Member services for national equine veterinary associations

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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 do people join BEVA?

• no statutory requirement to joint 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

FVE secretariat presentation Dec 07

• 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?
### 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?

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<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Most important?</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Education</td>
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<td>Journals</td>
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<td>Business advice</td>
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<td>Discounts (with outside companies)</td>
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<td>Guidance - professional &amp; legal</td>
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<td>Guidance - personal</td>
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<td>News &amp; updates</td>
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<td>Web discussion forum</td>
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Delivering member services

- web based delivery is most efficient
  - paper delivery may be required for the older generation
  - younger veterinarians expect online 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?