

Adding media **channels.**

Reaching members where they already are.

PRESENTER

Chris Gloede, CAE — Chief Consultant, Ricochet

Hilton Anaheim
Friday, July 10, 2026

6,000

**Marketing messages
the average person sees
every day.**

85% of associations recruit mainly by email

Just 8% use SMS

How many of yours are just... more email?



Hello.

A quick hello before we get to work.



HELLO

Chris Gloede, CAE

Chief Consultant, Ricochet

Chris was the first-ever Chief Marketing Officer of the American Bar Association, where he grew membership to its largest in 137 years, making it one of the largest voluntary associations in the world.

Chris now helps associations build modern membership strategies, value propositions, technology stacks, and marketing campaigns that drive growth.





Why add channels now.

Email still works. It's just not enough on its own anymore.



Email is the **floor**, not the whole house.

We're not replacing email — we're building around it.

Four generations, four life experiences, four viewpoints.

NEXT GENERATION



Baby Boomers

BORN	1946–1964
AGE TODAY	62–80
U.S. SIZE	~73M
EVENTS	Post-WWII, Cold War

Heaviest users of TV, radio and print – though most now keep a Facebook account to stay in touch with family.



Gen X

BORN	1965–1980
AGE TODAY	46–61
U.S. SIZE	~65M
EVENTS	Fall of Berlin Wall, dot-com bubble

Still reads print and watches cable, but logs the most weekly hours on Facebook of any generation.



Gen Y (Millennials)

BORN	1981–1996
AGE TODAY	30–45
U.S. SIZE	~74M
EVENTS	9/11, Great Recession

Cut the cable cord for streaming and carry multiple social accounts across every device.



Gen Z

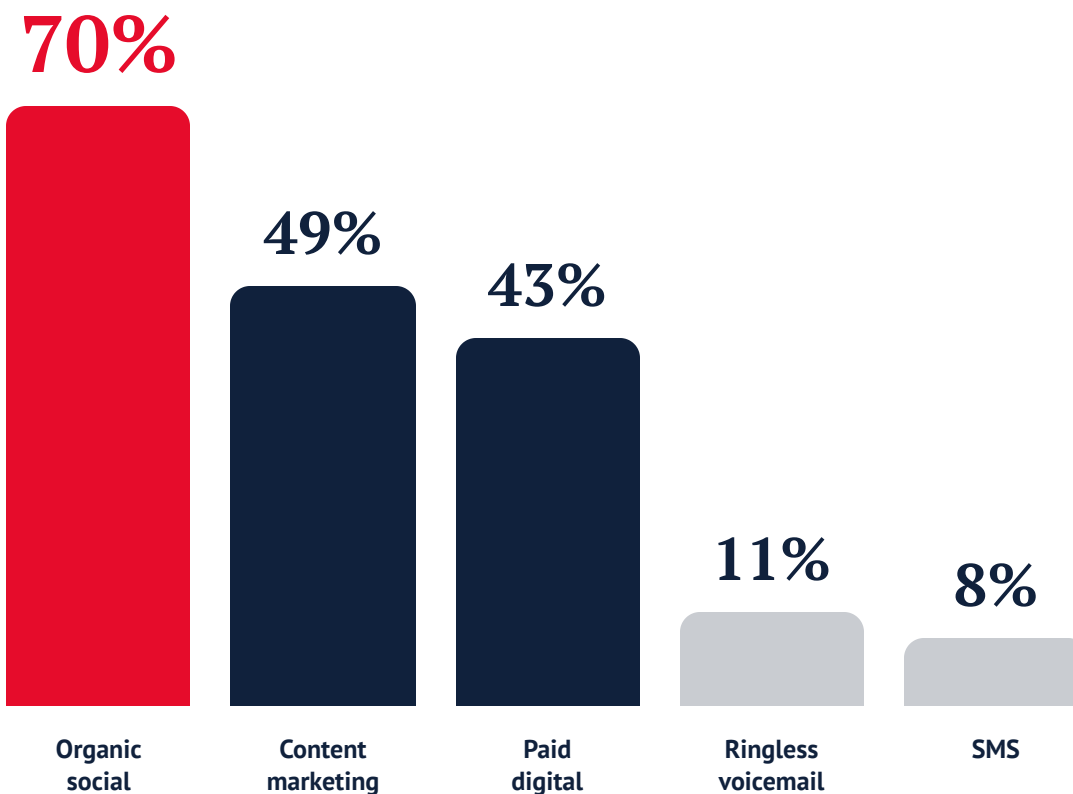
BORN	1997–2012
AGE TODAY	14–29
U.S. SIZE	~69M
EVENTS	Social media boom, COVID-19

