

Expect the Unexpected. Considerations & Predictions for Associations in 2022

A TAS Publication

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If the last two years has taught us anything, it is to expect the unexpected.

Making predictions for the year ahead with a continuing high level of uncertainty is probably difficult at best and impossible at worst. However, there are some things we can predict with a reasonable level of certainty, some we think are a reasonable bet for 2022 and then there are the “who knows”. These are the unknowns over which we couldn’t have predicted and have little or no control over.

As we head into 2022 with the same uncertainty as 2021, below is a list of what we think will definitely eventuate, what may be and then some strategies for the unknowns!

Hopefully you can find in this list a few thoughts which resonate and help you to navigate through what one can only assume will be another unpredictable year.

2022 will be the year when the word “trust” becomes of even greater importance than the norm. As borders re-open and the world begins to try to return to some level of “normality” (whatever that is), trust will become all important. Whether that is trust in what politicians are saying and doing, trust in what your colleagues are doing or simply trust in our fellow human beings to “do the right thing”. Associations that thrive will be those who can be trusted to deliver real tangible benefits to their members. This may take the form of advocacy with government that achieves results, increased credibility with relevant stakeholders or simply providing high quality learning and networking opportunities. Members now want tangible results delivered by an organisation that is respected and listened to. Now is the time for associations and their leaders to focus on building a brand that can be trusted to make a difference.



Francis Child,
Executive Chair

100% - IT'S HAPPENING

- **Director identification numbers** – will be required for all company directors by the end of 2022.
- **Self-assessed tax exemptions for not-for-profits** – online self-review forms will need to be submitted to the ATO from 1/7/2023 so start planning / reviewing in 2022.
- **Corporations Amendment (meetings and Documents) Bill 2021** – will allow the electronic signing and use of technology for meetings and documents to become permanent. The bill should pass into law in 2022.
- **Work flexibility** – With the move to staff working regularly from home, hours and locations may become more flexible but these changes will be more formalised under new contracted terms. As the boundary between work and personal life are blurred, employees will need to assume greater responsibilities for the social welfare of their employees. – what does that mean for office space requirements and employment contracts?
- **War on Talent** - Staff recruitment will remain a problem until borders re-open for both casual staff and migrants. This will lead to a greater focus on technology to improve productivity to counter the effects. Organisations will need to implement long-term plans for people management and will need to make sure they have the best systems in place and know how to use them effectively.



- In 2022, people will hold companies to a higher standard in an **employee-driven market**.
- **Work-Life balance**, mental health and meaningful work will all trump salary. 2022 will become the year of the employee value proposition.
- **All events** will need to continue to include online delivery to reach a wider audience, or as a Plan B in case of disruption. The good news is that it is becoming easier and cheaper to do this everyday, so you need to be aware of the technology options as they change.
- **Grants and funding** will be available through much of 2022 for events and innovation. Make sure you are aware of what is on offer.
- **Data management** will be an increasing focus for associations as they need to engage more frequently and more directly with their members in a meaningful manner.
- **Cybersecurity Awareness** will feature heavily in 2022 as organisations assess their current state of cybersecurity readiness. Understanding security gaps and implementing steps will be an essential part of any business strategy.
- Organisations will start to **simplify their offerings** and processes during 2022 and focus on doing more with less. This will allow them to streamline products/services and do one or two things really well and do it better to stay competitive.

Revenue streams – how to maintain and how to increase them, have and always will be the key focus for Associations. 2021 saw the continuation of a year filled with risk, challenges and the need to think outside the box with regards to traditional revenue streams due to the ongoing implications of COVID-19. The absence of Face to Face conferences and the conversion to virtual events changed the way Associations sought sponsorships and key funding from their partners and stakeholders. In 2022, Associations will need to think beyond the conference, they will need to get creative and collaborative with their partners and change their sponsorship offerings. The trend to a 365 day approach of delivering value to key partners will need to be adopted and just as Associations ask 'how do we increase the value proposition' for our members', this key question will extend through to Association's sponsorship and partnership strategies.



Nell Harrison,
Managing Director

LIKELY TO HAPPEN

- **Revenue streams** – associations will look for new revenue streams to bolster their balance sheets – maybe through partnerships, sponsorships, monetising data, publications, research or other means but it will be a focus for 2022.
- **Duty of Care** – will the onus shift from the individual who attends an event to take care when interacting with other attendees or will there now be increased responsibility on the host organisation?
- **Insurance** needs may change to cover for increased health risks both in the office, at home and at events. Expect policies to include more riders and for premiums to increase substantially.
- **Local events** may become more valued as reticence and travel budgets continue to affect movement. The upside of this is the ability to record or transmit these meetings quickly and broadly online so make sure this is a consideration for every event you run.
- **Inflation** may return to the economy as wage pressures increase. Will it hit the 15% of old – unlikely but don't be surprised by 5%+ by 2023. Factor this into your financial planning.





- The **technology** for delivery of online content may evolve considerably to support virtual reality thereby enhancing opportunities for personal interactions, which is the current weakness of online delivery mechanisms. Adoption at the right price may still be some way off!
- Organisations will need to be more **strategic about growth** and this will include Association, For-Purpose and N-F-P mergers. As membership becomes more competitive, some Associations may need to join forces in order to financially survive.
- **Innovation will become fundamental.** Associations will need to embrace innovation which can include emerging technologies such as AI, and augmented reality or using existing technology to give themselves a competitive boost.

Towards the end of 2021 we saw Associations start to redirect their focus to marketing. I see this trend continuing and expanding in 2022 as Associations realise the importance of communicating their value to potential members, engaging and retaining current members and putting in place a detailed lapsed member communication strategy. I expect 2022 will see a huge increase of outsourced professional marketing services as associations compete for attention as well as starting to use their marketing data more effectively. For larger Associations, I see marketing automation software becoming more popular in late 2022 to assist with consistent, brand messaging and communications.



Lynne Greenaway,
Director Sales and Marketing

PLANNING FOR THE UNPREDICTABLE

Every year there are curveballs thrown up which no one could have foreseen. These may include changes of government (likely in Australia in 2022), natural disasters, pandemics, wars, criminal acts, environmental changes or simply something we never even considered. Whilst we cannot generally foresee these events there are at an association-level things we can do to plan for such eventualities, including:

- 1) **Financial** – ensure we have sufficient reserves for a rainy day, supported by regular budgeting, forecasting and cash-flow strategies
- 2) **Risk** – put in place a risk management plan that – identifies, assesses, mitigates and monitors the risks that face your organisation
- 3) **Strategic** – have a Board focussed on strategy at every meeting that clearly defines the goals and aims of the organisation
- 4) **Disaster Recovery** – have an up to date and regularly reviewed plan to cover the “what if” scenarios. Ensure you have a plan for that worst case scenario – it may not be perfect but it will have you thinking!
- 5) **Apply the disruption mindset** to approach problems and to solve problems that don't even exist yet for your organisation.



*If we have one message
for 2022 it would be*

*“to be firm in your
destination but flexible in
your path”.*

*If any of these ideas resonate and
you would like to discuss them
further don't hesitate to contact our
office.*



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