2018 Member Education and Career Development Report

Examining the intersection between professional development and career advancement.

communitybrands®
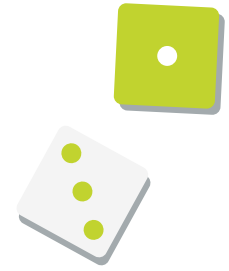
A deep dive into **member education and career development.**

Table of contents

Overview: Why care about this study?

Professional membership organizations and associations are leaders within their industries. Members join to connect with like-minded individuals, drive personal and professional career growth and continue learning. Most organizations provide a wealth of educational content, materials and information. But is that enough? Are organizations meeting the needs of current members and the market?

In this study, we focus on the intersection of professional development and career advancement from the perspective of who it matters to most: members. Building off the **"2017 Member Professional Development Study: Aligning Education Strategy with What Matters Most to Members,"** this study takes the next step for association leaders to better understand how their professional membership organizations can help members expand their knowledge and advance their career.

Our research set out to answer the following questions:

- How much are professional membership organizations helping members prepare and progress in their careers and industries?
- What types of learning and continuing education experiences are members really looking for?
- How can associations cultivate value and play a larger role in providing meaningful career opportunities and advancement assistance?

We hope this study helps professional membership organizations find ways to expand and adjust their services, so they can better accommodate the online learning and career advancement support their members desire.

Edge Research conducted an online survey of 1,018 members throughout the United States. Those members surveyed self-reported they are 18-years-old or older and a member of a professional membership organization. The survey was fielded from March 28 through April 4, 2018. Full survey methodology can be found on page 30.

Here's what **we found.**

Key findings

1 **Members want more from their organization.**
There has been a shift in why individuals join member-based organizations within their industry. In the past, members felt a sense of professional responsibility to join organizations. Today, many are searching for a place where they can network among a group of like-minded individuals, while growing and developing their careers in various ways.

2 **Fewer members are seeking training and continuing education from their professional organization.**
Eighty-two percent of members have completed some sort of professional development within the past two years. But, only 53 percent have gone through their professional organization to do so. Yet, these same members also rate their employer training significantly lower on quality. Such a statistic allows professional organizations ample opportunities to competitively grow their learning programs.

3 **Members are multimodal learners.**
Members want learning options that will meet their needs and fit their lifestyle. A variety of options in packaging and delivery can help professional organizations reach more members. Associations dominate the in-person space. But, there are areas for opportunity in video, on-demand and mobile learning.

4 **Personalization is key.**
Each member wants to develop his or her own learning paths based on personal, professional and career development goals. However, members still want support, guidance and recommendations from their professional organizations on topics, such as required job skills, certification requirements and career advancement.

5 **Members are focused on career advancement. Especially Millennials.**
Eighty percent of Millennials and 72 percent of Gen Xers desire some form of career stage matching, based on completed continuing education, from their professional organization. They are interested in a range of tactics that connect and highlight their current and future continued learning to potential employers and jobs.

6 **A gender perception gap exists among members.**
Women are more interested in what their organization can provide to help them grow as professionals, and feel they "need" continuing education for more "competence" in their jobs. They are less likely, though, to feel their organization has helped them advance their career.

Section 1: Change in the market
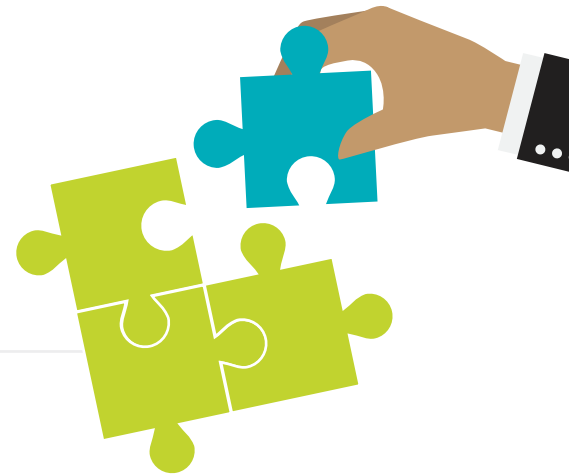
There is a shift occurring as to why members are joining professional organizations.

Fifty-one percent of members surveyed report they joined their current organizations for benefits like continuing education and networking. This number has increased by 9 percentage points since our **2016 Member Engagement Study** was conducted. The percentage of members who report joining organizations out of a sense of professional responsibility has also dropped 5 percentage points since 2016.

Legend: ■ 2018 ■ 2016

Professional benefits, like networking and continuing education	Professional responsibility to support the organization	Specific product or service provided by the organization, such as insurance	Other	Don't know
51% / 42%	36% / 41%	7% / 9%	4% / 4%	2% / 4%

Figure 1: Thinking back to when you first joined the professional membership organization, would you say that you primarily joined because ... Please select one.

Members are desiring additional benefits, offerings and services from their membership. All generations surveyed prioritized organizations providing continuing education opportunities, networking and help in facilitating new skills adoption.

Because of this shift, it is important professional organizations understand what members are looking for from their membership. Ultimately, they need to assess their services and offerings. **Figure 2** shares those benefits and services members feel are most important for their professional organization to provide in the context of learning and professional development.

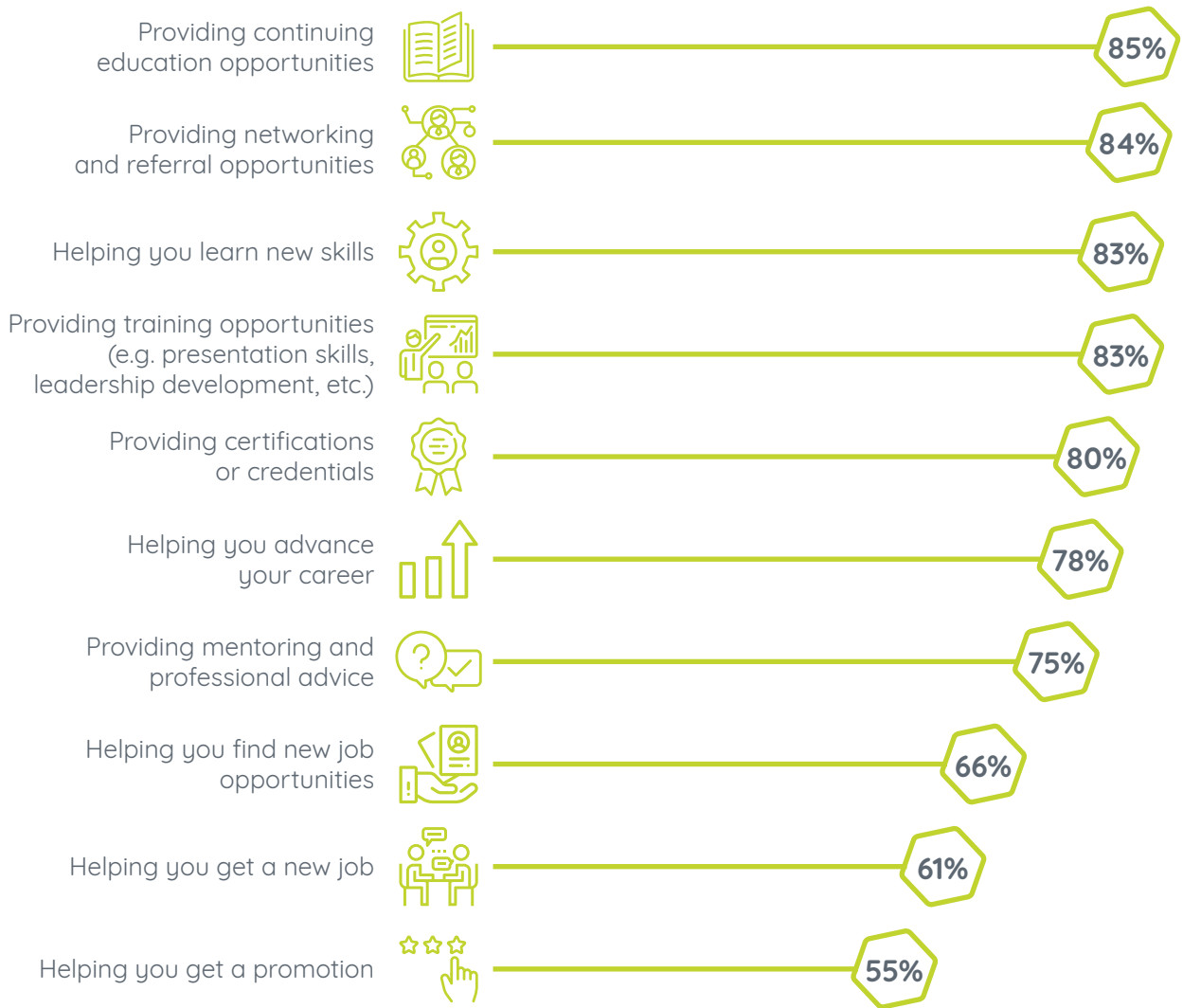| Benefit / Service	Importance
Providing continuing education opportunities	85%
Providing networking and referral opportunities	84%
Helping you learn new skills	83%
Providing training opportunities (e.g. presentation skills, leadership development, etc.)	83%
Providing certifications or credentials	80%
Helping you advance your career	78%
Providing mentoring and professional advice	75%
Helping you find new job opportunities	66%
Helping you get a new job	61%
Helping you get a promotion	55%

Figure 2: How important, "Very" to "Somewhat," is it for your professional membership organization to provide each of the following benefits and services to you personally?

It is also critical to understand different generations shift their level of importance for particular benefits and services.

