

Association Executive

THINK TANK

THINKWORKS 2026



Think Tank: *The Fast-paced Collaborative Exchange*

- STRATEGIC GOVERNANCE
- MEMBER ENGAGEMENT
- COMMUNICATIONS
- NEW GRADUATES/EARLY CAREERISTS

Strategic Governance

- Prioritizing vs Putting Out Fires
- Board Engagement
- Governance Effectiveness
- Leadership Capacity
- Leadership Burnout
- From Operational to Strategic Discussions/Actions
- Keeping Board/Volunteers Focused
- Keeping Strategic Goals/Objectives on Track
- Leading Strategic or Operational Planning
- Succession planning

What's one question or obstacle related to Strategic Governance you're hoping to explore in your breakout?

Succession planning for senior staff

Recruiting board members

What elements of succession planning are most useful

Leadership burnout

CEO burnout

Engagement of early career members

Succession planning for board and staff

Moving the board out of operational detail

What's one question or obstacle related to Strategic Governance you're hoping to explore in your breakout?

How to keep Board members engaged and responsive when they are incredibly busy

Succession planning for key volunteers.

Moving up the strategic governance food chain

Getting presidents to focus on strategic plan and not own agenda

Engaging young members

Duties for governance Committee to be more effective and not on 2-3 persons

Balancing staff and board as the drivers of strategy

Do we have the right people and structure at the board level to lead change?

What's one question or obstacle related to Strategic Governance you're hoping to explore in your breakout?

Strategic planning -
remaining actionable when
times are rapidly changing

Online community platform,
conference, webinars,
committees and
volunteering

Member Engagement



When you think of membership engagement, what ways does your organization have for members/your audience to engage?

Online community

CE events

Engage various segments with different needs and interests

Online community platform

In our listening campaigns via email.
Great engagement

CE EVENTS

Prop fuel

Committees Webinars
Monthly mingles Task forces
Delivering education

When you think of membership engagement, what ways does your organization have for members/your audience to engage?

Social platforms, volunterrism, virtual ce events, in person ce events

Conferences

CE events, listservs, social media

Large conferences, regional meetings, P10, social media, committees, advocacy

Social media wellness group

Webinars

Tailgates/Student Mixers

Social time at conferences

When you think of membership engagement, what ways does your organization have for members/your audience to engage?

Surveys, CE opportunities (including more interactive learning labs), Propfuel, committees

Pet events

Veterinary Day at the Capitol

Career Fairs

Committed, board meetings, networking at conferences

CE events, networking only events, committees, volunteering,

Email polling

Testimony at legislative hearings

When you think of membership engagement, what ways does your organization have for members/your audience to engage?

Power of 10

Case Study – Member Survey

In the past 24 months, which of the following ways have you engaged with the organization outside of using the programs from above? (Select all that apply)

- Spoke positively about the FelineVMA within my professional or personal networks. 63.4%
- Printed or distributed FelineVMA resources to caregivers (e.g. Client brochures, catfriendly.com, etc.). 53.3%
- Printed out FelineVMA resources for my practice to use. 51.7%
- Forwarded FelineVMA resources to my peers/colleagues (e.g., Guidelines, Toolkits, JFMS, website, etc.). 48.8%
- Recommended FelineVMA Membership to others. 45.5%
- Engaged (liked, commented, shared) with FelineVMA social media posts.
- Collaborated with other members I've met through the FelineVMA.
- Attended networking or community-building activities (either formal events hosted by FelineVMA or informal gatherings of members not hosted by FelineVMA).
- Volunteered my time in an established role (Board, Committees, Task Forces, Focus Group, formal representative to external organization, etc.).
- Provided content for the magazine/newsletter/website/Guidelines/resource.
- Helped mentor or advise another member I've met through the FelineVMA.
- Hosted a lunch and learn or equivalent training for my team on a recent Guideline/Toolkit from FelineVMA.
- Volunteered onsite at the Annual Conference.
- Moderated a FelineVMA webinar, podcast, and/or event.
- Spoke on behalf of FelineVMA at an event.
- Served as a Student Chapter Faculty Advisor.
- If you've volunteered your time in an unestablished role or engaged in other ways, please share specific details below:

Case Study – Member Survey

Follow up questions:

- How would you rate your overall level of engagement with FelineVMA?
- How would you compare your current level of engagement with FelineVMA to your desired level of engagement?
- What are the reasons that keep you from engaging with FelineVMA at your desired level? (Check all that apply)
- In your view, what could FelineVMA do differently to help increase your engagement with the organization?

Breakout Sessions



Communications

- Internal Communication Issues (Staff, Board)
- Improving outreach
- Everyone is time-poor; they aren't reading our information
- Remaining nimble; staying relevant in fast paced and changing times
- Small budgets; not enough time/staff
- Conference/Education Engagement – creating appeal and demonstrating value
- Relaying info about all our programs that is read/absorbed
- Messaging Tactics:
 - Have these changed over time?
 - Different approaches to different audiences?
 - Will a mobile app help?
 - Quick ideas for a small budget (e.g., AB testing subject lines; cute vs professional)



What are the top communication challenges that apply to your organization (choose up to 3)?



11 Our communications tend to focus more on activities than on impact or outcomes



4 We lack sufficient staff time, expertise, or resources dedicated to communications



9 We don't tailor messages for different audiences



3 Internal communication between staff, leadership, and the board are not always aligned



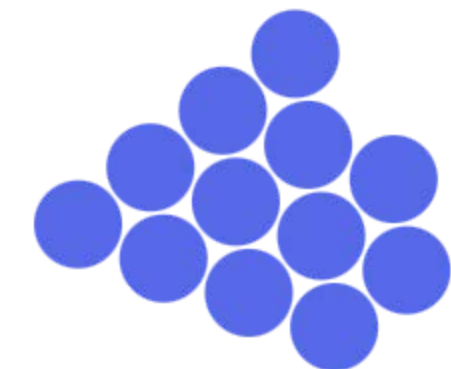
3 Communications are often reactive rather than guided by a clear strategy



2 Key messages are not consistently used across chnnels



3 Even with a dedicated communications team/plan, messages are still siloed or inconsistent



12 We don't consistently measure whether our communications are effective

New Graduates

- Associations struggle most because new graduates don't clearly see how membership meets their immediate career needs in a way that feels worth the cost and effort.
- Perceived value gap – don't see how it helps *right now*
- Benefits may feel long-term (mid-career or established professionals)
- Cost sensitivity (debt, competing membership/conferences for their \$)
- Low awareness – might not understand how it will be meaningful to them
- How to engage and RETAIN them as members?
- What do you offer that works (or doesn't) e.g., reduced/free membership?
 - Do you look at the data to see if they join after the reduced/free membership?
- Have you surveyed them and asked what they want/need?
- Do they know what they need?
- Changing landscape of/for new graduates

What do you see as the biggest obstacle your organization faces in attracting new graduates to become members or attend events?

Relevance

Relevance

Value for the price

Cost and time

Value and time

Family obligations

connecting

Reminding them it's okay to join

What do you see as the biggest obstacle your organization faces in attracting new graduates to become members or attend events?

They are less interested in spending their free time on work related events unless they are CE

Understanding the value

Time to dedicate

Tough competition

Relevance and budgets

Don't know what they need

Relevance,, competing for time, find community online

Having the right offerings

What do you see as the biggest obstacle your organization faces in attracting new graduates to become members or attend events?

They don't receive a lot of time off so they have to choose wisely when to take vacation and spend time with family and friends

Value versus cost

Getting their attention- many like more segmented groups versus a state association

Breakout Sessions



Thank you

