2015 Member Engagement Survey Report

ashridge
COMMUNICATIONS

Participating organisations

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Thank you to the following organisations for contributing their time and for providing the information used in this study:

ACCA UK (Association of Chartered Certified Accountants)
Association of Accounting Technicians (AAT)
Association of Reflexologists (AoR)
BCS - The Chartered Institute for IT
BDA (The British Dental Association)
Biochemical Society
British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP)
British Dietetic Association (BDA)
British Veterinary Association (BVA)
Chartered Institute of Credit Management (CICM)
Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH)
Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP)
Chartered Institute of Management Accountants (CIMA)
Chartered Institute of Marketing (CIM)
Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD)
Chartered Quality Institute (CQI)
Faculty of Medical Leadership and Management (FMLM)
ICAEW (Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales)
Institute of Biomedical Science (IBMS)
Institute of Physics (IOP)
Market Research Society (MRS)
Professional Association for Childcare and Early Years (PACEY)
RICS (Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors)
Royal College of General Practitioners (RCGP)
Royal College of Nursing (RCN)

Royal College of Obstetricians & Gynaecologists (RCOG)
Royal College of Ophthalmologists (RCOphth)
Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists (RCSLT)
Royal Pharmaceutical Society (RPS)
Royal Society of Chemistry (RSC)
Royal Society of Medicine (RSM)
Society for Experimental Biology (SEB)
STEP
The Chartered Institute of Building (CIOB)
The College of Optometrists
The Physiological Society

Foreword

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This study was carried out by Ashridge Communications and follows our inaugural member engagement survey exclusively for professional membership bodies, which took place in 2013/2014.

By studying the member engagement definitions and interpretations used by organisations in the professional membership sector - looking at the engagement factors they deem most important and assessing the methods for measurement and monitoring currently in use - we aim to provide insight into current practices and trends in the sector, and build evidence to support organisations in developing their own strategies and plans. The introduction this year of a new model for scoring member engagement activity also provides organisations with a means to benchmark their activities: to compare with others and to monitor their own progress over time.

Thanks to the Working Group – derived from the MemCom Marketing Directors Group - for their input to the overall structure of the 2015 survey and the data assessment method, particularly Simon Tunna (Head of Strategic Insight, ICAEW), Linda Stranks (Marketing and Membership Director, British Dental Association), Gemma Wood (Manager, Member Engagement, Royal Society of Chemistry), David Barr (Head of Membership and Professional Practice, Royal Society of Chemistry) and Elaine Crehan (Chief Operating Officer Member Services, STEP). Thanks also to the 36 professional bodies for their participation.

It is hugely encouraging that, with an increasing number of organisations placing emphasis and resources on membership engagement, Ashridge Communications is taking the initiative to develop this study specifically for the membership sector. As we have seen with the net promoter score, external benchmarking is becoming increasingly important. The ability to measure and compare engagement will open the dialogue to a wider understanding of the importance and mechanics of this vital aspect of association work.

Cristian Holmes,
Chair of the 2015 MemCom Conference on Engagement, and Director of Marketing, Communications and Membership, British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy

Measuring member engagement is critical to understanding the value members derive from membership and providing guidance on where we should focus our future activity.

Simon Tunna,
Head of Strategic Insight, ICAEW

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Member engagement is beginning to change the face of many organisations' membership departments. Once just a term associated with online and social media communities, it now combines marketing, membership management and communications with service delivery, volunteer management and customer satisfaction - and many other functions besides. Member engagement is fast becoming a key area of focus in the membership sector.

Some membership organisations are already making clear headway with their engagement strategies and have dedicated staff - or even departments - in place. And, as we saw in our first study, others are still only just beginning the journey.

But what constitutes engagement? If it is more than just a visit to a website or participation in an event, how do you assess whether your members are engaged with your organisation and its activities? There is still a variety of definitions of the term among professional membership bodies, as well as a wide range of methods for putting engagement into practice, however there is some coalescence, and we are beginning to identify common - and perhaps more effective - methods of measurement.

In this study we explore the current interpretations of member engagement, how those interpretations are built into strategies and plans and how professional bodies are measuring activity and involvement. We also include an insight to the range of engagement success using our own scoring model, developed specifically for this study.

Increasingly, member engagement is becoming a stand-alone role: 80% of professional membership organisations we have worked with in the last 3 years have hired an engagement specialist.

Dennis Howes,
Director, Membership Bespoke

Headlines

Headlines

- Thirty-six organisations took part in the survey, between February and April 2015. Of these, thirty-three provided data to enable calculation of Member Engagement Scores (MES).

- Many of the definitions of member engagement relate directly to the types of activities being actively monitored or measured, and to those for which statistics are easily accessible.

- Assessment and understanding of the emotional commitment individuals have to their organisation and of individuals' satisfaction with the level of interaction - whatever that may be for them - is becoming increasingly important.

- Even though many organisations are not formally defining engagement at present, there is clear recognition of the benefits that improved engagement might bring.

- The strategic focus on improving the member offer correlates with the perception that the key benefits of member engagement are improvements in retention, recommendation and use of services.

- Targeting of activity - specific activities for specific member (or non-member) types - is becoming increasingly important. The aims of these activities are mainly focused on membership numbers, with very few focused on member satisfaction and value.

- The shift of strategic focus away from traditional membership functions and towards new engagement activities is evident: 25 organisations were able to outline one or more successful member engagement initiatives from the past 2 years; two thirds of the 54 initiatives outlined were targeted to specific audiences.

- The desire for improved recommendation is exemplified by an increasing focus on advocacy and volunteering initiatives: 14 organisations outlined successful initiatives from the past two years; 23 have initiatives planned for the next 12 months.

- The steps towards a headline engagement score - and being able to formally define engagement - appear to involve first being able to quantify engagement, and then being able to use both transactional and emotional measures of engagement in that quantification.

- Most organisations (30 of 33) were able to offer data related to member retention. Most difficult to quantify was the number of members involved with social media activity.

- Transactional engagement is measured by more organisations at the current time than emotional engagement: more organisations were able to provide data for opening the e-bulletin, for example, than could provide a Net Promoter Score or data related to member satisfaction. However the number of organisations able to quantify recommendation by members was relatively higher.

Although some professional bodies provided data for a large number of the 28 measures used in this study - demonstrating that they are monitoring and tracking member engagement in many ways - only a few achieved Member Engagement Scores (MES) significantly above the mean. And 48% of the participants (16 of 33) provided data for fewer than half the measures.

Interestingly, the top three scores (MES Complete) were achieved by organisations with memberships in

the range of 5000 - 20,000 individuals. Three of the four lowest scores were recorded for organisations with medium (20,000-80,000) or large (>80,000) memberships. Of the nine organisations with a score above the average (30%), 5 were small, 2 were medium-sized and 2 were large.

Professional bodies achieving a MES Complete above the average score (30%).

