

2009 ARMA Regional Leadership Conference

What was Your “Take Away” from the 2009 Conference?

You may ask yourself, “Am I really benefiting by attending a Regional Leadership Conference?” or “Do I really gain any insight or learn anything new by spending a few days away from home, attending seminars, and networking with other RIM Professionals?” Of course, each attendee has a personal and professional perspective, so answers will vary, but I believe that the positive benefits are there for the taking. So, whether you are a newbie (like me) or a veteran, this year’s Regional Leadership Conference, held in beautiful San Diego’s Gas Lamp District, offered something for everyone and I would like to share my thought on the benefits I received.

Those of us who arrived on Thursday enjoyed an evening event that brought friends, acquaintances, and strangers together by sharing interesting facts about this year’s Pacific Region Leaders. By the end of the evening, I had met some very friendly and interesting people and felt very much a part of the “team”. On Friday evening, we took a trip to historic Old Town where we gathered for an enjoyable evening meal, participated in a tour of the haunted Waley House, visited other historic sites, and perused the various shops.

Getting Down to Business

The “business” began each day with breakfast, announcements, and a fun activity to get the group motivated and alert. We received updated information about the HQ new initiatives and projects including a RIM self-assessment tool, additional educational content, GARPSM guidelines, new membership options for companies, and the duties and responsibilities of the various committees and task forces. We also learned about member services resources including new membership categories, the new Association Management System, the new Chapter Operations e-Handbook, Leadership Academy online courses, new Chapter awards, and grants and financial support for Leadership Training as well as Chapter Speakers and Conferences. I also learned about the mission and history of the ARMA International Educational Foundation (AIEF) and the various scholarships and projects made possible by Chapter fundraisers, sponsorship donations, and the Annual ARMA Conference activities that typically include a raffle and silent auction. In addition, this year’s Conference in Orlando is holding the Gary Lewis golf tournament to benefit the AIEF.

During the breakout sessions we discussed Chapter related issues and challenges with our Regional Manager, Helen Streck, who listened to the various Chapter representatives’ ideas and concerns, shared her perspective and experience, and promised to relay our needs to HQ. We also participated in a condensed training course on Strategic Planning and its role in developing the leadership skills we can use in both our professional and personal lives. With our chapters preparing for the upcoming year, HQ could not have provided this very informative course at a better time.

Sharing Ideas at a Chapter Level

As a new Chapter Leader, I appreciated the knowledge I received regarding HQ resources and support, but I personally found that the chapter reports and presentations offered more practical “take away” information and here is a list of *some* of the great ideas that I intend to discuss with the Nevada Chapter when we meet to plan our upcoming year:

- Take a short survey after each event to gauge the value of the topic to the attendees
- Use an electronic survey, such as Monkey Survey, to solicit member input and ideas
- Utilize social networking such as LinkedIn, Twitter, and Facebook to inform our members
- Use conferencing options to facilitate Board meetings
- Do NOT OVER-GOAL. Prioritize goals and only tackle a few at a time
- Make meetings affordable, particularly during these economic times
- Offer event options such as a vendor show or a seminar

Each Pacific Region Chapter shared both the past year's successes as well as their failures and I believe that these experiences are great learning tools, so I am going to seize the opportunity to use these tools to build a stronger and more successful Nevada chapter. Thank you all for sharing and a special thanks to all who made the Pacific Region Conference such a success!

Note: This article was written by 2009-2010 Silver State Vice President - Linda Hellow and published on the Pacific Region Website following the regional conference.