

Framework Partners Incorporated

Summary of Findings from the 2011 Ontario Association of Architects Member Survey

It is the purpose of this summary to describe the methodology, the reliability, the findings, and suggested next steps of the 2011 Ontario Association of Architects (OAA) Member Survey. This Survey, along with the Practice and Intern Surveys, were solicited in support of the OAA's future internal and external administration and communications efforts; to aid in establishing and planning future programs and initiatives. The summary has been broken into the following sections:

- Introduction
- Methodology
- Response Rates
- Definitions
- Findings

Introduction

The OAA retained the services of Framework Partners Inc., a strategic planning and market research firm, to gather and interpret member perceptions, and to compare these findings with those from their 2002 survey, where possible. The stated research objectives of this engagement include examining member perceptions in the following areas:

- *General Satisfaction with the OAA;*
- *Experience with and perspectives on architecture;*
- *Continuing Education;*
- *Strategic Direction of the OAA;*
- *Communications & Member Services;*
- *Information Technology; and*
- *Segmentation and Demographic Information.*

In addition to these objectives, a series of demographic questions were added which allowed the topics above to be segmented. Further, Framework added, based on strong experience with similar survey and research projects, the following intended:

- **Satisfaction.** Understanding the satisfaction drivers and sub-drivers of members of the Ontario Association of Architects;
- **Awareness & perception.** Determining the members' perceptions of the Ontario Association of Architects overall and their awareness of specific programs, where applicable; and
- **Needs & expectations.** Determining the existing needs and expectations of the members.

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The survey was conducted in the late fall of 2011 with the final results presented to the Council of the Ontario Association of Architects in February of 2012.

Methodology

Reliability

For this research Framework used an online methodology, which gave the project both accuracy and breadth. The online survey was open to all those who wanted to respond, and was advertised. It is important to note that a convenience sampling methodology, such as the one used for this survey, cannot produce a margin of error or confidence interval. A survey of this nature, where the respondents chose whether they would respond as opposed to the respondent being chosen to respond, is actually a census, where all members of the population are allowed to choose whether or not they will participate in the survey. In a sample survey, the researcher chooses who will respond, therefore producing much more accurate results. With a census survey there is no way to calculate a margin of error; however a high response rate is always better than a lower response rate. A wide ranging survey has the benefit of allowing all who want to respond the opportunity to contribute and to be heard.

General Methodology

Stage One – Questionnaire Development

Stage Two - Electronic / Online Survey

Stage Three - Data Smoothing & Analysis

Stage Four – Recommendations, Report & Presentation

Reliability and Response Rates

As has been described in the previous section, the survey was conducted online where all who chose to participate could respond; this survey received 1,935 responses. Further, the profile of the sample responses mirrors the profile of the membership database, which allows us to conclude that the sample is a good sample, and that it can be relied upon. These 1,935 responses represent a response rate of 44%, which is judged to be very high by industry standards.

If this survey were a sample survey, a total of 354 responses would be required to achieve a margin of error of +/-5%, 19 times of 20. As the resulting respondent database far exceeds 354, the resulting margin of error is +/-1.67%. Again it must be emphasized that this was not a sample survey.

Readers are encouraged to examine the full results of survey.

General Statistical Definitions

In support of the conclusions described below, the following statistical definitions and explanations are detailed here to help the reader better understand the information presented.

Mean. The mean is a measure of central tendency. It is the arithmetic *average* of the set of values, or observations received from a question.

Median. The median is also a measure of central tendency. It is the observation or number that is at the 50th percentile in an ordered data set. Stated differently, it is the point at which half of the observations are above it and half of the observations are below it.

Mode. The mode is another measure of central tendency. It is the most popular or frequently mentioned observation in a data set. It is the value that occurs most frequently.

Score. The score is the mean or average of the responses received expressed as a percentage for easier interpretation. The Score is an important measure of all responses received; it demonstrates the overall response average, and includes all respondents. Stated differently, the score is a batting average, or percentage that helps us to better understand the average response. It is important to examine the score as interpreting the average or mean response, when a seven-point Likert scale is used, can be difficult.

