

Extract from:

# Managing the Membership Experience

*Using MembershipMapping™ to  
engage members and give them the  
experiences they want and value*

By Sue Froggatt & Mark Levin CAE, CSP

This book is an excellent tool for membership professionals. It gives them the ability to better understand the life journey your members are on and where their organisation can add tangible value. Anyone interested in ensuring they have a sustainable, successful and member-centric organisation will benefit from the insights shared in this book.

—Belinda Moore, CEO, Australian Society of Association Executives

This book captures exactly what we're trying to do - focus our efforts not just on member recruitment and engagement but on providing the best member experience every time. In this book Mark and Sue have provided an easily adaptable approach for doing that in any organisation.

—Anne Czeropski, Senior Manager of Member Experience and Chapters, Applied Client Network

Every membership or association manager should have a copy of this book. The in-depth and unique knowledge and experience of Sue and Mark has enabled them to produce the first book of its kind in an area of absolutely essential need. I am certain that every person who takes the time to read and absorb the content within this book will have lightbulb moments about how they can help their organisations to manage the membership experience. The book is easy to read and follow and will take membership development to the next level. This is a great piece of work from two of the most respected people in the membership world.

—James Jeynes FRSA, Chief Executive, MemNet.biz

A refreshing 'must read' guide that will help your association focus on effective, segmented and measurable member journeys. This guide places a timely focus on positive member outcomes, with practical path laying instructions, at a time when member journeys need to be bullet-proof. The risk of getting it wrong is too high, particularly with the 'What's in it for me?' generation coming through!

—Richard Gott, Chair, MemberWise Network

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ISBN 978-1-909093-74-7

Version 1.0.0

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**If you read this  
book carefully and  
actively**

**you will never  
approach  
membership in the  
same way again**

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# Chapter 1 – Making the Move to Experience Management

## What you'll take away from this chapter

- A clear understanding of what managing the membership experience is all about
  - An awareness of how things have changed for membership organisations and what that means to yours
  - What you need to do to meet the changing needs of members
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## What has changed

Technology has put more information in the hands of consumers than ever before. We have entered an era where the power is with the customer.

The most successful organisations have noticed this and have been altering what they do to focus on what customers want. These companies have discovered that there is value and profit in creating (managing) experiences that *make people feel good about themselves*.

Perhaps this is not surprising, as we also live in an era where people are constantly bombarded and interrupted with messages, and overwhelmed with too much “stuff.”

So who is leading the way and what are they doing? Take a look at Apple, Starbucks and Amazon.

Apple doesn't sell hardware. It invites customers to have fun and play with their devices and see their beauty.

Starbucks doesn't sell coffee. It invites customers to feel like they are home and smell the aroma. They are staging an *orchestrated* feast of sensations for the senses.

Amazon use insights from their data to give customers a personalised and effortless one-click online shopping experience.

This new focus on the customer has been good for business. Their customers recommend them to friends, spend more, and are less likely to switch to a competitor.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Forrester, *The Business Impact of the Customer Experience 2014*, 2



### *The benefits of investing in the customer experience*<sup>3</sup>

We now find ourselves in the era of managing and staging experiences that are effortless, enjoyable and valuable.

When members interact with you, they reflect on what they experience with other organisations.

That is what this book is all about helping you achieve.

## **What Managing the Membership Experience Is All About**

Let's begin with a few definitions.

When we refer to the **membership experience**, we are talking about how interactions with your organisation makes them *feel* about themselves.

We define **managing the membership experience** as “the *purposeful design* of these interactions to meet the expectations of the member.” This means we provide careful

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<sup>3</sup> *Customer Experience Impact (CEI) Report, 2011* and Fleming, Coffman, and Harter, *Manage Your Human Sigma*, *Harvard Business Review*, July 2005

orchestration of the clues and cues which reduce effort and raise the member's conscious perception of the value being provided.

Managing the experience requires making a commitment to a *system* of working with both strategic urgency and increased creativity. Yes, we need to think differently, but we also need to be strategic in our actions.

*“We’ve entered the age of the customer—an era when focusing on customers is more important than any other strategic imperative.”<sup>4</sup>*

By being strategic, we can create a powerful culture that puts the member at the heart of the organisation (**becoming member-centric**).

Proof of the importance of focusing on members was confirmed in a key membership sector research study.<sup>5</sup> Being focused on the member was found to be a key attribute of remarkable membership associations.

The key to being successful with member experience management is to realise that the focus has to be on the qualitative (how do members **feel** about their interactions) rather than quantitative (how often do they interact). If each interaction becomes a positive experience, then the member will come back.

This focus will be a major shift from the current philosophy of most membership organisations, where there has always been considerable emphasis on getting more members to participate more frequently. However, it should be noted that the companies that have embraced this thinking have moved into the lead in this new era of successful customer relations—and membership organisations need to follow.

Member experience management is more than customer service. It is larger in its scope, and more holistic. It encompasses member service and sales, marketing, branding, user experience design, product design, service design, operations, finance and strategy.

*“In the future, experience management will be a prerequisite to compete effectively”<sup>6</sup>*

## **What you need to do to meet the changing needs of members:**

### **Create a new culture**

Becoming a member-centric organisation means creating a new culture that permeates everything the organisation does. This will need to come from the top. It requires

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<sup>4</sup> Forrester, Cooperstein, *Competitive Strategy In The Age Of The Customer*, 3

<sup>5</sup> ASAE, *Seven Measures of Success: What Remarkable Associations Do That Others Don't*, 24

<sup>6</sup> Carbone, *Clued In: How to keep customers coming back again and again*, 113

determining member priorities and doing things in ways that are most convenient for, and easily understood by, members and prospective members.

