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Executive Summary and Discussion Guide ***Looking Forward[®] Impact***

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Letter from the President

We are proud to provide you with an executive summary of the 12th annual edition of Looking Forward® Impact, the leading environmental scan of the association strategy environment and the first of three annual studies in the Looking Forward® series for 2023.

This year, our theme is “It’s the end of the world as we knew it.” The COVID-19 Pandemic is increasingly in the rear-view mirror. The most recent election cycle is behind us. The world we knew is no more.

Sadly though, the ability of associations to adapt to this new world is in doubt. Consider the following.

- Workforce challenges have been at the top of the Looking Forward® Impact list for many years but associations seem no closer to helping members deal with these challenges.
- Merger and acquisition activity is increasing, but few associations seem to have adjusted to the changing company landscape.
- The competition facing associations is savage, yet too few associations are structured to adapt successfully to the fact that both corporate and other organizations are actively seeking to engage their members.

As in years past, respondents continue to be concerned about the same challenges. They are concerned about membership again. They are concerned about meetings.

Association volunteer leaders continue to operate within governance systems that are ill suited to a fast-paced dynamic world. The result? Too many associations in an environment characterized by savage competition will struggle to be successful.

The challenge for the association sector will be to demonstrate that the lessons learned during the COVID-19 pandemic are not short term but are being institutionalized within our organizations. The resilience that saw the sector survive the pandemic needs to be commonplace. The urgency we brought to efforts identifying and implementing new solutions for members needs to be a utility not a project.

At Association Laboratory, we hope this sector research will guide you in your efforts to create a more adaptable and useful association. We will continue our commitment to giving you the information, insights, and opportunities you need to thoughtfully consider your future and develop strategies to make your professional and organizational success a reality.

I hope you will use the information from Looking Forward® Impact contained in this executive summary and in the customizable dataset located on the Looking Forward Dashboard® to inform the decisions that are critical to the success of your association.

If I or my team can ever be of assistance, never hesitate to contact us. We look forward to working with you.



Dean West, FASAE
President and Founder
Association Laboratory Inc.



The Association Laboratory Research Alliance



Association Laboratory is proud to be the founder and leader of the Association Laboratory Research Alliance®.

The Association Laboratory Research Alliance® is a collaboration of more than 20 state, national, specialty and global societies of association executives designed to investigate, lead the discussion of, and provide insight into the future of the association business model.

Since inception, the Association Laboratory Research Alliance® has investigated the forces shaping association members and the implications of these forces on association strategy. Through research reports, customizable dashboards and virtual and in-person seminars, the Alliance provides the most recent, relevant, and useful information for association leaders to learn about the future of associations.

The Association Laboratory Research Alliance® produces three sector studies under the Looking Forward® banner that are critical to association sector thought leadership.

- **Looking Forward® Impact** – This global environmental scan of the association strategy environment identifies the factors with the greatest impact on association members and the challenges these factors create for associations.
- **Looking Forward® Solutions** – This study assesses more than 135 different strategies that association leaders believe are important to success given the influences on their members and the challenges these factors create.
- **Looking Forward® DEI** – This study, the first of its kind in the association sector, investigates sector perceptions of DEI issues, the challenges associations perceive in effective DEI work and the strategies being pursued by associations to address these challenges.

To access the most relevant, recent and useful association sector research, visit the [Looking Forward Dashboard](#).



Thanks to Our Strategic Partners

Association Laboratory would like to thank two companies that are essential to the continued collection and dissemination of quality association sector research.

Gravitate

Gravitate's Nucleus data analytics platform was built specifically for associations and is designed to meet the unique needs of the member industry.

Nucleus aggregates the vast amounts of member data currently stored in different systems across member-based organizations (AMS, email marketing, events, learning management, online community and more) and makes insights into this data available to everyone: staff, leadership, components, the board – and even members.

The Looking Forward® 2023 Data Dashboard is Nucleus, specially configured to show this important environmental scan information and allow you to explore it.

Gravitate is thrilled to have been selected as the official data analytics solution of the Association Laboratory Research Alliance and hopes you enjoy this new way to benefit from the Looking Forward® study.

You are invited to browse the [Analytics for Associations Success Kit](#) to learn more about Nucleus and to contact us to discuss use cases at your organization at analytics@gravitatesolutions.com.

CE21

CE21 is a cloud-based technology and services company providing a full service, Learning Management System (LMS) that delivers distance education, online registration, and physical product sales solutions.



The company serves professional education verticals including Legal, Accounting, Health Care, Insurance, Business, Education Content Providers, Professional & Trade Associations, and Non-Profit Organizations.

[Association Laboratory uses CE21's LMS system to give us more capacity and capability to provide leading edge content to association leaders. You can see the system in action on Association Laboratory's Knowledge Center.](#)

CE21's award-winning LMS can help your organization deliver a best-in-class e-learning experience designed specifically for your most important customers – your learners.

Built for today but designed with the flexibility to take on tomorrow's changing needs, CE21 provides an elegant, mobile-optimized online learning environment that will transform your organization into a 24/7 on-demand value provider.

For more information visit CE21.com.

The Issues Facing Association Members

Overview of Environmental Factors

Looking Forward® Impact 2023 assessed more than 60 different factors on association members within 6 domains. The following chart identifies, in descending order, the factors identified by at least 30% of respondents.

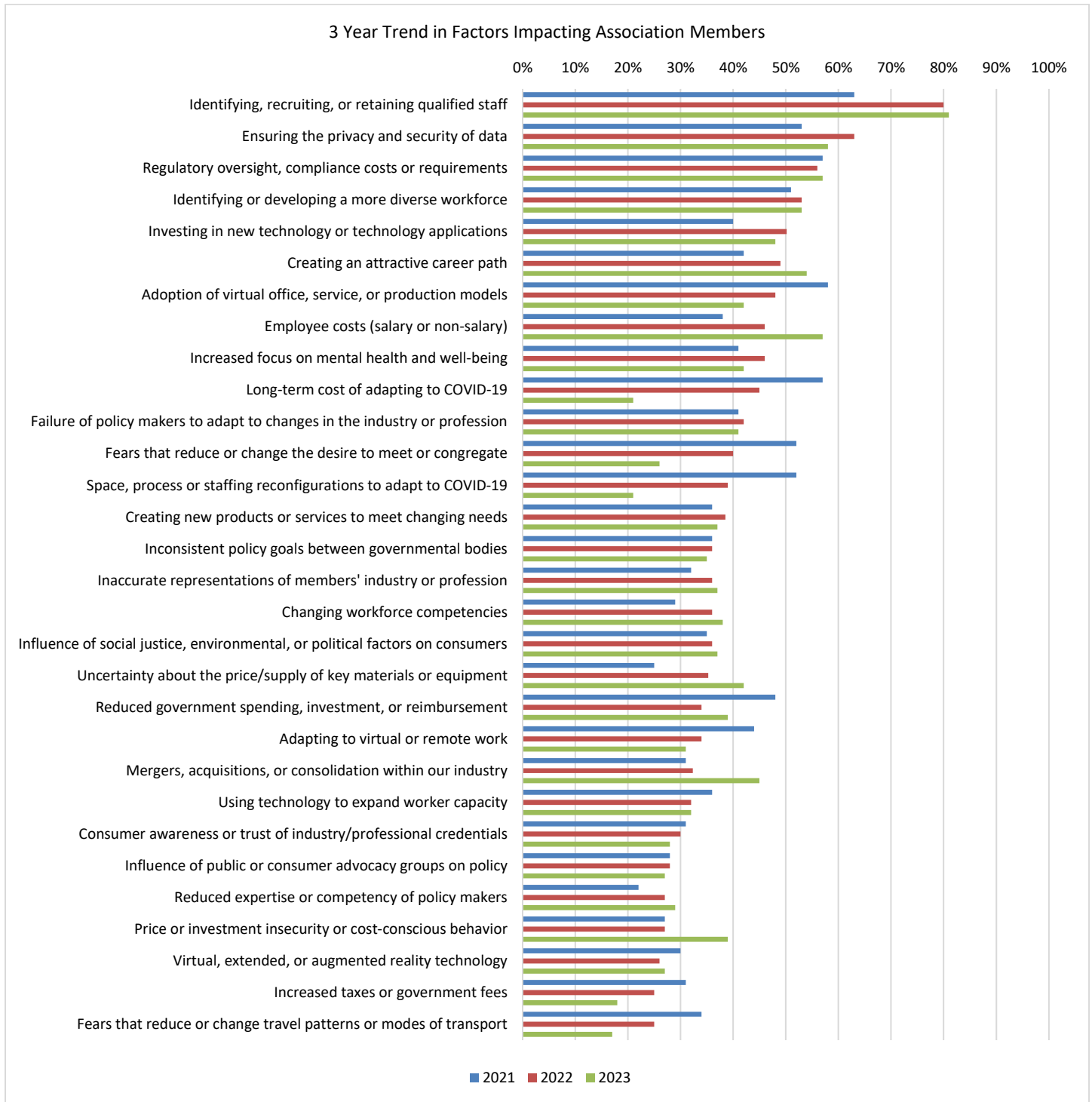


FIGURE 1 LOOKING FORWARD IMPACT

In addition, trade and professional respondents were presented with some unique issues facing their members, worded to reflect their unique perspective. The following are responses from professional and trade association respondents for unique issues that were identified by 20% or more of their respondent group in 2023.

Issues Unique to Professional Association Members Over the Next 3 Years (% of Professional Association Respondents)	2021	2022	2023
Changing social, economic, or demographic characteristics of people our members serve	44%	47%	48%
Artificial intelligence to examine large datasets to inform decisions	42%	46%	46%
Open access publishing or complimentary information access	36%	34%	36%
Changing needs or buying preferences of the people our members serve	34%	16%	26%
Personalized, customized, or concierge-based services or support	14%	23%	19%

Issues Unique to Trade Association Members Over the Next 3 Years (% of Trade Association Respondents)	2021	2022	2023
Disruption of traditional supply chains	35%	46%	44%
Artificial intelligence for predictive monitoring, performance modeling, etc.	37%	43%	57%
Changing needs or buying preferences of the customers our member serve	49%	40%	44%
Smart industrial or collaborative robotics	18%	23%	30%
Changing size, type, or characteristics of the customers our members serve	3%	8%	27%

Global Issues

The study assessed 11 different issues impacting members of associations with non-US activity. For some questions, the wording was modified to address the perspective of a trade or professional association respondent. The following chart identifies, in descending order, the factors identified by at least 10% of respondents from associations with a multi-country scope:

