# Data Informs Decisions: ASAE and Association Analytics Aim to Predict Engagement

ASAE's goal was to bring all member engagement data together for cross analysis to build a rich picture of overall engagement and participation.
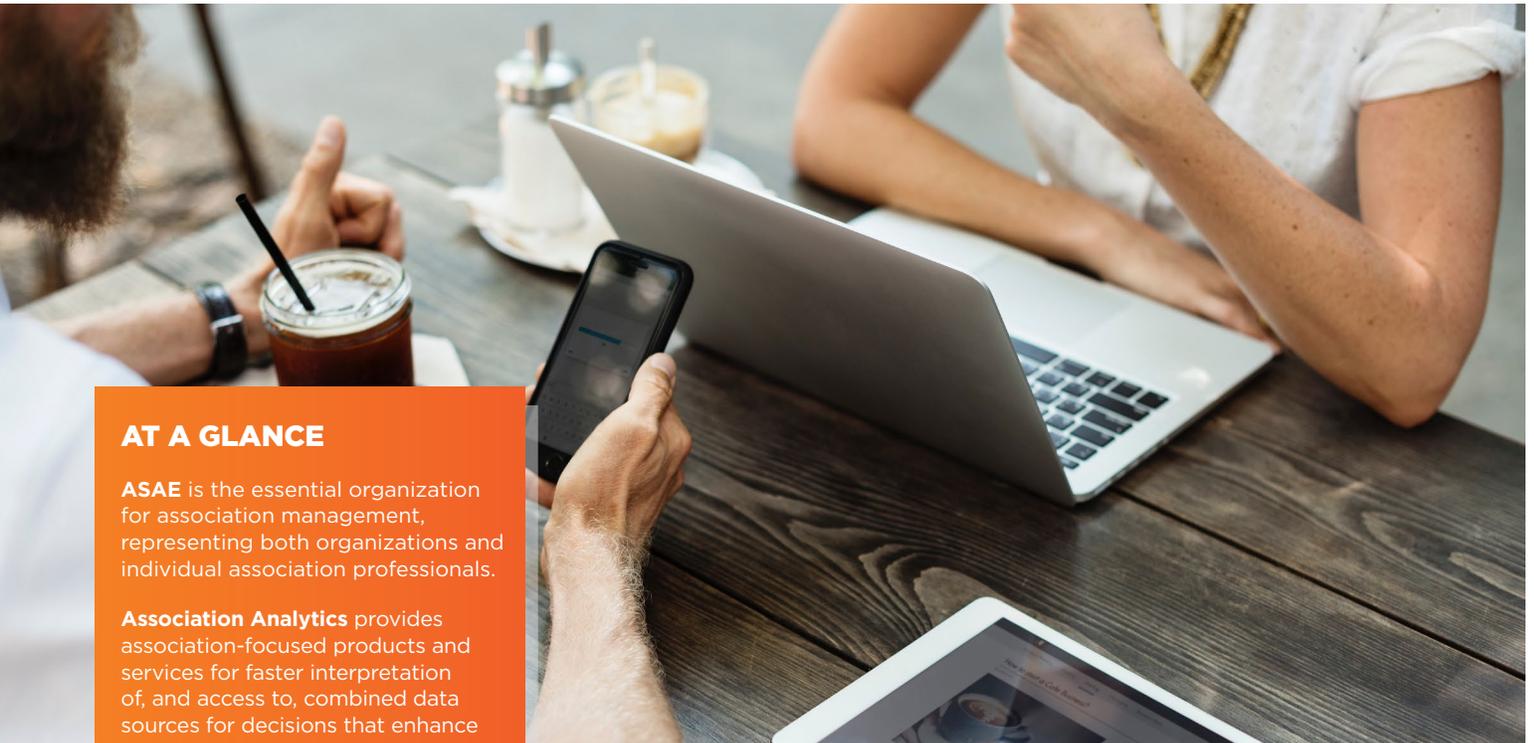
AT A GLANCE

ASAE is the essential organization for association management, representing both organizations and individual association professionals.

