



SIX BIG TRENDS TO WATCH IN 2021

BY CHRIS WALTON

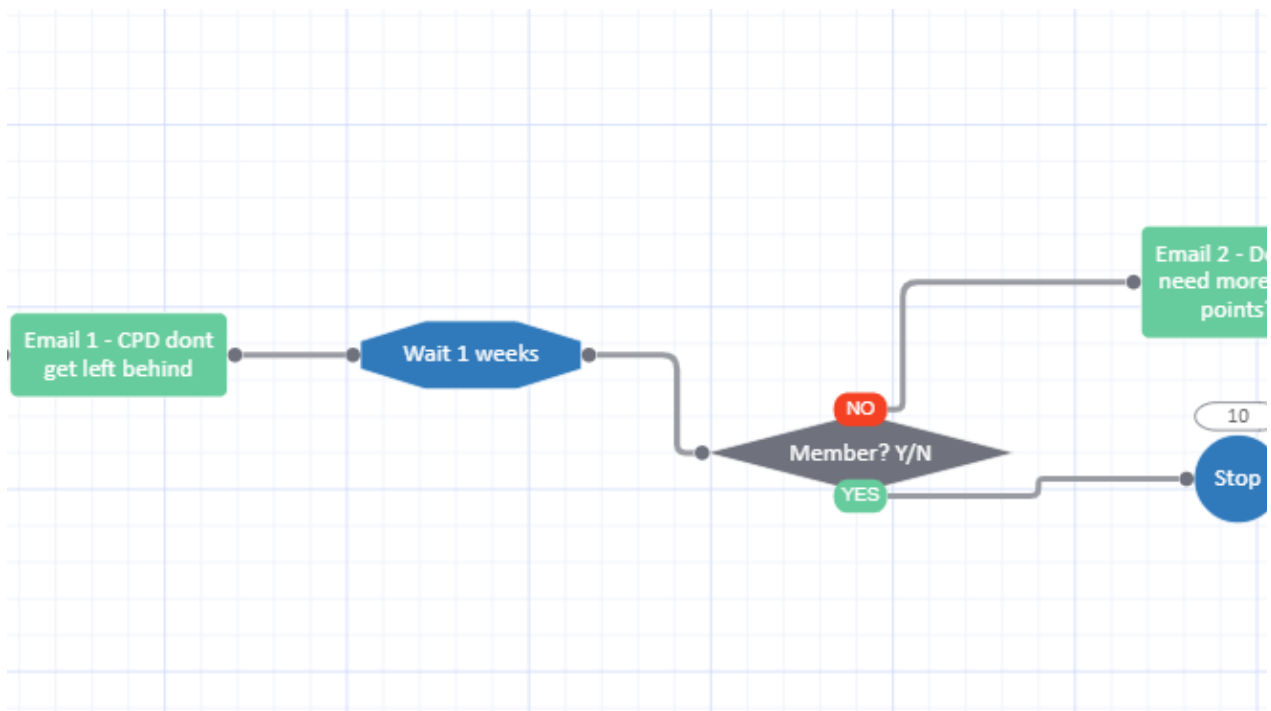


SIX BIG TRENDS TO WATCH IN 2021

At the start of a new year, many unions are taking a fresh look at how they do business. Lessons learned over the past 12 months are helping leaders re-examine everything from membership models to organising strategy to services offered.

2020 showed unions can be nibble. Success will rely on unions continuing to adapt, pivot and embrace technology.

Here's a look at the how future-focused unions can approach 2021 and beyond, to come out of 2021 even stronger.



1. MEMBER AND POTENTIAL MEMBER JOURNEYS

Few had heard of member and potential member automated digital journeys at the start of 2020. Now they are being used by a rapidly increasing number of unions.

Ideal for onboarding new members or building a list of potential members and sending them a series of emails or texts encouraging them to join. You can even build in a phone call in the journey. The next email depends on the actions of the worker (opened email; did not open; did take action or not etc).

Once the journey is written it can be automated- so results including improved retention of new members and new recruitment keep on being delivered.

Ideally the content of the journey is different for each segment you are targeting- early career members; particular occupations or industries.

