

# The future of personalisation in the AI era

A ReadyMembership guide





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# Introduction: the promise and the peril

Artificial intelligence has transformed the conversation about personalisation. Where once organisations spoke about adding a name to an email or tailoring content by sector, AI now makes it possible to predict behaviours, adapt journeys in real-time, and deliver individually relevant experiences at scale.

But here is the twist: technology is only part of the story. For membership organisations, the heart of personalisation is still about trust, data quality, and meaningful connections.

Done well, personalisation builds loyalty, boosts retention, and increases engagement. Done badly, it risks confusing members, appearing intrusive, and eroding trust. This guide is for membership professionals who want practical, actionable steps to harness personalisation in the AI era.

You will find lessons from sector leaders, strategies to overcome common challenges, and ideas for building member value with confidence. Think of it as a friendly but honest companion for your journey, without jargon or gimmicks.

## Why personalisation matters more than ever

Every day, your members are swamped with digital noise. Webinars, newsletters, online learning, social media... it is a blur. Against this backdrop, why should a busy professional give their precious time to you?

The answer: relevance. Members do not want to hunt through endless updates for something useful. They want their membership to feel like it is designed for them, helping their career, saving them time, and connecting them with people who matter.

Membership organisations have natural advantages that consumer brands envy:

- **Trust:** Members believe you will use their data responsibly, for their benefit.
- **Context:** You know their professional world better than most.
- **Continuity:** Membership is not a one-off transaction, it is a long-term relationship.
- **Community:** You can connect people with peers who share their challenges and goals

# Why personalisation matters more than ever

When these strengths are combined with smart use of data and technology, personalisation becomes more than a marketing trick; it becomes central to your member value.

For **Tim Flagg**, CEO of the UK's AI trade association **UKAI**, the opportunity is clear:

“

“Trying to understand the behaviour of diverse members is the ultimate goal but predicting needs and serving relevant content is really hard. Now, Machine Learning and predictive AI tools mean we can join up the data, crunch it, predict and analyse member behaviour – and most importantly, act on it.”

”



**Tim Flagg**  
CEO, UKAI

**Rennie Schafer**, former CEO of the **Federation of European Self Storage Associations (FEDESSA)**, has a more down-to-earth take:

“

“Associations are all about giving members the information they want at the time they want it. Personalisation is not just about making it pretty or putting your name on it. It is about understanding the member, ideally delivering what they need before they even think about it.”

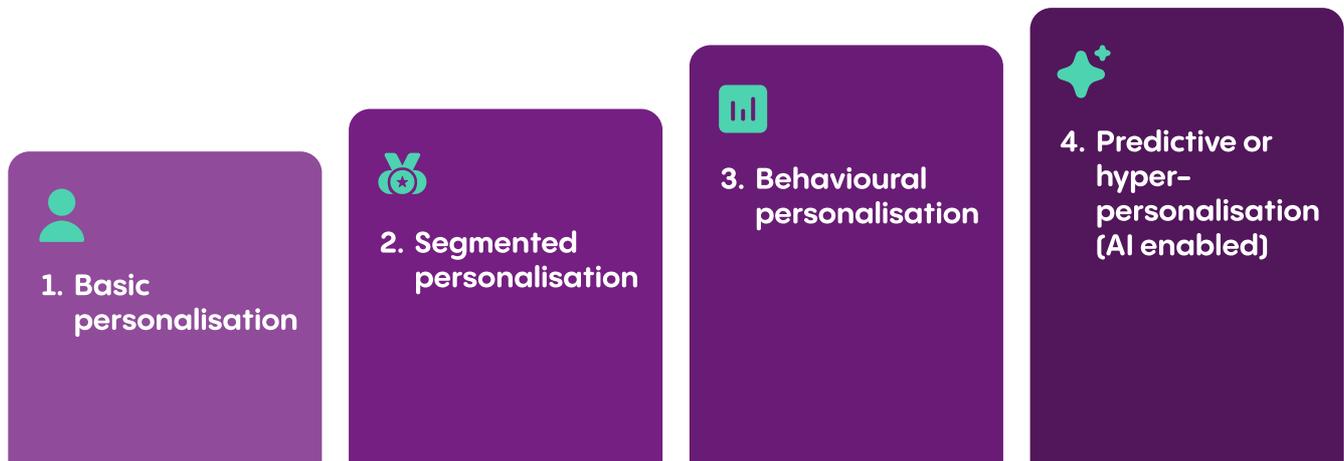
”



