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# The Development of Social Marketing Strategies for the American Board of Professional Psychology

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# The Development of Social Marketing Strategies for the American Board of Professional Psychology

## **Abstract**

Objective: Develop a social marketing strategy for the American Board of Professional Psychology (ABPP) so that potential members, as well as the public consumer receive an appropriate and meaningful message via social media. Method: Create a survey which will be distributed via Survey Monkey to early entry members of ABPP, executive board members of ABPP, board presidents, and the presidents of each academy. Results: Interpret the data and analyze the data by descriptive statistics. Conclusions: Use the data to inform recommendations that will serve to meet the goal of ABPP's Communications Committee, that is reach their target audiences through the use of social media.

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The Development of Social Marketing Strategies for the American Board of Professional  
Psychology

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Faculty

of

School of Professional Psychology

Pacific University

Hillsboro, Oregon

by

Emily M.R. Szeliga, MA, MS

In Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree

of

Doctor of Psychology

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Abstract

Objective: Develop a social marketing strategy for the American Board of Professional Psychology (ABPP) so that potential members, as well as the public consumer receive an appropriate and meaningful message via social media. Method: Create a survey which will be distributed via Survey Monkey to early entry members of ABPP, executive board members of ABPP, board presidents, and the presidents of each academy. Results: Interpret the data and analyze the data by descriptive statistics. Conclusions: Use the data to inform recommendations that will serve to meet the goal of ABPP's Communications Committee, that is reach their target audiences through the use of social media.

*Keywords: social marketing, American Board of Professional Psychology*

## Introduction

Objective: Develop a social marketing strategy for the American Board of Professional Psychology (ABPP) so that potential members, as well as the public consumer receive an appropriate and meaningful message via social media. Method: Create a survey which will be distributed via Survey Monkey to early entry members of ABPP, executive board members of ABPP, board presidents, and the presidents of each academy. Results: Interpret the data and analyze the data by descriptive statistics. Conclusions: Use the data to inform recommendations that will serve to meet the goal of ABPP's Communications Committee, that is reach their target audiences through the use of social media.

## Literature Review

### *Social Marketing*

Social marketing is a concept that has been around for over three decades. Its definition has changed and evolved over time (McDermott, 2000). In the early 1990's, the concept and application of social marketing came into its own and a comprehensive definition emerged:

Social marketing is the adaptation of commercial marketing technologies to the analysis, planning, execution, and evaluation of programs designed to influence the voluntary behavior of target audience in order to improve their personal welfare and that of the society of which they are a part (Andreasen, 1994, p. 110).

Overall, the focus of social marketing is influencing behavior on the individual and societal level. Social marketing combines the theoretical underpinnings of commercial marketing in that it relies on exchange theory, audience segmentation, competition, the four 'P's' of marketing (aka, the "marketing mix"), consumer orientation, and continuous monitoring (Grier & Bryant, 2005). When applied to social marketing, exchange theory states that an exchange (either tangible or intangible) must be mutually beneficial to both parties. In order to influence behavior,



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marketers must show that the perceived benefits of changing outweigh the perceived costs of maintaining status quo.

Audience segmentation is dividing the target populations into distinct subgroups. This is done based on consumers current behaviors, intentions for the future, readiness for change, loyalty to the product, and “psychographics” such as lifestyle and values. The purpose of segmenting target markets is to properly allocate resources, and devise strategies that address specific characteristics of each segment. Competition, in social marketing, refers to alternative behaviors that the consumer may engage in; these are behavioral alternatives that compete with the recommendations and services provided by the marketers.

Social marketing also incorporates marketing strategies such as the “marketing mix:” product, price, placement, and promotion. Product is/are the desired benefits to doing the behavior. It must be noted that it is necessary to understand the values of the consumers in order to deem whether the benefits to the behavior are truly valuable. Price is the cost of the desired benefits. In social marketing, the price may include intangible expenses such as time, psychological costs, effort, and life changes for the consumer. Place is anywhere the consumer will engage in the desired behavior, or receive information, goods, or services that promote the behavior change. Finally, promotion is specific communication objectives geared toward target audiences. Effective, timely, and appropriate messages are involved in promotion, as is using the right communication channels.

Andreasen (1994) makes explicit a main difference between commercial marketing and social marketing: the bottom line in commercial marketing is *production of sales*, whereas in social marketing, the bottom line is *influencing behavior*. It is in that vein that consumer orientation is a primary factor in social marketing. The consumer’s values are necessarily central

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to the planning and implementation of an integrated marketing strategy. Of particular interest are the perceptions, needs, wants, and present behavior of the consumer. The evidence of consumer orientation must be found through research. Formative research provides specific and distinct information regarding target audiences environment, behavior, mindset, lifestyle, and interests. Continuous monitoring is necessary to evaluate the effectiveness of social marketing. It entails consistently and regularly checking in with target audiences to gauge responses, changes, and interactions evidenced during and after interventions. Conducting market research has reached new heights with the introduction and use of social networking sites.

### *Using Social Media in Social Marketing Strategies*

Individuals, businesses, and non-profit organizations are changing the way they gather information, conduct research, and communicate due to new technologies and capabilities (Bernoff & Li, 2008). When applied to social marketing, social media is invaluable for the purposes of conducting market research as well as implementing interventions and applying a successful social marketing strategy. Social media includes a wide range of online forums through which consumers may communicate directly with other consumers in real-time, and businesses and organizations may also receive feedback as well as send direct messages to consumers. Some examples of social media include chat-rooms and discussion boards sponsored by organizations, blogs sponsored by users or businesses, listservs, social networking sites (e.g., Facebook and Twitter), consumer product and service rating sites, and internet forums, to name a few.

Boyd and Ellison (2008) use three characteristics to define social networking sites: invitation to construct a public or semi-private profile within a bounded system, maintain a list of users to whom they are connected, and view and navigate their connections and the connections

made by other users of the site. The richest use of social networking sites, according to the researchers, is communicating with others who are a part of their extended network; social circles may grow exponentially, and with ease on such sites.

For-profit businesses are using social media in their business strategies regularly. In a study conducted by Barnes (2010), of 30 percent of the fastest growing US companies, 75 percent of the Chief Marketing Officer's are "very familiar" with social networking sites. Fifty-two percent of these businesses are using twitter, according to the findings, and 45 percent have a public-facing (intended for public consumption and contribution) corporate blogs. The companies included in this study replied with a resounding "yes" when asked if social networking has been successful for their business. Forty-three percent claimed social media is a "very important" factor in their marketing plans. Those interviewed cite network or website hits, comments, leads, and sales as indicators of success. Finally, more than half of the companies in the study use social networking as a method to recruit and evaluate potential employees. Forty eight percent highlighted Twitter, Facebook, and LinkdIn for this purpose. It is evident that social media is useful in a variety of ways when employed knowledgably by savvy for-profit businesses.

In another vein, research shows that non-profits are incorporating social media into their social marketing plans. For example, The American Red Cross, National Wildlife Federation and March of Dimes (Kanter, 2009) are using social media to conduct market research and connect and communicate with supporters and consumers. NTEN, Common Knowledge, and thePort are online professional organizations that provide services for non-profits. In particular, the mission of these firms is to enable non-profit organizations use technology supported by the internet most effectively for the purposes of marketing, fundraising, educating, and communicating. In 2010

these three organizations published their second annual study in which social media usage by non-profits was investigated (<http://www.commonknow.com/html/white-papers/NonprofitSocialNetworkSurveyReport.pdf>, 2010). In the study, over 1,100 non-profit organizations responded to a survey about their use of social networks online. There are two types of social networking the study inquired about: one is commercial social networking sites, such as Facebook, and Twitter; the other is “house social networking,” that is an online community built on the organizations website.

The key findings of this study reveal that 86 percent of the organizations have a presence on Facebook and 60 percent are represented on Twitter. Slightly less than half of the survey respondents reported using LinkedIn as well; interestingly, 65 percent of “Professional Associations” and 45 percent of “Education” organizations take advantage of LinkedIn’s “group” application. The primary reason for having a presence on the commercial social networking sites is for “traditional marketing” purposes (92.5 percent of respondents). Fundraising is the second most cited reason (45.9 percent). The other two purposes for engaging with social networking as noted by the respondents are “program delivery” and “market research.”

As for “house social networking,” from 2009 to 2010, there was a drop from 31 percent of organizations operating a network to 22 percent. The researchers suspect that the current economy has impacted organizations ability to justify the high up-front costs necessary to support such networks. Marketing (56.8 percent) and program delivery (49.1 percent) were the primary uses of the house networks. The house networks themselves are promoted to prospective community members through the organizations current email list (76.7 percent) and via the organizations website (75.1 percent).

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In essence, the researchers report that non-profits continue to increase their use of commercial social networks, primarily Facebook and Twitter. It is notable that for professional organizations and educational institutions, a platform such as LinkedIn is relied upon. The researchers include in their study a hypothesis regarding the difference between the few agencies that are very satisfied with their commitment to social media and those that do not claim to be reaping benefits. It seems that non-profits that resist allocating adequate resources necessary to fully incorporate social media into their business plans are less satisfied. These organizations site unclear and unsure returns on their investments thus far. As for conclusions drawn for the house networks, the decrease in adoption is likely due to the economy, note the researchers. Though, the numbers of members in the house communities is growing to rival the membership numbers in comparable commercial networks. Furthermore, as reported, members of house networks report decent satisfaction with their involvement.

Overall, pervasiveness, persuasiveness, and the meticulousness of a social marketing campaign may be directly influenced by the use of social media as was shown to be the case with the American Cancer Society. In a paper written by Silvia (2009), an analysis of how the American Cancer Society uses popular networking sites is presented. The author details the organizations use of blogs, Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, among others. Using the case of the American Cancer Society, the following are descriptions of how selected social networking tools may be applied in social marketing.