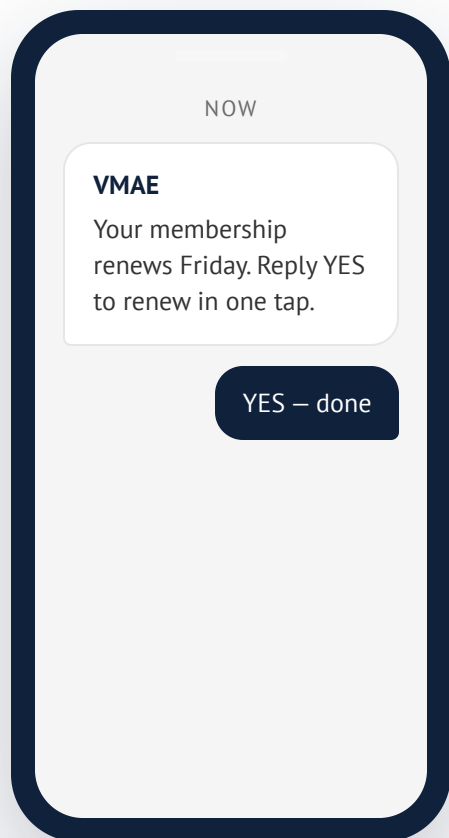
Mobile-first and always on – the smartphone is their primary channel for communication, search, and news.

The shift beyond email is already underway.

The field has already diversified. Email-only is now the laggard position – not the safe one.

70% now recruit with organic social – up from 65%





But members live on their phones.

75%

of millennials and Gen Z prefer a text
over a phone call.

