



Center for Responsible Travel



Analysis of Travelers' Philanthropy Survey Osa Peninsula, 2011

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Table of Contents

TABLE OF CONTENTS	1
INTRODUCTION	4
OBJECTIVES	5
METHODOLOGY	6
SAMPLING STRATEGY	6
SURVEY INSTRUMENT	6
DATA ENTRY, ANALYSIS, AND INTERPRETATION	7
RESPONDENT PROFILES	8
BUSINESS DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION	8
<i>Business Sector Representation</i>	8
HOTEL CARRYING CAPACITY	8
BUSINESS BASES OF OPERATION	9
TOURIST ATTRACTIONS OFFERED TO CLIENTS AND BUSINESS COMPOSITION	9
BUSINESS COMPOSITION: NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES	10
CLIENT DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION	10
YEARLY AVERAGE OF GUESTS BY RESPONDENTS	11
BUSINESSES BY PRICE RANGE	12
HOTELS BY STAR RATINGS	12
SUSTAINABLE TOURISM PROGRAMS	13
TRAVELERS' PHILANTHROPY	15
AWARENESS AND INTEREST IN TRAVELERS' PHILANTHROPY	15
BUSINESS CHARITABLE GIVING	16
CURRENT CHARITABLE GIVING	16
AMOUNT DONATED	16
BENEFICIARIES OF CHARITABLE CONTRIBUTIONS	16
SELECTING BENEFICIARIES	18
<i>Selection Process</i>	18
<i>Decision-Making</i>	19
MEASURING THE IMPACT OF DONATIONS	20
CLIENT CHARITABLE DONATIONS	20
INFORMING CLIENTS OF PHILANTHROPIC OPPORTUNITIES	20
BENEFICIARIES OF CLIENT DONATIONS	21
MARKETING & GIVING	23
SHARING DETAILS OF CONTRIBUTIONS WITH THE COMMUNITY	23
TRAVELER'S PHILANTHROPY	23

SUCSESSES AND CHALLENGES..... 24

FUTURE INVOLVEMENT 25

Interest in Future Training, Conferences and Pilot Project..... 25

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS 26

 RESPONDENT PROFILES 26

Key Points..... 26

 TRAVELERS’ PHILANTHROPY..... 27

Key Points..... 27

 BUSINESS CHARITABLE GIVING 28

Key Points..... 28

 MARKETING & GIVING 29

Key Points..... 29

Introduction

Travelers' Philanthropy is a growing international trend in which travelers and companies in the tourism industry give financial resources, time, and expertise to increase the well-being of local communities. As defined by CREST's newly published *Travelers' Philanthropy Handbook*:

Travelers' philanthropy is tourism businesses and travelers making concrete contributions of time, talent, and treasure to local projects *beyond what is generated through the normal tourism business*.

Travelers' philanthropy is not about collecting loose change for charities; rather, it is about integrating tourism company and visitor support for local communities into the core definition of responsible travel. It is also about:

- o Helping tourism businesses become actively involved as 'good citizens' in their travel destinations.
- o Assisting local projects that provide a 'hand up' not a 'hand out;' that is, projects that promote social empowerment, education, and entrepreneurship that lead to sustainable, long-term development and environmental conservation.
- o Enriching the travel experience through meaningful, culturally sensitive, and productive interactions with people in host communities.

Done well, travelers' philanthropy benefits the destination, the travel business, and the traveler.¹

Travelers' philanthropy most often takes the form of direct alliances between an individual company involved in tourism and a local non-profit organization. Since 2004, CREST has worked with individual travel businesses to assist them in developing travelers' philanthropy initiatives. However, there is growing evidence indicates that entire communities with a strong local economy based on tourism, like the Osa Peninsula and Monteverde, Costa Rica as well as Cape Cod, Massachusetts in the United States, could benefit more from collaborative initiatives at the destination level. With the support of CRUSA, CREST, together with Fundacion Corcovado, undertook a six month project designed to assess the potential and lay the groundwork for creating a destination-wide travelers' philanthropy initiative and fund in the Osa Peninsula.

As part of the same project, CREST and Fundacion Corcovado, with strategic support from the Osa Chamber of Tourism (CATUOSA) undertook a survey with local tourism businesses to better understand the current practices and opinions related to business and client contributions. The results of the survey will be used to establish a baseline reference for developing a Travelers' Philanthropy initiative in the Osa. As well, the survey was used to help identify businesses and organizations already involved in or most interested in becoming involved in travelers' philanthropy, including attending the international conference "Travelers' Philanthropy: An Essential Component of Responsible Tourism" held in San José and Monteverde, Costa Rica from July 20-23, 2011. For more information regarding the conference and its results, visit <http://www.travelersphilanthropy.org>.

¹ CREST, *Travelers' Philanthropy Handbook*, 2011, http://www.responsibletravel.org/resources/documents/reports/Travelers'_Philanthropy_Handbook_by_CREST.pdf

Objectives

The following report provides a basic outline of our methodology, highlights key findings, and includes recommendations for future work in the development of Travelers' Philanthropy in the Osa Peninsula. The report is divided into seven sections that address the following themes and questions:

Methodology

- Sampling strategy
- Survey Instrument
- Data entry, analysis, and interpretation

Respondent Profiles

- Who are the respondents?
- What sector/business type do they represent?

Travelers' Philanthropy

- What are their opinions, practices and motivations regarding travelers' philanthropy?

Business Charitable Giving

- Current charitable giving
- What trends do we see in donation collection and giving from their part?

Marketing and Giving

- Do businesses share information about their charitable donations with the community?
- If so, how?

Client Charitable Donations

- What trends do we see in client donations?

Summary and Recommendations

Methodology

Sampling Strategy

Before implementing the survey on travelers' philanthropy, CREST conducted a project, with the support of the Tinker Foundation, to assess the current importance of and attitudes towards ecotourism in the Osa Peninsula. (See earlier section for details) This research indicated both visitor willingness to pay to support local projects in the Osa as well as local businesses and NGO interest in expanding travelers' philanthropy projects

Based on this research, we decided that it would be useful to conduct a baseline survey focused specifically on travelers' philanthropy in order to more accurately assess the current level of involvement and interest and the potential for building a more robust and integrated Osa-wide program. In compiling the list of businesses for the survey, we used the CATUOSA membership list which includes around 100 businesses, of which about half are hotels, tour operators, and other enterprises directly involved in providing services to tourists. We supplemented this with names supplied by Fundacion Corcovado as well as online research of databases of hotels and other tourism businesses in the Osa. The final database of those offered the survey totaled 97 tourism businesses.

Survey Instrument

We created both a hard copy and online version of the survey instrument (see appendix A). Survey questions were developed by the Center for Responsible Travel (CREST and Fundación Corcovado, in consultation with the Monteverde Institute. It drew upon early surveys CREST had used in Tanzania, East Africa. The survey utilized multiple-select, single-select and open-ended responses and was divided into seven sections:



Data Entry, Analysis, and Interpretation

In March and April 2011, the online survey was administered through Kwiksurveys.com, and online survey results were recorded through the site. The survey component was not part of the original work plan under the grant from CRUSA but seemed an important step to take. It was conducted with support from three tourism students from the University of Costa Rica in Golfito, and served several purposes:

- 1) Collect valuable information on current travelers' philanthropy practices as a baseline from which impact could be measured
- 2) Inform tourism business owners and managers about the concept of travelers' philanthropy, including terminology and issues related to the practice
- 3) Inform tourism businesses about the upcoming workshops and gauge interest
- 4) Inform tourism businesses about the upcoming 3rd International Travelers' Philanthropy Conference

We created a flyer announcing the workshops (see attached) and circulated it attached to an e-mail inviting folks to complete the online survey via a web link, and attend the workshops. This message was sent to a database of over 100 tourism businesses (primarily lodging providers) throughout the Osa. The list was then divided into thirds and three students from the University of Costa Rica made follow up phone calls to each tourism business on the list. The callers were instructed to identify the right individual from the business who could answer questions related to corporate or guest giving, get that person on the phone, and do several things: a) identify themselves and the project partners (CREST, Fundacion Corcovado, CATUOSA); b) briefly explain the concept of travelers' philanthropy and the purpose of their call; c) invite them to complete the online survey; d) invite the business representative to participate in the workshop; and e) re-send the survey and workshop flyer if the business rep hadn't yet seen it.

