

Canadian Military Engineers Association
MEMBERSHIP SURVEY
September 2005

1) Introduction

An Association wide member survey was conducted over the spring and summer of 2005 to gain feedback from members in preparation for a strategic planning workshop held in September. The workshop used the input from members to assist in the preparation of a Strategic Plan for the CMEA that will guide the direction and priorities of the CMEA over the next five or more years. Sufficient response was received from the web-based survey to allow critical input to the long-term plans of the Association, reflecting the real needs and interests of all members across Canada.

2) Profile of respondents

The 192 members who replied to our questionnaire fell into the following categories.

Regular Force – 72%
Retired Regular – 22%
Reserve Force – 2%
Retired Reserve – 2%
Civilian – 2%

For the regular force members, the breakdown was as follows.

Officers – 55%
Senior NCMs – 36%
Junior NCMs – 9%

The current makeup of CMEA membership is as follows.

Regular Force – 741
Retired Regular – 120
Reserve Force – 15
Retired Reserve – 22
Civilian – 32

Five females responded, and results came in from all Chapters except Lunenburg. Most came from Gagetown (31), followed by Edmonton (28), Ottawa (23), Chilliwack (16), and Esquimalt (13). The responses from the other 13 Chapters were all single digit numbers, while eight individuals indicated that they were unsure of which Chapter they belonged to, and eleven were Members at Large. Twenty-three respondents were members of the CFB Chilliwack Historical Society, ten were members of CanTechAide, and five were members of the Atlantic Retired Sappers.

3) Confidence in the results

There were 178 responses to the membership survey with an additional 14 partially completed surveys, out of an approximate CMEA membership of 930 members. An opinion poll or survey with a response of 192 out of a total population of 930 will yield a confidence interval of 6 with a 95% confidence level.

The confidence level tells you how sure you can be of the result. It is expressed as a percentage and represents how often the true percentage of the population who would pick an answer lies within the confidence interval. The 95% confidence level means you can be 95% certain; the 99% confidence level means you can be 99% certain. Most researchers use the 95% confidence level. It means that the results will be the same 19 times out of 20.

The confidence interval is the plus-or-minus figure usually reported in newspaper or television opinion poll results. For example, if you use a confidence interval of 4 and 47% percent of your sample picks an answer you can be "sure" that if you had asked the question of the entire relevant population between 43% (47-4) and 51% (47+4) would have picked that answer. In our case, we are dealing with an interval of 6 so our percentage results are within 6% of what we would get if we polled all 930 members.

4) What should the priorities of the CMEA be?

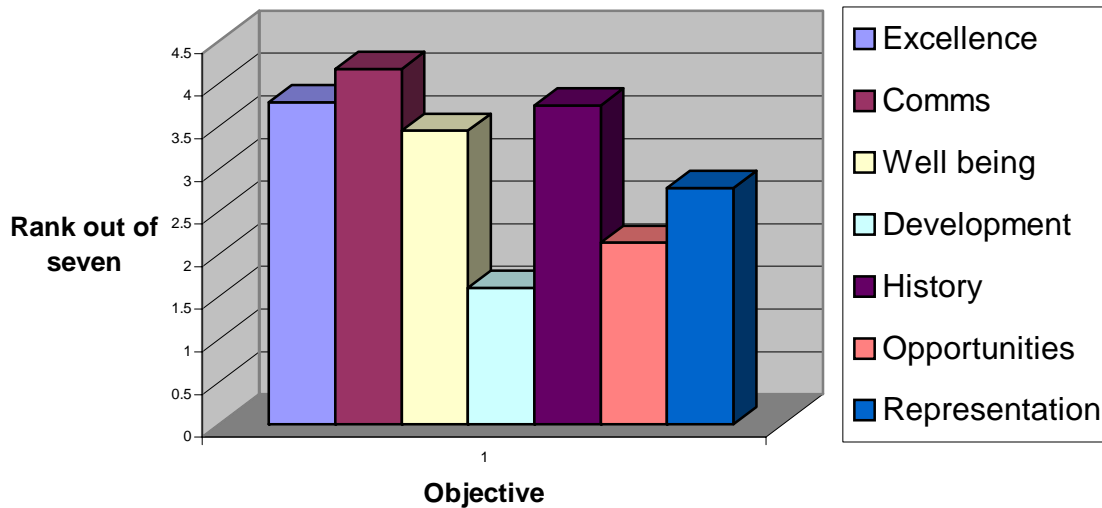
This is the fundamental question and the first question members were asked to rate. The wording of the question was as follows.

“The following seven sentences summarize the basic objectives of the CMEA. Please rate each from 1 to 7 with 1 being the most important to you. If you feel that the CMEA should have an additional objective, please add it.

- The CMEA promotes excellence in all aspects of military engineering and enhances the effectiveness of Canada’s military engineering capability.*
- The CMEA provides coordination and communication among serving and retired members and associated organizations.*
- The CMEA facilitates the well being of members.*
- The CMEA assists in applying military engineering talent for world development.*
- The CMEA assists in the preservation of Canadian military engineering history, customs, and traditions.*
- The CMEA enhances opportunities for members in the CF and society in general.*
- The CMEA represents the interests of military engineering to the Canadian government and other organizations addressing national security issues.*
- Other.*

With a 6% confidence interval, the results are accurate to within 0.4, thus this statement of priorities truly reflects the interests of all members of the Association.

CMEA Basic Objectives



The most important objectives for members are for the CMEA to provide coordination and communication, rated 4.2, and to promote excellence, rated at 3.8, while applying talent for world development and enhancing opportunities for members received the least support at 1.6 and 2.1 respectively. Additional basic objectives for the CMEA suggested by members included the following.

- a) Facilitate an esprit-de-corps among current serving service members and their civilian partners and past members.
- b) Establish a rapport with associated professional engineer societies in the national and international community.
- c) Promote new and developing Engineer roles as well as provide a forum for presenting ongoing challenges and achievements to serving and retired members and associated organizations.
- d) The CMEA is the "glue" that holds the CME Branch together.

5) Assessment of individual activities within objectives

Following the first question of the overall priorities of the CMEA, seven questions followed outlining the individual activities currently supporting each of the basic objectives. The results for each follow.

