MDRT NON-JOINER SURVEYS—SELECT RESULTS

2018-Q4 Research Brief

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BACKGROUND

With membership at its highest ever, one might wonder why we care about the non-joiners. Recruitment of new members and retention of existing members encompass the lifeline of any membership organization. Healthy numbers for both are needed for longevity. Some argue that retention is a bit more important because it represents the strength of the foundation of an organization. MDRT is different than most membership associations in that one may "*want*" to be a member, but may not qualify and "*cannot*" be a member. Thus, the purpose this survey is to get insights from members who do not rejoin. Why don't they rejoin? Did they qualify? Why did they join in the first place? How satisfied were they with their membership? Etc.

To date, the "Non-Joiner Survey" has been conducted four times:

- 2014 members who did not rejoin in 2015;
- 2015 members who did not rejoin in 2016;
- 2016 members who did not rejoin in 2017; and
- 2017 members who did not rejoin in 2018.

The surveys were conducted internally and sent to English-speaking non-joiners. The surveys were sent in May or August of the non-joined year. In each year of the survey, respondents ranged from 21 to 23 countries. The top four countries in terms of number of respondents are listed below.

	Number of 2014 non-joiner respondents	Number of 2015 non-joiner respondents	Number of 2016 non-joiner respondents	Number of 2017 non-joiner respondents
India	220	151	89	314
United States	257	240	257	241
Hong Kong	66	65	188	143
Philippines	44	60	86	129
Other countries	170	149	141	166
Total	**757**	**665**	**761**	**993**

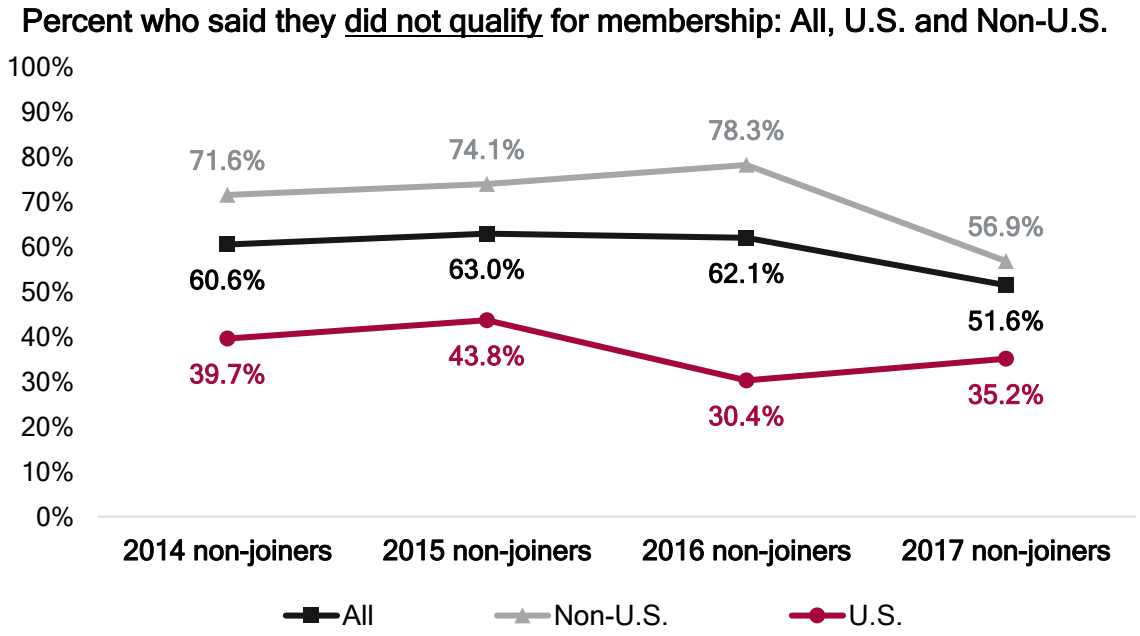
SELECT SURVEY QUESTIONS

Did You Qualify for Membership?

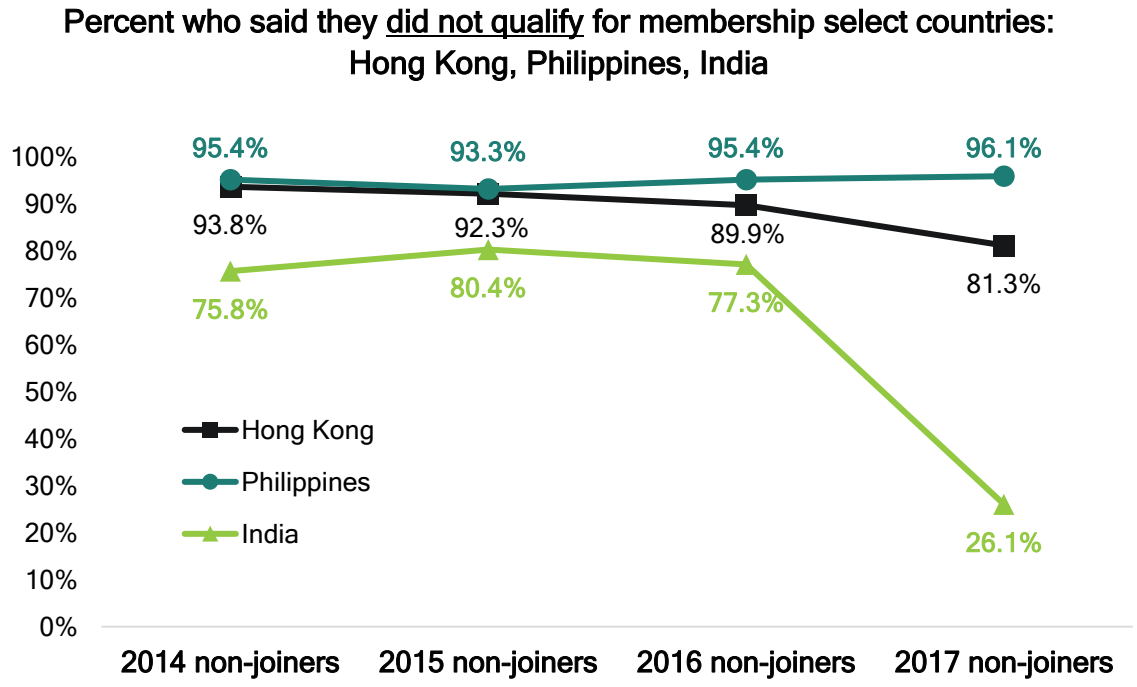
For the first three years of this survey, 60%-63% of all non-joiner respondents said they did not qualify for membership. This year, 51.6% said they did not qualify–a 10.5 percentage point decrease from the previous year. Let's look a little deeper.

