

2024

MEMBERSHIP MARKETING BENCHMARKING REPORT

16TH EDITION

SUPERVISED BY:

Tony Rossell
Senior Vice President

Adina Wasserman, PhD
Research Director











Elisa Joseph Anders, DCMP
Senior Account Director

McKay Wright, PhD
Market Research Analyst

Jana Darling, DCMP
Vice President, Client Services



THE SECTIONS
INCLUDED IN
THIS REPORT ARE:

12	 SECTION 1 Association Statistics
22	 SECTION 2 Value Proposition
25	 SECTION 3 Member Recruitment
34	 SECTION 4 Member Engagement
39	 SECTION 5 Member Renewal and Reinstatement
50	 SECTION 6 Innovation
59	 SECTION 7 Dues
62	 SECTION 8 Marketing Your Association
74	 SECTION 9 Association Demographics
78	 SECTION 10 Words of Wisdom

Introduction

SURVEY OBJECTIVE

For 16 consecutive years, MGI has conducted its annual Membership Marketing Benchmarking Survey. Our report highlights strategies and tactics membership organizations most often use, those they consider most effective for various stages of the membership lifecycle, and how these strategies and tactics correlate to membership growth and development.

Each year, we review the questions from the preceding survey to maximize the report's content relevancy. When evaluating the usefulness and success of questions, we determine which questions to remove, add, or maintain. In the current edition of this report, we expanded questions in a few areas. As artificial intelligence (AI) has become an ever-growing presence in marketing, we introduced questions pertaining to its use. This survey also included questions about how associations maintain their knowledge about their membership through research. We also selectively updated answer choices offered as the technology used by associations for their marketing efforts continues to evolve.

METHODOLOGY

The 2024 Membership Marketing Benchmarking Survey was conducted online. It launched on January 4, 2024, and remained open until February 12, 2024.

Email invitations were sent to 48,592 association professionals. A total of 584 individuals fully completed the survey, and 220 individuals partially completed it, totaling 804 participants. From these 804 responses, 696 unique associations form the basis for this report.

REPORT LAYOUT

The data in this report are segmented by type of association: Individual Membership Organization (IMO), Trade Association (Trade), or Combination Association (Combination) defined as an association with both individual and organizational members. A total segment (Total) is included in every chart and table to show data representative of all association types.

Our Words of Wisdom section contains verbatim insights and recommendations shared by survey respondents.



The MGI Membership Marketing Benchmarking Report Team



Tony Rossell

Senior Vice President
703.706.0360
Tony@
MarketingGeneral.com

For over three decades, Tony has consulted with hundreds of associations to help them achieve their membership growth goals and mission through better strategy, research, and marketing.

A frequent writer and speaker, Tony recently published a book, *Membership Recruitment: How to Grow Recurring Revenue, Reach New Markets, and Advance Your Mission*, that offers a practical guide to help membership professionals. He is the past chair of the ASAE Membership Council.

In his work at MGI, Tony launched the annual *Membership Marketing Benchmarking Report* and developed the membership framework he calls the "Membership Lifecycle."



Adina W. Wasserman, PhD

Research Director
703.706.0373
AWasserman@
MarketingGeneral.com

Working in research for over 20 years, Dr. Wasserman brings a wide range of expertise in both qualitative and quantitative methodologies. Her work with associations provides insights in a multitude of areas including determining value proposition and member needs, evaluating membership models and pricing, and uncovering perceptions and preferences. She has conducted research on a global scale, and is adept at translating research findings into actionable insights.

Adina oversees the operations of the Research Department. She has overseen the annual *Membership Marketing Benchmarking Report* since its inception.



Elisa Joseph Anders, DCMP

Senior Account Director
703.706.0339
EMJoseph@
MarketingGeneral.com

A results-driven marketing and strategy expert, Elisa has a strong track record of creating and building member, customer, and donor bases. Elisa brings her clients over 30 years of marketing, management, and consulting experience in the nonprofit and for-profit sectors.

During her 11 years with MGI, she has helped clients with memberships ranging from 2,000 to over 280,000 build successful, high-performance marketing programs to drive dues and non-dues revenue growth.

Elisa serves on ASAE's Membership Professionals Advisory Council and speaks internationally about membership marketing best practices.



McKay Wright, PhD

Market Research Analyst
703.706.0378
MWright@
MarketingGeneral.com

Dr. Wright is a trained cognitive psychologist with a passion for using data to answer real-world questions. McKay has over seven years of experience leading projects, including nationally-funded grant projects, from conception to completion.

Using their expertise in mixed-methods research, experimental design, and data analysis, McKay has a strong track record of delivering insights into human behavior and cognition.



Jana Darling, DCMP

Vice President, Client Services
703.706.0349
JDarling@
MarketingGeneral.com

Results-oriented and data-driven, Jana is a high-impact strategist who brings a proven record of success in guiding the member journey across a diverse portfolio of clients.

Specializing in the strategic management and execution of integrated marketing campaigns for over 15 years, Jana has built a track record of success on both sides of the association/agency partnership. Focused on collaboration and relationship-building, Jana has developed marketing programs for her clients that have generated over 100,000 new members and millions of dollars in dues and non-dues revenue.

Marketing General Incorporated is the nation's largest marketing agency working exclusively with membership associations. For 45 years, MGI has helped hundreds of associations and relationship-based organizations increase their membership, improve retention, enhance member engagement, grow revenue, and gain new insights through market research and analysis. Additional information can be found at MarketingGeneral.com or by contacting us at 703.739.1000.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

“Don’t stop believin’
Hold on to that feelin’¹”

Our 2024 Membership Marketing Benchmarking Report shows that associations are continuing to rebound from the challenges of the past few years and are steadily expanding their membership.

Perhaps one of the most telling signs of this renewed stability in association membership programs is that only 21% of the nearly 700 individual, trade, and combination associations that participated in our research report membership declines — the lowest percentage in the 16-year history of this report. Additionally, 31% of associations indicate no change in their membership counts, the highest percentage reported since 2009. Together, these two findings paint a picture of steadiness in the aftermath of the pandemic.

¹Written by: Jonathan Cain, Neal Schon, Steve Perry.
© Lacey Boulevard Music and Weed High Nightmare Music.



MEMBERSHIP CHANGE IN PAST YEAR				
	Total (n = 695)	IMO (n = 281)	Trade (n = 229)	Combination (n = 185)
⊕ Increased	47%	50%	42%	51%
⊖ Decreased	21%	24%	20%	17%
⊞ Remained the same	31%	25%	37%	30%
❓ Not sure	2%	1%	1%	2%

However, this stability does not mean that membership programs are not advancing. Rather, it is serving as a foundation for continued expansion. Nearly half of the respondents (47%) say their membership counts grew this past year. Furthermore, 49% of respondents report growth in total membership over the past five years, versus 46% in our 2023 report and 41% in our 2022 report.

What are the drivers of these positive results? Our benchmarking report explores the practices and characteristics of associations that correlate with membership growth, while also identifying the challenges that impede growth. The analyses of our 2024 data provide insight into five association practices associated with membership growth. These membership drivers include providing value, adding new members, engaging in continuous innovation, reaching emerging generations, and increasing member engagement.

Year after year, value appears as one of the best predictors of membership growth.



PROVIDING VALUE



Associations reporting membership gains are more likely to say that their association has a very compelling or compelling value proposition.

Year after year, value appears as one of the best predictors of membership growth. The good news is that associations report positive trends in the value that they provide to members. 58% of associations describe their value proposition as very compelling or compelling, up from 51% reported in 2023.

Additionally, associations that report gains in their one- and five-year membership counts, as well as increases in overall renewal rates, are significantly more likely to believe their value proposition is very compelling or compelling to members. These findings underscore the power of a strong value proposition in driving membership growth.

Conversely, associations with declines in membership levels over the past year and the past five years, and declines in overall renewal rates, are significantly more likely to indicate that their value proposition is not very compelling or not at all compelling. These associations are also significantly more likely to have overall renewal rates below 80% and first-year renewal rates below 60%. In fact, two-thirds of association executives indicate that prospects do not join because they do not see value in the membership (66%, up from 60% reported in 2023).

The most common reason association executives give for not having a more compelling member value proposition is not that their association does not provide value but because they have challenges in effectively articulating it (48%, up from 45% reported in 2023). Renewal rates provide compelling evidence that many associations deliver exceptional value to their members. Our data show that median renewal rates remain steady at 85%, indicating that members recognize the value and are willing to invest in maintaining their memberships.

So, the issue for associations is how to find ways to better understand and communicate their value. Our data suggest that many associations turn to market research to address this challenge.

Conversely, associations with declines in membership levels over the past year and the past five years, and declines in overall renewal rates, are significantly more likely to indicate that their value proposition is not very compelling or not at all compelling.

DOES YOUR ASSOCIATION CONDUCT RESEARCH TO BETTER UNDERSTAND YOUR MEMBERS, LAPSED MEMBERS, OR PROSPECTIVE MEMBERS?

Associations that conduct member research regularly are more likely to report membership growth.

Our data show that 38% of associations conduct member research annually, and 29% conduct member research at an even greater frequency. Additionally, nearly one-quarter of associations conduct member research every two years (22%). The use of research positively correlates with encouraging membership numbers. Associations reporting increases in their five-year membership numbers are more likely to conduct regular member surveys than those reporting declines.

Member research can significantly influence how an association communicates its value proposition. More than half of associations (53%) that conduct member research say that doing so has helped them articulate their value proposition more effectively, and 41% say that it has prompted the addition of new products and services to better serve members.

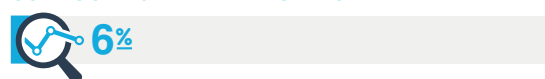
YES, WE CONDUCT MEMBER RESEARCH REGULARLY



YES, BUT WE DO NOT HAVE A SET SCHEDULE FOR CONDUCTING MEMBER RESEARCH



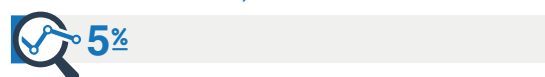
YES, WE JUST STARTED CONDUCTING MEMBER RESEARCH



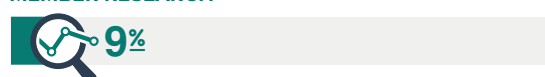
NO, BUT WE ARE PLANNING TO CONDUCT MEMBER RESEARCH



WE USED TO CONDUCT MEMBER RESEARCH REGULARLY, BUT HAVE STOPPED



NO, WE DO NOT CONDUCT MEMBER RESEARCH



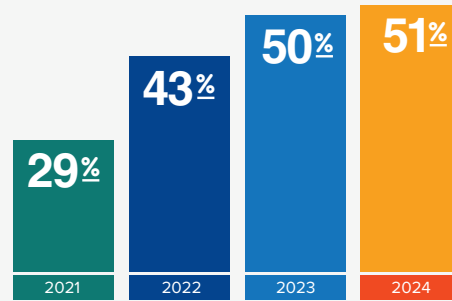
(n = 519)



ADDING NEW MEMBERS

ASSOCIATIONS REPORTING AN INCREASE IN NEW MEMBER ACQUISITIONS IN THE PAST YEAR

New member growth is driving overall membership growth.

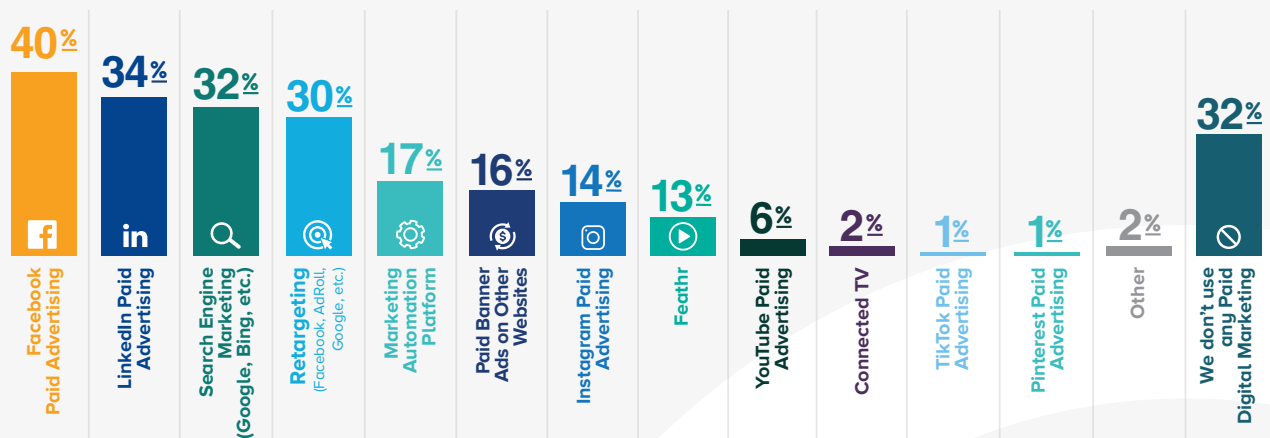


Providing value to attract and retain members remains the foundation of growing membership, but effective recruiting of new members remains critical. The positive news is that half of associations report increases in new member acquisition over the past year (51%, on par with 50% reported in 2023 and up from 43% reported in 2022).

Putting new members at the top of the funnel continues to drive total membership growth. Associations reporting increases in new members are significantly more likely to report increases in total membership over the past year and the past five years. Similarly, associations reporting declines in new members over the past year are more likely to report decreases in their overall membership numbers over the past year and the past five years.

This year's data amplify some aspects of why members decide to join an association. The top reason members join an association is to network with others in their chosen profession (67%, up from 64% reported in 2023). Continuing education (42%, up from 39% reported in 2023) and accessing specialized and current information (32%, up from 29% reported in 2023) are also top reasons.

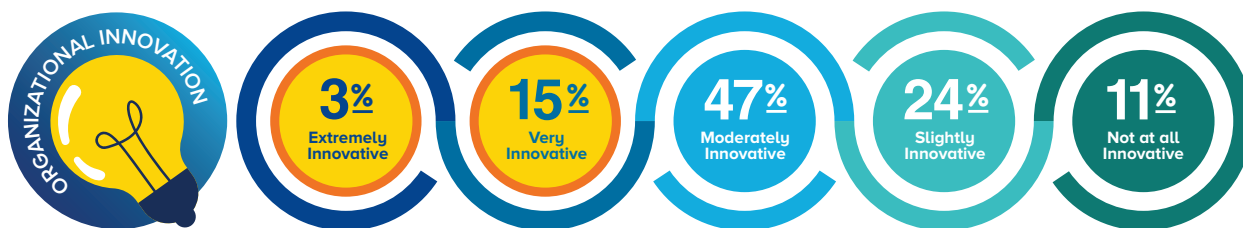
The channels for reaching and inviting prospects to join are evolving. One method that shows promise in supporting recruitment efforts is paid digital marketing. The landscape of digital marketing tools continues to grow, with Facebook and LinkedIn advertising remaining prevalent. Search engine marketing has seen a slight increase in adoption (32%, up from 30% reported in 2023).



In particular, a higher percentage of individual membership organizations (IMOs) report using paid digital advertising (49%, up from 39% reported in 2023) and consider paid digital advertising a highly effective recruitment tool (21%, on par with 20% reported in 2023). Results also show that associations reporting increases in membership over the past year and the past five years consider paid digital advertising to be one of their most effective methods for gaining new members.



ENGAGING IN CONTINUOUS INNOVATION



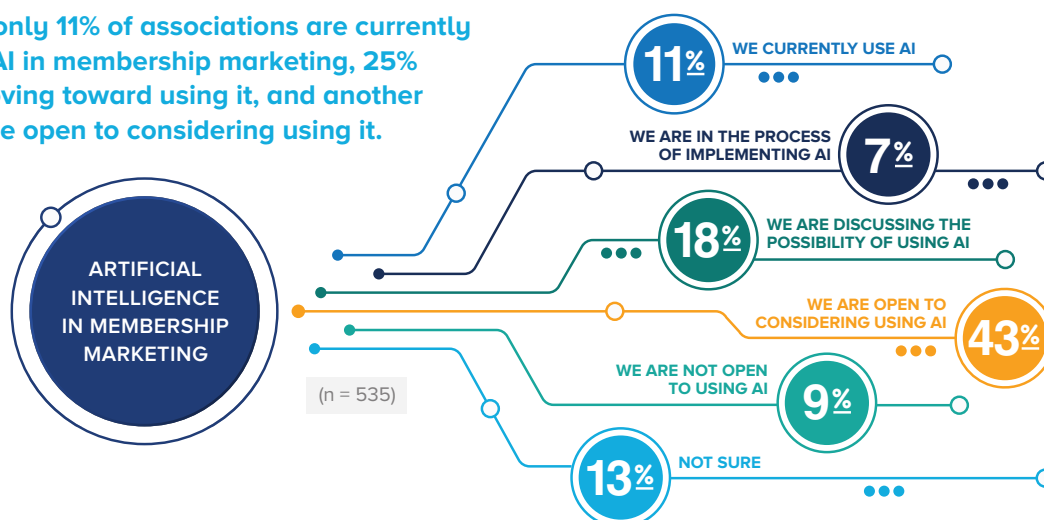
Associations that consider their organization extremely or very innovative are more likely to report membership growth.

Innovation remains a focal point for associations and positively correlates with membership growth. Associations that consider their organization extremely or very innovative are more likely to report increases in their one-year and five-year membership levels and new member acquisition. They are also significantly more likely to report increases in member renewals.

However, we note a downward trend in associations identifying as innovative. For example, 18% of associations consider their organization extremely or very innovative (down from 25% reported in 2023 and 30% reported in 2022). Given that the current percentage aligns with pre-pandemic levels (20% reported at the beginning of 2020 and 13% reported in 2019), one possibility is that this trend reflects the need to consolidate the products and services introduced during the pandemic.

One new area of innovation we investigated this year is how associations adopt and use artificial intelligence (AI).

While only 11% of associations are currently using AI in membership marketing, 25% are moving toward using it, and another 43% are open to considering using it.



One new area of innovation we investigated this year is how associations adopt and use artificial intelligence (AI). 18% of associations are currently using or are in the process of implementing AI for membership marketing, and another 18% are discussing the possibility of using AI. Nearly half of association executives (43%) say they are open to considering the use of AI in their membership marketing plans.

Of the associations considering using AI for membership marketing, more than half are exploring using it for content generation (76%), data analysis (64%), or real-time personalization (54%). Of the 9% of associations not open to using AI for membership marketing, 49% indicate that their staff does not have the expertise or bandwidth for this task.

Notably, several participants highlighted AI efforts as the most innovative initiative their association is working on. One IMO participant told us they are “currently looking at using AI to increase staff efficiency.” Another said they are “leveraging AI to assist in building products and producing copy.”

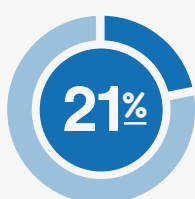


REACHING EMERGING GENERATIONS

(n = 226) / IMO Only



Generation Z
(born 1996 or later)



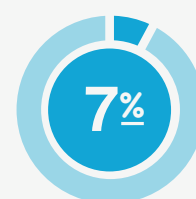
Millennial
(born 1980 to 1995)



Generation X
(born 1965 to 1979)



Baby Boomers
(born 1946 to 1964)



**Born 1945
or earlier**

One of the benefits of our ongoing benchmarking research is the ability to evaluate changes over time. One key area we assess is the participation of different generations in membership. We often hear considerable concern that the younger generations are not interested in membership. However, our findings report a different story as we continue to see associations reporting a gradual generational shift. Until recently, Baby Boomers have made up the lion's share of IMO membership. Since the previous year's report, however, the representation of Gen-Xers in IMO membership rivals that of Baby Boomers (31% and 32%, respectively, reported in 2023).

In this year's data, we see further increases in Gen-Z membership (11%, up from 9% reported in 2023 and 6% reported in 2022) and a decline in Baby Boomers and Gen-Xers (29% and 26%, respectively, down from the 32% and 31% reported in 2023). This shift is likely due to younger generations entering the workforce while Baby Boomers are nearing or entering retirement. Interestingly, millennials have remained constant since 2020, at 21%. Traditionally, our benchmarking research has found a positive correlation between overall membership numbers and generational makeup of membership, with associations reporting membership growth also reporting higher proportions of younger members.

The ability to reach younger members may be supported by some of the engagement practices that associations have developed. In response to the question of how member participation has changed within the past year, two areas that serve younger members rise to the top. Young professional programs continue to be one of the top services seeing increased participation, with 56% of associations reporting more engagement (up from 52% reported in 2023). Additionally, 55% of associations report increases in their public social media participation (up from 50% reported in 2023). These generational shifts are vital for associations to continue to thrive in the future.

Associations are using various strategies to reach and engage younger generations effectively. This shift in strategies is exemplified in the words of an IMO respondent, who told us, “We've greatly expanded our emerging professionals' program and are actively reaching out to community colleges and universities to grow our student and recent graduate participation.”

Enhanced engagement not only boosts participation and non-dues revenue

but also significantly contributes to membership growth and retention.



INCREASING ENGAGEMENT



62%

report increased attendance at their in-person conference.

Increasing member engagement is a powerful catalyst for driving membership growth and strengthening associations.

Let's look at a few areas where engagement has increased over the past year. The continuing rebound of in-person conference attendance has further supported association budgets, with 62% of associations reporting increases in attendance (up from 58% reported in 2023 and 26% reported in 2022). This upward trend in attendance and participation also applies to other association activities. For example, 53% of associations report an increase in professional development registrations (up from 44% reported in 2023), and 56% of associations saw an increase in the acquisition and maintenance of certifications (up from 47% reported in 2023).

Our data show that these increases in member engagement positively correlate with membership growth. Associations that report increases in in-person conference attendance, professional development registrations, and certifications are more likely to report one-year and five-year membership growth and increases in new member counts and overall renewal rate in the past year.

Enhanced engagement not only boosts participation and non-dues revenue but also significantly contributes to membership growth and retention.

Associations that report increases in in-person conference attendance, professional development registrations, and certifications are more likely to report one-year and five-year membership growth, as well as increases in new member counts and overall renewal rates in the past year.



Conclusion

The 2024 Membership Marketing Benchmarking Report highlights associations' resilience and continuing evolution as they serve their members.

Despite past challenges, this year's research highlights the remarkable ability of associations to rebound and expand their membership bases.

The data underscore a significant shift toward stability, with only 21% of associations reporting membership declines — a historic low. Furthermore, nearly half of respondents indicate growth in overall membership numbers. Key drivers of this growth include presenting a compelling value proposition, using effective new member acquisition strategies, continuously innovating, reaching emerging generations, and prioritizing initiatives that increase member engagement. Associations are also increasingly leveraging market research to better understand and communicate their value, while embracing digital marketing tools and exploring emerging technologies like artificial intelligence. Moreover, this year's report underscores the importance of adapting engagement practices to cater to evolving demographic trends, particularly the rising influence of younger generations. As associations navigate these dynamics, their ability to innovate, provide value, and adapt to changing member needs will remain critical for sustaining growth and relevance in the years ahead.





