

2026 Membership Performance Benchmark Report

This **11th** annual report reveals membership professionals' **top priorities and challenges**, highlights trends for improved long-term decision making, and shares the latest best practice strategies for **peak performance**.

2026 Membership Performance Benchmark Report

01	Introduction , <i>page 2</i>		
02	Key Takeaways , <i>page 3</i>		
03	Demographics , <i>page 5</i>		
04	Report Insights , <i>page 8</i>		
	A Technology, <i>page 8</i>		
	B Member Levels and Acquisition, <i>page 10</i>		
	C Member Retention, <i>page 12</i>		
		D	Member Engagement, <i>page 15</i>
		E	Goals and Strategic Focus, <i>page 16</i>
		F	Future Outlook, <i>page 19</i>
		05	Next Steps , <i>page 20</i>

01 Introduction

More than 400 association and membership professionals participated in our 11th annual **Membership Performance Benchmark Survey**.

Organizations are feeling **confident about future growth and stability**, especially those with easy access to data to track and improve performance across clearly defined metrics.

Member engagement, from onboarding through renewal, is still the key to maintaining your base. This is something these participants know well, as we see more organizations growing rather than shrinking, with increased retention and new member acquisitions.

Read on to learn about strategies to attract, keep, and engage your members more effectively, and how your organization's performance compares to your peers'.

Data-driven organizations
are taking center stage because they're prepared for the challenges ahead.

Those with data that's easy to access and clearly defined performance metrics are seeing tangible positive outcomes.

02 Key Takeaways

Insights show gains in most areas of membership, but organizations still see opportunities to improve in 2026.

Retention



45% increased retention, a big jump over last year's 32%

See [page 13](#) for the top reasons members don't renew, and how to win them back on [page 14](#).

Engagement



38% report that member engagement is up, and another 43% held rates steady

Check out [page 18](#) to see how easy-to-understand data can affect your engagement levels.

Acquisition



61% increased new member acquisitions vs. only 48% last year

Discover the most effective new-member recruiting strategies on [page 11](#).

Goals



Further increasing engagement, retention, and acquisition are top goals for 2026

[Page 17](#) shows how effectively tracking metrics can help you achieve these goals.

02 Key Takeaways

Data underscores the relationship between an organization's systems and their outlook for 2026.

Technology



71% have or plan to invest in membership management software *this year*

See [page 8](#) for other tech stack investments.

Confidence



36% are extremely confident about future growth and sustainability, *up from only 25% last year*

Learn more on [page 19](#).

Challenges

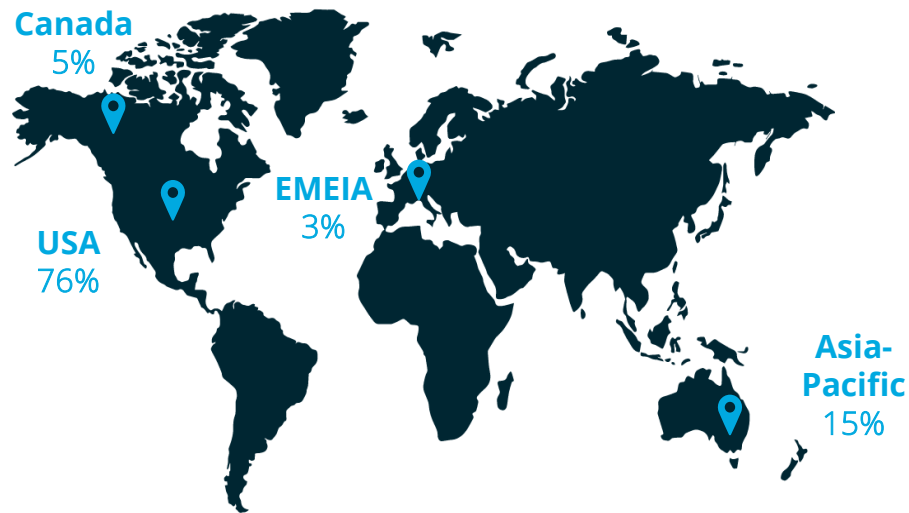


System integrations and inaccurate or incomplete data are top obstacles *in 2026*

[Page 19](#) shows how an organization's systems impact their outlook.

03 Demographics

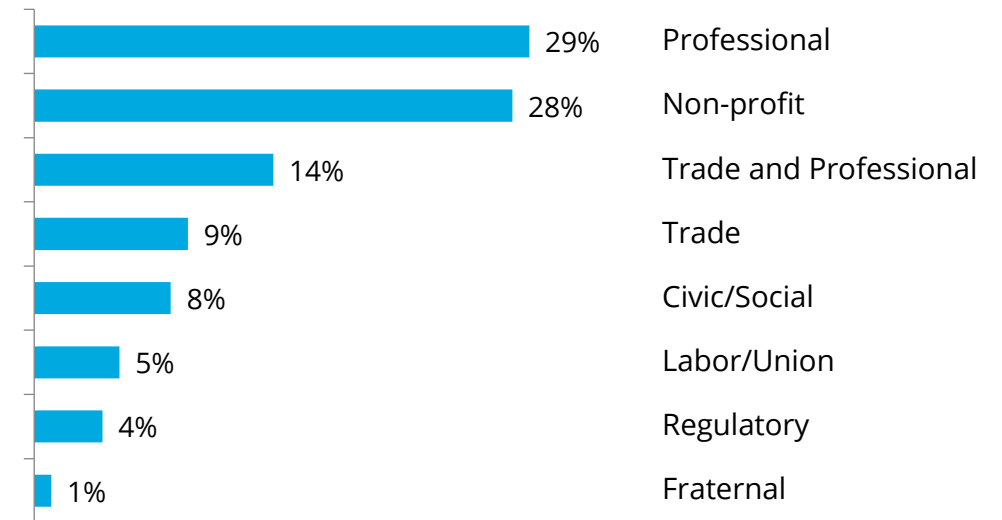
Locations



Three-quarters of respondents are in the United States and one in six are from Asia-Pacific.

EMEIA is defined as Europe, the Middle East, India, and Africa.