Traditionally, the percent of U.S. respondents who indicate they did not qualify is lower than other countries–see red line in the graph below. The percent of U.S. respondents who said they did not qualify; however, increased from 30.4% of 2016 non-joiners to 35.2% of 2017 non-joiners.

Therefore, as shown below, the drop is associated with non-U.S. respondents. Specifically, among 2016 non-U.S. non-joiners (gray line), 78.3% said they did not qualify compared to 56.9% of 2017 non-U.S. non-joiners–a drop of 21.4 percentage points.

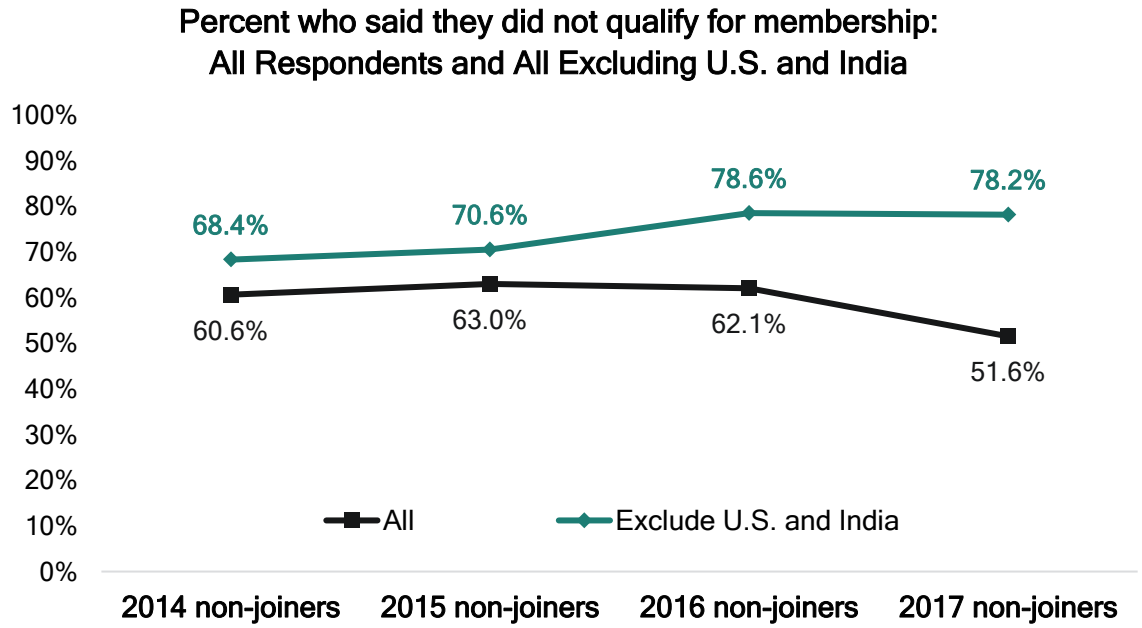


Further examining the three non-USA countries with the highest numbers of respondents, we see in the graph below that respondents from India are skewing the "did not qualify" percentage down.



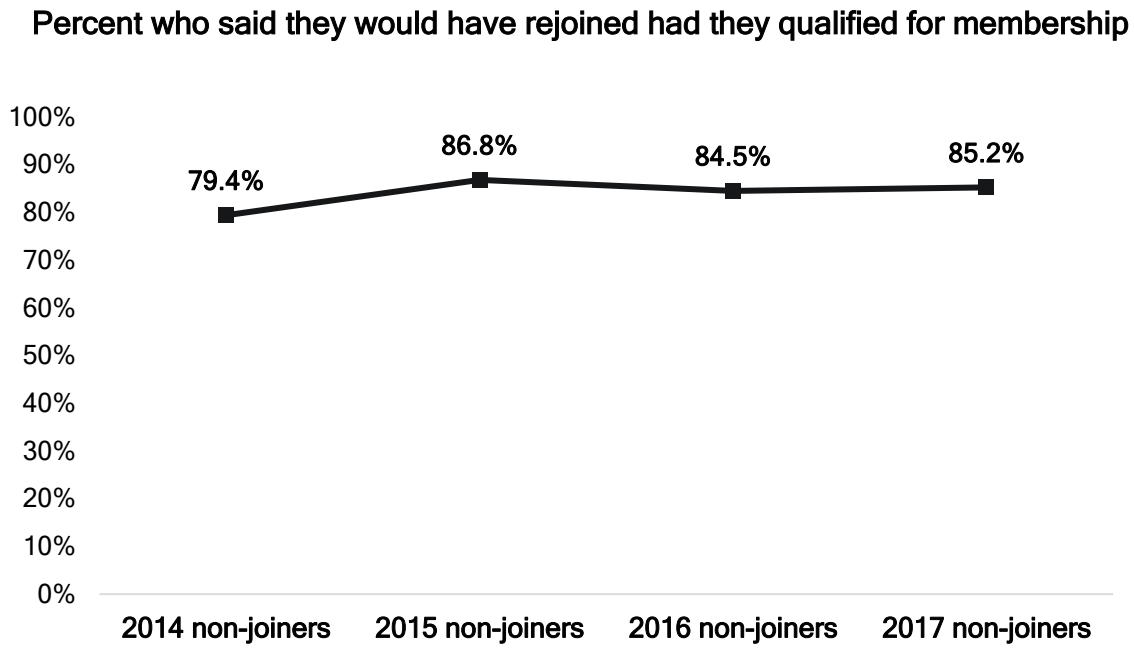
Among the 2017 non-joiner respondents from India (299) who answered the qualification question, the majority (221) said *they qualified for 2018 membership* and of the 221, 92.8% (or 205) were from LIC. LIC changed its policy of paying MDRT membership dues which may be one of the underlying reasons for the reverse in the India trend line.

Excluding both U.S. and India, the trend line takes back its shape as depicted in the graph below with 78.2% indicating they did not qualify for membership.



Non-Qualifiers: Would You Have Joined Had You Qualified?

Among respondents who said they did not qualify for membership, in all four years, the majority said they would have joined had they qualified.



Why Did You Originally Join MDRT?

Past members were given a list of reasons and asked if any were a reason why they originally joined MDRT. In all four years, about 90% of respondents said that joining MDRT was a "**Benchmark of success**" for them. The second highest reason was, "**To help grow my business**."

