

Myrtle Beach  
2009 Conversion Study  
– February 2010 –

Prepared By  
**Equat!on**  
research

## Objectives:

- **Determine the conversion rate for Myrtle Beach inquirers**
  - How effective have our marketing efforts been in turning potential visitors into actual visitors, and which channels have had the most success?
- **Determine the revenue our conversion efforts generated**
  - Who spent what and where - what was the average spend per vacationing group, where did they spend it, and how much overall revenue was generated?
- **Establish our Net Promoter Score**
  - How effective is the Myrtle beach experience in generating word-of-mouth recommendations?
- **Assess the use and usefulness of The Official Myrtle Beach Area Vacation/Visitors Guide**
- **Examine party composition, visitor types, trip duration and activity participation**

## Who we talked to:

- The Myrtle Beach Area Chamber of Commerce provided us with a random list of Inquirer names – people who had inquired about vacationing at Myrtle Beach. We looked at two different groups:
  - **Internet Inquirers** – people who inquired through the website or various other online channels (website survey, leaving email address, etc.)
  - **Telephone Inquirers** – people who called us up inquiring about Myrtle Beach

	N-size	Margin of Error
Total completes:	4,092	±1.5%
Internet Inquirer completes:	3,641	±1.6%
Phone Inquirer completes:	451	±4.6%

- Respondents were surveyed between January 13 – February 1, 2010.

### Key Finding #1

#### **We continue to see very high and encouraging conversion ratios for the leads generated via our marketing efforts**

Overall conversion rates were **69%** among all Inquirers, resulting in an estimated 212,000 travel parties in 2009.

Among total Inquirers, **25% became New Converts**—visiting the Myrtle Beach area for the first time (EVER) in 2009.

- When including lapsed visitors (have not been since before 2004), this climbs to **31.2%**.

### Key Finding #2

#### **Our Marketing spend is very efficient in generating and converting leads**

On average, guests spent \$2,210 per group over the length of their Myrtle Beach stay – **that's \$467.7 million in revenue** from converted leads alone.

**That's \$77 dollars of revenue per Marketing dollar** spent.

### Key Finding #3

#### **Inquirers who didn't vacation to Myrtle Beach show strong positive conversion intent**

Of those who had not yet traveled, 73% indicate they plan to visit the Myrtle Beach area in the next 12 months.

### Key Finding #4

**Not only were conversions slightly higher in the online channel, the Internet is by far the most useful trip-planning tool**

Conversion through the online channel was 74%, while 7 out of 10 converts found the Internet highly useful as a tool to plan their Myrtle Beach stay.

### Key Finding #5

**The planning guide plays a dual role – it is both an integral part of the planning process and a destination advertisement – it’s critical it does both well (and by the way – it is shown to do both well)**

Four out of five Converts order the guide after they’ve already decided to visit Myrtle Beach (80%).

Approximately a fifth (20%) of first-time Myrtle Beach visitors order it as part of the destination selection process.

### Key Finding #6

#### **Our Net Promoter Score, at 81%, should be the envy of the vacation world**

A significant majority of Myrtle Beach vacationers highly recommend us. What are we doing to leverage this outstanding word-of-mouth?

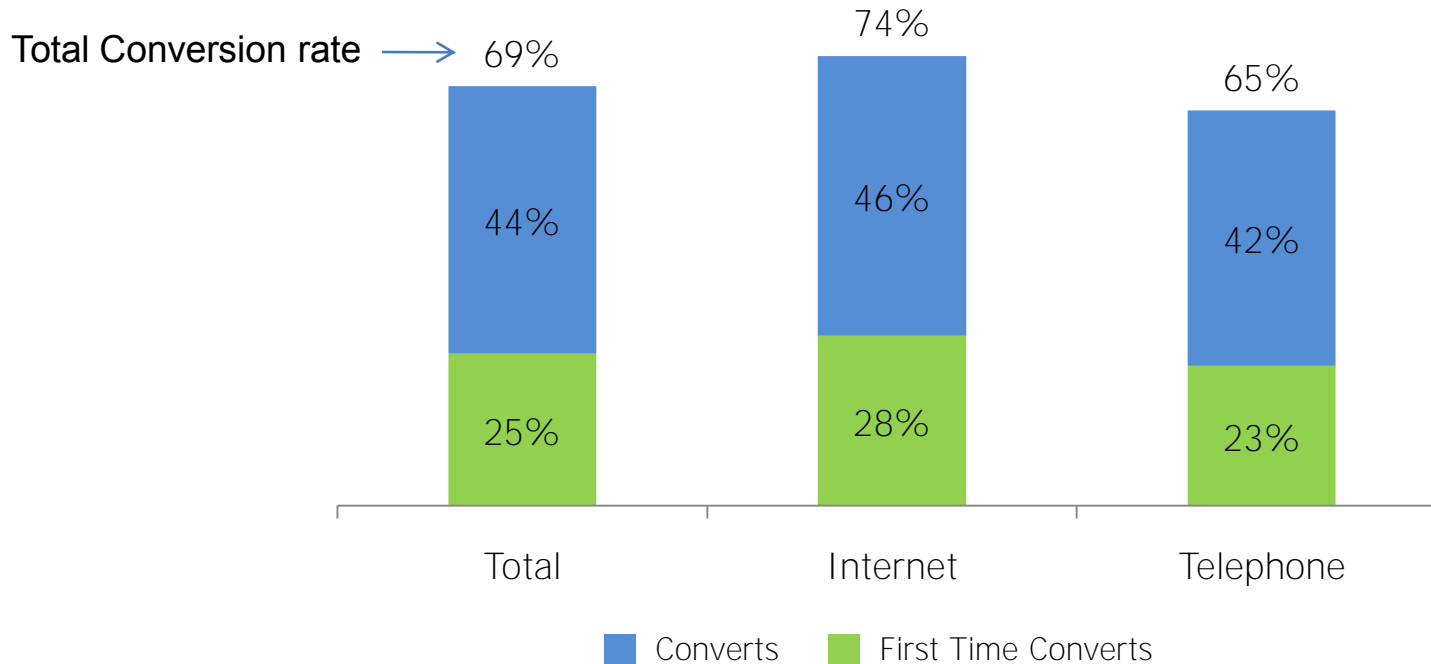


# Myrtle Beach Inquiries and Conversion Rates

# Conversion Rates

While online had a higher conversion rate, both channels are still important avenues to promote as initial contact points.

*Conversion Rates for Inquirers Who Visited the Myrtle Beach Area in 2009*



**Base: Took a vacation in 2009 (N=3413)**

# Spending Patterns

The average party spent \$2,210 in total – accommodation was the largest single chunk at \$557 (\$99/night on average)

## *Trip Expenditures*

	Average Expenditure per Party
Accommodations	\$557
Restaurants/ Groceries	\$441
Golf	\$57
Entertainment/ Attractions	\$343
Shopping	\$410
Daily transportation (excluding rental car)	\$107
Rental car	\$62
Miscellaneous	\$233
<b>Total Expenditure:</b>	<b>\$2,210</b>

Median Party Size  
**4**

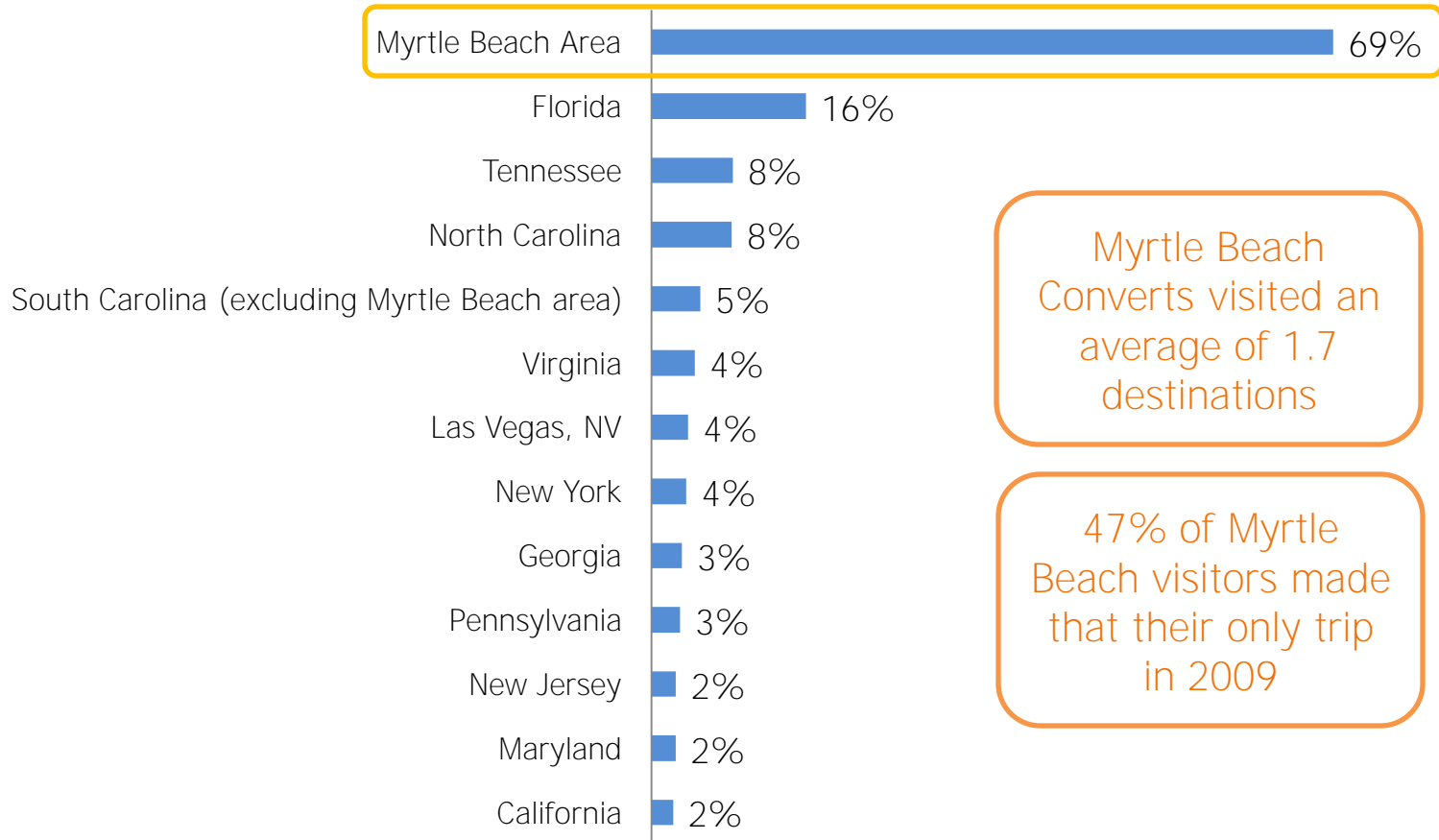
Avg. Length of Stay  
**5.6 nights**

**Base: Converts; visited Myrtle Beach in 2009 (N=2358)**

# Vacation Destinations - Converts

Our guests are heavily invested in us – while some have the luxury of multiple destinations over the year, for many, Myrtle Beach is their only vacation.

## Destinations Visited in 2009



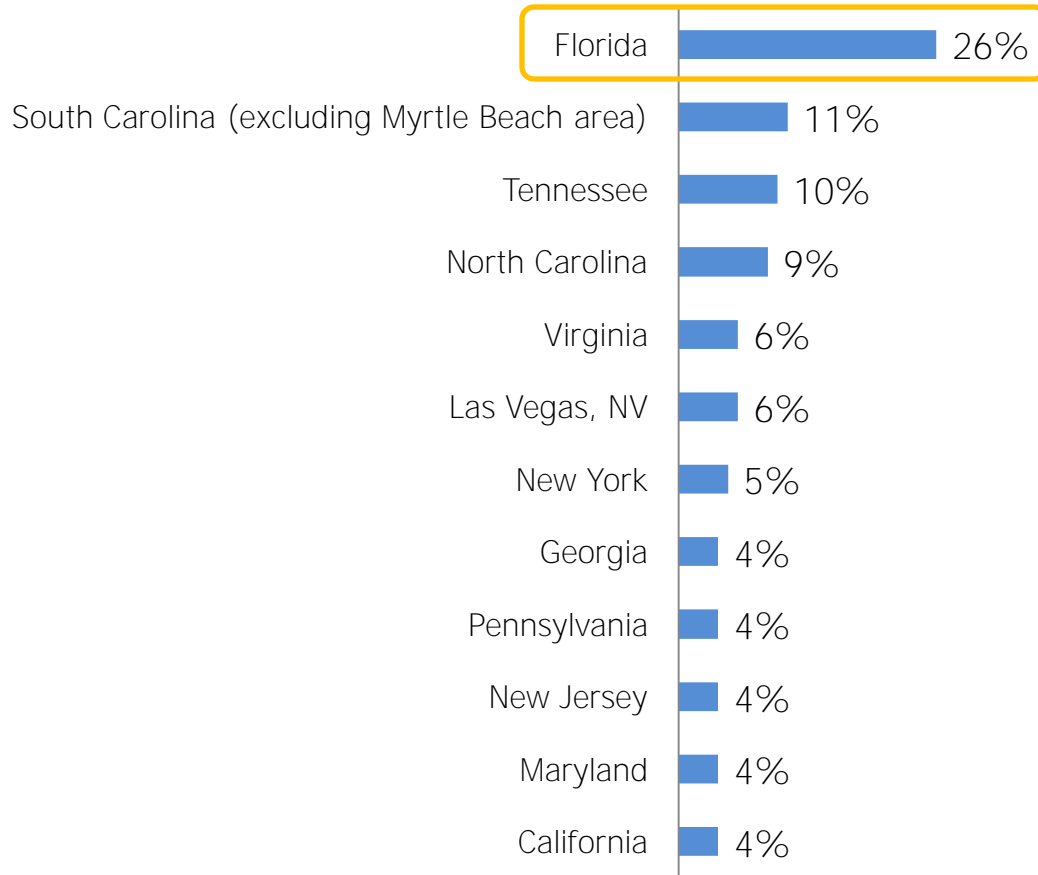
Myrtle Beach Converts visited an average of 1.7 destinations

47% of Myrtle Beach visitors made that their only trip in 2009

Base: Took a vacation in 2009 (N=3413)

Florida is the most popular destination for people we didn't convert after an inquiry.

