

I once described this last year to another Board member as the perfect storm coming together to put before me challenges that have certainly made my life interesting this past year in taking on this new position. I need not go into details but leave it to say that I haven't been bored with my time in this position so far. Because of all that, I have learned so much in trying to meet these challenges.

I knew the nuts and bolts of the day-to-day operations was going to be a time-management challenge, and it certainly has been, but what I didn't know or fully understand was the reach and scope of the Association Manager position and the unique challenges that come with that, and that's where the real learning begins.

Let me explain a bit...

The Association Manager is a paid position. So, I'm an employee of the Oregon State USBC; I'm not a volunteer. However, I'm not a voting Board member though. I have described my position as I'm not steering the ship, the Board Directors and Officers do that, my job is to make sure the ship runs smoothly. This means, the entire Board is my boss, and by extension, that means all dues-paying members of the state are my boss as well. When I began to think of my position in those terms, I realized the awesome responsibility that comes with this position.

With that responsibility though, I'm put into a position of leadership and that's what has been the challenge – where to draw the line between leading and following. As the person most in contact with the general bowling public, I need to take a leadership position and make decisions on how to guide questions and answers from the bowling public. Sometimes I can answer the questions, other times I need to seek the guidance of the Board. I'm learning more and more how to navigate the line between leading and following.

Whatever the case, because I am the person out in front, I have learned that most often it isn't necessarily what the answer is, but *how* I answer the question. Having been on the other side of the fence by being the one asking the questions at times, I know how frustrating it is to not get the expected answer, or worse yet, no answer at all. I'm trying to do my best to be sympathetic to this and answer all questions in a respectful and timely manner, and I hope to get better as I become more and more acclimated to this position.

The other really important thing I've learned is just how much passion there is for our sport out there. As I've gotten older, I am probably guilty of becoming a little jaded and have maybe doubted the depth of the passion for our sport. I can unequivocally say that the passion for bowling is very much alive and well. From youth/high school bowling to senior bowling, I have had first hand experience this year in witnessing the passion that I thought was maybe waning.

I thought that in taking this position I could give back to the sport that has given me so much, but really, I've found the passion that I have witnessed this year has just given

me more fuel for my own passion. In other words, bowling has and still is giving so much to my life that I'm thankful and proud to call myself a bowler.

Gary Yamasaki  
OSUSBC Association Manager