

## The Chair's Column

*Mark Mathewson*

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### No Fear!



**R**emember that slogan from the early 90s, complete with edgy logo that was plastered everywhere: "No Fear"? I laughed out loud the day I saw this bumper sticker: "Some Fear."

It is with some fear—and much eagerness and even more humility—that I take the helm of the NABE Communications Section. As a 19-year veteran of NABE Comm, I'll do my best to give a little back to a professional group that has given me more than I can repay. Our section is not only NABE's largest, but also its most dynamic and productive. Or so we've been told (perhaps by flatterers, but that's beside the point). It's great to start from a position of strength.

Speaking of which, I'd be remiss in not thanking immediate past chair Carol Manning for handing me a well-tended, financially healthy section. Note to NABE Comm vice-chair Francine Walker—I intend to follow Carol's example.

My principal goal is to begin systematically implementing the strategic plan we hatched in early 2005 under the leadership of Susan Andres. At the just-held NABE Annual Meeting in San Francisco, the NABE Comm executive council fine-tuned the plan under the expert guidance of facilitator Elizabeth Derrico of the ABA's Division for Bar Services. I'm glad Elizabeth did this pro bono, because we can't afford to pay her what she's worth.

The strategic plan encompasses everything from NABE Comm's relationship with NABE—e.g., our ability to influence Annual and Midyear programming so it best serves our section members' needs—to NABE Comm's corner of the NABE Web site and how we can make the best use of that. We'll be working on both of those things this year.

Also, we'll be turning our attention to leadership development and to making sure we're giving NABE Comm members an opportunity to

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# Philadelphia Workshop Early Bird Deadline is Sept. 4!

**T**he 2007 Communications Section Workshop is almost here! Join us in Philadelphia as we honor Benjamin Franklin's 300th birthday with our high-tech theme, "Communication is Electric!" But hurry, the deadline to register for the Workshop at the "Early Bird" rate is FAST APPROACHING! To receive the special rate, all registrations must be RECEIVED by TUESDAY, SEPT. 4.

Additionally, the room block is going FAST at our host hotel, the Doubletree Hotel Philadelphia, so don't delay in making your hotel reservations! The Workshop officially begins with registration on the morning of Wednesday, Oct. 10, and concludes after the morning programming on Saturday, Oct. 13. The Workshop Preliminary Program and Registration Form, as well as online Doubletree Hotel registration, are available at: <http://www.abanet.org/nabe/communications/2007workshop.html>

We anticipate a big turnout for the Workshop this year and hope you are part of it!

Our Program Committee has assembled an impressive roster of breakout sessions featuring the latest developments in Web technologies, publication design, media relations techniques, membership strategies, and more. Plus, our Sponsorship Committee has worked overtime to ensure wonderful support and representation from a wide variety of company products and services.

This year's Workshop will be held in the heart of downtown Philly on the famous Avenue on the Arts.



Our Wednesday night dinner event will be held at the new National Constitution Center, which sits majestically on Independence Mall, directly across from the Liberty Bell and Independence Hall. On Thursday, optional communications-themed excursions will include a private tour of the QVC Network Studios; a "Philadelphia in the Movies" luxury coach tour of historic sights with film clips on a flat-panel LCD screen; and a viewing of the Philadelphia Museum of Art's much-anticipated Renoir exhibition, which makes its only U.S. stop in Philadelphia, just in time for the NABE Workshop!



Philadelphia is a dining city, so you'll want to bring your appetite! From cheesesteaks, hoagies, and soft pretzels to celebrity chef bistros, the choices are endless. Best of all, there's no need to rent a car: the Doubletree is within walking distance of countless

renowned restaurants, museums, and attractions. And remember, there's no sales tax on clothing in Pennsylvania! Don't delay, register TODAY!

For more information, contact 2007 Workshop Chair Mark Tarasiewicz at (215) 238-6346 or <mailto:mtarasiewicz@philabar.org>.

**Editor's Note:** The deadline to submit a Workshop scholarship application is Friday, Aug. 31; [see Page 3](#) for more information.



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**“A countryman between two lawyers  
is like a fish between two cats.”**

**— Benjamin Franklin**

# Workshop Scholarship Deadline Friday, Aug. 31!

**T**he NABE Communications Section Fall Workshop "Communication is Electric" will take place in Philadelphia from October 10-13, and if money is holding you back from registering, perhaps a scholarship could help!

