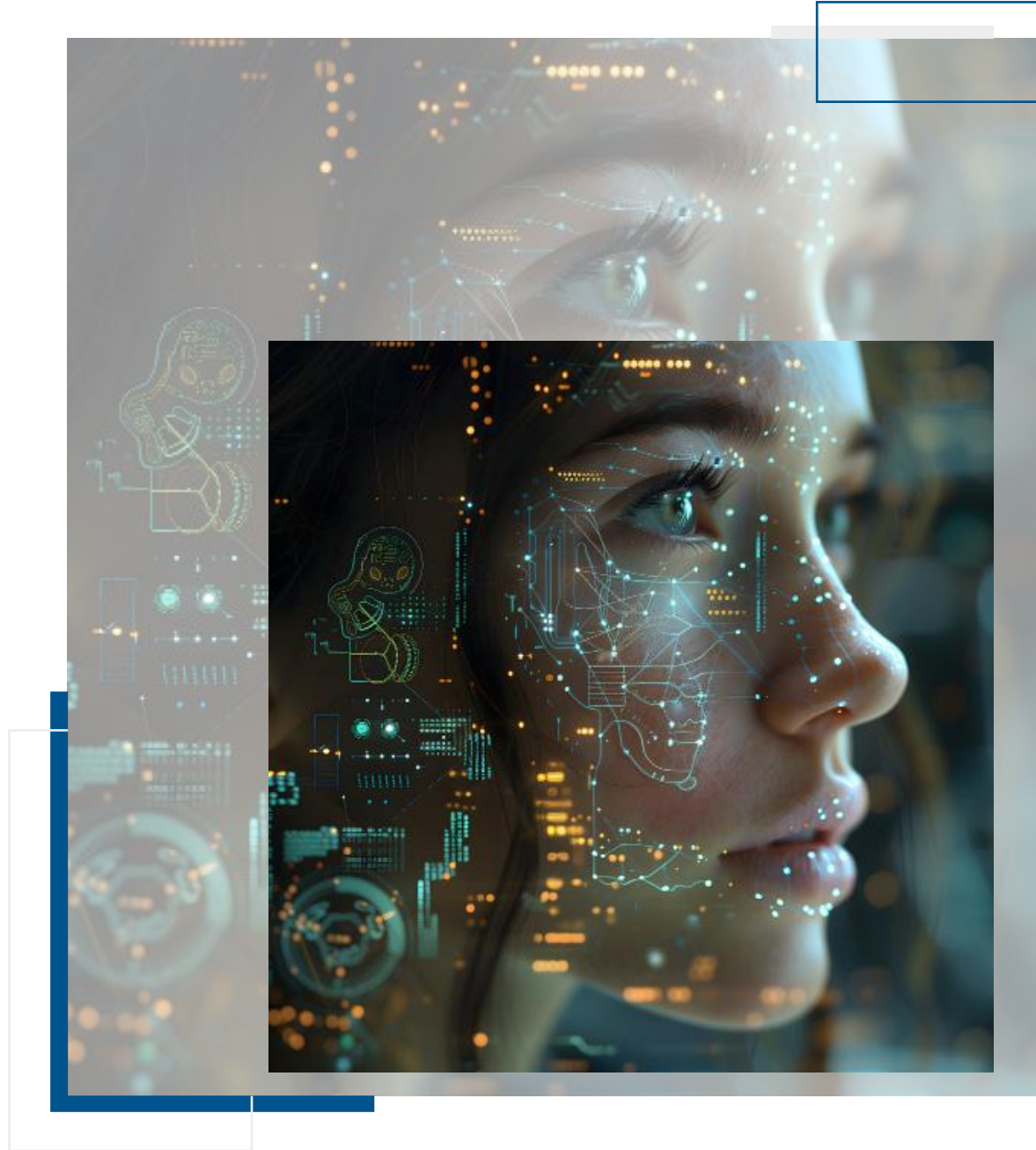


HONONGA

NO. 01

FEBRUARY 2025



INSPIRING ASSOCIATIONS
IN AOTEAROA

NZSAE

NEW ZEALAND SOCIETY OF ASSOCIATION EXECUTIVES
Te Hapori o nga Kaiwhakahaere Hononga o Aotearoa



HONONGA

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Kia ora, and Welcome to the Inaugural Edition of Hononga

From the Executive Officer

As the Executive Officer of NZSAE, I'm proud to share the first issue of Hononga, a platform designed to empower membership organisations across Aotearoa. NZSAE was founded with the mission of building a collaborative, supportive community where association leaders can connect, share expertise, and access professional development tailored for New Zealand.

Our vision is to strengthen the association sector as a catalyst for sustainable economic and social growth. Hononga, meaning connection, reflects this purpose by providing insights, stories, and strategies that inspire positive change and professional excellence.

We hope this magazine becomes a go-to resource, sparking collaboration and inspiring stronger associations across the motu.

Thank you for being part of our journey.

Ngā mihi nui,
Brett Jeffery, CAE
Executive Officer, NZSAE



From the Interim NZSAE Chair

As the Interim Chair of NZSAE, I'm honoured to contribute to this milestone moment in our journey as a membership organisation. Hononga embodies our mission of connection, collaboration, and professional growth for associations across Aotearoa.

Since NZSAE's establishment, we've shown true leadership in supporting the sector and ensuring members can access valuable resources and guidance tailored for New Zealand.

Looking ahead, we're excited about our member board elections in March and the AGM in April. These milestones represent important steps in continuing to build a member-driven, forward-focused association.

Together, we can continue to strengthen our community and create lasting impact.

Ngā mihi nui,
Lyn McMorran
Interim Chair, NZSAE



ASSOCIATION FOR ASSOCIATIONS in AOTEAROA

WHERE YOUR ADVENTURE BEGINS

In this first edition, we explore the transformative potential of AI across various sectors, particularly within not-for-profit organisations and associations. As AI continues to evolve, it presents unprecedented opportunities for enhancing member engagement, streamlining operations, and driving innovation.



NZSAE

NEW ZEALAND SOCIETY OF ASSOCIATION EXECUTIVES

Te Hapori o nga Kaiwhakahaere Hononga o Aotearoa

Upcoming NZSAE Events for 2025

NZSAE has an exciting lineup of events scheduled throughout 2025, including the Associations Matter Conference & Exhibition, CEO/ED Meetings, and our Membership & Conferences Symposium. These events are designed to provide valuable networking, professional development, and collaboration opportunities for association professionals across Aotearoa.

While not all webinars are currently listed, more events are being added regularly, so keep an eye on the NZSAE Events Calendar for the latest updates and to secure your spot!

