2026 TNSAE CONVENTION + TRADE SHOW

Education Sessions & Speakers

December 2–3, 2026 | Embassy Suites Franklin Cool Springs

WEDNESDAY · DECEMBER 2

9:00–10:00 A.M.

Building Blocks of a Better Committee, Board and Team

Tara Puckey, MBA, FASAE, CAE, CMP, Founder & CEO, GrayRails Consulting and President & CEO, Radio Television Digital News Association

Is your team, committee or board clicking together like a perfectly built structure or clunking along with mismatched pieces? Strong collaboration and communication are the foundation of any high-performing group, and in this interactive session, you'll discover how to strengthen both while building something special.

Using building blocks as both metaphor and hands-on tool, we'll explore what it takes to build trust, align around shared goals and adapt to change. Whether you lead a staff of one to three, chair a volunteer committee or serve on a board, you'll gain fresh insights into group dynamics, leadership styles and the invisible structures that support effective teamwork. Come ready to build, reflect and leave with practical strategies for assembling a more connected, resilient group: one brick at a time.

10:15–11:05 A.M. AND 11:10 A.M.–12:15 P.M.

Your Next Revenue Engine, Part 1

Christine Saunders, CM | President & Founder, Halmyre

Most associations are sitting on more revenue potential than they realize.

Not because they're missing programs or ideas. But because the way they've defined and positioned what they offer hasn't kept pace with what the market will actually support, and the assumptions behind those decisions haven't been seriously examined in years.

That gap costs more than revenue. It shapes how your organization is perceived, what you're able to invest in, and how confidently you lead into the future.

Christine Saunders has spent years helping associations across North America find exactly where those gaps live and face the assumptions driving them. Her work isn't about pricing formulas. It's about helping leaders see their organization's value more clearly — and lead from that clarity.

This session is built around one question most associations haven't asked directly enough:

Are we making revenue decisions from strategy — or from habit, comfort, and fear of pushback?

It's a harder question than it sounds. And the answers tend to surface conversations that are long overdue.

What we'll explore together:

- Where are we undervaluing what we offer — and what is that actually costing us?
- Which assumptions about pricing and value are rooted in strategy versus history?
- Are we funding the future of this organization or protecting its past?
- Where are we overdelivering without clear strategic return?

- What would we build differently if we were starting today?

Whether your role is in executive leadership, member engagement, or events and sponsorships, this session has something for you. We'll cover some pricing strategy fundamentals up front, then you'll think out loud alongside people facing the same pressures, challenge assumptions you may not have named yet, and leave seeing your organization's revenue picture differently.

1:45–2:35 P.M.

Found or Forgotten: The New AI Race for Thought Leadership

Charles Stanisce | Customer Growth Strategist, Novi AMS

Associations have spent decades building industry-trusted knowledge. The problem is that your future audience won't be engaging with you. Their AI assistants will. Those assistants now shape how people find answers and engage professionally. Right now, most of what you know sits behind member-only reports, community threads, and networking events. AI can't easily read any of it. That leaves less credible but more accessible sources to shape your industry's conversation. This session shows how your association can become the voice your audience turns to. You'll learn a framework for deciding what content to share publicly, what to keep at a premium, and how to govern and promote both so you can maximize your influence.

- Understand the role AI now plays in people's decisions, from searching for answers to choosing which association to join
- Learn how your association can become the trusted voice your audience turns to for answers, and the community they want to be part of
- Apply practical tactics for deciding what to publish, what to keep as a member benefit, and how to share your content effectively

2:50–3:50 P.M.

Better Meetings, Together: Associations, CVBs/DMOs & Hotels at the Table

Interactive panel discussion

Association professionals, CVBs/DMOs and hotel partners each bring a unique perspective to creating successful meetings and events. This interactive panel brings those perspectives together for a candid conversation about what we're seeing, what's changing and what's working.

We'll explore trends shaping today's meetings and events - from tighter budgets to the growing focus on experiences, engagement, networking and meaningful connection. Where are groups finding creative ways to save or shift dollars? How can those dollars create an experience attendees will remember, encourage connection, or give them a chance to experience more of the property or destination?

We'll tap into the experience and ideas within our own community, sharing examples and fresh approaches that associations, CVBs/DMOs and hotel partners are seeing and trying. It's also a reminder to make the most of these relationships throughout the planning process. From local restaurants and unexpected spaces to creative activities, budget solutions and new approaches to attendee engagement, your partners may have ideas, connections and resources that can help you think differently about your next event.

Come ready to share what you're seeing, learn from others in the room and leave with new ideas for creating memorable meetings while making every dollar work harder.

WEDNESDAY WRAP-UP | AFTERNOON RECEPTION

We're not quite done with Day 1! At 4 p.m., we'll head out for an afternoon reception sponsored by Visit Franklin, with transportation provided by Gray Line of Tennessee.

And there's a little extra fun waiting! The first 80 guests through the reception doors will receive a pickleball paddle!

Join fellow attendees, exhibitors and speakers for a fun afternoon of conversation, laughter and connection. It's a great way to wrap up our first day together, and you won't want to miss it! **And, don’t forget to wear your comfy shoes. We’re going to have some fun!

THURSDAY · DECEMBER 3

9:00–10:00 A.M.

Trends Shaping the Association Landscape

Lowell Aplebaum, EdD, FASAE, CAE | IAF Certified™ Professional Facilitator; CEO, Vista Cova

The association environment is changing quickly, and boards are being asked to govern through a period of increasing complexity. Workforce shifts, changing expectations of leadership, emerging technologies, economic pressures, and broader societal change are all influencing the decisions associations will need to make in the years ahead.

This session will explore several of the trends shaping associations today and consider what they may mean for governance and board leadership. Together, we will look at where these forces may challenge long-standing assumptions, where boards may need to ask different questions, and how governance practices may need to evolve as organizations navigate greater uncertainty. Participants will leave with a broader view of the environment around them and a set of questions they can use to help their boards stay focused on the future while continuing to govern well in the present.

11:00 A.M.–12:05 P.M.

Leading with Curiosity: The Power of Inquiry

Lowell Aplebaum, EdD, FASAE, CAE | IAF Certified™ Professional Facilitator; CEO, Vista Cova

Curiosity is one of the most useful tools a leader can bring into a conversation. The questions we ask influence what we learn, whose perspectives we hear, and how deeply we understand the challenges and opportunities in front of us. In complex environments, the quality of our inquiry can have a significant impact on the quality of the decisions that follow.

In this session, we will explore curiosity and inquiry as practical leadership skills that can strengthen conversations with boards, staff, members, and other stakeholders. Participants will consider how different kinds of questions can open up thinking, surface assumptions, create space for new perspectives, and help groups move toward stronger decisions. Along the way, we will look at ways to build inquiry more intentionally into everyday leadership practice so that curiosity becomes part of how we learn, engage others, and navigate what comes next.

1:05–1:55 P.M.

Peer Power Hour: From Ideas to Action

Peer-led closing conversation

After two days of learning, sharing and connecting, we'll close Convention by turning the conversation over to the collective experience in the room.

This interactive session will give us an opportunity to reflect on the ideas and perspectives that resonated throughout Convention, explore them a little further and learn from how our peers are approaching similar opportunities and challenges within their own organizations.

Together, we'll connect the dots between what we've heard and what it could look like in practice—sharing experiences, asking questions and identifying ideas worth taking back to our teams and organizations.

THURSDAY WRAP-UP | TRADE SHOW DAY!

Make time to visit the trade show floor and explore the silent auction throughout the day. Convention concludes at 3:00 p.m. with the silent auction closing and prizes announced!