



THE 2023

association community benchmark report



contents

Introduction	3
Key Takeaways	4
Our Data Set	5
Definitions	6
Benchmark Data	7
Comparisons	9
size of community	9
time on community	10
organizational budget	12
customers who have upgraded	13
Conclusion	14



Your online community is a key component of your association's success.

Monitoring your community metrics helps you gain a deeper understanding of your member engagement, growth, and satisfaction. Comparing your data to community benchmarks, especially from your industry, puts your community's health and performance into context. Reviewing relevant benchmarks can also reinforce a culture of continuous improvement for your association, helping you set meaningful goals, understand your progress, and innovate within your community.

Higher Logic's **2023 Association Community Benchmark Report** offers data specifically for the association and nonprofit industries. It will help you analyze how you compare to similar organizations and provide you with insights to aid your strategic decision-making, resource allocation, and the refinement of your engagement strategies.

Only *you* can decide the community measurements and goals that matter most for your association – but this report can serve as a tool to help you gauge your effectiveness in fostering meaningful connections and delivering value to your members.

TLDR: key takeaways

Communities Come in All Sizes



From 20 to 200,000 members

Our customer data showed our largest communities had nearly 200,000 active users and our smallest had as few as 20.

Now's the Time to Foster Engagement



Average Unique Monthly Contributors

2020: 94	2022: 68
2021: 77	2023 (so far): 74

Average Unique Monthly Logins

2020: 759	2022: 550
2021: 689	2023 (so far): 601

During the pandemic, many communities experienced a boost in users. The number of unique monthly logins has since returned to a more modest average. Supporting member engagement with strong and consistent community strategies is key.

Keep an Eye on Activity



207 Average Community Actions per Month

On average, across our customer communities, members took 207 total actions per month. This includes new discussion threads, discussion replies, and replies to sender. Monitor your own data to see how your activity evolves.

Size and Budget Aren't Everything

- While larger communities may have a larger number of users, the percentage of **users who are active and contributing trends downwards as size trends upwards.**
- **An organization's total budget, similarly, is not a reliable or automatic indicator of success for community.** Organizations with a larger budget (which can, but doesn't always indicate a larger audience served), sometimes saw larger numbers of user accounts within their communities, but our data didn't show a significant trend in the percentage of users who logged into the community monthly. And, regardless of budget, larger communities still trend downward when it comes to the percentage of users who are active and contributing.

Time Will Tell

On average, our data showed that the number of active users, monthly unique logins, and monthly unique contributors is higher for communities that have been around longer.

Our Newest Features Can Help

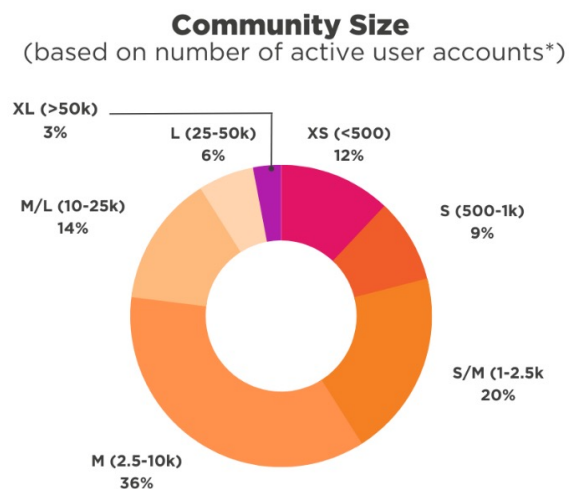
On average, communities using our newest solutions, [Higher Logic Thrive Community](#) and [Higher Logic Thrive Platform](#), see a higher number of active users, monthly unique logins, and monthly unique contributors than those using Higher Logic Online Community. [Updating to Higher Logic Thrive](#) can help you refresh your community and engage more users. Plus, get access to dedicated advisors to help you achieve your goals.

our data set

Higher Logic has almost 3,000 customers in the United States, Canada, and the Asia-Pacific region. This report is based on anonymized data **specifically from our association and nonprofit customer base** who use Higher Logic Community, Higher Logic Thrive Community, or Higher Logic Thrive Platform.

