



*shipping services as a valuable  
member benefits program*

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### *introduction*

Nonprofit associations continue to face increasing challenges in their "[race for relevance](#)" with current and prospective members. Often with declining staffs, and limited financial resources, today's associations leaders must balance membership needs and interests with the need for additional non-dues revenue to fund ongoing programs and services.

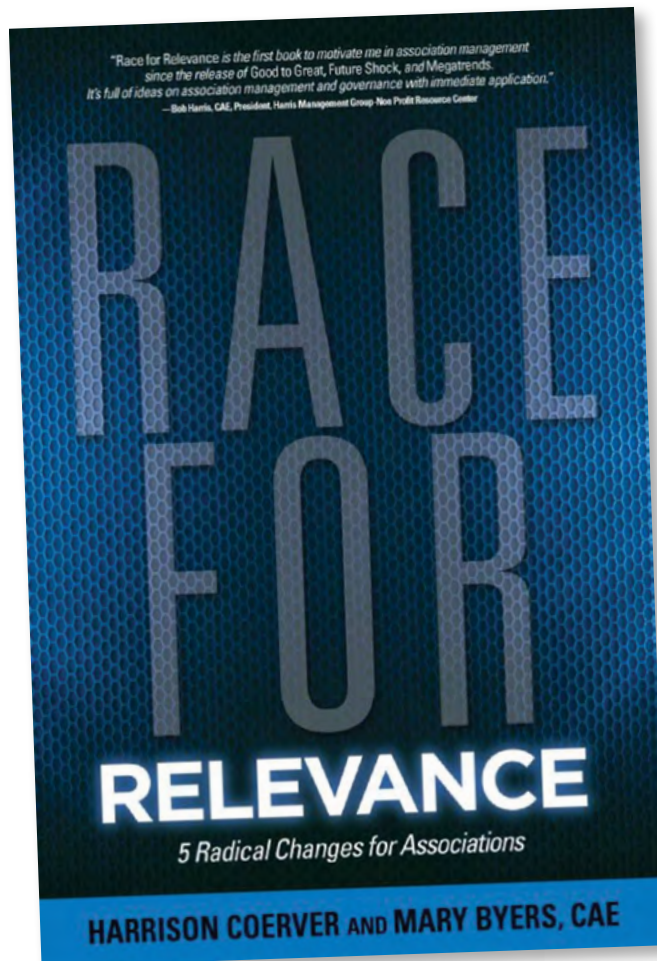
In the process of evaluating member programs and services, it is important that association leaders identify and provide solutions to address members' actual, real-life, "they-do-this-for-a-living" needs. Shipping services are an example of something that almost every member will want and need – and having a shipping services program creates value for both members and the association.



## association challenges

As written by Harrison Coerver and Mary Byers in their association must-read book *Race for Relevance*, there are six marketplace realities impacting associations today.

- **Time** ... members have less of it.
- **Value Expectations** ... with more open, competing sources of information, today's professional has higher expectations of an association's value than ever before.
- **Consolidation and Specialization** ... Association groups continue to consolidate or specialize to remain competitive.
- **Generational Differences** ... younger generations of members have less loyalty to the traditional association model.
- **Competition** ... today's association competes not only with other associations, but with other non-association sources of professional education and value.
- **Technology** ... technology innovations and social media continue to move at rapid paces.



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## *need for non-dues revenue*

The need for sustainable revenue further adds to the list of challenges facing associations today. According to a 2012 survey by marketing company Constant Contact, cash flow is a problem for 43 percent of nonprofit associations. Additionally, the survey found that 35 percent need but can't afford additional staff and 14 percent report cash flows so challenged that they can barely sustain operations.

While membership dues are crucial to revenue, they are no longer adequate to fund operations. According to ASAE, membership dues now average only 32 percent of total revenue for larger associations, and 39 percent in smaller associations.

To fill the revenue gap, more and more associations are looking to fund more operations with non-dues revenue through new approaches to member benefits programs and new ways of managing trade shows and conventions.



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As noted, most associations have members that have occasional or frequent needs for shipping services. In many associations, members are small business owners or professionals who don't have the time or resources needed to take advantage of lower-cost or more efficient shipping services – which often comprise 10% or more of a product's total cost.

That's where industry associations and trade groups can step in and create real, tangible value for their members. The savings that members will realize through an association-sponsored shipping program will usually offset their membership dues – a key selling point for any association or trade group!

The more that members use the program, the more non-dues revenue generated for the association – a true win/win for both parties!



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### finding the right partner

Finding the right third-party partner to design, implement, and manage your member benefits shipping services program is critical to its success. Here are some checklist items to consider if you are reviewing potential program partners:

- Do they have proven experience and successful programs with other associations?
  - ✓ The best partners will have experience working with hundreds of other groups, with references and [testimonial examples](#).
- Do they offer all of the shipping services my members want and need?
  - ✓ The best partners will have solutions for your members [small](#), [big](#), and [specialized](#) – inbound and outbound – shipping needs.
- Do they offer competitive shipping rates with fair and equitable non-dues revenue?
  - ✓ The best partners will have the industry expertise to negotiate the best rates for your association and members.



## *finding the right partner (continued)*

- Do they have alliances with the most reputable shipping companies?
  - ✓ The best partners will be able to provide your members access to the best carriers in the industry.
- Do they have a turnkey process for implementing and marketing the program to your members?
  - ✓ The best partners will have tangible examples of integrated marketing communications materials to share.
- Do they have detailed and customized reporting capabilities?
  - ✓ The best partners will be able to provide detailed metrics at both the association and member levels.
- Do they provide dedicated management to sustain the program going forward?
  - ✓ The best partners will have a dedicated manager and support team for your program.



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### finding the right partner (continued)

- Do they have experience with trade shows?
  - ✓ The best partners will be able to help your trade show exhibitors and industry suppliers with their [event-based shipping needs](#); and they'll also work with your association on sponsorships and other ways to increase non-dues revenue.
- Do they have an easy-to-use website for program enrollments and shipping management?
  - ✓ The best partners will have a dedicated website for your members to review and enroll in the program; they'll also have [user-friendly tools](#) for members to manage their shipping.





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## conclusion

Shipping services are something that most association members want and need.

Association leaders can create value for both members and the association by offering a shipping services member benefits program.

Finding the right shipping services partner is key to the successful design, implementation, and management of a shipping services program.

Be sure you follow the checklist described in this document to ensure you find the right partner to help you build a program for your association.

For help getting started, call PartnerShip at **800-599-2902** or email [programrequest@PartnerShip.com](mailto:programrequest@PartnerShip.com). Let us help you build a successful shipping services program for your association today!





*ready to build your own shipping services program  
as a valuable benefit to your members and your  
association?*

Visit [PartnerShip.com/BuildProgram](https://PartnerShip.com/BuildProgram)

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