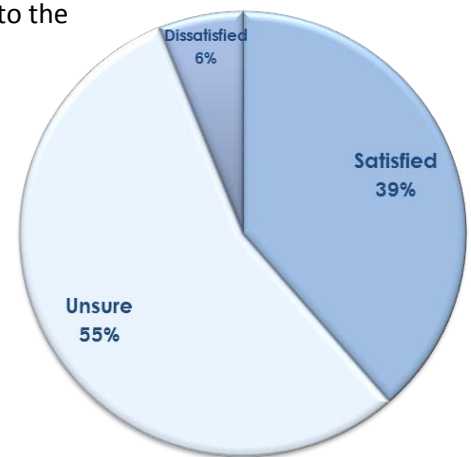
Top Two. The percentage of respondents to a question who responded with either a 1 (“Very Important”, “Very Satisfied” or “Strongly Agree”) or a 2 (“Important”, “Satisfied” or “Agree”) on a scale of 1 to 7. The Top Two is an indication of strength of opinion; it represents the proportion of respondents who have answered that they have a firm opinion about the stated question.

Findings

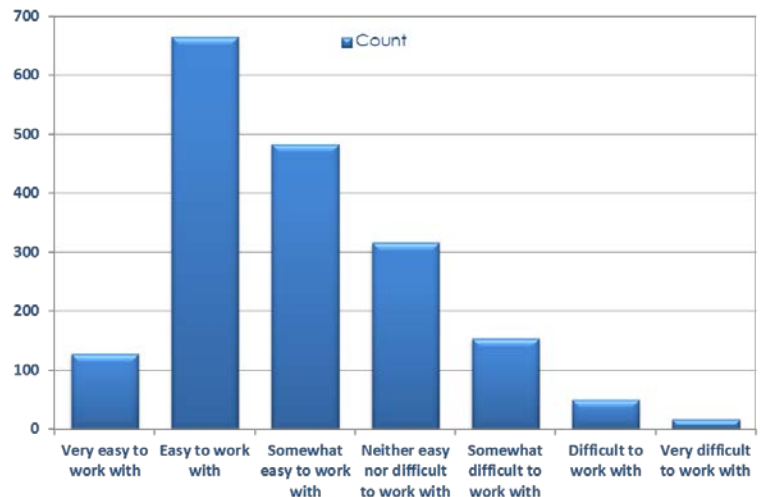
The summary learnings are from the membership survey of 1,935 respondents, which was conducted in the fall of 2011. They are as follows:

- **General satisfaction.** When asked the question: “When thinking about the OAA in general, would you say that the OAA responds to members' needs?”, respondents to the survey answered with a very positive response. 74% of the respondents indicated that the OAA does respond to members’ needs.

When asked the question: “When thinking about OAA in general, would you say that you are satisfied or dissatisfied with the member services that you receive?”, respondents to the survey gave the OAA a top two ranking of 39% and a score of 64% (please refer to the previous section of this memorandum for definitions of terms such as “score”). The most popular response was "Satisfied", and the median response was “Somewhat Satisfied”. In doing the analysis of these results Framework grouped together the top two on each scaled question and the bottom two on each scaled question in order to develop an accurate sense of whether the respondents were actually satisfied or dissatisfied generally. These performance measures, while leaving room for improvement, indicate strong and positive opinions about the Ontario Association of Architects.



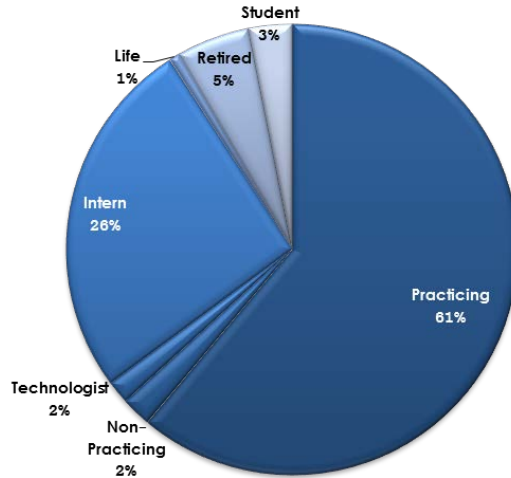
- **Ease of interaction.** Respondents to the survey were asked: “How would you rate the ease of interacting with OAA? Would you say that the OAA is ...” on a scale of 1 to 7, where one was very easy to work with, and seven was very difficult to work with. The purpose of this question was to determine how easily members’ issues are resolved. As the histogram to the right indicates,



