



U.F.B.A

UNITED FIRE BRIGADES'
ASSOCIATION OF NEW ZEALAND

UFBA Communications Survey Report

MAY 2010

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...standout communications

Overview

In April 2010, the UFBA conducted a survey of its members to gauge the effectiveness of its current communications and identify areas for improvement. 149 people took part in the survey, which could be completed electronically or returned by post.

There were several key themes and suggestions that came through, particularly in the comments, which the UFBA is already taking steps to address and take action on. Based on the information gathered through the survey and other research, an overall plan for improving the UFBA's communications with its members has been developed, and will be implemented over the coming year.

Following are the strongest themes from the survey, and the UFBA's intended courses of action for making improvements related to each:

- 1. More direct communications with individuals in member brigades, and more regular communications.** Many of the respondents indicated that they would prefer to have the newsletter and other updates emailed directly to them, and that in some instances, the CFOs and secretaries of brigades fail to pass the information along. The UFBA is working to remedy this by building its email database with the personal email addresses of individual members. Newsletter subscriptions will be promoted as part of the new website launch, at registration for every event, and through the front page of the website. Getting word out to more individual members will ensure that we can also communicate more regularly with important updates between newsletters. The UFBA is also looking to create a Facebook account.
- 2. Ask for feedback from members.** We received a lot of comments around getting input from members on important issues and continually keeping them in the loop with our decisions. As a means of fostering a two-way conversation with our membership, the UFBA will be introducing online forums, polls, and more regular surveys. In addition to those tools, the UFBA will be continually looking for ways to get our members more actively involved, including making contributions to our newsletter.
- 3. Refresh communications, make the newsletter more eye-catching and include more relevant content.** We're currently working on refreshing the look and feel of our website and newsletter, and we're definitely looking at expanding the content of both of these communications. Our aim is to do a better job of keeping members in the loop with the UFBA activities and important issues, and to foster more information sharing among member brigades. We plan to expand the content of our newsletter to include more of the big issues fire brigades face, how the UFBA is representing and advocating for its members, and the activities of our members.

Length of Service

How many years of service do you have?		
4 or under	14	9.46%
5 - 9	25	16.89%
10 - 14	15	10.14%
15 - 19	17	11.49%
20 - 24	17	11.49%
25 - 29	20	13.51%
30 - 34	17	11.49%
35 - 39	13	8.78%
40 - 44	4	2.70%
45 - 49	2	1.35%
50 - 54	4	2.70%
55 - 59	0	0.00%
60 - 64	0	0.00%
Total	148	

Member Category

What category are you? Choose as many as apply.		
Urban volunteer	113	60.75%
Employed / Paid	22	11.83%
Rural Volunteer	22	11.83%
Airport	4	2.15%
Industrial	3	1.61%
Military	1	0.54%
Operational Support / Fire Police	11	5.91%
Communication Centre Staff	5	2.69%
Other (Past President, DPRFO, PRFO)	5	2.69%
Total	186	

Rank

What is your rank?		
Paid Executive Staff	3	2.01%
Chief Fire Officer / Deputy Chief Fire Officer	44	29.53%
Senior Station Officer	10	6.71%
Station Officer	23	15.44%
Senior Firefighter	23	15.44%
Qualified Firefighter	16	10.74%
Firefighter	10	6.71%
Operational Support	8	5.37%
NZFS National Headquarters	0	0.00%
NZFS Administration Staff	0	0.00%
NZFS Training	0	0.00%
Other (Assistant Area Commander, Senior Communicator, Fire Police Constable, Communications Operator, Fire Risk Management, Fire Police Constable, Recruit Firefighter, Retired)	12	8.05%
Total	149	

Age Range

Which age range do you fall under?		
18 and under	0	0.00%
19 - 24	4	2.68%
25 - 29	6	4.03%
30 - 34	9	6.04%
35 - 39	21	14.09%
40 - 44	21	14.09%
45 - 49	18	12.08%
50 - 54	22	14.77%
55 - 59	16	10.74%
60 - 64	18	12.08%
65 - 69	9	6.04%
70 - 74	3	2.01%
75 - 79	2	1.34%
Total	149	