Association Statistics

Associations have seen a steady recovery from membership declines seen during the first year of the pandemic. Nearly half of associations report membership growth over the past year, and only 21% report declines, the lowest in the report's history. Notably, associations reporting growth are more likely to have larger budgets and higher renewal rates. We also observe a generational shift in association demographics, with increases in Gen-Z membership and declines in Baby Boomers.



HOW HAS YOUR MEMBERSHIP CHANGED IN THE PAST ONE YEAR PERIOD?

MEMBERSHIP CHANGE IN PAST YEAR (TREND)				
	Increased	Decreased	Remained the same	Not sure
2024	47%	21%	31%	2%
2023	49%	22%	29%	1%
2022	38%	33%	29%	1%
2021	26%	47%	26%	1%
2020	42%	27%	30%	2%
2019	45%	26%	28%	1%
2018	48%	25%	26%	2%
2017	46%	25%	28%	1%
2016	49%	22%	27%	1%
2015	46%	24%	28%	2%
2014	53%	27%	16%	4%
2013	52%	31%	16%	1%
2012	52%	29%	16%	3%
2011	49%	34%	16%	2%
2010	36%	48%	14%	3%
2009	45%	35%	16%	5%



- Associations are holding steady in their recovery from steep declines in membership during the first year of the pandemic as illustrated in the 2021 report. Nearly half of associations report membership growth throughout 2023 (47% versus 49% reported in 2023, 38% in 2022, and 26% in 2021).
- Only 21% of associations report declines in membership, the lowest percentage reported in the 16-year history of this report. Meanwhile, 31% of associations indicate no change in their membership counts. This outcome is the highest percentage reported since 2009, suggesting a possible tapering off from the remarkable expansion seen in the past few years.

MEMBERSHIP CHANGE IN PAST YEAR				
	Total (n = 695)	IMO (n = 281)	Trade (n = 229)	Combination (n = 185)
➕ Increased	47%	50%	42%	51%
➖ Decreased	21%	24%	20%	17%
➡ Remained the same	31%	25%	37%	30%
❓ Not sure	2%	1%	1%	2%

- As mentioned above, 47% of associations report increases in membership throughout 2023. Similar to the trend in the 2023 report, approximately half of the IMOs and combination associations report membership increases (IMO: 50%, on par with 49% reported in 2023; Combination: 51%, down slightly from 53% reported in 2023), and approximately four in ten trade associations report increases in membership over the past year (42%, down slightly from 44% reported in 2023).
- While 31% of associations report no change in membership in 2023, a significantly higher percentage of trade associations report stability in membership compared to IMOs (Trade: 37%, up from 34% reported in 2023 versus IMO: 25%, on par with 24% reported in 2023).
- Associations reporting an increase in membership this past year are significantly more likely to report increases in membership over the past five years, increases in new members, increases in overall renewal rates, an operating budget of at least \$15 million, and annual marketing budget of \$60,000 or more.
- Alternatively, associations reporting declines in their membership counts during the past year are more likely to report overall renewal rates below 80%, first-year member renewal rates below 60%, decreases in membership over the past five years, decreases in new members, and decreases in overall renewal rates.



PERCENTAGE INCREASE IN MEMBERSHIP OVER PAST YEAR				
	Total (n = 313)	IMO (n = 133)	Trade (n = 88)	Combination (n = 92)
÷ Mean % Increased*	10%	9%	12%	8%
ⓘ Median % Increased	5%	5%	5%	6%
+ Increased up to 5%	52%	54%	52%	49%
+ Increased 6% to 10%	24%	24%	26%	23%
+ Increased 11% to 50%	22%	21%	18%	28%
+ Increased more than 50%	1%	1%	3%	0%

*Means are influenced by high and low numbers in the data set.

- Associations reporting increases in membership for 2023 reveal a median increase of 5% (down slightly from 7% reported in 2023).
- A majority of associations report gains of up to 5% (52%, up from 46% reported in 2023). 24% of associations report increases of 6% to 10% (down from 28% reported in 2023), and 22% report increases of 11% to 50% (down from 24% reported in 2023).
- IMO and trade associations are less likely than combination associations to report growth of over 10%. In fact, substantially fewer trade associations reported gains of over 10% compared to findings reported in 2023 (21%, down from 32% reported in 2023).
- A significantly higher proportion of associations reporting growth in their five-year membership numbers, new member acquisition, and overall renewals report that their membership has increased by 11% to 50%.

PERCENTAGE DECREASE IN MEMBERSHIP OVER PAST YEAR				
	Total (n = 135)	IMO (n = 64)	Trade (n = 41)	Combination (n = 30)
÷ Mean % Decreased*	8%	7%	10%	8%
ⓘ Median % Decreased	5%	5%	5%	5%
- Decreased up to 5%	59%	67%	51%	53%
- Decreased 6% to 10%	16%	13%	17%	23%
- Decreased 11% to 50%	24%	20%	32%	23%
- Decreased more than 50%	0%	0%	0%	0%

*Means are influenced by high and low numbers in the data set.

- Similar to results reported in 2023, the median percentage of decline among associations is 5% (down from 6% reported in 2022).
- Of the associations reporting losses in overall membership, a majority report small drops, indicating declines of up to 5% (59%, on par with 58% reported in 2023, up from 44% reported in 2022). The fact that associations are reporting smaller declines is a positive indicator that the effects of the pandemic on membership are receding.
- Comparatively, IMOs are more likely to report losses in the 5% or less range (67%, up from 63% reported in 2023), while combination associations are more likely to report losses in the 6% to 10% range (23%, down from 41% reported in 2023) and trade associations in the 11% to 50% range (32%, up from 16% reported in 2023).



OVER THE PAST FIVE YEARS, HOW HAS THE TOTAL PERCENTAGE OF YOUR MEMBERSHIP CHANGED?

CHANGE IN MEMBERSHIP OVER PAST FIVE YEARS (TREND)				
	Increased	Decreased	Remained the Same	Not Sure
2024	49%	29%	19%	3%
2023	46%	34%	15%	5%
2022	41%	35%	20%	4%
2021	45%	32%	20%	3%
2020	46%	28%	20%	6%
2019	50%	31%	14%	4%
2018	53%	29%	14%	4%
2017	50%	30%	15%	5%
2016	51%	31%	14%	5%
2015	49%	31%	16%	4%
2014	54%	33%	10%	5%
2013	54%	36%	7%	2%
2012	52%	34%	9%	5%
2011	51%	38%	9%	4%
2010	57%	30%	8%	5%
2009	60%	27%	8%	5%

- 2023 represents a continued push upward in five-year membership metrics for associations since before the pandemic, with 49% reporting growth in membership over the past five years (versus 46% reported in 2023 and 41% in 2022). While 29% of associations still report overall declines for their five-year metric, this is down from 34% reported in 2023 and 35% reported in 2022.

- 19% of associations report that membership over the past five years remains relatively unchanged (up from 15% reported in 2023, similar to the high of 20% reported from 2020 through 2022).



CHANGE IN MEMBERSHIP OVER PAST FIVE YEARS				
	Total (n = 636)	IMO (n = 278)	Trade (n = 220)	Combination (n = 138)
+ Increased	49%	48%	46%	55%
- Decreased	29%	30%	29%	27%
= Remained the same	19%	17%	24%	16%
? Not sure	3%	5%	1%	2%

- Combination associations are more likely to report a five-year membership expansion (55%, up from 48% reported in 2023) compared to IMOs and trade organizations.
- Compared to findings reported in 2023, fewer organizations across the board report membership declines, with IMOs having the greatest drop in percentage decrease compared to the 2023 report (30%, down from 38% reported in 2023).
- Associations reporting membership growth over the past year, increases in new members, and increases in overall renewal rates are significantly more likely to also report increases in membership over the past five years.
- Conversely, associations reporting renewals under 80%, declines in membership over the past year, declines in new member acquisition, and declines in renewals are significantly more likely to also report membership drops over the past five years.

PERCENTAGE INCREASE IN MEMBERSHIP OVER PAST FIVE YEARS				
	Total (n = 344)	IMO (n = 141)	Trade (n = 94)	Combination (n = 109)
÷ Mean % Increased*	47%	75%	21%	35%
⏷ Median % Increased	12%	10%	13%	14%
+ Increased up to 5%	29%	28%	27%	33%
+ Increased 6% to 10%	17%	23%	19%	9%
+ Increased 11% to 50%	44%	39%	45%	49%
+ Increased more than 50%	10%	11%	9%	9%

*Means are influenced by high and low numbers in the data set.

- The median growth for associations reporting increases in membership over the past five years is 12%, identical to results reported in 2023. A plurality of associations report growth of 11% to 50% (44%, up from 41% reported in 2023).
- Trade and combination associations have a higher median increase in membership over the past five years compared to IMOs.
- Nearly three in ten associations report increases of up to 5% in their five-year membership (29%), while the majority of associations report five-year membership growth of over 10% (54%, up slightly from 52% reported in 2023).



PERCENTAGE DECREASE IN MEMBERSHIP OVER PAST FIVE YEARS				
	Total (n = 180)	IMO (n = 76)	Trade (n = 57)	Combination (n = 47)
÷ Mean % Decreased*	13%	14%	11%	14%
ⓘ Median % Decreased	9%	9%	7%	10%
➔ Decreased up to 5%	29%	18%	42%	30%
➔ Decreased 6% to 10%	34%	38%	32%	30%
➔ Decreased 11% to 50%	36%	42%	25%	38%
➔ Decreased more than 50%	2%	1%	2%	2%

*Means are influenced by high and low numbers in the data set.

- The median loss for associations reporting five-year membership declines is 9% (similar to 10% reported in 2023, 2022, and 2021). However, the percentages of loss have dropped, with fewer associations losing more than 10% of members over the past five years (38%, compared to 43% reported in 2023).
- Comparatively, trade associations are more likely to report smaller losses (5% or less) while IMOs and combination associations are most likely to report larger declines (over 10%).
- Not surprisingly, associations reporting membership renewals of 80% or higher are significantly more likely to report smaller percentages of declines (5% or less).



IN THE PAST ONE YEAR, HOW HAS YOUR NEW MEMBER ACQUISITION CHANGED?

CHANGE IN NEW MEMBER ACQUISITION OVER PAST YEAR				
	Total (n = 667)	IMO (n = 273)	Trade (n = 215)	Combination (n = 179)
⊕ Increased	51%	51%	50%	52%
➔ Decreased	11%	9%	13%	11%
⊞ Remained the same	31%	29%	34%	29%
❓ Not sure	8%	11%	3%	8%

- Mirroring findings reported in 2023, about half of associations report increases in new member acquisition over the past year (51%, on par with 50% reported in 2023, up from 43% reported in 2022).
- A higher percentage of IMOs report increases in new member acquisition over the past year than the prior year (51%, up from 47% reported in 2023). Substantially fewer IMOs report declines in new members compared to the previous research (9%, down from 14% reported in 2023).
- Associations reporting increases in new members in 2023 are significantly more likely to report increases in membership over the past year and the past five years, and increases in renewals over the past year. Similarly, a significantly higher percentage of associations reporting declines in new members in 2023 also report decreases in their membership numbers over the past year and the past five years, and lower renewal rates than a year earlier.
- Associations reporting stability in new member acquisition are more likely to also report both overall and first-year member renewal rates of 80% or more.



PERCENTAGE INCREASE IN NEW MEMBER ACQUISITION OVER PAST YEAR				
	Total (n = 306)	IMO (n = 120)	Trade (n = 97)	Combination (n = 89)
÷ Mean % Increased*	16%	18%	15%	16%
1 Median % Increased	8%	10%	7%	9%
+ Increased up to 5%	41%	38%	45%	40%
+ Increased 6% to 10%	23%	26%	24%	19%
+ Increased 11% to 50%	30%	30%	26%	35%
+ Increased more than 50%	6%	7%	5%	6%

*Means are influenced by high and low numbers in the data set.

- The median increase for associations reporting gains in new members is 8% (down slightly from 10% reported in 2023).
- 41% of associations report small increases of up to 5% (similar to 40% reported in 2023). Nearly one-quarter of associations report new member gains of 6% to 10% (23%, up slightly from 21% reported in 2023), and one-third report gains of greater than 10% (36%, down from 39% reported in 2023).
- A plurality of associations typically see new member increases of up to 5%, with trade associations most likely to report gains in this range. IMOs and combination associations are more likely than trade associations to indicate new member growth over 10% (IMO: 37% and combination: 41% versus trade: 31%).
- Associations with overall and first-year member renewal rates of 80% or higher are significantly more likely to report modest gains of up to 5% compared to associations with lower renewal rates.

PERCENTAGE DECREASE IN NEW MEMBER ACQUISITION OVER PAST YEAR				
	Total (n = 68)	IMO (n = 22)	Trade (n = 26)	Combination (n = 20)
÷ Mean % Decreased*	16%	13%	20%	13%
1 Median % Decreased	9%	8%	11%	8%
- Decreased up to 5%	38%	41%	35%	40%
- Decreased 6% to 10%	19%	23%	15%	20%
- Decreased 11% to 50%	40%	36%	42%	40%
- Decreased more than 50%	3%	0%	8%	0%

*Means are influenced by high and low numbers in the data set.

- The median percentage of new member decline continues to shrink (9%, down slightly from 10% reported in 2023 and 12% reported in 2022). Nearly four in ten associations with declines in new members report a drop of up to 5% (38%, up from 24% reported in 2023), suggesting the depth of new member declines is lessening. In fact, the percentage of associations reporting losses greater than 10% in new members has dropped (43%, down from 47% reported in 2023).
- IMOs and combination associations report smaller declines, with at least 60% reporting drops up to 10% (IMOs: 64%, up from 51%; combination: 60%, down from 65% reported in 2023), while only half of trade organizations report new member declines up to 10% (50%, down from 53% reported in 2023).



IN THE PAST ONE YEAR, HOW HAS YOUR MEMBER RENEWAL RATE CHANGED?

CHANGE IN MEMBER RENEWAL RATE OVER PAST YEAR				
	Total (n = 656)	IMO (n = 266)	Trade (n = 212)	Combination (n = 178)
⬆ Increased	22%	23%	17%	28%
⬇ Decreased	24%	21%	27%	24%
= Remained the same	46%	46%	51%	41%
? Not sure	8%	9%	5%	8%

- The percentage of associations reporting increases or declines in renewal rates is remarkably similar to past research. 22% of associations report increases in renewal rates (down from 25% reported in 2023), and 24% report decreases in renewal rates (mirroring findings reported in 2023). More associations remain steady in their renewals (46%, on par with 45% reported in 2023 and up from 40% reported in 2022).
- As in the previous research, trade associations are most likely to report no change in their overall renewal rate (51%, mirroring findings reported in 2023).
- Associations reporting an increase in overall membership in the past year and the past five years, and growth in new member acquisition are significantly more likely to also report increases in renewal rates. Not surprisingly, associations indicating declines in one-year and five-year membership counts, drops in new members, and renewal rates below 80% are significantly more likely to report declines in their overall membership renewals.

PERCENTAGE INCREASE IN MEMBER RENEWAL RATE OVER PAST YEAR				
	Total (n = 136)	IMO (n = 56)	Trade (n = 34)	Combination (n = 46)
⬆ Mean % Increased*	7%	6%	5%	9%
⬇ Median % Increased	4%	4%	4%	4%
⬆ Increased up to 5%	66%	71%	71%	57%
⬆ Increased 6% to 10%	18%	16%	24%	17%
⬆ Increased 11% to 50%	15%	13%	6%	24%
⬆ Increased more than 50%	1%	0%	0%	2%

*Means are influenced by high or low numbers in the data set.

- The median increase in the overall renewal rate is 4% (down slightly from 5% reported in 2023). Compared to findings reported in 2023, a greater percentage of associations report increases in their renewal rate up to 5% (66%, up from 62% reported in 2023), mostly due to IMOs and trade associations reporting increases in this range (71% each, up from 61% and 64%, respectively).
- Additionally, there is a substantial drop in the percentage of associations reporting renewal rates that increased by more than 50% (1%, down from 9% reported in 2023).
- The percentage of trade associations reporting increases in renewal rates in the 6% to 10% range has more than doubled (24%, up from 10% reported in 2023), while the number of combination associations reporting renewal gains of 11% to 50% has doubled as well (24%, up from 12% reported in 2023).



PERCENTAGE DECREASE IN MEMBER RENEWAL RATE OVER PAST YEAR				
	Total (n = 138)	IMO (n = 49)	Trade (n = 51)	Combination (n = 38)
÷ Mean % Decreased*	7%	8%	7%	8%
ⓘ Median % Decreased	5%	5%	4%	4%
➔ Decreased up to 5%	63%	61%	65%	63%
➔ Decreased 6% to 10%	20%	20%	20%	21%
➔ Decreased 11% to 50%	17%	18%	16%	16%
➔ Decreased more than 50%	0%	0%	0%	0%

*Means are influenced by high or low numbers in the data set.

- As observed since 2021, the median decline in membership renewals is 5%. Similarly, the majority of associations reporting drops in renewals show a smaller falloff of 5% or less (63%, up from 61% reported in 2023 and up from 56% reported in 2022), suggesting that the intensity of waning renewals is shrinking. None of the associations lost more than 50% of their renewals.
- Compared to findings reported in 2023, where IMOs were more likely than trade or combination associations to lose over 10% in renewal rate, the association types are more or less aligned now in the percentage of declines in their renewals.



WHAT IS YOUR OVERALL MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL RATE?

OVERALL MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL RATE				
	Total (n = 513)	IMO (n = 195)	Trade (n = 177)	Combination (n = 141)
÷ Mean	83%	79%	89%	81%
ⓘ Median	85%	82%	90%	82%
➔ Less than 80%	27%	40%	9%	33%
➔ 80% or more	73%	60%	92%	67%

- Similar to results since those reported in 2020, the median membership renewal rate is 85%, and remains relatively unchanged for each type of association.
- Trade associations have the highest median renewal rate (90%, mirroring findings reported in 2023).
- 73% of associations now report renewal rates of 80% or higher (up from 71% reported in 2023 and 64% reported in 2022).
- Trade and combination associations are more likely than IMOs to report renewal rates at or above 80%.
- Associations reporting increases in overall membership in the past year and the past five years are significantly more likely to report renewal rates of 80% or above.



WHAT IS YOUR RENEWAL RATE FOR FIRST-YEAR MEMBERS?

RENEWAL RATE FOR FIRST-YEAR MEMBERS				
	Total (n = 333)	IMO (n = 119)	Trade (n = 126)	Combination (n = 88)
÷ Mean	72%	63%	82%	70%
ⓘ Median	75%	64%	85%	74%
⏪ Less than 60%	24%	39%	10%	25%
⏮ 60% - 79%	29%	31%	25%	34%
⏩ 80% or higher	46%	31%	65%	41%

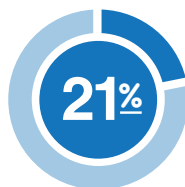
- As in the 2023 research, the median renewal rate for first-year members is 75% (down from 78% reported in 2022). While 46% of associations overall report first-year member renewals at 80% or higher (up from 43% reported in 2023), IMOs are most likely to report first-year renewal rates of less than 60%, although at a much smaller percentage compared to the previous research (39%, down from 46% reported in 2023).
- Consequently, a higher percentage of IMOs report first-year renewal rates between 60% and 79% compared to the previous research (31%, up from 21% reported in 2023). Trade associations are most likely to report first-year renewal rates at or above 80% (65%, up from 59% reported in 2023), while a plurality of combination associations report renewal rates for first-year members at 80% or higher (41%, up from 37% reported in 2023).
- Associations reporting overall renewal rates at or above 80% are significantly more likely to also report first-year member renewal rates of over 80%. Smaller IMOs (up to 1,000 members) have significantly higher first-year member renewal rates compared to their larger counterparts. Associations with smaller operating budgets (under \$5 million) have significantly higher first-year member renewal rates as well.



PLEASE INDICATE WHAT PERCENTAGE OF YOUR MEMBERSHIP BELONGS TO EACH OF THE FOLLOWING GENERATION GROUPS.



Generation Z
(born 1996 or later)



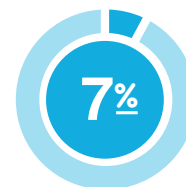
Millennial
(born 1980 to 1995)



Generation X
(born 1965 to 1979)



Baby Boomers
(born 1946 to 1964)



**Born 1945
or earlier**

(n = 226) / IMO Only

- We often hear considerable concern that the younger generations are not interested in membership organizations. However, the findings report a different story as we continue to see a generational shift. In previous research, Baby Boomers made up the lion's share of the IMO membership until results reported in 2023, when the percentage of Gen-Xers rivaled that of Baby Boomers (31% and 32%, respectively).
- Now, we see more growth in the Gen-Z membership (11%, up from 9% reported in 2023 and 6% reported in 2022) and declines in Baby Boomers and Gen-Xers (29% and 26%, respectively). Millennials, interestingly, have remained constant (21%, as reported since 2020).



Value Proposition

There has been a positive shift in association leaders' perceptions of their member value propositions. Trade associations are significantly more likely to rate their value propositions as compelling compared to IMOs and combination associations. Associations with increases in membership and renewal rates are more likely to view their value proposition positively. At the same time, those experiencing declines are more likely to find their value proposition less compelling, often citing challenges in articulating it effectively or offering sufficient benefits.

HOW COMPELLING IS YOUR ASSOCIATION'S VALUE PROPOSITION TO MEMBERS?



(n = 603)

Associations reporting membership gains are more likely to say that their association has a very compelling or compelling value proposition.

- Compared to the previous research, there is a positive shift in how compelling associations consider their value proposition. 58% of associations believe their value proposition statement is compelling or very compelling (up from 51% reported in 2023 and 53% reported in 2022).
- 45% of associations believe their value proposition is compelling (up from 38% reported in 2023), and 32% of associations believe it is somewhat compelling (down from 40% reported in 2023).



Associations that believe their member value proposition is very compelling or compelling are significantly more likely to report one-year and five-year membership growth and increases in overall renewal rate.

