

Results from the 2018 Membership Survey

By E. Lander Medlin

First and foremost, many thanks to those members who found time to respond to APPA's membership survey this past May. Your feedback was immensely valuable and has served as the cornerstone for APPA's new Strategic Plan, *Preparing for Every Future*, focused on the aligning vision of continuous learning and is further reinforcing our brand strengths of professional development and community. (For more information, please read President Don Guckert's profile and the detailed Strategic Plan in this issue and on the APPA website.)

The membership research study/survey was conducted by Stratton Media Strategies LLC, electronically by email invitation and password protected link to the survey site. The email invitation was

sent to all primary institutional representatives and a random sample of secondary contacts at member institutions. We were pleased to receive a 9% rate of response from a random APPA member institution population pool totaling 9,894. Responses were calculated at the 95% confidence level with a margin of error of +/- 3.2% (well within the acceptable range of 95% +/- 5%).

THE HALLMARKS OF APPA'S BRAND

"The one thing" members collectively said they value most or that APPA could do/provide was, first, professional development in all its forms (educational training, information and best practices, webinars, peer-to-peer learning); and second, professional networking and relationships. These two areas – *enhancing professional development opportunities and cultivating community* – represent the hallmarks of APPA's brand.

Correspondingly, we were extremely pleased that 94% of members across all job roles say the value they receive from APPA in terms of services/benefits versus the cost of dues meets or exceeds their expectations. In addition, 91% of our Primary Representatives would likely recommend APPA to a colleague or a friend. Finally, the value of APPA membership and engagement leads that of all other associations two to one (2:1).



PARSING THE RESPONSES

+ Of the 18 total survey questions, the last eight addressed respondents' demographic profiles, and provided equally rich information on the changing face of our membership base.

+ The first two questions addressed the value of and participation in APPA's programs. Clearly, professional development and relationship-building opportunities across all of APPA, its regions, and chapters were key among respondents. However, information on current industry issues, emerging trends, and current or best practices are the most highly prized. APPA's programs were ranked valuable or extremely valuable (in the high 70th or 80th percentile). The issue for us to explore further and improve upon is that of participation/use.

After dissecting your responses, it is clear that more professional development and leadership training opportunities are needed locally (institutional and chapter deliveries in particular), along with ramping up our focus on delivering more webinars, online books, and associated learning platforms. Hence, more learning at your time and place of choice!

No matter what the job role or function, the top challenges and issues our members face in order of importance or need were:

- Aging infrastructure
- Budget issues
- Recruiting and retaining talent
- Expanding workload and expectations
- Leveraging and adapting new technologies
- Leadership development of staff

And, from your vantage point, the top factors that are shaping the future for our members were:

- Modernization of aging infrastructure (or escalating deferred maintenance)
- Budget issues/pressures
- Efficient and effective use of space
- Workforce skills gap and recruitment of talent
- Keeping up with technology solutions
- Succession planning and succession management

In addressing the top challenges, issues, and factors shaping the future, we will focus on these topic areas to drive future content development and utilize different delivery systems (e.g., targeted, topical email communicues; enhanced website searchability; online webinars and continuous learning platforms; along with increased local and regional deliveries). Hence, more content at your time and place of choice and

content that is appropriately repurposed and/or formalized in an enhanced content management system for easier retrieval.

+ The demographic profile data was just as compelling. We had a representative distribution by job role and age with GenXers cresting 50% for the first time. What was eye opening was "prior member type" (i.e., before taking a job in educational facilities management), with 47% coming from the private business sector and 16% from college or vocational education schools. Additionally, although "years of experience in the field" was a wide range, it was telling that 18% have only been in the field for 1-5 years. Therefore, those new to the field of educational facilities management will be an important target audience for us to focus information and programming. Responses by institutional type was 76% public and 24% private with institutional Carnegie Classifications noted as 50% Research Universities, 21% Comprehensive/Doctoral, 8% Community Colleges, and 13% small Liberal Arts institutions. This is a fairly standard distribution for past surveys.

PREPARING FOR EVERY FUTURE

As we move forward, a few noteworthy recommendations are:

- Refocus and repurpose content on members' most challenging issues and utilize different delivery systems to meet that need in a timely manner.
- Add greater focus on those less experienced or new to the field of educational facilities management.
- Develop a more effective marketing strategy that specifically addresses and/or targets members' needs by role or function.
- Use social media to drive conversations on important topics.
- Update supporting technology infrastructure (e.g., from website and content management system upgrades to online community and enhanced communications tools).

Again, our sincerest thanks for your willingness to provide such important and timely feedback. We are excited about the prospects for the future and the new Strategic Plan's aligning vision of continuous learning. Make APPA your "go to resource" as you *prepare for every future.* ☺

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