Source of News

What is your preferred source of local and world news?		
Newspaper	75	50.34%
Radio	22	14.77%
Internet (please specify which website(s) in the space provided)	52	34.90%
Total	149	

Other Options: Stuff, blogs, NZHerald, TV3 news, Yahoo!Xtra, NZcity, BBC, MSN, reddit, Slashdot, CNN, Time

Social Media

Which types of social media do you use? Select all that apply.		
Facebook	69	45.10%
Myspace	2	1.31%
Linked in	2	1.31%
Twitter	4	2.61%
Digg	0	0.00%
Yahoo Buzz	5	3.27%
None	63	41.18%
Other	8	5.23%
Total	153	
Other Option [Other]	Email, text & email, internet, Volynet, NZfire, skype, myfriends.co.nz, ICQ	

General Preference for Receiving Information

In general, how do you prefer to receive information? Choose up to 2.		
Physical Mail	76	27.74%
Email	131	47.81%
Phone calls	19	6.93%

By text to my mobile phone	16	5.84%
Through websites	30	10.95%
Other	2	0.73%
Total	274	

Other Option [Other] Depends on what the information is; fax to phone at home.

Information on the UFBA

How do you get information about whats happening with the UFBA (events, benefits, news, etc.)? Choose as many as apply.

Emails from the UFBA	48	13.87%
The monthly newsletter	83	23.99%
Notice board at my brigade	28	8.09%
At the Annual Conference	32	9.25%
At brigade meetings	49	14.16%
Word of mouth / other members of the brigade	34	9.83%
The UFBA website	49	14.16%
Don't get information	13	3.76%
Other	10	2.89%
Total	346	

Other Option Secretary, email from local rep, Volly-Net, posting to PPs, you don't tell us what's happening, Not region office!

UFBA Newsletter Readership

How frequently do you read the UFBA Newsletter?

Always	72	50.35%
Frequently	20	13.99%
Sometimes	17	11.89%
Rarely	25	17.48%
Never	9	6.29%
Total	143	

UFBA Information Sharing Among Brigades

How frequently is UFBA news discussed at your brigade meetings?

Always	17	11.56%
Frequently	33	22.45%
Sometimes	44	29.93%
Rarely	39	26.53%
Never	14	9.52%
Total	147	

Relevance of UFBA Newsletter

How relevant do you find the UFBA Newsletter?

Very Relevant	23	15.86%
Somewhat Relevant	61	42.07%

Neutral	46	31.72%
Somewhat Irrelevant	10	6.90%
Very Irrelevant	5	3.45%
Total	145	

UFBA Newsletter Satisfaction Ratings

Rate your satisfaction with the following aspects of the UFBA Newsletter:

Length

Very Unsatisfied	1	0.72%
Unsatisfied	11	7.91%
Neutral	41	29.50%
Satisfied	61	43.88%
Very Satisfied	11	7.91%
Not Applicable	14	10.07%
Total	139	

Look and feel (colour and design)

Very Unsatisfied	2	1.46%
Unsatisfied	7	5.11%
Neutral	36	26.28%
Satisfied	64	46.72%
Very Satisfied	14	10.22%
Not Applicable	14	10.22%
Total	137	

Content

Very Unsatisfied	2	1.45%
Unsatisfied	14	10.14%
Neutral	38	27.54%
Satisfied	56	40.58%
Very Satisfied	15	10.87%
Not Applicable	13	9.42%
Total	138	

Number of photos

Very Unsatisfied	1	0.73%
Unsatisfied	19	13.87%
Neutral	44	32.12%
Satisfied	50	36.50%
Very Satisfied	9	6.57%
Not Applicable	14	10.22%
Total	137	

Quality of photos

Very Unsatisfied	1	0.73%
Unsatisfied	8	5.84%
Neutral	40	29.20%
Satisfied	55	40.15%
Very Satisfied	18	13.14%
Not Applicable	15	10.95%
Total	137	

Layout

Very Unsatisfied	2	1.46%
Unsatisfied	8	5.84%
Neutral	44	32.12%
Satisfied	54	39.42%
Very Satisfied	17	12.41%
Not Applicable	12	8.76%
Total	137	

Overall		
Very Unsatisfied	1	0.72%
Unsatisfied	16	11.51%
Neutral	34	24.46%
Satisfied	56	40.29%
Very Satisfied	19	13.67%
Not Applicable	13	9.35%
Total	139	