91%

own a smartphone

98–99%

of texts are opened

95%

read within 3 minutes

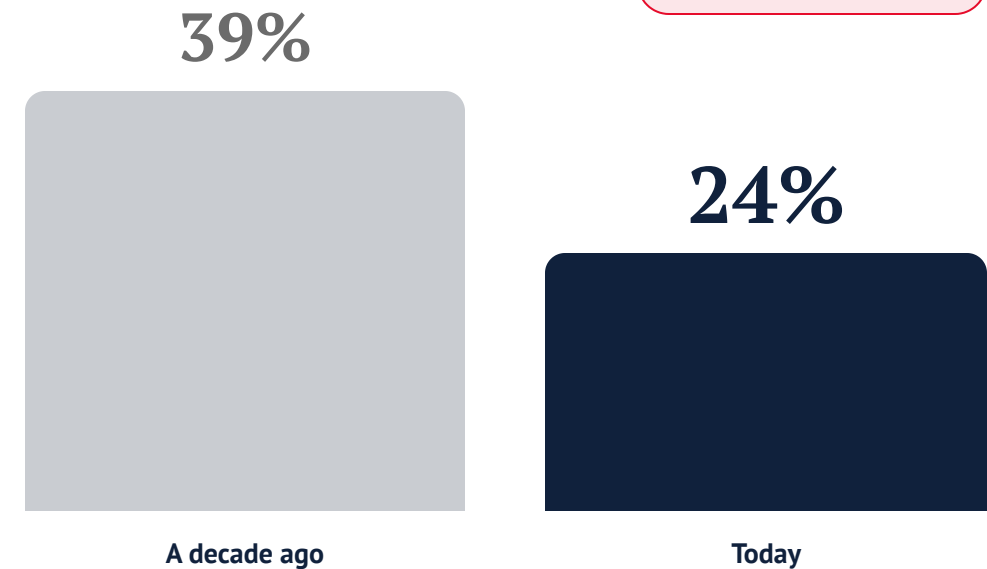
8%

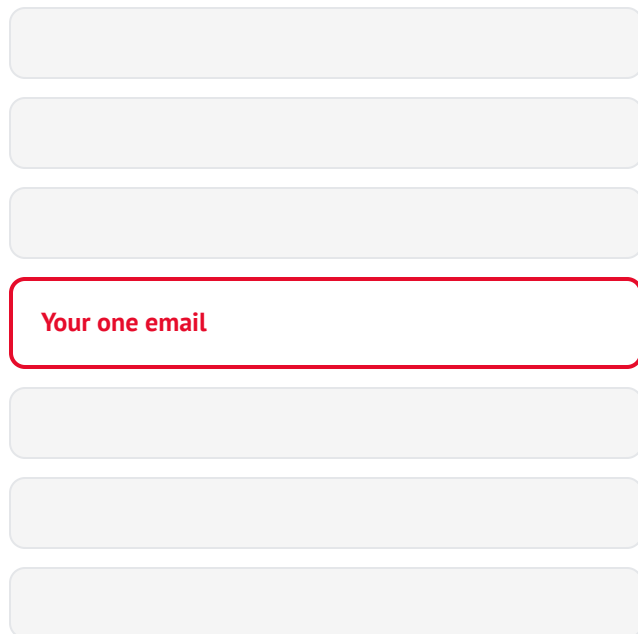
of associations recruit by SMS

Your membership is getting younger — and associations are not responding

Associations with **no younger-member strategy collapsed from 20% to 2%** in one year.

BABY BOOMER SHARE OF MEMBERSHIP





One message $\neq$ one decision.

Decisions build across repeated, varied touches. Spread beats volume.

51% of members already say they get too many emails.

“Information overload” – a top-3 challenge (52%)

6,000 messages a day

The fix is distribution, not volume — a text + a social touch + an email beats four emails.



It's finally feasible (and still necessary).

The tools got cheap, simple, and connected. The barrier is gone.

The martech explosion.

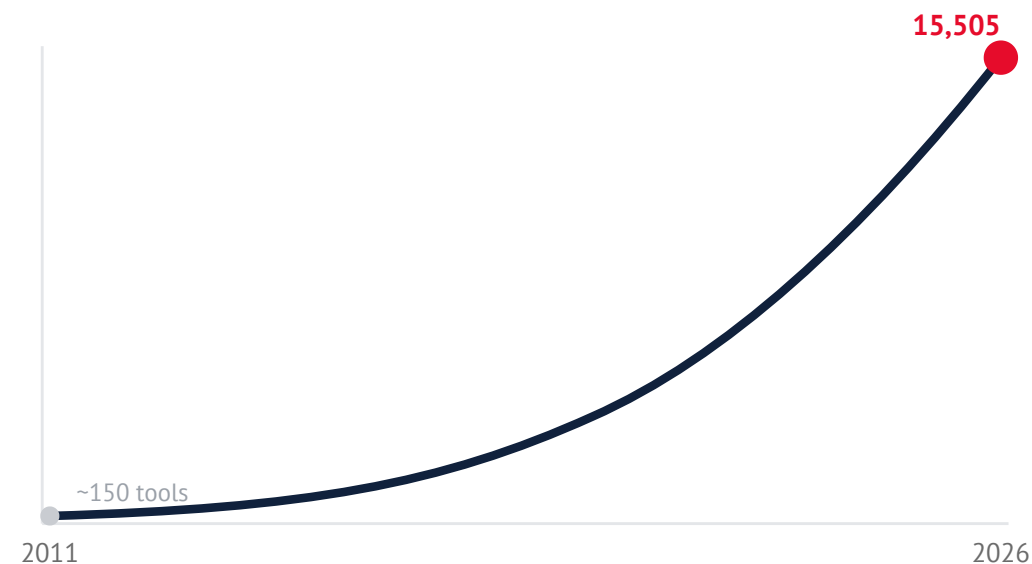
15,505

marketing tools in
2026 – about 100×
since 2011.

Growth is now flat (**0.79% last year**) – a maturing market, not a shrinking one.

Free tiers and usage-based pricing let you start near zero.

29,000+ tool connectors appeared in ~18 months.



Generators vs. agents, in plain language.

23%

now use AI in membership
marketing — up from 18%, with
another 5% implementing now.

GENERATE

Writes the message.



AGENT

**Automates it — analyzing across
systems and sources, directing
actions.**

From generating to delivering.

