

Topic: Membership experience

Introduction

While we know that the share of members who actively engage with RICS is less than 30%, as the *Member engagement* consultation paper indicates, a much higher share of members will interact with RICS to undertake basic service and support tasks.

As an example, the Survey of the Profession indicates that 85% of members will visit the RICS website in an average year, and we know that the RICS contact centre receives an average of 9,000 calls and 8,000 emails from members every month. In addition, around 25,000 members will purchase a product or service from RICS annually.

However, we know that the experience members receive through these channels needs improvement, with only slightly more than 50% of members who responded to the Survey of the Profession saying they were satisfied with their experience when engaging with RICS or accessing RICS products and services.

Sentiment analysis of responses also tells us that customer service and the digital experience are by far the most common areas that members mention negatively when giving feedback. Access difficulties when recording CPD and issues with the website more generally are among the most frequently cited reasons that members are dissatisfied with RICS.

It is also clear that there are issues with the ways in which email communication is used, with a sizeable number of members having opted out of receiving anything other than basic service emails. The most recent Survey of the Profession elaborated on this issue, with more than 70% of respondents saying that they don't engage with marketing emails from RICS, and more than 60% saying they don't engage with emails of any kind from RICS.

It is therefore acknowledged that it is vital for RICS to make fundamental changes to improve the experience members have when interacting with us. These changes should cover all aspects of members' core interaction with RICS, such as using the website or emailing or telephoning us, as well as when they undertake tasks related to maintaining their professional status, or accessing content, products and services more generally.

Current activities

RICS began a major programme of digital transformation in 2019, focusing on providing 'a digitally driven experience for members and other stakeholders that is as professional as the standards we set'.

This programme has already successfully made fundamental changes to our core infrastructure, and will soon significantly transform our main platforms as we move to Microsoft Dynamics 365.

For an organisation such as ours, it is vital that data is managed in an appropriate way. Historically, our data has been stored across multiple legacy systems and in different databases. This has created a range of issues, including challenges in the ways we can use the data effectively to personalise communication and gain members' insights.



These issues have been addressed as part of our digital transformation, and the implementation of modern software such as Dynamics – coupled with the content and e-commerce platforms that will be part of our new digital presence, detailed below – will ensure that our systems are fully integrated and offer a single, unified source of information.

Most of these changes have addressed crucial underlying issues, and build a base for the next stage of transformation. However, they have not yet provided tangible benefits for members and other users.

We are now well under way with the next stage of the programme, though, which focuses on changing our digital presence; that is, the experience that members and other users have when they interact with RICS across all channels. This is the most obvious stage of our digital transformation, and benefits will be felt as key outcomes are achieved throughout 2021 and into 2022.

Over the past six months, RICS has organised a series of discovery workshops, involving staff, members and other key stakeholders, to identify the critical components of the digitally driven experience of the future. As part of this, we have examined in detail key elements of the interactions that members have with RICS during activities such as enrolment, membership renewal and recording CPD, as well as when accessing standards and guidance, buying products, and using templates and application forms. We have also explored new and enhanced areas such as research contributions, interactive communities, member-to-member interaction, career management and well-being support.

In addition to the digital transformation programme, we have recently created a single, dedicated global membership engagement team for the first time, which is focusing on managing all calls and emails received by RICS from anywhere in the world. For clarity, this is not a central team based in the UK but a single, virtual team with staff located around the world, covering all time zones. Wherever they are based they are all working the same way, using the same systems and operating in the same team structure.

As well as managing all incoming communication, this team is responsible for active communication such as the subscription renewal and lapsed member campaigns, and it provides dedicated support for groups such as APC candidates and assessors.

What we could do

As part of the next stage of improving the digital experience, we are currently testing several hypotheses and assumptions about the needs of members and other users. These cover everything from members' appetite to participate in two-way engagement, exploring preferences for different ways of receiving notifications from RICS, and shaping their approach to networking and communication with other members. This testing is being done through virtual workshops with a sample of qualified professionals, candidates and prospective members from all career stages and disciplines in a range of key markets.

A critical component of our future vision that is being tested is myRICS, a unified portal that provides a personalised, integrated and seamless experience for members and other users whenever they engage digitally with RICS. This is an individual, logged-in experience, building an

- d) Taken action in response to an RICS email
 - e) Accessed an RICS product
 - f) Called the RICS contact centre
 - g) Emailed the RICS contact centre
 - h) Left a comment for RICS on social media
 - i) Overall satisfaction
3. What aspect of that engagement experience led you to answer question 2 as you did?
4. If you have emailed or called RICS in the past 12 months, what was the reason?
5. What percentage of your digital interactions with RICS are through a mobile device rather than a laptop or desktop PC?
- 0-25%
 - 25-50%
 - 50-75%
 - 75-100%
6. Would you be more likely to engage with RICS if all relevant information was available in a single, personalised RICS portal that offered intuitive ways to complete everyday tasks?
7. Are there any other comments you would like to make that will help our review of the membership experience?
8. 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