

Myrtle Beach  
2011 Conversion Study  
– Updated May 2012–

## Objectives:

- **Determine the conversion rate for those exposed to Myrtle Beach marketing efforts**
  - How effective have our marketing efforts been in turning potential visitors into actual visitors, and how does the online channel contribute?
- **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?
- **Revisit our Net Promoter Score**
  - Does the Myrtle Beach experience continue to generate word-of-mouth recommendations?
- **Assess the use and usefulness of the Internet in general and VisitMyrtleBeach.com in particular**
- **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 VisitMyrtleBeach.com visitors and E-newsletter recipients.

	<b>N-size</b>	<b>Margin of Error</b>
Total completes:	3,186	±1.7%
Email - Website Guide Order	1,108	±2.9%
E-newsletter	1,524	±2.5%
Website survey	554	±4.2%

- Respondents were surveyed between March 2 – March 14, 2012.



- More people are utilizing the Internet in their considerations of Myrtle Beach as a possible destination
- Of those that consider/inquire, more than half convert with a high return per marketing dollar
- Many first timers who are now considering MB in 2012 at higher rates than before
- Once here, people are spending a bit more
- For those that visit, they are hooked (Net Promoter is extremely high)

## Key Finding

**The Internet is the most utilized information source for trip planning, with over 70% using the Internet in planning their trip**

VisitMyrtleBeach.com is an important resource for visitors, as it is used by 81% of people who use the Internet to plan their trip.

52% of Converts began planning their visit 1 to 4 months in advance, and a third began planning 4+ months in advance. This trip planning coincides with VisitMyrtleBeach.com usage.

While most visitors have already decided to visit the area prior to going to VisitMyrtleBeach.com, the site further bolsters interest.

## Key Finding

**Our Net Promoter Score, at 85% among Converts, demonstrates considerable word-of-mouth equity for the Myrtle Beach area**

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

## Key Finding

### **Our marketing efforts are highly successful in generating and converting leads**

The conversion rate is an estimated **54%** among website visitors, resulting in an estimated 2,042,106 travel parties in 2011.

Among Converts, **57% were Repeat Converts**, and **34% were New Converts**—visiting the Myrtle Beach area for the first time ever in 2011.

- When including lapsed visitors—those who have not been since 2006—this climbs to **43%**.

## Key Finding

**We continue to see very high and encouraging returns on our marketing spend**

On average, guests spent \$2,660 per group over the length of their Myrtle Beach stay – that’s an estimated **\$344 dollars of revenue per marketing dollar** spent from *converted site visitors alone*.



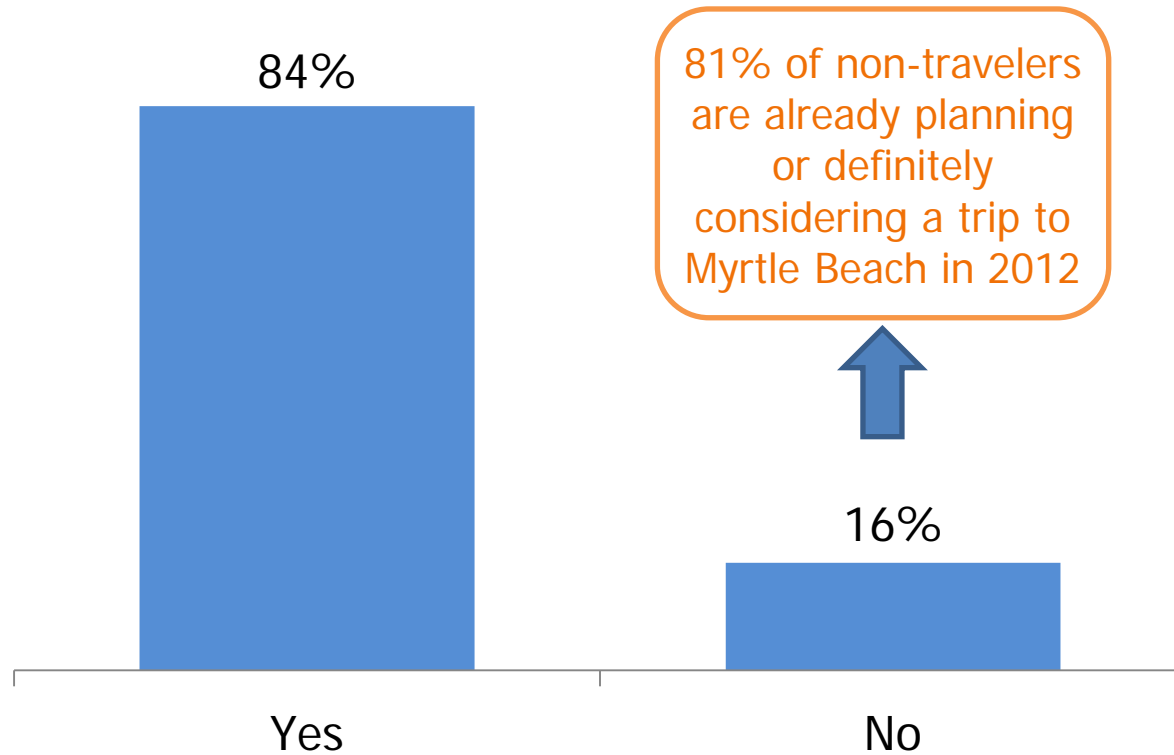


# Myrtle Beach Visitation

## 2011 Leisure Travelers

84% of Inquirers took a leisure trip in 2011. Among those who did not, 81% are planning a trip to Myrtle Beach in 2012.

*Took a Vacation in 2011*

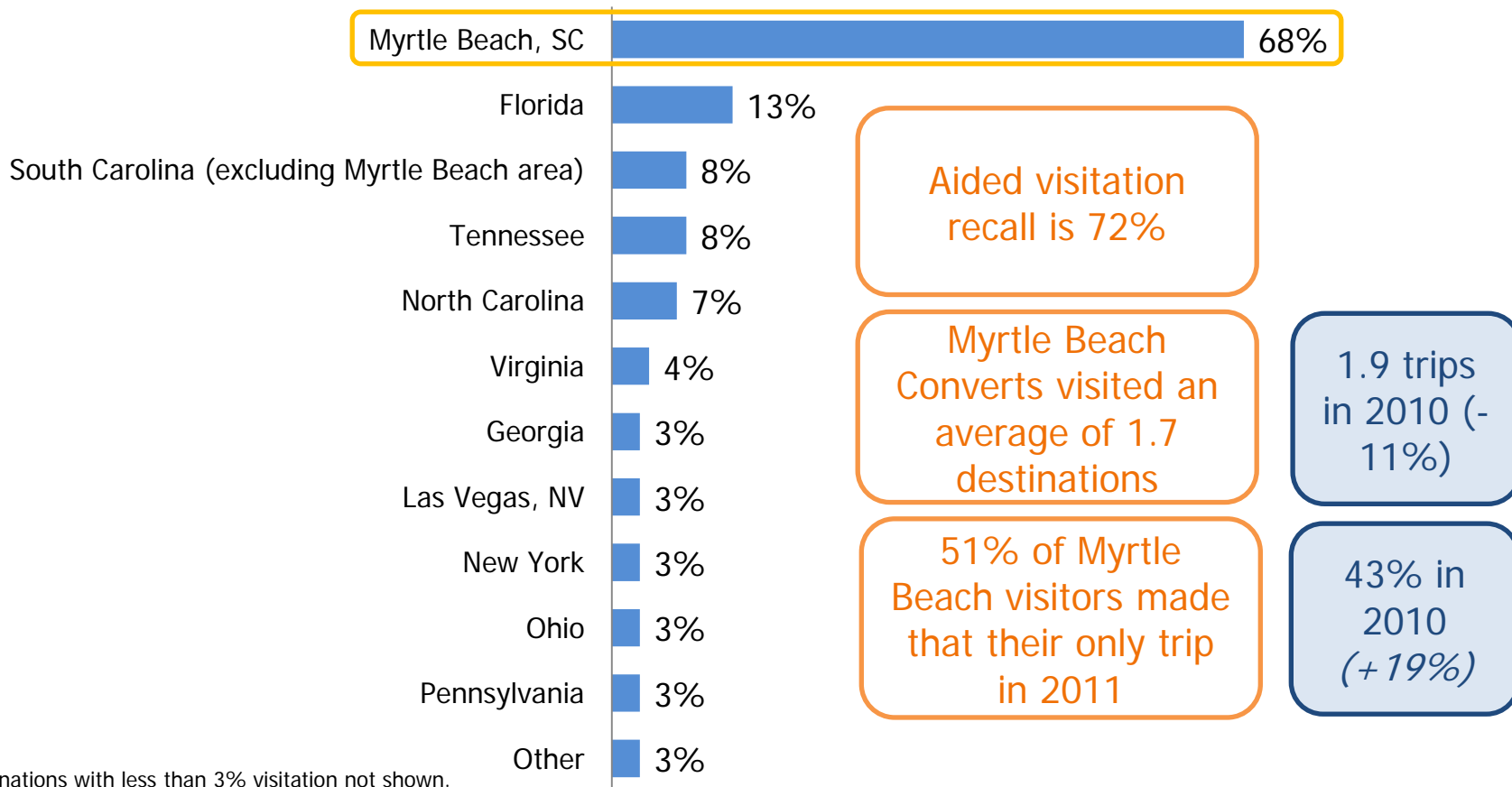


*Base: Total Inquirers (N=3186)*

# Vacation Destinations

Over two-thirds of those who took a vacation in 2011 went to Myrtle Beach, and about half of those who vacationed here made it their only trip last year.

*Destinations Visited in 2011*



Note: Destinations with less than 3% visitation not shown.

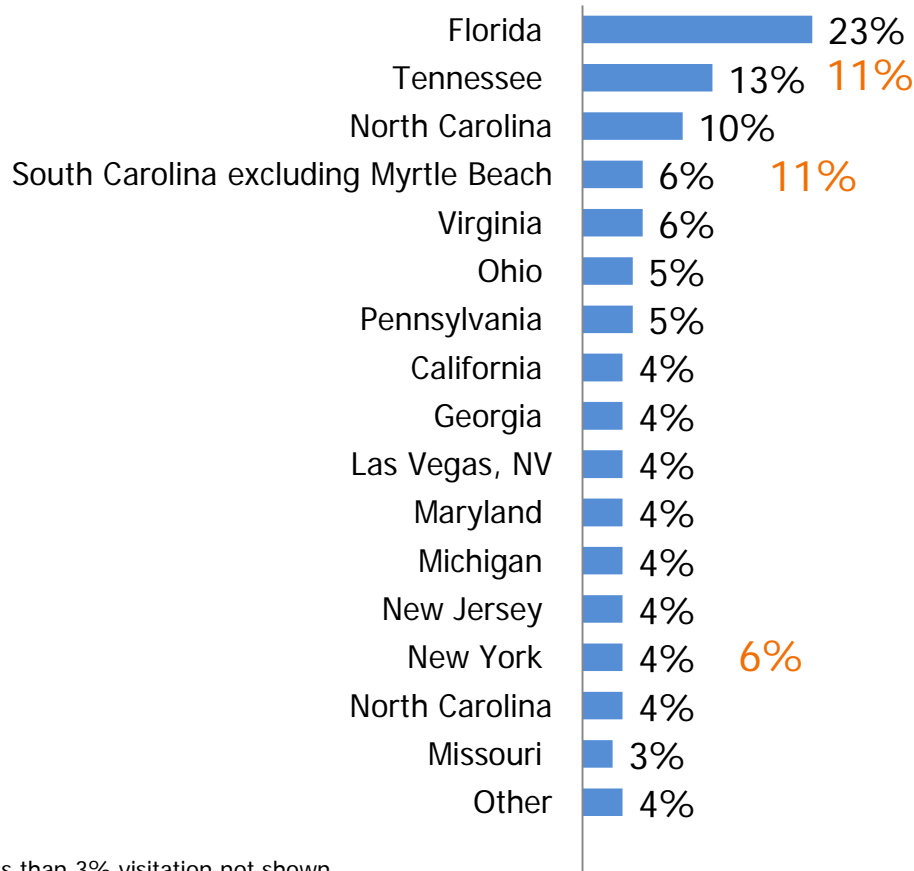
**Base: Took a vacation in 2011 (N=2687)**

Q7. Where did you vacation in 2011? [Unaided]

Q8. Please indicate when, if ever, you vacationed overnight in each of the following destinations?