Across age and career level, continuing education and certifications still rank high across all generations. **Figure 3** spotlights where Millennials, Gen Xers and Boomers converge and diverge when it comes to the significance of particular benefits and services.
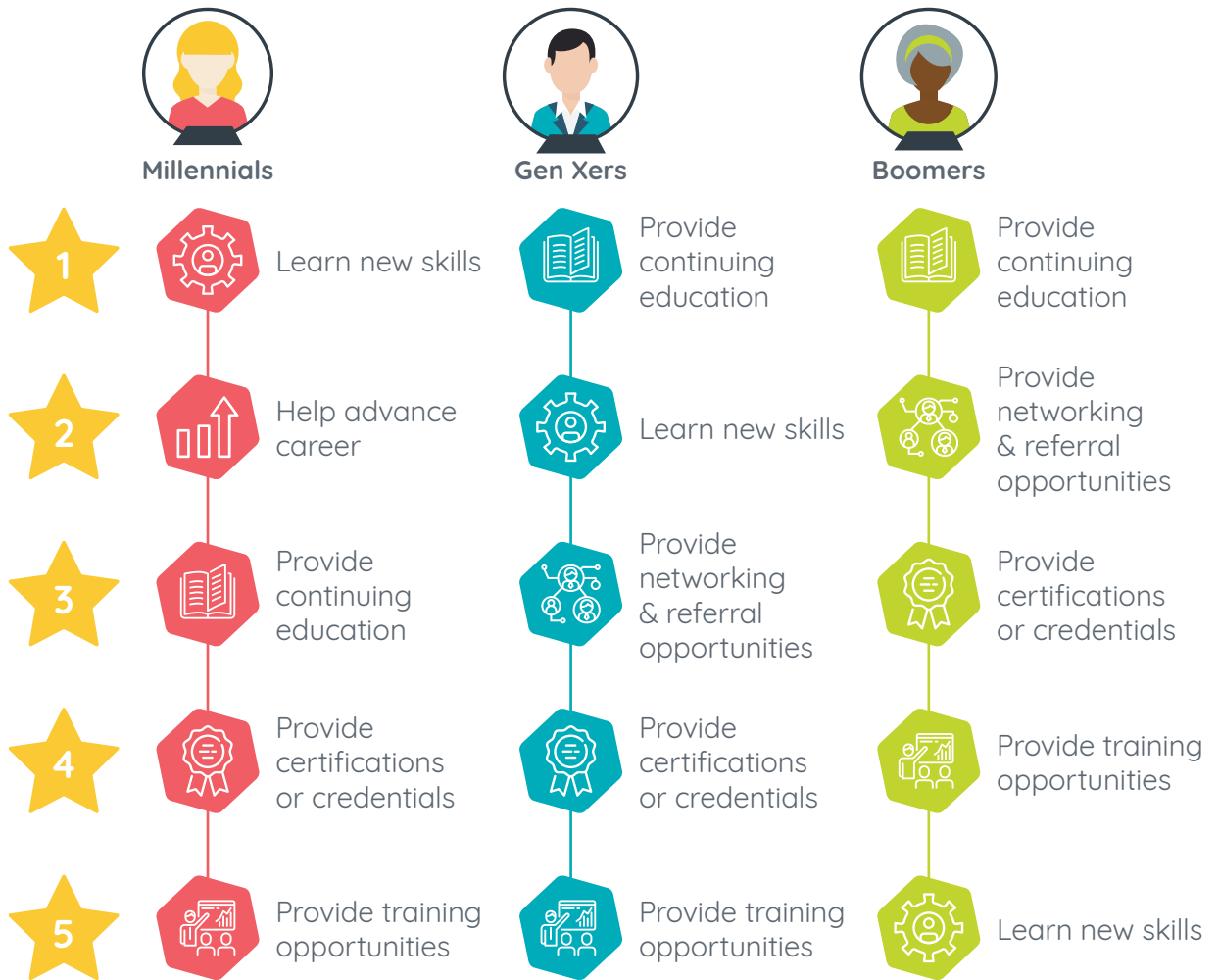
	Millennials	Gen Xers	Boomers
1	Learn new skills	Provide continuing education	Provide continuing education
2	Help advance career	Learn new skills	Provide networking & referral opportunities
3	Provide continuing education	Provide networking & referral opportunities	Provide certifications or credentials
4	Provide certifications or credentials	Provide certifications or credentials	Provide training opportunities
5	Provide training opportunities	Provide training opportunities	Learn new skills

Figure 3: How important is it for your professional membership organization to provide each of the following benefits and services to you personally? (Rated "Very Important" by generation, across the three primary generations surveyed: Millennials, Gen Xers and Boomers.)

Millennials place more weight on learning new skills and gaining access to career advancement.

In comparison, Gen Xers and Boomers perceive career advancement and new skills far less important and rank continuing education opportunities highest. It can be assumed the younger generations prioritize growth, while older generations prioritize stability when it comes to the next step in their career path. **Figure 4** provides a view of the variances by generation when it comes to those benefits and services pertaining to career advancement.
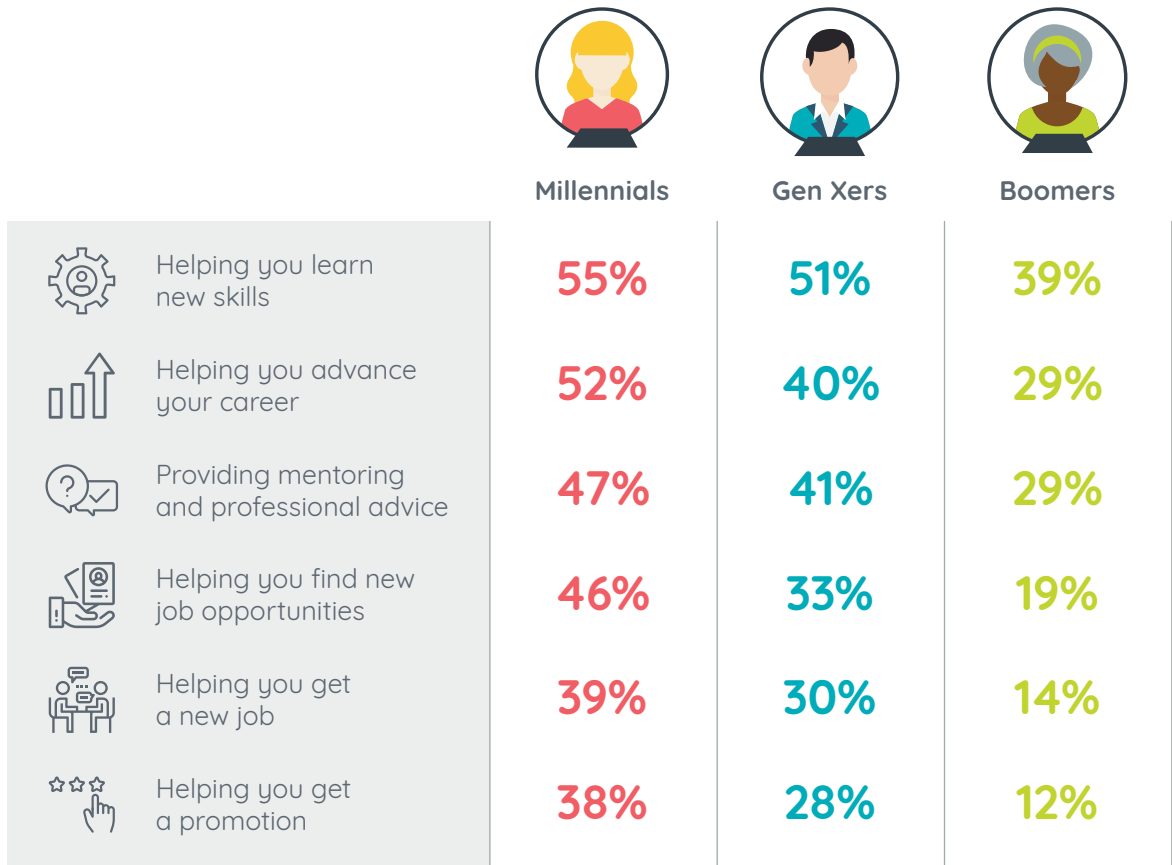
	Millennials	Gen Xers	Boomers
Helping you learn new skills	55%	51%	39%
Helping you advance your career	52%	40%	29%
Providing mentoring and professional advice	47%	41%	29%
Helping you find new job opportunities	46%	33%	19%
Helping you get a new job	39%	30%	14%
Helping you get a promotion	38%	28%	12%

Figure 4: How important is it for your professional membership organization to provide each of the following benefits and services to you personally? (By generation, "Very Important" responses)

When asked to rate how well their current member organization provides these benefits and services from **Figure 2**, members gave their organizations good ratings. However, across those benefits outside of continuing education and certifications, very few would say professional organizations are doing an excellent job. This leaves opportunities for improvement within key offerings. **Figure 5** shows the percentage of those surveyed who rated each benefit or service provided by their professional organization as "Excellent" or "Very Good."

Excellent
Very Good

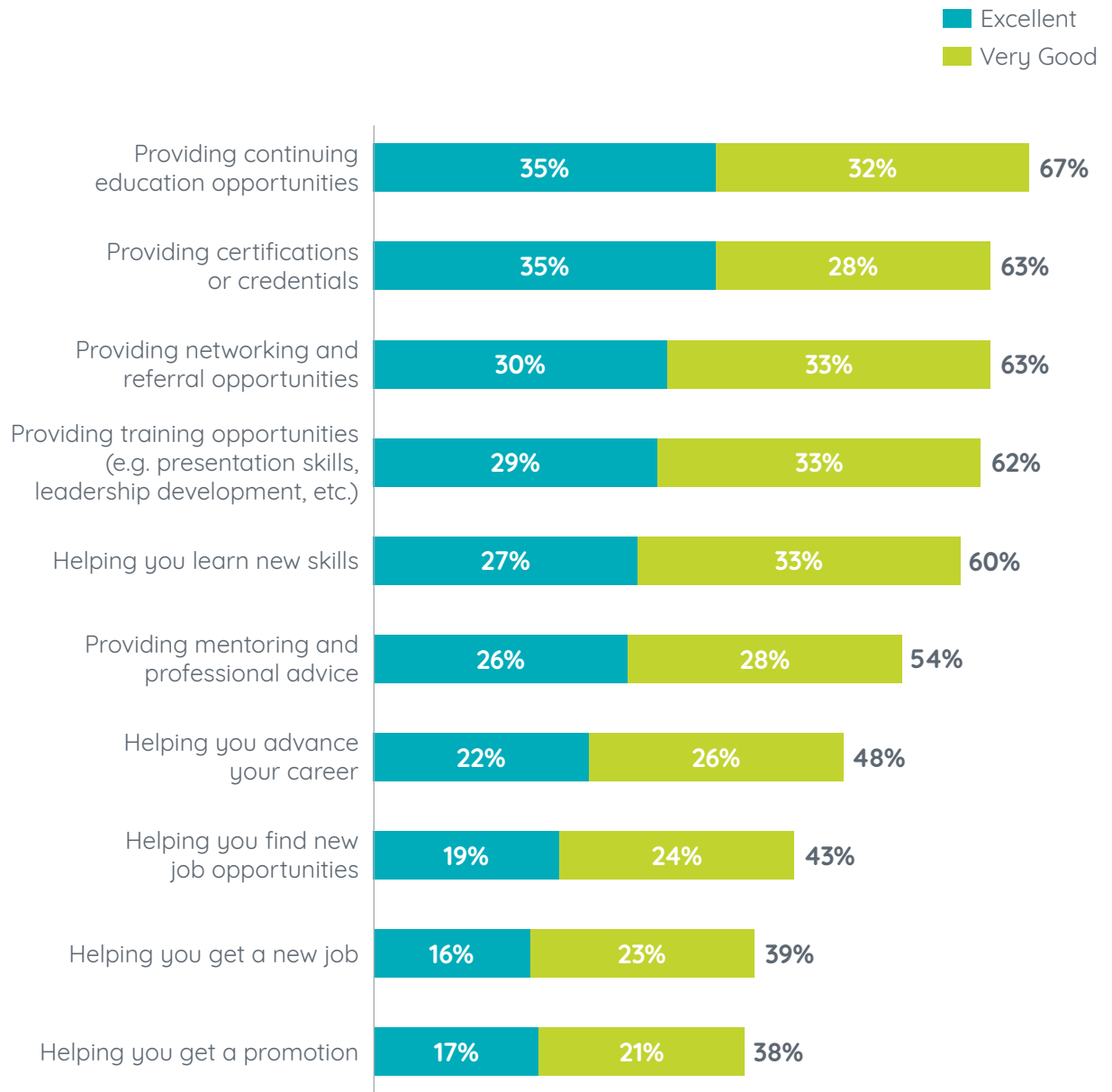|	Excellent	Very Good	Total
Providing continuing education opportunities	35%	32%	67%
Providing certifications or credentials	35%	28%	63%
Providing networking and referral opportunities	30%	33%	63%
Providing training opportunities (e.g. presentation skills, leadership development, etc.)	29%	33%	62%
Helping you learn new skills	27%	33%	60%
Providing mentoring and professional advice	26%	28%	54%
Helping you advance your career	22%	26%	48%
Helping you find new job opportunities	19%	24%	43%
Helping you get a new job	16%	23%	39%
Helping you get a promotion	17%	21%	38%

Figure 5: How would you rate your professional membership organization on each of the following?

