

# MEETING PLANNERS

## Preference Survey

January 2017

# About Tambourine

Tambourine drives direct revenue for hotels and resorts worldwide using advanced marketing technology. Symphony, the Firm's flagship product, helps hotels increase direct website traffic, create a comprehensive presence across all digital channels and decrease the overall cost of acquiring direct bookings. The firm is celebrating its 32nd year in business.

# About EproDirect

EproDirect is a hospitality marketing agency who focus exclusively on the meetings & convention segments of the hospitality industry.

Over the last 15 years they've worked with several hundred clients, launched thousands of email marketing campaigns, and delivered thousands of new group business opportunities to hotels, resorts, destinations and other meeting suppliers by marketing their clients content and messages to EproDirect's database of over 80,000 qualified meeting planner subscribers. In addition, they help conference organizers market their events to their target audience to help grow their event attendance.

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# Methodology

Tambourine, along with EproDirect, conducted an online survey of meeting planners to better understand the sources they typically use for research, their communication preferences and their booking patterns. The survey was conducted from December 9 through December 22, 2016 and a total of 170 meeting planners participated.



# Key Findings

- Meeting planners would like to see stronger customer service, an improvement in the quality of the facilities, flexibility and quicker response times from hotels in 2017.
- Email marketing communications from the hotel is the best way to reach planners with hotel information, updates, and special offers.
- The hotel website is the primary source of information planners use to learn about meeting facilities. They are primarily using their desktop or laptop to access hotel websites, but many are also using their smartphone mobile devices.
- Meeting planners continue to find a great deal of value in fam tours, meetings facilities guides and new hotel openings.



# Key Findings

- Planners seem to find facilities views and virtual tours to be the most helpful when selecting a meeting venue.
- Floor diagrams, measurements and capacity charts are the most important hotel website tools for planners when selecting a meeting venue.
- Planners continue to read trade publications, but don't often use them as their primary source to learn about meeting venues.
- LinkedIn and Facebook are the most often used social media channels.
- Saving time and money are the most important benefits for planners engaging in multi-year contracts.



# MEETING PLANNER PROFILE

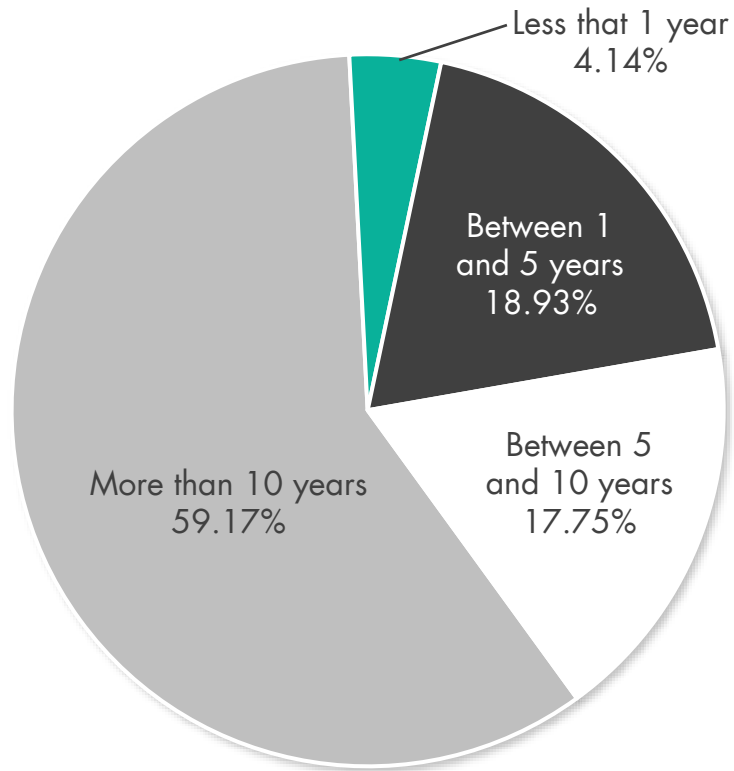
# Meeting Planner Profile Summary

- Six in ten respondents have worked as a professional planner for more than 10 years.
- Around six in ten (61%) plan fifteen meetings or less per year.
- Survey respondents include:
  - Independent/Third Party Meeting Professionals (30%)
  - Association Meeting Professional (28%)
  - Corporate Meeting Professional (24%)
  - Government (4%)
  - Other (10%)
- The majority (52%) are not members of the professional organizations shown on page 11.
- Almost half of the respondents (48%) have booked offshore meetings or incentive groups with the most popular destinations being Europe, the Caribbean and Canada.

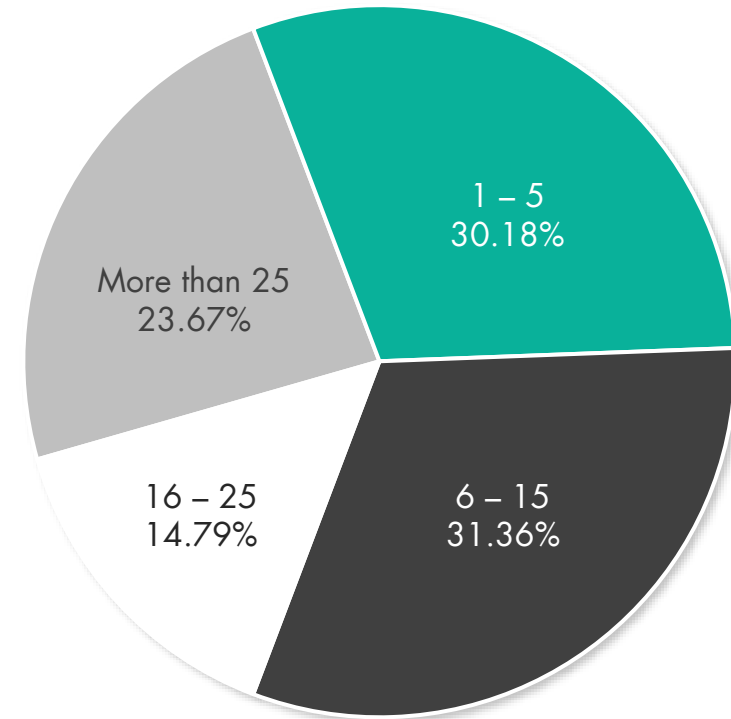


# Meeting Planner Profile

## Years as a Professional Planner



## Number of Meetings Planned Per Year

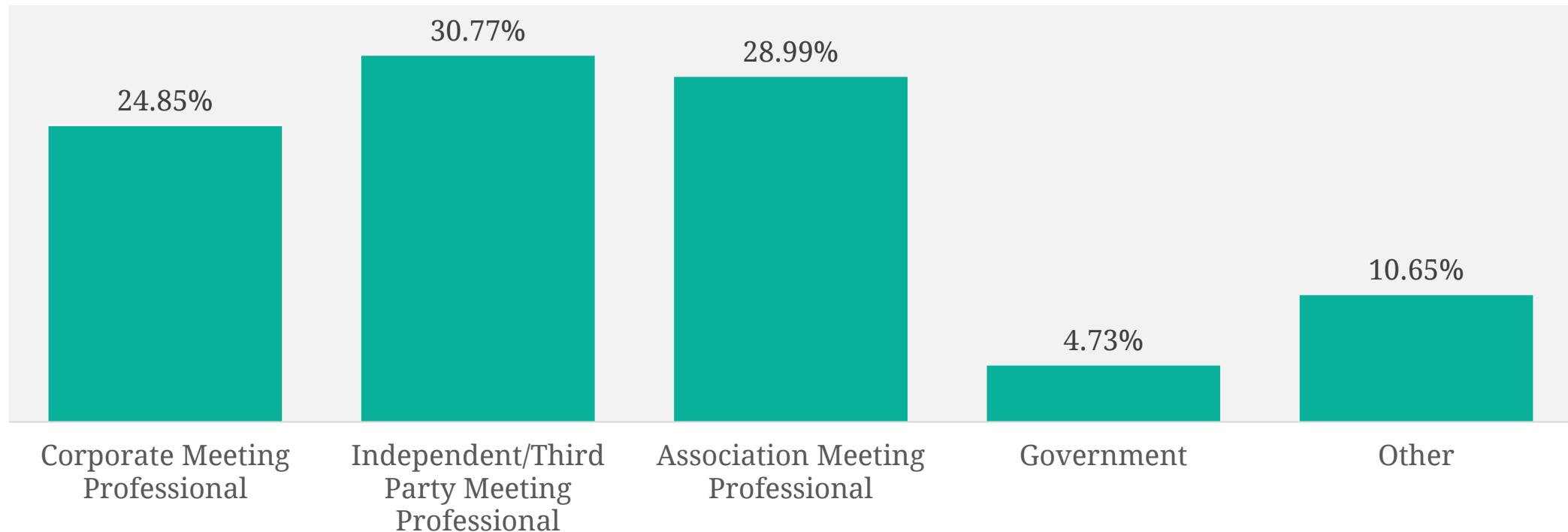


How many years have you worked as a professional meeting planner?  
How many meetings per year do you typically plan?



# Meeting Planner Profile

Type of Meeting Planner

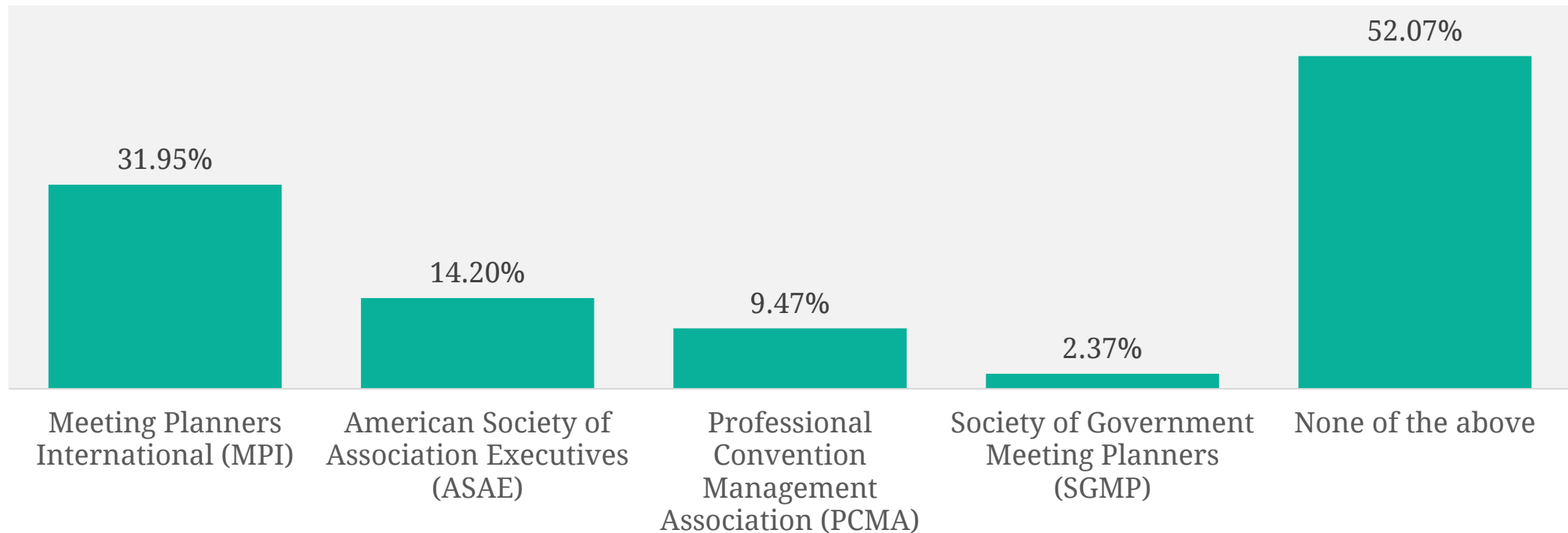


Which of the following best describes your current role?



