

Myrtle Beach  
2014 Economic Impact Study  
–March 2015–

## 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?
- **Review 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 list of VisitMyrtleBeach.com visitors and E-newsletter recipients.

	<b>n-size</b>
Email - Website Guide Order	1,119
E-newsletter	671
Website survey	674
<b>Total completes</b>	<b>2,515</b>
<b>Margin of Error</b>	<b>±1.9%</b>

- Respondents were surveyed between January 29<sup>th</sup>–February 17<sup>th</sup>, 2015.



- Among inquirers, half convert with a high return per marketing dollar
- We're seeing more repeat visitors
- Visitor spending remains stable while number of visitors is increasing
- Those who visit are extremely satisfied (our Net Promoter is extremely high)
- The Internet continues to be a primary source of information and influences the consideration of Myrtle Beach as a destination

## Key Finding

**Marketing communications continue to generate and convert a significant volume of visitors, while the proportion of new converts is increasing**

The conversion rate is an estimated **50%** among website visitors, resulting in an estimated 3,600,000 travel parties in 2014.

Among visitors, 49% are Repeat Converts (up 4% over the previous year). 38% were New Converts—visiting the Myrtle Beach area for the first time ever in 2014—and 13% are Lapsed Converts (last visited 4+ years ago).

## Key Finding

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

On average, guests spent \$2,755 per group over the length of their Myrtle Beach stay – that’s an estimated **\$445 dollars of revenue per marketing dollar** spent from *converted site visitors alone*.

## Key Finding

**Our Net Promoter Score of 86% among Converts demonstrates tremendous word-of-mouth equity for the Myrtle Beach area**

A significant majority of Myrtle Beach visitors highly recommend us, which likely accounts for the increase in Repeat Converts and sustained high levels of New Converts.

## Key Finding

**The Internet remains the most utilized information source for trip planning, with 82% using it in vacation planning**

Among those who use the Internet in planning, VisitMyrtleBeach.com is a vital resource: it is used by 85% of Converts. Furthermore, 58% say the site influenced their decision.

49% of Converts begin planning their visit 1 to 4 months in advance, and 34% begin planning 4+ months in advance. Advance trip planning coincides with VisitMyrtleBeach.com usage.



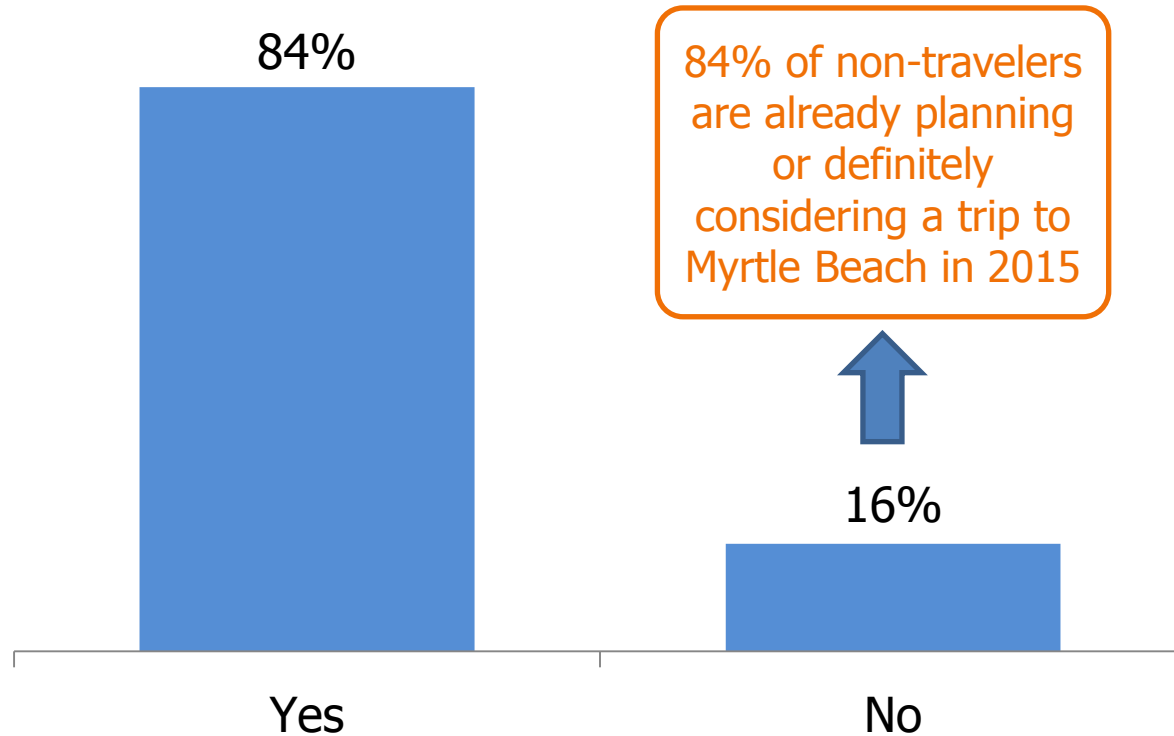


# Myrtle Beach Visitation

## 2014 Leisure Travelers

84% of Inquirers took a leisure trip in 2014. Among those who did not, 84% are planning a trip to Myrtle Beach in 2015.

*Took a Vacation in 2014*



**Base: Total Inquirers (n=2515)**

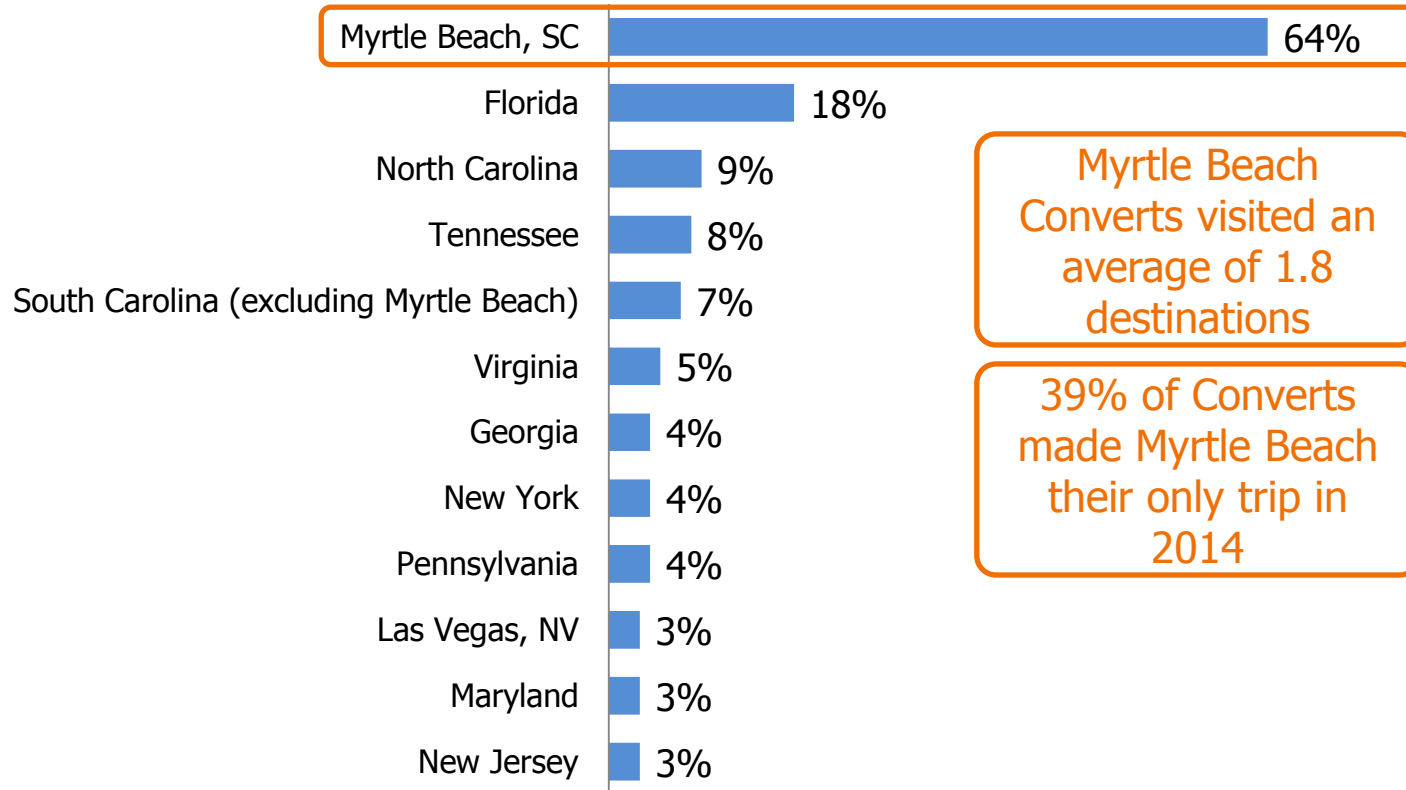
Q2. Did you take a vacation in 2014?

Q43. How likely are you to take a leisure vacation to the Myrtle Beach area in 2015?

# Vacation Destinations

Among inquirers/site visitors, 64% of those who took a vacation in 2014 went to Myrtle Beach.

*Destinations Visited in 2014*



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

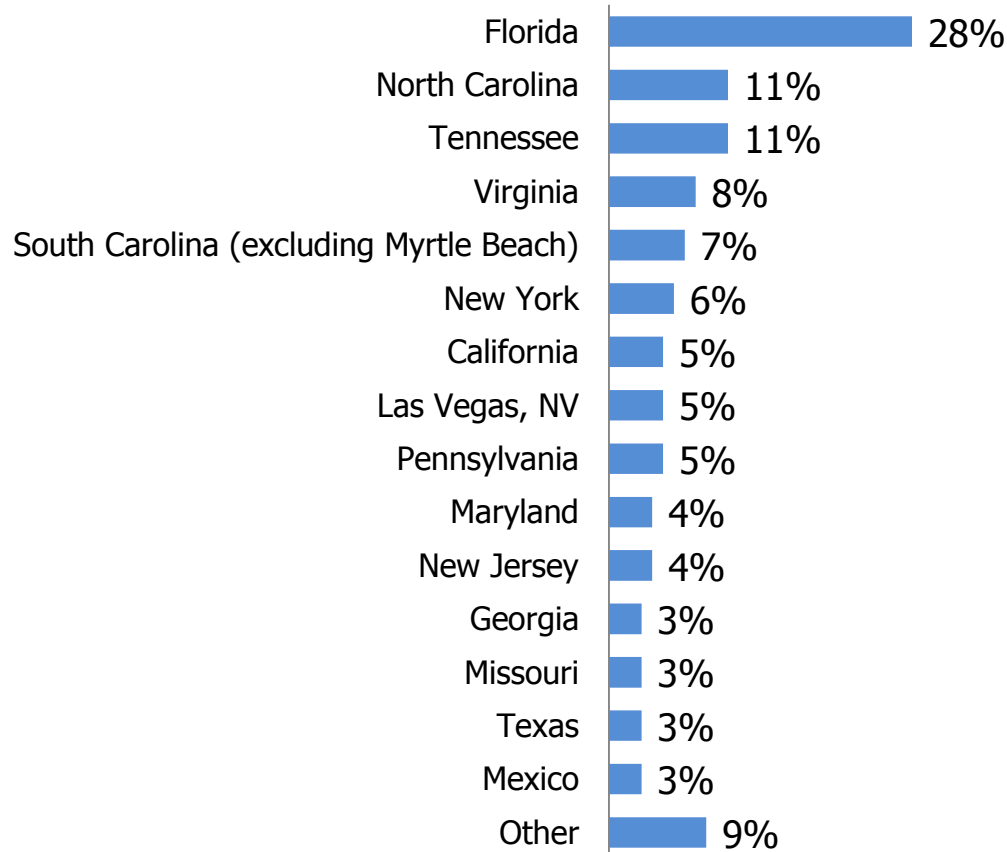
**Base: Took a vacation in 2014 (n=2112)**

Q7. Where did you vacation in 2014? [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*



