



**A MESSAGE FROM THE
ACUMA PRESIDENT**

Tracy Ashfield



The Power of Coming Together

Everyone Benefits When We Share Our Knowledge and Experience

By Tracy Ashfield

It seems every year-end column starts with “It’s been a challenging year.” No truer words have been spoken about last year, but for ACUMA members 2021 was a spectacular year!

Why, you ask? More than ever before, our members came together—almost weekly, in fact—to learn, network and explore.

Much of that learning was online—out of necessity. But it opened the way for us to expand the educational events we offer for mortgage-lending credit unions.

Topics have ranged from strategic conversations to operational and process challenges. An example of the latter occurred in the Lightning Round that kicked off the year. ACUMA hosted a fun and informative session sorting through all the various definitions of a “business day” by tapping into the knowledge of compliance expert Amanda Phillips.

Not only did we explain how the “days” are counted for the loan estimate vs. the closing disclosure, we cleared up the always murky Saturday issue when counting recession days.

Attendees at the session received a great training grid to help educate originators, processors and closers. They raved about this take-away tool.

More recently, we heard directly from Fannie Mae on what it takes to get approved to sell loans directly to them. Many eyes were opened with this candid and informative conversation.

All our sessions attract many attendees, often well over a hundred per session.

COLLABORATE, LEARN, EXPLORE

With the onset of digital mortgage lending and remote employment it’s never been more important to collaborate, learn from the experts and examine tools and services. By doing through your ACUMA membership you can enhance your own mortgage program, increase efficiencies and cre-



ACUMA President Tracy Ashfield moderated a LiveWire25 conference session with panelists Ryan Doehrmann, CMO at GreenState Credit Union and Kristin Nesbitt, VP of Mortgage Lending at Summit Credit Union.

ate a “Wow!” member experience.

In today’s challenging environment, these are not only things you need to do, you need to do them better than the competition.

Nearly every day I hear from someone in the industry about a new technology or a digital tool that seeks to address their pain points in the mortgage process. For example, the shift to e-closings is resulting in many process changes.

We’re now having conversations about everything from compensation management to chatbots, as well as checking out new products and services to better compete and serve members.

Sometimes it’s like drinking from a firehose to try to keep up.

Every credit union person I speak with is looking at how to grow purchase volume. So it’s really no wonder we’re all looking to improve efficiencies and attract more business to meet this goal.

This issue’s theme deals with a related top-of-mind priority: recruiting and developing a younger and more diverse workforce.

It’s essential for your mortgage team to reflect your membership and, specifically, those who are looking to buy a home. As one article in this magazine puts it, “If you don’t diversify, you will be missing out on a lot of business in the coming years.”

MANY FORMS OF LEARNING

ACUMA can help you with all of these challenges. In addition to our Annual Conference—with a return to an in-person event in September 2021 (See the special section in this issue for details about the program)—and the upcoming Spring Deep-Dive Workshops, we also have offered nearly three dozen educational and networking sessions online—all free to our members.

These programs are designed to address your pain points, much of the topics shaped by your own feedback. In them we’ve shared best practices, as

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experience, reaching more members, etc.

Keep an eye on our programming schedule. And don’t forget to obtain log-in credentials to our online community and join the discussion.

DO YOU WANT TO GROW BUSINESS?

There are so many ways we can help you grow your business:

- Are you looking to hear how folks are dealing with staff getting “shopped” by competitors with the lure of higher compensation and/or work-from-home guarantees? If so, you can check out the online discussion to hear what other credit unions are doing and saying about it.
- Are you curious about what is being said about the role artificial intelligence can play in the mortgage process? Then go ahead and post a discussion thread to get the ball rolling.
- Are you wondering about how competitive your rates are or where margins are headed? Then join our virtual Power Hour presentations online.

well as business suggestions and cautions.

We’ve also looked into solutions and services that are helping credit unions keep pace with the expectations of leadership and members, all from the convenience of your “office,” wherever that may be.

So let me ask you: Are you willing to get involved? Do you want the best information available to be successful?

If you get involved, you’ll always learn something. What it is you learn depends on what you are willing to consider. But you just might find a key that leads you to a better process, providing a better member experience.



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■ Are you ready to take a deep dive into mortgage compensation trends, compliance changes or how to use member/Realtor education to increase visibility and purchase volume? Then register for our Deep-Dive Workshops. (See Page 29 for details.)

■ Are you interested in what companies and organizations are doing to address the aging workforce? Then just keep reading, because this issue of the magazine shares some great success stories about recruiting and keeping younger workers.

There is another way to get involved, too. And that’s helping to create our programming and content:

- Share with us what’s on your mind.
- Suggest speakers you have found engaging and educational.
- Offer to educate others on lessons learned, best practices and recipes for success.

Yes, we realize credit unions compete with each other. But everyone wins when credit unions increase their visibility as mortgage lenders. The growth in credit union market share proves that out.

Remember the adage, “When the tide rises, all boats rise along with it.” Let’s work together to reach that highly sought after 10% market share. We can do it!

ACUMA is the bridge that lets you leave your own credit union’s “island” and participate, virtually or in person, with your peers.

Everyone is busy, but the value of coming together has never been more valuable.



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