



2020

ASSOCIATION

ANNUAL SURVEY RESULTS

SURVEY



CLICK

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GrowthZone
smarter association software



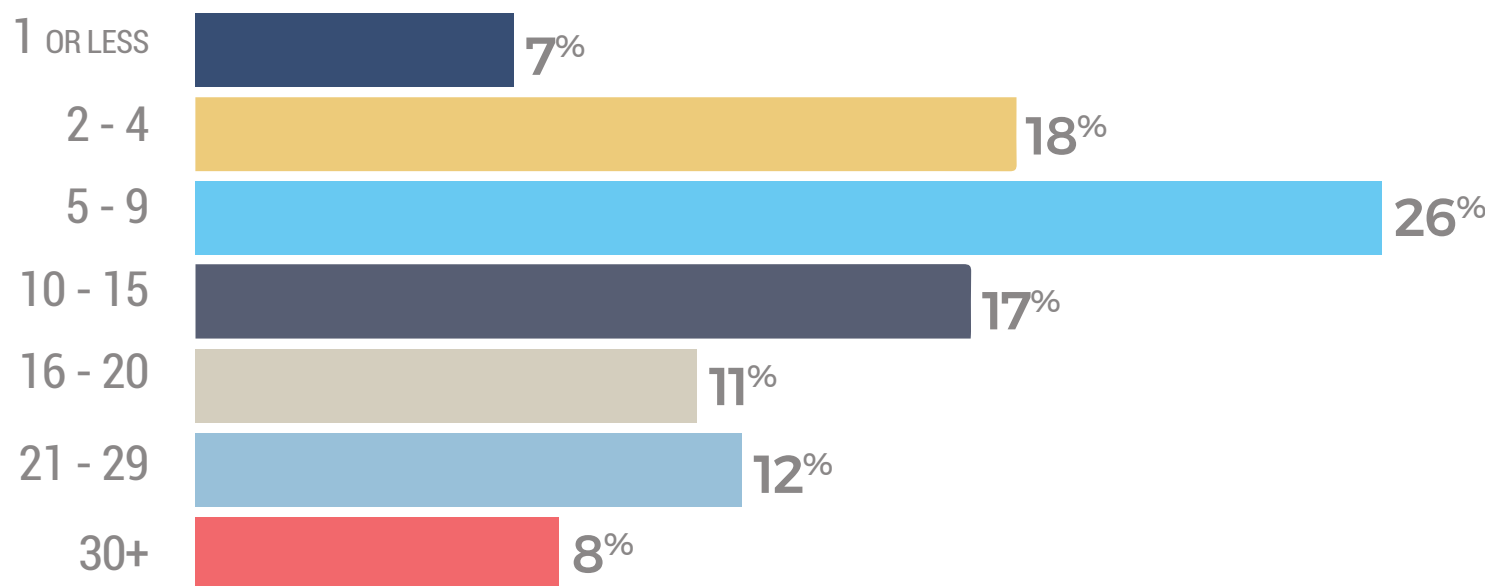
GrowthZone surveyed over 300 association professionals across the U.S. and Canada. Topics included everything from staff turnover rates and most effective member benefit/affinity programs, to political endorsements and the top 5 reasons cited for improved member engagement. The results showed a number of interesting trends impacting today's associations.

ABOUT THE RESPONDENTS

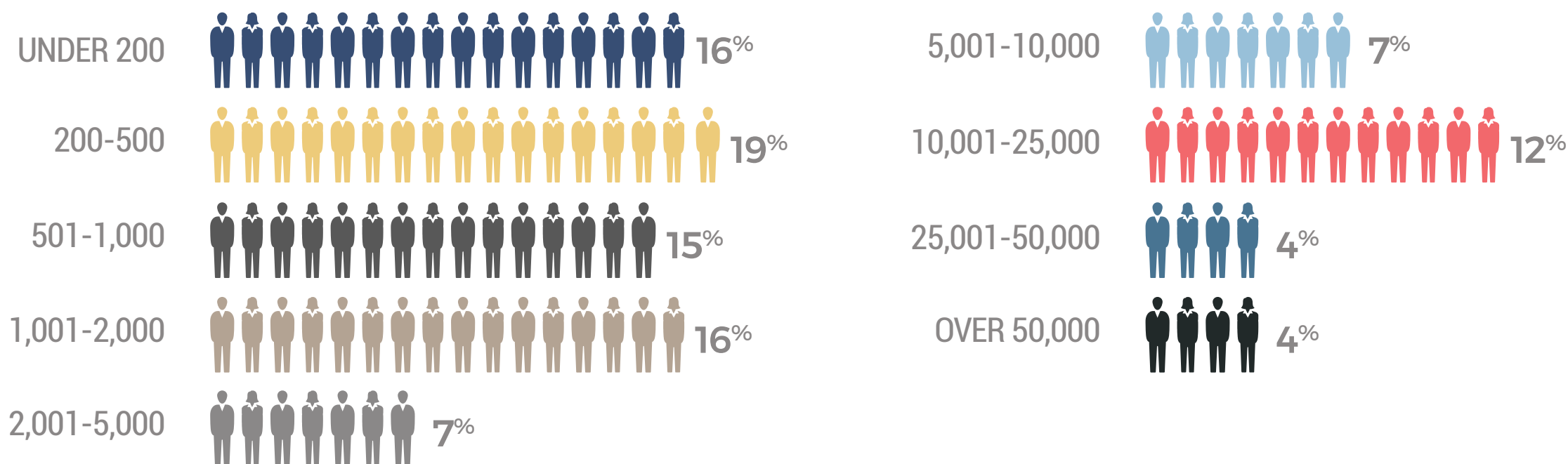
With over 300 survey responses, this year's respondents have a wide range of years of experience, membership sizes, and budgets.

On average, survey respondents had 9-12 years of experience in the membership industry.

