

In my experience, the benefit of having more users in the database outweighs the potential negative impact.

16. Make your vendor part of your team

Buying association management software is not like buying a used car. You don't buy the product and drive it off the lot, never to see the dealer again. Unlike a new or used car, you won't have dozens of options for getting your software serviced.

And so it is. Whether you have an off-the-shelf association management system that tens or hundreds of associations are using, or you have a custom system designed by an outside developer, you have to understand that the long-term success of your system depends upon the long-term success of your vendor. This means making your vendor part of your team. Here are two suggestions for how you can do that:

1. Communicate your strategic plans and goals to your vendor. Help the vendor understand what you're trying to accomplish with your association management system. What are the important events, products, and services your organization provides? How will the AMS support your organization's mission? With this level of understanding, your vendor may be able to help you better use your system.
2. Schedule regular meetings between your vendor's senior management team and your association's senior management team. At least twice per year, the two senior management teams should get together to discuss what strategic initiatives each is undertaking, what the focus for each will be for the coming six months, and what each can do to strengthen the relationship.

17. Establish a disaster recovery plan

From terrorism to natural disasters, the potential for some unexpected catastrophe seems to be going up every day. So what is your organization doing about disaster recovery, especially as it relates to your data?

Do you have a formal disaster recovery plan (DRP)? It doesn't have to be fancy. It simply has to outline how you will manage your data given different disaster scenarios. For example, in a case where you are unable