



# NEWSLETTER



AUGUST 2025

[www.azsae.org](http://www.azsae.org)



## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE:

### **WHY IRL MATTERS: A BUSINESS LESSON FROM 90 DAY FIANCÉ**

Patrick Farrey, CAE  
2025 AzSAE President

Dear AzSAE Members,

I'm about to admit something my wife Sharon says I probably shouldn't say out loud: I'm a big fan of 90 Day Fiancé. (Don't judge!)

If you're not familiar, it's a reality show about international couples—one from the U.S., one from abroad—who meet online, begin "dating," and start the 90-day visa process to (hopefully) live happily ever after together in America.

After these people meet and connect online, they spend hundreds of hours over months (sometimes years!) talking via FaceTime or Zoom or WhatsApp. The show begins documenting their journey just before they meet "in real life" ("IRL" as the cool kids call it), following them from their first in-person meeting until they do, or don't, find true love.

What boggles the mind is that, despite the ridiculous amount of time these people spend on text and video chats, they usually realize they barely know the person they've just flown halfway around the world to meet. Online-only relationships apparently don't create the kind of true connections that happen when you're with someone face-to-face.

So, what does this have to do with business?

I was recently reminded that my "online-only" business relationships are nowhere near as strong as my IRL ones. Every day at work I interact with scores of people, many of whom I only know from our LinkedIn connection or from email or from a Zoom or Teams meeting. These relationships, I feel, are almost always transactional in nature. "I need to tell you this," or "We need to discuss this thing." These interactions create very little opportunity for personal connection beyond, "hope you are well," or "so where are you calling in from?"

Some might say this is a generational thing — and sure, I remember when face-to-face was the only option. But I believe it's more than nostalgia. There's something about meeting in person that makes even future online conversations deeper, more productive, and more human.

Having an IRL connection, even just once, makes future remote conversations much more meaningful. I look forward to the Zoom calls with people I have previously met at trade shows or conferences or meetings way more than the Zooms with people I haven't met in person. The connection is more comfortable, the conversations more meaningful.



AzSAE is a Community for All Association Professionals and those who serve the association industry.

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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE CONTINUED....

I would venture to guess that everyone likes meeting with people they know more than with people they don't. These are the people who can become our "business friends."

So, you ask, why do I need a personal connection with people I do business with? Can't we just Zoom, do what we need to, and retreat to our respective lives? Sure we can, but by working that way we lose out on 3 important things.

1. Business friends can help you! You're probably way smarter than me, but I often find myself not knowing something. I need a referral, a suggestion, or someone to talk me through a situation. I would certainly never admit to a stranger that I need help. But I know I can trust my business friends. They're my go-to people. And they don't let me down.
2. You can help your business friends! Sometimes I'll read something and think, "wow, I wonder if Mary saw this?" And I'll send it over, with a friendly "hi, saw this and thought of you." That someone is personally invested in your success is meaningful. That's what friends do for each other. I love doing that, and I love it when people do that for me. (Thinking about you Kevin Holt!)
3. Business friends can become real friends. While not the primary reason to encourage face-to-face business meetings, it's a great unintended benefit. Think of the number of people you meet through business. I bet if you spend IRL time with some of them you might become pals. And who couldn't use more friends!

Arizona Society of Association Executives believes strongly in the value of face-to-face meetings. Through a rich program of social mixers, educational talks, awards celebrations and CAE training, AzSAE creates opportunities for you to connect IRL to grow your network of business friends. These meetings are designed to support your personal career path while helping you form relationships that will make your work life easier and richer.

I hope to see you at one of our upcoming events — [www.AzSAE.org/events](http://www.AzSAE.org/events). Even better, invite someone you've connected with but haven't met yet to join you there IRL.

I'd be happy to become your next business friend!

Patrick Farrey, CAE  
2025 AzSAE President

*PS> Can you guys believe what's up with Jasmine and Gino?!?!?!?*



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Get Involved!

<https://www.azsae.org/getinvolved>

# Tucson Hospitality Shines at the AzSAE Executive Getaway



AzSAE's signature events would simply not be possible without the unwavering generosity and partnership of our sponsors, and this year's Executive Getaway in Tucson was no exception. We are profoundly grateful for their commitment, creativity, and hospitality, which touched every detail of the event. From the delicious meals and cocktails to the stunning venues, seamless transportation, and educational site tours, our partners went above and beyond to ensure that every attendee felt welcomed, valued, and celebrated. Thanks to their extraordinary contributions, the 2025 Getaway was not just a success — it was a truly unforgettable experience.