### *Types of Social Networking*

*Blogs.* Blogs give individuals, companies, groups, and organizations a voice. Consumers may use blogs to talk at length about their experiences. Companies and organizations may “talk” to consumers about news, campaigns, events, and products. The American Cancer Society uses a

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blog (“Blog for Hope”) as a forum for discussion, story sharing, and to generate support for the organization as well as offer support for the consumer. Through this medium, voices may be “heard,” and the organization may “listen.” For this reason, Silvia (2009) reports, the use of a blog increases the credibility of the organization.

*Facebook.* Facebook is one of the most widely used social networking sites. Corbett (2009) reported rapid growth in Facebook users over the age of 30 years old; there was a 276.4% increase over a 6 month period! Users can maintain relationships, upload photos, and share links with others in their network. Shappell (2010) likened Facebook to a house party or a barbeque. Generally, Facebook is regarded as a resource for young professionals and university students. For non-profits, Facebook created an application called “Causes.” Users may add this application to their profile, thus raising awareness among their networks. The application allows Facebook users to donate money to the cause directly from their profile. The American Cancer Society created and maintains a “Fan Page.” This is another function of Facebook in which a group or organization may have a Facebook presence as such. On the Fan Page of the American Cancer Society, users may participate in surveys, be notified of upcoming events and RSVP their intentions. Also on the site, consumers may participate in discussions by posting on the American Cancer Society’s discussion boards. The American Cancer Society has also been represented by Facebook members who are consumers, and have created personal pages. These individual pages generate more interest and individualize the messages conveyed by the American Cancer Society.

*YouTube.* YouTube is a medium in which individuals, groups, organizations, and companies may post online videos. Video is one of the most powerful mediums for communicating emotional stories, honest interviews, campaign messages, and advertisements

(Stiner, 2008). The American Cancer Society uses YouTube to post public service announcements (PSA's). A critical aspect of YouTube for such messages is the ability for viewers to post responses to videos. This feedback has a significant impact on the proliferation of the video itself, as a tally of the number of viewers is maintained overtime. Users of YouTube who resonate with the posted video may re-post the video (or a link to the video) on their personal blogs, Facebook pages, Twitter accounts, etc. Thus, YouTube is a powerful tool in and of itself as well as across mediums.

*Twitter.* According to the Wall Street Journal, Twitter is one of the fastest growing social media sites with 32 million individuals, organizations, businesses, and non-profits worldwide using Twitter to reach their target audience. A user may post "tweets" of up to 140 characters. The announcements are scrolled onto a global feed. Users follow one another, and upon login are privy to a personalized feed including tweets from anyone they are following. There is no limit to how many one may follow and how many followers a user may have. Twitter is a valuable medium in that it instantaneous, brief, and had a wide reaching network (users do not need approval to follow others; anyone may follow anyone). As Shappell (2010) described it, Twitter is the equivalent of a soapbox. Raising awareness about a cause and establishing a presence is achievable without the use of many resources (time, prose, money).

*LinkedIn.* LinkedIn began in 2003 to enable users to expand professional networks, create and maintain contacts, stay informed and connected to industries of interest, develop opportunities, and grow their businesses. LinkedIn users tend to be professionals who work for various companies, businesses, or are self-employed or entrepreneurs. Registered LinkedIn users create an online profile, and have the option to upload, CV's, slideshows and presentations, blog content, and files to share with other users. Users may also join groups, or they may form online

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communities by identifying with a particular company. Professionals may share ideas with one another, ask questions and receive answers from other users in their network. LinkedIn has served individuals organizations by allowing for increased outreach, connecting, and networking within, and throughout businesses worldwide. It is like Facebook for CEO's; professionals may create, control, and tout an online identity. Professionals who maintain profiles on LinkedIn have claimed to feel increased credibility in the business world and businesses have increased visibility (<http://blog.wsidigitalmarketing.com/>, 2010). As an organization, the American Cancer Society has an organization profile and a group page. The profile includes details about who the key players are in the organization, and statistics and demographics highlighting age, sex, and educational background of its employees. Other users of LinkedIn may access this information in order to glean direct contact information, and gain a better understanding of who is behind the cause. Interaction between employees, supporters and volunteers is encouraged by the group's open discussion board to which upcoming events, fundraisers, and testimonials may be posted.

As may be gleaned from the use of some social networking by the American Cancer Society, and the overview of the purpose of select sites, some of the overall benefits of using social networking sites by non-profits in particular include: communicating directly with the target audience, exchanging information, minimal cost, focuses on building connections, increases awareness, increases visibility and establishes communities, sharing stories and "listening," expanding reach and distributing messages in a short amount of time. One of the drawbacks to using social networking in a social marketing strategy is that it is difficult to track outcomes and effectiveness due to the constantly changing environment on the internet. An organization may fall out of date or out of sync with its consumers if there is not an established and reliable monitoring practice in place. Additionally, Bernoff and Li (2008) remind marketers



that, “empowered by online social technologies...customers are now connecting with and drawing power from one other. They’re defining their own perspective on companies and brands, a view that’s often at odds with the image a company wants to project" (p. 36). While social networking may work for the organization, its use also runs the risk of negatively impacting the organizations public image.

### Current Project

#### *American Board of Professional Psychology (ABPP)*

The American Board of Professional Psychology was started in 1947. Within ABPP there are a number of boards that represent the various sub-specialties in which members are certified; these are headed by an elected president of the board. In addition, there is a board of trustees (BOT) that is made up of elected representatives of each board. ABPP also has an elected executive committee. Finally, within ABPP there are established academies. The largest three academies are Clinical Psychology, Clinical Neuropsychology, and Forensic Psychology. The academies provide continuing education (CE) opportunities and credits, recruit potential members, and provide mentors for the new members. They also represent the profession in the eyes of the courts, hospitals, and other medical centers that require professional employees to be “board certified” and deemed “competent.”

About five years ago, ABPP established an “early entry option.” This was designed for graduate students who are finishing their degree in psychology, or professionals who are completing their post-doc’s to become familiar with ABPP as well as allow ABPP to note them on the radar as potential future members. Recently, ABPP has determined it must become innovative in order to get their message delivered to the target audiences, such as those described above. It is essential for ABPP to expand their reach in order to convey their mission to potential

members as well as highlight the services they provide to consumers. Other target markets for ABPP that are not addressed in this study due to limited resources included hospitals and third party payers.

According to the American Board of Professional Psychology, BOT Communications Task Force, their charge is to evaluate the communications strategy of ABPP. More specifically, the task is to examine methods for reaching a larger audience, and implement strategies that convey relevant and meaningful messages to potential early entry members, as well as to the consumer. The research conducted for this paper will involve steps towards creating a social marketing strategy which includes the use of social media.

### Method

The goal of this project is to facilitate ABPP's outreach towards target audiences using a social marketing strategy. In the literature there are varying opinions regarding the steps to creating a social marketing strategy. For example, Grier and Bryant (2005) delineate six steps to the process of social marketing. Walsh, Rudd, Moeykens, and Maloney (1993) outline nine steps necessary for a social marketing program to be comprehensive. For this research, I have extracted and combined steps that are necessary and at the same time feasible for the current project. There are five steps in this tailored methodology:

1. Initial planning: gather relevant information such as identify the preliminary behavioral objectives, target markets, behavioral determinants, and strategies
2. Formative research: investigate factors identified in the first step, including segmenting audiences, understanding consumer orientation, and goals of the organization
3. Strategy development: prepare a marketing plan which includes observable and measurable and specific outcomes/objectives/goals; and create a step-by-step guide for

development, implementation, and tracking of the project. This includes overall goals of the program, description of target audience, and specific behaviors central to the marketing strategy.

4. Implementation
5. Monitoring and evaluation: identify necessary revisions, and determine effectiveness

Based on these steps, the following is the design for this study:

### *Participants*

For the initial planning stage, the target audiences for this project are identified as early entry members, board presidents, academy presidents, and the APBB executive committee.

### *Procedure and Analysis*

The formative research in this project included investigating the values and goals ABPP and honing in on what messages ABPP wishes to send to the target audiences; what they wish to market to consumers. Also, understanding the goals of early entry members is essential. Both qualitative and quantitative methods were used to conduct formative research. A group specific survey was distributed to the four groups identified above.

The data gathered through these surveys were evaluated for themes around values and goals, as well as trends in messages and communication patterns. Also, the goals and objectives of the early entry members were clarified so as to help ABPP continue their reach to this audience. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics. A strategy was developed in accordance with the goals of the organization as well as the emerging themes as evidenced in the survey results. Based on the results, recommendations were made around the construction of appropriately nuanced messages for identified target audiences and how to broaden ABPP's reach via social networking. The implementation phase and the monitoring stages of the strategy were detailed as part of the recommendations.

## Results

*Early Entry Members*

*Demographics.* There were 137 (N=137) early entry members (EEMs) who agreed to participate in the survey. As for how EEMs heard about the early entry option (EEO), 135 participants answered the question (2 respondents skipped the question). The majority (56%,  $n = 62$ ) endorsed learning about the opportunity from a faculty member or supervisor ( $n = 31$  for each). Another 22% ( $n = 30$ ) identified the ABPP website as the avenue in which they heard about the EEO. One of the response options was 'other.' A total of 28 participants (21%) responded this way. Among the open-ended answers, about half ( $n=10$ ) acknowledged they found out about the ABPP EEO by attending the APA Convention or Division conferences. The remaining participants noted mentors or peers were how they found out about the EEO. None of the participants endorsed learning about the EEO by way of social networking (*Figure 1*).

