



# **Communications Survey Report 2015**

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## Introduction

In April 2015, we asked members to participate in a communications survey to learn about their opinions on two of our main communications vehicles: **BC Forest Professional** (BCFP) magazine and **The Increment**. We did not ask about the website because the redesign project was already well underway so any information we gleaned on the website would be out-of-date in a few short months.

As with most of our surveys, we had an excellent response rate. More than 1,100 members took the time to provide responses to the survey. They provided us with 29 pages of written comments in addition to the quantitative data collected.

As part of our business plan, we wanted to make sure that our communications to members were effective. The goal was to have 85% of members tell us that our communication was effective. **We are pleased to report that 99% of respondents agreed that we are effective in our communications efforts (73% always and 26% sometimes).**

## BC Forest Professional Magazine

ABCFP members are big fans of BCFP magazine -- 77%\* read BCFP always or most of the time. If they only read the magazine some of the time, the main reason (64%) was because they don't have time or have other priorities. Only 12% indicated that they were not interested in the content. In fact, 81% of respondents agree or strongly agree that BCFP is a valuable benefit of their membership.

We understand that not every issue appeals to every member; however, we were pleased to see that 51% of respondents spend 15-30 minutes reading each issue while 27% spend more than 30 minutes reading each issue.

We also asked members to tell us how satisfied they are with various aspects of the magazine. Ninety-six percent of members are satisfied or very satisfied with BCFP overall, with the writing quality, with the frequency (bimonthly) and with the size. We were pleased to see that 98% like the appearance of the magazine.

It is important that we're delivering information readers want and need. The three most popular regular features (sections that are in every issue) in the magazine are: Association News, Letters, and Member News. The special features (sections that appear once a year) are also popular. The top two are the conference brochure in the November/December issue and the ForesTrust scholarships feature in the September/October issue.

When it comes to topics readers want to see more of in the magazine, the top two are current issues and new techniques/developments. Other popular picks include:

- Public engagement and trust
- Providing professional decisions and advice
- Silviculture
- Climate change (many people also asked us to stop talking about climate change)
- Fire management
- GIS and mobile apps
- LiDAR case studies
- Bylaws especially Bylaw 11 (code of ethics)
- Resource roads
- Safety
- Forest land reclamation and remediation
- First Nations/cultural awareness
- Forest engineering or forest management
- State of forest product markets around the world
- Professional reliance as it relates to oil and gas (many people asked us to stop talking about PR)
- Forest policy and legislation
- Urban interface

- FREP – the good and the ugly
- Discipline (cases as well as how to stay out of the process)
- research

There is always a bit of a debate about print versus electronic versions of the magazine. Many members think it is cheaper to have an electronic version while, in reality, unless we stop producing a print version, the cost savings are negligible. It seems unlikely that we'll stop printing BCFP because 64% of readers want to receive the magazine in the mail. The rest would like it in some sort of electronic format. Did you know you can choose to receive an e-mail notifying you when a new issue of BCFP is on the website? E-mail [editor@abcfp.ca](mailto:editor@abcfp.ca) to be put on the mailing list.

## The Increment E-Newsletter

The Increment is definitely not as popular as BCFP magazine; however, readers do find it useful and valuable. Fifty-eight percent of readers say they read **The Increment** always or most of the time and respondents who are not regular readers say that a lack of time or other priorities is the reason they don't read it more often.

We were pleased to learn that 75% of readers skim the table of contents and click on stories that interest them because we created **The Increment** in its current format to facilitate this type of reading.

Over 90% of readers are satisfied or very satisfied with: writing quality (95%); timeliness (93%); ease of reading (90%); and frequency (93%). And 82% agree that **The Increment** provides them with important information about what's happening at the ABCFP.

The most requested information was for new guidance, policies, legislation, followed by training opportunities offered by the ABCFP. Most complaints are about the format. While some people like it others call it "clunky" and "outdated." Some find it hard to navigate. Suggestions for improvement include adding images and reducing the frequency to once a month.

Interestingly, many readers asked for **The Increment** to be produced in a print format and sent via mail. Obviously, this request isn't reasonable because the information we convey in **The Increment** is time sensitive. However, the vast majority (84%) of readers want to receive **The Increment** via e-mail.

## **Conclusion**

We thank all the members who completed the survey and provided us with valuable feedback. We will be looking into making improvements to both BCFP magazine and **The Increment**.

*\* All figures in this report are rounded to the nearest percentage.*