



The New Motto: Access, Resources and Solutions to Members

For as long as I can remember, the message to members was “Get involved, get results.” This implied that if members wanted to gain benefits from us, they had to come to events, belong to a committee, or be active in grassroots advocacy initiatives to drive favorable business legislation. Inadvertently, this message also told members that if they couldn’t get “involved” in the face-to-face opportunities we provide, they weren’t likely to reap the benefits they anticipated.

I agree that when members actively and consistently engage in networking and committee initiatives, they are more apt to know what’s going on and can develop deeper relationships with other members. It’s the same recipe for what it takes to make social media initiative effective. It doesn’t matter how many Facebook friends, LinkedIn connections or Twitter followers one has—if you’re not reading, sharing, or contributing, you can be out of the loop and lose touch and favoritism pretty quickly.

Association Transformation



But membership in a professional or trade association isn’t another social media venue. People have so many choices today to be profiled, get involved, collect information, and network with others. Time poverty prevents so many members from attending programs and events that are either “one-offs” or offered on days/times when they can’t attend. And managing so many

different memberships can be time-consuming and unproductive.

We also have to realize that individuals and organizations belong to associations for different reasons. Some join because of us—why we exist, how we do it, and what we get done. Many others join because it’s more about them—what they want to communicate to the community about their brand, what needs or interests they have to address, and what they can get from us.

The new motto we’re rallying around is focused on: Access, Resources, Solutions and realizing that the interests/needs the motto communicates can mean different things to different groups. Our days of selling the same benefits to all prospects and members are behind us. The bottom line is that one size fits no one. We must develop different value propositions to communicate and serve

Common Interests and Needs

	<p>Support a thriving local economy Education, transportation, talent attraction, job creation Promote the local area and region</p>
	<p>Influence a business-friendly environment Develop relationships with policy and regulatory decision-makers Create a positive sentiment toward business</p>
	<p>Develop a skilled existing workforce Skills development on current and emerging needs Leadership development for younger talent and succession plans</p>
	<p>Provide support to growing enterprises Local and global visibility, advertising and marketing opportunities Cost savings, experts and mentors, and strategic connections</p>
	<p>Create opportunities to build a local network Networking and events at no or low cost to schmooze Welcome newcomers and start up businesses seeking connections</p>

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a diverse membership base. That starts with an understanding of the various segments of your audience (both members and prospects), what's important to them, and how these diverse needs are met through the association.

In our webinar, [How to Appeal to the 4 Types of Members](#), we discussed common interests and needs of members and prospects. This chart reflects a high level description of the most common ones. Of course, there are a few other "themes" that could be added. Learn more about the webinar.

We recommend that you develop your own themes by communicating with your current and non-members. This is the foundation of understanding your different target audiences and what matters to them.

The webinar also shared **The Member Profile Matrix** and how each quadrant portrayed a type of member with specific values, needs and interests. We discussed how the Matrix could be used to evaluate current benefits, identify service gaps, and to develop a tiered benefits model.

Our webinar, [The VOI of Membership is Greater than the ROI](#), focuses on developing value propositions that resonate with the different types of members. Lessons learned from the webinar can enhance how we communicate the value of membership. Learn more about the webinar.

Member Profile Matrix—the Framework

Get Something Done Through You

INVESTED	<p>Community Investors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategic direction, vision Sustainable, thriving economy Progress towards goals Community leadership Public policy and advocacy 	<p>Community Builders</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sustainable, thriving economy Community involvement Public policy and advocacy Recognition Execute corporate initiatives 	INVOLVED
	<p>Business Investors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cost reduction Pay to play Convenience ROI expectations Access to experts, best practices 	<p>Business Builder</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transactional activities (leads) Just-in-time marketing Pay by showing up ROI without \$ investment Exposure, connections 	

Get Something for Their Business

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