We believe that this process was successful in reaching the right individuals at the tourism companies because the 17 completed surveys were filled out by senior staff members of responding businesses. The process was also useful for both CREST and Fundacion Corcovado in updating our database of tourism business contacts in the region, as the students found and corrected numerous outdated or erroneous e-mails and phone numbers.

The current analysis primarily consists of frequencies, averages, and response ranges. Due to the low number of completed surveys and the non-random sampling strategy employed, no statistical tests were performed. For the same reasons as stated above, we remind readers the results to do not represent the values, attitudes, or practices of all businesses, or business sectors, within the Osa Peninsula, rather they are representative of a small sample. If future surveys are administered, a larger, more representative sample of businesses would need to be collected in order to examine differences in practices and perspectives across sectors. However, because the findings are consistent with other CREST research including the ecotourism study and the workshops as well as with similar surveys conducted during this same time frame in Monteverde and Cape Cod, we believe that the results reflect the current attitudes and practices of civic minded tourism businesses.

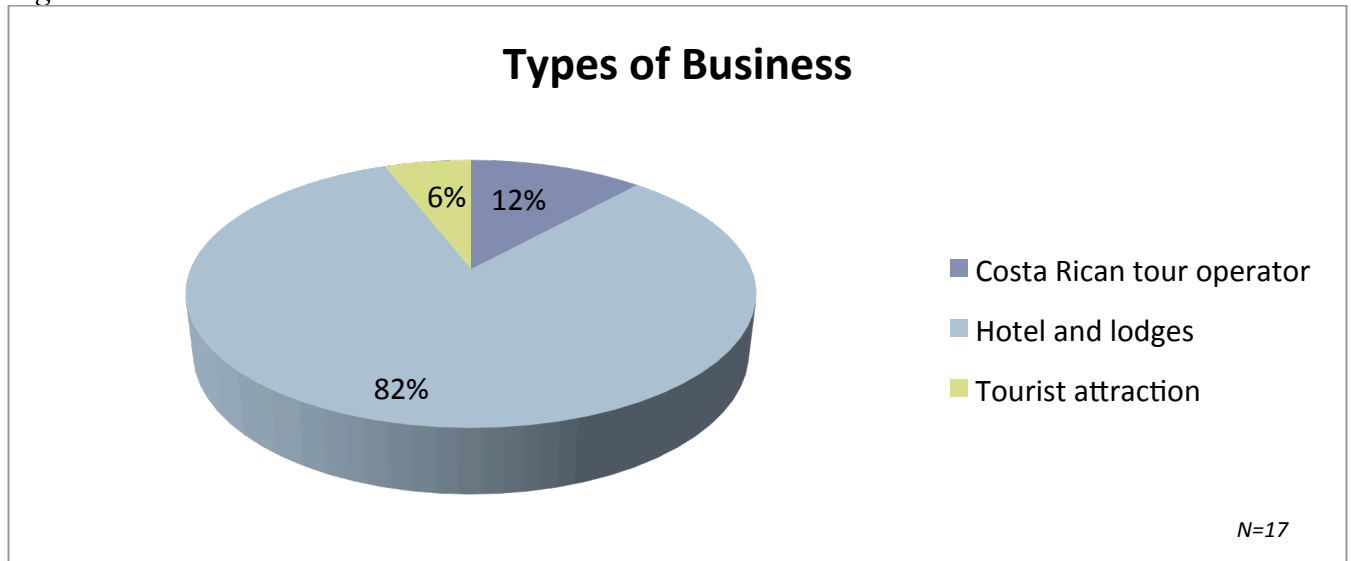
Respondent Profiles

Business Demographic Information

Business Sector Representation

In total, representatives from 17 businesses completed the survey (Figure 1.1). Representing 82.35% (n=14) of all respondents, the hotel industry is over-represented in the sample. This is followed by Costa Rican tour operators with 11.76% of the sample (n=2) and tourist attractions at 5.88% (n=1).

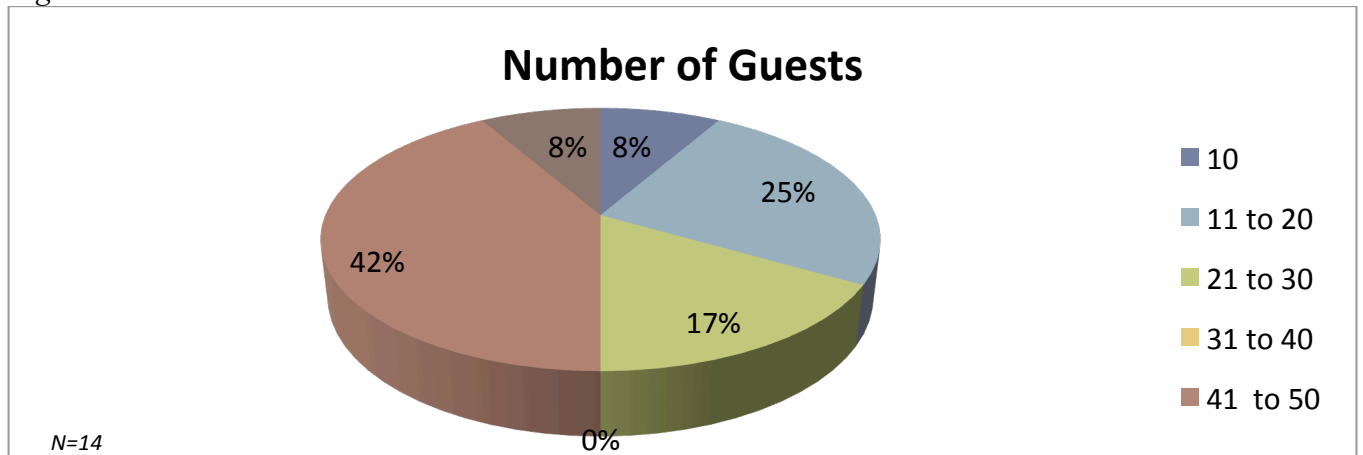
Figure 1.1



Hotel Carrying Capacity

Hotels were small to medium in size, accommodating no more than a total of 60 guests (Figure 1.2).

