

# **LGMA Membership Review: Strategies and Techniques to Attract and Retain Members**

**Kipp Sezginalp  
University of Victoria  
Masters in Public Administration  
Coop Term 1**

## Table of Contents

<b>Executive Summary.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>1. Introduction.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>1.1. Scope of Analysis and Research</b>	
<b>1.2. Methodology</b>	
<b>1.3. Who is LGMA? .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>2. Membership Value and How it is Delivered .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>2.1. Value</b>	
<b>2.2. Value and Services</b>	
<b>2.3. Considerations .....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>3. Relationship Marketing and Communications .....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>3.1. Commitment</b>	
<b>3.2. Communications</b>	
<b>3.3. Outcome Based Membership Benefits</b>	
<b>3.4. Embracing Technology</b>	
<b>3.5 Considerations .....</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>4. Member Market and Attracting a Younger Demographic .....</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>4.1. Precisely Defined Member Market</b>	
<b>4.2. Attracting a Younger Demographic</b>	
<b>4.3. Considerations .....</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>5. Incentives and Membership Structure .....</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>5.1. Incentives</b>	
<b>5.2. Pricing Objectives</b>	
<b>5.3. Membership Dues and Structures</b>	
<b>5.4. Considerations .....</b>	<b>38</b>
<b>6. Conclusion .....</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>7. Recommendations.....</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>8. References .....</b>	<b>42</b>

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Local Government Management Association of British Columbia (LGMA) has requested a research report to review its membership structure and determine what strategies and/or techniques may be implemented to increase, develop and retain membership. This is in response to the changing economic landscape of membership associations. Gone are the days when people felt it was a requirement to be a part of an association within their profession's industry. Nowadays, associations must convince their industry professionals that their association can provide them with a membership that delivers valuable products and services, and successful associations will be those that are willing to adapt and deliver value to their members in new, interesting and exciting ways.

This report provides an overview and insights on the trends in similar membership associations, and the successful strategies and techniques used to attract and retain members. The key recommendations for LGMA are highlighted for priority membership considerations.

### **Membership Value**

Before LGMA considers adding any new products and services, they should consider addressing their communication challenges to members as new programs or initiatives may be for naught if they continue to be challenged with informing members of all their services.

LGMA should promote volunteer opportunities to members such as participating in committees.

LGMA should consider adjusting their industry value versus member value and analyze how this may affect their membership numbers. Specifically, make some products and services exclusive to members (increasing member value) to see if this increases membership numbers.

### **Relationship Marketing and Communications**

LGMA should look to consider implementing online polls or a direct message option on their website to encourage direct feedback and engagement from members.

Communications with members by email should include more information regarding the association's current projects and how these contribute to reaching an overall vision for the association and its members.

The 'Membership Spotlight' that ICMA uses could be an effective tool for LGMA to provide recognition to contributing members and encourage others to get involved.

LGMA should consider revising the language used to describe their products and services on their website and in their membership guide, specifically by humanizing their offerings by connecting member problems to LGMA services.

LGMA may want to consider a Twitter layout similar to AMANS, where there is a direct Twitter feed on the main page of their website.

A video strategy seems like an attractive option for LGMA to describe where and how the association delivers value to members.

Continue developing the membership database and harvesting information about membership traits and behaviour to provide data that can help produce valuable services and aid in marketing strategies.

### **Defining Member Market and Attracting a Younger Demographic**

LGMA may want to consider broadening their characteristics of members (e.g. CAOS and Corporate Officers), especially on the website description, as many people who do not fit these characteristics still highly value the products and services being offered by LGMA.

Include information on the website and through communications with their members of the impending demographic shift in the workforce.

Creating a mentorship program similar to what PMANL offers, where the association acts as a middleman between mentee and mentor, is a model worth considering.

LGMA should consider building closer relationships with the MPA program at UVic and the MPP program at SFU, as well as CapU, UBC, TRU and UNBC.

### **Membership Structure and Incentives**

LGMA should consider promoting the incentives that they do have more explicitly on their website. Similar to BCHRMA, incentives should be made clear to anyone visiting the website and explicitly cost them out (ie. Your \$250 membership brings you x dollars in savings...)

LGMA may want to experiment with some strategies to promote the concept of access. This may be relatively radical considering most of their services are not web-based but even restricting some products and services to 'members-only'

can produce a more exclusive experience and may increase the value of membership.

LGMA may want to experiment with their pricing. The \$100 price differential between non-members and members for course offerings could be increased to measure how that affects membership and course participation.

LGMA should consider what LGAA is doing by providing a significant discount to first year members.

To attract a younger demographic LGMA should considering adopting AMCTO's 'New Professional Member' category of membership.

LGMA should advertise that they prorate membership depending on when the member signs up and include incentives as BOMA and AMCTO have for joining later in the calendar year.

## **1. Introduction**

Local Government Management Association of British Columbia (LGMA) has requested a research report to review its membership structure and determine what strategies and/or techniques may be implemented to increase, develop and retain membership. This is in response to the changing economic landscape of membership associations. Gone are the days when people felt it was a requirement to be apart of an association within their profession's industry. Nowadays associations must convince their industry professionals that their association can provide them with a membership that delivers valuable products and services. Successful associations will be those that are willing to adapt and deliver value to their members in new, interesting and exciting ways. This will be accomplished by fostering relationships and communications with members that create a sense of commitment between the association and the member. Communications established between the two will help inform members of the unique products and services that are worth the members' time and money. Successful associations will embrace new technologies to stay relevant, improve communications and deliver value in a more attractive and accessible way. By doing this, membership growth and retention will be affected positively. To develop this further, membership must be precisely defined to ensure that the products and services that are offered produce the highest level of member satisfaction while at the same time being cognizant of a forthcoming demographic shift in the workforce. The retirement of baby-boomers will see itself reflected on associations' memberships so associations must be ready to adapt their communications to attract and accommodate this younger demographic. The membership structure and the incentives that go along with it can also be a source of value and positively affect membership growth and retention.

This report will inform LGMA on the trends of similar membership associations and the successful strategies and techniques used to attract and retain members. Notable practices will be distinguished at the end of each section under the "Considerations" heading. Practices that could be applicable to the LGMA will be noted at the end of the report under the "Recommendations" heading.

### **1.1. Scope of Analysis and Research**

Research of secondary sources looked mainly at Internet websites and blogs that addressed membership associations. Some academic sources retrieved from journals dealing with marketing and non-profit associations were also analyzed but to a far less extent than Internet websites. Research focused on membership trends and best practices by commentators and experts within the field of membership associations. Developed from this secondary research was a membership framework that would guide the analysis of membership associations. The membership framework consists of nine characteristics that were identified as important aspects to a successful membership association:

- Value
- Core and supplementary services
- Relationship Marketing and communications
- Outcome based membership benefits
- Embracing technology
- Precisely defined member market
- Younger demographic
- Incentives
- Membership Structure/Dues

\*Value can be an independent characteristic but it can be identified and gauged within the other characteristics.

Research also included primary sources, specifically the websites of membership associations. The majority of associations that were researched were associations that dealt specifically with public administration and local governments. Over 30 associations were analyzed with the above membership framework in mind to identify best practices.

## **1.2. Methodology**

Internet websites and blogs that addressed membership associations were discovered using Google. Journal articles were discovered through the UVic library database. The search terms used include combinations of the following: “membership”, “association”, “public administration”, “trends”, “strategy”, “public administration”, and “local government”.

Some of the associations that were analyzed were on the advice of the LGMA Director. Many of the other associations were identified through the Canadian Society of Association Executives (CSAE) 2014 Source Guide directory. Information concerning LGMA, was acquired through the website and informal meetings and conversations with LGMA staff.

## **1.3. Who is LGMA?**

LGMA is a non-profit, professional membership association specializing in professional development and training for management in local government in BC. They were established in 1919, then known as the Municipal Officers Association of BC. According to their constitution their purpose is “to promote professional management and leadership excellence in local government and to create awareness of the municipal officer's role in the community” (LGMA, 2014). This is accomplished mainly through educational courses, career development programs, instructional manuals, forums and the annual conference. More

information and details of their offerings will be highlighted below with the analysis of other associations' best practices.

## **2. Membership Value and How it is Delivered**

### **2.1. Value**

Value is delivering unique, knowledgeable products and services that are worthwhile for members by meeting their needs and wants, while providing a significant return on investment for the costs of membership.

The twenty-first century has become a time pressed environment. Value is delivering a product or service to someone that is worthwhile. Worthwhile products and services are those that include topics that members care about, that help them perform better at work, that advance their careers, and that are fun and interesting. As Martin Sirk, CEO of the International Congress and Convention Association, explains, "my association can never be more than a small segment of its member's lives, so we strive to make that slice of time as valuable, enriching and constructive as possible" (Coerver & Byers, 2013).

Value is established through uniqueness; specifically the way products and services distinguish themselves in the marketplace from products and services offered elsewhere (Coerver & Byers, 2013). Associations may not be businesses per se, but they still have competition. If there is only one place that delivers a specific service then it becomes more valuable than others since it is the only place where you can receive this service. Add to that, society is becoming increasingly competitive and specialized. Specialists want access to resources and information that support their specialized work. This is where niche associations arise. Niche associations distinguish themselves from the competition by narrowing their target market and providing value to their market's unique needs. The marketplace is getting a lot choosier in the way they're spending their money. Instead of people being apart of multiple associations they will only choose the one that best suits their needs and provides them the most value (Association Mavens, 2012a).