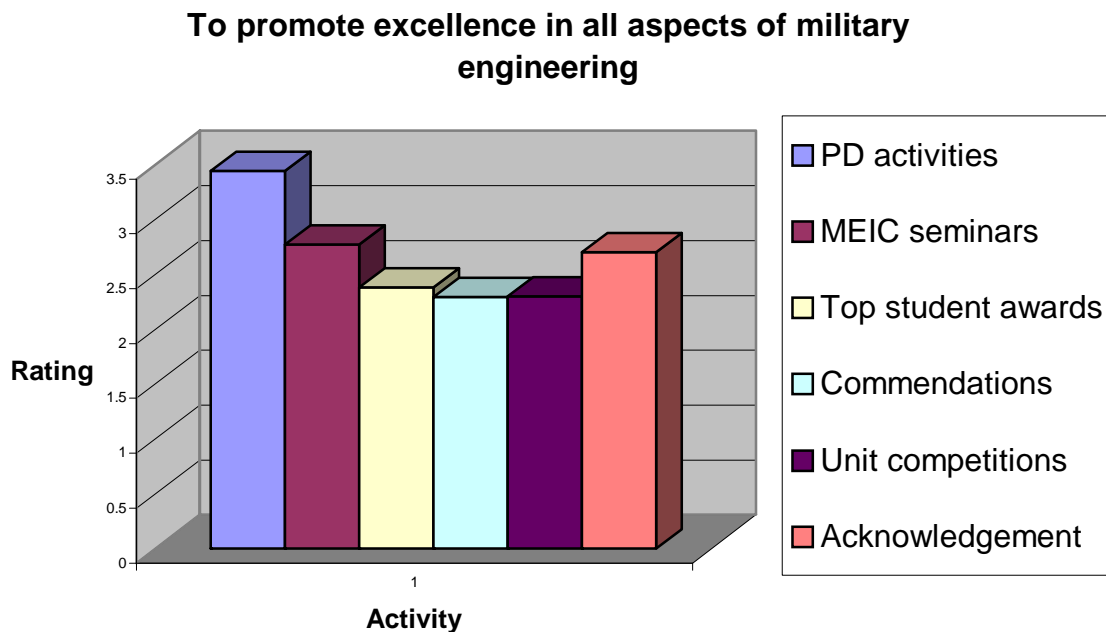
6) To promote excellence in all aspects of military engineering

Participants were asked to rate six activities supporting this objective. Results are accurate to 0.2. The wording of the question was as follows.

“To promote excellence in all aspects of military engineering the CMEA conducts the following activities. Please rate them from most important to you to least, with 1

representing the most important. If you believe there should be other activities supporting this objective please add them.

- Professional development activities.
- Military Engineering Institute of Canada seminars.
- Top Student Awards.
- CMEA Commendations.
- Unit competitions.
- Acknowledgement of service, on retirement.”



The top rated activities in support of this objective were to provide professional development activities, rated 3.4, seminars, rated 2.8, and to acknowledge service on retirement, rated 2.7. Suggestions for additional activities for this CMEA objective include the following.

- a) Outside partnerships with professional societies, trades associations, Allied Engineer organizations, etc.
- b) Recognition of significant events both current and past.

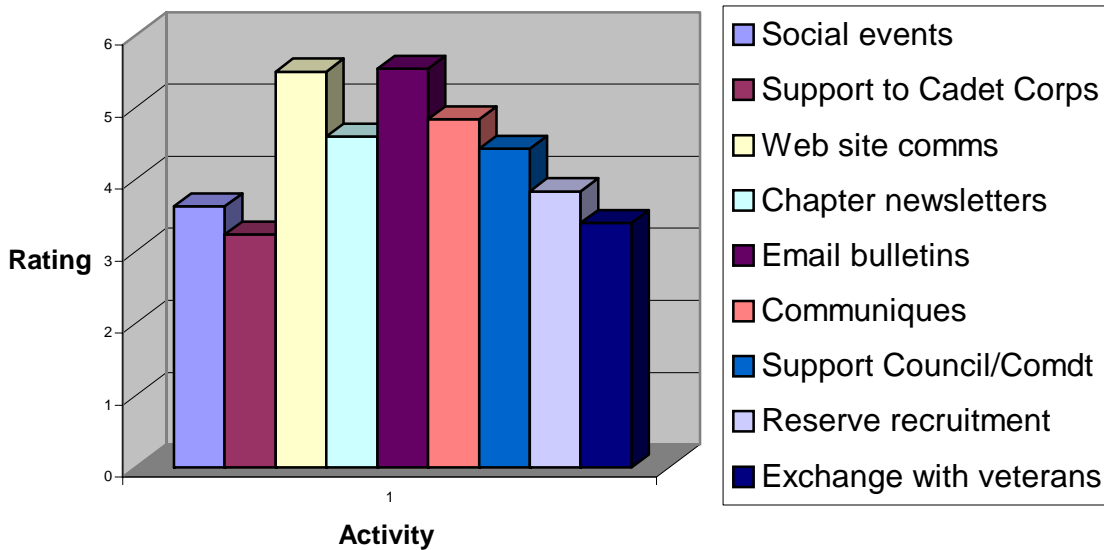
7) To provide coordination and communication

Participants were asked to rate nine activities supporting this objective. Results are accurate to 0.5.

“To provide coordination and communication among serving and retired members and associated organizations, the CMEA conducts the following activities. Please rate them from most important to you to least, with 1 representing the most important. If you believe there should be other activities supporting this objective please add them.

- Social events.*
- Support to Cadet Corps.*
- Communications through web site.*
- Communications through CMEA Chapter newsletters.*
- Communications through email bulletins.*
- Communications through input to “CHIMO Communiqués”.*
- Support to CME Branch Council, Colonel Commandant, etc.*
- Support in recruitment to engineering Reserve units.*
- Exchange of information with veterans groups.”*

Coordination and communication



The top rated activities in support of this objective were e-mail bulletins, rated 5.5, web site communications, also rated 5.5, and CHIMO Communiqués, rated 4.8. Support to cadets at 3.2 and veterans groups at 3.4 received the least support from members.

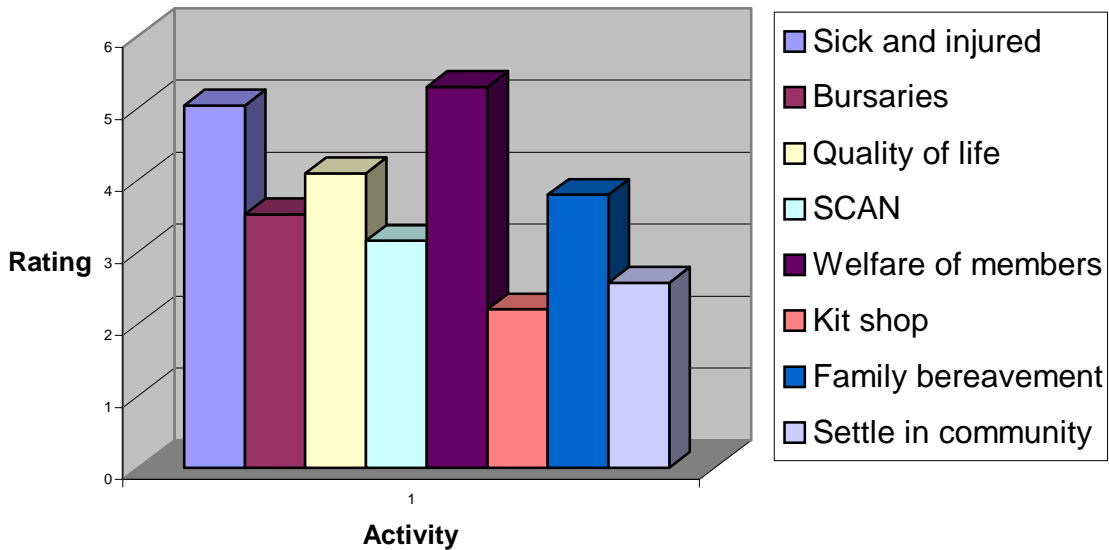
8) To facilitate the well-being of members

Participants were asked to rate eight activities supporting this objective. Results are accurate to 0.5.

“To facilitate the well-being of members the CMEA conducts the following activities. Please rate them from most important to you to least, with 1 representing the most important. If you believe there should be other activities supporting this objective please add them.

