

Culture of Engagement

HOW TO BUILD ENGAGED, PASSIONATE MEMBERS
2021 FSAE Foundation Think Tank



*Written by Think Tank Facilitator **Joshua Evans**
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At the beginning of Think Tank, attendees were asked to share their thoughts on what they wanted to extract from the two-day event on building member engagement and retention.

Responses included:

- How to make all members ambassadors / develop advocates
- How to pass culture to new staff and volunteers
- How do we get members past the 2-3 year hump?
- Identify members needs in this new hybrid world
- What are other associations doing successfully?

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Membership is Subjective

Attendees were broken into several teams, the names of these teams were derived from asking a member at each table **"If you could be any animal in the world, what would it be?"**

Answers were very subjective and ranged from exotic to domestic animals. As it turns out, the reasons people join and stay with their professional associations is also very subjective. How can we serve hundreds of perspectives regarding what makes an association great or worth joining?

We need a common definition:

A great association is defined as having members that are **Engaged** in what they are doing and having **Fun** while they are doing it.

Why is engagement important?

According to a Recent Gallup Poll, at any given for profit company:

29% of Employees are Engaged

71% are Disengaged at work!

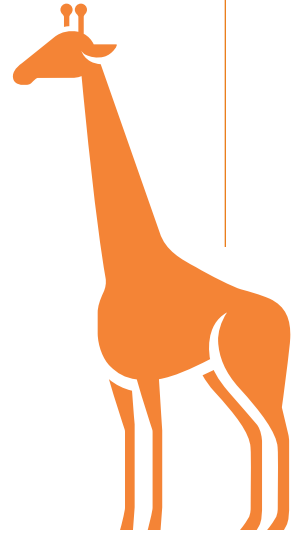
24% are ACTIVELY DISENGAGED!!!

These are statistics for your members' professional careers! If individuals can disengage so easily from an organization that pays them, how easy would it be for them to disengage from an organization that they feel just takes their time and money? EG: *their professional association.*

The #1 Reason members give for membership cancellation is **Cost.**

"If you could be any animal in the world, what would it be?"

- **EAGLES**
- OSTRICHES
- DOGS
- Dolphins
- GIRAFFES
- **KANGAROOS**



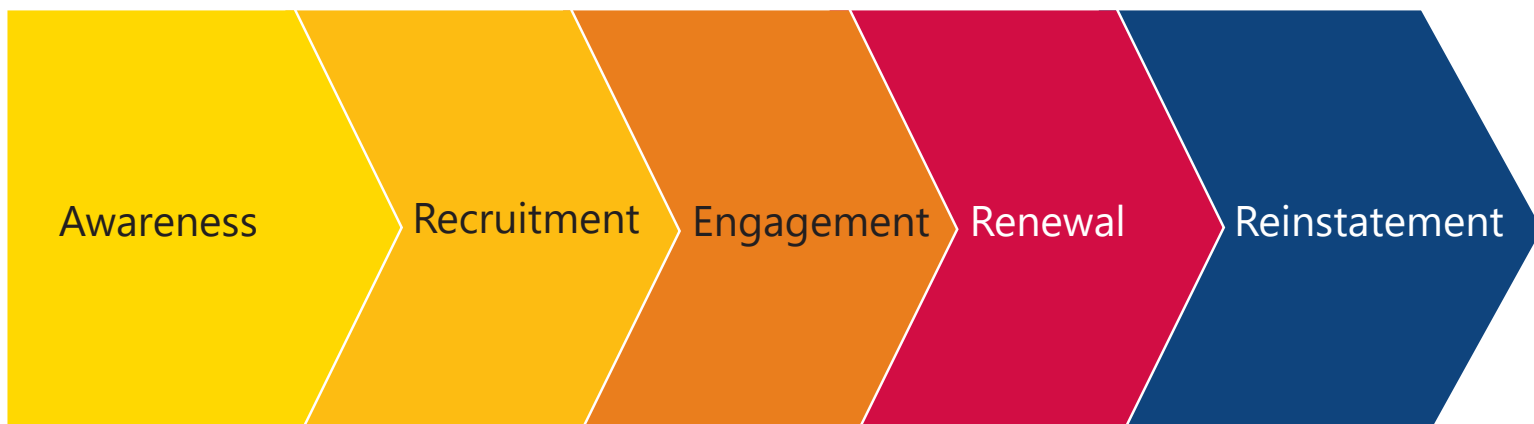
Average membership turnover is **34%** per year. However, in millennials the average turnover is **37%** Why? Millennials are known to contribute their time and money to causes they deem worthy. Not only that, 92% of millennials say they would work for less money if they found purpose in their work.

While 'cost' is widely reported that the number 1 reason for failure to renew is money, the real reason people cancel memberships is because of a lack of perceived **Value.**

We must be constantly providing value to our members or we risk losing them. We must also be nurturing our best recruitment tool:

Passionate Members.

MEMBERSHIP LIFECYCLE:



5.88 years

Average length of tenure in a professional association

83%

Average renewal rate

92,000

Number of professional associations in the US

Question: What's the real cost of membership?

