



HUBILO FOR ASSOCIATIONS

# Member engagement strategy for a virtual world

This eBook provides actionable insights to drive meaningful engagement with your association members and prospects.





# What you'll learn

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**Key characteristics of a winning member engagement strategy**

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## Why you should rethink your engagement strategy

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### **In an ideal world,**

new members would join your association with a clear understanding of its mission and the value it offers.

Existing members would continue to connect with you and one another, as well as refer new members to join. But this doesn't happen in the real world.

### **Read this eBook to discover:**

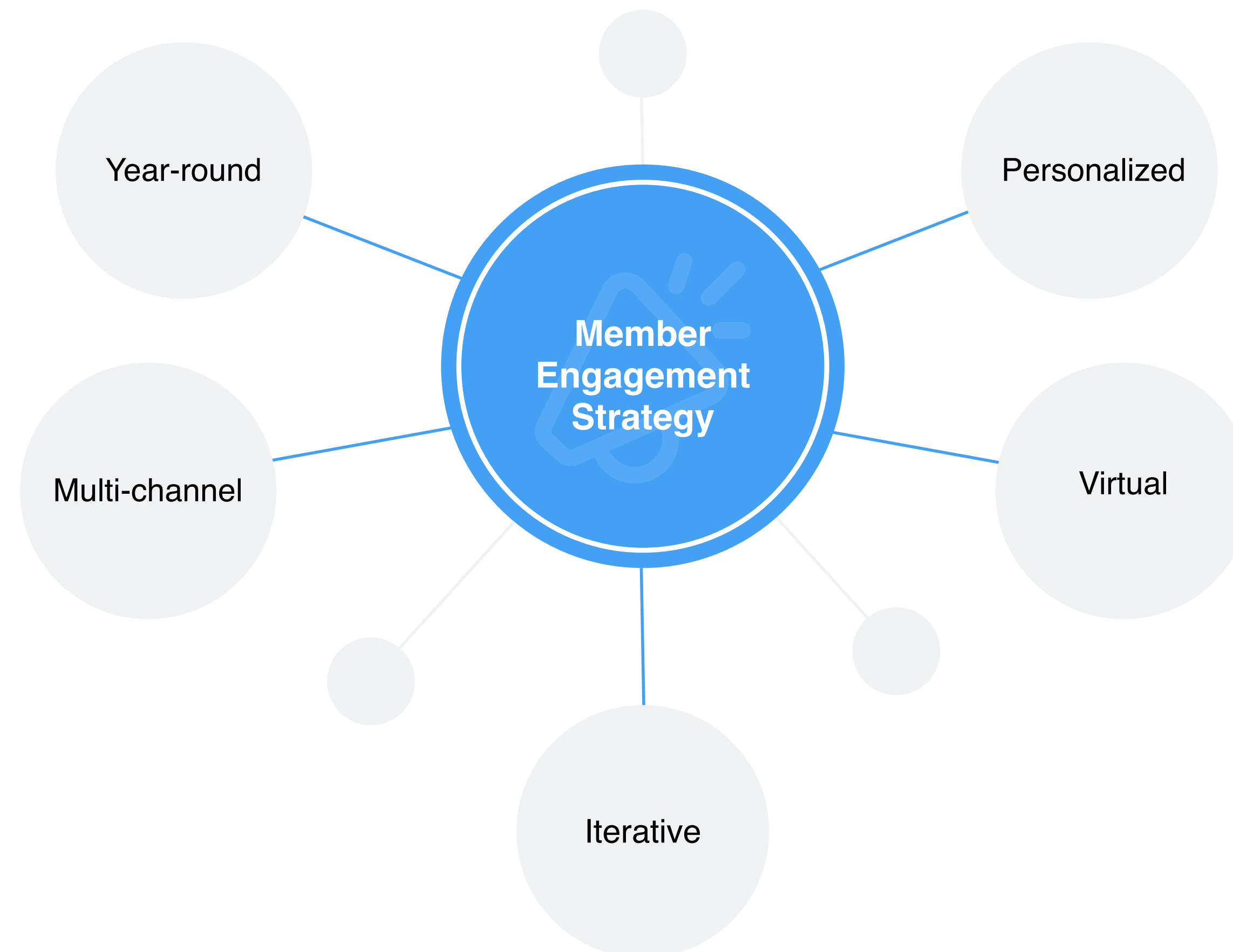
- Characteristics of a winning member engagement strategy
- Actionable ideas to engage and delight members and prospects throughout the year

**In fact,** members are most likely not to renew with an association because of lack of engagement. Renewals are also a low-priority item on most people's to-do lists. In keeping up with the daily demands of life, joining an organization — even one whose cause you care about — takes a back seat. This is especially true in today's increasingly distracted world. It's essential to let your members and prospects know why your association is important and how it can help them.