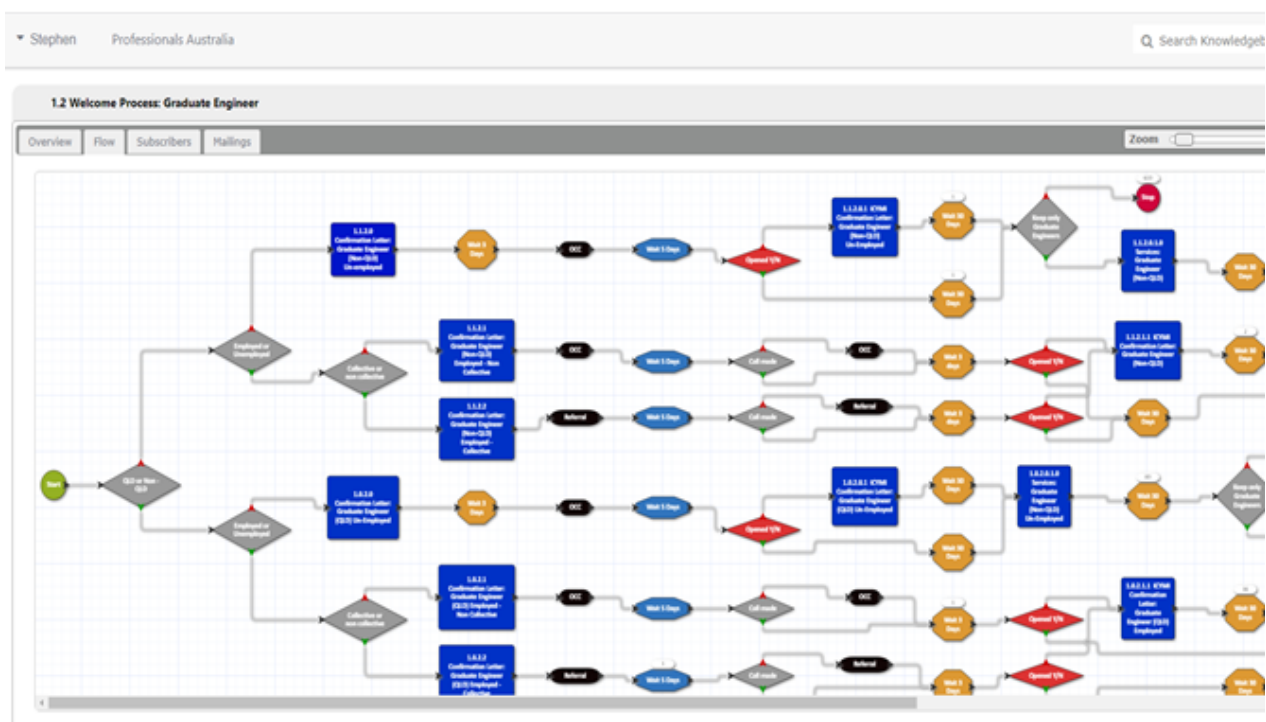
It is now relatively easy to build a large list of potential members- running petitions; reverse marketing where you predict what a potential member will Google and relevant content is accessible if the person provides their name and email; building social media groups around an occupation or topic and driving them to activity; searching LinkedIn to find all those in a particular company.

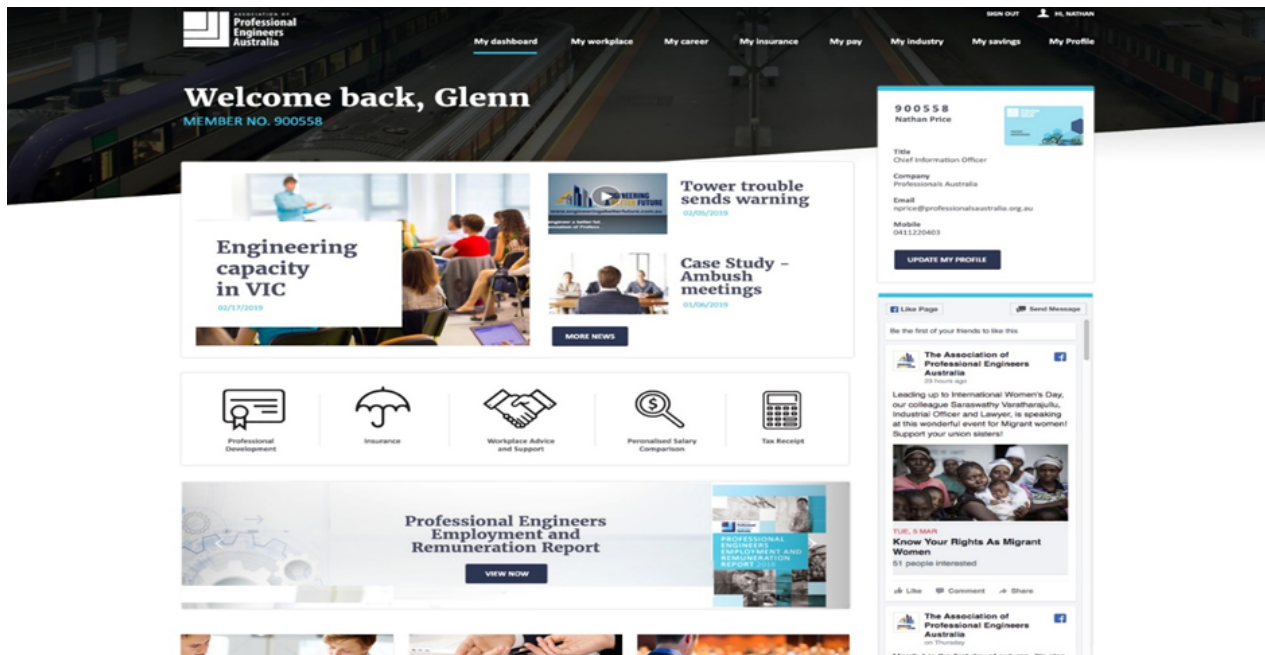
The biggest and arguably best list of potential members is former members. Tell them how we have changed, there has never been a more important time to be part of our union, we miss them and would love to have them back!