- Assistance with the sick and injured.
- Bursaries for post secondary education.
- Quality of Life and Conditions of Service initiatives.
- Support to the Second Career Assistance Network.
- Welfare of members and their families.
- Coordination of engineer kit shop.
- Acknowledgement of family bereavement.
- Assistance to former serving members to settle in the local community.”

Facilitate the well being of members



Assisting with the welfare of members and their families, rated 5.3, and assistance to the sick and injured, rated at 5.0, received the most support, while coordination of the Kit Shop and assistance to settle received the least at 2.2 and 2.6 respectively. Other suggested activities in support of this objective were as follows.

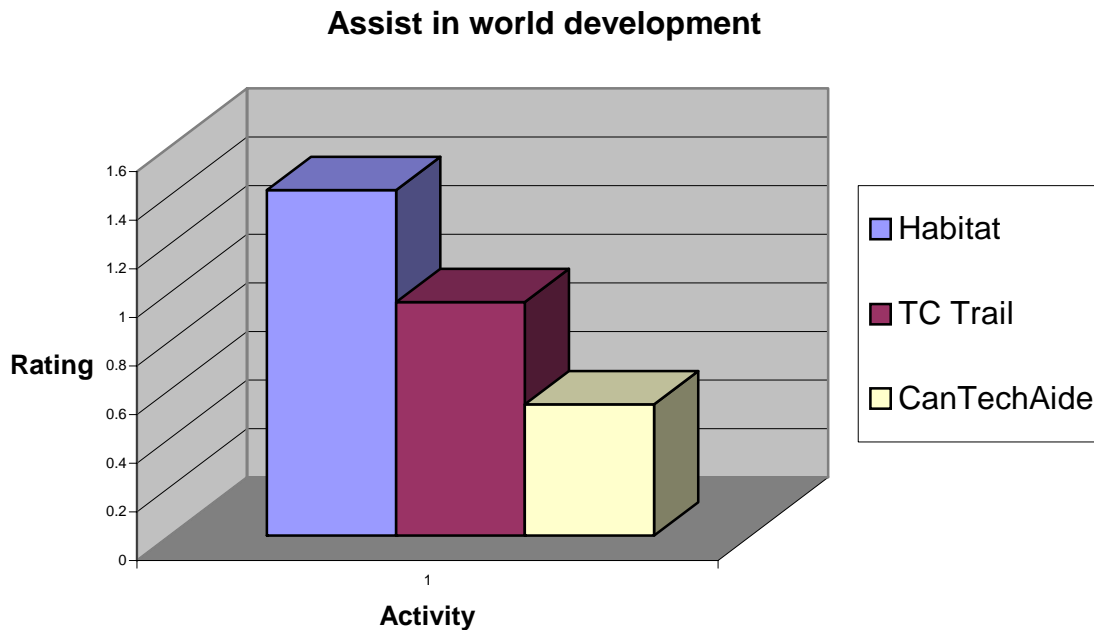
- a) Post traumatic syndrome education and assistance.
- b) Passing on significant information on individuals, retirement, and promotion much like is done in University magazines directed at alumni.

9) To assist in applying military engineering talent for world development

Participants were asked to rate three activities supporting this objective. Results are accurate to 0.2.

“To assist in applying military engineering talent for world development the CMEA conducts the following activities. Please rate them from most important to you to least, with 1 representing the most important. If you believe there should be other activities supporting this objective please add them.

- Habitat for Humanity projects.*
- Trans Canada Trail.*
- Assisting CanTechAide.”*



There was no a great deal of support for this overall objective. Habitat received a rating of 1.4 while CanTechAide received 0.5 out of 3. Additional suggestions for activities in support of this objective included the following.

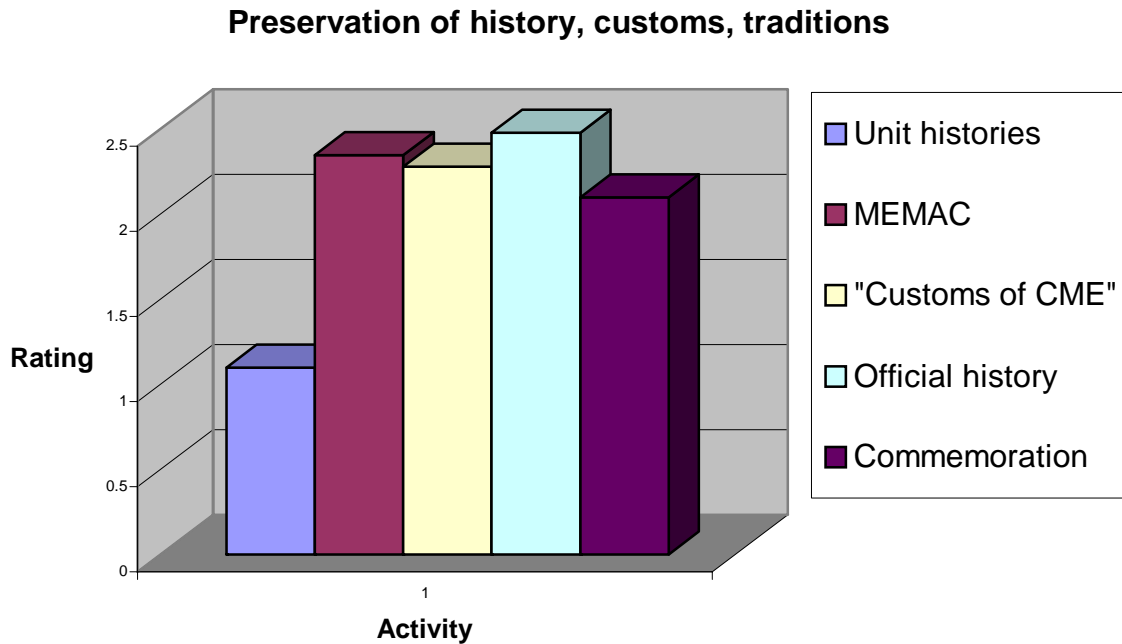
- a) Actively support the movement to cease the use of mines.
- b) Outreach projects to Northern and isolated communities.
- c) Partnerships with groups like CESO for northern development, aboriginal development, and third world development.
- d) Continue with bridges for Canada.
- e) Offer of technical assistance to NGOs in the fulfillment of their missions.

10) To assist in the preservation of history, customs, and traditions

Participants were asked to rate five activities supporting this objective. Results are accurate to 0.3.

“To assist in the preservation of Canadian military engineering history, customs, and traditions, the CMEA conducts the following activities. Please rate them from most important to you to least, with 1 representing the most important. If you believe there should be other activities supporting this objective please add them.

- Assistance with Unit Histories.
- Support to the Military Engineering Museum Association of Canada.
- Assistance in the production of the “Customs of the Canadian Military Engineers”.
- Promotion of the official CME history and assisting in the production of additional volumes as necessary.
- Commemorating achievements and sacrifice of members.”