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

### Destinations Visited by Non-Converts



Trip Advisor:  
 44% seek beach trip  
 42% seek cultural trip

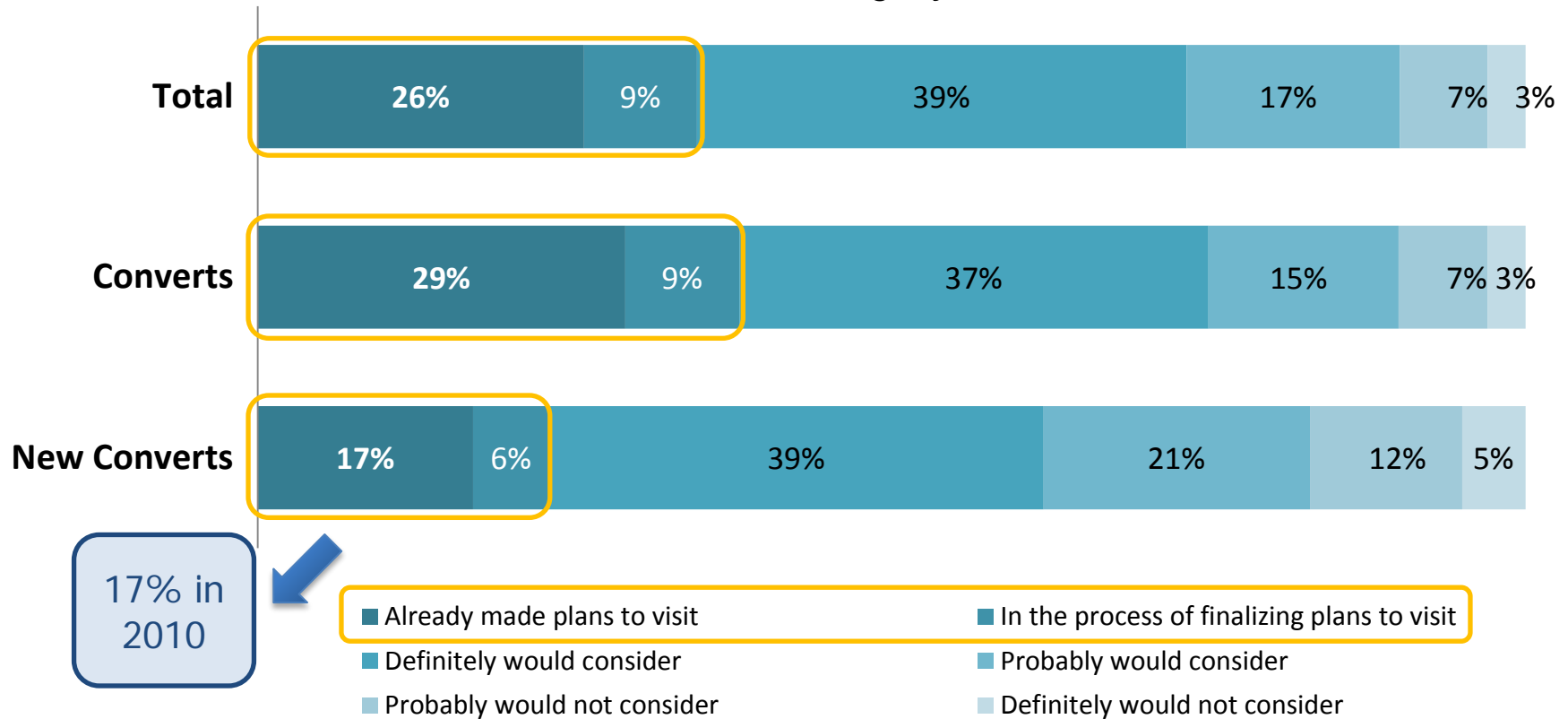
Note: Destinations with less than 3% visitation not shown.

Base: Non-Converts; did not visit Myrtle Beach in 2011 (N=762)

# Likelihood of 2012 Myrtle Beach Visit

Almost a quarter of first-time Myrtle Beach visitors (New Converts) are already making 2012 plans, and nearly 40% would 'definitely consider' returning.

*Likelihood of Visiting Myrtle Beach in 2012*



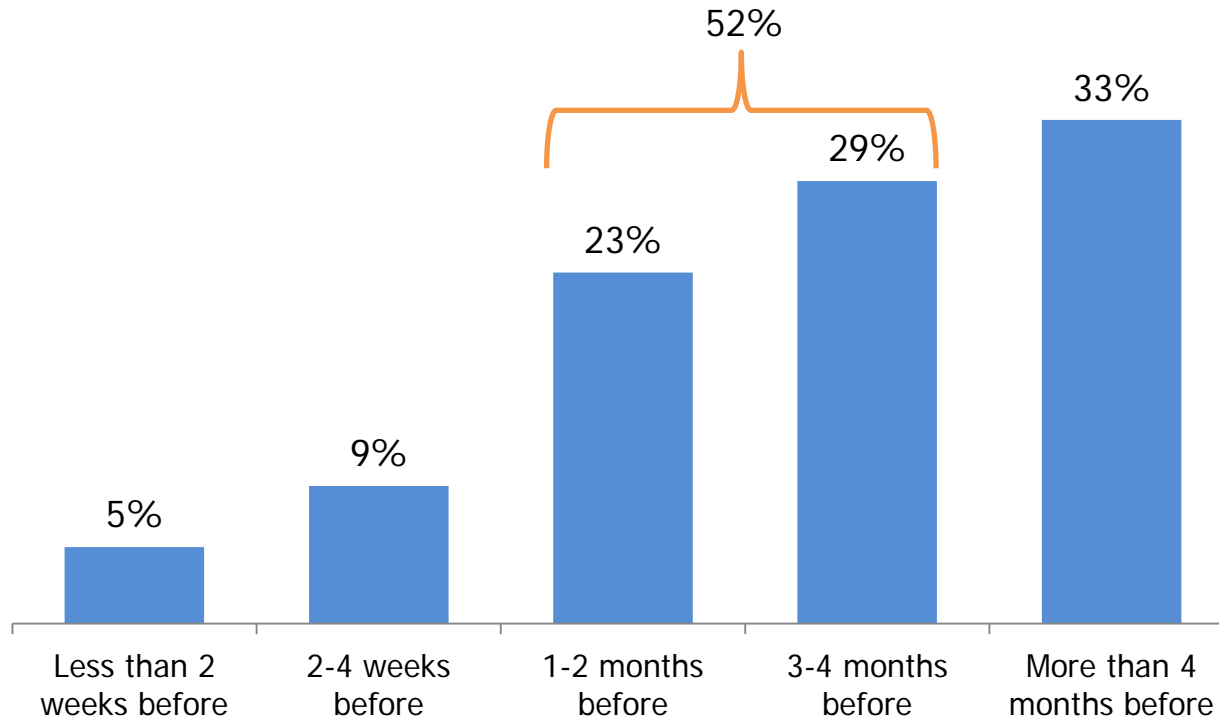
Base: Inquirers who took a vacation in 2011 (N=2687)



## **Vacation Planning & Information Sources**

52% of Converts began planning their visit 1 to 4 months in advance, and a third began planning 4+ months in advance.

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



*Base: Converts; visited Myrtle Beach in 2011 (N=1925)*

Information Source:  
 Internet/Online

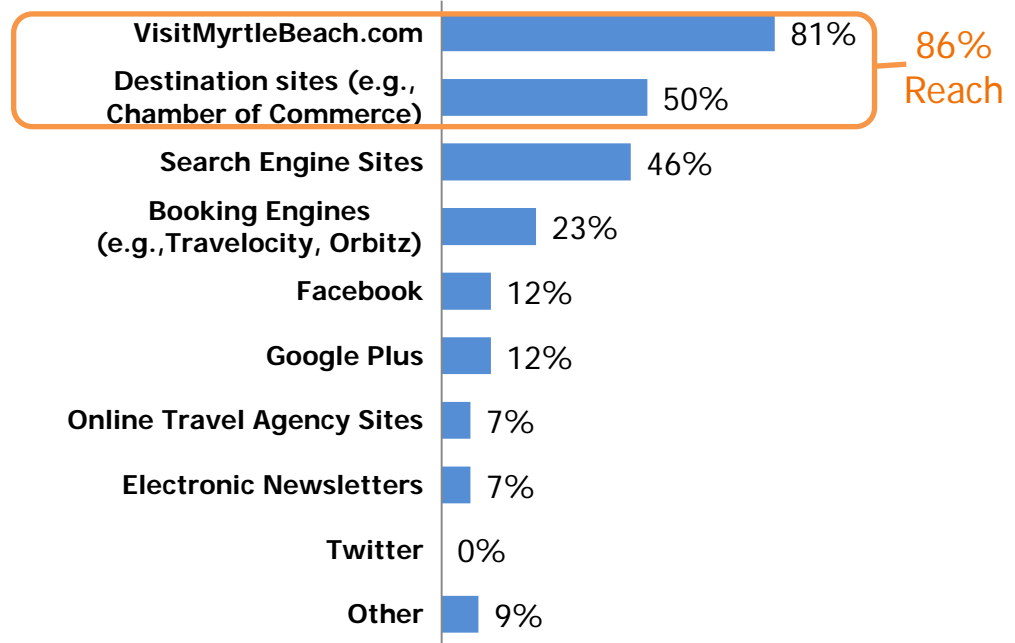
The Internet is the most utilized information source for trip planning. VisitMyrtleBeach.com is a fantastic resource for visitors, as it is used by 81% of people who are using the Internet to plan their Myrtle Beach vacation.

*Used the Internet  
 in Planning*



*Base: Converts; visited Myrtle Beach in 2011  
 (N=1925)*

*Online Sources  
 Used in Planning*

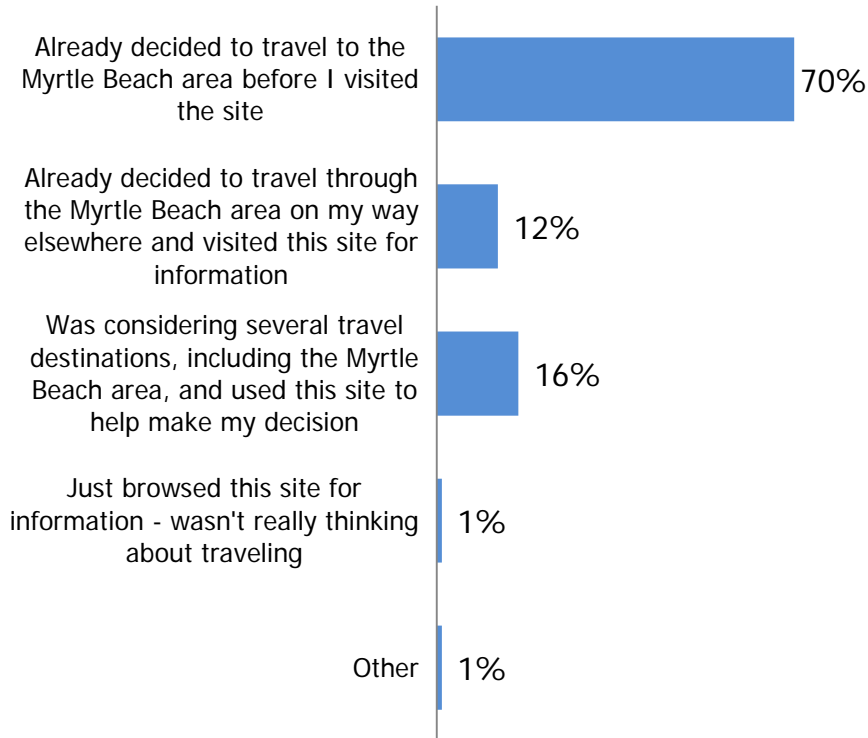


*Base: Converts who used the Internet for planning  
 (N=1155)*

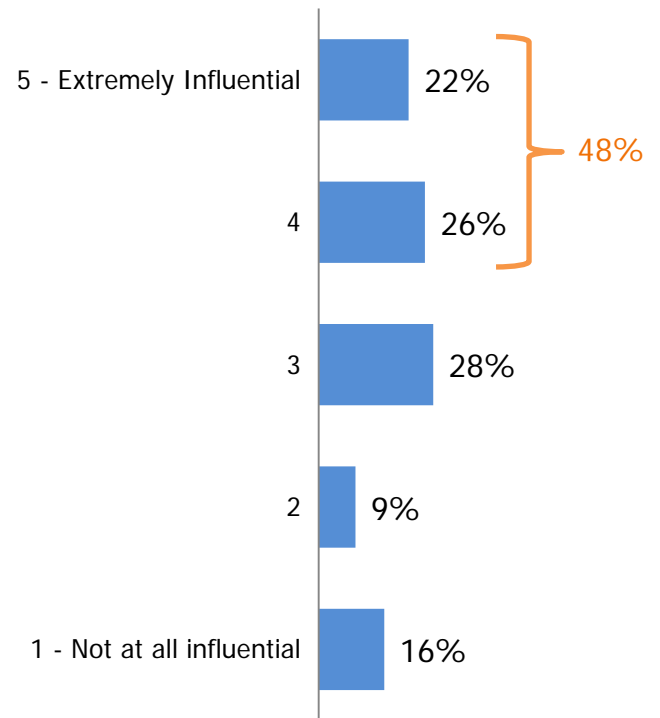


Although the majority of visitors say they already decided to visit the area before going to VisitMyrtleBeach.com, almost half say the site influenced their decision - bolstering an already strong desire to vacation here.

