

## OPENING KEYNOTE SESSION: WEDNESDAY 2:30 – 4:00 PM



### Engagement Leads to Membership; Membership Does Not Lead to Engagement

**AVI OLITZKY**

Speaker & Principal Consultant  
Olitzky Consulting Group

Too many organizations operate under the flawed assumption that once someone becomes a member, engagement will follow. In reality, it's the reverse: meaningful engagement is what drives people to join and stay. Yet countless associations and nonprofits still use a "set it and forget it" approach—sign the member, send the welcome packet and hope for the best.

This session flips the script. We will explore why traditional membership pipelines are failing and how to build an engagement-first model that attracts, activates and retains members. You'll gain tools to identify your core engagement drivers, design intentional touchpoints throughout the member journey and rethink how value is delivered before, during and beyond the point of joining. Whether you're trying to boost renewals, reach new audiences or deepen loyalty, this session will help you map a more strategic and sustainable path forward—one where engagement fuels membership, not the other way around.

In this session, participants will:

- Diagnose why membership-first models often fail to generate sustained engagement.
- Define core engagement strategies that build value before, during and after joining.
- Construct an engagement-first approach tailored to your organization's goals and audience.

## CONCURRENT SESSIONS: WEDNESDAY 4:15 – 5:15 PM



### Find Your Punchline: Turn Setbacks Into Setups Like A Comedian

**DAVID HORNING**

Founder  
Water Cooler Comedy

Life doesn't always go as planned. Emails get ignored, projects fall apart, massive industry shifts and unexpected crises throw everything into chaos—the question isn't if setbacks will happen, but how we respond when they do. Great comedians do not just survive adversity, uncertainty and mistakes, they use those moments to get better, sharper and funnier and turn their setbacks into setups for the next punchline. This high-energy, interactive program takes a page from their playbook, helping leaders and teams turn uncertainty into opportunity, rethink failure and develop a creative mindset that thrives in disruption. You don't even need to be funny to do it!

In this session, participants will:

- Redefine humor as a crucial leadership skill for inspiring engaged, trusting, innovative cultures.
- Create a psychologically safe space for open collaboration and innovation using improvisational comedy skills.
- Embrace disruption, strengthen resilience, and reframe challenges with simple, repeatable creative thinking exercises.



### Experience Matters More Than Service

**DIANE HELBIG**

President  
Helbig Enterprises

"Customer service" is misleading. What really matters is the experience customers have with your organization. From first contact to last, how do prospects, customers, employees and colleagues feel about your association? Understand why it matters and create a strategy to ensure every experience is a good one. Through discussions and exercises, participants explore challenges and solutions to common customer experiences.

In this presentation, participants will:

- How to use discovery to identify member needs.
- How to deal with difficult people.
- How to implement problem-solving and decision-making techniques.



### The Collaboration Equation: CVBs + Venues + You = Event Magic

**MELINDA HUNTLEY**

Executive Director  
Ohio Travel Association

Great events do not happen in silos – they happen when association professionals, meeting planners, CVBs and venues operate as one high-performing team. In this fast-paced and idea-packed session, participants will break down the "collaboration equation" that leads to smarter planning, stronger results and unforgettable attendee experiences. They will learn how to engage destination partners early, turn venues into value-drivers and align every player around your association's strategic goals. If you're still treating CVBs and venues as vendors instead of allies, it is time to flip the script – and unlock the full magic of partnerships.

What participants will learn by engaging in this session:

- Understand and practice using a tool to generate ideas for making any gathering exciting and memorable.
- Adopt a partnership mindset that transforms planning relationships from transactional to transformational.
- Apply practical strategies for early and meaningful collaboration that improve planning efficiency and event outcomes.



# 2025 Annual Conference **EDUCATIONAL SESSIONS**

## GENERAL SESSION: THURSDAY 8:30 – 9:45 AM



### The Power of Laughter: Unlocking Happiness in the Workplace

**GREG KETTNER**

Founder  
WorkHappy

Laughter is more than just a moment of levity—it's a powerful tool that can transform workplaces, boost well-being and foster resilience. In this inspiring keynote, we delve into the science behind laughter, its impact on mental health and practical ways to incorporate humor into everyday work life. Discover how embracing humor can enhance team dynamics, reduce stress and create a more joyful organizational culture. Join us to learn how to harness the power of laughter as a catalyst for positive change and personal growth.