Association Analytics provides association-focused products and services for faster interpretation of, and access to, combined data sources for decisions that enhance member experience, optimize processes, drive organizational strategy, and increase revenue..

AMS: **Aptify**®

KEY STATS

5X member-generated revenue from users with at least one community activity per month

6X more community activities from users who attended ASAE's annual event

50% more community activities from members who renewed

ASAE uses multiple systems—AMS, email marketing, and online community, among others—to collect member data, but it couldn't compare or analyze valuable member activity across systems. There was no clear way to track retention, understand satisfaction, or analyze member engagement.

ASAE partnered with Association Analytics to integrate all data into a consolidated architecture for analysis. Connecting the Higher Logic community platform, branded as "Collaborate," is the latest addition to this long-term project.

Both organizations got to work consolidating ASAE's data from all the different systems. There was preexisting data available using visualizations with Tableau and Power BI. Association Analytics developed an integration with Higher Logic's Activity Sync to bring community activity data into its data platform, Acumen, in near real time, where it's linked to member data from ASAE's multiple systems. Additional data includes community membership and discussion content for text analysis. This will enable future plans to automatically categorize discussions and derive other valuable information.

"Since starting this partnership with Association Analytics, we've aimed to make data analytics top of mind for associations. We want to create some thought leadership around full data analysis. Don't solve just one data problem – let's get as much data as we can into this warehouse, so we can continuously solve problems. And let's bring the community along for that ride."

- **Reggie Henry**,
   Chief Information Officer, ASAE

Revenue Impact of Community

50,000	
40,000	■ # of orders by community users with at least one activity per month
30,000	
20,000	■ # of orders by community users with fewer than one activity per month
10,000	

Source: Association Analytics

"We built an analytics platform and ASAE helped us build a baseline," said Julie Sciullo, President and CEO of Association Analytics. "Since Higher Logic is a standard integration, we were able to quickly and easily integrate community data into the rest of this new ecosystem, bringing to light different trends, ways to look at preexisting data, and a plan to prompt further actions. And that's a big part of it – collecting data is cool, but what are you going to do about it?"

In other words: ASAE wants to understand the "aboutness" in its member conversations. At a basic level, Acumen helps the organization visualize search terms and subject lines. On a broader scale, it helps to see what members, volunteer groups, and people in the community talk about.

"Since starting this partnership with Association Analytics, we've aimed to make data analytics top of mind for associations," said Reggie Henry, Chief Information Officer of ASAE. "We want to create some thought leadership around full data analysis. Don't solve just one data problem – let's get as much data as we can into this warehouse, so we can continuously solve problems. And let's bring the community along for that ride."

Community Data Results

ASAE knew Collaborate was a strong member benefit, but insights gleaned from Association Analytics' Acumen tool proved the community extends beyond just a place for members to interact:

Revenue: community users with at least one activity per month generate 5 times more revenue than users with one activity or fewer per month

Event Registration: users who attended the annual event had over 6 times more community activities than users who did not attend the annual event

Member Retention: members who renewed had over 50% more community activities than members who did not renew
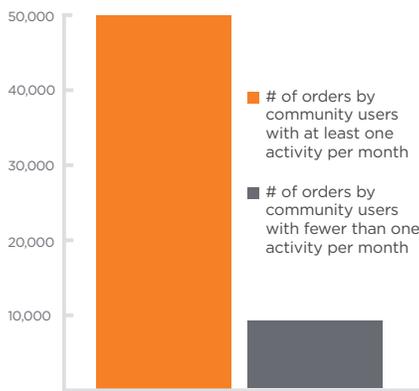
The access to this data has been a big improvement for ASAE. Staff liaisons have accessible information at their fingertips. It's easy to perform timely analysis, since data is updated at least daily and involves all activities (including community membership group composition, discussions, and any details).

Association Analytics added a way to automate community conversation details over time. Staff can view and track individual conversations to see how each got started and how it has grown over time. The next step is alerting staff and different departments to take action.

"Someone can now alert me when conversation X reaches a certain threshold, so myself or others can get in front of it, whether it's answering a question or assessing a certain product or service based on member feedback," said Reggie.