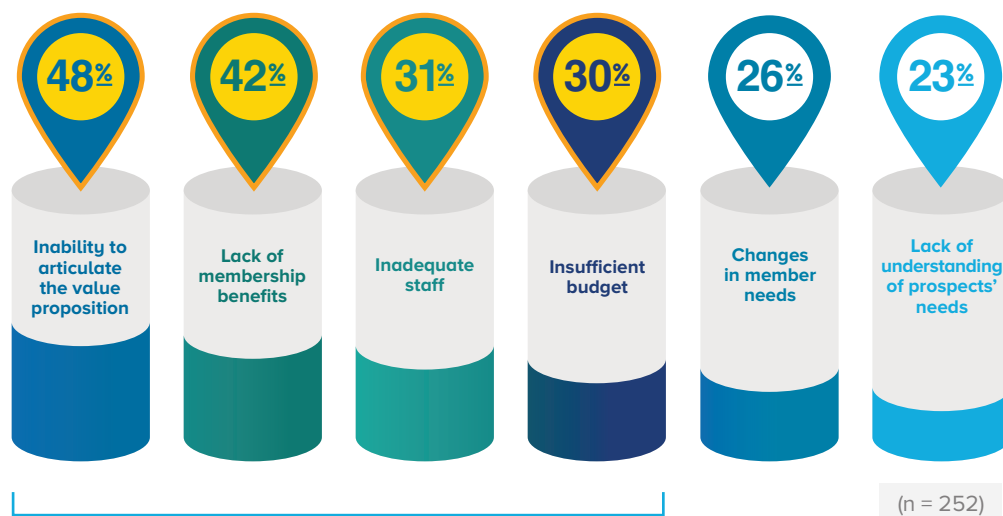
IS VALUE PROPOSITION COMPELLING?				
	Total (n = 603)	IMO (n = 225)	Trade (n = 208)	Combination (n = 170)
⬆ Very compelling	13%	10%	15%	13%
↻ Compelling	45%	39%	54%	41%
➡ Somewhat compelling	32%	37%	26%	34%
⬇ Not very compelling	10%	13%	4%	12%
⬇ Not at all compelling	<1%	0%	0%	1%

- As reported in 2023, trade associations are significantly more likely to indicate their value proposition is compelling (54%, up from 48% reported in 2023) compared to IMOs (39%, up from 31% reported in 2023) or combination associations (41%, up from 36% reported in 2023). In fact, a significantly higher proportion of trade associations rate their value proposition as compelling or very compelling compared to IMOs and combination associations (Trade: 69% versus IMOs: 49% and Combination: 54%).
- IMOs and combination associations have fueled the overall increase in associations believing their value proposition is compelling or very compelling this year versus last year. 49% of IMOs and 54% of combination associations indicate their value proposition is compelling or very compelling (versus 40% and 47%, respectively, reported in 2023).
- Associations that believe their member value proposition is very compelling or compelling are significantly more likely to report one-year and five-year membership growth and increases in their overall renewal rate. These associations are also significantly more likely to report overall and first-year member renewal rates of 80% or higher.
- Conversely, associations with declines in membership levels over the past year and the past five years and losses in overall renewals are significantly more likely to indicate the value proposition of the association is not very compelling or not at all compelling. These associations are significantly more likely to also have renewal rates below 80% and first-year renewal rates below 60%.



WHAT PREVENTS YOUR ASSOCIATION FROM OFFERING A MORE COMPELLING MEMBER VALUE PROPOSITION?

Select up to three responses.



Associations that experienced a membership decline are more likely to give these as reasons for preventing a more compelling value proposition.

- The most common reason association executives believe their value proposition is not more compelling is an inability to clearly or effectively articulate it (48%, up from 45% reported in 2023). Other reasons for a less compelling value proposition include an overall lack of membership benefits (42%, up from 36% reported in 2023) and inadequate staff (31%, down from 40% reported in 2023).
- The top two reasons for an unconvincing value proposition do not vary based on association type. However, while trade and combination associations feel inadequate staff leads to a less compelling value proposition, IMO executives are more likely to report that an insufficient budget more often leads to a poorly received value proposition (31%, slightly up from 30% reported in 2023).
- Notably, a much higher percentage of trade associations report a lack of membership benefits prevents them from offering a more compelling value proposition (48%, up from 29% reported in 2023). A much lower percentage of IMOs report this is due to inadequate staff than previously reported (23%, down from 38% reported in 2023).
- Associations reporting deterioration in their five-year membership numbers and new member acquisition numbers are more likely to cite the changes occurring in the industry or profession as reasons the value proposition is not more compelling.

“Our value proposition is not well understood by members and nonmembers alike, and we struggle to differentiate ourselves from other competing organizations.” — IMO



Member Recruitment

Associations find that networking, education, and specialized information are top reasons for joining, with trade associations excelling in specific areas like advocacy support. Challenges in recruitment include a perceived lack of value and brand awareness, particularly for IMOs. Effective recruitment channels include email, association events, and personal sales calls, with personal outreach being particularly effective for trade associations. These insights highlight the importance of understanding member motivations and employing targeted recruitment strategies to attract members effectively.



WHAT DO YOU BELIEVE ARE THE TOP REASONS MEMBERS JOIN YOUR ORGANIZATION?

Select up to three responses.

TOP REASONS MEMBERS JOIN ORGANIZATION					
		Total (n = 571)	IMO (n = 217)	Trade (n = 193)	Combination (n = 161)
TOP 1	Networking with others in the field	67%	60%	71%	70%
TOP 2	Continuing education/ professional certification	42%	54%	32%	39%
TOP 3	Accessing specialized and/or current information	32%	26%	40%	32%
	Learning best practices in their profession	29%	23%	33%	34%
	Supporting advocacy	27%	23%	39%	19%
	Obtaining member discounts	21%	25%	19%	19%
	Advancing their career	19%	27%	8%	21%
	Receiving recognition or prestige by belonging to the association	15%	12%	20%	14%
	Promoting the mission of the association	14%	15%	12%	14%
	Gaining membership through conference/trade show registration	9%	9%	7%	12%
	Membership is compulsory	3%	2%	4%	1%
	Other	8%	7%	6%	11%
	Not sure	<1%	1%	0%	0%

Please see explanations on following page



Members most often join an association to network with others in their chosen profession (67%, up from 64% reported in 2023). This finding is the top reason for all association types, although it is significantly higher for trade and combination associations.

- Echoing prior research, members most often join an association to network with others in their chosen profession (67%, up from 64% reported in 2023). This finding is the top reason for all association types, although it is significantly higher for trade and combination associations.
- Continuing education remains one of the top reasons for joining an association (42%, up from 39% reported in 2023), followed by accessing specialized and/or current information (32%, up from 29% reported in 2023). Learning best practices drops to the fourth from the third spot (29%, down from 33% reported in 2023).
- IMOs are significantly more likely to indicate that members join to advance their careers (27%, similar to 26% reported in 2023). Combination associations are more likely to indicate members join to learn best practices in the profession (34%, identical to 2023) than to access specialized and/or current information (32%, same as reported in 2023).
- Alternatively, a significantly higher percentage of trade associations than IMOs report that members join for the following reasons: to access specialized and/or current information (40% versus 26%, respectively), support advocacy efforts (39% versus 23%), learn best practices (33% versus 23%), and receive recognition or prestige through membership with the association (20% versus 12%).
- A significantly higher percentage of associations reporting increases in their one-year and five-year membership numbers report that accessing specialized and/or current information is a strong membership driver compared to associations with declines in the same areas.

**WHY DO YOU BELIEVE ELIGIBLE PROSPECTS DO NOT JOIN?**

Select up to three responses.

TOP REASONS ELIGIBLE PROSPECTS DO NOT JOIN ORGANIZATION					
		Total (n = 571)	IMO (n = 217)	Trade (n = 193)	Combination (n = 161)
TOP 1	They don't see the value of membership	66%	64%	71%	61%
TOP 2	They don't know about us – lack of brand awareness	38%	32%	40%	42%
TOP 3	Their employer does not pay dues	32%	42%	14%	41%
They belong to a competing association		26%	27%	24%	26%
Our dues are too high		22%	20%	26%	19%
We do not market membership effectively		20%	17%	22%	22%
We have difficulty articulating our value proposition		19%	24%	16%	17%
We give too much away; too few members-only benefits		12%	16%	9%	11%
We don't ask them to join		12%	7%	16%	14%
They disagree with the association's advocacy positions		6%	7%	6%	4%
Other		6%	6%	6%	6%
Not sure		3%	3%	2%	3%

- Value and awareness are the top reasons prospects do not join associations. In fact, two-thirds of association executives indicate that prospects do not join the association because they don't see value in the membership (66%, up from 60% reported in 2023). Trade association leaders are significantly more likely to believe this is a barrier than IMO or combination association leaders.
- Association leaders also report that a lack of brand awareness keeps prospects from joining (38%, similar to 39% reported in 2023). This reason is also more likely for trade and combination associations than IMOs.
- Additionally, association executives feel that employers not paying dues (32%, up from 29% reported in 2023) negatively impacts prospects from joining. Not surprisingly, this is significantly more likely for IMOs and combination associations than for trade associations (42% and 41% versus 14%, respectively), as trade association memberships are often company-based and therefore covered by the employer. A higher percentage of trade associations report that the cost of membership dues is one of the top reasons that prospects do not join (26%, up from 23% reported in 2023).
- IMOs have more difficulty articulating the association's value proposition compared to trade and combination associations (24% versus 16% and 17%, respectively). Positively, though, this percentage has declined for all association types since reported last year (IMO: 31%, trade: 24%, and combination: 26%).
- Associations reporting declines in overall membership in the past year are significantly more likely to report that prospects do not see the value of membership and/or that the association does not market itself effectively. Organizations with membership declines over the past five years are significantly more likely to report that prospects fail to see the value of membership and/or the organization struggles to articulate the value proposition well.



WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING MEMBERSHIP RECRUITMENT MARKETING CHANNELS DO YOU USE? Select all that apply.

MEMBERSHIP RECRUITMENT CHANNELS USED					
		Total (n = 594)	IMO (n = 222)	Trade (n = 205)	Combination (n = 167)
TOP 1	Email	85%	85%	85%	86%
TOP 2	Organic (unpaid) social media	68%	72%	67%	63%
TOP 3	Association-sponsored events/meetings	67%	64%	71%	65%
	Promotion or exhibiting at conferences/trade shows	48%	51%	46%	49%
	Paid digital advertising	40%	49%	30%	41%
	Personal sales calls	32%	16%	52%	28%
	Direct mail	30%	34%	28%	27%
	Chapters	30%	41%	14%	35%
	Content marketing lead generation	30%	28%	32%	30%
	Advertising in publications	26%	29%	23%	26%
	Association-sponsored member-get-a-member program	19%	21%	17%	17%
	Texting	8%	9%	9%	5%
	Telemarketing	7%	10%	3%	7%
	Other	11%	12%	12%	10%
	None of these	2%	1%	2%	3%



Associations reporting one-year and five-year membership growth indicate that paid digital advertising is one of their most effective methods for recruiting new members.

- Associations most often use email (85%, identical to the percentage reported in 2023 and 2022), organic social media (68%, on par with 67% reported in 2023), and association-sponsored events and meetings (67%, similar to 66% reported in 2023) to recruit new members.
- These are the most commonly used channels regardless of association type, although trade and combination associations are slightly more likely to use association events (71% and 65%, respectively) rather than social media (67% and 63%, respectively) for recruitment.
- Compared to the previous research, a higher percentage of IMOs report using paid digital advertising (49%, up from 39% reported in 2023) and chapters (41%, up from 29% reported in 2023), and a lower percentage of personal sales calls (16%, down from 30% reported in 2023) to recruit new members.
- Trade associations utilize personal sales calls in their new member recruitment significantly more often than IMOs or combination associations (52% versus 16% and 28%, respectively). Instead, IMOs and combination associations use paid digital advertising and chapters significantly more often than trade associations in recruitment campaigns (49% and 41% versus 30%, respectively, for paid digital advertising, and 41% and 35% versus 14%, respectively, for chapters).
- Associations with renewal rates at or above 80% are significantly more likely to employ association-sponsored events/meetings and personal sales calls to recruit members.
- Associations reporting increases in overall renewal rates over the past year are significantly more likely to utilize their chapters to help with member recruitment compared to associations reporting declines in renewal rates.
- A higher percentage of associations reporting an increase in membership and new members recruited over the past year use promotion or exhibition at conferences/trade shows to recruit members. Similarly, more associations reporting membership growth over the past year recruit members via paid digital advertising.



OF THE RECRUITMENT MARKETING CHANNELS USED, WHICH ARE MOST EFFECTIVE FOR OBTAINING THE MOST NEW MEMBERS?

Select up to three responses. (Responses are a subset of those who use each respective offer.)

MOST EFFECTIVE CHANNELS FOR NEW MEMBER RECRUITMENT					
		Total (n = 571)	IMO (n = 212)	Trade (n = 197)	Combination (n = 162)
TOP 1	Email	46%	56%	35%	48%
TOP 2	Association-sponsored events/meetings	39%	36%	42%	40%
TOP 3	Personal sales calls	21%	10%	38%	17%
Organic (unpaid) social media		16%	14%	16%	19%
Promotion or exhibiting at conferences/trade shows		16%	17%	17%	13%
Paid digital advertising		15%	21%	8%	17%
Chapters		13%	17%	7%	15%
Direct mail		8%	9%	9%	7%
Association-sponsored member-get-a-member program		8%	8%	9%	7%
Content marketing lead generation		7%	5%	8%	8%
Advertising in publications		2%	2%	2%	2%
Telemarketing		1%	1%	1%	1%
Texting		1%	1%	0%	1%
Other		7%	6%	10%	4%

- Of the marketing channels used for recruitment, email (46%, down from 52% reported in 2023), association-sponsored events and meetings (39%, down from 41% reported in 2023), and personal sales calls (21%, similar to 20% reported in 2023) are considered the most effective for recruiting new members. These findings mirror those reported in 2023.
- However, the high overall ranking of personal sales calls is likely due to the large percentage of trade associations who consider personal sales calls to be among the most effective channels (38%) compared to IMOs and combination associations (10% and 17%, respectively).
- It should also be noted that while the percentage of IMOs who report personal sales calls as one of the most effective channels for recruiting new members has doubled (10%, up from 5% reported in 2023), the percentage of IMOs that are actually

using this channel for recruitment has dropped by almost half (16%, down from 30% reported in 2023). Instead, IMOs are more likely to consider paid digital advertising a highly effective recruitment tool (21%, up slightly from 20% reported in 2023).

- A significantly higher proportion of associations with renewal rates of 80% or higher consider association-sponsored events and personal sales calls to be very effective recruitment tools.
- Associations reporting one-year and five-year membership growth indicate that paid digital advertising is one of their most effective methods for recruiting new members.
- Associations with increases or no change in new member acquisition are significantly more likely to consider association-sponsored events effective for recruiting new members.



WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING OFFERS DO YOU USE FOR RECRUITING NEW MEMBERS? Check all that apply.

OFFERS USED FOR RECRUITING NEW MEMBERS					
		Total (n = 582)	IMO (n = 220)	Trade (n = 197)	Combination (n = 165)
TOP 1	Conference or convention discount	46%	51%	42%	46%
TOP 2	Product discount, coupon, or voucher	29%	30%	22%	35%
TOP 3	Monthly or quarterly installment dues	23%	25%	26%	16%
	Additional months free (e.g., 15 months for price of 12)	23%	21%	23%	24%
	Dues discount for first year	22%	30%	20%	15%
	Member referral incentive (given to members)	16%	16%	16%	16%
	Multiple-year dues discount	12%	17%	8%	12%
	Free gift or premium	10%	16%	7%	6%
	Drawing or contest	9%	15%	3%	9%
	Free trial	8%	7%	8%	11%
	Money back guarantee	2%	2%	2%	2%
	Other	6%	6%	6%	6%
	No special offers provided	20%	16%	24%	22%

- A conference or convention discount is the most commonly used offer for recruiting new members (46%, similar to 47% reported in 2023). Trade associations, echoing previous findings, are least likely to provide this offer as an incentive compared to IMOs or combination associations.
- Nearly three in ten associations offer a product discount, coupon, or voucher (29%, up from 26% reported in 2023) as a recruitment incentive, while approximately one-quarter of organizations offer monthly or quarterly installment plans (23%, up from 18% reported in 2023), additional months free (23%, identical to the percentage reported in 2023), and/or a discount on dues for first-year members (22%, similar to 23% reported in 2023).
- IMOs are significantly more likely to offer a first-year dues discount compared to trade or combination associations.
- IMOs and trade associations are more likely than combination associations to offer an installment payment plan incentive. IMOs are significantly more likely to offer monthly or quarterly installment plans, dues discounts for first-year members, multi-year dues discounts, free gifts or premiums, and/or a drawing or contest as an incentive to join.
- Associations reporting declines in their five-year membership numbers are significantly more likely to use drawings/contests as incentives, and those indicating drops in overall renewal rates significantly more often employ installment plans.



OF THE NEW MEMBER OFFERS YOU USE, WHICH HAVE YOU FOUND ARE THE MOST EFFECTIVE?

Select up the three answer choices.

(Responses are a subset of associations that use each respective offer.)

MOST EFFECTIVE OFFERS USED FOR RECRUITING NEW MEMBERS					
		Total (n = 445)	IMO (n = 178)	Trade (n = 143)	Combination (n = 124)
TOP 1	Conference or convention discount	43%	44%	35%	50%
TOP 2	Dues discount for first year	19%	24%	17%	16%
TOP 3	Additional months free (e.g., 15 months for price of 12)	17%	14%	21%	19%
	Product discount, coupon, or voucher	16%	15%	17%	17%
	Monthly or quarterly installment dues	14%	16%	19%	7%
	Member referral incentive (given to members)	9%	8%	11%	8%
	Multiple-year dues discount	6%	9%	4%	3%
	Free gift or premium	6%	9%	4%	3%
	Free trial	5%	3%	5%	7%
	Drawing or contest	2%	3%	1%	2%
	Money back guarantee	<1%	1%	0%	0%
	Other	4%	3%	5%	5%

- Similar to findings reported in 2023, the conference or convention discount offer for new member recruitment is most often rated as highly effective for all association types (43%, down from 45% reported in 2023), although it is considered less effective for trade associations than for IMOs and combination associations.
- Echoing the results reported in 2023, a dues discount for first-year members (19%, identical to the percentage reported in 2023) and additional months free (17%, similar to 18% reported in 2023) are also considered effective offers for member recruitment.
- However, trade and combination associations are more likely to consider additional months of membership as a more effective incentive than offering dues discounts for first-year members (21% and 19%, respectively).
- Higher percentages of IMOs and trade associations report monthly or quarterly installment dues as an effective new member recruitment offer (16% and 19%, respectively) compared to combination associations (7%, down from 11% reported in 2023).



- Associations reporting renewal rates of 80% or greater are significantly more likely to rate the additional free months as highly effective for recruitment.
- Associations that consider conference or convention discounts as effective offers are more likely to report one-year membership growth and an increase in new member acquisition over the past year.

- A significantly higher percentage of associations reporting declines in one-year and five-year membership counts and/or declines in new members consider the following offers effective in recruiting new members: first-year discounts, monthly or quarterly installment plans, and/or contests and drawings.



WHAT STRATEGIES AND TACTICS ARE YOU USING IN YOUR MEMBERSHIP RECRUITMENT?

Check all that apply.

PROVIDING A JOIN BUTTON ON OUR WEBSITE



USING COMPELLING "WHAT'S IN IT FOR ME" MESSAGING



OFFERING MULTIPLE WAYS TO JOIN (E.G., ONLINE, MAIL, PHONE)



RUNNING MEMBERSHIP RECRUITMENT CAMPAIGNS REGULARLY THROUGHOUT THE YEAR



TAILORING MESSAGING BASED ON MEMBER OR MARKET SEGMENT



CONDUCTING MEMBER RESEARCH TO UNDERSTAND PROSPECTS' NEEDS



(n = 569)

★ Associations using these strategies are more likely to report increases in membership in the past year.

- Over three-quarters of associations provide a join button on their website (78%, up from 76% reported in 2023).

- Other well-used strategies include utilizing compelling "What's In It For Me" messaging (56%, down slightly from 58% reported in 2023) and offering multiple ways to join (51%, on par with 50% reported in 2023).
- IMO and combination associations are significantly more likely to run membership recruitment campaigns year-round and offer multiple ways to join compared to trade organizations. Trade associations, however, are more likely to tailor messaging based on segmentation rather than offering multiple ways to join or run recruitment campaigns throughout the year.
- Compared to trade or combination associations, a significantly higher percentage of IMOs conduct multi-channel recruitment campaigns, offer prospects a special incentive to join now, base their marketing decisions on campaign evaluations, and conduct ongoing testing in their membership recruitment campaigns.
- Compared to associations showing no change, associations reporting membership growth over the past year and/or growth in new member acquisition are significantly more likely to employ the following strategies: use a compelling "What's In It For Me" message, run campaigns year-round, tailor their messaging to specific segments within the membership, conduct member research to understand what prospects want and need, conduct multi-channel recruitment campaigns, offer an incentive to join now, and conduct ongoing recruitment campaign testing.



Member Engagement

In this year's results, welcome emails remain the most common method for new member engagement, with trade associations often using additional tactics like welcome phone calls. Engaging tenured members involves ongoing email series and volunteer requests, with IMOs focusing more on volunteering and trade associations on member surveys. In-person event attendance is rebounding, with significant growth in many other engagement areas.



HOW DO YOU WELCOME NEW MEMBERS?

Check all that apply.

METHODS TO WELCOME NEW MEMBERS					
		Total (n = 567)	IMO (n = 215)	Trade (n = 192)	Combination (n = 160)
TOP 1	Welcome email(s)	81%	80%	80%	85%
TOP 2	Emailed welcome kit	42%	33%	52%	42%
TOP 3	Invitation to follow/like association's social media	35%	34%	33%	40%
	Membership card or certificate	30%	32%	28%	28%
	Welcome phone call by staff/board/chapter	29%	11%	48%	30%
	Invitation to join an association-sponsored online community	28%	30%	25%	29%
	Mailed welcome kit	23%	24%	27%	17%
	In-person new member reception or orientation	22%	17%	28%	20%
	New member webinar(s)	20%	14%	21%	27%
	New member survey	12%	15%	8%	11%
	New member welcome webpage or microsite	12%	9%	14%	12%
	New member gift (e.g., gift card or branded merchandise)	11%	11%	14%	7%
	Welcome phone call by paid telemarketing	5%	7%	5%	3%
	Paid digital ads inviting new members to use their benefits	2%	3%	2%	1%
	Other	7%	6%	9%	5%
	No special communication	3%	2%	3%	3%



- The top methods used to welcome new members remain the same as those reported in 2023. Associations most often use welcome emails to engage new members (81%, down from 84% reported in 2023).
- After that, associations welcome new members through an emailed welcome kit (42%, up from 40% reported in 2023) and/or an invitation to follow/like an association's social media (35%, up slightly from 34% reported in 2023). A significantly higher percentage of trade associations provide an emailed welcome kit compared to IMOs (52% versus 33%, respectively).
- As seen in previous research, trade organizations are more likely to employ welcome phone calls from staff, board members, or chapter leaders (48%, up from 42% reported in 2023) than invitations to follow/like the association's social media (33%, up slightly from 32% reported in 2023) or membership cards/certificates (28%, up from 25% reported in 2023). Significantly fewer IMOs utilize phone calls as an approach for welcoming new members (11%).
- The mailed welcome kit continues to fall out of favor, with only 23% of associations employing this welcome technique compared to 26% reported in 2023 and 31% reported in 2022.
- A significantly higher percentage of associations reporting overall and first-year member renewal rates above 80% make welcome phone calls to new members. Similarly, a significantly higher proportion of associations reporting increases in new member acquisition use in-person new-member receptions or orientations.
- Large IMOs (over 20,000 members) significantly more often employ welcome tactics that include a membership card or certificate, a mailed welcome kit, a new member survey, and/or a new member welcome webpage or microsite. Large and mid-size trade organizations are more likely to employ welcome methods such as membership cards or certificates, welcome phone calls, mailed welcome kits, and new member webinars compared to smaller trade organizations.

