

THE 2008 ETA STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP &
NETWORKING FORUM:
WHERE IDEAS AND OPPORTUNITY MEET

Empowered in the Windy City

Anyone who has attended more than one ETA Strategic Leadership & Networking Forum knows that while it is an exceptional opportunity to build industry relationships and see the payments business from a high-level perspective, each event has its own distinct flavor.

“The forum always is a unique event,” says Carla Balakgie, ETA’s executive director, “but this year, the energy level will be a little higher and the focus a little more intense. An urban setting like Chicago is perfect for that.”

The 2008 Forum will be held at the Fairmont Chicago—a premier urban

destination and the perfect location for a broad-ranging discussion of the issues facing the payments industry. The Fairmont is in the heart of the city along Lake Michigan and a short distance from the city's famous attractions.

To optimize travel convenience, the Forum schedule has been condensed. On-site registration begins at 3 p.m. on Tuesday, October 21, and the program opens with the keynote session at 5 p.m. On Wednesday, sessions begin at 8:30 a.m., and the Forum concludes with a closing roundtable discussion at 4 p.m.

Wide-Angle Economic View

Like its predecessors, the 2008 Forum will be built around key topic areas—the economy, risk and regulation, global business developments, and technology. Plenty of networking time is built into the program as well.

On Tuesday, Terry Savage, author of “The Savage Truth on Money,” *Chicago Sun-Times* columnist, and regular contributor on PBS, CNN, CNBC, and NBC, will draw on her broad experience covering economic trends in a keynote presentation that focuses on the factors that may influence the payments industry in the immediate future.

Savage started her career as a stockbroker and later became a founding member—and the first woman trader—of the Chicago Board Options Exchange. She was also a member of the Chicago Mercantile Exchange's International Monetary Market, where she traded interest rate contracts and currency futures. Savage is a registered investment advisor for both stocks and futures. She currently serves on the board of directors of the Chicago Mercantile Exchange (NYSE) and was a former board member of McDonald's Corp. (14 years) and Pennzoil-Quaker State Corp. (five years).

Global Payments President and CEO Paul Garcia will kick off Wednesday's sessions by offering a sweeping look at the international arena and developments shaping the global payments industry. A 30-year industry veteran, Garcia has been at the helm of Global Payments since 1999. His depth of experience working in the

Like its predecessors, the 2008 Forum will be built around key topic areas—the economy, risk and regulation, global business developments, and technology.

industry in the United States and around the world gives him a unique perspective on the industry and its place in the global economy—one that's decidedly optimistic despite current economic challenges. (For more about Paul Garcia, see *Transaction Trends*' April 2008 cover story, page 11.)

Legislation, Regulation, and Innovation

Garcia's presentation will be followed by a look at the “Changing Economics of the ISO: Effects of Changing Markets.” This panel discussion, facilitated by Calpian CEO Harold Montgomery, will feature Rob Metzger, principal and group head of financial services for William Blair & Co. investment firm, and Steven Gersen, formerly of Credit Suisse. Speakers will discuss ISOs' changing roles and the many ways in which this evolving landscape affects the entire payments chain—from consumer to financial institution.

Additionally, the Forum will take an executive level look at risk mitigation that will touch on a wide range of issues, from compliance best practices, ACH and prepaid issues, legislative developments and the regulatory arena. With new developments in all these fields and an election looming, an expert panel will have plenty to talk about as it explores what every executive and board member should know about the risks their organizations face.

One of the most popular sessions at the

April ETA Annual Meeting & Expo was the Technology Super Session, which demonstrated some of the latest POS systems. On the afternoon of October 22, the Forum will revisit that topic in the “Innovation at the POS” session. This program will look a little further down the payments road toward innovations that may transform how merchants do business and accept electronic payments. For example, panelists will address how smart phones may become the wallet of the future and how shopping carts will be equipped with checkout scanners and credit card terminals. More importantly, the session will address how or if consumers and merchants will adopt these changes, whether these new systems can be made secure, and how payments technology companies are developing and bringing the new POS systems to market.

The closing session will feature a new format, as all Forum presenters convene on stage to organize and recap the information presented. Meeting organizers expect this free-wheeling discussion will help attendees to solidify what they've learned, and ample time will be allotted for questions and follow-up.

Networking Events

Because no Forum would be complete without networking opportunities, meeting organizers have planned several occasions for peer interaction, starting with the annual golf tournament the morning of October 22. Participants will move to the Fairmont's famed Moulin Rouge ballroom following the day's keynote session, and continue through an elegant After Glow party later in the evening.

On Wednesday, October 22, the Forum will continue to use a dual-room arrangement, with a networking room adjacent to the main presentation room for breaks and impromptu discussions.

Although the 2008 Strategic Leadership & Networking Forum is convenient, compact, and efficient, it still offers the best opportunity for industry leaders and strategists to focus on the broad view and build the basis for sound strategic thinking and planning for themselves and their organizations. **TT**