The Section's Scholarship Committee will be awarding at least two scholarships to members who have not attended the workshop in the past five years, providing up to \$500 in reimbursement and waiver of registration fees. No member may receive a scholarship more than once. In awarding scholarships, the committee considers whether applicants are new to bar association work or have moved to a bar association that is financially constrained; whether their participation would improve the racial or ethnic diversity of the section; and whether applicants are likely to continue their participation in the section.

The workshop is our premiere event, offering fabulous programming as well as extensive networking opportunities. Workshop Committee Chair Mark Tarasiewicz and his entire committee have done a tremendous job and Philadelphia is a world-class location. The full conference program, which includes the scholarship application, is available online at <http://www.abanet.org/nabe/communications/csworkshop/nabecomm07reg.pdf>.

For more information, contact Cynthia Kuhn, scholarship committee chair, at <mailto:cgkuhn@dcbar.org> or at (202) 626-3470. The deadline for applications is Friday, August 31, 2007. ■

## Selling an Idea: Tools and Techniques for Improving Bar Association Communications

*By Francine Walker, director of public information, The Florida Bar*

**B**ased on the premise that convincing people to support your bar association is an important part of the job for many bar staff, NABE members in public relations and governmental affairs presented a panel discussion on the synergies that can result from collaboration. This session was produced by the Communications and Governmental Relations sections of NABE.

Our communications section was well-represented by René Eichen of the Kansas Bar Association. She said that voluntary bars like hers walk a fine line between government relations and public relations in order to retain membership. But she agreed that the two departments should work together and she stressed the importance of media relations in message delivery.

Mandatory bars like the State Bar of South Dakota and The Florida Bar are limited in subjects they may lobby, but communications tools and solid messaging of positions are critical. Tom Barnett, of South Dakota, said messaging needs to be "bullet-proof" as well as logical, concise, powerful, and persuasive. Paul Hill, of Florida, said "GR is PR." Lawmakers are a "public" he stressed, and through coordination, cooperation, and communication the two departments will "get the job done."

Bill Weisenburg of the Ohio State Bar Association, which is voluntary, said messages that are designed for internal publics—that is, members—and external publics, including consumers and lawmakers—must be coordinated. He also recommended that bars conduct editorial board meetings jointly staffed by governmental affairs and communications staff and emphasized the need to train the president as the chief spokesperson to provide only the organization's position, not offer personal opinions.

In closing, all of the panelists agreed that message development and management are the most important areas of collaboration for bar communicators and lobbyists. As Paul Hill said, "GR is PR." ■

# Take Your Seat at the Decision-Making Table

By Holly Wilkerson, local bar services coordinator, State Bar of Texas

**B**ar executives walk a thin line between appearing as glorified administrative assistants and trusted advisors. During the session titled "Take Your Seat at the Decision-Making Table," bar executives filled the chairs and stood along the back and side walls, searching for the recipe to become the invaluable trusted advisor.

Moderator Bonnie Sashin, communications director of the Boston Bar Association, introduced the panel, which included Christine Lanier, director for media relations and communications services for the American Bar Association; John Norwine, executive director of the Cincinnati Bar Association; Russell Rawlings, director of communications for the North Carolina Bar Association; and Kay Sim, executive director of the Houston Bar Association. The Q&A format allowed the panelists to share the pearls of wisdom that have led to their success and credibility:

## **How do you deal with the constant change associated with rotating bar leaders?**

Rawlings acknowledged the importance of retaining past knowledge. He pointed out that bar volunteers have "Hotel California" mindsets: They may check out but they never leave. Utilize tenured leaders to maintain traditions and remind new leaders of why policies or processes were established.

Panelists recommended that bar executives view change with enthusiasm, not fear. Demonstrate flexibility. While orienting a new leader, explain that you are simply communicating history, nothing that is set in stone. Staff should encourage leaders to devise new goals, offering support along the way. Do your homework by determining the new leaders' issues and views before you begin planning the year.

## **How can you build the credibility of your staff?**

Norwine allows staff to lead meetings and answer questions. He prefers to sit in the back of the room, sending the signal that his team is capable.

Sim joined the Houston Bar team to work on a new project and dazzled her leaders by successfully implementing the multifaceted project. She continued to manage that project while taking on additional responsibilities, showing her ability to balance multiple tasks and her desire to learn more about the organization.