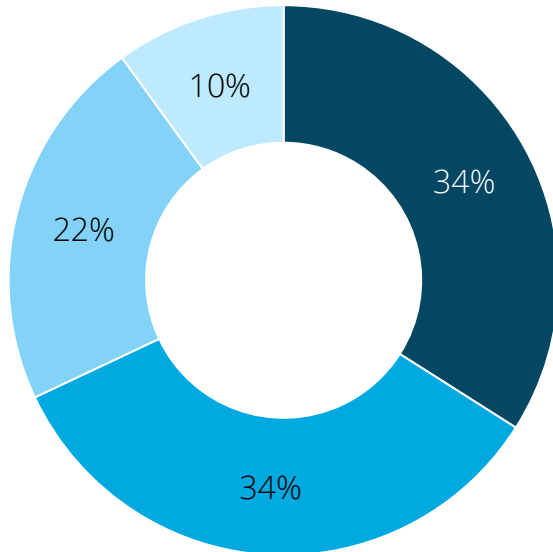
Organization Types



Over half (52%) describe their organization as Professional and/or Trade. Over 1 in 4 (28%) are a non-profit.

Computers/Technical (15%), Education (12%), and Healthcare (12%) are most well represented industries.

Operating Budgets

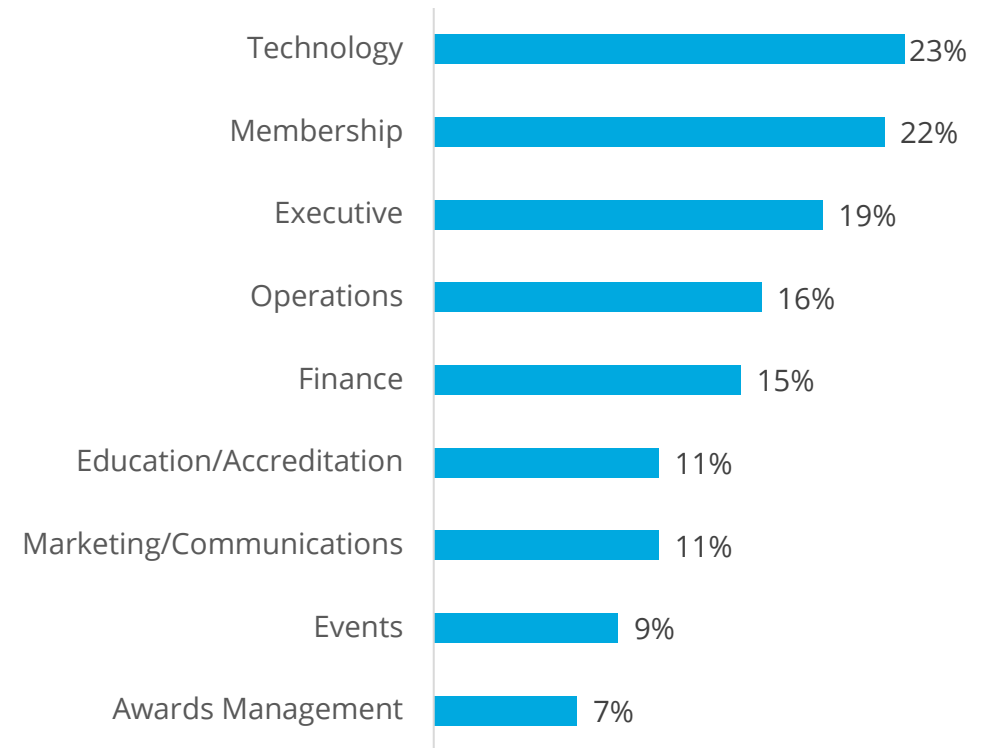


■ Under 2.5 million ■ 2.5 to <10 million ■ 10 to <50 million ■ 50 or more

The operating budgets for represented organizations are evenly distributed. Approximately 1 in 3 respondents come from each of the following: small (under 2.5M), medium (2.5 to under 10M) and larger (over 10M) organizations.

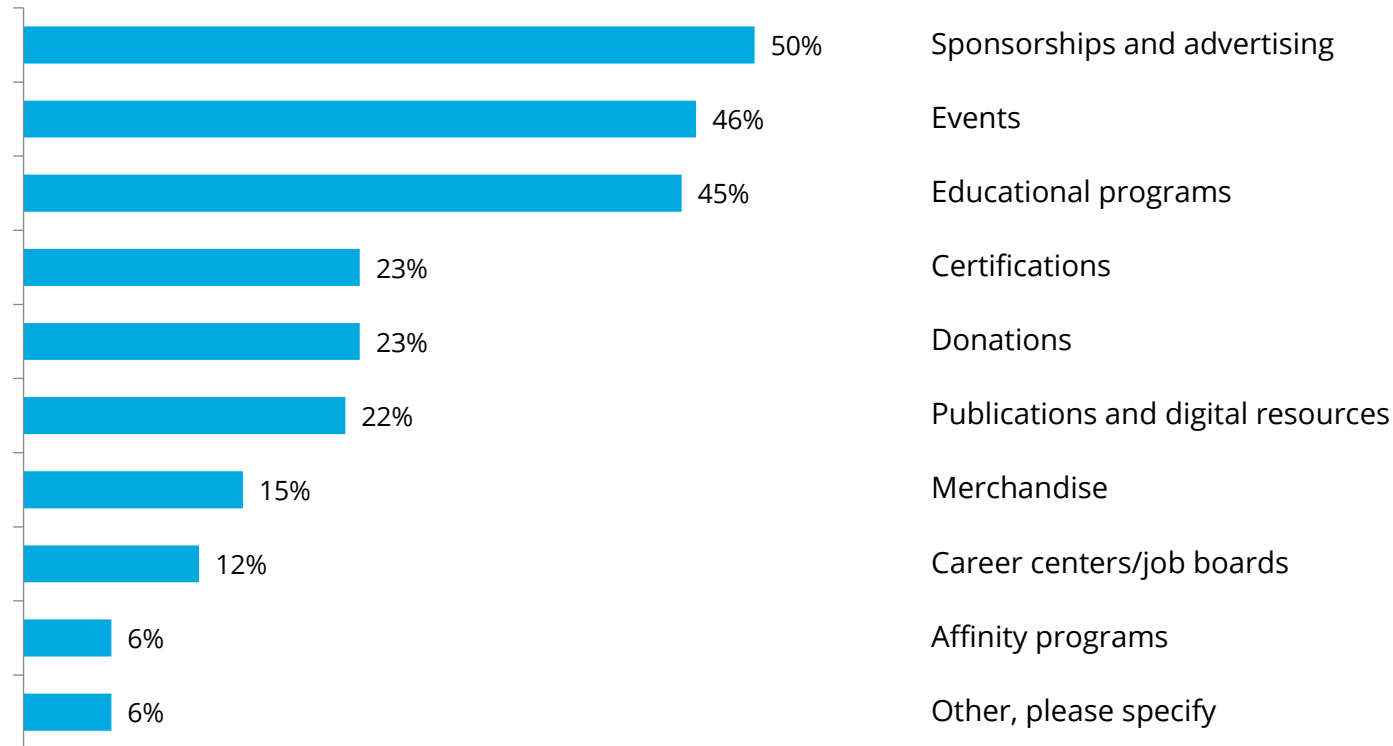
**See top revenue sources on the next page.*