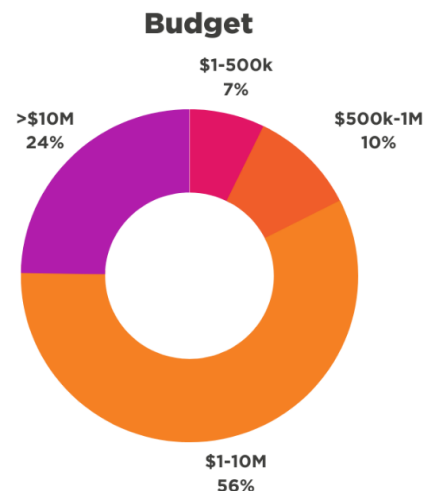
COMMUNITY SIZE

Communities come in all sizes. Our customer data showed the **largest communities have nearly 200,000 active users and the smallest have as few as 20**. Most communities land in the “Medium” category, which includes communities from 2,500-10,000 users.



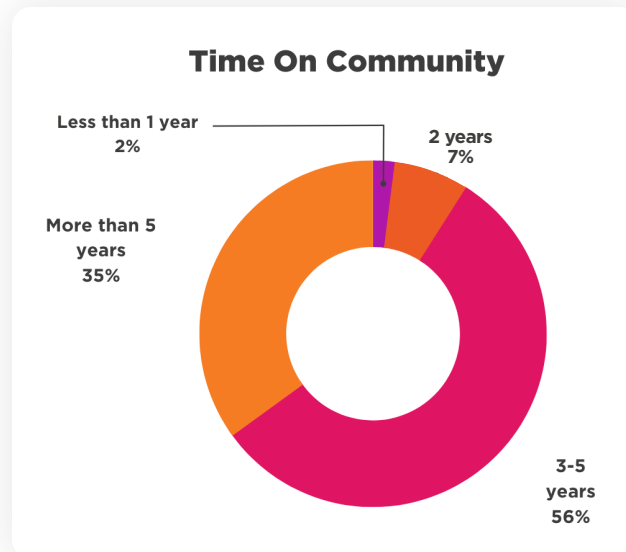
BUDGETS

Association sizes and operating budgets vary. Most associations and nonprofits in our dataset have total organizational budgets between \$1-10 million.



TIME ON COMMUNITY

Most of our customers have been benefiting from their communities for more than three years.



definitions

Throughout this report, we explore metrics related to the following:

- **User Accounts** refers to the number of community user accounts an organization has that have a status code of active (in other words, who have not been deactivated).
- **Active Users** refers to contacts who logged in within the last 120 days or have an active subscription. For tracking within your own community, you may decide that “active” means something different to you (perhaps incorporating digest opens, event registrations, etc.).
- **Monthly Unique Logins** refers to unique contacts who logged in within a given month (if one person logs in 20 times, they only count once against this metric).
- **Monthly Unique Contributors** refers to community users who either started or replied to a discussion.
- **Discussion Activity** includes new threads, replies to threads, and replies to sender (original poster).
- **Time on Community** is determined by the time since customer launch.
- **Budget Numbers** are approximate and represent the total operating budget of the organizations we pulled data from, not the budget for community or the membership department.

benchmark data

2020-2023 ENGAGEMENT OVERVIEW

During the pandemic, many communities experienced a boost in users. The number of unique monthly logins and unique contributors has since returned to a more modest average. Supporting member engagement with strong and consistent community strategies is key to continuing and growing engagement.

2020-2023 Engagement Overview



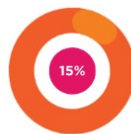
Average Monthly Unique Logins		Average Monthly Unique Contributors	
2020	759	2020	94
2021	689	2021	77
2022	550	2022	68
2023 (Jan-June)	601	2023 (Jan-June)	74

2022-2023 OVERVIEW

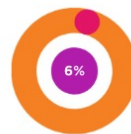
In the past year (June 2022-2023), the average total number of user accounts was 60,789, while the average total number of active users was 9,076. So, on average, about **15% of a community's total users are active**. Of the active users, an average of **6% log in on a monthly basis**, and **13% of those who log in contribute to discussion activity**.

