

FALL 2024

AEXPERIENCE

FOR ASSOCIATION EXECUTIVES.
POWERED BY REALTOR® MAGAZINE.
WWW.NAR.REALTOR/AEX

Fast Forward

Choose the right tools
and technologies for
your association.

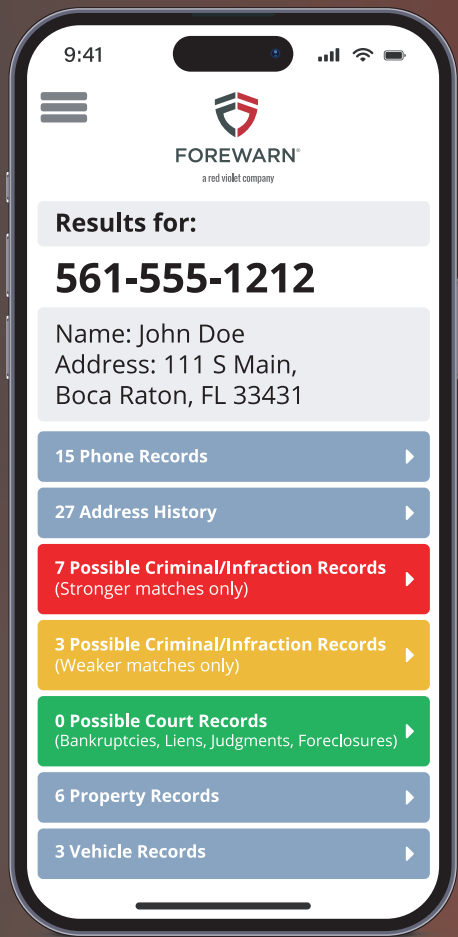




SAFER SHOWINGS. SMARTER ENGAGEMENTS.

Join the 490+ associations and MLSs that protect their members with FOREWARN.

Know your prospect...*in seconds*



1

Receive a call



2

Enter phone #
in FOREWARN app



3

Get instant prospect info
(Identity verification, criminal history and more)

We did a series of focus groups with our members last summer to find out what they thought of Mainstreet and where they saw the value of membership. In each group, participants said FOREWARN was their most useful and appreciated member benefit.


— John Gormley, CEO
Mainstreet Organization of REALTORS®
(Chicago area)

Contact us today to find out why associations across the country are calling FOREWARN the best benefit they provide!

GET STARTED TODAY!

 www.FOREWARN.com

 sales@forewarn.com

 888-424-9276

FOREWARN, LLC ("FOREWARN") is not a "consumer reporting agency" and its services do not constitute "consumer reports," as these terms are defined by the Fair Credit Reporting Act, 15 U.S.C. § 1681 et seq. ("FCRA") or similar state statutes. Accordingly, FOREWARN services may not be used in whole or in part as a factor in establishing an individual's eligibility for credit, insurance, employment, or any other eligibility purpose permitted by the FCRA.

© 2024 FOREWARN, LLC. All rights reserved.



Editorial Offices

430 N. Michigan Ave., Chicago, IL 60611-4087
500 New Jersey Ave. N.W., Washington, DC 20001-2020
ContactNAR@nar.realtor; 800-874-6500

2024 AE and Staff Leadership

President

Kevin Sears, AHWD, C2EX

Association Executives Committee Chair

Theresa Hatton, RCE, AHWD, C2EX

Association Executives Committee Vice Chair

Tricia Thomas, RCE, C2EX

CEO Nykia Wright

Senior Vice President, Strategic Business, Innovation and Technology Mark Birschbach

Chief Marketing & Communications Officer Suzanne Bouhia

Senior Vice President, Leadership Resources Beth Brittingham

Chief Learning and Events Officer Marc Gould, RCE, SRES, EPRO, C2EX

Chief Advocacy Officer Shannon McGahn

Chief Financial and Internal Operations Officer John Pierpoint

Chief Economist Lawrence Yun

Director, Engagement and Association Leadership Development Cindy Sampalis

Vice President, Creative & Content Strategy Susan Welter

Director, Content Strategy Jennifer Hajigeorgiou

Executive Editor, Publications Stacey Moncrieff

Executive Editor, Digital Graham Wood

Editor Lauren E. Pinch

Product Manager Erica Christoffer

Production Manager Wilma Veal

Project Manager Cynthia Strohschein

National Sales Director Paula Fauth

Advertising Manager Alvin Pulley

Content, Design & Production

The YGS Group

Managing Editor Rachel Markey

Senior Editor Danielle Moores

Copy Editor Amanda Holahan

Senior Art Director Megan Hacker

Graphic Designer Tara Roth

Account Manager Frankie Singleton

Ad Sales Account Executives Natalie Matter Bellis, Zack Buchanan, Heather Macaluso

(nar@theYGSgroup.com)

The representations, information, advice and opinions presented by AExperience authors, sponsors or advertisers are solely their responsibility. Find the full disclaimer policy at magazine.realtor.com/disclaimer.

Questions and comments email: danielle.moores@theYGSgroup.com

NAR supports the federal Fair Housing Act, which prohibits discrimination in housing on the basis of race or color, national origin, religion, sex, familial status, and handicap or disability. NAR's Code of Ethics also prohibits discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity.

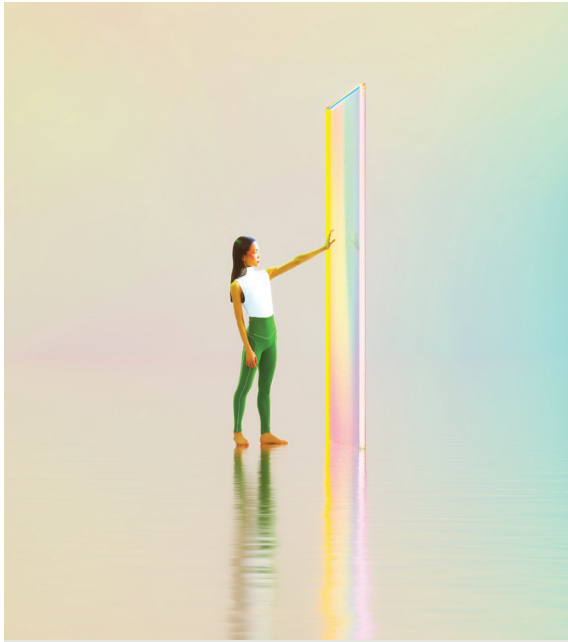
Copyright ©2024 by the National Association of REALTORS®. All rights reserved. AExperience, powered by REALTOR® Magazine, is published quarterly by NAR for REALTOR® association executives. REALTORS® are members of the National Association of REALTORS®.

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS® OFFICIAL PUBLICATION

FALL 2024 CONTENTS

Visit Us Online
nar.realtor/aex

Connect with AEs on Facebook
facebook.com/groups/AEYearRound



4 AEC Chair

Ready for Change

6 AOR in Action

News and Ideas From Your Peers



24 Law & Policy

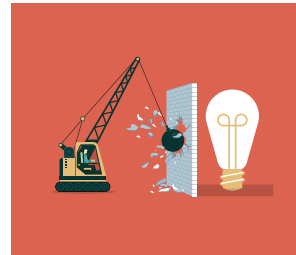
Crafting an AI Use Policy

25 Governance

The Right Course

26 Human Resources

Civil Minded



28 Mind of the Member

If It Ain't Broke (Yet), Break It

30 AE Leader

Arizona Regional MLS CEO

Matt Consalvo

10 The Right Tools, Right Now

These are the apps and new technologies you need to know, for everything from association management to content creation.

14 AI Within Reach

Struggling with how to use artificial intelligence? Follow the lead of these associations and start with member engagement.

20 Web Essentials

Master the basics of creating an engaging, member-friendly website.

COVER IMAGE: ©GETTY IMAGES/WESTEND61/WESTEND61



ON THE WEB

Find the Right Balance

It's the resource AEs ask about the most—and now it's newly updated. The President/Association Executive Checklist gives you a tool to help manage expectations and create a professional and effective working relationship with your top volunteer leader. Access it now.





AEC CHAIR

Ready for Change

If you are reading this article, congratulations! You survived the summer and the new rules being implemented, so give yourself a pat on the back. Everyone says that change is inevitable, and it is—although when people want change, what they really want is “incremental” change, just a bit of change at a time.

Thankfully, the settlement allowed our associations and members that opportunity to adjust to a new way of doing things, with updates to fields, contracts, forms and office policies. Amid all this change, it’s good to remember that so much remains the same: The industry is still intact, members are conducting vital business, the Code of Ethics is still relevant and important, and the National Association of REALTORS® is as present as ever to support us in steering a confident course through any challenge.

Very soon, we will begin another year with new leaders. I hope that the information shared during Leadership Summit was helpful and that you are using the tools available to onboard your board of directors. Remember that the Association Executives section of NAR’s website (nar.realtor/association-executives) has a multitude of resources available to assist you, your staff and your volunteer leaders.

Next, as we get ready for the first round of the reimagined Core Standards, your members may benefit from watching the video that explains Core Standards to volunteer leaders (nar.realtor/ae/volunteer-



Theresa Hatton, RCE, is CEO of the Massachusetts Association of REALTORS® and 2024 AEC chair.

leadership-toolkit, see “Introduction to Core Standards”). They’ll understand why the standards exist, what’s required, and why you might be encouraging certain programs and activities in order to comply with the standards. Also, please remember that the online tool prepopulates information from the prior year’s submissions, so review and edit where necessary.

Now is also an excellent time to invest in yourself and check out the AEI Year-Round Virtual Sessions and the Answer Book and perhaps complete your application for the RCE credential. Understanding member policy, history and your association’s role in NAR’s three-way agreement is key to being able to provide the answers to members’ needs.

I am looking forward to seeing you at NAR NXT in Boston. Join us for the Association Executives Committee and Forum on Friday, Nov. 8, at 10:30 a.m. I hope that you enjoy your visit to my state of Massachusetts and can take some time to enjoy the history and experiences that Boston has to offer.

Thanks for all that you do!

AEXPERIENCE

2024-2025 AExperience Editorial Advisory Board

Shannon Allen
Florida Realtors®

Carly Arsenault
Kingman/Golden Valley Association of REALTORS®, Ariz.

Paige Bates
Whidbey Island Association of REALTORS®, Wash.

Shannon Brasher
Northeast Alabama Association of REALTORS®

Kim Cox
Ozark Gateway Association of REALTORS®, Mo.

Meighan Harris, RCE, IOM
Bonita Springs-Estero REALTORS®, Fla.

Kathy Hartman, RCE
Santa Cruz County Association of REALTORS®, Calif.

Dezmarie Hedrick
Fresno Association of REALTORS®, Calif.

David Kissinger, RCE
Glendale Association of REALTORS®, Calif.

Lesli Langslet, RCE
Coastal Mendocino Association of REALTORS®, Calif.

Sean Martin
Tacoma Pierce County Association of REALTORS®, Wash.

