

**“The only  
sustainable  
advantage  
is an  
organization's  
ability  
to learn  
faster  
than the  
competition.”**

*- Peter Senge*



EXECUTIVE  
AGENDA

## How Do You Continue to Grow and Develop?

There comes a time when every leader must assume responsibility for his or her continuing learning, growth and development. But how?

- How do you stay ahead?
- How do you maintain your edge?
- How do you stay abreast of developments outside of your own areas of expertise?
- How do you quickly sort through and settle on best practices that work?
- How do you find individuals who care about you and with whom you can safely share anything?
- How do you find a forum for test driving a strategy?
- How do you find a mentor who is dedicated to your success and who challenges you to become all that you are capable of becoming?
- How do you find a personal “board of advisors” that is genuinely committed to helping you and your organization achieve your goals?



*“Business politics can be especially challenging for a woman. In my EA group there are no politics. I’m respected and treated equally regardless of title, experience or gender. There are no pre-determined gender roles. It’s a safe, non-judgmental environment free of hidden agendas. It’s priceless.”*  
- Dawn Pankow  
Long-term EA 12 member

**“In times of great change, learners inherit the Earth while the learned find themselves beautifully equipped to deal with a world that no longer exists.”** – Eric Hoffer

## The Irony of Leadership

Yet, ironically, as careers progress, a leader’s sources for counsel, mentoring and perspective often diminish. Greater responsibility can make managers feel isolated, vulnerable and unable to openly discuss concerns, explore alternative solutions, wrestle with tough decisions and seek advice. This is the reason Executive Agenda (EA) exists, and this is the reason EA enjoys high levels of member loyalty and referrals.

## Why Executive Agenda?

Comfort in chaos. That’s what today’s thought leaders have determined is the key requirement for success. How do you become comfortable in chaos? By continuously learning and honing your skills. Comfort does not come from knowing the answers. It comes from knowing you can understand the issues and figure out the answers. That is what Executive Agenda is all about: providing a platform where business leaders can help each other learn, develop and improve their performance within the context of their specific organizations and circumstances. And it works. Research shows that businesses, whose leaders participate in peer-learning organizations similar to EA, consistently outperform their competition. The formula is pretty simple: better learning = better leaders and better leaders = better results.

## How Does Executive Agenda Work?

Executive Agenda is structured around a simple concept: put inquisitive, non-competing professional peers together in confidential settings and let them learn from each other. Add the leadership and mentoring of a seasoned business Group Chair and you have unparalleled, real-time, pragmatic learning capable of generating unique corporate and personal value. Three “hubs” are at the heart of EA: The Group, The Group Chair and The Extended Community.

### The Group

Groups are composed of 12–16 men and women from a variety of functional areas and non-competing businesses and industries together with a professional Group Chair. Groups meet once per quarter in all-day meetings that are typically hosted in a member’s facility. The group members determine the agenda by bringing forth their concerns, problems

## Who Can Join EA?

and opportunities. It is in the quarterly meetings that members caringly and confidentially challenge each other, work through issues, share best practices, hold each other accountable and support the achievement of each other's business, professional and personal goals.

### The Group Chair

To paraphrase John Quincy Adams, the role of the Group Chair is to help each member become a better leader by inspiring him or her to “dream more, learn more and become more.” The two primary platforms upon which they accomplish their role are the quarterly meetings and One-on-Ones. As experienced facilitators, Group Chairs work hard to ensure that the meetings are focused, safe, collaborative, challenging, and deliver high value.

Minimum criteria for membership in Executive Agenda includes working in Wisconsin as a senior-level executive other than a CEO. More important than title, age or gender is openness, a thirst to learn and a willingness to invest in your own and others' development.

While we have members from organizations of all sizes, Executive Agenda's “sweet spot” tends to be private and public, for profit and not-for-profit, organizations between \$10 million and \$250 million. And membership representing a wide variety of industries is not only welcomed, it is encouraged because diversity is one of the things that makes Executive Agenda work.

