



## Annual Membership Survey

Prepared on behalf of




April 2023

# What do PSA need to know?


## Organisation challenge:

To stabilise and grow membership with realistic targets through a defined value proposition at each membership tier.


## Research Objectives:




Understand members individual/business ambitions, challenges and opportunities




Identify why they joined, awareness of benefits, how they engage, the greatest benefits, things they'd like to change



Evaluation of awareness and value of existing member benefits



Understand the perceived value of being a PSA member and how it differs for Associates, Professionals and Fellows.





Identify any benefits and behaviours that would add value and increase engagement

# Respondent profile

An online survey was sent to all members of the PSA.  
112 responded (est. response based of 550 members 20%)

## GENDER

 Male	50%
 Female	46%
Prefer not to say	4%

## AGE

25 - 34	3%
35 - 44	17%
45 - 54	30%
55 - 64	35%
65+	10%
Prefer not to say	6%

## Have disability

Yes	9%
No	88%
Prefer not to say	4%

## LENGTH OF MEMBERSHIP

Less than 1 year	16%
1 - 3 years	18%
4 - 5 years	20%
6 - 10 years	26%
More than 10 years	20%













## MEMBERSHIP LEVEL

Associate	45%
Professional	29%
Fellow	26%

## WHERE SPEAK

UK / Ireland	90%
Europe	38%
International	38%

## REGION

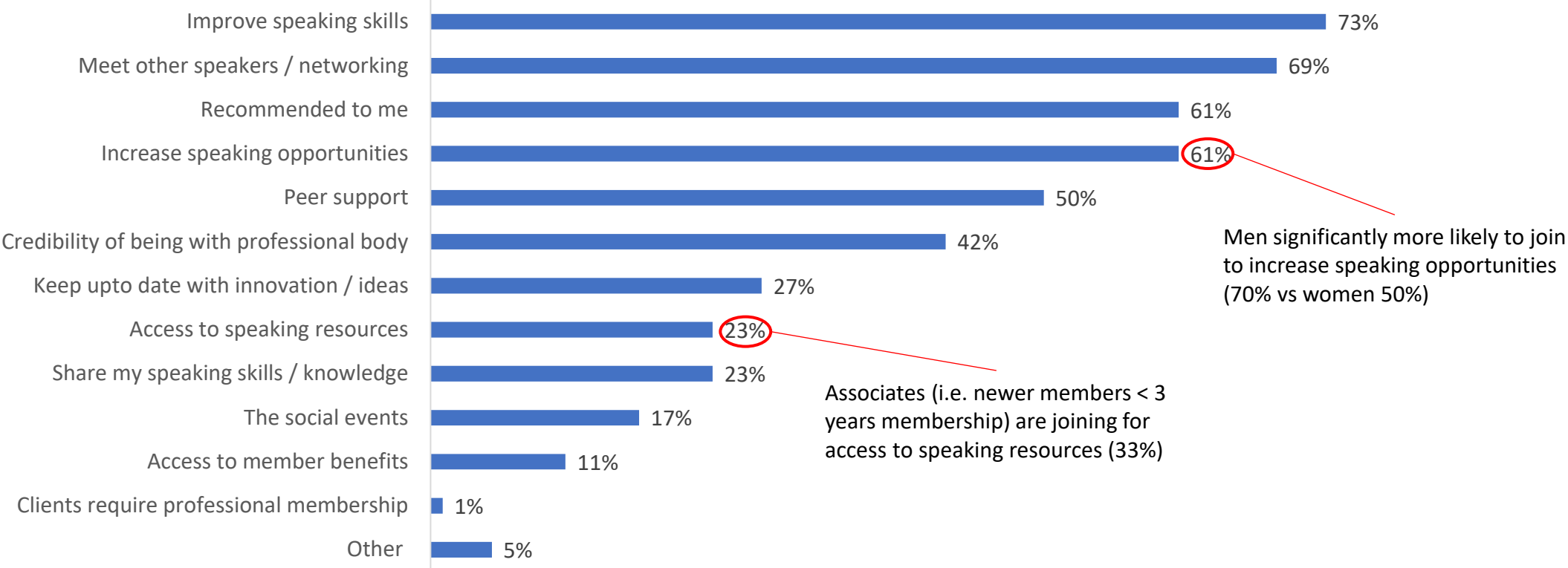
 N. East	4%
 Yorkshire	2%
 E. Midlands	9%
 S. East	5%
 Birmingham	9%
 S. West	5%
 London	25%
 N. West	14%
 Scotland	6%
 Thames Valley	10%
 Ireland	7%
 Staffordshire	4%



# Findings

# The drivers to joining the PSA are business orientated

## Initial reasons for joining PSA

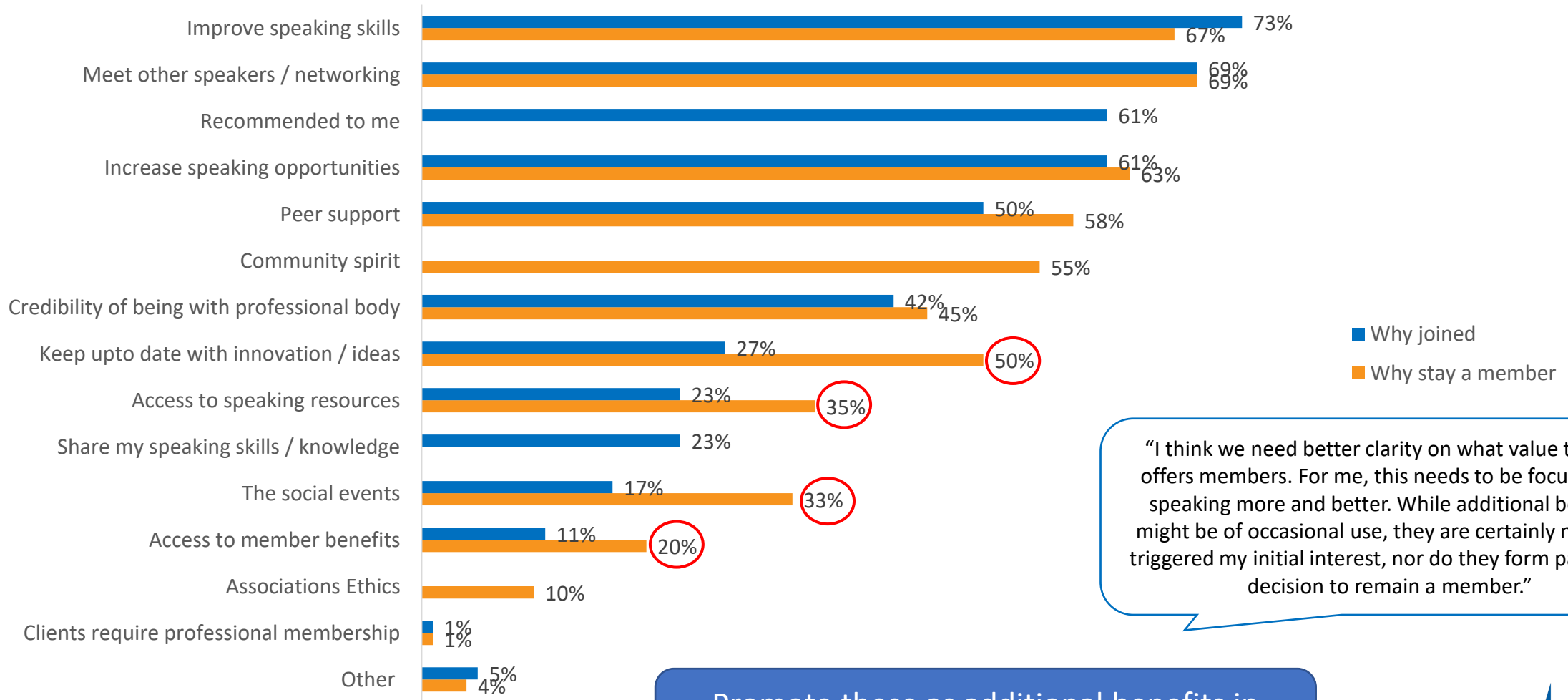


What are your initial reasons for joining the PSA?

