Our Membership Survey - what we found

by Brian Hargreaves

Introduction

Members will recall that a questionnaire for this survey was sent out towards the end of April. It was distributed electronically to those with known email addresses and by post to the remainder. As mentioned in an earlier issue of TPI, I was delighted with the very high level of response (34%). Thank you to all those members who took part.

The survey gathered a lot of useful information which the board will be using to address the needs and concerns of the members. What follows are some of the more interesting and useful findings.

The Membership Profile

It will probably be no surprise that our members tend to be of 'maturer' years, with a bias towards the London and SE region (60%). The 'length of membership' question testifies to a gratifyingly strong and lasting loyalty to the UKSA organisation (80% for over 5 years).

The questions about members' investments revealed a predictably wide range of responses, and evidenced UKSA's attraction to the whole spectrum of private investors. The question relating to sources of investment information produced some interesting responses - which are the subject of a separate item on the facing page.

Usage, Attitudes and Opinions in regard to UKSA

One of the most interesting findings was that over 40% of members joined UKSA as a result of seeing an article in the Press. A clear sign that we need to do more to ratchet up our media communications.

There were two outstanding reasons why members joined UKSA. Firstly the campaigning ethos to give the private shareholder a stronger and more effective voice. Secondly the specially arranged company visits. One of the key questions concerned whether UKSA was living up to member's expectations. Whilst 84% responded positively, it needs to be noted that 16% did not.

The benefits UKSA members valued most revealed a strong recognition of three in particular – The Private Investor (64%), Campaigning for Shareholders' Rights(42%) and the Special Company visits (41%).

Perhaps the most valuable question concerned how well members feel that UKSA is performing against its four key objectives:-

Standing up for the Private Investor.

Members recognised the efforts being made by the Board, but expressed concern that UKSA needed to grow larger in order to have a more powerful voice.

Direct Access meetings with Top Company Directors.

Members felt that the meeting organisers were doing a superb job.

Information/Advice for Investment Decision-making and Making Members feel part of a like-minded community.

Whilst neither of these objectives were the most important reasons why they joined UKSA, members nevertheless felt that the organisation should do more. This was particularly the case in the need for more information/advice.

The Private Investor

The key finding here was that the Editor and his contributors have been doing an excellent job. Across the three main 'agree/disagree' areas – **'I read all or most of the articles', 'There is always something interesting to read' and 'It's a valuable part of being an UKSA member'** – TPI recorded very high levels of agreement..

Summary Conclusions

Overall there is a high level of satisfaction from the membership. However the board acknowledges that it is doing some things better than others.

It has taken to heart the comments about the need for more investment information/advice, and for more social interaction amongst members. These areas will need some thought, but it is hoped they can be addressed over the coming months.

But perhaps the main thread underlining many members' comments was concern about UKSA's size. This is clearly a major challenge for us all. Our ageing profile is a clear signal that UKSA needs not just a louder voice, but younger blood with which to put our message across.

The membership survey has been just the start of a wide-ranging marketing programme that will ultimately help increase the membership. A Marketing Team has been set up, and we are actively canvassing for more members with relevant experience to join us.

Members' favourite sources of investment ideas

I thought that members might be interested to read what other members are using to help frame their decision-making. You will recall in the membership survey that there was a question asking what newspapers, magazines etc. were used. There was also a space for 'Other' - where members could write in any other sources they found useful.

I have drawn together the list below. The criteria for inclusion is that each of these has been named by several members. I have put them under broad headings with a brief description where necessary. They all have websites and will be easily found by Google for anyone wishing to find out what they've been missing!

Newsletters

- Momentum Investor
- Small Company Sharewatch

Web Sites – offering different mixes of news, data, share prices, live trading charts, analysis and market insights

- Morningstar
- Digital Look
- Seeking Alpha
- Yahoo Finance
- Techinvest

Media

- Bloomberg TV
- Shares magazine

Others

Stockopedia – stock picking software

- Sharescope – portfolio management package
- Sharewatch – online trading platform

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