

Join the #JLTeam.
 Audit, Tax, & Consulting for Associations & Nonprofits



[About Us](#) [Request sample](#) [Help](#) [Log out](#)

BECOME A MEMBER TODAY [▶](#)

POST A JOB fast, free, simple [▶](#)

NEWS	CAREERS	RESOURCES	SALARIES	ASSOCIATION DATA	EVENTS	PEER GROUPS	<input type="text" value="Search..."/>
----------------------	-------------------------	---------------------------	--------------------------	----------------------------------	------------------------	-----------------------------	----------------------------------------

[Home](#) » [News](#) » [Division of duties: Association splits roles of CEO, president](#)

NEWS

Division of duties: Association splits roles of CEO, president

[View](#) [Edit](#) [Nodequeue](#) [Devel](#)

There can be many reasons for having a president as the number-two staffer, but it's still a rare occurrence in the association world

CEO AND SENIOR-LEVEL JOBS (MEMBER ONLY)

[Director of International Advocacy Communications](#)
Washington DC

[Chief Financial Officer](#)
Washington DC

[Director of Business Development](#)
Pittsburgh PA

MORE CEO AND SENIOR-LEVEL JOBS



Bowers

April 2, 2021

By [Kathryn Walson](#) and [Lori Sharn](#)

Ford Bowers did something recently that's unusual for an association leader. He split his role and his title at PRINTING United Alliance, keeping the rank of CEO but designating another staffer to be president.

Bowers said sharing the role "made a lot of sense" because the Alliance has grown so much in recent years. Bowers was CEO of the Fairfax, Va.-based Specialty Graphics Imaging Association before its 2020 merger with Printing Industries of America and subsequent rebranding as PRINTING United Alliance.

Bowers said SGIA had about 32 employees when he started there in 2016.

"Now we're between 135 and 140 people. And we've had a couple of mergers. We've had a fairly large acquisition," Bowers told CEO Update. "It really required, I think, focused attention on dealing with the

LATEST NEWS

In the new issue: Some associations are making the well-being of their members a priority in their programming, fro... <https://t.co/uKOzmXU7fu>

Produce associations announce plans to merge next year

CEO DATELINE – Dental association chief to get Forum's highest honor

MORE NEWS

[MID-LEVEL JOBS AT ASSOCIATIONJOBS.COM](#)

[MORE MID-LEVEL JOBS \(OPEN ACCESS\)](#)

FOLLOW US:

[E-LETTER SIGNUP](#)

Association NewsBite



integration of what used to be separate companies and separate operations, more so than I could personally devote to it and still keep my mission of being ... chief strategy officer.”

Dave Leskusky, who joined the association in 2019 when it acquired NAPCO Media, is now president of the Alliance. He also remains president of NAPCO Media, the Alliance’s independent media arm.

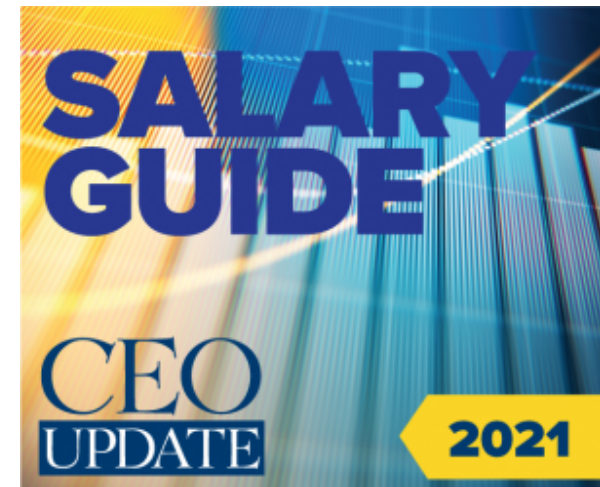


Leskusky

Executive compensation experts Charlie Quatt and Brian Vogel, both of Quatt Associates, said they have seen more cases in recent years of the number-two person at an organization being given the title of president—though usually at other types of nonprofit groups rather than at associations.

“It’s still very much a minority practice (but) I’m seeing more of a situation where you have essentially a COO, a number two that is seen as being not quite but almost the equal of the CEO,” Vogel said.

