

KEY ASSOCIATION PREDICTIONS FOR 2016

It can be difficult to get your bearings in this ever-evolving association sector. It's as though the landmarks and celestial bodies are continually shifting and changing.

To help you chart a course, our Abila experts have compiled these 2016 Association Predictions. Consider them – along with the recommended actions – your compass, accurately orienting you and providing clear direction in the coming year.



FOCUS ON MEMBER EXPERIENCE

According to a recent study, 38 percent of those who don't renew their association memberships site a lack of engagement with the organization. Add to this the fact that new member acquisitions are stalling and workforce demographics are shifting, and it becomes clear that associations will need to find a new normal as it pertains to engagement, retention, and the overall member experience.

ACTION

With the likes of Amazon, Netflix, and eBay providing a highly-customized, segmented, personal experience that keeps individuals engaged and retained, your association will need to follow suit with a very similar strategy to create emotional, long-lasting connections with your members.

A focus on managing and engaging members, as well as analyzing and scoring these relationships, will be essential to your association's success in 2016. A sophisticated association management system (AMS), like [Abila netFORUM Enterprise™](#), can help you logically segment, communicate with, and appeal to members in ways that are the most meaningful and relevant to them.



CERTIFICATION REVENUE WILL ECLIPSE MEMBERSHIP REVENUE

Certification programs are emerging as principal revenue drivers for associations. There will be a tipping point where certification revenue will surpass membership revenue as individuals look to get the most out of every dollar they spend.

ACTION

One of the most valuable resources you have is your association's e-learning content. Sophisticated learning management platforms like [Freestone™ Learning Management System](#) can help you easily package and deliver this content as certification programs, awarding members with professional certificates upon completion.

For many members, certification has greater perceived value and affords a significant career edge that mere membership can't provide. This is particularly true for your Millennial members who will make up 75 percent of the workforce by 2020.

3 HYBRID MEMBERSHIP MODELS BECOMING MAINSTAY

The traditional membership models that are focused on a one-size-fits-all dues structure – primarily, individual and company memberships – will be a thing of the past.

ACTION

Emerging hybrid models will change the way you engage with your membership, and will also be more reflective of current culture and behavior, with your association offering tiered membership levels, hyper-focused services within existing memberships, and differentiated value for individuals and groups. The move is toward a membership experience that is as unique as each member.

4 AN INCREASE IN PARTNERSHIPS

Sharing resources and ideas across like-minded organizations, as well as forging partnerships with the for-profit sector, will become the norm.

ACTION

Your association should look closely at similarly aligned organizations – regionally, nationally, and internationally – to forge alliances for greater visibility and awareness. All avenues, channels, and opportunities should be explored to connect with potential new members and customers and generate revenue.

You might also look to create for-profit partnerships as corporations seek to raise their social profile, and your association explores new revenue streams.

5 AMS USED AS A STRATEGIC TOOL

Many associations use their AMS as a tactical tool, focusing primarily on transactions, such as dues renewal and event registration. To get more out of their technology investment, organizations will tap into the power of their AMS for strategic purposes.

ACTION

For-profit organizations are finding success by offering customized experiences to consumers through data analytics, segmenting, and choice. Your association will need to take a similar path, using technology to create a highly-personalized member journey for each individual member. Using the data already housed and readily available in your AMS will also help you make more informed decisions across the organization.

About Abila

Abila is the leading provider of software and services to nonprofit organizations and associations that help them improve decision making, execute with greater precision, increase engagement, and generate more revenue. Abila combines decades of industry insight with technology know-how to serve nearly 8,000 customers across North America. For more information, please visit www.abila.com.

About our Association Solutions

Our customizable association management systems (AMS) allow you to manage and engage members, as well as analyze and score these relationships for increased engagement. Our learning management system (LMS) enables associations to offer members webinars and webcasts, on-demand courses, and continuing education. Learn more about our [association management software](#).

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