June 2022-2023

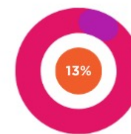
Average Total User Accounts	Average Total Active Users	Average Monthly Unique Logins	Average Monthly Unique Contributors	Average Monthly Discussion Activity
60,789	9,076	586	77	207



Percentage of Total Active Users (out of User Accounts)



Percentage of Monthly Unique Logins (out of Active Users)



Percentage of Monthly Unique Contributors (out of Logins)



Having a consistent online community strategy makes a big impact on community engagement. Explore our [community management checklist](#) and our [Path to Renewal: Member Engagement guide](#) for practical tips and strategies you can use to help manage your community, even with limited time and resources.

CONTRIBUTING FACTORS:

- Many organizations do not deactivate users for inactivity because they grant community access to all individuals with an active membership. If deactivating inactive users doesn't make sense for your organization, you will still want to ensure you're deactivating accounts of former staff and others who should no longer have access (both for security reasons and to make your metrics more accurate).
- The report tracking whether users have been "active" does not account for users who only interact with their community digest and do not log into the community platform.
- Not all active users will have something they'd like to contribute monthly; they may choose to observe and learn from others.

While it's beneficial if your members are logging into your community platform and fully engaging there, **you shouldn't discount your users who are engaging with their community digests** or who are mostly reading the content in your community without contributing.

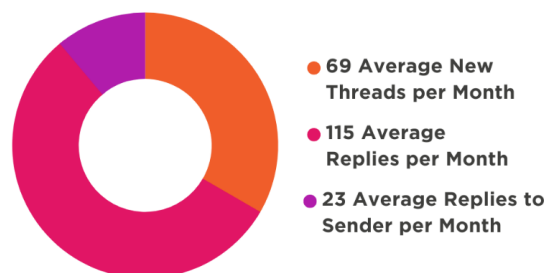
Keep an eye on your community digest open and click rates in addition to your community logins and activity to get a more complete picture of your members' interactions with community content.

On average, communities have **207 total discussion activities per month**. The majority of discussion activity within communities comes from replies to threads.

If you're seeing a low percentage of users contributing and want to increase participation, try looking at who is posting and replying and what content is being shared in your community. Then ask yourself if there are other topics that would interest different subsets of your membership and how you could foster those conversations. This can help you explore what strategies to employ within your [**community content plan and calendar**](#).

For example, if conversations seem highly technical or advanced and you'd like to engage early-career members, you could start a thread asking members to share the most helpful tip they learned in their career. Alternatively, you could invite early-career professionals to anonymously ask the questions that they're afraid to ask their boss.

**June 2022-2023
Discussion Activity**





Need advice on new ways to engage your members? Want help implementing a new marketing campaign? Don't have time to spend on metrics and analysis and need someone to pitch in? Harness the innovation of Higher Logic Thrive together with an industry expert who specializes in helping associations achieve their goals with **Higher Logic Thrive Services+**. Our dedicated Advisors can free up staff time by providing another set of hands to get things done without adding to the payroll.

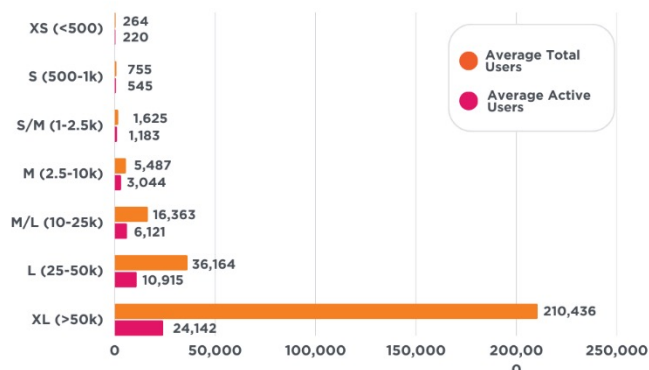
comparisons

SIZE OF COMMUNITY

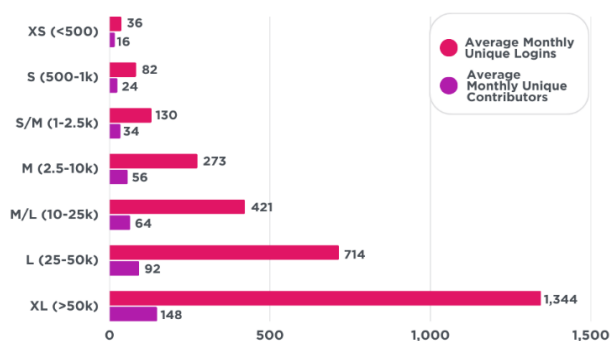
Communities come in all different sizes, and size isn't always an indicator of community health.