*Destinations Visited by Non-Converts*

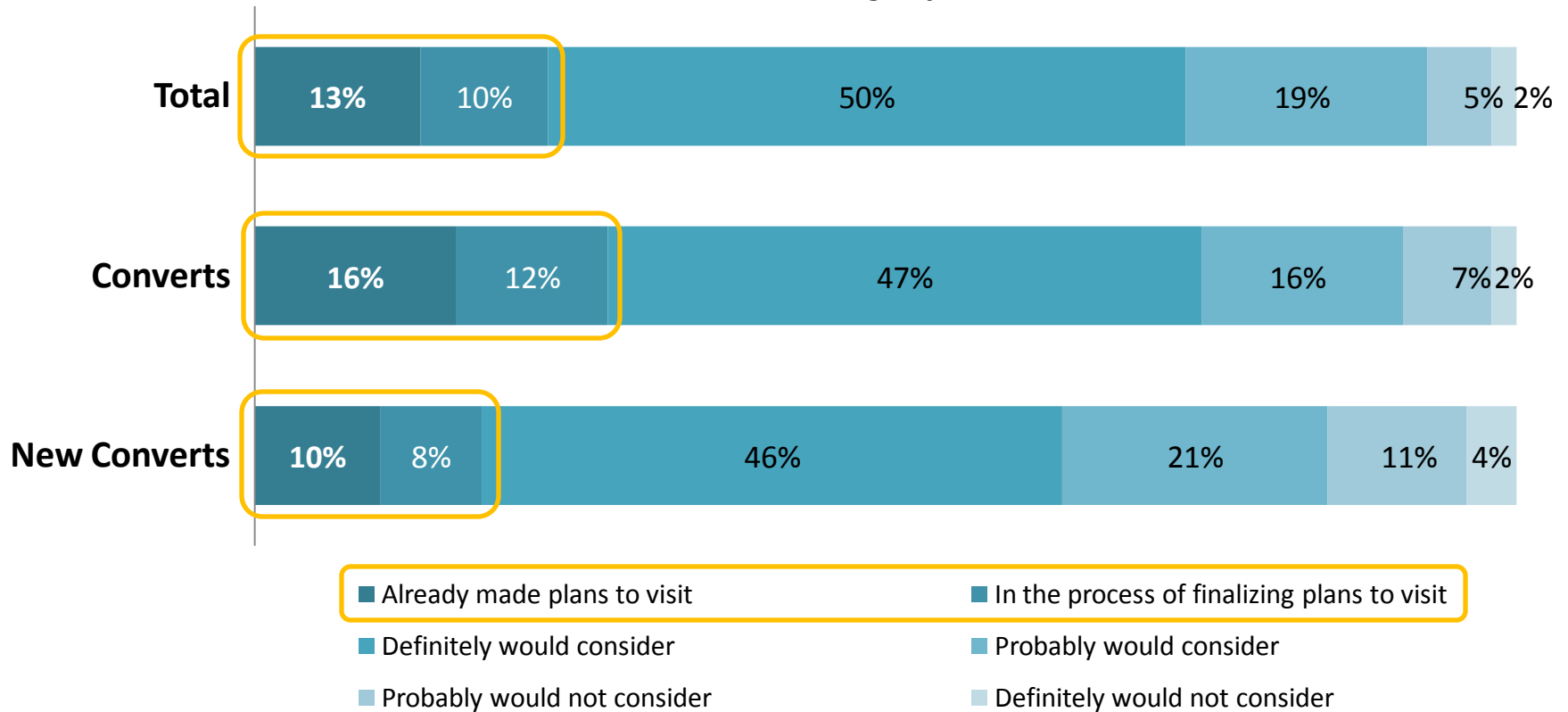


**Base: Non-Converts; did not visit Myrtle Beach in 2009 (N=1055)**

## Likelihood of 2010 Myrtle Beach Visit

While our repeat business is strong given the accommodation structure (many time-shares), almost a fifth of first-time Myrtle Beach visitors are already making 2010 plans and nearly a half plan to 'definitely consider' returning.

*Likelihood of Visiting Myrtle Beach in 2010*

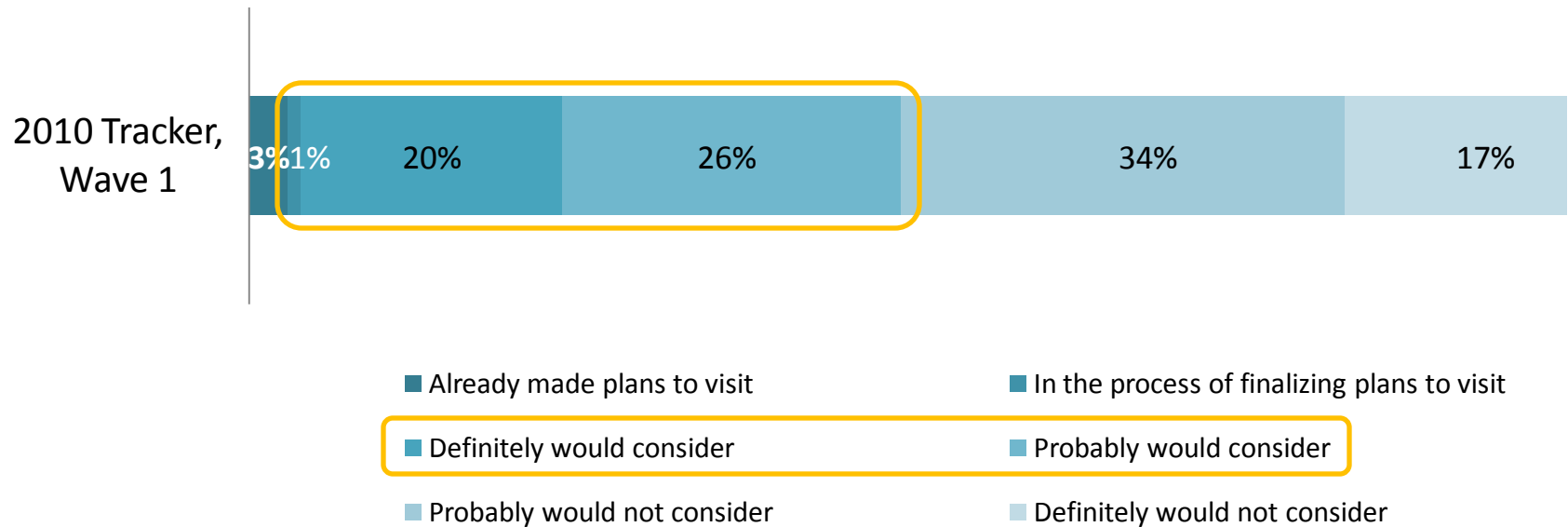


**Base: Total Inquirers (N=4092)**

# Likelihood of Spring Myrtle Beach Visit

Our communications goal is to target the 46% of people who show a strong intent to consider Myrtle Beach – once they become inquirers, we have a better than 2/3 chance to convert them.

*General Population –  
 Likelihood of Visiting Myrtle Beach in Spring 2010*



**Source: Myrtle Beach Tracker, 2010, Wave 1**

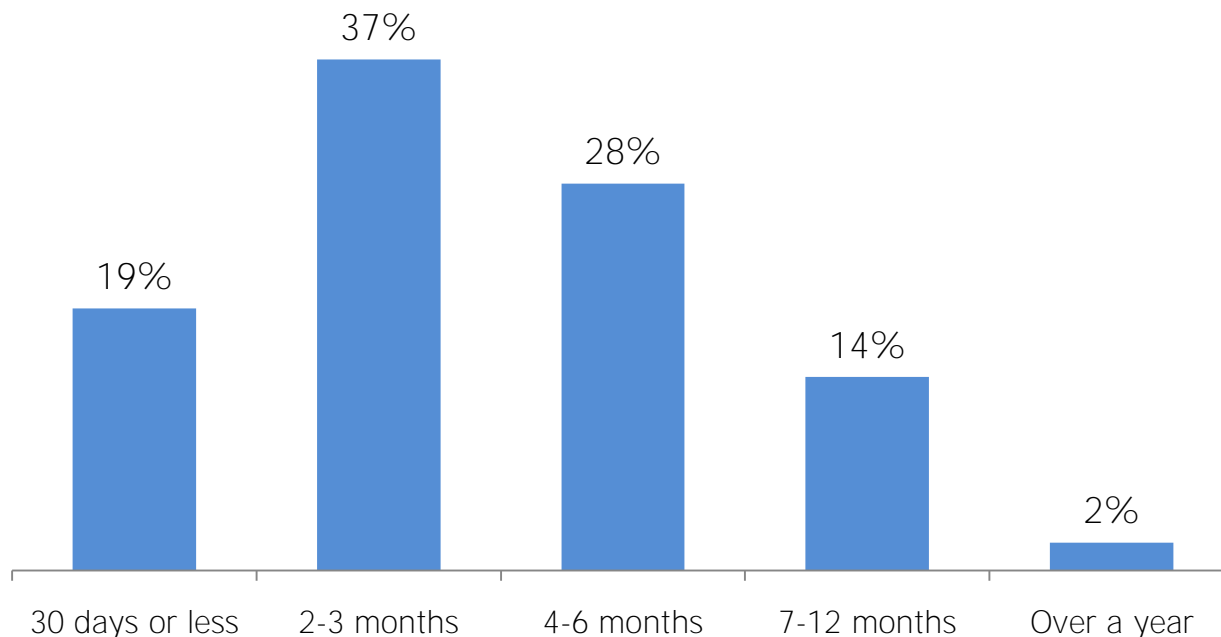
**Base: General Population sample; plan to take a vacation in Spring 2010.**



## **Vacation Planning and Information Sources**

Planning begins 2-3 months out, with the average being approximately 3 months – this is a considerable window of opportunity for engaging potential visitors.

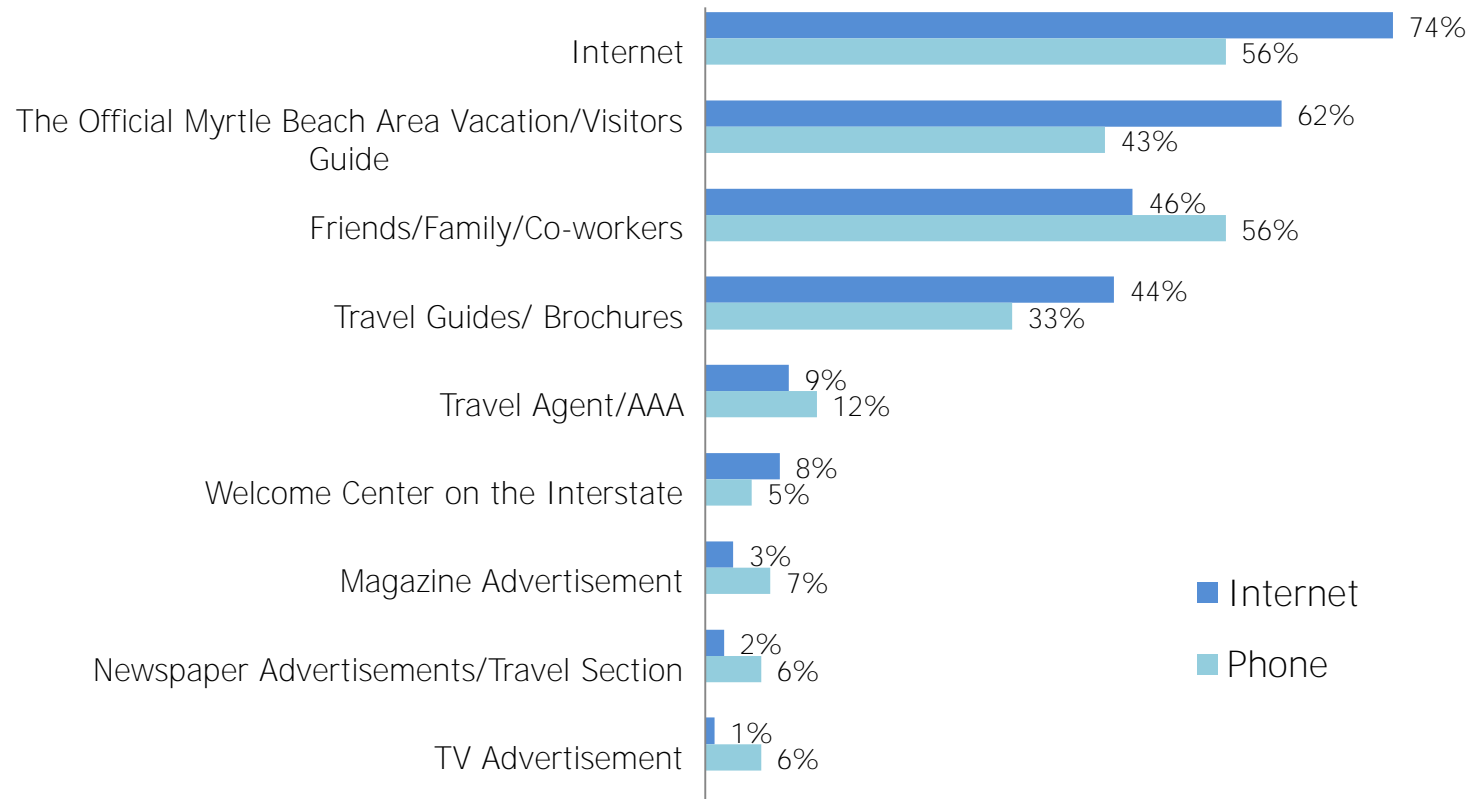
### *How far in advance did you plan for your trip?*



**Base: Converts; visited Myrtle Beach in 2009 (N=2358)**

The Internet is the most popular information source for trip planning, followed by *The Official Myrtle Beach Area Guide*.

