

Value Proposition Overview & Outline:

- **Value Proposition Overview:** The Value Proposition Toolkit is a resource to help associations establish a clear and impactful value proposition to promote the value of membership in the association. A value proposition is a unique statement that communicates the value an association offers to members. Having a value proposition helps members understand the services and opportunities they have through their membership, and why their investment in the association is important.
- Every association should have a value proposition to reinforce its significance to members, leaders, and staff. It is important to remember that value propositions focus on what the association already delivers on and does well with and is not meant to be an aspirational statement.
- In this toolkit you will find:
 - o What a value proposition is, and why it's important.
 - o Key steps to outlining the time and talent needed to create a value proposition.
 - o A step-by-step process for creating a value proposition.
 - o Communication tips for value propositions.
 - o How to measure the success of the value proposition.
 - o How to establish ongoing evaluation of the value proposition.

What is a Value Proposition and Why do you Need it?

- **What is a Value Proposition?** A value proposition is a brief statement that explains the benefits an association provides to members. A value proposition should answer the question "why should a member belong to the association?" A value proposition should be equally as impactful to current members as it is to prospective members and convey why the member is better with the association, than without it.
- A value proposition identifies what the association already does well, not something that should be fixed, and it could change over time.
- **Why is a Value Proposition Important?** Having a value proposition helps retain members and attract new members to the association.
- A value proposition creates a unified understanding of the association's relevance and enables leaders and staff to communicate the association's value clearly.
- Building a recognized brand through the value proposition can build trust and loyalty amongst members.
- A value proposition connects for the membership, how the association positively impacts a member's business

Getting Started:

- Creating a value proposition takes time and involvement from members to ensure a successful outcome. Before getting started, work with association leadership to determine what group should be responsible for the creation of the value proposition.
- SUB SECTION: **Member Involvement:** Member involvement in creating a value proposition is crucial to ensure the message resonates with the membership. Members will add important perspectives and experiences that will help shape the value proposition as it's created. Consider the following when creating your value proposition team:

- Size: utilize the power of small groups when identifying the type of member group that will be established for this project. Creating a group of no more than 12 individuals is recommended.
- Diversity: it is vital that the group include member representation of all kinds. Be sure to include highly involved members, uninvolved members, top producers, members with diverse backgrounds, brokers, up to two board members, and key staff. Be mindful of the associations DEI initiatives when selecting this group.
- Group Leadership: A strong chair and vice chair will be needed to lead this initiative, ask individuals that are up for the task and can communicate the group's progress and outcomes clearly and convincingly.
- ADD SUB SECTION: **NEXT STEPS FOR THE GROUP:** After the group is selected and approved, get the project started by using the [Key Steps document](#).
- Establish a timeline for the group to complete the project and include update points throughout the timeline.

Process:

- Use this checklist to help complete the value proposition for the association.
- **Value Proposition Checklist:**
 - Initiate the project by discussing the idea with association leadership and formulating a preliminary plan. Take this initiative and the plan for the value proposition project to the board for approval to ensure their commitment and support.
 - Determine the most suitable type of member involvement for the association to move this initiative forward (work group, PAG, task force), and select a diverse group of members. See more information on this here (LINK TO TIME AND TALENT PAGE)
 - Brokers
 - BOD member(s)
 - Committee members
 - Naysayers
 - Staff
 - Top producing agents
 - If required, have the Board of Directors approve the group, and the proposed chair and vice chair.
 - Identify target membership audiences. Associations may target more than one group when creating a value proposition; three is the recommended maximum.
 - Focus on benefits, not features of the association. For example, a feature of an association may be that it is "small and a tight-knit community," but the benefit would be that the association delivers networking opportunities to build relationships with others in the industry in the area, to help ensure smooth transactions for clients and customers.
 - Establish the research methods that will work best for the association. A mix of multiple methods is best, rather than only using one data set. Possible methods include:
 - Surveys
 - Focus groups
 - All member forum
 - One on one meetings with key stakeholders



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- Competitive analysis
 - Third party researcher to execute methods
- Collect and analyze data to find similarities in target audiences. The goal is to verify and then clarify members' greatest needs and determine whether the association delivers exceptionally well in those areas.
- Identify the entities that compete with the association. Take the results of the research and identify which differentiates the association the most from its competitors.
- Identify the association's "Unique Selling Points (USPs)". Use these to begin the brainstorming process.
- Begin the brainstorming process for key messages that answer the questions:
 - Why would a member choose to join this association over _____?
 - Why should a member open our emails?
 - For what should a member look to our association as the go-to source?
 - Revisit the key steps questionnaire.
 - What does the association do best, with what members say they need the most?
- Select two or three unique selling points that tell members the benefits the association provides. From this, create the value proposition. While developing the value proposition, remember, a value proposition is not what the association **wants** to do well. A credible value proposition is a promise of what the association delivers today. Associations can work to improve an area of business to include later, but it cannot be a part of a value proposition if it is not done very well today.
- Successful value propositions:
 - Are clear and concise: clearly identify and articulate the unique selling points of the association that set it apart competitors.
 - Address specific pain points: a powerful value proposition addresses the pain points faced by the target audiences identified.
 - Align with the association's brand identity: the value proposition must align with the mission of the organization, but it should NOT be the mission statement. Align the messaging so that it is consistent, but not the same.
 - Are memorable: aim to create a memorable message. A well-crafted value proposition should resonate in the minds of members and be easily recalled.
 - Incorporate emotion appeal: it's important to keep the focus on benefits, but also consider the emotional appeal of a value proposition. How does the association make the member feel? It cannot always be included in a value proposition but should be considered.
- Present the draft value proposition to key stakeholders and leadership for input on any final revisions. Make sure to keep the focus of the value propositions rich with the words of members.
- Bring the proposed value proposition to the Board of Directors for their support. Have the BOD representative from the designated group present the process, findings, evaluation, and creation of the value proposition. Solicit feedback and tweak the value proposition as necessary.
- Finalize the value proposition and develop graphics that communicate and support the message. Consider launching an awareness campaign. Incorporate the value proposition and messaging into the following:

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- Website (homepage and About Us)
- Email newsletters and communications
- Social media
- Events (scripts, programs, presentations)
- New member materials (brochures, welcome guides, emails)
- Signage for high traffic office areas (reception, classrooms, meeting rooms)
- Broker materials
- Email signatures and office voicemail messages
- Incorporate into branding when appropriate

ADD A SECTION FOR VALUE PROPOSITIONS DON'T' s:

Value Propositions “Don’ts”

- Don't be vague or generic: avoid statements that could apply to any association or business.
- Don't overcomplicate the value proposition: keep the language simple and straightforward to enhance comprehension.
- Don't overpromise and underdeliver: overpromising and underdelivering can lead to dissatisfaction amongst members. Be truthful and avoid overexaggerating what the association delivers.
- Don't neglect testing: put the draft value propositions in front of other members for feedback. This step will save the association time and resources in redoing a value proposition after it's already been approved.
- Don't copy competitors: associations are encouraged to share ideas in many instances, but this is not one of them. Go through the process of creating a value proposition, do not copy another value proposition, as it won't resonate in an impactful way.
- Don't make the process overly difficult: while it's important to have member involvement and go through a clear process to identify the value proposition, be cognizant of time and resource constraints. Create a process that enables the association to be nimble in adjusting the value proposition.

Communicate Your Value Proposition:

Communicating the value proposition of the association is just as important as creating it. If possible, while the value proposition is being created, have staff take the time to outline a communications plan for the value proposition once it's approved. If this requires member assistance, designate a few members of the group with experience in communications to take on the task of creating a plan for approval. Once the communication plan is in place, be sure to share with all staff, even if they were not involved in the process. The following steps and ideas are available for guidance:

- o First, plan to disseminate the value proposition at key milestones to members. These milestones include dues renewals, events, and annual conferences/meetings.
- o Identify opportunities to ingrain the value proposition in ongoing communications. For example, email newsletters can include the value proposition as a part of the header design or create a monthly section in the newsletter that highlights the value proposition in a new way, and then share it on social media.



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- Consider asking key stakeholders to record quick video clips highlighting how the association has helped them in their business directly related to the value proposition. Post these videos as “Testimonial Tuesdays” or “Member Spotlight Mondays”.
- Create specific communications for new members that highlight the value proposition. Build an email list of new members (those who have joined within the last 12 months) and use this list for the targeted messaging.
- Create specific communications for brokers that highlight the value proposition. Create a list of all Designated REALTORS®, brokers, and office managers and use this list for the targeted messaging.
- Help association leadership and staff keep the value proposition top of mind to ensure they work as ambassadors in the cause.
- As the communication plan changes, notify association leadership to keep them up to date.
- Reinforce the value proposition as a key factor in decision making, and question how significant decisions align.
- Make sure association leadership knows and can recite the value proposition.
- Consider making a laminated “cheat sheet” index card for BOD members to keep.

User Guide and Graphics: DELETE THIS SECTION IN THE TOOLKIT.

ADD FOLLOWING SECTIONS IN TOOLKIT:

Measure Success:

As with all association initiatives, it is important to define what makes the goal of creating a value proposition a success. The designated group should determine what success looks like for this initiative and create key performance indicators (KPIs) that can be used to evaluate the value proposition. Here are indicators that the association’s value proposition is successful:

- Membership retention increases.
- New member applications increase.
- Membership satisfaction grows year over year on the annual membership survey.
- Engagement increases (event attendance, committee interest, board nominations)
- Sponsorships increase.
- Communication open rates increase.

Be realistic with expectations. Use accurate membership data to determine the KPIs and understand that saturation of the value proposition can take time. Assess the success of the value proposition regularly and adjust based on feedback and performance.

Ongoing Evaluation:

Having a value proposition is vital and keeping it up to date is crucial. Take a proactive approach in soliciting feedback on the value proposition and keep the approved member group who helped create the value proposition intact to review and consider feedback. A value proposition can remain unchanged for years, or it can evolve quickly. Neither are cause for concern and should be determined through ongoing evaluation.

Here are ways the association can generate feedback on the value proposition:

- Surveys
- A member feedback form on the website
- Brokerage visits to present the association's value proposition.
- If live classes still take place, have the value proposition available during breaks and a comment box set up for intake.

While it can be hard, remember that feedback is wanted and needed for the association to continue to refine the value proposition.

Don't forget to showcase the positive outcomes and impact the value proposition generates.

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