PASS
Board of Directors Question-and-Answer
PASS Summit, Charlotte, North Carolina
October 18, 2013

Participants: Bill Graziano, Douglas McDowell, Thomas LaRock, Rushabh Mehta, Rob Farley, Adam Jorgenson, Denise McInerney, Wendy Pastrick, James Roland-Jones, Sri Sridharan, Rick Bolesta, Olivier Matrat, Jennifer Moser

Attendees (not on stage): Judy Christianson, Sandy Cherry, Alison MacDonald, Janice Simpson

Question-and-Answer Session:

Adam Jorgenson opened the session. The Directors introduced themselves and identified their portfolios.

1. **Question (Kendal Van Dyke):** Kendal voiced a positive opinion of the most recent PASS election but indicated that multiple votes were admittedly cast. He asked the Board to speak to what was done to look into the duplicate voting and if it was time to create another Elections Review Committee? He also asked what the Board is going to do to in the coming year to resolve the duplicate member issue.

Bill Graziano outlined that 113,478 ballots were issued to eligible voters and that eligible voters were determined by unique email address and date entered into the system. 1514 ballots were submitted, totalling 3904 individual votes. All submitted ballots were compared to registration lists for paid PASS events. Duplicate ballots were discovered based on first name, last name and address. The ballots were also compared to PASS membership data (people who fill in the member profile on sqlpass.org) and additional duplicates were uncovered based on identical first and last name and identical voting pattern. Taking duplicates into account, the election results remained unchanged.

Bill confirmed that another elections review committee would be formed and that he would chair the committee. The Board is still working through how to handle the duplicate votes.

2. **Question (Andrea Allred):** Andrea asked if the board has ever considered extending the voting period time frame.

Bill replied that yes, in the past the voting time had been longer, 10 days or maybe even 2 weeks. The concern is that extended voting periods are a burden on the candidates as it's a long time for candidates to be fielding twitter, forums and chats.

> **Follow up (Attendee 1):** Attendee mentioned 90% of votes are done on first and last day so it doesn't matter what's in between.

Bill said he is not sure of the vote spread by day but the board will look into it.
James Roland-Jones confirmed that a refined election timeline was created to ensure the election was impactful. JRJ explained that the longer the voting period is left open does not translate into more votes. This year's shortened voting period had a better per day average than in previous years. The elections brought forward an EMEA seat and JRJ was satisfied that we had a good meaningful election.

> **Follow up (Andrea Allred):** Andrea asked if a closing date could be added to the ballot.

Bill noted Andrea's comment and said the Board would look into it.

Sri Sridharan summarized the Nominations Committee role in the election and explained their due diligence in adjusting the elections timelines. A religious holiday coincided with the voting period which was another reason for shortening the timeline.

> **Follow up (Kristin Ferrier):** Kristen stated that she understands the lengthy time each person has to campaign but feels if the campaign period is shortened, it makes it harder on the community to review candidates.

Rob Farley asked Kristin to confirm if the issue is the time period the community has to cast the vote or is it the length of time to get to know the candidates?

> **Follow up (Kristin Ferrier):** Kristin confirmed that it's the length of the campaign time. She recommends that the slate be announced earlier if we want to keep the voting period to 5 days.
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> **Follow up (Tim Ford):** Tim noted that procrastination exists within the community around elections and no matter what you do length wise with the elections, you get the immediate votes the first day and then the remainder on the last day/minute. Tim suggested extending the voting period to a week from 5 days, but assumes we will experience the same trend.
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> **Follow up (Brian Moran):** Brian commented that the shorter timeline turned the elections into a popularity contest.

Rushabh Mehta noted that he has been on the board for many years and to some degree, it's always been a popularity contest. He is happy to hear from the community that they want more time to look at each candidate, not just the people you know. Rushabh asked the audience to please provide feedback on how the next NomCom can help the community.

Wendy Pastrick noted that this year an extra effort was made to ensure the candidate's application and platform was posted so the community could do some research. Wendy mentioned that extending the campaigning period is not easy for all candidates. A shortened voting and campaign period provided a fairer playing field for all candidates.

JRJ validated that the candidate applications are a significant undertaking and in no way is there a lack of information. JRJ suggested providing a comparison chart to review all candidates at once instead of having to review each application individually. He also mentioned that when we have separation between campaign time and election time, it's a difficult for the candidates as no one really engages until the voting period opens.

