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## ★ Leadership for turbulent times

CoreNet Global - Atlanta Chapter

Premium content from Atlanta Business Chronicle - by Doug DeLoach, Contributing Writer

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The kernel of truth at the core of an age-old business adage inspired the theme of "Leading through Turbulent Times: Transforming Challenge into Opportunity" for this year's educational forum hosted by the Atlanta chapter of CoreNet Global, the association for corporate real estate professionals.

The daylong event, which will take place Aug. 25 at the JW Marriott Atlanta Buckhead hotel, has been described by organizers as a compendium of "leadership strategies of organizations that have prevailed and are finding the right balance between seizing opportunities and managing accompanying risk."

"This is our answer to the question that's been on everyone's mind for the last several years," said Karen League, education forum chair and senior vice president and director of interior design at Jova/Daniels/Busby, an architectural, planning and design firm in Atlanta.

"The question is, 'How are we going to survive?'" League said.

The schedule for this year's education forum, which includes seven breakout sessions, plus keynote speakers during breakfast and lunch periods, represents one of the organization's most ambitious efforts, according to League, who for the previous five years has served on the program committee.

In planning the event, the CoreNet Atlanta

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Ed Forum: The focus is providing information attendees can utilize immediately, Chair Karen League said.

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team invited global association members (who number around 7,000), as well as professionals from the broader commercial real estate community and related industries, to submit ideas for presentations and case studies focusing on the forum theme as viewed from the perspective of different partner categories, such as service provider, economic developer, technology consultant, human resources and risk management.



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"One of the most significant things we learned

is that individuals and businesses are partnering more than they had done previously," said **Philip J. Carabillo**, co-chair of the event and director of real estate services, at [Randstad US](#)  .

According to Carabillo, this elevated level of cooperation and collaboration can be attributed to the need to get deals done when challenged by an extraordinarily weak economic environment.



"The pressure from the recession has reduced the distance between everyone involved in transactions, regardless of size or complexity," he said.

A perfect example of this impetus toward collaboration is the subject of one of the breakout sessions, "[Novelis](#)   : Capitalizing on Chaos." A privately held, nearly \$11 billion enterprise, which employs approximately 12,000 in 11 countries, Novelis recently relocated its global operations in a new 120,000-plus square foot facility at Two Alliance Center in Buckhead.

Ed Forum session attendees will learn how the Novelis deal evolved through the eyes of participating members who guided the project to its conclusion: **Eric Drummond**, senior vice president and chief people officer at Novelis; **Rob Metcalf**, managing director at [Jones Lang LaSalle Inc.](#)  , representing the broker; **Chris Ahrenkiel**, senior director at [Tishman Speyer](#)  , which manages the Two Alliance property; and **Deidre O'Sullivan**, a principal at idea|span, which handled the interior architecture and design.

"Not only is the audience going to be inspired and energized by these presentations, they are going to be taking away information they can use immediately in their own businesses," League said.

Another breakout session, "Effectively Engaging the C-Suite," presents the thesis that major real estate initiatives, especially in difficult times, must be driven by strategic goals, which requires engagement with and attention from executive management.

"The idea is to do a better job of integrating the real estate discussion within the C-suite so that you are creating much more value for the company in terms of planning and executing their strategy," said **Gail M. Crowder**, chair of the education forum programming committee and senior vice president at [Grubb & Ellis Co.](#)   's Tenant Advisory Group.

"Sustainability=Innovation" is a breakout session that addresses a key current topic for commercial real estate, Crowder said. Presenters including **James E. Hartzfeld**, managing director at InterfaceRAISE LLC, and **Laura Case**, senior project manager, Commercial Green Building Services at Southface, will explain how sustainability can drive cultural transformation using lessons learned in the field.

"This is a leadership story with tremendous implications and global reach," Crowder said.



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Sustainability also plays a central role in "Energizing the Future," the opening keynote address presented by **Ron Shipman**, vice president of environmental affairs at [Georgia Power Co.](#) + ▾

"We have to stay on all the time, even during turbulent periods, and that means one of the most important arrows in the quiver that helps us succeed is fuel diversity," Shipman said.

Listing nuclear and clean coal technology, gas, wind, solar and biomass products as examples of diverse fuel sources, Shipman said, "We can't just take something off the table because it's unpopular."

And so the adage goes, "With every challenge comes another opportunity." Ed Forum 2011 represents an attempt by the Atlanta chapter of CoreNet Global to meet the challenge posed by the current, less than robust, commercial real estate environment.

"We wanted to acknowledge that, yes, there has been turbulence and change," Crowder said. "In response, we wanted to present ideas and opportunities that carry a positive message and sense of optimism about the future."

The presenting sponsor of the education forum is [Balfour Beatty](#) + ▾ , with additional support provided by [Teknion](#) + ▾ , San Bernardino County, Calif., Centergy Group LLC, Centergy Studios, [Steelcase Inc.](#) + ▾ , [Herman Miller Inc.](#) + ▾ and CWC LLC.

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