



Supporting THE DECISION TO JOIN


What Association Boards Should Know and Do About Membership and Affiliation

JAMES DALTON ASAE & THE CENTER FOR ASSOCIATION LEADERSHIP

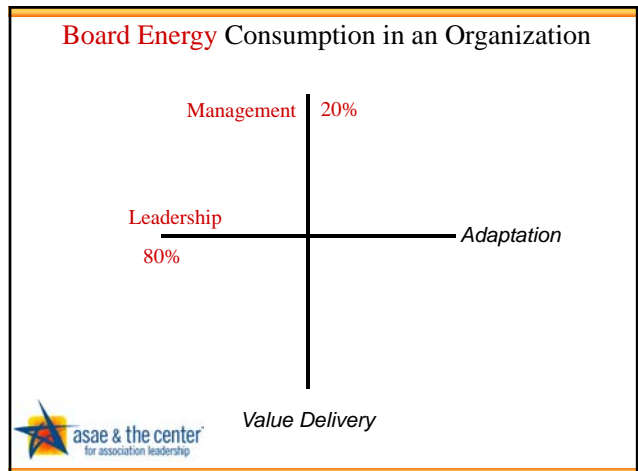
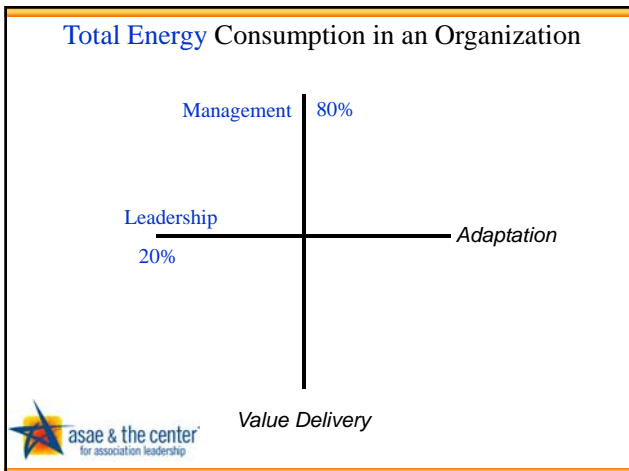



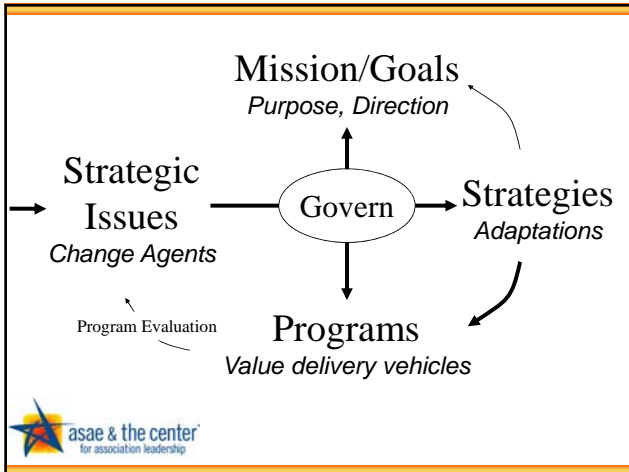
Session Objectives

- Consider a survey tool to minimize Board involvement in current programs and focus that attention on critical issues (verifiable)
- From the *Decision to Join* research, convey 5 points that association Board members should know to attract and retain members



Jim Dalton: jdalton@aol.com 301-258-8460





Association Gap Analysis

- Develop value proposition statements for all primary program activities
- Survey members to get their estimates of the Importance and Satisfaction levels they associate with each
- Calculate the “Gaps” as the difference between Importance and Satisfaction

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Jim Dalton: jdalton@aol.com 301-258-8460

