

My Leadership Journey

Early in my career, I was quite content being in the background of any project or activity...a follower. That is typical of an Introvert of which I am most certainly one. Luckily, as I matured and gained more experience, there were people who recognized my potential as a leader even when I couldn't see it in myself. At the encouragement of my then boss, I joined the National Association of Bar Executives (NABE) and started attending the national conferences. I joined a committee and soon became its chair. A few years later, the NABE Board approved my proposal to create a forum for meeting planners and I was appointed chair. Feeling more confident in my leadership skills, I again approached the NABE Board for authority to create a forum for Assistant/Associate/Deputy Executive Directors (AEDs). Unfortunately, this time the NABE Board did not accept my proposal. Nevertheless, I was determined to move forward so I contacted AEDs around the country and proposed we get together at a NABE conference to see if this concept was worth a try. To my delight, 15-20 AEDs attended that meeting. To this day, the AEDs group is a thriving forum.

I was becoming more and more recognized within NABE as a leader and was strongly encouraged by my peers to run for the Board. My reaction was to run...as fast as I could in the other direction! Thankfully, colleagues persisted and I decided to declare my candidacy for State Delegate. I ran unopposed and was elected to my first two-year term on the NABE Board. Nearing the end of that term, I felt I was just hitting my stride so I ran for a second term. This time I had a very worthy opponent but was fortunate to win the election. When that term was coming to an end, I was encouraged to take on a higher leadership position, that of Vice President, which ascends to the President-elect and President positions. Once again, my first reaction was "thanks, but no thanks." After further consideration, I realized that I wanted to continue serving on the Board and contributing to the organization. I launched my campaign with postcards, personalized emails and phone calls. It was exhausting and completely out of my Introvert comfort zone. My opponent and I conducted a friendly yet vigorous campaign and, thankfully, I came out as the victor. That launched my three-year service in officer positions, ultimately serving as NABE president in 2011-12. Ultimately, I overcame my doubts about whether I could be an effective leader and ended up having an incredible experience. I am proud of what we accomplished during my tenure on the NABE Board.

Until mid-2016, my entire career was spent at the Colorado and Denver Bar Associations. When I left the CBA/DBA, I was proud to hold the position of Assistant Executive Director. One of my greatest accomplishments while at the CBA was as co-founder of COBALT, the CBA's leadership training program. In the 10 years that I had the privilege of shepherding the program, I saw firsthand how participants benefited from the leadership training they received. The experience led some of these lawyers to make major career changes, including becoming judges and opening their own law firms. Watching these people realize their leadership potential was extremely rewarding for me.

When I left the bar associations, I knew I wanted to start my own business but struggled with what the nature of the business should be. In talking with friends and colleagues, it became clear that my passion is leadership, so DCS Strategies LLC was launched. My goal is to assist individuals and organizations in identifying, fostering and furthering leadership skills. That includes developing formal leadership programs, facilitating sessions in which an organization's leadership is working to develop goals and plans, making presentations about leadership, and providing consulting to individuals who are looking to further their leadership skills.

And so, my leadership journey continues.