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THE END OF MEMBERSHIP

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“ We are who we choose to be.”
 –Green Goblin,
 from Spider-Man



BACKGROUND

- o Associations are suffering from a loss of membership and a lack of involvement from members
- o Have you heard that people are just “too busy”
- o How do you attract new members and new leadership?




THE MAKING OF A DOMINANT ASSOCIATION

"Prosperity tries the fortunate, adversity the great"
-Rose F. Kennedy

The goal is to build your association into a dominant, membership-attracting, revenue-generating organization, standing out from others as the best in the industry

- o Niche
- o Culture
- o Dues
- o Focus
- o Involvement



STARTING POINT

- What does your association do?
 - Younger generations are your toughest consumers
 - They want to be inspired
 - Focus on your message
 - Does your organization connect business?
 - Does your organization bring in \$25,000 in business per member/year



STARTING POINT

- How does your association add value to the lives of your members?
- What is the cost-to-value ratio?
 - Givers – volunteer, pay dues, give resources
 - Takers – "I will show up if you can show me value"
 - Givers – Economic dip, may question membership
 - Takers – always question membership



EMBRACING CHANGE

"When you are finished changing, you are finished"
- Benjamin Franklin

Focus on the future, anticipate change

Making Change – denial, fear, acceptance, embracing

Association life expectancy

- o Calculate your retention rate, run past 5 years and determine your rate.
- o Calculate your association's loss rate
- o Calculate your turnover

Membership turnover

- o Where does brain drain impact you?
- o How do you account for the loss of baby boomers?
- o Succession planning, score your board, 1 likely to stay 6 years, 5 gone within a year.



OFFER BETTER BENEFITS

- Do you nickel and dime members?
- Do you charge for stuff that should be a true benefit?
- When you bring in young members



OFFER BETTER BENEFITS

• Associations that are struggling fall into categories

- Scrooge associations

- nickel and diming associations – everything has a cost
- Diminishing returns to members

- Milk associations

- Why buy the cow when you can just buy the milk
- Are you giving away your main assets

- Antique Associations

- They had a niche, but may not be relevant
- Do you do things that are no longer relevant?



RETHINK BENEFITS

- Member benefits are the end all be all of your association
- Most have excelled at baby boomers, governed by baby boomers, but struggle as they get to new generations of leaders, members, and volunteers.
 - Are you ready for the largest shift of human capital?
 - Are you meeting the needs of your members?
- What do the under 45 crowd want?
 - Could care less about history, discounts, or conference
 - You need them to survive
 - What do you offer them that is unique?



WHAT GEN X AND BEYOND WANT

- Opportunity to lead
 - Get young people on your board
 - Leadership is not sitting in endless meetings
 - Offer board service
 - Short term leadership projects
 - Recognition for new leaders
 - How often do people go "online" during your meeting, meaning they are offline from the meeting?
 - Want to be asked to take leadership role, don't often pressure for it



WHAT GEN X AND BEYOND WANT

- Opportunity to learn
 - Webinars
 - Video or audio of programs
 - Podcasts featuring case studies
 - Mentoring programs
 - Round table small guided programs
 - Self guided certification
- Opportunity to make a difference
 - When on the board, the need to make a difference
 - Organize service activities



FURTHERING YOUR REACH

"The future belongs to those who prepare for it today"
-Malcolm X

- o Create solutions, make it easy to generate ideas and create alternatives
- o Encourage feedback
- o Be inclusive – would someone describe you as a clique?
- o What is your market potential?
- o Where are your potential members?



BUILDING ONLINE COMMUNITIES

- o Can you tango on Twitter? You have an audience there.
- o Do you have an online leader?
- o Give up control, you can't control content
- o Find an expert
- o Determine your mission
- o Tell your story
- o Be timely
- o Engage your audience
- o Use your influence
- o Keep working
- o Just do it



BUILDING A NEXT CENTURY ASSOCIATION

- Focus, define, with clarity your associations reason for being a niche
 - Why does it exist?
 - What makes it unique?
 - What does it need to best serve its purpose?
 - Cut out any unnecessary effort, expense, or program
- Goal Setting
 - Day to day operations are one thing, what are your goals?
 - Where should you be in 5 years?
 - There are no right or wrong answers



BUILDING A NEXT CENTURY ASSOCIATION

- Marketing
 - If you want to sell more memberships, you need to know who benefits
 - Better to be of value to a few people, than everything to everyone
 - Four step process
 - What differentiates you from the competition
 - Determine your guarantee, what happens if you don't deliver your goals
 - Identify your core benefits – step by step for how you work
 - Determine your target market



BUILDING A NEXT CENTURY ASSOCIATION

- Troubleshooting
 - Identify obstacles to growth and potential solutions for overcoming those obstacles.
 - Declining value, outdated member benefits, outdated technology, aging membership, declining revenue
 - Revamp dues structure, introduce new technology, target younger audiences, eliminate negative influences
 - Ask your leadership team to think of the obstacles, concerns, and opportunities
 - Discuss the real reason you have aging membership or declining revenues for a reason, what are those?
 - Discuss solutions, which may require an outside facilitator



BUILDING INTO THE NEXT CENTURY

- Targeted progress
 - What is the timeline for implementation and strategy?
 - What must get done this year?
 - Determine:
 - Retention
 - Recruiting
 - Revenue
 - Profit
 - What are goals for next year



SIX KEY POINTS

- Understand what your members want and need
- Develop member benefits that solve the problems of your targeted audiences
- Assess the costs to provide those benefits and get rid of anything that doesn't provide a benefit
- Put a membership model in place that both aligns with the way your audience wants to pay to have their problems solved and makes it easy for your offering to sell
- Test the offerings and revenue models with members and non-members – adjust accordingly
- Repeat



QUESTIONS Dr. Nick Prewett


