ASSOCIATION INSIGHTS CENTER

ASAE Report:

Building Successful Partnerships

December 2024

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The Center for Association Leadership

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How to Use this Deck

Use this report as a strategic resource and guide tailored for CEOs, C-Suite executives, and staff and Board members. It serves as a tool to guide leaders in adjusting their practices to effectively identify, vet and manage successful partnerships.

ASAE provides this deck in partnership with McKinley Advisors.

What is the Association Insights Center?

A community of experts collaborating to face the increasingly complex environment and challenges ahead. In partnership with McKinleyAdvisors, AIC provides critical, on-demand intelligence and tools to support association CEOs as they face the tough decisions yet to come.

The slides that follow provide a synthesis of the community's work in 2024 to support CEOs effectively identify, vet and manage partnerships for success.

2024 - 2025 AIC Thought Leadership Panel

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Preet Bassi, CAE	Center for Public Safety Excellence Inc
Philip K. Bell, CAE	Steel Manufacturers Association
Sid Bhatnagar	American Society for Quality
Paul D. Bishop, CAE	Water Professionals International
Adonia Calhoun Groom, CAE	Renal Physicians Association
Wayne Chopus	Insured Retirement Institute
John E. Courtney, Ph.D.	American Society for Nutrition
Vicki Deal-Williams, FASAE, CAE	American Speech-Language-Hearing Association
Michael DePrisco	Institute of Management Accountants
Michael Desiderio	Executive MBA Council
Amy Schabacker Dufrane, EdD, SPHR, CAE	HR Certification Institute
James R. Flanigan, CAE	American Society for Clinical Laboratory Science
Tina C. Gordon, CAE	North Carolina Nurses Association
Melanie Gottlieb, CAE	American Association of Collegiate Registrars & Admissions Officers
Matthew Haller	International Franchise Association
Terri Hinkley, EdD, MBA, BSN, RN, CAE	National Association of School Nurses
Jon Hymes	American Optometric Association
Sharon H. Kneebone, IOM, FASAE, CAE	American Academy of Pain Medicine

2024 - 2025 AIC Thought Leadership Panel

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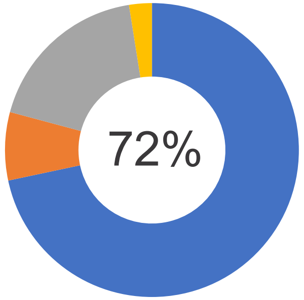
David Labuskes, CAE	AVIXA
Janice R. Lachance Esq., FASAE	American Geophysical Union
Denise A. LeDuc Froemming, MBA, CPA, CAE	California Society of CPAs & CalCPA Education Foundation
Adam Levy, CAE	American Cleft Palate Craniofacial Association
Michelle I. Mason, FASAE, CAE	ASAE
Patricia Montague, FASAE, CAE	School Nutrition Association
Bob Moore, FASAE, CAE	American College of Osteopathic Family Physicians
Brian T. Pallasch, CAE	International Institute of Building Enclosure Consultants
Mary E. Post, MBA, CAE	American Academy of Neurology
Denise Roosendaal, FASAE, CAE	Institute for Credentialing Excellence
Joe R Sapp, CAE	Talley Management Group, Inc
Jennifer M. Schlener	Association of American Medical Colleges
Angela Schnepf, MBA, CAE	Leading Age Illinois
Sheri Sesay-Tuffour, PhD, ICE-CCP, IOM, FASAE, CAE	Pediatric Nursing Certification Board
Cara Woodson Welch, Esq.	Public Sector HR Association

Background and Introduction to the Topic

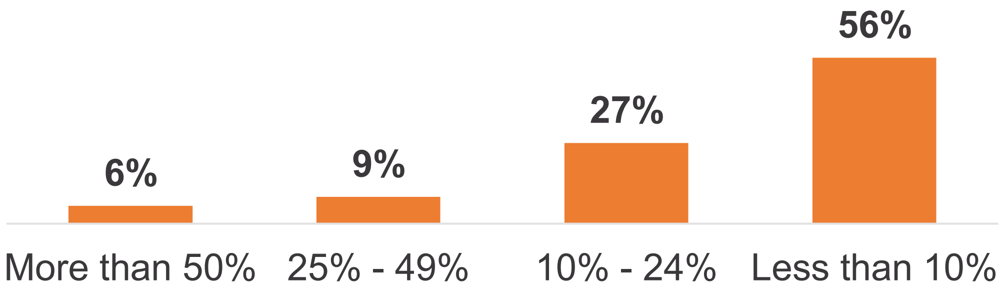
Current Landscape of Partnerships

Revenue-Generating Partnerships (n=120)