Base: All participants - 113

# Members discovered additional benefits once they joined

## Initial reasons for joining vs. reasons for staying



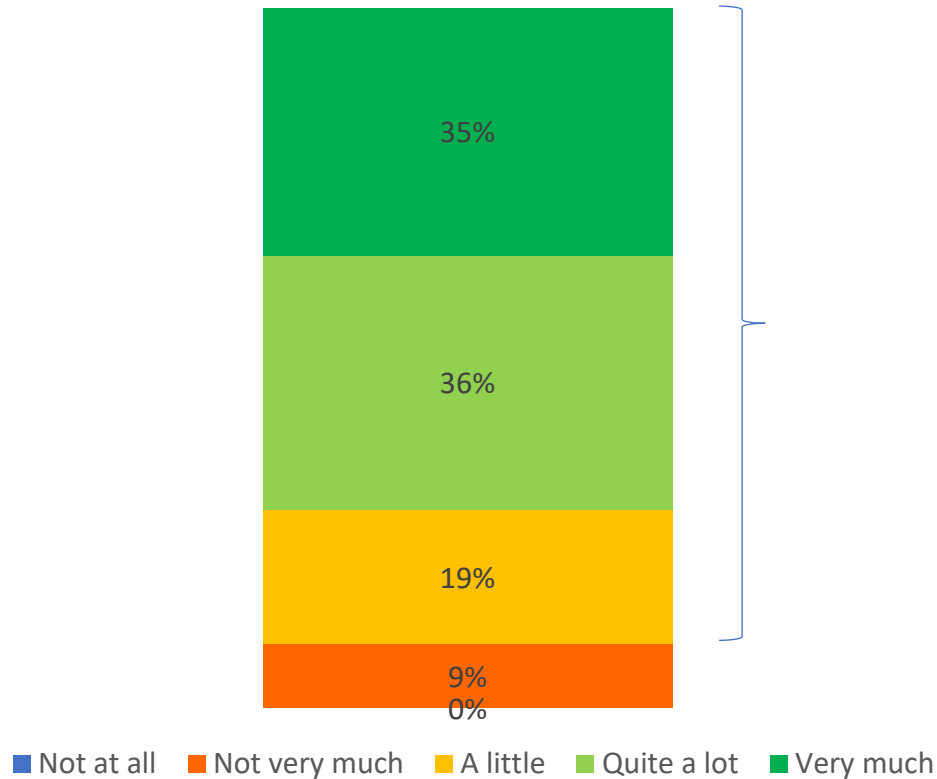
“I think we need better clarity on what value the PSA offers members. For me, this needs to be focussed on speaking more and better. While additional benefits might be of occasional use, they are certainly not what triggered my initial interest, nor do they form part of my decision to remain a member.”

Promote these as additional benefits in marketing information and on the website

What are your initial reasons for joining the PSA? /  
 What are you reasons for being a PSA member today?  
 Base: All participants - 113

# The individuals who make up the PSA community and support available are of particular value

## Level at which PSA membership is valued



## What is valued about the PSA (unprompted)



However there is concern that over a quarter only feel a little or not very much value from their membership

How much do you personally value your PSA membership?

Base: All participants - 113

What is it about the PSA that you particularly value?

Base: All participants - 53

# The PSA works well for the majority of members in a number of ways

Support is not just about improving speaking skills. The fact that support is provided to members makes them feel part of a community

“It’s one of my tribes. Being able to openly share the ups & downs of business with colleagues who will not judge you is a precious resource for those of us who run our own businesses. The welcome is always warm, and genuinely so.”

“It breaks the isolation of being a solopreneur. I meet like minded people to network with and learn from too.”

“Support from other members. Knowing that I can ask for help whenever I need it, from a very supportive, non-competitive group of people. Fun!”

“Perhaps strangely, it’s less about speaking. I have met others who can help me directly and help me build a better business. If I was not in PSA, it would be much harder to tap into this expertise. It’s about support, motivation and expertise.”

“Ready access to a peer group that helps me grow and learn as a speaker. Greater understanding of how to effectively run my business.”

“I value the fact that it’s a unique organisation that spans both industry know-how and on-stage performance skills. Both of which are vital for a successful Speaker business, such as, fees, contracts marketing, sales - and how to tell a story or sell-in from the stage, for example. It also encompasses training and coaching and enables (through peer contact and connections) these businesses to perform better as a whole. I also value the variety of members and unequivocal support we give each other.”

“A membership group dedicated to professional speaking (one of the few that I’m aware of in the UK). The regular social events, monthly in my region and multiple times a month if I go further afield. The peer support offered by other members during events. The showcase and speaking opportunities at events. General networking with other speakers.”

“I value that the PSA and in particular my region helps me, and others feel as equals, even if 'speaking' means different things to us.”

What is it about the PSA that you particularly value?

Base: All who get value from their membership - 103



# However, not everyone feels they gain the same level of value

Associates are more likely to feel only a little, or not very much, value from the PSA

“Very little benefit to long standing members stuck in the Professional Member grade. Focus on Associates, speaker factor etc. Also, the PSA appears very London centric.”

“A significant part of the offer PSA has is with additional costs to attend events. Both the time cost of evenings/weekends when I have a family and financial outlay.”

“For a professional body, there’s a lot of non-professionals. I appreciate everyone’s got to start somewhere, and there are plenty of good speakers, but there’s far too many motivational speakers or ‘break out the tissues’ types.”

“It appears to be a three-tier membership system with most of the benefits in the top tier.”

“I think there should be greater differentiation between the fees charged to Members and Fellows given the expectation that Fellows should be earning significantly more. Also there sometimes feels like an us and them between the Fellows and the rest...”

“I am an Associate member and not a coach or trainer, more of a keynote speaker and storyteller. I have had negative feedback about speaking being my core business rather than using it to get clients for another business.”

“Quality and calibre of members and speakers”

“The prices for membership feel very skewed. Fellows seem to get a lot extra for their fees, members get nothing, Associates get a decent discount. I will never reach the earning threshold to apply to be a Fellow, so feel my contributions are not valued, and the value from the organisation is minimal. No benefits just for us.”

“I found more value when meetings were online as easier to attend. I think at the moment the balance has gone back the other way. Having said that, I will make an effort this summer to attend some meetings in person before deciding whether to continue as a member.”

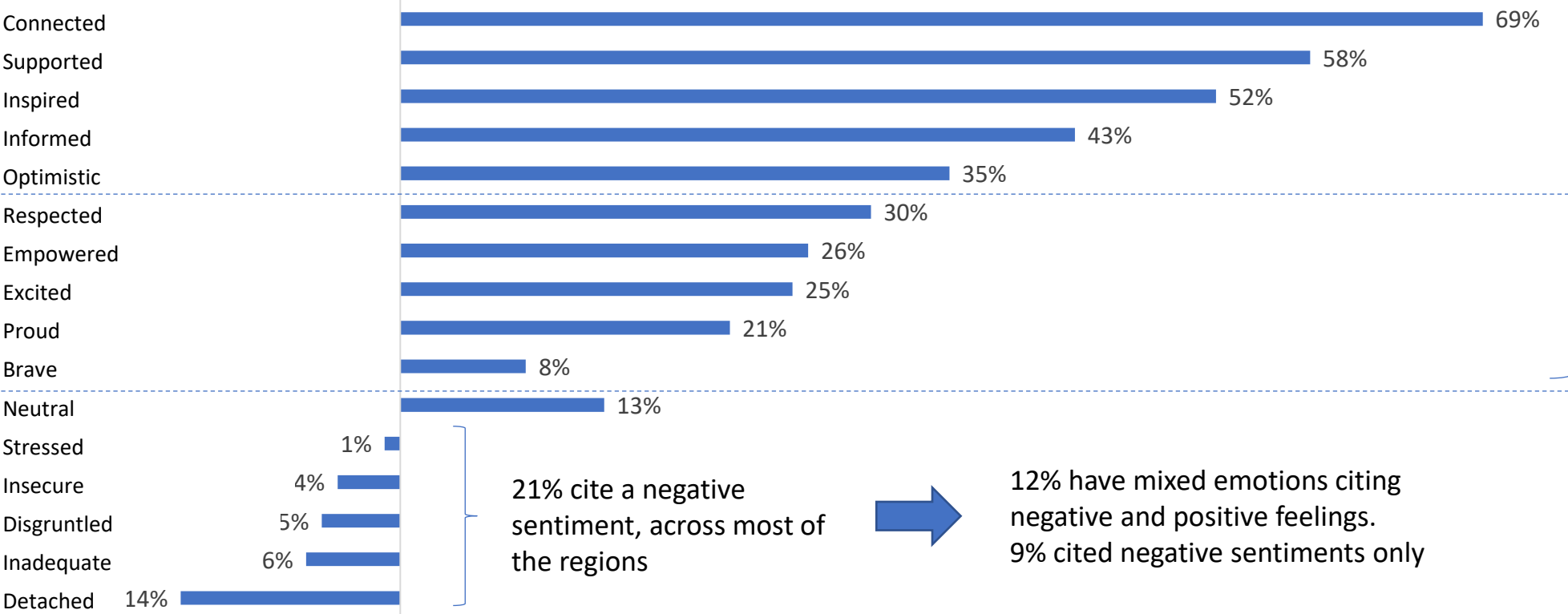
“The nearest regional meeting is more than 20 miles away by road & takes 1.5 hours to get to via train/public transport. Getting to any PSA meeting held during the week means not working on that afternoon. The April & October events are, quite naturally, an opportunity for friends to meet up, which isolates both new members & those who can't attend regular regional meetings. The online meetings were useful.”

