

REDEFINING THE ASSOCIATION EXPERIENCE

Opportunities to take the
member experience (MX)
from average to exceptional

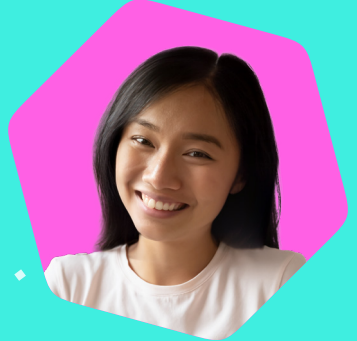




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Surveys conducted by: **Edge Research**

Foreword

Now in its eighth year, this Association Trends Research Study has proven to be an important industry-specific tool designed to help understand the needs, wants, and areas of opportunity for associations. And the data speaks for itself: Through evolving member needs, global conditions, and economic fluctuations, associations continue to deliver member value.

During challenging times, organizations may be focused on staying relevant in a competitive environment; in times of stability, they're poised to grow and thrive. Regardless of circumstance, we see consistently high member loyalty metrics, which serve as a testament to associations' unwavering dedication to the member experience and impressive ability to adapt their use of time, data, and technology to keep their organizations going strong.

We proudly offer this unique study to bolster the association industry with data to help shape and support their critical work. Because we understand the flexibility required of association professionals, our study -- unlike others in this industry -- strategically shows both member and organizational viewpoints. This gives member-based organizations a more complete picture of the opportunities for (and potential risks to) ongoing growth in member acquisition, engagement, and retention.

Just as our new [Event Trends research study](#) earlier this year offers insights tailored to the needs of event planners and industry professionals, this association-focused study highlights analyzed data, explores compelling questions about members and pros' mindsets, and examines shifts in the present and future of associations.

We're also excited about a new offering this year: A portion of this study's findings will be presented through [Nucleus by Community Brands](#), the first data analytics solution for associations. Within Nucleus, association professionals can slice and dice data to gain deeper insights into various aspects of associations' priorities and take well-informed action.

We are thrilled to share these fresh new insights and see the practical applications help association professionals take their organization to the next level.



Jennifer Lee
President, Associations & Events, Community Brands

INTRODUCTION

Why care about this study?



For eight years, Community Brands has conducted surveys to gain and share insights into association members' and professionals' behaviors and perspectives. This study builds on previous studies to answer key questions and offer recommendations about important aspects of the member experience (MX).

What you'll learn



How members are engaging with their professional organization, and how their preferences have changed



What opportunities (and risks) have emerged for member engagement



What benefits are most important (and not so important) to members today



How association professionals can provide greater member value and deliver a better MX while diversifying and growing revenue

Discover how to take the member experience (MX) to the next level



Build a stronger member engagement strategy.

Member engagement remains stable, but only a quarter of organizations have a unified engagement strategy, and less than one-third have strong confidence in the strategy.



Rethink your organization's events.

Events are a mixed bag for members and organizations, presenting possible risks (and opportunities) for member value and organizational revenue.



Get innovative with professional education.

Members turn to their professional organization for professional education. Innovation is key to maintaining an advantage in this area.



Move toward a robust online career center.

Members are looking for resources to help grow their careers and consider their professional organization to be a top source for career assistance.



Keep an eye on MX.

While the focus is member acquisition and retention, organizations must not let the MX suffer.

A few notes about this study: Parallel surveys were conducted with 1,014 members of professional membership organizations in the United States and 285 professionals who work at those organizations (referred to in this report as "Members" and "Pros," respectively). The online surveys took place between June 5, 2023 and June 27, 2023. In this report, "small organizations" refers to organizations with annual revenue of less than \$5 million. "Large organizations" refers to organizations with annual revenue of \$5 million or greater. Note that due to rounding, not all percentage totals in this report equal 100 percent.



105.7%
PERCENT OF GOAL



SLICE AND DICE DATA TO GAIN DEEPER INSIGHTS INTO THE 2023 ASSOCIATION TRENDS STUDY

Uncover actionable insights and gain a universal view of data by comparing survey responses to those of your peers. Turn insights into action and achieve success with data-driven decision-making. Nucleus aggregates peer data and displays the results in a dynamic, filterable dashboard.

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SEE HOW I STACK UP

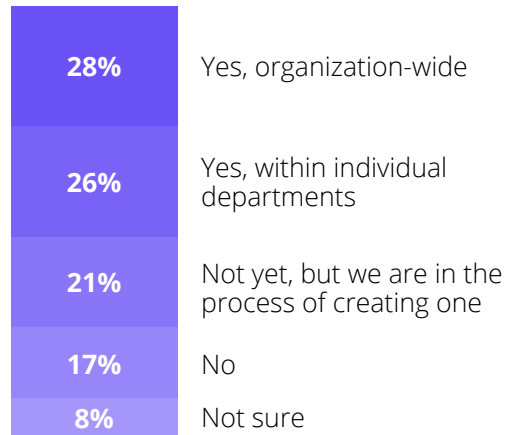
Key findings



1 Member loyalty and engagement remain strong, but Pros lack a cohesive strategy.

Metrics for Member loyalty and engagement remain solid – with Members’ intent to renew up slightly from 2022 and a third of Members reporting that they engage with their professional organization at least weekly. Meanwhile, as Pros report using a variety of engagement tactics with their members, only a quarter say they have an organization-wide engagement strategy, and few rate their organization’s use of engagement channels as excellent.

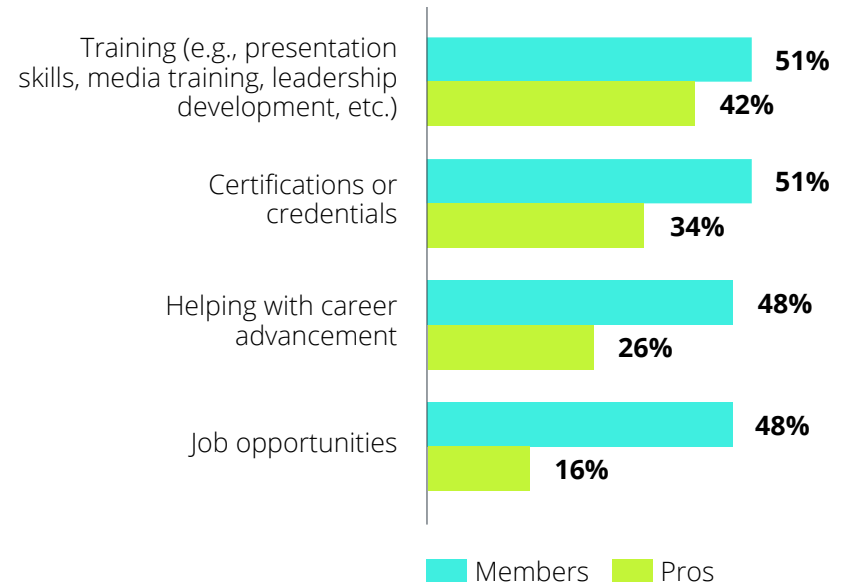
Have a member engagement strategy



2 Organizations have significant opportunities to bridge gaps in member value.

Multiple areas have risen in importance to Members that Pros under-value, including training, certifications, job opportunities, and help with career advancement. At the same time, online member communities have emerged as an opportunity for professional organizations to provide greater member value. Slightly less than half of Members say they have used their organization’s online community, and those who use it are significantly more loyal to the organization.

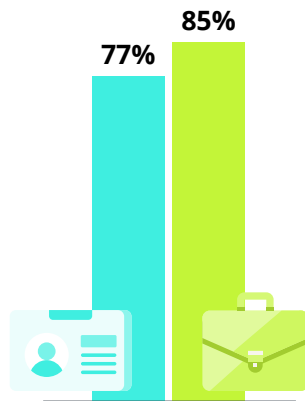
Among the top membership benefits



3 Organizations must innovate to maintain their competitive edge with professional education.

Members are turning more to their professional organization and employer as top sources for professional education content; they rate the quality of content higher for their organization. Members also express interest in a variety of professional education options – particularly short videos, online courses and webinars, and hands-on experiential training. However, a continued focus on multi-day conferences suggests that Pros might be missing other opportunities to engage and inform members. Members and Pros agree that organizations should provide new learning opportunities to remain relevant.

Members and Pros agree



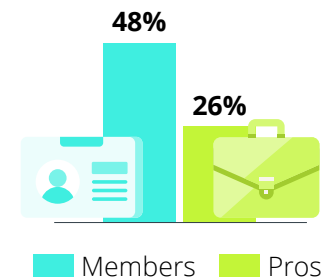
“Professional membership organizations that don’t innovate will no longer be a go-to source for professional development”

Members Pros

4 The importance of career assistance has grown.

Help with career growth has increased in importance for Members. Members also place higher value on the quality of job opportunities from their professional organization over LinkedIn and Indeed. And while about two-thirds of Pros say their organization offers an online job board, fewer provide other impactful career development options Members seek, including career advice and insights, mentoring, peer data, and résumé reviews. Gen Z and Millennial Members are especially interested in these options and are more likely to say that organizations will no longer be a preferred source for career assistance if they fail to innovate in this area.

Believe it’s very important to help with career advancement

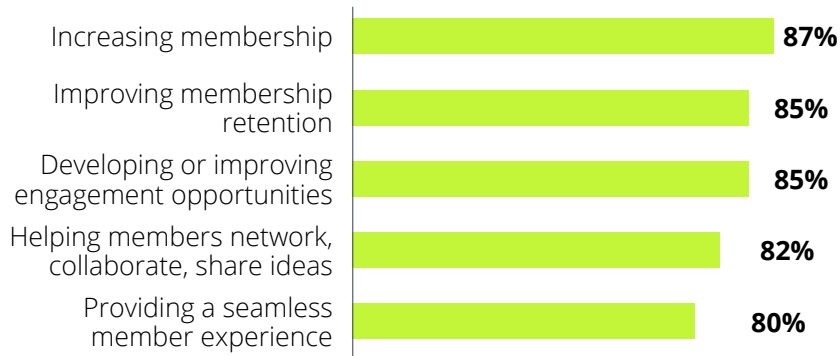


5 Pros are optimistic about acquisition and revenue, but the member experience could suffer.

Pros report positive trends over the last 12 months and are optimistic about member acquisition and increases in non-dues and event revenue over the next year. Their priorities continue to be member acquisition and retention; however, they've reduced their emphasis on developing and improving engagement opportunities, providing a seamless MX, building trust with members, and upgrading/integrating new technology – introducing a potential risk in continuing to deliver a positive MX.



Pro priorities for the next year



Member loyalty and engagement trends



Member loyalty and engagement trends

As in past studies, Members were asked to think about the one professional membership organization most important to them, and then evaluate it on multiple loyalty metrics.

A look at the responses shows that loyalty metrics have remained stable. This year shows a slight uptick in Members' intent to renew.

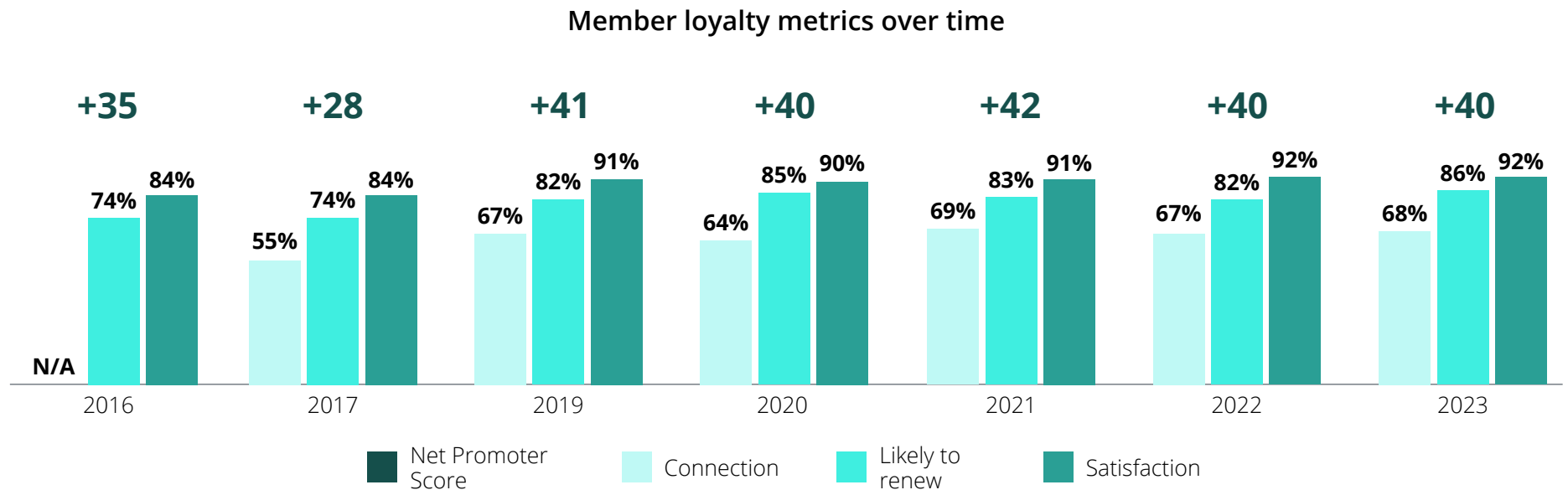


Figure 1. Questions asked: Overall, how satisfied are you with your membership in this professional membership organization? | How likely are you to recommend this professional membership organization? Use a 10-point scale where 10 means you are extremely likely to recommend and 0 means you are not at all likely to recommend the organization. | On a scale of 1 to 5, where 5 means extremely connected and 1 means not connected at all, how connected do you feel to this professional membership organization and the work that it does? | How likely are you to renew your membership in this professional membership organization after your current membership expires?