As for length of time enrolled as an EEM, 3 respondents skipped the question. More than half of those who did respond said they had been enrolled for at least one year; 23% ( $n = 31$ ) have been enrolled for a year, 31% ( $n = 42$ ) have been enrolled for over two years. Another 22% ( $n = 30$ ) endorsed being an EEM for over six months. Finally, 13% ( $n = 17$ ) have been enrolled for less than three months, and 10% ( $n = 14$ ) have been members from 3 to 6 months (*Figure 2*).

*Perceptions of ABPP.* When asked why they chose to enroll in the EEO, 134 participants responded at least once to the multiple response option question. The majority of them (73%,  $n = 99$ ) agreed that a reduced ABPP application fee was the primary reason for joining early. This response was followed by high endorsement of wanting to get a lead on ABPP certification by registering early (66%,  $n = 88$ ). To demonstrate early commitment to ongoing professional development was a response endorsed by 72 participants (54%). Forty-one participants (31%)

responded to the choice, “to identify with a specialized area of practice.” A small number ( $n = 8$ ) said they enrolled as an EEM to find a mentor (*Figure 3*). Most of the EEMs have declared a specialty ( $n = 107, 80\%$ ). The remaining participants have not declared a specialty. Three participants skipped the question.

When asked if being an early entry member has been beneficial in any way so far, 132 participants responded. Of those who answered, 34 (26%) said “yes.” The majority ( $n = 76, 58\%$ ) were neutral, answering that being an early entry member has not benefitted them yet. A few participants were not sure ( $n = 22, 17\%$ ).

Of the respondents who endorsed benefits from being an EEM, 33 provided an open-ended response to provide examples of the perceived benefit. These answers were coded based on language and specific words used (e.g., “motivates me,” “money savings,” “marketability”). The response categories that emerged include staying motivated and engaged, saving money and financial benefits, and networking opportunities and more optimal career outcomes. The majority of the respondents to this question ( $n = 20, 61\%$ ) noted that being an EEM has helped them to stay motivated for future board certification. What has helped them stay motivated, according to the respondents, is the ability to “bank” their credentials with ABPP, thus helping them to stay organized and focused. Another benefit cited by the respondents was the financial savings. As acknowledged by participants, being an EEM will save them future ABPP fees incurred when one sits for board certification ( $n = 17, 52\%$ ).

Another open-ended question posed to the EEMs asked how they expect being an EEM will be beneficial in the future. Nineteen participants skipped this question. Of the 118 who provided an answer, the themes that emerged (after coding responses) were similar to those found in the responses to the previous question. The themes found include: staying organized,

motivated, and efficient; career and networking opportunities; saving money; and not sure.

Almost half ( $n = 55$ , 45%) of the responses mentioned how being an EEM will be beneficial later by providing opportunities for increased organization, and efficiency toward becoming ABPP board certified. Having increased career and networking opportunities (e.g., increased pay, and opportunities for professional growth) were future benefits mentioned by 30% ( $n = 35$ ). An additional 31% ( $n = 36$ ) highlighted the money savings in the future as a benefit to be had later. Twelve respondents (10%) were not sure how being an EEM will be beneficial in the future.

The next question in the survey asked what EEMs value about ABPP. This question was also open-ended, and 29 participants skipped it. Of those who answered ( $N = 108$ ), the responses were coded in order to extract common themes. An overwhelming majority ( $n = 95$ , 88%) cited that being associated with ABPP (either as an EEM or board certified) speaks to ones credibility. Most EEMs who responded to the survey value ABPP's endorsement of a practitioner's expertise and credibility in the field. The remaining responses (21%,  $n = 23$ ) included a value placed on training and networking opportunities provided by ABPP.

*Communication.* When asked how EEMs have been communicating with ABPP, 117 participants responded. The most popular method of communicating with ABPP is through email (95%,  $n = 111$ ). In addition, 13% ( $n = 15$ ) mentioned mailings as a way they have received communication from ABPP. Another 11 respondents (9%) endorsed communication with ABPP has occurred via the phone. Four participants said they have communicated with ABPP representatives in person, and another respondent noted that they left a voice mail message but never received a call-back.

As for effective communication, among 125 EEMs who answered this question, 115 endorsed email as the number one method (92%). The next most popular channel for communication was the ABPP website (44%,  $n = 55$ ). Close in popularity to the website was listserv(s), which were highlighted by 36% ( $n = 45$ ) of participants. Other response options included: newsletters (17%,  $n = 21$ ), mailings (16%,  $n = 20$ ), Facebook (10%,  $n = 12$ ), and phone contact (9%,  $n = 11$ ). A handful of participants also endorsed LinkedIn, Twitter, and blogs together as effective methods of communication (7%,  $n = 10$ ). Most respondents (77%,  $n = 98$ ) reported that word of mouth was the method used most to communicate about the EEO. Another 29 participants (23%) admitted that they have not promoted the EEO to their colleagues.

*Social Networking.* When asked if they use social networking sites, 126 participants responded (11 skipped the question). Sixty-seven (53%) endorsed using social networking sites for personal use only. The next most popular option was using social networking sites for both personal and professional reasons (29%,  $n = 37$ ). Only 14% ( $n = 18$ ) denied using social networking sites. As for the sites EEMs use most regularly, for personal use only, Facebook ranked highest with 93% ( $n = 85$ ) endorsement. For professional use only, listserv(s) were most popular (74%,  $n = 61$ ), followed by LinkedIn (48%,  $n = 39$ ). For both personal and professional use, Facebook was the front runner (44%,  $n = 18$ ). Websites (27%,  $n = 11$ ) and listserv(s) (22%,  $n = 9$ ) were other popular sites for both personal and professional use.

The last question in the EEM survey inquired about how ABPP may be able to use social networking sites. There were 90 EEM who wrote in their answers to this question (47 skipped the question). The answers were coded. Common themes that emerged regarding ways ABPP could use social networking sites include: marketing ABPP and promoting its purpose (23%,  $n = 21$ ), disseminating information (22%,  $n = 20$ ), networking (17%,  $n = 15$ ), and facilitating

discussions (10%,  $n = 9$ ). In addition, 19% ( $n = 17$ ) were not sure how ABPP could use social networking sites. Another 23% ( $n = 21$ ) do not see ABPP using social networking sites for a particular purpose.

*Board Presidents*

In total, 12 ( $N = 12$ ) Board presidents agreed to participate in the survey. The first question was open-ended, and 11 participants responded. The first question asked what Board presidents think their board members value about ABPP. The responses were coded, and the themes that emerged with overwhelming popularity (100%) were the credibility, recognition of being competent, and the certification of quality that comes with being ABPP board certified. One respondent also mentioned that board members also value their increased marketability due to being ABPP board certified.

The next question also asked about values; however it was more specific to what the board members value about their board in particular. Again, 11 participants responded to the open ended question, and the answers were coded. Themes among the responses include: credibility, collegiality and supportive atmosphere, active nature, trainings and materials offered, and the influence a board may have over policies and procedures.

*Board Members.* Board presidents were asked additional questions regarding their boards in particular. The first of these was to identify the number of members within the board. Nine board presidents responded to this question. Between 101 and 200 members was the most popular response (44%,  $n = 4$ ). One participant was not sure how many members the board had, and another respondent endorsed there are 300 or more members of their board.

The next question had up to five response options. The question posed determined how board presidents activate members of their board. There were nine respondents to this question



who varied in their provision of ideas from giving one answer to offering the maximum of five methods by which they activate members of their board. After coding the total responses to this question, open and frequent communication (31%) with board members were the primary way by which board presidents activate the members of their particular boards. Another common response (28%) includes attending conferences, giving presentations, and being active in campaigns. Finally, 10% pointed towards the academy as the primary way that members of the board are activated.

When the board presidents were polled regarding motivators to become board certified in their particular specialty, nine participants responded with multiple responses. Themes among the responses included: gaining credibility, status, and recognition of competence in the specialty area (41%,  $n = 13$ ), professional growth and dedication, and personal satisfaction and sense of accomplishment (25%,  $n = 8$ ), and 16% ( $n = 5$ ) mentioned increased pay and being more competitive in the market.

*Board Representation.* Board presidents were polled regarding what they want consumers to believe/know about board certified psychologists. Again, nine board presidents responded to the open ended question. All of them agreed they wish for consumers to believe that board certified psychologists are credible experts, and practice competently (have the knowledge skills and abilities) as evaluated by their peers. In terms of how the board presidents represent themselves to the public, eight participants responded to this question. Three respondents admitted that they have not done much to represent themselves to the public. A few board presidents acknowledged they keep an updated list of board certified psychologists and they regularly communicate with their constituency. In addition, one respondent noted writing letters to policy makers when appropriate helps represent the board to the general public. The next

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questions had to do with marketing to potential board members as well as to consumers. Nine board presidents participated in these questions. The majority of participants (67%,  $n = 6$ ) agreed that marketing to potential board members is of utmost importance. Similarly, marketing ABPP's services and expertise to consumers is of utmost importance according to 67% ( $n = 6$ ) of participants.

*Social Networking.* Board presidents were asked if they use social networking sites, nine participants responded. Five of them (56%) denied using social networking sites. Three participants (33%) endorsed using social networking sites for personal use only. Finally, one board president reported using social networking sites for personal and professional use. The social networking sites used most for personal reasons were Facebook ( $n = 4$ ) and websites ( $n = 3$ ). For professional use, websites are most commonly accessed ( $n = 2$ ). Finally when board presidents were asked how they see ABPP using social networking sites, nine participants responded to the open ended question. Most board presidents are not sure how ABPP can use social networking (42%,  $n = 5$ ). Two board presidents suggested ABPP can use social networking sites for promotional purposes. Finally, one respondent hypothesized that social networking could be used by ABPP to facilitate relevant discussions/professional collaboration/networking.

