



Tips and tools
FOR CONTENT & DESIGN

Content Strategy for Associations

Small association teams often create great value for members through content despite tight budgets and small staff. This guide provides practical ways to turn these limits into opportunities.

Create Content for Dual Audiences

Create content that serves existing members while attracting potential new ones.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER	WHAT TO DO
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Who are your current members, and what content matters most to them?• What information would prospective members need to understand your industry?• How can you showcase member expertise while making content accessible to newcomers?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Request in-depth contributed content from subject-matter experts within your membership.• Pair industry terminology with brief explanations that welcome newcomers.• Feature member success stories that demonstrate tangible benefits.• Create a content matrix that maps different content types to specific audience segments.

Create Content That Works in Multiple Ways

Instead of creating isolated pieces, develop content that can be repurposed across multiple channels.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER	WHAT TO DO
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What existing content has been most valuable to your members?• Which formats and channels reach different segments of your audience?• How can you extend the life cycle of your most resource-intensive content?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Extract insights from comprehensive research for social media campaigns.• Convert webinar recordings into blog posts, guides, or podcast episodes.• Transform member stories into testimonials for marketing materials.• Create tiered content with free previews that lead to member-exclusive material.

 Before creating any major content piece, plan at least three ways it will be repurposed in different formats.



Get the Most From Your Content Tools


Make the most of technology to help your small team do more.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER	WHAT TO DO
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Does your current CMS support your evolving content needs?• What manual processes could be automated or streamlined?• Which content formats consistently deliver the highest member engagement?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop templates for recurring content types to speed production.• Create a comprehensive style guide to ensure consistency even with multiple contributors.• Invest in affordable tools for planning, creation, and distribution.• Use analytics to identify high-impact content and focus limited resources there.

Get Teams to Work Together on Content

Break down walls between departments to get more from your content.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER	WHAT TO DO
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What content goals do different departments share?• How can a single content piece serve multiple organizational objectives?• Where are departments duplicating efforts that could be combined?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Create a unified content calendar that supports organizational goals.• Design content that meets both educational and marketing needs.• Share tools and resources across departments.• Establish consistent messaging guidelines across all member touchpoints.

 *Have a monthly meeting where different teams share their content plans and find ways to work together. Put one person in charge of documenting the plans and assigning execution.*

Create Clear Paths From Free to Member-Only Content

Guide industry newcomers toward membership while providing value at every stage.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER	WHAT TO DO
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What information do professionals need at different stages of their careers?• How can you create a logical progression from introductory to advanced content?• What content would show clear value at each step toward membership?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Create “Industry 101” series that lead naturally to more advanced topics.• Develop milestone content addressing challenges at each career stage.• Design “day-in-the-life” content showcasing member journeys.



Know When to Seek External Support

Outside content experts can help with creation while your teams focus on high-priority, bigger-mission association initiatives.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER	WHAT TO DO
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Is content quality or consistency suffering due to bandwidth limitations?• Do you need specialized expertise for certain technical topics?• Are there seasonal peaks when additional support would be valuable?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop partnerships with agencies that understand association contexts.• Bring in specialized expertise for technical topics beyond staff knowledge.• Use external support during peak periods without adding permanent headcount.• Get an unbiased, big-picture perspective on your content strategy.

Quick Checklist

Use this quick checklist to see whether your content is doing the most with what you have:

- Each piece of content helps keep current members and attract new ones.
- We can use each major content piece in at least three different ways.
- Our templates and tools make creating content faster and more consistent.
- Our teams collaborate on content instead of duplicating efforts.
- We have clear steps that guide newcomers toward becoming members.
- We offer enough free content to attract interest, with high-quality and more detailed content for members only.
- We know when to get outside help for the best results.