A look at engagement shows that more than a third of Members engage with their organization every day or at least once per week.

Of those, the Members more likely to engage at least once per week or more include Gen Z and Millennials (52 percent), those early in their career (56 percent), and those that consider their organization an early adopter of technology (59 percent).



Members' engagement frequency with their professional organization

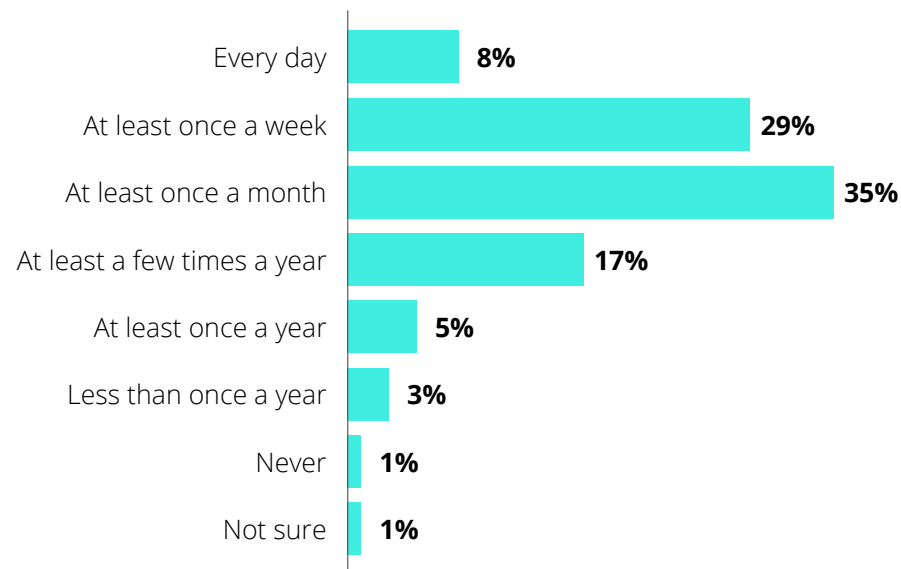


Figure 2. Question asked: How often do you engage with your professional membership organization/s?



When asked how their engagement level compares with what they thought it would be when they first joined their organization, 87 percent of Members say they're engaging the same or more than they anticipated.

Members' engagement expectations with their professional organization

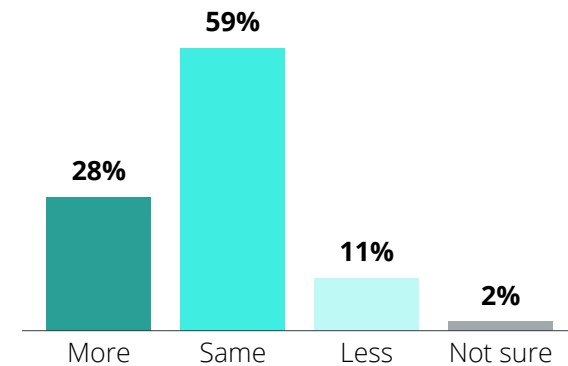


Figure 3. Question asked: And is this more, the same, or less than you thought you would engage with your professional membership organization/s when you first joined?

A review of engagement by generation shows that younger generations engage more regularly (at least once per week) than older generations.

For those older generations, such as Gen X or Boomers, engagement is lower, decreasing by age bracket.



Member engagement by generation

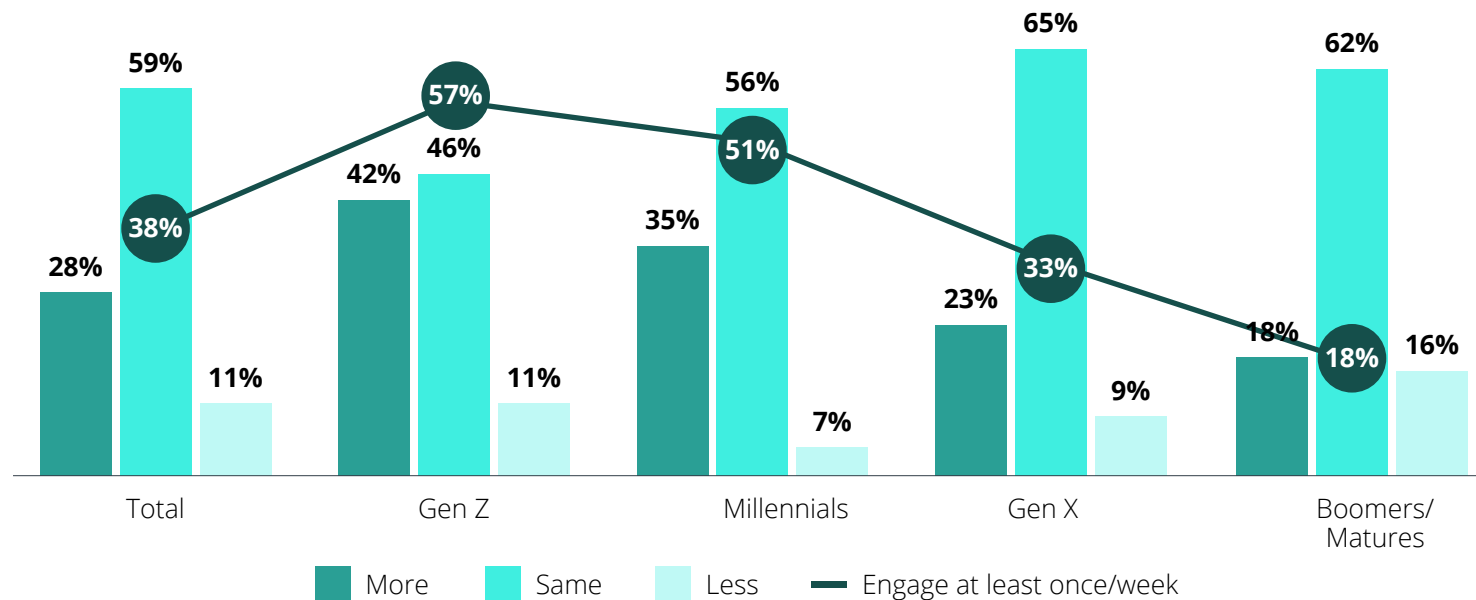


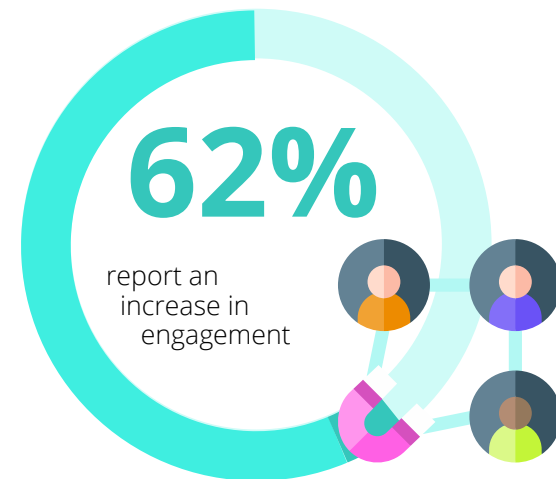
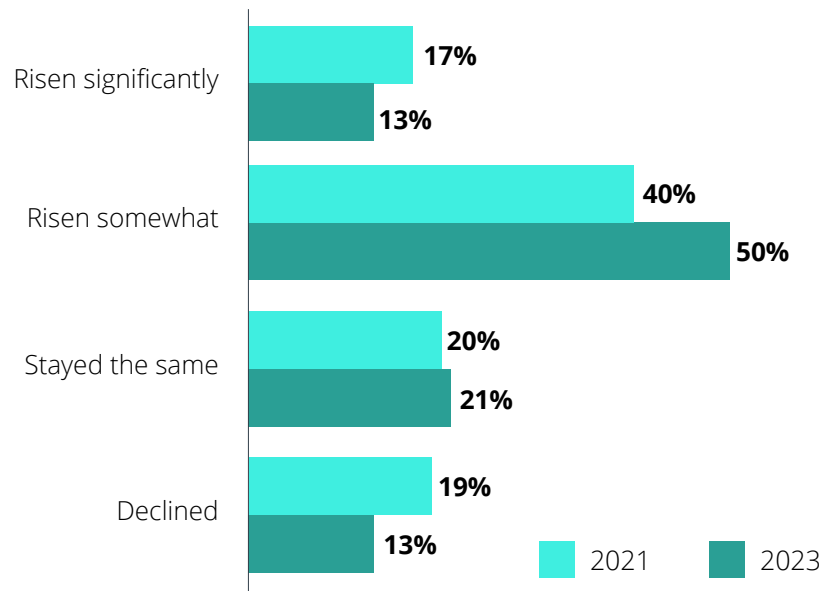
Figure 4. Questions asked: How often do you engage with your professional membership organization/s? | And is this more, the same, or less than you thought you would engage with your professional membership organization/s when you first joined?

From the organization’s perspective, 62 percent of Pros report increases in member engagement over the past 12 months.

Only 13 percent of those report significant increases, but 50 percent say engagement has increased somewhat, an overall 6-point increase in the number who say engagement has gone up since the 2021 study. Those increases are higher among organizations with one to five staff members (64 percent) and six to 20 staff members (73 percent). In comparison, the percentage of those reporting a decline has decreased by 5 points.



Changes in Member engagement (Pros’ perspective)



Figures 5 & 6. Question asked: How has member engagement overall changed over the past year (in terms of the number of members engaging and how much they interact)?

Despite modest increases in member engagement, only a quarter of Pros report that their organization has an organization-wide member engagement strategy.

Another quarter say their organization has a member engagement strategy within individual departments.



Organization's Member engagement strategy status (Pros' perspective)

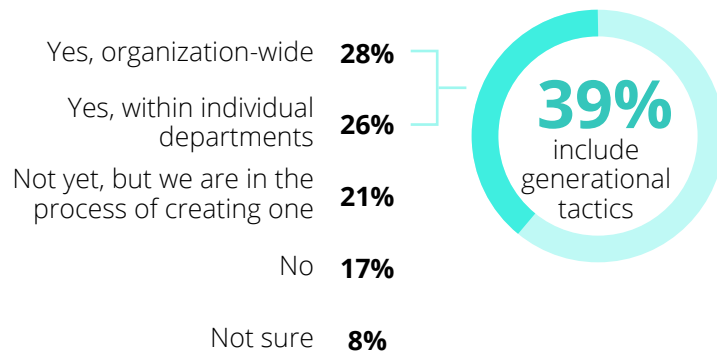


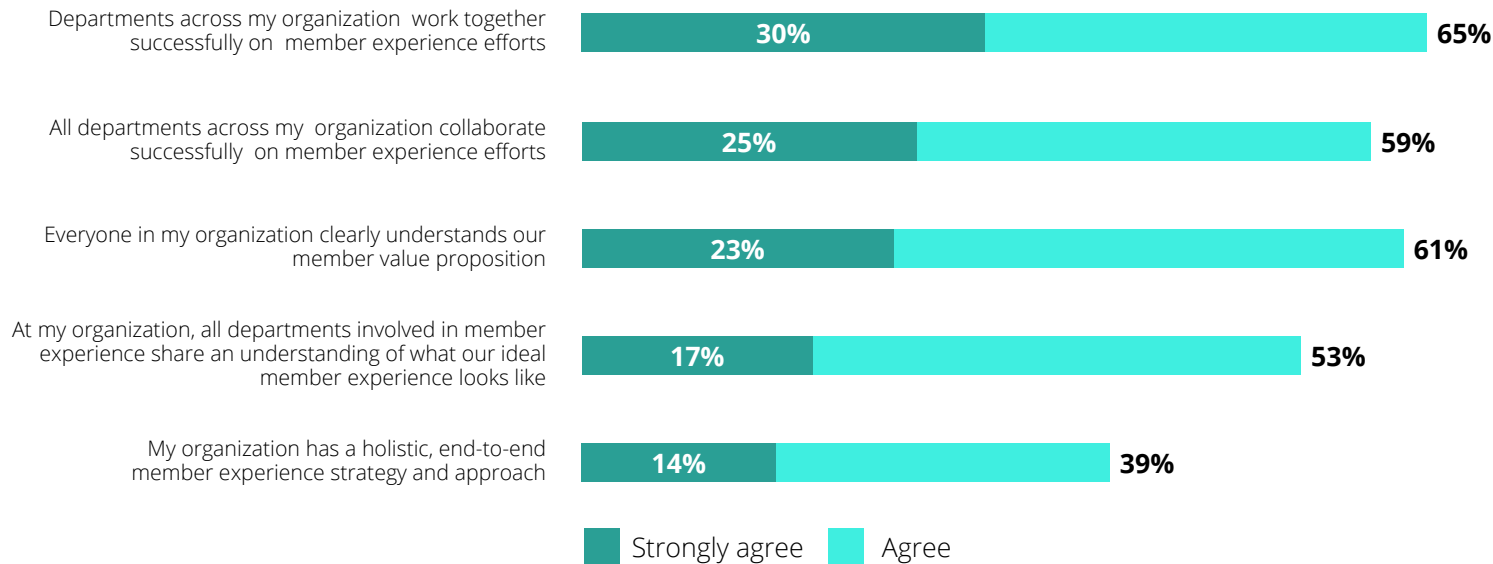
Figure 7. Question asked: Do you currently have a member engagement strategy? | Does your member engagement strategy include engagement strategies and tactics for specific generations (i.e. Gen Z, Millennials, etc.)?

