



Communications Review – Progress Report

This paper is a report on progress with the review of SSPA communications, agreed to at the meeting on 26 October. It covers the following:

- The survey of members
- SSPA News
- SSPA Weekly Update
- SSPA website
- Refreshing the look.

SURVEY OF MEMBERS

It was decided at the 26 August meeting to survey member organisations to find out what they think of the communications they receive from us, who sees them, and what they would find most useful.

We asked for feedback on:

- *SSPA News* – the quarterly print newsletter
- *SSPA Weekly Update* – the regular email newsletter
- SSPA website, which includes our Facebook.

The survey was carried out in November using Survey Monkey. It remained open for a week, during which time a reminder was sent in *SSPA Weekly Update*. The survey did not ask for the name of the respondent or organisation.

The survey attracted 52 responses, slightly more than 25% of the total membership assuming one reply per organisation.

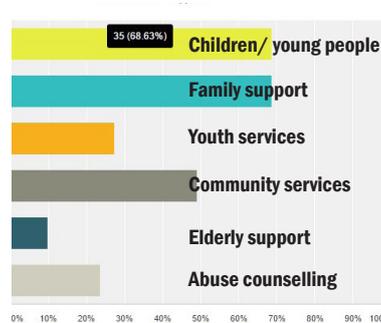
Summary of findings

About the respondents

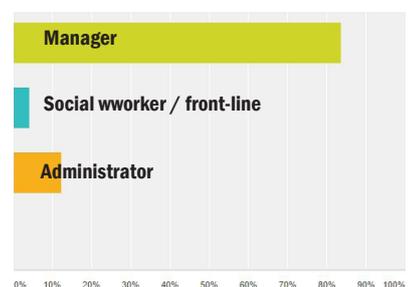
Most respondents work with children and young people, and/or with families and whanau. Many work in community services, youth services and in sexual and domestic violence services.

The vast majority of respondents were managers; no doubt the ones who received the survey email. Only two of the respondents were front-line or social workers.

Type of organisation



Occupation of respondent



SSPA News

We wanted to know if SSPA News was read and if it was circulated within the organisation. We also asked respondents to say, in their own words, what would make them more likely to read SSPA News.

This is what we found:

Most organisations circulate the newsletter (which could mean leaving it on the coffee table) but there is little information on how widely it is read. Several respondents said they extract and circulate relevant material (ie they decide what others will read).

There is a reasonably high level of satisfaction with SSPA News. Many said they find it succinct and relevant.

"I think this is currently working OK."

"We're always interested in the information. Most of the time it's just finding time to prioritise reading over doing"

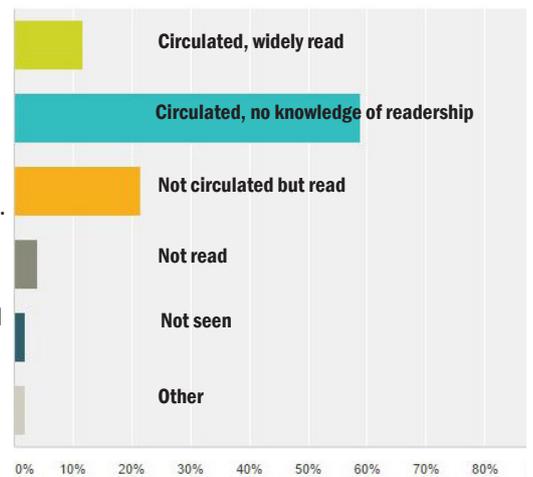
Judging by the comments, the main barrier to readership is lack of time. *"Staff only look at it when they have a spare moment and I don't think that will change no matter what."*

Readers appreciate brevity. *"Information recorded more succinctly."* The same person noted it has improved a lot.

Some respondents identified specific things they would like to see in the newsletter:

- Maori models of practice
- Local, national news and government updates
- Stronger political analysis
- Client experiences in working with agencies.

Readership of SSPA News



SSPA Weekly Update

We asked about readership and circulation. Respondents were also asked what they like and what they don't like about SSPA Weekly Update.

We found a high level of satisfaction; in fact there were no negative comments.

These are typical comments:

"I think it's great and an easy way for me to keep the team up to date."

"Short, snappy, up-to-date, relevant."

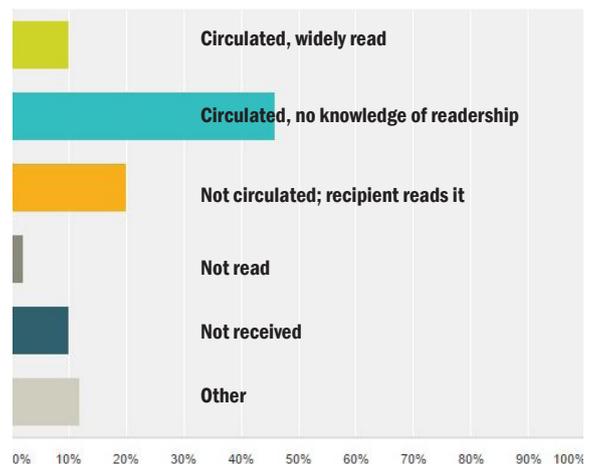
"I like the updates on trends and political viewpoints as well as workshops and events."

Oddly, given how quick and easy it is to forward an email, it is less widely circulated than the printed newsletter. Several respondents say they extract and circulate relevant information.

"Only manager receives it. No time to distribute."

"It is read and relevant matters circulated."

Readership of SSPA Weekly Update



SSPA website

We asked respondents how often they visited the website, and what they were looking for when they did visit.

