

## Why Associations Should Use Crowdsourcing:

Members are the lifeblood of associations. Yet, surprisingly few associations give their members a way to be actively involved in the organization beyond serving on committees or attending an annual meeting or conference. **Crowdsourcing is a powerful new dynamic connection between an association and its members**, which nourishes and strengthens this often passive relationship by inviting active, constructive participation on issues important to all.

Perhaps most importantly, **crowdsourcing can help make an association more relevant to its members by:**

- Helping association leaders identify the priorities and needs of its members with a greater level of clarity;
- Giving members a way to help association management chart a path for a growing, vibrant association;
- Forging the creation of new connections between members that would otherwise have never been formed; and,
- Leveraging the vast experience and knowledge of the membership to help solve commonly shared challenges.

Crowdsourcing goes beyond online forums or surveys by providing an interactive process, focused on specific objectives, that guides online collaboration and innovation, leading to desired outcomes. **Participants in well-designed crowdsourcing engagements report stronger connections to their organizations as a result of having the opportunity to contribute in a meaningful way.**

Associations can use crowdsourcing to address challenges such as:

- finding solutions for problems commonly encountered by its members;
- making meetings and conferences more valuable;
- innovating ways to ensure a successful and growing future; and
- providing a conduit for fresh ideas into the community;

Using crowdsourcing can become a major differentiator for an association and be a visible demonstration of its “leading edge” vision.

## How Crowdsourcing works:

Crowdsourcing is a disciplined online process where people who have a common interest or affiliation (such as members of an association) collaborate in an organized and positive way towards accomplishing specific objectives.

Crowdsourcing uses online technology to pose questions to the “crowd” and enable people to submit ideas, which other participants can read, comment on, or make further suggestions. In this way, the ideas submitted are improved and enhanced based on the “wisdom of the crowd” (or in other words, the various experiences, knowledge, backgrounds and opinions of the participants). For example association members may be asked to submit, discuss and rate topics for a conference or journal, which helps identify gaps in knowledge members think are most needed.

Crowdsourcing can also incorporate other types of online collaborative activities to provide a wider breadth of input and data of real value for the association.

Numerous **studies show that “crowdsourced” ideas and solutions are often superior**, even to those from panels of experts.

Crowdsourcing engagements may span days, weeks, or months and can evolve into an ongoing on-demand dialogue to address different issues and topics over time.  
**Crowdsourcing can be cost-neutral or even revenue generating for associations.**

## Applications for Crowdsourcing

There are a variety of ways that associations can and should take advantage of the power of crowdsourcing. Specific examples include:

- **Understanding Needs:** Associations are in place to further the interests of its members, and must have the clearest possible understanding of members’ needs. The collaborative, interactive process of crowdsourcing facilitates drilling into issues at a deeper level for greater clarity.
- **Issue prioritization:** Association leaders and their members typically have many potential issues to address, but focusing on all at once isn’t possible. Crowdsourcing provides a more democratic way to establish priorities, and helps leaders understand *why* they are the top priorities to members.
- **Collaborative problem solving:** Members have a tremendous amount of collective knowledge and experience, which can be effectively tapped for the benefit of all members and the association through crowdsourcing. This also creates new connections among members, putting the association at the center of a valuable network.
- **Innovation:** Whether for cost-saving, higher impact, greater efficiency, or something else, new ideas and approaches are always needed, and crowdsourcing provides the best process for allowing members to bring their innovative ideas forward, and have them enhanced and vetted by others.
- **Planning for the future:** No one can predict the future, but crowdsourcing has proven to be one of the most accurate ways to identify how things may change, and position the association to be on top of emerging issues.

## How GoodCrowds can help:

The benefits of crowdsourcing can be significant for associations, but it takes planning and strategy to do it right. Where is the best place to start? What are the right topics? What technology is right for your needs? How long should you engage? What can you expect?

GoodCrowds will work with you to determine and customize the right approach for your organization. We have worked with organizations around the world to conceptualize, design and implement effective crowdsourcing programs. We will help ensure that your engagements are successful from the get-go and make the best use of your valuable budget.

**For more information, please email [info@goodcrowds.com](mailto:info@goodcrowds.com), or visit [www.goodcrowds.com](http://www.goodcrowds.com)**