When asked to rate their organization's MX, less than one-third of Pros express strong confidence in their organization's strategy.

While 85 percent say their organization is at least somewhat effective in delivering an industry-leading MX, only 25 percent say their organization is "very effective."



The organization's approach to the MX (Pros' perspective)



Figures 8 & 9. Questions asked: How much do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements? | How effective is your organization at delivering industry-leading member experiences today?

A deeper dive into how Members are engaging shows that 95 percent of Members have participated in at least one type of activity with their organization in the last year – reinforcing the finding that Member engagement remains strong.

Members place the highest value around engagement activities related to professional development and leadership opportunities, and the least to social media engagement. More specifically, working with a mentor, taking a certification or accreditation program, and belonging to a student chapter are considered the most valuable engagement activities among those who have done them.

Engagement activities with organization (Members' perspective)



	 Involvement	 Value
Regularly read the organization's emails and/or e-newsletters	37%	51%
Regularly read the organization's journal or magazine	27%	53%
Attended a networking event	26%	65%
Attended an annual meeting and/or trade show	25%	66%
Take/took continuing education classes online	24%	76%
Follow/ed the organization on social media	22%	41%
Participate/d in a training program	22%	73%
Attended a webinar or townhall	21%	58%
Engage/d in an online social network	21%	51%
Volunteered at an event	19%	64%
Take/n a certification or accreditation program	17%	82%
Work/ed with a mentor	15%	84%
Contributed to the foundation	15%	51%
Take/took continuing education classes in-person	15%	76%

Figure 10. Questions asked: In the last 12 months, in which of the following ways have you been involved with your professional membership organization? Please select all that apply. | How valuable are each of the following types of involvement with your professional membership organization? (only asked among those who participated in each)



Engagement activities with organization (Members' perspective) continued



	 Involvement	 Value
Attended an in-person or virtual career fair	14%	67%
Serve/d as a mentor to young professionals	14%	71%
Spoken at an event or meeting	12%	61%
Regularly listen to the organization's podcast	12%	63%
Used the organization's job board/career center	11%	64%
Purchased a product or service either offered by or endorsed by the organization	11%	53%
Participated in an advocacy activity with federal, state, or local policy makers	10%	69%
Hold/held a leadership position	9%	72%
Serve/d on a committee/task force	9%	75%
Submitted for awards program or scholarship	6%	63%
Submitted an abstract	4%	56%
Serve/d on the board of directors	4%	74%
Serve/d as a judge for an award, contest, scholarship, etc.	4%	55%
Belong/ed to a student chapter	4%	81%

Figure 11. Questions asked: In the last 12 months, in which of the following ways have you been involved with your professional membership organization? Please select all that apply. | How valuable are each of the following types of involvement with your professional membership organization? (only asked among those who participated in each)

Future engagement interest mostly aligns with current involvement.

There are slight increases in future interest with serving as a mentor to young professionals, holding a leadership position, serving on a committee/task force, and serving on the board of directors.

Future engagement activities with organization (Members' perspective)



Future Interest

Regularly read the organization's emails and/or e-newsletters	28%
Take continuing education classes online	26%
Attend a networking event	26%
Regularly read the organization's journal or magazine	24%
Attend an annual meeting and/or trade show	21%
Participate in a training program	21%
Volunteer at an event	21%
Engage in an online social network	19%
Serve as a mentor to young professionals	19%
Follow the organization on social media	18%
Take continuing education classes in-person	18%
Take a certification or accreditation program	17%
Attend an in-person or virtual career fair	16%
Attend a webinar or townhall	15%



Future Interest

Work with a mentor	14%
Contribute to the foundation	14%
Hold a leadership position	13%
Serve on a committee/task force	13%
Speak at an event or meeting	12%
Regularly listen to the organization's podcast	11%
Participate in an advocacy activity with federal, state, or local policy makers	11%
Use the organization's job board/career center	10%
Purchase a product or service either offered or endorsed by the organization	10%
Submit for awards program or scholarship	8%
Serve on the board of directors	8%
Serve as a judge for an award, contest, scholarship, etc.	7%
Submit an abstract	5%
Belong to a student chapter	3%

Figure 12. Question asked: And thinking about the NEXT 12 MONTHS, in which of the following ways DO YOU WANT TO BE involved with your professional membership organization? Please select all that apply.

To reach members, Pros say they use a variety of channels, but few rate their use of channels as “excellent.”

These findings suggest strong opportunities for improvement in how organizations connect with their members.

Use of channels to reach members (Pros' perspective)

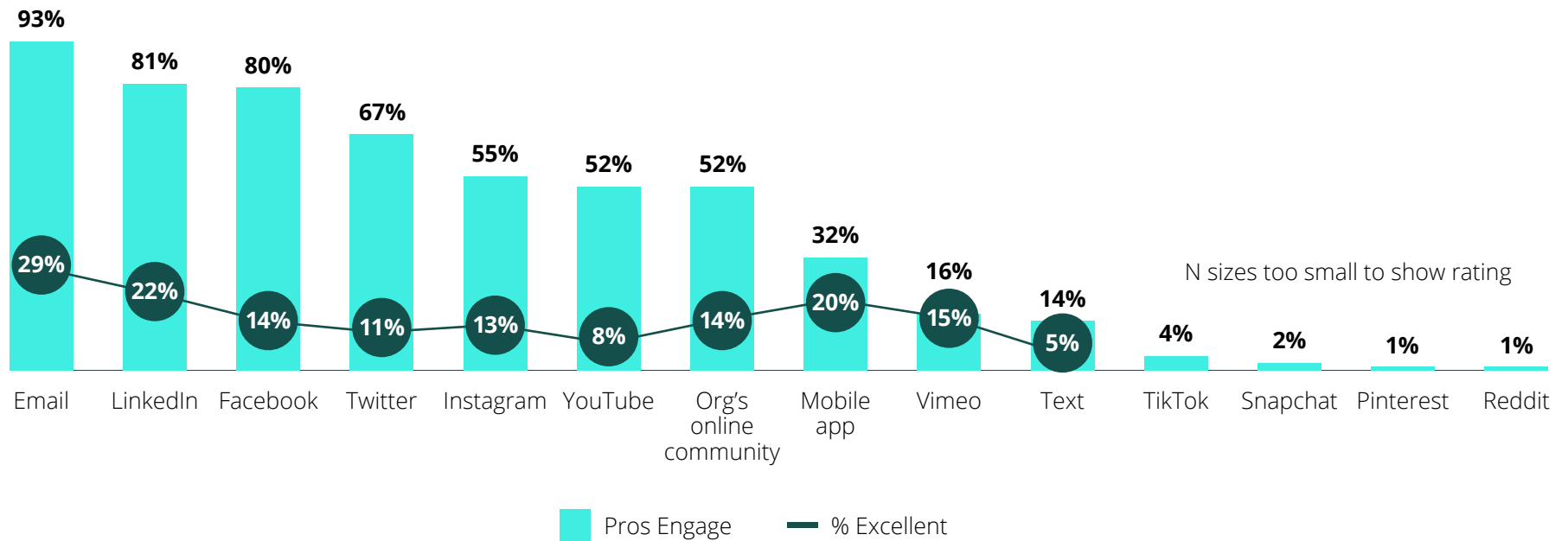


Figure 13. Questions asked: In which of the following ways is your organization engaging with members? Please select all that apply. | And how would you rate your organization's use of each of the following? Only asked of those that use.

From the Member perspective, email and online community are the top ways they engage with their organization and their top preferred engagement channels.



Engagement channel usage and preferences (Members' perspective)

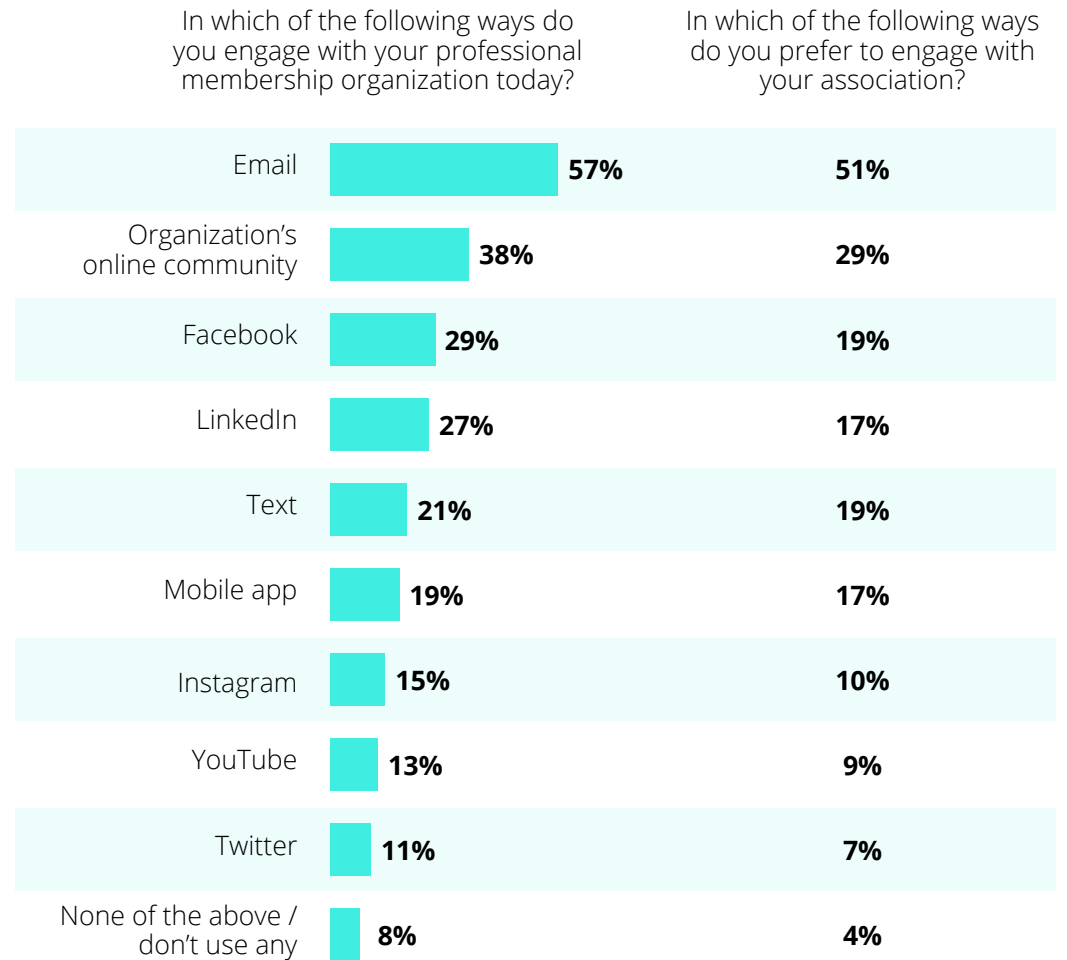


Figure 14. Questions asked: In which of the following ways do you engage with your professional membership organization today? Select all that apply. | Looking at this list again, in which of the following ways do you PREFER to engage with your association? Select all that apply.

A look at Pro and Member viewpoints together show some gaps between how Pros engage versus how Members prefer to engage. Responses suggest that Pros could be engaging more with members via text:

Approximately two in ten Members prefer text communication while only 14 percent of Pros use text. Findings also indicate that it might be time for Pros to rethink their strategies around social media to provide more member value.

OPPORTUNITY ALERT

Online member community

In this study, several data points indicate that an online community can drive member engagement and loyalty. Fifty-one percent of Members rely on their professional organization the most for networking, collaboration, sharing ideas, and participating in a professional community. Nearly half of Members (47 percent) have used their organization’s online community. Those who have used it report higher loyalty metrics. They also report a strong sense of community (52 percent) versus those who don’t (20 percent).

