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TECH TOOLKIT

While associations have different technology needs, they all share similar goals: to stay ahead of the curve and meet member needs. The *2016 Tech Toolkit* is designed to help with ideas from companies that offer solutions to some of your most complex problems. Whether you're looking to move to a data-driven email marketing plan or leverage data visualization, this special advertising section is essential reading prior to your next strategy session.

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EMPOWERING YOUR ATTENDEES WITH SMART TECHNOLOGY

BY RAJIV JAIN

Numerous recent industry research reports have highlighted the significant gap between the technology expectations of event participants and the features made available to them on event websites. To stay ahead, show organizers need to engage attendees with smart technology and enhance their preshow and onsite experience.

WHAT'S IMPORTANT TO ATTENDEES

According to a survey report included in the CEIR Digital Toolkit, 94 percent of event attendees engage in preplanning efforts, but two-thirds of respondents indicated that many organizers do not provide them with the features they need to successfully participate in an exhibition or conference.

This is an astoundingly high percentage of attendees who are dissatisfied with what's offered. Gone are the days of lightweight event websites with static content that remains unchanged throughout the show cycle. The recent surge in the popularity of smart devices, touch screens, and apps—as well as modern digital marketing techniques—have forever changed the audience's expectations.

Tech-savvy attendees now expect the event website and the mobile app to be highly interactive, in sync with and responsive to their viewing environment. They need ample search, planning, and networking features to utilize their valuable time more efficiently by making more relevant connections and engaging in quicker buying conversations.

This is especially true for young professionals, who make up the largest-growing attendee segment in the industry. There is a huge demand for fully integrated digital offerings that are also highly personalized to the preferences and requirements of this younger audience. It's important for them to access interactive features as soon as they register for the event.

The mandate today is in favor of cloud-based technology

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a2z, Inc. provides powerful, cloud-based event management and marketing tools that grow your brand by accelerating and boosting revenue and by enhancing engagement and value for event participants.

Our solutions are used by more than 1,000 leading tradeshow and conferences across the globe every year. Event professionals can build and update education content by adding, importing, and editing data online.

A multiyear, multievent system with detailed reporting gives organizers the power to manage all their conferences more efficiently. They can also maximize their event performance by adding Call for Papers, an award-winning event app, to their system. Speakers use a secure login to submit proposals, bios, photos, and handouts.

solutions that take the pressure out of navigating busy show floors and several sessions over a short period of time.

TUNE INTO WHAT ATTENDEES NEED TO STAY ENGAGED

Here are the features high on the attendees' technology demand list:

- **Interactive floor map alongside searchable exhibitor directory.** Fast-loading event maps enable attendees to easily search for and locate exhibitors, browse eBooths, and create a personalized walking map.
- **Recommended exhibitors, products, and sessions based on their own demographics.** Intelligent matchmaking makes it easy for attendees to quickly find resources that best fit their requirements.
- **Searchable attendee directory.** The ability to pull up a list of registered attendees to speedily identify peers and influencers makes it easier for participants to get started on augmenting their professional circles.
- **Options to request and schedule meetings with matched exhibitors and attendees.** Facilitated online introductions and preshow networking with appointment scheduling options ensure that attendees do not have to take time breaking the ice or standing in long lines at the event venue.
- **Searchable session/speaker directory.** If attendees can search the complete event itinerary along with the detailed profiles of speakers and presenters during the preconference stage, they can make more informed decisions on how to maximize their event experience.
- **Downloadable speaker presentations and handouts.** The ability to download copies of session handouts and speakers' digital content on demand rescues attendees from having to lug around reams of paper or take copious notes while attending sessions.
- **Speaker Q&A features.** Attendees can fully benefit from the presenters' expertise by asking them questions and participating in polls in a live environment.

Conference and meeting organizers who have not yet tapped into the power of cloud-based, integrated technology should start looking for smart options. By providing multi-channel, multidevice interactive features, they'll not only empower their audience but also bring a new customer-centric focus to their events.

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CONTENT • CONNECTIONS • COMMUNITY • COMMERCE

KEY ASSOCIATION TRENDS TO EMBRACE NOW

BY AMANDA MYERS

It can be difficult to get your bearings in this ever-evolving association sector. It's as though the landmarks and celestial bodies are continually shifting and changing.

