



100+ QUESTIONS
ASSOCIATIONS
SHOULD BE
ASKING
MEMBERS

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INTRODUCTION

Imagine you have a single objective for the day. You have one member to work with, and you need to help her get as much value as she can from your association. You have no time restraints, you don't have other people who need help; it's just you and your member.

How do you help her?

My guess is you aren't thinking about sending her some informational emails, hoping the thing she is looking for happens to be in your latest newsletter.

Instead, you are probably thinking of connecting with her directly and asking some questions. You might ask about her background, her career, her goals. You'll ask her why she joined, what she is interested in, or just a simple "How can I help you today?"

You are thinking of having a conversation.

This is how humans communicate. We ask questions, we listen to the response and we take action on what we have heard. In fact, if we are trying to help someone, the goal in that conversation is to get the other person to talk about herself more than we talk about ourselves. Sure, there is a time when it is our turn to tell her how we think we can help. But our information is in response to what she has told us, and not how we lead.

This concept is what we call Conversational Engagement.

There are a lot of conversations to start with your members over time. Conversations lead to a better understanding of your members' needs, and the ability to service them with more relevant engagement. This ebook will help you think about what questions to ask around some common conversations we see associations having with their members, and prospective or lapsed members, too.

WHAT'S MISSING FROM TODAY'S MEMBER ENGAGEMENT?

Before we dive into the questions that will help you start the conversations, let's take a look at what most of us are doing now and what we are missing.



Broadcasts

Today, most communications are done via what we call broadcasts. We have a lot of information about us — announcements, articles, events, courses — that we want to share with our members. Without a better method of mass communication, we send it all in a broadcast. Maybe it is via a newsletter that lists everything that is going on this week, or maybe it is via targeted emails to people who we think might be interested in hearing about a specific topic.

Ultimately, this style of conversation is one-way. You are telling people about your organization, but the only thing they can tell you about themselves is whether they are clicking on the links. Sure, an individual recipient could reply to the email, but you aren't asking them to reply. And imagine if all of them actually did? You would be back in the place we were picturing a minute ago, overwhelmed at the prospect of having a one-on-one conversation with one thousand people, with no systems or automation to help facilitate it.

There is a place for broadcasts; they are useful for keeping people informed. **But if you are only doing broadcasts, you are not engaging your members as effectively as you could be. The missing element is the difference between one-way and two-way communications.**



