

2004 *Wisconsin* Lawyer Reader Survey
Final Report
May 2004

Prepared for

State Bar of Wisconsin

by

Gene Kroupa & Associates
Madison, Wisconsin
(608) 231-2250

Table of Contents

I. Executive Summary	
A. Objectives	3
B. Methodology	3
C. Profile of Respondents	4
D. Conclusions	4
E. Recommendations	7
II. Results	
Appendices	
A. Tabulation Tables	
B. Frequency Tables & Verbatims	
C. Crosstabulation Tables	
D. ANOVA Tables	
E. Questionnaires	
F. File Information	

I. Executive Summary

The State Bar of Wisconsin periodically surveys its resident and nonresident members to get their feedback about the *Wisconsin Lawyer* magazine (*WL*), *Wisconsin Lawyer Directory* (*WLD*), purchase intentions and referrals. This report summarizes the 2004 survey, plus compares the results where possible with the 1998 study.

A. Objectives

Overall objective of the survey was to get feedback that would help the Bar continue to provide timely, relevant information to its members via the *Wisconsin Lawyer* magazine and the *Wisconsin Lawyer Directory*. Key questions the survey sought to answer include:

1. How do members typically read the *WL*?
2. What use do members make of the *WL*?
3. Who else sees the *WL* besides members?
4. How satisfied are members with various aspects of the *WL*?
5. How frequently should certain topics be covered in the *WL*?
6. How often do members access the online *WL*?
7. What value does the online *WL* provide?
8. How can the online *WL* be improved?
9. How often do members refer to various sections of the *WLD*?
10. How can the *WLD* be improved?
11. Who in the office uses the *WLD* and for what purposes?
12. Do members use the online Lawyer Search feature?
13. What sources are used when members look for contact information for other lawyers?
14. What do members plan to buy or lease in the next 12 months?
15. Do members refer clients or engage other professionals for various services?

B. Methodology

State Bar staff developed a mail questionnaire with input from the Bar's Communications Committee. The questionnaire was pretested by State Bar staff, directors and Communications Committee members. On April 5, 2004 the 4-page questionnaire with a cover letter from the Communications Committee chair and editor of the *Wisconsin Lawyer* magazine was mailed to a random sample of 1,700 resident and 1,900 nonresident members. The questionnaires were mailed first-class and included postage-paid

business reply envelopes. Questionnaires and reply envelopes were not coded in any way to ensure confidentiality. A follow-up reminder postcard was mailed to all 3,600 sample subjects two weeks later. Questionnaires received as of April 30, 2004 were included in the analysis.

A total of 553 resident and 305 nonresident questionnaires were returned for response rates of 33% and 16%, respectively. The response rates are what would be expected from a busy, professional audience when no monetary incentive is included. All usable questionnaires were audited, data entered and analyzed by Gene Kroupa & Associates, a Madison-based marketing research firm. Copies of the survey questionnaires are included in the appendix of this report.

C. Profile of Respondents

The average number of years of practicing law is 21.9, with a median of 22.0 years. The average number of years respondents have been practicing law in Wisconsin is 16.6, with a median of 15.0 years. Nearly three in 10 are women, compared with 73% who are men. This compares with overall membership statistics indicating that 71% of all SBW members are male, while the remaining 29% are female. Average age is 50.6, with a median of 50.0 years. Nearly one in 10 described their practice as being a law firm partner, while one-fifth said they are a sole practitioner. While one-half said there were less than five lawyers in the entire firm, agency or entity, one-fifth said there were more than 30. Six in 10 respondents said their office is located in a community with a population of 100,000 or more. Among residents, one-fifth said their office is located in Dane County, while 27% said it was in Milwaukee County. This compares with SBW membership statistics indicating that 21% of all members have a primary office in Dane County, while 34% have a primary office in Milwaukee County. Most nonresidents said their office is in Minnesota (23%) – compared with 20% of all SBW nonresident members, or Illinois (17%) compared with 20% of all SBW nonresident members.