MES Complete	Number of measures for which data was provided	Size (by number of members)
63%	26	5000-10,000
47%	27	10,000-20,000
42%	20	10,000-20,000
40%	16	<5000
38%	16	10,000-20,000
37%	16	200,000-300,000
36%	16	>400,000
35%	20	40,000-60,000
35%	15	20,000-40,000

So the size of a professional body is not necessarily indicative of its ability to succeed, either in engaging with individuals or in measuring endeavours to do so. In this study it is the smaller professional bodies that are currently making better headway.

Clearly there is work to be done by all: to put in place the processes and systems required to monitor and measure engagement in as many ways possible and to develop initiatives and activities that increase the levels of member engagement as defined by each measure.

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Methodology and participant profile

Methodology and participant profile

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This is our second sector-specific member engagement survey; the first was conducted in 2013. This year, thirty-six organisations took part between February and April 2015.

Data collection
The survey was available online as a questionnaire and was structured in two parts. The first part consisted of a mix of closed and open questions and covered a range of topics related to member engagement. The second part enabled input of data against a set of pre-defined measures, for use in the scoring model and to enable further insight into particular areas of questioning.

The survey was promoted online, in person and via MemCom communications. Organisations from the professional body sector were invited directly and provided with details to allow them to collate the required data in advance and access the survey online to submit that data.

Not all participants were able to provide information or data for all parts of the questionnaire, nor for all measures used in the scoring model. The sample size for charts and figures throughout this report therefore varies.
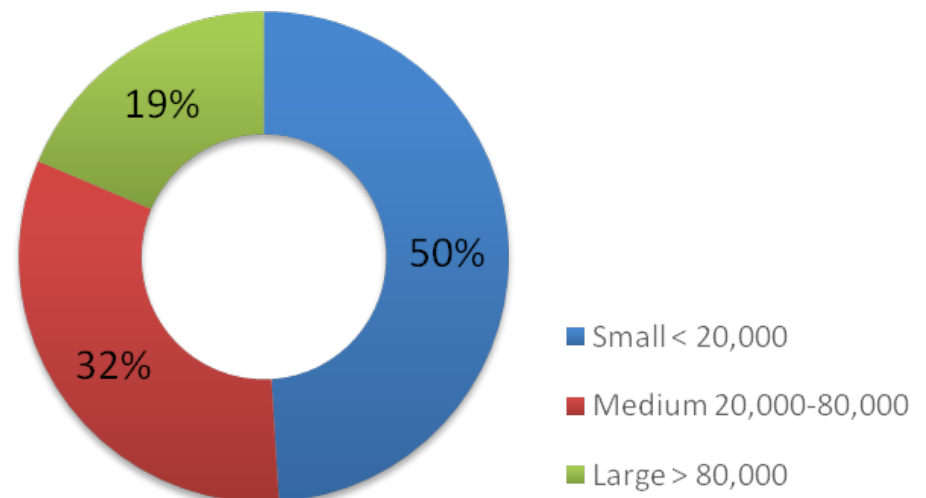
Scoring model
We defined 28 measures of engagement that were described to participants in the second part of the online survey. The 28 measures were grouped into five sections covering: volunteering; website & communications; social media; events & member surveys; retention & satisfaction and recommendation.

Organisations were asked to provide data for as many measures as possible. Each measure allowed input of data for the 'whole membership', for 'UK members' and for 'international members'. We calculated the mean average response for each measure, based on the 'whole membership' data provided.

For each measure, we determined fixed ranges of values - five of them above and five below the mean – and matched them to a scale of scores centred on the mean. The lowest score was 1, the highest score was 11 and 0 (zero) indicated that no data had been provided in response to the question. Thus a response of exactly the mean would give a mid-scale score for that measure; a response above the mean would result in a higher score, and a response below the mean would result in a lower score - all relative to the mean.

For each organisation, we assigned a score for each measure provided to produce the overall Member Engagement Score (MES): the sum of all scores as a proportion of the maximum possible score, expressed as a percentage. Two types of MES were possible: **MES Complete** - based on all 28 measures, and calculated where at least 10 of the 28 measures were provided by the organisation, and **MES Focus** - based on only those measures for which data had been provided.

19%

50%

32%

■ Small < 20,000

■ Medium 20,000-80,000

■ Large > 80,000

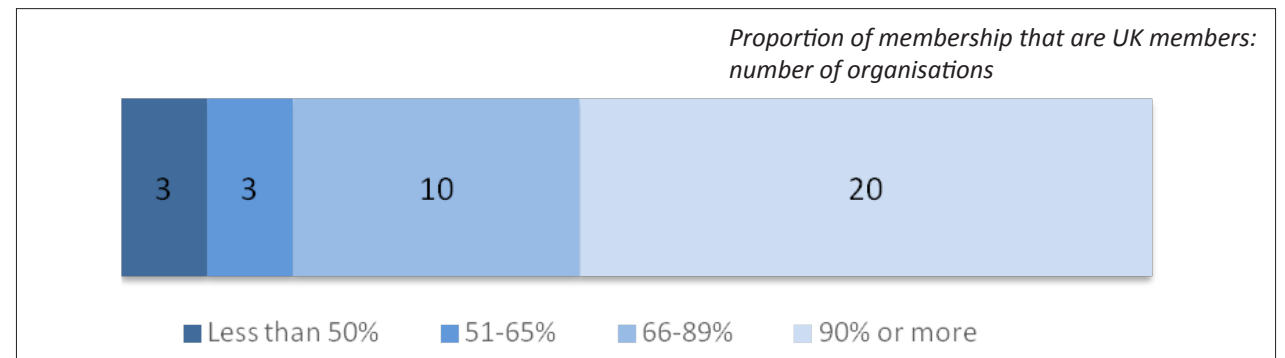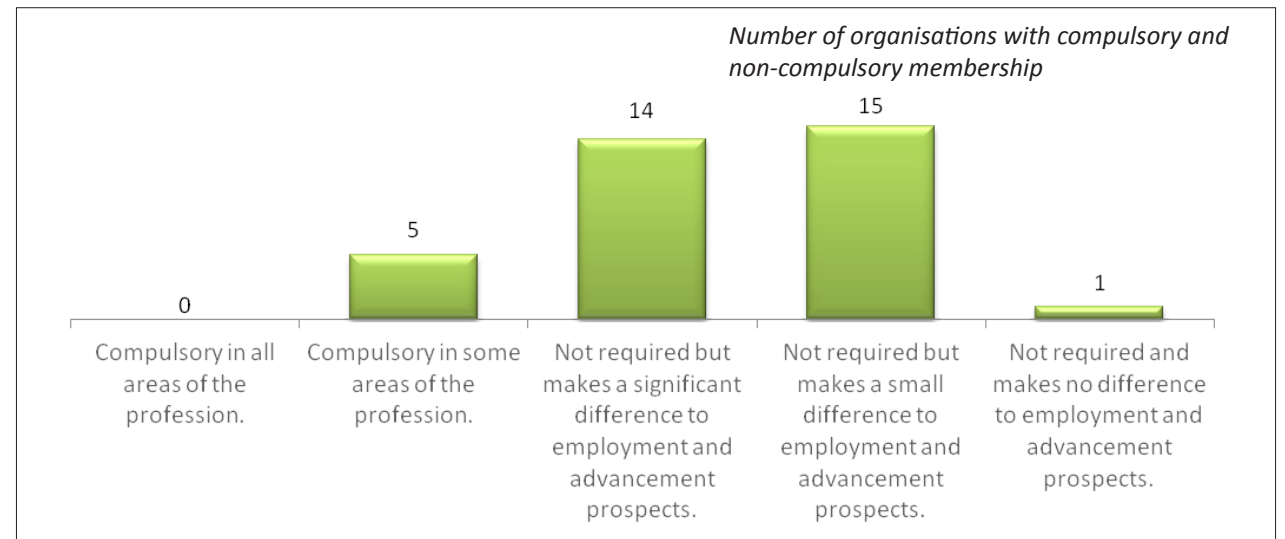*Organisation size (by number of members)*

