

**Top 7
Membership
Trends in**

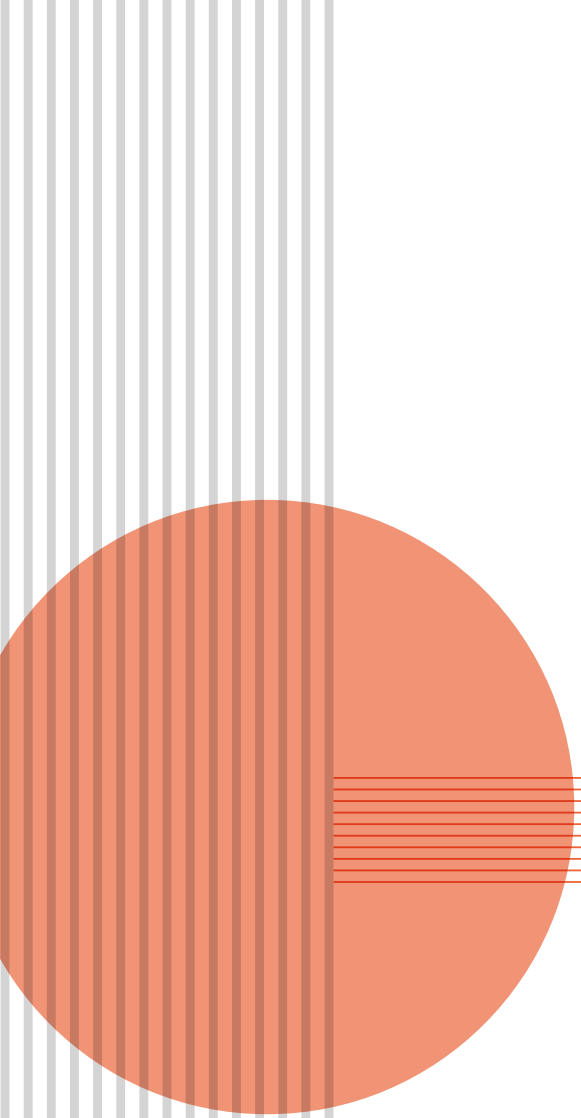
2025

Seize opportunities to increase
membership, engagement, and growth.



r/c rottmancreative
The association people.

We inspire members to register, join, and renew.



We've compiled the top seven membership trends for 2025 and provided curated resources for each to help your association drive growth in the year ahead.



TREND 1:



The Engagement Problem Will Get BIGGER



Expect that your audience will be busier and more distracted than ever. People will continue to face a never-ending barrage of emails, texts, phone calls, meetings, ads, and social media feeds. Keep in mind that your biggest competition isn't another organization; it's all this busyness that prevents people from fully engaging with your events and offerings.

How the Engagement Problem Affects Associations

- People will always make time for the things that matter most. Associations must focus on a **rock solid value proposition** that causes people to stop, pay attention, and act.
- **New tech will drive engagement.** Consider short videos, subscription-based TV ads, social media ads, and web retargeting. These channels can reach likely users with relevant messages where they already spend time online.
- **Associations must stop over-relying on email.** Audience inboxes are already overfull, and things will only get worse in 2025.
- **Corporate speak won't get the results you need.** A human, conversational tone to all communications is a better strategy.
- **A caring, empathetic message** shows the audience that you understand their challenges and are here to help.
- **Storytelling will grow in popularity and effectiveness.** Let your members showcase the value of your organization in their own words to drive engagement.



