



Construction Writers Association
2008 Membership Survey

Conducted by
Two Rivers Marketing
September 2008

Executive Summary

Purpose

The 2008 membership survey was conducted by Two Rivers Marketing in conjunction with the Construction Writers Association (CWA) board of directors. The objective was to gather feedback from current members of CWA for future planning efforts.

Methodology

CWA Executive Director Deborah Hodges distributed a Web site link via e-mail to approximately 300 CWA members. The link connected members to an electronic survey of 25 questions. A total of 70 completed surveys were collected through the online survey tool. The results have been totaled and are represented in graphs on the following pages. Comments and “other” responses have also been collected and are printed, starting on page 11.

Results

Membership results

- Fifty one percent (51%) of the survey respondents indicated they have been a member for one to five years.
- Sixty eight percent (68%) of respondents reported the key reason they joined CWA was for the networking opportunities.
- More than half of respondents reported working for a company rather than an association or freelancing.
- Networking was ranked as the number one CWA member benefit, followed by the annual meeting.
- Respondents asked for more networking opportunities and Webinars to enhance their CWA membership.
- Approximately 27% of respondents said they are a member of PRSA and another 14% said they belong to SMPS.
- For long-time members, a majority (55%) said networking was the greatest membership benefit.

Meeting results

- The two most-attended CWA events in the past two years were the annual meeting and the mid-year (fall) meeting.
- More respondents selected Denver as a city for future conferences and meetings than any other city. Other responses included multiple entries for New York City and Los Angeles.
- Fifty nine percent (59%) of respondents said they would likely attend annual meeting if it were held outside of the Washington, D.C., area.
- Regarding event sessions, 56% of respondents said the journalism and communications issues were most valuable.

Sponsorship results

- Eighty seven percent (87%) of respondents said they would prefer to receive sponsorship information via e-mail.
- Nineteen (19) of the 70 respondents indicated they were interested in becoming a CWA sponsor.

Web site results

- Fifty eight percent (58%) of respondents indicated the CWA Web site was easy to navigate. Only 3 respondents said it was difficult.
- 30 respondents indicated they visit the CWA Web site at least once a quarter. Another 25 respondents said they visit the CWA Web site at least once a month.
- Respondents ranked access to member contact information as the number one reason why they visited the CWA Web site. Twenty three percent (23%) respondents said the number one reason they visited the Web site was to check the events calendar.
- Fifty three respondents indicated they would visit the CWA Web site more often if conference presentations were on the site. Another 26 respondents said they would be more likely to visit the site if there were blogs.

Newsletter results

- Almost 75% of respondents indicated they were very interested or interested in the CWA newsletter.
- Seventy one percent (71%) of respondents would prefer to receive the newsletter quarterly.

- Seventy percent (70%) of respondents (49) indicated they would be more likely to read the newsletter if it was distributed electronically instead of a printed version.
- Twenty eight percent (28%) of respondents ranked information on upcoming events as number one in terms of newsletter content. Tips or how-to articles ranked second (25.7%).

CWA award results

- Seventy one percent (71%) of respondents gave the current awards program a 4 or a 5 on a scale of one to five, with five being the highest value.
- Only 20% of respondents said they were very likely to submit an award entry for the awards program next year. Twenty one percent (21%) said they were very unlikely to submit an entry next year.
- Fifty five percent (55%) of respondents said the CWA awards program should be open to non-CWA members.

Continue to the next page to begin reviewing the CWA membership survey results, including graphs that illustrate the responses.