Section 2: Continuing education and certification

Most members, regardless of their age, reported that continuing education and training is required to be compliant within their industry.

Because of this, most members surveyed have participated in some form of professional development or a continuing education course in recent years.
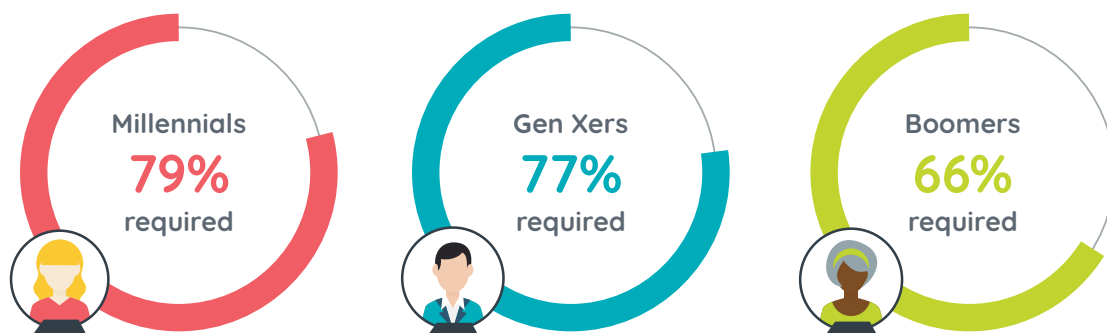

Millennials
79%
required

Gen Xers
77%
required

Boomers
66%
required

Figure 6: In the industry in which you work, are you required to take professional education and training in order to comply with industry standards (i.e. licensure and certification)?

In fact, 82 percent of respondents state they have participated in professional education and training within the past two years. But, only 53 percent received that education from their professional membership organization. The number of members who receive continuing education from their organization has declined 7 percent over the past year as many members are reporting they, instead, receive it from their employer. This is especially true among younger members. During the past year alone, the percentage of Millennials who received education from their professional organization dropped 11 percentage points (**Figure 7**).
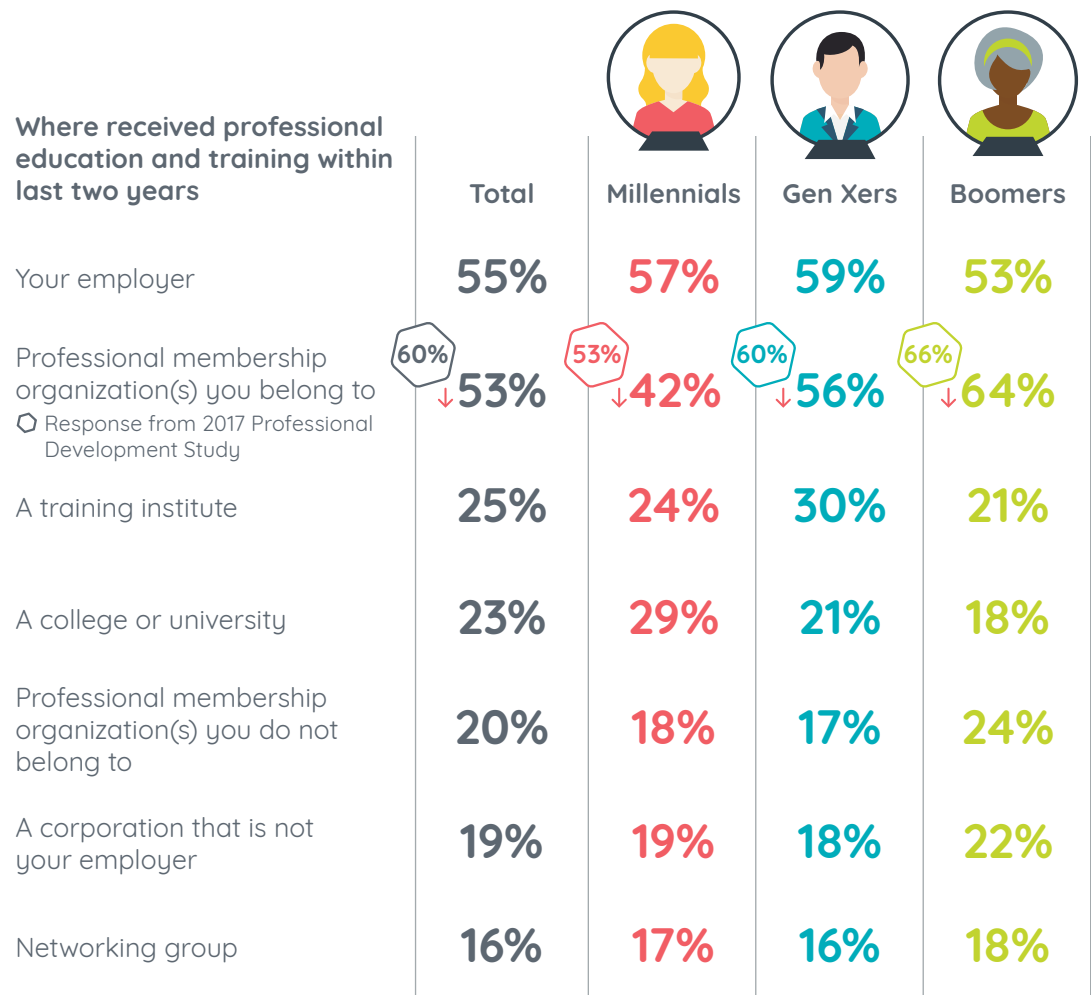
Where received professional education and training within last two years	Total	Millennials	Gen Xers	Boomers
Your employer	55%	57%	59%	53%
Professional membership organization(s) you belong to ○ Response from 2017 Professional Development Study	60% ↓53%	53% ↓42%	60% ↓56%	66% ↓64%
A training institute	25%	24%	30%	21%
A college or university	23%	29%	21%	18%
Professional membership organization(s) you do not belong to	20%	18%	17%	24%
A corporation that is not your employer	19%	19%	18%	22%
Networking group	16%	17%	16%	18%

Figure 7: Within the past two years, through which of the following organizations or venues have you received professional education and training? Select all that apply.

It is worth noting some of this employer training and education may actually be taking place through an employer's affiliation with a professional membership organization.

Younger generations may also find a level of convenience and lower to no cost in training and education provided by their employer. However, as we find later, professional organizations have an upper hand when it comes to quality and the ability to serve as a trusted, go-to source for individuals within their industry.

In seeking education overall, staying up to date with the latest trends in their industry is a key driver, especially for Boomers. **Figure 8** shares the top five motivators, including maintaining requirements within their field, that play a large role in members' reasons to participate in professional training.

Note, the highest ranking drivers also tie directly to the stated desired benefits of members for continuing education and career advancement.
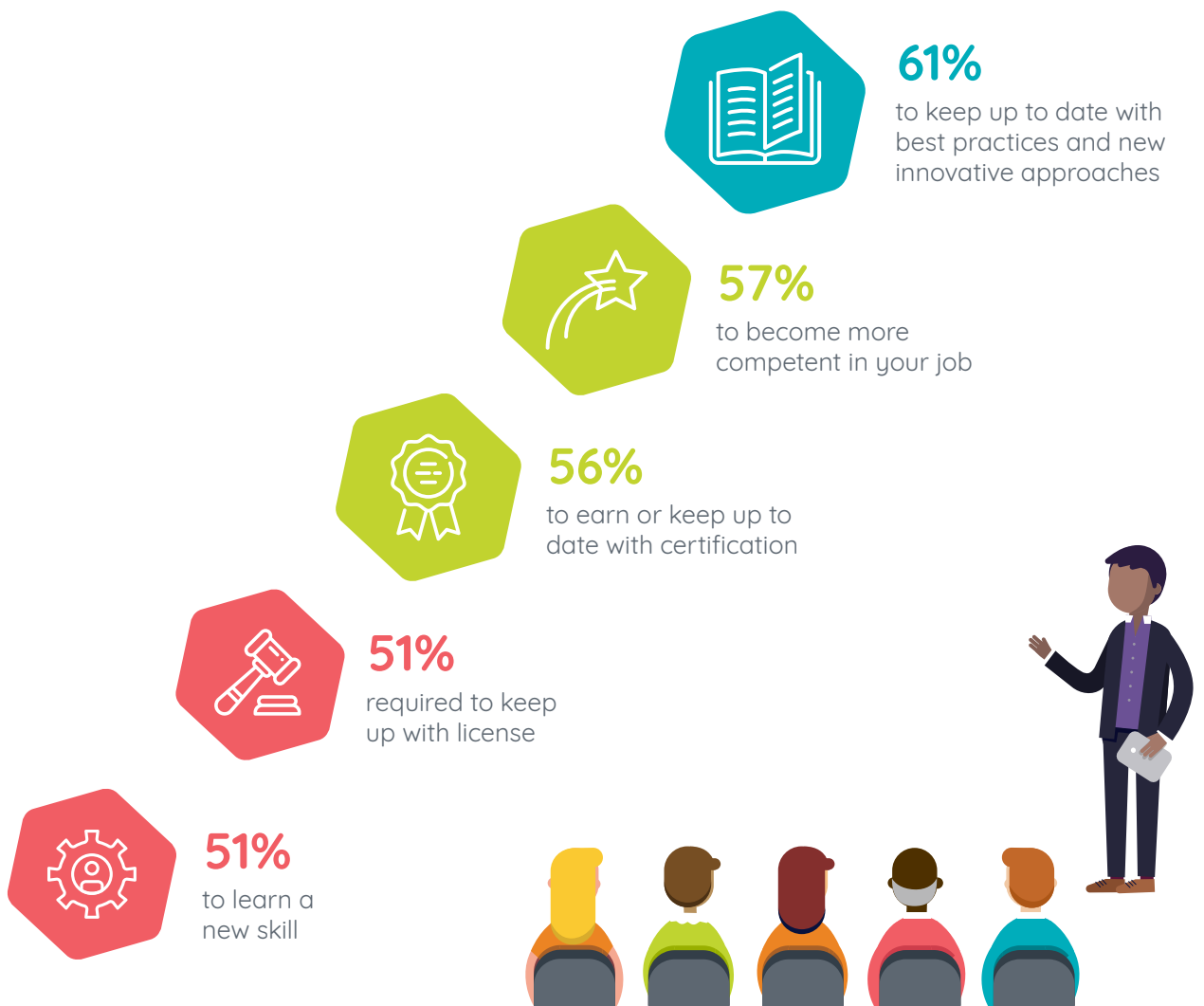
61%
to keep up to date with best practices and new innovative approaches

57%
to become more competent in your job

56%
to earn or keep up to date with certification

51%
required to keep up with license

51%
to learn a new skill

Figure 8: For you personally, what role do each of the following play in your decision to take professional education and training?

