



A MESSAGE FROM ACUMA BOARD

Tim Mislansky



Making the Most of Your Conference Attendance

*If You Take Some Time to Consider
Your Goals, You Will Find the Best Fit*

I think I could spend every week of the year traveling to some sort of credit union conference. There are many events and many themes. Some events have become annual affairs, scheduled about the same time each year. Other meetings pop up just once, or at different times. But it sure seems like there are more and more events every year.

If I attended too many conferences, however, my work performance would suffer and my family might start a revolt. Besides, “Credit Union Conference Attendee” is not, and should not be, a full-time position.

So how do you make choices among the many and varied educational and networking opportunities out there?

As an ACUMA board member, I have the opportunity to see the effort and work that goes into the association’s annual Fall Conference and its spring workshops. I also help build a smaller conference each year through our CUSO, myCUMortgage, giving me a unique insight into mortgage lending conferences.

Why do people attend these conferences?

- Some probably make conference decisions based on the destination and venue. Who doesn’t want to be in a cool city or at a swanky hotel?
- Most look at content, checking out the

agenda and learning who is speaking about what. If they’re interested, they might attend.

- Others look at the networking opportunities that might be available.

The most successful and worthwhile conferences have some form of all three opportunities.

If you decide to attend a mortgage conference, here are my tips for success:

- 1. Decide what you want to learn or know more about.** Ask yourself some questions before you choose: Is mortgage lending a core product for your credit union? Are you trying to grow your mortgage program and your mar-

ket share? Maybe your loan volume is down and you need to find ways to make it climb again. Or would you like to grow your network of peers? Once you have asked these questions, you will have goals to match with content offered at various conferences, and you can find the best fit for you.

2. Do some advance planning. As exciting as a conference can be, it can also be exhausting. Planning what you want to accomplish while at the conference will help you get the most out of the agenda. Take in the industry experts to learn what’s happening in the industry and beyond your hometown credit union.

3. Come back with a reasonable “to do” list. I must confess that I have attended many conferences over the years where I have come away with a veritable laundry list of things I want to accomplish back at my credit union. If I’m honest, few items on these lists get done; I get drawn back into the day-to-day operations and miss out the opportunity to do some new, and potentially big, things for my credit union and its members. A short list works best. So, as you take that plane trip home, pull out your notes and pick a couple of things you are going to imple-

ment or do differently.

4. Get out of your hotel room and meet people. While there is tremendous value in attending sessions and listening to speakers present new ideas or give industry updates, the most important aspect of a conference is often the networking. This is especially true for credit unions. We work together cooperatively and are more likely to share and help each other.

For example, recently I was able to reach out to someone I met at ACUMA's conference a few years ago to ask for some help. I did not need to re-invent the wheel or go on a Google search. I was simply able to call a friend and ask a question. And she had the answer.

And not too long ago, a credit union I know hired an experienced Loan Origination Manager who came from a super-regional bank. He knew his mort-

gage stuff, and he attended an ACUMA workshop. When he came back from the workshop, I had a chance to talk with him. He was impressed with the location, the hotel and the food. He was impressed with the content and agenda, too.



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But he was most impressed, and quite honestly, surprised, by the amount of networking that went on. He told me that when he attended big bank events, few people shared anything. Instead, the conversation never strayed beyond high level and almost superficial. There was little to be gained from networking.

By contrast, the ACUMA workshop presented him with a few ideas he was going to implement with his team, and he also now had a contact at another credit union he could call with questions.

While there are many conference on mortgage lending, the only one presented by the association that focuses solely on credit union mortgage lending, ACUMA, holds its annual conference in Las Vegas, September 23-26. You can learn more about this event at acuma.org/acuma-annual-conference.



Tim Mislansky is a leading executive in credit union housing finance with more than 25 years of credit union experience. Mislansky is the Senior Vice President at Wright-Patt Credit Union in Dayton, Ohio. He is also the founder and President of myCUMortgage, which serves the mortgage needs of nearly 200 credit unions across the country. Mislansky served 10 years on the Board of Directors of Habitat for Humanity in Dayton, Ohio, and he is a former member of Fannie Mae's Credit Union Advisory Board. He also serves on the Board of Directors for ACUMA, CU Student Choice and CU Realty. Mislansky writes a blog about credit union mortgage lending at mortgagesarememberlicious.com.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

ACUMA extends a warm welcome to its newest members, who join a community dedicated to helping credit unions put more members in homes through competitive mortgage-lending programs.

These new members are entitled to all the benefits of ACUMA's educational and networking organization, including events and knowledge shared through our website (www.acuma.org) and our magazine, the *Pipeline*.

Join ACUMA in wishing success to these new members:

CREDIT UNION MEMBERS

- Heritage Federal Credit Union
- Whitefish Credit Union
- Members 1st Federal Credit Union
- Fibre Credit Union
- Santa Clara County Federal Credit Union
- Family Trust Federal Credit Union
- Pioneer Federal Credit Union
- Local Government Federal Credit Union
- Kitsap Credit Union
- First Alliance Credit Union
- Mid-Minnesota Federal Credit Union

- Call Federal Credit Union
- Access Community Credit Union
- Sesloc Federal Credit Union
- City & County Credit Union
- Altana Federal Credit Union
- Westconsin Credit Union
- First Community Credit Union

CUSO MEMBERS

- Centennial Lending