Low on the list of reasons are, "My company paid for my membership," and "I was mentored by an MDRT member"—each garnering less than 50% in all four years. However, the percentages for both reasons have increased from last year by about nine percentage points. The increase for "My company paid for my membership" reason may be in part be associated with the India-LIC anomaly.

Please tell us if any of the following are reasons why you first decided to join MDRT (Yes/No) **Percent indicating "Yes" shown in this table**	**2014-2015**	**2015-2016**	**2016-2017**	**2017-2018**
I viewed membership as a benchmark of success	92.5%	90.0%	90.5%	91.8%
To help grow my business	88.5%	86.7%	80.9%	86.4%
For exposure to new ideas	84.6%	86.1%	81.4%	84.3%
To develop as a person	83.7%	83.8%	77.9%	85.2%
For the opportunity to meet other top producers	78.1%	76.9%	75.3%	79.5%
For access to MDRT content	76.0%	78.5%	74.2%	77.1%
My company/agency encouraged me to join	74.8%	76.0%	78.3%	78.1%
For access to MDRT meetings	73.9%	75.4%	72.8%	75.6%
A peer suggested it	64.1%	62.7%	66.2%	63.5%
My company paid for my membership	44.1%	39.9%	38.0%	47.0%
I was mentored by an MDRT member	42.8%	41.1%	38.5%	47.0%

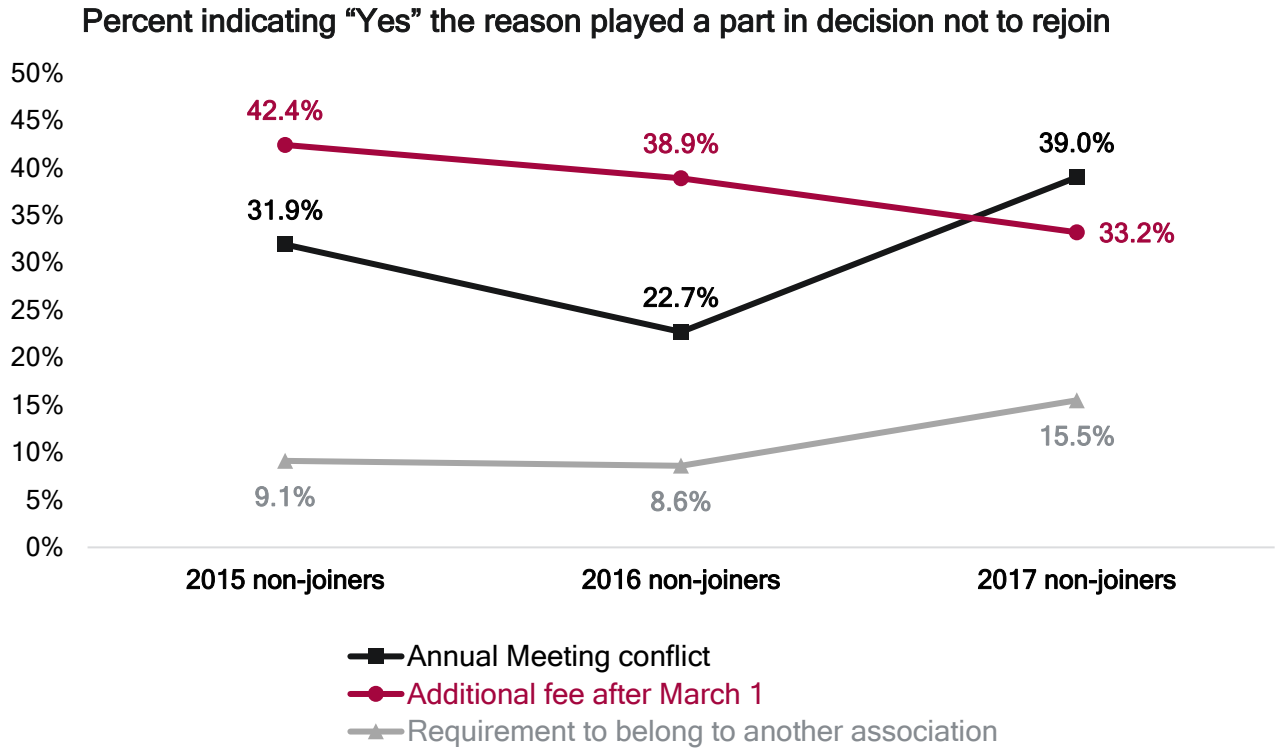
If They Qualified, Why Didn't They Join?

Among *respondents who said they did qualify for membership*, we tried to probe for possible reasons. Three popular anecdotal reasons are:

1. Conflict with the dates of the Annual Meeting and recently, the Meeting selling out;
2. The requirement to belong to another professional association; and
3. The additional filing fee charged for applying after the March 1 deadline.

In three of the four survey years, we asked if any of the above reasons played a part in the decision not to rejoin. As shown, belonging to another association does not seem to be a big factor–although there is a 6.9 percentage point increase since last year.

Annual Meeting conflict and the additional filing fee both captured more than 20% "yes" responses in all three years. The percent indicating the AM played a part in the decision not to rejoin increased from 22.7% among 2016 non-joiners to 39.0% among 2017 non-joiners–a 16.3 percentage point increase. In contrast, the percent indicating the additional fee played a part in not rejoining decreased from 38.9% to 33.2%–in fact, this percentage has steadily decreased since first asked of 2015 non-joiners. Still, during the three-year period, at least one out of three respondents have indicated the additional fee after the March 1 deadline played a part in not rejoining.