**Rennie Schafer**  
Former CEO, FEDESSA

# From basic to hyper-personalisation: levels explained

Not all personalisation is created equal. Think of it like climbing a ladder:



- 1** The “hello [first name]” stage. Simple demographics and broad rules. Polite but not exactly exciting.
- 2** More thoughtful. Students get early career content, senior members get leadership insights. You are starting to show that you know them.
- 3** Now it gets interesting. You track what members actually do, such as events attended, CPD logged, resources downloaded, and adjust what you show them.
- 4** The top of the ladder. AI looks for patterns, predicts needs, and surfaces relevant answers or recommendations before members ask. It is proactive, not reactive.

“

**In order to personalise a single source of data for our 16 associations was key – along with gated access. FEDESSA staff can see everything but associations only access their own data. We can now segment and personalise by member interest and behaviour across Europe.**

”



**Rennie Schafer**  
Former CEO, FEDESSA

# The risks of over-personalisation

Yes, you can have too much of a good thing. If personalisation crosses the line from helpful to creepy, you will lose trust. The big pitfalls to avoid:

- 1. The creepiness factor:** Recommending something so specific that members wonder if you have been snooping.
- 2. Misuse of sensitive data:** Using EDI or personal demographics in ways that feel exploitative.
- 3. Over segmentation:** Carving audiences into so many tiny slices that nobody gets a coherent experience.
- 4. Automation fatigue:** When every interaction feels robotic, the human touch that defines membership disappears.

Rennie Schafer warns that over-personalisation can backfire if the data foundations are not right:

“

“There was scepticism when we started because it took a lot of work by staff to get the data right. Personalisation does not work unless you have a solid dataset. But once the data is clean, it is so much easier to create targeted messages that really land.”

”

He also makes the case for balance:

“

“We create a lot of content that is probably 70% generic but the 30% we personalise drives the biggest impact on member engagement. It shows you do not have to personalise everything to make a difference.”

”

The lesson: personalisation is powerful, but restraint matters. Members want relevance, not surveillance.

# Overcoming the challenges: practical recommendations

Personalisation often falls down on the practicalities. Here is how to tackle the usual suspects:



## Fragmented data

Bring systems and /or data together where you can. Aim for a single view of each member. Focus first on the journeys that matter most: joining, renewing, attending and learning.



## Poor data quality

Audit regularly, clear duplicates, and prompt members to update their profiles. Use system flags to catch missing or inconsistent data before it causes problems.



## Consent and privacy

Be open about how data is used. Give members control via preference centres. Spell out how AI supports their experience without drowning them in tech speak.



## Limited resources

Automate the dull stuff, such as reminders, confirmations, renewals. Let AI suggest events or surface resources so your team can focus on meaningful engagement.



## Channel inconsistency

Map member journeys end-to-end. Use rules that apply across email, portals and events so members get a joined-up experience.

Alex Skinner, CEO of Pixl8 and ReadyMembership, sums it up neatly:

“With a unified data platform, you do not have to ask if a field was integrated. You can focus on the journey itself, deciding what rule to describe or what trigger to apply, rather than which system the data sits in.”

# Lessons from membership leaders



## FEDESSA – behavioural personalisation at scale

The Federation of European Self-Storage Associations represents over 2,500 facilities across 15 national associations. By tailoring communications based on behaviour, they saw half of members renew two months early, and retention jump from 85% to 94%.

*Rennie Schafer: "Personalisation touches every point, from member journeys, to retention to events. If you get it right, it gives you the ability to give members what they want, when they want it."*

They also grew their European conference audience, especially in non-English speaking markets, by using multilingual personalisation.

