501works

2023

2023 AMS/CRM SYSTEM SELECTION SURVEY RESULTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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DELIVERING TECHNOLOGY THAT WORKS FOR YOUR ASSOCIATION

501Works is an advanced software engineering, consulting, and solutions company with a deep knowledge of AMS/CMS systems, website delivery, systems integrations, data management and business applications. Our experience and knowledge is built in to our innovative products, including Mojo Middleware and Software Mage.

Why We Did This Survey

Selecting and implementing a new association management system (AMS) or customer relationship management system (CRM) presents organizations with several complex challenges. Those challenges include thoroughly assessing operational needs to ensure that the chosen system aligns with existing workflows, managing financial constraints and resource allocation throughout the implementation process, and navigating the diverse landscape of vendors and solutions. Additionally, organizations must prioritize effective change management strategies to facilitate smooth transitions and minimize disruptions to daily operations.

Successful system implementations demand meticulous planning, strategic decision-making, and proactive management of potential challenges to maximize long-term benefits for all of the project stakeholders.

After the launch of the AMS/CRM Selection survey in 2021, we confirmed what we had previously known only anecdotally: project stakeholders are having many of the same experiences. Explore the results of the 2023 survey to see how much things change, or stay the same with system selection and implementation.

How To Use This Report

This report focuses on the results from the 2023 survey with some comparison to the 2021 survey results. This report will allow readers to gain insight into what your association peers and Vendor and Consultant partners experience during system selection.

SURVEY METHODS

Survey Participant Groups

The survey targeted participants who have been involved in **AMS/CRM system selection** during their careers. Respondents were placed into participant groups based on their response to the first survey question asking them to self identify as **Association Staff**, **Association Management Company Representatives**, **Vendors/Solution** providers, or **Consultants**. If the survey respondent fell outside of these groups but had experience with system selection, they were given the opportunity to provide their contact information for consideration for future research.

System Selection Timeline

Association Staff were categorized by having selected a system within the past 5 years (even if that system was not yet implemented) or in the process of selecting a system. Association Staff who identified as neither of those groups, specifically who selected a system six or more years ago or who were not preparing to go through system selection, were given the opportunity to provide their contact details for inclusion in future research. Five years was chosen as the boundary timeline for system selection respondents with the hope that the memory would be recent enough to be recalled for the survey but not too distant that significant details were forgotten. Respondents who were AMC Representatives who manage one organization at a time were given the same questionnaire as Association Staff.

Research Questions

The survey was driven by four research questions:

- Are the feelings of AMS/CRM selection participants positive, negative, or neutral towards the AMS selection process?

- What are the key factors driving the AMS/CRM selection participants' feelings towards the selection process?

- How would the creation of a standardized approach to AMS selection benefit selection participants?

- How would the automation/digitization of the selection process benefit selection participants?

Survey Overview

Participants answered between **5** and **48** survey questions depending on their participant group. The questions collected responses across several topics of interest including demographic information such as understanding the type of organization they work for or service, the roles they played or expect to play during system selection, their level of comfort with certain aspects of the system selection process, and their overall impressions of their experiences.

The survey questions also asked participants to share the reasons for their feelings about their experiences, share an overview of the processes they followed or plan to follow during system selection, identify what they would do differently with the process if faced with another system selection, and other insights about dealing with RFPs and system selection.

The 2023 survey included refined versions of the questions from the original survey and presented new questions to gain a better understanding of the level of satisfaction with the legacy versus newly selected system.

The survey, which ran from November 2023 to January 2024, received **241** responses representing more than **108** associations, **23** AMS/CRM solution providers, and **12** consulting groups.

SURVEY PARTICIPANT GROUPS

ASSOCIATION STAFF - 67% OF RESPONDENTS

161 Association employees participated in the survey. **26%** of the Association employee participants are in the process of searching for a new system. **52%** of Association respondents selected a system within the past 5 years.

VENDOR - 13% OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS

31 Vendor employees representing **23** AMS/CRM solutions

CONSULTANT - 7% OF RESPONDENTS

18 Consultants representing **12** consulting organizations

ASSOCIATION MANAGEMENT COMPANY REPRESENTATIVE - 8% OF RESPONDENTS

19 AMC representatives responded to the survey. **15** were managers of multiple organizations, and **4** manage one organization. Managers of one organization responded to the same survey questions as the Association Staff.

OTHER INTERESTED PARTICIPANTS

12 Survey respondents with experience in the system selection process fell outside of the targeted participant groups but were given the opportunity to share their contact information for inclusion in a future survey. This included Association Staff who completed selections more than 5 years ago or who are preparing for system selection in the near future, as well as consulting groups or vendors who provide specific services that may fall outside of system selection and implementation.

ASSOCIATION STAFF DEMOGRAPHICS
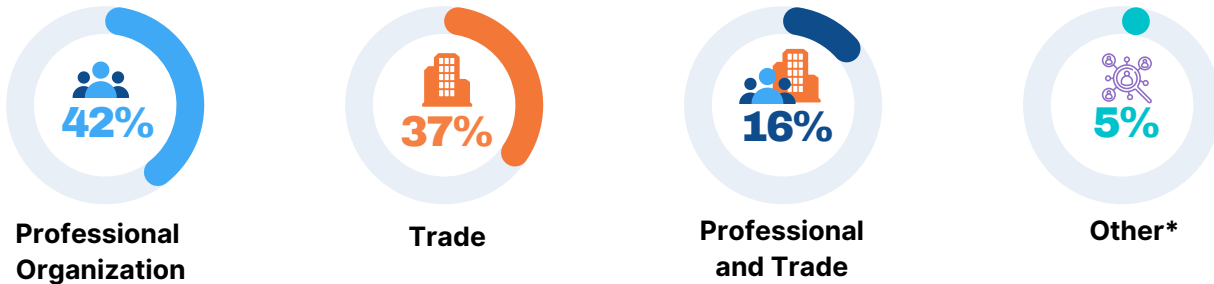
Organization Type

42%
Professional
Organization

37%
Trade

16%
Professional
and Trade

5%
Other*

*"Other" Organization Types included honor societies and certification entities.

Number of Employees at Association Staff Organizations

6%
0 to 2

30%
3 to 10

30%
11 to 30

10%
31 to 50

14%
51 to 100

10%
101+
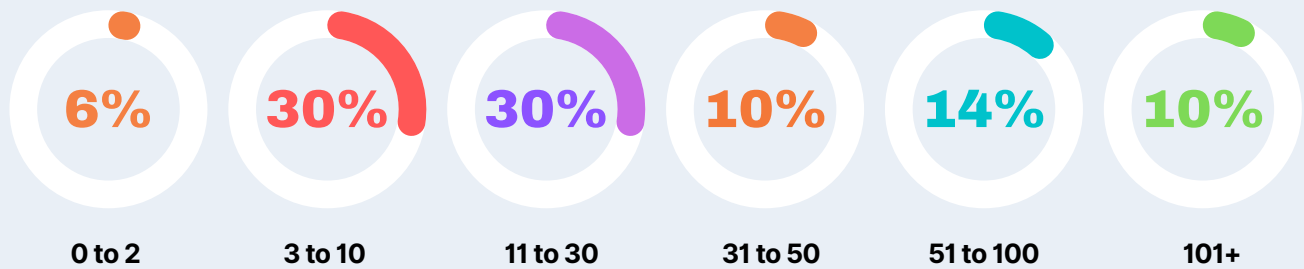
Most Association Staff respondents are based at organizations with 3 to 30 staff.

Length of Time on Legacy AMS/CRM

20%
Fewer than 5 years

37%
5 to 10 years

23%
10 to 15 years

12%
15 to 20 years

8%
More than 20 years

Most respondents reported organizations keeping the legacy system for 5 to 10 years.

ASSOCIATION STAFF PRIMARY FUNCTIONS AND DEPARTMENTS AT ORGANIZATIONS

Primary Function at Organization

52%
Manager/Director

22%
Vice President/C-Suite

17%
CEO/Executive Director

9%
Non-managerial staff
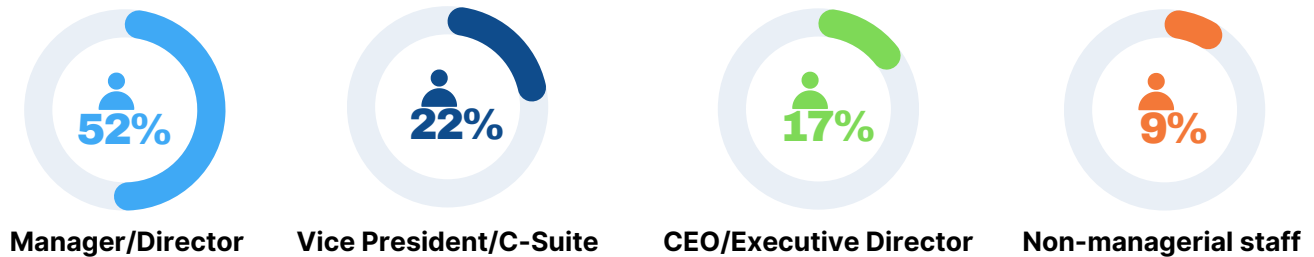
Just over half of the Association Staff survey participants were Manager/Director level followed by 39**%** of participants at the highest levels of their respective organizations.

Departments

8%
Other*

5%
Communications

3%
Finance

3%
Education

2%
Governance

2%
Meetings

1%
Marketing

1%
Research

23%
Technology

23%
CEO/ED/COO

29%
Membership
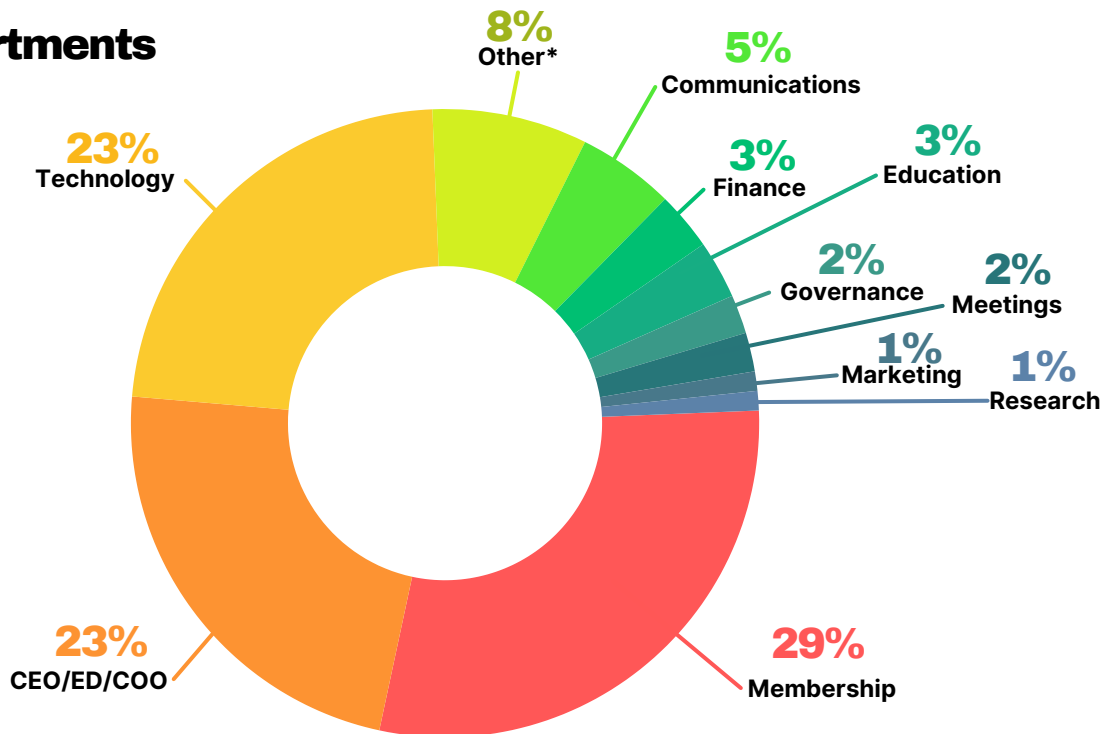
Survey participants represented various departments when going through system selection. **Membership** was the frontrunner at **29%** followed by **23%** each of participants who identified as **CEOs/Executive Directors/COOs** or **Technology.**

8% of Association respondents highlighted Operations and "wearing multiple hats across all departments" in the "Other" category for their departments.

ASSOCIATION STAFF ROLES AT ORGANIZATIONS

Most Association Staff participants identified their roles during system selection as Project Manager. Executive Sponsor (described as an executive-level staff who provided approval and oversight on the selection project), came in a close second place, with Subject Matter Expert rounding out the top three roles participants filled.

*Responses in the "Other" category were primarily respondents who held or expect to hold multiple roles.