**“Leadership and learning are indispensable to each other.”** – John F. Kennedy

The second platform, the One-on-One, is an often invaluable, confidential 1½ to 2 hour mentoring session between a member and his or her Group Chair. One-on-Ones are held prior to each quarterly meeting. The member sets the agenda; no topic is off limits.

### The Extended Community

As Wisconsin's oldest and largest membership organization dedicated to executive development across diverse business functions, members have access to the wisdom of leaders in other groups – 500+ members representing over 325 of Wisconsin's foremost organizations. Operating within commonsense boundaries of competitive interests and conflicts, EA provides members with opportunities to share and learn from peers working in similar roles, businesses and industries.

## Is EA Right For You?

Membership in Executive Agenda is not easy. EA works because its groups are “greater than the sum of their members.” Their “greatness” is the product of the quality and commitment of each individual member and the standards and expectations of the group.

If Executive Agenda seems like the kind of organization that would facilitate your growth and development, and you are willing to commit to peers who are willing to commit to you, we invite you to take the next step.

Please contact the EA office to learn more or discuss how you can be considered for membership.

### Sample Meeting Topics:

- *Setting up a new product development group*
- *How to structure sales coverage and compensation*
- *Facilitating a management transition*
- *Controlling health insurance costs*
- *How to select and implement an ERP and CRM system*
- *Acquisition tips and traps*
- *When and how to change the organizational structure*
- *How to create and nurture a strategically-aligned culture*
- *How to manage up*
- *Ways to inject more innovation into an organization*
- *What, how and when to outsource manufacturing*
- *Protecting against fraud*
- *Cultivating the right culture*
- *The most important things to know when deciding whether to outsource manufacturing to China*
- *How to create differentiation and stop commoditization*
- *How to charge for your engineering services*

*Off-site retreats can create special opportunities for EA groups to focus on particular topics and strengthen relationships.*



Call (877) MY GROWTH or e-mail the office at [ea@executiveagenda.com](mailto:ea@executiveagenda.com).

## Overview of Executive Agenda



*Meetings typically include a focused tour of the host member's operations.*

*"I can reflect back when the last recession hit the manufacturing sector. Our company actually prospered during the recession because we took pre-emptive actions before the most severe part of the downturn. These actions came from guidance learned through EA resources."  
- Alan Johnson  
Long-term EA 14 member*

- Wisconsin's oldest and largest membership organization dedicated to executive development across diverse business functions
- Each member is invited to join a dedicated, peer learning group of 12–16 members that formally meets once each quarter in full-day working sessions
- Each EA group is chaired by a carefully-selected, seasoned business professional
- Every member participates in a dedicated mentoring session with his or her Group Chair every quarter
- Quarterly meetings are structured to provide a safe, confidential platform for working member-defined topics using EA's unique Seven Step Process
- Membership includes participation in Executive Agenda's *Executive Fuel* program: three relevant business leadership seminars per year delivered by world-class speakers and teachers. These member-wide events also provide great opportunities to interact with individuals from other EA groups
- EA's unique learning method "forges" leadership development by enabling and encouraging peers to teach each other, challenge each other and hold each other accountable
- Companies that participate in peer learning similar to EA outperform those that don't. And, organizations that support development of their key executives realize better retention, better leaders and better business results

## EA Statistics

- Founded in 1986
- More than 500 leaders (men and women) representing all functions and industries
- 44 groups located in greater metro areas of Appleton, Green Bay, Madison and Milwaukee
- 325+ of Wisconsin's foremost organizations
- 24 seasoned business Group Chairs, averaging 40 years of experience
- 4 quarterly group meetings per year
- 4 individual mentoring sessions per year
- 3 EA exclusive all-member *Executive Fuel* seminars per year
- "No strings attached" membership fee:
  - \$1,100 per quarter (\$4,400 annually)
  - \$150 one-time Enrollment Fee for sponsored companies
  - \$350 one-time Enrollment Fee for non-sponsored companies



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