Roles/Responsibilities



Membership and Technology are the most represented roles, but many respondents (32%) wear multiple hats.

Top Revenue Sources (aside from membership fees)



This chart shows the percentage of respondents who list that particular revenue source as one of their top 3 revenue sources outside of membership fees.

Respondents could choose up to 3. **Sponsorships and advertising** followed by **events** and **educational programs** are primary non-dues revenue sources.



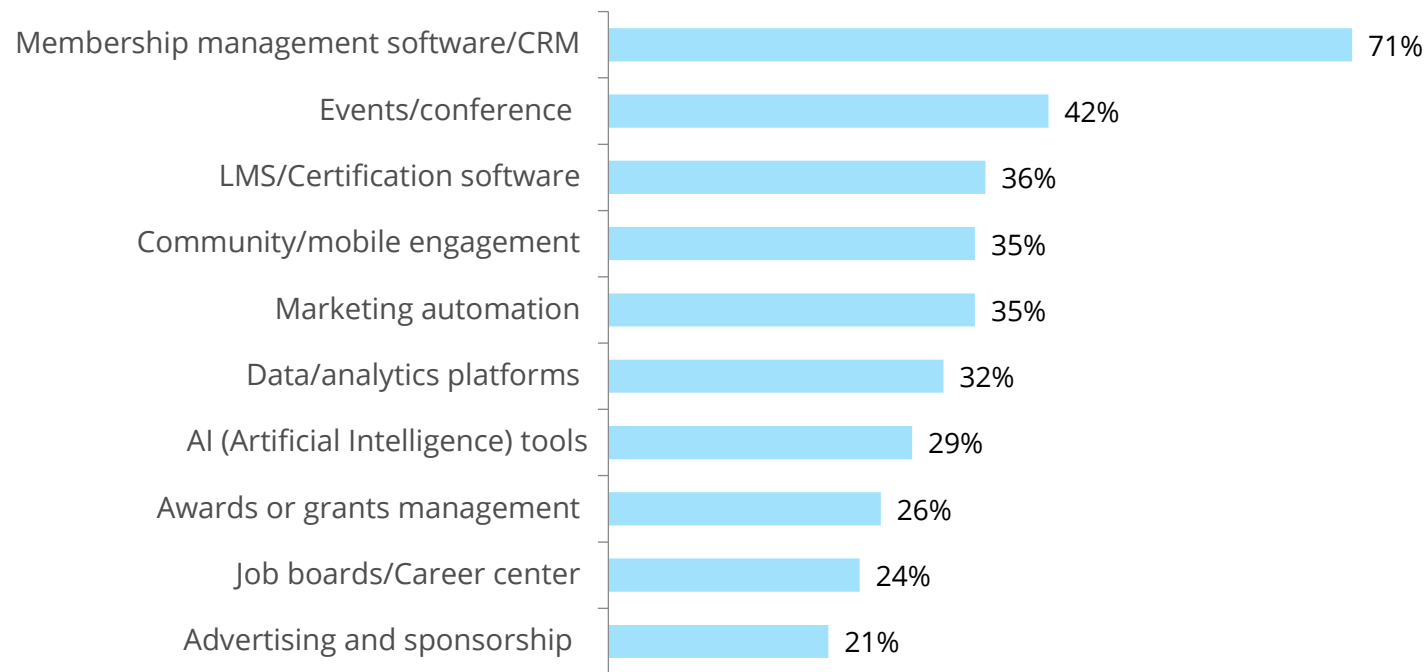
Half of respondents list sponsorships and advertising as a top 3 revenue source *apart from membership fees*

46% of respondents cite **events** as a top 3 non-dues revenue source

45% of respondents cite **education** as a top 3 non-dues revenue source

04 Membership Performance Insights

Current Tech or Planned Tech Investment



Respondents have invested or are planning to invest widely in their tech stack from membership management and LMS software, to tech to engage members via events, communities and mobile.



71%
*Have or will invest
in **member
management
systems***



42%
*have or will invest
in **event or
conference tech***

Cloud-Based Systems



73% are in the Cloud



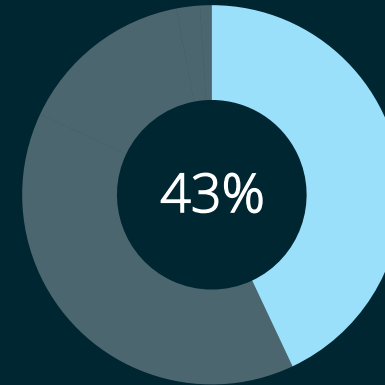
16% are in process of moving to the Cloud



5% are not there yet

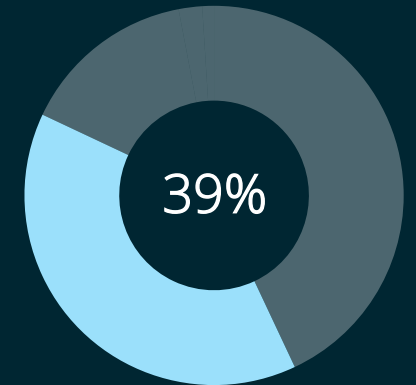
A cloud-based software system ensures that you and your staff can continue to successfully run your organization and support your members remotely. Read more in [The Ultimate Guide to Association Software](#).