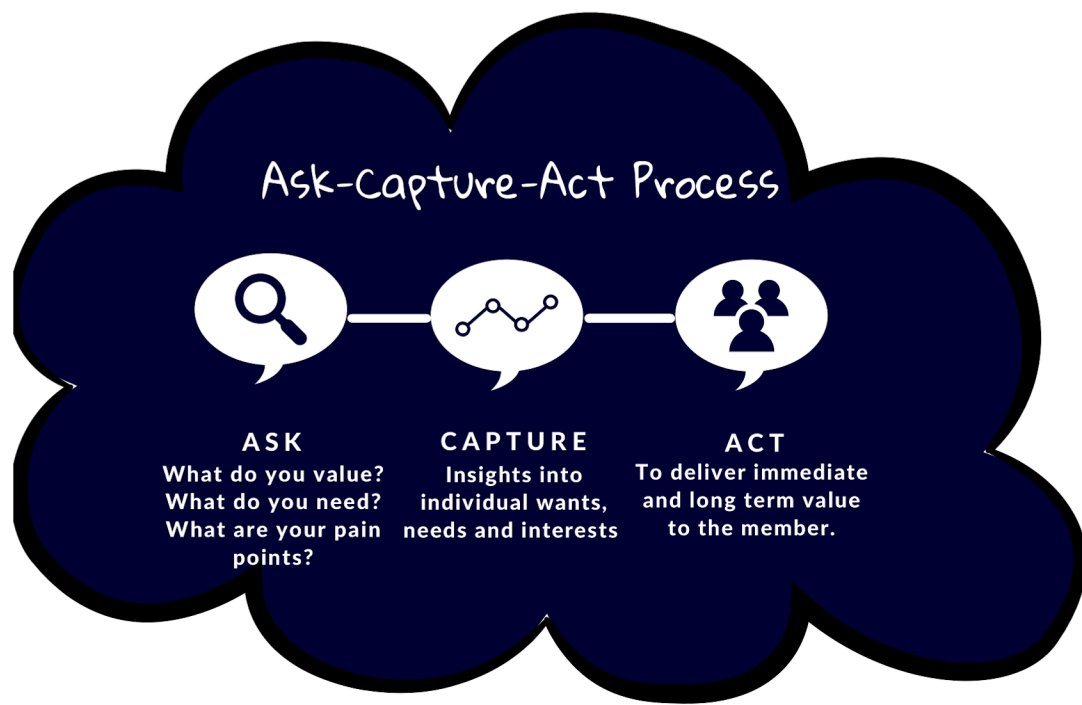
TWO-WAY COMMUNICATIONS

Conversational Engagement is based on the premise that what your members have to tell you is just as important as what you have to tell your members. There are many ways to get your members to talk to you; we call them **conversation starters**.

The simplest way to get people talking is to ask them a question. We call this process **Ask - Capture - Act**.

Go back to the example of how you would best help a single member:

1. You ask her a question.
2. You capture her answer.
3. You act to help her get what she needs.



This isn't a linear process, nor is it necessarily a single step process. Your action may be to ask

another question to learn more detail, or it may be to tell her to go take a course and come back to tell you how it went. It may be to get her to pay her membership invoice that she forgot to pay last month, so she has access to all of your wonderful benefits.

The key concept here is that you want to engage in an ongoing, two-way conversation with your member, where you are constantly learning more about her. And in return, you are delivering value that helps advance her interests, and building a stronger connection with your organization.



ASK QUESTIONS

What's the easiest way to engage people over email? Ask them a question.

Think about how you engage your friends, or even strangers, in conversation in real life. You greet them with a brief comment and a question. "What a beautiful day today. What are you going to do?" Or, "I love your sweater, where did you find it?" Perhaps, "Your dog is so sweet. Is she friendly?"

Like we mentioned earlier, every mass email features a prominently placed reply button, but few people ever use it. Why? Because we are all trained not to use it. Emails from organizations are meant to be read and clicked on, not to start a conversation.

So if you, representing your organization, actually want to engage people over email, you are going to have to do something different. And the simplest way to make it clear to someone that you want them to tell you something is not to send them yet another email full of information about you, but ask a question about them.

Keep it as simple as possible. Don't bury a question at the bottom of an email newsletter and expect people to answer it. You may get a few responses, but you will get far more engagement by sending a dedicated email, with a brief prompt, and just asking the question.

What does it look like to ask questions rather than just send information? Let's look at how we attempt to engage people around the renewal process. You are probably sending email after email telling people that their membership is expiring. You send them a:

- 90 day notice.
- 60 day notice.
- 30 day notice.
- 15 day notice.
- Countless other notices once the grace period begins.

You send, maybe quite literally, a dozen reminders. And yet, you have tons of former members who let their membership lapse that you never heard from. We've trained them to ignore our emails.



One of the most popular Conversational Engagement campaigns our clients run attempts to win back lapsed members. It all starts with a simple question: “Did you know your membership lapsed?”

Remember, these are people who have probably received 12 emails by this point telling them their membership was going to expire, warning them that it will expire soon and finally telling them that they lapsed, so you would think they would know by now, right?

Almost every time we ask this question, more than 50 percent of respondents say, “No, I didn’t know my membership had lapsed.” Sometimes it’s as high as 80 percent, and rarely is it below 40 percent who didn’t know.

If you send people informational emails, the odds are they will do what they have been trained to do. The best case is, they glance at them and move on. But, if you send someone a question, they are more likely to do what they’ve been trained to do when someone asks them a question: they will answer.

Once they answer the question, you can have a back-and-forth conversation with them. In PropFuel that can be facilitated by automation, allowing you to ask follow-up questions and redirect them to where they need to go, without any human interaction necessary. You can also flag respondents for manual follow up, and reach out personally to dive deeper into what matters to them and get them renewed.

By taking this approach, you can direct the people who are willing and able to renew on their own through the process, and those who want or need your help are able to raise their hand to continue the conversation. Make sure you get in touch with them.

The most common conversations we see associations having with members fall into a few categories:

- New Member Acquisition
- New Member Onboarding
- Net Promoter Score (NPS)
- Certification
- General Member Engagement
- Profile Building
- Lapsed Members
- Dormant Member Win-Back
- Membership Renewals
- Quizzes
- Miscellaneous
- Conference Registration & Event Engagement

The following pages offer questions for each category of conversation, giving you plenty of options based on what type of engagement you are looking to achieve with your members.