Engagement channel usage and preferences gaps (Pros’ and Members’ perspectives)

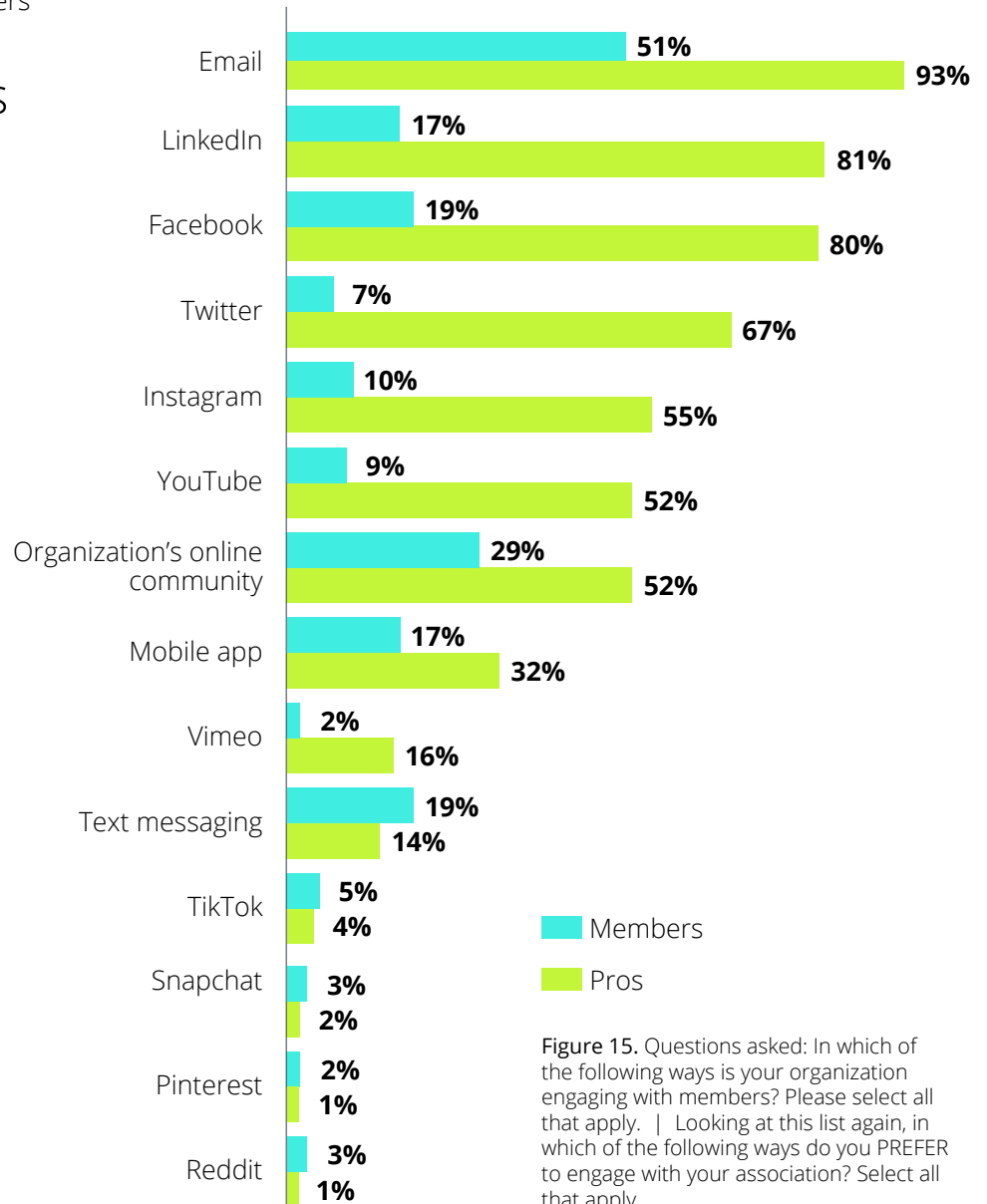
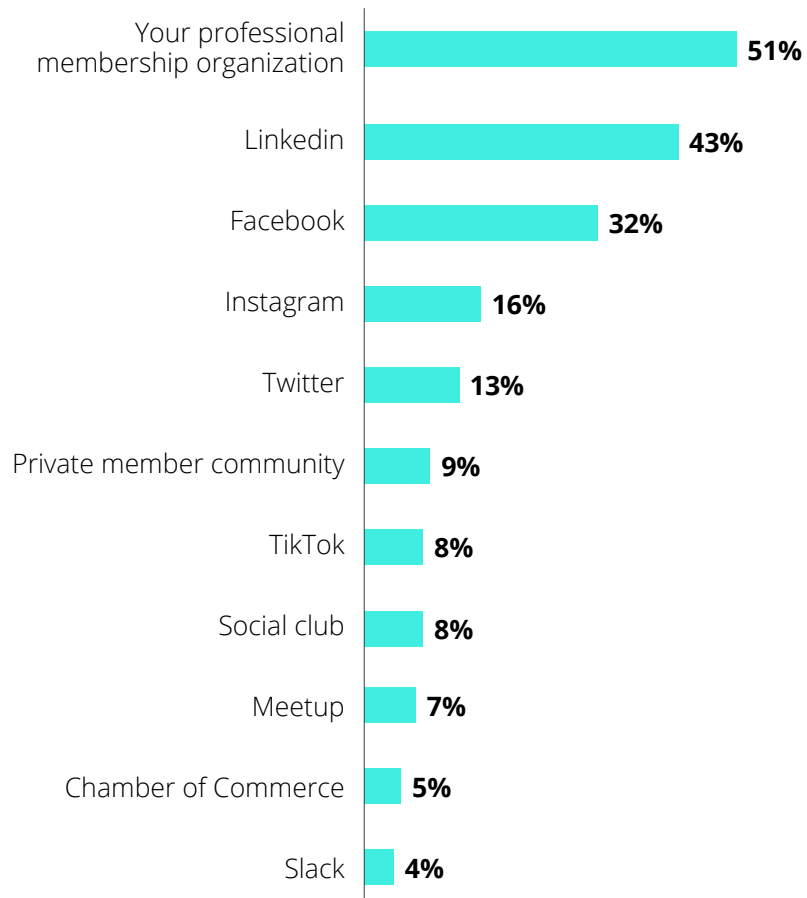


Figure 15. Questions asked: In which of the following ways is your organization engaging with members? Please select all that apply. | Looking at this list again, in which of the following ways do you PREFER to engage with your association? Select all that apply.

Member preferences for professional communities



Figures 16, 17, & 18. Questions asked: Which of the following are you most likely to use to network, collaborate, share ideas, and/or participate in a professional community? Please select your top 3. | Have you ever used your professional membership organization's ONLINE MEMBER COMMUNITY? | Overall, how satisfied are you with your membership in this professional membership organization? | On a scale of 1 to 5, where 5 means extremely connected and 1 means not connected at all, how connected do you feel to this professional membership organization and the work that it does? | In which of the following ways is your organization engaging with members? Please select all that apply. | How likely are you to renew your membership in this professional membership organization after your current membership expires?

**What
members
value today**



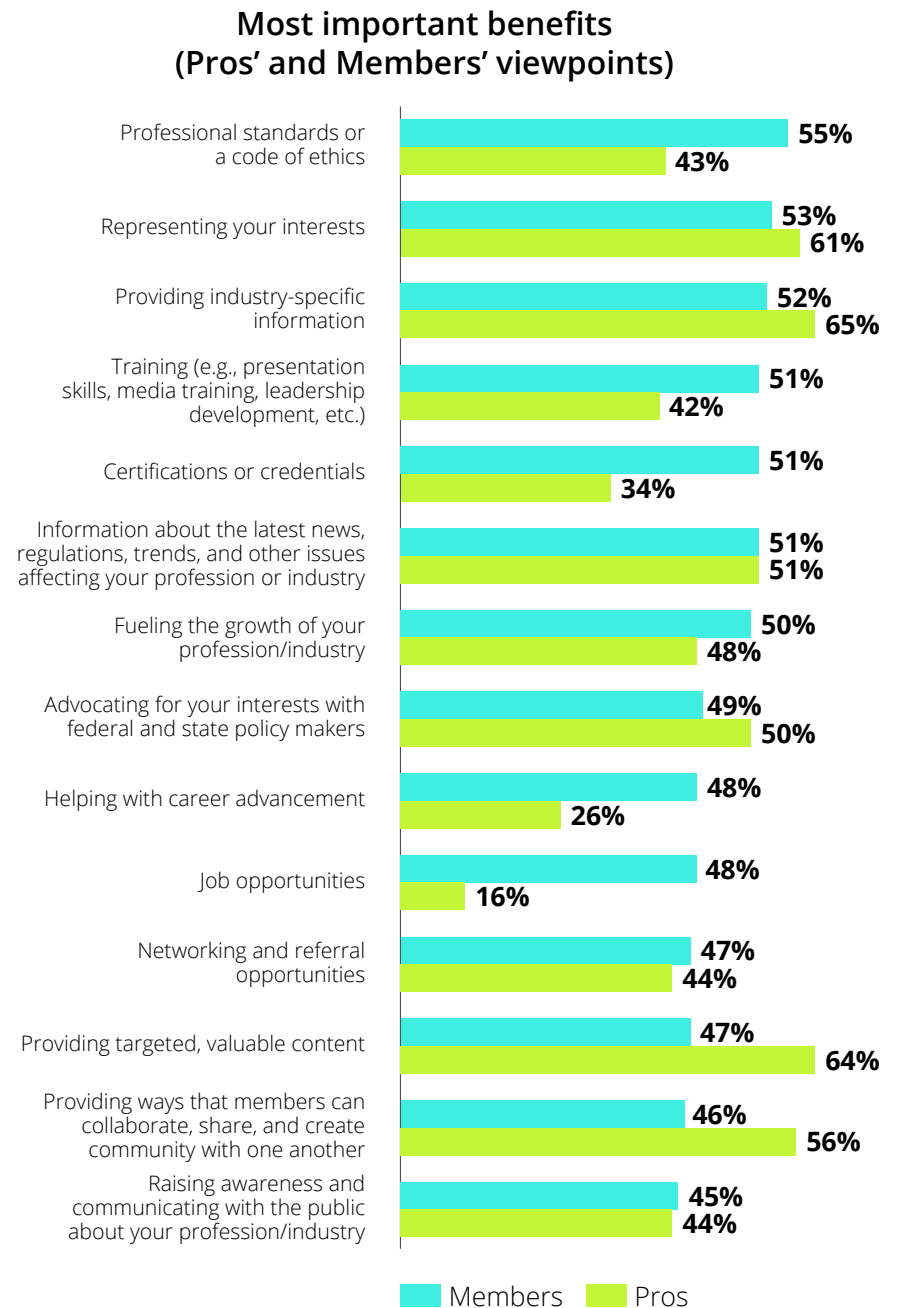
Overview

Members were asked to rate the importance of key benefits provided by their organization.

It turns out that top benefits from previous studies are even more important this year, with training, certifications and credentials, fueling industry growth, advocacy, and help with career advancement all up significantly from 2022.

In comparison, Pros' priorities align with Members when it comes to advocacy and industry trends. However, as in past studies, they greatly underestimate the value of key areas, including certifications/credentials, job opportunities, and help with career advancement.

Figure 19. Questions asked: Below is a list of benefits that being a member of a professional membership organization might provide. For each, please indicate how important that benefit is to you. | Below is a list of benefits that a professional membership/trade organization might provide to its members. For each, please indicate how important you feel that benefit is to your organization's members. Would you say it is...



For second tier benefits, Pros overestimate the value of meetings/conferences/tradeshows – a trend that continues from previous studies.

The widening gap in this area suggests that Pros might be considering meetings/conferences/tradeshows as a member benefit when they are really more of a program for the broader industry/profession.



Tier two benefits (Pros' and Members' viewpoints)

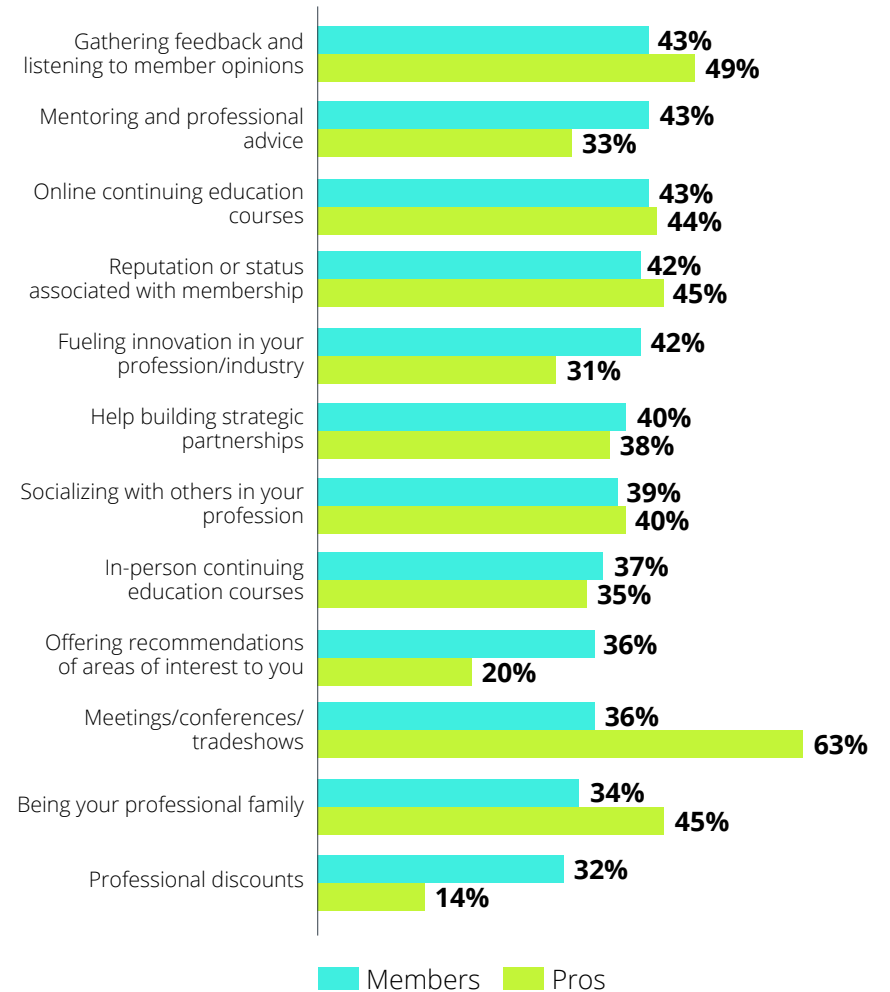


Figure 20. Questions asked: Below is a list of benefits that being a member of a professional membership organization might provide. For each, please indicate how important that benefit is to you. | Below is a list of benefits that a professional membership/trade organization might provide to its members. For each, please indicate how important you feel that benefit is to your organization's members. Would you say it is...

Audience drill-down: career stage

As seen in past studies by Community Brands, some Member priorities differ based on career stage.

While training is the number one priority for those early in their careers, this group is even more interested in fueling growth of the industry than they were in 2022.