*Role of VisitMyrtleBeach.com  
in MB Visitation*



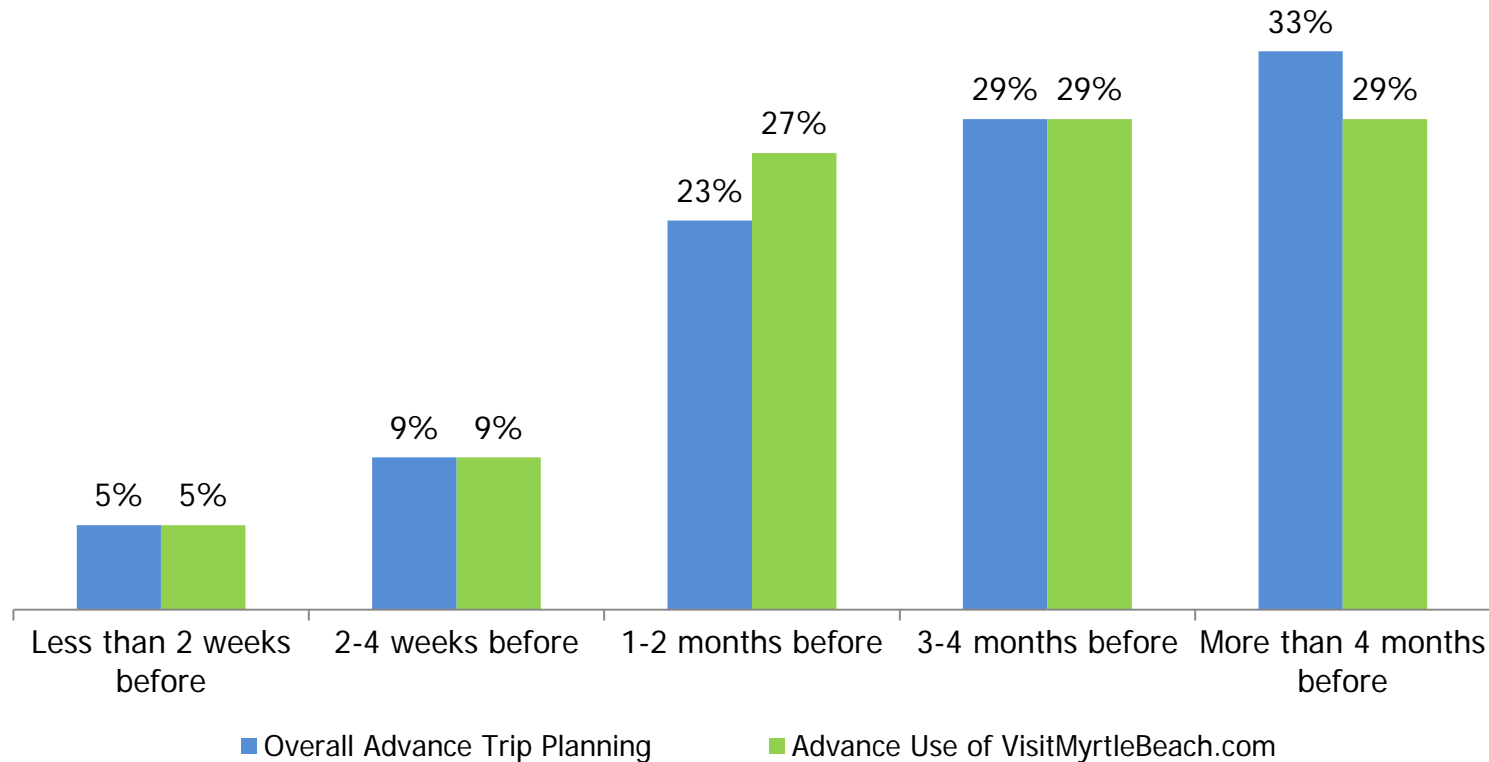
*Influence of VisitMyrtleBeach.com  
in MB Visitation*



Base: Used VisitMyrtleBeach.com in planning (N=937)

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

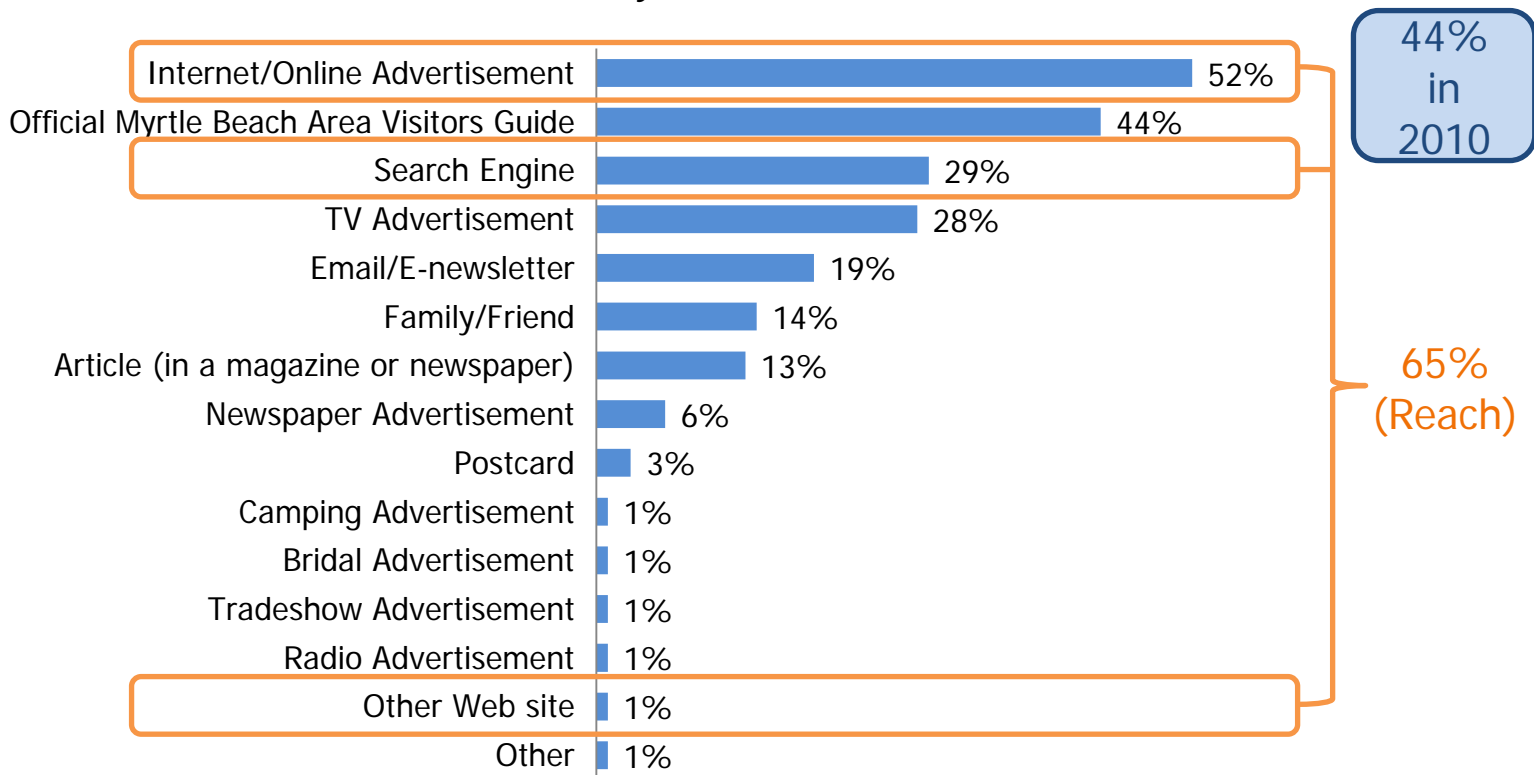
*Advance Visitation of VisitMyrtleBeach.com*



*Base: Used VisitMyrtleBeach.com in planning (N=937)*

Among those citing advertising as the source of their awareness of VisitMyrtleBeach.com, nearly two-thirds learn about it through the Internet, followed by the Visitors Guide (44%).

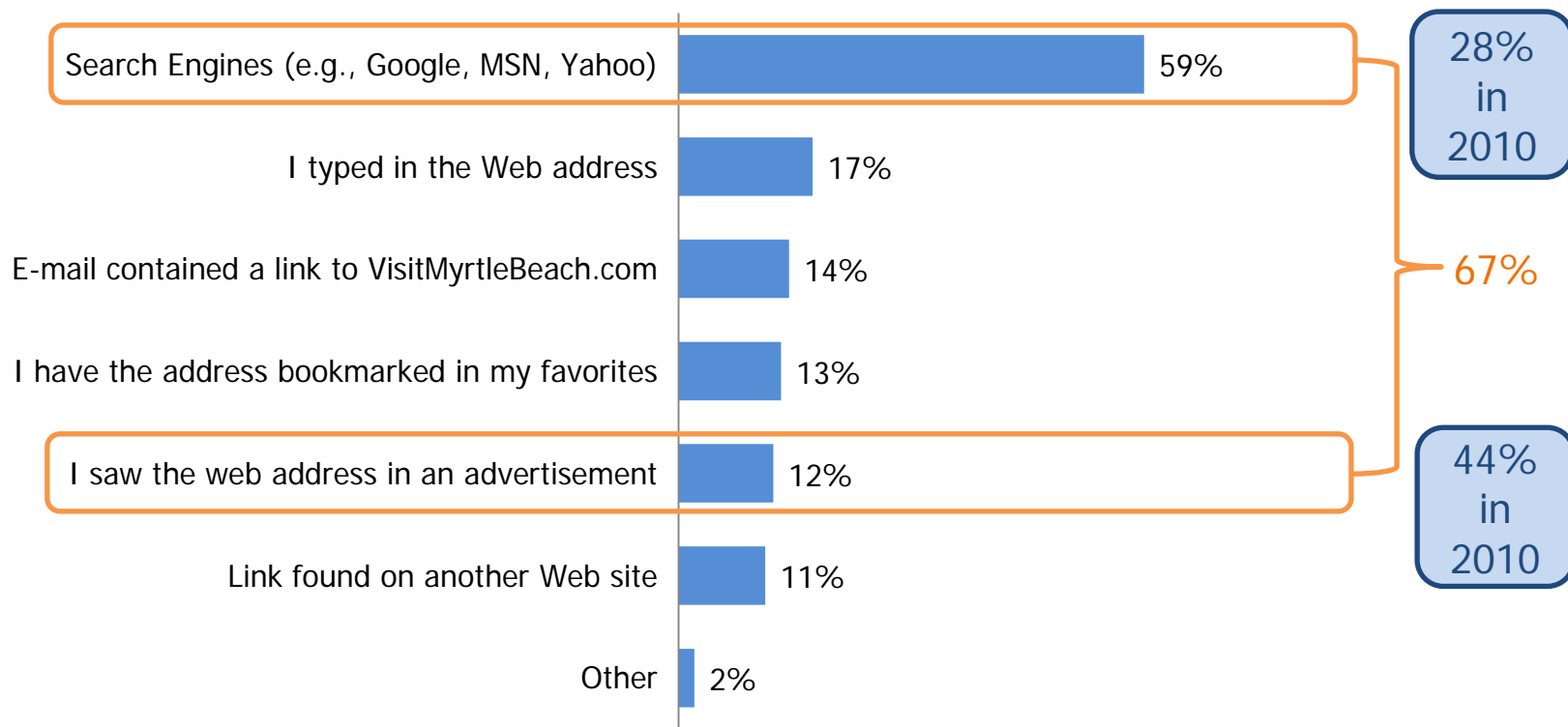
*Ad Source of VisitMyrtleBeach.com*



Base: Learned about VisitMyrtleBeach.com through an advertisement (N=112)

67% of VisitMyrtleBeach.com visitors are finding us through our online efforts (search engine placements and web advertisements).

*Means of Finding VisitMyrtleBeach.com*

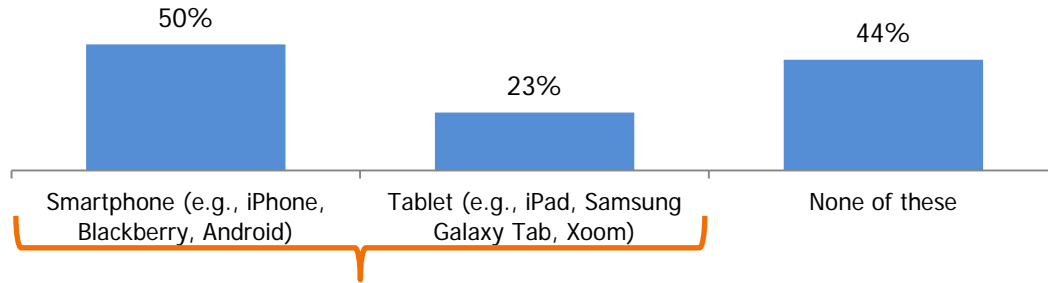


Base: Used VisitMyrtleBeach.com in planning (N=937)

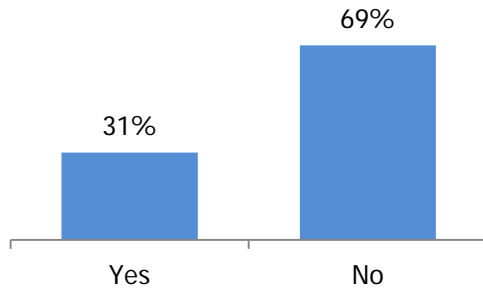
# Smartphone/Tablet Ownership and Role in Vacation Planning

56% of Converts own a smartphone and/or tablet, and almost a third used those devices to plan their Myrtle Beach area trip, mainly searching for dining, maps/directions, or activities.

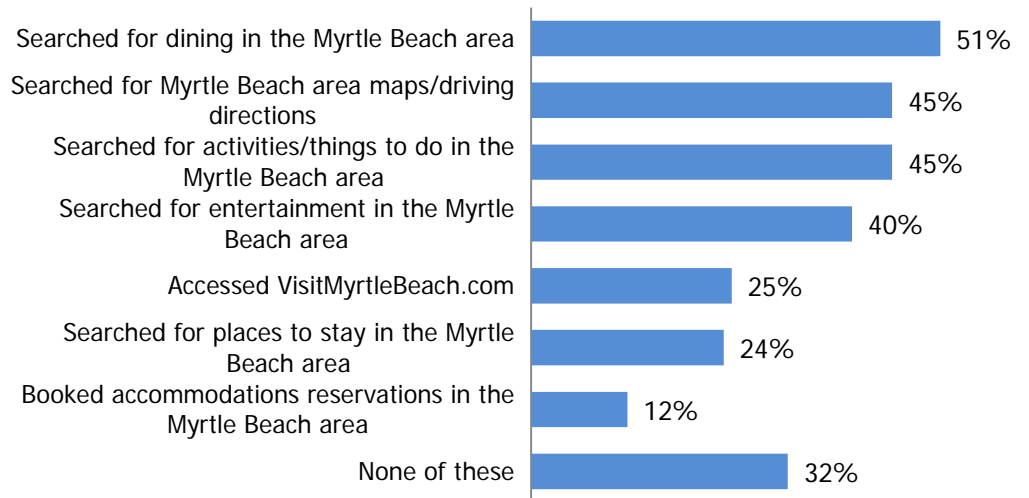
## Device Ownership



## Use Smartphone/Tablet for Trip Planning?



## Activities Done with Smartphone/Tablet



Base: Converts; visited Myrtle Beach in 2011 (N=1925); visited and own smartphone/tablet (N=1075)

