



Session Topics

A Sampling of Presentations by
Learning Strategist & Meetings Coach
Aaron Wolowiec

Meet Aaron.

Aaron Wolowiec is an award-winning learning strategist and meetings coach for leading trade associations and individual membership societies across the United States.

Committed to the latest research and trends on learning, intentional networking environments and meaningful transfer exercises, he launched Event Garde, a professional development consultancy, in 2011.

Download Aaron's [headshot](#) and [bio](#).



Option 1: Choose a session.

Select from the most popular session topics Aaron and his colleagues are currently delivering at industry conferences.

Option 2: Customize a session.

Use these sample topics as inspiration, along with member feedback, to customize a session with Aaron for your next event.



What you can expect.



Learn

An active partnership designed to help learners personalize and process new content.



Network

An intentional networking environment that results in the growth and development of learners.



Transfer

An educational experience that supports application and post-session behavior change in the workplace.

Session List (for both keynotes & breakouts)

- ✓ *9 Secrets to Building a Volunteer Surplus*
- ✓ *2018 Meetings Report: Findings & Trends*
- ✓ *Association Learner: Extreme Skeptic or Eternal Optimist*
- ✓ *Creating Connection in an Era of Disconnect*
- ✓ *Designing a Sustainable Event Plan*
- ✓ *Diving Deep into the Theory & Practice of Design Thinking*
- ✓ *Engaging Learners: Successfully Designing Engaging Learning*
- ✓ *Environment Matters: Engaging the Five Senses*
- ✓ *Event Strategy & Operations: Building from the Ground Up*
- ✓ *Healthy by Association: Health & Wellness for Busy Professionals*
- ✓ *Jumpstarting the D&I Discussion*
- ✓ *Payoff Point: Transforming Ideas into Action*
- ✓ *Results-driven Event Marketing for the Discerning Attendee*
- ✓ *Savvy Sponsorship Solicitation*
- ✓ *Under Pressure: Navigating Extreme Association Trends*
- ✓ *Under-performing Programs: Seeking Out Hidden Pain Points*



9 Secrets to Building a Volunteer Surplus

As it turns out, shoddy outcomes and unreliable volunteers can be the exception rather than the rule. Although the benefits of a successful volunteer management program are many and varied, the complexities should not be underestimated. Given the right approach, however, the investment can be well worth it. In this session, examine strategies to ensure your association makes it easy, enjoyable and beneficial for your volunteers to give back – and you will be rewarded tenfold.

Takeaways:

- ❑ Describe current volunteer management challenges.
- ❑ Explore the nine secrets to building a volunteer surplus, ranging from objective-setting to evaluation.
- ❑ Develop an action plan for improving your association's volunteer management program.



2018 Meetings Report: Findings & Trends

Optional co-facilitator: Kevin Whorton

Sometimes the most valuable information is sourced from your peers. In this session, we'll unearth the meetings, education and professional development practices of 382 associations in 12 participating state societies of association executives from a survey conducted in January/February 2018.

Key findings are focused on meetings planned or held, professional speakers, major meetings, speaker preparation for major meetings, evaluations and profiles of both the top education staffer and the organization itself.

Takeaways:

- ❑ Identify the common practices of associations in speaker selection, preparation and costs.
- ❑ Access benchmarks for the annual structure of education programs, as well as the size, attendance and budget of association major meetings.
- ❑ Examine the profile of organizations and how well they serve their membership through training program participation.



Association Learner: Extreme Skeptic or Eternal Optimist?

It's easy to be dismissive. For some of us, that's become our default. Blame it on our childhood or those lessons learned along the way. But if we continue to participate in each new learning opportunity with a skeptical mind, we're closing ourselves off to the possibility of what could be. We dismiss the entire book before giving the first full chapter a chance. In the end, challenging problems require creative solutions. But if you always do what you've always done, you will always get what you've always got. In this Ted-style presentation (which happens to be an incredibly powerful kick-off session!), we explore what it means to see the good in association learning and to open ourselves up to the possibilities that lie ahead.