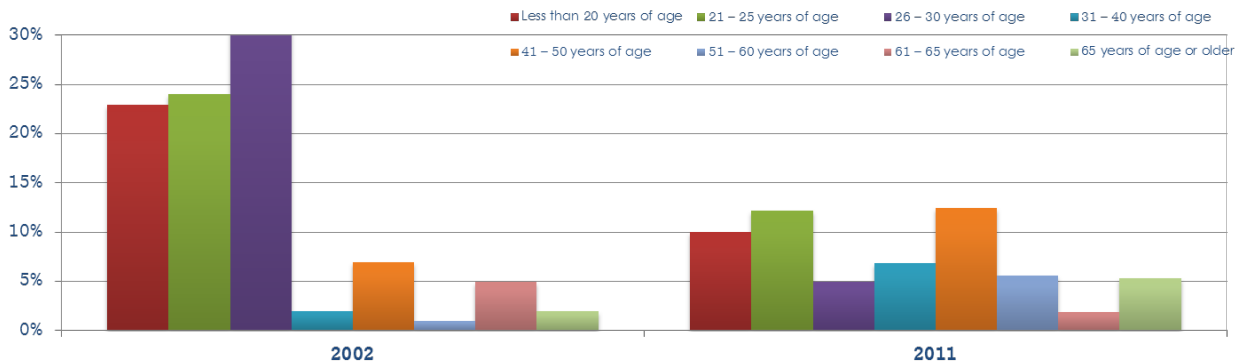
44% of respondents stated that the OAA is either easy or very easy to work with. This question produced extremely high correlation with overall general satisfaction, and therefore it can be

concluded that ease of interaction is a fundamental and critically important component of the services that are offered to members of the OAA.

- **Membership type.** The strong majority of the respondents to the survey were practicing and intern architects.



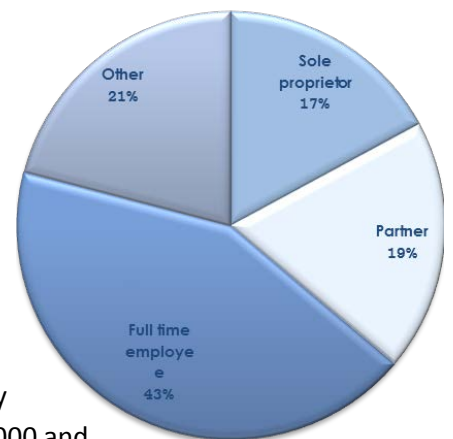
- **Gender.** Respondents to the survey were split 25/75 female/male. The proportion of the respondents who are female increased by 33% over the 2002 member survey.
- **Age.** The age profile of the respondents to the survey is far more representative than the profile of the responses to the 2002 survey. The 2011 survey received responses from all age groups with no single age group dominating.



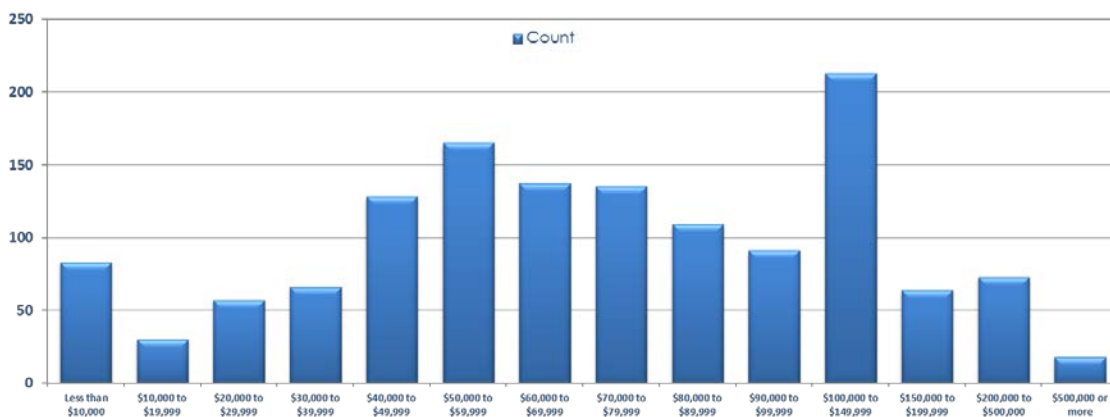
- Years in the profession.** Most of the respondents to the survey have worked in the profession for more than 20 years and therefore have a strong knowledge on which to base their opinions. In general Framework found that the longer an architect is a member, the more likely they are to be satisfied. Stated differently, longevity correlates with satisfaction.