To engage your members and prospects effectively, you'll need an engagement strategy that helps you better understand their interests, generate meaningful interactions, and ultimately, build a vibrant community.

## Key characteristics of a **winning** member engagement strategy

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## Year-round

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Building an engaged member community takes time and consistent effort.

You need regular interactions with members and prospects to keep your association top of mind. A single annual event and one-way communications like monthly updates and holiday cards won't cut it.

Providing your members with greater value than they pay for a membership, and doing so throughout the year, will maximize your chances of successful member retention. Plus, a year-round strategy helps your recruitment efforts and allows you to reach out to a larger pool of prospects.



## Personalized

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Just about every marketer who participated in a recent survey said personalization helps advance customer relationships.

And in the age of Netflix and Spotify, users expect it. A training session that members in their 20s find valuable may not be of any interest to members in their 50s. What a prospect, a new member, and a veteran member want from your association are all quite different. From creating audience personas to inform content marketing to using members' first names throughout an email, personalization is about nuance and detail.

Create different member segments using the data available to you. Gathering more data over time allows you to keep improving your segmentation to provide the best personalizations for your association's diverse audiences. And strategic segmentation can pay off — big time. Marketers have found that email revenue from segmented campaigns increases as much as 760% over non-segmented campaigns.



## Multi-channel

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It's essential to reach your customers where they are. Different people prefer different methods of communication and content consumption. Some can't stay away from Twitter while others have never sent a tweet, but religiously clear their email inboxes.

Want to increase the likelihood of your members seeing your messages or maximize your brand reach to a wide pool of prospects? Use a multi-channel engagement strategy. After all, it takes about 8 marketing touches to generate a viable sales lead. Here is an example of digital engagement channels and how best to use them:



## Website

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1. Sharing your association's value proposition, detailed offerings, and member benefits
2. Hosting all the content you create and your events schedule
3. Hosting membership offers, discounts, and referral programs
4. Membership profiles and renewals
5. Showcasing your association's impact

## Social media

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1. Regular updates about your organization's impact, offerings, and upcoming events
2. Distributing content
3. Creating online member groups or communities
4. Gathering user-generated content from your members and showcasing it (for example - member stories, polls, AMAs with experts, etc.)
5. Welcoming new members and recognizing existing members

## Email

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1. The primary source for one-to-one connection with your members and prospects
2. Sharing personalized content, newsletters, and events
3. Sending relevant surveys, reminders, and offers
4. Sharing recommended courses and certifications for professional development
5. Nurturing prospects and members



## Virtual event platform

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Apart from everything you use in-person events for, use virtual event platforms for:

1. Hosting engaging, interactive events online
2. Providing year-round networking opportunities (plus AI-powered connection recommendations)
3. Giving members an option to host their own breakout rooms and networking lounges to meet among themselves throughout the year
4. Making event content available on-demand (for members to rewatch and for new members to get easy access to all the previous events' content)
5. Gamifying member experience
6. Accessing rich, granular data about your member activities to understand and serve them better

## In-person events

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1. Providing networking opportunities
2. Interactions with industry experts
3. Learning opportunities about industry development and trends





“Associations that were able to offer or increase the availability of remote and online engagement tools saw **increases in engagement during the pandemic.**”

Marketing General Incorporated



## Virtual

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Virtual events make it possible to reach members who previously did not engage with your association. In a recent study, 35% of members polled said that virtual options made attending more association events easier or possible.

Virtual interactions in all facets of people's lives are a large element of today's normal. This doesn't mean your association should discontinue in-person volunteer activities and regional chapter meetings.

