



Association Laboratory Inc.

25 YEARS HELPING ASSOCIATIONS MAKE BETTER DECISIONS

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***Executive Summary and Discussion Guide***  
***Looking Forward<sup>®</sup> Impact 2025***

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## Letter from the President

Association Laboratory is proud to provide an executive summary of the 14<sup>th</sup> annual edition of Looking Forward® Impact, the leading environmental scan of the association strategy environment, and the first of three yearly studies in the Looking Forward® series for 2025.

This year, we continue with the theme of “Leadership in a boundaryless world.” The elimination of boundaries for movement of people, money, and information, and the use of AI, means that association leaders will no longer benefit from static strategies, slow decision-making, and the assumption of protected markets. The lines between markets and jurisdictions are effectively gone.

Sadly, though, the ability of associations to adapt to this new world is in doubt. Consider the following.

- Government – For many associations, the historical relationship with state and federal governments has been predictable. That is no longer the case as long-held assumptions on policy, appropriations and priorities are being tested.
- The gap between the way many modern industries and professions operate and the level of understanding by policymakers continues to grow – jeopardizing traditional advocacy strategies.
- Workforce challenges continue to be of concern, but now, with AI, the impact on rules-based professions is as disruptive as disruptive gets.
- Merger and acquisition activity continues to be an essential factor, creating more extensive and resource-intensive companies that alter member needs and their ability and reasons to engage with associations. New research shows that employers are having a substantial impact on member decisions.
- As for-profit organizations recognize the value of association communities, while simultaneously rejecting them as partners, they become the most substantial competitive force in the sector.

Potential members and customers live and work in a world awash with opportunities for education, professional networking, and content. Unfortunately, many association leaders continue to operate slowly and deliberately, using poorly informed governance systems ill-suited to a fast-paced, dynamic world. The result? Too many associations will struggle to keep pace with competitors in an environment characterized by savage competition.

The challenge for the association sector will be to pursue a governance and leadership renaissance that provides associations with faster, more data-driven decision-making. Without a change in how associations make decisions, they will continue to fall behind their more aggressive peers and the for-profit competitors that value their community.

I hope you will use the information from Looking Forward® Impact contained in this executive summary and in the customizable data located on the Looking Forward® Dashboard to inform the decisions critical to your association's success.

We will continue our commitment to giving you the information, insights, and opportunities you need to thoughtfully consider your future and develop strategies to make your professional and organizational success a reality. If I or my team can ever assist, don't hesitate to contact us. We look forward to working with you.



Dean West, FASAE  
President and Founder  
Association Laboratory Inc.



# Association Laboratory Research Alliance



Association Laboratory is proud to be the founder and leader of the Association Laboratory Research Alliance®

The Association Laboratory Research Alliance® is a collaboration of state, national, specialty, and global societies of association executives designed to investigate, lead the discussion of, and provide insight into the future of the association business model.

Since its inception, the Association Laboratory Research Alliance® has investigated the forces shaping association members and the implications of these forces on association strategy. Through research reports, customizable dashboards, and virtual and in-person seminars, the Alliance provides the most recent, relevant, and helpful information for association leaders to learn about the future of associations. The Association Laboratory Research Alliance® produces three sector studies under the Looking Forward® banner critical to association sector thought leadership.

- **Looking Forward® Impact** – This global environmental scan of the association strategy environment identifies the factors with the most significant impact on association members.
- **Looking Forward® Challenges** – This study looks at the challenges that the changing environment creates for association strategy.
- **Looking Forward® Solutions** – This study assesses more than 135 different strategies and solutions and identifies the ones that association leaders believe are important to success, given the changes in the member environment.

To access the most relevant, recent, and helpful association sector research, visit the [Looking Forward Dashboard](#).

## Thanks to Our Strategic Partners

Association Laboratory would like to thank two companies essential to the continued collection and dissemination of quality association sector research.

### Gravitate

Gravitate's Nucleus data analytics platform was built specifically for associations and is designed to meet the unique needs of the member industry.

Nucleus aggregates the vast amounts of member data stored in different systems across member-based organizations (AMS, email marketing, events, learning management, online community, and more). It makes insights into this data available to everyone: staff, leadership, components, the board – and even members.

The Looking Forward® 2025 Data Dashboard is Nucleus, specially configured to show this essential environmental scan information and allow you to explore it.

Gravitate is thrilled to have been selected as the official data analytics solution of the Association Laboratory Research Alliance and hopes you enjoy this new way to benefit from the Looking Forward® study.

You are invited to browse the [Analytics for Associations Success Kit](#) to learn more about Nucleus and to contact us to discuss use cases at your organization at [analytics@gravitatesolutions.com](mailto:analytics@gravitatesolutions.com).

### CE21

CE21 is a cloud-based technology and services company providing a full-service Learning Management System (LMS) that delivers distance education, online registration, and physical product sales solutions.



The company serves professional education verticals, including Legal, Accounting, Health Care, Insurance, Business, Education Content Providers, Professional & Trade Associations, and Non-Profit Organizations.

[Association Laboratory uses CE21's LMS system to give us more capacity and capability to provide leading-edge content to association leaders. You can see the system in action at the \[Association Laboratory's Knowledge Center\]\(#\).](#)

CE21's award-winning LMS can help your organization deliver a best-in-class e-learning experience explicitly designed for your most important customers –learners.

Built for today but designed with the flexibility to meet tomorrow's changing needs, CE21 provides an elegant, mobile-optimized online learning environment that transforms your organization into a 24/7 on-demand value provider.

For more information, visit [CE21.com](http://CE21.com).

# The Issues Facing Association Members

## Overview of Environmental Factors

Looking Forward® Impact 2025 assessed more than 60 factors affecting association members within six domains. The chart on the following page identifies, in descending order, the factors selected by at least 30% of respondents in 2025.