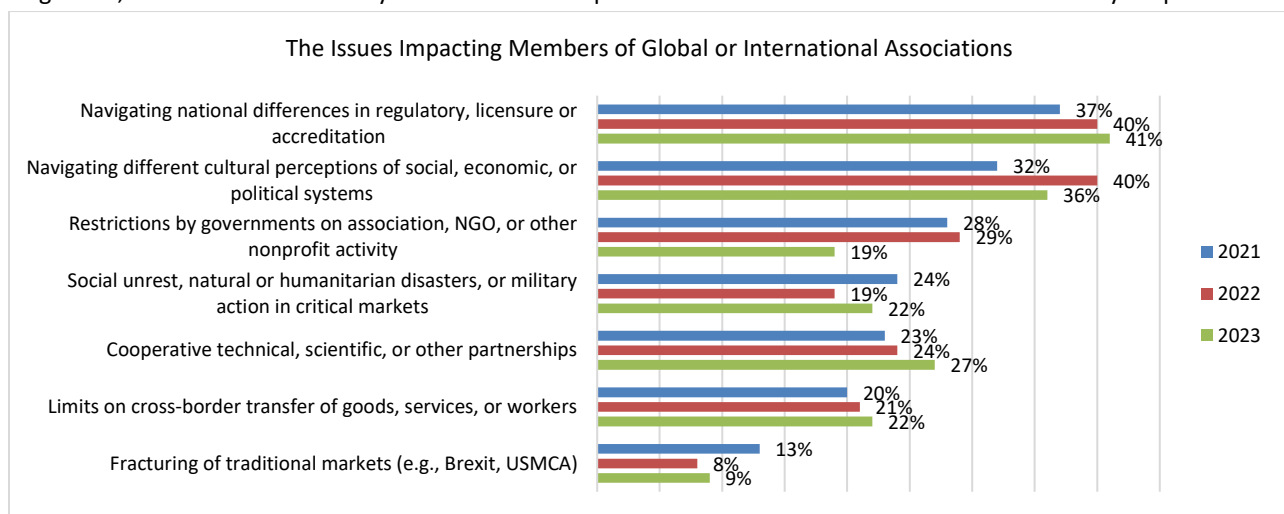


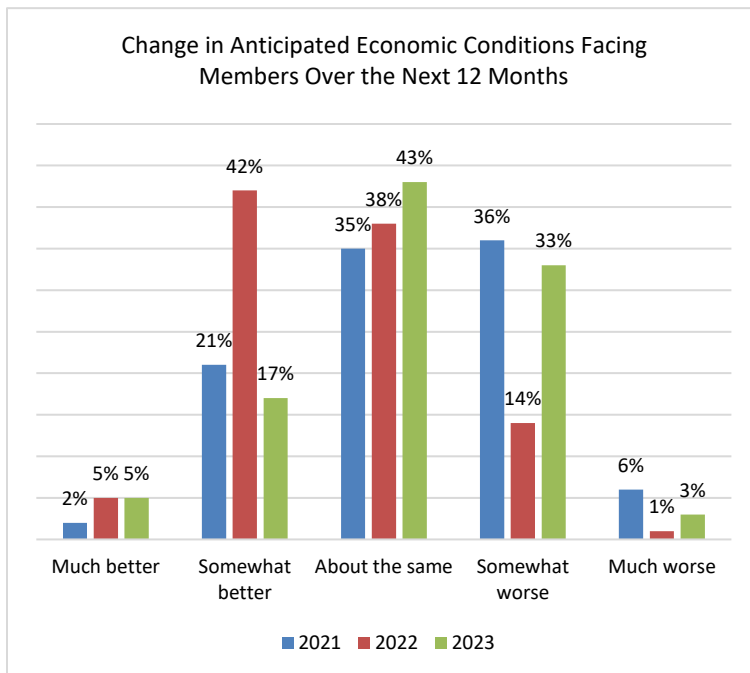
FIGURE 2 LOOKING FORWARD IMPACT

Question text: Which of the following will have the most impact on your members over the next three years? Select up to five.
(Global, US+International, and Multi-Country Federation [non-US] respondents only)

Economic Circumstances

In 2014, Association Laboratory’s sector research on behalf of the ASAE Foundation identified the link between the economic circumstances facing members and member organizations and their likelihood of engagement with the association.

Historically, the more economic hardship faced by association members, the less likely they were to engage with an association. In Looking Forward® Impact, we asked respondents to identify the anticipated economic circumstances of their members during the upcoming year.



In 2023, 22% of associations anticipate their members will face a more positive economic climate, compared to 36% who anticipate a more challenging economic climate.

This is a substantial decrease in sentiment from 2022 and indicates individuals and organizations may be increasingly cautious about investment or additional expenditures.

Associations that have invested properly during the pandemic should still be well positioned to prosper if they understand the changing nature of their audience and its needs.

The lesson? The post COVID economy continues to be in flux.

FIGURE 3 LOOKING FORWARD IMPACT

Question text: What will be the economic situation facing your members over the next 12 months?

It will be critical for leaders to continue assessing the future economic climate facing their members and understand the implications, challenges, and opportunities this climate presents to the association.

Competition

Historically, Looking Forward® Impact has identified increasing competition as a significant factor impacting association members. Looking Forward® Impact, using [Porter's Five Forces](#) as a frame of reference, assessed the types of competition with the most substantial influence. Porter's Five Forces can be summarized as:

1. Existing competitors
2. Threat of new entrants
3. Threat of substitutions
4. Increasing buyer power
5. Increasing supplier power

Methodological Note: The Looking Forward® Dashboard calculates percentages differently than in the Looking Forward® Summary. The following two graphs represent the percentage of Professional and Trade Respondents only while the Dashboard aggregates all respondents. Use the Organization Type filter function in the Looking Forward Dashboard to see results similar to those reported below.

The graphs below identify trade and professional association respondents' perceptions of whether their members will be impacted by each of these competitive factors. Question wording was adjusted to reflect the unique perspective of each audience:



FIGURE 4 LOOKING FORWARD IMPACT

Question text: Your members operate in a highly competitive environment. Which of the following will have the most impact on your members over the next 3 years? Select up to three.

(Professional association respondents only)

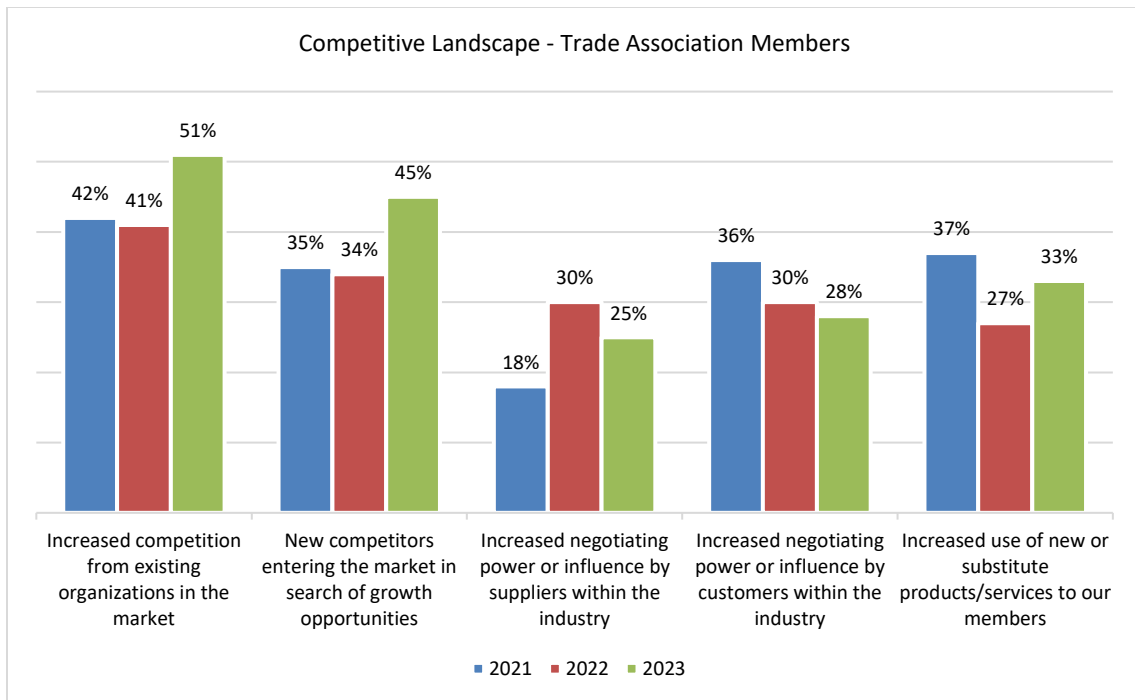


FIGURE 5 LOOKING FORWARD IMPACT

Question text: Your members operate in a highly competitive environment. Which of the following will have the most impact on your members over the next 3 years? Select up to three.

(Trade association respondents only)

Mission-Based Strategies

Associations are all about the Mission. While associations pursue many types of business strategies, Association Laboratory’s sector research indicates there are some Mission-based strategy categories that are more common.

Looking Forward® Impact identified to what extent associations anticipate using these strategies to achieve Mission-based success. The following summarizes the definition of these strategies.

- **Research Strategies** – strategies focused on discovering new knowledge. For example, collecting information on the results of new research into breast cancer or identifying best practices in manufacturing.
- **Education Strategies** – strategies focused on existing knowledge transfer. For example, presenting a small group session on Industry 101 at the Annual Meeting or a webinar on applying industry standards to a production process.
- **External Advocacy Strategies** – strategies focused on benefiting the public or other external constituencies outside the profession or industry. For example, creating a public relations campaign advising parents to immunize their children or for drivers to drive safely around construction sites.
- **Industry/Professional Advocacy Strategies** - strategies focused on improving the regulatory or economic climate within which members and/or member organizations operate. For example, hiring a lobbyist to advocate for increased reimbursement or reduced regulatory oversight.
- **Convening Strategies** - strategies designed to position the association as a neutral body for the discussion or resolution of professional or industry issues. For example, convening a CEO-only event to discuss shared industry or professional problems like product quality or workforce diversity.

The following chart identifies the relative importance of each strategy (arranged in descending order of “Extremely important” data).

The importance of these Mission-based strategies for associations is not substantially different than in 2022.

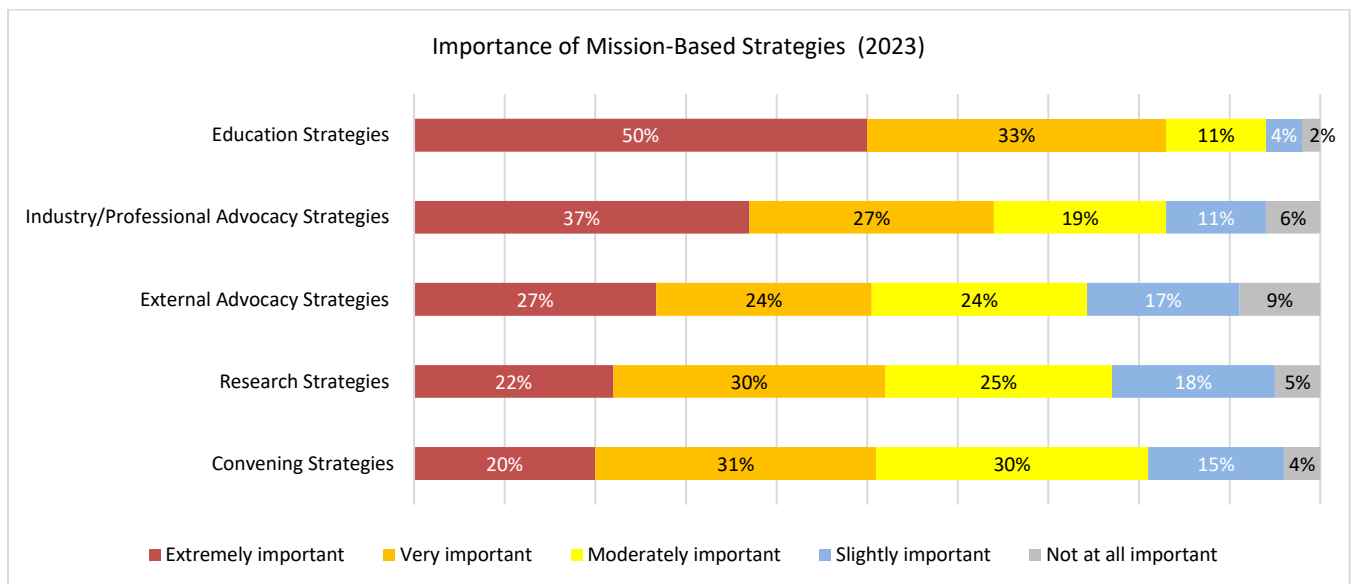


FIGURE 6 LOOKING FORWARD IMPACT 2023

Question Text: How important are each of the following Mission-based strategies to your association over the next three years?