72% have revenue-generating partnerships
8% had partnerships in the past
18% no partnerships (for 10+ years)

% of Assoc Revenue from Partnerships



Partnership Areas

Educational & Professional Development (43%)

- Training programs & workshops
- Conferences & events
- Certification programs
- Educational publications
- Prof development initiatives

Product/Services (31%)

- Insurance & financial services
- Member benefit programs
- Preferred provider partnerships
- Group purchasing programs
- Discount programs & services

Research & Technology (15%)

- Data sharing partnerships
- Software & platform development
- Research collaborations
- Industry analysis

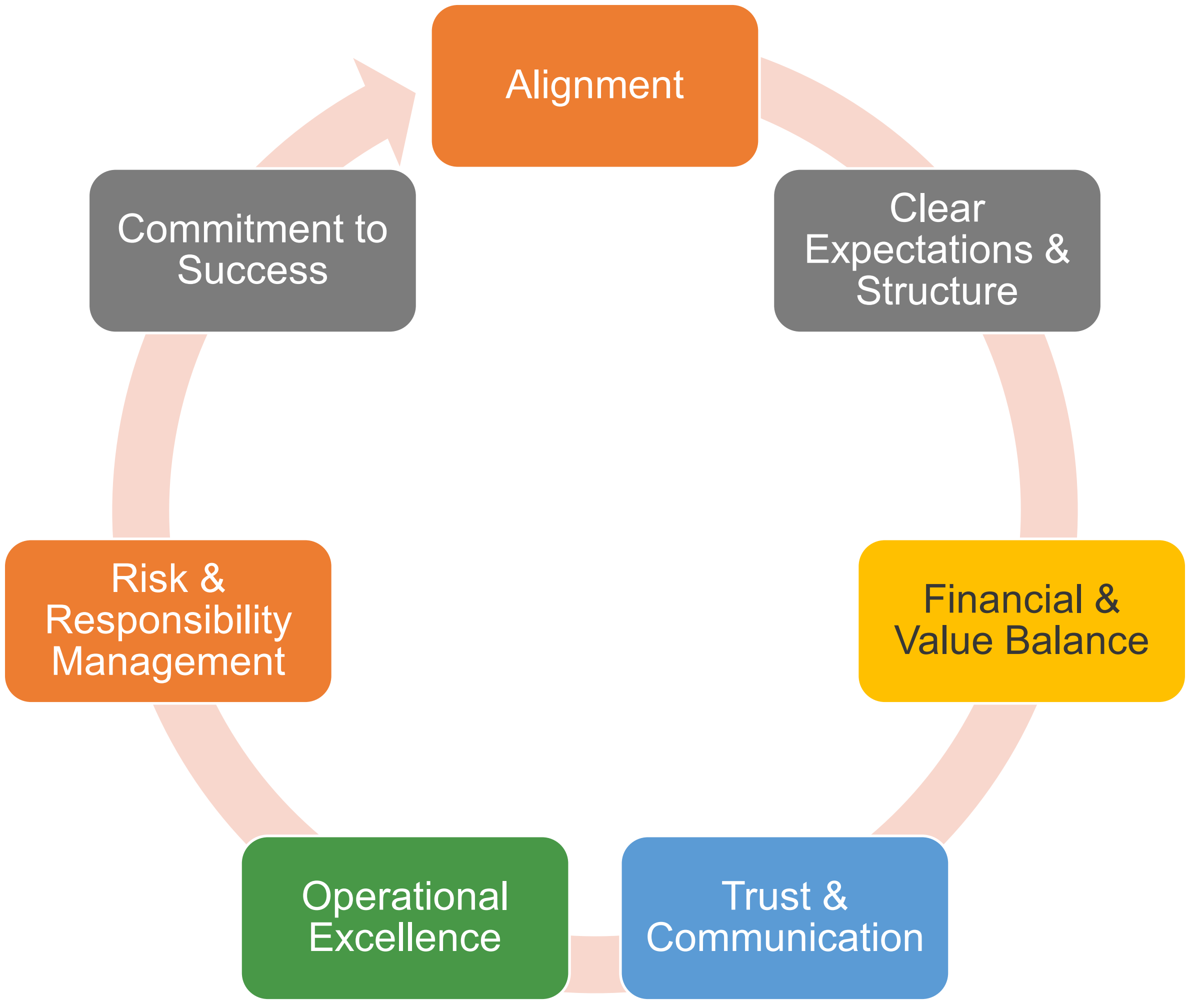
Public Sector (12%)

- Government funding
- Public health initiatives
- Legislative partnerships
- State and federal grants
- Public awareness programs

