



THE COLLEGE OF
VETERINARIANS
OF ONTARIO

REPUTATION SURVEY

Results Report

2013

Strengthening the veterinary profession through quality practice and public accountability.

Background

As part of its 2010-2013 strategic plan, Council set as one objective to increase member engagement with the College. As one component of this work Council spent time considering the “personality” or reputation it is striving for within the veterinary community as well as with the public. In summary, the articulated desired future included such characteristics as:

- trusted
- informative
- fair
- dedicated
- responsive
- accessible
- transparent
- progressive

In order to assist with measuring our progress in this area, a reputation survey (Appendix A) was distributed to the profession in February 2013 to develop a baseline of the community’s perception of the College.

Survey Overview

The online survey was active for three weeks and viewed by 1,177 veterinarians. Just over 1,000 completed the entire survey; a response rate of 24%. This is the first time such an opportunity to provide direct feedback to the College on its communication to and perception by veterinarians has been offered. This may account for the enthusiastic and passionate response.

Survey Participants

The majority of survey participants - 68% - have more than 10 years in the profession. As well, 68% of survey participants listed companion animal as their primary practice area. However, a broad cross-section of practitioners completed the survey. The majority of survey participants – 60% - indicated they had contacted the CVO in the past year. It is interesting to note that a large percentage – 38% - who had no contact with the College over the past year chose to complete the online survey.

Of those who contacted the College, 44% reported the reason as having a policy or practice guidance question. Another 21% reported the reason for the call as being licensure.

Reputation

This area of the survey received the greatest participation and provides helpful feedback for analyzing the College’s reputation on an ongoing basis. The words chosen to be graded were reflective of those words chosen by Council (see above).

Survey participants were asked to provide a score – one through five – as to whether they would apply a list of characteristics to the College. In reviewing the top two score levels (four and five), the top performers are “Dedicated,” “Informative,” “Responsive,” and “Trusted” with more than 60% of survey participants attributing these characteristics to the College. Over 20% of survey participants disagreed with the idea of describing the College as “Transparent,” “Representative” or “Progressive.” Those characteristics falling to the middle of the ratings included “fair,” “accessible,” and “accountable.”

Customer Service

Questions probing the analysis of our customer service were answered positively. Of the 611 participants in this section of the survey, 82% indicated receiving helpful and efficient service. The results also indicate that poor customer service experiences are recalled in specific detail. Options were provided to reflect a positive to less than satisfactory experience but in addition to that 29 survey participants elected to choose “other” to provide details of their poor experience – no response, calls going to voicemail, contradictory information received, etc.

When asked to grade the depth of knowledge, the quality of information provided and the experience in interacting with staff, the first area received the majority of positive responses. As well, three-quarters of survey participants indicated they would recommend a colleague contact the CVO.

Participation

Over half of survey participants had attended a CVO event previously and we can assume some survey participants would recommend a CVO event without ever having attended one. Just over 540 indicated they had attended an event yet 671 said they would recommend a CVO event to a colleague. Just under 60% of survey participants indicated they were aware that Council meetings are open to the public.

Key Themes

Several hundred comments were received demonstrating the profession’s interest in directly sharing its experience and thoughts with the College. These thoughts ran the continuum from complimentary to critical. They spanned from communications to programs and from impressions to actual experiences. While rich, it is not possible to include all of the raw data in this report. The data will be used to guide system improvements and member engagement strategies. Below is a sampling of the key themes that emerged using direct quotes from the material received.

Communication

- *“sometimes when asking a question we are made to feel stupid*
- *easy to contact, helpful*
- *fiscal disclosure may be a concern*

- *the communication style of CVO has changed greatly in a more positive, supportive, informative direction in the last year...refreshing...moving in the right direction*
- *full details of discipline information should be online for the public when they search the CVO site for information*
- *too Toronto focussed*
- *consult with and inform the profession before formulating policy*
- *not responsive to phone calls*
- *many of the concepts and regulations are more complicated than they need to be*
- *whenever I have had a question regarding practice or policies over the years I have found CVO very helpful*
- *the presence of this survey is hopeful that some of the previous attitudes may be changing*
- *the CVO needs to be more proactive in informing and educating the public about veterinarians and veterinary medicine not just protection after the fact*
- *too small animal oriented*
- *I have contacted the CVO on several occasions and view it as a resource centre*
- *what about roundtable meetings with members*
- *events aimed at vets not in private practice would be welcomed*
- *CVO is doing an excellent job remaining accessible and helpful to its members*
- *I think this review is a positive step*
- *every time I receive correspondence from the CVO I am afraid to open it in case it is a complaint*
- *create a liaison between the CVO and practicing veterinarians and get as much input as possible*
- *staff can come across as blasé and not professional. I want to speak to a real person when I call*
- *need to be more invitational*
- *CVO image is improving by opening up access and information to veterinarians”*

General

- *“watch out for over regulating the profession*
- *the us vs. them mentality persists*
- *many of my colleagues absolutely abhor CVO. It should not be that way*
- *new graduates are afraid of CVO*
- *this review is certainly needed*
- *CVO is getting into areas that are not part of its mandate*
- *too officious*
- *relying on regulatory solutions to manage situations that are low risk to the public interest...need to focus more on real public interest risks – food safety, prudent medicines use, public health awareness, etc.*
- *the complaints process takes way too long*
- *protect the public but stop the “Big Brother” control*
- *the CVO seems to see the veterinary practitioner as an enemy, one whom the CVO must be suspicious of at all times. There does not seem to be an underlying assumption that most veterinarians are good people, doing a good job*
- *compared to other provincial regulatory colleges the CVO is by far the best and easiest to deal with*