The Challenges Facing Association Strategies

Looking Forward® Impact assesses challenges across 10 association strategy domains. Within these strategies, participants identified the most significant challenges to their association’s success.

Strategic Concerns

Looking Forward® Impact asked respondents to identify the association strategy domains most likely to face challenges in the near future. The following two charts compare the response in 2023 to 2022 and identifies the level of concern respondents have for each strategy (shown in descending order based on the “Concerned” data).

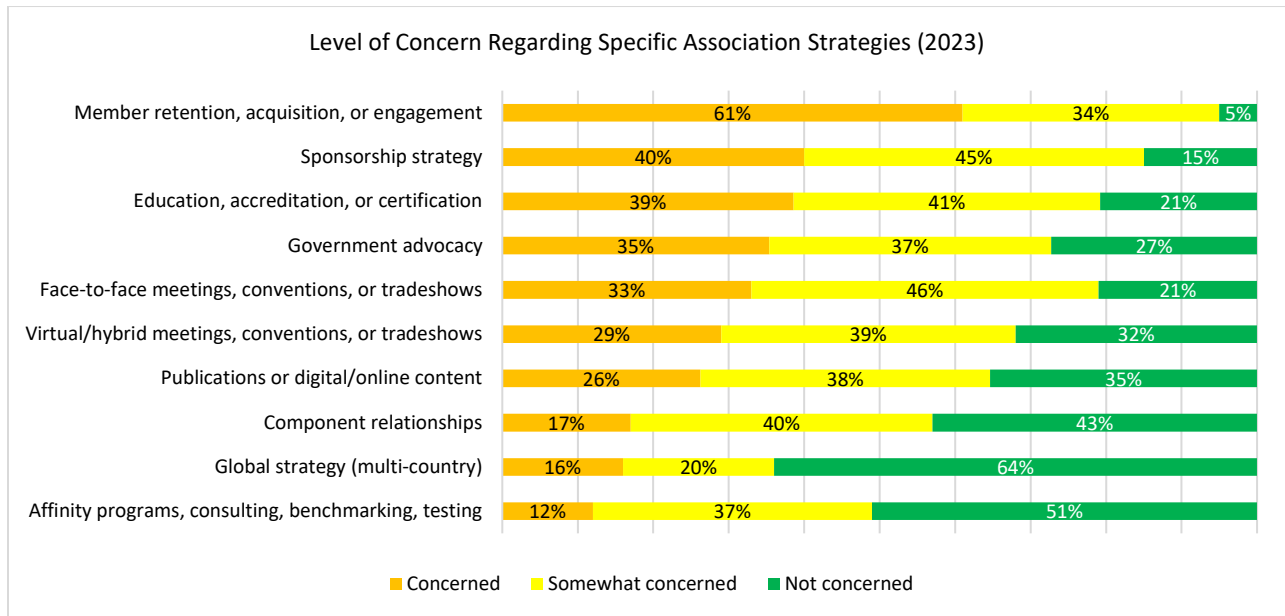


FIGURE 7 LOOKING FORWARD IMPACT 2023

Question text: How concerned are you about each of the following association strategies over the next three years?

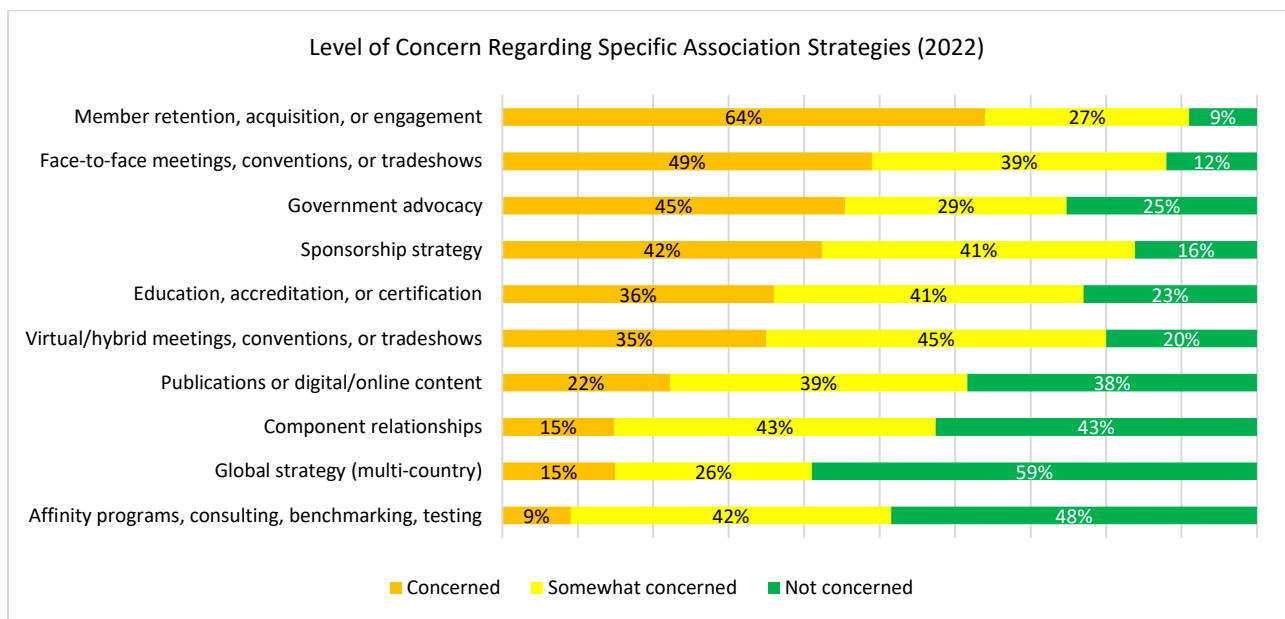


FIGURE 8 LOOKING FORWARD IMPACT 2022

Question text: How concerned are you about each of the following association strategies over the next three years?

Challenges to Face-to-Face Meetings Strategy

Evidence suggests the evolution of the pandemic has decreased concerns specific to face-to-face meetings. The following are the primary anticipated challenges to this strategy.

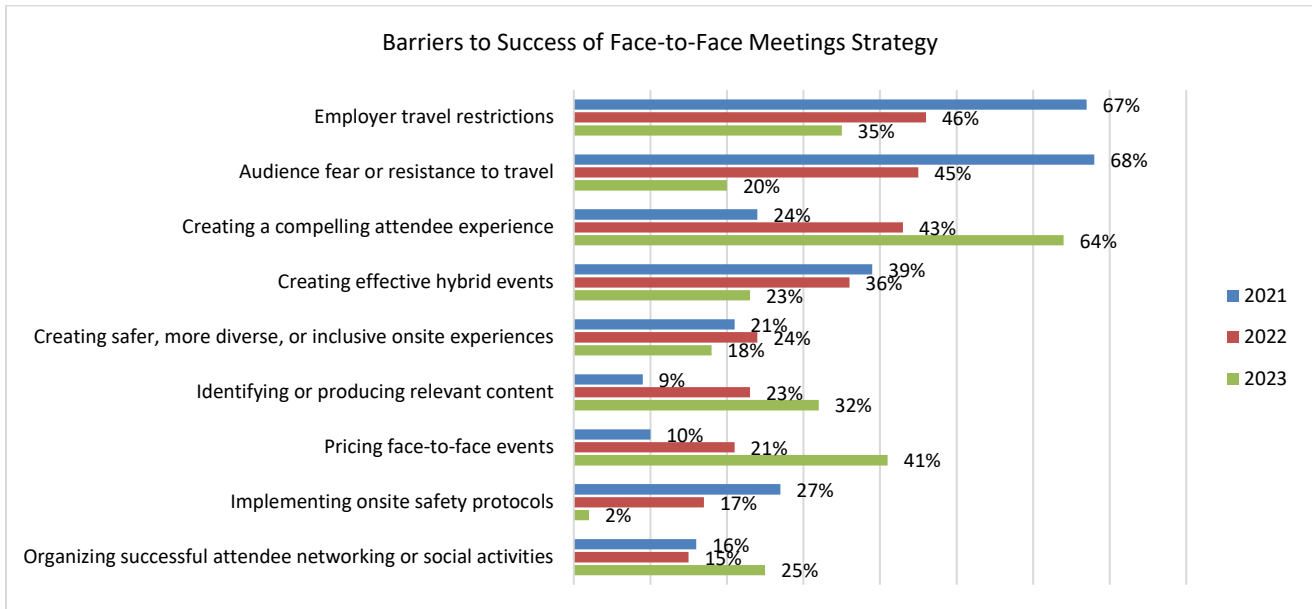


FIGURE 9 LOOKING FORWARD (IMPACT) 2022

Question text: What are the most substantial barriers to the success of your face-to-face meetings? Select up to three.
 (Respondents indicating concern regarding face-to-face meetings only)

Challenges to Membership Strategy

Membership is a foundational strategy essential to the success of most associations. The following are the primary anticipated challenges to this strategy.