Once you have the list, the potential members journey massively reduces the cost of recruitment and follow up.

Where organisers do speak to potential members, the digital journey will reveal what they are interested in and help us focus on the ones most likely to join.

It's too hard to do this manually - the union needs to invest in marketing automation software such as Higher Logic Communication and the software needs to talk to your membership system (Higher Logic is integrated with iMIS). It will pay itself off in no time with improved retention and recruitment. It helps if you employ a skilled digital marketer.





2. DYNAMIC WEBSITES WITH UNIQUE CONTENT FOR EACH MEMBER

Members' needs evolve as they move through their careers and members in different industries or occupations have different needs and interests.

Unions that personalise the experience will reduce churn and achieve improved engagement.

When a member opens the web site it should welcome them by name and provide them with content they are likely to be interested in.

The member portal should also let them change their details, find out how much they paid last financial year, let union staff know of a work problem they need advice on, find their delegate, access other union services and find when their next pay rise is due.

Because much of the content for members is covered in the member portal, the union can have a simple and clean website for potential members and the community. The public facing site can be predominantly a “brochure site”- who we are, what we do, join now. The site may also explain the union's policy position on matters for the community.

Ideally the member's activity on the site should be tracked so the union better understands each member's interests. With smart technology the member should be recommended the next logical service or content. With predictive analytics, you can predict other members who may be at risk.

Imbedding a chat online will also be a core feature in the future. Chat bots will increasingly reduce the servicing load of unions as they learn to respond to common questions.

BEST VALUE PLAN

<p style="font-weight: bold; color: #800040; margin: 0;">Extra Large 180GB</p> <p style="margin: 5px 0 0 20px;">Was \$115 per month. Now \$65 per month. <small>\$50/mth credit for 12 months.</small></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 5G network access included ✓ No excess data charges in Australia ✓ Flexible, no lock-in plan <hr style="border: 0.5px solid #ccc;"/> <p style="font-size: 0.8em; margin: 0;"> Get up to \$600 bill credit. </p> <p style="font-size: 0.8em; margin: 5px 0 0 20px;">That's \$50 bill credit/month when you stay connected for 12 months. Offer ends 1 March 2021. See offer details</p>	<p style="font-weight: bold; color: #800040; margin: 0;">Large 120GB</p> <p style="margin: 5px 0 0 20px;">\$85 per month</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 5G network access included ✓ No excess data charges in Australia ✓ Flexible, no lock-in plan <hr style="border: 0.5px solid #ccc;"/> <p style="font-size: 0.8em; margin: 0;">Telstra Plus Member Rewards</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Earn 50% more points across your account when you're on this mobile plan ✓ Earn 20,000 bonus Telstra Plus points when you take up 5G 	<p style="font-weight: bold; color: #800040; margin: 0;">Medium 80GB</p> <p style="margin: 5px 0 0 20px;">\$65 per month</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 5G network access included ✓ No excess data charges in Australia ✓ Flexible, no lock-in plan <hr style="border: 0.5px solid #ccc;"/> <p style="font-size: 0.8em; margin: 0;">Telstra Plus Member Rewards</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Earn 50% more points across your account when you're on this mobile plan ✓ Earn 20,000 bonus Telstra Plus points when you take up 5G 	<p style="font-weight: bold; color: #800040; margin: 0;">Small 40GB</p> <p style="margin: 5px 0 0 20px;">\$55 per month</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 4G network access included <small>5G network access NOT included</small> ✓ No excess data charges in Australia ✓ Flexible, no lock-in plan
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3. NEW MEMBERSHIP APPROACHES AND MODELS

Shock alert- potential members act like consumers!