What makes you feel as though you don't get enough value from your PSA membership?

Base: All who don't get very much value from their membership - 10

# The PSA engenders positive feelings for most members

How feel as a result of being a PSA member



Newer members are more likely to feel inspired and empowered and optimistic and informed to a greater extent than those of more than 10 years membership

21% cite a negative sentiment, across most of the regions



12% have mixed emotions citing negative and positive feelings. 9% cited negative sentiments only

Which of the following adjectives, if any, describes how you feel as a result of being a PSA member?

Base: All participants - 113

# The support given and the members generate the positive sentiments of being a PSA member

"I love the people in the organisation who are seeking to change and evolve with the world. The speaking profession must adapt for its audience and so seeing speakers who have made and continue to make this transition inspire me."

"I truly believe the association is my tribe - I feel bigger and stronger knowing my peers "have my back" - either in times of need or when I can offer my support back."

"As I've gradually got to know more people, I've improved my own speaking skills and gained confidence, and taken on more roles. I feel connected with so many great people, mutually respected and well supported as I now focus on taking my own speaking to its next level."

"I found everyone to be very welcoming, and happy to have a chat. I found the group to be very supportive. For example, some members offered to give me some guidance on how I can go about future showcases. Some people have very inspiring experiences."

"Inspired by talented speakers."

"You are not judged, and no expectations are placed upon you. You are able to share beyond the limits of your commercial clients. "

"I really enjoy the events in London (and other regions when I get a chance) and the national conferences. I always leave on a high with new inspiration, ideas and connections."

"I feel supported by other members. I also feel informed as there's a collective knowledge on a whole variety of topics."

What makes you feel as though you don't get enough value from your PSA membership?

Base: All who don't get very much value from their membership - 10

# There are personal reasons for feeling neutral or negative towards their membership

“Whilst the PSA claims to reach a broad spectrum of people who speak publicly as part of the business, there are some who state that the PSA is for people who speak professionally or who coach (i.e. paid for speaking), rather than those who speak as a means of obtaining business. It sometimes feels exclusive as a 'Professional Coaching Association', making other mere mortals feel on the outside.” Feels insecure

“Being let down by senior PSA members over the years. Nobody seemed interested when I was considering leaving the PSA.” Feels insecure

“Run by Fellows for Fellows. If you're not a Fellow you're excluded.” Feels Detached

“Unless I'm physically attending events, I have had negligible contact with PSA since 2020. The Facebook group is a big asset though.” Feels detached

“Good peer support. Proud to be a member but not sure how to leverage membership. Can be stressful to be in a room full of such accomplished speakers.” Feels inadequate

“All positive with the exception of disgruntled - it feels that for a small organisation, there is far too much bureaucracy and I am considering looking at other speaking organisations as a comparison. For example, the 3 levels of membership do not make sense. There is only one competition that is for associate level only. Meetings are now only in person which limits my access to other regions. These are all restrictions that other organisations do not appear to have - and I would argue, are not necessary.” Feels disgruntled

“I feel I should be going to more meetings, but the venue and timings put me off. I really like the zoom speaker booker days that the London PSA run. I'm more likely to attend another region who have daytime/weekend events than my own region due to the events being at night” Feels neutral

“Not sure I get as much value as I used to.” Feels neutral

“I could remove the PSA from my professional life and be no worse or better off - the PSA has little to no impact on my career.” Feels neutral

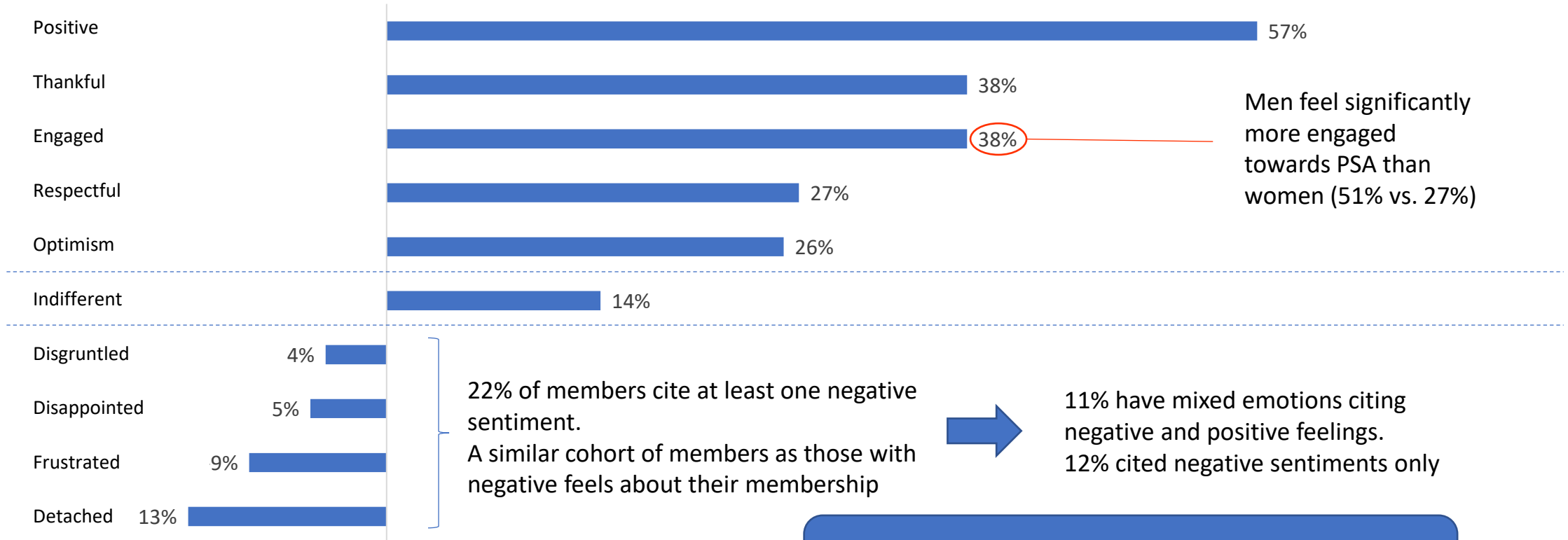
Not surprisingly these members are more likely to be considering leaving or are undecided whether to renew their membership

What makes you feel as though you don't get enough value from your PSA membership?