March

- 3 CAE May Exam Study Programme
- 6 SIG Group – Membership
- 6 CEO/ED Meeting – Wellington
- 11 CEO/ED Meeting – Auckland
- 12 Associations in Focus – Auckland
- 19 Associations in Focus – Wellington
- 21 The NZSAE Whiteboard: March
- 26 Membership Forum Panel

April

- 4 The NZSAE Whiteboard: April
- 10 NZSAE Annual General Meeting

May

- 1 SIG Group – Social Media
- 9 The NZSAE Whiteboard: May
- 13 CEO/ED Meeting – Wellington
- 14 Membership & Conferences Symposium
- 21 CEO/ED Meeting – Auckland

June

- 6 The NZSAE Whiteboard: June
- 17 Matariki Lunch: Wellington
- 18 Matariki Lunch: Auckland

July

- 16 CEO/ED Meeting – Wellington
- 18 The NZSAE Whiteboard: July
- 23 CEO/ED Meeting – Auckland

August

- 3-5 **Associations Matter: Conference & Exhibition**
- 22 The NZSAE Whiteboard: August

September

- 10 Associations in Focus – Wellington
- 12 The NZSAE Whiteboard: September
- 17 Associations in Focus – Auckland

November 2025

- tbc NZSAE Connect
- 17 The NZSAE Whiteboard: November
- 12 CEO/ED Meeting – Wellington
- 19 CEO/ED Meeting – Auckland

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EMBRACING AI



Artificial Intelligence (AI) is no longer a futuristic concept; it is a transformative tool that membership organisations can leverage to enhance various aspects of their operations. With the right approach, AI can provide deeper insights,

streamline operations, and create more meaningful connections with members. Here's why AI is essential for the modern membership organisation and how you can start integrating it today.

1. Membership Engagement

AI can revolutionise how organisations interact with their members. Tools like HubSpot and Intercom offer AI-driven chatbots that provide real-time responses, while platforms like ChatGPT can assist with personalised communication strategies by analysing user input to generate tailored replies. Predictive analytics tools such as Microsoft Power BI help identify member needs and preferences, enabling proactive strategies that foster stronger connections and promote a more engaged membership base.

2. Governance and Decision-Making

AI can assist in making more informed and efficient decisions by analysing large datasets for trends and insights. For instance, Tableau and IBM Watson help organisations visualise data patterns, predict outcomes, and provide insights that inform governance and strategic planning. This ensures leadership teams can make data-driven decisions that align with organisational goals and member interests, ultimately improving transparency and accountability.

3. Content Creation and Management

Creating engaging content is vital for member retention and growth. Tools like Jasper and Grammarly use natural language processing (NLP) to generate high-quality, consistent content for newsletters, articles, and social media posts. Canva Magic Write further simplifies content creation by generating posts tailored to your audience, ensuring relevance across various channels. Automated content management can free up your team's time, enabling them to focus on strategic initiatives while maintaining a strong communication flow.

4. Operational Efficiency

AI can streamline administrative tasks, freeing up valuable time for staff to focus on strategic initiatives. Platforms such as Wild Apricot and Zapier automate routine processes like membership renewals, event registrations, and payment processing, reducing administrative workload while improving member satisfaction. These tools can also assist with workflow automation and task prioritisation, ensuring operational tasks are handled promptly and effectively.

“ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IS NOT JUST A TOOL FOR THE FUTURE”

“IT’S A CATALYST FOR TRANSFORMATION TODAY. FOR MEMBERSHIP ORGANISATIONS, AI ENHANCES ENGAGEMENT, DRIVES EFFICIENCY, AND UNLOCKS NEW POSSIBILITIES FOR GROWTH AND INNOVATION”





5. Predictive Analytics

By analysing historical data, AI can predict future trends and member behaviours, offering insights into how your organisation can stay ahead of the curve. Salesforce Einstein and Microsoft Power BI help organisations anticipate member needs, tailor services, and develop targeted marketing campaigns. Predictive analytics can also highlight potential challenges and opportunities, enabling proactive and strategic planning that ensures long-term success.

Take the Next Step

Embracing AI is not just about staying current with technological trends—it's about transforming your organisation to better serve your members and achieve long-term success. Start small by exploring one or two tools mentioned above and consider how they can help you streamline processes, enhance engagement, and make more informed decisions. As your organisation becomes more comfortable with AI, you can expand its usage to other areas, creating a culture of continuous improvement and innovation.

AI is here to empower your membership organisation—how will you use it to make a difference?

Recommended Tools for AI Integration in Membership Organisations:

Membership Engagement:

HubSpot, Intercom, Tars, ChatGPT, Drift

Governance and Decision-Making:

Tableau, IBM Watson, Sisense

Content Creation:

Jasper, Grammarly, ChatGPT, Canva Magic Write, Anyword, Copy.ai

Operational Efficiency:

Wild Apricot, Zapier, Airtable, Trello

Predictive Analytics:

Salesforce Einstein, Power BI, Alteryx

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AI Examples



Blaze AI and similar marketing tools can be a game-changer for associations, helping to make marketing more efficient, personalised, and consistent. Here's how associations in Aotearoa could use Blaze AI to strengthen their marketing efforts:

1. Tailored Member Communications

Automated Pānui and Updates: Blaze can generate customised pānui (newsletters) with content suited to different membership categories or interest groups.

Targeted Messaging: AI can help craft messages specific to different audiences, such as membership renewals, event invitations, or new member campaigns.

2. Content Creation and Thought Leadership

Blog and Article Generation: Associations can quickly create articles for their websites, such as insights from leaders, event recaps, or educational content relevant to their members.

Whitepapers & Reports: Blaze can assist in drafting informative reports, research summaries, or strategic documents while reflecting the association's unique voice and expertise.

3. Event Promotion and Engagement

Social Media Management: Blaze can generate effective posts to promote hui, wānanga, and conferences while keeping a consistent brand presence.

Event Branding: The AI design tools can create professional visuals for event banners, invites, and presentations, ensuring a cohesive look.

4. Member Recruitment and Retention

Automated Campaigns: Blaze can simplify membership recruitment campaigns by generating and scheduling targeted messages.

Retention Messaging: Use AI to craft value-driven renewal reminders and messages highlighting the benefits of staying connected to the association.

5. Data-Driven Insights for Growth

Performance Analytics: Associations can track how well their campaigns perform and make informed decisions to refine their approach.

A/B Testing: Blaze can create different versions of content to see what resonates best with members, ensuring continuous improvement.

Why It Works for Associations in Aotearoa:

Efficiency: Save time on content creation, allowing more focus on member engagement and strategic planning.

