



Listening to Our Members: IPBC's 2018 Membership Study Highlights

In early 2018, IPBC completed a membership study to gain candid insight into how members feel about their association, what it has accomplished and what its priorities and direction should be in the future. We were supported in this endeavor by external consultants from The Portage Group (TPG), a consultancy that works with associations and not-for-profit organizations.

The Membership Survey was sent to 1,645 IPBC members in January 2018. A total of 541 responses had been received by the cut-off date for an overall response rate of 33%. Results from the sample of 541 are considered to be accurate to within $\pm 3.5\%$ nineteen times out of twenty (95% confidence interval) and are on par with response rates for similar organizations TPG has worked with.

Importantly, IPBC's results were compared to over 70 studies conducted by TPG for more than 50 associations over the last decade. This has enabled us to understand how IPBC stacks up across key satisfaction areas against other professional associations.

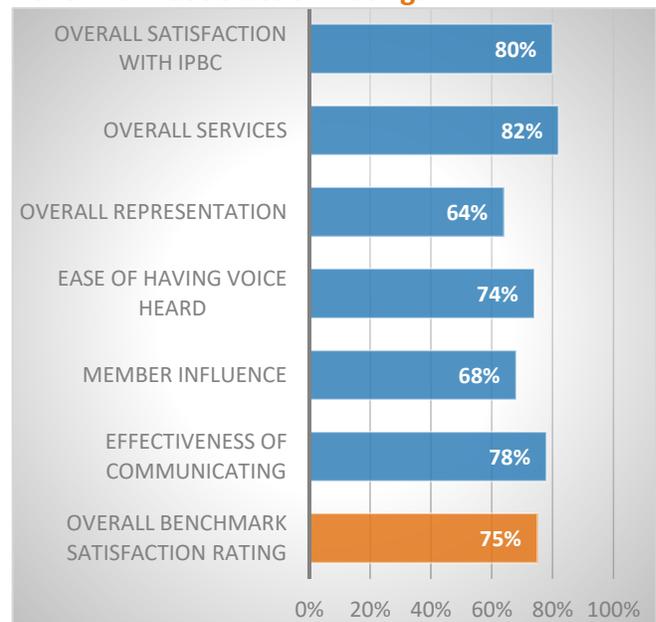
Following the survey reporting, the membership study was used by the board throughout its recent strategic planning process. The result is one we can all be proud of – a plan that is truly driven by the needs and priorities of our members!

Following are some key highlights from this research:

Overall Member Satisfaction with IPBC

- IPBC's overall benchmark satisfaction rating of 75% is excellent news! Members are telling us that although there are areas to improve, they are extremely satisfied with the association.
- IPBC's ranks well ahead of the 63% average for other professional associations and is the second highest benchmark across the 44 studies TPG has carried out with professional associations. In fact, IPBC is among the top five ranking professional associations on all attributes and in the top three for Overall satisfaction (#2); Ease of Being Heard (#2); Member Influence (#2); and, Satisfaction with Services (#3).