### 5-Year Trend in Factors Impacting Association Members

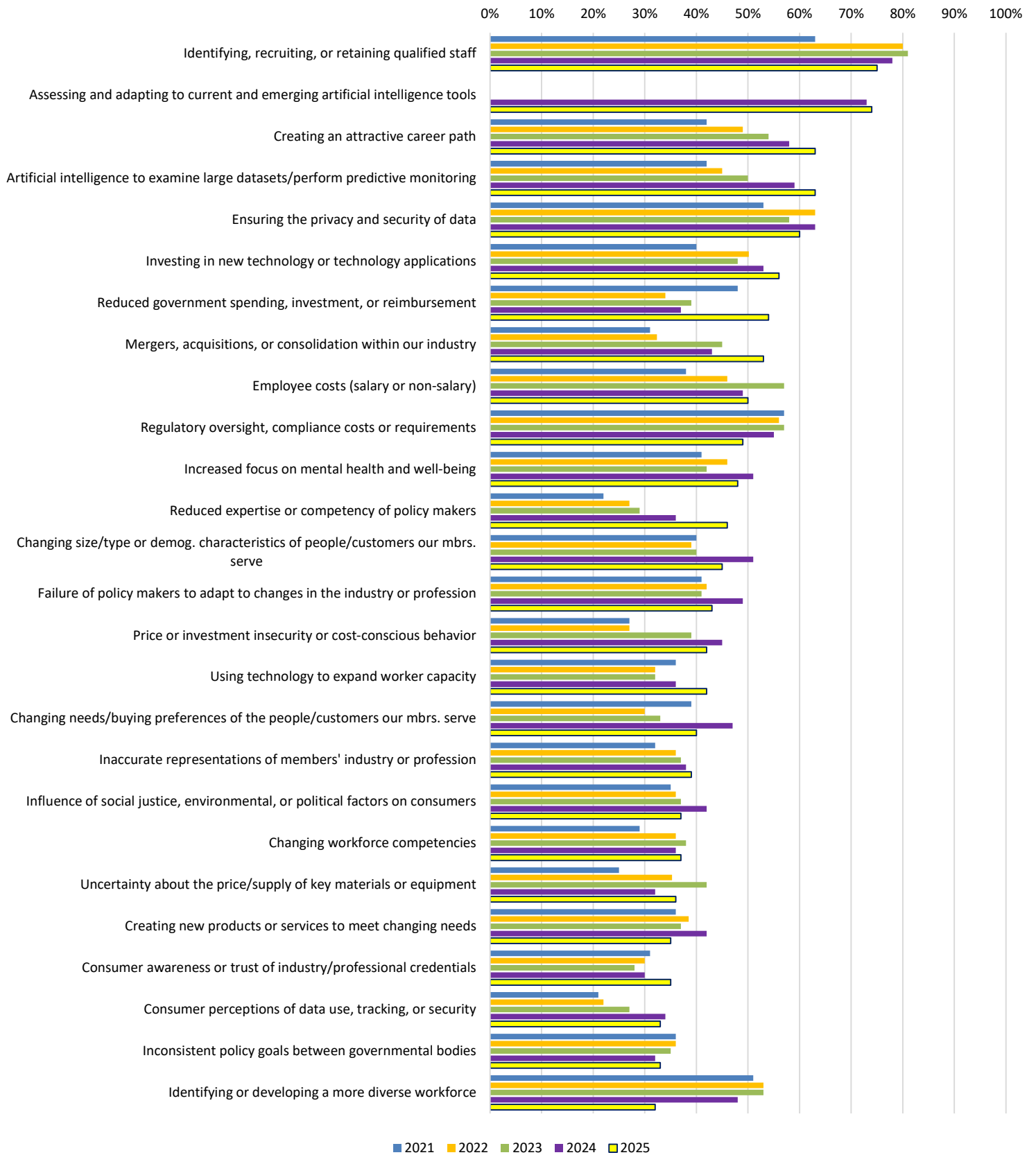


FIGURE 1 LOOKING FORWARD IMPACT

In addition, trade and professional respondents were presented with some unique issues facing their members, worded to reflect their unique perspectives. The following are responses from professional and trade association respondents for unique issues affecting their respondent group.