Figure 1.2

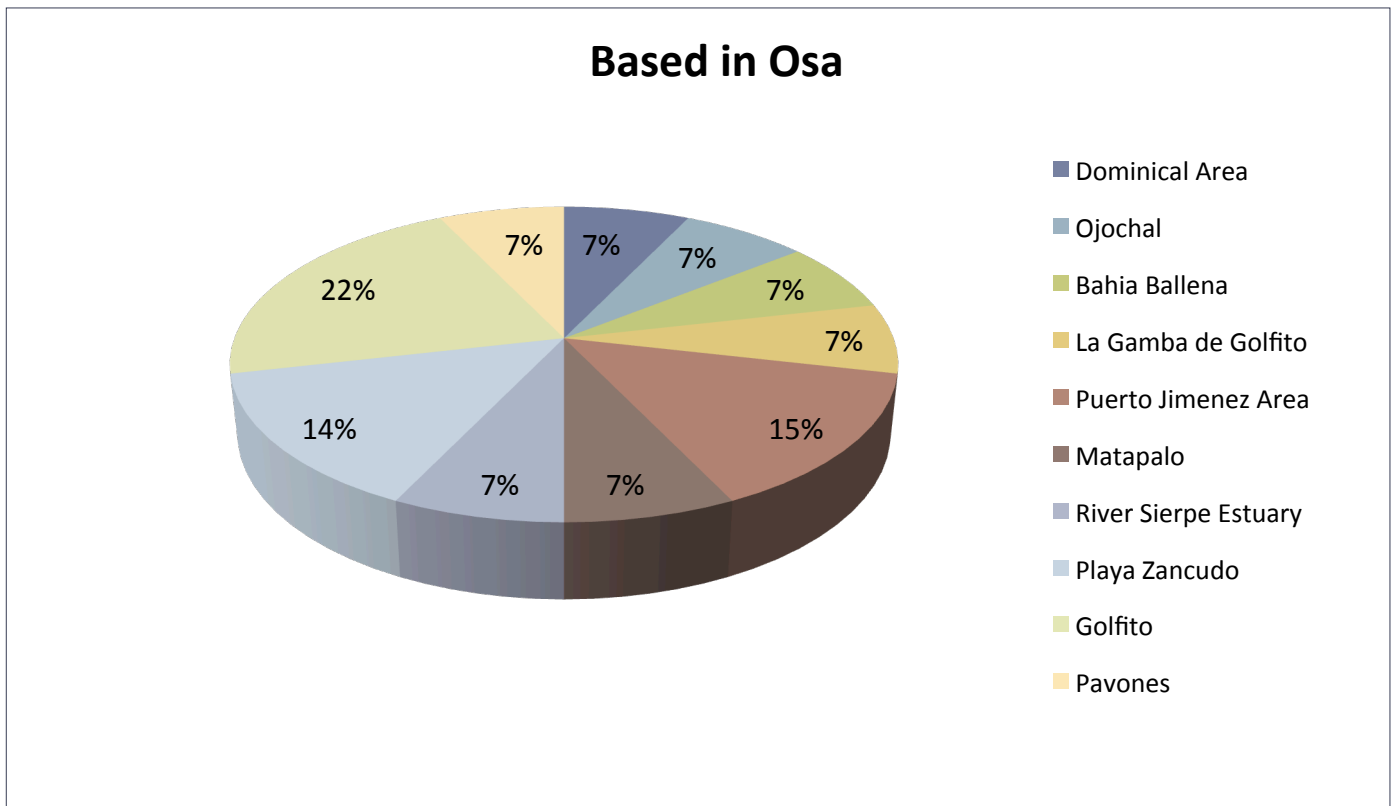


Business Bases of Operation

In carrying out this survey and other parts of the CRUSA project, we defined the Osa Peninsula, as does the ICT, as including two counties or cantons, Osa and Golfito which are spread around the Golfo Dulce. However, in conducting the surveys and workshops, we encountered many people in the canton of Golfito who prefer to define themselves as part of the ‘Pacífico Sur’, not the Osa Peninsula.

Everyone responding to the survey operates in the Osa Peninsula (cantons of Osa and Golfito), and most operate only in this region. Only one of the 17 business is headquartered San Jose and operates throughout Central America, as well as in Ecuador and Peru (n=1).

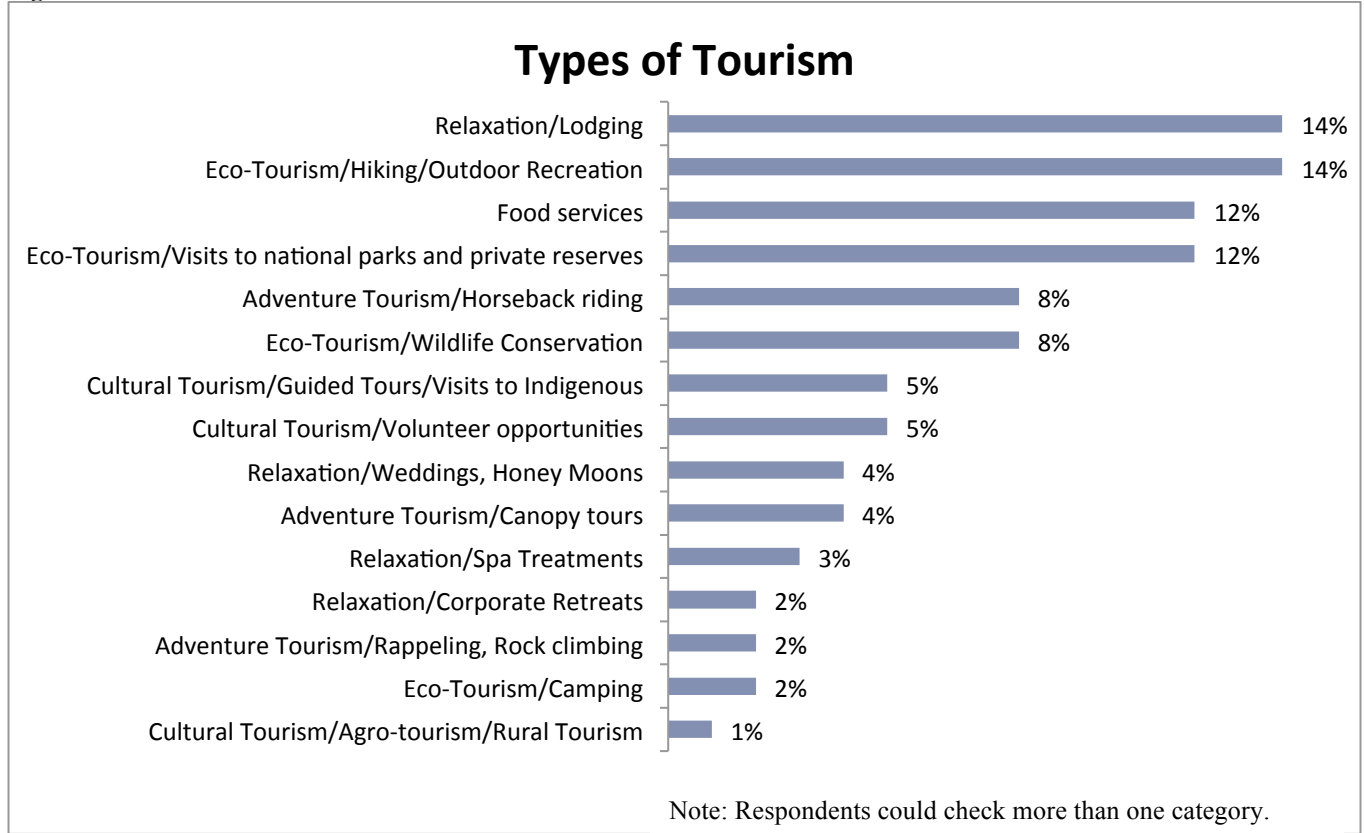
Figure 1.3



Tourist Attractions Offered to Clients and Business Composition

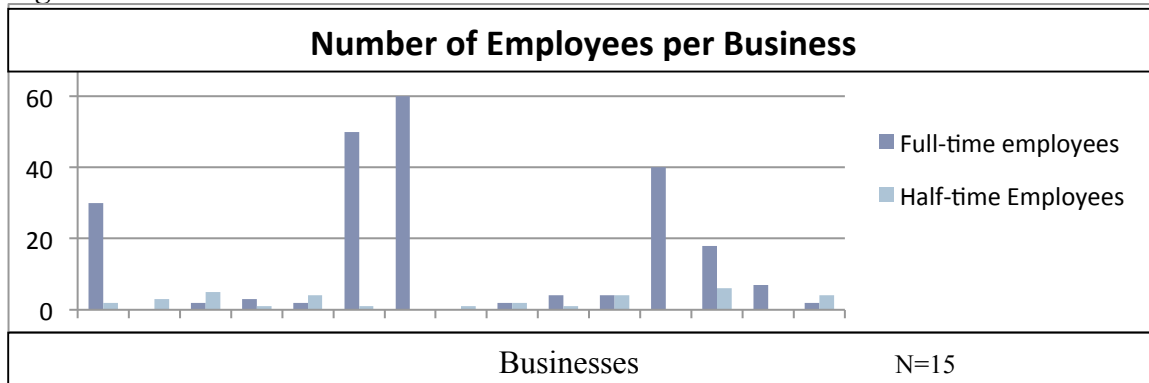
Figure 1.4 depicts the kinds of tourist offering that the survey respondents provide to their customers. The most predominant services are related to relaxation, food services, and various manifestations of eco-tourism. Other responses included discotheques (n=1) and surf-oriented tourism (n=1). As Figure 1.5 indicates, businesses were typically small, employing fewer than ten people. Four businesses were larger, employing between 30 and 60 full-time staff members.