A significantly higher percentage of associations reporting overall and first-year member renewal rates above 80% make welcome phone calls to new members. Similarly, a significantly higher proportion of associations reporting increases in new member acquisition use in-person new-member receptions or orientations.



WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING COMMUNICATION METHODS DO YOU USE TO ENGAGE MORE TENURED MEMBERS WITH THE ASSOCIATION? Check all that apply.

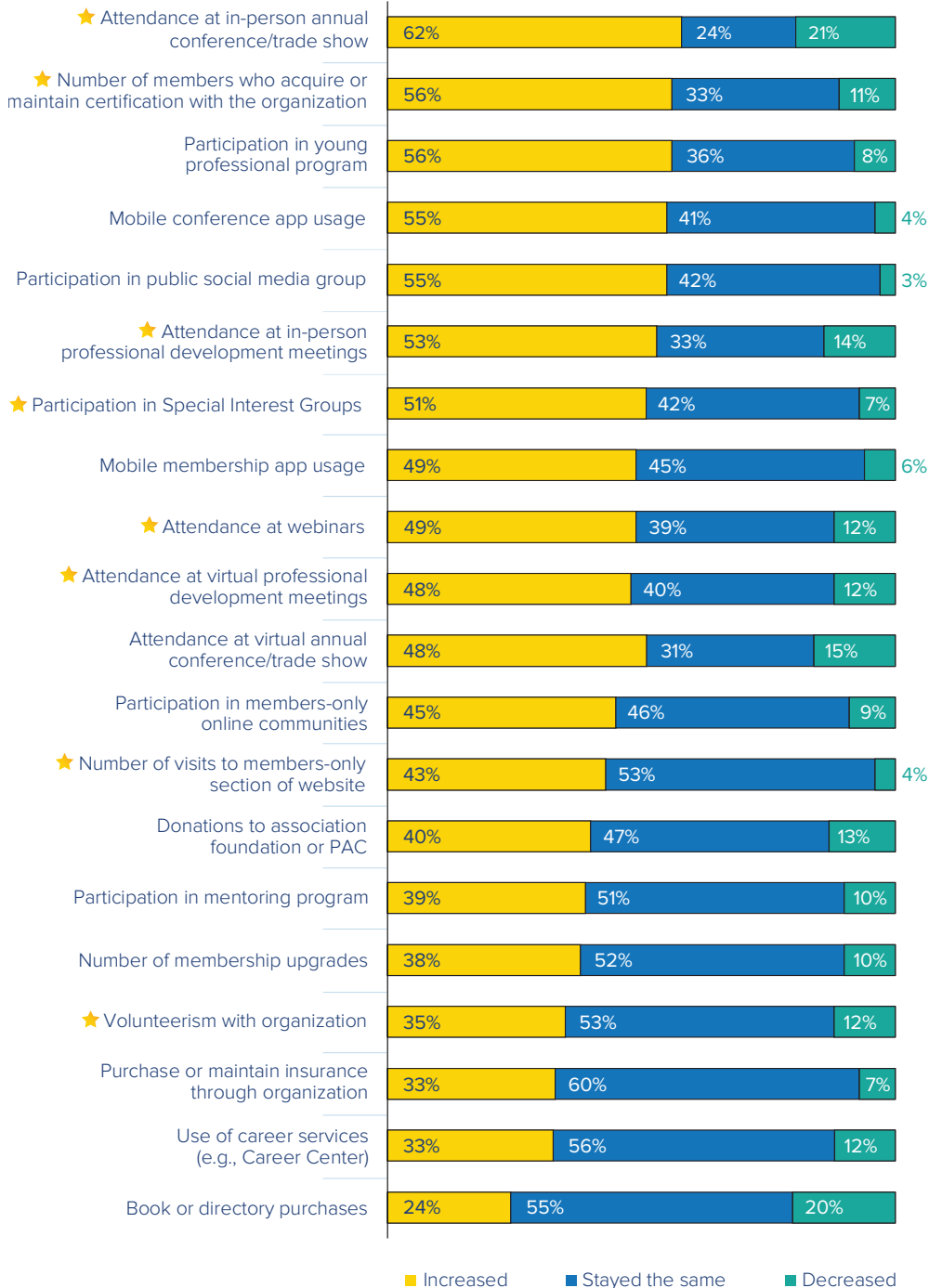
COMMUNICATION METHODS TO ENGAGE TENURED MEMBERS					
		Total (n = 562)	IMO (n = 210)	Trade (n = 192)	Combination (n = 160)
TOP 1	Ongoing engagement email series (e.g., monthly)	60%	56%	65%	59%
TOP 2	Requests to volunteer	57%	68%	45%	59%
TOP 3	Invitation to follow/like association's social media	43%	41%	46%	42%
	Regular member surveys	42%	39%	47%	41%
	Invitation to join the online community	31%	36%	25%	33%
	In-person member reception	29%	22%	38%	27%
	Invitation to chapter meeting	26%	29%	23%	28%
	Annual membership card or certificate	22%	24%	18%	25%
	Membership tenure gifts (e.g., gift card, pin, or plaque)	14%	20%	11%	11%
	Ongoing engagement paid digital ads	9%	11%	6%	11%
	Other	6%	5%	7%	4%
	No special communication	8%	6%	7%	11%

- The three most common methods for engaging tenured members have not changed since reported in 2023. Most associations utilize an ongoing engagement email series (60%, on par with 61% reported in 2023) and/or requests to volunteer with the association (57%, up from 52% reported in 2023).
- More than four in ten associations invite tenured members to follow/like the association's social media (43%, up from 41% reported in 2023) and/or participate in regular member surveys (42%, up from 40% reported in 2023, but down from 58% reported in 2022).
- IMOs are more likely to ask more tenured members to volunteer (68%, up from 59% reported in 2023) than to use an ongoing engagement email series (56%, similar to 57% reported in 2023), whereas an equal number of combination associations report using both these methods (59% each, up from 54% and down from 65%, respectively, reported in 2023).
- Trade associations, on the other hand, are more likely to engage tenured members with regular member surveys (47%, up from 40% reported in 2023) than to invite them to follow/like the association's social media (46%, up from 38% reported in 2023) or ask for volunteers (45%, up from 41% reported in 2023). Comparatively, IMOs and combination associations are significantly more likely to engage tenured members with volunteer opportunities than trade associations.
- A significantly higher percentage of smaller IMOs engage tenured members with ongoing email series, invitations to follow/like social media pages, and in-person member receptions. Similarly, larger trade organizations are significantly more apt to engage tenured members with annual membership cards/certificates, membership tenure gifts, and/or ongoing paid digital ads.
- Associations reporting increases in their five-year membership numbers significantly more often conduct regular member surveys compared to those reporting declines in the same time period.



THE PAST FISCAL YEAR, HOW HAS MEMBER ENGAGEMENT AND PARTICIPATION CHANGED WITHIN EACH OF THE FOLLOWING AREAS?

CHANGES IN MEMBER ENGAGEMENT (TOTAL)



★ Associations seeing increases in engagement in these areas over the past year are more likely to report growth in one-year and five-year membership and increases in renewal rates.

Please see explanations on following page



- In-person conference attendance continues to bounce back, as 62% of associations report increases in this area (up from 58% reported in 2023 and 26% reported in 2022). Only 15% of associations report declines in in-person conference attendance (down from 22% reported in 2023 and 53% reported in 2022), providing more evidence that in-person turnout is recovering.
- In fact, more than half of associations report increased engagement in several areas: attendance at several in-person events (annual meeting/trade show: 62%, up from 58% reported in 2023; professional development: 53%, up from 44% reported in 2023), growth in certification acquisition/maintenance (56%, up from 47% reported in 2023), increased participation in young professional groups (56%, up from 52% reported in 2023), social media groups (55%, up from 50% reported in 2023), and Special Interest Groups (51%, up from 40% reported in 2023), and increased utilization of the mobile conference app (55%, albeit down from 58% reported in 2023).
- Other areas of engagement have shown growth as well. Compared to findings reported in 2023, associations report substantial gains in mobile membership app usage (49%, up from 39%), attendance at webinars (49%, up from 44%), attendance at virtual annual conference/trade show (48%, up from 39%), purchase or maintenance of insurance through the organization (33%, up from 25%), and volunteerism with the association (35%, up from 23%).
- There are only three areas of engagement where the percentage of declines has increased since last reported in 2023: the number of membership upgrades (from 7% to 10%), use of career services (from 10% to 12%), and book or directory purchases (from 16% to 20%).
- Associations reporting an increase in member engagement in several areas are more likely to report one-year and five-year membership growth and an increase in their renewal rate over the past year. These areas include attendance at in-person annual conferences/trade shows, the number of members who acquire or maintain certification with the organization, attendance at in-person professional development meetings, participation in Special Interest Groups, attendance at webinars, attendance at virtual professional development meetings, the number of visits to the members-only section of the website, and volunteerism with the organization.
- Correlations with positive membership metrics in these many areas underscore the importance of actively engaging members across various channels to drive overall membership growth and retention.

Associations that reported an increase in member engagement in several areas are more likely to report one-year and five-year membership growth and an increase in their renewal rate over the past year.

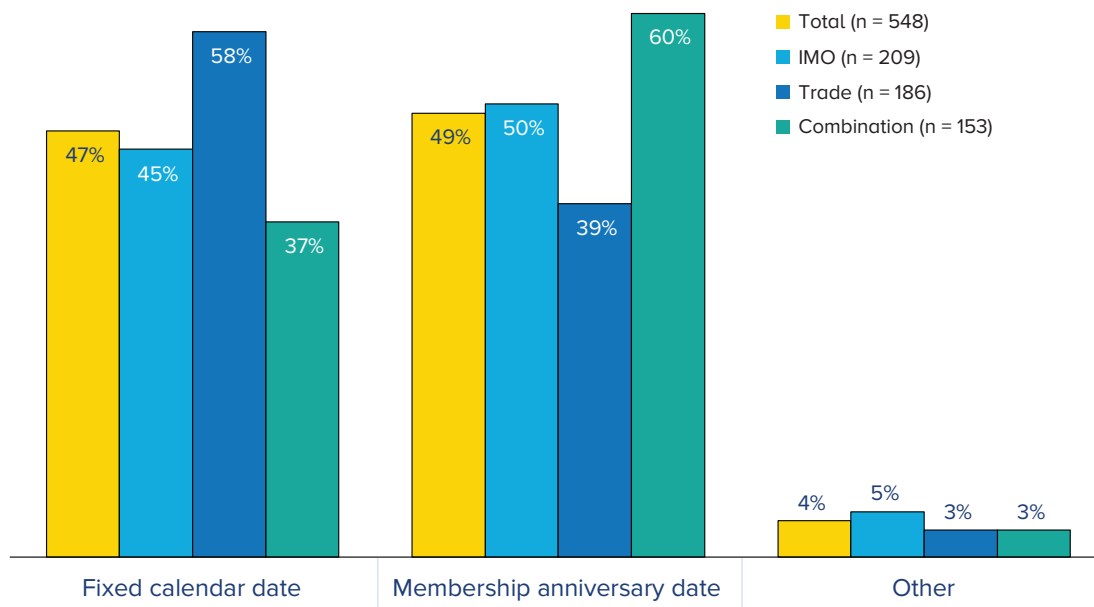


Member Renewal and Reinstatement

Renewal rates in this year's report remain consistent with previous research, with trade associations typically boasting higher rates. Email continues as the primary renewal channel, followed by phone calls and direct mail. Lack of engagement and perceived value persist as top reasons for non-renewals, particularly among trade associations. Associations with higher renewal rates often employ fixed calendar date renewals and prioritize phone calls for lapsed member reinstatement.



IS MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL BASED ON A FIXED CALENDAR DATE FOR ALL MEMBERS OR AN ANNIVERSARY DATE FROM THE START OF THE MEMBERSHIP?



- Compared to findings reported in 2023, fewer associations renew members on the anniversary date of joining (49%, down from 54%). In fact, the percentage of associations that renew members on the anniversary date, compared to those that renew based on a fixed calendar date, is almost even (47% for a fixed date and 49% for an anniversary date).
- IMOs and combination associations are more likely to renew members on their anniversary date (50% for IMOs, down from 52%; 60% for combination associations, down from 65% reported in 2023).

Trade associations, on the other hand, significantly more often use a fixed calendar date for renewals (58%, up from 54% reported in 2023).

- Associations with overall renewal rates and first-year member renewal rates of 80% or higher are significantly more likely to use a fixed calendar date for renewals. Alternatively, associations with overall renewal rates and first-year member renewal rates below 80% are significantly more likely to base renewal on a member's anniversary date.



AFTER A MEMBERSHIP EXPIRES, HOW LONG IS YOUR ASSOCIATION'S GRACE PERIOD FOR ACCESSING MEMBER BENEFITS?

LENGTH OF GRACE PERIOD				
	Total (n = 548)	IMO (n = 209)	Trade (n = 186)	Combination (n = 153)
📅 One month	20%	21%	16%	24%
📅 2 to 3 months	48%	40%	56%	48%
📅 4 to 6 months	10%	12%	12%	6%
📅 7 to 12 months	2%	3%	3%	1%
➤ More than a year	1%	2%	1%	1%
✕ We don't offer a grace period	19%	23%	12%	21%

- Unchanged from findings reported in 2023, 48% of associations allow a two- to three-month grace period after a membership expires where lapsed members can still access benefits. IMOs and combination associations are more likely to offer no grace period (23% and 21%, respectively) compared to trade organizations (12%). Alternatively, trade associations are significantly more likely to offer a two- to three-month grace period (56%, up from 50% reported in 2023) compared to IMOs (40%, down from 43% reported in 2023) and combination associations (48%, down from 51% reported in 2023).
- 19% of associations offer no grace period at all (on par with 18% reported in 2023).
- Associations with renewal rates under 80% are significantly more likely to offer no grace period or only a one-month grace period where lapsed members can access benefits. In contrast, associations with renewal rates of 80% or more are more likely to offer a two- to three-month grace period.

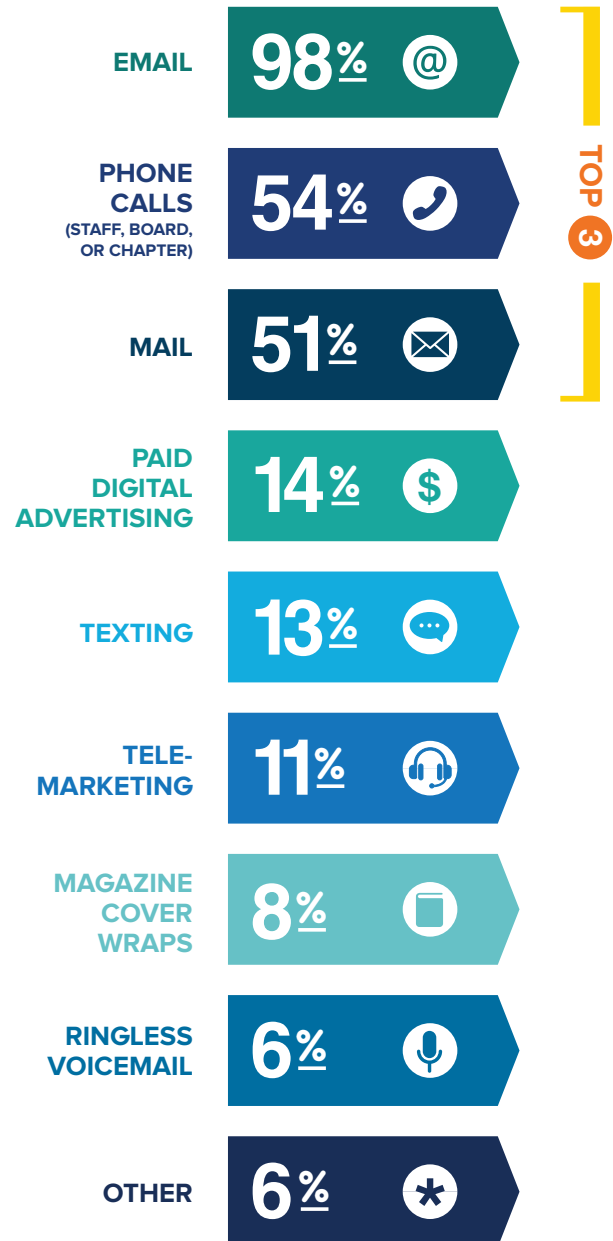
Associations with renewal rates of 80% or more are more likely to offer a two- to three-month grace period.



WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING MARKETING CHANNELS DO YOU USE IN YOUR MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL SERIES?

Select all that apply.

- 98% of associations use email for membership renewals, and more than half of associations utilize phone calls from staff, board members, or chapter leaders (54%, down from 57% reported in 2023) and/or direct mail (51%, down from 54% reported in 2023).
- IMOs are significantly less likely to utilize staff, board members, and chapter leaders to make phone calls compared to trade and combination associations but are significantly more likely to employ direct mail, paid digital advertising, telemarketing, magazine cover wraps, and ringless voicemail in the renewal series.
- Associations with renewal rates at or above 80% significantly more often utilize phone calls in their renewal series.
- Larger associations (IMOs with over 5,000 members and trade associations with over 500 members) use direct mail, paid digital advertising, texting, and telemarketing significantly more than smaller associations.



(n = 549)



**PLEASE INDICATE HOW MANY TIMES EACH MEMBER
CAN RECEIVE CONTACT FROM YOUR ASSOCIATION
USING EACH OF THE FOLLOWING CHANNELS.**

(Responses are a subset of those who use each respective channel.)



EMAIL



PAID
DIGITAL
ADVERTISING



MAIL



TEXTING



PHONE
CALLS
(STAFF, BOARD,
OR CHAPTER)



TELE-
MARKETING



MAGAZINE
COVER
WRAPS



RINGLESS
VOICEMAIL



OTHER

- On average, when reaching out to members in a renewal program, associations use six emails, six paid digital advertisements, three pieces of direct mail, three texts, and/or three phone calls from staff, board members, or chapter leaders.
- Trade associations are significantly more likely to use phone calls compared to IMOs or combination associations.

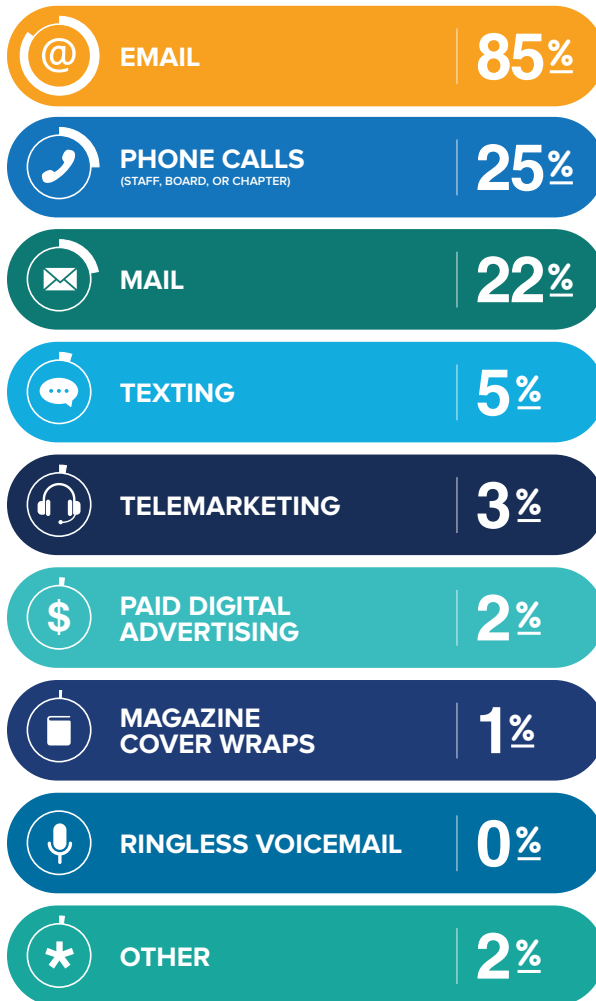
Trade associations are significantly more likely to use phone calls compared to IMOs or combination associations.



OF THE MARKETING CHANNELS USED IN THE RENEWAL SERIES, WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING GENERATE THE MOST MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS?

Please select up to three answer choices.

(Responses are a subset of those who use each respective channel.)



(n = 539)

- Mirroring past research, associations report that emails overwhelmingly garner the most membership renewals (85%, up from 82% reported in 2023). One-quarter of associations report that phone calls from staff, board members, or chapter leadership (25%) and direct mail (22%) are also top channels for generating renewals.
- Trade and combination associations are significantly more likely to report that phone calls are highly effective for generating renewals. The effectiveness of phone calls declines as the size of IMOs increase but increases as the size of trade associations increases; in essence, they are more effective for smaller IMOs (under 5,000 members) and larger trade organizations (over 500 members).
- Associations with annual marketing budgets over \$60,000 are more likely to consider direct mail and telemarketing as highly effective methods for renewals.



WHEN DO YOU START THE RENEWAL EFFORT?

START RENEWAL EFFORT				
	Total (n = 545)	IMO (n = 208)	Trade (n = 184)	Combination (n = 153)
⌚ Immediately after welcoming	8%	7%	9%	6%
⌚ Prior to 6 months before expiration	2%	2%	2%	2%
⌚ At 6 months prior to expiration	4%	5%	4%	4%
⌚ 5 months prior to expiration	2%	3%	2%	2%
⌚ 4 months prior to expiration	10%	12%	8%	9%
⌚ 3 months prior to expiration	36%	40%	30%	37%
⌚ 2 months prior to expiration	20%	16%	20%	25%
⌚ 1 month prior to expiration	11%	9%	14%	8%
⌚ The month of expiration	5%	1%	9%	4%
❓ Not sure	3%	3%	2%	3%

- As we've seen in past research, associations most often begin the renewal process three months prior to the expiration date (36%, down from 40% reported in 2023). IMOs more often start around this time period (40%, down from 42% reported in 2023).
- Trade associations are less likely to begin at the three-month mark (30%, down from 34% reported in 2023) and instead are more likely than IMOs to begin one- to two-months from the date of expiration. In fact, one-third of trade (34%) and combination associations (33%) start renewal efforts less than three months from membership expiration.



WHEN DO YOU END RENEWAL EFFORTS (STOP RENEWAL CONTACTS TO THE MEMBER)?

