

# INSIDER

www.waceonline.com

## Lessons from *Chess Not Checkers* to Be Shared at 2018 Annual Conference by Randy Gravitt



Randy Gravitt

Most leaders begin their leadership journey utilizing an approach similar to checkers—highly reactionary with a frantic pace. Such strategies are limited, if not rudimentary. The opportunities for leaders to play checkers are dwindling.

The game today for most leaders can better be compared to chess. A game in which strategy matters; a game in which individual pieces have unique abilities that drive unique contributions; a game in which heightened focus and a deeper level of thinking are required to win.

With the above as the backdrop, author and leadership coach Randy Gravitt will kick off the Association’s 2018 annual conference, sharing four specific parallels from the game of chess that can inform and transform any organization seeking high performance—like your chamber of commerce.

“The opportunity to present at the 2018 W.A.C.E. annual conference is truly an honor,” said Gravitt. “Why? Because I love being around difference makers and learning together. When leaders grow, everyone wins, and I believe this event will be a game changer for many soon-to-be-winning communities.”

### Gravitt

In 2014 Gravitt founded INTEGRATE Leadership, a company whose mission is to grow a generation of integrity-based leaders. His current work includes training high-performance teams for Chick-fil-A, Inc. and serving as a leadership coach for the Pittsburgh Pirates organization.

Gravitt co-authored the *Chess Not Checkers: Field Guide & Workbook* with Mark Miller. His other books include *Finding Your Way* and *UNSTUCK*.

He has worked in education, both as a teacher and a coach, served in the nonprofit arena for nearly 20

years, and taught leadership training to companies and teams all over the world. His audiences are drawn to his encouragement and motivational style of speaking aimed at bringing about transformation.

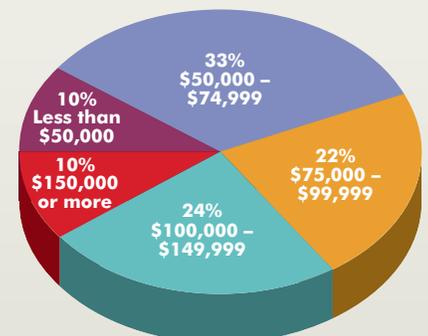
“Randy Gravitt will be the perfect kick-off to our conference,” said Jill Lagan, ACE, CEO of the Boulder City Chamber and 2018 conference chair. “We’re looking forward to having him share the ‘chess moves’ chambers need to make to move us toward improved and sustained performance.”

### Registration Information

Registration information for the 2018 annual conference, which will be held February 7–9, 2018 at Green Valley Ranch in Henderson (NV), will be available in early November.

### SNAPSHOT

#### Salaries of Chamber Chief Executives



Source: 2017 W.A.C.E. CEO Salary and Benefits Survey.

COMMENTARY .....	2
GUEST COMMENTARY .....	3
2017 ACADEMY RECAP .....	4–5
LEADER TO LEADER .....	6
OPINION POLL .....	7
CHAMBER EXECUTIVES IN THE NEWS .....	8
MEETING DATES .....	8

## COMMENTARY

# The Why, What and How of Your Chamber



**Dave Kilby**

When was the last time your leaders took a “pause” to reflect on and discuss the WHY of your chamber of commerce?

According to our brand research, your WHY or purpose needs to be the three Cs:

- Catalyst for

business growth;

and

- Convener of leaders and influencers;

- Champion for a stronger community.

If you take a look at *The Magicians of*

*Main Street* by Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives Senior Vice President Chris Mead, who chronicles the history of chambers of commerce from 1768–1945, chambers originally excelled at the three Cs.

You can open the book to almost any page and find examples of chambers leading by tackling business and community issues, all the while excelling at being conveners and coalition builders.

So what happened? Did we all of a sudden in the years following World War II have mission creep or amnesia and become chambers of events?

I’ve been around long enough to remember the day when the bulk of ALL chamber funding (approximately 80%) came from dues, but somewhere along the line, we adopted a “user fee” mentality and went “all in” doing events, and many got addicted to government money. The combination of the two, I believe, dramatically changed our organizations.

The possibility exists that we now have an opportunity to change again—and return to normalcy—and be more like the magicians of main street showcased by Mead, fighting for causes that will improve our communities and local economies.

For many chambers, the possibility exists that our brand research may be the stimulus needed to give them permission to change.

## WHAT We Do

With the above three C purpose in mind as our WHY, we also have data from thousands of business people across the United States which clearly indicates that members think it’s important for their chamber to

focus on five core areas. At W.A.C.E., we have called these our core competencies and think they are the WHAT for today’s chambers:

- Build business relationships;
- Political action;
- Promote the community;
- Represent the interests of business with government; and
- Strengthen the local economy.