# Meeting Planner Profile

## Professional Affiliations



Which of the following, if any, professional organizations are you a member of?



# International Meetings

49% Have booked offshore meetings or incentive groups.

Offshore Meeting Locations	%
Europe	28.66
Caribbean	27.39
Canada	26.75
Hawaii	22.29
UK	19.11
Asia	22.29
Africa	7.01

Have you booked offshore/overseas meetings or incentive groups?  
In which of the following destinations have you booked meetings or incentive groups?  
*Among those who have booked off shore meetings*

# COMMUNICATION PREFERENCES

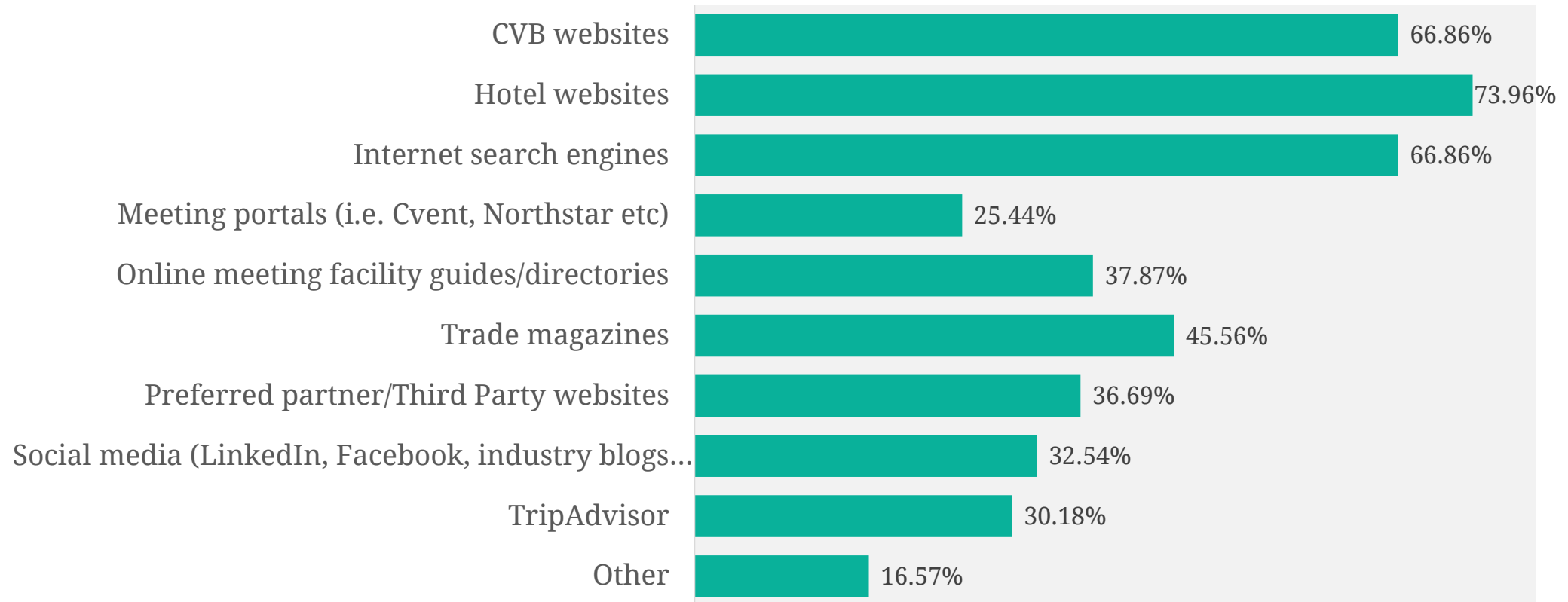
# Communication Preferences

- To learn about meeting facilities, planners are most likely to use hotel websites (73%). Other sources used include internet search engines (66%), and CVB websites (66%).
- By far the most preferred method of receiving hotel information, updates, or special offers is through email marketing communications from the hotel (59%).
- In regards to different types of hotel communications, planners find the most value in fam tours (50%), meeting facilities guides (28%) and new hotel openings (33%).
- When viewing video content, planners find facilities views (72%) and self-guided virtual tours (69%) to be the most helpful.



# Sources of Information

Sources Used to Learn About Meeting Venues

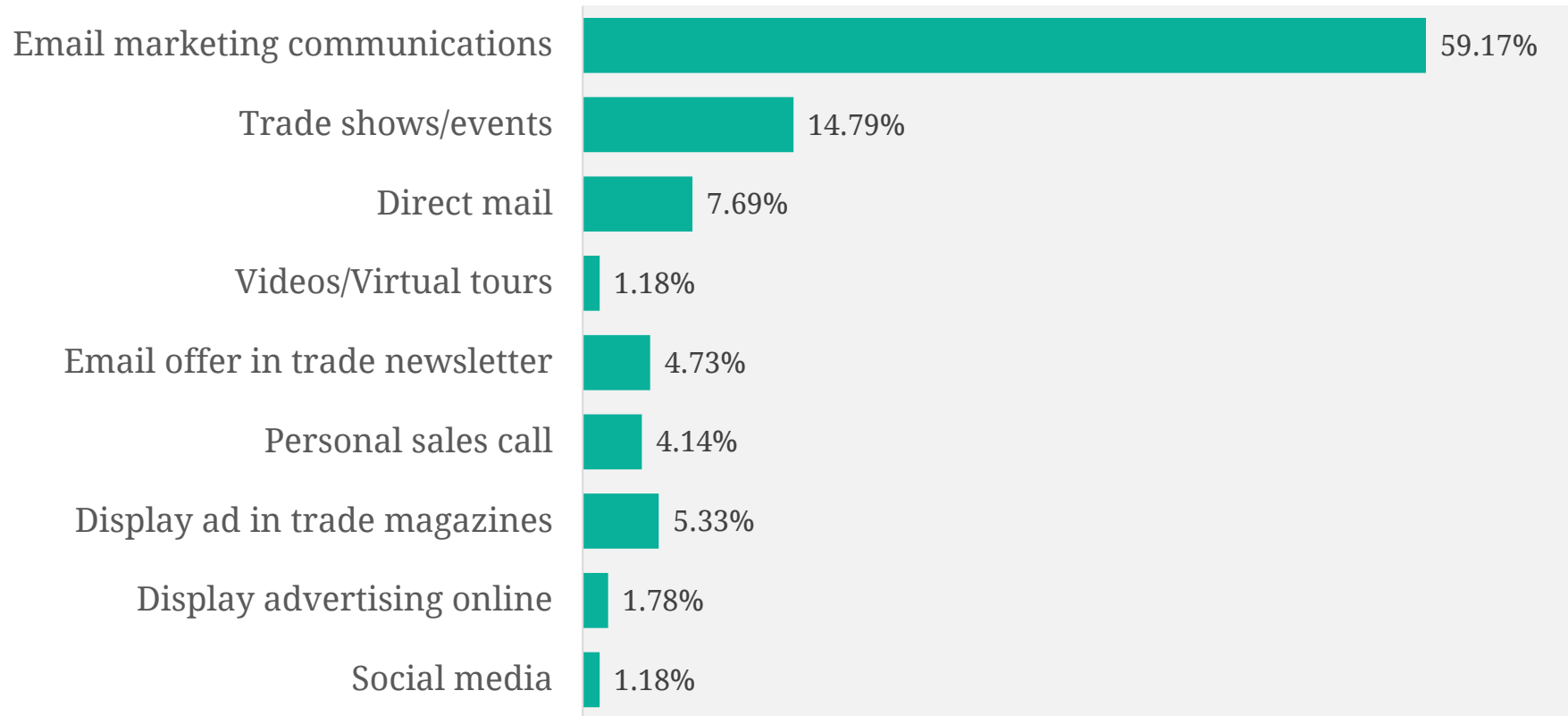


Which of the following sources do you use to learn about potential hotels/meeting facilities?



# Hotel Communications

Preferred Method of Receiving Hotel Communications: Information, Updates or Special Offers

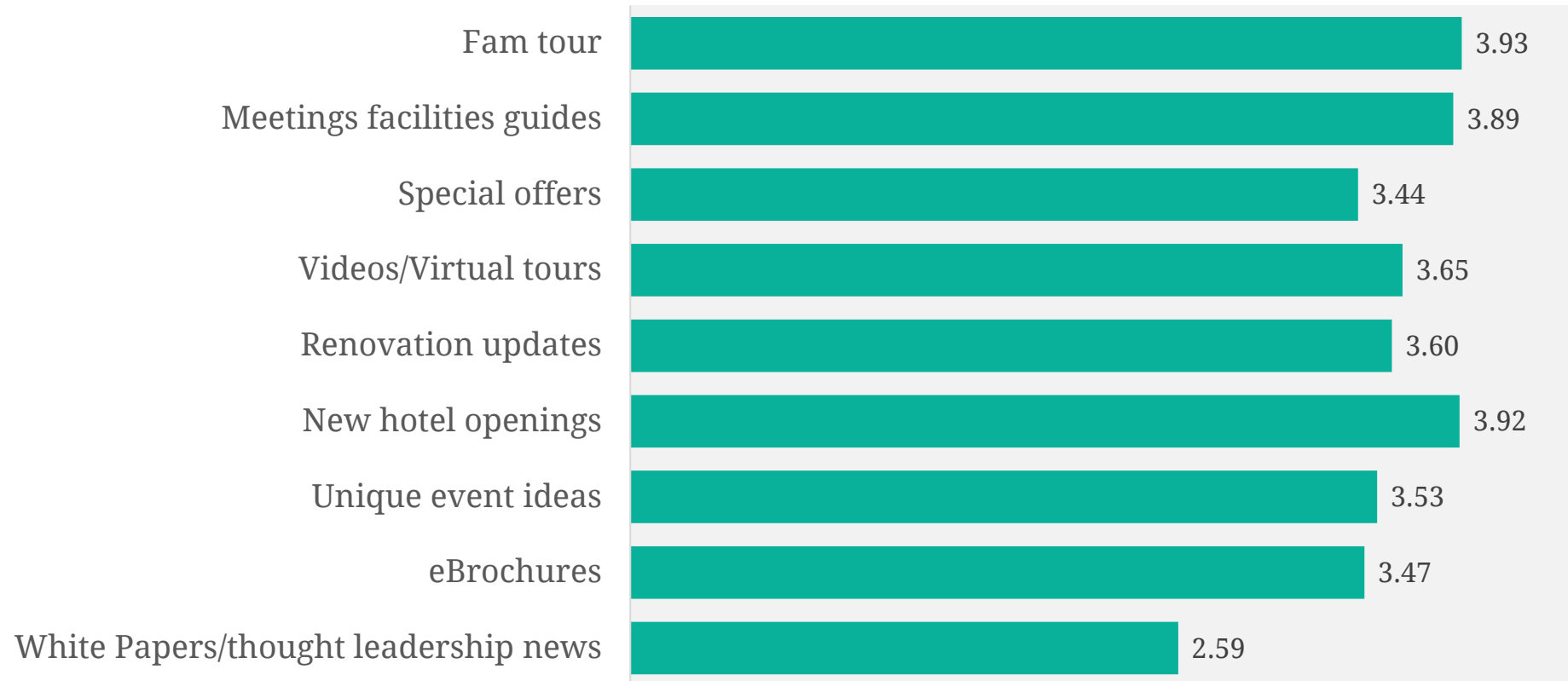


How do you prefer to receive hotel communications: information, updates or special offers?





