



# ASSOCIATION MARKETING PREDICTIONS FOR 2019

TOP ASSOCIATION MARKETING TRENDS ON THE  
RADAR OF THE HIGHROAD SOLUTIONS TEAM





# INTRODUCTION

## HOW CAN YOUR ASSOCIATION TAKE ADVANTAGE OF TRENDS IN MEMBER ACQUISITION, RETENTION, AND ENGAGEMENT?

Do you remember when associations first began using social networks to attract and engage members?

What was novel and offered sizeable growth opportunities to early adopters is now commonplace among associations and an expectation among their members.

There are countless examples of association marketing trends that benefited a small number of associations who dared to learn about and implement technology and tactics before anyone else – from content marketing and video to split testing and virtual events.

In the past 5 years, associations marketing trends have shifted faster than at any point in history. The strategies that were crushing it 18 months ago don't give you the advantage today that they did then.

With this accelerated pace of change, association executives who see it coming have tremendous opportunities, while associations that are late to the game face an uphill climb.

For over 10 years, the team at HighRoad Solution has led the way in educating association executives on how to roll out new marketing technology and provided software to help associations capitalize on these opportunities.

We believe that all association executives and board membership should have access to expert analysis of where association marketing is heading.

We wrote our 2019 Association Marketing Predictions guide so that associations could easily stay up on the tactics and tools driving growth, retention, and revenue in 2019.



**Ron McGrath**

*CEO, HighRoad Solution*



## HOW CAN YOU SUPER-CHARGE YOUR ASSOCIATION'S MARKETING WITHOUT BURNING OUT YOUR STAFF?

HIGHROAD SOLUTION CAN HELP. WE PROVIDE MARKETING  
AUTOMATION SOFTWARE FOR ASSOCIATIONS.

### EMAIL MARKETING

Keep your members  
engaged with highly  
personalized email content  
and newsletters that reach  
your members' inboxes  
through expert deliverability.

### MARKETING AUTOMATION

Your membership is diverse.  
Get members to convert on  
your calls to action  
throughout their journey  
with one-to-one online  
interactions.

**Take An Online Tour Now**



# 2019 ASSOCIATION MARKETING PREDICTIONS

## MORE MARKETING POINT-SOLUTIONS



**ADAM  
HIGGINS**

DIRECTOR OF TECHNOLOGY

**“The days of the Swiss Army Knife like applications are gone. ”**

Innovators and technologists are creating software to serve a very specific purpose really well.

Associations will bring new technology into their marketing stacks that fits a very specific purpose and need rather than a one-size fits all solution.

With the shift to more single-purpose platforms, the key for associations is keeping the data integrated across all your systems.

This means that not all systems will lead to or from your AMS. Some applications will also be an extension of each other platforms – creating several

layers of complexity, data, and power.

For example, your AMS will integrate with your marketing platform. Then, your marketing platform will integrate with your social platforms. This shift will result in converting multiple tools and applications into a single, powerful engine with a clear direction.

The AMS will be less of a wheel and spoke. Rather the AMS will act as a tree with branches. The roots and foundation of the tree will be your AMS, and all the other applications branch off.

# 2019 ASSOCIATION MARKETING PREDICTIONS

## PIVOTING TO THE 25% OR GENERATION Z



**EMILY  
WILSON**

CLIENT SUCCESS MANAGER

**“Growth-minded associations, that have identified the big potential for membership acquisition...”**

with younger demographics, will need to start thinking in terms of the generation after millennials; generation Z.

As this age group ages into their first roles in their careers, their expectations are different. They require unique experiences to delight them into valuing what associations have to offer. Across the board, associations have been developing new models that have demanded new tools or technology, new staff roles, and keener eyes to analytics and data.

This lays the groundwork for being able to pivot to target early twenty-somethings born in the mid-1990s with strategy and technology.

Seeing this prediction play out would result in segmenting out this younger persona and giving them specific customer journeys to experience more interactive digital communication, like email.

Associations will also leverage the visual nature of their social consumption and make their communications more image heavy, with light copy and big calls-to-action that might fade in as a way to stand out. Of course, the value behind the offers will need to be appealing to younger audiences with on demand webinars for early career education and interesting meet up opportunities.



