The Small Association’s Guide to
Generating Non-Dues Revenue
8 great ways to drive revenue beyond membership dues
Introduction

You need to grow your association’s revenue. But, you can’t always simply raise the cost of membership dues. That approach can turn off new and current members, leading to a drop in member recruitment and retention. So, what can you do to work within your budget while continuing to provide members with excellent value — even with ups and downs in the economy?

The power of non-dues revenue

For associations, non-dues revenue is revenue from any source other than membership fees. Non-dues revenue is always an important aspect of any association’s financial health. In today’s economic climate, it’s even more important.

Like many associations, yours likely goes through periods of flat or declining memberships. Non-dues revenue can help smooth out disruptions in the economic cycle, allowing you to maintain budgets and continue to provide members with the levels of service they expect.

How to drive non-dues revenue — even with a small staff

The type of non-dues revenue you pursue depends on the nature of your membership association. The good news is that there are many non-dues revenue generating approaches to choose from — even for associations with small staffs.

Read on for eight great ideas to get you started.

A Community Brands benchmark report found that increasing non-dues revenue is an important priority for associations with small staffs, but few are using technology beyond event-related tools to generate this income. This points to an opportunity for small associations to leverage technology in other areas, such as job boards, e-commerce, and webinars to increase non-dues revenue.

1 yourmembership.com/resources/whitepapers/small-staff-association-study/
1. Offer advertising opportunities

Your membership base offers a targeted market for companies in your industry. Offer those companies ways to get their businesses in front of your members throughout the year by placing their logo and/or an advertisement in communications channels that reach your members.

These might include:

1. **Website and email communications**
   Sell banner advertisements for your website and email communications to give sponsors exposure to your membership base. Be sure to sell ads to companies that are relevant to your members. This approach will demonstrate your association’s prominence and viability in the industry, in turn attracting new members and keeping current members around.

2. **Print and online publications**
   For many associations, magazines and research papers are considered a source of revenue, but there are expenses involved in producing high-quality content. Help support those publications by offering stand-alone ads, a classifieds section where employers can post recruiting ads, or a co-sponsorship for research papers.

3. **Online community**
   Here’s something you might not have considered: You can get sponsors for your online community. Paid ads can be displayed within your online community via text links, posts within groups, and in a quick announcement area. You can also offer online community sponsorships as an added benefit for sponsors when they purchase sponsorships in other areas of your organization.

Once you’ve established multiple sponsorship opportunities, summarize them in a sponsorship kit. Simply put together a list of sponsorship opportunities available with a list of sponsor benefits and post them on your website. Post them on your website and be sure to include information about how to sign up as a sponsor.

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**Haven’t launched an online community yet?**

Launching an online community when you have a small staff may seem like a big task, but it doesn’t have to be. YourMembership® AMS includes an online community to help you increase social and community collaboration. It connects members to personalized dynamic content, career and learning opportunities, and other member benefits. Learn how to launch an online community for your association. Read **The Small Association’s Guide to Getting Started with an Online Community**
Put your online career center to work

When employers need to fill jobs that require specific skills and industry knowledge, they need to promote their jobs to members of professional and trade associations. Your online career center can help.

Here are three ways to use your career center to drive revenue:

1. **Offer employers the opportunity to promote their jobs** on your home page, your Twitter feed, and Facebook page. Employers have no better way to promote their jobs to such a targeted group of qualified potential employees, and they will pay for that access.

2. **Introduce a job email to your members.** Employers are often willing to pay extra for this distribution of their jobs to additional potential candidates.

3. **Include a job feed or widget** in your member and prospective member e-newsletters with recently posted jobs that sponsors have paid extra to promote.

Need an online career center?

YM Careers™ job board software is part of the Community Brands® integrated software suite for associations. It helps you provide a stream of qualified candidates for your industry by allowing employers to market their job openings to your members. With tools for posting and promoting jobs, plus screening and managing candidate applications, YM Careers lets employers tap into your pool of highly qualified members to fill open job opportunities.
3 Offer a career fair

Career fairs (virtual and in-person) are a great way to engage with and provide value to members and prospective members while serving your industry and generating revenue. Employers value career events because they directly connect them to your members – a targeted group of professionals in the employers’ industry who are actively looking for a career change or new job. In addition, virtual career fairs, in particular, provide employers the opportunity to get in front of passive job seekers, who can attend without a great deal of effort or expense. To generate revenue from your career fair, you can choose to charge an attendance fee, and also sell virtual booths to industry employers for the event.

In many cases, the YM Careers Events sales team can sell booths, on your behalf, for your career fair.