### *Academy Presidents*

*Recruitment.* Ten ( $N = 10$ ) academy presidents agreed to take part in the survey. The first question posed to the academy presidents inquired how the academy recruits members. Of the 10 participants, 6 answered the question. Participants were allowed to select more than one response. Three response options received equal votes: word of mouth, professional conferences, and workshops (67%,  $n = 4$  each). The next most popular response regarding how the academy

recruits members was through graduate programs (50%,  $n = 3$ ). Through the website was also endorsed as a method by three participants. Two academy presidents reported their academy does not actively recruit members (33%). Social networking sites received no credit in terms of acting as a method of recruitment.

When asked if any EEMs are aligned with the academy, seven academy presidents responded. Only one president answered in the affirmative (14%). The other six were split (43% each) between not knowing, and reporting that there are no EEMs aligned with their particular academies. Again, only one academy president endorsed having a mentoring program within the board they represent. This respondent described the goals of this mentoring program, “[to] link boarded individuals with candidates to assist in prep for [the] exam process.” This president admitted that the mentoring program mostly accomplishes the stated goals.

All of the academy presidents who agreed to take the survey skipped the next questions, which had to do with engaging EEMs and academy members. None of the respondents chose to answer the question geared toward understanding what they wish for recognition by consumers. When asked what ABPP members value about the academy in particular, six presidents responded. Half of them noted the status of being a “fellow” is highly valued. Other responses to the open-ended question included value placed on CE credits, and the newsletter put out by the Academy.

*Communication and Social Networking.* Academy presidents were asked how they communicate with members of their academies. Five presidents responded to this question, which allowed multiple response options to be chosen. All five of the participants endorsed email as a channel through which they communicate. Listserv(s), website(s), and newsletter(s) were methods of communication each highlighted by three presidents (60% each). Response

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options that did not receive any acknowledgement were: in person, and social networking. By phone, mailings, and meetings were methods that received minimal support ( $n = 2$  or less). Four academy presidents responded to the next question that wondered how the academy communicates with consumers. Email, website(s), and in person were each acknowledged by two presidents (50%).

Five academy presidents responded to the question regarding increasing ABPP's notoriety. The majority of them (75%,  $n = 3$ ) agreed that increasing ABPP's notoriety by marketing ABPP's services and expertise to consumers is "of utmost importance." One president noted that it is "very important" to market ABPP to potential members, and another president called marketing ABPP to potential members is "of utmost importance." In terms of how marketing is currently being done, again, five academy presidents weighed in. According to four presidents, marketing is being done to potential members in person, at conferences, and through the website. Other popular marketing methods include Listserv(s) and email. As for marketing to consumers, three Presidents agreed such connection is being made via the website.

Six academy presidents shared their social networking use. Three admitted to not using social networking sites. Two presidents said they use social networking sites for personal reasons. Finally, one president noted using social networking sites for professional reasons. For personal use, Facebook is the most popular among academy presidents. For professional use, Facebook, LinkedIn, and blog(s) each received one vote. The last question asked of the academy presidents was open-ended, and it inquired about how ABPP may be able to use social networking. Six presidents weighed in. Responses in favor of ABPP using social networking included having a presence on Facebook, listservs, and blogs to communicate with graduate program directors to better reach potential EEMs, and consumers and organizations that approve

of/require certain credentials. One president suggested that social networking could be useful to ABPP as a method to facilitate relevant and important discussions regarding current events among professionals in the field. Two presidents were unsure how social networking may be used by ABPP.

### *Executive Committee*

Five members of the executive committee (EC) agreed to participate in the survey. Four EC members weighed in regarding what they value most about ABPP. They all agreed that the collegiality and assurance of competency in ones specialty area as evaluated by a challenging examination process is highly valuable. One member noted the clout provided by ABPP certification may aid in receiving increased recognition by regulating and legislative bodies. Four EC members provided opinions regarding how ABPP may be relevant for consumers. All respondents highlighted how ABPP board certification allows consumers to identify competent experts in specific specialty areas. In response to what is most important for the general public consumer to know about ABPP, four EC members contributed a number of opinions. The open-ended answers were coded. Themes that emerged include wanting consumers to know that ABPP is a legitimate and important organization that oversees board certification among specialties within psychology (43%). Executive committee members would like consumers to know that ABPP board certified psychologists have been deemed competent and are experts in their specialty area (29%). Finally, it was important to some EC members for consumers to know that not all psychologists are board certified, and that many psychologists are not. Furthermore, it is important for a consumer to seek a board certified psychologist who is an expert in the specific type of service one is seeking (21%).

*Communication.* When asked how ABPP most successfully engages with consumer, four EC members chimed in. Three of the four responses mentioned that ABPP does not engage in any meaningful ways with consumers. It was noted by one EC member that ABPP must become more established, and board certification of psychologists needs to become an expectation held by consumers. Hypotheses about how ABPP may be represented to consumers included: through media, state regulations, and legislation around requirement of board certification. In addition, one EC member acknowledged that providing board certification using a model that is familiar to consumers may be a way to engage them. EC members were asked how ABPP markets itself to potential members. Four EC members agreed that the most popular way of doing this is having a presence at, or hosting, conferences and workshops. All four also noted the website as a marketing tool. Another method by which ABPP markets to potential members is through newsletters (75%,  $n = 3$ ). Listserv(s), social networking sites, and outreach were marketing methods that received two votes each by respondents. One EC member also noted that insurance panels increasingly ask about board certification, and this is a marketing opportunity. In terms of marketing ABPP's services and expertise to consumers, two EC members agreed it is "somewhat important," and two remaining EC members agreed it is "of utmost importance." There was complete agreement (100%,  $n = 4$ ) that marketing ABPP to potential new members is "of utmost importance."

Executive committee members were asked how ABPP has been recruiting members for the EEO. Again, four EC members responded. The four respondents all acknowledged "word of mouth," "outreach by current ABPP members," "workshops/conferences," and "newsletters," as methods used to recruit potential EEMs. The website was noted by three respondents as a way in which EEMs have been recruited. Outreach by current EEMs, emails, listserv(s), and social

networking sites were each selected by half of the respondents ( $n = 2$ ). According to two of four EC members, those enrolled in the EEO may be characterized as “committed” to the field and to being provider of a specialized psychological service. Another EC member noted EEMs engagement in the process of becoming board certified. Finally, those enrolled in the EEO are characterized as being influenced by current board certified psychologists, reported one EC member.

*Social Networking.* When EC members were asked if they use social networking sites, three of four (75%) reported they do not use social networking sites. The remaining EC member endorsed using social networking sites for professional reasons only. This respondent disclosed they use LinkedIn for professional reasons only, and for personal and professional use, they take advantage of listservs. When asked how APBB may be able to use social networking sites, four EC members offered responses. All four of them agreed that ABPP could use social networking sites for marketing to potential members. The other response options received three votes each; ABPP could use social marketing sites: “for marketing to consumers,” for “communicating with members,” for “communicating with consumers,” for “raising awareness of mental health issues/public service announcements (PSA’s),” and for “networking.” Finally, EC members were asked to hypothesize how they would know that ABPP’s use of social networking sites is working to ABPP’s benefit. The responses included: seeing more “hits” (on the website, for example), experiencing an increase in applications received, reports of new members and new consumers, and seeing news outlets defer to ABPP for opinions on important and relevant matters.

## Discussion and Conclusions

### *Summary*

ABPP certification is valued by early entry members, board presidents, academy presidents, and executive committee members for its credibility and the rigorous board certification process that deems members competent and practicing experts in their specialty area. Among board members and academy members, it is hypothesized (by the board and academy presidents) they value belonging to a collegial group with whom networking is possible. In addition, publications such as newsletters, as well as the provision of CE credits and workshops are also valuable to ABPP members. For the EEMs, they value the money savings that being an EEM has provided them for the future. Also, EEM's identified the potential for networking and career opportunities including increased salary by virtue of being ABPP board certified.

More than half of the academy presidents agreed that marketing to consumers is "of utmost importance," and two respondents endorsed marketing to potential members as at least "very important." The majority of board presidents endorsed marketing to potential ABPP members as well as consumers is "of utmost importance." Board presidents acknowledged having presence at conferences, activity on listservs, and annual meetings as examples of how they engage and activate members. Representation to consumers comes in the form of communication with constituency and providing an up-to-date list of board certified psychologists. Though in favor of marketing to consumers and potential members, both board presidents and academy presidents had mixed responses as to how marketing is currently being done and how it could be more effective.



As for social networking, there were mixed reviews. About half of the academy and board presidents who participated in the survey denied using social networking sites. For those who did endorse their use, Facebook is the most popular for personal use. For professional purposes, blogs and LinkedIn are the sites of choice for most. Despite the minimal use of social media and its perceived questionable use for ABPP, academy presidents and board presidents hypothesized social networking could be useful for ABPP. Suggestions included using social media for promotional purposes, hosting discussions, and for communication and dissemination of information.

As of now, early entry members communicate with ABPP primarily via email. In addition, some EEMs mentioned using the ABPP website as a valid method of communicating. When it comes to social media, the majority of EEMs endorsed using social networking for personal use only, and about one third reported using social media for both personal and professional use. In response to the notion of ABPP incorporating social media into its methods of communicating, the EEMs who participated in the survey had varied ideas. Some were not sure how ABPP could use social media, and a few more were skeptical of the idea that ABPP could take advantage of social media. Still others agreed social networking sites could be of use to ABPP. For example, it was suggested that ABPP could increase their marketing and promotion through social media. Faster, more efficient, and broader dissemination of information (e.g., CE trainings, workshops, conferences, announcements, etc.) could take place via social networking sites. Finally, recommendations included using social media sites as a platform for discussions and networking with colleagues.

