AmericanHort

Fall Meeting

October 19, 2026 | Columbus, OH

Wi Fi Network: MarriottBonvoy_Conference

Wi Fi Access Code: Marriott2026



Welcome!

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Stand Up If...

Find Your Connection

- Each person at your table gets a sheet of paper in the “Find Your Connection” envelope
  - You have 6 descriptions on your paper
  - Find a different person that meets the description
  - Must be someone you are not sitting with
  - Aim for making at least 3 connection

AmericanHort

LEADERSHIP REFLECTIONS

My First Months at AmericanHort

> ***"I am even more optimistic about the future of this industry than I was at Cultivate."***

My first impressions have been reinforced

The convictions I shared in July now have firsthand evidence behind them.

MY CONVICTIONS AT CULTIVATE	WHAT I HAVE NOW SEEN
Hidden champion	Extraordinary scale, sophistication and impact
One industry. Many voices.	Complex businesses, many segments, global connections, but interconnected needs
Ubuntu: “I am because we are.”	Openness, peer learning and genuine collaboration
Technology supports people	Automation is accelerating; human expertise still differentiates

A strong foundation to build on

I inherited an organization with considerable strengths + opportunities to become even more relevant and impactful.

THE TEAM

Capable and deeply committed

An experienced, knowledgeable team that genuinely cares about members and the industry.

OUR FOUNDATION

Financial and organizational strength

A sound platform built over many years.

ADVOCACY

A credible voice with significant impact

Respected, influential and effective representation of our members and industry.

Opportunity: clearer priorities, more focus, partnerships & collaboration, and industry leadership.

The industry is resilient, and evolving

Four recurring themes from conversations across our industry.

Resilience under pressure

Labor, input costs, regulation and uncertainty — yet businesses keep adapting and innovating.

Technology + human expertise

Automation is accelerating, but people, experience and sound judgment remain decisive.

Develop the middle managers

More capable supervisors, crew leaders and production managers are essential to growth and succession.

Spanish education is key

Practical, accessible technical and leadership learning — not simply translated content.

Encouragingly, I am also seeing impressive next-generation talent stepping forward.

WHERE WE GO FROM HERE

Turn listening into leadership

We continue focusing on member insight to expand relevance and impact.

PROTECT & REPRESENT

Build on advocacy & Influence

Expand our credible voice and influence on the issues that matter.

DEVELOP CAPABILITY

Continue investing in people

Executive education, Middle managers, Future leaders and Spanish-language.

ELEVATE THE INDUSTRY

Tell our story

Move perception of horticulture from ornamental to essential.

MEMBER VOICE → MEANINGFUL OUTCOMES

Listen → **Connect** → **Prioritize** → **Act** → **Show impact**

Connector groups / advisory Councils, members, volunteers and staff all have a role in making this work.

I am optimistic about what we can achieve — together.

Policy Governance

Ends, Means, and how our priorities connect

The Board’s Role: Establish the Ends

On behalf of AmericanHort Members (our ‘owners’), the Board defines the results AmericanHort exists to achieve.

1

AmericanHort Members

Their values, needs, and long-term interests guide the organization.

→

2

Board of Directors

Listens across the membership, weighs priorities, and speaks with one voice.

→

3

Ends

States what results matter, for whom, and at what priority.

→

4

CEO and staff

Develop and execute the methods that deliver the Board’s intended results.

The Board also sets risk boundaries and monitors whether the Ends are being achieved.

Ends vs. Means: The Core Distinction

Ends describe the desired results. **Means** describe the choices and work used to achieve them.

ENDS | Board

The difference AmericanHort exists to make

- What results?
- For whom?
- At what worth or priority?

MEANS | CEO and staff

How we turn those required results into reality

Programs, services, staffing, budgets, events, technology, partnerships, and other operating choices.

Means: this is where staff judgment, expertise, and accountability live.

AmericanHort's Current Strategic Goals

GOAL 1	Be the leading organization supporting the industry's financial, operational, and organizational health.
GOAL 2	Develop our advocacy capability to defend and enhance our industry.
GOAL 3	Be the most effective employee development partner for the industry.
GOAL 4	Leverage the impact of Horticultural Research Institute investments in research and scholarship benefiting our industry.
GOAL 5	Explore, develop, and invest in new methods and innovations to expand industry communication, collaboration, and development.

How Strategy Cascades

The five current Board strategic goals are the Ends that our Means are focused to achieve.

GOAL 1 | GOAL 2 | GOAL 3 | GOAL 4 | GOAL 5

Board goals / Ends

The results we exist to produce.

→

Enterprise objectives

Organization-wide priorities and intended outcomes.

→

Department objectives

How each function contributes to the priorities.

→

Team-member objectives

Individual contributions, responsibilities, and priorities.

We are in the process of documenting and reviewing enterprise and departmental objectives. Individual objectives will follow once this work has been completed.