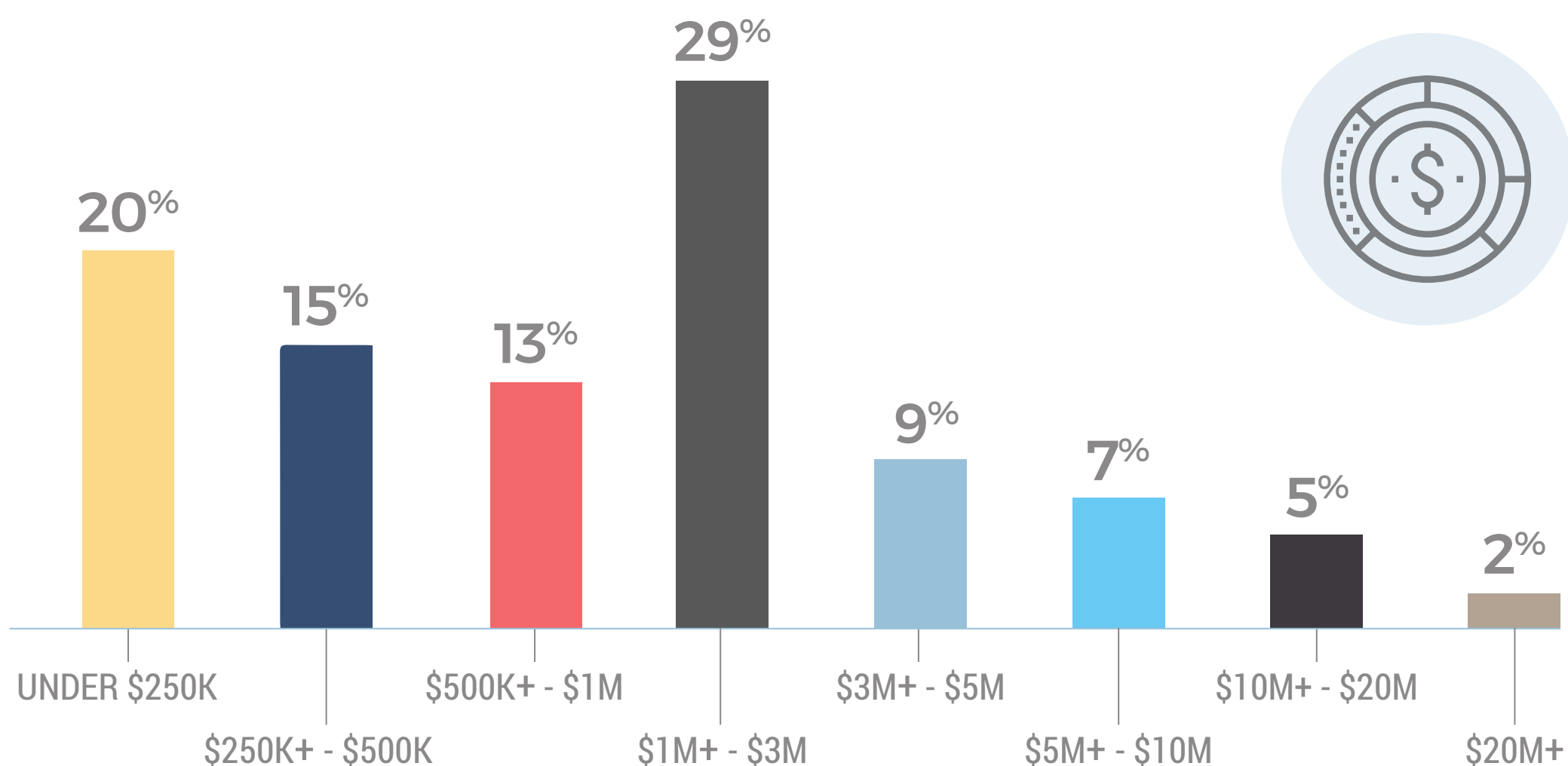
EXPERIENCE | TOTAL # OF YEARS EMPLOYED IN THE MEMBERSHIP INDUSTRY



NUMBER OF MEMBERS | PREDICTED MEMBER COUNT ON 1/1/2020



ANNUAL OPERATING BUDGET | APPROXIMATE

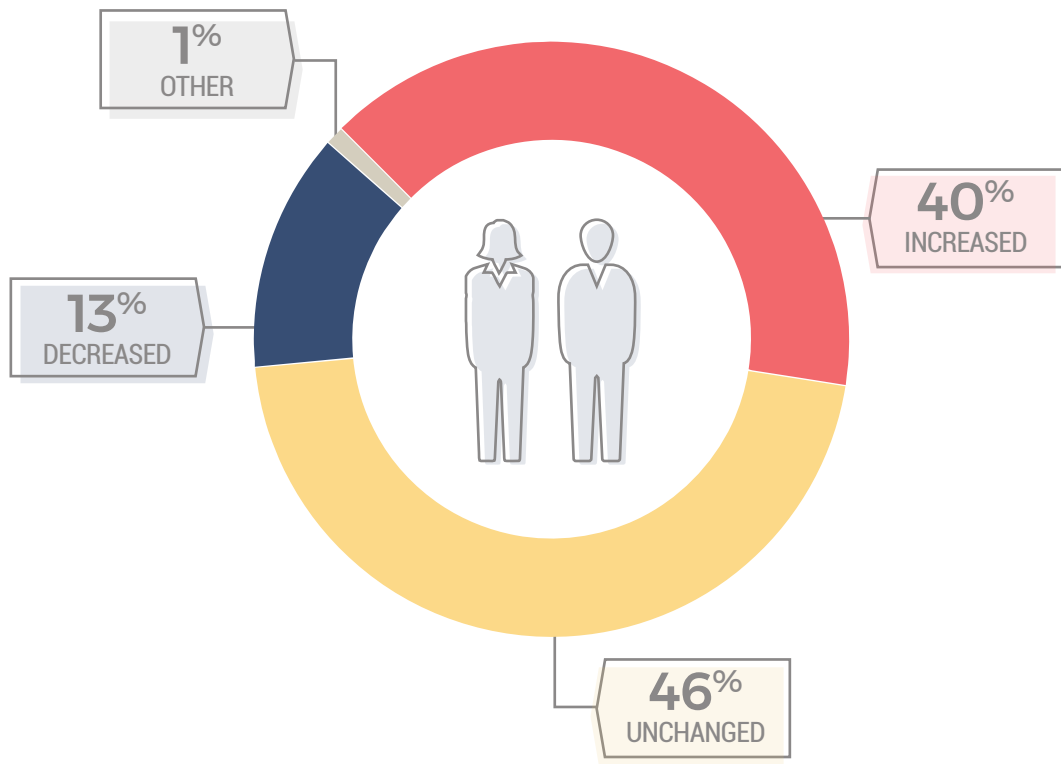


*Due to rounding and checkbox questions, percentages may exceed or not appear to add up to 100%