Leading companies like Netflix have redefined expectations of what it means to be a member. Consumers have grown accustomed to intuitive user experiences and subscription offers. Over the next few years there is likely to be a boom in forward thinking unions trailing some of these approaches.

Subscription membership model: This “set and forget” model has been embraced by most unions, with fewer and fewer members paying annually. With credit card or direct debit, it is convenient for users, provides

predictable recurring revenue and when members change jobs you do not need to sign them up again. Why not make clear to the potential member can resign or pull out easily- don't they look for that when purchasing online?

Special offers: Potential members are often doubtful joining is worthwhile. By providing a lower entry price reduces the risk of joining. During the limited period there is an opportunity to build the relationship and demonstrate value.

By putting a time limit on the availability of the special offer, the worker has an incentive to make a decision to join. And who doesn't like a special!

Some unions have tried free membership but the experience of most is some payment is important and you then have the payment details so after the special offer period the member automatically reverts to normal fees (for example 50% off for first 6 months, offer closes in 3 days).

Bronze, silver and gold membership: if unions were like a speed dating exercise, the first questions we would ask is when do you want to get married! Maybe we should start with what movies do you like 😊.

Particularly in areas of low membership, some union have tried a lower cost entry membership with restricted services. At the base level the member can maybe support campaigns and access the unions group insurance or online advice and resources. With encouragement the member can move to the next tier because they want access to additional services, such as industrial advice, webinars and Member Advantage savings. If they have a

collective agreement in place, they must be on the top or normal fee tier.

Consumers are used to comparing options- think phone or health schemes. The potential members feel in control in choosing the option that suites. More importantly they access whether it is worth the extra payment for the extra services, rather than consider the whole cost (ie. For an extra say \$1.50 per week I can get work advice and Member Advantage).

Unions are often concerned that they will lose revenue from existing members who want the lower price option. The experience of those unions that have done it is that this is not true. Members are used to the concepts of offers being available to new members only and usually don't want to reduce the services they can access. If they are on an enterprise agreement, the lower cost option may not be available.

Despite the concerns there is no evidence that these initiatives impact revenue from existing members.

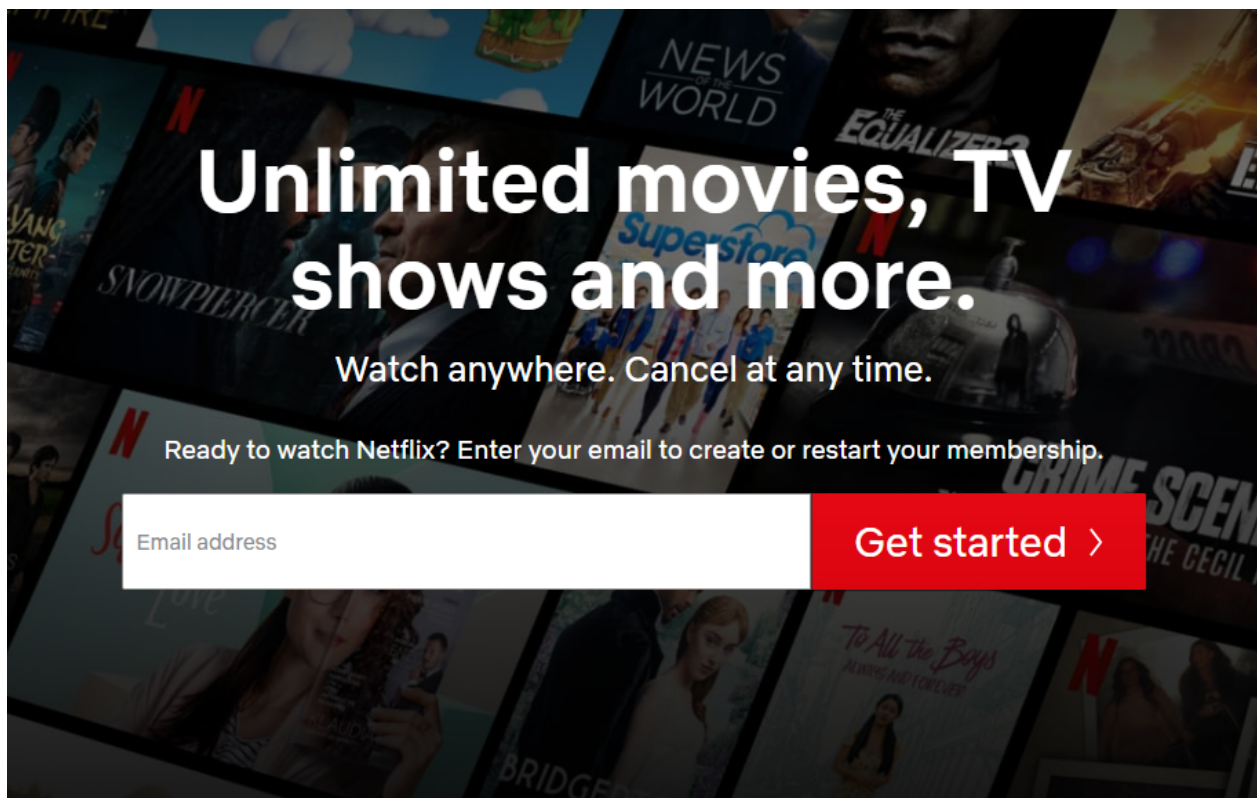
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4. EASY ONLINE JOINING

