

# Are You a Membership Mind Reader?

Understanding your Member's wants and needs



# It's Renewal Time

Imagine the scene...

It's time to bring the subs in. This is the job of the Membership team – no one really cares how it happens, it just happens, right? The renewal notifications go out. And everyone pays.

On time. Willingly. With a smile...

Ok, ok, that doesn't happen! But could it be easier? Is it possible to make this process slicker and supporters happier?

It all begins with a few key areas:



# Membership Renewal

## The Silent Conversation

Each year at renewal time, your members ask themselves “Do I really need this membership?”

Are you a Membership Mind Reader? Do you know what they’re thinking and when they’re thinking it? How are you staying relevant? If you know they’re dissatisfied, how will you change their minds?

Organisations and Associations might be focused on staying relevant, for members of regulatory and professional bodies it might be a case of “I have to have it”, but if the perceived value of your offer isn’t positive, your supporters’ engagement is likely to suffer. Less engagement means no ambassadors to promote you, no case studies, reduced impact...and that all has an impact on retention.



# Member Value

## Can you articulate your value proposition?

Some organisations don't think of their members and supporters as "customers" or "users".

Perhaps this relationship feels too commercial, and I understand that the relationship with a member is more than just receiving subscriptions in exchange for benefits. These people shape your organization, are part of your Boards and Committees, fund and deliver your activities, lobby government with you, advance your profession and champion your work.

But they view your organization as "the centre", the organiser, the enabler, the voice.

Their expectation is that you'll deliver for them, provide them with a good experience and be comparable to the other types of organisations that they interact with. This means that they expect a great website, you to know all about them, the right or object and complaint.....all sounds a bit like a customer, right?

***So, what can you do to understand your supporters more and become a mind reader?***



# Solution # 1

## Know Your Supporters.

Firstly, know your supporters and walk in their shoes.

Organisations who really understand their supporters create personas. Personas represent key, different user groups, members or communities. They feel like real people because they're created using real information and reflect their behaviours. And they aren't just based on staff knowledge – the really impressive ones have been validated with real supporters. A core set of between 4 and 8 personas is optimal – anything beyond that becomes complicated and difficult to target.

Memorising your personas, having them on the wall, referring to them collectively is all part of making your personas part of your user-centric decision-making.



# Solution #1

## Member Personas

Organisation X are trying to attract new, internationally-based prospect supporters in a territory where they're launching a new region. The aim is to focus on experienced people who could become mentors.

Wendy represents that key user segment. Knowing about Wendy – what she thinks, what she values, how she consumes information, who influences her, her aspirations.....all of this information helps them to target her – what language to use, how to communicate with her, the type of content she's likely to engage in.



Associate Member

**Sarah Brewer**

BIO

Jenny is a newly qualified member. She previously held free Student Membership and has started working for a firm who are happy to pay her membership fees.

She commutes from within the city and her starting salary has to stretch to cover her outgoings and student loans.

She has just completed her first few months in industry and is excited to increase her employability and put her learning to the test.



Ealing, UK

22 YEARS OLD

NEWLY QUALIFIED

ENGINEERING

AT WORK

JOBS TO BE DONE	PAINS	GAINS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Getting used to working in industry</li><li>Putting her newly acquired skills into practice</li><li>Learning from her mentor</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Struggling to balance her new workload with her personal commitments</li><li>Her starting salary barely covers her outgoings</li><li>Standing out from her peers</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>She is very proud of how quickly she gained employment</li><li>Her gap year in industry has helped with a smooth transition</li><li>She's received good feedback from her line manager</li></ul>

RELATIONSHIP

EXPERIENCE	TOUCHPOINTS	VALUE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Student membership provided free access to learning materials</li><li>Library access</li><li>Her membership organisation feels a bit old-fashioned at times</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Follows Twitter feed</li><li>Emailed about events</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Feels part of her profession</li><li>Job boards</li><li>Lots of events</li></ul>



# Solution # 1

## Know Your Supporters.

It's really important that all staff who interact with members and supporters invest in personas. Because in reality it's not just the job of the membership team to collect subs to make retention happen. All interactions, all engagement matters.