To help you chart a course, our Abila experts have compiled these five association trends. Consider them and the recommended actions your compass, accurately orienting you and providing clear direction as you navigate your association's "Journey Map in 2016: The Year of the Member."

1 Focus on member experience. According to a recent study, 38 percent of those who don't renew their association memberships cite a lack of engagement with the organization. Add to this the fact that new member acquisitions are stalling and workforce demographics are shifting, and it becomes clear that associations will need to find a new normal as it pertains to engagement, retention, and the overall member experience.

Action: With the likes of Amazon, Netflix, and eBay providing a highly customized, segmented, personal experience that keeps individuals engaged and retained, your association will need to follow suit with a very similar strategy to create emotional, long-lasting connections with your members. A focus on managing and engaging members, as well as analyzing and scoring these relationships, will be essential to your association's success.

2 Certification revenue is eclipsing membership revenue. Certification programs are emerging as the principal revenue drivers for associations. There will be a tipping point when certification revenue will surpass membership revenue as individuals look to get the most out of every dollar they spend.

Action: One of the most valuable resources you have is your association's e-learning content. Sophisticated learning management platforms can help you easily package and deliver this content as certification programs, awarding members with professional certificates upon completion.

COMPANY BIO

Abila is the leading provider of software and services to associations and nonprofits that help them improve decision making, execute with greater precision, increase engagement, and generate more revenue. Abila combines decades of industry insight with technology know-how to serve nearly 8,000 customers across North America. Our customizable association management systems allow you to manage and engage members, as well as analyze and score these relationships for increased engagement. Our learning management system enables associations to offer members webinars and webcasts, on-demand courses, and continuing education.

For many members, certification has greater perceived value than mere membership and affords a more significant career edge. This is particularly true for your millennial members who will make up 75 percent of the workforce by 2020.

3 Hybrid membership models are mainstay. The traditional membership models that focused on a one-size-fits-all dues structure—primarily individual and company memberships—are a thing of the past.

Action: Emerging hybrid models will change the way you engage with your membership. They will also be more reflective of current culture and behavior with your association offering tiered membership levels, hyperfocused services within existing memberships, and differentiated value for individuals and groups. The move is toward a membership experience that is as unique as each member.

4 An increase in partnerships. Sharing resources and ideas across likeminded organizations and forging partnerships with the for-profit sector are becoming the norm.

Action: Your association should look closely at similarly aligned organizations—regionally, nationally, and internationally—to forge alliances for greater visibility and awareness. All avenues, channels, and opportunities should be explored to generate revenue and connect with potential new members and customers. You might also look to create for-profit partnerships as corporations seek to raise their social profiles.

5 Use your AMS as a strategic tool. Many associations use their AMS as a tactical tool, focusing primarily on transactions, such as dues renewal and event registration. To get more out of their technology investment, organizations are tapping into the power of their AMS for strategic purposes.

Action: For-profit organizations are finding success by offering customized experiences to consumers through data analytics, segmenting, and choice. Your association will need to take a similar path, using technology to create a highly personalized journey for each individual member.

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WHAT IS THE CLOUD, AND IS IT RIGHT FOR YOUR ASSOCIATION?

BY DANESH HUSSAIN

By now, most in the association world are familiar with the cloud, although many are still not taking full advantage of its numerous benefits.

Simply put, the cloud refers to software and services that run on hardware owned and operated by a third-party provider. The information is stored in massive, offsite data centers instead of the organization's own internal servers and computer hard drives. Heard of Apple's iCloud or Dropbox? They are just a few of the many cloud services available to the public.

To put into perspective how popular the cloud has become, spending on cloud services at the end of 2015 was projected to surpass \$180 billion! Here are a few reasons using the cloud is the right choice:

Scalability: An association can easily grow, or scale back, depending on individual needs.

Disaster Recovery: Backup and recovery mechanisms are built into cloud technology, which save time and headaches downstream.

Automatic Updates: An association doesn't need to worry about regular software updates as the cloud partner handles system maintenance on their behalf.

Flexibility: Staff doesn't need to be chained to their desk to get the work done. Cloud-based file-sharing apps store files in a central location, allowing teams to access, share, and work on documents from anywhere, all in real-time.