END RENEWAL EFFORT				
	Total (n = 545)	IMO (n = 209)	Trade (n = 183)	Combination (n = 153)
🕒 At the month of expiration	3%	4%	3%	3%
🕒 1 month after expiration	9%	11%	7%	9%
🕒 2 months after expiration	11%	9%	13%	12%
🕒 3 months after expiration	26%	19%	30%	31%
🕒 4 months after expiration	7%	5%	7%	11%
🕒 5 months after expiration	1%	0%	2%	2%
🕒 6 months after expiration	7%	10%	7%	5%
🕒 More than 6 months after expiration	9%	14%	6%	7%
🕒 We don't stop contact	22%	26%	22%	17%
🕒 Not sure	3%	2%	3%	4%

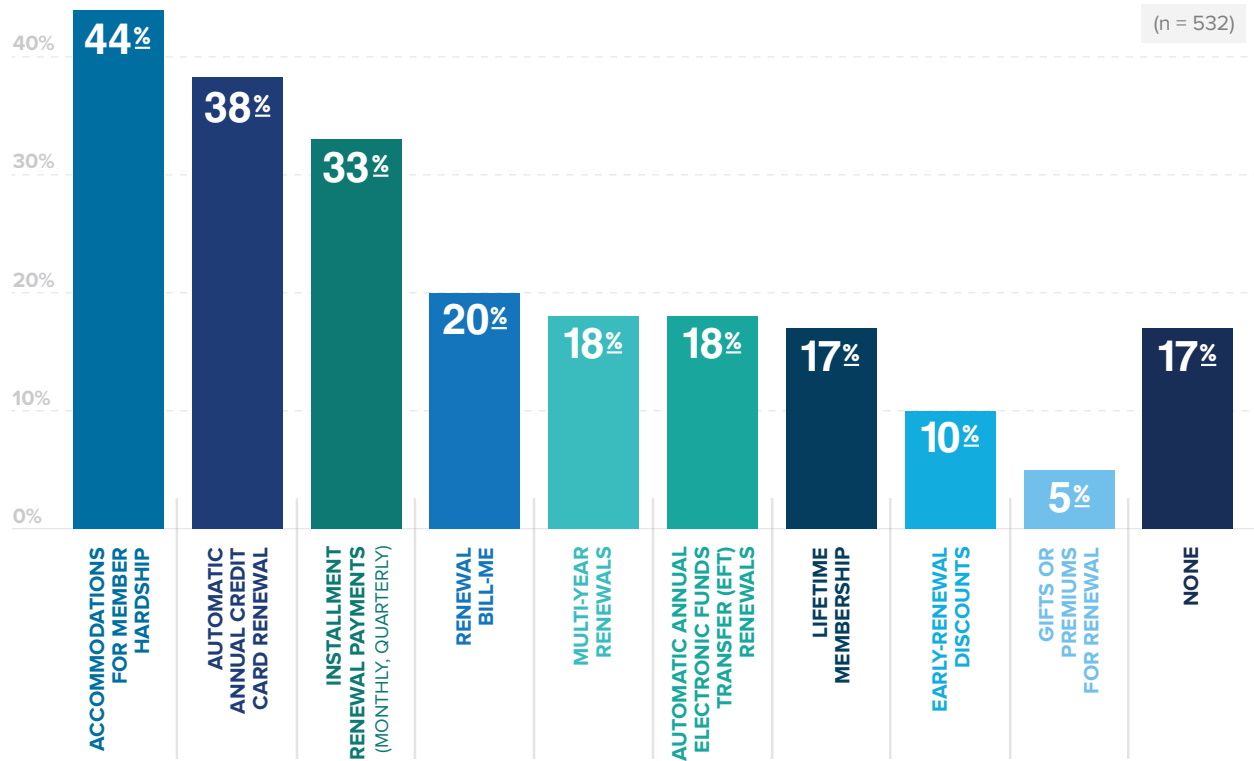
- Associations most often stop the renewal process three months after membership expires (26%, up from 23% reported in 2023). Trade and combination associations are significantly more likely to end their renewal efforts at the three-month mark compared to IMOs. 22% of associations do not stop the renewal effort at all, continuing to contact lapsed members for reinstatement.

- Interestingly, a significantly higher percentage of associations reporting declines in overall membership indicate they do not stop contacting lapsed members for renewal.

As we've seen in past research, associations most often begin the renewal process three months prior to the expiration date.



DO YOU OFFER ANY OF THE FOLLOWING RENEWAL OPTIONS? Check all that apply.



- 44% of associations offer accommodations for member hardship (up from 40% reported in 2023). Combination associations, now surpassing IMOs and trade organizations, are most likely to offer this choice (47%, up from 38% reported in 2023).
- Similar to findings reported in 2023, 38% of associations offer automatic annual credit card renewal. IMOs are most likely to offer this renewal option, but a higher percentage of combination associations are now extending this opportunity (38%, up from 33% reported in 2023).
- One-third of associations offer installment renewal payments (33%, up from 31% reported in 2023). Significantly more trade associations offer installment renewal payments compared to IMOs and combination associations.
- Trade and combination associations offer a renewal bill-me option significantly more often than IMOs. However, IMOs are significantly more likely to offer multi-year renewals and/or lifetime memberships than trade associations.
- Associations with renewal rates of 80% or higher are significantly more inclined to provide accommodations for member hardship and/or automatic annual EFT renewals compared to associations with renewal rates of less than 80%.
- However, associations reporting declines in membership over the course of 2023 are significantly more likely to offer installment plans compared to those reporting overall membership growth last year. Similarly, a significantly higher percentage of associations with drops in their renewals offer installment payment plans and/or accommodations for member hardship.



WHAT DO YOU BELIEVE ARE THE TOP REASONS MEMBERS DO NOT RENEW THEIR MEMBERSHIP IN YOUR ORGANIZATION?

You may select up to three choices.

TOP REASONS FOR NOT RENEWING MEMBERSHIP					
		Total (n = 542)	IMO (n = 208)	Trade (n = 182)	Combination (n = 152)
TOP 1	Lack of engagement with the organization	47%	37%	64%	40%
TOP 2	Lack of value	32%	32%	30%	34%
TOP 3	Forgot to renew	29%	36%	24%	27%
Left the field, industry, or profession		27%	26%	17%	41%
Employer does not pay dues		24%	32%	7%	34%
Too expensive		24%	24%	32%	14%
Joined only for the conference/meeting discount		20%	25%	13%	22%
Retirement		20%	26%	16%	18%
Company closed or merged		20%	1%	42%	18%
Personal/professional needs changed		13%	14%	11%	16%
Student memberships do not convert to full memberships		7%	14%	1%	5%
Disagree with advocacy position of the association		4%	4%	4%	4%
Unemployment		4%	5%	2%	3%
Other		6%	3%	9%	5%
Not sure		2%	2%	1%	2%

- Lack of engagement with the organization is the top reason association executives believe members do not renew their membership (47%, down from 51% reported in 2023). This reason is significantly higher for trade associations (64%), compared to IMOs or combination associations (37% and 40%, respectively).
- One-third of associations believe members do not renew because of a perceived lack of value (32%, on par with 33% reported in 2023) or because they simply forgot to renew (29%, down from 32% reported in 2023).
- Compared to trade associations, executives from IMOs and combination associations are

continued on following page



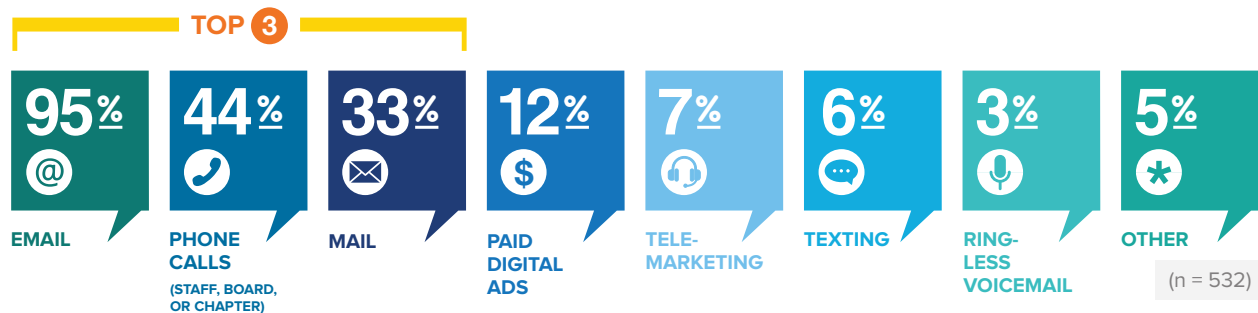
significantly more likely to report that members do not renew because they have left the field or profession, their employer does not pay their membership dues, they joined specifically for the conference or meeting discount, and/or student members did not convert to a full membership.

- Trade associations significantly more often report that members do not rejoin because the company closed or merged (42%), or the membership is too expensive (32%).

- Associations reporting increases in membership and renewals over the past year and increases in membership over the past five years are significantly more likely to believe members do not renew because members have left the profession.
- A lack of perceived value is given as a reason for non-renewals significantly more often for associations reporting declines in membership over the past year and the past five years and declines in renewals.



WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING CHANNELS DO YOU USE FOR REINSTATING LAPSED MEMBERS? Check all that apply.



- Nearly all associations use email to reinstate lapsed members (95%, a slight increase from 93% reported in 2023). After that, 44% of associations employ staff, board member, or chapter leader phone calls (down from 47% reported in 2023), and one-third utilize direct mail (33%, down from 37% reported in 2023).
- Trade and combination associations use phone calls significantly more often than IMOs in campaigns to reinstate lapsed members (trade: 61% and combination: 42% versus IMO: 31%),

whereas IMOs employ direct mail more often than trade or combination associations (IMO: 43% versus trade: 25% and combination: 30%).

- A significantly higher percentage of associations reporting renewal rates of 80% or higher and first-year member renewal rates of 60% or higher employ phone calls to reinstate lapsed members compared to associations with lower renewal rates.
- IMOs with at least 5,000 members significantly more often use direct mail, paid digital advertising, and telemarketing compared to smaller IMOs.



OF THE CHANNELS USED FOR REINSTATEMENT, WHICH ARE MOST EFFECTIVE IN GENERATING THE MOST REINSTATED LAPSED MEMBERS?

Please select up to two answer choices. (Responses are a subset of associations that use each respective channel.)

MOST EFFECTIVE CHANNELS USED REINSTATING LAPSED MEMBERS				
	Total (n = 520)	IMO (n = 201)	Trade (n = 174)	Combination (n = 145)
@ Email	77%	84%	68%	77%
📞 Phone calls (staff, board, or chapter)	30%	17%	45%	28%
✉ Mail	12%	15%	10%	10%
💰 Paid digital advertising	3%	5%	1%	3%
📞 Telemarketing	2%	3%	0%	3%
💬 Texting	1%	2%	1%	1%
📞 Ringless voicemail	1%	1%	0%	1%
* Other	4%	2%	6%	4%

- Over three-quarters of associations report that email is the most effective channel for reinstating lapsed members (77%, up from 73% reported in 2023). While all types of associations consider email a highly effective tool for reinstating lapsed members, IMOs are significantly more likely than trade and combination associations to report email as effective.
- Trade and combination associations are significantly more likely than IMOs to believe that phone calls from staff, board members, and chapter

leaders are highly effective. In fact, associations reporting overall renewal rates of 80% or better and first-year member renewal rates of 80% or higher are significantly more likely to report that phone calls are very effective in reinstating lapsed members.

- IMOs with at least 5,000 members and those with marketing budgets of \$200,000 or more are significantly more likely to consider direct mail and paid digital advertising as effective tools for reinstating lapsed members.

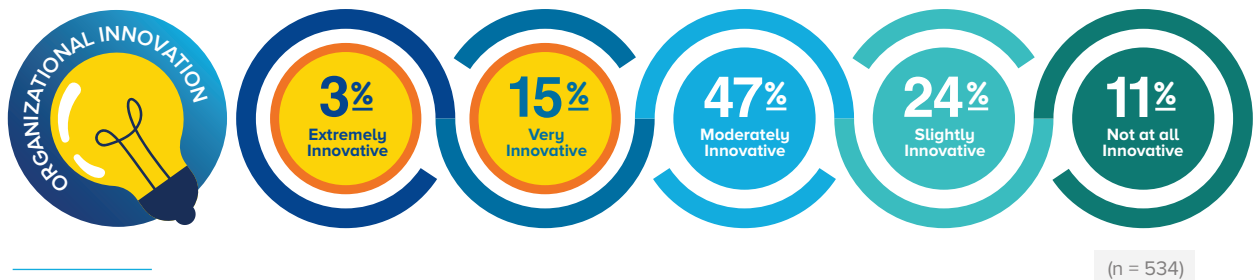


Innovation

Once again, innovation remains a focal point for associations, with a slight decline in those considering their organizations extremely or very innovative. Trade associations lead in this perception, while most rate themselves as moderately innovative. Despite this, innovation correlates positively with membership growth, indicating its importance. While AI adoption in membership marketing is still relatively low, there's openness to its potential, particularly among larger associations. New initiatives, such as expanded benefits and refreshed engagement programs, are prevalent, especially among trade associations, suggesting a continued focus on member value and retention.

INNOVATION HAS MANY MEANINGS. In the context of the association world, it most commonly means creating or improving a product or benefit that provides additional value to members and customers. Innovation can be done for its own sake or in order to solve members' currently unsolved problems.

? GIVEN THAT INTERPRETATION, HOW INNOVATIVE WOULD YOU CONSIDER YOUR ORGANIZATION?

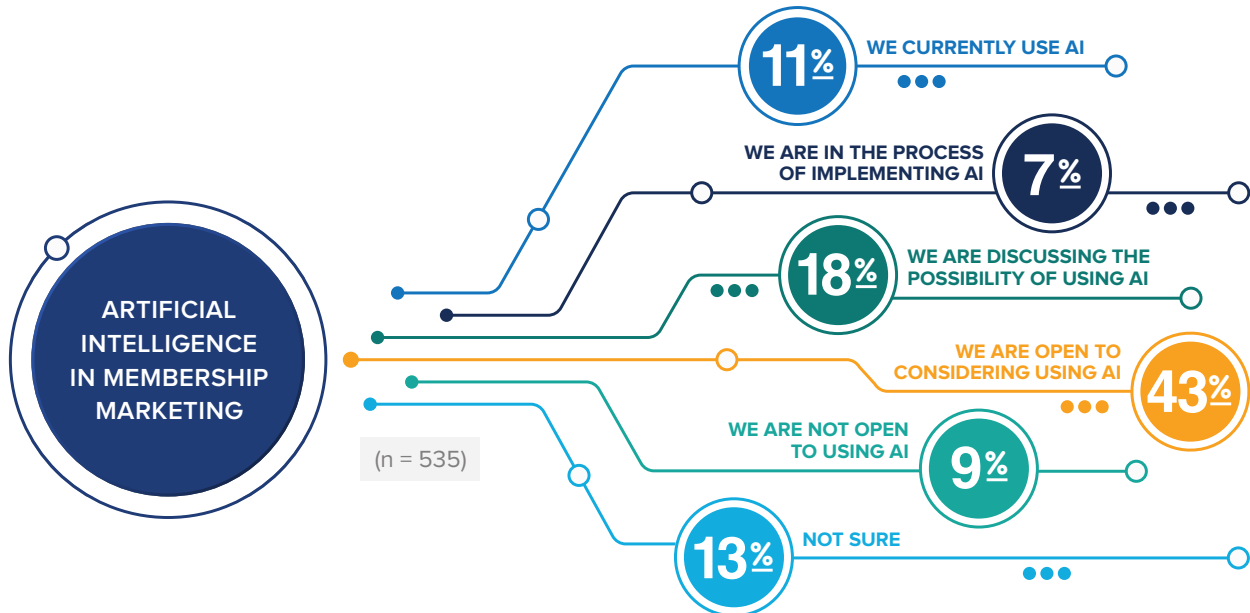


Associations that consider their organization extremely or very innovative are more likely to report membership growth.

- In a continued downward trend, 18% of associations consider their organization to be extremely or very innovative (down from 25% reported in 2023 and 30% reported in 2022). This change may be a result of necessary innovation born from the pandemic that has since waned. This percentage is now close to pre-pandemic levels (20% reported at the beginning of 2020 and 13% in 2019).
- Trade associations are significantly more likely than IMOs to regard their organization as extremely or very innovative (24% versus 19%, respectively).
- A plurality of association leaders, however, rate their organization as moderately innovative (47%, a slight increase from 45% reported in 2023). A majority of IMOs categorize their association in this manner (53%).
- One-third of association executives consider their organization to be only slightly or not at all innovative (35%, up from 30% reported in 2023).
- Innovation is positively correlated with membership growth, as executives who consider their association extremely or very innovative are more likely to report increases in their one-year and five-year membership levels and new member acquisition over the past year. They are also significantly more likely to report increases in member renewals.



? WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS MOST CLOSELY REFLECTS YOUR ASSOCIATION'S USE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI) IN MEMBERSHIP MARKETING?



While only 11% of associations are currently using AI in membership marketing, 25% are moving toward using it, and another 43% are open to considering using it.

- 18% of associations are currently using or in the process of implementing AI for membership marketing, and another 18% are discussing the possibility of using AI. Nearly half of association executives (43%) report they are open to considering the use of AI in their membership marketing plans.
- Associations reporting declines or no change in membership over the past year significantly more often report that they are not open to incorporating AI in their membership marketing.
- Furthermore, associations with operating budgets of at least \$1 million are significantly more likely to indicate they are discussing the possibility of using AI for membership marketing. Those with marketing budgets of at least \$20,000 annually are significantly more likely to report they are currently using AI for marketing or are discussing the possibility of using it.



FOR WHAT PURPOSES ARE YOU USING/ACTIVELY PLANNING TO USE AI IN YOUR MEMBERSHIP MARKETING?

Check all that apply. (Subset of associations that are using or planning to use AI in membership marketing.)



CONTENT
GENERATION



DATA
ANALYSIS



REAL-TIME
PERSONALIZATION



TAILORED
RECOMMENDATIONS
FOR SEARCH ENGINE
OPTIMIZATION (SEO)



NATURAL
LANGUAGE
PROCESSING
(NLP)



AUTOMATED
MEMBER
SUPPORT

(n = 95)

Of the 18% of survey respondents that indicate they are using or actively planning to use AI in their membership marketing, 84% are using it for content generation.

- Currently, 84% of associations report using or planning to use AI for content generation. IMOs are more likely to employ AI than trade or combination associations for this purpose.
- One-third of associations plan to use AI for data analysis (33%), and 28% plan to utilize AI for real-time personalization.
- Associations reporting drops in their five-year membership numbers are more likely to be actively using or planning to use AI for automated member support compared to those reporting increases in their five-year membership metrics.

Currently, 84% of associations report using or planning to use AI for content generation.



FOR WHAT PURPOSES COULD YOU SEE YOUR ASSOCIATION USING AI IN MEMBERSHIP MARKETING?

Check all that apply. (Subset of associations discussing the possibility or are open to using AI in membership marketing.)

PURPOSES YOU MIGHT USE ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN MEMBERSHIP MARKETING				
	Total (n = 319)	IMO (n = 120)	Trade (n = 106)	Combination (n = 93)
CONTENT GENERATION Writing both short and long pieces of content for a marketing strategy, such as video captions, email subject lines, e-newsletters, web copy, blogs, and more	76%	70%	85%	73%
DATA ANALYSIS Collecting and sifting through large amounts of marketing data from various campaigns and programs that would otherwise have to be sorted manually	64%	70%	62%	57%
REAL-TIME PERSONALIZATION Changing a member's experience with a marketing asset – such as a web page, social post, or email – to fit the member's past preferences to encourage a certain action, such as clicking a link, signing up for something, or buying a product	54%	54%	51%	57%
AUTOMATED MEMBER SUPPORT Using chatbots to answer questions and provide 24/7 support for members	45%	46%	43%	47%
TAILORED RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION (SEO) Driving organic traffic more effectively to boost search engine rankings	41%	42%	40%	41%
PROSPECT SCORING/PROSPECT SELECTION Using AI predictive models to score and/or select top prospects for marketing campaigns	37%	38%	33%	39%
NATURAL LANGUAGE PROCESSING (NLP) Creating human-like language for content creation, member service bots, experience personalization, and more	30%	33%	28%	26%
AUTOMATED DECISION-MAKING Using AI marketing tools help our business decide which marketing or business growth strategy we should use based on past data or outside data inputs	15%	23%	7%	16%
MEDIA BUYING Predicting the most effective ad and media placements for our business in order to reach our target audience(s) and maximize marketing strategy ROI	15%	16%	14%	16%
OTHER	1%	1%	1%	1%

Please see explanations on following page



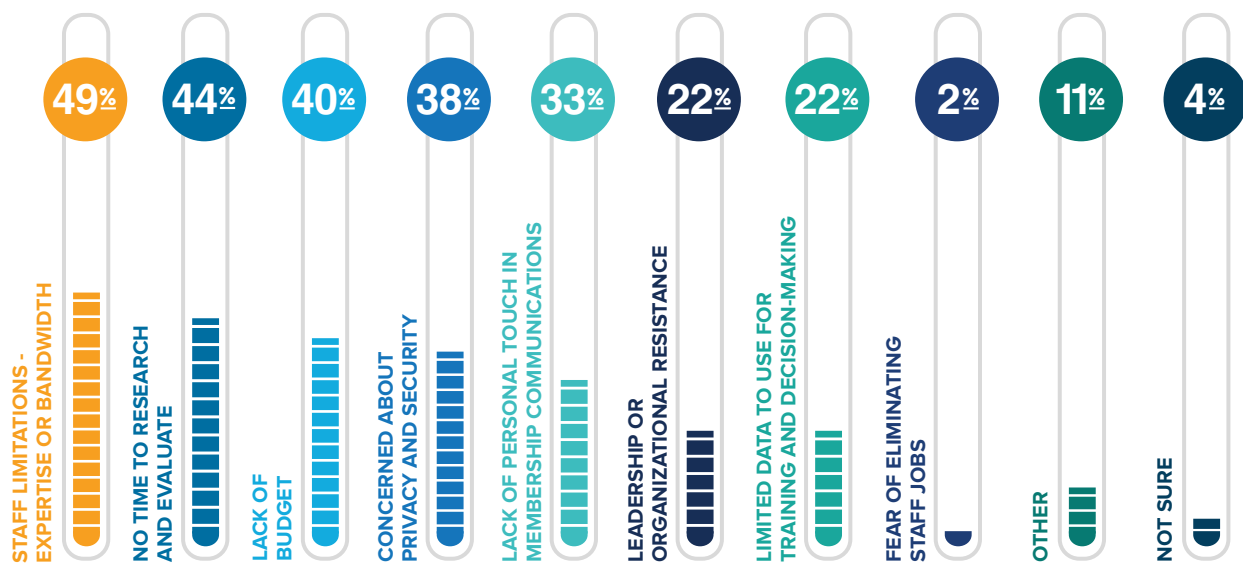
- Of the associations considering using AI for membership marketing, more than half might use it for content generation (76%), data analysis (64%), and/or real-time personalization (54%).
- Trade associations are more likely to consider using AI for content generation than IMOs and combination associations (85% versus 70% and 73%, respectively).
- Associations reporting increases in membership over the last year and the last five years are significantly more inclined to consider AI for prospect scoring/prospect selection than those reporting declines in the same areas.



WHY IS YOUR ASSOCIATION NOT OPEN TO USING AI IN MEMBERSHIP MARKETING?

Check all that apply. (Subset of associations discussing the possibility or are open to using AI in membership marketing.)