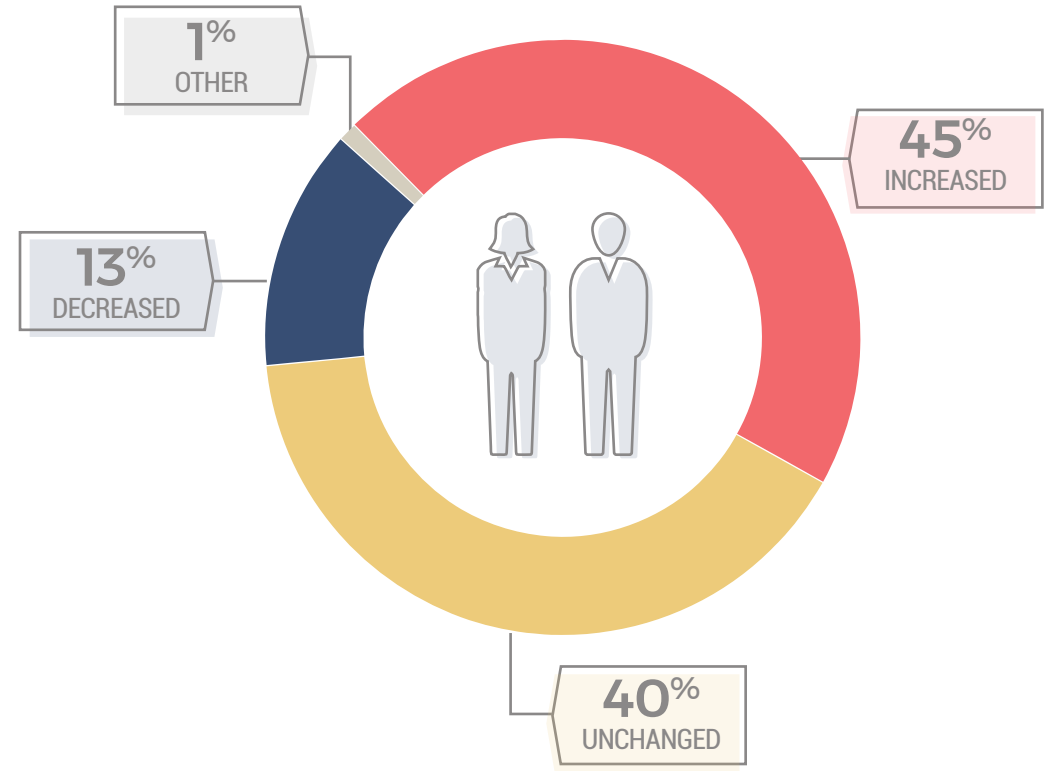


MEMBERSHIP GROWTH

ANNUAL OVERALL **NET** MEMBERSHIP | YEAR-OVER-YEAR CHANGE

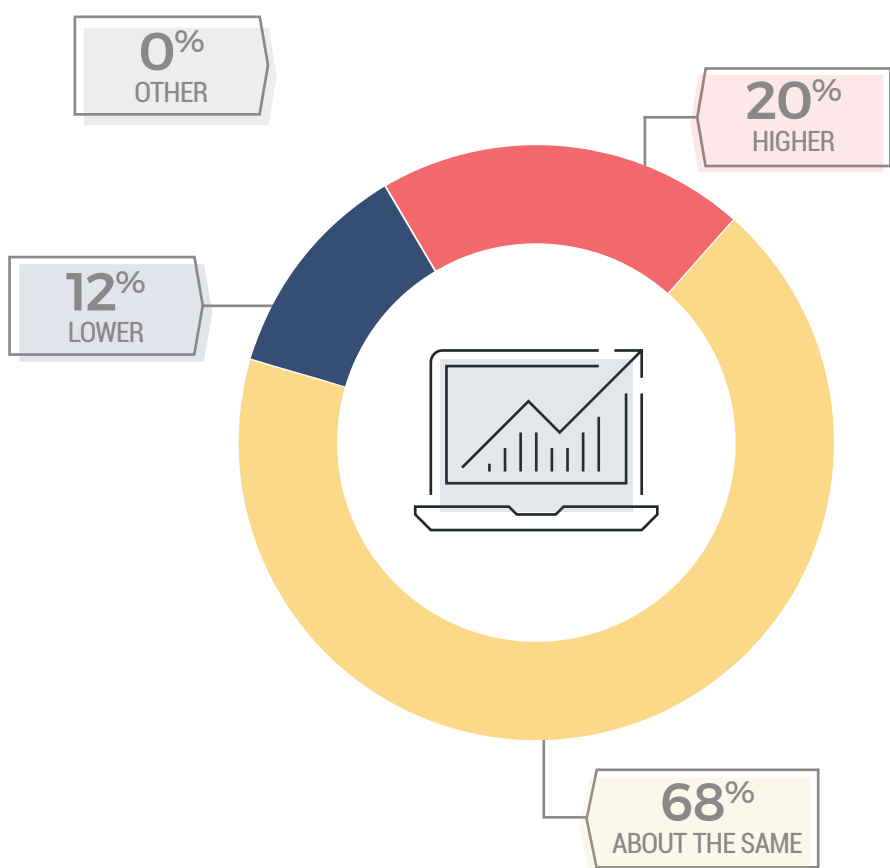


ANNUAL OVERALL **NEW** MEMBERSHIP | YEAR-OVER-YEAR CHANGE

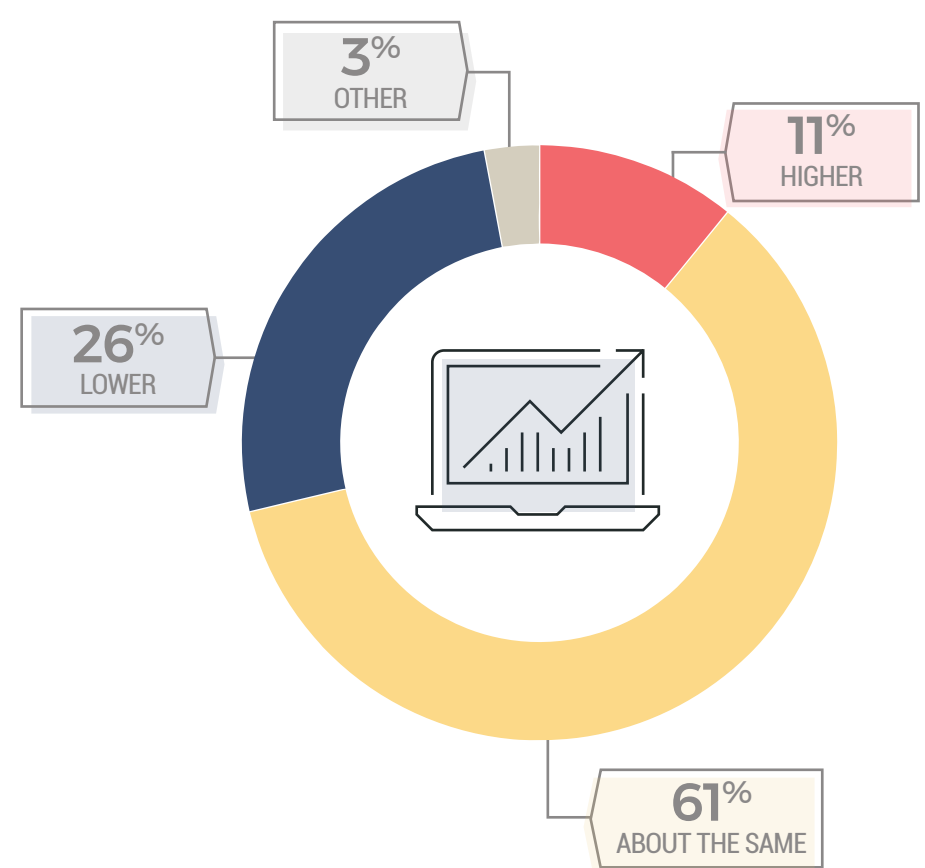


Organizations whose members recognize their value proposition reported higher renewal rates than those whose members don't recognize value proposition.