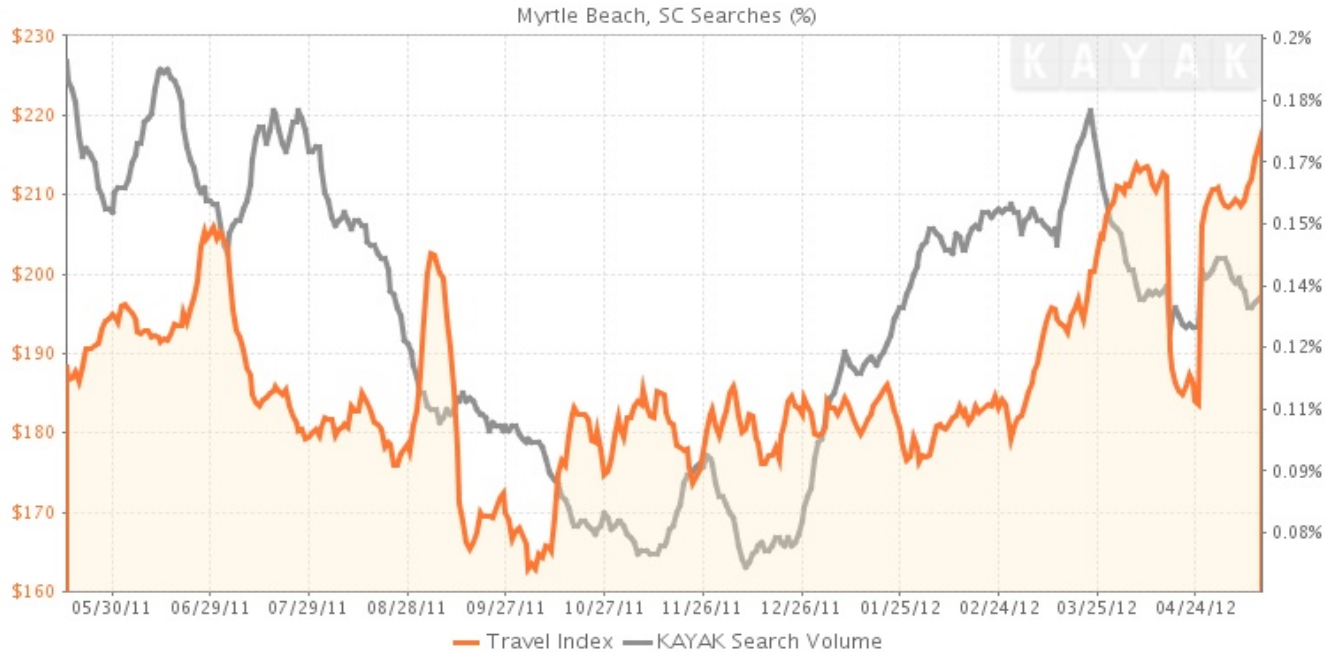
Q19a. Which of the following devices do you own? Please select all that apply.

Q19b. Did you use your smartphone or tablet to plan your trip to the Myrtle Beach area?

Q19c. Which of the following activities have you done using your smartphone or tablet? Please select all that apply.

# Myrtle Beach Search Trends (Kayak)

**Myrtle Beach**  
 1 year change: +13.4%



- Orlando: -0.1%
- Charleston: +8.5%
- Daytona: -2.6%
- Savannah: -7.3%
- Branson: -11.1%

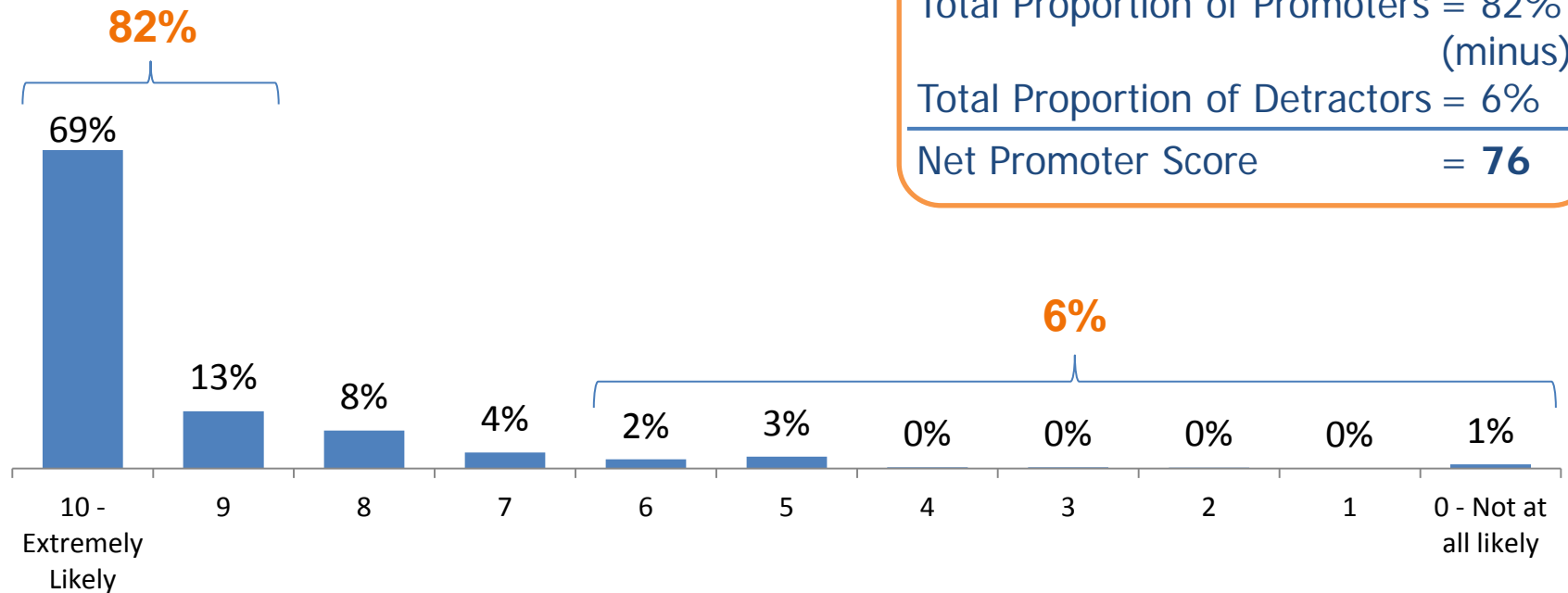


# Net Promoter Score & Interest in Visiting

# 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.

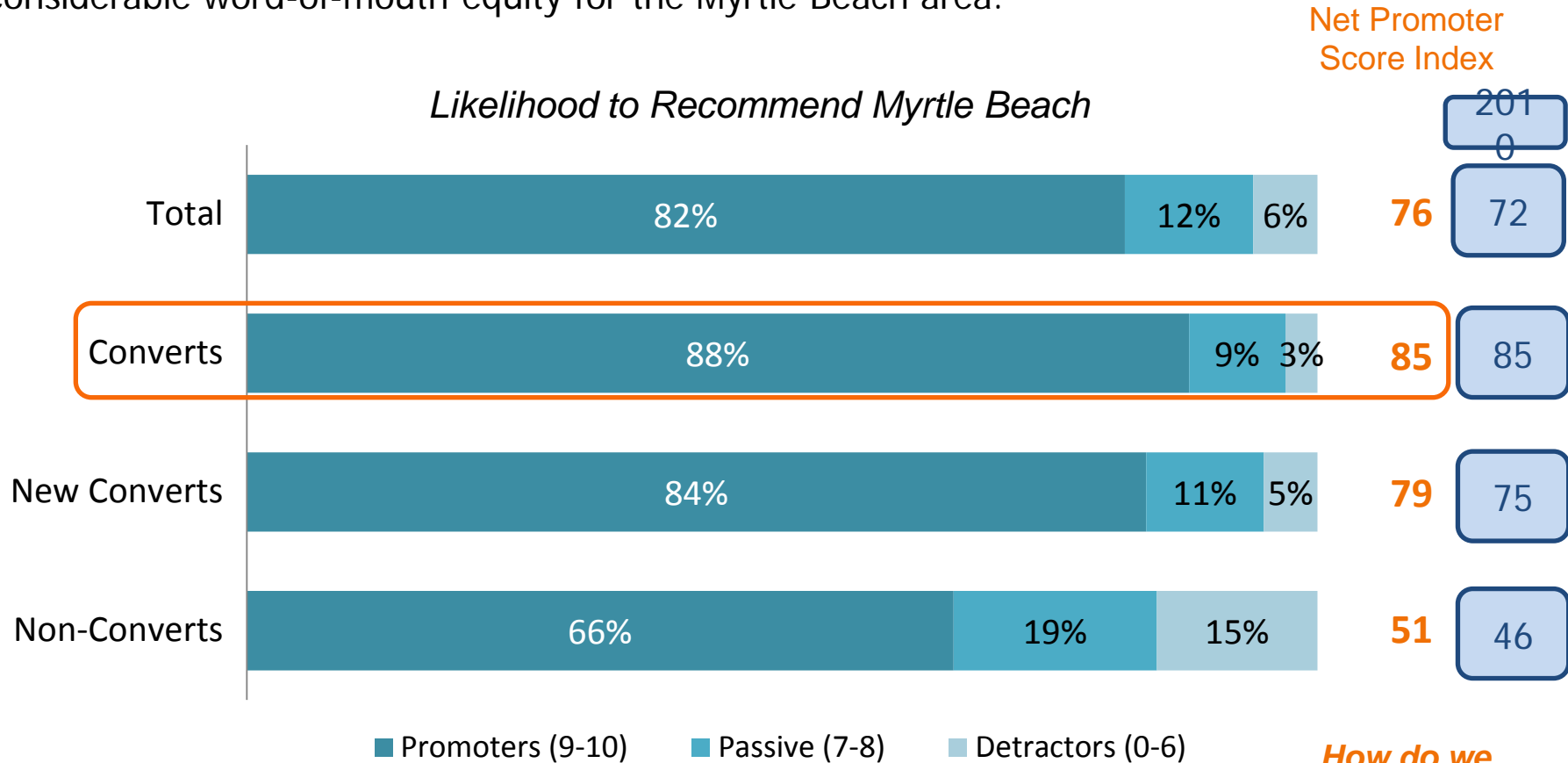


Base: Took a vacation in 2011 (N=2687)



# Net Promoter Score Index

We have an outstanding Net Promoter Score – 85% among Converts. This represents considerable word-of-mouth equity for the Myrtle Beach area.

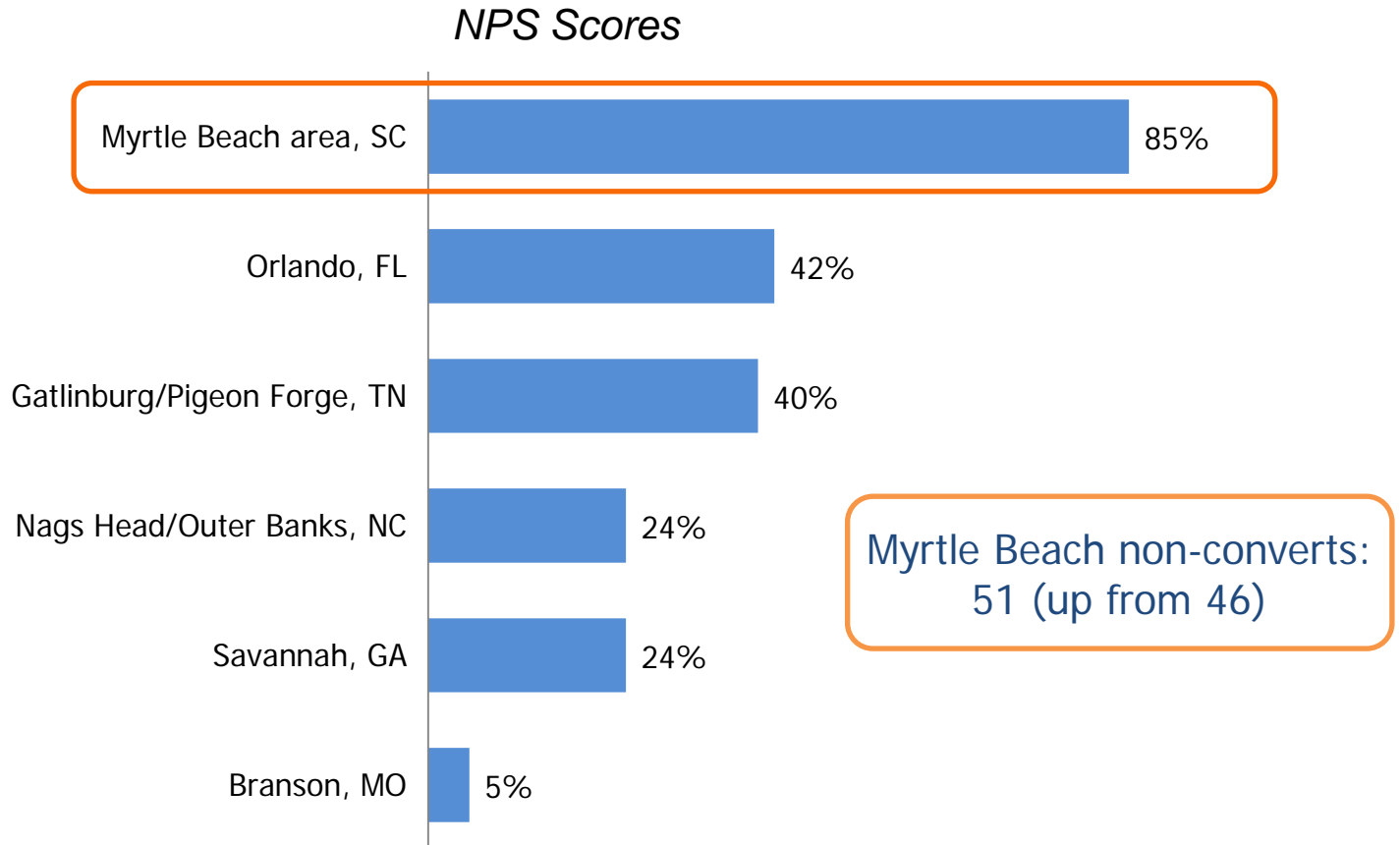


*How do we leverage NPS?*

Base: Took a vacation in 2011 (N=2687)

## Net Promoter Score Index vs. Others

Among visitors of these respective vacation destinations, the Myrtle Beach area's Net Promoter Score is the highest.

