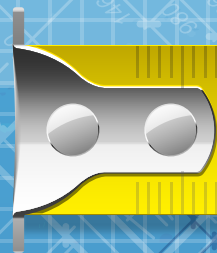


# BUILDER ASSOCIATIONS:



**A Framework for Success**





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## The Ebbs and Flows of the Housing Market

Who can forget the housing bust from 2007 to 2012? Since then, homebuilding activity has been slow and steady with its usual ebbs and flows. In other words, the housing market is doing what all markets do after a bust – it's self-correcting in preparation for the next boom.

Between 2010 and 2019, there were only 6.8 million single-family housing starts according to the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB). Looking back at the previous decade, that number was almost double at 12.3 million home starts. Naturally, this has led to a decade of underbuilding and a loss of skilled labor – which ultimately left the country short by one million homes.

Despite ongoing challenges, homebuilding is expected to expand throughout the 2020s, which is shaping up to be a dynamic decade. But with that will come challenges.



## Challenges to Overcome

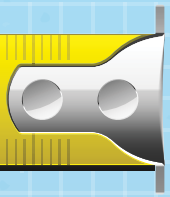
The number one challenge facing the construction industry is a shortage of skilled labor, which will lead to higher costs and longer build times. And now, there is another huge challenge.

COVID-19 has changed the way we live and do business. There is a growing demand for cleaner, less crowded work areas, which adds to a build timeline.

### Builders must be prepared:

- For new rules reinforced by state, local, and federal organizations.
- To permit one trade on a site at a time and staggering work shifts.
- For requirements like a written infectious disease preparedness and response plan.
- For longer build times due to increased safety procedures and delays in acquiring material.

# Builder Associations Can Offer Great Support



As the housing industry continues to evolve, builder associations must find fresh strategies to attract new members, while keeping current members engaged and updated on issues that affect the industry in both good and bad economic times.

## Your builder association should aim to:

- Develop meaningful relationships with new members.
- Demonstrate to seasoned members that your association remains relevant for their business.
- Maximize your association's strengths.
- Keep an eye on the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead for your members.
- Offer educational opportunities to help fill the skills gap.
- Keep members updated on all state and federal mandates relating to COVID-19.

While the economy may rise and fall, the two primary reasons members join a builder association remain constant: members want educational and networking opportunities.

This guide is loaded with tips and strategies you can implement immediately to strengthen and grow your builder association membership.

While the economy may rise and fall, the two primary reasons members join a builder association remain constant: **members want educational and networking opportunities.**



# Targeting Every Generation

Strategic marketing will help you reach your targets and get prospective members in the door to an event. But don't lose sight of the long-term goal to keep them actively involved so they develop a sense of ownership in your association.



## BABY BOOMERS

Don't count Baby Boomers out just yet! Many Boomers still want to work because they enjoy it, yet others are financially not able to leave the work force at the same retirement age as the generation before them. At the end of 2019, about 20 percent of Americans over 65 were employed or looking for work, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS).

***Reach Boomers best through direct mail, blogs, long-form content, and on Facebook - where 70 percent of them have an account.***



## GEN X

Gen Xers, (born between 1965-1980) is the smallest of the generations, and sometimes get overlooked. They earn more money than any other generation, which equates to more buying power. In fact, Gen X surpasses all others when it comes to spending on housing, eating out, entertainment, and clothing.

***Reach Gen Xers best through email communications, blogging, informative websites, Facebook, and Twitter.***



## MILLENNIALS

Millennials (born between 1981 and 1996) are now the largest generation in the work force. They are already serving in leadership roles in builder associations, with many more waiting in the wings and willing to join and volunteer if an association engages them.

