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D+I Innovation Talks Findings

September 19–23, 2011

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About this Report

ASAE's work to help associations and association professionals transform society through the power of collaboration requires authentic connection and engagement with various market segments. Understanding the diversity of the groups and individuals that make up our global community is an essential element of this work.

The information below is a summary of key data points and shared understanding gleaned from seven diversity-related conversations that took place in fall during ASAE's week-long series of InnovationTalks, five-day global campaign to stimulate conversations about—and commitments to—innovation in the association community. This report outlines what 43 participants want association professionals like you to know and what they think you should consider when engaging their segment as members, staff, board members, donors, and volunteers in your own organization.

Contents herein are based on the observations and knowledge from ASAE members that self-identify with one or more market segment or have experience reaching and serving a particular population. The observations represent a broad overview of cultural patterns within each market segment; however, none of the ideas or behaviors applies to every individual within a group. This summary is not intended to promote stereotypes, nor is it based on academic research; its goal is to avoid broad generalizations about individuals, groups, and populations. Wherever possible, we draw on U.S. Census data and the best resources, diversity scholarship, and association management literature to help you make use of this information to recruit and engage members and volunteers more effectively. We invite you to use this report as a starting point to grow your association's ability to reach and resonate in diverse market segments.

Acknowledgements

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Association for Women in Science (AWIS)
Association of Hispanic Advertising Agencies (AHAA)
Council on Foundations
DC Hispanic Employee Network
Deirdre Reid LLC
Fernly & Fernly
Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities
International Foundation of Employee Benefit Plans
International Right of Way Association
International Society for Performance Improvement
Michigan Association of School Boards
Municipal Employees' Retirement System of Michigan
NASPA
National Cable & Telecommunications Association
National Court Reporters Association
NeighborWorks America
OCA National
Oklahoma Osteopathic Association
Regulatory Affairs Professionals Society® (RAPS)
Purdue University
Society for Human Resource Management
Society of Tribologists & Lubrication Engineers
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Innovation Talk Leaders and Volunteers

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What Frames an Association's Ability to Resonate with Diverse Audiences?

You know that you need to cultivate new members to ensure that your association grows. What you're likely struggling with is how to go about doing that and ensure your message doesn't come across as strange or inappropriate. This resource helps your association resonate with diverse audiences, giving you a starting point for understanding and authentically resonating with key demographic market segments that have the potential to drive your association's growth.

It is designed for association professionals like you who are serving your members really well, and therefore know that the most effective marketing messages or outreach strategies are those that resonate with the target audience. Something in that message taps into a belief, a value, an aspiration, a fear, or something important to that constituency. In essence you're saying, "I hear you, value your perspective and experiences, and am pulling out the welcome mat just for you. You fit here." This notion is simple, but it's natural to feel some anxiety or sense of risk when your message has to resonate with a segment of your profession that is quite different from you, your values and experiences, or those of your most active members and volunteers.

It's for people like you who may be curious—and possibly hesitant—to work differently in order to reach a new audience segment, for fear of getting it wrong. The fact that you're reading this resource indicates that you know your association needs to reach new audiences. You know there's a business opportunity for you in doing so, but how do you start? How do you ensure your tight marketing budget stretches far enough to deliver results? Amidst business pressure and limited resources, how do you sell colleagues on the need for innovative approaches in order to expand your reach? What information could you share that would open the minds of powerful naysayers that value business as usual since it's been working for years? What are easy steps to take to help prepare your association tap into new markets while avoiding walking on eggshells, or saying something that could be unintentionally offensive?

Content contained herein is an aggregated summary of the ideas, experiences, and resources shared by participants from 43 associations listed below during ASAE's first-ever week-long series of InnovationTalks. You'll learn:

- Factors from one's background that influence decisions about member involvement
- Insight into the member you're not currently reaching, but could be
- Perceptions of characteristics of an innovative association, CEO, and board
- Ideas to strengthen your comfort level and relevance engaging different audiences
- Tips for getting your message to reach and resonate with new and unfamiliar audiences

It's worth noting that participants self-identified with a particular market segment on a broad level, and some also identified with more than one group (e.g. early-career and Hispanic). Other contextual considerations are referenced throughout the document. Keep this resource handy and email diversity@asaecenter.org with updates on how you use it to drive growth in your association.