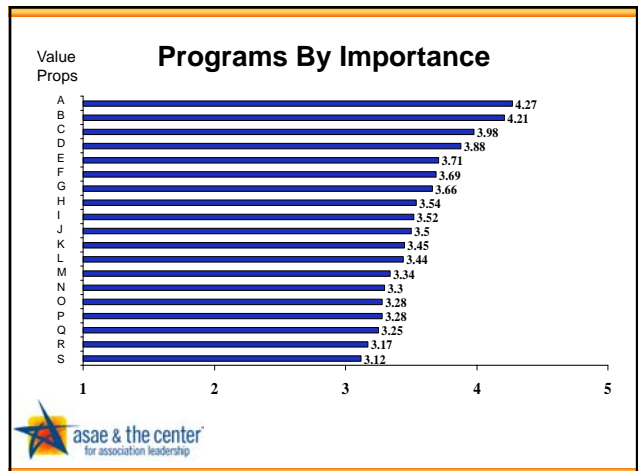
Examples of Value Propositions

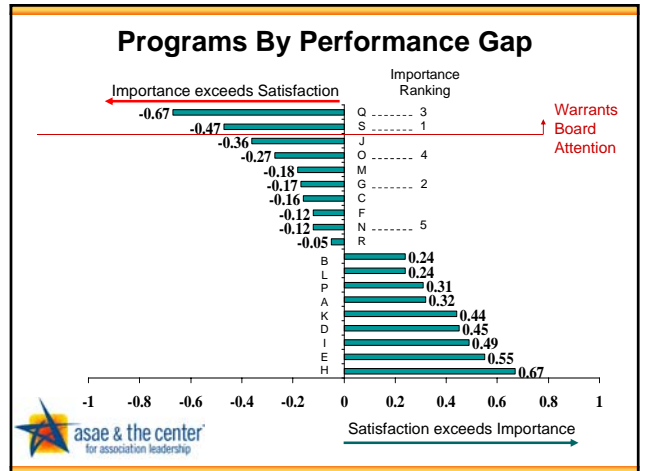
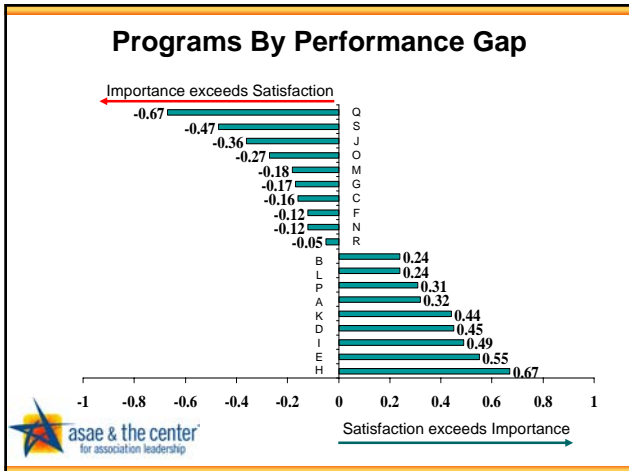
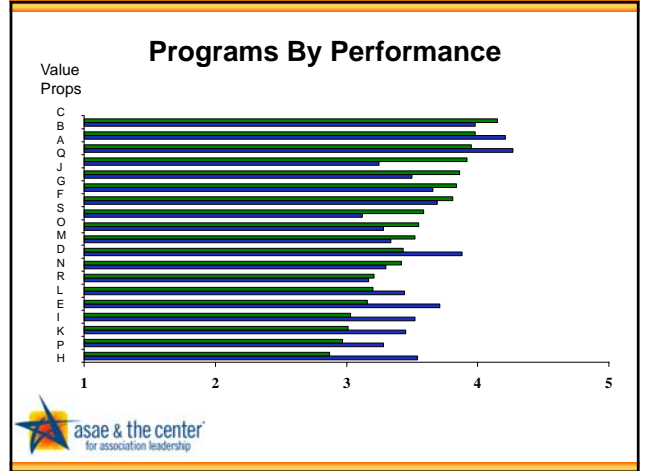
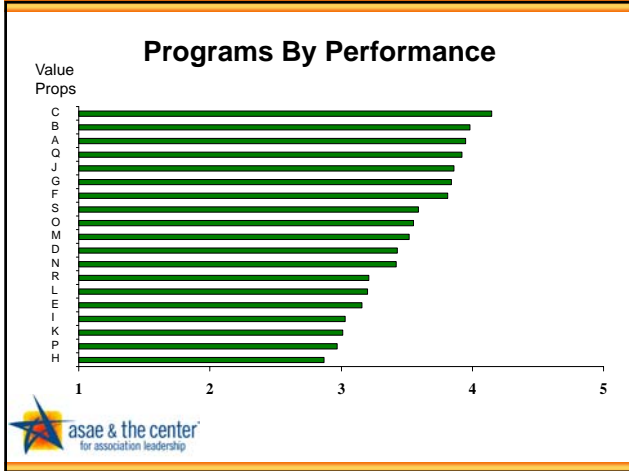
Trade Association Example of a Value Proposition
Inform members on a monthly basis of ten economic conditions in the industry for manufacturers and distributors (Economic Indicators Report)

