

BVA online research 2007

A summary of findings and actions

Your BVA,
Your S@Y



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During June/July 2007 we undertook member and non-member research surveys. The following document is a summary of the key findings and our actions against those findings.

Member survey

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- Measure and evaluate member satisfaction
- Determine whether members feel represented/consulted
- Evaluate member rating of:
 - Publications and services
 - Marketing activity
- Inform future member marketing activity
- Allow the BVA to adapt services and activity to suit members expectations and needs

OUR APPROACH

- Appoint research agency Allman Horrocks Consulting (AHC) following tender process
- Web-based survey
 - Maximise response levels within budget
 - Involve as many members as possible
 - Minimise disruption to already busy lives
- Development of draft questionnaire
 - Reviewed by the Members' Services Group (MSG)
- Pilot study with MSG

- Final survey launched June 14th – July 16th 2007

ANALYSIS

- AHC reviewed core data
- AHC development of strategic 'assertions'
- Workshop with cross-section of BVA personnel, including the President
 - Debate assertions
 - Develop into outline action plans
- Draft report issued to project team
- Presentation to MSG
- Development of summary report for members

RESEARCH SAMPLE

- Email invitation to more than 4000 BVA graduated members (that is, all graduated members for whom we have correct emails)
- Publicised on the BVA website
- Advertised in BVA publications
- Press release issued
- 1054 members responded between June 14th – July 16th 2007
- More than 25 per cent response rate from those invited
- Approximately 12.4 per cent of total membership

RESPONDENTS

Sex

- 45 per cent female
- 55 per cent male

Membership category

- 61 per cent full/standard members
- 27 per cent 1 – 8 years post graduation
- 7 per cent retired
- 5 per cent overseas
- 1 per cent other

Length of membership

- 14 per cent 0 – 2 years
- 31 per cent 3 – 10 years
- 35 per cent 10 – 30 years
- 21 per cent 30 years or more

Working category

- 44 per cent small animal
- 5 per cent large animal
- 3 per cent equine
- 20 per cent mixed
- 28 per cent other

Type of respondent

- 13 per cent practice owner
- 15 per cent in partnership
- 36 per cent working for a practice
- 4 per cent in industry
- 4 per cent veterinary teachers

- 2 per cent research workers
- 7 per cent government vets
- 18 per cent other

MEMBERSHIP SATISFACTION

Key findings

- 85 per cent of members would recommend BVA membership to a friend or colleague
- 60 per cent of members believe that subscriptions provide excellent value for money

BVA response

Whilst these statistics generally look positive, they emphasise that we still have some way to go in meeting the objectives detailed in our Strategic Plan 2007 – 2010. This research has been the first step in identifying members' needs and this document identifies how we plan to meet those needs, and work to provide a higher level of membership satisfaction.

KEY ISSUES FACING MEMBERS

Key findings

- 65 per cent work/life balance
 - Time management, excessive working hours, stress management
- 45 per cent career management

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- Career development, new techniques, identifying jobs, mentoring
- 31 per cent management of business
- Business planning, managing finances, remaining competitive, legislation, resource management

BVA response

We already provide a number of services/resources to support members in these areas including:

- Graduate support through the Young Vet Network (YVN) and the graduate support scheme meetings
- Monthly practice management articles in *In Practice*
- Practice standards documentation on the BVA website
- Useful guides such as the recently published *BVA Good practice guide on veterinary medicines*
- Free legal advice on professional and personal issues
- Financial advice through Lloyd & Whyte Ltd
- The re-introduction of a wide range of CPD sessions at our annual Congress

However, we recognise that more can and should be done to help support members on the key issues they face. During 2008, we will be introducing a number of new services including:

- EMS guidance for students and practices
- An online CPD resource, VETS.TV
- An improved online *Veterinary Record* jobs website
- An online locum recruitment site, with free member access and discounted rates for job advertisements

In light of the research during 2008/09, we will also be looking at the following services:

- Guidance notes/support information for practice managers/owners, such as marketing advice
- The introduction of a service providing HR support for small business
- An extension of the YVN material to include guidance for practices when employing a new graduate
- A free CPD event for members of the YVN

DEPRESSION/SUICIDE

Key findings

- 50 per cent do not think enough is done to help with related issues:
 - Suicide, depression, alcohol and drug dependency
- 75 per cent think they are significant problems
- Suggested support required:

- Improve awareness and more open discussion
- Direct support at new graduates
- Stress management programmes/mentoring

BVA response

The BVA was a key contributor in the launch of the new Vetlife website, www.vetlife.org.uk delivered by the Veterinary Benevolent Fund (VBF). The BVA will continue to support the VBF in the promotion of the website and support services.

