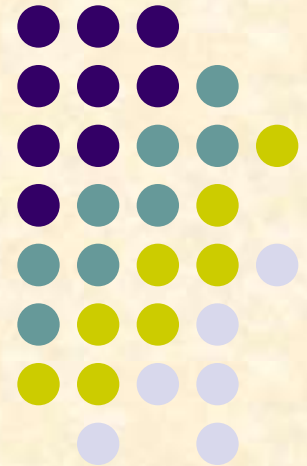


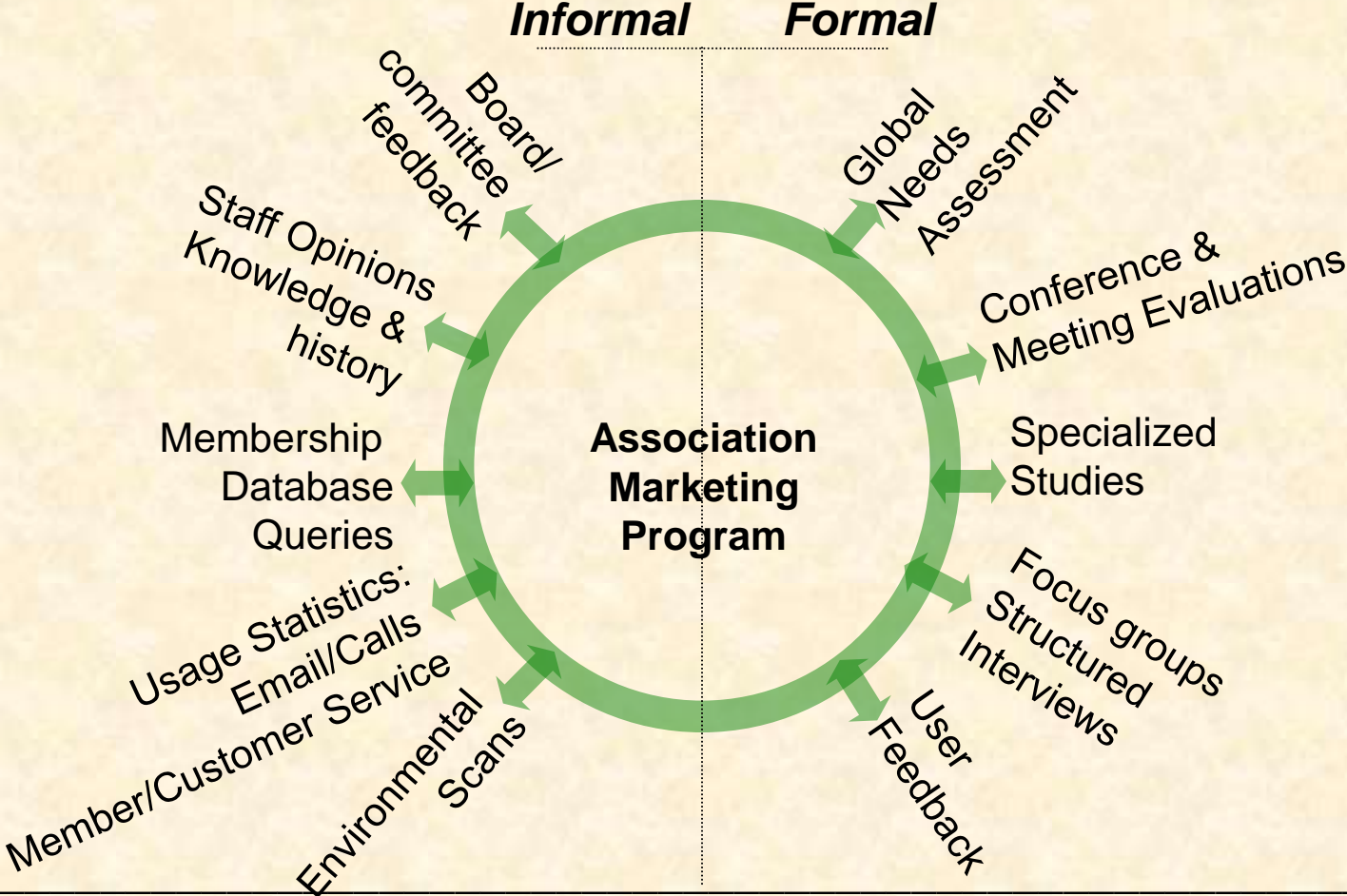
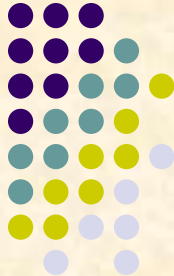
CESSE 2005

MEM5: Survey Design: Best Practices



Kevin Whorton
Whorton Marketing & Research
10798 Symphony Way
Columbia, MD 21044
kwhorton@comcast.net
202-558-2466

Sources of Information



Methodology Choices



- **Secondary research**
 - Understanding the association & membership through their promotions, sales, history, old studies
- **Qualitative research**
 - Focus groups, personal interviews, face-to-face
- **Quantitative surveys**
 - Samples vs. census
 - Formats: online, print, telephone
 - Sequence of mailings/reminders
 - Testing for bias: unrepresentative results
 - Premiums/incentives for response
 - Length/format of instrument

Topical/Type Choices



Studies most commonly conducted:

- Member satisfaction
- Member needs assessment
- Non-member/customer needs
- Educational assessment/evaluation
- Readership surveys
- Compensation surveys
- Consumer surveys
- Diversity studies
- Meeting evaluations
- Industry specific studies
- Pricing
- Product development
- Operating/financial operations
- Employee/staff satisfaction
- Web usage

Source: 2005 ASAE Policies & Procedures survey

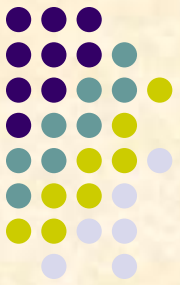
What Other Associations Do



- **Administration**—Print only or online only (30% each); print/online mix or phone (20% each).
Other methods: personal interviews & focus groups (15% each)
- **Response rates**—Average (all methods combined): 42%
 - Online: 21% response
 - Print: 28% response
 - Print with lapsed segment: 31% response
 - Phone: 24% response
- **Audience**—65%/35% split: random sample vs. census
- **Incentives**—28% offered a premium to respondents
- 11% see lower, 32% higher response (remainder split between about the same and unsure)