Engagement Resources

- **Your Biggest Competition Isn't Another Organization: It's Busyness**
Learn how to cut through the noise to reach your audience and spark action. **Read now >>**
- **Non-Members Don't Trust You. Here's How to Fix That.**
Discover ways to fuel engagement and event attendance by reconsidering "the way we've always done things." **Read now >>**
- **Let's Talk Business**
Find out how to focus on business benefits to make your audience stop what they're doing and engage with your organization. **Read now >>**

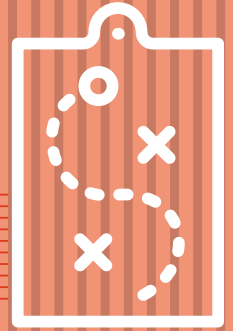
TREND 2



• Acquisitions • Will Take More • Time and More Effort



Expect membership acquisitions to be a slog in 2025. Your audience will have a lot on their minds—whether it's a changing political climate, economic worries, professional ambitions, or personal responsibilities. Hitting your numbers will require patience and perhaps a little grit. While a final membership push in the fall is not a bad idea, you must reach out to web visitors and prospects all year long for greatest success.



How Difficult Membership Acquisitions Affect Associations

- **Join campaigns** should launch at least quarterly to get attention and nurture leads throughout a potentially long buying cycle.
- **Follow-up materials** necessary for successful campaigns will include landing pages, member stories, sales sheets, infographics, short form videos, and podcast ads.
- Join campaigns won't work without a **follow-up plan in place**. Your sales team must be ready to pick up the phone, build relationships, and reinforce the value of the organization.
- **Go beyond email** to reach people via social media, retargeting ads, direct mail, video streaming, and more.
- **Campaigns developed around industry trends** compel people with timely content while demonstrating expertise.
- **List segmentation will be essential** to crafting timely, relevant campaigns that convert.
- **Web visitors represent an untapped source of new members** for associations. You must first convert these individuals into prospects, then into members.

Acquisition Resources

- **Stop the Year-End Scramble: 6 Strategies for Better Join Campaigns**
Find out how to reach membership goals through the ideal combo of timing, content, distribution, trends, data, calls to action, and follow-up. [Read now >>](#)
- **7 Ways Associations Can Get New Members Amid Today's Challenges**
Use these action steps to exceed your membership goals and alleviate financial stress. [Download >>](#)
- **The #1 Content Piece Associations Need for Effective Membership Marketing**
Discover why "Top Trends" content is a priceless marketing tool that can help you attract and retain members all year long. [Read now >>](#)



TREND 3

- AI Will Skew Value
- Perception



Artificial intelligence is changing how associations work by offering tools for creating content, analyzing data, and supporting education. As AI gets smarter, it gives away for free many things that associations charge for. This raises a big question: why join an association when you can get so much from AI for nothing? Associations must now clearly show what makes them special and explain the unique benefits they offer beyond what AI can provide.



How AI Affects Associations

- Associations will need to **identify their unique value** that can't be replaced by AI, including their tight-knit community.
- You will also need to clearly and quickly articulate your **value to busy people in a noisy world**.
- AI can help you **better understand your audience**, refine event offerings, improve administration, track and enhance marketing efforts, build smarter chatbots, and create better content.
- A **website overhaul** is a strategy against obsolescence in the age of AI. Sites must be clean, simple, intuitive, and lightning fast.
- **Deep audience analysis**—perhaps with the aid of AI—can help associations increase relevancy of resources, communications, and events.
- **AI is not cause for panic**, but associations that want to survive must face this new technology head on.

AI Resources

■ Your Association and AI: The Story You Need to Be Ready For

Find out how to embrace the best of AI while guarding against the potential damage it can do to your association. **Read now >>**

■ Why Your Event Needs a Value Proposition

Prove the ROI of attending your event to drive attendance and engagement in the long term. **Read now >>**

■ Not Another Snoozeletter

Get membership and event marketing best practices that can help your association stay relevant amid changing times and technologies. **Subscribe >>**

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TREND

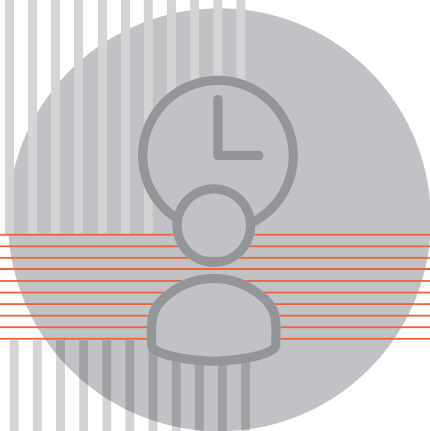
- Late Registration
- is Here to Stay

Attendees are waiting longer than ever to register for events. Many won't commit until 40 days out or less. This "trend" is the new normal, as economic worries, busyness, and work-life balance concerns cause attendees to pause before clicking the "Register Now" button. Associations can capitalize on this behavior by launching multitouch event marketing efforts in the last days leading up to events.



