

Interview Questionnaire for CWCF Regular Members

Winter 2017

These surveys were conducted in a combination of in-person, telephone and self completed surveys.

During the survey member contact information was verified from the database.

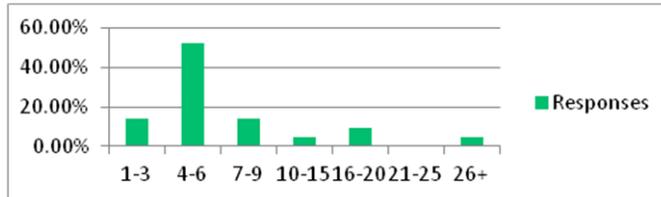
A total of 21 Surveys were completed, representing 19 members.

Co-op Membership (statistical purposes)

1. Is your co-op a worker co-op or multi-stakeholder co-op?

Worker Co-op	17	85%	
Multi-stakeholder Co-op	2	10%	
Other	1	5%	Non-profit non share capital

2. How many worker members does your co-op currently have?



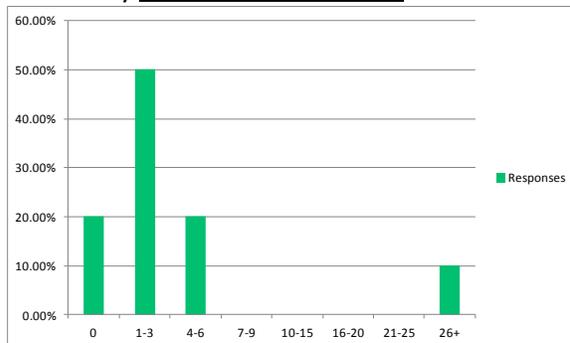
3. Gender of these worker members?

Women	45%
Men	45%
Other	10%

4. Age of worker members

Under 30	34%
30-under 60	45%
60 plus	20%

5. How many **non-member workers** does the co-op have?



6. Gender of these non-member/workers?

Women	46%
Men	46%
Other	8%

7. Age of these non-member workers.

Under 30	42%
30-under 60	50%
60 plus	8%

8. How many non-workers does the co-op have in its membership?

Very few members have non-worker members. 84% do not.

Challenges and Successes

9. Successes

- Strategic planning process
- Dig in and clarify vision before growing membership - this helped the pitch to new members
- Capacity growth
- Grant to develop a new program
- Won an award
- Accepted into a new supply program
- Recruited new members
- Self-funded new leasehold improvements
- Instituted pay raise in the last 5 years after too many years at min wage
- Adjusted bylaws
- Had membership losses and changes but still in business
- Getting a location - that was not in a strip mall
- Connections with another similar co-op(US) provided a working model
- Worker longevity-low turnover
- New collaborative models
- Growth as a co-op over 19 years from 12 members to 47.
- Developed employee handbook/operations manual
- New space better suited to our needs

10. Challenges

- Turnover because of the competitive job market
- Retention - seasonal business
- Member succession planning
- Steep learning curve for new members
- Finding new staff
- In survival mode
- Lack of work
- Lack of capacity to work, write proposals and market all at the same time.
- Need to move
- Cash flow

- Debt load
- Industry challenge
- Limited capital for new stock
- Finding time to promote business

11. What have you done or what are you currently doing to address this challenge?

- Trying a new approach
- Comprehensive role review
- Strategic partnerships
- Streamline tasks and responsibilities
- Community consultation advisory
- Investigate funding options
- Improve margins
- Coaching new members to take on more responsibility
- Rebuild without incurring debt
- Connecting with like minded organizations

12. What kind of help/support/knowledge and/or training would help your Co-op in addressing this challenge?

- Even simple things like a resources page for reading, Success stories, featured articles. Business related.
- Can we connect with and learn from a more established worker co-op that has more than 6 members?
- Help in expanding our network, promotion and skills-training on business and management would be helpful
- Funding/investment, project management training.
- By-law updating
- Business plan development
- Business planning assistance - development
- Funding/grant writing help
- Assistance to hire a project manager
- Connections. Sharing bylaws. The sharing culture.
- Working together to share their knowledge and skills.
- More training sessions aimed at new members, materials for use in internal training.
- We really needed to talk with someone about our business model.
- City council, don't seem to get the whole co-op thing. They had a difficulty understanding the co-op model. Having materials to help them in this education.
- Interested in marketing advice tailored to a small business.
- Technical assistance - train new colleagues around what is a WC; perhaps also other new organizational elements with the sudden growth.
- Ideas on diversifying their revenue as a WC.
- Help in hiring process specific to member-track employees.
- Bookkeeping help or funding for that
- Coordination with other co-ops and figuring out different strategies that would work.
- Promotion between co-ops.