Base: All who don't get very much value from their membership - 10

# 4/5 members have at least one positive feeling towards the PSA as their professional body

## How feel towards PSA as your professional membership body



4/10 members with disabilities feel the association doesn't cater very well for them or their disability

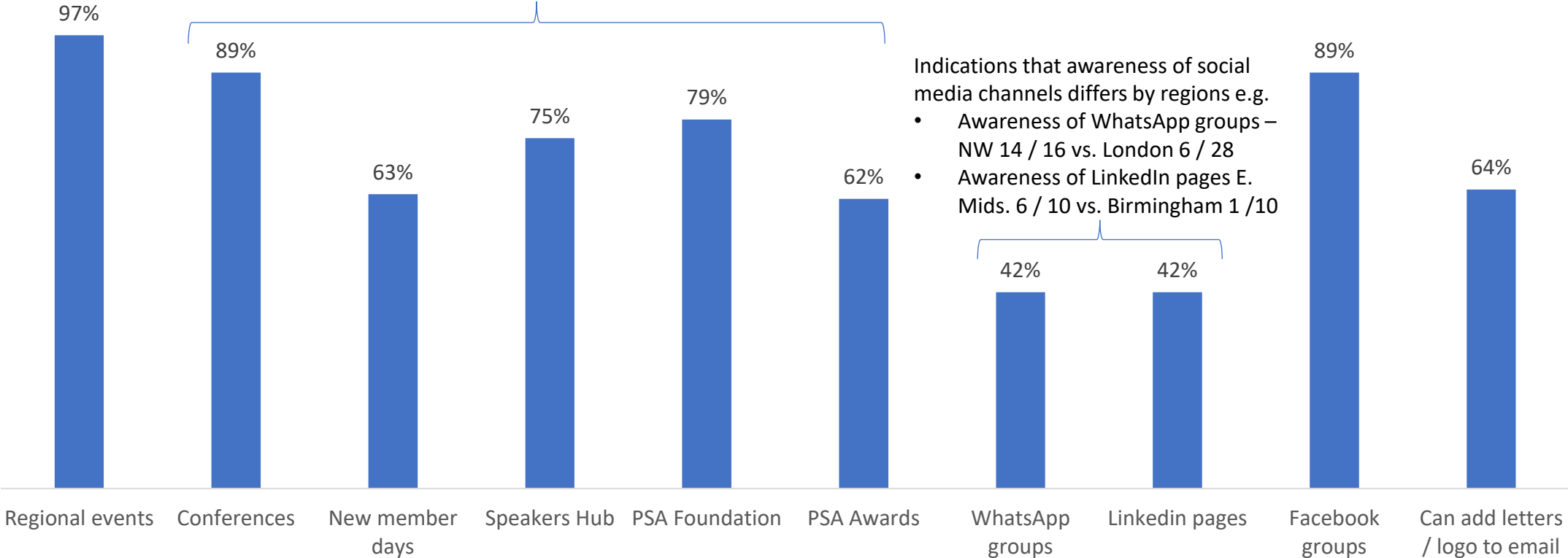
Overall, how do you feel towards the PSA as your professional membership body?

Base: All participants - 113

# Awareness of membership events, resources and communication vehicles is mixed, especially social media channels

## Awareness of PSA membership features

Associates appear to have lower awareness of many of these, especially conferences, Speakers Hub, PSA foundation, PSA awards, new member days



Indications that awareness of social media channels differs by regions e.g.

- Awareness of WhatsApp groups – NW 14 / 16 vs. London 6 / 28
- Awareness of LinkedIn pages E. Mids. 6 / 10 vs. Birmingham 1 / 10

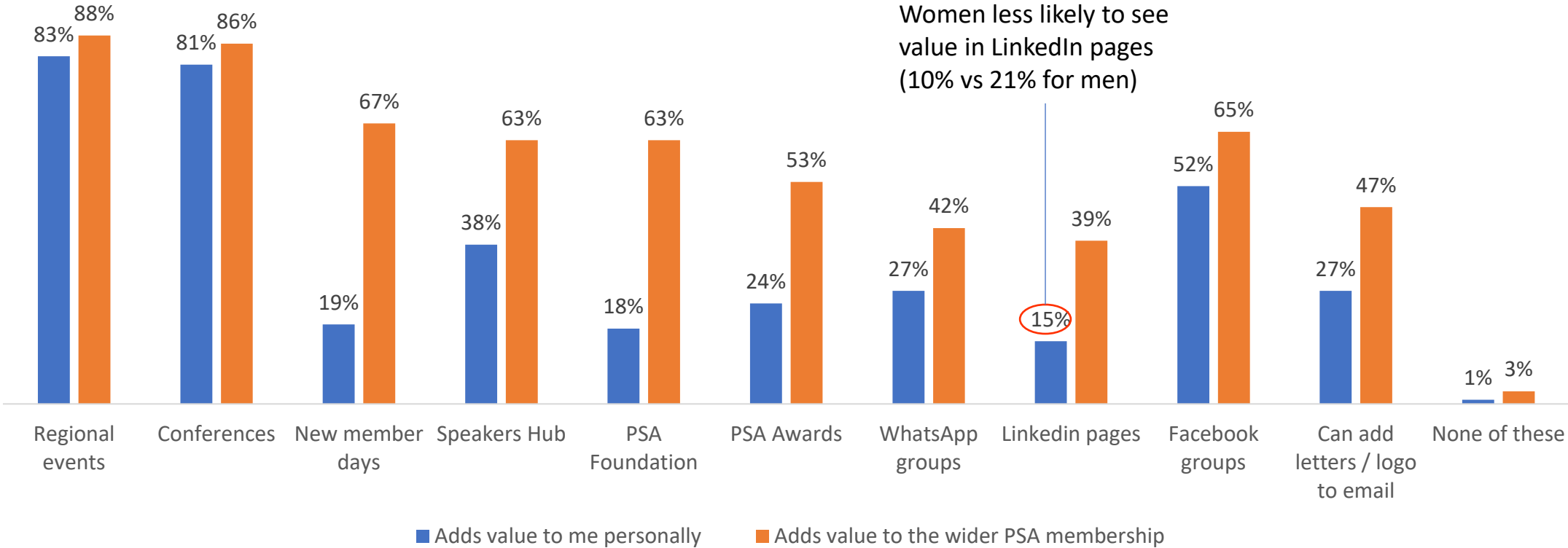
Which of the following aspects of the PSA are you aware of?

Base: All participants - 113

A reminder of the PSA tools / resources and engagement channels could be beneficial

# The events provide the greatest level of personal value

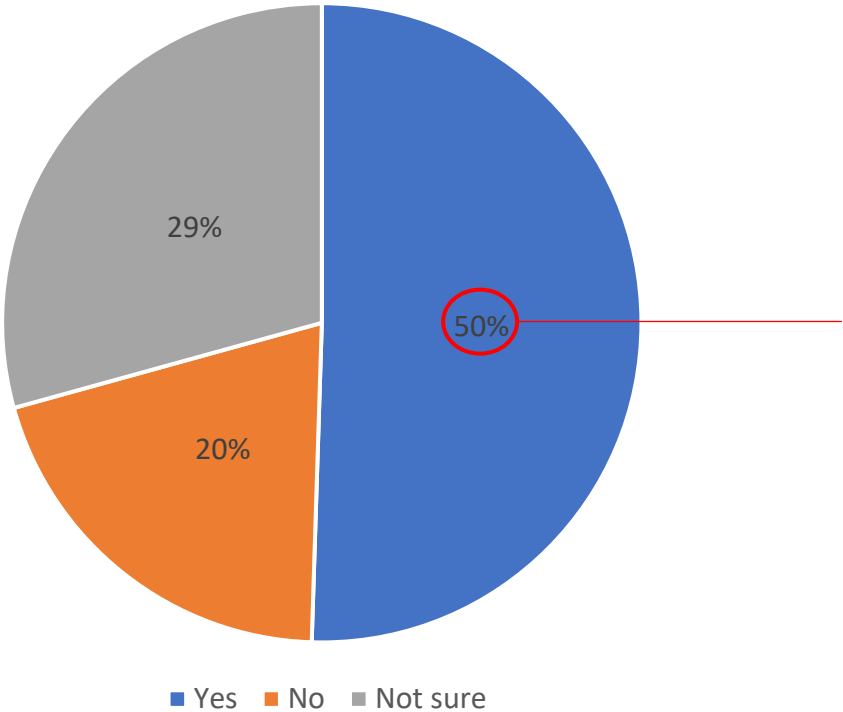
Features which add value personally / to wider PSA (prompted)