Source: July 2005 ASAE Listserver survey (29 associations)

Practices of Other Associations (*cont'd*)



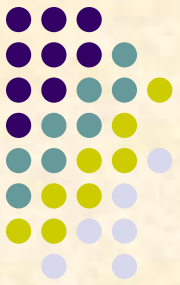
- **Frequency**—Members are most likely to conduct needs assessments about every 2-3 years: 27% do so annually, 15% never and 20% less often than four years
- **Performance**—Associations pleased with their most recent needs assessment (4.2 satisfaction score).
Less so with more targeted research (3.7), membership database (3.4), or environmental scans/competitive assessments (3.0)
- **Analysis**—25% looked only at overall membership.
60% looked at demographic segments.
35% at membership type, 30% at lapsed, and 20% at prospective members

Defining Our Needs



- Focus on what you need to know:
 - Opinions
 - Perceptions
 - Changes of mind/trends
 - Differences across segments
 - Externalities: other memberships/value
 - Decision support
 - Feasibility
 - Verification/validity
 - Link to probable retention
 - Evaluation/growth potential
 - Incidence/prevalence
- Compile this into a survey, and you're done!! :O]

Feeding an Overall Research Agenda



- Number/types of methods you integrate
 - Surveys, focus groups, user groups, planning sessions
- How often do you survey
 - Often seems to be a custom, not always related to responsiveness to member needs
 - Perhaps even a proxy for action: study things instead of act
 - To what degree are surveys used as relationship tools
 - Guiding new program launches
 - Helping guide new market penetration: segments, students
 - Integrated with marketing strategy: feasible universe studies linking secondary data analysis to attitudes to identify obstacles

Qualitative Research



- Focus groups
 - Strengths: Good brainstorming/idea formation, concept tests, good member networking
 - Weaknesses: bias, often done as a convenience sample (i.e. conference attendees), weak facilitation, insufficient probes, weak group dynamics
 - Essentials: Recruitment, guide, facilitation
- Depth interviews
 - Often more promising: more candid feedback
 - More content per member: 30-45 minutes per person, not 90 minutes divided by 10!
- Pretesting your instrument
 - Using members/insiders who understand the profession but aren't insiders from your process

How to Ask Research Questions



➤ Key principles

- Get the right response options
 - Closed-ended, allowing for some open-ended feedback
 - Make it easy to complete, especially at the beginning
- Design philosophy
 - Balance of communications device & data collection form
 - Good questions measure what people think; avoid testing people's knowledge
 - Choose an appropriate length: sufficient to cover your organizational information needs

Developing the Survey



- Being comprehensive: ensure key points are covered
 - Myth: "if you can't do something about it don't ask"
 - Reality: "I don't trust you if you only ask about happy things"
- Order/sequence matters
 - Make it easy to complete the first questions
 - Avoid taking more than 15 minutes: but avoid being too short
 - Use sections to divide content, helps for long needs assessments

Common Survey Mistakes



- 1) **Poor fielding**: populist Census rather than a sample: little or no consideration of bias
- 2) **Low response**: unclear thought on incentive: “what’s in it for the respondent” and unwillingness to exert effort for high response
- 3) **Poor shelf life**: Insufficient use of the study after first presentation: not retaining data for re-use or building on learnings for subsequent studies
- 4) **Surface level analysis**: Weak conclusions the err on the side of being “objective” or looking at the trees not the forest
- 5) **Over-focus**: Too much emphasis on the global needs assessment and not for specific applications

Messaging/Introductions



- **Phrase communications to elicit a response**
 - Bandwagon effect, yet “specialness” of the sample
 - Impart sense of urgent action
 - Repetitive contacts to increase likelihood of participation
 - Use your *unique selling proposition* in marketing
 - Focus on them—“What’s In It For Me”
 - Offer incentives that matter:
 - Tangible—summaries
 - Intangible--better decisions
 - Win trust: cite past successes using information
 - Be conversational & friendly

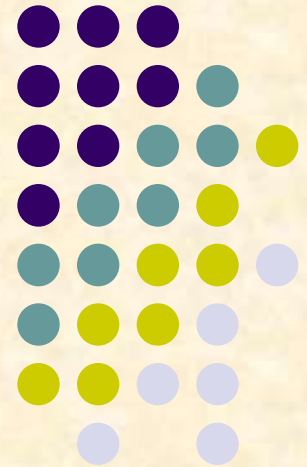
Testing/Mixed Methods



- **Consider multiple administration methods/vehicles**
 - Accept that some are “e-people” and others are print
 - Component: letters, instrument, business reply envelope
- **Test wherever possible**
 - **Methods**: premium to determine sensitivity
 - **Sequence**: E-mail first, mail second as followup, phone followup with hard core nonresponders
 - Analyze respondents by media/source to determine any real differences in attitudes & behavior

Samples: Question/Item Types

Rating
Ranking
Forced-Choice
Open-ended
Special Applications



Ratings/Likert Scale



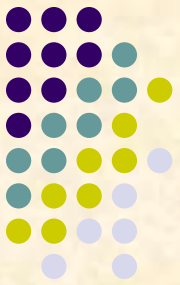
4. How do you rate the value of OSAP overall, and for each of the following resources? (*circle your response*)

	Very Valuable	Somewhat	Not at all Valuable	
Overall	1	2	3	NA
Infection control guidelines	1	2	3	NA
Position papers	1	2	3	NA
<i>Monthly Focus</i> mailings with C.E.	1	2	3	NA
Quarterly <i>OSAP Report</i> newsletter	1	2	3	NA
OSAP web site	1	2	3	NA

Notes:

- "Overall" to catch details, often we miss this among the detailed questions
- Gives us a report card for each service. Report it two ways: percentages and average scores (more useful if it's a 5-point or a 10-point scale)

Ranking



14. What method do you prefer to receive information regarding products, services, and programs? (*indicate “#1” for your first choice and so on*)