Training and CWCF Services

13. CWCF is planning to offer a twice-a-year worker co-op check-in and sharing session; i.e. webinar style networking. Would you or anyone in your co-op be interested in attending?

Yes	37%
No	5%
Maybe	58%

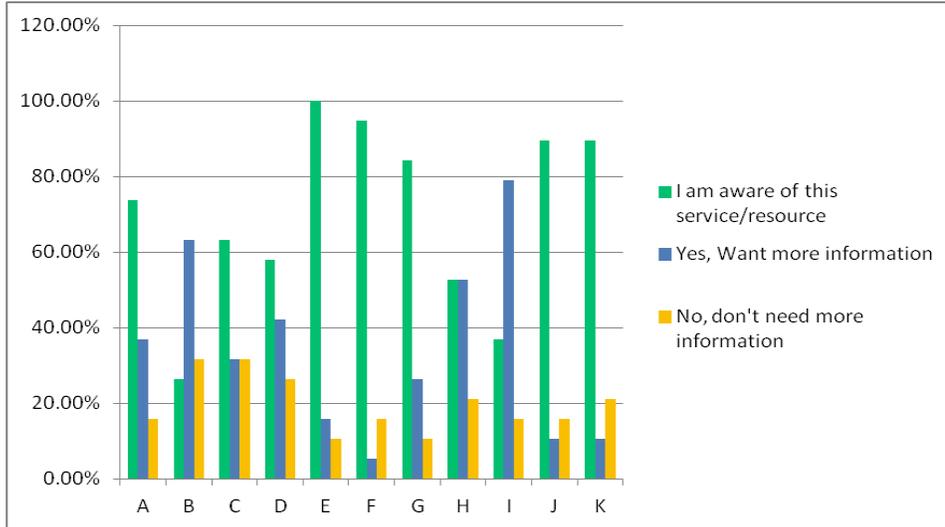
14. What other topics would you suggest for webinars for worker co-operatives?

- HR related engaging new workers,
- Increasing member engagement
- Being worker-members in a multi-stakeholder co-op.
- How other co-ops move good workers to good member owners/ Conversations around membership and responsibilities.
- Difference between membership and employees.
- How to manage worker-members vs non-member staff.
- Participatory decision-making/problem-solving methods.
- Improving democracy within our co-operative
- Lean business
- Focus on the fundamentals of process and business model and not the more classical business plan preparation.
- Dealing with seasonal issues.
- Team building how to deal with the worker economy increasing automation - how to diversify your skills and market.
- Governance 101/ Board development - governance
- Tips for policy development on the board
- Effective member/board meetings
- Financing
- Cooperator Benefits
- Low/no-budget marketing/ Promotion/marketing
- Marketing, Tips & Tricks for Marketing/Business Ideas especially retail
- Worker co-op taxes & dividends. Ensuring saving taxes and leveraging structure for tax purposes
- Good ways to explain to the public, government, etc what a worker co-operative is.
- How to participate in the coop movement and what can be done to bolster this movement.
- Sector specific workshops.

15. CWCF offers a number of member services. I'd like to find out if you are aware of these services or if you might be interested in knowing more about them:

- a. Technical Assistance and small grant program
- b. Support to carry out the Worker Co-op Index
- c. Loans by our Tenacity Works Fund
- d. RRSP program, to enable investing in one's co-op, if it's large enough.
- e. Annual Conference
- f. Web site (resources, contacts and relevant membership information)
- g. Lobbying for worker co-op interests

- h. Co-op Guard for the co-op’s insurance needs, including group benefits (medical/dental) program
- i. A “Member Benefits” program with preferential insurance coverage for your members, on auto, home or contents, & travel medical insurance. Farm insurance is also available for CWCF members which are farms.
- j. Representing the Canadian worker co-op movement to the broader co-operative sector in Canada, and to the international worker co-op movement (CICOPA)
- k. Promoting the worker co-operative model.