ANNUAL OVERALL **RENEWAL RATE** | YEAR-OVER-YEAR CHANGE



ANNUAL **NEW-MEMBER** RENEWAL RATE | YEAR-OVER-YEAR CHANGE

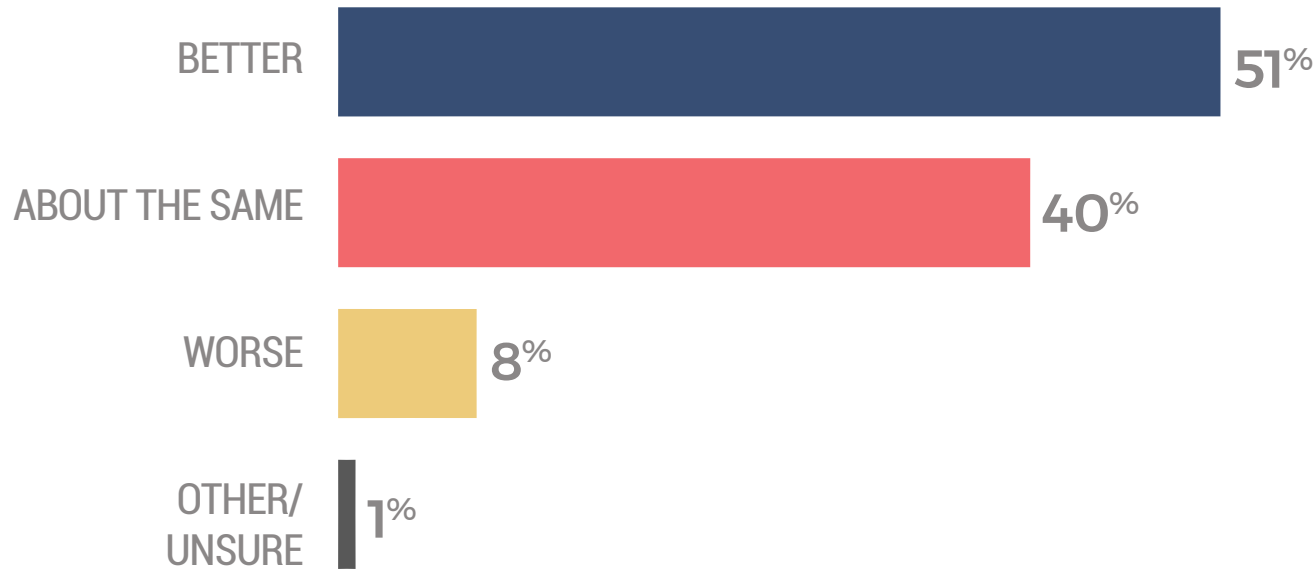




MEMBER ENGAGEMENT

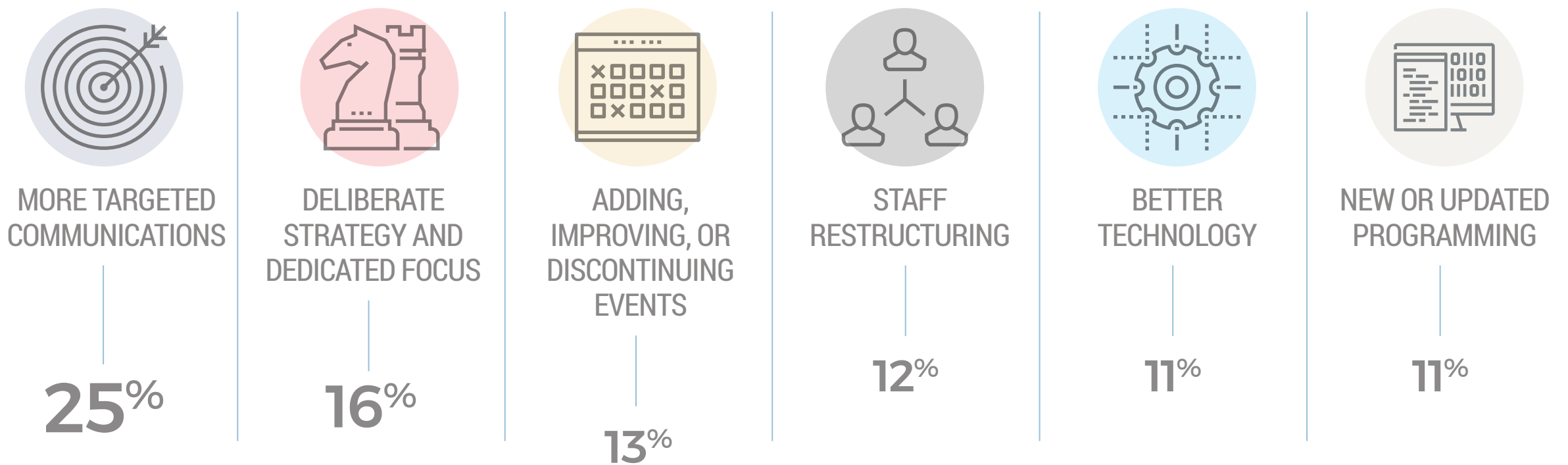


OVERALL MEMBER ENGAGEMENT | YEAR-OVER-YEAR CHANGE



MEMBER ENGAGEMENT IMPROVEMENTS | RESPONDENTS INDICATING INCREASED ENGAGEMENT ATTRIBUTED THE IMPROVEMENT TO:

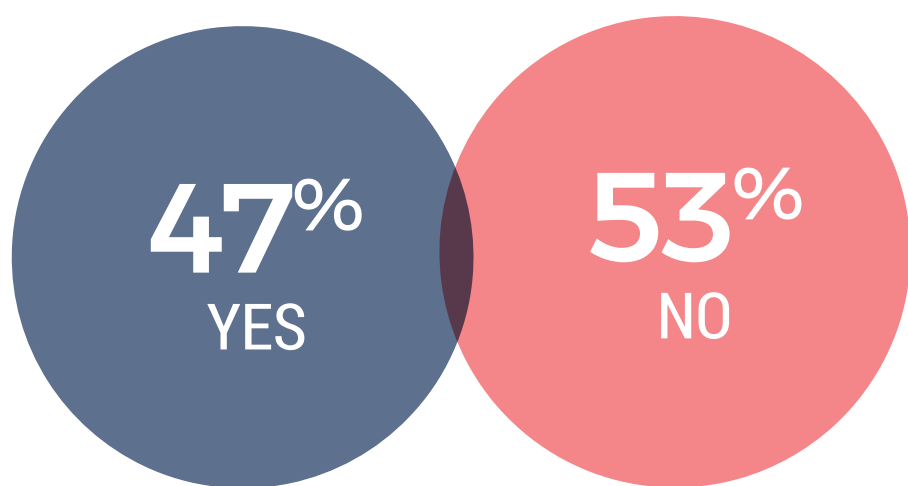
TOP 6 ANSWERS



Organizations whose members recognize their value proposition reported higher engagement rates than those whose members don't recognize value proposition.

MEMBER ENGAGEMENT TRACKING

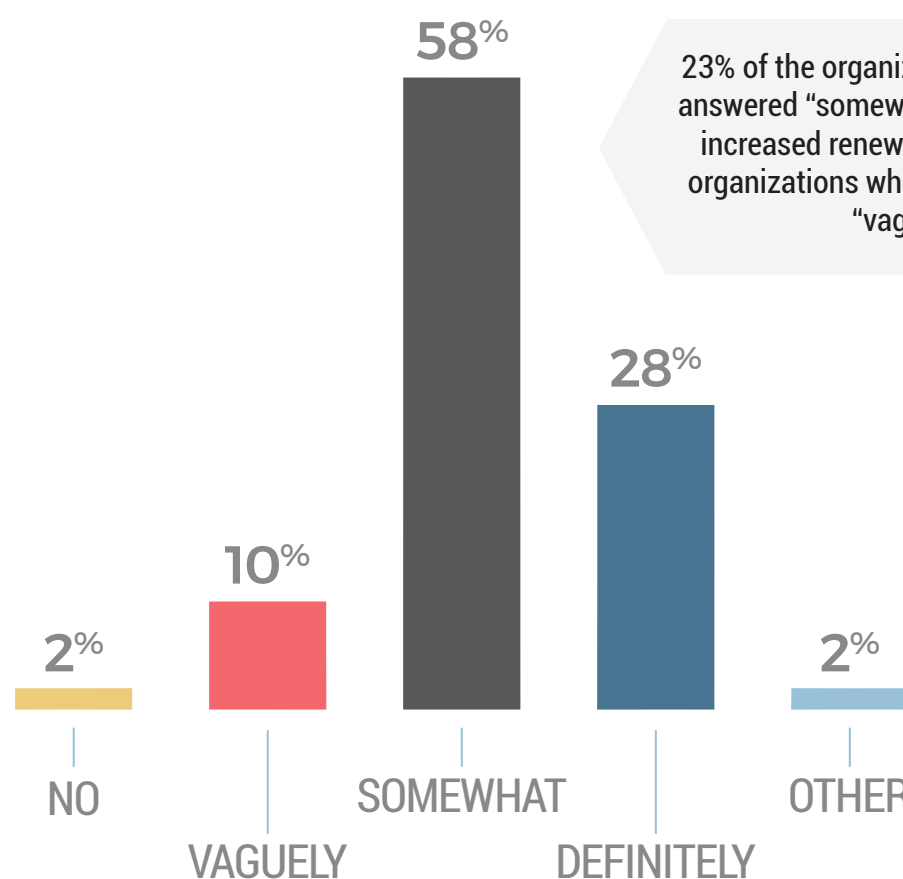
Do you use a formal process and/or a software system to track member engagement?



Of organizations reporting increased member engagement, 50% use a process/system for tracking, vs. only 33% of organizations with decreased member engagement.

VALUE PROPOSITION RECOGNITION

Do you think members recognize your association's value proposition?



23% of the organizations whose respondents answered "somewhat" or "definitely" reported increased renewal rates vs. only 6% of the organizations whose respondents answered "vaguely" or "no."

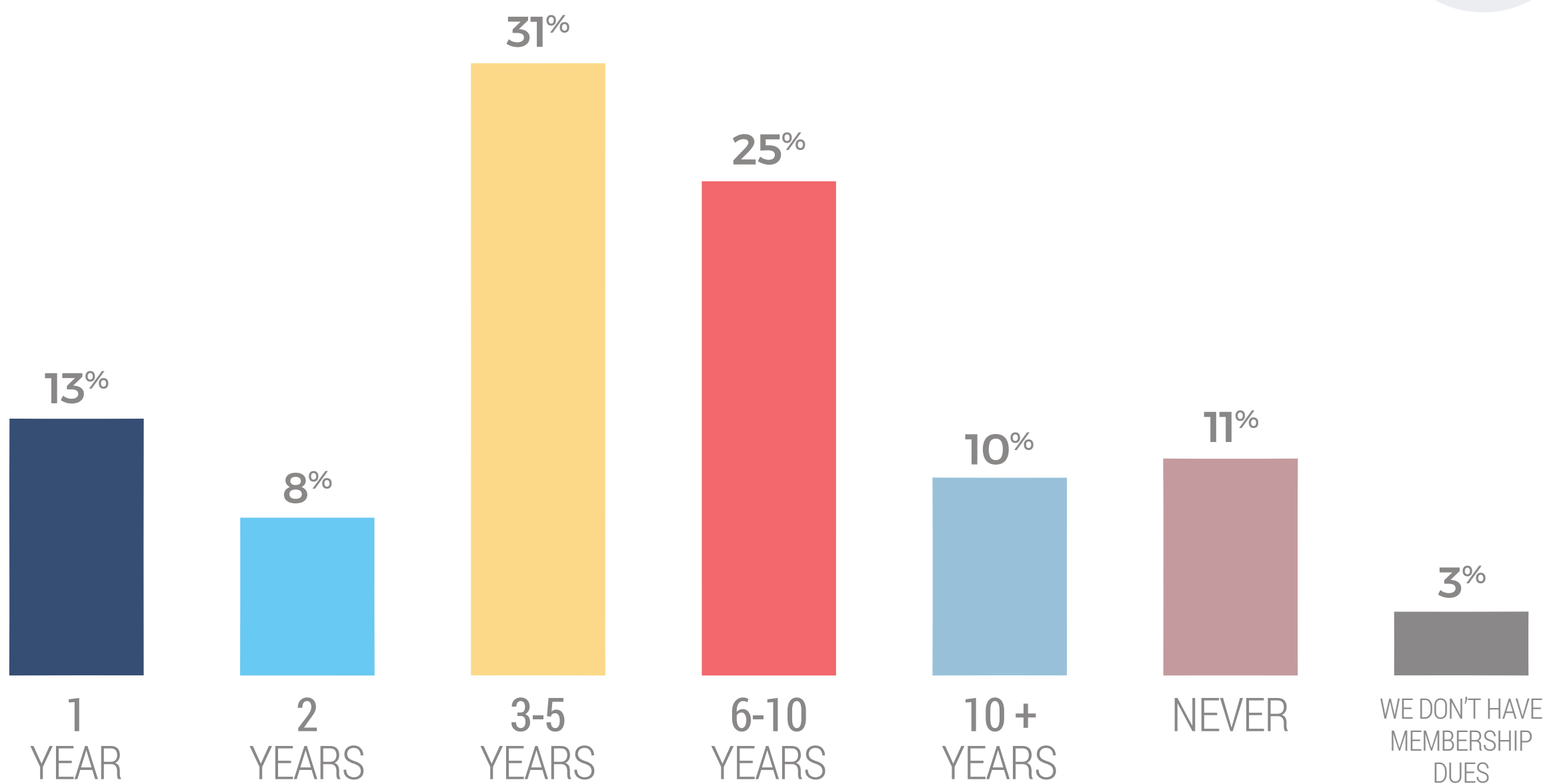
42% of the organizations whose respondents answered "somewhat" or "definitely" had increased net membership numbers vs. only 28% of the organizations whose respondents answered "vaguely" or "no."