New Member Acquisition

Have you ever wondered how to convert that big email marketing list to paid members? Instead of just telling them things about the association and hoping they take action, how about asking them some questions that will give you insights into individual members, what they need and if they might be interested in joining? Over time, you can use this data to deliver more relevant information and connect what they value with what the association offers. Here are some ideas to get you started:

- What's most important to you this year?
 - Are you interested in becoming a member?
- What need is top of mind for you right now?
- What would you like to do next?
 - Are you interested in becoming a member?
- How can we help you achieve your goals?
- Are you interested in joining as a member?
- Do you plan to join?
- Would you be interested in learning more about membership?
- Would you consider joining?
- Which of the following is most important to you or your business?
- What industry issue keeps you up at night?
- Why have you hesitated to join?
- What's holding you back from joining?
- What else could we offer to encourage you to join?
- Is there anything we can do to help you join?
- Are you interested in a free trial membership?
- Are you interested in joining now and saving 10%?

Want more on member acquisition? See how ITechLaw engaged 1,300 nonmembers to convert them to members:

info.propfuel.com/itechlaw-100qs



New Member Onboarding

So, you have new members and want to get to know them? Instead of sending a long menu of member benefits (which is really about the association), how about asking them some questions that will give you insights into individual members, what they need and why they joined? Over time, you can use this data to better serve them, deliver more relevant information and remind them of the value they're receiving from your association. Here are some ideas to get you started:

- Why did you join our association?
- How would you describe where you are in your career?
 - Where would you like to be in your career in 5 years?
- What's the best way for us to communicate member information with you?
 - What other method might work for you?
- Would you be interested in volunteer or committee opportunities?
 - Why or why not? And what interests you?
- What's your #1 goal this year?
- What's most important to you as you manage your career in the year ahead?
- What are you hoping to get out of your membership this year?
- How do you prefer to connect with other members?
- How well have we met your expectations as a member of the association?
 - What could we do better?
- What topic is top of mind right now?
- What type of support do you need at this stage of your career?
- Do you have any employment updates to share?
- How do you prefer to learn?
- How would you describe your professional peer group?
- Which of these challenges keeps you up at night?
- Would you like to get involved in our mentorship program?
- To what degree are we giving you what you need?
- Looking back on the last year, have your personal or business objectives changed?
- What resource have you found most valuable this year?

Want more about member onboarding?
Check out ASAE's campaign to connect
with members on various aspects of their
career, member experience and needs.

info.propfuel.com/asae-100qs

Net Promoter Score

Net Promoter Score, also known as NPS, is a way of gauging the overall value perception of, and loyalty to, a product, service or organization. It can be sent to customers once, and then periodically over time, to gauge satisfaction. If you're new to NPS, or aren't sure what question to ask your members to gauge the health of your relationship, here are some ideas to get you started:

- How likely would you be to recommend membership to a friend or colleague?
 - Tell us more.
- How likely would you be to recommend our event to a colleague in the industry?
 - What could we do to improve the event?
- Given your experience with our association, how likely would you be to recommend membership to a colleague in the industry?
 - What could we do better?
- Given your experience with our association to date, how likely would you be to refer us to an associate?
 - How could we improve your experience?

Want more on Net Promoter Score?
Check out our [blog post](#) about NPS
and how to increase your score
over time.

Certification

So, your industry has a certification or credential, or perhaps your association is the credentialing body? There's so much to communicate, from educating about the certification, to the required education, to renewals. While you might send a lot of information about the program or certification, are you actually engaging members, or even speaking to the right people? Try asking some questions to get them involved and interested. Here are a few questions to try:

- Did you know your certification has expired?
- Would you like to learn more about discounted/free CE?
- Would you like to renew your certification?
- Would you like to submit CE credits towards your certification?
- Have you found your certification to be valuable? Why or why not?
- Would you recommend getting certified to a colleague?
- In what ways has your certification helped you in your career?
- Do you hold other certifications?
- Is there a reason you've let your certification lapse?
- Is there anything we can do to help with your certification journey?