Figure 1.4



Business Composition: Number of Employees

Figure 1.5



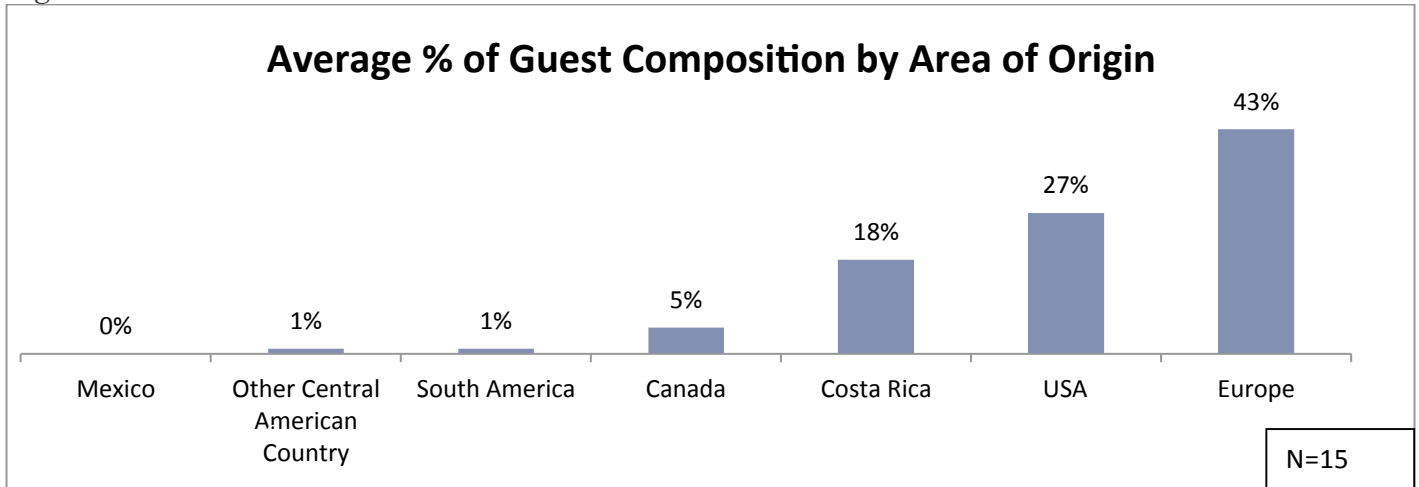
Note: Several respondents left out information either on half or full-time employees on this question.

Client Demographic Information

Figure 1.6 presents the average of perceived country of origin of guests for respondents. Fifteen businesses filled out information relevant to this question on the survey. As is evident, Europeans composed the greatest percentage of guests when averaged across the 15 respondents. This was followed by guests from the US, Costa Rica and Canada, with much smaller percentages from

various Latin American countries. Only one of the 15 respondents caters solely to Costa Ricans; the rest all have international visitors.

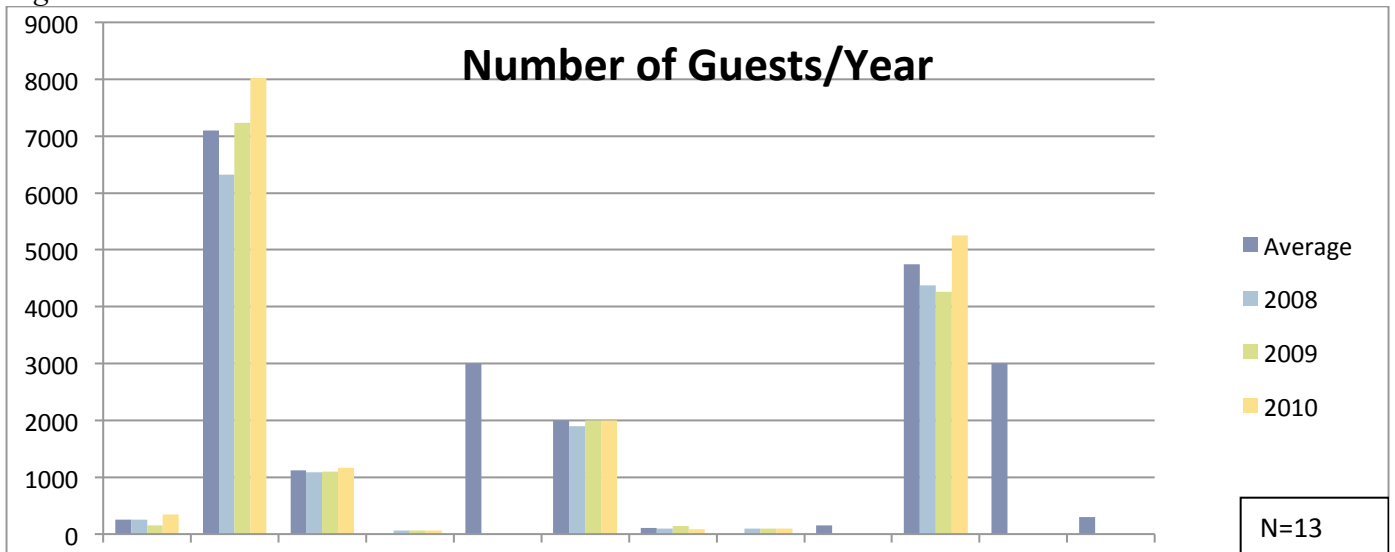
Figure 1.6



Yearly Average of Guests by Respondents

Figure 1.7 shows the amount of guests reported by respondents for the years 2008, 2009, 2010, and as an average of all three years. Noteworthy is the wide variation in amount of guests handled by the respondents to this survey. Several respondents only reported average values for all three years, without reporting the disaggregated numbers. These numbers appear to indicate that while there was some drop in visitor numbers during the worst of the recession (2008-2009), 2010 showed recovery. Overall, tourist numbers to the Osa doubled between 2000 and 2010, reaching about 150,000 in 2010, according to the ICT.

