

KEITH M. SOARES, CAE, CPACC, AAiP

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STRATEGIC ASSOCIATION TECHNOLOGY AND DIGITAL INNOVATION

I am a highly user-centric association technologist and digital leader with excellent relationship-building skills. I'm well versed in multi-faceted, cross-platform technology utilizations and integrations, with a strong strategic association management and accessibility focus, and experience delivering success for public- and private-sector clients in a wide range of industries, including non-profit, education, government, environmental, commercial, and health organizations.

My expertise focuses on:

- Deep technical knowledge, with the ability to bridge between technology professionals and all levels of stakeholders
- Association technology systems and strategy
- Communication, both internal and external
- Design and development of digital solutions to meet organizational goals
- Data oversight and risk management
- Innovative problem solving
- Digital accessibility
- Staff mentoring and growth

In addition, I have experience growing a seven-figure technology agency from the ground up and delivering over two decades of innovation for an array of over 300 organizations.

Professional Experience

American Society of Association Executives (ASAE)

Vice President, Digital & AI Strategy

March 2023 – current, full time

I spearhead ASAE's digital strategy across internal and external digital systems and integration across all technology platforms including member management, event management, learning management, ID systems, financial systems, and more. Through my leadership, ASAE has seen significant improvements in cohesive, audience-centered organization, greater control of a diverse digital infrastructure, and massive improvements in accessibility. I act as the chief liaison between ASAE and our developers and third party partners working to produce and extend our digital presence, requiring me to work with all departments in the organization to ideate, scope, prioritize, and manage projects related to ASAE universe of digital offerings.

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As the driving force in the digital space toward achieving ASAE's core goals, I'm managing the organization's first public-facing digital infrastructure overhaul in a decade. This process involves the redevelopment of multiple websites and apps, as well as tight integration with e-commerce and other systems including ASAE's membership database, events management system, donations platform, certifications system, and more. I utilize traditional cross-platform integrations enhanced by AI systems for speed, breadth, and scope, to translate individual connections to a membership base of over 50,000.

Financial Responsibility and Budgetary Impact: I manage the digital strategy budget and provide input on other technology budgets, and oversee the e-commerce platform responsible for \$20M+ in annual revenue. In my tenure at ASAE, I have modernized and improved the speed, capability, and accessibility of digital systems while successfully reducing YOY budget expenditures by 50%, primarily through the identification and removal of redundant and unnecessary contracts, as well as a major shift in cloud computing resources that enables growth with a significantly better ROI. I serve the primary role in developing digital project RFPs, overseeing responses, and vetting final vendor acceptance across our digital platform landscape.

Digital Strategy: I lead ASAE's efforts to modernize, streamline, and drastically improve the organization's entire digital presence, with a particular focus on member journeys, events, learning systems, usability, accessibility, and fiscal responsibility. The primary goal of our digital platforms is to provide benefit to our members in a way that is respectful of their varied professional development needs, time, and money. To this end, I have developed the organization's first complete catalog of digital systems including all integrations and connected functionality, which has allowed the identification of redundancies and unused or underused resources that have been scaled back, removed, or relocated to better effect. I have identified and implemented clear improvements in digital infrastructure and development that also resulted in significant cost savings, allowing ASAE to achieve its digital goals faster, smarter, and with more flexibility while freeing time and budget to improve digital offerings and value.

Audience-Focused Oversight: Having spent two decades working with a diverse client base while running my own company, I bring the ability to think like many different types of users into the process of managing the organization's digital footprint. I combine statistics and usage data with real world surveys, interviews, and conversations to get a holistic view of how people currently use ASAE's digital universe, what needs immediate attention, and what could be improved through long-term planning. Using this information, I construct and manage projects ranging from small improvements to complete system overhauls, keeping real audience members in the review and revision process along the way. I also organized and serve as direct liaison to our digital usability and accessibility groups, encompassing 70 individuals from across the membership spectrum.

Cross-Department Leadership: I serve as a key member of the ASAE Leadership Team, and on the Core Teams for ASAE's Annual Meeting, MMC+T Conference, CEO Conclave, Content Strategy,

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Infrastructure Success Team, and other strategic internal groups. Through these teams, I develop strategy for key organizational initiatives, and manage interrelations between systems, assessing and selecting new technology partners for such needs as member management, learning management, event management, donations, awards nominations, certification, and more. In addition, I planned and implemented the most significant multiphase improvement to digital accessibility in the organization's history, and continue to integrate accessibility and usability as core tenets of all technology projects and systems.

Freelance

February 2020 – March 2023, full time

After selling my company, I continued working in the digital space via freelance engagements for select clients. I managed web applications, deployments and maintenance, content management, and integrated with technology support for my clients' digital products, including a childhood cancer charity, an independent book publisher, a debt relief law firm, and a national peace activism organization.