D. Conclusions

The following conclusions are based on our review of the results from the analysis of data provided by 858 resident and nonresident members of the State Bar of Wisconsin.

1. Most members either review the table of contents first or page through the whole *WL* to see what is in the issue. As a result, it is important that the table of contents highlight the articles. Likewise, the headlines for articles and columns need to quickly convey content and have stopping power.
2. Members are more likely to throw away or recycle the *WL* after they are through reading it, especially if they are not residents, not practicing, practice in Dane or Milwaukee County, and work in larger law firms or for a state or federal agency. However, a fairly large proportion file the *WL* for future reference, clip or copy articles, or file the *WL* in the firm's library. Few route *WL* to others in the office or place it in a public area.

3. Incidence of routing to others in the office, such as paralegals or legal assistants and administrative staff, and to spouses, other family members and clients is quite low. While some of these individuals in firms might actually read the *WL*, pass-along readership of the *WL* is relatively small.
4. Overall, members are Satisfied with most aspects of the *WL*. However, a sizable proportion gave Neutral ratings, which indicates that there is some room for improvement. While over seven in 10 are either Satisfied or Very Satisfied with the usefulness of information, about one-fourth gave a Neutral rating. Less than one-fifth gave a Neutral or lower rating for timeliness of information and content. Both of these aspects may be closely associated with usefulness of information. The fact that older, men and more experienced members gave higher ratings to content than their peers might warrant a review of content to make it more relevant to younger members and women. Key improvements suggested include: do not reverse large blocks of copy on dark backgrounds, include more articles about specialized areas of practice, deal with more issues of interest to sole practitioners and small firms, increase type size, and do not continue articles to back of publication.
5. Eight in 10 members want the *WL* to continue publishing the Supreme Court and Court of Appeals digest columns. Only 7% said "no," while 12% said "not sure." Among the members who supported continued publication, only one-fourth preferred receiving the columns electronically, while 64% said they did not. Reasons cited include: prefer hard copy, information not wanted nor useful, and already receive too many email messages. However, younger attorneys were more accepting of receiving the columns via email.
6. Although members want most topics addressed with the same frequency in future issues of the *WL*, four in 10 want to see developing areas of state law and articles on substantive areas of law addressed more often. About one-fourth would like to see developing areas of federal law, practice management, and law office technology topics addressed more often. Four in 10 want to see human interest articles addressed less often, while seven in 10 want to see special issues focusing on one topic run with the same frequency. Clearly members want to see "meat and potatoes" topics covered more often, and less attention given to topics not directly affecting their practice.
7. Nearly two-thirds never refer to the online *WL*, while one-fourth do it less than monthly. The 66% who never refer to the online *WL* is divided into 38% who are unaware that it is online and nearly one-fourth who have Internet access and are aware of its online availability. The Bar probably needs to do more promotion of the online *WL* to increase visits. However, use or lack thereof is closely related to age. Younger members are more Internet connected and comfortable using it as a resource.
8. The main value the online *WL* offers is as an archive of back issues, followed by access to related material, including cases and statutes, email access to authors, and no longer have to save print copy. A key improvement suggested was improving the online search capabilities.