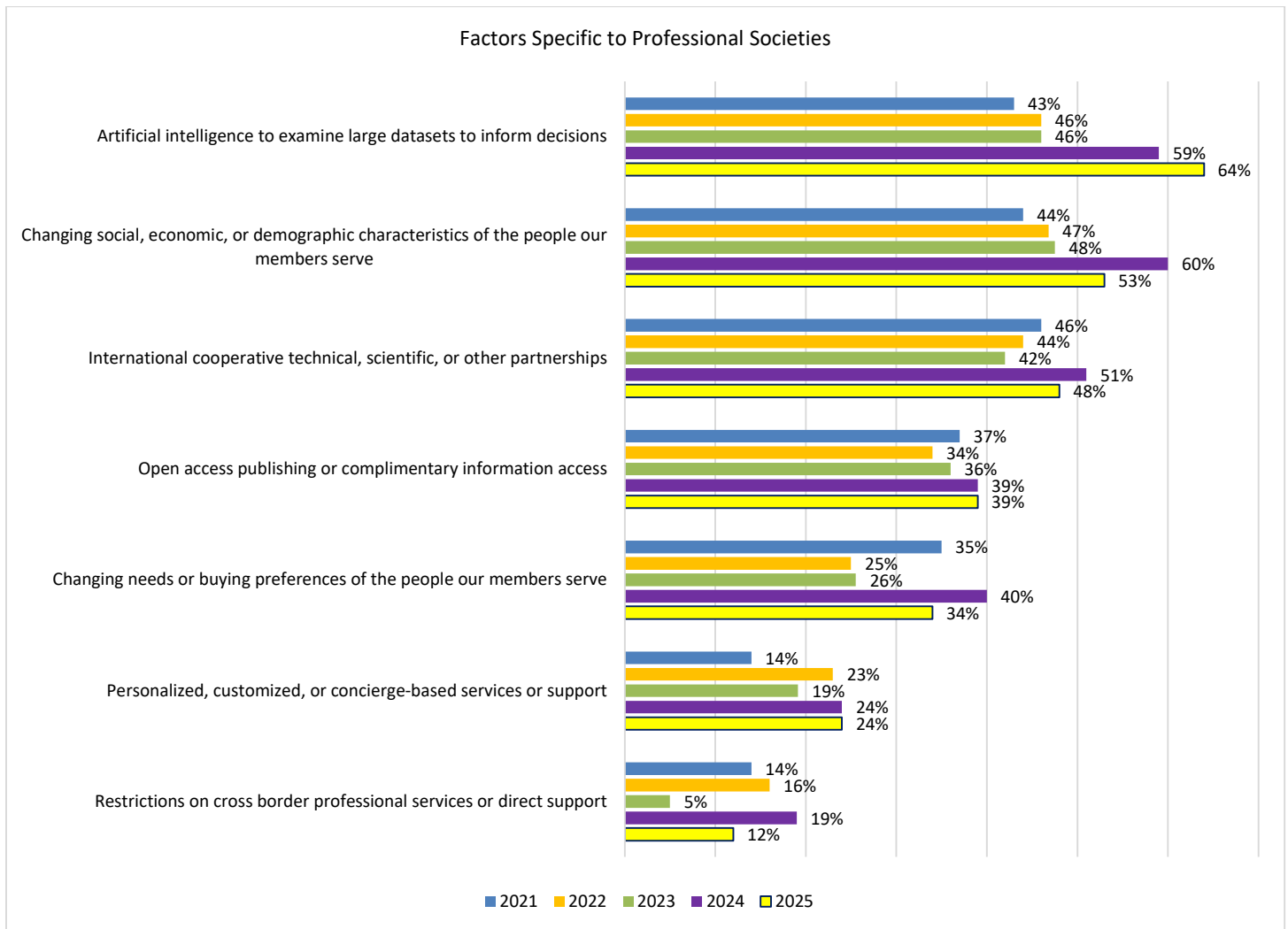


FIGURE 2 LOOKING FORWARD IMPACT



### Factors Specific to Trade Associations

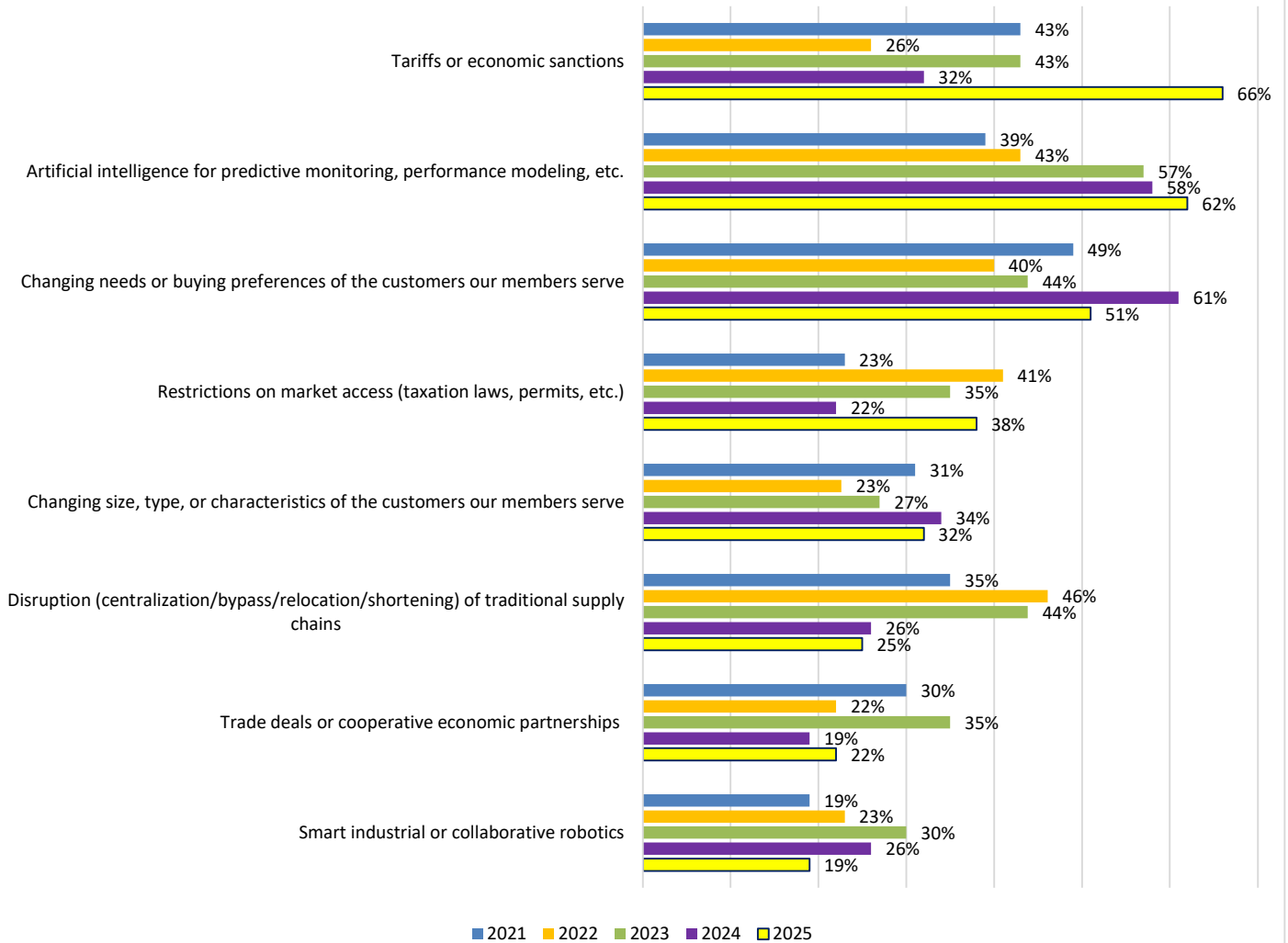
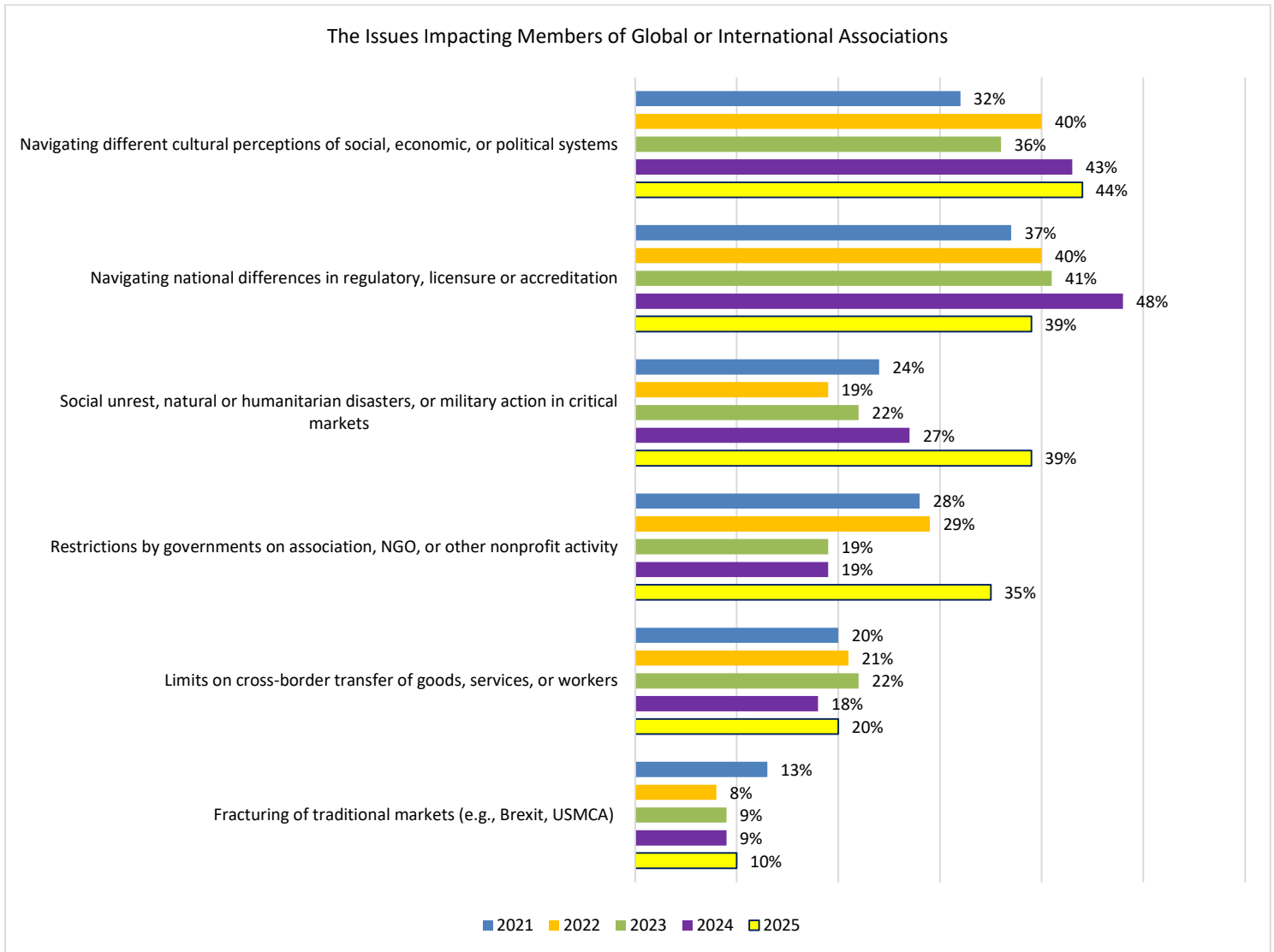


