



In the April "Bridges" column, I talked about my experience working with GWSAE board members, volunteers, and staff to significantly change and further improve our organization during the seven years I have been CEO. However, after expand-

period of time, then trust your instincts and go forward.

8. Be a constant dispenser of passion, show commitment to a dream, and do it with enthusiasm. Willingness to be a risk taker and an innovator is part of the equation.

9. Most people are change-averse. Accept that premise,

be sensitive to it, and work with it.

10. Ask for help more often than you do now. It's a sign of strength, not weakness.

14. Realize that you can't communicate enough. Use every opportunity to share the vision, passion, and dream.

15. Examine sacred cows, be honest about the results, and act accordingly.

16. Speed to market is often more important than perfection. As a regular activity, weigh speed to market against the need for perfection.

17. Twenty-first-century leaders must be catalysts for learning and builders of community. Walk that talk.

18. Rosabeth Moss Kantor, an internationally recognized thought leader who holds a chaired professorship at Harvard Business School, subscribes to the philosophy of IKIWISI (I know it when I see it). So do I.

19. Have as much fun as possible. And be visible about it — laugh and smile!

20. Realize that ideas are a dime a dozen and that it's *all in the execution*.

Lessons from *The Road We Traveled*

ing on this topic in a recent speech at the Leadership Conference of the Professional Convention Management Association, I was surprised at how many attendees were interested in the *personal* lessons I have learned over the years.

This special CEO issue of *Executive Update* — our second, thanks to the overwhelmingly enthusiastic response to our first award-winning CEO issue last June — seems an appropriate place to share my personal suggestions for leading successful organizations in an environment of constant change. Here's what I have learned:

1. It's essential to put a stake in the ground around a vision and values. This is a critical responsibility of the CEO.

2. Show pride in past accomplishments of those who came before; build on history while communicating a strong message for the future.

3. Focus on building organizational capacity and diversity — on the board, in the volunteer leadership, and among staff.

4. Simple is best — in developing, implementing, and communicating strategy — and in nearly everything the organization does.

5. People want to be involved with a winning organization. Be inclusive when planning and in celebrating success.

6. Living with confusion and ambiguity is not only okay, but also necessary in today's environment.

7. Don't overanalyze, naval gaze, or wait until you have all your ducks in a row before moving ahead. Do your due diligence, consult with others for a finite

My goal — and that of both this special issue of *Executive Update* and GWSAE as an organization — is to help you not only to succeed, but also to excel. I ask that you come forward with your advice to colleagues and to GWSAE about how association leaders can achieve the immensely important missions that drive their organizations every day.

11. Bring in outside thinkers — individuals not involved in your industry or profession on a day-to-day basis — and use their expertise.

12. FOCUS, FOCUS, FOCUS.

13. Never stop asking, "How can we be more nimble?"

My goal — and that of both this special issue of *Executive Update* and GWSAE as an organization — is to help you not only to succeed, but also to *excel*. While I am happy to share my thoughts, I ask that you, too, come forward with your advice to colleagues and to GWSAE about how association leaders can achieve the immensely important missions that drive their organizations every day. To get you started, we want your feedback — positive and negative — on the 17 features we've carefully chosen for this issue to address many of the most pressing topics challenging association CEOs today. After all, each of us is both teacher and student of association management — perhaps that is the most important "lesson."

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