ALA Executive Board
Fall Board Meeting

TOPIC: ALA Survey Results: Avenue M Presentation [PPTs]

ACTION REQUESTED: Discussion

DRAFT MOTION: NA

REQUESTED BY: Mary Ghikas, ALA Executive Director
                       Lorelle Swader, Associate Executive Director, ALA Offices and Member Relations

DATE: 23 October 2018

BACKGROUND:

In spring 2018, ALA contracted with Avenue M Group, a market research firm, to conduct a communications and membership study with the goal of improving our services to members.

On membership, questions such as the following were posed to Avenue M:
- *What are the barriers that may prevent individuals from joining ALA?*
- *Are there membership models that might better respond to the needs of current and prospective members?*
- *How might we improve or increase member engagement?*

 In the areas of communications, the key objective was to develop an overall high-level strategy for more consistent communications with members. Questions included such things as:
- *How do we refresh and refocus our message framework?*
- *How do we focus individual communications more specifically to avoid "over-communicating" with members (a frequent member complaint)?*
- *How might we more effectively coordinate and collaborate across units – again, to avoid "over-communicating" and confusion.*

Work on the study began in April with interviews of ALA staff and members. In July 2018, a survey was sent to 65,000 individuals – ALA members, recently lapsed ALA members and other non-members. Over 10,000 responses were received.   These responses, as well as interviews and other research, formed the basis for recommendations in three reports:
- American Library Association (ALA) -- 2018 Membership Study – CBD#9
- American Library Association (ALA) – Marketing Communications Assessment and Strategy – CBD#8
- American Library Association (ALA) – 2018 Membership Models Report – CBD#10

Sheri Jacobs, President and CEO of Avenue M, will meet with the ALA Executive Board on Friday, October 26, to provide a high-level review of the survey results and their implications for ALA. (2018-2019 EBD#12.12, attached).

Current ALA staff members who were part of the internal Membership and Communication Study selection team were: Beth Nawalinski (Executive Director, United for Libraries); Christopher Keech (Director, Production Services, ALA Publishing); Eleanor Diaz (Program Officer, ALA Office for Intellectual Freedom); Emily Wagner (Assistant Director, ALA Washington Office); Jan Carmichael (Web/New Media Manager, Communications and Marketing Office); Sheila O'Donnell (Director, ALA Development Office); Terra Dankowski (Associate Editor, American Libraries); Thomas Ferren (Registration Coordinator, ALA Member and Customer Service); Allison Cline (Deputy Executive Director, American Association of School Librarians); Denise Moritz (Director of Financial Reporting and Compliance, ALA Finance); Kerry Ward (Executive Director, Library Leadership and Management Association); Lindsey Simon (Campaign Coordinator, Communications and Marketing Office); Michael Dowling (Director, ALA Office for International Relations/ALA Office for Chapter Relations); and, Tim Smith (Deputy Director, ALA Information Technology and Telecommunications Services). With the July 2018 retirement of Cathleen Bourdon (Associate Executive Director, Communications & Member Relations), overall leadership for the process was passed to Lorelle Swader (Associate Executive Director for ALA Offices and Member Relations).

Over the coming weeks and months, a number of staff and member groups will be reviewing recommendations and developing strategies to enhance organization effectiveness, increase member engagement, and build an agile model for future ALA support for libraries and library workers.

ALA Survey Results

October 2018
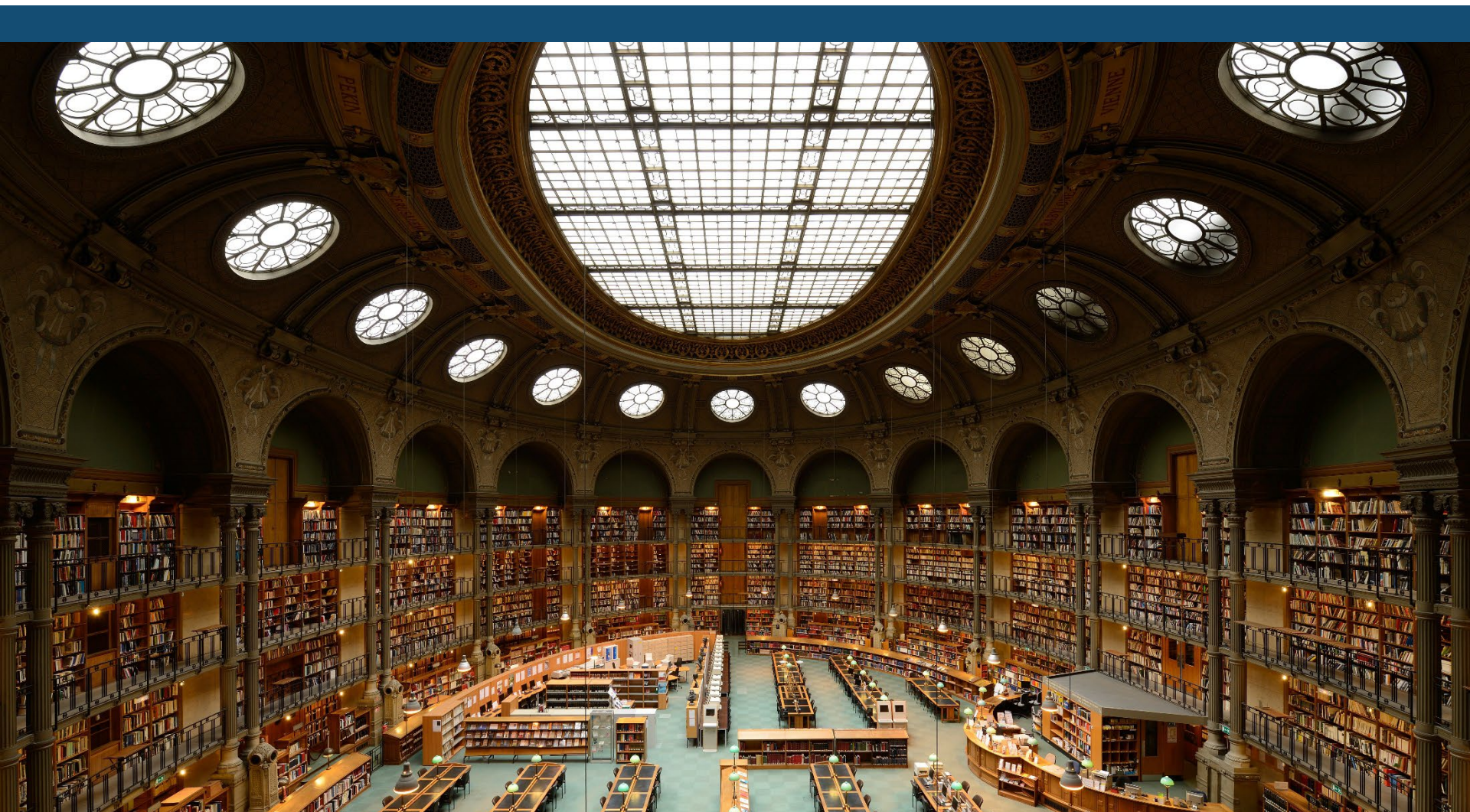
Project Overview: Membership Research