Consistency: Maintain a professional and uniform brand voice across all communication channels.

Scalability: Easily create content for multiple events, campaigns, and member resources.

Cost-Effective: Reduce the need for extensive design and copywriting resources while achieving high-quality results.

By using Blaze AI, associations in New Zealand can modernise their marketing, deepen member connections, and amplify their reach with minimal extra resource demands.

<https://www.blaze.ai/>

For Associations To Use



ChatGPT

How Associations Can Use ChatGPT Differently from Other AI Tools.

While platforms like Blaze focus on automated marketing content, ChatGPT goes further by acting as an on-demand strategic assistant for associations. It can assist with decision-making, idea generation, and deeper member engagement strategies beyond standard content automation.

1. Thought Leadership and Industry Insights

Generate **whitepapers**, **discussion guides**, and **thought leadership pieces** that go beyond promotional content.

Assist with drafting policy summaries or simplified versions of complex legislation for members to understand easily.

Develop **industry trend reports** based on existing data, helping associations stay ahead of the curve.

2. Board and Committee Support

Prepare **board briefing packs** with summaries of key points and recommendations.

Assist in **drafting board evaluation tools** and templates for performance reviews.

Generate **governance policies** and support with Incorporated Societies Act 2022 compliance documents.

3. Member Interaction and Engagement Ideas

Develop **interactive Q&A formats** for webinars or panel discussions, including suggested questions and talking points.

Provide **icebreaker prompts or networking questions** for conferences and workshops.

Assist with creating member feedback surveys and help summarise results with actionable insights.

4. Internal Operations and Strategic Planning

Help draft **strategic plans** or assist with outlining annual reports and operational roadmaps.

Generate **risk assessments and event-specific risk registers** (like for conferences and social functions).

Assist with **conflict of interest policies** and ethics frameworks tailored for New Zealand associations.

5. Professional Development and Resource Creation

Create **training resources** for volunteer board members or committees.

Develop **checklists** and how-to guides for onboarding new association staff or volunteers.

Generate **educational quizzes or self-assessment tools** for professional development programmes.

6. Custom Content and Personalisation Beyond Automation

Provide **speechwriting support** for keynotes, AGM addresses, or member events.

Tailor **press releases and public statements** for association announcements.

Draft scripts for video content or member welcome videos.

Why ChatGPT is Different for Associations in Aotearoa:

Strategic Depth: Goes beyond automation by supporting decision-making and content strategy.

Flexible Use: Ideal for both operational tasks and creative projects.

Customisable: Tailored specifically for your association's needs and New Zealand context.

ChatGPT isn't just a content tool—it's a virtual assistant that helps associations stay strategic, compliant, and deeply connected to their members.

<https://chatgpt.com/>





Auntie Admin

Introducing Your Questions, Answered

Each edition of Hononga will feature practical questions from our members focused on the administration of associations. From managing member records and data security to streamlining board operations and workflow management, we aim to provide clear, actionable advice tailored for association leaders across Aotearoa.

This section is designed to help you navigate the everyday challenges of running an effective membership organisation with confidence and clarity. Have a question you'd like addressed? Let us know, and we'll include it in a future edition.

Strategic Planning: Should I involve my staff or just the board in our planning afternoon?

Auntie Admin: Great question! The short answer is—both, but at different stages and in the right way.

Your board is responsible for setting the high-level strategic direction of the organisation. Their role in the planning session is to define broad goals, priorities, and key focus areas for the coming years. The board should discuss the bigger picture—mission, vision, values, and overarching objectives—without getting too bogged down in operational details.

Your staff, on the other hand, are the ones who will be responsible for executing the strategy. While they don't need to be present for the full strategic planning session, their input is essential. Consider involving them in a pre-session workshop or feedback process. Ask them about operational challenges, member feedback, and potential opportunities they see from their day-to-day work. If you have senior staff (such as a GM or department heads), you may want to invite them to part of the session to provide insights on feasibility and resource allocation.

One approach that works well is:

- 1/ Pre-session input – Gather feedback from staff before the board meeting, either through a survey or a short discussion.
- 2/ Board-led strategic planning session – The board defines the vision and key priorities.
- 3/ Staff involvement in implementation planning – Once the strategy is set, staff can help refine the practical steps needed to achieve it.

By involving staff in the right way, you'll gain valuable insights while ensuring buy-in when it comes to execution. Plus, it helps create a culture where strategy isn't something imposed from the top but something the whole organisation is aligned with.





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Auntie Admin

Reviewing Your Membership Model: What are the first steps I should take?

Auntie Admin: Reviewing your membership model is a smart move—it ensures your structure remains relevant, valuable, and financially sustainable. Before making changes, start with these key steps:

1. Analyse Your Current Membership Data

Look at your existing membership structure:

- How many members do you have in each category?
- What's the retention rate for each group?
- Are certain categories underperforming or overrepresented?
- How do members typically engage—are they actively involved, or are they passive subscribers?

If possible, track trends over the past few years to see what's changing.

2. Gather Member Feedback

Your members are the best source of insight into what's working and what's not. Use surveys, focus groups, or direct conversations to ask:

- Does the current structure make sense to them?
- Are the benefits aligned with what they need? Are there barriers to joining or renewing?
- Would they be willing to pay more for additional services, or do they feel the pricing isn't justified?

3. Benchmark Against Similar Organisations

Look at how other associations structure their membership models, particularly those in similar sectors or regions. Pay attention to:

- How they segment their members (individual vs. organisational, tiered models, value-based levels, etc.).
- Pricing models (flat rates, usage-based, tiered pricing).
- The benefits included at different levels.

This helps ensure your model remains competitive while still reflecting the unique needs of your members.

4. Identify Key Challenges and Opportunities

Once you have data and feedback, identify:

- Any friction points—are people confused about which category they fit into? Are certain groups subsidising others unfairly?
- Opportunities for new categories—do you need an entry-level option for emerging professionals, a premium tier for high-value members, or a corporate bundle?
- Whether your pricing is sustainable and aligns with the value members perceive.

5. Start Small with Pilot Changes

Before rolling out a major overhaul, consider testing new ideas. You could:

- Introduce a trial membership or a new tier on a small scale.
- Offer an alternative pricing model for a limited time to gauge response.
- Adjust benefits gradually and monitor member feedback.

6. Engage Your Board Early

Since a membership model impacts finances, governance, and member engagement, involve your board in the discussion early. Provide them with data-backed insights and potential options rather than broad hypothetical changes.

Audit Requirements Under the Incorporated Societies Act 2022: Do We Need One?