Rawlings' theory is that the social aspect of your bar work is an opportunity to build credibility. Chauffeuring bar leaders from event to event allows for one-on-one time that is invaluable for building relationships and learning more about the leader's needs.

## **How can you prevent long-term harmful decisions while respecting the board's role in making policy?**

Staff must explain the full history and precedent surrounding an issue. Remind leaders of other involved parties and the likely impacts of the policy change. If trying to make a contentious point, phrase the statement in the form of a question, forcing the leadership to play devil's advocate. Remind board members of their constituency; they represent the beliefs of the entire organization, not personal interests.

## **How can you help prevent staff mistakes?**

Staff members are extensions of the executive director. Every e-mail, telephone call, and public appearance reflects upon the executive staff. Train staff to write brief e-mails and to edit e-mails as if they are published articles. Bar leaders are educated professionals accustomed to looking at details. Small mistakes can diminish credibility for the entire team.

Internal communication is key to seamlessly serving bar leaders. Copying senior staff members on e-mails regarding presidential or board projects, even if unrelated to their departments, can save time that could be wasted on duplicated efforts. Additionally, it will save senior staff embarrassment by providing information about top initiatives in case they are confronted with questions.

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# Get More From Your NABE Comm Membership by Joining the Section Listserv

Looking for information on logo design? Suggestions for keynote speakers? Starting an electronic newsletter? Methods for retaining members? Considering podcasting? If so, then join the Communications Section listserv by contacting Maria Johnson at <mailto:johnsonmaria@staff.abanet.org>. Information about these topics and many others relating to bar communications are discussed weekly on the listserv. The ABA Division for Bar Services periodically sends out summaries of those discussions—but they can also be retrieved from the archives at <http://mail.abanet.org/archives/nabecomm>. The archives are searchable by topic and author.

Recently the New York State Bar Association asked listserv members for suggestions for Web site designers. Below are some recommendations from your colleagues:

## STATE BAR ASSOCIATIONS

**The DC Bar** (<http://www.dcbar.org>)—Tom Pizer (<mailto:tpizer@performtech.com>). Tom also created <http://www.electionsonline.us>. The bar proclaims Tom to be the "best in the business." The bar has also worked with Bret Peters of Figleaf Software (<http://www.figleaf.com>).

**North Carolina State Bar** (<http://www.ncbar.gov>)—Sage Island (<http://www.sageisland.com>). The bar has worked with this design agency for seven or eight years. They recently redesigned the bar's main Web site and affiliate sites (<http://www.nclawspecialists.org> and <http://www.nccertifiedparalegal.org>). Bar says "they are fantastic!"

**Tennessee Bar Association** (<http://www.tba.org>)—Christine Schoenbrodt (<http://www.studiohaus.net>).

## LOCAL BAR ASSOCIATIONS

**Los Angeles County Bar Association** (<http://www.lacba.org>)—Delaplaine Creative (<http://www.delaplaine.com>). "They do high-end commercial work as well as budget work for us. They did our home page redesign a few years back, which took us to a new level of professionalism at a low cost."

**Bar Association of San Francisco** (<http://www.sfbar.org>)—Ginger Bisek (<mailto:gingerdoe@earthlink.net>) and Jessica Gore (<http://www.gorecreative.com>). At the time of the bar's redesign, Jessica Gore worked for POP Interactive (<http://www.popinteractive.com>), but is now on her own. "All are great to work with, highly professional and very intuitive about the business for which they are building the site."

**Lawyers Club of Atlanta** (<http://www.lawyersclubofatlanta.org>)—Laith Renno (<http://www.spicydragon.com>) "Specializes in custom Web sites for limited budgets and staff. Understands bar association business."

**Clark County (NV) Bar Association** (<http://www.clarkcountybar.org>)—Kimberly A. Smith (<http://www.kimberlyasmith.com>).

## OTHER GROUPS

**National Association of Bar Executives** (<http://www.nabenet.org>)—Laura Benson with PaperStreet (<http://www.paperstreet.com>). "She is super talented and helped assemble NABE's Web Site Best Practices Manual." ■

# W<sup>5</sup> + H<sup>1</sup> = Success

By Kelley Jones King, communications division director, State Bar of Texas

Who, what, where, when, why, and how—familiar to all communicators as the basics of a good story, these "Five W's Plus One" are the basis of Dan Angel's "Equation of Success." Angel, president of the Golden Gate University in San Francisco, spoke primarily about the "How" in his sensible discussion filled with tips for leaders seeking to build a successful organization or complete a successful project.