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Black/African-American Professionals

Demographic Stats:

- **Median age is 31.6** compared to 36.7 for total U.S. population
- In 2000 to 2009, the nation's **Black buying power** grew from \$318B to \$910B. This **gain of 54%** outstrips the 46% increase in white buying power and the 49% increase in total buying power (all racial/ethnic groups combined).
- Represents:
 - 14% of U.S. population
 - 7% of U.S. nonprofit/association boards
 - 3.5% of U.S. corporate boards
- In 2009, **top 5 states** with the largest African-American markets:
 - New York (\$86B)
 - Texas (\$62B)
 - Georgia (\$61B)
 - Florida (\$61B)
 - Maryland (\$52B)

For Further Information

See: Current Population Reports,
Series P25-1104, *Population Projections of the United States, by Age,
Sex, Race, and Hispanic Origin: 1993 to 2050.*

U.S. Census Bureau, 2005–2009 American Community Survey
African American News and Information Consortium (afro.com)
African-American Research
Blackdemographics.com
Black Enterprise magazine
Black Population–U.S. Census Bureau
Target Market News
The National Black Public Relations Society
The Neilson Company–State of the African American Consumer

Cultural considerations that participants want you to know...

- Similar to other racial and ethnic groups, there's no single African-American consumer or member profile. There is a lot of diversity in history, traditions, and religions within this demographic segment.
- Pick up any magazine or brochure with national reach and you'll be hard pressed to see Black men or women featured in major ad campaigns. One participant said: "I easily identify when I see a positive image featured of Black professionals in promotional materials. It says you're trying to reach me."
- Do you prefer to be referred to as Black or African-American? Which one is politically correct? These are common questions. Generally speaking, either term works; none is more or less equal than the other. One participant said: "I can't speak for everyone, but I know what my preference is – call me by my first name."
- An association that serves this market segment well avoids a one-size-fits-all type approach to outreach. The message may be the same, but the vehicles may be different. Look at radio and different media outlets, venues, magazines, even if they may not reach other groups. When that happens, people may ask, "Why are you doing something special for them and not us?" It's ok to say you're doing something different to get a different, hopefully better, result.
- Create messages and ads that resonate with this audience on an inspirational level. One participant said: "Often Black women are portrayed as having an attitude, or are oversexed. Men are portrayed as rappers or macho athletes. We're also consultants, CEOs, geeks, entrepreneurs, and CAEs. Focusing on status of achievement is a critical way for marketers to reach us."
- Focus on telling me about your association, rather than trying to connect by telling me about your friend of my race or background.
- For any association executives that oppose market segmentation strategies, try this exercise with them: If I say the word "autumn" what comes to mind? They'll probably say things like leaves, apples, or pumpkins. Ask them to describe (or draw!) what comes to mind when you say the term "CEO" or "association exec" or "leader." Does someone African-American come to mind? Does *any* person of color come to mind?

Early-Career Professionals

Demographic Stats:

- In the U.S., 15-29 year olds make up **21% of the population**.
- By 2015...
 - One in every 5 Americans will be 65+ years of age.
 - People under 25 years of age will make up 40% of the U.S. workforce.
- In the U.S., **80% of people under 30 years of age participate in charitable giving** of some kind.
- In *Decision To Join*, ASAE's members at or below 30 years of age, identified these **top five important functions** of an association:
 - Provide training/professional development
 - Connections
 - Technical information
 - Timely information
 - Create/Disseminate standards of practice

For Further Information

See: Current Population Reports,
Series P25-1104, *Population Projections of the United States, by Age,
Sex, Race, and Hispanic Origin: 1993 to 2050*.

ASAE Publication: *Decision to Join*
Age & Generations studies from The Sloan Center on Aging and Work at Boston
College

ASAE's Young Association Executives Committee (YAEC)
Millennials: A Portrait of Generation Next by Pew Research Center

Cultural considerations that participants want you to know...

- Give specific feedback on outcomes of our work. From a pragmatic viewpoint, we're drawn to logical conclusions: If I do this, then I'll get this outcome. One participant said: "We want to know what we did well or not so well and why. Avoid waiting until the end of the year, because it's likely we're applying a similar thought process or methodology to other projects."
- Not all early-career professionals identify as an association professional. Some find their way into associations and say, "I'm a marketing professional, and work at XYZ association." So, look at your association's pipeline and identify what skill

sets—if any—are different in associations from similar jobs in government or business sector.