For example, if your organization has 5,000 members and 99% of them are logging in and using your community, that would likely be a more successful community than one with 100,000 users where only 1% ever engage with the community. This is not only because that's more members using the community, but also because that high participation rate leads to better discussions across a range of topics and experience. It also provides a more complete understanding of your member base for your association.

2022-2023 Average Community Size



2022-2023 Average Monthly Unique Logins and Contributors vs. Community Size





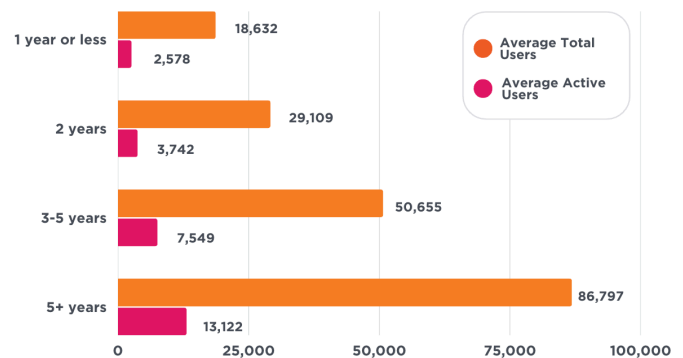
Higher Logic Thrive makes managing communities, both large and small, easier than ever. Use built-in discussions, Q&A, events, automations, and gamification features to create a personalized experience and keep members coming back. Plus, scale as you grow with additional functionality like an integrated job board, learning, and mentoring using our expansion packs and third-party integrations.

TIME ON COMMUNITY

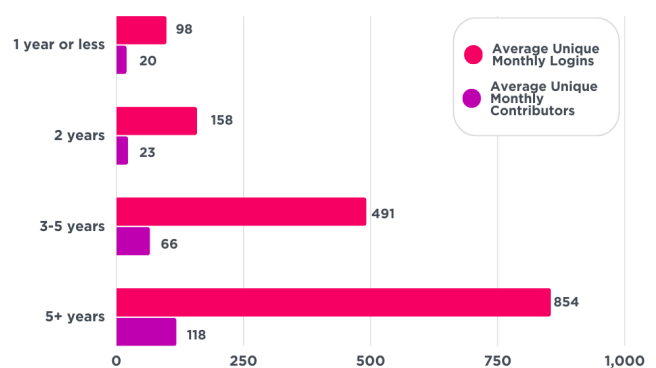
Community is a key component of member engagement – organizations that invest in an online community see amplified impacts the longer they spend cultivating their communities.

Most of our customers have maintained their communities for more than 3 years, and the longer they have a community, the larger it becomes.

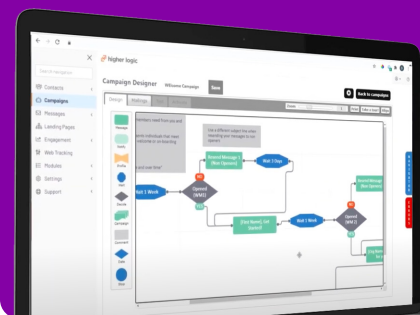
2022-2023 Average Total Users vs. Time on Community



2022-2023 Average Monthly Unique Logins and Contributors vs. Time on Community

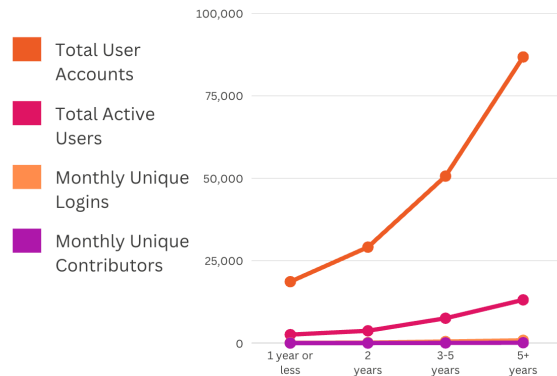


Based on almost 20 years in the association space, Higher Logic has created resources like **Advanced Starter Kits** and pre-built campaigns to help you realize value fast. Need deeper strategic advice or help with execution? Tap our expert Advisors to help you achieve your goals!