Which of these do you feel add value:  
 a) To you personally as a PSA member?  
 b) To the wider PSA membership  
 Base: All participants - 113

# Only 1/5 feel they are getting everything they need from the membership & half feel they could get more

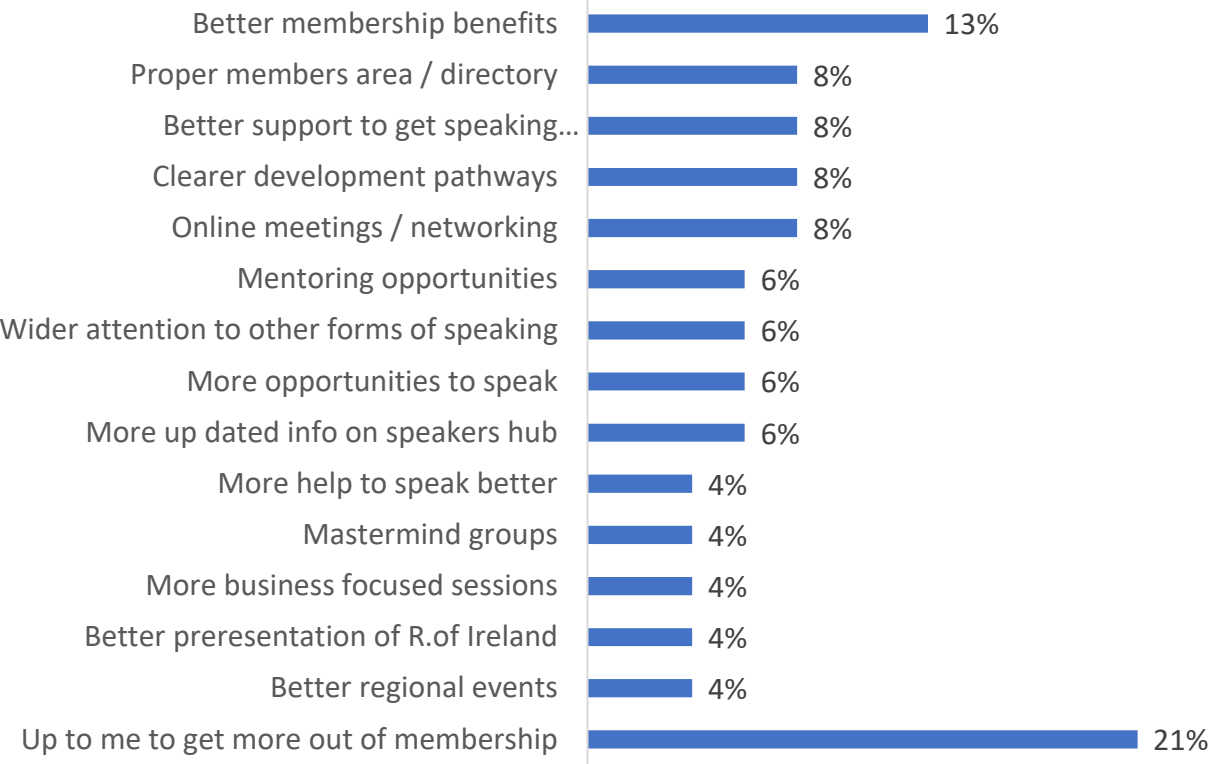
## Could / should get more out of PSA membership



Do you feel you could or should be getting more from your PSA membership?

Base: All participants - 113

## What else would like to get from membership



What else would you like to get from your membership, that you are not already getting?

Base: All Who feel could be getting more from membership - 53



# There are some common themes evolving that would enhance a sense of value

## Better benefits

"Discounts on common tools/subscriptions. Much reduced event ticket prices. Promotion of the membership to clients, to stand out from non-members."

"I don't understand why members pay the same as non-members for the events.."

"More help with getting to speak better. Possibly mentoring opportunities. Benefits that are not simply insurance or discounts."

## Better support

"Perhaps a more structured mentoring offering from Fellows to Associates would be a welcomed addition, like a mentoring matching service or similar."

"Too much focus on keynoting and lack of attention to other forms of speaking."

## Members directory

"I would love to see some kind of register of members, and the topics they talk about."

"A speaker directory on the website would be great - specifically for PSA members."

## Development pathways

"High level, structured professional development - high level qualifications to work towards that mean something to bookers. Something more akin to the CSP in the US. Something that actually takes work and dedication to achieve so is a true measure of success - unlike Fellowship."

## Online meetings / networking

"If you kept online 1x a month- for all of us far away, would be kind- even if it's just networking UK and beyond."

"I found more value when meetings were online as easier to attend. I think now the balance has gone back the other way. Having said that, I will make an effort this summer to attend some meetings in person before deciding whether to continue as a member."

"We need to find a balance for in person and virtual events and hybrid events, in order to encourage speakers to come to the far-flung regions."

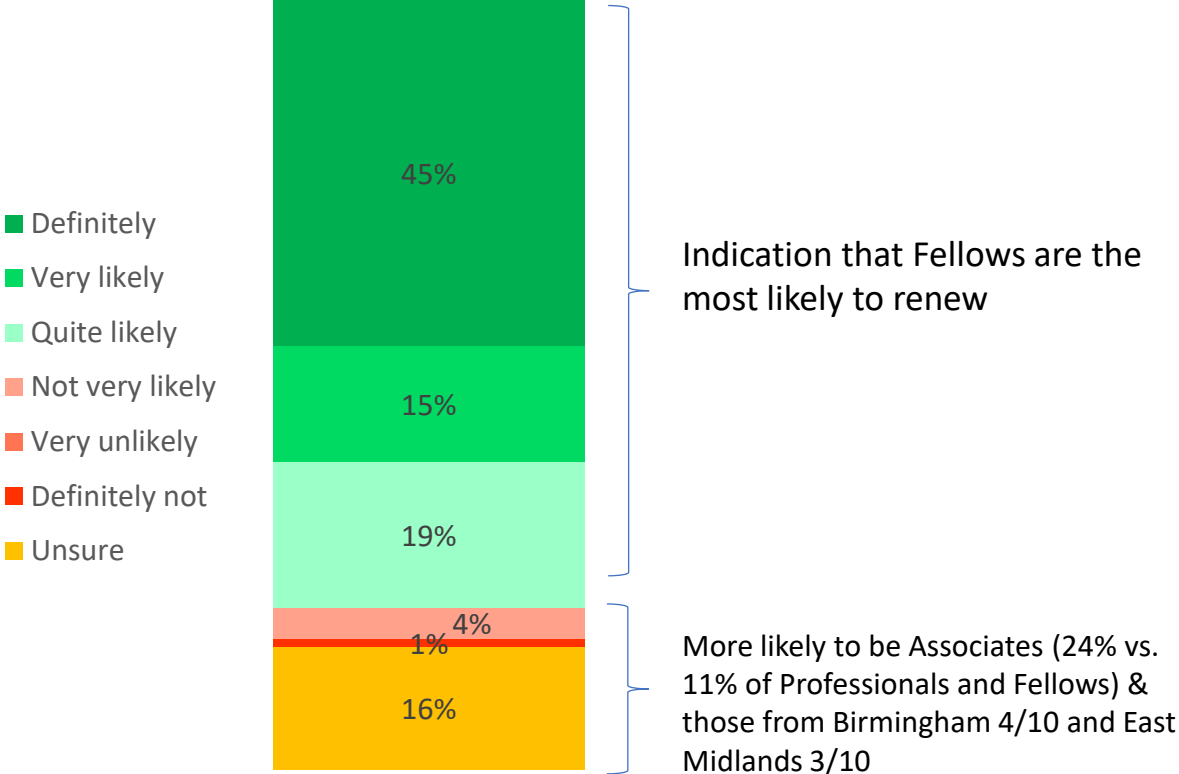
## Misc

"Benefits are only relevant to UK based groups, The Republic of Ireland is underrepresented. Would like a clearer path to move through the ranks, would like to know how to use the benefits that are available to Republic of Ireland."

"This is more about me than the PSA. I feel I ought to be making better use of the resources that have been developed."

