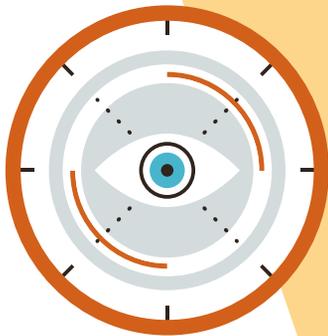


Emerging Leaders

FOCUS on the

FUTURE



**Want to develop your career in equipment finance?
Tips for the next-generation workforce**

By Susan L. Hodges



“[ETAC is] here to groom and empower you to do more for your organization and the industry, and do it sooner in your career.”

—Nate Gibbons, Innovation Finance

NATE GIBBONS spent the first several years of his equipment finance career chasing success. “Success had a very different meaning for me when I first entered the workforce, and to be completely transparent, it was primarily about advancing my career and becoming a person of influence,” says Gibbons, Chief Operating Officer for Innovation Finance in Fairport, New York, and Chair of ELFA’s Emerging Talent Advisory Council (ETAC). Then he had a revelation. “It occurred to me that I actually started having more success when I focused less on helping myself and more on helping the people around me,” he says. “The personal achievements I was trying to manipulate began happening naturally.”

If that sounds like so much kumbaya, read on because Gibbons is arguably one of the best-known young professionals in the industry today. By sharing his ideas and outlook with others, he met people, made new friends and came to the attention of industry leaders. “I certainly underestimated how impactful the friendships and networking would be,” he says. “You might be volunteering on an ELFA committee and suddenly be asked to take part in an opportunity that would never have been presented to you otherwise. I never imagined how many close friends I’d generate in an association full of my competitors.”



Some of the members who attended the Emerging Talent Networking Event in Chicago in April, pictured L-R: Ricardo Rios, Commercial Equipment Finance; Nishant Deshpande, BMO Harris Equipment Finance; Rachael Schubarth, BMO Harris Equipment Finance; Patric Berkery, CIT; Lovern Gordon, Boston Financial & Equity; Troy Graziani, Toyota Industries Commercial Finance; Alberto Colon, Commercial Equipment Finance; Carlie Yeandle, BMO Harris Equipment Finance; and Humble Wellington, Sumitomo Mitsui Finance & Leasing. Photo by John Boehm.



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—Kara Miyasato,
Stryker Flex Financial

This summer Gibbons and other members of ETAC will host EMERGENCE2018, a two-day leadership development event designed to help the industry’s emerging leaders consider steps they can take to develop their careers and add greater value to the industry. In support of the theme “Think. Act. Empower Like a Leader” the conference will include sessions on career mapping, networking and executive coaching.

Map Your Next Move

Kara Miyasato, Senior Manager of Marketing at Stryker Flex Financial in Portage, Michigan, and a member of ETAC, will conduct a session on career mapping at EMERGENCE2018 with Emily Latham of DLL. “Often people find a job they can do that pays well, and they look for satisfaction outside their work,” says Miyasato. “Career mapping looks at all the things you do in your job, then at the ones you do best and enjoy the most, and the amount of overlap between them. The goal is to find work roles that maximize the things you’re good at.”

Miyasato went through career mapping herself and benefitted. “I was managing our front-end operations team and doing a lot of day-to-day transactions,” she says. “I loved my job but knew I was really good at project management, and I wasn’t getting enough of that in my position. So I told my manager and we looked at moving me into a more project-based role on a different team. We also talked about the activities or skills I’d need to develop to get from Point A to Point B.”

Today Miyasato has a different job that employs more of her skills and aligns with her interests and affinities. “At the end of the day, career mapping is about ownership,” she says. “We need to take responsibility for figuring out what we want and love to do, and shaping our careers so we can get to that place.”