Construction Writers Association Member Survey

1. How long have you been a member of CWA?



- 35.7% [1 to 3 years \(25\)](#)
- 24.2% [5 to 7 years \(17\)](#)
- 15.7% [3 to 5 years \(11\)](#)
- 15.7% [10+ years \(11\)](#)
- 8.5% [7 to 10 years \(6\)](#)

2. What was the key reason you decided to join CWA?



- 68.5% [Networking \(48\)](#)
- 11.4% [Learning opportunities \(8\)](#)
- 11.4% [View "Other" Answers](#)
- 8.5% [Meetings and tours \(6\)](#)
- 0.0% [Job listings/employment opportunities \(0\)](#)

3. Please identify your primary affiliation?

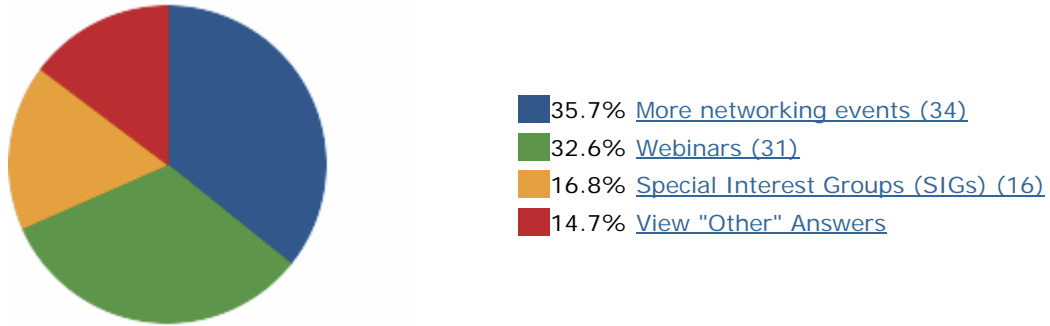


- 57.1% [Company \(40\)](#)
- 24.2% [Freelance professional \(17\)](#)
- 18.5% [Association \(13\)](#)
- 0.0% [Government \(0\)](#)

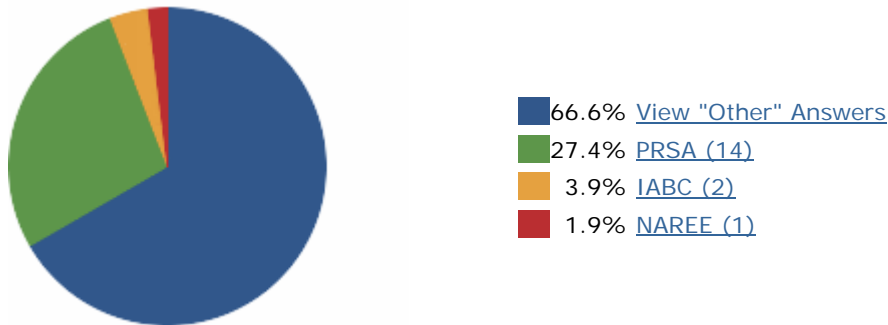
4. Rank the following CWA member benefits in terms of importance to you.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Annual meeting	12.8 %	20.0 %	14.2 %	10.0 %	12.8 %	7.1 %	4.2 %	12.8 %	5.7 %
Educational opportunities	8.5 %	14.2 %	17.1 %	17.1 %	18.5 %	7.1 %	5.7 %	4.2 %	7.1 %
Fall (mid-year) meeting	10.0 %	14.2 %	18.5 %	7.1 %	11.4 %	8.5 %	14.2 %	8.5 %	7.1 %
Finding freelancers	8.5 %	5.7 %	4.2 %	7.1 %	5.7 %	18.5 %	7.1 %	12.8 %	30.0 %
Job listings	8.5 %	7.1 %	10.0 %	7.1 %	7.1 %	14.2 %	8.5 %	17.1 %	20.0 %
Networking	47.1 %	12.8 %	4.2 %	10.0 %	5.7 %	1.4 %	2.8 %	4.2 %	11.4 %
Newsletter	10.0 %	2.8 %	10.0 %	8.5 %	15.7 %	11.4 %	21.4 %	8.5 %	11.4 %
Tips for doing your job better	8.5 %	15.7 %	12.8 %	10.0 %	20.0 %	8.5 %	10.0 %	4.2 %	10.0 %
Tours	10.0 %	5.7 %	2.8 %	7.1 %	7.1 %	20.0 %	18.5 %	14.2 %	14.2 %