When asked to rate the quality of professional education and training received during the past two years, (from **Figure 7**), only 69 percent of members rated education and training from their employer as "Excellent" or "Very Good," compared to 81 percent for education and training received from a professional membership organization. Millennials, in particular, rated training from a professional organization as "Excellent" – 13 percent higher than received from their employer. **Figure 9** shows how each provider rates as "Excellent" or "Very Good" compared to the other.
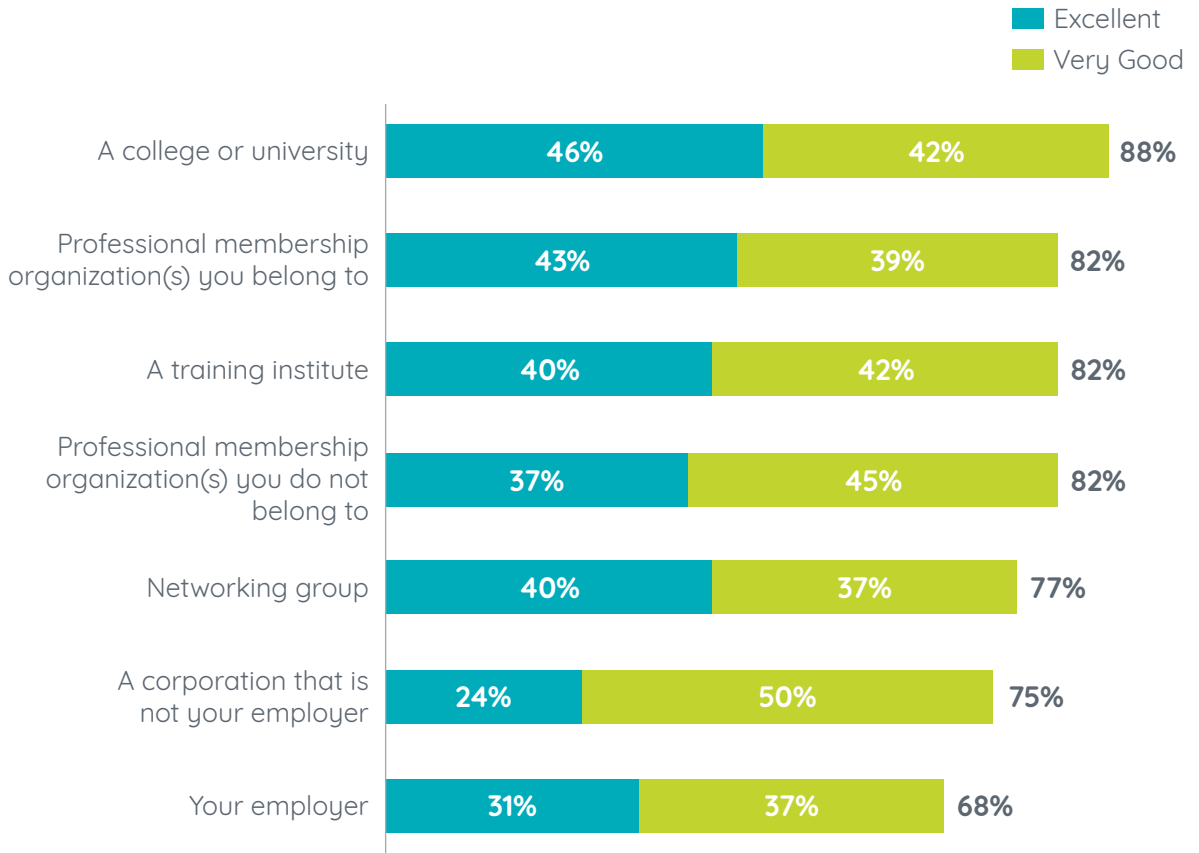
	Excellent	Very Good	Total
A college or university	46%	42%	88%
Professional membership organization(s) you belong to	43%	39%	82%
A training institute	40%	42%	82%
Professional membership organization(s) you do not belong to	37%	45%	82%
Networking group	40%	37%	77%
A corporation that is not your employer	24%	50%	75%
Your employer	31%	37%	68%

Figure 9: Overall, how would you rate the professional education and training you received from each of the following? ("Excellent" or "Very Good")

For those members who pursue professional development and continuing education from their professional organization, the top reasons for doing so are relevance and quality of content, which are ahead of convenience, general value and fulfilling required training. **Figure 10** provides those reasons that describe "Perfectly" or "Very Well" why members sought out education from a professional member organization.

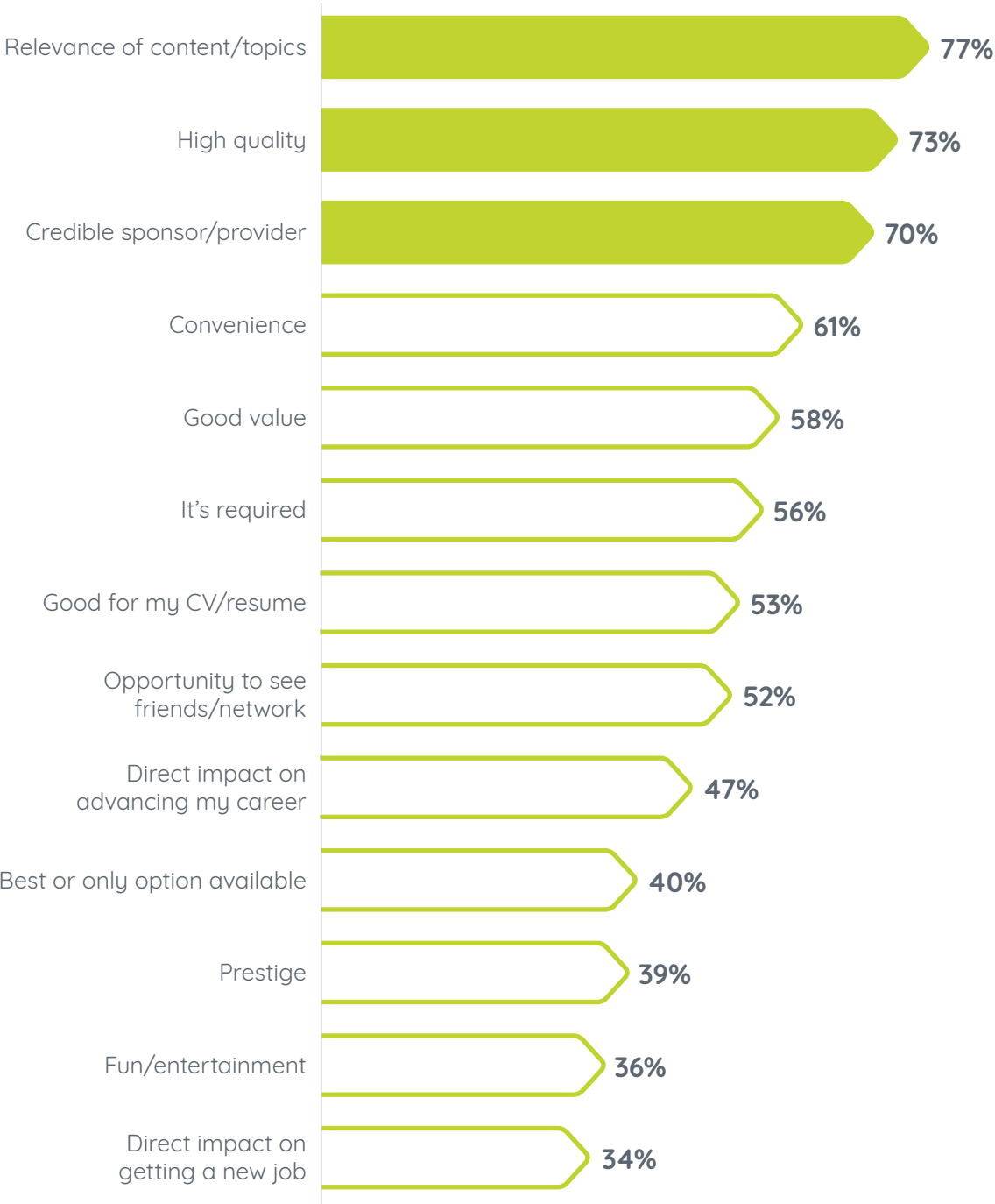|	
Relevance of content/topics	77%
High quality	73%
Credible sponsor/provider	70%
Convenience	61%
Good value	58%
It's required	56%
Good for my CV/resume	53%
Opportunity to see friends/network	52%
Direct impact on advancing my career	47%
Best or only option available	40%
Prestige	39%
Fun/entertainment	36%
Direct impact on getting a new job	34%

Figure 10: How well do each of following describe WHY you took professional education and training through your professional membership organization?