FIGURE 3 LOOKING FORWARD IMPACT

# Global Issues

The study assessed several\* different issues impacting members of associations with non-U.S. activity. The chart below identifies the factors impacting respondents from associations with a multi-country scope:



**FIGURE 4 LOOKING FORWARD IMPACT**

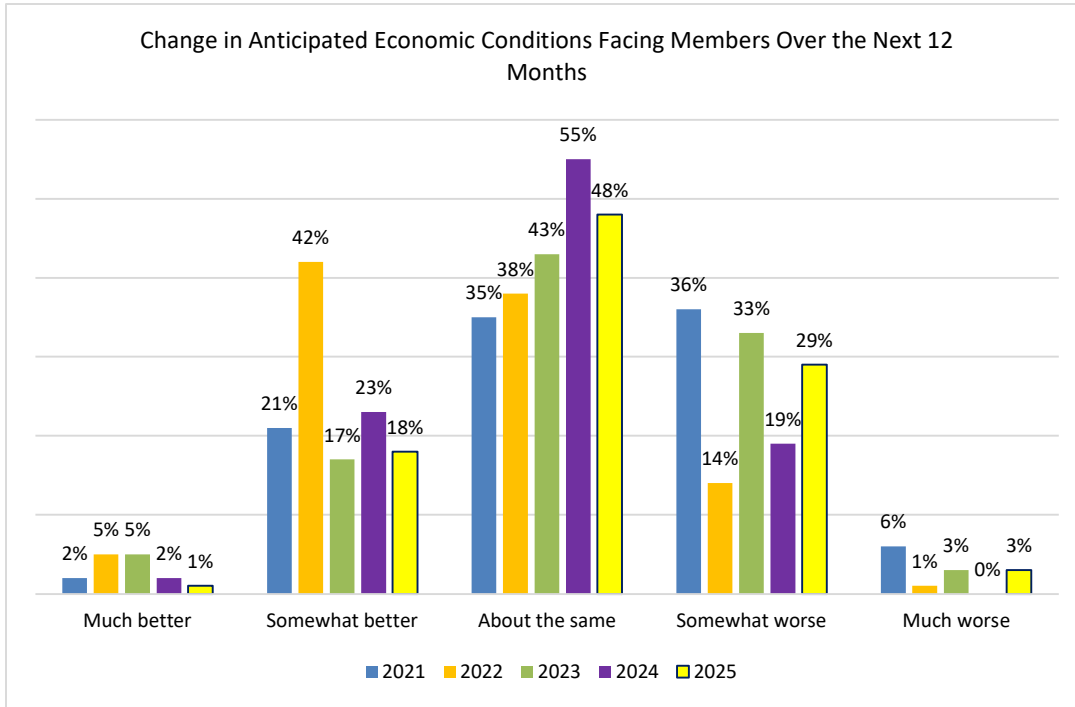
*Question text: Which of the following will have the most impact on your members over the next three years? Select up to five.*  
 (Global, US+International, and Multi-Country Federation [non-US] respondents only)

\*There were 11 total Global issues tested. Figure 4 shows the six issues that were shown to all Global/International association respondents. For the remaining five options, the wording was modified to address the perspective of a trade or professional association respondent – these responses are included in the preceding Trade and Professional-specific charts (Figures 2 & 3).

## Economic Circumstances

In 2014, Association Laboratory’s sector research on behalf of the ASAE Foundation identified a link between the economic circumstances facing members and member organizations and their likelihood of engagement with the association.

Historically, the more economic hardship association members face, the less likely they were to engage with an association. In Looking Forward® Impact, we asked respondents to identify the anticipated economic circumstances of their members during the upcoming year.



Respondents are more pessimistic about the economy in 2025 compared with 2024.

In 2025, 19% of associations anticipate their members will face a more favorable economic climate, down from 25% in 2024. Meanwhile, 32% of respondents anticipate worse economic conditions in 2025, up from 19% in 2024.

This is a notable increase in negative sentiment about the economy in the coming year.

**FIGURE 5 LOOKING FORWARD IMPACT**

*Question text: What will be the economic situation facing your members over the next 12 months?*

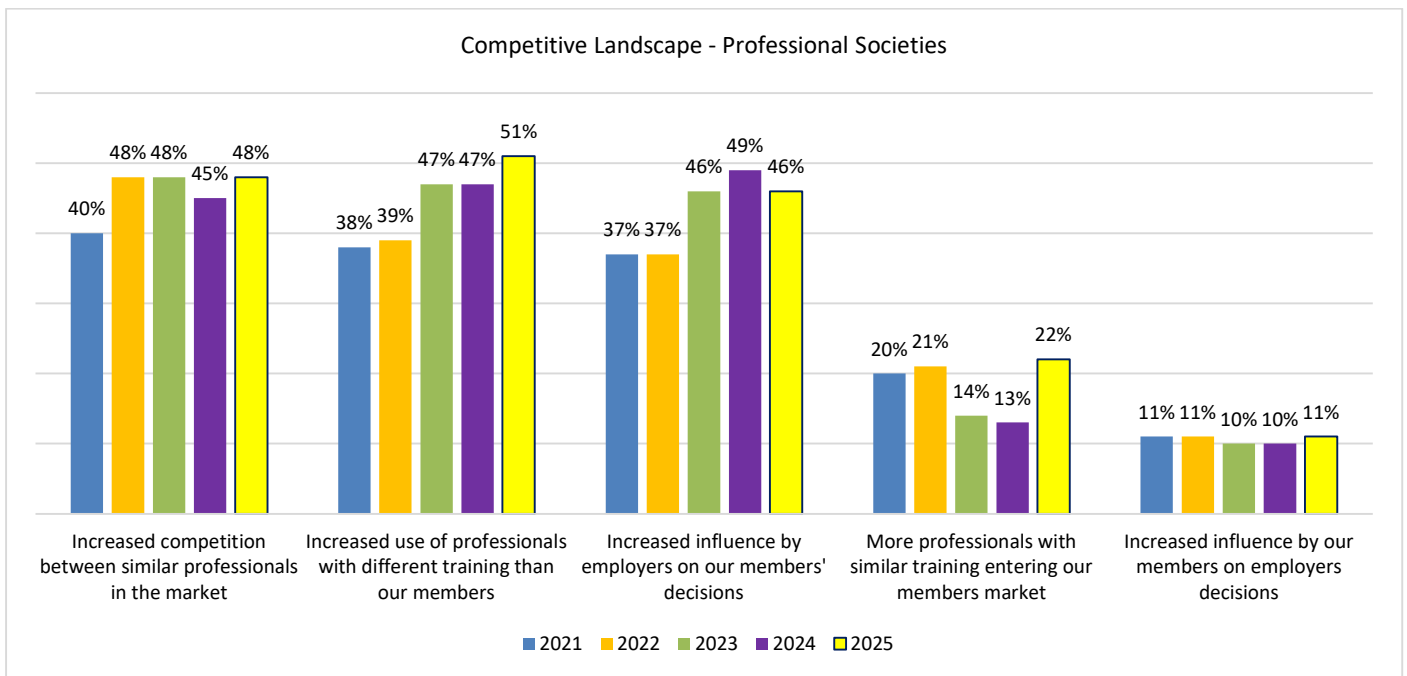
# Competition

Looking Forward® Impact has identified competition as a significant factor impacting association members. Looking Forward® Impact, using [Porter's Five Forces](#) as a frame of reference, assessed the types of competition with the most substantial influence. Porter's Five Forces can be summarized as:

1. Existing competitors
2. Threat of new entrants
3. Threat of substitutions
4. Increasing buyer power
5. Increasing supplier power

*Methodological Note:* The Looking Forward® Dashboard calculates percentages differently than the Looking Forward® Summary. The following two graphs represent the percentage of Professional and Trade Respondents only, while the Dashboard aggregates all respondents. Use the Organization Type filter function in the Looking Forward Dashboard to see results similar to those reported below.