5. What other benefits would you like CWA offer to its members?



6. What other organizations are you actively involved with at this time?



7. If you are a long-time member, what are the greatest benefits of your membership?



- 55.7% [Networking \(39\)](#)
- 20.0% [View "Other" Answers](#)
- 18.5% [Conferences and meetings \(13\)](#)
- 5.7% [Programs \(4\)](#)

8. Which of the following CWA events have you attended in the past two years?



- 29.5% [Annual meeting \(42\)](#)
- 21.8% [Fall \(mid-year\) meeting \(31\)](#)
- 14.0% [World of Concrete reception \(20\)](#)
- 12.6% [Board meeting \(18\)](#)
- 11.9% [CONEXPO-CON/AGG reception \(17\)](#)
- 6.3% [View "Other" Answers](#)
- 3.5% [World of Asphalt reception \(5\)](#)

9. What other cities would be of interest to you for conferences and meetings?



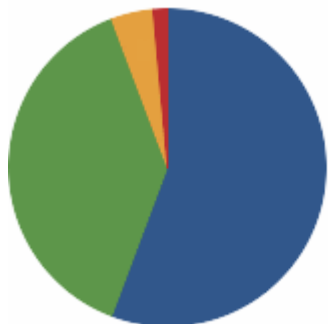
- 33.8% [View "Other" Answers](#)
- 26.4% [Denver \(32\)](#)
- 20.6% [St. Louis \(25\)](#)
- 19.0% [Miami \(23\)](#)

10. How likely would you be to attend the annual meeting if it were held outside of the Washington, D.C. area?



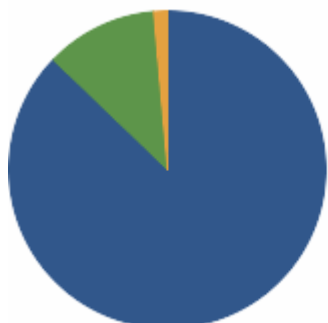
- 32.8% [Somewhat likely \(23\)](#)
- 27.1% [Very likely \(19\)](#)
- 25.7% [No affect \(18\)](#)
- 10.0% [Not likely \(7\)](#)
- 4.2% [Definitely would not attend \(3\)](#)

11. What sessions do you find more valuable?



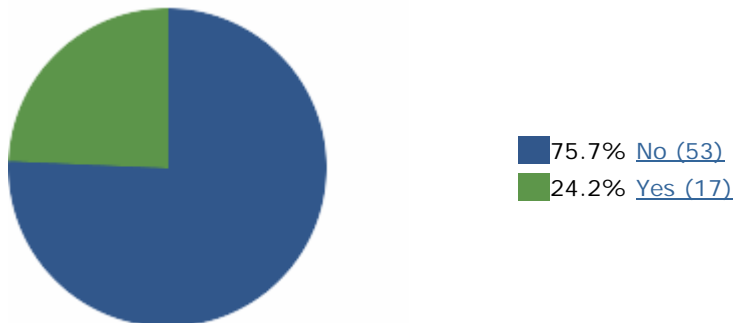
- 55.7% [Journalism and communications issues \(39\)](#)
- 38.5% [Industry topics \(27\)](#)
- 4.2% [View "Other" Answers](#)
- 1.4% [Government update \(1\)](#)

12. How would you like to receive the sponsorship information?

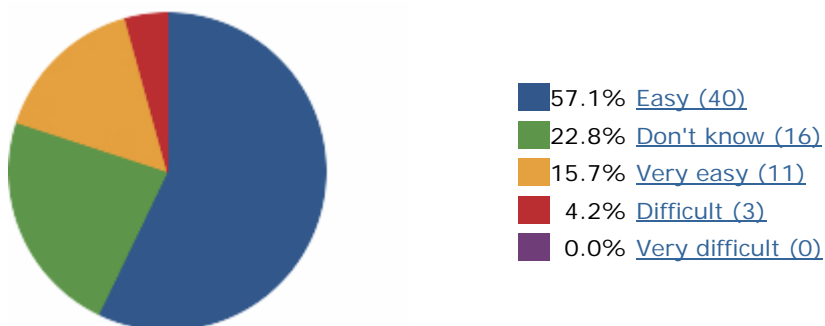


- 87.1% [E-mail \(61\)](#)
- 11.4% [Mail \(8\)](#)
- 1.4% [Phone call \(1\)](#)