"Everyone talks a lot about 'engagement,' but we're really close to actualizing that at ASAE, and the community is one of the key components," said Julie.

Association Analytics' Acumen platform helped ASAE understand overarching membership trends and primary discussions within Collaborate, such as questions about GDPR.

Improving the [Specific] Member Experience

Currently, ASAE staff is exporting data on its own communities, including trends on popular discussion topics and content. These staff groups take that information back to ASAE to compare notes and plan engagement outreach accordingly.

"How can we make sure these are rich communities?" asked Megan Kuhman, Senior Manager of Online Communities at ASAE. "If we're talking about new members, it's invaluable to get them engaged the second they walk in the virtual Collaborate door. This new data analysis helps me get a general idea of conversations occurring across the larger member community, so I can better navigate those members to their cohorts. There is still so much potential in my day-to-day community work."

And beyond Collaborate, the industry at large is also reaping the benefits. ASAE's Tech Council can now view the data from staff in real time, in order to review and analyze trends and patterns. The same goes for upcoming shifts in technology and even legislation.

"When we started aggregating data, GDPR was strongly searched and frequently discussed in the community. So, we created a group and started pushing more GDPR content and resources based on the data we had collected. This was well before the regulation went into effect – we knew we had to be proactive. We put together a GDPR program much faster because we saw it growing early," said Reggie.

asae®

ASAE is the essential organization for association management, representing both organizations and individual association professionals. We believe associations have the power to transform society for the better. Our passion is to help association professionals achieve previously unimaginable levels of performance. We do this by nurturing a community of smart, creative, and interesting people: our members. In short, we are the Center for Association Leadership.

ASSOCIATION ANALYTICS

Association Analytics offers data analysis and management products, services, tools, and training, developed with the association professional in mind. Our exclusive focus is on helping associations make better, more confident decisions. These decisions enhance customer experience, optimize processes, drive organizational strategies, and increase revenue. Our team of experts provide software solutions, strategic consulting, data architecture, data quality management, data visualizations, analysis, and training.

The Future of Association Data is a Culture Shift

ASAE sees this data analysis as a constant evolution, with unlimited ways to slice and dice the data to best understand how their members use their systems. In the next six to 12 months, the team hopes to dive deeper into understanding group participation and how to weight different community activities. Ultimately, it aims to use data to guide members to the right place in Collaborate.

ASAE has around 40,000 members, while only 16,000 have joined at least one group in the community – systemic of its new organizational membership. With a lot of room for growth, it hopes to get more members assigned to specific groups.

"We hear people say they are part of an association and don't recognize the benefits," said Megan. "This is a great selling point for a members-only site or community, because this data helps us with the member view component. We can use this demographic data from the AMS and community to steer a member to the right place, where they find valuable, relevant conversations."

Using Acumen is meant to be a two-pronged approach to engagement: a strategic tool and a day-to-day metrics tracker. ASAE wants to predict future actions, but it's primarily focused on analyzing current conversations, terms, and actions to see how that affects the community at large.

ASAE sees this project as a reflection of a culture change in the broader association space. Where before its members would ask about static reports, now they are asking ASAE for exploration and insights into member activity. Both ASAE and Association Analytics hope this movement inspires other associations to consider change management to create a real cultural shift, based on the success ASAE has seen.

"I've gleaned this from the last few years: the future of data is insight. We don't want to measure how well we did against old strategy, because it's now constantly changing. We have these stereotypes in our minds about how to use data analytics – it's still based on reporting and meetings. But has your data affected the day-to-day fabric of your organization?" asked Reggie.

HIGHER LOGIC

Higher Logic is an industry leader in cloud-based engagement platforms. Our data-driven approach gives organizations an expanded suite of engagement capabilities, including online communities and marketing automation. From the initial web visit to renewal and ongoing engagement, we help you track and manage interactions along each stage of the digital customer experience. Organizations worldwide use Higher Logic to bring people all together, by giving their community a home where they can interact, share ideas, answer questions, and stay connected. Everything we do - the tools and features in our software, our services, partnerships, best practices - drives our ultimate goal of making your organization successful.