Takeaways:

- ☐ Examine the experience of an association learner.
- ☐ Compare skeptic and optimist mindsets.
- ☐ Consider implications for future learning and networking opportunities.



Creating Connection in an Era of Disconnect

Co-facilitated by: Lindsay Gross, LMSW, CTF/QT, CLEA

Millennials often struggle to remain engaged in traditional learning/workplace environments. Uncovering and leveraging the strengths and unique characteristics of millennials will not only elevate member engagement and strengthen your workforce, but also improve your organization's relevance. This session promises a fresh look at the generational discussion, opportunities to hear participant successes/struggles and tactics that may be immediately applied for quick wins.

Takeaways:

- ❑ Discuss basic background information about millennial adults.
- ❑ Explore both myths and truths about millennials.
- ❑ Identify strategies for leveraging millennial strengths.
- ❑ Examine opportunities for staying relevant in the age of millennials.



Designing a Sustainable Event Plan

Optional co-facilitator: Kate Pojeta, CMP

Events drive both innovation and education. Planning sustainable events generally reduces the harmful impact of events on the environment, improves the financial outcomes for organizations and supports thriving communities. Specifically, the adoption of environmentally responsible practices can reduce the consumption of resources and can position the host organization as a responsible business. During this session, consider the primary benefits of sustainable events and begin to design a sustainable event plan for your organization.

Takeaways:

- ☐ List the benefits of sustainable events.
- ☐ Explore an association event case study.
- ☐ Examine sustainability lessons learned.
- ☐ Develop the initial framework of a sustainable event plan.



Diving Deep into the Theory & Practice of Design Thinking

Co-facilitated by: Lowell Aplebaum, CAE

In an association world of ever-increasing competition, of customers who seem to have less time and read fewer communications, of generational and societal shifts that are quickly impacting organizational structure, our associations have to stand out in order to grow. In fact, our associations have to produce the right solutions for the right members in the right format, all while generating experiences and interactions that are easy, positive and, where possible, fun. And we can't rely on the long-standing premise that what we create will be an evergreen solution - instead, we must continually experiment, prototype, learn and grow.

Takeaways:

- ❑ Examine the basic tenants of the design thinking approach.
- ❑ Workshop your own member-focused experience with facilitator feedback and support.
- ❑ Develop an actionable plan to make further member-centric improvements upon return to the office.



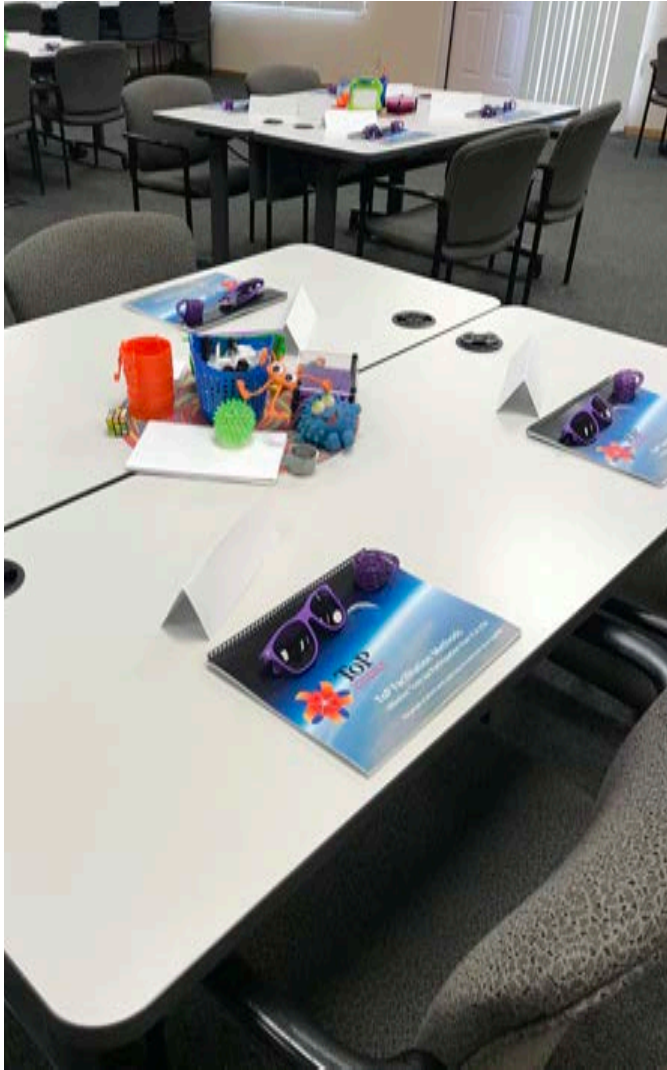
Engaging Learners: Successfully Designing Engaging Learning