Insurance

16. Does your co-op currently obtain any of its insurance from The Co-operators?

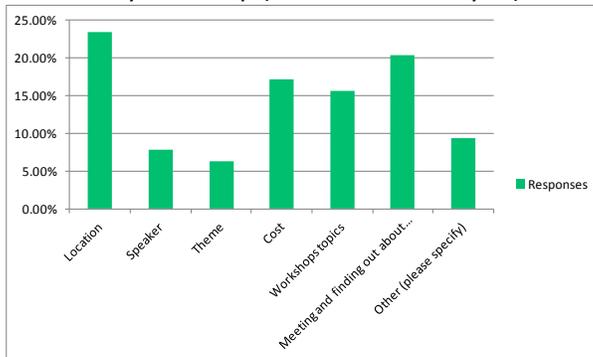
Yes	58%
No	42%

Annual Conference

17. Have you or anyone at your co-op attended a CWCF Conference in the past 5 years?

Yes	84%
No	16%

18. What attracts your co-op (or would attract you) to come to a Conference?



19. Would you have any suggestions for conference topics?

- We really need a taking coops/coop movement to the next level discussion to happen. What are the big moves we can make to get coops occupying a major share of the marketplace?
- Sharing of bylaws, what works, how have they developed their members, i.e. making a good member owner. Different models, structures, how they orientate new members.
Mostly interested in meeting other coops in similar situations
- Technology = strategies for making great use of tech for business
- staying competitive in automation
- stay adaptable and lean

20. Our conference this year is in Ottawa/Gatineau from November 2-4th. Is anyone in your co-op planning to attend?

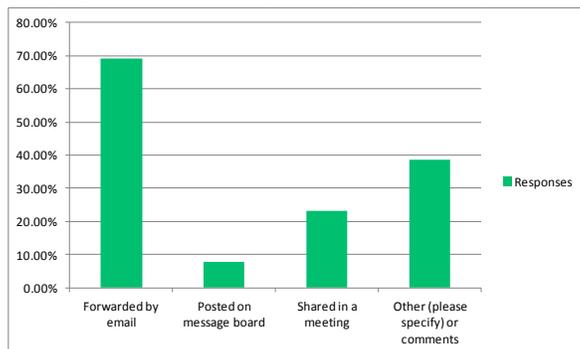
Yes	30%
No	25%
Unsure	45%

21. Is there anything which might help you change your mind? (for those who said no or unsure)

- Need to ensure availability.
- A travel bursary would be nice though
- Knowing that other multi-stakeholder co-ops will be there, as our model is different in some ways from the typical worker co-op
- Capacity at the co-op
- Cost to attend and time
- Subsidy
- Keeping the costs affordable
- Getting their stuff in order
- Full airfare would help.
- Other members will be more likely to attend with any sort of travel subsidy.
- No because we have to run the co-op (retail with set hours). More members would allow for someone to go. Very strict with hours.
- Subsidy

Newsletters

22. How are these newsletters shared with other members and/or workers?



23. What do you like about the newsletters?

- Reading success stories
- Generally informed about what is going on in the community
- Features on other coops that remind me of the broader scene in Canada and the world. Important Information and updates
- Member spotlights, coop movement info
- Quality updates
- Likes to read about what others are doing. esp Canadian examples,
- Like to see what other co-ops are doing. What is happening in other provinces. specifically in Canada.
- It's great to hear what is going on with other co-ops across Canada
- Quick scan - easy to follow
- Interesting articles sometimes. Can't read it every time.
- Write succinctly - nice little chunks can get - set up in a nice easy way.
- Like the features of the different coops.
- Reading stories about other worker co-ops with whom they can connect.
- Being reminded of the impact of WCs internationally.
- Includes stories and events and whatnot from across Canada.
- Keeps us informed of what's going on.
- Find them to the point not overly wordy. Frequency is good. Keeps her feeling connected
- Profiles from our members.

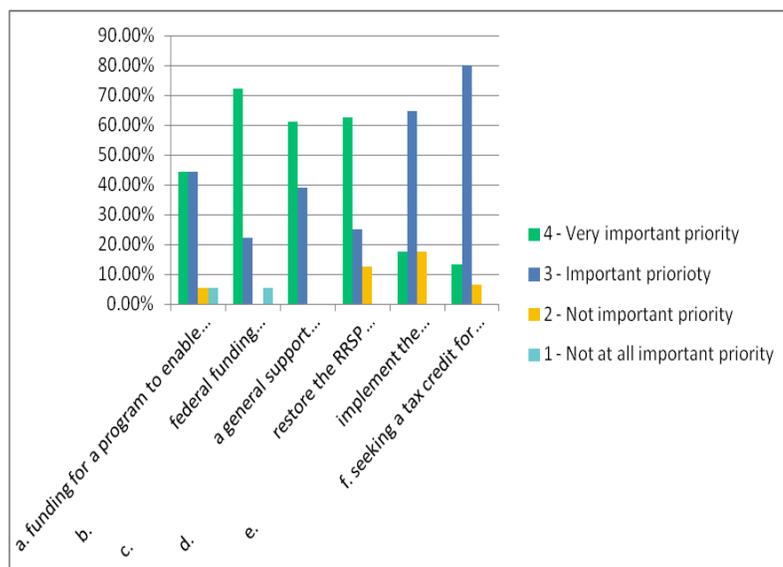
24. What changes would you like to see in our newsletter?