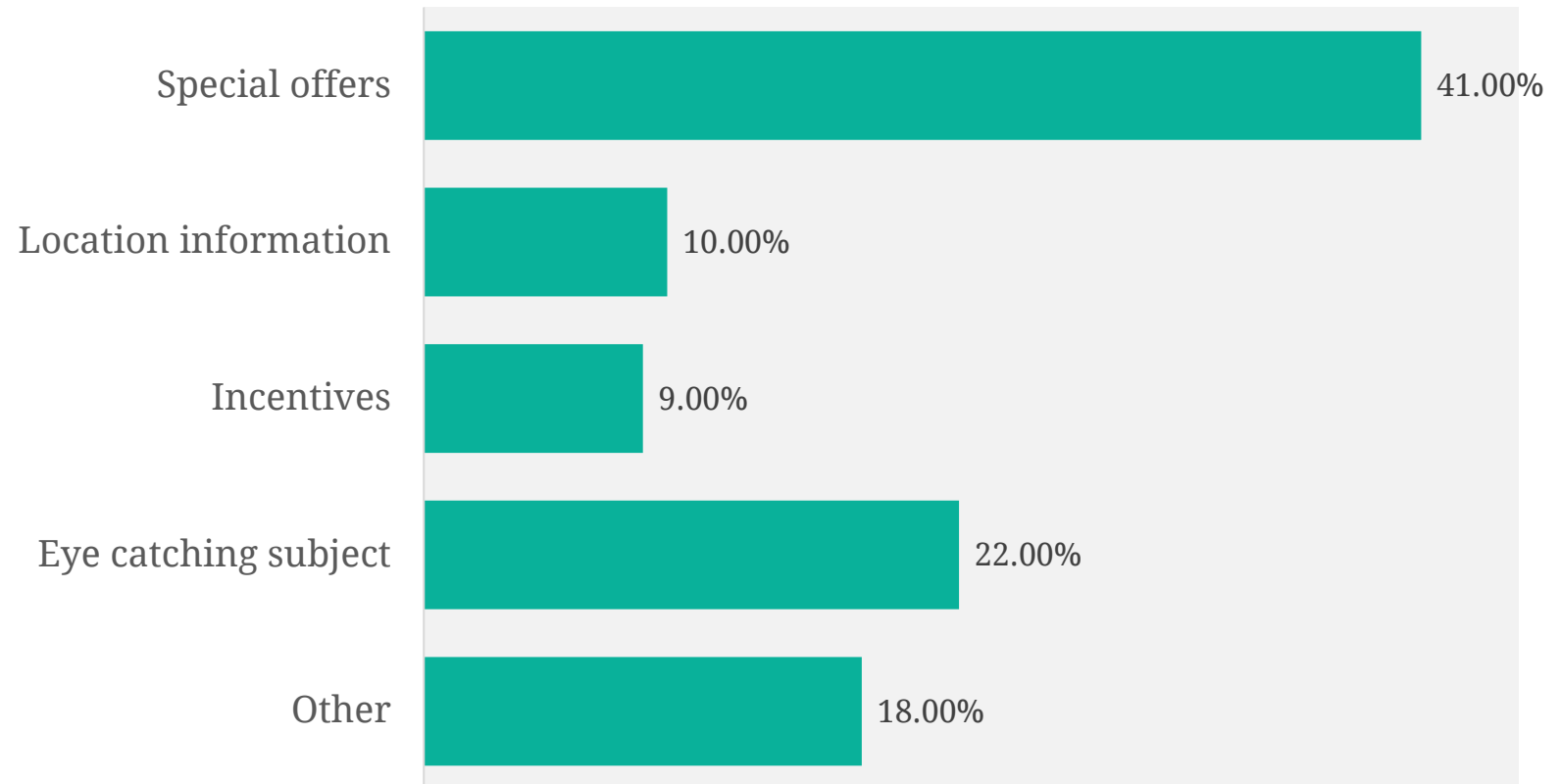
# Hotel Communications



Please indicate the level of value you find in each of the following hotel communications.  
(1 = NO VALUE and 5 = VERY EFFECTIVE)



# Hotel Communications



What would entice you to open and read an email communication from a hotel or destination?



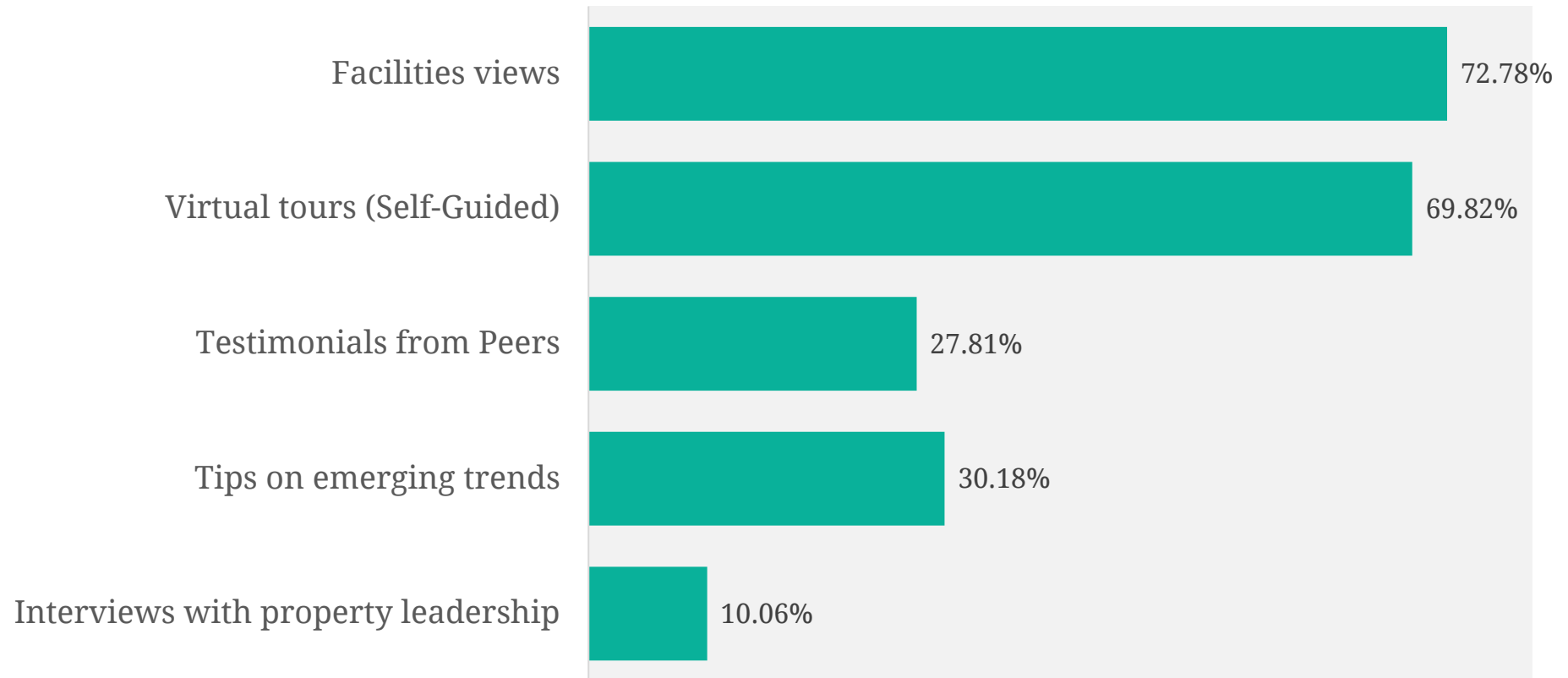
# Hotel Communications

- Personalized email
- Great photos
- A subject line that was very specific w/ who/where it was from and what they had to say
- If it includes unique ideas and articles
- If it was from a general location I was interested in
- Incentives for me to book or new ideas that that particular site is running
- Most of the time it really depends on how busy I am at the time. If I am super busy, everything gets deleted unless from an actual client. Otherwise, fam opportunities, new hotels/venues, destinations that may not be on the forefront are all able to catch my eye
- Special pricing and promotion emails that benefit the client and planner, especially extra points
- Needs to be direct and to the point. I get a ton of email so needs to be specific

What would entice you to open and read an email communication from a hotel or destination?