Optional co-facilitator: Tracy King, MA, CAE, CFD, CVEP

We want our speakers to punch up the engagement in their sessions, but we often struggle securing their buy-in and follow-through. And, sadly, the passive speaker checklist disseminated with the best of intentions just doesn't result in meaningful action. As we know, waning engagement can take a serious toll on the attendee experience - which ultimately impacts your brand, your attendance and, subsequently, your revenue. So, what can we do? Whether you're a meeting planner, a learning designer, a supplier or a speaker, this session is for you. We'll tap into [this eBook](#) and dig deeply into the central tenets of learner engagement.

Takeaways:

- ☐ Identify what learner engagement is not.
- ☐ Define what learner engagement is and how to tap it.
- ☐ Explore quick win learning formats.
- ☐ Examine strategies for working with speakers.



Environment Matters: Engaging the Five Senses

Optional co-facilitator: Lindsay Gross, LMSW, CTF/QT, CLEA

Whether you're leading a full-day strategic planning retreat or a 75-minute breakout session, the environment plays an important role in setting the tone for the meeting. Ignore the environment and you're affecting both the first impression of your participants and their ability to effectively engage with your content. The more deeply you encode the experience by engaging all five senses, the more likely your participants are to engage in and remember both the experience and the content. During this session, we'll explore tactics both you and your speakers can easily put into practice to amp up the effectiveness of your facilitated experiences.

Takeaways:

- ☐ Examine why environment matters.
- ☐ Identify tactics to encourage a more innovative learning or facilitation environment.
- ☐ Consider approaches for coaching speakers.



Event Strategy & Operations: Building from the Ground Up

Chances are, aside from dues, your major annual meeting comprises a significant portion of your organization's annual operating revenue. So what does it say about the seriousness with which you approach your organization's long-term viability, let alone the quality of the attendee experience you hope to create, without first establishing a solid foundation upon which to build your event? In this session, we explore what it means to inherit an event, as well as the ideal intervals and tactics for auditing an event.

Takeaways:

- ❑ Create events with a strategic purpose.
- ❑ Utilize technology to improve the bottom line and increase attendee satisfaction.
- ❑ Examine financial management, stakeholder management and event design.



Healthy by Association: Health & Wellness for Busy Professionals

Optional co-facilitator: Angela Pelc

Healthy by Association launched in 2017. HBA is an online Facebook community for association and hospitality professionals, known as #GoalGetters, to set goals, share workout accomplishments, exchange healthy recipes and, above all, stay motivated. After a year, HBA has nearly 400 members, and features daily posts, weekly video chats and member contests, a challenge coin program and a special line of apparel. In this session, we'll use HBA as a lens for exploring health and wellness opportunities within your association.

Takeaways:

- ☐ Examine health and wellness for meeting attendees.
- ☐ Explore tactics for engaging meeting attendees in health and wellness initiatives.
- ☐ Define health and wellness for association staff.
- ☐ List tactics for engaging association staff in health and wellness initiatives.