Research Goals

Better understand the interests, needs, motivations, habits and behaviors of current and former members and those who have never been members of ALA.
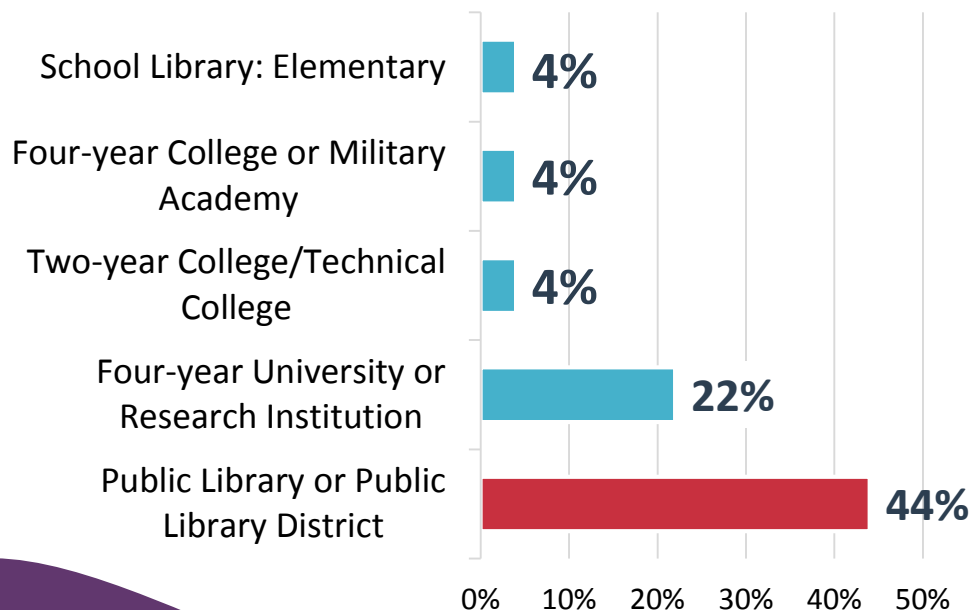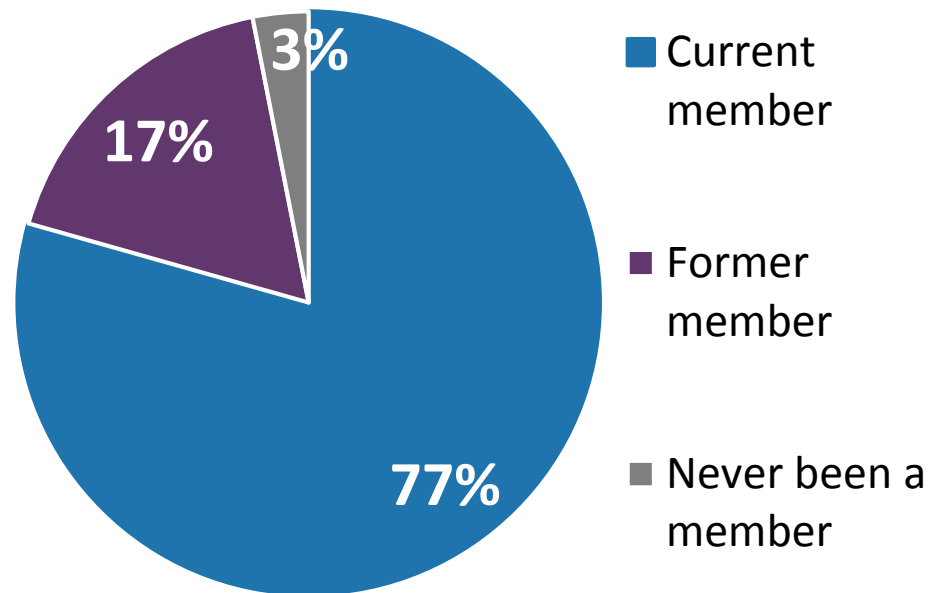
Electronic Survey: July 10 – July 27, 2018