The Value of this Approach

More clarity, better coordination, and greater ownership of results.

1 Clearer priorities

Know the outcomes that matter and who owns them.

2 Empowered execution

Choose effective methods within agreed boundaries.

3 Better measurement

Look at progress and impact, not activity alone.

4 Stronger coordination

Make capacity trade-offs and work across teams.

Alignment | Efficiency | Impact | Relevance

Advisory Councils

Initiative overview

Why Transition from Connectors to Advisory Councils?

We are keeping the strongest parts of the current model and strengthening the focus & impact for Members, the Board, and staff.

What we keep

Connector strengths
Industry discussion
Programming input
Networking and ambassadors
Volunteer leadership pipeline

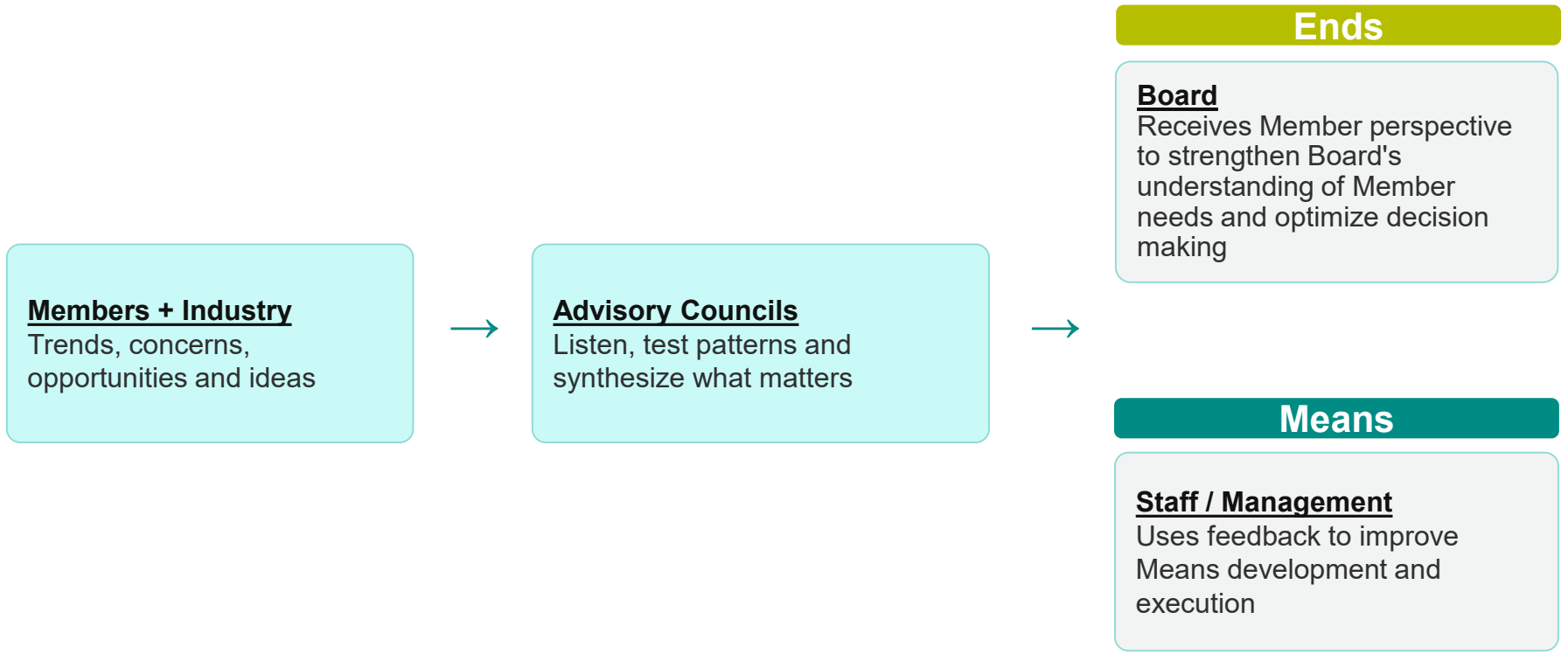
What we improve

Advisory Council discipline
Clear Ends and Means linkage
Consistent capture and synthesis
Open access for all association Members
Strengthened Board and staff intelligence
Membership representation

The change matures the current model to a disciplined industry-intelligence and Member-listening system.

The Core Model

Councils listen, synthesize, and route intelligence to the right place.



Role Clarity: Councils Inform

The system works only if governance and management roles stay clear.

Board owns Ends
Defines the outcomes AmericanHort should seek and monitors progress.

Management owns Means
Determines programs, services, resources, execution and follow-through.

Councils inform both
Provide Member perspective, horizon signals and practical feedback.

Operating principle: Councils do not govern, set Ends, direct staff, approve budgets, or act as a substitute for Board or management decision-making.