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Participant profile

The 36 participating organisations represented a range of fields of interest, sizes and types. To enable more effective comparison, we created subgroups of participants based on responses to the questions regarding the size of the organisation by number of members, and the extent to which being a full member is required to work in the professional sector.

Participants were able to select the most appropriate response to the latter question from a list, as follows:

Full membership of our organisation is....

compulsory in all areas of the profession;

compulsory in some areas of the profession;

not required but makes a significant difference to employment and advancement prospects;

not required but makes a small difference to employment and advancement prospects or

not required and makes no difference to employment and advancement prospects.

We also allocated a number of the organisations to one of three groups, based on their professional field of interest. (This assignation was our own, and was not based on responses to a survey question.)
The groups were:
Accounting & Finance (5 organisations),
Healthcare (12 organisations) and
Scientific (7 organisations).

Twenty organisations had a membership comprising 90% or more UK members. For 10 organisations, UK members made up between 66% and 89% of the whole membership. Some organisations had a much higher proportion of international members: 3 had 51% - 65% UK members and 3 had less than 50% UK members.

Number of organisations with compulsory and non-compulsory membership

Proportion of membership that are UK members: number of organisations

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Findings

Defining member engagement

At the time of the survey, 13 of the 36 organisations (36%) were defining member engagement. This is a similar proportion to that seen in the 2013 study, when 9 of the 29 participants had a formal definition.

Looking at the responses by subgroup, only 2 of the 12 organisations in the Healthcare group have a definition. Additionally, small-sized organisations were less likely to define engagement: 13 out of 17 organisations did not.

What interpretations are applied by those who are defining engagement? We noted that many of the definitions related directly to the types of activities being actively monitored or measured, and to those for which the statistics are easily accessible: seven organisations used a scoring model or identified a number of measures of activity (from just a few, to many) that together made up their definition of engagement.

> **We currently define member engagement by monitoring membership retention, recruitment and attendance at national events.**
>
> *Small organisation, 98% UK membership, membership not required but makes a significant difference to employment and advancement prospects.*

> **Monitor how many members open and click through on the member newsletter. Attend events. Access the member secure area. Access the CPD tool.**
>
> *Medium-sized organisation, 79% UK membership, membership not required but makes a small difference to employment and advancement prospects.*

Measurable actions described included both transactional and emotional measures, where transactional measures are those that involve minimum active participation from the individual (where they are generally taking something from the organisation) and emotional measures are those that require maximum participation and commitment from the individual (where they are giving to the organisation) such as volunteering.

> **Various measures in place (e.g. events attended, % renewals) ... Also using industry models to measure engagement and benchmarking against other societies. Also measure 'things members get from us', 'things members do for us'...)**
>
> *Medium-sized organisation, 77% UK membership, membership not required but makes a small difference to employment and advancement prospects.*

Four organisations described purely transactional measures and 2 mentioned purely emotional measures. Three mentioned use of both transactional and emotional measures used to inform their definitions. Thus the trend identified in the 2013 report, of organisations moving away from purely transactional measures, still holds true. We discuss measuring engagement in more detail later in the report.

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Why engage – what are the benefits?

Assessment and understanding of the emotional commitment individuals have to their organisation and of individuals' satisfaction with the level of interaction - whatever that may be for them - is becoming increasingly important.

❝ *Engagement is currently defined [as] the level of interaction members have with the organisation. But this doesn't provide any view of the value of that interaction or any understanding of whether or not those not interacting feel engaged with the organisation.*

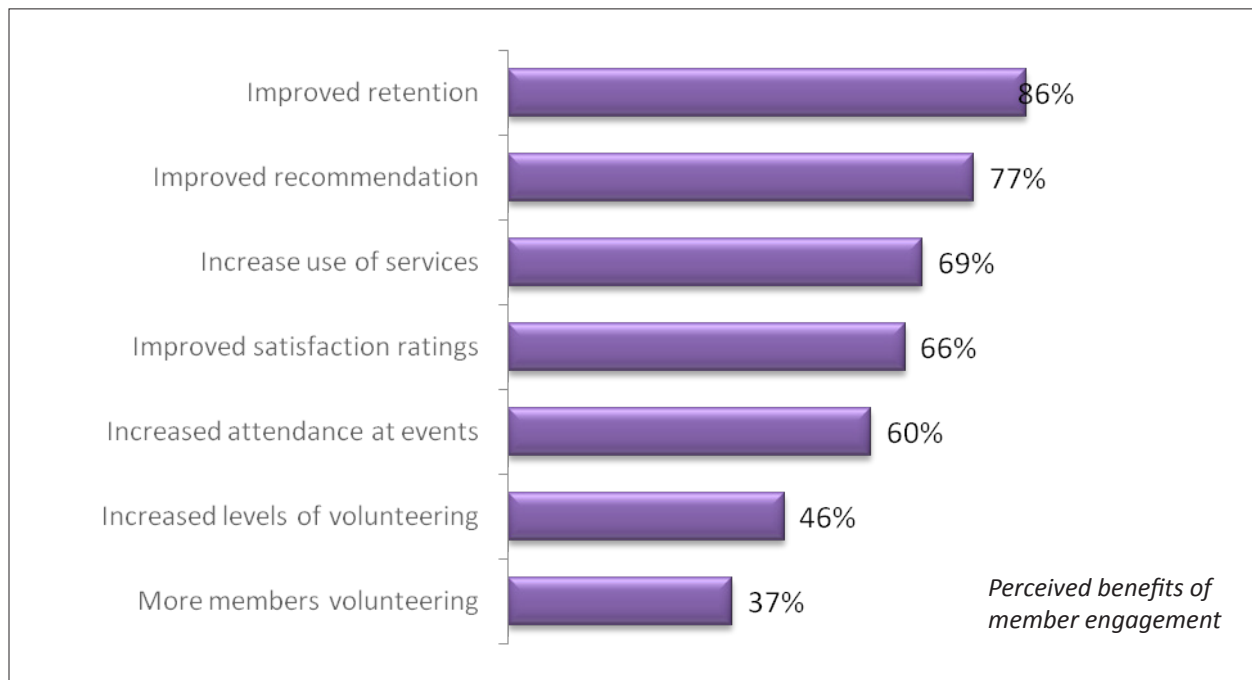*Large organisation, 84% UK membership, membership compulsory in some areas of the profession.*

Even though many organisations are not formally defining engagement at present, there is clear recognition of the benefits that improved engagement might bring.