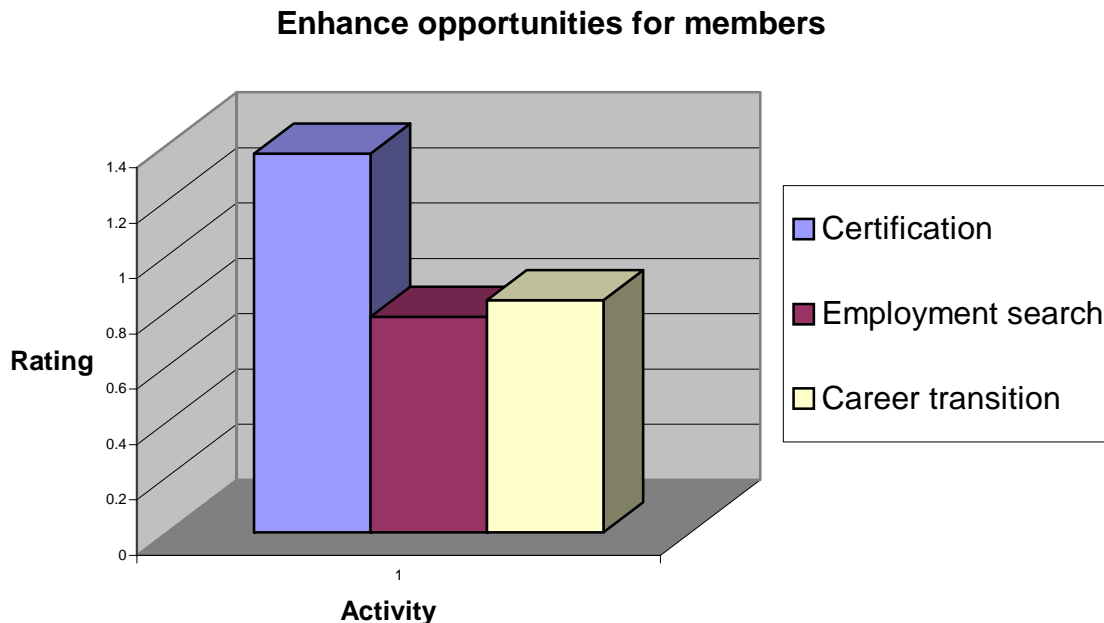
Members consider that support to the official history is the most important activity at 2.5 out of 5 while assistance with unit histories is the least supported at 1.1.

11) To enhance opportunities for members

Participants were asked to rate three activities supporting this objective. Results are accurate to 0.2.

“To enhance opportunities for members in the CF and society in general, the CMEA conducts the following activities. Please rate them from most important to you to least, with 1 representing the most important. If you believe there should be other activities supporting this objective please add them.”

- Assisting with the certification of military engineering experience and training in civil society.*
- Assistance in the search for new employment.*
- Assistance in the transition to a meaningful ‘second career’.*”



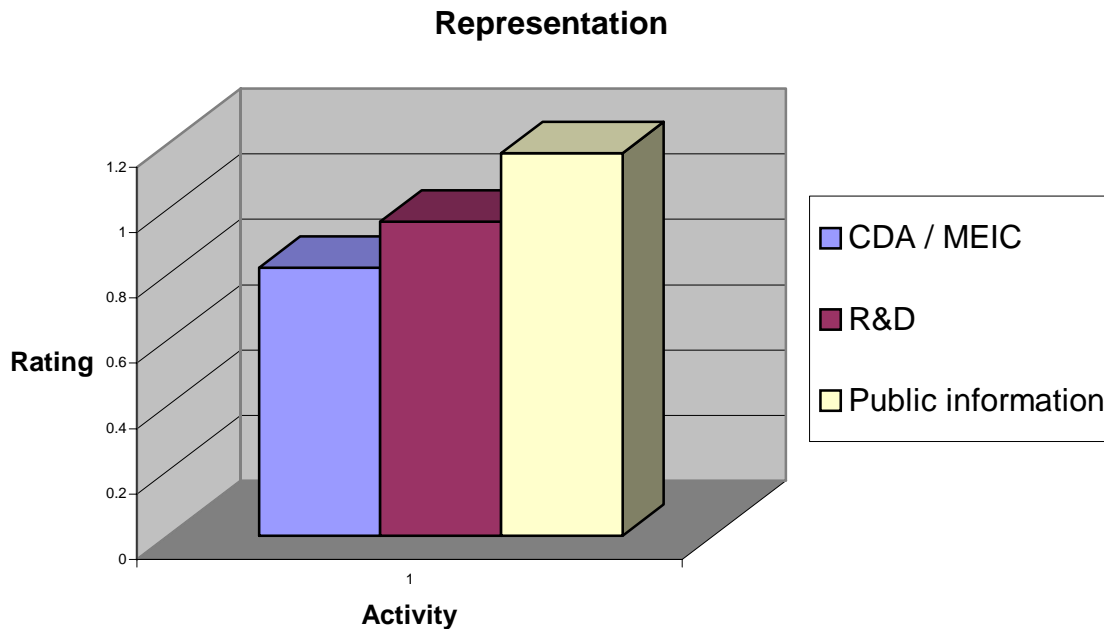
Certification was the top rated activity at 1.4 out of 3.

12) To represent interests to the Canadian government and other organizations

Participants were asked to rate three activities supporting this objective. Results are accurate to 0.2.

“To represent the interests of military engineering to the Canadian government and other organizations addressing national security issues, the CMEA conducts the following activities. Please rate them from most important to you to least, with 1 representing the most important. If you believe there should be other activities supporting this objective please add them.”

- *Advocacy with the Conference of Defence Associations and the Military Engineering Association of Canada.*
- *Encouraging research and development in military engineering.*
- *Public information activities demonstrating military engineering excellence in all forms.”*



Public information was the top rated activity while support to CDA and MEIC was the least. Other suggested activities for this objective included the following.

- a) Form closer liaison with British, Australian and American Engineer units. Foster the idea of sister units abroad.
- b) Should the need for parochial inputs to the federal government be evident, CMEA needs to be able to advocate outside the CDA forum.
- c) Promoting links with professional engineering associations (and other applicable associations or societies e.g. firefighters, geomatics, etc.)

13) Priority of all objectives

There are a total of 37 activities within the seven Basic Objectives of the CMEA. It is possible to weight the 37 activities according to the ratings calculated from the responses to the assessment of the seven Objectives in order to come up with an overall estimate of the most important and least important activities overall. By doing that we obtain the following top rated activities.

- 1) Communications through web site
- 2) Communications through email bulletins
- 3) Welfare of members and their families
- 4) Communications through input to “CHIMO Communiqués”
- 5) Assistance with the sick and injured
- 6) Professional development activities
- 7) Communications through CMEA Chapter Newsletters

Similarly the bottom rated activities of the CMEA were obtained as follows.