And your supporters expect you to know about them – they don't care that your lobbying team use a spreadsheet instead of the membership database – they expect you to know that they're interested in a local issue and have been talking to you about it.



# Solution #2

## Understand The Member Experience

Have you ever experienced what your supporters experience when they interact with your organisation? It's often an interesting exercise to undertake!

Organisations looking to improve experience get the most out of task mapping. Walking in their shoes helps staff to stop thinking about what they do and what they need and helps them to think about how to move to a service or supporter-led approach.

It's also essential preparation if your reviewing your web journeys, looking to improve your internal processes, or undertaking a technology review – because your supporters should be at the heart of everything you do and your ways of working and the tools you use should be built around UX.





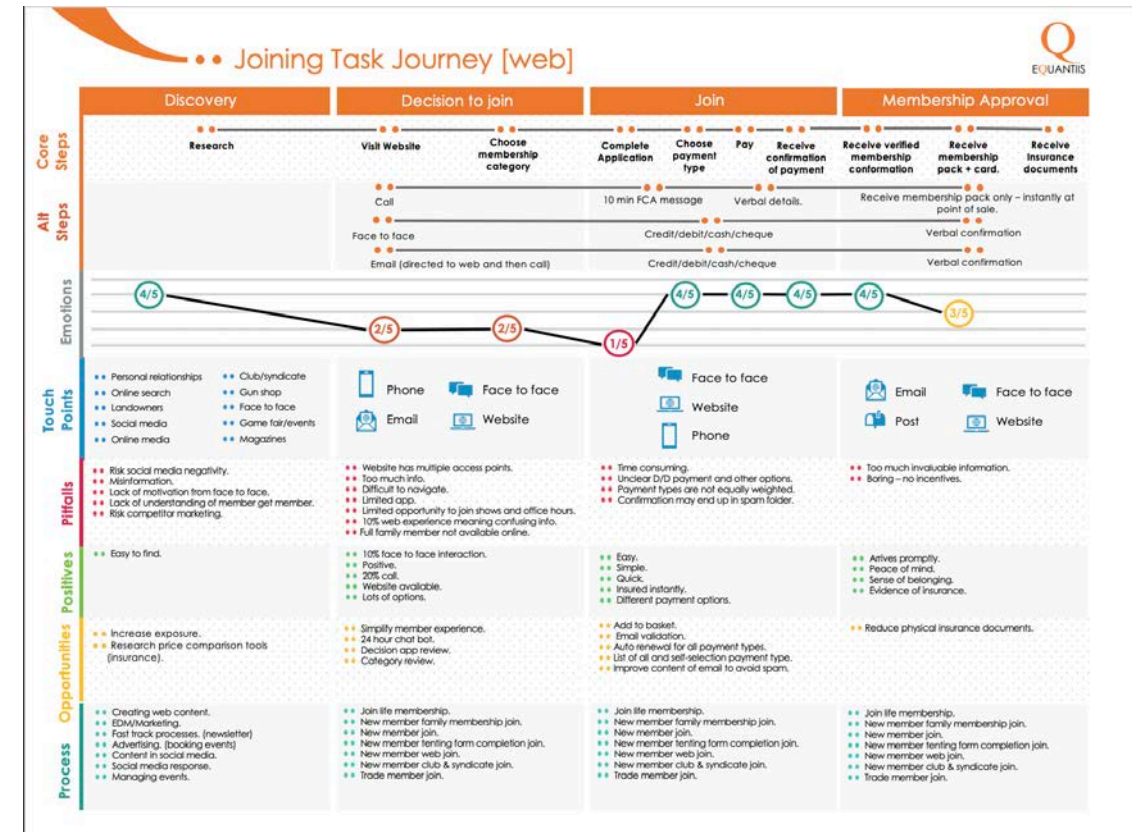
# Customer Journeys

## An Example

A task map is about understanding the user's (your member's, supporter's) journey, what they experience in a given scenario. They're created using real information in the context of (a) particular persona(s), mapping out behaviour, experience and satisfaction.

