

How Can Associations Be Ready For Post COVID-19?

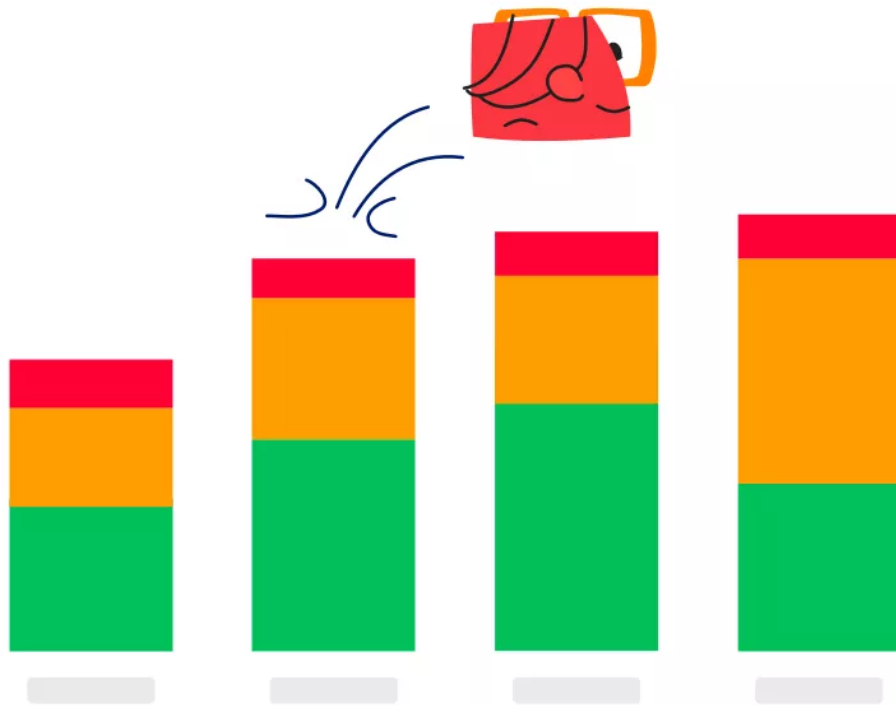


Table of Contents

Introduction

A look at the current state of US associations during the pandemic

Rethinking Strategy during COVID-19

Revisiting and reworking the original strategic plan

Convincing the board to make the tough decisions

Memberships during COVID-19

Why Communication is Key

Tips to Managing Your Community Through Digital

Pivot to Virtual Events

Strategies for Paid Webinars that Bring Value

New normal and the future of associations

Conclusion

Video Recordings from Webinars

Contact Info

Introduction

Panel



Magdalena Nowicka Mook
CEO & Executive
Director at International
Coaching Federation



Derrick Johnson
Executive Director at
NABITA



Sharon Newport
COO at Door Security
+ Safety Professionals



Anne Gill
President & CEO at
Tempe Chamber of
Commerce



Tonia Socha-Mower
Executive Director at
American Association
of Dental Boards



Gregg H. Talley
President &
CEO of Talley
Management Group,
Inc. (TMG)



Eric Schmidt
CEO & Co-
Founder of Glue Up

Associations across the United States are facing unprecedented challenges because of COVID-19. From adapting to working from home to convincing members to renew in times of crisis, the challenges are diverse and increasingly difficult to overcome.

On April 23rd and May 7th, 2020, Glue Up (formerly EventBank) together with Talley Management Group, hosted a 2-part panel discussion where association leaders and experts came together to help guide association professionals on how to overcome the challenges of COVID-19.

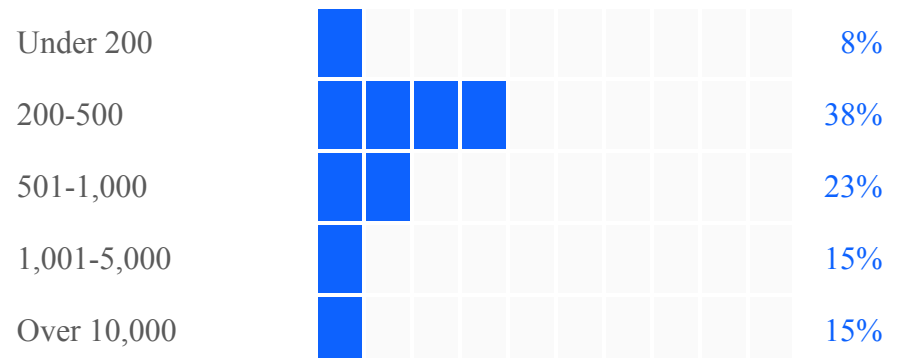
This whitepaper aims to guide associations into what strategies they need to put in place in order to be ready for post COVID-19. The global pandemic has altered business as we know it, and associations must adapt in order to survive.

