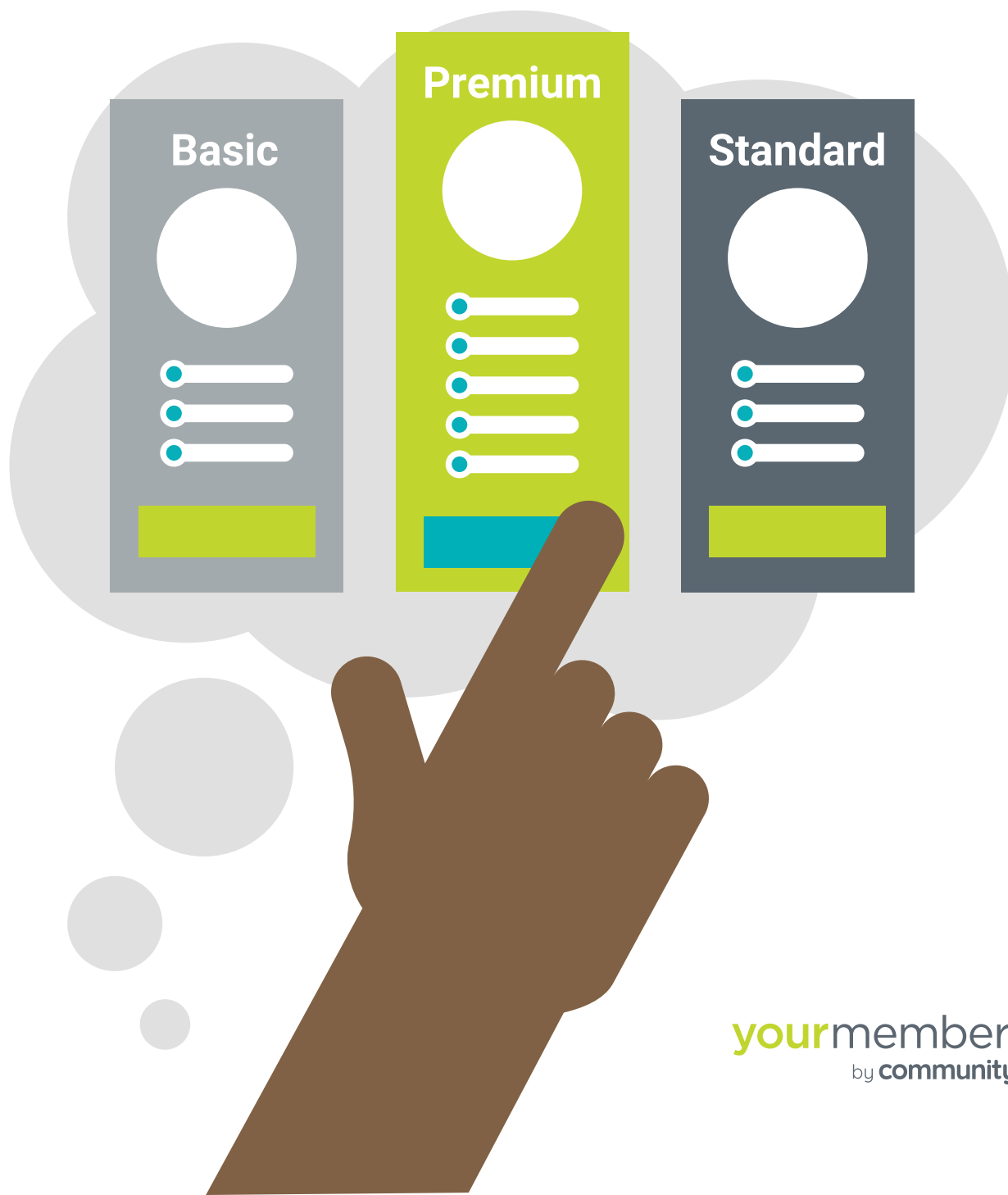


Rethinking membership models

Keep your membership strong and thriving.