Rank

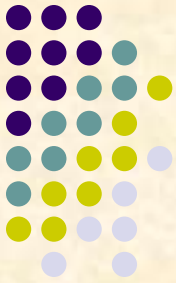
#1 #2 #3

- E-mails
- Fax
- Mail
- Web site
- Other (*specify*) _____

Notes:

- Goal is to prioritize: forcing choices between various options
- Often good for clarifying rating questions: some people are consistent “high scorers” or “low scorers” and survey findings merely aggregate their tendencies.
- Both can be cross-tabulated with usage, satisfaction to help explain interest levels and satisfaction with specific services

Forced Choice (Direct Comparisons)



3. How do you rate our services relative to other providers. In your opinion, who is the primary provider?

- a. Best Source of Research: NOPA or Other provider (*specify*) _____
- b. Best Web site resources: NOPA or Other provider (*specify*) _____
- c. Best Networking oppty: NOPA or Other provider (*specify*) _____
- d. Strongest advocate: NOPA or Other provider (*specify*) _____

Notes:

- Indifference is a suitable option: sometimes we include "about the same" or "no preference"
- Associations love to know where they're strong and weak, and this works better than a gap analysis to identify areas that require more attention & resources.
- Often link this question to an overall "what organization do you regard as your primary professional affiliation"—a universal statement that reflects specific service-area judgements/evaluations.
- It allows them to grade on a curve: "we're a 4.0" or "65% say we're excellent or good" means less than knowing if you're better or worse than the competition

Open-ended (Demographics Collection)



1. **Approximately how long have you been a registered nurse?**
_____ years
2. **How long have you worked:**
for a NOPA member company? _____ years
in the industry? _____ years
3. **What is your approximate age:** _____ years

Notes:

- Open-ended questions for short values get high response; convert to ranges later.
- Open ended allow for correlation better analysis. can combine average timelines for those who wait to join/join early, enter mid-career, etc.
- Critical for operational studies—always want the detailed data point
- Ranges only necessary when people can't remember or won't approximate or you only need a cross-tab heading or a contingency table
- “*Optional*” is a good idea to avoid losing some responses by offending people
- Convey a better reason than “for statistical purposes”; if no perceived reason, question level non-response may be as high as 20%
- Consequently ask these last

Open-ended (Long-format)



1. What do you believe to be the top two issues our profession will face over the next 3-5 years?

#1: _____

#2: _____

Notes:

- We always need to include this kind of question to get at what people think
- Questions don't lend themselves to quantification, but ...
- The alternative of closed ended options introduces a bias where you get the answers you're looking for
- Organize open-ended in final report, by theme and general category—too often this data isn't misinterpreted, it's just laid out “objectively” without covering any key issues
- Recognize that low-involvement people who hold strong opinions but don't care to write will drop out of this analysis
- Don't overuse, blanks lower the response rate by increasing the perceived difficulty of completing the survey

Feasibility of New Services



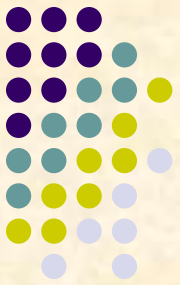
1. What is your interest in using each of the following potential new services that we are currently in the stages of evaluating?
 - A. Certified Advanced Practice Nurse (CAPN)—A certification program featuring an examination for your field of specialty nursing practice, developed by a committee of practicing nurses. Recertification would be required to ensure expertise and familiarity with current practice.
 Extremely interested Somewhat interested Not interested

2. Of the three services concepts above:
Which one offers you the greatest value? #1 _____ (enter A,B or C)
Which one offers you the second greatest value? #2 _____

Notes:

- Hard to interpret/assess feasibility: strategic responses, gaps between what people say and do. Ensure that multiple concepts force prioritization among members.
- Keep responses simple and description complex to ensures clients know what was evaluated and have an unambiguous basis for projecting future behavior.
- First cut or litmus test. Analyze for profile of interested members

Perceived Value/Price-Sensitivity



9. What are each of the following services worth to you if you had to pay for them separately?

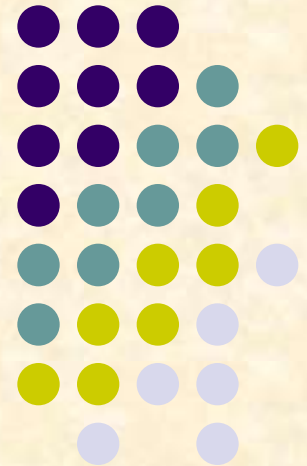
- | | | |
|---|----------|----------------------------------|
| A. All print and electronic newsletters | \$ _____ | or <input type="checkbox"/> Zero |
| B. Key research study reports | \$ _____ | or <input type="checkbox"/> Zero |
| C. Access to content on assn-net.org Web site | \$ _____ | or <input type="checkbox"/> Zero |
| D. Access to unique industry education programs | \$ _____ | or <input type="checkbox"/> Zero |
| E. Government advocacy programs | \$ _____ | or <input type="checkbox"/> Zero |

Notes:

- These techniques allow us to get at issues otherwise explored in focus groups
- Try to quantify things that people don't share very often
- Analysis often sums the responses and compares to actual price paid (i.e. dues)
- More complex methods might include tradeoff analysis (good for small scale new product/service development studies: when including features and effect on pricing becomes important).

Analyzing Surveys: Beyond Quantification

Processing Steps
Tools: Cross-tabs & Graphics
Sample Interpretation/Conclusions



Kevin Whorton
Whorton Marketing & Research
10798 Symphony Way
Columbia, MD 21044
kwhorton@comcast.net
202-558-2466

Steps in Processing



- **Data capture**: data entry (mail/phone) and/or download (online)
- **Data cleaning/coding**: categorical, nesting variables, consistency checks, coding non-responses as “none” etc.
- **Cross-tabulation**: creating a table of column percents and summary statistics by a variety of “banner variables”
- **Verbatims**: spell check/editing, categorizing text by theme
- **Narrative report**: writing the “sports story” narrative
- **Presentation graphics**: bar/pie charts for all questions
- **Full report**: importing tables and charts, appending verbatims and questionnaire

Measuring Bias: Projection Comparisons



Common Variables to Test:

Average retention/tenure: compare to average years of respondent, likelihood of future renewal

Service Utilization: the proportion who use and who are in Board/committees are often grossly over-represented

- **Technique:**

- Calculate percentage responding “used service,” “attend every year,” “attended last year”
- Multiply proportion across the overall membership to project total showing behavior
- If proportions vary substantially across member segments, adjust accordingly
- Compare to actual figures: higher or lower than the 7,200 total in our example?