The graphs below identify trade and professional association respondents' perceptions of whether these competitive factors will impact their members. Question wording was adjusted to reflect the unique perspective of each audience:

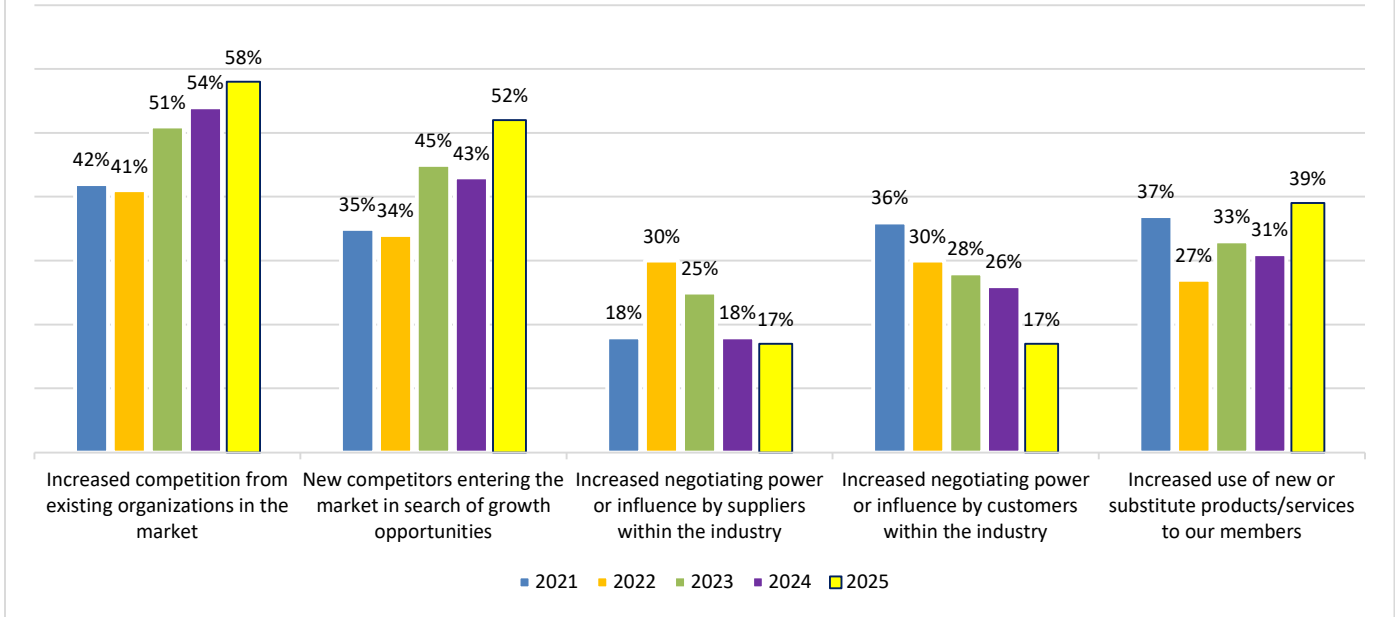


**FIGURE 6 LOOKING FORWARD IMPACT**

*Question text: Your members operate in a highly competitive environment. Which of the following will have the most impact on your members over the next three years? Select up to three.*

(Professional association respondents only)

### Competitive Landscape - Trade Associations



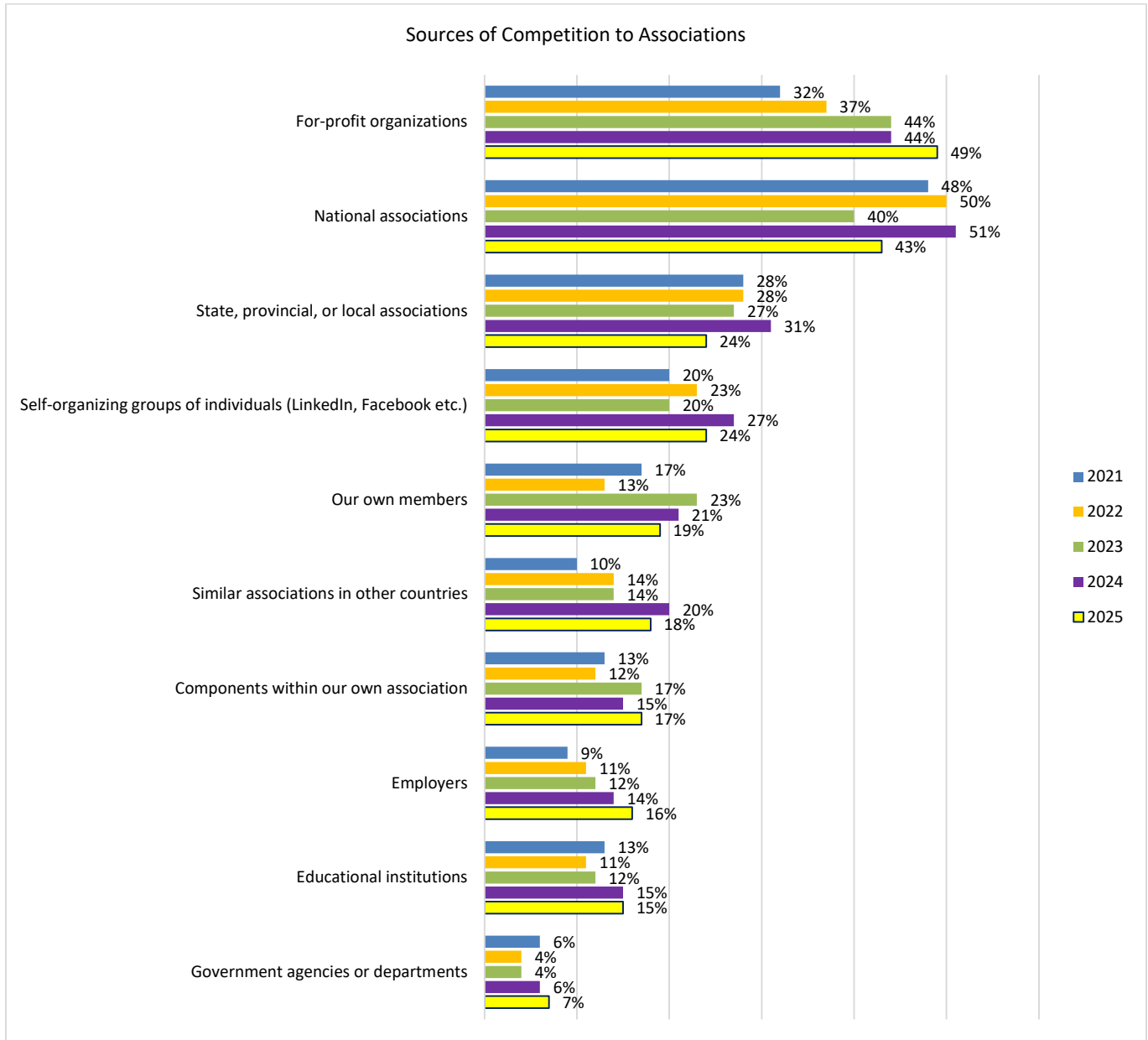
**FIGURE 7 LOOKING FORWARD IMPACT**

Question text: *Your members operate in a highly competitive environment. Which of the following will have the most impact on your members over the next three years? Select up to three.*

(Trade association respondents only)

## Sources of Association Competition

Associations operate in a highly competitive environment. The following chart identifies the anticipated sources of competition to association products, services, and initiatives.