Network for Exposure

Mike Hube, Vice President of Syndications at Fifth Third Equipment Finance Co. in Cincinnati, advocates networking as a way to advance. “Networking is connecting or operating within a group of people that share common interests or goals,” he says. “Whether it’s a sales event or a meeting of a specific industry segment, there are so many types of networking opportunities, and they’re about creating friendships and relationships that are valuable in the long run.”

Hube will present on networking at EMERGENCE2018 and will likely do a lot of it while he’s there. “There are so many ideas and opinions in the world and when you network, you can share your ideas and knowledge and hear those of others,” he says. “You may uncover opportunities you didn’t know existed or find solutions you didn’t know you were looking for because so many things come up in conversation.” He pauses a moment and then says, “Besides, if you just sit at your desk, no one will know how smart you are.”

Martin Klotzman is also a fan of networking and contributes to ETAC by helping to set up Emerging Talent Regional Networking Events, the next of which will occur July 18 in Washington, D.C. “These events are for young members of companies in our industry and even for college students interested in learning more about a career in equipment finance,” says Klotzman, who is Marketing and Operations Manager at Ivory Consulting Corporation in Walnut Creek, California. Regional events supplement larger ELFA events that young professionals may not be able to attend. All feature time for networking and either a panel or roundtable discussion led by industry leaders who share information about how they achieved success. “In a way, you can see these as group mentoring sessions,” says Klotzman. “Leaders who attend give graciously of their time. It’s an opportunity to meet them and hear their stories.”

Travel to ETAC Events

Klotzman first attended an Emerging Talent Regional Networking Event in 2015. “The experience was phenomenal,” he recalls. “I met others in similar situations who were looking to learn as much as possible and be the best they can be at their companies. It was a great opportunity to learn from my peers who were trying to climb the same ladders. I’ve made friendships that will probably last across my career. And these events are free to attend.”

Klotzman also participates in the Equipment Leasing

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—Martin Klotzman,
Ivory Consulting
Corporation



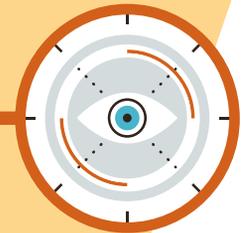
opened a whole new world,” he says. “I think the vast majority of people in this industry get here the same way: by chance. And it’s such a great industry to be in.”

To help widen the scope of equipment finance and his experience in it, Klotzman volunteers. “The best thing I’ve done for myself in my career is to be as involved as possible, joining a committee, joining groups,” he says. “Working with people in different roles gives me a finer understanding of how ELFA works as a whole.” He also gets to ask questions and connect with professionals in many areas of the business. Says Klotzman, “It’s truly a great way to build your network, learn from your peers and grow as an individual.”

Zack Marsh can vouch for that. Marsh is CFO of Mintaka Financial, LLC, in Gig Harbor, Washington, and Chair Emeritus of ETAC. As one of the handful of young professionals selected to start ETAC, he remembers early networking and volunteer activities that helped him learn more about the industry and get to know others. He’ll talk about executive coaching at EMERGENCE2018 as part of a panel discussion on the subject.

& Finance Foundation’s Guest Lecture Program, which is designed to help industry leaders increase awareness of equipment finance and attract new talent to the industry. “As an undergrad, I never took a course on equipment finance,” he says. “And not once was it covered when I went for my MBA, and this wasn’t that long ago.” He learned of the industry through a friend who knew Scott Thacker, CEO of Ivory Consulting. “It

GET INVOLVED



If you’re a young industry professional and still wondering where to start, here are some action steps you might consider:

- **Reach Out to an ETAC Member:** Seventeen equipment finance professionals compose ELFA’s Emerging Talent Advisory Council. Contact any of these members to learn more and start advancing your career in new ways and new directions. Access the committee list at www.elfaonline.org/about/governance/committee-list/.
- **Visit the Emerging Talent page** at www.elfaonline.org/industry-topics/emerging-talent/ to access training opportunities, the Generation Next LinkedIn Group and more.
- **Attend EMERGENCE2018**, July 18-19 in Washington, D.C. Learn more at www.elfaonline.org/events.
- **Attend an Emerging Talent Regional Networking Event** on July 18 in Washington, D.C., or Sept. 17 in Philadelphia. Learn more at www.elfaonline.org/events.
- **Present the Foundation’s Guest Lecture Program** at a college or university near you. Learn more at www.leasefoundation.org/academic-programs/guest-lecture-program/.