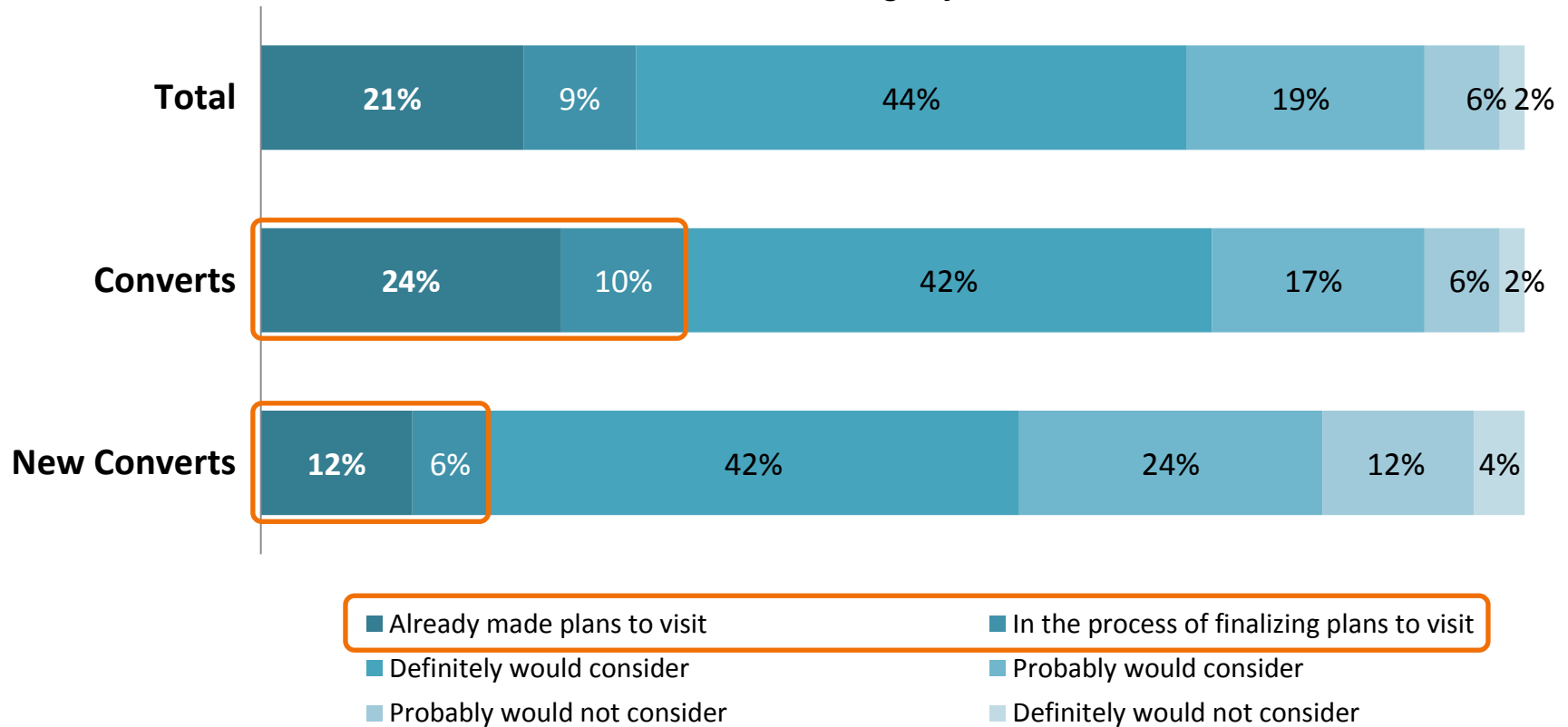
Note: Destinations with less than 3% visitation not shown.

**Base: Non-Converts; did not visit Myrtle Beach in 2014 (n=658)**

## Likelihood of 2015 Myrtle Beach Visit

Among Converts, 34% are already making 2015 plans, while an additional 42% would 'definitely consider' returning. Furthermore, 18% of first-time visitors (New Converts) are already making 2015 plans.

*Likelihood of Visiting Myrtle Beach in 2015*



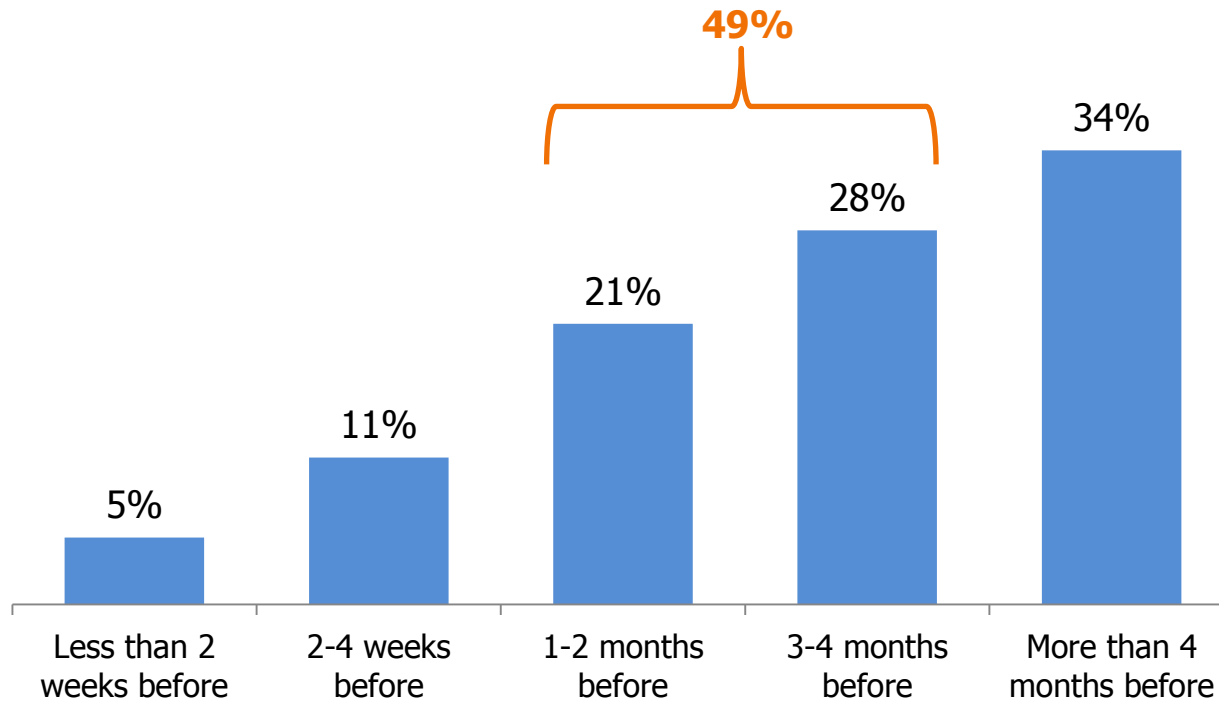
**Base: Inquirers who took a vacation in 2014 (n=2113)**



## **Vacation Planning & Information Sources**

49% of Converts began planning their visit 1 to 4 months in advance, and 34% began planning more than 4 months in advance.

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



**Base: Converts; visited Myrtle Beach in 2014 (n=1456)**

Information Source:  
 Internet/Online

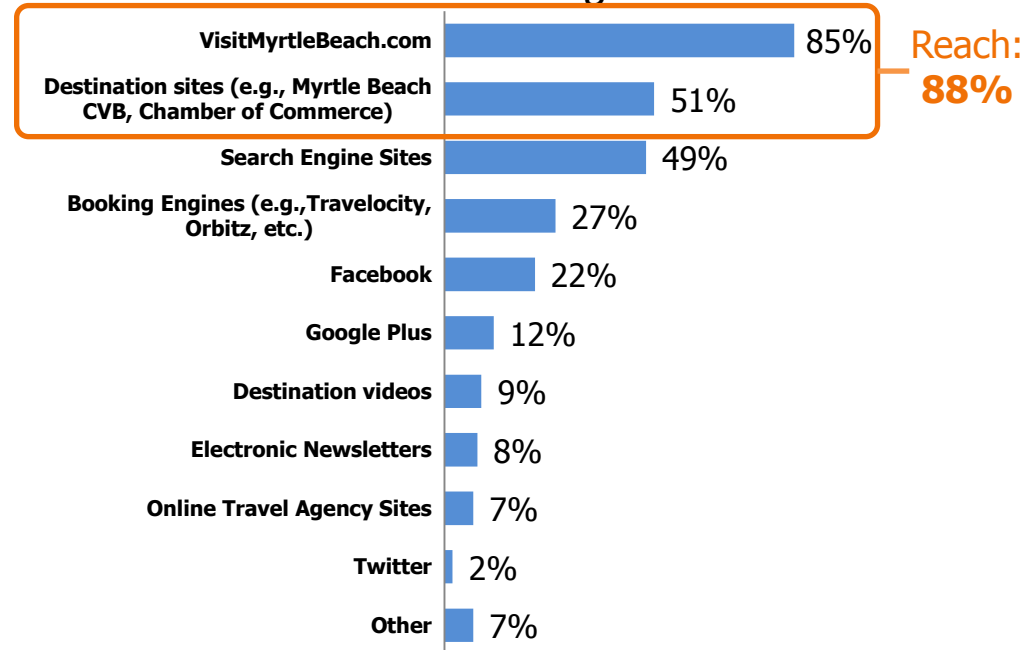
The Internet is the most utilized information source for trip planning by far (82%). Among those using the Internet to plan their Myrtle Beach vacation, VisitMyrtleBeach.com is the most popular resource at 85%.

*Used the Internet  
 in Planning*



**Base: Converts; visited Myrtle Beach in 2014  
 (n=1456)**

*Online Sources  
 Used in Planning*

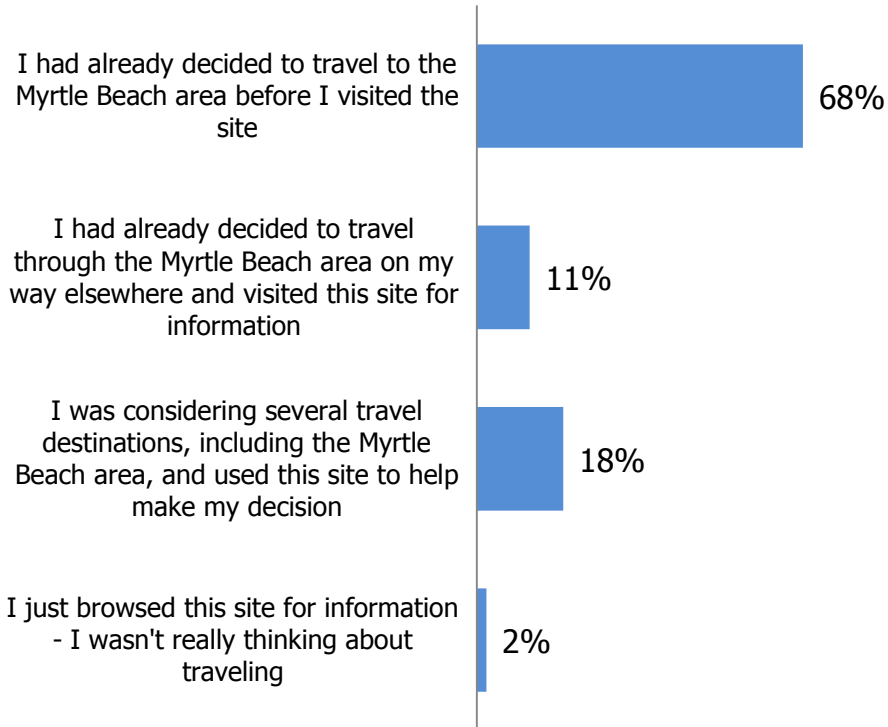


**Base: Converts who used the Internet for planning  
 (n=815)**

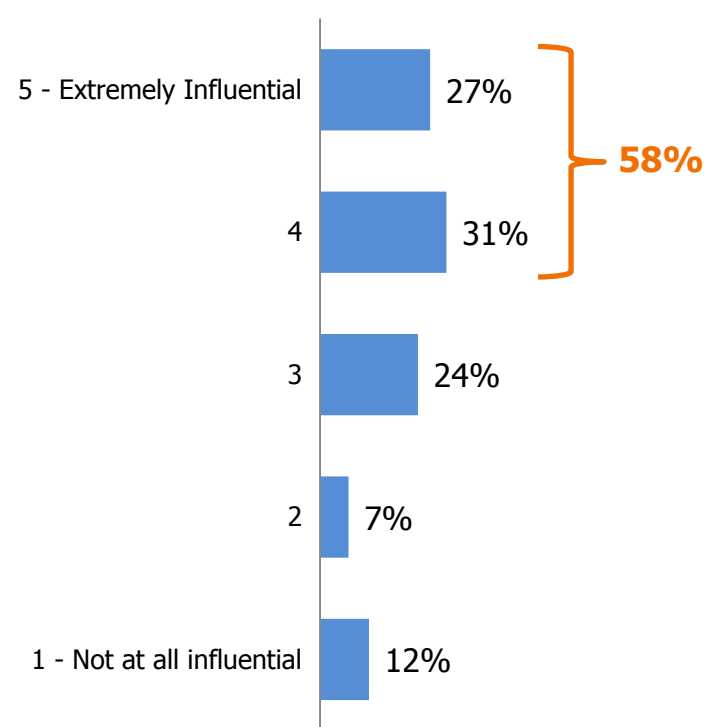


Although the majority of visitors say they already decided to visit the area before going to VisitMyrtleBeach.com, 58% say the site influenced their decision – reinforcing an already strong desire to vacation here.