yourmembership®
by **community**brands

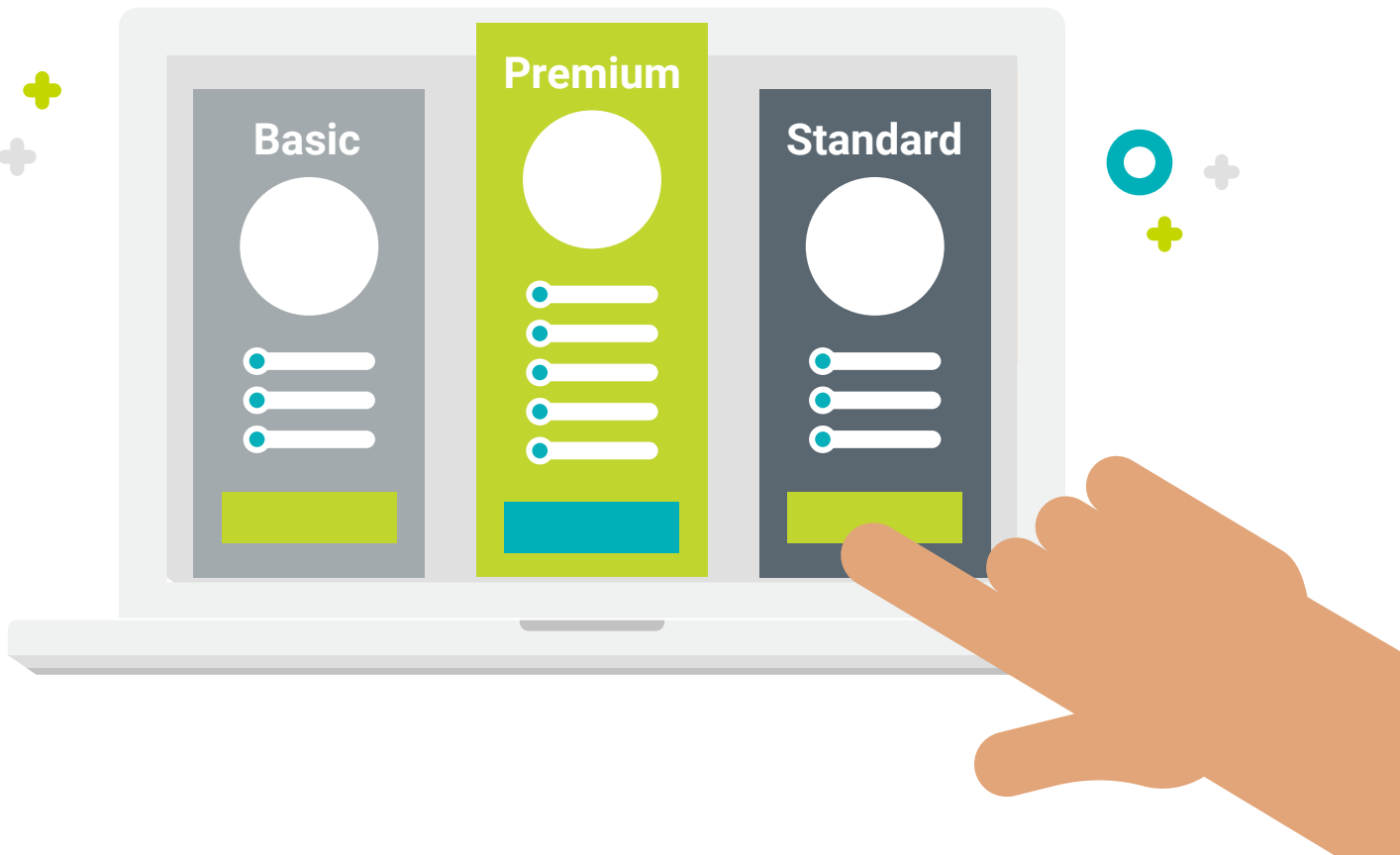
Introduction

Members are the lifeblood of associations. They help fulfill your organization's mission and propel your organization forward. In fact, small staff associations report nearly half of their revenue comes from membership dues.