Bean Creative

Co-Founder & Vice President

February 1997 - February 2020, full time

I led one of the DC area's first digital agencies with seven-figure revenues based on a proven track record of web, app, and mobile product development for non-profit, education, health, government, entertainment, and Fortune 500 level clients. I managed relationships and digital strategic planning for 300+ clients driving business growth. My responsibilities included all project facets, from initial client prospect communication through full digital strategy, production, deployment, analysis, and review. I managed a digital design and development team of 20, as well as client teams, from a wide range of industries.

I fostered excellent client relationships and referrals by building trust and rapport with clients and industry partners, while growing a top 20 DC-Metro area digital agency.

Digital Strategy: As a primary component of my role, I spearheaded digital development projects across a variety of industries. My experience working on a wide range of educational projects often influenced projects in other industries, utilizing accessibility and concepts such as universal design for learning. I created strategic plans for all project facets in collaboration with audience research, client brand and marketing teams, subject matter experts, technology teams, and UI/UX experts, while adhering to organizational requirements, structural needs, and limitations. In addition, I planned projects with a clear focus on user needs and expectations, both internal- and external-facing. My strategy espoused that the audience goals and needs must be identified and integrated from the very beginning.

I led teams to develop interactive educational experiences on such topics as Edgar Allan Poe (a Webby Award winner), finance for teens, environmentalism, the physics of amusement parks,

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civics education for middle school (a Library of Congress grant winner), English for adult workers in construction, and the life of pandas, for clients including PBS, Maryland Public Television, the Department of Labor, and National Geographic.

Innovative Technology: By continuously keeping abreast of new technologies, I kept an eye toward implementing future-forward client work, features, and functionality while maintaining a realistic view of budgets, time, user needs, and access to technology. I strategized on how to tackle new trends and explain their advantages to clients. I worked with internal and external teams to conceptualize and implement new technology solutions that expanded client capabilities.

- I developed a proof of concept solution that garnered an education client \$1M in sales at a preliminary event, resulting in a five year contract to develop and support multi-person touchscreen capabilities for pre-readers. My team then translated the proof of concept into the final product shipped to market, on-time and on-budget, including custom developed behind the scenes content building tools to allow the client's staff to produce and deliver updates via the Internet to buyers' locations anywhere in the world. A key component of my work secured a US patent for my client.
- I designed and led the development of an early childhood literacy iPhone app featured at an Apple announcement event, which went on to dominate iTunes as a top 5 education app for PBS over 5+ years with more than 750k downloads and \$2.25M in revenue. I then worked with a team of developers to further translate this app to successful iPad, Android, Kindle, and Windows iterations.

Full Lifecycle Development Leadership: For two decades, I've guided teams of designers, developers, programmers, and project managers from initial project conception through a carefully structured process of requirements analysis, audience research, strategic planning, UX design, and development. For educational projects, this involved working closely with a wide range of subject matter experts and curators.

I've worked from initial pitch and proposal through full development and deployment for a wide array of organizations, leveraging multiple partnership teams and with knowledge of each ones' capabilities, strengths, and weaknesses. I've worked with internal and client-based teams, as well as teams across multiple time zones, to produce digital products that meet user goals and exceed client expectations.

Client Shortlist: National Geographic, PBS, American Red Cross, Digital Promise, "Weird" Al Yankovic, Smithsonian Institution (Air & Space Museum, American Art Museum, Cooper Hewitt, and Renwick Gallery), Verizon, Consumer Technology Association CES Show, FORTUNE, Telecommunications Industry Association, Carnival Cruise Lines, Tennessee Performing Arts Center, the Library of Congress, Inova Hospital System, Random House, HarperCollins Publishers, the United States Army, Discovery Channel, National Wildlife Federation, World Wildlife Federation, and the Department of Labor.

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Prior to Bean Creative

1994 - 1997

I worked in-house as web development director and digital strategist for Community Associations Institute and the American Society of Travel Agents, providing full lifecycle web design and content development to meet organizational requirements. In addition, I worked as a junior designer in the Exhibits department of the Smithsonian National Air & Space Museum, crafting visual presentations and digital solutions to meet curator educational goals for the exhibits, *How Things Fly*, and *Where Next, Columbus?*

Capabilities

Organization- and user-focused digital technology strategy, with a focus on accessibility. Client liaison, relationship building, proposal development, with full-cycle oversight and engagement. Clear communications, verbal and written, whether at a technical or layperson level, or translating between the two. Project management and digital systems assessment. Team leadership and mentorship, with a focus on career management. Digital product development oversight and management. Digital content strategy, writing, and editing, including proposal and technical documentation. Digital accessibility assessment, guidance, and improvement. Front-end and back-end programming, and relational database design and maintenance. Content management including open source and proprietary systems, as well as custom development. Version control systems, issue tracking software, and project management tools. Design/UX/UI tools. Budgeting, departmental and project financial management, and reporting.

Recognition and Awards

My digital work has been the winner of more than 75 top technology and digital industry awards, including 3 Webby Awards with 8 nominations, and my work has been featured in *The New York Times*, *The Huffington Post*, *The Washington Post*, *USA Today*, and *FORTUNE*.

Education

Bachelor of Science – Applied Design, University of Maryland, College Park