Jumpstarting the D&I Discussion

Co-facilitator: Trevor Mitchell, MBA, CAE

Many of today's associations are struggling with diversity and inclusion (D&I) as a strategic focus. Often, the challenge resides in initiating the conversation. With this struggle comes the inability to meet the many diverse needs of association members, which has a long and profound impact on both the association and its industry. In an increasingly diverse landscape, we need to be more prudent than ever to develop and deploy quality programs, products and services to diverse customers. Otherwise, our competitors will beat us to the punch, rendering us irrelevant.

Takeaways:

- ❑ Examine the challenges association professionals face in jumpstarting the D&I discussion within their organizations.
- ❑ Explore the outcomes of two associations who have successfully engaged in this strategic D&I dialogue.
- ❑ Develop a simple game plan for initiating the D&I discussion within your own organization.



Payoff Point: Transforming Ideas into Action

It's been a busy few days. You're likely drained and eager to return home. While you're about to walk away with a lot of information and many new connections, the office promises countless demands, long hours and high stress. When will you find the time to organize your takeaways and develop a game plan for leveraging this newfound content, competence and connections? There's no better time than the present! During this session, gain simple tools and participate in guided interaction designed to help you find the payoff point – your whole reason for attending this conference in the first place. With an action plan in place, it will become significantly easier to not only identify your return on investment, but to truly transform ideas into action. Join us for this fast-paced, action-packed capstone experience that's both fun and productive.

Takeaways:

- ☐ Engage in peer discussions.
- ☐ Identify key takeaways and connections.
- ☐ Develop a simple action plan.
- ☐ Examine opportunities for transfer support.



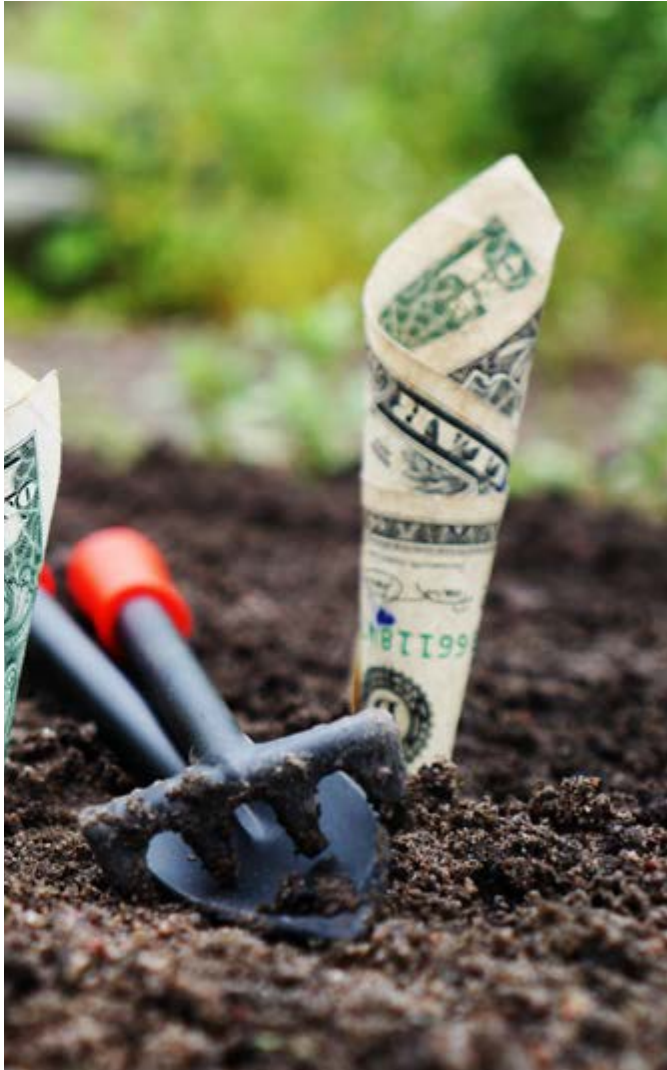
Results-driven Event Marketing for the Discerning Attendee

Co-facilitator: Scott Oser

Capturing your industry's slice of meetings revenue requires, among other tactics, results-driven event marketing. This type of marketing occurs in three distinct phases: pre-planning, implementation and post-activity. When intentionally designed, developed and implemented, the right event marketing can cause both attendance and revenue to soar. During this session, examine each phase of this three-part marketing plan, along with simple application ideas to jumpstart your journey.