When rating their overall professional education experiences from those providers in **Figure 9**, members were asked to take a lot into consideration. Those considerations included if the content was engaging and specific enough, if the timing of the training worked well with their schedule and the ease of use of technology used during the training. Most (81 percent) feel as if the professional education they received from their professional member organization was "Excellent" or "Very Good," and few (only 2 percent) "Fair" or "Poor." Those who rated it unfairly are most likely to criticize the content for not being engaging or specific enough. In **Figure 11**, each of the reasons why professional education and training from any venue received a "Fair" or "Poor" rating are displayed. By comparison, a higher percentage, 11 percent, of members feel as if professional education received from their employer was "Fair" or "Poor."
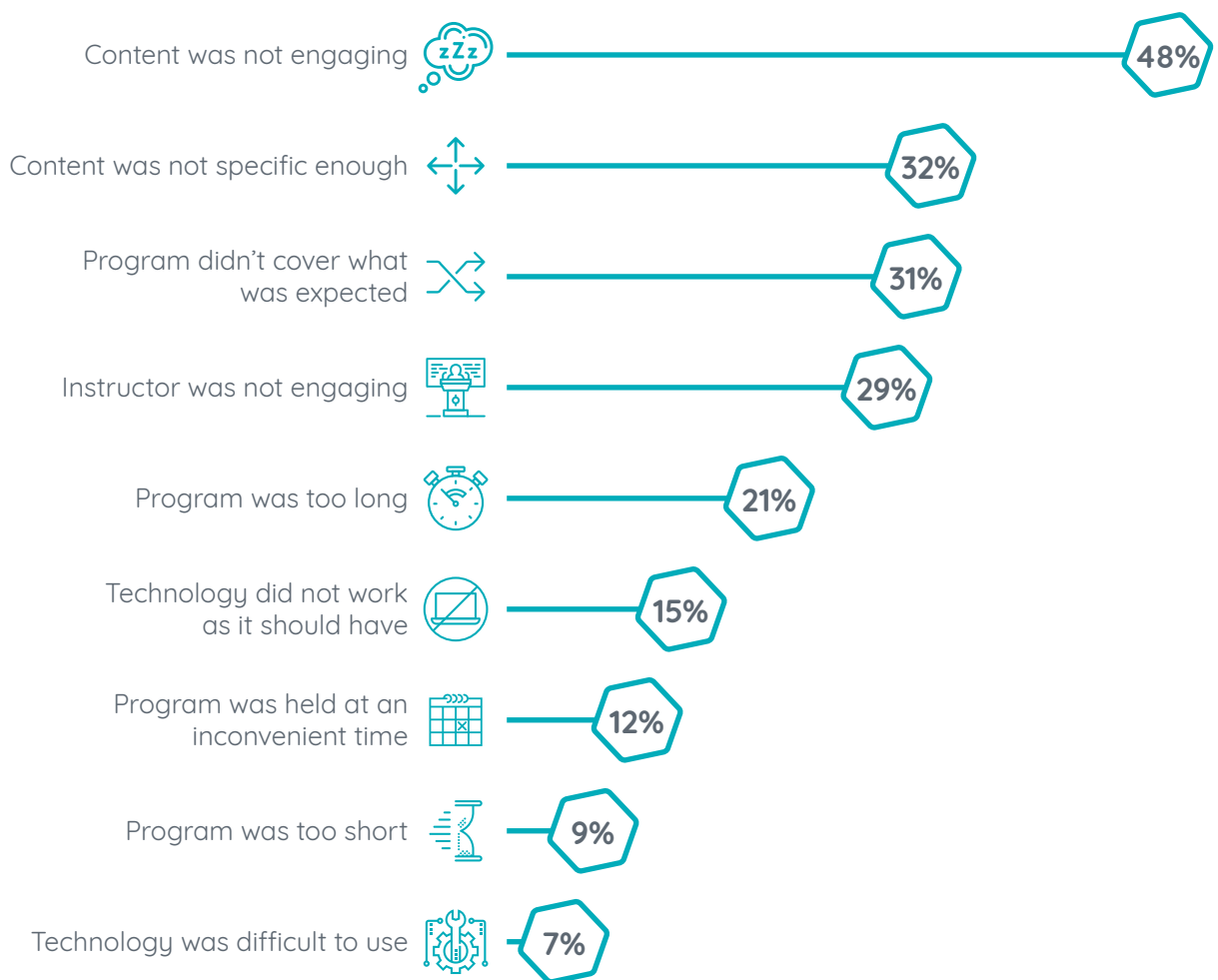
Content was not engaging — **48%**

Content was not specific enough — **32%**

Program didn't cover what was expected — **31%**

Instructor was not engaging — **29%**

Program was too long — **21%**

Technology did not work as it should have — **15%**

Program was held at an inconvenient time — **12%**

Program was too short — **9%**

Technology was difficult to use — **7%**

Figure 11: You indicated some of the professional education and training you received was "Fair" or "Poor." For which of the following reasons did you rate your professional education and training in that way? Select all that apply. (n=75)

Section 3: Preferred learning formats
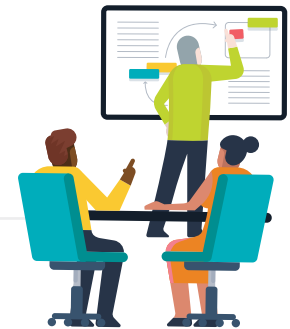
Gone are the days when members rely on all of their continuing education coming from annual conferences or hosted meetings.

Members are now learning anytime, anywhere and in a variety of different ways (five on average), including in-person, digital, time-intensive, condensed and micro-focused. This adoption of a multimodal way of learning provides professional organizations with ample opportunities and challenges to creatively deliver educational content in engaging ways. **Figure 12** lists the various modes of learning in which members have participated through their professional membership organization or another organization/venue during the past two years.
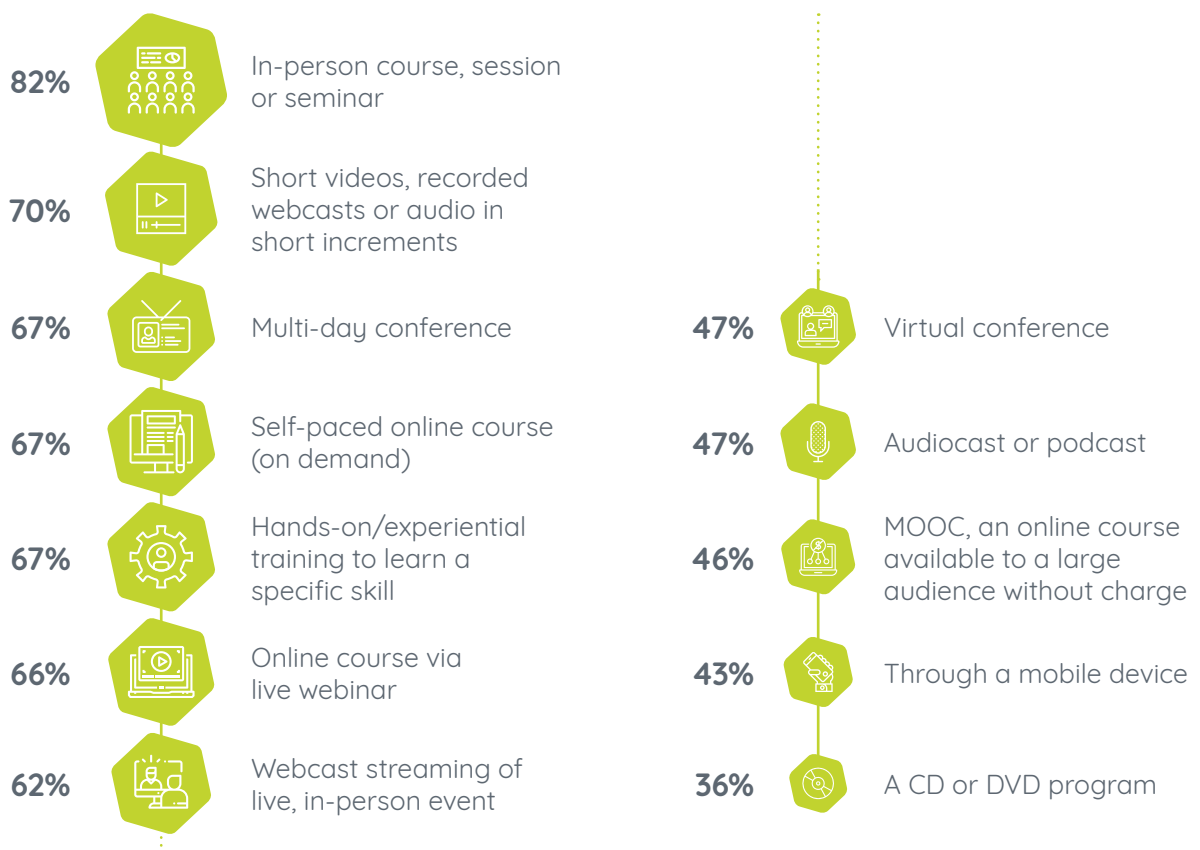
82% In-person course, session or seminar

70% Short videos, recorded webcasts or audio in short increments

67% Multi-day conference

47% Virtual conference

67% Self-paced online course (on demand)

47% Audiocast or podcast

67% Hands-on/experiential training to learn a specific skill

46% MOOC, an online course available to a large audience without charge

66% Online course via live webinar

43% Through a mobile device

62% Webcast streaming of live, in-person event

36% A CD or DVD program

Figure 12: Which of the following types of professional education and training have you taken during the last two years through your professional membership organization and/or another organization or venue?

Professional membership organizations still dominate the traditional in-person course space. But, the landscape is becoming more competitive, as newer learning formats grow in popularity among members, such as short videos and webcasts, on-demand learning courses and mobile learning opportunities.
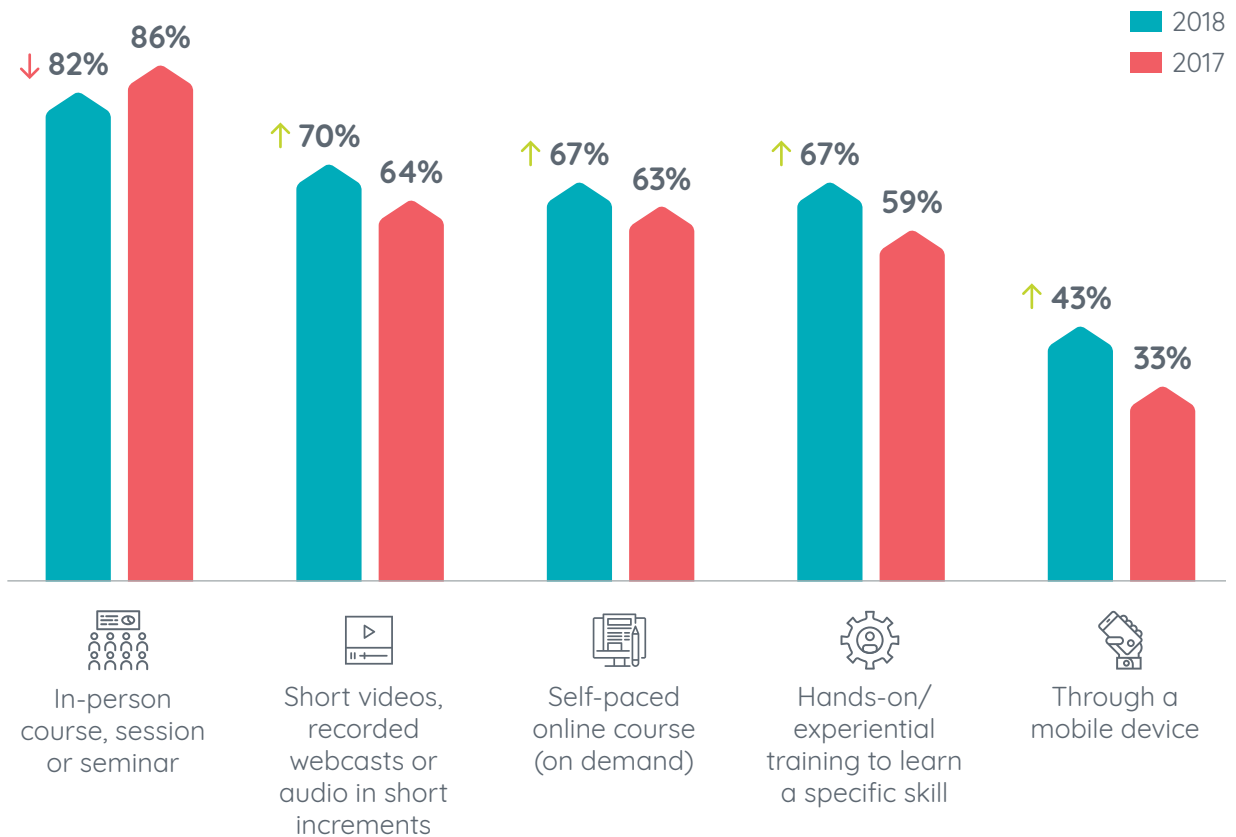

Legend:
- 2018
- 2017

Category	2018	2017
In-person course, session or seminar	↓ 82%	86%
Short videos, recorded webcasts or audio in short increments	↑ 70%	64%
Self-paced online course (on demand)	↑ 67%	63%
Hands-on/ experiential training to learn a specific skill	↑ 67%	59%
Through a mobile device	↑ 43%	33%

Figure 13: Which of the following types of professional education and training have you taken during the past two years through your professional membership organization and/or another organization or venue? (2017 Member Professional Development Study vs. 2018 responses)

The slight decrease in in-person courses shouldn't be considered a threat or major concern, but rather an opportunity for organizations to recognize a desire for variety and options when it comes to consuming learning.

