

Bridging the Gap: Aligning Association Professionals and Members for Success

A preview of Momentive's upcoming
10th Annual Associations Trends Research Report



Table of contents

Introduction **03**

Executive Summary **04**

Key Findings **05**

RESEARCH FINDINGS PART I **07**
The Pros/Members Gap in Priorities

RESEARCH FINDINGS PART II **17**
Professional Development Disconnect

RESEARCH FINDINGS PART III **23**
Digital Transformation Opportunities

RESEARCH FINDINGS PART IV **30**
Events Strategy and Member Preferences

Conclusion **34**

Methodology **38**

Appendix **40**

INTRODUCTION

Loyalty is growing, but misalignment continues.

While both association professionals and members agree on the importance of advocacy and industry growth, a massive disconnect exists around career development—a driving force of member loyalty.

For a decade, we've been tracking the pulse of professional associations and their members through partnership with Edge Research, aiming to understand what drives membership recruitment, retention, and association revenue.

THE GOOD NEWS: Loyalty is up. Members are turning to their organizations for guidance during economic and political challenges, which contributes to both groups strongly aligning on the importance of advocacy, representation, and community building.

THE BAD NEWS: Ten years later, association professionals are still missing what their members want most—career advancement support. While nearly half of members say job opportunities and career development are “very important,” fewer than 1 in 4 association professionals recognize this priority.

This disconnect comes at a critical time. The data reveals shifting patterns in who pays membership dues, while cost remains the #1 reason for membership lapse.

The research reveals both challenges and opportunities that can benefit every association professional. While 88% say putting on successful events is their top priority, younger members may not agree on event formats. Three-quarters of members need continuing education, yet associations may be missing digital delivery preferences. And despite members using AI weekly at work, association professionals are still catching up on adoption.

While the full report won't be released until Fall 2025, here's an advance look at the findings. What we discovered about member retention trends can help reshape how you approach membership strategy as you prepare for 2026. The association industry is resilient, so it's important to show up for your members when they need it most.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Association professionals must close critical gaps with their members to recruit, retain, and boost revenue

This research reveals substantial misalignments across four critical areas: career services, professional development delivery, technology adoption, and event strategy.

While encouraging progress exists in community building and advocacy alignment, the gaps in individual member priorities pose immediate threats to retention and long-term revenue sustainability. Organizations that ignore these misalignments risk losing members in the next year, particularly as more than half of members now pay their own dues and evaluate value more judiciously.

Career services—still disconnected

The most significant disconnect centers on career-focused services, where members consistently place much higher importance on job opportunities and career advancement than professionals recognize, despite being a recurring theme year after year. This gap has direct financial implications as self-paying members become increasingly selective about organizational value and cost remains the primary reason for membership lapse.

These career service expectations vary significantly by career stage, with early career professionals prioritizing job opportunities, mid-career members focusing on advancement pathways, and late-career members valuing networking and referral opportunities. Organizations that fail to address these stage-specific needs risk losing members across their entire professional lifecycle.

Professional development transformation opportunity

Professional development requirements have increased substantially, creating opportunities for associations to provide core value through learning programs. However, significant gaps exist between member preferences for flexible, digital delivery methods and current organizational offerings. Members demonstrate strong desire for on-demand courses, short-form video content, and recommended learning pathways that most organizations currently under-provide.

This represents both a retention risk and a revenue opportunity, as members increasingly source professional education from multiple providers and consistently rate self-service digital formats higher than traditional employer-provided training.

Events strategy under pressure

Association event planners face multiple pressure points, from travel concerns affecting both international and domestic attendance to evolving member preferences for educational and networking experiences. While events remain the second-largest revenue source after membership dues, organizations must balance financial dependencies with changing member needs and external constraints. Understanding best practices for conference planning, particularly event registration, is vital to event strategy.

The path forward

Success requires strategic realignment across four major channels: expanding career services to match member priorities, modernizing professional development delivery, leveraging technology perception advantages, and adapting event strategies to address travel and engagement challenges. Organizations that take a comprehensive approach to closing these gaps will strengthen member loyalty while building sustainable revenue growth.

Differing perceptions about technology adoption

Members consistently rate their organizations higher on technology capabilities than association professionals rate themselves. This perception gap, combined with expected IT budget increases, suggests significant untapped potential for digital transformation initiatives that could substantially improve member satisfaction and loyalty.

The acceleration of AI adoption across both professional and member organizations creates opportunities for associations to lead their industries in AI-enabled services, training, and policy development.

Key Findings

KEY FINDINGS

Shifting Trends Among Pros and Members

Career Development Disconnect

Job opportunities:

46%

of members say this is **very important** vs just 23% of pros (23-point difference)



Helping with career advancement:

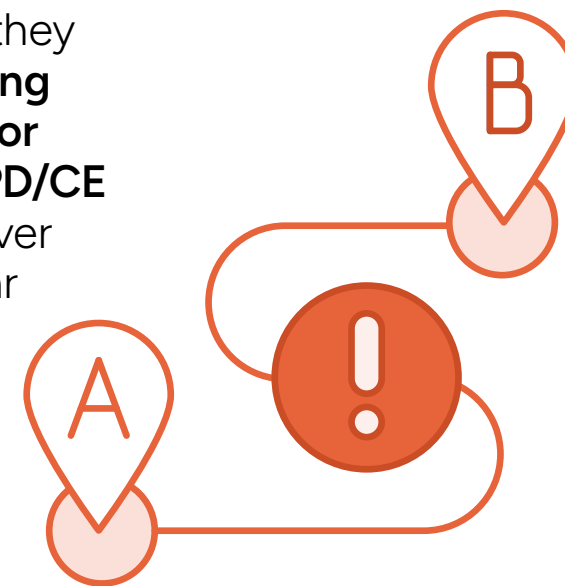
45%

of members say this is **very important** vs just 27% of pros (18-point difference)

Opportunities for Alignment

74%

of pros say they are **prioritizing developing or improving PD/CE programs** over the next year



46%

of members have used their organization's online career center/job board

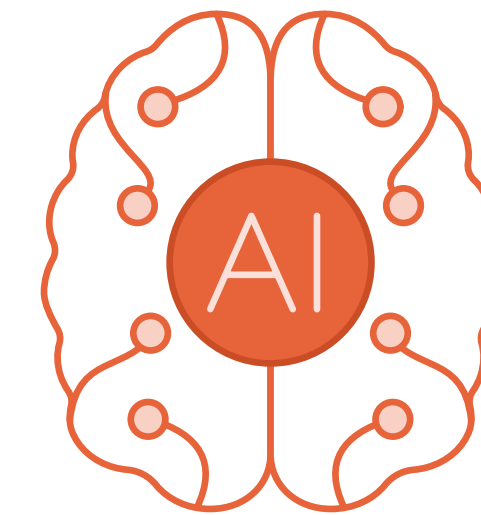
→ **73%** would be interested in using a career platform from their org if it was offered

Conflicting Outlooks About AI and Tech

62%

of members use AI **every day** to a few times a month

→ just **39%** of pros say their organization uses AI



Only

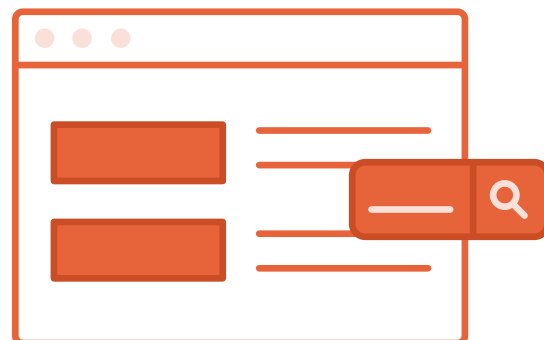
50%

of pros feel **technologically prepared** for the future

Event Strategy Remains a Priority

88%

of pros say successful events, conferences and/or tradeshows are their **#1 priority**



77%

report **stable or growing attendance** despite economic or political concerns

72%

of current members prefer **in-person events** over virtual

The Alignment Sweet Spot

Top 3 areas where pros and members completely agree on importance:

1. Advocating for interests with federal/state policymakers

2. Fueling growth of the profession/industry

3. Raising awareness about the profession/industry

This alignment matters more than ever as shifting dues payment patterns emerge and membership growth tells a complex story that every association professional needs to understand.

RESEARCH FINDINGS PART I

Understanding Career Development and Member Priority Gaps



01 The Career Development Crisis: The Pro-Member Disconnect

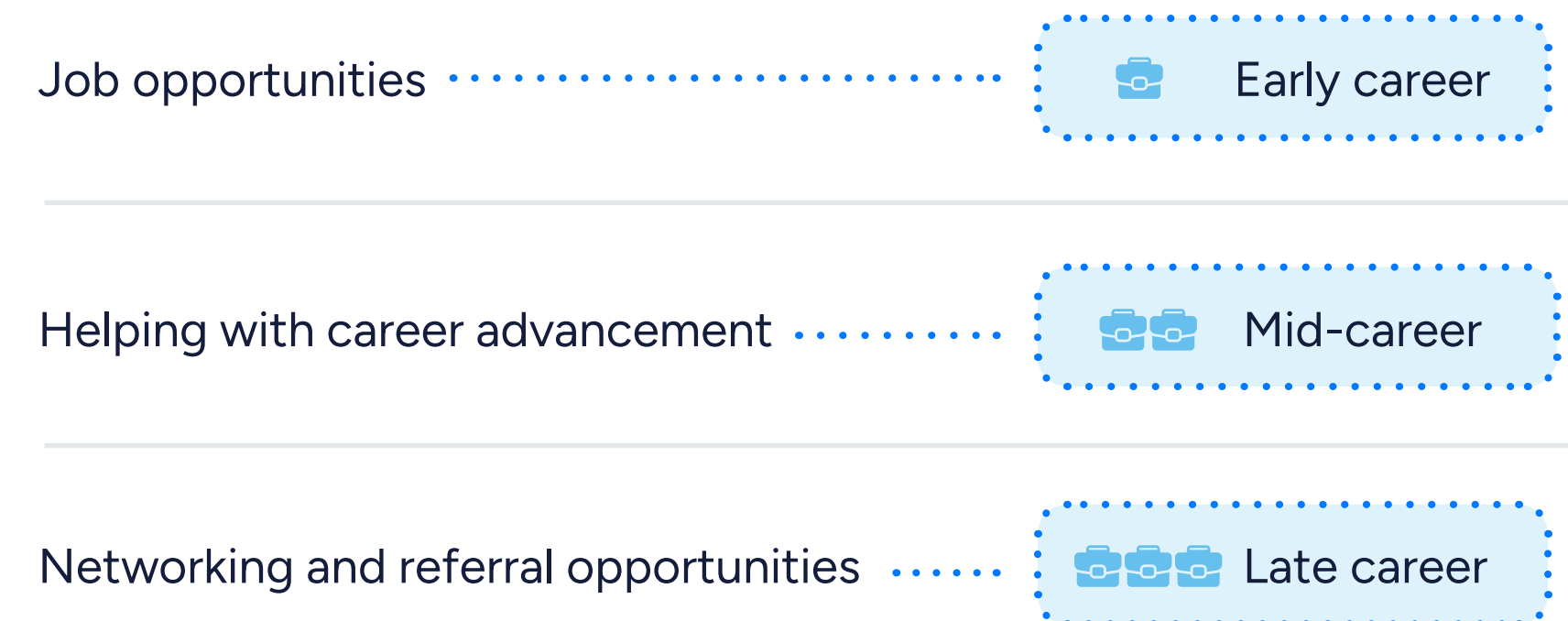
The most critical misalignment between association professionals and members centers on career-focused development and support. Members place dramatically higher importance on job opportunities and career advancement than Professionals recognize—gaps that have persisted year after year despite being recurring themes in member feedback.