Auntie Admin: Audit Requirements Under the Incorporated Societies Act 2022

The Incorporated Societies Act 2022 introduces updated financial reporting and audit obligations for societies in New Zealand. These requirements are primarily based on the society's financial size, specifically its total expenses and operating payments.

1. Determining Your Reporting Tier

The External Reporting Board (XRB) has established a tiered framework for financial reporting:

Tier 1 & Tier 2: For societies with total expenses over \$5 million annually.

Tier 3: For societies with total expenses under \$5 million but operating payments over \$140,000 annually.

Tier 4: For societies with operating payments under \$140,000 annually.

Note: "Total expenses" refer to all expenses recognized on an accrual basis, while "operating payments" are based on actual cash payments made during the year.

2. Audit Obligations

Under the Act, audit requirements are as follows:

Large Societies: If your society falls under Tier 1 or Tier 2 (total expenses over \$5 million), an audit by a qualified auditor is mandatory.

Medium Societies: For those under Tier 3 (total expenses under \$5 million but operating payments over \$140,000), an audit is not mandatory unless:

Your society's constitution specifically requires an audit.

A funder or other stakeholder mandates an audit as a condition of funding or support.

Small Societies: Societies under Tier 4 (operating payments under \$140,000) are generally exempt from mandatory audits, unless otherwise stipulated by internal rules or external requirements.

3. Reviewing Your Society's Constitution

It's crucial to examine your society's constitution to determine if there are any clauses that require an audit, regardless of your financial size. If such provisions exist and you wish to align with the new thresholds, consider proposing amendments to your members to update these requirements.

4. External Funding Considerations

Be aware that some grant providers, sponsors, or partners may have their own audit requirements. Even if your society doesn't meet the mandatory audit threshold, fulfilling these external obligations is essential to maintain funding and support.

5. Next Steps

Assess Financial Metrics: Review your society's total expenses and operating payments to determine your reporting tier.

Consult Your Constitution: Identify any existing audit requirements that may necessitate action.

Engage with Stakeholders: Communicate with funders and partners to understand their audit expectations.

For detailed guidance, refer to the External Reporting Board's resources on incorporated societies:

"Have an admin question? Ask Auntie Admin!"

Email accounts@nzsaen.org.nz with 'Attn: Auntie Admin' in the subject line, and we'll feature your question in an upcoming edition of Hononga!"

PEACE OF MIND THAT YOUR TECHNOLOGY CAN ADAPT TO A CHANGING LANDSCAPE

The Membes Story

February 2024 marked 10 years since the launch of Membes Association Management System (AMS).

In 2014, this was a game changer for the association sector. A complete software solution that could meet the unique needs of member-based organisations at an affordable price, signaled the arrival of a better model of association management software. A new alternative to high-budget, custom built systems that remain static as technology moves on.

But it was long before this - back in 2003 when the story really began. A Melbourne-based software company - then known as Asset

Media - identified a need amongst SMEs for complex web-based software (now known as Cloud software). It quickly built a reputation for developing bespoke software for a range of organisations with diverse purposes.

In particular, the team established a strong client base of professional associations and in those early years, acquired a deep understanding of their unique needs and complexities.

At that time, the software developed for associations was much simpler - a website with online membership, linked to a database and a secure interface for viewing records and communicating with members. And it was

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Membes In 2 Minutes



tailored to each association's brief. But over time, the needs of the average association expanded to the point where the cost to deliver additional features on a made-to-order basis had become prohibitive for most mid-sized associations.

With a strong understanding of the pitfalls and challenges of the custom-made software model, and a deep appreciation of the critical role of associations in our society, the team embarked on a mission. A mission to design a system that would deliver the features and functionality associations require, at an affordable price.

And so, Membes AMS was born: A Software as a Service (SaaS) solution that delivers the benefits associations need, at a fraction of the cost.

"Our mission was clear: to build a system that delivers essential features and functionality at a price point that's accessible to mid-sized associations. To offer the benefits associations need – without the hefty overheads."

Membes Today

Today, Membes is a stable commercial business with a proven track record in delivering advantages to customers beyond what is possible with a custom-made, bespoke system.

The Membes team has remained committed to addressing the needs of the Australian association sector, while continually striving to build a better product. By growing as a business, Membes has been able to reinvest in enhancements to the Membes AMS platform for the benefit of all customers.

With associations today facing rising pressure to optimise spending, deliver tangible ROI, keep up with rapid advances in technology and data security requirements, it's more important than ever to choose a future proof technology solution. One that offers peace of mind that it can adapt to a changing landscape and continue to meet the needs of associations into the future.

Membes now proudly supports almost 200 association customers across New Zealand and Australia with their daily operations, helping them work more efficiently and achieve better outcomes for their association and their members.

- Jason Morris, Founder

The Incorporated Societies Act 2022

Why Haven't You Updated Yet?

The Incorporated Societies Act 2022 introduced essential reforms designed to modernise governance, transparency, and accountability for membership organisations in Aotearoa. With compliance deadlines fast approaching, many associations still haven't updated their constitutions or aligned with the new requirements—raising the risk of non-compliance and loss of legal status.

Key Changes Under the Act:

The Act emphasises clearer governance and accountability standards. Key changes include:

- **Officer Duties:** Defined roles and responsibilities for committee members, including conflict of interest management.
- **Constitution Requirements:** Associations must update constitutions to include dispute resolution processes and membership criteria.
- **Annual Reporting:** Enhanced financial and operational reporting obligations.

Why Some Associations Haven't Updated Yet:

Despite its importance, many associations have yet to update due to:

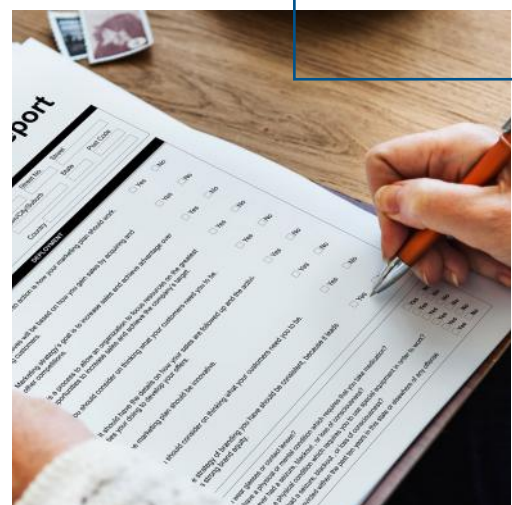
- **Awareness Gaps:** Some organisations are unaware of the deadline or requirements.
- **Perceived Complexity:** Legal language and procedural steps can feel overwhelming.
- **Limited Capacity:** Smaller associations may lack the resources for legal review or administrative updates.