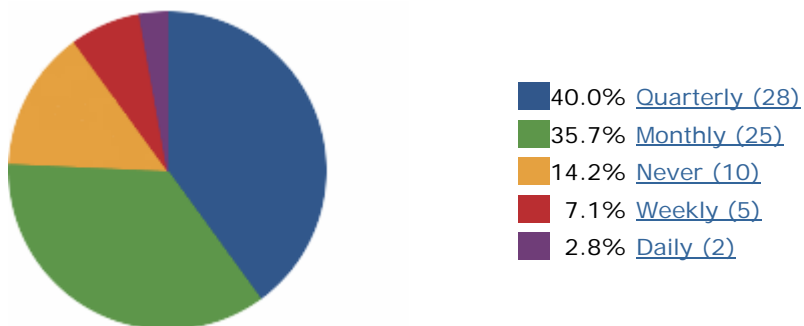
13. Are you interested in becoming a sponsor and have your brand be seen by all of the CWA members?



14. How easy or difficult do you find the CWA website to navigate and find what you are looking for?



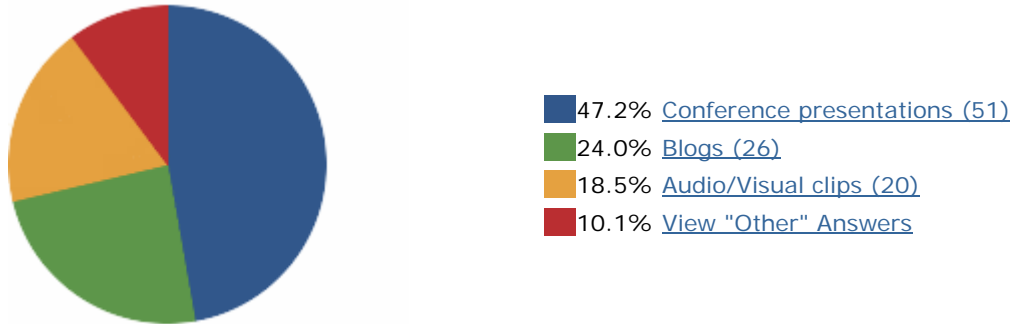
15. How often to you visit the CWA Web site?



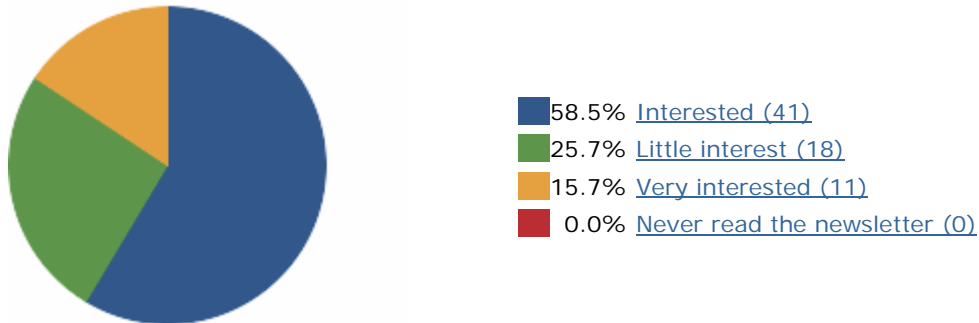
16. Please rank in order of importance why you visit the CWA web site.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Access member contact information	27.1 %	18.5 %	18.5 %	14.2 %	10.0 %	2.8 %	8.5 %
Award entry information	20.0 %	12.8 %	17.1 %	21.4 %	14.2 %	5.7 %	8.5 %
Events calendar	24.2 %	18.5 %	18.5 %	15.7 %	8.5 %	7.1 %	7.1 %
Job listings	18.5 %	5.7 %	4.2 %	20.0 %	25.7 %	17.1 %	8.5 %
Meeting registration	17.1 %	18.5 %	22.8 %	11.4 %	12.8 %	2.8 %	14.2 %
Sponsorship opportunities	11.4 %	8.5 %	5.7 %	2.8 %	11.4 %	42.8 %	17.1 %
Other (provide comments below)	24.2 %	4.2 %	0.0 %	1.4 %	4.2 %	2.8 %	62.8 %