Interest in Contributing to the Newsletter

Would you be interested in providing content for the newsletter?		
Yes	26	18.31%
No	51	35.92%
Maybe	65	45.77%
Total	142	

Usage of UFBA Website

How frequently do you visit the UFBA website (www.ufba.org.nz)?		
Daily	1	0.68%
Weekly	19	13.01%
Monthly	57	39.04%
Quarterly	34	23.29%
Annually	14	9.59%
Never	21	14.38%
Total	146	

UFBA Website Satisfaction Ratings

Rate your satisfaction with the following aspects of the UFBA Website:		
Ease of Navigation		
Very unsatisfied	5	3.70%
Unsatisfied	23	17.04%
Neutral	33	24.44%
Satisfied	60	44.44%
Very Satisfied	5	3.70%
Not Applicable	9	6.67%
Total	135	
Accuracy of Information		
Very unsatisfied	6	4.41%
Unsatisfied	13	9.56%
Neutral	43	31.62%
Satisfied	56	41.18%

Very Satisfied	9	6.62%
Not Applicable	9	6.62%
Total	136	

Quality of Content

Very unsatisfied	5	3.65%
Unsatisfied	17	12.41%
Neutral	45	32.85%
Satisfied	53	38.69%
Very Satisfied	8	5.84%
Not Applicable	9	6.57%
Total	137	

Quantity of Content

Very unsatisfied	5	3.65%
Unsatisfied	20	14.60%
Neutral	42	30.66%
Satisfied	54	39.42%
Very Satisfied	7	5.11%
Not Applicable	9	6.57%
Total	137	

Layout / design

Very unsatisfied	6	4.41%
Unsatisfied	22	16.18%
Neutral	46	33.82%
Satisfied	48	35.29%
Very Satisfied	5	3.68%
Not Applicable	9	6.62%
Total	136	

Meeting your needs

Very unsatisfied	11	7.97%
Unsatisfied	19	13.77%
Neutral	46	33.33%
Satisfied	45	32.61%
Very Satisfied	8	5.80%
Not Applicable	9	6.52%
Total	138	

Overall

Very unsatisfied	7	5.07%
Unsatisfied	20	14.49%
Neutral	43	31.16%
Satisfied	50	36.23%
Very Satisfied	8	5.80%
Not Applicable	10	7.25%
Total	138	

Reasons for Visiting UFBA Website

On your last visit, what was your primary reason for visiting the UFBA website?

Seeking information about a Challenge	19	13.57%
Seeking information about the Conference	26	18.57%

Seeking information about another event	1	0.71%
Seeking information about service honours	16	11.43%
Seeking information on membership benefits	3	2.14%
Looking for Fire Shop merchandise	21	15.00%
Seeking contact information	8	5.71%
Checking for news updates	24	17.14%
Not applicable	11	7.86%
Other; please specify:	11	7.86%
Total	140	

Other Option [Other; please specify:] Answer Survey, check UFBA rules, Accident information, trying to find line of duty deaths listings – not there

UFBA Website Features

Which of the following features would you like to see on the new UFBA website? Select all that apply.

Online discussion forum for members	57	15.24%
Members-only section	32	8.56%
Online polls to collect member opinions on different issues	74	19.79%
Blog	13	3.48%
Photo gallery	78	20.86%
Fire Shop with automatic online ordering and payment system	99	26.47%
Other; please specify:	21	5.61%
Total	374	

Other Option [Other; please specify:]

UFBA Member Activities, NZFBI pages up to date, LODD, history, meeting info, Issues that affect us all so we can have our say, a search engine that works properly, list of members, full reporting of executive members, Fire shop with online ordering is a biggy and more items, up to date infor of competition results published immediately, hearing about what the Board is doing and the issues they are facing, getting member feedback on solutions, news on what the UFBA is currently working on and frequent updates, a historical section where members can research their brigade.

UFBA Services

Which UFBA service(s) are most important to you? Select up to two choices.