Security: Laptops are lost and stolen frequently. Since data is stored in the cloud, and not on a machine, recovery of the information is instantaneous. Data security is another key area where cloud technology outweighs what an organization can do on its own.

Competitive Advantage: Moving to the cloud allows access to enterprise-class technology for associations, which previously was a luxury only the big boys could afford.

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American Technology Services, Inc. (ATS) is a leading provider of comprehensive IT, web design, and development services. Founded in 1994, the company has a strong track record of providing high-quality services to organizations of all sizes, including associations.

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Once an association has made the decision to move to the cloud, it then needs to understand the different types of clouds available and how they best fit an association's needs.

Public: The entire cloud is available for public use.

Private: The cloud is used by only one entity.

Community: The cloud is shared by several organizations, usually in the same industry.

Hybrid: A mix of the private and public cloud. Associations can store less critical information on a public cloud and mission-critical data on a private cloud.

But how does this apply in the real world? A good example comes from Washington, DC-based American International Health Alliance (AIHA), an organization working to advance global health in 34 countries.

AIHA had concerns about the costs involved in potentially investing in new hardware and a sufficiently high level of security to prevent a breach. So, the AIHA team reviewed the cloud options and chose a strategy that was right for them.

AIHA became more agile and flexible—without concerns about hardware or physical space—and had 24/7 access to the files from anywhere in the world. The cloud solution also offered users a secure environment at an affordable price point, saving the organization money. Initial estimates showed a conservative cost savings of 10 to 15 percent over previous costs for on-premise infrastructure, but after deployment, the actual savings was more than 35 percent.

For any association, the bottom line is moving to the cloud makes good business sense. Just make the move cautiously, and ask questions every step of the way to make certain the system you choose provides the greatest benefits for your particular operation.

American
Technology Services

THE EVOLUTION OF EMAIL MARKETING

BY SUZANNE CARAWAN

We've embraced the fact that our emails and websites need to be responsive so that they can be consumed on mobile. We became aware that we should be able to preset a sequence of email sends, and we've started to get our head around the fact that we need to measure more than open rates and click-through behavior. We might have even started to build out an integrated digital ecosystem to match software applications to fit our business purpose and staff skillsets.

That's certainly progress, but does it constitute evolution?

People have been saying that email is dead for so long that it should be a #tbt and considered back in style along with turntables and records that are hip again. In fact, it's true that email is back in style, but it's not dropping the same beat as your old LPs. What's evolved in email is solely driven by the realization and acceptance that email is the most intimate form of digital communication there is, and to blast it is to expose your organization as being outdated and greedy.

Greedy? Indeed. The modern consumer is now used to (and expects) highly personalized emails and websites that cater to their own interests, provide them information to make them better, and offer a pleasing user experience. I receive my Starbucks email, which tells me how much money is left on my card and what a rockstar I am. I receive my Dick's Sporting Goods email with bonus point information and product suggestions that align with my recent purchases and match up with the upcoming season.

Modern email is more than mobile-friendly. Modern email is unique to each user, and it makes me a better me by serving as my personal inbox concierge that's got my back to ensure that I'm on my A game. I rely on my digital relationship with Starbucks and Dick's to keep me informed so that I can take necessary action when it's the appropriate time. Due to my trust in the brand, I'm subsequently more aware of new information that Starbucks and Dick's may send

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HighRoad Solution provides email, automation, and inbound marketing solutions to the nonprofit market. Utilizing BlueHornet for email and HubSpot for inbound, HighRoad connects these enterprise platforms using our +Plus automation product line to Aptify, netFORUM, iMIS, and Personify360. Our portfolio of +Plus automation email products won us the endorsement from ASAE Business Services and powers the award-winning *Associations Now Plus* email newsletter from ASAE. Additionally, HighRoad is a full-service digital agency with both the creative and technical expertise to deliver the right elements needed for inbound marketing. HighRoad is the leading provider of HubSpot solutions in the association market.

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and am far more likely to not only open but also to take the action that the brand wants me to take. My logic is simple: They are here to help me, and they've come through over time.