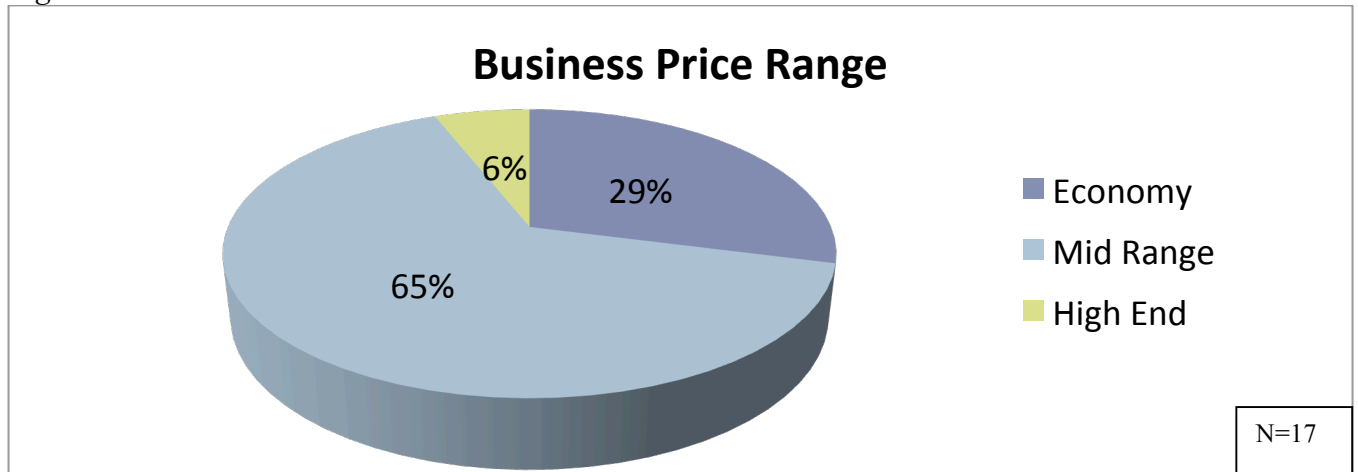
Figure 1.7



Businesses by Price Range

Figure 1.8 depicts the breakdown of respondent business according to their price range.

Figure 1.8



Hotels by Star Ratings

Figures 1.9 and 2.0 show the breakdown concerning the “Star” ratings of hotels. This near universal voluntary certification system is designed to measure quality, service, and price of hotels and other tourism businesses, and rate them on a scale of one to five stars. Of the 15 that responded to this question, it is interesting that only five reported being rated under the star program: three reported having a rating of three stars and two a rating of four stars. None hold five stars and in fact, at present there are not five star hotels and no hotels from international branded chains in the Osa Peninsula.

In Costa Rica, hotels that are catering to an international (as opposed to domestic) tourism market are generally required to be rated under the star program. The fact that ten hotels reported not having such a rating may indicate that until recently they catered only to the domestic market. As stated above, only one business reported that all its clients are Costa Ricans.

Figure 1.9

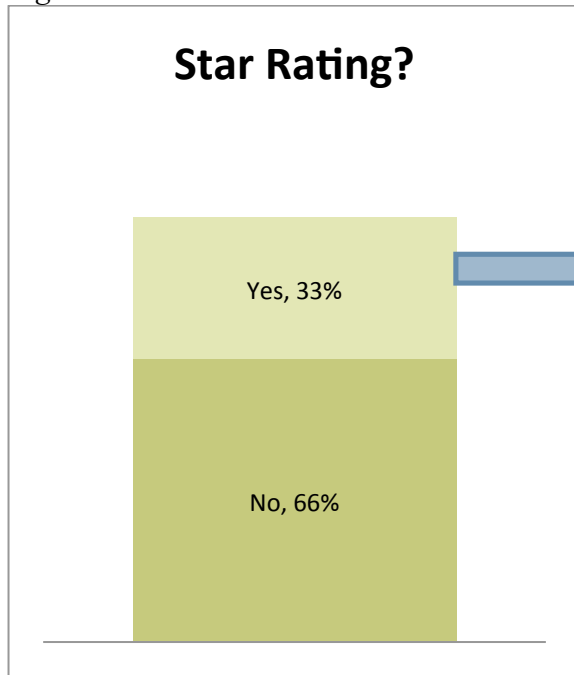
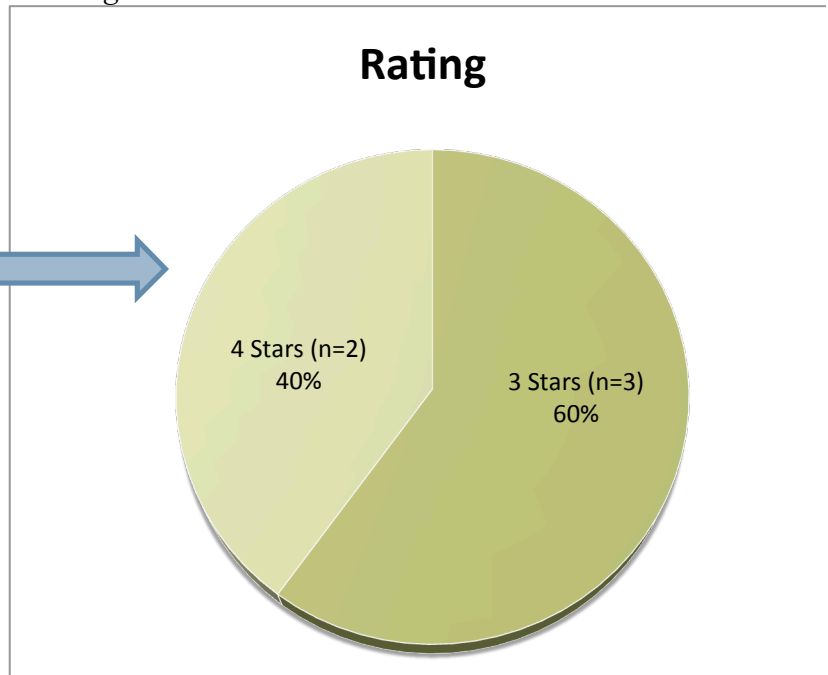


Figure 2.0



Sustainable Tourism Programs

Since the late 1990s, Costa Rica has had another voluntary certification program, Certificate for Sustainable Tourism (CST) designed to measure sustainability – economic, social and environmental impacts – of hotels and other types of tourism businesses. Today several other programs also measure sustainability related to tourism.

Interestingly, fifty-three percent of respondents currently participate in a sustainable tourism program, and several hold multiple sustainable certifications. In comparison, only 33% report having a star rating. This appears to indicate the importance of sustainable or ecotourism in the Osa Peninsula. Of those businesses with sustainability ratings, 67% received certification through the (CST); 22% through the Rainforest Alliance’s verification program; the remaining have been through one of several other sustainability programs. Of the CST certified hotels, two have earned five green leaves (top ranking), four have four green leaves, and one has three green leaves. One – Lapa Rios Ecologe -- was certified in 2000; all the others have been certified by CST or verified by Rainforest Alliance since 2007.

Sixty percent of respondent who were not certified stated that they plan to apply in the future (Figure 2.5). Respondents who selected “other” as to why they are not currently certified elaborated that they either didn’t have a regulator plan for their business, precluding them from applying (n=1), or else stated that such an application process would not be lucrative for as small business, since they believed that becoming certified would probably not result in more customers (n=1).