9. The *Wisconsin Lawyer Directory* is used less than monthly by four in 10 members, while one-fourth use it 1 to 3 times a week, and nearly one-fourth use it more frequently. Of the 12% who never use it, most are aware that the directory exists but they have no need for it. Six in 10 nonresidents use it less than monthly compared with about three in 10 residents.
10. Nearly six in 10 (57%) members have used the *WLD* to select a co-counsel or refer a client, while one-third have also used it to locate a court reporter, expert witness, or other professional services. Clearly, the *WLD* is an important resource for members, especially those practicing in smaller firms and communities. Use for both purposes tends to increase with the age of the attorney.
11. The most frequently referred to sections of the *WLD* include: attorney alphabetical listing, state and federal court listings, attorney geographical listing, Wisconsin law firm/corporation listing, and the lawyer-to-lawyer directory. Members rarely or never refer to the other sections. Key improvements suggested include: list more information, such as email address and city, remove attorney biographies/blue section, make available online, and improve index and/or tabs. Some suggested that it be better publicized, and some were unaware of the information available or that there is an index.
12. The *WLD* is used mainly by the attorneys (70%), although 46% said their office staff and 12% said other legal professionals also use it. Residents were much more likely than nonresidents to check all categories.
13. Only one in 10 members purchase any other directories of Wisconsin lawyers, such as *Martindale-Hubbell* and *Wisconsin Legal Directory (Blue Book)*. Residents are more likely than nonresidents to purchase other directories.
14. Three in 10 members have ever used the online Lawyer Search feature on WisBar. The 69% who have not used it split mainly between the 36% who said "no" and 30% who are unaware of this feature. Again, it appears that more frequent and continuous promotion of this feature is needed. Use is most common among members who have been practicing for less than 5 years, and then decreases as years in practice increases.
15. When looking for contact information for other lawyers, seven in 10 members first turn to the *Wisconsin Lawyer Directory*, while 13% check Lawyer Search and 18% use a variety of other sources, such as *Martindale-Hubbell* and other attorneys. However, the younger attorneys who have been in practice less than five years were about evenly split between Lawyer Search (48%) and *Wisconsin Lawyer Directory* (44%). This result again emphasizes the growing gap between younger and more seasoned attorneys in the information sources they are using.
16. If the *WLD* content were made available on WisBar, nearly one-half of the members would still want to receive a print copy, while one-third would not. Another one-fifth were unsure. Residents, those who have practiced for 5 or more years, solo practitioners and those in smaller firms are more likely to want a hard copy. Reasons given for wanting the hard copy include: being old-fashioned, not having Internet access, and find it is more convenient and easier to use, especially when

they don't have access to their computer. Some suggested that they would need only one copy for the office instead of one for every attorney. As a result, the Bar should continue to produce hard copies of the *WLD*.

17. In the next 12 months, two-thirds or more members plan to purchase or lease CLE seminars (66%), travel for personal or business (58%), computer hardware/software (50%), Internet access (49%), local, long-distance or wireless phone service (47%), CLE books (46%), office furnishings, fixtures or equipment (44%), online legal research services (43%), and insurance services (38%). While these are standard items basic to doing business, the Bar should also review some of the less frequently mentioned items, such as document imaging/enlargement equipment and litigation support services, as leading edge items that will become more of the norm in the future. These products and services offer advertising sales opportunities. Most of the purchasing decisions will be made by an individual attorney in a solo or small firm practice, and the managing attorney or management committee in larger practices.
18. More than one-half refer clients to other attorneys, while four in 10 engage other professionals for accounting services, and three in 10 each engage other professionals for expert testimony and bank or trust services. One-fifth to one-fourth refer clients to or engage professionals for real estate transactions, dispute resolution services, investigative services, insurance purchases, and financial planning. As a result, attorneys are a valuable source of business for other attorneys and professionals.

