

# The ESA Board of Directors Takes Steps to Adapt to an Evolving Industry Landscape



**Marshall Marinace**  
President & Chairman  
of the Board  
President@ESAweb.org  
972.807.6829

This year's Leadership Summit was a resounding success with industry professionals from across the nation coming to Phoenix to link up for exciting new networking opportunities, learn new strategies and developments from our various speakers and discuss the future of our association at the Board of Directors meeting on Monday, Feb. 9.

In the last edition of Security Nation, I spoke about the importance of strong, effective governance to the future of ESA, and how we must streamline the board itself to maintain our position as the industry-leading association for the electronic security industry. I said there were several steps that we, as an association, could take to make our board more nimble and better able to respond to future challenges as we adapt to fit an evolving industry landscape.

During the round table discussion with facilitator Peggy Hoffman, the board came to that same conclusion: we simply cannot continue to go on with business as usual and expect better results. We must move away from old traditions and toward newer thinking to remain relevant.

Hoffman discussed the difference between a "strategic" board outlook and an "operational" one. She said a strategic outlook focuses on future plans and where you want to go, while operational thinking focuses on the ways to get there. Unfortunately, we aren't very strategic: to paraphrase the collective opinion of the board, we're 99 percent "informational" with no emphasis on strategic direction.

Hoffman said that the most effective boards combine the two focuses, with the best ratio of thinking being 75 percent strategic and 25 percent operational.

Hoffman came to a similar conclusion I came to months ago: that a restructuring of the board along with rethinking the current selection process for board members will allow for greater engagement from knowledgeable participants and quicker decision making.

She identified companies including Apple and Netflix as successful entities with boards ranging from six to eight members; a smaller board wouldn't diminish the voice of membership, but increase strategic effectiveness and provide more support at the local level.

A smaller board with selection based on competencies rather than geography would also allow us to divert more time, money and attention to our mission, rather than spending it on bringing a large board together only to disseminate information.

A change to a small, faster, more responsive board can't come at a better time. Our industry and therefore our members face a number of growing challenges including police department response, Net Neutrality, cybercrime, new entrants into the market and much more. We must find a way to make a smaller board work better for our members without taking away their representation at the highest levels. We must always keep the betterment of our members first.

The Board of Directors recognized the challenges facing ESA and is taking steps to position ESA as an indispensable contributor to the growth of our members and the industry. These steps begin with a thoughtful review and development of the optimal governance structure to ensure ESA is well positioned for the road ahead.

With this in mind, the Board agreed to form a Governance Task Force to bring back recommendations on how ESA can meet the vision of creating an effective governance model. The Task Force recommendations will be reviewed by the board at the next board meeting and eventually presented to the membership to adopt through bylaw changes. I applaud the Board for recognizing that change is needed and I'm looking forward to working with our members, chapter leaders, board members and staff to ensure a continued bright future for ESA members and our industry. ■