Interest Code Description	Attending	Total	count ID
New Members	12%	3,500	420
Long-time Members	21%	20,000	6,300
Associate Members	8%	6,000	480

Cross-Tabulations



- Basic tool is irreplaceable. This chart shows column percentages and demonstrates how a key factor (price sensitivity) relates to a single key variable that influences it.

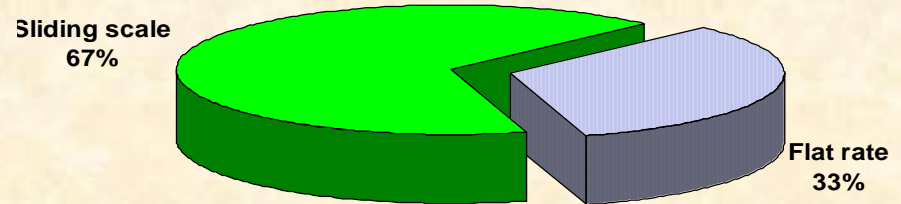
Probable Effect of a Dues Increase	2004: YEARS OF EXPERIENCE				
	Overall	0-5	6-10	11-20	>20
<u>A.\$170 - \$10 increase</u>					
Considerable negative	3%	6%	3%		3%
Some effect	19%	24%	15%	17%	18%
No effect	79%	70%	82%	83%	78%
<u>B.\$185 - \$25 increase</u>					
Considerable negative	19%	29%	21%	16%	12%
Some effect	51%	52%	52%	50%	52%
No effect	29%	19%	26%	34%	36%
<u>C.\$210 - \$50 increase</u>					
Considerable negative	68%	76%	72%	62%	65%
Some effect	25%	20%	23%	27%	27%
No effect	7%	4%	5%	10%	8%

Pie Charts

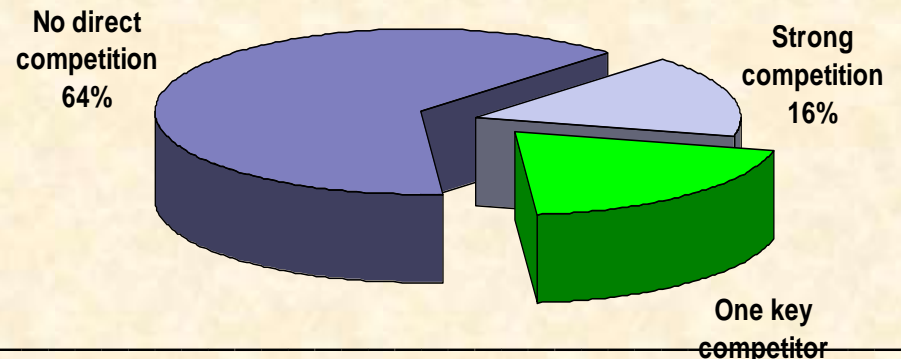


- Common, overused method of presentation
- Only works when totals add to 100%
- Note that differences don't jump out: stacked/horizontal bar formats are much more effective
- Often good for conveying demographics/descriptive data