Organizations committed to service and known for that service—bar associations—have to continuously work to be the best they can be. Angel hit close to home when he started with some statistics about the impact of service on an organization:

- Two percent of complainers can never be satiated.
- One customer with a complaint will tell 25 people of his or her bad experience.
- A happy customer will only tell five people about good service they received.
- Seven of 10 people who switch from one provider to another do so because of bad service.
- It costs more to find new customers than it does to keep current customers.

As a leader in your organization, the first thing Angel advised is to listen to what is happening in the organization. Quoting Yogi Berra, he reminded his audience, "You hear a lot just by listening." He encouraged leaders to be familiar with trends within their profession through reading and suggested that surveying is a great way to stay in touch with what your members want and need and how they are receiving the services you are providing.

Angel has experience moving up the ladder in academia. His experience includes moving within organizations but also moving into leadership positions at new organizations. He knows firsthand that "how" you go about doing something new has a tremendous impact on its potential for success. Some considerations he suggested for a leader as he or she begins the process of change in an organization include:

- Celebrate endings; in other words, remember when you take over a position or project that somebody else had been doing that job. Recognize that service and that contribution as you move forward.
- Take a piece of the past with you.
- Compensate for loss.
- Define what you are and what you are not.
- Be consistent.
- Focus.
- Remember that timing is important for new initiatives.
- Early successes in new initiatives or change processes are important.
- Over communicate!
- Remind people of "what the organization has done lately." That is to say you should toot your own horn, create a buzz, share successes, develop awards and rewards, have briefings, create best practices, and use benchmarks to ensure that you and others know that your endeavor is successful or that you are doing better.

Angel talked about "marketing the value-added" and recommended the book "Immutable Laws of Marketing" by Al Ries and Jack Trout. He shared some advice from the book, including:

1. Be first (nobody ever remembers who was second),
2. Establish your own category, and
3. Think about short-term versus long-term returns.

Angel then shared his "Bag of Tools." He suggested that everybody and every organization has stumbling blocks but, if looked at as opportunities, they can be changed to stepping stones for change and success. Some of his tools include:

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# Meetings & Learning: Principles, Practices, and Play

By Francine Walker, director of public information, The Florida Bar

**W**ho says meetings shouldn't be fun as well as productive? In fact, studies have shown that laughter releases endorphins and increases an individual's ability to learn.

In a two-part session during concurrent tracks, Joan L. Eisenstodt, chief strategist of Eisenstodt Associates LLC in Washington, DC, encouraged NABE members to inject meetings with creative tools and to understand the learning motivation style of meeting participants.

Eisenstodt said there are three primary types of learners:

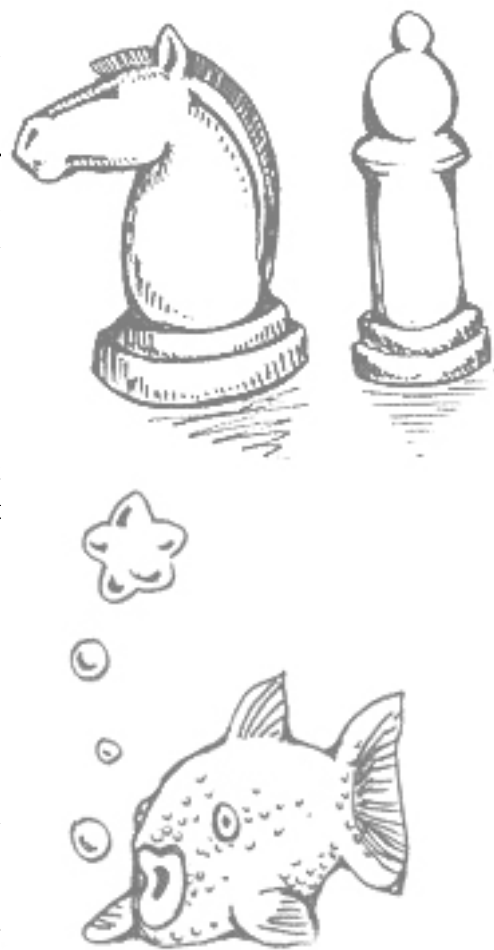
1. **Goal-oriented learners** see learning as a way to solve problems, pursue interests, and accomplish clear-cut objectives. These learners believe that you should be able to use what you learn or not bother learning it.
2. **Relationship-oriented learners** like the social interaction that learning offers.
3. **Learning-oriented learners** love to learn anything new just for the sake of learning.