But making sure you have virtual options as well makes these events more accessible for your members, providing those who cannot attend an event in person with opportunities to engage with each other and your association. Including a major virtual component is a key part of effective member engagement plans.

## Iterative

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Being open to new ideas and embracing change is crucial to keep improving your engagement strategy. Actively listen to your members. Reevaluate your plans when you get strong signals about what's working and what's not, and adapt your strategy accordingly.

The best way to know what your members want is to ask them. Some effective ways to get quality member feedback include:

- Using surveys to understand what members think about your association, its benefits, and how you can deliver more value to them.
- Paying attention to how people interact with and what they write in the online communities and on social media. Take part in the conversations to gather more feedback.
- Analyzing member data to understand their needs, behaviors, and preferences better.



## Engagement ideas to delight your members

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Early renewal discounts, referral programs, contests and giveaways, partner discounts, events, and regular newsletters are all ways to up your engagement game by not only interacting with your members but delighting them, too.

Consider using a few of the following ideas to add real value to members' lives. You will be surprised to see how these strategies will also help you attract new members by increasing brand awareness and the perceived value of joining your association.

## Learning options with multiple formats

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Depending on where they are in their career, your members will find varying types of learning opportunities useful.

Create unique learning paths, recommendations for educational resources, and offers and discounts on professional certifications, for each of your member segments.



## Member-generated content

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Your members are your biggest asset. Turn them into influencers and advocates for your association by giving them a voice. Urge your members to share their stories with you through social media posts, emails, at events, or even with a phone call. You can always ask a few questions to get them started, but be sure to let your members know that they can talk about anything they want to share with the community.

Stories bring out who members are in their personal lives, what matters to them, and why. Why does longtime member Taylor relate to your association's cause? What value does your association add to new member Alex's life? Letting them tell their stories can provide these insights and so much more.

This is high-quality, relatable content that will strike a chord with other members as well as your prospects. It's a great way to welcome new members, recognize older members, and show that you really care about all of them.

### **Here are other helpful ways to obtain member-generated content:**

- Host AMAs with experts and invite members to join. These live video/text chats can provide ample material for quality content.
- Create a 'tag a friend' campaign or contest on social media You can ask members to tag a friend they're thankful for or someone they look up to in their professional life. Get creative with your ideas and create tons of awareness for your association.
- Run a social media takeover campaign.

## Create immersive experiences with virtual event platforms

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You can use virtual event platforms year-round to actively engage your members in countless ways to implement your engagement plan and reach your goals. Here are a few ideas to get you started.

**Extend year-round networking opportunities** to members in different formats such as one-on-one virtual chat, audio/video meetings, breakout rooms, and more.

**Diversify the kind of events you host** throughout the year to ensure you have something of interest for all your members and prospects. Consider hosting awareness events, meet-and-greets, expert discussions, open events, training events, or workshops. Monthly virtual networking events are a great opportunity for your members to connect with others regardless of geography.

**Let members host their own theme-based networking lounges** anytime they want and invite other members to join. These virtual get-togethers can spark conversation and allow members to find others who share their interests.





**Extend the life of your event by making content available on-demand** after the event is over. Members who can't attend a live event due to other priorities or new members who join your organization after the event is over will appreciate the opportunity to watch the event later at their own convenience.

**Gamify the member experience** by assigning points for participation in different activities on the virtual event platform throughout the year (not just during your event). Activities such as networking, answering polls and questions, interacting with other members' posts on the activity feed, and hosting a networking lounge on their own are all great opportunities for gamification and engagement. Incentivize members who engage the most with prizes, awards, and social shoutouts.

Whether your goal is to acquire new members, retain existing ones, create brand awareness, or demonstrate your association's value to members and prospects, you need a robust member engagement strategy to achieve it. And the right tools and technology to help you execute it.





Enabling **creative**  
**events** to succeed



## About Hubilo

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Hubilo is the only all-in-one virtual + hybrid event platform built to drive engagement. With the industry's largest suite of engagement and gamification features and full branding capabilities, backed by our designated full-time customer success team, we ensure every event run on the Hubilo platform executes perfectly every time. All the enterprise security, integrations, and analytics you need - with the engagement and white-glove support you want. Visit [hubilo.com](https://hubilo.com) to learn more.







# Hubilo for Associations

All your use cases  
covered in one platform

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