- Employment form.** Most respondents to the survey were full-time employees of architectural firms. There is also a roughly equal split between those who indicated that they are sole practitioners and those who are partners in architectural firms. The “Other” category comprised several different responses including retired, out of work, working in another field, part-time, and so on. 82% of the respondents work at architectural firms, regardless of whether they are sole practitioners.



- Income.** The respondents were asked to indicate how much income they made from all sources in 2010. The median response was between \$70,000 and \$79,999. While 27% of the respondents are making more than \$100,000 a year, and 6% of respondents are making more than \$200,000, there is a significant component (27%) of the membership making less than \$50,000 a year.



Interestingly, it appears that there is no correlation with overall satisfaction and gross income.

- **Jurisdiction.** 86% of the respondents are licensed in a single jurisdiction. The 200 respondents who indicated they are licensed in more than one jurisdiction also indicated that they are licensed in the following jurisdictions, listed in order of frequency:
 - United States of America
 - Québec
 - Alberta
 - British Columbia
 - Manitoba

For those who are listed in United States of America, the State of California is the most popular.

- **Image.** It is the opinion of the respondents to the survey that their friends have a positive image of the profession. Their clients, the media and the general public have a somewhat less positive image of the profession, while government has the least positive image of the profession. While these results are not what one would normally hope for, they are higher across the board than the results received to a similar question asked in the 2002 survey.

Most respondents are unsure whether the OAA's performance has enhanced the profession's image (56%).

Respondents were asked to use one word to describe the Ontario Association of Architects. This is called unaided recall, wherein the respondents can reply with any answer they see fit. The responses to this question on any survey tend to produce norms or frequently used words. This in turn helps one understand the image or top of mind reaction the respondent has when thinking about the Ontario Association of Architects. In this instance the words most frequently used were positive and include the following:

- | | | |
|----------------|----------------|-------------|
| ▪ Informative | ▪ Necessary | ▪ Effective |
| ▪ Reliable | ▪ Helpful | ▪ Useful |
| ▪ Responsible | ▪ Organized | ▪ Competent |
| ▪ Fair | ▪ Supportive | ▪ Governing |
| ▪ Great | ▪ Good | ▪ Efficient |
| ▪ Responsive | ▪ Resource | |
| ▪ Professional | ▪ Satisfactory | |

Framework also received words that were somewhat indifferent or, stated differently, not overly positive. These words included:

- | | | |
|----------------|--------------|---------------|
| ▪ Toronto | ▪ Conflicted | ▪ Regulator |
| ▪ Adequate | ▪ OAA | ▪ Association |
| ▪ Required | ▪ Okay | |
| ▪ Architecture | ▪ Neutral | |

The most frequently mentioned negative words included:

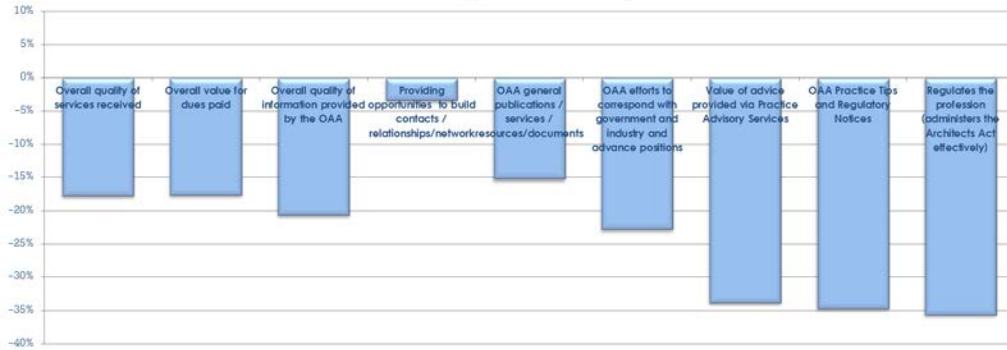
- Disconnected
- Distant
- Institutional
- Out-dated
- Trying
- Irrelevant
- Antiquated
- Club
- Difficult
- Elitist
- Invisible
- Bureaucratic
- Ineffective
- Expensive
- Administrative
- Self-Serving
- Useless
- Conservative
- Passive

