

Member services for national equine veterinary associations

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- function of national veterinary associations
 - promote interests of members
 - development of the profession
 - provide member services
- reasons for providing member services
 - generate loyalty to the association
 - increase profitability for members
- 'in house' provision versus outsourcing
 - veterinary-specific needs versus generic needs
 - cost of provision and importance of the service
 - is the service already provided elsewhere?

Missions of professional associations

Specific details vary but common themes are:

- Equine welfare
 - improve health and welfare of the horse
- Education of equine veterinarians
 - further professional development
 - community resource but preferentially aimed at members
- Provide resources/information/guidance for equine vets
 - may be restricted to members
- Provide representation and leadership for the equine profession (includes engagement with the industry)
 - important collegiate and community role
 - may include provision of guidance for horse owners
 - lay activities may be delegated to charitable arm

Why do vets join an equine professional association?

- statutory requirement to practise (i.e. compulsory)
 - varies from country to country
- subsidiary of all-species national association
 - membership 'bundled in'; but may also be competition
- trade union
- loyalty
- political representation
- education (post graduate clinical education and training: e.g. conferences, seminars, courses)
- member services
 - resources only available to association members

Why join an equine professional association?

Reason	Number	Most important?
Statutory requirement to practise		
Subsidiary of all-species association		
Trade union		
Loyalty		
Political representation		
Education		
Member services		

Why do people join BEVA?

- no statutory requirement to join BEVA
 - regulatory body for UK is RCVS
 - maintains Register
 - responsible for public confidence and discipline
- BEVA is division of BVA (competition)
- BEVA is not a trade union
- loyalty
- ? political representation
- education
- member services



Why provide member services?

- recruitment and retention of members
- increase loyalty to the association
- increase the standing of the association within the professional community
- raises profile of the association with the industry
- for the benefit of members
 - improve their professional knowledge and skills
 - improve their businesses
 - improve practice standards
 - equip them to deal with legislative requirements

Member services

Goal is to provide 'one stop shop' for all members' needs by making the association an information portal for members:

- Education
- Journals
- Business services
- Discounts with outside companies and services
- Guidance on professional & legislative matters
- Guidance on personal matters
- News and updates
- Web-based discussion forum (e-community)

Education

- major activity for all associations
- congress
- seminars
- practical training courses
- distance learning
- web resources
 - audio and video pod casts
 - access to web based clinical information databases



Journals

- production of own journal versus journal of the parent all-species association
- purpose of journals is promotion of equine science, research and education
 - Equine Veterinary Journal (science and research)
 - Equine Veterinary Education (education)
- may be provided as exclusive member service, i.e. journal subscription is bundled with membership fee
 - may be sold by subscription to non-members
- commercial activity
 - in house production versus outsourcing

Business services

- access to business development advice and business services
- financial planning
- guidance on different business models
 - partnership, equity stake, corporate
- partnerships with financing organisations
- definition of practice standards
 - may include regulation
 - this is the responsibility of the RCVS in the UK
- business benchmarking
- business networking opportunity

Discounts with other organisations

- traditional member service
 - widely used as member benefit
 - historically often the main member benefit
- probably much less attractive in modern competitive market place
- discounted insurances (professional and business)
- discounted credit card rates
- discounted loans

Guidance on professional matters

- key member benefit and important role for professional associations
 - there is a lot of information on the web but it needs interpretation and opinion to make it useable
 - practitioners do not have time to work from source material and may not have skills to interpret it
- guidance notes and expert opinion on professional regulatory matters that are specific to the equine vet profession and industry
- provision of equine relevant codes of practice and policy statements

Legal guidance

- Equine veterinarians require guidance on legislation at different levels
 - **veterinary specific legislation**
 - veterinary surgeons act
 - veterinary medicines regulations
 - **sector specific legislation**
 - waste disposal
 - **general legislation**
 - employment law
 - health and safety
 - taxation

Guidance on personal matters

- traditionally overlooked by professional associations
 - still not valued in the UK
- is now a big issue for all branches of the profession
- broad spectrum of themes
 - often called 'lifestyle' issues
- changing aspirations of young veterinarians
 - young veterinarian mentoring and development
- changes to business succession
- career planning and work-life balance
- happiness and unhappiness
 - depression, suicide, counselling services, career breaks, career changes within and out of the profession

News and updates

- news is a key member service
- not only valuable for members but reinforces value of the association membership
- 'hot topics' and news digest from
 - within the association
 - within the equine profession
 - within the profession as a whole
 - outside the profession
 - may include scientific news digests and well as current affairs
- may include classified adverts for jobs and equipment

Web discussion forum

- moderated e-community
- has valuable community role
 - exchange of opinion
 - professional help and advice
 - networking opportunity
 - access to business and professional expertise within the community membership
 - increases effectiveness of the association
- may include classified adverts
 - positions vacant
 - equipment for sale

Who does what?

Service	Number	Most important?
Education		
Journals		
Business advice		
Discounts (with outside companies)		
Guidance – professional & legal		
Guidance - personal		
News & updates		
Web discussion forum		

Delivering member services

- web based delivery is most efficient
 - paper deliver may be required for the older generation
 - younger veterinarians expect on-line services
- database of members' e-mail addresses prerequisite for proper use of electronic communication
- some services need to be provided by the association but many can be provided by other professional associations and companies
 - association web site provides links to other providers
 - 'one stop shop'
 - sharing resources between FEEVA members?