Even though most chambers have plenty of room for improvement when it comes to doing the above, you don’t have to stretch your imagination very far to connect the dots and see how these core competencies fit with the three Cs.

## HOW We Do It

A case can be made that while the WHY and the WHAT for chambers is nearly universal, every chamber can be different when you look at HOW chambers follow through, and the programming needed to fulfill their brand promise and mission.

The specific programs in a tourism town may be *very* different than in an agriculture community—just as the challenges in a metro chamber are, most likely, *very* different than a bedroom community.

The HOW is where each chamber can do its own thing. But I strongly suggest, as our research points out, that chambers not lose sight of their WHY or the core competencies (their WHAT) as they keep the promise of chambers in the 21st century.

*Dave Kilby is the president and CEO of W.A.C.E., and is executive vice president of corporate affairs at the California Chamber.*

## 2017–2018 W.A.C.E. OFFICERS

Chairman of the Board

**Pat Patrick**

Lodi District (CA) Chamber  
(209) 367-7840 • ppatrick@lodichamber.com

Chairman-Elect

**Brad Hicks, CCE, IOM**

The Chamber of Medford/Jackson County (OR)  
(541) 779-4847 • brad@medfordchamber.com

Vice Chairman

**Anne Glasscock, ACE**

Kaufman (TX) Chamber  
(972) 932-3118 • aglasscock@kaufmanchamber.com

Vice Chairman

**Tallia Hart, ACE**

San Francisco (CA) Chamber  
(415) 392-4520 • thart@sfcchamber.com

Vice Chairman

**Jill Lagan, ACE**

Boulder City (NV) Chamber  
(702) 293-2034 • jill@bouldercitychamber.com

Vice Chairman

**Glenn Morris, ACE**

Santa Maria Valley (CA) Chamber  
(805) 925-2403 • glenn@santamaria.com

Past Chairman

**Nancy Lindholm, ACE**

Oxnard (CA) Chamber  
(805) 983-6118 • n.lindholm@oxnardchamber.org

Published by: Western Association of Chamber Executives, P.O. Box 1736, Sacramento, CA 95812-1736 (916) 442-2223, Fax (916) 444-6685.  
Website: [www.waceonline.com](http://www.waceonline.com)

Opinions expressed in articles are those of the author and not W.A.C.E.

## Chairman’s Circle

### Gold Members

- CalChamber
- Chamber Marketing Partners
- Citslinc International, Inc.
- PG&E
- WebLink International

The Chairman’s Circle is a special group of members that have committed to support W.A.C.E. through sponsorships.

If your business would like to become a member of the Chairman’s Circle, please contact Dave Kilby, W.A.C.E. president and CEO, at (916) 930-1202 or email [dave.kilby@calchamber.com](mailto:dave.kilby@calchamber.com).

## GUEST COMMENTARY

# How 3 Struggling Chambers Merged into 1 to Create Success for Regional Community



Jill Lederer, ACE

"There are no traffic jams along the extra mile."  
~Roger Staubach

We've all heard the saying, "When you've seen one chamber, you've seen one chamber." In fact, we all heard it here,

if not in our first class in Academy, then many times along the way in the outstanding conferences, webinars and seminars available to us from W.A.C.E. and the California Chamber.

It's certainly true, but there is one time I can think of when that statement stands in the way of great progress: when a merger is being discussed between two chambers, you can count on hearing "we can't do that; we're different."

Well, yes, but here I remind you of the worldly wisdom found in Monty Python's *Life of Brian*:

Brian (seeking to convince his followers to be individuals): "You're all different."

His crowd of followers: "Yes! We are all different."

A voice from the crowd: "I'm not."

## Financial Uncertainty

Now in 2017, when all of our chambers have survived the great recession, the time when our business communities needed us most, there are still echoes of that recession in the way some of our chambers are operating: financial uncertainty being the one most damaging to our communities, members and team members.

Competitive by nature, chambers of commerce found meaningful ways to increase resilience in the face of great economic change and a painfully slow recovering economy that brought many businesses, both non- and for-profit, to their knees.

When I look at the indelible tracings of that time on our chamber, I realize there was a particular turning point for us, one that many chambers have successfully navigated over the years, but one that I think not enough of us do: finding synergy between struggling chambers and merging into one successful one.

## Mergers and Acquisitions

Successfully used in the for-profit world, mergers and acquisitions fill countless MBA classes and legal bank accounts, but in my experience, it doesn't have to be that complicated.