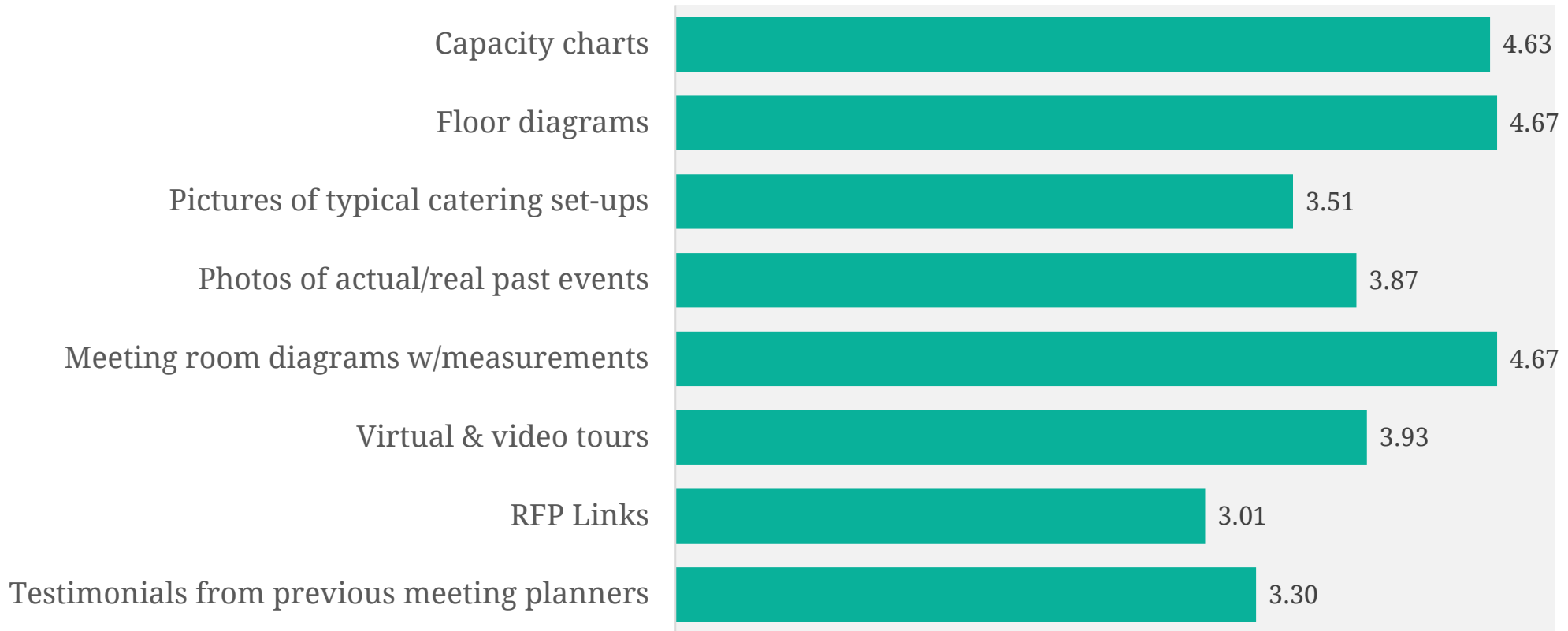
# Venue Video Content



When watching hotel/venue videos, which of the following do you find helpful ?



# Hotel Website Tools

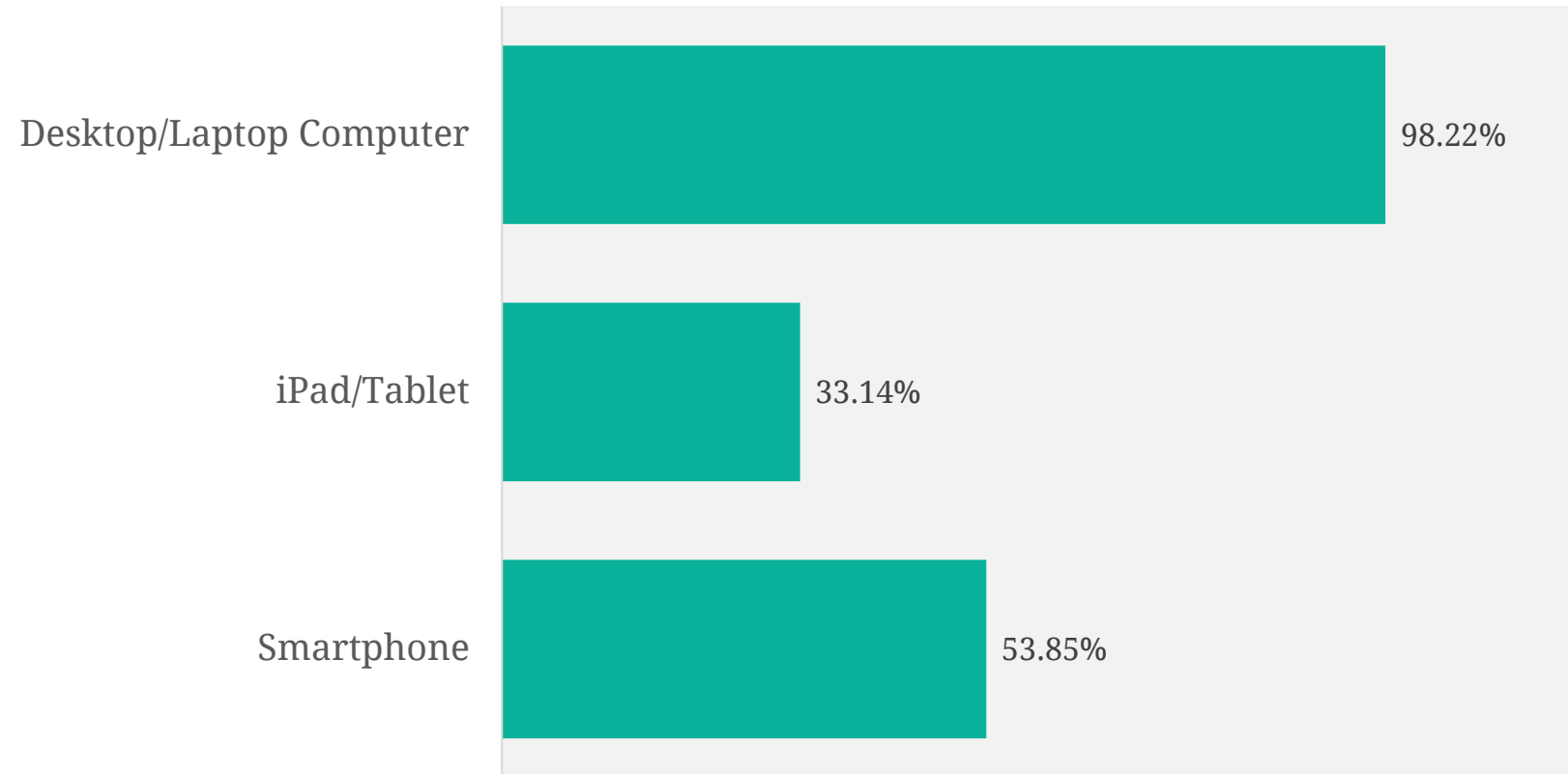


Which of the following hotel website tools are important to you?  
(1 = NOT IMPORTANT and 5 = VERY IMPORTANT)



# Mobile Devices

Devices Used to Learn About Hotels/Meeting Venues

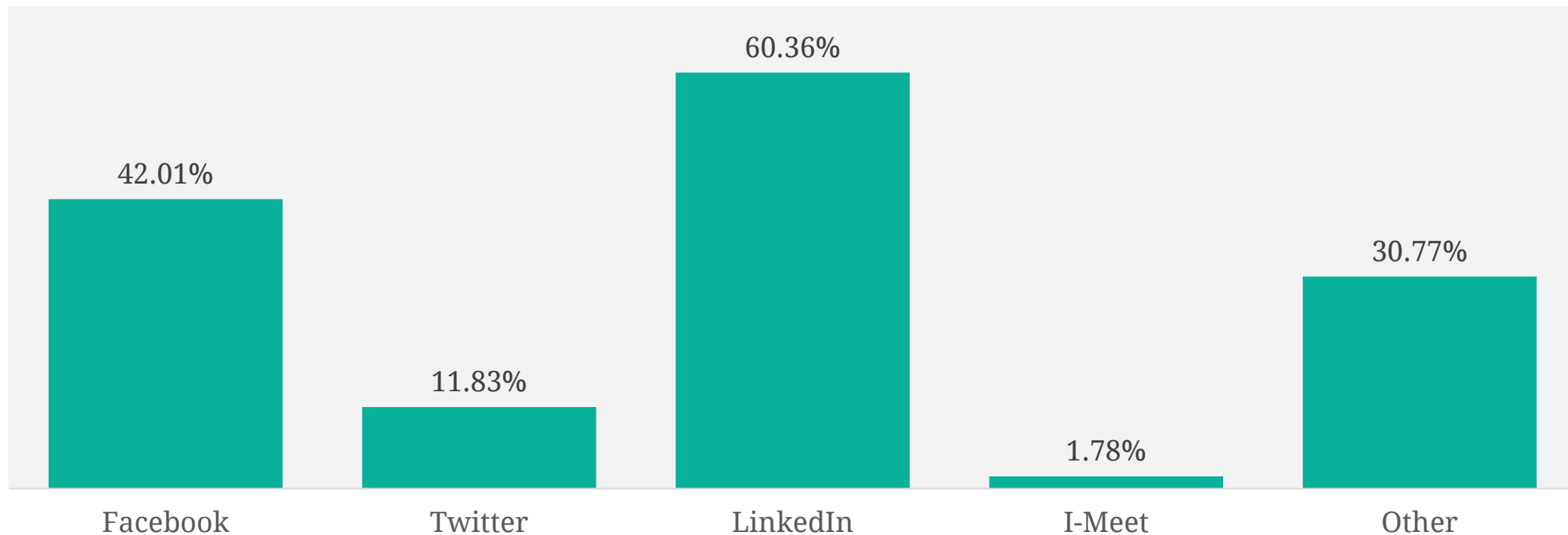


Which of the following internet-enabled devices do you use to learn about hotels/meeting venues?



# Social Media

Social Networks Used Regularly for Planning Meetings

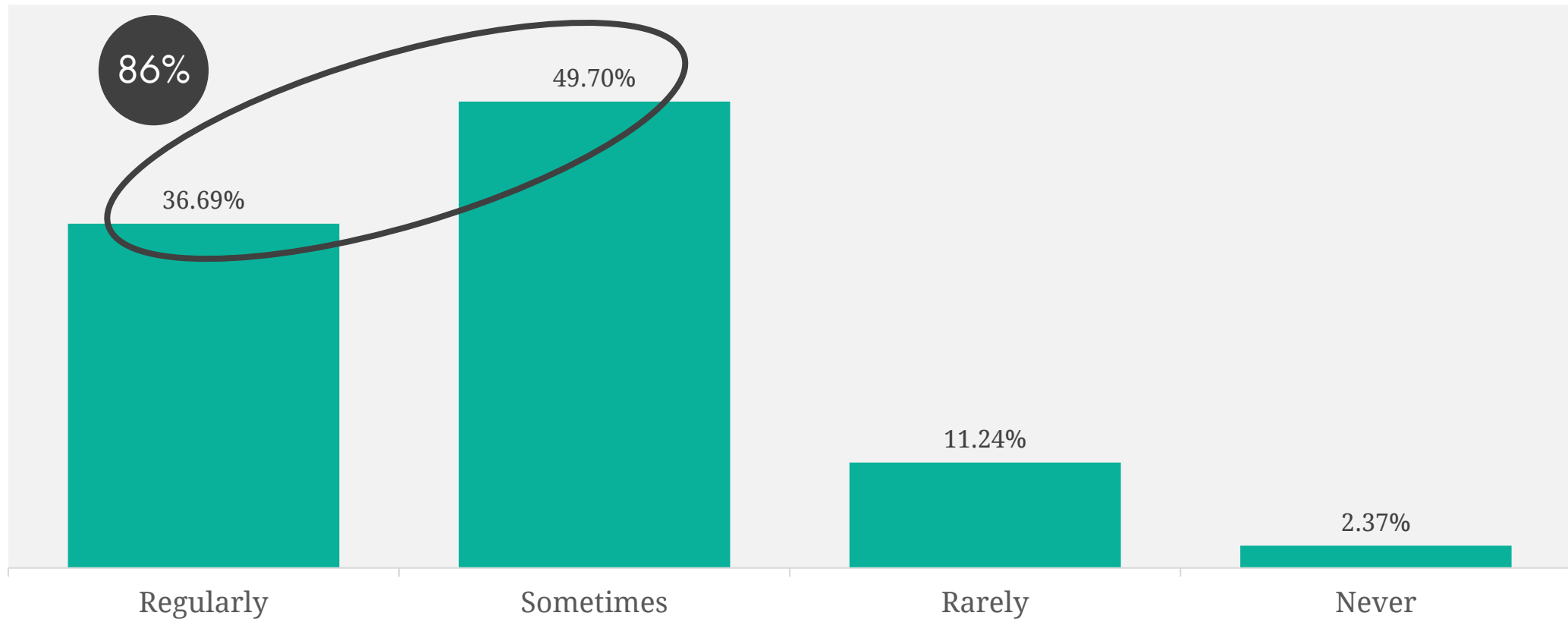


Which social networks do you use regularly for planning meetings?