*Role of VisitMyrtleBeach.com  
in MB Visitation*



*Influence of VisitMyrtleBeach.com  
in MB Visitation*



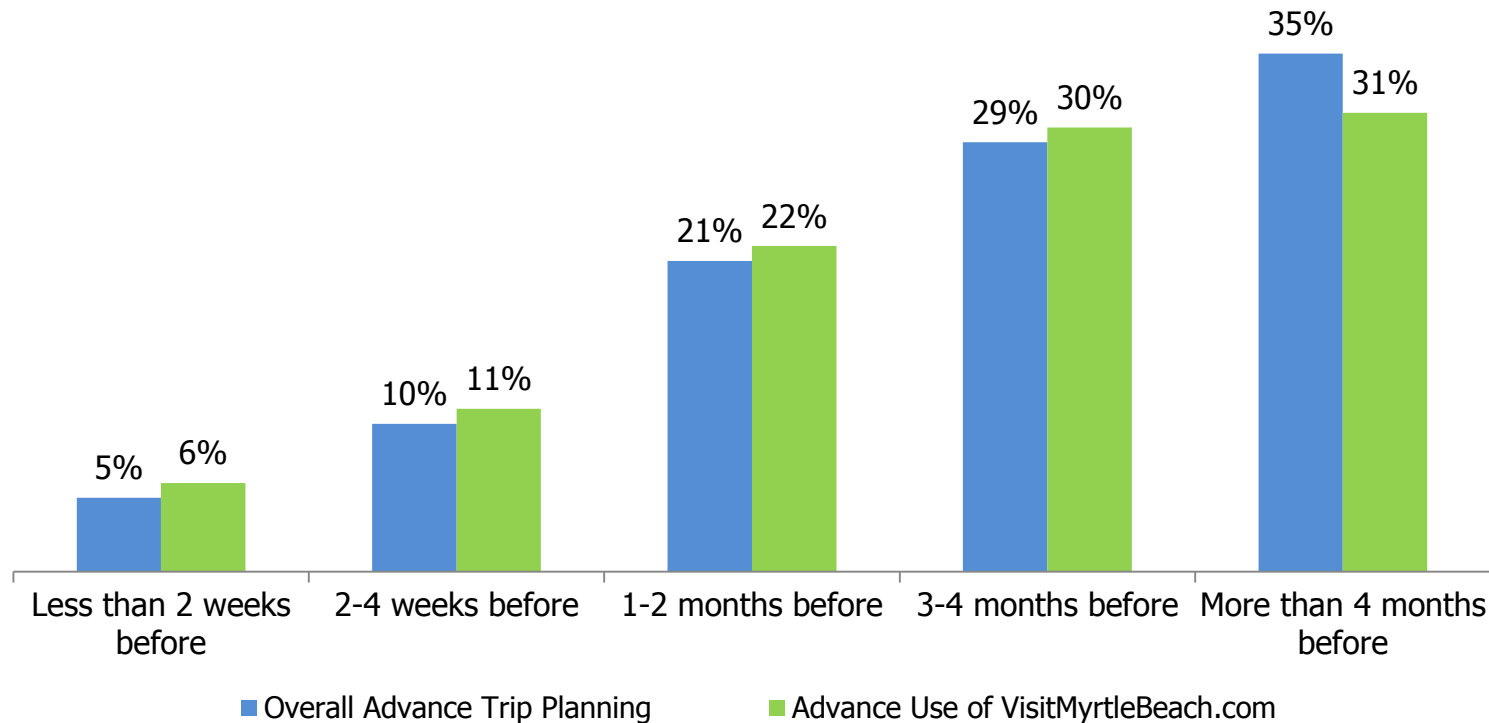
**Base: Used VisitMyrtleBeach.com in planning (n=691)**

Q18a. What role did VisitMyrtleBeach.com have in your decision to travel to the Myrtle Beach area?

Q18b. On a scale of 1 - 5, how influential was VisitMyrtleBeach.com in your decision to vacation in the Myrtle Beach area?

Initial VisitMyrtleBeach.com visitation mirrors overall advance trip planning, indicating the site continues to be a first step in the planning process.

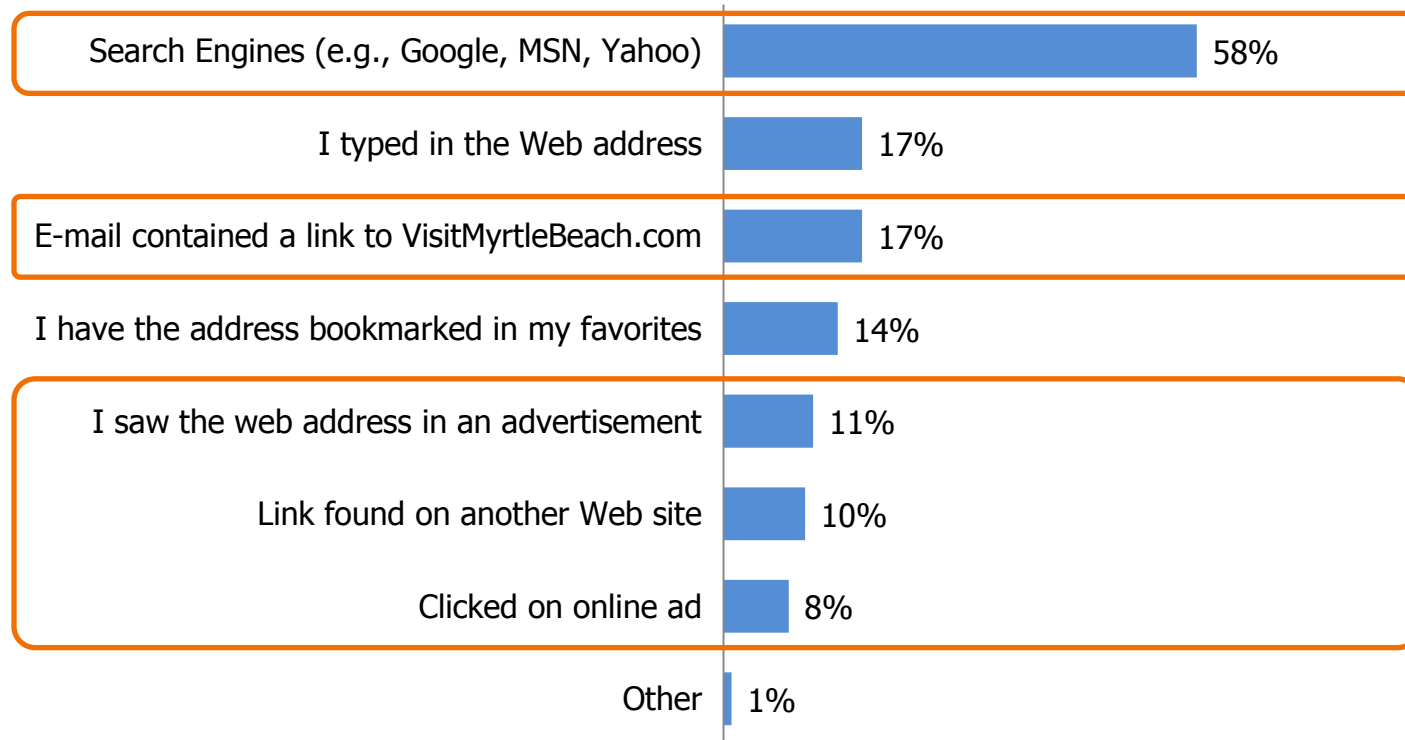
*Advance Visitation of VisitMyrtleBeach.com*



**Base: Used VisitMyrtleBeach.com in planning (n=691)**

At 58%, Search engines remain the primary source of discovery of VisitMyrtleBeach.com. Beyond search engine optimization, other online efforts (e.g., e-mail campaigns, digital ads) are also successful at driving site visitation.

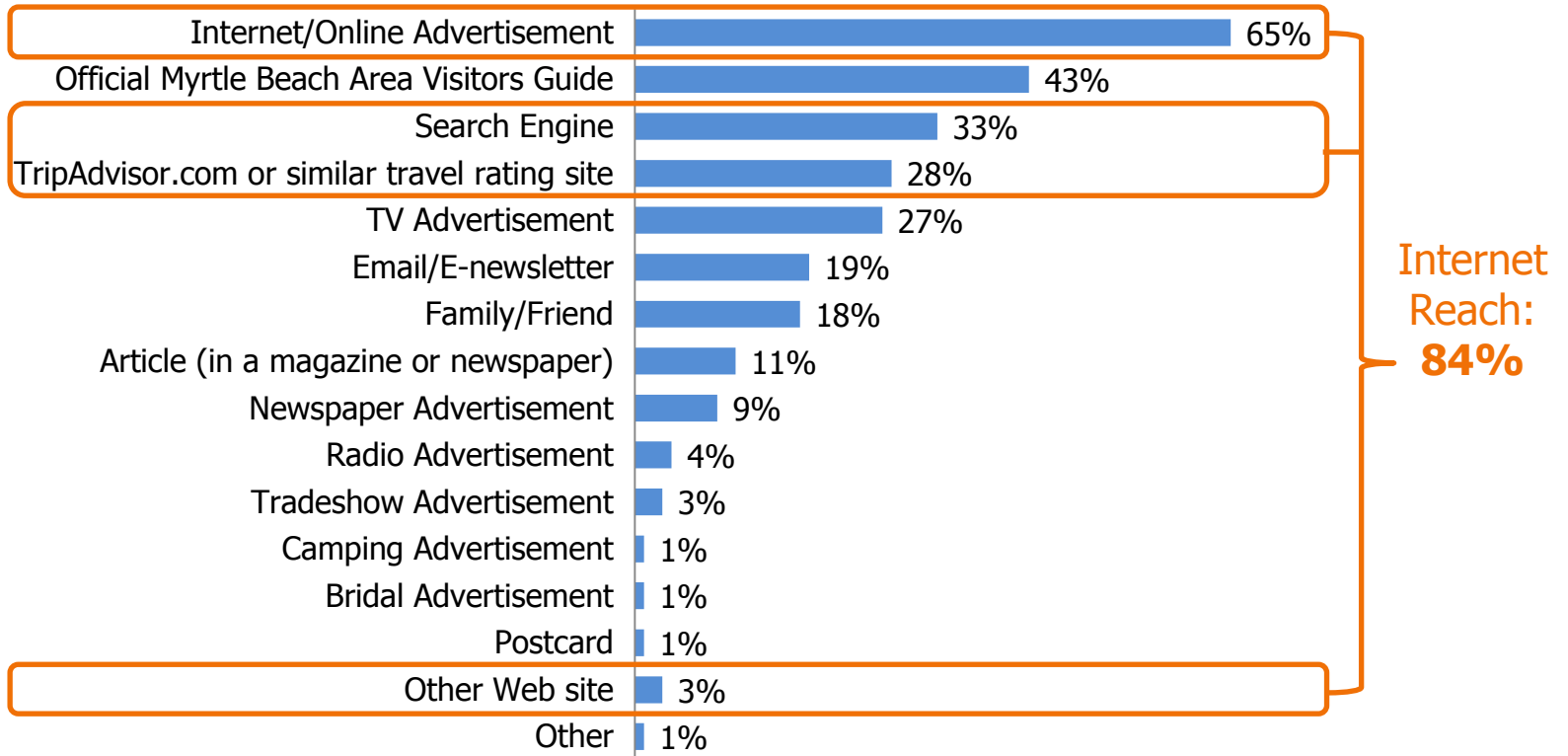
*Means of Finding VisitMyrtleBeach.com*



**Base: Used VisitMyrtleBeach.com in planning (n=691)**

Among those citing advertising as the source of their awareness of VisitMyrtleBeach.com, 65% learn about it through the Internet, followed by the Visitors Guide (43%).