Role During Selection

14%
Subject Matter Expert

13%
Other*

8%
General Staff

3%
Business Analyst

2%
Network Systems

1%
Software Developer

25%
Executive Sponsor

34%
Project Manager
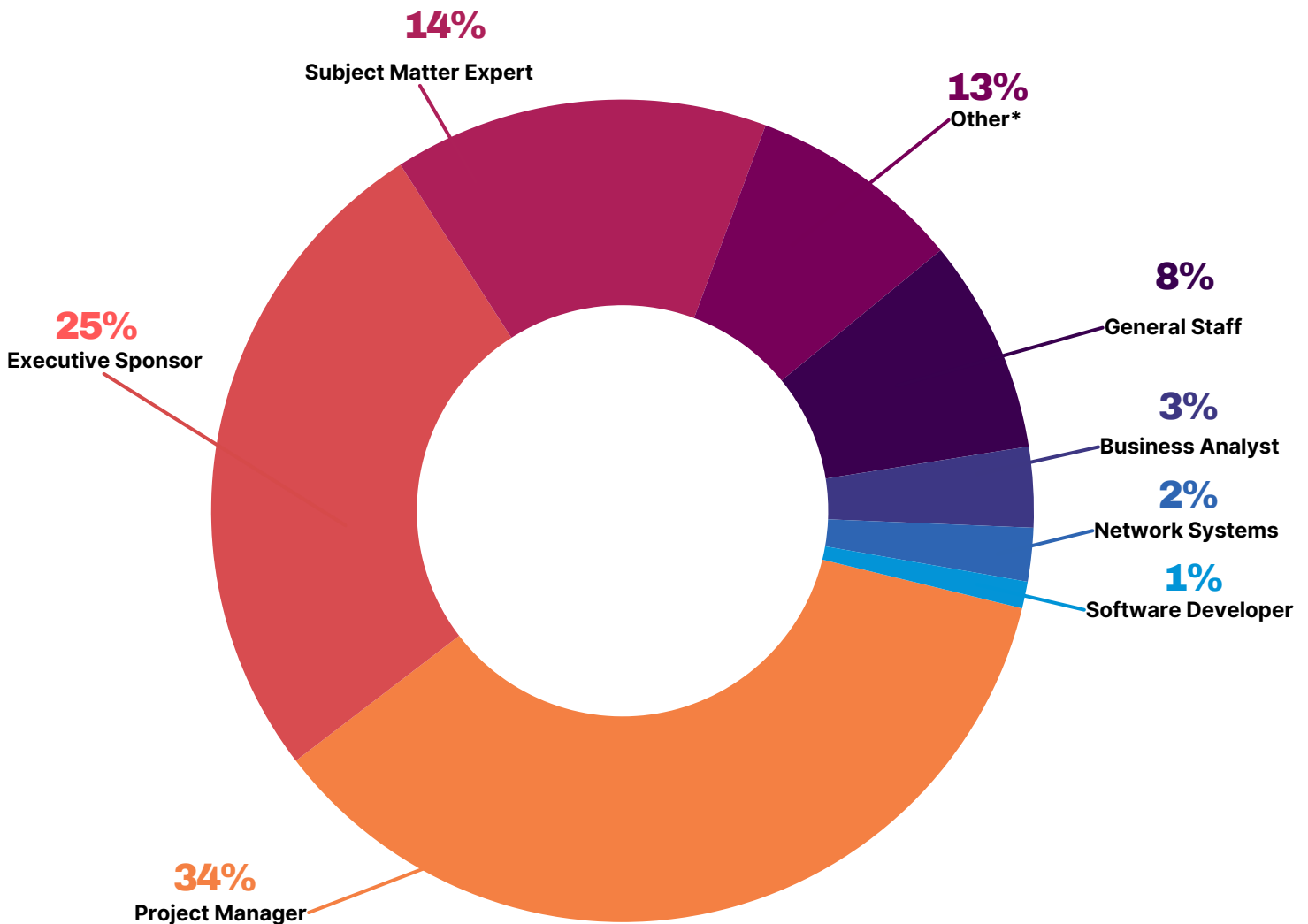
ASSOCIATION STAFF INVOLVEMENT IN SYSTEM SELECTION

ASSOCIATION STAFF INSIGHTS

What challenges did you face during AMS/CRM selection? "Other organizational priorities. The process would have been less frustrating if it took 2-3 years from start to finish. Rather it took nearly 5 years Other things got in the way which dragged it out Also, the issue with our organization was that nothing was documented prior to the project. Thus, requirements gathering process was longer than necessary because teams had to come into meetings and align on what is actually happening within their departments-often at the manager's and leadership's surprise."

Executive Sponsorship

A new demographic question in the 2023 survey was whether the project had an Executive sponsor. The vast majority of survey respondents were involved in selection projects that had an Executive sponsor.

Fig.7

✓ Yes **63%**   ✗ No **8%**

✓ Yes **20%**   ? Unsure **9%**
I was the executive sponsor
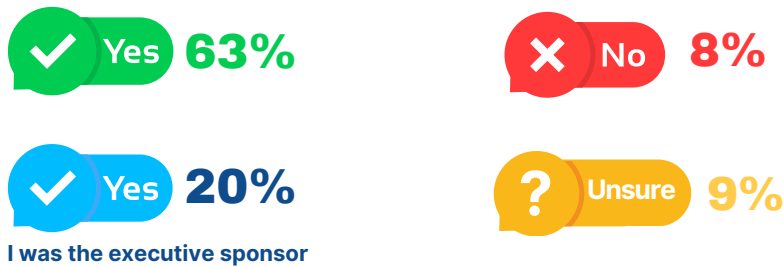
How Staff Became Involved in Selection

Fig.8

"Volunteered" refers to participants who sought out inclusion in the system selection process.

29%
Volunteered

71%
Assigned by Management

"Assigned by Management" includes participants who were hired specifically for the system selection process or whose job descriptions included participation in the system selection process.

CONSULTANT INSIGHTS

62% of Consultant respondents assist 1 to 5 clients with selection each year. 75% of these respondents create between one and five RFPs and 62% review up to 10 Vendor proposals on behalf of clients in a year.

ASSOCIATION STAFF INVOLVEMENT IN TECHNOLOGY IMPLEMENTATION

ASSOCIATION STAFF INSIGHTS

If you could do the selection process all over again, what would you do differently? "I think we would have asked the vendors to show us working examples of what we needed, as opposed to taking them at their word on their capabilities."

Fig.9

Number of Times Assn. Staff Selected/Implemented Systems

AMS/CRM

Zero	1	2	3	4 to 6	7 to 10	More than 10
11%	14%	13%	17%	21%	11%	13%

ANY TECHNOLOGY (not AMS/CRM)

Zero	1	2	3	4 to 6	7 to 10	More than 10
5%	8%	11%	13%	30%	14%	19%
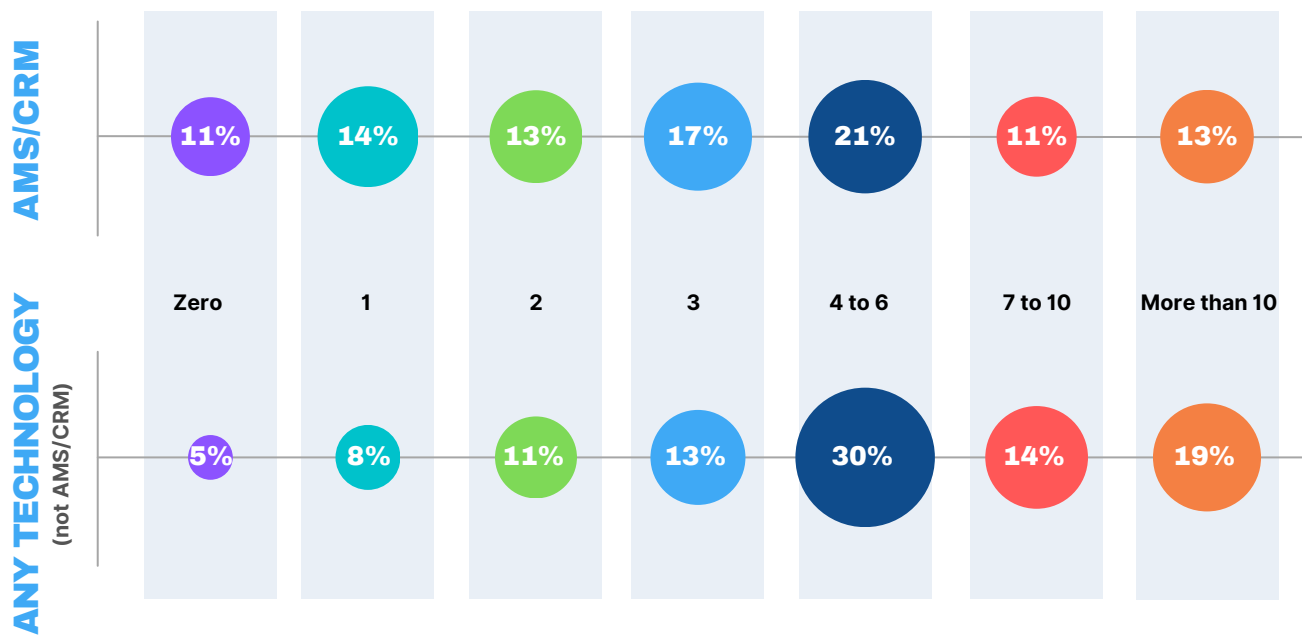
Most of the Association respondents have selected and/or implemented 4 to 6 AMS/CRM in their careers.

CONSULTANT INSIGHTS

"One problem that is recurring is vendors that underestimate implementation costs and timing. We sometimes have to push back when we see unrealistic goals or expectations, and re-iterate full scope of the project. Another frustration is lack of continuity between sales and implementation teams - a lot of discovery often rehashes details provided in RFPs, vendor demonstrations, and detailed tech sales discussions."

SYSTEM SELECTION DECISIONS

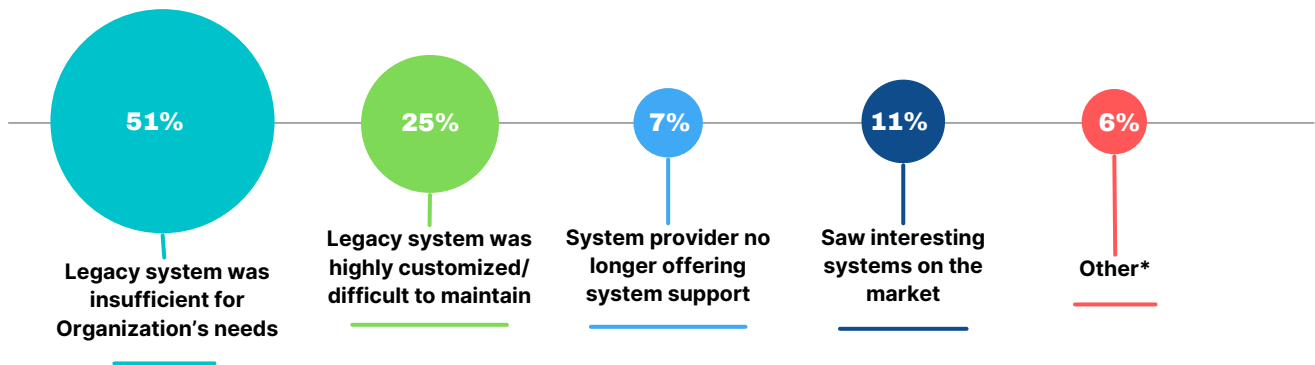**112** Association Staff respondents selected the reasons their Organizations decided to transition from the legacy system. **NOTE:** Respondents were able to choose as many reasons as were appropriate for their situations as well as provide any reasons under the "Other" category that weren't already listed.

Fig.10

Reasons for Associations Changing Legacy System (n=112)

51%	25%	7%	11%	6%
Legacy system was insufficient for Organization's needs	Legacy system was highly customized/difficult to maintain	System provider no longer offering system support	Saw interesting systems on the market	Other*

*Some issues identified by respondents as "Other" included: 1) pricing issues/changes with no added benefit to the system/customer, 2) system provider not investing in system development/enhancements, 3) limited ability for self-sufficiency (organization having to be reliant on the vendor/consultant for system operations), 4) new executive leadership choosing the new system based on familiarity with the system, 5) deprecation of desired functionality, and 6) loss of faith/declining relationship with the vendor.

CONSULTANT & VENDOR INSIGHTS

65% of Consultant respondents and 50% of Vendor respondents identified "Legacy AMS/CRM was insufficient for Organization's needs" as the primary reason clients share for seeking a new system.
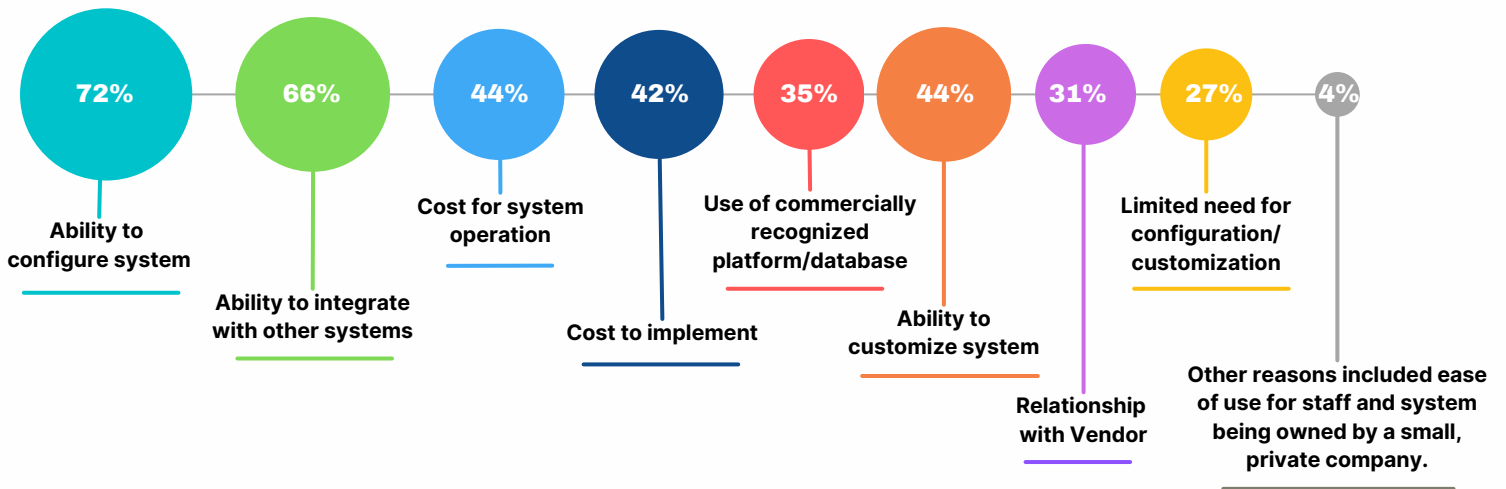
65%

50%

SYSTEM SELECTION DECISIONS

71 respondents who selected a system within the past five years identified the reasons that led to the final system choice.

Reasons for System Choice (n=71)

72%	66%	44%	42%	35%	44%	31%	27%	4%

Ability to configure system

Ability to integrate with other systems

Cost for system operation

Cost to implement

Use of commercially recognized platform/database

Ability to customize system

Relationship with Vendor

Limited need for configuration/customization

Other reasons included ease of use for staff and system being owned by a small, private company.