Challenges and Solutions for Managing Partnerships

	Clarity & Communication	Workload & Resource Management	Revenue Sharing & Financial Management	Member Engagement & Awareness	Balancing Organizational Interests
Challenge	Lack of clarity in roles, responsibilities, and goals	Unequal distribution of work, limited staff time	Ensuring fair revenue share, managing fluctuations	Low member interest or understanding of partnerships	Maintaining independence while partnering
Solutions	• Clear written agreements, revisited annually • Frequent communication and check-ins • Transparent data sharing • Detailed selection process for partnerships	• Dedicated staff member to manage partnerships • Integrating staff time into cost equations • Outsourcing market research • Finding partners who carry most of the workload	• Negotiated contracts with clear expectations • Restructuring revenue arrangements to suit both parties' needs • Linking partnerships to strategic plans	• Improved marketing and communication strategies • Retargeting ads to members via website • Offering evergreen or hot topics to boost engagement	• Explicit communication about partnership limitations • Careful management of public relations • Addressing lightning rod issues proactively

Essentials of Successful Partnerships



A Deeper Look into Partnerships

A Deeper Look into Partnerships

This deck examines the partnership lifecycle, learning from AIC partners and survey participants about the considerations to be undertaken at each stage of the process.

The dynamic governance cycle of association boards requires that staff create a clear process for establishing partnerships, design rigorous measurement to evaluate success and determine a thoughtful governance strategy to maximize potential. These key elements are explored at each stage of the partnership lifecycle.

The Partnership Lifecycle

[Take a two-sided approach to partnerships]

[Partnerships and joint ventures that keep evolving perform better]
- Enable restructuring
- Broaden the deal funnel
- Adapt stage-gate process

Vetting

Robust criteria to evaluate partners as well as clear direction on goals and strategy are keys to launching a successful partnership.

Forming

Defining and articulating partner roles and relevant performance metrics sets the stage for execution.

Maintaining and Evolving

Effective partners establish a solid foundation for their business relationships and actively nurture and evolve them.

Exiting

A robust exit strategy typically includes exit triggers, exit scenarios and an agreed upon process to initiate and execute the exit.

Vetting Partnership Opportunities

Robust criteria to evaluate partners as well as clear direction on goals and strategy are keys to launching a successful partnership.

Key Steps to Vet Prospective Partners for Revenue-Generating Activities

1. Get clear on what type of partner would be most beneficial to the association.
2. Establish criteria to assess prospects and conduct an evaluation.
3. Determine if Board involvement is necessary prior to advancing.
4. If Board involvement is necessary, define the type of input needed.

Types of Partners for Revenue Generation Purposes

Define the type of partner the association needs to guide your search.

How well does this partner enhance our operational efficiency and extend our ability to deliver high-quality services to members?

Delivery champions optimize and streamline delivery to extend the provider's capabilities.

Delivery Champion

Co-Creator

Co-creators drive joint innovation to develop new offerings with the partners as part of the solution positioned to the customer.

How can this partner help us co-create innovative solutions or business models that open new revenue streams or serve emerging needs?

How effectively can this partner bring our existing solutions to market and expand our reach to reach underserved or untapped audiences?

Selling allies bring the provider's ready-to-use products to market and manage most customers.

Selling Ally

Ecosystem Partner

Ecosystem pioneers drive new revenue in leading offering areas and new business models by going to market with a joint IP solution

What shared goals and joint innovations can we pursue with this partner to position ourselves as leaders in addressing complex member challenges?

Adapted for associations from: Schroeck, M., Kwan, A., Gill, J., & Sharma, D. (n.d.). *Evolving partner roles in industry 4.0*. Deloitte Insights.

Assessing Prospective Partners

To determine whether a prospective partner is right for your association, consider the following areas for compatibility.

Fit	Operations	Legal	Value
• Strategic alignment • Culture	• Financial health • Technical capabilities • Resources	• Risk • Compliance	• Member value • Market competition

TIP:
Engage the day-to-day managers in the process to foster transparency, awareness of goals and metrics and to identify potential red flags.

"If the partnership doesn't align with our mission and values, there would be no reason to pursue it despite any potential financial gain."

"(It) has to work for both sides financially, brand advancement and in mission advancement. Can't just be financial."