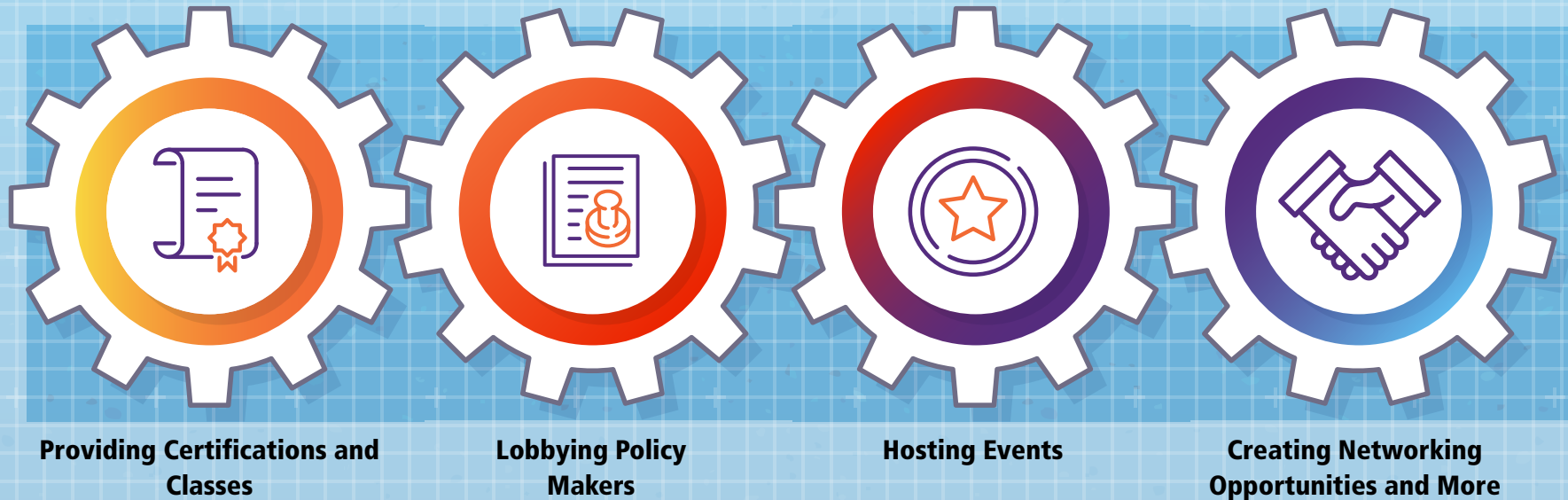
Millennials are more likely to become involved if they have established a relationship with someone within the group who can invite them to attend their first meeting or event. They are also very passionate about improving the world and helping to make an impact – gravitating toward organizations that give back.

***Reach Millennials with direct mail! Believe it or not, due to digital overload, the US Postal Service claims that 82 percent of Millennials will sort through paper mail to get a break from screen time. However, smartphones are still their primary source of information. They seek opinions of their peers or influencers for reviews and ratings. They also like to consume user-generated content.***

## Communicate Your Association's Value

Technology and social media has permanently altered the playing field. There are many ways to connect with others around the world as well as become educated on a topic for free. So, it is important that your association communicates its value and delivers on that promise.

**The key to building a successful association is having an active membership who takes advantage of the opportunities that a builder association has to offer:**



To foster active members, a diverse communication strategy is crucial for getting messages out to them in the ways they prefer to be contacted, which could include email, social media, text messages, or notifications through a mobile app.

## Social Media Strategy is a Must

It is vital for builder associations to have a social media presence. However, the expectation from your followers is that you will respond in a timely manner if there is a question or a concern. Make sure your association has the resources to manage and respond when needed. If you aren't already using these platforms, or you need to revisit your strategy, consider what each one brings to the table.





## **FACEBOOK:**

Unlike your association website, Facebook is one of the best platforms for creating two-way conversations. Your updates can reach a much wider audience, including the friends of those who “like” your group page or share your posts. It is more effective at circulating information, and it is a very visual medium (which Twitter is not). It is the best platform for older association members like Boomers and Gen Xers.

### **Opportunities:**

- Create an online community that can provide the first step toward engagement with prospective members.
- Use it to drive traffic to your association website.
- Create quick and organic videos and house them here so followers can watch or find them anytime.
- Use it to generate non-dues revenue from nonmembers who decide to attend educational seminars, workshops, or classes.
- Post current news stories or policy-making issues that affect your membership for fast updates without having to craft an email.
- Great way to ask for help, whether you need volunteers for events or members to serve in leadership positions.
- Create events within your page for each separate association event, which will show up in members’ and local nonmembers’ feeds with all of the details they need to know to attend.

## **TWITTER:**

This platform is more limited than Facebook, and it is quite different. A good Twitter following of 1,000 plus takes a good amount of time to cultivate, but it is a popular avenue to attract members and nonmembers. Posts need to be written concisely since you’re on a character count. And because users expect a quick response, be sure you’re prepared to address concerns quickly.

### **Opportunities:**

- Post or share breaking news that affects your association in real time.
- Easily connect with press who may be interested in your association’s take on current events.
- Engagement is higher when associations have a good call to action.
- Be sure to use hashtags for common themes, calls to action, and events.







