

Technology, education, training alter community leadership

BY MONICA CORREA

Community leadership has changed throughout the years with the expansion of technology, by providing a wider social reach, and by education, with institutions offering leadership training that aims to foster innovation, said the new Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce Chair Roberto Muñoz.

As chairman of the GMCC and South Florida's Boy Scouts of America—as well as his extensive career in banking and his financial expertise in a multitude of institutions and civic organizations—Mr. Muñoz says he believes in the leaders of Miami-Dade County. “Individuals are born leaders, they're known as natural leaders, but the good news is that all individuals can be taught leadership skills for service.”

Not-for-profit organizations have changed over the years with better general governance, stronger boards and executive committees, he said. There is also more focus on the value proposition for members, with “enhanced mission statements; a deeper vision; more attention to diversity, which is key to a successful organization; ethics; transparency, and accountability.”

Funding continues to be the most volatile part of sustain-



Photo by Cristina Sullivan

Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce Chairman Roberto Muñoz says all can be taught leadership skills.

INSIGHT

Continuing a series that began with Miami Today's 40th year, we turn weekly to past Achievers for insight on relevant issues and suggestions for younger persons who will be involved in dealing with those issues.

ability of an organization, he added. “Funding and managing a memberbase, obtaining sponsorship sources and working with

and through the board with each community are still very, very much key elements for success.” Mr. Muñoz has a career of more

than 35 years with ample experience in wealth management and executive strategies, serving in executive positions with BBVA Bank, Professional Bank, Marquis Bank, Regions Bank, Israel Discount Bank, Mizuho bank, Barclays Capital, and PLC. He is the president of the South Florida Council of Boy Scouts, chair of the Distinguished Citizens Award Committee, member of the executive board of the Miami-Dade Beacon Council and the Center for Financial Training International, chair of the Center for International Trade Development and member of the advisory board of the Center for Leadership at Florida International University and the Tibor and Sheila Hollo School of Real Estate at FIU.

He was chairman of the World Trade Center Miami in 2019 and 2020 and the Florida International Bankers Association. He has, additionally, received a multitude of awards and recognitions. Some include “Distinguished Chairman” from the World Trade Center Miami in December 2020 and the “Lifetime Achievement Award” and induction into the Second Century Society by the South Florida Council of the Scouts of America in December 2019. In June, Mr. Muñoz was named board chair of the GMCC.

“It takes commitment, individual commitment,” he said, to have a heart of servitude and attitude to do good for others which is what it takes to be a leader. “Leadership entails an individual asking for the tasks for the jobs, for the performance, and then perform all tasks within that designated group and move up in the chain of command of the organization, get to understand it better, help form it and guide it from the very beginning.”

Training youth to seamlessly take over civic organizations as leadership gets older is a must, he said, but the key is also funding. “Right now, there are around 15,000 not-for-profits in Miami. Some of them overlap, some of them don't have a strong focus. What we really do have is a limited number of funding sources.”

Concentrating on the 15 or 20 things that the community really needs and focus heavily on them would make the community stronger, he said. “I think we're going to have probably somewhat of a decline over time of not-for-profits.”

Transportation continues to be one of Greater Miami's biggest issues, he said. “If you look at the minutes of the Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce in 1964... they were talking about transportation,” he said. “Traffic continues to be a top item.”

“We're involved with the SMART plan that the county has put forward,” he continued. “We have been navigating the SMART plan for many years, expanding our toll roads, expanding our expressways. Since 1898, transportation has been our key.”

The second most important issue in our region is workforce housing, said Mr. Muñoz. “Today, especially because of the rents that have gone up substantially, a lot of our youth are finding it difficult to stay here in Miami. We need to find workforce housing for our nurses, our firefighters, our police, teachers, and those that take care of the basic needs of our community.”

The Miami young professional community has grown over the years, as population grows and people continue to want to be in South Florida, said Austin Hollo, senior vice president of Florida East Coast Realty, who head the third generation of Hollo leaders.

“One of the most incredible and unique things about Miami is that people want to embrace you and connect with you,” he said. “You have a lot of incredible community and business leaders open to give advice to young professionals, helping us learn and grow.”

Mr. Hollo, who serves on the advisory boards for Florida International University's Tibor and Sheila Hollo School of Real Estate and Center for Leadership, the New Leaders Taskforce of the Beacon Council, and on the board of the New World Center Committee for the Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce, said it is important to take advantage of the opportunities a place like Miami offers.

“It's just a matter of taking the time to seek out those higher-level community leaders who can give you a foothold and help you get above,” he said. “There is no shortage of young professional groups out there, and if you can take a little bit of time and make some research, I think it's very easy to get involved.”



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