Unfortunately, for many associations, this brand trust has severely eroded due to exploitation of email as a sales channel. The very name "blast email" says it all—we, the association, are going to employ a spray-and-pray method for selling our products and services to you and then label the actual email as a member benefit. For many associations, the selling in email has gotten so bad that members view the email in my inbox as the equivalent of getting my blue Val-Pak envelope of coupons in the mail. Sure, it's possible that I just might be in the market for duct-cleaning services that day, but it's far more probable that this is not the case. What do most people do with their Val-Pak envelope when they're sorting their mail?

Trash.

The solution? Evolve your email by allowing the member to drive the experience. Utilize each member's purchase history, interest areas, website visits, and any other data point that you can amass to target the content and delivery times of email. Allow members to take part in their email experience and choose their content. Stop creating all of your emails manually, which only allows for blast approaches and instead evolve to a data-driven email-marketing program.

ANALYZE AND VISUALIZE: LEVERAGE DATA VISUALIZATION TO TELL YOUR STORY

BY PATRICK DORSEY

“THE PURPOSE OF VISUALIZATION IS INSIGHT, NOT PICTURES.”
—BEN SHNEIDERMAN, COAUTHOR OF READINGS IN
INFORMATION VISUALIZATION

An exciting development in association technology is the growing transparency and access to data created by members, prospects, customers, internet-enabled devices, and other sources. However, access to this data doesn't provide executives and key decision makers with valuable insights. What matters most is what is done with the data. The ever-increasing amount of data must be collected, organized, and analyzed to provide meaningful value and drive data-driven decisions.

With more and more data available, forward-thinking associations are beginning to embrace new approaches, including data visualization tools and techniques, to dramatically improve their ability to quickly grasp the valuable information hidden in their data.

Data visualization is a powerful way to simplify the complexity of an association's data and present it in a form which is comprehensible, insightful, and actionable. And with interactive visualizations, associations can take the concept a step further by drilling down into charts and graphs for more detail, interactively changing what data is seen and how it's viewed—all in real-time.

Data visualization offers three benefits to association decision makers and their organizations:

1 COMPREHEND INFORMATION QUICKLY

By using graphical representations of their business and membership information, associations are able to see large amounts of data in clear, cohesive ways—and draw conclusions from the information. But associations not only have

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Smarter, simpler membership management. Impexium's 100 percent web-based association management software supports the full range of association business and administrative activities. We combine enterprise-level functionality with the benefits of a software-as-a-service model to deliver a mobile-first, fully responsive, analytics-driven platform to associations of all sizes.

Impexium relies on customers, prospects, and our own insights, gathered from more than 2,000 implementation experiences, to continuously refine our platform to deliver the outcomes necessary to address your organizational goals. We believe AMS technology is no longer simply a productivity tool to perform tasks faster and cheaper but rather that it should transform the way an organization conducts business.

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to find and analyze the relevant data they need; they must also find it quickly. And, for many individuals, because it's significantly faster to analyze information in graphical format, visualizations help identify problems or answer questions in a timelier manner.

2 IDENTIFY AND RESPOND TO EMERGING TRENDS

Enormous amounts of complicated data can start to make sense when presented graphically. Visualizations help quickly identify parameters that are correlated. Some correlations are obvious, but others are not. Identifying and responding to key relationships between data as well as trends and patterns can help to build and execute initiatives most likely to influence goals and objectives.

3 INTERACT DIRECTLY WITH REAL-TIME DATA

Unlike Excel spreadsheets or canned reports that can only be viewed, data visualization tools enable users to interact with data. For example, a canned report will inform the executive team that membership is down or registrations for a conference are lagging, but it will not identify why membership is down or whether certain membership types are not registering for the conference. Complicating matters, information in the report could be days or weeks old. When decision makers have access to real-time data, they have a better opportunity to understand and respond to why membership is down and the reasons negatively impacting the conference registrations.

To fully leverage the benefits of a data visualization initiative, associations should take steps to ensure their data is accurate and timely. In addition, understanding the data, including its size and context (e.g., whether the data comes from social media content or financial transactions), when determining what data to visualize is important. Equally important is knowing your audience (staff, volunteers, board members), and taking into account how each audience may process the visual information is critical when considering which visualization conveys the information and communicates the "story" in an engaging and simple format.



ACHIEVE MORE: CONNECT THE DOTS FOR YOUR ASSOCIATION

BY DAVE BORNMANN

Have you recently stopped to think about how your association's technology solutions can complement one another to maximize your existing resources and provide a better member experience?