“This is all very new, and we’re not even talking about 5%. We’re talking about the beginning of what



could be a trend,” Quatt said. “We don’t really know. But it’s something we’re seeing a little bit more now than in the past.”

Quatt and Vogel said there could be multiple reasons for such a move: The titles can reflect a division of responsibilities, with one executive more internal facing and the other more external facing. Bestowing the title of president may entice someone to join an organization or keep a person who may have considered leaving.

At many organizations, the chief operating officer was and still is the second-in-command who runs the place. But Vogel said COOs are often the heads of administration only, so the COO title has a little less heft than it used to.

Sometimes the president title is employed as part of a succession plan, or with the understanding that the president might one day be a candidate for CEO. When Mitch Glazier was promoted to president of the Recording Industry Association of America in 2017, it was also announced that he would become CEO in 2019 after Cary Sherman retired.

Suzanne Clark was named president of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce in 2019. The Chamber announced then that CEO Tom Donohue planned to step down in 2022 but did not say Clark would be his successor. The Chamber announced in February that Clark would assume the top role in March as president and CEO.

Executive recruiter Lorraine Lavet, association sector leader at Korn Ferry, said she doesn’t often see an organization with a CEO and, as the number-two person, a president.

Lavet said the title of the top executive is often part of an organization’s bylaws. At many professional societies, the volunteer leader of the board has the title of president. What she does see more often is groups that have historically had an executive director wanting to change the title to CEO when recruiting a new top executive.

“People tend to see the CEO role as more of a strategic set of competencies, more external facing. And these roles have evolved over time,” she said.

Near-daily communication

At PRINTING United Alliance, Bowers is still first-in-command. The board of directors approved the change in December, and the group announced it internally in January.

The Alliance already has a COO who oversees finance and accounting, human resources and IT. Leskusky, on the other hand, “needs to be able to speak on behalf of the association in an authoritative fashion,” Bowers said.

Leskusky will oversee the organization’s three main areas: events, association functions and the media company. He will be responsible for directing staff, measuring success and carrying out the strategy to achieve goals.

As CEO, Bowers remains the main liaison to members, exhibitors and the press, and he represents the association on Capitol Hill. He also develops strategies with the board and handles outside partnerships.

“I read the landscape. I look at the directions we need to go. I look at opportunities or challenges that we face in the marketplace,” Bowers said.

The key to success with having two people at the top, according to Bowers: near-daily communication.

“We need the staff to understand that we speak with the same voice, we speak with the same vision. And so many times messaging comes from both of us at the same time so that they understand that we’re in lockstep,” he said.

The division of duties is part of a business continuity plan in case something disruptive were to happen, but it is a work in progress.

“It’s new. We’re having to feel our way through it to determine exactly where some of the roles and responsibilities will ultimately lie, and it’ll probably be an evolving process,” Bowers said.

Related content

[Division of duties: Association splits roles of CEO, president](#)

[Making member well-being part of your group’s mission](#)

[Corner Bookshelf: Opportunity for membership growth looks positive in 2021](#)

[Produce associations announce plans to merge next year](#)

[21 years of guiding future leaders](#)

[Automation association unites groups under core brand](#)

[In-person meetings contend with carbon emissions concern](#)

[Pandemic disruption presented challenges, opportunities to interim association leaders](#)

Join the discussion

Subject

															Styles		
Font Family			Font Size														

Path: p

SUBMIT COMMENT



Download recent issues of CEO Update

[Read More](#)



21 years of guiding future leaders

[Read More](#)



Corner Bookshelf: Opportunity for membership growth looks positive in 2021

[Read More](#)



Produce associations announce plans to merge next year

[Read More](#)



Association Departures and Arrivals (March 25, 2021)

[Read More](#)



Association Departures and Arrivals (April 2, 2021)

[Read More](#)

[News](#) | [Careers](#) | [People](#) | [Compensation](#) | [Association Intelligence](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [Resources](#) | [Advertising](#)

Address: 1725 Eye Street NW, Suite 200, Washington, DC 20006

Telephone: 202.721.7656

Email: info@ceoupdate.com

Copyright 2021, CEO Update. All Rights Reserved