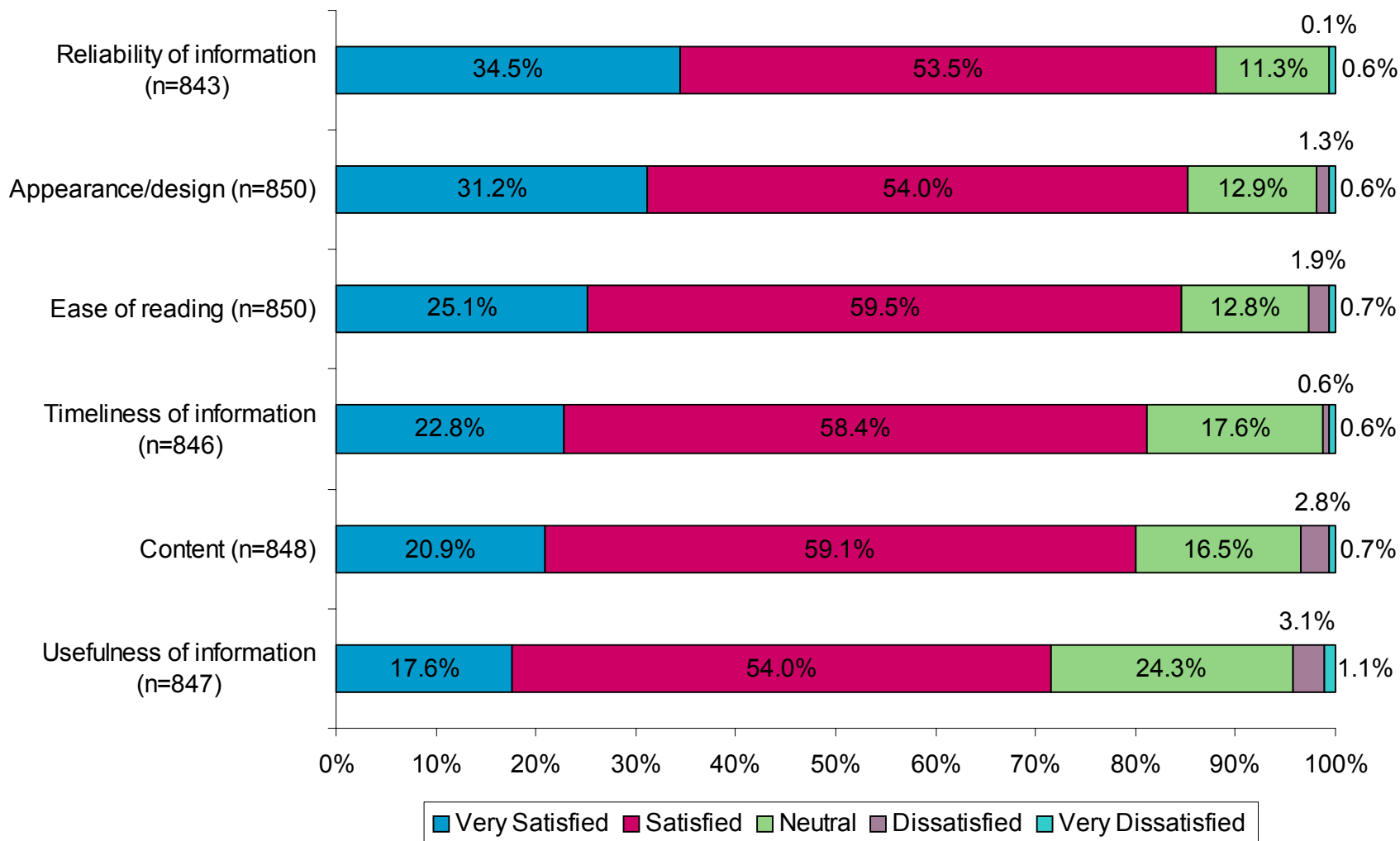
E. Recommendations

The following recommendations based on the conclusions and results are presented for your consideration:

1. Make sure that the *WL* table of contents clearly highlights the articles, and the headlines for articles and columns quickly convey content and have stopping power.
2. Emphasize the importance for advertisers of members' passing along the *WL* to others inside and out of the office rather than throwing away or recycling the publication.
3. Review content of the *WL* to make sure that it is more relevant to younger members, women, sole practitioners and those in small firms. Give more coverage to "meat and potato" topics, and less attention to topics that do not directly affect members' practices. Focus more on developing areas of federal law, practice management, and law office technology topics.
4. Continue publishing the Supreme Court and Court of Appeals digest columns in the *WL*.