Too often, associations think of their tech solutions from too narrow a perspective: How can my association management system (AMS) more effectively manage my member data? Or, how can my career center help me provide increased member value? This thinking in silos results in a series of satisfactory solutions that miss an opportunity for your association to provide a richer membership experience while enhancing your potential member-value proposition.

Let's start by looking at content: Thoughtful content printed in your publications, broadcast on your video channel, referenced in your career center, or spoken at your annual symposium attracts nonmembers and keeps current members engaged while positioning your association as the premier information resource in your industry. You're likely promoting your content on your website and on social media to generate interest and increase your reach. Your tech solutions—career center, learning management system, marketing automation platform, and AMS—independently manage, track, and measure it all.

But can your technology more effectively amplify all your content? Set meetings with your colleagues to consider the ways your association can work across departments to share tools and merge information and schedules to amplify communications and technology outside of traditional functional groups. Imagine:

- Your latest webinar is promoted through social media, summarized in your magazine, stored in your learning center, and promoted in your career center. Member attendees automatically get continuing education credit in your AMS, while nonmember attendees are added to a potential member marketing list.

COMPANY BIO

Naylor Association Solutions provides products and services that drive member engagement and revenue for more than 1,800 associations in North America. Founded in 1969, Naylor helps trade and professional associations by offering an array of solutions, including communications strategy, content, print, digital, video, full-service event management, advertising, sponsorship and exhibit sales, career centers, learning management, association management, and association management software solutions. It's not what Naylor does that makes us unique; it's how we do it. Our team is committed to customer service, has a strong sense of integrity, and possesses deep expertise helping associations achieve more success.

- Job postings are included in your newsletter, drive people to your job board, improve your site's search-engine optimization, and automatically add nonmember job seekers into your AMS for new-member marketing.
- Keynote sessions at your annual meeting are captured on video, promoted in your newsletter, and stored in your learning center for further member engagement and revenue generation.

The best part about these examples is that in many cases they don't require additional investments. They simply require your association staff to stay apprised of content and tools that traditionally reside in other departments. The challenge: Most association staff members have many projects on their plate and a finite amount of time. But lowering barriers between staff, while requiring a front-end investment of time and effort, is well worth the seamless experience your members will have on the public end.

If your staff meets these ideas with resistance, consider the following approaches:

- If one solution, such as your website, is one of your top traffic generators (as it often is), flag it for your executives along with ideas for how to extend that traffic to other online publications and products. Run a trial and monitor results.
- Talk to colleagues in other parts of your association about how certain tech solutions can support their initiatives (e.g., membership growth, event attendance, certification enrollments). Create a map of all your content, communication channels, and technology platforms. Brainstorm all points of connectedness. The more people see how your association's publications, events, and tech solutions can complement each other, the more champions you will have to fully integrate them.
- Update senior staff about each of your tech solutions' revenue generation and member engagement metrics. Identify strong points of content and integration already in place, opportunities for future integrations, and the expected improvements to your member experience.

Breaking down content and tech silos is worth the heavy lifting. Your members will notice a richer content offering from your association and will respond positively. Use tech to give them the best content experience you can offer.

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NAYLOR 
ASSOCIATION SOLUTIONS

4 TIPS FOR PLANNING A SUCCESSFUL ASSOCIATION MANAGEMENT SOFTWARE IMPLEMENTATION

BY ANN EICHEL

Associations recognize that an association management system (AMS) is a requirement to function as a business and deliver remarkable member experiences. But, choosing an AMS is only the first step to achieving streamlined processes, greater member engagement, and association growth. Here are four tips for planning a successful AMS implementation:

1 Plan for change. Change can be intimidating. Management sets the tone for the entire project by showing their support and guidance. They can also mitigate resistance to change by communicating openly about the reasons a new system is needed and what benefits are expected. This is best accomplished by use of presentations, demonstrations, or one-on-one conversations. These techniques will demonstrate the benefits of the AMS for the staff, as well as members and the organization as a whole. Communication is often one of the most overlooked components of an implementation. Without it, staff fail to fully leverage the system and the original benefits fall by the wayside. Setting a positive tone will help ease any concerns and result in higher user adoption rates.