- Survey delivered to 65,152 individual email addresses.
- 10,386 survey responses; overall response rate = 16%
- Margin of error of +/-1% at the 95% confidence level is well within the industry standard

Study Participants*

Work Setting

Work Setting	Percentage
School Library: Elementary	4%
Four-year College or Military Academy	4%
Two-year College/Technical College	4%
Four-year University or Research Institution	22%
Public Library or Public Library District	44%

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50%

Membership Status

- Current member — 77%
- Former member — 17%
- Never been a member — 3%

*Please note this is an overview of the demographics, and some figures have been rounded or excluded. Please refer to the Excel file for all data.

81% are white

80% are female

Study Participants*

Years a Member	Respondents
1 year or less	21%
2– 3 years	**41%**
4 – 5 years	14%
6 – 10 years	10%
11 – 15 years	4%
16 – 20 years	2%
21 – 30 years	2%
31 or more years	1%

Years in Profession	Respondents
Less than 1 year	2%
1 – 5 years	**22%**
6 – 10 years	20%
11 – 15 years	16%
16 – 20 years	12%
21 – 30 years	15%
31 or more years	10%

*Please note this is an overview of the demographics, and some figures have been rounded or excluded. Please refer to the Excel file for all data.

Key Findings

ALA members are drawn to membership because they see ALA as an advocate for the profession.

Drivers of Membership	Not a Driver	Low Driver	Medium Driver	High Driver
Believe in supporting my profession	3%	10%	34%	**54%**
Support advocacy for the profession	5%	14%	37%	**44%**
Support intellectual freedom	7%	17%	36%	**40%**
Learn new skills to become more proficient in my job	10%	15%	**38%**	37%
Keep up-to-date through ALA publications	8%	19%	**40%**	33%
Access to ALA Division	25%	22%	**27%**	26%
Employer pays my dues	**67%**	6%	10%	16%
Gain leadership experience through volunteer service	**34%**	30%	23%	13%
Receive member discounts for continuing education	**38%**	28%	23%	11%

Though roughly half of members are satisfied, few are extremely satisfied with their ALA membership.


American Library Association
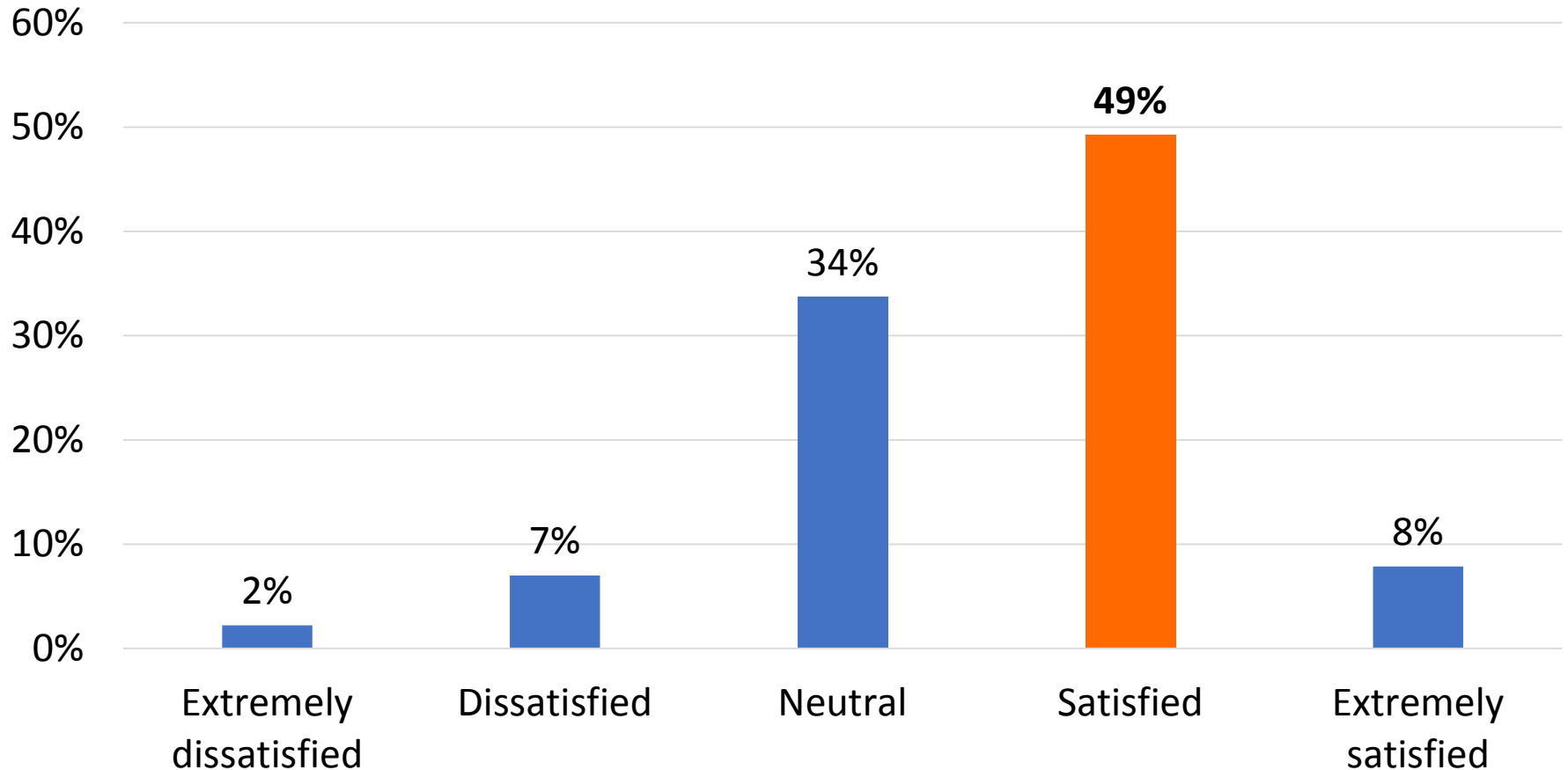
ALA Membership Satisfaction

