Concerns Regarding Transparency and Financial Stability

Jocelyn Gunter, CEO, ARMA International

In late October and most recently this week, Doug Allen, a former member of the ARMA International Board of Directors (BOD), circulated his personal concern regarding ARMA’s financial health, past decision making, and transparency. In both cases he reached out directly to chapter leaders. In mid-November, all chapter leaders should have received a note from me to address the concerns he raised.

Announcing an Open Forum

While we cannot publicly respond to every comment, post, or issue raised by Mr. Allen, it is extremely important to ARMA – the BOD and staff – to provide our volunteers an appropriate level of information to allow them to lead with confidence and in support of our overall mission. Toward that goal, we are announcing an open forum for chapter leaders.

In the beginning of the new calendar year – to coincide with the availability of the planned State of the Association-style annual report – ARMA will hold an open forum to give you greater insight into ARMA’s actions and progress, as well as an opportunity to ask questions and get transparent answers. We will provide more information on Chapter Central and in InfoPro about the timing of this forum and how to participate after our (much anticipated!) new website launches in mid-December.

Dispelling Misinformation

As was mentioned in Mr. Allen’s initial social media post:
“…misinformation can develop rapidly and spread quickly.” We want to take this opportunity to dispel Mr. Allen’s misinformation and to provide additional context.

Next Level IG Assessment (IGA) Platform Investment

• The investment figure referenced by Mr. Allen is incorrect. Over a three-year span, $826,000 was incurred for software development, marketing, salary, and sales commissions related to the Assessment. The investment should not be represented as a loss. We have recouped approximately 30% of the total investment and 50% of our software development costs.

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• The statement that we did not engage in any market research and that we didn’t have a project manager engaged in the process is incorrect. We utilized membership focus groups as well as feedback from other ARMA strategic partners, and we hired a project manager for the development process.

• The IGA platform is a valuable product that has exposed ®ARMA’s Generally Accepted Recordkeeping Principles® and Information Governance Maturity Model to many stakeholders who were not aware of these concepts. The IGA Lite version, which was based on the Next Level IGA and was launched at conference, is providing value to attendees and gathering valuable metrics for ARMA, and it will continue to do so into the future.

• While we indeed learned lessons in terms of market readiness, we continue to see significant long-term value in Next Level IGA and in the intellectual property within the platform.

ARMA’s Financial Health and Reporting

• ARMA is not in an untenable financial situation.

• ARMA’s Financial Planning Task Force diligently reviews the financial position of the association each month. For example, the task force receives benchmark reports comparing ARMA’s revenue sources, expenditures, and other ratios to professional associations of similar size, thus ensuring appropriate oversight of our strategic plans as we mitigate financial challenges. The association president, president elect, and immediate past president receive weekly updates.

• Mr. Allen referenced an incorrect figure for our current year projections, but we do expect that it will be another year or two before we break even and return to a profitable bottom line.

• We are careful about making financial data public because it can be sensitive, often represents industry intelligence, and – if it has not yet been audited – exposes ARMA to increased risks. As soon as we have audited financials, we file the IRS 990 form (“Return of Organization Exempt from Income Tax”), which is immediately available to the public.

As we’re providing more information, it is imperative that we find the right balance to increase transparency without increasing risk.

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Board Operations and Access

- Board meetings remain open to guests and other than rare executive session there is no current practice of holding “off the record” conversations. Guidelines for attending meetings have been and remain available within the Governance section of ARMA.org.

- The current BOD changed the long-standing practice of approving the minutes twice a year to approving them monthly so they can be made available faster.

- Other efforts to update governance practices, policies, and procedures have been and are still underway, and they have been aligned with general best practices and legal advice. The entire BOD is involved in major initiative discussion and decision making.

- Within the last three years, to increase continuity and oversight, the organization has formalized the roles of all three presidents: immediate past, current, and incoming. They operate as a team, working hand in hand with headquarters to ensure that no individual has undue influence and that each is trained for his or her next role.