So it's no surprise that increasing membership is a top goal for many associations. The Community Brands benchmark report of small-staff associations found that increasing membership topped the list of priorities for 93 percent of respondents, followed by improving retention.

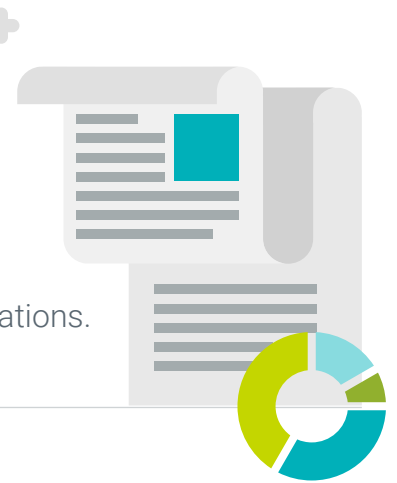
At the core of membership is the membership model. Since consumer experiences have been redefined by leading companies such as Amazon, Netflix, and Apple, there has been continuous conversation about membership models. They are the core strategies to sustain the growth of your association, and it is time to start rethinking yours.

In this ebook you'll discover practical approaches to help rethink your membership models and, in turn, reach your membership goals and exceed your members' expectations.



Before you make a change

Gathering feedback from your members before changing models is a must. You can gather feedback through focus groups, surveys, or one-on-one conversations.



According to the American Society of Association Executives (ASAE), here are five questions you should ask before rethinking your membership models:

Does the current membership model provide enough value? Why or why not?

Which member benefits do you find most or least useful?

If you could add one new thing to the member experience, what would it be and why?

Would a new membership model appeal to you right now? Why or why not?

Would your employer view a membership model change favorably? Why or why not?

Day-to-day consumer and technology experiences play an important role in your members expectations.

Your members now expect the same convenience of a personalized, digital experience with your association that they're seeing in other areas of their lives. Associations are challenged to reconsider their traditional membership models and how they can be modified to align with new expectations of consumers. Here are five membership model examples to consider as you build your strategic plan.

1

All-access pass

An all-access membership option is the “Cadillac” of membership models, giving members access to all content, webinars, on-demand courses, and resources. The cost of these benefits is baked into the total cost of an all-access membership. With an all-access pass, members can investigate the various benefits and build their own personalized experience.

2

Subscription

For-profit companies like Netflix and Hulu have championed the subscription-based membership model and have grown their revenue substantially. This model translates well for a convenient online user experience as members can set it and forget it. It also has proven its sustainability in how adaptable it is to new and emerging technologies.

One-third of Amazon Prime members pay higher monthly fees for the convenience of monthly payments and the ability to cancel at any time.

Did you know?

3

Freemium

A freemium-membership model brings together “free” and “premium” memberships. This model offers a “free” tier that gives members limited access to certain benefits as a trade-off for not paying. With the premium tier, members have access to more benefits and value, for their paid membership. The freemium model gives your members the opportunity to test drive the value of your organization and eventually invest in the premium membership.

4

Hyper-bundling

If your organization offers a wide variety of services, resources, and events, hyper-bundling might be perfect for your members. Hyper-bundling is where exclusive benefits and services are grouped together with an organizational membership. Hyper-bundling makes it easier for members to budget for their membership fees and can make the decision easier, especially when there is a long list of services to choose from.

5

Free trial

You may also consider a free trial option which offers a free month of membership that allows members to try before they buy. Netflix and Hulu are great examples of business models using this approach. With instant digital access, your members can see the value of membership, just like those interested in Netflix and Hulu can get a taste of what to expect when they become a member.

TIP

Take advantage of modern technology like YourMembership association management software (AMS), which allows you to easily set-up a variety of membership models and accept multiple payment options, including recurring and installment payments for member dues.

