

WEF/MA Leader Workshop - Finance

Feb 16, 2021

2:00-4:00 PM ET

78 Participants

Keith Hobson – WEF Treasurer, Opening Remarks. “Welcome everyone. I am pleased to be here today. Thank WEF staff for putting this together. We want to support our MA’s through our engagement staff. I work with Penny and Karen and they do a great job for WEF and are also here to assist you (the MA’s). Again, the WEF Board is looking out for the MA’s and we will be providing the resources that we can to assist you.”

WEF Finance Staff Presenting: Penny Young & Karen Powderly

Penny Young: It is not a challenge but an opportunity. 2020 was a challenging year. Hardest thing is not knowing when new normal will be established. We had to develop a budget not knowing WEFTEC would take place or nor. We had cancellation insurance and building net assets/reserves allowed us some room to plant what to do next.

Actions Taken

- Cash receipts sent to the bank.
- Set up as many vendors as possible for e-payment.
- Good VPN was crucial.

Zoom Poll #1

How many have applied and received PPP or other assistance money?

35% Yes

65% No

Karen Powderly:

Cash flow forecasting process. It is essential. We did not have a formal process pre COVID. Now it is a monthly task we have.

- Look at historical trends is how we go about this. From 2020 data is not going to work now, but you still need a baseline. So, look at last 3 years for baseline trends for receipts and disbursements.
- Allows management to determine if programs need to be paused until cash flow is obtained.
- How do I forecast? Use your bank balance at the end of prior month and add what cash was coming in at this time of the year (Membership, subs, pubs, registration), add one-time payment, insurance, etc. and now subtract your regular payments you have (such as audio visual, food for events, payroll, and fixed assets), line of credit, etc.?
- Look at your cash on an excel sheet, remember to start with money from prior month. (Karen showed a Cashflow Forecast Sample slide – this will assist to determine what your revenue & reserves will be. What is the difference between the revenue and what it normally is versus what it currently is? That is how you can determine what your reserves will be. Need about six months of reserves. That number has been creeping up. You need to look at the risk if your revenue does not come in as planned and what do you do to compensate for that.
- Forecasting is an Art and not a Science and will never be perfect. It is your best guess. As information becomes available, update your model, and do not wait until the end of the month.
- This is a fluid process and a valuable tool to set the stage until the *new normal* comes back.

Breakout (20 mins.)

How has the pandemic affected your MA? What did you learn, do differently and how will this affect your future?

ROOM 1: Jenn Jones

1. Pivot to using more online tools and virtual platforms - Teams, Zoom, Remo
2. Alabama, hard to get everyone on one system
3. Big turning point for Ontario WEA was Microsoft Teams and pivoting to online meetings for staff, board, etc.; Really learned about Microsoft Teams Live Events - slick, though there is a learning curve.
4. Opportunities include: Members have become much more tech savvy
5. Really had to ramp up learning online tools. Hybrid /
6. WEF will have more connectivity internationally and across US.
7. Capturing content from in-person meetings and making it available after learning about contracts, and what MAs should look for in event contracts.
8. Challenges: Operators have no desire to be online - what happens after pandemic?
9. Washington DC / Conducted a poll, 50/50 split between in-person and online learning preference.

ROOM 2: Pam Burnett

- 1 Georgia AWP
 - a. Deliver content in smaller chunks of time – no more than 4 hrs./day
 - b. NO - volunteers had to be managed a bit more.
 - c. Importance of having tech support
 - d. Take charge of volunteers
 - e. streamlining vs. volume
- 3 Chesapeake
 - a. We had to cancel our annual meeting in late March.
 - b. Our budget is relatively small at 150K/yr. and 60% of our annual revenue is from our annual conference (Collection Systems & Stormwater). So, we ramped up or online presence and charging for non-members supplement income from some of our conferences.
 - c. We have been able to get more sponsors this year than we have had in the previous years.
- 4 Central States
 - a. We had to pivot, and our business model has changed due to pandemic and going online.
 - b. We ended up in the red for the year. We too have seen more sponsors.
 - c. We custom tailored our packages for sponsors dependent upon the platform used. People are looking for opportunities to market.
 - d. I think the biggest thing is how much tech support is needed in an online world. How much work is done behind the scenes and how important our LACs are.

ROOM 3: Kylee Daily

1. Important of networking opportunities.
2. Importance of the support of our legal counsel. Having our attorney help negotiate our contracts was extremely helpful.

ROOM 4: Eddie Abisaab

Pandemic Impacts:

1. Partnering with other associations on webinars / seminars
2. Virtual learning opportunities
3. Network opportunities on the decline

4. Take advantage of PPP finding
5. Rely on savings
6. Minimum live events
7. Cut back on expenses to the extent possible

ROOM 5: Tara Washington

1. Virtual conference & webinars are the new norm
2. Association partnerships can be very helpful.
3. Obtaining contact hour units can be a huge hurdle.
4. Capping CEUs may be necessary.
5. You must establish good relationships with your sponsors so that they tread with you.