3. **Question (Andy Leonard**): Andy mentioned that he blogged quite a bit about the election process in the past but did not this year due to time constraints. He feels the process has become less transparent as we used to be able to see the applicants prior to the announcement of the slate. Andy asked why PASS is no longer publishing the candidates who are running.

Bill stated that the published ranking was a big reason as to why we no longer share who has applied for the Board elections. PASS wanted to make it easier for people to apply and step out gracefully.

> **Follow up (Andy Leonard):** Is there an option for candidates to announce?

Bill confirmed that candidates can announce but they cannot campaign.

DRAFT

Follow up (Tim Ford): Tim stated as a candidate he could announce that he was a candidate, however no campaigning was permitted until the campaign period opened.

Follow up (Andy Leonard): Andy agreed this was a good option for someone who may want to run but is a little unsure; they can submit their application in confidence and withdraw in confidence. Andy referred back to the question around the amount of time candidates need to commit to the election process. Andy mentioned it takes a lot of time to serve on the Board. If a candidate does not have time to go through the election process they may not have the time to sit on the Board.

Follow up (Tim Ford): Tim stated that knowing you are on the Board for a certain amount of time allows you to plan ahead if self-employed or getting the right support from your workplace but it's more difficult to commit, and get the approved time off, to participate in an election campaign.

4. **Question (Ryan Adams):** Ryan stated that he was on the NomCom this year and asked the board to consider those who served on the NomCom for the ERC due to their recent firsthand knowledge. Ryan thanked the board members for their commitment, time, and hours they put into supporting the community. He also noted that every director he has spoken to says it takes about a year to familiarize with their assigned portfolio and he would urge the board not to change the portfolios annually. He recognized the portfolios did not change this year and felt this was a wise decision for the community.

5. **Question (Aaron Nelson)** Aaron thanked the board for hosting the PASS Summit in Charlotte this year. Aaron felt there was a lower turnout of Microsoft representatives at the appreciation event on Thursday night at Summit. Aaron asked the board if the location of this year's Summit contributed to the lower turnout of Microsoft representation at the event.

Jennifer Moser stated that fewer Microsoft representatives attended Summit this year because of the location. The Microsoft representatives who did attend delivered more sessions, upwards of 5 a day plus pre cons, therefore their time at the evening event could have been shortened due to fatigue.
Bill commented that he got to talk to some significant senior Microsoft marketing people at the Thursday evening event and they were excited about the event.

6. **Question (Aaron Nelson):** Aaron stated that the Tableau conference is going to be in Seattle next year and they were offering a lower hotel rate for the attendees. The Tableau conference is approximately the same size as Summit and Aaron wondered if a lower rate could be considered for Summit in Seattle next year?

Bill replied that this requested would be noted in the minutes and reviewed.

7. **Question (Stewart Ainsworth):** When will the board know the final numbers for attendance at this year's Summit and will Summit return to the East or Central US?

Bill replied that we have the numbers now and it has been a great success. PASS needs to analyze the pros and cons of hosting outside of Seattle before deciding to move to different locations. Bill noted that booking facilities for events of this size happens years in advance, and we are booked in the Seattle area for the next 3 years.

DRAFT

Follow up (Stuart Ainsworth): Stewart requested as the time comes to make the decision that the board get the community as actively involved as possible as there are great benefits to moving the Summit location around.

Denise McInerney reminded the audience that one of the ways the community gets heard is from the session and event surveys.

Jennifer stated that from a Microsoft perspective, no matter where PASS Summit is geographically, Microsoft is a huge supporter. Some logistical details regarding travel and budget may impact Microsoft's representation, but it's a fantastic event and Microsoft supports the community.

Follow up (Stuart Ainsworth): Stewart agrees and he would rather see Microsoft follow PASS Summit around rather than PASS following Microsoft around by always being in Seattle.

Jennifer commented that Microsoft appreciates the community.

8. **Question (Jack Corbett):** Jack recommended that when Summit is away from Redmond that Microsoft deliver fewer sessions and open up sessions to the community.

Bill stated that the community needs to fill out the survey. The survey is the community's opportunity to give their feedback. The more feedback the board receives the greater the chance to make changes. The survey will be sent to attendees the week after Summit.

Jennifer noted that there is more than one kind of survey and that the session surveys are online now. The event survey will be sent to every attendee and she encouraged everyone to please fill it out.

Douglas McDowell echoed that all verbatim comments get compiled and are circulated and read by the entire board.