According to US Labor statistics, the average wage of a professional is **\$46.24** per hour. A conservative number of hours an association member spends with their association a month is **2 hours**.

Now we can get a good idea regarding what the real cost of membership is:
 $2 \text{ hours} \times 12 \text{ months} \times \$46.24 = \mathbf{\$1,109.76}$
(And that's before your DUES!)

**\$1,109.76 + Member dues =
The REAL cost of membership**

Your association is competing every day for your members: **Time, Money, and Attention**

Once you get members engaged, you need to be focused on keeping them. Engaged members not only stay members of our organization, they help us recruit and nurture new members.

Every association wants amazing members, but what does the perfect member look like?

Most associations desire members that are engaged in their organizations and passionate about the mission. Members that are established in their careers are the most likely to contribute to their professional association and build it into a community. We need members that are not only willing to drink the Koolaid, but inspire others to drink it as well.
(See next page for team responses).



What does the perfect member look like?

TEAM KANGAROOS

- Mid-Career
- Family person – settled, serious about their career
- Small company / independent / limited resources

Member's Goals:

- More time/efficiencies
- Fun / experiences
- Success / freedom
- Expanded network



- Passionate
- Recruits Others
- Mid-Career
- Pays Dues
- Volunteers



- Community
- Career Growth
- Continuing Education

Team Dolphins

- Early to mid-level career
- Stable in role
- Engaged in their associations
- Act as ambassador
- Have time/bandwidth to participate and volunteer

Member's Goals:

- Learn/earn CE credits
- Want networking opportunities
- Expand their association

TEAM DOG

- Shares values with their association
- Passionate
- Values career ladder in their profession
- Respects organizational boundaries
- Challenges a growth mindset

Member's Goals:

- Professional growth
- Accomplishments
- Learn and share new ideas
- Bond with fellow members



TEAM GIRAFFES

- Cares about association
- Seasoned practitioner
- Mid-Career
- Established / stable role
- Willing to mentor
- Volunteers
- Passionate

Member's Goals:

- CEU's
- Community
- Business help

TEAM OSTRICHES

- Shared values
- Passionate / engaged
- Excitement for the association's mission
- Enjoyment of career choice
- Passion to be actively involved
- Pays dues regularly
- Attends events
- Serves on committee(s)
- Recruits others

Member's Goals:

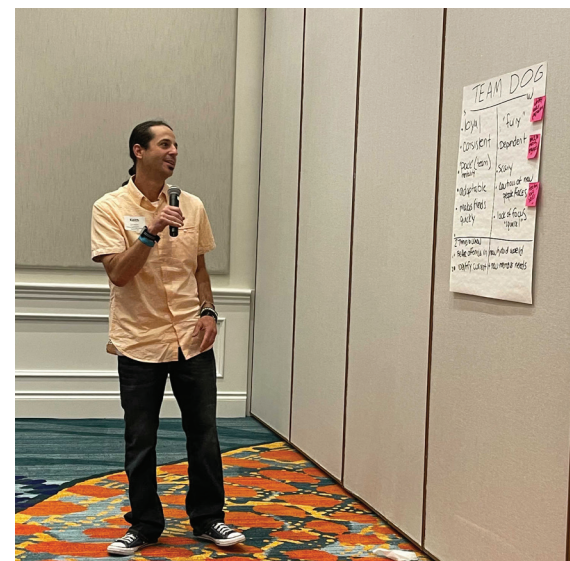
- Professional advancement
- Sense of belonging
- Be involved in association's direction
- Mentor junior members

TEAM EAGLES

- Engaged
- Attends events (live and virtual)
- Post / comment / engage in the online community
- Pays dues on-time
- Passionate
- Stays up to date on current events
- "Drinks the KoolAid"
- Respondent
- Team player
- Altruistic

Member's Goals:

- Advance career
- Be part of a community
- Grow other membership
- Become more involved



How can we Evoke Passion and Engagement from Members?

Influences • Perceptions • Aspirations

INFLUENCES

Our members are constantly being influenced by things in their lives. Their careers, global challenges, their friends & colleagues. With every person being bombarded with over 10,000 marketing messages per day, we must strive to be a positive influence and safe haven in their lives.

Your association wields a tremendous amount of influence in the lives of your members. Every interaction, whether text, email, phone, or in person is an opportunity to positively impact that member.

If you are going to be wielding influence on others, you must be **Subtle, Intentional, and Selfless.**

Question: If you could influence your members to do one thing, what would that one thing be?

While your answer will vary, here are the top answers derived from the Think Tank event. They wish they could influence their members to:

- Believe
- Have ownership in their association
- Mentor other members
- Get involved early
- Bring us new members
- Be passionate about our association

PERCEPTIONS

How can we Direct our Member's Perceptions? Harvard University Research Study, A Positive Brain is:

19% more accurate

31% more productive

3x more creative

10x more engaged

It is an endless battle to help our members default to optimism. What they choose to **Perceive** first is what becomes their **Reality.**

What we choose to look for becomes what we see. For example, if you buy a blue Honda and pull onto the road, what do you begin to notice? All of a sudden, there are blue Hondas everywhere. Did they just manufacture them? Are they shooting a commercial for Hondas? No.

