

How Associations Can Bring Young Professionals to the Top

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Anyone can benefit greatly from joining an association, yet 56% of associations admit they have trouble engaging young professionals, according to Naylor's Association Communications Benchmarking Survey. However, many factors that millennials and Gen Z value most, including networking, collaboration and education opportunities, are abundantly available through associations. For any younger professional reading this, or older one advancing their career, by joining an association, you *will* stand out from the competition. Here's why.

Increased Knowledge

One of the leading benefits of joining an association is the education. This includes opportunities such as programs and certifications that will expand your knowledge—something employers are always looking for. For example, NACM offers [credentialing](#) for credit professionals so they can set themselves apart.

"Knowledge is power and this program is so empowering," said Georgette Bevan, CCE, CGA, president of NACM Business Credit Services (Murray, UT). "When you know more about what you do, you do it with more confidence, you get better results and you get recognized for doing the right things."

Professional Development

Members of associations have opportunities for self-education with workshops, seminars, and online courses with industry leaders who have years of experience. Members will benefit from exclusive online access to journals, articles, webinars and message boards, keeping them informed and ahead of the competition. "One of the most helpful courses was the *Financial Statement Analysis II* course that led to the CCRA," said Nicholas Luzania, CCRA, CCE, credit manager at Helena Agri-Enterprises, LLC (Fresno, CA). "Since I didn't have a vast background with any kind of accounting beforehand, I feel like the course gave me all of the tools I needed to be able to fully evaluate financial statements."

Networking Opportunities

Social media is a strong networking tool but it is not always effective in business. Associations provide networking opportunities for members, leading to more business opportunities and a deeper knowledge within their respective field.

You want people to know who you are behind the profile. As a member of an association, you will not only connect with others, but form long-lasting relationships. Members can find mentors, colleagues or even partners that could help them advance in their careers. This can be from professionals in similar or completely different career paths.

Innovation

Innovation is grounds for success in any organization. An association gives members the chance to be creative and discuss ways to innovate their company. From brainstorming to drawing boards, members can share their ideas and discuss best practices in the credit profession. The B2B credit industry is quickly evolving. It is crucial to stay ahead of cutting-edge technology.

In doing so, members can work together to make their ideas a reality. These ideas can give rise to new products, projects or even incentives. What business wouldn't want that?