Follow Up (Mark Caldwell): Mark said that speaking as a community member who lives in the Seattle area, this is the 10th Summit he has attended. He stated that Charlotte is a fantastic location and the City of Charlotte did themselves proud with their hospitality. Mark stated that having the conference locally is not always an advantage to locals due to ongoing commitments. Occasionally it's a nice break to travel and fully engage in all events including the evening events. Mark would encourage the board to consider an alternating West/East schedule for Summit regarding location and feels it would be a good pattern to establish.

9. **Question (Pat Wright):** Pat stated that the database world is changing for database professionals Pat would like to see SQLSaturday expand its horizons past SQL Server and support other community events like local code camps in the area. Pat asked if there is any opportunity to use the speaker lists to send out to code camps.

Denise stated that Mark Ginnebaugh, who is the chapter leader in the Silicon Valley and a couple of local volunteers had partnered with their local code camp. There were MVP's and speakers from Europe that came to the code camp.

Follow Up (Pat Wright): Pat is asking more about putting on future events with speakers at a local code camp and can he use speaker lists from SQLSaturday events?

Rob stated that it would depend on who we can distribute email lists to legally and that it could be looked into.

DRAFT

Follow Up (Tim Ford): Tim said that a lot of information is already exposed on the SQL Saturday website, you can see who has submitted abstracts and he suggested reviewing the website.

Follow Up (Pat Wright): He was hoping PASS would embrace this and sponsor other communities by saying that we have this other event coming up and somehow put a call out for speakers. This would help spread the word for SQL Server.

10. **Question (Ryan Adams):** Ryan thanked PASS HQ as the unsung heroes, they do amazing work and that IT has a vast work load. How do we engage the community more in projects when it's appropriate?

Adam stated that the board does not have the answers but the question is being pondered.

Wendy mentioned that if there is a specific project in mind a written proposal could be submitted to the board. Committees have been formed in the past and brought up Allen Kinsel as an example. Allen was committed to making sure the Chapter tools moved forward regardless of whether he was still on the board or not. We welcome ideas but also need a plan.

11. **Question (Stewart Ainsworth):** Stewart stated that the SQLSaturday meeting earlier in the week created some confusion about what was and was not allowed in terms of reaching out to SQLSaturday event registrants as a Chapter leader. Steward asked for clarification on the use of registrant email addresses.

Rob introduced Alison MacDonald from PASSHQ Marketing. Alison clarified that any Chapter leader involved in organizing a SQLSaturday event may use the SQLSaturday sponsor opt-in list to append registrant contact information to their Chapter email list.

12. **Question (Said Salomon):** Said introduced himself as the Chapter leader for Philadelphia and stated that they would like to consider having a larger event than a SQLSaturday. With SQL Rally gone from the US, he wondered if there is any kind of format to do a mini event that spans a couple of days.

Wendy noted that currently the SQLSaturday format is the available community event model. Some events have been tacking on one or 2 pre con days.

Follow up (Said Salomon): Some Chapters have become large enough that we could have these mini events if PASS were to sanction it.

Rob mentioned that discussions have occurred about the future for large SQLSaturday events but that currently the community has the successful SQLSaturday model to leverage. Rob said he would like to celebrate PASSHQ IT for all their hard work in creating a set of online tools that enable the SQLSaturday model.

Follow up (Said Salomon): Said noted that it's not just a tool set and we appreciate the fact that tools are offered, however we would like to have the opportunity to move to a bigger model than a SQLSaturday event can withstand. He is asking that some time and energy is put in to consider this idea regarding what kind of support the community can get.

13. **Question (Pat Wright):** Pat stated that the Volunteer meetings held on Tuesday prior to Summit were not effective for him. They were not very helpful, and asked as volunteers and PASS board members what is going to be done to improve those meetings?

DRAFT

Denise commented that it's about the ability to plan, prepare and frame the discussion. That responsibly lies with the person who is leading the meetings. It takes time to frame up and execute a meeting. A lot of people that come to the Tuesday meetings can support the meeting leader by keeping the meeting on track.
Bill asked Alison to confirm if PASS can conduct evaluations of the community meetings?
Alison confirmed that we could do this.

> **Follow up (Pat Wright):** Pat stated that for future meetings it's about getting the right people in place to manage the meetings as project managers and organizers. Look to those volunteers with that skillset for improvement to those meetings for the future.