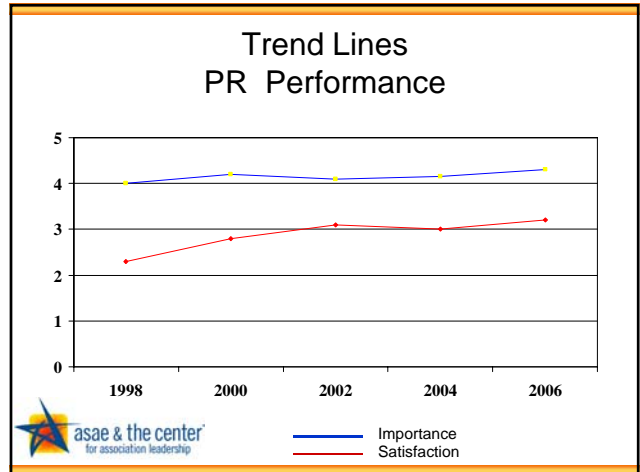
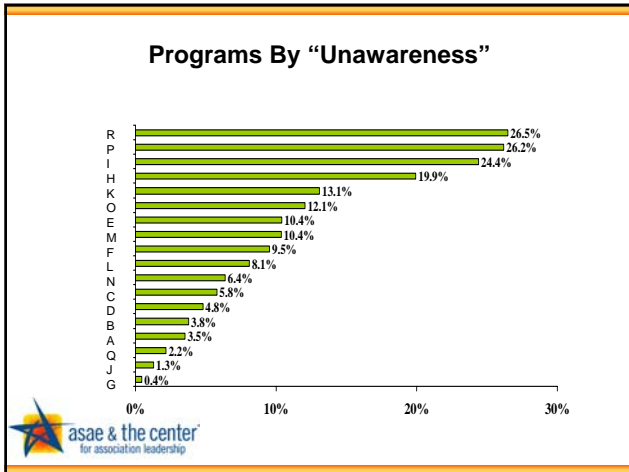
Medical Association Example
Provide physicians and their staff with a comprehensive guide to Medicare coverage, coding and regulatory policies including regular online updates and a telephone hotline service.

Typically associations have anywhere from 12 to 20 propositions depending on size

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Board Use of a Value Proposition Survey

- Identify the critical few that are of high Importance and have a significant Gap
- Give these strategic attention: analysis, investment, accountability
- All others are relegated to staff/committee responsibility to pursue continuous improvement

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The Decision to Join

- 18 diverse associations participated in a common value proposition survey
- 16,944 survey respondents who are, were, or could be but never chose to become members of an association
- The database was analyzed as one common population of professionals

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Jim Dalton: jdalton@aol.com 301-258-9460

Core Survey Elements

- 8 Value propositions describing the “personal benefits” that individuals receive
- 12 value propositions describing the “benefits to the field” that everyone receives, regardless of membership
- Evaluation of these propositions on two 5-point scales: Importance & Satisfaction



Jim Dalton: jdalton@aol.com 301-258-8460

Board Admonitions from the *Decision to Join*

1. **Focus more on the collective benefits of membership, and less on the personal benefits.**
2. **Define, develop, measure and improve member involvement.**
3. **Don't assume that elected leaders can correctly identify the priorities of rank-and-file members.**
4. **Stop worrying so much about the younger generation.**
5. **If the association plans to go global, first square up with domestic members.**



Jim Dalton: jdalton@aol.com 301-258-8460

Focus more on the collective benefits to the field, and less on the personal benefits.