Code of ethics remains the most important to those later in their careers.

Member priorities based on career stage



Figure 21. Question asked: Below is a list of benefits that being a member of a professional membership organization might provide. For each, please indicate how important that benefit is to you.

Professional education and training

When it comes to professional education and training, Members turn most to their employer or professional organization – even more than when this same question was asked in 2021. Between those top sources, more Members rate the quality of professional education and training from their professional organization as “excellent” than those of their employer (50 percent versus 38 percent).

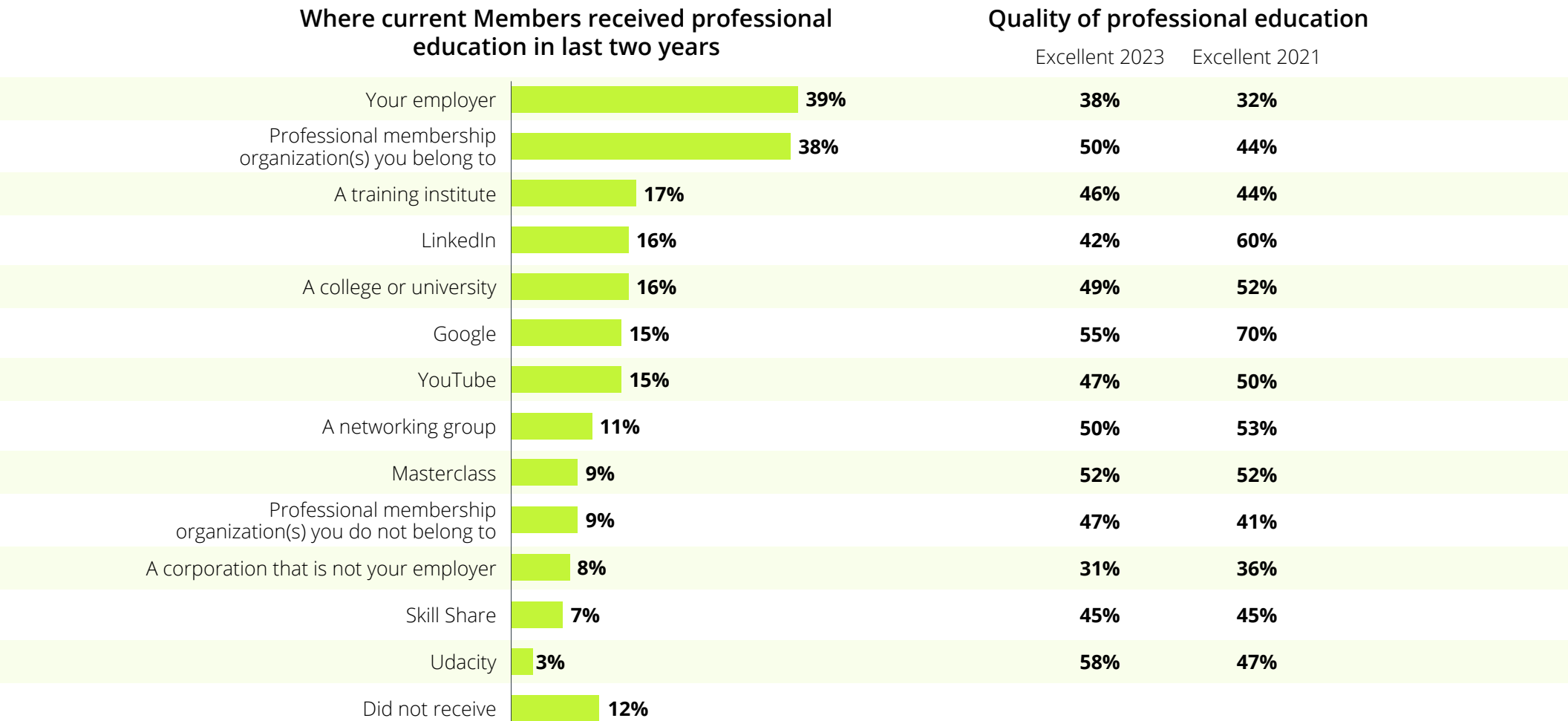
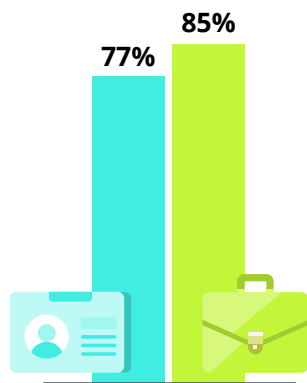


Figure 22. Questions asked: Within the last two years, through which of the following organizations or venues have you received professional education and training? Select all that apply. | Overall, how would you rate the professional education and training you received from each of the following? (Asked only of those who received that type of professional education in last 2 years)

Members and Pros agree on the importance of innovation with professional education and training.

Members who are mid-career are more likely (82 percent versus 77 percent overall) to agree that organizations need to innovate. Larger organizations are more likely than smaller organizations (94 percent versus 83 percent) to agree that organizations need to innovate.



“Professional membership organizations that don’t innovate will no longer be a go-to source for professional development”

Members Pros

Figure 23. Question asked: How much do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements? (% Overall)

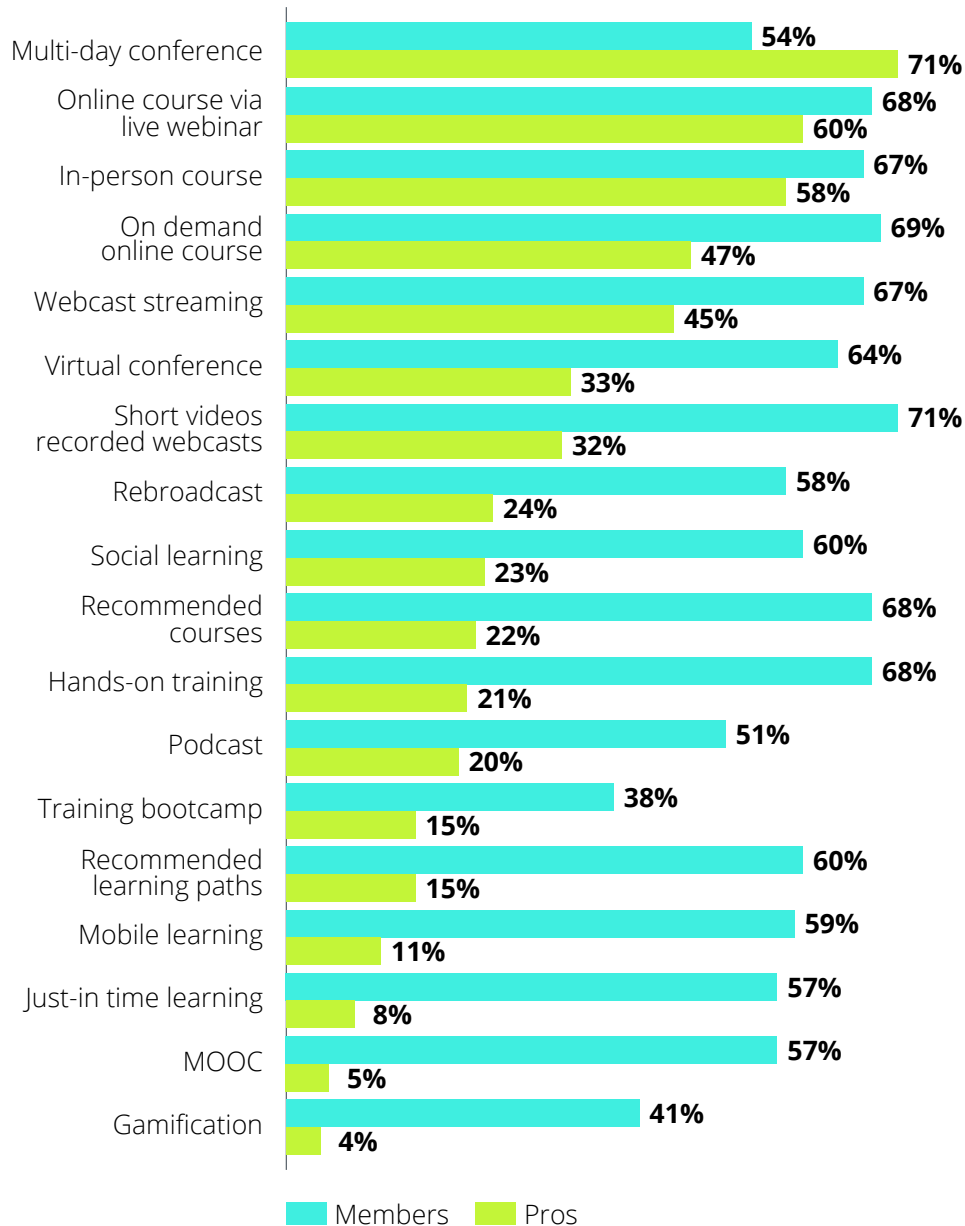


OPPORTUNITY ALERT

Professional education

Members are relying more on their professional membership organization for professional education, and perceived value in sources like LinkedIn and Google is declining. This finding suggests an opportunity to attract more members who are dissatisfied with generic sources of professional development by delivering excellent and specific professional education experiences.

% Members likely to use versus what Pros offer



As in the 2021 study, Members are interested in a variety of learning options – more than their organization offers.

This finding suggests a continued opportunity for professional membership organizations to expand their learning programs. Large organizations are significantly more likely than small organizations to offer more learning modes.

Most organizations provide multi-day conferences, the one offering that Members are less likely to use.



Figure 24. Questions asked: How likely are you to utilize the following professional education and training opportunities in the next 12 months? | How do you currently offer professional development or training to your members? Select all that apply.



Risk Alert: Just-in-time learning

Members and Pros are not on the same page when it comes to the definition of “just-in-time” learning.

Members view it as a way to immediately enhance important skills whereas Pros view it as providing timely industry information.



You said you were likely to take advantage of a “just-in time learning” opportunity. Please explain what you hope to get out of this. (Members)

“Like a crash course if I have something big to prepare for.”

“I hope to get information and solutions on whatever problem I’m facing at that time.”

“Immediate experience and on the job learning that will enhance my current skill level.”

You said you offer “just-in time learning” opportunities. Please explain what you hope your members get out of this. (Pros)

“Timely, accurate information that is topical in the moment.”

“These are for immediate changes, rules, and regulations. An example is/was COVID-19 compliance.”

“When changes happen in the profession mid-year, we will often create materials for quick-learning.”

Figure 25. Questions asked: How likely are you to utilize the following professional education and training opportunities in the next 12 months? | How do you currently offer professional development or training to your members? Select all that apply.

Throughout previous studies, meetings/conferences have consistently been a lower priority for Members when it comes to professional education, while other modes – including certifications, training, and mentoring – have grown in importance.