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—Zack Marsh,
Mintaka Financial, LLC



Search for an Executive Coach

“A coach can focus on your strengths and weaknesses to help you apply knowledge, actions and ideas for you to build on those strengths and perhaps offset some of your weaknesses,” he says. Although different philosophies exist about tackling or simply acknowledging weaknesses, an executive coach can usually help a professional decide how to go forward and target ways to be a better leader. Executive coaching is not for everyone, Marsh says, but for those “who aspire to do more, be their best selves and become leaders and influencers.”

Marsh enjoys many aspects of ELFA, but says the opportunity to meet others outside his company who are doing similar things in different ways is what he values most. “Being able to bring to the table information I’ve learned from others outside my bubble has helped me so much,” he says. “You have to be proactive about what you want to accomplish and ask for help. Just sitting there doing a lot of work and waiting to be recognized isn’t always effective. The larger your company, the better the chance that your contributions may go unrecognized.”

Gibbons agrees and emphasizes the need for young professionals to take charge of their ambitions, partly by becoming more active in the ELFA. “Sometimes the most talented, gifted people don’t realize their full potential because they simply need a little help from others and don’t realize it,” he says. “That’s why industry involvement can be so powerful. Resisting the temptation to be consumed by day-to-day activities takes tremendous discipline, but if we don’t take steps to extract ourselves and look for possibilities, we won’t be prepared for the future.”

Miyasato adds this point about being consumed by daily tasks: “People get caught up thinking they need to be in a certain job for five years and then another one for five years if they want to be leaders in this industry. But there are multiple paths available to us and if you know that, you can do amazing things that you’re passionate about and that keep you fulfilled in your work.”

Hube says ETAC activities and other opportunities in ELFA fill yet another role for young professionals. “We all recognize the graying of the industry, and as it continues, younger industry members need to know each other to understand each other’s capabilities. In this way, we can become the leaders we know we’re capable of being and lead our industry forward.”

Pointers to Get Started

If you’re a young industry professional and still wondering where to start, contact an ETAC member or go to www.elfaonline.org/industry-topics/emerging-talent/ to learn more. Also consider these suggestions: “Take time to focus on your own learning and skill sets, be they soft skills or professional skills relating to your specific job,” says Marsh. “Focusing on goal-setting and where you envision yourself can help you set your sights on what it will take to get there.”

“Come to an ETAC session,” says Miyasato. “We really focus on development activities and want to inspire people. We want them to feel they can take control of their careers and see what that looks like. We also feel impassioned about this industry and want to share that with others. ETAC provides opportunities to learn more about the industry and the opportunities available in it.”

“Get involved,” advises Klotzman. “Participate in the Guest Lecture Program or join a committee or another volunteer effort. Attend an ETAC regional event, and if your company can send you to a conference, by all means go. This industry has so many moving pieces, and we can learn from every one of them.”

“Get out and talk to people,” adds Hube. “Make new friends. The diversity of knowledge and backgrounds of people in ELFA is astonishing: the ideas they can bring to the table and the many different perspectives...you’ll find people in similar situations that you can talk to in confidence and get advice and support. There are so many people out there who can help.”

“I often hear that people are unsure of themselves, of their career moves, of what they can do to add value,” says Gibbons. “ETAC’s mission is to focus all of its attention and energy on the industry’s single-most valuable and competitive resource: its people. We’re here to groom and empower you to do more for your organization and the industry, and do it sooner in your career. Let’s get started!” 

SUSAN HODGES writes about equipment finance and other business topics from her office in Wilmette, Ill.