

Interview with Mike Erdmann, EO, HBA of Marion and Polk Counties (Salem, Ore.)

How do you balance being an executive officer and having a personal life?

Running an HBA can create challenges in balancing your professional responsibilities with your family and personal life, as there are no shortage of evening meetings - HBA functions, community events, City Council meetings and more. Balancing the role with a personal life requires intentionality. I focus on setting clear boundaries, ensuring work doesn't overshadow family time or personal interests. This means prioritizing what truly needs my attention and letting go of the rest. By structuring my schedule to include time for family and personal activities, I can work to stay engaged in both areas without compromising either.

Are there any tools you use to help you achieve this balance?

I rely on a few essential tools to stay organized and maximize efficiency. I make sure to set and protect time blocks in my calendar for both professional and personal commitments. I also use Asana task management software to help me prioritize and track projects, so I can focus on high-impact areas and delegate the rest. These tools ensure that my time is spent on what matters most while still maintaining a balanced life.

How do you balance being involved in the EOC with your personal life and day-to-day responsibilities at your association?

Taking on EOC responsibilities requires a purposeful approach to prioritization. To make room for my EOC commitments, I limit other professional obligations that don't directly align with my core responsibilities at the HBA. That allows me to focus my energies on activities that enhance our association and my professional growth, while still allowing time for my personal life. By streamlining my commitments, I can stay engaged in both the EOC and my role at the association without feeling overextended. I've found this approach allows me to bring back valuable insights from the EOC that benefit my association, creating a good balance between involvement and day-to-day responsibilities.

Delegating tasks is an important part of being a leader. How do you do this successfully in your role?

Successful delegation starts with recognizing the strengths within your team – both staff and member volunteers. I make an effort to align tasks with team members' skill sets and then work to provide clear instructions, set expectations, and trust the team to handle responsibilities effectively. Regular check-ins are essential, but I aim to provide enough autonomy so they can excel independently.

How do you avoid burnout?

Avoiding burnout is about knowing when to recharge. I build time into my schedule for family and personal time, allowing me to stay energized and focused. Golf is a big passion for me away from work, and spending time outside on the course on a weekend morning or summer evening helps keep my mind fresh. Having a supportive team I can trust with responsibilities also reduces stress, as I know things are moving forward even when I step back.