

# Six Excuses for Not Attending NAPEO's Annual Conference

And Why None of Them Work Anymore



**Barron L. Guss**

2018-2019 NAPEO Chair  
President & Chief Executive Officer  
SimplicityHR By ALTRES  
Honolulu, Hawaii



Over the years, I have attended NAPEO conferences on all shores of the United States and places in between. As a result, I have made lifelong friends as well as gleaned information and insights that I would not have been exposed to if it were not for being there.

In my travels, I come across people who, despite their many years and involvement in the industry, have never or not recently attended a NAPEO event. When I ask why, I receive all kinds of excuses. To that end, I have put together six excuses for not attending NAPEO's Annual Conference & Marketplace—to be held September 16 to 18 in Austin, Texas—and why none of them work anymore.

**1. "There is nothing there that interests me."** The conference planning committee continually strives to improve the content of the conference and this year will be better than ever—I promise! From an educational point of view, there will be three tracks:

- **PEO Operations.** This is new for 2019. Thanks to NAPEO's 2017-2018 Chair Norman Paul, we have designed a new and ongoing focus to help PEOs improve operationally with instructional guidance in the areas of payroll, workflows, and overall efficiency.
- **Compliance.** This topic is not only important to our customers, but to the liability of our PEOs. The landscape and requirements are ever-changing and NAPEO's staff and committees are staying on top of this to make your lives easier and reduce liability. This track will keep you abreast of the latest changes in the law and how best to navigate them.
- **Growth.** Now is a great time to be in the PEO industry. The industry is growing and the market is embracing PEOs and outsourcing HR functions. NAPEO has been hard at work creating tools for our members to increase awareness and drive home the value of PEOs. In addition, your industry colleagues will be sharing their best practices about what works for them to grow their PEOs. I personally will be giving a presentation, "Leading the Sale with Technology." I will be sharing how our company has transitioned our sales approach from selling HR services to marketing technology.

**2. "It's too far to travel."** Great news! This year's annual gathering is in Austin, smack dab in the middle of the country and within three hours by plane of any gateway city. In addition, unless you are traveling from Hawaii you are no more than a two-hour time zone difference from home, which means minimal jet lag and you can still call home to tell your loved ones good night.

**3. "I want to see what's new, but the vendors are the same ones year after year."** Sure, there are some familiar faces in the Marketplace, but that's because they have been providing real value to the industry and our members. You would have to be living under a rock to not be aware that technology is the future of the industry. I know of two new associate members who will be in the Marketplace showcasing their PEO-specific HRIS systems.

**4. "The keynote speakers are great to listen to, but there is nothing I really can take home with me."** I agree that at many of the conferences I have attended in and out of the industry, the keynote speakers are great, but the take-home value is not necessarily there or it's a stretch for the message to relate to PEO. Good news! Our conference committee is very aware of this and has spent hours

## Officers

**Chair**  
Barron Guss  
**Vice Chair**  
Andrew Lubash  
**Secretary-Treasurer**  
Lee Yarbrough  
**Immediate Past Chair**  
Norman Paul

## Directors

Kristen Appleman	Bob Kohnle
Steven Bentley	David Lawrence
Chris Dollins	Bill Maness
Pamela Evette	Sean McConnell
David Feinberg	Christina Nelson
Kerim Fidel	Steve Politis
Frank Fiorille	Andy Ramzel
Jimmy Franzone	Jennifer Robinson
Timothy Graham	Midge Seltzer
Clay Kelley	Charlie Vance

## Staff

### Publisher

NAPEO

### CEO/President

Patrick J. Cleary

### Editor

Stephanie Oetjen

### Legal Editor

Farrah L. Fielder, Esq.