Steps to Comply Before April 2026:

To ensure compliance before the April 2026 deadline, follow these steps:

- **Review Your Constitution:** Engage legal advisors or constitutional experts to identify necessary amendments.
- **Understand the Changes:** Familiarise yourself with the legislative requirements to ensure full compliance.
- **Consult with Your Membership:** Member consultation is paramount. This may involve hosting a special general meeting (SGM) rather than waiting for the next AGM, ensuring members understand and approve the changes.

Updating your compliance isn't just about ticking boxes—it's an opportunity to strengthen your association's governance and better serve your members. Act now to ensure you're meeting legal obligations while positioning your organisation for long-term success.



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Unlocking Sponsorship Success: Maximising ROI for Professional Member Associations

Author: Mike Wootton – getsponsorship.co

How many times have you worked tirelessly to onboard a brand as a sponsor for your association, only to encounter the following challenges?

- Sponsors not spending time or money on leveraging, promoting, or activating their sponsorship.
- Expecting a return on investment (ROI) from the sponsorship fee alone without additional efforts.
- Complaints like, “We’re not seeing any return or sales from this sponsorship.”

These issues are common in the sponsorship industry. Let’s explore how you can navigate these challenges effectively.

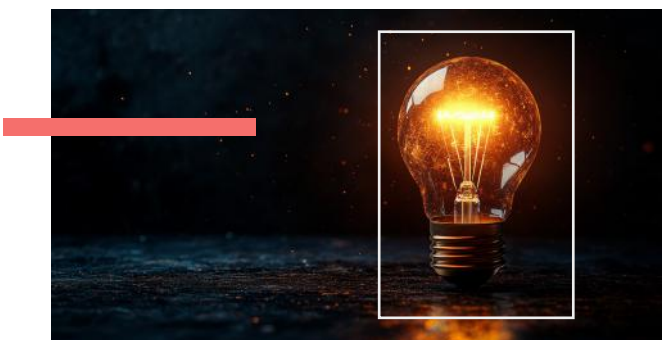
1. Managing Expectations: Sponsorship is Like a Gym Membership

The first step in ensuring sponsors invest additional resources is to manage their expectations.

During negotiations, make it clear that achieving a return on investment requires extra spending on leveraging the sponsorship. If not, they may receive limited value.

Explain that sponsorship is akin to a gym membership. When you purchase a gym membership, you gain access to facilities, equipment, and classes. However, if you don’t utilise these resources, you won’t achieve the desired results.

Similarly, sponsorship provides access to an association’s resources, expertise, and audience. Without active engagement and promotion, sponsors won’t see the desired outcomes. This analogy helps set realistic expectations.





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We host guests at event spaces inside the Beehive and Old Parliament buildings, in the heart of New Zealand's revered democracy.

Our team brings world-class expertise and warm heartened hospitality to every event, welcoming everyone from visiting dignities to our local community.

The on-site AV team specializes in all aspects of audio, visual, and lighting services, and 24/7 security is provided at no added cost to ensure a seamless event. In-house catering services offer premium, contemporary cuisine to complement your event's style and theme.

As an extra touch, consider beginning your event with a guided tour of Parliament, available daily.

Get in touch with Huihui team about your next event at Parliament.

0800 228 377 | huihui@parliament.govt.nz |
www.parliamentarycatering.nz/huihui

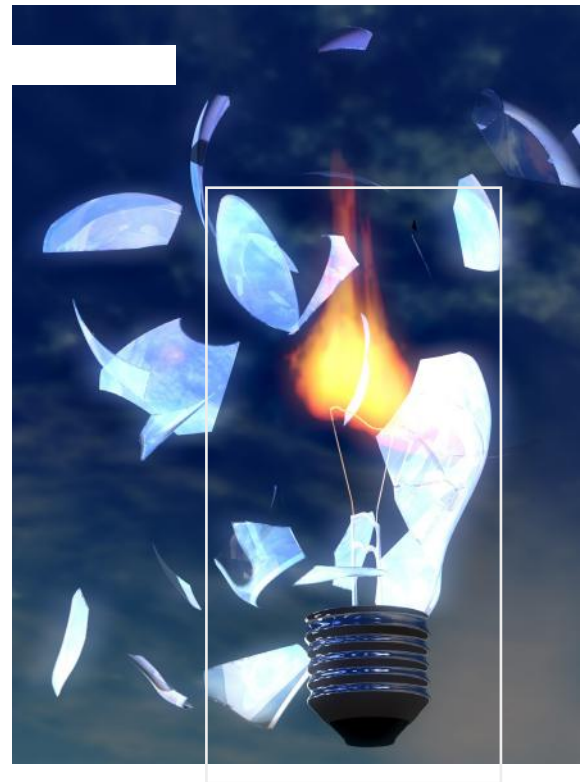
2. Proactively Present Leveraging Ideas

Often, sponsors may lack the creativity or time to come up with leveraging ideas. This is where you, as the association, can step in.

Understand that no one knows your association, events, or members better than you do. Listen to sponsors to understand their problems and preferred brand representation. Then, propose creative ideas that bring their brand to life through sponsorship.

Presenting your own leveraging ideas not only adds value to your sponsors but also benefits your members and participants. For instance, instead of offering generic activation opportunities, suggest specific ways they can engage with your audience.

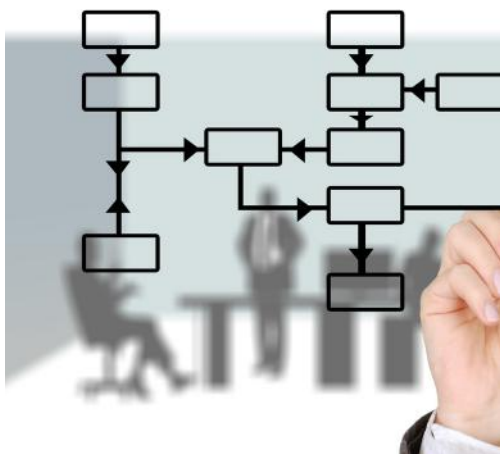
Even if your ideas aren't perfect, they can spark creativity within the sponsor's team, leading to more effective collaborations.



3. Focus on the Sponsor's Objectives

When pitching leveraging ideas, align them with the sponsor's objectives. For example, if a technology company sponsors your association to promote their new product, suggest creating a high-tech engagement zone at your event. This could include interactive experiences that showcase their product and facilitate engagement with attendees.

Highlight how these activities fit within their goals and offer tangible benefits. Providing visual plans and detailed proposals can help sponsors visualise the impact and invest more confidently.