LGMA can be considered a niche association by being the central resource for training opportunities to local government management in British Columbia. LGMA offers the Municipal Administrative Training Institute (MATI), which are six intensive residential training programs that are held all throughout BC. LGMA also offers workshops and forums which take place in-person or some of which are offered online through "webinars". LGMA sells manuals that can be used as reference guides for specific tasks or practices within local governments. LGMA provides educational scholarships to applicants who are pursuing studies in local government and public policy. Education and training is where LGMA focuses its time and resources and this is where the majority of LGMA's value is delivered to members. There are other avenues for someone to access local government

management education but LGMA provides a practical, pragmatic curriculum within their courses that delivers real world applicability to attendants. This practical hands-on training is unique within the market as other educational programs are more theory based.

Associations do not need to address membership numbers directly if they can focus on bringing value to members. This will create revenue to be concentrated back into services and produce even greater value to your members. The byproduct of this will positively affect membership numbers. Specifically, there will be a steady increase in membership as retention will stay high and membership will grow on the increased reputation that it is worthwhile to be apart of this association (Association Mavens, 2014). "More than ever; the way associations become more successful is to help their members do the same"(Coerver & Byers, 2013). At the end of the day, not for profit associations have one goal in mind and that is to provide products and services that meet the needs of a certain group of people. If this goal continues to be met then associations will continue to attract people who are interested in the services they provide.

LGMA's unique training has delivered considerable value, as members answering to an online survey have responded with high levels of satisfaction when asked about course offerings (Insights West, 2014). What is interesting with LGMA's delivery of value is that it is not directly related to membership. Non-members continue to attend LGMA courses in large numbers. With a lack of significant financial incentives to membership, some prefer to be non-members who pay slightly more to attend educational courses. This can be regarded as 'industry value' in comparison to 'member-only-value'. LGMA certainly delivers value but it is to the benefit of all individuals within an industry and not exclusive to members of LGMA only.

## **2.2. Value and Services**

As members become choosier with their money so should associations. What is important to keep in mind is that more stuff does not necessarily equal more value (Coerver & Byers, 2013). Some associations decide to implement more products and services as a way to increase value for members, however this strategy may have a contrary effect. If too many services are offered, members or prospective members may not utilize some of the services that can provide them the most value because they get overwhelmed or distracted by the long list of offerings. Associations must identify which courses and services are used the least and which courses and services are used the most. Determining which products and services are used the most will give you a greater understanding of where members receive value from the membership. (Coerver & Byers, 2013). Additionally it should indicate which products and services deserve the resources and time to run them and which services do not. If there are products and services that require a significant amount of time and resources to run and

members are not taking advantage of them then obviously it would be financially responsible to end those services and divert resources to services that members utilize.

International City/County Management Association (ICMA) provides a high value service that requires a relatively little amount of resources. ICMA provides professional development, membership support and publications to local government leaders across the world. One of ICMA's core services, aside from training and professional development, is a service called "Range Riders", which are retired managers with extensive experience who volunteer their time to provide a unique source of outside counsel to their colleagues. They are not consultants, in a formal sense, but can provide valuable advice and guidance for personal and professional issues for members. This service fosters member participation and networking and can greatly increase commitment to the association. Most importantly it provides a great deal of value to members at a low cost (ICMA, 2014).

Supplementary products for associations can add real value to a membership but can also be distracting or under utilized. Supplementary products are not the core products and services that the association specializes in but they can enhance the experience of membership and complement core services (Oster, 1995).

According to an Insights West survey (2014) of LGMA customers, the majority of respondents answered that they were unaware of the supplementary services offered by LGMA. Supplementary services provided by LGMA include: Career Transition Counseling Service, Overseas Exchange Program, Pension Consulting Services, Temporary Employment Database, Exchange Magazine, Employee Toolkit. LGMA acts as a middleman with their program called "TeamWorks", which allows municipal employees from larger local governments to be lent out to another municipality to help on a project that the smaller municipality may not have the personnel to undertake. Volunteer opportunities may also be considered supplementary services. LGMA offers boards, committees and course presenters for members to participate within. These services, although members may be unaware of them, require little to no resources to remain active. Under-awareness by members may not signify a lack of value from these services but rather a lack of communications and advertising for these services.

Supplementary services that bring members together deliver value in a variety of ways such as member participation and networking. Committees are one way to provide members with an arena where they can voice their opinions and really feel like they have contributed to the association. Some members join associations to be passive and simply receive the services offered, which they are obviously entitled to. Some other members either through their own volition or by encouragement from the association receive a great deal of pride and value when given the opportunity to contribute to the association by working with and

helping other members. Committees are one common way for associations to do this. AMANS does this well by offering six committees for members to be apart of, which are: Education Committee, Records Management Committee, Fall Convention Planning, Spring Convention Planning, Healthy and Safety Resource Committee and Emergency Management Advisory Group (AMANS, 2014). The more committees an association provides, the more opportunities members have to voice their opinions and for the association to listen. Associations should encourage committee participation by making it easy to apply. For example the Trial Lawyers Association of British Columbia (TLABC) website has a committee page and right on the top it states “If you would like to volunteer on a TLABC Committee, please contact [Jane]” and the number to call (TLABC, 2014). It should be this easy for members to get involved.

Supplementary services that associations offer to complement their core services can vary widely. The Manitoba Municipal Administrators (MMAA) offers a “For Sale” and “Wanted to Buy” section on their website, where municipalities can post equipment that they need or want to sell (MMAA, 2014). Professional Municipal Administrators of Newfoundland and Labrador (PMANL) have developed a “Municipal Administrator’s Handbook”, which acts as a quick reference to the roles and responsibilities of a municipal administrator and to the legislation that affects municipalities (PMANL, 2014). Canadian Association of Municipal Administrators (CAMA) provides manuals guiding municipal management such as a “Widespread Illness Response Plan” and a “Sample Employment Contract”, which is similar to the Employee Compensation Toolkit offered by LGMA (2014).

### **2.3. Considerations**

Before LGMA considers adding any new products and services, they should consider addressing their communication challenges to members as new programs or initiatives may be for naught if they continue to be challenged with informing members of all their services.

LGMA should promote volunteer opportunities to members such as participating in committees.

LGMA should consider adjusting their industry value versus member value and analyze how this may affect their membership numbers. Specifically, making some products and services exclusive to members (increasing member value) to see if this increases membership numbers.

### **3. What is Relationship Marketing and Communications?**

#### *Relationship Marketing & Communications*

Relationship Marketing is viewing customer relationships as key assets of the organization, where commitment and communication are essential to this relationship.

#### **3.1 Commitment**

Establishing membership commitment is integral in a successful relationship marketing strategy. Membership commitment is the degree of the member's psychological attachment to the association. Perceived costs of leaving the association, moral obligation to the association, and positive emotional attachment to the products and services offered by the association can all strengthen the psychological bonds between members and the association. Commitment regardless of the form leads to membership retention so it is something that should proactively be fostered (Gruen, Summers & Acito, 2000).

The three forms of commitment are: Costs, Moral Obligation and Emotional Attachment

Cost commitment is derived from a member's self interest stake in the association. Members do not want to leave the association for fear of losing the economic benefit, the social connections and the status that goes along with holding a membership. These benefits may involve significant discount to training programs, access to databases or loss of professional designation. Simply put, the individual will feel as if they are at a disadvantage within their profession if they did not hold a membership.

Moral obligation is derived from a member's sense of duty toward the association, to contribute and maintain a relationship with the organization and its members. This commitment can be seen clearly when looking at two significant components to moral obligation: member participation and networking. Participation can be seen as members consuming but also contributing value to the association. That is, members will benefit from the services provided to members but will also volunteer and contribute in some capacity to the delivery of these services. Networking is the relationships formed between members. Specifically, members develop a sense of belonging to the group when relationships are made between members, which help create an increased belief that they ought to stay in the association.

Emotional attachment is derived from the positive and favourable feelings a member feels toward the association and its services. The product or service that is exchanged between the association and the member exerts the most influence

over the strength of the relationships formed between them. The member utilizes, enjoys and truly appreciates the value delivered by the association and therefore feels psychologically bonded to the association.

Relationships are not one-way transactions but two-way ongoing exchanges based on gratitude and reciprocity, which can both strengthen the relationship between the two parties (Vincent & Webster, 2013). These relationships can be between members themselves or between the association and the member but it is the association's role to foster and encourage these relationships. This is especially valuable with niche associations that deliver specialized services to narrowly defined member base. Associations must foster these relationships to develop a community, where members can feel connected to like-minded individuals, a task that would be quite difficult without the association (Brooks, 2008). Not only do these relationships increase the value of membership but it also increases the commitment for members to an association.

Committees and opportunities to lead workshops or forums within LGMA allows for member participation. MATI programs, workshops and forums all create networking opportunities that create a sense of belonging and commitment to a larger group. LGMA seems to foster a substantial amount of engagement and participation with their forums and training courses. Many of the courses and forums are taught or led by volunteer members from the association. LGMA has a quarterly magazine that is sent to members called "Exchange Magazine". In each issue there is a section called, "Where are they now". This section celebrates the careers of retired members and acknowledges their contribution to local government and the Association. This provides recognition and gratitude to long time members and demonstrates to all other members that the Association values its members.

Fostering relationships with members and providing them with recognition after contributing to the association is important in establishing a reciprocal relationship that can create a strong level of commitment from the member to the association. The International City/County Management Association (ICMA) provides an example of how they do this. On the front page of their website they have a large link to an article with a picture of member titled, "Membership Spotlight". The article will give the background of a member and how they have contributed to the association. The "Membership Spotlight" changes to different members periodically and it is a tool to encourage membership participation, humanize the association's services and provide recognition to members, which will strengthen their commitment to the association (ICMA, 2014).

Relationship marketing strategies remain important because the survival and prosperity of membership associations relies on repeat purchases or continuing service utilization by members. Fortunately, general outcomes deriving from successful relationship marketing strategies include loyalty of membership, increased sales, greater retention levels and a positive word of mouth (Vincent &

Webster, 2013). Greater retention levels are very important, as some studies have shown that on average retaining existing customers is 6 times less expensive than acquiring new ones (Bhattacharya, 1998).