- Associations that serve this segment well ensure early-career professionals are judged on merit of work, not age. It's also important to evaluate the work they do, not where they do their work.
- Age is not the right yardstick to measure maturity or experience. One participant said: "You don't know my story. My experience may be different than yours, but not less valuable than yours."
- During presentations, ensure your opening statements consider different experiences of audience members. At meetings, when speakers start their presentations with the statement: "I have 25 years of experience in association management," it signals that you're in charge. You're the giver of information and the audience is the recipient of it. Depending on the topic, early-career professionals may tune out or wonder if the speaker realizes that the world is different now than it was 25 years ago.
- Early-career professionals find the courage to ask questions and express what they really want. One participant said: "To us, speaking up is a form of contribution and collaboration. Some who have been in an organization awhile view this as insubordination. Others see it as a relief and may agree, but this gives others an opportunity to jump in who wouldn't otherwise."
- Sometimes when early-career professionals suggest an idea, they get stuck implementing it. So, you may need to evaluate your organizational support systems.
- We are probably more interested in gaining experience for the sake of our resumes and our network, while those later in their careers are more likely to gain experience for prestige.
- Early-career professionals are wary of sales pitches. One participant said: "What I want to know is whether it is available online. If not, then that tells me that it's not important to you or to me. If it is, then can I quickly access it? Is it endorsed by someone I know?"

Differently-Abled Professionals

Demographic Stats:

- 54 million American adults, **nearly 1 in 5**, live with a disability.
- In 2008, the prevalence of U.S. professionals with a disability was:
 - **12% (all age groups)**
 - 10% (21 to 64 years of age)
 - 26% (65 to 74 years of age)
 - 51% (75+ years of age)
- The majority of **workplace accommodations cost nothing or less than \$500**. Additionally, people with disabilities may already have the accommodations they need or they may be reasonably obtained.
- There is **no single, universally accepted definition** of the term “disability.”

For Further Information

See: Current Population Reports,
Series P25-1104, *Population Projections of the United States, by Age,
Sex, Race, and Hispanic Origin: 1993 to 2050*.

American Association of People with Disabilities
April 2011 Disability Employment Statistics by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics
(bls.gov/news.release/empsit.t06.htm)

Disability.gov

The Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP)

U.S. Department of Justice Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) (ada.gov)

Cultural considerations that participants want you to know...

- The first topic of conversation should not be about ability or mobility. One participant said: “I don’t want people to come up to me and talk about my ability or mobility issues first.”
- How do people with disabilities want to be addressed? Is it best to say “differently-abled” or “professionals with disabilities” or something else? These terms are appropriate, but there’s no general consensus on a preferred term to use.

- Avoid insisting on doing something for me. It makes me feel like I'm special in the wrong way. One participant said: "Allow me to air issues privately or raise them myself. Don't assume that I need you to help me."
- In your event registration forms, job applications, and membership sign-up forms, advertise the fact that you will have signers, interpreters or translators. It's a sign that differently-abled professionals are welcome in your association.
- In your advertisements, use faces of real people. Some photos of people in wheelchairs are staged. Professionals who use a wheelchair or scooter can tell.
- I have a visible disability. When you see me, you may feel empathy. Having a disability doesn't make me weak; it just makes me unique. That's ok with me.
- Assure us that accessibility is the norm, not an issue

Asian & Asian-American Professionals

Demographic Stats:

- **Common definition of Asian** is a person who descends from East Asia, South Asia, and Southeast Asia. Here are some (not all) groups that are considered to be Asian:
 - Chinese
 - Pakistani
 - Vietnamese
 - Iranian
 - Japanese
 - Syrian
 - Cambodian
 - Palestinian
 - Taiwanese
 - Saudi
 - Filipino
 - Korean
 - Lebanese
 - Sri Lankan
 - Afghani
 - Iraqi
 - Bangladeshi
 - Laotian
 - Indonesian
 - Singaporean
 - Yemeni
 - Thai
 - Burmese
 - Sakha
 - Nepali
 - Malaysian
 - Jordanian
 - Tibetan
 - Mongolian
- **Largest ethnic subgroups:**
 - Chinese
 - Filipinos
 - Indians
 - Vietnamese
 - Koreans
 - Japanese
- In San Francisco, **1 in 5** people are Asian-American/
- **Highest household income and education** attainment levels of any other racial or ethnic group
- **Lowest poverty levels** of any other racial or ethnic group
- **Median age is 34** compared to 36.7 for the total U.S. population