NOTE: *Respondents were able to choose as many reasons as were appropriate for their situations as well as provide any reasons under the "Other" category that weren't already listed.*
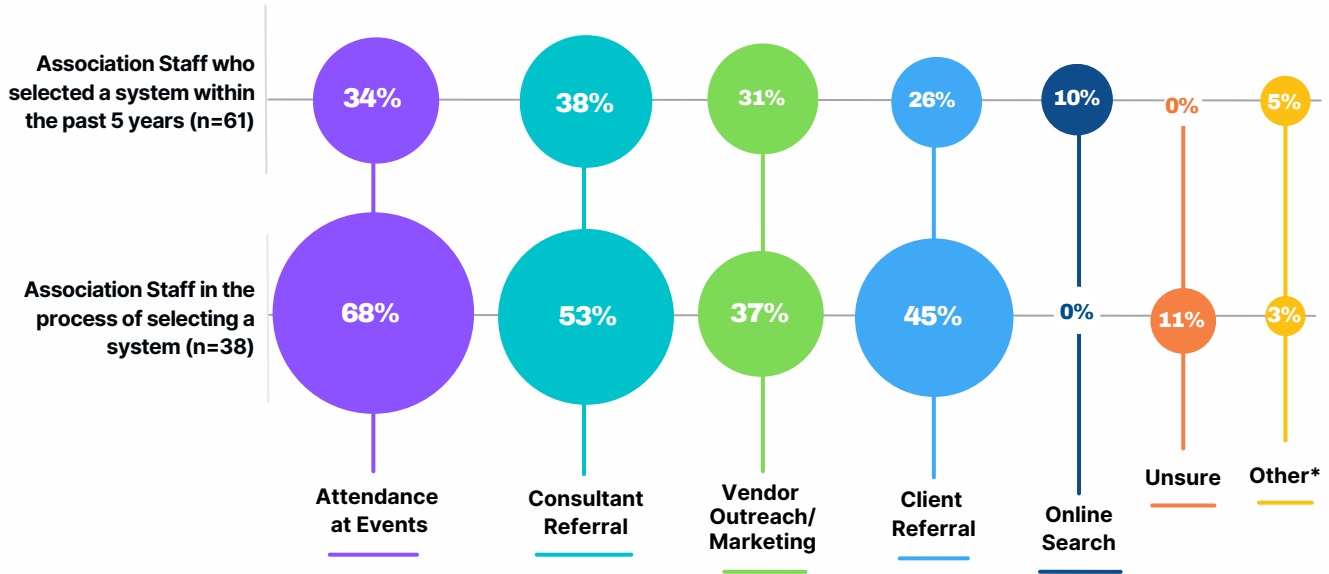
VENDOR INSIGHTS

"Too little time is typically provided to turn around a full and proper response [to an RFP]."

SYSTEM SELECTION DECISIONS

Fig.12

Identification of Potential Vendors

	Attendance at Events	Consultant Referral	Vendor Outreach/ Marketing	Client Referral	Online Search	Unsure	Other*
Association Staff who selected a system within the past 5 years (n=61)	34%	38%	31%	26%	10%	0%	5%
Association Staff in the process of selecting a system (n=38)	68%	53%	37%	45%	0%	11%	3%

Association respondents selected all of the ways they identified or expect to identify Vendors/Solution providers.

*Other ways potential vendors were identified included: previously using other services offered by the vendor, using own knowledge of the market, using short list of vendors provided by executive leadership, and being unsure if executive leadership plans to use "traditional" vendors.
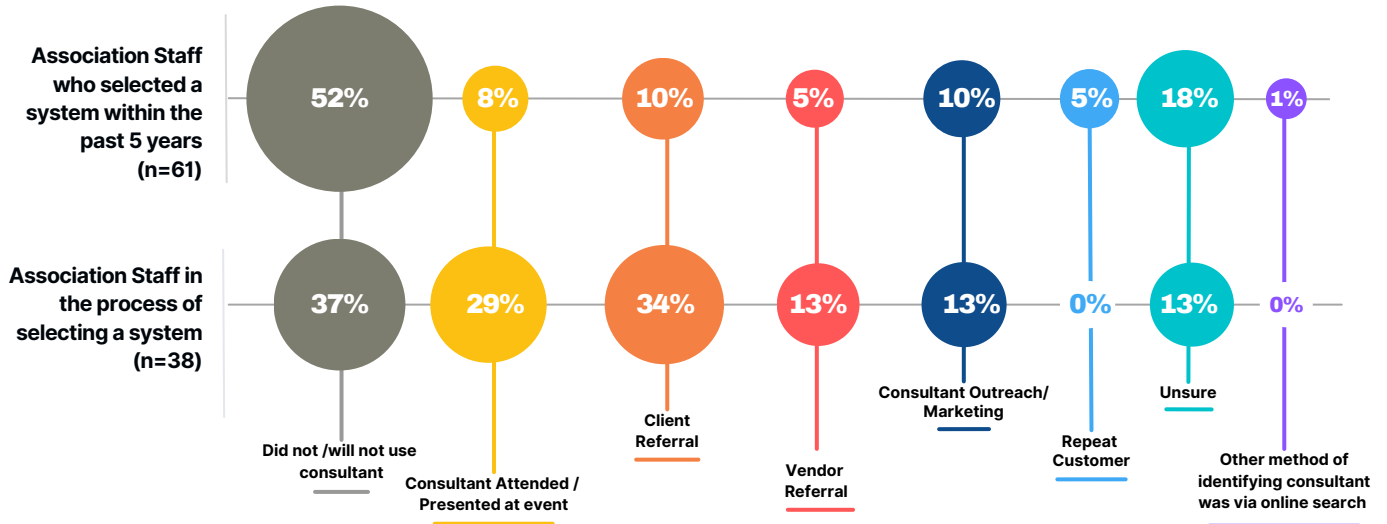
VENDOR INSIGHTS

57% of Vendors identified Company Outreach/Marketing efforts and Client referrals as main sources for new clients.

SYSTEM SELECTION DECISIONS

Fig.13

Identification of Potential Consultants

	Did not /will not use consultant	Consultant Attended / Presented at event	Client Referral	Vendor Referral	Consultant Outreach/ Marketing	Repeat Customer	Unsure	Other method of identifying consultant was via online search
Association Staff who selected a system within the past 5 years (n=61)	52%	8%	10%	5%	10%	5%	18%	1%
Association Staff in the process of selecting a system (n=38)	37%	29%	34%	13%	13%	0%	13%	0%

Association respondents selected all of the ways they identified or expect to identify Consultants. Most respondents went through or plan to go through system selection without the services of a Consultant. In a small number of cases, respondents were already benefitting from other services provided by the consultant/consulting group and decided to expand that relationship for system selection.

CONSULTANT INSIGHTS

47% of Consultants identified Client referrals as the main source for new clients. 18% identified Vendor referrals as the main source.
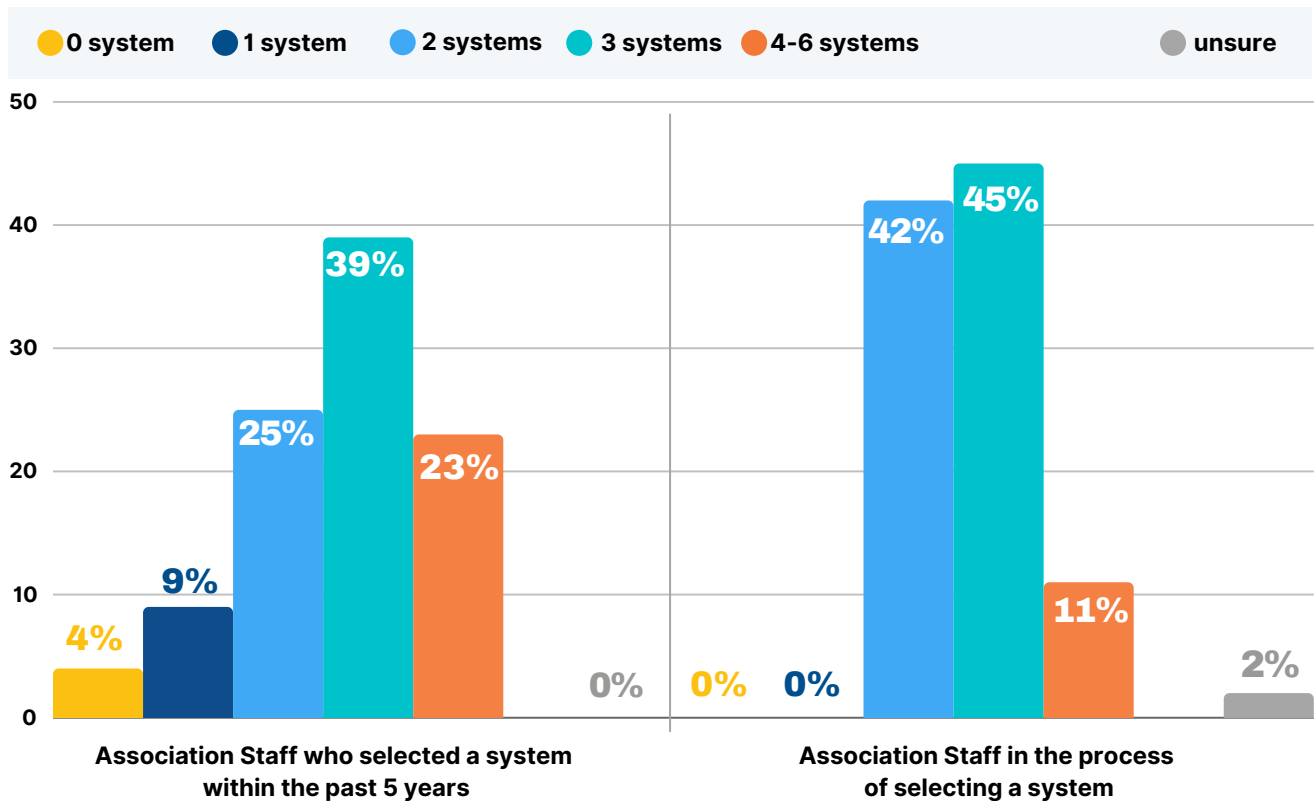
ASSOCIATION STAFF INSIGHTS

If you could do the selection process all over again, what would you do differently? "Ask more questions, really clarify what our expectations are and what they mean when they say 'we can do that.'"

Fig.14

Number of systems "seriously" considered for selection

Legend: 🟡 0 system ⚫ 1 system 🔵 2 systems 🟢 3 systems 🟠 4-6 systems ⚪ unsure

Association Staff who selected a system within the past 5 years
- 0 system: 4%
- 1 system: 9%
- 2 systems: 25%
- 3 systems: 39%
- 4-6 systems: 23%
- unsure: 0%

Association Staff in the process of selecting a system
- 0 system: 0%
- 1 system: 0%
- 2 systems: 42%
- 3 systems: 45%
- 4-6 systems: 11%
- unsure: 2%

Most Associations focused on, or expect to focus on, three systems as their top contenders before making a final selection. None of the respondents seriously considered or expect to seriously consider more than 6 systems as finalists. Respondents who chose "0" systems seriously considered shared that the system was selected by executive leadership or other project stakeholder on behalf of the organization.

VENDOR INSIGHTS

44% of Vendor respondents provide three targeted demos with content specific to the potential client before a selection decision is made. 37% of Vendor respondents said they rarely learn <u>after</u> the targeted demo that the system does not fit the needs of the potential client. Another 37% said it sometimes does occur.
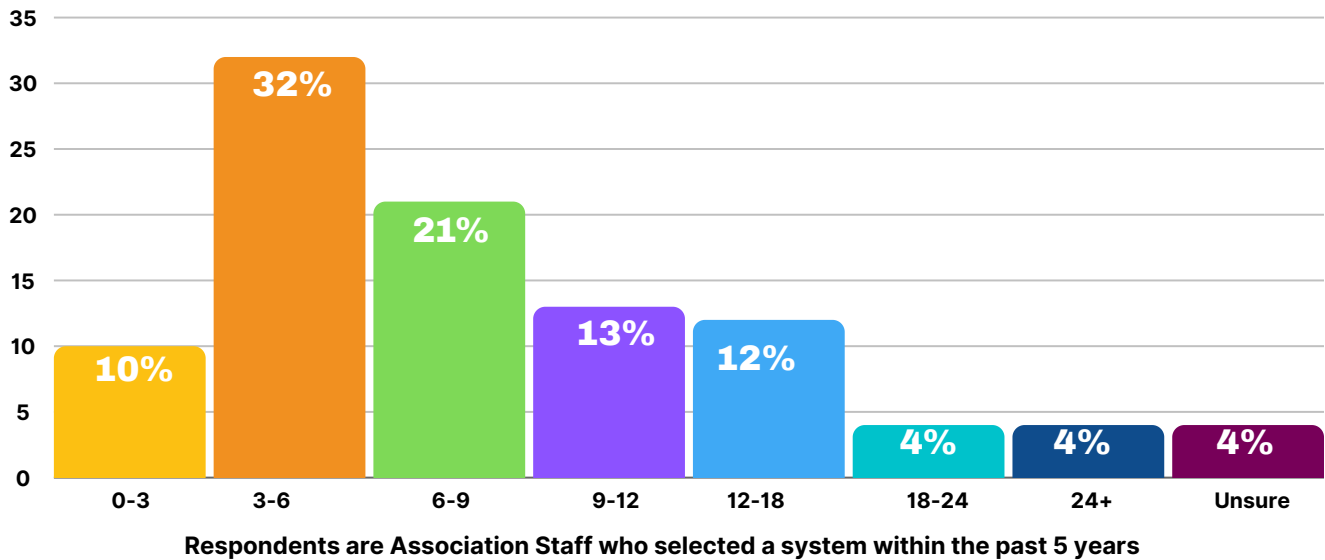
SYSTEM SELECTION TIMELINE

VENDOR INSIGHTS

43% of Vendor respondents say it can take five or more days to respond to a client RFP.

Number of Months b/t deciding system was needed and selecting new system

Respondents are Association Staff who selected a system within the past 5 years

Most participants who selected a system within the past five years were able to make that selection between three and six months.