During Kettner's keynote, participants will learn how to harness the following objectives:

- Understand the power of happiness and its physiological and psychological benefits, including stress reduction and increased resilience.
- Identify practical strategies to incorporate humor and laughter into daily work routines to improve team cohesion and overall well-being.
- Learn how a "WorkHappy" culture can foster more meaningful conversations around mental health, without shame and guilt, so anyone feels like they can reach out and ask for the help they need.

## CONCURRENT SESSIONS: THURSDAY 10:45 – 11:45 AM



### DIY SEO: How to Check Your Website's Performance for Free

**SHAWNA BURGER**

Vice President, Client Services  
Burgie MediaFusion

Search Engine Optimization – or SEO – often gets pushed the back burner, especially for busy association professionals wearing many hats in their organization. In this presentation, Burger will help you understand SEO, the important metrics to track and show you how to improve your website's SEO for free. You will walk away with a checklist of actions you can take to tackle SEO with confidence.

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- Explain the three core components of SEO and how each contributes to improving a website's visibility in search engine results.
- Identify key SEO metrics that associations should track regularly to measure and improve their website's performance.
- Utilize five free SEO tools to assess website health, uncover optimization opportunities, and apply insights to support organizational marketing goals.



### Navigating Stakeholder Engagement with a Smile

**TADARELLE LETT**

Diversity and Inclusion Coordinator  
Kent State University

This session will empower professionals to utilize evidence-based strategies designed to increase stakeholder engagement and improve community well-being. Learning is focused on embedding culturally sustaining pedagogies into professional settings through the practical application of customer-centric theories in business.

Attendees will learn about culturally sustaining pedagogies and how they can drive customer engagement, loyalty and, ultimately, business success. Attendees will explore each other's lived experiences as we dive into the importance of nurturing relationships and building community amongst industry professionals.

After this session, attendees will:

- Demonstrate an understanding of customer-centric theories to foster meaningful relationships with stakeholders.
- Be able to analyze and respond to the unique needs of stakeholders through actionable strategies.
- Learn how to promote collaboration across various sectors to address shared challenges while improving efficiencies.



### Breaking Through the Concrete: Inspiring Excellence in Life and Leadership

**JACOB MAUCH**

Sales Manager  
Hyatt Regency Columbus

This session is about Jacob Mauch's life experience and personal journey of resilience, recovery and leadership. Drawing from his life experience, and more 10 years working at the Hyatt Regency Columbus, Mauch opens up about how his struggles with addiction shaped his approach to life, leadership, team-building and personal growth. With a focus on overcoming barriers, both personal and professional, he will inspire attendees to "break through their concrete" and strive for excellence in both their careers and lives.

In this workshop, participants will learn how:

- Recognize the power of personal adversity as a catalyst for growth.
- Explore the role of authenticity and vulnerability and how these qualities can drive performance.
- Identify practical strategies for building resilience.



# 2025 Annual Conference **EDUCATIONAL SESSIONS**

## CONCURRENT SESSIONS: THURSDAY 1:15 – 2:15 PM



### Cybersecurity Simplified: Finally Understanding the Complex

#### STEVE NAUGHTON

Owner and Founder  
Summit Pines Co.

Cybersecurity often feels overwhelming or curious, filled with technical speak and complex threats. In *Cybersecurity Simplified: Finally Understanding the Complex*, Naughton takes pride in breaking down the essentials into clear, actionable insights that audience members can take with them immediately after the presentation. Whether you're a business leader, IT professional or simply cyber-curious, this session will strengthen your cybersecurity skills.

During this session, participants will learn:

- How to demystify key security concepts, real-world threats and practical defense strategies.
- How to gain confidence to safely and smartly navigate cybersecurity in a rapidly-evolving digital landscape.
- How to implement actionable insights that protect their members' information and their organizations' data.



### Risky Business: Tips and Best Practices for Avoiding Legal Risks in Contracting, Employment and More

#### DAVID SCOTT, Managing Partner

& **DAPHNE KACKLOUDIS**, Healthcare Attorney  
Brennan Manna Diamond

During this session, the presenters will identify legal and business risks related to contracting and employment/human resources common to associations and their members, and will provide tips, strategies and best practices for how to avoid and mitigate them.

During this session, participants will:

- Gain tips for resolving conflict using effective consensus-building skills in the context of avoiding litigation.
- Learn how to potentially avoid legal conflict in the first place by negotiating contract terms favorable to their organization.
- Gain an understanding of strategies to help them avoid common mistakes that may result in legal risk to the organization, optimizing financial and business planning to achieve the organization's strategic objectives and mission.