ROOM Group 6: Leigh Blecki

1. We had a wide variety re # of staff and members.
2. Had to pivot quickly as CA's annual conference was end of March.
3. We all learned to pivot to a virtual setting.
4. California
 - a. Fast forwarded their implementation of their Learning Management System
 - b. Will continue w/the online learning once COVID-19 is over.
5. Virginia
 - a. Had our annual conference on pheedloop.
 - b. Did a great job on participant side but we need to find a better value or implementation for our exhibitors.

ROOM 7: Rob Lee

How has the pandemic affected your MA?

1. Illinois
 - a. Canceled April 2020 conference, virtual conference to be held April 2021, webinars followed
 - b. 50% operating budget in reserves, deposits were pushed
 - c. Held a 2 weeklong conference, 2-hr session in morning and 2-hr session in afternoon
2. Arizona
 - a. Postponed conference, then transitioned toward a virtual platform.
 - b. Negotiated out of in-person conference deposits.
 - c. Refund all exhibitors
 - d. \$250 registration, lowered top sponsorship \$15k down to \$10k
 - e. pre-recorded sessions
3. Nebraska
 - a. 100 % volunteer
 - b. Canceled early April Conference, canceled summer, held fall
 - c. Not seen a significant
4. PNCWA
 - a. Canceled 2020 conference
 - b. Had pandemic insurance
 - c. Pivoted to a "Summit Series", 6 half-day sessions with sponsors
 - d. Partnerships with other organizations that are also struggling with the same challenges.

ROOM 8: Peter Garvey

1. Most events turned to virtual
2. Generally good experience for attendees
3. Has been challenging for vendors
4. Event sponsors seem satisfied
5. Virtual learning has been positive experience
6. Some annual conferences cancelled totally,
7. Virtual platform committees convened to determine best virtual platforms
8. Planning hybrid (virtual/in-person) models for later in 2021
10. Virtual platforms used:
11. Cadmium
12. Gathertown,
13. WHOVA (\$7.5k)
14. Pheedloop
15. Teams
16. Wonder.me
17. Chesapeake WEA created a lot of "virtual benefits" for our sponsors that were not in their original benefits package, listed them in a thank you letter and sent them out to our 2020 sponsors. (newsletter shout-outs, social media posts about our sponsors, website recognition, etc.)
18. Nebraska might use gather town for our exhibit hall if we go virtual again.

ROOM 9: Catrice Jones

1. There was a consensus that we all had started moving towards more automated processes even before the pandemic.
2. There was a recognition that having processes virtual made things easier and eased the pains of staff not being able to be in office daily.
3. We use 3rd party payroll processing systems and adjusted processes for reviewing/approving payments.
4. QuickBooks online has facilitated communication about budget compared to QuickBooks desktop.
5. Remote workers

ROOM 10: Allison Wood

1. @Pam... same for us. Our committees and volunteers seemed to struggle to adjust and we had to manage more as well.
2. Flexibility

ROOM 11: David Baize

1. Cancellation insurance has tripled in cost and no longer covers anything that might happen except storms.
2. Continue virtual learning
3. OnDemand programing allowing people to learn when it works for them.

Additional Question: Lisa, "What do you think of conferencing, relationships with our sponsors, what do you see how things will look a year out?"

1. Mohammed Haque: Hybrid.
2. Catrice Jones : Hybrid events
3. Audrey Arisman: Kandis Boyd, Helms Briscoe, kboyd@helmsbriscoe.com
4. Madeline Zimmerman : Yes - hybrid in-person and a virtual setting.

5. Jennifer Byrn: Hybrid will provide accessibility to a broader audience and saves emissions.
6. Shana Schwarz: Virtual events to still support our Operators, but better attended in-person events now that we know not to take it for granted.
7. Kathy Rabalais: What does hybrid mean to everyone?
8. Marc Rosso: Nebraska might go virtual with our spring conference all the time.
9. Samantha Weidenbenner: Mostly in person events, some virtual seminars. Depends on regulatory requirements for operator training.
10. Jenn Jones: We will be recording content from in-person meetings averse going hybrid – cost issue
11. Rob Lee: More "local" in-person events rather than regional events
12. Jenn Jones: We are also increasing our support of our local sections - these smaller meetings will come back much faster than our state-wide larger gatherings.
13. Kylee Daily: In-person and virtual. Or in-person with the option to watch after the event.
14. Sue Boynton: hybrid is combination of self-study + live webinars.
15. Marc Rosso: Our Board may meet virtually on a regular basis.
16. Mohammed Haque: Hybrid means the in-person event will need to be livestreamed if possible. Some speakers may also have to present virtually.
17. Shana Schwarz: True hybrid- the event can be accessed at home or in-person. Difficult to navigate from a tech perspective if you try to keep it synchronous. Aim for asynchronous when possible.
18. Jennifer Byrn: Hybrid can be offering some version of online experience. Can be as small as live streaming only or as robust as robots as the eyes, ears, and mouths for attendees.
19. Tara Washington: Ongoing training like this will allow the MAs to get together & share ideas on virtual platforms: What technologies tackle the different hurdles for CEU retention, breakout rooms, attendance/CEU tracking...
20. Catrice Jones: Hybrid approaches could be different. May include some live streaming of portions of events. Hybrid could include interaction within person attendees or just ability to watch.