Brittany Powell Parich
Portland Metropolitan Association of REALTORS®, Ore.

Sarah Rayne, RCE, CAE
Howard County Association of REALTORS®, Md.

Blake Stewart
Greater Nashville Association of REALTORS®, Tenn.

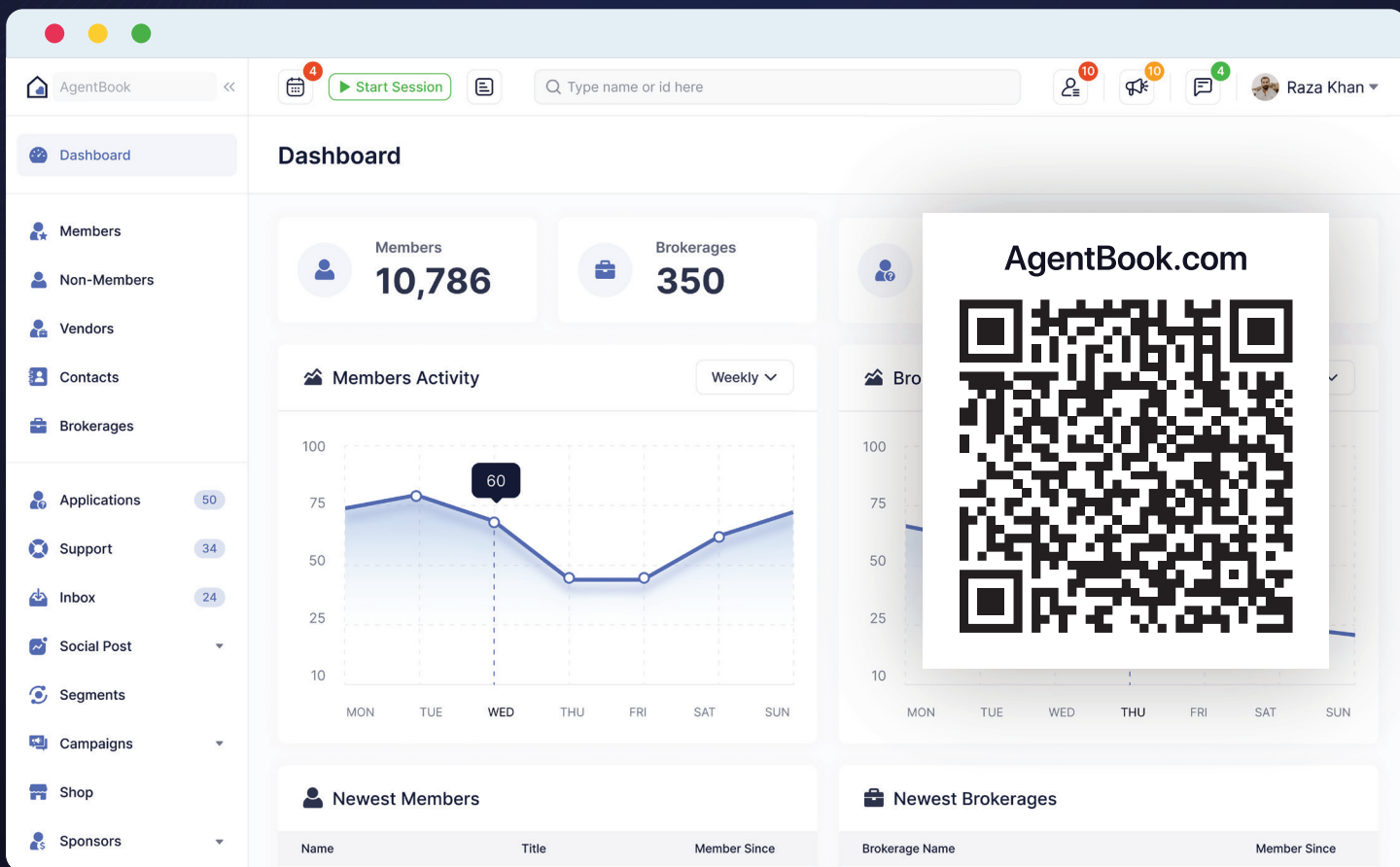
Ashley Wheeler, RCE
Florida Realtors®

Heather Wiedrich, RCE
Hometown Association of REALTORS®, Ill.

Allison Woodham, RCE
Baldwin REALTORS®, Ala.

The AExperience editorial board reviews each issue and provides critical feedback, proposes story ideas and stays in touch with fellow association executives nationwide to scout out new programs and products to share with the AE community. To join the editorial board, write an article or contribute information, email Danielle Moores, senior editor, AExperience magazine, danielle.moores@theYGSgroup.com.

Exclusive Real Estate Association Management System (AMS)



Supercharge your association by eliminating friction for your team
Allowing them to build meaningful relationships with members.



Member Management



Email/SMS Campaigns



Event Management



Education Forum



Application Automation



Elections/Surveys



Member Portal



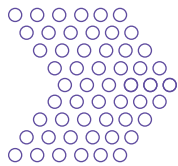
Website Builder



QR Code Generator

AOR IN ACTION

NEWS AND IDEAS FROM YOUR PEERS



RESOURCES

Tech Learning on Demand

Am I doing everything I need to do to protect our association's data? Can ChatGPT really help my association? If these are the kinds of questions that pop into your head as you're falling asleep, you're not the only one.

Both questions are top of mind for AEs today, says Heather McGowan, manager, physical archives and records, at the NAR Library & Archives.

To help AEs navigate the latest updates on AI and educate their staff and members on phishing schemes and other scams, the library staff has curated collections of ebooks and audiobooks on these and other



©GETTY IMAGES/DRAFTER123/DIGITALVISION VECTORS

important topics, such as leadership, antitrust, trends for hosting successful virtual or hybrid meetings, and how to boost happiness and overcome anxiety.

"AEs can access these collections from any device, including their mobile phone," says McGowan. If you can't find what you need, the library also

offers virtual reference services that can help answer any question you might have—via email at librarians@nar.realtor; through its web form, nar.realtor/library-archives/reference-request-for-nars-library-archives; or by phone at 800-874-6500.

 realtor.overdrive.com

FRESH IDEA

Non-Dues Clues

Looking for new ideas to generate non-dues revenue? The National Association of REALTORS®'s 2024 Association Profile and the AEI Year-Round Facebook group offer some for associations of any size.

- If you own a building, lease space for offices.
- Your building could host events large or small. (Be creative: The **Greater Tyler Association of REALTORS®** has held everything from proms to election watch parties.)
- Use RE-Target to give sponsors, affiliate members and other partners a way to advertise on your association-owned MLS or member dashboard.
- The **River Counties Association of REALTORS®** buys commercials and hosts a half-hour show on its local radio station; REALTOR® members or preferred partners can then contract directly with the association to purchase commercial spots or an appearance on the show to promote themselves.

COMMUNICATIONS

Great Conversation

Twelve hundred news stories. Two media tours. More than 4,800 shares on social media.

With help from the National Association of REALTORS®' Practice Changes Toolkit, associations everywhere spoke directly to hundreds of millions of consumers, members and stakeholders as part of a coordinated media strategy, culminating in the practice change implementation on Aug. 17.

Texas REALTORS® relied on the toolkit, content from facts.realtor and information from its own legal staff to create a custom toolkit for its members, including media training videos, shareable PDFs, and social media and email content. "Since March 15, Texas REALTORS® and its spokespeople have been mentioned in 71 related stories, generating a reach of 117+ million, and an ad value equivalent of over \$1 million," says Marty Kramer, communications director.

Meanwhile, an online consumer ad campaign has already garnered more than 16,000 views from 15,000 visitors for texasrealestate.com/learn, with Facebook and Instagram being the two most significant drivers.

New York State Association of REALTORS® found the toolkit's talking points a great resource when President Joe Rivellino was interviewed by media. Its greatest effort, however, was a letter from Rivellino to members and the public, placed in 11 major newspapers across the state as a full-page color advertisement on two successive weekends in August. Local boards also co-branded and promoted the letter.

By telling our stories, associations can help lead the conversation, says Mantill Williams, NAR's vice president of public relations and communications. Ongoing, associations can still lean on the Practice Changes Toolkit for talking points or direct buyers and sellers to facts.realtor. Members and association staff interested in becoming advocates can email surrogates@nar.realtor.

PLACEMAKING

Honoring History

Gospel choirs swayed and sang, dancers leapt and artists wielded their paintbrushes—all part of a joyful celebration of Juneteenth at African American Commemorative Park in Orange, Va., earlier this year.

The National Association of REALTORS® was there, too, to capture the moment. Watch the video: nar.realtor/grants/placemaking-grant.

The commemorative park hosting the Juneteenth celebration was built with help from NAR's Placemaking Grant and is a project of the Fredericksburg Area Association of REALTORS® plus a coalition of government and nonprofit organizations. FAAR is always looking for ways to engage with its six jurisdictions, says Kim McClellan, RCE, AHWD, public policy director. "The park presented a great opportunity to bring a focus to the town of Orange and support a much-needed community amenity," she says.

African American Commemorative Park is part of a formerly thriving African American business district that went defunct after the federal government built a highway bypass in the 1970s and businesses shut down or relocated. Now, with the support of NAR's Placemaking Grant, FAAR hopes the community



FAAR representatives gathered at the 2024 Juneteenth celebration at African American Commemorative Park in Virginia.

FREDERICKSBURG AREA ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS®

gathering space will spur economic development, attracting businesses that can revitalize the neighborhood but keep its historic character.

The NAR grant purchased the park's benches and interpretive panels, which, says McClellan, are key to telling the history of the African American community in Orange, while providing places to sit and reflect on that history. NAR's video of the celebration is part of a campaign launched in September to showcase successful Placemaking Grant projects.

Starting the first week of January 2025, associations can apply for funding to build or revitalize publicly accessible gathering spaces on public land. Plan to apply early and start a conversation with the Placemaking grant manager to make sure your proposed project fits the scope of the grant.

nar.realtor/grants/placemaking-grant



NEW THINKING

Your Website Matters

As artificial intelligence pulls information from across the web, your website plays a crucial role in shaping consumer perception of members and REALTOR® associations. Is your content robust and informative? According to Ad Age, "owned media is the No. 1 'ingredient'—or 'algorithmic anchor'—of AI answers across all engines from Perplexity and Grok/X to Gemini and ChatGPT." In other words, say experts, your website isn't just talking to humans anymore—your content also must educate bots. Creating robust, informative content that caters to both these audiences is just one of many new realities we must face in an increasingly AI-centric world. From Ad Age's "AI and Brands—10 Realities Marketers Can't Ignore," July 2, 2024.

©GETTY IMAGES/FILO/DIGITALVISION VECTORS

TAKE NOTE

AE YPN Forum Reimagined

Young Professionals forum has a new name and a broader focus.