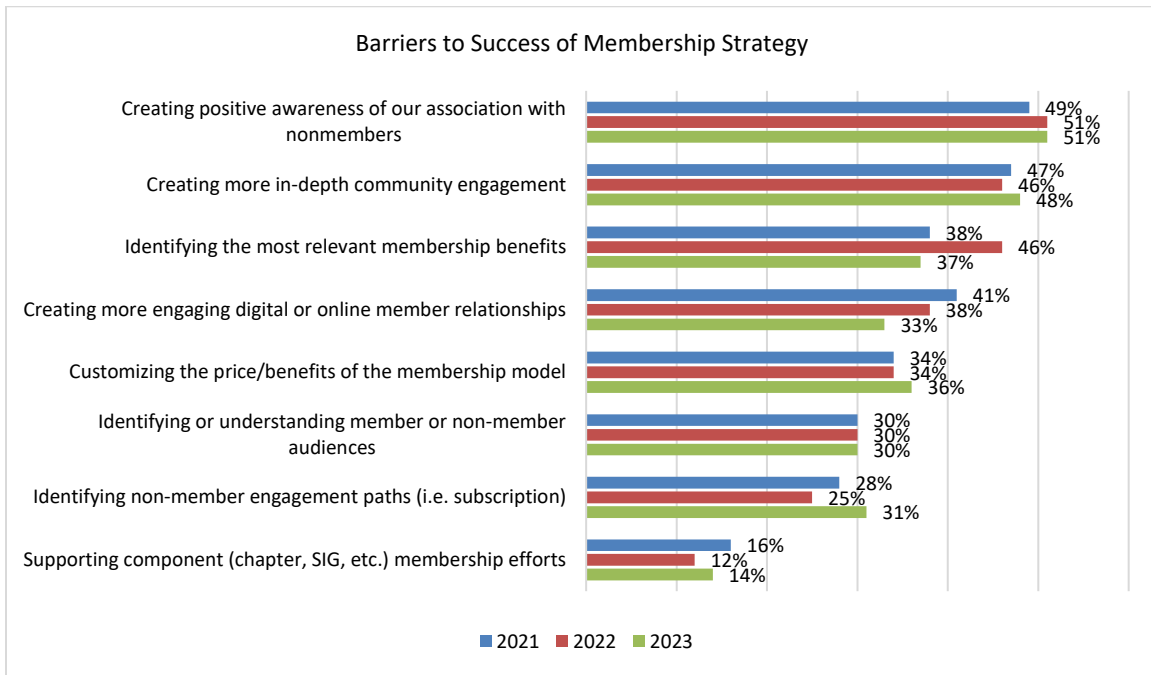


FIGURE 10 LOOKING FORWARD IMPACT

Question text: What are the most substantial barriers to the success of your membership strategy? Select up to three.
 (Respondents indicating concern regarding membership strategy only)

Challenges to Exhibits or Sponsor Strategy

Supplier support of associations is often essential to a sustainable financial model. Respondents were asked to select the primary barriers to the success of their exhibitor or sponsor strategies. The following are the primary anticipated challenges to this strategy.

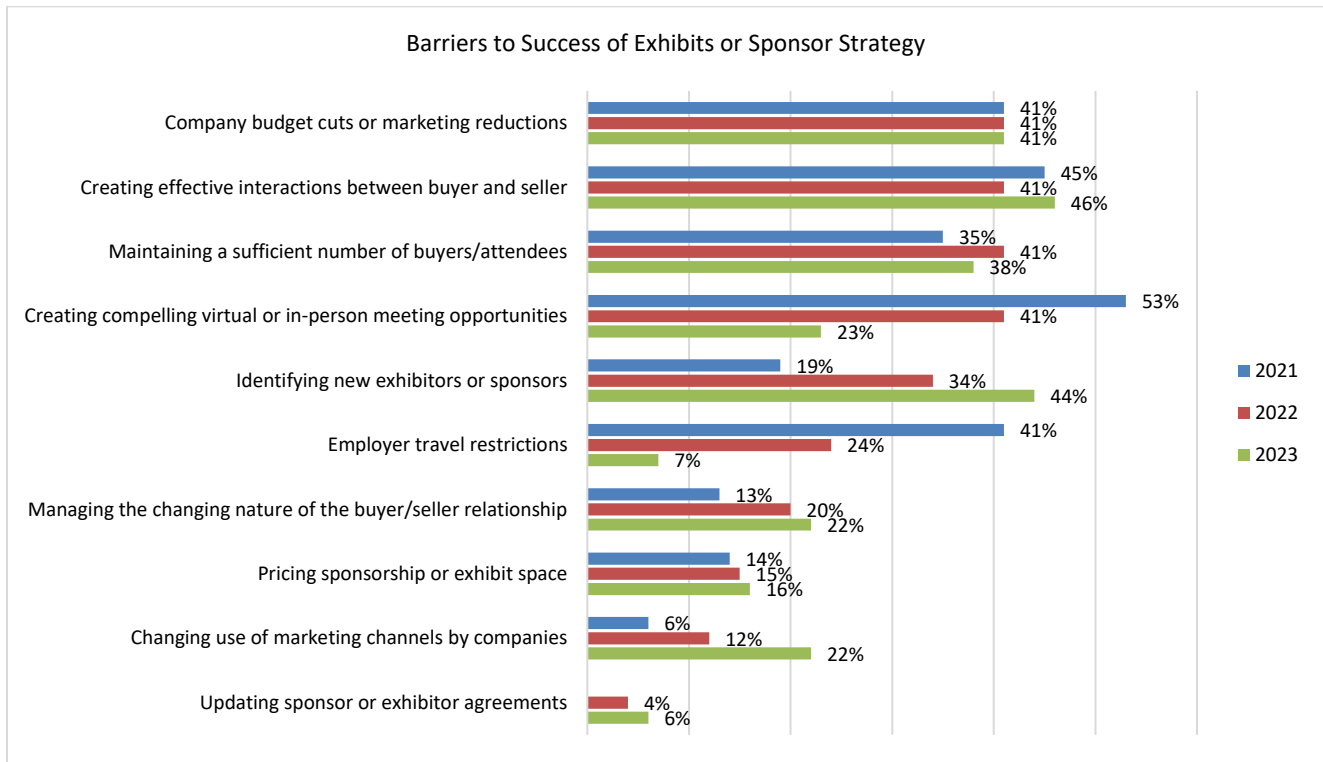


FIGURE 11 LOOKING FORWARD IMPACT

Question text: What are the most substantial barriers to the success of your exhibitor or sponsor strategies? Select up to three.
 (Respondents indicating concern regarding exhibitor/sponsorship strategy only)

Challenges to Virtual/Hybrid Meetings Strategy

Many associations have adjusted their strategy to offer a virtual or hybrid meeting offering to members and stakeholders. The following are the primary anticipated challenges to this strategy.

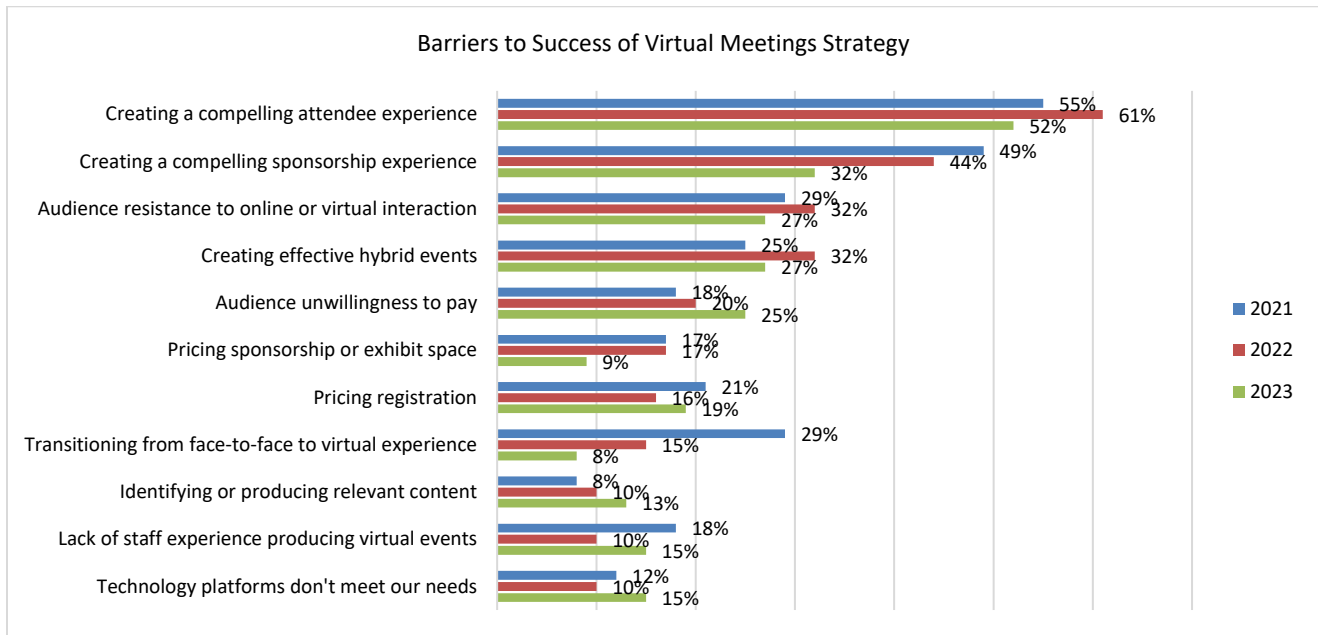


FIGURE 12 LOOKING FORWARD IMPACT

*Question text: What are the most substantial barriers to the success of your virtual meetings? Select up to three.
(Respondents indicating concern regarding virtual meeting strategy only)*

Challenges to Government Advocacy Strategy

Many associations act as an aggregating, unifying voice for their industry or profession. The following are the primary anticipated challenges to this strategy.

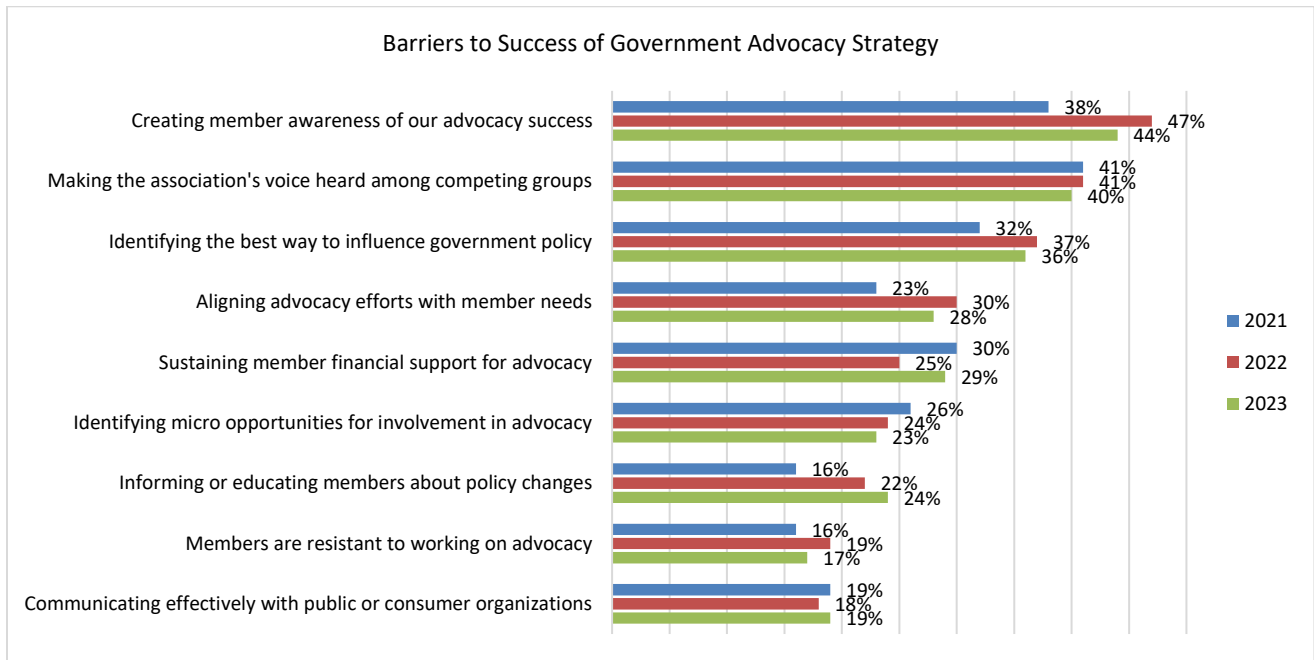


FIGURE 13 LOOKING FORWARD IMPACT

Question text: What are the most substantial barriers to the success of your government advocacy strategy? Select up to three.
 (Respondents indicating concern regarding government advocacy strategy only)

Challenges to Education Strategy

Education is central to many associations' missions. The following are the anticipated challenges to this strategy.