31. Habitat for humanity projects
32. Encouraging research and development in military engineering
33. Advocacy with the CDA and the MEAC
34. Assistance in the transition to a meaningful ‘second career’
35. Assistance in the search for new employment
36. Trans Canada Trail
37. Assisting CanTechAide

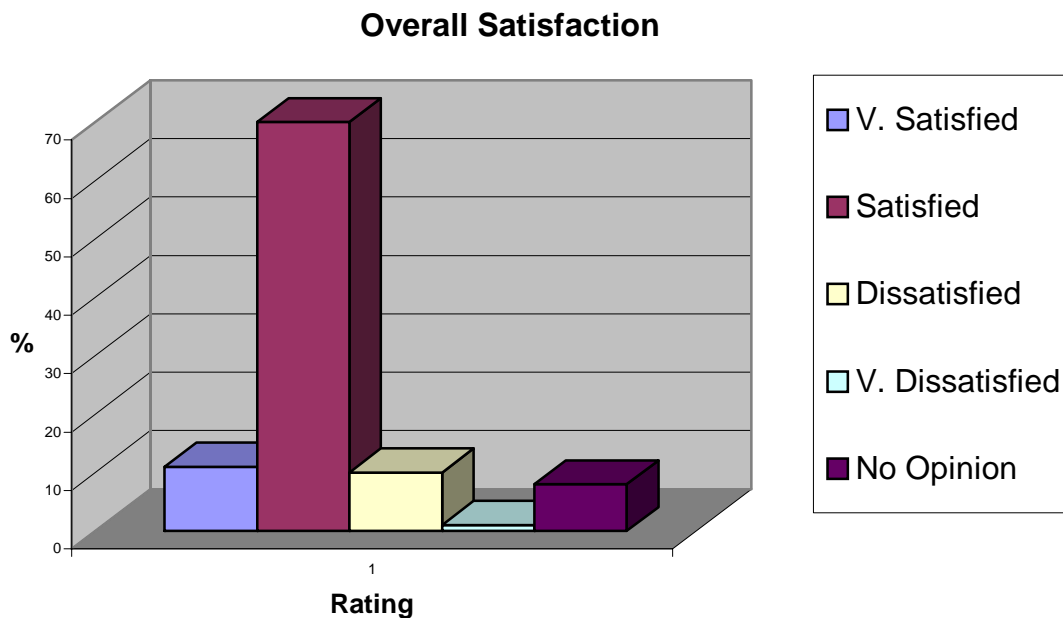
14) General comments on members attitude to the CMEA

Following the above questions on the existing objectives and activities of the CMEA, members were then asked a series of general questions about their feelings towards the Association and how effective some of its activities were.

15) Overall satisfaction with CMEA

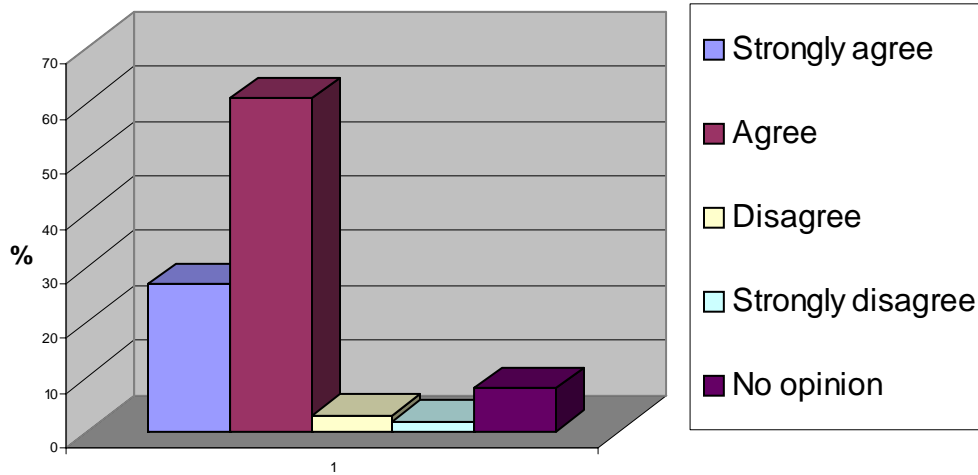
How would you rate your overall satisfaction with the CMEA?

Very dissatisfied. Dissatisfied. Satisfied. Very satisfied. No opinion.



The results were excellent! 81% were either satisfied or very satisfied with membership. Another indicator of general satisfaction with membership is the response to the question, “Would you recommend CMEA membership to others?” Here, 87% indicated that they agreed or strongly agreed with that statement. This would indicate an excellent starting point for increased membership through promotion by individual members.

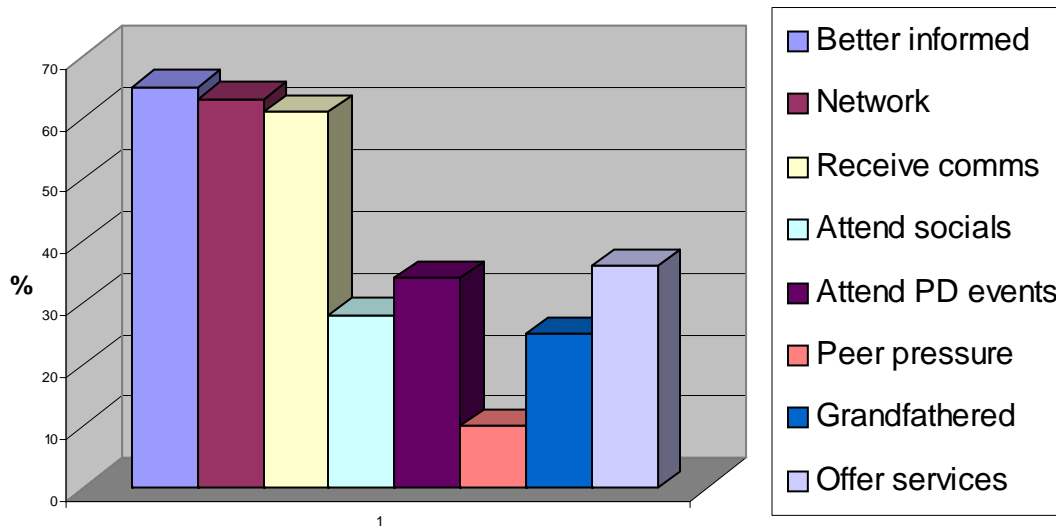
I would recommend membership in the CMEA



16) Why did you join the CMEA?

The top three reasons, of the eight provided, for joining CMEA were: to be better informed about military engineering in Canada; to network with other military engineers; and, to receive communication bulletins, newsletters, etc. About 60% of respondents agreed that these were the top three reasons why they joined. The message here seems to be that communications and networking are key.

Why did you join the CMEA?

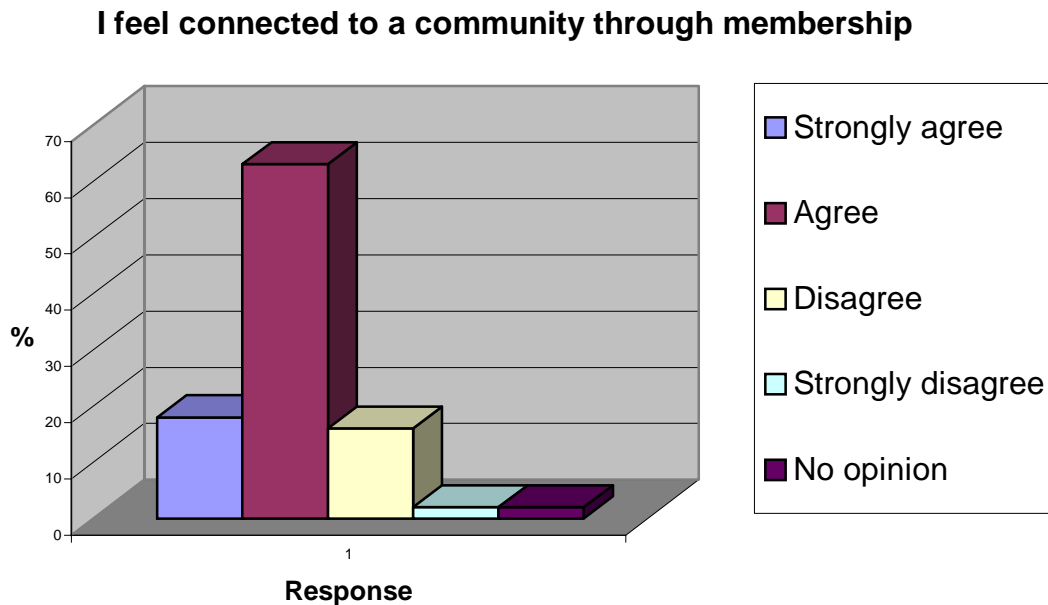


Members were offered space to add other reasons why they joined the Association. Some of the replies included the following.