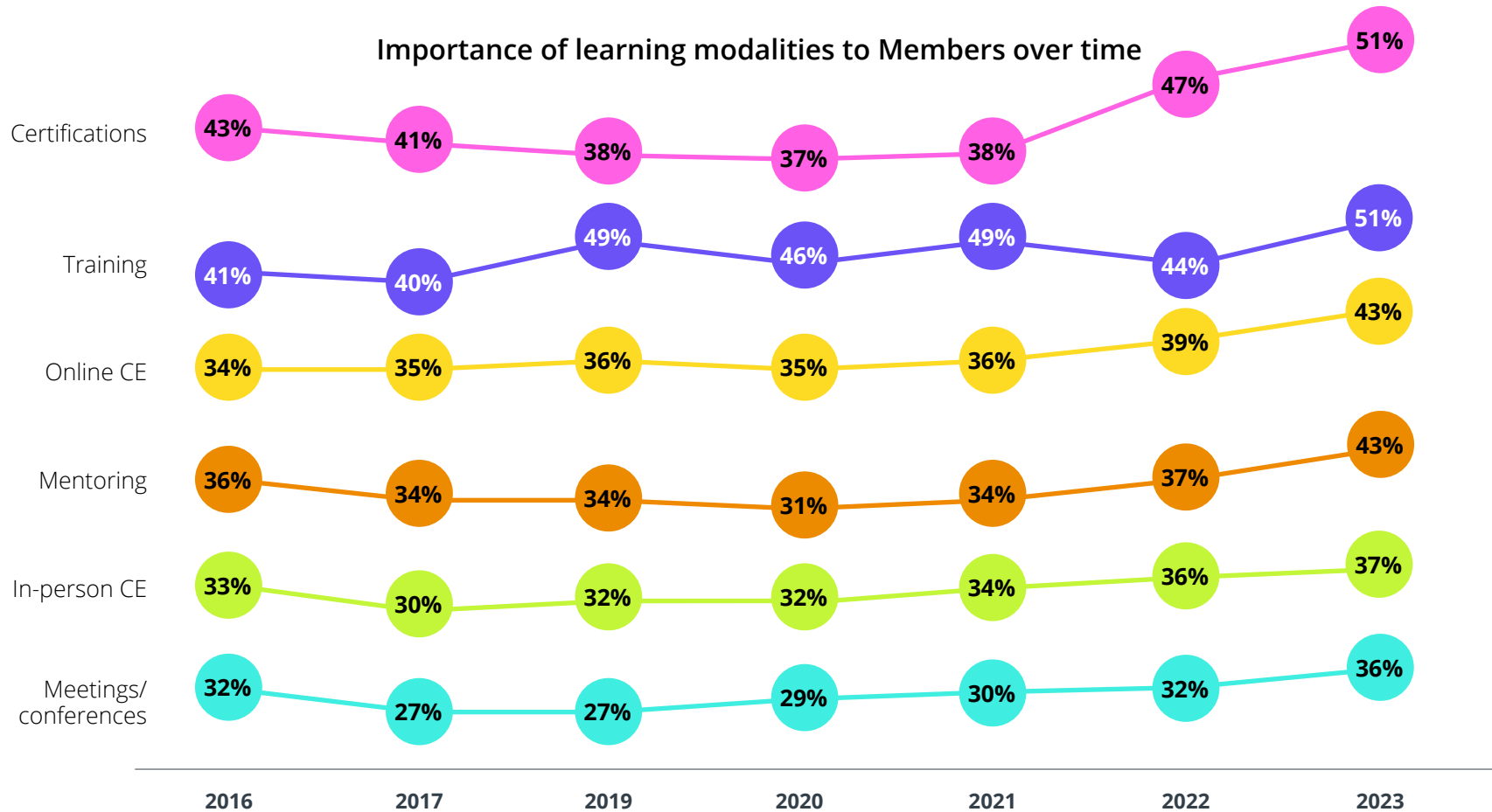
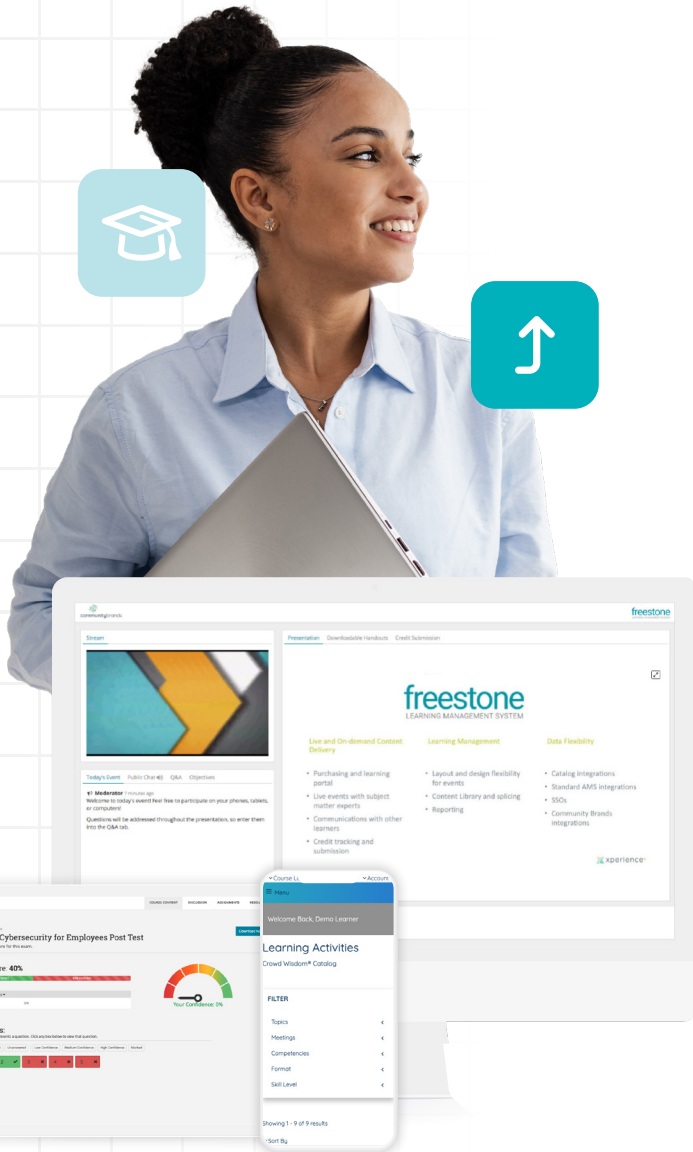


Figure 26. Question asked: Below is a list of benefits that being a member of a professional membership organization might provide. For each, please indicate how important that benefit is to you (% very important).



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Career development

As mentioned earlier, job opportunities and help with career advancement are not only top priorities for members but have grown in importance this year.

When looking for job opportunities, Members say they are most likely to use LinkedIn and Indeed. However, they are significantly more likely to view professional membership organizations as the best source for getting a quality job offer.

Member viewpoints of sources for job opportunities

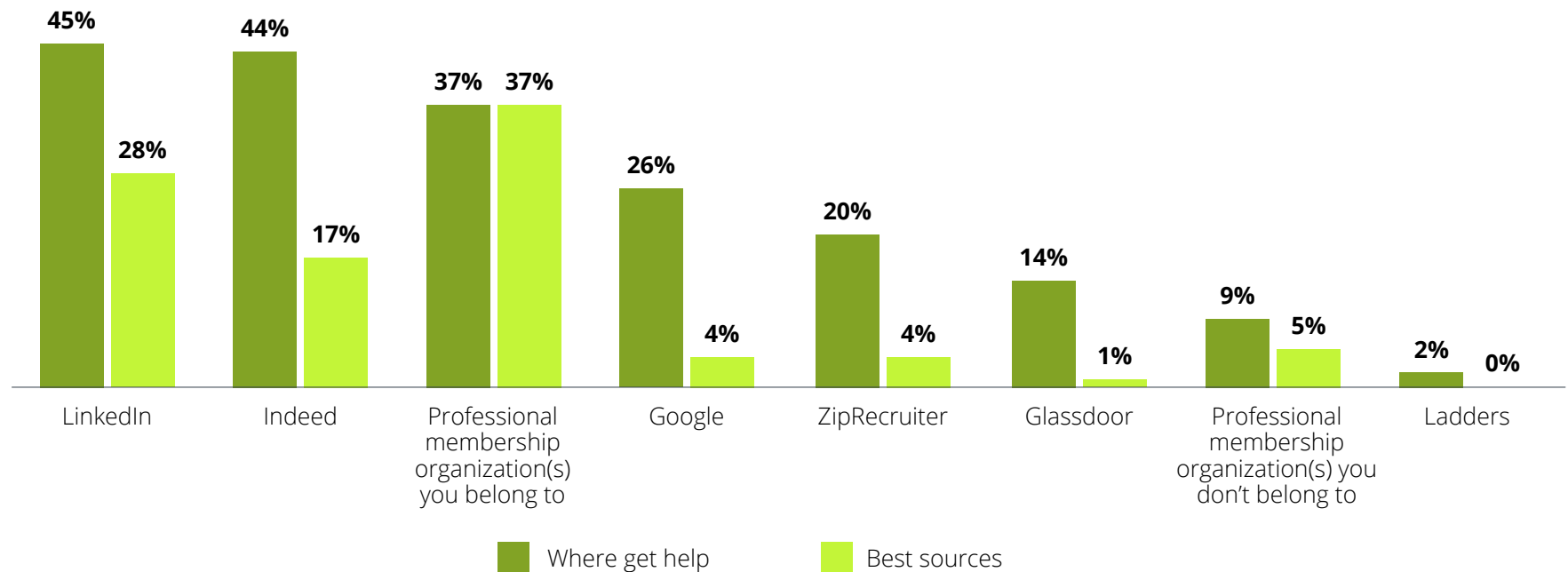
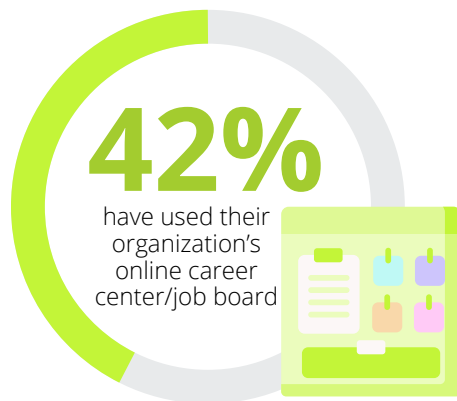


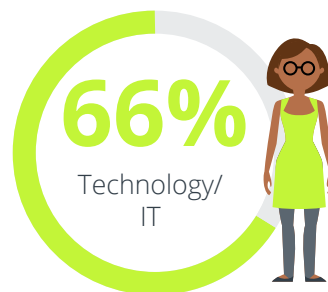
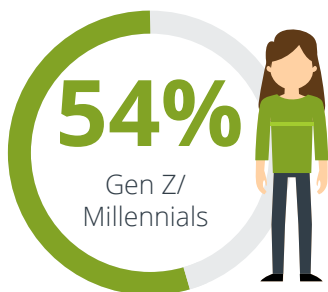
Figure 27. Questions asked: Which of the following are you most likely to use to find job opportunities? Please select your top 3. | Looking at this list again, which of the following do you think is the BEST SOURCE for getting A QUALITY JOB OFFER? Select one.

Forty-two percent of Members say they have used their professional membership organization's online job board/career center.

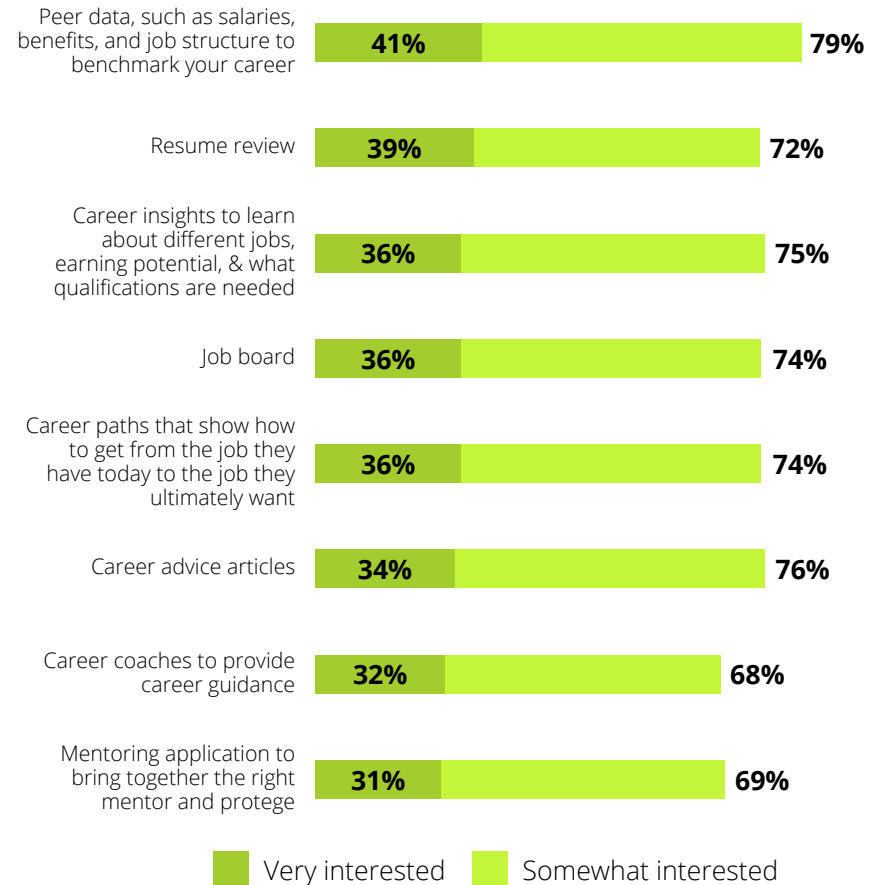
Members are interested in receiving career development help from their organization in multiple ways, including peer data (on salaries, benefits, etc.), résumé reviews, career insights, and career advice articles. Usage of, and interest in career development help is highest among Gen Z and Millennials.



Higher among:



Member usage of and interest in career help from organization



Figures 28, 29, & 30. Questions asked: Have you ever used your professional membership organization's ONLINE CAREER CENTER/ JOB BOARD? | How interested are you in receiving the following job/ career assistance from your professional membership organization?

While a majority of Pros say their organization offers a job board, few offer additional career advancement help that is of interest to Members.



OPPORTUNITY ALERT

Career Development

The gap between the importance of job opportunities and career advancement to Members versus Pros is widening. Even though Members see their professional membership organization as the best source for quality job offers, they still turn to LinkedIn and Indeed over their organization’s job board. These findings suggest an opportunity for organizations to provide a greater breadth of career resources to become a go-to career destination.