Attendees also walked away with more than \$1,000 in gifts — including a Flemings dining experience, a Hacienda Del Sol stay with \$100 in casino play, a two-night stay at Westward Look, and even the rare opportunity to drive a train at the Port of Tucson!

## Our Gracious Sponsors

We are deeply grateful to the partners who made this year's Getaway a success. Each contribution elevated the program and highlighted the very best of Tucson hospitality:

- **Visit Tucson** – One-of-a-kind speaker gifts and full-day transportation..
- **Hacienda Del Sol** – Host hotel and the site of a beautiful opening reception.
- **The Eddy Hotel** – Breakfast and meeting space.
- **Embassy Suites** – A wonderful lunch and inviting meeting venue.
- **El Conquistador** – A memorable evening of dinner and entertainment.
- **The Westin La Paloma** – Breakfast and excellent facilities.
- **Westward Look** – Lunch, meeting space, & a generous gift of a two-night stay.
- **Desert Diamond Casino** – One night stay and \$100 in casino play
- **Flemings Steakhouse** - \$50 gift certificate
- **Port of Tucson** – Unique opportunity to drive a real train

Together, these contributions showcased the warmth, creativity, and professionalism that make Tucson an ideal destination for conferences, retreats, and special events.

# Thank You to Our Attendees

To all who joined us — thank you for bringing your time, energy, and enthusiasm to this year's Getaway. Your participation is what makes the AzSAE community thrive. We are grateful for the ideas, connections, and collaboration you shared, and we look forward to building on this momentum. Spread the word that next year's Executive Getaway is a can't miss event!. We guarantee new connections, valuable learning, stunning properties, and first-class hospitality.



## Connect with Our Sponsors

If you were impressed by all Tucson has to offer, we encourage you to reach out to our outstanding sponsors for your next conference or meeting. You can be confident they will deliver an exceptional event experience to you and your members that will be long remembered.

<p><b>Visit Tucson</b>  <b>Pamela Traficanti</b>, National Sales Manager          520.770.2150   800-638-8350 x150  <a href="mailto:ptraficanti@visitTucson.org">ptraficanti@visitTucson.org</a>  <a href="#">Visit Tucson, Arizona</a></p>	<p><b>El Conquistador</b>  <b>Ann Vandehey</b>, Director of Sales &amp; Marketing          520 544 1188  <a href="mailto:Ann.Vandehey@Hilton.com">Ann.Vandehey@Hilton.com</a>  <a href="#">El Conquistador Tucson, A Hilton Resort   Stay Near Santa Catalina Mountains</a></p>
<p><b>Hacienda Del Sol</b>  <b>Brian Johnson</b>, Managing Director          520.901.1311  <a href="mailto:bjohnson@haciendadelsol.com">bjohnson@haciendadelsol.com</a>  <a href="#">Hacienda Del Sol Guest Ranch Resort</a></p>	<p><b>The Westin La Paloma</b>  <b>Dustin Holt</b>, Group Sales Manager          520.577.5855  <a href="mailto:Dustin.Holt@westinlapaloma.com">Dustin.Holt@westinlapaloma.com</a>  <a href="#">The Westin La Paloma Resort and Spa</a></p>
<p><b>The Eddy Hotel</b>  <b>Bonnie St. Dryden</b>, Dir. Of Sales          520-297-8624 ext. 6011  <a href="mailto:Bonnie.StDryden2@Hilton.com">Bonnie.StDryden2@Hilton.com</a>  <a href="#">The Eddy Hotel Tucson</a></p>	<p><b>Westward Look</b>  <b>Art Zehnder</b>, Executive Director, Sales &amp; Marketing          520-917-2475  <a href="mailto:arthur.zehnder@aimbridge.com">arthur.zehnder@aimbridge.com</a>  <a href="#">Westward Look Wyndham Grand Resort And Spa</a></p>
<p><b>Embassy Suites</b>  <b>Monika Davis</b>, Area Director of Sales          520.352.4004  <a href="mailto:Monika.Davis@aimbridge.com">Monika.Davis@aimbridge.com</a>  <a href="#">Embassy Suites by Hilton Tucson East</a></p>	<p><b>We hope to see you at next year's AzSAE Executive Getaway! We guarantee you will make new contacts learn important information about our industry, see incredible properties and enjoy world-class meals!</b></p>

## 2025 Annual Getaway Sponsors

Thank you for your support!