*Conclusions*

After meeting with the ABPP executive committee to present the findings of this study, opportunities and future directions were discussed. For example, the prospect of developing a listserv specifically for EEMs (who voiced desires to connect with one another around the experience of becoming ABPP board certified) emerged. In addition, EC members showed appreciation for the detailed analysis of board and academy presidents' survey results, in particular their knowledge of the EEO and the EEMs who are enrolled. In addition, after brainstorming additional methods of outreach based on the needs of EEMs highlighted in the survey results, it was determined that ABPP would benefit from increased efforts to invite EEM's to the ABPP Annual Summer Workshop Series as well as the annual APA convention. Proposed ways to increase EEM's presence and engagement at these events include: hosting a poster session during which graduate students may present their scholarly research in a professional forum, EEM-specific networking time (e.g., social hour), question and answer sessions with ABPP board certified psychologists, and discounted rates for EEM's to attend.

Future research for the purpose of increasing ABPP's notoriety and expanding the organization's reach to both potential members and consumers is necessary to develop a more extensive and substantial marketing plan. Additional projects may include a more substantial presence on Facebook, the formation of groups on LinkedIn, and stimulating discussion forums and listservs.

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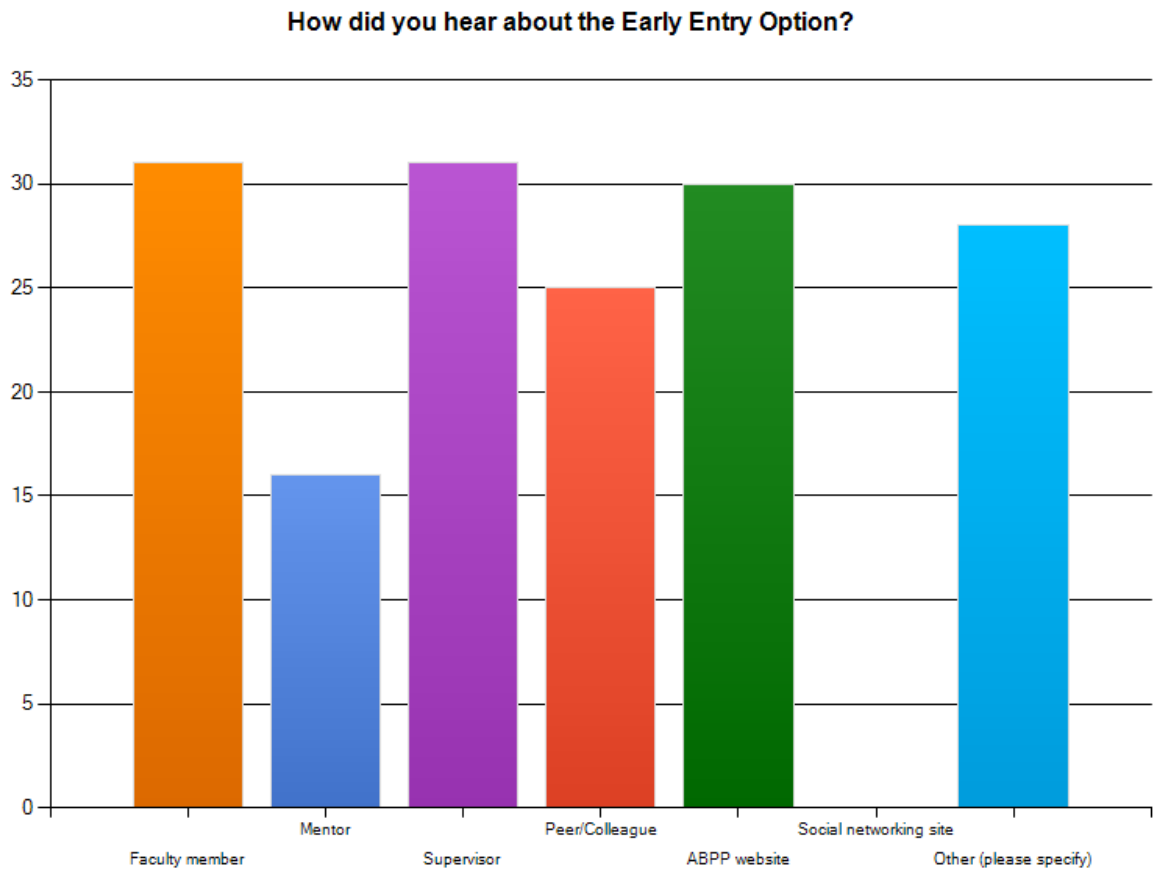
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Appendix A.

*Figures.*

*Figure 1. Number of early entry members who endorsed hearing about the early entry option through various channels.*



*Figure 2.*

*Length of time early entry members have been enrolled.*

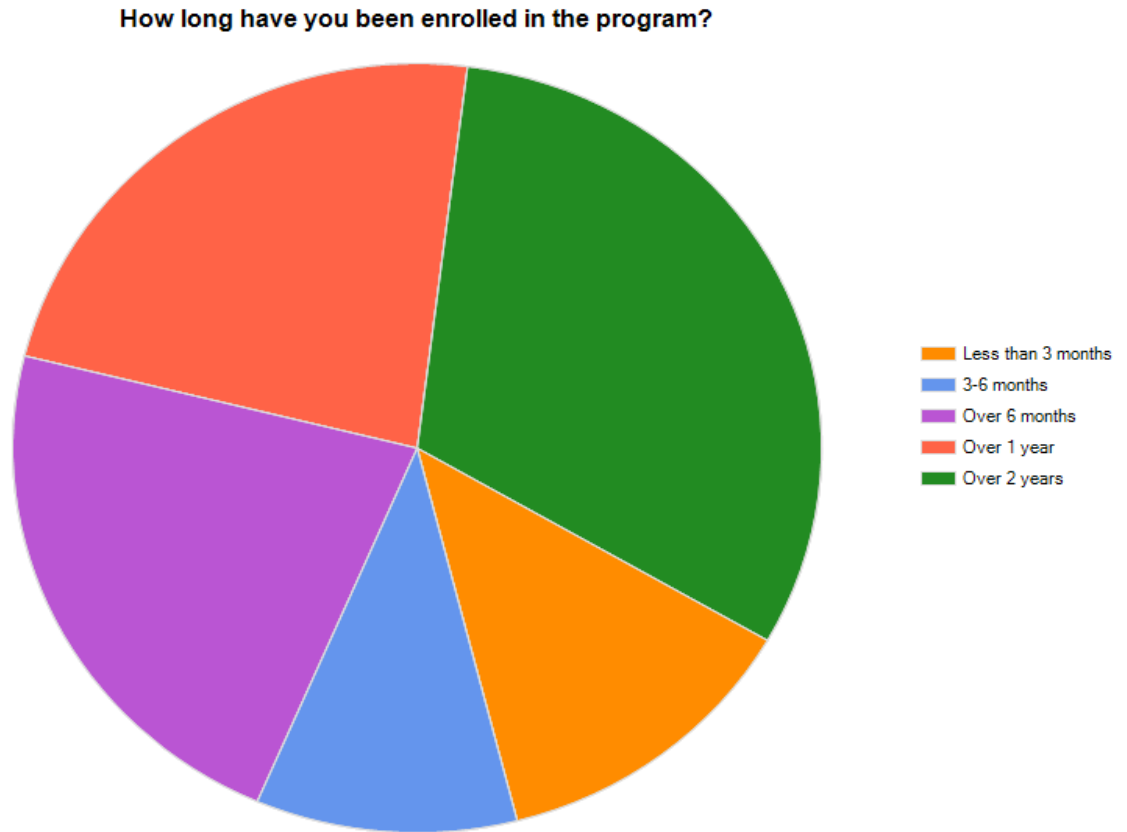


Figure 3. Reasons for enrolling in the early entry option as cited by EEM's.