How are organizations using their data?



Only 43% can easily access and understand the data they need to monitor and improve performance.

Another 39% have the data, but it takes effort to pull or analyze.



Read more on [page 18](#)

Membership Levels are *Rising*

62% increased their membership base, which is a gain of 14 points over last year.

The number of respondents who lost members (**14%**) is down from last year's 24%.

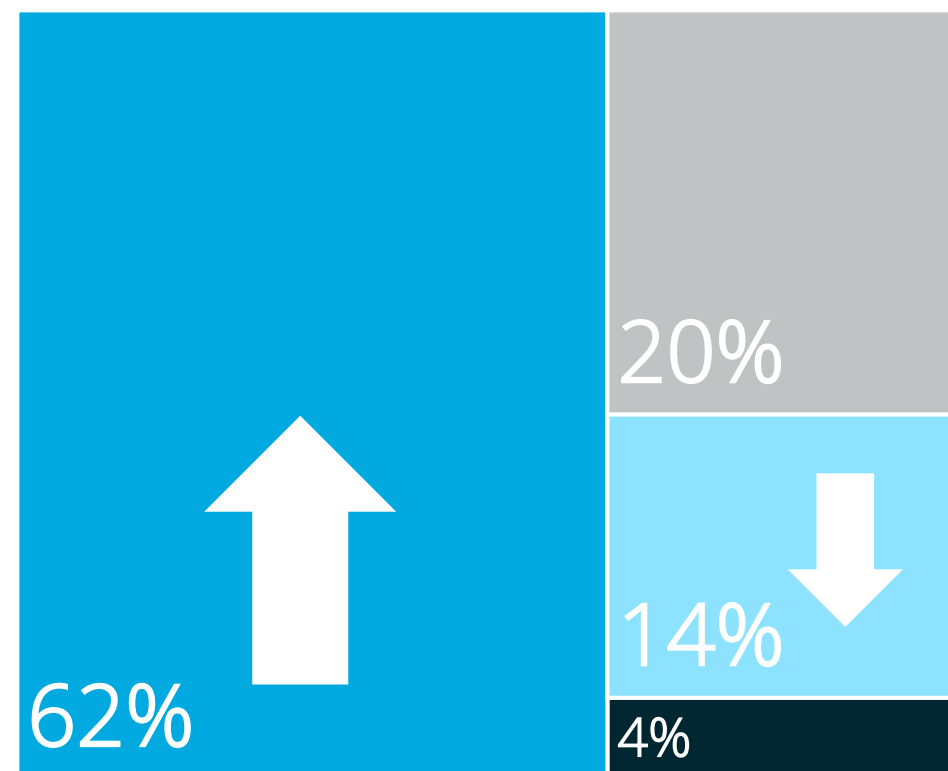
"Previously, we had to email applicants one-by-one with their approval letters. Now it's completely automated through iMIS." -Associate, Professional Practice at CMLTO



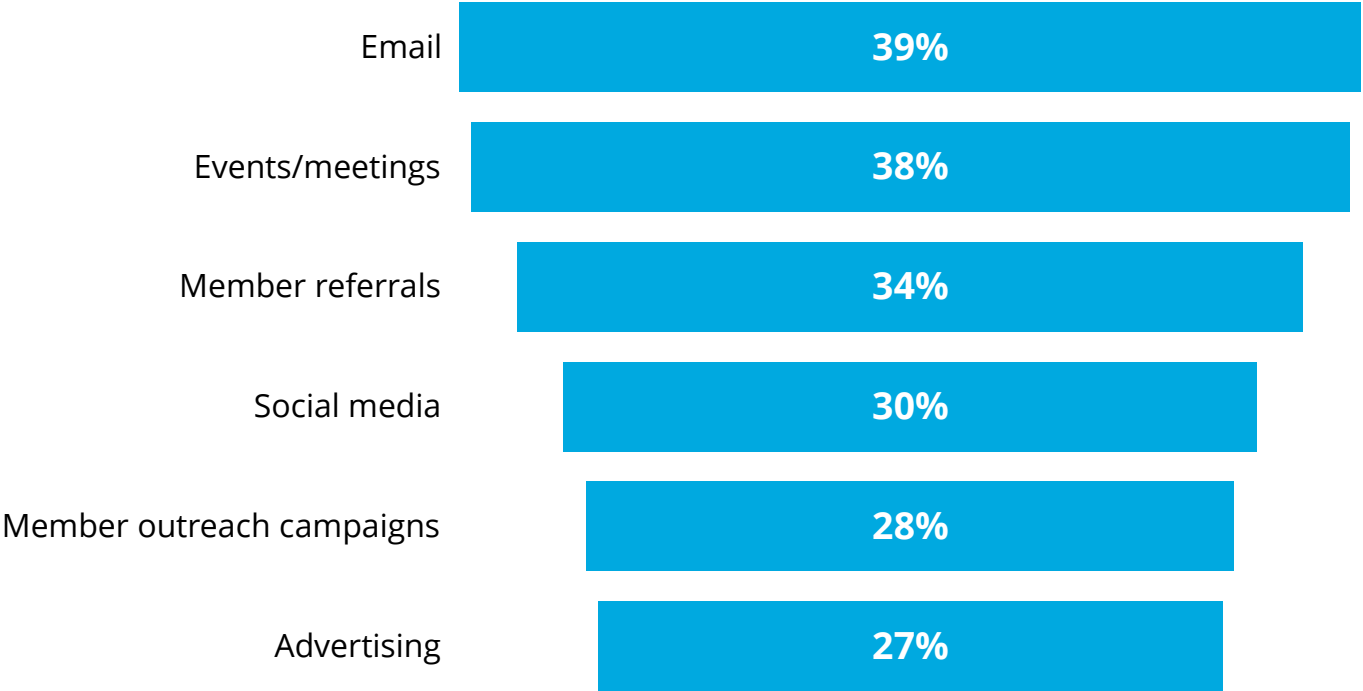
College of Medical
Laboratory Technologists
of Ontario

Overall Member Levels

■ Increased ■ Unchanged ■ Decreased ■ Don't Know



Best New-Member Recruiting Strategies



Email and events and meetings, followed closely by member referrals, are the most effective ways to attract new members to your organization.
Respondents could choose up to 3 answers.

