

*"Why Should You Survey the Membership?"
by Jerry N. McCoy, MCM*

Each year hundreds of clubs will survey their membership for feedback on a variety of issues. The main reason for many of these surveys is to address controversial issues. The most progressive clubs realize that member satisfaction is the primary purpose of their existence. To that end, they believe that by identifying expectations, and then taking action to meet and exceed those expectations, true progress can be made in maximizing satisfaction. The way they do that is to solicit feedback regularly. The main vehicle for the feedback process is the membership survey. Club leaders then measure results against benchmarks for previous surveys to track real progress.

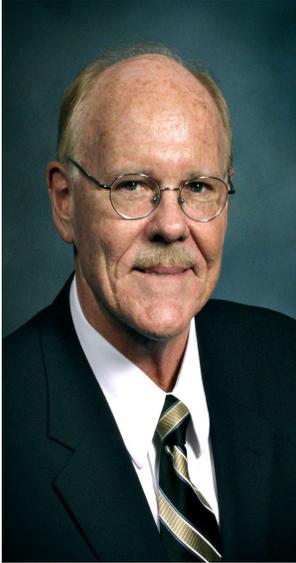
The problem with member satisfaction is that it is a moving target. What was a new service, or smash new program yesterday, normally becomes the minimal standard of expectation tomorrow. It is mandatory to continually measure expectations so that the club can take whatever action is required to meet their primary mission.

A well done membership survey will allow all members the opportunity to participate. Many times clubs believe majority opinion is represented in a vocal minority. It is important to have a clear representation of majority opinion so that management can establish appropriate priorities.

Survey results are an important tool for management. Surveys uncover not only broad issues but also small, but not inconsequential, problems with service delivery systems. Most of these problems can be easily taken care of in quick order with little resources. Acting on these small issues can cause an immediate jump in the overall satisfaction levels.

The result of improved satisfaction levels carry over to greater departmental revenue generation. The obvious impact is that the club receives a greater portion of the members disposable dollars providing revenues for continued improvement of services. The membership survey is just one form of means testing in the club industry.

If your overall mission is member satisfaction, your goal is to maximize cost/benefit relationships and your objective is great service, then your strategy has to be to provide the best possible service-delivery-systems. The final beneficiary will be a better club for all members.



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