The new AE Professional Growth Forum came about naturally when the AE YPN Forum began to attract association executives of all generations, staff specialists and aspiring CEOs. The newly reimagined forum—featuring association management topics such as finance, volun-

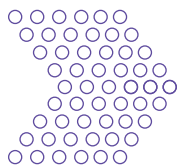
teer engagement, MLS and transitioning to a CEO—takes place at NAR NXT, Saturday, Nov. 9, at 2 p.m. "We think this change will facilitate greater networking among staff specialists, more mentoring opportunities and greater career growth for all," says Derek Sprague, RCE, 2025 forum

chair and CEO, Bakersfield Association of REALTORS®, Calif. Francoise Jordan, chief financial officer, Bay East Association of REALTORS®, Calif., joins Sprague as 2025 vice chair of the forum.

narxt.realtor/event/ae-professional-growth-forum



Virginia REALTORS® Leslie Frazier, RCE, (left) winner of the 2023 AE Leaders of Tomorrow Young Professionals Award, with Christina Smalls, RCE, Arizona REALTORS®.



BY THE NUMBERS

In the Neighborhood

Local associations have long honored members for their outstanding community contributions. In 2000, the National Association of REALTORS® joined in by founding the Good Neighbor Awards. For the past 25 years, the awards have given a national stage to NAR members making an extraordinary impact on their communities through volunteer work. Awardees receive \$10,000 in grant funding for their cause and national publicity. The program wouldn't be possible without the partnership of local and state associations that help identify candidates for the awards. In honor of a quarter century of giving, we gathered information from past honorees to create a snapshot of their volunteerism.

250

Honorees since the awards began in 2000

43

States where Good Neighbor awardees have put grants to good use (as well as Puerto Rico and 17 countries worldwide)

\$1.47 billion

Raised by awardees for their charitable causes

275,893

Volunteers recruited

1.8 million

People in need who received shelter

56 million

People who received food via 84.8 million meals

1.5 million

Youths who were mentored

nar.realtor/gna

Get Engaged in Community Development Priorities

Does your association need to get up to speed on fair and attainable housing, walkable communities, or rural priorities? Access these NAR Community Outreach resources and prepare ahead to apply for various grants in 2025. (Applications open Jan. 3.)

- | | |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Housing Opportunity Toolkit | 3. Placemaking Toolkit |
| 2. Fair Housing Toolkit | 4. Smart Growth Toolkit |
| | 5. Rural Outreach Toolkit |

Sign up for a one-on-one virtual coaching session to brainstorm ways to advocate and engage locally.

realtorparty.realtor/community-outreach

“Our board of directors has asked—gulp!—what’s the plan if I ‘get hit by a bus’ or worse? Any help on how I should plan for my own demise?”



Cindy Butts, RCE, CAE, (left) CEO of Connecticut REALTORS®, once blogged an answer to this scenario, based on the “disaster file” created by friend and colleague Jerry Panz, who retired from Cape Fear REALTORS® in 2017. “Jerry provided great advice that continues to survive the test of time,” she

says. Start by creating a document that outlines actions your leadership should take and the location of key information. Here’s what Panz recommended:

1. Don’t panic. cash, to locked filing cabinets and more—are located here: _____.
2. Call an emergency board meeting to appoint a staff person as acting CEO, with additional pay.
3. Signature cards are changed annually with the election. You may want to add the acting CEO as a signatory, but notify the bank of any last checks that I signed.
4. Notify the CPA and legal counsel. You may need their help.
5. Passwords are saved here: _____.
6. Notify the state and national associations of my death and who is now the acting CEO.
7. Decide on a search committee now. It may take months to hire a new CEO, and the current staff person already has a full-time job!
8. Change the signature card on the safety deposit box to determine who else may access it, if anyone.
9. Important keys—to the building, to offices, to petty
10. The checklist for doing the month-end accounting for each entity can be found at (filename). See if I have started the monthly accounting. The CPA can find an employee/temp to help with this as necessary.
11. Change the membership system database to reflect the current CEO. Have someone check the national membership system for the change the day after the transmission.
12. There is an insurance policy on me paid by the corporation. (Name) is the beneficiary for both. Please remind (Name) to contact the insurance provider and my personal attorney about the car, life and house insurance.

Need to prepare for more “what ifs”? The Association Disaster Preparedness Plan Checklist walks you through how to plan for other disasters.

nar.realtor/disaster-preparedness-plan-checklist



FIVE TIPS

Building a Thriving YPN

The Long Island Board of REALTORS® Young Professionals Network has a strong member-centric approach. Like anything built to last, annual maintenance is beneficial in ensuring the longevity of your network. Here are five tips from LIBOR's associate communications manager, Liana Inzerillo Werner (above), to ensure your YPN continues to deliver for its membership.

1 Embrace change: The landscape of real estate and REALTOR® associations is always evolving, and your YPN should too. Be open to incorporating new best practices and get in the habit of reevaluating existing processes. What worked in years past might not work today. Routinely assess what resonates with your membership and what may be hindering engagement.

2 Prioritize member value: LIBOR YPN boasts a robust awards program, but our sights are set beyond recognition. We actively connect our YPNers to the leadership pipeline. This includes access to the Leadership Academy, meetings with the executive team and a plethora of low-cost events. These events not only encourage networking and education, but also foster connections between YPN members and established members.

3 Build trust through transparency: Clearly outline committee objectives and their execution plans. This allows YPNers to understand how

their support contributes to achieving shared goals. Open and honest communication built on a foundation of transparency fosters trust and leads to a more collaborative partnership between the association and YPN members.

4 Take cues from leadership: Pay close attention to the strategic planning methods used by your board of directors. Techniques like a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis can be valuable. By understanding the bigger picture, your YPN can make informed decisions that prepare members for future leadership roles.

5 Actively seek feedback: Saving the best and most important for last, the power of member input is invaluable. After large events—or before the year ends—gather feedback on effectiveness and reach. By actively listening to members, you can pivot to address their evolving needs and keep your YPN an evergreen resource for young and new real estate professionals.



GIVING BACK

Volunteer Days

Forty-three percent of REALTOR® associations took part in this year's REALTOR® Volunteer Days, June 1–9, for a total of 473 associations nationwide.

Member volunteers—about 120,000 strong—helped build houses, distributed care packages, served or packaged food, helped local animal shelters and much more.

Above, from top left:

Central Oregon Association of REALTORS® members volunteered with Habitat for Humanity of La Pine Sunriver.

The Community Outreach committee at **Laguna Board of REALTORS®** (Laguna Beach, Calif.) delivered 27 summer senior care packages to low-income residents.

Missouri REALTORS® staff packaged apples at The Food Bank for Central & Northeast Missouri.

Marco Island Area Association of REALTORS® (Florida) volunteers offered lunch at Camp Able, serving people of all ages with diverse abilities.

The **Lake of the Ozarks Board of REALTORS®** (Missouri) helped with the Great Shootout Treasure Hunt, a fundraiser for the Laurie-Sunrise Beach Rotary Club, which supports local charities, police and fire departments.

Below: More than 100 **Raleigh Regional Association of REALTORS®** (North Carolina) members made birthday boxes and more for families in need at Dorcas Ministries in Cary.

In Missouri alone, Missouri REALTORS® and its local associations hosted 30 events, involving 400-plus REALTOR® volunteers helping 10,000 Missouri residents.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF LISTED ASSOCIATIONS

THE RIGHT TOOLS, RIGHT NOW



© GETTY IMAGES/ANDRIY ONUFRIYENKO/MOMENT

THESE ARE THE APPS AND NEW TECHNOLOGIES YOU NEED TO KNOW, FOR EVERYTHING FROM ASSOCIATION MANAGEMENT TO CONTENT CREATION.

BY DAVID KISSINGER



It's easy for AEs to focus on the items most visible to members: the MLS, the dues bill, emails. But in the association tech space, so much is happening behind the scenes that members will never notice—unless something goes wrong.

Associations track long-term projects, delegate among remote teams, plan complex events, and stay on top of legal news, forms, economic data and member questions—plus produce oodles of content. The main outreach tool used to be a once-a-month mailed newsletter, but today it's blogging, emails, long videos, short videos, podcasts, social media posts and real-time live feeds for immediate interaction with, well, pretty much anyone.

With more than 11,000 members in a high-profile population center, the Greater Capital Area Association of REALTORS® needs to stay on top of many moving parts at once. That's why its staffers rely on multiple technology tools. For example, team members use Asana, a project management tool, to stay on top of tasks, and Teamup for managing calendars and dates. "I couldn't live without Teamup for making editorial calendars," says Christine Barnhart, GCAAR's vice president of strategic communications. "We set up a timeline, or we make it look like a calendar. That's the view I prefer."

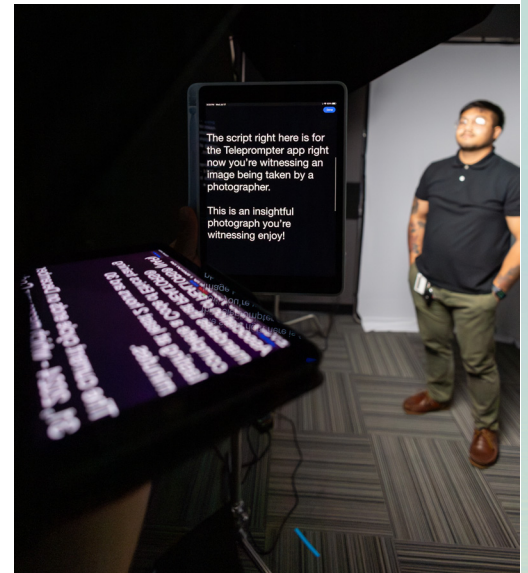
Barnhart's team also uses Canva, a web app for developing any kind of graphics imagin-

able. "It's so easy for anybody, whether you're a designer or not a designer," she says.

For member meetings, GCAAR loads a written speech onto a teleprompter that the speaker can see in real time, just as politicians do. The only equipment needed is an iPad with the app Teleprompter Pro. "A photographer uses a mirror on a stand to reflect the iPad to the person speaking," says Barnhart. "We can control how fast the text moves and can edit on the fly."

Not every association needs so much technology. Patra Brady has been the AE of the South Central Association of REALTORS® for 10 years. Over that time, her membership has doubled to 260. While she partners with associations in nearby cities like Richmond, her association is a good place for the needs of her members transacting in nine rural counties in central Virginia. "I think we provide a lot to our members being as small as we are," says Brady, who is the sole staff member. "We'll do anything to make their daily transactions easier."

South Central offers industry tools such as SentriLock, InstaView and ShowingTime. It uses QuickBooks for financials. It has MLS data shares with its neighbors, and the website is hosted by the MLS. It just works. "I try to be available and have low-cost supplies in the store," Brady says. "They don't want to drive to Richmond and pay double for a sign."



GCAAR uses the app Teleprompter Pro for presentations during member meetings.

Saving Time With AI

At the National Association of REALTORS® Communication Directors Institute in Oklahoma City in July, one keynote speaker was Marki Lemons Ryhal of Chicago, who talked about the potential for artificial intelligence to create, enhance and repurpose all kinds of member communications.