- The proportion of ALA members who are extremely satisfied with membership is lower than the average of 25% observed in Avenue M's database*.

- Satisfaction is higher among members who have been in the profession longer (21+ years), and it is lower for those newer to the field.

*Avenue M's database includes professional membership associations from a range of industries.
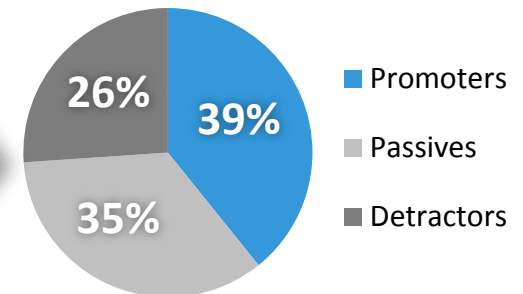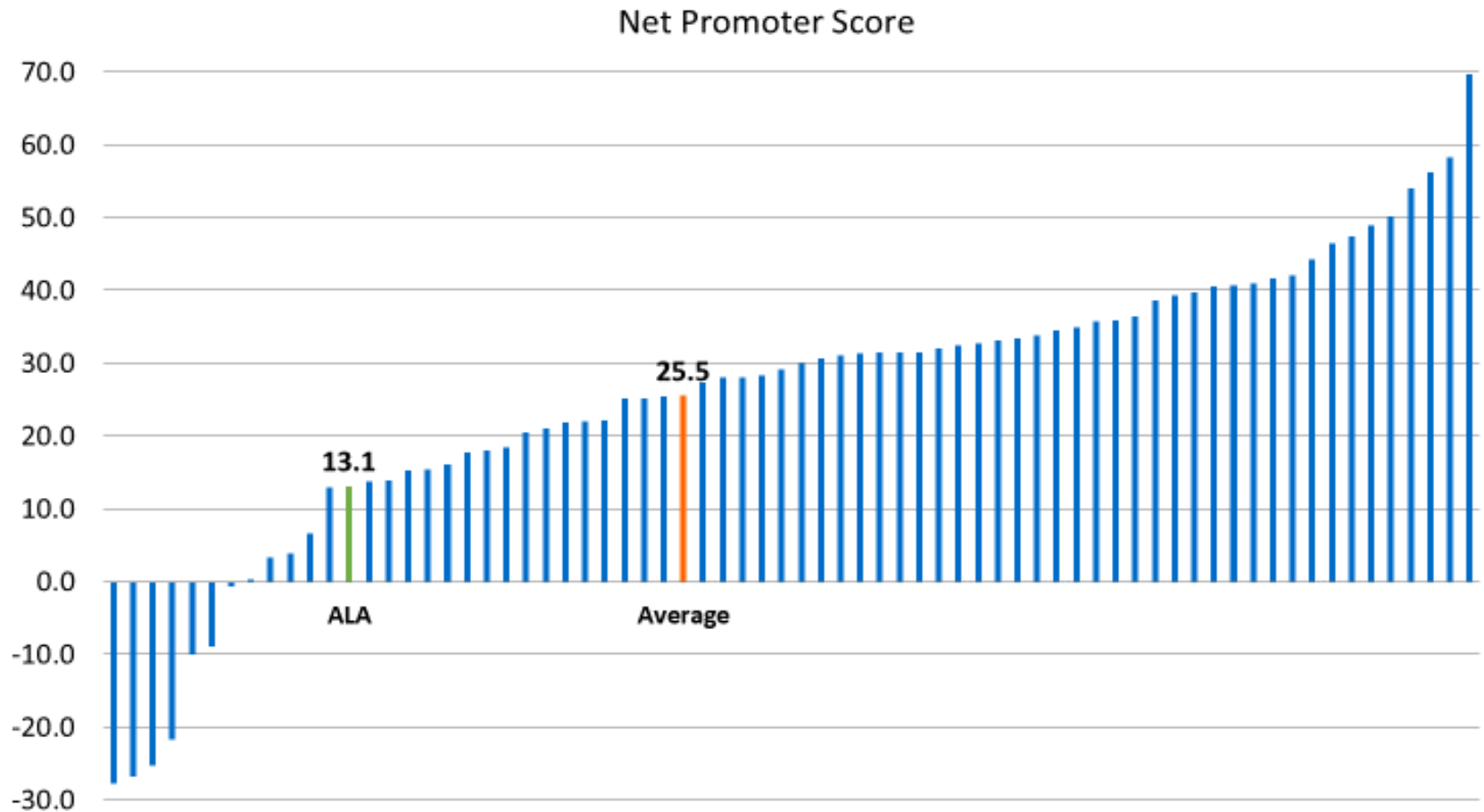
Net Promoter Score
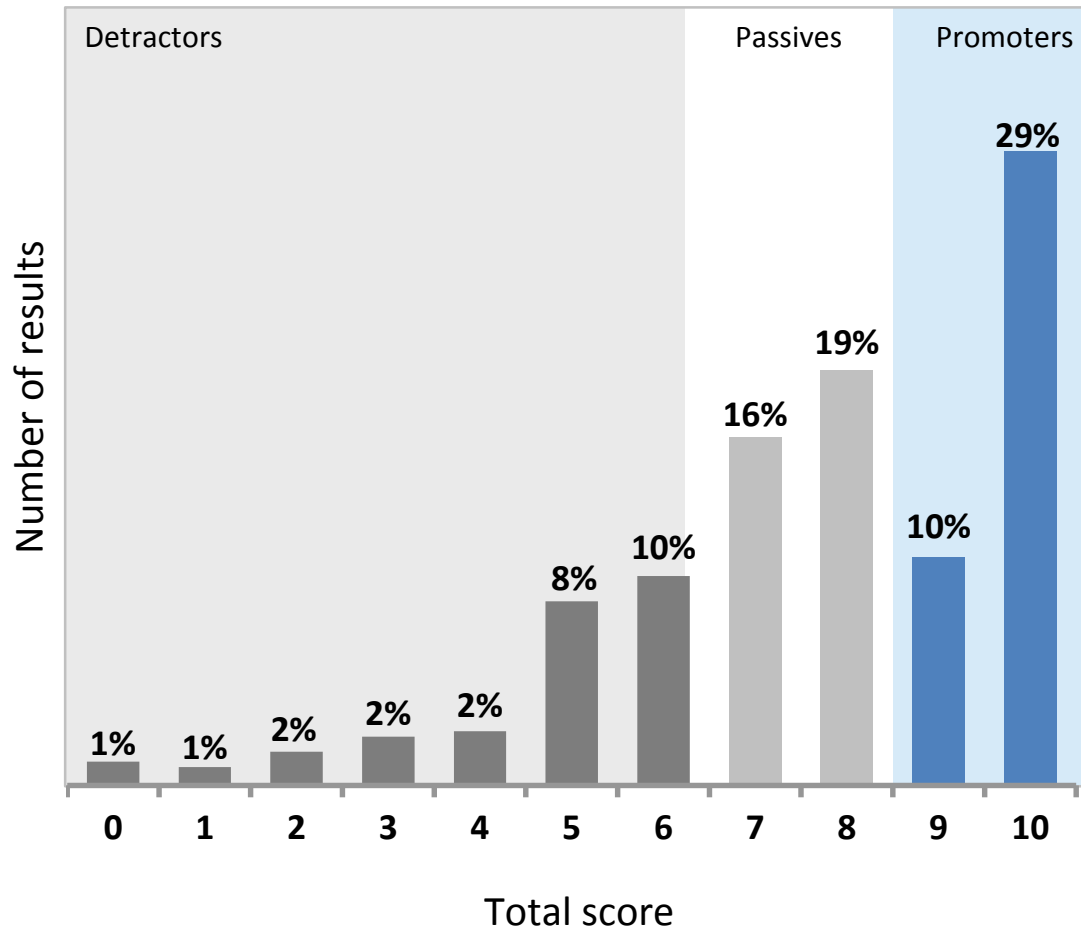
Member loyalty is low relative to other professional associations.