Selling the sizzle, emphasizing the “what’s in it for you” side of the benefits is a for-profit sector strategy that is not the smart choice for professional associations



Jim Dalton: jdalton@aol.com 301-258-8460

Personal Benefits

Access to the most up to date information available in your field	4.22
Professional development or educational program offerings	3.91
Opportunities for you to network with other professionals in your field	3.72
Access to career information and employment opportunities	3.39
Access to products, services and suppliers	3.21
Opportunities to gain leadership experience	3.05
Access to all members through a reference directory or database	2.93
Member discounts or group purchasing activities	2.85



Jim Dalton: jdalton@aol.com 301-258-8460

Benefits to the Field

Providing standards or guidelines that support quality	3.85
Gathering, analyzing and publishing data on trends in the field	3.77
Maintaining a code of ethics for practice	3.74
Promoting greater appreciation of the field to other disciplines	3.70
Conducting research on significant issues affecting the field	3.70
Promoting greater public awareness of contributions in the field	3.67
Influencing legislation and regulations that affect the field	3.64
Supporting student education and entry into the field	3.58
Attracting competent people into the field	3.53
Certifying those who meet critical competency standards	3.52
The association's role in defining critical competencies	3.44
Providing awards or recognition for excellence in the field	3.07



Jim Dalton: [jadalton@aol.com](mailto:jdalton@aol.com) 301-258-8460

Question

The most democratic country on the face of the earth is that in which men have, in our time, carried to the highest perfection the art of pursuing in common the object of their common desires and have applied this new science to the greatest number of purposes. Is this the result of accident, or is there in reality any necessary connection between the principle of association and that of equality?

Alexis de Tocqueville



Answer

Among the laws that rule human societies there is one which seems to be more precise and clear than all others. If men are to remain civilized or to become so, the art of associating together must grow and improve in the same ratio in which the equality of conditions is increased.

Alexis de Tocqueville

Translation: Associations are the single most critical factor in determining the success of democracy and hence the pursuit of equality



Average Importance Ratings

Personal Benefits	Good of the Order
3.4	3.6

This is a well-balanced pair; but given the size of the respondent database it represents a statistically significant bias in favor of benefits to the field.



Jim Dalton: [jadalton@aol.com](mailto:jdalton@aol.com) 301-258-8460

Recommendations

- Know the ratio between these two factors in your member preferences and association's offerings
- Know that potential members understand that professionalism carries an obligation to support the good of the order.
- To increase the appreciation of value to younger people, educate them on the value of the supporting the good of the order



Jim Dalton: jdalton@aol.com 301-258-8460

Define, develop, measure and improve member involvement.

Involvement at any level is the number one factor affecting long-term loyalty to the association



Jim Dalton: jdalton@aol.com 301-258-8460

What percent of your members are involved in the work of the association?

(Do not include attending events)



Level of Involvement

Govern/Admin	6.8%	} 14.6%
Program Committee	7.8%	



Jim Dalton: jdalton@aol.com 301-258-8460

Level of Involvement

Govern/Admin	6.8%	} 14.6%
Program Committee	7.8%	
Ad Hoc	15.5%	
Total	30.1%	



“The Ultimate Question”

By Fred Reichheld

How likely is it that you would recommend membership in the association to a friend or colleague?



Jim Dalton: jdalton@aol.com 301-258-8460

How likely is it that you would recommend membership in the association to a friend or colleague?

<i>Govern/Admin</i>	65.7%
<i>Committee</i>	60.8%
<i>Ad Hoc</i>	47.0%
<i>None</i>	39.8%

9 or 10 rating on a 10 point scale



How did you first learn about membership in the association?