Advocacy & representation	68	23.21%
Challenge events	38	12.97%
Annual conferences	32	10.92%
Benevolent Fund	15	5.12%
Accident Assurance Scheme	13	4.44%
Service honours	78	26.62%
Member benefits / discounts	29	9.90%
I don't know the services well enough	16	5.46%
Other; please specify:	4	1.37%
Total	293	

Other Option [Other; please specify:]	Fire Shop – but needs more items; Information on rules, etc.
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UFBA Member Discount Benefits

How frequently do you use your UFBA member discount benefits?		
Frequently	2	1.41%
Sometimes	17	11.97%
Rarely	28	19.72%
Never, but I am aware of the benefits	40	28.17%
Never because I don't know what the benefits are	55	38.73%
Total	142	

Fire & Rescue Magazine Readership

How frequently do you read Fire & Rescue Magazine, published by the New Zealand Fire Service?		
Always	99	69.72%
Frequently	24	16.90%
Sometimes	11	7.75%
Rarely	6	4.23%
Never	2	1.41%
Total	142	

Fire & Rescue Magazine Relevance

How relevant do you find Fire & Rescue Magazine?		
Very Relevant	73	51.77%
Somewhat Relevant	47	33.33%
Neutral	18	12.77%
Somewhat Irrelevant	3	2.13%
Very Irrelevant	0	0.00%
Total	141	

Fire & Rescue Magazine Satisfaction Ratings

Rate your satisfaction with the following aspects of Fire & Rescue Magazine:		
Length		
Very Unsatisfied	3	2.21%
Unsatisfied	7	5.15%
Neutral	25	18.38%
Satisfied	75	55.15%
Very Satisfied	23	16.91%
Not Applicable	3	2.21%
Total	136	
Look and feel (colour and design)		
Very Unsatisfied	2	1.47%
Unsatisfied	1	0.74%
Neutral	21	15.44%
Satisfied	69	50.74%
Very Satisfied	39	28.68%

Not Applicable	4	2.94%
Total	136	

Content

Very Unsatisfied	5	3.68%
Unsatisfied	8	5.88%
Neutral	25	18.38%
Satisfied	68	50.00%
Very Satisfied	27	19.85%
Not Applicable	3	2.21%
Total	136	

Number of photos

Very Unsatisfied	2	1.50%
Unsatisfied	3	2.26%
Neutral	19	14.29%
Satisfied	67	50.38%
Very Satisfied	39	29.32%
Not Applicable	3	2.26%
Total	133	

Quality of photos

Very Unsatisfied	2	1.48%
Unsatisfied	1	0.74%
Neutral	18	13.33%
Satisfied	69	51.11%
Very Satisfied	41	30.37%
Not Applicable	4	2.96%
Total	135	

Layout

Very Unsatisfied	2	1.48%
Unsatisfied	1	0.74%
Neutral	20	14.81%
Satisfied	77	57.04%
Very Satisfied	32	23.70%
Not Applicable	3	2.22%
Total	135	

Overall

Very Unsatisfied	2	1.45%
Unsatisfied	2	1.45%
Neutral	19	13.77%
Satisfied	80	57.97%
Very Satisfied	32	23.19%
Not Applicable	3	2.17%
Total	138	

Fire Service Portal Usage

How frequently do you log onto the New Zealand Fire Service portal?

Daily	45	32.37%
Weekly	49	35.25%
Monthly	11	7.91%
Quarterly	8	5.76%

Annually	3	2.16%
Never	23	16.55%
Total	139	

Firefighter Networking Websites Usage

How frequently do you log onto firefighter networking websites?

Always	11	8.03%
Frequently	32	23.36%
Sometimes	30	21.90%
Rarely	29	21.17%
Never	35	25.55%
Total	137	

K1 Magazine Readership

How frequently do you read K1 Magazine?

Always	61	43.88%
Frequently	21	15.11%
Sometimes	12	8.63%
Rarely	11	7.91%
Never	34	24.46%
Total	139	

Comments from Open-Ended Questions

NOTE: Comments from the survey have been collated and organized into themes to provide a snapshot of the overall responses. There are several instances where we received the same comments multiple times relating to the same issues. Repeat comments have not been listed.

How would you improve UFBA Communications?