## Information Sources Used for Planning

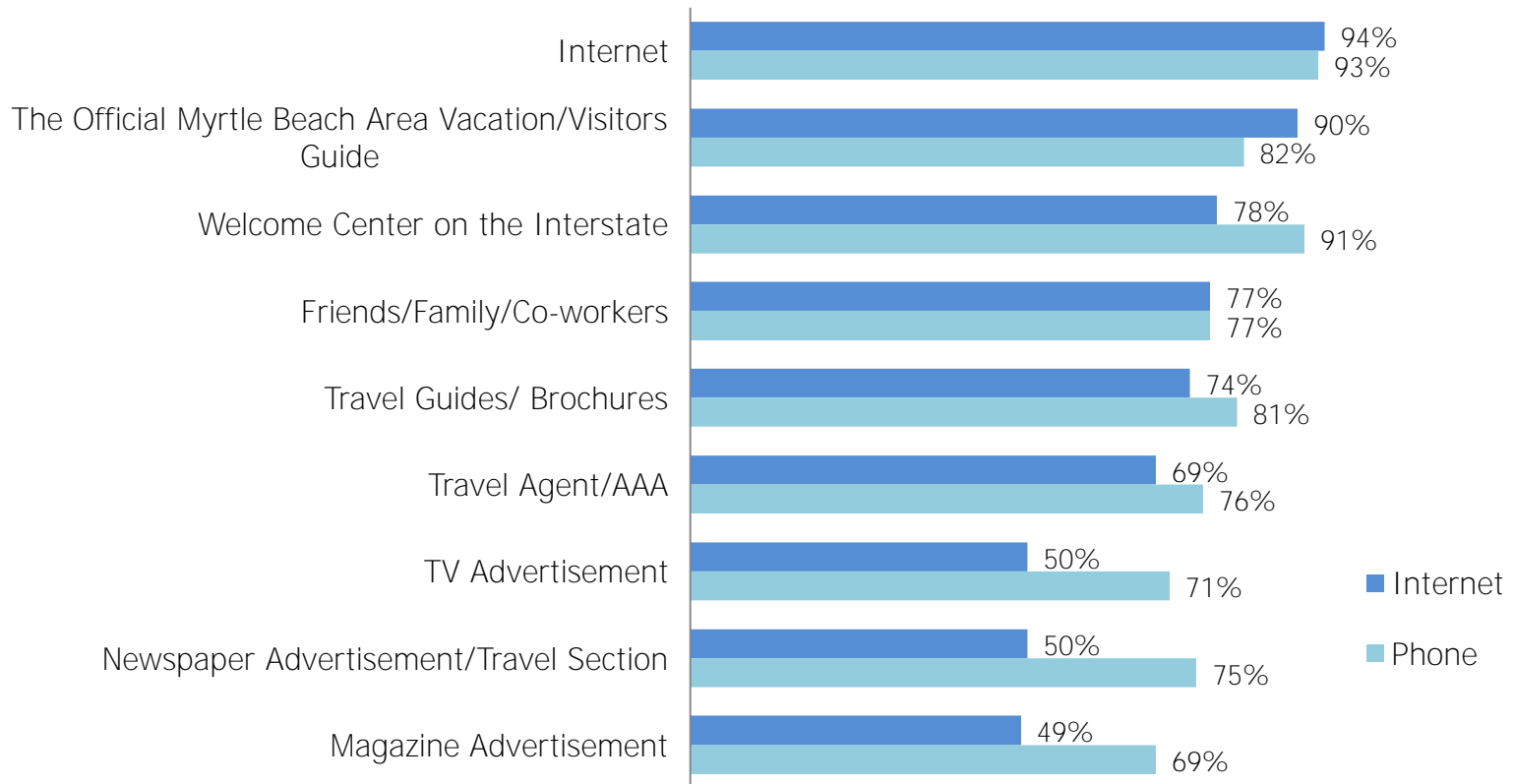


**Base: Converts; visited Myrtle Beach in 2009 (N=2358)**

## Information Source Usefulness

The Internet and the official guide are also two of the most useful information sources – the Internet’s popularity stemming from its use as the main planning tool.

*Usefulness of Information Sources  
 (8,9,10 on a 10 point Usefulness Scale)*

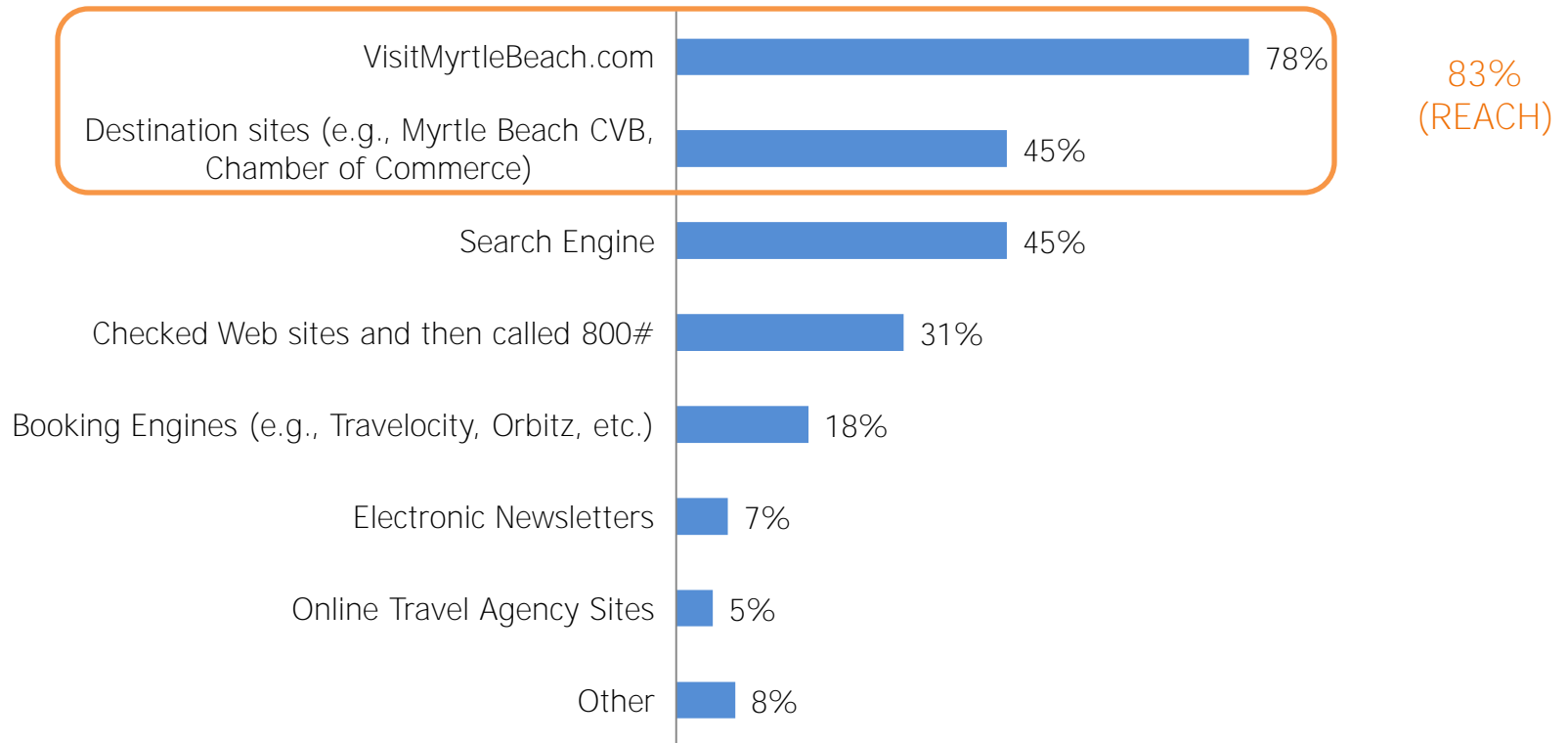


**Base: Converts; visited Myrtle Beach in 2009 (N=2358)**

## Information Source: Internet/Online

VisitMyrtleBeach.com is an outstanding resource for visitors – it is used by 83% of people who are using the Internet to plan their Myrtle Beach vacation.

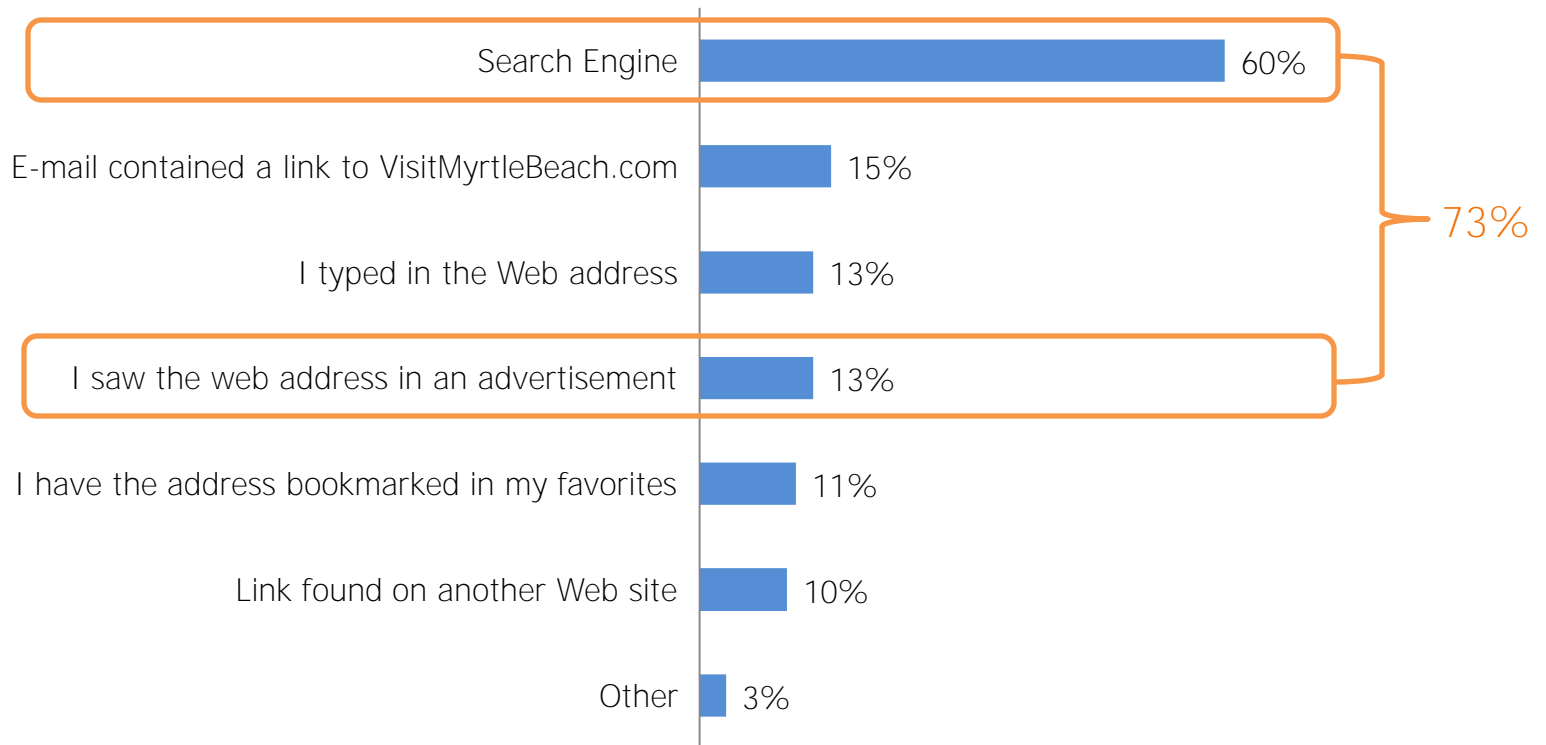
### Online Sources Used in Planning



**Base: Used the Internet for vacation planning (N=1708)**

If we look at just our online efforts (search engine placements and web advertisements), 73% of VisitMyrtleBeach.com visitors are finding us through these channels.

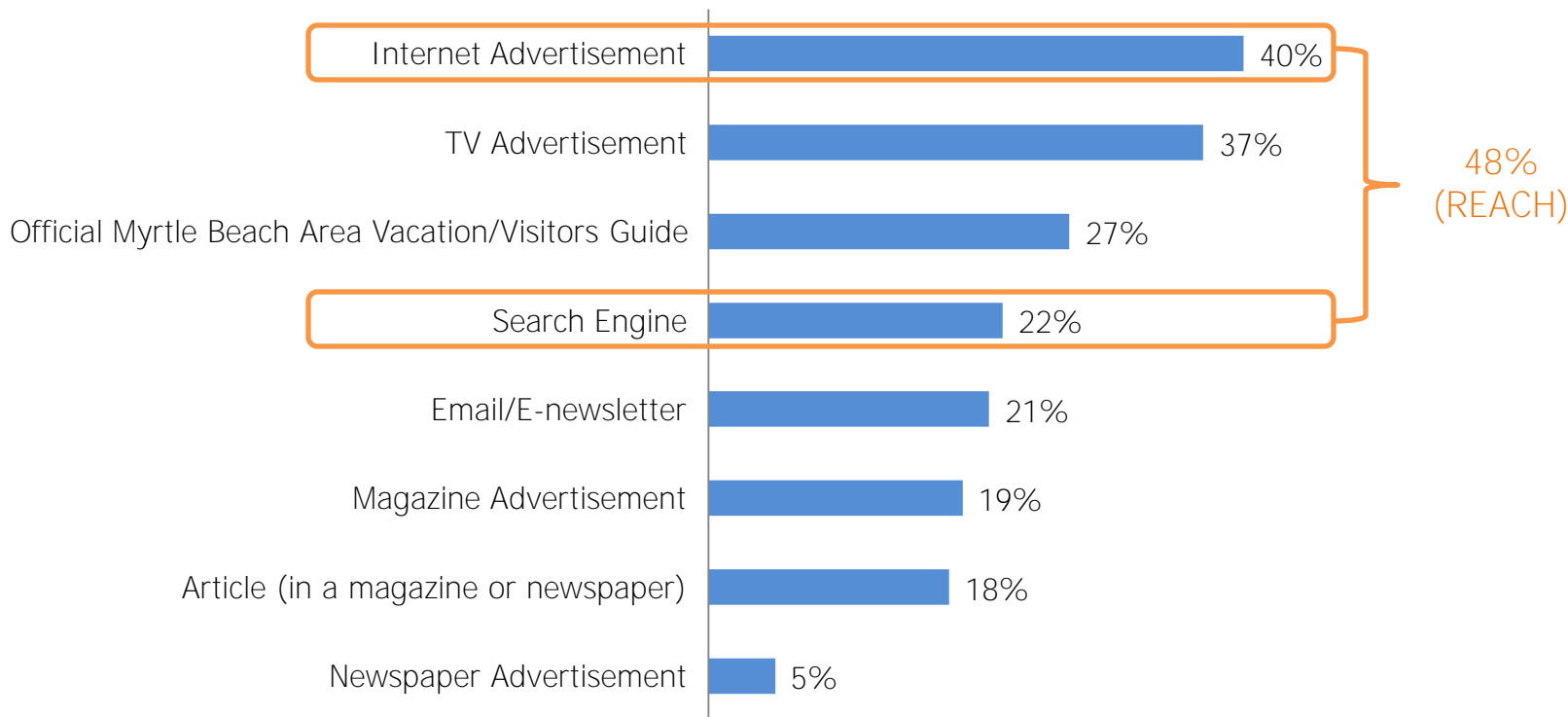
### Means of Finding VisitMyrtleBeach.com



**Base: Used VisitMyrtleBeach.com in planning (N=1325)**

Among those citing advertising as the source of their awareness of VisitMyrtleBeach.com, nearly half saw it in an online ad.

