John Spencer, ARMA Board of Director Candidate

Question 1

Each candidate so far has described the importance of the ARMA Chapter network and the need to engage as a Board more strategically with them. Please provide at least 3 concrete suggestions you will bring to the Board to enhance the support for individual chapters.

I've noticed there can be a disconnect between the board and the chapters. Sometimes, it feels like there are two separate ARMA groups, with an Us-versus-Them mindset. To move forward, we need to build stronger relationships. It's up to the board to take the first steps to close this gap and help everyone see ARMA as one united group.

Develop Relationship Currency by opening dialogue

- The board should develop Relationship Currency with chapters and adopt a more Chapter-Centric approach. In the same way that I have encouraged chapter leaders to prioritize members' experiences and needs through the Member-Centric Chapter Leadership theme, the board should focus on the experiences and needs of chapter leaders through a Chapter-Centric approach.
- This starts with open and honest conversations to build trust and strong relationships. Good communication is key to connecting with chapters. I suggest the board holds virtual "Ask Me Anything" (AMA) sessions every two months at first, so chapter leaders can connect, ask questions, and share feedback. Once trust is built, the board can switch to holding these sessions every quarter.

Enhance Board Engagement

- Chapters have minimum meeting requirements, and board members should also meet a basic attendance standard for both chapter and board meetings. When board members are actively involved, it shows chapter leaders that the association values them and that the board is dedicated to supporting their work.
- The board should be involved in onboarding and welcoming new chapter leaders. This demonstrates commitment from the beginning and throughout their chapter leadership journey.

The Importance of Feedback – The F-word

- The board should regularly solicit feedback from chapters through surveys, focus groups, Ask Me Anything sessions, etc. It is important to schedule these sessions frequently and clearly communicate how the feedback will be utilized, ensuring chapters understand their voices are heard and valued.

- If the board wants to learn how to do anything better and be effective, it needs feedback. This requires the board to build relationships with the chapter leaders where they feel safe to do so. Without feedback the board can't fully know the impact it's having on the chapters. Without it the board can't know if its actions, behaviors and culture are hitting the mark and resonating with the chapters, so the chapters are positioned for success.

Question 2

What do you see as some recent major successes of ARMA? ARMA chapters?
What do you see as opportunities for improvements within ARMA and/or ARMA chapters?
In what specific ways do you plan to support local chapters?
How will you bridge the disconnect between the Board and individual members and chapters?

What is one piece of advice you would share with ARMA members?

ARMA major successes

- ARMA's ongoing global expansion is a major achievement that shows its commitment to staying relevant. This growth also helps raise its brand recognition around the world.

    - This expansion gives members access to a wider range of perspectives and expertise, which encourages new ideas, strategies, and best practices.

    - It also helps members stay relevant and competitive as the world becomes more connected.

- The whitepaper 'From Rules to Reflex – Transforming IG Into a Cultural Value' is essential reading and, as described in the document, should be treated as "The Holy Grail." It highlights the Human Side of IG, and ARMA should keep using it as the basis for future training.

- ARMA could improve by offering more training on the Human Side of IG. This focus should be built into information management practices alongside standards, policies, and systems.

Chapters major successes and opportunities for improvement

The chapters are the backbone of ARMA. They represent the association in their cities and help give ARMA recognition around the world.

One big success that often goes unnoticed is the strength and resilience chapters have shown since COVID. They have worked hard to keep a local community for our members. Many chapters have not only held on but have continued to thrive. They adapted from only in-person meetings to virtual, hybrid, and even informal coffee chats, so members could keep connecting.

We have a chance to improve by focusing more on our current members. Sometimes we get so caught up in growing membership that we forget how important it is to keep the members we already have. If we work on making our current members excited about our chapters, growth will follow.

Make sure you have a plan for both current members and new members. Start by focusing on your current membership strategy. We can't keep members without a clear, member-focused plan.

How will you bridge the disconnect between the Board and individual members and chapters?

Within my answers for question one, I recommended the board should offer "Ask Me Anything" sessions, to connect and engage with the chapter leaders. If I'm elected, I will volunteer to lead, plan and host these sessions.

Also, I recommended soliciting feedback on a regular basis. I will lead this initiative as well.

As a board member, I will take on the personal responsibility for improving the engagement and relationships between the board, the chapters and its members. Serving as an Ambassador of Engagement for the Board to change the perception from Us vs Them into a One ARMA.

Advice to ARMA Members

To stay relevant and competitive as ARMA members in the age of AI, I recommend putting as much effort into developing your human skills in IG and RIM as you do into learning standards, policies, and systems. These human skills, especially emotional intelligence, are just as important. Even if we are experts, our advice and guidance only matter if others are willing to listen and collaborate with us. As the saying goes, people don't care how much we know until they know how much we care. Focusing on the human side of IG and RIM helps us become trusted advisors.

I encourage you to read the whitepapers From Rules to Reflex: Transforming IG Into A Cultural Value by ARMA and New Economy Skills: Unlocking the Human Advantage by the World

Economic Forum. In this whitepaper it says, "In the age of artificial intelligence (AI) and disruption, the true competitive edge is human."

Because ARMA offers chapters, you have a great chance to develop your human and relational skills. While digital tools make remote engagement possible, being present in person is still important for building trust, credibility, and relationships. The better you are at connecting in person, the easier it will be to build your digital presence if meeting face-to-face isn't possible.