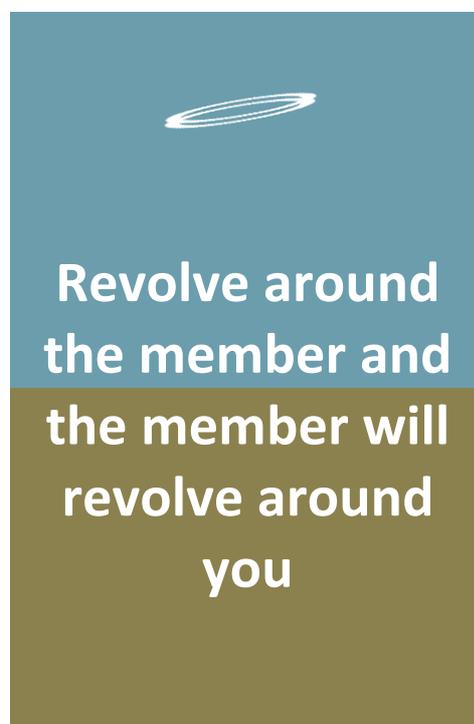
The organisation will need the *full* commitment of the staff and the volunteer leadership to make this move. It's often difficult to change an organisation's culture, and it's up to the organisation's leaders to work in concert to make it happen.

### **Get members involved in helping make the changes**

Becoming a member-centric organisation requires a higher level of understanding of your members. To achieve that, you have to invite members into the process. This member involvement is one of the building blocks needed to effectively use the MembershipMapping tool and other systems that we provide for you in Part 2 of this book.

By involving members in the process, you gain new levels of familiarity with their needs. The only people who can truly define what's important are the members themselves. Without this insight, you may inadvertently overlook opportunities that would help you improve and engineer (manage) the membership experience.

It will be very tempting—and natural—to start by looking at MembershipMapping and other techniques from the organisation's perspective. But this would be a continuation of association-centric (inside-out) thinking. The focus needs to switch to member-centric (outside-in) thinking, so everything can be developed in a manner that reflects the member's perspective.



## Embrace the need to understand feelings and emotions

Becoming a member-centric organisation will require a deeper understanding of members' feelings and emotions. It requires us to dig deeper below the surface to really find out the motivators of member behaviour.

While it might be tempting to evaluate matters from a rational and logical perspective, the truth is that many decisions and judgements *are* based on emotion, and later justified with logic. This is especially true when considering the impact that **effort** has on the membership experience. An interaction that requires minimal effort, to get the information or service desired, leaves the member feeling better about the experience. The greater the effort required, the more negative the member feels about the entire experience.

Membership still is, and always will be, about dealing with people, so emotions and relationships will come into play. For the member, it is the *cumulative experience* delivered at all the touch points that contributes to the overall feeling that membership is a good investment. Any touch points where emotions are involved will take centre stage in that evaluation.

*“The tangible attributes of a product or service have far less influence on customer preference than the subconscious sensory and emotional elements derived from the total experience.”<sup>7</sup>*

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<sup>7</sup> Carbone, *Clued In: How to keep customers coming back again and again*, 31

## *Chapter 1 Summary*

### **Change is needed to thrive and survive**

- Focusing on the experience increases value for the member. It is time to embrace new concepts, tools, and insights in order to reach a higher level of member-centric performance.
- Commitment to managing the customer experience is what the winners are doing in the commercial sector. Taking this same step will help member organisations better understand and better serve their members.
- Emotions play a large role in shaping member experiences. The new areas to focus on are the impact of effort and emotions on the membership experience.
- Organisations need to involve members in this process of helping the organisation better understand what types of experiences give members the most value. This member input will be a vital part of the data used to make decisions and evaluate performance.

## About the Authors

### **Sue Froggatt**



Sue is the founder of Sue Froggatt Training and Consulting, an independent company focused on providing seminars, consultancy and research for membership organisations. Several thousand people have attended her events in the UK.

Sue specialises in member recruitment, member retention, member research and communicating the value of membership.

She has conducted a range of different research projects for associations in the UK and USA, undertakes a bi-annual membership industry benchmarking study and has developed the CleaView Membership Planning tool to help associations plan with confidence.

Sue is also a regular speaker at membership conferences around the world and a founding member of the UK Professional Speakers Association.

In her earlier career, Sue worked in market research and marketing for a range of organisations in the UK and Australia.

**For more information about Sue visit:** <http://www.suefroggatt.com>

**Mark Levin, CAE, CSP**



Mark is a leading expert in membership development and volunteer leadership training.

He has written several books, is a regular international conference speaker and has an impressive list of association clients, including: The American Medical Association, the National Education Association, the US Chamber of Commerce, the American Medical Association, the Australian Society of Association Executives, the Latin American Chamber Executives and the Canadian Police Association.

Mark is not only a globally respected speaker and author; he is also a respected Association Executive who is completing his 30th year as the Executive Vice President of the Chain Link Fence Manufacturers Institute, an international trade organisation.

Mark's other books include: *Retention Wars: The New Rules of Engagement*; *Millennium Membership: How To Attract & Keep Members in the New Marketplace*; *Membership Development: 101 Ways to Get & Keep Your Members*; *The Gift of Leadership: How to Rekindle the Volunteer Spirit in the 21st Century*.

**For more information about Mark visit:** <http://www.baileadership.com>

- Understanding the importance of the experience
- Using mapping tools to capture and manage the experience
- Focusing on effort during experiences



Managing the  
Membership Experience

What this  
book is about

ISBN: 978-1-909093-74-4



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Using MembershipMapping<sup>®</sup> to engage members and give them the experiences they want and value