For Further Information

See: Current Population Reports,
Series P25-1104, *Population Projections of the United States, by Age,
Sex, Race, and Hispanic Origin: 1993 to 2050.*

Améredia
Asia Society (asiasociety.org)
Asian-Nation.org
Asian American Advertising Federation

Asian American Alliance
Asian American Net (asianamerican.net)
AsianWeek magazine
Center for Asian American Media
Leadership Education for Asian Pacifics, Inc (LEAP)
Market Profile Report by Magazine Publishers of America
(magazine.org/content/files/market_profile_asian.pdf)
National Association of Asian American Professionals (NAAAP)
USAsianWire
White House Initiative on Asian-Americans and Pacific Islanders

Cultural considerations that participants want you to know...

- This is not a homogenous group. Key considerations include primary language spoken in the home and timing of entry into the U.S.
- Be sensitive, but don't pander to any particular group. For instance, one participant received a marketing piece in Chinese and said, "Don't assume that because I have an Asian last name that I want to be marketing to in that way". Doing so could result in this response: "I'd never join that organization."
- One participant said: "Many of my fellow CEOs of Asian-majority associations are not that comfortable with the limelight. You don't see us expressing industry opinions. We tend to keep to ourselves and run the business."
- The term "API" is short for Asian/Pacific Islander and is an appropriate reference to this population.
- Explore Asian media outlets. In Dallas, for example, there is a large Vietnamese population and a weekly newspaper called "But Viet" that serves this community. The paper has a strong and stable weekly readership, and is relatively small so it's inexpensive for advertisers and they get results.
- Since there are many different Asian subgroups, with different languages, traditions, holidays, it's important to understand *your* associations target audience as much as possible. Are they Chinese? Japanese? Korean?

American Indian & Alaska Native Professionals

Demographic Stats:

- Comprise 19% of Alaska's population and **1.5% of the U.S. population.**
- From 1990 to 2008, Native American **buying power increased 213%** versus 151% for the total population.
- Median age is **29.7** of the single-race American Indian and Alaska Native population in 2008, younger than the 36.8 median for the population as a whole.

For Further Information

Current Population Reports, Series P25-1104, *Population Projections of the United States, by Age, Sex, Race, and Hispanic Origin: 1993 to 2050.*

U.S. Census Bureau, *2005-2009 American Community Survey*

Center for World Indigenous Studies

National Association of Tribal Historic Preservation Officers (NATHPO)

National Center for American Indian Enterprise Development

National Congress of American Indians

Cultural considerations that participants want you to know...

- Often the term “ambassador” is used instead of “leader” because it’s more in harmony with the essence of Indian cultures. Native American ambassadors are civil servants, helping their tribal government articulate the concerns of their people.
- One participant said: “Our natural tendency is to listen first, to reflect on what people are saying and to determine the meaning behind it. In meetings, I may be quiet out of respect not lack of leadership skills.”
- Educated young people often play the role of “cultural broker.” They understand how things operate in the dominant culture in their communities, as well as how to position oneself in associations and the working world.
- Tribal governance practices are good examples of collaborative leadership practices.
- Representation is not a bad thing; it’s often an expected responsibility that carries a sense of pride.

Hispanic and Latino Professionals

Demographic Stats

- The terms “Hispanic” and “Latino” are used interchangeably by the U.S. Census Bureau to refer to persons of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central and South American, Dominican, Spanish, and other Hispanic descent; **persons may be of any race.**
- **Top 5 U.S. States by Hispanic Population:**
 - California (13B)
 - Texas (8B)
 - Florida (3B)
 - New York (3B)
 - Illinois (1B)
- **19** –The number of U.S. states in which Hispanics are the largest race or ethnic group
- Between 2000 and 2010, the **Hispanic population grew by 43%**, compared to a nationwide rate growth of 9.7%.
- In 2009, **median age is 27.4 years**, compared to 36.8 years for the total U.S. population.

For Further Information

Current Population Reports, Series P25-1104, *Population Projections of the United States, by Age, Sex, Race, and Hispanic Origin: 1993 to 2050.*

U.S. Census Bureau, *2005-2009 American Community Survey*

ALMA Magazine

HispanicAd.com

HispanicBusiness.com

Hispanic Magazine (hispaniconline.com)

Hispanic Meetings and Travel Magazine

HispanicPRwire.com

Latina Magazine (latina.com)

Latino Perspectives Magazine (latinopm.com)

Pew Hispanic Center (pewhispanic.org/)

Poder360.com

SAVisión, the Hispanic marketing arm of the American Marketing Association

Cultural considerations that participants want you to know...