### **3.2. *Communications***

Communications at all levels of an association must foster relationship building with members. This means more than simply delivering exemplary customer service. Relationship building will allow for a dialogue to be established between the members and the association, where the values of the association can align themselves with the values of the members. This dialogue will include information on upcoming service offerings by the association, professional issues interesting to members but as well as information and knowledge about the association itself. The level of an association's dissemination of organizational knowledge, values, goals, culture, personnel etc. has a positive, direct affect on moral obligation and emotional attachment (Vincent & Webster, 2013). A good example of this can be seen in an association's strategic plan and mission statement. Here is where an association can make their values and beliefs known to all members and non-members.

By establishing a constant dialogue between the association and their members, the feedback from members should provide the association with the information needed to produce a strategic plan, course offerings and a website that parallels member feedback and member values. Not to mention, if members are actively engaged with the association and are finding value in the services offered, they will be motivated to talk about the organization to colleagues and superiors at work (Ed Rigsbee, 2011c). This word of mouth can only positively affect membership recruitment.

At LGMA, a weekly email is sent out to members that includes job postings, however it is a repeat list of jobs that were posted by Civic Info BC the week prior. Emails are also sent out to members to inform them on upcoming professional development and training opportunities. There are usually surveys/questionnaires given to participants at the end of course offerings. LGMA also produced a general survey to all members and non-members who have been in contact with the association in the past year. From these surveys, LGMA hopes to receive adequate feedback to listen and respond to members' concerns.

Membership engagement does not have to be difficult or complicated. Alberta Urban Municipalities Association (AUMA) engages with members on a daily basis in an easy, time effective manner. On the front page of their website, directly in the center of the page, they have listed seven links that cover issues and news relevant to its members. Out of the seven links, four of them were asking input from members either through direct messages that could be completed by filling in a blank window at the bottom of the linked page or they

had provided short surveys to be completed (AUMA, 2014). This is an easy, cost effective way to keep an open dialogue with members.

A similar technique is used on the website of the Association of Municipal Managers, Clerks and Treasurers of Ontario (AMCTO). Right on the front page when you visit the website there is an online poll. An example of a question they have posed was: “What current regulatory requirement/reporting are most challenging to complete for your municipality at this time” (AMCTO, 2014). Both AUMA and AMCTO use techniques that provide the association with valuable information to form services and marketing around. These techniques also allow members to feel as if they have contributed to the organization, thus increasing their commitment to it. Another example can be seen on CAMA’s website. On literally every page of their website, there are 4 large links:

- Annual Conference
- Ask CAMA
- e-Brief
- Jobscene.

Under the “Ask CAMA” link it says, “Stay connected, ask a question, provide feedback, share ideas...” (CAMA, 2014). This type of link, which is clearly visible on every page of the website, encourages members to contact the association and even explicitly welcomes feedback. This is another simple way to encourage member engagement and develop a dialogue that fosters a relationship between the members and the association.

The language that is chosen for the association’s value proposition, strategic plan and overall website will be important in building this relationship. Most associations that will not endure are associations that struggle with their value proposition. These associations have difficulty articulating where or how value will be delivered to members. In doing so they have difficulty convincing members to join (Association Mavens, 2012b). The language used for the value proposition and the strategic plan should promote the values and vision of the association, which should closely resemble the values of its target market. The language all throughout the website will be similar to that of the value proposition and strategic plan.

Not only will the language promote the values of the association but also it will try to humanize the association and the services they provide. To humanize the language is to show the reader that the association understands and empathizes with members’ challenges in their careers or more generally in their lives. For example, on an association’s website and in their membership guide, it will be effective to identify common challenges, issues, problems for managers in local government or challenges for anyone working in local government. This shows the prospective member reading this that the association understands their position and lays the foundation for the website to explain that the products and

services offered can aid these challenges. By explicitly connecting challenges faced by municipal workers with services that provide the necessary information and training to deal with them, it provides a picture of value to a prospective member that is difficult to ignore. This should encourage them to sign up for membership or convince their superior that the value provided by the association can really improve their work in the office.

The language that is chosen to be used on the website or in the strategic plan can be so simple yet so effective. A good example of this is from the website of the International Institute of Municipal Clerks (IIMC). IIMC provides educational training and certification to municipal clerks, secretaries and treasurers to members in cities and towns worldwide. Under the “Benefits of Membership” tab on their website, they state: “Tap into the only source exclusively dedicated to the advancement of Municipal Clerks” (IIMC, 2014). It establishes the uniqueness of the association with words like, “only source” and makes the association’s goal clear with words like “exclusively dedicated to the advancement of Municipal Clerks”. This last segment also parallels presumably the most obvious goal for most members, which is that they want to advance their careers. A prospective member, from this one sentence, can see that there is value in membership to this association. A challenge for most people is career advancement so why wouldn’t you be interested in joining an association that makes it clear that they are exclusively dedicated to doing just that for you. Beside this line, ingeniously they have a link that reads “join IIMC now”, which takes you directly to a membership application form (IIMC, 2014).

The LGMA website includes a strategic plan and vision, where they clearly lay out their values and goals, which can allow members to see how their values align with the association’s. There is also a membership guide that explains their products and services in great detail, however neither on the website nor in the membership guide are member’s problems or concerns explicitly stated and then connected to the products and services offered by LGMA.

Branding is a strategy designed to help the association serve members better by establishing its uniqueness in a very cluttered public and non-profit world. It does this on a mass level with things like advertising but more importantly in this context, it does this on a personal level through client interactions with the organization. An association can create brand recognition by connecting products and services to an overall brand vision or strategic plan and creating experiences for your clients that reflect this vision (Centre of Excellence for Public Sector Marketing, 2009). This might not only be achieved through products and services but through the association’s website and at all levels of communications between the association and its members. Brand strategy must foster loyalty-based relationships by defining relevant and credible value propositions. Remembering the brand name and having positive associations with that brand makes selection easier and enhances the value and satisfaction

with the organization or product/service/program. Once that occurs the brand will become a promise to deliver value.

The LGMA promotes their brand. The website looks very modern and has a tagline slogan, “Learn, Lead, Grow” on the front page. The website is robust with many links to information about the association and what they provide. It has been voiced by staff and by association members that many members, although they are satisfied with the services they do use, they do not know of all the services offered by LGMA. Brand and name recognition as well is not prevalent amongst municipal employees except within senior management.

### ***3.3. Outcome Based Membership Benefits***

Outcome based membership benefits must be mentioned when discussing the importance of language and communications. It has to do with the choice of words that are used in describing what the association offers, in terms of products and services to members. This can be analyzed in the association’s website but also in the email and information provided to members and non-members in all forms of communications.

It is important to differentiate between the features and benefits of membership. The features of membership are the items available to members to utilize or ignore. Benefits are the things that make the members’ lives better, either through utilization of the products and services offered or the inherent benefits that come along with membership (Rigsbee, 2010). Rather than talking about things like courses or a membership directory as features, instead it’s thinking of membership as something that people can really relate to and making it measurable and tangible (Association Mavens, 2012a). It’s about humanizing membership; connecting members’ problems with products and services that solve these problems.

The LGMA website is very informative with multiple pages describing the products and services that they offer. Under the “Membership Benefits and Services” tab, a membership guide link is provided that details all their course offerings, as well as the supplementary services that come along with membership. The Association’s website however could be improved. The association’s website can be an influential tool to attract and retain members. Language used in text of the website could sell the membership more, with more language that establishes the uniqueness of LGMA. The membership guide is robust with details on LGMA offerings but the language used does not humanize the service by connecting municipal employee problems with the solutions that can be derived from utilizing LGMA products and services.

Not all associations adopted this technique of outcome based membership benefits but there are many that have. AMCTO is one of those associations. On AMCTO’s website they use statements such as this one to convince prospective members of the value in membership: “If you are a municipal professional who

needs to stay connected with the rapidly evolving municipal environment, or want to continue to develop your career, becoming an AMCTO member is one of the most rewarding decisions you can make”(AMCTO, 2014). A statement like this shows prospective members that the association has identified two important problems or concerns facing municipal professionals today, specifically staying connected and developing your career. The outcomes of membership are the rewards of staying connected and developing your career.

After explaining their services, an association like AMANS will finish their identification of problems with a statement such as this one: “It is through this unique network that you will be able to remain up to date on important and current, municipal government issues” (AMANS, 2014). Connecting problems and solutions, humanizes the association and establishes a promise to deliver value to members. Another example is from IIMC. They identify the problem by stating: “As a Municipal Clerk, you are continually asked to produce more with less. There are always too many questions and not enough answers”. They explain the solution by providing the outcome benefits: “As a member, you and your municipality can rely on IIMC to help you become more efficient and productive” (IIMC, 2014). Increases in efficiency and productivity are benefits of membership that deliver value to members.

In some circumstances it is better to explicitly explain the benefits of a feature than assume that the feature is self-explanatory. By doing so, members and non-members will value the features more. For example, the value delivered through online courses is more complex than simply convenience. The International Public Management Association (IPMA) provides an ‘Online Course Value Proposition’. The proposition explains that value from online courses is offered through:

- Flexibility – You come to class when and where you want
- Instructor facilitated courses
- Online addresses the needs of all types of learners
- Expense: No travel related expenses
- Preparation for certification (IPMA, 2014)

By explaining benefits in these terms, prospective members will recognize that the products and services offered by the association can truly deliver them value by helping them solve the challenges they face.