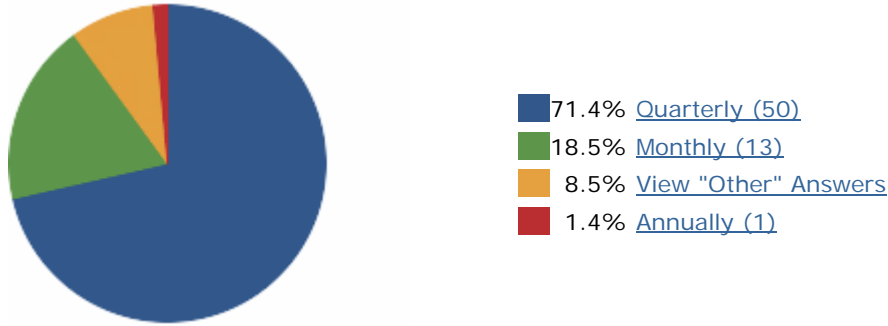
17. What new elements might motivate you to visit the CWA Web site more frequently?



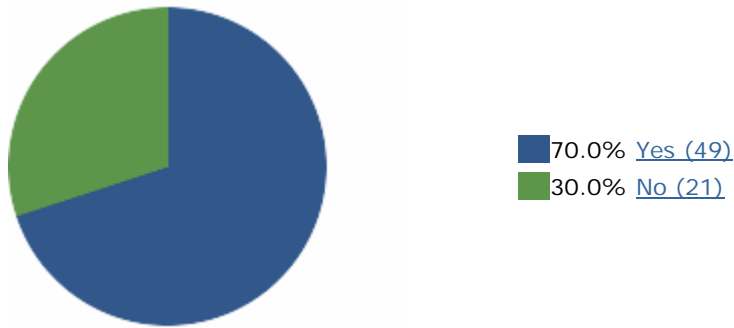
18. What is your interest in the CWA newsletter?



19. How often would you like to receive the CWA newsletter?



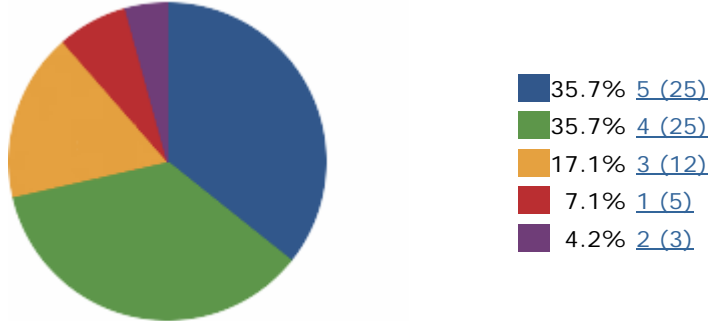
20. Would you be more or less likely to read a CWA newsletter if it were sent electronically, as opposed to the traditional printed version? (Please ignore any cost and/or environmental considerations.)