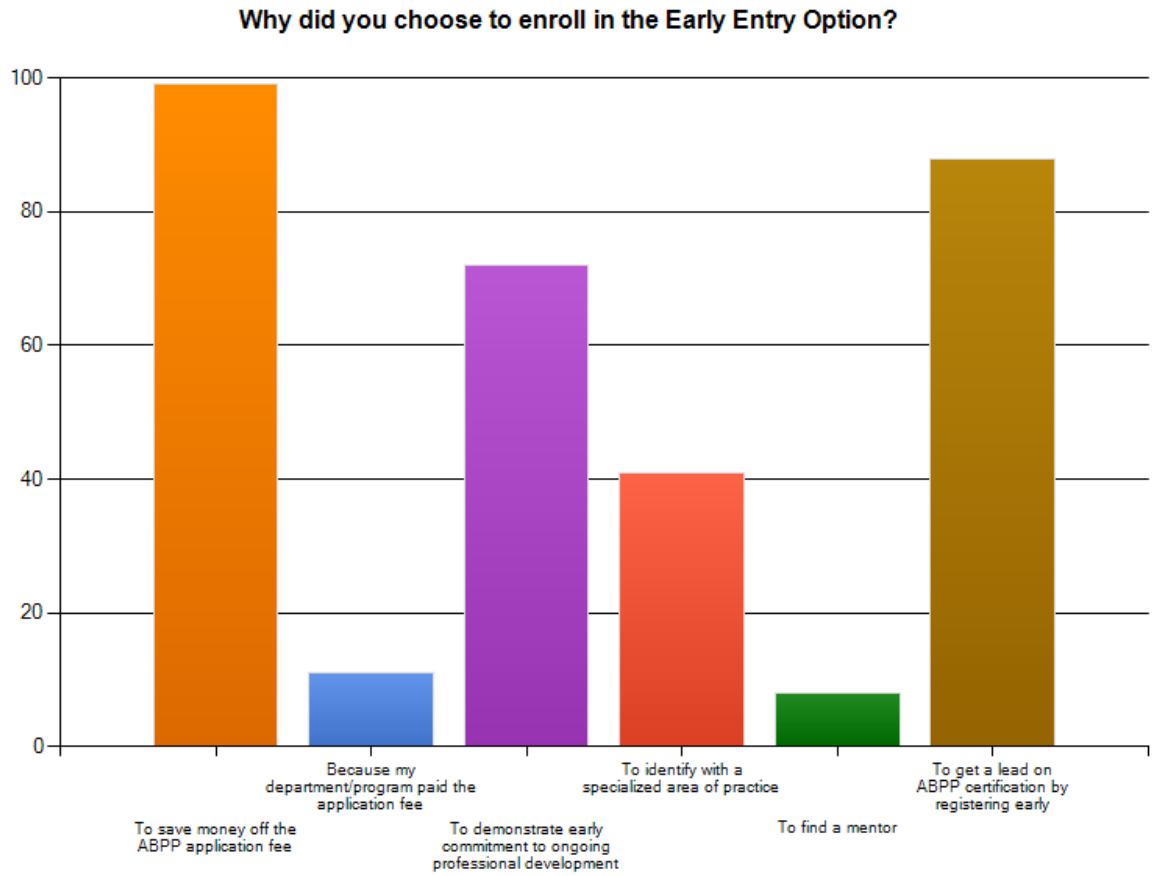
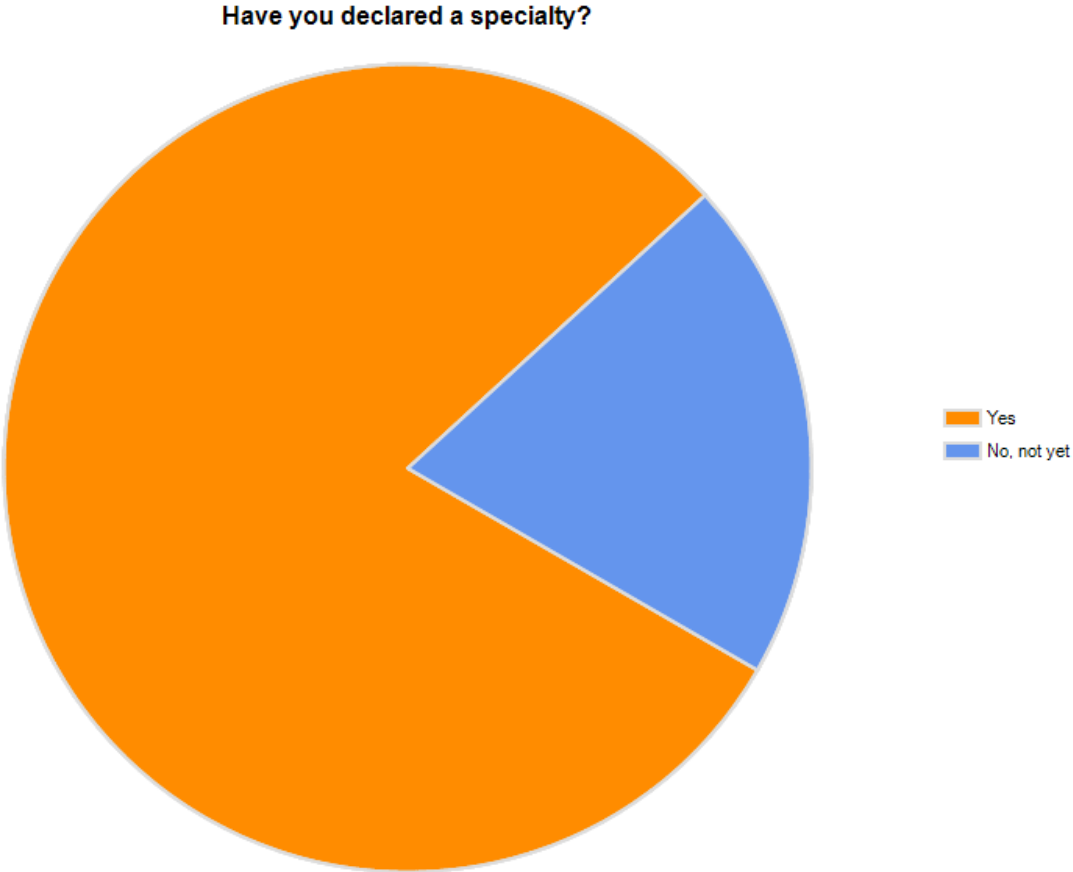


Figure 4. Early entry members who have/have not declared a specialty.





Appendix B.

**Executive Report**

To: American Board of Professional Psychology, Executive Committee

Date: June 18, 2011

From: Emily M.R. Szeliga, M.A., M.S., Principal Investigator

Jay C. Thomas, Ph.D., ABPP, Faculty Advisor

Subject: Summary of the American Board of Professional Psychology (ABPP) Survey Data

Executive Summary: Based on qualitative and quantitative data collected from online surveys between February 2011 and April 2011.

Purpose of the Report:

1. To investigate trends within ABPP, in particular among the early entry members (EEMs). Specifically, to examine the perceptions held by early EEMs, why they enrolled as an EEM, what they are looking for, and what they value about being an EEM. Finally, how EEMs consider social media implemented by ABPP.
2. Survey responses of board presidents and academy presidents are examined in the second half of this report.
3. Information about ABPP's communication strategies in terms of reaching potential members and consumers are considered.

**Summary Conclusions**

Overall, the American Board of Professional Psychology has noteworthy strengths such as a highly respected and credible certifying process and representation of the variety of fields within psychology among the boards. In addition, it is evident that ABPP members value professional networks and recognition of their commitment to the field. Early entry members

appreciate saving money by enrolling early. They also value how ABPP keeps them motivated and organized when it comes to making necessary steps toward board certification. In addition, EEMs clearly anticipate a variety of benefits in becoming board certified including gaining credibility, and increased networking and career opportunities.

Among survey respondents, some advocated for ABPP's use of social media as a method of communicating, networking, marketing, and mentoring. Naturally, there was expressed concern regarding maintaining privacy, as well as a professional appearance when using social media; for this reason some participants were hesitant in their support for ABPP's use of social networking sites.

### Areas of Attention

#### *Early Entry Members*

*Enrollment.* Early entry members (EEMs) are represented by 137 participants in the survey. Most heard about applying to ABPP as an EEM from a faculty member or supervisor (about 50% combined,  $n = 62$ ). Another 22% ( $n = 30$ ) saw the link on the ABPP website. In addition, 28 participants (21%) chose to write in their response; 7% ( $n = 10$ ) were made aware of this option by attending APA's annual conference and/or attending division – specific conferences or events (*Figure 1*). Additionally, the EEM's who have been enrolled as a member for over one year comprise more than half ( $n = 73$ ) of the respondents. (*Figure 2*).

The reason for enrolling as an EEM cited most frequently ( $N = 134$ ) was to save money on the future ABPP application fee (74%,  $n = 99$ ). However, also noted as reasons for becoming an EEM were to “demonstrate early commitment to ongoing professional development,” (54%,  $n = 72$ ) and “to get a lead on ABPP certification” (66%,  $n = 88$ ) (*Figure 3*). As evidenced by the data, those who are enrolled as an EEM value the savings on money and efficiency. In addition,

over half of respondents endorsed being committed to the field and ongoing professional development. Perhaps related to such commitment, 80% ( $n = 107$ ) of EEM participants have declared a specialty (*Figure 4*).

*EEM's Values and Perceptions about ABPP.* Early entry member respondents had mixed reviews of their experience with ABPP thus far. For example, when asked if being an EEM has been beneficial in any way ( $N = 132$ ), 26% ( $n = 34$ ) answered “yes,” 58% ( $n = 76$ ) answered in a neutral way (i.e., being an EEM has not benefitted me in any way as of now), and 18% ( $n = 22$ ) answered “I’m not sure.” those who answered in the affirmative, they were polled for examples of how being an EEM has benefitted them so far. The response option was open ended. After coding the responses, it is shown that half ( $n = 17$ ) cited money savings as a benefit. Eighteen participants noted that being an EEM has helped to keep them motivated to sit for board certification in the future. For example, one respondent said, “[being an EEM] remains a constant reminder of my desired goal and serves as a mechanism to accomplish that goal.” Another stated, “by entering early, I have maintained motivation to begin the process of studying for the first written exam...” One more example includes, “initiating my additional board certification early on has increased my motivation to obtain my licensure as quickly as possible and get started on the requirements for ABPP.”

When asked how participants expect being an EEM will benefit them in the future, 118 responded to the open-ended question. After coding the responses, nearly half (47%,  $n = 55$ ) acknowledged how being an EEM will help them to be organized and efficient when completing the paperwork and documentation necessary for APBB certification, thus becoming certified earlier. About 30% ( $n = 35$ ) of the respondents expect that being an EEM will help them become involved in desirable networks, find a mentor, and increase their career opportunities and

credibility. Some responses include: “I also hope that I will be able to find a mentor whom I can work with throughout this process,” and “finding a mentor and opportunities for professional growth.” In terms of increased career opportunities, examples of open ended responses are: “enhancing my career marketability,” and “networking, which leads to increased learning and potential opportunities for collaboration.” As for credibility, some responses as to how being an EEM will be beneficial in the future include: “because I am at a non-accredited APA school, I believe it will give my Psy.D more credibility,” and a further example, “higher wages, support from colleagues, better recognition in the field.”