> **Follow up (Amy Lewis):** Amy stated that PASSHQ has helped her fill the gap from an organization standpoint. With the program committees with the Virtual Chapters she relied on PASSHQ to help manage volunteers. On the survey there is a lot of spots for the experienced volunteers to say the Tuesday's meeting didn't work for them and to comment. Amy stated that the PASS board members are looking for help and there is opportunity for the experienced community members to get involved.

Wendy also noted that she worked with a team of people for the Chapter meeting, it was a team effort with all the information that needs be shared it's a rare opportunity to get a large group of people in the same room. Trying to balance the social aspect with information aspect can be a challenge.

Denise mentioned Vicki Van Damme from PASSHQ doing a lot of work to provide the data needed to present to the Virtual Chapters meeting.

14. **Question (Craig Purnell):** Craig asked the board why the fiscal year 2013 financial statements had not been posted and why the Board meeting minutes for July, August and September were not posted.

Douglas replied that the tax auditing is just being finalized for the fiscal year statements. They will be posted as soon as that is complete and they are usually available by November. The board understands that more transparency for getting meeting minutes posted is a valid community ask. We have really tightened the timeline on getting that information out. Douglas wanted to applaud the Board and HQ at getting the minutes up in a timelier manner. Douglas would follow up to be sure the minutes for July, August and September are posted.

15. **Question (Andy Leonard):** Andy understands the budget is huge and complex for PASS and many community members have managed budgets that have been far larger but what PASS publishes for a budget is confusing and he can't quite understand it. He believes there should be a 4 or 5 line summary.

Douglas acknowledged the question. Although he did take a few minutes in the keynote to talk about the path we have been on in the budgeting process, we haven't added items that make it more digestible and accessible for the community. He will make the ask that this be done going forward.

16. **Question (Andy Warren):** Andy asked the board to clarify if Rick Bolesta and Neil Buchwalter from CA are leaving the board at the end of this year?

Rick clarified that he and Neil Buchwalter have been on the Board for close to 14 years and when they first joined the board CA was very much involved in the marketing of database management products through PASS. Over time CA and PASS have grown strategically in different directions. When the overall investment CA is contributing to PASS was reviewed it was not at the level that Neil and Rick felt comfortable with for ensuring a voice at the table for the future direction of PASS. Rick appreciates all the

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time he spent on the board and explained that he and Neil are leaving due to CA technologies growth outside of Microsoft.

Follow Up (Andy Warren): What's going to happen with Rick and Neil off the board?

Bill said he was unsure at this time and that the board just received notification from CA so are just starting to think this through. Nothing will happen before Jan 1, 2014 and it's something for the future board to consider. Bill hesitates to speculate or consider options at this time.

Douglas commented that there are some governance changes that have to happen as this affects the Bylaws but some due diligence is required first.

17. **Question (Andy Warren):** When the SQLRally was dropped in the US, the reason he heard was because it lost money. He has heard since then that not be the case. Is this true? To what extent and can we reopen that discussion? Lastly how is SQL Rally doing internationally?

Bill stated that one of the reasons the board hesitates to publish preliminary financial information is because they are not always accurate. SQLRally was marginally profitable. The board may revisit it for the July budget cycle.

Douglas noted that there are concerns about reintroducing the SQLRally model in the North American market considering the growth and size of SQLSaturday events as well as PASS Summit. Another comment on the financial aspect is that PASS does not make it a practice to create separate and concise Profit & Loss statement for a given event as there is a lot of overlap of shared resources that make it difficult to allocate costs.

Follow Up (Andy Warren): Andy felt the decision was based publically purely on financial results.

Denise commented that this is the narrative that has been generally understood in the community and the onus is on the board for not communicating very clearly. It is the short hand version of events. The decision to not move forward with the model in FY201 3 and FY2014 was about resourcing and how PASS was going to execute effectively the overall organizational goals.

18. **Question (Andy Warren):** Andy asked if the board understood that SQLSaturday events are a fundraiser and a membership drive for local Chapters and could the Board please look into legal use by the Chapters to access all registrant contact information.

Bill said he would have the board look into it.

Bill Graziano thanked everyone on the Board for their dedication and hard work. Bill also recognized the people from HQ for dedicating their long hours of 8 hours a day/40 hours a week and sometimes more. Bill asked the HQ attendees to stand up thanked Judy Christianson for coordinating all the HQ staff and putting on all the events at Summit and putting on a fantastic event. Bill thanked the audience for attending and is looking forward to seeing everyone next year in Seattle.

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