Takeaways:

- ❑ Explore the pre-planning marketing questions you should ask in advance of your next event.
- ❑ Examine the key considerations that will set your marketing plan in motion during the implementation phase.
- ❑ Identify the action steps post-activity designed to make the most of your marketing efforts in the short- and long-term.



Savvy Sponsorship Solicitation

Sponsoring programs, products and services can be a significant source of revenue for most associations; however, our traditional approaches are resulting in both lost revenue and disengaged sponsors, particularly as sponsorship targets have increased and sponsorship budgets have decreased. During this session, examine nearly two decades of sponsorship lessons learned, including some of the most innovative tips, tricks and tools of the trade relative to sponsorship inventory and marketing; packaging and pricing; lead generation and maintenance; pitching and closing; and return on investment (ROI).

Takeaways:

- ❑ Identify the five steps to growing association sponsorships.
- ❑ Explore the best-kept secrets from each of the five steps.
- ❑ Crowdsource solutions to your current sponsorship challenges.
- ❑ Consider implementation opportunities within your own organization.



Under Pressure: Navigating Extreme Association Trends

Co-facilitator: Scott Oser

Countless authors and thought leaders have claimed to have identified the next big association trend. From the end of the traditional membership model to the rise of the social media imperative, it can be confusing who to listen to. This interactive session will serve as an open, honest and safe space to discuss some of the most highly debated subjects in the association industry today. Walk away with a simple strategy for evaluating the appropriateness of the next big meetings and events trend within the context of your association.

Takeaways:

- ☐ Examine an extreme trend case study.
- ☐ Practice vetting an extreme trend.
- ☐ Explore the extreme trends affecting your education portfolio.



Under-performing Programs: Seeking Out Hidden Pain Points

As education providers, we routinely inherit programs with unclear or undefined outcomes; we operate in an increasingly competitive professional development environment with fewer resources and budget-strapped attendees; and we consistently grapple with unrealistic revenue and attendance targets while forgetting to sunset programs that are past their prime. During this session, we'll identify the hidden pain points most likely to result in an under-performing education program. We'll then leverage an innovative framework for knowledge sharing, known as The Solution Room, to provide each participant with a brief but powerful consulting session on a personalized pain point of their choosing. Participants can expect to walk away with a variety of ideas and resources, resulting in a stronger brand, an elevated reputation and more loyal participation.

Takeaways:

- ❑ Identify the hidden pain points most likely to result in an under-performing education program.
- ❑ Explore ideas and resources that can be immediately applied to a current under-performing education program.

Book Aaron.

For more information about one or more of the session topics outlined in this catalog or to book Aaron for a future program, please contact Sara Krueger, Event Garde manager of team resources, by email at sara@eventgarde.com or by phone at 773.330.7884.

[Testimonials](#), [news articles](#) and [blog posts](#) featuring Aaron and the Event Garde team may be accessed on our [website](#).



Compensation & Concessions

Standard compensation:

- ✓ *Speaker fee (negotiated based on a variety of factors)*
- ✓ *Expenses for associated presentation supplies*
- ✓ *Travel expenses, as applicable*
 - *Airfare*
 - *Ground transportation*
 - *Lodging*
 - *Meals*
 - *Parking*

Common concessions:

- ✓ *Complimentary conference attendance*
- ✓ *Personal introductions to prospective clients*
- ✓ *Informal opportunities (e.g., roundtable discussion or genius bar) to showcase programs, products and services*
- ✓ *Testimonials from both CEO and meeting planner*
- ✓ *Featured article and/or blog post*



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