A little history on the Greater Conejo Valley (CA) Chamber: now the official chamber with contracts for services with three cities, we merged once in 1999 (I was on the board then, not CEO), joining the neighboring cities of Thousand Oaks and Westlake Village; and then again in 2009 when we added the contiguous city of Agoura Hills, rebranding as a regional chamber for the Greater Conejo Valley.

Were there opposing board views about the unique qualities among the cities that might be lost in the merger, the multitudes of city council members and city staff, and their competing agendas, which board members and chamber staff would survive the transition, etc.?

Of course, but there also was an innate understanding that we would be better together and that there was no detail that couldn't be worked out as long as we stuck to our values, collegiality (almost always) and collaborative abilities (much improved now!).

Were there a few fender benders and casualties along the way? Yes, but sometimes that inevitability is just Darwinism at its best.

## Bridge Building

What have we achieved by these mergers, the second of which was almost seamless, due to the success of

the first? Certainly, we have enhanced our reputation for inclusiveness for both members and future members; we are recognized as bridge builders and as a large successful chamber with a respected voice representing a diverse community. Our members love the easy access to three cities without needing three memberships, and the truth is that commerce doesn't have a line on a map anyway.

And for the chamber, it happened exactly the way we learned it was supposed to: chambers don't compete against each other, members first and nothing happens without money. It's the way of the world and chambers, as the intersection of any community, are uniquely qualified to do it better than anyone. It's our nature.

*Jill Lederer, ACE, is president and CEO of the Greater Conejo Valley (CA) Chamber.*

## 2018 WACE Annual Conference



## GET IN THE GAME Make Your Chamber a Winner

February 7-9, 2018 • Green Valley Ranch • Henderson, Nevada

W.A.C.E. 2017 ACADEMY

# Professionals Gather for Training in Management



## ent, Media, Economic Development and More



5



6



7



8



9

1 The Chamber of the Santa Barbara Region (CA) President/CEO Ken Oplinger, ACE, shares a laugh with members of the third-year class as he leads them through the "Dealing with the Media" class. 2 Gail Zurek, CEO of the Visalia (CA) Chamber, makes a presentation at a mock city council meeting during the Intro to Economic Development Essentials class. 3 Keith Woods inspires and entertains third-year attendees during their last formal class of Academy. 4 Members of each Academy class gather on the steps outside the Sacramento Memorial Auditorium. 5 Rana Ghadban, president/CEO of the Simi Valley (CA) Chamber, participates in a class exercise on the final day of Academy. 6 First-year participants Candace Carnahan (right), events and program manager for the Grand Junction Area (CO) Chamber, and Brittney Sherman, members and community relations director for Morgan Hill (CA) Chamber, listen to introductions from their fellow classmates during their first Academy class. 7 Fifty-three chamber executives and staff members attended their first year of Academy this year. 8 Academy attendees enjoyed a networking reception and dinner Monday night at the California State Railroad Museum in the Old Sacramento Historic District. 9 This year's Academy program attracted 121 chamber professionals from nine states and Canada. Attendees marked their chamber's origin on a map displayed throughout the week.

## LEADER TO LEADER

# Quality Leadership, Innovation, 3Cs Purpose Will Define Chamber of the Future, Execs Say

*What is one critical element that will define the chamber of the future?*



**Ann Silver**  
CEO  
**The Chamber**  
**Reno-Sparks-**  
**Northern**  
**Nevada (NV)**

A critical element in the future will be the composition of chamber boards.

Board members will need to reflect the greater diversity of our business interests, including startups, minorities, women, and veteran-owned operations, entrepreneurs, and 21st century employers. Nevada is challenged with unprecedented growth and future chamber members will need to embrace creative and innovative means by which to maintain the relevancy and vitality of our economy.



**Jill Lederer, ACE**  
**President/CEO**  
**Greater Conejo**  
**Valley (CA)**  
**Chamber**

The critical element that will define the chamber of the future is, I believe,

the same element that has always defined our chambers: leadership. Will the leaders of the future be agile, energetic, inclusive, innovative, resilient, financially savvy, motivational and aspirational, to name a few key qualities?

With rapidly changing times comes tremendous opportunity and the leaders of the future must be clear in their vision and strategic in how they execute it. They must be passionate in their belief that chamber membership provides the

single most efficient way to build both a business and personal brand; not that chamber membership is the only thing you'll do, but it's the foundation that provides both short-term and sustained results that are measurable in a multitude of ways over the life of any business and career.



