



The Newsletter of CORPORATE RENEWAL

TURNAROUND MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION

Chicago/Midwest Chapter

From Our President

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Your Professional Growth—An Ambitious 2015 and a Continued Call to Arms



There is a moment of self-introspection that naturally arrives with the finality of each year. Did I complete what I set out to accomplish? What can I improve upon going forward? As referenced in my previous articles, at the onset of his or her tenure, each chapter president is tasked with deciding upon an organizational theme for the coming year. During my presidency, I've asked our membership to undertake ambitious goals, respectively and collectively, throughout 2015. My mantra has been "be ambitious" in all aspects of our lives. For too long, members of our industry have looked backwards at easier times that have long since passed. It should be axiomatic that an industry of turnaround professionals would refrain from tying our ambitions to circumstances outside of our control—yet this is exactly what too many of us do—we assume that "things are finally turning around; more opportunities are waiting just around the corner." But as we tell our own clients, if rain is not coming, go find water. There is simply no excuse for crossing your fingers and no replacement for hard work and creativity in your pursuit. It is with this mindset that opportunities in an evolving landscape must be discovered, and I ask our membership to continue our growth through hard work and creative thought.

Taking into account the many challenges we have faced and continue to face as an industry, I am incredibly proud to report that 2015 has been a most successful year for our chapter. That said, I conclude my final article not with a pat on the back but with a continued call to arms. And maybe it's not said enough—let's keep having fun as we grow together.

Our Chapter's Accomplishments in 2015

We continue to leave our mark on people and businesses throughout the country—and, as demonstrated by our recent award by TMA Global for Operational Excellence (Large Chapter), among two others, honors bestowed upon us this past fall at the TMA Annual in Scottsdale—our industry is taking notice. For our organization to continue to thrive, our chapter must be a place where professionals find real value, where membership in our organization is considered requisite to building a successful career in the turnaround industry. We accomplish this goal by providing quality content, meaningful educational experiences, and unique networking opportunities. We have abundantly succeeded in all areas over the past 12 months.

This past year, for the first time, our nationally renowned Executive Speaker Forum hosted two premium speakers—former U.S. Secretaries of Defense and CIA Directors, Dr. Robert Gates and Secretary Leon Panetta—who regaled an audience of 650 turnaround professionals and business leaders from around the country with practical lessons in navigating obstacles through positive leadership. In just a few short years, this event has become one of the marquee gatherings of turnaround professionals in the country—having featured former U.S. President George W. Bush, former British Prime Minister Tony Blair and former U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, among many others. There is no event more demonstrative of your chapter leadership's unrelenting resolve to provide relevant and premium content to our membership than this event. Special thanks to Conway McKenzie and, specifically my good friend Jeff Zappone, our premium event sponsor during this year's Executive Speaker Forum.

Our breakfast forums provided our membership with access to world renowned speakers who encountered highly publicized transitional events topical to our industry. These events included sitting Illinois Governor Bruce Rauner, the principals of MB Financial Bank, Big Ten Conference Commissioner James Delany and former Enron CFO Andrew Fastow. From bank mergers to massive corporate meltdowns to state budget crises to evolving media markets, the goal of providing quality content in a unique and relaxed atmosphere was well satisfied.

The events hosted by our TMA NOW committee continued to draw top-level industry leaders to speak at its events—such as Nancy Ross, Mike Egan and Faye Feinstein. These events are always phenomenally well attended and the hosts are particularly engaging. On a year-to-year basis, I consistently find our NOW committee events to be some of the most enjoyable networking and educational affairs sponsored by our organization. Likewise, our education committee provided meaningful seminars on both novel issues and rudimentary basics, both of which are equally important.

In review of our great accomplishments this past year, thank you to both our chapter sponsors and our committee members who continue to improve upon this great organization. I specifically want to take this opportunity to express the TMA's gratitude to Kobus van der Zel, a consummate professional who has selflessly driven our CTP program forward for the past several years. Although still very much a work in progress, Kobus and his efforts on behalf of TMA exemplifies my concept of "being ambitious." If you are a CTP or CTA, or are interested in the program—which I strongly recommend—please take a moment to thank Kobus for his tireless efforts on our collective behalf. I'm confident he would graciously accept a cup of coffee or a business referral as well.

A Call to Arms

Like a boat with no anchor, our industry, our organization and our careers refuse to stand still. We aspire to accomplish more this year than last year, and more next year than this because we aspire to build business and to properly serve our clients. These are simple goals with far reaching implications. How to we find and retain clients? How do we properly serve those clients?

I've discussed at length the reasons to leverage the TMA as your forum for business development and professional education, and it is my hope that you have taken my message to heart. My purpose is to remind our constituency to make goals, both small and large, and to act on these goals. Embracing an ambitious goal-oriented outlook is healthy, not only for your professional careers but also for your personal lives. As with exercising, take a holistic approach toward bettering yourself for the sole purpose of leading a more enriching life. Do right by yourselves by aiming high and following through. Your successes will endure longer than your misses, which will be unto themselves lessons. Make friends with your peers within our industry—and for this, there is no place better to do so than within TMA. And always remember to send business to one another when possible! If you look to make the TMA your marketplace, it will return the favor.

It has been my tremendous privilege to have served as your president this past year. I take my hat off to each of you who demonstrated commitment toward individual and communal excellence and I am indebted to you for your hard work. Those who know me best would agree that I am not one for riding off into the sunset, so I look forward to continuing our work for the betterment of TMA and the turnaround industry as a whole.

Stay ambitious, send work to one another and continue striving for greatness. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Owen Hamer", followed by a horizontal line extending to the right.