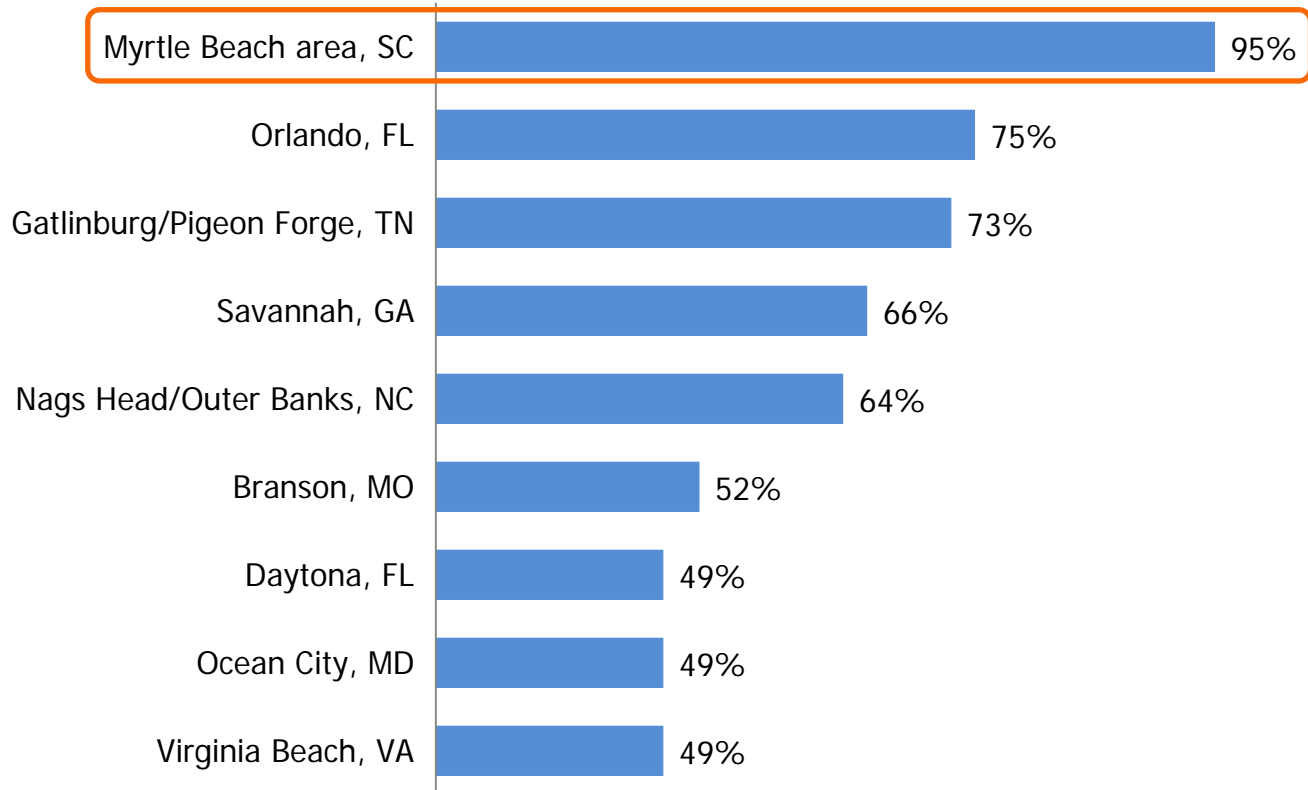


*Base: Varies, based on those who have visited respective destinations.*

## Likelihood to Recommend

Myrtle Beach ranks first in likelihood to recommend among competitive destinations.

*Likelihood to Recommend (Top-3-Box)*



*Base: Varies, based on those who have visited respective destinations.*



# Myrtle Beach Website Traffic, Inquiries & Conversion Rates

# Website Conversion Calculation

The conversion figures are calculated using industry standard factors established to reconcile stated intention and actual behavior. These factors are then applied to the intent-to-visit responses, providing more realistic and conservative results:

	Stated Intent		Factor		Resulting Intent
I have already made plans to visit the Myrtle Beach area	56%	×	80%	=	44%
I am in the process of finalizing plans to visit the Myrtle Beach area	17%	×	50%	=	9%
I would definitely/probably consider visiting the Myrtle Beach area [NET]	25%	×	5%	=	1%
I would definitely not/probably not consider visiting the Myrtle Beach area [NET]	2%				

**54%**  
 Conversion Rate

52% in 2010

Note: change in call to action

\* Source: VisitMyrtleBeach.com website survey.

# Website Conversion Rate & Return

The website conversion rate of 54% is based those who have planned, or are likely to plan, a trip to Myrtle Beach.

## 2011 Visitor Conversion & Marketing Return\*

Website Visits	6,302,795
Adjusted Website Visits <sup>1</sup>	3,781,677
Conversion Rate <sup>2</sup>	54%
Converts	2,042,106
Spend Per Trip	\$2,660
Visitor Expenditures <sup>3</sup>	\$5,432,000,843
Total Marketing/Media Expenditure	\$15,772,733
<b>Revenue Per Marketing Dollar Spent</b>	<b>\$344</b>

Travel parties increased by 3%

Increased by 8%

- Adjusted Website Visits: Weighted down to 60% to adjust for repeat web site traffic, such as those viewing from multiple devices and/or locations over time.
- Percentage of web site visitors who stated they have already made arrangements or are planning to visit Myrtle Beach. Factored for accuracy to 44% of "made reservations", 9% of "planning to visit Myrtle Beach", and 1% of "considering Myrtle Beach".
- Visitor Expenditures: Projection of average trip expenditure of what visitors spent during their stay on lodging, dining, shopping, entertainment, and transportation and the conversion rate of visitors to annual web site traffic.

Trip Advisor: 31% plan to increase dollars spent on leisure travel in 2012

\* Figures based on VisitMyrtleBeach.com site traffic metrics and 2011 website survey results.

# Myrtle Beach Visitor Spending Patterns

The average party spent \$2,660 in total – accommodations were the largest single chunk at \$637 (\$126/night on average)

## Trip Expenditures

	Average Expenditure per Party
Accommodations	\$637
Restaurants/ Groceries	\$552
Golf	\$60
Entertainment/ Attractions	\$417
Shopping	\$486
Daily transportation (excluding rental car)	\$129
Rental car	\$79
Miscellaneous	\$300
<b>Total Expenditure:</b>	<b>\$2,660</b>

Median Party Size:  
**4 people**

Avg. Length of Stay:  
**5.8 nights**

Base: Converts; visited Myrtle Beach in 2011 (N=1925)

# Website Conversion Rate & Return by Visitor Type

The impact of marketing can be categorized into different degrees by looking at visitor type. Repeat Converts are loyal to Myrtle Beach and thus marketing efforts largely serve to maintain and reinforce that loyalty. In the absence of destination loyalty, Lapsed and New Converts are more directly impacted by marketing. Distinguishing between these groups provides some insight to the amount of visitation we *influence* and the amount we actually *create*.

*2011 Marketing Return by Visitor Type\**

	Repeat Converts (visited 1-5 years ago)	Lapsed Converts (visited 6+ years ago)	New Converts (never visited before)
Proportion of Converts	57%	9%	34%
Travel Parties	1,164,000	183,790	694,316
Visitor Expenditures	\$3,096,240,480	\$488,880,076	\$1,846,880,287
Revenue Per Marketing Dollar Spent	<b>\$196</b>	<b>\$31</b>	<b>\$117</b>

**2010:** 12% + 33% = 45%  
**2009:** 6% + 25% = 31%  
**2008:** 8% + 16% = 24%

\* Figures based on VisitMyrtleBeach.com site traffic metrics and 2011 website survey results.



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



54%

Conversion rate among site visitors, with 34% being completely New Converts.

\$344

Revenue generated per dollar spent. \$2,660 spent per party over the length of their stay.

85

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



# Respondent Profile

# Respondent Profile

	Total	Converts	New Converts
<b>Age</b>			
18 to 24	2%	2%	2%
25 to 34	11%	12%	14%
35 to 44	22%	22%	22%
45 to 54	30%	29%	29%
55 to 64	24%	25%	23%
65+	10%	10%	9%
Mean (years)	49.1	48.9	47.9
<b>Gender</b>			
Male	31%	31%	24%
Female	69%	69%	76%

# Respondent Profile

	Total	Converts	New Converts
<b>Marital Status</b>			
Married/Partnered	79%	79%	77%
Single	11%	11%	13%
Separated/Divorced/Widowed	11%	11%	10%
<b>Annual Household Income</b>			
Less than \$45,000	24%	23%	25%
\$45,000 - \$74,999	34%	34%	32%
\$75,000 - \$99,999	20%	21%	21%
\$100,000 or more	22%	22%	22%
Mean (\$000s)	70.8	71.3	71.1
<b>Ethnicity</b>			
White	89%	90%	85%
Black	8%	8%	12%
Other	3%	2%	3%

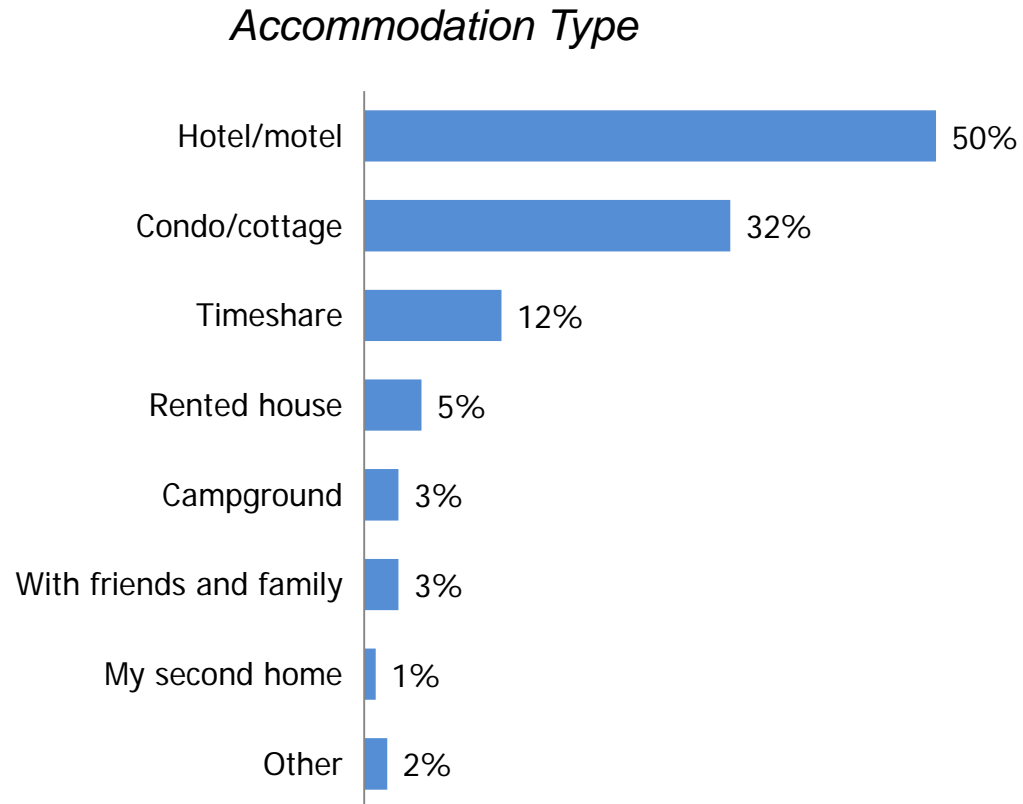
	Total	Converts	New Converts
<b>Employment Status</b>			
Employed full-time	65%	66%	66%
Employed part-time	11%	11%	13%
Other	24%	23%	20%
<b>Education</b>			
HS graduate or less	19%	19%	18%
Some college/technical/trade school	30%	30%	28%
Associate degree	15%	14%	14%
Bachelor degree	22%	23%	24%
Post-graduate study/degree	13%	13%	15%
Other	1%	1%	1%



# Appendix I: Accommodations Patterns

## Accommodations Patterns

Most Converts stay in paid accommodations, with hotel/motel accommodations being the most common, followed by condo/cottage.