# Industry Trade Publications

Frequency of Reading Industry Trade Publications



How often do you read industry trade publications?





# BOOKING PATTERNS

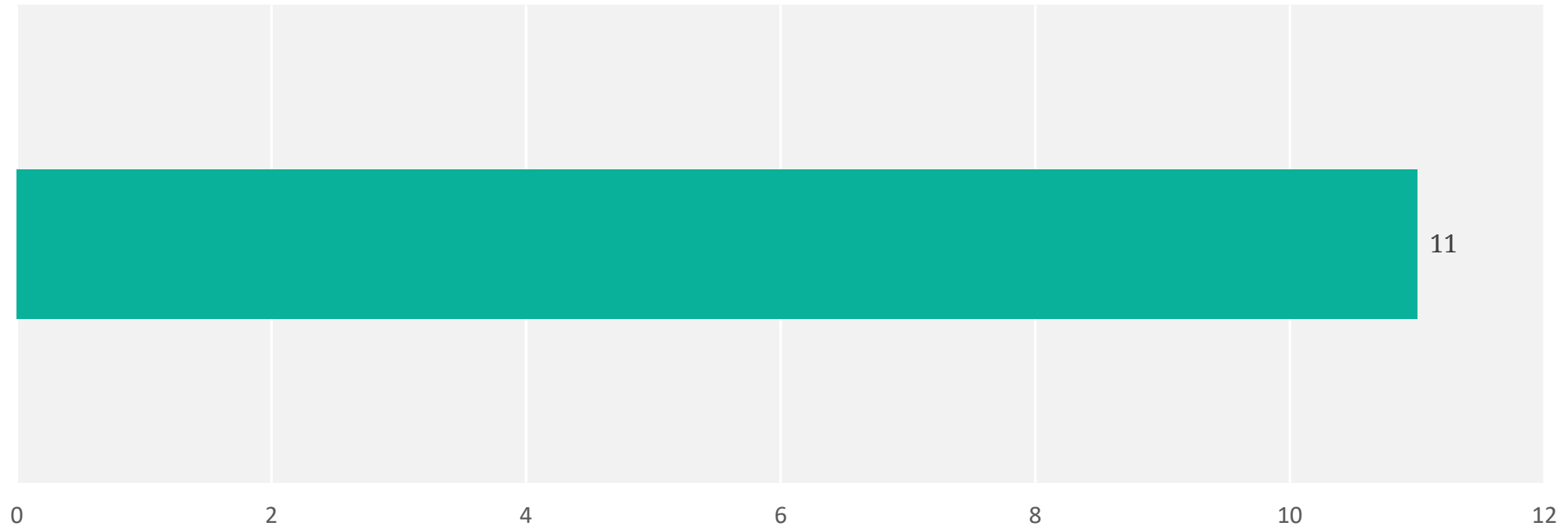
# Booking Patterns

- When selecting a meeting site in the U.S., the average lead time is around 11 months.
- When planning international meetings, the average lead time is around 14 months.
- Quality of Service, location, meeting space size and room rates all play an important role when choosing a meeting venue.
- Meeting planners find submitting online (33%) RFP via a site portal to be the most preferred method followed by contacting the hotel sales rep directly (29%) to submit RFP forms.
- Peer endorsements and testimonials are important for nearly all (77%) planners.
- Reward points (39%) seem to be the most attractive booking incentive.



# Booking Patterns

Average Lead-Time for Selecting Hotel/Meeting Facility in the U.S.

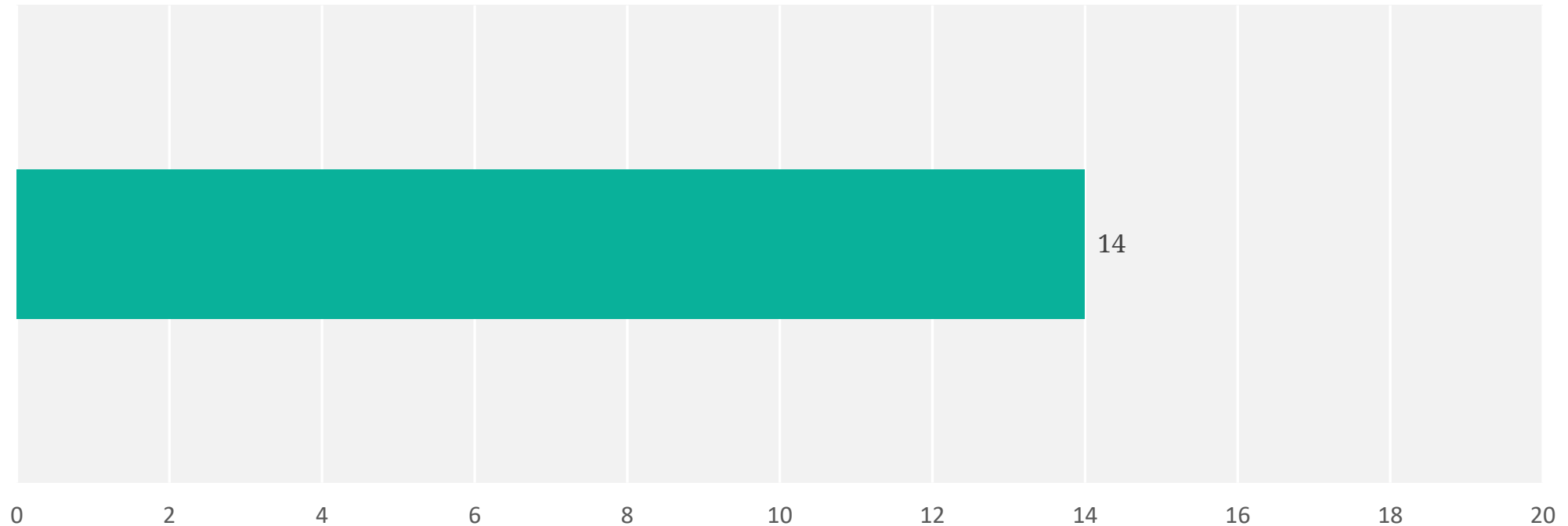


What is your average lead time for selecting a hotel/meeting facility in the US?



# International Meetings

Average Lead-Time for Selecting Hotel/Meeting Facility Outside the U.S.

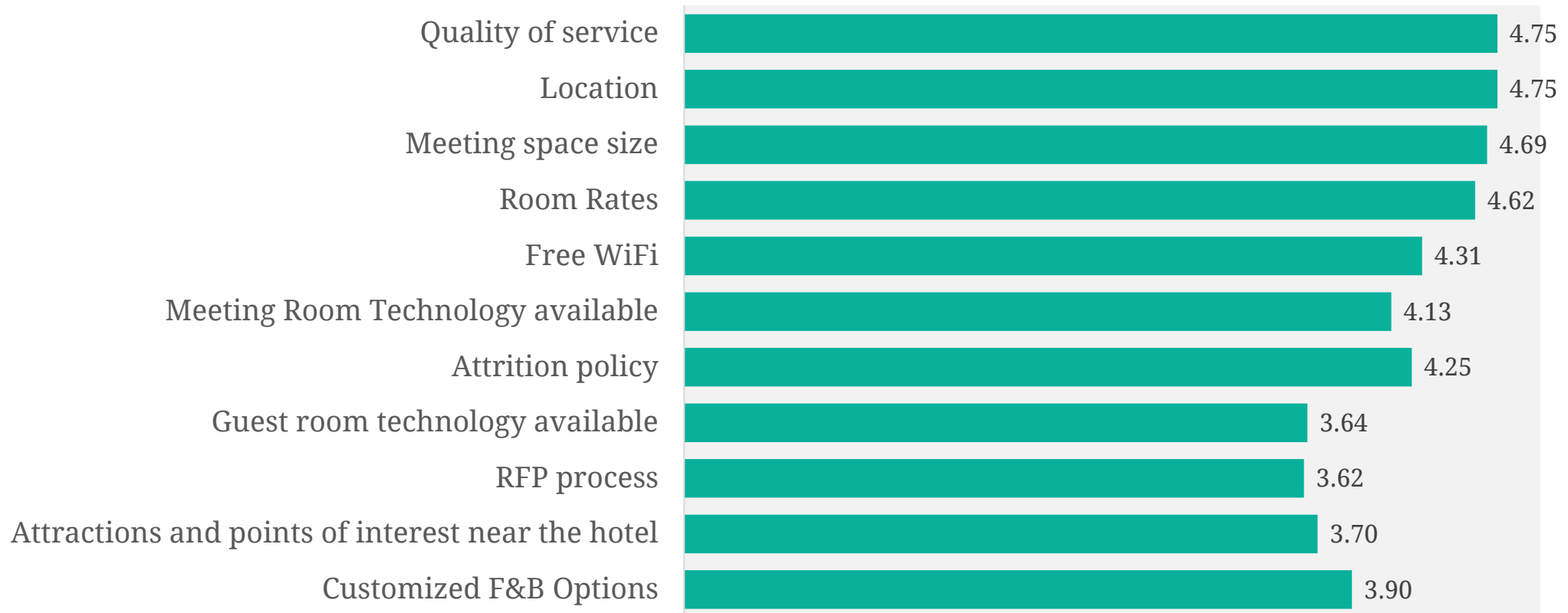


What is your average lead time for selecting a hotel/meeting facility OUTSIDE the US?