From a given list, the top two benefits were seen to be improved retention (by 30 organisations) and improved recommendation (by 27 organisations) again demonstrating the move away from a purely transactional focus. Looking at variation by subgroup, all organisations in the Accounting & Finance group selected increased attendance at events as a key benefit, whereas only 4 of the 5 selected improved retention or improved recommendation. All organisations in the Scientific group* selected increased use of services, with fewer selecting the top two chosen benefits. (*6 of the 7 in the group answered this question.)

A number of other benefits were identified including:
• Improved student progression
• Meeting strategic goals
• Improved recruitment and diversification of the membership
• More targeted meetings conferences and events

Perceived benefit	%
Improved retention	86%
Improved recommendation	77%
Increase use of services	69%
Improved satisfaction ratings	66%
Increased attendance at events	60%
Increased levels of volunteering	46%
More members volunteering	37%

Perceived benefits of member engagement

Priorities – who and what matters most?

Nine organisations had no member engagement priorities at the time of the survey. Seven of these fell in a *Membership is not required* category and 5 were small-sized. Additionally, 17 organisations indicated that they had not set priorities or targets for specific membership types.

Those who did have priorities were asked to describe their top three. There were a number of identifiable themes in the responses, with many focused on resources or services for the membership. The most frequently mentioned priority (17 mentions) related to the increased use of member benefits and services as a whole, or of a specific type of service.
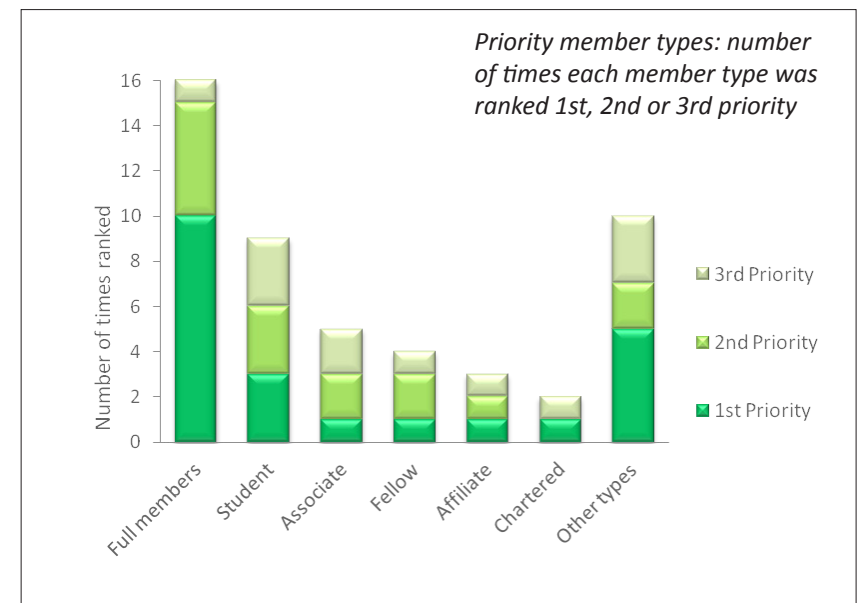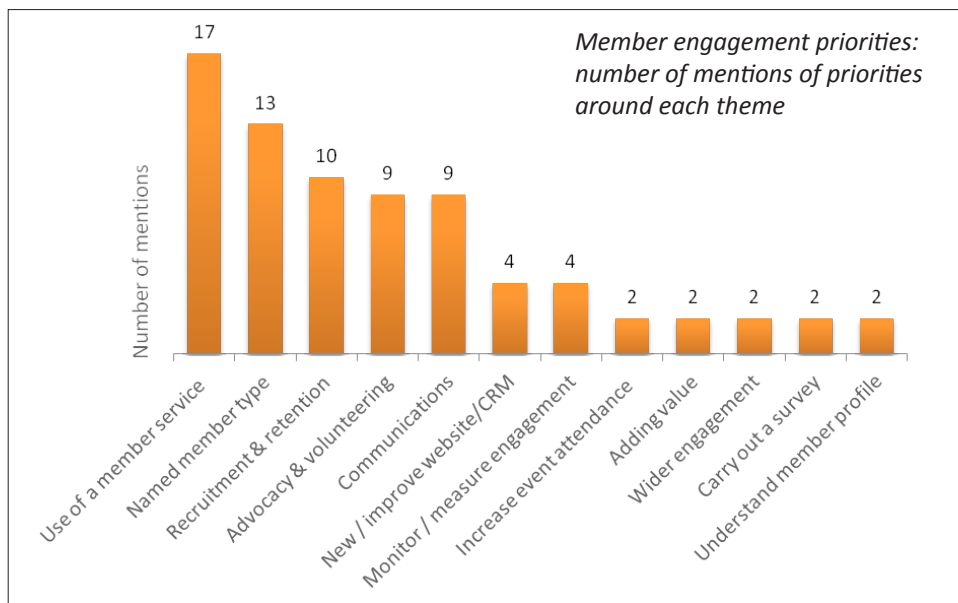
Notably, among those who had set priorities, were 13 mentions of an activity or a focus on particular member types or target demographics, plus 2 further mentions of understanding the member profile.

Other themes in the responses included: recruitment and retention activities, volunteering or advocacy activities, member communications, CRM or website development and measuring or monitoring engagement.

The strategic focus on improving the member offer correlates with the perception that the key benefits of member engagement are improvements in retention, recommendation and use of services.