\- Survey Participants

Criteria for Assessing Prospective Partners

Fit	Operations		Value	
Strategic & Cultural Fit	**Resource Analysis**	**Financial Assessment**	**Member Value Validation**	**Market Demand & Competition**
Evaluate alignment with mission and strategic plan	Determine sufficient staff bandwidth	Develop revenue projections & potential ROI	Understand member needs & interests	Research existing services in the market
Assess alignment with core values (identify examples of demonstration)	Identify required skills/abilities or capacity to acquire them	Prepare cost-benefit analysis	Consider capacity to resolve challenges	Evaluate partner's reputation & financial stability
Consider alignment with content strategy	Evaluate for a feasible implementation timeline	Plan for alternative scenarios	Identify prospective member profiles and usage potential	Understand the competitor landscape
Determine if and how it advances brand position	Determine capacity to invest money, time, expertise	Consider financial risk factors	Assess potential impact on engagement	Review partner's existing relationships
Evaluate partner compatibility	Identify a clear staff owner	Consider long-term sustainability		Conduct a market analysis for unmet needs

**Consult legal counsel for support in assessing risk and compliance.*

Sample Rubric:

Here's an example of a partnership evaluation rubric used by AACRAO. This sample rubric offers a framework for assessing partnership impact, alignment, and viability.

AACRAO

Partnership Evalution Rubric (Pilot 2024)

This rubric provides a general framework for evaluating AACRAO partnerships. It can be customized further to include additional criteria or weightings based on specific partnership goals and objectives.

Criteria	Level 1 (Poor)	Level 2 (Fair)	Level 3 (Good)	Level 4 (Excellent)
Impact to Members	Partnership offers little to no discernible benefit to AACRAO members.	Partnership provides some benefits to members, but impact is limited.	Partnership provides significant benefits to members, with noticeable positive outcomes.	Partnership delivers substantial and lasting value to members, exceeding expectations.
Impact to Market	Partnership has minimal or no impact on AACRAO's market presence or influence.	Partnership contributes marginally to AACRAO's market position.	Partnership strengthens AACRAO's market position and visibility.	Partnership significantly enhances AACRAO's market leadership and brand recognition.
Impact to Operations	Partnership requires significant operational resources and/or has challenges or inefficiencies.	Partnership requires minor operational resources, with some adjustments required.	Partnership integrates smoothly into AACRAO's operations with minimal disruption.	Partnership streamlines operations and enhances organizational efficiency.
Alignment with Mission/Vision /Values	Partnership is misaligned or in conflict with AACRAO's mission, vision, and values.	Partnership has limited connection to AACRAO's mission, vision, and values.	Partnership aligns well with AACRAO's mission, vision, and values.	Partnership strongly reinforces and advances AACRAO's mission, vision, and values.
Alignment with Strategic Plan	Partnership is not aligned with AACRAO's strategic plan.	Partnership has limited alignment with AACRAO's strategic plan.	Partnership supports key goals and objectives of AACRAO's strategic plan.	Partnership is integral to the successful execution of AACRAO's strategic plan.
Alignment with Strategic Initiatives	Partnership does not support current strategic initiatives.	Partnership has limited connection to current strategic initiatives.	Partnership aligns with and supports current strategic initiatives.	Partnership is critical to the advancement of key strategic initiatives.

Scoring:

- Each criterion is scored on a scale of 1 to 4.
- Total scores range from 6 (poor) to 24 (excellent).

Interpretation:

- **6-8:** Partnership is not recommended or needs significant improvement.
- **9-16:** Partnership is acceptable but requires further development.
- **17-24:** Partnership is strong and strategically valuable.

Note: This rubric was developed with the support of Google Gemini.

Partnership Specific Metrics & Goals Evaluation Sub-Rubric:

This sub-rubric from AACRAO is designed to be flexible and adaptable to the unique goals of each partnership. It is intended to be used in conjunction with the main rubric to provide a comprehensive evaluation of the partnership's overall value and effectiveness.

AACRAO

Partnership Evalution Rubric (Pilot 2024)

Partnership Specific Metrics:
In addition to the general rubric, each partnership might have very specific goals and objectives. Use the below rubric to consider partnership goals:

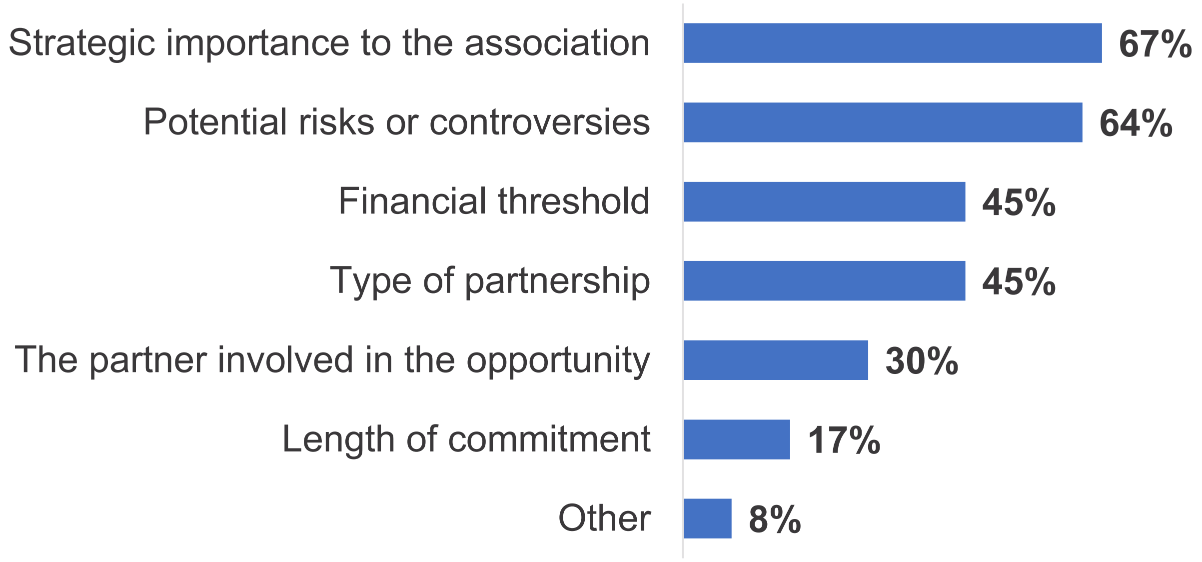
Partnership Goals Evaluation Sub-Rubric

Goal	Meeting Goal (Yes/No/In Progress)	Annual Goals Revision Needed (Yes/No)	Notes/Comments

How to Use This Sub-Rubric:

1. **List Partnership Goals:** Identify the specific goals outlined in the partnership agreement.
2. **Assess Progress:** For each goal, indicate whether it is being met ("Yes"), not being met ("No"), or is currently in progress ("In Progress").
3. **Review Annual Goals:** Determine if the current annual goals need to be revised based on progress and changing circumstances.
4. **Identify Opportunities:** Consider if there are new opportunities or goals that should be incorporated into the partnership.
5. **Add Notes/Comments:** Provide additional context or details as needed.

How Should the CEO Determine When to Vet a Partnership vs. Bring the Question to the Board?



When presenting to the Board, organizations must clearly address these considerations:

1) Strategic alignment and rationale
   "Why should we do this?“
2) Risk assessment
   "What could go wrong?"
3) Financial implications
4) Win-win value proposition
5) Implementation plan

Approach to Reviewing Potential Partnerships

Many organizations discussed using a staged approach when asked to provide more detail (similar to above).

Involving the Board

> *"As licensed professionals, any hint of compromised integrity because of a partnership or sponsorship is for discussion and decision at the Board level."*
>
> *- Survey Participant*

Strategic Importance	Risk Assessment
Financial Thresholds	Partnership Type

Circumstances Requiring Board Review:

- Controversial partners or industries
- High-profile relationships
- Partnerships affecting governance
- Industry-changing initiatives
- Major stakeholder relationships

Supporting Your Board in Taking a Strategic Approach to Partnerships

When Board engagement is needed, staff leaders can engage Board members in high-level conversation that addresses these aspects of vetting possible partners.

Selectively choosing partners

- Check references, strategic, cultural and mission alignment.

Linking to strategic plans

- Consider long-term implications, fit within the existing portfolio.

Clarifying mutual benefits

- Identify and name various types of value to be delivered.

Obtaining market research to ensure unbiased opinion

- Evaluate need, competitive landscape, market; validate potential benefits.

Setting boundaries early in relationships

- Discuss IP, financial expectations, promotional expectations, communication protocols, human resources investment.

Discussion Questions for the CEO When Evaluating Potential Partners

CEO questions focus on execution, value delivery, alignment, and change requirements.

What is our current staff bandwidth for managing a partnership?	What new systems or processes would need to be created?	What is a realistic timeline for implementation?	What potential operational challenges do you foresee?
What are the resource costs versus expected returns?	What member feedback channels should we establish?	How would we monitor partner performance?	What security concerns exist?

Questions sourced and adapted from ChatGPT.

Discussion Questions for the Board When Evaluating Potential Partners

Board questions focus on gathering guidance and developing consensus around purpose, process, investment and value in vetting partnership.

For what purpose are we seeking partners?	What criteria should guide our selection process?	What is our risk tolerance for different types of partnerships?	What resources might be required long-term?
How can this partnership advance our strategic goals?	How might this partnership impact our strategic direction?	What investments are required to deliver value?	What other types of value should we consider?

Questions sourced and adapted from Claude.ai

Forming Partnerships

Defining and articulating partner roles and relevant performance metrics sets the stage for execution.