It's important for meeting facilitators to know the learning styles of the participants in order to tailor their presentations. Eisenstodt recommended that speakers or meeting planners ask participants to complete learning inventories in advance of meetings, like those available from VARK's Guide to Learning Styles (<http://www.vark-learn.com>), in order to design their presentations.

Room arrangements are critical to the learning environment too. She suggested trying various styles of seating, including combinations of the tradition classroom and theatre with the addition of crescents (round tables with seats only facing the lectern) and comfortable furniture such as arm chairs and other furniture that may be available at the facility. Ideal conference centers with excellent learning environments recommended by Eisenstodt are those that are approved by the International Association of Conference Centers (<http://www.iacconline.org>).

Meetings can also benefit from the use of Q-Storming, Eisenstodt said, which is an advanced form of brainstorming that stimulates the discovery of new questions and new possibilities that can be used for resolving problems, strategic planning, and innovation. Participants "storm" questions rather than answers or solutions because questions have the most power to open doors to fresh thinking, new possibilities, and innovative solutions. For more on Q-Storming, see <http://www.qstorming.com>.

For fun during the sessions, Eisenstodt provided various small toys at each table and said that doodling is really a good thing. "When your hands are engaged, your mind is actively engaged," she said. "Creative stuff," as she called it, also promotes creativity, which is vital in the workplace. Quoting Marc Tucker, president and CEO of the National Center on Education and the Economy, she said, "Jobs in the new economy put an enormous premium on creative and innovative skills and seeing patterns." ■



# In Memory of Sheree Swetin



**Sheree Swetin**  
(1955-2007)

Sheree Swetin, executive director of the San Diego County Bar Association (SDCBA), died June 3 at the San Diego Hospice following a 14-month battle with lung cancer. She was 51.

Prior to working for the SDCBA (2001-2007), Sheree worked for the American Bar Association (ABA) in Chicago for 20 years. Three years ago, she joined the board of the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) of San Diego and Imperial Counties; she also served on the board of Teen Court.

Sheree was born in Chicago on July 4, 1955, and grew up Champaign, Ill., and Madison, Wis. Shortly after her high school graduation, she moved to an Israeli kibbutz where she lived for seven years. She went to work for the ABA upon her return to Chicago, and in 1999 she received a bachelor's degree in nonprofit management from DePaul University.

This year, the Lawyers Club of San Diego honored Sheree with their community service award for her commitment to justice, fundamental liberties, and civil rights.

Donations may be made to the ACLU Foundation of San Diego & Imperial Counties, P.O. Box 87131, San Diego, CA 92138-7131 or the National Lung Cancer Partnership, 222 N. Midvale Blvd., Suite 6, Madison, Wis., 53705. ■

## NABE Comm Members on the Move

- **Duane Stanley**, Hennepin County Bar Association, left in June for a three-month sabbatical in recognition of 20 years with the HCBA. Duane and his wife, Kathy, planned to pull their travel trailer for a month on the road into New England and back.
- After four plus years as the communications director of the Westchester County Bar Association (NY), **Rachel Piven-Kehrle** left the association on August 10 to return to teaching. Her replacement is **Christina Papadopoulos**. Rachel can be reached at <mailto:pivkeh@comcast.net> and Christina can be reached at <mailto:editor@wcbany.org>
- After nearly eight years at the Cincinnati Bar Association, **Carol Branch**, director of communications, left the CBA to spend more time with family; her last day with the CBA was Aug. 3, and her replacement is **Julie Borths**. Julie can be reached at <mailto:jkborths@cincybar.org>. ■

### 2007 STATE AND LOCAL BAR MEMBERSHIP DUES AND MANDATORY FEES SURVEY



If you were looking to buy a car, you'd probably invest in a blue book. But if you're looking to refine your bar's dues structure, nothing beats purple. The expanded 2007 State and Local Bar Dues Survey breaks down and analyzes the revenue and benefits structures of more than 200 bar associations, forming a sound basis for any dues-related decision your bar makes. The survey features individual and aggregate statistics and analysis, including program trends, success rates, and assessments. \$29.95.