Priority member types

Full Members were ranked in the top 3 by priority 16 times: ranked 1st priority by 10 organisations, and 2nd or 3rd priority by a further 6 organisations. Student members were included in the ranking by 9 organisations, and Associates were included by 5 organisations. Five 'Other types' of members were given 1st priority: these were specified as 'all', 'incorporate', 'newly qualified', 'recent graduate' and 'technician member'.
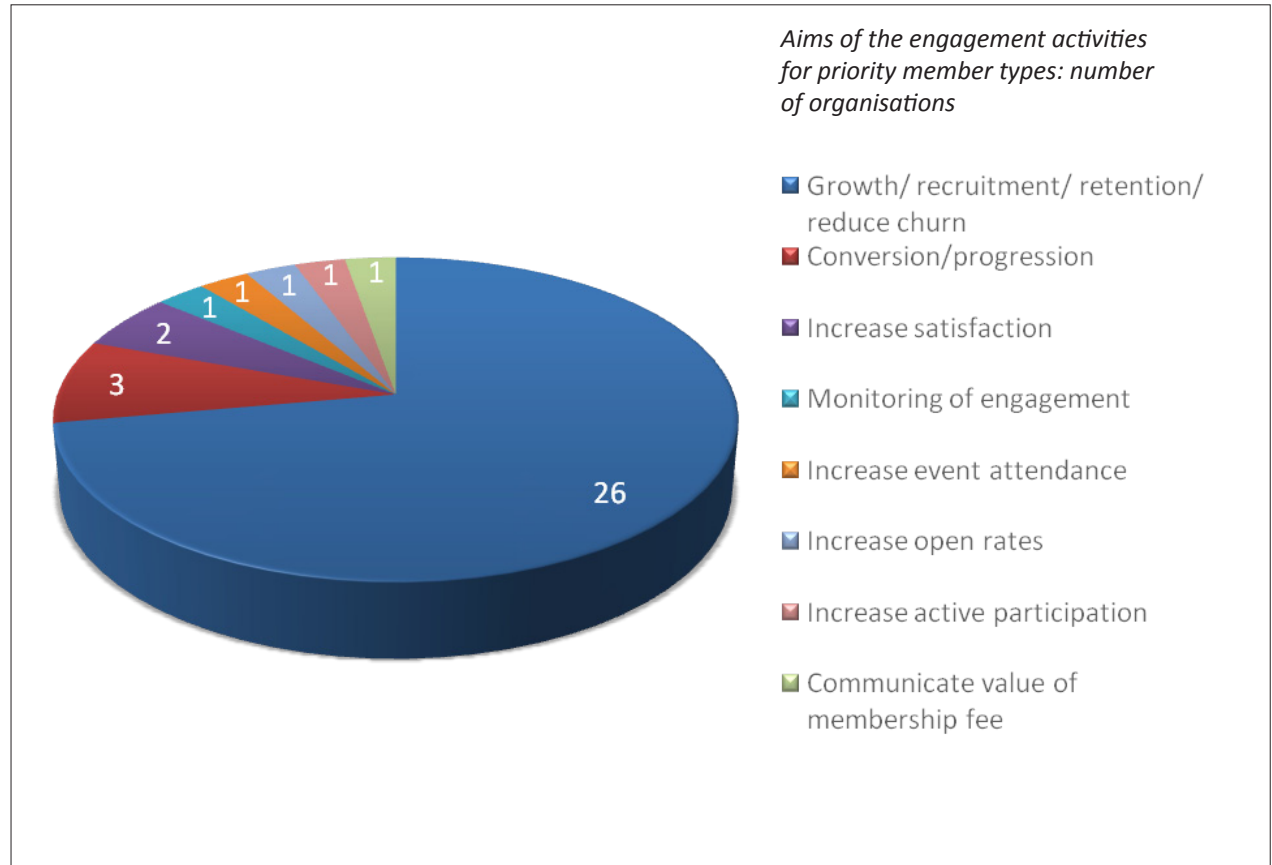

Member engagement priorities: number of mentions of priorities around each theme

Priority member types: number of times each member type was ranked 1st, 2nd or 3rd priority

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Aims

The aims set for engagement activities for priority member types related, in the main, to stabilising or increasing membership numbers, through growth, recruitment, retention or reducing churn. Aims falling into this theme were given for 26 of the stated priorities. Additionally, aims related to member conversion/ progression were mentioned 3 times.

Targeting of activitiy - specific activities for specific member (or non-member) types - is becoming increasingly important. The aims of these activities are mainly focused on membership numbers, with very few focused on member satisfaction and value.

Aims of the engagement activities for priority member types: number of organisations

- Growth/ recruitment/ retention/ reduce churn
- Conversion/progression
- Increase satisfaction
- Monitoring of engagement
- Increase event attendance
- Increase open rates
- Increase active participation
- Communicate value of membership fee

Putting engagement into practice – new initiatives

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The shift of strategic focus away from traditional membership functions and towards new engagement activities is evident: 25 organisations were able to outline one or more successful member engagement initiatives from the past 2 years.

A total of 54 new initiatives that have led to an improvement in member engagement were given.

The top three types of initiative, constituting half of those described, were related to member communications (14 mentions), development of a new or improved member benefit (8 mentions) and professional development tools and resources (6 mentions). Other initiatives mentioned more than once centred around recruitment or advocacy activities, provision of careers information or information to support studies, website development, a review of

member services, and reward and recognition of members working on behalf of the organisation.

There were single mentions of initiatives in the following areas: campaigning, collaboration, administration of fees, internal communications, measuring and monitoring, member progression and organisation visibility/awareness.

Just under a third of the initiatives were developed for all membership types, however the remaining two thirds were targeted to named audiences – some being member types and some being potential members or non-members. In 8 cases, a single initiative was aimed at two different audience types. Named audiences were given as:

- particular membership grades (23%)
- other target groups of members (for example: out of work members, committee members) (18%)
- non-members/potential members (9%)
- other specific audiences such as the public, school/ university students, industry contacts (10%)

Successful initiatives from the past 2 years: number of organisations

Category	Value
Member communications	14
Member benefit - new or improved	8
Professional development	6
Recruitment	5
Advocacy	4
Careers info/studies	3
Website development	3
Member services review	2
Reward and recognition	2

Member communications success story
Small organisation, 96% UK members, membership not required but makes a significant difference to employment and advancement prospects

Initiative: Targeted emails to members
Activity: Surveys and member renewals
Audience: All members

Improvement: Achieved 25% average response
                        rate to surveys

Member benefit success story
*Large organisation, 80% UK members
Membership compulsory in some areas of the profession*
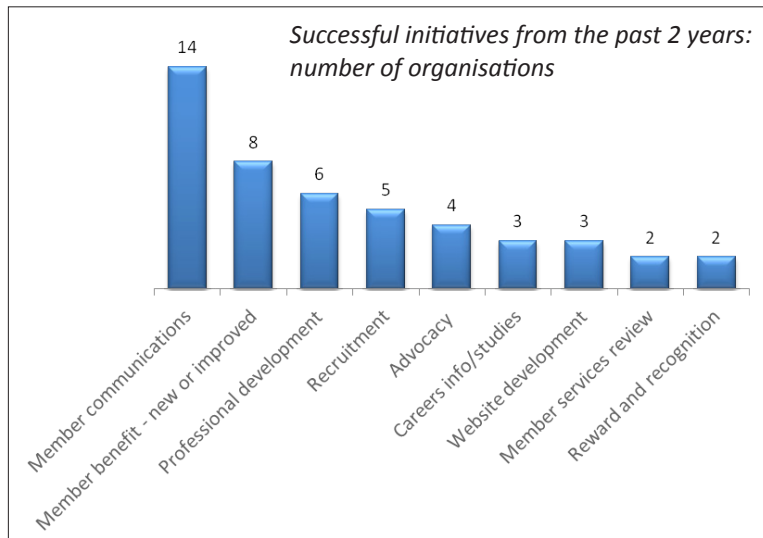
Initiative: Regional events
Activity: Holding events for CPD etc at low cost
                   locally
Audience: SMEs in the regions