- **Weaknesses.** The respondents were asked, by way of unaided recall through open ended questions, to describe the weaknesses of the OAA. While 1,000 of the 4,200 weaknesses submitted were unique, and therefore not able to be grouped, certain trends emerged that focus on six key areas where the OAA should, in the opinions of its members, concentrate future strategies. These areas are: education, advocacy, fees, public awareness, communication, and promotion of the profession. Readers are encouraged to read the full detailed responses in this area as each response is unique and equally important.

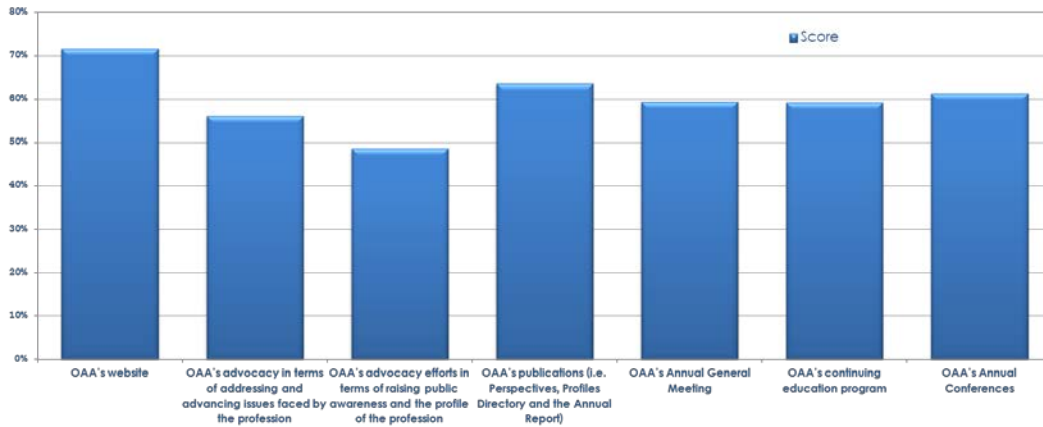
Response	Count	Relative %	Rank
1 Education	721	23%	1
2 Advocacy	599	19%	2
3 Fees/costs	421	13%	3
4 Public awareness	403	13%	4
5 Communication	364	11%	5
6 Promotion	263	8%	6
7 Interns	170	5%	7
8 Government Relations	77	2%	8
9 Website	75	2%	9
10 Responsiveness	27	1%	10
11 Client awareness	24	1%	11
12 Member services	23	1%	12
13 Other	1094	35%	

- **Strengths.** There were 4,755 distinct strengths listed about the OAA. Most of the strengths focused on regulating the profession, promoting the profession, advocating on behalf of the profession, and education, however, many were unique and difficult to group. Certain trends emerged that can be better understood by examining the placement of words within the word cloud as displayed in the following image:

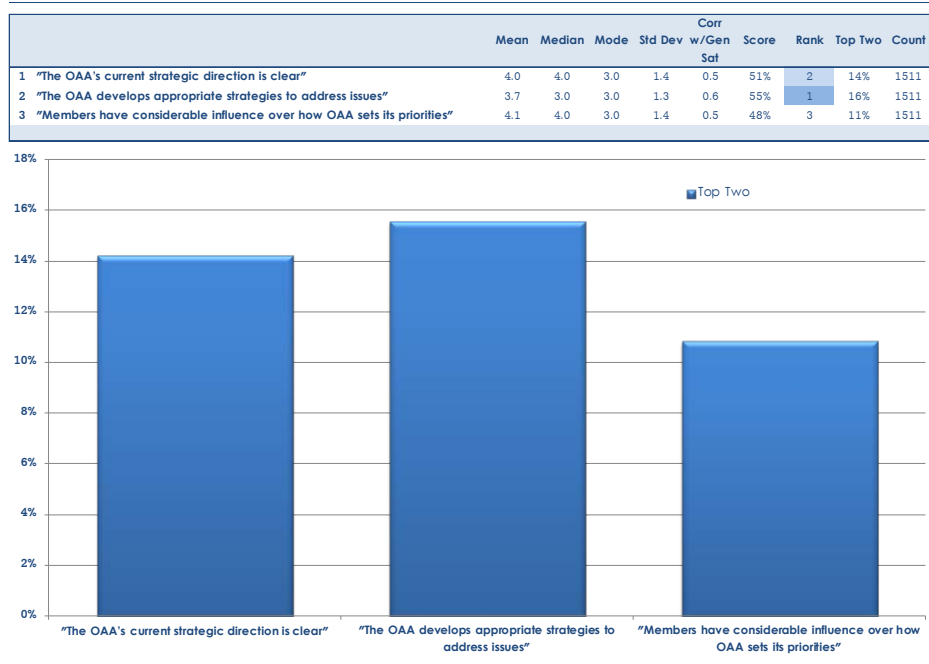
Expectation Gaps



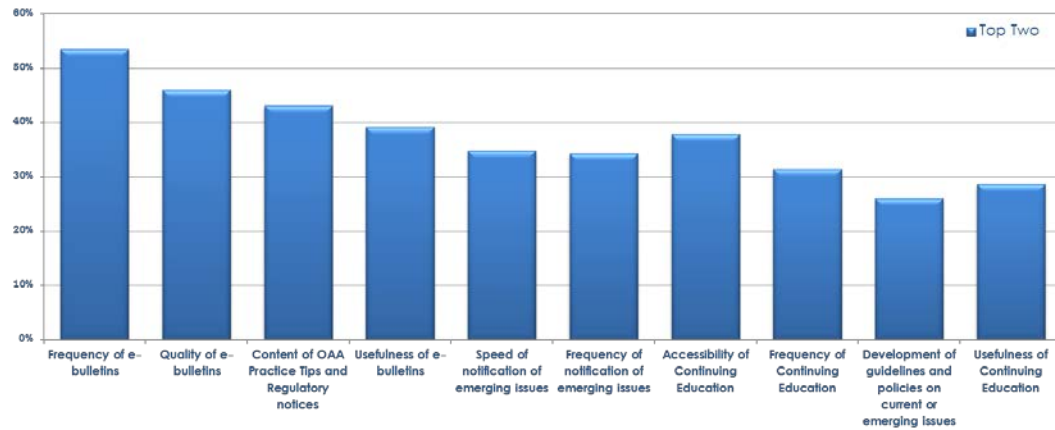
- Satisfaction with specific member services.** Satisfaction with specific member services is generally relatively high. Clearly, the OAA's website is effective and well thought of, while attention needs to be paid to the areas pertaining to advocacy



- Strategic Direction.** It is apparent that the OAA's current strategic direction is not clear, and is not supported by strategies to address issues. In addition, members do not feel that they have considerable influence over how the OAA sets its strategic priorities.



- Communications.** Satisfaction with specific communication efforts is relatively high and relatively consistent across the board. The satisfaction levels are as follows:



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- **Other issues.** The survey asked several questions about other issues which are very detailed and oriented to specific information queries. They are not included in these summary results. These other issues include:

- Types of software used
- Preferred format of communications
- Issues specific to OAA meetings, including the annual conference, annual general meeting, local society meetings, continuing education seminars, presidents' annual society visits.
- Social media usage and preferences
- Specific OAA website usage
- Satisfaction with recent contact with the OAA
- Issues concerning the annual report
- Needs-based segmentation issues
- Typical hours worked
- Typical vacation expectations
- Proportion of time spent at work at specific tasks
- Types of compensation received
- Overtime and bonus compensation received
- Location throughout the province of Ontario
- Ancillary income sources, saving patterns, and retirement plans
- Other professional designations
- OAA volunteering patterns