(n = 45)

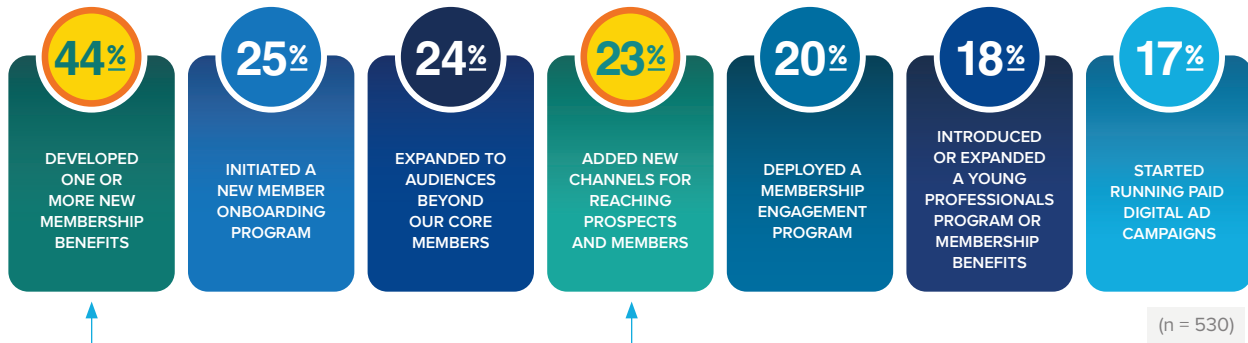


- For associations not open to using AI for membership marketing, nearly half indicate their staff does not have the expertise or bandwidth for this task (49%).
- At least four in ten associations report that staff does not have the time to research and evaluate the applications (44%) and/or that there is no money in the budget to implement AI for marketing purposes (40%).



WHAT NEW MEMBERSHIP MARKETING INITIATIVES HAS YOUR ASSOCIATION INTRODUCED DURING THE PAST YEAR?

Check all that apply.



Associations that introduced these marketing initiatives during the past year are more likely to report membership growth.

- While many associations introduced new marketing initiatives during the past year, the percentage of associations making these introductions has declined compared to those reported in 2023.
- Nearly half of associations have developed one or more new membership benefits (44%, down from 48% reported in 2023), and about one-quarter of associations have either initiated a new member onboarding program (25%, down from 29% reported in 2023) and/or expanded membership to audiences beyond their core members (24%, down from 31% reported in 2023).
- Trade and combination associations are more likely to have developed new member benefits compared to IMOs (trade: 48% and combination: 49% versus IMO: 38%).
- Trade associations are significantly more likely to have deployed a member engagement program than IMOs or combination associations (trade: 29% versus IMO: 19% and combination: 11%).
- Associations with first-year member renewals at or above 80% are significantly more likely to have developed new member benefits.
- Additionally, a significantly higher percentage of associations reporting increases in membership over the past year added new channels for reaching prospects and members, and significantly more associations with increases in their five-year membership counts added new member benefits.
- Associations with marketing budgets over \$5,000 are significantly more likely to have added new channels for reaching prospects and members.



WHAT MEMBERSHIP MARKETING INITIATIVES HAS YOUR ASSOCIATION EXPANDED OR REFRESHED DURING THE PAST YEAR? Check all that apply.



Associations that expanded or refreshed their membership recruitment initiatives during the past year are more likely to report membership growth.

- More than half of associations have expanded or refreshed their engagement initiatives (52%, identical to findings reported in 2023). Trade associations have more often refreshed engagement programs compared to IMO and combination associations (trade: 56% versus IMO: 51% and combination: 49%).
- More than four in ten associations have expanded or refreshed recruitment (46%, identical to findings reported in 2023) and renewal programs (41%, on par with 42% reported in 2023). Trade associations are significantly less likely to have revamped renewal programs than IMOs and combination associations (28% versus 48% and 47%, respectively).
- Associations that refreshed their recruitment, renewal, and onboarding campaigns during 2023 are more likely to report one-year membership growth and an increase in new member acquisition over the past year.
- Additionally, a significantly higher percentage of associations with increases or no change in membership over the past five years made changes to their onboarding initiatives compared to those showing membership declines over the past five years.
- Associations reporting increases in renewals are significantly more likely to have adapted their renewal and reinstatement programs over the past year compared to those reporting declines in renewals over the same period.

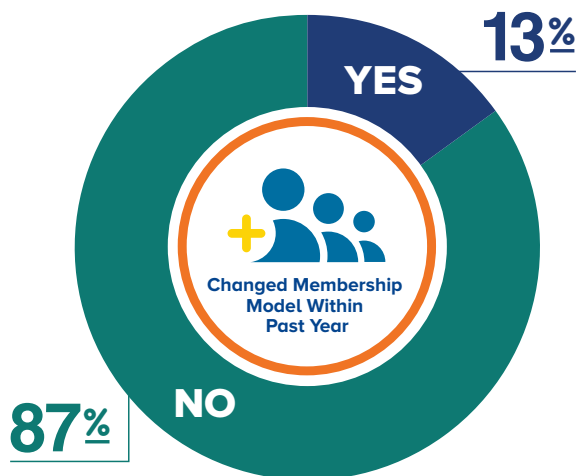
“Ringless voicemail - the ROI is off the charts.” — IMO



“We have a special pricing level and group for people under 40. We also have a few ‘Future Leaders’ development programs, and we offer Student Membership for colleges/universities.” — *IMO*



WITHIN THE PAST YEAR, HAS YOUR ASSOCIATION ADOPTED A NEW MEMBERSHIP MODEL OR CHANGED YOUR EXISTING MEMBERSHIP MODEL?

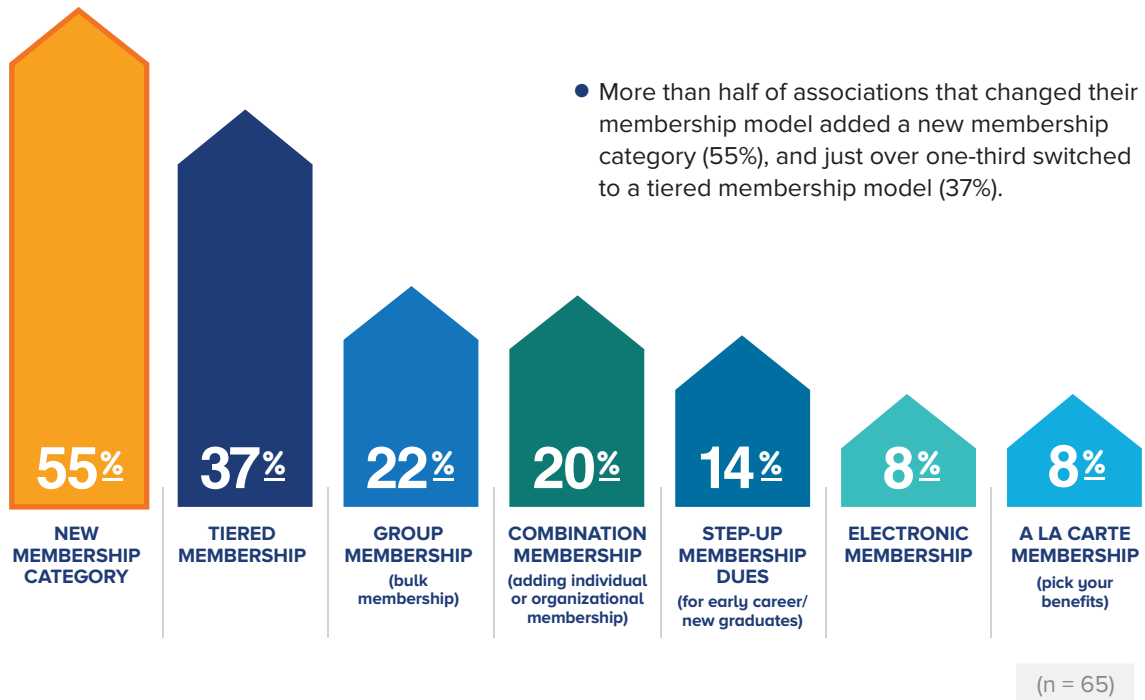


- A majority of associations have not adopted a new membership model within the past year (87%, a slight uptick from 85% reported in 2023).
- Combination associations are significantly more likely to have changed their membership model in the past year (22%) compared to IMOs and trade organizations (8% and 11%, respectively).
- Smaller IMOs (less than 5,000 members) are significantly more likely to have changed their membership model within the past year than those with a greater number of members.



WHAT TYPE OF NEW MEMBERSHIP MODEL(S) HAS YOUR ASSOCIATION ADOPTED?

Check all that apply. (Associations that have adopted a new membership model.)



“[We introduced a] Corporate Membership which enables companies to be members... [This] Increased membership and revenue.” — *IMO*



Dues

A majority of associations base their membership dues on specific attributes, with trade associations leading in this practice. Most associations raise dues as needed, although a significant portion implement annual increases. There's a growing trend in the percentage of associations raising dues, with higher renewal rates associated with more frequent increases.



HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE YOUR MEMBERSHIP DUES STRUCTURE?

MEMBERSHIP DUES STRUCTURE				
	Total (n = 530)	IMO (n = 205)	Trade (n = 177)	Combination (n = 148)
\$ The membership dues are based on certain attributes (i.e., qualifications, experience, company size, revenue, geography, etc.)	59%	58%	66%	51%
\$ Everyone pays the same membership dues	21%	25%	16%	21%
\$ The membership dues are based on a tiered structure of increasing benefits	12%	7%	11%	19%
\$ The membership dues are based on member-selected benefits (à la carte)	1%	2%	1%	1%
* Other	8%	8%	7%	8%

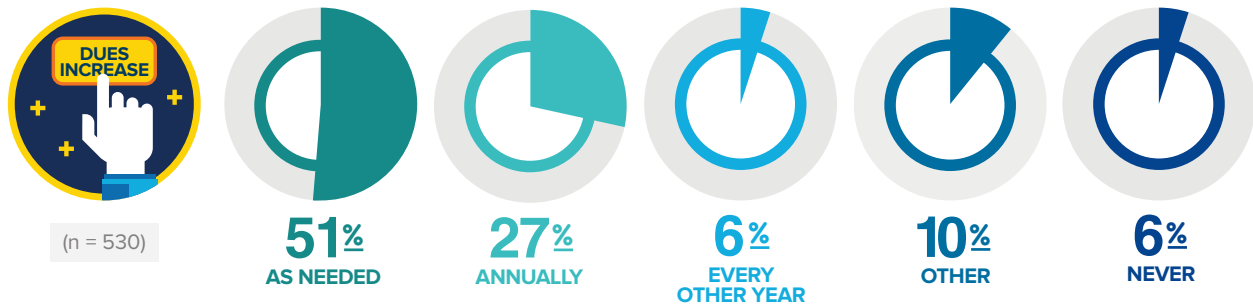
- A majority of associations report that the membership dues are based on certain attributes such as qualifications, company size, or experience level (59%, up from 53% reported in 2023). Two-thirds of trade associations employ this dues structure (66%, up from 61% reported in 2023, but similar to 67% reported in 2022).
- 21% of associations utilize a one-size-fits-all dues structure where everyone pays the same

membership dues (on par with 22% reported in 2023).

- Associations with renewal rates at or above 80% are significantly more likely to base their membership dues structure on specific attributes. Associations with increases in membership counts over the past year and past five years more often use a tiered membership structure compared with associations reporting declines in the same areas.



HOW OFTEN DOES YOUR ASSOCIATION RAISE MEMBERSHIP DUES?



- Most associations only raise dues as needed (51%, down from 55% reported in 2023). Trade associations (54%) are more likely than IMOs (51%) and combination associations (47%) to raise dues when necessary.
- One-quarter of associations raise dues annually (27%, up from 24% reported in 2023), with trade and combination associations more likely to apply an annual increase in dues than IMOs (29% and 31% versus 24%, respectively).
- A significantly higher percentage of associations with renewal rates at or above 80% raise dues annually than those with lower renewal rates.

A significantly higher percentage of associations with renewal rates at or above 80% raise dues annually than those with lower renewal rates.



WHEN WAS THE LAST YEAR YOUR ASSOCIATION INCREASED DUES?

LAST YEAR DUES WERE INCREASED				
	Total (n = 500)	IMO (n = 187)	Trade (n = 173)	Combination (n = 140)
2023	52%	50%	53%	54%
2022	11%	12%	10%	11%
2021	5%	3%	6%	7%
2020	4%	4%	4%	6%
2019	5%	4%	5%	6%
2018	4%	5%	6%	2%
2017	3%	5%	2%	1%
2016	2%	2%	3%	1%
2015	1%	1%	1%	1%
2014	1%	1%	0%	1%
2013 or before	5%	6%	5%	4%
Not sure	6%	6%	6%	4%

- 52% of associations last raised dues in 2023 (up from 47% reported in 2023 and 30% reported in 2022), demonstrating a continued uptick in the percentage of associations raising dues in the past year. This trend is evidenced across all association types.
- Associations with renewal rates at 80% or more are significantly more likely to have raised dues in 2023, as are trade associations with over 500 members and associations with operating budgets of over \$5 million.



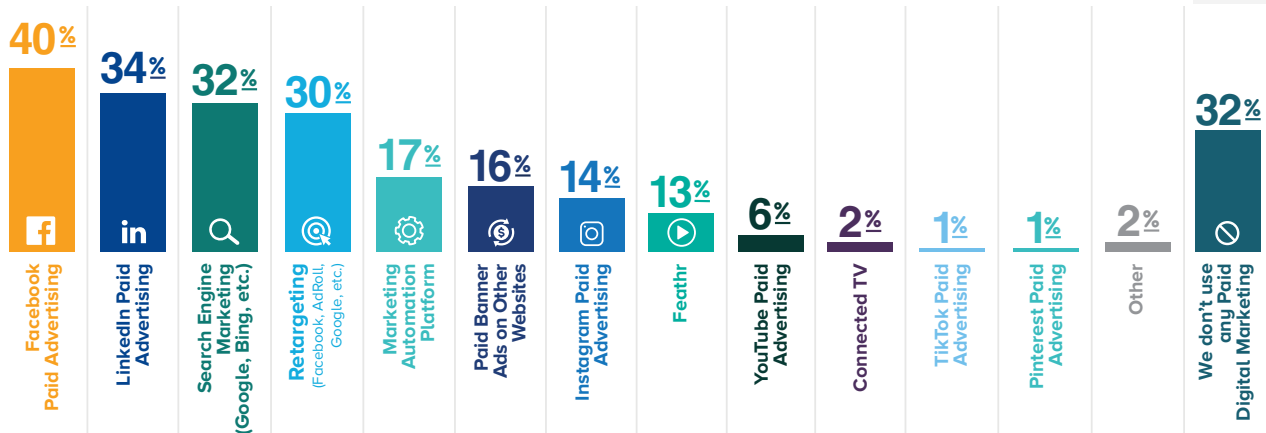
Marketing

The landscape of digital marketing tools continues to evolve, with Facebook and LinkedIn advertising remaining prevalent while search engine marketing sees a slight increase in adoption. Associations reporting membership growth tend to leverage search engine marketing more effectively. Larger associations with substantial budgets dominate the utilization of paid digital marketing tools. Paid digital advertising primarily serves to promote annual events, recruit new members, and drive engagement, with varying effectiveness across association types. Meanwhile, email marketing remains a cornerstone, with segmentation, using a master schedule, automation, and personalization leading the way. Member research emerges as a vital strategy, with three-quarters of associations conducting it, leading to tangible improvements in value proposition articulation and product/service offerings.



WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING PAID DIGITAL MARKETING TOOLS, IF ANY, DO YOU USE? Check all that apply.

(n = 521)



- The most commonly used paid digital advertising tools include Facebook paid advertising (40%, up from 37% reported in 2023), LinkedIn paid advertising (34%, up from 30% reported in 2023), search engine marketing (32%, up slightly from 30% reported in 2023), and retargeting (30%, up from 28% reported in 2023).
- Mirroring findings from past research, one-third of associations do not use any paid digital marketing tools (32%, on par with 33% reported in 2023).

A higher percentage of trade and combination associations report not using paid digital marketing than IMOs (42% and 30% versus 23%, respectively).

- The percentage of IMOs reporting non-use has decreased since reported last year (23% versus 29%), whereas the percentage of trade associations not using paid digital advertising has increased (42% versus 38%).



- A significantly higher proportion of IMOs and/or combination associations use Facebook paid advertising, search engine marketing, retargeting, a marketing automation platform, paid banner ads, and Instagram paid advertising compared to trade associations.
- Associations reporting increases in their five-year membership numbers are significantly more apt to utilize search engine marketing than those reporting declines over the past five years.
- Associations reporting one-year membership growth and increases in new member acquisition

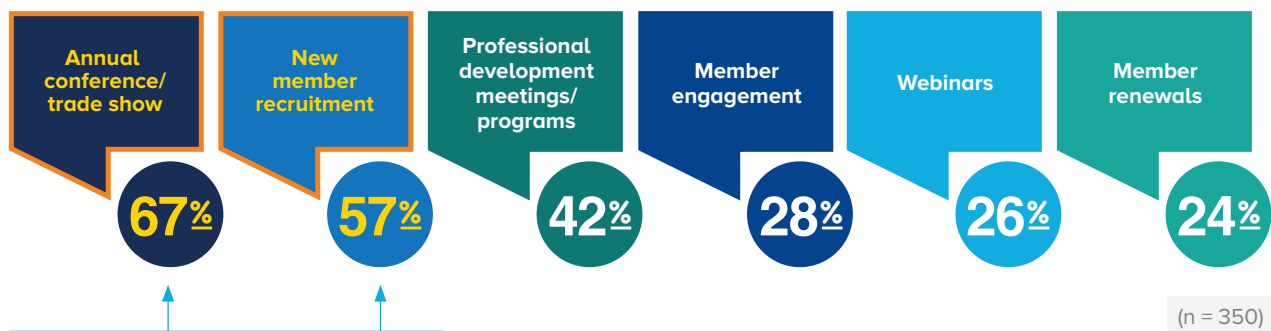
are more likely to use LinkedIn paid advertising and search engine marketing.

- Not surprisingly, associations with operating budgets over \$1 million and/or marketing budgets over \$5,000 are significantly more likely to utilize several paid digital marketing tools. Similarly, a significantly higher percentage of larger associations (IMOs with over 5,000 members and trade associations with over 500 members) use a wide range of paid digital marketing tools compared to their smaller counterparts.



FOR WHAT MARKETING PROMOTIONS DO YOU USE PAID ONLINE DIGITAL ADVERTISING PLATFORMS?

Check all that apply. (Subset of associations using paid digital advertising.)



Associations that use paid digital advertising tools to market their conferences and to recruit new members are more likely to report one-year membership growth.

- Echoing findings from past research, paid digital advertising is most commonly used to promote an association's annual conference or trade show (67%, similar to 66% reported in 2023), recruit new members (57%, on par with 56% reported in 2023), and publicize professional development meetings and programs (42%, similar to 43% reported in 2023).
- At least one-quarter of associations use paid digital advertising to encourage member engagement (28%, on par with 27% reported in 2023), promote webinars (26%, down slightly from

28% reported in 2023), and conduct member renewal campaigns (24%, identical to results reported in 2023).

- IMOs are significantly more likely to use paid digital advertising for member renewal and reinstatement campaigns compared to trade and combination associations.
- A significantly higher percentage of associations reporting renewal rates of 80% or higher use paid digital advertising to promote their annual conference or trade show than those with lower renewal rates.



FOR WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING MARKETING PROMOTIONS IS PAID DIGITAL ADVERTISING MOST EFFECTIVE?

Check all that apply. (Subset of associations using paid digital advertising.)

MOST EFFECTIVE MARKETING PROMOTIONS USING PAID DIGITAL ADVERTISING				
	Total (n = 338)	IMO (n = 142)	Trade (n = 97)	Combination (n = 99)
Annual conference/trade show	52%	51%	49%	56%
New member recruitment	31%	37%	25%	28%
Professional development meetings/programs	24%	19%	27%	28%
Webinars	13%	14%	12%	13%
Member engagement	12%	8%	16%	16%
Member renewals	10%	16%	5%	7%
Certification	8%	9%	8%	7%
Member reinstatement	4%	6%	2%	1%
Donations to association foundation or PAC	2%	5%	1%	0%
New member onboarding	1%	1%	0%	1%
Other product or service purchases other than previously checked	6%	5%	6%	7%

- The paid digital advertising campaigns deemed most effective are used to promote annual conferences/trade shows (52%), recruit new members (31%), and promote professional development meetings/programs (24%).
- Executives from IMOs more often consider digital advertising effective for new member recruitment and member renewals and less effective for promoting professional development or member engagement, compared to trade or combination associations.
- Associations with first-year member renewals of 80% or higher are significantly more likely to consider paid digital advertising highly effective for increasing member engagement than those with lower first-year member renewals.
- A higher percentage of associations reporting increases in one- and five-year membership numbers indicate that using paid digital advertising is most effective for promoting the annual conference or trade show and for new member recruitment.



WHY DO YOU NOT USE PAID DIGITAL ADVERTISING?

Check all that apply. (Subset of associations using paid digital advertising.)

WHY NOT USE PAID DIGITAL ADVERTISING				
	Total (n = 164)	IMO (n = 46)	Trade (n = 74)	Combination (n = 44)
👉 We don't have the budget	55%	46%	54%	66%
👉 We don't have staff expertise to implement	33%	35%	28%	39%
👉 We don't believe there will be enough ROI	27%	30%	30%	21%
👉 We don't know if we can reach our prospects online	18%	22%	19%	14%
👉 We don't have the time	15%	15%	14%	18%
👉 We haven't had a chance to consider this	13%	9%	18%	11%
👉 We can't get executive level buy-in	10%	15%	10%	5%
👉 We are not sure how to measure results/track ROI	10%	11%	12%	5%
👉 Other	11%	9%	12%	11%
👉 Not sure	7%	7%	7%	7%

- Of the associations not using paid digital advertising, most report they do not have the budget (55%). This reason is noted by more than half of trade associations (54%) and two-thirds of combination associations (66%). Nearly half of IMOs also report not having the budget (46%).
- One-third of associations report that they do not have the staff expertise to implement paid digital advertising (33%), and just over one-quarter indicate they don't think using paid digital advertising will bring the ROI desired (27%).
- Not surprisingly, associations with the smallest operating budgets (less than \$1 million) are most likely to report budgetary issues.



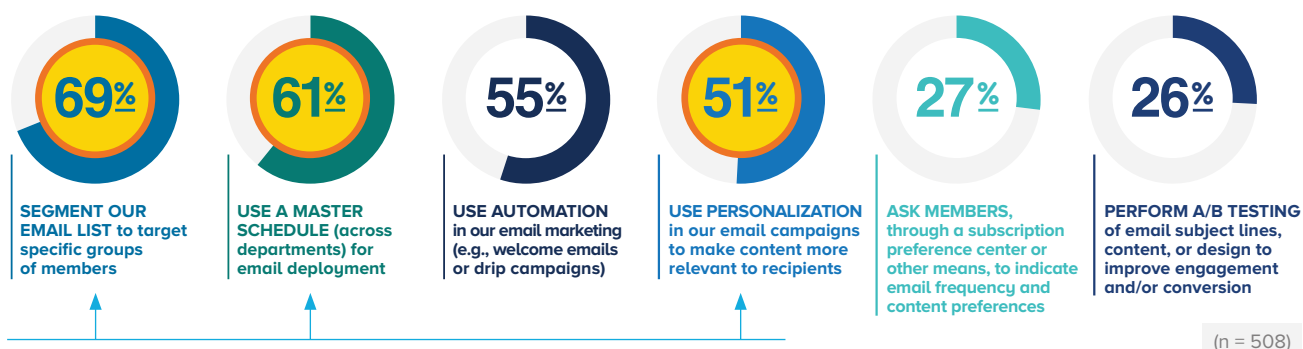
HOW MANY TOTAL EMAILS DOES YOUR ASSOCIATION TYPICALLY SEND OUT TO MEMBERS EACH WEEK?

