

**Association of Manitoba
Municipalities**

Report on Quantitative Research

*Prepared for The Association of
Manitoba Municipalities*

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▼ METHODOLOGY

Objectives

On behalf of the Association of Manitoba Municipalities (AMM), Viewpoints Research conducted a study with member communities in Manitoba to examine their opinions of the AMM, its current role, the services it provides and communication. Specifically, this research was designed to:

- Explore the opinions of members regarding the value of various services and activities offered by the AMM;
- determine member communities' opinion of the type and scope of communication available from the AMM;
- evaluate members' opinions of the Trading Company (MTCML) and explore the level of support for new services being contemplated.

Methodology

On behalf of the Association of Manitoba Municipalities, 328 members including Heads of Council and the Chief Administrative Officers were interviewed by telephone between April 15th and May 8th, 2008.

Sample Design and Analysis

For this project, a complete list of member communities was utilized. The total number of Manitoba municipalities is 197 for a sample size of size of approximately 394. The Head of Council and a distinct CAO were contacted from each community. In a handful of instances, more than one community shared the same CAO, and therefore those communities only have one representative responding to the survey.

Analysis of this research consisted of descriptive statistics including frequencies and cross tabulations.

Questionnaire Design

The survey instrument was designed by Viewpoints Research, in consultation with the AMM. Prior to the commencement of interviewing a pre-test was conducted to ensure ease of administration and to finalize question wording.

Member Profile

In this sample, almost all Heads of Council are men and throughout this report, when significant differences exist between genders, they are also almost always present between the CAOs and the Mayors or Reeves. The following table displays the overall structure of the sample and the demographics of interest.

MEMBER PROFILE /Table 1

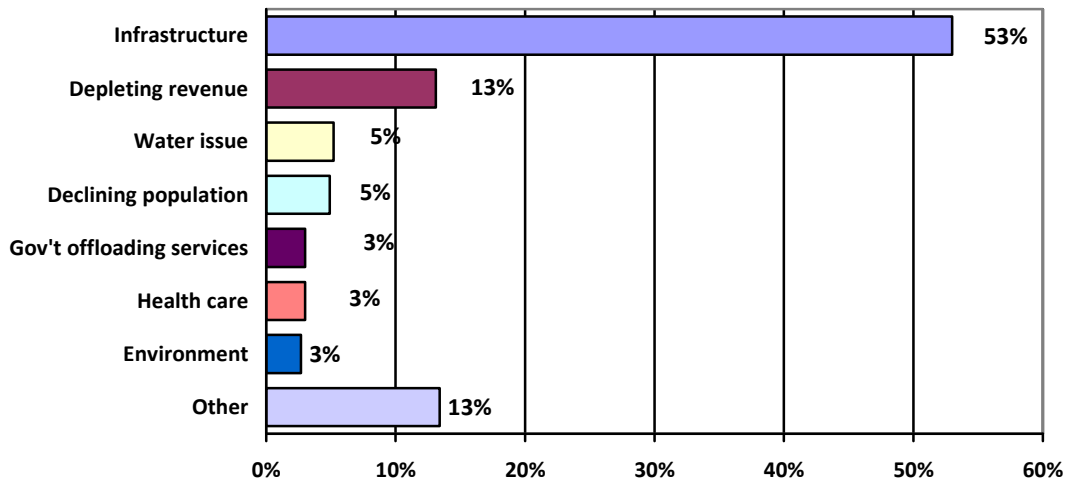
	% of Total
Gender	
Male	65%
Female	35%
Time have Dealt with AMM	
Less than 1 year	2%
Less than 3 years	11%
Less than 5 years	5%
Less than 8 years	13%
10 years	6%
10 years	62%
Title	
Head of Council	49%
CAO	51%
Region	
Central	17%
Eastern	14%
Interlake	10%
Midwest	17%
Northern	6%
Parklands	15%
Western	22%
Rural / Urban	
Rural	58%
Village, Town or City	42%

▼ DETAILED REVIEW OF KEY FINDINGS

Most Important Issue

To begin the survey, respondents were asked what they would say is the most important issue facing Manitoba municipalities today. More than half mentioned infrastructure (53%) while one in eight (13%) said depleting revenues is their biggest issue. Five percent or fewer mentioned water issues (5%), the declining rural population (5%), governments offloading services (3%), health care (3%) and the environment (3%). Fewer than one in five respondents mentioned government funding cuts in general (2%) and education (1%). One in ten mentioned something else while 2% were unsure how to respond.