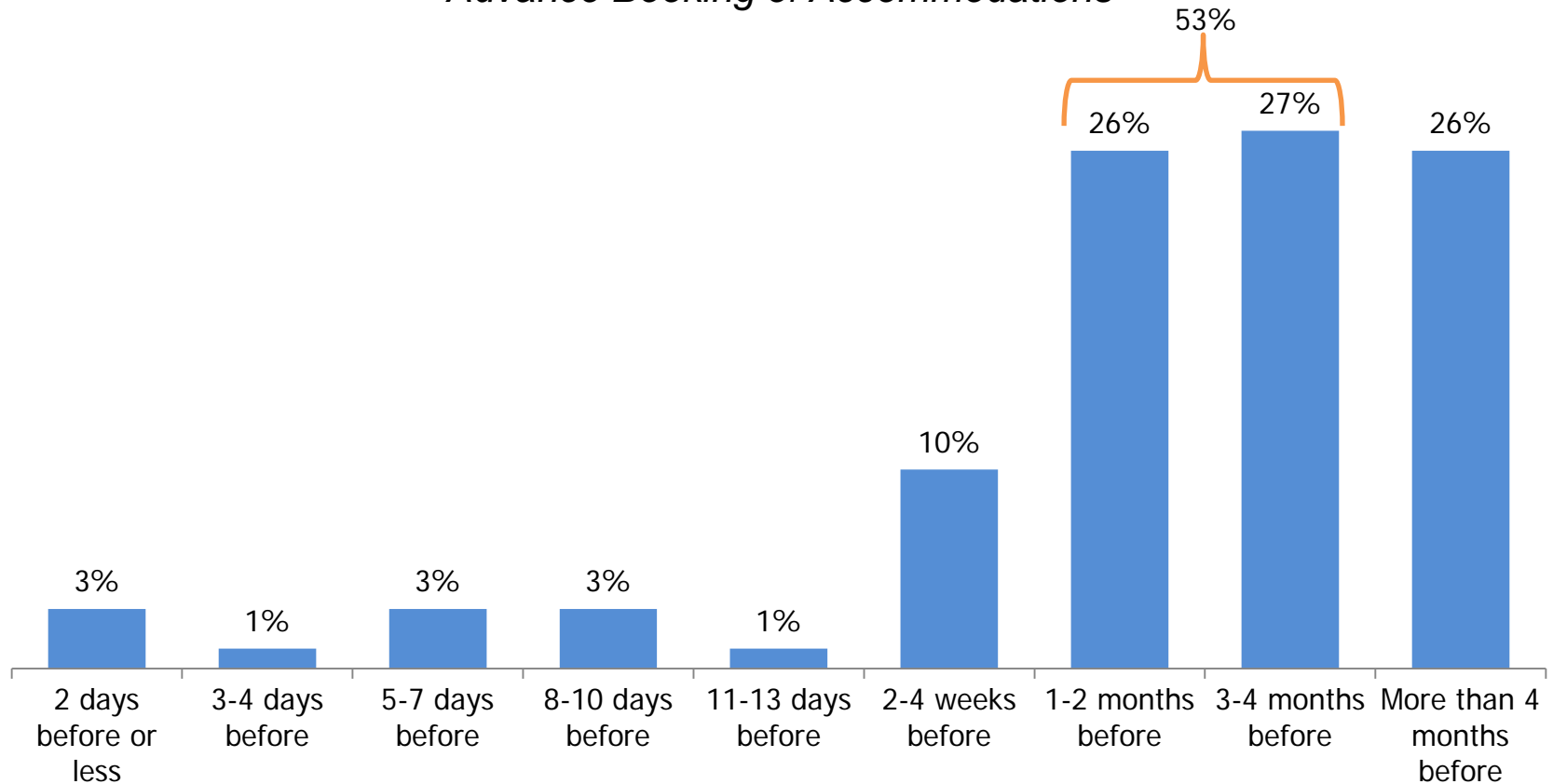


*Base: Converts; visited Myrtle Beach in 2011 (N=1925)*

# Accommodations Patterns

Over half of Converts make lodging reservations 1 to 4 months prior to arrival, and about a quarter of Converts reserve 4+ months in advance.

*Advance Booking of Accommodations*



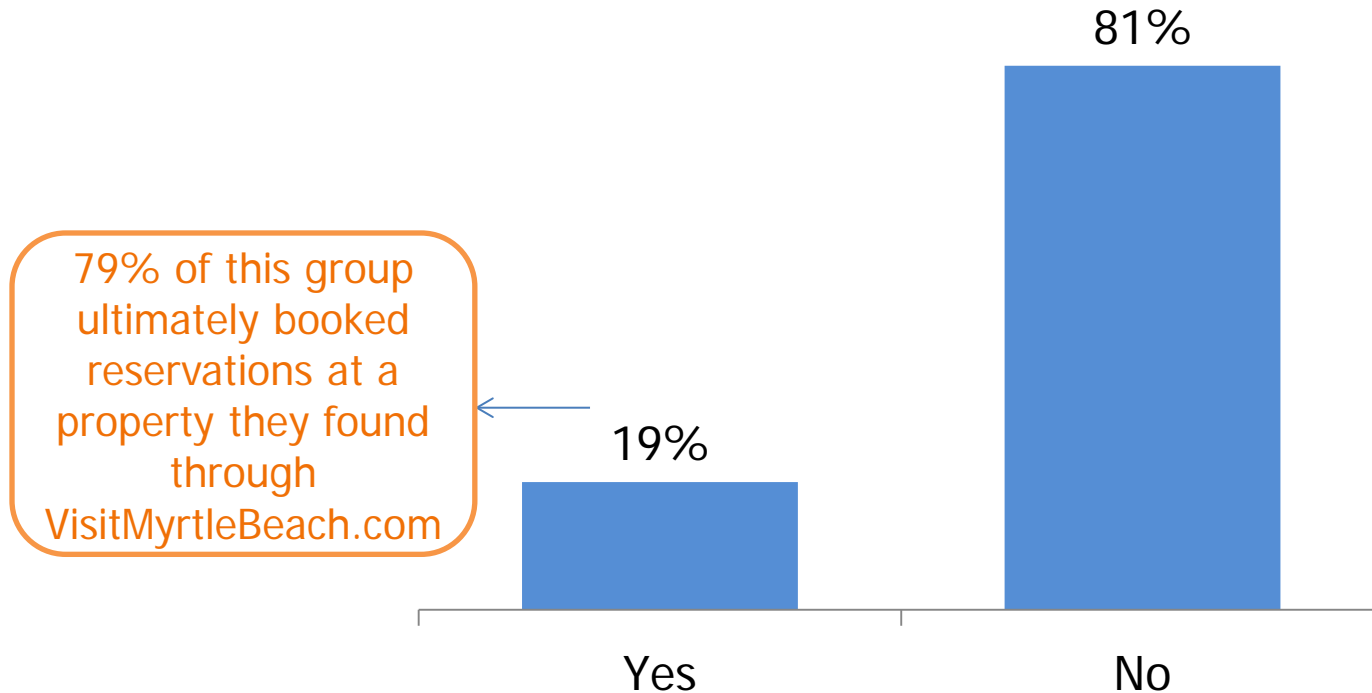
*Base: Stayed in paid accommodations (N=1875)*



## Accommodations Patterns

19% use VisitMyrtleBeach.com to locate and secure accommodations. Of those who use it, 79% ultimately book at a property they find through the site.

*Use of VisitMyrtleBeach.com to locate and secure accommodations*

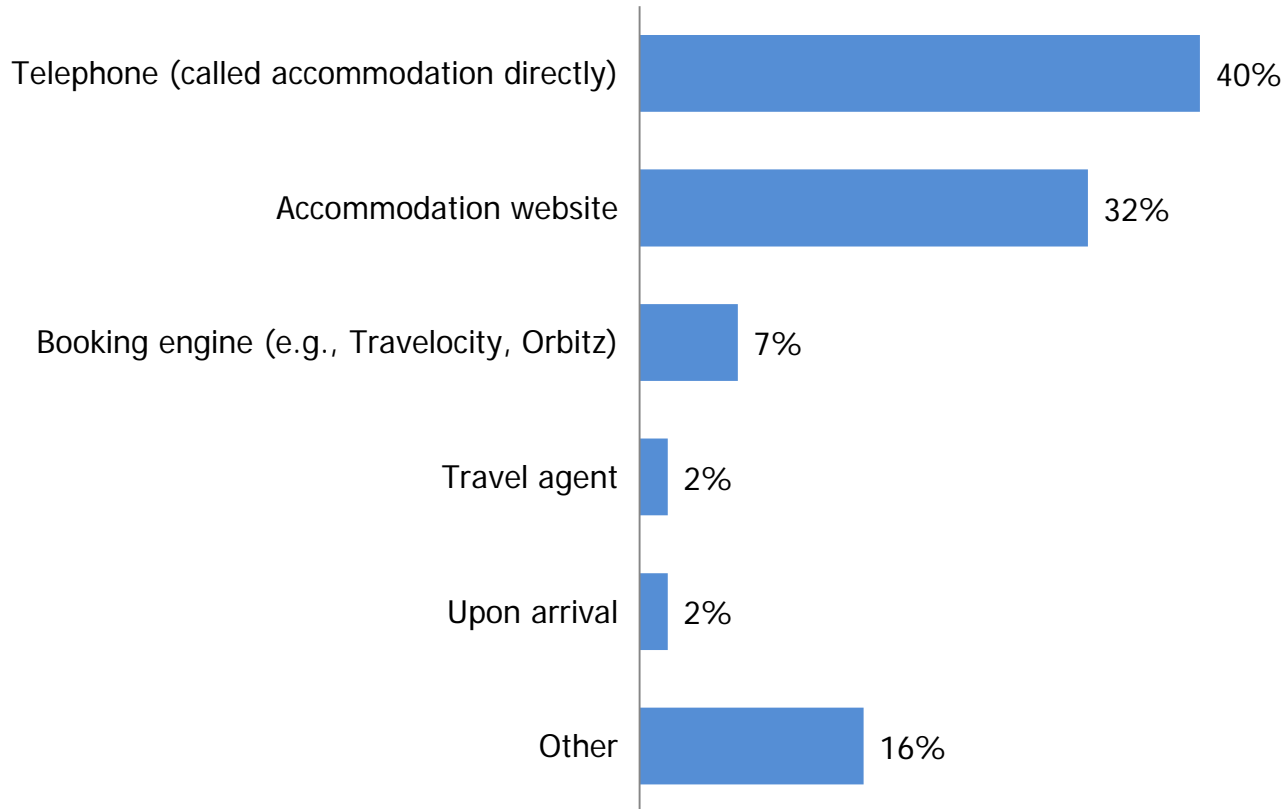


*Base: Stayed in paid accommodations (N=1875)*

## Accommodations Patterns

Among those who stay in paid accommodations on their trip, 40% make reservations via the telephone, and 32% use the lodging's website.

*Reservations Channel*

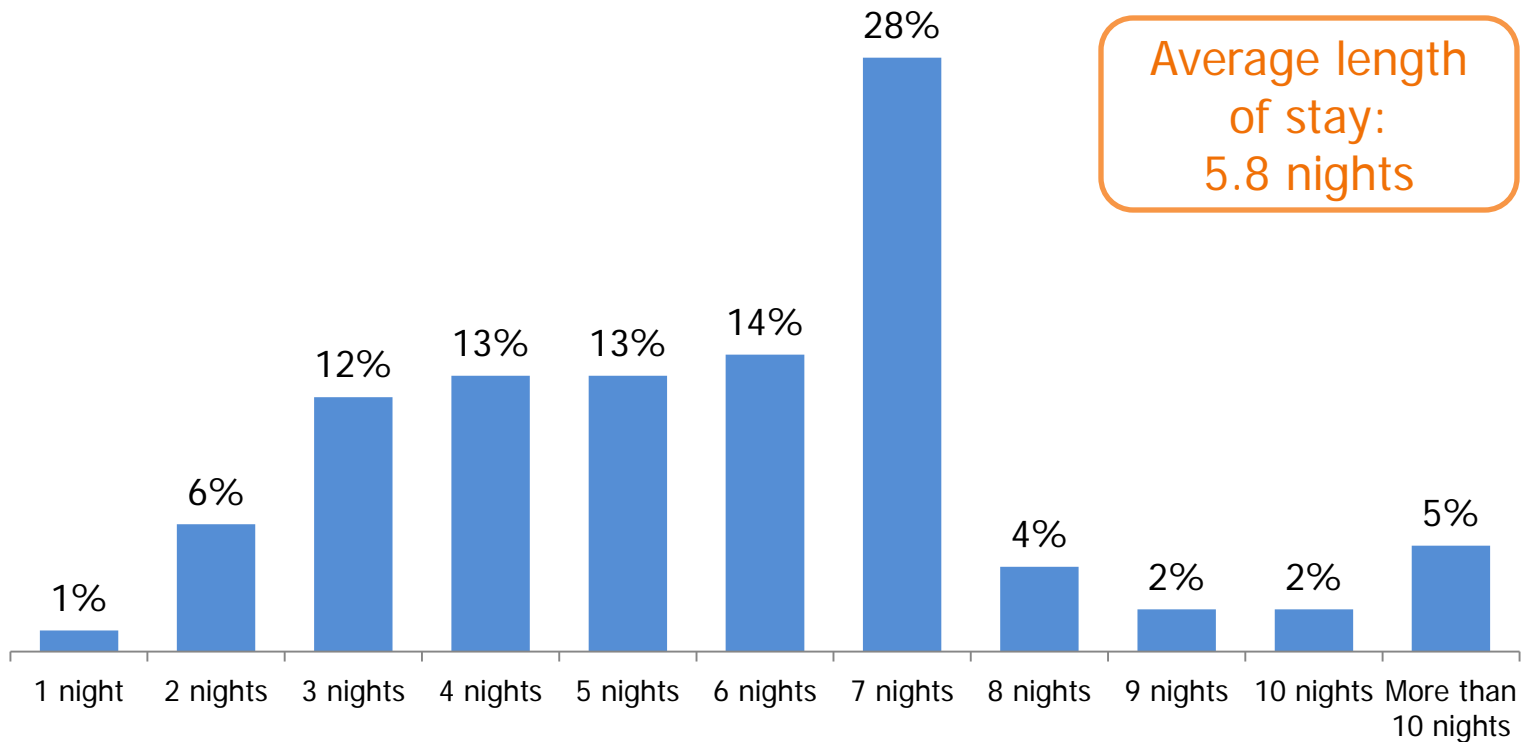


*Base: Stayed in paid accommodations (N=1875)*

## Accommodations Patterns

28% of Converts say they stay in the Myrtle Beach area 7 nights, regardless of whether they pay for their accommodations.