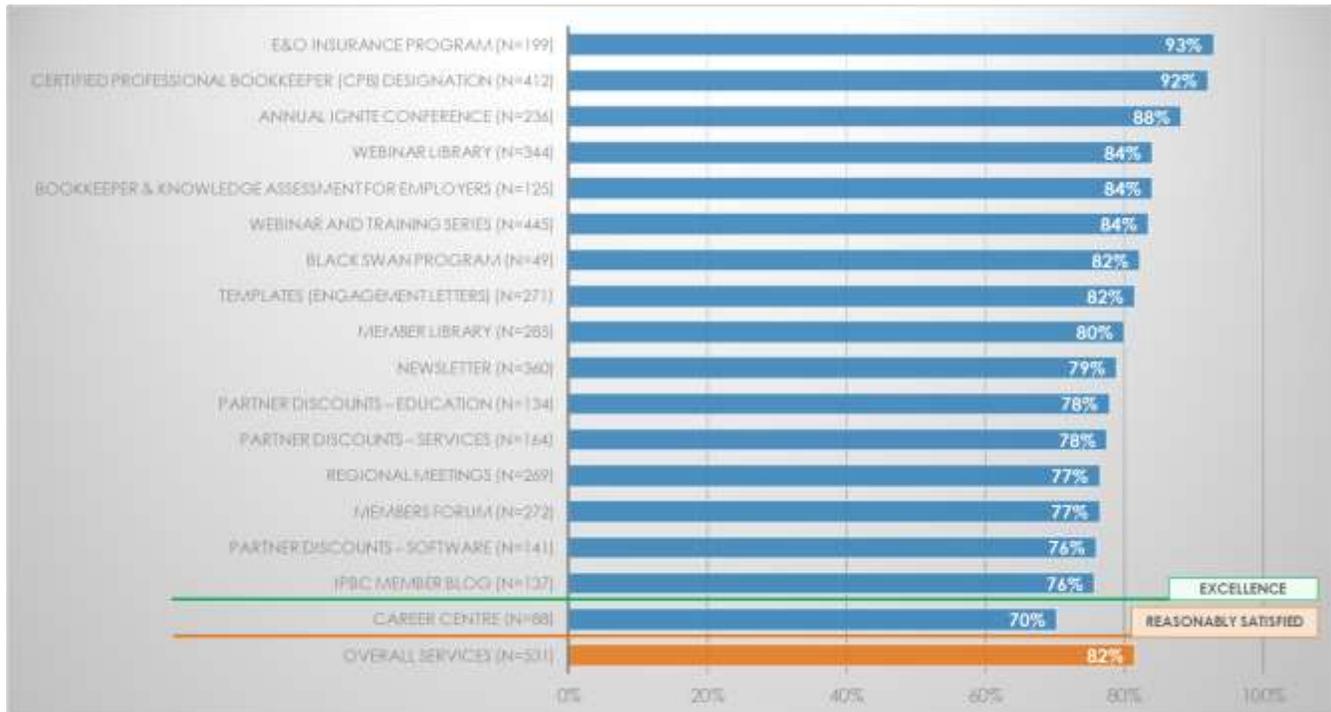
Benchmark Satisfaction Ratings



IPBC Services

- IPBC is performing well across its core services. The results show that those who use the services are extremely satisfied with them, awarding an average benchmark rating of 82% across all services. In fact, sixteen of the seventeen services were rated in the 'excellence' category at 76% or higher.
- The top-rated IPBC services that require IPBC's ongoing dedication and commitment include the E&O Insurance Program (93%) and the CPB designation (92%).
- In contrast, the lowest rated service, which received a 'reasonably satisfied' rating, was the career centre (70%), indicating some potential room to improve.

Satisfaction with IPBC Services



- Use of services is strongest with the CPB designation (Certified Professional Bookkeeper), with 73% of members currently using it. Penetration also good with the webinar and training series, with 59% of members currently using this service.
- Of some concern are the services members don't use. In particular, the quality and/or relevance of the Black Swan Program is something we need to look at, as 75% of members are aware of but don't use this service. Additional services of concern include the following:
 - Annual Ignite Conference (45% aware of but don't use this service);
 - E&O Insurance Program (43%);¹
 - Regional meetings (40%);²
 - Partner discounts -education (42%); and,
 - Partner discounts -services (41%).
- The survey also revealed some services that are of potential interest to members but that suffer from low levels of awareness. In particular, services that may benefit from better communication include:
 - Partner discounts -software (33% not aware but might use);
 - Career centre (32%);

¹ This number should be interpreted with caution as only CPB members can access this service.