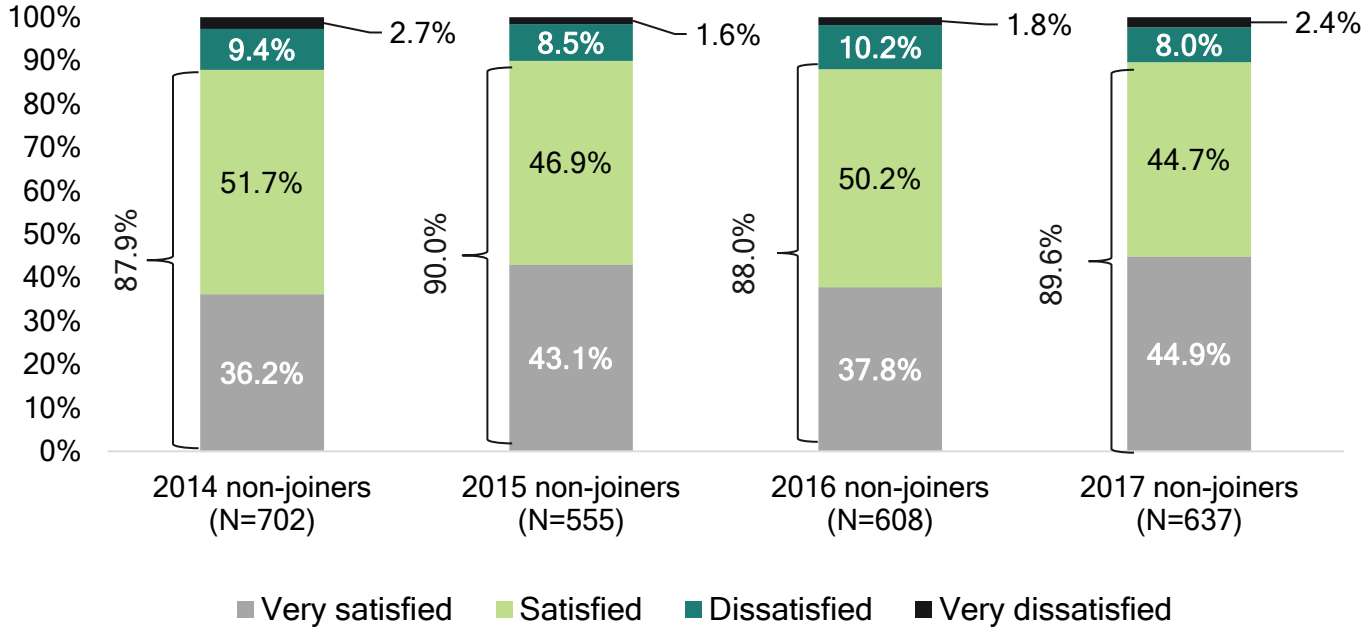
In addition to the three reasons above, past members were given a list of other factors and asked in any influenced them to discontinue their membership. Again, for this analysis, only those who indicated they did qualify are included.

As shown, "**Limited impact on my productivity**," and "**Limited impact on my personal development**" had the highest percent "yes" as influencers to discontinue membership. "Perceived lack of prestige among clients" was the third factor receiving the highest percent "yes." However, in the most recent survey (2017 non-joiners), "My company/agency stopped paying the cost of my membership" has a higher percentage "yes" compared to previous years and is actually the second highest percentage among 2017 respondents – which may be due to the India-LIC change.

Did any of the factors listed below influence your decision to discontinue your MDRT membership? (Yes/No) **Percent indicating "Yes" shown in this table**	**2014-2015**	**2015-2016**	**2016-2017**	**2017-2018**
Limited impact on my productivity	49.3%	44.1%	45.7%	39.0%
Limited impact on my personal development	44.1%	37.3%	39.7%	35.0%
Perceived lack of prestige among my clients	31.8%	29.1%	34.9%	28.8%
My company/ agency stopped paying the cost of my membership	21.6%	15.4%	25.1%	36.9%
MDRT meetings lacking in relevancy/quality	20.5%	20.7%	19.3%	23.1%
Insufficient opportunities to learn from other top producers	18.8%	20.3%	17.6%	18.6%
MDRT content (Round the Table magazine, website) lacking in relevancy/quality	19.1%	13.6%	23.2%	17.8%
Perceived lack of prestige among peers, other producers	19.4%	20.8%	21.3%	20.6%
Insufficient opportunities to share ideas with others	18.8%	17.1%	15.8%	16.7%
Membership is not encouraged or expected by my company/agency	18.9%	21.7%	20.4%	28.4%
Insufficient opportunities to build meaningful relationships with peers	18.6%	18.2%	17.1%	20.9%
Insufficient opportunities to get involved	15.5%	11.2%	11.6%	12.8%
Insufficient achievement opportunities (Top of the Table, Court of the Table)	6.5%	4.0%	5.9%	10.8%

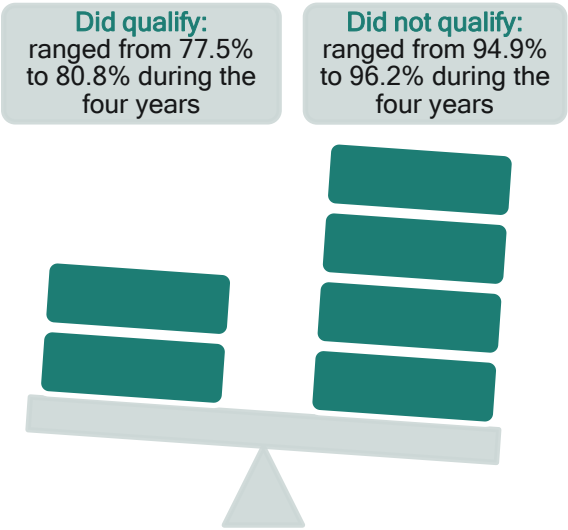
Membership Satisfaction

Past members were asked how satisfied they were with their MDRT membership. Consistently, about 88% to 90% were "satisfied/very satisfied."



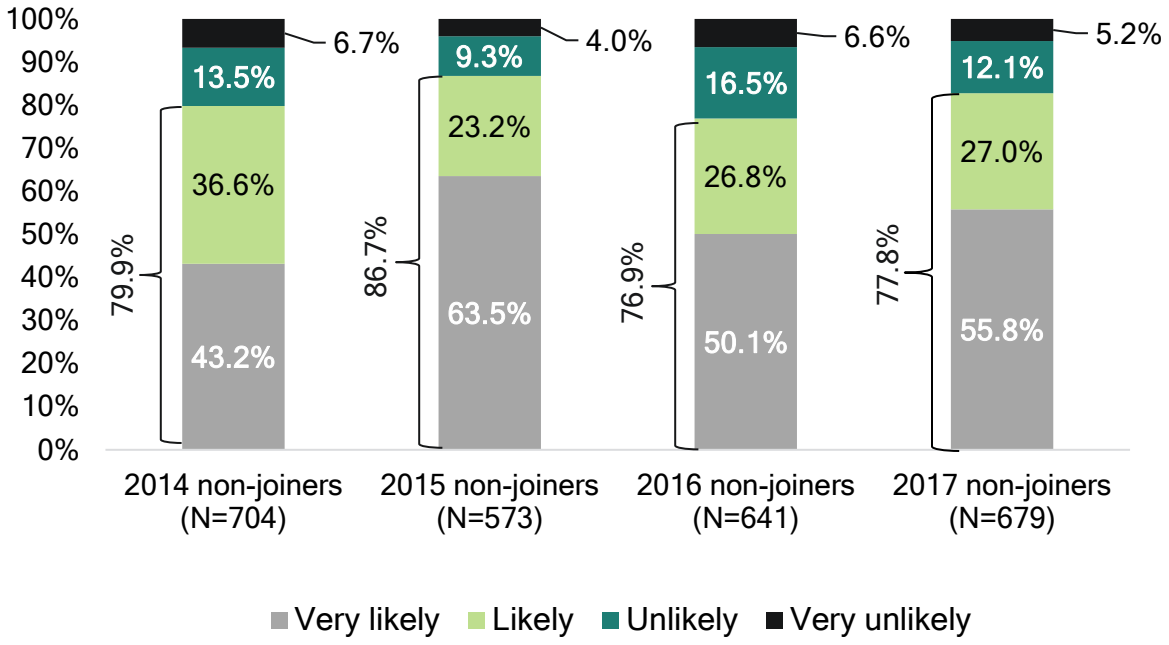
As illustrated below, satisfaction was higher among those who said they *did not qualify* compared to those who said they *did qualify.*