Largest Career Advancement Priority Misalignments

	MEMBERS	PROS	
Job opportunities	46%	23%	+23% gap
Career advancement	45%	27%	+18% gap
Training	48%	34%	+14% gap

➔ This disconnect becomes even more critical when considering career stages, as different member segments have distinct career development needs:

Career Services Priorities by Stage (top renewal benefit)





02 Spotlight on Career Advancement Misalignment

- Six years of data reveal a pattern of association professionals consistently failing to recognize how much members value career-focused services.

What makes this particularly concerning is the timing: as workplace dynamics shifted post-pandemic and members increasingly pay their own dues, the very services they most need for professional success remain the most undervalued by the organizations meant to serve them.

Consistent Gaps Between Members and Pros since 2021





03 Lapsed Members Reveal What Organizations Are Missing: Career Benefits (Even Over Advocacy)

➔ Lapsed members consistently prioritize career advancement benefits at higher rates than current members.

While current members value collective benefits like advocacy and industry representation, professionals are risking attrition by not adding more focus to the career development benefits they can offer. Not only do lapsed members prioritize individual career benefits more highly—they're also significantly harder to please across the board. Even their top-rated benefit scores 10 points lower than current members' top priorities, suggesting that once members become dissatisfied, winning them back requires addressing fundamental value propositions.

Top 6 Benefits for Current Members (% Very Important)

1. CODE OF ETHICS	55%
2. LATEST NEWS AND INFO	54%
3. REPRESENTING INTERESTS	54%
4. ADVOCACY	52%
5. FUELING GROWTH	50%
6. RAISING AWARENESS ABOUT THE INDUSTRY	48%

Top 6 Benefits for Lapsers (% Very Important)

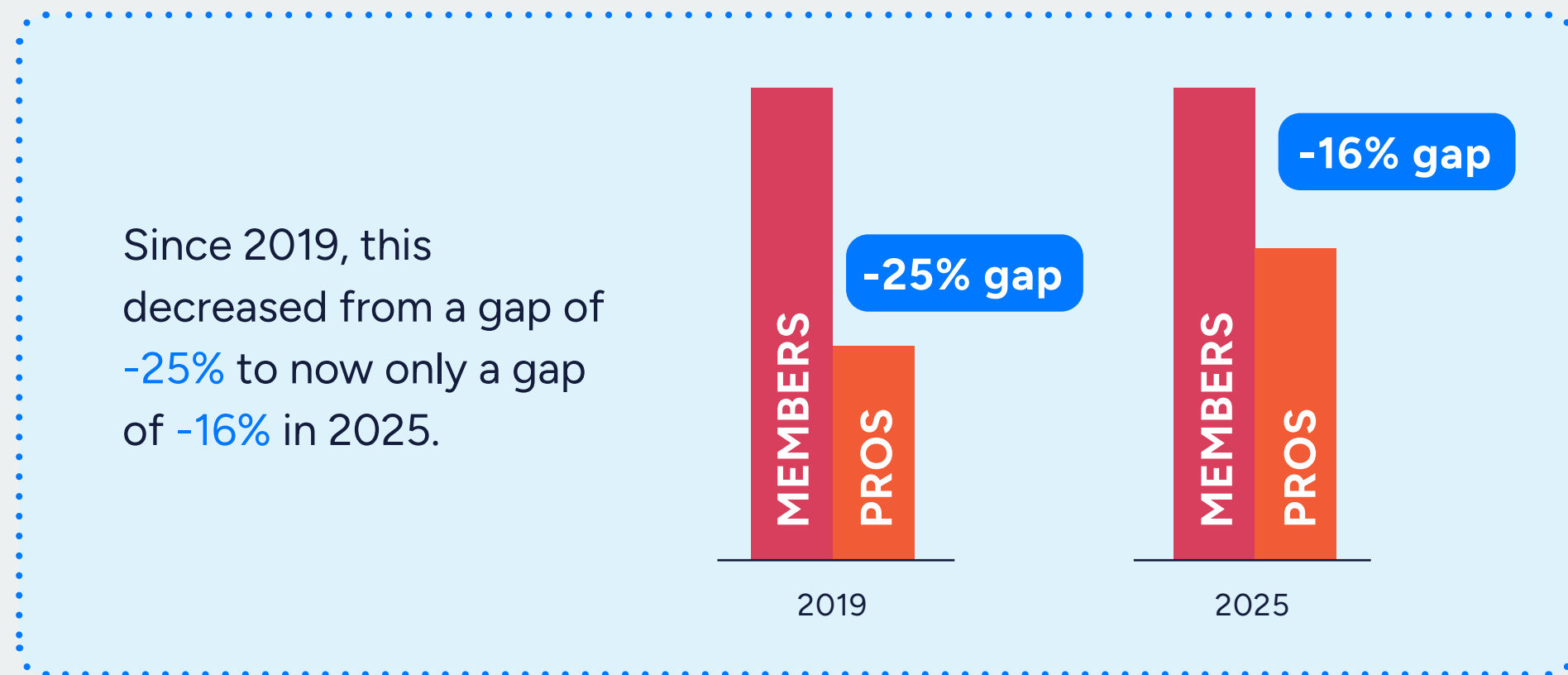
1. TRAINING	45%
2. INFORMATION ABOUT LATEST NEWS	42%
3. PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS OR CODE OF ETHICS	42%
4. CAREER ADVANCEMENT HELP	41%
5. REPRESENTING INTERESTS	40%
6. JOB OPPORTUNITIES	39%



04 Alignment Over Advocacy, but Misalignment Over Professional Development

→ While Members and Pros continue to be misaligned in several key areas, they do agree on the increased importance of advocacy.

Unifying over advocacy efforts is crucial for the association industry at large, especially during the current economic and political climate. However, associations are at risk of losing members if they don't focus on the importance of career development and support that their members want. The gap has decreased in some areas—professionals previously overestimated conference importance, but this misalignment has narrowed significantly since 2019.



Top Areas of Agreement Between Members and Pros

(% Very Important)

	MEMBERS	PROS	Gap
Advocating for your interests with federal and state policy makers	52%	50%	1% gap
Fueling the growth of your profession/industry	50%	52%	-2% gap
Raising awareness about profession/industry	48%	44%	4% gap

Conference Gap Improvement

	MEMBERS	PROS	Gap
Recognizing the Importance of Meetings and Conferences	38% 33% in 2024	54% 65% in 2024	-16% gap



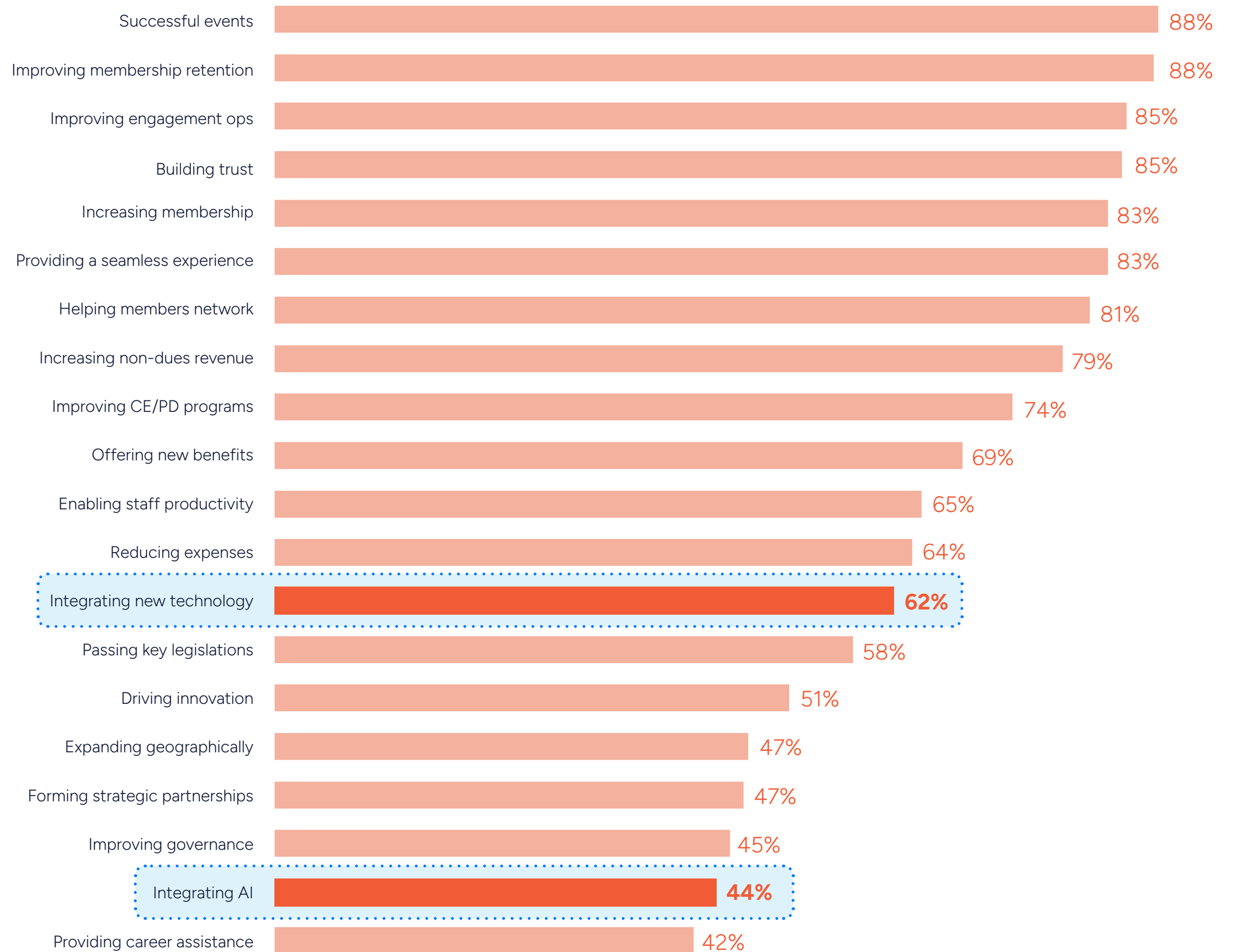
05

Technology and AI Remain Lower Organizational Priorities Despite Increasing in Importance

→ Despite significant increase in importance for upgrading technology and integrating AI these initiatives remain lower priorities...