*Length of Trip  
(Paid and Unpaid Accommodations)*

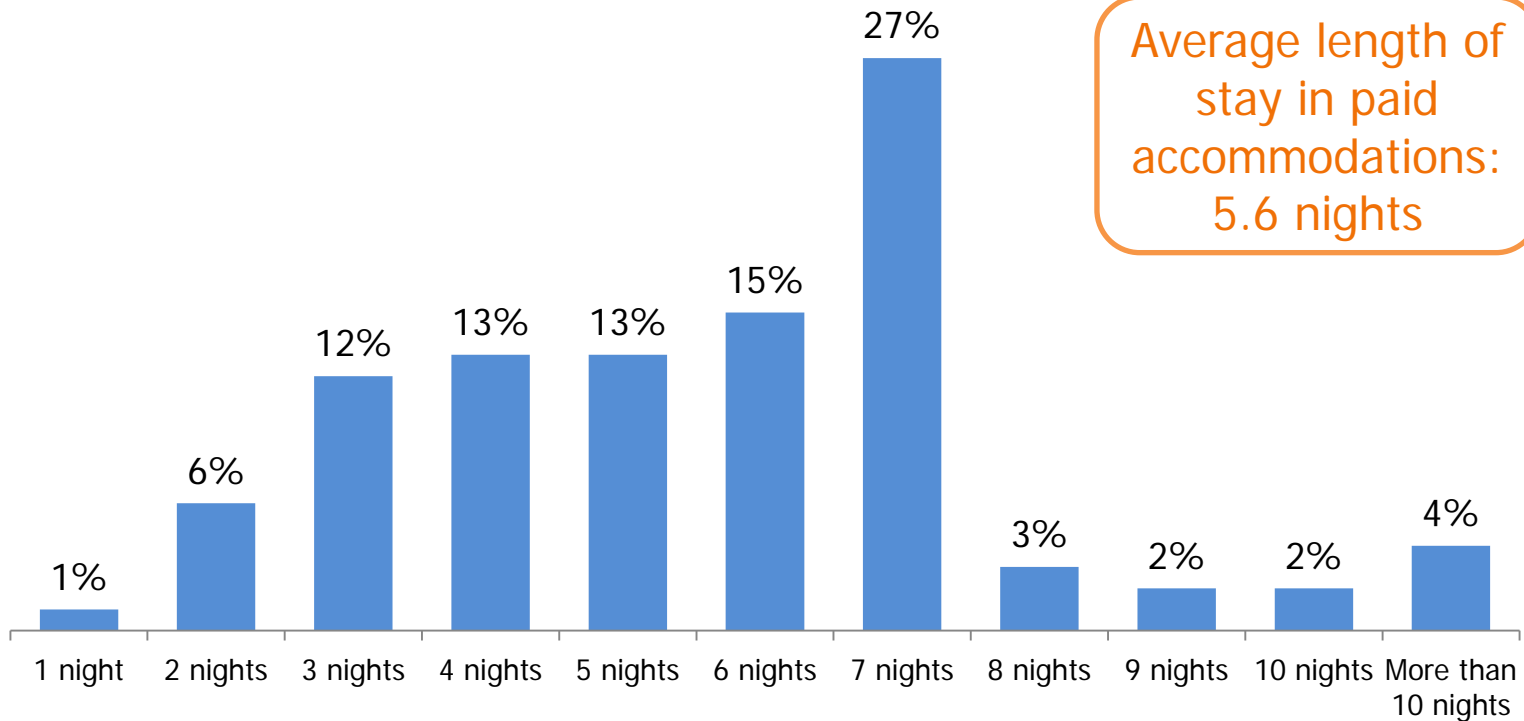


Base: Converts; visited Myrtle Beach in 2011 (N=1925)

## Accommodations Patterns

As the majority of Converts report staying in paid accommodations, 7 nights is again the most common length of their trip to the Myrtle Beach area.

*Length of Trip  
(Paid Accommodations)*

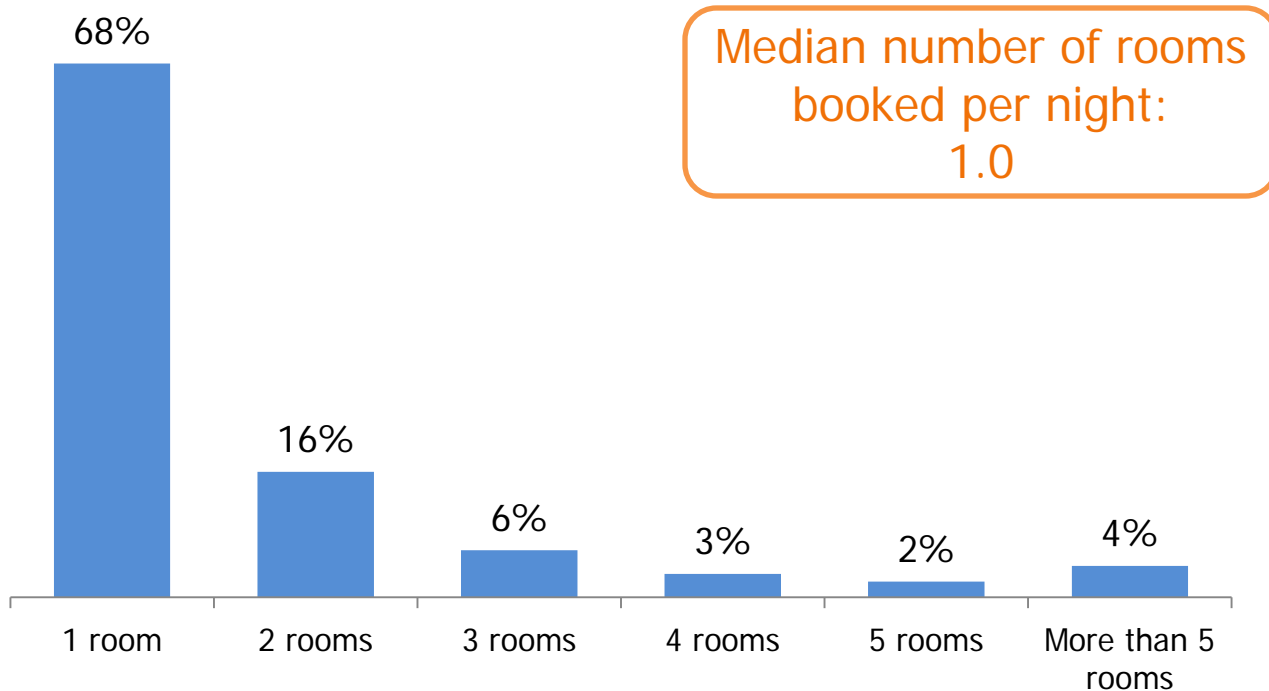


Base: Stayed in paid accommodations (N=1766)

## Accommodations Patterns

Over two-thirds of visitors who stay in paid accommodations book 1 room per night.

*Rooms Booked per Night*



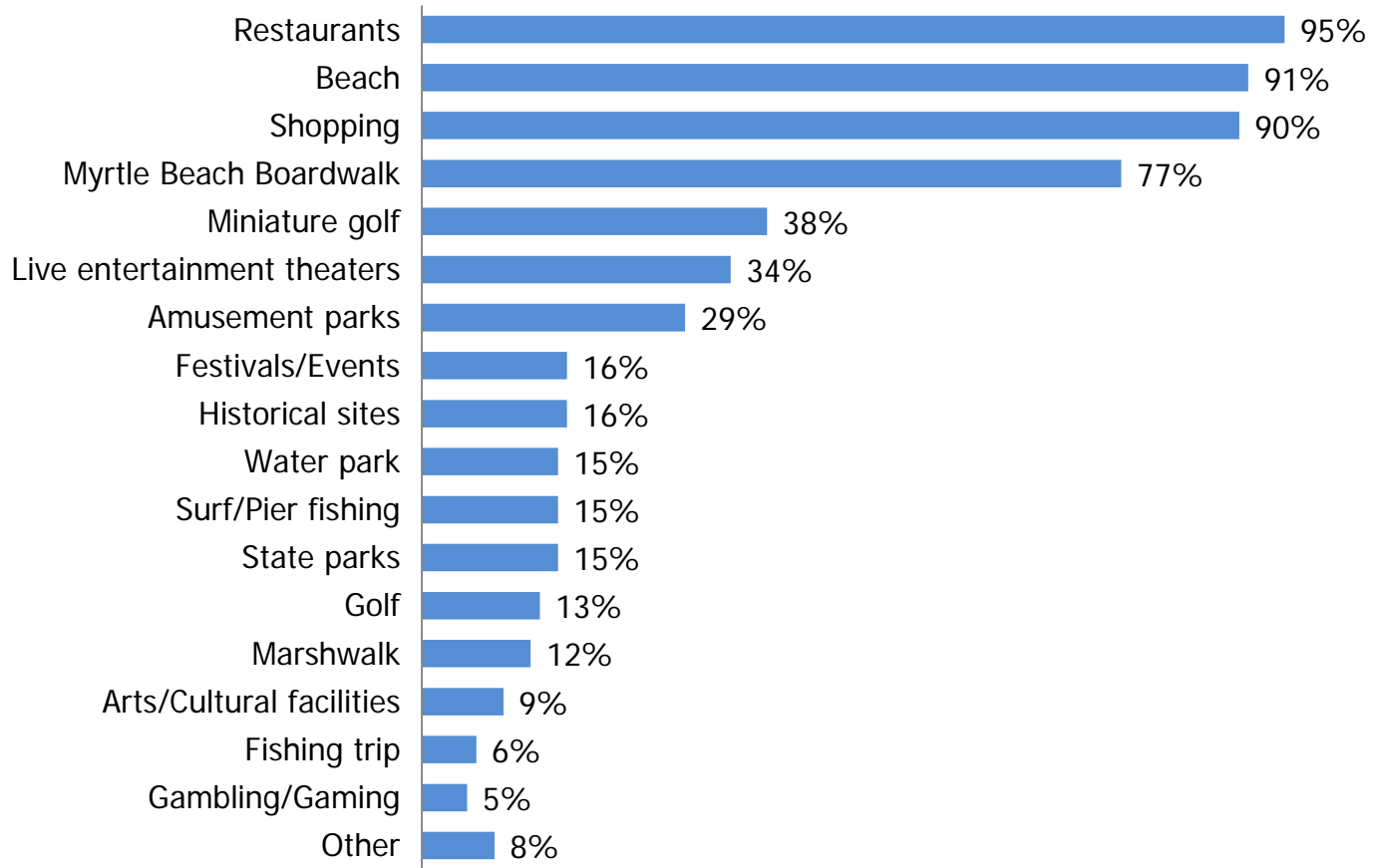
*Base: Stayed in paid accommodations (N=1875)*



## Appendix II: Travel Patterns

Going to restaurants, the beach, and shopping are overwhelmingly the most popular activities while in the Myrtle Beach area.

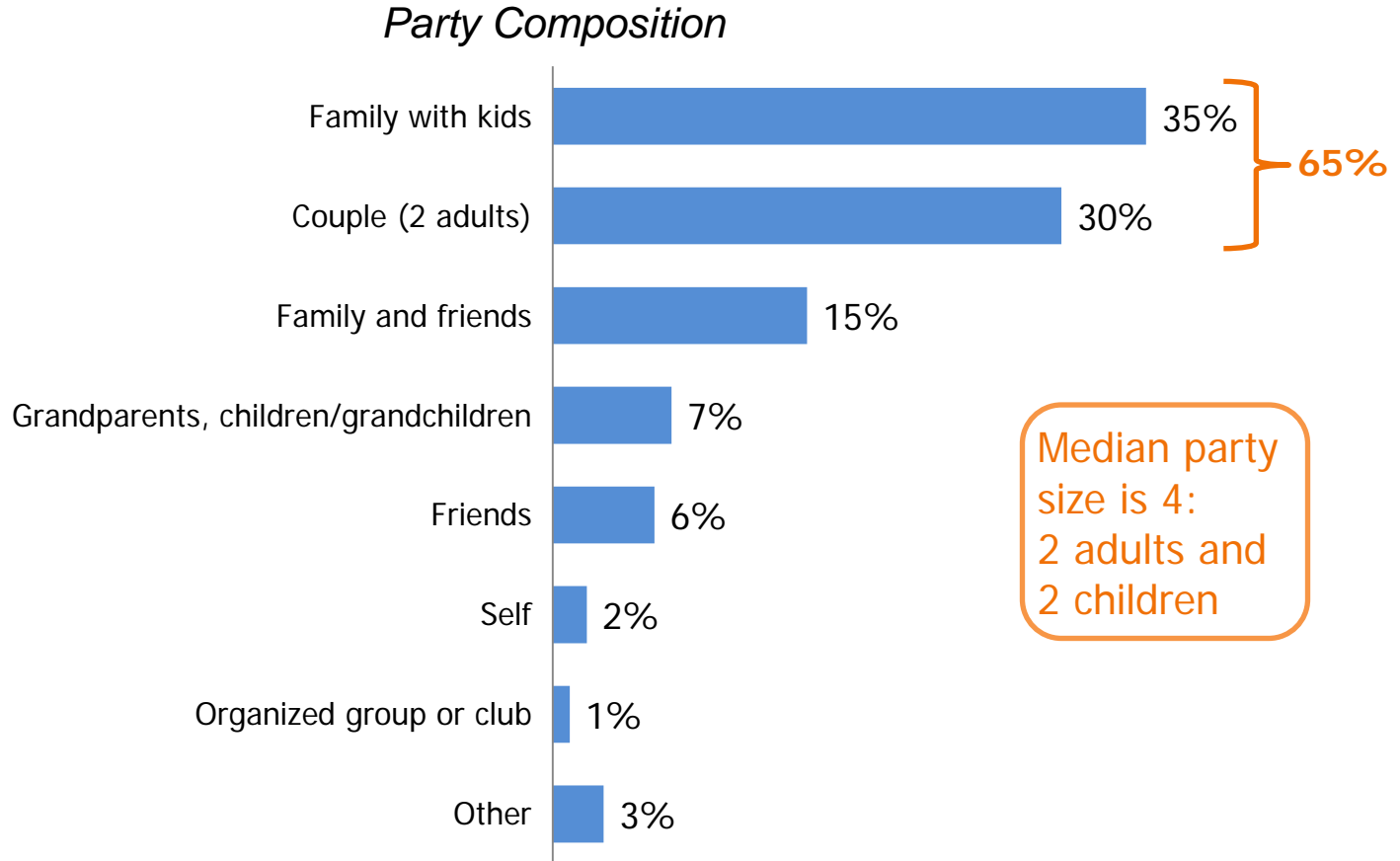
### Activities Participated in at Myrtle Beach



Base: Converts; visited Myrtle Beach in 2011 (N=1925)

# Travel Party Composition

The majority of Myrtle Beach Converts travel in groups, with 65% traveling as a family with kids or as a couple.

