WBEA Member Survey 2011

Dittmar Associates, Inc.
18333 Egret Bay Blvd., Ste. 270
Houston, TX 77058
(281) 335:3626

POC: Dr. Mary Lynne Dittmar
mld@dittmar-associates.com

WBEA
Women's Business Enterprise Alliance

Dittmar Associates
Creating the Future

Survey Statistics

Survey Status:		Web Deployment Status:		Email Deployment Status:	
Status:	Closed	Total Takers:	173	Invited Via Email:	0
Launch Date:	09/07/2011	Complete Responses:	155	Total Takers:	0
Closed Date:	09/23/2011	Partial Responses:	18	Complete Responses:	0
Total Survey Takers:	173			Partial Responses:	0
Median Response Time:	15 mins, 53 Seconds			Bounced Email:	0
				Opted Out:	0

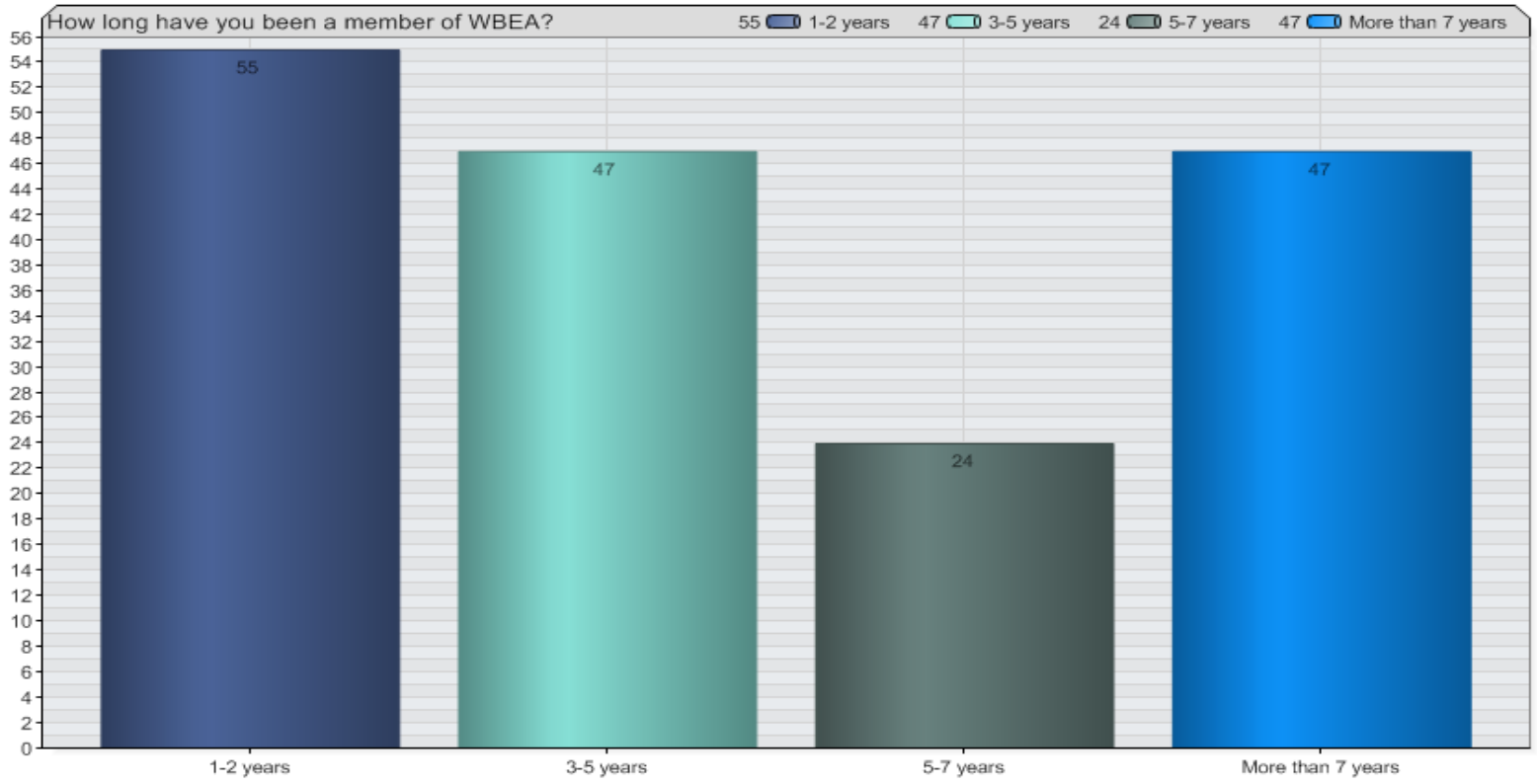
173 responses, from 746 members, enabled the survey to be a valid measure of WBE member responses (23% response rate).

All findings are similar to the results of 2010, except where noted.

WBEA
Women's Business Enterprise Alliance

Dittmar Associates
Creating the Future

How long have you been a member of the WBEA?

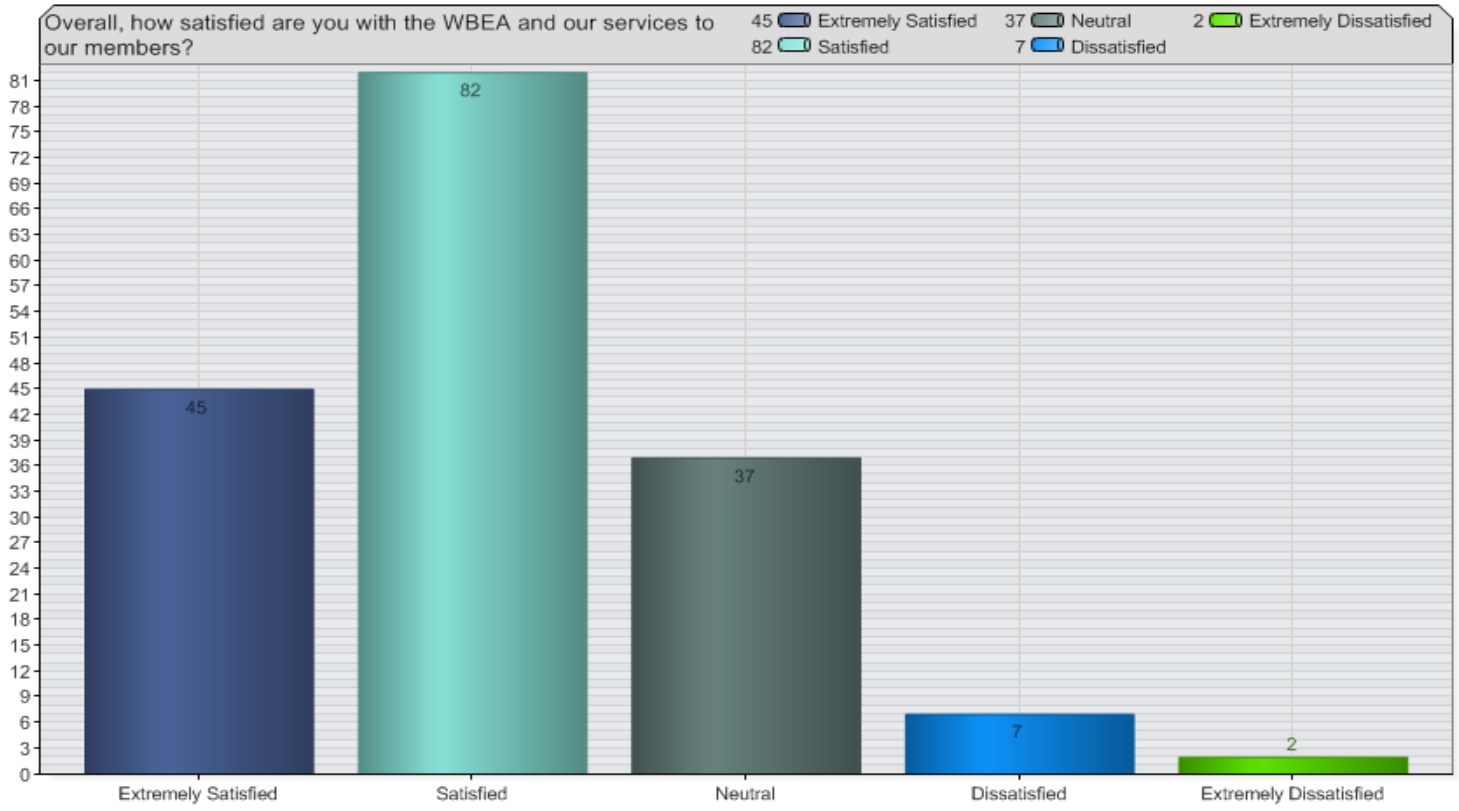


The majority of respondents were members of the WBEA for 5 years or less. A little more than 4/5 are located in Harris County.

WBEA
Women's Business Enterprise Alliance

Dittmar Associates
Creating the Future

Overall, how satisfied are you with the WBEA and our services to our membership?



73% of respondents are satisfied or very satisfied with the WBEA and its services.

WBEA
Women's Business Enterprise Alliance

Dittmar Associates
Creating the Future

What do you find most helpful or beneficial about the WBEA? (Ranked by frequency of response)

1. Networking opportunities
2. Certification
3. Education & other events
4. Staff

Networking, certification and educational opportunities are the most helpful.

WBEA
Women's Business Enterprise Alliance

Dittmar Associates
Creating the Future

What do you find least helpful or beneficial about the WBEA? (Ranked by frequency of response)

1. WBEA is not “visible” as a business development organization; needs to be more effective and take a greater role in south Texas

2. Interactions with “Corporates” are frequently unsatisfying
   - Many do not seem to take networking events or “do business with” events seriously
   - Many seem to participate just to “check the block”
   - Most are disinterested in “service” companies and are petrochemical. Need a broader base of business sectors

3. Staff need to have more business experience.

4. Certification process is cumbersome and has to be repeated yearly.

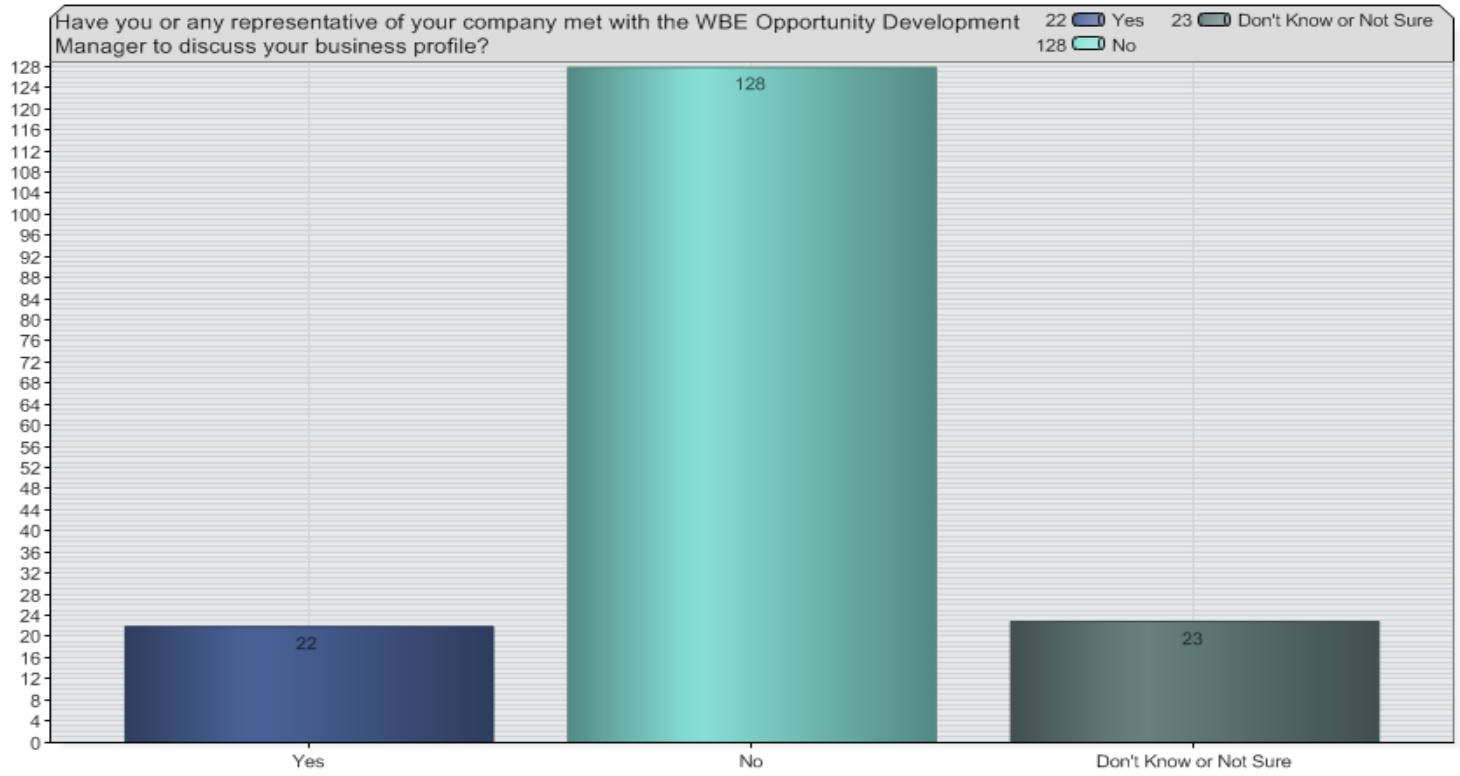
.