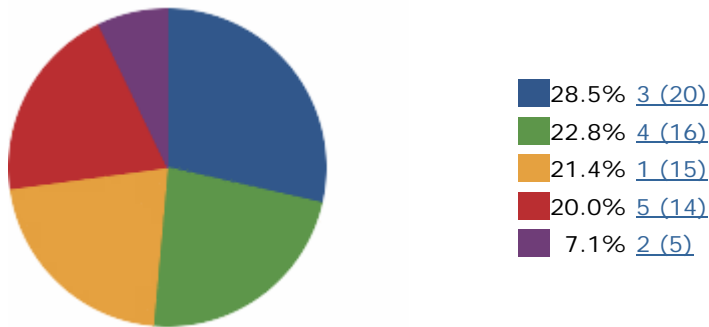
21. What are the five most important types of content you'd like to see in the CWA newsletter? Please rank them below.

	1	2	3	4	5
Information on upcoming events	<u>28.5 %</u>	<u>22.8 %</u>	<u>15.7 %</u>	<u>21.4 %</u>	<u>11.4 %</u>
Industry news	<u>17.1 %</u>	<u>31.4 %</u>	<u>21.4 %</u>	<u>11.4 %</u>	<u>18.5 %</u>
Listing of new members	<u>15.7 %</u>	<u>11.4 %</u>	<u>21.4 %</u>	<u>22.8 %</u>	<u>28.5 %</u>
Summaries of recent events	<u>7.1 %</u>	<u>14.2 %</u>	<u>28.5 %</u>	<u>25.7 %</u>	<u>24.2 %</u>
Tips/how-to articles	<u>25.7 %</u>	<u>22.8 %</u>	<u>10.0 %</u>	<u>12.8 %</u>	<u>28.5 %</u>

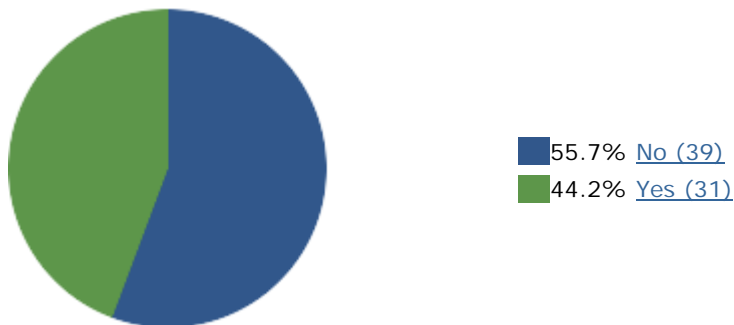
23. Please rate the value of the current awards program and its importance to CWA. (With 1 as a very low value and 5 as a very high value)



24. How likely are you to submit an entry for the CWA awards program in the next year? (With 1 as very unlikely and 5 as very likely)



25. Should the awards programs be open to non-CWA members?



4. Rank the following CWA member benefits in terms of importance to you.

Comments:

- Most of these (after #3) are not important to me
- "Assume that 1 is most importance..."
- Not sure how to answer these. The midyear meeting may or may not be important to me, but I have never gone due to expense. And the one thing I do every year, the WOC gathering, isn't even listed."
- Are the awards programs not a benefit?
- Good awards program
- Need to move meetings around to various cities. Hotel Allegro not a great venue.
- Awards program
- I have never been able to attend a meeting - will you ever schedule one in New York?
- Excellent networking opportunities, meetings are the ideal time/setting to meet other members and put faces with names, discuss topics of mutual interest, etc.
- I really enjoy going to the Annual and Midyear meetings, but often can't because of budget constraints.
- I would like more mentoring opportunities/education for freelance writers.
- The importance of the job listing depends on one's present job situation; at times it's very important and at others it is not as important -- but still very useful and a great service.
- None
- Is "1" the most important? No indication on the survey, but networking and the tours are the most important issues for me. Fall meeting the least important.
- I am spread so thin publishing my magazine that I have never been able to attend a meeting of CWA, or I'm sure I would have ranked the meetings higher.