Key Steps to Forming a Partnership

1. Define a structure for the partnership that outlines how both parties will work together, specifying:
   - Expectations and boundaries for each partner
   - Governance framework to determine roles and responsibilities
   - How the partnership will be executed and by whom
   - Data privacy and security protocols
2. Prepare legal documents that set expectations for both parties
3. Identify the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) that will measure success of the partnership and define reporting requirements
4. Formalize processes for executing the partnership
   - Establish communication protocols
   - Agree on a schedule for periodic reviews (annual, semi-annual and/or quarterly)
   - Define exit triggers and prepare an exit strategy

Consider Your KPIs

Associations and their partners should identify common data points that will satisfy each partner's goals.

These can be tracked as Key Performance Indicators that monitor the partnership health and signal potential problems.

Outcome Oriented	**Financial Impact**	• Revenue generated • Cost savings achieved • Joint market share • Customer acquisition cost • Lifetime value of joint customers
	Strategic Impact	• New market penetration • Brand awareness lift • Member satisfaction scores • Market share growth • Competitive position
Process Oriented	**Operational Efficiency**	• Response time • Resource utilization • Project completion rate • Quality metrics • Integration milestones
	Relationship Health	• Meeting attendance • Decision-making speed • Escalation frequency • Team satisfaction scores • Communication effectiveness

Discussion Questions for the CEO When Forming a New Partnership

CEO questions focus on execution, decision-making, data security and metric management.

What training or skills are needed by staff?	What issues would require escalation to management?	How will responsibilities for the partnership be distributed?	Who will manage data sharing?
How will we compile and analyze data?	What baseline data do we need?	What information needs to be shared internally?	How will we document and track interactions and progress?

Questions sourced and adapted from ChatGPT.

Discussion Questions for the Board When Forming a New Revenue Partnership

Board questions focus on defining investments, metrics and overall success.

- What resources are we willing to commit?
- What expectations are non-negotiable?
- What metrics will the Board monitor?
- What are the triggers that will prompt board involvement?
- What defines success for our organization?
- What metrics matter most strategically?

Questions sourced and adapted from Claude.

Maintaining and Evolving Partnerships

"Successful partnerships don't happen. Strong partners set a clear foundation for business relationships and nurture them." (De Backer & Rinaudo, 2019)

Ongoing Actions to Maintain/ Evolve Successful Revenue-Generating Partnerships

1. Establish clear communication channels
2. Monitor performance and accountability
3. Promote mutual benefit and value
4. Foster strong and trusting relationships
5. Address challenges proactively and collaboratively
6. Provide education and resources to all stakeholders
7. Allocate sufficient resources throughout the partnership
8. Be flexible and adaptable
9. Evaluate innovation and growth opportunities

AIC Research Insight	Recommended Action
Partnerships thrive when both parties are aligned on values and mission. Misalignment can lead to friction, so continuous alignment checks are critical.	**Establish Clear Communication Channels:** Misunderstandings about goals, roles, or expectations can derail partnerships. Agree on preferred communication methods and regular check-ins to assess progress, align strategies, and ensure accountability. Conduct joint planning sessions to review performance and recalibrate objectives as needed.
Regular reporting, goal-setting, and transparency are vital to ensure both parties are on the same page.	**Monitor Performance and Accountability:** Regularly review key performance metrics (KPIs), such as member value, ROI, and market penetration, to track progress toward shared goals. Use reporting systems to maintain accountability and identify areas needing adjustment.
Both partners must see ongoing value to stay committed, this is supported by collecting feedback and celebrating shared successes.	**Promote Mutual Benefit and Value:** Ensure both parties perceive value in the partnership by regularly highlighting benefits and successes. Collect feedback from members and partners and formalize feedback loops to maintain a strong value proposition and refine offerings as needed.
Strong partnerships require trust, active engagement, and relationship management.	**Foster Strong and Trusting Relationships:** Build collaboration and trust between organizations, especially during periods of leadership or staff turnover. Engage authentically with partners; don’t put the partnership on autopilot.
Establish clear expectations for shared responsibilities to maintain fairness and motivation on both sides.	**Address Challenges Proactively and Collaboratively:** Use a structured approach to identify and resolve issues before they escalate. Define escalation paths, set resolution timelines, and maintain open communication channels. Conduct regular check-ins focused on resolving conflicts, inefficiencies, or other challenges to sustain trust and transparency.