...compared to traditional activities like events, retention, and engagement, which is consistent with previous findings over the past ten years. As Pros report feeling ill prepared for future technological challenges, there should be a better balance between priorities and investing in upgrading the right technology.

Pros' Top/Important Priorities Over the Next Year





06

The Cost of Misalignment

→ With membership dues as the primary revenue source for Pros, the dual pressures of self-paying members and cost sensitivity create significant financial vulnerability for associations that don't address these value alignment gaps.

Increasing numbers of Members are paying their own dues and cite cost as the primary barrier to membership. In fact, cost and low perceived value emerge as the top reasons for membership lapse, with a key theme from lapsed Members including organizations being "out of touch with what's important to members."

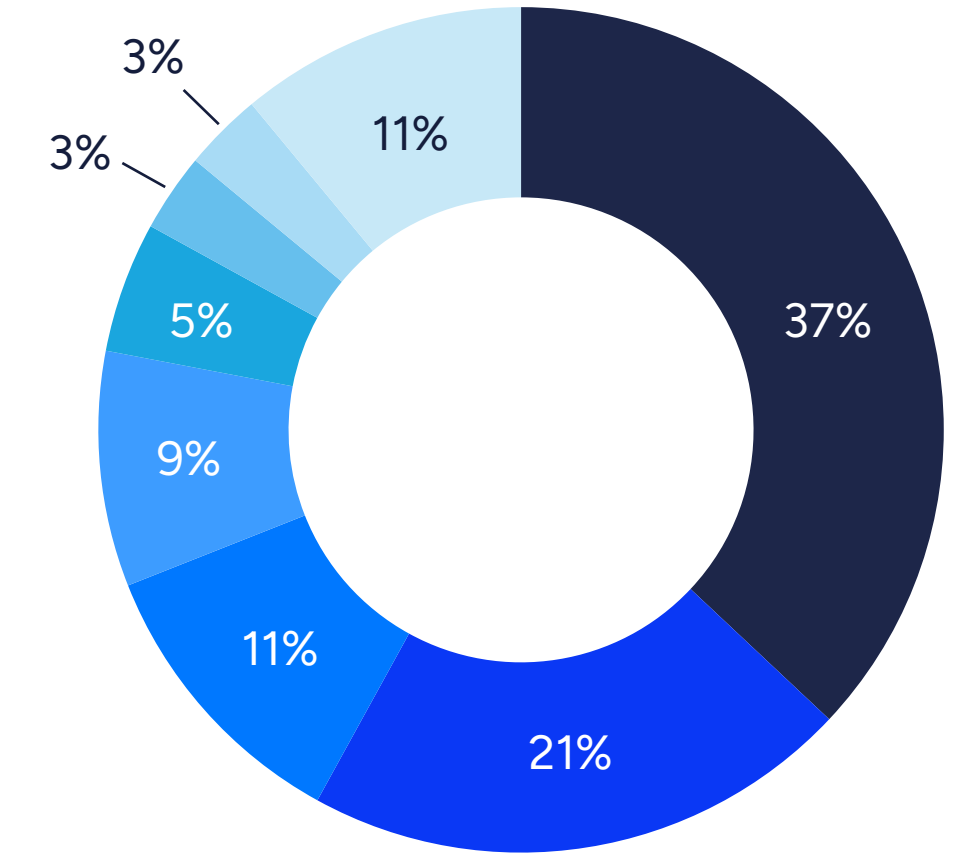
94%

of Members engage in at least one organizational activity...

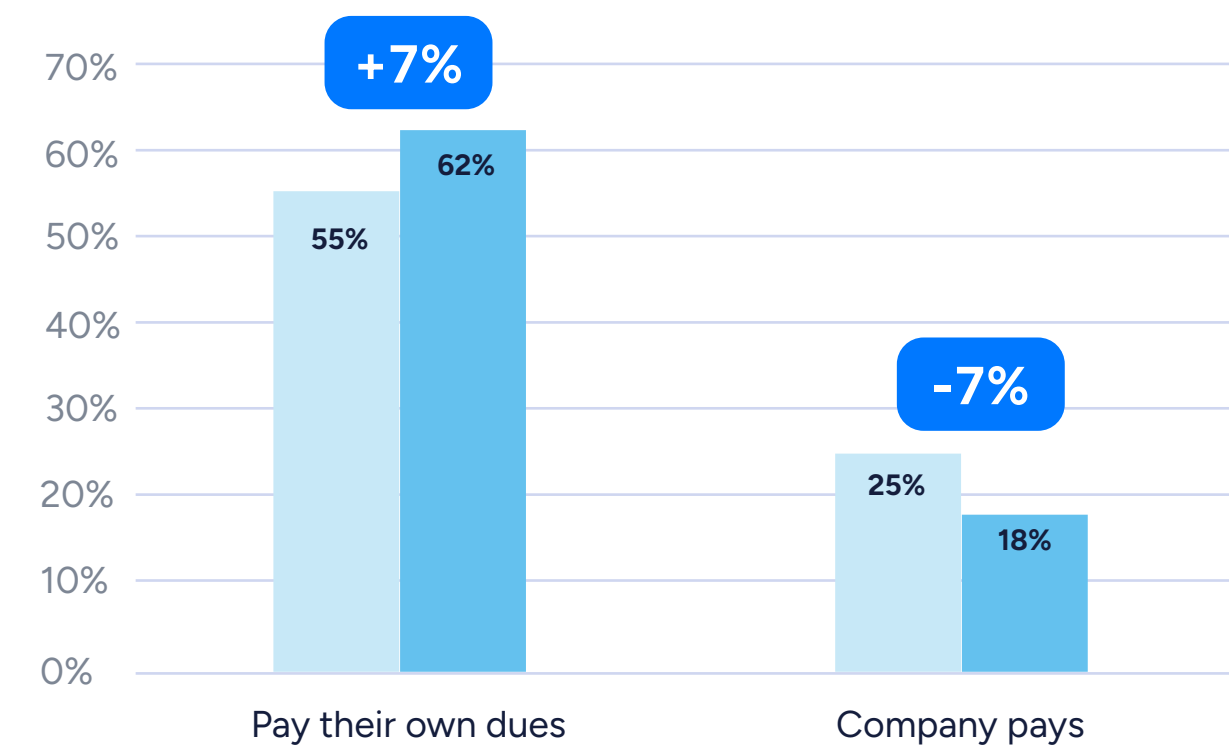
...placing particularly high value ratings for leadership opportunities, mentorship, and certifications.

Current Pros' Revenue Sources Breakdown

Member dues	37%
Meetings/trade shows	21%
Sponsorships/partnerships	11%
PD courses	9%
Grants (foundation, gov't)	5%
Job board	3%
Fundraising	3%
Other/Other non-dues revenue	11%



Self-Paying Members Trends



52%

would reassess their organization's value/stop membership if they were forced to pay their own dues



06

The Cost of Misalignment Continued

➔ Most Important Benefits for Current Members for Renewal

- 1 Providing ways that members can collaborate, share, and create community
- 2 Advocating for your interests with federal and state policy makers
- 3 Helping with career advancement
- 4 Representing your interests
- 5 Information about the latest news, regulations, trends, and other issues affecting your profession or industry
- 6 Job opportunities
- 7 Networking and referral opportunities
- 8 Being your professional community
- 9 Fueling the growth of your profession/industry
- 10 Certifications or credentials

Top Reasons for Lapsing

- 1. IT BECAME TOO COSTLY 28%
- 2. HAVE OTHER PRIORITIES RIGHT NOW 23%
- 3. ORGANIZATION WAS PROVIDING LITTLE VALUE 20%
- 4. CHANGED INDUSTRY/ EMPLOYMENT 17%
- 5. ORGANIZATION WAS OUT OF TOUCH WITH WHAT'S IMPORTANT TO MEMBERS 10%

Highest Value Activities from Members' Organizations

- 1. LEADERSHIP POSITION 80%
- 2. MENTORSHIP 79%
- 3. CERTIFICATIONS 77%
- 4. ANNUAL MEETING/ TRADE SHOW 70%
- 5. TRAINING PROGRAMS 70%