5. What other benefits would you like CWA offer to its members?

Comments: "Other" answers

- None
- West coast chapter?
- N/A
- Presentations at annual meeting on improving your writing/editing skills

- lunch and learns in Chicago area
- regional 1 day networking/educational session
- none
- none come to mind
- not sure
- More networking at key trade shows - CSI, GreenBuild, AGC etc
- Can't think of anything else at the moment.
- Just make sure to keep heavy construction as part of the topical mix
- Nothing

6. What other organizations are you actively involved with at this time?

- ABC
- ABM, ASBPE
- AGC
- AIA (2)
- American Marketing Association
- APRC
- ASAE (2)
- ASBPE (3)
- Automotive Press Association
- Council of Public Relations Firms
- CREW
- CSI, ACI
- Editors Association of Canada, Canadian Authors Association
- HESNI, ASHE
- NAWIC
- None (4)
- SMPS (10)

- TWNA
- WTS

7. If you are a long-time member, what are the greatest benefits of your membership?

“Other” answers:

- None
- I am not yet a long-time member
- AWARDS
- Woody
- new member
- I am not a long term member
- I am not a long term member
- The reception at the CONEXPO show
- Friendships
- Keeping up with changes in trade media

8. Which of the following CWA events have you attended in the past two years?

“Other” answers:

None (multiple entries)

9. What other cities would be of interest to you for conferences and meetings?

“Other” answers:

- Boston (10)
- New York City (8)
- Chicago (6); Chicago & DC are best with the most direct flights
- Los Angeles (4)
- San Francisco (4)
- Washington, D.C. (4) Washington, D.C. only
- Minneapolis (3)
- Atlanta (3), but would prefer staying around DC
- San Antonio (3)
- Las Vegas (3)
- Indianapolis (2)
- Kansas City (2)
- San Diego (2)
- New Orleans (2)
- Portland, OR (2)
- Toronto (2)
- Austin
- Baltimore
- Cincinnati

- Dallas
- Fort McMurray Alberta
- Houston
- Milwaukee or Madison, WI
- Napa Valley or Sonoma, Calif.
- Northeast city
- Orlando
- Philadelphia
- Places with unique construction projects to tour
- Seattle
- Spokane, Wash.
- Tampa
- Vancouver
- West coast (Phoenix, California)
- Would consider attending about any location. Chicago is convenient because I'm located here.

11. What sessions do you find more valuable?

“Other” answers:

- Combination is best to attract construction writers; avoid too narrow a focus
- None, since I don't attend

16. Please rank in order of importance why you visit the CWA Web site.

“Other” answers:

- 2 – Sites to See
- Bad survey design. I had to answer this even though it does not apply
- Don't know as I have never been to the site.
- Find out who's involved in CWA leadership
- Freelancer information
- General catching up on news about organization
- General news
- I should not have to rank all of these if some of the categories do not apply. So this answer is skewed. Think about redesigning your survey - there is another question on the previous page that is the same way
- It is hard to believe that for the very high number of awards submitted, that each entry was read carefully. Seems strange that long time members and those on the board would often get the awards.
- I've never visited the Web site
- Login is difficult ... weird login/password process, I'd like to assign my own password, etc
- Member contact information not the easiest to access, search, view.
- Not visited Web site
- Organizational news
- Past press releases and info about awards winners from past
- PR Newswire
- To post an ad for a vacant position.

- To send others to site for info on CWA

17. What new elements might motivate you to visit the CWA Web site more frequently?

“Other” answers:

- Industry news. 2. tips on how to do job better or use technology more effectively
- Construction publishing/marketing news
- Editorial calendars
- images from awards submittals, PPT or other presentation files, board meeting and committee meeting notes
- More updates - fresh content
- No blogs
- No more needed
- Nothing
- Resources, like "grammar" or "word" resources

19. How often would you like to receive the CWA newsletter?

“Other” answers:

- Bimonthly
- N/A
- Twice a year
- Twice a year if hard copy

20. Would you be more or less likely to read a CWA newsletter if it were sent electronically, as opposed to the traditional printed version? (Please ignore any cost and/or environmental considerations.)