Figure 2.1

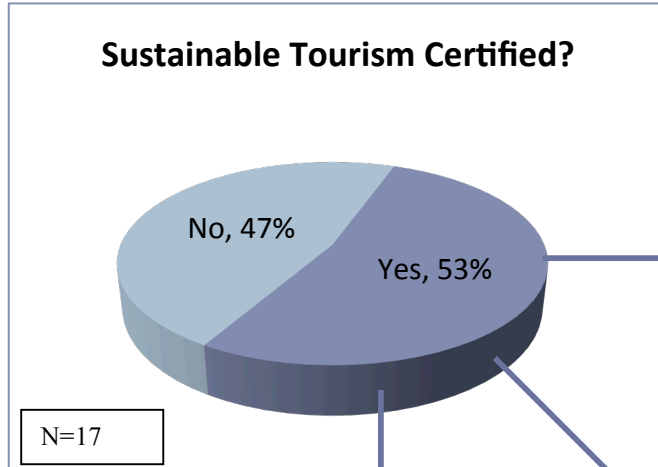


Figure 2.2

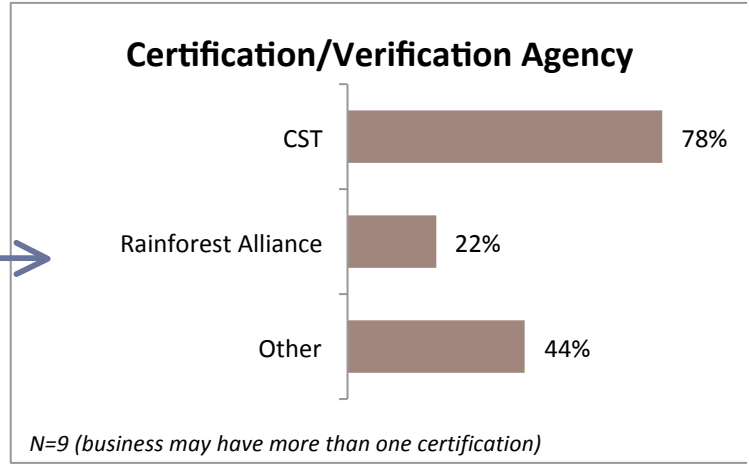


Figure 2.3

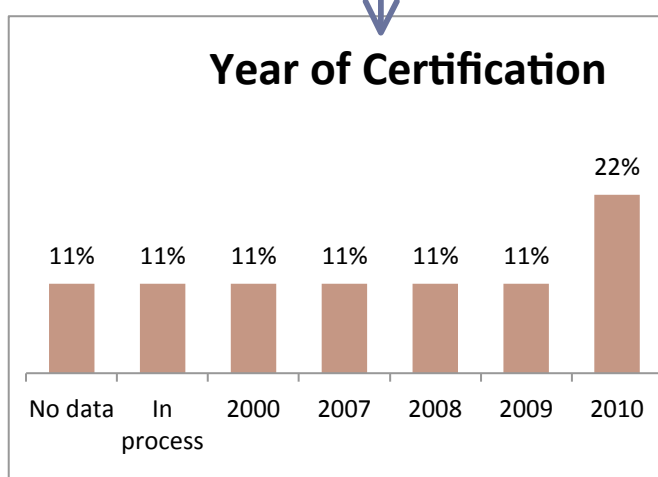


Figure 2.4

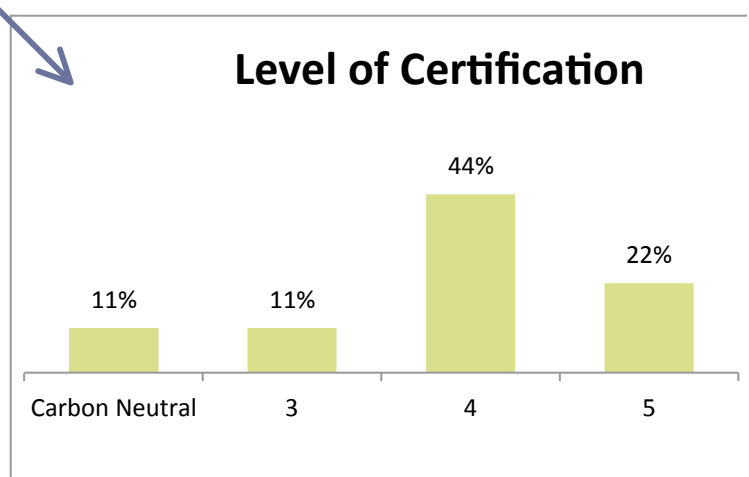
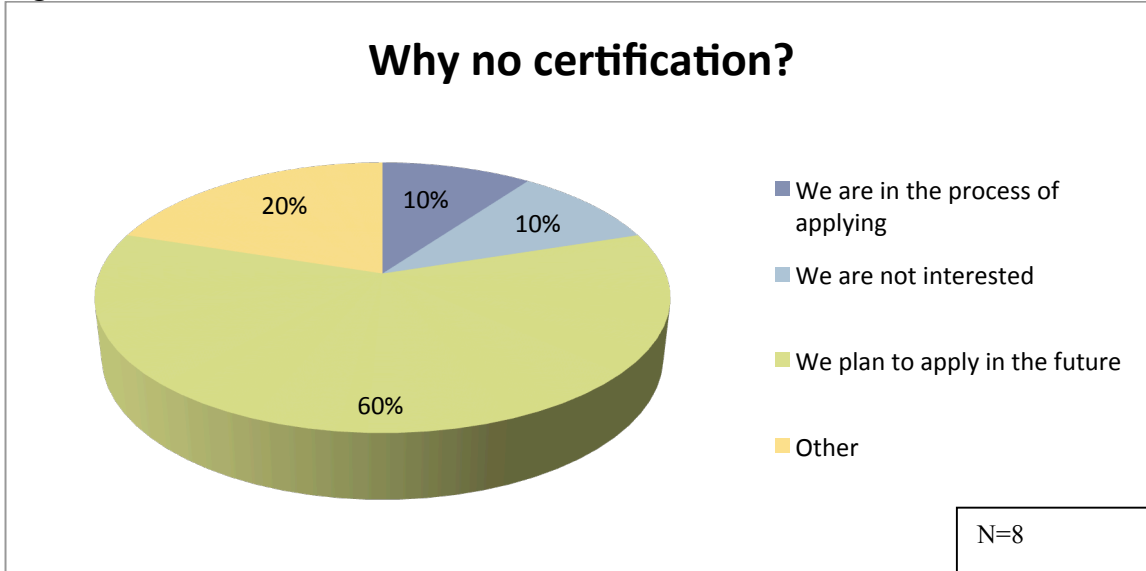


Figure 2.5

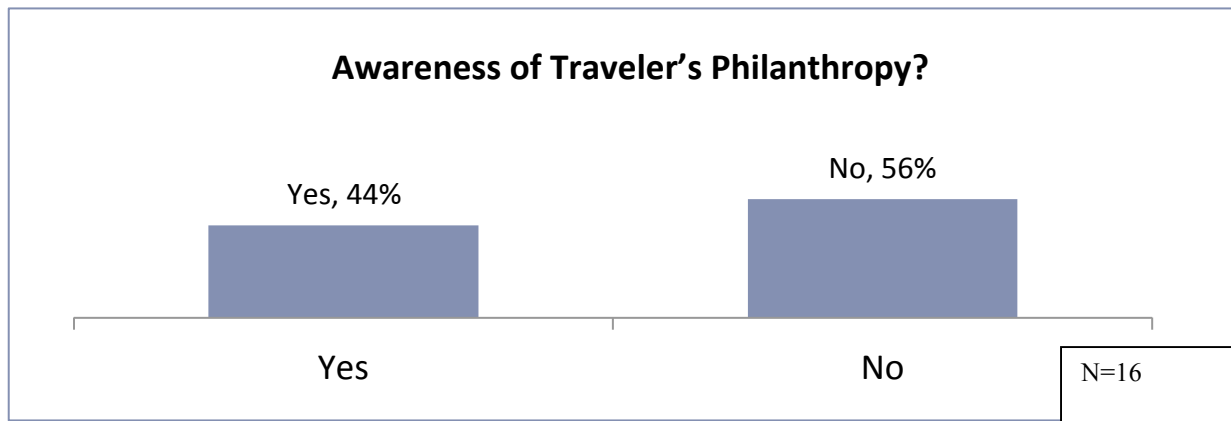


Travelers' Philanthropy

Awareness and Interest in Travelers' Philanthropy

Before participating in the survey, 43.75%, (n=7) of business respondents were already aware of the concept of Travelers' Philanthropy or a similar concept. When those who stated they were aware of Travelers' Philanthropy were asked to elaborate on their thoughts of what Travelers' Philanthropy entails, respondents highlighted the benefits that the local community receives from the tourist enterprise. Also highlighted were the perceived benefits that tourists may receive from participating in such volunteer programs, such as gaining knowledge and appreciation from local communities, and participating in humanitarian efforts.

Figure 2.6



Business Charitable Giving

Current Charitable Giving

A gratifying result of the survey is the finding that all sampled businesses engage in some form of charitable donation (Figure 2.7). More than three-quarters of businesses engage in ongoing donations. The forms of donations are almost equally divided among ‘time, talent and treasure’ – volunteering, material donations, or monetary contributions. Additionally, 15% of respondents also reported “other” types of donations, including, developing strategic plans for airport construction and resource management, providing lodging and food, and donating space.