Dues Structure



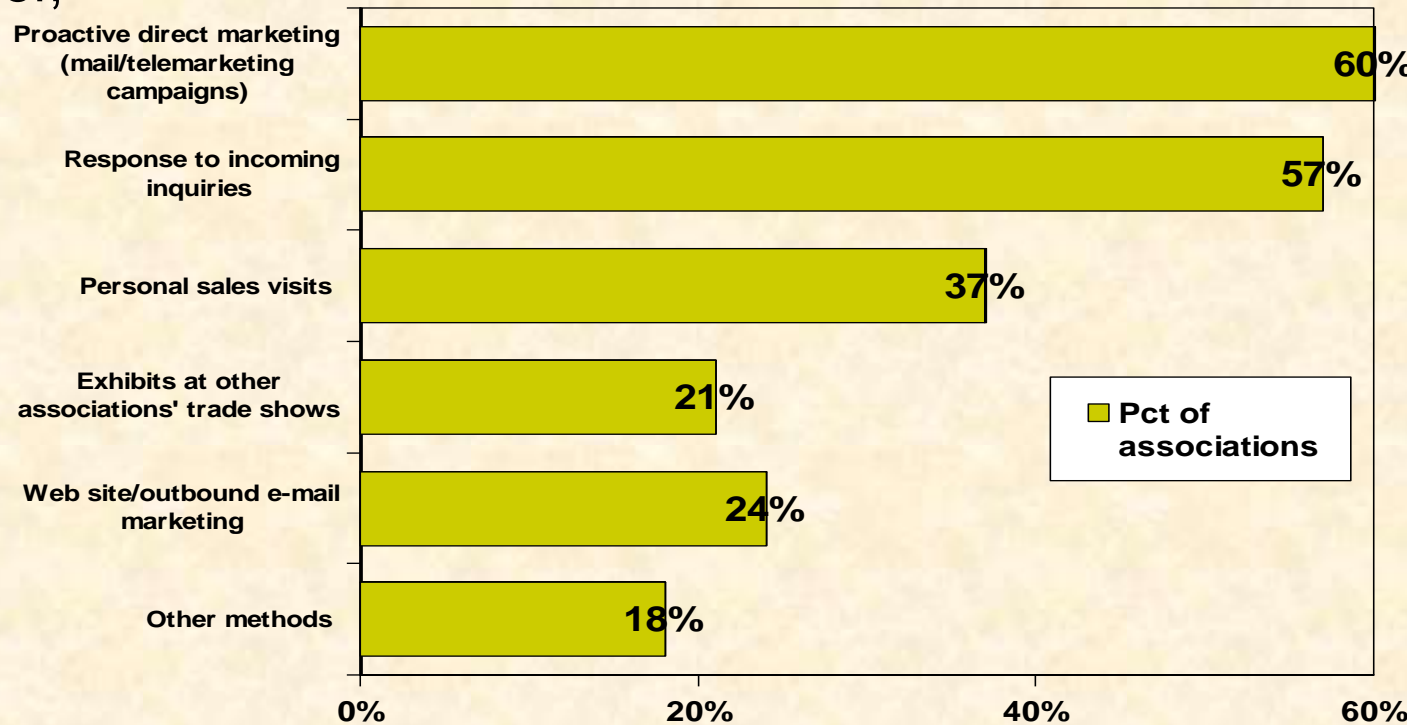
Competitive Position in the Industry



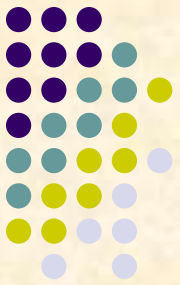
Horizontal Bar Charts: Single Value



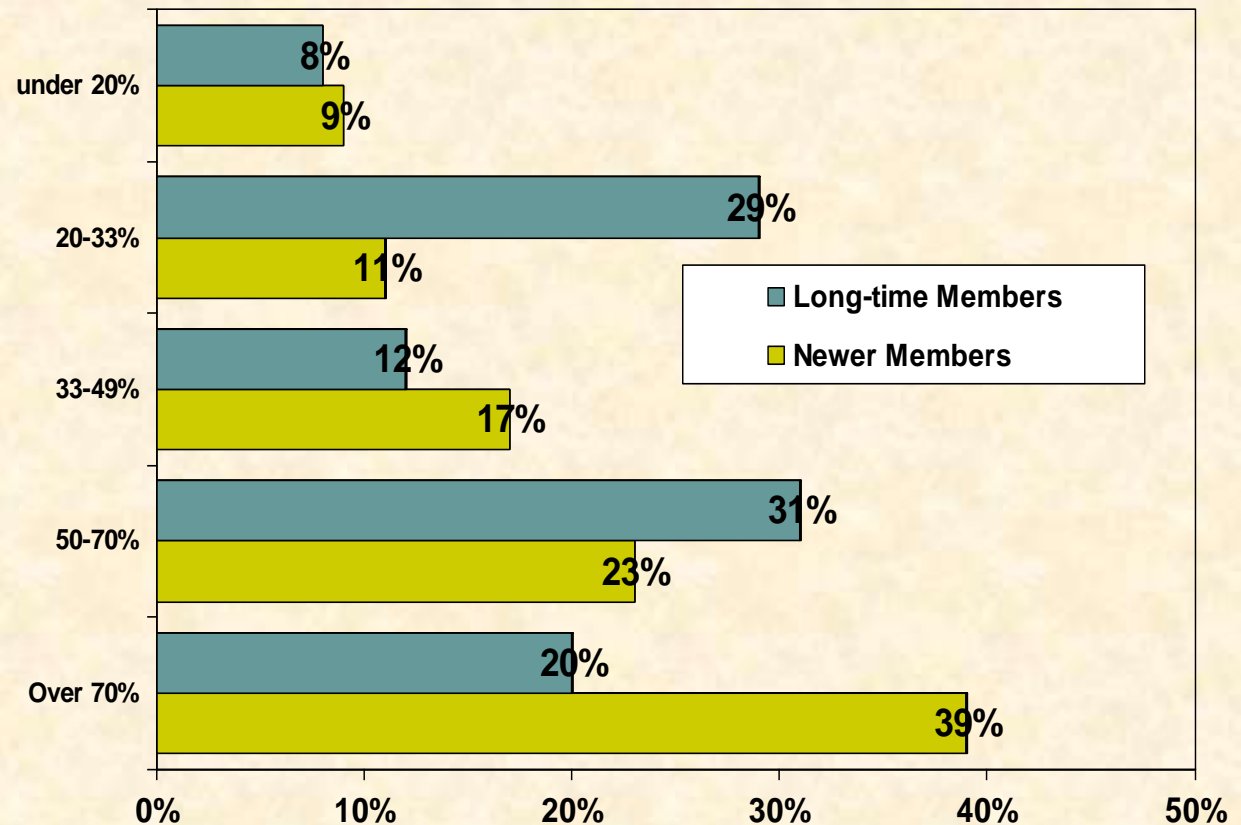
- Chart format is more helpful than vertical format, allows longer descriptions.
- Tip: Helpful to sort data in ascending order, transpose in Excel, then load into Power Point data tables.)