5. WBEA needs to act more like a business development organization; needs to be more effective and more visible.

WBEA
Women's Business Enterprise Alliance

Dittmar Associates
Creating the Future

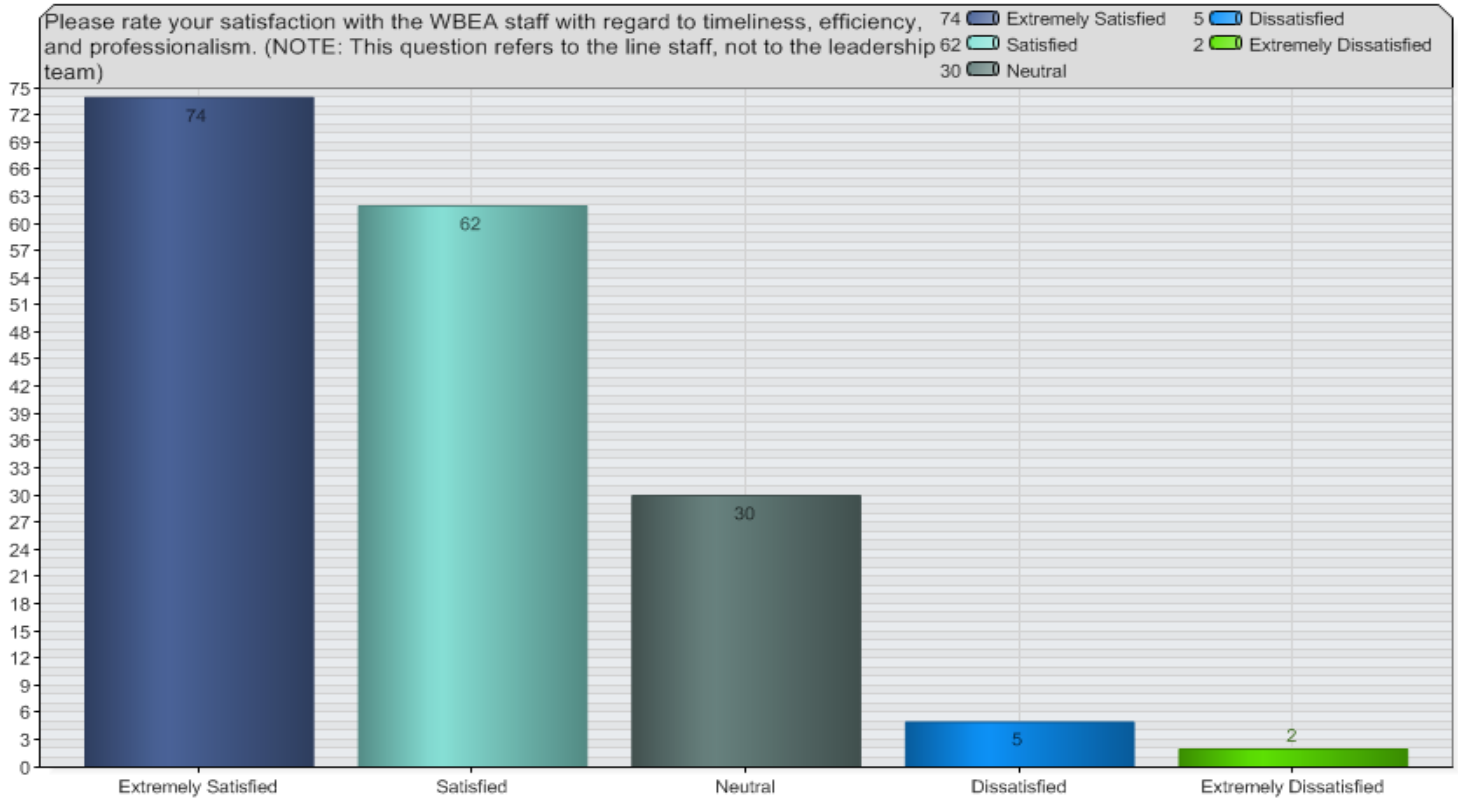
Have you or any representative of your company met with the WBE Opportunity Development Manager to discuss your business profile?



The Opportunity Development Manager and related services are underutilized; despite the fact that most respondents are aware of the service*.

*In 2010 most respondents were not aware of the service.

Please rate your satisfaction with the WBEA staff with regard to Timeliness, Efficiency, and Professionalism. . (NOTE: This question refers to the line staff, not to the leadership team)



The vast majority of respondents are satisfied with WBEA staff.

WBEA
Women's Business Enterprise Alliance

Dittmar Associates
Creating the Future

What additional comments would you like to make about the WBEA staff, if any?

1. Overwhelmingly, the respondents are pleased with staff.

2. Areas of strength are attitude, professionalism, and kindness.

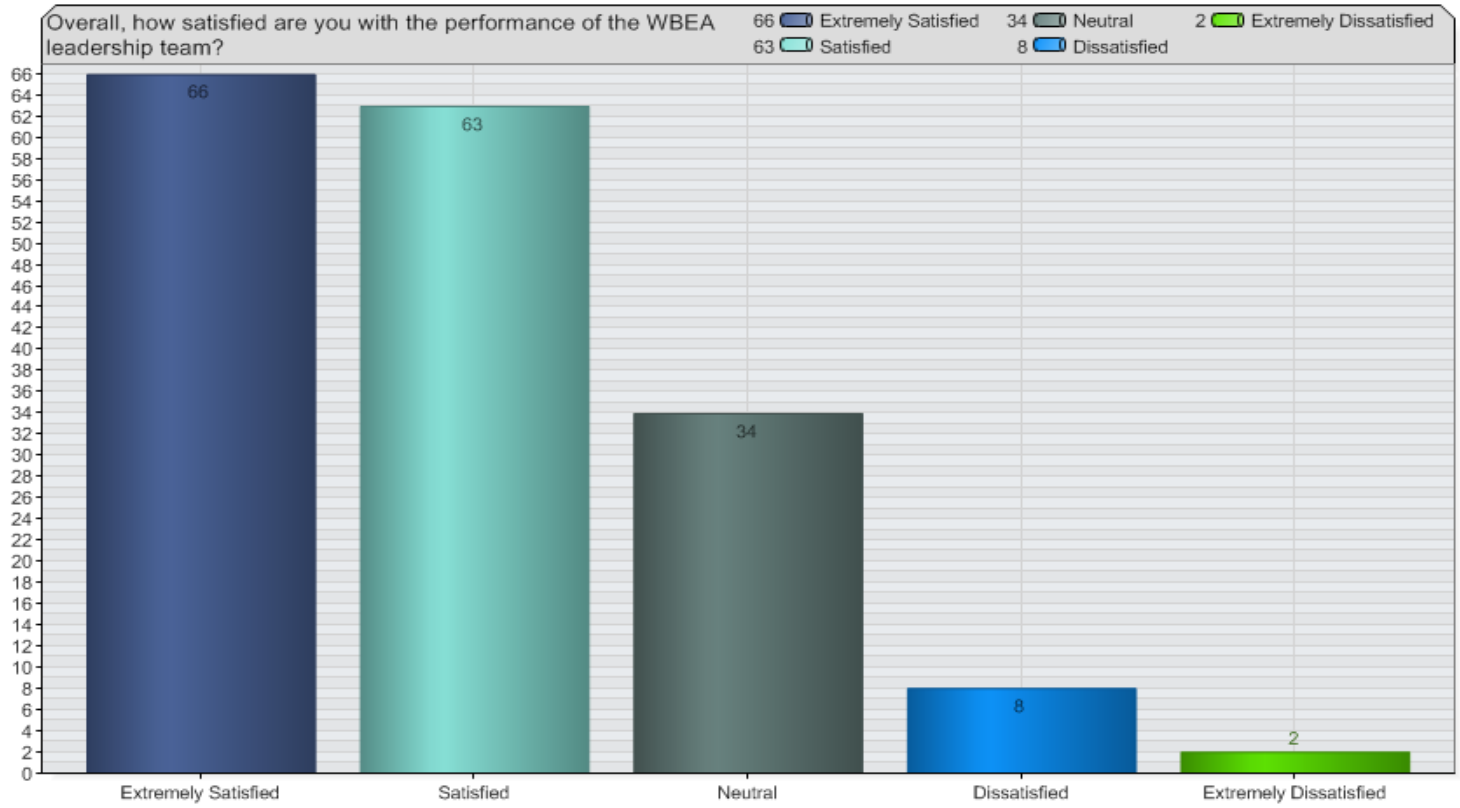
3. Areas of weakness are business experience, timeliness of response, and lack of resources (for the staff themselves.)

Respondents were pleased with staff, finding them supportive and professional; however they feel they need training in business.

WBEA
Women's Business Enterprise Alliance

Dittmar Associates
Creating the Future

Overall, how satisfied are you with the performance of the WBEA leadership team?



The vast majority of respondents are satisfied with WBEA leadership.

WBEA
Women's Business Enterprise Alliance

Dittmar Associates
Creating the Future

What additional comments would you like to make about the WBEA leadership team, if any?

1. Executive Director is seen as helpful.

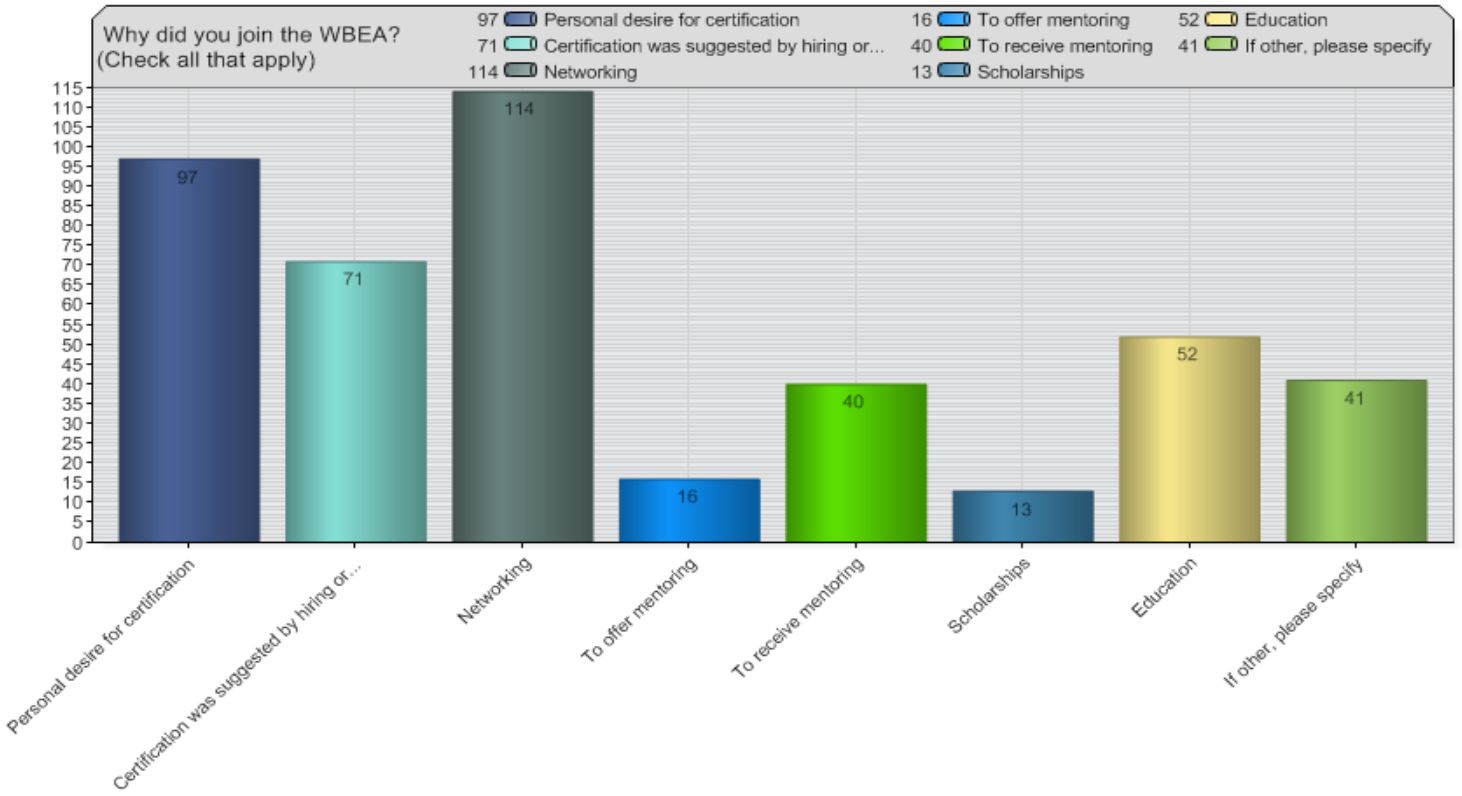
2. Executive Director needs more business experience, not seen as conversant with business issues.

3. Board is not visible, nor is Board influence evident in the greater Houston business community. WBEA is not well-represented at the political level.

4. Team is laboring under severely constrained resources. Need professionals with years of experience in business, marketing, etc. Need professionally produced website, outreach materials, presence in politics, etc.

Leadership team seen as supportive but limited by experience and resources.