*Ad Source of VisitMyrtleBeach.com*



**Base: Learned about VisitMyrtleBeach.com through an advertisement (n=79)**

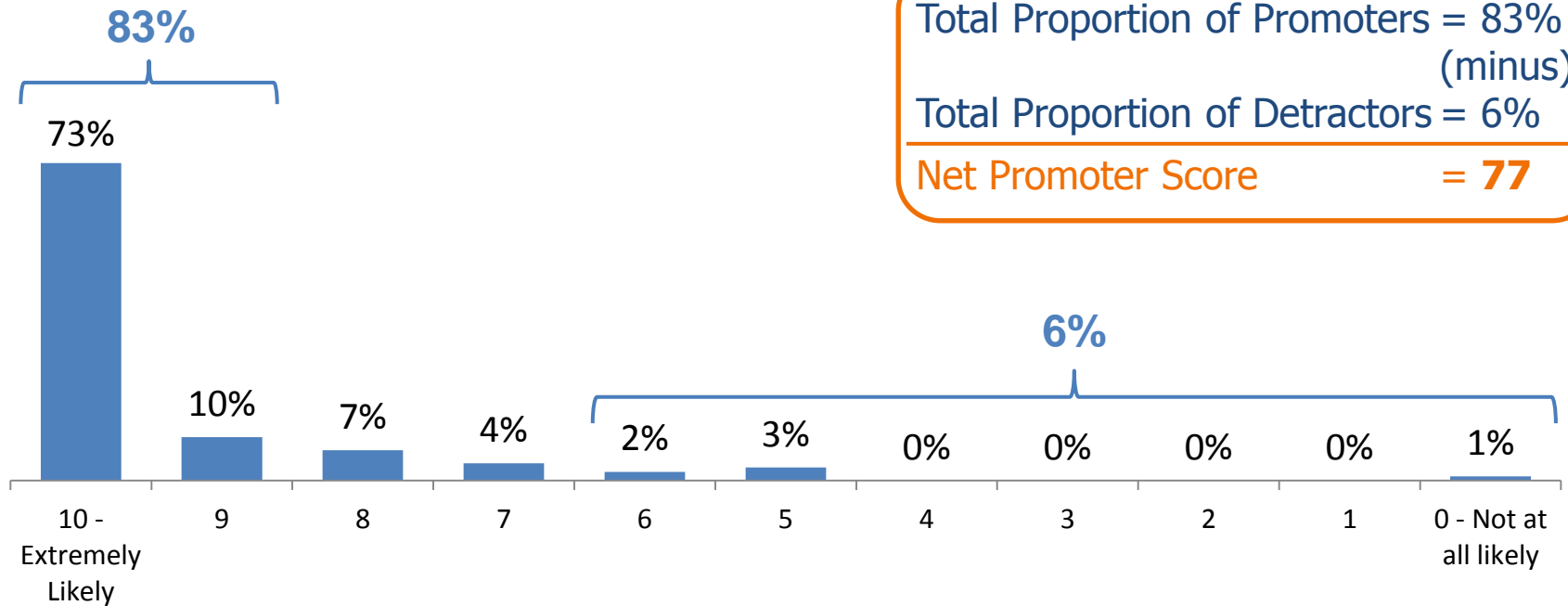


# Net Promoter Score & Interest in Visiting

# Net Promoter Score Index Explained

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

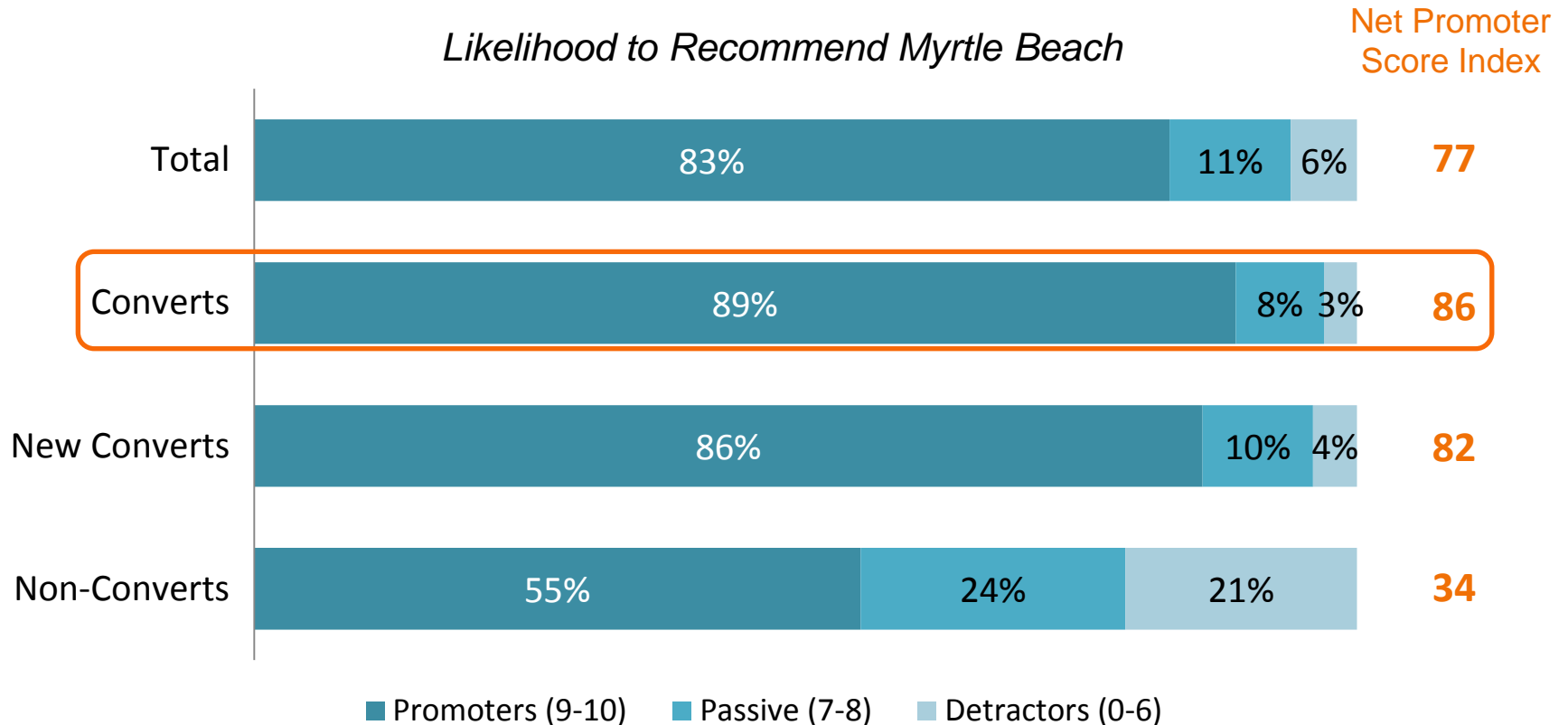
- The Net Promoter Score (NPS) is a brand in and of itself and correlates extremely highly with satisfaction but is a more sensitive measure to high and low scores.
- 'Recommendations' are what every brand should aim for – we need to set that bar.



**Base: Took a vacation in 2014 (n=2112)**

# Net Promoter Score Index

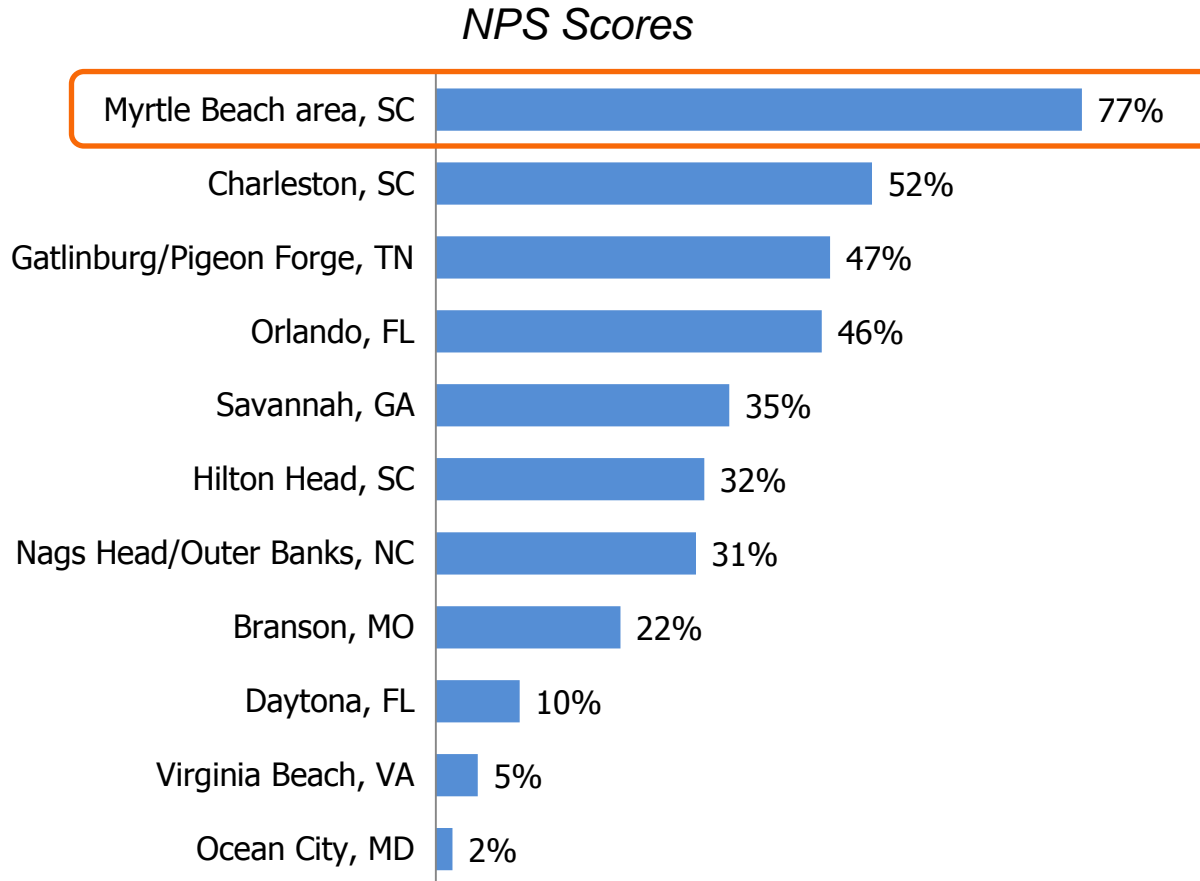
At 86% among Converts, we have a tremendously strong Net Promoter Score. This represents considerable word-of-mouth equity for the Myrtle Beach area.



**Base: Took a vacation in 2014 (n=2112)**

## Net Promoter Score Index vs. Others

Among past and present visitors of these respective vacation destinations, the Myrtle Beach area's Net Promoter Score is the highest at 77%.