OPERATIONS

MEMBERSHIP DUES

Approximately how often does your organization increase dues?

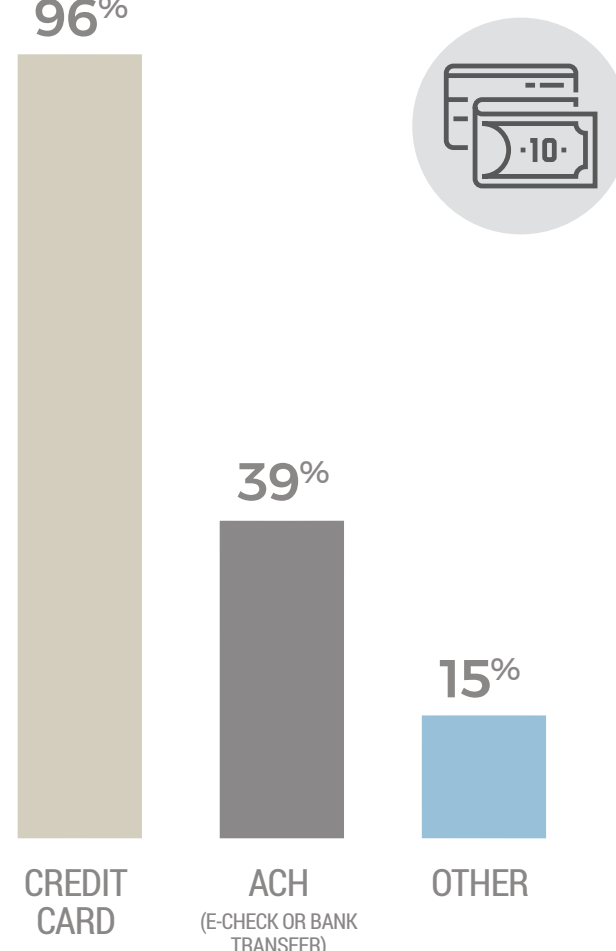
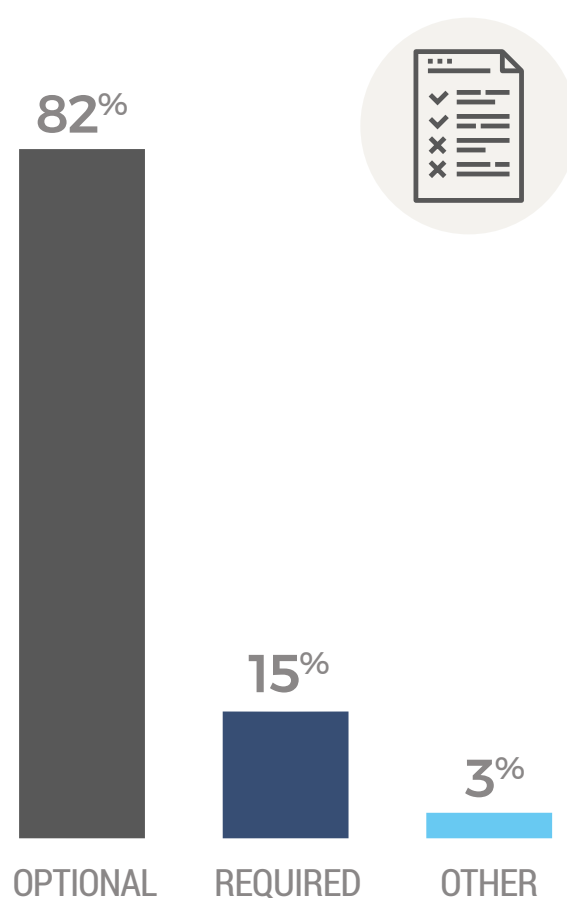
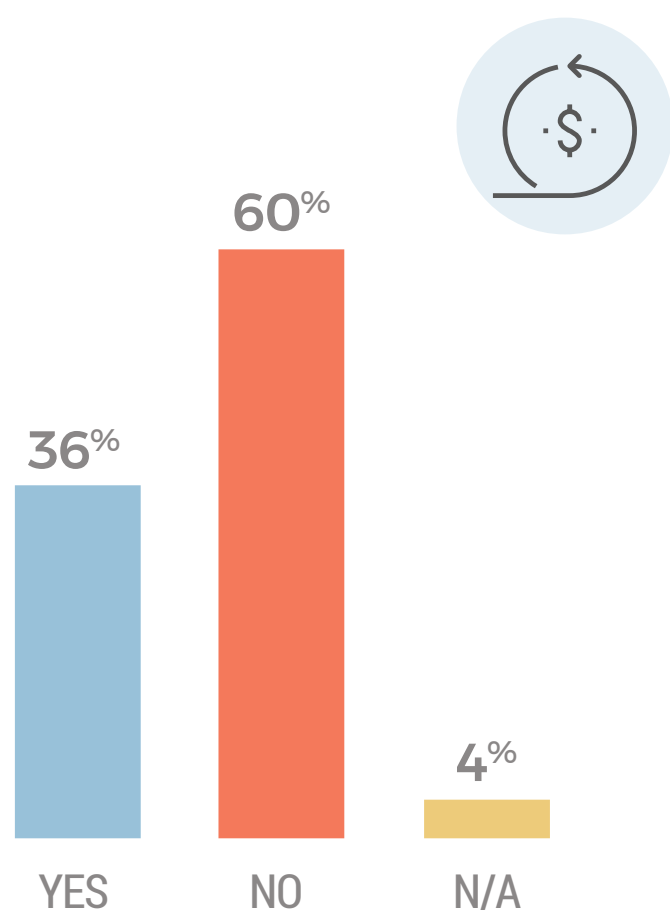


RECURRING MEMBERSHIP

Does your organization offer recurring memberships (auto-renewal)?

Is auto-renewal participation optional or required?
(The following includes data from respondents who offer auto-renewal.)

What auto-renewal payment methods do you accept?
(The following includes data from respondents who offer auto-renewal.)



Of participants including "other" in their response, many specified that recurring auto-payments are determined by whether dues are paid monthly or annually.

Of participants including "other" in their response, additional methods included debit card, PayPal, and payroll deduction.