[Read the full case study](#)



## BDA – from crisis to connection

The British Dietetic Association faced a failing CRM that left members frustrated and staff exhausted. Moving to ReadyMembership transformed things. Specialist group participation rose from 50% to 63%, attrition dropped from 11% to 4%, and members began to self-serve with ease. COO Louise Pritchard puts it simply:

*"ReadyMembership freed us to focus on member engagement. We are on the edge of greatness."*

These case studies show that personalisation is not an abstract concept. It is a tangible driver of retention, satisfaction, and growth.

[Read the full case study](#)

# Getting started without overcomplicating

Personalisation does not have to mean a two-year IT project. Start small. Test, learn, and build from there.

- Add conditional content to emails.
- Segment by simple factors like career stage or location.
- Try behavioural nudges such as renewal reminders.
- Be upfront about how AI is used.
- Keep human oversight for sensitive interactions.

Or as UKAI CEO Tim Flagg says: “Avoid treating AI as magic. The challenge is not the technology, it is building confidence, skills and culture to use it effectively.”

## Redefining member value in a personalised world

Membership has always carried tangible benefits: journals, discounts, events, and of course post-nominals. These remain important. Post-nominals in particular are still a powerful signal of professional quality and credibility, giving members recognition and status. They are part of the foundation of membership value, but they should not be the only thing members associate with their organisation.

In a personalised world, the value proposition is expanding. Members now expect experiences that are:

- **Relevant:** showing them exactly what matters at the right time.
- **Efficient:** saving time by filtering noise and surfacing what is most useful.
- **Belonging:** connecting them to peers who share their challenges, interests, and aspirations.
- **Progressive:** guiding their professional journey with tailored resources, learning pathways and opportunities to grow.
- **Trusted:** giving them reliable answers and being transparent about how their data and AI are used.

The organisations that thrive will combine the traditional marks of value, such as post-nominals and professional recognition, with these new personalised experiences.

Members will continue to want the badge of quality, but they will also expect you to know them, support them, and deliver relevance throughout their journey. Personalisation is no longer an add-on. It is becoming the core of how you demonstrate and deliver membership value.

# Conclusion: the future of personalisation and membership

Personalisation is no longer a nice-to-have, it is becoming the backbone of membership value. Members expect experiences that feel as tailored and responsive as the consumer platforms they use every day, but with the trust and professionalism that only membership bodies can deliver.

AI is accelerating this shift. It gives organisations the ability to scale relevance, anticipate needs, and deliver answers in real time. But technology alone will not secure the future.

As Tim Flagg reminds us:

“

**AI amplifies everything. With clean data and a clear strategy, it transforms value. With poor data, it multiplies mistakes. The foundations still matter most: quality data, a clear strategy, and a culture ready to adapt.**

”



**Tim Flagg**  
CEO, UKAI

Case studies like [FEDESSA](#) and the [BDA](#) show the impact: higher retention, stronger engagement, broader reach. Rennie Schafer sums it up:

“

**Personalisation is why FEDESSA has grown attendance its annual conference. We have automated messaging in multiple languages. AI in ReadyMembership allows us to do even more. The scope of personalisation is going to be even more impressive in the future.**

”



**Rennie Schafer**  
Former CEO, FEDESSA

The future of membership will be defined by organisations that make this shift: from generic to relevant, from transactional to personalised, from being a provider of benefits to being a trusted partner in each member's journey. Get this right, and personalisation will not just support your membership strategy - it will become it.

# Getting started: quick action checklist



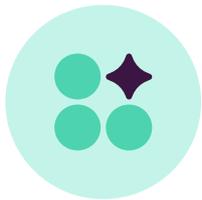
## Data foundations

- Audit and clean your member data
- Create a single member view across systems
- Set clear governance and responsibilities



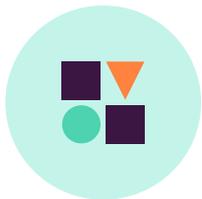
## Strategy and culture

- Define what personalisation means for your organisation
- Build staff confidence with training and experimentation
- Encourage a test and learn culture



## Technology

- Choose platforms that unify CRM, CMS, events and email
- Use automation for repetitive tasks
- Add AI gradually for recommendations and insights



