

Intergenerational Member Engagement

DESTINY HASTINGS, MBA | Director, Partner Development, Naylor Association Solutions



Associations today are serving a membership base that spans multiple generations—each with its own communication styles, career priorities, and event preferences. While this diversity presents challenges, it also creates opportunities for associations to build stronger, more dynamic communities.

To truly engage members of all ages, associations must be intentional about their communications, events, and career resources—meeting members where they are while fostering connections across generations.

Communicating Across Generations: Finding the Right Balance

Effective communication is the foundation of member engagement, but with four (and soon five) generations in the workforce, a one-size-fits-all approach won't work. Understanding where and how each generation prefers to engage is key:

Baby Boomers (1946–1964): Prefer structured, detailed communication via email, newsletters, and print publications.

Gen X (1965–1980): Appreciate direct, no-nonsense communication, often favoring email, LinkedIn, and industry forums.

Millennials (1981–1996): Gravitate toward digital-first, interactive content like social media, videos, and webinars.

Gen Z (1997–2012): Expect mobile-friendly, real-time engagement on platforms like TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube, with an emphasis on authenticity and social impact.

A successful communication strategy blends these preferences, ensuring every member receives relevant and engaging content. Associations should embrace segmented email campaigns, dynamic social media strategies, and AI-driven personalization to deliver the right message in the right format.

Events That Bring Generations Together

Association events provide a powerful opportunity to connect members across generations—but only if they are designed with multi-generational engagement in mind. Here's how to ensure events resonate with attendees of all ages:

Offer multiple formats: Hybrid events, on-demand content, and in-person networking ensure accessibility and flexibility.

Facilitate intergenerational mentorship: Structured networking sessions and peer-matching programs can connect younger and seasoned professionals in meaningful ways.

Diversify session styles: Traditional keynotes appeal to some, while interactive workshops, roundtable discussions, and gamified experiences engage others.

Leverage technology: Event apps, live polling, and digital Q&A features encourage participation and feedback from all generations.

A successful event strategy ensures that each attendee finds value in the experience—regardless of their career stage or preferred engagement style.

Building an Inclusive Career Center

Career development is a cornerstone of association membership, but the needs of an early-career professional differ greatly from those of a seasoned executive. Associations can foster long-term engagement by offering career resources tailored to each stage of the professional journey:

Personalized career tools: While younger members seek resume-building support and job search tools, senior members may look for leadership development and board opportunities.

Reverse mentorship programs: Encourage knowledge sharing by pairing emerging professionals with experienced leaders, allowing both to learn from each other.

Comprehensive job board offerings: Ensure postings include entry-level, mid-career, and executive roles to serve all generations.

Skill-building for all ages: Provide leadership training for younger professionals and technology workshops for more experienced members to keep learning accessible for all.

By designing career resources that evolve alongside members' professional journeys, associations can strengthen long-term retention and engagement.

Fostering a Thriving, Multigenerational Community

The real key to intergenerational engagement isn't just offering the right tools—it's creating a culture of inclusivity, adaptability, and shared learning. Associations that recognize and celebrate the strengths of every generation will foster a stronger, more connected community where all members feel valued.

Engagement isn't about choosing between tradition and innovation—it's about finding the right balance to serve and connect members at every stage of their careers. By embracing generational diversity, associations can create more meaningful experiences, build deeper relationships, and ensure long-term sustainability.

If you would like to learn more about member engagement, visit Naylor for insights, strategies, and solutions tailored for associations.
www.naylor.com



Meet Destiny

DESTINY HASTINGS is the Director of Partner Development at Naylor Association Solutions, where she builds meaningful partnerships to strengthen associations and the communities they serve. She holds an MBA from Kaplan University and is completing her EdD in Leadership at Saint Mary's University of Minnesota, with dissertation research focused on multigenerational workplaces. Her work draws on interviews with Baby Boomer and Millennial human resources professionals, examining how these groups navigated challenges and change during the Covid-19 pandemic. Reach her at destiny.hastings@naylor.com.