Want more on how to engage members on certification? See how NYACP is engaging members regularly with exam questions related to their industry credential:

info.propfuel.com/nyacp-100qs

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General Member Engagement

You have your list of members... now, how do you engage them in meaningful ways throughout the year? Instead of defaulting to sending them informative email after informative email, consider asking them a question periodically. Members love to be heard! Here are some ideas to get you started:

- What's your #1 goal this year?
- What's the best way for us to communicate member information with you?
 - What other method might work for you?
- Would you be interested in volunteer or committee opportunities?
 - Why or why not? And what interests you?
- What's most important to you as you manage your career in the year ahead?
- What are you hoping to get out of your membership this year?
- How do you prefer to connect with other members?
- How well have we met your expectations as a member of the association?
 - What could we do better?
- What topic is top of mind right now?
- What type of support do you need at this stage of your career?
- Do you have any employment updates to share?
- How do you prefer to learn?
- How would you describe your professional peer group?
- Which of these challenges keeps you up at night?
- Would you like to get involved in our mentorship program?
- To what degree are we giving you what you need?
- Looking back on the last year, have your personal or business objectives changed?
- What resource have you found most valuable this year?
- Are you interested in becoming more involved as a member of our association?
- Why did you become a member of this association?
 - Tell us more.



General Member Engagement, cont'd

- How well do you understand the benefits your membership in our association provides to you?
 - How could we do a better job communicating that to you?
- What would you change if you were on the board of our association?
- What do you most value as a member of our association?
 - Tell us more.
- How well does our association deliver thought leadership to our members? (5 being the best)
 - What could we do better?
- Do you get a good return on your investment as a member of our association? (5 being the best)
 - What could we do better?
- Do you get reimbursed for your membership dues?
- How well does our association's advocacy work reflect your views and opinions? (5 being very well)
 - Tell us more.
- How well connected do you feel with peers in your industry?
 - How can we help?
- Would you recommend membership in our association to a colleague?
 - What could we do better?
- Do you personally know someone to reach out to on the staff of our association if you need help?
- On what social media platform do you spend most of your time?
- How well do we do at providing you opportunities to network with fellow members of our industry?
 - Do you have any ideas on how we can improve?
- Would you recommend membership in our association to a friend or colleague?

Want another idea for how to engage members? See how NYACP uses quizzes to add value and get members involved!

info.propfuel.com/nyacp-100qs



Profile Building

What is your strategy to encourage members to update and add to their member profiles? Asking members to log in to your website or AMS probably yields low success, because often, it's a friction-filled activity! Members have to log in, figure out where to update their information, and might get lost along the way. Instead, consider asking them questions one at a time, periodically throughout the membership cycle, and update their member records for them. Here are some ideas for what to ask:

- What's an alternative email address where we can reach you?
- What is your primary phone number?
- Would you like to change your (insert field) now?
- What is your top career priority this year?
- When do you plan on retiring?
- Which category best describes your current profession?
- How would you describe where you are in your career?
- When is your expected graduation date?
- What is your current job title?
- Is your mailing address correct?
- Who is your current employer?

Want more on profile building? Check out how PIHRA helped members update their profile information quickly and easily.

info.propfuel.com/pihra-100qs



Lapsed Members

So, you have a list of lapsed members who won't respond or rejoin your association? How frustrating! You might've already tried to send them multiple emails, enticing them with membership discounts and reminding them of your member benefits, and nothing works. Have you tried to ask them why? Are you sure they're aware of their lapsed status? Try asking them! You'll get valuable, new information and perhaps manage to re-engage them. Here are a few questions to try:

- Are you aware that your membership has lapsed?
- Are you considering rejoining our association as a member?
- We haven't heard from you. Are you planning to renew your membership?
- Are you planning to renew your membership?
- Did you know that your membership expired?
- Would you like to renew now?
- Why are you hesitating to renew your membership?
- Is there anything we can do to help you renew your membership?
- How would you like to reinstate your membership?
- What did you value most as a member of our association?
- What is most important to you or your business this year?
- What's your #1 priority this year?

Want more on lapsed members? See what HSMAl did in an effort to win back over 700 lapsed members.

info.propfuel.com/hsmal-100qs



Dormant Member Win-Back

Dormant members are past members who have not rejoined for an extended period of time. They're sleepy! How do you wake them up? Instead of reminding them - once again - that they're not a member, consider asking them some questions to get insights into why they haven't rejoined. It will give you valuable information on what to do next. Here are some ideas for what to ask:

- What was your primary reason for leaving the association?
 - What can we do to get you to renew with our association?
- Would a discounted membership bring you back as a member?
 - What dollar amount is membership worth to you?
- Would you like to rejoin?
- Would rejoining [Association] be of value/be of interest to you?
- Did you join a different professional association?
 - What can we do to get you to renew with our association?
- Do you expect to rejoin the association later in your career?
 - What can we do to get you to renew with our association now?
- Why did you originally join our association?
 - How have we fallen below your expectations?
- If you were on the leadership team of the association, what would you change?
- Are you considering rejoining our association as a member?
 - Why or why not?
- What should we start, stop, continue doing to add value for you?
- Would you be willing to have one of our staff visit with you?
 - What's the best way to reach you?
- Is there anything we can do to help you rejoin?
- Why are you hesitating to rejoin?
- How would you like to reinstate your membership?