Comment: Lisa Ruane, "First we were figuring what virtual looked like and now we'll have to do it for a hybrid may look like.

BREAK (10 Mins)

Penny: Funding Matters and how to plan. (Slide – Funding Matters). Where should your revenue be coming from? Are you relying on a single revenue source? Event insurance can help but pandemics are no longer covered. WEF has a good back up plan and now we need to think about what to do next. Are there untapped revenue possibilities?

- What happens with WEFTEC? It is a huge in-person event, but can we take WEFTEC and make it an even greater idea to move forward?
- Finding the right balance (Slide): Shows a drop in revenue (green) and operating expenses (yellow). How do we rebalance for the future? Expanding WEFTEC Connect may be an option.
- Non-Profits are limited in areas where they can gain revenue. As you expand, what do/can you do?

Poll #2:

What percentage of net assets do you currently have in reserves?

51-75% (38% of WEF MA's)

In pre-COVID which following are top 3 revenue sources?
Conferences: 95%, Followed by Membership & Education

In current COVID, which are the top 3 revenue sources?
Membership: 81%, Followed by Education & Conferences

In post-COVID, what do you think your largest revenue source will be?
Membership: 78%

Clara Shea (Atlantic Canada) - Revenue Generating Virtual Conferences, she told the Board, "Let's do a virtual conference." The Board was uneasy about it and no one wanted to assist initially. She found a sponsor – Trihedral, and they jumped on the opportunity to host the event on their platform. They did not want to charge and additionally, donated 4 staff and performed troubleshooting and wanted to moderate the conference. The outcome was fantastic. They had 12 trade show spots and there were no concurrent events. They ran a successful sponsorship program. The budget was \$25K and they were revenue positive and therefore did not have to dip into reserves and added \$8,000 of scholarships. Received 80 surveys back which were positive.

Open Questions:

What/where are people putting money located in reserve accounts: Mary Barry, "We had our money in CD accounts. We spoke with Penny Young and saw what NY was doing. NY had an outside company invest the money and chose ML (BoA) to invest New England's money in low risk/moderate risk.

Nebraska did the same as NE and NY did and went outside to gain greater returns.

Penny Young, "Make sure to discuss the third-party fiduciary agreement. Be sure their responsibility is with you and not with the firm. Look at the fees. WEF saved \$90K in fees changing to funds and not using individual stocks. Show the advisor your cash flow analysis to help them determine where to put what money "where". Have an investment policy spelling out who is doing what and again, the fiduciary responsibilities. WEF will share with anyone." WEF meets with financial advisors quarterly. WEF rebalances as needed. It's in WEF's investment policy and we were following our policy to WEF's benefit."

Mark Rosso: I think it is important run a business as if we are here for the long-term and not act like we are saving the money to retire. We have a great Board, and they recognize that we have \$130K in an account now up 30%. We assess every three years and determine what we are going to do with that gain; actually, use it.

Question:

Lisa Ruane: What is happening now to engage members in a virtual environment?

Chat, "we are struggling bringing in new members at this time.

Lisa mentioned a staff member (Megan) is developing a mentor program.

Kathy Rabalais to Everyone:

It is harder to utilize volunteers in the virtual world. Constantly trying to figure how to keep people engaged.

Clara Shea to Everyone:

I am finding that the volunteers are busier and harder to engage virtually.

Question:

Lisa Ruane: What platforms are you using?

Mary Barry, New England: used Pheedloop, best price for the services offered.

Allison Wood, Michigan: Whova for tracking, Hopin for networking options

Kylee Daily, Indiana: Cvent. This platform works well with our CEU tracking, as well as meets our hybrid needs.

Jennifer Byrn, Pacific Northwest: Pheedloop, for CEU tracking, low costs.

Keith Hobson: You should know and contact your MA Engagement staff member. Great to hear how much some MA's have in reserves. We are interested in the sustainability and health of our MA's. We have allocated some of WEF's reserves for MA's and have a COVID relief fund if necessary. Contact Lisa Ruane for more information. Feel free to contact Penny Young. WEF is customer driven. This is not just a financial thing. We need to do things from which our members will benefit. And we need to determine what is best for long-term and you may need to do some strategic planning as well.

Dianne closing remarks: As we leave today, understand that WEF MA leader workshop has been in-person and designed for MA staff and for smaller MA staff to talk about the challenges/success with association management that you may have. On Feb 23rd, the 2nd half of the leadership series will be about membership. Thank you for attending and look to see you at a future WEF event!