Future of Work for Unions

Empowering Your Union with Data and Analytics

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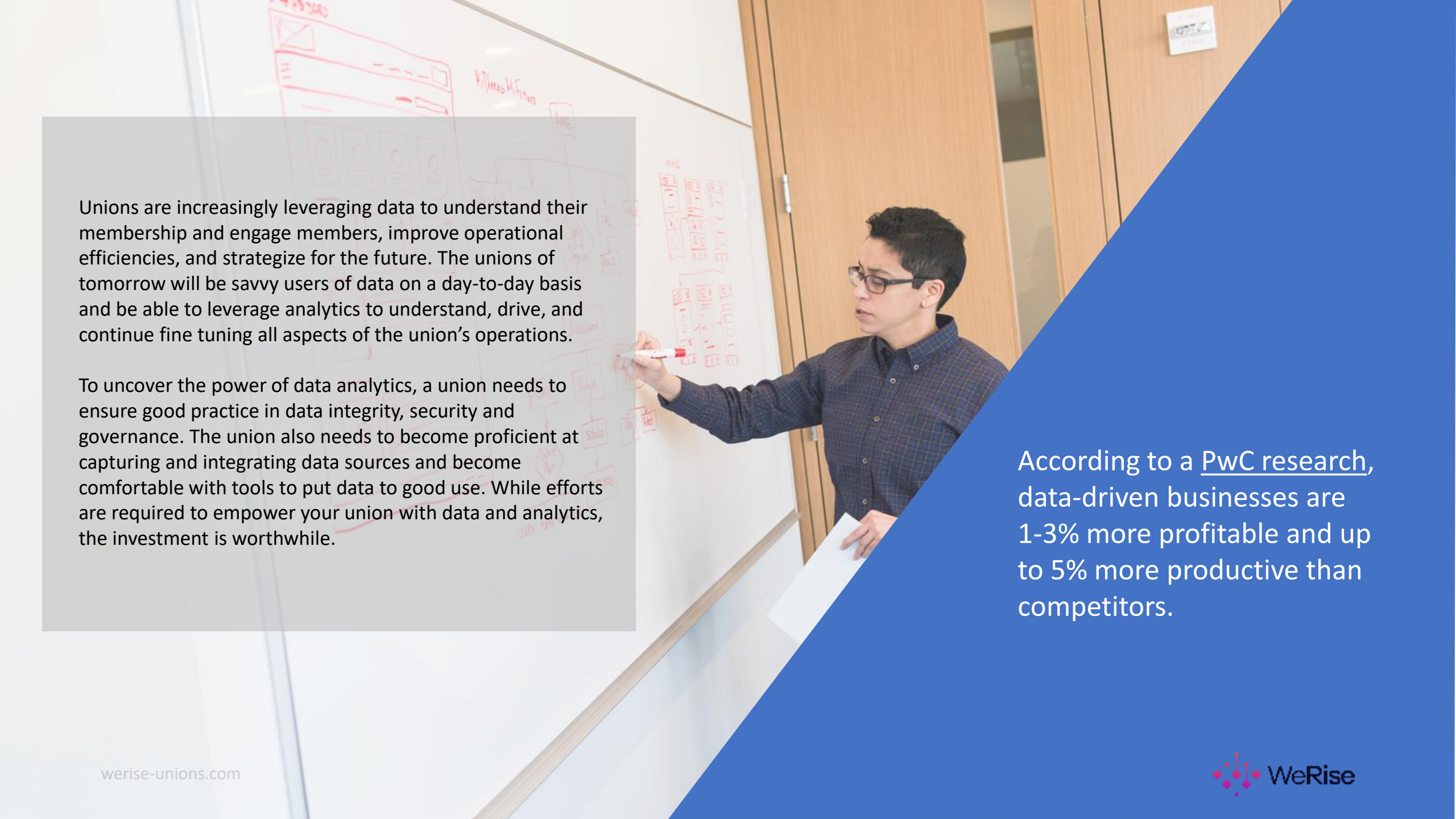

Unions are increasingly leveraging data to understand their membership and engage members, improve operational efficiencies, and strategize for the future. The unions of tomorrow will be savvy users of data on a day-to-day basis and be able to leverage analytics to understand, drive, and continue fine tuning all aspects of the union's operations.

To uncover the power of data analytics, a union needs to ensure good practice in data integrity, security and governance. The union also needs to become proficient at capturing and integrating data sources and become comfortable with tools to put data to good use. While efforts are required to empower your union with data and analytics, the investment is worthwhile.

According to a PwC research, data-driven businesses are 1-3% more profitable and up to 5% more productive than competitors.

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Here are the key benefits of data analytics:

Benefit 1. Understand Your Membership & Deliver Better Member Experience

Data analytics can help unions better understand and service their membership. For example, a member demographic dashboard can help unions understand the makeup of their membership, be it members' cultural background, type of jobs, age, and more.