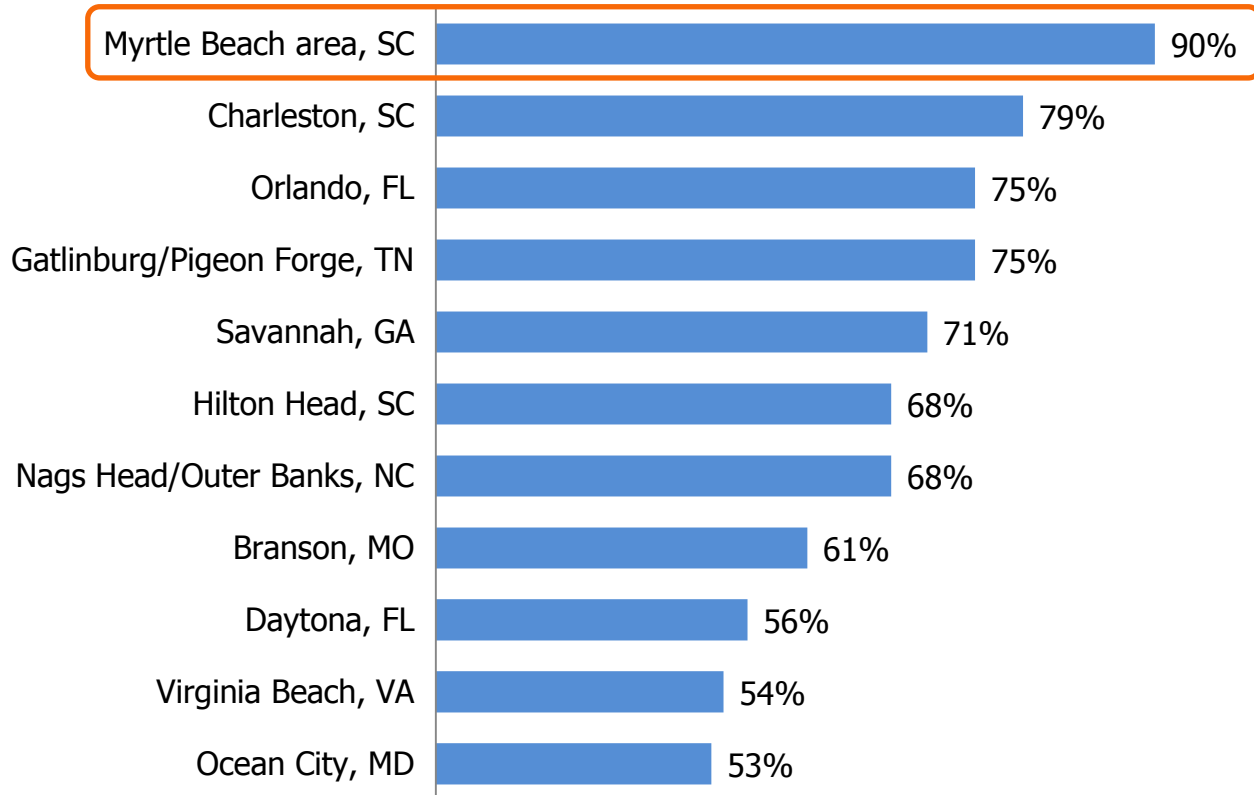
**Base: Varies, based on those who have ever visited respective destinations.**



## Likelihood to Recommend

Not surprisingly, Myrtle Beach also ranks first in likelihood to recommend among competitive destinations (90%).

*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 will travel to the Myrtle Beach area soon and have made my reservation	52%	×	80%	=	42%
I am planning to travel to the Myrtle Beach area soon but have not made my reservation	28%	×	20%	=	6%
I may be traveling soon and am considering Myrtle Beach as a possible destination	18%	×	5%	=	2%
I do not have plans to travel to Myrtle Beach anytime soon	2%				

50%  
 Conversion  
 Rate

\* Source: VisitMyrtleBeach.com website survey.

## Website Conversion Rate & Return

The website conversion rate of 50% is based on those who have already made reservations, planned, or are considering, a trip to Myrtle Beach.

### 2014 Visitor Conversion & Marketing Return\*

Website Visits	12,300,000
Adjusted Website Visits <sup>1</sup>	7,380,000
Conversion Rate <sup>2</sup>	50%
Converts	3,653,100
Spend Per Trip	\$2,755
Visitor Expenditures <sup>3</sup>	\$10,064,290,500
Total Marketing/Media Expenditure	\$22,598,304
<b>Revenue Per Marketing Dollar Spent</b>	<b>\$445</b>

1. 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.
2. Percentage of web site visitors who stated they have already made arrangements or are planning to visit Myrtle Beach. Factored for accuracy to 42% of "made reservations", 6% of "planning to visit Myrtle Beach", and 2% of "considering Myrtle Beach".
3. 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.

\* **Figures based on VisitMyrtleBeach.com site traffic metrics and 2014 website survey results.**

# Myrtle Beach Visitor Spending Patterns

The average party spent \$2,755 in total – accommodations were the largest single chunk at \$702 for the total stay (\$135/night on average).

*Trip Expenditures Among 2014 Visitors*

	Average Expenditure per Party
Accommodations	\$702
Restaurants/ Groceries	\$561
Golf	\$60
Entertainment/ Attractions	\$418
Shopping	\$491
Daily transportation (excluding rental car)	\$124
Rental car	\$84
Miscellaneous	\$313
<b>Total Expenditure:</b>	<b>\$2,755</b>

Median Party Size:  
**4 people**

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

*Base: Converts; visited Myrtle Beach in 2014 (n=1455)*

## Website Conversion Rate & Return by Visitor Type

Marketing impact 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*.

*2014 Marketing Return by Visitor Type\**

	Repeat Converts (visited 1-3 years ago)	Lapsed Converts (visited 4+ years ago)	New Converts (never visited before)
Proportion of Converts	49%	13%	38%
Travel Parties	1,790,019	474,903	1,388,178
Visitor Expenditures	\$4,931,502,345	\$1,308,357,765	\$3,824,430,390
Revenue Per Marketing Dollar Spent	<b>\$218</b>	<b>\$58</b>	<b>\$169</b>

\* Figures based on VisitMyrtleBeach.com site traffic metrics and 2014 website survey results.

Three key indicators demonstrate very strong performance...



50%

Conversion rate among site visitors, with 37% being completely New Converts.

\$445

Revenue generated per dollar spent. \$2,755 spent per party over the length of their stay.

86

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	1%	1%	2%
25 to 34	10%	11%	11%
35 to 44	18%	20%	22%
45 to 54	27%	26%	26%
55 to 64	28%	28%	27%
65+	15%	13%	12%
Mean (years)	51.2	50.6	49.7
<b>Gender</b>			
Male	34%	35%	34%
Female	66%	65%	66%

# Respondent Profile

	Total	Converts	New Converts
<b>Marital Status</b>			
Married/Partnered	76%	77%	77%
Single	13%	12%	14%
Separated/Divorced/Widowed	11%	11%	9%
<b>Annual Household Income</b>			
Less than \$45,000	25%	22%	24%
\$45,000 - \$74,999	29%	29%	27%
\$75,000 - \$99,999	15%	16%	16%
\$100,000 or more	16%	17%	17%
Prefer not to answer	16%	16%	15%
Mean (\$000s)	\$66.2K	\$68.4K	\$68.2K
<b>Ethnicity</b>			
White	88%	88%	85%
Black	10%	9%	12%
Other	2%	3%	3%

# Respondent Profile

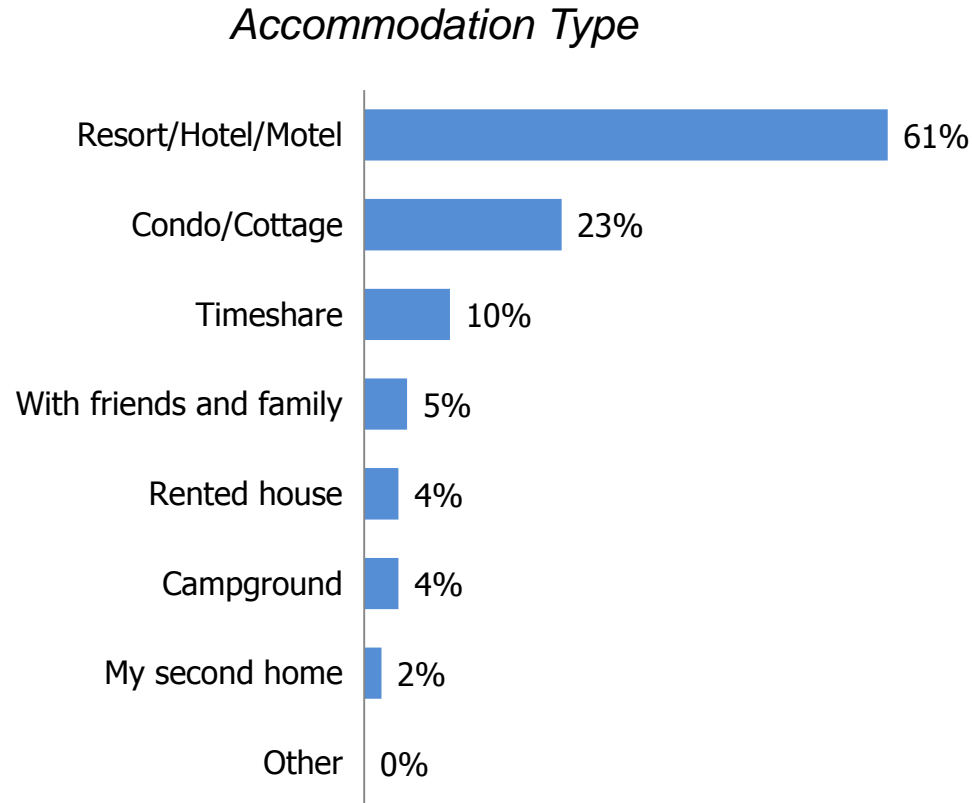
	Total	Converts	New Converts
<b>Employment Status</b>			
Employed full time	58%	63%	63%
Employed part time	7%	7%	8%
Not employed, in between jobs	2%	2%	2%
Homemaker	5%	5%	4%
Retired	23%	21%	19%
Student	1%	1%	1%
Other	3%	2%	2%
<b>Occupation (if employed)</b>			
Executive/Owner	3%	3%	3%
Manager/Technical	20%	21%	19%
Sales/Purchasing	8%	9%	9%
Other professional	34%	35%	37%
Craft/Factory	5%	5%	5%
Education	8%	8%	7%
Self-Employed	4%	4%	3%
Other	16%	15%	16%
<b>Education</b>			
HS graduate or less	21%	20%	20%
Some college/technical/trade school	32%	31%	29%
Associate's degree	13%	14%	15%
Bachelor's degree	21%	21%	22%
Post-graduate study/degree	12%	12%	14%
Other	1%	1%	1%



# Appendix I: Accommodations Patterns

## Accommodations Patterns

Most Converts stay in paid accommodations, with resort/hotel/motel accommodations being the most common (61%) and condo/cottage a distant second (23%).

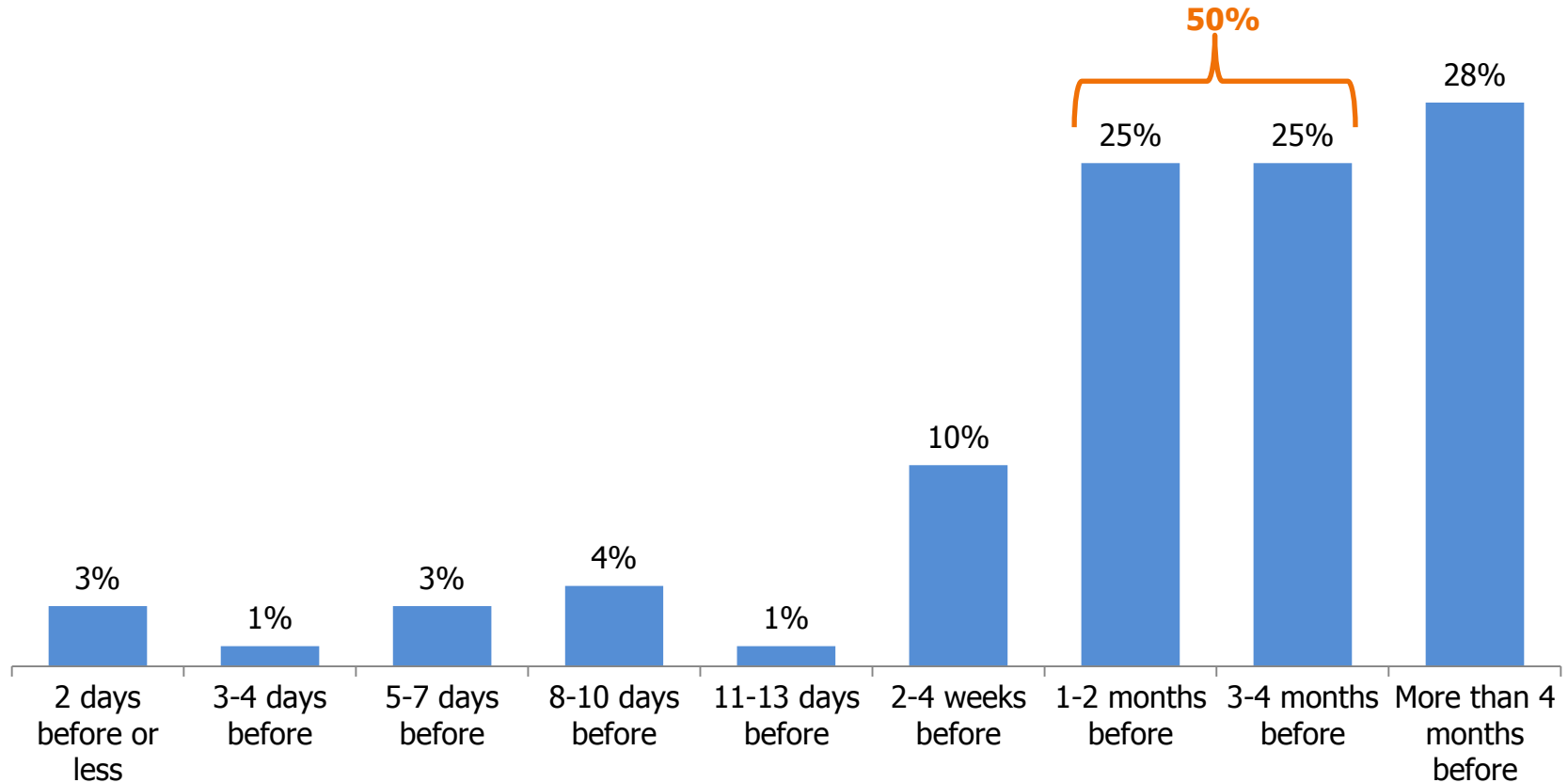


**Base: Converts; visited Myrtle Beach in 2014 (n=1455)**

# Accommodations Patterns

50% of Converts make lodging reservations 1 to 4 months prior to arrival, and 28% of Converts reserve 4+ months in advance.