### **3.4. *Embracing Technology***

If a certain technology can strengthen the association’s capacity to add value to current programs and services than it should be addressed, discussed and considered for implementation. Of course time and cost must be accounted for any decision but it is important for associations to stay current with technological advancements to ensure their relevancy in today’s fast

changing society. It is essential however; to know what technological category your members fall into before drastically investing in technologies. For example, are your members early-or-late adopters to technological advancements? If they are late adopters then it will be unnecessary to invest time and resources in an attempt to constantly be adapting to all the new technological innovations. If your members are the contrary then it may be worthwhile to stay in touch with their reactivity to new technologies. Staying up to date on newer technologies and multimedia trends may at the very least allow prospective members who are early adopters to entertain the idea of joining the association, where as if the association was clearly not up to date, these prospective members would not be interested.

LGMA has identified their members as late adopters as the majority of respondents to a membership survey, answered that they did not check nor wanted to check Twitter (Insights West, 2014).

Social networks are only as effective as the members that are using them. It does not provide much value to represent your association on all social media platforms if none of your members utilize these social networks. It goes hand in hand with what technological category your members fall in. With that being said however, social media is not going away and it will continue to be an effective medium to communicate and advertise to members and prospective members. Associations should be represented on popular social networks with clear goals in mind, such as increasing the association's online presence and creating public awareness (Audrey Price, n.d.). This can be achieved by having your association send out bi-weekly announcements on a social media platform, by using social media to promote relevant third party content that will be of interest to your members and by seeking opportunities to guest blog on external sites (XYZ University, 2013). This can all be accompanied with emails to members notifying them of the announcements until they check these social networks without your notification. Social networks can open dialogues between members and the association thus strengthening relationships and commitments between the two.

Although LGMA members are 'late-adopters' this membership base will eventually change. Younger demographics are active on social networks so to attract and provide value to this upcoming membership base, LGMA should stay active and promote their online presence. LGMA currently has a Twitter and a LinkedIn account in which they periodically post on average about once per week. Tweets mostly include promotion of upcoming training opportunities and announcement of new positions acquired by members. The LinkedIn account is kept relatively inactive.

Participation in social networks does not need to be an all or naught endeavor, especially when many of your members may not utilize social media. AMANS handles this well. AMANS has a Twitter account where they regularly post job openings, recognize sponsors to the association and

promote upcoming training opportunities. What is interesting is that AMANS has linked their Twitter account to the front page of their website where there is a Twitter feed that you can scroll through all the Association's past tweets. On the feed there is a "Follow" button, which makes it easy for anyone to follow the association and also at the bottom of the feed there is a message box that reads, "Tweet to @amanovascotia", to allow anyone to provide feedback or get in contact with the association (AMANS, 2014). This type of social media arrangement provides AMANS to stay up to date on technology and communications, while not turning their back on members who still may prefer to visit their website for information on the association. The association will stay attractive to prospective members who are 'earlier adopters', while at the same time not withholding information to their members, who may be similar to LGMA's and do not use twitter very often.

To convince members that they should pay attention to your social network you may need a blurb to captivate them. TLABC does just that. TLABC states on their website: "We strive to post a wide variety of items: TLABC events, pertinent legal news, community support, member initiatives and even pieces of interest... it's not just legal- it's as well-rounded as we are!" (TLABC, 2014). This informal blurb can humanize the association as they attempt to endear themselves to their members by explaining that they are going to post pertinent legal information but also things that simply interest them. By allowing members to get to know the association's staff and culture it strengthens relationships and provides value to members by adding a level of trust that getting to know someone can produce.

Database technology is something all associations can use to provide important information about their members to develop products and services that deliver more value. An association can conduct an information audit that derives two types of data: research data and behavioural data. Research data will include "who are your members?" This includes demographic information on age, gender, and income. Also it will include other data about members, such as key dates (join, renewal, lapse) and job titles. Behavioural data will include "what do my members do?" This can be gleaned from product sales, meeting registrations, web site traffic, and program participation. It can help you answer questions about how members and others interact with your organization, where they spend their time and money, and what's important to them (CSAE, n.d). Leveraging this data to design products and services specifically for these members will provide a high degree of value to members. Having the knowledge of member behaviour and preferences will also help in marketing purposes to attract like-minded prospective members.

LGMA has a membership database that includes members' position title, the organization they work for, their type of membership, how long they have been a member, and the LGMA courses/events that they have registered for in the past. Looking at an individual's membership information page provides all this information. It is not possible however, to categorize the information

by these information traits. For example, being able to select a specific course and having the database generate a list of all the members who have registered for this specific course in the past. This type of filtering would be more helpful in determining marketing strategies and member needs.

The use of multimedia on an association's website is a tool to communicate your association's value to members and prospective members. With the prevalence of high speed Internet, multi media such as video, can more easily be accessed by visitors to your association's website. Associations should take advantage of this and use video which can give so much more value than simply having visitors of the website reading multiple pages of your website. If a picture tells a thousand words, then a video would tell a million. With a video strategy on your website people can witness the passion in your association and "see leaders in their midst who they can buy into, trust and want to follow" (Association Mavens, 2014). As Tom Morrison, CEO of the Metal Treating Institute, explains, "if you're an association without a video strategy you are like a steak with no taste" (Association Mavens, 2014). The website is used to inform visitors to the site about what the association has to offer but also to convince prospective members on joining the association. A video strategy coupled with the website can be a persuasive tool for achieving this.

LGMA does not currently have a video strategy on their website. They have uploaded a video on the website in the past to promote one of their speakers, who ironically spoke on the use of media and technology, but they have not used a video on the website since. Some reasons for not using videos on the website included receiving permission from guest speakers and the cost of producing a professional looking video about the Association. A video strategy however could be an effective medium to explain services such as the MATI programs or to be used to promote the annual general meeting.

Many associations have identified that the use of video is a great tool for promotion. The Planning Institute of British Columbia (PIBC) utilizes this tool for promotion of their annual conference. PIBC provides professional development to professional planners in BC through workshops and networking events. Their promotional video for their annual conference not only promotes the conference but also promotes the association's culture, their values, who their members are and most importantly the passion that members and the association have towards their profession. The video has testimonials from members about the problems that the profession faces in BC, implying that it is at the annual conference where these problems will be addressed and discussed. The video can invoke feelings towards the profession and the association that reading words off of a web page would be hard-pressed to match. It is through videos such as these that can strengthen commitment for members to the association, as the video provides testimonials from members who are sharing their inspiration and goals for the profession. Viewers who share these beliefs will be

encouraged to join the association because people like to be with other like-minded individuals (PIBC, 2014).

Link to PIBC Annual Conference promotional video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ppKm2hvtUlw&feature=youtu.be>

Another good example is the International Public Management Association for Human Resources (IPMA-HR). Their video is conveniently placed right on the “About Us” page of their website. The video clearly states whom their association serves and the value that is delivered to members (IPMA-HR, 2014). Link to IPMA HR video: <http://ipma-hr.org/about-us>

### **3.5. Considerations**

LGMA should look to consider implementing online polls or a direct message option on their website to encourage feedback and engagement from members.

Communications with members such as email should include more information regarding the association’s current projects and how these contribute to reaching an overall vision for the association and its members.

The ‘Membership Spotlight’ that ICMA uses could be an effective tool for LGMA to provide recognition to contributing members and encourage others to get involved.

LGMA should consider revising the language used to describe their products and services on their website and in their membership guide, specifically by humanizing their offerings by connecting member problems to LGMA services.

LGMA may want to consider a Twitter layout similar to AMANS, where there is a direct twitter feed on the main page of their website.

A video strategy seems like an attractive option for LGMA to describe where and how the association delivers value to members. The examples listed above seem to be appropriate models to mimic.

Continue developing the membership database and harvesting information about membership traits and behaviour to provide data that can help produce valuable services and aid in marketing strategies.

## **4. Member Market and Attracting a Younger Demographic**

### *4.1. Precisely Defined Member Market*

Precisely defining a member market means to focus on the needs and wants of a specific group. Defining a member market is not necessarily about size; it has more to do about value. Members do not care if they belong to a large association or a small association. They only care about whether the association provides them with value. Value for your membership will be defined by the audience who is receiving the products and services offered by the association. The same product or service may have a very high value to one segment of people and a very low value to another segment (Association Mavens, 2012c). The scope of the membership will be broadened or narrowed by the products and services offered. An association will want to capture the segment of people who highly value their products and services as their target market. With that being said the scope of membership can change if the association fundamentally changes the products and services offered, thus potentially changing the value for members and prospective members. As long as the association is continuing to provide products and services that are of their expertise and specialty than the association will continue to provide value to a certain segment of people.

The LGMA website states that “appointed management or statutory officials and their deputies and assistants” are open to full time memberships (LGMA, 2014). There have been LGMA members in the past however that have not met these characteristics and have still highly valued their membership. As well, educational courses offered by LGMA have been attended by a variety of people who do not fit the Regular Membership definition. LGMA has precisely defined their member market on their website but internally they are unclear who exactly should fall within this definition. This inclusive mentality however is to the benefit of the association and to their consumers as LGMA regularly delivers value to people outside of this definition.

Associations with a precisely defined member market are generally more successful than broad based associations because their mission is clearer; their value proposition is stronger, their communications are improved with more targeted messaging and their competitiveness is enhanced with efforts dedicated to more of a distinct market (Coerver & Byers, 2013). With a broad membership base, there will certainly be members that do not value products and services offered in the same high regard as other members. These members will increasingly question their return on investment and in turn question why they are paying membership dues when they do not need or benefit from the association’s offerings (Coerver & Byers, 2013). As well, the more broad based the membership is for an association, the more competition it will encounter from other associations. By precisely defining the member market and having the products and services aligned to this defined market, the association will

establish its uniqueness amongst the variety of associations that are relevant to your members. With a more precisely defined member market, members will highly value the products and services and in turn retention rates will remain high.

Although, LGMA could benefit from internally coming to a consensus of whom exactly they want their target market to be, they must keep in mind the dangers noted above that come along with broadening the membership base. LGMA's definition now, although unclear, has delivered significant value to consumers utilizing their services, as the Insights West survey has shown. The products and services are delivering value to consumers and now for LGMA it is just about capturing precisely who they are.