For management, stronger alignment with members' needs and preferences means stronger member experience. For example, having front line staff that have similar cultural background can help build closer relationship with members. For organizing, real-time data analytics offer timely insights on how different campaigns and messaging are performing and how different members are engaging with the union. With campaign dashboards, organizers can view the overall performance of a campaign based on a point in time and drill down to specific areas (e.g., by geography, by employer, by role, by messaging, by individual member) to inform decision making.

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Benefit 2. Improve Operational Efficiency

One other key benefit of data analytics is its ability to identify inefficiencies and help pinpoint problem areas within the operation – be it time spent on specific tasks, bottlenecks in the operation, or error rate. Modern unions are armed with real-time data, intuitive data analytics dashboards and the ability to drill down to pinpoint issues. By identifying the root cause of the problem, they can take steps to optimize the process and improve their overall performance.

With such ability, managers can address issues swiftly, such as improve processes, refine training programs, redesign team structure, or augment the team with different skillsets. For dues processors, analytics can flag accounts with billing discrepancies and ensure discrepancies are addressed timely and proactively.

Benefit 3. Strategize for the Future

Data analytics can also help unions anticipate the changes in the macro-environment, membership, and union operations. Individually or combined, the derived insights can help shape the future of the union.

For example, the ability to track key performance indicators and see how they trend overtime allows union executives to have alignment founded on facts versus forming different opinions based on anecdotal information.

Data analytics become especially powerful when different data sources - internal and external data - are integrated to tell a holistic story. For example, a union representing workers in the construction industry might overlay data on the volume and types of planned construction projects in the years ahead and their membership data in terms of skills and labor force. The derived insights can help the union identify areas where it may have elevated bargaining power and areas of vulnerability in both the short- and long-term. Armed with such insights, unions can better guide and protect its membership.

Supercharging the Impact of Data Analytics

With the increased sophistication in technology, unions can further empower staff to leverage data in relevant ways with faster turnaround and lowered dependency on IT.

For example, many analytics and data visualization applications today allow non-IT stakeholders to customize their data views based on their departmental or role needs, using low-code/no-code (LC/NC) development platforms.

In the past, to acquire customized dashboards for different roles can be cost-prohibitive as such needs may require lengthy requirement gathering processes and compete for IT resources to implement. As a result, staff would have to make do with generic dashboard views. With modern technologies today, non-IT staff can create custom views and modify their data visualization needs on-the-go through intuitive drag-and-drop interfaces and pre-built apps.

Some of the popular data visualization tools requiring little to no development skills include Power BI (by Microsoft), Data Studio (by Google), Tableau, and Klipfolio. Many of these tools have free or affordable options that can help unions supercharge their data analytics usage and competencies affordably.

What are Low-Code/No-Code Development Platforms?

Low-code/no-code (LC/NC) development platforms offer visual software development environments that allow users to drag and drop application components, connect them together with little develop background. Low-code development platforms require some basic coding skills for users to develop and integrate complex applications while no-code development platforms do not require programming knowledge at all.

According to Fortune Business Insights, the global low-code development platform market is projected to grow from about $14 billion in 2021 to $95 billion by 2028, at a CAGR of 31.6% from 2021 to 2028.

Watch Out's

The opportunities brought forth by data analytics are exciting. Moreover, some data analytics tools in the marketplace can dazzle organizations with all kinds of features and functionalities. With that said, unions need to ensure they are starting with the business objectives and implement with the data set, visualization views, and functionalities aligned to the business objectives.

Another area for caution is to ensure your data strategy is built on a strong data foundation. A common mistake is to ignore the basics or to assume the basics are already there – such as data quality, consistency, security and overall governance. Failing to address the fundamentals can lead an organization to expose inaccurate data or data that are not helpful.

Looking Ahead

In summary, data analytics can empower a union in many aspects, from being able to better understand and engage members, to improving operational efficiency and ensuring your union provides strong value to its membership. With modern technology where non-IT staff are further empowered to customize their data visualization to their own needs, the impact of data analytics can be supercharged.

While efforts are required to become data-driven organizations, the investment and the journey are worth the while.

About Bursting Silver

Bursting Silver works with North America's leading associations, regulatory bodies, and unions. We specialize in digital transformation. Our unique ability is in finding the simplicity in the complex. We are nimble, responsive and client driven.

Want to learn more?
Contact us at: info@burstingsilver.com
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WeRise is a software platform that enables unions to efficiently administer all aspects of their memberships and provides a platform for organizers to rally union members.

WeRise is 100% cloud-based with security, accessibility, and scalability built-in to future proof your operations. The solution has been architected to provide a cohesive software solution across all locals, while keeping local data segregated and secure.

With a powerful platform as a foundation, WeRise is multifaceted with the member information at its core. Clients can use the out-of-the-box capabilities as they are released and participate in product development plans through feedback or take a more direct role in specific engagements to expand the system to meet organizational goals.

Some key features include:

- Membership Data Management
- Dues Management
- Dashboard & Data Visualization
- Member List Segmentation
- Email/SMS Blast to Members

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