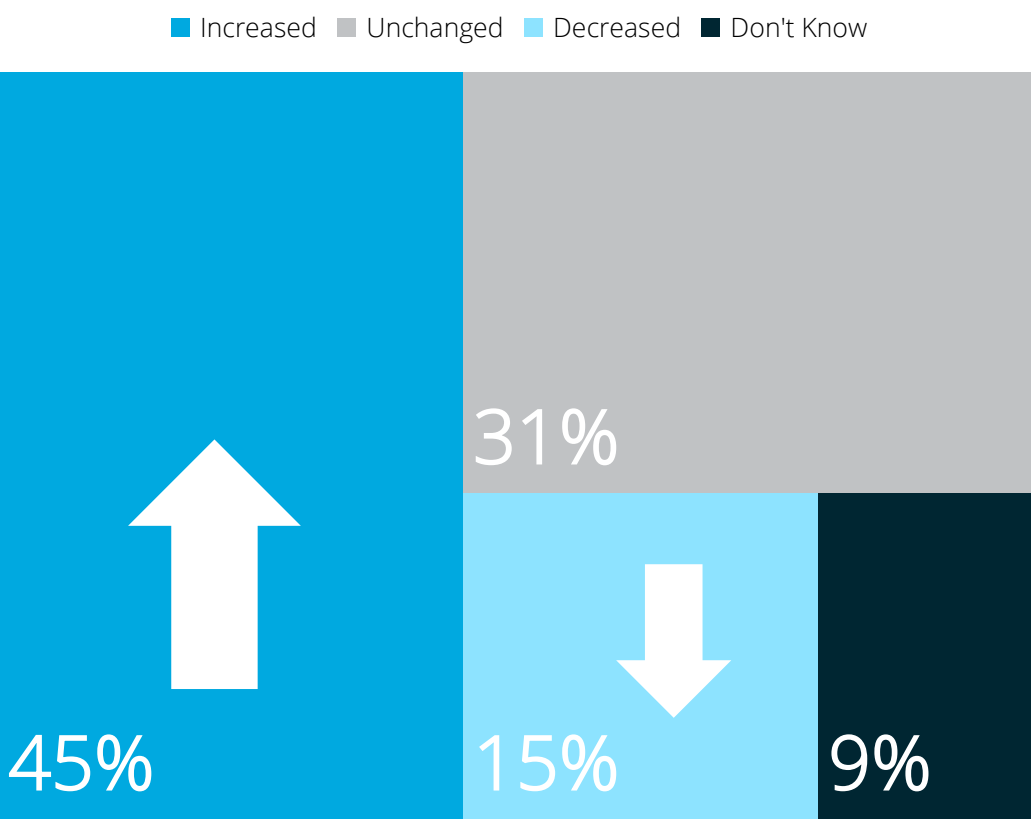


61%
increased **new**
member
acquisitions



81%
Saw above average
member
satisfaction

Overall Retention Rate Changes



Retention rose or held steady for 3 in 4. Only 15% experienced a dip in retention rate.

Success Story: LTEN saved money by eliminating 20 hours/month of outsourced accounting.

The Life Sciences Trainers & Educators Network (LTEN), a scientific professional/trade association, replaced manual processes with automation, including instant invoicing, application acknowledgments, and approval letters.

In the end, they eliminated hours of outsourced accounting by **automating key financial processes.**

"With iMIS, we've been able to automate invoicing and reminders...we didn't have that before. We were doing it manually." -LTEN Executive Director