# There is some uncertainty about renewing membership this year

## Likelihood to renew membership this year



These members appear to be more likely to have a lower sense of getting value from their membership, are not feeling the sense of the community, nor the credibility of being part of a professional speaking body.

They can also have a lower awareness of PSA features e.g. Conferences, Speakers Hub, LinkedIn pages

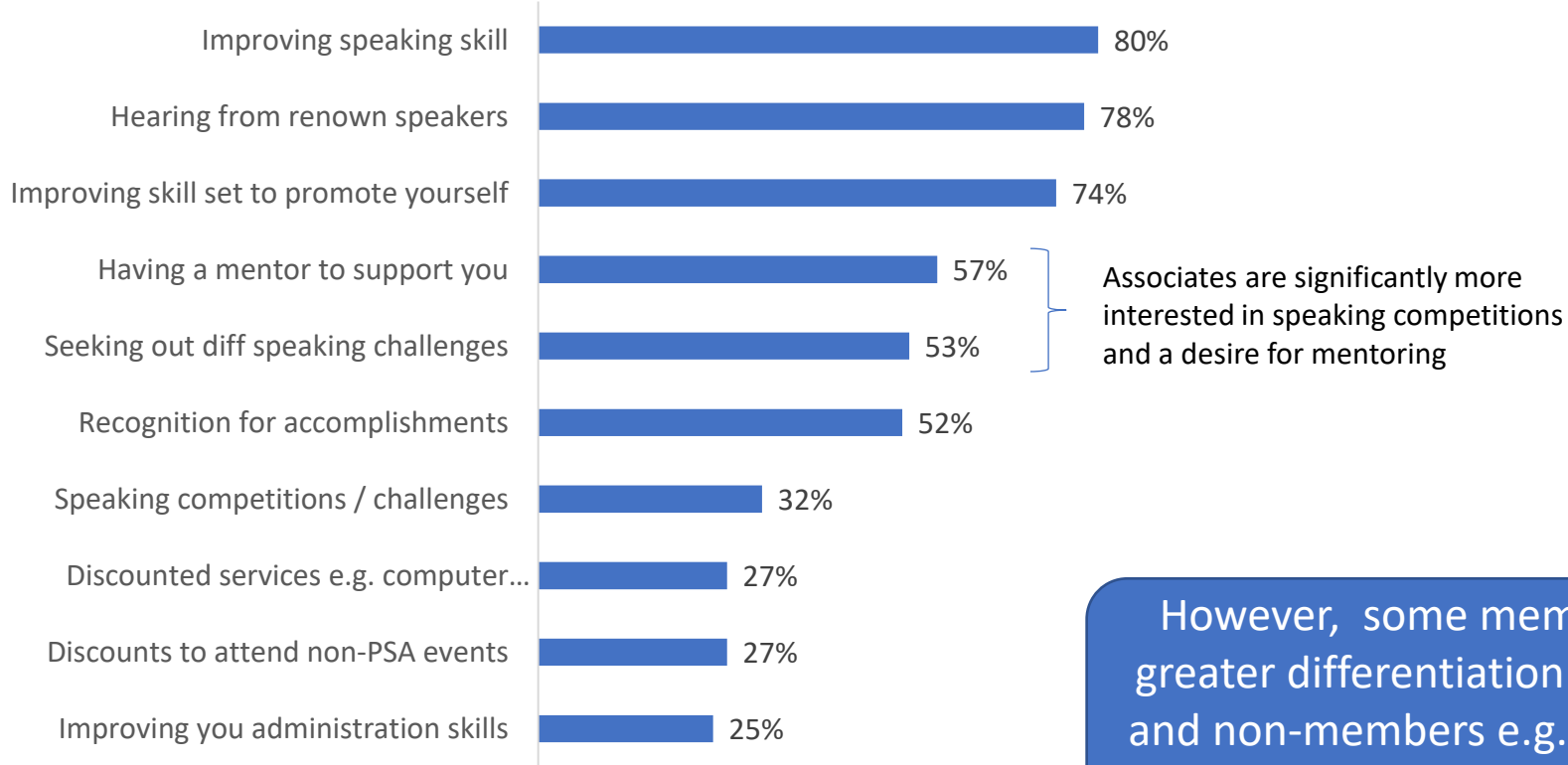
Their level of income from speaking doesn't appear to be driving this uncertainty.

How likely are you to renew your membership this year?

Base: All participants - 113

# Self improvement opportunities are a greater motivation than discounts

## What members find motivating.....



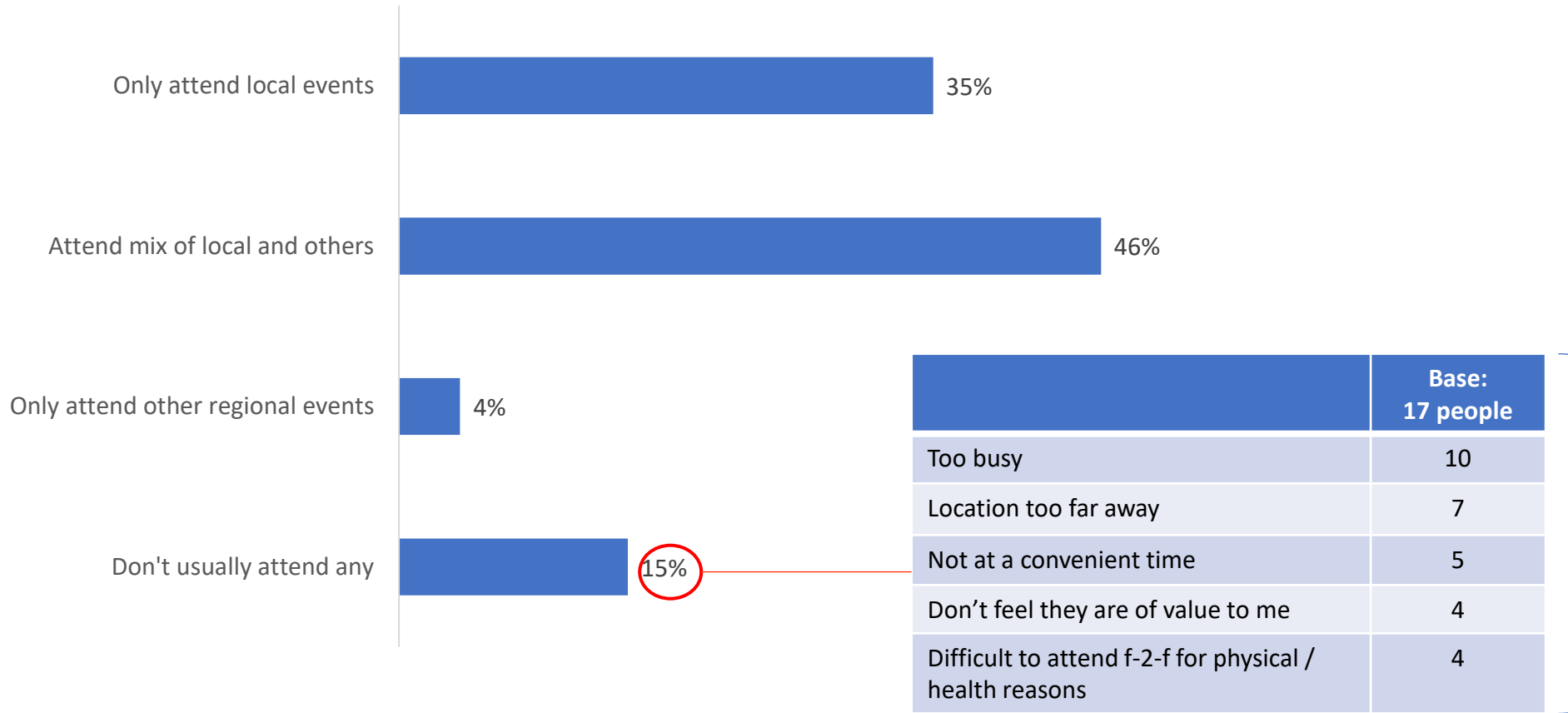
However, some members want to see greater differentiation between member and non-members e.g. pay less than non-members at events

In general as someone with an interest in speaking, what do you find motivating?