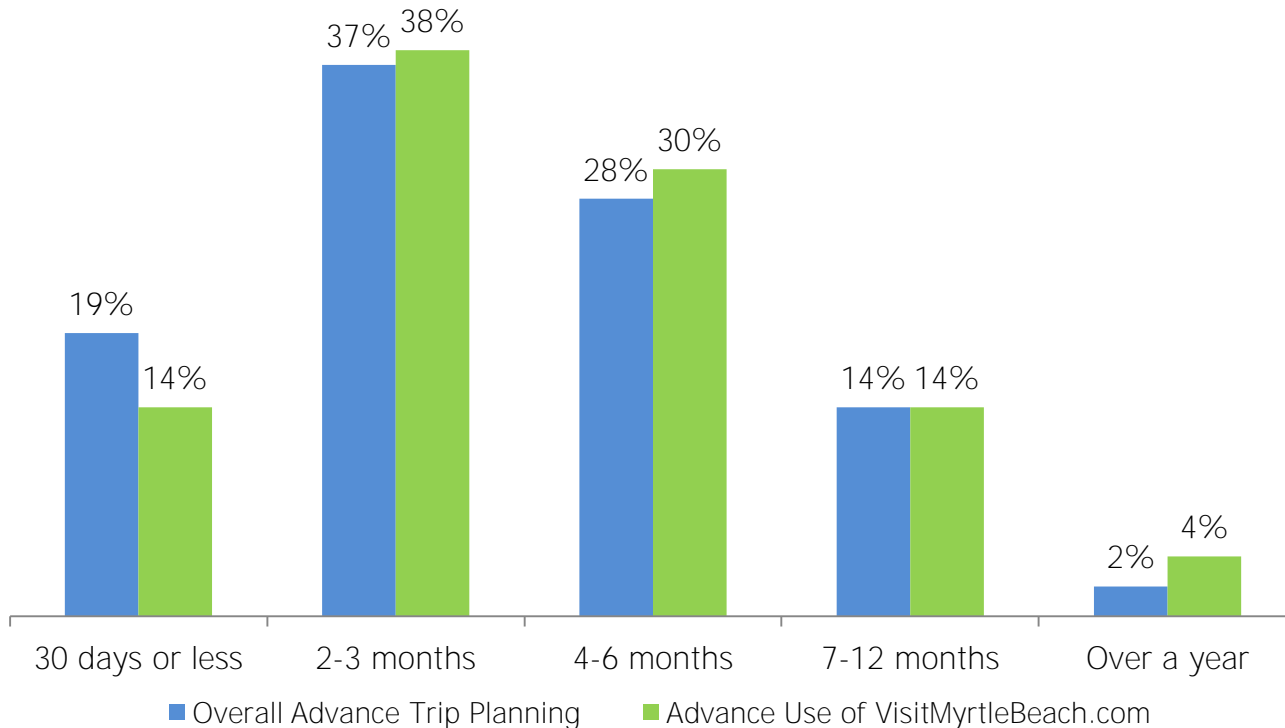
*Ad Source of VisitMyrtleBeach.com*



**Base: Learned about VisitMyrtleBeach.com through an advertisement (N=166)**

Initial VisitMyrtleBeach.com visitation coincides with overall advance trip planning, demonstrating the site is an initial step in the planning process.

*Advance Visitation of VisitMyrtleBeach.com*



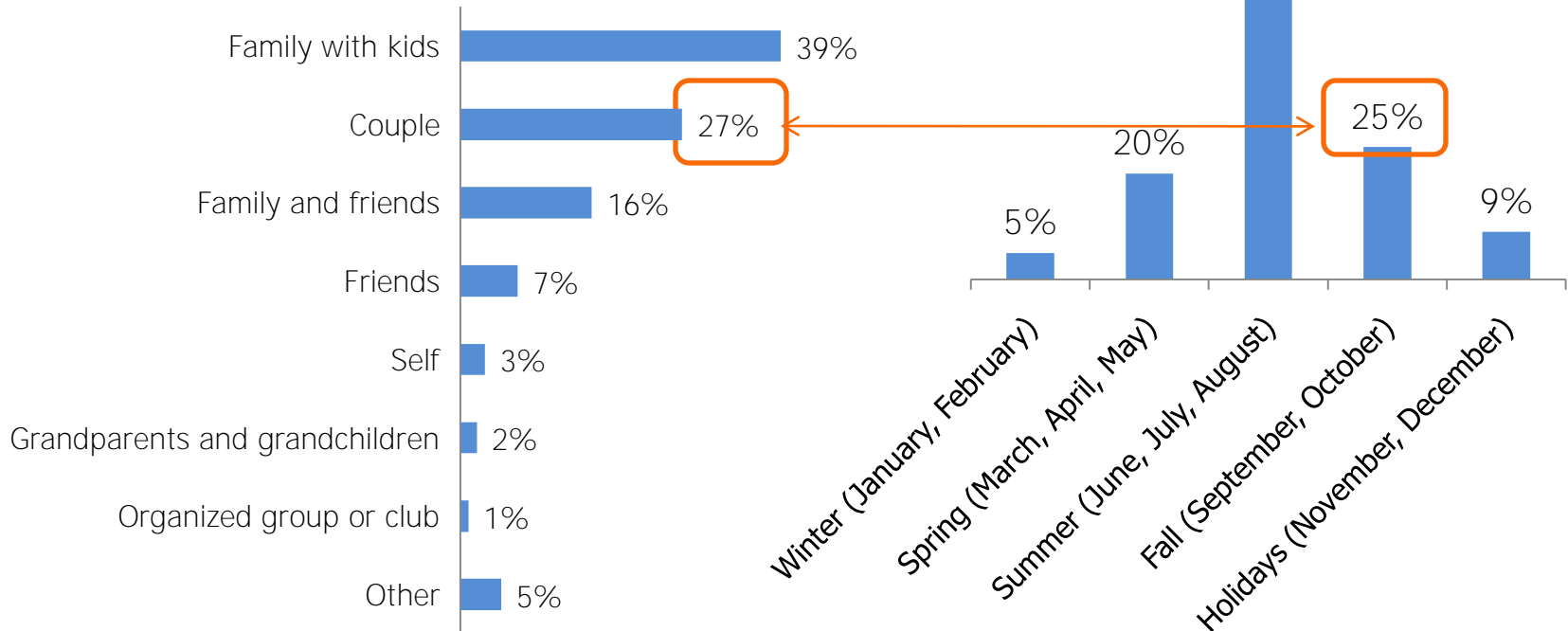
**Base: Used VisitMyrtleBeach.com in planning (N=1325)**

# Travel Party and Planning

The percentage of couples traveling to Myrtle Beach is substantial – this also translates to the higher shoulder season promotion (25% in the Fall).

Median party size is 4  
 (2 adults and 2 children)

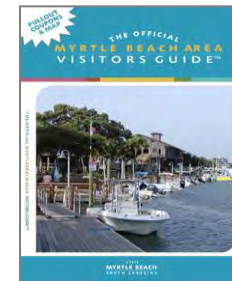
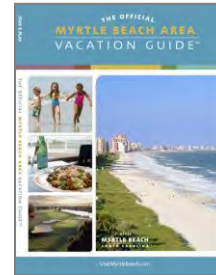
## Party Composition



**Base: Converts; visited Myrtle Beach in 2009 (N=2358)**

## Information Source: Official Myrtle Beach Area Guide

We looked at people who received the small guide and large guide to see if there was anything different between these groups (and they were virtually identical)

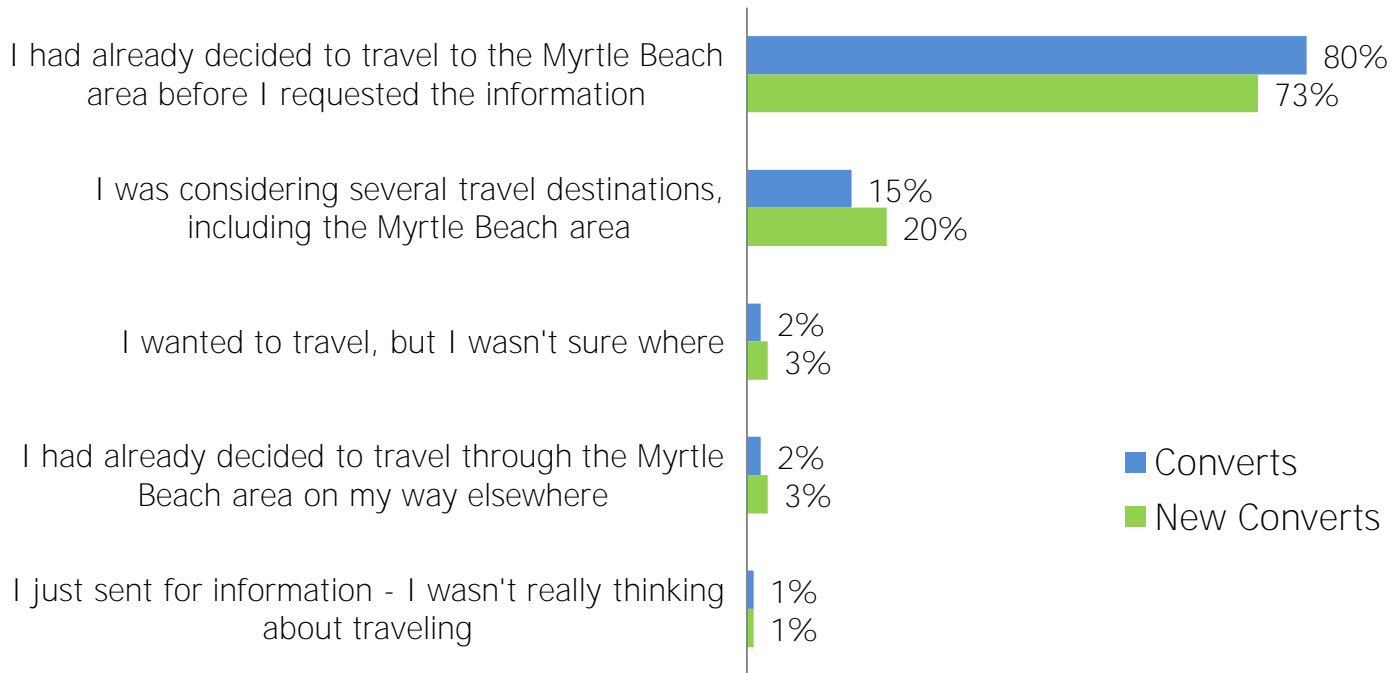


Indicator	Large Guide	Small Guide
Usefulness of guide top 3 box - 8, 9, 10	90%	87%
Net Promoter Score	79%	78%
Total Converts/New Converts	71%/26%	73%/29%
Definitely considering/planning 2010 visit	73%	69%
Restaurants	95%	97%
Shopping	89%	90%
Live entertainment	33%	38%
Festivals/events	14%	18%

**Base: Recall Receiving a Guide (N=2859)**

The guide is playing a dual role – as a planning instrument and as a destination selector.  
**It's critical it does both well and people find it very useful.**

*Role of Guide in Planning Trip*



**Base: Converts; visited Myrtle Beach in 2009 (N=2358)**



# Net Promoter Index and Interest in Visiting

# Net Promoter Score Index Explained

How likely is it that you would recommend Myrtle Beach as a vacation place to your family/friends?

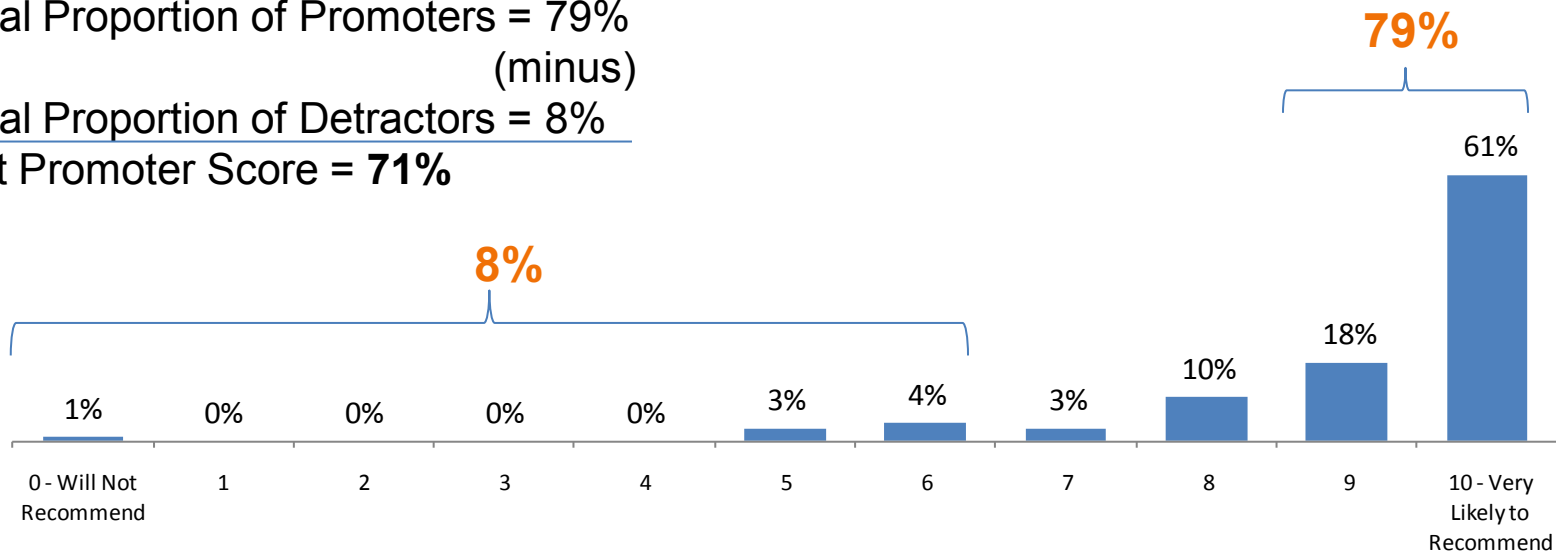
- The Net Promoter Score (NPS) is a brand in and of itself and correlates extremely highly with satisfaction but is a more sensitive measure to high and low scores.
- 'Recommendations' are what every brand should aim for – we need to set that bar.