Why did you join the WBEA? (Please check all that apply)

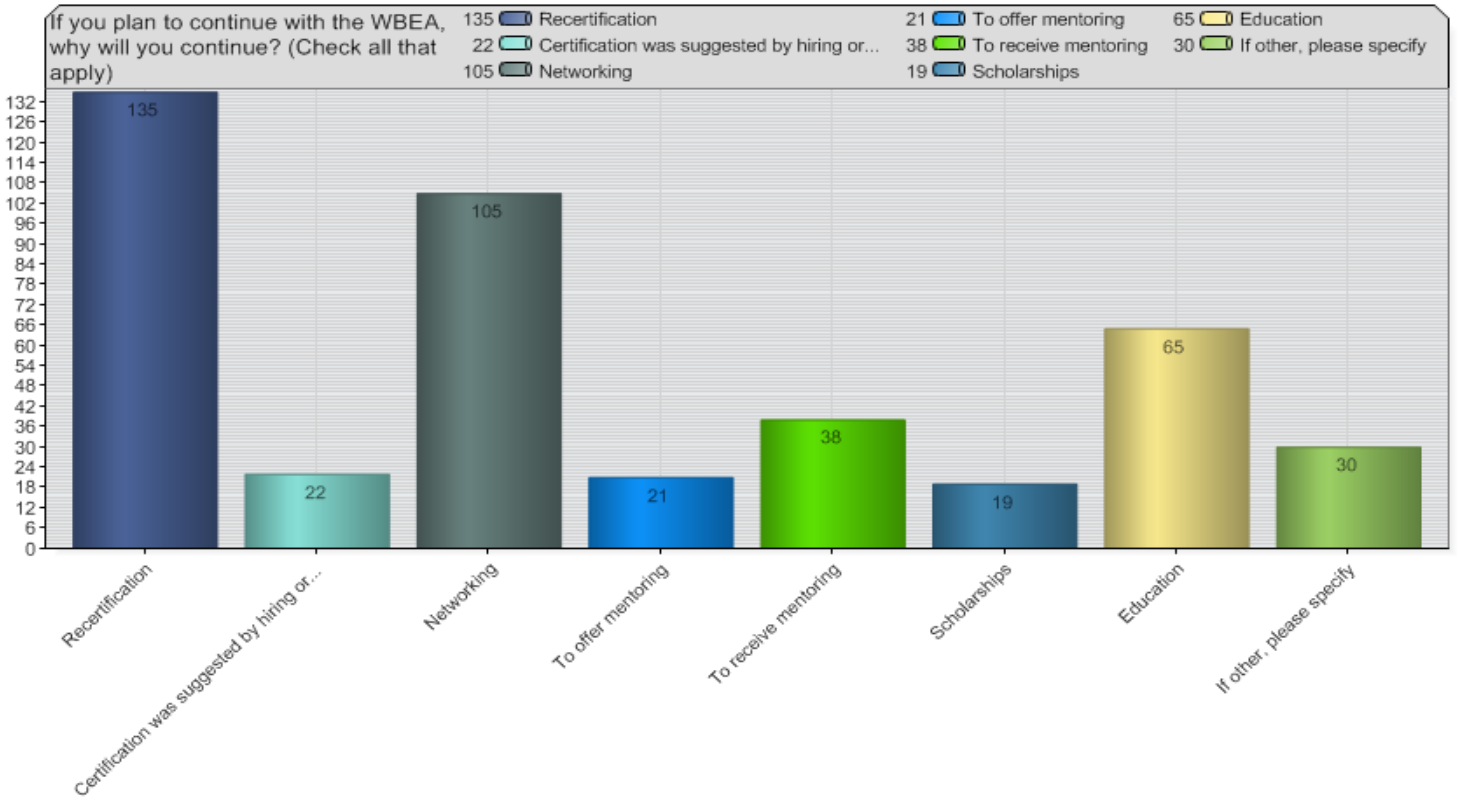


Certification & Networking are the primary reasons respondents joined WBEA

WBEA
Women's Business Enterprise Alliance

Dittmar Associates
Creating the Future

If you plan to continue with the WBEA, why will you continue? (Please check all that apply)

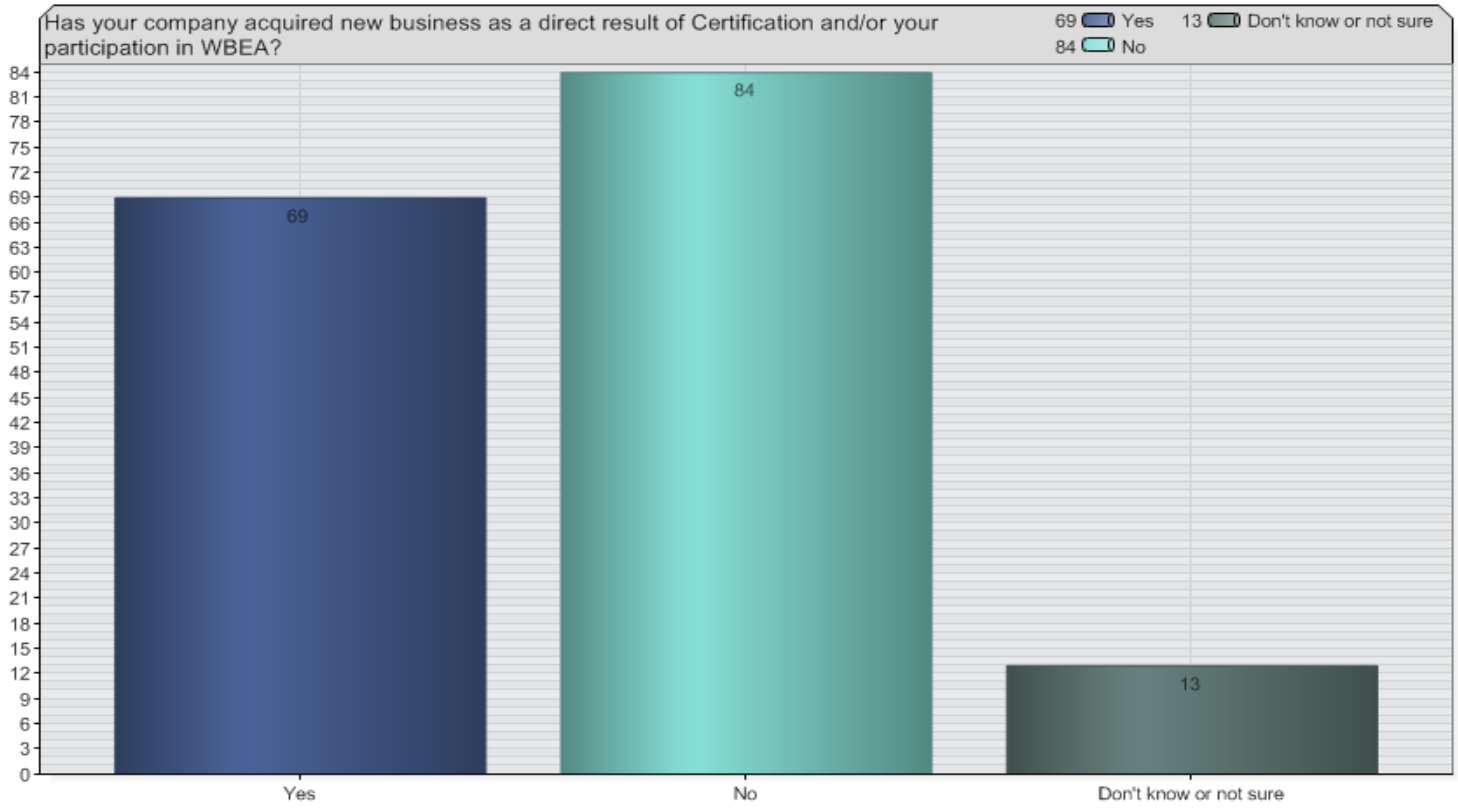


...most of those who plan to continue will do so for the same reasons they joined. However, recertification is more important than networking for as a reason for staying; when joining networking is considered more important.

WBEA
Women's Business Enterprise Alliance

Dittmar Associates
Creating the Future

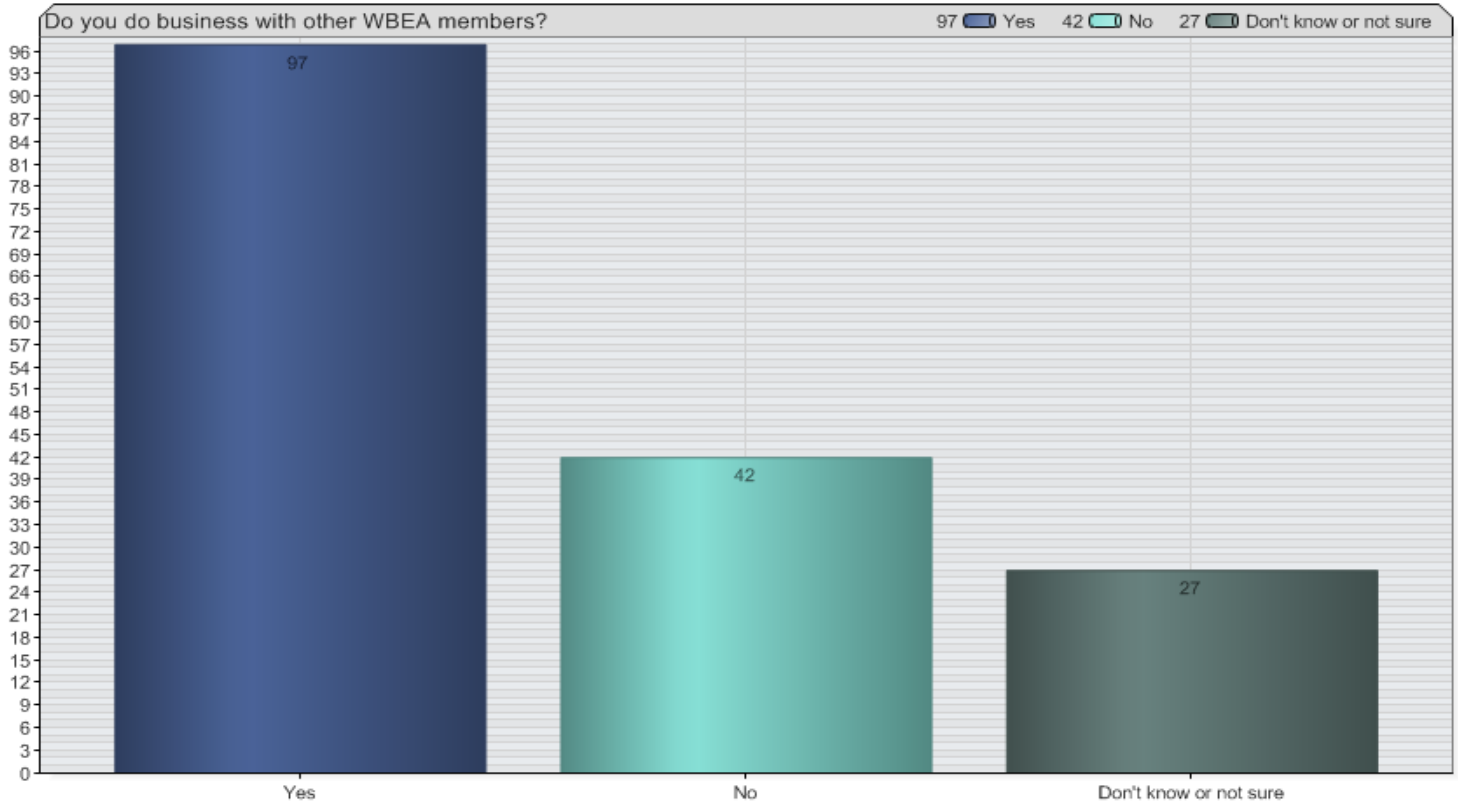
Has your company acquired new business as a direct result of Certification and/or your participation in WBEA?



40% have acquired new business as a result of certification/belonging to WBEA; however 49% have not.*

*This is a change from last year's results that strongly indicated certification/WBEA membership led to new business.

Do you do business with other WBEA members?

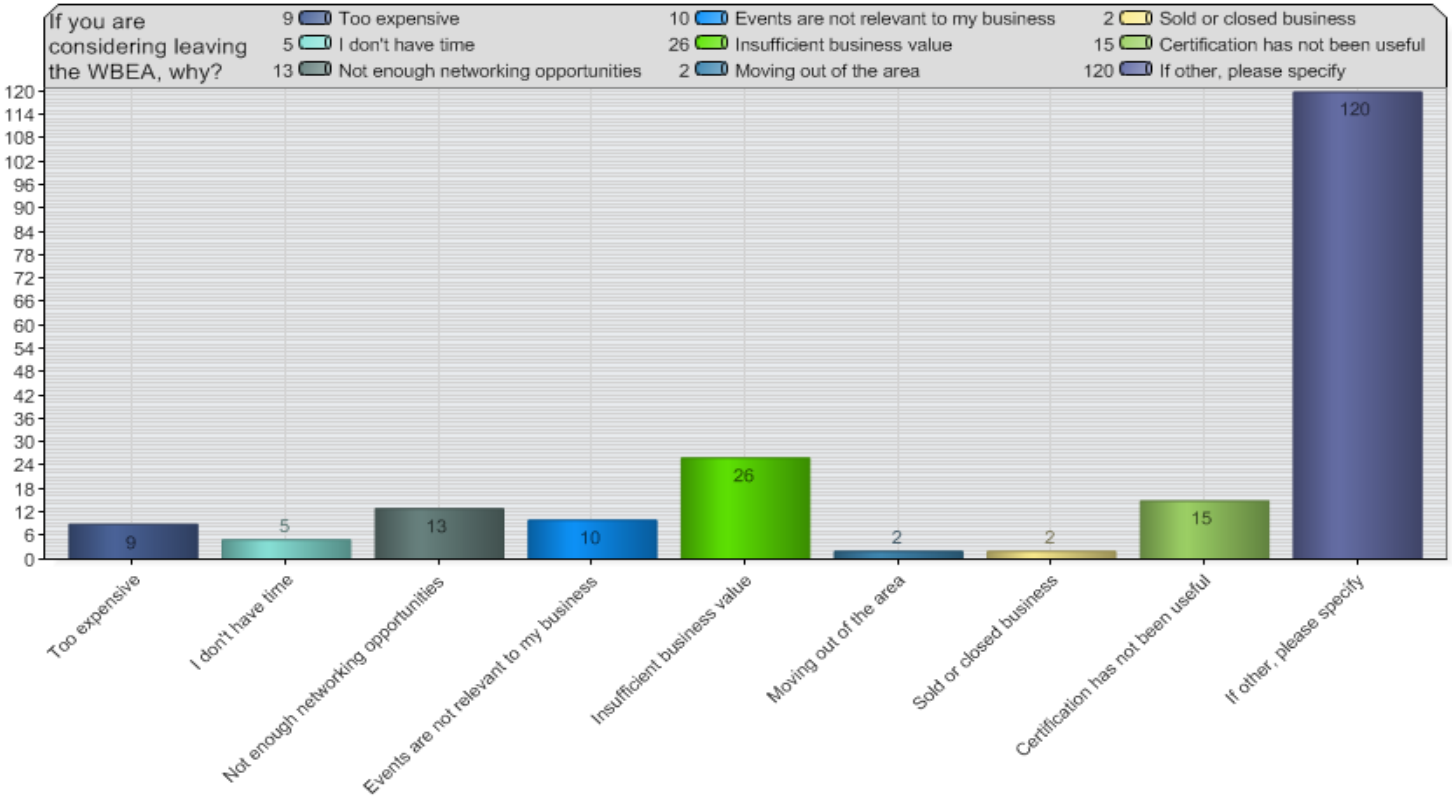


58% of respondents do business with other WBEA members.