MOST IMPORTANT ISSUE/Chart 1



AMM's Role

Performance on Important Issues

All respondents were asked if in general they would say the AMM does an excellent, good, fair, poor or very poor job dealing with the issues raised by Manitoba municipalities. More than four out of five respondents said the AMM does an excellent (33%) or good (51%) job dealing with the important issues. Slightly more than one in ten (11%) rated the job the AMM does as fair and fewer than one in twenty (3%) said it does a poor job. No one said the AMM is doing a very poor job on the issues important to Manitoba municipalities.

- Municipalities in the Midwest region (92%) and those in the Central region (93%) are more likely than Northern communities (39%) to say the AMM does a good or excellent job dealing with important issues.

Statements about AMM

Respondents were read five statements about the AMM and for each one were asked whether they strongly agree, agree, disagree or strongly disagree. In all cases, more than eight out of ten respondents said they either strongly agree or agree with the statement being explored.

In terms of doing enough to keep the membership informed on various issues and actions, almost all (98%) said they agree somewhat or strongly the AMM does this. There was also a high level of agreement among members when exploring whether or not the AMM is a successful lobby group (93%).

Among the few who said they disagree with this statement (20 people), some said the AMM could improve its efforts in this area by being more assertive and by paying more attention to rural areas.

More than nine out of ten respondents (93%) said they agree the AMM makes it easy for members to have their issues heard while slightly fewer than nine in ten (88%) said they agree the AMM has an adequate presence in the Manitoba media. Finally, most respondents said they either strongly agree (36%) or agree (51%) the AMM plays a positive role in local issues. The table below displays the level of agreement for each statement.

STATEMENTS ABOUT THE AMM/Table 2

	Strongly Agree	Total Agreement	Total Disagreement
Plays a positive role in local issues.	36%	87%	12%
Does enough to keep the membership informed on various issues and actions.	56%	98%	2%
Makes it easy for members to have their issues heard.	43%	93%	6%
Has an adequate presence in the Manitoba media.	37%	88%	11%
Is a successful lobbying group.	47%	93%	6%

- Female respondents are more likely than male respondents to agree the AMM is a successful lobby group, the AMM makes it easy to have their issues heard and the AMM does enough to keep the membership informed.
- Only one significant statistical difference exists between the Head of Council and CAO. CAOs (66%) are more likely than Heads of Council (46%) to strongly agree the AMM does a good job keeping the membership informed.
- Region is significant on all the statements explored with communities in the Northern region being the least likely to say they strongly agree with any statement. Communities in the Interlake region are most likely to say they strongly agree the

AMM does enough to keep the membership informed (76%), the AMM plays a positive role in local issues (45%) and they make it easy for members to be heard (67%).

- All Western region municipalities (100% total agreement) said they agree the AMM has an adequate presence in the Manitoba media while member municipalities in the Midwest were more likely than others to agree the AMM is a successful lobby group (96% total agreement).
- Rural municipalities (92%) were more likely than villages, towns and cities (79%) to strongly agree or agree the AMM plays an important role in local issues.

