The Need for Strong Member-Based Association Brands
This observation was made 20+ years ago, and still resonates today; especially given the growing importance of associations in the advancement of the sectors for whom they advocate and support.

Over the past ten years change has accelerated exponentially. This is due to factors including digitization, population increases, government policies, changes in consumer preference, an influx of venture capital and private equity, a growing number of agricultural entrepreneurs, and countless other factors.

Unfortunately, some associations have found it difficult to adapt and many have chosen, or have been forced to merge survive. Others have seen budgets shrink or remain static, forcing them to set priorities of survival rather than planning for growth. This is understandable, but it is not a sustainable path forward.

Therefore, the vital question that should be asked is how can associations grow and thrive with limited resources? The answer in part, is the presence of a strong brand.

Whether it’s advocacy or the introduction of new member services and benefits, a strong brand is key to building trust with regulators,
suppliers, and other constituents. Brands are bridges of understanding that link businesses with their key constituents and provide a common thread for different professional associations’ actions and efforts.

We need to only look to the strength and familiarity of leading consumer and b2b brands to highlight this claim. Leading brands engage with empathy, are purpose driven, and they keep things simple and memorable to maximize the experience of targeted constituents.

The messaging and creative elements needed to support an associations marketing and communication can’t be fully standardized. To fill this void, a set of tools and templates that make up a brands’ marketing infrastructure can and should be leveraged.

Specifically, two types of infrastructure are needed to support the building of a strong association brand and convey resonate messages. They are:

**A technology infrastructure** made up of the digital tools and capabilities to connect, sort, analyze, and access new forms of information and services in a simple, safe, and secure way. Think of this as an association’s brands’ hardware.
A communication infrastructure made up of branded templates and on-demand consulting services to create the empathy needed to keep the human factor front-and-center, and the means to keep the producer-consumer relationship central to all communications. Think of this as an association’s brands’ software.

Having both in place will contribute to making regulatory, marketing, sales, advocacy, and communication processes more efficient, affordable, and effective. They also provide the integrated communications operating system needed to help associations engage with those audiences who matter most.

In closing, we leave you with the following quote that sums up our perspective on the importance of and association brand and related marketing efforts:

“Marketing today is not a function; it is a way of doing business. Marketing is not a new ad campaign or this month’s promotion. Marketing must be all-pervasive, part of everyone’s job description, from the receptionists to the board of directors.”

—REGIS MCKENNA, Marketing Is Everything
WE MAKE
THE COMPLEX
SIMPLE AND
THE SIMPLE
MEMORABLE

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We create simple brand strategies, designs and communications that move markets, organizations — and the world — forward by collaborating with our clients to change experiences in ways that positively impact the behaviors of customers, employees, investors and policymakers. We make this happen by transforming complexity into simplicity and ensuring what is simple becomes memorable.

The members of the Infinia Alliance are driven by imagination and craft to help clients meet their brand, marketing, and communication challenges.