In this example Omar's experience begins negatively but ends positively. It charts what he sees and hears, thinks, feels and says and does. This enables Organisation X to look at the phases and pick out which aspects needs attention and where there are opportunities to improve or do more of the same.

Task mapping workshops are a great opportunity to collectively consider where there are opportunities to improve, especially if you're looking to improve engagement, satisfaction and retention.



# Solution #3

## Member Value Proposition

Member Value Proposition (MVP) answers the question “why should I (continue to) be a member?” It enables organisations to read minds – it shows that you’ve thought about how to answer the question before they’ve asked it.

Member Value Proposition is a promise of a value to be delivered, communicated and acknowledged. It clearly states what your organisation provides and how it’s received, appreciated, respected, needed and prized. It’s a member’s rationale for choosing you, which is especially important if you have competitors or separate regulatory bodies vying for your supporters’ attention in the same space.

MVP focuses on how your prospect’s or member’s belief about how value will be delivered, experienced and acquired.



# Solution #3

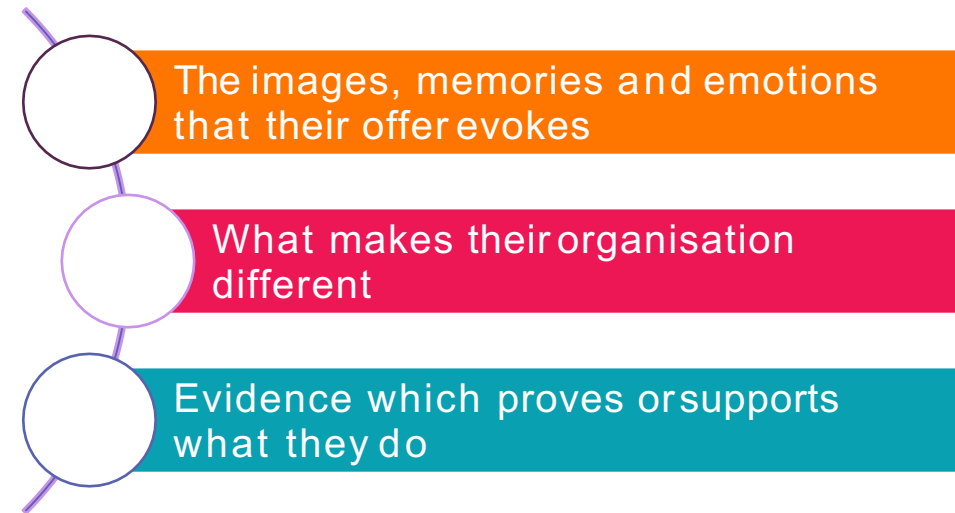
## Developing the Proposition

Organisations using MVP effectively don't just put a list of member benefits on their website or in their renewal packs and hope that someone reads them and likes something.

**They consider the following:**



**They do this by focusing in on:**





# Reading Minds

## Listen, Understand, Improve

Engaging with your members gives you insight. Knowing who they are, mirroring and understanding their experiences with you demonstrates empathy and credibility. It means that you can plan and improve rather than react. It's always easier to retain someone if you demonstrate value and intervene to deflect issues before you ask them for next year's subs.

Creating, building, knowing and delivering an effective, clear and demonstrable MVP will assist you with your content planning, engagement opportunities and acquisition and retention strategies.



# Suggestions

Some ideas to get you started

- § How do you record your **member interactions**?
- § How do you know if an intervention stops someone from **resigning**?
- § What messages, content, phrases, images encourage someone to **join**?
- § If you survey your members how do you use that information for further planning and to **demonstrate improvements** back to your membership?
- § Are you only measuring transactions? Or can you move towards **measuring engagement**?

# Thanks

## What next?

Thanks for reading Equantiis' Guide to  
Membership Mind Reading.

If you have any questions, or want to have a  
chat about how these principles could be  
applied to your organisation, get in touch  
with me through any of these channels:

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