CONSULTANT INSIGHTS

50% of Consultant respondents receive and respond to fewer than five requests for system selection support in a year.
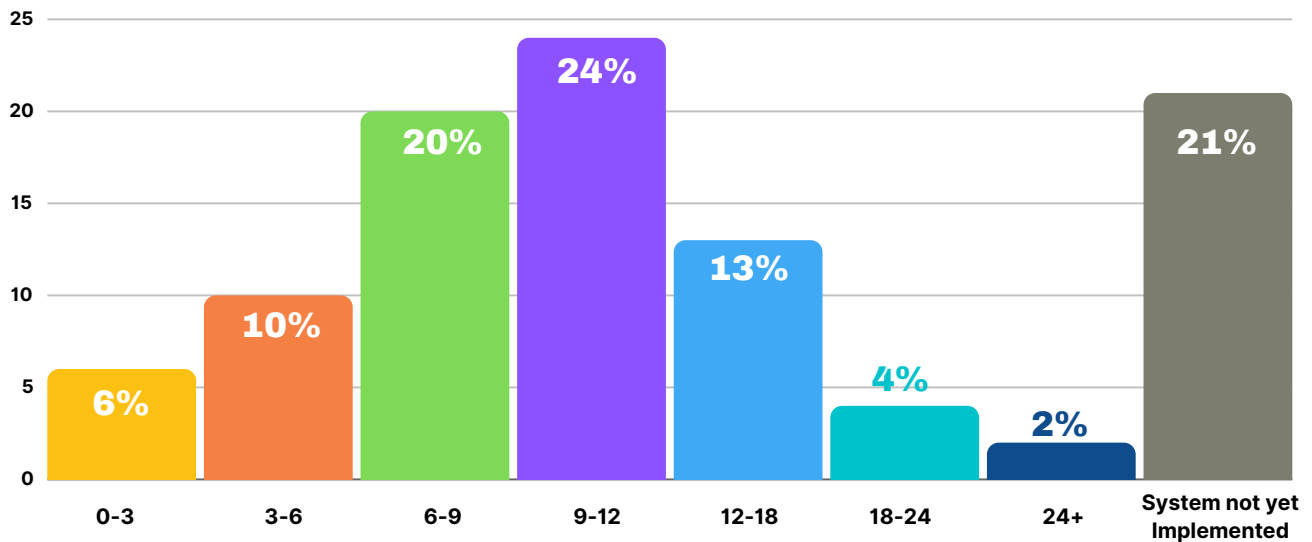
SYSTEM SELECTION TIMELINE

Fig.16

Number of Months b/t system selection and system implementation

	0-3	3-6	6-9	9-12	12-18	18-24	24+	System not yet Implemented
%	6%	10%	20%	24%	13%	4%	2%	21%

Respondents are Association Staff who selected a system within the past 5 years

Nearly a quarter of participants who selected a system within the past five years were able to implement the new system 9 to 12 months after selection. Many of the survey participants have not yet implemented their new systems.

ASSOCIATION STAFF INSIGHTS

"It's a big challenge to run your business while migrating to a new platform, trying to anticipate what you'll need as you grow 5 years from now. These investments in time and people resources are huge, and none of us are working with complete understandings of the business needs of the future. So we are looking for systems that are as open as possible to allow for future integrations of tools that have yet to be developed. Crazy, right?"
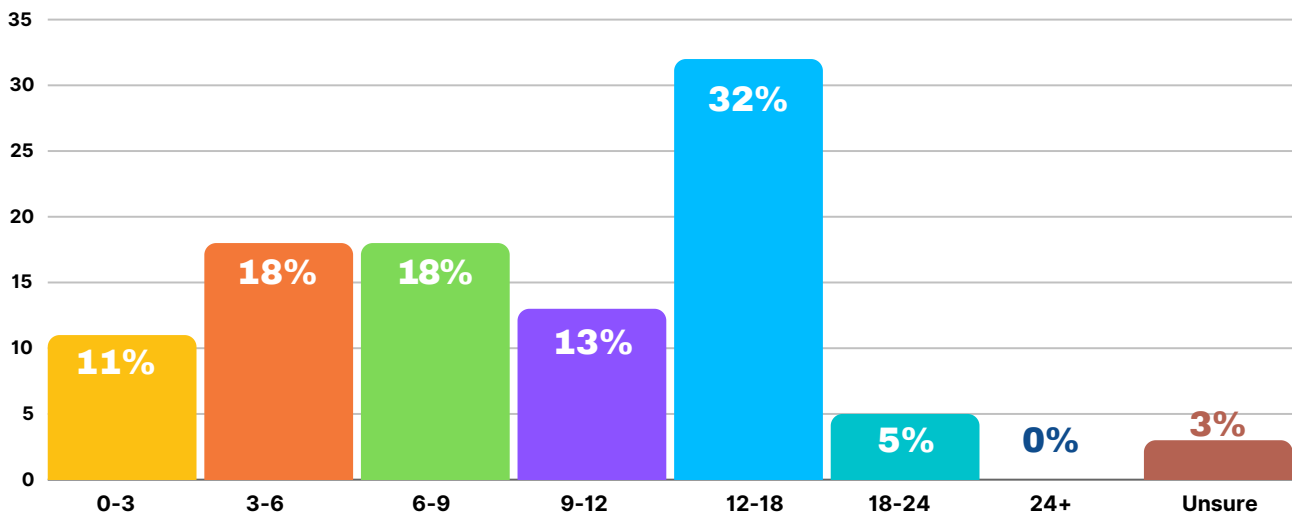
SYSTEM SELECTION TIMELINE

VENDOR INSIGHTS

"Prospects schedules often drive the search (we need this right now so we can be live quickly - regardless of whether that makes sense or not). Once the search starts, that sense of urgency OFTEN goes away."

Fig.17

Expected number of months for system selection

Respondents are Association Staff currently going through system selection

Nearly one-third of Association Staff currently going through system selection expect to have a decision made 12 to 18 months after starting the search.

CONSULTANT INSIGHTS

37% of Consultants said they rarely assist a client with selecting a new system and then not assist with the implementation of that system. 31% said it sometimes occurs where they are involved with selection but not implementation for that client.
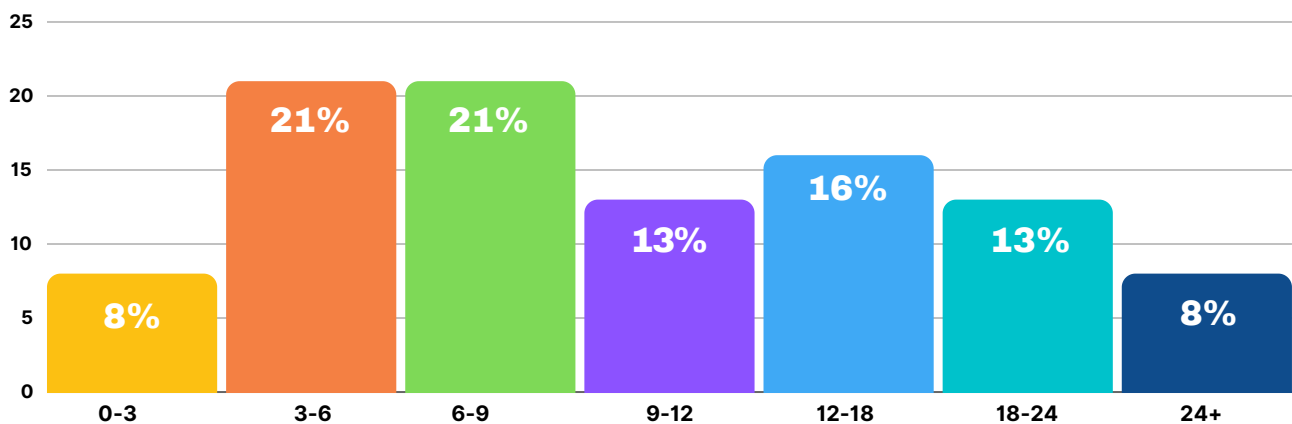
SYSTEM SELECTION TIMELINE

VENDOR INSIGHTS

30% of Vendors said sometimes organizations do not include system/business requirements in the RFP. 37% said system/business requirements are sometimes included that do NOT fit the actual system/business requirements of the organization, followed by 33% who said this frequently occurs.

Fig.18

Number of months expected b/t system selection and implementation

Respondents are Association Staff currently going through system selection

42% of participants currently going through the process expect to implement the new system three to nine months after making a selection.

ASSOCIATION STAFF INSIGHTS

What aspects of the AMS/CRM selection process did you find to be positive?

"Our team got a lot closer as we realized that it was okay to challenge the vendors' thinking and it was okay to make a decision to pull back after learning the truth of what the newly proposed system really offered."

Fig.19

Association Staff Confidence with Major Tasks

84%
Previously selected

92%
Currently selecting

**Gathering Accurate
Business Requirements**

72%
Previously selected

52%
Currently selecting

**Writing an
Appropriate RFP**

82%
Previously selected

92%
Currently selecting

**Researching
Vendors/Solutions**

81%
Previously selected

92%
Currently selecting

**Comparing
Vendors/Solutions**

70%
Previously selected

68%
Currently selecting
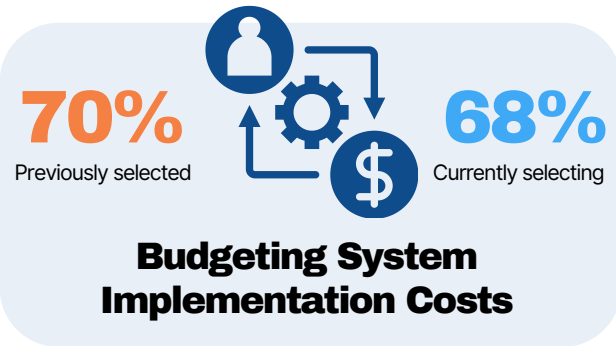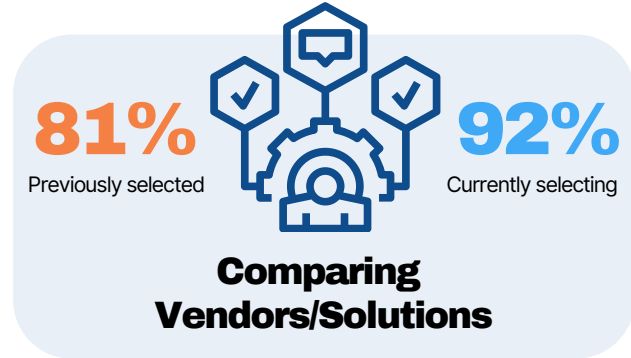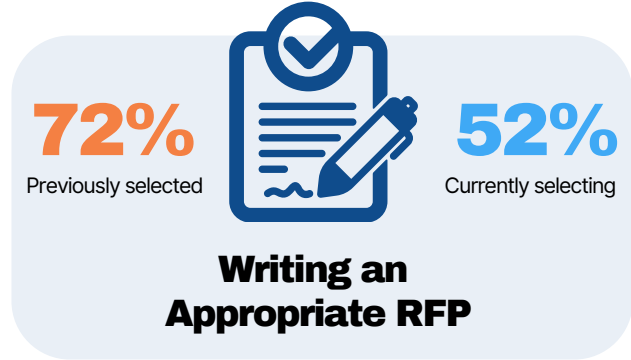
**Budgeting System
Implementation Costs**

81%
Previously selected

79%
Currently selecting

**Budgeting System
Operating Costs**

74%
Previously selected

81%
Currently selecting

**Selecting a System
That Meets Needs**

75%
Previously selected

69%
Currently selecting

**Negotiating
a Favorable Contract**

Association Staff respondents were asked to rate their level of confidence with eight specific tasks. Participants rated each task as feeling no confidence, little confidence, unsure, some confidence, and high level of confidence. Percentages displayed show respondents who expressed **some** or **high confidence**.

Fig.20

System Selection Information Tracking
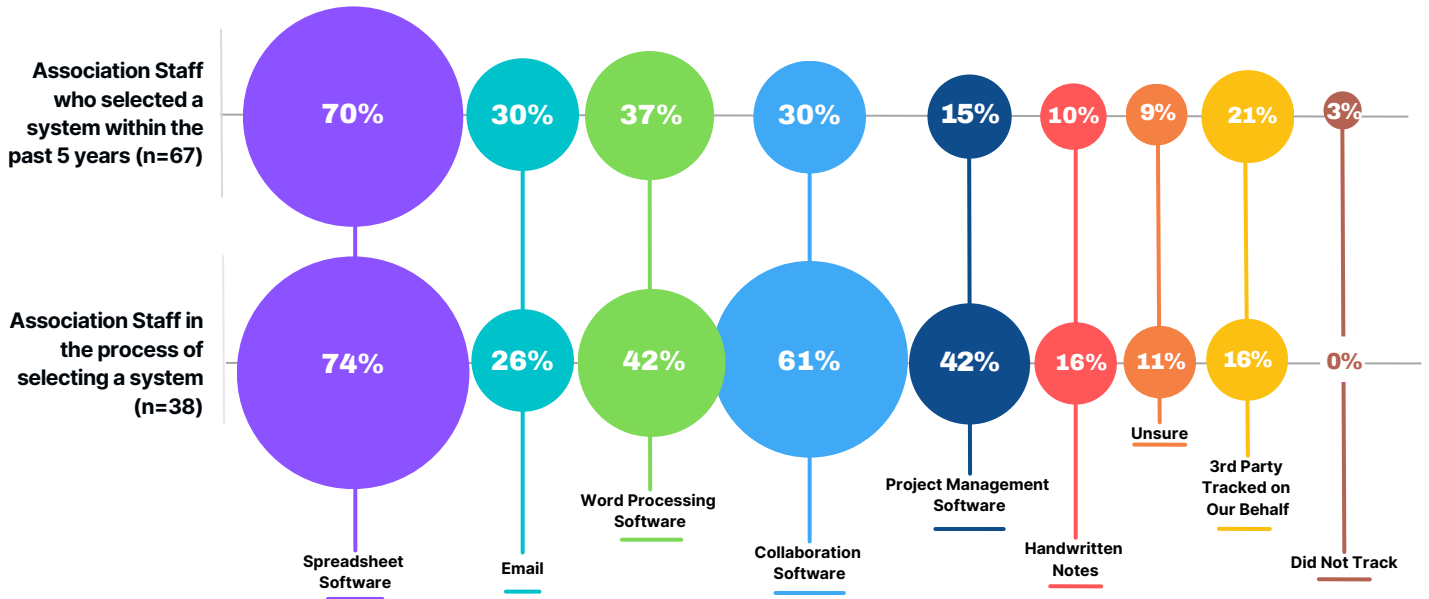

Association Staff who selected a system within the past 5 years (n=67)

Spreadsheet Software	Email	Word Processing Software	Collaboration Software	Project Management Software	Handwritten Notes	Unsure	3rd Party Tracked on Our Behalf	Did Not Track
70%	30%	37%	30%	15%	10%	9%	21%	3%

Association Staff in the process of selecting a system (n=38)

Spreadsheet Software	Email	Word Processing Software	Collaboration Software	Project Management Software	Handwritten Notes	Unsure	3rd Party Tracked on Our Behalf	Did Not Track
74%	26%	42%	61%	42%	16%	11%	16%	0%

Participants selected the various ways they managed/plan to manage information during the system selection process. Spreadsheet software (e.g. Excel, Google Sheets, etc.) is heavily relied upon followed by word processing software (e.g. Word, Google Docs, etc.) and email. The majority of respondents chose how the information would be tracked based on staff already being familiar with the methods and because the options were cost effective or free.