When it comes to that desire for variety and options, the assumption younger generations are primary early adopters of emerging learning formats is largely a misconception. For example, the number of Gen Xers and Boomers interested in short videos and condensed content as educational tools has increased from last year (compared to findings from the **2017 Member Professional Development Study**). Furthermore, this increase surpasses Millennials who are still just as interested in face-to-face learning and on-demand, self-paced options. **Figure 14** shares the top three types of training taken through any venue during the past two years, broken out by generation.
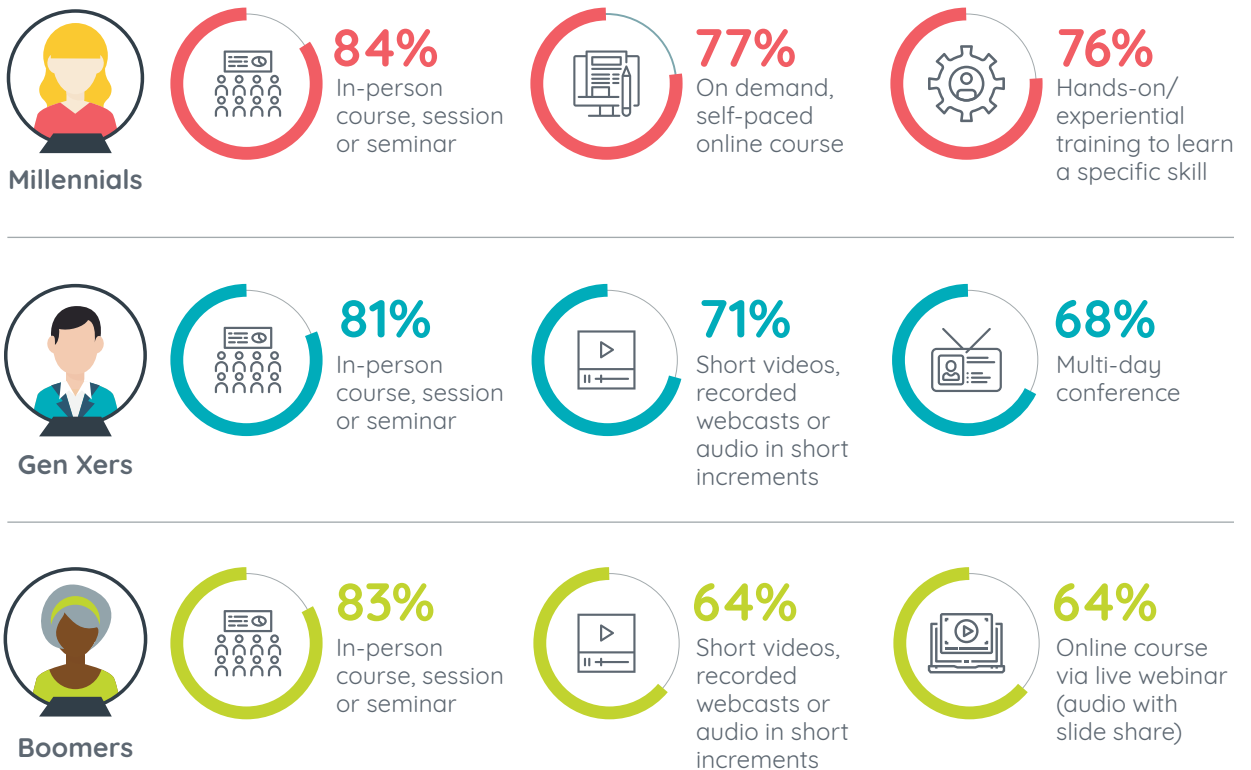
Millennials

84% In-person course, session or seminar

77% On demand, self-paced online course

76% Hands-on/ experiential training to learn a specific skill

Gen Xers

81% In-person course, session or seminar

71% Short videos, recorded webcasts or audio in short increments

68% Multi-day conference

Boomers

83% In-person course, session or seminar

64% Short videos, recorded webcasts or audio in short increments

64% Online course via live webinar (audio with slide share)

Figure 14: Which of the following types of professional education and training have you taken during the past two years through your professional membership organization and/or another organization or venue? (Broken down by the top three for each of the three main generations surveyed: Millennials, Gen Xers and Boomers.)

Overall, the ability to consume a variety of formats and learning options appeals to members of every age.

When asked what types of professional education members are interested in participating in, responses spread similarly across multiple modes and formats of learning. **Figure 15** shares how interested members are in participating in a variety of in-person and online learning opportunities today and in the near future.

	Total	Millennials	Gen Xers	Boomers
In-person course, session or seminar	79%	82%	78%	79%
Hands-on/experiential training to learn a specific skill	77%	81%	82%	70%
Self-paced online course (on demand)	74%	79%	80%	64%
Recommended courses	72%	78%	74%	66%
Short videos, recorded webcasts or audio in short increments	70%	74%	73%	64%
Online course via live webinar	69%	71%	75%	63%
Multi-day conference	65%	68%	64%	62%
Recommended learning paths	64%	74%	66%	54%
Social learning	63%	69%	66%	53%
MOOC, an online course available to a large audience without charge	63%	71%	66%	54%
Webcast streaming of live, in-person event	63%	65%	67%	60%
Rebroadcast	60%	64%	64%	55%
Just-in-time learning	60%	72%	62%	47%
Virtual conference	59%	64%	66%	50%
Mobile learning	51%	65%	56%	35%
Podcast (audio only)	46%	56%	48%	33%
A CD or DVD program	44%	51%	42%	39%
Gamification	43%	63%	46%	18%

Figure 15: How interested are you in each of the following professional education and training opportunities?

As consumption habits, behaviors and attitudes continue to evolve, it is important to consider how newer learning modes, such as just-in-time learning, podcasts and gamification, will continue to grow to become crucial learning tools and formats.

Section 4: Connecting learning to career opportunities

ADVANCE
TO YOUR NEXT CAREER

Members want their organizations to help them develop professionally.

All generations are prioritizing continuing education opportunities and learning new skills as benefits they seek and need. But, Millennials and many Gen Xers also are focusing on career advancement.

Members prefer personalized learning paths that are self-constructed or recommended and use various modes of learning to best fit with their lifestyle. When asked about their interest in recommended learning paths, members report a desire for recommendations based largely on required job skills, certification opportunities, career stage and past interest in particular topics. **Figure 16** and **16a** look at learning path and course recommendations each generation is interested in most.

Millennials		Gen Xers		Boomers	
Build own learning path	Pre-determined course	Build own learning path	Pre-determined course	Build own learning path	Pre-determined course
35%	**24%**	**37%**	**21%**	**45%**	**26%**
Want recommendations on learning path		Want recommendations on learning path		Want recommendations on learning path	
38%		**38%**		**21%**	
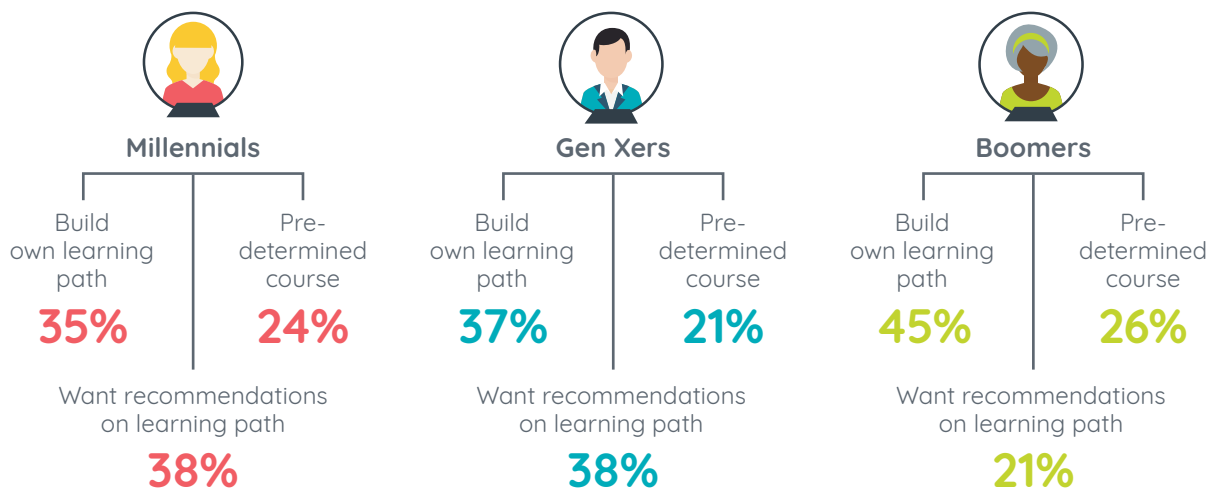
Figure 16: When it comes to the professional development and training your professional membership organization offers, which of the following do you prefer?
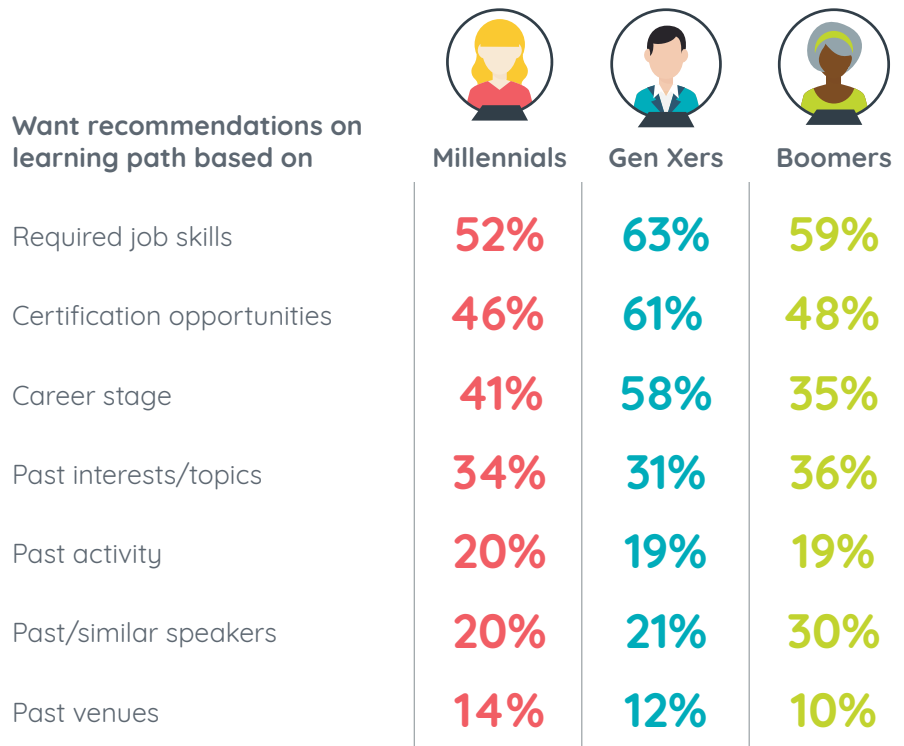
Want recommendations on learning path based on	Millennials	Gen Xers	Boomers
Required job skills	52%	63%	59%
Certification opportunities	46%	61%	48%
Career stage	41%	58%	35%
Past interests/topics	34%	31%	36%
Past activity	20%	19%	19%
Past/similar speakers	20%	21%	30%
Past venues	14%	12%	10%