WBEA
Women's Business Enterprise Alliance

Dittmar Associates
Creating the Future

If you are considering leaving the WBEA, why? (Please check all that apply)

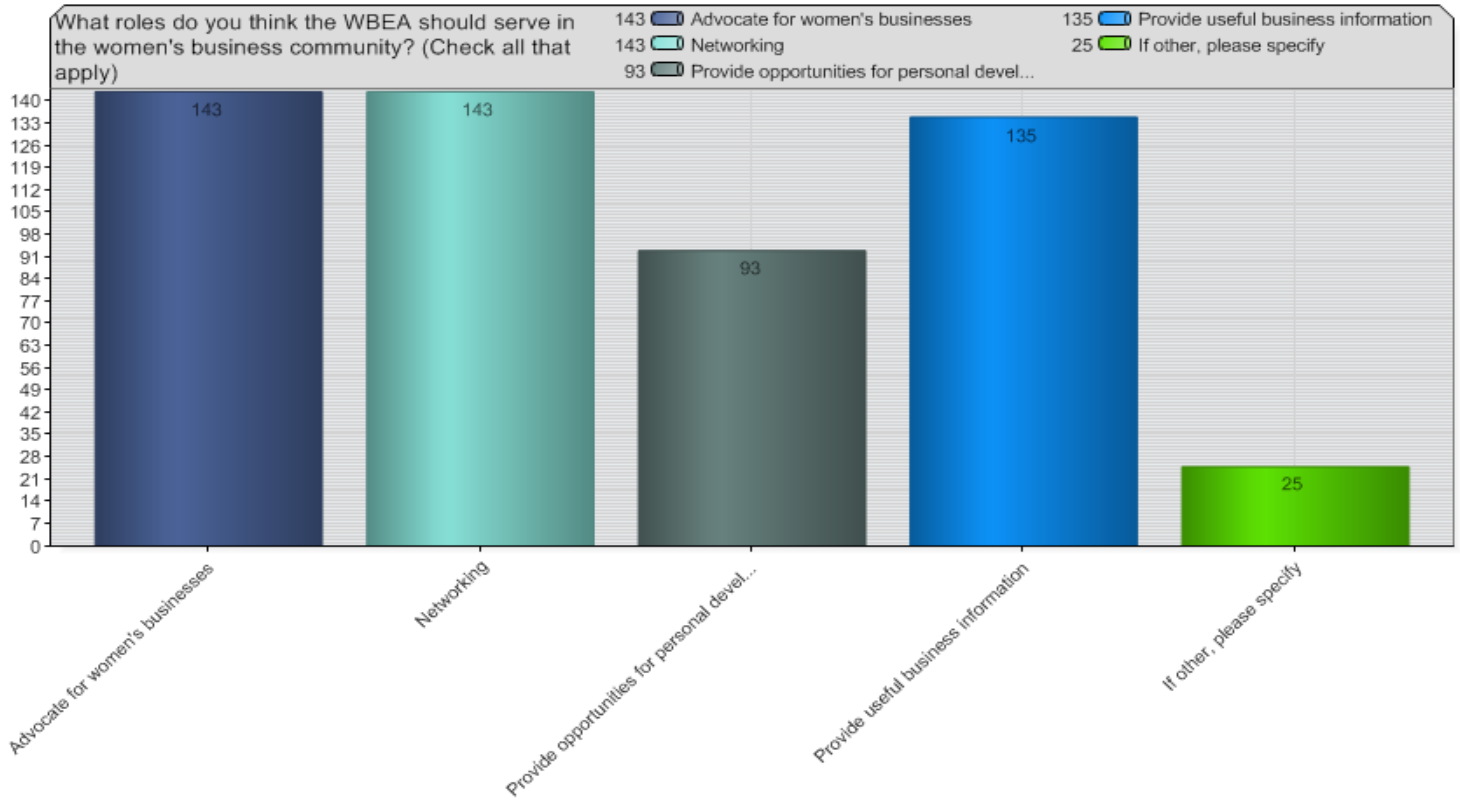


The vast majority have no plans to leave; those who are considering it cited “insufficient business value” and “certification has not been useful” most often as reasons to depart the organization.

WBEA
Women's Business Enterprise Alliance

Dittmar Associates
Creating the Future

What roles do you think the WBEA should serve in the women's business community? (Please check all that apply)



Networking, education/information, and advocacy for women's businesses are desired by respondents.

WBEA
Women's Business Enterprise Alliance

Dittmar Associates
Creating the Future

What else could the WBEA do to benefit your business?

<u>The overwhelming response to this question was identical to the 2010 survey results:</u> A desire desire that WBEA be more visible!!

Respondents are seeking respect for WBEA in the community, greater Community involvement, more marketing, more PR for the organization, stronger and more public promotion of its members.

Executive leadership not seen as actively engaged in networking at the local and state levels, nor seen as a strong advocate for women's businesses in the business community.

WBEA is perceived as under-delivering in the greater business community. It is seen as a "weak actor" in need of its own marketing plan.

WBEA
Women's Business Enterprise Alliance

Dittmar Associates
Creating the Future

What educational programs would you like the WBEA to offer? (Ranked by frequency of response)

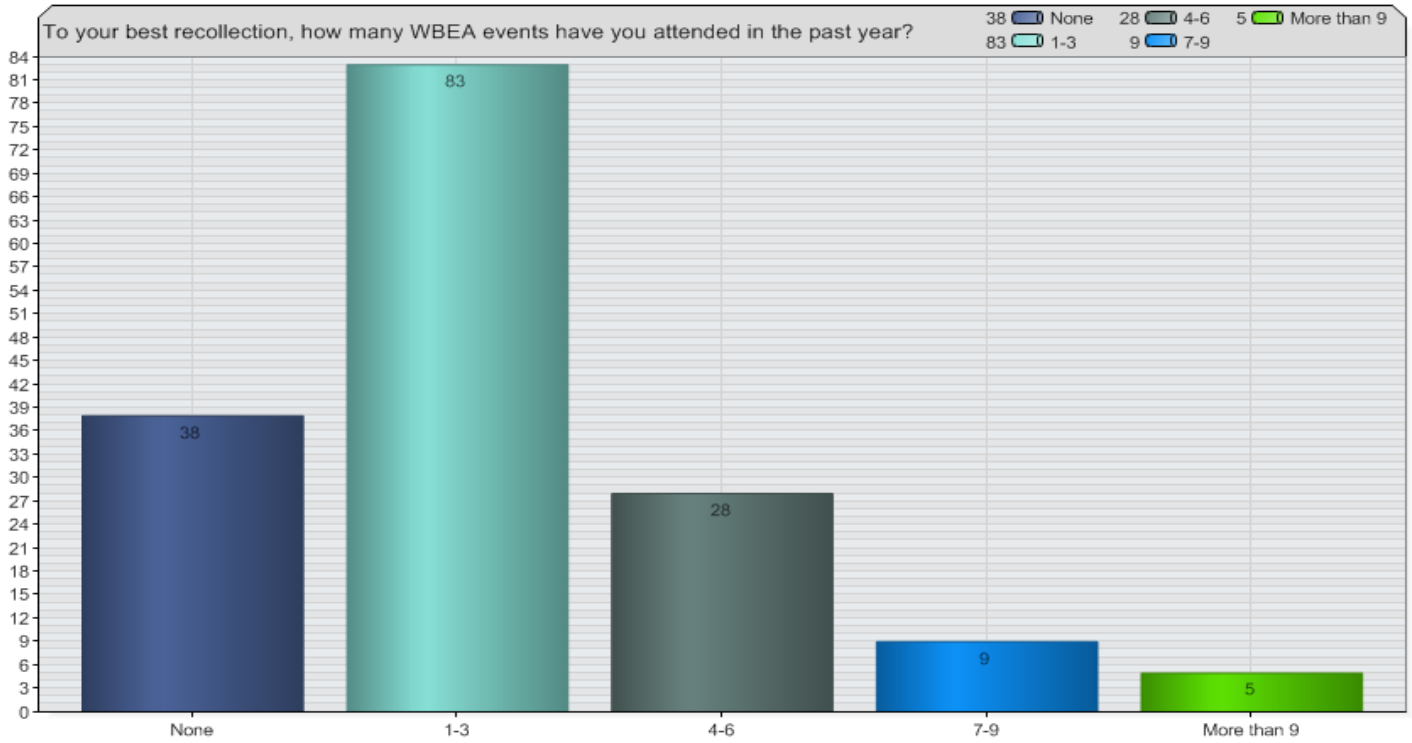
1. Business development/new business acquisition/lead development – including targeting markets, influencing procurements, how to respond to RFP's/RFI's, etc.

2. Marketing

3. Business life-cycle – how to build a business but also how to maintain and grow existing businesses

4. Most programs are targeted to new (young) businesses; need to establish programs for companies in business > 5 years. Focus on growth, acquisition of capital, attracting investors, succession planning, etc.

To your best recollection, how many WBEA events have you attended in the past year?

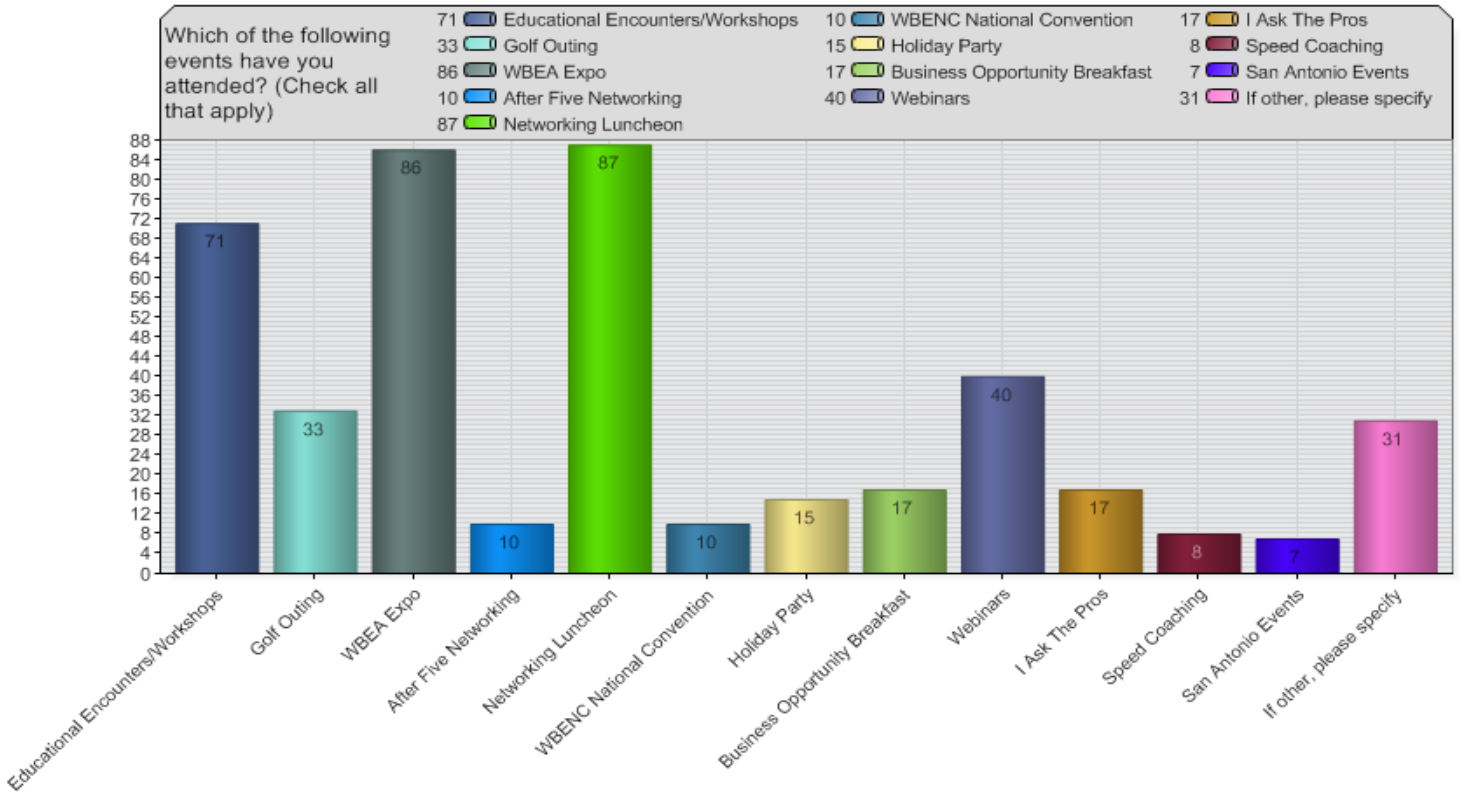


Most respondents have attended 1-3 events.