CONSULTANT INSIGHTS

"Vendors never seem able to meet budget and timeline in the proposals during implementation. Not sure if that is a deficiency of the RFP itself, the RFP process, the vendor sales team, or something else."

SYSTEM SELECTION PROCESS

Participants describe the steps taken to select a new system:

"Online research, attending AMS Fest, creating a requirements list, narrowing down to 5-6 systems, setting up demos, narrowing down to 2-3 systems, setting up more detailed demos with Q&A, obtaining proposals."

"Pitched to ED, staff & BOD. Worked with outside consultant to prepare RFP. Sent RFP (we were interrupted by COVID, so we repeated the RFP process a year later). Consultant summarized proposals, staff lead (me) reviewed proposals. Selected 4 for demos. Did Demos with staff. Did second demo with top 2 finalists. Had third demo with selection. Lots of discussion Made selection."

"Situational assessment > requirements analysis > solution research > vendor evaluation > selection."

1. Informational calls 2. Select Demos 3. Select Demos to Select Staff 4. Provide current software system overview and specific scenarios to select AMSs 5. Review responses/experiences 6. Full Staff Demos 7. Financial Review 8. Decision

Used consultant to build requirements documents. Consultants identified 9 potential vendors. Staff review of the identified AMS systems. Narrowing of the potential systems. Focused-staff review to pick final vendor.

Poll staff to determine what is needed; research what is available; get demos for all staff to attend; poll staff for preferences; key staff use all of the gathered info to determine who to contact; send proposals; select an AMS.

We reviewed many different options until we had narrowed it down to 2 finalists. We then worked with a consulting firm to do a full business process review to identify the end goal(s) of all our processes. This helped us determine which system would best allow us to meet those goals, and implement the system in a way to minimize unneeded customizations.

LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY EXPERIENCED OR EXPECTED

Fig.21

Selected within the past 5 years		Currently going through selection
6%	No challenges experienced/expected	5%
9%	Small but manageable challenges	16%
61%	Challenging but not overwhelming	55%
24%	Very challenging and sometimes overwhelming	24%
0%	One of the worst challenges in my career	0%

Participants identified "Difficulty comparing available systems" and "Concerns with cost of system" as the main reasons for the level of difficulty experienced or expected during system selection. None of the survey participants felt system selection was the worst challenge they have experienced during their career.

ASSOCIATION STAFF INSIGHTS

"Now thinking back on it, it felt we were told different things during the demo in response to questions we had about customization and compatibility with what the organization needed, during the demos, implementation and as support after implementing the new system. Some of the things we thought would be good for us, turns out does not exist."

LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY EXPLAINED

Participants explain the reasons for the level of difficulty they experienced or expect to experience with system selection:

> Limited availability of solutions that fit our organization's needs and budget.

> Organization was very siloed and each department's unique business needs were thought to be most important.

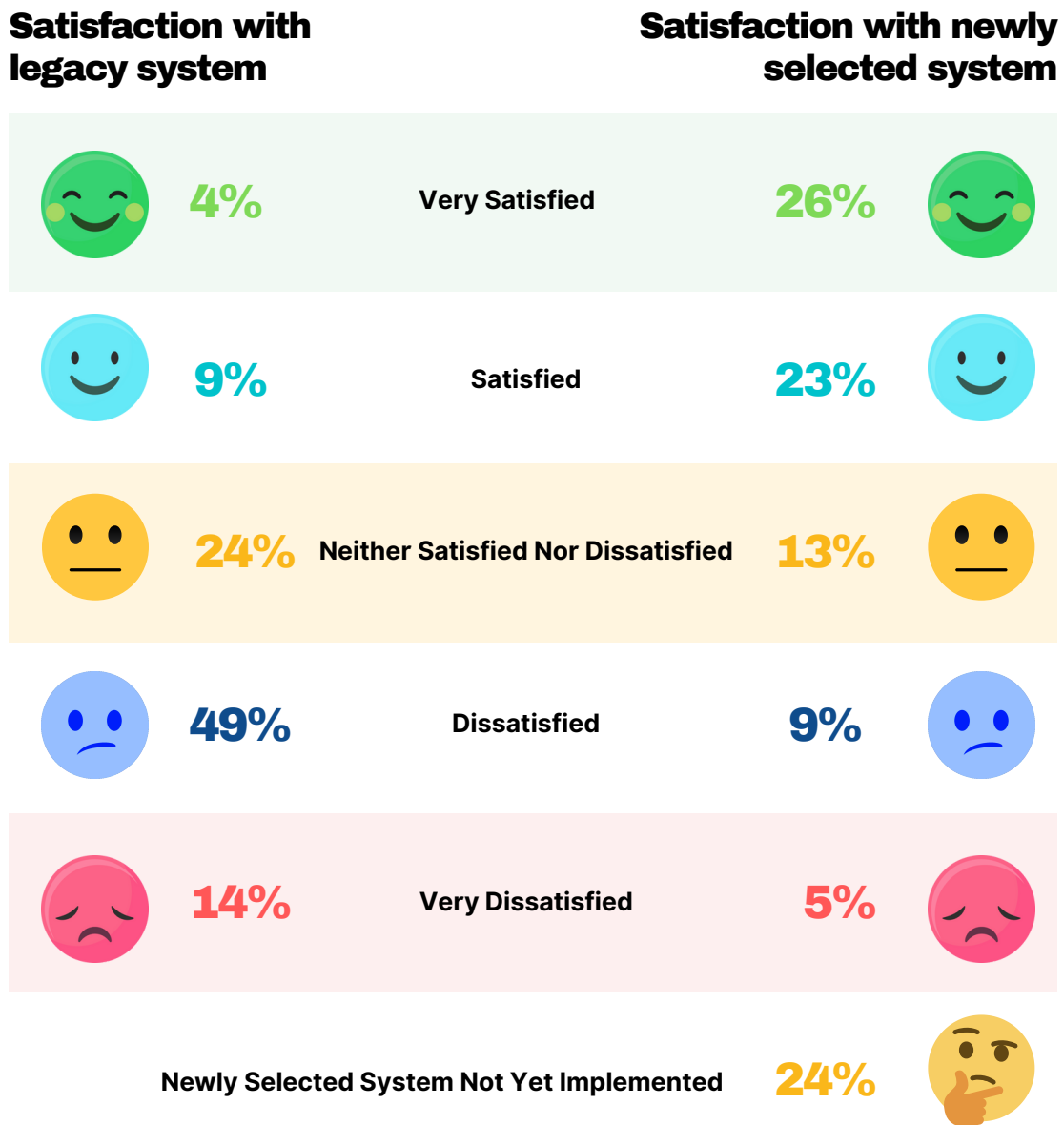> Software sales reps often oversell what the software can actually do. We've experienced this COUNTLESS times!

> We are all doing this in addition to our regular jobs -- and finding time to do an adequate, deep level analysis of every option is impossible. We use our best judgment and hope that we're right!

> "The initial IT manager was not in agreement with moving to an AMS and did not work towards the collective goal"

> "Not finding one that met our needs completely, therefore having to decide which needs would go unmet."

LEVEL OF SATISFACTION WITH LEGACY VS CURRENT SYSTEM

Fig.22

Satisfaction with legacy system		Satisfaction with newly selected system	
😊	4%	**Very Satisfied**	26%	😊
🙂	9%	**Satisfied**	23%	🙂
😐	24%	**Neither Satisfied Nor Dissatisfied**	13%	😐
🙁	49%	**Dissatisfied**	9%	🙁
😞	14%	**Very Dissatisfied**	5%	😞
		Newly Selected System Not Yet Implemented	24%	🤔

Participants who selected a system within the past 5 years shared their level of satisfaction with the legacy system compared to the newly selected system.
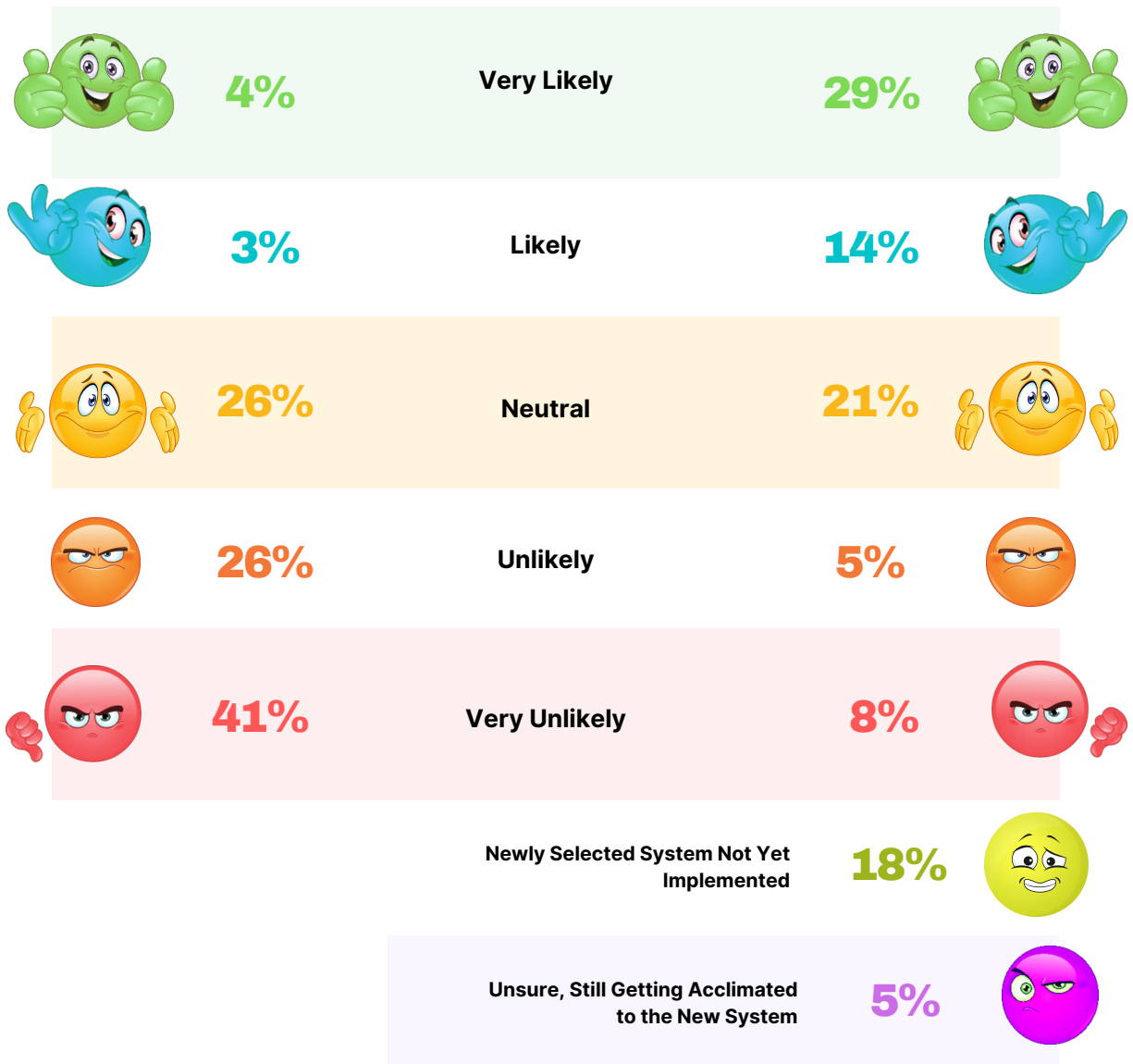
ASSOCIATION STAFF INSIGHTS

What challenges did you face during AMS/CRM selection?
"The number of meetings and demos required a lot of staff time that impacted our day to day projects."

