

Lead the Way As a PMI Volunteer

By Kerry Stackpole, IOM, FASAE, CAE, PMI CEO/Executive Director



Kerry Stackpole

Have you ever wondered what it takes to make a change in our world? Leadership is rarely born in comfort. More often, it emerges when someone chooses to step forward—to contribute, to collaborate, and to serve something larger than themselves.

That truth has shaped nearly every successful trade association, business enterprise, civic movement, and industry transformation in modern history. Plumbing Manufacturers International thrives because individuals decide their experience, judgment and leadership matter enough to invest in the future of an industry, a profession, and the people who depend upon it. Volunteer leadership is not simply about filling a seat on a committee or serving on a board. It is about helping shape the direction, relevance and impact of an entire community of professionals navigating a rapidly changing world.

For many executives and emerging leaders, volunteer service often begins with a simple question: “Do I really have time?” Yet, the better question may be: “Can I afford not to?”

The pace of change confronting industries today is extraordinary. Regulatory complexity, artificial intelligence, cybersecurity risks, workforce shortages, sustainability demands, economic uncertainty, supply chain disruptions, geopolitical instability, and shifting consumer expectations are reshaping business models at unprecedented speed. No leader, no organization, and no association can navigate these challenges alone.

A PMI leadership position can be a career gamechanger

Association leadership offers something increasingly rare in modern business life—the opportunity to step outside the daily operational whirlwind and engage in deeper strategic thinking alongside peers confronting many of the same challenges. Those who lead the PMI Board of Directors and committees gain a wider aperture into emerging trends, legislative

developments, market shifts, technological disruption, and evolving stakeholder expectations. They see around corners sooner. They hear perspectives they might not otherwise encounter. They learn not only from formal presentations and reports, but from candid conversations with fellow leaders who understand the realities of the business landscape.

Perhaps more importantly, volunteer leadership changes the leader themselves.

Leadership inside one’s own company often operates within familiar systems, cultures, and reporting relationships. Association leadership is different. It requires influence without direct authority. It demands consensus-building among competitors, collaborators, and diverse personalities with differing priorities and perspectives. It sharpens emotional intelligence, diplomacy, listening skills, strategic communication, and the ability to navigate ambiguity—all essential capabilities in today’s environment.

Volunteer service also offers an invaluable proving ground for emerging leaders. Many executives first discovered their leadership voice while chairing a committee, facilitating difficult discussions, helping resolve industry disagreements, or building alignment around a shared objective. Those experiences create confidence, credibility and perspective that often translate directly back into stronger leadership inside their organizations.

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Women of PMI Presenter Shares Tips to Move Past Hesitation

By Judy Wohlt, PMI Communications Team, Valek and Co.

Even the most accomplished professionals can hesitate at critical moments. A promotion opportunity appears. A leadership role opens. A bold idea needs to be shared. Yet, something invisible presses the brakes.

That hesitation is not a lack of ambition, intelligence or capability. Rather, hesitation is an internal protection system doing exactly what it was designed to do: keep us safe, explained executive coach **Tiffany Houser**, the creator of the Momentum Intelligence Methodology and author of the upcoming book of the same name, during a recent Women of PMI workshop.

She shared strategies to help participants identify their personal hesitation patterns, interrupt self-protective patterns, and move forward despite uncertainty. Houser has built her coaching philosophy around a powerful insight: successful people are not fearless; they simply learn how to act even when doubt shows up.

“The professionals who advance aren’t the ones who never feel doubt,” she explained. “They’re the ones who know how to move anyway.”

Updating your outdated internal operating system

Houser compared personal growth to updating a smartphone operating system. When software becomes outdated, phones slow down, overheat, and lose efficiency. People experience something similar when their internal operating system (IOS) no longer matches whom they are becoming.

The IOS consists of a person’s belief system and nervous system. As careers evolve and responsibilities grow, old mental patterns can create friction that limits progress.

“What’s important to understand is that an outdated internal operating system doesn’t mean anything is wrong with

you,” Houser said. “It just means you’re evolving and your system hasn’t caught up to align with where you are and where you want to go next.”

