

MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR MEMBER MANAGEMENT SOFTWARE

A Practical Guide for Associations

Optimize the Technology You Already Have

Today, Association business can be conducted anywhere. A staff member could be at the office sending out an email blast or text notification to members or performing the same back office task from a mobile app while working at an Association event or while at home.

Your members want to quickly and conveniently interact with you and your staff when they are on the go or out of the office – developing these connections and growing a strong membership network is critical to your Association.

Your Member Management Software probably makes it easy for Association staff to maintain direct access to business back at the office while also providing mobile functions and capabilities that members want to use on their mobile devices.

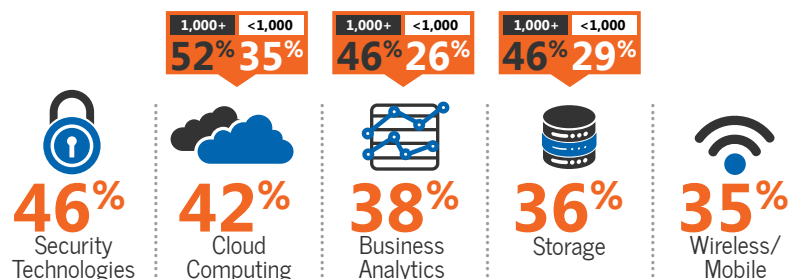


While many of these features in your member management software aren't difficult to navigate, what can be difficult is getting buy-in from staff and members so they intuitively use them.

It's not uncommon for users to utilize just a small percentage of their member management software features. This can be particularly frustrating for both Association staff and members, who use their mobile devices for nearly everything and want to access relevant and readily-accessible information from an Association website or mobile app.

Many organizations are choosing to invest in new technologies, making it easier than ever to improve efficiencies and increase productivity. **But if you aren't even taking advantage of what you already have, then you're wasting valuable resources.**

Top Five Tech Spending Increases:



The percent of those decreasing spending in each tech area is insignificant for 2015, with the exception of **hardware**, where **24%** said they **expect to decrease spending**.

[Chart Source »](#)

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Strategies To Help Your Association Get The Most From Its Investment

Get buy-in from staff.

Every business today, no matter what industry or sector, is either digital or quickly adopting new technologies to compete online. But many organizations, including Associations, can become too narrowly focused on deployment of the latest digital tools or software applications, which often aren't used as effectively as they should be.



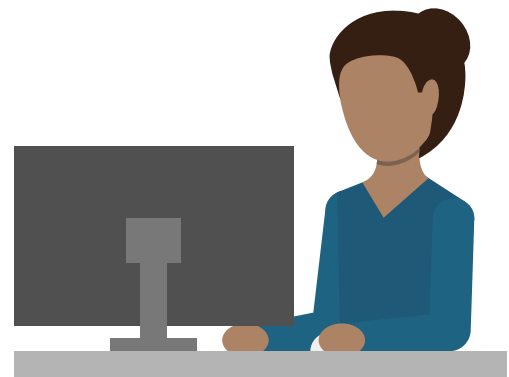
Change can be hard, and some staff, management included, may have difficulty adapting to a new member management system.

Staff should be:

- Engaged in the process from the beginning
- Allowed to provide feedback, which provides a sense of ownership
- Informed of the benefits for both staff and members
- Encouraged to share many of the lesser known benefits with members
- Given a sense of urgency for adopting new technologies

Today, nearly two-thirds of Americans, or 64 percent, own a smart phone, an increase of 35 percent from the spring of 2011 (Pew Research Center, April 2015). Chances are good that your Association staff may already understand the benefits of using mobile apps and cloud-based software systems based on their own personal experience. If there are staff members who are slow to warm up to new technologies, **it's helpful to demonstrate how using member management software could improve their own key performance indicators (KPIs)**, such as:

- Return on investment (ROI)
- Increased non-dues revenue
- Increased website traffic and mobile app usage
- Shortened average days in accounts receivable
- Increased dues and donations
- Increased event registration



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Reevaluate your Association's goals and objectives that you're currently measuring, along with the current and projected results, so you can begin to track the impact a new system might have on meeting those targets.

Make software and mobile app training an integral part of your Association's culture.

For many people, adopting new technology can be intimidating. They may be afraid to look foolish in front of co-workers or they think it's a waste of time to learn a new system when the current system seems to work just fine. If Associations support a culture of continuous learning, some of their concerns should be resolved.

Once the basics have been covered, sometimes additional instruction may be needed. A live, online training seminar using the Association's actual data can help staff members become more comfortable with the change. Once they have hands-on experience with the system, they can see how easy it is to access their own reports and information from their own mobile devices, for example.



Your software vendor will likely have a series of **online training videos and other resources to allow your staff to learn and explore new software capabilities at their own pace**, especially functions that are specific to their role with the Association, including billing, communications, website, mobile app and features, events, and more. It's important that everyone knows how to access these resources.

Even informal training is beneficial for everyone in the office. **Employees feel valued and demonstrate increased job satisfaction and higher morale when they receive regular training.** They are better able to adapt to changing technologies and more likely to use their mobile apps.

Take a phased approach and take it slow.

When you realize how beneficial your member management software will be for staff and

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members, it's natural to be eager to introduce changes quickly. Too many changes too quickly not only can disrupt Association operations, but you could see a stronger pushback from staff. Start small. Adopt small changes that require less disruption and then move on to broader improvements.

Before implementing a new procedure or system, be sure your current data is accurate and complete if you're converting it from a previous system or manually creating it for the new system. This upfront investment of time is critical for success.

Stay connected and follow up.

Many people tend to view adopting new technology as a one-time event. **It's important that staff know who to contact in case they run into problems or have questions as they use the software**, or when they run into a challenging technical question when explaining mobile features to members.

Encourage staff to also offer a solution when they make you aware of a problem or concern. The best way to ensure that staff are effectively using the new system is to allow each staff member to be held accountable for making their own improvements within the system that affect their job duties, such as member satisfaction, billing efficiencies, website improvements, overall reporting, and any other major areas of concern. Your software should allow you to develop customized reports to track KPIs and membership engagement, particularly if they are downloading and utilizing your Association's mobile app.

Benchmark these changes and measure your Association's progress to determine what's working, what's not, and if any adjustments need to be made.



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Create Meaningful Change.

Member management software should provide Associations with a wealth of valuable metrics and analytics, as well as ways to deepen members' engagement through easier access via your website and member center.



But just having software isn't going to solve every problem within the organization. Your web-based member management software's purpose is to help your staff make meaningful decisions and to streamline operational processes.

How the software is put to work is up to you.

About GrowthZone

GrowthZone AMS helps organizations grow and retain membership, engage and inform members and prospects, and streamline tedious tasks.

The cloud-based system is powerful, easy to use, and designed to manage all the day-to-day operations of your organization.

GrowthZone Website Services

Whether you simply want to populate your existing website with useful GrowthZone website Modules, edit your own website with a content management system, or launch a new website from scratch, we have an experienced developer and design team who will accommodate your objectives and budget.