4. Engage Multiple Teams Within the Sponsor's Organisation

Sometimes, the person you're dealing with may have limited budget for leveraging. However, other departments within the sponsor's organisation might have their own budgets and goals.

Identify and engage with different teams, such as HR, Sales, and IT. Understand their objectives and propose solutions that align with their goals. For instance, HR might be interested in staff engagement, while Sales may focus on customer acquisition.

By addressing the needs of various teams, you can unlock additional budgets and create a more comprehensive and impactful sponsorship experience.

By effectively managing expectations, presenting creative leveraging ideas, focusing on sponsors' objectives, and engaging multiple teams, Professional Member Associations can maximise the value of sponsorships. This approach not only benefits sponsors but also enhances the overall experience for association members.

For more expert tips and strategies on sponsorship, visit www.getsponsorship.co

Let's transform your sponsorship efforts and achieve remarkable results together.

Want **More** Sponsorship?



"We went from no sponsorship, to asking for \$100,000 sponsorships."

Tyrone Campbell - Founder, Global Games



"I can confidently say that I would not have been able to achieve the level of sponsorship support needed to make my event a success without them."

Jen Jones - Founder, Auckland Design Week



www.getsponsorship.co

Get
Sponsorship  - We're Better At Getting You **More**

The Power of Micro-Communities



"Micro-communities don't just bring people together - they empower members with focused opportunities for growth, collaboration, and shared learning, ultimately making your association stronger, more inclusive, and better equipped to serve its mission."

Strengthening Connections in Your Association

A strong association is built on a foundation of value—whether that value comes from networking, education and professional development, advocacy, or sector-specific resources.

While these pillars remain essential, creating micro-communities can deepen the connection members feel and strengthen the association as a whole.

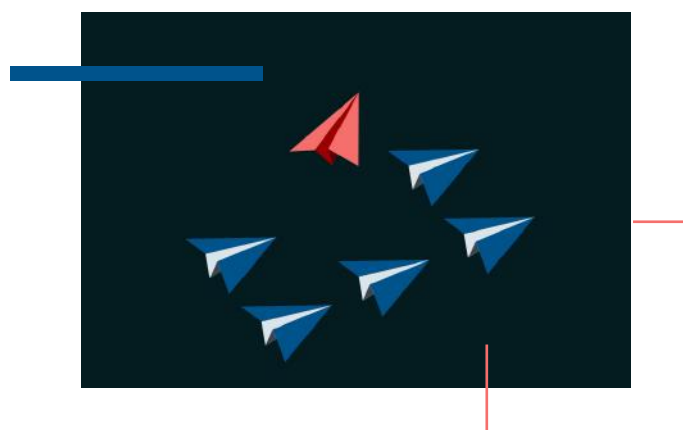
Micro-communities don't dilute your core value proposition. Instead, they amplify it by allowing members to engage with a focused, like-minded group within the broader network. These groups can be formed based on shared goals, professional challenges, demographics, or interests, and can operate online, hybrid, or in-person. A well-designed micro-community provides a space for collaboration, deeper learning, and a sense of belonging that can be harder to achieve in a larger membership structure.

When designed with intention, micro-communities create more meaningful engagement. For example, a regional leadership circle for CEOs could provide targeted peer support, while an interest group for marketing professionals could offer specific resources and collaborative problem-solving spaces. Similarly, micro-communities based on career stages, such as emerging leaders or retired professionals, allow for more tailored experiences and shared learning within smaller, focused groups.

The key to success is ensuring these groups remain connected to your association's core mission. Data-driven insights can help you identify which segments of your membership would benefit from a more tailored experience while still being supported under your primary association structure. It's also important to ensure these groups are facilitated effectively, with clear guidelines, a designated point of contact, and regular check-ins to ensure alignment with broader organisational goals.

A strategic approach could involve analyzing participation trends, gathering member feedback, and offering targeted content or exclusive events for these groups. Consider using metrics like event attendance, discussion participation, and resource downloads to assess their impact and adjust as needed. Encouraging leadership development within micro-communities can also help members step into broader leadership roles across the association, further strengthening the network.

Ultimately, micro-communities should empower your members, positioning your association as the connector and solution provider for shared challenges. When done right, they enhance retention, engagement, and your association's overall impact, making your organisation even more indispensable to its members. By creating opportunities for deeper, more focused connections, micro-communities ensure that every member finds a space where they belong, contribute, and grow.



How to Establish Micro-Communities Within Your Association

Creating micro-communities within your association requires a strategic and thoughtful approach to ensure they align with your organisation's goals and deliver value. [Here's how to get started:](#)

1. Identify Member Needs and Interests

Begin by assessing your membership demographics, professional challenges, and feedback to identify natural segments within your community. Surveys and participation trends can help pinpoint areas where members would benefit from a smaller, focused group.

2. Define Purpose and Objectives

Clearly outline the purpose of each micro-community. Will it focus on career stages, shared professional goals, or geographic regions? Defining the group's objectives early ensures alignment with your association's core mission and value propositions.

3. Create a Framework and Guidelines

Develop a structure for how the group will operate. This includes leadership roles, meeting frequency, communication channels, and member expectations. Providing a basic framework ensures consistency while allowing the group flexibility to grow organically.

4. Offer Support and Resources

Equip micro-communities with the tools they need to succeed, such as dedicated online forums, virtual meeting tools, and access to relevant resources. Ensure there is a point of contact within the association for guidance and support.

5. Promote and Encourage Participation

Actively promote the new micro-communities through newsletters, events, and personal invitations. Highlight the benefits of joining, such as networking opportunities, targeted resources, and leadership development.

6. Measure Impact and Evolve

Track participation, engagement, and feedback to assess each group's success. Regularly review their alignment with your association's strategic goals and be open to evolving their structure based on member feedback.



When micro-communities are well-structured and supported, they create deeper connections, empower members with targeted opportunities for growth, and reinforce the value of membership. These focused groups help transform associations into dynamic ecosystems where every member feels heard, included, and valued, ultimately contributing to the long-term success and sustainability of the organisation.



As a trusted partner of NZSAE, we take pride in transforming events into unforgettable experiences. From captivating visuals to crystal-clear audio, our tailored AV solutions ensure every message resonates with your audience. Whether it's a conference, awards night, or special event, we're here to bring your vision to life.



Why Us?

- Seamless AV delivery for events of all sizes
- Engaging design that captures attention
- A proven track record of delivering exceptional results for associations.



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Building Pride In Membership

CASE STUDY

Industry associations are not immune to the negative financial effects of New Zealand's gloomy economy.