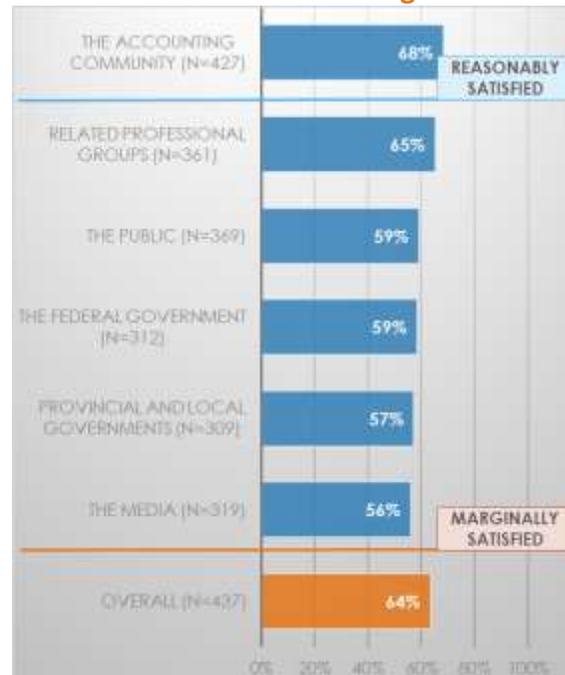
² Note this number should be interpreted with caution as not all regions hold meetings.

- Partner discounts - education (29%); and,
- IPBC member blog (28%).

Advocacy

- With an overall benchmark satisfaction rating of 64%, IPBC’s performance is ‘marginal’ in the area of representation of member interests to different stakeholder groups. With the exception of a ‘reasonable’ satisfaction rating of 68% for advocacy efforts to the accounting community, there is significant room to improve, in particular with representation to: Related Professional Groups (65%); The Public (59%); The Federal Government (59%); Provincial and Local Governments (57%); and, The Media (56%).

Benchmark Satisfaction Ratings



Becoming a Member-Driven Association

- A big part of becoming a member-driven association has to do with the extent to which IPBC members feel it is easy for them to have their voice heard by the organization, as well as the extent to which they feel they influence the association’s direction and priorities.
- With a benchmark rating of 74%, members are very satisfied that it is easy to have their voice heard by IPBC.
- With a benchmark satisfaction rating of 68%, members feel they have ‘reasonable’ influence over the direction and priorities of the association. Although an area to improve, IPBC’s rating in this area is well above the 57% average for member influence for professional associations overall.

Effectiveness of Communication

- The survey suggests that at 78% satisfaction, IPBC is doing an excellent job at communicating effectively to its members.

- Although IPBC is doing well in the area of communication to members, there is room to improve in the types of information it is communicating about. In particular, we heard there are opportunities to better communicate information that will contribute to members' understanding about the strategic direction, focus and activities of the organization. Additional information to members about IPBC's performance, governance as well as more communication about where member dollars go may also be warranted.

Performance and Governance

- Members are proud to belong to IPBC and want to see it succeed – this is an important strength to leverage going forward. Importantly, members also feel they get good value for their membership dollars and also feel both IPBC and the CPB designation give them a competitive advantage.
- Lower scores were awarded in some areas to suggest that members view IPBC decision-making could be more open and democratic.

Important Issues

- In developing its professional development and education offerings, top-of-mind professional trends and issues to consider as topics include: Staying up-to-date on compliance regulations; Public awareness of the role and understanding the value of Bookkeepers; The impact of technology and automation on the bookkeeping profession; Recognition of the certification within the profession and external to the profession; and, The pace of innovation and keeping up.

Top Tier Issues



Role and Priorities for IPBC

- In the eyes of members, there are two primary areas where IPBC should be spending its time, effort and resources. These include: Professional development and education (including providing professional development and education and providing education and resources to support members in running their business); and, advocacy and promotion (including: Raising the profile of the CPB certification and profession; and, representing member interests via advocacy, lobbying and promotion).
- Secondary areas of focus include: Providing the CPB certification; Keeping members up-to-date on trends, issues, challenges; Bookkeeping conference; and, providing opportunities for members to connect with each other and to the association.

Conclusion

The staff and volunteer leadership at IPBC would like to thank you for your feedback as part of this important initiative. This feedback was used to drive the development of IPBC's strategic plan and will be used to assist in the development of IPBC's plans for marketing, communications and member programs and services.

Members have used this survey to articulate quite clearly that IPBC is doing a great job in meeting their needs. Although there is room to improve in some areas, the survey results are something we should all be proud of!

The challenge ahead will be to maintain its success while continuing to raise the bar as an association that offers excellent value and relevance to its members. There has never been a more exciting time to be a part of IPBC. We appreciate your continued confidence and support!