Moving Forward

The leadership of ARMA has one clear goal: to work and grow together to build a stronger, more united ARMA. We will need your help to continuously improve our ways of working and the ways we engage and support our chapters. You are the lifeblood of this organization, and if we cannot lead the community forward with a united voice and vision, our challenges will become greater than our opportunities.

We look forward to the upcoming website launch, our open forum, and all the other exciting new member-driven products and services the new year will bring.

Have Questions?

- We strive to address the concerns of our community without creating unnecessary distraction and through appropriate and consistent communication channels. If you have additional questions, please reach out to BOD members, ARMA staff, or your region teams. We are always available.

Leadership Corner

Management and leadership skills are both necessary to be successful. Take a look at this article on “How to Manage the ‘Manage vs. Lead’ Divide” to help you sharpen your skills.

If you have a suggestion for content to include in the Leadership Corner, please e-mail us.
Prepare Now for the New Website!

Not only is the new year fast approaching...so is ARMA’s new website! Scheduled to launch in mid-December, it promises a new look and feel that will bring easier navigation and access to the tools and resources that are so important to your career!

What you need to do now:

1. **Complete any in-process online education** – Because the transition will also include a new learning management system (LMS), all online courses or sessions you have begun but not completed MUST be finished by **11:59 p.m. (CST) on Friday, December 8**. Don’t worry; all your completed online education and credits will transfer over to the new LMS. But, since your partially finished education will not transfer, you must act now to complete it.

2. **Watch for your new member login** – Once the new site is launched, you will no longer use your e-mail address as your user name for your MyARMA account. During the first week of December you will receive a personalized e-mail from ARMA containing your new unique username and password, which you will need to access the new website. After logging into the new site, you will be able to change your password. (Your current information will work up until the date of the launch.)

We are excited to be delivering soon the change we have all talked about for quite some time!

**NEW ‘1 in 1’: One Topic in One Minute**

This month we announce a new feature of *Chapter Connection* called 1 in 1. Each month we will use this space to ask you to disseminate one brief but important piece of information to your chapter members; it should take no longer than about one minute.

This month’s 1 in 1:

**Update your member information**: Please use your new user name and password (see above) to revisit your MyARMA profile when asked to after the new website rolls out in mid-December. While the new database that will power the new website will capture all member information in the present database, it can also capture additional member preferences that will allow us to:

- Connect you to others in your industry, your area, and your chapter
- Plan and connect you to content that is targeted to your needs
- Tailor our communications to send only what is most relevant to you

So, please visit your MyARMA profile to test your new username and password, update any outdated information that was transferred from the current website, and provide additional information that will help us customize our communications and content for you.
Session of the Month

Has your chapter used the Session of the Month? ARMA chapter members have exclusive access to sessions from previous ARMA International conferences, as well as the resources associated with those sessions, such as job aids and discussion questions. The sessions from the 2016 ARMA International Conference are available on the platform. For more information, click here.

Next Community Call: Connect with Fellow ARMA Leaders

Have you registered yet? Join us in our upcoming discussions on topics to help your chapter.

December 13: Being Social Media Savvy

The Houston and Arizona chapters will share how they are using social media to enhance their chapter's value. ARMA International's marketing team will also share best practices for being social media savvy.

January 24: Chapter Websites

Live presentation take place from noon-1:00 p.m. (CST). We will e-mail registrants the instructions for accessing these sessions two days before the sessions.

Did you miss our last Community Call on prospect lists? View the recording on Chapter Central.

LinkedIn

Have you ever wondered what other chapters do during the holiday season? Do they give back to their community like your chapter does? Join the Linked In group and find out. Ask questions and hear responses from fellow chapter leaders. To join the conversation, click here.