Communication

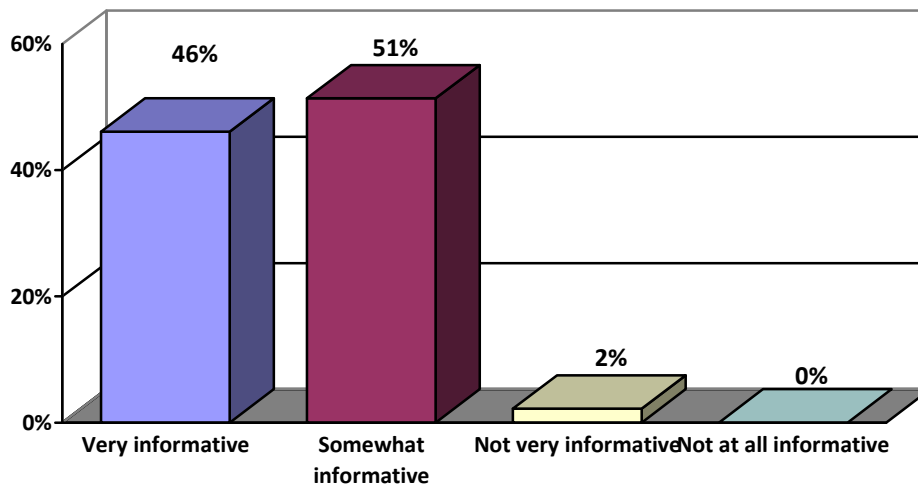
Municipal Leader

AMM municipal members were asked a number of questions dealing with some AMM publications as well as their website. The magazine the Municipal Leader is one way the AMM communicates with its members. Almost all respondents said they read (53%) or look through (44%) this publication. A small number of people said they do not look at the magazine at all (2%) or have never seen a copy (<1%).

Among those respondents who have read or looked through the magazine, almost all said they find the magazine either somewhat (51%) or very informative (46%). Fewer than one in twenty said the magazine is not very informative (2%) or they were unable to respond (<1%).

- Women (58%) were more likely than men (40%) to say the Municipal Leader is very informative.

MUNICIPAL LEADER INFORMATIVE/Chart 2



Readers of the Municipal Leader were asked what kind of articles or features they like the most. Community profiles and stories was the most common response given (25%) followed by policy news and provincial government updates (13%) and special features that may be relevant to them and their community (13%). The President’s message (6%), coverage of municipal events (3%) and articles dealing with legal issues (3%) were also mentioned by members. Fewer than three percent of respondents said they most like to read the Executive Director’s message (2%), see coverage of AMM events (2%) and photos (1%). One in five (19%) said they were unsure, while one in ten (11%) said there was no one kind of article or feature they like most.

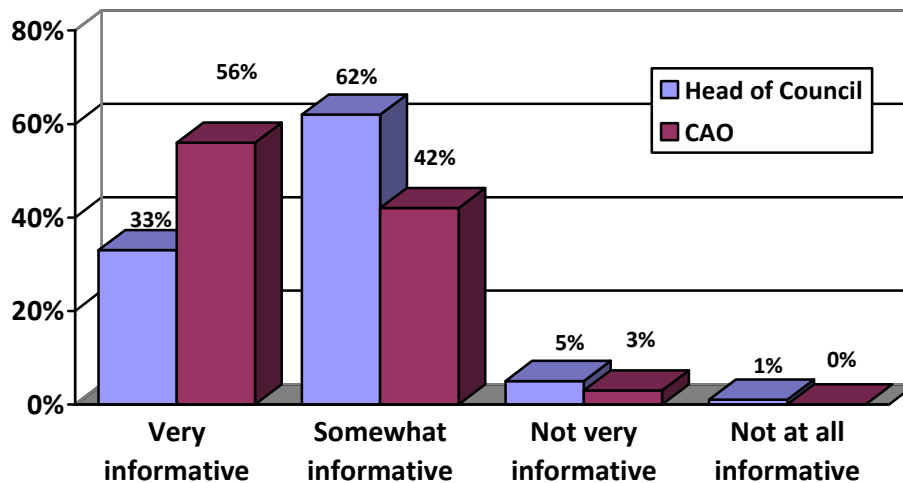
AMM News Bulletin

Every two weeks, the AMM distributes the News Bulletin to its members. As with the magazine, almost all respondents said they either read the bulletin (51%) or look through it (41%). One in twenty (6%) said they do not look at it at all while 2% said they have never seen a copy. Fewer than one percent of respondents were unsure or refused to answer the question.

