

Why Your Association Should Have an Online Community

Posted on August 5, 2013 by Leon Bracey in [Associations](#), [Business](#), [Group Management](#), [Trends](#)

Nowadays, associations need more than just a blog entry and a few comments to keep their members engaged and interested in an organization.



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With the development of [social media](#) and cloud-based SaaS platforms, associations now have the ability to collaborate with their members on the Internet as a part of their overall outreach strategy. According to [research from Membership Marketing](#), approximately 31% of the 700 associations (with over 20,000 members) profiled have a private online community. With the length of time professionals often spend to communicate with their peers, it's important that your association has an online community where members can engage and collaborate with each other.

It's important that your organization taps into as many of these potential members as much as possible. Here are some of the reasons why.

Establish Credibility

Joining an association gives professionals the opportunity to network with peers and gain professional development. However, [a 2007 study from ASAE](#) indicates that many people do not join associations because a significant number of members felt they weren't getting any current, relevant information for their professions. With an online community, getting more people to join and contribute will enable it to have a diverse array of voices who can participate in conversations, network, and become advocates for your association.

Personalization

For many members of your association, an [online community](#) may be the only interaction they have with your organization. Use [segmentation](#) tools to [provide](#) members with the information and messages that are relevant to them. If you want them to pay dues to your association, decide on a pricing structure that will make the community accessible to members who may not have thought to join your association otherwise.

Valuable Content

Your online community should have [engaging content](#) that will make members come back for more. Add [videos](#), email lists, discussion groups, online events, discounts for events, or anything else you feel will keep your online community enticing and worth visiting.

Members of your association have a variety of options available to collaborate online. An online community will provide access to them and help keep your association relevant with diverse voices, additional content, and generate more revenue. Establishing an active online community will give your association the visibility it needs and provide another credible voice for your organization.

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