- To help associations put population numbers in perspective, there are more Hispanics living in the U.S. than Canadians in Canada.
- “Latino” includes Brazilians, who speak Portuguese, and are Latin American.
- Language is a tactic, not a strategy. Spanish or English? Both? It depends. They equate the term “Spanish” with language. Some Hispanics are “Spanish dominant” which means Spanish is the language of preference. Others are bilingual or “English dominant” and may understand Spanish but speak English.
- In recruitment materials, use the term “bilingual” not “Spanish-speaking;” otherwise, you may attract prospects who speak Spanish but not English.
- Outreach to Hispanics is not just something to do during Hispanic Heritage month; it’s a long-term strategy. One participant said: “Associations need to ‘walk the talk’ and spend time earning their way in. They can’t just suddenly jump in and expect results, respect, or responses from the community. Why does the community need them and what are they offering? Are they in for the duration or is this just a promotion?”
- Watch the timing and cultural references applied in marketing campaigns. Cinco de Mayo is NOT Mexican Independence Day. In fact, it’s not a holiday widely celebrated in Mexico.
- Being a “Latino-friendly” association doesn’t cost a penny. One participant said: “When I look at the website, do I see diversity on the staff lists or the board and volunteer ranks? In promotional materials, do all of the speakers look the same? If I’m looking into employment opportunities or membership at an association, I need to know I belong here.”
- Hugging, kissing on the cheek, gesturing with our hands, and using the proper respectful titles to address adults and elders are common social practices.

An innovative association...

Participants of these diversity-related InnovationTalks shared the following descriptions of innovative associations:

- Approaches business exchanges with a focus on building relationships, not just closing transactions.
- Considers “family-style” membership offerings and experiences. For many Hispanics, making decisions, shopping, and doing business is a family matter. Innovative associations are prepared for this by making everyone feel comfortable (e.g. warm greeting that acknowledges children, extra seating in the waiting area, “kid or family friendly” reading materials—including content on the value of your association). Consider offering an organizational membership package family style so that products and services serve different needs and career stages of my staff.
- Understands trans-creation is more important than translation. For example, recall the popular “Got Milk?” ad campaign that reminded people to drink milk regularly. If you translate those words, as written, into Spanish, the slogan is “¿Tiene leche?” In other words: Do you have milk? Obviously, that’s not the intention of the marketers. They recognized this. So, the ads in Spanish say “Más leche,” which means “more milk.” Innovative associations don’t just rely on translation to create meaning.
- Has a CEO that takes the pulse of the organization. As CEOs, sometimes we’re so focused going down one path that it might not be the right path.
- Has a CEO that looks at trends differently. Who are we reaching now? Who do we need to reach next based on what we know about the changing U.S. landscape? Those are two different questions and require a commitment to innovation to go there.
- Has a CEO that fosters open communication and sets stage but gets out of the way so you can do what you need to do.
- Has a CEO that is not afraid to make mistakes...not afraid of technology...and is stewarding the association for upcoming generations.
- Walks a fine line of not treating everyone in its membership the same, but also not treating everyone so differently that they don’t feel a part of the whole enterprise reinvents itself.
- Allows its staff to experiment.
- Is creative not controlling; not all power is in the hands of any one particular group of people.
- Is one where creating, collaborating, and forward thinking is valued.
- Is one where more focus is on intention, not specifics. Everyone understands the general goal and are working on different parts of achieving it.
- Fulfills a shared goal, but is able to do so in different ways.
- Routinely brainstorms, evaluates and empowers all levels of staff.
- Rarely uses one source (or moniker) for information on business.