Almost all respondents who read or look through the bulletin said they find it somewhat (51%) or very informative (45%). Fewer than one in twenty (4%) said it is not very informative.

- Women (68%) were twice as likely as men (33%) to say they read the News Bulletin. They were also more likely than men (58% vs. 37%) to say the bulletin is very informative.
- The same relationship can be seen depending on position. CAOs (68%) were more likely than the Reeves and Mayors (33%) to say they read the bi-weekly bulletin and more likely than the head of council (56% vs. 33%) to say the publication is very informative.

NEWS BULLETIN INFORMATIVE/Chart 3



Website

All survey participants were asked if they have ever visited or looked at the AMM website. Four out of five respondents said they have visited the site (80%) while the remaining respondents said they have not (20%).

- As with other communication tools, female respondents (98%) were more likely than males (70%) to have visited the website.
- The CAO (98%) of most communities was very likely to visit the website compared to the head of council (62%).

The vast majority of members visiting the AMM website said they were looking for specific information (87%) and almost all of these members said they found the information they were looking for (93%).

- Women (94%) and CAOs (97%) were more likely than men (81%) and heads of council (70%) to say they were looking for specific information when visiting the website.

In terms of the website being easy to navigate and containing useful information, most AMM members agree the site is very (44%) or fairly easy to navigate (49%) and the information is very (59%) or somewhat (39%) useful.

- Female respondents (69%) were more likely than male respondents (51%) to say the information on the website is very useful.
- Members who have been dealing with the AMM for 10 years (61%) were more likely than those who have been dealing with them for less than 10 years (57%) and fewer than 5 years (53%) to say the information on the website is very useful.

When asked what changes they would make to the website to improve it, two out of three respondents could not offer any suggestions (67%) and one in eight said they were unsure (12%). One in ten (11%) suggested the AMM provide more or updated information on the website, while fewer than one in ten said the site could be made easier to navigate (7%), could have better links (4%) or gave some other suggestion (1%).

Events, Education and Convention

All AMM members were read a series of items the AMM currently offer its members. For each one, they were asked to rate on a scale from 1 to 5 where 1 is not at all important and 5 is very important, how important it is for AMM to offer the item. The following table displays these items and their associated ratings. The table is sorted in descending order by mean score.

IMPORTANCE OF ACTIVITIES OF THE AMM/Table 3

	Total Importance (4 & 5)	Extremely Important (5)	Mean
Insurance program.	90%	70%	4.6
The AMM Trading Company (MTCML).	87%	55%	4.4
Education workshops.	77%	43%	4.2
The AMM annual convention.	81%	50%	4.2
Individual meetings with Mayors, Reeves and CAOs.	82%	45%	4.2
The Municipal Officials Seminar.	72%	38%	4.0
The Display Area held in conjunction with the annual convention.	66%	33%	3.9

Nine out of ten respondents said the insurance program is important (score of 4 & 5 combined) with 70% indicating it is very important. More than eight out of ten members said it is important (score of 4 & 5 combined) the AMM offer the Trading Company (87%) as a service, continue the individual meetings with Mayors Reeves and CAOs (82%) and continue to host the annual convention (81%).

Three out of four members (77%) said the education workshops the AMM offers are important (score of 4 & 5) and slightly more than seven out of ten (72%) said it is important the AMM offer the Municipal Officials Seminar. Two out of every three respondent (66%) said the display area held in conjunction with the annual convention is important but ranked this item below all others explored in this survey.