## Net Promoter Score

Total Proportion of Promoters = 79%  
 (minus)

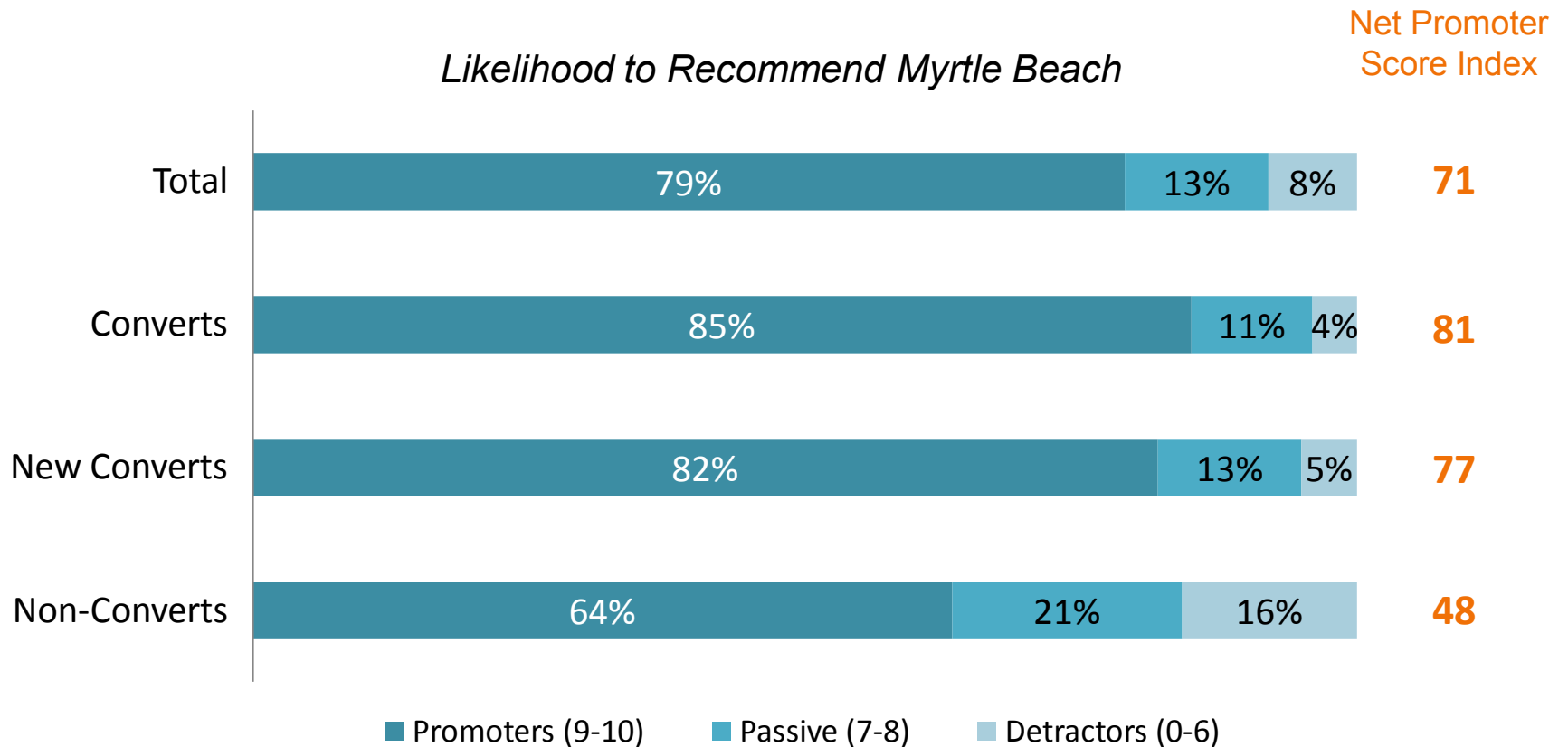
Total Proportion of Detractors = 8%

Net Promoter Score = **71%**



# Net Promoter Score Index

We have an outstanding Net Promoter Score – 81% among Converts. This represents considerable word-of-mouth equity for the Myrtle Beach area.

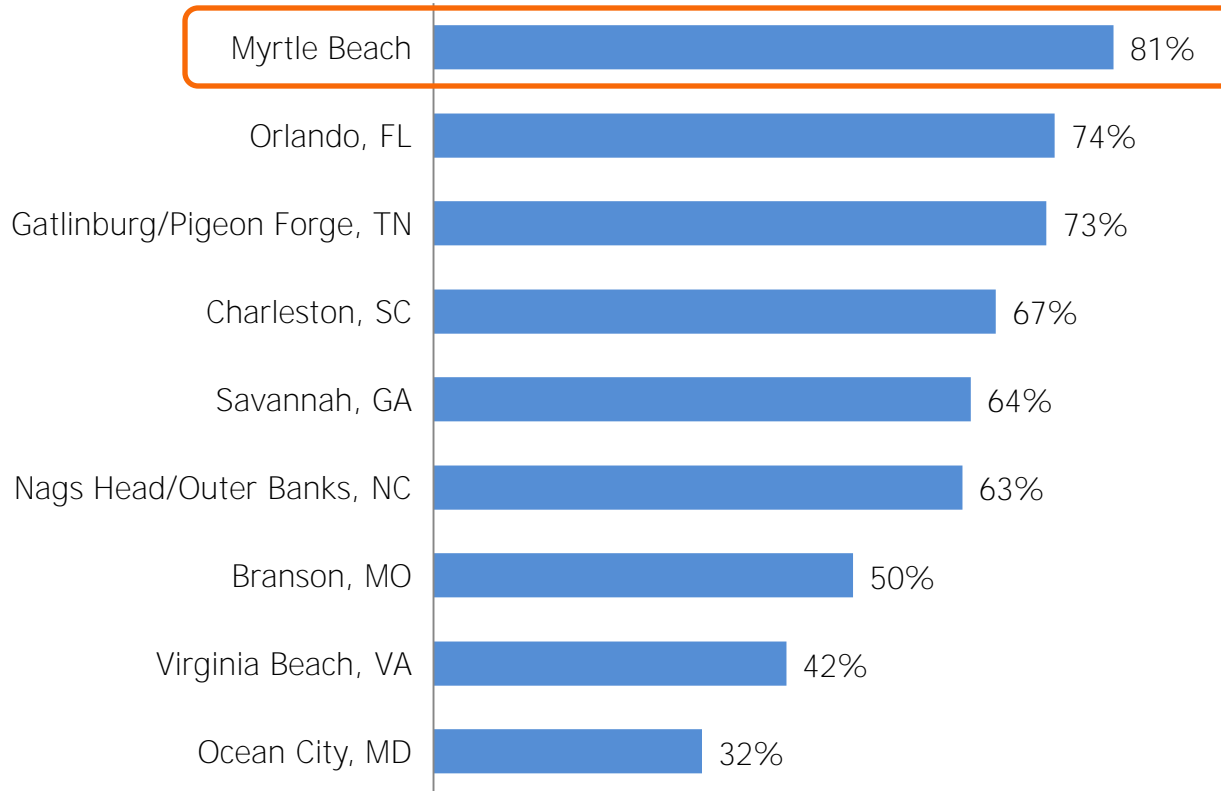


**Base: Took a vacation in 2009 (N=3413)**

# Net Promoter Score Index vs. Others

This high Net Promoter Scores really pops when compared to other destinations ...

## NPS Scores

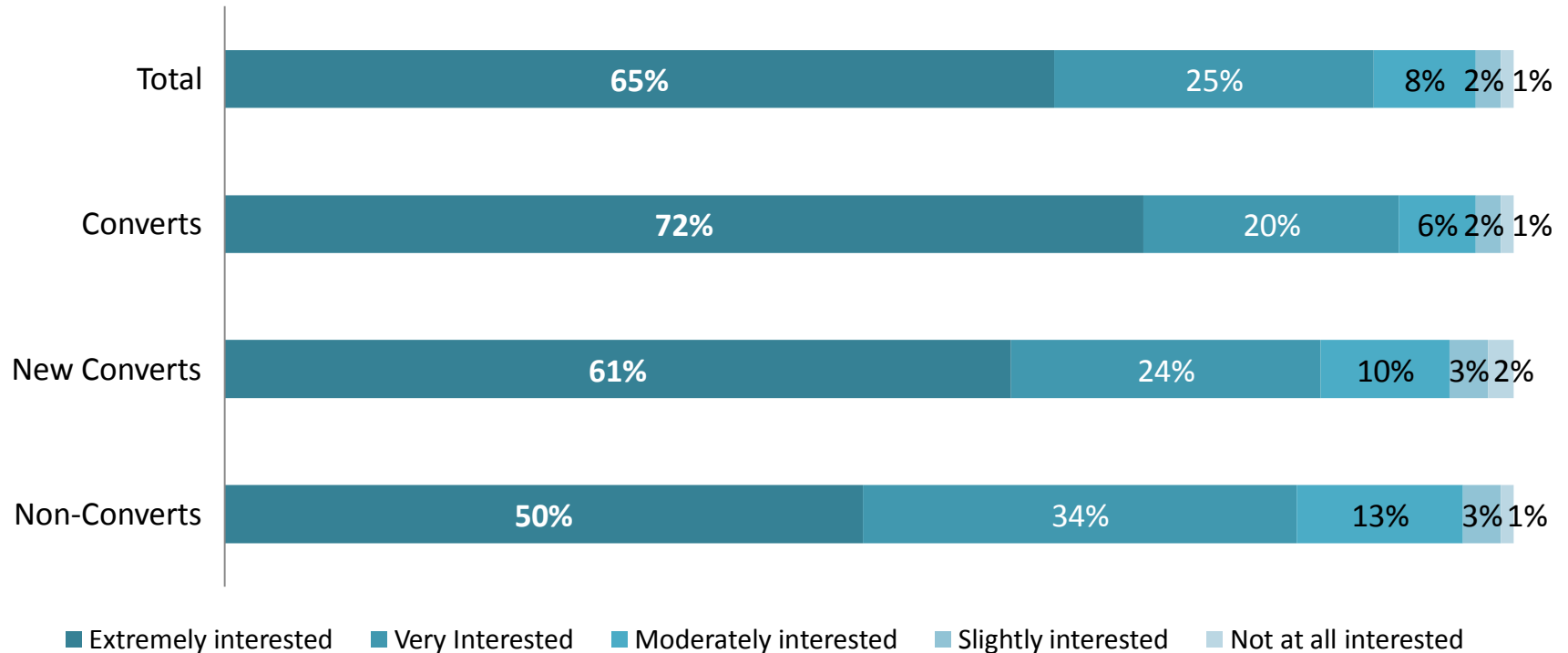


**Base: Took a vacation in 2009 (N=3413)**

## Interest in Visiting

A high Net Promoter Score translates into significant repeat visitation – an indication that the 'lifetime value' of a Myrtle Beach visitor is considerable.

*Interest in Visiting Myrtle Beach*



**Base: Total Inquirers (N=4092)**

Three key performance indicators provide a really strong signal ...

69%

Conversion rate among inquirers. 25% New Converts (31.2%) when including people who have not been **since' 04**.

\$77

Revenue generated per dollar spent. \$2,210 spent per group over the length of their stay.

81

Myrtle Beach Net Promoter Score which is exceptionally high – worth leveraging.

