



Focus on the Future

Guest Predictions: Steve Haraczak

Guest Predictions is a regular feature in which we ask leaders in a number of professions questions that affect us all.

More than 35 years of leadership in national associations, including Executive Management; Board and Committee Liaison; Planning; Recruitment and Retention; Marketing and Public Relations.

Recently served for 10 years as Executive Director to the Society for Vascular Ultrasound, a national professional organization.

Previously with the American Ambulance Association, the National Association of Medical Equipment Services (now the American Association for Homecare); the Association of Trial Lawyers of America; and the American Gas Association.

A graduate of Duquesne University, and a long-term member of the American Society of Association Executives. Steve is an usher at Vienna Presbyterian Church, and the U.S. Park Services' Wolf Trap Park for the Performing Arts. Also a volunteer at the Shepherd's Center for senior citizens.

Steve and his wife Nancy have been married for 33 years and have three daughters, one granddaughter and two cats.

Q: What do you see as the key emerging uses of the internet for the National Association Leadership?

A: Being able to reach all of the members of an association 24/7 with important information about what their association is doing for them as members, plus providing timely information via both in-person courses as well as online education such as webinars. Key information also should be available online aimed at potential members in order to get them or their business to join the association.

Q: What surprising applications of the Internet have you found in National Association Leadership?

A: Some of the best applications of the Internet include detailed and timely websites, online newsletters on at least a monthly basis, bulletin boards, blogs, and online educational webinars.

Q: What have been the "Best Uses" of the Internet for you in National Association Leadership?

A: One of the "Best Uses" of the Internet is to provide timely, focused and low-cost information via members' only web pages. In today's competitive business environment, many people do not

have the time or inclination to leave their business to travel to meetings for an education, with significant meeting registration fees, travel, hotel and food costs. A 1-2 hour online webinar can be offered to members at very reasonable costs as a benefit of membership. They can participate from their office or home, either when the webinar is held or later, when they can access an archive version.

Q: What should be avoided when dealing with the Internet in National Association Leadership?

A: With providing too much free information on the Internet, association members may not see the value of paying for membership and may elect not to renew their membership in order to save money. It is important for associations to continue to provide specific membership benefits that are not on the Internet.

Q: Which next steps might you recommend for all of us to take in National Association Leadership?

A: It is critical to have staff that can use the latest technology in reaching the members via the Internet, but the association leadership must not lose the special importance of face to face communication with its members annually at a national conference.