Net Promoter Score

*This average is based on Avenue M's database, which includes professional membership associations from a range of industries.

Two-thirds of members pay their own ALA membership dues.

53% pay for dues associated with divisions and/or roundtables.

Though the value of membership is equal to the cost for about half of members, more than one-third of members are concerned with ALA's value proposition.
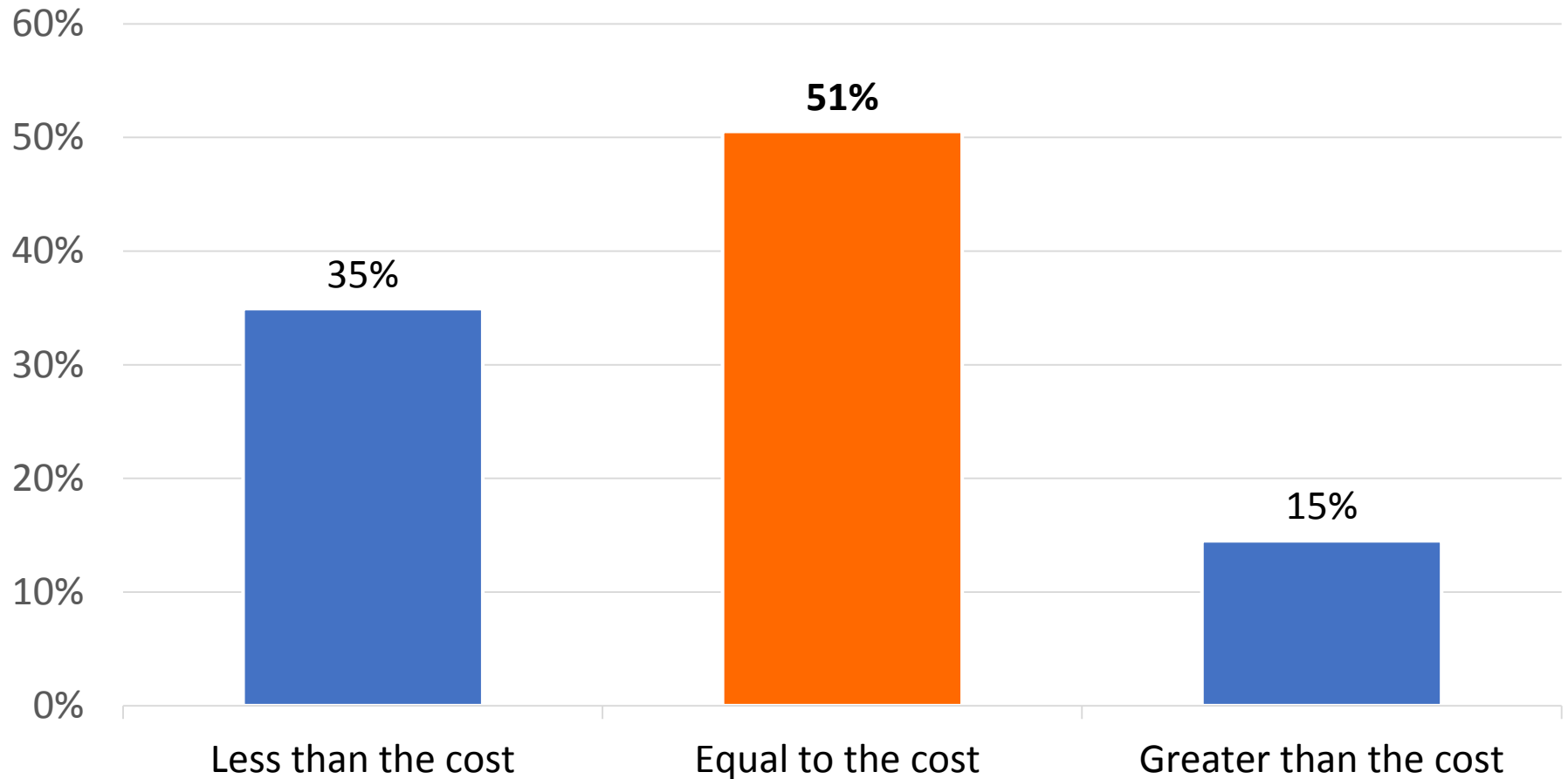
How to Increase the Value of Membership?

1 Free registration to a CE course/webinar with membership (52%)

2 More virtual conferences (24%)

3 Improve accessibility of resources on website (20%)

4 More opportunities to increase skillsets (20%)

5 Increase state/local advocacy (19%)

How to Increase the Value of Division Membership?

1 Free registration to a CE course/webinar with membership (44%)

2 More virtual conferences (22%)

3 Make it easier to find resources online (17%)

4 More opportunities to increase skillsets (16%)

5 Increase state/local advocacy (16%)

Members of ALA Divisions often derive more value from their Division membership than their National membership.

Value of National Verse Division Membership	Percent
I receive more value from my division membership(s)	**48%**
I receive equal value from my ALA membership and my division membership(s)	24%
I receive more value from my ALA membership	12%
I don't know	16%

ALA members believe that ALA National is most effective in advocating for the profession and helping them stay up-to-date.

Which branch of ALA is most effective?	ALA (National)	ALA Division(s)	ALA Regional/ State Chapters	ALA Round Table(s)	Non-ALA Association
Advocates effectively on behalf of my profession	**67%**	11%	13%	1%	7%
Helps me stay up-to-date on the latest information in my profession	**52%**	28%	9%	2%	9%
Provides high quality, affordable education	**29%**	26%	18%	1%	26%
Facilitates networking or the exchange of information between peers	25%	26%	**27%**	5%	17%
Offers volunteer opportunities	17%	26%	**29%**	6%	22%

ALA's most widely utilized benefits:

- *American Libraries* Magazine (78%)
- ALA Annual Conference (58%)
- AL Direct (41%)
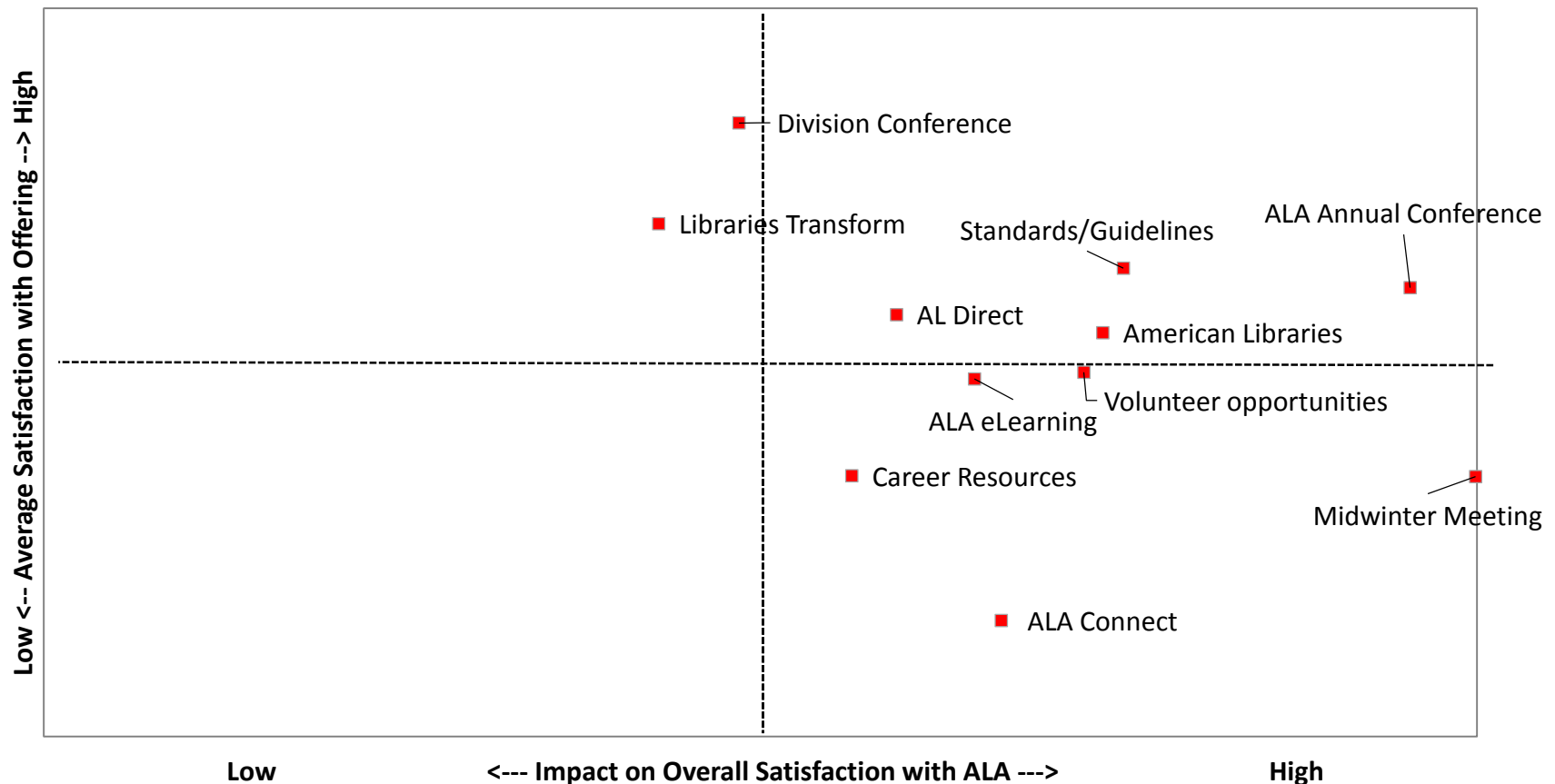- ALA eLearning (41%)
- ALA Standards and Guidelines (40%)

Satisfaction for ALA's core benefits is generally strong.

Benefit Usage and Satisfaction	Usage	Satisfaction (Satisfied + Extremely Satisfied)
American Libraries	78%	74%
ALA Annual Conference	58%	77%
AL Direct e-publication/newsletter	41%	75%
ALA eLearning (webinars, online courses)	41%	71%
ALA Standards and Guidelines	40%	79%
ALA Midwinter Meeting	33%	62%
ALA Connect	29%	46%
Division Conference/Symposium/Forum	29%	85%
Libraries Transform public awareness resources	23%	83%
ALA Library Resource Guides	21%	75%
Career Resources	21%	59%
I Love Libraries Website	20%	78%
ALA online discussion lists	19%	65%
Advocacy Resources	17%	81%

This table only displays a selection of benefits.

The ALA Midwinter meeting and Annual Conference have the strongest relative impact on overall membership satisfaction.

Satisfaction with Offerings & Impact on Overall ALA Satisfaction

Low <-- Average Satisfaction with Offering --> High

- Division Conference
- Libraries Transform
- Standards/Guidelines
- ALA Annual Conference
- AL Direct
- American Libraries
- ALA eLearning
- Volunteer opportunities
- Career Resources
- Midwinter Meeting
- ALA Connect

Low   <--- Impact on Overall Satisfaction with ALA --->   High

Connectedness to ALA (continued)