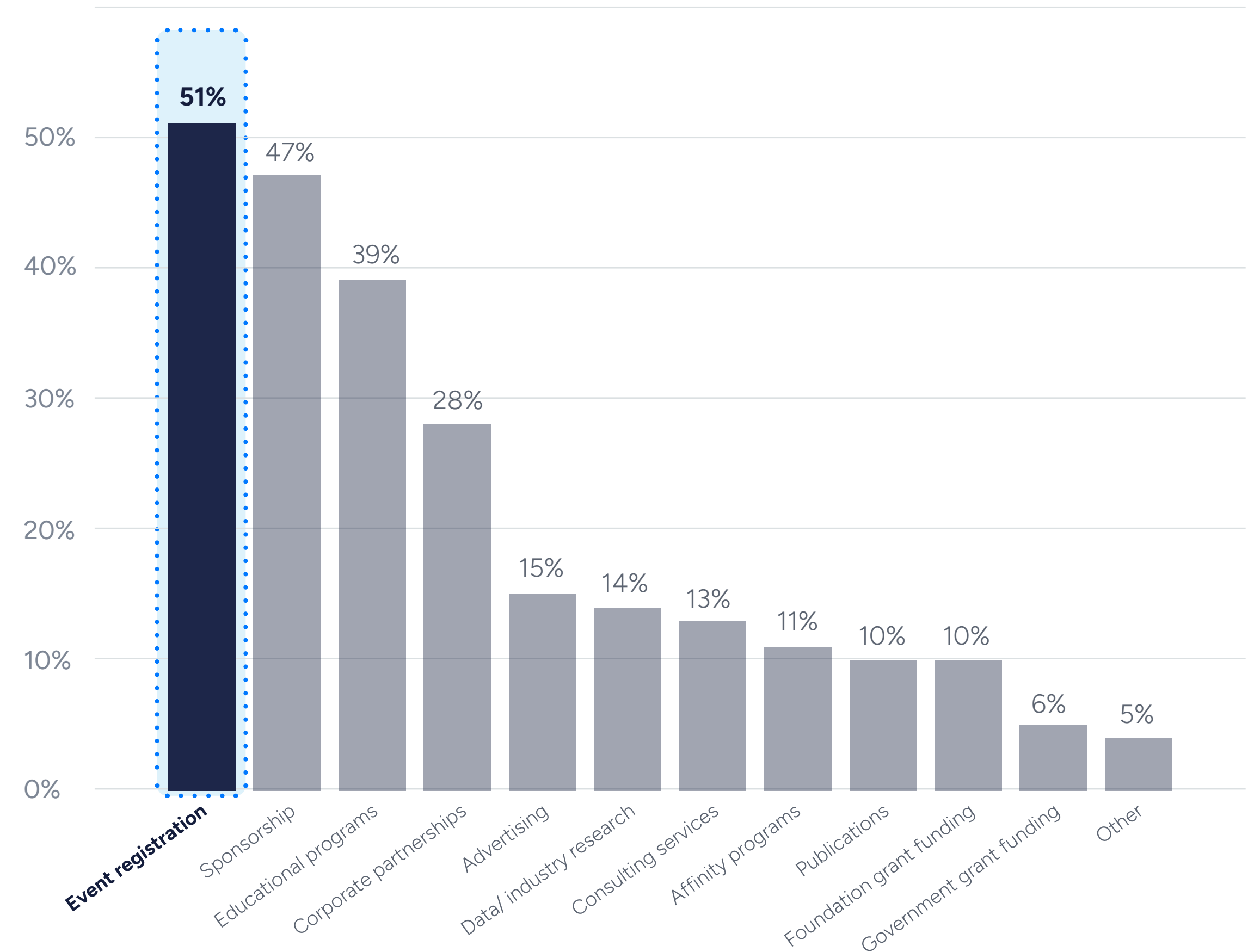


07 Current Event Strategy Focuses on Attendance, Revenue, and Experiences

→ Events represent the #1 priority for 88% of Pros, reflecting their critical importance as the second-largest revenue source.

Professional event priorities emphasize increasing attendance, revenue, engagement, and seamless experiences. Pros say the biggest challenges to their event goals over the next year will be their attendees/members' organizations having tighter budgets. For Pros' budgetary constraints, their cost pressures concentrate in food & beverage, audio/visual technology, and venue rental.

Non-Dues Revenue Development Focus for Pros Over the Next Year





07 Current Event Strategy Focuses on Attendance, Revenue, and Experiences *Continued*

Top Event Priorities for Pros

- 1. INCREASING ATTENDANCE **63%**
- 2. INCREASING REVENUE **62%**
- 3. IMPROVING ATTENDEE ENGAGEMENT **57%**
- 4. PROVIDING SEAMLESS ATTENDEE EXPERIENCE **56%**
- 5. BUILDING TRUST WITH ATTENDEES/COMMUNITY **49%**

Biggest Cost Pressures for Pros

- 1. FOOD & BEVERAGE **53%**
- 2. AUDIO/VISUAL AND TECHNOLOGY **49%**
- 3. VENUE RENTAL **48%**
- 4. STAFF TIME/RESOURCES **32%**
- 5. SPEAKER FEES/TRAVEL **23%**

Biggest Challenges to Achieving Event Goals for Pros

- 1. OUR ATTENDEES/MEMBERS' ORGANIZATIONS HAVE TIGHTER BUDGETS **46%**
- 2. INFLATION/RISING COSTS **39%**
- 3. ECONOMIC/POLITICAL FORCES **30%**
- 4. TRAVEL LIMITATIONS FOR ATTENDEES/MEMBERS **27%**
- 5. LIMITED TIME AND RESOURCES **25%**

RESEARCH FINDINGS PART II

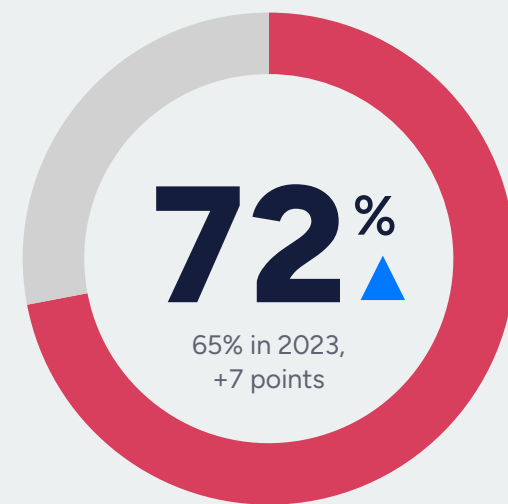
Professional Development Disconnect and Member Retention Patterns



01 Growing Professional Development Requirements Create Opportunities for Enhanced Member Value

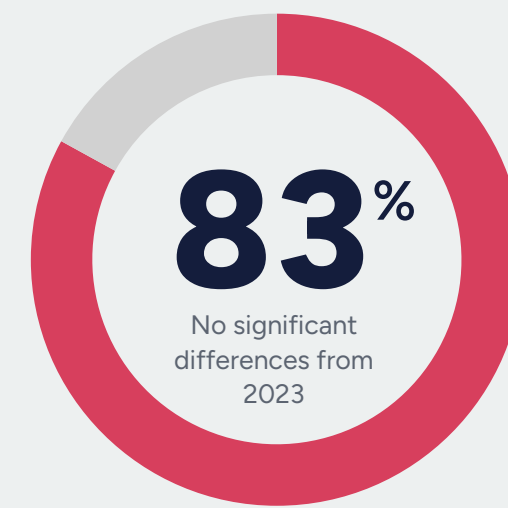
Professional development (PD) requirements have increased substantially, with 72% of Members now required to take professional education and training (up 7 points from 65% in 2023), and 83% completing at least one PD activity within the last year. Higher requirements are concentrated among in industries like education, healthcare, and technology/IT sectors. In-person courses jumped 6 spots to become the most popular PD format, which explains member preferences for in-person conferences focused on education.

Professional Development Growth Trends for Members



are required to take professional education and training

Higher among: Gen Z/Millennials, Education, Healthcare (Medical), Technology/IT



did at least one PD activity within the last year

Professional Development Formats Most Likely to be Utilized in the Next Year by Members (% Very/Somewhat)

1. IN-PERSON COURSE, SESSION, OR SEMINAR	69%
2. SHORT VIDEOS, RECORDED WEBCASTS	68%
3. ON DEMAND, SELF-PACED ONLINE COURSE	68%
4. WEBCAST STREAMING OF A LIVE EVENT	66%
5. ONLINE COURSE VIA LIVE WEBINAR	66%
6. RECOMMENDED COURSES	65%
7. HANDS-ON/EXPERIENTIAL TRAINING	65%
8. VIRTUAL CONFERENCE	65%
9. SOCIAL LEARNING	62%
10. RECOMMENDED LEARNING PATHS	62%
11. MOBILE LEARNING	60%
12. MULTI-DAY CONFERENCE	59%
13. JUST-IN TIME LEARNING	58%
14. REBROADCAST	56%



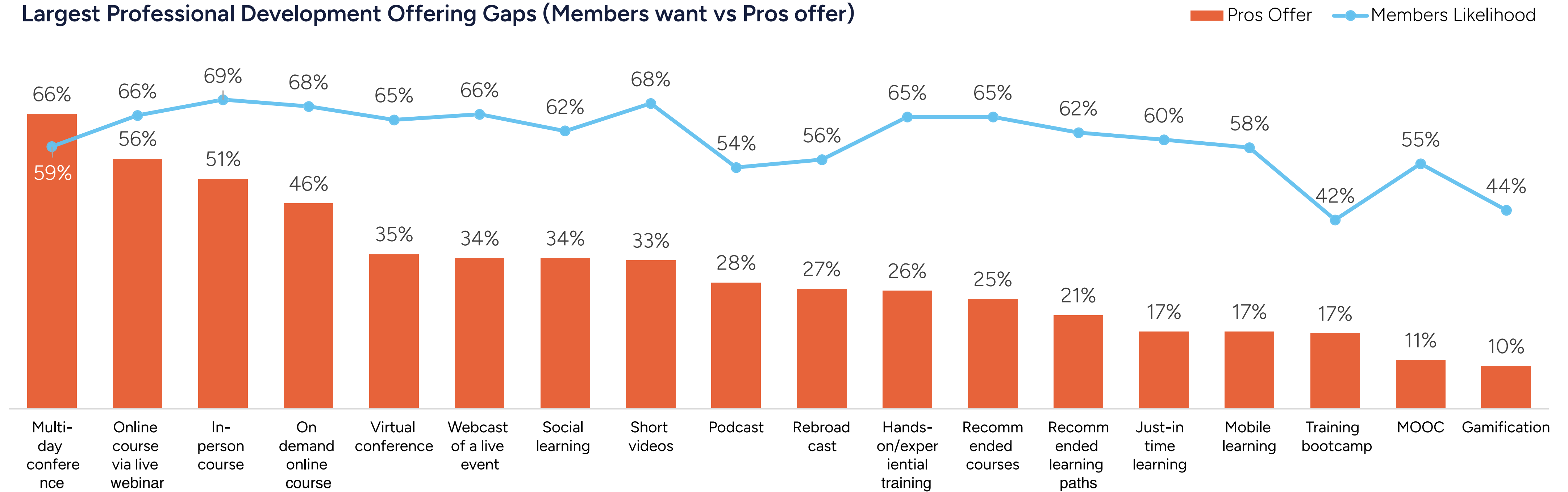
02

Significant Gaps Between Member Demand and Professional Offerings

→ While Members show strong demand for flexible, digital professional development options, organizations currently under-provide many of these formats.

The largest gaps exist in short videos (35-point gap), recommended courses (40-point gap), and recommended learning paths (41-point gap), representing immediate opportunities to better serve member needs.