### Strategies for Dealing with Accounting and Finance Uncertainties

#### MICHAEL BOROWITZ, CPA, CAE

President  
Clark, Schaefer, Hackett & Co.

Michael Borowitz, CPA, CAE is a long-time member of OSAP and has served on board the OSAP and OSAP Foundation boards so he possesses a deep understanding of the challenges that nonprofit leaders face. During this session, he will explore several strategies for mitigating the uncertainties that intersect with the accounting and financial components of associations.

Participants in this session will explore:

- How to analyze information to help them formulate a process to navigate change.
- How to facilitate a culture of inquiry that assesses the impact of future scenarios, challenges and opportunities.
- How to craft ideas that help them consider which economic and external factors should be used in financial planning.



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# 2025 Annual Conference **EDUCATIONAL SESSIONS**

## CONCURRENT SESSIONS: THURSDAY 2:30 – 3:30 PM



### From Decline to Growth: Reinventing Membership with the Freemium Model

**DEBBIE SEGOR**, CAE, PCM, CDMP, Marketing and Communications Director and **PATRICIA WHITE**, Membership and Engagement, Group Sales Manager  
The American Society for Nondestructive Testing

Many associations are facing membership decline—but what if a new model could turn that around? In this session, discover how one organization embraced a freemium membership strategy to spark growth, expand reach, and strengthen engagement.

In this session, participants will how to:

- Understand the “freemium model in practice: Explore the key benefits and potential pitfalls of a freemium approach, including its impact on member growth, engagement, and revenue strategy.
- Apply effective communication strategies: Review real-world marketing examples and gain insight into engaging current and prospective members during a model transition.
- Turn insights into action: Learn how to adapt lessons from an active freemium rollout to inform your own strategy and drive sustainable membership growth.



### Strategic Board Leadership: Elevating Governance for Impact

**DONNA OSER**, CAE  
President and CEO  
Michigan Society of Association Executives

This session will equip association executives with the tools, insights, and practices to strengthen board performance and governance outcomes. Blending legal responsibilities with strategic foresight, participants will explore what makes boards highly effective, how to foster productive communication and collaboration, and how to engage in meaningful, future-focused decision-making that supports organizational resilience and growth.

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- Define the core fiduciary duties and essential responsibilities of association board members.
- Distinguish between governance and management roles and explain how to foster a productive board-staff partnership.
- Apply effective governance practices that enhance communication, decision-making, and board accountability.



### Creating and Managing Online Learning With AI: What Works, What Doesn't and How to Get Started

**NATALIE TAYLOR HART**, MS  
Lead Instructional Designer  
eLearning Doc

Join us to learn how artificial intelligence (AI) can transform the way your organizations build and manage online learning programs, creating valuable educational offerings for members while driving non-dues revenue. Explore the possibilities and limitations of AI in the process, helping organizations with limited budgets and staff leverage this technology effectively.

Leave with practical strategies for incorporating AI tools into your e-learning development, as well as actionable next steps to build scalable, high-quality online courses. Through interactive discussion and case studies, you will gain insight into AI's role in content creation, customization, assessment and member engagement. Get a roadmap for integrating AI-powered solutions with human expertise to design relevant, engaging and profitable education programs that support both member upskilling and organizational growth.

In this session, participants will:

- Identify AI tools that can aid the program development process.
- Balance AI automation with human expertise to create engaging, high-quality educational experiences for association members.
- Develop a clear action plan for moving forward.

## GENERAL SESSION: THURSDAY 3:45 – 5:00 PM



### Leading with Purpose and Values in Turbulent Times

**HINDA MITCHELL**  
President and Founder  
Inspire PR Group

The “plane of life” right now is fraught with turbulence. For association leaders and their members, flying through the volatility of the business and economic environment is a bumpy ride and requires a strong seatbelt.

Participants will discover how they can:

- Shape decision-making to be ethical, transparent and effective.
- Develop communication skills that ensure all voices are understood, resolve conflict and navigate change.

- Understand the impact of external factors on an organization and the impact of the environment on its stakeholders.
- Engage stakeholders to maximize organizational impact.
- Effectively leverage communications and public relations tools to create an environment conducive to effective association leadership.