More and more members will be joining online.

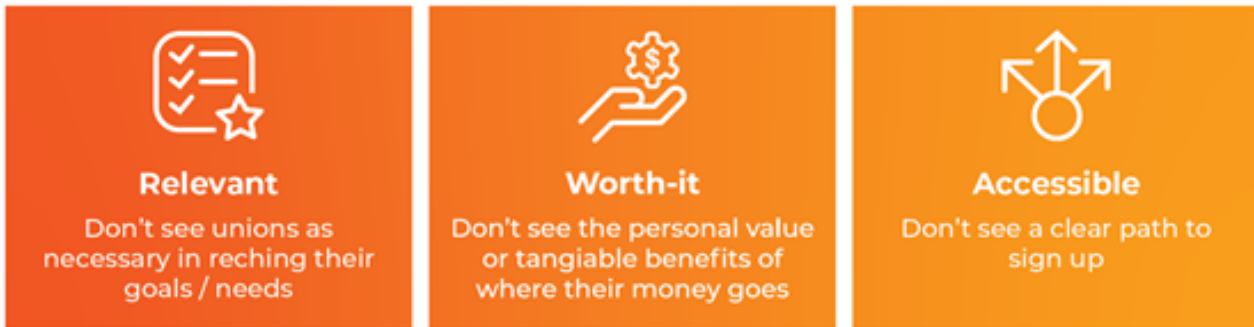
We must make joining easy and efficient. The online join form should be dynamic (fill in your industry or occupation or employment status and you automatically see your fee rate) and the data should go straight into the membership system, with payment automatically triggered.

Have the form as simple as possible and in multiple parts so that it doesn't look overwhelming.

Think how you react when you have a long form to fill- maybe follow up to get some further information after they've joined rather than a long form.

If the potential member drops off during the process, their details should be captured to enable follow up.

Unions will increasingly automate as much as possible, particularly with membership processing, eliminating double handling and repetitive tasks. This will free resources for more member focused activities and provide employees with the tools to be more effective.



5. BROADEN THE VALUE

Increasingly we will see unions broadening the services they offer members.

The core services will remain critical but many of those benefit workers whether they are members or not. That is fine when we have a hot issues and a big campaign, but we need to help the worker recognise the value of joining and remaining a member at any time.

Unions will increasingly add to the reasons to join with additional services and experiences which provide individual utility and benefit.

There is nothing wrong with an individual benefiting because the collective exists and it fits our reason for existence- to help workers get ahead.

This was shown in recent ACTU research which showed workers don't always see unions as necessary in reaching their goals/needs and don't see the personal value or tangible benefits of membership.

The research suggested workers want unions to share an optimistic view of what work can be, want to see strong individual as well as collective benefits and need to see the connection between membership and getting ahead at work and in life.

In addition to positive campaigns at a workplace and industry level, additional services may include: market pay rate information; career services; vocational insurance; vocational/professional development; information on how to help elderly parents; financial advice and member savings. The service needs to fit workers' circumstances and needs.