Career development offerings versus Member interest

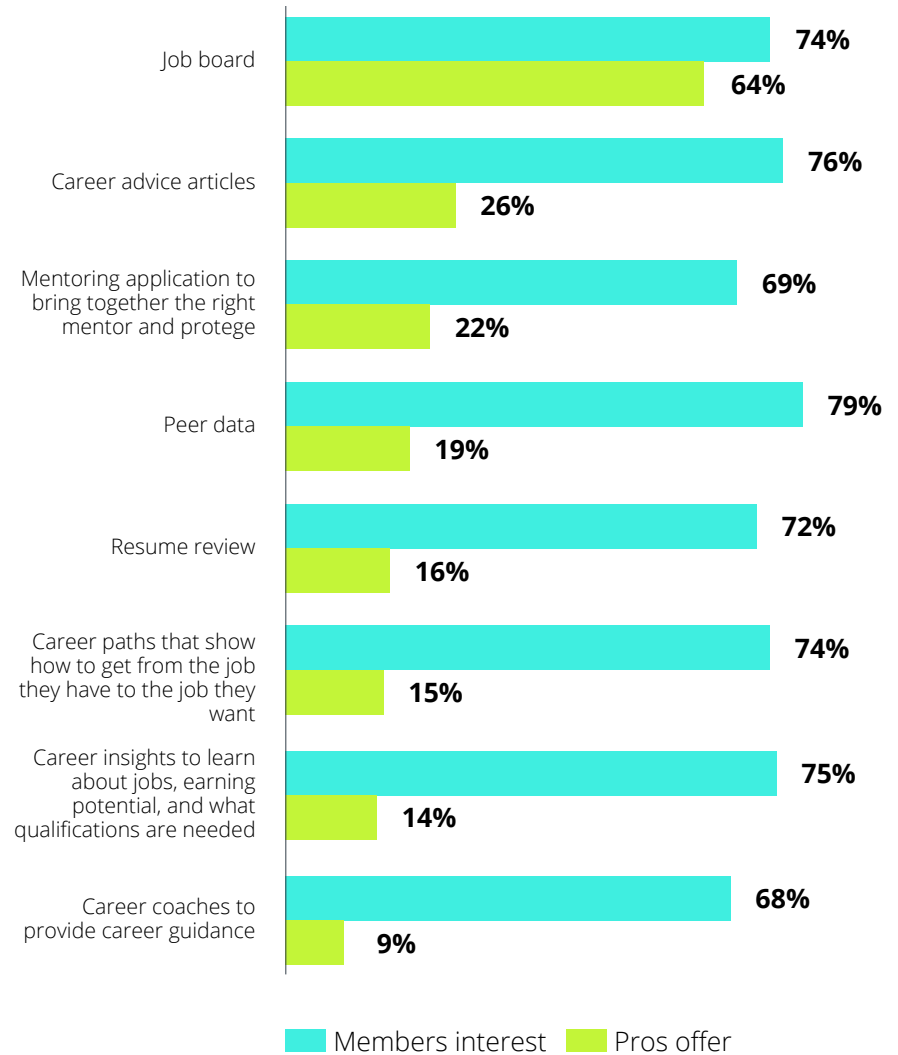


Figure 31. Questions asked: How interested are you in receiving the following job/career assistance from your professional membership organization? | Do you offer any of the following job/career assistance to your members? Please select all that apply.

YOUR ASSOCIATION WILL BE READY TO ADVANCE MEMBERS' CAREERS WITH SOLUTIONS

Career resources include career advice and coaches, job board software, onsite and virtual career fairs, and compensation/career benchmarking.



Relevant Jobs

Registered Nurse
 Incredible Health
 Portland, Oregon, United States (On-...)
 16 hours ago

Career Articles and Advice

Interviewing
 31 Top Nursing Interview Questions & Answers

Employment News
 The Hottest Job During a Pandemic? Travel Nurse

Career Growth
 Military Nursing Path Offers Many Opportunities to...
 Matthew Gaines

Career Pathing

Popular Career Paths

Entry Level	Intermediate Low	Intermediate High	Advanced	Executive
HR Coordinator	HR Generalist	HR Business Part...	HR Director	VP of Human Re...
	Recruiter (Talent...)	Recruiting Mana...	Talent Acquisitio...	Director of Com...
	Benefits Adminis...	HRIS Manager	Benefits Manager	
	HRIS Analyst			

How would you rate your level of burnout?

3.2 / 5

Priorities and outlooks of association professionals



Pros also weighed in on different aspects of organizational health today and their outlook for the future.

These professionals report positive figures for staffing levels, member acquisition, and member retention over the last 12 months. They also continue to be optimistic about the future – especially when it comes to member acquisition, non-dues revenue, and events revenue.



Pros' sentiments about last year and the future

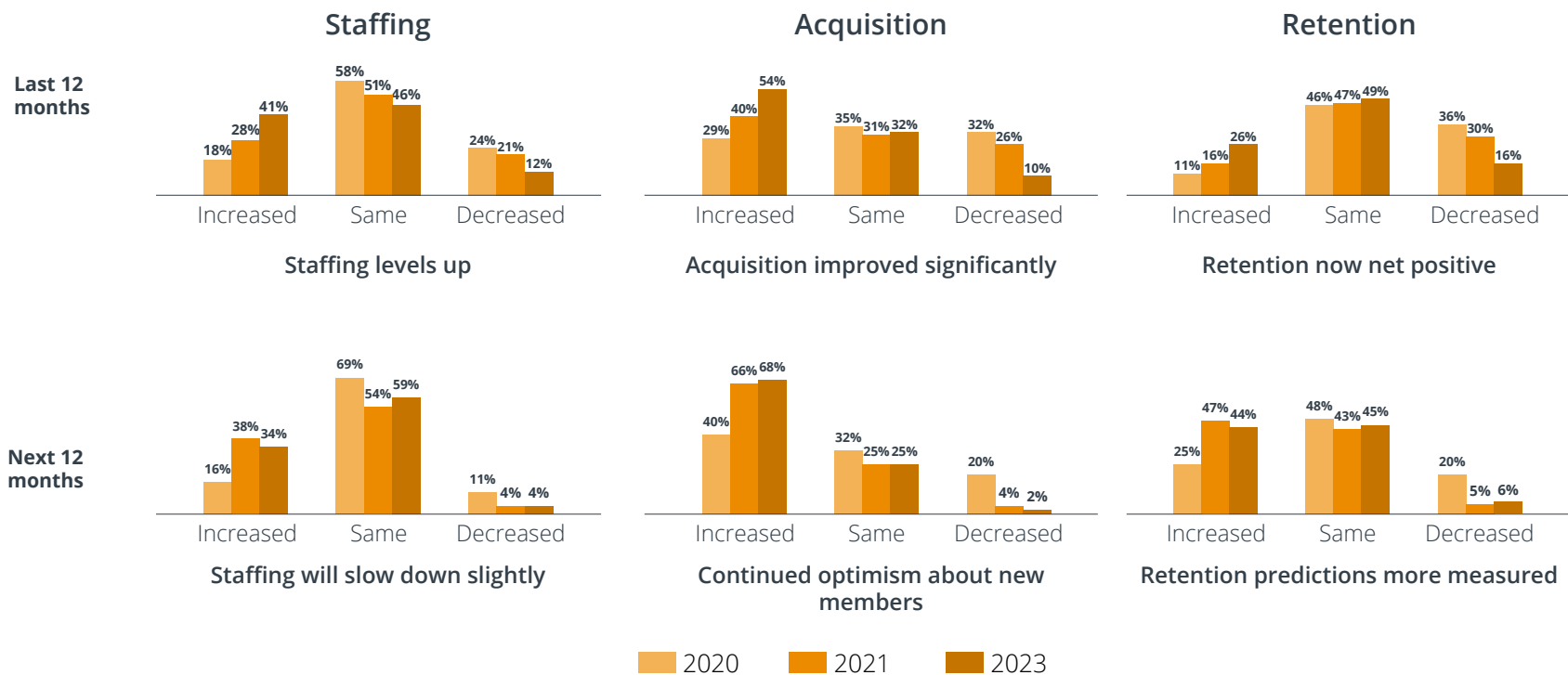


Figure 32. Questions asked: Over the last 12 months, has your organization increased, remained the same, or decreased in terms of: | And in the next 12 months, do you think each of the following will increase, remain the same, or decrease?

Majorities of Pros are expecting an increase in both non-dues and events revenue streams,

which is an expected result of organizations returning to in-person events. Also, few Pros are expecting a change in membership tiers.

Pros' sentiments about last year and the future

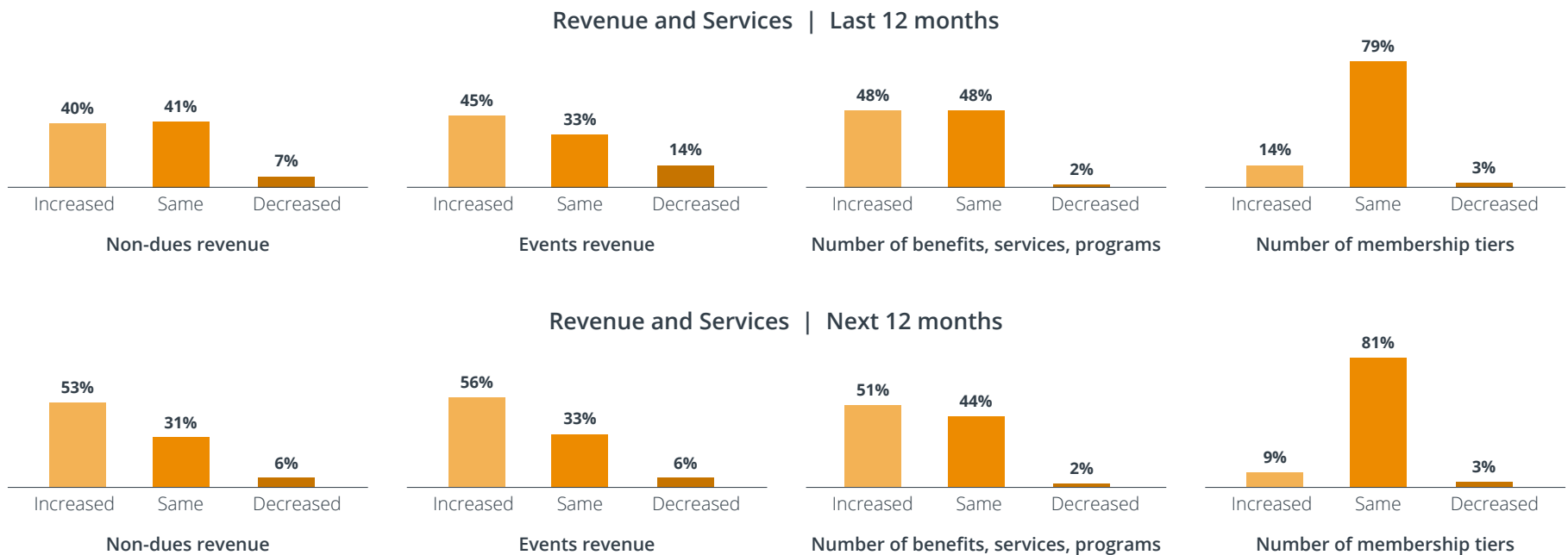


Figure 33. Questions asked: Over the last 12 months, has your organization increased, remained the same, or decreased in terms of: | And in the next 12 months, do you think each of the following will increase, remain the same, or decrease?

Excitement versus concern

While Pros are excited about the future, they still face some concerns.



Most excited about over the next 12 months

"Growth possibilities"

"New programs and innovations"

"Member engagement"

"Development of strategic plan"

"New technology"

"Rollout of new website design"



Biggest fears about the next 12 months

"Recession/ the economy"

"Loss of members"

"Meeting goals"

"Reduced revenue"

"Loss staff/ Burnt out staff"

"Unclear strategic plan/ value prop"

Figure 34. Questions asked (Open-ended): As you think about the next 12 months and your role at your organization, what are you most excited for? | As you think about the next 12 months and your role at your organization, what are your biggest fears?

BRING YOUR EVENT VISION TO LIFE USING FLEXIBLE EVENT TECHNOLOGY

Explore options designed to tackle obstacles and create engaging events with streamlined planning processes, connect with attendees anywhere, and tools to host safe and engaging events.



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Orders Count
14,423

Average Clicks per User
59.7

Total Number of Clicks 52,038
Total Number of Users 872

Information Exchange
Grand Ballroom

Corporate Showcase: To Infinity and Beyond
Marquis Ballroom

Lunch
Grand Ballroom

National Update from...
Grand Ballroom

IN

The dashboard features a central image of a woman speaking into a microphone. To the left is a shopping cart icon with the number 14,423. To the right is a circular gauge showing 'Average Clicks per User' at 59.7, with sub-totals for 'Total Number of Clicks' (52,038) and 'Total Number of Users' (872). Below the image is a circular icon with 'IN' and a double arrow. At the bottom is a schedule card with four items: 'Information Exchange' (12PM, Grand Ballroom), 'Corporate Showcase: To Infinity and Beyond' (Marquis Ballroom), 'Lunch' (1PM, Grand Ballroom), and 'National Update from...' (Grand Ballroom).

The focus for Pros continues to be member acquisition and retention.

However, Pros place less emphasis than they did last year on key areas that impact member engagement and the MX, including providing a seamless MX, building trust with members and the community, and upgrading and/or integrating new technology.

As in last year's study, technology and driving innovation continue to be higher priorities for large organizations than for small organizations. Increasing membership, improving membership retention, and developing or improving member engagement opportunities rates higher for small organizations. Notably, Pro priorities have decreased in the following areas: developing or improving engagement opportunities, providing a seamless member experience, building trust with members and the community, and upgrading and/or integrating new technology. Passing key legislation or other advocacy efforts has increased by 8 points from 2022.