In addition to being a real estate broker and NAR member, Lemons Ryhal is a podcaster, public speaker and sales trainer.

For Local Associations

TO AVOID BECOMING OVERWHELMED AND WORRYING ABOUT PICKING THE WRONG TOOL, REMEMBER THESE TIPS.

After all, local associations might not have sufficient resources to take advantage of the latest tools and tech. Some might also have different priorities based on the needs of their members and the initiatives of board leadership.

- Don't get drawn in by the newest bright, shiny object. Start with a clear and detailed assessment of what problem you are trying to solve.
- Engage your staff from the start.
- Take advantage of trial periods, and be ruthless about ending unneeded subscriptions, whether after one month or a few years.
- Get the staff trained. Pay for classes or webinars.
- Is the tool making a difference all the time, or just a few times per year? If you're not using it enough, cut it.
- Are you "overengineering"? Sometimes a simple, manual process works better than a complex project management tool with AI-driven automation features. This is especially true for small projects and small groups.
- On the flip side, do you have to manage events for dozens or hundreds of people? Post photo galleries for several events each year? Track multiple products and price points at your charity fundraiser? When you're at scale, the right app will bring relief to your staff, which means relief to you.

To save time, she creates content once and repurposes it often for many channels.

"Video is the only form of content that you can repurpose without recreating," says Lemons Ryhal. She uses Zoom or Zencast for recording video. From there, she extracts the sound into a podcast, or she uses an app like OpusClip to create short, snappy videos for Instagram, TikTok or YouTube.

AI tools like Fireflies or Otter.ai can extract written text for a blog post or email—that is, after Lemons Ryhal proofreads it with Grammarly, an online grammar tool. For example, she used Fireflies to automate the scheduling and summary of an interview call held with this AExperience magazine writer.

The AI-generated summary was not perfect. While the quality should improve over time, "I encourage everybody to go back and proof that content," she says of AI tools. However, she adds, "I've never seen a set of human notes compare to Fireflies."

Decide What You Really Need to Get Done

If our mantra is to ensure real estate agents who are REALTORS® remain highly valued by buyers and sellers in the transaction, technology is not the start or the finish. But it is the means to associations supporting members and creating a sense of belonging. It can also help associations meet Core Standards and strategic planning goals.

The real estate industry is blessed with high-quality and committed software providers, but they cannot fill every need and cannot always develop new features fast enough. For this reason, the wider business world is a great resource.

The web is full of apps, tools and services eager for you to sign up. They are attractively designed, easy to use and, most importantly, easy to learn. Many use a technique called "gamification," which makes interacting with the app fun by using scores, leaderboards, bright colors and even avatars so you can watch yourself rack up points online. For example, if you're learning a language on Duolingo, then you're deep into gamification. This is not a bad thing, but be aware of your time commitment.

Another caveat for REALTOR® associations is that it can be too easy to get drawn into an attractive new app without fully understanding what you need to accomplish. It becomes a solution in search of a problem.

So, sit down with your staff, consultants and key members to think about what you need to get done. Perhaps your needs fall into categories like these:

- Planning and running events and classes
- Scheduling employees in the office, at events or at state/national meetings
- Communicating with members through email, the website and social media in a way that works best for them to receive your messages
- Carrying out new initiatives called for in your strategic plan
- Doing repairs or upgrades on your office building

Once you understand your needs, you'll have a better idea of the right tools. You will not always get it right the first time. Because so many apps require pay-as-you-go subscriptions, the easiest way out is often just to cancel the subscription and look for something else. However, when you cancel, you will probably want your data that's been stored in the app. Read the Terms & Conditions carefully. They usually say you own the data but not the technology. The easiest way is to export data to an Excel spreadsheet, but some services make that difficult and you must manually cut and paste. This is "vendor lock-in," which is probably legal but definitely frustrating.

Also consider this final, important caution about using apps. The parties ultimately responsible for what your association produces are you and your staff. Remember to endlessly check, double-check, proofread and fact-check everything that you produce and release. This is especially true with AI: As such a young technology, it is fun and efficient but far from perfect. Every AI-generated piece of content that comes across your desk should be reviewed by at least one human before it goes out into the world.

Popular Apps and Other Tools by Category

Following is a list of tech tools and apps that may be a fit for you. All these apps are in use at a REALTOR® association somewhere in the U.S. today. There are many, many more available than those on this list, so take your time to explore and find what's best for you.

Images and Photography

Pixieset: Store photos from your events, classes and meetings in easy and professional online

galleries. Link to photos from your website or create a separate site hosted by Pixieset rather than bog down your database with hundreds or thousands of pictures. Price: \$8 to \$40 per month. pixieset.com

Canva: A fast, easy, fun tool for making all manner of graphics: blog images, social media posts, reels, stories, even flyers, banners and more. Price: Free tier for one person, then annual subscription starting at \$100 per person. canva.com

iStock: Yes, you need stock photos. No, don't pick the cheesy ones. And please: Respect photographers everywhere and avoid copyright claims against your association—do not use images without paying for them. iStock is a photo library with millions of images. Price: Starting at \$29 per month. istockphoto.com

Online Project Management

Gather your team online to track projects, goals, budgets, to-do lists and, yes, even hiccups and challenges in one place. Many choices are available, and these are just a few:

Asana: Pricing from \$10.99 per user per month. asana.com

Monday.com: Pricing from \$9 per user per month. monday.com

Todoist: Great for teams or individuals. Useful free tier or premium pricing from \$4 per user per month. todoist.com

Wrike: Free tier to get started, then pricing starting at \$9.80 per user per month. wrike.com

Airtable: For your IT or accounting staff who are still grieving over Microsoft's elimination of Access. Airtable has the same powerful database tools Access did, with new templates added all the time. Bare-bones layout to get started, so you or your staff will have to roll up your sleeves to make it work. Excellent free tier for individuals and small teams, then premium pricing starting at \$20 per user per month. airtable.com

For Events and Meetings

Teleprompter Pro: Writing your incoming president's debut speech and worried about your nervous fingers smudging the paper it's written on? Use Teleprompter Pro to flash the speech on screen to your speaker in real time. Free tier and premium yearly subscription starting at \$59.99. teleprompterpro.com

Teamup: Planning a huge installation or conference? Need to manage multiple dates, meeting rooms, speakers and logistics? Or

just looking for a way to schedule your team in the office or at the big off-site event you're planning? Teamup integrates with your favorite project management app or works by itself to be sure that time is your friend. Use it for team calendars, room schedules, reservations, event itineraries and more. Limited free tier for small teams, and then pricing starts at \$10 per month. teamup.com

Doodle: Want to schedule a fast meeting but can't bear to juggle the 10 different calendars of your 10 committee members? Use Doodle for a fast way to propose a meeting date, time and location. Free tier with premium benefits starting at \$6.95 per user per month. doodle.com

Video Recording

Here's a pro tip: Record your stuff once, on video, and then turn it into blog posts, emails, social media posts and more. There are many apps that can help.

Fireflies.ai: Transcribe, summarize, search and analyze voice conversations. Free tier, then premium tiers starting at \$10 per month per user. fireflies.ai

Otter.ai: Record audio, write notes, capture action items and generate summaries. Free tier, then premium tiers starting at \$8.33 per month per user. otter.ai

Zencastr: Audio-plus-video platform for high-quality recording, editing and distribution options. Subscription tiers starting at \$18 per month. zencastr.com

Zoom: Use it to record video for podcasts, courses and more. Free tier, then premium tiers starting at \$13.32 per month per user. zoom.us

Creating Content

OpusClip: Quickly make reels and stories by clipping your longer videos into their own vibe. (If you don't understand "reels," "stories" or "vibe" in this sentence, ask your kids or any Gen Z person nearby.) We need to know the new language: Gen Z will be our REALTOR® members soon enough, so get out and slay! Free tier, then pricing starts at \$15 per month. opus.pro

Grammarly: Whether you're using AI-written notes or your own clunky fingers, typos will happen. Use Grammarly to pull out those stubborn typos that everyone in the office will overlook but some key members will notice right away (and you know what happens next). Free tier, then



Who's in Charge of Tech?

THE APPS AND TOOLS LISTED HERE ARE JUST A SAMPLE OF ALL THAT IS AVAILABLE. Depending on your association size, you can work with your staff members to discover and roll out these tools, ask your colleagues, or ask your IT staff or consultant to take the lead. Management of apps and services may also be well suited to a government affairs director, communications director or membership director. Or, if you want to grow that junior staff member whose performance has been impressing you lately, give them the responsibility for this new tech initiative.

If you don't have staff resources, you could hire a part-time consultant. Even 10 to 15 hours per week may be sufficient for your needs. If you work with a member, ensure that member is well experienced in this area of technology and clearly knows the roles and limitations of each person on the team.

premium pricing starting at \$12 per month. grammarly.com ●



David Kissinger, RCE, is the association executive for the Glendale Association of REALTORS® in Los Angeles County, Calif. Previously, he was the director of government affairs for the South Bay Association of REALTORS®, Calif. He has worked for REALTOR® associations since 2006. Earlier in his career, he worked in the public sector, in public relations and as a freelance journalist.

AI Within REACH



If you're feeling like a novice on how to use artificial intelligence, follow the lead of these associations and start with member engagement.

BY KEVIN HAWKINS

If artificial intelligence has existed since 1956, why is it on everyone's lips today, and how is it affecting associations, MLSs and real estate executives?

Today, using AI has become pervasive among America's leading real estate brokerages, with 75% already using the technology and brokerage executives noting that almost 80% of their agents are using AI tools, according to the 2024 Delta Media Real Estate Leadership Survey earlier this year.

Meanwhile, some associations and MLSs have also quickly adopted and deployed AI, while others are still developing their AI strategies.

"AI adoption by associations and MLSs has been slow but steadily increasing, as these organizations recognize the potential of AI technologies to enhance their operations, provide better services and support their members more effectively," says Alex Lange, vice president, strategy and innovation, at the National Association of REALTORS®.

Associations and MLSs already using AI in a big way are realizing that potential, as staff and members report better efficiencies, improved compliance and other benefits.

AI Powerhouses

For Jeremy Crawford, CEO and president of FMLS in Atlanta, AI has become a primary tool he uses to improve his organization and business workflow.

Serving more than 47,000 subscribers, FMLS leverages AI for managing compliance, maintaining internal documentation, improving operational efficiency, enhancing training and education services, improving member satisfaction, refining the

We must work smarter so we can dedicate our time to continuing to support our members. We accomplish that by using every resource.

tools it provides agents to increase productivity, and helping deliver a better client journey, especially with home search.

"AI is crucial in ensuring compliance with listing data standards," Crawford says. "Our goal is to have the most accurate data in the MLS industry,

and these AI-driven tools—such as Restb.ai integrated with CoreLogic's Listing Data Checker—assist in compliance checks through algorithms that verify things like members who are following our rules and regulations, image quality being uploaded for listings, and general accuracy around listing and sold property data."