Largest Professional Development Offering Gaps (Members want vs Pros offer)



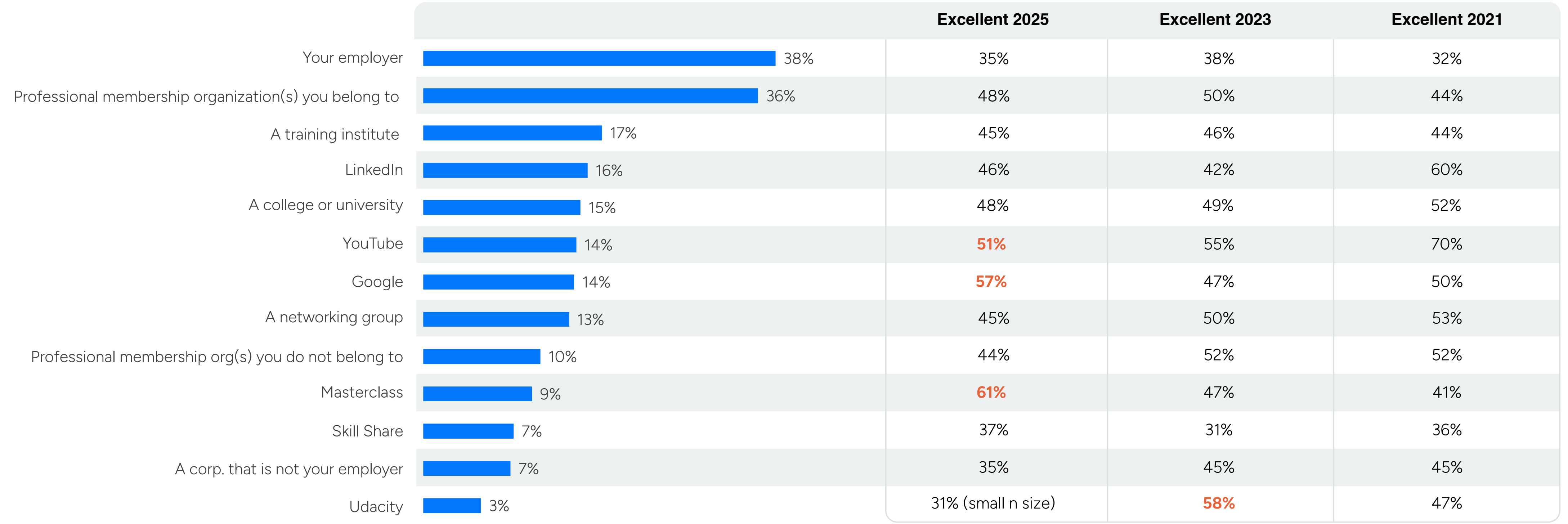


03 Associations Compete Effectively Against Employers for Professional Development Market Share

Members source professional education equally from employers (38%) and professional organizations (36%), but online self-service formats receive the highest satisfaction ratings. With Members equally prioritizing professional development opportunities from their organizations and employers, pros can stand out by enhancing the learning experience through self-service formats, on-demand environments, and virtual events.

→ Within the last two years, through which of the following organizations or venues have you received professional education and training? Select all that apply.

→ Overall, how would you rate the professional education and training you received from each of the following?





04 Career Services Show High Demand Among Younger Demographics

➔ Almost half (46%) of current Members have used their organization’s online career center/job board, with strong interest across generations but particularly among Gen Z and Millennials.

The technology/IT and accounting sectors show the highest interest levels.

Career Support Interest by Member Sector

(% very interested)

63%
Technology/IT

58%
Finance

44%
Arts

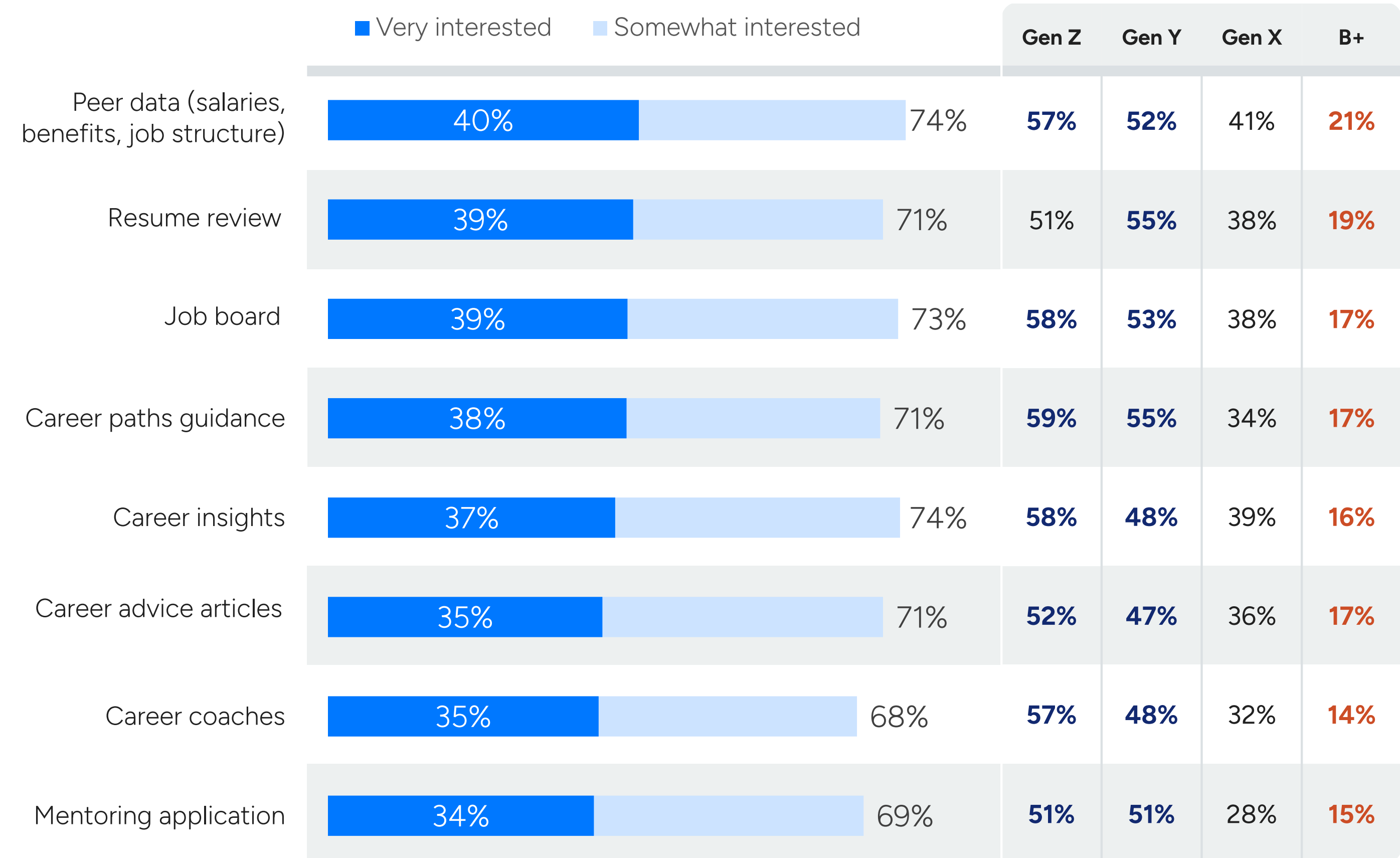
39%
Healthcare

36%
Nonprofit

29%
Education

Interest in Career Help Continues to be Highest among Gen Z and Millennials

(% Interested in Receiving from Their Organization)



RESEARCH FINDINGS PART III

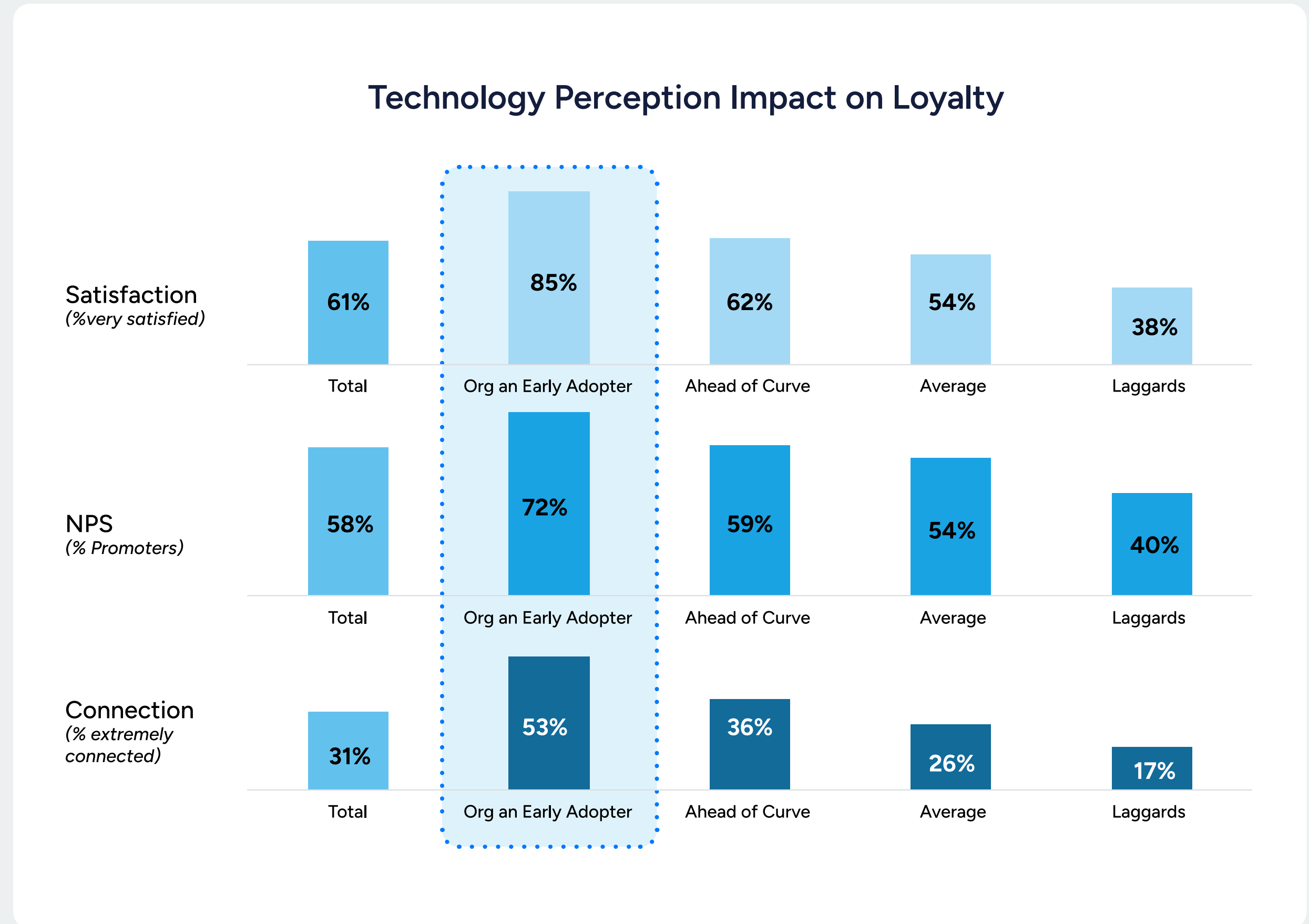
Digital Transformation and Member Loyalty Connection



01 Technology Perception Drives Member Loyalty

→ Members who perceive their organizations as early technology adopters show significantly higher loyalty across all key metrics.

This data reinforces the loyalty improvements seen across the membership base since 2016. Member loyalty indicators have strengthened across satisfaction, Net Promoter Score (NPS), connection, and renewal metrics—and technology perception appears to be a significant driver of these improvements.





02

The Technology Confidence Gap Creates Opportunity

→ Despite Members rating organizations higher on technology adoption than Pros rate themselves (58% of Members vs 41% of Pros see their organizations as early adopters), significant opportunities exist to capitalize on this positive perception.