5. Promote the availability of *WL* online on a more frequent and consistent basis to increase visits. Improve the online search capabilities so that visitors can more easily find what they want.
6. Offer a print copy of the *Wisconsin Lawyer Directory* to all members who want one. However, upgrade both the print copy and online version to make them more useful.
7. Explore online advertising opportunities to replace possible revenue loss as more members turn to online versions of the *WL* and *WLD*. Target companies involved with continuing legal education, travel, computer hardware/software, Internet access, phone service, office furnishings, fixtures and equipment, online legal research services, insurance, and various professional services that get referrals and assignments from attorneys.
8. Share the results of this survey with members as soon as possible. Continually remind them of changes made as a result of this feedback.

Chart 4: Overall Satisfaction with *Wisconsin Lawyer*



Q3. Please rate your overall satisfaction with the *Wisconsin Lawyer* for the following attributes by checking one circle for each attribute listed below.

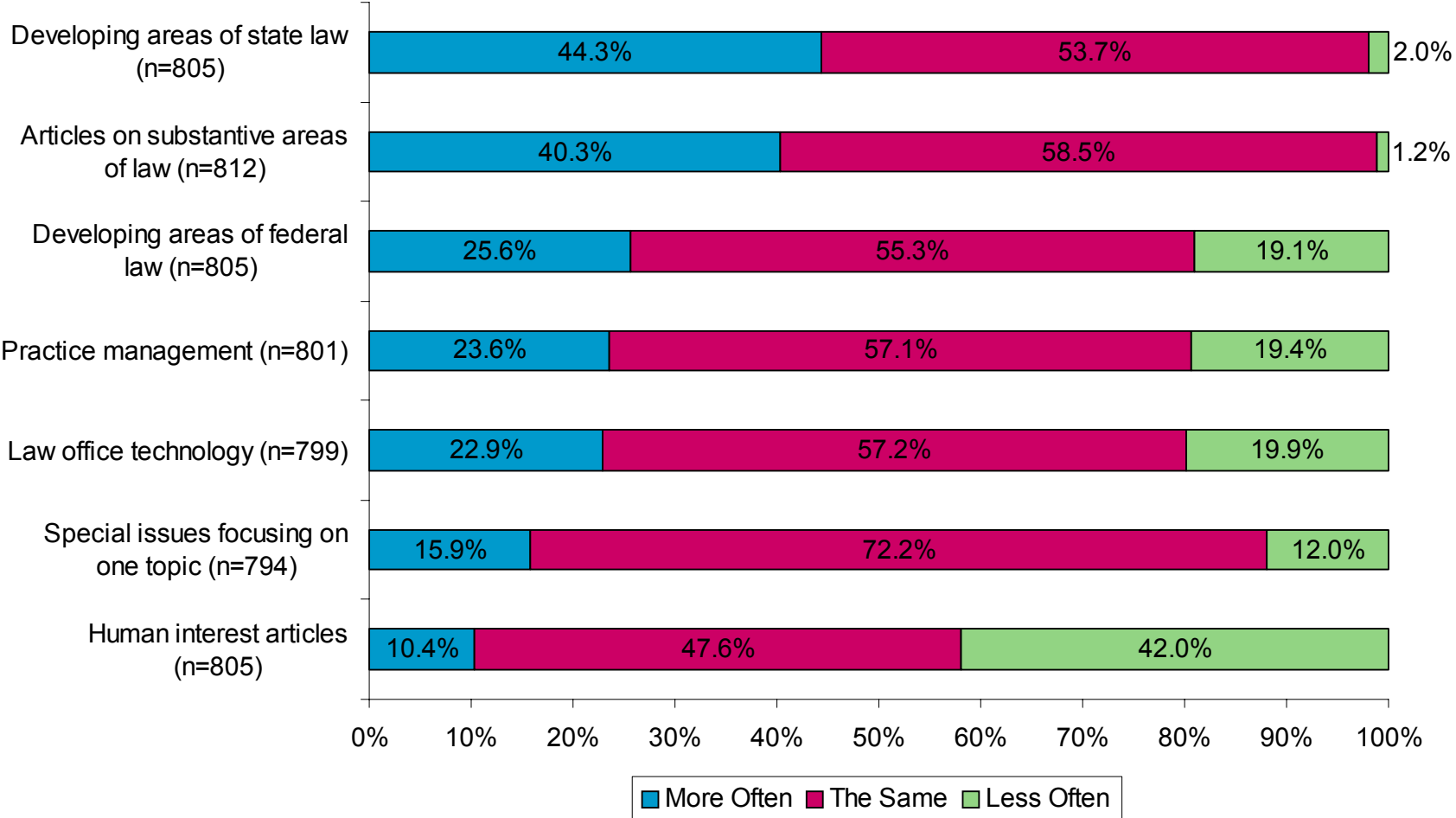
- Overall, respondents are Satisfied with all attributes listed. At least one-half said Satisfied for these attributes, and mean ratings fall between 3.8 and 4.2, with medians of 4.0 for all. However, a sizeable proportion gave Neutral ratings, indicating that there is some room for improvement. Only a small proportion are Dissatisfied or Very Dissatisfied. Compared with 1998, satisfaction scores for all attributes are either equal to or higher. A larger proportion of members gave Satisfied or Very Satisfied ratings for all attributes.
- a. Appearance / design.** More than one-half (54%) are Satisfied, 31% are Very Satisfied, 13% are Neutral, 1% are Dissatisfied, and less than 1% are Very Dissatisfied, for a mean rating of 4.1 and a median of 4.0 out of a possible 5.0.
 - In general, those who have practiced law for 25 or more years and those who have practiced in Wisconsin for 25 or more years, males, and respondents ages 55 and older expressed a higher level of satisfaction with appearance/design of the *Wisconsin Lawyer* than did their counterparts.