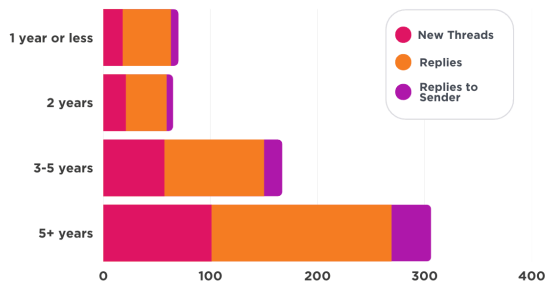
The longer an organization has a community and invests in its success, the higher member activity they'll see in return. Our data showed the number of accounts, active users, monthly unique logins, and monthly unique contributors is higher for organizations that have been using their communities longer.

Average Number of Users, Logins, and Contributors vs. Time on Community



Time on Community	Avg. Total User Accounts	Avg. Total Active Users	Active Users/ User Accounts	Avg. Unique Monthly Logins	Logins/ Active Users	Avg. Unique Monthly Contributors	Contributors/ Logins
1 year or less	18,632	2,578	14%	98	4%	20	20%
2 years	29,109	3,742	13%	158	4%	23	14%
3-5 years	50,655	7,549	15%	491	7%	66	13%
5+ years	86,797	13,122	15%	854	7%	118	14%

2022-2023 Average Monthly Discussion Activity vs. Time on Community



Communities that have existed longer also tend to see higher numbers of discussion activity.

Time on Community	Average Monthly New Threads	Average Monthly Replies	Average Monthly Replies to Sender	Average Monthly Discussion Activity (All)
1 year or less	18	45	7	71
2 years	21	38	6	65
3-5 years	57	93	17	167
5+ years	101	168	37	307



Higher Logic Thrive Platform saves you time and makes your team more efficient. Say goodbye to siloed data and embrace intuitive automations that eliminate manual work. Prebuilt community and campaign templates get you up and running in no time at all. Plus, our expert Advisors are available to help you achieve your goals - fast.

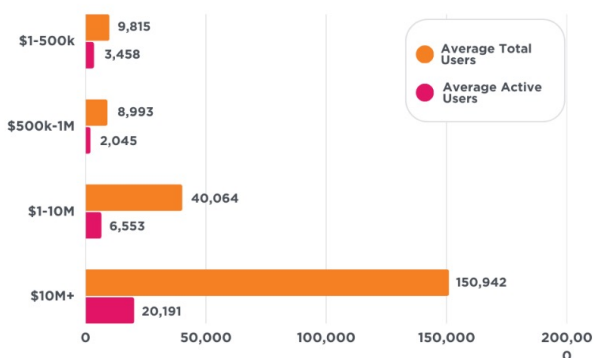
ORGANIZATIONAL BUDGET

An organization's total budget is not an automatic indicator of success for community.

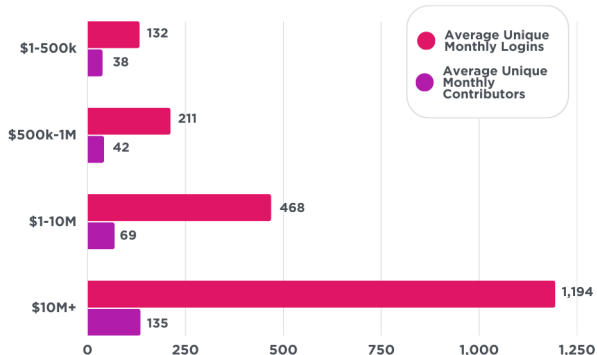
Organizations with a larger budget, on average had larger communities (they may – though we don't have data to verify – have larger budgets in part because they serve larger audiences). But our data didn't show a conclusive correlation between the size of an organization's budget and the percentage of their users who logged into the community monthly. Regardless of budget, larger communities still trend downward when it comes to the percentage of users who are active and contributing.

Both large, highly resourced organizations and small teams can **achieve big impacts** through community. When faced with limited resources, identify your highest priorities and tailor your community strategy to focus on what matters most to you. And remember to leverage your technology to help you save time and make things easier.