- a) To promote military engineering as a proactive discipline of Canadian military professionals.
- b) To support the Top Student Awards.
- c) To maintain my link to the CME family both serving and retired.
- d) To support initiatives that will enhance and promote the military engineering family.
- e) To keep the CHIMO Spirit alive!
- f) Because this association embodies all that our Corps is about and is responsible for providing leadership into the future.
- g) To share a sense of brotherhood with others in my profession.

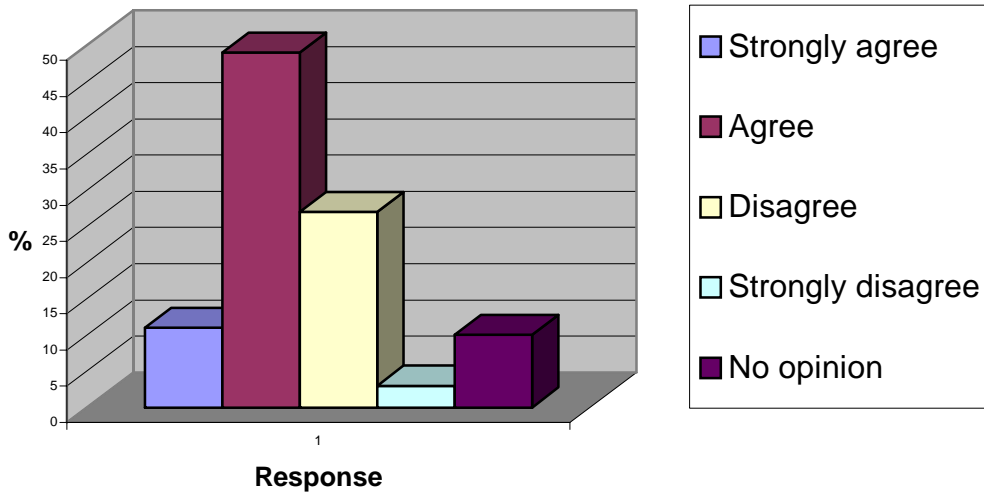
17) What does membership give you?

Three questions addressed this issue, with the first asking respondents to rate the statement that, “I feel connected to a military engineering ‘community’ through membership”. 81% agreed or strongly agreed with this statement, perhaps reinforcing the continued need for connectedness through communications.



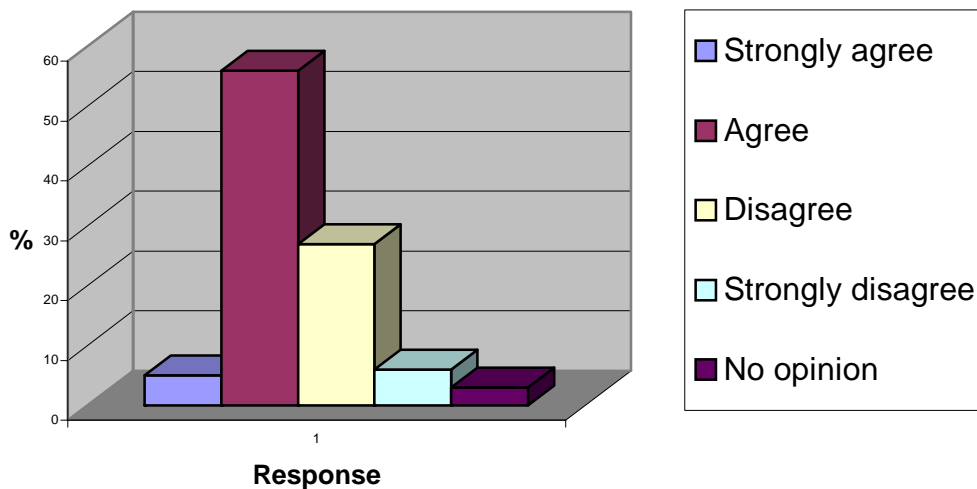
The second question asked respondents to rate the statement, “I improve my knowledge and understanding of military engineering through membership in the CMEA”. 60% agreed or strongly agreed with this statement, perhaps indicating a desire for professional development.

I improve my knowledge and understanding



The third question asked respondents to rate the statement, “My membership helps me to stay current with changes in military engineering”. Again, 61% agreed or strongly agreed while 33% disagreed or strongly disagreed, reflecting similar concerns as the previous questions with regard to professional development and communications.

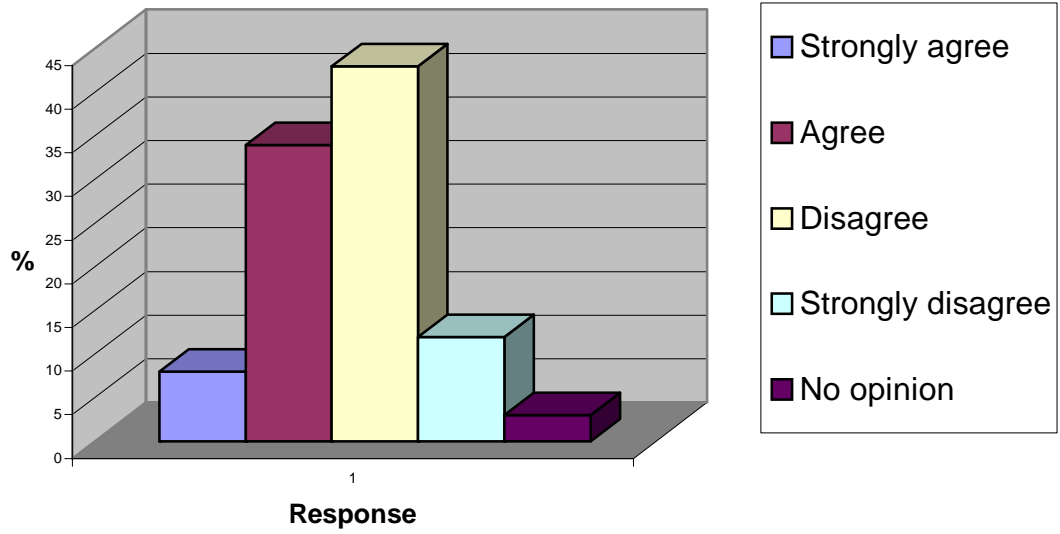
Membership helps me stay current



18) How well are they informed?