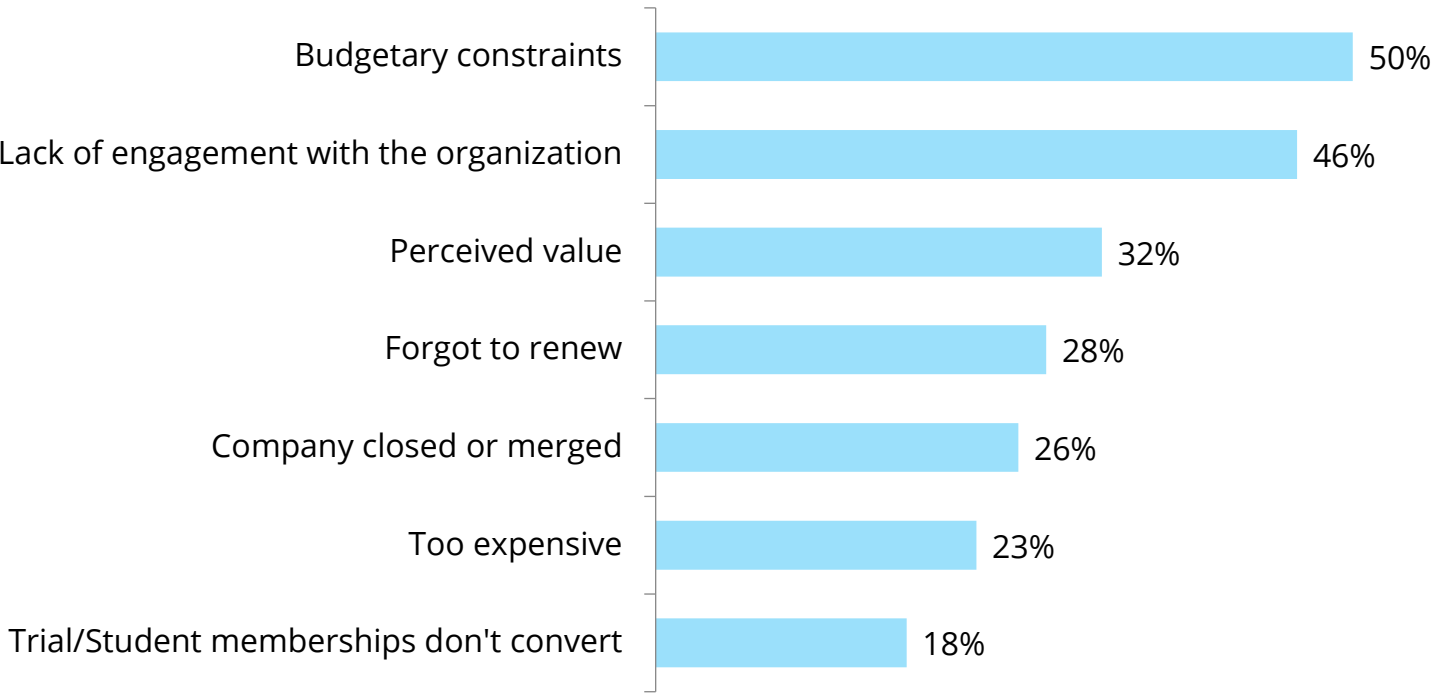


Create a strong member value proposition

Your member value proposition demonstrates the benefits of membership and clearly communicates why members will want to join and renew. Showcase specific resources they absolutely need and can't get elsewhere.

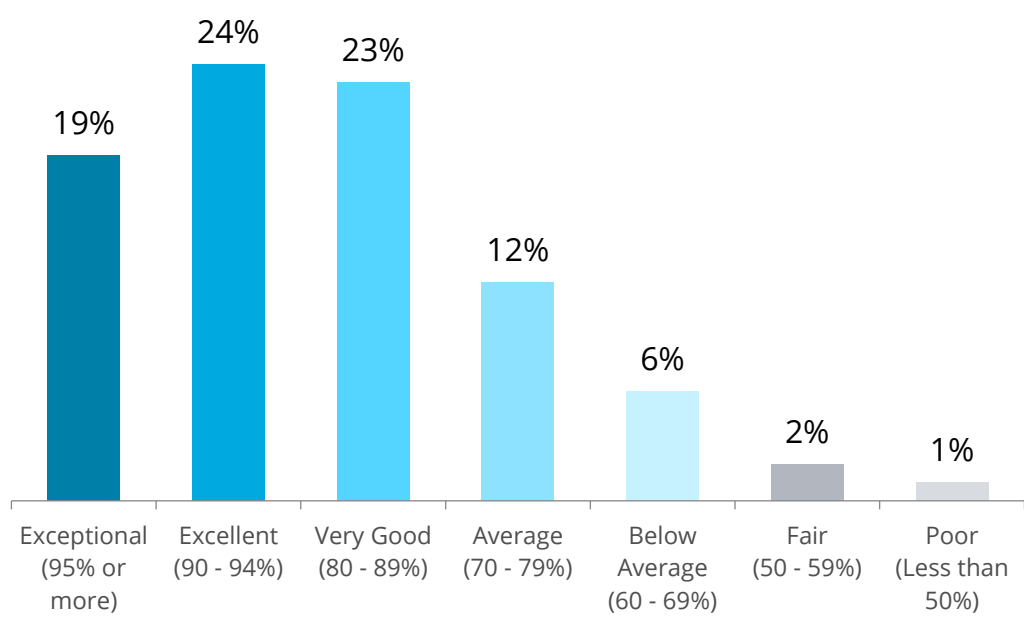
[Follow our 6 steps to craft a compelling value proposition.](#)

Why Members Don't Renew



Budgetary constraints are consistently the primary driver preventing renewal. However, it is important to note that nearly half point to lack of engagement. Respondents could choose up to 3 answers.

Renewal Rates for First-Year Members



Organizations continue to keep more new members. 78% report an average or better renewal rate for first-year members. 13% did not have this information.

Best Ways to Win Back Lapsed Members

- 1

70% of respondents report **email** as an effective method
- 2

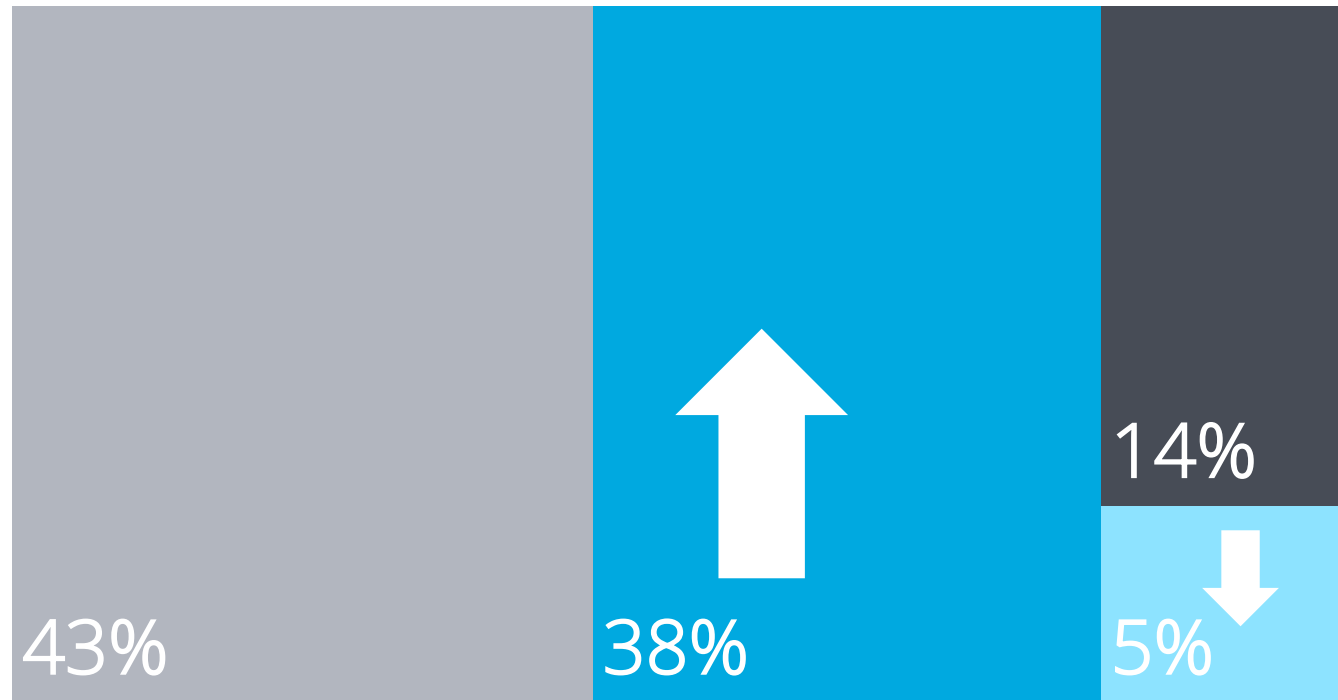
46% credit **member-to-member outreach** for winning back members
- 3

