

Financially speaking, you have two types of assets: physical assets, which include your building, equipment, and infrastructure, and intangible assets including your ideas, your brand, your unique knowledge and other human capital.

In traditional business, it used to be that physical assets were responsible for the bulk of an organization's value. Thanks to the information technology revolution and the growth of the service economy, intangible assets are often becoming more valuable than physical assets.

For example, it is commonplace today to think of service as the chief source of income of a business: think Google, eBay, Ernst & Young, and other professional services firms. Technology and intellectual capital are their biggest resources. They have almost no hard assets. What they have is a lot of soft assets - more conventionally known as people; smart, motivated, talented people. And they achieve great success with it. So, if they can do it, why not you?

Imagine a **tenured civic Association member** who promotes his property listings on U-tube! This is a true story - he may be the only member to establish this practice in his Association. He has written articles about this phenomenon for the Association magazine, and teaches a class on the topic. Young Professionals and tenured members alike find value in this relevant example of using technology as a tool for business development.

The benefit to the new and young member is apparent. This type of mentoring is most desperately needed for your new members.

Look for members to use as spokespeople to your young members:

- **Instill confidence to the most risky segment of your membership, those with less than five years in the business**
- **Collaborate with your members to link different generations together to teach and transfer skills**
- **Demonstrate that you tap into your membership to innovate and share promising practices.**

In many associations, new members get a "wow" experience when they receive an e-mail video from the Association President to personally welcome them. The video reinforces the many benefits in store for the new member. It also makes an early connection between member and leader. A personal message, well-planned and delivered sincerely, can make the difference in a new members' long term connection with your association.

"People get very creative if you include them."

– Arnold Schwarzenegger

You may already use talented members for teaching classes. Think about asking them to write articles, to sit on panels or to reach out and even mentor new members. This is the way to look at your members and your communications as a real business asset.

Are your Communications a Business Asset?

Melynn Sight, nSight Marketing