**Base: Total Inquirers (N=4092)**



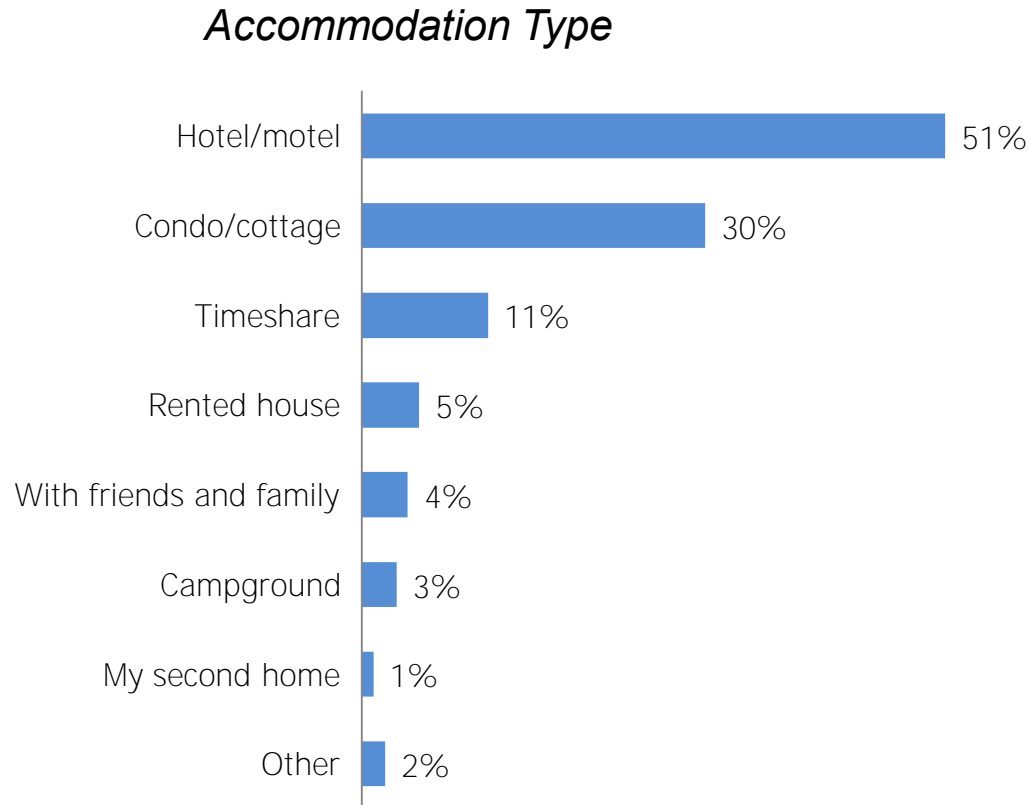
# Appendix



# Accommodations Patterns

## Accommodations Patterns

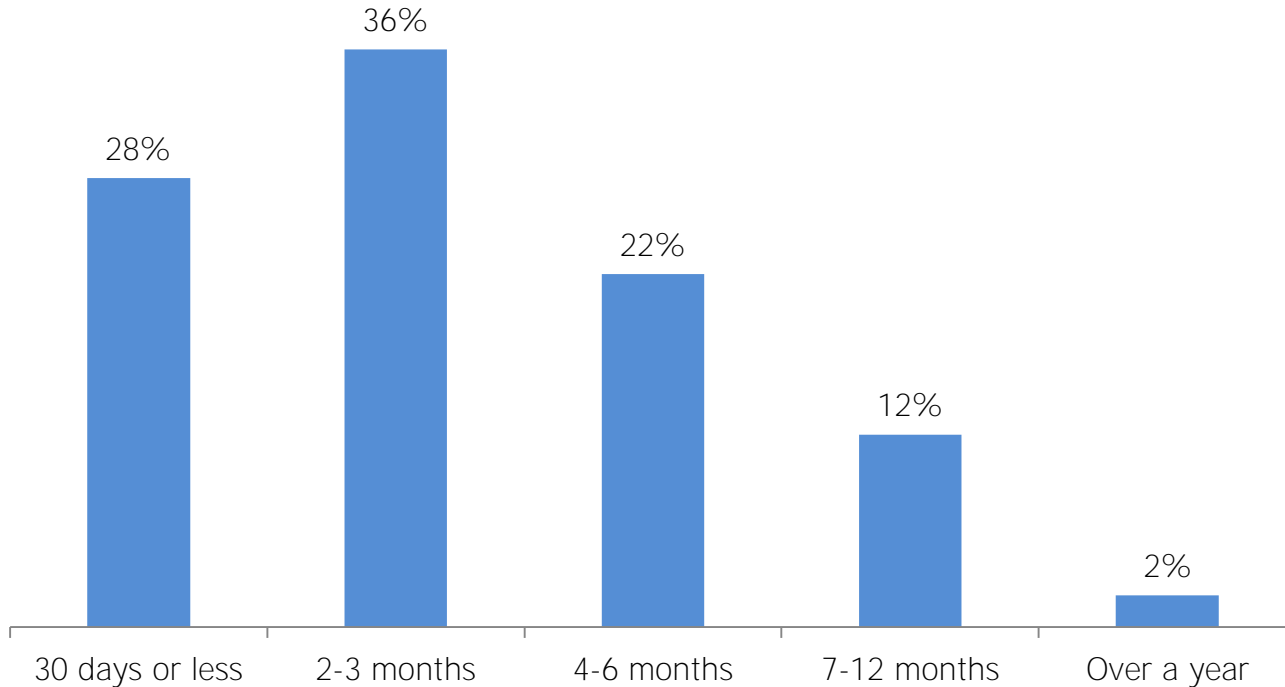
Nine out of ten Converts stayed in paid accommodations, divided nearly evenly between hotel/motel accommodations and timeshare/rental properties.



**Base: Converts; visited Myrtle Beach in 2009 (N=2358)**

Two-thirds of Converts make lodging reservations within three months of arrival.

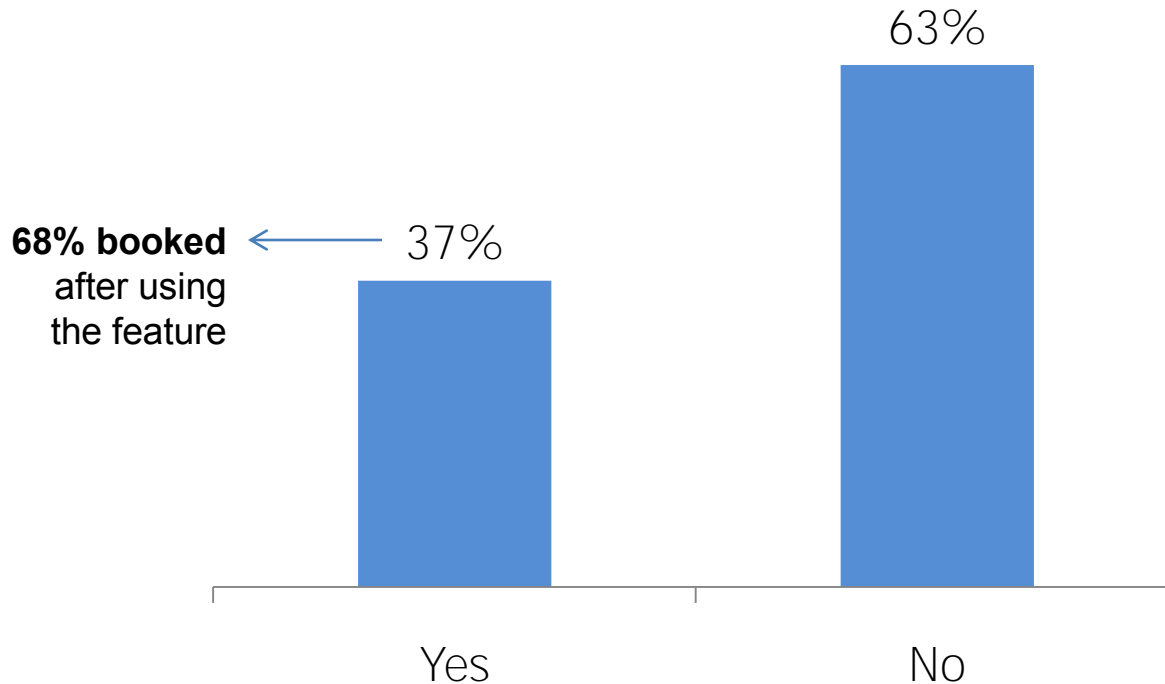
## *Advance Booking of Accommodations*



**Base: Stayed in paid accommodations (N=2290)**

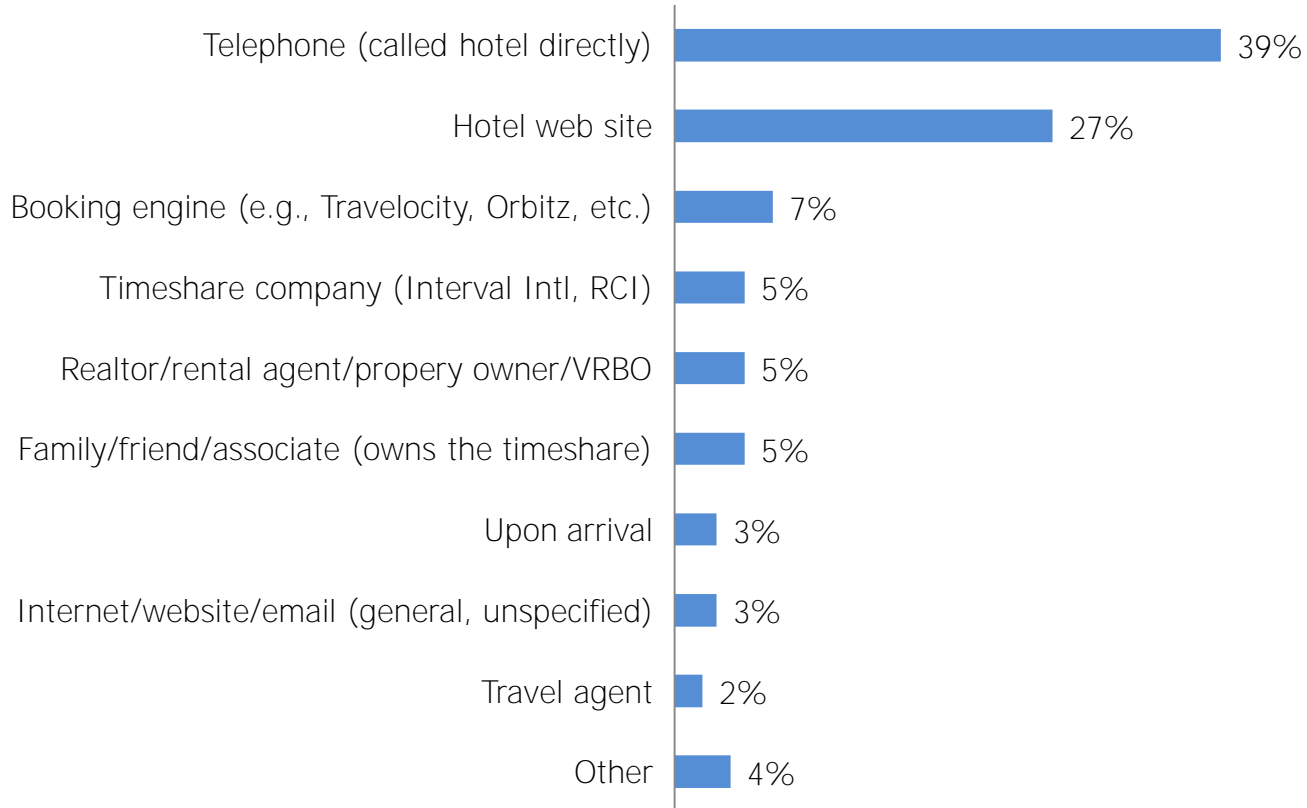
Over one-third use the Lodging Search Feature in VisitMyrtleBeach.com. Of those who use it, about two-thirds ultimately book at a property they found through the Lodging Search.

## *Use of Lodging Search Feature on VisitMyrtleBeach.com*



**Base: Stayed in paid accommodations (N=2290)**

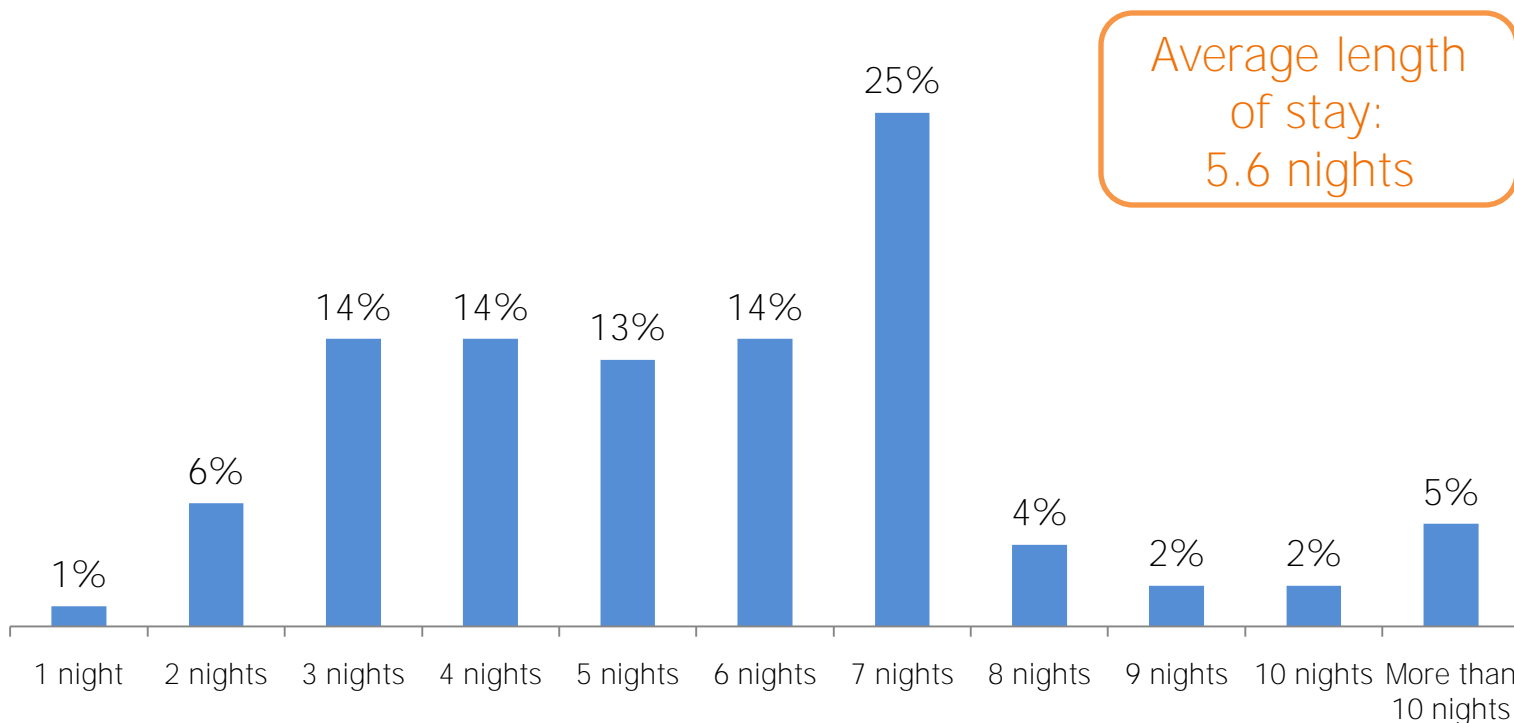
## Reservations Channel



**Base: Stayed in paid accommodations (N=2290)**

# Accommodations Patterns

Length of Trip  
(Paid and Unpaid Accommodations)