Business is bad for almost every sector and that means spending goes on hold, or even stops altogether. That, in turn, can impact subscription revenue.

In difficult times, lifting member engagement assumes even greater importance. Creating and promoting a compelling value proposition is a necessity. Telling your association's 'story' effectively is essential.

How we doubled an association's membership

For several years The PR Company was contracted to run an industry association (we still run another, different association today). We got the job because of our lengthy experience working in the associations' sector.

Over the course of our contract, we doubled membership, significantly boosted the organisation's public profile and cemented previously strained relationships with the regulator and Minister.

Our success wasn't because of any special gifts or talents on our part – other than having the ability and expertise to roll out a strategic communications, PR, media management and advocacy plan that tackled the key issues about which the sector was passionate.



The Trick

The real trick was taking members on 'the journey'. Most members don't think about their industry association unless there's a problem or they need something ... or it's renewal time.

We wanted to change that. We wanted to give the association a profile members would respect and a 'personality' they could relate to. We wanted them to see their association as 'being on their side', doing the things members cared about and sharing our successes (and failures) with them.

That lifted engagement and satisfaction levels, and attracted new members.

Need help saying the right things, to the right people, at the right time?



OUR TYPICAL CLIENT

- Has tight budgets
- Needs practical advice
- Demands tangible results
- Wants to work with someone they can trust



THEIR MOST COMMON PR NEEDS

- Enhance member engagement and attract new members
- Media publicity, including media training
- Advocacy advice and support
- To connect with government
- Issues and crises management advice
- A social media presence
- To produce high quality newsletters, magazines and website content



WHY WORK WITH US?

The PR Company is a family-owned agency that specialises in working for industry associations and membership organisations. We:

- Build relationships with you
- Are cost-effective
- Go the extra mile
- Do the job properly, first time
- Deliver the results our clients want
- Are pleasant to work with

Another lesson

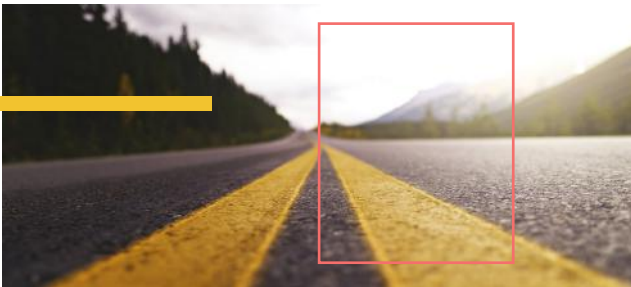
We also learned – very quickly – that running an industry association is demanding! There's always lots to do, you are often time poor and budgets are tight.

And here's the disconnect. As association professionals, you know the importance of good comms and PR, you appreciate the need for it, but ... time pressures, budget constraints and other priorities take precedence.

We have a solution

That's why The PR Company developed a special service package for industry associations and membership organisations.

It's based on what we learned running an industry association, and our extensive experience providing PR and comms services to association professionals like you over 30 years.



We have three explicit goals:

1. Enhance organisational visibility and reputation, and build trust in the association. Members are more likely to join and stay with an organisation they see as credible and influential. Trust is a cornerstone of long-term member relationships.
2. Make members feel part of a united community with a common cause(s). Members want to belong to an organisation that understands and advocates for them and that 'makes a difference'.
3. Share the journey with members. That's how we build engagement.

This package is affordable and workable, and can be executed without a lot of resource. When we did your job, we were subject to the same kind of resourcing and budget constraints you are.

But we've learned over many years that even with time and money pressures we can still make strategic communications and PR work and deliver the all-important return on investment.

Author: Daniel Paul – The PR Company

It's All About Building Pride In Membership.

MAD MARCH

Make A Difference
(MAD)
In March
With YOUR
Professional
Development



- 3 March** CAE with NZSAE Exam Study Group
- 6 March** SIG Membership Group
- 6 March** CEO Meeting Wellington
- 11 March** CEO Meeting Auckland
- 12 March** Associations in Focus Auckland
- 19 March** Associations in Focus Wellington
- 21 March** The NZSAE Whiteboard
- 26 March** Membership Forum Panel

NZSAE

New Zealand Society of Association Executives

www.nzsae.org.nz/mad

Rethinking Conferences: Transforming Events into Catalysts for Change

The Death of the Traditional Conference: Why Your Next Event Should Be a Catalyst, Not a Calendar Filler

Conferences have long been seen as flagship events for professional communities — but have they become stale? Too often, they feel like a series of panels, keynotes, and passive networking where the most meaningful connections happen in the coffee line. It's time to rethink what conferences should be.

Reimagine the Stage — Who Really Holds the Mic?

What if conferences weren't about 'thought leaders' speaking at the audience but instead about amplifying collective intelligence? Imagine a conference where delegates contribute as much expertise as the speakers — think crowdsourced panels, real-time case study deconstructions, and collaborative problem-solving sessions where the audience becomes the expert.

From Thought Leadership to Thought Experiments

Stop curating lineups based on impressive CVs alone. What if speakers were chosen based on the problems they're solving, not the titles they hold? Disrupt the model by featuring those who are experimenting with new ideas and sharing unpolished insights instead of polished presentations. It's not about the person — it's about the idea.

Conferences as Laboratories, Not Lecture Halls

What if every breakout session was treated like a live experiment?

- Could delegates test new strategies in real-time?
- Could sessions be designed where the outcomes are unknown when the event starts?
- What if keynotes ended with a challenge that attendees had to workshop solutions for by the end of the day?

This approach shifts events from being consumption-based to participation-driven.

The Uncomfortable Conversation Track

Innovation doesn't happen without discomfort. Imagine an Uncomfortable Conversation Track where the hardest questions are tackled head-on.

No corporate filters, no PR spin — just raw, honest dialogue about the biggest issues in the industry. Not every question needs an answer, but it deserves a platform.

What If A Conference Wasn't The End: But **The Starting Point?**

Every attendee leaves with three commitments for change in their organisation.

Attendees are paired with post-event accountability partners to ensure actions happen.

A progress check happens months later with digital follow-ups or micro-events to measure impact.

The Challenge:

Stop running conferences that just fill calendars.

Create platforms for change.

If we're serious about leadership and growth, our events can't be passive.

They must demand engagement and ignite action.