*Advance Booking of Accommodations*

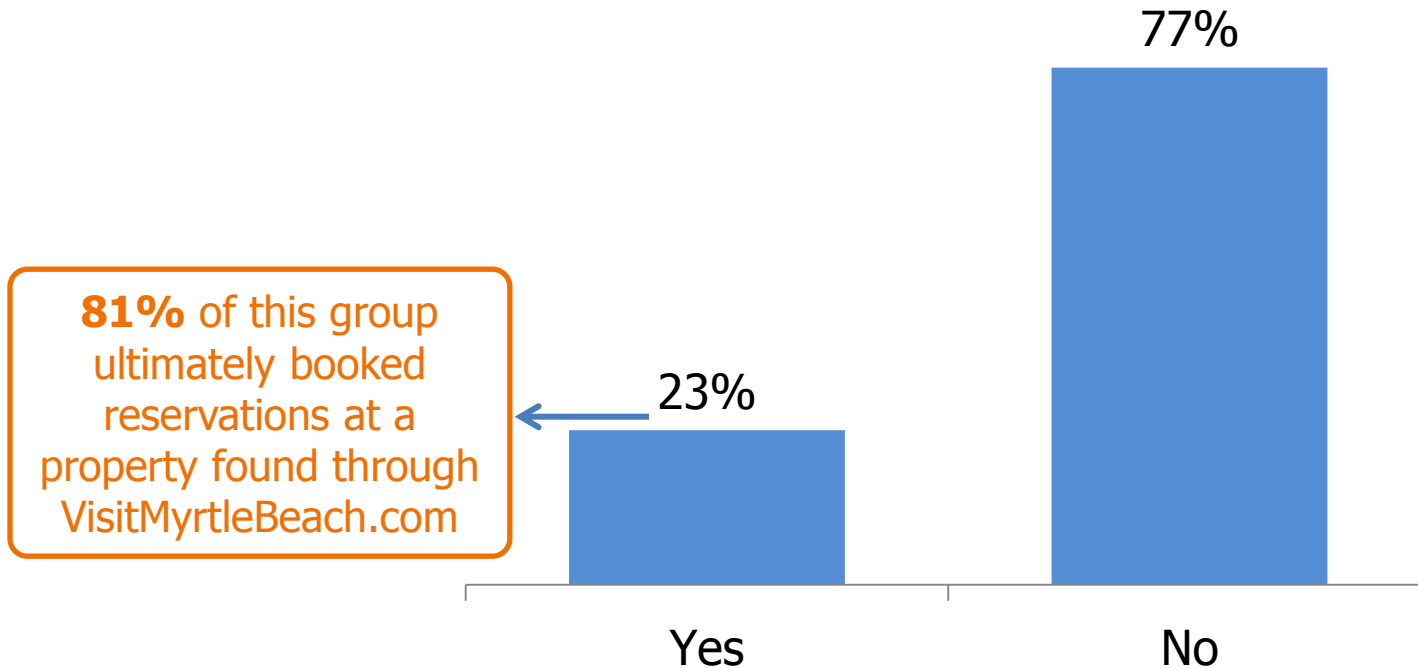


**Base: Stayed in paid accommodations (n=1397)**

## Accommodations Patterns

23% use VisitMyrtleBeach.com to locate and secure accommodations. Among those who use it, 81% ultimately book at a property they find through the site.

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

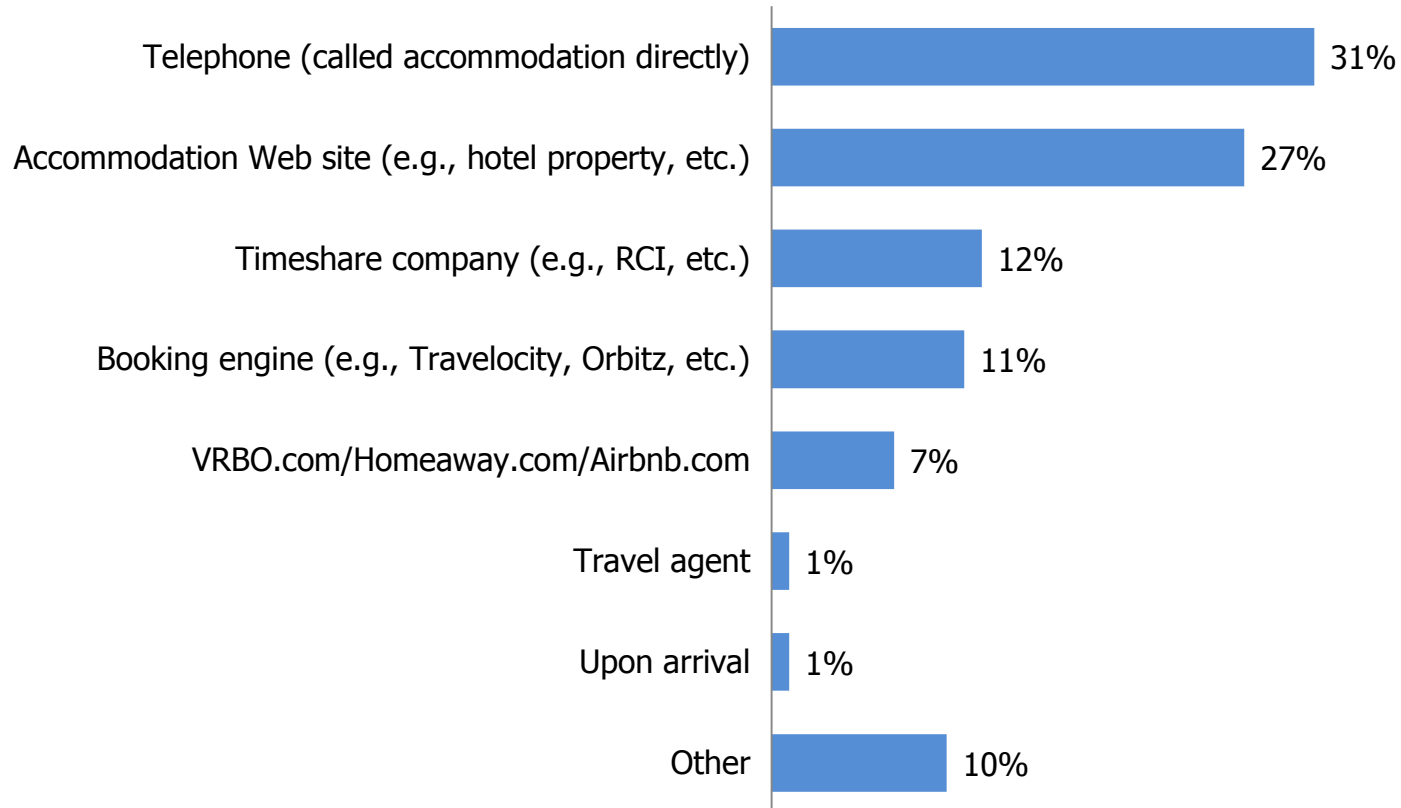


**Base: Stayed in paid accommodations (n=1397)**

## Accommodations Patterns

Among those who stay in paid accommodations on their trip, 31% make reservations via the telephone, and 27% use the lodging's website.

*Reservations Channel*



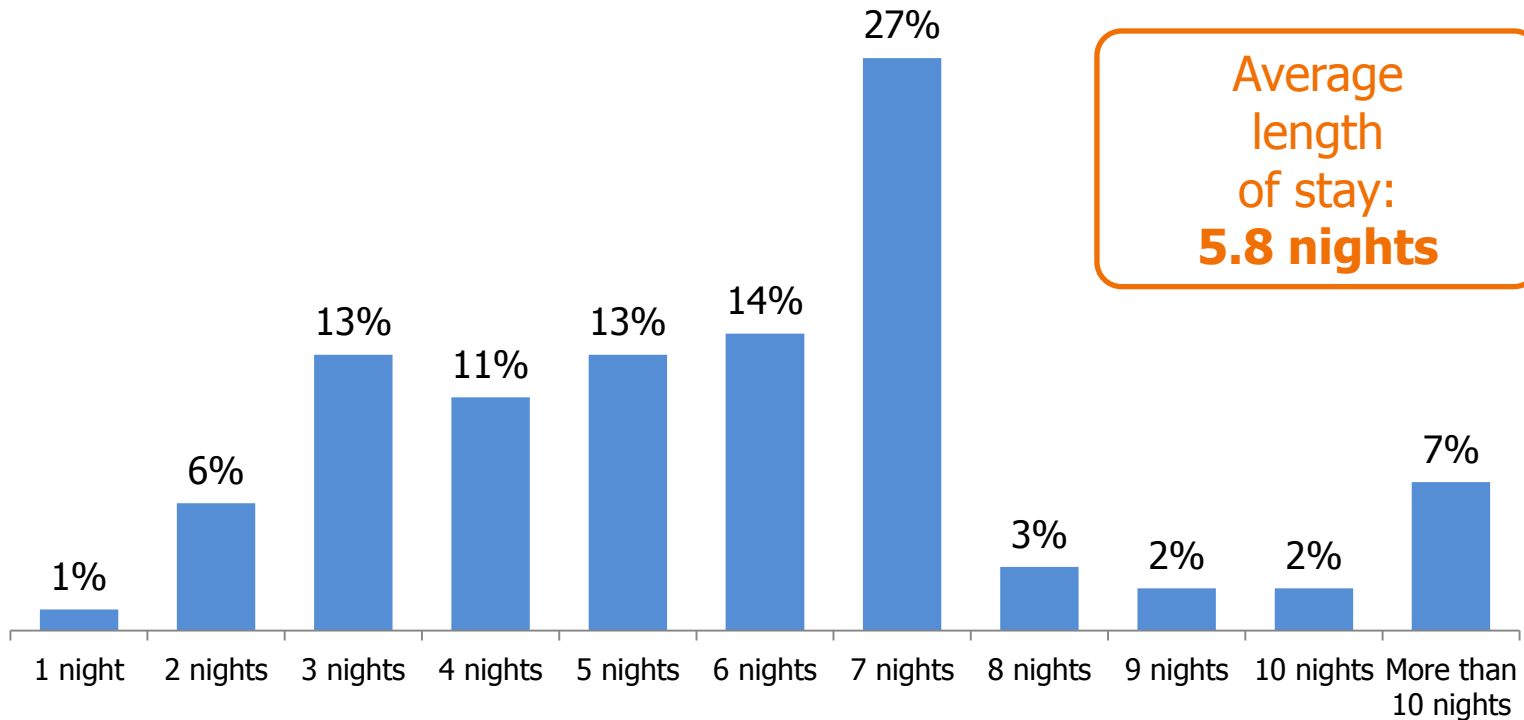
**Base: Stayed in paid accommodations (n=1397)**



## Accommodations Patterns

Regardless of whether they pay for their accommodations, 27% of Converts stay in the Myrtle Beach area 7 nights (5.8 nights on average).