Figure 16a: What kind of recommendations are you most interested in? Recommendations based on … Please select all that apply. (Broken down by the three main generations surveyed: Millennials, Gen Xers and Boomers.) Note: This was only asked among those who said they "wanted recommendations on a learning path, n=329.

Members also prefer continuing education options and recommendations that provide them with the knowledge and skill development they need to be successful in their jobs and throughout their career. **Figure 17** shows how likely each generation is to seek out continuing education if it is connected to specific jobs for which they have an interest and qualifications.

	Total	Millennials	Gen Xers	Boomers
Much more likely	45%	57%	47%	30%
Somewhat more likely	29%	35%	29%	21%
No effect	21%	6%	20%	39%
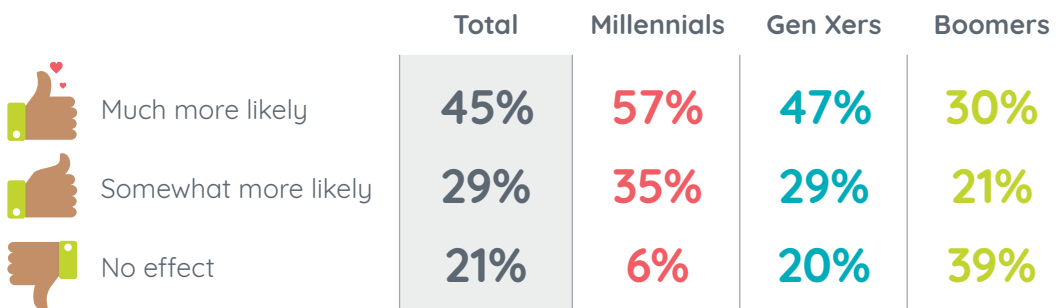
Figure 17: How likely are you to seek out continuing education if it's connected to specific jobs you may be more qualified for?

Millennials and Gen Xers both demonstrated a great interest in a career-stage matching service provided by their professional membership organization. This service would connect each member's qualifications and credentials with open jobs found within their job board or career center. Members are matched with job postings aligning to their career aspirations and acquired or future continuing education.
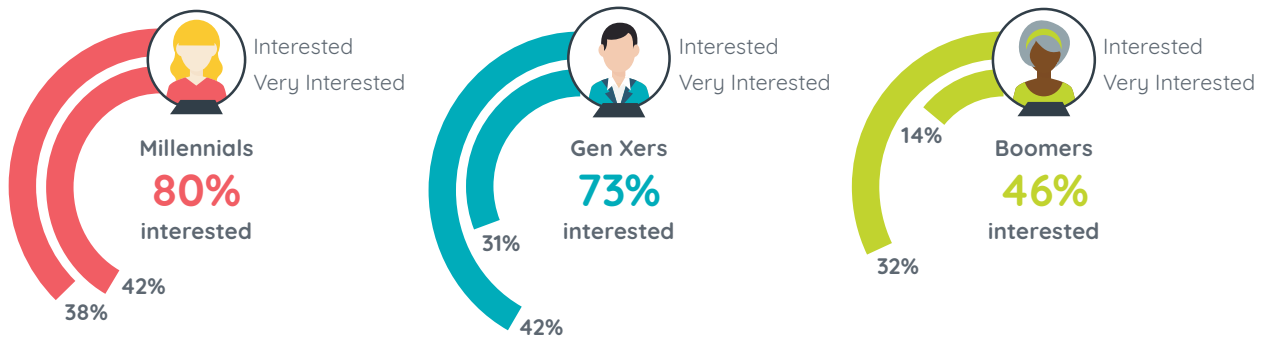

Millennials Interested / Very Interested — **80% interested** — 42% / 38%

Gen Xers Interested / Very Interested — **73% interested** — 31% / 42%

Boomers Interested / Very Interested — **46% interested** — 14% / 32%

Figure 18: How interested are you in a career stage matching service that connects your certifications/e-learning credentials (as you complete them) with open, relevant job opportunities?

Younger generations are more interested in promoting their certification and achievements. They are also more likely to seek out continuing education that makes them more qualified for potential jobs. Millennials, in particular, like the idea of being able to connect their continuing education directly to available jobs or employers. They embrace social sharing, digital badges and posting tactics that allow them to highlight their continuing education on places like job boards, LinkedIn and other professional and social profiles.

Seventy-six percent of Millennials are interested in options that add their continuing education to their profile within their organization's job board. Meanwhile, 73 percent would like automatic updates made to their profile within the organization's job board. **Figure 19** demonstrates other ways professional organizations can assist their members by publicly highlighting their continuing education credit for professional growth and career opportunities.
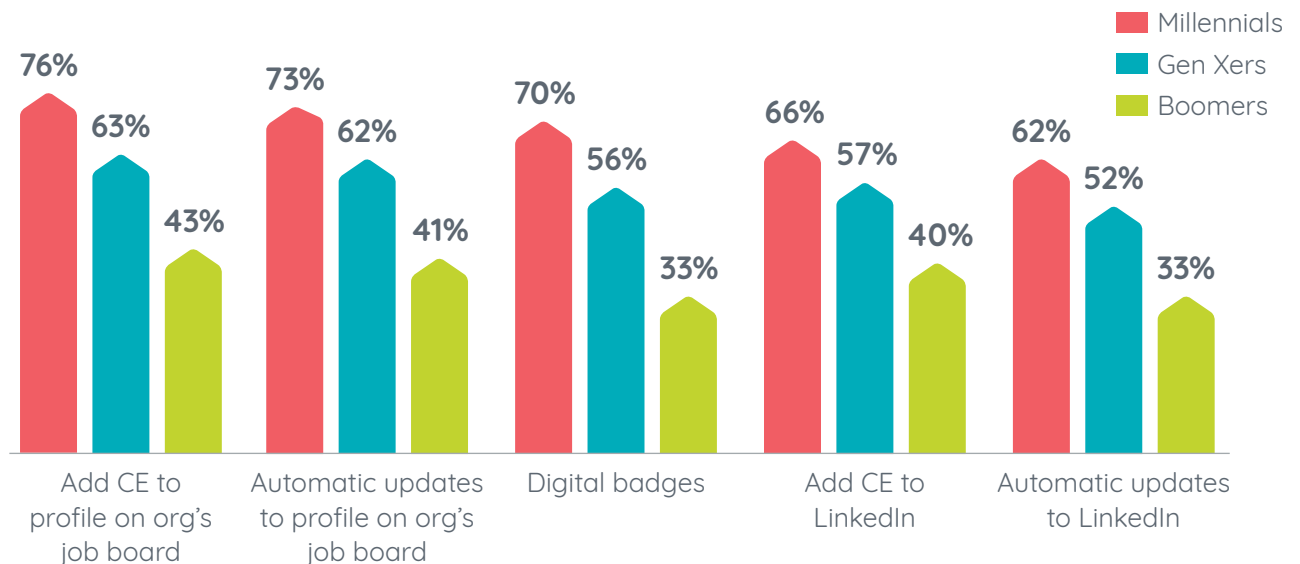

Legend: Millennials / Gen Xers / Boomers

	Millennials	Gen Xers	Boomers
Add CE to profile on org's job board	76%	63%	43%
Automatic updates to profile on org's job board	73%	62%	41%
Digital badges	70%	56%	33%
Add CE to LinkedIn	66%	57%	40%
Automatic updates to LinkedIn	62%	52%	33%

Figure 19: Here are some different ways your professional membership organization can help you to highlight or showcase on your network the professional development, training and/or certifications you have received. How interested are you in each?

Career centers and job boards

+2 NEW JOB MATCHES

Fifty-six percent of members report that their professional organization has a career center or job board, of those, 75 percent have used that job board with 46 percent reporting they have used it within the past two years. And, from that, younger generations of Millennials and Gen Xers report the highest use.

Figure 20 shows the percentage of members who have used their professional organization's job board during the past two years by generation (among those whose organization has a job board, n=567).

Millennials
56%
used a career center/job board

Gen Xers
54%
used a career center/job board

Boomers
24%
used a career center/job board
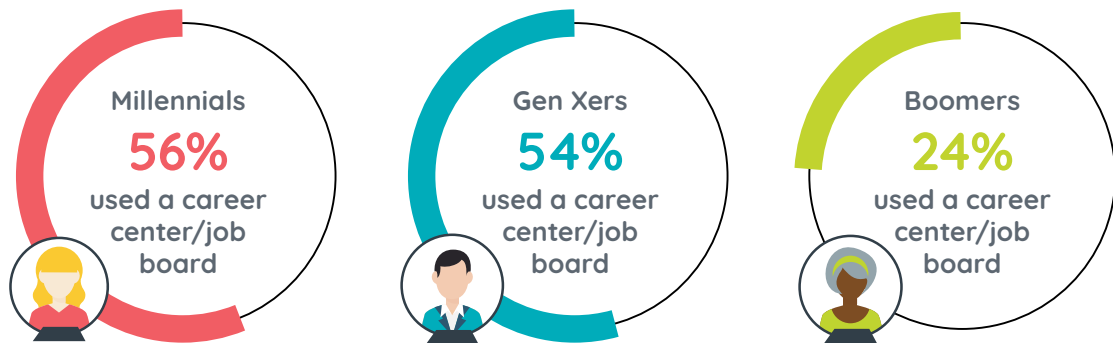
Figure 20: Have you used your professional organization's career center or job board (within the past two years)?

