Best Boards Conference

Thursday, March 9.

The Best Boards conference is an all-day program designed by Rice University to help nonprofit board members and staff work together more effectively. The program is valuable to both new and seasoned board members and nonprofit executives.

**Date:** Thursday, March 9, 9 a.m.-4 p.m. (breakfast and lunch included)

**Fee:** $185

**Group Discount Fee** (three or more from the same organization): $135/person

**AFP member Discount Fee:** $135/person

**CEUs:** 0.6

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**Keynote Speaker: Tony Chase**

Chase's deep-rooted relationship with our community provides an indispensable perspective of Houston’s business economy. Chase is an owner of the Marriott Hotel at George Bush Intercontinental Airport and is currently the chairman and CEO of ChaseSource LP. He also serves on nonprofit boards including the Houston Endowment, Greater Houston Partnership, Texas Medical Center, University of Texas School of Architecture Dean's Advisory Council, MD Anderson Board of Visitors, St. John's School Board of Trustees, Houston Zoo Development, Foreign Affairs Museum Council and KIPP Schools. He has also served as Deputy Chairman of the Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas.
Afternoon Plenary Session: Successfully Navigating Messaging Milestones

The relevance of an organization’s mission and impact of its services pass through milestones of messaging that contribute to both its success and the strength of its bottom line. This presentation explores clearly defined benchmarks experienced by organizations of all sizes and the messaging strategies necessary for successfully navigating ever evolving life cycles.

Kelli B. Newman, APR, President, Newman & Newman, brings 30 years of communication experience to her position as President of Newman & Newman, where her responsibilities center on formulating messaging strategies, developing communication plans and producing communication tools for both nonprofit and for-profit clients.

Breakout Session: Evaluation as a Planning Tool and an Assessment Strategy: Basic Concepts for Measuring Results

Measuring success is a complex process, and evaluation is an integral part of every nonprofit’s strategic planning and program implementation. Participants will evaluate how to find, interpret and communicate data.

Dr. Catherine Oleksiw, Measured Transitions LLC, currently has a management consulting practice offering technical services and coaching primarily to nonprofits and government entities. She earned her Ph.D. in educational psychology from Columbia University.

Breakout Session: Interim Executive Leadership

This session explores the pros and cons of hiring an interim executive leader, factors to consider in deciding whether to hire an interim versus a permanent leader, how to prepare for an interim leader, and some tips on making the most of an interim leader’s time with your organization.

Claudia Gee Vassar, Claudia Gee Vassar Consulting is a nonprofit professional specializing in intentionally interim executive leadership. She has served as an interim ED in a variety of nonprofit sectors and with organizations at various stages of growth.

Breakout Session: Upcoming Changes to the Presentation of Not-For-Profit Financial Statements

This session will provide participants an understanding of the recently issued FASB Accounting Standards Update, Presentation of Financial Statement of Not-For-Profit Entities, and review key provisions of the new standard, highlight significant changes from current practice and identify the effective date and transition options.

Laurie Gutierrez, Audit Partner, joined Blazek & Vetterling in 2003 and became a partner of the firm in 2008. She earned a bachelor of business administration from Texas A&M University. She is a member of the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants, the Texas Society of CPA’s, and the Houston Chapter of CPA’s.

Mimi Holt, Audit Partner, joined Blazek & Vetterling in 1994 and became a partner of the firm in 2007. She earned her bachelor’s degree magna cum laude from the University of St. Thomas. She is a member of the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants, Texas Society of CPA’s, and the Houston Chapter of CPA’s. Holt serves on the audit committee of Catholic Charities USA.

Breakout Session: Optimizing and Building a Sustainable Board of Directors

This session walks attendees through the steps of building and assessing the board of directors. Using real scenarios and recent leadership data, attendees uncover techniques used when developing a board of directors, re-inventing a current board, and delivering board orientations that work.

April Day, President, Women’s Business Enterprise Alliance (WBEA), increases opportunities for women-owned businesses and corporate members through education programs and professional networking at WBEA. Day holds a bachelor of arts in psychology from the University of Houston and an MBA from Our Lady of the Lake University.

What Board Members Should Know About Social Media

In this session, attendees will learn how to effectively use their social media networks to benefit the organization(s) they serve, and what not to do when using social media which may reflect poorly on themselves and the nonprofit.

Lisa M. Chmiola, Director of Major Gifts and Planned Giving, St. Agnes Academy. She is responsible for transformational fundraising, particularly related to capital campaigns and the 1906 Society for legacy donors. She earned a bachelor’s in journalism at UH and a master’s in public relations from the University of Louisiana at Lafayette.

Engage Board Members Using Strengths Empowerment

In this session, participants will learn how to use talents and strengths drive a person’s behavior and accomplishments, optimize strengths to play a pivotal role in engagement and team dynamics, develop a strengths profile for each board member, appreciate the four domains of talent, and utilize and understand the benefits of a team talent map.

Marianita Paddock Snodgrass, Executive Coach, Positively Your Coach!, is an executive coach, specializing in fundraising assessments, strategic plans, staff recruitment and building strengths-based advancement managers and teams for organizations. She holds a BA in journalism from Texas A&M University with a minor in marketing and Spanish.