

Fall Colors Retreat

BTA Southeast hosts event Oct. 12-13

by: Elizabeth Marvel, Office Technology Magazine

The 2023 Fall Colors Retreat, hosted by BTA Southeast, was held Oct. 12-13 at the Omni Grove Park Inn in Asheville, North Carolina. The event featured a keynote address; a dealer panel; an additional educational session; round-table discussions with exhibitors, giving attendees extra time to learn about their products and services in more detail; time to network with peers and exhibiting sponsors; and cocktails and a sunset dinner at the Grove Park Inn's Seely Pavilion, which offered panoramic views of the surrounding Blue Ridge Mountains.

The keynote, "Five Components of Extraordinary Teams," was presented by Lee Rubin, former captain of the Penn State football team and a corporate HR professional. The additional educational session, "What's Happenin' in the Imaging Industry," was presented by Andy Slawetsky, president of Industry Analysts Inc.

The dealer panel, "Diversifying for Success: The Next Generation's Path to a Thriving Future," was made up of next-generation dealership leaders. John Eckstrom, president of Carolina Business Equipment (CBE), a Novatech company, Columbia, South Carolina, moderated the panel. The panelists included: Lizzy Cathcart, account manager at Plus Inc., Greenville, South Carolina; Richie Creech, director of service at CopyPro Inc., Greenville, North Carolina; Austin Gregory, marketing coordinator and a service technician at Advanced Business Solutions LLC, St. Augustine, Florida; Blake Renegar, director of managed network services at Kelly Office Solutions, Winston-Salem, North Carolina; Brice Renegar, director of the Pure Water Technology Division at Kelly Office Solutions; and Drew Shumate, business consultant at Carolina Business Equipment, a Novatech company.

The BTA event schedule for 2024 will be announced soon. Keep an eye on www.bta.org/BTAEvents for more information as it becomes available. ■

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Clockwise from top: The 2023 Fall Colors Retreat featured a keynote address, a dealer panel, an additional educational session, round-table discussions with exhibitors and plenty of networking time, including cocktails and a sunset dinner at the Grove Park Inn's Seely Pavilion; Rubin presents the keynote address; attendees network during a break between sessions; attendees enjoy lunch before the event kicks off on Oct. 12; and 2023-24 BTA Southeast President Mike Hicks serves as an event emcee.



Clockwise from top: Eckstrom (center) moderates the dealer panel with panelists (left to right) Creech, Blake Renegar, Gregory, Shumate, Cathcart and Brice Renegar; Slawetsky presents his educational session; and Jeff Alexander (far left), Ashley Enscoe (middle right) and Peter Kubat (far right) of Sharp Electronics Corp. visit with John Pecnik (middle left) of Dowling Douglas Co., Jacksonville, Florida, during a break between sessions.



Clockwise from above left: (left to right) Melissa and Adam Gregory, Advanced Business Solutions LLC, St. Augustine, Florida, visit with Amy Dills and Jason Thomas of NA Trading and Technology during a break; 2023-24 BTA Southeast President-Elect Blake Renegar (left) assists Hicks with prize drawings; attendees enjoy dinner in the Seely Pavilion; attendees network during a break; and (far left to right) Celty and Wes Kearney of Kirbo's Office Systems, Brownwood, Texas, visit with (near left to right) Jason Resnick and Mary Ballentine of Kodak Alaris during the round tables.



Extraordinary Teams

During the retreat, Lee Rubin presented the keynote address, “Five Components of Extraordinary Teams.” He drew from his experience playing college football — including serving as captain of the Penn State football team — and his years as a corporate HR professional to share his thoughts on what makes great teams. “Teams exist because there’s a challenge or an opportunity too big for any one person to handle alone,” Rubin said, laying the foundation for the rest of the keynote. “If you can do it by yourself, you don’t need a team ... But when the things that we’re trying to accomplish, both professionally and personally, are too big for any one of us to handle by ourselves, we need a team.”

With the foundation laid, Rubin spent the rest of his presentation discussing the five components of extraordinary teams:

(1) Extraordinary teams are comprised of competitors.

“A competitor is an individual who loves to win and hates to lose,” he said. “It’s about passion. The most successful individuals, the most successful teams in the world are not just competent — they’re passionate about what they do. And it is that passion that drives them to action.”

(2) Extraordinary teams have a common goal.

“The only way [to achieve a common goal] is everyone on the team at some point must be willing to make a sacrifice,” Rubin said, adding that the more team members talk about what they’re trying to accomplish as an organization, the better. “You’ve got to be willing to make sacrifices [for the team] to achieve something that none of you could have achieved by yourselves ... But sacrifice requires you to let go of what you’ve always done.”

(3) Extraordinary teams communicate.

“When they communicate openly and honestly, they find out that, despite their differences, they both want the same thing,” Rubin said, citing the movie “Remember the Titans” as an example of learning to communicate well as a team. “... But the first thing I learned as a communications major is that communication works two ways. It’s not just how well you give information, but it’s also how well you take it or receive it. When I say ‘communicate,’ I also mean ‘listen.’”

(4) Extraordinary teams have chemistry.

“You can walk into a room and tell when there’s good chemistry in the group,” he said. “There’s a good vibe, right? People feel connected; they seem to enjoy being around each other ... So when you’ve got good chemistry, whether in sports or business, things just feel easier.”

Rubin added to this, quoting his high school chemistry teacher who told him that most chemical bonds are formed under heat and pressure. “The same stuff that tears most teams apart, if leveraged properly, is the same exact stuff that brings extraordinary teams together,” he said. “Heat and pressure.”

(5) Extraordinary teams are consistent.

“There is no way you can call yourself extraordinary if your performance is inconsistent,” Rubin said. “No one wants to do business with people who are inconsistent. So how do you build that type of consistency? ... Practice, practice, practice.”

“Bruce Lee said, ‘I fear not the man who practices 10,000 kicks one time each. I fear the man who practices one kick 10,000 times,’” he continued. “Why? Because he has mastered it ... My last challenge to you is: What have you mastered? ... In pursuit of that mastery is a machine-like consistency that allows us to produce on a consistent basis for the people we serve ... We’ve got to focus on the basics — the blocking, the tackling, the passing, the catching. If you look at the best teams around, they have mastered the basics.” ■

— Elizabeth Marvel