The associations already using AI are seeing the payoff.

STEP 1

Generate.

AI drafts the message.



STEP 2

Automate.

Rules send it on a trigger.



STEP 3

Deliver.

It reaches the member.

Human in the loop – set it up once, keep a person in charge.

79% report increased staff productivity.

The connective layer: marketing automation platforms.

Software that ties channels together and sends the right message automatically – on a join, a lapse, an event registration.

57% of associations use an automation platform.

COMMON PLATFORMS TO KNOW

ActiveCampaign

Constant Contact

Higher Logic Thrive

HubSpot

Keap

Mailchimp

PropFuel

Not an endorsement – a map.

Pick for your budget, your AMS, and what you'll actually use.



The channel scorecard.

Four channels, three questions each: Impact, Simplicity, Affordability.

Organic social.

70%

▲ up from 65%

use organic social to recruit – core,
not optional.

60%

Social is the #1 strategy for engaging younger members.

Reddit and LinkedIn increasingly power discovery – including how AI tools surface your brand.

Free in dollars, not in hours – consistent posting is a real staff-time cost.

Organic social.

Free in dollars, not in hours.

BEST ROLE

Ongoing trust, visibility, and being found – a slow burn, not a direct transaction driver.

SCORECARD RATING

IMPACT



SIMPLICITY



AFFORDABILITY



PLATFORMS

Facebook

Instagram

LinkedIn

Reddit

TikTok

Paid social.

43%

already run paid digital advertising – its strength is influence over time.

MOST-USED PAID PLATFORMS



Instagram up from 16% a year earlier – the fastest riser.

Paid social.

High influence, higher effort.

BEST ROLE

Awareness + retargeting to move non-members and lapsed members toward joining or renewing. Pair with a landing page and one clear next step.

SCORECARD RATING

IMPACT



SIMPLICITY



AFFORDABILITY



PLATFORMS

LinkedIn Campaign Manager

Meta Ads Manager

Ringless voicemail.

11%

▲ up from 9%

of associations now use RVM in
renewal campaigns.

Still climbing.

One of the few direct channels rising year over year, while most plateau.

A human voice cuts through.

A recognized voice lands differently than one more text or email in the queue.

Ringless voicemail.

Cheap, easy, high-touch.

BEST ROLE

Warm, branded messages from a board president or ED — welcomes, thank-yous, event invites, re-engaging lapsed members. Not hard asks.

SCORECARD RATING

IMPACT



SIMPLICITY



AFFORDABILITY



VENDORS

DropCowboy

Slybroadcast

SMS.

98–99%

text open rate – the highest of any channel members use.

95%

read within 3 minutes

75%

of younger members prefer text

8%

of associations recruit by SMS –
the gap

14%

now use it in renewal campaigns

SMS.

Strong engagement, growing adoption.

BEST ROLE

Time-sensitive nudges – renewal deadlines, event reminders, “last chance.” Keep it rare and relevant.

SCORECARD RATING

IMPACT



SIMPLICITY



AFFORDABILITY



VENDORS

ActiveCampaign

DropCowboy

HubSpot

Mailchimp

Sakari

Slybroadcast

The connective layer: marketing automation platforms.

Software that ties channels together and sends the right message automatically – on a join, a lapse, an event registration.

57% of associations use an automation platform.

COMMON PLATFORMS TO KNOW

ActiveCampaign

Constant Contact

Higher Logic Thrive

HubSpot

Keap

Mailchimp

PropFuel

Not an endorsement – a map.

Pick for your budget, your AMS, and what you'll actually use.

The scorecard at a glance.

The “hot” channel isn’t always the right first move, consider your capabilities and true audience needs.

CHANNEL	IMPACT	SIMPLICITY	AFFORD.	IN A PHRASE
Organic social	★ ★ ★ ☆ ☆	★ ★ ★ ☆ ☆	★ ★ ★ ★ ☆	Free in dollars, not in hours
Paid social	★ ★ ★ ★ ☆	★ ★ ☆ ☆ ☆	★ ★ ★ ☆ ☆	High influence, higher effort
Ringless voicemail	★ ★ ★ ☆ ☆	★ ★ ★ ★ ☆	★ ★ ★ ★ ☆	Cheap, easy, high-touch
SMS	★ ★ ★ ★ ☆	★ ★ ★ ★ ☆	★ ★ ★ ★ ☆	Strong engagement, growing adoption

THE CONNECTIVE LAYER Marketing Automation Platform coordinates email and all channels for a powerful digital experience.



