

# Trade & Industry Association Benchmarking & Collaboration Survey 2008

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by Max.net (UK) Ltd – [www.max-net.co.uk](http://www.max-net.co.uk)

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## Survey Background

With the financial crises gathering pace from mid 2008 it was clear that all industries and sectors would be under increased pressure to improve performance, competitiveness and reduce costs. As a part of its strategy to promote the use of benchmarking as a business performance improvement tool, Max decided to undertake its first survey of UK Trade & Industry Associations to establish the current provision of benchmarking services to their members.

It is hoped to extend and repeat the survey annually and provide a benchmark of the results via our website from 2009.

Many thanks to all those who took the time to participate.

Further details on Max.Net(UK) Ltd can be found at [www.max-net.co.uk](http://www.max-net.co.uk) or contact Brendan DUNPHY at [brendan@max-net.co.uk](mailto:brendan@max-net.co.uk) or call 0208 123 1418.

This report can be downloaded from [http://www.max-net.co.uk/Website/Free\\_downloads\\_from\\_Max.aspx](http://www.max-net.co.uk/Website/Free_downloads_from_Max.aspx).

## Survey Method

The survey was conducted between September and December 2008.

550 contacts in around 450 UK Trade & Industry Associations were emailed a survey link (see Annex A for the survey questions) and 40 responded (7%), an above average response.

## Key Findings

### Benchmarking

1. 70% do not provide any form of benchmarking service to their members but 20% do and 10% are planning to do so.
2. Of those that have or are planning a benchmarking service, only 28% use the web to do so.
3. 75% of those providing a service are either fairly or very satisfied with it.
4. No respondents charge a separate fee for the service; it is included in the membership fee.
5. Of those that do not provide a service, over 63% cite that there is no demand from members, followed by 45% not seeing it as a part of their role and 36% recognising they have no relevant expertise.

## Collaboration

6. 40% provide some form of web-based collaboration and networking service and 10% are planning to do so.
7. Of those that do not provide a service, 70% see lack of member demand as the key reason followed by 40% recognising they have no relevant expertise.
8. 57% of those providing services are either fairly or very satisfied with it.

## Implications for Trade & Industry Associations and their members

We welcome comments and insights from Associations and their members via our benchmarking forum at <http://benchmarking.ning.com/forum/topics/2008-uk-trade-industry> . Our analysis and insights are:

1. With a recession likely to continue through 2009 and beyond, the provision of new services designed to help members' understand and improve their business performance would seem essential rather than desirable. Associations risk losing members and relevance if they fail to raise their game and help to lead their members through this difficult period.
2. Surfing both member and association websites reveals that in many instances members' appear to be more sophisticated in their use of the web than their Industry Association. This gap will continue to increase unless Associations update their knowledge of the web and its potential to transform the creation, delivery and access to their services and, most importantly, their membership value proposition as a result.
3. With near universal broadband access by businesses to the web, it is no longer enough to simply move existing services to the web but instead to develop and deliver innovative web-based services not previously deemed possible or required by members. This can only be achieved if Associations understand the art of the possible and engage with leading members to explore and implement these new services.
4. Both benchmarking and collaboration via the web are now a cost-effective and practical reality and lack of technical knowledge or previous experience is not a reason to hold back on their provision given the options available to outsource their development and operation or insource the necessary skills.
5. Benchmarking is not a panacea and only one possible business improvement service in a range that Associations should consider providing in discussion with their members. The web has considerably eased the collection of data and the presentation of results, reduced operations costs and renders results in quasi-real time.
6. Anti-trust or competition law is not a barrier to benchmarking and increased collaboration within an industry sector as it is possible to work within these constraints as many Associations do. Overcoming an industry culture where members are obsessed with confidentiality is more of a challenge but one that can be addressed by demonstrating the benefits of sharing far outweigh any risks. *Anonymising* data and outsourcing the service to a third-party are some ways to reduce these barriers.

