

MemberSuite  
By GrowthZone

CASE STUDY:  
**SNOW & ICE MANAGEMENT  
ASSOCIATION**



## LESSONS LEARNED FROM SNOW & ICE MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION

**CONTROL YOUR IT BEFORE IT CONTROLS YOU.** Within a year of moving to MemberSuite's association management software (AMS), the Snow & Ice Management Association (SIMA) was able to align its data and improve membership engagement and non-dues revenue.

By integrating disparate systems to a centralized database of record, SIMA was able to eliminate operational inefficiencies, reduce manual processes, and grow revenue. Read on to learn how SIMA took the association to the next level bringing all of its core data into one place.

"As an organization we wanted to move toward information technology that was a strategic asset."



- Brian Birch, Chief Operations Officer,  
**Snow & Ice Management Association**

## ABOUT SIMA



The Snow & Ice Management Association (SIMA) is a North American trade association for snow & ice industry professionals.

The non-profit trade association focuses on training, events, and best practices related to snow plowing, ice management, and business management.

## CHALLENGES

*"We had eight data silos and countless spreadsheets." To get information consolidated for his monthly reports, it would take Birch and his team hours to do data mining then cutting and pasting into Excel. Part of this was due to data silos caused by building their own AMS system which was not integrated. "Our association had just invested \$50,000 in a custom database and chose a marketing firm to build it," Birch explains.*

Because the custom-built database did not have an API which integrated to other systems, it created the issue of data silos. *"It was a constant go-between trying to get the information and support we needed," Birch says. "It was pretty*

*much a failure, but it was informative for me because I had to learn early on how to manage our technology."*

SIMA struggled with this custom system for years before ditching it for an off-the-shelf AMS. *"That was better than what we had but still pretty archaic," Birch explains. "The platform was stable but it wasn't regularly updated and very limited. There was virtually no API. We had invested in an LMS and wanted it to be more impactful."*

**"That was a painful experience trying to build an AMS from scratch."**



## SOLUTIONS

For Brian Birch, he knew if SIMA was able to move towards information technology as a strategic asset then he could modernize his association. By switching to MemberSuite, he was able to reduce manual, timeconsuming processes for his staff and find new ways to grow revenue. SIMA has accomplished this by using MemberSuite's AMS as the core database and the record of truth for their association. The open API functionality allows data from the integrated systems to flow in and out of MemberSuite easily.

**"I personally am much more informed and knowledgeable of our day-to-day operations and all associated metrics," Birch said. Here's how MemberSuite made it happen for SIMA:**

### CAPABILITIES

- Integrated with multiple platforms to aggregate core data, eliminating the problem of data silos.
- Achieved single-sign on (SSO) allowing members to do self-service.
- Eliminated third party applications which were now erroneous, including the event management system which cost SIMA \$6,000 annually.
- Improved certification process by integrating online courses in LMS for designation, then storing data within MemberSuite.
- Used GL codes in MemberSuite's Financials module to establish a better revenue recognition process.
- Created real-time snapshots to show membership engagement and activity, so at any time SIMA's board can see the last 10 members who joined, the top 20 most engaged members, or the last 10 members who terminated.

## WHY MEMBERSUITE?

*"The question we asked ourselves was, 'How can we aggregate more of our core data?' Our goal was to consolidate our eight silos and access this information. That's why I was excited about MemberSuite. A referral I knew from the ASAE Tech Council had seen the documentation on the system's flexibility."*

*"The other core reason we bought MemberSuite was the architecture of their API, which we have found to be true to their word."*

*"Since we switched to MemberSuite we were able to get six full years of financials, membership, and event registration data into the system and configured. We're down to three other data silos - our LMS, Quick Books, and GoPlow.com (the custom content site we manage) - but by the end of this year we hope to be down to two silos, if not one."*

*"It would have taken about six hours of staff time slicing and dicing all our different lists to make information accessible. Now with MemberSuite, it takes me less than five minutes to build each report."*