Membership Satisfaction: "Satisfied/Very satisfied"



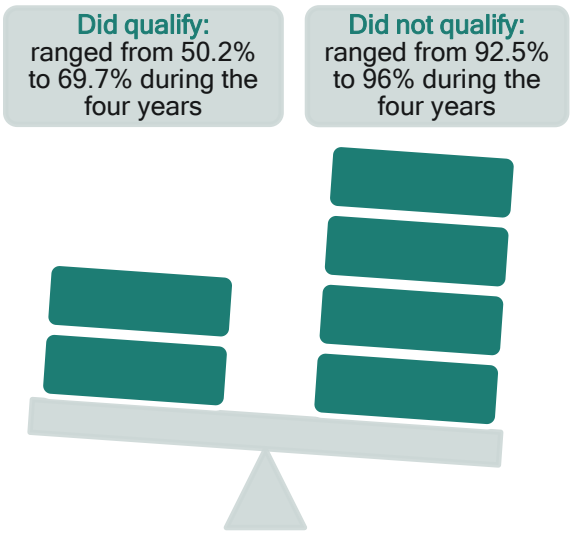
Likelihood to Renew MDRT Membership

Past members were asked, “How likely are you to renew your MDRT membership in the future?” Across the four years of this survey, overall, about 77% to 87% said they were “likely/very likely” to renew membership.



As illustrated below, likelihood to renew was higher among those who said they *did not qualify* compared to those who said they *did qualify*.

Likelihood to Renew: “Likely/Very Likely”



What Do You Think of MDRT?

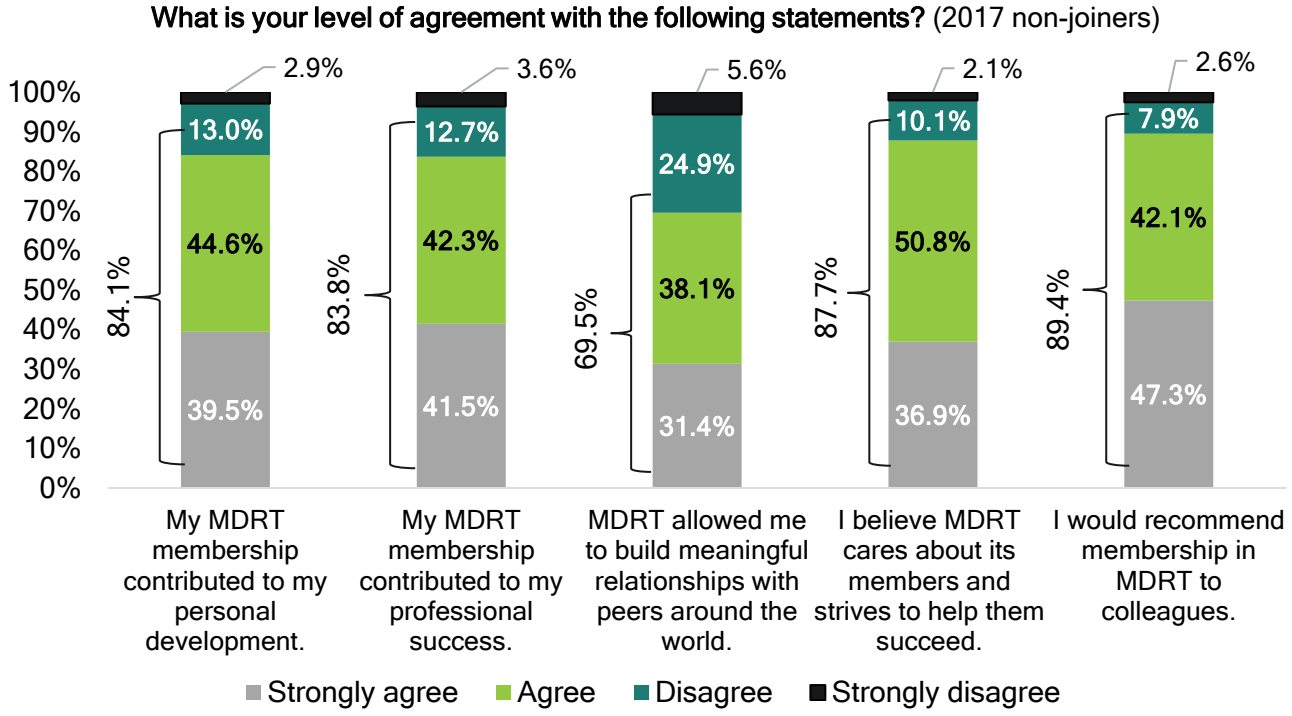
Past members were given five statements and asked to indicate their level of agreement with each statement. For brevity, only 2017 non-joiner responses are shown in the graph below.

In the four years of the survey, about 79% to 84% have “agreed/ strongly agreed” with the first two statements regarding MDRT’s contribution to personal and professional development.

Although lower than the other four comments, at 69.5%, this year’s survey had the highest percent of non-joiners that “agreed/strongly agreed” with the third statement regarding meaningful relationships with peers around the world.

In the three years that statement four has been listed in the survey (it was not in 2014-2015 version), 87.1% to 87.7% of non-joiners have “agreed/strongly agreed” that MDRT cares about its members and strives to help them succeed.

In the four years of the survey, about 85% to 89% have “agreed/ strongly agreed” that they would recommend MDRT membership to colleagues.