## Detailed Results

<b>Q1: Do you currently provide any form of benchmarking or performance improvement service to your members?</b>	
<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response % (N°)</b>
Yes	20% (8)
No (go straight to Q5)	70% (28)
Planning to provide	10% (4)
If you are planning to provide such as service please provide details here:	10% (4)
<i>answered question</i>	<b>100% (40)</b>
<i>skipped question</i>	<b>0% (0)</b>

<b>Q2: If you answered YES or PLANNING TO PROVIDE to Q1, how is or will the service be provided?</b>	
<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response % (N°)</b>
Paper	17% (2)
Excel	33% (4)
Third-party system - web-based	0% (0)
Third-party system - not web-based	0% (0)
Own system - web-based	33% (4)
Own system - not web-based	33% (4)
Please provide further details you feel relevant:	0% (0)
<i>answered question</i>	<b>30% (12)</b>
<i>skipped question</i>	<b>70% (28)</b>

<b>Q3: If you answered YES or PLANNING TO PROVIDE to Q1, do you charge a separate fee for members to participate or is it included in the membership fee?</b>	
<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response % (N°)</b>
Separate fee &#163;1,000/year	0% (0)
Separate fee &#163;1,000-&#163;5,000/year	0% (0)
Separate fee &#163;5,000-&#163;10,000/year	0% (0)
Included in membership fee	100% (12)
If a separate fee, how is it calculated?	0% (0)
<i>answered question</i>	<b>30% (12)</b>
<i>skipped question</i>	<b>70% (28)</b>

<b>Q4: If you answered YES to Q1, how satisfied are you with the current system?</b>	
<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response % (N°)</b>
Very Satisfied	25% (2)
Fairly Satisfied	50% (4)
Neither	25% (2)
Fairly Unsatisfied	0% (0)
Very Unsatisfied	0% (0)
Are there any specific issues you would like to mention?	0% (0)
<i>answered question</i>	<b>20% (8)</b>
<i>skipped question</i>	<b>80% (32)</b>

<b>Q5: If you answered NO to Q1 (you do not provide such a service), what is the reason (tick all that apply):</b>	
<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response % (N°)</b>
Not a part of our Association's role	45% (10)
No demand from members	64% (14)
Too expensive	0% (0)
Too complicated to provide	18% (4)
No IT resource	9% (2)
No relevant expertise	36% (8)
Other (please specify)	36% (8)
<i>answered question</i>	<b>55% (22)</b>
<i>skipped question</i>	<b>45% (18)</b>

<b>Q6: Do you provide any form of web-based networking or collaboration service for your members?</b>	
<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response % (N°)</b>
Yes (go straight to Q8)	40% (16)
No	50% (20)
Planning	10% (4)
Please provide further details of the current or planned service if possible:	5% (2)
<i>answered question</i>	<b>100% (40)</b>
<i>skipped question</i>	<b>0% (0)</b>

<b>Q7: If you answered NO to Q6 (you do not provide an online networking or collaboration service), what is the reason (tick all that apply):</b>	
<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response % (N°)</b>
Not a part of our Association's role	10% (2)
No demand from members	70% (14)
Too expensive	10% (2)
Too complicated to provide	10% (2)
No IT resource	10% (2)
No relevant expertise	40% (8)
Other (please specify)	0% (0)
<i>answered question</i>	<b>100% (40)</b>
<i>skipped question</i>	<b>100% (40)</b>

<b>Q8: If you answered YES to Q6, (you provide an online collaboration or networking system) how satisfied are you with the current system?</b>	
<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response % (N°)</b>
Very Satisfied	14% (2)
Fairly Satisfied	43% (6)
Neither	14% (2)
Fairly Unsatisfied	14% (2)
Very Unsatisfied	14% (2)
Are there any specific issues you would like to mention?	43% (6)
<i>answered question</i>	<b>35% (14)</b>
<i>skipped question</i>	<b>65% (26)</b>