AIC Research Insight	Recommended Action
Educating and engaging members, staff and partners about partnership benefits should be a continuous focus.	**Provide Education and Resources:** Support members, board members, staff and partners with training and/or resources to enhance their understanding of the partnership's benefits, goals, and value to ensure engagement and alignment across stakeholders and continuity of understanding as Board members rotate.
Clear expectations for shared responsibilities help ensure partners are sustainable and productive.	**Allocate Sufficient Resources:** Partnerships require adequate staffing, time, and financial investment to thrive. Dedicate the necessary resources to manage and sustain partnerships effectively.
Adaptability and flexibility are critical to addressing changing priorities and ensuring partnerships remain resilient over time.	**Be Flexible and Adaptable:** Anticipate external changes, such as market shifts or leadership transitions, and prepare contingency plans to address them. Stay agile to adjust priorities and maintain alignment as circumstances evolve.
Innovation and adaptability ensure the relationship continues to evolve and deliver value.	**Evaluate Innovation and Growth Opportunities:** Ongoing partnerships thrive on innovation. Regularly explore new joint revenue streams or market expansion opportunities that can add vitality and long-term value to the partnership.

Discussion Questions for the CEO to Ensure Ongoing Partnership Success

CEO questions focus on execution, value delivery, alignment, and immediate decision-making.

How can we ensure the partnership continues to deliver meaningful value to members?

What trends or developments could affect the relevance of this partnership?

What tangible and intangible value has the partnership delivered recently?

How effectively do we incorporate partner feedback into our ongoing strategies and actions

Are there any gaps in our internal resources or systems that could impact our ability to support this partnership?

Are there any areas where our values and those of the partner might diverge, and how do we address them?

How might we evolve this partnership to meet future needs or challenges?

Questions sourced and adapted from ChatGPT.

Discussion Questions for the Board to Ensure Ongoing Partnership Success

Board questions focus on strategic alignment, risk management, and broader organizational impact.

How well does this partnership align with our mission and long-term strategy?

Are we maintaining a balanced portfolio of partnerships across different areas of need or opportunity?

What risks might this partnership pose to our organization, and how have we prepared to address them?

How are we ensuring accountability from both sides of the partnership?

Are there ways we can better understand or measure the broader impact of this partnership on members?

Are there opportunities to expand or replicate this partnership model for greater impact?

What lessons from this partnership can we apply to future collaborations and partnerships?

Questions sourced and adapted from ChatGPT.

Exiting Partnerships

A robust exit strategy typically includes **exit triggers** (e.g., drop in KPIs below target), **exit scenarios** (e.g., wind-down) and an **agreed upon process** to initiate and execute the exit.

Steps for Respectfully Exiting Revenue-Generating Partnerships

1. Plan for exit from the beginning
2. Align on strategic reasons for an exit
3. Conduct a structured evaluation, including financial and stakeholder feedback
4. Manage exit collaboratively with legal and compliance oversight
5. Develop a comprehensive communication plan for all audiences
6. Preserve the relationship by expressing gratitude and exploring future opportunities
7. Identify and mitigate risks associated with the exit
8. Learn from the experience and monitor post-exit impacts

Action	Description
Plan for exit from the beginning	• Build clear exit strategies into the partnership agreement during its formation. • Define the process for dissolution, including financial, operational, and reputational considerations.
Align on strategic reasons for an exit	• Revisit the original goals of the partnership to determine whether they have been met or are no longer viable. • Engage in open and honest dialogue with the partner to ensure mutual understanding of the rationale for the exit.
Conduct a structured evaluation	• Perform a partnership health check to assess performance, risks, and alignment with organizational goals. • Use measurable data and stakeholder feedback to support the decision.
Manage exit collaboratively	• Develop a detailed transition plan with input from both organizations to minimize disruption. • Address operational handovers, financial settlements, and communication strategies.
Preserve Relationship	• Express gratitude for the contributions and successes achieved during the partnership. • Consider opportunities for future collaborations, even after the partnership ends.
Identify and mitigate associated risks	• Assess and address risks to organization's reputation, strategy, operations, and compliance. • Plan for potential operational, financial and legal risks or disruptions to minimize impact.
Learn from the experience	• Conduct a post-exit review to identify lessons learned and areas for improvement. • Share insights internally to improve future partnership strategies.

Discussion Questions for the CEO to Ensure a Successful Exit

CEO questions focus on operational execution, relationship management, and minimizing disruption.

How can we approach the exit process to minimize disruptions for stakeholders?

What resources or support are required to manage the transition effectively?

How can we ensure the partner organization feels respected and valued throughout the exit process?

What strategic shifts or changes in priorities have made this partnership less relevant to our goals?

Could the exit harm the association's reputation with members, sponsors, or the public?

Are there any immediate operational gaps we must address to ensure a smooth transition?