(n = 506)



- The median number of emails sent to members per week is three. This count does not vary much based on association type.
- 58% of associations send between one and three emails to members per week. 22% send more than five per week.
- A higher percentage of IMOs and combination associations send more than five emails per week to members than do trade associations (26% and 24% versus 18%, respectively).
- A significantly higher percentage of associations with renewal rates of 80% or higher send only two emails to members per week.

WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING DO YOU EMPLOY FOR YOUR EMAIL MARKETING? Check all that apply.



Associations that use these email marketing tactics are more likely to report membership growth.

- The most commonly used email marketing tactics include segmenting the email list to target specific groups (69%), using a master schedule across all departments for email deployment (61%), using automation in email marketing campaigns (55%), and utilizing personalization to make content more relevant to recipients (51%).
- Compared to trade and combination associations, IMOs more often employ a master schedule, use personalization, and conduct A/B testing of email subject lines, content, and design to improve engagement or conversion.
- Associations reporting increases in their renewal rate over the past year are significantly more likely to employ personalization than associations reporting declines or no change in renewals.
- Compared to the smallest IMOs (under 1,000 members), IMOs with more than 1,000 members are significantly more likely to utilize email segmentation to target their audience, automation, perform A/B testing, and ask members to indicate their email frequency and content preferences.



- Large trade associations (over 500 members) are significantly more likely to employ a master schedule for email deployment, use automation and personalization, perform A/B testing, and ask members for email frequency and content preferences compared to smaller trade organizations.
- Associations with larger operating budgets (over \$5 million) and larger marketing budgets (over \$20,000) are also significantly more likely to employ a variety of email marketing strategies than associations with smaller corresponding budgets.



DOES YOUR ASSOCIATION CONDUCT RESEARCH TO BETTER UNDERSTAND YOUR MEMBERS, LAPSED MEMBERS, OR PROSPECTIVE MEMBERS?

- Three-quarters of associations conduct member research (74%), with one-third reporting regularly undertaking member research and one-third indicating the association has no set schedule for research (35% and 33%, respectively).
- IMOs are more likely to have a set schedule for conducting research compared to trade and combination associations (39% versus 30% and 34%, respectively).
- One-quarter of associations do not conduct member research either because they stopped (5%), haven't yet started (13%), or have never instigated member research (9%).
- A significantly higher percentage of larger IMOs (over 5,000 members) conduct member research regularly compared to their smaller counterparts.
- Similarly, associations with larger operating budgets (over \$1 million) and larger marketing budgets (over \$60,000) are significantly more likely to conduct member research regularly.
- Associations reporting five-year membership growth and increases in new member acquisition over the past year are more likely to conduct research regularly.

Associations that conduct member research regularly are more likely to report membership growth.

YES, WE CONDUCT MEMBER RESEARCH REGULARLY



YES, BUT WE DO NOT HAVE A SET SCHEDULE FOR CONDUCTING MEMBER RESEARCH



YES, WE JUST STARTED CONDUCTING MEMBER RESEARCH



NO, BUT WE ARE PLANNING TO CONDUCT MEMBER RESEARCH



WE USED TO CONDUCT MEMBER RESEARCH REGULARLY, BUT HAVE STOPPED



NO, WE DO NOT CONDUCT MEMBER RESEARCH



(n = 519)



HOW OFTEN DOES YOUR ASSOCIATION CONDUCT OR PLAN TO CONDUCT MEMBER RESEARCH TO BETTER UNDERSTAND YOUR MEMBERS, LAPSED MEMBERS, OR PROSPECTIVE MEMBERS?

(Subset of associations that conduct member research or are planning to conduct member research.)

- 38% of associations conduct member research annually, and 29% conduct member research more frequently. One-quarter of associations conduct member research every two years (22%).
- Compared to IMOs and combination associations, trade associations more commonly conduct member research multiple times per year (32%), while IMOs are more likely to survey members only once a year (42%).
- Associations that conduct research annually are more likely to report one-year membership growth.

Associations that conduct research annually are more likely to report one-year membership growth.





WHAT KIND OF CHANGES OR IMPROVEMENTS HAS YOUR ASSOCIATION MADE BASED ON MEMBER RESEARCH?

Check all that apply. (Subset of associations that conduct member research.)

MORE EFFECTIVELY ARTICULATED OUR VALUE PROPOSITION



BOLSTERED OUR VALUE PROPOSITION



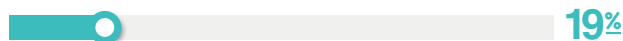
ADDED NEW PRODUCTS OR SERVICES (THOSE FOR WHICH AN ADDITIONAL FEE IS CHARGED)



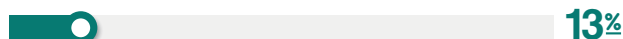
ADDED AND/OR SUNSET MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS (BENEFITS INCLUDED WITH MEMBERSHIP)



MODIFIED PRICING OF OUR MEMBERSHIP, PRODUCTS, AND/OR SERVICES



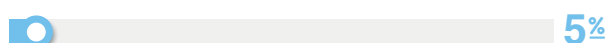
CHANGED OUR MEMBERSHIP MODEL



WE HAVE NOT MADE CHANGES BASED ON OUR RESEARCH



OTHER



(n = 376)

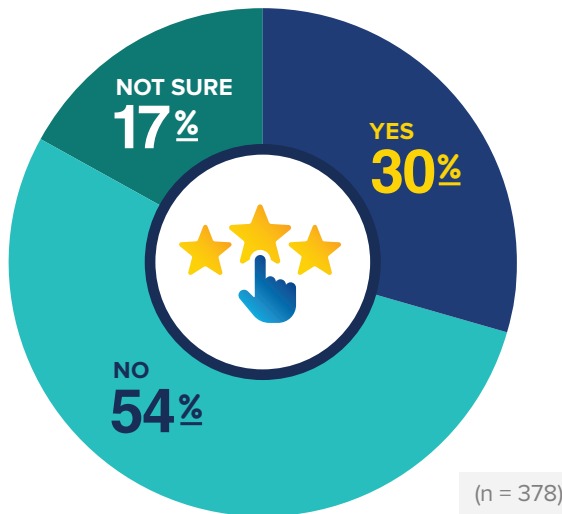
- More than half of associations that conduct research have more effectively articulated the value proposition based on the results (53%). Additionally, more than four in ten associations report that research findings have bolstered the value proposition (42%) or prompted the addition of new products and services (41%).
- Trade associations are significantly more likely than IMOs and combination associations to report that member research has enabled them to more effectively communicate their value proposition and has, in turn, reinforced the value proposition promoted.
- A significantly higher proportion of combination associations report that research has prompted a change in the association's membership model (21%) compared to IMOs and trade associations (11% and 8%, respectively).
- Associations reporting five year membership growth are more likely to have added new products and services as a result of member research.

Associations reporting five year membership growth are more likely to have added new products and services as a result of member research.



DO YOU INCLUDE A NET PROMOTER SCORE (NPS) QUESTION IN YOUR MEMBER RESEARCH?

(Subset of associations that conduct member research or are planning to conduct member research.)



- A majority of associations do not employ the Net Promoter Score (NPS) as part of their research (54%), and fewer than one-third of associations use the NPS as a regular metric (30%).
- Of the associations that do use it, IMOs are more likely to utilize this measurement.
- When conducting research, the associations significantly more likely to employ the NPS metric include large IMOs (over 5,000 members), associations with operating budgets over \$1 million, and associations with annual marketing budgets over \$5,000.

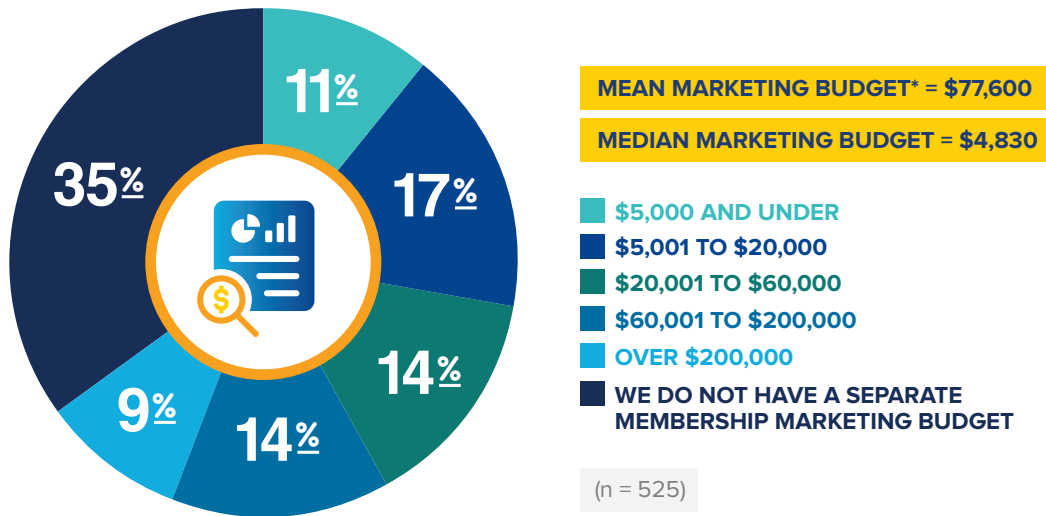
NET PROMOTER SCORE				
	Total (n = 378)	IMO (n = 152)	Trade (n = 125)	Combination (n = 101)
÷ Mean NPS*	40	38	44	40
● Median NPS	40	36	46	41

*Means are influenced by high and low numbers in the data set.

- Of the associations that conduct research using the NPS, the median score is 40.
- The median NPS is higher for trade associations (46) than for combination associations (41) and IMOs (36).
- Associations more likely to report one-year and five-year membership growth are more likely to use NPS than those reporting declines or no change.



WHAT IS YOUR ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MARKETING BUDGET?



**Means are influenced by high and low numbers in the data set.*

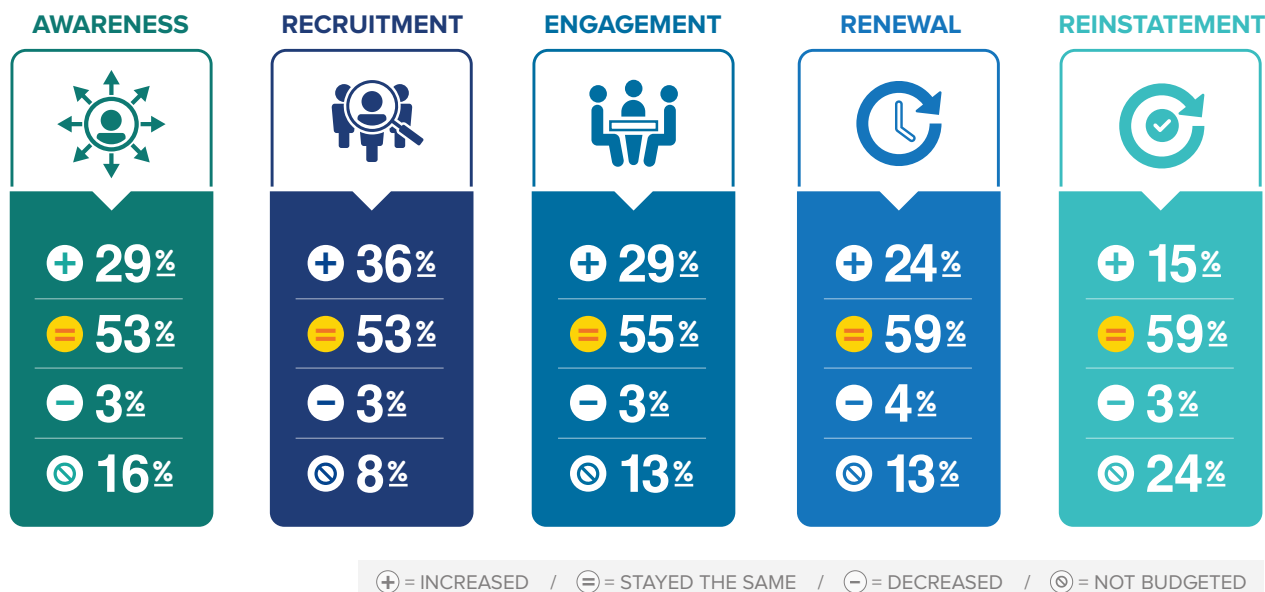
Associations that do not have a separate membership marketing budget are more likely to report a one-year membership decline.

- One-third of associations report they do not have a separate budget for membership marketing (35%, up slightly from 33% reported in 2023). Trade and combination associations are more likely than IMOs to report not having a membership marketing budget (40% and 39%, respectively, versus 28% for IMOs).
- Interestingly, associations with membership renewal rates of 80% or higher are significantly less likely to have a separate marketing budget.
- However, associations reporting no change in their membership count or in new members recruited in the past year are significantly more likely to report having no separate marketing budget compared to associations that saw growth in the same areas.
- Not surprisingly, associations with larger annual operating budgets typically also have larger marketing budgets.



HOW HAS THE MEMBERSHIP MARKETING BUDGET CHANGED FROM LAST YEAR FOR EACH STAGE OF THE MEMBERSHIP LIFECYCLE?

(This is a subset of associations that have an annual marketing budget.)



Associations that increased their recruitment marketing budget are more likely to report membership growth over the past year.

- A majority of associations report that the budget for each area of the membership lifecycle has not changed.
- 24% of association executives indicate that they do not budget for reinstatement campaigns as a separate entity. Trade associations are significantly more likely to have not budgeted specifically for reinstatement or renewal campaigns than IMOs.
- Recruitment budgets are most likely to have increased from the previous year (36%), followed by increases in budgets earmarked for association awareness and member engagement (29% each).
- A significantly higher proportion of associations reporting first-year member renewals at 60% or higher report increases in their member engagement and member renewal budgets compared to those with first-year member renewals under 60%.
- A significantly larger percentage of associations reporting increases in overall members in the past year indicate budget increases in awareness and recruitment compared to associations that showed no change in member counts.
- Associations reporting increases in new members in 2023 are significantly more likely to report increases in their budgets for recruitment, awareness, renewal, and reinstatement compared to those reporting no change in member acquisition.
- Similarly, associations reporting increases in renewals over the past year are significantly more likely to indicate budget increases for awareness, renewal, and reinstatement campaigns compared to associations reporting no change in renewals.



WITH REGARD TO YOUR MEMBERSHIP MARKETING, WHAT SERVICES, IF ANY, DO YOU OUTSOURCE? Check all that apply.

OUTSOURCED SERVICES					
		Total (n = 509)	IMO (n = 196)	Trade (n = 171)	Combination (n = 142)
TOP 1	Graphic design	31%	31%	32%	31%
TOP 2	Website development	27%	21%	35%	26%
TOP 3	Direct mail printing and mailing	23%	31%	19%	16%
Paid digital advertising		18%	21%	17%	16%
Market research		16%	19%	14%	16%
Brand development		12%	12%	11%	13%
Copywriting		12%	11%	15%	11%
Search engine optimization		11%	10%	14%	11%
Telemarketing		9%	15%	3%	8%
Public relations		9%	8%	9%	9%
Email marketing		8%	7%	11%	6%
Organic social media management		7%	5%	12%	4%
List management/list acquisition		6%	7%	4%	5%
Print ad placement		5%	5%	5%	3%
Data analytics		5%	4%	5%	8%
Database hygiene		4%	3%	3%	6%
Texting		3%	6%	1%	2%
Other		2%	3%	2%	1%
Nothing/no outsourcing		30%	29%	30%	33%

- Associations are most likely to outsource graphic design (31%, down from 35% reported in 2023), website development (27%, on par with 28% reported in 2023), and direct mail printing and mailing (23%, similar to 24% reported in 2023).
- IMOs are significantly more likely to outsource direct mail, whereas trade and combination associations more often outsource website development than IMOs.
- 30% of associations do not outsource any services (similar to 29% reported in 2023). These tend to be smaller associations (fewer members) with smaller operating and/or marketing budgets.



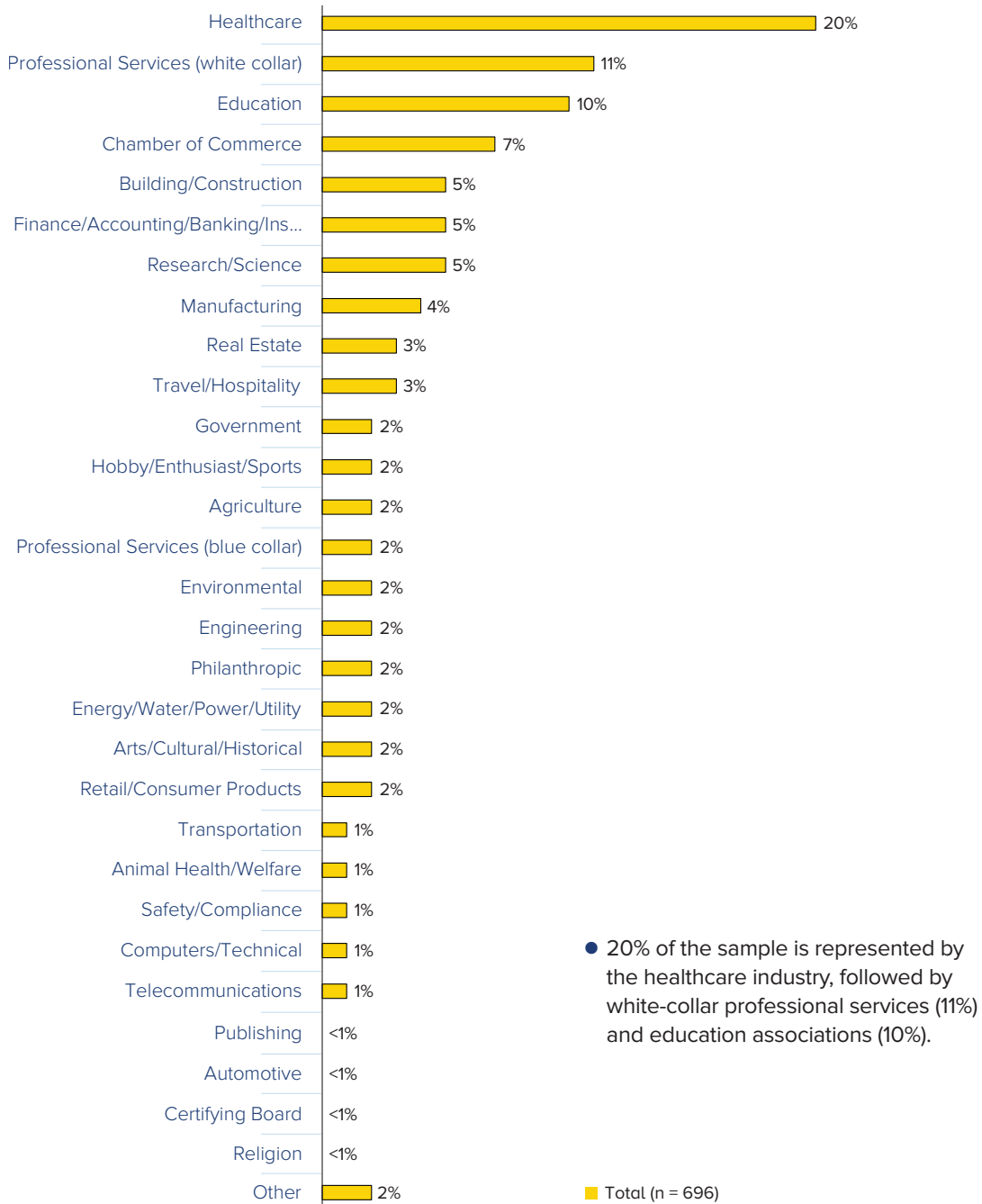
SECTION 9

Association Demographics



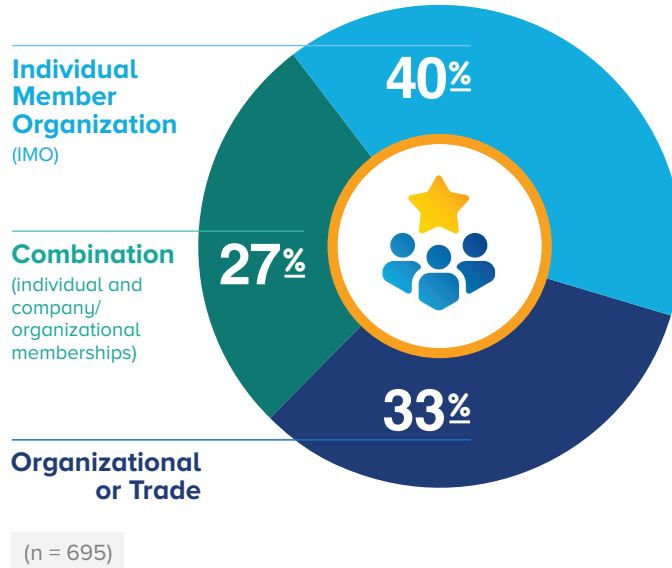
WHAT BEST DESCRIBES YOUR ASSOCIATION'S INDUSTRY?

ASSOCIATION INDUSTRY





WHAT TYPE OF MEMBERSHIP OFFERING BEST DESCRIBES YOUR ORGANIZATION?



- 40% of the survey participants represent IMOs, 33% represent organizational or trade associations, and 27% represent combination associations.
- A higher percentage of trade associations have participated in this study than in the 2023 survey (33%, up from 29%).



HOW MANY PAID MEMBERS ARE IN YOUR ASSOCIATION?

NUMBER OF PAID INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS			
	Total (n = 437)	IMO (n = 266)	Combination (n = 171)
📊 Median	4,998	7,900	1,231
# Up to 1,000	27%	14%	47%
# 1,001 - 5,000	24%	25%	22%
# 5,001 - 19,999	28%	35%	17%
# 20,000 or more	22%	26%	15%

- The median number of individual members in either an IMO or combination association that participated in the survey is 4,998 (up from 4,185 reported in 2023). Approximately one-quarter of IMO and combination associations report having either up to 1,000 members (27%, identical to results reported in 2023), 1,001 to 5,000 members (24%, down slightly from 26% reported in 2023), or 5,001 to 19,999 members (28%, on par with 27% reported in 2023). 22% of IMOs and combination associations participating in this survey have

20,000 or more individual members (similar to 21% reported in 2023).