Instead of criticizing themselves for hesitation, Houser encouraged participants to take advantage of the opportunity for an internal update. “We don’t throw our phones away when they slow down,” she noted. “We refresh them.”

Your safety director vs. your authentic self

At the center of Houser’s framework are two competing forces: the authentic self and the safety director.

The authentic self represents ambition, creativity, critical thinking, and possibility. She described it as the “CEO aspect” of the brain, which focuses on vision, purpose, and long-term goals. “It’s the adventurous side of you ready to create your best-case scenarios and make them happen,” she explained.

The safety director, by contrast, focuses entirely on protection, scanning for risk and potential failure by drawing from past experiences, insecurities, and emotional memories. “Your safety director doesn’t care about the destination,” Houser said. “It only sees danger and what could go wrong.”

The safety director can become overactive in high-pressure situations involving visibility, leadership or responsibility. The resulting “momentum paradox” presses the gas pedal and brake at the same time, Houser explained.

The subsequent internal conflict often creates cycles of starting, stopping and restarting goals without sustained momentum. “You still want it, but the internal friction keeps interrupting your progress,” she added.

Understanding the four zones of growth

One of the workshop’s central lessons



focused on Houser’s “four zones of growth”: comfort, fear, learning, and growth.

Most people spend much of their time in their comfort zone, where life feels predictable and controlled. But the opportunities people want exist outside that space, she emphasized. “Everything we want is out there in our learning and growth zones,” she shared. “But you have to take a trip through your fear zone first.”

The fear zone is often filled with self-doubt, excuses and concern about other people’s opinions. Houser explained that many professionals unknowingly allow their safety director to dominate this territory. However, she stressed that once people understand what is driving their fear, they can reduce its power and move through it more quickly.

She compared the process to ripping off a Band-Aid. “Yes, there is discomfort,” Houser said. “But it’s short. Then you’re learning and eventually growing.”

People develop new skills in the learning zone, where resilience expands. Over time, taking repeated action will stretch the boundaries of comfort, she noted. Eventually, people reach the growth zone—where confidence, purpose and achievement begin to compound.

PMI members can view slides, a summary and playbook from Houser’s presentation, “Momentum Intelligence: Why We Hesitate—and How to Overcome It,” on the PMI Webinars/Videos page (tinyurl.com/ywnec8td).

Kyle Thompson Helps PMI Shape the Future of Plumbing Codes

By Judy Wohlt, PMI Communications Team, Valek and Co.



Kyle Thompson

Most people give little thought to plumbing codes and standards, which protect public health, prevent property damage caused by leaks, ensure product reliability, and advance water efficiency and conservation. Behind the scenes, however, a complex regulatory landscape is constantly evolving, shaped by technical debates, emerging technologies, and shifting policy priorities. Few people understand that landscape better than PMI Technical Director **Kyle Thompson**, who applies his technical expertise, collaborative skills, and focus to the code-change proposals that may impact plumbing manufacturers.

Thompson tracks hundreds of proposals and participates directly in critical code cycles that influence the industry's future, all the while championing plumbing manufacturers' interests and delivering critical expertise and insight on emerging issues that could have lasting consequences.

Focusing on what matters

Thompson participates in every phase of the rigorous three-year code cycles for the International Plumbing Code (IPC) and Uniform Plumbing Code (UPC). He also serves on ASHRAE committees and several NSF standards committees, and monitors plumbing and building standards developed by the American Society of Mechanical Engineers and ASTM International.

The International Code Council (ICC), responsible for developing the IPC, and the International Association of Plumbing and Mechanical Officials (IAPMO),

which develops the UPC, operate under a system filled with proposal deadlines, hearings, committee votes, public comment periods, and revisions.

Thompson participates in ICC's Plumbing, Mechanical, and Fuel Gas Code Action Committee, the IAPMO Technical Committee and Water Efficiency and Sanitation Standard (WE•Stand) Committee, and various work groups. His involvement encompasses reviewing code-change proposals submitted by various industry groups and organizations, gathering feedback from PMI members, and drafting and submitting PMI's proposed revisions.