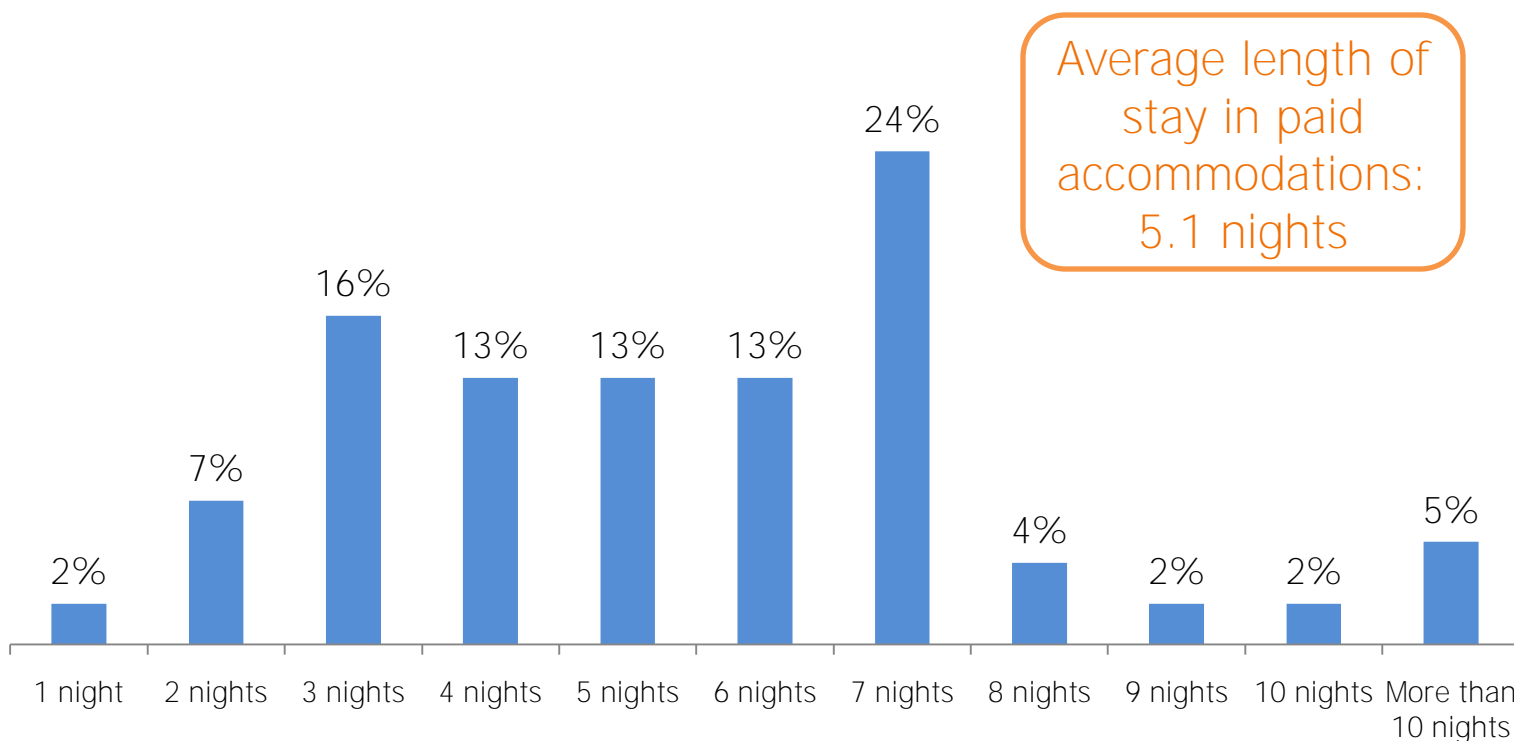


**Base: Converts; visited Myrtle Beach in 2009 (N=2358)**

Q. How many total nights did you spend in the Myrtle Beach area?

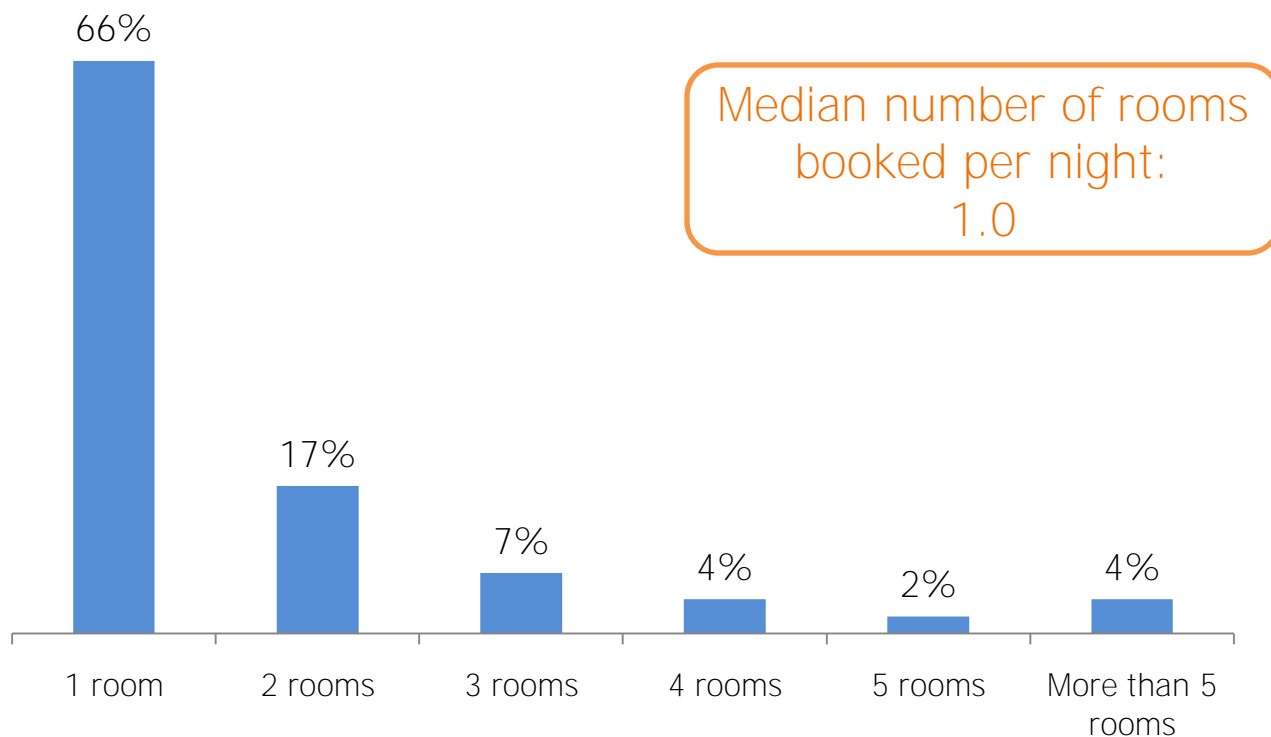
# Accommodations Patterns

Length of Trip  
(Paid Accommodations)



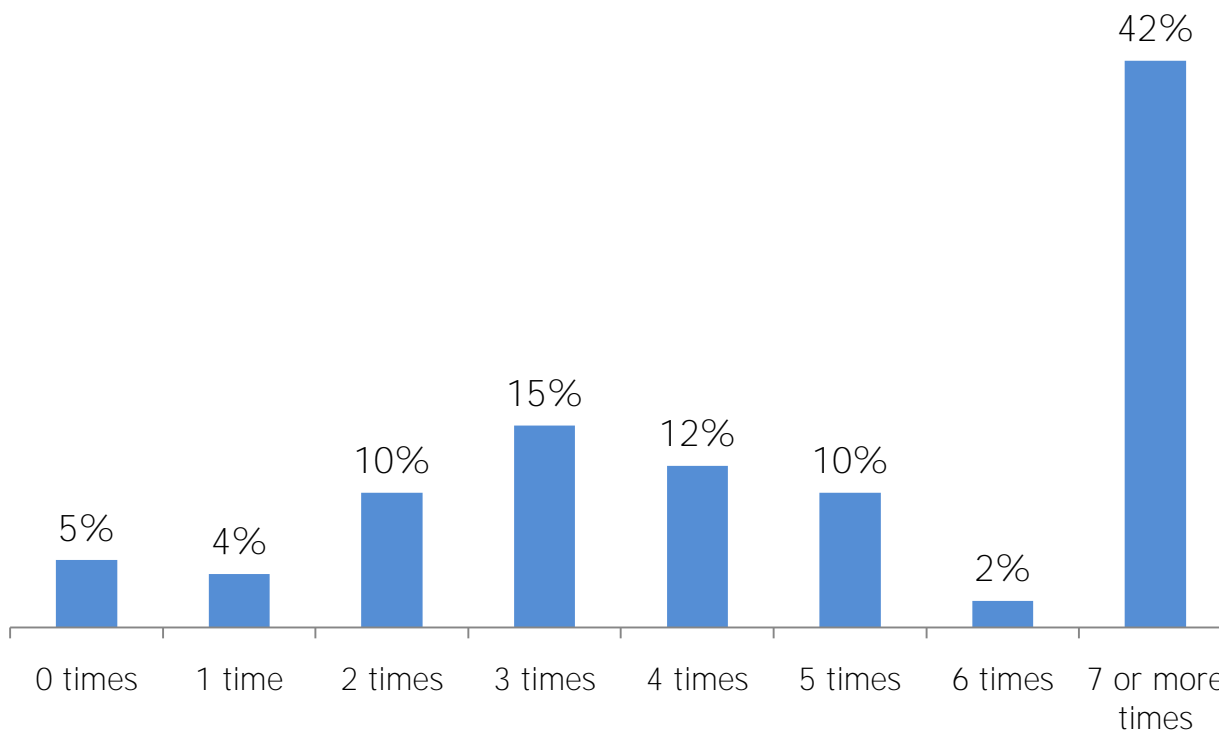
**Base: Converts; visited Myrtle Beach in 2009 (N=2358)**

## Rooms Booked per Night



**Base: Stayed in paid accommodations (N=2290)**

Outgoing Leads to MBCC Partners from VisitMyrtleBeach.com



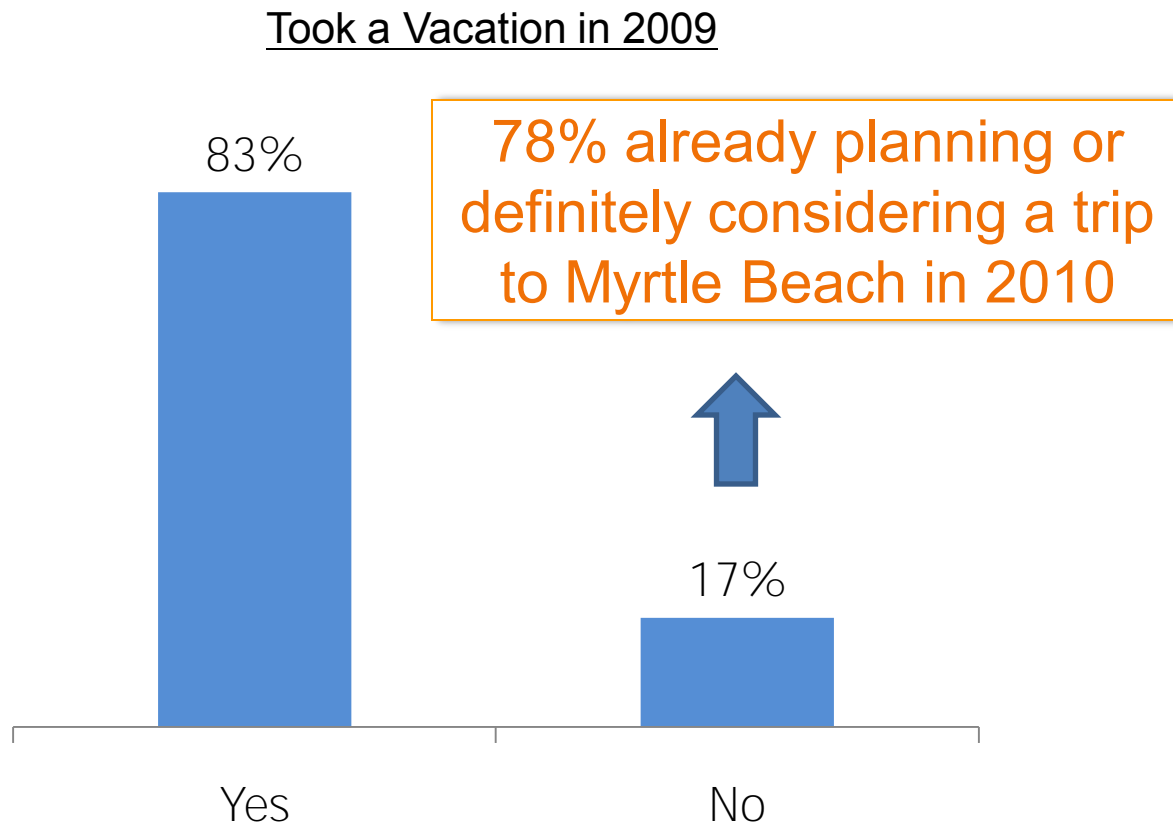
**Base: Used VisitMyrtleBeach.com in planning (N=1325)**



# Travel Patterns

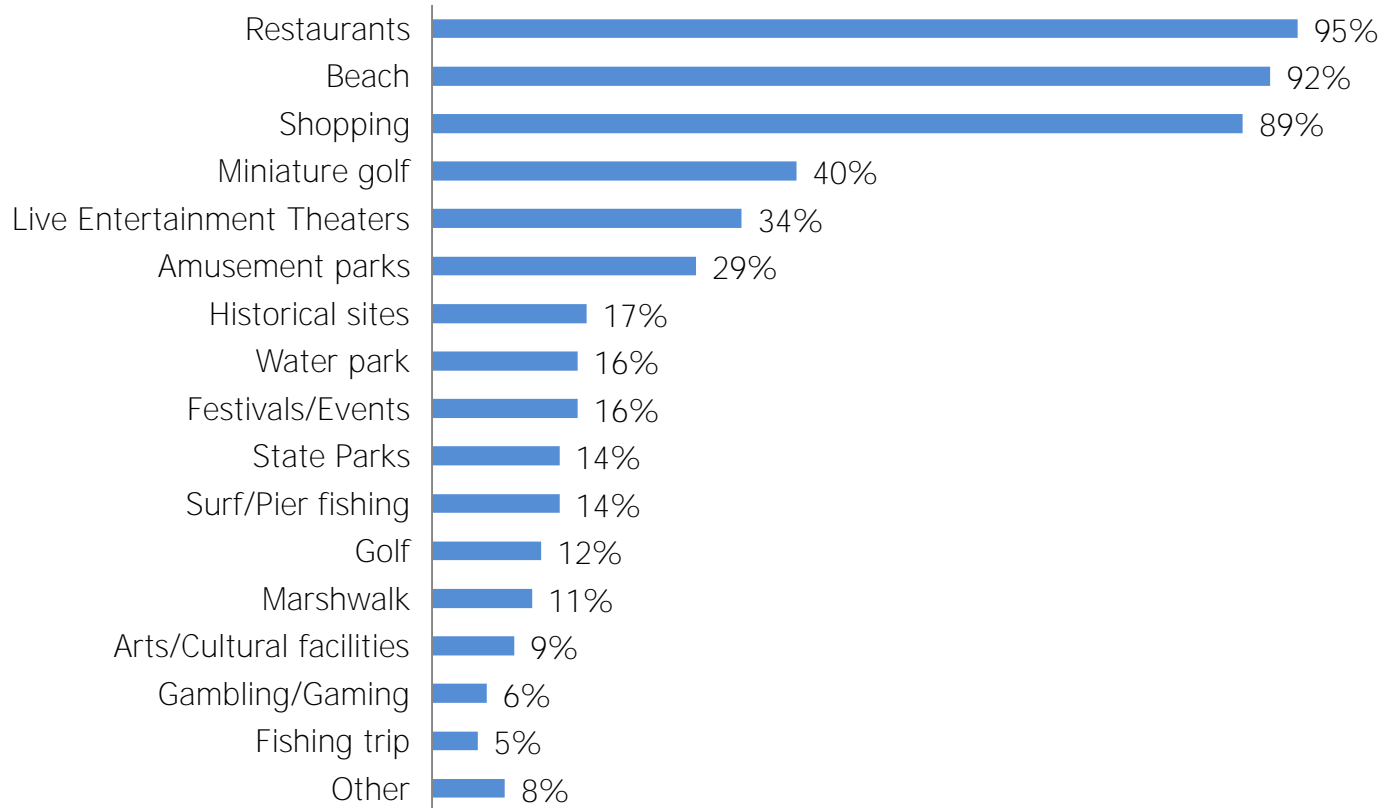
## 2009 Leisure Travelers

The majority of Inquirers took a leisure trip in 2009.