As it turns out, what we are conditioned to see, we see more of.

What are you conditioning your members to see more of? Is it opportunities? Issues? Regulations? Freedom?

Think about the last newsletter you sent to your members. What was its general feel? Was it based on hope of the future or fear of the unknown?

These small things can play a large role with how your members feel when thinking about your association.



Exercise: Write down 3-4 things you have to do on a week to week or day to day basis:

I HAVE to: _____.

Now, reread your list one more time. Then, cross out the word Have and write the word Get –

I GET to: _____.

and reread the list once more.

These small changes in perspective can lead to huge changes in attitude and behavior. **We must be continually pushing our members to perceive the value we bring to them.**

As it turns out, there is a huge disconnection between what is said and heard. Therefore, there is a huge opportunity for us to miscommunicate with our members. In an effort to continually evolve to their needs, we must constantly be seeking feedback and adapting to these new needs.

The best communication is clear, concise, specific, and simple. To effectively communicate and wield influence in the lives of our members we can employ 3 techniques:

1. Perception awareness (the alternative perspective principle)
2. Reframing
3. Issue Illumination

Aspirations: Is, Does, Means

We must stop talking about what our association is and what our association does. Neither of those things is compelling when renewal comes up. What we need to be talking about is what our association **MEANS!**

To be Fulfilled, We first need to focus on **MEANING!** The vast majority of people focus on what something 'is' or what something 'does'. We hear about what our company 'is' or what our company 'does'. We talk about people based on what their role 'is' and what someone in their role 'does'. We talk about our association based on what our association 'is' and what our association 'does'.

Focusing on 'is' and 'does' prevents us from finding depth and fulfillment in these things. What we need to be focusing on is what our association **MEANS.**

Training our minds to naturally focus on **'MEANING'** will allow us to derive more satisfaction, more fulfillment, and more success from our efforts. It will allow us to connect more deeply with our members and drive passion for our associations.

See Worksheet page 9.

Real life example: Recently I met a woman named Kathy who sold real estate and felt burned out. She told me about what her job is and what someone with that job does, but neither of those things was compelling. Of course it's not! However, when we began to discuss what her work really MEANS, she began to feel a renewed sense of fulfillment and excitement about her work.

Now, because of her new sense of purpose, she has been clearly communicating her value to potential clients and has seen a huge increase in her business.

In Conclusion, the largest epiphany reached at the Think Tank was: **Your Association means something different to each Member.**

In other words, you members' reasons for caring about your association are absolutely subjective. There is no silver bullet with regards to getting Members engaged and keeping them engaged. Make impassioned members a priority. **It's passionate members that attend, volunteer, and recruit.**



2021 FSAE Foundation Think Tank Participants

Adrian Amos - Honderick, CAE
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FL Society of Assn Executives

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Chief Executive Officer, Pinellas Realtor Organization

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Gregory Brooks
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Beth P. Brunner, MBA, CAE
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Laura Caputo, Esq.
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Danielle Clermont
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Executive Director, FL State Oriental Medical Assn



About the FSAE Foundation



Foundation Mission: Support education, research, professional development, publications, and public relations efforts for the association management professional.

The FSAE Foundation is a 501(c)(3) organization founded in December 1984 with the purpose of enhancing the Society's programs and services through education, grants, research and certification initiatives. The FSAE Foundation continues to be supported entirely by voluntary, tax-deductible contributions and grants from corporate donors.

What is Think Tank?

- An opportunity for key Florida association executives to look at complex issues from a different perspective
- A discussion that has no "right answer"
- A discussion that does not lead to a vote, decision, position or commitment
- A challenging, stimulating intellectual exercise
- Choices associations must make
- Challenges which will need to be overcome
- Opportunities to be seized

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I had the opportunity to attend my first FSAE Think Tank in May, which was also coincidentally the first in-person professional development event I've attended since the start of the pandemic. **It felt great to put faces to names, brainstorm on ways to best serve each of our members, and learn from each other.** It also didn't hurt that we were wined and dined by the awesome teams at Opal Grand Resort, Hilton West Palm Beach, and The Palm Beaches! Thank you FSAE Foundation for putting on an engaging and educational experience! I look forward to attending again!”

Krissy Greenleaf

Executive Director, Sport & Social Industry Assn

“

I truly enjoyed the FSAE Think Tank! **It was a mentally and physically engaging experience** where we all had the opportunity to speak with our peers and share our successes and challenges. The workshop speaker kept things moving so there was never a dull moment. Not to mention the hotel, the food and the new friends were all A+!”

Laura R. Caputo

*Chief of Staff to the CEO
Turnaround Management Assn*



Culture of Engagement Worksheet

Is/Does/Mean Association Worksheet

Example – Coat Hanger

IS: Metal wire bent into a triangle with a hook

Does: Holds clothes

Means: Confidence, respect, best foot forward, peace of mind

	Is	Does	Means
Inanimate Object:			
Your Role to your Association			
Your Association to it's members			
Your association to your industry			