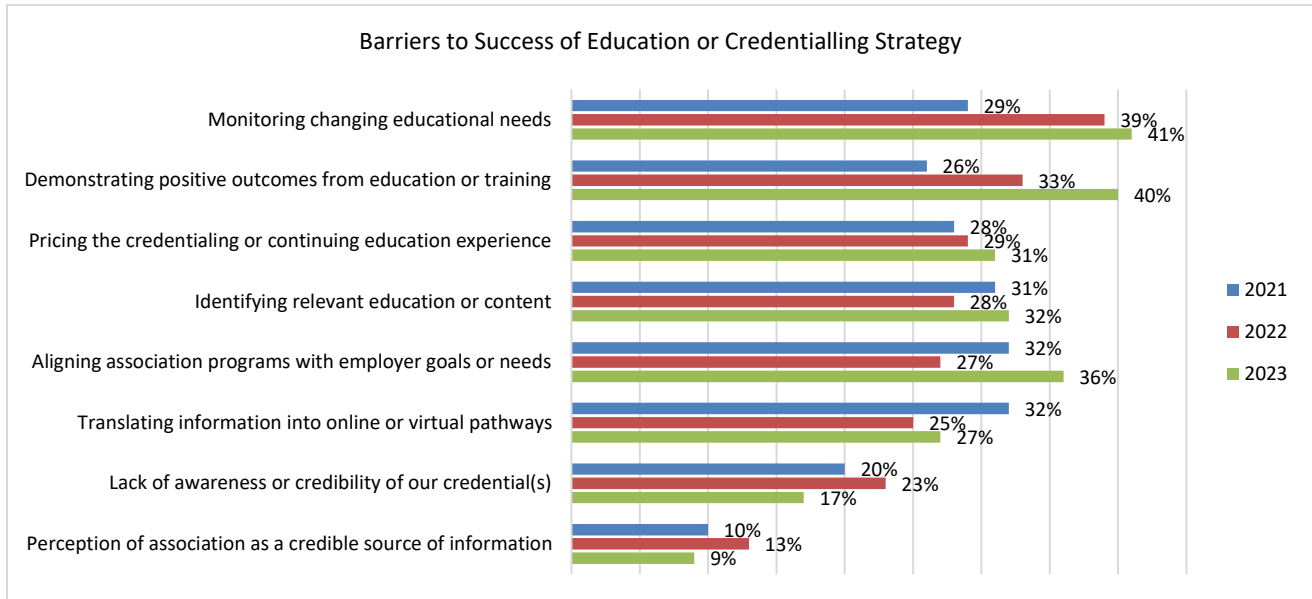


FIGURE 14 LOOKING FORWARD IMPACT

Question text: What are the most substantial barriers to the success of your education or credential (certification/accreditation) strategy?

Select up to three.

(Respondents indicating concern regarding education/credentialing strategy only)

Challenges to Publications or Content Strategy

The creation, vetting, and dissemination of relevant information is one of the most substantial strategies for associations. The following are the anticipated challenges to this strategy.

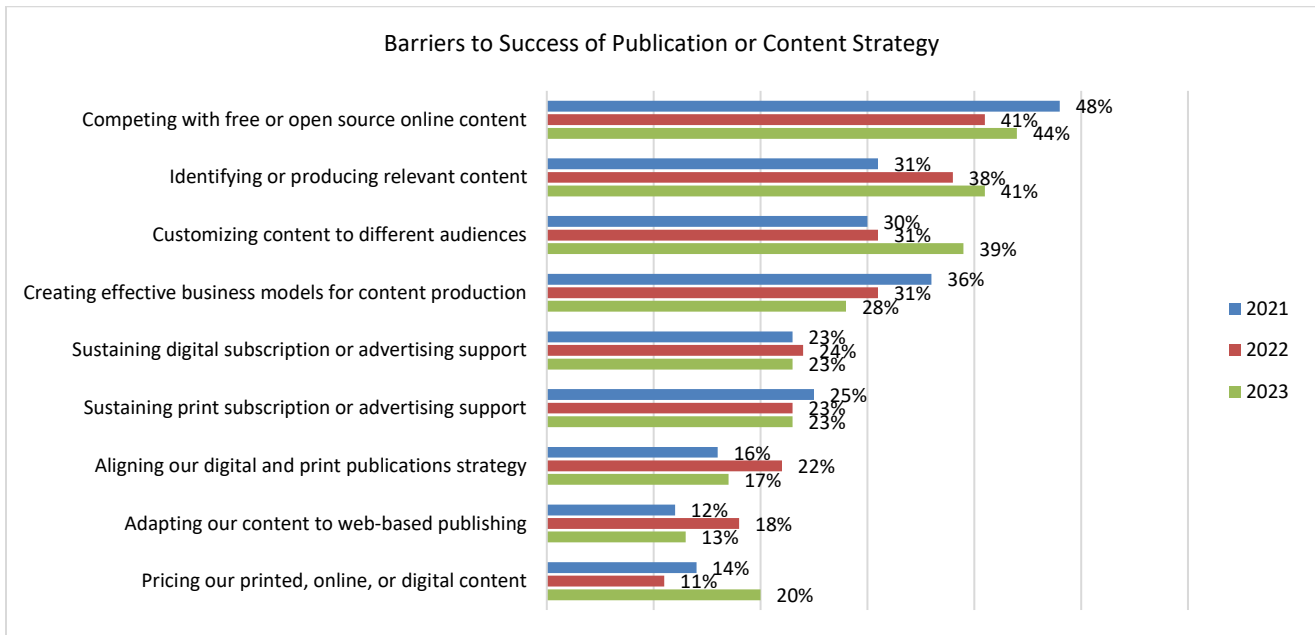


FIGURE 15 LOOKING FORWARD IMPACT

Question text: What are the most substantial barriers to the success of your published, online, or digital content strategy? Select up to three.

(Respondents indicating concern regarding publications/content strategy only)

Challenges to Component Strategy

The component relationship and component strategy are vital to many associations, ranging from efforts at distinct localities to global markets. The following are the anticipated challenges to this strategy.

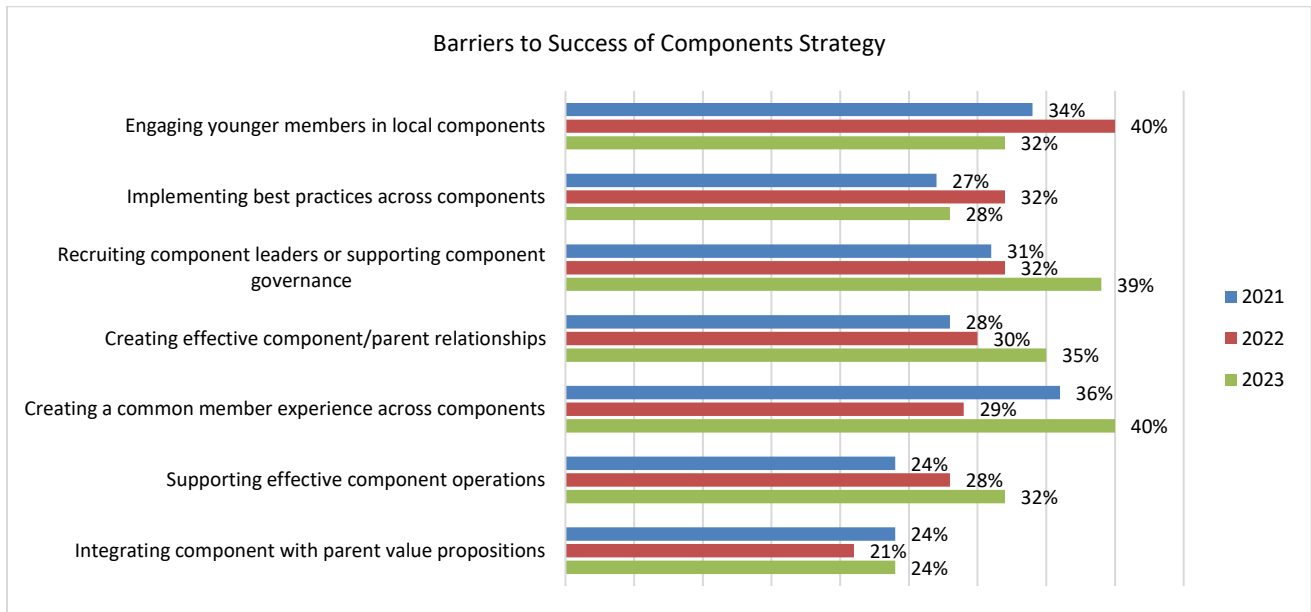


FIGURE 16 LOOKING FORWARD IMPACT

Question text: What are the most substantial barriers to the success of your component relationships or strategy? Select up to three.
 (Respondents indicating concern regarding component strategy only)

Challenges to Global Strategy

Many associations have an international or global reach, targeting audiences from multiple countries or regions.

Respondents who self-identified as international (serving across two or more countries) were asked to identify the most significant challenges to global strategy.

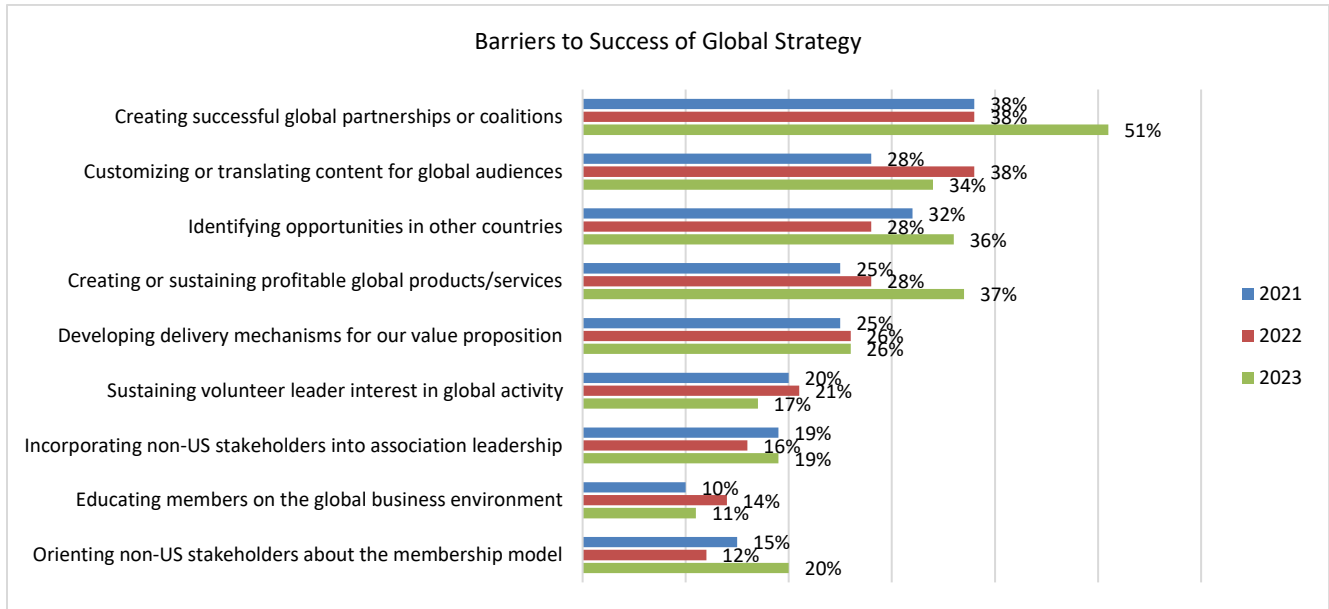


FIGURE 17 LOOKING FORWARD IMPACT

Question text: What are the most substantial barriers to the success of your global strategy? Select up to three.