- b. Content.** Six in 10 (59%) are Satisfied, 21% are Very Satisfied, 17% are Neutral, 3% are Dissatisfied, and less than 1% are Very Dissatisfied, for a mean rating of 4.0 and a median of 4.0 out of a possible 5.0.
 - In general, those who have practiced law for less than 5 or for 25 or more years and those who have practiced in Wisconsin for 25 or more years, males, and respondents ages 55 and older expressed a higher level of satisfaction with content of the *Wisconsin Lawyer* than did their counterparts.
- c. Reliability of information.** More than one-half (54%) are Satisfied, 35% are Very Satisfied, 11% are Neutral, and less than 1% are Dissatisfied or Very Dissatisfied, for a mean rating of 4.2 and a median of 4.0 out of a possible 5.0.
 - In general, those who have practiced law for 25 or more years and those who have practiced in Wisconsin for 25 or more years, respondents ages 45 and older, and those whose office is located in a community with population of less than 50,000 expressed a higher level of satisfaction with reliability of information than did their counterparts.
- d. Timeliness of information.** Nearly six in 10 (58%) are Satisfied, 23% are Very Satisfied, 18% are Neutral, and 1% are Dissatisfied or Very Dissatisfied, for a mean rating of 4.0 and a median of 4.0 out of a possible 5.0.
 - In general, those who have practiced law for 25 or more years and those who have practiced in Wisconsin for 25 or more years expressed a higher level of satisfaction with timeliness of information than did their counterparts.

- e. **Ease of reading.** Six in 10 (60%) are Satisfied, 25% are Very Satisfied, 13% are Neutral, 2% are Dissatisfied, and less than 1% are Very Dissatisfied, for a mean rating of 4.1 and a median of 4.0 out of a possible 5.0.
- f. **Usefulness of information.** More than one-half (54%) are Satisfied, 18% are Very Satisfied, 24% are Neutral, 3% are Dissatisfied, and 1% are Very Dissatisfied, for a mean rating of 3.8 and a median of 4.0 out of a possible 5.0.
 - In general, those who have practiced law in Wisconsin for 25 or more years and those with 30 or less (particularly those with 16-30) lawyers in their firm, agency, or entity expressed a higher level of satisfaction with usefulness of information than did their counterparts.