We wish you a happy learning!

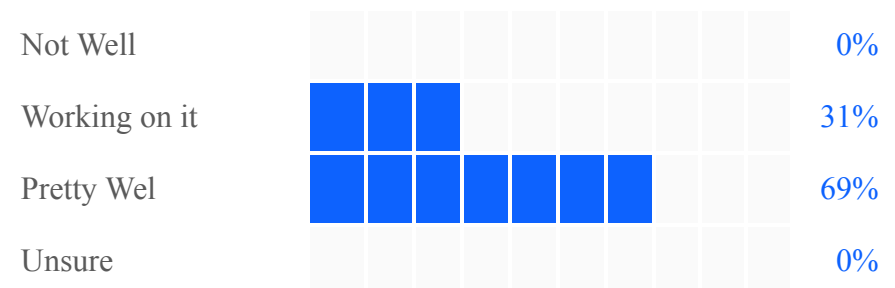
Team at Glue Up
association@glueup.com

A Look At The Current State Of Associations During The Pandemic

How many members do you currently have?



How well do you think your association is handling the COVID-19 pandemic?



Among surveyed associations only

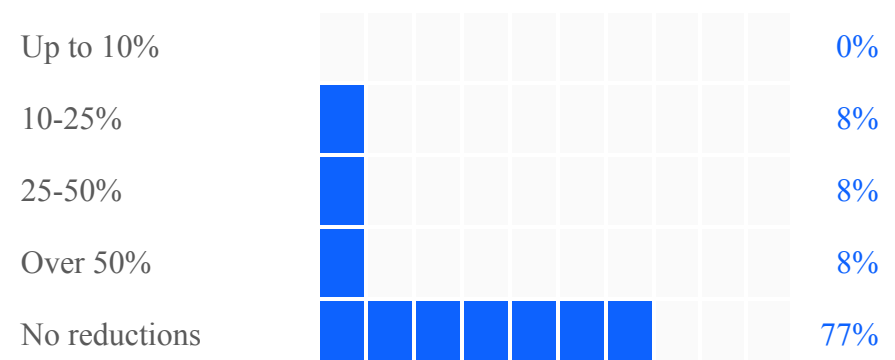
23%

have reduced its workforce during or by cause of COVID 19 crisis while

77%

have not reduced its workforce

Has your organisation reduced its workforce since the start of COVID-19, by what percentage of total employees has the workforce been reduced?



Rethinking Strategy During COVID-19

All of an organization's budgets and strategic plans for 2020 can all but be thrown out the window because of COVID-19. According to [Strategy-Business.com](https://www.strategy-business.com), generic plans need to be adapted and tailored to cope with the specific challenges of an epidemic. If large numbers of employees have to work remotely for a time, for example, is there enough technology bandwidth to cope? Will your operations be impacted if outsourced, offshore workforce are unable to come to work? What is the procedure for updating travel advice and policy? How will communication with employees be managed?

If you are mission driven, that support from the community will continue to follow you.

Anne Gill
Tempe Chamber of Commerce

These are all important questions to be asking. Reworking strategic plans to eliminate “sacred cows”, categorizing events and other activities into what is essential and what is not, and preparing for the worst are all effective practices. As Derrick Johnson explains “its important to reevaluate the core of what we’re doing and remain authentic to ourselves and our mission and providing a service to people that is timely.”

COVID-19- is really going to have us look at our day to day processes and see if there's a way to implement some cost savings.

Tonia Socha-Mower,
American Association of
Dental Boards

An organization must rework their strategic plan if they want to survive 2020 and even 2021, but they need to do so while staying true to their mission. Things are not and may never be the same, organizations cannot operate in the same ways they used to, or they will crumble. Now is the time to rethink these traditional ways to adapt and be ready for the future.

Associations must look at their “sacred cows” such as in-person events that have been happening for 25 years, and truly evaluate if the sacred cow can continue. How can that be adapted to an online format or is the event even able to happen online are questions that organizations need to ask themselves regarding events and other activities. Magdalena Mook explains that “in associations we have such a difficulty stopping anything we do... we have to prioritize. You can do anything you want but you can’t do everything and situations like this now are perfect situations to evaluate.”