Using AI to guide your channel strategy.

You just saw the generic scorecard. AI can build yours.

Ask AI before you pick a channel.

Its best marketing job for a small staff isn't writing posts – it's helping you decide where to show up.

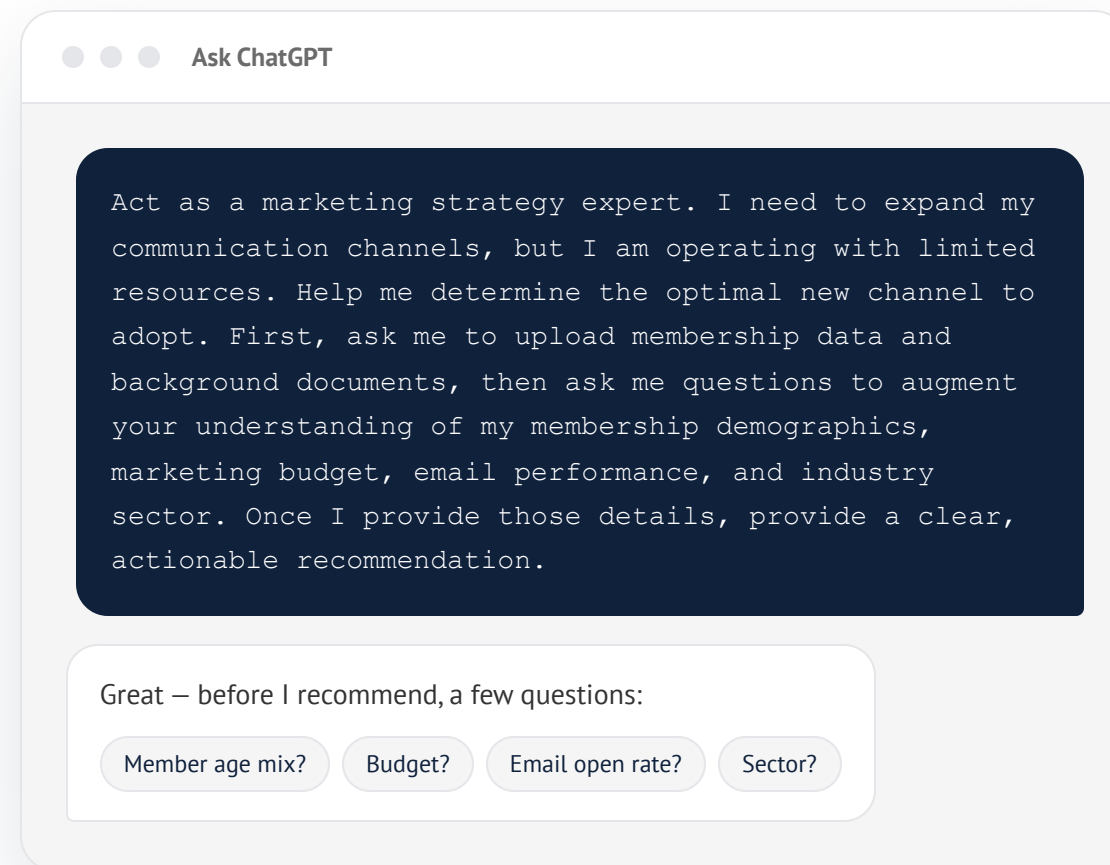
33%

cite staff expertise as a top barrier

32%

cite bandwidth – the gap an advisor closes

Source: MGI, 2026 Membership Marketing Benchmarking Report.