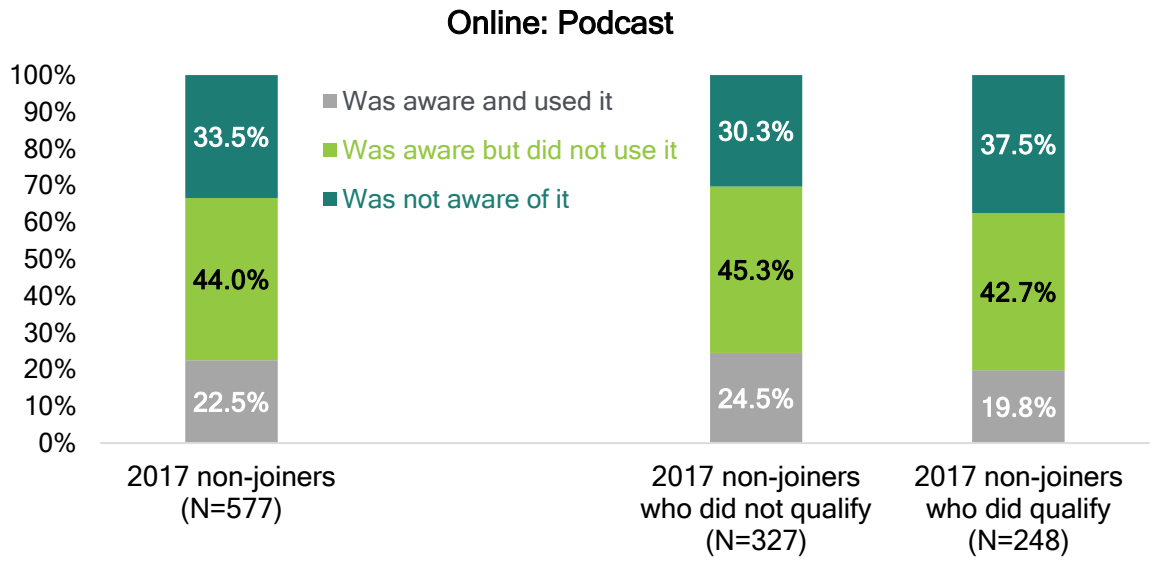


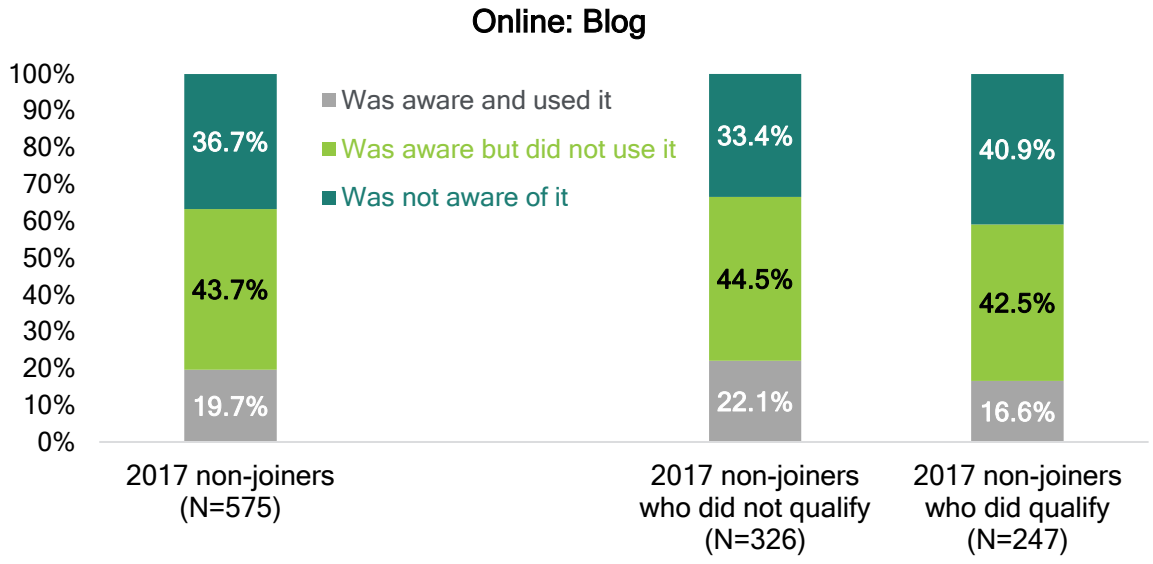
Awareness and Use of MDRT Resources

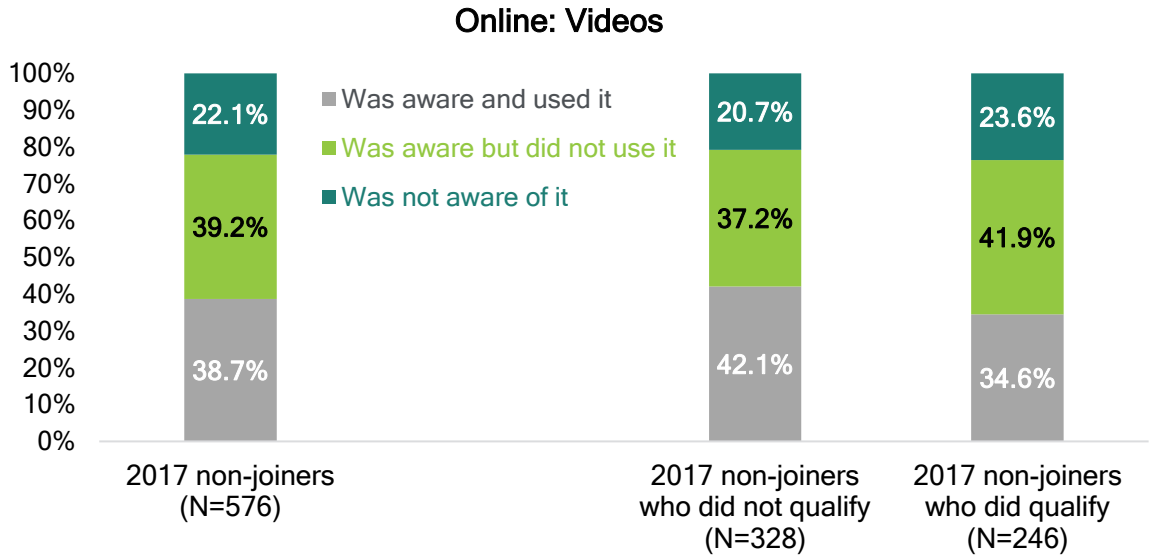
As a new topic of inquiry, 2016 and 2017 non-joiners were asked about awareness and use of select resources. There's overlap in how resources can be consumed, of course, but the questions were two-thronged: online (mdrd.org) resources and publications. Specifically, we asked:

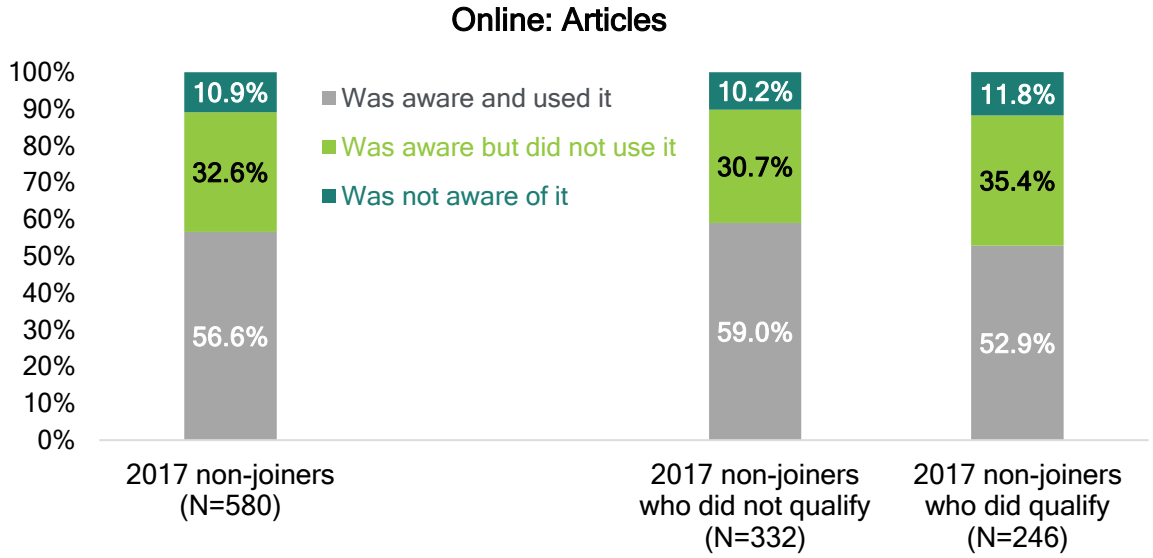
1. Please indicate your awareness and use of the following **online (mdrt.org)** resources during your time as an MDRT member:
    a. Podcast
    b. Blog
    c. Videos
    d. Articles
2. Please indicate your awareness and use of the following **publications** during your time as an MDRT member:
    a. *Round the Table* magazine (RTT)
    b. E-news

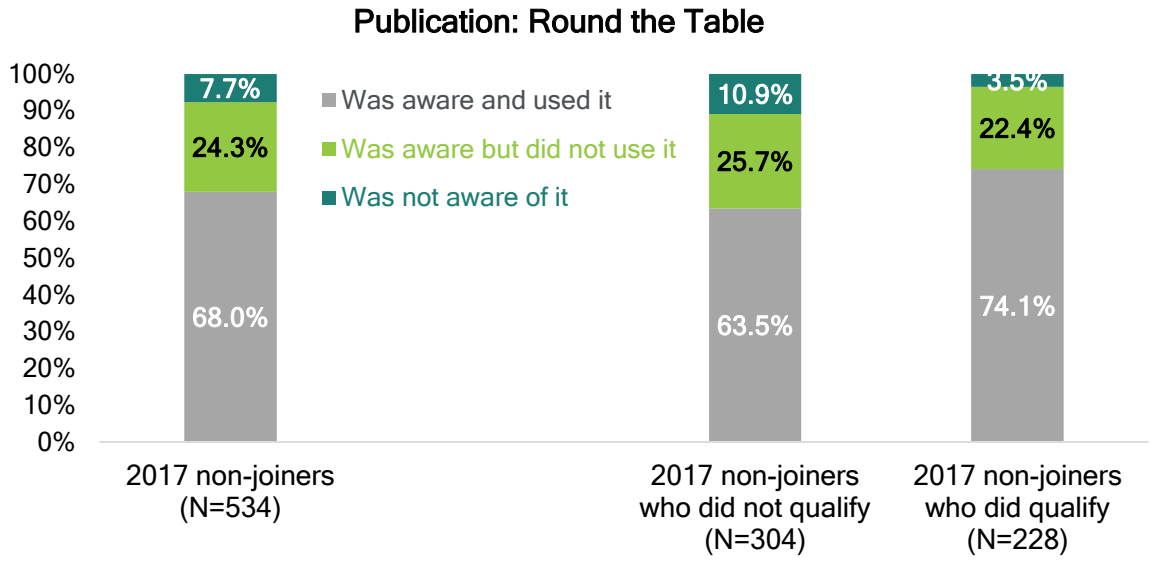
The results for 2017 non-joiners are shown in six graphs below. For online resources, awareness was lowest for the Blog (36.7% were not aware; however, this is a decrease from last year's 42.7%– in other words more are aware this year). A higher percentage of respondents were aware of the publications–7.7% were not aware of RTT and 15.9% were not aware of e-news. Among all the resources listed, RTT had the highest percent for **awareness and use**: 68.0% (up from 65.1% last year).