**FIGURE 8 LOOKING FORWARD IMPACT**

*Question Text: What are the top three sources of competition for your association? Select up to three.*

In a highly competitive environment, it will be essential for associations to clearly define who they are serving, understand their needs, and create a competitively differentiated value proposition.

In addition, it will be critical to establish business processes designed to monitor and adapt this value proposition to the changing needs of the market and the environment within which the market lives and works.

## Closing

It is becoming clear that associations continue to struggle with the changing world in which they need to be successful.

The data show increasing concern about association members' ability to adapt to ever-evolving AI, to create attractive career paths within their industry, and to manage competitive pressures and M&A activity. Concern is also up regarding the potential for reduced government spending and the perceived decline in policymaker expertise and competence.

Strategies that do not anticipate these market changes will suffer as a result.

The increasing competitive challenge from other associations as professions are forced into competition, and continuing competitive pressure from for-profit organizations, proves that different entities are fighting for the limited time, money, and energy of customers, members, and volunteer leaders.

Too many associations are structured around historical assumptions to be successful in a world that has changed so dramatically that these assumptions are obsolete.

Associations that invest in market knowledge, create business processes to make effective decisions, and strategically differentiate themselves from competitors are more likely to be successful.

As a new generation of volunteer leaders and executives begins taking their place in leadership, we will have tools, resources, and opportunities like never before.

During the next 10 years, we will discover whether our executive ability will be sufficient to keep the association sector prospering.

Please get in touch with Association Laboratory if you believe we can help in any way.

Good luck.

## Appendix 1: Accessing the Looking Forward® Dashboard.

**The most recent, relevant, and customizable data to inform your decisions is critical in a dynamic and uncertain environment.**

For 14 years, Association Laboratory has produced our annual environmental scan of the association strategy environment – Looking Forward® Impact. This year, it will be critical for association leaders to make faster, better decisions. You will need to know what the future looks like now, not later.

Looking Forward® data is provided via a customizable dashboard, allowing you to focus on the segment of the association sector most critical to you, your staff, and the Board. See what issues are impacting members and identify the challenges you'll face. Then, download the custom report to guide discussions with your team and volunteer leaders.

[Click here for the Looking Forward Dashboard.](#)

### **How to use the dashboard**

The Looking Forward Dashboard is a simplified presentation of the environmental scanning data. It does not, for example, provide unique n counts (number of respondents per individual question) for each question. The overall total number of respondents and the number of filtered respondents, if filters are selected are displayed at the top of the page. The percentages shown are based on these totals.

As you drill down into the data and customize your report to your needs, it is expected that only the most relevant data per question will be included. As a result of the different counting methodologies and the natural limitations of a published document requiring data counts at a particular time, there may be minor differences between the Executive Summary Looking Forward® 2025 and the Looking Forward Dashboard.

The homepage of the data dashboard displays top-level results of the Looking Forward® 2025 data. Clicking “Explore” in each chart will allow you to dig deeper into that topic area.

Each chart has a book icon in the bottom right corner, allowing you to see the questions asked of respondents.

In addition, once you click “Explore,” you will see a list of filters along the right side of the page. These filters allow you to adjust the data set by annual budget, member size, organization type, location, profession, and organization type (meaning professional or trade). It also allows you to toggle between data years.

At the bottom of each page, the printer graphic allows you to print a PDF of the page to use in conversations with your Board.



## Appendix 2: Methodology

Looking Forward® Impact provides an ongoing picture of the forces influencing members' professional and business environment and the implications on association strategy and the association business model.

Association Laboratory developed and deployed an online survey directly and via collaboration with the company's Research Alliance partners. Data collection occurred between November 25, 2024, and January 22, 2025.

Response options for Looking Forward® Impact 2025 were initially informed by qualitative research conducted in 2021 involving executives from the Association Laboratory Research Alliance membership, combined with the Association Laboratory's extensive experience with environmental scanning on behalf of clients representing a wide range of professions and industries.

The study assesses factors affecting the association environment in six domains:

- **Economic Factors** — issues regarding the financial and competitive outlook of association members' industry or profession.
- **Information & Technology Factors** — issues regarding the technology and communications underpinning industry and professional activity.
- **Workforce Factors** — issues regarding the movement, engagement, and competencies of workers in association members' industries or professions.
- **Government Factors** — issues regarding the relationship between association members and local, state, and federal governments.
- **Global Factors** — issues regarding relationships between individuals, companies, and governments across international boundaries.
- **Uncertainty and Adaptation Factors** — issues regarding association members' psychological outlook and response to rapid and unpredictable change.

For each domain, participants were shown a list of issues and asked to select up to five that would most impact the members of their association over the next three years:

*"Which of the following will have the most impact on your members over the next three years? Select up to five."*

After selecting the issues likely to impact members most, respondents were asked to identify how those issues or problems would affect their association's strategy.

Respondents first identified their level of concern regarding each of the nine general association strategies:

*"How concerned are you about the following association strategies over the next three years?"*

Respondents who indicated concern about a strategy were asked a follow-up question about their specific concerns, such as:

*"What are the most substantial barriers to the success of your membership strategy? Select up to three."*

The survey also collected information, including:

- Changes in the competitive landscape and sources of competition
- General economic outlook for members

A total of 212 individuals took part in the survey.

## Appendix 3: About Association Laboratory

**Association Laboratory helps association leaders make better decisions through research and strategy consulting services, dissemination of association sector research insights, and the education of association leaders.**

The award-winning company is a national leader in developing sustainable, successful strategies for associations and has been advising associations since 1999 from offices in Washington, DC, and Chicago, IL. You can learn more about us at [www.associationlaboratory.com](http://www.associationlaboratory.com).

### Research and Strategy Consulting Services

Association Laboratory is a full-service research and strategy firm. We lead evidence-based, collaborative engagements addressing the spectrum of association challenges. From strategic planning and membership model design to online education and global expansion, the company helps you identify and implement a successful business strategy.

Typical engagements include the following.

|                        |  |
|------------------------|--|
| Strategic Planning     | Membership Value Proposition and Modeling Strategy |
| Environmental Scanning | Online Education Strategy                          |
| Content Strategy       | Component Value Proposition Strategy               |
| Credentialing Strategy | Global Strategy                                    |
| DEI Strategy           | Emerging Leader Strategy                           |

### Association Sector Research and Insights

Association Laboratory collects and disseminates association sector research, aggregating information gathered from hundreds of association leaders, providing you with the most recent, relevant, and helpful information you need to guide conversations at your association.