PIBC states on their website who their target member market is but also gives a profile of who their members are now. The profile includes a summary of membership information such as age, educational achievement, geographic location, and employment experience (PIBC, 2014). This can attract new members to the association as prospective members realize the common similarities that they share with members. This summary of membership information can inform the visitor of the website to the types of people who value their products and services.

#### **4.2 *Attracting a Younger Demographic***

Younger demographic will be defined in this report as individuals from generation x and part of generation y, specifically the younger demographic that is expected to replace the Baby-boomers as they retire. These individuals have already been in the workforce for numerous years and are taking on larger roles as their superiors retire. Generation X is generally defined as individuals born from the mid 1960s to the early 1980s. Generation Y is defined as individuals born from the early 1980s to the early 2000s.

Baby boomers were those individuals born after World War II up until the 1960s or mid 1960s. With baby boomers aging and retiring now, the largest turnover of human capital in North American history is upcoming. Baby boomers participate heavily in membership associations but as they retire many will not renew their membership or will purchase less products and services from the association. As we approach 2015, Generation Y, which is currently the youngest generation in the workforce today, will actually become the majority of the workforce (Association Mavens, 2012a). Membership associations must be aware of this trend and be prepared to adapt to this situation by attracting more members from this younger demographic.

The marketplace is craving new leaders as most leadership positions are held by baby boomers that are soon to be retiring. Individuals from generation x have been waiting for years to fill their roles but many workplaces do not have succession plans in place. Succession planning involves identifying bright,

energetic, talented employees and then formally providing them the training and the experiences so they, as aspiring managers, are ready to move up in the organization when opportunities arise. The lack of succession planning in local governments clearly leaves a void where associations such as LGMA can take advantage (Benest, 2003). Associations need to step in and provide the necessary training and preparation for these younger generations to fill these roles.

LGMA currently offers some features that are attractive to a younger demographic. LGMA has a student membership option that is available to any student enrolled in a full time course of studies in an accredited Canadian post-secondary institution. The student membership however has not been taken advantage of, as the past two years there has been only one student member. As noted above, LGMA provides three different scholarships for anyone interested in studying local government. LGMA also offers a comprehensive course called MATI Foundations, which provides essential information about the roles and responsibilities of local government. This course would be ideal for a younger local government employee who has ambitions to become a manager in the future.

Informing prospective members on the upcoming demographic shift in the workforce can be an effective way to attract membership from a younger demographic. It can also inform superiors like CAOs, who sometimes determine which of their employees will have memberships purchased for them. This information may help them realize that it is worthwhile to provide membership to their younger employees as a form of succession planning. Washington City/County Management Association (WCMA) does this by including a tab on their website titled, "Next Generation". Within the "Next Generation" page it explains the upcoming issue of the baby boomers retiring; including information for local government managers to prepare for this and as well as information directed towards young people on what a career in local government entails (WCMA, 2014). One criticism with this page is that WCMA could take this page one step further and connect this issue with solutions that are provided by the association. This would explicitly state the value in membership for a younger demographic. The more your members are aware of this, the more members will require and appreciate succession planning that their municipality may or may not offer. This is where LGMA can step in and provide the required training and leadership that is necessary to help municipalities with this transition period.

Attracting new members from a younger demographic, in need of succession training or not, may be different than how it was with baby boomers. The younger generation has different definitions of value, different ways of accessing information, different learning processes and different ways of socializing (Coerver & Byers, 2013). There are cultural differences between baby boomers and the younger generations that affect their attitude towards membership associations. Baby boomers were comfortable being apart of an association that

wasn't perfect but did not mind working to make it better. Where as the younger generation does not share that same line of thinking. Baby boomers are more loyal and will stick with an association through tough times, where as generation x and y will disengage if they are not having a positive experience or if they are not seeing a real return on investment. When they sign up for an association they expect it to be a fun learning experience, where there is a certain level of flexibility to come and go as they please (Maryland Association of CPAs, 2013). The younger demographic wants value from their memberships but when it is convenient and worthwhile for them.

A way to get a younger demographic engaged and interested in your association is to give them a level of responsibility within the organization. AMANS has a close relationship with Dalhousie's School of Public Administration and have established a practice that one of their students serves on the AMANS Board of Directors. This will provide the association with insight on the younger demographic within the industry that the board generally would not know. A student representative could be a valuable resource for marketing purposes with word of mouth at school and advice on marketing initiatives targeting younger demographics. It also provides a great experience for someone young to have some responsibility and contribute to the association. These opportunities could allow the association to identify future members, explain to them how rewarding a career is in local government and inform them of the value that an association like LGMA can provide to them as they aspire for career advancement within local government.

For an association to remain relevant in this digital age, they need to reach, mobilize and engage their next generation of members on their platform, which is mainly social media. 89% of 18-29 year olds are using social media (Harrison, 2014). This has been discussed above under technology but sharing updates on social media allows associations to promote events and keep those not attending current on what's happening. It is essential that the association is tweeting regularly on Twitter and is not just promoting events but is keeping it conversational. An association's Twitter feed should be a fun and informative source for members. Being active on social media will not guarantee that an association attracts a younger demographic but it is definitely a medium that cannot be ignored going forward especially with this turnover of baby boomers.

Younger demographics value a work/life balance, however they are still keen for training and guidance that can propel their career. Members from older generations also highly value career-enhancing benefits from associations. This is one area where the two groups of members share a common ground. Associations might consider how they can act as conduits between senior executives and ambitious younger members (Brooks, 2008). This will provide value to both groups as younger members receive guidance and more senior members receive access to the motivated, bright new minds within their industry. An ICMA manager guide stated that many assistants believed that mentorship

was a desirable and helpful experience in preparation for becoming a city manager (Benest, 2003). If a mentorship program is too formal or cannot be achieved for whatever reason, associations should find some way to foster relationships between senior administrators and younger members.

PMANL have set up a mentorship model that is relatively straightforward. The association compiles a list of members that are willing to be a mentor for a younger administrator. The younger administrator will contact the association and a committee within the association will determine the most suitable mentor for the young administrator, in terms of region and particular needs. Simply put the association will act as a middleman to set up the relationship but after that it is really between the mentee and the mentor. This program seems to require a lot of promotion and little funding but could provide a great deal of value for younger members that the association wants to acquire. It is also another opportunity for member engagement, which once again strengthens commitment to the association.

The Saskatchewan Municipal Administrator (SARM) and AMCTO have established internship programs, however both are in partnership and funding support from their respective provinces. AMCTO's program provides 50% of the funding to subsidize the intern's salary while the participating municipality covers the rest (SARM, 2014)(AMCTO, 2014). These internship programs may be costly and require a lot of coordination with the province so they may not be worthwhile. However, these interns will be forever grateful to what the association provided them and will in turn produce loyal members and ambassadors for the association.

In 2008, LGMA administered and delivered a three-year pilot internship program with a partnership between themselves, the provincial government and the Municipal Finance Authority (MFA). This program was initiated in response to local governments in BC having a difficult time attracting qualified workers to local government positions. The internship program was intended to attract the young bright minds of the day to career opportunities in local government. Interns' salaries were approximately \$45,000 a year with \$30,000 being subsidized from the funds contributed by the Ministry of Community, Sport and Cultural Development and the MFA. In 2010 there wasn't a need or desire from local governments to fill positions so with financial pressures the program was stopped that year. The program was not self-sustaining, as it required grants from the provincial government and the MFA. It was a successful program though, as it garnered significant interest from both local governments and young people. Some local governments carried on the model on their own volition and the Northern Development Initiative Trust currently uses this model for local governments in northern BC.

LGMA has never formally established a mentorship program. At the 2013 annual conference however, the Association invited three well-experienced retired

members to give advice to members by appointment. It was not taken advantage of by the attendants to the conference. Mentorship and guidance from experienced members is a valuable source but the annual conference may not have been the most ideal situation to access it for members so judgments on whether this is something members would actually appreciate should not be made from this experience alone.

Associations must be proactive when targeting this younger demographic. They must recruit personally, demonstrate value and nurture the early experiences of younger members. Recruiting personally requires efforts to visit universities or workplaces to invite prospective members to events for free or provide trial memberships. Demonstrating value can be achieved by inviting younger people in the industry to events and pairing them with more senior members, who can enlighten them on the benefits of membership. To nurture their early experiences is to ensure that younger people in the industry enjoy a value filled first impression of the association, where they come to the realization that they can't *not* become members.

Connecting with local post secondary institutions is a way of getting the word out early in the younger demographic that will benefit the association perhaps years later with brand recognition. ICMA has a "Manager in Residence Program", which is a partnership with MPA programs at local universities that host city managers for a week on campus. The program is aimed at enhancing university curricula and attracting university students to local government careers (ICMA, 2014). It is also a great opportunity to promote the association, sign up some student memberships and build relationships with the motivated, bright new minds entering the industry.

### **4.3 Considerations**

LGMA may want to consider broadening their characteristics of members, especially on the website description, as many people who do not fit these characteristics still highly value the products and services being offered by LGMA.

Include information on the website and through communications with their members of the impending demographic shift in the workforce.

Creating a mentorship program similar to what PMANL offers, where the association acts, as a middleman between mentee and mentor, is a model worth considering.

LGMA should consider building closer relationships with the MPA program at Uvic and the MPP program at SFU, as well as CapU, UBC, TRU and UNBC.