LEVEL OF SATISFACTION WITH LEGACY VS CURRENT SYSTEM

Fig.23 **Likelihood to recommend legacy system to others**

Likelihood to recommend newly selected system to others

	Likelihood to recommend legacy system		Likelihood to recommend newly selected system
	4%	Very Likely	29%
	3%	Likely	14%
	26%	Neutral	21%
	26%	Unlikely	5%
	41%	Very Unlikely	8%
		Newly Selected System Not Yet Implemented	18%
		Unsure, Still Getting Acclimated to the New System	5%

Participants who selected a system within the past 5 years identified how likely they are to recommend the legacy system and newly selected system to colleagues and peers.
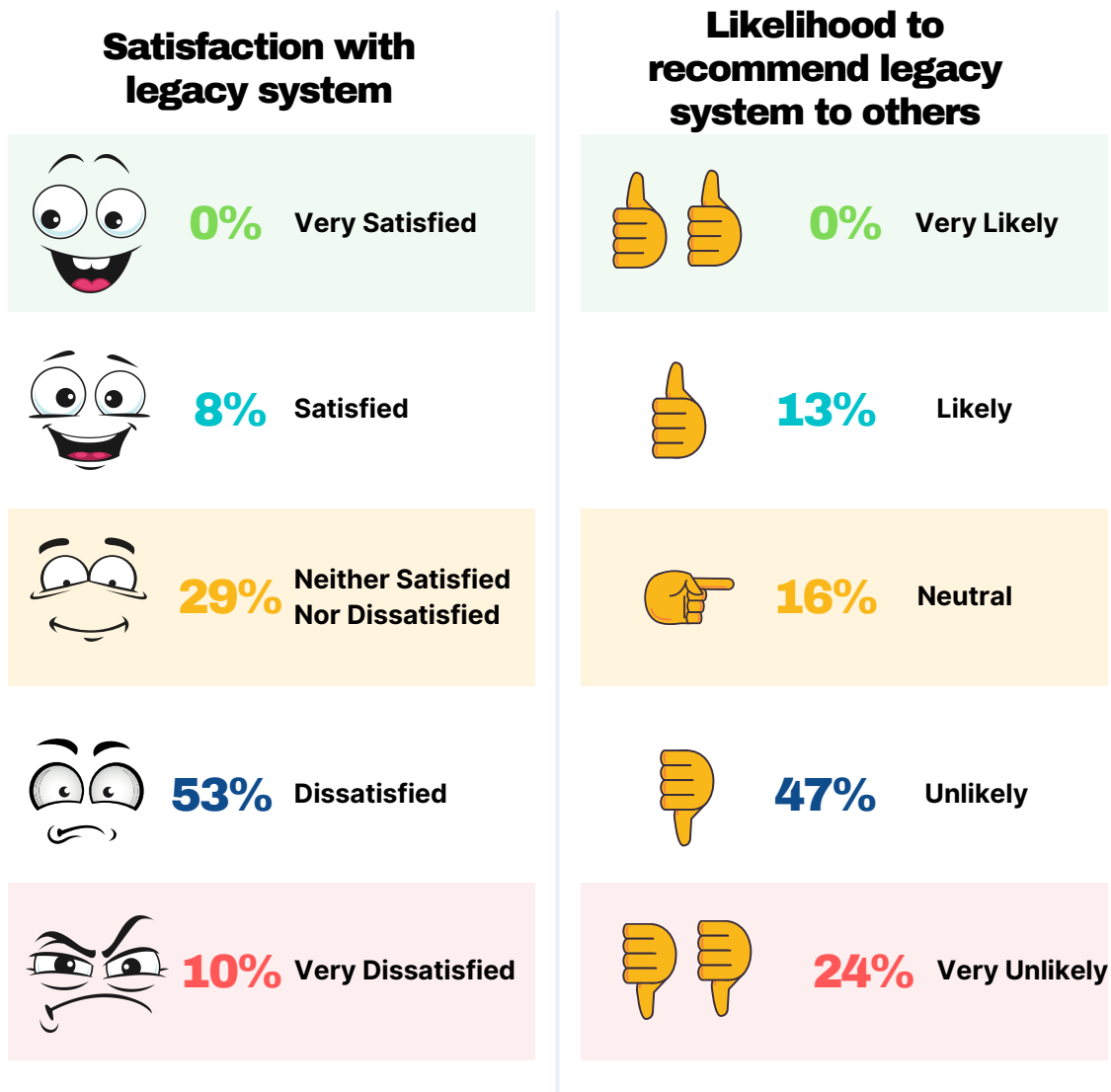
ASSOCIATION STAFF INSIGHTS

If you could do the selection process all over again, what would you do differently?

"Mention even minute details that are important to us and not assume they will be provided, hire folks who know more about how to do this, push for a higher budget, and confirm information more than once to make sure we really know what we are getting into"

LEVEL OF SATISFACTION WITH LEGACY VS CURRENT SYSTEM

Fig.24

Satisfaction with legacy system

😃	**0%**	**Very Satisfied**
😄	**8%**	**Satisfied**
🙂	**29%**	**Neither Satisfied Nor Dissatisfied**
😟	**53%**	**Dissatisfied**
😠	**10%**	**Very Dissatisfied**

Likelihood to recommend legacy system to others

👍👍	**0%**	**Very Likely**
👍	**13%**	**Likely**
👉	**16%**	**Neutral**
👎	**47%**	**Unlikely**
👎👎	**24%**	**Very Unlikely**

Participants who are currently going through system selection identified their satisfaction with the legacy system and likelihood of recommending to colleagues and peers.

ASSOCIATION STAFF INSIGHTS

Why did your Organization decide not to use a Consultant during the selection process?

"I spoke with a few consultants briefly, and tried to convince my Executive Director to hire one, but he couldn't stomach the cost on top of the AMS costs (and overlap in costs during transition)."

OVERALL IMPRESSION WITH SYSTEM SELECTION PROCESS

ASSOCIATION STAFF INSIGHTS

What challenges did you face during AMS/CRM selection?

"Resistance to Change: Employees may resist adopting a new system, especially if they are accustomed to existing processes. Proper training and change management strategies are crucial to overcoming this challenge."

Fig.25

Overall Impression of participants who selected system w/i past 5 years

48%
Overall positive experience

46%
Neither Positive nor Negative

6%
Overall Negative Experience

Overall Impressions of participants currently going through system selection

26%
Overall positive experience

74%
Neither Positive nor Negative

0%
Overall Negative Experience

ASSOCIATION STAFF INSIGHTS

What aspects of AMS/CRM selection have you found to be positive?

"We learned about functionality in other systems that we didn't know existed."

2021 VS 2023 DATA RESULTS

The following pages provide a side-by-side comparison of key data points from both surveys.

Association Staff Demographics

The demographics of association staff respondents (role, department, organization size, etc.) remained largely the same. The organization type saw some shift in professional and trade organizations, as well as some increase in the "Other" category.
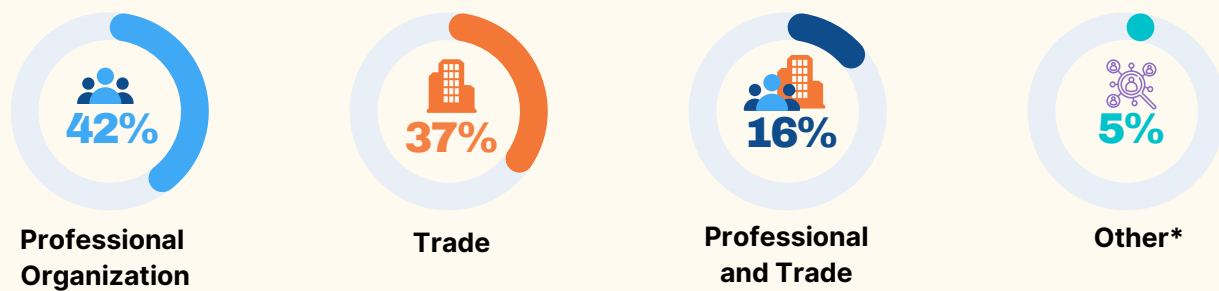
Fig.26

2021 Survey

Organization Type

64% Professional Organization

23% Trade

13% Professional and Trade
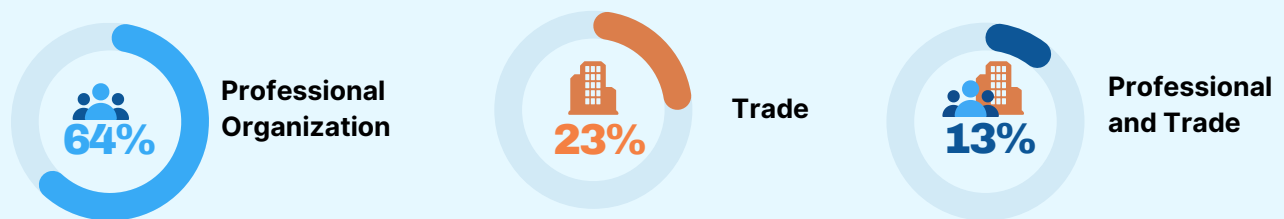
*Fewer than 1% of respondents identified "Other" as their Organization Type.

2023 Survey

Organization Type

42% Professional Organization

37% Trade

16% Professional and Trade

5% Other*

*"Other" Organization Types included honor societies and certification entities.

Staff Involvement in Selection

The number of staff who volunteered to be included in the AMS/CRM project increased in the most recent survey results.

Fig.27

2021 Survey

How Staff Became Involved in Selection

14%
Volunteered

"Volunteered" refers to participants who sought out inclusion in the system selection process.

86%
Assigned by Management

"Assigned by Management" includes participants who were hired specifically for the system selection process or whose job descriptions included participation in the system selection process.

2023 Survey

How Staff Became Involved in Selection

29%
Volunteered

"Volunteered" refers to participants who sought out inclusion in the system selection process.

71%
Assigned by Management

"Assigned by Management" includes participants who were hired specifically for the system selection process or whose job descriptions included participation in the system selection process.

2021 VS 2023 DATA RESULTS

Length of Time on Legacy System

There was an 8% shift in the 5 to 15 year time range of how long organizations kept their legacy systems. There was minimal change in the other time ranges.

Fig.28

2021 Survey

Length of Time on Legacy AMS/CRM

20%	**45%**	**15%**	**11%**	**9%**
Fewer than 5 years	5 to 10 years	10 to 15 years	15 to 20 years	More than 20 years

Most respondents reported organizations keeping the legacy system for up to 10 years.

2023 Survey

Length of Time on Legacy AMS/CRM

20%	**37%**	**23%**	**12%**	**8%**
Fewer than 5 years	5 to 10 years	10 to 15 years	15 to 20 years	More than 20 years

Most respondents reported organizations keeping the legacy system for 5 to 10 years.

Time to System Selection

Respondents in the most recent survey selected a system in 3 or fewer months after determining a new system was needed. The number of respondents who selected 9-12 months after identifying the need declined compared to the previous survey.
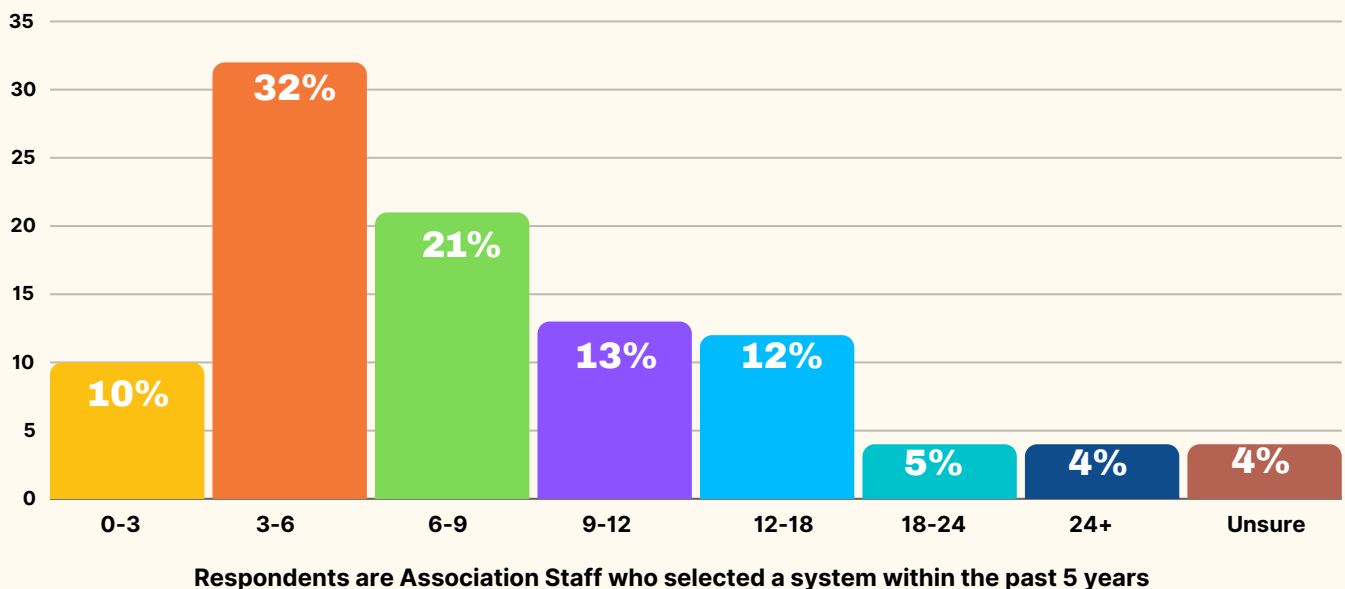
Fig.29

2021 Survey

Number of Months b/t deciding system was needed and selecting new system
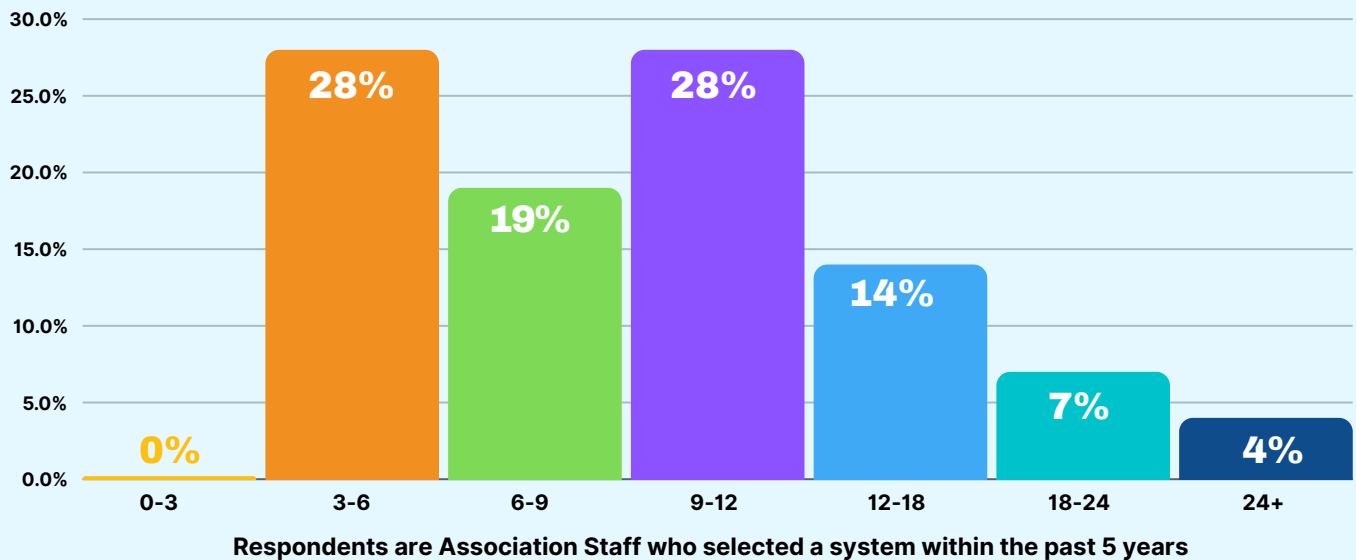
Category	Value
0-3	0%
3-6	28%
6-9	19%
9-12	28%
12-18	14%
18-24	7%
24+	4%

