

CEO Succession: A Strategic Opportunity for Associations and Association Management Companies

Background

As board leaders and CEOs forecast the future of their associations, factors ranging from business model pressures to executive transitions to rapid technological and other shifts underscore the need to consider what skills and capacities will be needed to carry forward their strategic vision.

In this environment, association management companies have distinct operational advantages to offer to many self-managed associations. However, in what contexts, under what circumstances, and for what purposes do the leaders of associations that are not presently managed or otherwise supported by an AMC think about AMCs as a resource? Of those associations that have transitioned to AMC support, what attracted them and what AMC messages and capabilities compelled them?

To provide AMC leaders with additional intelligence, the AMC Institute and Vetted Solutions are collaborating to explore three windows of opportunity, or entry points, for engaging with self-managed, or standalone, associations:

THREE ENTRY POINTS

- CEO succession
- Integrated, or hybrid, management
- Consultative services

The Vetted Solutions x AMCI Research Series targets one report per topic. The first, exploring when, why, and how self-managed associations consider AMCs during CEO succession, is described here.

Research and Interviews

A combination of research and interviews will inform the report, which will include insights from

- staff and board leaders of organizations that have recently transitioned to AMC management or otherwise have useful perspectives to share
- AMC executives
- interim executives
- influencers (e.g., attorneys, CPAs, strategic planners)

Areas of inquiry include the following.

Environment and landscape

- What is the prevalence of succession plans among associations, and how are AMCs considered in that context?
- What factors have the greatest bearing on associations' strategic planning and business models?
- What environmental/future issues weigh heavily on association board leaders and CEOs, and what is their confidence level in the ability of the management structure to sustain growth?

Succession practices and experiences among standalone associations

- Are reflection, evaluation, and consideration of a re-set typically a part of a board's CEO transition planning and decision making? When they are part of the process, what are some of the insights and how are those applied to considering what management and resources will be needed to help an association reach its goals?
- In an executive transition, what strategic questions need to be asked as succession is considered, and how can AMCs play a bigger part of that dialogue?

Opportunities for AMCs

- Do association leaders think of AMCs as resources in any of these contexts: strategy making, succession planning, CEO transition? To what degree have standalone associations considered alternative management models, and if so, under what circumstances?
- What is the level of understanding of how an AMC can help associations during succession planning and CEO transitions? Understanding of the range of services?
- What offerings or advantages of AMCs resonate with association boards?

Case Studies or Sidebars

Case studies or sidebars will amplify, or illustrate, key points raised in the main report narrative. The goals of each concise piece will be to illustrate standalone-association perspectives on CEO succession and the related opportunities for AMCs. The content will speak directly to the AMC executive.

Provisional case studies or sidebars include:

- *X succession planning opportunities for AMCs* (and how to navigate them)
- *Supporting succession*: how an association benefited from AMC counsel or support during the executive-transition process
- *Strategic transition*: what AMCs can learn from an association’s strategic decision to move to AMC management
- *Opportunities in chapter and component management*: what AMC leaders can learn about identifying and approaching opportunities to manage component organizations
- *Influencer perspectives*: where influencers such as attorneys, CPAs, interim executives, and strategic planners have seen ideal matches between association needs and AMC management; plus, their insights into how AMCs best approach associations in a succession scenario