## 5. Membership Structure and Incentives

### 5.1. *Incentives*

The same factors that strengthen a relationship between a member and their association can also be the same factors that attract them to the association. Similar to cost, moral obligation and emotional attachment, incentives can be seen as tangible or intangible rewards. Tangible rewards are those that can have a monetary value assigned to them. These rewards serve the individual's self interest of career advancement, status and economic position. Intangible rewards are those based from the social interaction that the association provides members. Intangible incentives promote a sense of belonging to the profession and to a group of like-minded individuals. This sense of belonging derives itself from an individual's identification that the association shares and champions the principles they believe in (Granik, 2005) (Chen, 2004). These incentives all speak to value. The more valuable the information delivered by the association, the higher the likelihood that access to that information will influence individuals to sign up for the association (Chen, 2004).

Incentives can be used to motivate new members or non-members to try something new like a course or attending the annual conference. CAMA states on their website that members who are attending their first CAMA Conference are eligible for a \$150.00 discount off the registration fee (CAMA, 2014). The purpose of the discount is to get participation from a hesitant member who would otherwise not have come to the conference. Once they arrive for the first time with a discount they will understand the value that is delivered through the conference and will come to the conclusion that they need to be there every year. This tangible incentive can be used on courses or could be used on membership where the first year is substantially cheaper than thereafter.

LGMA provides tremendous value to members and non-members through their products and services. This was made evident from the professional needs survey in which respondents averaged an 8.6 out of 10 for product and service satisfaction. With this high level of satisfaction it is important that people working in local government in BC "try out" LGMA's products and services. Incentives, specifically tangible, financial incentives will encourage those to try out LGMA's services.

Access can be an important asset for associations. As discussed earlier, associations must deliver value. The question for associations is how much member-only value they want to deliver compared to how much industry value they want to deliver. Member-only value is exclusive access to products and services and overall benefits to holding a membership. Industry value is every activity your organization does that delivers value to all stakeholders in the association's industry. While non-members do enjoy the industry value that your organization delivers, it is the member-only benefits that will potentially motivate

the non-member in your industry to sign up (Rigsbee, 2012). If there is too much industry value delivered then the asset of access for an association is diminished. Members should receive access to exclusive, valuable, and beneficial resources that the general public does not receive or can only access at a premium price. The premium price for non-members increases the value in membership because members appreciate that they do not need to pay this exaggerated price and it also acts as an incentive for non-members to sign up for membership so they can avoid paying this premium price (Sladek, n.d.).

The LGMA website offers a Compensation Toolkit which is a free toolkit only accessible to members, where a username and password must be entered on the website for access. The majority of LGMA's products and services are not accessed through the website so this is the only member benefit that requires a username and password.

Many associations are using a "Members Only" section on their website (AMANS, 2014) (CAMA, 2014) (AMCTO, 2014) (IIMC, 2014). This option makes it explicitly clear that members receive something more exclusive than non-members. Products such as manuals, toolkits and even forums where members can interact with each other are all accessed through a "Members Only" section of the website. A "Members Only" section reinforces the notion of access thus increasing the value of membership. It increases the prestige and cost commitment of membership, as members will understand that if they did not have a membership they would lose access to many benefits.

### *Pricing Objectives*

Pricing of membership or products and services is a significant factor in creating incentives. It is important for an association to establish objectives when determining what price they want to assign to membership or products and services. Is the objective to increase demand, increase response time, subsidize other services, penetrate new markets etc.?

LGMA's pricing strategy is a pragmatic approach. They want to make their products and services affordable while at the same time attempting to make some sort of profit. Setting prices is thus a flexible process to try and meet these two goals. As well, some courses are very highly valued and LGMA tries its best to maintain its integrity as a provincial association by holding these courses in remote parts of BC. These courses may not reach a profit but other very highly successful courses will subsidize the losses from these.

Pricing differential for members and non-members for products and services is a common incentive practiced by membership associations. Associations realize they may be losing revenue if they make services exclusively for members so they allow non-members to participate but at a premium price. MMAA (2014) provides courses at \$399 for members and \$449 for non-members. CAMA (2014) has a

member fee for the annual general meeting at \$675 and for non-members at \$875. IIMC (2014) has 'region symposiums' at \$175 for early bird members and at \$310 for non-members. Price differential is common amongst association but the amount to differentiate varies. Associations must evaluate the price sensitivity of the offering and have a price objective in mind, to determine an appropriate differential in prices for members and non-members.

Incentives are important to drive membership and participation but it can be all for naught if non-members and visitors to the website are not aware of them. Incentives should be made explicitly clear. AMCTO and British Columbia Human Resource Management Association (BCHRMA) exemplify this technique. AMCTO states in their membership section of the website "Only AMCTO members have access to the services in the 'Members-only' area of the website including exclusive Affinity Programs such as travel discounts, group home & auto, and supplemental life insurance. This, in addition to access to all the other products and services AMCTO offers - Municipal Directory, How-To Manuals, Broadcast Service" (AMCTO, 2014). BCHRMA makes it even simpler with bullet points:

- up to 20% discount on BC HRMA learning events
- member rates at the annual BC HRMA Conference & Tradeshow
- \$200 savings on annual conference registration
- Up to 30% savings on professional development registration
- Free Roundtable admission for BC HRMA members. Non-members may attend for a fee of \$20/session (BCHRMA, 2014)

These examples display different incentive aspects discussed above such as access, and tangible pricing incentives. In the case of BCHRMA, monetary values are placed on benefits to drive home the tangible benefit of membership. The more ways the association can deliver a value proposition to a prospective member the better off they will be increasing and retaining membership.

The LGMA does use some incentives to membership. The Annual Conference, Admin Professionals course, Clerks & Corporate Officers course, CAO Forum and one-day workshops all have different prices for early bird registration, members and for non-members. The price differential between members and non-members is \$100 and the price between early bird and not is \$50. There are services like the popular MATI courses that do not have different prices for members and non-members. There are products such as LGMA Manuals that do not have different prices for members and non-members but do have a slight price difference if someone orders them in a print version or by CD ROM.

## **5.2 Membership Dues and Structures**

LGMA displays its membership structure as a group membership by listing regular membership fees from 1 to 4 members, 5 to 9 members and 10 or more

members. The price of individual membership decreases between the three group bundles:

**Regular Membership fees:**

1 to 4 Members	\$285.00 plus 5% GST per Member
5 to 9 Members	\$245.00 plus 5% GST per Member
10 or more Members	\$215.00 plus 5% GST per Member

The rationale behind LGMA's group membership structure is that the CAO of local governments decides who amongst their municipality will have membership, instead of municipal workers signing up individually on their own. LGMA offers an "Affiliate Membership", for anyone interested in local government administration but does not fit the criteria of a regular member. Affiliate members range from law firms, universities, to port authorities. There is a "Retired Membership" for \$130 a year, which is made available to a member of the association immediately prior to retirement. LGMA offers a free student membership but it is not advertised on the website. LGMA also prorates the membership price depending on what period of the calendar year a member signs up, however they do not advertise this accommodation.

People pay dues to be a part of a great experience, to be a part of a community, to feel like they belong and most importantly to feel like their problems are being solved. Because associations do not offer these things for free, members will re-evaluate their cost/value ratio for membership dues come renewal time each year (Association Mavens, 2012a). The cost/value ratio is simply, the perceived value provided by membership compared to the cost of membership. If an association can provide greater value than the cost of membership then members will be retained. Membership structures and payment methods are some ways to deliver more value and make the decision to join or renew with an association easier.

AMANS uses an additional incentive for long time members to renew their membership. The incentive is delivered through the retired member category of membership. For AMANS members that retire from local government as five to fourteen year members of the association, they are eligible for Retired Membership thereafter at \$100 a year. For AMANS members that retire from local government as fifteen-year members or more of the association, they are eligible for Retired Membership thereafter for \$0 a year (AMANS, 2014). This may entice members at year three or four, or at year twelve or thirteen of their membership to renew a few more years to be eligible for this Retired Membership perk. Not to mention, to offer a free membership to a member that

has been with the association for fifteen years or more shows appreciation and recognition of their loyalty. With a retired membership structure such as this it may only provide minimal revenue but it could produce a significant source to draw from for volunteer and leadership opportunities required in delivering some of the association's products and services.

The membership structure that an association uses has the potential to increase revenue, members and membership retention by providing options and categories that best fits an individual's needs or wants. One method is the 'VIP' option. All members will pay a base price for membership but others can pay more and receive perks. Perks may include priority seating at the annual general meeting, a meet and greet with the keynote speaker, and an increased discount to course offerings in comparison to members and non-members. Any of the members could pay more for membership and receive the VIP add-on but it will add more exclusivity and prestige if there are a limited number of VIP add-ons to be had. This can increase revenue and produce a new experience for members (Association Mavens, 2012c).

AMCTO uses a unique membership category to attract a younger demographic to its association. AMCTO has a "New Professional Member" (NPM) category for individuals with five years or less of municipal sector experience. The NPM is equivalent to the "Associate Member", as they both receive the same level of access to the products and services offered by the association. The NPM is \$200 a year, while the "Associate Member" is \$345. Not only does the NPM have a discount of membership of \$145 it also comes with a \$200 annual voucher that is redeemable through AMCTO educational and professional development programs (AMCTO, 2014). The discount and perks of the NPM are significant incentives for younger municipal employees to get involved with the association. The voucher that goes towards AMCTO courses will allow NPMs to try out the association's core services and come to appreciate the value that membership can provide. This seems like a promising technique to acquire less senior members of local government to sign up for membership and promote succession planning. Not only does the discounted membership for the first five years seem like an attractive incentive but also most importantly is the \$200 voucher redeemable for one of their courses. Similar to the first consideration, LGMA should take every opportunity to encourage prospective members to try out the services offered by the association. By exposing more people to the valuable products and services being offered, the LGMA brand grows and hopefully the membership as well.

Another common membership structure is the "multiple member group plan". It allows for the staff of associations who might not otherwise consider membership at this stage of their career to become involved and to take advantage of the resources. The categories may look as such:

- Individual Membership - \$550

- 2-5 group membership - \$1025
- 6 or more group membership - \$1230.