WBEA
Women's Business Enterprise Alliance

Dittmar Associates
Creating the Future

Which of the following events have you attended? (Check all that apply)

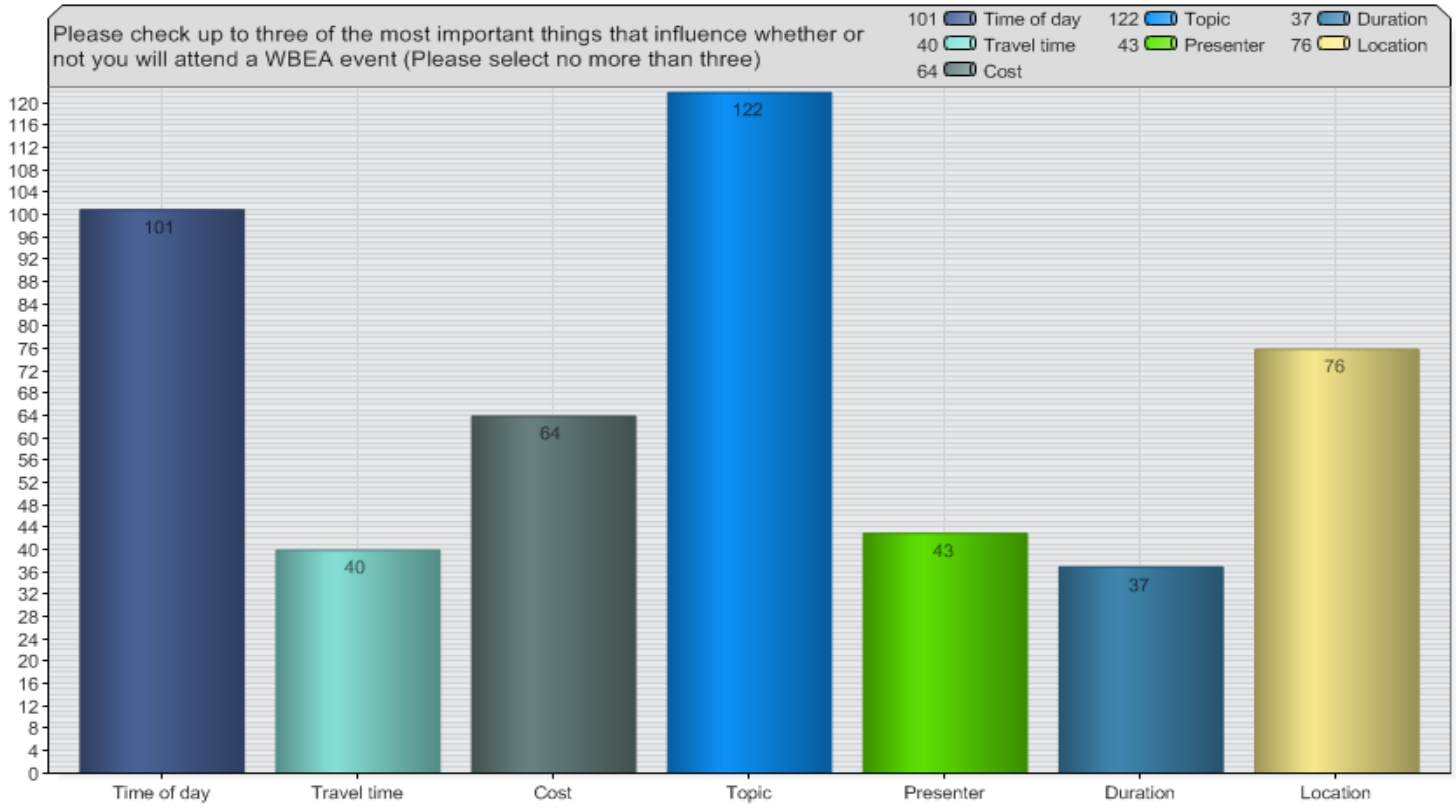


Networking Luncheons, Expo, and Educational Encounters are the most popular events.

WBEA
Women's Business Enterprise Alliance

Dittmar Associates
Creating the Future

Please indicate the most important things that influence whether or not you will attend a WBEA event. Please select no more than three.

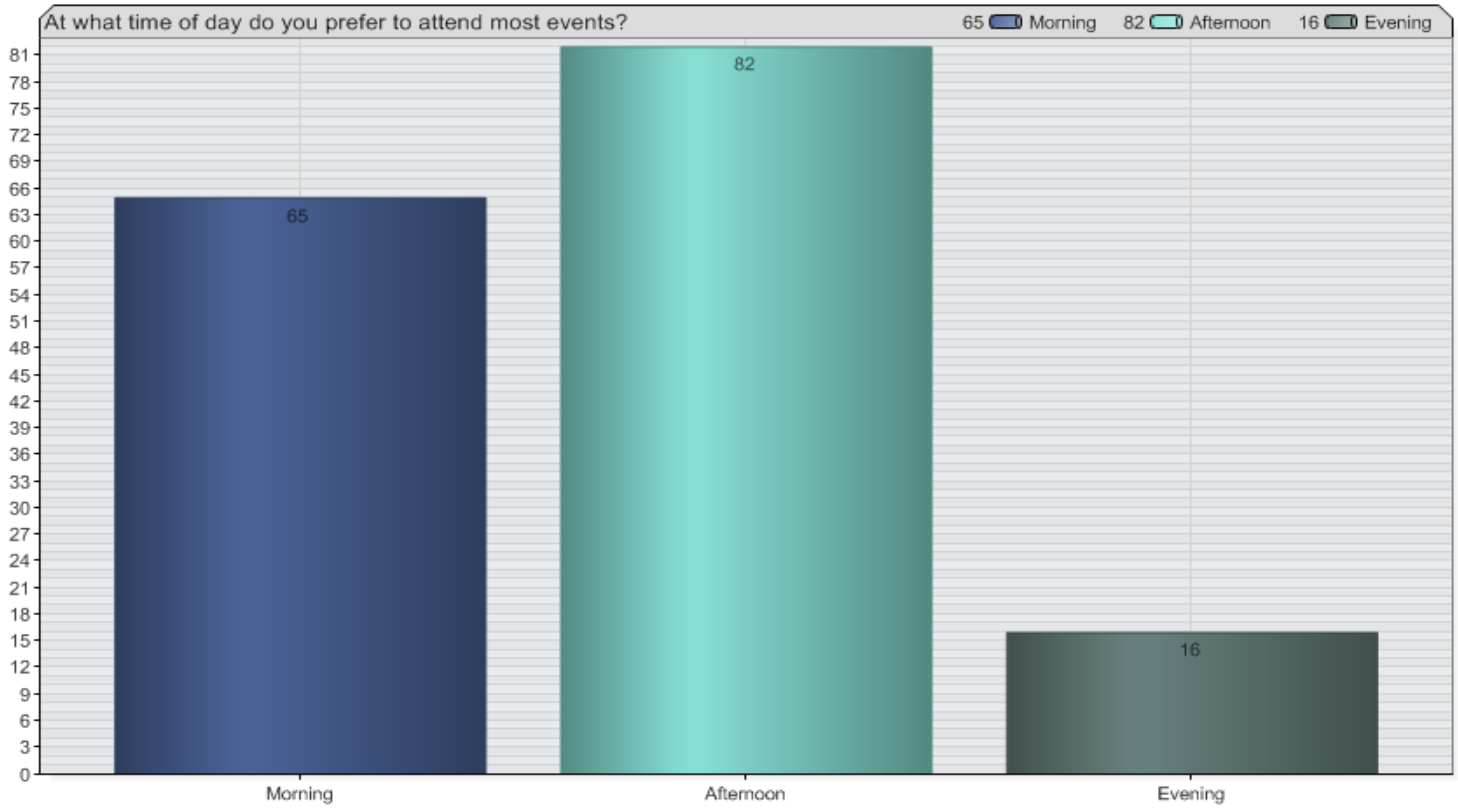


Topic, time of day, and location drive event attendance. With regard to topics, business development, marketing, effective networking, and financial programs are of the most interest.

WBEA
Women's Business Enterprise Alliance

Dittmar Associates
Creating the Future

At what time of day do you prefer to attend most events?

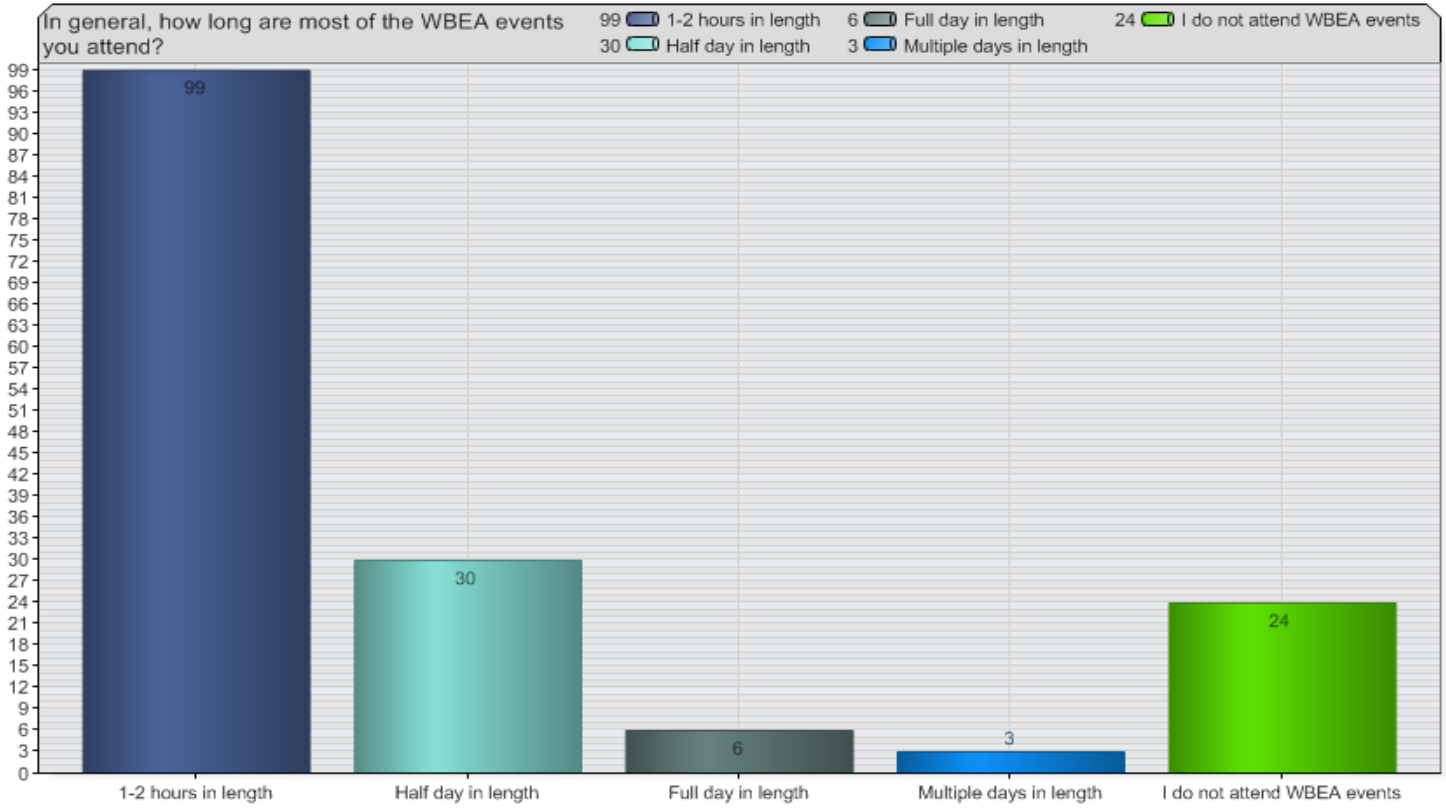


Events scheduled in the evenings are least preferred by respondents; afternoon events are the most preferred.

WBEA
Women's Business Enterprise Alliance

Dittmar Associates
Creating the Future

How long are most of the WBEA events that you attend?

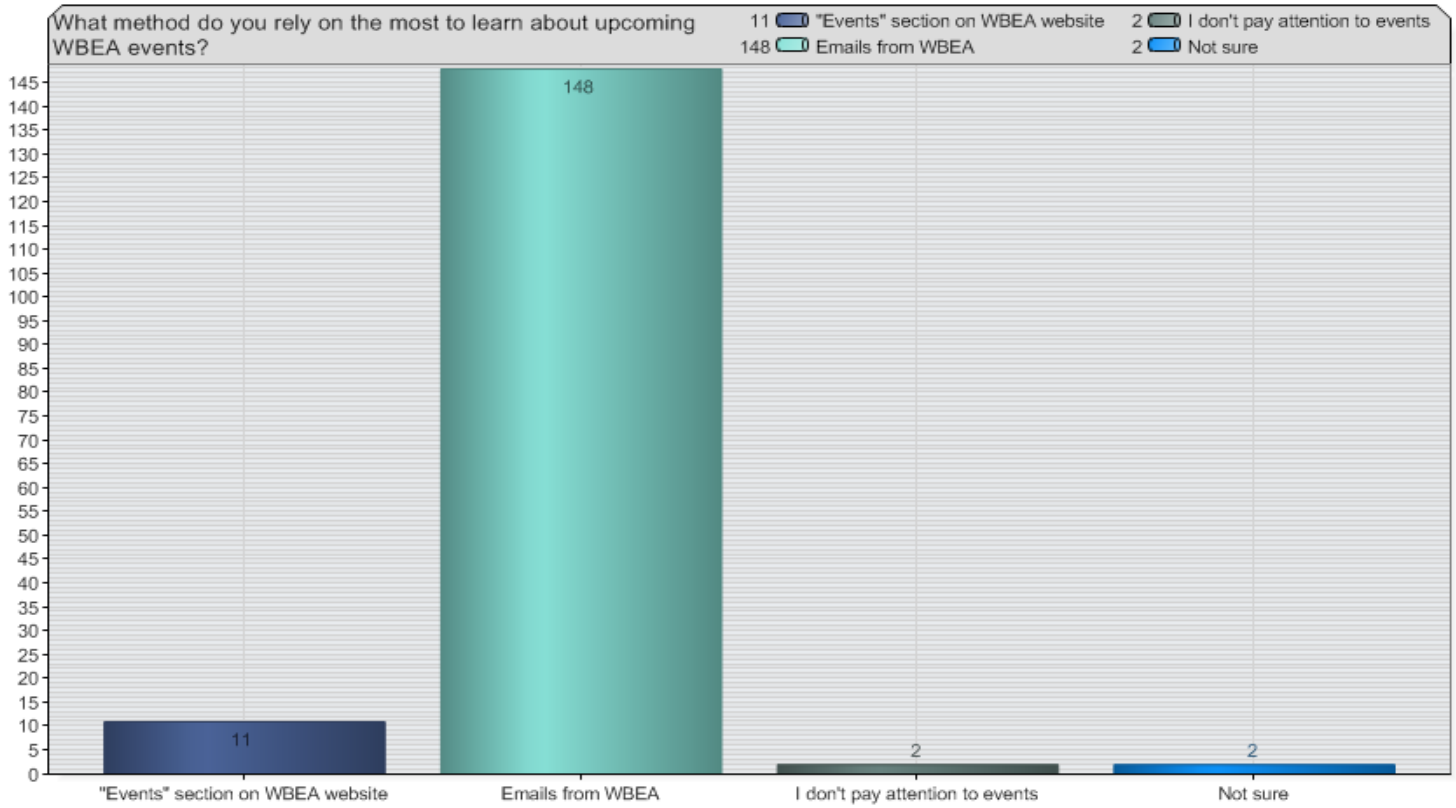


Schedule pressures drive most respondents to events no longer than 2 hours duration; ½ day workshops are considered when workshop goals are well-defined and communicated to potential participants.

WBEA
Women's Business Enterprise Alliance

Dittmar Associates
Creating the Future

Which answer best describes your approach to learning about upcoming WBEA events?