### Association Leader Education and Competency Development

Association Laboratory produces strategic educational content to help leaders develop the competencies necessary for success. Research-based and peer-driven, this content provides you with an engaging, effective means of improving the success of your leadership and decision-making.

# Appendix 4: Discussion Guide

## Introduction

Without understanding the future in which your members live and work, developing a successful, sustainable, long-term strategy is impossible.

Therefore, forward-looking leaders must be prepared to **foster and lead engaging conversations about the future.**

This **Looking Forward® Impact 2025 Discussion Guide** is designed to help you lead a productive conversation about the future of your industry or profession. A companion piece to the **Looking Forward® Dashboard**, it enables you to identify, deepen understanding, and reach consensus on three essential questions:

1. *What environmental factors have the greatest impact on your members?* – Identify the issues with the most impact on your members and the decisions they will be making over the next three years.
2. *What are the **implications of these factors** for your association’s strategy?* – Assess the impact of evolving member decision-making on the future strategies of the association. *How should the association **act on this information**?* – Determine what the association needs to strengthen, evolve, or reduce to be more successful, given these implications.

By using the Looking Forward® Impact 2025 Discussion Guide and Dashboard, you will arrive at a research-based, consensus understanding of the future of your industry or profession and the implications for your association’s strategy.

Consider the following.

In 2016, the Harvard Business Review published a study of 30,000 publicly listed companies over a 40-year span that reached a striking conclusion:

“Companies are dying at a faster rate than ever before.”

The reasons, according to the research:

“Organizations are dying younger because they are failing to adapt to the growing complexity of their environment.”<sup>1</sup>

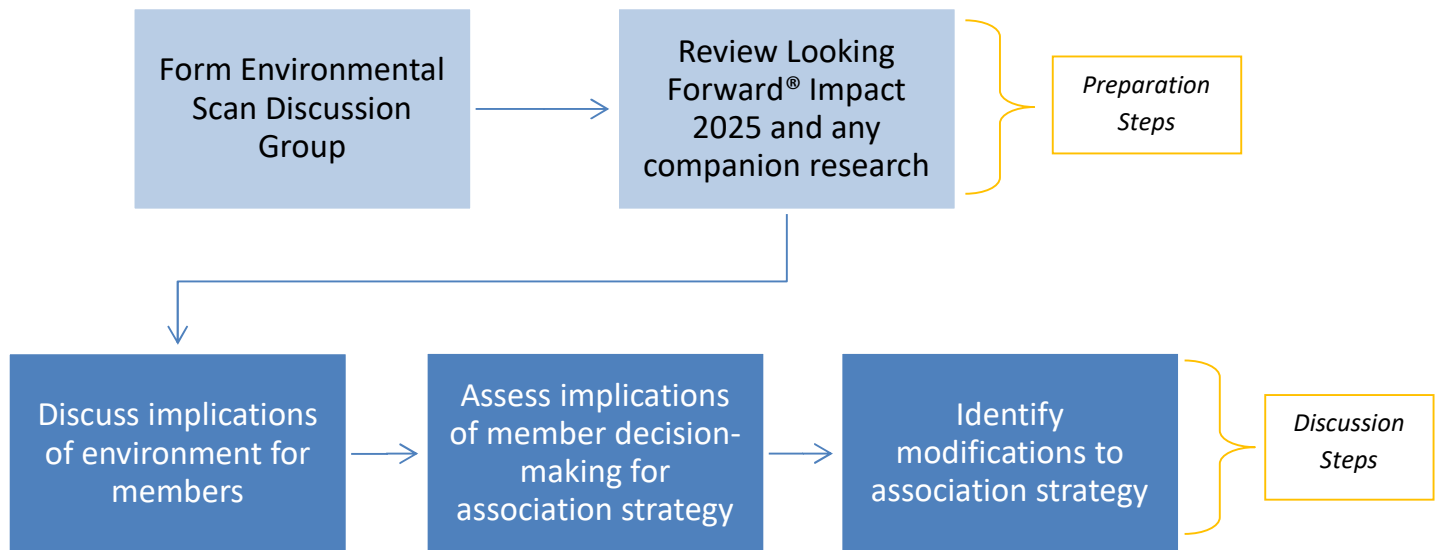
The tools in your **Looking Forward® Discussion Guide** will help prepare you and your volunteer leaders to adapt to an uncertain future, and to continue advancing your Mission and serving your members and other stakeholders.

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<sup>1</sup> The Biology of Corporate Survival, Harvard Business Review Jan/Feb 2016

## Overview: Leading the Futures Discussion

The futures discussion process involves a series of iterative steps resulting in consensus on the factors with the most significant impact on your members and corresponding association strategy. The process affects the following key steps:



These steps provide a structured process for reviewing, understanding, and applying data-driven, future-focused knowledge to your association's strategy.

## How to Use This Discussion Guide

The following sections will guide you through creating a productive futures discussion within your organization.

**Section 1** provides information on creating the discussion group, reviewing the research, and tips for successful facilitation.

**Section 2** provides a sample agenda for a full-day meeting and participant worksheets to be used during the meeting to facilitate the conversation and reach a consensus on critical issues.

### Section 1: Preparing for a Futures Discussion Meeting

The following steps will help you create an influential discussion group and guide preparing and setting up a productive futures discussion meeting.

#### Create an Environmental Scan Discussion Group

Assemble a group of 8–12 people to participate in the discussion.

This group can consist of staff only, volunteer leaders only, or some appropriate combination based on your association's culture. You can also include external subject matter experts.

The participants in your discussion should meet the following criteria:

- **Intellectual Diversity** – Participants should represent a diversity of perspectives and opinions regarding the association, its activities, and its members.
- **Association Commitment** – Participants should be critical to the long-term successful implementation of strategies designed to address the issues identified in the discussion, and they should be willing to take the time to participate fully in discussions and, if necessary, post-discussion follow-up.
- **Personal Capability and Capacity** – Participants should have the intellectual curiosity and willingness to think strategically about the future of their industry, profession, and association.

#### *Advice and Tips*

There is no perfect group. Don't worry about precision.

The group size should be sufficient to have diverse perspectives without creating extensive logistical expenses or hassle.

In Association Laboratory's experience, the group should be no less than eight people and no more than 12 people.

## Organize an Environmental Scan Discussion Meeting

Identify a one-day timeframe to organize the group to discuss and decide on the changing environment facing your members and the implications for your association's strategy.

You will need space for 8–12 people to meet. In addition, you will require sufficient space for 2–3 small break-out groups and their corresponding discussions.

### *Advice and Tips*

It is essential to have a quiet, reflective environment without the daily distractions of work. Consider an off-site meeting venue or other place that allows you to have robust conversations.

## Conduct a Pre-Meeting Review of the Goals, Process, and Research

Before the meeting, provide Looking Forward® 2025 and any other research or information you believe is valuable to participants, and organize a 90-minute webinar or meeting to orient individuals to the onsite discussions.

This advance webinar or meeting aims to address any questions about the goals, process, or data prior to discussions onsite. This improves the efficiency of onsite interactions by reducing the time necessary for administrative, logistical, or process discussions.