This may be a good structure for succession planning as the more members who sign up, the price per membership goes down. So organizations could include younger employees at a lower price and prepare them for future roles (Cybak, n.d.). It also encourages more people to sign up from any one organization since the group pricing creates a significant financial incentive compared to the individual membership. Having an individual membership price, even though many organizations will opt for the multiple member group plan, is important because it establishes a price point where individuals can measure their savings depending on which group plan they choose. LGMA uses the multiple member group plan as their membership structure with greater savings given to the larger group bundles.

The Local Government Administration Association Albert Chapter (LGAA) offers a model catering to municipalities that purchase memberships for their employees. LGAA offers professional development opportunities and also advocates for municipal employees to the provincial government and other agencies in contact with local government. LGAA membership structure encourages municipalities to sign up more than one employee for membership:

- First Member of a Municipality - \$178.50
- Second and all other members of the same municipality - \$147
- First Time Member - \$89.25

This membership due structure encourages municipalities to include more of their employees in membership to the association with discounted memberships to additional members and a significant markdown for first time members (LGAA, 2014). By doing this, it exposes more industry minded individuals to the association and the value that it can deliver to them. With this exposure more municipal employees will come to the understanding that membership to this association is valuable to have and will pressure their superiors to renew their membership the following year. This should increase membership and membership retention. With LGMA's proven high valued professional development and training opportunities, LGMA should look to encourage prospective members to try out their membership and services. This discount can be either delivered through a first time membership or the first time attending a LGMA course.

For membership associations in which their core services include knowledge acquisition through training and courses, it appears that some form of customization is required to retain certain segments of members. For those members who "outgrow" the basic offering, an advanced level possibly could be offered. Providing access to additional courses and information may be required to maintain interest and retain members in more senior members (Vincent &

Webster, 2013). A “tiered membership” model would allow members to choose the value option that best satisfies their particular needs. To clarify, this is not a categorized approach with categories such as regular, associate, or fellow, which require a certain characteristic from the member. The tiered membership allows members to choose which level of membership they will pay for. For example, the levels could be basic, standard and advanced. Basic provides limited access to benefits. Standard would provide limited access but an option to pay for access to certain benefits. Advanced would provide access to all benefits and perhaps a unique benefit that is only available to advanced members. The specifics are merely an example, but the concept is to have multiple levels of membership with varying degrees of benefits dependent on which level the member purchased. The caution with this model is that if members are provided with the opportunity to pay reduced membership renewal fees without a significant incentive for the standard or advanced options then they may well opt for the cheaper option (Gott, 2014). LGMA does not offer any tiered membership categories at this time.

IPMA-HR provides four distinct member categories that allow members to pick which category they feel most comfortable paying for. IPMA-HR provides training, news, policy resources and jobs to public sector human resource professionals around the world. Their four main categories are:

- Standard Agency Membership
- Online Agency Membership
- Standard Individual Membership
- Online Individual Membership (IPMA-HR, 2014)

Essentially, the categories allow members to choose from a group versus an individual membership and whether or not the benefits can be accessed through both print and online or only online. This model will be worthwhile if an association produces a lot of news and information through publications and manuals. Providing group memberships, while at the same time providing individual memberships, allows organizations to feel like they are receiving a deal when they compare their group prices to the individual’s but it also welcomes individuals who may not be apart of an organization to join the association. If there is no individual category, individuals will shy away from the association assuming it is something that you can join only as a group.

Different payment methods may encourage members to stay with an association. For individual memberships it may be worthwhile to set up automatic payments, as people are generally more likely to continue paying for something when it is automatically deducted from a credit card or bank account (Harris, 2013). An automatic payment turns renewals from an opt-in decision to an opt-out action (Rossel, 2012). Another model is “name your price”. Where there is a small base fee for membership but the utilization of each benefit comes with an additional charge. This protects the association from arguments from members like, “don’t

make me pay for something that I'm not going to use." It may also come across as the association "nickel and diming members" though so it could work against the association (Association Mavens, 2012c).

LGMA receives payment by a cheque on a yearly basis. In October renewal reminders are sent to CAOs with a list of all the members they paid for the previous year. The CAOs will add or remove names to their list and send a cheque in by March at the latest.

Different payment methods for membership dues can allow members to feel more comfortable with paying dues. The British Columbia Principals' and Vice Principals' Association (BCPVPA) provides a flexible payment schedule to members:

General Member - \$1,185

- Options for payment
  - 10 month – 10 equal payments of \$118.50
  - 26 bi-weekly – 26 equal payments of \$45.58
  - 12 month – 12 equal payments \$98.75
  - Other – please specify (BCPVPA, 2014)

These options lend themselves to an automatic payment system, which benefits the association as it turns renewal from an opt-in decision to an opt-out action. The Building Owners and Managers Association of British Columbia (BOMA) provides a pro-rated membership fee table to encourage individuals or organizations to sign up to the association at any time of the year:

Annual Fees for the first year are prorated as follows (all amounts are before tax):					
	Group A	Group B	Group C	Group D	Group E
<b>Jan - Feb</b>	\$1,005.00	\$1,890.00	\$2,585.00	\$3,250.00	\$3,960.00
<b>March - May</b>	\$753.75	\$1,417.50	\$1,938.75	\$2,437.50	\$2,970.00
<b>June - Aug</b>	\$502.50	\$945.00	\$1,292.50	\$1,625.00	\$1,980.00
<b>Sept - Oct</b>	\$251.25	\$472.50	\$646.25	\$812.50	\$990.00
<b>Nov - Dec</b>	FREE *with full payment of next year membership				

The different groups in the table refer to the different categories of membership. The table uses five different time periods to adjust the price. They include an incentive to join by potentially giving the member two free months of membership if they register in November (BOMA, 2014). Here is another pro-rated membership structure from AMCTO:

**2014 Membership Fees and Membership Categories**

(The following fees include 13% HST #106732936)	JOIN BETWEEN OCTOBER – MARCH	JOIN BETWEEN APRIL – JUNE	JOIN BETWEEN JULY – SEPTEMBER
	for 2014 Membership Period from (Jan. 1, 2014 – Dec. 31, 2014)	for 2014 Membership Period from (April 1, 2014 – Dec. 31, 2014)	for 2014 Membership Period from (July 1, 2014 – Dec. 31, 2014)
<b>FULL MEMBER</b>	<b>\$418.10</b> \$370.00 + \$48.10 HST	<b>\$314.14</b> \$278.00 + \$36.14 HST	<b>\$209.05</b> \$185.00 + \$24.05 HST
<b>ASSOCIATE MEMBER</b>	<b>\$389.85</b> \$345.00 + \$44.85 HST	<b>\$292.67</b> \$259.00 + \$33.67 HST	<b>\$195.49</b> \$173.00 + \$22.49 HST
<b>STUDENT/ EDUCATOR MEMBER</b>	<b>\$144.64</b> \$128.00 + \$16.64 HST		<b>\$72.32</b> \$64.00 + \$8.32 HST
<b>NEW PROFESSIONALS MEMBER</b>	<b>\$226.00</b> \$200.00 + \$26.00 HST		AMCTO provides a \$200 annual voucher redeemable for AMCTO educational and professional development programs

Similar to BOMA, AMCTO has provided an incentive that if you join in October of the previous calendar year your membership will be active for the next fourteen months, essentially giving the member two free months of membership. Most associations do provide pro-rated rates depending on when you sign up but by providing clear tables such as these on their website, both BOMA and AMCTO, have eliminated ambiguity and possible doubt by a prospective member to sign up.

There are numerous associations that include the member's salary into the equation Management Association (ILCMA) uses such a model:

- Base fee of \$65 plus \$1.75 per \$1,000 of salary
  - $\$65 + (\$1.75 \times \$1000/\text{Salary}) = \text{Membership Fee}$

So for example, if the member's salary were \$100,000, then the yearly membership fee would be \$240. ICMA uses a slightly different model:

- Annual Salary x 0.008 = Membership fee

So if the member's salary was \$100,000, then the yearly membership would be \$800. Membership dues that consider salary, take the rationale that if you earn more, you can pay more. It may however, be an attractive model for a younger demographic that may have lower salaries and will therefore benefit from a relatively more affordable membership fee in comparison to their seniors.

Another model that lends a similar rationale to the models that take member salary into consideration, are membership fees dependent on the population within the municipality they work. CAMA uses such a model with four regular membership categories based on population:

Membership Level	Fee
<b>A: Regular Member (primary): For municipalities with a population of:</b>	
5,000 or less:	\$255
5,000 but less than 10,000:	\$455
10,000 or more but less than 100,000:	\$605
more than 100,000:	\$910
<b>B. Regular Member (additional):</b>	
The second and each additional member from every individual municipality:	\$255

This model would be effective for an association that receives mostly group members, where the municipality pays for membership for their employees. A municipality with a larger population would have a larger purse to draw from to pay for their membership fees so this model attempts to “level the playing field” for smaller municipalities. The rationale would be that the association wants municipalities to pay the same fees but relative to their fiscal capacity.

### 5.3. Considerations

LGMA should consider promoting the incentives that they do have more explicitly on their website. Similar to BCHRMA, incentives should be made clear to anyone visiting the website and explicitly cost them out (ie. Your \$250 membership brings you x dollars in savings...)

LGMA may want to experiment with some strategies to promote the concept of access. This may be relatively radical considering most of their services are not web-based but even restricting some products and services to ‘members-only’ can produce a more exclusive experience and may increase the value of membership.

LGMA may want to experiment with their pricing. The \$100 price differential between non-members and members for course offerings could be increased to measure how that affects membership and course participation.

LGMA should consider what LGAA is doing by providing a significant discount to first year members.

To attract a younger demographic LGMA should considering adopting AMCTO's 'New Professional Member' category of membership.