Reminders

- Prospect Lists: If you have not turned in a prospect list yet, email it today!
- ARMA's Virtual Conference is December 5th. This is a free event for all members!
Chapter Operations Article

How Your Educational Programs Can Help Recruit New Members

By Christopher M Bednar, CRM

Chapters frequently survey their members and learn what challenges they are facing or would like to learn more about so they can develop great programs and target great speakers to meet that need. But this strategy is more geared to retaining current members than to bringing in new ones.

Because the scope of information governance is much wider than “pure” records management, we have an opportunity to offer a wider variety of educational programs that may appeal to non-member IT workers, data privacy experts, data analysts, legal (e.g., lawyers, paralegals, assistants), librarians/information specialists, and students in all of these areas.

A quick scan of the International Legal Technical Association (ILTA) website uncovers a host of programs that could fit equally well into ARMA chapter programming – 360-degree document security and Azure information rights strategy, for example. Add to that mix industry vertical industries’ topics that overlap with information governance (IG) – such as healthcare administration, which would be of interest to American Health Information Management Association (AHIMA) members – and your chapter’s world of potential members could increase three-fold.

Another example to follow is LegalTech (now LegalWeek). The exhibit floor at the recent conference was covered with e-discovery vendors, many of whom now claim their solutions can manage records as well. Most of these attendees are solely in the legal industry, and I would bet that more than 70% have either never heard of ARMA or never attended an ARMA event. Yet, some chapters offer programs on discovery, even having judges and/or lawyers present, which would interest this group. Those chapters should reach out to this audiences, and those that have never offered this kind of topic or haven’t done so for a while should consider doing so.

To get ideas about what types of programming would interest those outside of your typical membership, consider the many functional areas within an organization that would be involved in an IG strategy. As an example, see the wheel diagram of professional
development certifications on ARMA’s website, which identifies 15 related certifications in IG stakeholder groups (i.e. business/audit, Privacy, IT, legal, and RIM).

I challenge chapters to reach a little outside the box with your programming; in addition to the typical programs geared to appeal to current members, consider adding at least one program that will appeal to non-member audiences from other IG stakeholder groups. Not only could it draw in people who were previously unfamiliar with ARMA, it will expand the knowledge and interest of your current members.

Final note: Make sure you, as chapter leaders, identify non-members who attend your meetings and reach out to them personally, either right there at the meeting or shortly afterwards, to explain the benefits of becoming an ARMA member.

Chapter at Work:
December 2017
Nebraska Chapter Gives Back!

The Nebraska chapter has been hard at work planning our annual charity luncheon with auction, which is held in December. Each year the board selects a charity to support, to which the chapter makes a monetary donation. To support this, chapter members donate gifts that are auctioned off to the highest bidder. Most gifts are wrapped so the winner doesn’t know what he or she is getting; that’s half of the fun. We open the gifts as they are won and then applaud or laugh, depending on what’s in the box.

Some great past gifts were the regifted bowling trophy that made the rounds for a few years, a redneck wine and cheese set (Cheez Whiz may have been involved), and old swag from ARMA conferences. We also have gifts like homemade wine, small appliances, and movie-night packages. The chapter usually has gift card raffles, and last year we had a fantastic quilt that was generously donated; it brought in a hefty amount. In the past 10 years, the chapter has raised more than $32,500 to help local charities!
This year we’ll be supporting Lighthouse, a charity in Lincoln, Neb. The Lighthouse After-School Program offers middle and high schoolers academic support, evening meals, and enrichment/recreational activities during non-school hours, Monday through Friday, 12 months a year. The program’s goal is to “Increase the likelihood of high school graduation of middle and high school-aged youth by providing high quality programming.”

The Nebraska chapter believes focusing on our youth is a necessity for growth in Nebraska, and because we’re an association focused on education, this fits right in! You can find more details on this great charity or donate at https://lincolnlighthouse.org.

Future Chapter Connections

If you would like to submit an item for the upcoming Chapter Connection, please e-mail the information to Chapter Service Team no later than noon (CST) Friday, December 8.