Members indicated that the top ways they feel connected or would feel more connected to ALA are...
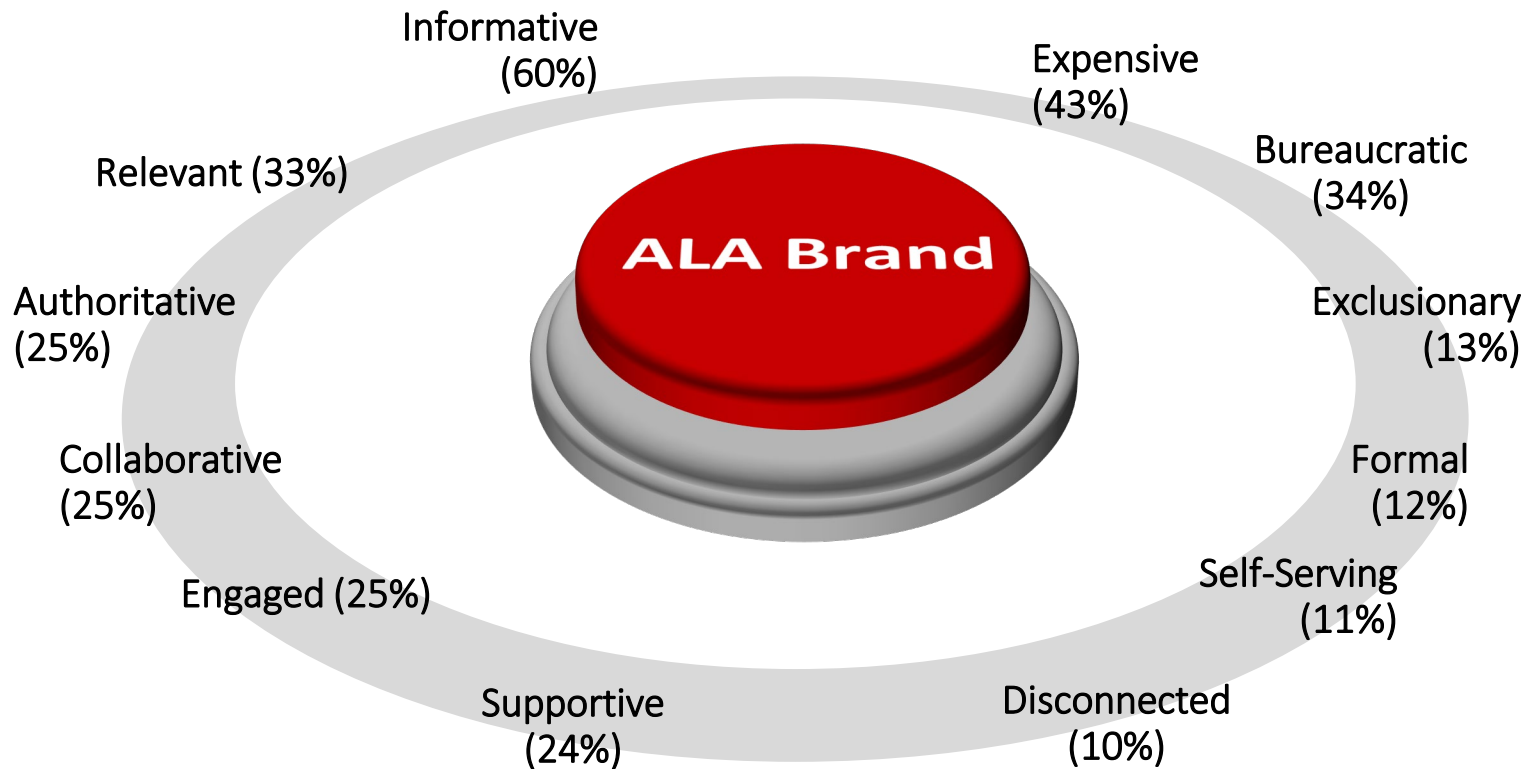
- Meeting other librarians and library workers (36%)

- Learning new things from ALA educational offerings (33%)

- Collaborating with peers (31%)

- Meeting colleagues/peers at events (31%)

ALA is described as informative and relevant but also expensive and bureaucratic.

Positive Attributes

Negative Attributes

Informative (60%)

Expensive (43%)

Relevant (33%)

Bureaucratic (34%)

ALA Brand

Authoritative (25%)

Exclusionary (13%)

Collaborative (25%)

Formal (12%)

Engaged (25%)

Self-Serving (11%)

Supportive (24%)

Disconnected (10%)

Non-Member Survey Respondents

The majority of former members did not make it past the three-year mark of membership (62%).

A misalignment between dues and value is the number one reason some library professionals are not members of ALA.

Just one in five non-members say they are likely (15%) or extremely likely (5%) to join ALA in the next year.

Keeping up-to-date is library professionals' number one challenge.

Professional Challenges	Percent
Keeping up-to-date with new trends and developments in the field	**41%**
Dealing with budget constraints	37%
Personal considerations (e.g., work/life balance, family commitments)	30%
Expanding my knowledge/level of expertise	29%
Finding a job or making a job change	23%

This table only displays a selection of challenges.

ALA effectively helps library professionals address some of the challenges they face.

How Well Do You Feel ALA Addresses Each of These Issues?	Bottom-two box (Not well + Not well at all)	Top-two box (Well + Very Well)	Unsure
Keeping up-to-date with new trends and developments in the field	4%	**72%**	6%
Expanding my knowledge/level of expertise	10%	**51%**	12%
Expanding my network/connections with other library professionals	17%	**40%**	12%
Finding a job or making a job change	**30%**	20%	19%
Dealing with budget constraints	**32%**	17%	22%
Personal considerations	**40%**	6%	35%

This table only displays a selection of issues/challenges.

ALA American Library Association

AVENUE M GROUP

Next Steps - Recommendations

- Develop a wide range of volunteer opportunities and emphasize the benefits of these opportunities on the volunteer and on the profession.

- Diversify communications to members and prospects about the opportunities at ALA.

- Demonstrate the value of paid ALA resources over free alternatives.

- Increase awareness of ALA's advocacy-related successes. Make it easier for members to become involved in advocacy issues.

- Guide members to ALA's educational and professional development offerings that best fit their career stage, topical interests and formatting preferences.

- Use this research to further evaluate ALA's portfolio of programs, products and services. Guide members to the offerings that best address their needs.

- Highlight how ALA membership can save members time and money in the short- and long-term.

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