## INSTAGRAM:

Instagram is the most popular with Millennials and is the second choice for Gen Xers, behind Facebook. This platform is highly driven by beautiful imagery, hashtags, and live video. Just like Twitter, developing a following is a long-term game. If you want to go where the builders are going, Instagram has been making headway, and is becoming a big part of a builder's marketing mix.

### Opportunities:

- Hashtags are just as important here. Let people who don't follow your account still find you.
- Fill your feed with attention-getting images that have a narrow focus, like inspiring work from members. (Don't use it to tell the association's entire story).
- Be sure to have an ample supply of visually appealing content to cover topics that fit into the platform.
- Using the same filter for every image is a great way to establish your brand look and grow your audience.
- The "recommended for you" feature easily allows associations to reach new targets by serving up your content to potential members based on their search history.



## LINKEDIN:

Many businesses and associations are now choosing to use LinkedIn more than Facebook because of the advantages it has in the business world. LinkedIn allows for business-to-business targeting and can generate more qualified leads. It also offers a great (and professional) way to network.

Whichever platforms you choose, an editorial calendar is a must. There are also tools, such as Hootsuite, to help you monitor your social media and plan out your content deployment.



## Find Opportunities to Lead

When members find themselves struggling in a tough economy, a crisis, or facing major policy changes that affect their business, your builder association can demonstrate leadership by helping members look beyond a short-term bump in the road.

Instead of simply collecting information and passing it along to members, associations will have a bigger impact and add value to members if they:

- Process and analyze proposed policies and issues that affect members' lives and livelihoods.
- Hire experts in specific fields who can provide information members need today.

## Upgrade Your Technology

Technology evolves literally every day, so don't fall behind. It is important to keep up and take advantage of the benefits that new technology has to offer as often as you can.

### Improved technology makes it easier for members to:

- Stay connected to the association and other members.
- Register for meetings or events; attend virtual events.
- Renew memberships.
- Take advantage of membership benefits.
- Receive information through their preferred method of communication.

Web-based management systems give your staff greater access to their work files and other information, allowing them to remain connected to the office even when they're out of town on business. Your staff can simply download your builder association mobile app onto their smartphones or mobile devices and gain access to their contacts and work files.

### Mobile apps are also available for members to:

- Update their member information.
- Look up their membership benefits.
- Communicate with other members directly from their smartphone.

A technology upgrade demonstrates that your builder association is adaptable to change and has a vision toward the future.





## Maximize Digital Advertising Opportunities

Why not take advantage of online advertising opportunities when they are offered? The most cost-effective web-based management software allows member businesses to market their products and services, which sends a message to association members and others that they are proud to be a part of the association.

Many smaller builder associations don't have the resources to dedicate to selling advertising. Even if your association can sell it, the process requires a creative team to design the ads from start to finish, and to place them online. There's also invoice management and collection that has to be accounted for.

Without the proper follow-up and the staff to manage the process, there's a chance advertisers aren't going to renew their ads, costing you future ad revenue. If you lack the resources to create an effective advertising campaign for your members, consider outsourcing the work to a company that offers a revenue-sharing program.

### **These online advertising revenue streams can include:**

- Enhanced member listings, including priority placement in the business directory and website search results.
- Advertising on the association website, such as banner ads, member business directory, events calendar, hot deals, and member-to-member deal pages.
- Press releases about member businesses and sponsors on the association website.
- Sites that allow members to build search engine optimization (SEO) results and change their own keywords.
- Promotional advertising for event sponsors or for use during special events or occasions.