Only half of Pros feel technologically prepared for the future, while 67% of Members believe their organizations help them stay prepared—suggesting untapped potential for technology initiatives.

Technology Helpfulness Agreement Rates

MEMBERS

PROS

“My organization helps me stay up-to-date with latest technological innovations”:

70%

59%

“Technology is transforming my organization for the better”

69%

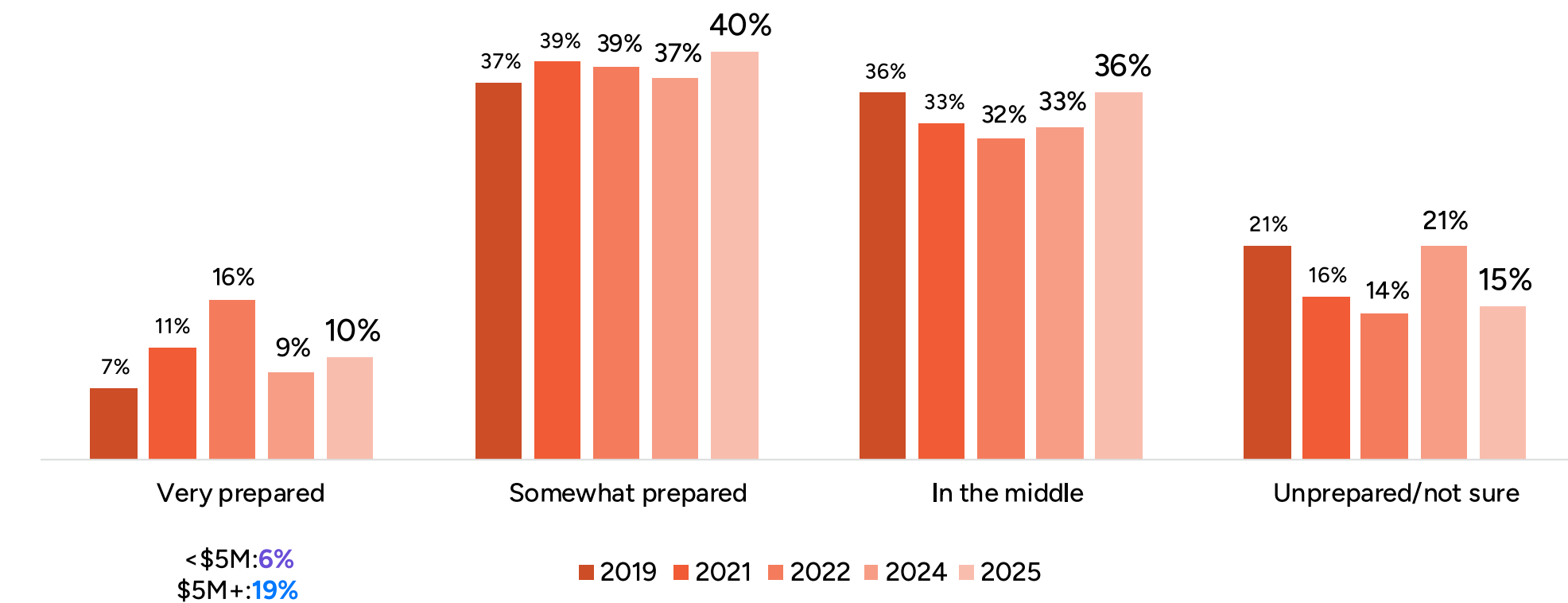
70%

“My organization helps me be technologically prepared for the future”:

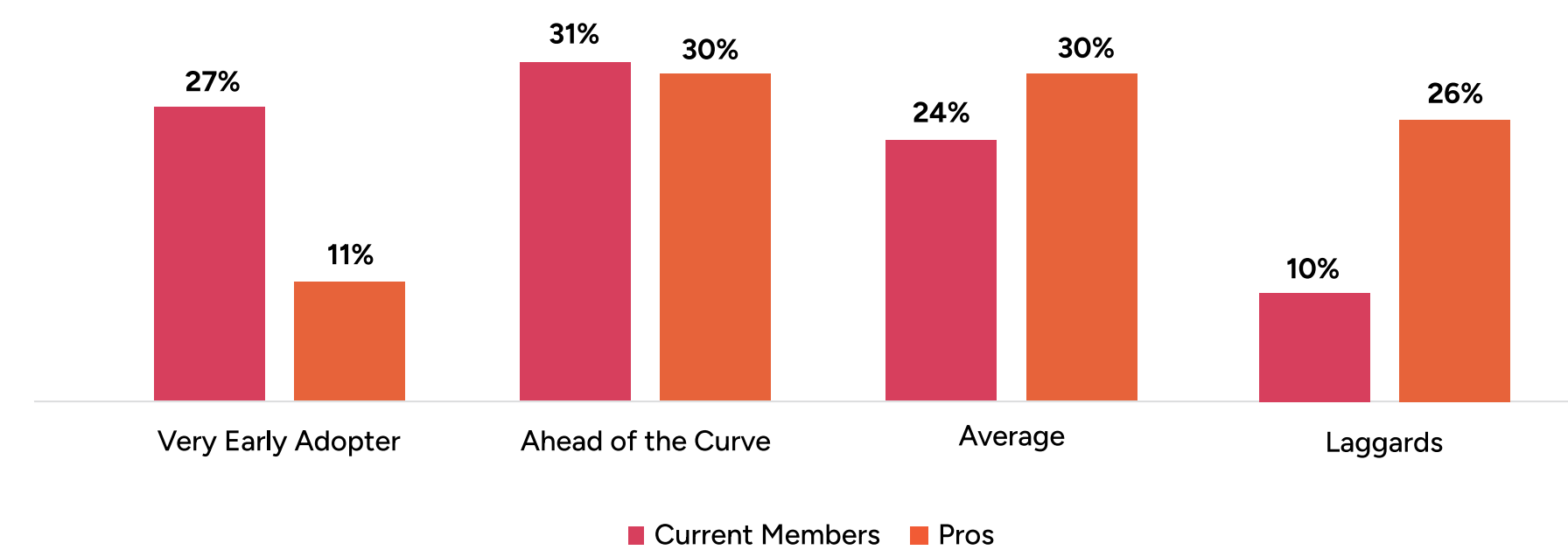
67%

52%

Pros’ Sentiment About Tech Preparedness Over Time



Organizational Technology Adoption Perception Between Members and Pros





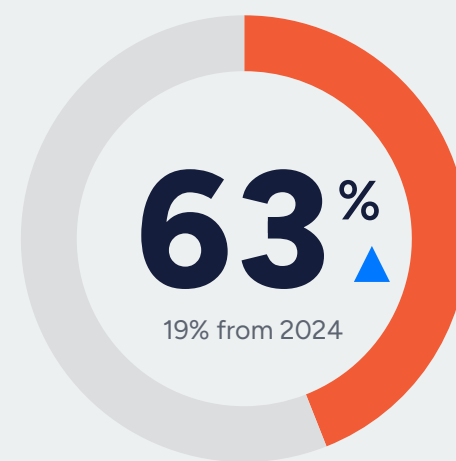
03 IT Budget Increases Enable Technology Investment Opportunities

➔ Despite Pros not feeling technologically prepared for the future, there's promise that in the next year they'll be better equipped to keep up.

The majority report increasing IT budgets, with a significant jump in both budget increase and flexibility in tech purchasing decisions over 2024, with growth concentrated in larger organizations. Investment priorities focus on member-facing systems, with AI leading planned spending increases and LMS software being the largest expansion over 2024 spending increases.

However, based on their overall priorities, it's likely Pros are underutilizing the tech tools that could enable their organizations to thrive.

IT Budget Growth



of Pros say IT budget will increase

Audiences who say IT budget is up:
Staff (77%)
Revenue (86%)

Technology Solutions Used by Pros

AMS or CRM	80%	Artificial intelligence (AI)	39%
Events related tools	62%	Mobile applications	36%
Accounting/fund accounting system	62%	Marketing automation tool	35%
Webcast/webinar tool	60%	Analytics/business intel	31%
CMS	56%	Advocacy system	19%
Job boards	47%	Fundraising related tools	19%
Online Communities	45%	Volunteer management platform	18%
LMS	45%	RMS	10%
E-commerce platform	44%	Predictive intelligence	6%

Technology Investment Priorities (of those already using and planning to spend more)

AI	38%	E-commerce	22%
CMS	34%	Online communications	21%
LMS	33% (+16 points since 2024)	Events tools	21%
AMS or CRM	32%	Accounting systems	12%
Advocacy system	29%	Job boards	7%

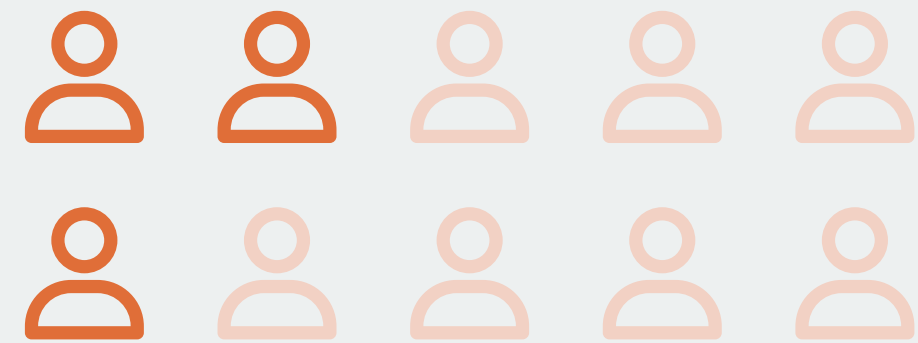


04 AI Adoption Accelerates Among Both Pros and Members

➔ Member AI usage has increased significantly, with 76% using AI at least a few times a week, and 22% now using AI every day at work (+9 points since 2024).

The majority (57%) agree AI is changing how their companies operate.

AI Adoption and Governance Among Pros

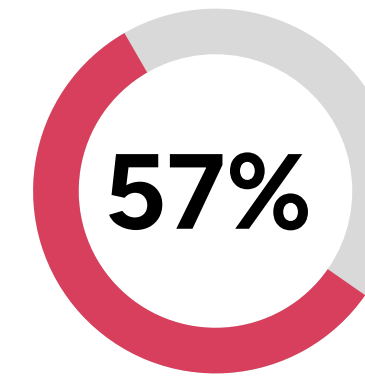


39% of professional organizations use AI (significant increase)

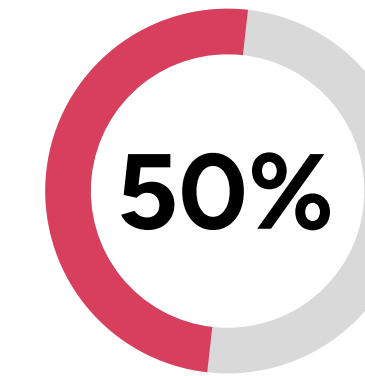
40%
have established AI policies

20%
are in the process of creating AI policies

Members Agree:



"AI is changing the way my company operates"



"AI is helping me be smarter and more efficient"

Professional AI adoption also jumped substantially, with 39% of organizations now using AI and 60% having established AI policies or in the process of creating them. Board support for AI initiatives reached 61% (up from 23% in 2024), indicating organizational readiness for AI integration.