Improvement: Attendance has grown by 20%

Professional development success story
*Medium-sized organisation, 72% UK members
Membership not required but makes a small difference to employment and advancement prospects*

Initiative: Revised qualifications at L4 and L6
Activity: Moving to modular and flexible
                   approach to awards
Audience: Learners/early workers

Improvement: 8% increase in volume of
                        assessments Mar 14 to Mar 15

Advocacy and volunteering

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In the 2013 study, advocacy was cited as the third highest benefit of member engagement, after retention/recruitment and representation/responsiveness. Nineteen of the 29 organisations taking part in 2013 provided information about member volunteers or supporters and 21 gave specific examples of advocacy initiatives.

In this study, improved recommendation is still perceived as a significant benefit, ranked second after improved retention. Fourteen organisations outlined one or more initiatives from the past 2 years - aside from previously mentioned engagement initiatives - that had improved advocacy and/or volunteering. Of those 14, 9 had introduced both advocacy and volunteering initiatives, 3 only volunteering and 2 only advocacy: a total of 12 advocacy and 11 volunteering initiatives were described.

Notably, 23 organisations stated that they had advocacy and/or volunteering initiatives planned for the next 12 months. Of these, 7 had both advocacy and volunteering initiatives planned, 6 planned to introduce only volunteering and 7 planned to introduce only advocacy: a total of 14 advocacy initiatives and 13 volunteering initiatives.

Target audiences for these initiatives, past and future, were varied with a slight tendency for advocacy initiatives to be focused on all members, and volunteering initiatives to be focused on subgroups of members with particular characteristics (for example, "young professionals under the age of 35").

Advocacy success story
*Large organisation, 26% UK members,
Membership compulsory in some areas of the profession*

Activity: Tell my story - opportunity for members to be profiled in publications and/or promotional materials. Presentations at schools. Offer internships / work placements

Audience: Full members at present

Improvement: Significant take up amongst our panel members and will be extended to wider membership once pilot stage has been reviewed

Advocacy in the next 12 months
*Small organisation, 60% UK members
Membership not required but makes a significant to employment and advancement prospects*

Activity: Associate Champion Scheme to promote Associate membership

Audience: Overseas specialists without the [named] qualification

Volunteering success story
*Small organisation, 79% UK members
Membership not required but makes a small difference to employment and advancement prospects*

Activity: Local Ambassador scheme on university campuses where lecturers publicise events and membership benefits to students

Audience: Students

Improvement: Significant growth in this category

Volunteering in the next 12 months
*Large organisation, 90% UK members
Membership not required but makes a small difference to employment and advancement prospects*

Activity: New code of conduct agreement to help Volunteers and [organisation] understand priorities and manage expectations

Audience: All Volunteers and all staff coordinating volunteers

There were two measures of engagement in the survey that related to volunteers working locally or centrally for the organisation. Around two thirds of the organisations providing data for the measures were able to quantify the proportion of members working locally or centrally as volunteers, demonstrating that organisations are investing resource in monitoring their volunteer members. The proportion of members acting locally or centrally as volunteers (in 2014) ranged from 1% to 16% with a mean of 3.8%. The two organisations with 10% or more member volunteers working locally were both small, with non-compulsory membership. Of the two organisations with 10% or more member volunteers working centrally, one was small with non-compulsory membership (and was the same organisation that also had a high proportion of local volunteers) and one was medium-sized with non-compulsory membership.

The desire for improved recommendation is exemplified by an increasing focus on advocacy and volunteering initiatives.

Measuring and monitoring

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We have already reported that 13 of the 36 organisations that took part in this study defined member engagement.   In a separate line of questioning, 4 organisations described a 'headline member engagement score': all 4 also had formal definitions. Two used a net promoter score model, one used measures of behavioural and attitudinal factors and one used the results of an annual satisfaction survey.

Of the remaining 32 organisations not describing a headline score, 8 stated that they were able to quantify their levels of engagement. Five of the eight also had formal definitions of engagement. Seven of the eight organisations measured engagement by members' use of services or participation in activities. The remaining organisation described a model that involved valuing levels of engagement:

> **We look at the interactions that we can measure for each member; we then allocate an engagement value for each interaction. This allows us to distinguish between low value interactions such as changing member details and high value interactions such as volunteering or being a member of a committee.**
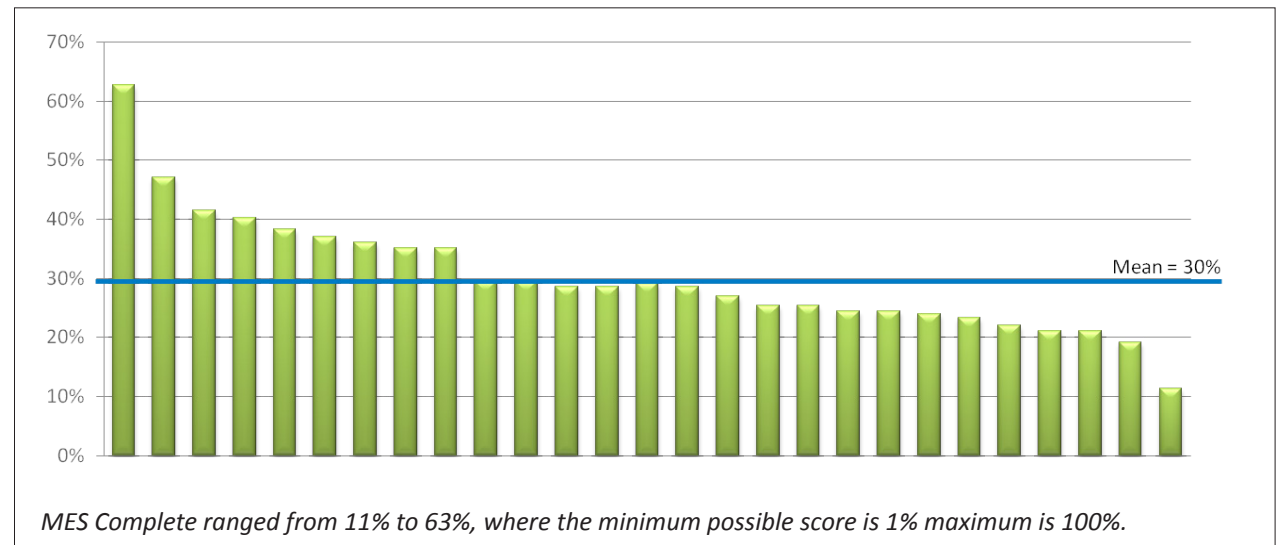>
> *Large organisation, 84% UK membership, membership compulsory in some areas of the profession.*

Of the 12 organisations able to score or quantify their levels of engagement, 5 were *quite satisfied* with the levels they achieved, 4 were *neither satisfied nor dissatisfied* and 3 were *quite dissatisfied.* (The five-point scale ranged from *very dissatisfied* to *very satisfied*.) These organisations represented a range of types with no particular trend observed.

