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Shaping What Comes Next

A KEY RESPONSIBILITY of any organization's leaders is to think about the members' needs—not just what they need today but also what they will need to continue to thrive in the future.

This fall, the IIBEC Board of Directors has been thinking hard about these matters. We recently met in San Antonio, Texas (the site of our 2027 convention and a fantastic city), where our agenda included strategic conversations about IIBEC's future, the community of building enclosure professionals that we serve, and the changes happening around us. By the time you read this, we will be working toward finalizing IIBEC's next Strategic Plan, which will guide IIBEC for the next three years, from 2027 through 2029.

To help direct the board's strategic discussions, we have been exploring the American Society of Association Executives' "ForesightWorks Drivers of Change," which help association leaders understand external forces that currently affect their organizations and will be influential into the future. We have been particularly focused on four drivers that we think will have a big impact on IIBEC and our members: the evolving role of volunteers, Generation Z, ethics, and artificial intelligence (AI). I'd like to share some of what we have discussed with you here.

VOLUNTEERISM

IIBEC, like most professional associations, depends heavily on volunteers. Our members generously give their time and expertise to committees, chapters, and countless other activities. But the needs of volunteers and expectations around volunteering are shifting. For example, communication technologies now allow people to collaborate without being limited by their locations or time zones. On the other hand, it can be hard to build the bonds of community that sustain volunteerism when volunteers rarely meet face to face. As we contemplate IIBEC's future, we are guided by the following question: How do we continue to create meaningful opportunities to contribute while recognizing the changing needs and expectations of those who participate?

GENERATION Z

As Generation Z, our second important "driver of change," enters the workforce in greater numbers, they bring new experiences, expectations, ways of learning, and approaches to technology. If we want IIBEC to remain relevant, we need to welcome members of Generation Z into our community, and we need to make sure that they find enough value to stay.

ETHICS AND AI

Ethics and AI are driving change in intersecting ways. AI is already altering how we approach our work. Over the next several years, its influence will grow, potentially creating enormous opportunities for building enclosure professionals, while also raising challenging questions about ethical behavior and professional standing. When an AI tool can process information and generate a conclusion almost instantly, how do we evaluate whether the input and output are correct? Where does accountability sit when AI technology contributes to a professional decision? And, perhaps most importantly, how do we protect the value of our expertise in a world where information seems to be so easy to access? We, along with our colleagues, our clients, and the public, need to be confident that the AI tools we use strengthen, rather than replace, the professional judgment that our work requires. IIBEC has a role to play in helping members face these issues.

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Foresight is not about predicting exactly what 2029 will look like. It is about recognizing the forces that will shape our future and asking what we should do today to prepare for them. That's why IIBEC's leadership is asking:

- What skills will our members need?
- How will people want to learn, connect, and volunteer?
- How do we sustain ethics and expertise in the context of technological change?
- And what role should IIBEC play in helping our members navigate these changes?

Although we cannot know precisely what the next three years will bring, I believe that IIBEC is asking the right questions, paying attention to the change around us, and preparing members to meet whatever comes next.

The future of our profession is ours to shape. Let's make the most of the opportunity!



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