The volume of proposals can be staggering. For example, during the May 2024 review for the 2027 UPC, Thompson said he reviewed 371 proposals to determine which could significantly impact PMI members. Out of those, roughly 30 required PMI's close attention and strategic action, he explained. "Separating the distractions from the things that are going to impact PMI members is an important part of the job," he noted.

Balancing competing interests

The code development process brings together manufacturers, testing laboratories, certification bodies, labor organizations, inspectors, and regulators—all with different priorities. Patience, due diligence, and a collaborative mindset are required to achieve successful outcomes, Thompson shared.

Thompson currently serves on the UPC Technical Committee, which has roughly 30 stakeholders representing varied interests. "Our work is essentially developing consensus among disparate groups," he explained. Consensus-building has become second nature to Thompson after he spent 10 years at IAPMO coordinating standards development efforts and helping opposing sides negotiate workable language, he shared.

The standards development process often becomes an endurance test. "You might

work in the background for two years on a proposal before it ever goes to a committee for ballot consideration," he explained.

Celebrating big and small wins

Even when PMI presents a compelling case for or against a particular code revision, Thompson said things don't always work out. That's why PMI celebrates both major and incremental victories while continuing to prepare for future code cycles, he emphasized.

One recent success involved water reuse safety. PMI secured what Thompson called a "significant victory" in the 2027 IPC revisions by classifying bidets and personal hygiene devices as potable-water-only applications. In addition, PMI secured a revision in the 2027 UPC that will require separate potable and non-potable water lines for indoor reuse water systems in new construction.

More recently, Thompson encouraged PMI members to review the IAPMO 2026 WE•Stand Technical Committee Meeting Monograph and 2027 code change proposals. In a May 6 email to PMI Technical Committee members, he flagged several measures that could significantly reduce flush and flow rates for toilets, showerheads, lavatory faucets, and wash fountains.

For example, PMI opposes lowering the flush rate for single-family residential water closets from 1.28 to 1.1 gallons per flush, citing concerns about drainline carry, consumer satisfaction, feasibility, and the lack of sufficient technical justification. Thompson noted the issue is especially important because the UPC Technical Committee may incorporate WE•Stand language directly into the UPC or its appendix.

PMI welcomes member feedback on codes and standards revisions. "The more voices and perspectives we can bring together, the better the chances our position will prevail," he added.

Mobile Showrooms Feature Plumbing Advances, WaterSense Wins

By Judy Wohlt, PMI Communications Team, Valek and Co.

Plumbing Manufacturers International members Sloan and TOTO USA have been taking plumbing innovations directly to plumbers, designers, contractors, and other industry professionals using immersive mobile showroom tours. PMI's communications consultant **Ray Valek** attended the recent TOTO event in Oakbrook, Illinois, where he highlighted the impact of the EPA's WaterSense Program, as TOTO celebrated the program's 20th anniversary.

"This is a big moment because it's a milestone of a great public-private partnership between the United States government and the plumbing manufacturing industry," Valek noted to **Chie Toguchi**, a TOTO representative, at the Whistle Stop Tour. "Although WaterSense wasn't mandated, plumbing manufacturers did a great job of coming up with all these innovative products on their own, and these products have saved around 10 trillion gallons of water so far."

TOTO staff distributed t-shirts to attendees to commemorate the WaterSense Program achievement. A TOTO truck bore the WaterSense logo. "TOTO takes great pride in the WaterSense program and was a key contributor to its first high-efficiency toilet specification. A TOTO team was also with EPA Administrator **Stephen Johnson** when he announced the program's 2006 launch in San Antonio, Texas," emphasized **Fernando Fernandez**, vice president of codes and standards at TOTO USA. "We decided to celebrate the important milestone of WaterSense's 20th anniversary via our cross-country Whistle Stop Tour while advocating for its success in water resiliency—a goal that is central to TOTO's sustainability theme."

TOTO debuts new water-saving & cleaning tech

Visitors to the event were introduced to



Ray Valek (far left) with the TOTO team at a Whistle Stop event.

the new TOTO Aurora WASHLET+ and the Aurora INTEGRAVITY SYSTEM flushing platform. During a live demonstration, attendees watched the system's dual-phase cleaning technology rinse the toilet bowl five times longer for enhanced cleaning while delivering a powerful, complete flush using only one gallon of water. The event also featured the latest TOTO Washlet+ Bidet Seat.