Q4. For any item that you rated a “1” or “2,” please tell us how to improve this area.

- Remarks touched on a variety of topics, such as subjects covered are not relevant to specific area of practice and readability issues, such as font size, color and page layout. Key improvements suggested include: do not reverse large blocks of copy on dark backgrounds, include more articles about specialized areas of practice, deal with more issues of interest to sole practitioners and small firms, increase type size, and do not continue articles to back of publication. A detailed review of the comments is recommended.
 - *I think the digests of court decisions should be better featured and more prominent, i.e. more of a news and analysis emphasis at beginning of the magazine.*
 - *Finding the continued portions of the articles (at) the back does not make for easy reading.*
 - *The content needs to be more of interest to lawyers of all specialties. Frequently, I find that no feature articles are of any use or interest to me.*
 - *I would like to see more articles on the non-traditional roles lawyers fill.*
 - *Perhaps a larger print size.*
 - *Since I am an assistant DA, many parts of the issue are not interesting to my area of practice.*
 - *I wish you would never print articles (or portions of articles) on dark backgrounds.*
 - *I would like to see the publication become more relevant to the small firm or solo practitioner.*
 - *Practical articles on the law of Wisconsin is usable, not theoretical or opinionated format.*
 - *More trial skills articles would be nice.*
 - *Too much material of historical or social interest; not enough "meat and potatoes" law.*

Chart 7: How Frequently Various Topics Should Be Addressed in Future Issues of *Wisconsin Lawyer*



Q7. How frequently should each of the following topics be addressed in future issues of the *Wisconsin Lawyer*?

- Most respondents feel that these subjects should be addressed with The Same frequency. More than one-half gave this response for the various topics listed, with the exception of human interest articles for which 48% said The Same and 42% said Less Often. The two topics that received the most mentions for More Often are developing areas of state law (44%) and articles on substantive areas of law (40%). Few said that these top subjects should be addressed Less Often. All other topics had comparable proportions who said More and Less Often, again with the majority of respondents saying The Same; therefore, the frequency of addressing these topics should remain unchanged.
- a. **Special topics focusing on one topic.** Nearly three-fourths (72%) said The Same, 16% said More Often, and 12% said Less Often.
- b. **Articles on substantive areas of law.** Six in 10 (59%) said The Same, 40% said More Often, and 1% said Less Often.
- c. **Human interest articles.** Nearly one-half (48%) said The Same, 42% said Less Often, and 10% said More Often.
 - Males were more likely than females to say Less Often (46% vs. 30%) and were less likely to say The Same (45% vs. 54%).
- d. **Law office technology.** Nearly six in 10 (57%) said The Same, 23% said More Often, and 22% said Less Often.
- e. **Developing areas of federal law.** More than one-half (55%) said The Same, 26% said More Often, and 19% said Less Often.
 - While they were both most likely to say The Same, residents were more likely than nonresidents to say Less Often (23% vs. 12%) and were less likely to say More Often (23% vs. 31%).
 - Males were more likely than females to say Less Often (22% vs. 12%) and were less likely to say The Same (53% vs. 62%).
 - Those with more than 30 lawyers in their firm, agency, or entity were more likely than those with fewer lawyers to say More Often.
 - The likelihood of saying More Often tends to increase with population of the community in which the office is located.
 - Milwaukee County residents were more likely than other residents to say More Often. Minnesota nonresidents were less likely than other nonresidents to say More Often.
- f. **Developing areas of state law.** More than one-half (54%) said The Same, 44% said More Often, and 2% said Less Often.
 - Residents were more likely than nonresidents to say More Often (51% vs. 32%) and were less likely to say The Same (48% vs. 65%).
 - Those ages 35 and under were more likely than those over age 35 to say More Often and were less likely to say The Same.
- g. **Practice management.** Nearly six in 10 (57%) said The Same, 24% said More Often, and 19% said Less Often.