# AzSAE's Awards Gala and Celebration

December 18, 2025

Hilton Scottsdale Resort & Villas

It is that time of year to CELEBRATE associations for the amazing work they have accomplished for their organizations.

Gain the recognition your association deserves for excellence in association management!

Submit your outstanding programs or projects implemented in the last year (August 1, 2024-July 31, 2025).

Entry Categories:

- Communications: Newsletters, journals, magazines, membership directories, brochures, web sites, videos.
- Creative Funding: Non-dues revenue generating activity such as trade shows, special events, or any other short or long-term project that raised funds.
- Education: Any format from a 1-hour program to a multi-day convention, technology based, print based, educational curriculum, strategic alliances, and community service education.
- External Affairs: Governmental relations, community service, public relations.
- Membership Development: Membership recruitment campaigns, retention programs, new member orientations, and member benefits programs.



Click button to download entry form

## Executive | Volunteer | AzSAE Member of the Year

Do you know an outstanding leader in an Arizona Association who has demonstrated exemplary service and personal ethics? Nominate them today!

All submittals will be recognized and awarded to the winning entries in each category. This awards program is open to all associations located in the state of Arizona, including chapters of national & global associations.

View criteria and nomination forms by clicking on a button below.



# UPCOMING EVENTS



## October Webinar

Thursday, October 16  
9:00 am - 10:00 am

**TOPIC: HOW AI IS TRANSFORMING THE WAY ASSOCIATIONS FIND AND BOOK SPEAKERS**



Arel Moodie, Co-Founder Talkadot

**REGISTER TODAY!**

Members - No Fee | Nonmembers - \$50

480-946-0119  
www.azsae.org



[Register Now](#)

Pending: 1.0 hour CAE credit.



## SAVE THE DATE

November 19, 2025  
3 pm - 6 pm

**2025 Annual Meeting  
Education  
Network Mixer**



Topic: Reclaim Your Life, Amplify Your Performance  
Speaker: Buffy Sanchez

1.0 hour CAE Credit approved



azsae.org | 480-946-0119

[Registration Opens  
Soon!](#)



Approved for 1.0 hour CAE credit.



## December Webinar

Thursday, December 4  
9:00 am - 10:00 am

**Topic: Difficult Conversations – How to Have Them  
When Needed and Best Ways to Avoid Them in the  
Future**



Diane Darling, Speaker & Author of  
*The Networking Survival Guide* and  
*Networking for Career Success*

**REGISTER TODAY!**

Members - No Fee |  
Nonmembers - \$50

Approved for 1.0 hour CAE credit.



480-946-0119  
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[Register Now](#)



Approved for 1.0 hour CAE credit.

[Join Us!](#)



Thursday, December 18  
Hilton Scottsdale Resort  
6333 N. Scottsdale Rd.  
Scottsdale, AZ 85250  
[Award Nominations Open!](#)  
[Registration Open](#)

# Congratulations to Lisa Zarda, CAE, CNAP ISHOF Aquatic Award Honoree

The International Swimming Hall of Fame (ISHOF) presented its prestigious Aquatic Award for Aquatic Safety to Lisa Zarda on September 13 in Ft. Lauderdale, FL. As Executive Director of the United States Swim School Association (USSSA) since 2017, Lisa has been a tireless advocate for drowning prevention and a transformative leader in the learn-to-swim industry. Through her leadership, USSSA has built national partnerships, elevated swim schools as vital community resources, and supported groundbreaking legislation to educate families on water safety. This well-deserved recognition highlights Lisa's remarkable impact on aquatic safety nationwide.



