



Membership Survey Results Announced!

September 23, 2008

Prize winners...

As promised, the winners of the drawing for a few PRIZES for survey participants are:

WINE - **Lance Downs**, Advanced Remediation; **Richard Blackmun**, Black & Veatch; **Neil Fernando**, Emerio Design; and **Javier Moncada**, Berger/ABAM Engineers

DINNER - **Nicole Tangvald**, PBS Engineering + Environmental

Congratulations! Please contact mwebber@acecOregon.org or call (503) 292-2348 to claim your prize.

Now for the survey results...

In May, the board of directors launched a comprehensive membership survey designed to help ensure that the association is heading in the right direction and meeting the needs of its members.

In addition to the electronic survey, several board members conducted interviews with a number of member firms to further assess the needs of members. Prior to launching the survey, staff, board members and the consulting team also reviewed innovative programs developed by other ACEC member organizations and similar associations.

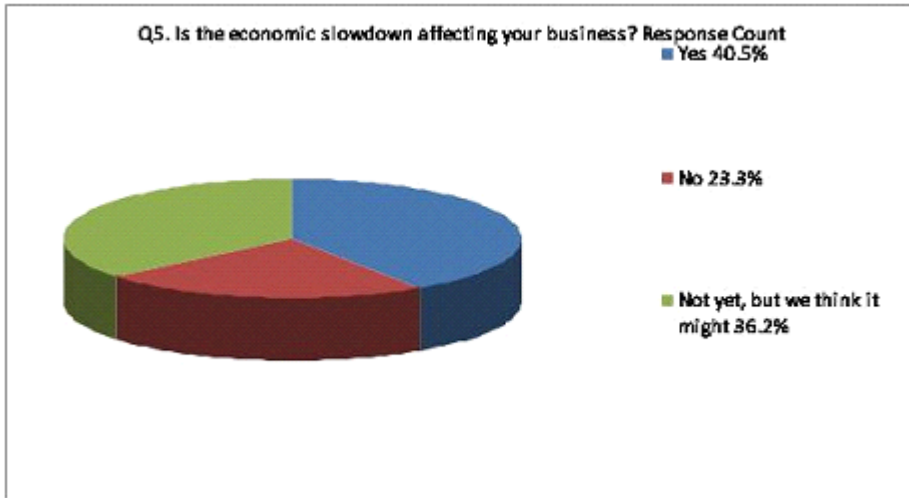
Survey response was tremendous.

- 125 ACEC Oregon members responded
- 508 comments were provided
- Over a dozen interviews were conducted
- Dozens of case studies reviewed

The responses provided some innovative ideas and valuable insight into ways that ACEC Oregon can improve the services it offers to its members. It also provided great insight into the key reasons members belong and how they feel toward the organization. Over half of the respondents have belonged to ACEC Oregon for more than 10 years, which indicates satisfaction with the association. But the survey and interviews also pointed the way for ACEC Oregon to become an even more effective partner for its members.

Economic Outlook/Challenges:

The survey indicated that while most members' businesses are strong (77% expect to meet or exceed their financial goals), many (76.7%) are worried about the effects of the economy on their business.



Four areas of "practice challenges" rose to the top in the survey (these four were virtually tied):

- *Profitability*
- *Liability*
- *Client expectations*
- *Health care*

These same issues came up again later in the survey when asked "What services could ACEC Oregon provide?" *Group health care or group liability insurance pools* were at the top of the list, along with *more networking opportunities, better advocacy to pressure ODOT to improve their process and better marketing/advocacy for the industry.*

Key legislative issues that members want to focus on are: *infrastructure funding (53.6%)* and *health care reform (18.9%)*. *Legal/liability* issues were also high on the list.

What Are ACEC Oregon Assets?

The survey process also indicated that many members want ACEC Oregon to help them better define exactly what it is that the industry provides to clients. Many suggested that a few key terms helped categorize many ACEC Oregon members, including:

- *Experience/expertise*
- *Quality staff/work and "Job Done Right"*
- *Customer service/client relationships*
- *Diversity of services*

