

Chief of Staff Association hosts two former White House chiefs of staff for expert discussion on leadership

The Chief of Staff Association welcomed Denis McDonough (Obama) and Joshua Bolton (W. Bush) to discuss the unique demands of leadership and process in the White House. Emmy Award-winning documentarian Chris Whipple moderated.



Washington, D.C, District of Columbia Sep 17, 2025 ([Issuewire.com](https://www.issuewire.com)) - The Chief of Staff Association, the global peak body for connecting and developing chiefs of staff across all industries and sectors worldwide, recently convened world-leading experts to examine best practices for the chief of staff profession.

The inaugural event welcomed Joshua Bolton, White House Chief of Staff to President George W. Bush; Denis McDonough, White House Chief of Staff to President Barack Obama; and moderator Chris Whipple, Emmy Award-winning Discovery Channel documentarian and New York Times bestselling author of *The Gatekeepers: How White House Chiefs of Staff Define Every Presidency*.

[Download the powerful 15 Top Takeaways](#) of the event to empower C-Suite leaders from the Oval Office to the corner office.

'Our community learns from leaders who have managed the most complex challenges on earth,' said Trent Smyth, Chief Executive Officer of the Chief of Staff Association. 'Examining the frameworks, stakeholders, and values of each decision point at this level helps us raise the standard of leadership, strategy, and alignment across all sectors.'

The public event and reception were held at the stunning Towers of Rosslyn along the Potomac River. Overlooking the DC cityscape, attendees gained direct access to proven methods for leadership synchronization, organizational alignment, strategy execution, and decision-making at the highest levels.

Why it matters to executives

Modern organizations need disciplined decision-making, trusted leadership support, and masterful execution. This forum translated White House operating rigor into actionable roadmaps for corporate and scale-up leaders, showcasing how a high-functioning chief of staff drives clarity, alignment, and results.

Top takeaway teasers from the briefing

Several of the key takeaways from the evening included robust discussions on: Defining the role; Protecting time and energy; Sending up only consequential decisions; Achieving with follow-through; and Anticipating versus reacting. [Read more on the 15 Top Takeaways.](#)

'This event reflects the extraordinary access and expert methods our community receives year-round,' shared Drew Davis, Senior Vice President at the Chief of Staff Association. 'Every day I see the CSA community help chiefs of staff advance strategy, leadership, and collaboration. Our [Certified Chief of Staff®](#) program sharpens their decision-making and executive support, and builds mastery around aligning teams and increasing efficiency.'

The Chief of Staff Association is already planning to continue this leadership series next year, and extends appreciation to several corporate partners for their support of this event, including AiPi Solutions, Beacon Capital, Jones Lang LaSalle, Talent Acquisition Strategies, and Vectigo.



Media Contact

The Chief of Staff Association

*****@csa.org

60 Madison Avenue (Level 9), New York, NY 10010

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