GrowthZone surveyed healthcare association professionals across the U.S. and Canada. Topics included everything from staff health insurance coverage, to the Top 10 challenges holding them back, to what they wished their board knew. The results showed a number of trends impacting today’s healthcare associations.
58% of associations report stagnant or decreased membership growth.
## Top 10 Challenges Holding Associations Back:

**We asked, “What’s the #1 thing holding your association back?”**

### What Respondents Said:

1. Lack of funding
2. Leadership / Board of directors
3. Outdated technology / Lack of innovation
4. Resistance to change / Complacency
5. Not enough staff
6. Politics / Industry change
7. Marketing / Communication
8. Member engagement
9. Lack of strategy
10. Amount of work vs. time & manpower

### Quotes:

- Honestly, our association has done well. I credit our national organization with much of that.
- We need to keep up with the times.
- Board not being strategic — spending too much time doing committee work and micro-managing the administration.
- Lack of support from national level.
- Sacred cows — programs keep getting added without more staffing.
- Lack of direct interaction with members, and members not feeling like our work is essential to what they do every day. Member buy-in and engagement.
- The fact that our members don’t want CME events, which would help bring non-membership revenue into the organization.
- Volunteer direction and availability.
- Board of Directors backward focus.
- Relevancy - We are a professional association that can’t seem to stay relevant for our perspective members.
- Non-progressive thinking and employee dissatisfaction.
- Absolute reluctance on the part of the board to institute term limits.
- Inertia. Things have been done a certain way for so long that it’s hard to get the leadership or the membership to change.
Respondents indicated that 73% of their associations' communications are sent digitally.
ASSOCIATION OPERATIONS CONT.

MEMBERSHIP DUES STRUCTURE

- INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS: 52%
- COMPANY/ORGANIZATIONAL: 23%
- COMBINATION OF INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS AND COMPANY/ORGANIZATIONAL: 23%
- OTHER: 2%

MEMBERSHIP MODEL:

- INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS
- COMPANY/ORGANIZATIONAL
- COMBINATION OF INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS AND COMPANY/ORGANIZATIONAL
- OTHER

EMPLOYEE/STAFF HEALTH INSURANCE:

- OFFERED: 77%
- NOT OFFERED: 18%
- UNSURE: 2%
- OTHER: 3%

MOBILE CREDIT CARD READER USAGE:

- YES: 62%
- NO: 29%
- PLANNING TO SOON: 5%
- OTHER/UNSURE: 4%

1/3 of associations are using mobile credit card readers (or planning to soon).
We asked respondents “What do your members say is the reason they don’t renew?” and, “Why do you think members don’t renew?” The biggest difference of opinion was in Lack of Engagement/Interest.

**Lack of Value/Little to No Return on Investment**
- According to Association Staff: 18%
- According to Members: 9%

**Happy but Too Expensive**
- According to Association Staff: 9%
- According to Members: 17%

**Budget Cuts**
- According to Association Staff: 17%
- According to Members: 25%

**Never Had Time to Participate**
- According to Association Staff: 8%
- According to Members: 9%

**Don’t Use/Like/Need Benefits**
- According to Association Staff: 7%
- According to Members: 9%

**Lack of Engagement/Interest**
- According to Association Staff: 7%
- According to Members: 17%

**Disagree with Organization’s Advocacy**
- According to Association Staff: 1%
- According to Members: 0%

**Company Closed/Merged/Industry Consolidation**
- According to Association Staff: 5%
- According to Members: 3%

**Participated but Too Much of a Time Commitment**
- According to Association Staff: 2%
- According to Members: 2%

**Left Industry/Job**
- According to Association Staff: 1%
- According to Members: 1%

**Displeased with Member/Customer Service**
- According to Association Staff: 1%
- According to Members: 0%

**Unsure/Don’t Know**
- According to Association Staff: 9%
- According to Members: 11%

**Other**
- According to Association Staff: 4%
- According to Members: 6%
**ASSOCIATION-SENT EMAIL**

**OPEN RATE:**
- 0-10%: 3%
- 11-20%: 26%
- 21-35%: 30%
- 36-50%: 11%
- 51-75%: 7%
- OVER 75%: 4%
- NOT SURE: 17%
- WE DON'T SEND EMAILS: 1%

**EMAIL RATE:**
- AVERAGE NUMBER OF EMAILS SENT PER MONTH: 10

**NON-DUES REVENUE:**

**PERCENTAGE OF ANNUAL NON-DUES REVENUE**

- 0-10%: 3%
- 11-20%: 26%
- 21-35%: 30%
- 36-50%: 11%
- 51-75%: 7%
- OVER 75%: 4%
- NOT SURE: 17%
- WE DON'T SEND EMAILS: 1%

50%
**WISH LIST**

**WHAT ASSOCIATION EMPLOYEES WISH THEIR BOARD REALIZED:**

**AMOUNT OF WORK VS. TIME/MANPOWER**

**DON’T INTERFERE SO MUCH**

**WE NEED A STRATEGY**

**WE NEED MORE STAFF**

**RESOURCES NECESSARY FOR SUCCESS**

**UNDERSTANDING WHAT’S INVOLVED WITH THE JOB**

**THEY MAKE THE JOB HARDER**

**WHAT IT TAKES DAY-TO-DAY**

8% of respondents reported that their board has a thorough understanding of their job responsibilities.

**WHAT RESPONDENTS SAID:**

- We have to listen to all voices, not just a loud minority.
- How difficult it is to balance the interests of members.
- That administration is for the purpose of running the operations of the organization, and is NOT the board’s responsibility.
- The varied issues that we are called upon by our members to address and help resolve for them.
- We all wear multiple hats and we are a stretched, small staff.
- It’s a lot of cats to herd.
- How much work the implementation of systems takes.
- That you cannot come up with an idea and have me incorporate it in a couple weeks’ time.
- Sometimes decisions must be made with imperfect information.
- The number of people joining the association, or lack thereof, does not represent the amount of work or effort being put forth by me or my co-workers.

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At GrowthZone, we pride ourselves on listening to and focusing on healthcare associations and the people who make them run. In order to provide the best possible product to industry professionals, we regularly seek data on the trends and issues facing their organizations.

Thank you to the healthcare association professionals that took the time to respond to the survey.

ABOUT GROWTHZONE

GrowthZone is the first Association Management Software fully integrated with sales funnel management. It’s a smarter solution designed for efficiency and growth. The cloud-based system is powerful, easy to use, and designed to manage all the day-to-day operations of your organization. Guaranteed.

- Download a free copy of our Association Management Software Buyers Workbook.
- Contact us today for a personalized product demo.