Associations must shift their focus on pivoting to virtual events or finding other new ways to provide value to members. Associations should evaluate their events and activities into four categories: mission critical (must happen), important/urgent (good opportunity), important but can wait (less important, can reschedule), and not necessary (cut things that aren’t crucial to maintain the organization’s survival).

Revisiting And Reworking The Original Strategic Plan

When reworking a strategic plan, an organization needs to prepare for the worst. Creating a plan that sees COVID-19's impact ending after 2020 is foolish, and organizations must plan for a more long-term effect in order to be ready for the worst possible scenarios. As Gregg Talley explains "this is going to be a longer impact to organizations and industries than anyone's come to grips with yet."

An opportunity that's going to come out of this is to really look at your digital strategy that needs to be tied together now... really starting to think about a strategy and that you've got a virtual and digital strategy that grows across the organization.

Gregg Talley, Talley Management Group, Inc.

According to the American Marketing Association some important first steps are to "Ensure the health, safety and productivity of employees, Put a rapid response team in place, Take stock of the commercial situation across retail, marketing, sales and digital, Minimize business exposure, Capture immediate business opportunities, Monitor and update in real time, Plan now for the recovery."

Additional reading: [How the ITE Met Section went Paperless with Glue Up's Association Management Software](#)

**Community
Engagement
Suite**



Convincing The Board To Make The Tough Decisions

When meeting with the board, organizations need to shift the conversation from ‘what are we dealing with right now?’ to ‘what is the opportunity?’. The COVID-19 pandemic is a challenge but is also an opportunity for organizations to grow in new ways they haven’t before. If the organization is not doing whatever it can to positively impact its members today, it may become irrelevant tomorrow. An organization must adapt to overcome the challenges that COVID-19 has brought about, so convincing the board to make the tough decisions is critical. According to McKinsey & Company, leaders have to trust that their subordinates will do their best and ask for help when they need it, and subordinates need to trust their leaders to give them tasks that they can accomplish and support them as needed.”

There are two key things. First, how do you maintain your corporate culture and organizational culture and what do you need to do as a leader to step that up and protect that culture? Second, that we continue to be presenting and pulling together relevant information for our stakeholders and then sharing that.

Gregg Talley
Talley Management Group, Inc.

As Gregg Talley explains, this the time for leadership where leaders are stepping up and deal with difficult conversations. There will be opportunities out of this and those organizations that are prepared to step up and step into those opportunities versus hunkering down and really playing defense are going to come out stronger from this whole episode.

Memberships During COVID-19

Retaining members is of the utmost importance during COVID-19 because organizations may not be able to bring in revenue from traditional ways such as live events. In order to maintain member retention, extending member renewal dates, offering grace periods, and allowing members to pay in installments are all effective practices. Members are likely struggling financially so making things easier on them will always be met with gratitude and loyalty.

Associations can provide value in two main ways - through their online events and through an online community.

Among surveyed associations

69%

of them had to cancel 10 or less events while only

8%

haven't cancelled or postponed any events

With online events, associations must consider the increased competition in a digital marketplace. Webinars are online seminars that can be accessed by a seemingly unlimited amount of people from different locations of the world for one single event. Ever since the COVID-19 crisis, there has been an uptick in the number of webinars hosted by different organizations to maintain engagement since physical seminars can no longer be hosted.

Memberships During COVID-19 (Continued)

Another important way in which associations can provide value to members is through a community presence online. In a time of extremely limited socialization, members will derive value from communication with other members through online forums or chat options. If your association doesn't already offer an integrated community platform, this may be the time to invest in one.

Additionally, easing membership requirements can also help to make it easier to find new members during these times. While not every organization is able to, some organizations may want to consider discounted membership rates so that they can maintain their member retention. If an organization is unable to provide the same amount of value to its members during crisis, a discounted membership rate may be able to retain members. Making it easier for members to stay members by using these practices is a great way to show that the organization cares, and members will not soon forget it.

Among surveyed associations

46%

of them are expecting revenue
decrease between 10-20% in
2020

Additional reading: [How Tempe Chamber of Commerce is Keeping Members Engaged with Glue Up](#)

Why Communication Is Key

Communication is key, especially during COVID-19.