2022-2023 Average Total Users vs. Organizational Budget

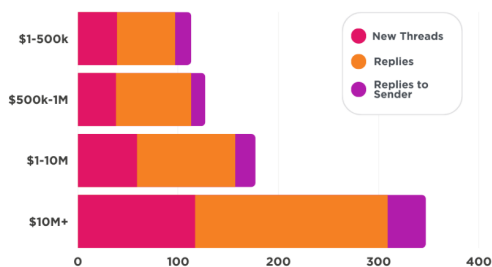


2022-2023 Average Monthly Unique Logins and Contributors vs. Organizational Budget



Budget	Avg. Total User Accounts	Avg. Total Active Users	Active Users/ User Accounts	Avg. Unique Monthly Logins	Logins/ Active Users	Avg. Unique Monthly Contributor	Contributors/ Logins
\$1-500k	9,815	3,458	35%	132	4%	38	29%
\$500k-1M	8,993	2,045	23%	211	10%	42	20%
\$1M-10M	40,064	6,553	16%	468	7%	69	15%
\$10M+	150,942	20,191	13%	1,194	6%	135	11%

2022-2023 Average Monthly Discussion Activity vs. Organizational Budget

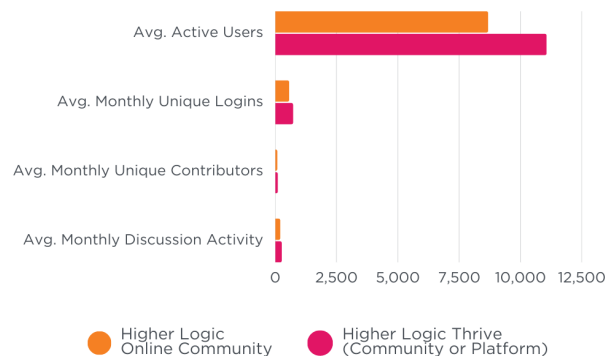


Organizational Budget	Avg. Monthly New Discussion Threads	Avg. Monthly Replies	Avg. Monthly Replies to Sender	Average Monthly Discussion Activity (All)
\$1-500k	39	58	16	113
\$500k-1M	38	75	14	126
\$1M-10M	59	98	20	177
\$10M+	117	192	38	348

CUSTOMERS WHO HAVE UPGRADED TO HIGHER LOGIC THRIVE

On average, our customers who have upgraded to Higher Logic Thrive have **27% more active users, 28% higher monthly unique logins, 21% higher monthly unique contributors, and 29% more monthly discussion activity.**

Customers Who Have Upgraded to Higher Logic Thrive



Are you a Higher Logic Online Community customer? Looking to refresh your community design, renew member excitement, and make your community even better? Get our **latest tools** and make your job easier than ever by upgrading to Higher Logic Thrive. **Associations that have upgraded** have seen increased efficiency, member engagement, and satisfaction!



Community benchmarks serve as a valuable compass to navigate and contextualize your community's performance metrics.

They offer insights that can inspire metric exploration, novel strategies, experimentation, and potential enhancements. However, it is paramount to complement these benchmarks with your unique data.

Your own data can illuminate what's most important to your members and the strategies that resonate. From there, you can employ personalization, gamification, content, and overall **engagement tactics** to drive higher member participation.

Your understanding of your members and community, coupled with inventive adaptability, propels your community strategies beyond benchmarks to create an engaged community that thrives through meaningful connection.



higher
logic
thrive

Higher Logic Thrive is the leading association community software. It's easy to use and makes deep member engagement a reality, with built-in tools for polling, resource libraries, events, analytics, gamification, and more. Higher Logic Thrive Platform combines **three essential pillars of association technology - community, marketing, and member management** - into one integrated solution. Say goodbye to siloed data and embrace intuitive automations that eliminate manual work. Provide a modern, personalized member experience, strengthen member retention, and gain valuable insights - all while improving staff efficiency.

You can also get additional assistance with **Higher Logic Thrive Services+**, which connects you with a dedicated industry expert Advisor to help you achieve your association's specific goals. Advisors provide strategic guidance and can help you establish automation rules, build and execute new marketing campaigns, implement engagement scoring, design branded templates, monitor and analyze performance metrics, and more! Free up staff time, get things done without adding to payroll, and quickly maximize the ROI of your Higher Logic investment.

BOOK A DEMO