- *we need to get out of the stone age and start holding our members to a higher standard with more surprise inspections, more review of medical records and tougher consequences for members who are giving our profession a bad name*
- *CVO is doing a great job*
- *I feel the CVO is overly concerned about “not making waves” in the veterinary community and therefore drags its feet on committing to progress in our profession*
- *I appreciate the hard work done by volunteers and staff*
- *I feel many of the rulings on professional misconduct are too lenient*
- *I think the CVO is increasingly intrusive in its continuing education requirements*
- *perhaps it may be better if our regulator was the provincial government, like the US model*
- *practice quality and standards should be on the top of CVO’s to do list*
- *CVO is doing a necessary job*
- *rules only apply a portion of the time and inconsistency reigns*
- *CVO needs to reconnect with the profession in Ontario”*

Role of the College

Surprisingly a substantial number of comments were provided that clearly demonstrated a lack of understanding of the role and purpose of the College in society. While confusion can exist within a profession between the role of the Regulatory Body and that of an Association, the extent of the prevalence of this dialogue requires attention. Illustrative comments from the survey demonstrating this confusion include the following:

- the CVO is not supporting the needs of veterinarians and is permitting too many clinics to be accredited
- the CVO is not doing enough to represent professional corporations
- the CVO has not represented me as a member for a long time, generally I feel that you favour the public in your decisions and paperwork
- you do NOT represent veterinarians very well
- CVO is more interested in defending the public than representing veterinarians
- the College does not adequately protect its members. The CVO forgets who put the CVO there

Summary

Based on all of the genuine feedback received, the survey results definitively provide baseline data from which to make judgements on the College’s current reputation. It is clear that opportunity continues to exist to support and pay specific attention to positive engagement of the profession in self-regulation.

This data will be used by Council and staff to set communication and customer service goals and strategies in order to make legitimate and visible improvements to our reputation. Further, Council and its Committees will commit to using the feedback to shape policy and program work while continuing to act in the public interest. Education materials regarding the role of the College, specifically what is and is not, will be developed to promote a better understanding across the profession and in the public at large. A next survey will be launched in 2016 to measure our progress.



Rate Us -- Your Opinion is Important

For the last several months, the College has been turning its attention to its reputation. As a profession-based regulator this is important for the organization, for licensees and for the public. We know we have work to do and central to this is improving our customer service.

As we look at new initiatives, we would like a baseline opinion on how you feel about us now so we can keep doing what we do well and make improvements where they are needed.

Please take five minutes to complete this short survey. Be honest and rate us. Thank you for your help.

How many years have you worked in the veterinary profession in Ontario?

- 1-5 years
- 5-10 years
- 10-20 years
- more than 20 years

What is your primary practice area?

- Companion Animal
- Large Animal
- Mixed Animal
- Equine
- Academic
- Regulatory
- Industry
- Specialty
- Other:

Have you contacted the CVO directly in the past year?

What was the purpose of your call/e-mail/visit to the CVO?

- Licensure
- Policy Question
- Accreditation
- Discipline
- Change of Address
- Practice Guidance
- Advertising
- Other:

Was your inquiry handled efficiently?

- Yes, I received a helpful response immediately.
- Yes, I was referred to someone who was able to answer my question.
- I expected a response more quickly.
- I was referred to several people in order to finally get the response I was seeking.
- I was not satisfied with the response I received.
- Other:

Please rate the knowledge of the person you spoke to at the CVO?

Not Knowledgeable 1 2 3 4 5 Very Knowledgeable

Please rate the quality of the information you received from the CVO.3

Poor 1 2 3 4 5 Excellent

Please rate your experience with the staff person at the CVO.

Poor 1 2 3 4 5 Excellent

Based on your experience, are you likely to recommend that a colleague contact the CVO?

- Very likely
- Slightly likely
- Not likely

Please indicate if you would use the following words to describe the CVO.

	Disagree		Agree		
	1	2	3	4	5
Trusted	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Progressive	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Fair	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Accessible	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Representative	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Accountable	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Informative	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Dedicated	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Responsive	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Transparent	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Have you attended or participated in an event, workshop or webinar sponsored by the CVO?

- Yes
- No

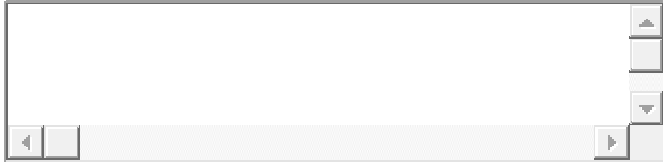
Would you recommend a CVO event to a colleague?

- Yes
- No

Do you know that CVO Council meetings are open to members of the public?

Yes No

Please add any further comments you may have.

A text input field with a scroll bar and a vertical toolbar on the right side. The toolbar contains four small icons: a left-pointing arrow, a right-pointing arrow, a downward-pointing arrow, and an upward-pointing arrow.