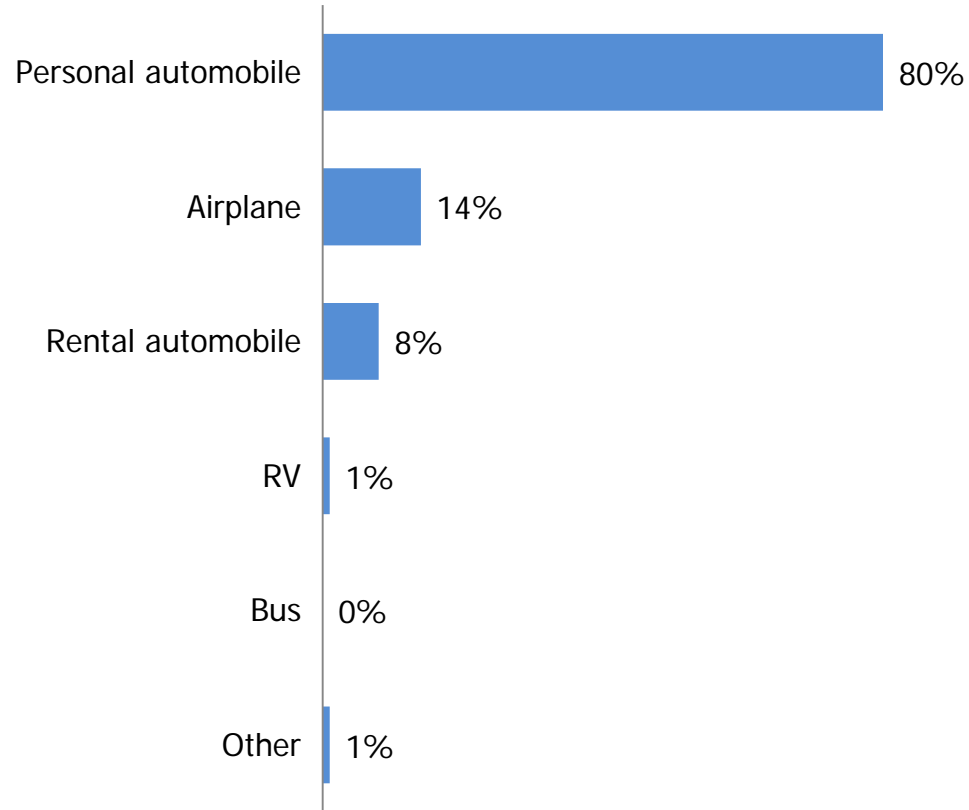


Base: Converts; visited Myrtle Beach in 2011 (N=1925)



80% of Converts arrive in the area via their own car.

*Mode of Transportation*

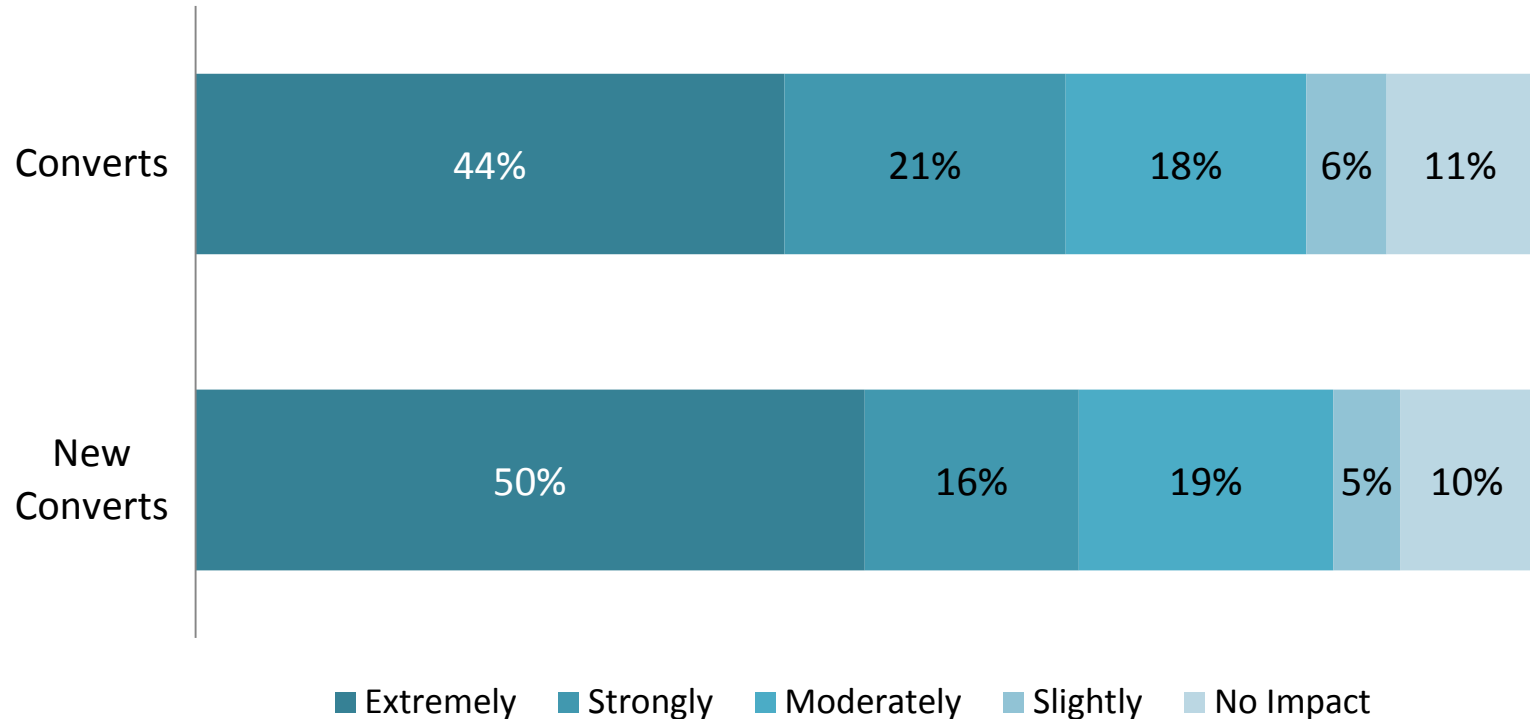


*Base: Converts; visited Myrtle Beach in 2011 (N=1925)*

# Impact of Weather

Weather plays a huge role in the decision to keep a vacation reservation for a weekend visit.

*Impact of Inclement Weather*

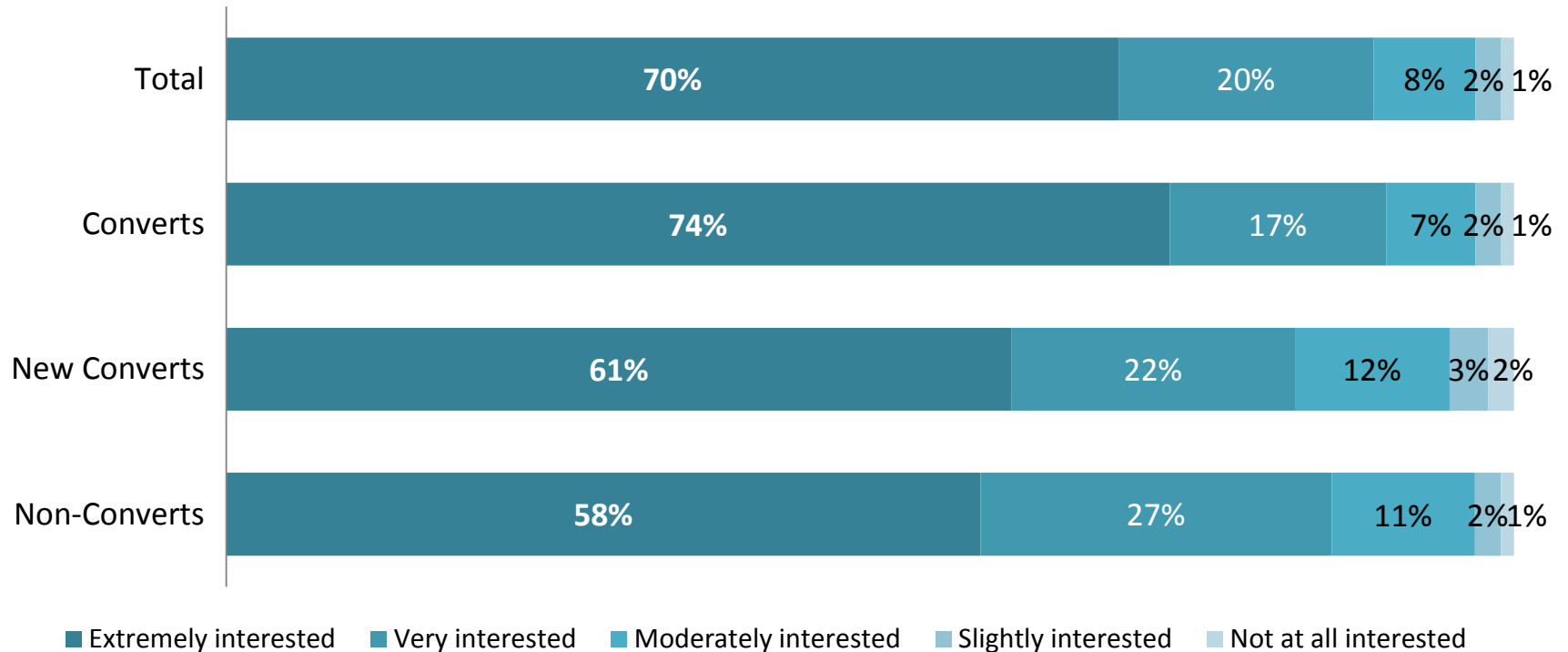


*Base: Converts; visited Myrtle Beach in 2011 (N=1925)*

## Interest in Visiting

The area's 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: Took a vacation in 2011 (N=2687)

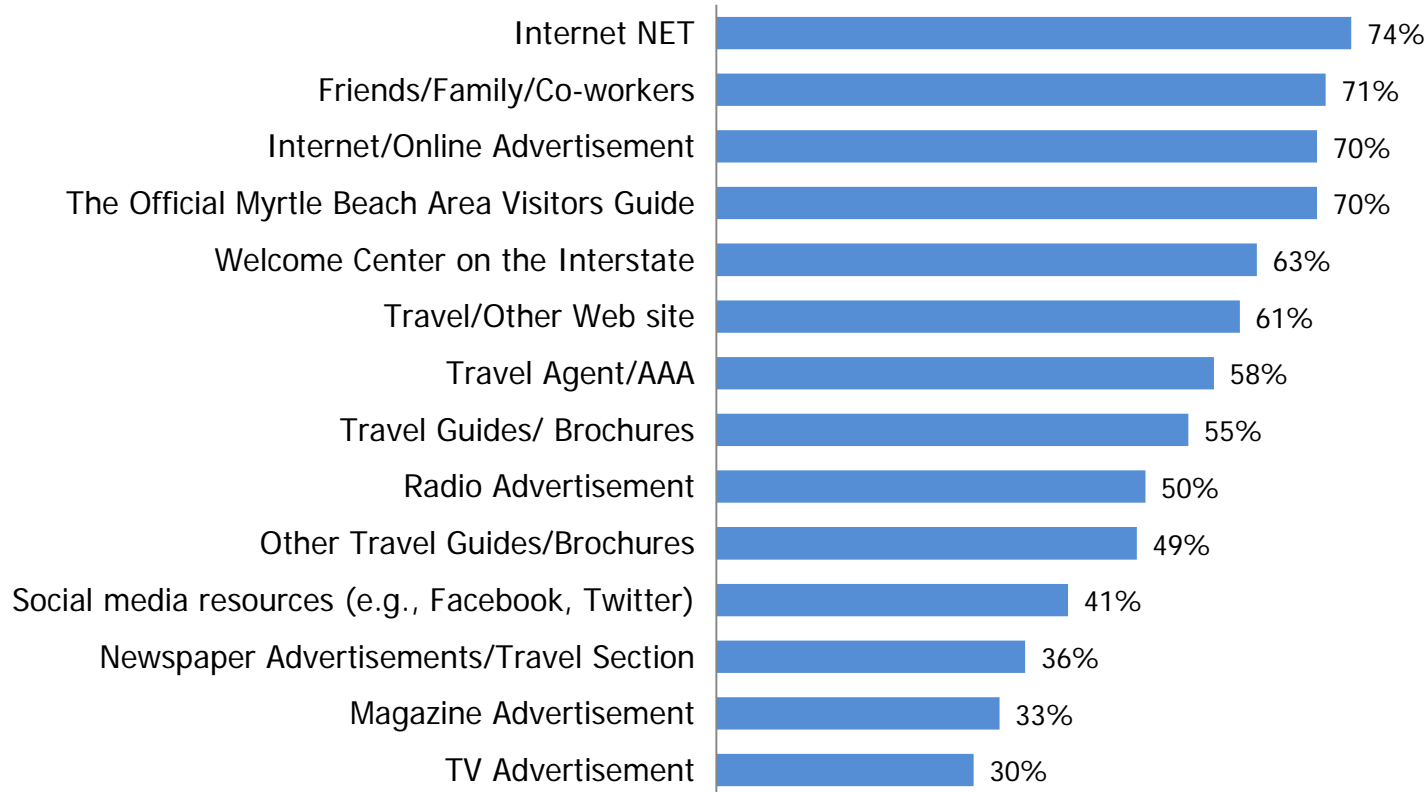


## **Appendix III: Information Sources & Planning**

## Information Source Usefulness

The Internet, Friends/Family/Co-workers, and the Visitors Guide are the most useful vacation planning information sources.

*Usefulness of Information Sources  
 (Top-2-Box on a 0-10 Usefulness Scale)*



*Base: Inquirers; visited Myrtle Beach in 2011 varies by type of source used*