Respondents are Association Staff who selected a system within the past 5 years

2023 Survey

Number of Months b/t deciding system was needed and selecting new system

Category	Value
0-3	10%
3-6	32%
6-9	21%
9-12	13%
12-18	12%
18-24	5%
24+	4%
Unsure	4%

Respondents are Association Staff who selected a system within the past 5 years

2021 VS 2023 DATA RESULTS

Time to System Implementation

More respondents implemented the new system in 9 to 12 months compared to the previous survey results.
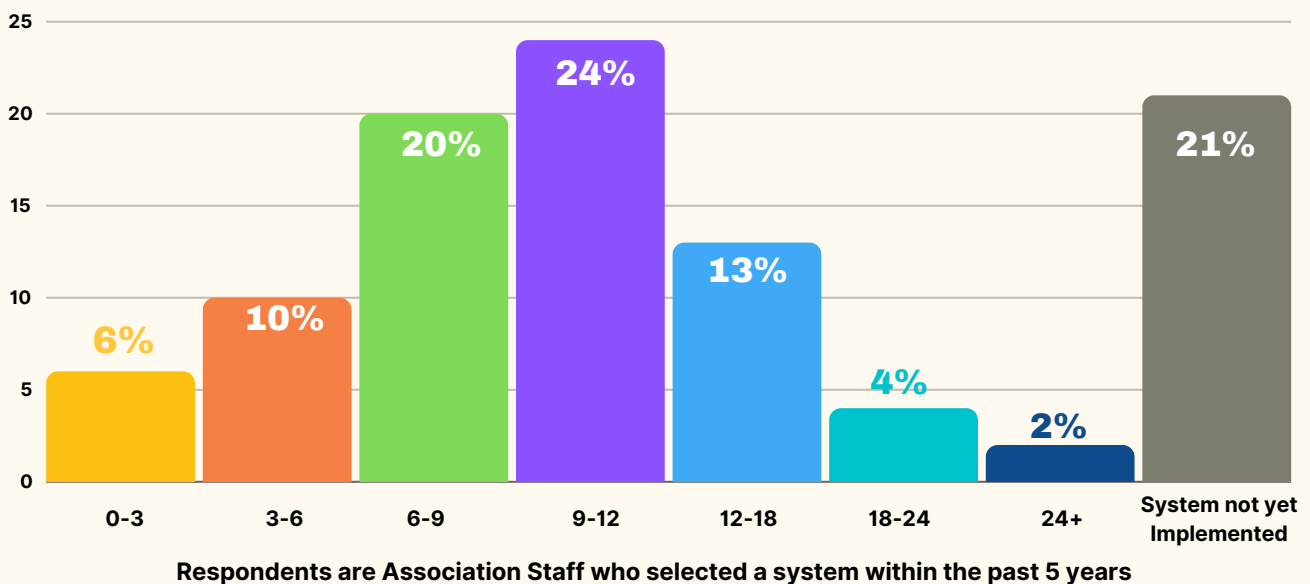
Fig.30

2021 Survey

Number of Months b/t system selection and system implementation
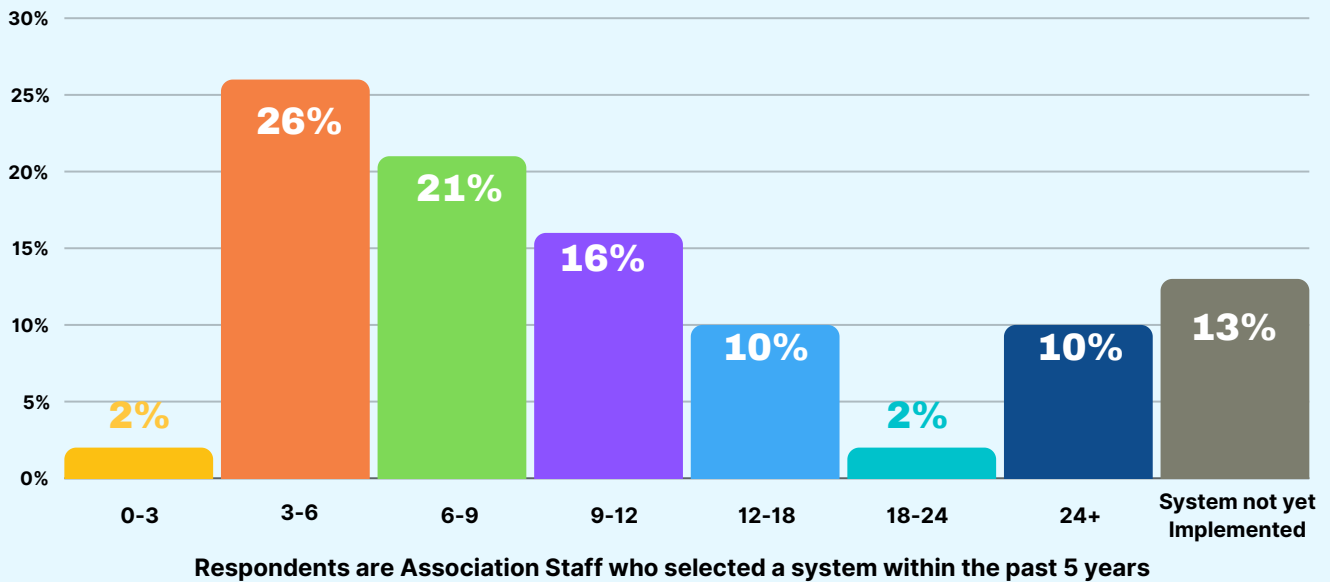
Bar chart values: 0-3: 2%, 3-6: 26%, 6-9: 21%, 9-12: 16%, 12-18: 10%, 18-24: 2%, 24+: 10%, System not yet Implemented: 13%

Respondents are Association Staff who selected a system within the past 5 years

2023 Survey

Number of Months b/t system selection and system implementation

Bar chart values: 0-3: 6%, 3-6: 10%, 6-9: 20%, 9-12: 24%, 12-18: 13%, 18-24: 4%, 24+: 2%, System not yet Implemented: 21%

Respondents are Association Staff who selected a system within the past 5 years

2021 VS 2023 DATA RESULTS

Expected Time to System Selection - Not Yet Selected

There was a 19% increase of respondents expecting system selection to take 12-18 months compared to the prior survey results.

Fig.31

2021 Survey

Expected number of months for system selection

Respondents are Association Staff currently going through system selection

2023 Survey

Expected number of months for system selection
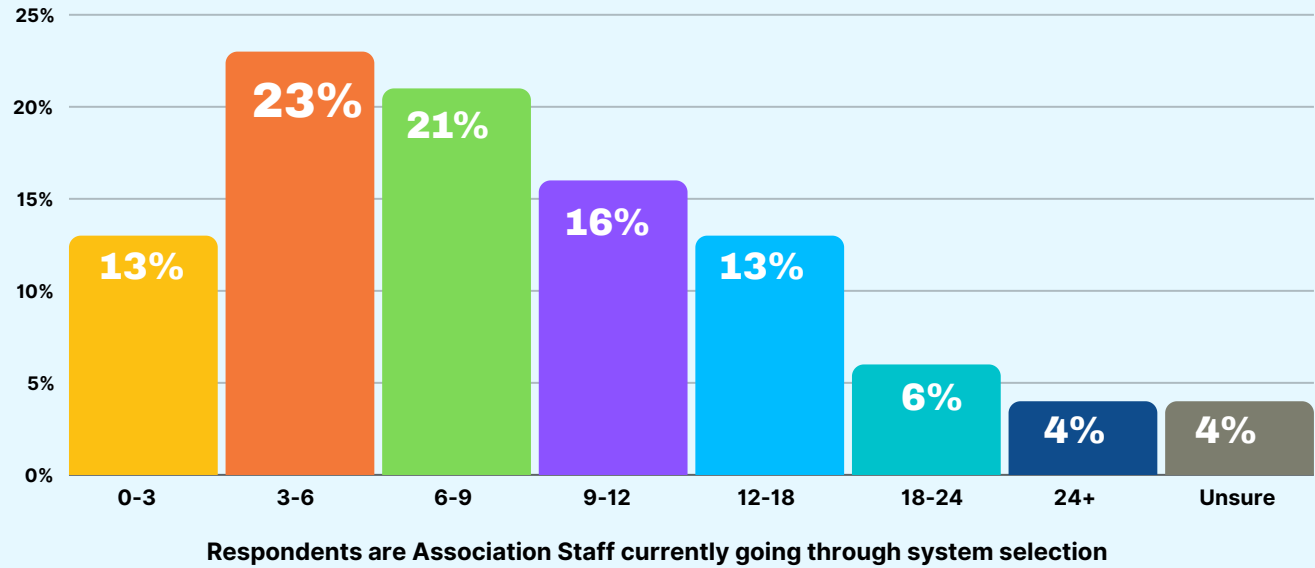
Respondents are Association Staff currently going through system selection
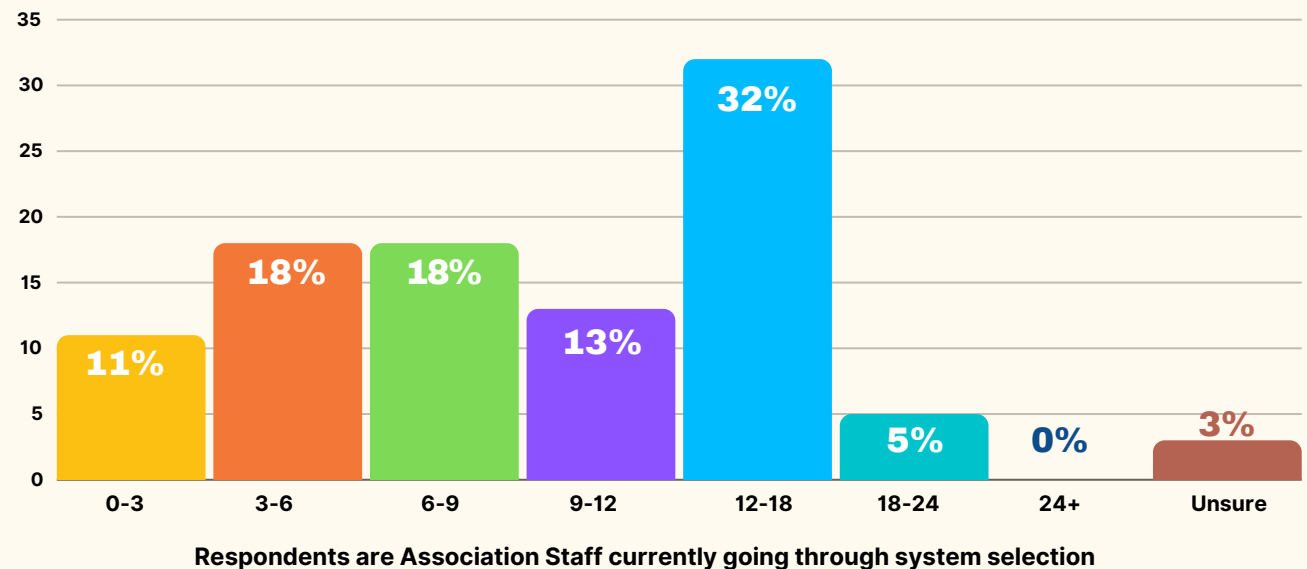
Expected Time to System Implementation - Not Yet Selected

Fewer respondents expect to implement the new system in less than 3 months with a shift to expecting 12 or more months for the system implementation.