How Late Registration Affects Associations

- Articulating a clear, unique value proposition will be essential to earning late registrations. People need to know **“What am I paying for?”** quickly and without confusion.
- **Email will be less and less effective.** Spambots will drastically reduce deliverability, and users will soon fatigue of the emails that do reach the inbox.
- **A multitouch approach** that includes targeted social media campaigns, web retargeting, cross-marketing, and direct mail—along with a few thoughtful emails—will be key to hitting event numbers in 2025.
- **Social media “dedication weeks”** will gain traction as a way to get attention and action, potentially generating hundreds of registrations for an event in just one week.



Late Registration Resources

- **6 Proven Tactics to Reach Your Attendance Goals in 6 Weeks or Less**
Learn more about the new late registration phenomenon and what you can do about it. **Download >>**
- **3 Event Marketing Best Practices That Cut Through the Recession Chatter**
Find out how to reach your event attendance goals amid economic uncertainty. **Read now >>**
- **40-Day Dash Event Marketing Program**
Take a bold step toward reaching your event goals and bolstering your association for future success. **Learn more >>**



TREND

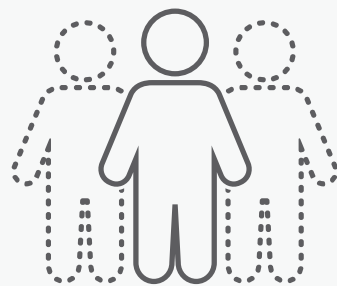
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- Event Attendance Will Start
- Slow but Finish Strong



Event attendance will be slow or low in Q1 2025 as travel and training budgets continue to be lean.

However, by the end of the year, associations will likely see a 5% increase in attendance over 2024 numbers. To weather the ups and downs, focus on three phases: 1) inspire people with actionable messages, 2) reassure their interest with concrete details, and 3) plan to get most registrations six weeks prior to your event.





How Attendance Fluctuations Impact Associations

- **Finding what inspires people and moves them to act requires some art and some science.** For example, combine emotional, human messaging with data on user behaviors.
- Effective event marketing includes content pieces that **speak to industry trends and tools as well as audience pain points and goals.**
- **The first wave of marketing communications should hook people emotionally.**
- **Concrete details about the event's location, speakers, and agenda should come second,** only after you have a sizable list of interested parties.
- **Expect the bulk of registrants to come 40 days or less before the event.** During this crucial period, it is imperative to test and track a range of marketing tactics to reach attendance goals.

Event Attendance Resources



- **How to Use Brand Pillars for Better Marketing**
Understand how and why to distill your association's offerings into three or four categories for simpler, more effective marketing. **Read now >>**
- **40-Day Dash Event Marketing Program**
Discover a revitalizing approach to event marketing specifically tailored to address the challenges of today's fast-paced, distraction-filled environment. **Learn more >>**
- **3-Phased Approach For Event Marketing Success**
Learn how to think in phases to attract event attendees with timely messages and offers. **Read now >>**

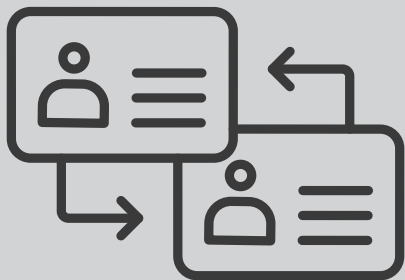


TREND

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- Renewals
- Will Increase

Associations will likely see a boost in membership renewals in 2025. One key to success in this area is making your offerings quick and easy to access, digest, and act upon. Keep communications clean and simple. Distill your offerings into three or four meaningful categories, or “brand pillars,” to help members easily see your resources. Consider all the ways you’re planning to reach your base this year. How many messages will be transactional, where you ask people to do something? How many will be helpful and relationship-building?



