



Annual Meeting | State of the Association
Howard Anderson, Chair, Board of Directors
Tuesday, November 15, 2022

Thank you for attending our inaugural Leadership Forum. I hope you gained some new insights on workforce from our panelists and can put what was shared to use. It is important that we all keep learning and modifying ways of doing business in the hospitality industry. I have always believed that if I was able to take away one or two critical/key points from these types of round tables, it puts me ahead of my competition! I hope you had that success today.

It's inspiring to hear about the care, commitment and effort dedicated to finding solutions that both support our employees and our businesses. Our industry is amazingly creative and resilient. When you combine those traits with a passion for providing a great guest experience, you can feel confident knowing the hospitality industry is uniquely poised to heal the wounds and divisions in our world. We're so fortunate to work in such a dynamic/engaging industry. One that makes people who visit our businesses feel better!

We now turn our attention, briefly, to the business of the Association. We're doing something little different this year by convening our annual meeting after our program. We're doing this so more of you can be part of the important work of governing your association, and we can recognize and celebrate the importance of getting involved.

So, to get things started, I am officially calling the 2022 annual meeting of the Hospitality Minnesota Association to order.

We will move through our business quickly, so we can get to one of the most important reasons we gather – to connect with one another. I'd like to share some thoughts about your industry association – Hospitality Minnesota – and your role in helping us move into the future stronger than before. Then, we'll elect our incoming officers and directors and recognize our retiring directors.

Hospitality Minnesota has been navigating uncharted territory – just like in your businesses. Fortunately, the merger of the three prior associations allowed us to focus on helping member businesses first survive (if you remember those daily updates! Thank you HM team!), then revive (if you remember the state issued pandemic funding – it was better here than in many states) and now shifting our focus on how we assist our member's efforts to thrive.

The focus on the pandemic took significant momentum away from the plans we had for building an integrated association – but we are now back on track to re-engage in person and deliver solutions that will help our member businesses succeed in a changed world.

While we've faced many challenges over the course of the pandemic that could have derailed our association and even put it in jeopardy of its existence, but I am happy to report that the association's financial strength is now improving, and our recovery and reanimation is solidly underway.

Today's Leadership Forum is a great example of Hospitality Minnesota's intention to provide industry insights, create professional development opportunities for you and your team, and organize opportunities for industry peers to reconnect after such a long interruption. Future-focused conversations, such as this, help inform our decision-making and raise our leadership profile in wider public conversations on the issues facing Minnesota.

Emerging programs – such as the “Operating Now” webinar series, the Sidebar socials, and our regional programming are intended to bring you information, connections and resources that you can put to use immediately.

Your role in helping your association rebuild and thrive is critical with your active involvement and wider engagement are key components in moving us forward faster. You know, every member expects a little something different out of their association experience – from advocacy/representation to active participation, but I think everyone should expect the opportunities to grow personally, professionally, and economically through their membership investment.

Re-engaging our members, reaching out to our hospitality business neighbors, and expanding our reach with new partners is underway and we are excited about the future.

That future involves leveraging the resources and capabilities of both the Association and the Hospitality Minnesota Education Foundation to strengthen our industry. In fact, last week in these very rooms, the Hospitality Minnesota Education Foundation hosted its inaugural Hospitality Career Student Expo. Nearly 200 high school and college students learned about the broad and diverse career opportunities in our industry. And, thanks to the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development grant we successfully lobbied for at the state legislature in 2021, we have been expanding the number of Minnesota high schools offering ProStart and Hospitality Tourism Management programs with nearly 100 schools engaged. This is how we grow the pipeline of new hospitality leaders for our industry, as we also work to build partnerships like the one with Capango to address the immediate need for workers.

We're committed to telling the story about our industry and the many exceptional careers available within it. Thanks to association and foundation outreach efforts, more elected leaders, more high school administrators, and more parents and community members know about the great jobs our industry provides. That fact is that hospitality careers have many options – management, operations, human resources, marketing, finance – just to name a few. Our industry is simply much more complex than many believe. Time to shine a light on the diversity of opportunities within the Hospitality Industry!

With your engagement we can expand our reach and membership base. As we do, we can better represent our industry. With more voices comes more influence and impact that will help us all do better. Here is what I'm going to ask you to do:

- Engage your hospitality business network by taking time to impress upon them the importance of becoming part of the Hospitality Minnesota community. If they aren't a member, encourage them to become one. Every business contributes to expanding our reach, influence and impact.

- Find opportunities to tell your own story and create the visibility for the importance of our industry to a thriving Minnesota economy.

The past two years have demonstrated the need for political strength and an organization looking out for our industry. The mid-term elections are bringing many new legislators and changed dynamics to the conversations and deliberations. It is important that we continue to capitalize on the visibility Hospitality Minnesota has been generating for our industry as a thought leader for workforce solutions and major contributor to the state's economy. If each one of us here tonight were to deliver one new member to the association, we'd have double the impact within this room!

Impact that will help us with our evolving legislative agenda. Our dedication to continuing to deliver on that hallmark of work of the Association is unwavering. We will not let down our guard regarding any legislation that has impact on our members. We will look for opportunities to work with as many legislators as possible. Feel free to reach out to your direct representatives and offer your services to be their "go to" connection to the Hospitality Industry. If you can convince them to become a "Champion for the Hospitality Industry" – even better! (ADD interaction with Senator Steve Cwodzinski)

Our staff team has been tireless through very challenging circumstances. Over the past two years, as the very issues we have talked about today have constrained member engagement, our opportunities for revenue generation and diversification to achieve a positive bottom line has been difficult. But through focused hard work, the Hospitality Minnesota team and board of directors have successfully navigated through the worst of times and is poised for regeneration and growth. Now, it is time for all of us to help widen the base of engaged support by encouraging others to join us.

In closing, on behalf of Hospitality Minnesota and the board of directors, I want to thank you for your ongoing commitment, participation and support. This is our association and by working together, we will work as partners to help all member businesses achieve greater levels of success and fulfillment. Association value is a two-way street – we get as much out of it as what we put in – and moving our industry ahead requires an investment in both time and financial commitment.

It is up to each of us to be our own Champions of the Hospitality Industry, member engagement opportunists, industry evangelists and passionate leaders to ensure Hospitality Minnesota continues to support our industry for years to come.

Your presence here tonight, and your continued input as we work towards a fully recovered, thriving and growing hospitality industry in Minnesota are both necessary and greatly appreciated. Again – Thank you for attending today's Annual Meeting for Hospitality Minnesota!

Now I'd like to turn the program over to JJ Haywood, Chair of the Nominating & Governance Committee who will oversee the election of officer and directors for Hospitality Minnesota.