- Rarely talks to each other across departments because some people may disagree with the value or vision of a new initiative, but it needs to get done.
- Rarely has a ceremonial board culture or agenda.
- Rarely hires innovative staff when it only wants time-clock punchers. It's a waste of their gift and your association's resources.
- Rarely says, "Because that's the way we've always done it."
- Recruits staff who are committed to their passion, not necessarily to the profession. Staff who are committed to learning and to excellence can pick up the association stuff. You can't train for passion the same way you can for the profession.
- Has a board that takes the long view and values perspectives of members who may not agree with the popular group of volunteers.
- Realizes the best innovation happens when people are involved.
- Allocates resources to experimentation, staff professional development, and play. When you have creative people and an open environment with a creative outlet, then you have better products.
- Understands many early-career professionals value participation, being listened to, meaningful volunteer work.
- Shows—rather than tells—why I should like its products and services. Focuses on the experience benefits provide.
- Empowers its staff and supports creative thinking
- Is about allowing staff to make decisions and be responsible for good and bad results. As a result, staff retention is good because they feel empowerment and have a sense of ownership.
- No one is allowed to point fingers and say you failed. The organization does its homework to check in with different stakeholders and collect data. If there is failure, the organization does not consider you a failure or organizational liability. The focus is on moving forward.

About Professional Needs...

Here are some specific things that InnovationTalks participants said they needed for their professional development:

- I need to see myself in your association. For instance, promote your association involvement in the Asian/Pacific Islander (API) community. Do you have partnerships or involvement with other API-focused organizations? Do you get involved in API-issues or do you just support majority issues? Is your association represented in API-centered conferences or events?
- I need to see a pipeline or path to leadership. As CEOs we get so focused on taking care of our [board] chairs, the bottom line, and we need to make the case to grow leaders and move them through the ranks.
- How can my association have conversations about innovation without making people squirm? Our members aren't asking for these types of conversations.
- Provide information on what associations should or shouldn't ask about demographics on member profiles. Also, what's the best language to use to get a high number of responses?
- When developing programs, ensure materials include names common in non-Anglo racial and ethnic groups, the choices you make about food, music, keynote speakers and entertainment also tell us whose needs you are catering to regardless of whose face is on the cover of the ad. Work with associations who have expertise in multicultural education and event planning.
- I want to understand what's fact or fiction about differences and similarities across generations. For example, is it true that work/life balance is not as important to Millennials as it is to Gen X? Is it true that young professionals leave jobs within two years?
- I need to know what's politically correct or incorrect to say. Terminology changes often and I'm not sure where to go to keep up.
- All groups have a need to feel supported and respected by their leadership. The sense that they can contribute to the larger association. Part of our jobs as CEOs is just showing up. We have to be there to support issues and individuals in different identity groups.
- Early-career professionals want to make a difference—and not have to wait 10 years or more to do it. Show me the opportunity to get involved and use my skills or develop new ones.
- Skills to educate others on what's culturally different but important to me and other groups and why. What I bring to the table is tainted by my experiences and learning style and that's not necessarily negative. It is different. How do you teach someone a value you hold?

Skills or qualities necessary for individuals to add value to boards...

- Know governance practices and models such as Roberts Rules, bylaws, good boardmanship practices
- Bring core skills to the table, not just being a “professional Hispanic” or professional who adds diversity to the board.
- Commitment to advancing the industry.
- Have a sense of purpose; act on your beliefs. Remember you’re not there just to warm a seat
- Let board members know what qualities you bring to the table
- On all volunteer boards, you’ll need to take charge of certain situations. Step up and pitch in. Along the way you’ll develop leadership opportunities and take on tasks that may challenge you in ways your day-to-day job may not offer you.
- Share perspectives and show your value.
- Don’t walk into the board meeting with anything to prove. Instead, focus on maximizing your contributions.
- Come prepared to meetings. Read ahead of time and determine questions you have that are “nice to know” and “need to know.” Manage your air time accordingly.
- Get comfortable asking questions, tough questions that may not feel good but are right given your role as a board member.
- Whether you’re aware of this or not, you bring your personal values to the table. Remember you’re selected with the expectation of bringing values that your members have, too. It’s important to understand where the two are in alignment and where they’re not.
- Respect differences of opinion.
- Empathy and understanding of people not like you.
- Communication skills: Understand there are different opinions around the table and different work styles and ways people approach sharing opinions.
- Know when to walk away if you are not being taken seriously or wasting your time; too many other groups really need your help.
- Patience
- Visibility: are you ready for that? If you’re on a small board, people will know your name. What you do before, during, and after that board meeting will be a part of your reputation in the community.
- Get comfortable with the notion of being #1 go-to person. You may be asked to take on tasks that you may not consider to be “board work” (e.g. prepare administration materials, make photocopies, have the gift of gab, etc).

Skills or qualities necessary for boards to leverage diversity...

