

One of the important functions of a State Network is building positive 'industry relations'. A key part of this initiative is forming productive relationships within organized real estate, especially between the State Network and the State REALTORS[®] Association. A positive State Network-State Association relationship can bring value for both organizations in terms of contribution of time, talent and even financial support to further Network and Association goals.

Based on the collective experience of State Network leaders, here are some key steps to follow to build and maintain a positive, productive relationship with the State REALTOR[®] Association.



Key Steps to Consider

- 1** *Set a Goal for the Relationship.* Be clear what it is you are trying to accomplish by working to build and maintain a relationship with the State Association. Doing this will guide you to the right type of support or engagement you seek. And remember, solid relationships are those based on *mutual value*. So be sure that both the State Network and State Association will benefit from the relationship. Some possible goals are:
 - Raise awareness or gain visibility for the network
 - Recruit members
 - Increase networking opportunities for members
 - Increase leadership opportunities for members
 - Show support for the industry and organized real estate in your area
- 2** *Approach the State Association Staff Executive (AE).* Many State Networks have found success by expressing initial interest with the State Association AE. He or she has a broad perspective of the opportunities for involvement throughout the organization and the possibilities for support the State Association may provide. Having the AE as a network advocate – someone who understands the value of the State Network and the distinctive qualities of its members – can go a long way in building solid inroads with the leadership of the State Association. In many cases, State Networks have also developed positive relationships with key State Association senior staff, and in this way have become invaluable to the Association's education, PR or advocacy efforts, for instance.
- 3** *Get Involved!* There is no better way to showcase the unique abilities and contributions of the Women's Council member than by getting active in the State Association through committee work, in leadership roles, and through support for State Association projects and initiatives, in such areas as education, advocacy and political action. Due to the high level of leadership skills Women's Council members have attained, the State Network has become in many instances an invaluable source for committee chair, vice-chair, Board and officer positions.
- 4** *Extend the Invitation to Get Involved in the Network.* Inviting the AE, senior staff and State Association leadership to attend network meetings and events, or become members is the best way to expose them to the pool of talent and support the State Network represents, and to demonstrate the ways in which the network can enrich the benefits available to

Association members and support industry initiatives. Some networks have even offered to pay for the membership of the State AE or President.

- 5 **Ask!** With the value of the relationship established, the State Network has a solid foundation for seeking support from the State Association. Be sensitive to the guidelines or procedures that may be in place within the State Association for providing support to related groups like Women's Council, but also be willing to explore a range of options with the AE to help meet the needs of the network. A menu of the types of support and mutual activities many State Networks enjoy with their State Associations is below.
- 6 **Work at It.** Relationships take time to build and must be maintained. Never take the relationship with the State Association for granted. Open communication, a regular show of appreciation, and recognition for the mutual benefits that are resulting from the relationship are the cornerstones of the sustaining a positive and productive relationship. Once a year, the State Network leadership should evaluate the relationship. Suggested questions to discuss are:
 - Are we making progress on the goals we have set for this relationship?
 - Are both the State Network and State Association gaining value from this relationship?
 - Are the needs of the State Network and/or State Association changing? And, if so, in what ways should we adjust the value we can provide each other?
 - How can we continue to improve this relationship?

Seek input from the AE or President to help the network leadership team more accurately evaluate the relationship and possible next steps.

Menu of Support Opportunities

Here are some common ways state networks are receiving support from state associations, and conversely, are contributing to the state association.

Support from the State Association to the State Network

- Free or discounted space for State Network meetings held in conjunction with a State Association meeting
- Recognition/promotion/advertising opportunities for State Network events (e.g., on website, announcements at state board or membership meetings, a booth at an Association expo event, etc.)
- Strategic Partner (cash or in-kind) for State Network meetings and events
- Speakers for State Network meetings
- Joint meetings with the State Association (for installation of officers, educational programming, etc.)
- Technical support (with marketing, meeting management, technology, etc.)

Support from the State Network to the State Association

- Pay for AE or President network dues; complimentary tickets to Network events
- Hold joint events (e.g., with YPN)
- Network member service on committees and in leadership positions
- Network strategic partner or collaboration for Association projects or activities (e.g., a women's initiative)
- Promotion of Association services and activities to network members
- Active engagement in political action and advocacy initiatives
- Conduct Network meetings in conjunction with State Association meetings