Horizontal Bar Charts: Comparative Series



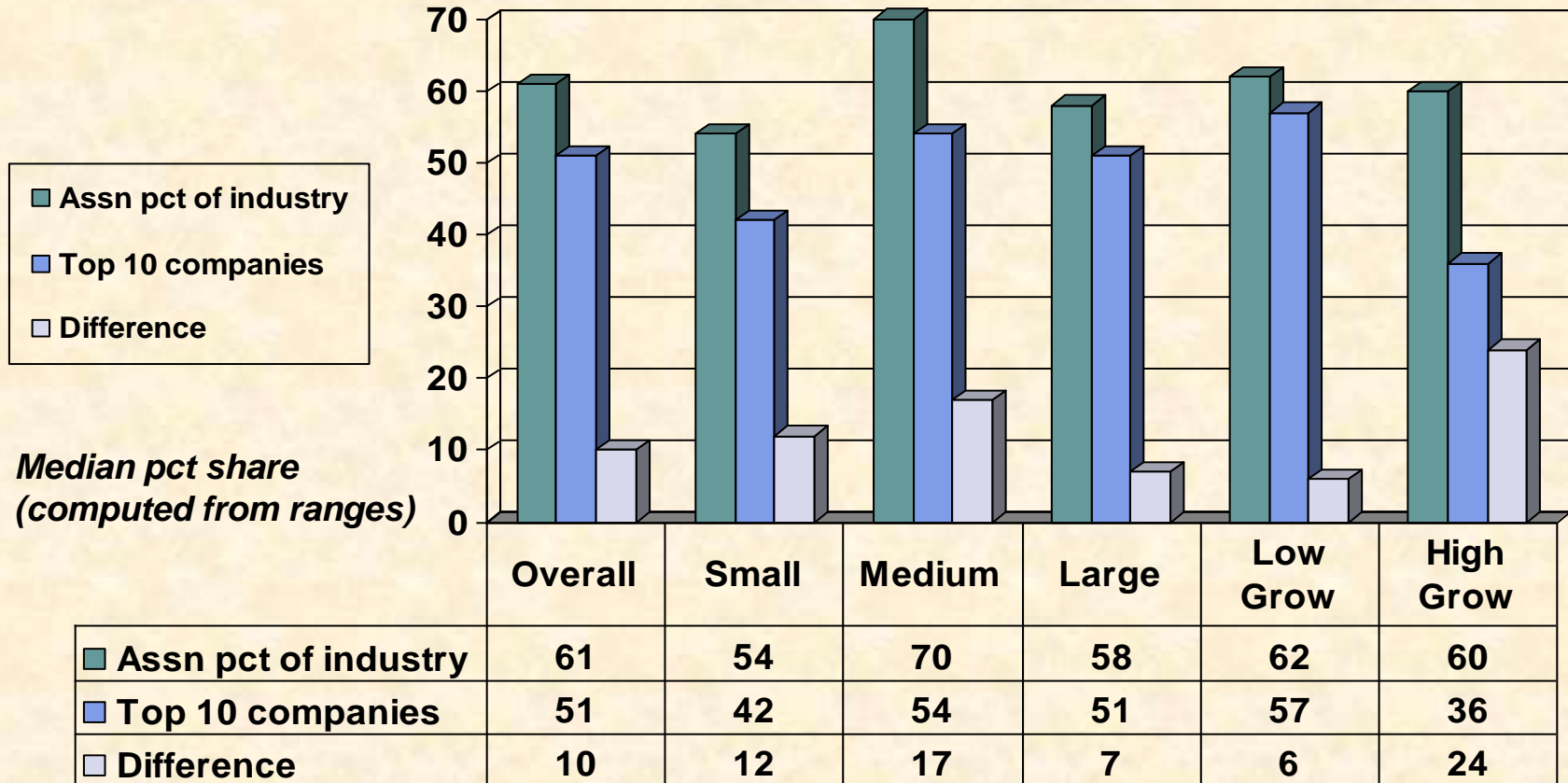
- This format shows contrasts between the series
- Good: visually demonstrates fluctuations in responses due to filter variables
- Outside oral presentation, may be confusing



Charting with Detailed Data: Telling Two Stories



- This format uses the graphic as a prop and the data tells the story: good for operational studies



Alternative Visualization

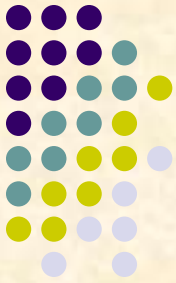
Example:

Total in profession: 35,000

Level of awareness: 30% unaided, 50% aided

Total current members: 5,500

Total “users”: 9,500 (*members, conference attendees, product purchasers, recent lapses*)



Total in Profession

Aware

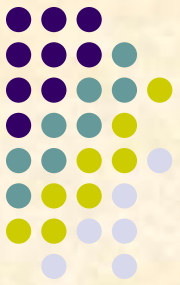
Members

Users

Prognosis:

- Good pool for membership acquisition with non-member “users”-4,000 potential
- Need to raise awareness overall and among those who “know” you but lack top of mind recall.
- Membership penetration of 16%: may indicate issues with offer, past marketing: needs clarification.

Non Graphical Comparisons



- Summarize diverse data in considerable detail.
The statistical equivalent of the narrative Executive Summary.

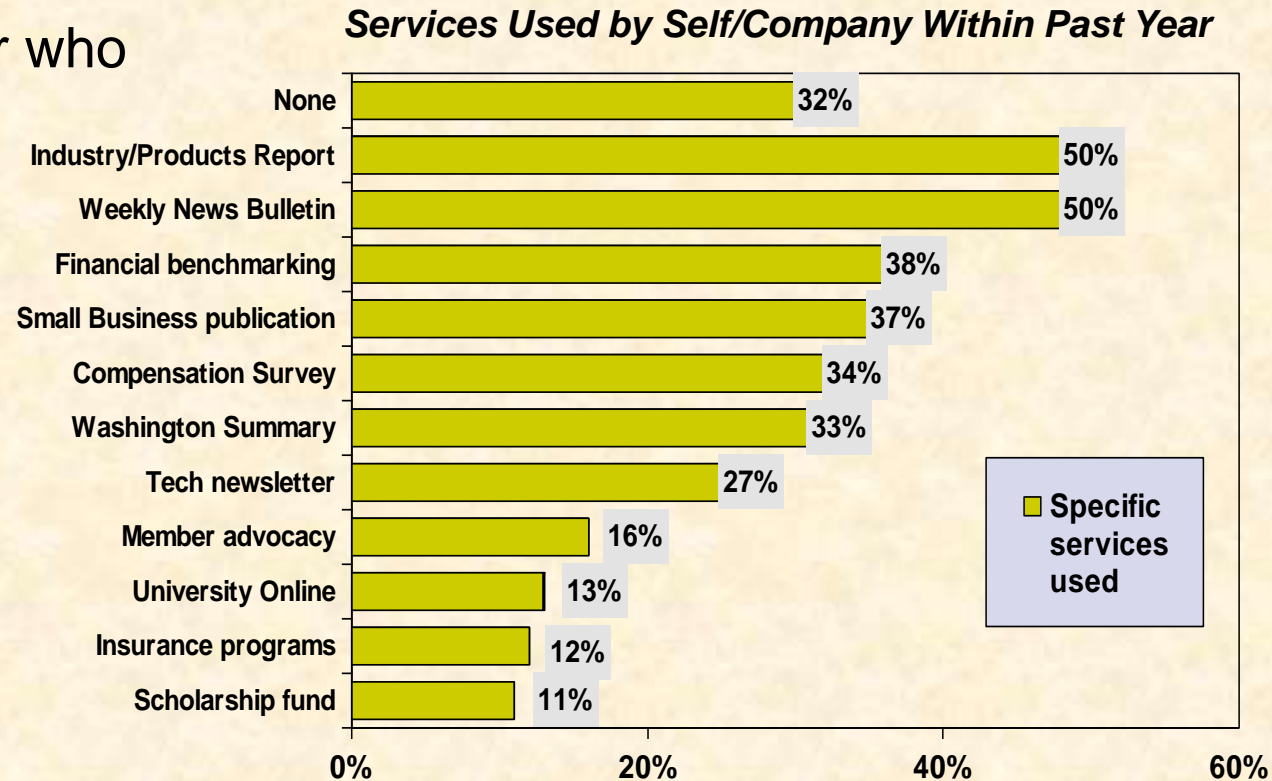
Profile of responding associations:

Average size association	Mean	Median
Total general members	1,967	540
Total associate members	309	108
Budget size	\$4.91M	\$2.20M
Mean percent of total income:	Today	5 yrs ago
General/primary member dues	42.0%	45.4%
Associate/affiliate member dues	8.2%	8.7%
Exhibit/sponsorship income	20.3%	19.9%
All other sources of income	29.5%	26.0%
Average changes over five years:	Mean	Median
Total general members	9.6%	0.0%
Total associate members	22.0%	2.8%
Total budget	53.1%	18.8%

Sample Analysis



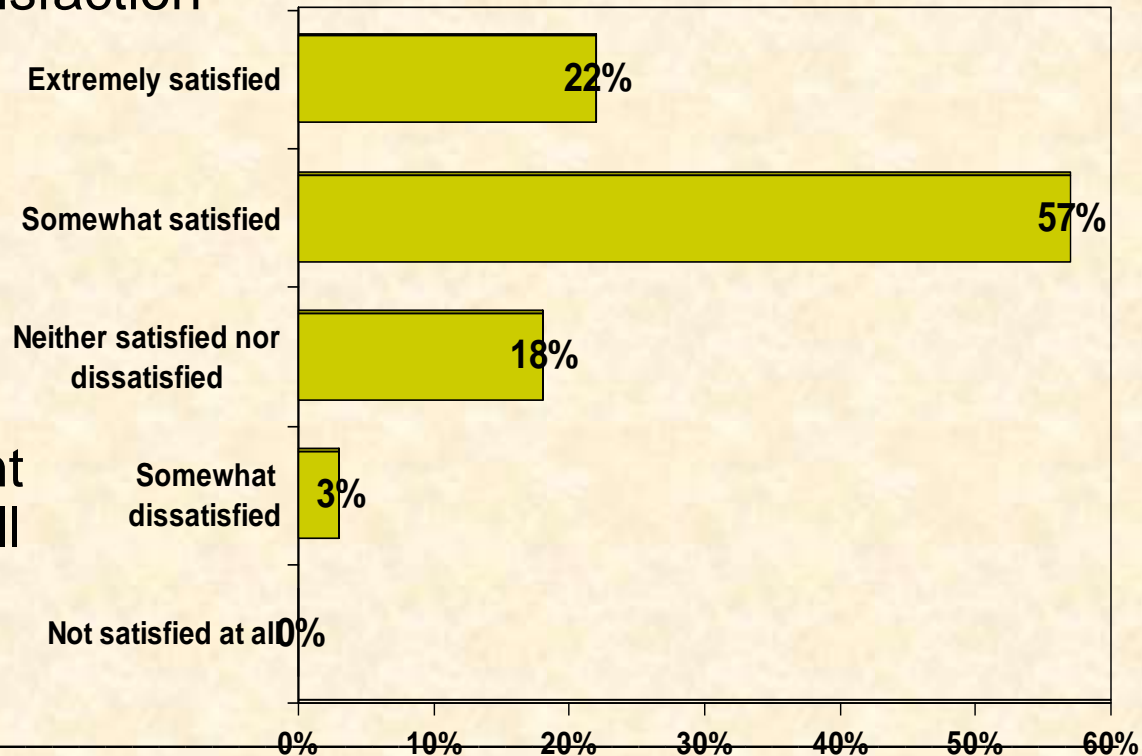
- Best indicator regarding value of services: very objective measure of exposure, influences, value received
- Look at the number who indicate “none” and look at their profile
- Consider likely renewal, LTV
- Distinct from “checkbook” members—people who don’t use *anything*.



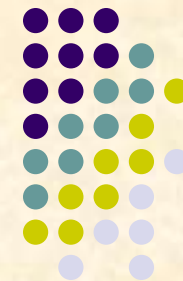
REPORT CARD: *How Satisfied Overall*



- Basic indicator of overall performance
- Average compared to averages per service helps to identify what makes a positive contribution or detracts from overall satisfaction
- Very typical to see 3.7 to 4.0 score
- Higher among long-term members
- Positively related to awareness
- Performance by segment says a lot about how well you represent/serve diverse constituencies.



SATISFACTION: Quality of Service



- Often helpful for scorecarding with big problem: self-selection
- People who complete these typically say good things
- Similar to judging speakers solely on written evals
- Someone who cleans the room still gets high marks from the survivors.