**Tiffany Neilson**  
**VP of Operations**  
**Rocklin Area**  
**(CA) Chamber**

Chambers of the future will be defined by CHANGE. The scope of change will be unique to each chamber's

individual landscape and will require forward thinking, innovation and the ability to adapt. There's a saying that goes something like this: "Old ways won't open new doors." What new doors do you want to open for your chamber? What old doors do you want to nail shut, never to open again? It's a dialogue that needs to happen as an industry and within the walls of each chamber organization. So here's to not only opening new doors, but busting them down.



**Ken Brengle,**  
**CCE, IOM**  
**Executive**  
**Director**  
**Mammoth Lakes**  
**(CA) Chamber**

Is your chamber a leadership organization? Dave Kilby has been tweeting

about whether your chamber is a three P (parades, pageants and parties) chamber or a three C (catalyst, convener and champion) chamber. If you are moving your organization to the three C level,

you are moving your chamber into a leadership position. As an executive running a small town chamber, I understand there may be a few "events" you need to nurture; however, you will be amazed at how you can increase engagement in your organization by addressing the critical issues facing your business community! Carpe diem: seize the day through leadership!



**Darletta Willis**  
**CEO**  
**El Centro Area**  
**(CA) Chamber**  
**and Visitors**  
**Bureau**

One critical element that will define the chamber of the future is return

on investment (ROI). Members today are not like those from years ago, nor are they the same as tomorrow's members. Everyone is looking for "what's in it for me?" and unless we can provide an adequate response, the membership is lost. We must offer relevant and meaningful value to our members in order for the chamber to survive. It is important to identify and implement benefits that are useful to all members throughout the entire time of their membership.



**Bill Marcum**  
**CEO**  
**Kelso-Longview**  
**(WA) Chamber**

My answer is pretty simple: Help local businesses be more successful. The more local you can make

your chamber, the more relevance the chamber will have in the future.

## OPINION POLL

# Lessons from This Year's Non-Dues Survey

The Western Association of Chamber Executives recently asked its members which single chamber program provides the largest non-dues income, aside from government contracts, and the results are published in a new report that has been posted in the members-only section of the W.A.C.E. website.

Revenues are down considerably in each main category of non-dues revenue, except for special events and golf events, which each saw an average increase of more than \$2,000. The overall average of non-dues revenue rose slightly more than \$20,000 to \$74,128, in large part due to items that fell into an "other" category.

Below is a list of five things W.A.C.E. has learned when comparing responses of participating chambers from this year's data to data from the previous two years.

## 1. New Opportunities

When asked what area has the largest potential for revenue growth, advertising came in at only 19%, but that was a 5-point increase over last year's results. The overall spike was boosted by chambers in the less than 250 members and 751-999-member range, which each showed a 13-point increase in potential compared to 2016. Only chambers with more than 1,000 members saw a decline in perceived potential by 2 percentage points.

## 2. Tiered Dues

Coming in at fourth on the overall future sources of non-dues revenue was tiered dues at 28%. Tiered dues saw a 4-point increase in potential compared to 2016. Chambers of all sizes showed an increased potential in revenue, except for chambers with less than 250 members.

"Though the tiered dues membership model has been around for a while, I'm still surprised that many chambers still have a membership model based on

the company's employee count," said W.A.C.E. Vice President Russell Lahodny. "I think one of the biggest reasons this has seen an increase in potential is that more chambers are seriously considering the switch."

## 3. Sponsorships

Sponsorships have perennially been regarded as the top area for increased revenue by chambers participating in this annual survey, but the potential has come down by 3 percentage points to 54% compared to last year.

The biggest shift occurred among chambers with more than 1,000 members who dropped the potential by 30 percentage points compared to 2016. More than 50% of chambers with 751-999 members saw potential for increased revenue from sponsorships, but this was a 16-point decrease from last year. The biggest increase in perceived potential for sponsorships came from chambers with 501-750 members with 61% feeling optimistic about increasing revenue. This was a 13-point increase from last year.

## 4. Special Events

Whether it's an installation dinner or a festival, special events appear to have fallen into a category of "If it ain't broke don't fix it." It appears right behind sponsorships as having the most potential for increased revenue, but the percentage is down to 43%, a 3-percentage-point drop from last year.