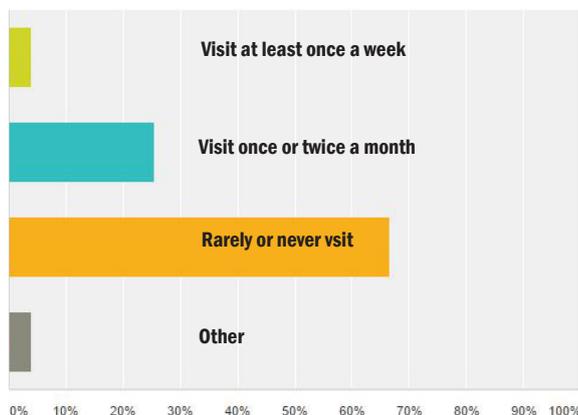
We found that hardly anyone visits the website on a regular basis, and most do so only rarely.

Members visit the website for these reasons:

- Information about workshops and registering.
- To find out what SSPA is saying about new policies and legislation.
- SSPA Conference

Only one person said they visited the website to read Facebook. No-one suggested any other reason for visiting the website.

SSPA website



Preference for receiving information

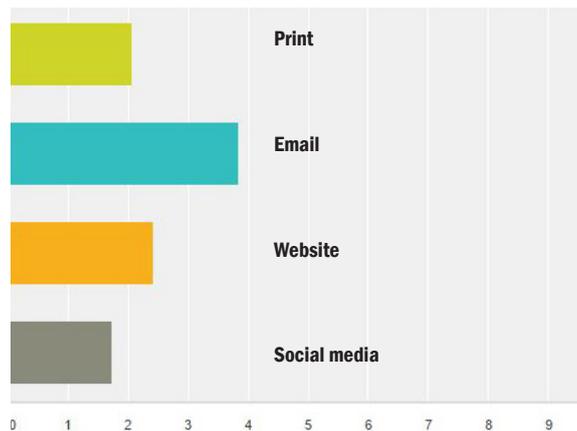
We asked respondents to rank their preferences for receiving information from 1 to 4.

Email is, without question, the most preferred method for receiving information. Respondents were asked to rank their preference.

First preferences are:

Email	91.49%
Print	7.14%
Social media	4.5%
Website	0%

Preference for receiving information - 1 to 4 combined.



Information resources

The strategic plan includes supporting member organisations through information resources of practical value. The survey listed some examples and asked respondents to tick those they would find useful. Respondents could also suggest other examples.

Responses in order of preference (respondents could tick more than one box):

- What you need to know about government. 98%
- What the latest research is telling us 84%
- What you need to know about employment 76%
- What you need to know about governance 60%
- What you need to know about finances 42%

Respondents offered no other suggestions.

Conclusions

What we know

The reliability of the findings is tempered by the fact that they are most likely the views of one person in each of the responding organisations, usually the manager. A more broad-based survey which included front-line staff may have elicited different information.

Despite this caveat, we now have more information than before. We know, for example:

- Our publications are well received but not reaching their potential readership.
 - Members have little time for reading and value information that is succinct.
 - Members want to be kept up-to-date with what's going on, whether it's government policies or the latest research.
 - The website has a functional role and there appears to be little, if any, demand for anything else.
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REVIEW OF SSPA NEWS

What we know from the survey

SSPA News is generally well received.

We don't know how widely it is read but it is quite widely circulated. This is important for visibility.

Members like the fact that articles are short and that it has information about government policies.

Members have suggested topics they would like to see covered – for example, more analysis of government decisions, comment on relevant research, and coverage of different models of practice, including Maori practice.

Options for SSPA News

The findings suggest two viable options:

1. The status quo – that is a short quarterly newsletter which seeks to pass on current information and news as available at the time.
 2. A longer newsletter with more defined goals – for example, including a feature on a particular topic that canvasses current status, research and opinion and comment. This would require a bigger investment in staff time and would increase the printing costs. These costs could be offset, at least in part, by reducing the number of issues per year.
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REVIEW OF SSPA WEEKLY UPDATE

What we know from the survey

SSPA Weekly Update (now called *Quick Update* to avoid false advertising) is very well received.

It meets members' demand for short updates

It aligns with the strong preference for email

It is not widely circulated.

Options for SSPA Weekly Update

There seems no reason to change what we are doing other than continue to increase its relevance by actively seeking out useful information.

REVIEW OF SSPA WEBSITE

What we know

The website is not regularly visited or browsed.

Members have a functional relationship with the website – it's a place to go for specific information or to follow a link, and, importantly, to register for workshops and other events.

Options for SSPA website

The national executive has agreed on the need to improve the website, both in appearance and functionality. The following options have been explored.

1. **A rebuild.** We investigated the option of building a new website.

One supplier offered to build a website based on a pre-purchased template – the example offered was Weebly. While much was promised, we were unable to get a quote and timeline for this work.

Another supplier provided a quote of between \$15,000 and \$20,000 to build a new website.

2. **A make-over.** This option would retain the existing platform but reorganise the content so it is more intuitive and add a fresh “skin” to improve the appearance.

Dartworks, a Wellington-based web design company, offered to do this within a budget of \$4,000. Dartworks was highly recommended by Inspiring Communities.

We have decided on this option as it meets the organisation's needs and aligns with members' expectations whilst avoiding the risks and teething problems associated with a new website.

REFRESHING THE LOOK

National executive agreed on the need to refresh the look of our publications and the website, including a new logo.

We have engaged a graduate of Yoobee Design School to design a logo and colour palette. He is working with us on three possible designs. These will include a re-working of the current logo.

It is anticipated that a fresh look will be achieved early next year.