GrowthZone surveyed education association professionals across the U.S. and Canada. Topics included everything from 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 education associations.
MEMBERSHIP GROWTH

OVERALL MEMBERSHIP GROWTH:

- 46% UNCHANGED
- 6% UNSURE
- 38% INCREASE
- 10% DECREASE

NEW MEMBERSHIP:

- 10% UNSURE
- 35% UNCHANGED
- 41% INCREASE
- 14% DECREASE

RENEWAL MEMBERSHIP:

- 11% UNSURE
- 24% INCREASE
- 53% UNCHANGED
- 13% DECREASED

MEMBERSHIP GROWTH: LAST 5 YEARS

- 6% UNSURE
- 23% DECREASED
- 23% DECREASED
- 49% INCREASE

56% of associations reported deceased or stagnant membership numbers.
HOLDING ASSOCIATIONS BACK:
WE ASKED, “WHAT’S THE #1 THING HOLDING YOUR ASSOCIATION BACK?”

WHAT RESPONDENTS SAID:

1. Lack of funding
2. Not enough staff
3. Member engagement
4. Marketing/Communication
5. Recruitment/Retention
6. Resistance to change/Complacency
7. Leadership
8. Resources necessary for growth
9. Lack of strategy/Vision
10. Amount of work vs. time & manpower

QUOTES:

- A willingness to buy in to the values and culture of our association. This includes but is not limited to the investment of time.
- Lack of direct access to the end user. Staff capacity to set aside existing stagnant work for new opportunities.
- Staff workload impacts the number of people we can serve.
- The poor reputation of the industry represented.
- Old world thinking by leadership.
- Not doing enough strategic marketing.
- Growing base without growing budget.
- Too frequent change; there is never time to stabilize and improve—we’re often off to the next thing!
- Ourselves: fear, lack of focused direction, strategy and patience/realistic timeframes.
- Lack of creative thinking; trying things outside the very traditional box and not looking to incorporate a younger demographic.
- Trying to be able to do everything we want to do to increase the growth of the organization.
- Changes in university funding.

1 out of every 4 respondents cited lack of funding as the #1 challenge facing their association.
ASSOCIATION OPERATIONS

**MILLENNIAL MEMBERS:**
(Members born 1983-2000)

- 41%

**MEMBER COMMUNICATIONS:**

- Printed Materials: 28%
- Non-Printed Materials (Email, Text Messaging, etc.): 72%

> Respondents indicated that 72% of their associations' communications are sent digitally.

**ASSOCIATION EVENT ATTENDANCE:**
2017 VS 2016

- 38% increased
- 43% unchanged
- 14% decreased
- 5% other
- 0% we don’t have events
ASSOCIATION OPERATIONS CONT.

MEMBERSHIP DUES STRUCTURE

- Individual Members: 36%
- Company/Organizational: 21%
- Combination of Individual Members and Company/Organizational: 34%
- Other: 9%

MEMBERSHIP MODEL:

- Individual Members: 36%
- Company/Organizational: 21%
- Combination of Individual Members and Company/Organizational: 34%
- Other: 9%

EMPLOYEE/STAFF HEALTH INSURANCE:

- Offered: 66%
- Not Offered: 27%
- Unsure: 8%
- Other: 0%

MOBILE CREDIT CARD READER USAGE:

- Yes: 55%
- No: 33%
- Planning to Soon: 8%
- Other/Unsure: 5%

Over 1/3 of associations are using mobile credit card readers (or planning to soon).

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2018 ANNUAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATIONS SURVEY RESULTS
### Non-Renewals

**Why Members Don’t Renew:**

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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>According to Association Staff</th>
<th>According to Members</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lack of Value / Little to No Return on Investment</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Happy But Was Too Expensive</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Budget Cuts</td>
<td></td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never Had Time to Participate</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t Use/Like/Need Benefits</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of Engagement/Interest</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree With Organization’s Advocacy</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Company Closed/Merged/Industry Consolidation</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participated But Too Much of a Time Commitment</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Left Industry/Job</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dissatisfied with Member/Customer Service</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsure/Don’t Know</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Association Staff Say Top 3 Reasons Members Don’t Renew:**

- **Budget Cuts**
- **Don’t Like/Need/Use Benefits**
- **Lack of Engagement/Interest**
ASSOCIATION-SENT EMAIL

OPEN RATE:

EMAIL RATE:

AVERAGE NUMBER OF EMAILS SENT PER MONTH

8

PERCENTAGE OF ANNUAL NON-DUES REVENUE

53%
### Wish List

**What Association Employees Wish Their Board Realized:**

- **Amount of Work vs. Time/Manpower**
- **Our Level of Commitment**
- **How Much We Do**
- **What It Takes Day-to-Day**
- **How Hard We Work**
- **We Need More Staff**
- **We Need a Strategy**
- **Resources Necessary for Success**

21% of respondents reported that their board has a thorough understanding of their job responsibilities.

#### What Respondents Said:

- Someone is an unpaid (volunteer) position is no less committed than those in paid positions.
- They have big ideas for what they want to offer, but little follow through.
- Always coming up with new initiatives while maintaining day to day work is unrealistic.
- Sometimes there just isn’t enough time in the day to pack in all the benefits they think we should be offering.
- The software that we use is extremely limited.
- That it is hard to hold all organizational thoughts in one’s head all the time.
- Random decisions can have a lot of work repercussions.
- That it is challenging without more funds.
- That even though membership is declining, staff still works very hard and deserves a raise.
- Some staff functions just can’t contribute much to the effort of increasing membership.
- It is harder to keep a member than to get them.
- How important it is to focus on a few association issues and do them well, not getting distracted by other issues until goals are accomplished.
- Their role is to determine policy, not make day-to-day decisions.
At GrowthZone, we pride ourselves on listening to and focusing on education 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 education 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.