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# How One Association Created Massive Value for Members.

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With digital disruption on our doorstep, every business is under threat, but when budgets tighten the first expense to go is often an association membership. So how does an association stay relevant and become a 'must have' not a 'might have' if times get tight.

The best way to stay relevant is to get really clear about what value you offer to your members. It's about creating a point of difference that others aren't offering.

The Institute of Public Accountants (IPA) is a great example of an association that was under competitive pressure and invented a benefit that became valuable to their members. Arthur Burt, IPA's Executive General Manager (Member Growth) was the man behind the idea.

"As an accountancy association, we have the CPA and CA as our major competitors. They are much bigger than us, with deeper pockets so we had to think outside the box on how we could be of more value to our members, without incurring extra costs," he said.

The IPA researched what their members needed and discovered that what they really wanted was a new source of revenue. But how can you invent that out of thin air, without incurring extra expenses? Their research revealed another interesting fact.

"Our research showed that what the clients of accountants most fear was not just getting audited but the cost of being audited. So, we did some brain storming and posed the question: 'What if IPA offered accountants an insurance service that would cover the cost of the accountancy fees if their clients were audited by the ATO?'"

Arthur Burt says, "The audit insurance not only generates revenue for the accountant, but it also gives certainty to their client that if they do get audited, the fees will not cripple their business."

If your association is under threat or it just seeks to offer more value to its members, take a leaf out of the IPA book and think about what your members really need and brainstorm creative ways to help them get it.

## Key take outs

1. Have a reality check – is your association as relevant as it once was? If not, maybe it's time to review your new member benefits.
2. Do your research – find out what the needs of your members really are.
3. Run an innovation workshop for your team and members to devise new and creative ways you can add value.

## More information

You can find more information on this topic on the [Strategic Membership Solutions](http://www.strategicmembershipsolutions.net.au) website. Alternatively, email [info@smsonline.net.au](mailto:info@smsonline.net.au) for a list of free resources related to sponsorship, membership, and revenue generation for associations.