# Factors When Choosing a Hotel/Destination

## Influential When Choosing a Hotel/Destination for a Meeting

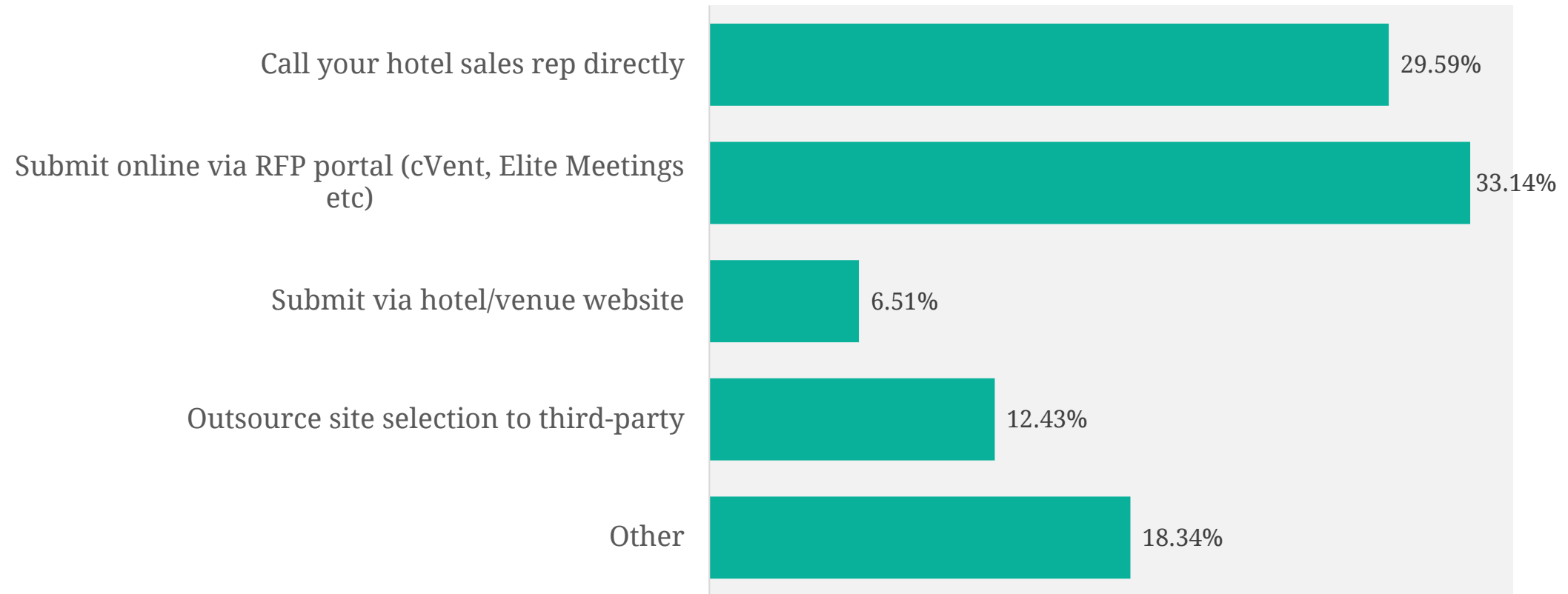


Please indicate the level of importance of each of the following factors when choosing a hotel/destination for a meeting?  
(1 = NOT IMPORTANT and 5 = VERY IMPORTANT)



# Submitting an RFP

Preferred Method for Submitting an RFP



What is your preferred method of submitting an RFP?



# PROMOTIONAL PREFERENCES

# Promotional Preferences

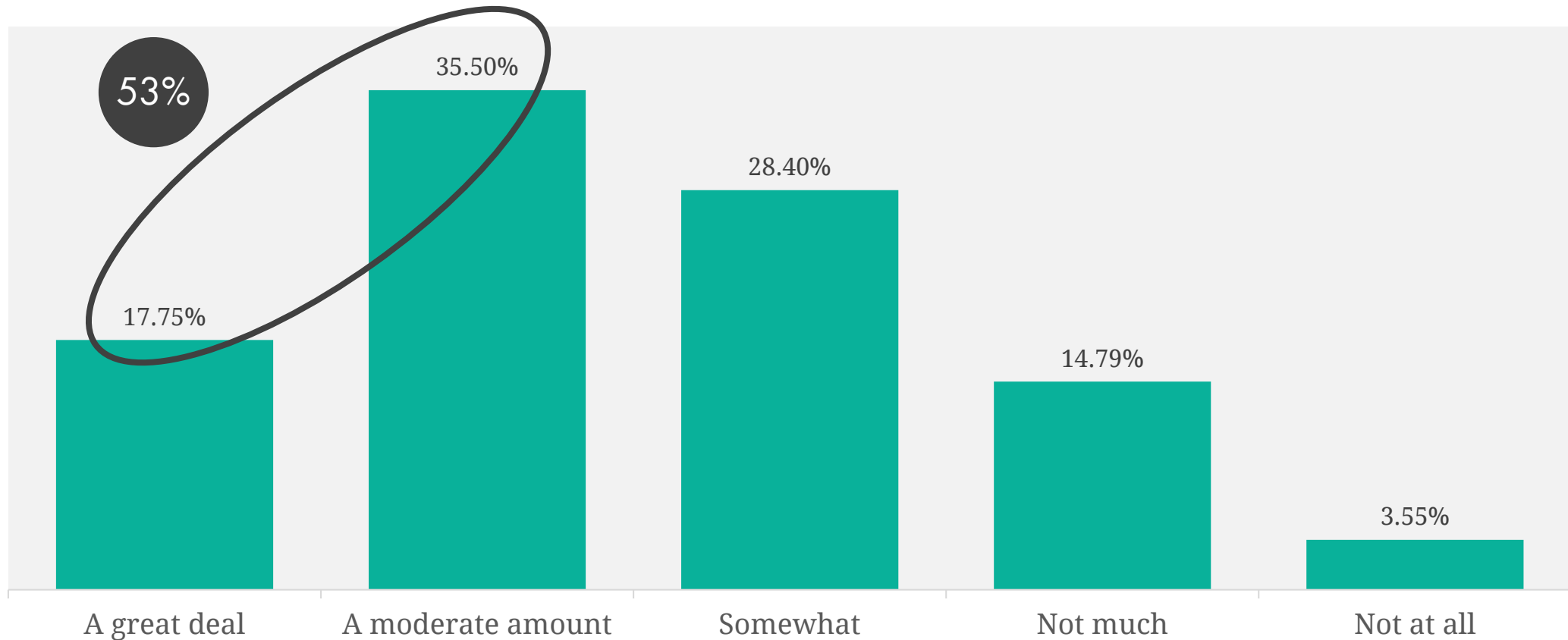
- Promotional offers and incentives only moderately (35%) affect meeting space decisions for planners
- Complimentary meeting space promos (71%) and F & B discounts (53%) are the most attractive of the promotional offers.





# Promotional Offers/Incentives

Extent to Which Promotional Offers/Incentives Affect Choosing a Venue

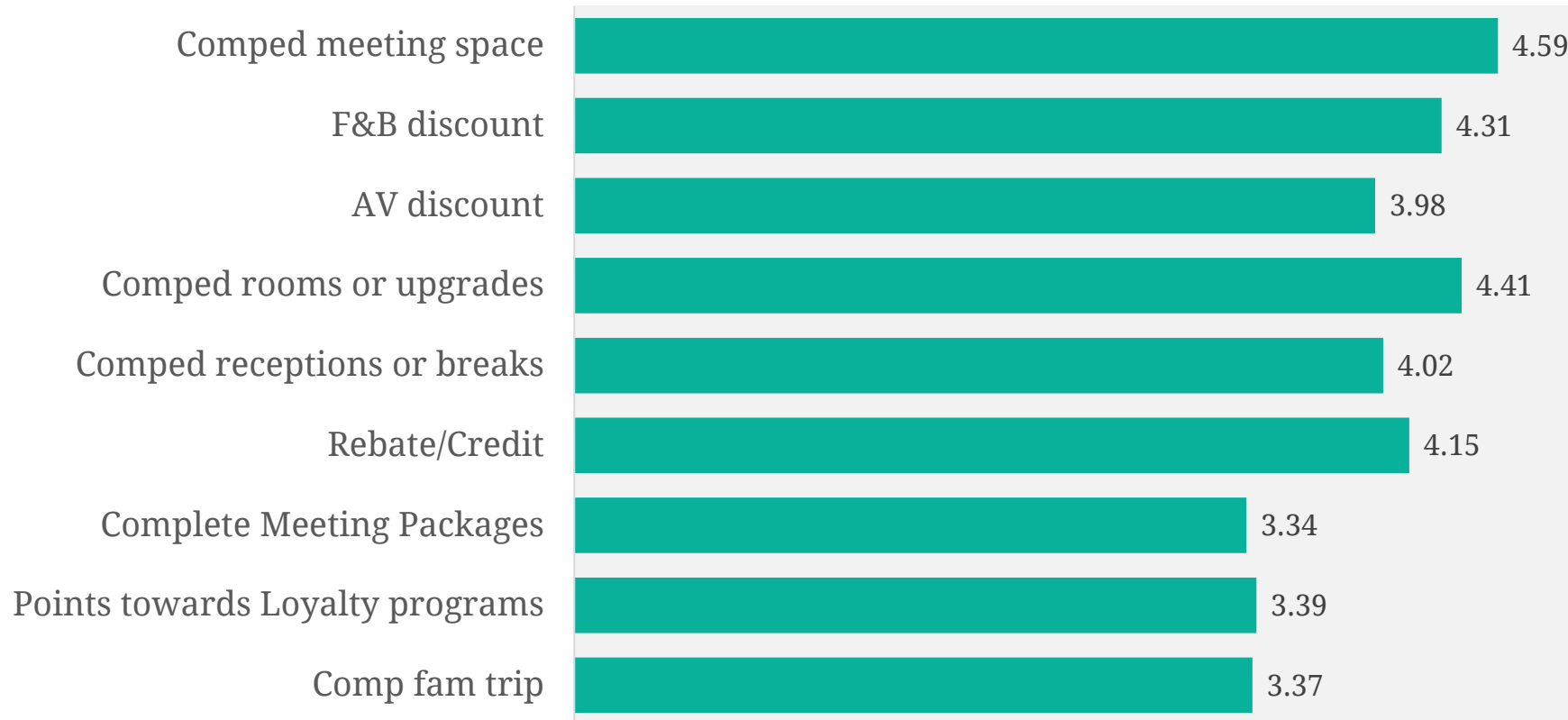


To what extent do promotional offers or incentives affect your decision to choose a particular hotel for a meeting/venue?