Organizations need to stay in a constant dialogue with their members so they can understand what their member's challenges are and how the organization can try to help.

Communication is the number one priority action needed to dispel disappointment, inform members and contacts of news and upcoming changes, and offer alternatives to anything that's been impacted. A member may refute renewal of their membership, or refuse to attend events in times of emergency when in fact you may be offering alternatives or reassurance, leaving more control of the situation in your hands, all while keeping your audience safe.

In an attempt to lessen the impact this crisis had organizations made efforts to deliver pertinent information to members and contacts with notifications of surveys, resource centers, and direct phone calls or emails to keep members informed, provided alternatives and constant dialogues with members.

Engaging with your members is more important than ever. Give your members a place where they can connect with you even when meeting face to face isn't possible. The best [Community Engagement Platforms](#) enable your members to do more than just network.

If we want to stay relevant with our next generation of members, we need to change our tech deck and our platform and get way better acquainted with the new technology.

Gregg Talley

Talley Management Group, Inc.

Tips To Managing Your Community Through Digital

Create Community Guidelines

Guidelines are a simple but highly important set of implied rules that must be agreed upon in any community that aims to thrive. Guidelines set expectations of actions not just for members, but for everyone. It keeps you on-track to fostering a fair, decisive, and coordinated community that others can trust in. The important aspect of community guidelines is that it is generally unchanging, and it sets the precedence for moderation, communication, and any other rule pertaining to your community.

Foster Networking

Networking is an important aspect of communities, most especially online where communication barriers are much lower than in-person meetings. An online forum, event, chat group, bulletin board, webinars, and other forms of discussion are great places that once arranged with a certain amount of moderation, can become quite active and in a lot of cases can be the core attraction to a community.

Broadcast News

Broadcasting news, promoting products and services, sharing content, and other ways of blasting news to your community members is as a great way to keep members in the loop and reminded that the community is still active.

An opportunity that's going to come out of this is to really look at your digital strategy that needs to be tied together now... really starting to think about a strategy and that you've got a virtual and digital strategy that grows across the organization.

Gregg Talley

Talley Management Group, Inc.

Tips To Managing Your Community Through Digital

Be Regular

Set a schedule for those activities that can benefit from a schedule like social media posts, blog posts, events, and newsletters. Leave room for any ad-hoc communication, and generally, the community will be in a constant state of activity from the management side, which in turn will impact the activity from members.

Stay Personal

Its imperative that associations are prioritizing communication and ensuring that the members know you're there for supporting them and getting to know them as people. Everyone is struggling right now, so developing a stronger, more personal relationship with members is an effective way to show members that you care.

Analyze the Data

At the back-end of things, it's important to analyze data that you can collect from your community. This can be surveys, or it can be web data, all of it can come together to paint a great image of your community's trends and activities.

Additional reading: [7 Tips to Managing Your Community Through Digital](#)

Pivot To Virtual Events

The coronavirus has left associations with a huge loss in a main revenue stream because of events being cancelled. Association leaders are challenged with either adapting these in-person events into online events or choosing to cancel the events.

Provide new value to members

While events cannot be held in person because of COVID-19, organizations can still provide their members with value in new ways. Magdalena Mook explained that “our main focus right now is to create a different value because our members need different things right now.” Digital networking, webinars, and community building are all effective practices. Digital networking is an effective way for member communities to get together and help each other. Since organizations cannot hold happy hours and other in-person networking opportunities, they should still find a way to provide members with an online setting to network. Whether it be a software that allows members to connect with one another and share business cards, or a weekly virtual networking even through a webinar software, organizations need to find ways for their member communities to stay connected.

Monetizing Webinars

Monetizing webinars can be a good way for associations to make up for some of the lost revenue stream that was coming from events. Webinars need to provide a true value to members in order to monetize them or else your members won't want to pay for it. Think about why your members might purchase a ticket to your in-person events. According to the American Society of Association Executives, now is a great time to gain knowledge about running effective virtual meetings, adding a new discipline to your routine and inviting someone to network via Zoom.

Strategies For Paid Webinars That Bring Value

Manage Ticket Sales

Managing your ticket sales over webinars will not be an easy task. Ensuring that there are no so-called “Zoom Bombers” creating a ruckus during your webinars is an important consideration to make. While managing your ticket sales you need to verify that your pricing is correct so that potential audience members will be willing to pay for your webinars, and to shield your platform from non-paying audience members or “Zoom Bombers” joining your webinar to ruin your audience member's experiences.