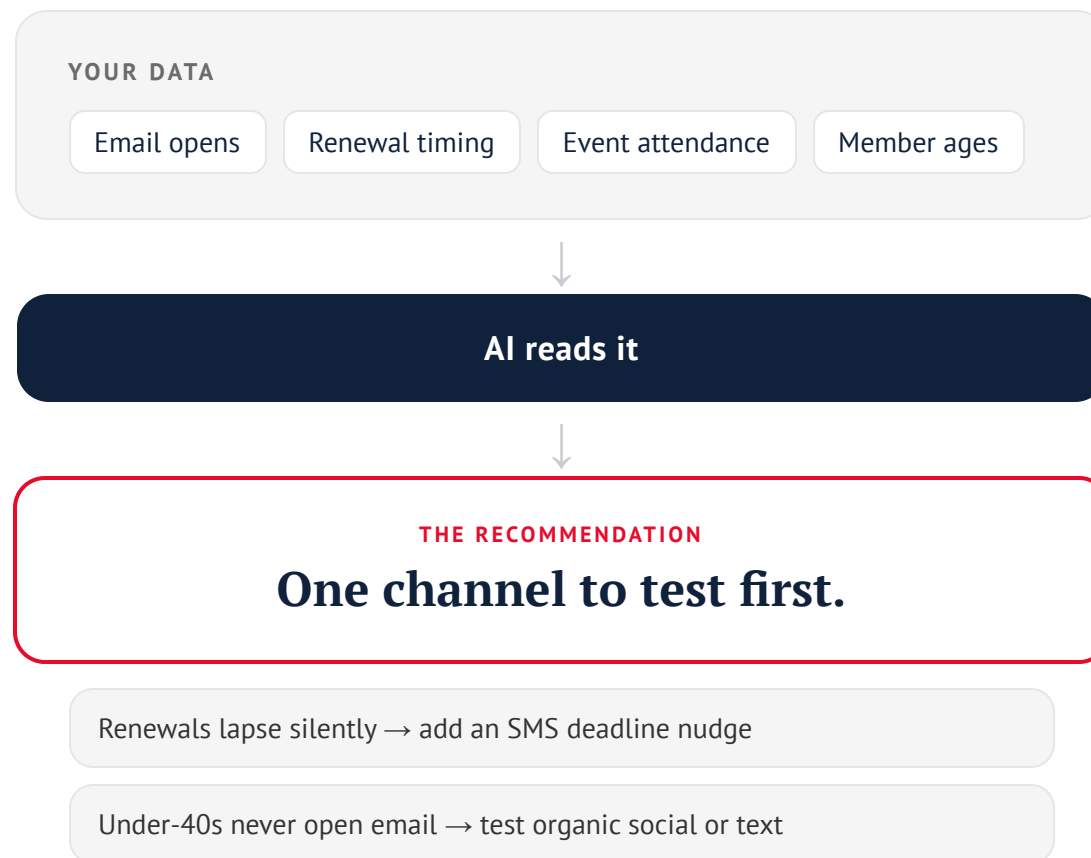


Share your own data to find the biggest gap.

53% of AI-using associations apply it to data analysis and insights – and personalization has doubled (22% → 47%).

Import your data and ask – “Where are we over-messaging? Which segments never open email? What channel would reach them?”

Source: MGI, 2026 Membership Marketing Benchmarking Report.



AI recommends. You decide.

94%

of members are comfortable with associations using AI – if it stays transparent and human-centered.

AI proposes the plan; a human approves it, owns the voice, and answers the replies (**what's next**).

AI PROPOSES

The channel plan and the draft.



YOU DECIDE

Approve it. Own the voice.

Yes, but...

The real-world obstacles — and how a small team handles them.

Yes, but my team is tiny.

You don't have to add everything – add one thing well.

