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Gail Perry • Nov. 08, 2023



**ITA**

**Information Technology Alliance**  
Leading the IT Profession

*By Gail Perry.*

This past week, the Information Technology Alliance (ITA) welcomed its new president, [Geni Whitehouse](#), who will hold the reins of this prestigious member-only organization as it heads into the new frontier of AI and improved technology. But before we look forward, let's take a moment to recap the story of ITA's most recent president, Shawn Slavin, who stepped down from his leadership role this year.

With education and expertise in both finance and computing, Shawn Slavin was looking for a way to merge the two in his life and career. His work had led him to the Sage leadership program which was training value-added resellers (VARs) in the early days of the proliferation of accounting technology solutions. But the Sage program was just a two-year program, and Slavin and many of his colleagues believed the growth and improvement of those working in the constantly evolving area of software solutions was dependent on continuous learning.

Around the same time, a forward-thinking CPA in Indiana with a passion for technology had helped found a new organization called the Information Technology Alliance with the goal of providing a club-like atmosphere where members could

learn from each other, share experiences, join forces, and improve, while exploring

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Shawn Slavin

Slavin learned of ITA in 2003, joined the organization, and knew he had found a place where he belonged. “ITA has always been about improving the operations of the VAR. It’s all about the members. We are of the members, by the members, and for the members – on purpose – because it’s the members who set the agenda. The number one value that people get from coming to the meetings is the interaction, the off-topic conversations – deals get done here, mergers happen here, but also joint ventures happen here – it’s invaluable.”

Founder and original president Ron Eagle stepped down from leadership in 2012, and technology advisor Stan Mork led the organization for the next seven years. In the fall of 2019 Slavin became ITA’s third president. He had barely a year to get grounded in this new role when the world was rocked with the COVID-19 pandemic. As the entire accounting profession was pivoting to providing remote and digital services, ITA was in the grips of a different type of problem. The whole mantra of ITA – the in-person meetings with impromptu conversations between vendors and accounting firm IT specialists and resellers – was upended when the group could no longer meet in person.

“By the end of May 2020, it was obvious we weren’t going to be able to get together, so we planned our first virtual conference in August.” The summer 2020 virtual conference was followed with more Zoom meetings in the winter and again in the

spring of 2021. Meanwhile, the organization was renegotiating hotel bills with

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vendors will have to wait for a future opportunity to be a part of ITA, but the size of that waiting list speaks to the significance of the organization.

ITA is all about relationships, and the organization's relationship with Slavin will carry on. "Shawn Slavin's infectious personality and caring nature have made a lasting impact on the ITA community," said Lissa Johnson, vice president of ITA. "His departure from the position of ITA president will leave a void, and his positive influence and contributions will be felt for years to come."

Jan Goodman, onsite chair at ITA, shared this memory of Shawn: "Many, many years ago ITA spring meetings were members-only. We had outgrown the Peninsula and the Four Seasons in Chicago and contracted for five years at the Westin Buckhead in Atlanta. I was chair of the membership committee and as such in charge of onsite registration. At the second meeting in Atlanta, Shawn, a more recent member, approached me about working the registration desk. His comment was, 'I want to get to know the members and thought this might be a good way to put faces to names.' And so it began.... Since that time, we served together on many onsite committees, and then when golf became a bi-annual event, we spun off the social committee and Shawn was made the de facto chair. His ability to engage others has been proven out with his amazing recruitment efforts even before becoming president. I'm proud to call him my friend and know we will continue our friendship going forward. Especially since Scottsdale is one of his favorite golf locations!"

Slavin's goals when becoming president were focused on continuing the mission of the ITA – passionate and dedicated members coming together and sharing and interacting with their peers. In fact, his mission had to be realigned in order to bring the organization out of the pandemic and provide a bright future. Looking back on what has become his legacy, Slavin proudly hangs his hat on holding the ITA together through the pandemic. "We stayed together, we kept the community

together, we thrived, we didn't just make it – we grew, and we came out stronger

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