Fig.32

2021 Survey

Number of months expected b/t system selection and implementation
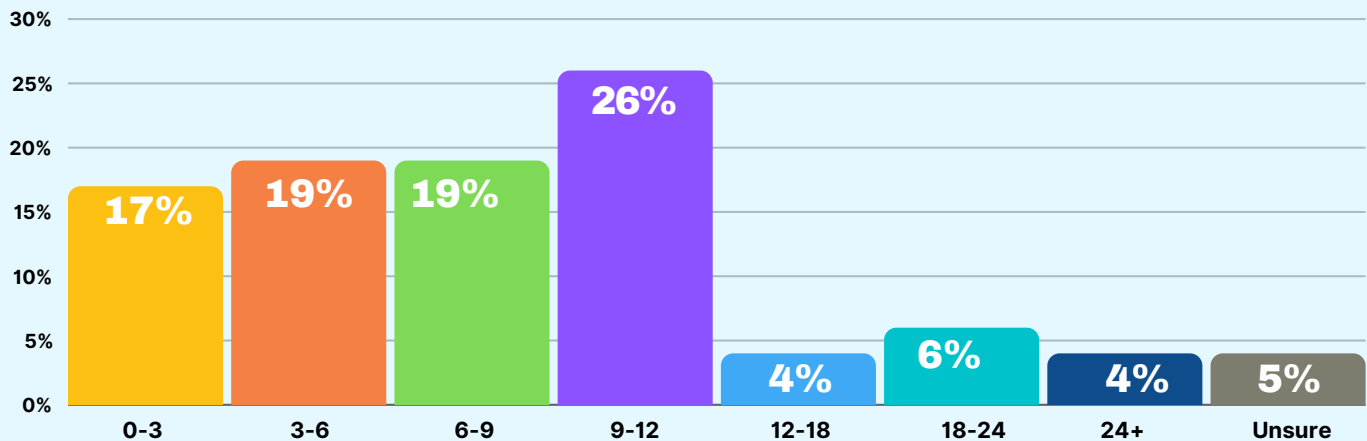
0-3	3-6	6-9	9-12	12-18	18-24	24+	Unsure
17%	19%	19%	26%	4%	6%	4%	5%

Respondents are Association Staff currently going through system selection

2023 Survey

Number of months expected b/t system selection and implementation

0-3	3-6	6-9	9-12	12-18	18-24	24+
8%	21%	21%	13%	16%	13%	8%
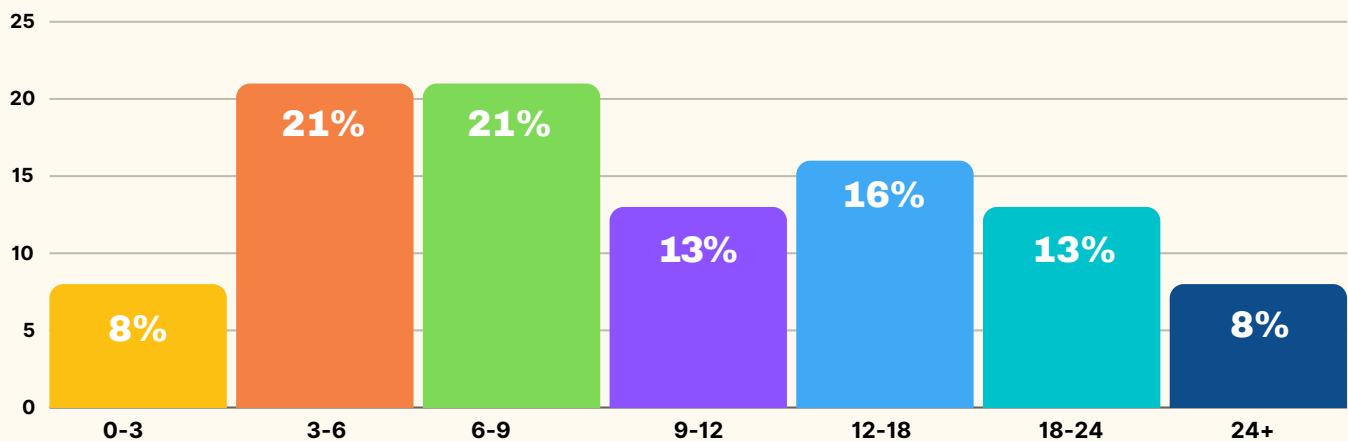
Respondents are Association Staff currently going through system selection

Overall Impressions

The overall impressions of survey respondents shifted to more neutral in the most recent survey.

Fig.33

2021 Survey

Overall Impression of participants who selected system w/i past 5 years

57%
Overall positive experience

36%
Neither Positive nor Negative

7%
Overall Negative Experience

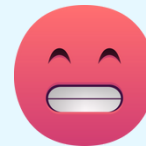**Overall Impressions of participants currently going through system selection**

47%
Overall positive experience

47%
Neither Positive nor Negative

6%
Overall Negative Experience

2023 Survey

Overall Impression of participants who selected system w/i past 5 years

48%
Overall positive experience

46%
Neither Positive nor Negative

6%
Overall Negative Experience

Overall Impressions of participants currently going through system selection

26%
Overall positive experience

74%
Neither Positive nor Negative
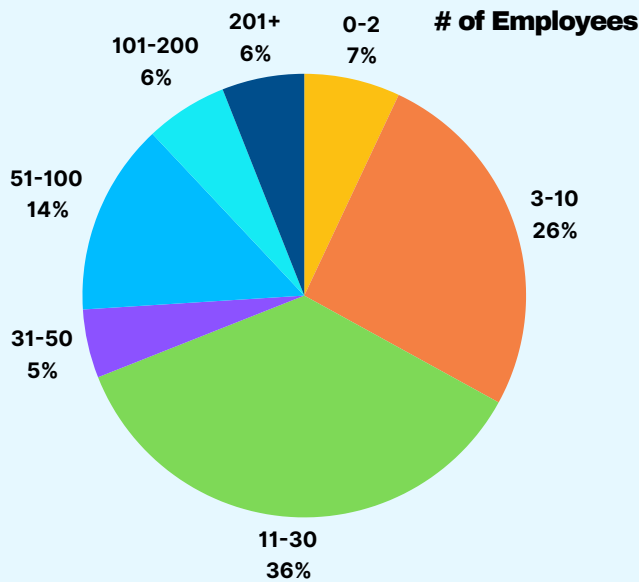
0%
Overall Negative Experience

2021 VS 2023 DATA RESULTS
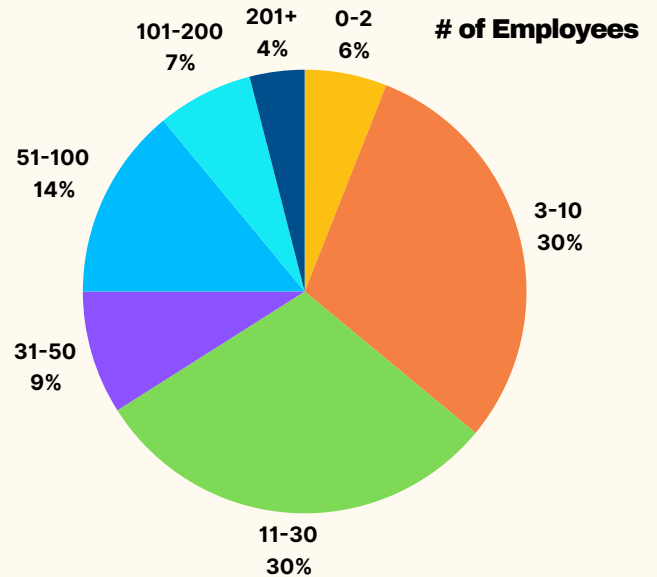
Survey Respondents by Organization Size

The break out of survey respondents by organization size was similar across both surveys.

2021 Survey

# of Employees

- 0-2: 7%
- 3-10: 26%
- 11-30: 36%
- 31-50: 5%
- 51-100: 14%
- 101-200: 6%
- 201+: 6%

2023 Survey

# of Employees

- 0-2: 6%
- 3-10: 30%
- 11-30: 30%
- 31-50: 9%
- 51-100: 14%
- 101-200: 7%
- 201+: 4%

Time to Selection - By Organization Size

There was minimal indication of organization size impacting the time it took, or was expected to take, to select a system.

2021 Survey

Most survey respondents from organizations with 11-30 employees selected a system in 12-18 months (37%). There were no other clear patterns for system selection timeline based on organization size.
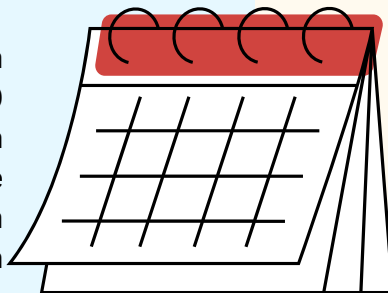
2023 Survey

14% of respondents who selected a new system in 3-6 months were from organizations with 11-30 employees. The time to selection as reported by other respondents was spread across organization size.

RESOURCES

501Works has assembled a number of tools, resources and capabilities to help associations successfully navigate the challenges that come with large scale technology projects such as an AMS / CRM system. We are always updating these resources, so check back as you need advice. We are always here to help!
**https://www.501works.com**

The CIO Hour is our monthly Webinar program where we tackle real-world technology problems that associations face. We feature industry experts and association executives in all roles from membership to events to technology. We offer a complimentary 30-minute meeting with James Marquis – our CIO – who has years of experience managing these types of projects. Feel free to contact us today and take advantage of this free advice!
https://www.theciohour.com

Plus, here are some highlights from 2023 that are specifically related to the AMS Journey.
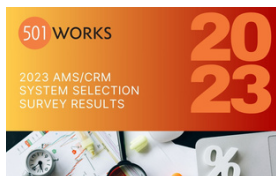
AMS/CRM Software Selection Survey - 2023
In late 2023, we redid the survey to update our data and see how the landscape has changed. Be the first to hear a summary of new data results from the 2023 AMS/CRM System Selection Survey and be the first to access the report results at the February CIO Hour.
https://www.theciohour.com/episodes/february-2024/

Know Before You Go – Project Wisdom To Set Your Organization Up For Success
Ready to find the perfect software solution for your association in 2024? Don't know where to start? Our expert panel is here to offer practical advice, easy-to-follow guidance, and valuable resources to help you start your journey towards success. Whether you need an AMS, LMS, CRM, or Community system, we'll cover the key steps for maximizing your chances of success. Don't miss out on this opportunity!
**https://www.theciohour.com/episodes/november-2023/**

AMS Or CRM - A Candid Conversation 6/1/2023
Join our band of friendly rivals for a lively discussion about the different approaches between platforms, key features that ALL associations need in their AMS/CRM and tips for a successful selection regardless of the platform you choose.
https://www.theciohour.com/episodes/the-cio-hour-june/
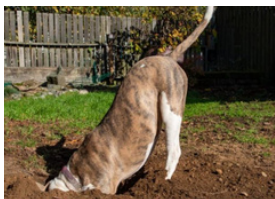
AMS Selection From The Trenches
We dig into the trenches and explore the real-world process of AMS selection by inviting two of our own clients who selected an AMS System in the past 90 days to share their experiences. We'll conduct a retrospective discussion and share what went well, and what they wished they had done differently so you can benefit from their experiences.
https://www.theciohour.com/episodes/february-2023/

GIVE A REVIEW. READ REVIEWS.
For years, associations have relied on Review My AMS to gain insight what other associations think of their AMS solutions. Utilizing a community driven approach, ReviewMyAMS provides you with a platform where you can share your own insights, learn from unbiased reviews, and make informed decisions about selecting your next AMS.
https://reviewmyams.com

RESOURCES

Software Mage™
Online tools helping you navigate the AMS/CRM selection process, gather requirements, draft your RFP, and evaluate vendor responses. We are constantly growing our tools and resources. Below are a few highlights you may find useful during your AMS journey.
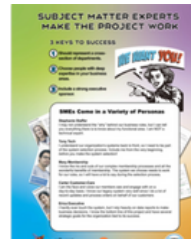**https://www.softwaremage.com**

HOW TO CREATE A WINNING SME TEAM
Here's 4 tips to help you create a winning Subject Matter Expert (SME) team.
https://www.softwaremage.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/501Works-How-to-Create-a-Winning-SME-Team.pdf

KEYS TO SME'S
Subject Matter Experts (SME's) make the project work.
https://www.softwaremage.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/501Works-Keys-To-SMEs.pdf

SOFTWARE JOURNEY
Good software projects are a journey – not a destination. Review and share this with your selection team.
https://www.softwaremage.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/501Works-Software-Journey-1.pdf

INTEGRATIONS
What you need to know in easy-to-understand terms.
https://www.softwaremage.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/PerByte-Integration-Basics.pdf

UNDERSTANDING TECHNOLOGY PROJECT FOUNDATIONS
How can you better position your team for success? Go beyond technology selection and make sure that other parts of your organization are ready to use your shiny new toy!
https://www.softwaremage.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/Its-Not-Just-the-Technology-v3.pdf

GUIDE TO BUILDING A BETTER DATA STRATEGY
Data seems to be the buzz word in the association space these days, but mainstream organizations have been utilizing data to shape business decisions for the past 20 years. So why are associations so behind?
https://www.softwaremage.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/Guide-to-building-a-better-data-strategy.pdf

AMS/CRM DEMO TRACKER
As you conduct your AMS/CRM search, you are likely to view basic demos from several vendors to see which appeal to you. Keeping all the solutions, features and your thoughts organized can be tough. Download our Demo Tracker to easily track the solutions you have seen and stay organized.
https://501works.com/demo-tracker/

WHAT COMES NEXT...?

After two surveys and many formal and informal conversations, the foundation has been set and patterns begin to emerge from the shared experiences of stakeholders during system selection.

Ongoing surveys will allow us to continue to track experiences on a larger scale and address new questions as they surface from the data. Interviews and discussion groups further allow us to gain deeper insight beyond what the surveys can give us; participants are able to provide details and nuance that bring clearer understanding of how these selection projects impact organizations, vendors, and consultants, and identify ways to improve the process to everyone's benefit.

We will continue to analyze and publish more of the key insights from this and the previous survey and have embarked on the next steps of this research with interviews and discussion groups comprised of industry partners. We are always seeking participants, so please inquire about participation in the ongoing research in system selection and implementation. Your insight is what will take us beyond the next steps.

We are so thankful for the survey participants sharing their experiences and joining us on this path towards stronger relationships with project stakeholders and improved project outcomes.

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DELIVERING TECHNOLOGY THAT WORKS FOR YOUR ASSOCIATION

501Works™ LLC
- IT Consulting Services – vCIO Service
- Software Selection & Implementation Services
- Customized Software Solutions and Integrations

https://501works.com

Mojo Middleware™.
Easily integrate your different association software packages with over 40 available connectors.

https://mojomiddleware.com

Software Mage™
A growing collection of resources and tools to help your association add a little expertise to your software projects no matter where you are in the journey.

https://www.softwaremage.com

The CIO Hour
Not a tech type but have tech questions that you need answered? Join us for The CIO Hour – designed specifically for non-tech association staff to boost their IT-IQ. Ask your technology questions and get them answered by an experienced CIO and a crew of industry experts in a safe, casual environment.

https://www.theciohour.com

GIVE A REVIEW. READ REVIEWS.
Utilizing a community driven approach, ReviewMyAMS provides you with a platform where you can share your own insights, learn from unbiased reviews, and make informed decisions about selecting your next AMS.

https://reviewmyams.com

2023 AMS/CRM
SYSTEM SELECTION
SURVEY RESULTS

2023

501WORKS™