- Female respondents (68%) are more likely than men (30%) to say the education workshops are extremely important.
- CAOs (54%) are more likely than council heads (32%) to say education workshops are extremely important.
- Female respondents (68%) are more likely than males (47%) to say the AMM Trading Company is extremely important.
- Rural members (60%) are more likely than their urban counterparts (47%) to say the MTCML is extremely important.
- Those who have been with the AMM for longer (60%) are more likely to say the Trading Company is extremely important compared to those who have been dealing with the AMM for less than 5 years (37%).
- The insurance program offered by the AMM is more important to CAOs (79%) compared to Mayors and Reeves (61%).
- Rural members (79%) are more likely than urban members (58%) to say the insurance program offered by the AMM is extremely important.

Before completing this section, respondents were asked, in their own opinion, which aspects of the annual convention they think are very important and should not be changed. Policy discussions and resolutions (31%) were mentioned by almost one third of all respondents while one in four said the plenary (24%) is very important as are the speakers and keynote addresses (23%). Slightly less than one in five (18%) said the bear pit with cabinet is a highlight for them and should not be changed. The table below displays all the responses offered by respondents and is sorted in descending order. Municipal members were encouraged to provide more than one response, so the total percentage equals to more than one hundred.

IMPORTANT ASPECTS OF CONVENTION/Table 4

	%
Resolutions / policy discussions	31%
Plenary	24%
Speakers / keynote addresses	23%
Bear Pit with cabinet	18%
Have never attended	8%
Other (specify below)	7%
Maintain current format/no changes	4%
Trade show/displays	4%
Seminars/workshops/breakout sessions	3%
Social events	2%
Banquet	1%
Elections (of executive)	<1%
Nothing	11%
Don't know / Refused	11%

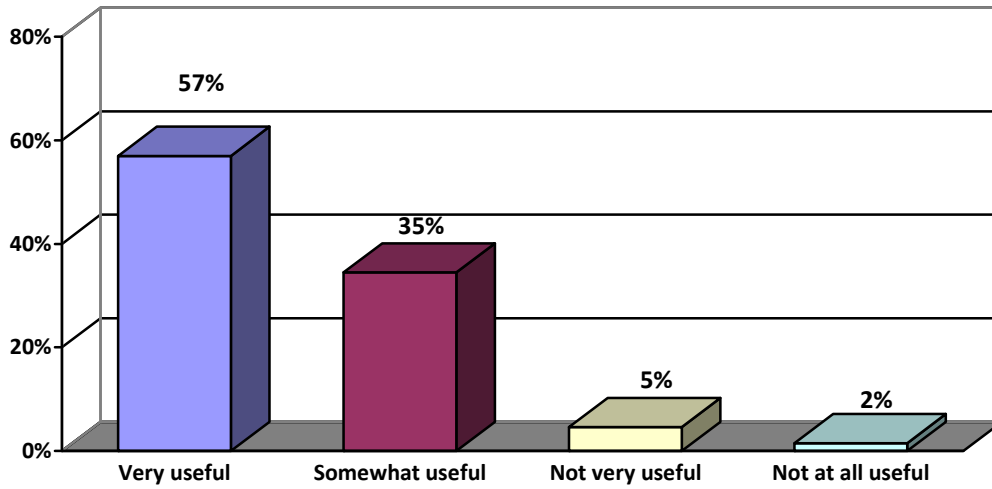
Trading Company

Respondents were asked a series of questions about the Trading Company (MTCML) including how useful they find this service and how AMM could improve the value of this service for its members.

Almost all respondents said they find the AMM Trading Company either somewhat (35%) or very useful (57%). One in twenty said it was not very useful (5%) or not at all useful (2%). A small percentage of respondents were unsure.

- Female respondents (72%) and CAOs (68%) were more likely than men (49%) and heads of council (46%) to say the Trading Company is very useful to them and their municipality.
- Rural communities (65%) were more likely than their urban counterparts (46%) to say the Trading Company is very useful.