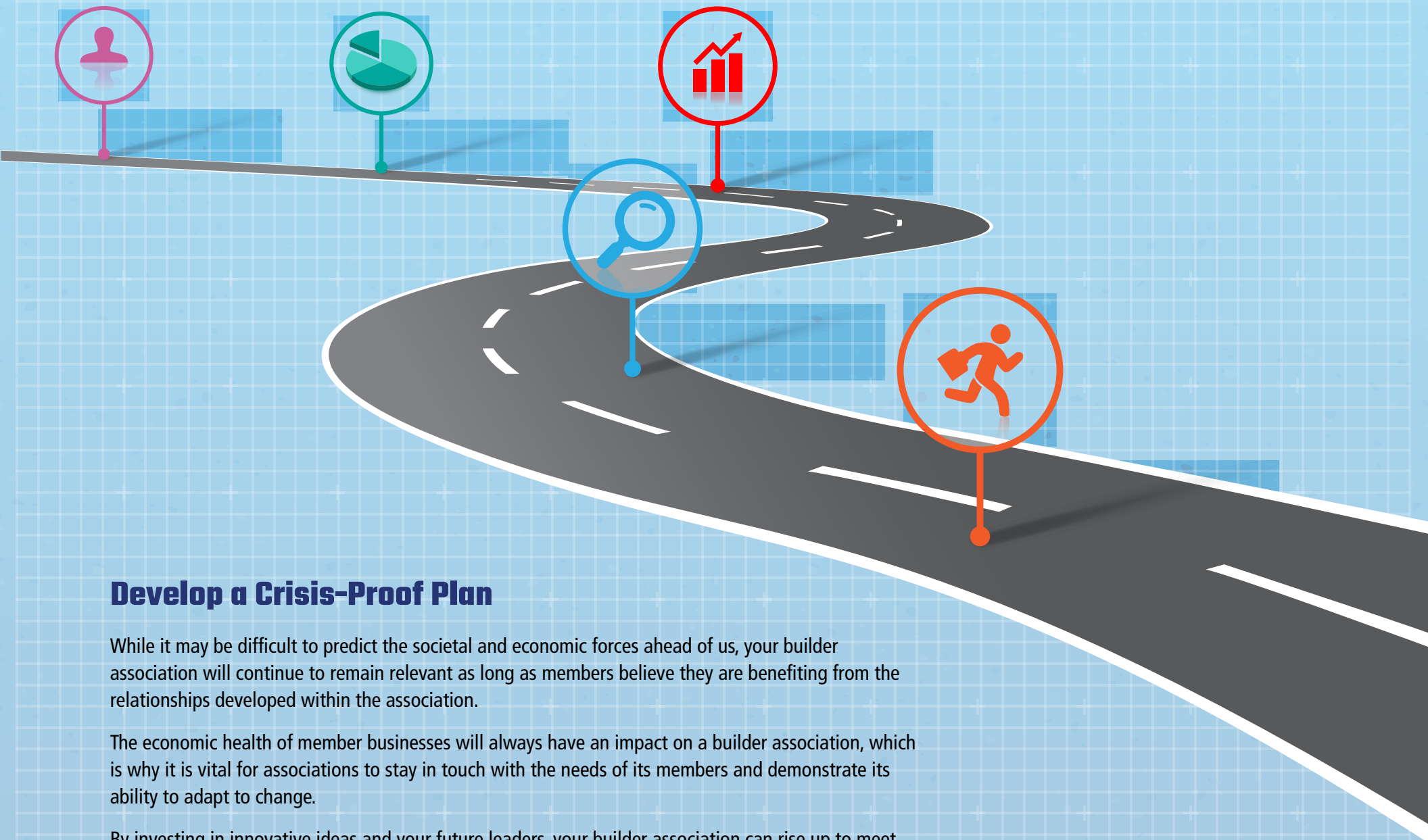
## Make the Most Out of Your Events

It's important to know which events are valued by your members and which ones are not. Find out exactly why they like to attend them and whether you are meeting their expectations. Ask if you are providing the relevant content they need. Perhaps you can incorporate more virtual events and less in-person events to deliver what members need at a lower cost to you.

The most effective web-based management software system should help your staff evaluate if an event is worth the cost and effort, or if it should be replaced by another event.

Associations can no longer expect that members will be willing to attend every event or exhibition because they may be cautious to spend money on travel. Now may be the perfect time to revamp your strategy, and instead of playing it safe, upgrade the event to demonstrate that attendance is worth the time and effort.





# Develop a Crisis-Proof Plan

While it may be difficult to predict the societal and economic forces ahead of us, your builder association will continue to remain relevant as long as members believe they are benefiting from the relationships developed within the association.

The economic health of member businesses will always have an impact on a builder association, which is why it is vital for associations to stay in touch with the needs of its members and demonstrate its ability to adapt to change.

By investing in innovative ideas and your future leaders, your builder association can rise up to meet the challenges ahead.



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## ABOUT GROWTHZONE

### Manage Your Builder Association with Ease:

- User-friendly web-based system with mobile apps for members and staff
- Built-in integrations with WMS & Dues Hub
- Streamline events and automate billing and communications

GrowthZone Construction & Trades Edition helps associations retain membership, generate revenue, engage and communicate with members and prospects, and streamline their day-to-day operations.

**Guaranteed.**