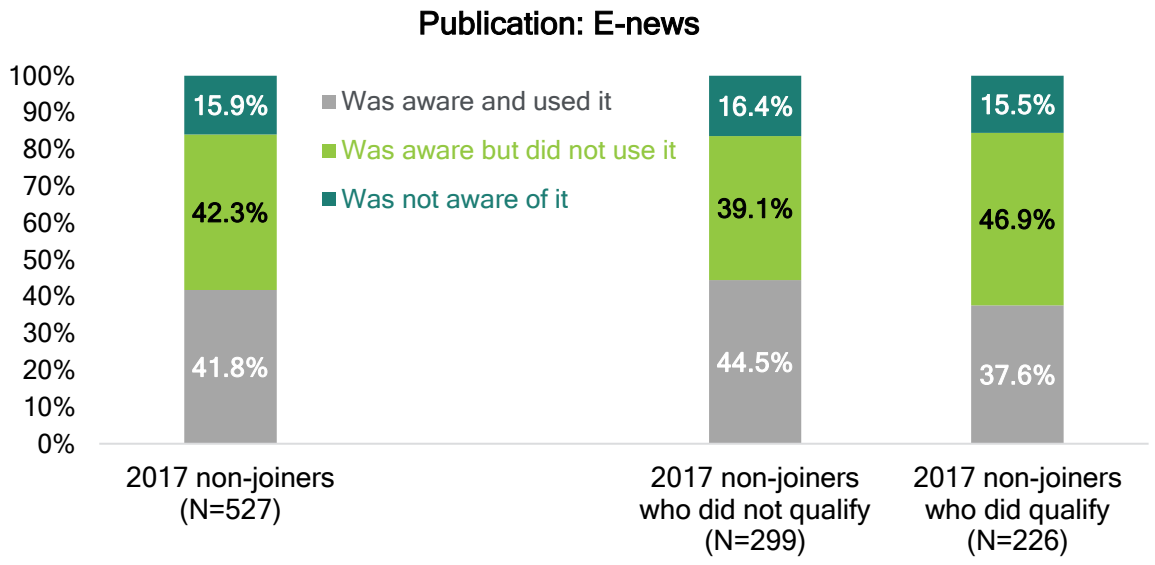



Online: Blog
100%
90%
80%
70%
60%
50%
40%
30%
20%
10%
0%
Was aware and used it
Was aware but did not use it
Was not aware of it
36.7%
43.7%
19.7%
33.4%
44.5%
22.1%
40.9%
42.5%
16.6%
2017 non-joiners (N=575)
2017 non-joiners who did not qualify (N=326)
2017 non-joiners who did qualify (N=247)


Online: Videos
100%
90%
80%
70%
60%
50%
40%
30%
20%
10%
0%
Was aware and used it
Was aware but did not use it
Was not aware of it
22.1%
39.2%
38.7%
20.7%
37.2%
42.1%
23.6%
41.9%
34.6%
2017 non-joiners (N=576)
2017 non-joiners who did not qualify (N=328)
2017 non-joiners who did qualify (N=246)


Online: Articles
100%
90%
80%
70%
60%
50%
40%
30%
20%
10%
0%
Was aware and used it
Was aware but did not use it
Was not aware of it
10.9%
32.6%
56.6%
10.2%
30.7%
59.0%
11.8%
35.4%
52.9%
2017 non-joiners (N=580)
2017 non-joiners who did not qualify (N=332)
2017 non-joiners who did qualify (N=246)





Comparing overall 2016 and 2017 non-joiner respondents, 2017 respondents were, for the most part, less unaware of the resources. And more were aware and used the resources.

Resource	*Was **not aware** of resource*		*Was **aware and used***	
	2016 non-joiners	**2017 non-joiners**	**2016 non-joiners**	**2017 non-joiners**
Podcast	37.8%	33.5%	16.0%	22.5%
Blog	42.7%	36.7%	13.0%	19.7%
Videos	28.3%	22.1%	26.7%	38.7%
Articles	13.7%	10.9%	47.5%	56.6%
RTT	7.3%	7.7&	65.1%	68.0%
E-news	18.5%	15.9%	36.5%	41.8%

(Note: "*Was aware but did not use*" comparisons are not shown as they can be calculated from the numbers shown.)

Select Summary Subjects:

Subject	Survey data and thoughts ...
U.S.	In the four years of this survey, the percent of U.S. respondents who said they did not qualify for membership ranged from a low of 30.4% to high of 43.8%. So, more than half of our U.S. non-joiner respondents qualified for membership but chose not to renew their membership. ❍ MDRT is actively pursuing U.S. solutions – some examples are the U.S. Growth Team; the EDGE, and most recently the U.S. initiative taskforce.
Non-U.S.	In contrast, among non-U.S. respondents, more than half say they did not qualify for membership. ❍ More content is being tailored to different member segments; the Global Conference will allow members who aren't able to travel to the U.S. to partake in AM-like learning opportunities.
Company factor	There was an increase in the percent of non-joiners from India who had qualified for 2018 but did not rejoin: LIC factor ❍ Are we truly an individual-based membership? Should we wean ourselves/members from dependence on companies? Or do just the opposite - strengthen and deepen company relationships?
Did not qualify	Among those who did not qualify, the majority (consistently greater than 79%) said they would have rejoined had they qualified. ❍ Reminders and applications are sent, what else can be done to reach members who may have had a bad year?
Top reason for joining	In all four years, 90% or higher said that they first joined MDRT because they *viewed membership as a benchmark of success*. ❍ If one achieves the ultimate goal – "I made MDRT!" - how can we combat the "...been there, done that" mentality? How can we make repeating the MDRT achievement be like repeating an NBA championship or winning the Super Bowl? Repeat, three-peat, etc.
March 1	Three years of data show that at least one in three non-joiners do not rejoin due to the additional fee after March 1. ❍ The additional fee safeguards annual operational budget and Annual Meeting fulfillments. For the past five years, we surpassed the required budget and sold out the AM ... is this fee worth losing one in three members? How do other associations that do not have a late fee operate?
Annual Meeting	Just short of 40% of 2017 non-joiners said that not being able to attend the AM played a part in the decision not to rejoin. ❍ The EDGE and Global Conference were created. The EDGE was extremely successful - but on principle (aside from visa complications), should every member who wants to attend the AM be able to attend?
Top reasons for dropping out	Each year of the survey, between 35% and 49% indicate the following two reasons influence decision to discontinue membership: *Limited impact on my productivity* and *Limited impact on my personal development* ❍ If members do not see an impact related to productivity and personal development despite numerous MDRT offerings, is this analogous to a college course where you have access to a class, the professor, the class notes, the homework answers, the book, the teaching assistant, a study group consisting of the top students, but you still get a "C" on your exam ... should you drop the course (don't rejoin) and save your GPA (save your money) or persevere and try to bring the grade up (rejoin)?

Select Summary Subjects:

Subject	Add your thoughts...
U.S.	In the four years of this survey, the percent of U.S. respondents who said they did not qualify for membership ranged from a low of 30.4% to high of 43.8%. So, more than half of our U.S. non-joiner respondents qualified for membership but chose not to renew their membership.
Non-U.S.	In contrast, among non-U.S. respondents, more than half say they did not qualify for membership.
Company factor	There was an increase in the percent of non-joiners from India who had qualified for 2018 but did not rejoin: LIC factor
Did not qualify	Among those who did not qualify, the majority (consistently greater than 79%) said they would have rejoined had they qualified.
Top reason for joining	In all four years, 90% or higher said that they first joined MDRT because they *viewed membership as a benchmark of success*.
March 1	Three years of data show that at least one in three non-joiners do not rejoin due to the additional fee after March 1.
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