**"MemberSuite makes it easy to manage our membership. It's much better than what we had before."**

# RESULTS

*"The beautiful thing about MemberSuite is it treats membership like a product. When someone comes to the event registration page, the system checks to see if they are a member. If they are an active member coming up on renewal, the system prompts them, and they can choose to renew when they are registering for the event. Or if they are expired or a nonmember, it prompts them to join."*

*"When we implemented MemberSuite, there was about five years of data and 10,000 records. We had 5,000 people who came to our show but we never captured their data or followed up."*

*"It sounds like we're morons, but we only had seven people on staff and data imports weren't easy with our prior system. Now after doing data dump and MemberSuite managing the system, we can build an outreach program to these non-members and purge them later if we need to."*

*"If we send an e-mail to these 5,000 people, and half of them open the email (2,500) and potentially 10% join, then that's 250 new members."*

*"Exhibitor sales management is also much better for us now. We have all of our exhibitor and prospect information in one database instead of membership info in one system and spreadsheets plus an additional CRM. The process for organizing and selling booth space is much easier."*

*"We're also creating a better revenue recognition process with MemberSuite. Because of the way our prior AMS was built, there wasn't clarity on certain items. For example, shipping from our store wasn't coded correctly so our shipping costs weren't itemized from the revenue we earned on training items sold in our E-Commerce store. MemberSuite has the functionality to manage that with its GL Codes to tell us what we paid for shipping costs instead of inflating the revenue on training sales."*

**"The good news is all our core data is now connected in one place."**

## PUTTING THE SYSTEM TO USE

*"In an effort to drive attendance to our annual show, two weeks prior to the event, we quickly ran two separate searches in MemberSuite's AMS:*

- 1. People who have attended at least one symposium in the last five years prior to this year.*
- 2. Past members within a 200 mile radius of our show; since the majority of our communications go to members, the non-members likely didn't receive much if anything in terms of pre-show marketing."*

*"We offered these non-members a \$50 discount off the registration for the show, a limited time of about 10 days to register. We got six registrations totaling \$4,380 in total revenue, and that's even after the discounts."*

*"Would these folks have registered if we hadn't blasted them? Maybe, but I doubt all of them would have, and we likely saved wait time on-site*

*by getting these registrations prior. We all know how full show registrations do take time on-site and increase waiting time in the lines."*

*"Also, before MemberSuite, we would have up to 80 people who joined SIMA at our show that we could have charged more and ended up leaving money on the table. Now, if someone joins or renews at the show, the MemberSuite portal allows us to allocate funding to the right account."*

*"Plus, if a prospect in our database joins at the show, we can track that. I would say that we would never have even been able to do this previously, so its not only a time savings only, but also an entirely new set of possibilities."*

***"We'll be using MemberSuite to get as specific as possible for these marketing initiatives. These little things can make a big difference."***

## CONCLUSION

1. By aggregating its core data, SIMA eliminated the problem of data silos. Previously, it would have taken six hours of staff time to make information accessible, whereas now it only takes five minutes.
2. SIMA discovered new ways to recruit members through better management of its database of prospects, plus using automated prompts for renewing existing members.
3. The association also increased non-dues revenue by using the data in the AMS to do targeted marketing and invite non-members to its annual show, generating \$4,380 in new revenue.
4. Better data means more targeted marketing communications, with lower marketing costs and higher returns to the association and its members. If your processes rely on pulling data from spreadsheets, or if it takes your staff forever to compile reports, it's time to bring all that great data out of hiding.



# MemberSuite

By GrowthZone

To learn more, visit  
[www.membersuite.com](http://www.membersuite.com)

## Manage. Engage. Grow

MemberSuite is the most configurable association management software on the market. The powerful AMS provides mid- and upper-market level membership organizations with applications that deliver the functionality, integration, reporting, and support that empower associations to manage, engage, and grow membership.

With dozens of modules and bi-directional API integrations, as well as customizable reports that enable your team to make informed data-driven decisions, the fully customizable AMS platform is changing the way modern associations do business.

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