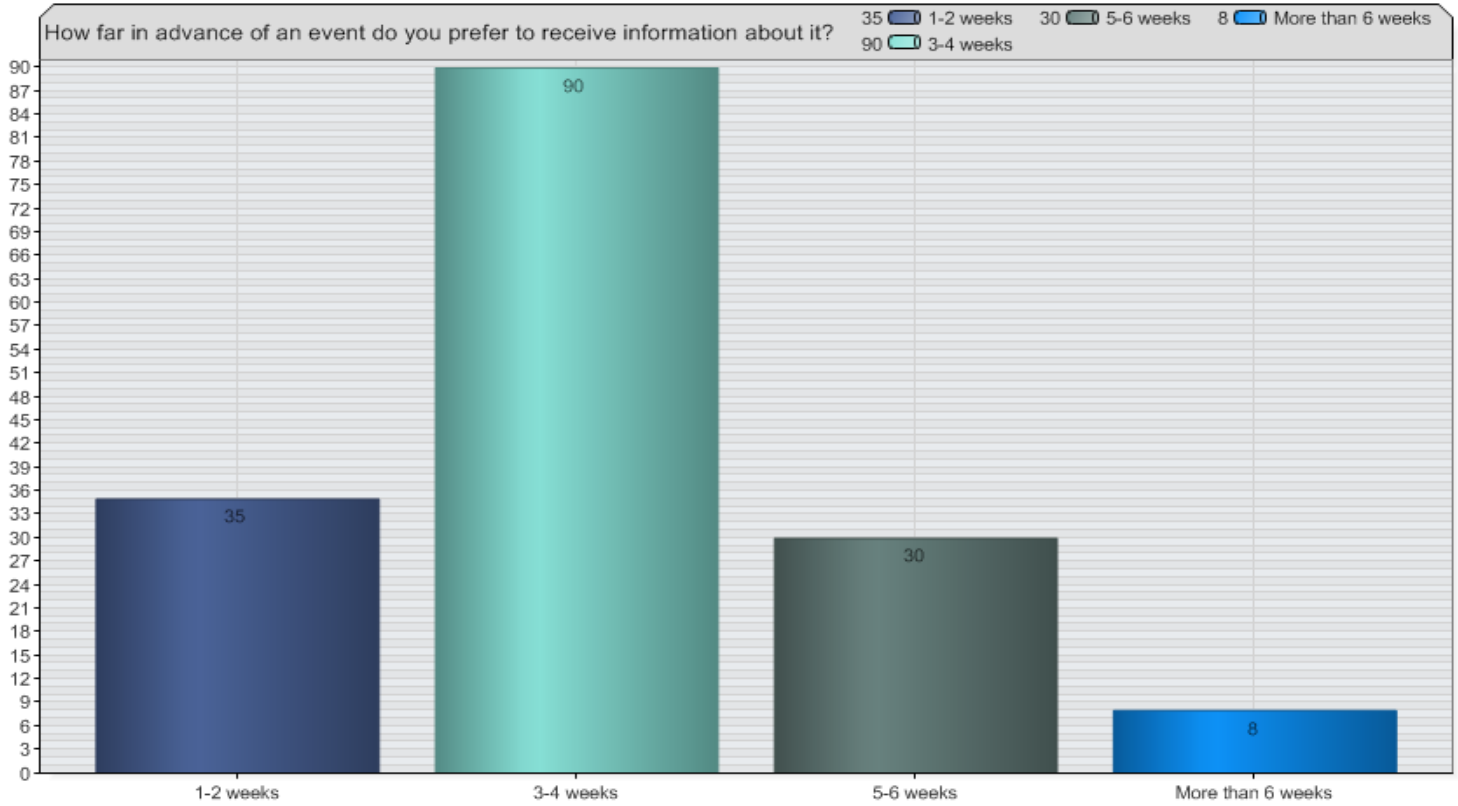


Email is the chief mechanism by which respondents learn about WBEA events.

WBEA
Women's Business Enterprise Alliance

Dittmar Associates
Creating the Future

How far in advance of an event do you prefer to receive information?

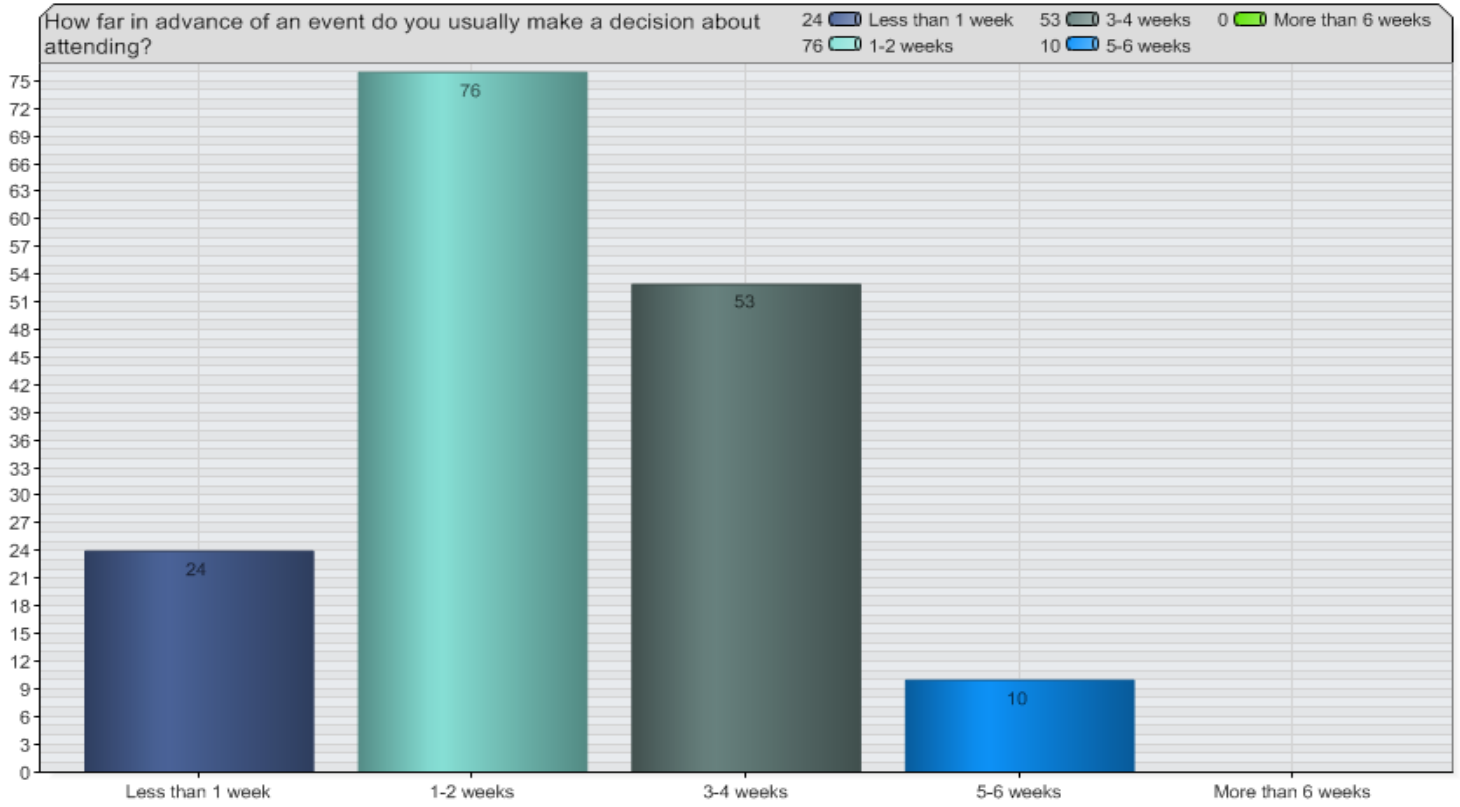


Almost half of respondents prefer to be notified about events 3-4 weeks in advance...

WBEA
Women's Business Enterprise Alliance

Dittmar Associates
Creating the Future

How far in advance of an event do you usually make a decision about attending?

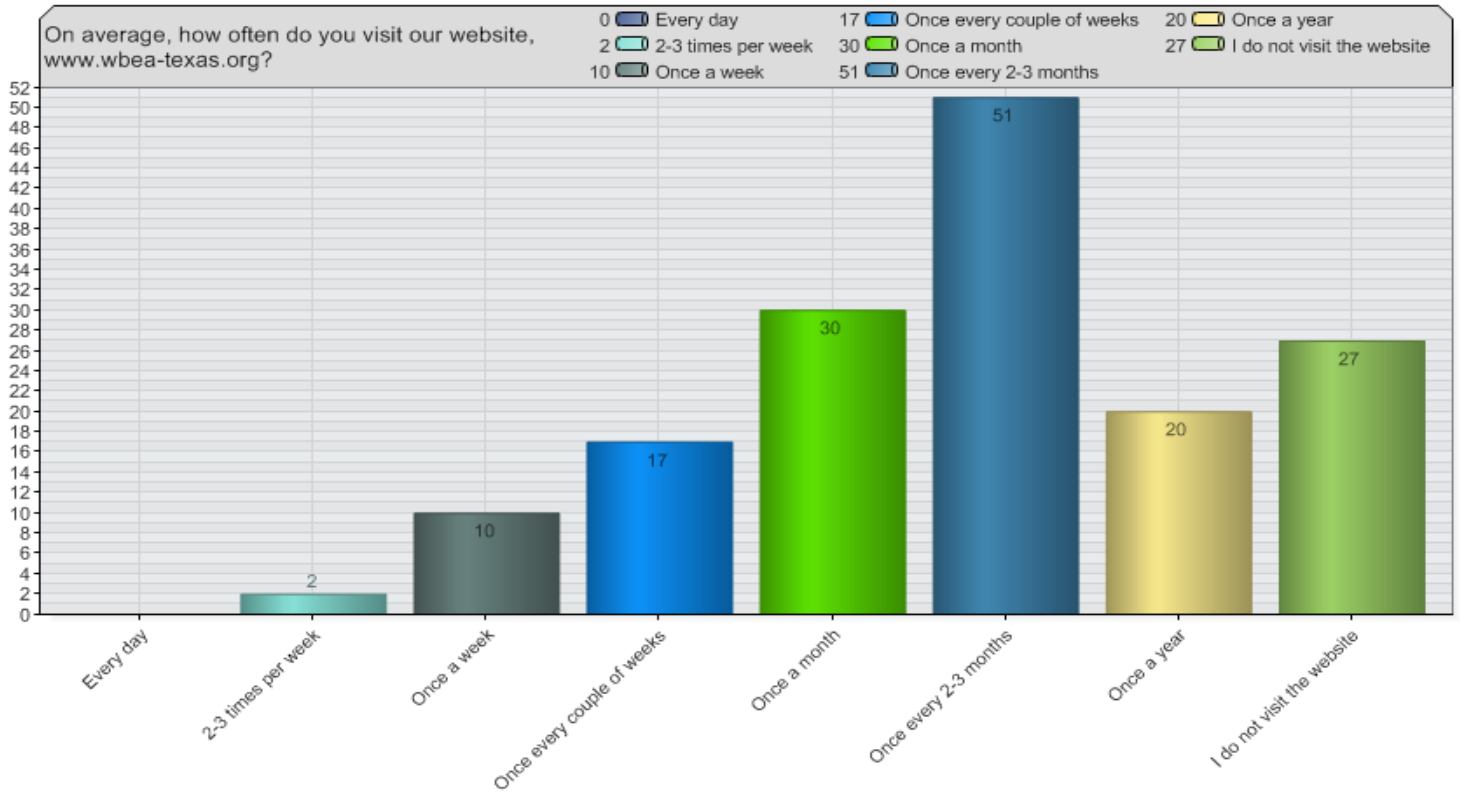


…enabling them to make decisions about attendance between 1-2 weeks ahead. Another 1/3 make decisions about attendance further out, between 3-4 weeks in advance.

WBEA
Women's Business Enterprise Alliance

Dittmar Associates
Creating the Future

How often do you visit our website, www.wbea-texas.org?

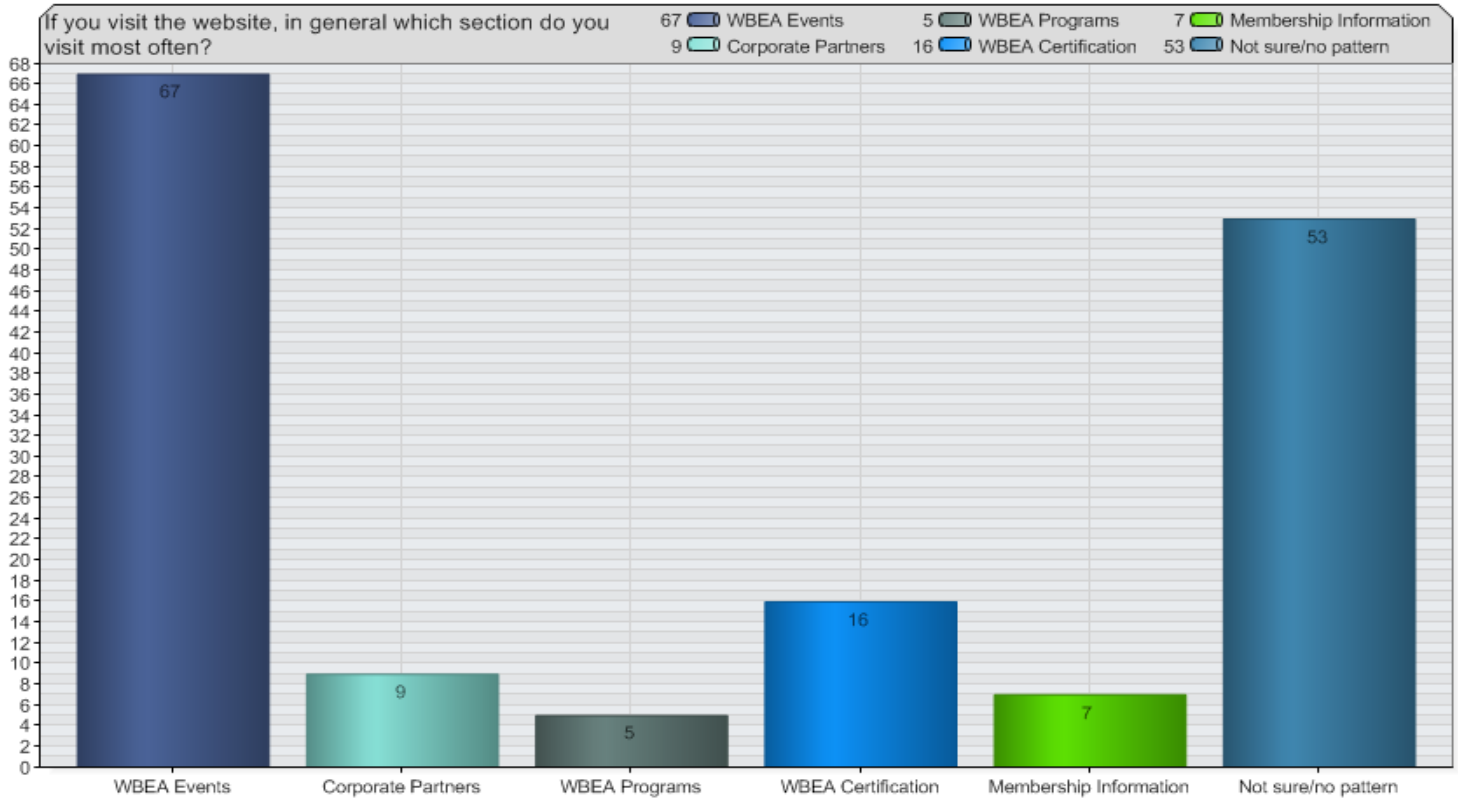


Roughly half of the respondents visit the website once every 1-3 months...