Sloan roadshow delivers hands-on experience

Like TOTO, Sloan is bringing its latest innovations directly to customers via a nationwide Sloan Mobile Showroom roadshow.

Inside a large travel trailer, Sloan showcases water-saving fixtures, touchless technology, and complete restroom solutions at various offices, distilleries, and other locations. The immersive experience allows visitors to watch live product demonstrations, step inside virtual reality restroom designs, and examine finishes and material samples firsthand, explained **Monika Burzy**, strategic account manager at Sloan.

"It's helpful for customers to see, touch and use our products. For example,

designers want to see the functionality, while engineers would like to know how the product works," Burzy noted.

A featured fixture wall displays a Sloan pressure-assisted toilet with Flushmate vessel, floor-mounted water closet, and designer urinal. Additional highlights include Sloan's FLITE-DEC integrated sink system, AER-DEC integrated sink system, SloanStone solid surface 1-station wall-mounted round front sink paired with a Sloan wide-frame mirror in polished chrome, and the Sloan DropSpot bottle filler.

Many of Sloan's WaterSense-labeled commercial products and water management systems appear throughout the mobile showroom.

As a longtime WaterSense partner, PMI continues championing the program and its impact on water efficiency. "It's something that plumbing manufacturers can be proud of and can build upon. As we face more water shortages in the future, these products are going to be even more important," Valek emphasized.

PMI Staff Connects With Kohler Team During Productive Visit

Plumbing Manufacturers International staff visited with a team from PMI member Kohler in May to gather valuable industry insights, see firsthand the plumbing innovations Kohler produces, and learn about the company's challenges and opportunities.

The PMI team included CEO/Executive Director **Kerry Stackpole**, Director of Programs and Administration **Jodi Stuhrberg**, Technical Director **Kyle Thompson**, and Director of State Government Affairs, Policy and Advocacy



Matthew Windrum along with PMI government affairs consultants **Stephanie Salmon** and **Jerry Desmond**. The group toured the Kohler, Wisconsin, campus and foundry, while hearing

about the company's long and storied 150-year history. Salmon and Desmond shared government affairs updates.

Dan Rieland, Kohler's PMI ambassador, led the group through a productive discussion about various plumbing manufacturing industry issues and topics. "We enjoyed our thoughtful, engaging meeting with the Kohler team. We learned a great deal about their culture and strong, committed team that continues to make lasting contributions to our industry," Stuhrberg noted.



l-r: Brian O'Laughlin, Windrum, Amanda Rodriguez, Salmon, Thompson, Dan Rieland, Stackpole, Lowell Lampen, Charlie Hoffmann, Stuhrberg, and Mark Gibeault.

PMI Boosts Social Media Effort with Public-Facing Videos & More

By Ray Valek, PMI Communications Team, Valek and Co.



Infographics and videos have driven engagement on PMI's social media platforms

Building upon a media strategy focused primarily on members and industry allies, Plumbing Manufacturers International has expanded its social media effort, with public-facing “Rethink Water” messages for those interested in kitchen and bath products and related topics.

Started on Feb. 16, the campaign so far has focused primarily on water efficiency, with a media tip sheet, “How to Save Water and Increase Home Value with Water-Efficient Kitchen and Bath Products,” (tinyurl.com/bdcspmy8) and social media posts featuring infographics found at the end of the tip sheet, which gained \$48,900 in publicity value.