Available as a PDF only. Order at <http://www.abastore.org>.

# Chair's Column ...

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participate in the way that best suit their needs, be that as committee volunteer, newsletter author, e-mail discussion group participant (or lurker)—whatever helps you get the most value from your NABE Comm membership.

Stayed tuned for more specifics about all of this. And know that the strategic plan is a living document, not something we'll wrap up in a year's time. We're just getting started. Fortunately for you, you have a great executive council to carry this work forward. And fortunately for all of us, NABE Comm has a great talent pool—including you—from which to draw future council members.

Finally, I want to urge those who haven't already done so to register now for the 2007 Communications Workshop in Philadelphia (*see Mark Tarasiewicz's update on Page 2*). Take a look at the program and you'll know why this promises to be one of the best workshops ever. And you know what they say about Philadelphia—it's a fun city. Hope to see you all there! ■

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## Take Your Seat ...

(Continued from Page 4)

Lanier emphasized the importance of confirming information from reliable and appropriate parties. The communications team should not write articles about legislative issues without coordinating with the governmental affairs team.

### How do you deal with a "crazy" leader?

The audience, obviously familiar with this issue, chuckled as Sashin asked this question. Remember that at the end of the day, bar work is still a business and dealing with all leaders pays your bills. While there is no clear-cut answer, the panelists suggested ways to minimize the problem:

- Solicit input from staff when identifying prospective leaders by evaluating committee members' participation. Share this information with the president and president-elect, who will influence future leader decisions.
- Consider recycling leaders. Bar leaders often see their volunteer leadership as a "vacation." There is always an effective leader who has a difficult time letting go. Utilize this leader in a "second season of service."
- Remember, young lawyers are the up and comers. Keep an eye out for a young star, eager to move into the world of the "big bar." ■

## 2007-2008 Communications Section Officers and Executive Council

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# Success ...

(Continued from Page 6)

- Ghostbusting—Don't stay so tied to the past that you can't make the transition to the present, much less the future.
- Refocusing—People have a hard time making change.
- Feedback—Listen, hear what people are saying, go through processes.
- Piloting—Don't do anything drastically new without testing (think Classic Coke!).
- Alienation—Be able to separate yourself enough to know where the change needs to be. Your value as a leader is in your ability to step back and recognize places where change is needed.
- Benchmarking—You must be able to measure your successes.
- Outsourcing—And, on the other hand, insourcing. You might be able to insource some things that were outsourced.
- Seek and Destroy—Figure out what went wrong or what isn't working within an organization and get rid of it. Don't go for the "quick fix."
- Layering—Review your processes. Where are the layers of work?
- Discounting.
- Intrapreneuring—This is internal, not external. What are you doing to innovate in your organization?
- Joint Venture.
- Goal Ratcheting—Continuously set new goals. When you achieve one level of success, look for the next level.
- Frosting—Do good fences make good neighbors? Sometimes it is important to tear down those walls and get people to work together.
- Process Mapping—Make graphs of how things get done. Sometimes looking at processes in black and white helps you see where there is an opportunity for improvement.
- Grandfathering—Whenever you are making changes, do not hurt the people who are already there. Make changes going forward.
- Phasing—Phase new initiatives in. This provides flexibility as well as an opportunity to continuously see how it is going and evaluate the need for change.
- Lagniappe—This term from Louisiana translates to “surprise and delight” in customer service. Do something extra, something unexpected, for your customers. Something beyond saying thank you (which is always important).
- Epitaph Questions—What do you want to be remembered for? Can you reduce it to just a few words?
- Order your "crisis du jour"—Critical situations provide opportunities to make good changes.
- Effort versus Result—Be careful to not just spin your wheels. Judge your organization's activities on results.
- Are you in to win, place, or show?
- Search for Waldo—Set an aspirational goal that you want to attain. Search out what it is that you want to become.
- Zeitgeist—As a leader and as an organization, what do you want to be? Where do you want to go?

Angel reiterated that change is difficult but that by owning and sharing a vision for success, it is attainable. He closed by reminding the audience that everything is always in transition, so ... once you declare victory, the success begins eroding and the opportunity for change and setting new goals puts the process back to work!■