Want to win back your dormant members? Watch to see how SLA re-engaged dormant members to gain revenue in the tens of thousands!

info.propfuel.com/sla-fireside-100qs



Membership Renewals

It's renewal time... what's your solution to get more members to renew? If it involves sending *another* email to *tell* them to rejoin, perhaps try something different. Instead of telling them about their impending member expiration, consider asking them a question about their membership. You'll gain new information about individual members, figure out how to help them and maybe even get them to act. Here are some ideas to get you started:

- Are you planning on renewing your membership?
 - Why or why not?
- What do you most value as a member of our association?
 - Is there anything else?
- Did you know your membership is expiring?
- Why are you hesitating to renew your membership?
- Are you ready to renew now?
- Would you like to renew your membership now?
- Is there anything we can do to help you renew?
- What member benefit has been the most valuable to you this past year?
- Are you aware that your membership has lapsed?
 - What can we do to get you to renew with our association?
- How valuable has your membership been this year?

Want more on member renewals? See how SLA reengaged 4,500 lapsed members to encourage renewal.

info.propfuel.com/sla-100qs

Quizzes

If your members hold an industry certification or credential, they need to keep up with their education! While webinars, online session libraries and study courses are useful, they require a time commitment. Try something new: an email quiz! It commands only a few minutes from your members, mixes up the typical communications coming from your organization, and offers immediate member value. Here are some steps to take to create a quiz:

1. Source educational content from internal or external sources (exams, study guides, prep courses).
2. Create questions from the content which will stretch your members' understanding of concepts.
3. Use your email platform to create a question/answer style email template, and create a regular schedule for sending out quiz questions.
4. Share the answer either on a landing page or in the following week's quiz email.

As an alternative, you can take a question that came in from an individual member - an industry or business question - and ask your entire membership for their input. Members love to talk and share!

Want to see more on how associations are using quizzes? Check out NYACP's quiz that doubled member satisfaction:

info.propfuel.com/nyacp-100qs

Miscellaneous

Are you looking to mix it up a little with your members? The same association-focused emails can get dull over time and cause your members to check out mentally from your organization. Keep it interesting by asking them some out-of-the box questions! Here are some ideas:

- How has your (association) membership made you a better (insert title)?
- Will you commit to a donation?
- Which of these issues is keeping you up at night?
- How well does our association's advocacy work reflect your views and opinions?
- Describe a typical day of work for you.
- Describe your dream vacation.
- How are you feeling about your job this week?
- How could we help you grow in your current role?
- What would you like to see us do differently?
- If you could live anywhere in the world for a time, where would it be and why?
- If you had one extra hour of free time a day, how would you use it?
- Name three things you think will become obsolete in ten years.
- What are the bottlenecks in your business and how could we eliminate them?
- What are your most recent big win(s)?
- What is making your job harder than it needs to be?
- What is one new thing you would like to learn how to do this year at work?
- What is one new thing you would like to learn how to do this year outside of work?
- What is your biggest challenge and how can we help?
- What project from the past year are you most proud of?
- What's one thing you learned last week?
- What's one big goal you would like to accomplish in your life?
- DEI questions related to your association's mission or industry.

Want to engage with members on another level? See how Infusion Nurses Society explored DEI challenges with their members:

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Conference Registration & Event Engagement

How are you encouraging your members to attend events and engage before, during and after the event? Incessant calls to action, along with bulletin board-style emails with a load of information, can overwhelm members and attendees and cause them to stop paying attention. Instead of telling them more information, consider asking them questions one at a time, periodically throughout the conference registration and onsite timeframes, to capture the Voice of the Member. Here are some ideas for what to ask:

- Are you planning to register for (event/conference)?
- What is holding you back from registering?
- Is now a better time to register for (event/conference)?
- In which of these (conference/event) topics are you most interested?
- What did you learn at the conference that you're currently applying to your day-to-day activities? Anything else?
- How would you rate the overall experience at {event/conference}? (5 being the best)
- How would you rate the food at {event/conference}? (5 being the best)
- How would you rate the venue at {event/conference}? (5 being the best)
- How would you rate the speaker at {event/conference}? (5 being the best)
- What's the best way for us to communicate event/conference information with you?