(Respondents indicating concern regarding global strategy, and with a 2+ country scope, only)

Challenges to Internal Governance

Faster, better decision-making within associations is an essential condition of success. The following are the anticipated challenges to internal association governance.

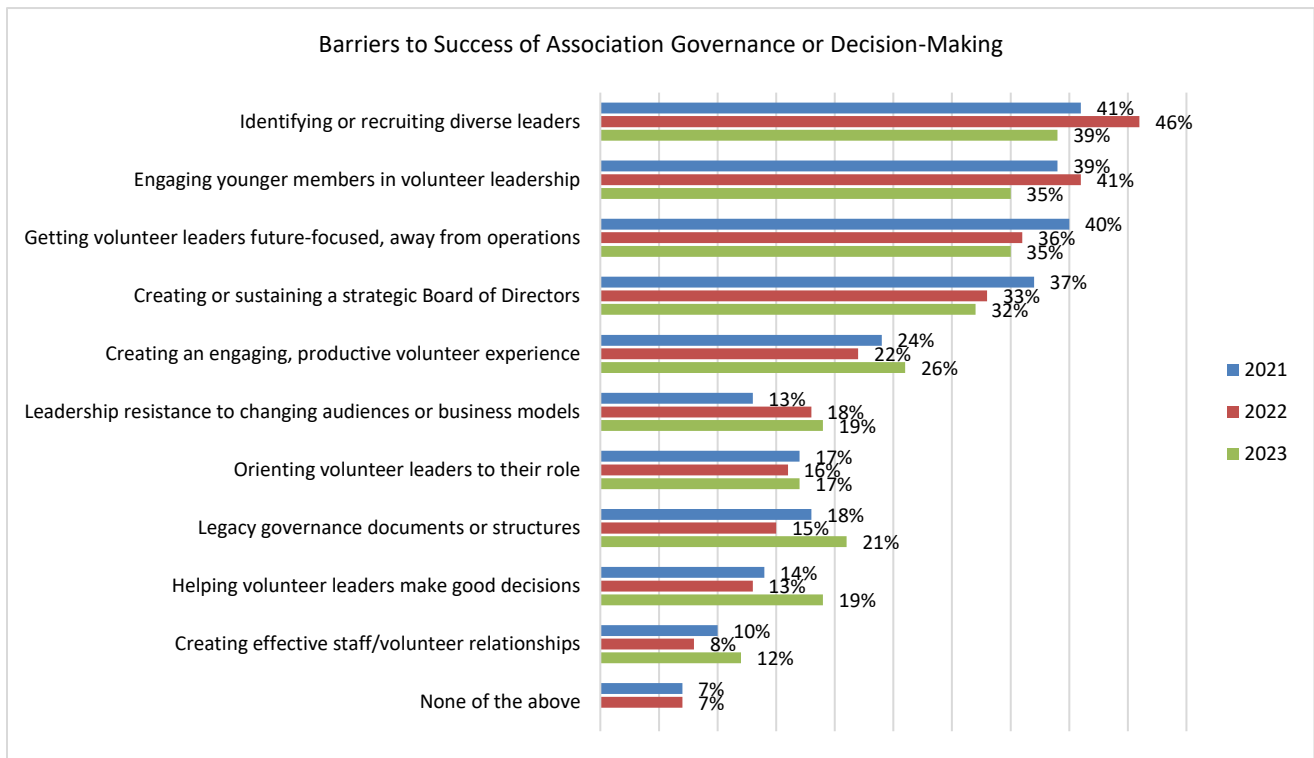


FIGURE 18 LOOKING FORWARD IMPACT

Question text: What are the most substantial barriers to the success of your governance or decision-making? Select up to three.

Moving forward, associations that invest in business process and governance reform allowing for faster, data-based decision-making are more likely to be successful in a dynamic, uncertain environment than those that do not make these investments.

Sources of Association Competition

Associations operate in a highly competitive environment. The following chart identifies the anticipated sources of competition to association products, services, and initiatives.

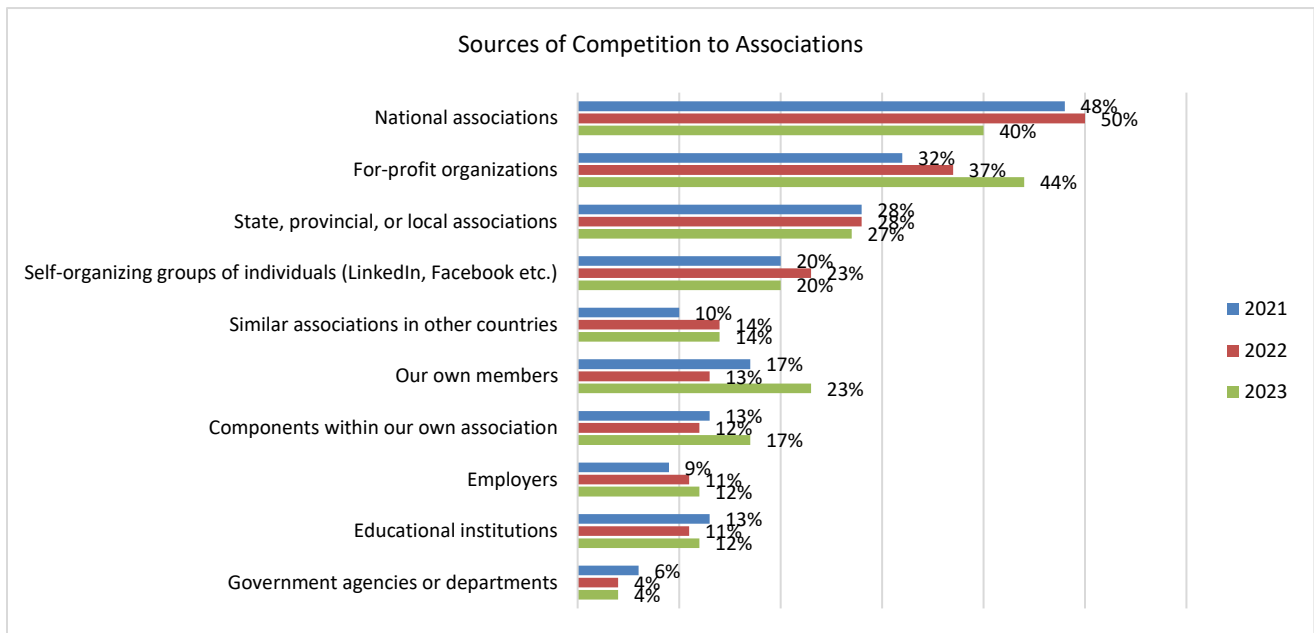


FIGURE 19 LOOKING FORWARD IMPACT

Question Text: What are the top three sources of competition for your association? Select up to three.

In a highly competitive environment, it will be essential for associations to clearly define who they are serving, understand their needs, and create a competitively differentiated value proposition.

In addition, it will be critical to establish business processes designed to monitor and adapt this value proposition to the changing needs of the market and the environment within which the market lives and works.

Closing

It is becoming clear that associations continue to struggle with the changing world in which they need to be successful.

From adapting to workforce issues and the changing competency needs of employers and professionals to establishing effective, profitable global partnerships, it often seems like the world is changing faster than associations can adapt.

The increasing competitive challenge by for-profit organizations is evidence that other entities have discovered the value of creating a relationship with their community and don't necessarily believe the association is the best avenue to create this relationship.

Too many associations are structured around historical assumptions to be successful in a world that has changed so dramatically that these assumptions are obsolete.

Associations that invest in market knowledge, create business process to make effective decisions, and strategically differentiate themselves from competitors are more likely to be successful.

As a new generation of volunteer leaders and executives begins taking their place in leadership, we will have tools, resources and, indeed, opportunities like never before.

During the next 10 years we will discover whether or not our ability as executives will be sufficient to keep the association sector prospering.

Please contact Association Laboratory if you believe we can help in any way.

Good luck.

Appendix 1: Accessing the Looking Forward® Dashboard.

The most recent, relevant, and customizable data to inform your decisions is critical in a dynamic and uncertain environment.

For 12 years, Association Laboratory has produced our annual environmental scan of the association strategy environment – Looking Forward® Impact. This year, it will be critical for association leaders to make faster, better decisions. You will need to know what the future looks like now, not later.

Looking Forward® data is provided via a customizable dashboard, allowing you to focus on the segment of the association sector most critical to you, your staff and Board. See what issues are impacting members and identify the challenges you'll face. Then download the custom report to guide discussions with your team and volunteer leaders.

[Click here for the Looking Forward Dashboard](#)

How to use the dashboard

The Looking Forward Dashboard is a simplified presentation of the environmental scanning data. It does not, for example, provide unique n counts (number of respondents per individual question) for each question. The overall total number of respondents, and the number of filtered respondents if filters are selected, is displayed at the top of the page. Percentages shown are based on these totals.

It is expected that as you drill down into the data and customize your report to your needs, only the most relevant data per question will be included. As a result of the different counting methodologies and the natural limitations of a published document requiring data counts at a particular time, there may be minor differences between the Executive Summary Looking Forward® 2023 and the Looking Forward Dashboard.

The homepage of the data dashboard displays top-level results of the Looking Forward® 2023 data. Clicking “Explore” in each chart will allow you to dig deeper into that topic area.

Each chart has a book icon in the bottom right corner, which allows you to see the question that was asked of respondents.

In addition, once you click “Explore,” you will see a list of filters along the right side of the page. These filters allow you to adjust the data set by annual budget, member size, organization type, location, profession, and organization type (meaning professional or trade). It also allows you to toggle between data years.

At the bottom of each page, the printer graphic allows you to print a PDF of the page to use in conversations with your Board.

Appendix 2: Methodology

Looking Forward® Impact provides an ongoing picture of the forces influencing members' professional and business environment and the implications on association strategy and the association business model.

Association Laboratory developed and deployed an online survey directly and via collaboration with the company's Research Alliance partners. Data collection took place between November 9 and December 29, 2022.

