

How do TAPPI members feel about their Association?

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TAPPI members seem to be evenly divided on whether or not the Association should expand its scope and move more aggressively into other areas of interest.

As most of you already know, an extensive, four-page questionnaire was mailed to each TAPPI member living in the United States in June of 1988. The results of this survey are being used by the Board of Directors' Marketing Committee in developing marketing and public relations strategies for the Association. Before these strategies could be developed, the Committee needed a better picture of how the membership perceived the Association. A total of 5583 questionnaires were returned, for a response rate of 23.58%. A 25% response rate is excellent; since this survey was mailed during the summer (when response rates are traditionally low), this response rate was exceptional.

The objectives of this research were to:

1. Define segments within the membership that have similar needs and wants
2. Identify products and services that TAPPI can develop to meet the needs of these segments
3. Determine the attitudes and perceptions of these groups toward TAPPI and its offerings
4. Provide some objective, quantitative data on where the general membership feels the organization should go in the coming years.

On the whole, the people who actually responded to the questionnaire mirrored the TAPPI membership (Table I).

What is TAPPI's role?

Several questions on this survey gauged the awareness of the membership on what TAPPI's role is. TAPPI is a professional association that advances technology and professional achievement in the pulp, paper, packaging, converting, and corrugated industries. Apparently, there is some confusion among 36% of the general membership as to what this role is. Over 32% thought TAPPI was a professional association that provides technical data, as well as other products and services, *only* to the pulp and paper industry; almost 4% thought TAPPI was a trade association that gathers research on industry statistics and market conditions.

I. Respondents mirrored the TAPPI membership

	Percentage of respondents	Actual percentage of members
Company type		
Pulp/paper/paperboard manufacturer	40.05	33.70
Paper/paperboard converter	6.60	7.20
Print/packaging company	1.79	3.30
Manufacturers of chemicals, equipment, materials, and supplies	29.57	32.60
Manufacturer/supplier of corrugated	2.12	3.90
Nonwovens manufacturer/supplier	1.67	1.30
Consulting firms	9.31	10.10
University	2.40	3.60
Other	4.94	3.20
Area of interest		
Paper & Board Manufacture	21.36	15.20
Engineering	16.08	19.28
Pulp Manufacture	10.67	7.92
Coating & Graphic Arts	9.64	15.07
Process & Product Quality	8.14	6.95
Research & Development	7.58	7.38
Packaging	7.41	7.26
Corrugated Containers	5.53	8.63
Environmental	5.47	4.96
Finishing & Converting	4.90	2.85
Nonwovens	3.22	2.69

When asked to indicate their level of agreement with the statement, "Most people in my industry have a good understanding of what TAPPI is and what its purposes are," 67% of the membership either strongly agreed or agreed. The greatest variation in responses to this statement came from those in the corrugated, nonwovens, and packaging groups who feel that awareness in their industries is not great enough (Table II).

II. Most people in my industry have a good understanding of what TAPPI is and what its purposes are

Industry	Strongly agree/agree, %	No opinion, %	Strongly disagree/disagree, %
Coating	69.15	14.00	16.85
Corrugated	52.13	15.59	32.28
Engineering	65.92	17.63	16.45
Environmental	70.77	14.62	14.61
Finishing	65.23	14.16	20.61
Nonwovens	62.67	16.67	20.66
Paper and Board Manufacture	71.90	15.09	13.01
Packaging	54.42	16.52	29.06
Process and Product Quality	69.53	13.28	17.19
Pulping	69.17	11.45	19.38
R&D	66.48	19.27	14.25

Awareness of the fact that "TAPPI addresses more than pulp and paper—it also provides information for the corrugated, nonwovens and packaging and applications industries" was high; 74% was the average. As we could expect, awareness was higher among the nonwovens, corrugated, and packaging areas. Respondents were next asked to choose between two statements describing the areas the Association should focus on in the future:

1. TAPPI should concentrate on providing technical information and professional development opportunities for those who work in the pulp and paper industries.
2. TAPPI should expand its scope and move more aggressively into packaging and converting, in addition to pulp and paper.

Almost 59% of the general membership agreed with the first statement, while 41% agreed with the second one.

Membership and participation in TAPPI

The next portion of questions on the survey related to membership in the Association—why people joined, how much they feel they benefit, and how they feel they could benefit more. The major reasons for joining TAPPI are outlined in Table III.

When asked to indicate a level of agreement with the statement, "I benefit greatly from my membership," responses were overwhelmingly positive. Almost 84% agreed with this statement.

Meetings—one of TAPPI's most visible services

Several statements on the survey related to meetings, specifically the quality of TAPPI's technical programs. Over 75% of those who had attended a TAPPI meeting felt that papers presented at TAPPI meetings generally provided useful information that could be applied back at the job. Another measure of the value of TAPPI's meetings provides the best indicator of their worth: "TAPPI meeting fees provide a good return for the

III. Why did you join TAPPI?

Reason for joining	Percentage rating as first choice
Joined to keep up-to-date on technical advances in the industry	50.84
Joined to make contacts in the industry	26.52
Joined for professional development so I can advance my career	16.36
Joined to take advantage of reduced meeting fees	2.75
Joined to get <i>Tappi Journal</i>	2.34

investment." Close to 80% of the membership strongly agreed or agreed with this statement.

A statement on information in general applies to TAPPI meetings, as well as to *Tappi Journal*. This is the one statement that had the most "strongly agree" (as opposed to "agree") responses: "I'd like to get more practical information from TAPPI that I can readily apply to my job as opposed to theoretical information." Over 65% of the general membership agreed with this statement.

Member needs

Among the general membership, 57% feel TAPPI has sufficient programs and services to address their segment of the industry to their satisfaction. TAPPI should focus on developing more programs and services in the following areas: packaging, corrugated, finishing and converting, and nonwovens. Members would also like to see TAPPI sponsor:

- Seminars on a regional basis (54.21%)
- More roundtables and panel discussions (31.67%)
- Educational and training programs broadcast by satellite that could be picked up by a television at each location (25.87%)
- Multi-registrant discounts on TAPPI seminars and short courses (20.85%)
- Seminars that could be conducted in the workplace (19.56%).□