Of those job boards, 77 percent of them received an "Excellent" or "Very Good" rating from members using them. When asked about the quality of jobs posted to the job board, 40 percent feel that jobs published through their professional membership organization's job board are more "authentic" than those posted on generic job boards not focused in their specific niche or industry.

40%	37%	15%	7%	1%
Excellent	Very good	Good	Fair	Poor

Figure 21: How would you rate your professional organization's career center or job board? (among those who have used a job board, n=424)

When it comes to discovering new job postings from their professional membership organization and within their professional network, members across all generations express new preferences and methods on learning about them.

Fifty-nine percent now report they prefer dedicated emails and 32 percent want to see recommendations specific to them based on past activity. This is a drastic shift compared to the **2017 Member Loyalty Study** where 54 percent of respondents stated they preferred to find out about job opportunity listings from their organization's newsletter. Member behaviors are showing a desire for targeted, focused and relevant messaging around what they are most interested.

Figure 22 provides a snapshot of communication preferences of new job postings across the three generations of members surveyed: Millennials, Gen Xers and Boomers.

	Total	Millennials	Gen Xers	Boomers
Dedicated emails	59%	62%	62%	53%
Monthly newsletter	38%	34%	42%	41%
Email recommendations based on past activity	32%	35%	36%	26%
Social media	21%	25%	28%	10%
Text alerts	19%	23%	26%	8%
Do not want to hear about new job opportunities	10%	5%	5%	20%
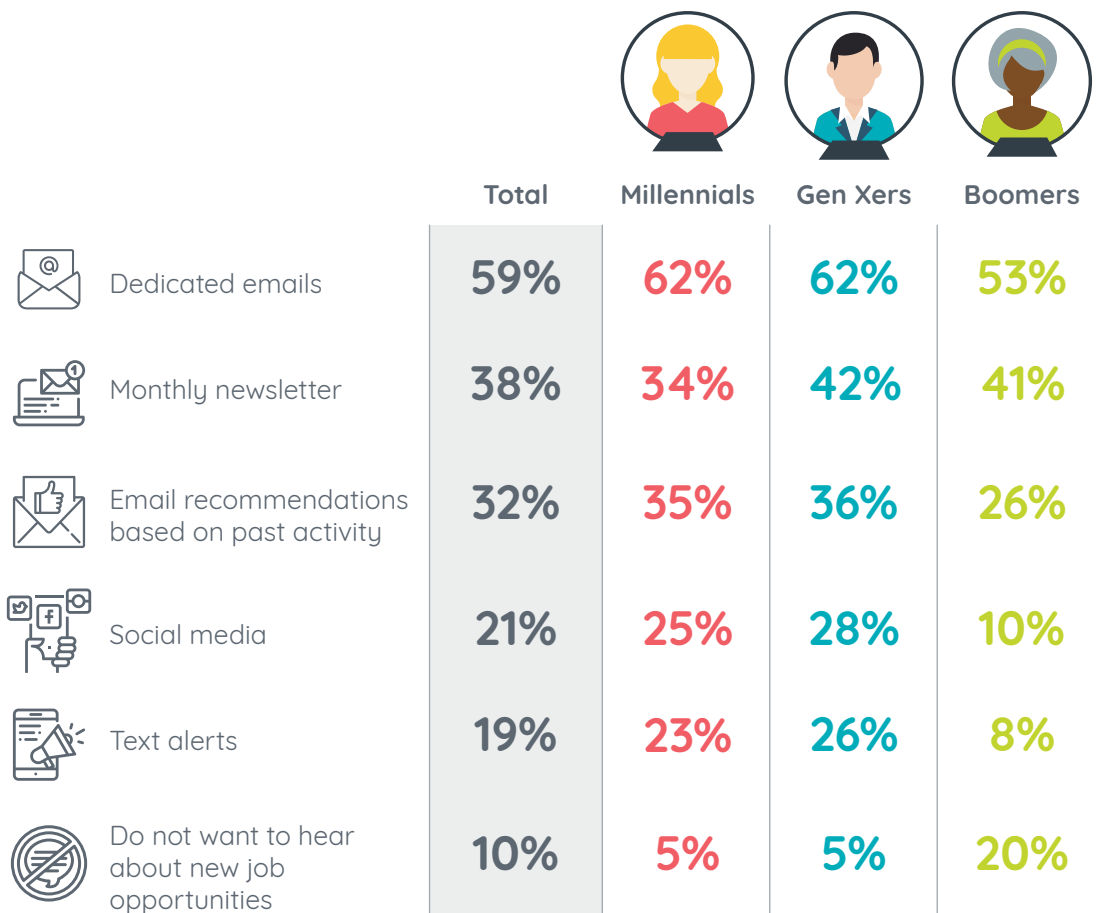
Figure 22: How do you prefer to hear about new job opportunities from your professional membership organization? Select all that apply.

# Special section: The gender perception gap

Throughout the findings we collected, several data points highlight a gender gap among members.

Women appear to be more focused on the bottom line: What can they really get out of their membership to help better themselves as professionals? They join professional membership organizations for core benefits and services and embrace continuing education to learn new skills and become "more competent" and qualified.

Both men and women say it is important for their professional member organization to help them get a new job or advance them in their career. Yet fewer women feel their organizations are doing a good job at helping them, 8 to 9 percent less than men reported. When it comes to their organization's job board, more women report they are unsure if their organization has one or they never use it.

Discrepancies in interests, behaviors and perceptions can vary for a variety of reasons. But, professional organizations must take advantage of member data, such as identifying gaps among member groups that rate or show success and those that do not. This allows organizations to segment those members and focus on providing and educating particular services and offerings that allow them to succeed.
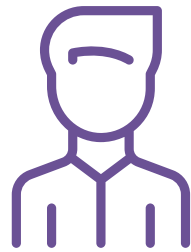
Male		Female
48%	Joined organization for professional benefits	**55%**
53%	Took CE to become more competent in job	**60%**
52%	To earn or keep up to date with certification	**60%**
47%	To learn a new skill	**54%**
61%	Very/somewhat important for organization to help you get a new job	**61%**
43%	Organization is excellent/very good at helping you get a new job	**34%**
57%	Very/somewhat important for organization to help you get a promotion	**53%**
42%	Organization is excellent/very good at helping you get a promotion	**34%**
18%	Unsure if organization has a job board	**25%**
21%	Never used job board	**29%**
37%	Held leadership position	**31%**

Section 5: Where do we go from here?

Findings from this study are designed to provide perspective and insight into the preferences and desires of members across generations.

We are also sharing recommendations so you can better understand what the best next steps are to help you deliver the holistic learning, professional and new skill development and growth opportunities today's members seek.

1 Assess your organization's services and offerings.

Because professional benefits and education continue to increase as the primary driver behind professional organization membership, the spotlight on the value of your organization's services and offerings will intensify. Take a close look at your member offerings and programs to see how they map back to what your members want most. Ensure your offerings provide the trifecta of key professional development benefits in some capacity: learning and continuing education, career growth and networking.

2 Evaluate your learning and professional education program.

Based on key motivators behind seeking professional education and general interest in all types of learning, members crave variety and options for how they consume education. Audit your professional education program and begin to understand what additional learning formats may be beneficial to add.

- Embrace new techniques and evaluate them to see if they may fit within your programing, such as personalized learning paths, just-in-time learning, virtual conferencing, live webinars, etc.

- Understand how other organizations have adopted different learning formats and how they may be adapted by your organization.

- Leverage technology partners with a system and services that make it easier to break down content, offer a variety of learning modes and formats and deliver content through an organized, customized on-demand course library.

3 Deliver quality content.

Content will always be king. As members seek professional development to stay up to date on best practices, become more competent in their job and learn new skills, the ability to provide engaging, quality content is key. While members do seek variety and options for how they consume content, quality will always trump quantity. Quality content is current, relevant, pragmatic and concise. Focus content on the expected educational experience. Based on the topic, courses should:

- Share fundamental knowledge
- Offer practical tips with detailed information on how to implement
- Convey ongoing shifts and trends
- Easily resonate

4 Cultivate career advancement.

Seeking support in career growth and advancement will only continue to increase in importance, especially with the growing workforce of Millennials. Professional organizations can connect members to career growth in a variety of ways. Consider how your organization's services and offerings support findings from this study around member career advancement today, how they may be easily enhanced or improved upon and through what other ways your association can support members at every career stage. You can categorize services and offerings in two ways to help achieve this:

- Connect learning to job skills development and advancement
- Connect members to relevant, new job opportunities

5 Leverage technology.

The right technology infrastructure truly makes all the difference. While the market is swarming with solution providers and options, the right solution to meet your organization's needs and goals is out there. Seamless integrations between your key systems is also critical to your success and ability to capture, analyze and understand member behaviors, activities and interests. Based on your organization's goals and roadmap for the future, assess your current technology solutions and begin to understand where key features, functionality and integration points may be missing by asking these questions:

- Association Management System (AMS): Does our AMS streamline operations to save time and create staff efficiencies? Is it providing the data intelligence we need to drive growth? Are we able to create and deliver member value that promotes lifelong membership and retention? Does it integrate with our other solutions for a seamless end-user experience?
- Learning Management System (LMS): Does it allow us to create and deliver the impactful learning and professional education our members are looking for? Is it flexible enough to grow with us as we adopt new programs and learning formats?

Does it deliver an intuitive front-end user and back-end administrative experience? Does it seamlessly integrate with other critical technology solutions?

- Job Board/Career Center Solution: Do we have a job board? Does our job board or career center drive traffic? Does it accurately represent our brand and appeal to our members? Do members know about our job board? Are we able to market job postings and matches to each member specifically? Is our job board driving non-dues revenue for our organization?

6   Understand your members.

While this study summarizes findings from a diverse group of members and provides important insights, each organization and membership base is unique. Create a dialogue with your members and survey them so you can understand their preferences, interests and goals. Analyze their responses, then take what you learn and apply that data to drive organization goals, programming and enhanced benefits that promote acquisition, retention and member/learner loyalty.

Survey Methodology

Commissioned by Community Brands, Edge Research conducted an online survey of 1,018 U.S. members who self-reported they are 18-years-old or older and a member of a professional membership organization. Survey respondents were recruited through an online non-probability sample, meaning findings are not projectable to the larger population of members. When the term "members" is used, we are referring specifically to those who were surveyed. Quotas were set so the survey is representative of key demographics. The survey was fielded March 28 through April 4, 2018.

About Community Brands

Community Brands is the leading provider of cloud-based software to associations, non-profits, K-12 schools and faith-based groups. Through innovation and technology, the company empowers more than 100,000 clients and partners to succeed faster, grow stronger and achieve social good. Organizations adopt Community Brands software to manage memberships, career centers, learning, accounting, mobile giving, peer-to-peer fundraising, donations, admissions, enrollments and events. Using these engagement platforms, customers of all sizes create meaningful and lasting experiences for their members, donors, volunteers and families. Headquartered in St. Petersburg, Florida, USA, Community Brands serves the social good community in more than 30 countries. To learn more, visit www.communitybrands.com or follow us on Twitter or LinkedIn.

communitybrands®

Learn more:
communitybrands.com