*Length of Trip  
 (Paid and Unpaid Accommodations)*

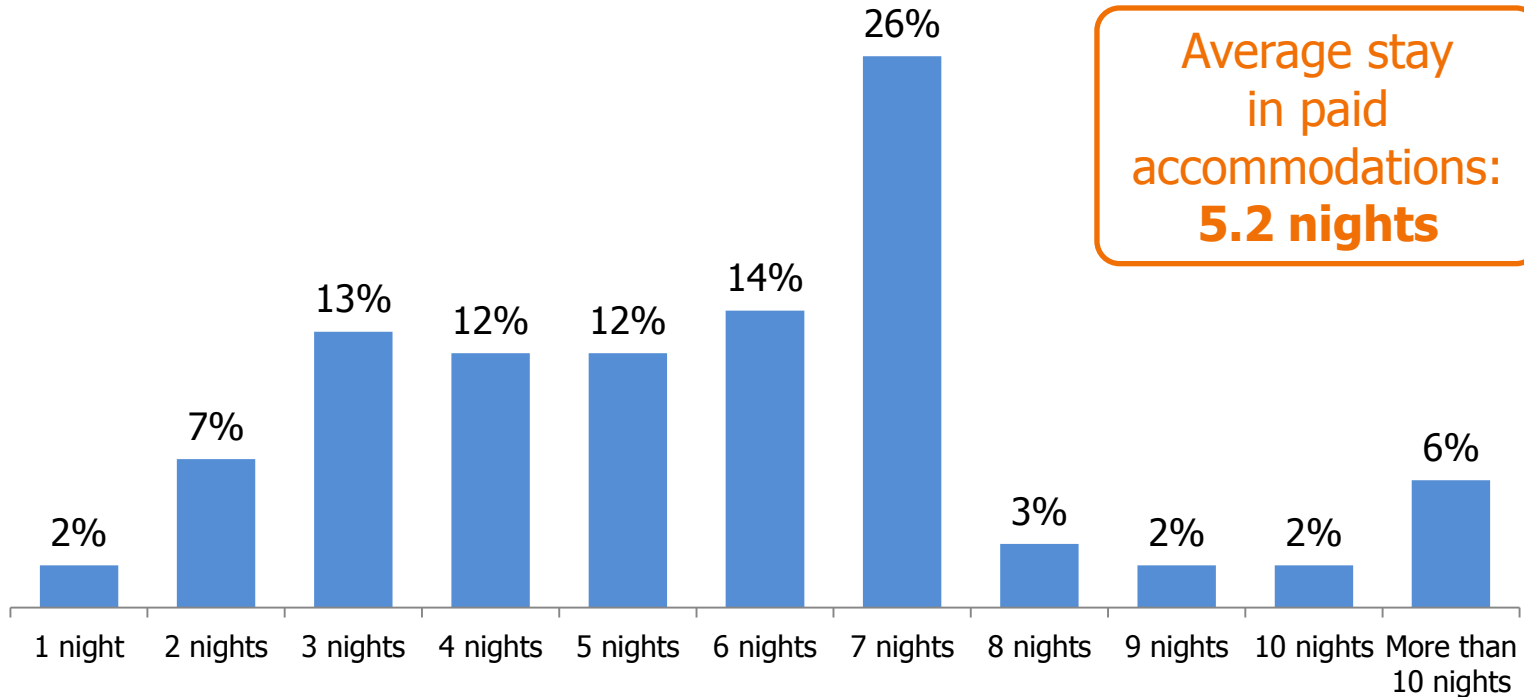


**Base: Converts; visited Myrtle Beach in 2014 (n=1455)**

## Accommodations Patterns

The majority of Converts report staying in paid accommodations. As such, 7 nights is again the most common length of their trip to the Myrtle Beach area (26%, with an average stay of 5.2 nights).

*Length of Trip  
 (Paid Accommodations)*

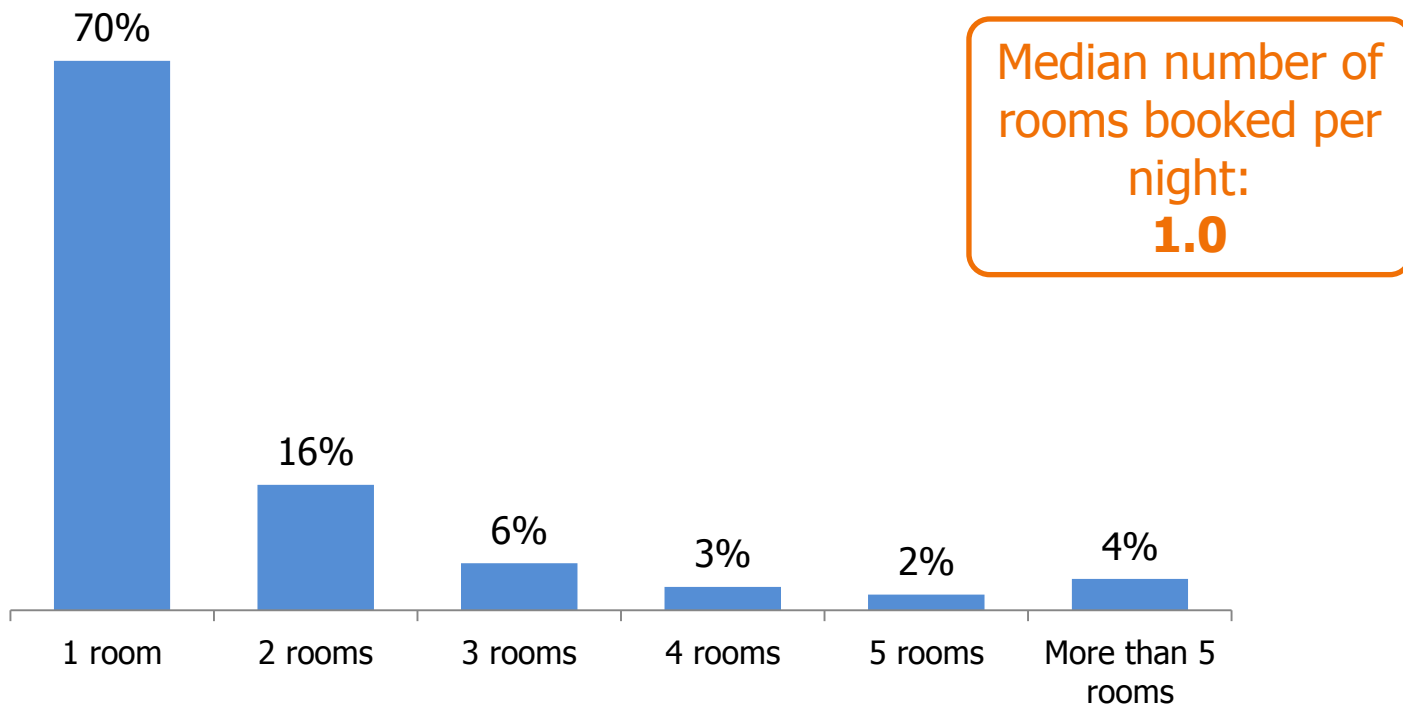


**Base: Stayed in paid accommodations (n=1304)**

## Accommodations Patterns

Fully 70% of visitors who stay in paid accommodations book 1 room per night.

*Rooms Booked per Night*



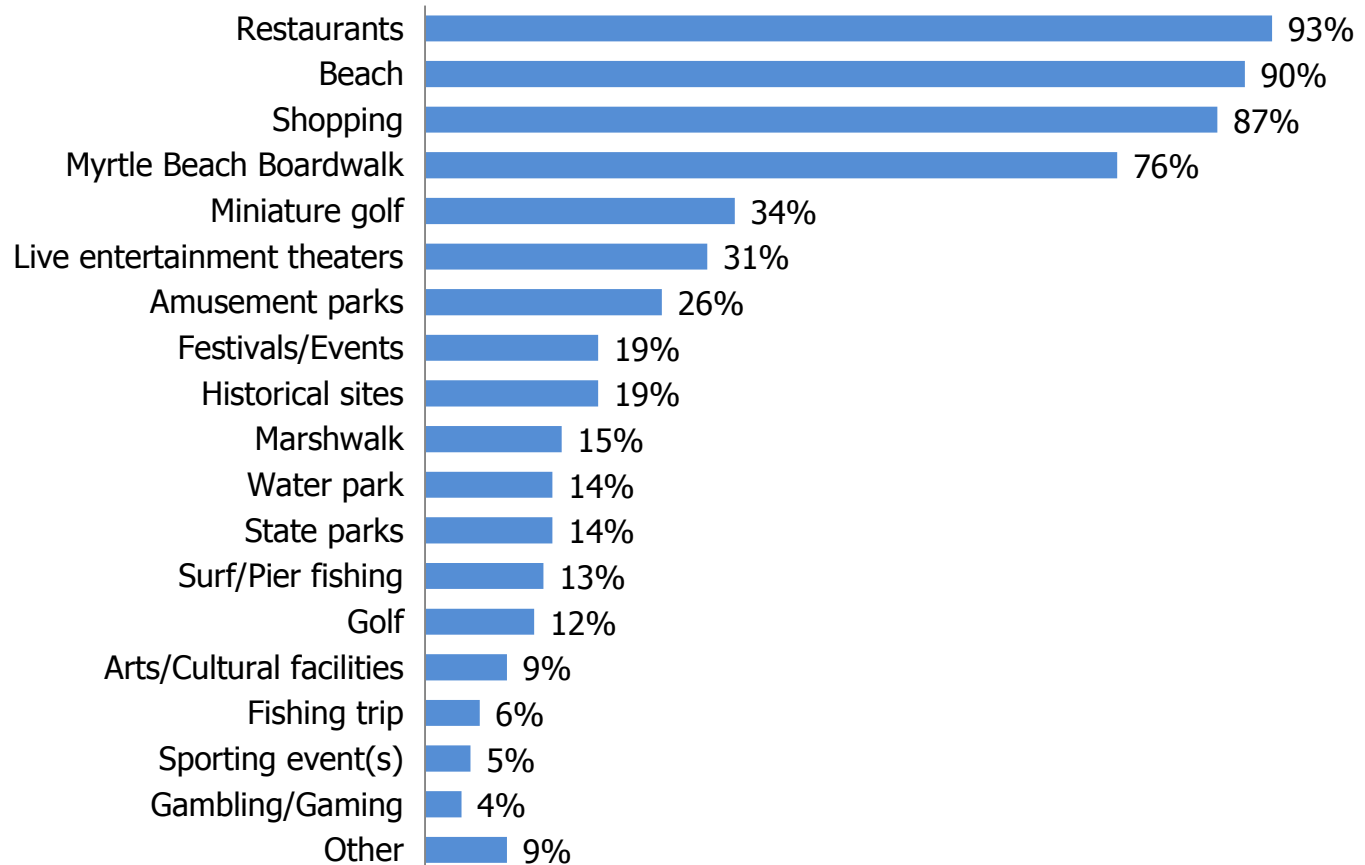
**Base: Stayed in paid accommodations (n=1397)**



