



This page can be found at <http://www.asaecenter.org/AboutUs/newsreldetail.cfm?itemnumber=39061>

New Economic Impact Study Shows Surprising Confidence Yet Signals Concerns for Association Community

February 18, 2009

WASHINGTON, DC—Results of a new economic impact study recently conducted by ASAE & The Center for Association Leadership point to new challenges associations might have to face in the near future. The study, titled “ASAE & The Center Impact Study—Beliefs, Behaviors and Attitudes in Response to the Current Economy,” shows that although overall the association sector is doing well, there are some important points that association leaders should consider when planning their business strategies for this and next year.

“Although some of the research confirms what we hear anecdotally from associations operating in a soft economy, other findings are somewhat surprising and counter-intuitive to what we assumed to be industry-wide trends,” said ASAE & The Center President and CEO John H. Graham IV, CAE. “For example, many associations are emphasizing virtual experiences right now, which is probably good planning, but the study clearly shows that the members who participated in the study want to meet face-to-face instead, and may even skip some more localized events that they would normally attend in order to afford a larger, distant meeting where the perceived value is high. This study really speaks volumes about what members want and value from their associations, and should be a great resource for associations as they adapt to these changing economic conditions.”

Conducted between December 2008 and January 2009, the study evaluated the effect of the ailing financial system on working professionals who belong to associations and their outlook for the future. Nearly 100 associations agreed to share their membership lists, culminating in 8,500 professionals who participated in the study, including highly educated people like lawyers, doctors, pharmacists, counselors, architects, accountants, scientists, engineers and meeting professionals, representing both the corporate and nonprofit sectors.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE STUDY:

- Overall, association members have a positive outlook on their jobs and feel their employment situation will not deteriorate in the coming year; only 8.4% of participants think their employment situation will worsen in the next year;
- As organizations seek to cut costs, employers might be less likely to pay for membership fees for staff, which might lead to a decline in association membership; members that don't pay their own membership are the ones likely to affect associations' bottom line;
- Association meetings, one of the main sources of income for associations, are likely to be more deeply affected if economic conditions worsen;
- Only 58% of association members who have attended a face-to-face meeting or an event last year indicate they have a high probability of doing so this year – primary markets are shrinking;
- They are willing to travel farther in 2009 but might skip the local meetings to save funds for the more distant events;
- Millennials, individuals born after 1977, will have to be convinced of the value of membership and are most likely to drop membership and event attendance. To be successful, we have to show them, and all members, how our associations help them in a down economy.

ASAE & The Center plan to conduct a similar study later this year to measure the change in beliefs, behaviors and attitudes among working professionals to see how their perspectives have changed based on the shifting economic climate.

“We want to make sure that our research reflects the constantly changing economic climate. A follow-up study later this year will give us an opportunity to benchmark the results and track progress, or decline, of the U.S. economy and its impact on working professionals,” added Graham.

Associations operate in all 50 states and in dozens of countries around the world, and represent individuals, causes and organizations that comprise a vibrant and educated workforce. Associations also provide education opportunities and specialized training to make individuals more efficient and beneficial to the economy as a whole. Associations are a vital part of the U.S. economy, accounting for more than one million jobs nationwide, according to ASAE's 2007 research titled *Associations Matter*. Many associations have been hard hit by this unprecedented economic crisis, but have unique tools

and resources that can be leveraged to assist the nation in its eventual recovery.


For more information about the study and to read the white paper highlighting the results, visit www.asaecenter.org/economy.

MEDIA CONTACT: Jakub M. Konysz, 202.626.2831, jkonysz@asaecenter.org

About ASAE & The Center for Association Leadership

ASAE & The Center for Association Leadership are two organizations linked together by a common belief and passion. The American Society of Association Executives is a membership organization of more than 22,000 association executives and industry partners representing more than 11,000 organizations. Its members manage leading trade associations, individual membership societies and voluntary organizations across the United States and in 50 countries around the world. The Center for Association Leadership is the premier provider of learning, knowledge and future-oriented research for the association profession. Together, ASAE & The Center for Association Leadership provide resources, education, ideas and advocacy to enhance the power and performance of the association community. For more information about ASAE & The Center, please visit www.asaecenter.org.

###

[Top ^](#)
 [Subscribe to updates](#)
[To News Releases Listing](#)
[To ASAE home](#)

ASAE & The Center for Association Leadership

ASAE & The Center Building, 1575 I St. NW, Washington, DC 20005, P. 888.950.2723, F. 202.371.8315 or P. 202.371.0940 (in Washington, DC)
Marriott Learning Complex, The Ronald Reagan Building & International Trade Center
1300 Pennsylvania Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20004, P. 202.326.9550, F. 202.326.0999

© Copyright 2008 ASAE & The Center. All rights reserved.