Want more about conference engagement? Check out how Amazon CTA EMEA engaged meeting attendees before, during and after the event:

<https://info.propfuel.com/matchbox-amazon-100qs>



FOLLOW UP

Your most important contribution to Conversational Engagement is follow up. The concept is simple: a conversation requires two people to participate, so if you don't follow up, the conversation is over. Of course, this is easy to do in person, or when carrying on a few conversations with a few people over a few days. But how do you keep a conversation going with hundreds of people at the same time? **You need systems and automation to give you conversational superpowers.**

Automation gives you a few advantages. The first advantage is that a lot of conversations can happen without you even knowing about it. How does that work? Well, remember that a conversation is a back and forth exchange of information. This is something you can do entirely with technology, taking advantage of workflows that analyze what people tell you, and take action to deliver additional content, more questions, or whatever process you design.


Using workflows and automation, you can have a conversational interaction with 90 percent of people who interact with you without ever needing personal intervention. Of course, not all requests fall neatly into a bucket that can be handled via automation, and that is where systems come into play.

A good Conversational Engagement system will surface those instances where you do need to get involved and give you tools to easily handle the flow of those conversations as they progress. An easy way to do that in PropFuel is to tag people who respond to a question with an answer that requires follow up.

For example, let's look at renewals again. If someone says "Yes, I'm planning to renew," tag them for follow up. You can then build a list a few days later that contains the people who said they were planning to renew, and using the data from your AMS through an integration, filter out those who did actually renew. Now you have a list of people who have shown intent to renew but haven't done it yet: a perfect opportunity to follow up manually via email or phone call to complete the renewal.

Another example where categorizing people for follow up is useful is with Net Promoter Score (NPS). In this case, you are asking people to rate how likely they are to recommend your organization to a colleague of theirs. This tactic gives you a net score that you can use to benchmark your organization, but it also allows you to slot the respondents into three categories.





"How likely are you to recommend us to a colleague or friend?"

You have your promoters, those are the ones who think you are doing great. You can reach out to them and ask for referrals and reviews.

Then you have the passives and detractors; those people often leave a comment telling you why they didn't rate you higher. You can go a long way toward improving their opinion of you by reaching out to them and addressing their issues. Conversation solves a lot of problems and changes sentiment dramatically.

Another example of how systems can help you better follow up with people is with response templates. Quite often, you will have a group of say 20 members who are asking for the same or similar thing. Response templates allow you to craft a personalized response and use it as a starting point for each email you send, allowing you to include small tweaks to each personal response that you send, without having to start from scratch each time. Templates also allow you to choose who you are sending from; so for example, staff can send personal responses from the Director of Membership without the Director having to do all the work from their inbox.

The good news is that the way your organization chooses to follow up can be catered to the human and technological resources you have available. For example, if your staff is maxed out on time and won't have enough time to follow up via phone or email on open text replies in a campaign, no problem. There are other options, like adding those who respond with open text to another campaign that asks additional questions, which can narrow down the number of individuals who need one-on-one assistance. The possibilities for follow up are unlimited and can be as unique as an individual, in person response would be.



GETTING STARTED

Systems like PropFuel can help you implement a Conversational Engagement strategy across your organization, but you don't need a system to take the Ask - Capture - Act methodology and try it out in some of your communications. Next time you send an email, think about how you can make that communication a little more conversational.

It may be as simple as adding a quiz question at the bottom and asking them to reply with the answer. It could be simply emailing 100 random members and asking them how you can help. Start small and work your way up.

The one thing you will find, no matter the scale at which you are operating, is that your members will be grateful for the attention. They will get more value and feel more connected to your organization because you gave them an opportunity to speak up rather than only consuming what your organization is communicating.

"I was pulling some data now that we are one year into our use of PropFuel for our renewal campaigns and was pretty shocked by the shifts we have seen...the new campaign has really moved the needle on when our members are renewing - which is a great reduction of resource usage on our staff time and paper bill mailing, phone calls, etc." -Amanda, Chief Strategy Officer, AAMFT



Start a Conversation with Us
www.propfuel.com

