



MEMBERS THRIVE
CONNECT. ENGAGE. GROW.

Steps to Building Successful Member Engagement

Let's remember that a 'membership' is a voluntary subscription and no association is immune to the impact of economic climate change. Therefore, an association must remain competitive within the marketplace of its geographic and economic region by providing worthwhile resources and experiences in order to remain viable and consistently grab a portion of the market share. Yes, some associations are fortunate to have those long-standing or 'cornerstone' members who do not typically take advantage of those offerings nor do they attend events – except for maybe an annual dinner or political hob-nob. However, the majority of its members have that “*what's in it for me?*” mentality (and they should), so they usually subscribe and engage in order to drive value for their businesses. In short, this majority weighs its options and is very cognizant of where to invest discretionary funds.

So, the question becomes, **is an association's resources and experiences (we'll now call 'events') worthwhile to the majority of its members?** Can an association establish a valuation to attendance and actually see from where event revenue is generating? In fact, the answer is a resounding 'yes.'

We know the questions an association's staff at each management level *should* be asking:

- **CEO / President:** How is our membership doing? How's engagement this month or year?
- **VP of Membership / Director of Programs & Events:** What events drive the most / least engagement? Who's engaging? Who is thriving? Who is struggling?
- **Account Manager / Sales & Retention Specialist:** Who needs the most personal attention? Who's at risk of churning? Who has the potential for an increase in membership tier?

Without a proper way to determine a valuation to attendance or **Member Engagement Score** and find the quantifiable correlation to each of these questions above, it's impossible to know what's truly going on within an association. As W. Edwards Deming put it, “*Without data, you're just another person with an opinion.*” In short, associations need to remove the guesswork. Properly tracking and measuring member engagement allows management at all levels to solve certain issues by creating visibility for every part of the association who is conscientious about revenue.

So, what is a **Member Engagement Score**? A **Member Engagement Score** is a metric that measures member activity by quantifying event attendance – the higher the number the more engaged the member. However, don't mistake equating higher engagement with a feeling, such as 'happiness.' That's better left to surveying members to 'qualify' how particular events and those messages, substance and resources are perceived. The **Member Engagement Score** metric does not require surveys to capture information subjectively nor does it rely on sampling. But, rather, it allows engagement to be objectively (1) **tracked**, (2) **measured**, and (3) **targeted for improvement** at a very detailed level for all association members.

Let's take a look at the six (6) specific **Steps to Building Successful Member Engagement...**

The **MEMBERS THRIVE Member Management System** has a custom-built module specific for generating real-time **Member Engagement Scores**.

It's a new day for how you can **Connect, Engage, and Grow** and with input from association staff, here's how it works.

1. TRACK

Use the **MEMBERS THRIVE Member Management System** to manage all event registrations and track every event.

The key here is to be consistent. In order to build a successful and more accurate model, it's imperative to track all events within the **MEMBERS THRIVE Member Management System**.

2. WEIGH

Not all events are created equal, so prioritize events and then set a weight to each one.

Association staff will use our easy scale to give each event a value based on the level of its importance to the association. As a rule-of-thumb, larger annual events carry more weight than weekly or monthly recurring events.

3. COLLECT

The **MEMBERS THRIVE Member Management System** will aggregate scores by event for each member and overall membership.

Now that each event is properly tracked and has a defined numeric weight, the **MEMBERS THRIVE Member Management System** will take over and do the rest. It will collect and categorize scores per event for every registration and sponsorship sold.

4. ADJUST

The **MEMBERS THRIVE Member Management System** will assign normalization in order to standardize raw scores that people will understand.

The initial aggregated scores would be confusing to members and possibly even association staff to say the least. So, the **MEMBERS THRIVE Member Management System** converts these values into a recognizable scale for determining what to do next with regard to measurement and growth.

5. MEASURE

Analyze the data to gain understanding of engagement overall and build on success.



What gets measured gets managed.

- Peter Drucker

When all members have active engagement scores, association staff can then **rank membership** based on engagement in order to understand the overall health of events. Ranking scores will enable staff at all management levels to identify:

- The “Power” members (and, conversely, know if any have become inactive).
- Most engaged members.
- Members who are falling behind in onboarding or those who are at risk of churning.
- Members who are ready to upgrade membership.

Comparing engagement and profitability across various segments of an association’s overall membership, event attendance, and sponsorships will also allow association staff to gain insight on:

- Entire membership
- New members
- Established members
- Various membership levels / tiers
- The “who is attending” from within each specific member business – upper / mid / lower levels
- Non-members / Guests
- Categories / Industries

6. GROW

Keep improving events and keep improving attendance by connecting with members.

Understanding and utilizing **Member Engagement Scores** doesn’t require a large amount of internal bandwidth or staff. The **MEMBERS THRIVE Member Management System** provides real-time data on how effectively an association is engaging with members quickly and easily. This data can help association staff deepen member relationships and drive deeper member loyalty by:

- Focusing on members who need a little extra attention.
- Focusing on members who are ready for expansion.
- Growing WITH members by providing the right experiences that offer the right resources.
- Testing new events and opportunities for engagement.
- Providing immediate feedback to tailor and evolve events and initiatives as they unfold to maximize benefits.

Member Engagement Scores will also help association staff prioritize sales and retention efforts by:

- Driving personalized marketing and communications.
- Improving the targeting of messaging, events, and what members want.
- Inventorying assets and reviewing current sponsorship opportunities.
- Capitalizing on upselling and cross-selling.
- Making higher-level decisions, such as continuing certain events.
- Modifying events and / or making adjustments to more closely meet members’ needs.

To learn more about the **MEMBERS THRIVE Member Management System** and the Member Engagement Module, call 678.878.3376 or email info@membersthive.com.