For example, watermarks and trademarks—such as logoed T-shirts or brands on signs—should not be visible in images. He added, "We have some custom language scanning built up into AI as well, looking for keywords and phrases in remarks fields that are not allowed."

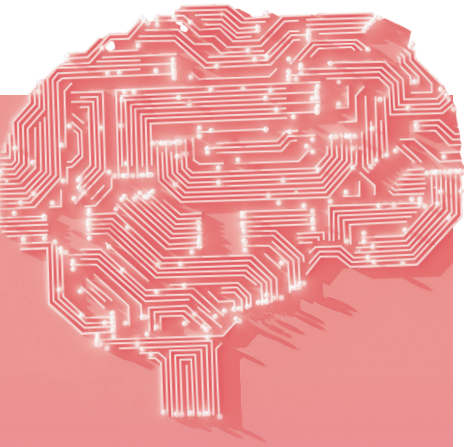
What drives Crawford's penchant as an early AI adopter? Results.

"AI contributes to significant time savings and operational efficiency by automating repetitive tasks and improving the accuracy of data-handling processes," he says. "This allows our team to focus more on strategic initiatives and providing high-quality service to our members."

Crawford's enthusiasm for AI was amplified by personal experience. "Many of us use AI on a personal basis and don't even realize we are using it," he says.

For example, in 2018, Crawford traveled to Spain for the LeadingRE Global Symposium, which was held in Barcelona. A translator on his smartphone saved the day.

"I found out that the menu and the local language in general



What Exactly Is AI?

Most of us are using artificial intelligence anytime we ask Alexa or Siri to help us manage our calendars, when streaming services recommend movies or shows, or when we adjust lighting or room temperature with smart devices.

Think of AI as the “brain” for machines. Just like we humans use our brains to learn, solve problems and make decisions, AI lets computers do similar tasks. Instead of being programmed to follow specific instructions, AI enables machines to learn from experience, adapt to new information and perform tasks that usually require human intelligence.

Importantly, AI is a human creation designed to enhance our abilities and make our lives easier.

was not Spanish but instead Catalan,” he says, and the translator “greatly changed my experience in traveling in the Catalan regions of Spain.”

Miami Association of REALTORS® is one major association embracing AI throughout its organization. As the largest local board in the U.S., with 60,000 members, Miami uses AI to offer personalized training, automate administrative tasks, streamline market analysis and enhance services.

For example, “our AI-enabled phone system allows us to quickly respond to our members and includes texting capabilities, ensuring exceptional member service,” says Connie Nieto, vice president of technology services.

“AI also allows us to continuously review and improve our customer service levels with our Miami professionals. Our selection of AI products and classes inspires our members to achieve optimal performance,” she adds.

Lisa Marshall, CEO of the Central Wisconsin Board of REALTORS®, sees multiple applications for AI. For example, a recently deployed AI-powered compliance tool is helping her organization audit photos within its MLS. “This will not only help us improve our compliance but ensure that fair housing guidelines are not being missed,” Marshall says.

She also points out that the savings AI offers are significant. “As a medium-sized MLS and board, it can be taxing on staff to check every photo, especially when a listing has 60 photos,” she says. “We are beyond ready for a tool that will [free up] hours of work.”

That’s a key benefit. “AI is a necessary tool that all

associations have to welcome because the days of manual work have to evolve,” she says. “We must work smarter so we can dedicate our time to continuing to support our members. We accomplish that by using every resource.”

She sees AI helping in other ways, including assisting Central Wisconsin in reimagining new member onboarding, continuing education and compliance. “AI will enrich not only our community but all associations,” she says.

AI can also help associations put together effective messaging for advocacy work. For example, Elizabeth Edwards Martin, government affairs director at the Greater Greenville Association of REALTORS®, is an avid user of Realtors Property Resource® market trends reports and housing data to craft informational pieces for elected officials.

Now, with RPR’s AI Script-Writer, she can turn that data into informational video content, another way to connect with and educate legislators, as the RPR reports contain “really great information for us to share with elected officials for buy-in and a seat at the table.”

As associations and MLSs continue to adopt new AI tools, Florida Realtors®, the largest state association in the U.S., is helping to bolster AI use through education. AI topics have been a cornerstone of its member educational efforts through its Tech Helpline (techhelpline.com). The association’s Tech Helpline analysts can assist clients by answering AI questions and troubleshooting AI-related tech problems, among other issues.

Tech Helpline has been an early and prolific producer of

practical AI posts for agents and brokers on its searchable blog site (techhelpline.com/category/artificial-intelligence-ai/). Clients—17 state and 65 local associations and organizations—can repost all Tech Helpline content, helping association members nationwide learn more about this quickly evolving topic.

Hacking Member Engagement

AI efforts at associations are “focused mostly on member engagement,” says NAR’s Lange, and they include chatbots and virtual assistants to provide instant responses to common queries, streamline customer service and support members 24/7. They’re also using AI to analyze member behavior, preferences and feedback to improve engagement strategies and retention rates, as well as for content creation to provide more personalized content for members, such as news, articles, market reports, and educational resources based on their specific interests and needs.

“AI chatbots and virtual assistants are changing the game for member engagement, offering quick responses and support anytime,” Lange says. “It’s helping associations improve how they interact with members and streamline their processes.”

As associations continue to explore AI, Lange notes they will discover “personalization opportunities and the ability to predict member needs. This means they can offer more tailored services and keep members more engaged.”

Being member-focused has been the key to successful AI rollouts for associations.



C2EX: A WIN-WIN FOR REALTORS®

Help your members boost their professional profile by earning their C2EX Endorsement, not only fulfilling NAR's Code of Ethics requirements but also:

- Enhances credibility as trusted industry experts
- Keeps members informed on the latest regulations
- Provides real-life scenarios for skill sharpening



ENCOURAGE YOUR MEMBERS TO DOWNLOAD THE C2EX APP:

Learn more at nar.realtor/c2ex



C2EX REALTORS®
COMMITMENT TO EXCELLENCE

REALTORS® are members of the National Association of REALTORS®. C2EX does not fulfill New Member Code of Ethics requirement.



AI Is Not New

Understanding the unprecedented ascent of artificial intelligence in real estate begins with its origin. AI isn't new: It has been a part of human imagination and scientific venture for over a century.

In popular culture, the word "robot" was introduced in the 1920 science fiction play *R.U.R. (Rossum's Universal Robots)* by Karel Čapek. The play depicts a world where humanlike mechanical workers rebel against their creators. The 1927 silent film *Metropolis* features a humanoid robot and explores the relationship between man and machine.

The term "artificial intelligence" was coined in 1956 at a Dartmouth conference, marking the formal beginning of AI in America's lexicon. Early AI pioneers such as Alan Turing and John McCarthy envisioned machines that could mimic human thought processes.

Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, AI research saw significant advancements, primarily in problem-solving and symbolic reasoning. The 1980s introduced the era of expert systems, which used AI to mimic the decision-making abilities of human experts. However, these systems were severely limited by the computational power and data availability of the time.

The 1990s and early 2000s witnessed a remarkable shift toward machine learning, where algorithms could improve their performance over time with exposure to more data. Data is the fuel that AI depends upon for its creation and iteration.

The 2000s also saw the rise of neural networks and the initial successes in natural language processing and image recognition, driven by massive increases in computational power, a substantial increase in accessible data driven by the growth of the internet, and a collapse in the costs to develop AI.

Another example is the Houston Association of REALTORS®, which serves 49,000 members.

HAR Chief Technology Officer Taqi Rizvi says that the association is integrating AI across its platform to support listing agents in writing property descriptions, tagging photos and creating audio narrations about properties.

"AI also empowers HAR members with tools to create their agent profile, respond to leads and manage marketing efforts," Rizvi says. "This integration is designed to enhance the consumer search experience on har.com as well as streamline agents' workflows."

Guardrails and Skepticism

However, using proven AI tools is crucial for association executives, says FMLS' Crawford.

"As we expand our AI capabilities, we prioritize implementing robust AI guardrails," he says. By doing so, MLSs can mitigate risks, build trust and responsibly maximize the benefits of AI technologies. This proactive approach protects stakeholders and ensures sustainable and ethical AI deployment in real estate operations.

Crawford notes that guardrails must address data security, maintain compliance with privacy regulations, and continuously monitor AI systems for potential risks or biases. "Implementing AI guardrails is crucial for any organization as they adopt AI technologies into their operations," he says. (See "Crafting an AI Use Policy," page 24.)

The MLS rule is another challenge associations might

AI is the new frontier, and associations should embrace it.

face with AI, says Ruben Gonzales, CEO of Imperial County Association of REALTORS®, El Centro, Calif. "[It] states that the photos in the MLS must be a 'true standard' of the actual property. This could be challenging at times ... when adding or altering images to portray a more enticing view to the public."

Leading AI experts also recommend healthy skepticism when evaluating any AI-related tool, and several association and MLS executives say this is one area where they take their time to get AI right for their organizations.

At the same time, adds NAR's Lange, we can't forget that AI can also be used to protect associations. For example, in areas such as fraud prevention, AI can "detect unusual patterns or activities in MLS data, helping to identify and prevent fraudulent listings, transactions and other threats."

What's Next for Associations and AI

Looking to the future, Central Wisconsin's Marshall sees the growing importance of AI, particularly in helping to navigate changing practices in residential real estate. "Working with AI will be a must in our space," she says, adding, "Enforcement of the settlement sits right on our shoulders, and we need the best technology to do it."

FMLS' Crawford offers this take: "AI is poised to continue transforming our MLS operations by automating tasks, improving data accuracy, enhancing training programs and ultimately delivering greater value to our members."

Miami's Nieto says, "AI is the new frontier, and associations should embrace it."

She points to many ways associations can leverage AI to "support their members in an impactful way," including personalized training and tailored learning paths, market analysis and insight, administrative efficiency, enhanced member service, fraud detection, security and risk analysis.

"By integrating these AI capabilities, AEs can enhance the value they provide their members, driving better outcomes in education, efficiency, member service and market performance," she says. "That makes it an association and member win." ●



Kevin Hawkins is co-creator and editor of real estate's first AI newsletter—REAL AI—and one of the industry's most prolific content creators, working with leading real estate tech firms, associations, MLS industry firms, the top-producing real estate agent in the U.S. and others.



