

Networks



WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO KNOW? IF YOU HAVE A QUESTION YOU WOULD LIKE TO PUT TO THE MEMBERSHIP, EMAIL IT TO EDITOR@ACTUARIES.ASN.AU

REPORT GENERATED ON 5 SEPTEMBER 2013, 255 RESPONSES

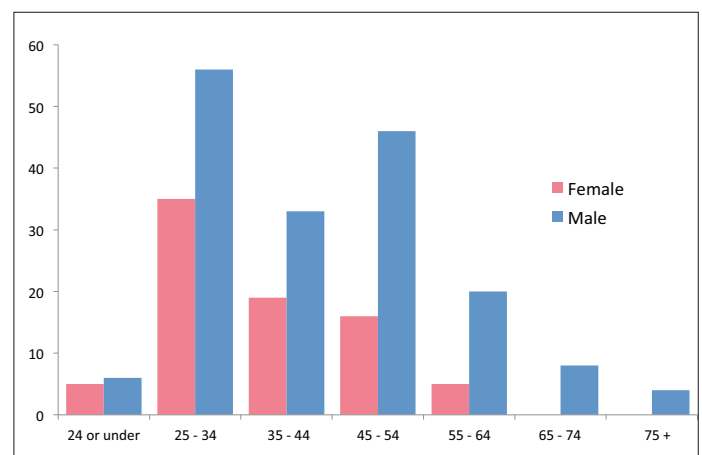
There were three purposes for this survey: • To remind readers of the wide range of networks that they may choose to connect with. • To explore the actual use of different types of networks by the respondents and the benefits they have enjoyed as a result. • To discover other types of networks that actuaries have tapped into.

It was taken for granted that almost all members would belong to three types of communities: family (irrespective of family shape); the actuarial profession (irrespective of member status); and current employer (except perhaps for retired members and sole traders). Hence, these links were not explored.

There were 255 respondents and their composition by age and gender are shown in the following data. These results are similar to most other Pulse surveys and were used to investigate potential correlations in the results.

Gender	Count	%
Female	80	32%
Male	173	68%

Age	Count	%
24 or under	11	4%
25 to 34	91	36%
35 to 44	52	21%
45 to 54	62	25%
55 to 64	25	10%
65 to 74	8	3%
75 and above	4	2%



The survey explored the potential involvement with the following networks:

1. An ex-student body or association.
2. A university alumni body or association.
3. A community associated with a past employer.
4. A community or club related to a leisure activity that you currently participate in (e.g. sport, hobby, arts).
5. A community or club related to a sport that you watch or an arts or leisure activity that you support.
6. A church or faith community.
7. A service club, charitable organisation or other group of volunteers that helps the broader community.
8. A community related to a school that your children currently attend.
9. A community or club related to a leisure activity that your children currently participate in.
10. A community related to the neighbourhood where you live.
11. A community related to an ethnic group or nationality you are associated with.

Each question adopted a similar format to identify whether, for that particular network:

- The person felt like an active member.
- The person had some interest and or contacts, without feeling like an active member.
- The person did not feel connected with other members of that network.
- It was not applicable for that person.



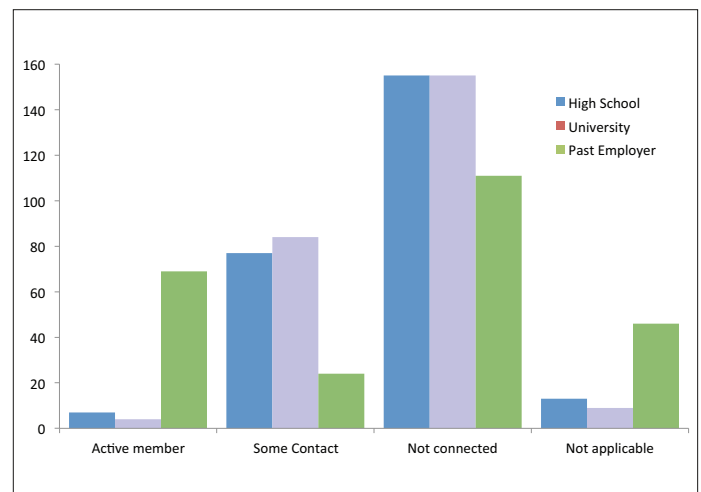
The Actuarial Pulse is an anonymous, web-based survey of Institute members, run on a monthly basis, giving members an opportunity to express their opinions on a mixture of serious and not-so-serious issues.



It was very interesting to observe the different patterns in the results that emerged. There were three types of networks which applied for the vast majority of respondents but for which the percentage of active members was low.

Q1: TO WHAT EXTENT DO YOU FEEL THAT YOU ARE PART OF YOUR HIGH SCHOOL EX-STUDENT BODY OR ASSOCIATION?

High school association	Total	%
Active member	7	3%
Maintained some contact	77	31%
Not connected	155	62%
Not applicable	13	5%



Q2: TO WHAT EXTENT DO YOU FEEL THAT YOU ARE PART OF YOUR UNIVERSITY ALUMNI BODY OR ASSOCIATION?

University alumni	Total	%
Active member	4	2%
Maintained some contact	84	33%
Not connected	155	62%
Not applicable	9	4%

There were three types of networks which were applicable for the majority of respondents and where the mix of commitment was quite even:

Q4: TO WHAT EXTENT DO YOU FEEL THAT YOU ARE PART OF A COMMUNITY OR CLUB RELATED TO A LEISURE ACTIVITY IN WHICH YOU CURRENTLY PARTICIPATE?