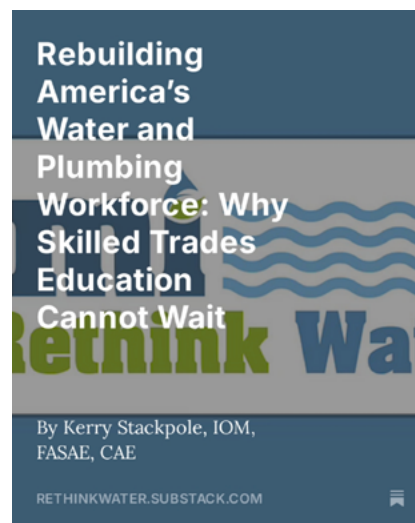
The PMI communications team also has stepped up its use of video, now engaging both with partner Association Studios and social media influencers **Nate Soetaert** (@natesoetaert.realestate, 17.9K followers on Instagram) and **Courtney Jacobs** (@courtneyjacobs.home, with 159K followers on Instagram). Both influencers post on Instagram, and allow PMI to repost their videos on PMI’s TikTok, Instagram, Facebook and LinkedIn platforms. The influencers expose PMI’s messages to new and influential audiences—encompassing real estate

agents and those interested in home cleanliness and maintenance, in addition to builders and architects.

Posts encourage views to learn more at safeplumbing.org/rethinkwater

All posts have the primary goal of encouraging viewers to learn more at safeplumbing.org/rethinkwater, the campaign’s landing page, where additional information on a variety of topics can be found. Between Feb. 15 and May 17, the page received 8,162 visits. During the same time period, the campaign achieved 850,571 impressions/views, 12,767 video views, 6,447 engagements (likes, comments, shares, etc.), and a net audience growth of 1,495, or 10.3%. PMI has received the highest engagement rates so far on LinkedIn (5.9%) and TikTok (5.4%).

PMI’s Rethink Water newsletter on LinkedIn and Substack has been integrated into this program, as well, with subscribers to the LinkedIn newsletter growing from 3,923 to 4,262 during the campaign. Subscribers to the Substack newsletter, which features the same articles as the LinkedIn newsletter, stand at 1,407. The newsletter also achieved very good open (28-29%) and engagement rates (8.8-11%).



Skilled trades education among the resonating messages

A recent Rethink Water newsletter article, “Rebuilding America’s Water and Plumbing Workforce: Why Skilled Trades Education Cannot Wait,” gained particularly strong engagement over all PMI platforms, with 295,000 impressions/views, 2,842 engagements, and 3,140 clicks to the landing page or other PMI information.

The PMI communications team plans to create additional campaigns around legacy product replacement, lead in water mitigation, how to spot counterfeit and contraband products, and the combined economic impact of the plumbing manufacturing and plumbing industries.

Facing a fragmented media environment, PMI is working to repurpose key messages in a broad range of media, including traditional consumer and industry trade media and the previously mentioned social media. In concert with PMI members communicating similar messages, the communications team works to lay a foundation that helps PMI and industry advocacy efforts to succeed.

PMI encourages all member companies to follow us on LinkedIn, TikTok (@pmihome), Instagram (@pmihome), and Facebook, and to subscribe to the Rethink Water newsletter on LinkedIn (tinyurl.com/mpv39cre) and Substack (tinyurl.com/mvfruwws). Like and share our posts, and we’ll be looking to share yours! Together, we can help to create a better understanding of the value of plumbing manufacturing among the public and policymakers.

PMI26 Inspiring Leaders to Experience WWII in 4D

By Judy Wohlt, PMI Communications Team, Valek and Co.



Participants in the PMI26 Inspiring Leaders Program will get to immerse themselves in a 4D cinematic journey through World War II during the PMI26 Manufacturing Success Conference, Nov. 2-5, in New Orleans. The immersion will occur at the National WWII Museum, where the program will take place.

A 48-minute captivating film experience, “Beyond All Boundaries,” will guide program participants from Pearl Harbor to V-J Day on a 120-foot-wide panoramic screen. PMI’s inspiring leaders will get to feel the treads of Tiger Tanks rumbling across North Africa’s deserts, steam rising from the jungles of Guadalcanal, and snow falling during the Battle of the Bulge.

Narrated by Oscar-winning actor and executive producer **Tom Hanks**, the film features an all-star celebrity cast—including **Brad Pitt**, **Gary Sinise**, **Patricia Clarkson**, and more—that voices the first-person accounts of those who witnessed history unfold. Learn why the war was fought, how it was won, and what it means today so that all generations can understand the price of freedom and be inspired by what they learn.

Discover how to become unstoppable during PMI26 keynote

Don’t miss the keynote presentation by **Alex Weber**, an award-winning speaker on leadership and peak performance,

who will share a practical roadmap to become unstoppable.