# Promotional Offers/Incentives

## Finds Promotional Offers/Incentives Attractive



How attractive do you find each of the following promo offers/incentives?  
(1 = NOT APPEALING and 5 = VERY APPEALING)



# DESIRED IMPROVEMENTS

# Desired Hotel Improvements

Ways Meeting Planners Believe Hotels Should Improve in 2017

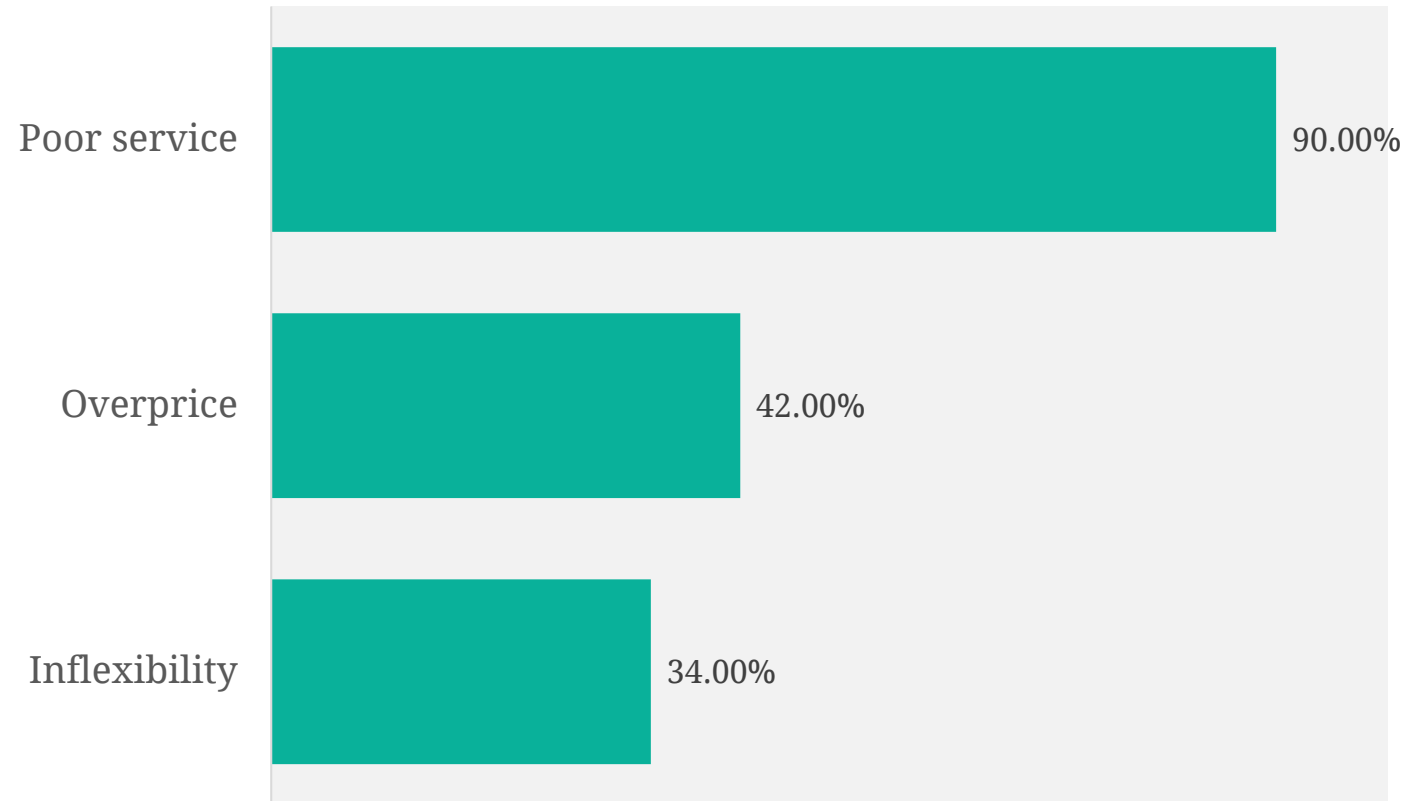


What are the top 3 things hotels can do to better meet your needs in 2017?

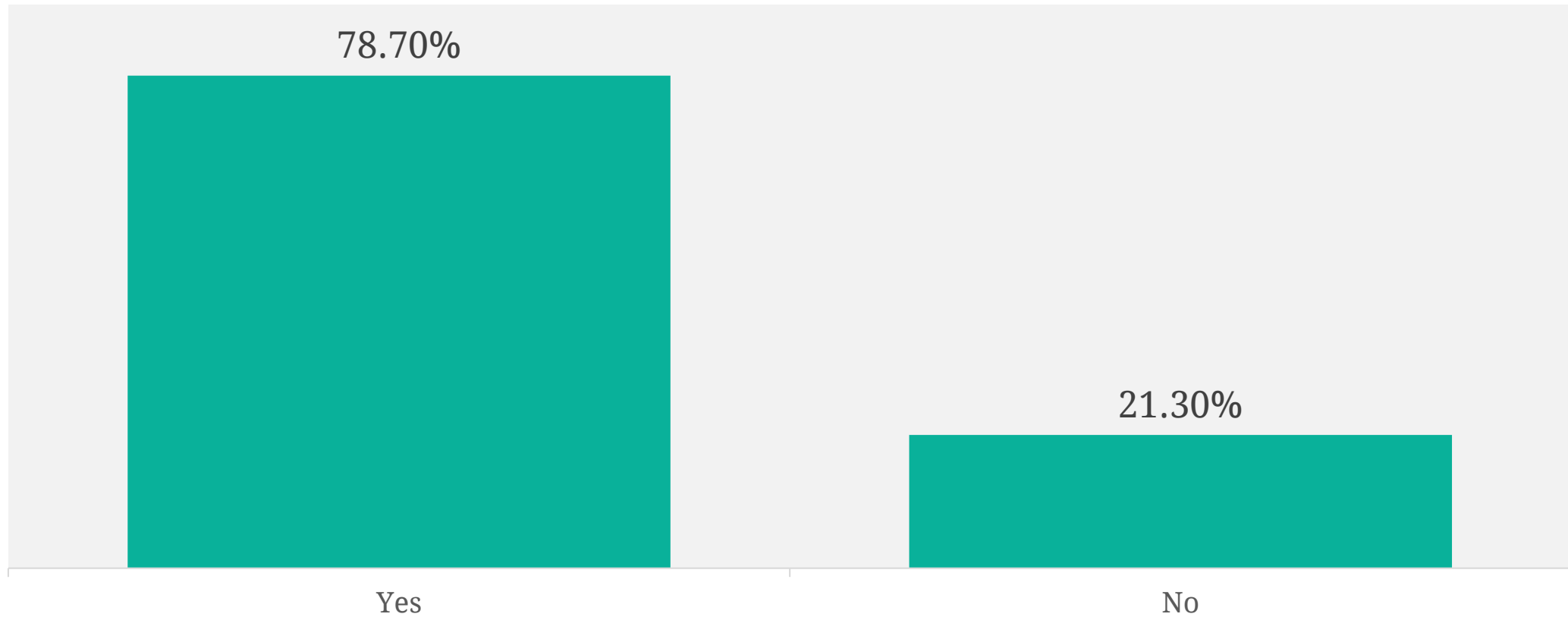


# Disappointments

What are the top 3 things hotels can do to disappoint you during an event and lose your future business?



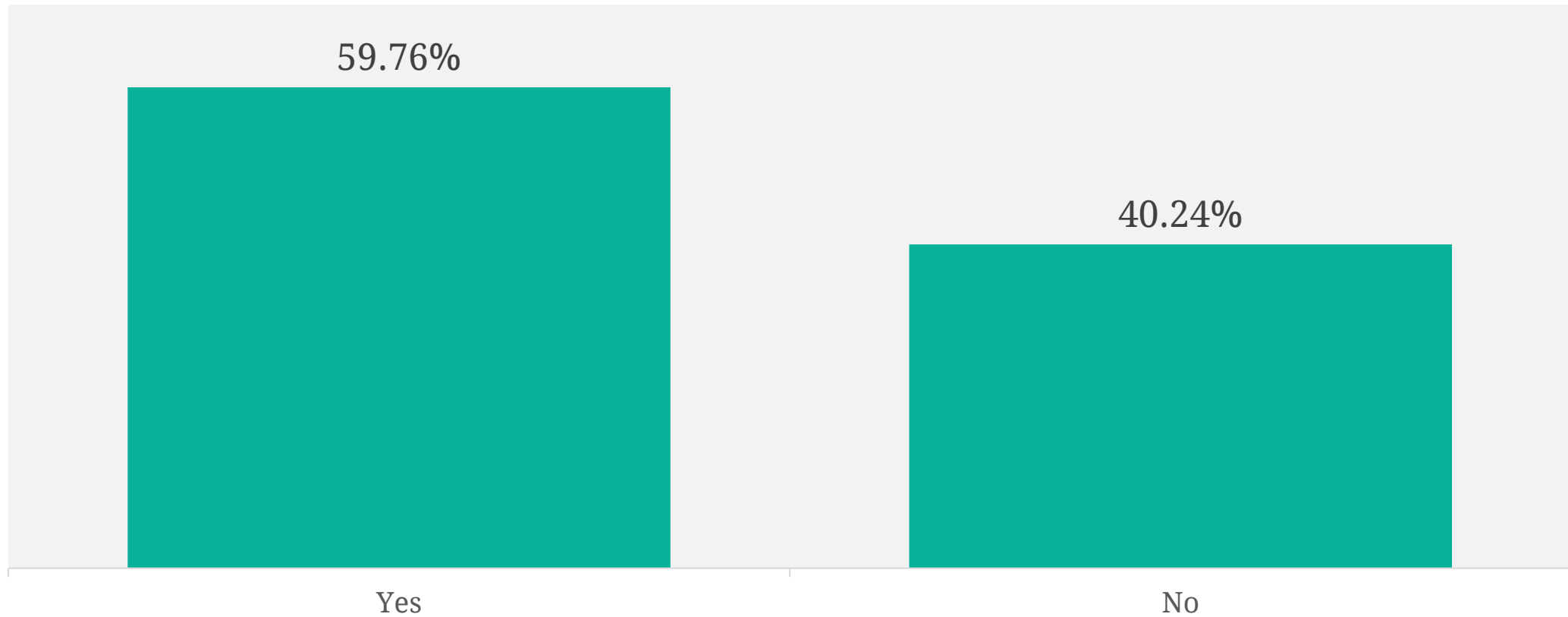
# Using Your CVB



Do you find value in using your CVB for RFP distribution and other destination assistance?