**This isn't conferencing.
It's community transformation.**

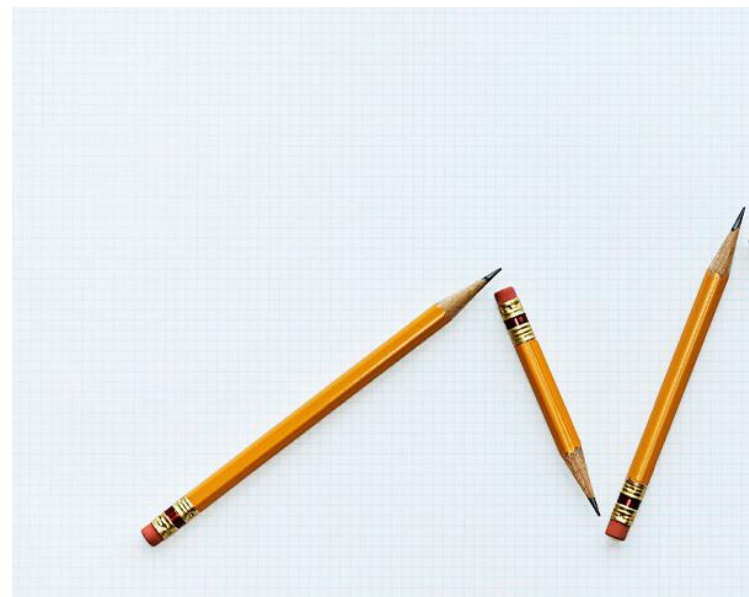
Are you ready?

Revenue Diversification: A Critical Focus for Associations in 2025

As we move through 2025, associations in Aotearoa must take a serious and strategic look at revenue diversification. The traditional funding model, built on three key streams—membership revenue, professional development (including conferencing), and partnerships—has long been seen as a balanced approach, with each contributing approximately 33% to an association's income. However, the question that remains is: How many associations truly understand their revenue split, and how proactively are they managing it?

In the past, many associations have comfortably relied on a dominant revenue source. Some have leaned heavily on sponsorship and partnership revenue, with 50-60% of their income coming from these agreements. Others have minimised the importance of membership revenue, viewing it as a small fraction of total income and therefore unworthy of significant focus. But in today's environment, such reliance on a single revenue stream is a high-risk strategy that could threaten an association's long-term sustainability.

The reality is that associations need to ensure a balanced and resilient revenue mix. Membership revenue is essential—not just for financial stability, but because it reinforces the very purpose of an association: to serve and engage its members. If membership only accounts for 10% of total revenue, it raises an important question—are we doing enough to demonstrate and deliver value to members? If professional development revenue is declining, have we explored alternative learning formats, digital offerings, or more targeted events? If partnerships are under pressure, are we diversifying our sponsorship models to offer more tailored and valuable opportunities for our supporters?



Gone are the days when associations could afford to be complacent about their revenue streams. The landscape is shifting, and financial sustainability requires a proactive approach.

Associations need to:

Understand Their Revenue

Composition – Knowing where revenue is coming from is the first step. Conduct an internal audit to determine the exact percentage breakdown across membership, professional development, and partnerships. This financial assessment should not only be a snapshot but an ongoing analysis, ensuring leadership teams can spot trends, anticipate challenges, and make data-driven decisions. Tools like dashboards, forecasting models, and benchmarking against similar organisations can help associations develop a clearer financial picture and respond effectively.

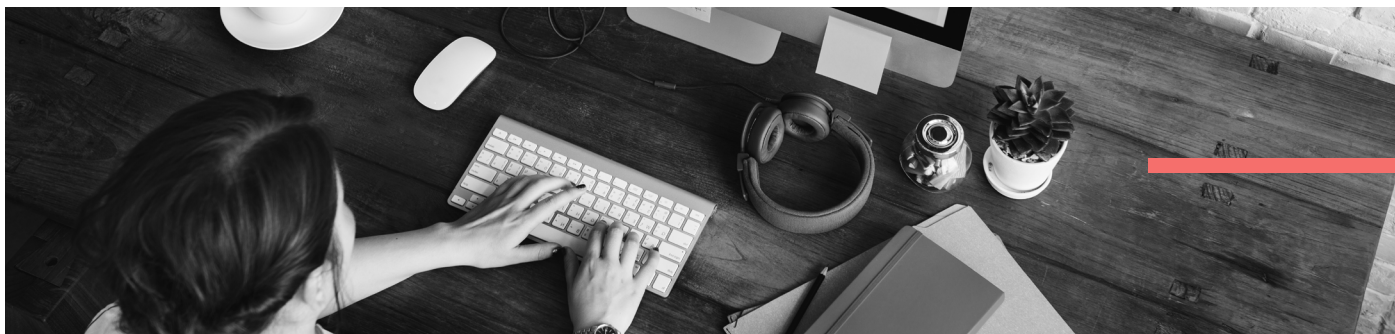
Strengthen Membership Value –

Membership should never be an afterthought. Even if it's not the largest revenue contributor, it is the foundation of an association's legitimacy. Investing in engagement, benefits, and personalised value for members will create a stronger base. Associations should consider diversifying member benefits through exclusive content, career development resources, peer networking opportunities, and advocacy efforts. Additionally, strengthening communication and demonstrating tangible value regularly will help maintain and grow membership retention rates.

Expand Professional Development Offerings

– Conferences, webinars, and educational programmes should evolve to meet members' changing needs. Experimenting with hybrid formats, microlearning, and sector-specific content can increase participation and revenue. Associations should also explore partnerships with educational institutions, credentialing programmes, and industry leaders to enhance their offerings. Providing certifications, on-demand learning, and interactive workshops can create additional revenue streams while simultaneously increasing member engagement and professional growth.





Reinvent Sponsorship & Partnerships

– Traditional sponsorship models are changing. Associations must offer more customised and outcome-driven opportunities to partners, ensuring that value is mutually beneficial and sustainable. This might mean shifting from static sponsorship tiers to dynamic, results-oriented partnerships that align with a sponsor's objectives. Creating year-round engagement opportunities, industry-specific sponsorships, or leveraging digital platforms for sponsor visibility can enhance value for partners while securing more consistent revenue.

Explore New Revenue Streams –

Diversification means looking beyond the standard three revenue sources. This could include certification programmes, consultancy services, affinity partnerships, or exclusive member-only content. Associations should explore monetising thought leadership through white papers, paid research, or expert advisory services. Subscription-based content, job boards, mentorship programmes, and data analytics services tailored to industry needs can also provide new income sources while reinforcing the association's role as a trusted authority in its field.

The future of associations in Aotearoa depends on their ability to remain financially stable while continuously delivering value. Now is the time to scrutinise revenue models, innovate, and ensure a diversified, sustainable approach to funding. The associations that take action now will be the ones that thrive in the years ahead.



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Brett Jeffery, CAE

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