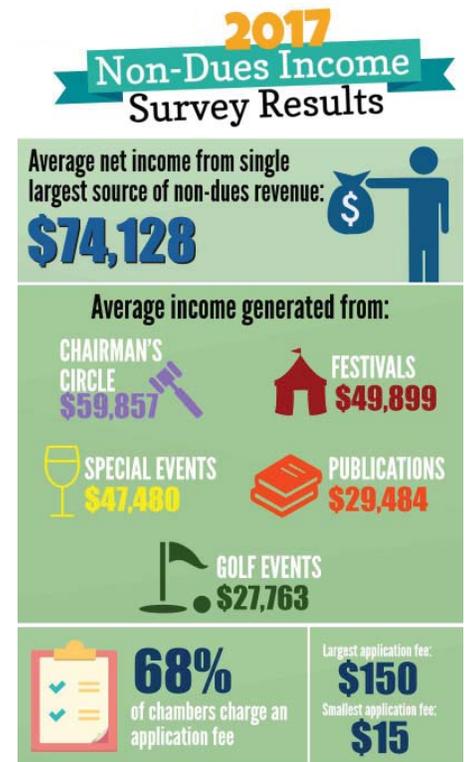
Every sized chamber showed a decrease in potential over the previous year, except among chambers with 250-500 members—and they only increased by 1 percentage point.

## 5. Chairman's Circle

Is the Chairman's Circle turning square? The tried and true Chairman's Circle model appears to have peaked.

Looking at the average income reported by chambers in this year's survey compared to 2016, there is a decline of \$25,000. When you compare that to the question of where chambers find the most potential for increased revenue, Chairman's Circle has a mixed outlook.

Overall, Chairman's Circle is third on the list of potential increased revenue, but when broken down by chamber size, it seems the mid-sized chambers are the most optimistic, while the small and larger chamber responses are trending down from previous years. This is most notable among chambers between 751-999 members, who decreased its potential by 19 percentage points.


**Visit Us on Facebook!**
[facebook.com/WACEPAGE](https://facebook.com/WACEPAGE)

## Chamber Executives in the News

**Lorraine Clarno**, ACE, of the Beaverton Area (OR) Chamber and **Donna Duperron** of the Torrance Area (CA) Chamber have been named to the W.A.C.E. Board to fill vacancies.

Leaders from 21 chambers of commerce, representing communities throughout the United States, have been

selected to participate in the Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives Fellowship for Education Attainment. Congratulations to W.A.C.E. members **Derek Kirk**, North Orange County (CA) Chamber, and **Chris Romer**, Vail Valley (CO) Partnership.

FOLLOW W.A.C.E. PRESIDENT DAVE KILBY @DaveKilbyWACE



<http://twitter.com/DaveKilbyWACE>

Find out more about us at [weblinkinternational.com](http://weblinkinternational.com)



# You do way more than member management.

Effortlessly manage the complexities of your chamber with **WebLink Connect™**!

Claim victory for any-sized event.

Automate membership data and elevate member experience.

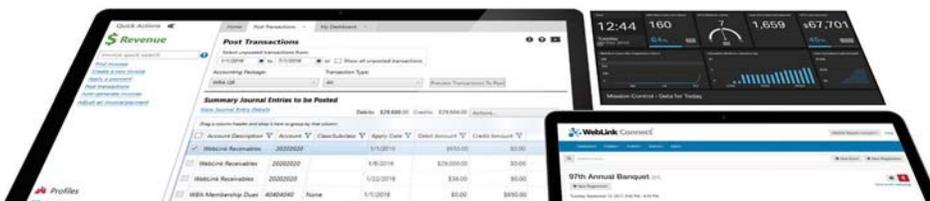
Trust your financial data 24/7.

Upgrade your website.

Champion choice.



ACCELERATE COMMERCE. BUILD COMMUNITIES. GROW ALONGSIDE YOUR MEMBERS.



## MEETING DATES

W.A.C.E. Events • (916) 442-2223  
[www.waceonline.com](http://www.waceonline.com)

### Webinar Series

- **October 4:** Marketing and Making Chambers Attractive to Millennial Business Leaders
- **November 1:** Show Me the Money...Strategies to Maximize Revenue Streams
- **December 6:** Workforce Development Strategies that Make a Difference

### Building Your Best Team Ever Workshop

October 6  
CalChamber Office  
Sacramento, CA

### Annual Conference

February 7-9, 2018  
Green Valley Ranch Resort  
Henderson, NV

## OTHER EVENTS

- **Southern California Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives (SCACCE)**  
Communicating Value Workshop  
October 13  
Irvine, CA  
[www.scacce.org](http://www.scacce.org)
- **Oregon State Chamber**  
Annual Conference  
October 25-26  
Florence, OR  
[www.oregonchamber.org](http://www.oregonchamber.org)
- **U.S. Chamber**  
Regional Government Affairs Conference  
October 25-27  
Chicago, IL  
[www.uschamber.com](http://www.uschamber.com)