Telling stories from his time as an American Ninja Warrior competitor and a championship lacrosse coach, Weber will share with PMI26 attendees the powerful idea that success is often built on the foundation of setbacks.

“Being unstoppable means fully accepting that challenges, setbacks and daily moments of adversity are inevitable,” he noted. “The difference lies in what happens next. Do those moments stop progress—or fuel it?”

Weber’s keynote will probe the questions of “What if I’m not good enough?” and “What if I fail,” while offering tools to not just cope—but to push through doubt.

Get the latest on PFAS, skilled trades, water use/data centers, tariffs, and more

The comprehensive PMI26 program will feature a variety of industry experts and professional speakers delving into issues and themes crucial to the plumbing manufacturing industry, such as PFAS, AI, water reuse, and more.

Updates on the rapidly changing PFAS regulation, policy and compliance landscape will focus on PFAS in products and current bans on these forever chemicals, as well as on reporting and

data gathering requirements and the latest on current and future testing methods.

Industry experts will also address the future of the skilled trades workforce; the water/energy nexus as it relates to AI, data centers, water usage, and the role that plumbing manufacturers can play in optimizing water reuse; and the impact of PMI’s initiatives, such as Rethink Water. Other sessions will explore 2027 United States trade and tariff policy, issues with plastics in our oceans, commerce events, and more.

Savor the sites and tastes of the ‘Big Easy’

Enjoy staying at the well-appointed Loews New Orleans Hotel, known for its ideal downtown location within walking distance to the French Quarter and signature Southern hospitality. The hotel embraces the “Big Easy” soul through its original local artwork and historic photography, along with onsite dining options of Poydras & Peter, which serves authentic NOLA comfort food using local ingredients.

Stay tuned for more exciting details about PMI26 coming soon!



Lead the Way As a PMI Volunteer (Contd.)

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Volunteer service creates shared purpose and valuable connections

Equally powerful are the relationships formed through service. Business relationships built through volunteer leadership often become some of the most enduring and valuable connections of a career. Trust grows differently when leaders work together to solve industry-wide challenges, advocate for sound public policy, strengthen technical standards, develop workforce initiatives, or advance sustainability and innovation efforts. The conversations move beyond transactions and into shared purpose.

In many respects, association leadership represents one of the few environments where competitors become collaborators in pursuit of something larger than quarterly performance. The resulting relationships often lead to partnerships, insights, mentorship opportunities, and friendships that endure for decades.

There is also something deeper at work. At its best, volunteer leadership reconnects professionals to purpose. In a business climate increasingly dominated by speed, metrics, disruption, and constant pressure, service reminds all of us that industries do not advance accidentally. Progress occurs because individuals choose to engage. They choose to lend their expertise. They choose to help develop future leaders. They choose to strengthen institutions that protect, advocate for, and advance the interests of their industry and society alike.

Become a steward for the future

The impact of those choices extends far

beyond boardrooms and committee meetings. Thoughtful volunteer leadership shapes public policy, advances innovation, improves product safety, strengthens sustainability initiatives, develops workforce talent, and helps create stronger communities and healthier economies. In many ways, volunteer leaders become stewards of the future.

The question facing every PMI member is not whether leadership opportunities exist. They do. The real question is whether experienced, capable and thoughtful professionals are willing to answer the call.

Industries need leaders willing to contribute their judgment, insights, creativity, and courage. PMI needs individuals prepared to help navigate uncertainty and seize opportunity. Emerging professionals need mentors willing to guide the next generation forward. This is your moment to step forward.

Submit a committee (tinyurl.com/2ce7nxcn) or board (tinyurl.com/mw3tyj9c) leadership application at your earliest convenience. PMI's 2027 leadership positions will be affirmed at the PMI26 Manufacturing Success Conference in November.

Share your expertise. Strengthen your industry relationships. Expand your perspective. Develop your leadership voice. Help shape the future. Leader is never a title bestowed upon someone. It is a decision to engage, contribute, and make a difference. Now is your time to lead.



2026 PMI LEADERSHIP

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