How Renewals Affect Associations

- **People will always make time for the things that matter most.** Associations should focus on the fact that it is far cheaper and easier to renew existing memberships than to attract new members. When considering your 2025 marketing plan, be sure to budget for helpful, relationship-building messages that reassure your current members.
- Associations that ask people to renew will get more people to renew. **Include quick “straight ask” promotions in your plan.** In less than 100 words, tell members to renew and give them an easy way to do so.
- **Don’t wait until the year-end scramble to drive renewals.** Relationship-building and renewal efforts should happen quarterly at a minimum.
- **A member is often NOT the person writing the check for dues.** Member engagement tracking can definitively show the value and ROI of your association to drive renewals.
- List segmentation based on member characteristics and behaviors will be **a top driver of renewals in 2025 and beyond.**



Renewals Resources

- **5 Steps to Easier Membership Renewals**
Learn how to focus on value all year long to keep your members coming back. **Read now >>**
- **The Anatomy of an Effective Member Story That Converts**
Discover a proven story format that makes for easier renewals, acquisitions, and event attendees. **Read now >>**
- **You’re Sending Too Many Transactional Emails**
Find out why your email strategy could be overwhelming your audience—and what to do instead. **Read now >>**



TREND



Reaching anyone via email will be more difficult in 2025 than ever before. Not only are busy professionals overwhelmed by sheer quantities of messages. Smarter spam filters are dramatically decreasing deliverability. New approaches are needed to actually get attention and spark action. Associations are already finding success by advertising on alternative media channels, such as YouTube, podcasts, and subscription-based television. Social media dedication weeks are generating dramatic results for event attendance. Additionally, word-of-mouth marketing has been reborn as an effective tool in the digital age.

- Communication Channels Will
- Evolve in 2025 and Beyond



How Alternative Media Channels Affect Associations

- Email open and click rates are increasingly inaccurate, with security **bots responsible for as much as 80% of B2B email engagement.**
- **YouTube Shorts ads** are video ads that run in between YouTube vertical videos of 60 seconds or less. They're a great way to take advantage of the current boom in online video streaming.
- **Ads during podcasts and subscription-based television** work because they reach your target audience where they are already spending time.
- **Social media dedication weeks** disrupt routine content and focus solely on your event for an entire week. They can generate hundreds of registration in a short time frame.
- **Share content on LinkedIn** to build audience trust while showcasing your association's credibility and expertise.
- Provide readymade social media **"buzz kits"** to members, board members, staff, event speakers, and registrants to authentically spread the word about your event and offerings while letting you control the narrative.



Alternative Media Resources

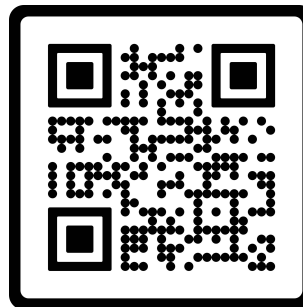
- **How to Create Priceless Word-of-Mouth Marketing in the Digital Age**
Learn how to harness the power of digital to generate buzz from invaluable word-of-mouth marketing. **Read now >>**
- **With Email Bot Clicks Skewing Your Open Rates, It's Time to Diversify Your Strategy**
Find out why your association's email performance numbers aren't accurate and what you can do about it. **Read now >>**
- **Your Association's Marketing Plan Isn't Working As Well as You Think It Is**
Discover ways to revise your marketing plan to replace outdated tactics with fresh approaches that help sustain your organization into the future. **Read now >>**

- Are your members not as **engaged** as they should be?
- Is your member renewal **rate below 85%**?
- Falling short on **member acquisition** goals?
- Struggling to **fill seats** at your annual conference?



Be ready for whatever the future brings.

Hi. We're Rottman Creative. The Association People. We inspire members to register, join, and renew. Let's connect to see how we can help your association solve your top pain points and reach your goals in 2025.



Questions: Luke@rottmancreative.com