WBEA
Women's Business Enterprise Alliance

Dittmar Associates
Creating the Future

If you have visited the WBEA website, what sections do you visit the most often?

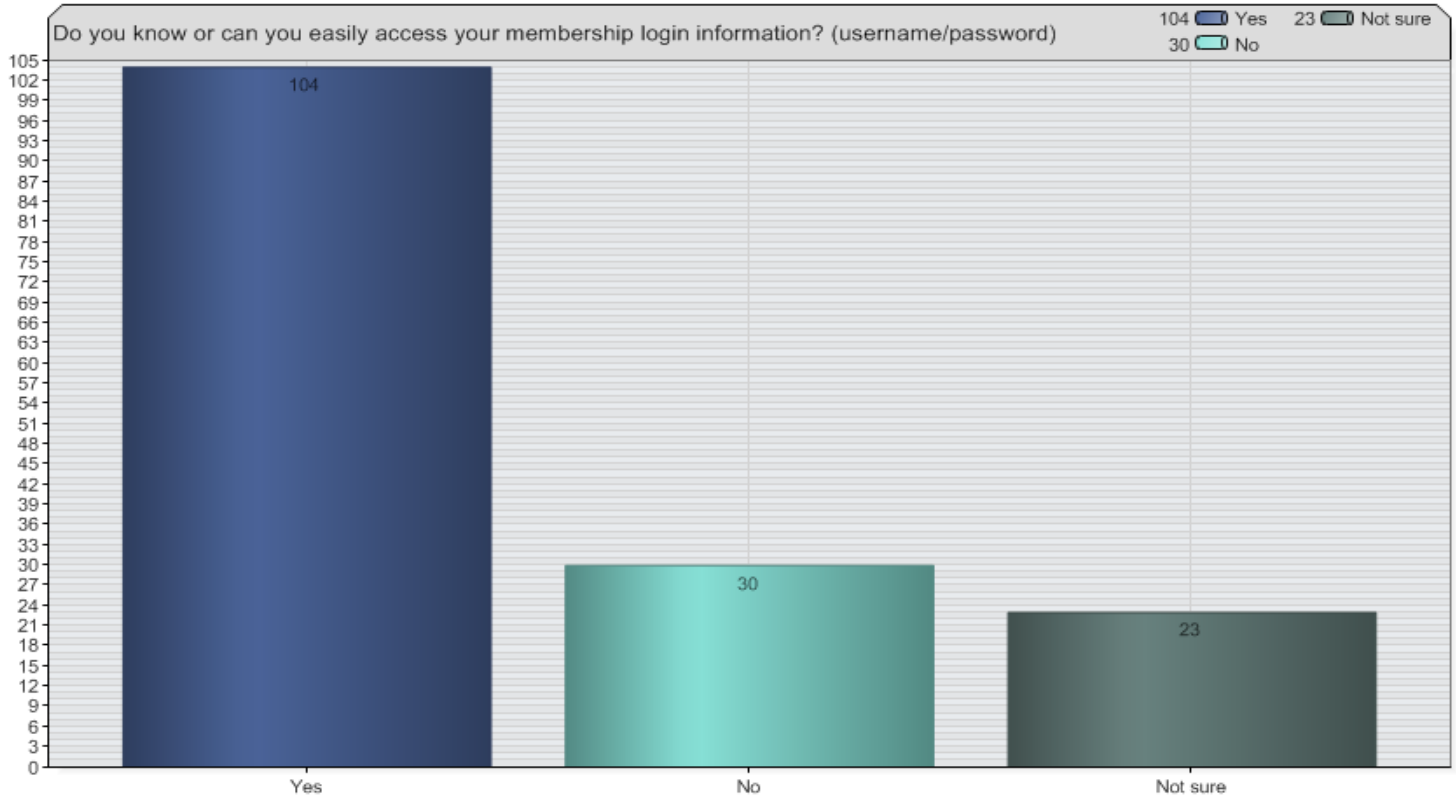


...and about 1/3 visit to access information about WBEA events. Another 30%, however, visit with no particular pattern of viewing various website sections – suggesting the website is browsed but not used by many visitors.

WBEA
Women's Business Enterprise Alliance

Dittmar Associates
Creating the Future

Do you know or can you easily access your membership login information (username/password)?



Approximately 65% of respondents knew or could access their login credentials.

WBEA
Women's Business Enterprise Alliance

Dittmar Associates
Creating the Future

What additional type(s) of information would you like to see on the WBEA website? (Ranked by frequency of response)

1. Membership Directory, including Corporate Member section. Needs to be MUCH more user friendly; current format is horrible. Get it out of Excel.

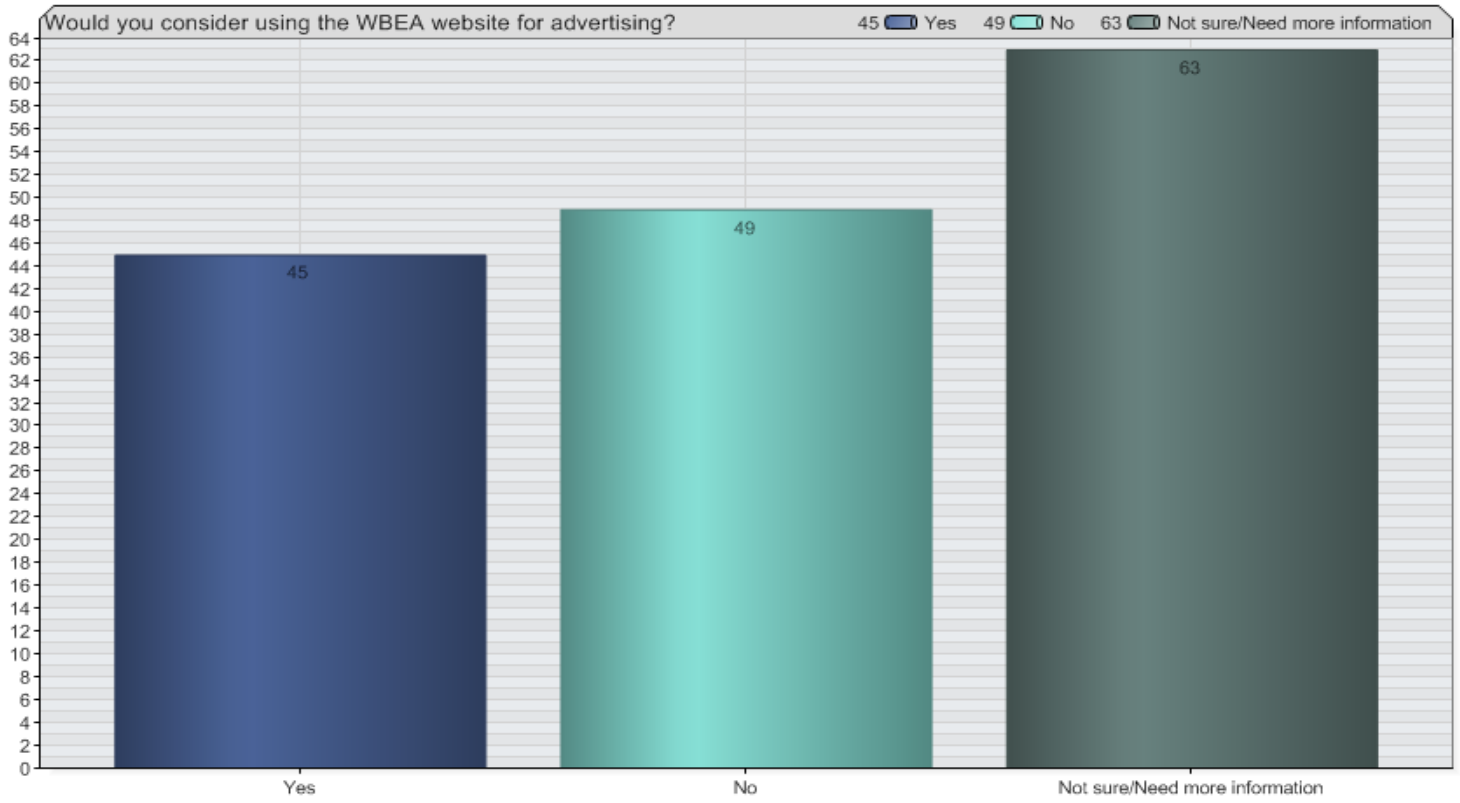
2. Better search capability

3. Regular updating – RFP's, Calendar, Events, etc.

4. Free webinars that have been archived so they can be accessed and played at any time (a la "YouTube") – and not just from WBEA. Would like to see better aggregation of web sources of interest to members.

A user-friendly Directory and a fully functional website updated daily are desired by respondents.

Would you be interested in using the WBEA website for advertising?

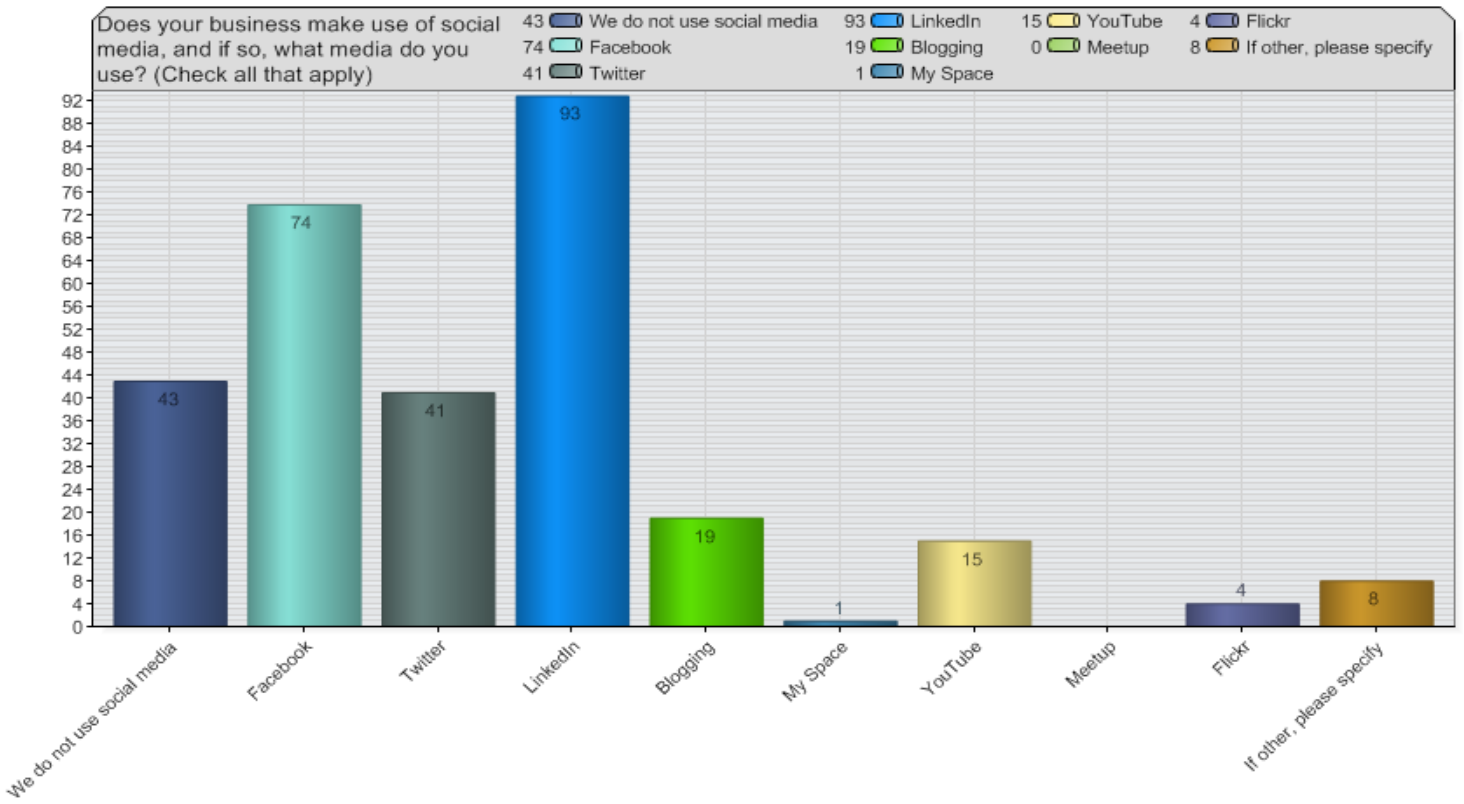


Of those expressing an opinion, there is no consensus on whether they would consider using the website for advertising. A significant portion of respondents indicated that they need more information to make a decision.