The BVA's YVN and graduate support scheme meetings have also gone some way to directing support at new graduates and encouraging more open discussion of these issues. The BVA will continue to increase and improve the services offered through the YVN in 2008 and beyond, to form a comprehensive support package for final year students and new graduates.

THE ROLE OF THE BVA

Key findings

- Recognised by more than 80 per cent of members to:
 - Develop policy and strategies to address current issues
 - Promote and support the interests of all members

- Have strong government representation and influence
- Provide services that are valued by members
- Least recognised role, by 66 per cent, is to:
 - Maintain a strong local/regional presence

BVA response

It is clear that the BVA has a wide-ranging role and, with members from all spheres of the veterinary profession. We will ensure we continue to work to represent and meet the needs of all our members.

INFLUENCING POLICY

Key findings

- Only 10.5 per cent indicated that influencing policy was a significant factor in joining the BVA
- Encouraging member participation in policy decisions received lowest rating of BVA processes
- Only 10 per cent involved in the consultation system

BVA response

It is clear from the research that we have some work to do in getting members involved in the policy making process. It is hoped that through improved electronic communications in 2008, we

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will not only be able to raise members' awareness of policy issues and consultations, but also encourage response by making the process more streamlined.

We also aim to encourage greater use of the regional structures – better highlighting how members can feed directly into their local divisions.

MEMBER INVOLVEMENT

Key findings

- 74 per cent involved through keeping abreast of news in BVA publications
- 32 per cent are members of a BVA division
- 20 per cent “not at all involved” with the BVA
- Less than 10 per cent visit the website regularly
- Only 8 per cent attend BVA Congress
 - 5 per cent indicated they attended in 2006

BVA response

Short of keeping abreast of news in BVA publications, the findings highlight the need to increase member involvement with the BVA. The survey response rate indicates a strong willingness to contribute and we need to build on that result – informing members of items of

interest, directing them to the website for more information, making the consultation process easier and communication routes clearer. The introduction of the new database in 2007 and the imminent launch of the new website in spring 2008 should go some way to doing this.

MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS

Key findings

- 60 per cent of members believe that subscriptions provide excellent value for money
- 85 per cent think membership of their territorial BVA division should automatically be included in the BVA membership package
- 85 per cent think BVA members should be offered discounted rates for joining BVA specialist divisions
- 46 per cent think membership of BVA specialist divisions should only be available to BVA members
- Many respondents suggested new membership categories such as:
 - A maternity rate
 - Part-time membership
 - Practice membership

BVA response

The BVA is currently investigating new membership categories, including greater tie-in

with divisional membership, salary-linked membership rates and practice membership packages. Automatic membership of territorial divisions for BVA members was rejected at the July 2007 Council. However, in light of these findings, this and other membership categories, will be considered again during 2008.

It is worth noting that members on maternity leave and those not currently earning from their professional qualification, qualify for a reduced rate. Members should inform the BVA membership team if their situation changes in order to qualify for a different rate. BVA will endeavor to promote better availability of these.

BVA PUBLICATIONS

Key findings

- Positives
 - Most popular reason for joining the BVA
 - Most used/beneficial BVA service
 - Most common means of involvement with the BVA
 - *In Practice* and *The Veterinary Record* are both highly recognised and used
- Opportunities
 - Variable ratings on content and design for the different publications – *In Practice* was

the most highly rated with over 90 per cent of respondents rating it as highly relevant and over 94 per cent rating the content/design excellent or good.

The Veterinary Record and *Off the Record* ratings showed room for improvement.

- Considering the most effective means of delivering information

BVA response

BVA periodicals received variable ratings in value/relevance and content/design. The BVA Publications directorate is currently reviewing the content and design of *The Veterinary Record*, with a view to launching the new design during 2008. *Off the Record* will also be reviewed during 2008 in terms of its content, design and format.

All BVA publications will be subject to consideration on how to achieve the most effective means of delivering information. The issue of electronic publications will also be considered.

BVA SERVICES AND BENEFITS

Key findings

- Top rated services – information, legal advice line, practice standards documentation and the 10 per cent discount received through the BVA Cairns Veterinary Bookshop.

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- Lowest rated services – discounted travel and hotel booking
- 5 per cent of members stated that they were not aware of the wide range of services currently offered through their membership package

BVA response

All BVA services are regularly reviewed through MSG. In 2008 we will particularly focus on extending our portfolio of services to better meet the needs identified in the research findings. The lowest rated services, hotel and travel, will be thoroughly reviewed in terms of their cost/time-benefit.