Colleague or co-worker	35.9%	} 64.9%
Professor or instructor	29.0%	
University or college career program	12.8%	
Do not recall	6.7%	
A workshop, conference or meeting	4.3%	
Some other way	3.3%	
Advertisement in a journal or magazine	3.1%	
Direct contact from the association by direct mail	2.0%	
Browsing on the Internet	1.4%	
Direct contact from the association in person	0.6%	
Direct contact from the association electronically	0.5%	
Booth at a trade show	0.2%	
Telephone or email inquiry	0.2%	
News story	0.1%	



Jim Dalton: jdalton@aol.com 301-258-8460

Lessons Learned

- Define specific levels of involvement and develop a database of ad hoc tasks that members can perform
- Develop a means by which active leaders recruit ad hoc task performers
- Invite all members to participate and make it easy for them to pursue
- Track and promote ad hoc task workers



Jim Dalton: jdalton@aol.com 301-258-8460

Don't assume that elected leaders can correctly identify the priorities of rank-and-file members.



Leaders Insight on Members

The importance attributed to program activities varies with level of involvement. In some cases, elected leaders are clearly not in sync with their rank-and-file colleagues.




Jim Dalton: jdalton@aol.com 301-258-8460

Personal Benefits Rank order of importance by Involvement	Govern	None
Opportunities for you to network with other professionals the field	1	3
Access to the most up to date information available in your field	2	1
Professional development or educational program offerings	3	2
Opportunities to gain leadership experience	4	7
Access to career information and employment opportunities	5	4
Access to products, services and suppliers (e.g. insurance, publications, etc.)	6	5
A reference directory of members/practitioners	7	6
Member discounts or group purchasing activities	8	8




Jim Dalton: jdalton@aol.com 301-258-8460

Benefits to the Field Rank order of importance by involvement	Govern	None
Promoting a greater appreciation of the role and value of the field to other disciplines	1	4
Providing standards or guidelines that support quality	2	1
Maintaining a code of ethics for practice	3	2
Influencing legislation and regulations that affect the field	4	7
Promoting greater public awareness of contributions in the field	5	6
Supporting student education and entry into the field	6	8
Certifying those who meet critical competency standards	7	9
Gathering, analyzing and publishing data on trends in the field	8	3
Attracting competent people into the field	9	11
Conducting research on significant issues affecting the field	10	5
The association's role in defining critical competencies	11	10
Providing awards or recognition for excellence in the field	12	12



Reasons Why Leaders are Out of Sync


- Access to information and analyses that give them a vantage point members don't have;
- Responsibility to take action that members don't have;
- Ignorance; unaware of the needs certain segments might have;



Jim Dalton: jdalton@aol.com 301-258-8460


Lessons Learned

- Do not operate on the assumption that elected leaders are in sync with rank-and-file on all matters
- Know where and why they are out of sync
- Read "7 Measures" of highly effective associations, particularly sections on "data driven strategies" and "dialogue of engagement"



Stop worrying so much about the younger generation.

Which doesn't mean you don't have to do anything different to attract and maintain them!



Jim Dalton: jdalton@aol.com 301-258-8460

Will “Generation X” join their professional associations as their predecessors did, or are they different in ways that make this questionable?



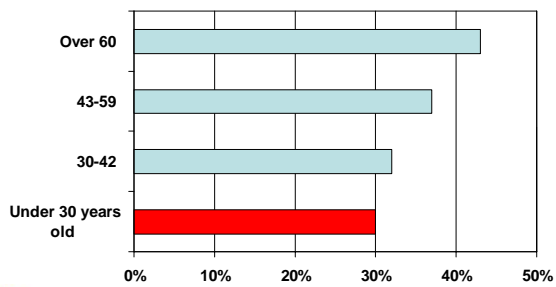
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“One of the more thorough studies of generational differences as they are apt to affect the decision to join an association was conducted by Arthur C. Brooks, PhD of Syracuse University. Dr. Brooks analyzed as a part of this study the “largest and most comprehensive datasets available on civic life in the UNITED STATES”. He noted that in the year 2000, Generation X had significantly lower association membership rates than the Baby Boomers, which could be construed to support the notion that they are inherently different. He points out, however, that in that year, the Generation X respondents were between 25 and 35 years of age. . Four years later Brooks conducted a similar study that confirmed most of the previous study’s findings but for one notable exception. The four-year time lapse moved most of the Generation X population past the age of 30, and with that as the only discernable difference, they surged ahead of the Baby Boomers in terms of their association membership.”