- Modernized look and interactive functionality.
- Integration with social media.
- Front cover confusing. Headlines on the first page and then link to the article.
- Look could be updated look. Mail Chimp has better templates.

Lobbying for worker co-op interests

25. Various initiatives which are being sought or could be sought by CWCF are as follows. Please rate on a scale of 1 to 4, with 4 as highest priority for CWCF, and 1 as not a priority at all.

- a. funding for a program to enable conversion of businesses to worker co-ops where a business owner is retiring – where CWCF sees significant opportunity to grow the worker co-op movement.
- b. federal funding for the Canadian Co-op Investment Fund.
- c. a general support program for development and expansion of worker co-ops
- d. restore the RRSP rules to those in place before 2011, to enable smaller co-ops to more easily use the program
- e. implement the CWCF's Climate Change statement - a focus on an integrated approach to reducing greenhouse gas emissions
- f. seeking a tax credit for investments in worker co-ops, as in Quebec



CWCF Dues

26. A CWCF dues task force was convened at the 2015 AGM. A resolution that came out of this task force was accepted at the CWCF AGM in November 2016. Are you aware of this resolution?

Yes	61%
No	39%

27. Do you feel CWCF has a reasonable dues formula?

100% agreed

CWCF Membership

28. Why is your Co-op a member of CWCF?

- Primarily to support advocacy for coops.
- It's important for us to be part of the scene more broadly, and I think CWCF does important work on our behalf and should be supported.
- We feel it is important to support and be a part of the coop movement, encouraging the coop model towards realization of a more just and equitable society.
- on principle, supporting worker o-ops and the co-op sector in general
- Gain the benefit and support. Support the WC as a serious business and community option in Canada.
- Can't imagine not being a member, started as a co-op to be part of the co-op sector.
- The CWCF is the association for worker co-ops in Canada
- See the benefit of part of CWCF because of promotion of worker coop governance structure. Good to support these efforts by CWCF.
- We need to be connected with other worker co-op.
- Have been since we began. Some of the members appreciate what CWCF does for us.

- Want to be part of a larger community. for support
- Gave us start-up funding.
- Because we're proud of being a WC.
- We want to support the further development of worker co-ops.
- Solidarity with other worker co-ops. Learning/networking opportunities. Support advocacy for more funding and improved laws/policies and awareness.
- Principles for being a co-op include solidarity with other co-ops.
- Important to have coordination and partnerships see value in this.

29. If there was one thing that CWCF could do to better support its members, what would you recommend?

- Keep pushing the growth of our sector!
- One of the most important tasks, I feel, is figuring out templates to guide corporate transitions to coop models. In terms of supporting existing members, though, funding and networking are key.
- Regional conferences
- Should talk to members who are new and see what they need.
- Offer larger WC's an option of a solidarity donation/membership. Maybe a different category for those - solidarity donation. maybe other ways to get support from them. recognition for that."
- The newest members need the most support and should be our focus.
- Lobby the CRA for more favourable tax treatment of indivisible reserves and patronage returns.
- CWCF just keeps things before and is not too pushy.
- Lobbying is going on
- Support co-ops needing business advice, i.e. have to change their business model.
- Have always been supportive and helpful. Could always call and dialogue. Can't suggest anything different now.
- Anything along lines of Co-op Guard benefit thing, where the pool of resources/money can lower cost of benefits and such.
- Communication on that was not practical enough.
- Support on the technical side; having access to expertise for a particular WC to look at diversifying revenue, depending on what the co-op is about. Best if from those who've been in a WC – to help them deal with such rapid growth in a WC.
- Some sort of sector specific link/groups/conversations for a-like co-ops that may have great info to share with each other, as well as the existing regional link/groups.
- Facilitating cross promotion sharing of ideas that work

Closing

30. Are there any questions or comments you have for us?

- He mentioned the Breakfast Club???
- What will CWCF do with the answers to this survey?
- Appreciate the work CWCF does and glad we are out there doing it.
- Thanks for the work we do, newsletters. keeps them connected.
- Local informal network session could good
- Why is it that there are 200 WC's in Quebec and only 5 in AB?

- Have there been any changes in legislation & programming here?
- The investment tax credit in AB will be helpful.
- Great to be doing the survey.