We should be able to tell workers that because we have so many members and buying power we have been able

to negotiate member saving that mean fees effectively cost nothing, through programs such as Member Advantage. This programs must provide an instantaneous, digital user experience.

Rather than each union developing the service, increasingly unions will provide the portal for members to access these services from best practice suppliers. These should include other unions.

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A New Solar System



6. BUILD AN INNOVATIVE CULTURE

Forward thinking union leaders will increasingly build a culture that invites innovation, problem-solving and calculated risk-taking. The leader will:

Encourage constant change: Leaders will embrace change so that staff and elected committees are prepared to implement initiatives and embrace the opportunities. We need a culture which celebrates having a go- trying new things, measuring the results and quickly tweaking until it works better.

Listen to workers: A focus on understanding what workers needs and wants, not treating them all the same and not asking them to fit us. Find ways to listen to the different segments; listen to potential members, not just members; prototype new ideas and test them; let data drive decisions.

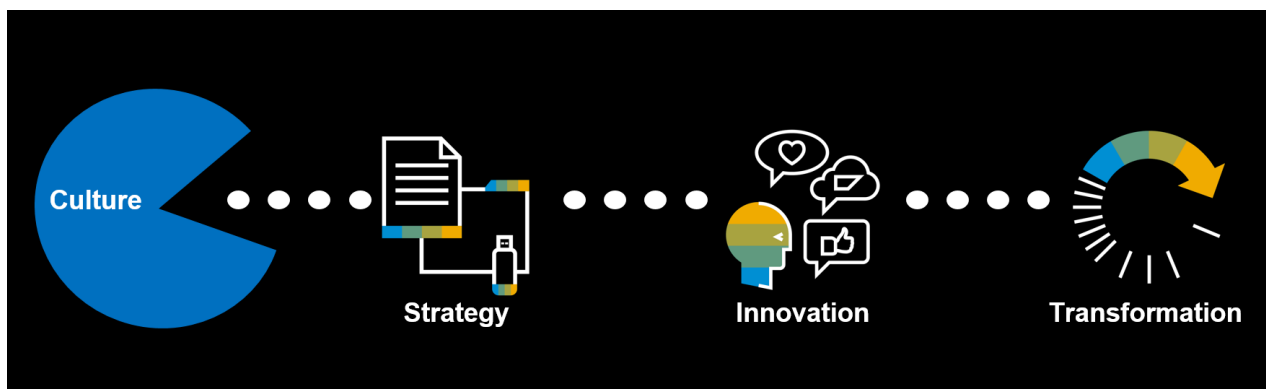
Collaborate across branches and unions: Make sure information flows easily across the organisation and unions; avoid duplication and reinventing the wheel. There is a crazy amount of waste that needs to be invested in the future- separate membership systems; missing group

deals because everyone purchases separately; new services and webinars not shared. Reaching out, sharing learning and struggles will put us all ahead faster.

Invest in modern systems: The internet and digital change is not going away. We need modern tools including a modern CRM system such as iMIS, which has an integrated CMS allowing dynamic websites. Integrated marketing automation software such as Higher Logic Communications (emails and automated member journeys) is also essential. The system needs to support field staff and leaders with clear data and reports which also track workers' engagements. It needs to allow unions to segment members and their potential members list.

Invest in Skills: Unions desperately need digital marketers and online organisers and campaigners, in addition to data and business analysts.

Invest: More of the same will not achieve a better result. Unions need to invest in infrastructure and skills. It is a smart use of money and will lead to improved retention, better organising and campaigning, back end efficiency and growth.



How can the Hub help?



can be applied on discussing.

HOW CAN THE HUB HELP?

If some of this is gobbledygook, that is no surprise. We are all on a journey and need to learn new tricks.

The Union Innovation Hub exists to help unions achieve growth, efficiency and impact by fast tracking progress and reducing the cost of digital and other innovation: www.uhub.org.au

The Hub can assist with:

- Accelerator training modules, on topics such as:
 - Building a member onboarding journey
 - Marketing automation
 - Data visualisation
 - Strategic planning
 - Member retention
- Group deals to reduce the cost of the technology such as:
 - Yabbr 2.9 cent texting and included Online Web Chat
- The Network, a purpose built community of union staff sharing ideas, questions and resources. Log in here: network.actu.org.au

To access any of these resources, or if you'd like any further information about trends affecting unions, contact:

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