Response options for Looking Forward® Impact 2023 were originally informed by qualitative research conducted in 2021 involving executives from the Association Laboratory Research Alliance membership, combined with Association Laboratory's extensive experience with environmental scanning on behalf of clients representing a wide range of professions and industries.

The study assesses factors affecting the association environment in six domains:

- **Economic Factors** — issues regarding the financial and competitive outlook of association members' industry or profession.
- **Information & Technology Factors** — issues regarding the technology and communications underpinning industry and professional activity.
- **Workforce Factors** — issues regarding the movement, engagement, and competencies of workers in association members' industry or profession.
- **Government Factors** — issues regarding the relationship between association members and local, state, and federal governments.
- **Global Factors** — issues regarding relationships between individuals, companies, and governments across international boundaries.
- **Uncertainty and Adaptation Factors** — issues regarding association members' psychological outlook and their response to rapid and unpredictable change.

For each domain, participants were shown a list of issues and asked to select up to five that would most impact the members of their association over the next three years:

"Which of the following will have the most impact on your members over the next three years? Select up to five."

Following selection of the issues likely to have the greatest impact on members, respondents were asked to identify how those issues or problems would affect their association's strategy.

Respondents first identified their level of concern regarding each of nine general association strategies:

"How concerned are you about each of the following association strategies over the next three years?"

Respondents who indicated concern about a strategy were asked a follow-up question about their specific concerns, such as:

"What are the most substantial barriers to the success of your membership strategy? Select up to three."

The survey also collected information including:

- Changes in the competitive landscape and sources of competition
- General economic outlook for members
- Government jurisdictions with the greatest policy impact on members
- Importance of various Mission-based strategies to association success

A total of 266 individuals completed the survey.

Appendix 3: About Association Laboratory

Association Laboratory helps association leaders make better decisions through research and strategy consulting services, dissemination of association sector research insights and the education of association leaders.

The award-winning company is a national leader in developing sustainable, successful strategy for associations and has been advising associations since 1999 from offices in Washington, DC and Chicago, IL. You can learn more about us at www.associationlaboratory.com.

Research and Strategy Consulting Services

Association Laboratory is a full-service research and strategy firm. We lead evidence-based, collaborative engagements addressing the spectrum of association challenges. From strategic planning and membership model design to online education and global expansion, the company helps you identify and implement successful business strategy.

Common engagements include the following.

Strategic Planning	Membership Value Proposition and Modeling Strategy
Environmental Scanning	Online Education Strategy
Content Strategy	Component Value Proposition Strategy
Credentialing Strategy	Global Strategy
DEI Strategy	Emerging Leader Strategy

Association Sector Research and Insights

Association Laboratory collects and disseminates association sector research aggregating information collected from hundreds of association leaders; providing you with the most recent, relevant, and useful information you need to guide conversations at your association.

Association Leader Education and Competency Development

Association Laboratory produces strategic educational content designed to help association leaders develop the competencies necessary for success. Research-based and peer driven this content provides you with an engaging, effective means of improving the success of your leadership and decision-making.

Appendix 4: Discussion Guide

Introduction

Without understanding the future in which your members live and work, it is impossible to develop successful, sustainable long-term strategy.

It is therefore essential that forward-looking leaders are prepared to **foster and lead engaging conversations about the future.**

This **Looking Forward® Impact 2023 Discussion Guide** is designed to help you lead a productive conversation about the future of your industry or profession. A companion piece to the **Looking Forward® Dashboard**, it helps you identify, deepen understanding, and reach consensus on three essential questions:

1. *What are the **environmental factors** with the greatest impact on your members?* – Identify the issues with the most impact on your members and the decisions they will be making over the next three years.
2. *What are the **implications of these factors** for your association’s strategy?* – Assess the impact of evolving member decision-making on the future strategies of the association. *How should the association **act on this information**?* – Determine what the association needs to strengthen, evolve, or reduce to be more successful, given these implications.

By using the Looking Forward® Impact 2023 Discussion Guide and Dashboard, you will arrive at a research-based, consensus understanding of the future of your industry or profession and the implications for your association’s strategy.

Consider the following.

In 2016, the Harvard Business Review published a study of 30,000 publicly listed companies over a 40-year span that reached a striking conclusion:

“Companies are dying at a faster rate than ever before.”

The reasons, according to the research:

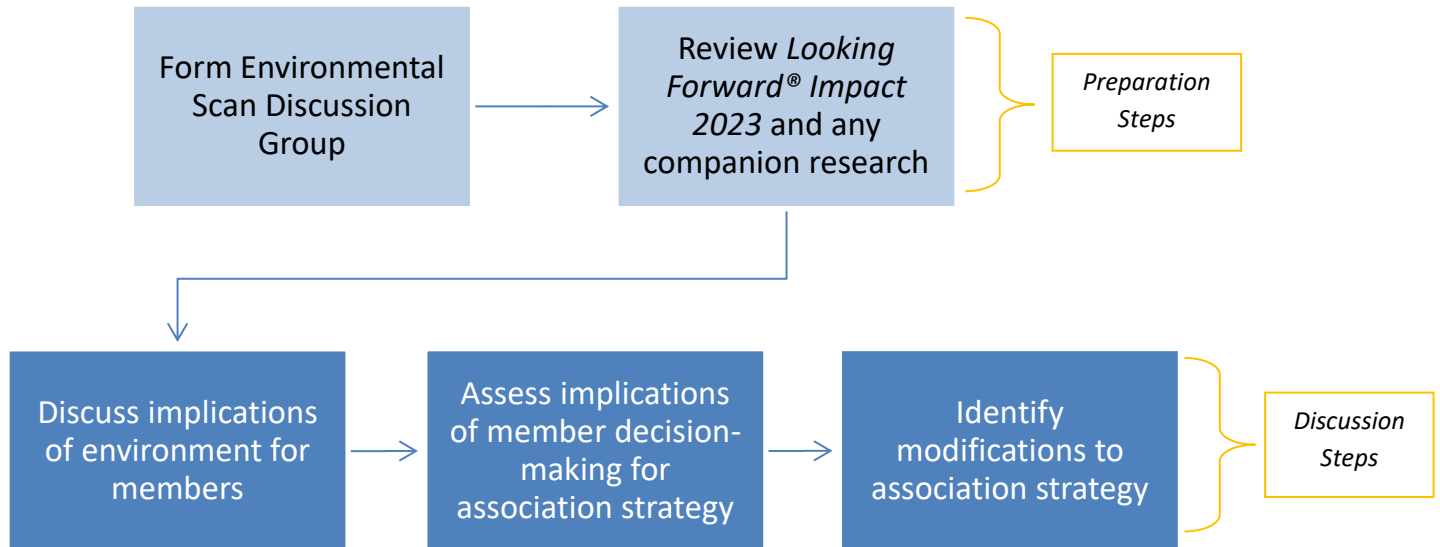
“Organizations are dying younger because they are failing to adapt to the growing complexity of their environment.”¹

The tools in your **Looking Forward® Discussion Guide** will help prepare you and your volunteer leaders to adapt to an uncertain future, and to continue advancing your Mission and serving your members and other stakeholders.

¹ The Biology of Corporate Survival, Harvard Business Review Jan/Feb 2016

Overview: Leading the Futures Discussion

The futures discussion process involves a series of iterative steps resulting in consensus on the factors with the greatest impact on your members and corresponding association strategy. The process involves the following key steps:



These steps provide a structured process for reviewing, understanding, and applying data-driven, future-focused knowledge to your association's strategy.

How to Use This Discussion Guide

The following sections will guide you through the process of creating a productive futures discussion within your organization.

Section 1 provides information on creating the discussion group, reviewing the research, and tips for successful facilitation.

Section 2 provides a sample agenda for a full-day meeting, and participant worksheets to be used during the meeting to facilitate the conversation and reach consensus on critical issues.

Section 1: Preparing for a Futures Discussion Meeting

The following steps will help you create an effective discussion group and guide the preparation and setup of a productive futures discussion meeting.

Create an Environmental Scan Discussion Group

Assemble a group of 8–12 people to participate in the discussion.

This group can consist of staff only, volunteer leaders only, or some appropriate combination based on the culture of your association. You can also include external subject matter experts.

The participants in your discussion should meet the following criteria:

- **Intellectual Diversity** – Participants should represent a diversity of perspectives and opinions regarding the association, its activities, and its members.
- **Association Commitment** – Participants should be important to the long-term successful implementation of strategies designed to address the issues identified in the discussion; and they should be willing to take the time to participate fully in discussions and, if necessary, post-discussion follow-up.
- **Personal Capability and Capacity** – Participants should have the intellectual curiosity and willingness to think strategically about the future of your industry, profession, and association.

Advice and Tips

There is no perfect group. Don't worry about precision.

The size of the group should be sufficient to have diverse perspectives without creating extensive logistical expense or hassle.

In Association Laboratory's experience, the group should be no less than 8 people and no more than 12 people.

Organize an Environmental Scan Discussion Meeting

Identify a one-day timeframe to organize the group to discuss and decide on the changing nature of the environment facing your members and the implications for your association's strategy.

You will need space for a group of 8–12 people to meet. In addition, you will need sufficient space for 2–3 small break-out groups and their corresponding discussions.

Advice and Tips

It is important to have a quiet, reflective environment without the daily distractions of work. Consider an off-site meeting venue or other place that allows you to have robust conversations.

Conduct a Pre-Meeting Review of the Goals, Process, and Research

Prior to the meeting, provide *Looking Forward*® 2023 and any other research or information you believe is valuable to participants and organize a 90-minute webinar or meeting to orient individuals to the onsite discussions.

The goal of this advance webinar or meeting is to address any questions about the goals, process, or data prior to discussions onsite. This improves the efficiency of the onsite interactions by reducing the amount of time necessary for administrative, logistical, or process discussions.

Agenda items include the following:

- Introduction of participants
- Review of the logistics, agenda, and process for the onsite discussions
- Presentation of the data from the **Looking Forward**® **Dashboard**, which you can filter to provide them with information unique to your type, size, or location of your association.
- Answer questions regarding the data, process, or other issues

Following this webinar, participants should be prepared to discuss the issues onsite without extensive additional orientation.

Organize Small Groups and Leaders for Onsite Discussions

The following are key steps guiding the onsite discussions. Modify as you see fit given your needs and resource constraints.

Create small discussion groups:

Once your participants have been recruited, divide the participants into smaller subgroups, each with a small group leader (more about leaders below).

Small discussion groups make participation easier because many people interact more productively in small groups.

In addition, when separate small groups consider the same question or issue independently and simultaneously and come to the same conclusion, it creates **organic consensus**.

Each group should be approximately the same size, and the makeup of each group should represent the diversity of participants and perspectives.

Designate a moderator:

The moderator is responsible for acting as a resource on the process for each small group and, if necessary, helping address any challenges that may occur with the discussion. The moderator can also act as an independent or objective voice on an issue.

Designate a leader for each small group:

Small group leaders are responsible for keeping the participants on task, making sure the groups are finished within the designated time, and organizing the small groups report to the larger group.

Advice and Tips

The following are tips to improve the productivity of your discussions based on Association Laboratory's experience facilitating staff and leadership retreats.