4 Extend your continuing education program

Your members look to you for learning opportunities, including everything from continuing education to certification. Here are three ways to optimize your learning program to drive revenue for your organization.

1 Take your in-person member learning events online. Extend your reach by offering content from your in-person learning events through an online experience. This approach offers several opportunities to drive non-dues revenue, including:

- Bring in revenue that you otherwise would not capture from members who are unable to attend your in-person events.
- Stretch your investment in on-site content further by repurposing it online – through livestreaming your on-site event or offering it on-demand after the event.
- Incorporate sponsors and exhibitors into the online experience – via online session sponsorships, sponsor logos, and a virtual exhibit hall – to generate additional revenue.
Offer alternative learning products and packages. Offer your online content in various ways and price it differently for each option. For example:

- Provide an "all-you-can-eat" option in which online learners pay a single price for access to an unlimited number of courses over a specified period of time.
- Offer various on-demand options for learners who are unable to attend live events and courses. For example, offer a per-course price, a track price, and a full-conference on-demand price.
- Offer conference recordings as an add-on fee to live event registration for learners who want to re-visit content online in the future.

Offer learning products through your association’s e-commerce store. Create a shopping experience that allows members to purchase your educational products through your online store. This approach gives your education program greater exposure to drive more sales. It also allows you to promote your learning program as a valuable member benefit to drive member acquisition.

Provide a better member experience
Integrating your learning management system (LMS) with your association management software (AMS) supports a great member experience. Learners can navigate from your website to your e-commerce store to your e-learning catalog to your member page. Any updates to user data automatically sync across your AMS and LMS.

YourMembership AMS integrates with the LMS solutions from Community Brands, Crowd Wisdom® and Freestone®, to help you deliver this type of connected member experience.
5 Offer sponsorships for free events

In times of crisis, organizations may offer free events to assist all in the industry and profession. These free events are a great way to showcase the value of your organization and can also generate revenue through sponsorships. A sponsor can do a small commercial to those attendees. These events are also a great source for potential members.

6 Offer sponsorships for virtual and in-person events and meetings

Offer event sponsorship packages that include multiple levels of benefits and sponsorship fees. Packages may include a booth and signage at the tradeshow, advertising in conference materials, special presentation sessions, meals or entertainment sponsorships, and more.

Host virtual events, such as virtual tradeshows and conferences, for members who can’t travel to in-person events, and offer online sponsorships for these events as well. Go a step further and incorporate sponsorships in your live online events through rotating slides, a customized event interface, spotlight videos, and commercial breaks.

Keep pace with the times
The needs of corporate sponsors are evolving, and so should your sponsorship offerings. Offer vendors integrated packages, complete with year-round opportunities. These packages might include conference sponsorships as well as advertising opportunities via publications, job boards, social media, and educational events.
Your organization is a valuable resource in your industry, so be sure to ask for support. If your organization can accept charitable donations, fundraising can be a great source of non-dues revenue.

Give your members the option to easily make a pledge or donate online. Here are two tips:

- It must be easy for donors to give. Your website should be mobile responsive and easy to navigate, with a “donate now” button front and center on the home page.
- Recurring donations are an easy way for donors to give larger amounts over a period of time. Asking for smaller donations like $10 or $25 a month will keep funds coming in while not feeling like a large ask from the donor.

Get ready to turn your members into groupies: Offer them branded merchandise. You’ve probably seen examples of associations selling coffee mugs, t-shirts, or baseball caps with the Association’s logo. But really, the sky is the limit on branded merchandising.

Nearly anything you can think of can be branded for your association, so think outside the box for unique ideas that members will love. To gain added visibility to your organization, offer playful items, including things that members would want to share on social media. Some examples might include:

- Golf apparel
- Happy hour shirts
- Travel accessories
- Tech products
- Themed day shirts such as Tropical Thursday, Flamingo Friday

Get your online store ready
YourMembership AMS include e-commerce and online store functionality that makes it easy to accept donations and sell store items through a familiar online shopping cart experience.
Take the next step

Generating non-dues revenue all year long is critically important to the ongoing success of your association. Using YourMembership AMS, you can implement the revenue-generating techniques in this guide, and more.

YourMembership AMS offers affordable, easy-to-use, all-in-one membership software for small to mid-sized organizations. It includes membership management functionality combined with event management features and an online community platform to help you manage member activities while providing members with an easy, everyday way to connect, share, and learn.

Learn more about why YourMembership AMS is the ideal solution for small and growing associations.

Explore YourMembership AMS