Whichever model (or models) you choose, here are examples of approaches to take when adapting a new membership model:

Verify that the benefits and value of your membership model meet the needs of your members.

Make it easy for members to join by providing an easy, quick online sign-up path.

Offer flexible payments through online monthly payments or payment installments.

Distribute communication through a variety of communication methods including email, online community, and push notifications via mobile apps.

Offer an online automatic renewal payment option for members.

Meet your members where they are – on their mobile device – with a community mobile app to keep members connected and in the know.

Did you know?

Thirty-eight percent of associations seeing an increase in renewal rates have an automatic annual credit card renewal option.

Not ready yet?



If your association is not quite ready to start implementing these models, you can start to make incremental changes. Here are five simple things you can do to prepare you and your staff for the inevitable next shift in membership models:

1

Tap into your younger staff members to regularly think about and report on how they engage with other professional societies.

2

Survey members about their expectations for the future and how they engage with for-profit companies.

3

Start a strategic “technology and member expectations” initiative with your executive team, including your board, to regularly review your findings from the above, and to create a plan to address changing member expectations.

4

Conduct focus groups with your early careerist members to identify changing member expectations so you can begin addressing them right away.

5

Connect with other association professionals who have implemented membership model changes to understand their successes and lessons learned.



Make sure your membership management system allows you to easily send and capture data from online surveys so you can gather valuable feedback from your members. With YourMembership AMS, you can not only gather feedback from a survey, you can easily distribute through multiple communication channels including email, online community and push notifications via the mobile app.



Benefits of rethinking your membership models.

As a membership organization, your association must critically assess how consumer expectations as well as technology are evolving. Re-working your membership models effectively requires adapting your business strategies and technology solutions to appeal to your members' expectations. But the benefits are well worth it.

Member benefits

A familiar online experience. Select the membership that best suits your needs, and sign up easily and quickly online.

The convenience of automatic payments. Pay monthly or through installments automatically via credit card.

An easier membership renewal process. Set up your membership to automatically renew each year using the payment method you selected when you first became a member.

Association benefits

An increase in membership growth and retention rates. Modernizing your member experience leads to happier members who stick around.

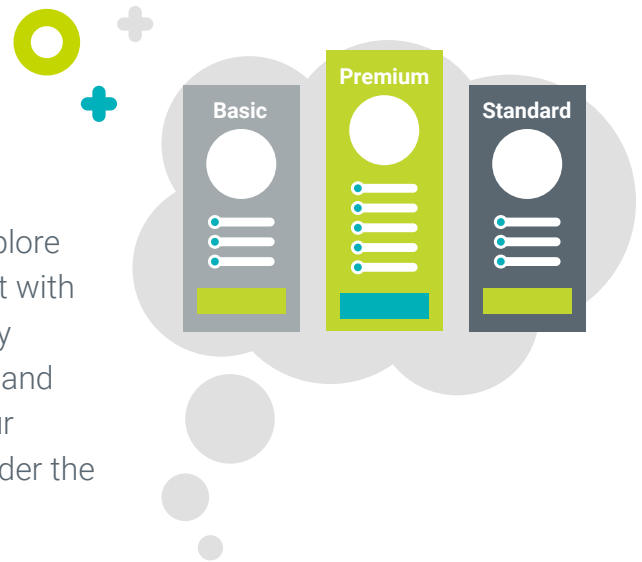
A way to connect with and appeal to early careerists. Early careerists see your organization as current, not outdated.

An opportunity to focus association staff on more critical initiatives. Automated processes frees staff members' time for projects and programs that deliver greater member value.



Take the next step

As a membership organization, your association must explore new paths of engagement and connection to stay relevant with your members. It has never been more important or timely for your association to critically assess how associations and membership models are evolving. To effectively serve your constituencies, and to thrive, your association must consider the future of your membership structures.



Learn how your association can make this transition by talking with an expert at YourMembership.

[Learn more](#)



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