## New & Renewed Members



**Richard Adams, CAE**

Credit Management Association

**Nikki Augsburger**

Stringfellow Management Group, Inc

**Devin Boisvert**

SMACNA-AZ

**Kevin Holt**

COInnovation Consulting

**Lise Houweling**

Sheraton Mesa & Courtyard Mesa Hotels

**Michelle Kroeger, CAE**

Non-Profit CFO Services

**Cheryl McNeill**

Phoenix Boys Choir | Phoenix Girls Chorus

**Nicole Pope**

National Board for Health & Wellness Coaching

**Brandi Reynolds**

RENCO Roofing

**Heather Rykowski**

AIT Promotions, LLC

*Thank you  
for hosting our September Mixer*

**FOX  
RESTAURANT  
CONCEPTS**  
*Established 1998*



**culinary dropout**

Culinary Dropout Tempe was thrilled to welcome AzSAE for an evening of networking, creativity, and local hospitality on September 11th. This unique paint-and-sip social was hosted in The Campus Room, a private space that blends laid-back ambiance with modern industrial flair. Whether guests were reconnecting with peers or meeting new faces, the setting sparked genuine conversation. Attendees enjoyed a selection of lite bites and handcrafted beverages while tapping into their artistic side during a guided painting activity, adding a playful twist to traditional networking.

Located just steps from Tempe Town Lake and Arizona State University, Culinary Dropout Tempe provided the charm of a space built for connection, creativity, and good company. We were proud to partner with AzSAE for this memorable evening and were delighted to showcase how we do events the Dropout way, where professionalism meets playfulness.

**Summer Cielak**

Special Events Manager

Culinary Dropout

direct: 480.265.3485

149 S Farmer Ave, Ste 103

Tempe, AZ 85281

[scielak@FoxRC.com](mailto:scielak@FoxRC.com)

**Maggie Dillane**

Special Events Manager

480.265.3485

[mdillane@foxrc.com](mailto:mdillane@foxrc.com)



# Strategic Partner Spotlight



SCOTTSDALE  
ARIZONA

## DISCOVER PURE MEETINGS INSPIRATION IN SCOTTSDALE

Scottsdale's sunny corner of the Southwest has something exceptional in store for your group. The magic begins with a magnificent Sonoran Desert setting renowned for its towering saguaro cacti, vibrantly hued sunsets and 330+ days of annual sunshine. Add in top-tier accommodations, state-of-the-art meeting facilities, unparalleled hospitality and convenient air and ground transportation, and you have all the makings of a destination that will leave your group inspired.



### IDEAL SPACES FOR EVERY GROUP

Inspired meetings call for equally inspiring accommodations and gathering spaces. Scottsdale's roster of 70+ premier properties runs the gamut from five-diamond luxury resorts and secluded desert sanctuaries to chic urban hotels in the heart of Old Town Scottsdale. In addition to amenities like fine dining, full-service spas, poolside cabanas and museum-worthy art collections, Scottsdale's meetings-centric accommodations also offer high-tech meeting rooms in all sizes. For large groups, more than a dozen of these properties offer ballrooms larger than 10,000 square feet, and six provide ballrooms in excess of 20,000 square feet. These on-property meetings spaces are complemented by more than 60 unique off-site venues that include elegant Arabian horse ranches, rustic Western-themed locales and architectural masterpieces.

### ASSOCIATIONS SPECIALISTS

Scottsdale provides everything needed to align with the [associations industry](#). At Experience Scottsdale, we understand that getting a great value for your dollar is imperative for both you and your attendees. Scottsdale offers full-service resorts, upscale boutiques and an extensive list of value-based properties for annual meetings. With 330 days of sunshine and an abundance of nonstop flights from cities around the U.S., Canada and Mexico, and it's easy to see why Scottsdale is a top choice for association meetings of all sizes.



### SPECIAL OFFERS & REBATE PROGRAMS

Scottsdale offers a variety of ROI-boosting [rebate programs and promotions](#) that can save your group at participating hotels and resorts. And with Experience Scottsdale's [Summer Meetings, Summer Savings Rebate](#) program, you can save up to \$5,000 at more than 30 participating properties. The more rooms you book, the more you save!

### OFF-PEAK PERKS

Stretch your budget without sacrificing the Scottsdale wow-factor. Our Off-Peak Perks program gives you the inside track on low-occupancy dates at top resorts—book your group over these windows and receive a \$4 per room, per night rebate (up to \$5,000). Select "Pick Your Peak" Mondays also qualify when one of your peak nights falls on those dates. Submit your RFP and we'll confirm eligibility and participating properties.