General Comments

- Current communications are good – remembering to log onto your website is my major downfall.
- Add a page to Fire & Rescue Magazine – better inform brigades of what the UFBA does and show them that it is not a waste of time.
- Get a decent website and do more to involve and appeal to younger firefighters
- You've pretty much nailed it. Well-done on a professional job.
- Unfortunately, the UFBA has lost what was there 10 years ago. So hard to get volunteers now and get people involved in the "other goings on"
- Use email, text, and the latest technology

- When a person joins, it would be a good idea to provide them with an introductory pack on the UFBA
- Put out a newsletter in electronic format that anyone can subscribe to
- Keep members totally informed about the activities of the UFBA – work groups with the NZFS, etc. Also on representation issues.
- Join the 21st century. Focus on advocating the issues really facing volunteers. The UFBA is largely irrelevant to me. If you harnessed the awesome power of the volunteer sector, you could move mountains.

Comments on Content

- Actively promote the combat challenge through the website – include training, interesting forums, and results with images.
- Let us all know what is happening with the NZFS Commission and the NZFS as a whole.
- Keeping up to date with NZFS policies with no surprises.
- Show that you are standing up for volunteer brigades
- Extensive coverage of events
- Publish UFBA policies on the website

Getting More Frequent Feedback from Members

- Good idea doing the survey – suggest you do these far more often relating to the issues that you're representing us on, etc, so we can feel more involved and listened to.
- Get info out in a timely fashion – communication is a two way business, and the UFBA is very poor at gaining feedback from its members. The UFBA belongs to its members, not the other way around.
- Inform brigades of any proposed change in direction being promoted by the NZFS before it becomes the National commanders instruction. Volunteers seem to agree that it is a lot of extra work just to satisfy a person from head office who is on a mission to cement his future.

More Direct & Frequent Communication

- Great step in the right direction – try to get more from the grass roots membership and not rely on CFOs or other self-appointed delegates.
- Email the newsletter and other news updates directly to individuals – CFOs and secretaries don't always pass the information on
- Get around the country and regions, meet brigade members, and sell the UFBA to brigades

- The UFBA needs to communicate more directly with firefighters – individual firefighters should be able to ask the UFBA to look at issues and discuss them directly with the NZFS (ie. Health and safety, noise issues with pumps, etc.)
- A Facebook page would be popular with younger members
- We need to know what issues the UFBA is facing as they happen – not months later
- Use Fire Service emails to notify of conference and field days
- Rural Firefighters do not generally have access to the NZFS portal. This means that K1 and other information published there is not available to them

How would you improve the Newsletter?

General

- No change
- Haven't seen it
- Use recycled paper
- Make it easier to access – distribute to individuals by email
- What is the purpose of the UFBA. In all the years I have been in the brigade, I have only heard of the UFBA when they provide our service awards. Didn't know about the newsletter – maybe a sign that the UFBA is ineffectual. What is the purpose of the newsletter and does it add value to brigades? How could the UFBA better spend its time representing brigades?
- You are doing a good job now of it, I find.

Visual Aspects

- More photos
- Better without columns – save scrolling up and down
- Something a little more attention grabbing – larger headings, more colour
- More colour pictures!
- Big photos of the Tech Panel

Content

- A section on upcoming events from brigades around the country

- Include articles that are of interest – reports from working parties, report from the President, list of working parties and who is on them representing the various factions.
- More information on what is being discussed with the Fire Service CEO and the commission
- Communicating on issues that affect us all
- Add some local content – make VSOs report on the work they do for brigades
- Publish much, much more about what the UFBA is doing, especially on behalf of volunteers and their relationship with the NZFS
- Content, content, content!
- Have more content that isn't about competitions. Tell us about the issues you are representing us on. All we see is one-liners that the UFBA is representing us on this or that, but we never see any detail on how we can give feedback.
- Plenty happening, but little shown in newsletter – more current news of what is happening at Board meetings, local brigade events, etc.
- Put some relevant information in it. Get some youth in the UFBA and get rid of the “old mans” stigma.
- Content, that was fluff, would be useful.
- More information on what's happening – you could learn a lot from K1 Magazine
- More info, promote events better, show some history
- More details on the actual activities between the Board and the NZFS and other organizations – NZPFU, FRFANZ, and the Commission
- More local input
- More profiles of the UFBA members / Board – where they've been, what they've done.
- More information on individual brigades
- Join the 21st century
- Invite provincials to provide input and material into the newsletter