LGMA should advertise that they prorate membership depending on when the member signs up and include incentives as BOMA and AMCTO have for joining later in the calendar year.

## 6. Conclusion

With the impending demographic shift in the workforce in the next decade, baby-boomers are preparing for retirement and concern is growing amongst membership associations that this may negatively affect membership numbers. Not to mention, perceptions of membership associations have been evolving for some time now, from being associations that every industry professional should be involved with to associations that must provide a high level of value to garner members. Successful associations are however handling these concerns by adapting with effective techniques and practices. Membership trends and best practices by commentators and experts within the field of membership associations were scanned, alongside over 30 local government associations and alike to illuminate some of the techniques associations are using to adapt. These techniques lent themselves to important themes in analyzing membership associations, specifically the concepts of value, communications, membership growth and membership structure/dues.

LGMA is a healthy association, in terms of its membership and the value it delivers through its products and services. All associations however should be proactive in dealing with the changing environment facing membership associations. LGMA should consider the recommendations below to minimize risk and continue to deliver the highest value to their customers and members.

## 7. Recommendations

1. Communications with members such as email should include more information regarding the association's current projects and how these contribute to reaching an overall vision for the association and its members.
2. The 'Membership Spotlight' that ICMA could be an effective tool for LGMA to provide recognition to contributing members and encourage others to get involved.
3. A video strategy seems like an attractive option for LGMA to describe where and how the association delivers value to members.
4. Include information on the website and through communications with their members of the impending demographic shift in the workforce.
5. Creating a mentorship program similar to what PMANL offers, where the association acts, as a middleman between mentee and mentor, is a model worth considering.

6. LGMA should consider promoting the incentives that they do have more explicitly on their website. Similar to BCHRMA, incentives should be made clear to anyone visiting the website and explicitly cost them out (ie. Your \$250 membership brings you x dollars in savings...)
7. LGMA may want to experiment with their pricing. The \$100 price differential between non-members and members for course offerings could be increased to measure how that affects membership and course participation.
8. LGMA should consider what LGAA is doing by providing a significant discount to first year members.
9. To attract a younger demographic LGMA should considering adopting AMCTO's 'New Professional Member' category of membership.
10. LGMA should advertise that they prorate membership depending on when the member signs up and include incentives as BOMA and AMCTO have for joining later in the calendar year.

## 8. References

- Alberta Urban Municipalities Association (AUMA). (2014). Retrieved from <http://www.auma.ca/live/ViewPage.action>
- Association Mavens. (2012a, August 21). Interview with Sarah Sladek, Author of *The End of Membership as We Know It*. Retrieved from <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1nBV2FnHaKs>
- Association Mavens. (2012b, August 22). 5 Radical Changes Associations: Interview with Mary Byers, Co-Author of *Race for Relevance*. Retrieved from [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=no\\_6cOv8jOg](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=no_6cOv8jOg)
- Association Mavens. (2012c, September 13). 21<sup>st</sup> Century Pricing for Associations: Interview with Sheri Jacobs of Avenue M Group. Retrieved from <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0FiOc4Mv-4k>
- Association Mavens. (2014, February 3). Membership Model Versus Value-Creation Model: Metal Treating Institute's CEO Tom Morrison. Retrieved from <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Omqqjl2wVQU>
- Association of Municipal Managers, Clerks and Treasurers of Ontario (AMCTO). (2014). Retrieved from <http://www.amcto.com/imis15/content/>
- Association of Municipal Administrators, Nova Scotia (AMANS). (2014). Retrieved from <http://www.amans.ca/>
- Benest, F. (Ed.). (2003). *Preparing the Next Generation: A Guide for Current and Future Local Government Managers*. International City/County Management Association.
- Bhattacharya, C. B. (1998). When customers are members: Customer retention in paid membership contexts. *Journal of the academy of marketing science*, 26(1), 31-44.
- British Columbia Human Resource Management Association (BCHRMA). (2014). Retrieved from <http://www.bchrma.org/>.
- British Columbia Principals' and Vice Principals' Association (BCPVPA). (2014). Retrieved from <http://www.bcpvpa.bc.ca/>
- Brooks, A. C. (2008). Where the winners meet: Why happier, more successful people gravitate toward associations.
- Building Owners and Managers Association of British Columbia (BOMA). (2014). Retrieved from <http://www.boma.bc.ca/>

- Canadian Society of Association Executives (CSAE). (n.d). Mining for Gold: Using Data to Drive Services and Revenue. Retrieved from <http://www.csae.com/Resources/ArticlesTools/View/ArticleId/486/Mining-for-Gold-Using-Data-to-Drive-Services-and-Revenue>
- Canadian Association of Municipal Administrators (CAMA). (2014). Retrieved from <http://www.camacam.ca/en/>
- Centre of Excellence for Public Sector Marketing. (2009). *Guide to Branding in the Public and Not-for-Profit Sectors*. Retrieved from [http://www.mikekujawski.ca/ftp/cepsm\\_branding\\_ebook.pdf](http://www.mikekujawski.ca/ftp/cepsm_branding_ebook.pdf)
- Chen, L. (2004). Membership Incentives: Factors Affecting Individuals' Decisions About Participation in Athletics-Related Professional Associations. *Journal of Sport Management*, 18(2).
- Coerver, H., & Byers, M. (2013). *Race for relevance: 5 radical changes for associations*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Cybak, Dave. (n.d.) What would you do if half of your members retired tomorrow? Retrieved from <http://www.csae.com/Resources/ArticlesTools/View/ArticleId/1944/What-Would-You-Do-if-Half-of-Your-Members-Retired-Tomorrow>
- Gott, Richard. (2014). Delivering Effective Membership Tiers without the Tears. Retrieved from <http://xyzuniversity.com/2014/02/delivering-effective-membership-tiers/>
- Granik, S. (2005). Membership benefits, membership action: why incentives for activism are what members want. *Journal of Nonprofit & Public Sector Marketing*, 14(1-2), 65-89.
- Gruen, T. W., Summers, J. O., & Acito, F. (2000). Relationship marketing activities, commitment, and membership behaviors in professional associations. *Journal of marketing*, 64(3), 34-49.
- Harrison, Melissa. (2014). Mobilize and Engage the Next Generation Through Social Media. Retrieved from <http://xyzuniversity.com/2014/02/mobilize-and-engage-the-next-generation-of-members-through-social-media/>
- Harris, Rebecca. (2013). The End of the Membership as We Know It (review). Retrieved from <http://www.csae.com/Resources/ArticlesTools/View/ArticleId/1881/The-End-of-Membership-As-We-Know-It-Building-the-Fortune-Flipping-Must-Have-Association-of-the-Next>

- Illinois City/County Management Association (ILCMA). (2014). Retrieved from <https://www.ilcma.org/>
- Insights West. (2014). *LGMA Membership Review* [Data file].
- International City/County Management Association (ICMA). (2014). Retrieved from <http://icma.org/en/icma/home>
- International Institute of Municipal Clerks (IIMC). (2014). Retrieved from <http://www.iimc.com/>
- International Public Management Association (IPMA). (2014). Retrieved from <http://ipma.ch/>
- International Public Management Association for Human Resources (IPMA-HR). (2014). Retrieved from <http://ipma-hr.org/>
- Local Government Administration Association Albert Chapter (LGAA). (2014). Retrieved from <http://www.lgaa.ab.ca/>
- Local Government Management Association (LGMA). (2014). Retrieved from <http://www.lgma.ca/>
- Manitoba Municipal Administrator's Association (MMAA). (2014). Retrieved from <http://www.mmaa.mb.ca/>
- Maryland Association of CPAs. (2013, January 8). What's the Value of Professional Association Membership Across Generations. Retrieved from <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-BqtbyE5hVo&feature=youtu.be>
- Oster, S. M. (1995). *Strategic management for nonprofit organizations: Theory and cases*. Oxford University Press.
- Planning Institute of British Columbia (PIBC). (2014). Retrieved from <http://www.pibc.bc.ca/>
- Price, Audrey. (n.d.). Engaging Members in an Era of Profound Change: A Look at Some Best Practices. Retrieved from <http://www.csae.com/Resources/ArticlesTools/View/ArticleId/1945/Engaging-Members-in-an-Era-of-Profound-Change-A-Look-at-Some-Best-Practices>
- Professional Municipal Administrators of Newfoundland and Labrador (PMANL). (2014). Retrieved from <http://www.pmanl.ca/>

- Rigsbee, Ed. (2010). Member Recruitment in a Down Economy. Retrieved from <http://www.rigsbee.com/association-member-recruitment-8.htm>
- Rigsbee, Ed. (2012). Member Verses Industry Value—What You Need to Know. Retrieved from [http://www.rigsbee.com/association\\_member\\_recruitment\\_19.htm](http://www.rigsbee.com/association_member_recruitment_19.htm)
- Rossel, Tony. (2012). Membership Marketing Blog. Retrieved from <http://membershipmarketing.blogspot.ca/>
- Saskatchewan Municipal Administrator (SARM). (2014). Retrieved from <http://sarm.ca/>
- Sladek, Sarah. (n.d.) How to Build Membership Relationships That Last. Retrieved from <http://www.csae.com/Resources/ArticlesTools/View/ArticleId/1494/How-to-Build-Membership-Relationships-That-Last>
- Trial Lawyers Association of BC (TLABC). (2014). Retrieved from <https://www.tlabc.org/>
- Vincent, N. A., & Webster, C. M. (2013). Exploring relationship marketing in membership associations. *European Journal of Marketing*, 47(10), 1622-1640.
- Washington City/County Management Association (WCMA). (2014). Retrieved from <http://wccma.org/>
- X Y Z University. (2013). Your Membership Marketing is in Trouble: The 2013 Pulse Report. Retrieved from <http://xyzuniversity.com/2013/09/your-membership-marketing-is-in-trouble-the-2013-pulse-report/>