Agenda items include the following:

- Introduction of participants
- Review of the logistics, agenda, and process for the onsite discussions
- Presentation of the data from the **Looking Forward® Dashboard**, which you can filter to provide them with information unique to your type, size, or location of your association.
- Answer questions regarding the data, process, or other issues

Following this webinar, participants should be prepared to discuss the issues onsite without extensive additional orientation.

## Organize Small Groups and Leaders for Onsite Discussions

The following are vital steps guiding the onsite discussions. Modify as you see fit, given your needs and resource constraints.

### Create small discussion groups:

Once your participants have been recruited, divide the participants into smaller subgroups, each with a small group leader (more about leaders below).

Small discussion groups make participation easier because many people interact more productively in small groups.

In addition, when separate small groups consider the same question or issue independently and simultaneously and come to the same conclusion, it creates **organic consensus**.

Each group should be approximately the same size, and the makeup of each group should represent the diversity of participants and perspectives.

### Designate a moderator:

The moderator is responsible for acting as a resource on the process for each small group and, if necessary, helping address any challenges that may occur with the discussion. The moderator can also act as an independent or objective voice.

### Designate a leader for each small group:

Small group leaders are responsible for keeping the participants on task, ensuring the groups are finished within the designated time, and organizing the small group's report to the larger group.

### *Advice and Tips*

The following are tips to improve the productivity of your discussions based on the Association Laboratory's experience facilitating staff and leadership retreats.

- Abide by the following **standards of conduct** throughout the process:
  - Participants are to discuss and decide issues with the association's best interests in mind.
  - Participants are not "representing" a department, constituency, or organization.
  - Participants should participate in an objective, open, and honest manner.
- **Be patient** – Keep the conversation high-level, and don't rush ahead. Develop understanding before conclusions and develop conclusions before recommendations.
- **Be open** – If you disagree with someone, explore why. Do you have different definitions of terms? Do you have different perspectives on the issue? Do you have other priorities or goals?
- **Be trusting** – Trust the process, but don't sacrifice outcomes on behalf of the process. If you need to adjust the agenda or explore an unplanned question, do so. But do so with intent and try to stay within the basic parameters of the process.
- **Be fearless** – Don't be afraid to ask difficult or nontraditional questions. Questions lead to understanding and unique perspectives.

## Section 2: Onsite Discussion Steps & Supporting Materials

### Template Agenda for a One-Day Meeting

The following outlines a potential agenda for a one-day meeting.

Association Laboratory believes that one full day of discussions allows for sufficient consideration of the issues without taking undue time or logistical expense. This agenda may be modified onsite to ensure enough time is devoted to important topics.

| Time              | Activity  | Description   |
|-------------------|---|---|
| 8:00– 8:15 am     | <b>Welcome</b>  |   |
| 8:15 am           | <b>Call to Order</b>  |   |
| 8:15 am – 8:30 am | Overview of Agenda and Process  |   |
| 8:30 – 8:40 am    | <b>Individual Reflection</b><br><br><u>Question 1:</u> Given the information in <i>Looking Forward® Impact 2025</i> , supplementary association research, and our experiences with members, what are the <b>top three issues</b> with the most impact on our members? | Participants complete Question 1 of the Looking Forward® Worksheet independently, identifying the top three issues impacting members.<br><br>Afterwards, allow 5 minutes to break into small groups.            |
| 8:45 – 9:45 am    | <b>Small Group Discussion</b>   | Each small group reviews the individual responses of the other participants in their group and agrees on the top three issues impacting members.  |
| 9:45– 10:00 am    | <b>Coffee Break</b>   |   |
| 10:00–10:30 am    | <b>Large Group Discussion</b>   | Each small group presents its top three issues to the full group. The moderator identifies common themes among the problems.  |
| 10:30–10:40 am    | <b>Individual Reflection</b><br><br><u>Question 2:</u> Given the identified thematic issues facing our members and considering the data in <i>Looking Forward® Impact 2025</i> , what are the <b>implications for the future</b> of our association and its strategy? | Participants complete Question 2 of the Looking Forward® Worksheet on their own, identifying the top three implications for association strategy.<br><br>Afterward, allow 5 minutes to break into small groups. |



|  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| 10:45–11:45 am                                       | <b>Small Group Discussion</b>  | Each small group reviews the other participants' responses and agrees on the top three implications for the association and its strategy.  |
| 11:45–12:00 Noon<br>Noon – 12:30 pm<br>12:30–1:00 pm | <b>Email and Relaxation Break</b><br><b>Lunch</b><br><b>Large Group Discussion</b>   | Each small group presents its top three implications to the full group. The moderator identifies common themes among the implications.   |
| 1:00– 1:20 pm  | <b>Individual Reflection</b><br><br><u>Question 3:</u> Given our discussions and general agreement on the changes impacting our members and the implications for our association, what do we <b>need to do differently</b> over the next three years to be successful? | Participants complete Question 3 of the Looking Forward® Worksheet on their own, describing the top three most significant changes the association will need to implement.<br><br>Afterward, allow 5 minutes to break into small groups. |
| 1:25 – 2: 30 pm                                      | <b>Small Group Discussion</b>  | Each small group reviews the other participants' responses and agrees on the top changes the association needs to consider to be successful.   |
| 2:30 – 2:45 pm<br>2:45–3:45 pm                       | <b>Coffee Break</b><br><b>Large Group Discussion</b>   | Each small group presents its top three identified changes to the full group. The moderator identifies common themes among the specified changes.  |
| 3:45 pm – 4:30 pm                                    | What are the <b>next steps</b> necessary to translate the preliminary ideas into action?   | The large group agrees on the priority of the issues to be addressed. It discusses and decides on the next steps necessary to advance the discussion throughout the association and assess how best to implement change.                 |

## Onsite Worksheet for Participants

The following worksheet is designed to guide discussion group participants through the key questions affecting future-oriented strategy and arrive at a consensus. It should be used with the full-day meeting agenda on the previous pages.

### Instructions to Participants

This worksheet is designed to help you organize your thoughts and ideas before discussing your views with your colleagues. It should be used with the information from Looking Forward® 2025 and any complementary research or information you have received.

You will answer the question in each area just before the discussion period.

**Do not** complete all the questions at once – your response to each will be based on the outcome of the small group discussions for previous questions.

### *Advice and Tips*

The following are tips to improve the productivity of your discussions based on the Association Laboratory's experience facilitating staff and leadership retreats.

- The point of the worksheets is to help each participant organize their thoughts before the discussion. It is not a test.
- People will complete the worksheets differently. Some will scrawl notes, some will write paragraphs, and some won't write anything. They can decide to use the tool in any manner they see fit.
- for prioritization purposes, the Association Laboratory recommends three responses for each question; some people will have more, some less. Note that a short, undeveloped answer may be insufficient to determine implications, and a long list of potential issues makes prioritization difficult.

### Question 1: Member Environment

Given the information in Looking Forward® 2025, supplementary association research, and our experiences with members, what are the **top three issues** with the most impact on our members?

Question 2: Implications for the Association

After completion of Question 1.

Given the identified thematic issues facing our members and considering the data in Looking Forward® 2025, what are the **three most significant implications** for the future of our association and its strategy?

Question 3: Changes to Association Strategy

After completion of Question 2.

Given our discussions and general agreement on changes impacting our members and the implications for our association, what **things do we need to do differently over the next three years to succeed?**