Council Architecture

Use standing Councils only where ongoing, useful intelligence is needed.

Industry Segment Advisory Councils
For distinct industry segments with ongoing Member-perspective and Means feedback needs.

Examples: Nursery, Greenhouse, Garden Retail, Landscape, Interior Plantscape

Cross-Industry Councils
For sustained issues or constituencies that cut across segments.

Examples: Spanish, workforce/talent, emerging leaders, technology or another enterprise-wide priority

Standard Structure

8–12 MEMBERS	CHAIR + VICE CHAIR	BOARD LIAISON	STAFF LIAISON

Default rule: create the fewest standing Councils needed to produce meaningful, representative intelligence.

Optimal Council Composition

Councils should be designed for perspective quality - **representing the voice of Members**, not just one business.

Geography
Regional and state realities; different markets and operating conditions.

Business size
Small, mid-size and large companies where relevant to the segment.

Business model
Different channels, customer types, production or service approaches.

Role perspective
Owner, executive, operational and emerging leadership viewpoints.

Thinking style
Members who listen, test patterns, challenge assumptions and synthesize.

Member voice mindset
Bring personal experience but seeks and understands the broader segment needs and trends.

Selection question: What perspective is missing for this Council to understand the segment well?

Composition should be reviewed annually so Councils remain useful, representative and current.

Two Workflows, Different Purposes

Each Council has one governance-facing workflow and one management-facing workflow.

ENDS INTELLIGENCE

Purpose
Help the Board understand changing Member needs, horizon signals and future conditions. Quarterly Reports – SWOT & PESTL framework

Members observe → Chair / Vice Chair synthesize → Board Liaison → Board

Output: concise Membership intelligence

MEANS INTELLIGENCE & FEEDBACK

Purpose
Help staff test assumptions, improve relevance and make better management decisions.

Staff asks → Council advises → Management decides → Staff closes loop

Output: practical insight and advice

Every Member Can Contribute

Members do not need to serve on a Council to share their perspective.

One simple front door

Share Industry Insight
A visible web form or shared email for trends, concerns, opportunities, ideas and observations.

→

Log and route
Staff acknowledges, records and routes input to the right Council and staff owner.

→

Consider and close loop
Councils and staff use the input in the right workflow and report back if required.

Members should not need to know:

whether the issue is Ends or Means • who currently chairs a Council • which internal pathway will handle it

Operating principle: AmericanHort owns the front door and recordkeeping; Councils own segment listening and synthesis; management owns the Means response.

Implementation

This is a collaborative, ongoing process to strengthen and optimize the program. We will learn and adjust together.

1. Launch Today
The rebrand & refresh starts today.

→

2. Phased Implementation
It is a phased implementation to be coordinated in partnership with Council leadership.

→

3. Fully Implemented by 2027 Meeting
Our objective is to complete the transition in 2027 with full implementation by our next group strategy meeting.

BREAK

Building Your Network & What It Means to Be an Ambassador of AmericanHort

Networking

- Small talk
- Fun
- Connections
- Information
- Collaboration
- Handshake
- Eye contact
- Relationship
- Listening
- Building connections
- Hug or not to hug?
- Future
- Dollars
- Business Development
- Reestablishing
- Pipeline
- Learning
- Contact info
- Build empathy
- Family
- Awkward
- Name recall
- Out of context situations
- Follow up

Negatives of Networking

- Takes time & intention
- Remembering name – knowing you have met them - I
- Some people are trying to be the focus – lack of being curious about the other person
- How to graciously end the conversation – notice cues – looking around
- It's draining and exhausting
- Not moving past small talk – I
- Pressure for conversation to create good connection and not forced
- Fear of long talkers who keep going and going
- Unstructured networking, makes it weird

Negatives of Networking

- Over network – talk to so many no connection is made, talk to only one missing opportunity to connect with others
- Breaking down click wall
- Awkwardness – keep smiling, knowing when to exit
- Balance of true engagement
- Time consuming
- Finding the right opening to talking about something meaningful

Negatives of Networking

- Environment – late at night, tired from the day
- Takes a lot of energy
- Not knowing the value of the room before going into the situation
- Transitioning conversation into something more meaningful or closing gracefully
- Not having enough time – want to connect with others too – need to manage the time

LUNCH

Industry Insight Sharing & Discussion

AmericanHort

Industry Pulse – Voices from Across the Industry

Panel & Group Discussion

BREAK

Connecting the Dots

Discuss at your Table:

- What did you hear today that feels most significant for the industry?
- Where did you hear common themes across very different segments?
- Where did you hear important differences or tensions that we shouldn’t overlook?
- What is something we should continue watching over the next 12–24 months?

Rapid Response – Full Group Discussion

5:15 PM – Busses Load
5:30 PM – Busses Depart