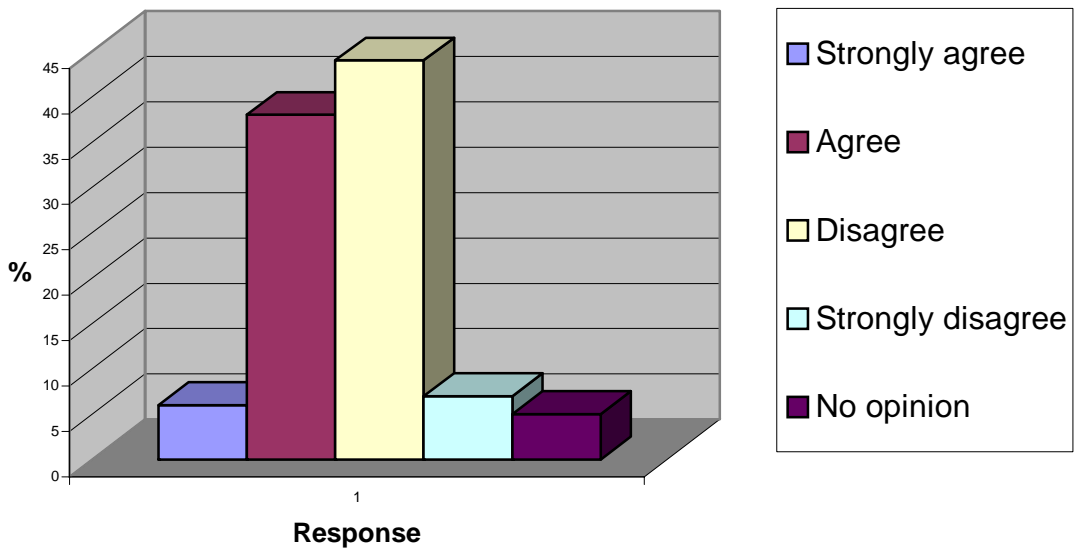
Respondents were then asked to rate their knowledge of Chapter and National events, and assess the value of various communication methods currently in use. When asked to rate the statement, “I consider myself well informed on CMEA Chapter events”, only 42% agreed or strongly agreed while 55% disagreed or strongly disagreed. Clearly there are problems at the local level for the CMEA.

I am well informed on Chapter events



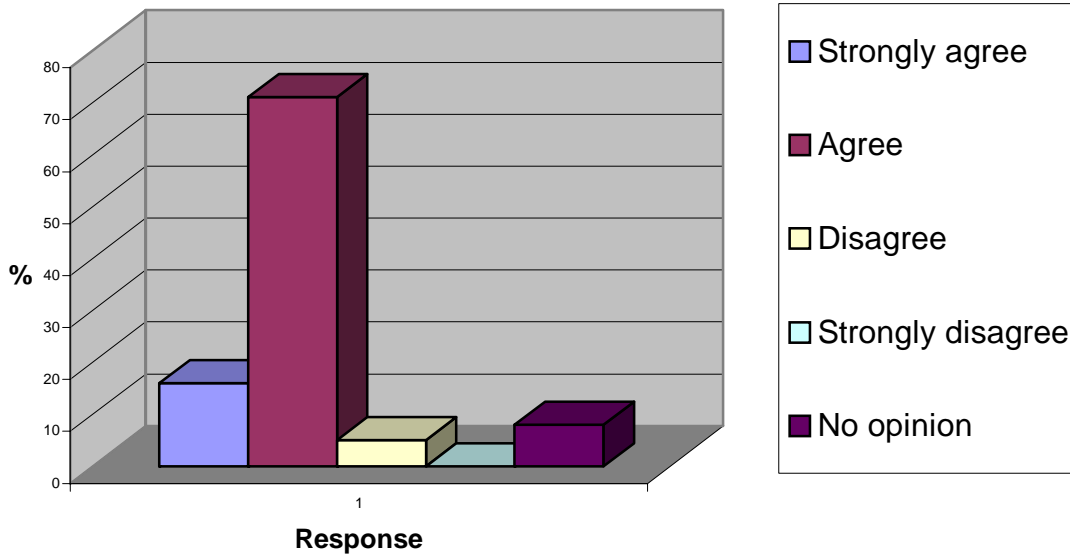
With respect to national events the results are similar but somewhat better as 44% were on the plus side and 51% on the negative.

I am well informed on National events



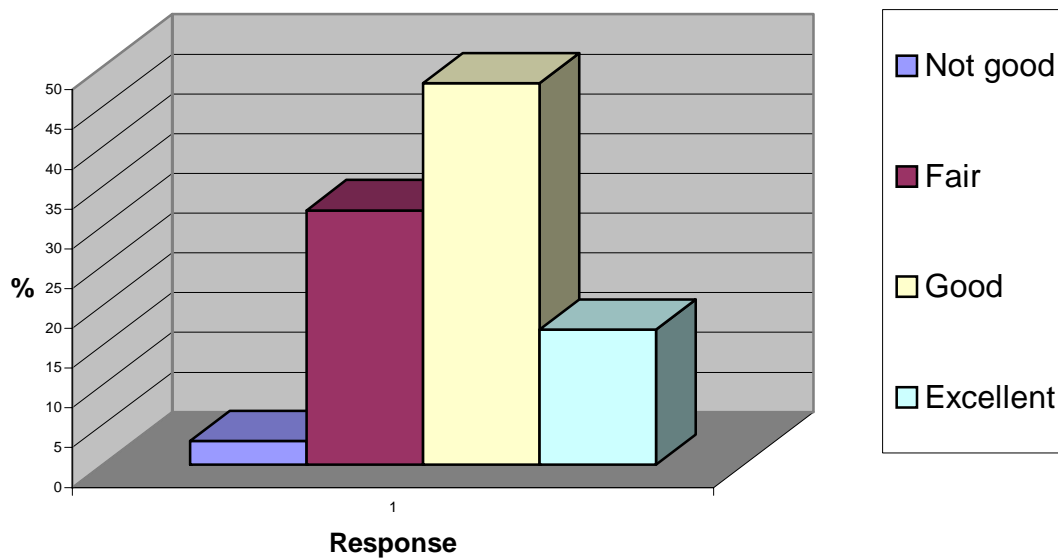
When asked whether the present level of fees for membership were appropriate, 87% agreed or strongly agreed. Removing those from the survey with no opinion on this question, a full 94% agreed that the fee structure is appropriate.

