

For a century now, NCACPA's primary focus has been providing superior member service. With guidance from the NCACPA Board of Directors, committees, local areas, and established strategic plan, we continue to successfully serve the accounting profession and community.

## NCACPA Leverages Data to Inform Business Decisions

The North Carolina Association of CPAs (NCACPA) is focused on providing superior service to its 13,000+ members in the accounting profession and community. They're dedicated to monitoring changes within the profession and ensuring members receive necessary resources and updates.

As part of their mission to serve their members, NCACPA has been focused on analyzing their member data to influence decisions that impact the member experience. In the past, they had been leveraging Tableau, but reached a point where they needed a different type of BI solution that would align with their association's needs.

"What we had in Tableau wasn't really a holistic view, and that is critical for any organization. So we moved to Acumen, a cloud-based platform using Power BI and that has opened up so many eyes on the adoption side and it's just made data "real" and especially the dashboards so we've changed to that and we're in the process of getting every data feed possible looped into it" explained Mark Soticheck, COO at NCACPA [in a recent webinar](#).

## CASE STUDY: NCACPA

Tools like Tableau and Power BI are widely available for any organization to purchase, but data visualization tools are just one component of an analytics solution. Getting to actionable data insights often requires things like data warehousing and data integration, data governance, data modeling, designing visualizations, and creating the specific solutions for multiple stakeholders in the organization that often have many different use cases.

Organizations choose to leverage a product like Acumen because it addresses these complex aspects of data and analytics. It includes pre-built solutions that are tailored specifically for the association industry and it's also built on many of the industry leading technologies for data analytics, including Microsoft Power BI.

### The concept of “fast data”

The ability to leverage fast data has become increasingly important for associations. This means that organizations have recognized that there's an opportunity to better serve members by understanding their needs, not only in retrospect, but also in near real-time.

“We're tracking in real-time what our membership renewal trends look like, down to the demographic level and understanding if certain types of members are not renewing at the same rates. Then we can either get out tailored marketing to them right away, offer programming, etc.” explained Sotichack.

This concept of using “fast data” is emerging as a way to spot and resolve issues before they become a larger concern. With Acumen, data is updated in near real-time and is integrated with NCACPA's key source systems for data – providing a central repository for understanding their key business metrics.

The whole idea is to enable staff with information in a timely manner, so that the appropriate action can be taken to provide relevant content, products, services, or messaging to address customers' needs in the moment.

### Building a Business Case for Investing in Data and Analytics

The COVID crisis has placed increased emphasis on having data in real-time and being able to use data to understand key business outcomes. But even before COVID, NCACPA recognized that data analytics brought an opportunity to provide a better member experience and better margins for the organization.

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“Even before COVID, we were looking at live events, the value proposition and member experience, and actual margins. Often the metric used around events is the total number of attendees, but when looking at the changing environment, we must look at expense and margin data. We made one decision that largely affected our customer experience and significantly reduced our live seminar programs (25%); however, our margin increased by over 30% and added \$400K to our bottom line. And right now, we are of course looking at all of our digital data points and using those numbers to really understand each member and potential member ‘personally.’ We do this not only through transactions, but through unstructured data sources like community posts and social media,” [explained Sotichack](#).

The business case for investing in data and analytics is simple: understand your member needs and understand what is driving the most value for members. Then you can optimize results and better serve members and customers.

The Acumen product helps associations reach their desired outcomes faster when it comes to building a culture of data and analytics. For NCACPA, the investment has helped to make data more accessible to staff, making it easier to look into the data and use it to inform their business strategies and operations.

To listen to the full story, [check out the webinar hosted by ASAE and Matchbox](#), featuring examples from the association industry on their use of fast data.