USEFULNESS OF AMM TRADING COMPANY/Chart 4



Credit Card Option

All survey participants were asked if being able to use a credit card for purchases made at the Trading Company would make a difference to them. An overwhelming majority said having this option would make no difference to them (87%). One in ten however (10%) did say they would be more likely to make purchases from the MTCML if they could use their credit card. A small proportion of respondents were unsure (3%).

Benefits of the MTCML

When asked what they consider to be some of the benefits of the MTCML, three out of four (73%) mentioned competitive pricing and that buying from the Trading Company is better than buying direct. One in three (34%) mentioned the rebates, based on sales, that are distributed to all AMM members while others mentioned convenience of buying from the MTCML (17%).

Some of the other benefits mentioned by members include the availability of the products (4%), the benefit of bulk buying (2%), the good service they receive (2%) and that the profits from this business venture stay with the AMM and subsidize other programs (1%). Fewer than one in ten (8%) gave some other response or said they were unsure (7%).

Improvement to the MTCML

Members had little to add when asked what improvements they would like the AMM to make to the Trading Company to increase its value to its customers. Almost three out of four said there was nothing the AMM could do (46%) or they were unsure (28%). Some did mention having a greater variety of supplies and products would be good (10%) as well as more rebates and discounts (4%). Others mentioned the office supplies including computer hardware and software could be improved (3%) and generally, more information about what is available could be provided (2%).

Other improvements mentioned included better prices and rates (1%), offering heavy duty equipment and fire trucks (2%), and access to local suppliers (2%). Four percent of these respondents included some other response.

Lobbying vs. Profile Raising

Towards the end of the survey, respondents were read two statements about the AMM and asked which view is closer to their own. One statement suggested the AMM is well known among the general public and should focus its time lobbying and getting results for Manitoba municipalities. The other statement suggested the AMM needs to increase its profile among the public any way it can before it can reap the rewards of its lobbying efforts.

Approximately two out of every three members (65%) said the AMM should focus on lobbying and getting results for Manitoba municipalities. One in four (24%) however said the AMM needs to increase its profile among the public. One in ten (10%) were unable to choose between the two and said they believe both to be the case while fewer than one percent said neither statement is close to their own view or they were simply unsure.

Finally, when asked what they think the AMM can do to improve support for their members, fifteen percent said they would like to see better communication between the AMM and its members and that the AMM be more accessible. Others suggested more effective lobbying (8%) would be an improvement as would more attention being paid to rural areas (4%).

Some suggested the AMM could improve scheduling and frequency of meetings and conventions (4%), they could increase their visibility among the public (3%), pay more attention to the resolutions agreed on at convention (2%) and improve overall operating policies and procedures (2%).

More than half of all members could not think of a way the AMM could improve its support for its members (46%) or were simply unsure (15%)

▼ CONCLUSIONS

Overall, survey respondents seem to be very positive about the AMM and the job it does for Manitoba municipalities. These results are positive across all regions both in rural communities and urban.

Communication

The survey results indicate that both CAOs and Mayors and Reeves feel the AMM does a good job communicating with its members and listening to their issues. Among their greatest concerns are those related to infrastructure and depleting revenues. Municipalities in the Northern region are somewhat less positive than their southern counterparts about the AMM but overall responded to the survey in a positive manner.

Almost all respondents said they find the publications distributed by the AMM to be informative and also find the website useful and easy to navigate. The one thing some members mentioned regarding the website is ensuring the information is current and complete.

Trading Company

Members are generally pleased with the service provided by the MTCML and have a good understanding of the benefits it brings to all member municipalities in the province. This service is slightly more important to rural communities compared to urban ones and in general respondents would like to see the Trading Company offer a greater variety of products from more suppliers.

The AMM as a Lobby Group

Almost all respondents feel the AMM is a successful lobby group and although its profile could be increased among the general population, they understand the main focus of the AMM should be on lobbying and getting results for Manitoba municipalities. Member communities believe the AMM can build on its success by improving communication with its members, especially those in northern and rural areas, increasing its profile in the general population and by continuing to act on the important policy decisions decided upon each year at convention.