2 Tailor legacy data for the new system. When migrating to a new AMS, legacy data is not “plug and play.” Considerable time and attention is needed to evaluate and clean up the data before it can be meaningfully used in the new system. Duplicate records can be deactivated; records with the same email address merged and erroneous data corrected. It’s best to begin the process to determine what information is valuable prior to migration so that corrupt and unnecessary data isn’t brought over to the new database. The more reliable the legacy data, the more confidence users will have

COMPANY BIO

Protech Associates, Inc., is the world’s first and leading provider of cloud-based association management software (AMS) powered by Microsoft Dynamics CRM. Founded in 1984, Protech combines deep industry expertise and technical knowledge to deliver a robust, easy-to-use, cloud-based AMS that is certified for Microsoft Dynamics, with enterprise-level security, a built-in disaster recovery plan, and a 99.9 percent uptime guarantee. Headquartered in Columbia, Maryland, the company has been named to the Microsoft President’s Club numerous times, received the Microsoft Distinction in Marketing Award twice, and is a Microsoft partner with a Gold Competency in CRM.

in the migrated data, which translates into increased user adoption.

Your AMS vendor can supply staging tables to easily manipulate the legacy data into new formats. This allows association staff to migrate the data to a test system for iterative reviews before the system goes live. Ensuring the data converts correctly is crucial to the software's success. After all, users will harness the power of this data daily for member management and engagement, and accurate data empowers users to better serve members.

3 Provide staff access to the software before go live.

A sandbox environment and early access to the software promote a smooth go-live process. Staff members can familiarize themselves with the software, its layout, and capabilities. They can thoroughly test configurations, workflows, transactions, and business processes to ensure they produce the desired results. This puts the staff's minds at ease about the implementation and gives association leaders and staff a chance to determine if existing business processes should change in light of the new system's features. Often, new association management systems will offer opportunities to streamline business processes and increase efficiency, enabling staff to focus on other, member-focused tasks.

4 Invest in quality education. Providing quality education and training for your staff, along with adequate time to practice what they've learned and master the skills needed to enter transactions, extract data, and configure the system, are vital to the success of the new system. However, education is not a one-time event. Staff should reinforce their knowledge through ongoing learning with internal training refreshers, lunch and learns, and skill-building activities. They can also try out their newly acquired skills through testing scripts in real-life scenarios.

By establishing a strong, well-thought-out implementation and deployment plan from the beginning, associations can set the foundation for leaders and staff to hone the skills and develop the business processes necessary to optimize the AMS for the organization's and members' full benefit.

To learn more, download the e-book, *How to Successfully Plan for an AMS Software Implementation* on our website.

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PROTECH

QUALITY ASSURANCE IN THESE NEW TIMES

BY MUKESH SHARMA

Product requirements change frequently, end-user expectations are very volatile, competition is stiff, resources are scarce, and time to market is shrinking. All of these elements add to the product dynamics that organizations need to manage today. While there is no denying that product quality is a differentiator for organizations, they are most often challenged by these previously mentioned constraints and also lack precise objective visibility into the quality and health of their products and platforms.

Additionally, there is complexity around handling voluminous data, ensuring consistent delivery across varied supported platforms, and maintaining agility in operations. While some of these are newer challenges, the traditional challenges continue to exist.

As in the past, quality is often compromised when superficial frontend testing is conducted; bugs are found closer to the release date; compatibility gets difficult to handle across multiple platforms and devices; usability and accessibility issues are not attended to; regression test cycles are manual, expensive, and not exhaustive; performance test sessions are not scalable; and so forth.

For example, regressions that enter into the product later in the game and break existing functionality pose significant challenges to most groups, causing a lot of last-minute stress, quality compromise, and adverse end-user visibility. While most test groups believe regression is a known territory, many do not realize the inefficiencies in this space can lead to enormous problems from cost, quality, and team-morale standpoints. Do these resonate with the work environment at your end?