The steps towards having a formal headline score - and being able to formally define engagement - appear to involve first being able to quantify engagement, and then being able to use both transactional and emotional measures of engagement in that quantification.

Member Engagement Scores
33 organisations participating in the survey were able to provide data for some (or many) of the 28 measures defined in our scoring model. Of these, 27 provided data for at least 10 measures, enabling calculation of MES Complete – a score based on all 28 measures to enable benchmarking between all participants. MES Focus was calculated for all 33 organisations – a score based only on the measures for which data had been provided, thus enabling an organisation to track their own progress over time based on only the measures they use.

MES Complete ranged from 11% to 63%, where the minimum possible score is 1% maximum is 100%.

MES Complete   Mean = 30%   Median = 29%   Mode = 29%

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We also report here the range of MES Focus achieved by the 33 organisations: the range of MES Focus was 32% to 94%. The mean average MES Focus was 55%. Note that caution must be applied when interpreting this result. The minimum and maximum possible MES Focus are 1% and 100% however this score is tailored to each organisation and based only on the measures for which data was provided. (For example, an organisation with data for many measures, all significantly below the mean would achieve a very low score. Conversely, an organisation providing data for just one or two measures, significantly above the mean, would achieve a very high score.) The intended use of the Focus score is for individual organisations to monitor progress on the set of measures that they are using.

We observed some trends in the types of measure for which organisations were more or less able to provide data, giving further insight into the ways in which organisations are currently measuring engagement.
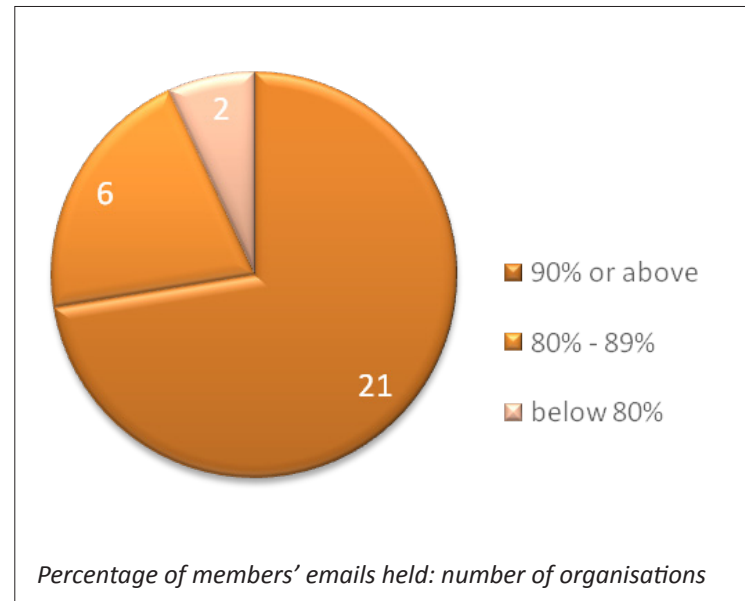
Member retention

Almost all participants (30 of 33) were able to offer data related to member retention, correlating with the previous observation that one of the key perceived benefits - and one of the key priorities for engagement - focus on member retention. Organisations reported overall member retention in the last 12 months (not including those lapsing due to retirement, death or ceasing to be students) to be between 65% and 99% of their members, with the mean being 88% member retention.

Communications

Twenty or more of the thirty-three organisations were able to provide data for a number of different measures related to member email communications, however just less than half of the organisations provided data related to use of the members' area of their website.

Four organisations were unable to provide data regarding the number of members' emails held; 21 of the other 29 organisations had 90% or more of their members' emails. The overall mean was 90%, compared to the 2013 study where the overall mean was 70%.

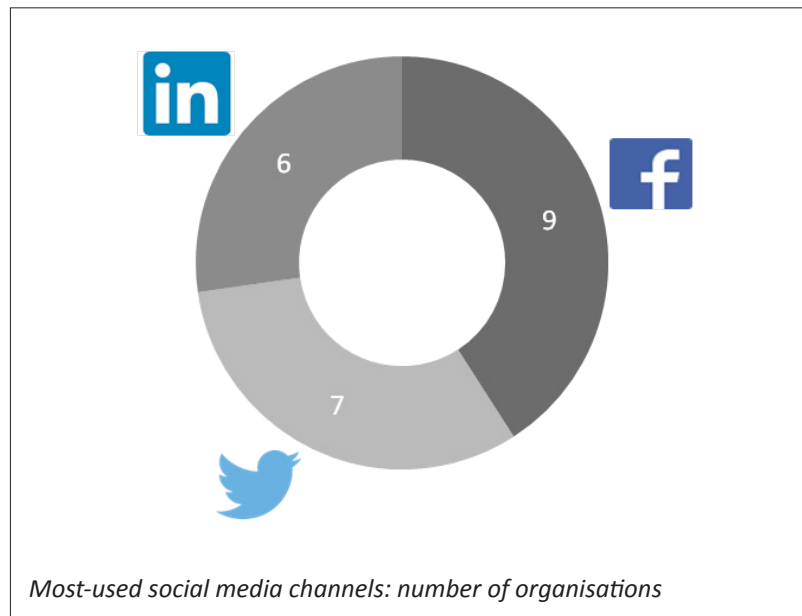*Percentage of members' emails held: number of organisations*

There was general agreement that more electronic communications than print had been used in recent years when communicating with members, and only 1 organisation agreed that the use of print would increase over the next few years (11 neither agreed nor disagreed, 22 disagreed/disagreed strongly).

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Social Media

Measures relating to participation and contribution to the organisations social media activity (members in Facebook or LinkedIn groups, using online forums, following Twitter) appeared to be the most difficult to quantify: the number of organisations able to provide data for these measures ranged from 15 down to just 7.

Similar numbers of organisations reported that the social media channel most-used by members was Facebook, Twitter or LinkedIn. There were also a number of comments that organisations were unable to distinguish between member and non-member users; this may also be a contributory factor to the lack of data provided for this section of measures, compared to other sections.

Most-used social media channels: number of organisations

Events

Data related to participation in events of various types was provided by between 10 and 17 organisations. This range may reflect the variation in types of events that organisations offer, from local to national, face-to-face and online. The percentage of members participating regularly in (at least 1 in 10) branch/local/regional events ranged from 2% to 36%, with a mean of 15%. Seventeen organisations provided data for this measure.