- The median number of individual members in an IMO is 7,900 (up from 6,494 reported in 2023), and in a combination association is 1,231 (down from 1,851 reported in 2023). Combination associations are more likely than IMOs to have fewer than 1,000 individual members (47% vs. 14%, respectively), while 60% of IMOs have over 1,000 members but fewer than 20,000.



NUMBER OF PAID COMPANY/GROUP MEMBERS			
	Total (n = 389)	Trade (n = 219)	Combination (n = 170)
Median	473	489	436
# Up to 100	16%	11%	23%
# 101 to 499	34%	38%	30%
# 500+	49%	51%	47%

- The median number of organizational members within a trade or combination association is 473 (up from 400 reported in 2023), with trade associations reporting more organizational members than combination associations (489 versus 436, respectively). However, the median number of organizational members within a combination association has increased from those reported in 2023 (436, up from 338 reported in 2023).
- Just over half of trade associations have 500 company members or more (51%), compared to 47% of combination associations reporting the same number of organizational members (up from 43% reported in 2023). Additionally, combination associations more often report having up to 100 organizational members (23%, down from 29% reported in 2023) compared to trade associations (11%, down slightly from 13% reported in 2023).



WHAT IS YOUR ORGANIZATION'S ANNUAL OPERATING BUDGET?

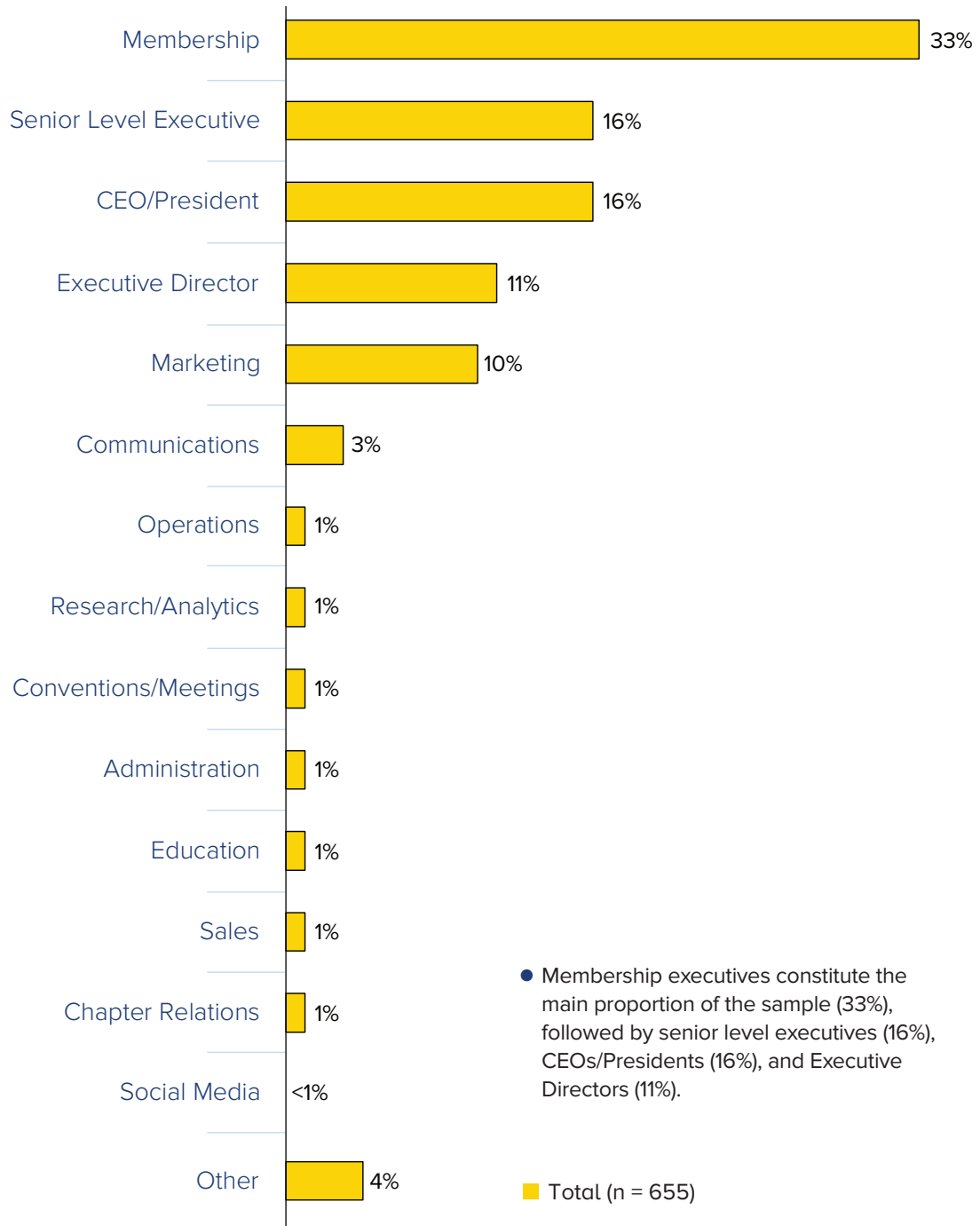
ANNUAL OPERATION BUDGET				
	Total (n = 695)	IMO (n = 281)	Trade (n = 229)	Combination (n = 185)
Median (in millions)	\$2.33	\$2.85	\$1.97	\$2.12
# Less than \$1 million	23%	19%	24%	29%
# \$1 million to \$4.9 million	37%	34%	44%	33%
# \$5 million to \$9.9 million	13%	15%	11%	13%
# \$10 million to \$14.9 million	8%	9%	6%	11%
# \$15 million to \$25.9 million	7%	10%	6%	5%
# \$25 million to \$49.9 million	6%	5%	6%	6%
# \$50 million or more	6%	10%	3%	4%

- The median operating budget of all associations is \$2,330,000 (down from \$2,420,000 reported in 2023). IMOs tend to have the highest median annual budget (\$2,850,000, up from \$2,570,000 reported in 2023), and trade associations report the lowest median annual budget (\$1,970,000, down from \$2,400,000 reported in 2023).
- Across all association types, the majority report an annual budget of up to \$4.9 million, with the highest percentage falling within the \$1 million to \$4.9 million range.



WHAT BEST DESCRIBES YOUR PRIMARY JOB FUNCTION?

PRIMARY JOB FUNCTION





SECTION 10

Words of Wisdom



WHAT IS YOUR ASSOCIATION'S BIGGEST IMPEDIMENT TO GROWTH?

The responses reflect a common challenge among associations: effectively articulating the value proposition of membership. Many struggle to communicate the benefits they offer, such as access to policy advocacy, educational resources, and networking opportunities. Resource constraints compound this issue, with limited time, budget, and staffing hindering strategic communication and member engagement efforts. Additionally, concerns about member retention and engagement persist, particularly in addressing evolving member needs and retaining members post-acquisition or merger. Despite these challenges, associations recognize the importance of overcoming these impediments to foster growth and sustain relevance in an increasingly competitive landscape.

- Lack of focused strategy to grow. We have lots of ideas, but have not implemented actions to grow. *IMO*
- Our value proposition is not well understood by members and nonmembers alike, and we struggle to differentiate ourselves from other competing organizations. *IMO*
- Understanding and conveying Value Proposition, specifically to employers who pay the memberships. *IMO*
- The changing needs of professionals (especially - Gen Z and Millennials) and the value proposition of an association in the fast-paced world of free knowledge sharing from service providers and AI. *IMO*
- A membership audience that is too diverse. The diversity of the audiences that we strive to recruit and retain have so many varying interests, honing in on reasons to join or stay a member differ greatly amongst the membership. *IMO*
- We could do a better job taking risks and learning to utilize new technology. *IMO*
- Defining our target market. *IMO*
- Lack of Board direction and lack of funds to strategically grow. *IMO*
- Working in silos in all senses: not sharing information, departments refusing to adopt standard organizational processes, procedures, technologies due to inflexible mentality and the fear of what change might bring. *IMO*
- Trying to do too many things at once and not taking the time to truly excel at each of them. *IMO*
- Our association's membership pool is very specific, and the overall population is small. We have a difficult time finding new sources of contact information for potential members to reach out to. *IMO*
- Clarity of value proposition. *IMO*
- Identifying member needs and providing membership value. *IMO*
- Outside competitors with large marketing budgets. *IMO*
- Having staff understand that membership should be a central consideration in all programs, not a separate program. *IMO*
- Engagement and retention with young members. *IMO*
- Outdated technology and business practices which impede revenue growth and member satisfaction. *IMO*
- Conveying the value of membership. *IMO*
- Our biggest impediment to growth is telling our own story. We get so bogged down in the day to day delivery of what we do and executing our mission that we forget not everyone knows what it is that we do, how we benefit them, and why they need to be a part of it. *IMO*
- Having the time to spend on true campaigns including testing, analyzation. *IMO*



- Freeloader syndrome - The understanding that what we do is important, but that we will do it regardless of their individual membership contribution. *IMO*
- Lack of marketing staff/understanding of marketing principles and benefits. *IMO*
- Right now the organization is focused on too many different membership segments. Trying to please too many potential members and not focused on the right members for long-term growth. *IMO*
- Articulating membership value proposition. As an association focused on policy and advocacy and industrial relations, the work being done by

the organization benefits all medical industry and society broadly. Given the past focus on only policy, advocacy, and IR, there hasn't been a focus on membership or membership growth. *Trade*

- Having sufficient time and resources to design strategic communications to educate, inform, and motivate members. *Trade*
- Our member retention and engagement dropped significantly from last year, partly due to rising acquisitions and mergers within our membership. Typically, when new ownership comes in, email addresses change, costs are cut, and we lose our primary points of contact. *Trade*



WHAT STRATEGIES DO YOU HAVE IN PLACE TO GROW YOUR ASSOCIATION'S REVENUE?

These responses highlight a proactive approach among associations to enhance revenue generation by diversifying their income streams. Associations are actively exploring non-dues revenue channels, such as sponsorship opportunities, advertising, and the development of new products and services, to reduce reliance on traditional sources. Moreover, there is a concerted effort to focus on membership growth and engagement to drive revenue, with initiatives ranging from recruitment campaigns to improving member retention through enhanced benefits and communication strategies. Additionally, associations are strategically optimizing their events and conferences to maximize revenue potential, leveraging both in-person and virtual platforms to attract sponsors, exhibitors, and attendees. Overall, the responses reflect a dynamic landscape where associations adapt their strategies to meet the evolving needs of their members while ensuring sustainable financial growth.

- We have implemented a sponsorship and partner program that has been very successful. *IMO*
- Continue to focus on membership growth and retention. *IMO*
- More active outreach, using AI tools to attack retention of lapsed members, and more digital media/use of association app for messaging of our impact. *IMO*
- I don't feel that we have good strategies in place to grow our revenue in any way. We are status quo. *IMO*
- Improve our product development process so we can better understand the market need, implications of developing (time, cost, risk, etc.) a given product, how it fits into the existing product lineup, and to understand how successful it will be at meeting the market need and generating revenue. *IMO*

- We launched paid professional development (virtual events) this year, very early returns are good, we're giving ourselves permission to experiment and learn the first year. *IMO*
- We are going to hire a new staff member that will focus 100% on marketing/branding of membership, courses, and conference. *IMO*
- A dues increase is planned for 2025 as well as further discussions on adding a new membership tier to our existing structure. A new sponsorship program is also being tested this year with plans to grow more in 2025. *IMO*
- Built a membership strategic plan for 2024-2026. *IMO*

continued on following page



- Texting young members for renewals. Initiating a win-back campaign. Renewal communications targeted to each member segment. Created webinars targeted to those lacking professional training. *IMO*
- Plan to hire additional staff to serve our members. *IMO*
- Survey our members and nonmembers to better understand them. *IMO*
- Looking into AI automation resources to streamline prospect and industry marketing. *IMO*
- Updating our dues structure and membership categories. *IMO*
- Digital Advertising. *IMO*
- We created 2 new initiatives this past year: Young Professionals and Women 2 Women Connecting. Both of these networking events are open to everyone, with a different price for members and

nonmembers. They are both doing a great job of recruiting new members to the chamber and helping share the chamber's story. *IMO*

- We have a variety of projects in the works at the moment. For membership, we are looking to offer multi-year memberships, company-wide memberships spanning many facilities, auto-renewal options, and offering membership resources to sister-facilities of members, regardless of their actual eligibility of membership. *Trade*
- A more inclusive membership model that will pull in adjacent industry professionals. *Trade*
- Began hosting low-lift regional events open to members and nonmembers. *Trade*
- Continue expanding brand awareness via industry partnerships. *Trade*
- Exploring non-dues revenue channels and increasing development/sponsorships. *Trade*



WHAT IS THE MOST INNOVATIVE INITIATIVE YOUR ASSOCIATION INTRODUCED IN THE PAST YEAR? HOW DID IT POSITIVELY IMPACT YOUR ASSOCIATION?

These responses reflect a concerted effort to innovate and adapt to the changing needs of members and industries. A prominent focus emerges on professional development initiatives, showcasing a commitment to enhancing members' skills, knowledge, and career opportunities through various programs, including certificate courses, mentorship programs, and leadership institutes. Furthermore, there is a strong emphasis on improving membership benefits and engagement, aimed at enhancing the value proposition for members and fostering stronger connections within the community. Additionally, technology integration emerges as a key theme, with associations leveraging chatbots, mobile apps, and webinars to enhance communication, accessibility, and overall member experience. These efforts collectively demonstrate a proactive approach to meeting the evolving needs of members and stakeholders while driving innovation within the associations and industries they serve.

- We moved to a new AMS that offers more reporting capabilities to understand our members and target segments for communication and engagement. We moved to a new website that is responsive to individuals' interests by suggesting "like" content. *IMO*
- We started partnering with universities to co-brand courses they were already offering, and provide a discount to our members. *IMO*
- Launched our new mobile app and have seen

significant increase in engagement that should result in stronger retention in 2024. *IMO*

- We introduced a new membership category that enabled a number of new companies to join. *IMO*
- Partnering with a nationally recognized organization to provide third-party validation for our certification program. *IMO*
- Automatic renewal, so far so good. *IMO*
- We are not innovative and do not try new things. *IMO*



- We started using our data to identify our members who are most at risk of dropping. This way we can proactively engage them, well before renewal season. *IMO*
- Corporate Membership, which enables companies to be members so the company pays the fees for the members of their company. Increased membership and revenue. *IMO*
- Currently looking at using AI to increase staff efficiency. *IMO*
- Leveraging AI to assist in building products and producing copy. *IMO*
- Having a concerned marketing effort to use digital ads on Facebook, Instagram to attract new members through a lead generation campaign. *IMO*
- Ringless voicemail - the ROI is off the charts. *IMO*
- Drip campaign to introduce member benefits to new members. Enhanced our engagement efforts through personal phone calls, emails, and meetings so current members are engaged. *IMO*
- Rebranding - logo, look and feel. Probably engaged younger members better. *IMO*
- In 2023, we completed the implementation of a new member onboarding program. The updated program follows a new member through their first year of membership. Upon approval, they receive a mentor who calls the new member to introduce themselves and the association. The mentor maintains communication throughout the year, and encourages them to participate. *Trade*
- All Access Pass Memberships that combine registration to all our events with their membership dues at a discount. It locked in participation at the beginning of the year. *Trade*
- The association hired an AMC, which was a huge step, because it brought professional managers to the association. *Trade*
- Article processing charge for our journal - waived for members. More submissions to our journal and more members! *Trade*
- Campus to Career Program to include our curriculum in universities, then matching students with employers in Mentor program, providing conference scholarships, and connecting them on internships. The program has a lot of energy around it as members are excited to participate. *Trade*



WITH REGARD TO YOUR ASSOCIATION, WHAT KEEPS YOU UP AT NIGHT?

These responses paint a nuanced picture of the current state of associations. While challenges and uncertainties abound, there's also a spirit of resilience and adaptability woven throughout the comments. Concerns about membership, including declining numbers and retention struggles, underscore the need for associations to evolve their approaches to cater to changing demographics and member expectations. Financial pressures, such as deficits and reliance on traditional revenue sources, highlight the imperative for associations to diversify their income streams. Operational hurdles, ranging from outdated systems to staffing shortages, further emphasize the need for strategic innovation and efficiency improvements. Despite these formidable obstacles, there's an underlying determination among association leaders to innovate, engage members, and forge ahead with solutions that ensure the long-term sustainability and relevance.

- Retention of young professionals. *IMO*
- The long-term future of the association if we cannot create a value proposition that resonates with younger professionals. *IMO*
- The pressure to retain a competent staff of association professionals in a marketplace that was devastated by the impact of COVID. It will take 3 to 5 years to recover the lost member revenue from closed member businesses. *IMO*
- How to promote our association and recruit new members. *IMO*

continued on following page



- Everything...managing a large team thinking we are not doing enough innovatively to continue to be relevant, wondering how AI will continue to impact. *IMO*
- Worries about the long-term future of the association and how to do more with less. *IMO*
- Member engagement, it's not so much an issue of growth, but how do we keep them engaged and connected to us. *IMO*
- Not enough hours in the day to achieve all we would like to achieve. *IMO*
- Letting our for-profit partners beat us to the punch with educational programming. *IMO*
- Our organization seems to be more concerned with keeping senior leaders happy rather than focusing on our customers and what will effectively grow engagement and revenue. We also give too much away to nonmembers that compromises our membership value proposition. *IMO*
- Building and communicating the value of membership to members and potential members. *IMO*
- Declining membership because of low conversion rate from free members to dues paying members. *IMO*
- Lack of proactive leadership and almost total disconnect of leaders from daily operations/needs of staff. *IMO*
- Membership—the biggest to-do list and little to no support. Leadership—executive director is not engaged, poor management. Team—silo working (small staff). *IMO*
- Industry consolidation and/or downsizing. Retirements of long-time supporters with no “succession” to the next group of industry executives. *IMO*
- Email open rates and the number of members unsubscribing to our emails. *IMO*
- Social media is a powerful marketing tool. I would like to improve how we use it to deliver value for our members. *IMO*
- Juggling too many offerings, deciding which to sunset. *Trade*
- Membership recruitment - our members are retiring and/or being bought out by corporations who are not eligible to belong to our association. Our potential membership base is shrinking. *Trade*
- A lack of non-dues revenue activities and loss of membership. Not having volunteers willing to support the organization has also made the day-to-day operations challenging. *Trade*
- Cyber Security and Member Engagement. *Trade*
- Declining membership. *Trade*
- Finances, as we have had to tap reserves x 3 years and need to have a great financial year. *Trade*



HOW ARE YOU EFFECTIVELY REACHING AND ENGAGING YOUNGER GENERATIONS IN YOUR ASSOCIATION?

These responses reflect a diverse range of strategies associations employ to effectively reach and engage younger generations. Many associations focus on creating tailored programs and events to appeal to the interests and needs of young professionals, providing opportunities for networking, mentorship, and professional development. Social media and digital outreach play a significant role in these efforts, with associations leveraging online platforms to connect with younger audiences. Initiatives targeting students and academic institutions, such as scholarships, student chapters, and educational partnerships, also feature prominently. Despite these proactive measures, opportunities for improvement remain, underscoring the ongoing efforts of associations to adapt and evolve their approaches.

- We have created a Young Professional Network; we have a committee and engage our more active young professionals in creating events that will draw in a younger generation. *IMO*
- We've greatly expanded our emerging professionals program and are actively reaching out to community colleges and universities to grow our student and recent graduate participation. *IMO*



- Our young professionals are very interested in our certifications - attracting new YPs is not a challenge but keeping them throughout their career is. We've introduced micro-learning and automated certification maintenance tracker as member-only benefits. *IMO*
- Yes, our Young Member Council is very active and increases in members each year organically. *IMO*
- Mentorship programs, increased social media engagement. *IMO*
- We are doing more social media, but that's about it. Though we recognize it's something we need to do, we're just not sure how best to go about doing it. *IMO*
- Use of social media. Big focus on LinkedIn this past year has been successful at bringing on new members and starting conversations. *IMO*
- We are reaching a younger generation of member, but the expectations and association value proposition look different for the younger generations. *IMO*
- It is a mixed bag for us. Our most successful program happens at our annual conference with social gatherings. *IMO*
- At the moment there are very few young people involved with our member organizations, and in the few cases where there have been, they often lose interest quickly and become frustrated by the slow pace and lack of resources available to them. *IMO*
- We have had a very strong and successful leadership program in place for 30 years. This is by far the best investment that the association makes in ensuring its future viability. *IMO*
- We have a special pricing level and group for ppl under 40. We also have a few "Future Leaders" development programs, and we offer Student Membership for colleges/universities. *IMO*
- Moderate success. There are programming that the younger generations resonate with and appreciate, but they are not connecting this to membership benefits (i.e., access to the programs is given because of membership). *IMO*
- Videos, reels, stories, TikTok - focus on food influencer vibe, positive messaging when possible. *IMO*
- Ensuring content is relevant to them. Addressing their needs with new affinity programs. *IMO*
- We have a robust student engagement strategy that we are continually enhancing and implementing. *IMO*
- Campus to Career Program and Scholarships. *Trade*
- We have a very collaborative relationship with the universities/colleges; some require membership and some pay for it for their students. Our challenge is the low renewal rate for graduates due to high cost of education/loans. *Trade*
- Implemented a Young Professionals Task Force and Young Professionals events/offers. *Trade*
- We try to get them plugged in as a volunteer the moment they express interest in something to help them feel a sense of ownership within the organization. *Trade*
- Student program expansion with university curriculum partners and student chapters. *Trade*
- We have a young professionals network within our association for employees 'under 35' at member facilities. We have small group peer networking, an in-person Leadership Summit, Lean Manufacturing training, ongoing webinars, and a private session with a main keynote speaker at our annual conference. *Trade*

Marketing General Incorporated has published the Membership Marketing Benchmarking Report annually since 2009. Every year, our research and creative teams put together this in-depth study of the strategies and tactics that membership organizations from the U.S. and worldwide use to recruit new members, engage and renew those members, and reinstate lapsed members. We want to thank all MGI team members who contributed to this project, especially Kimberly Humphries, Stella Niblett, and Nicole Clark.

MGI: Your Association's Digital Marketing Solution



DIGITAL
MARKETING



STRATEGIC
CONSULTING



DIRECT
MARKETING



MARKETING
RESEARCH



DATA
ANALYTICS



HELPING MEMBERSHIP ORGANIZATIONS GROW

625 North Washington Street, Suite 450
Alexandria, Virginia 22314
ph 703.739.1000
toll free 800.644.6646
info@MarketingGeneral.com

MarketingGeneral.com

Associations that thrive understand the power of digital marketing. At MGI, we help associations like yours reach their target audiences with proven digital strategies that deliver results.

From paid social media campaigns to search engine marketing, we know what works in the association world. Our digital experts track, analyze, and optimize campaigns to ensure you get the best ROI, whether you're boosting membership or promoting your annual conference or certification program.

Don't let budget constraints or lack of staff expertise hold you back. Partner with MGI and grow your association.

Contact us at info@MarketingGeneral.com for a free consultation.

Let's **get started.**