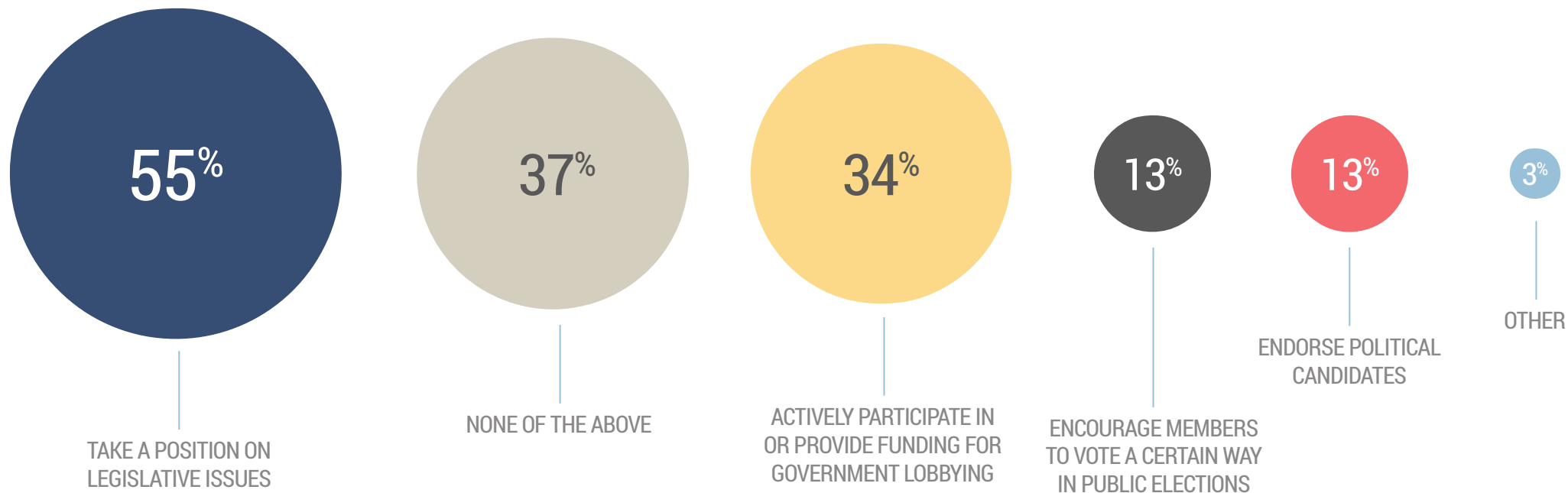


OPERATIONS | CONTINUED

ADVOCACY



Does your organization do any of the following?



Organizations that participate in advocacy have higher renewal rates and stronger member recognition of their value proposition.

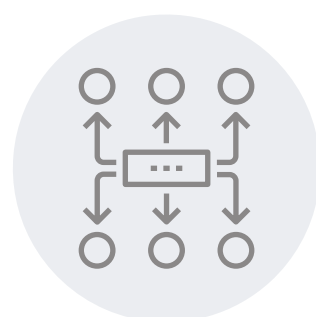
STRATEGIC PLANNING



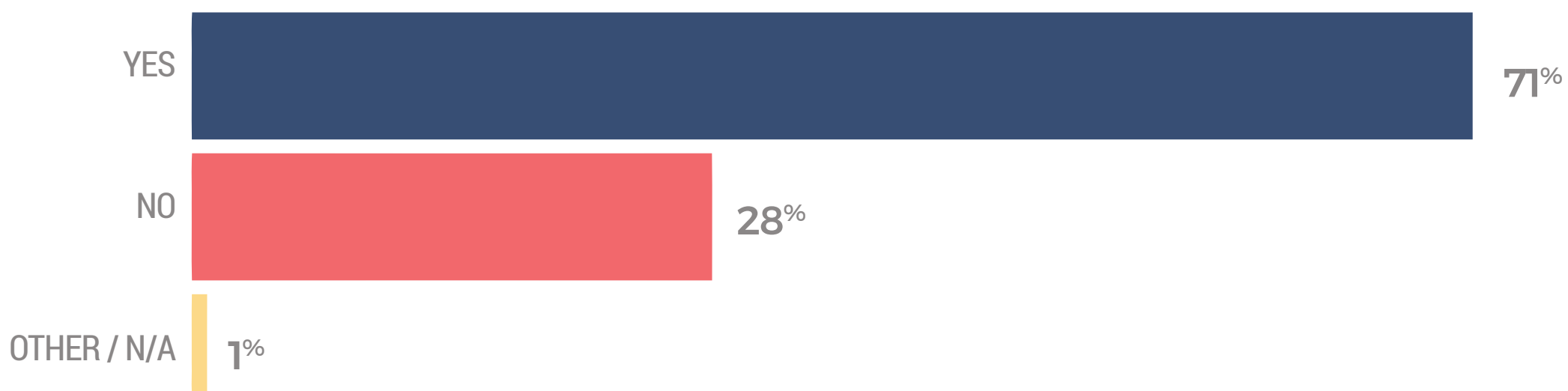
Does your organization have a formal crisis communications plan in place?



MARKETING



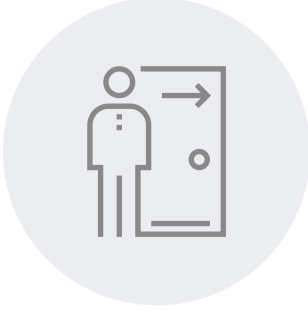
Over the past 2 years, has your organization done any paid advertising (e.g., boosted social media posts/campaigns, Google ads, display ads on specific websites, sent promoted texts, etc.)?



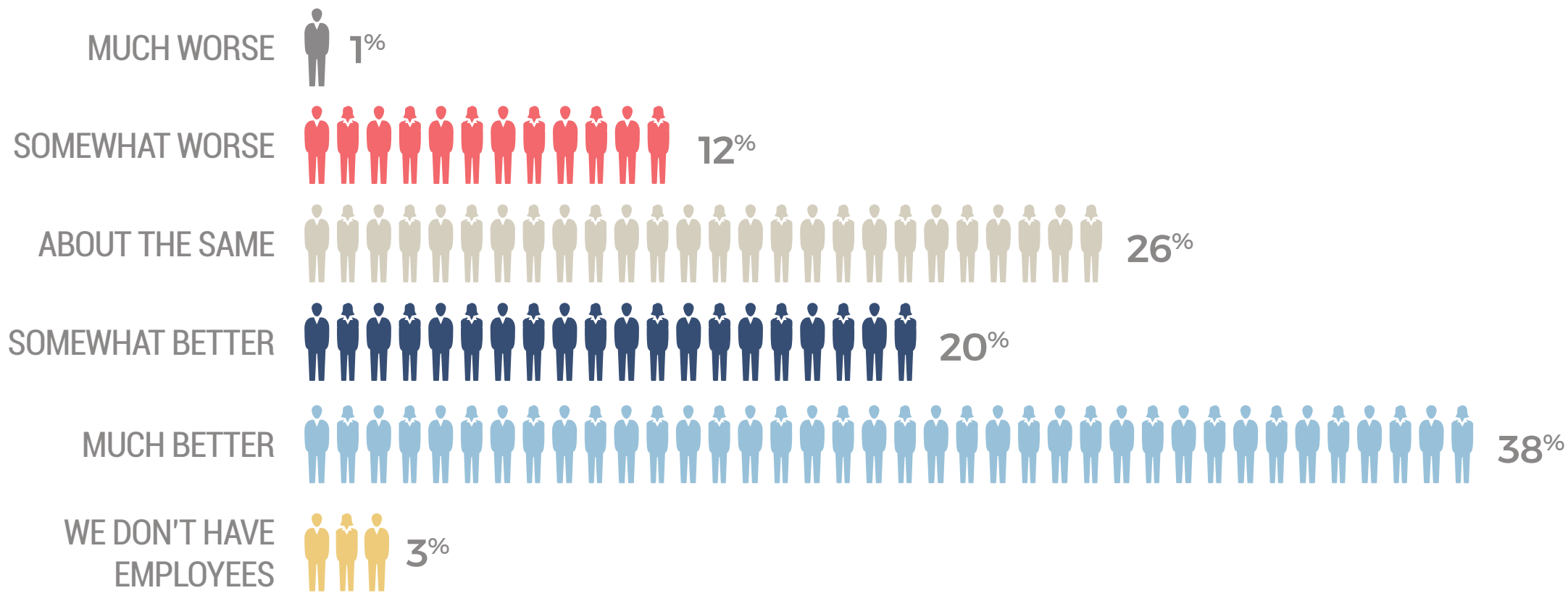


OPERATIONS | CONTINUED

HUMAN RESOURCES | EMPLOYEE TURNOVER



In the U.S., on average, 1 out of every 6 employees voluntarily quits each year (16%). Roughly, how would you say your staff retention rate compares?