The 2013 study revealed that event attendance tended to be higher where membership was neither compulsory nor made a significant difference to employment and advancement prospects. In this study, the top three highest levels of event attendance (across a range of measures relating to different types of events) were achieved by small-sized organisations, two in the Healthcare group, one Scientific, all with non-compulsory membership that makes a small (2) or significant (1) difference to employment and advancement prospects. The proportion of UK members in the top two organisations was 97% and 99%. The third had a UK membership of 70%. The levels of attendance achieved by these three organisations were, overall, significantly higher than the majority.

Nine organisations provided data related to use of webinars; the average percentage of members participating in webinars during 2014 ranged from 1% to 8%, with a mean of 4%.

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Recommendation and Net Promoter Scoring

Sixteen organisations were able to provide recommendation data, that is, the proportion of members saying they would be quite likely, likely or very likely to recommend membership in the organisation's latest member survey. Responses ranged from 14% to 97%, with a mean of 62%. In the 2013 study, 12 organisations were able to provide this data and the mean response was 77%.

Eleven organisations gave a Net Promoter Score. The NPS ranged from -42 to +42. In the previous study, six organisations provided Net Promoter Scores ranging from -13 to +29.
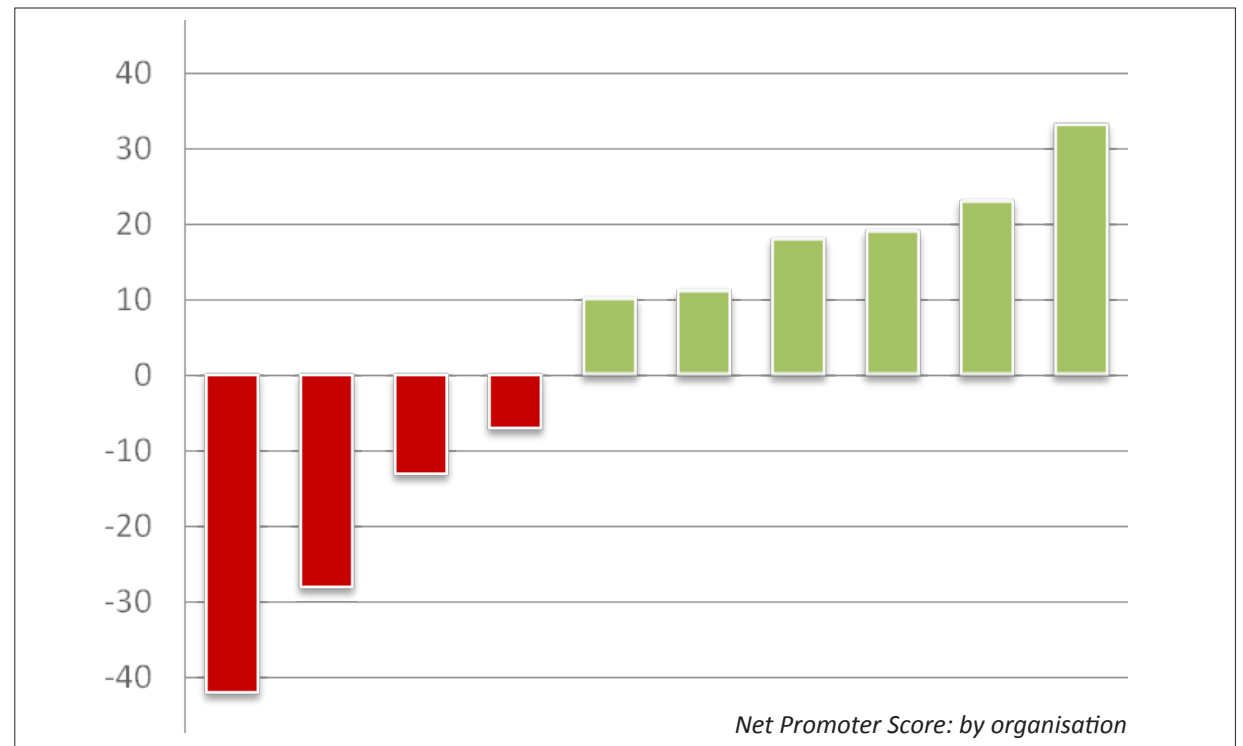
The Net Promoter Score is calculated as the difference between the percentage of Promoters and the percentage of Detractors, and is expressed as an absolute number between -100 and +100.

Organisations with negative NPS were either small (2) or medium-sized (2). Three had non-compulsory membership; for one membership was compulsory in some areas of the profession. One was from the Healthcare group, one from the Scientific group and two others.

Six of the seven organisations with positive NPS were small sized with non-compulsory membership. One was medium sized with membership compulsory in some areas of the profession. They represented a range of professional fields of interest (2 in the Healthcare group, 2 in the Accounting & Finance group, 3 others).

Transactional engagement is measured by more organisations at the current time than emotional engagement: more organisations were able to provide data for opening the e-bulletin, for example, than could provide a Net Promoter Score or data related to member satisfaction. However the number of organisations able to quantify recommendation by members was relatively higher.

This may be linked to the function of organisations' member management/CRM systems and the availability of appropriate software for monitoring and tracking member activity.

Net Promoter Score: by organisation

22   Next steps

Next steps

What we could do for you

Organisations participating in the 2015 Member Engagement Survey receive a copy of this report along with detail of their Member Engagement Scores. The following are also available:

Opportunities for 2015 survey participants:

- Individual, bespoke reports comparing your organisation with others in a given subgroup or with 5+ others of your choice (anonymously)

- Meeting with key staff to discuss the report and help align your strategies and plans with the findings

Opportunities for others:

- Your Member Engagement Score – calculated and compared with the survey results

- Review of your member engagement strategies and plans in line with the key findings of the report

There may be other ways we can help with your member engagement strategies or plans: just let us know!

(Note: a cost applies to all above opportunities)

What you could do for us

We'd very much like some feedback. How useful was this report to you? What discussions has it provoked between you and your colleagues? How might the results inform your strategies and plans? Has it given you new ideas or prompted a new area of thinking?

We'd like to hear from you: please call or email

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Next Member Engagement Survey 2016/17

About us

Experience-driven insight, ideas and strategic solutions for membership organisations

Over a hundred professional bodies and membership organisations have benefitted from our unrivalled depth and breadth of research and marketing experience over the last twelve years

Our consultancy services and support - focused on the membership sector - include:

- Membership and stakeholder research
- Member recruitment planning
- Engagement strategies and plans
- Research and development of new member offers
- Lapsed member re-activation programmes
- Marketing and communications audits, strategies and plans
- Brand awareness and development
- Sales office function providing sponsorship and sales for events and publications
- Publishing support

Next time you are looking for some fresh thinking please get in touch

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