

Members Advantage Overview

Executive Summary

In addition to content creation and distribution, whether print or digital, many publishers also offer memberships. Other organizations are membership associations first and publishers second. For these organizations, the ability to offer a powerful membership system coupled with a publishing system provides a cohesive product strategy. As the subscription economy continues to grow, more companies are testing membership-based offers in order to diversify their products and present more curated customer experiences. This is giving rise to the membership economy, a term coined by Robbie Kellman Baxter, who published the influential book [The Membership Economy](#).

Consumers are increasingly looking for additional benefits beyond simply consuming content and publishers are laser-focused on customer retention and customer acquisition. Membership-based models are well positioned to meet these demands. Additionally, as publishers strive to keep their customers engaged, employing membership models can introduce new revenue streams.

As the membership model continues to grow, the Members Advantage is a key strategic product for publishers and membership associations alike. The Members Advantage is a highly flexible membership system that offers powerful capabilities from application to online self-service. Advantage's broad range of offerings perfectly complements a membership model with the ability to offer a broad array of products and services to consumers and professionals. These include subscriptions (print and digital), bundles, conferences and events, one-time products, and book club participation. Members Advantage extends the customer-centric model to a member-centric one providing companies access to key value-identification metrics.

Business Need

There are several key reasons for the release of this product.

- The Advantage application continues to be the premier platform in the publishing space. There are many membership-only systems which simply lack the features required to create a comprehensive strategy. The AdvantageCS platform was able to be enhanced to extend its reach to incorporate membership functions.
- Integrating a CRM/ERP with a membership system is often complex and a source of corporate struggles (e.g., customer value identification). Members Advantage addresses that gap by consolidating key functions into a single system.
- There is a clear market trend to membership models as publishers are increasingly exploring new revenue models.

Components

There are three basic components of this new offering.

- Membership Registration – Customers can register for different types of memberships, which can represent tiers or levels. Each type of membership carries its own set of benefits. The membership types can also be priced according to standard price lists or through special



promotional pricing. Optionally, these types can be configured to require an application before purchasing the membership.

- Membership Benefits – Members are granted a variety of benefits. These include subscribed components (print and/or digital), partner benefits, and newsletters. Partner benefits allow organizations the flexibility to establish relationships with other organizations and offer exclusive values. Publishers can also offer members exclusive discounts on its own products to further member engagement.
- Membership Portal – Members can log in to their online account to view and manage their entire membership.
 - View membership status
 - Review current benefits including partner benefits
 - Change opt-in/opt-out status of newsletters
 - View and manage donation history
 - Cancel, suspend, renew, or change membership type
 - Update online profile (e.g., new certifications)
 - View Continuing Education Unit progress
 - Pay outstanding balances
 - Manage membership organization structures (e.g., local vs. national chapters)
 - Browse or search an online directory to discover other members

Key Benefits

The Members Advantage offers several key benefits for current and prospective Advantage clients.

- A flexible structure that can be configured for simple or complex memberships with a wide range of features, many being optional depending on the business requirements.
- End-to-end solution covering the full membership lifecycle of application, customer communication, payment acceptance, self-service, and marketing.
- Seamless Advantage integration – Clients with disconnected membership systems can have difficulty integrating the different systems; a fully integrated system is a key strength so clients do not have to support multiple systems, wrestle with different data models, or engineer integration touch points.
- A single point of information for marketing and member services.
- Evolving capabilities – AdvantageCS will continue to expand the feature set as part of its standard product package.
- Data intelligence – Clients will be able to analyze online data analytics along with Advantage sales data to understand customer habits through rich data relationships; marketers will have more information available to them for promotion and refinement of business strategies.