How can we communicate the exit decision effectively to internal teams and external stakeholders?

What contingencies do we need to prepare in case the exit process encounters challenges?

Questions sourced and adapted from ChatGPT.

Discussion Questions for the Board to Ensure a Successful Exit

Board questions focus on long-term strategy and learnings for future partnerships.

- What lessons can we learn from this experience to improve future partnerships?
- Are there other areas where we might work together in the future?
- What strategic shifts or changes in priorities have made this partnership less relevant to our goals?
- Could the exit harm the association's reputation with members, sponsors, or the public?
- How does this exit align with our mission and long-term strategy?
- Are there external trends or factors we need to consider in evaluating the overall decision to exit?
- What long-term risks or benefits does this exit present for the organization?

Questions sourced and adapted from ChatGPT.

Appendix

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Key Elements of Mutually Beneficial Partnerships

Clearly defined objectives
67%

Strategic Alignment:
- Shared purpose and vision for the partnership
- Alignment with organization's mission and values
- Clear understanding of what each partner wants to achieve
- Goals that benefit the membership base

Documentation:
- Written expectations in MOU format
- Clear articulation of partnership goals
- Detailed project management plans
- Agreement on intended outcomes

Agreed upon performance metrics and evaluation criteria
64%

Success Measures:
- Measurable and specific key metrics
- Clear criteria for evaluating project impact
- Defined success indicators for each partner
- Regular review and evaluation processes

Monitoring and Assessment:
- Annual review of partnership performance
- Evaluation of progress toward goals
- Metrics for member engagement
- Assessment of partnership value and effectiveness

Mutually beneficial financial terms and revenue sharing
56%

Revenue Structure:
- Fair and sustainable division of revenue
- Clear financial expectations
- Pro-forma financials at the outset
- Balance between investment and return

Value Proposition:
- Financial arrangements that work for both sides
- Benefits may not be equal but must be valuable
- Clear understanding of what each side has to gain/lose/risk
- Revenue sharing appropriate to work completed

Defined roles and responsibilities
44%

Operational Clarity:
- Clear delineation of each partner's duties
- Designated project managers from each organization
- Specific responsibilities for deliverables
- Clear ownership of relationship aspects

Resource Management:
- Understanding of resource commitments
- Clear workload distribution
- Defined project stakeholder roles
- Staff responsibilities and engagement expectations

Ensuring Success Relative to Board Conversations

Business-minded Directors	Strong Board culture	Data-driven conversation
Essential for properly interpreting and using that data, particularly for complex partnerships.	Viewed as a critical enabling factor that allows the first two elements to function effectively.	Most fundamental requirement, serving as the foundation for objective evaluation.
• “Business-minded directors are more inclined to rely on data to make decisions; so those two are hard to separate.“ • "Most (factors) I take as a given. But the extent to which we have 'business-minded' directors usually determines the outcome."	• “My board's ability to respectfully and candidly share agreeing and dissenting opinions are key elements needed to make the right decisions.“ • "There are limitations…if the directors are philosophically split on partnering with certain entities despite other favorable factors."	• “Our current board greatly appreciates backing up their decisions with data“ • “Sound data is needed for the board to have the discussion about the pros and cons.“ • "The Board needs realistic data along with candid discussions of costs, benefits, and risks, advantages/ disadvantages.“

The responses show significant overlap between data-driven decision making and business-minded directors, suggesting these two factors are often seen as complementary. Strong board culture appears most crucial when making difficult or controversial decisions regarding partnerships.

Factors for Success in Partnerships with the Board

	Key Components	Importance	Limitations
Business-Minded Directors	• Ability to objectively weigh pros and cons • Understanding of business implications • Experience in evaluation • Strategic thinking capability	• Often determines outcome of discussions • Essential for understanding complex business cases • Helps in realistic assessment of opportunities	• Not all board members may have business background • May need staff support to fill expertise gaps • Risk of over-emphasizing business aspects vs. mission
Strong Board Culture	• Respectful sharing of dissenting opinions • Safe space for diverse viewpoints • Balanced consideration of all perspectives • Trust among board members	• Enables honest evaluation of opportunities • Facilitates comprehensive risk assessment • Supports better decision outcomes • Allows for challenging status quo	• Can be undermined by philosophical splits • Requires ongoing cultivation • May not overcome fundamental disagreements
Data-driven conversation	• Sound financial projections • Market intelligence • Business case validation • Risk assessment frameworks	• Provides objective basis for decision-making • Helps mitigate emotional or political decisions • Enables proper evaluation of opportunities and risks	• Most partnership data involves future projections • Risk of "conjecture" in possible results • Need to avoid extremes (overly optimistic or pessimistic)