Create Engaging Content

Increasing your perceived value by your audience members is an integral part of running a paid webinar. The higher the perceived value for your webinar, the more willing people will be willing to pay for a ticket. In addition to that, the higher the perceived value also equates to the possibility of you charging more for your webinar which can greatly increase revenue. In some instances, the host herself/himself can create can increase the perceived value by following these tips.

Leverage an Engaging Platform

Not only can the host increase the perceived value of your webinar. There are also strategies that can be implemented on the platform you choose to run your webinars on that can increase your perceived value. Unlike the host created perceived value, the platform created perceived value can be implemented once and does not need to be disturbed aside from the occasional updates. This one-time implementation streamlines the process of implementing techniques to increase perceived value.

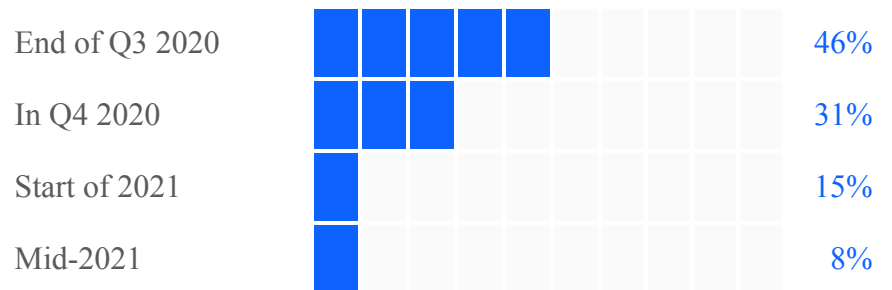
Check Your Tech

In webinars, technology is the bridge between the gap between your audience members and you, without it you could not connect with your audience members from all around the world. The main technological concerns that should be established are a tested platform that has minimal bugs and the accessibility for all different devices to eliminate exclusivity from potential audience members using specific devices.

Target Your Audience

To host the paid webinar with audience members joining it, you must inform the target audience about your webinar. You can't host a webinar with audience members without them knowing about your event. Good marketing and promotions inform the number of people who know about your webinar and convince them to pay and join your webinar.

When will in-person events return?



Additional resources:

[7 Tips When Hosting Webinars & Virtual Events](#)

[27 Strategies to Run a Successful Webinar](#)

New Normal And The Future Of Associations

Past success won't guarantee the success in future for any association unless the fundamental shift needed to operate successfully post COVID-19 is fully understood. The associations need to revisit and redefine their role, organizational structure, cultural norms and internal processes aligning with the stated purpose to effectively serve and create value for its members and stakeholders. The internal processes so defined should be agile enough to respond swiftly and effectively to the changing needs of the industry and its members.

The success mantra for the associations in future will be, clarity on the purpose of its existence, value focus, collaboration, access to talent, adoption of digital technology, virtual professional engagements and concern for human being and the planet at large.

Optimism and courage are the two qualities needed more than ever for the associations to make the decisions that will shape the next normal.

Additional resources:

[Providing Value to Members in a Post-Pandemic World](#)



All-in-One Platform



Event Management



Email Campaigns



Metrics & Analytics



CRM



Task Management



Finance & Invoicing



Community Management



Mobile Apps



The Solution

Association Management

With the rise of **Association Management Software**, this may be the time to shift away from lifetime membership models.

Association management software ensures that associations can easily track their consumer base and automatically collect reoccurring membership payments. Platforms such as [Glue Up](#) use automation to generate invoices, remind customers to renew their memberships, and store customer information. The event industry was the first to get hit by the pandemic and will be the last to get out, so associations must quickly evaluate how they can re-evaluate their membership and revenue models to stay competitive. An implementation of association management software may be the key in doing so.

An **Association Management Company**, like [Talley Management Group](#), has association professionals that can support association in all areas of their management and program delivery. Their experience covers professional societies and trade associations in a wide range of industries. From governance and strategy to program review and implementation to virtual event design and pricing, TMG has the knowledge and ability to help your association achieve its mission in these challenging times.