## Member experience

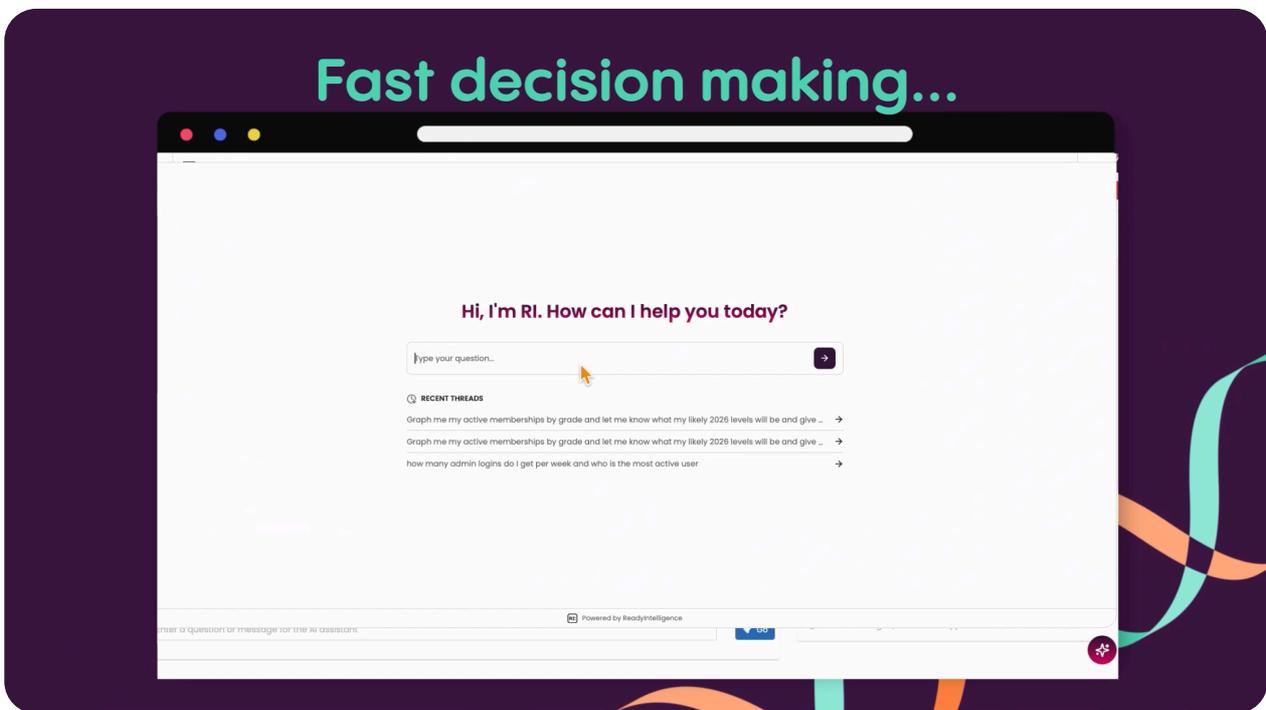
- Start small with conditional content or segmentation
- Balance generic with personalised content (think 70/30)
- Be transparent about data use and AI
- Keep human oversight for sensitive interactions

# About ReadyMembership

**ReadyMembership** is the unified membership experience platform for membership bodies, nonprofits and associations. It brings together CRM, website, event management, e-commerce & finance and much more.

The ReadyMembership AI agent, powered by ReadyIntelligence, is the conversational assistant built into ReadyMembership. It helps staff quickly and easily find information, understand data, and make decisions faster.

**Your knowledge is powerful if people can find it, use it, and act on it**



## Put membership AI into action

It's easy to get started with AI. First, audit your knowledge sources and identify where information is stored. Then test AI search with staff and define one clear goal for using AI. You'll be on the way with your AI personalisation journey.

## Get in touch

Get in touch with us and find out how your organisation can take membership personalisation to the next level.

## Sources

- Tim Flagg, CEO UKAI – interview for TechSmart 2025 (Sept 2025).
- Rennie Schafer, CEO FEDESSA – FEDESSA case study (ReadyMembership).
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- MemberWise Digital Excellence Report (2024/25).
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- Membership Guide (membershipguide.org).
- UK GDPR guidance, Information Commissioner’s Office (ICO).



## Get in touch

Your continuous improvement partner

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