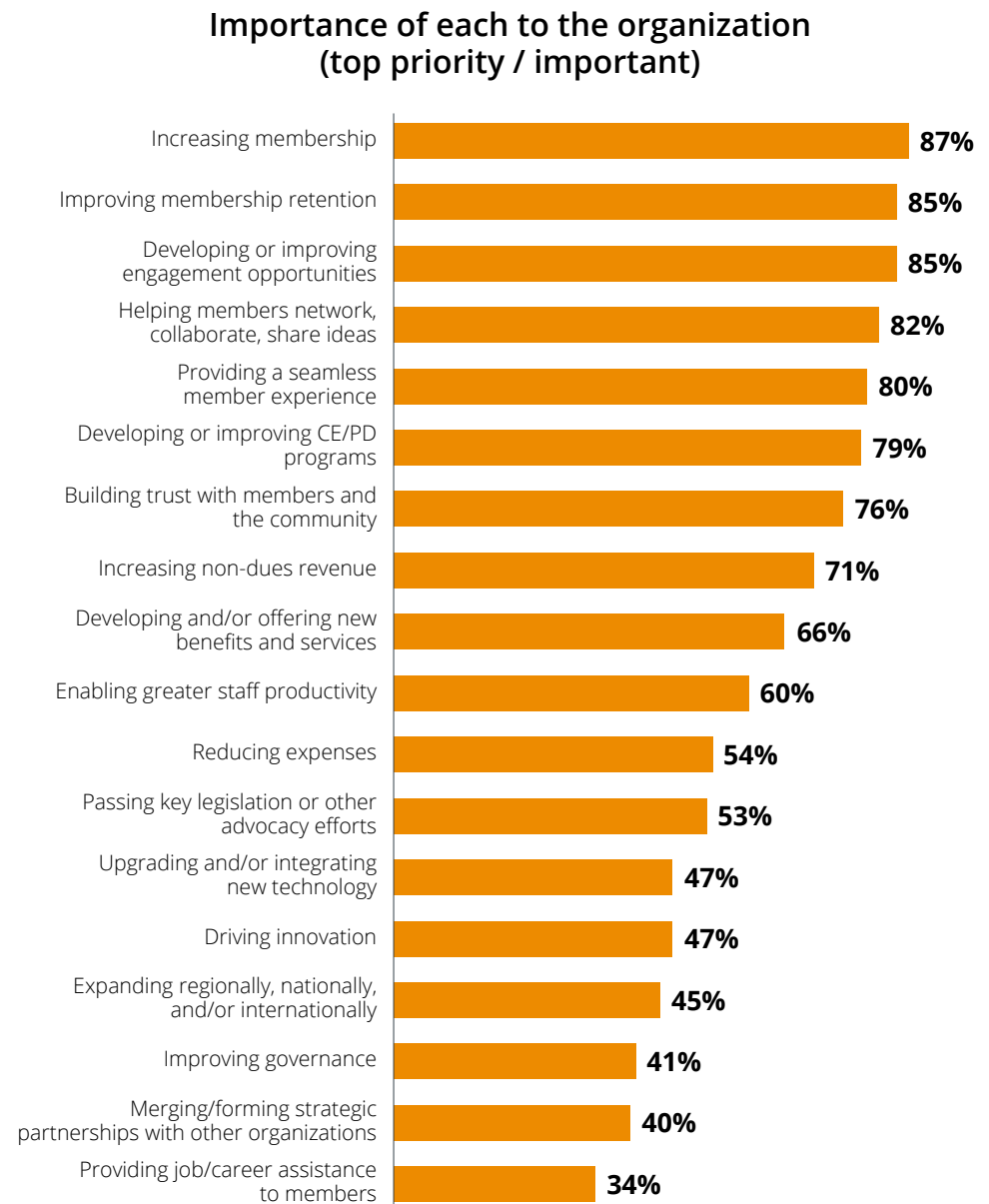


Figure 35. Question asked: How important are each of the following for your organization over the next year?



Risk Alert: Technology and innovation

Pros place less emphasis this year on building trust with members and the community, innovation and upgrading and/or integrating new technology.

Studies during the pandemic found that Members said the importance of their organization had grown than previous years. During this time Pros put a higher emphasis on building trust with members and the community, innovation and upgrading and/or integrating new technology. The de-emphasis of these priorities points towards a risk in loyalty metrics and the perception of member value.

This study also finds that only one-third or less of Members rate their professional membership organization's use of technology to provide benefits and services to members as "excellent."

This points to a need for organizations to prioritize innovation and rethink their processes and use of technology to support and improve the MX.

FUTURE-FACING ASSOCIATIONS OF EVERY SHAPE AND SIZE FACE MISSION-CRITICAL FACTORS

Explore increasing staff efficiency, leveraging data and analytics, driving revenue and growth, and deepening member connections. Expedite your work with industry-leading AMS solutions tailored to your needs.

Malik Zeigler
College Success Manager
KIPP Foundation
[Send Message](#)

Event Revenue by Product Type
Total Revenue: \$1.4 million

Record Type	Color
Advertising	Orange
Exhibitor	Dark Blue
Registration	Red
Sponsorship	Teal

Kay Morgan, Mississippi State University
Today at 9:54 am

Hi, my name is Kay Morgan, Mississippi State University, excited to join the community!

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Nimble AMS

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yourmembership

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NetForum

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From a revenue perspective, Pros say that membership dues and meetings/tradeshows continue to provide the majority of revenue – a consistent finding from past studies.

Pros say they are relying more on sponsorships/partnerships and exhibitors significantly more than in the past fiscal year. Small organizations are relying significantly more than large organizations on sponsorships/partnerships (64 percent compared to 48 percent) and large organizations are relying more on publications (28 percent compared to 8 percent).

OPPORTUNITY ALERT

Non-dues revenue sources

Professional development courses make up just seven percent of revenue, while job boards make up only one percent. Given Members' desire for job opportunities, career assistance, and professional education, these numbers point to a big opportunity for organizations to grow revenue in these areas.



Figure 36. Question asked: In a typical year, what percentage of your organization's revenue is from each of the following? (Your best estimate is fine. Total must add up to 100%.)



Risk Alert: Events

Meetings/events/tradeshows continue to be a large source of revenue for professional membership organizations, but findings in this study show that Pros continue to overestimate their importance to members.

To protect event revenue, organizations would do well to assess the potential risk that this gap poses. For example, an organization might determine how members value their events versus how their overall attendees value the events, and then consider if they should be viewing events as less of a member benefit and more of a program for the broader industry. This approach can help organizations find new ways to add value for event attendees.

Reliance on non-dues revenue sources compared to last fiscal year

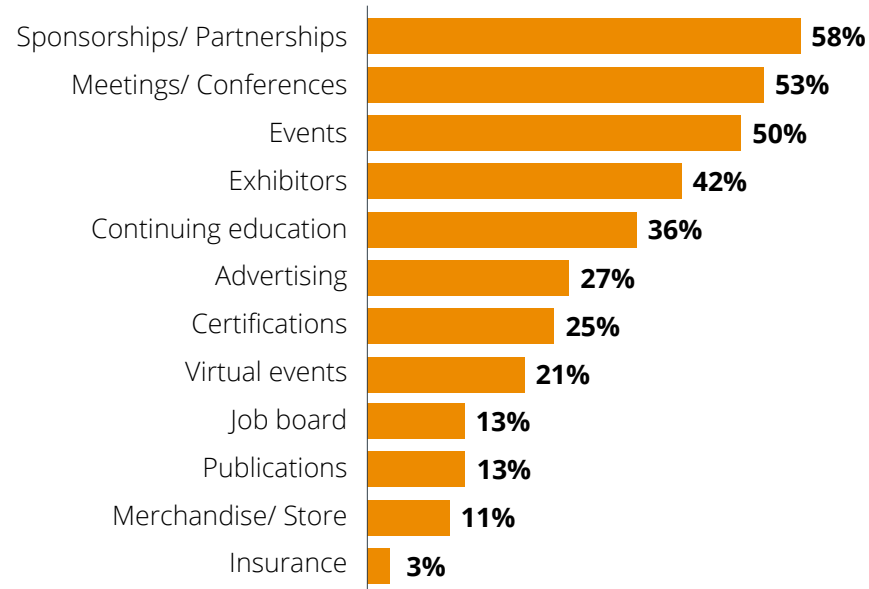


Figure 37. Question asked: Below are sources of non-dues revenue for professional membership/trade organizations. How much are you relying on each to generate non-dues revenue compared to the previous fiscal year?

Curious how your team can increase event engagement and ROI?

Find out how 500+ event professionals are utilizing the latest event tech.

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Where to go
from here



Findings from this study suggest that member loyalty and engagement within professional membership organizations remain strong.

However, organizations must sidestep certain risks and take advantage of opportunities to grow while maintaining a great MX.

Here are five ways to use the data and findings from this study:



1 Build a strong member engagement strategy.

This study's findings show that Member engagement remains stable, and organizations are engaging with members through multiple channels. However, engagement is higher for younger generations and trails off for older generations. Also, just a quarter of Pros report they have an organization-wide member engagement strategy, and less than one-third of Pros express strong confidence in their organization's strategy.

To keep member engagement strong, work within your organization to create a member engagement strategy that:

- Includes all departments for a more consistent MX
- Emphasizes high-value engagement activities, such as professional development and leadership opportunities
- Prioritizes the channels that members prefer, such as email and online member community
- Engages with all generations, based on their preferences

Take advantage of opportunities to engage more in areas such as texting. Invest in technology that will help execute your member engagement strategy:

- Provide your members with an online community to connect, learn, share ideas, and become loyal advocates.
- Leverage an AMS system with modern engagement tools such as process automation, engagement scoring, built-in text messaging capabilities and a built-in online community.
- Empower your members to engage from anywhere, anytime with a [365-engagement mobile app](#).
- Look for technology systems – including AMS, LMS, event management, and career center solutions – that integrate, bringing together all your member engagement data in one place (your AMS). This gives you a complete picture of your members to help you deliver a great MX.

2 Rethink your organization's events.

Events make an appearance multiple times in this study and seem to be a mixed bag. They continue to be a top source of revenue, but organizations greatly overestimate the importance of multi-day conferences to members. Even though events are among the top ways Members engage with their organization, they rate them toward the bottom of the list of important benefits.

These contradictions point to the need to evaluate opportunities and risks for your organization's events:

- Gather feedback about [who attends your events](#) and why, and determine if your goals are around revenue generation, member benefits, or both.
- Think about how you can provide greater value to keep event attendance and revenue strong, such as using [event technology](#) to provide a smoother and more engaging event experience.
- Consider ways to expand beyond big in-person conferences – such as offering an online member community for networking and collaboration and providing a greater variety of [learning opportunities](#) (like online courses, webcasts of a live event, and short videos) – to diversify your revenue streams and deliver more member value year-round.
- Embrace event technology today for event success. The Community Brands [2023 Event Trends Study](#) found that technology is playing a role in revitalizing the events industry. Organizations that are early adopters of technology report stronger growth in almost every area of event execution – such as number of attendees, speakers, exhibitors, and abstract submissions. Tech-savvy organizations can, and will, transform the event experience.

3 Get innovative with professional education.

Members look to their employer and professional organization for education and training. And while the value Members place on content from their professional organization rises, it falls for other sources, like LinkedIn and Google. At the same time, Members show interest in more learning modalities than most organizations offer.

Maintain your organization's edge by taking advantage of growth opportunities by giving members more ways to learn. For example, offer a variety of learning opportunities throughout the year to accommodate members' schedules, learning preferences, training, and certification needs. Invest in a [modern learning management system \(LMS\)](#) to provide the innovative educational experiences your members expect, such as course recommendations and a variety of online learning options.

4 A robust career center shows members you're invested in their futures.

This study's findings, as with past studies, suggest that organizations continue to undervalue career advancement and job opportunities as member benefits. While job opportunities and help with career advancement both make it into the list of top important benefits to Members, career advancement increased significantly in importance from the 2022 study.

If you think of your online career center as simply a place for job postings, you're missing out on an opportunity to engage more with your members and give them more of the value they seek. Provide an online career center that includes not just a job board, but also [career-building resources](#), such as career peer data, industry-specific career advice content, online coaches, an online career planning tool, and mentoring, to help members advance their career. Launch a survey collecting peer data to better serve members with personalized content and equip them with the tools they need to plan their career, negotiate compensation, and understand the trade-offs of different career paths. In addition to giving members the top benefits they seek, a robust online career center can help your organization drive non-dues revenue through sales to employers who are looking to fill roles with highly qualified candidates.

5 Don't lose sight of MX.

As Pros focus on member acquisition and retention, they de-emphasize some key areas that support a great MX: providing a seamless MX, building trust with members and the community, and upgrading and/or integrating new technology. Avoid putting your organization's MX at risk: Use technology, such as [association management software \(AMS\)](#), a learning management system (LMS), event management technology, a [data analytics tool](#), and job board software to continue giving your members a smooth, secure, engaging, and innovative experience that keeps them around for years to come.



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Experience the transformative power of connected technology from a leading partner. Community Brands is dedicated to helping associations utilize data in a more effective way, enhance member experiences, and discover new revenue streams.



Prioritize your staff and members with intelligent member management.



Move members forward with educational opportunities for professional development.



Become the ultimate career growth destination for members.



Create more engagement with end-to-end event management solutions.



Make smarter, faster decisions based on real-time data insights.



Member Management



Career Centers



Learning Management



Data & Analytics



Event Management



Put the insights from this study into practice.

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Let's chat



Research methodology Commissioned by Community Brands, Edge Research conducted an online survey of 1,014 U.S. Members who self-reported they are 18 years old or older and are currently a member of a professional membership organization. Survey respondents were recruited through an online non-probability sample, meaning findings are not projectable to the larger population of members. The term “Members” refers specifically to those who were surveyed. Quotas were set so the survey is representative of key demographics. A parallel online survey was conducted among 285 professionals who work in these types of organizations. Survey respondents were recruited using Community Brands lists, which is a nonprobability sample. The terms “Professionals” or “Pros” refers specifically to those who were surveyed. The surveys were in the field during June of 2023.

About Community Brands Community Brands amplifies the impact of over 50,000 purpose-driven organizations in over 30 countries. Associations, nonprofits, and K-12 schools rely on our software and services to solve their most critical challenges: engage the people they serve, simplify operations, and grow revenue. Built with reliability at the core and strategically focused on events, education, careers, fundraising, financials, and operations, our family of brands is bound by a common purpose to serve the organizations that make our communities a better place to live. Learn more at communitybrands.com and follow us on [LinkedIn](#) and [Facebook](#).



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