AI Usage Frequency Among Current Members

Everyday	22%
A few times a week	23%
Weekly	8%
A few times a month	9%
Monthly	3%
A few times a year	3%
Rarely	16%
I've never used AI	17%

+9 points
since 2024



05

AI Implementation Focuses on Content Creation and Marketing

→ Pros primarily use AI for content generation and marketing materials, though a third also use it for analyzing event and member data to personalize member experiences, or to develop continuing education content.



OF THOSE USING AI (PROS)

38%
plan to spend more time next year

76%
use it at least a few times a week

How Pros Use AI



AI Comfort by Generation	Gen Z	Millennials	Gen X	Boomers+
Content recommendations	43%	42%	30%	18%
Marketing materials	41%	43%	31%	16%
Behaviour prediction	46%	33%	16%	5%



05

AI Implementation Focuses on Content Creation and Marketing *Continued*

➔ Fortunately, Members show they are most comfortable with their organizations using AI for content creation and marketing materials. While they are least comfortable with their organizations using AI for behavior tracking and analysis, they are okay with its outcomes of predicting behavior.

Member Comfort Levels with Organizational AI Use





06

Assuring Members About Data Privacy and Security Is Imperative for Pros

➔ Data privacy is a hot topic with consumers today, and this study confirms that members of associations are no exception.

On the bright side, Members indicate they're willing to provide information to their organization if they think it's secure and they'll benefit from sharing the data.

Member Agreement About Technology Usage

Using technology makes me concerend about privacy and data security	69% agree
I am okay with technology collecting my data as long as it's secure	59% agree
I am okay with technology collecting data on me if it is for my benefit	56% agree
I don't like technology to collect data about me in anyway	48% agree
I usually don't take the time to read privacy policies or how my data will be used and stored	44% agree

RESEARCH FINDINGS PART IV

Events & Conferences



01 Despite Generational Differences Among Members, Event Attendance Continues to Drive Success

→ As events are the utmost priority for 88% of Pros, with 51% seeking to focus their 2026 non-dues strategy around event registration, it's important to understand how Members are thinking about events.

While most Members continue to value comprehensive large-scale conferences, some Member segments, particularly Gen Z and certain sectors like technology/IT, express interest in more frequent, smaller-scale regional events as complements to major conferences.

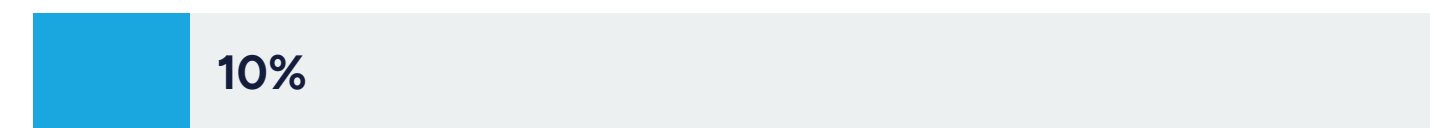
2025 Conference Attendance/Registration Performance



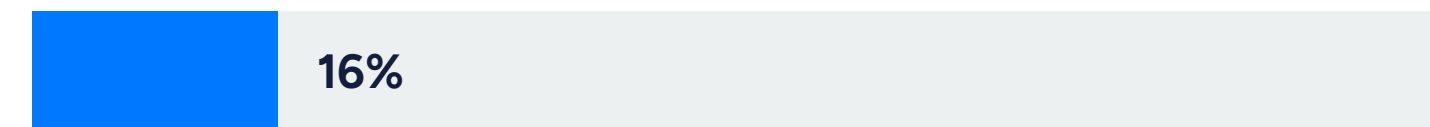
Professional Event Strategy Focus for Pros

Are you considering replacing your single annual conference with multiple smaller regional events?

Actively planning to replace single annual conference with multiple smaller regional events for 2025-2026



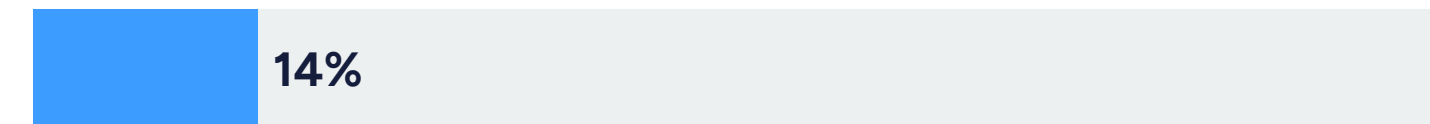
Considering multiple smaller regional events for 2026 or later



Maintaining current annual conference model



Already implemented multiple regional events



25%

are planning or have already implemented changes



02

Attendance Remains Stable Despite Travel Concerns

→ While 77% of Pros report stable or increased conference attendance for 2025, there's still a critical need to address that significant travel concerns persist.

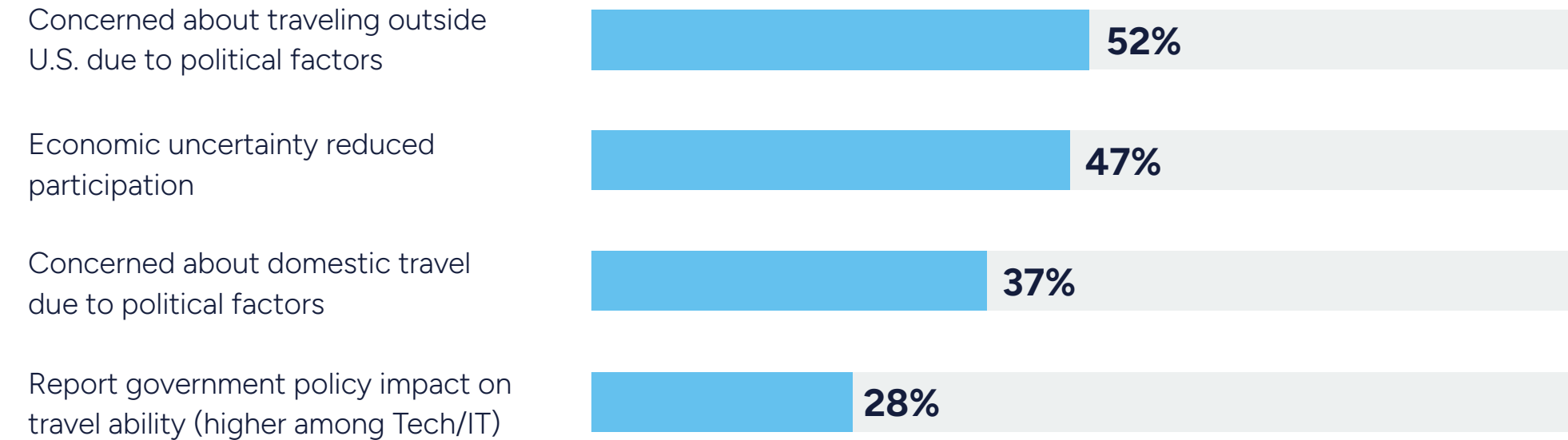
Most Pros report international attendees have expressed U.S. travel trepidations, with half domestic Members also reporting concern about traveling outside the U.S. due to political factors and economic uncertainty. Many organizations are adapting through various strategies to address travel and attendance concerns, which include virtual options, regional satellite events, improving year-round digital engagement, or supporting members with their travel or visas.

International Attendee Impact (Reported by Pros)

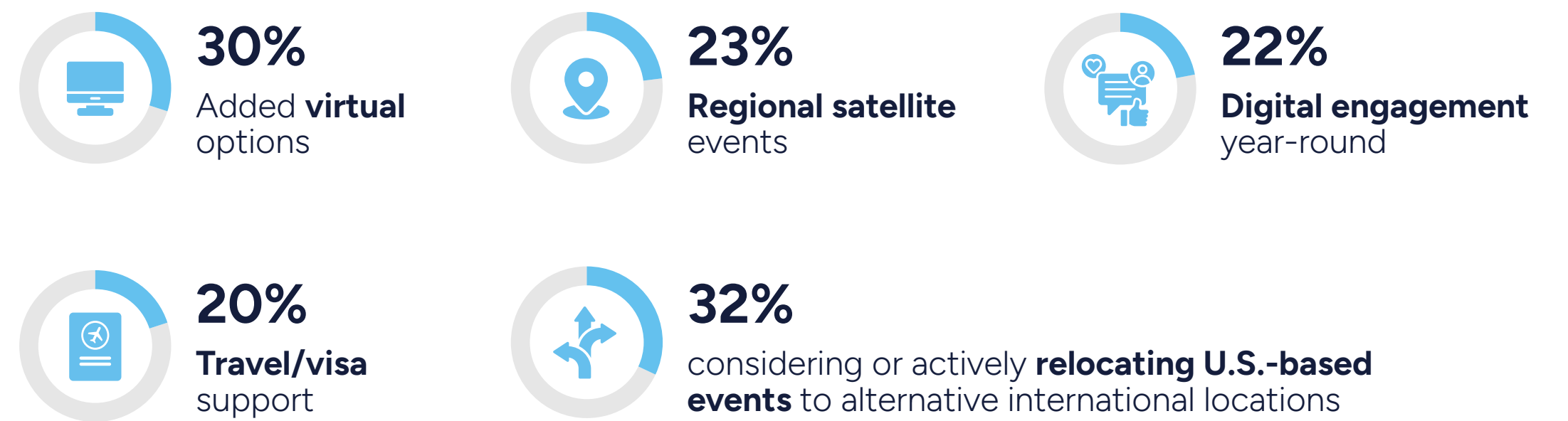


67%
of Pros say international attendees expressed at least some concern about traveling to the U.S.