ALL YOUR TOOLS, ONE SEAMLESS EXPERIENCE



Live and Actionable Stats Dashboard



Dedicated MLS Support Line



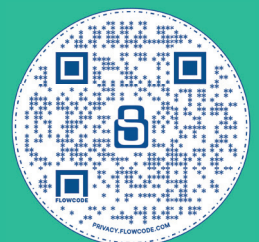
Unified Platform for Lockbox & Showing Service



Reduced Staff Time on Lockbox Issues

SEE WHY 400+ ASSOCIATIONS MADE THE SWAP
BOOK YOUR DEMO AT SENTRILOCK.COM

DOWNLOAD OUR LATEST PRODUCT GUIDE

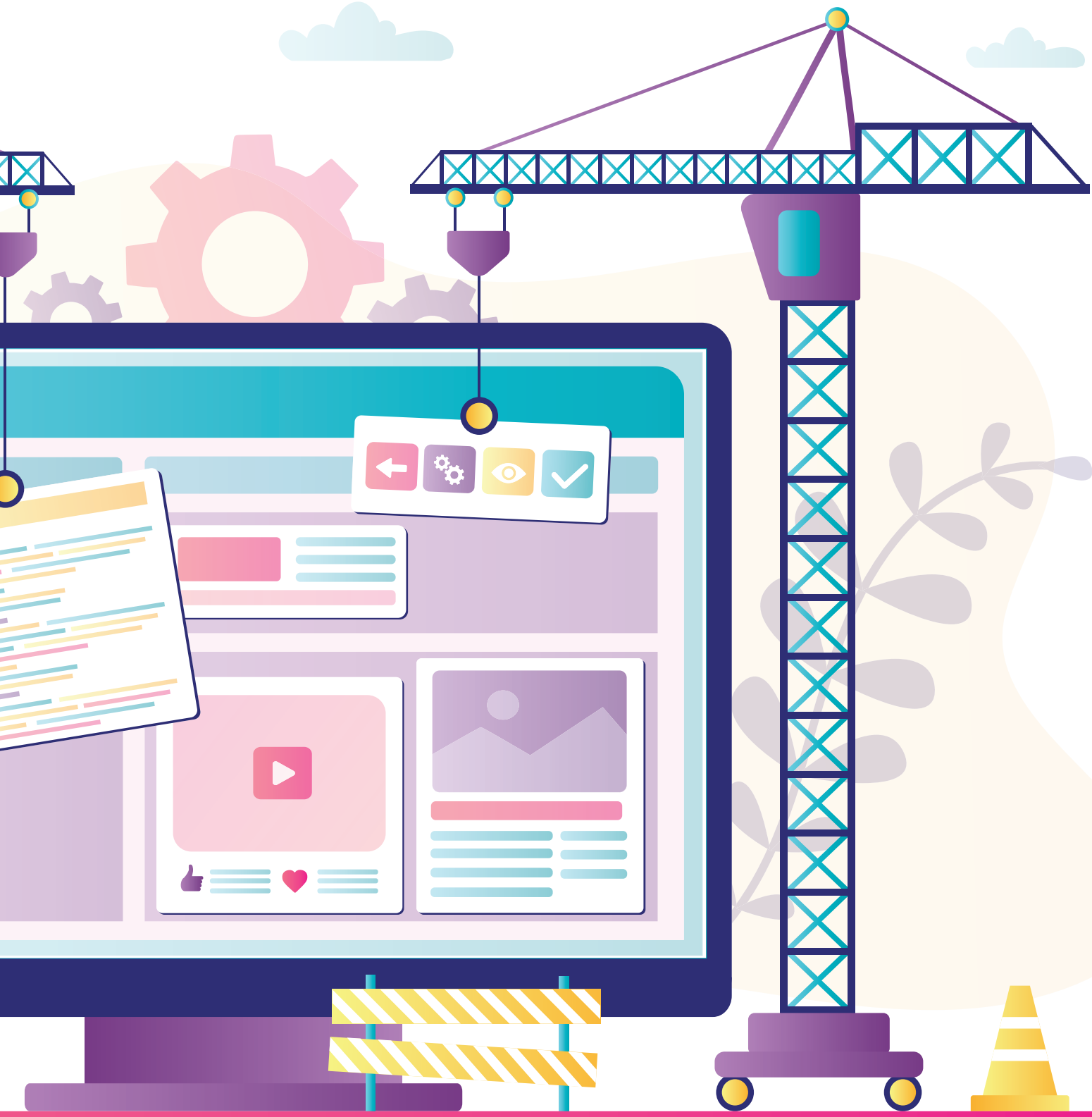




WEB ESSENTIALS

Creating an effective and relevant association website starts with mastering the basics.

BY HEATHER WIEDRICH



Real estate association websites are vital resources that, when done well, offer an abundance of information and tools useful to both members and the public. Association websites typically feature a range of services, including access to market data, educational materials, networking opportunities and much more.

Association websites also play a crucial role in promoting best practices and ethical standards within the real estate community and with the consumer. REALTOR® associations are required to feature a consumer-facing link to the Code of Ethics and procedures on their websites as part of Core Standards. This emphasis on ethics helps build trust between real estate professionals and their clients, ultimately benefiting the entire industry.

Your association's site should feature a user-friendly interface with easy navigation, allowing visitors to find information quickly.

Creating an effective website for your association requires careful consideration of various essential components to ensure it serves its members and the public effectively. Your association's site should feature a user-friendly interface with easy navigation, allowing visitors to find information quickly. A prominent homepage should highlight key

services, upcoming events and news updates relevant to the association.

Website Organization

Dashboard: A dashboard for members on the website homepage ensures they have quick links to all their resources. This dashboard should be a one-stop shop that will drive the members to use the website daily. Here are the types of links to place on the dashboard:

- Business partners
- State licensure
- Multiple Listing Service
- Electronic key/lockbox service
- Realtors Property Resource®
- Showing services company
- National Association of REALTORS®
- State REALTOR® association
- Association social media accounts
- NAR's institutes, societies and councils
- Economic development corporations
- The REALTOR® Party
- Sign-up for email lists
- How to join the association
- How to make payments to the association
- Forms

Menu Bar: Having a menu bar with subcategory drop-downs on the homepage of the website is a must. Here is an example of a simple menu bar and what could be placed under each title:

- **About Us**
 - The association mission and history
 - Contact us
 - Staff directory
 - Board of directors
 - List of past presidents

- **Membership**
 - Member portal to pay invoices, join and communicate
 - Membership benefits at the local, state and national levels

- **Calendar**
 - Upcoming events and meetings
- **Education**
 - Live, virtual and home study continuing education
 - Designation and certification courses
 - Pre-license courses
 - CE look-up and renewal information
 - MLS training
- **Committees**
 - Current committees and members
 - Committee sign-up forms
- **Advocacy**
 - Major investors in the REALTORS® Political Action Committee
 - Information on investing in RPAC
 - REALTOR® Party
 - Community outreach
 - Advocacy resources
- **Resources**
 - Member forms
 - Electronic lockbox service
 - Marketing resources
 - Logos and trademarks
 - REALTOR® Safety Program
 - Association apps
 - Diversity, equity and inclusion
- **Professional Standards (as required under Core Standards)**
 - Code of Ethics resources (from NAR and the state association if available)
 - Other professional standards resources (from NAR and the state association if available)
- **News and Updates**
 - Market trends
 - Legislative updates
 - Association news
 - Consumer corner

A Closer Look

One of the primary functions of an association website is to provide members with up-to-date information about industry trends, legislative changes and market conditions. This is essential for real estate agents and brokers who need to stay informed to better serve their clients. Many association websites include sections dedicated to news and updates, where members can find articles, reports and insights from industry experts.

The member portal is a login-required section of your website where members can access exclusive resources, manage their profiles and connect with one another. This portal could also facilitate the payment of dues and registration for events.

Such resources are designed to help members enhance their skills and knowledge, ensuring they remain competitive in a constantly evolving market. Furthermore, many associations offer networking opportunities through online forums, events and conferences, allowing members to connect with peers and share experiences.

Finally, association websites frequently feature tools and resources for consumers. Integrating a search function for property listings, along with detailed profiles of real estate professionals, can significantly enhance the user experience. Including contact information, social media links, and a blog for sharing success stories and tips can further engage visitors and establish the association as a trusted authority in the real estate industry. Many associations also feature guides for home buying/selling and information on local market conditions.

By providing valuable resources to the public, your website can help educate consumers and empower them to make informed decisions in their real estate transactions, allowing you to effectively serve the community and promote the association's mission.

Keep It Current

Regular updates and reviews of your website are crucial for maintaining relevance and user engagement. Ideally, you should evaluate your site at least quarterly to ensure that content is current, accurate and reflective of the organization's goals. This includes updating event calendars, news articles and resource links. Do a comprehensive review annually to assess the overall design, functionality and user experience, allowing for necessary adjustments to enhance accessibility and navigation. By keeping the website fresh and informative, you'll be better serving your members, and you'll be more likely to attract new visitors.

In summary, real estate association websites are essential platforms that support industry professionals through education, networking, ethical guidance and so much more. They not only serve the needs of their members but also play a significant role in informing and assisting consumers in the real estate market. As the industry continues to evolve, your website should adapt to meet the changing needs of both real estate professionals and the public. ●



Heather Wiedrich, RCE, C2EX, is the association executive at HomeTown Association of REALTORS® in Illinois.



Ready to Build?

Websites for associations can cost as little as \$300 a year if you build on your own. (They can also cost thousands of dollars, depending on the complexity of the website and the web builder or agency you hire.)

Take a look at these website builders used by many people and organizations in 2024. Some offer artificial intelligence to help you, but you can always build your own website, too. Many offer free trials so you can see how they work. Simply type in a few prompts, such as, "I need a website for my member association, with sections on member benefits, a payment portal, news and updates, and an About Us page," and let AI get to work.

- **CodeDesign**, codedesign.ai
- **Mixo**, mixo.io
- **10Web**, 10web.io
- **CreateWebsite.io**, createwebsite.io
- **Elementor**, elementor.com



Crafting an AI Use Policy

It can help manage both the benefits and risks of this innovative technology. **BY CHLOE HECHT AND DEANNE RYMAROWICZ**



The use of generative artificial intelligence platforms can increase productivity and foster creativity. At the click of a button, AI can quickly produce content—blog posts, video scripts, articles, social media posts, images and much more—in response to user prompts, after scanning its database of millions of pieces of content.

At the same time, using AI tools can pose risks to an association and its members:

- Content created solely by AI is generally not copyrightable, which means that you may not be able to prohibit others from using it.
- AI output may infringe a copyright owner’s exclusive rights if portions of that owner’s copyrighted work are included in the output.
- Flaws within the AI’s algorithm or training data mean AI output is not always accurate and may include biased results. Failure to review the AI’s output for accuracy can lead to embarrassment and even legal liability, such as for deceptive or misleading advertising content.
- Information the user provides is used to train the AI and might be incorporated into output for others, leading to potential security breaches.

For these reasons and more, an association must put guidelines in place to ensure employees use AI tools responsibly. Creating a policy will help mitigate the legal and reputational risks AI presents. Consider these five issues when creating an AI use policy.

Acceptable uses. An AI use policy should clearly explain the risks of using AI tools. Include a list of both permitted

and prohibited uses and require any other uses to be authorized in advance and in writing. Clearly state which platforms and tools employees are allowed to use. Be sure to train staff on those platforms and tools and provide best practices.