Figure 2.7

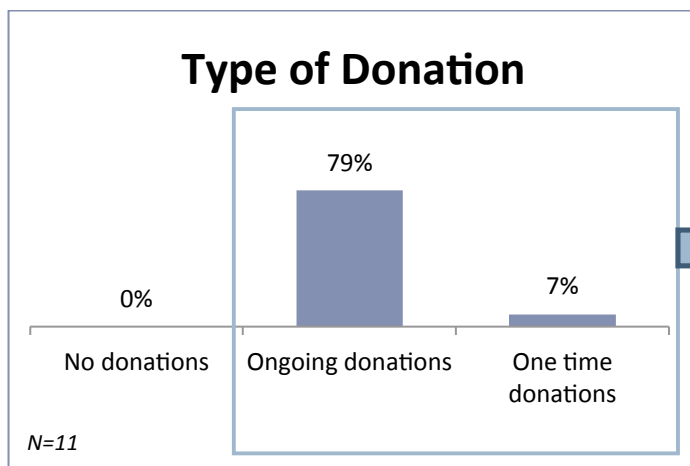
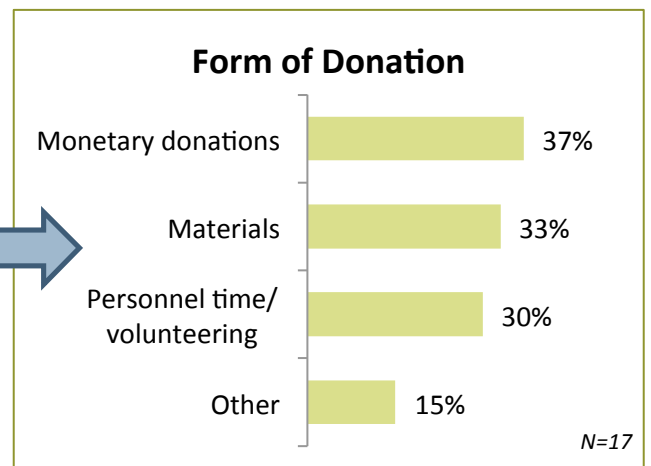


Figure 2.8



Note: Business may report more than one form of donation.

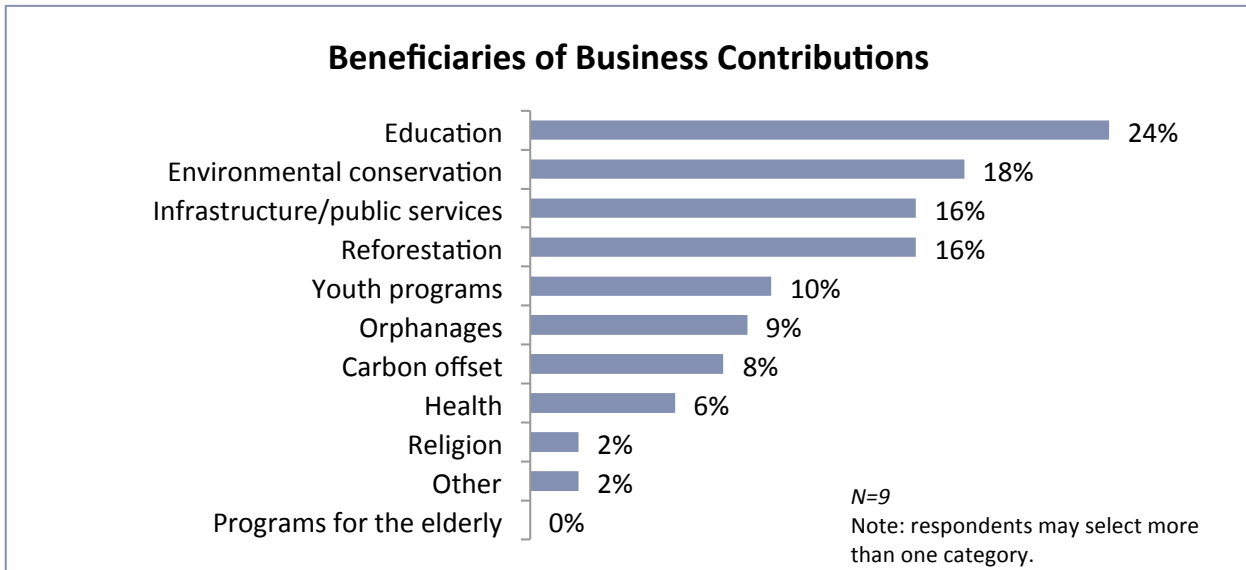
Amount Donated

Of the business that provided data for this question (n=9) the amount donated in colones on an average year is 3,444,444 (roughly \$6,700). Caution should be exercised in interpreting this result, as there is a very wide range of reported donations, from 100,000 to 20,000,000 colones. As a measure of central tendency, the mean is very sensitive to extreme values, and in instances like this one, the median may provide a more stable and accurate measure of central tendency. The median amount of reported donations for this sub-sample was colones 400,000 (roughly \$800).

Beneficiaries of Charitable Contributions

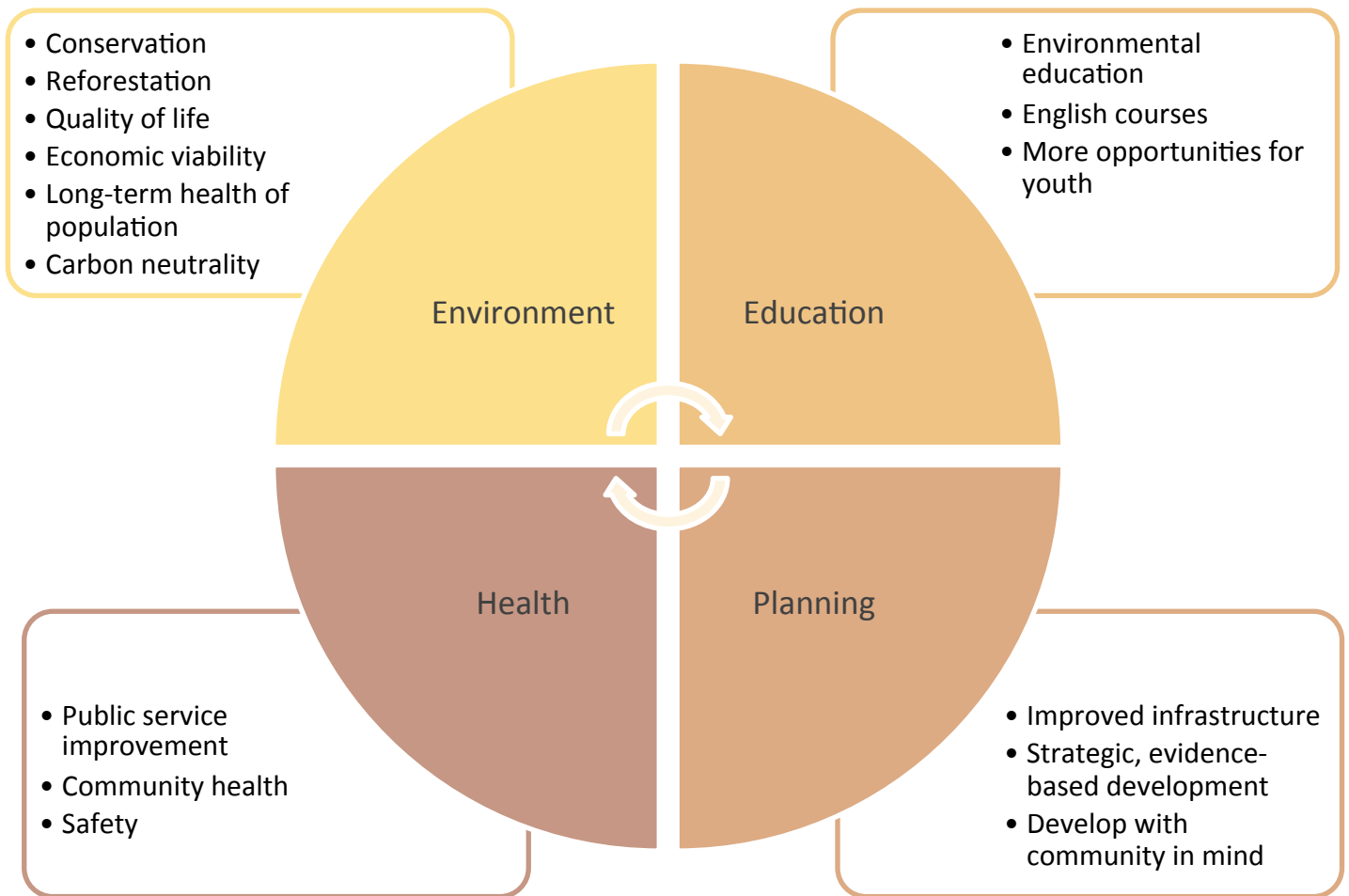
Business contributions address a wide range of social, health and environmental issues, with education topping the list (Figure 2.9).