Credibility is an important aspect of ABPP according to the EEMs who took this survey. Of 108 people who responded to this question, “What do you value about ABPP as an organization,” 88% ( $n = 95$ ) noted the credibility of ABPP’s certification in the field. Training opportunities and networking were mentioned as well.

*Social Media.* Of 117 early entry members, 111 participants (95%) recognized that they have mostly been communicating with ABPP via email. In addition, of 125 EEMs, 115 (92%) noted that email is an effective method of communicating with the ABPP community, and 44% ( $n = 55$ ) endorsed the ABPP website as an effective communication line.

When asked about taking advantage of social networking and media sites, 126 EEMs answered the question. One hundred and eight (85%) endorsed using social networking sites. Slightly over 50% ( $n = 67$ ) use sites for personal reasons only, and 29% ( $n = 37$ ) use social networking sites for personal and professional reasons. To gather more details regarding EEM’s use of social media, respondents were asked to specify which sites they tend to access for personal and professional means. For professional use, LinkedIn and listservs are the top sites used by EEMs (48% and 74% respectively). For those participants who use social media only for

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personal reasons, the overwhelming majority (93%) use Facebook. Finally, for both professional and personal use Facebook was highlighted with 44% use, followed by websites (27%), and then listservs (22%).

When asked the EEM's to imagine how ABPP may use social networking and social media, 90 participants weighted in. There were a range of responses from "not sure" (19%,  $n = 17$ ) to marketing and promotion of ABPP as an organization (23%,  $n = 21$ ). For example, one participant said,

Social networking sites are great for distributing information to the public. I would like to see ABPP provide information about what board certification means so that they can be better consumers of healthcare. Also, these sites can be used to reach students for the early entry program (early entry member).

Another response advocated for the use of social networking sites, "as a place for members to locate pertinent information and possibly network with each other." Using social media sites to disseminate information and network with others (22%,  $n = 20$ ) was also a common response theme. "I would think it would have great value on LinkedIn because of the discussion and networking ability. It would also provide a forum for increased viability and connections to others who might not be aware of ABPP." One respondent mentioned, "another possibility would be to have a network of people who are early-entry who could communicate with one another about the process and requirements." As expected, there were a number of concerns regarding the potential for undesired overlap between personal and professional life on the web. Also, there was contingent (23%,  $n = 21$ ) who declared that they "don't see ABPP using social networking sites."

*Summary.* According to the EEMs who responded to this survey, they appreciate how being an EEM has helped them stay organized and motivated when it comes to becoming certified by ABPP. Saving money on the application and certification process is also a positive outcome of becoming an EEM. An overwhelming majority of the EEMs value the credibility of ABPP and how becoming board certified increases their marketability. One respondent mentioned the prestige of ABPP, and how it may serve to increase his/her degree status from a non-APA accredited institution. Notably, EEMs anticipate benefits such as increased networking and career opportunities, as well as finding a mentor.

Early entry members communicate with ABPP primarily via email. In addition, some EEMs mentioned using the ABPP website as a valid method of communicating. As for social media, the majority of EEMs endorsed using social networking for personal use only, and about one third reported using social media for both personal and professional use. When it comes to the prospect of ABPP incorporating social media into its methods of communicating, the responses were varied. Some were not sure how ABPP could use social media, and a few more were skeptical of the idea that ABPP could take advantage of social media. Still others agreed social networking sites could be of use to ABPP. For example, it was suggested that ABPP could increase their marketing and promotion through social media. Faster, more efficient, and broader dissemination of information (e.g., CE trainings, workshops, conferences, announcements, etc.) could take place via social networking sites. Finally, recommendations included using social media sites as a platform for discussions and networking with colleagues.

### *Board Presidents and Academy Presidents*

*Survey Responses.* Ten academy presidents participated in the survey and 12 board presidents participated. The survey's that were distributed to both groups were slightly different

in the questions posed. However, in this section of the report responses from both groups will be examined. To start, board presidents spoke to what their board members value about ABPP as a whole. Respondents also noted what they believe ABPP member's value about their particular board. According to the board presidents who responded to this survey, credibility implicit in attaining ABPP certification and recognition of competence in the field were consistent response themes. In addition, a board's influence on policies, collegial nature and high level of activity were common responses regarding values among board members. In a similar vein, academy presidents were asked to consider what ABPP members value about the academy. Responses included being granted the status of a "fellow," and the production and dissemination of a newsletter. In addition, a few academy presidents noted CE opportunities as a valued aspect. One academy president highlighted the mentoring their Academy provides potential candidates.

In terms of recruiting new members, 6 of 10 academy presidents acknowledged recruitment methods. The most popular methods were 'word of mouth,' 'professional conferences,' and 'workshops.' Only one academy president affirmed that EEM's are aligned with their particular academy. The remaining respondents were either unsure or confirmed that there are no EEM's aligned with the academy. Only one academy president endorsed a mentoring program in their academy. The purpose of said program is to "link boarded individuals with candidates to assist in prep for [the] exam process." The same academy president declared the mentoring program is "mostly successful in accomplishing the goals."

When academy presidents and board presidents were asked how their respective contingents activate and engage members, the academy participants did not respond ( $n = 0$ ). The board presidents had a 75% response rate ( $n = 9$ ), and six respondents gave three or more examples (two respondents provided the maximum of five different ways by which the board

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activates its members). After coding the 29 total responses, it was found that communication with board members through email, listservs, websites and online bulletin boards serve as popular methods of engagement (34%,  $n = 10$ ). Having a presence at conferences, and conducting presentations at local, state, and national organizations, as well as campaigning, and holding annual meetings were additional methods noted in the responses (28%,  $n = 8$ ). As for communication, email was cited by five academy presidents as the primary method of communicating with members. Listservs, websites, and newsletters were also highlighted by more than half of the respondents ( $n = 3$ ).

The majority of nine board presidents agreed that marketing ABPP to potential board members and to consumers is ‘of utmost importance’ (67%,  $n = 6$ ). One respondent said, “[marketing APBB’s services and expertise to consumers] is what helps to create the expectation for board certification, and it is what creates the economic impetus to spend the money.” In terms of increasing ABPP’s notoriety, three of five academy presidents agreed that marketing to consumers is “of utmost importance.” As for marketing to potential members, one participant concluded it is “very important,” another participant checked “of utmost importance,” and the rest of the respondents did not declare their opinion. Of the five academy presidents who responded to the question about how marketing is currently being done, one person noted “social networks” as a method of marketing to consumers. Marketing to consumers is mostly done via the website according to three academy presidents. One participant declared that marketing is not being done. Another participant said the academy “only markets to consumers if [we] are doing workshop and [consumers] want to attend.” Four of the five academy presidents who responded mentioned marketing to potential members is done in person, through the website, and at conferences or workshops. When asked how social networking might be used by ABPP,



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academy presidents responded in favor of Facebook as a forum to convey updates or have “discussion regarding important current events.” Another suggestion included “sending news to graduate programs directors and to sanctioners.” There were a few academy presidents (two of six) who were unsure about ABPP using social media.

Nine board presidents reached consensus about what they wish for consumers to know about Board certified psychologists – they are credible experts, and practice competently (have the knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary for competence in their field). Board certified psychologists have been evaluated by their peers using a variety of methods. “[board certified psychologists] have demonstrated to their peers and to the public that they have the knowledge and skills to practice the specialty at an advanced level,” declared one respondent. However, the board presidents who took the survey noted that they do very little in terms of their representation to consumers. Some actions taken, as identified by respondents, include: regular communication with constituency, instituting a high quality examination process, providing a listing of board certified psychologists, and writing letters to policy makers as necessary. When it came to questions regarding improving communications strategies, of nine board presidents, three (33%) are “not sure” how social media could be used for this purpose. Two respondents (22%) suggested social networking sites could be used for “promotion” of ABPP. For example, “[social media may be used by ABPP] to promote the early entry option directly to doctoral students and to maintain contact to sustain interest in becoming board certified.” A few participants called attention to their board and academy’s website, as well as a discussion forum as methods of reaching members.

*Summary.* Board and academy presidents perceive the credibility and prestige of ABPP’s certification as highly valued by members. In addition, academy presidents view the production

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of newsletters, provision of CE trainings and workshops, as well as engaged and active communication among “fellows” as valued aspects among members. Despite academy presidents highlighting these valuable components, none of the academy presidents who took the survey commented on how they engage and activate members. More than half of the academy presidents agreed that marketing to consumers is “of utmost importance,” and two respondents endorsed marketing to potential members as at least “very important.” The majority of board presidents endorsed marketing to potential ABPP members as well as consumers is “of utmost importance.” Board presidents acknowledged having presence at conferences, activity on listservs, and annual meetings as examples of how they engage and activate members. Representation to consumers comes in the form of communication with constituency and providing an up-to-date list of board certified psychologists. Though in favor of marketing to consumers and potential members, both board presidents and academy presidents had mixed responses as to how marketing is currently being done and how it could be more effective.

In terms of social networking, again, there were mixed reviews. About half of the academy presidents and half of the board presidents who participated in the survey denied using social networking sites. For those who did endorse their use, Facebook is the most popular for personal use. For professional purposes, blogs and LinkedIn are the sites of choice for most. Despite the minimal use of social media and its questionable use for ABPP, academy presidents and board presidents hypothesized social networking could be useful for ABPP. Suggestions included using social media for promotional purposes, hosting discussions, and for communication and dissemination of information.