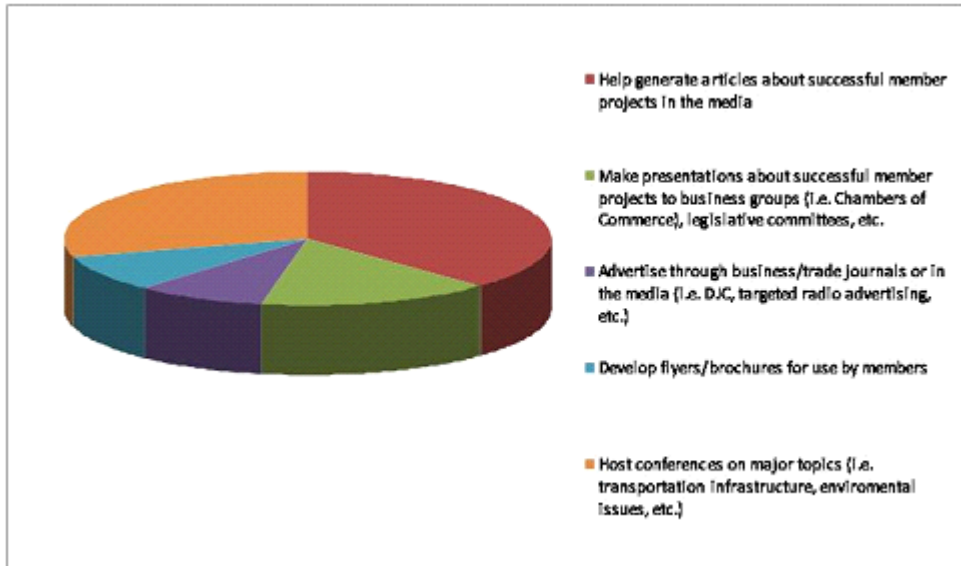
83% listed experience, quality/excellence or diversity of services as one or more of their "Top 3 Strengths." These are the most important "selling points."

Nearly 90% feel that ACEC Oregon should be a "vocal leader for additional state programs/investments in key areas" like infrastructure funding.

84.4% of survey takers indicated that they have had problems "communicating the value of their services to potential customers."

Members feel that ACEC Oregon could help its members drive market share by helping to generate better press/attention/recognition for successful projects, as well as by hosting conferences on major topics.

- *Generate articles about successful projects in the media* 45.3%
- *Host conferences on major topics* 36.2%
- *Make presentations on successful projects* 18.9%



Issues of Concern:

Several issues crept up again and again, including:

- *ODOT and government contracting concerns*
- *The cost of health care (many references)*
- *Need for more transportation and environmental infrastructure funding (a key to profitability)*

What's Next?

Members clearly want to be engaged, and they view ACEC Oregon as a valuable partner in their efforts to develop their business relationships and opportunities.

As a result, the board is considering several programs that spring directly from the membership input and from the research into effective programs run by other similar organizations. These include:

- **Developing and hosting a carefully planned annual policy conference** that will supplement the existing fall conference and "Day at the Capitol." Inviting key administrative and legislative leaders, large potential customers (manufacturers, BPA, utilities, cities, counties, etc.), national experts and the media, could improve both improve the ACEC Oregon brand and create unprecedented networking opportunities. The conference could easily become a "must attend" event for many of our potential clients and partners.
- **Rolling out a steady and coordinated media outreach campaign.** For example, highlighting one significant project per month (12 per year) in local media outlets would not only help improve the image of ACEC Oregon members and the organization, but also help better communicate the value of ACEC Oregon to its members.

- **Engaging in the legislature on issues that are top membership concerns.** A surprise in the survey was the dramatic concern over health care costs. The main concern of members is the huge annual increases that many are paying or expect to pay over the coming years. This is one of the largest contributors to an increased concern about profitability. Infrastructure funding and communicating ODOT contracting concerns were also frequently mentioned and will remain top ACEC Oregon priorities.
- **Providing a program for ACEC Oregon members to "Go Green" or "Support Sustainable Business Practices."** In our research of what other similar organizations are pursuing, it became evident that most are incorporating green elements into their association's outreach plan. Businesses and associations across the spectrum are incorporating sustainable and environmentally conscious products and services into their business plans. Several of our colleagues have already taken the plunge:



They are doing so not only because they feel it's the right thing to do, but also because in many cases it is a smart business decision. ACEC Oregon could help their individual members by developing a program which could take advantage of these trends in the region, and also give their members marketing tools which communicate individual ACEC Oregon members' commitment to these principles.

The program could include:

- Standards that members commit to meet on sustainability or environmental stewardship
- Opportunities for companies to learn more about the design and engineering techniques that advance these standards
- ACEC Oregon green logo that could easily be used by members on websites, publications and vehicles

As mentioned, were many excellent suggestions from the members, and the board is reviewing and prioritizing them to ensure that ACEC Oregon continues to be an effective and responsive organization for all of its members.

Thank you for your participation in this important process! Please don't hesitate to contact us directly if you have any further suggestions or questions.

Sincerely,

Gregg Scholz, President

Mel Sears, Immediate Past President

Alison Davis, Executive Director

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