## Appendix II: Travel Patterns

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

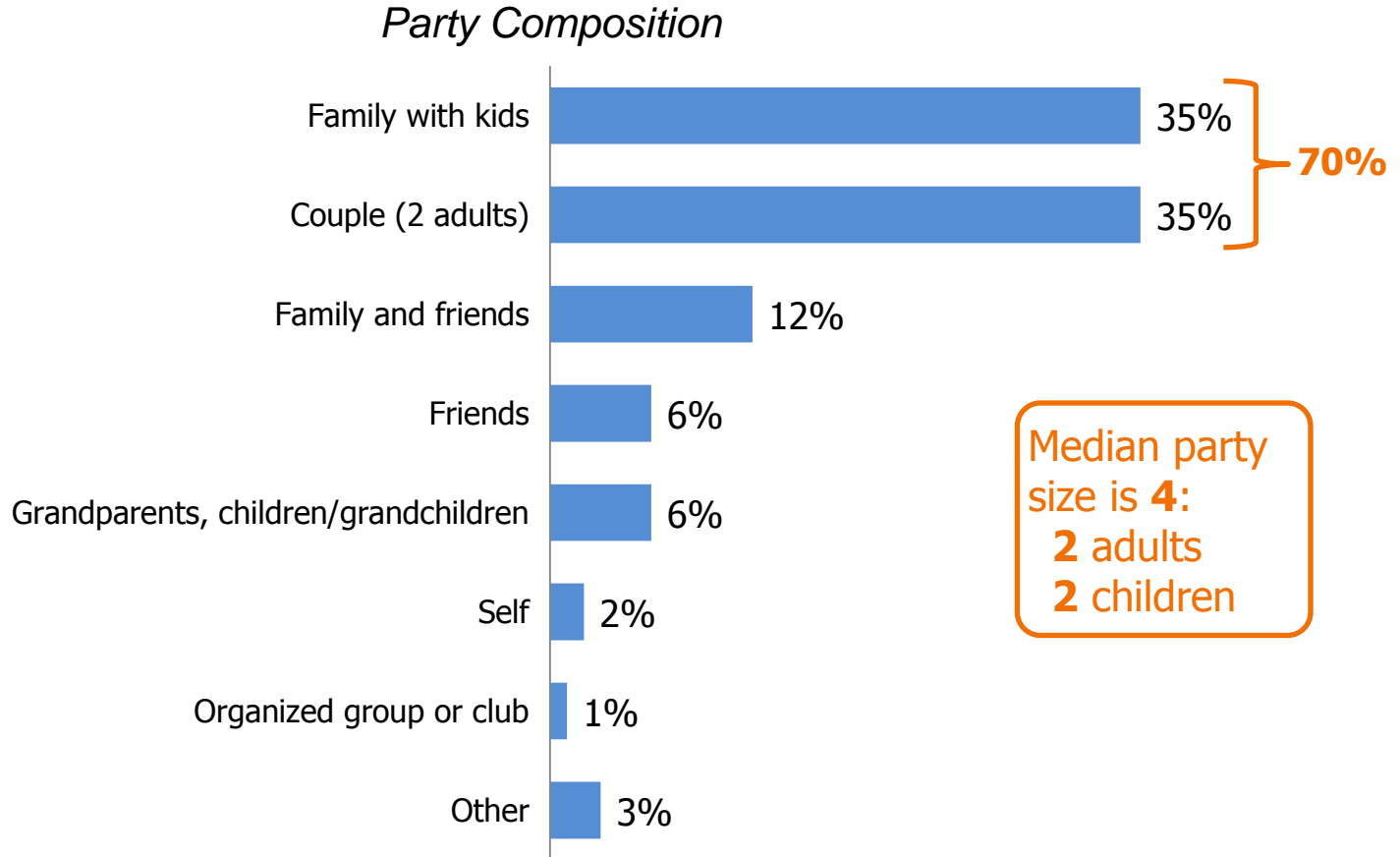
### *Activities Participated in at Myrtle Beach*



**Base: Converts; visited Myrtle Beach in 2014 (n=1455)**

# Travel Party Composition

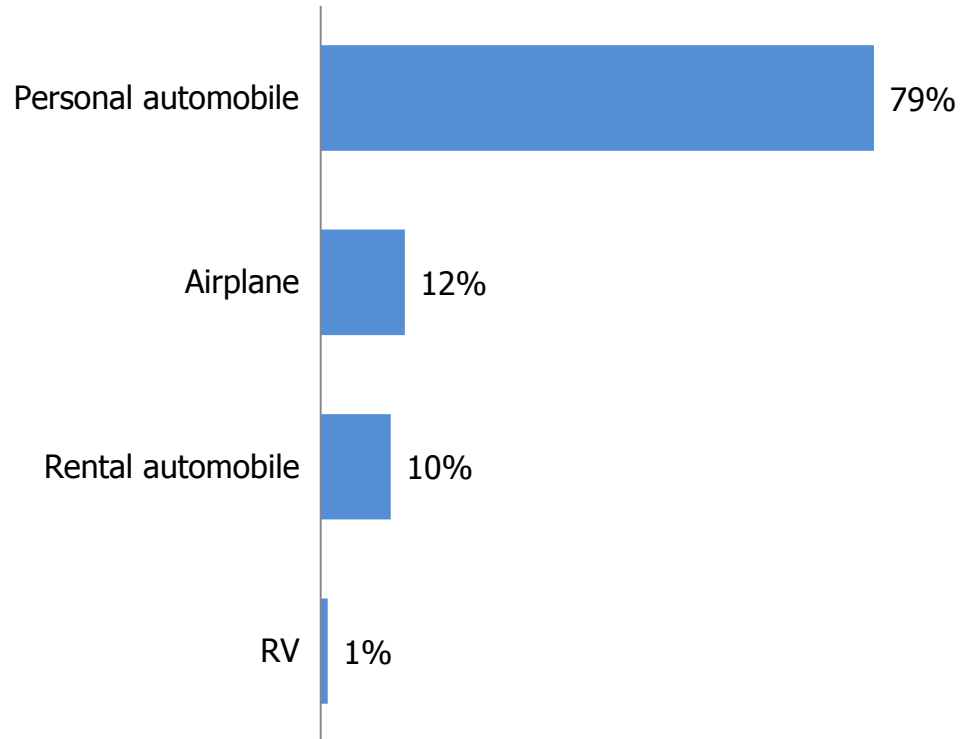
The majority of Myrtle Beach Converts travel in groups, with 70% traveling as a family with kids or as a couple.



**Base: Converts; visited Myrtle Beach in 2014 (n=1455)**

Nearly 80% of Converts arrive in the area via their own car, with air travel a distant second (12%).

*Mode of Transportation*

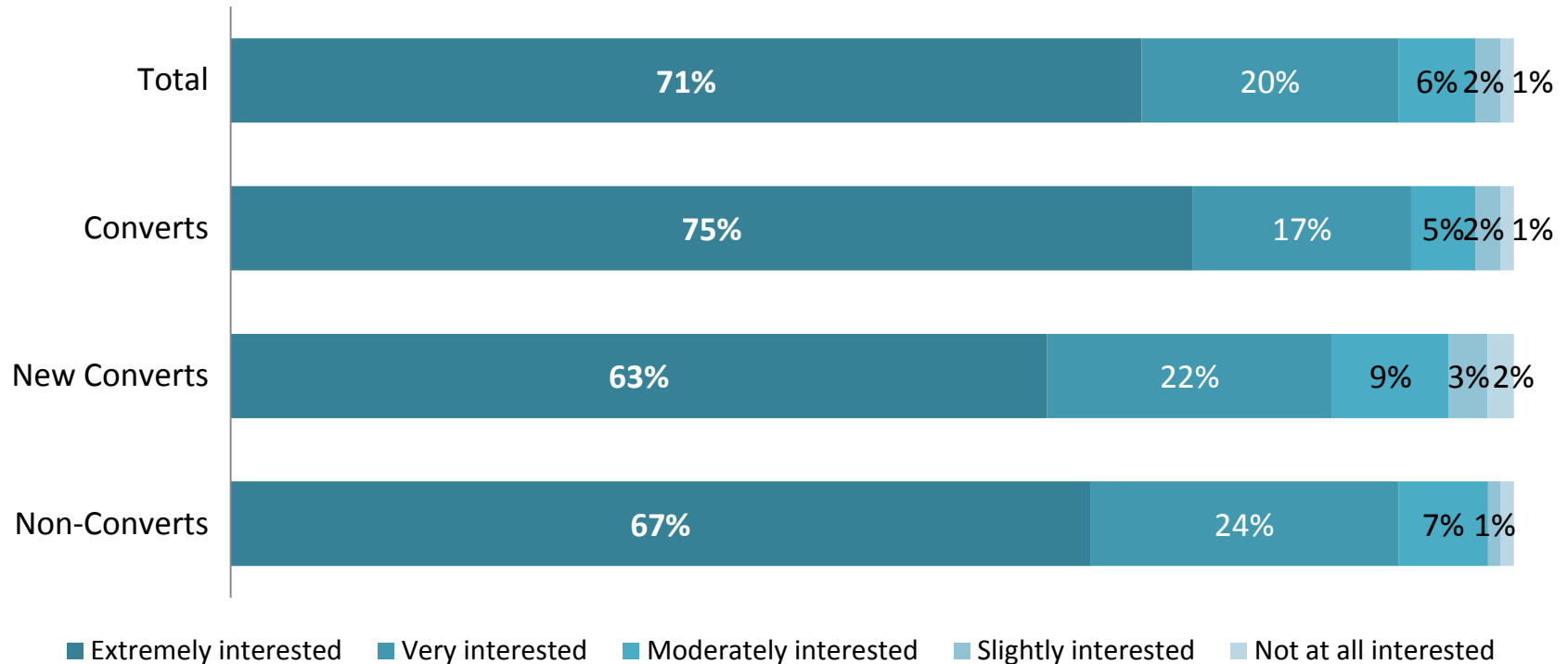


**Base: Converts; visited Myrtle Beach in 2014 (n=1455)**

## 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: Total (n=2515)**



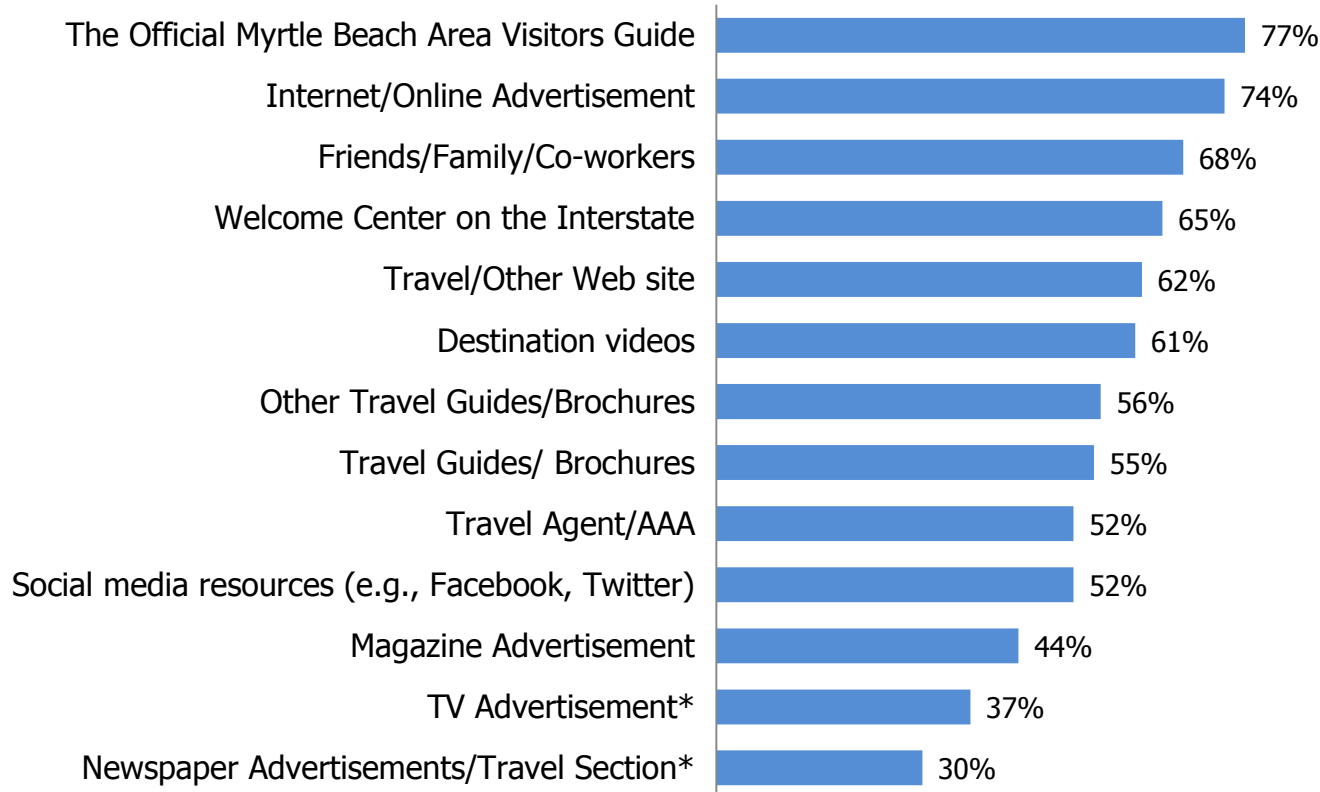


## **Appendix III: Information Sources & Planning**

## Information Source Usefulness

The Visitors Guide, Internet, and Friends/Family/Co-workers 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 2014 varies by type of source used.**

**\* Caution low base size for these sources; Note: Radio base too low to show data.**

Q14. How useful were each of the following in planning your vacation to the Myrtle Beach area? (10=Extremely useful, 0=Not at all useful)