



Is It Time to Give Back to Your Association?

On this beautiful May morning as I sit in my home office writing my last President's Message, I am reminded of what Mark Twain once said: "The two most important days of your life are the day you were born and the day you find out why." For me, the former was half a century ago. I am fortunate that the latter came early in life.



I was only 14 years old when I realized the power of contributing to others, the power of influence and the power to change. I have known since that young age that, for me, life was best lived with a heart focused on elevating others. There is no doubt this is why I was drawn to become a volunteer in this great organization.

It was none other than [2018-19 BTA President] John Eckstrom who initially introduced me to the idea of volunteering. John petitioned me while we were attending an IBPI meeting in Orlando, Florida. The meeting was held in conjunction with one of the Business Technology Association's (BTA's) Spring Break events — similar to the upcoming 2023 BTA National Conference, to be held Aug. 30-31 in Boston, Massachusetts (see pages two, three and six for details).

Admittedly, at the time of John's invitation, I was young in this industry. I had less than a decade of experience in sales leadership. This fact caused me to pause initially as I questioned the value that I could offer BTA, as I had only recently become an owner and managing partner at RITE Technology.

John persisted relentlessly while helping me to see that as a BTA volunteer board member, I would simply be an advisor and ease into a more active role if desired. I can recall being motivated by the idea of interacting closely with other men and women

who were leading organizations like mine. This thought, combined with an internal compulsion to contribute to the success of others, led me to say "yes."

As I ponder these memories while typing this message, I am so very grateful I chose this path. I look back over this journey and it is storied with great friendships that have not just made an impact in my business but, more importantly, on my soul.

To all BTA presidents who have come before me — including John, Bob Evans and Tim Renegar — I am forever grateful for your leadership paving the way. To those who are now leading — Don Risser, Adam Gregory and Debra Dennis (who will join the national officer team on July 1) — I celebrate your service.

BTA is the amazing resource that it is today because of people like each of you who are caring enough to consider the value of a seed sown for our futures. That legacy lives on as the baton of BTA leadership passes on in July.

Like me, many of you had the fortunate experience of hearing the wisdom of industry great Mike Riordan when he spoke at BTA's Spring Break event this March in Orlando. Among many things, he taught us to not live our lives caged by imaginary bars or limiting beliefs. Together, let's choose to follow Mike's counsel and reach for the stars with hope and optimism for the future of our industry. Do not stop at hope and optimism — be like Mike who so eloquently exemplifies that it is better to give back.

In my final request as BTA president, I ask that you consider this: Is it your time to step into the ranks of BTA volunteer leadership? Are you ready to help forge BTA's future, ensuring a thriving association for many years to come? Talk with your BTA district board leaders to get the process started today. ■

— David Polimeni

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