33%

cite lack of staff expertise as a top barrier to adopting new tools

32%

cite limited staff bandwidth (time) as a top barrier

DO ONE THING

SMS

**Ringless
voicemail**

Paid social

Organic social

One channel

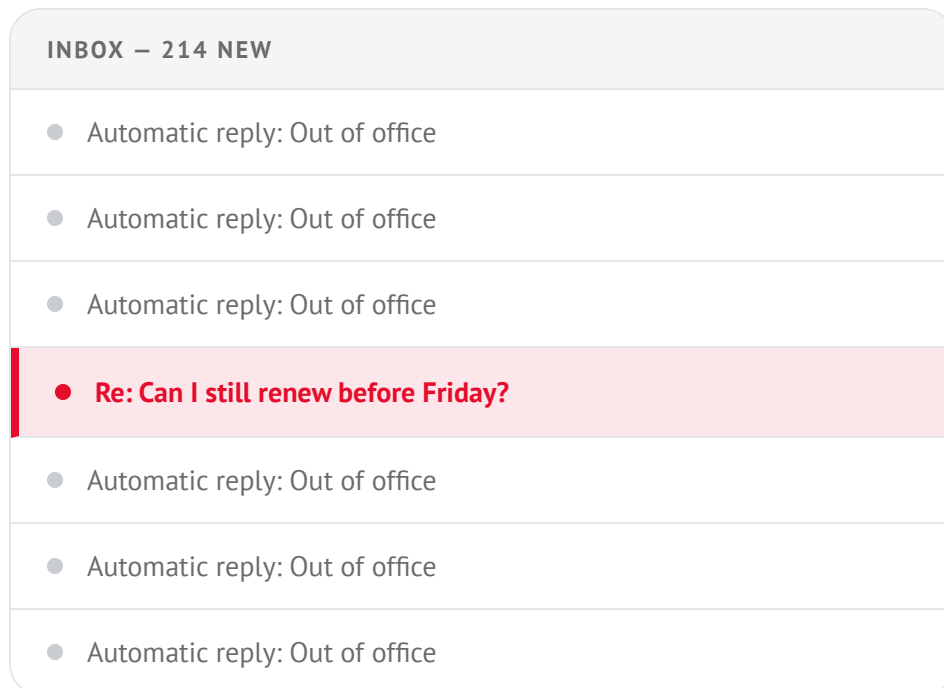


One message



One quarter





Yes, but our members don't engage.

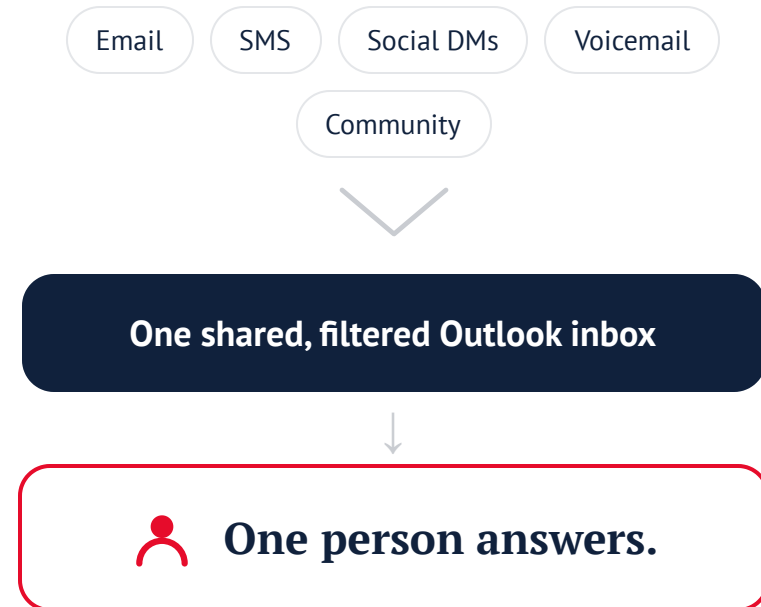
If you invite a response, you receive a response. Buried in 200 out-of-office auto-replies is often **one real member reply** — and it's easy to miss.

Open a channel and replies come back everywhere — texts, comments, DMs. Scattered across ten inboxes, an unchecked Facebook page, and a phone no one answers, members reach out and hear nothing.

Yes, but we don't have the technology.

One shared, filtered Outlook inbox – not replies landing in ten individual mailboxes.

One owner responding across email replies, texts, social comments/DMs, and community posts.



The goal is a **human connection.**

Multi-channel earns trust only if someone's home. Centralizing isn't about tidiness — it's that a real person is ready to reply, connect the member to the next step, and help them transact.

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Certificate Course**

Live course, 10 weeks, 10 CAE credits



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by  RICOCHET



Go deeper with an Academy course.

Learn more newsletter strategy and design best practices in the **Association AI Accelerator Certificate Course** – ten live weekly classes teaching advanced AI techniques for practical association use.

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Coming up this afternoon.

61%

of members say email is their primary way to stay connected to associations.

But 51% already feel over-messaged



UP NEXT

Part 2:
Run Newsletters Like a Newsroom

Let's keep the conversation going.

Bring your channel plan.

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