Leisure clubs – participation	Total	%
Active member	97	39%
Maintained some contact	47	19%
Not connected	47	19%
Not applicable	60	24%

Q3: TO WHAT EXTENT DO YOU FEEL THAT YOU ARE PART OF A COMMUNITY ASSOCIATED WITH A PAST EMPLOYER?

Past employer	Total	%
Active member	24	10%
Maintained some contact	111	44%
Not connected	69	28%
Not applicable	46	18%





Q5: TO WHAT EXTENT DO YOU FEEL THAT YOU ARE PART OF A COMMUNITY OR CLUB RELATED TO A SPORT THAT YOU WATCH OR AN ARTS OR LEISURE ACTIVITY THAT YOU SUPPORT?

Leisure clubs – support	Total	%
Active member	48	19%
Maintained some contact	48	19%
Not connected	68	27%
Not applicable	84	34%

Q6: TO WHAT EXTENT DO YOU FEEL THAT YOU ARE PART OF A COMMUNITY RELATED TO THE NEIGHBOURHOOD WHERE YOU LIVE?

Neighbourhood community	Total	%
Active member	60	25%
Maintained some contact	66	27%
Not connected	102	42%
Not applicable	16	7%

There were four types of networks which were only applicable to a minority of respondents but, for those who belonged, more than half were either active or had some interest:

Q7: TO WHAT EXTENT DO YOU FEEL THAT YOU ARE PART OF A CHURCH OR FAITH COMMUNITY?

Faith	Total	%
Active member	49	20%
Maintained some contact	32	13%
Not connected	16	6%
Not applicable	152	61%

Q8: TO WHAT EXTENT DO YOU FEEL THAT YOU ARE PART OF A SERVICE CLUB, CHARITABLE ORGANISATION OR OTHER GROUP OF VOLUNTEERS THAT HELPS THE BROADER COMMUNITY?

Charity, service and volunteering	Total	%
Active member	34	14%
Maintained some contact	48	20%
Not connected	29	12%
Not applicable	134	55%



Q9: TO WHAT EXTENT DO YOU FEEL THAT YOU ARE PART OF A COMMUNITY RELATED TO A SCHOOL THAT YOUR CHILDREN CURRENTLY ATTEND?

Children's schools	Total	%
Active member	37	15%
Maintained some contact	31	13%
Not connected	18	7%
Not applicable	161	65%



Q10: TO WHAT EXTENT DO YOU FEEL THAT YOU ARE PART OF A COMMUNITY OR CLUB RELATED TO A LEISURE ACTIVITY THAT YOUR CHILDREN CURRENTLY PARTICIPATE IN (EG SPORT, HOBBY, ARTS)?

Children's activities	Total	%
Active member	37	15%
Maintained some contact	25	10%
Not connected	13	5%
Not applicable	168	69%

I was also keen to investigate whether there was a different pattern by age or gender.

Firstly, comparing the experience between men and women, I looked at the percentage that did not apply and then, excluding that group, I looked at the percentage in the active category and the percentage in the top two categories. I was surprised to see how similar the results were for most networks. For example, for ex-school bodies, 34% of women felt active or maintained some contacts, compared with 35% for men.

One network where there was a material difference was in the church or faith community question where 68% of women said that it was not applicable compared with 58% of male respondents. That wasn't what I expected. Another curious difference emerged in the "sport/hobby/art activity that you participate in" community where, excluding the N/A group, 61% of women felt that they were active members compared with only 46% of male respondents.

Secondly, comparing the experience between the under 35s and the 35 and over age groups on a similar basis, I was again surprised to see how similar some results were. For example, for ex-school bodies, 36% of under 35s felt active or maintained some contacts, compared with 34% for the over 35s. It was predictable, of course, that networks related to children or service clubs/volunteers were less applicable for the under 35s.

There was one question that I really would like to understand better. In the "sport/hobby/art activity that you participate in" community overall, excluding the n/a group, 51% of respondents felt that they were active members. However, for the under 35 males, only 35% felt like active members. It was a similar story in the "sport/hobby/art activity that you watch/support" community where only 17% of under 35 males felt like active members compared with 29% overall. What are you young men doing with your leisure time with such relatively low commitment? (COD?)

In the qualitative part of the survey, it was evident that respondents enjoyed a wide range of benefits from their membership of various communities. There were some obvious advantages such as the opportunity to learn, to hear news, to share, to meet new people and to find valuable connections. There was also an interesting balance between those quoting the advantage of being supported and those quoting the benefit of supporting others in time of need. For some it was the sense of purpose they experienced, for others the sense of contribution and for others just pure enjoyment.

There were also some interesting comments on the linkage between mental health and life balance and also the value of participating in networks to reduce stress. There were also comments about feeling motivated or enriched by their experience. In any event, it made me wonder why more people aren't more connected.

And then I read the disadvantages – well really it was just one. Most people who commented quoted some variation on the theme of 'time' as the real barrier. A number of people warned that it was important to be selective and be able to say "no". Mind you, there aren't many people lying on their death bed who wish they spent more time in the office. The only other concerns that were mentioned more than once were the potential expense of involvement and some of the human challenges in the community (e.g. 'politics').

Finally, it was fascinating to read of many other networks that respondents belong to including:

- political parties;
- online forums (including LinkedIn);
- networks associated with their spouse;
- overseas ex-pat communities; and
- pet owners.

I was disappointed that no-one mentioned their sports tipping competition!

Thank you to all the respondents who were prepared to share their networking behaviour and opinions. I hope that it helped to prompt your thinking about who you might choose to keep in touch with.

Further thoughts, observations and opinions are most welcome.

A