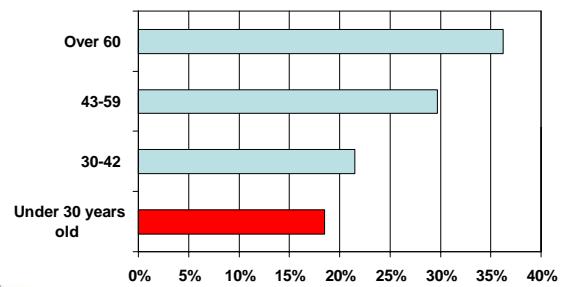


Decision To Join

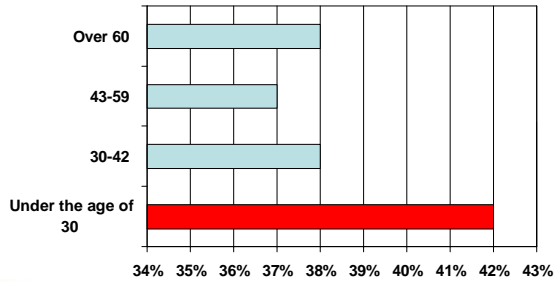
What is your overall attitude toward associations?



Do you believe associations are capable of addressing the practical needs of individual members?



Will there be a greater or lesser need for associations five years from now?



Rank order of importance for media preferences by age	<30	30-42	43-59	60>
Professional magazines or journals	1	1	1	1
Conferences or meetings	2	3	2	2
E-newsletters	3	2	3	3
Association website	4	4	4	4
Searching on the Internet	5	5	5	5
Network of peers	6	6	7	6
User groups, CoP	7	7	6	7
Other print	8	8	8	8
General interest magazines	9	9	9	9
Newspapers (print)	10	10	10	10
Blogs or podcasts	11	11	11	11
Traditional broadcast media	12	12	12	12



	Under 30	Board
Access to career information and employment opportunities	3	7
Supporting student education and entry into the field	1	9
Promoting greater public awareness of the field	3	6
Maintaining a code of ethics for practice	5	2



Lessons Learned

- The association's appeal has more to do with stage of career development than generational attributes
- Young professionals wake up to the value of associations as their appreciation for career development matures
- Associations can continue to wait for them to wake up, or appeal to them based on their specific needs



Jim Dalton: jdalton@asl.com 301-258-8460

If the association plans to go global, first square up with domestic members.



Typical Global Strategies

- Expansionist - Expand market reach, providing full membership, product and service access on a global scale
- Cordial - Welcome global members with the understanding that it is an "American" society
- Science – Contribute to an expanding body of knowledge through global information sharing
- Advocate - Advance the interests of US members in new forums, markets, and policies & standard setting bodies
- Philanthropic - Assist developing nations by sharing the expertise of US members



Jim Dalton: jdalton@aol.com 301-258-8460

Global Concerns

- Non US members show a strong interest in networking, yet low interest in education.
- Questions:
 - Why do they want to network?
 - To what extent might this mean they seek to sell/promote in US markets, effectively competing with US members?



Global Concerns

- Non US members assign different levels of importance to the program benefits, most notably in a lower ranking of ethics.
- Question:
 - How will these differences affect the strategic priorities of the association?
 - How important is it to make US members aware of these differences before international strategies are launched.



Jim Dalton: jdalton@aol.com 301-258-8460

Lessons Learned

- When going international, articulate a very specific strategy, giving the reasons why
- Know and analyze the differences between international and domestic members;
 - and then the impact international will have on program priority setting;
 - and then the impact this will have on domestic member satisfaction



Jim Dalton: jdalton@aol.com 301-258-8460

Association Gap Analysis

- Develop value proposition statements for primary program activities
- Survey members to determine their estimates of the Importance and Satisfaction they associate with each
- Calculate Gap as the difference between Importance and Satisfaction



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