WBEA
Women's Business Enterprise Alliance

Dittmar Associates
Creating the Future

Does your business make use of "social media", and if so, what media do you use? (Please check all that apply)

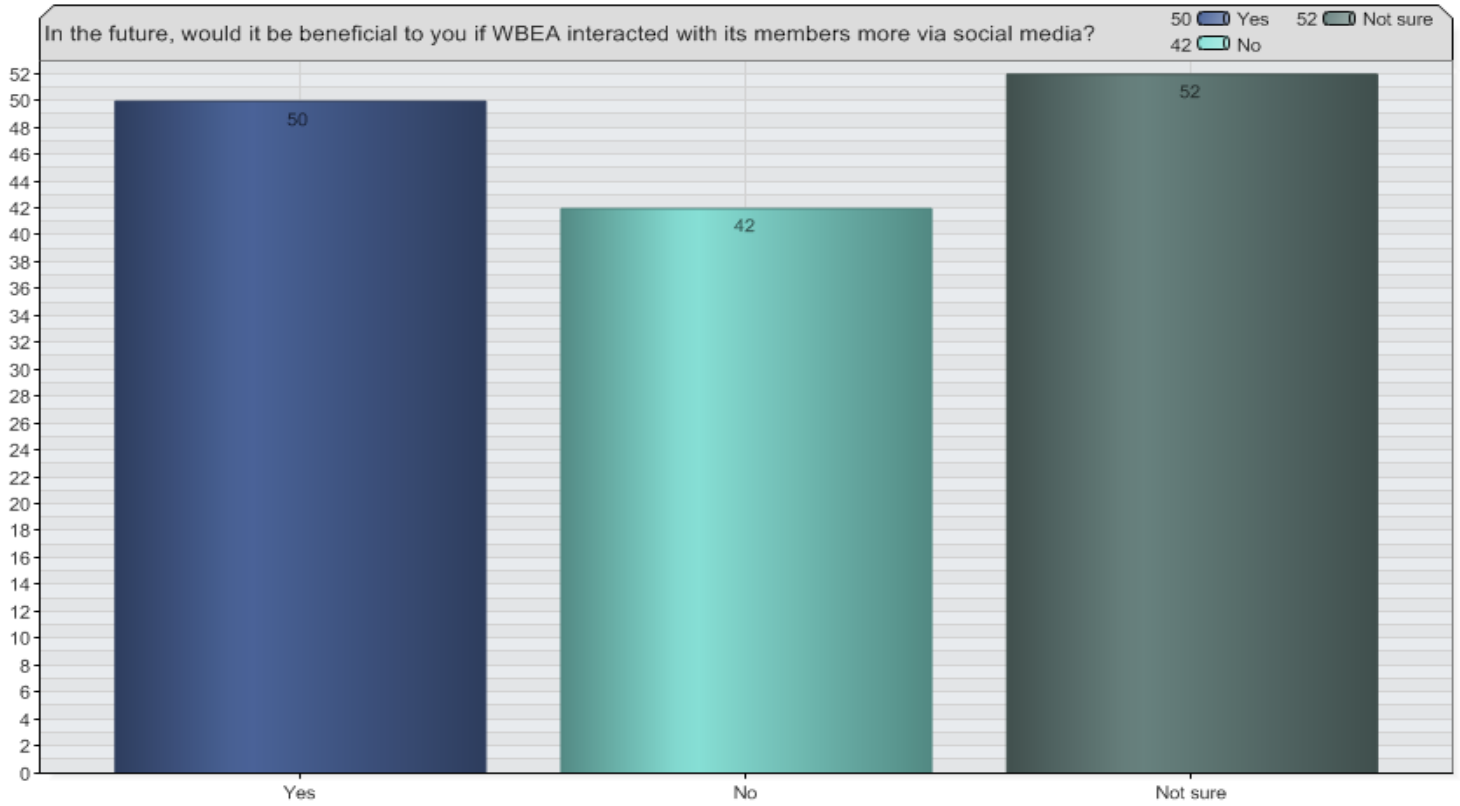


Most respondents (75%) use some type of social media to promote their businesses.

WBEA
Women's Business Enterprise Alliance

Dittmar Associates
Creating the Future

In the future, would it be beneficial to you if WBEA interacted with its members via social media? Please provide suggestions, if any, in the comment box.

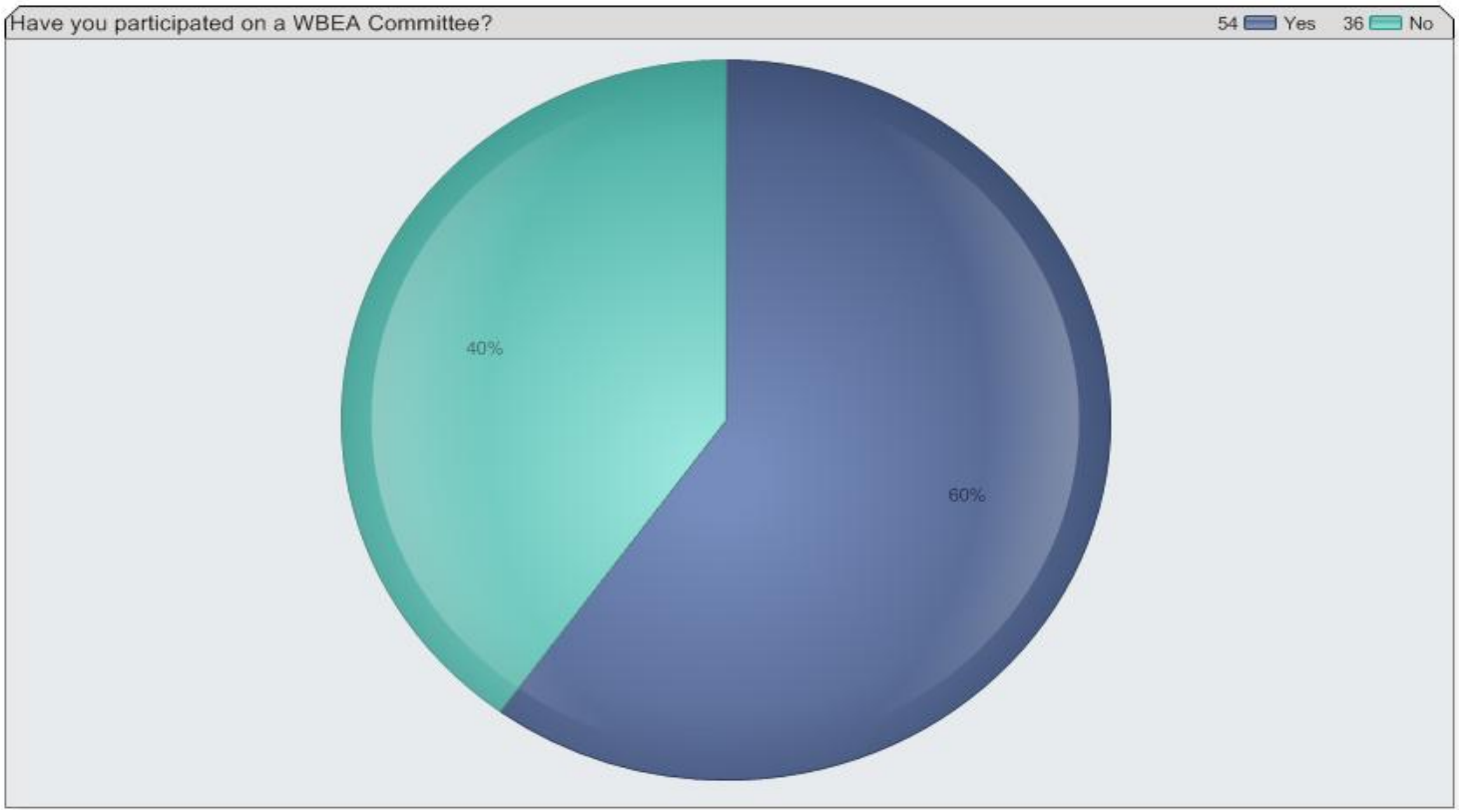


Respondents are evenly divided as to whether WBEA should utilize social media to communicate with members; many indicated it would depend upon the purpose and type of media and how it is deployed.

WBEA
Women's Business Enterprise Alliance

Dittmar Associates
Creating the Future

Have you participated on a WBEA Committee?

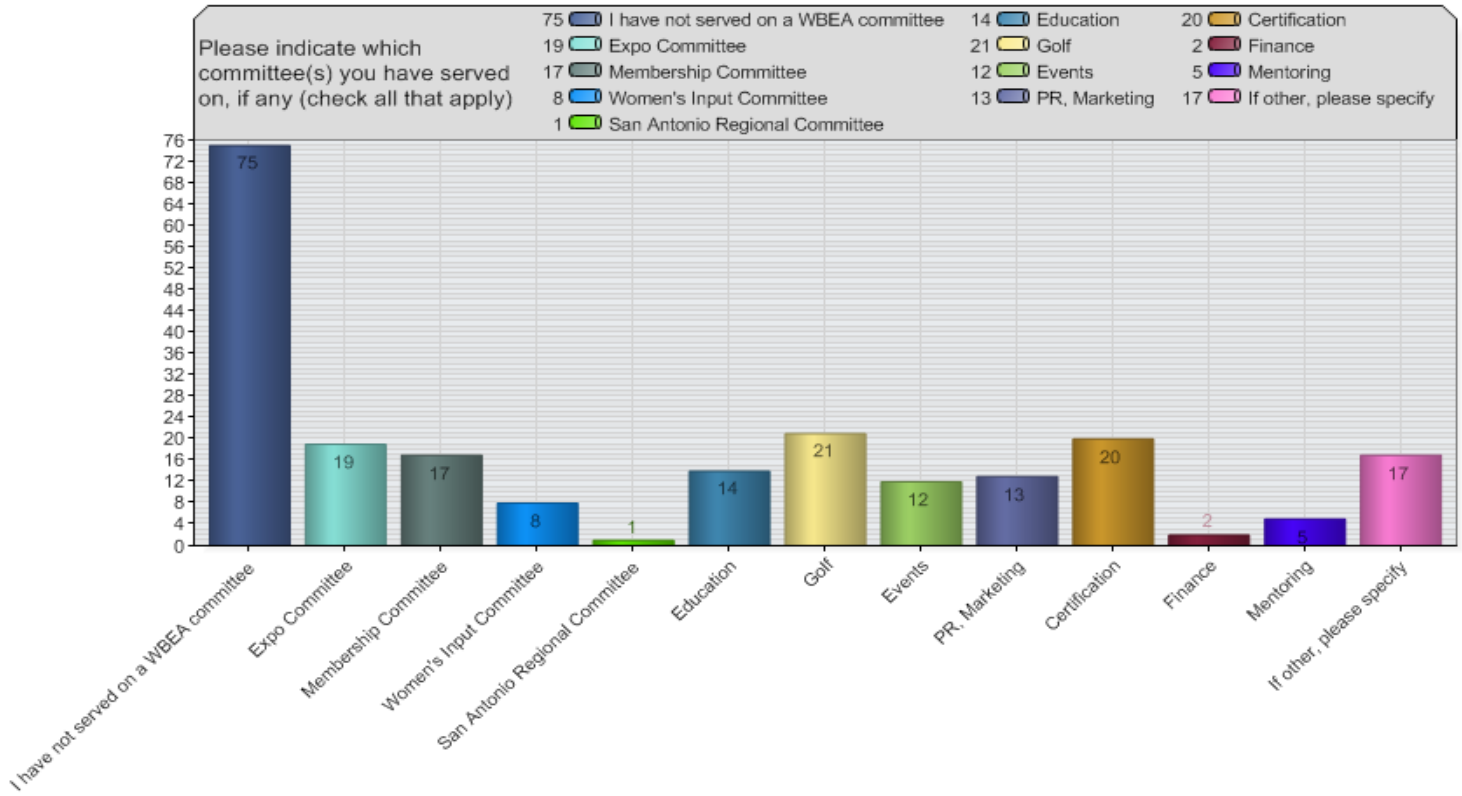


A little over half of the respondents have participated on committees....

WBEA
Women's Business Enterprise Alliance

Dittmar Associates
Creating the Future

Please indicate which Committee(s) you have served on, if any (Please check all that apply)



A little less than half of the respondents have served on WBEA committees. Committee service varies across the group.

WBEA
Women's Business Enterprise Alliance

Dittmar Associates
Creating the Future

What other topics would you like to see the WBEA address via a committee, if any?

1. Take 2 or 3 (max) results from surveys, assign to appropriate committees, and develop & implement action plan to address change. Inform entire membership about what has been selected and why, communicate plan, identify metrics to assess progress against goals, and then communicate results. Do this prior to next survey or don't both with another one. Committees should be used to implement change.

2. Current committees need to be rebuilt. Work coming forward from the committees is not followed up; suggestions not implemented.

3. Develop a strategic communications/marketing plan for the WBEA itself

4. A committee to track corporate trends affecting business and report back to membership. Could combine with use of social media or update website.

5. Consider working groups which are time limited to deal with "hot topics"

WBEA Committee structure and topics should be reviewed in light of the variety of suggestions and concerns expressed by respondents in this survey.

What other feedback would you like to offer the WBEA? (not ranked)

- Improve website – Bring in professional group to overhaul website with emphasis on collaborative websites.
  - More user friendly
  - Searchable membership directory
  - Searchable business opportunities
  - Aggregation of articles/sources in business sectors of interest to the membership
- Need a “new members” orientation and/or handbook
- Need a strategic plan that is shared with all members
- Need to position WBEA better in the business and political communities
- Need to focus on WBE/Corporate relationships
  - Corporates not in a “service” orientation; too many there to meet their organization’s small business goals (mechanics) rather than improve vitality of WBEA or help WBEs grow

Respondents offered a variety of good ideas for how to improve the organization; many responses focused on a more dynamic approach to marketing and business community involvement.

Survey Summary: Final Notes

Last year's survey and this year's – together with results from 2005 – are consistent in the following:

1. WBE's join and remain in WBEA for networking and certification purposes

2. The greatest value delivered by WBEA is in networking, certification, and dissemination of information about business, primarily through events (and now webinars)

3. Staff and leadership are generally well thought of, but need additional resources and expertise.

"Take-away" messages from respondents in both 2010 and 2011: *WBEA needs more visibility in the business and political communities*. Suggestions focused on:

- Marketing
- Strategic planning
- Improving the effectiveness of the leadership/executive team in creating meaningful community activities and high visibility public relations for WBEA and its members. Executive team needs to "get out of the box" and network with NEW organizations, focus on increasing vitality and incorporating change.