- Recruit them and use them for core needs; not to be token ethnic [members].
- Ensure good orientation and mentoring so that the culture of the board is learned quickly.
- Don't allow boards to be pigeonholed months later as the "broken record of Hispanic issues".
- Don't recruit the "usual suspects" every other board has gone after, or [are] already on multiple boards.
- In its simplest form, diversity means different. If all of you in a room are thinking about the same issues or looking at the same issue in the same way, you may not be ready.
- Diversity has to start at the top, rather than at the committee level. Otherwise, you're looking at limited success or awareness.
- Be open and flexible to doing things differently including changing things that were sacred cows.
- Don't feel embarrassed by what you don't know. It's alright if you have limited budgets; just don't limit your thinking about low or no-cost methods of reaching out.
- CEOs need to invest time and resources into board education on diversity. At the beginning of every year, my board president can pick an issue or anyone to facilitate a conversation about a topic in diversity. This program is in addition to board orientation. So, you don't have to be a newbie on the board to get the training. Everyone gets it.
- Extent to which board members have had broad experience shapes their views of the world. How many of your board members have had experiences interacting with people from different cultures? That exposure broadens your mind. As a CEO, it impacts my decision-making and desire to level the playing field.
- Keep in mind that people with disabilities have mobility impairment, not impairment in judgment.
- Guts to go against the grain. Identify board members who will challenge the status quo. It may make some meetings uncomfortable, but it may help your association take the long view.
- When you analyze trends, or do strategic planning, get this on people's radar screens. That's something we can do as CEOs.
- Boards have historically been guardians of tradition. As CEOs we don't always have board members comprised of forward-thinking people. Often our boards operate like private clubs, but it's not always intentional. Sometimes we don't think about diversity, but it's not that that we're closed off to it. There's just no intellectual effort to reach beyond comfort zones unless you're an association with a mission to serve a particular population.

- Whatever bothers or angers you about diversity is the very issue that you need to resolve before engaging board members different from you.
- Knowledge surrounding the laws of accommodation, accessibility, and compliance.
- Openness to try new things, including how the board works together.
- Empathy
- Understanding of others not like you (e.g. younger members).
- Exhibit cultural competence.
- Practice active listening.
- Embrace differences.
- There's a lot of diversity in our schools, but our school boards don't reflect the diversity of our classrooms or country. School board members should be educated on why people will run against them or have them removed.
- Whether you know it or not, members and potential members are watching from the outside and asking, "Why would I want to be a part of this board?" Not just during your recruitment season.
- The effective boards of the future will understand we're not a "sit and get" type generation.
- Offer board training to outline expectations and to encourage success as a board member.
- Don't try to connect on a superficial level. Remember, you don't want to merely sell me on your event or products today; you want to keep me as a member or customer for the long haul.

Additional Resources

Adcolor.org—a catalyst for the next generation of diversity programs by combining the energy of the marketing, advertising, and media industries to identify current issues and opportunities around diversity.

AdWeek.com—a weekly publication featuring the inside stories on: creativity, client/agency relationships, successful global advertising strategies. This magazine is read by advertising professionals worldwide.

Census Scope.org—an easy-to-use tool for investigating U.S. demographic trends, brought to you by the Social Science Data Analysis Network (ssdan.net) at the University of Michigan.

DiversityInc.com—the leading publication on diversity and business. Founded in 1998 as a web-based publication, their monthly print magazine was launched in 2002. They have the largest dedicated career center for diverse market segments of professionals, and regularly publish the DiversityInc Top 50 Companies for Diversity data.

Freedemographics.com—allows you to analyze hundreds of demographic variables and trends through reports, maps and charts, and access to the latest U.S. Census data sorted by geographies and demographic characteristics.

Globalhue.com—helps organization use social media to create ad campaigns and cultural narratives: relevant experiences that weave brands and their audiences together through conversations and meaningful interaction.

MPA: The Association of Magazine Media—offers profiles that consolidate major trends, and advertising and media usage research on demographic groups at the core of the nation's changing population.

Visit magazine.org/advertisingcategories/index.aspx for more info.

Multicultural.com—an online resource for multicultural and diversity news and access to professionals who specialize in marketing to Hispanic, Asian American, African American, women, and other market segments. You'll also find minority- and women-owned businesses that specialize in promoting multicultural marketing news.

National Alliance of Market Developers (namdntl.org)—an organization of professionals engaged in marketing, sales, sales promotion, advertising and public relations focused on the delivery of goods and services to various market segments.