38% indicate **board/executive outreach** helps win-back rates

Email is still #1 but peer connections prove effective for win-back, as well as new member acquisitions. Respondents could choose up to 3 methods.

Overall Member Engagement Rates

■ Increased ■ Unchanged ■ Decreased ■ Don't Know



Engagement has risen or held steady for most participants.
Very few (5%) saw a decrease in engagement.

Success Story: Amplify Alliance decreased admin time by 90%, while increasing engagement

This national association saves hours of staff time by automating tasks like renewals, event registrations, and communications. They improved engagement with advanced features that allowed for better segmentation and targeted outreach.

"iMIS's advanced features allow us to better segment and target our communications so we can enhance our member engagement"



Top 3 Goals

1

Increase Engagement



2

Increase member retention



3

Increase new member acquisitions



Respondents' priorities are centered on membership: increasing engagement, retention, and acquisition.

Top 3 Operational Challenges

1

Inadequate integration between member management system and website



2

Incorrect or incomplete data



3

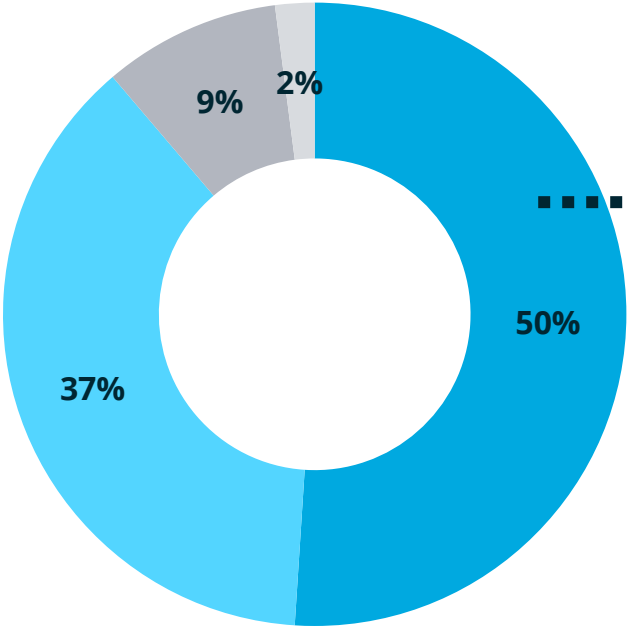
Multiple databases and silos of information



Inadequate integrations, incorrect or incomplete data, and information silos are the greatest operational challenges.

Metrics to Track and Improve Performance

- Yes, fully defined and reviewed regularly
- Yes, we track some, but it's informal
- Not yet, but we're working on it
- No, we don't track performance metrics

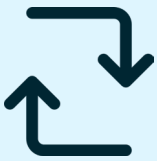


The most successful organizations have clear metrics in place to track and improve performance.

The 50% of organizations with **fully defined and regularly reviewed metrics** are significantly more likely to:



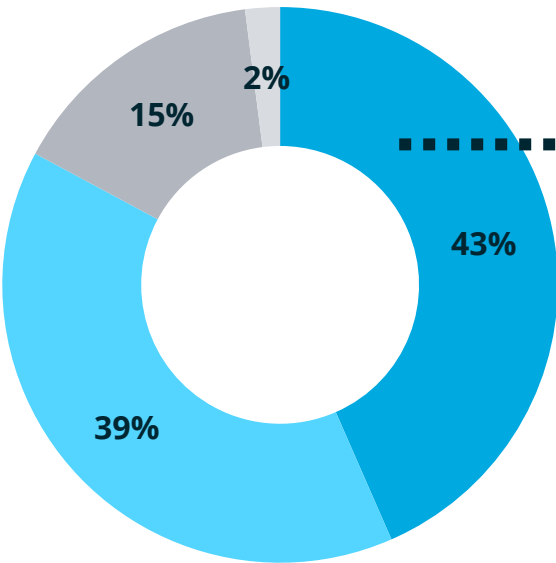
Enjoy “well above” average member satisfaction



Have increased membership retention over the past year

Access to Data to Monitor and Improve Performance

- Yes, it's easy to access and understand the data
- Mostly, we have the data, but it takes effort to pull or analyze it
- Partially, some key data is missing or difficult to get
- No, we can't access the data we need