Agree with present level of fees

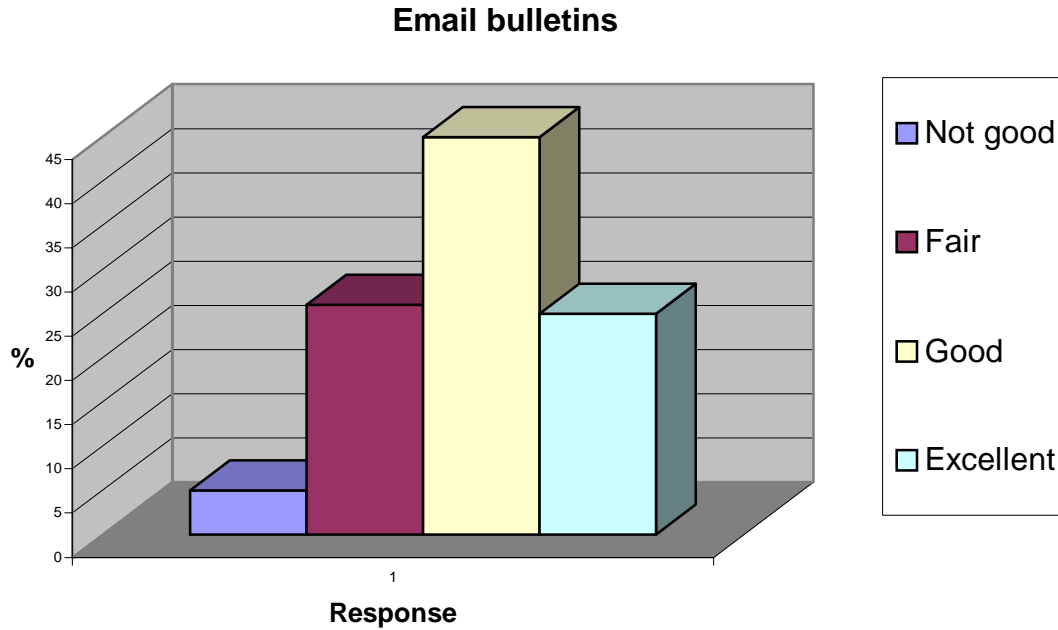


In terms of communication methods, when asked to rate the value of the CHIMO Communiqués, 65% rated them either Good or Excellent, while 35% rated them Fair or Not Good.

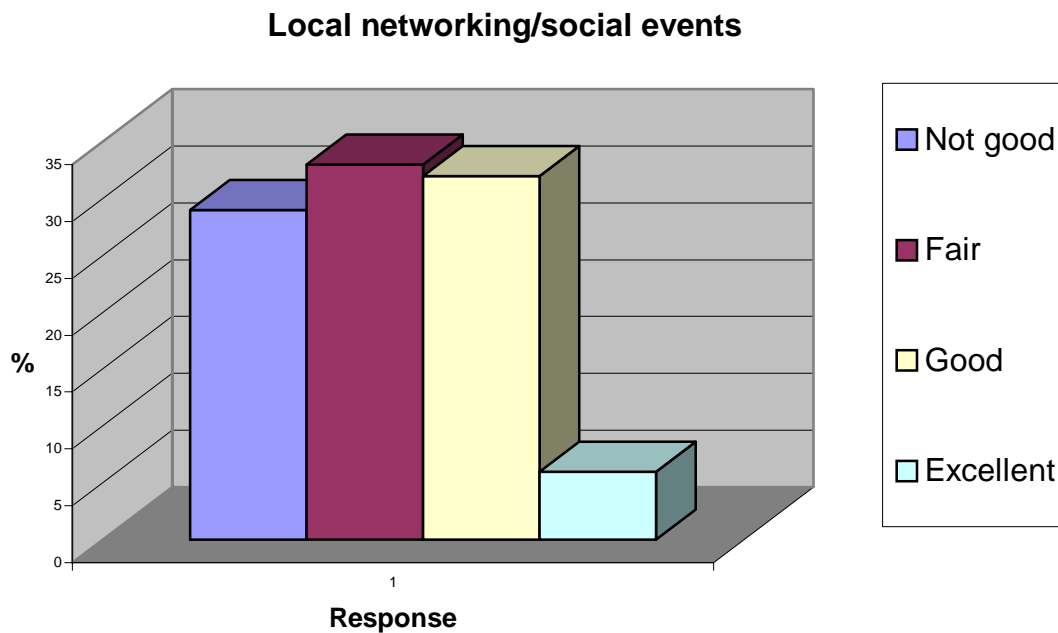
CHIMO Communiqués



When asked to rate the value of Email bulletins as a means of communication, 70% rated them either Good or Excellent, while 30% rated them Fair or Not Good.

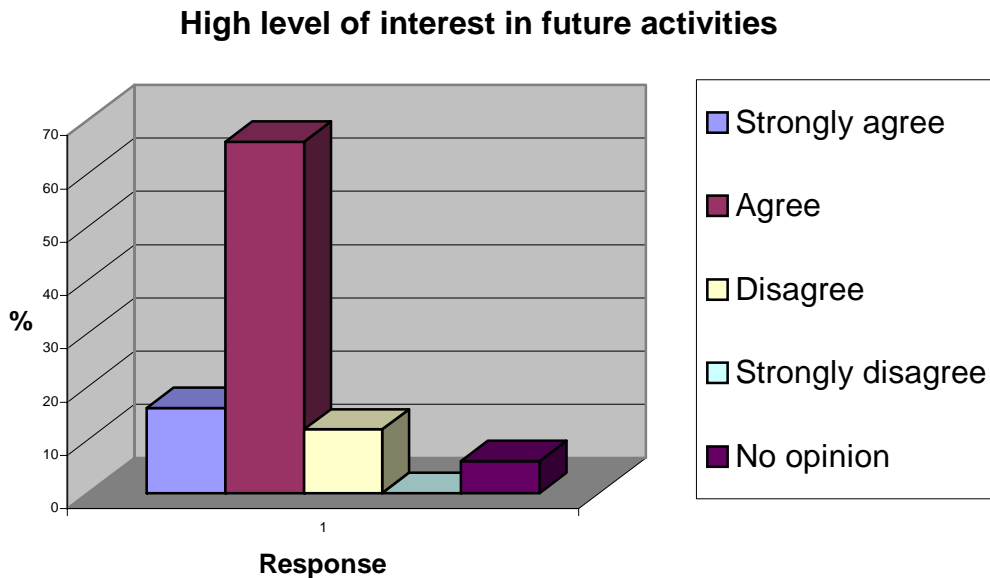


As for the response to networking or social events at the local level, only 38% rated them Good or Excellent, while 62% rated them Fair or Not Good indicating a low regard for this method of communications and networking.



19) What about the future?

Here we have 82% agreeing or strongly agreeing that they have a high level of interest in future CMEA activities, indicating that the members are looking for leadership in meeting their needs as expressed in this survey. Keeping informed, both locally and nationally, as indicated by the poor results from the previous questions, needs attention.



20) Areas of interest

When asked what military engineering activity they were most interested in, 120 indicated Combat Engineering, 106 Construction Engineering, 64 Airfield Engineering, 32 Diving, 31 Airborne, 26 Geomatics, 24 Fire Fighting, and 13 'Other'.

Other areas of interest included the following.

- a) Engineering support at the outset of newly deployed operations, now referred to as Theatre Activation.
- b) National infrastructure development and humanitarian aid overseas.
- c) EOD / IED Operations – the terrorist threat.
- d) CIMIC.
- e) Developments in foreign Engineer Training and Technologies.
- f) Civilian equivalency after retirement.
- g) Environmental Engineering.

21) Conclusion

Communication is paramount. Members see the CMEA as a source of information both current and professional, and a means to keep abreast of events happening to their colleagues and within the larger family of military engineering. This initial member survey has provided excellent background information reflecting the priorities and

interests of all members, and was a critical input to the Strategic Planning Workshop. A similar survey will be conducted every four to five years in order to stay current with member's interests as the Association grows. A sincere thank you to all those who participated in the member survey.