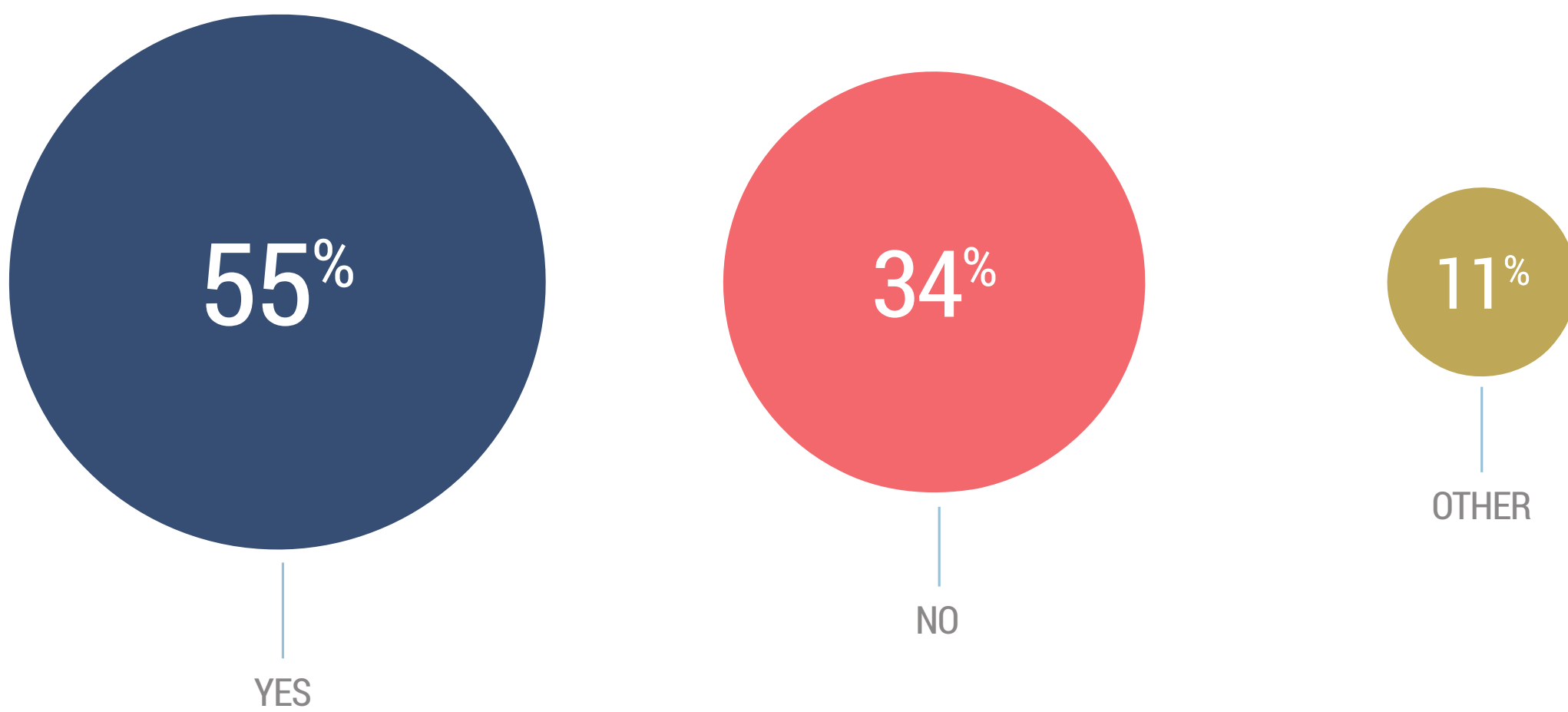


55% of organizations whose respondents are satisfied with their AMS have a below-average staff turnover rate

HUMAN RESOURCES | REMOTE EMPLOYEES



Does your organization allow staff to work from home/remotely on a regular basis? (e.g., 1 day/week)



Of participants including "other" in their response, many specified that it is handled on a case-by-case basis, based on position, or as a privilege.

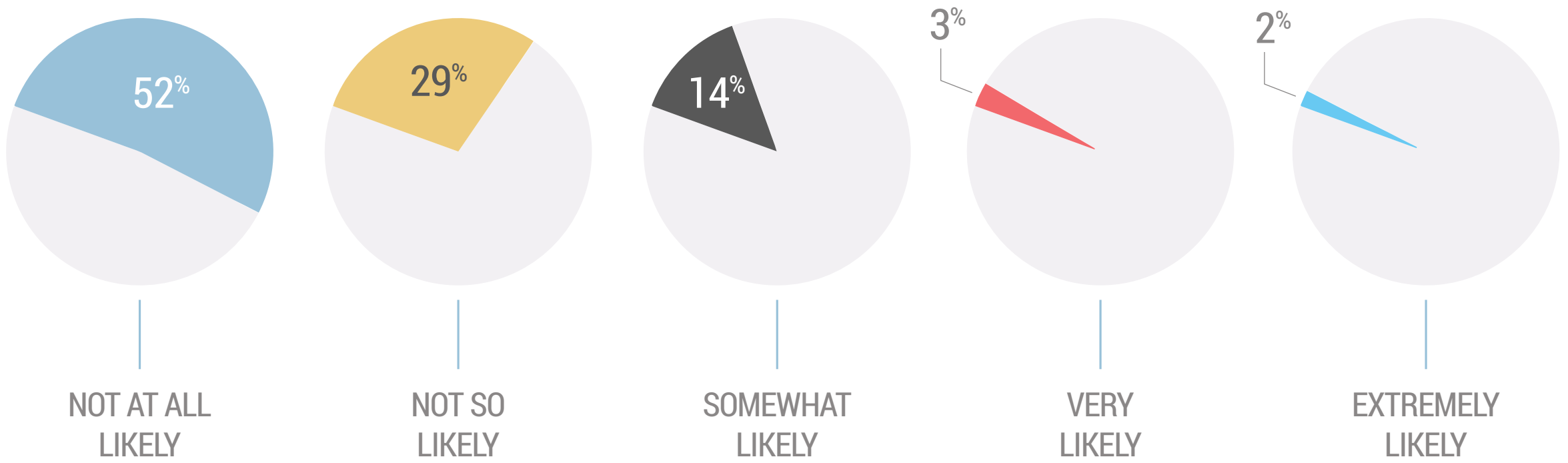


OPERATIONS | CONTINUED

CONSOLIDATION



How likely is it that your organization will merge with or acquire another organization in the next 3-5 years?



RETENTION



Does your organization have a particular benefit or affinity program used to keep your members returning (aka "golden handcuffs")?



gold-en hand-cuffs: plural noun, informal - informal financial allurements and benefits that are designed to increase retention.

BENEFITS/PROGRAMS



TYPE	YES %	EXAMPLES
INSURANCE	30%	Workers' comp, health, liability/indemnity, life, business
DISCOUNTS	28%	Association event discounts, discounts on products & services from outside companies
BENEFITS	19%	Tax hotline, payment processing, marketing content/templates
EDUCATION	12%	Continuing education classes, professional development programs
MISC.	11%	Online community, members-only forum, fundraising programs, directory
RESEARCH	9%	Annual surveys, industry-specific research results, publications
EVENTS	5%	Members-only conferences
LEGAL	5%	Free and discounted representation
DUAL MEMBERSHIP	4%	Membership at state or national level included
RETIREMENT	4%	Employer retirement plan, annual dividends
TECHNOLOGY	4%	Software, tech support



THE VALUE OF BENEFITS

Of the organizations with "golden handcuffs" programs and reporting improved engagement, 31% attributed increased engagement to member benefits.



MEMBER FEEDBACK

WE ASKED: If you were a fly on the wall in a room full of members, what do you think they'd say about your organization?