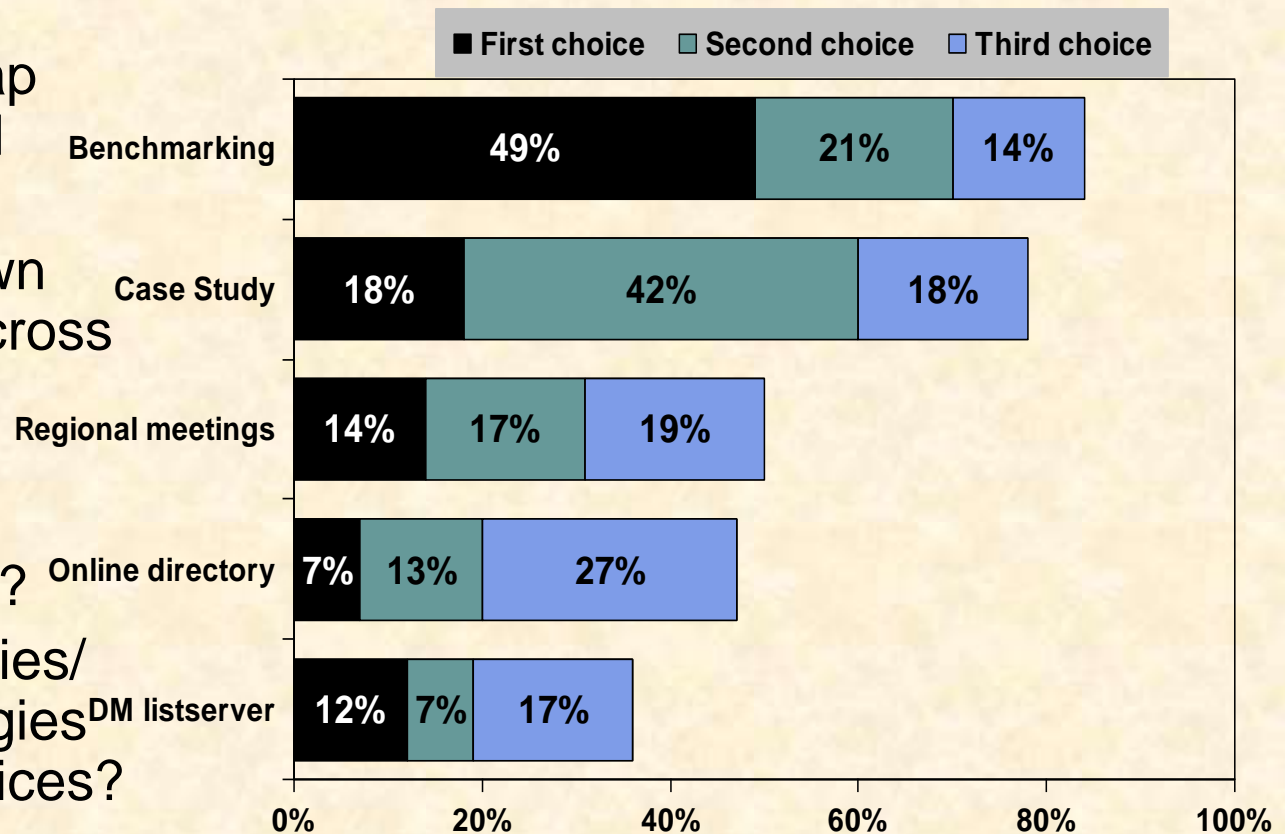


PRIORITY OF NEW SERVICES :

Percent ranking top, second, third



- We can easily tell what is a winner in an environment where we can develop one new service
- We can handicap pet projects and board favorites
- We can drill down and compare across services
- Do the same people rate each one highly?
- Any compatibilities/ audience synergies for specific services?

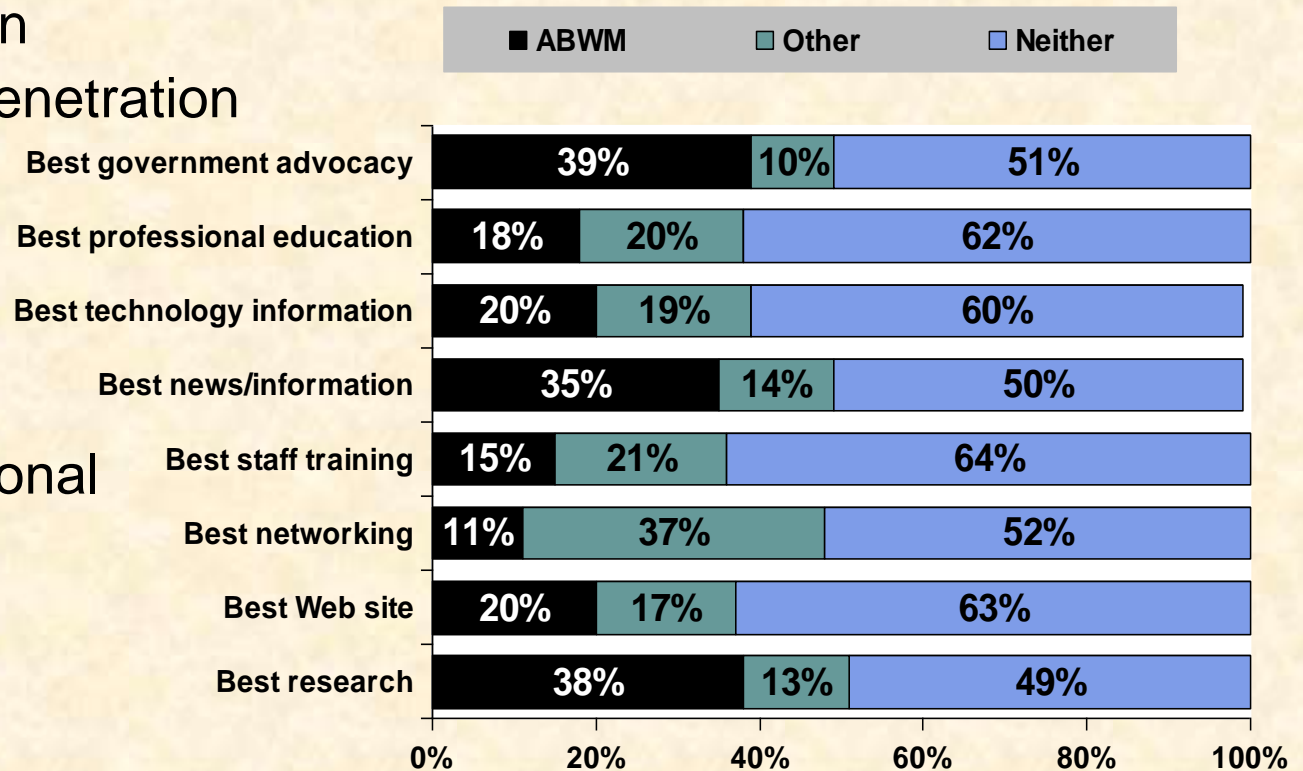


RELATIVE PERFORMANCE:

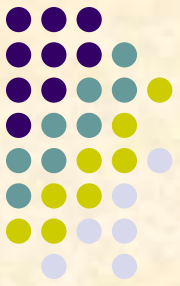
Rating of Association Relative to Others



- Good “bubble burster”: often we’re not strong in the areas we think we are
- This takes into account where we begin
- Membership penetration affects this
- Rather than serve as true competitive intelligence: it’s just operational and serves as environmental scan



TIME TRENDS: *Measures of Performance Over Time*



- Need to provide some context
- Can't compare how people feel from period to period by comparing studies if administration differs
- Rather, ask respondents each time how they feel, or what happened now vs. before and maybe vs. future