Review and disclosure. Require employees to do a thorough review of all output for accuracy—and to confirm the output does not contain biased, offensive or discriminatory content or disclose personal or confidential information. Consider requiring employees to disclose when they use AI and to document their use of AI tools for work purposes.

Data privacy. Data privacy should be a focus for any AI policy. The policy should prohibit employees from entering any association, member or vendor confidential information, trade secret or personal information. Limit employee access to sensitive information and require explicit permission to enter any association data into AI tools. Some AI platforms allow users to opt out of having their input data included as training materials for the AI platform. Consider restricting employees’ use of AI platforms only to those that offer this opt-out.

Consequences for misuse. Provide a mechanism for reporting any suspected violations of the AI use policy. Clearly state disciplinary actions, up to and including termination, that employees may face if they violate the policy or misuse AI tools.

Legal requirements. Work with legal counsel to ensure the policy: (1) adequately protects the association; (2) aligns with other association procedures and policies, such as anti-harassment or information security policies; (3) aligns with confidentiality agreements; and (4) complies with any state or local requirements, such as data privacy laws. Finally, track legal and regulatory developments and adjust the AI usage policy as needed.

Once finalized, create awareness of the AI policy. Train staff on the policy requirements and ensure a clear understanding of why compliance with the policy is critical to protecting the association’s interests.

Implementing an AI policy will help the association avoid reputational and legal issues. Even more importantly, providing staff with clear guidance and training on how to properly incorporate AI tools will allow employees to responsibly use these cutting-edge tools to enhance their work on behalf of the association’s mission. ●



Chloe Hecht is senior counsel, legal affairs, at the National Association of REALTORS®.



Deanne Rymarowicz is senior counsel, legal affairs, at the National Association of REALTORS®.



The Right Course

NAR's Governance team tackles your questions on ethics and fair housing training. **BY DANIEL DOEPKE**



With the deadline for the current Code of Ethics cycle on Dec. 31 and the new fair housing/anti-bias training requirement launching on Jan. 1, the National Association of REALTORS® has staff experts and resources to help. Here, we tackle your questions about how to properly vet and use third-party course providers.

Some of our members have been taking Code of Ethics courses from course providers I'm not familiar with. Do we have to accept these courses for credit?

Prior to the current Code of Ethics cycle, the NAR Leadership Team made a change to the requirements to state that only those courses and equivalencies provided by a local, state or national REALTOR® association (or their partnered providers) can satisfy the Code of Ethics training requirement. This was meant to ease the burden on associations that had previously spent an inordinate amount of time reviewing courses given by third-party providers. It can be assumed that any equivalent Code of Ethics course provided by another state or local association has been vetted and reviewed by that association, so those courses should be given credit at any REALTOR® association without the need for further review.

Associations are under no obligation to accept Code of Ethics equivalency courses from third-party providers unless those providers have previously set up a partnership with a state or local association to provide the course to their members. A best practice for third-party providers would be to include this information on their completion certificates for ease of processing. If proof of that partnership isn't readily apparent, associations may ask the student to contact the course provider to provide verification of its partnership with a state or local REALTOR® association before accepting the course for credit.

Keep in mind that associations may still review and accept courses from third-party providers who have otherwise not partnered with any other associations, if they choose to. There is just no obligation to do so. An association that would like to review and approve courses on a case-by-case basis may want to consider its affirmative review of a qualifying course as a "partnership" with that course provider, which would allow other associations the ability to accept the course in the future without any additional review.


If reviewing equivalent courses, you will want to make sure a course meets the 2.5-hour minimum and the required learning objectives found at

nar.realtor/code-of-ethics-training-requirements-existing-members.

Do these guidelines also apply to the upcoming two-hour fair housing/anti-bias training requirement for REALTOR® members?

Yes. The guidelines for fair housing/anti-bias training equivalency courses are modeled after the guidelines for Code of Ethics equivalent courses. Only those courses and equivalencies provided by a local, state or national REALTOR® association—or their partnered providers—can satisfy the fair housing/anti-bias training requirement. The one difference is that courses given by state licensing authorities to satisfy an existing fair housing requirement for state licensing purposes can also be used as equivalent courses, but a state or local association will still need to review those courses to ensure they meet the two-hour minimum and required learning objectives.

For more information, contact narpolicyquestions@nar.realtor. ●

 nar.realtor/fair-housing-requirement



Daniel Doepke is director of member

policy at the National Association of REALTORS®.



Civil Minded

Civility is the key to locking the door on bullying and harassment.

BY CAROLE KAPTUR



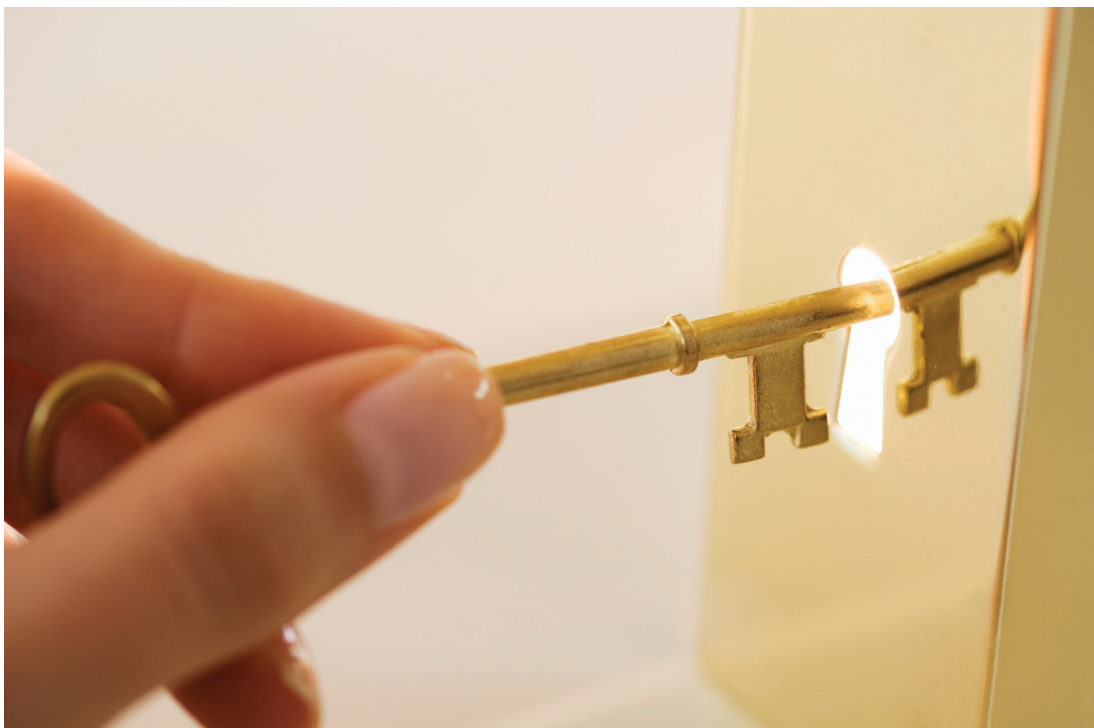
While we talk a lot about workplace bullying and discrimination-based hostile environments, the idea of civility doesn't often seem to enter these conversations. Yet incivility is really at the core of problems that lead

more than 171 million acts of incivility a day. That's an estimated 62.8 billion acts of incivility in a year, with approximately 24.7 billion of those happening in the workplace. It's a whole lot of incivility, wouldn't you agree? And many of you likely have experienced uncivil behaviors firsthand.

Civility Here and Now

So, what do we think of when we hear the word "civility"? Is it something we associate with behaviors from a time long ago? For example, do we envision people greeting each other by saying, "Good day; how do you do, Mr. Smith?" accompanied by a slight bow? Such behavior would come across very strangely in today's environment!

Most commonly, people think of civility as being kind and polite—for example, letting someone in ahead of you in traffic. But civility is more than that. It's about conducting ourselves in a respectful manner, expressing empathy, having conversations that allow the other person to speak their thoughts—without interruption or argument—and asking questions for understanding before arriving at a judgment. Civility is making others feel comfortable expressing their best or



to bullying and discriminatory behaviors, which are prone to escalating. "Workplace incivility is a gateway drug to workplace harassment," says Society for Human Resource Management CEO Johnny Taylor.

SHRM estimates that U.S. workers encounter

worst ideas and providing a safe and empathetic environment where they know they're heard and valued. It's more than just saying good morning or please and thank you, although that's important. It's treating each other with respect, regardless of what is going on around us and regardless of whether we like or agree with the other person.

The Rise of Incivility

What are some situations that give rise to incivility? Typically, it's when egos conflict, when opinions are misunderstood or disagreed with, when someone has had a bad day or just likes to push others around. Conflict is prevalent in our world today, and we can't get away from it. This causes people to have anxiety, and anxiety gives rise to shortened fuses, misunderstandings and poor communication.

We are surrounded by "reality" television shows that make it acceptable to be mean and rude, to say whatever is on our mind, or to berate others because we find some fault in them. Our fellow humans feel entitled to express harsh opinions on social media behind a veil of anonymity. We have become numb to watching celebrities judge

aspiring talents and tear them down, sometimes even to the point of tears, in front of millions of people. Humiliation and rudeness are normalized through this so-called "entertainment."

Becoming a Civil Workplace

We know that we can't fix the world, and we can't fix others regardless of how much we would like to. We can only fix ourselves. As Mahatma Gandhi wisely said, "Be the change you want to see in the world." This is how civility returns to the workplace.

Change happens one person at a time. When someone is uncivil to us, we should respond with decorum and calm defense of our personal boundaries. When others witness our negative interaction with someone else, we want them to walk away saying that we handled the situation well. It's not fun to think we've done something that gives rise to gossip about our poor behavior.

Civil behavior means accepting that not everyone has the skill to behave appropriately in polite society and acting with good manners anyway. However, it's important to point out that being civil doesn't mean we have



For more, check out "A Storm is Coming for HR"

to bow down to someone else's opinion or their way of thinking. It simply means showing that person regard as a fellow human being, actively listening to their point of view, and responding with questions or empathy, no matter how much we dislike what the other person has done or said.

This polite discourse leads to psychological safety and builds trust. We can appreciate others in a more positive manner, and that, in turn, reinforces our own well-being. Civility also means we understand that everyone—ourselves included—makes mistakes. We have empathy and understanding for our human fragility.

Your Role as an AE

As the chief staff executive at an association, much is expected of you. What are some actionable approaches you can take to improve civility in the workplace? You can think before speaking—in other words, hold the reaction "sauce." You can consider what is fact versus what is opinion. You can set your ego aside for the greater good. And you can disagree with others in a respectful manner that involves active listening and empathy.

How do you do all this? Maybe it means relearn-

ing some behaviors, using phrases such as "help me understand" or "tell me more about that." Even when we disagree wholeheartedly, we can respond with words such as "That's an interesting point of view. I'm not sure I agree, but you've given me much to think about." Or we can say, "I'm not sure I agree, but I respect your point of view."