Here's what to expect in a quality assurance and software testing company like QA InfoTech:

There is no denying that quality is critical to a product's success and acceptance in the marketplace. However, the strategy to implementing quality has to align with the needs of the day—with increased focus on areas such as regression

COMPANY BIO

QA InfoTech provides quality engineering services that help organizations meet their goals around user expectations and system requirements in dynamic, agile environments. We provide end-to-end testing services—spanning function, performance, accessibility, usability, localization, and security test areas—and specialize in test automation, performance engineering, and mobile testing. We have been in business since 2003 and work with both *Fortune* 500 companies and startups, bringing conscious yet collaborative quality to today's industry of a merged dev-test work model.

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testing, performance testing, and user-powered usability and accessibility testing. Testers have to be empowered to take on automation that is built on robust open-source frameworks, handle scripts that can be bundled up to cover not just functional but also nonfunctional test areas (e.g., security and performance), and work with product teams members in realistic ways to bring “collaborative, conscious, and continuous quality” within the organization.

In addition, quality can get very subjective. To ensure objectivity, you should ask your service provider for what measurable outcomes you can expect. For example, we have been helping clients across disciplines bring down cost of quality by 25 percent, improve reusability of test artefacts by 30 percent, reduce accessibility issues by 75 percent, and bring down regression test cycles time by 60 percent.

A focused service provider will also be able to offer you end-to-end testing services or point executions in a number of areas (e.g., performance, regression, security, accessibility, localization and linguistic testing, data analytics) that will enhance both product quality and the test team’s visibility across the board.

We have recently been working with a global leader in the e-learning domain, who had been facing a number of issues: frequent production-release rollbacks, lack of reliable regression suites, delayed production-deployment schedule, frequent post-deployment issues, and lack of collaboration among team members. These were not only affecting product quality and team morale but were also symptoms of a core problem of a missing quality-assurance function that aligned with an agile structure.

By pairing our automation frameworks that focused on regression and enhanced test coverage with our developers and deployment engineers, we helped this organization address its challenges within a short time. Choosing a testing services provider is an educated call and an investment. Make the right decision, and you’ll witness enhanced product acceptance in the marketplace for yourself!



5 KEYS TO GROWING THE REACH AND REVENUE OF YOUR E-LEARNING PRODUCTS

BY CAROLINE MARCH-LONG

When it comes to e-learning, there are three questions associations should be asking. Have we successfully created a set of e-learning courses that meet the needs of our members? Are current members aware of and taking advantage of our e-learning offerings? Have we leveraged our e-learning programs to get in front of new learners and potential new members?

This third question related to expanding e-learning to new audiences is often overlooked by many associations because a distribution strategy is not considered during the planning phase. By building what is commonly called an Extended Enterprise, an association can take its intellectual property and valuable asset—e-learning content—to new learners. As a result, the association can generate new, untapped nondues revenue, extend the association brand, and, as a byproduct, bring in new members.

There are five keys in growing the reach of an association's e-learning program, whether it's through partners, resellers, or other distribution networks.

1 Know your audience and know how to reach them.

How do you plan on expanding and broadening the reach of your e-learning beyond your direct member network? Who are your target learners, and what organizations can reach them?

Associations have many potential learners outside of membership who would be eager to consume a course. A skilled marketing and channel expert can help identify this network of potential learners/purchasers. Once identified, the association can reach them through partners, chapters, associations, or other resellers that would benefit from offering existing courses to their networks.

COMPANY BIO

Scitent is an e-learning company that turns an organization's valuable educational content into an engaging, impactful online learning *business* that can reach more audiences and generate solid revenue for ongoing success. We do this through our market-leading PROPEL distribution technology and services, which help a company open new markets and drive sales in the United States and around the globe. Organizations also can tap into our in-house experts in instructional design/courseware development, LMS technology, sales and marketing, eCommerce, and customer support to help them dream, design, deliver, and distribute their e-learning—what we call our 4-Ds. We help our customers Dream Big.

2 Build a business model that shows ROI. Growing a distribution network takes quantitative research on the cost savings and revenue potential. It's important to illustrate the cost savings from on-demand, online learning to distributors. But you also need to show the association C-suite the revenue potential of having a two-step business model: selling online courses via business-to-business or reseller networks to reach a much broader learner audience. In other words, find ways to show the organizational ROI for your expanded training network.

3 Build a distribution program that is a win-win for you and your distributors. Growing an e-learning distribution network means your distributors need to see the relationship as a win-win. Develop a compelling pricing model with margins that allow resellers and distributors to make money. Give distributors tools to support the marketing and sales efforts associated with your course products.