Base: All participants - 113

# Regional events are attended by the vast majority of members

## Regional events attend



Non-attendance of regional events appears to decrease the personal value of their membership

Which of the following statements is most relevant to you today in relation to attending the regional events?

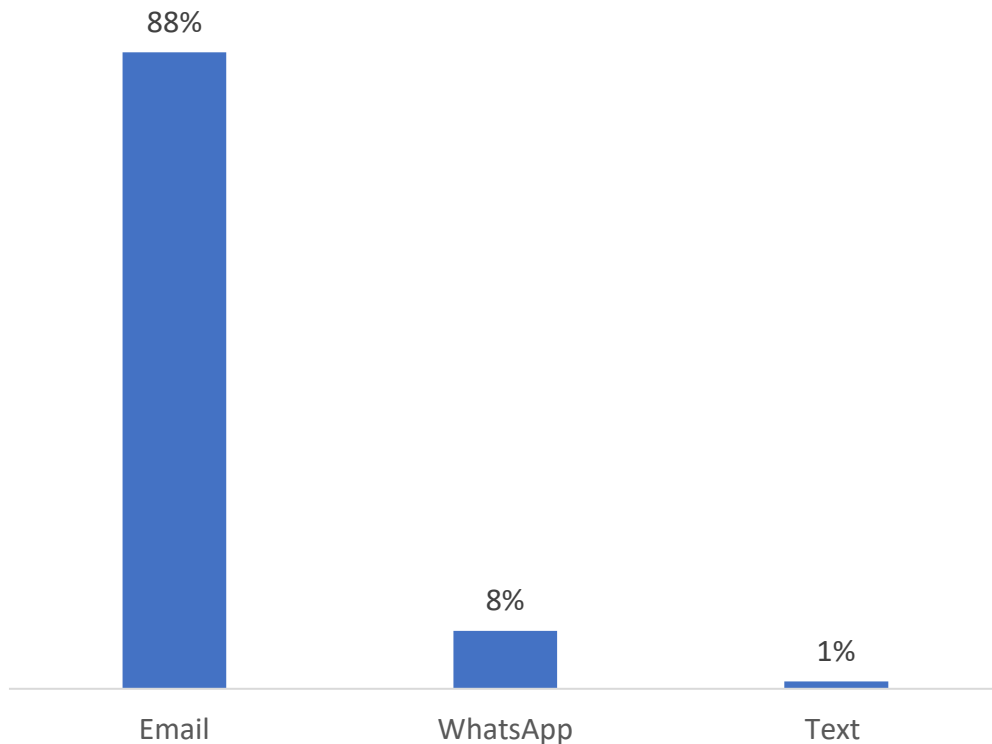
Base: All participants - 113

What are your reasons for not attending the regional events?

Base: All participants - 17

# Email is the preferred channel of communication

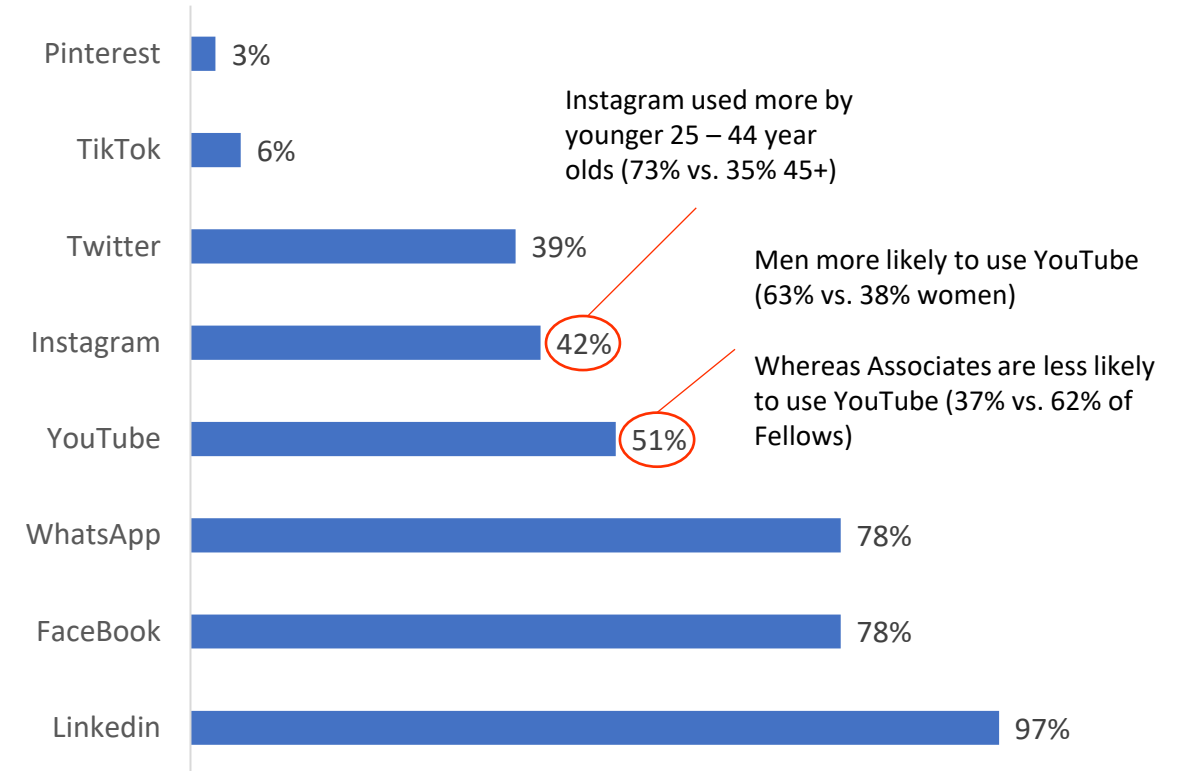
## How prefer PSA to communicate with you



How do you prefer the PSA to communicate with you?

Base: All participants - 113

## Social Media use regularly



Which social media, if any, do you use regularly?

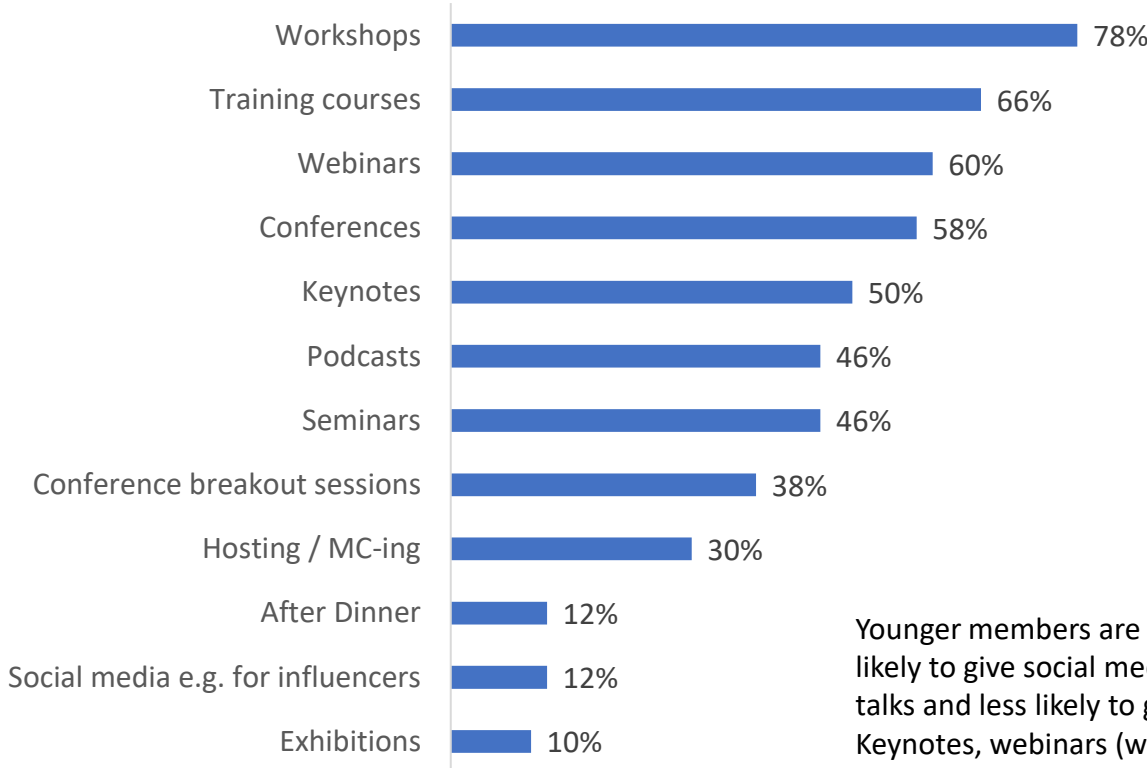
Base: All participants - 113

# Only a small proportion of members have seen a drop in their income over the last 12 months

## How speaking income has changed in last 12 months



## Type of speaking typically do..



Younger members are more likely to give social media talks and less likely to give Keynotes, webinars (which are more likely for Fellows)

How has your speaking income changed over the past 12 months?