Conclusion

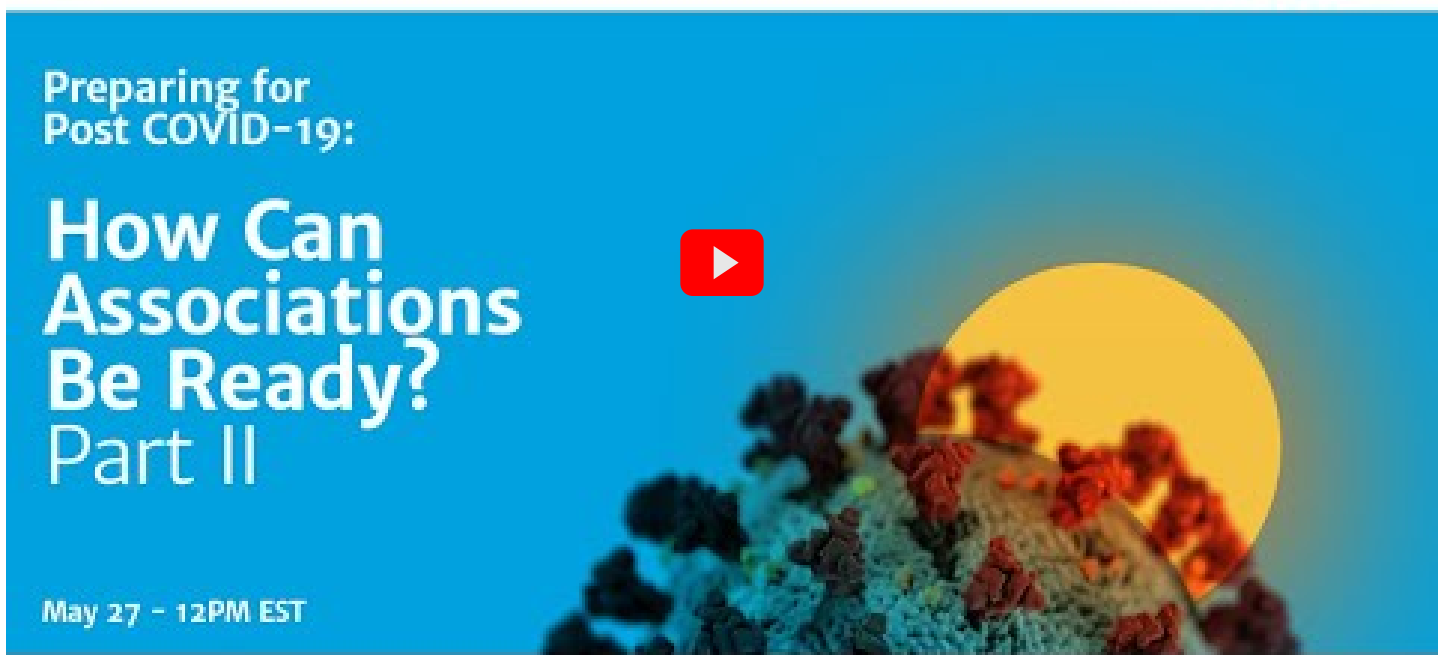
COVID-19 has already created a lasting impact on the association industry. Gregg Talley notes that “what’s interesting about associations is that we’re not a leading indicator: We’re a lagging indicator. We’re going to feel these effects in 2021 far worse than we are in 2020, that’s where the impact is going to be felt.”

Association executives must adapt to survive and they can do so in many ways. Rethinking the strategic plan and making tough decisions to cut out certain events or change the way the association is run can be helpful to ensure the association’s survival. Making it easier for members to pay their dues or renew their membership by offering grace periods and allowing payment in installments can help with member retention.

Associations that communicate periodically and hear directly from members can learn new ways in which they can assist members and better understand what challenges their members are facing.

Associations must find a new way to provide value to their members to make up for the lost revenue from events. Through digital networking, webinars, and online community building, associations can connect members and provide them with a new value. Because it is yet to be seen how long COVID-19 will effect in-person events, associations need to prepare for the worst and find new ways to provide value to their members. By rethinking standard practices, associations can not only survive, but turn the COVID-19 into an opportunity for growth.

Video Recordings From Webinars



Contact Info

E: association@glueup.com

W: www.glueup.com

T: +1-888-218-1354

A: 1775 Tysons Blvd, 5th Floor, Tysons, VA 22102

Preparing for Post COVID-19: How Can Associations Be Ready?
(Part I and Part II) webinars held on April 23rd and May 7th, 2020
were organized in partnership with **Talley Management Group**.

For more content for associations, please visit:

<https://www.glueup.com/blog>