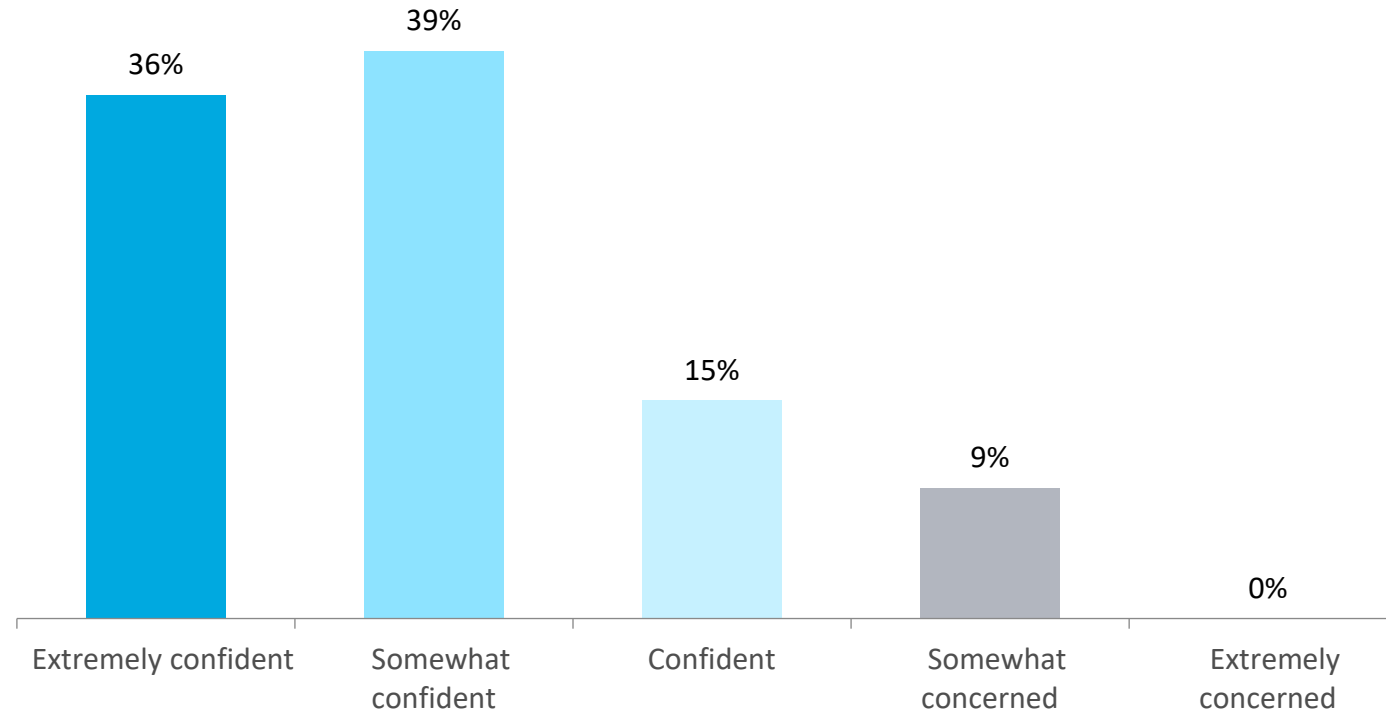


Successful organizations have systems that easily deliver the needed data to track performance and improvement metrics.

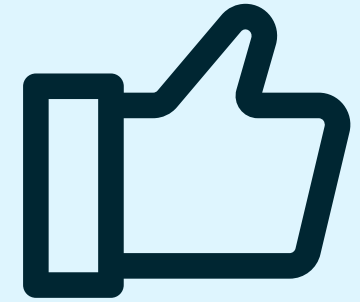
Similarly, organizations with **systems that support easy access to digestible data** are significantly more likely to:

-  Enjoy increased member acquisition levels
-  Have increased member engagement in the past year

Future Growth and Sustainability



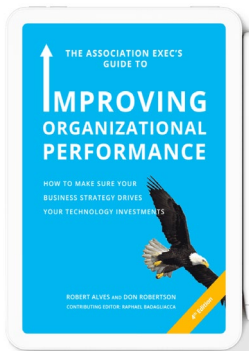
Organizations are feeling confident about the future. More than 1 in 3 are extremely confident about future growth and stability which is up from 2025.



Confidence is highest among organizations with easy access to data to track and improve performance across clearly defined metrics.

05 Next Steps and Additional Resources

If you're looking to improve your organization's performance, we've put together several resources that can help you create your plan and reach your goals:



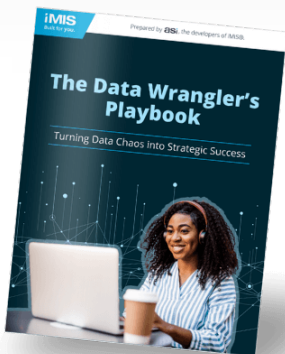
eBook: Compiled from best practices used by our association clients around the world, this guide provides a blueprint for improving performance, increasing revenue, and enhancing operational efficiency.

[Start this leadership read](#)



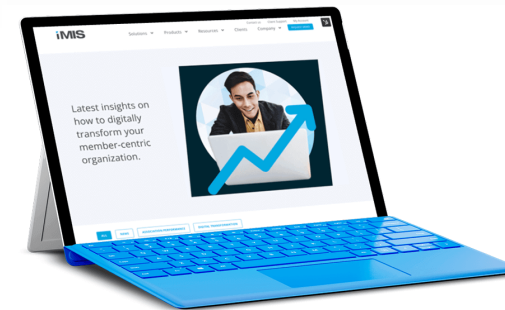
Whitepaper: Harness your data so you can learn from every member interaction and deliver unparalleled value to your members.

[Download the guide](#)



Guide: Get practical strategies to help you clean, manage, and maintain reliable data, without extra headaches.

[See the 10-point plan to tame your member data](#)



Blog: Deep-dives on membership best practices and tips to drive sustainable growth for your organization.

[Explore the iMIS Blog](#)

About ASI, the Developers of iMIS®

Advanced Solutions International, Inc. (ASI) is a leading global provider of cloud software and services for associations and non-profits. ASI's innovative suite of constituent engagement solutions helps clients digitally transform their organizations, streamline operations, and grow revenue by leveraging extensive industry expertise and proven best-practice advice. The company's portfolio includes [iMIS®](#) for association and non-profit management, [TopClass](#) LMS for learning management, [OpenWater](#) for application and review management, and [Clowder®](#) for year-round mobile app management.



iMIS®

Struggling to identify membership trends?

iMIS is the only engagement management system (EMS) purpose-built for the way associations, unions, and non-profits work and designed *at its core* to improve your performance.

[Watch a 3-minute iMIS quick tour](#) to see how iMIS empowers you to learn from every member interaction — putting you on a clear path to improved performance and better member value.



