

Have an idea or concern? Here's how to make it heard.

By Steve Pace

The governance system we use at AEE clearly defines the duties of the CEO and those of the board. Both functional areas want to have a strong connection to members. In order to improve this connection we thought it important to provide information about how to discern whether an idea or concern should be communicated to the CEO or to the board. To help with this I want to introduce two perspectives a member could come from—that of a customer and that of an owner.

Customers want to know that they are getting all the services they expect from AEE. They might have suggestions on how to improve an aspect of our conferences, accreditation program, Job's Clearinghouse, the *Journal of Experiential Education (JEE)* or have an insightful suggestion regarding a new way to better communicate with members. The CEO and other staff members have full authority over these areas and are very interested in hearing your perspective.

Owners are interested in sharing ideas and concerns about the direction of AEE. Maybe you have ideas about how the association could better fulfill its mission of making a difference in the world. A foundational responsibility of our board is to hear the opinions of AEE's owners and understand their diverse values when making decisions on their behalf.

In general, newer members will probably have more questions or comments from the perspective of a customer. A longer-term member will have a lot to say from both perspectives. As we get more practiced at using the concepts of customer and owner the more natural it will feel to approach the CEO or board to share your perspective.

AEE has always been a member-driven organization. The evolution of the member perspective from that of a customer to that of an owner is critical to our success. AEE makes a positive difference in the world because of the dedication of our members. They are moved to give back to a field that they passionately believe in. They do this in many ways. Some present at our conferences and become volunteer leaders in our professional groups, affiliation groups, regional groups and our board of directors. Many participate on an AEE council or committee, such as the Accreditation Council, Regional Council, or the Journal Advisory Committee. Others do research and publish in the *JEE*, and quite a few contribute their expertise and/or perspectives to *Horizon*, our member newsletter. We invite you to consider how you can contribute to the evolution and success of experiential education by becoming an active participant in AEE.

In addition to contributing your leadership please let the board and the CEO know what is working for you and what isn't. Your perspective is crucial to AEE's success. Let us know what you think!