TOP FEEDBACK

- ✓ Positive Feedback
- ✓ Who, What?
- ✓ Communication
- ✓ Value
- ✓ Customer Service
- ✓ Events
- ✓ Advocacy
- ✓ Education
- ✓ Young Professionals
- ✓ Time for Change
- ✓ Networking
- ✓ Engagement
- ✓ Resources
- ✓ Technology

COMMENTS FROM SURVEY RESPONDENTS | WHAT RESPONDENTS SAID

= What respondents said

POSITIVE FEEDBACK

- We're a small, but dynamic organization that does a lot with what we have.
- Mission driven with a strong value proposition in place.
- Fun, easy to work with.
- We are a very respected organization that works hard for them.
- Good value. Hidden gem.
- We do good work and are necessary to keep them up to date with business.

ADVOCACY

- Solid advocate for business.
- Great legislative work and industry support.
- Strong voice and representation in the political process.
- Engaged in current events at the capitol.

RESOURCES/RESEARCH/CONTENT

- They can always get solid information from us to help them with their business.
- We deliver good value and content.
- Good at distributing information to members.
- We provide them with valuable tools and resources to conduct their business.
- They need updated and additional member resources.
- We don't do enough research.

VALUE

- What do we actually do for them?
- They love us, but have trouble translating the value of the membership into concrete words that justify the expense.
- We should offer more free things.
- What do I receive for the dues I pay?
- Provide good service but do not deliver value on a consistent basis.
- Eroding importance due to social media and private conferences.
- That we need to better communicate benefits and value because we offer so many things, they get lost in the shuffle.
- Good value for membership with the affinity programs.

TIME FOR CHANGE

- Out of touch with the issues they are facing.
- Useful, but has gotten stale.
- The association is changing but needs to go faster.
- Need to continue to evolve and reach new members.
- Provide great service but need to modernize.
- Recent retirements personnel changes provide a good opportunity for change.
- We've come a long way.
- Effective and getting better.

CUSTOMER SERVICE

- They don't do enough for us.
- Not sure what they do all day.
- They would not be sure who we were and why they had to pay dues to us.
- I didn't realize I was a member.
- I don't know the difference between them and the competitor.

"I think that they would come up with a lot of ideas for what the association could offer, and 99% of those would be things that we already offer. I think that what they'd really be saying is that they don't have enough time to take advantage or understand the benefits that are available to them."



COMMENTS FROM SURVEY RESPONDENTS-2 | WHAT RESPONDENTS SAID

= What respondents said

EDUCATION

- We provide value with educational programs.
- We have the best instructors.
- We're putting out more education and content, but that we need more benefits and more reach.
- Fun events and free education!
- Good way to learn best practices.

NETWORKING

- Well run organization with many movers and shakers.
- Networking is the number reason they belong.
- Good for networking and learning from each other.
- Thoughtful, intellectual, a place to engage.
- Great networking and community.

COMMUNICATION

- We need to reach more people with our message.
- They take forever to get back to us.
- We're helpful but email them too much.
- Provide a lot of communication and good at distributing information to members.

TECHNOLOGY

- More options for digital learning and meetings.
- Need updated member resources.
- Needs to be more tech savvy.
- Need to be more mobile friendly.
- Our website is not easy to navigate.

YOUNG PROFESSIONALS

- Bunch of stodgy, old, white people (even though we're not old).
- Maybe too skewed to the older population because that's the base of our leadership.
- We need to be more relevant with our younger members.
- We have transitioned to the next generation and we should be asking THEM what they want not the "old timers."
- We need to do more to promote careers in our industry to young people.
- Definitely moving in a forward direction to engage younger members of the industry.
- We are attracting members from a variety of backgrounds and ages.

ENGAGEMENT

- I love their programs, but I don't have time to get involved.
- Don't have time to be as involved as they want to be.
- They're not sure how to get involved.
- They don't have time to read newsletters, social media, etc.
- Great volunteer opportunities to give back.

EVENTS

- There are too many events.
- Events are getting better and there's more value in attending.
- Lots of networking opportunities.

WHO ARE THEY?/WHAT DO THEY DO?

- They don't do enough for us.
- Not sure what they do all day.
- They would not be sure who we were and why they had to pay dues to us.
- I didn't realize I was a member.
- I don't know the difference between them and the competitor.

Many respondents indicated that their members' responses would vary based on level of engagement.



GOALS

WE ASKED: What would you most like to see your organization achieve?

COMMON GOALS

- ★ Value Proposition
- ★ Engagement/Interaction
- ★ Industry
- ★ Relevance
- ★ Education
- ★ Retention
- ★ Benefits
- ★ Events
- ★ Young Professionals
- ★ Collaboration
- ★ Marketing/Technology
- ★ Operations
- ★ Revenue/Finance

COMMENTS FROM SURVEY RESPONDENTS | WHAT RESPONDENTS SAID

= What respondents said

VALUE PROPOSITION

- Members understanding what we “really do.”
- For members to see greater value and perhaps not something they have to do.
- Make members aware of their benefits.
- Develop and execute a value proposition.
- Be our members’ partner, their “go-to” organization.

RELEVANCE

- Increase our name recognition and knowledge about who we are and what we do.
- To be recognized as THE voice of our industry.
- Become a “good housekeeping seal” trusted by the public and buyers of our members’ services.
- Long-term sustainability.
- A legislative win that benefits the industry and shows our value.

BENEFITS

- Golden handcuffs program.
- More member resources to add value to the membership.
- Strengthen the propositions we currently have in place, specifically education and mentoring.
- Better discounts for our members.

COLLABORATION/CONSOLIDATION

- Get rid of for-profit competitors to help unify the profession under one voice.
- Absorb the competition and be a clear front-runner in our industry.
- Successfully collaborate to reduce healthcare costs.
- Better coordination with educational organizations and other institutions.
- Cohesiveness.

EDUCATION

- More e-learning.
- Grow our eLearning program to reach more individuals in our industry, whether they are members or not.

OPERATIONS

- Streamline processes and policies.
- Improved cooperation and collaboration between departments.
- Strategic priorities and stick to them for long enough to see a positive change.
- A great place to work, where no one wants to leave.
- Focus on our core competencies and do a better job evaluating ROI on new initiatives.

“I want to drive greater industry awareness. Many potential members don’t know we exist.”



COMMENTS FROM SURVEY RESPONDENTS (CONTINUED)

= What respondents said

ENGAGEMENT/INTERACTION

- Improved engagement to maintain and grow overall membership numbers.
- More member participation in committees and volunteering.
- Find a way to engage with non-members as well.
- Help members become more politically active in a positive way.
- Stronger participation at various levels of member business organizational levels.
- More members who are happy to be part of the organization.
- Focus on active members and determine what they want their organization to become.
- Direct contact and increased personalization with member relationships.

EVENTS

- More signature events.
- More regional events.
- Active participation in activities offered.
- More successful fundraisers.

REVENUE/FINANCE

- More successful fundraisers.
- Better financial stability with diversification of funding revenue streams.
- More funding success with policymakers.
- More money in the bank.

INDUSTRY

- Raise the standards of professionalism while building a community feel for members to work together and help each other.
- Create a credentialing board to have more impact on licensure throughout disciplines.
- Growth of our profession by focusing on younger members (23-33) staying in this profession.

MARKETING/TECHNOLOGY

- Better handle on marketing plans.
- Stronger storytelling.
- A website with resources that easily provides value to members and nonmembers.
- Increase digital engagement avenues.
- More segmented email marketing and robust communication plan to engage members.
- I would like to see my organization take better advantage of technology.
- Improved contact tracking.

RETENTION

- A 55% first-year retention rate and an 83% overall retention rate.
- Over 500 members with a 10% increase in retention.
- Membership to hold steady (or increase) instead of decrease.

YOUNG PROFESSIONALS

- Membership growth among people under 40.
- Engagement of young members.
- Establish a gateway of involvement/engagement for younger/newer professionals.

“Become more productive through the use of a new database and website. Both of our programs are dinosaurs!”

“Long-term financial security to reduce percentage of time spent on fund raising rather than delivery of service.”



At GrowthZone, we pride ourselves on listening to and focusing on 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 associations.

Thank you to the association professionals who took the time to respond to the survey.

ABOUT GROWTHZONE

GrowthZone is the 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.



Download a free copy of our Association Management Software Buyer's Workbook

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