# 2025 Annual Conference **EDUCATIONAL SESSIONS**

## CONCURRENT SESSIONS: FRIDAY 8:30 – 9:30 AM



### **Joy Jolt: Energize Your Association's Culture with Purpose, Loyalty and Gratitude**

**KATHY PARRY**  
CEO

Corporate Energy Expert, LLC

Association leaders know that engaged teams and loyal members are the foundation of a thriving organization. Yet, workforce challenges, shifting expectations, and burnout threaten retention and morale. Joy Jolt delivers a powerful, research-backed strategy to reignite purpose, strengthen loyalty and foster gratitude—three essential drivers of high-performing teams and engaged communities. This session doesn't just inspire—it transforms. Attendees will walk away with a clear roadmap to create a culture where people don't just participate; they stay, contribute and thrive.

In this session, participants will:

- Describe the three reasons why teams and members lose purpose and revert to negativity.
- Learn why loyalty fades in members and tactics to retain great people.
- Explore how joy increases when we serve others and what this means to team culture.
- Understand two ways everyone should acknowledge team members to increase engagement.



### **Bold Balance – Escape the 100% Perfectionist Trap and Beat Burnout**

**KATIE VIRTUE**

Founder  
Virtue Consulting

Being bold requires balance. The secret to the right combination is the 70 percent playbook, a three-step solution to find bold balance (the good B's) and avoid burnout (the bad B). Are you burnt out from the perfectionist trap - always operating at 100 percent, lacking strategic thinking time, feeling endlessly busy? This inspiring and energetic presentation provides the escape. Shift your mindset and learn the behaviors needed to find space, adjust your pace and give yourself grace.

During this session, she will provide participants insights into how they can:

- Discover the 3 simple steps to enable you to make key strategic decisions as a leader.
- See how focusing on the bold balance and overcoming busyness can enable you to think strategically, navigate change and promote innovation.
- Understand how operating at a sustainable level enhances creativity, performance, and overall happiness, leading to greater success and productivity.



### **Beyond the Live Event: How Associations Can Transform Webinars into Lasting Learning Resources**

**EMMA THOMPSON, PH.D.**

Learning Experience Consultant  
D2L

Associations invest significant time and energy into hosting live webinars. But, too often, these valuable sessions fade into archives with limited long-term impact. In today's dynamic learning landscape, association professionals need scalable, sustainable approaches to extend the value of live events and better support member development.

This session explores how associations can transform their existing webinar content into high-impact, self-directed online learning experiences. By leveraging AI-powered authoring tools and intentional learning design, associations can repurpose webinars into structured, interactive courses that enhance engagement, support skill development, and align with their mission and member needs.

During this session, participants will gather insights into how they can:

- Identify the limitations of single-event webinars and the opportunity to transform them into sustainable learning resources that support ongoing engagement and member value.
- Explain how AI-powered tools and thoughtful learning design can convert webinar content into structured, self-paced, and interactive online learning experiences.
- Apply practical steps to transition from one-time webinars to a lasting, scalable learning strategy tailored to association learners.





# 2025 Annual Conference **EDUCATIONAL SESSIONS**

**CLOSING KEYNOTE SESSION: FRIDAY 10:30 AM – 12:00 PM**



## **Pieces of Success: Putting Your Life Back Together One Piece at a Time**

**RUTH M. BOWDISH, MS, LICDC, CEAP, SAP**  
Managing Director  
On Demand Occupational Medicine

We don't always get to choose the pieces life hands us — but we do get to decide how we use them. Bowdish brings together the themes, insights and experiences shared throughout the event and helps participants see how each piece fits into the bigger picture of their personal and professional journey. With warmth, wisdom and lived experience, Bowdish reminds us that success isn't about having it all figured out — it's about learning to take life one piece at a time.

During this presentation, participants will learn how to:

- Be empowered to lead with resilience and integrity by embracing their own life experiences as tools for transformation. Through storytelling and practical tools, attendees will explore how self-awareness and personal adversity can shape ethical leadership, build stronger volunteer relationships and create cultures rooted in purpose, equity and perseverance.
- Be guided on how to create empathetic, human-centered environments that support both staff and volunteers through life's complexities. Attendees will learn how to foster deeper connection by

recognizing unseen burdens, embracing diversity of experience and cultivating a leadership style that supports sustainable engagement through compassion, collaboration and lived authenticity.

- Be introduced to a practical, step-by-step approach to overcoming overwhelm—personally and professionally—by breaking down complex challenges into manageable, meaningful “pieces.” Attendees will gain tools to apply this framework to strategic planning, team development and personal leadership, helping their organizations and people grow from adversity with clarity and hope.