



| Silverbear Membership

Are You Using Technology for Technology's Sake

The last twenty years has seen incredible advancements in technology, both for business and personal use. The Internet has revolutionised how we interact with each other and businesses, how we consume information and how we communicate.

Other technology, such as developments in the software world has improved how businesses manage their data, processes and customer interactions. CRM (Customer Relationship Management) solutions help businesses manage their prospect and current customers, finance solutions manage everything from the generation of purchase orders, invoices through to payments and management information, whilst HR solutions manage everything that surrounds employees and staff matters. There's little doubt that technology has made businesses more streamlined, with many processes that used to take days, now taking a matter of seconds.

However, it's important that technology is employed for the right reasons. It can be far too easy to get caught up in the latest craze, wanting to make use of the latest technology because it seems cool, fun or just because you want to be seen to be doing so. Adopting technology without careful planning can lead to costly mistakes. Many technology investments can be very expensive, so undertaking an installation without understanding the reasons behind it or the goals it aims to achieve can mean that an ROI (Return On Investment) is unlikely and even worse the technology could go unused, wasted due to poor planning.

So what do you need to consider when investing in technology? Instead of picking the technology out first and figuring out where you can apply it in your business, think about what business problems you have and how you can solve it. For example, problems could be:

1. Lack of membership renewals
2. Poor membership subscription/renewal process
3. Lack of visibility over members
4. High business costs
5. Poor communication with members
6. Low number of new members subscribing
7. High event management costs
8. Inefficient back office processes

The temptation is to identify a desired piece of technology and try and justify its investment, rather than recognising a business problem and identifying a piece of technology that can solve it. If the above is a list of business problems, think about what the goals of the technology would be.





| Silverbear Membership

Business problems versus goals:

1. **Increase membership renewals:** Improve the communication to members, ensure members feel and understand the value of their membership, ensure renewal process is easy and efficient
2. **Improve the membership** subscription and renewal process: Make it faster, more streamlined and efficient
3. **Improve visibility of who your members are:** Understand how many members you have, what their history with your organisation is, how engaged they are with your organisation, how satisfied are they with their membership subscription?
4. **Reduce business costs:** Increase efficiency and reduce waste
5. **Improve communication with members:** How do members want to communicate? Give them option then use this effectively
6. **Increase the number of new membership subscriptions:** Market the organisation better, communicate the benefits of membership, increase awareness of the organisation, improve the number of member-to-member referrals
7. **Reduce the costs of events:** Increase delegate numbers, automate key event processes, improve efficiency of manual processes
8. **Improve back office processes:** Improve communication between departments, streamline and automate processes where possible, reduce waste and increase control

Once you have successfully identified your business problems and outlined the goals for technology, you can then start to research the available technology and see what would be a good match. You can focus on just one issue, or you can try and find a piece of technology that would try and solve all your particular business problems.

It's important to spend time researching various technologies and companies. It may be that the iPad you really wanted just can't solve the business issues you need to address!

It's also important to think long term about your technology investments, and any technology solution must be able to continually achieve its purpose. If the goal is to increase membership subscriptions and renewals, it must be able to continually increase these levels, especially if a large technology is going to be made.

A membership software solution is one such technology. It's able to streamline and automate many of the membership processes, improving the member experience and improving the efficiency and control of the membership organisation using it.

However, like many technology solutions, investing in a membership software solution isn't something that should be done lightly. You must consider what your specific business problems are





| Silverbear Membership

and what your key goals are. It's essential that the solution addresses these specific goals, and that the solution truly supports the needs of your organisation.

It's also important to take into consideration the company supplying the technology. Are they the kind of business that you can build a long term relationship with? Are they stable? Are they able to maintain and develop the technology you've invested in, ensuring its future is sustainable? Are there going to be high update costs each year? Can they give you a high level of support? These are all questions that you must consider when making an investment in technology. You don't want to find out that the solution you invested thousands in is obsolete after just two years!

Resource Box

Silverbear [Membership Management software](#) is part of the range of solutions from Silverbear Ltd. Used within societies and membership organisations throughout the UK, it supports businesses to build, define, examine, inform and communicate with existing and potential members.

Silverbear is helping membership organisations on a daily basis. For more information on Silverbear Membership Management solution and the benefits of membership software, visit their website at <http://www.silverbearmembership.co.uk>, email membership@silverbear.co.uk or call 01483 301 333.

