More than seventy credit union CEOs gathered for the 3rd annual CUNA CEO Council Conference in Coronado, CA.

The CEOs narrowed down a list of topics and held roundtable sessions in which they broke into facilitated groups for discussion. Each CEO self-selected two of the six topics to participate in.

The Top 6 Topics were:
1. Employee Engagement: Retention/Acquisition
2. Growth & Attracting Deposits
3. Tech Utilization & Implementation
4. Disruptive Forces
5. Defining Culture
6. Leadership & Organizational Development

The following is a summary of observations, conclusions, recommendations, and suggested actions CEOs might consider as they are thinking about their approach to addressing these issues in their credit unions.

1) Employee Engagement: Retention/Acquisition roundtable
   - “Big Idea” program: employees submit ideas to management for cost savings, improve member exp. Incentives!
   - Invite staff into strategic goal meetings.
   - Different approaches to recognize employees, based on their preferences. Use garage privileges, ice cream.
   - “Go the Extra Mile” employee-to-employee recognition.
   - Fun budget that is driven by employees.
   - Transparency.
   - Onboarding mentorship.
   - Interns: welcome them and get them interested in CUs.
   - Community involvement.
   - Non-traditional roles; cross-training, keeps jobs exciting and engaging.
   - Eliminating student loan debt.
   - Referral program.
   - Remote work and flexible schedules.
   - Salary not everything: what else does CU offer?

2) Growth & Attracting Deposits roundtable
   - Challenge for everyone.
   - Function of rate or not? Increasing rates doesn’t work well anymore.
   - Security of financial institution = resonating message; trust.
   - Members passing away; deposit assets going to heir. Develop relationship with heirs to keep $. Develop private banking function. Rate remains table stake but not always about rate.
   - Borrowing and saving difference—geographical and psychological influences. “Borrow from anywhere, save locally” mindset.
   - Decreasing member age—deposits decrease too. Younger members in borrowing stage.
   - Identifying top 1%, 5% of depositors; develop strategy exclusively for them. “Platinum” and relationship style service. Tie into investment arm of CU.
   - Consider how employees are interacting with depositor members. Create incentives.
3) Technology Utilization & Implementation roundtable

- Back office efficiency for tech delivery is challenging!
- Hire specialized staff—they can aggregate needs.
- Robotic automation tools; workflow and process to make regular tasks easier.
- Core conversion or other tech consultant for big or new projects—use one!
- Data analytics and BI: what are members using? Where to invest dollars?
- Chatbots: how are members communicating and what tech can facilitate relationship and interaction.
- Texting members: engagement with members on their terms; training for staff about how to respond.
- PTMs/ITMs.
- All Voice Interaction, artificial intelligence; map with needs of members.
- P2P as a service: Venmo, Zelle. What are losses?
- RDC: managing fraud risk that exists.

4) Disruptive Forces roundtable

- What is a disruptive force? Technology, but not always. “Someone doing what you do better.” Workplace practices; non-traditional products.
- Technology, payment disruption, deposits. How are others entering the market?
- How to react? Don’t become irrelevant. Keep relationship with member.
- Tech platforms: $$$ flowing out of CU because it happens with a digital click. Leverage vendor partners.
- Be fast followers to avoid expense of R&D.
- Partner with Fintech.
- Younger generation of employees disrupting work model; attract young talent with dress code, WFH. ADAPT, change culture to accept new ways.
- Serving next gen of young members: digital everything.
- Apple Pay/Apple Card—-incredibly easy.

5) Defining Culture roundtable

- Focus on employees: how to get things done; matter of FACT. (Financial stability, adaptability, community, team focus). Cultural charter.
- Employees must reflect mission, vision, values for recruitment & retention.
- “Make dreams come true”; have mantra.
- Culture is a new buzzword. It’s the simple things—be open and do the simple things well (chairs, refrigerators). It’s about listening—does the CEO understand the employees’ daily journey?
- Technology: world is more impersonal. A great deal of time and resources are spent on member-facing tech. Employee-facing technology may be making work worse in some cases.
- Empowerment and satisfaction linked intrinsically.
- Toxic employees hurt culture. Get rid of them. Resentment for leaders grows when toxic employees stay. Incompetence also toxic.
- Culture links to service employees provide to members.

6) Leadership & Organizational Development roundtable

- Organizational chart: hierarchical doesn’t serve members very well. Consider matrix organization design to deliver “killer” value.
- Goal Setting: where are we going? Has that been communicated?
- Relentless, intentional focus on leadership.
- Have a Playbook! What it means, what it looks like, how to get there.
- “Golden Commitments to Leadership” which are “I will” statements. I will self develop, inspire, communicate, etc.
- Individual talent development plans for all employees.
- More emphasis on leadership part of job, less on technical side.
- Leaders MUST care about people!!!
The CEOs also broke into three breakout sessions.

**AI Influence in Banking breakout**
- Define: machine learning and automate interactions with members.
- Requirements: emphasize good data to begin with, governance of data, regulatory compliance, acceptance with current core. Use data for making member-centric decisions.
- Current uses: chatbots, fraud monitoring, loan decisioning, call center automation.
- Consumers have high acceptance rates. Don’t be creepy though by over-anticipating needs.
- Vendors: CUNA Mutual.
- Risks: stay current or become obsolete, don’t become “too good” at AI, also don’t be “too compliant”, privacy of members’ data, bring board, members, and staff together.

**Charter Expansion breakout**
- 76% of Americans don’t have $400 for an emergency, so how can CUs reach and help more people prepare for their financial futures?
- Be entrepreneurial, be innovative, and be well thought-through.
- Educate oneself, and keep up with changing rules.
- Community charter not necessarily the answer to growth strategy; some CUs regret going community.
- Consider: what is the charter worth?
- Consider: how can CUs share back office functions, or a board, and continue to operate autonomously on the member-facing side?
- What can a CU do to promote itself with a particular audience? Be more segment-specific in product development, marketing, etc.
- Utilize a consultant to guide conversation about expansion of FOM while retaining identity.
- Charter a credit union to serve alongside existing credit union—innovative way to expand FOM.

**Innovative Products breakout**
- 30 type A CEOs shared their ideas and visions—there was a lot of energy in this breakout.
- Airplane loans—0 delinquencies, 0 losses.
- ITIN loans—serve the underserved and non-citizens with loans that don’t require SSN.
- Serve C and D paper, with rates that decrease alongside on-time payments during course of loan.
- Round up payments to save or pay down loans faster.
- Impaired credit loans—rebuild credit, improve score.
- $500 0% line of credit for all employees—helps ensure employees can stay afloat in an emergency.
- Private student loans—not innovative, but attracts younger members and employees. Refinance!
- Help employees with payments on private student loans.
- Give employees choice of 401k contribution or pay down student loans.

**Action Items:**

1) Watch for additional coverage of these topics in CUNA CEO Council resources, including Community discussions, virtual roundtables, the 2020 CEO Council Conference, and white papers.

2) Mark your calendars! Plan to join us for future CEO-only sessions at:
   c. The 2020 CEO Council Conference (TBD dates and location)

3) If you are not yet a member of the CEO Council and would like to participate in conversations with your credit union CEO peers, join at [www.cunacouncils.org](http://www.cunacouncils.org).