



AHS Name Survey Results

By *Valerie Sheehan, AHS Membership Director*

Over the past several years, the AHS International Board of Directors has continually increased the Society's emphasis on a much broader outreach strategy, embracing professionals worldwide and technologies beyond traditional rotorcraft. In 2012, the Board made significant changes to its structure and to our membership policies to attract more members working on vertical flight technology.

In 1997, we rebranded as "AHS International" to de-emphasize the words "American" and "Helicopter" and to convey our support of this increasingly diverse worldwide discipline of vertical flight technology. But in spite of our strong support of technologies ranging from micro air vehicles to the F-35B Joint Strike Fighter, those who don't realize our long heritage in supporting non-helicopter VTOL aircraft still refer to us as "The American Helicopter Society."

Now the Board is considering whether a change in the name of the Society would better support the policies and strategy that have been implemented, attract a wider constituency, and better achieve the Board's vision for the Society as "An international organization that advocates, promotes and supports global vertical flight technology and professional development."

In an effort to gather information on the views of our membership to inform the Board discussions, we conducted a survey from Sept. 12–28, emailing it to our mailing list of 11,000 subscribers, which includes current and many past members. The full results of the survey are available online at www.vtol.org/name. Thank you to everyone who participated!

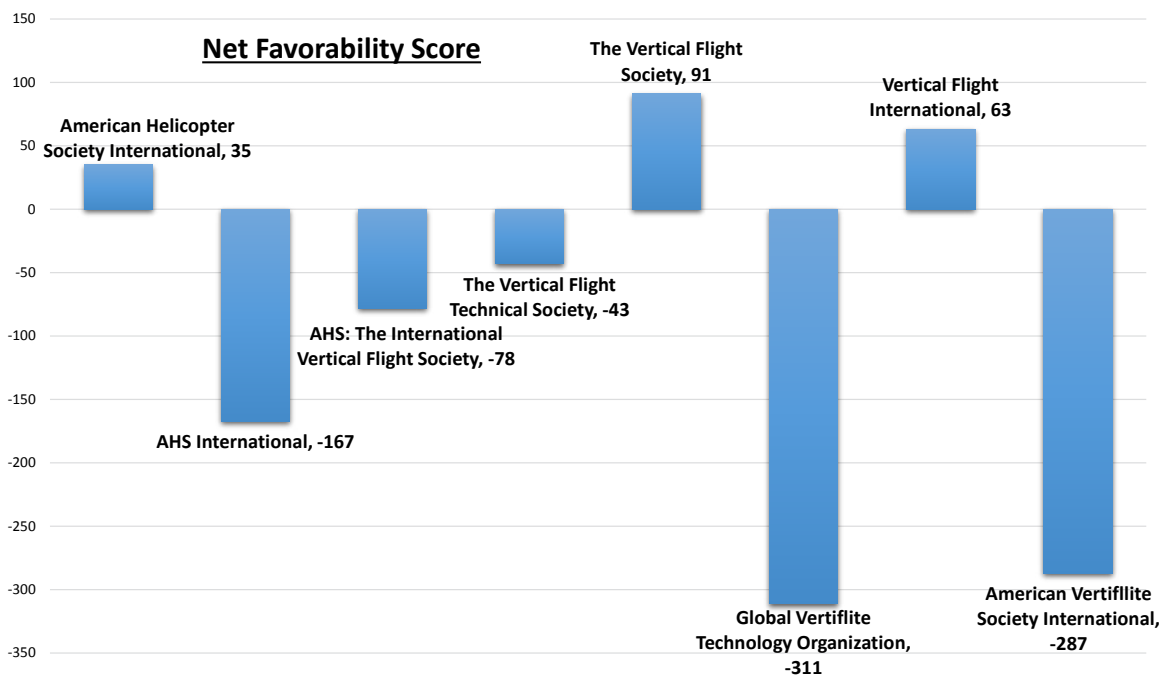
More than 600 people took the survey, with 95% of those respondents being members. In addition, well over half of respondents provided additional comments, which the Board found very helpful.

More than 92% of respondents said that "technology" was one of the most important attributes for the Society to emphasize. About 63% of respondents have been members for more than 10 years. The US accounted for about 80% of respondents, while Canada and Germany accounted for about 4% each. Only about 8% felt that the Society's focus was primarily "American."

One survey question asked, "How do you think that a name such as these would capture AHS and its mission, and position it for growth," and prompted respondents to score eight different names that members had proposed through the Hover online community or via other means. The graph below reflects the net favorability scores — the number of people who responded "strongly" minus those who answered "not at all" — for each of the names proposed in the survey. Only three names received positive scores: our current name of "The American Helicopter Society International," "The Vertical Flight Society" and "Vertical Flight International."

The Board discussed the survey results at its October meeting. Based on its analysis of the results, it decided to give two options further consideration: either changing our name to "The Vertical Flight Society"; or marketing ourselves more aggressively as "The Vertical Flight Society" while keeping our existing name.

We are planning an additional member survey this fall to provide more clarity to the Board. We ask again that you take our survey to ensure your opinion is counted.



The survey asked whether a given name would effectively convey the Society's mission. This chart shows the net yes-versus-no responses.