Domestic Member Travel Concerns



How Pros Addressed Travel Concerns



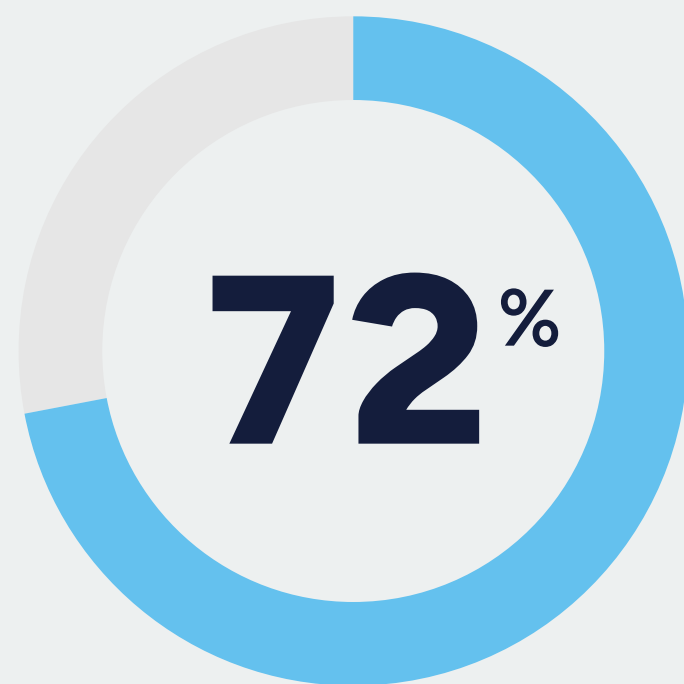


03

In-Person Events Are Still Preferred Overall, But Pros Should Prioritize Education Sessions to Gain ROI

→ Even amid economic and political impacts, most Members still strongly prefer in-person events over virtual options.

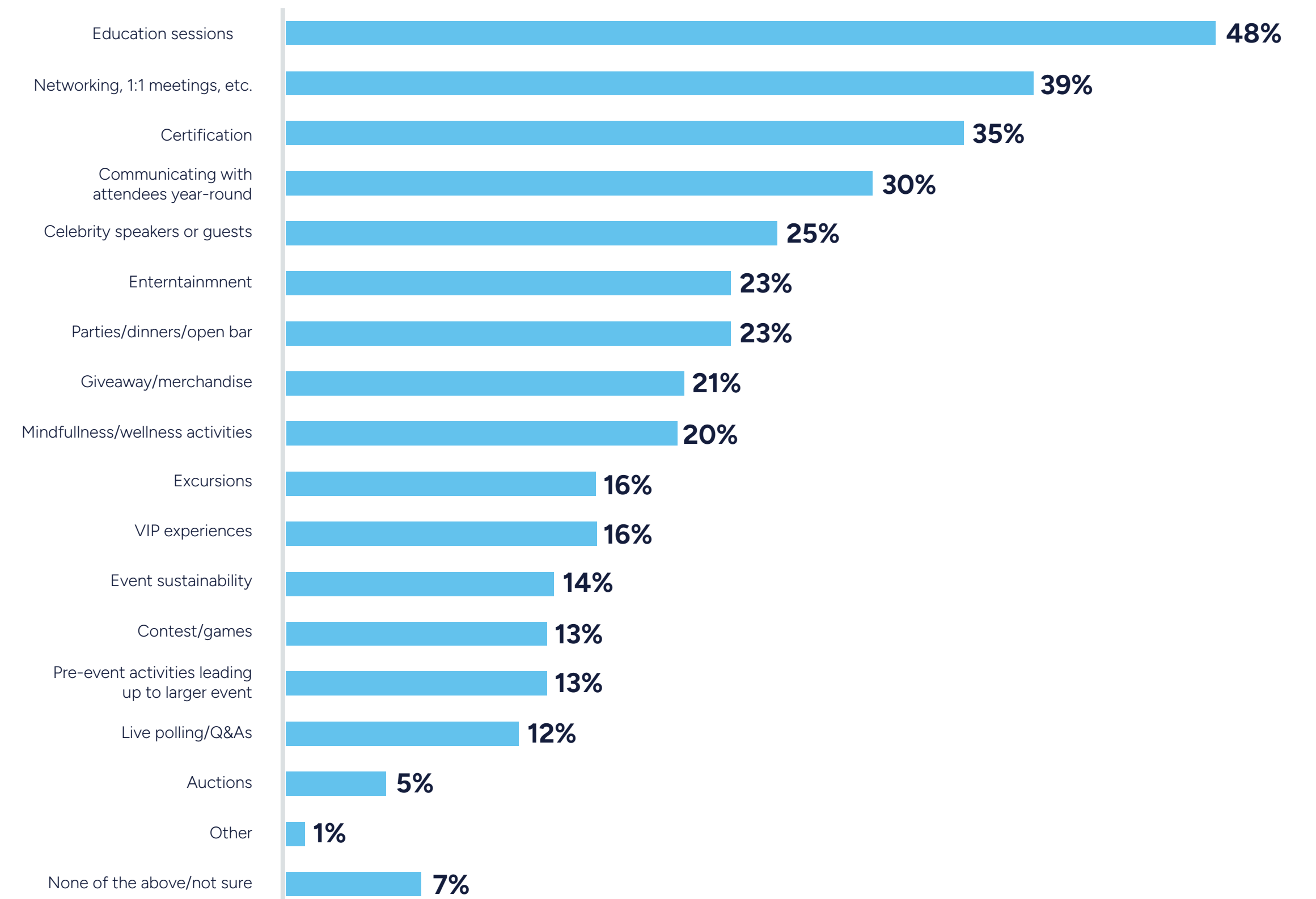
They also mostly value education sessions, networking, and certification from their events (in any format). While Pros are prioritizing increased attendance, revenue, and attendee experiences, they should build professional development and career path support into their event strategies to increase attendance and retention.



of members **prefer in-person events** over virtual

Members who are satisfied, connected, likely to renew, and promoters of their org are more likely to prefer in-person

Most Valuable Aspects of Events for Members



Conclusion

CONCLUSION

The 2025 research reveals a widening gap between what association professionals prioritize and what members actually value. With more members paying their own dues and evaluating ROI more critically, it's time for associations to realign their strategies.

The following **six recommendations** offer actionable ways to recruit, retain, and grow—by focusing on career advancement, flexible learning, technology adoption, and member-centric innovation.

1. Career Advancement is a Core Member Value, Not Just a Perk

Members consistently rank career advancement benefits, like job boards, resume reviews, and networking, as top priorities, especially younger and self-paying Members. Yet Pros continue to undervalue these offerings, creating a persistent gap that threatens retention.

→ ACTIONABLE STRATEGIES

- Elevate career advancement programs from “nice to have” to “need to have.” Promote them as core membership value, not just non-dues revenue.
- Segment offerings by career stage: job opportunities for early careerists, advancement pathways for mid-career, and referrals/networking for late-career members.
- Use AI to personalize career centers, making resources more intuitive and increasing repeat engagement.



2. Fuel Growth Through Multi-Modal Learning

With 72% of Members now required to take professional education, associations have a prime opportunity to become their go-to learning provider. But members want flexibility, relevance, and accessibility.

→ ACTIONABLE STRATEGIES

- Offer stackable micro-credentials tied to events and workshops.
- Launch peer-to-peer learning pods around trending topics like AI or new regulations.
- Push bite-sized learning into member workflows (e.g., 5-minute videos on member portal homepages).
- Ensure high-quality, on-demand content that rivals commercial platforms

CONCLUSION

3. Transform Technology into a Winning Advantage

Technology isn't just infrastructure, it's a companion to doing more with less, a driver of member loyalty, and a catalyst for innovation. Members who perceive their organizations as tech-forward report significantly higher satisfaction, connection, and renewal intent. Yet many Pros still underestimate their own tech capabilities and underutilize the tools they already have.

ACTIONABLE STRATEGIES

- Invest in scalable, member-facing systems like LMS, AMS, and AI-powered platforms.
- Treat your tech stack as a strategic asset, not a cost center—especially as budgets tighten.
- Use technology to personalize experiences, automate engagement, and deliver value at scale.
- Ensure your team is trained and empowered to use tech tools to their fullest potential.
- Remember: the possibilities for your organization's use of technology are vast. Make sure you're using them to stay relevant and deliver maximum value to your members.

4. Keep Advancing With AI

AI adoption is accelerating among Members (76% use it at least weekly), and they're comfortable with organizations using it for content creation, marketing, and personalized learning. Yet only 39% of Pros report using AI, and many feel technologically unprepared.

ACTIONABLE STRATEGIES

- Use AI for personalized content delivery, member segmentation, and predictive analytics.
- Integrate AI into career centers, CE programs, and event planning.
- Ensure board support and staff training to drive responsible, strategic AI adoption.
- Communicate clearly about data privacy and member comfort with AI use.

CONCLUSION

5. Rethink Events: Education + Accessibility = ROI

Events remain the #2 revenue source, but member preferences are shifting. While in-person is still preferred, Members want educational value, regional accessibility, and career relevance.

→ ACTIONABLE STRATEGIES

- Supplement annual conferences with regional events to address travel concerns.
- Tie micro-credentials to event workshops to boost perceived value.
- Prioritize education sessions and networking over flashy experiences.
- Use event data to personalize follow-up learning paths



6. Close the Cost-Value Gap Before It Costs You

With 62% of Members now paying their own dues (up from 55%), cost is the top reason for lapsing. Lapsed Members value career benefits even more than current ones and are harder to win back.

→ ACTIONABLE STRATEGIES

- Offer tiered pricing, renewal incentives, and trial memberships.
- Focus messaging on career advancement, learning, and community—not just advocacy.
- Use data to identify at-risk members and intervene early.
- Ensure tech investments align with member priorities, especially in LMS, AMS, events and career tools



How Momentive Can Help

HOW MOMENTIVE CAN HELP

Close the Gap Between What You Think Members Want and What They Actually Need

This is where Momentive can support you.

The research reveals that association professionals are working with assumptions that don't match member priorities. You're prioritizing advocacy (which matters) while missing career development opportunities (which drive retention). You're planning annual membership increases while members are losing employer-paid dues. You're cautious about AI while members are already using it weekly at work.

Momentive's ecosystem of association tools helps you:

- ✓ **Connect more** with members through integrated solutions that deliver the career development and flexible programming they actually want.
- ✓ **See what's really happening** with live dashboards and predictive analytics that identify member priorities before they become retention risks.
- ✓ **Deliver career value** through AI-powered job boards and career centers that address the gap in understanding what members need most.
- ✓ **Adapt quickly** with flexible platforms that let you test regional events, launch digital programming, and evolve offerings as member preferences shift.

Momentive Software amplifies the impact of over 20,000 purpose-driven organizations in more than 30 countries, with over \$11 billion raised and 55 million members served to date.

Mission-driven nonprofits and associations rely on Momentive's cloud-based software and services to address their most pressing challenges—from engaging their communities to simplifying operations and growing revenue. Designed to help organizations connect more, manage more, and ultimately expect more, Momentive's solutions are built with reliability at the core and strategically focus on fundraising, learning, events, careers, volunteering, accounting, and association management. Momentive partners with organizations that believe "good enough" is never enough—so they can bring on better outcomes for everyone they serve.

Learn more at momentivesoftware.com

Appendix