### ECO-FRIENDLY TRAVEL

Scottsdale's hospitality community is deeply committed to sustainability, inspired by our unique Sonoran Desert ecosystem. From water-wise operations and waste-reduction programs to conservation-minded experiences, local partners are embracing proven and innovative practices that lower environmental impact—and help guests do the same. Explore how to [travel consciously here](#), and feel great about your getaway.

### COMPLIMENTARY SERVICES

Experience Scottsdale offers a wide variety of complimentary services to help you plan the ideal program for your group. These include complete RFP processing, site inspections and FAM tours, collateral materials like the Scottsdale Visitor Guide. Experience Scottsdale's destination experts also can assist by connecting you with a network of highly qualified local vendors in areas such as transportation, entertainment, gifting and more.

**Your Experience Scottsdale Destination Expert:**  
**Kimberly Hart, CMP, HMCC, CIS**  
**National Sales & Canadian Account Manager**  
480-949-6164 |  
[khart@experiencescottsdale.com](mailto:khart@experiencescottsdale.com)

Learn more and [submit an RFP](#) at [MeetInScottsdale.com](https://www.meetinscottsdale.com).

# Professional Development



*Make 2025 the Year You Earn the Mark that Matters!*

**FULL COURSE**  
**16 WEEKS**

Orientation Call:  
Aug. 8, 2025

Course Begins:  
Aug. 25, 2025

**CONCENTRATED**  
**8 WEEKS**

Orientation Call:  
Sept. 15, 2025

Course Begins:  
Sept. 29, 2025

**CRAM SESSION**  
**1 WK COURSE**

Orientation Call:  
Nov. 7, 2025

Course Begins:  
Nov. 11, 2025

*Register Today!*

<https://tinyurl.com/RocktheCAE> to register

Earning your CAE credential is not just a certification; it's a testament to your expertise and commitment to excellence in the field of association management.

Use promo code **AZSAE-CAE** to receive **20%** discount on course. Click image to learn more about the course details, schedules, and registration process.

## AzSAE's Commitment to Educational Growth

AzSAE collaborates with various SAE associations and industry experts to offer a rich array of educational opportunities for our members. This partnership ensures optimal growth and timely application in our constantly evolving landscape.

Visit our website for more information [Professional Development](#)

## ELearning through SeminarWeb

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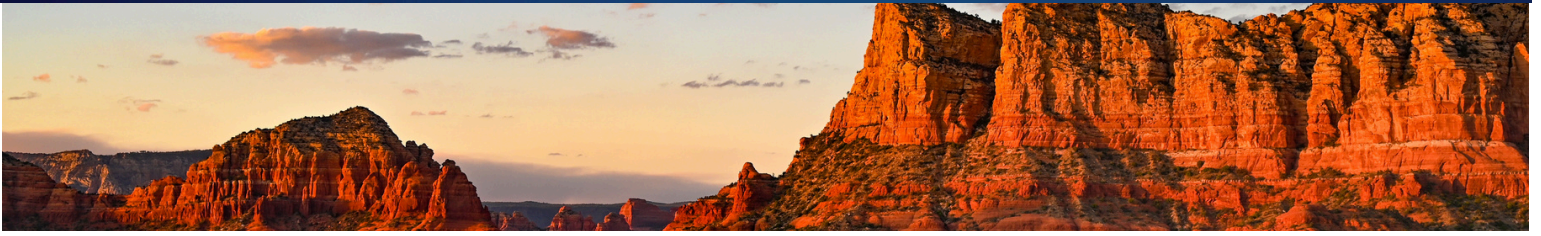


## Master the Fundamentals for Career Advancement in Association Management with QAS 2.0

QAS 2.0 - the Qualified Association Specialist (QAS) 2.0 Certificate Program provides anyone in the association industry, including CEOs, a broad base view of the key elements in running an association. QAS 2.0 is a refreshed and modernized version of the original program. With updated content, new speakers, timely topics, and an all-new design, QAS 2.0 reflects the current realities of association management and prepares professionals for what's next. [View Full Program](#)

AzSAE Coupon Code: AZQAS-SAE

# STRATEGIC PARTNERS



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