# 2019 ASSOCIATION MARKETING PREDICTIONS

## Individualization Rather than Personalization



**MANEESHA  
MANGES**

DIRECTOR OF CLIENT SERVICES

**“Organizations have started to focus on multiple customer experiences.”**

The traditional focus of what a member did has been expanded to include what they might do in the future. It's no longer a game of personalization but rather individualization.

To make something personal implies that it is something that everyone wants or needs – but the trend now is to go micro or niche – it's only about that one individual and what they want to see across all channels and what is important to them.

Associations that truly take the time to understand the needs of a prospective member, their motivations as well as their pain points, will be in a better position to create a user journey that results in conversion.

Individualized experiences are the direct output of omni-channel marketing and this year we expect to see more customized user journeys focusing on the individual steps required to get to that join form or shopping cart.

# 2019 ASSOCIATION MARKETING PREDICTIONS



**LYDIA  
ARUNKUMAR**

---

CLIENT SUCCESS MANAGER

## **“The trend that never ends – mobile.”**

I predict even more mobile-friendly email experiences in the coming new year. The most common way to check an email is on mobile because users are constantly on their phones to pass the time and can readily look through their inboxes without having to sit at a desk.

Mobile user interfaces are improving and association members are adapting to understand how to use them. The dominance of the smart phone means that businesses must adopt a mobile-first mentality or risk losing clicks, opens, and conversions.

Emails in general are becoming skinnier in width, shorter in content, and easier to digest. Email interactivity is another huge trend we see, with the ability to hover over an image to reveal additional details, click on a hamburger icon to

## **Email Marketing Is Going Mobile-First**

see a dropdown menu, or complete a survey and quiz that reveals your answer.

These trends are far more prominent in the mobile space because of compatibility issues on desktop email applications, and because users are far more likely to open an email on their phone than on desktop.

The on-the-go mentality of mobile has also continued to spur the trend in shorter content. User’s attention span has drastically lessened over the years, driving email marketers to reduce the amount of content included in their messages.

Keeping subscribers engaged means keeping the email no longer than 3-5 seconds. Creating more bite-sized, enjoyable, and eye-gluing content is the mobile way and is where we see a shift happening in 2019.

# 2019 ASSOCIATION MARKETING PREDICTIONS

Two Tools Are Better Than One



**ABBY  
CONLON**

---

CLIENT SUCCESS MANAGER

**“In 2019, the association market will continue to see the need to add two tools to their digital marketing stack. ”**

This association marketing technology stack will include an email marketing tool and a marketing automation tool. As associations work to grow their member base while maintaining current members, one tool is just not enough.

Associations are beginning with an email marketing tool to send email communications to current members (onboarding, renewals, dues, etc.) and grow to add a marketing automation tool (lead nurturing, prospecting, etc.).

I predict that this trend will continue on in 2019 and the marketing stack of an email marketing tool and a marketing automation tool will continue to grow across the association space.



# 2019 ASSOCIATION MARKETING PREDICTIONS

Why SMS Should be Part of your Marketing Strategy in 2019



**DAVID  
CARUSO**

---

CO-FOUNDER & PRESIDENT

**“ Many organizations are facing the problem and reality of member information overload! ”**

Just like most people, your association's members are individuals that work, have families and other time consuming activities on a daily basis. Getting a members' attention has never been more difficult. With these busy schedules and the demand on time, the value of phone calls and voicemail has diminished and is lost in some cases.

A more real-time, faster and more focused way to communicate is using SMS/Text Messaging. This form of communication channel has a 98% open rate and reaches members quicker, and easier than any other time-consuming communication channel.

In addition to a more focused way to communicate, research shows that younger workers entering the workforce prefer this form of communication over any other.

# 2019 TAKEAWAYS

## TOP ASSOCIATION MARKETING TRENDS ON THE RADAR OF THE HIGHROAD SOLUTION TEAM

If you have been paying attention to association marketing trends and emerging marketing technology over the past five years, you can be sure of one thing...

The strategies and tactics that work are always changing and change means opportunity for savvy association executives. In 2019, winning association marketing strategies will be more:

Specialized

Individualized

Human

Partnering with a solution provider that understands both effective digital marketing and how associations work will be critical to achieving your growth and revenue goals.