4 Make it easy on your network. Not only do your partners want to make money, but they also need to feel that reselling your e-learning doesn't require a heavy technology implementation and/or workforce burden. Use distribution technologies that don't require your partners and resellers to have a learning management system.

Consider an efficient system for distributing courses across your network and an administrative tool that allows your distributors to manage and track their learners (who purchased a course, who has taken and completed an online course, who has been certified, and so forth).

5 Focus on your overall strategic mission. E-learning business growth takes sales and marketing, technology, and, often overlooked, a customer support team. The logistics of developing and managing an e-learning network could quickly overwhelm your staff, costing you in terms of lost opportunities, poor outcomes, and a wounded brand. Determine, ahead of time if possible, what portion of your channel network development and the resulting business requirements you want to incur as an expense versus outsourcing those functions.

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GROWING ENGAGEMENT THROUGH MULTI-GENERATIONAL REACH

BY JP GUILBAULT

Working with more than 4,300 associations worldwide, we often hear the same question, “How do we reach and engage millennials?” Our response: “You may be asking the wrong question.” Over the past few years the millennial audience has been a focal point for associations, but why?

Millennials tend to be early technology adopters and represent a change in the way people connect with the world for knowledge exchange and social connections. Both are great shifts that an association should harness, but we must really understand that all generations are adopting this change—not just the younger working generation. In order to thrive, your engagement strategy must expand to reach *all* age demographics.

Discover how to engage all working generations at the same time. The number of people we connect with, the number of ways we connect, and the amount of information we consume has increased the complexity of our daily lives, and capturing a few minutes of someone’s attention is more valuable than ever.

In today’s always-connected world, you have about a minute to make a connection. Are you there, and are you ready? In order to maximize the reach and relevance of your message at the micro-moment of need, you should

- **think on-demand, always connected, and mobile first.** Your website must be optimized for mobile. User experience matters. Quick time to recognized value is the measure of success.
- **be relevant.** Your information has to be useful. Connecting them to the right answer based on intent, timing, and style is critical—is your audience searching to do something, learn something, go somewhere, or buy something?
- **use flexible and fast tools.** The systems and tools you use must be flexible enough to accommodate

COMPANY BIO

YourMembership has emerged as the leading technology and revenue solutions company serving the member-organizing industry. YM’s ecosystem of connected products include association, community, and learning management software; career centers; media solutions; and mobile applications all designed to take member engagement to levels never imagined. Leveraging the power of a best-in-class outsourced sales force and dynamic data model, revenue and member experience is maximized through a highly personalized presentation of association store products, content, and recruitment and media advertising. YourMembership provides comprehensive membership solutions to more than 4,300 customers in 32 countries with 20 million members served worldwide.

how your members engage. Consider the necessities of today's "on-demand" world: mobile responsive, video embedding, social media feeds, and single sign-on access.

Bring member connections back to you. It takes 7 seconds to make a first impression. Seek technologies like your AMS, LMS, and CMS based on their ability to organize data and connect to other applications like mobile apps, career centers, marketplaces, and so forth. Populate these with relevant content in a multiformat approach to become the hub for member resources and connections.

Modernize learning and certification programs. Most members will struggle to find a full, uninterrupted hour in the day to complete a certification course or watch a video. Harness a learning management system that offers flexible content delivery so members can complete education courses in smaller segments and at their own pace.

Be the career hub for your members. Today's professionals are moving between jobs faster than ever and are quick to jump at great opportunities when presented. Sharing job posts through your social media channels, job alert emails, and job board feeds will bring new value and traffic to your website.

Create an interactive annual show. Technology can help you enhance your next event while onsite and before attendees even arrive. Let members contribute to session content by introducing live polling and discussions. Add gamification, easy networking opportunities, and a more informative conference experience with a mobile event app, and increase vendor engagement with a virtual tradeshow for the members who aren't able to attend in person.

As people and technology change, so must our communication methods remain inclusive and relevant to our audience. Targeting just the younger working generation could leave your association missing out on a large group of potential members who are also consuming information through technology in various ways. Associations must harness a multigenerational and multiformat approach with the right tools, at the right time, in order to thrive.

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