Approaching disagreeable conversations and uncivil behaviors with civility puts you in the position of role model. As the saying goes, you can't be a leader if no one wants to follow you. And seeing how you respond to incivility helps your staff understand how to respond in similar situations.

There's nothing wrong with being prescriptive when it helps build the kind of environment and culture we want.

Always remember: The best response to incivility is civility. As you heighten your awareness of civility, it will help you be your best. And that's someone whom others want to follow. ●

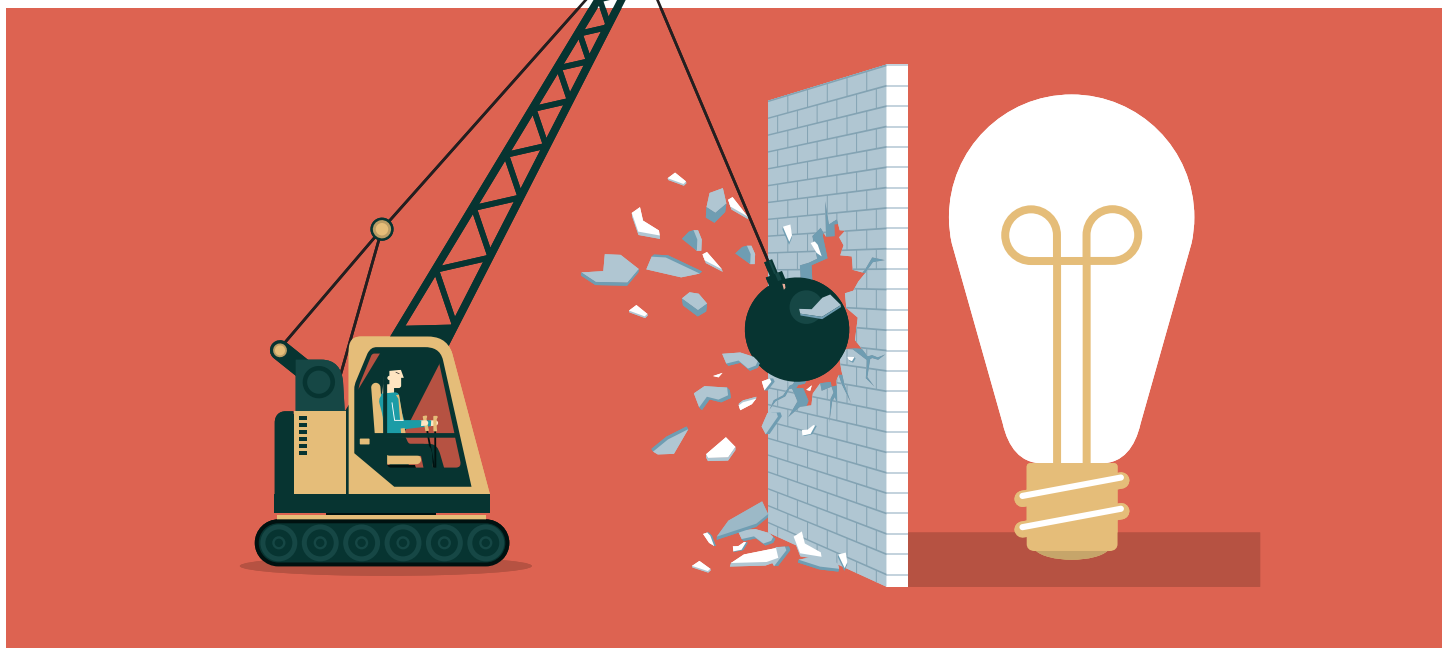


Carole Kaptur, SHRM-SCP, RCE, is

director of human resources outreach for the National Association of REALTORS®.



MIND OF THE MEMBER



If It Ain't Broke (Yet), Break It

Sometimes innovation means breaking the box. **BY BOB TAYLOR**



es, I know, it's poor English, and it flies in the face of those who prefer status quo, calm or same old, same old.

From a business perspective, innovation is critical because change is inevitable, requiring leaders to adapt, transform, alter and reorder. Change is seldom pleasantly embraced by anyone other than the innovator. But when the change is for the right reasons, accepting it becomes far easier. (By the way, making money—or saving it—is not a reason, it is a result.)

Let's consider a recent innovation here at Grosse Pointe Board of REALTORS® that we call the “five-week work block.” The need for this innovation was born out of three challenges:

- 1. Lack of new faces and ideas in association governance:** Standing commitments—office meetings, external meetings such as Rotary, or family obligations—were precluding some members from participating in association leadership, and monthly meetings were too much for some of those who were volunteering with us.
- 2. Sluggish response time in an era of rapid change:** The duration from idea to a decision by the board of directors was as long as two months, but speeding up the process required fewer people, creating the appearance of an oligarchy.

- 3. Overwhelmed staff:** There was too little time for necessary due diligence, and schedules were more about meetings versus actual work to provide exceptional member service.

Of the three issues, meeting frequency was involved in all three, but only response time was visible to the members, which is why we started there with a goal of: *“A nimble decision-making process that did not compromise transparency.”*

To expedite decision-making, we started first by classifying our committees to better understand the recommendations they might make and who might need to sign off prior to submitting to the board of directors:

- Semi-independent decision-makers (Chapters and Affiliate Committee)
- Association governance (Bylaws, Strategic Planning,

Budget & Finance, Education, Professional Standards, Young Professionals Network Advisory Group)

- Hyper-local governance (RPAC/Governmental Affairs; Fair Housing; Diversity, Equity & Inclusion; Community Outreach)
- Final decision making (Board of Directors)

We then began to schedule committee meetings according to a cadence that would allow time for due diligence by staff, committees and outside stakeholders; the involvement of other committees or internal groups; estimated time to get a recommendation to the board of directors; and weekly touchpoints for governance and daily association operations. What emerged was a five-week work block, something we had never seen or considered before.

- Week 1 – Regents (chapters), Affiliate Committee
- Week 2 – Education, Strategic Planning, Bylaws
- Week 3 – RPAC/Governmental Affairs; Fair Housing; Diversity, Equity & Inclusion; Community Outreach; YPN
- Week 4 – Budget & Finance
- Week 5 – Executive Committee, Board of Directors
- Professional Standards meets as needed.

Using this cadence, we reduced the time for ideas to make their way to the board to a maximum of 31 days, increased the time available to complete essential work

and provide due diligence, and ensured fewer decisions required special meetings or “asking for forgiveness.” The number of meetings for volunteers fell by at least 17%, and only twice in a year are meetings booked on the same day, both of which help prevent conflict with other commitments.

Because there are 52 weeks in a year and the five-week concept uses 50 of them, blocks also eliminate meetings during the year-end holidays, allowing the next year to start with a new five-week cycle versus a carryover from the previous year.

We started the five-week block system in 2022. Since then, new faces are populating our committees, and the staff is less stressed. Most importantly, membership sees us as nimble and responsive versus stodgy and slow.

Don’t kick the can down the road until crisis forces change. As systems and “old ways” become dated, be willing to break them. ●



Bob Taylor, RCE, is CEO of the Grosse Pointe Board of REALTORS® in Michigan.



Consider This

As you contemplate innovation:

- 1 Do you accept the fact that everything changes?
- 2 Is the innovation self-serving or member-serving?
- 3 Can you make sure to start with an appropriate why?
- 4 To get to that why, should you innovate on top of an existing process, or should you start from scratch?



Data is Our Passion



Continuous Product Enhancements



35 Years Perfecting Our Property Data Platform



Seamless Integration With Your MLS System



Innovative Customization Options



Comparables Include MLS and Off Market Sales



Extensive Mapping Layers and Features



Elevate Your Property Intelligence

CRS Data’s MLS Tax Suite delivers the most comprehensive property data in an intuitive platform.

Scan Here to Start a Conversation!



November 8-10 | NAR NXT, The REALTOR® Experience 2024 | Booth 831

CRSDATA.COM



Bringing Data to Life

Arizona Regional MLS CEO Matt Consalvo

As CEO of one of the nation's largest MLSs—Arizona Regional MLS—and founding member of the collaboration MLS Aligned, a six-MLS partnership, Matt Consalvo, RCE, knows a thing or two about thinking outside the box. He talks with AExperience about the role of the MLS following the practice changes—and about the power of creative thinking.

How are you articulating the value of the MLS to subscribers and consumers going forward?

The great MLSs will focus on all their layers of data that tell stories about homes and neighborhoods. They will also reinforce to subscribers how best to connect with consumers and meet their needs by giving them a clear picture of the market. That transparency and requirement for accuracy benefits consumers, meeting their needs and expectations.

Member engagement and satisfaction is always top of mind for association executives. How do you track

that for your MLS, and what can AEs learn from the data?

While we track the logins and activities, more importantly, we ask. We capture engagement data via surveys, focus groups, standing task forces and committees, ad hoc events and more. We listen for the voice of the customer in all the activities we do.

What functions of the MLS do subscribers love?

We purchased a public records data company, and the data that flows into the MLS from that company is amazing. Additionally, we placed a statistical tool into the equation, and now the layers of data come to life.

How else do you ensure your service stays "cutting edge"?

We believe strongly that outside perspectives help ARMLS frame the future. That's why we invite industry leaders from outside Arizona to join our board of directors. Additionally, we listen a lot and ask a lot of questions—both of our users and of folks within the sphere of real estate.

Can you talk about the value of partnerships?

I absolutely believe that MLSs are stronger together. This does not have to be a single ownership model, but it does mean that MLSs need to work



We listen for the voice of the customer in all the activities we do.

in partnership to benefit all the users of MLS content. This partnership is critical to the future of ARMLS in projects such as Markt, a multi-MLS service organization, or MLS Aligned, but also in respect to robust data-sharing within the state of Arizona so that all MLSs are stronger.

As an entrepreneur, you're known for thinking outside the box. How can AEs develop an entrepreneurial mindset?

Become a lifelong learner and read current books with respect to entrepreneurship and visioning. Hire a great planning facilitator who understands how Core Standards are the foundation of the association, but also that a long-term vision sets the association's future. You can then introduce that mindset into both your long-term planning sessions and events and your daily decision-making. ●

GOOD NEWS!

REALTORS® ARE GOOD NEIGHBORS



Hundreds of REALTORS® and associations have been featured on **REALTORS® Are Good Neighbors social media channels**. Highlight your members who uplift the community through volunteer work.

Benefits for your association:

- Increases member engagement.
- Inspires members to get more involved.
- Attracts positive media attention to your association.
- Captivates social media scrollers through compelling stories.

Share your members' stories today!

nar.realtor/rgn



Follow us at   @RealtorsAreGoodNeighbors #RealtorsAreGoodNeighbors

REALTORS® are members of the National Association of REALTORS®.

The All-In-One People-First, High-Performing, Pocket-Sized, Ultimate Real Estate Platform.

Whether you're an agent, brokerage or admin, **Supra One** is the ultimate real estate platform.

Find out how you can **Be The One** at www.suprasystems.com/one

