

Topic: Member engagement and involvement

Introduction and background

While retention rates are generally high, our Survey of the Profession shows overall satisfaction levels remain low (averaging less than 60% since 2018). It is clear from the survey that an absence of positive engagement with members, and limited opportunities to interact and contribute, are recurring themes from those who mark themselves as 'dissatisfied'.

A basic transactional relationship between RICS and its members exists with only a minority, as evidenced by the fact that fewer than 15% of members bought a RICS product in 2019. In the early months of the COVID-19 pandemic, the vast majority of RICS CPD products were made freely available online, but nearly 100,000 members did not take advantage.

Over the last 12 months RICS has been tracking the share of members who have 'actively engaged' with RICS beyond renewal of their professional subscription or basic membership servicing tasks. Engagement in this sense includes areas such as participation in our governance or advisory groups, support of our assessment process, attendance at member events, and the use of RICS products. Even with this broader definition, fewer than 30% of candidates and qualified professionals currently 'actively engage' with RICS.

The recent Governance Review conducted by the Berkeley Partnership also highlighted several key issues relating to engagement, with the most critical being that involvement in 'governance' (e.g. being on 'a board') has grown to be seen by some as the only way of 'engaging' with RICS and getting your voice heard. This has led to a conflation between 'governance' and 'engagement', which is a sub-optimal output as the qualities that lead to excellence in one are quite different to the qualities which lead to excellence in the other.

Further direct investigation around this theme, as well as recent public feedback from members, has also highlighted that the lack of engagement with members is having a fundamental impact on critical areas such as members' views on the direction, value, and relevance of RICS

It is therefore acknowledged that it is vital that RICS makes fundamental changes to its approach to member engagement and the specific ways that it interacts with members, focusing on opening-up new opportunities for members to engage and make their voices heard. This new approach to engagement should cover everything from informal opportunities all the way through to how engagement can shape the priorities of RICS.

Current activities

Detailed work has been underway for some months to identify the fundamental changes that RICS should make to move towards a model of 'great engagement'.

A clear vision about the positive benefits for all stakeholders (i.e. members, RICS, external stakeholders) that would result from a highly engaging future model has been defined and a series of 'key principles' that are needed to underpin a new approach to engagement were recently agreed by Governing Council.

Work has already started to renew and embed a member engagement mindset in RICS staff, using the agreed key principles, and make key changes to processes, ways of working and resource allocation. These changes are being made to ensure that every touchpoint with members, e.g. member services, assessment activities, product development, thought leadership, etc. is more interactive and engaging, allowing more input from members to be captured and used to enhance those activity areas.

More active promotion of existing engagement/involvement opportunities to all relevant parties is also now underway, encouraging participation through formal roles such as assessors, counsellors, trainers, speakers, etc. as well as joining ad hoc opportunities to contribute to the likes of standards and pathway development and the sharing of case studies, best practice and other valuable content.

Detailed tracking of progress at driving engagement up through these areas is being undertaken and we are starting to regularly communicate engagement successes. We are especially trying to focus on communicating the ways the insights and outputs being captured through engagement activities are being used to drive priorities and decisions, in turn using this to encourage even greater engagement.

We recognise that there is a need for more detailed, specific feedback loops to be set up with the most active and involved contributors, recognising their 'special status' and keeping them directly informed of the impact their personal inputs are having. Plans are underway to make this happen in a more systematic way.

What we could do

We are confident that the steps outlined above will have a positive impact on member engagement, but we recognise that more needs to be done to create new opportunities for members to engage and make their voices heard. This in turn will ensure that the direction, value, and relevance of RICS meets the aspirations of members. The issue of the conflation between 'governance' and 'engagement' must also be addressed.

It is important to note that there are currently over 400 boards, committees, groups, communities, panels, forums, etc. covering a wide, disparate range of geographies, disciplines and topics. The scale and variety of these groups, as well as the lack of any formal structure and definition, means that harnessing them to drive valuable engagement and outputs is currently impossible. It is also incredibly difficult for members to know about forums that might be relevant to them or how they might be able to join them and contribute.

It is therefore proposed to focus on a tighter, more impactful set of forums, structured such that there is absolute clarity about the role of each group and clear linkages across forum types. This means that insights and outputs from each group can feed through to the decision-making bodies of RICS and genuinely shape the priorities and influence the activities of RICS. It is recognised that there is also demand for more informal member networking opportunities and the ability to facilitate easier member-to-member contact.

Detailed planning is underway to understand more about what makes the currently most successful forums work so well and identify the structure and flows of information that will make a new model a success. There is clearly a need to balance formats – from larger, inclusive, open

forums (likely to be digital) to smaller, more targeted formats (likely to be a mix of digital and face-to-face). It is vital that there is clarity of purpose for each forum and clear roles within the group. Carefully defined processes will be needed for gathering key insights and outputs from all forums and deploying them where they can be acted on.

Questions

1. Do you want to engage with RICS beyond renewing your subscription and undertaking basic servicing tasks?

If yes, in what ways would you want to engage with RICS?

be part of an ongoing board or advisory panel

contribute to a one-off working group (e.g. developing standards)

play an active role in an informal online member network

support the assessment process (e.g. be an assessor or counsellor)

support knowledge and competence activities (e.g. share experience through a webinar or as an event speaker)

attend RICS events

use RICS for CPD

2. In addition to the above, what other engagement activities or opportunities to get involved would you want to see RICS support/facilitate?

3. How easy does it feel to find out about opportunities to engage or get involved with RICS?
(1 = very hard, 10 = very easy)

4. Which methods would you like to use to make your voice heard by RICS? Please tick all that apply.

email

phone

survey

digital forum

face to face group

other:

5. If you have engaged with RICS previously in one or more of the ways outlined above, how positive was your experience? (1 = very negative, 10 = very positive)

6. Are there any other comments you wish to make that will help our review of member engagement and involvement?



7. Do you give RICS permission to publish your responses?

Where possible, please respond in English through our [iconsult platform](#). If you would prefer to respond in another language please email any completed forms to review2021@rics.org