More likely: 49 responses

Less likely: 21 responses

Comments:

- "I'd be less likely to read it if it were sent electronically. A couple things: "Save the cost of printing and mailing, send a PDF out and if members want to read a hard copy, they can print it off themselves or read it on the screen. If you want to generate interest in the website, send a teaser email and get people to link to the website to download a PDF.
- Six (6) times a year if there is enough content to do via e-mail
- Either form is fine
- However, I like receiving the printed copy in the mail. Having it pop up in email just brings it more directly to your attention.
- I don't open much regular mail anymore — it tends to be junk.
- I prefer newsletters in print fashion as I can take them home and read them slower and more carefully than I can on a screen.
- I read more if something is printed on paper.
- In general - I like to read print.
- Less likely to read it as I am deluged with work e-mails.
- Less likely. I still like print.

- More likely
- More likely
- More likely to read if electronic; could have color photos and layout.
- More likely. And the environmental considerations are VERY important.
- Yes I'd be more apt to read the newsletter if it were digital.
- Need some printed items for the historical record.
- Often set printed copy aside planning to read it later, but it gets buried.
- I would be much less likely to read an electronic newsletter.
- So much is now electronic/digital; it's nice to have a print piece . . . true story.

21. What are the five most important types of content you'd like to see in the CWA newsletter? Please rank them below.

Comments:

- 3 - Information on member achievements
- As someone who hires my fellow members, I would be happy to contribute tips and how-tos.
- I listed industry news last but with a caveat: if the industry news could be focused on innovations and new trends in the industry that would be of a high level of interest to construction writers and/or impacts on construction writers, I would move that up on my list. I don't think CWA's primary role is to provide its members with current industry "news" as much as it is to be a forum for meeting and learning from one another, facilitating member connections (matching needs/resources), helping one another to improve our skills/knowledge, improving how we serve our clients/customers, sharing best practices and lessons learned, networking.
- It would be helpful to get stories of how people cover things, how they go about getting the contacts, if they do site visits or phone calls -- all the nuts and bolts of what we do.
- shorter, more concise articles
- Want articles on trends, all the Web 2.0 tactics, what works, editor panels

23. Please rate the value of the current awards program and its importance to CWA. (With 1 as a very low value and 5 as a very high value)

Comments:

- I work at a PR agency and write stories for trade publications. I wish there was an award for stories written by PR agencies, since we do more than create marketing materials.
- It became valuable when I decided to enter
- One of the main reasons I signed on and signed on others
- There is a real danger of having too many awards so that any one of them doesn't mean much.

24. How likely are you to submit an entry for the CWA awards program in the next year? (With 1 as very unlikely and 5 as very likely)

Comments:

- Depends on the amount entry fees are lowered.
- I would enter the marketing awards if I feel what we have is strong enough to enter.
- see previous comments
- Until there are awards that address more of what a PR agency does, I won't be submitting awards.

- Winners and non-winners should be notified. It's been a month since the call for entries deadline, yet no notification sent to companies who submitted.
- Winning an award is a real shot in the arm, however, the year I entered it took a long time to get the entries together and I never got even an acknowledgement that my entries were received, so that was that. I feel like as a one-person show, I'm not slick enough and will probably not enter again.

25. Should the awards programs be open to non-CWA members?

Comments:

- "Promote it outside, but I do support take out the membership to submit. It is not that expensive"
- For an additional fee
- For an increased fee, yes. That will also increase membership.
- I prefer having an individual or firm be a member of CWA if they submit for an award; that they also support the organization in some way. Either by participating, knowing/learning about the organization, helping us spread the word about CWA. I believe it is a motivator for some to join, and as a result they come to find additional value (and make valuable contributions) to the organization.
- It would reduce my chance of winning
- Non-members should have to pay more to submit an entry.
- Provided they are invited to join either when they are at the meeting/ceremony to accept the award or in a letter/email when the award is sent to them.
- Takes away the benefits of membership.
- They can be open to non-CWA members, but it would make sense that the entry fee should be higher.
- This is a good question. My first instinct is no. But perhaps it might help attracting new members, I'm not sure.
- To attract wider membership