- Several new online services are already planned for 2008 including:
 - A new corporate website
 - An online CPD service, VETS.TV
 - An online locum service
- Others to be considered are:
 - Guidance notes/support information for practice managers/owners, such as marketing advice
 - HR support for small business
 - An extension of the YVN material to include guidance for practices when employing a new graduate
 - A free CPD event for members of the YVN

There will be increased communication of all services, so members are fully aware of what is offered through their BVA membership.

Services that members suggested, that we already do provide, include, discounted gym membership (as part of the BUPA Care package) and a members' room at the BVA, which members are free to use during office hours.

BVA COMMUNICATION

Key findings

- Information desired by members
 - 92 per cent – professional news
 - 75 per cent – information on CPD events
 - 71 per cent – technical/scientific developments
 - 71 per cent – Government legislation
- Preferred means of communication
 - 64 per cent email
 - 36 per cent postal
- How can the BVA improve:
 - 66 per cent – email alerts and links to website for new relevant information
 - 38 per cent – more focused communications
 - 38 per cent – easier access and more up-

- to-date information on website
- 15 per cent – no improvement required

BVA response

A key objective in undertaking the research was to examine current communication, and gain a better understanding of where changes are needed. During 2008, we will focus on segmenting members based on their working categories, membership categories and preferences, and targeting them with information that they have specified they want to receive.

We will determine the most effective means of communicating key messages and then deliver through that medium, although it is clear that there needs to be an increase in e-communication, with a focus on emails directing members to the website.

Effective communication is essential – but this must be two-way – with members keeping us informed of changes in addresses, providing us with up-to-date email addresses and getting in touch with suggestions, comments, or complaints, as and when necessary.

BVA WEBSITE

Key findings

- Less than 10 per cent visit regularly

- 16 per cent have never visited website
- Main reason for visiting:
 - 26 per cent publication download
 - 17 per cent view news article
 - 16 per cent research topic of interest
- Main suggested improvements:
 - Navigation/search facility
 - New features such as password reminder

BVA response

We are currently redeveloping the BVA website, with a view to relaunching it in spring 2008. The results of this research are being used in the development process to ensure that the new site matches members' needs. The new website will be integrated with the member database and, following the launch, members will be able to update their details online, renew their membership, buy publications and resources and set up preferences for the types of news they would like to receive from us. This will enable us to direct members to information of specific interest to them.

BVA CONGRESS

Key findings

- 33 per cent of respondents said that they were not interested in attending BVA Congress in 2006
- Only 5 per cent actually attended in 2006

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BVA response

In 2007 we launched a 'new look' BVA Congress, which introduced CPD sessions alongside the normal political debate. Feedback from that Congress has been overwhelmingly positive and 98 per cent of delegates said that they had met their objectives in attending. We hope that following the change in format, future congresses continue to see the same success and that this is reflected in future member attendance figures.

Non-member survey

RESEARCH SAMPLE

- Email invitations to approximately 170 recently lapsed BVA members
- Telephone calls/emails to filtered selection of the RCVS database
- 60 respondents
- More than 90 per cent claimed to have been BVA members at some point since graduation, that is, lapsed members

LAPSED MEMBERS

Length of membership

- Approximately 50 per cent were members for 3 – 10 years
- More than 35 per cent were members for 10 years or more

- Approximately 55 per cent lapsed within last 12 months
- 5 per cent within last 3 months
- 18 per cent within last 6 months
- Approximately 33 per cent lapsed more than 5 years ago
- 30 per cent were still members of a BVA specialist division
- 20 per cent were still members of a BVA territorial division

Reasons for non-membership

- Cost/value for money of membership
- Retirement
- Moving abroad
- Relevance/benefit of membership
- Availability of BVA publications via work/spouse etc.
- Competition from other Associations

Likelihood of rejoining

- Approximately 50 per cent very unlikely to rejoin
- More than 8 per cent very likely to rejoin
- Approximately 60 per cent happy for the BVA to contact them in the future
- 30 per cent miss benefits of BVA membership
- Most valued/missed benefits:
 - Approximately 70 per cent said BVA publications
 - 32.5 per cent said access to relevant information

BVA response

Whilst the findings of the non-member survey haven't been a great surprise, it emphasises the importance of us improving the services we offer; so that cost/benefit ratio increases and members are less likely to resign from membership.

Summary

We would like to thank everyone who took part in our member and non-member online research surveys, we have received some very positive and valuable feedback.

The results will now feed into all aspects of the BVA and allow us to adapt our services, activity and communication to better suit members' expectations and needs.

We will ensure that we repeat this survey on a regular basis, to monitor change and adapt activity where necessary.