- Abide by the following **standards of conduct** throughout the process:
 - Participants are to discuss and decide issues with the best interests of the association in mind.
 - Participants are not "representing" a department, constituency, or organization.
 - Participants should participate in an objective, open, and honest manner.
- **Be patient** – Keep the conversation high-level, and don't rush ahead. Develop understanding before conclusions and develop conclusions before recommendations.
- **Be open** – If you find that you disagree with someone, explore why. Do you have different definitions of terms? Do you have different perspectives on the issue? Do you have different priorities or goals?
- **Be trusting** – Trust the process but don't sacrifice outcomes on behalf of the process. If you need to adjust the agenda or explore an unplanned question, do so. But do so with intent and try to stay within the basic parameters of the process.
- **Be fearless** – Don't be afraid to ask difficult or nontraditional questions. Questions lead to understanding and unique perspectives.

Section 2: Onsite Discussion Steps & Supporting Materials

Template Agenda for a One-Day Meeting

The following outlines a potential agenda for a one-day meeting.

Association Laboratory believes that one full day of discussions allows for sufficient consideration of the issues without taking undue amounts of time or logistical expense. This agenda may be modified onsite to ensure sufficient time is devoted to important issues.

Time	Activity	Discussion
8:00– 8:15 am	Welcome	
8:15 am	Call to Order	
8:15 am – 8:30 am	Overview of Agenda and Process	
8:30 – 8:40 am	Given the information in <i>Looking Forward® Impact 2023</i> , supplementary association research, and our experiences with members, what are the top three issues with the most impact on our members?	Individuals Reflection: Participants complete Question 1 of the Looking Forward® Worksheet on their own, identifying the top three issues impacting members.
8:45 – 9:45 am		Allow 5 minutes to break into small groups. Each small group reviews the individual responses of the other participants in their group and agrees on the top three issues impacting members.
9:45– 10:00 am	Coffee Break	
10:00–10:30 am		Large group discussion. Each small group presents their top three issues. Moderator identifies common themes among the issues.
10:30–10:40 am	Given the identified thematic issues facing our members and considering the data in <i>Looking Forward® Impact 2023</i> , what are the implications for the future of our association and its strategy?	Individuals Reflection: Participants complete Question 2 of the Looking Forward® Worksheet on their own, identifying the top three implications for association strategy.

10:45–11:45 am

Allow 5 minutes to break into small groups.

Each small group reviews the individual responses of the other participants in their group and agrees on the top three implications for the association and its strategy.

11:45–12:00 Noon

Email and Relaxation Break

12:00 Noon –

Lunch

12:30 pm

12:30–1:00 pm

Large group discussion. Each small group presents their top three implications. Moderator identifies common themes among the implications.

1:00– 1:20 pm

Given our discussions, and general agreement on changes impacting our members and the implications for our association, what do we **need to do differently** over the next three years to be successful?

Individuals Reflection: Participants complete Question 3 of the Looking Forward® Worksheet on their own, describing the top three most important changes the association will need to implement.

Allow 5 minutes to break into small groups.

1:25 – 2: 30 pm

Each small group reviews the individual responses of the other participants in their group and agrees on the top changes the association needs to consider to be successful.

2:30 – 2:45 pm

Coffee Break

2:45–3:45 pm

Large group discussion. Each small group presents their top three identified changes. Moderator identifies common themes among the identified changes.

3:45 pm – 4:30 pm

What are **next steps** in the process necessary to translate the preliminary ideas into action?

The large group agrees on the priority of the issues to be addressed and discusses and decides on next steps necessary to advance the discussion throughout the association and assess how best to implement change.

Onsite Worksheet for Participants

The following worksheet is designed to guide discussion group participants through the key questions affecting future-oriented strategy and arrive at consensus. It should be used in conjunction with the full-day meeting agenda on the previous pages.

Instructions to Participants

This worksheet is designed to help you organize your thoughts and ideas before discussing your views with your colleagues. It should be used in conjunction with the information from *Looking Forward*® 2023 and any complementary research or information you have received.

You will answer the question in each area just prior to the period of discussion.

Do not complete all the questions at once – your response to each question will be based on the outcome of the small group discussions for previous questions.

Advice and Tips

The following are tips to improve the productivity of your discussions based on Association Laboratory’s experience facilitating staff and leadership retreats.

- The point of the worksheets is simply to help each participant organize their thoughts prior to discussion. It is not a test.
- People will complete the worksheets differently. Some will scrawl notes, some write paragraphs, and some won’t write anything. They can decide to use the tool in any manner they see fit.
- While for prioritization purposes, Association Laboratory recommends 3 responses for each question, some people will have more, some less. Note though, that a short, undeveloped answer may be insufficient to determine implications and a long list of potential issues make prioritization difficult.

Question 1: Member Environment

Given the information in *Looking Forward*® 2023, supplementary association research, and our experiences with members, what are the **top three issues** with the most impact on our members?

Question 2: Implications for the Association

After completion of Question 1.

Given the identified thematic issues facing our members and considering the data in *Looking Forward*[®] 2023, what are the **three most important implications** for the future of our association and its strategy?

Question 3: Changes to Association Strategy

After completion of Question 2.

Given our discussions, and general agreement on changes impacting our members and the implications for our association, what **three things do we need to do differently** over the next three years to be successful?

Appendix 5: Zoom Tip Sheet

Instructions to Provide Attendees:

Update Names

To change a name when in the meeting.

1. Look in the top right corner of the square with your name or photo and click on the three dots
2. Click on rename
3. Put in correct name

To Unmute:

Hold down the spacebar while you're talking, like a walkie-talkie

Instructions for Sharing Documents

Annotation

You will need to have your desktop shared for the annotate tool to show up.

1. Annotate will show up in the menu bar
2. Attendees should click on it and can use stamp to stamp something on the screen or draw or type text onto the screen to share.
3. Remember to clear the annotation before moving on.
4. You can also click on your menu bar under More and choose Show names of annotation to have people's name associated with their annotation.

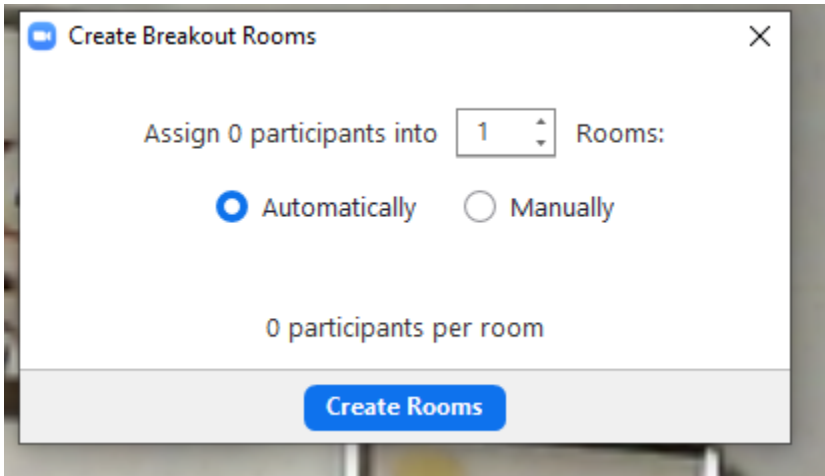
Sharing Screen

You will need to re-share a screen per document that you want to share if they're in different documents.

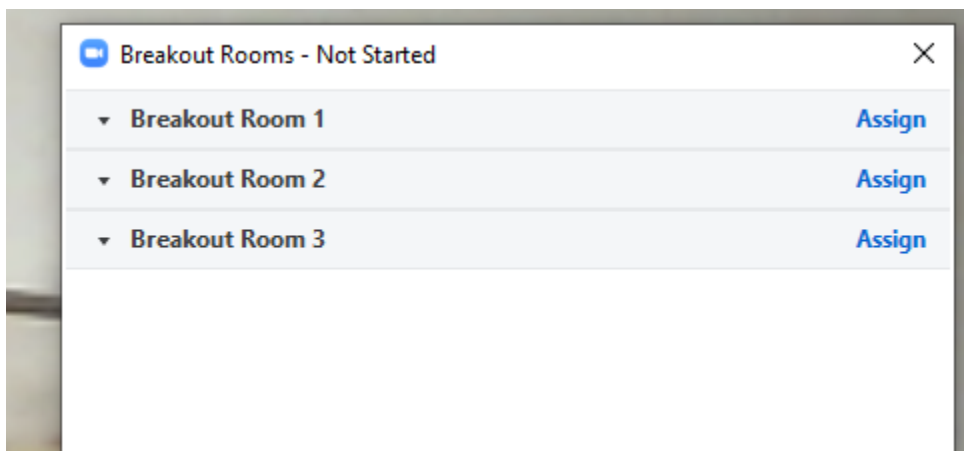
You can also share Whiteboard (when you look at Share Screen, Whiteboard will be one of the options), which gives you the same choices as Annotation and allows you to draw, write or spotlight content on a whiteboard via computer.

Instructions for Breakout Rooms

You will need to be made host to use this feature. It will be on your menu bar once you're made host. You can set up breakout rooms two ways: Automatic (random assignment) or manually (where you place people into rooms). You can't put people into a breakout room until they're all on the call.



1. Choose the amount of breakout rooms you want.
2. They will then display with the word Assign



When you click on assign, you will see the people's names, and you just click on the box next to their name to put them in the room.

- If people join late, and you need to go back to the breakout rooms to add them, instead of assign, it will have the number of the people in the room. Click on that number to get the list of names.
 - You can rename breakout rooms (people do not see the names) and delete breakout rooms from the breakout room window.
 - If you put someone in the wrong room, click on their name, and it will let you re-assign them.
3. Under Options at the bottom of the breakout room screen, you can choose to move people automatically into the rooms and out of the rooms at a set time (you can set the time on that window), or you can do so manually. You can also set the timer for the countdown when you close the room (default is 60 seconds).
 4. Once people are in the rooms, you as the host can move in and out of the rooms. In addition, you can send all of the rooms a broadcast message—maybe to let them know the halfway point and two-minute warning.
 5. When you hit open breakout room, let people know they will see an invitation to join a breakout room on the screen and must click on it to be taken to the room.

How to Use Polls

You can use polls, but they need to be added into the Zoom space ahead of the meeting, so if you plan to use any, send a week ahead to Shawn so she can get it in there. Then you click on the poll in the menu bar, you can choose which poll you would like to display and click Launch Poll.

Settings We Use

1. Make recurring meeting so you can use same room for the Discussion Leaders orientation
2. Use Waiting Room so you can do pre-tech run-through without participants joining

Security Passcode Waiting Room

3. Use another staff as an Alternative Host
4. Under Settings (left hand side), Under Meetings, enable the following choices:
 - a. Mute Participants Upon Entry
 - b. Chat
 - c. Private Chat
 - d. Auto saving chats
 - e. File transfer
 - f. Co-host
 - g. Polling
 - h. Screen sharing
 - i. Who can share: All Participants
 - ii. How can start sharing when someone else is sharing: Host Only
 - i. Annotation
 - j. Whiteboard
 - k. Meeting reactions
 - l. Allow removed participants to rejoin
 - m. Allow participants to rename themselves
 - n. Breakout room