Base: All participants - 113

What kind of speaking do you typically do?

Base: All participants - 113

# There is appreciation of the PSA and a desire to see it thrive

"It is a lovely, nice community, I am proud, being a part of it. Thank you for your engagement, commitment!"

"Thank you for all that you do. I think members don't always appreciate that most roles are voluntary and how much work you put in behind the scenes."

"I sometimes get frustrated that things are not run as efficiently as I would like them to be, but on the whole my experience is positive, and I value my membership and all the support that is offered to me at all levels."

"This is an amazing organisation and, as ever, must make sure it addresses professional speakers at every stage in their journey from Associate to PSAE and beyond. Very sad to see how many former Presidents, like Geoff Ramm, are no longer members. This should never happen."

"Keep working on modernising the Association. Seek to bring in new and different ways of speaking. Not just traditional keynote."

"It would be great to see the diversity of the younger generation in the PSA and allow greater innovation to come from that. At the moment in its current format the PSA attracts 'certain type' of individual."

"It does feel as if the PSA format is getting a little stale. Every regional meeting is a keynote, a showcase and some networking, which is fine, but there is so much more we could do - workshops, issue brainstorming, non-PSA organisations talking to us about the business side, speaking related games, deconstructions of successful keynotes/content, prop sharing sessions, and so much more. This applies at conference level too."

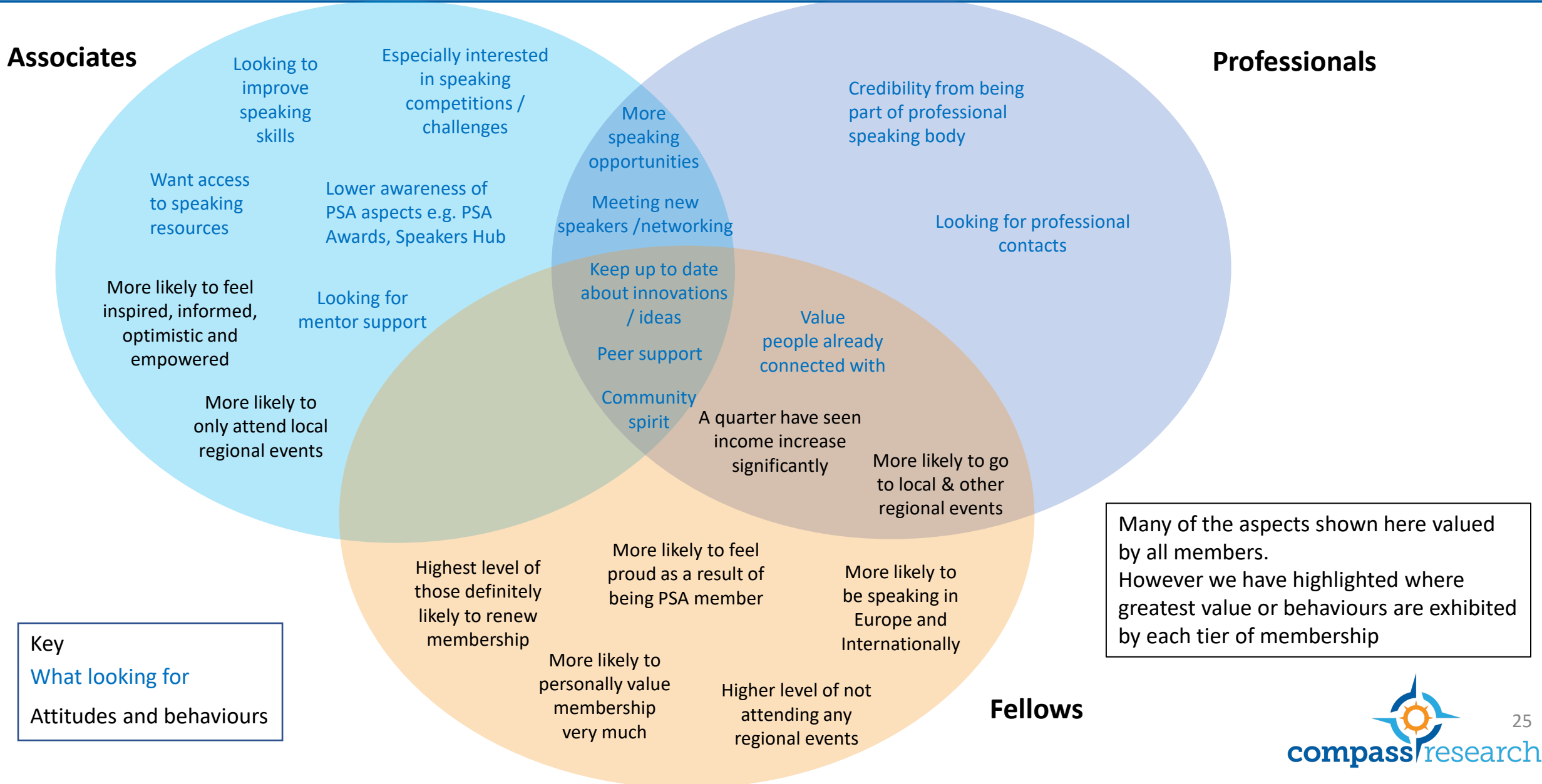
"I think that generally there's a good job at balancing the varying needs of members - from total beginners through to very experienced speakers. However, sometimes the PSA can feel a little like an 'amateur dramatics' or 'toastmaster' group and ideally there'd be more emphasis on the professional side of speaking, rather than just lots of people standing on stages. Personally, I'd often be happier with less 'official' content at events, and more time to network with peers and explore current problems /challenges/opportunities."

"Having done a few showcases & keynotes in different regions now, I sense some are struggling to get people back in the room (e.g. turnouts around 12). Would be fab to get numbers to 20+ at all meetings - but realise this is hard - especially where regions are more spread about..."

# Conclusions and Recommendations



# Conclusions – What each tier of membership is looking for from the PSA



# Recommendations

There is a sense of imbalance within the tiered membership structure

- This is contributing to some members feeling less satisfied and questioning the value of their membership and/or feeling some dissatisfaction with the PSA, especially Associates
  - Consider reviewing the distribution of membership fees and benefits across the 3 membership tiers so Associates don't feel marginalised or disadvantaged
    - Actively demonstrate inclusivity and engagement across membership levels
  - Ensure the benefits of being a member are tangible e.g. members pay less for events than non-members

There are opportunities to encourage greater involvement and engagement

- Consider interspersing face-to-face regional events with online events, to increase accessibility and bring the wider membership together
  - Invite renowned speakers
- Broaden the range of opportunities to improve speaking skills, with less focus on e.g. keynotes
- Encourage Associates to visit other regional events to gain greater engagement with a wider circle of members and different experiences
- Introduce speaking competitions / challenges (for Associates)
- Provide a membership directory
- Promote all the social media channels across the regions

The potential to provide member benefits is more than discounted offers

- Members will be most motivated by 'benefits' which :
  - Support skills development
  - Offer access and opportunity to hear renowned speakers
  - Enable self promotion to obtain greater speaking opportunities
  - Give access to wider support for those who want tips and tools to build and run a successful business
  - Remind members of opportunities to access all resources available (especially Associates) e.g. Speakers Hub, conferences etc.