# Multi-year Contracts

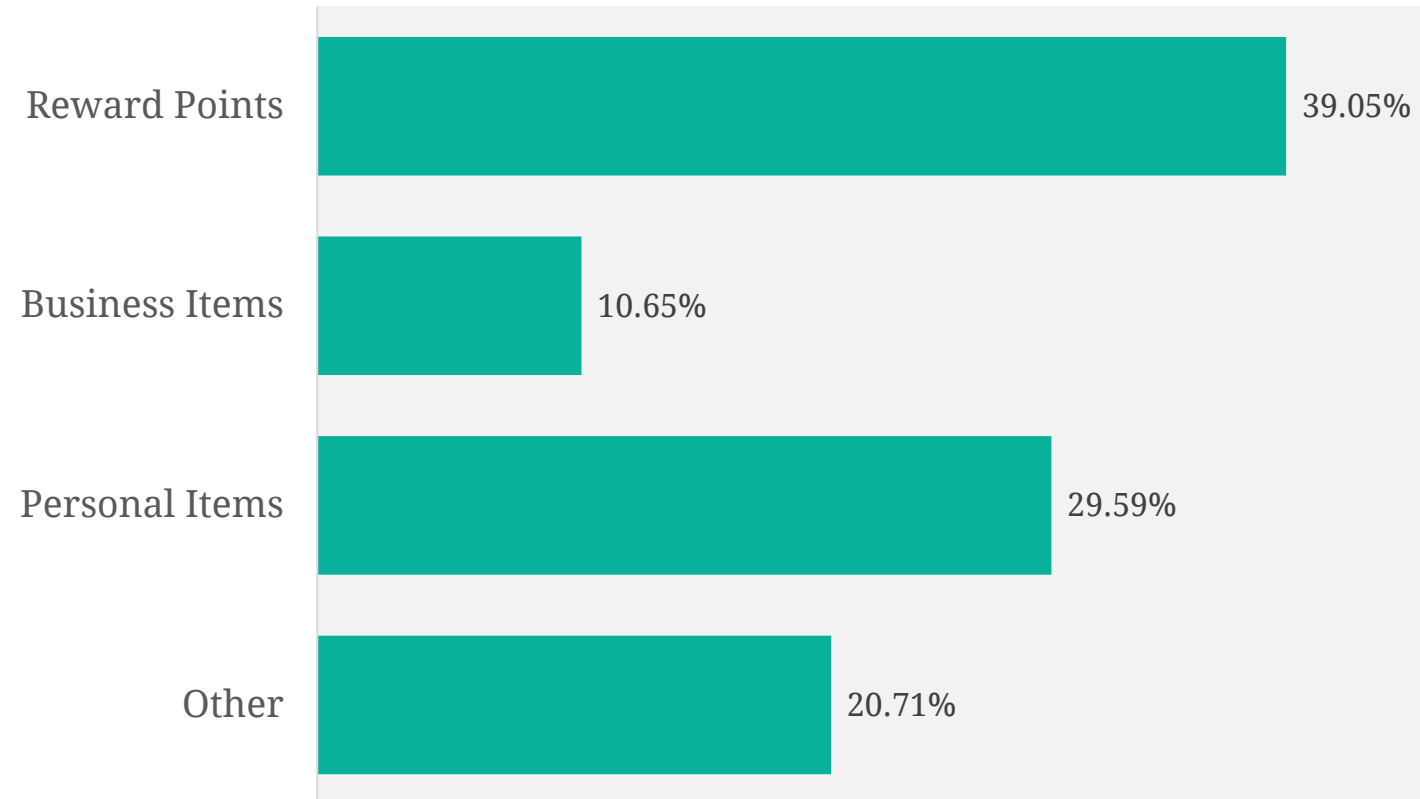


Do you give strong consideration to multi-year contracts?



# Booking Incentives

What kind of booking incentives do you most appreciate?





# Booking Incentives

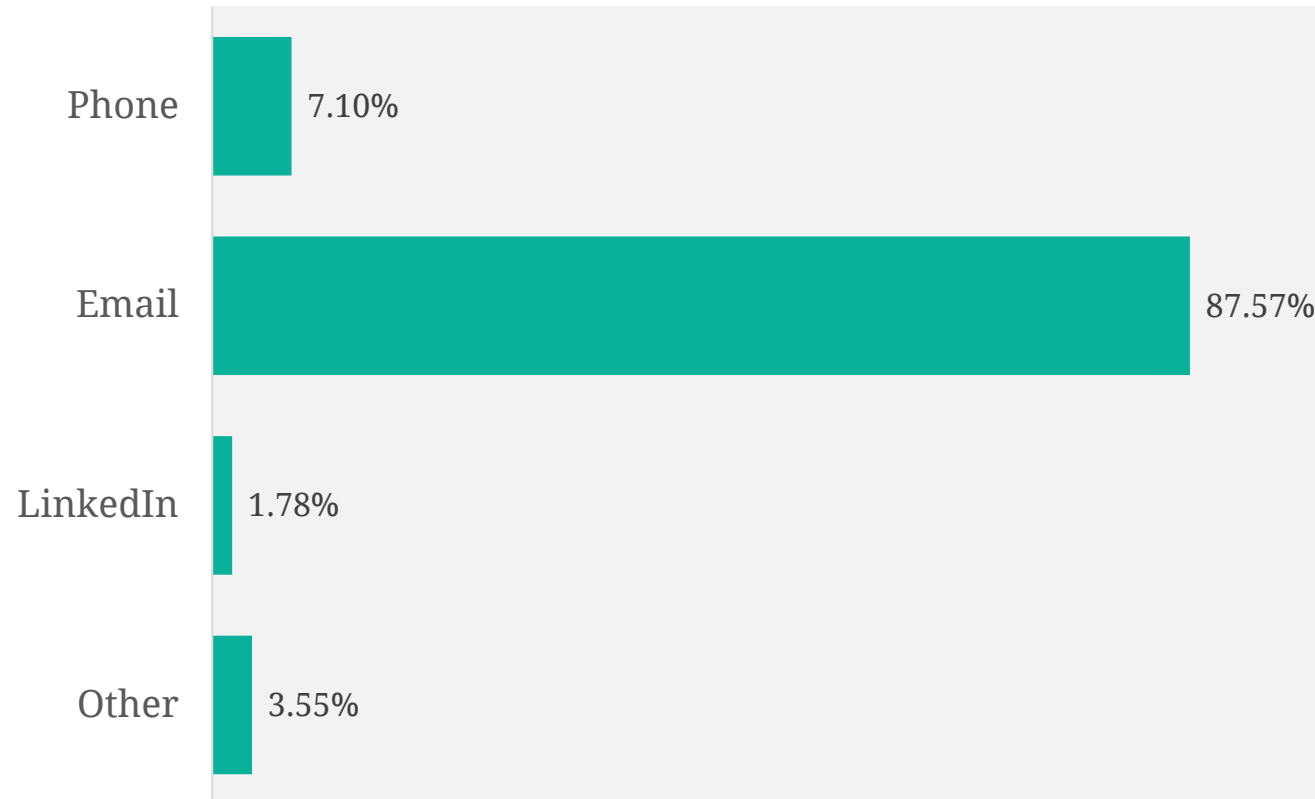
- All incentives MUST be pertaining to the business in the building. Planners cannot be compensated for putting business at a property
- Comped meeting space / free WiFi
- Flexibility in contract
- Percentage off the master bill/holding rates flat year over year
- Upgrades to VIPs
- Gift cards or cash rebates
- Increased concessions
- Memberships to industry orgs
- Discounts

What kind of booking incentives do you most appreciate?



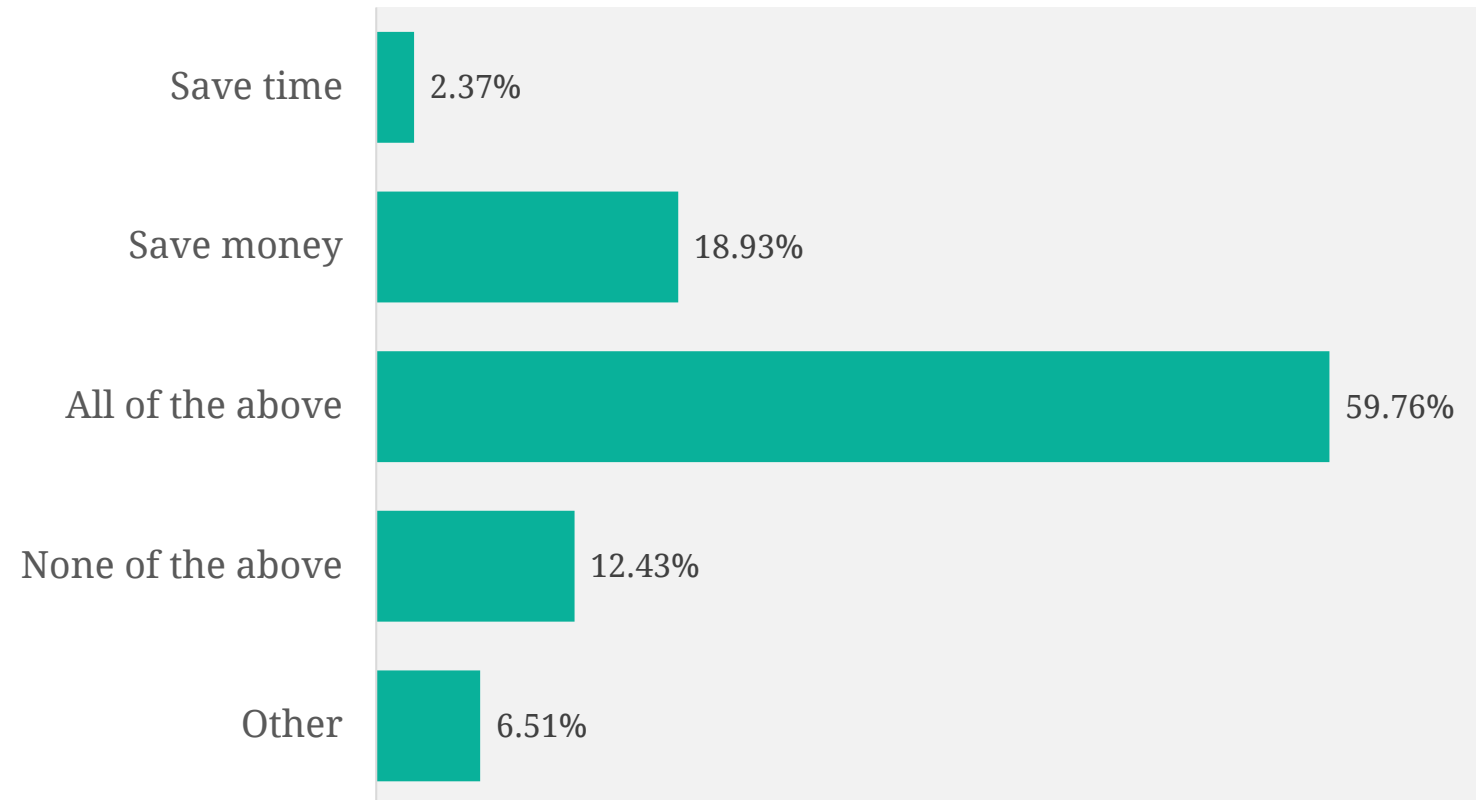
# Contact Preferences

When a hotel salesperson is soliciting/prospecting you, how do you prefer they contact you?



# Benefits of Multi-year Contracts

What benefits are most important to you regarding multi-year contracts?



# Survey Supporters

**Barceló**  
HOTEL GROUP



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**THE GUEST HOUSE**  
AT  
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