

Association Insights: Member Engagement

Problem/Opportunity

Associations of all types see member engagement as a key strategy to increase member value, boost revenues, encourage volunteerism and develop new leaders.

What's Changing & Why

Association leaders view member engagement as a priority for different reasons:

- A growing sense that what differentiates associations from other sources of low cost and even free knowledge and services is relationships and a feeling of community.
- Evidence that engaged members are more likely to renew their membership and buy more products and services.
- An aging volunteer cohort with too few new volunteers to do the work of the association.
- Increasing member preference for short-term, flexible and meaningful volunteer opportunities.
- Greater capacity to track and analyze member behavior using member data/customer relationship management systems.

Solutions & Options

1. Use a state of the art membership management system that can track and parse individual member data in meaningful ways.
2. Define and use a metric that monitors member engagement collectively for the association and at the individual or company member level. These key performance indicators should be tied to the association's strategic goals.
3. Establish a more transparent and open system for recruiting volunteers that features different levels and types of volunteer commitment. Include microvolunteering or ad hoc volunteering opportunities—short-term tasks that can be done individually or with others.
4. Use social media and online communities to engage people outside of meetings or when they are unable to attend them.

Resources

10 Lessons for Cultivating Member Commitment. James Dalton and Monica Dignam. 2012, ASAE Foundation Research Series.

Maximum Engagement. C. David Gammel, CAE. 2011, ASAE: The Center for Association Leadership.

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