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*Figures.*

*Figure 1. Number of early entry members who endorsed hearing about the early entry option through various channels.*

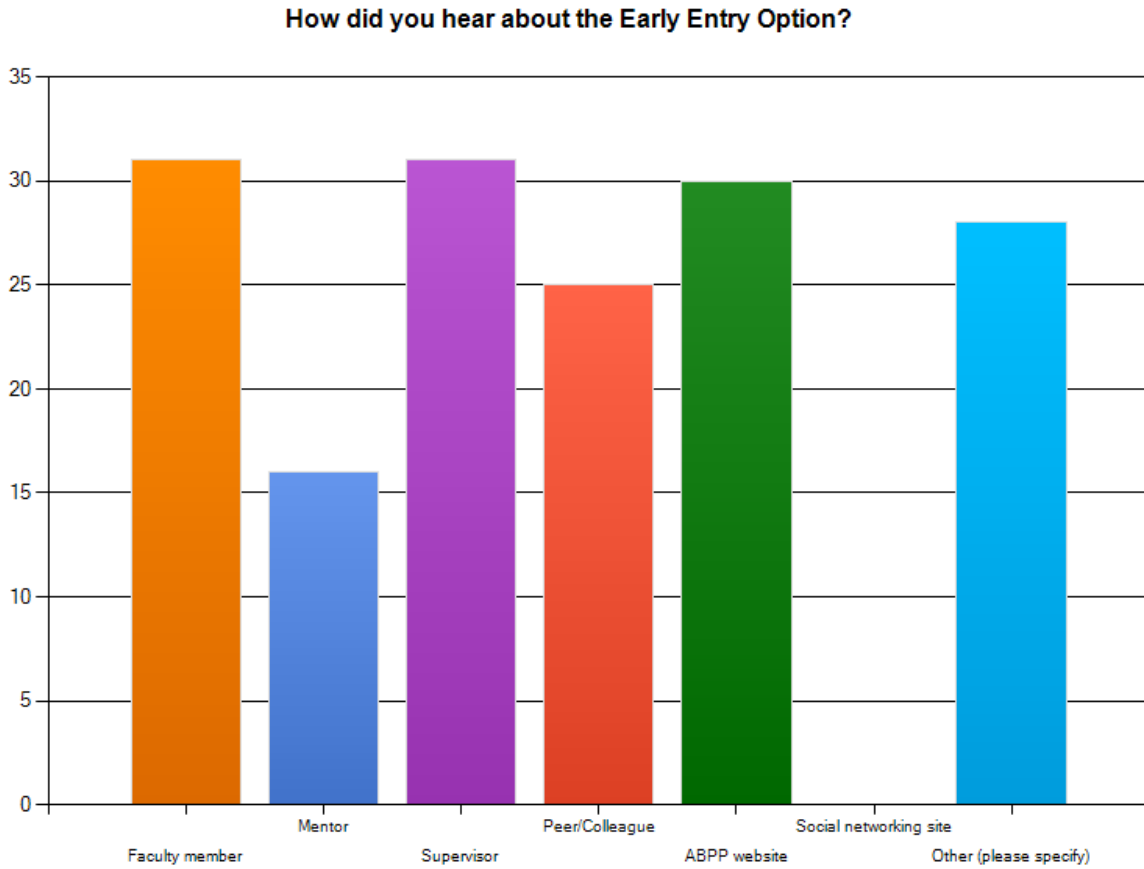


Figure 2. Length of time early entry members have been enrolled.

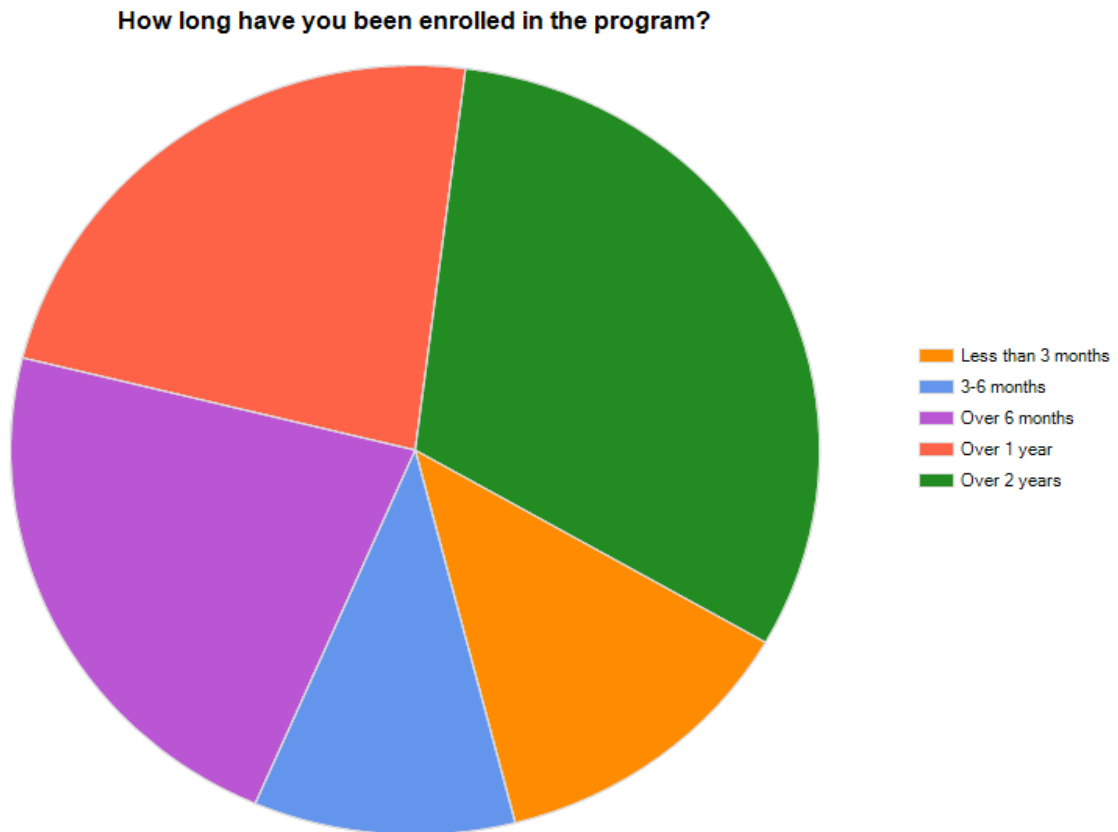


Figure 3. Reasons for enrolling in the early entry option as cited by EEM's.

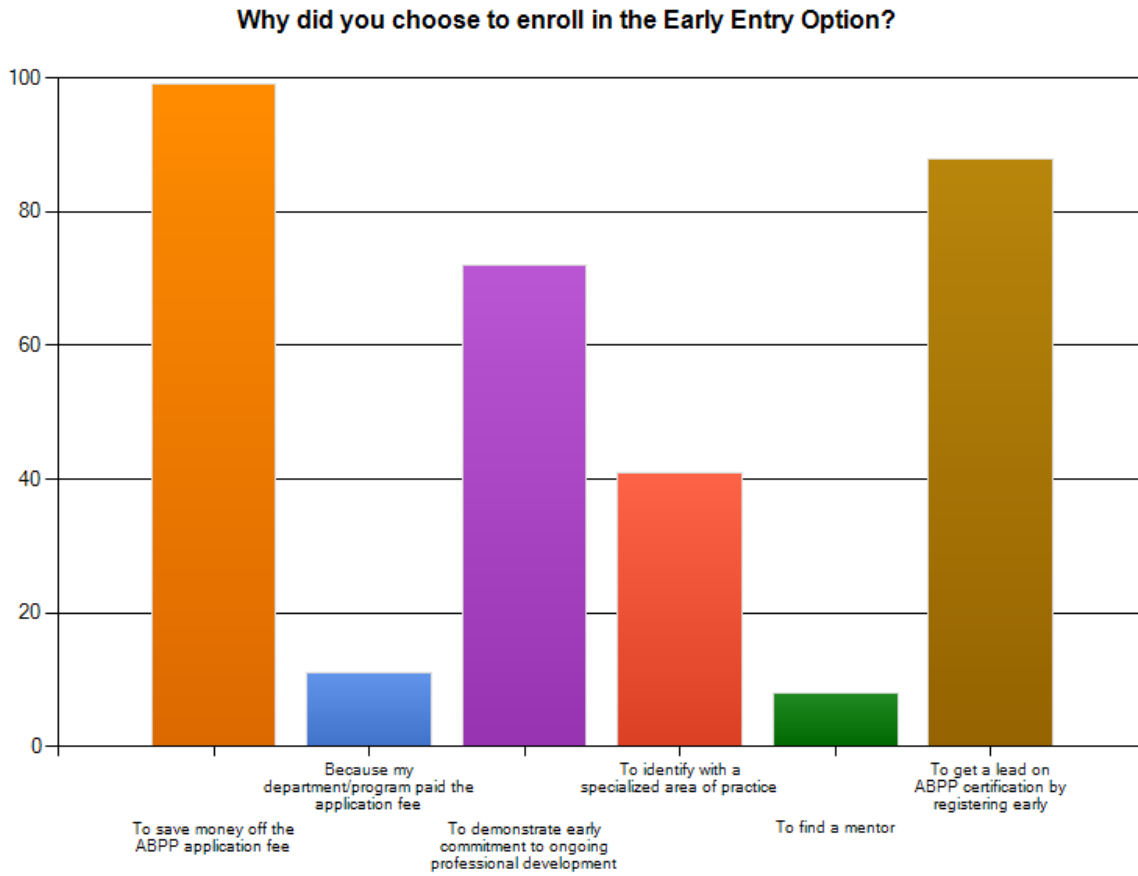


Figure 4. Early entry members who have/have not declared a specialty.