### Director of Advertising, Sponsorships, and Exhibits

Nancy Benoudiz  
703/739-8169  
nbenoudiz@napeo.org

### Design

Six Half Dozen Design Studio

*PEO Insider®* (USPS 024-492) (ISSN 1520-894X) is published monthly except June/July and December/January, which are combined, by the National Association of Professional Employer Organizations, 707 North Saint Asaph Street, Alexandria, VA 22314-1911. \$150 of each member's dues goes towards his/her annual subscription to *PEO Insider®*. The annual subscription rate for non-members is \$150. Periodicals Postage paid at Alexandria, Virginia, and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *PEO Insider®*, 707 North Saint Asaph Street, Alexandria, VA 22314-1911. Opinions expressed in this publication are those of the individuals who have contributed articles and are not necessarily those of NAPEO, its officers, directors, or employees. No part of this publication may be reproduced or distributed without the written permission of NAPEO.

### Subscribe Online

Renew or subscribe to *PEO Insider®* online! Save time and postage. Join NAPEO or renew your membership at [www.napeo.org](http://www.napeo.org).

© 2019 NAPEO. All Rights Reserved.



vetting the speakers. We have two I am sure you are going to like, with thought-provoking messages that you will reflect upon way beyond your return trip home.

- **Our kick-off speaker will be DeWitt Jones: Extraordinary Visions.** In his 20-year career with *National Geographic*, Dewitt lived the vision of “celebrating what’s right with the world” and embraced an attitude that took him to new heights both in business and in life. He found that the creative tools he employed as a photographer had even deeper application when applied directly to his personal and professional growth. Using his own extraordinary photographs as illustrations, Dewitt weaves a visual tapestry of emotion and content, one that allows you to touch your own passion, to balance your head with your heart, and to come away inspired with your own creative potential.
- **Tuesday morning’s keynote will be Erik Qualman: Digital Leadership—The Five Simple Habits of Digital**

**Leaders.** Qualman is often called the Digital Dale Carnegie and the Tony Robbins of Tech. His book, “Digital Leader,” propelled him to be voted the second-most likeable author in the world behind Harry Potter’s J.K. Rowling. Leaders in this digital decade are made—not born. The key is understanding the balance of offline and online. Using profound and practical research, Qualman showcases the five habits that drive success and happiness for employees, partners, and customers in a Wi-Fi world. Qualman reveals new techniques, including posting-it-forward and being *flawsome*.

- 5. **“I can’t afford the time away from my business.”** You can’t afford to not attend the conference. The PEO landscape is changing at a much faster pace than we have ever experienced in our 40-year history. If you or one of your company representatives don’t attend, you may miss out on a trend or bit of information that could have tremendous impact on

the future of your business. In this age of smartphones, email and texting, your office is where ever you are.

- 6. **“I won’t know anybody.”** NAPEO members are some of the friendliest people I know. Austin is known for its live music and battle call “Keep Austin Weird” (we’ll help). This year NAPEO’s evening event will take place at Banger’s Sausage House & Beer Garden, where you will find 200+ beers from Austin’s largest tap wall, along with an authentic Austin BBQ dinner. While dining, you’ll rock to the Spazmatics, who call themselves “Nerds that Rock.” Be sure to pack your jeans and boots for a fun night of food, beer, and dancing. I’m sure by the end of the night, you’ll have a slew of weird new friends!

There you have it, six reasons to attend NAPEO’s 2019 Annual Conference & Marketplace, and we won’t accept any excuses. I look forward to seeing you there. Visit [www.napeo.org/events/events-calendar/annual-conference](http://www.napeo.org/events/events-calendar/annual-conference) for more information. ●



**Unlock Your Data**

**We are data freaks who happen to specialize in PEO insurance placements**

- Workers’ Compensation  
*Master and multiple coordinated policy placements & Open market/Carve-Out/ASO placements*
- EPLI & Cyber
- Due Diligence and Collateral Advisement
- Data Driven Decision Making on Key Performance Indicators

**BALLATOR**  
Insurance Group

**LIBERTATE**  
INSURANCE  
A BALLATOR COMPANY

**RiskMD**  
INFORMED RISK MANAGEMENT  
DECISION MAKING

RiskMD | Libertate Insurance | 20 N Orange Ave, Ste 500 | Orlando, FL 32801 | [LibertateIns.com](http://LibertateIns.com) | Contact Paul Hughes at 321.217.7477