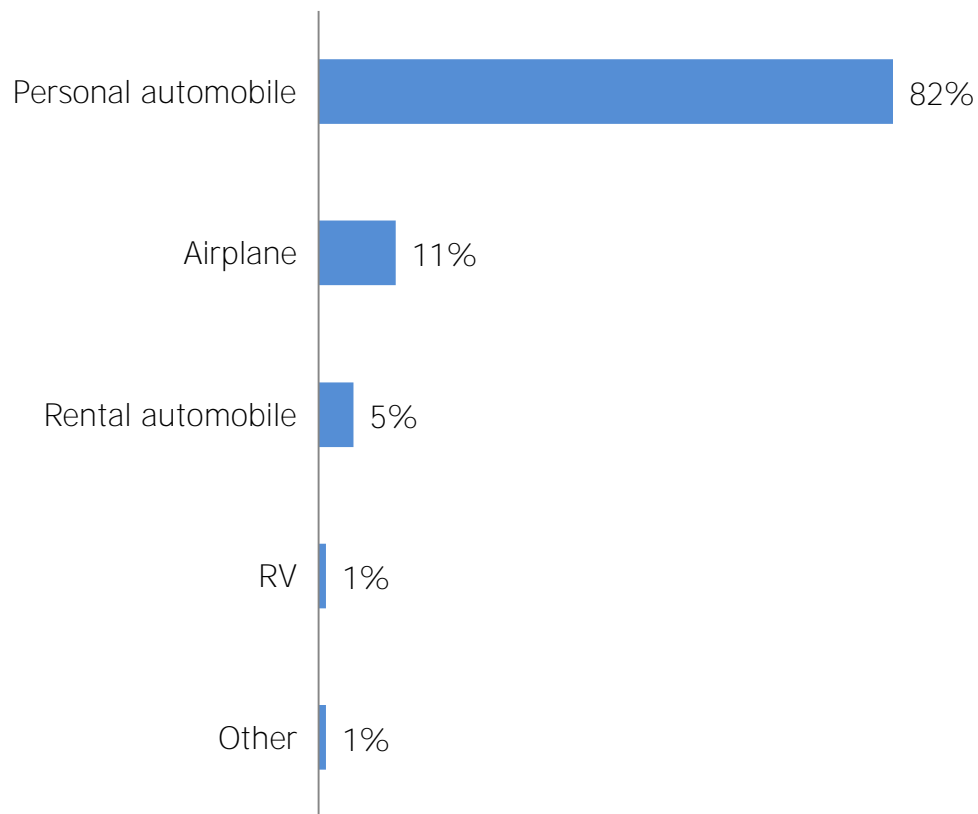


**Base: Total Inquirers (N=4092)**

## Activities Participated in at Myrtle Beach

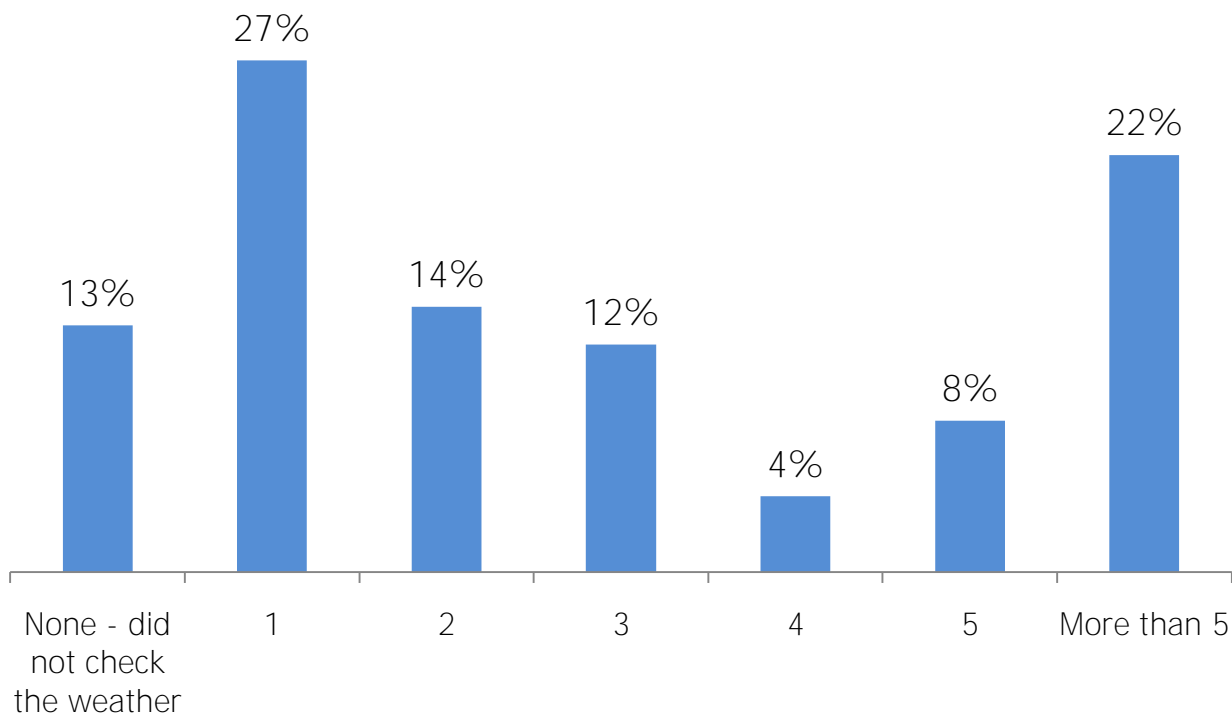


## Mode of Transportation



**Base: Converts; visited Myrtle Beach in 2009 (N=2358)**

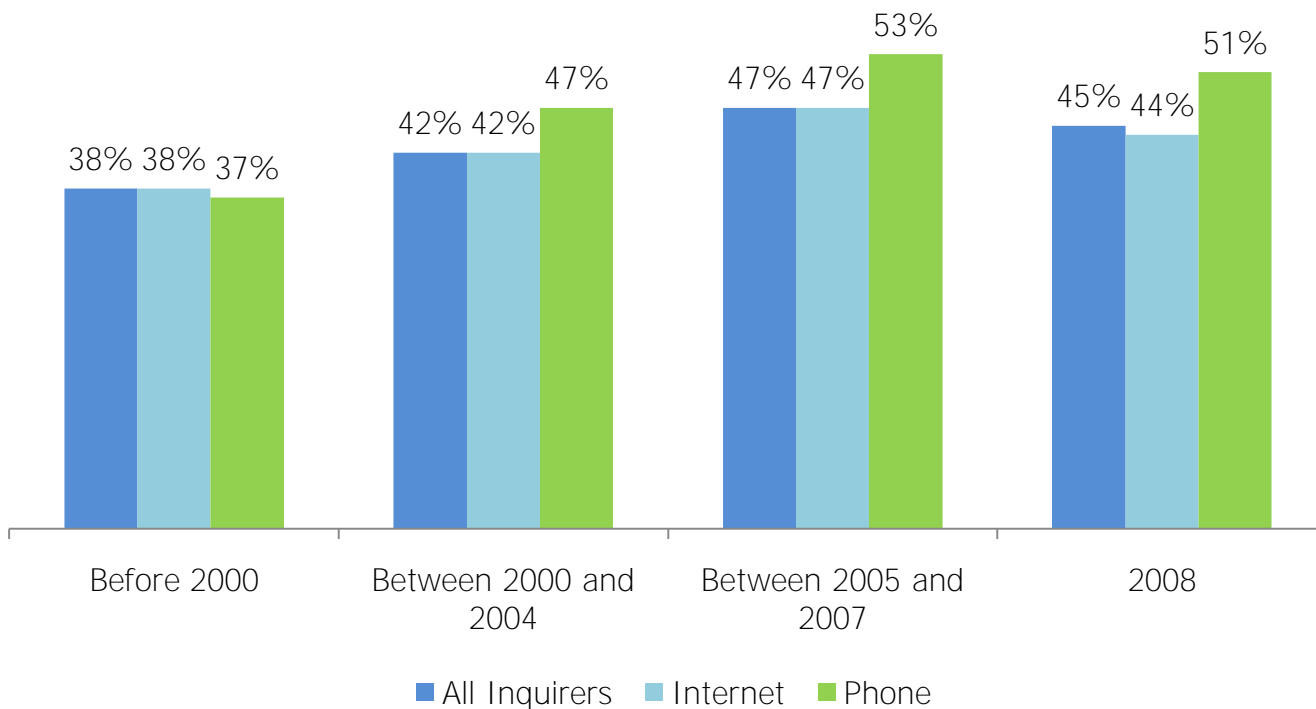
## Checking Weather – Days in Advance



**Base: Converts; visited Myrtle Beach in 2009 (N=2358)**

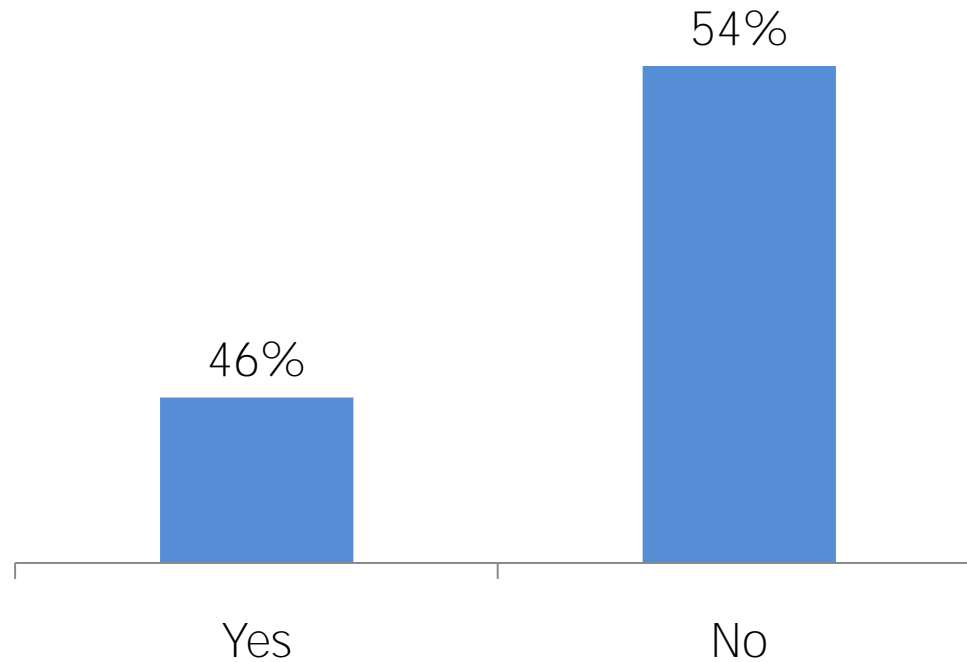
# Previous Myrtle Beach Visits

## Previous Visitation to the Myrtle Beach Area



**Base: Converts; visited Myrtle Beach in 2009 (N=2358)**

## Checking Weather on VisitMyrtleBeach.com



**Base: Checked the weather in advance of trip (N=2042)**



# Respondent Profile

	<b>Respondents %</b>
<b>Age</b>	
18 to 24	<b>2</b>
25 to 34	<b>13</b>
35 to 44	<b>24</b>
45 to 54	<b>30</b>
55 to 64	<b>23</b>
65+	<b>8</b>
Mean (years)	<b>47.9</b>
<b>Gender</b>	
Male	<b>31</b>
Female	<b>69</b>

	<b>Respondents %</b>
<b>Marital Status</b>	
Married	<b>78</b>
Single	<b>11</b>
Separated/Divorced/Widowed	<b>11</b>
<b>Annual Household Income</b>	
Less than \$45,000	<b>30</b>
\$45,000 - \$74,999	<b>35</b>
\$75,000 - \$99,999	<b>17</b>
\$100,000 or more	<b>18</b>
Mean (\$000s)	<b>66.5</b>
<b>Ethnicity</b>	
White	<b>85</b>
Black	<b>9</b>
Other	<b>6</b>

	<b>Respondents %</b>
<b>Employment Status</b>	
Employed full-time	<b>67</b>
Employed part-time	<b>12</b>
Other	<b>21</b>
<b>Education</b>	
HS graduate or less	<b>23</b>
Some college or less/Technical /trade school	<b>29</b>
Associate degree	<b>13</b>
Bachelor degree	<b>21</b>
Post-graduate study / degree	<b>10</b>
Other	<b>3</b>