Figure 2.9



As Model 3.1 depicts, businesses contribute most significantly to a range of environment issues and projects. Contributors express concern about the physical environment, not only in terms of conservation, but also as it relates to one’s health, well-being and long-term economic viability of tourist enterprises. Respondents often frame educational priorities in relationship to the environment, and the need to instill in youth a respect and appreciation for environmental protection. Additionally, respondents view strategic planning that takes the community’s needs and interests into consideration as necessary steps that need to be taken in order to ensure the long-term stability and prosperity of the area.

Categories for Business Contributions



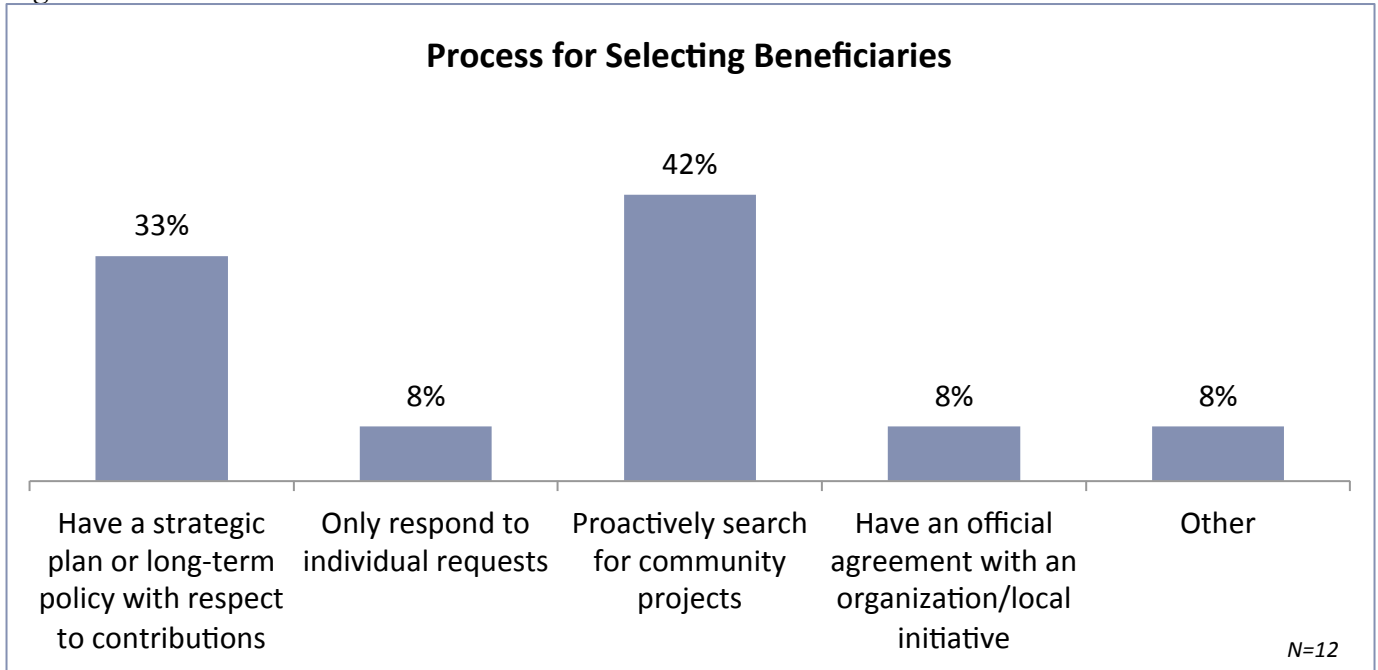
Selecting Beneficiaries

Selection Process

Businesses employ a variety of strategies to select beneficiaries for charitable giving. Three-quarters (75%) appear well organized: they have either a strategic plan or policy to guide their giving or they proactively seek out worthy community projects. (Figure 3.2).

In addition, 8% respond to individual requests for support, while another 8% have an official agreement with one organization or local initiative.

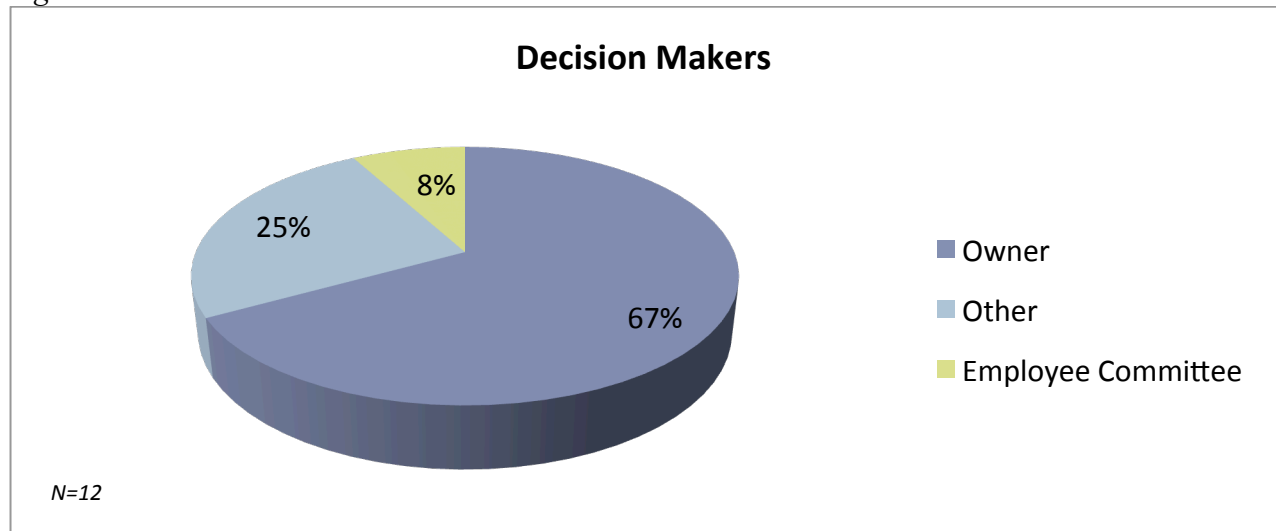
Figure 3.2



Decision-Making

For two-thirds of businesses (67%), the owner makes decisions regarding the allocation of charitable donations, while only 8% rely on an employee committee (Figure 3.3). A quarter of businesses have in place an alternate system for determining how to allocate funds. These include having decisions made by the sustainability or the coordinator for CST certification, or relying on a local organization.

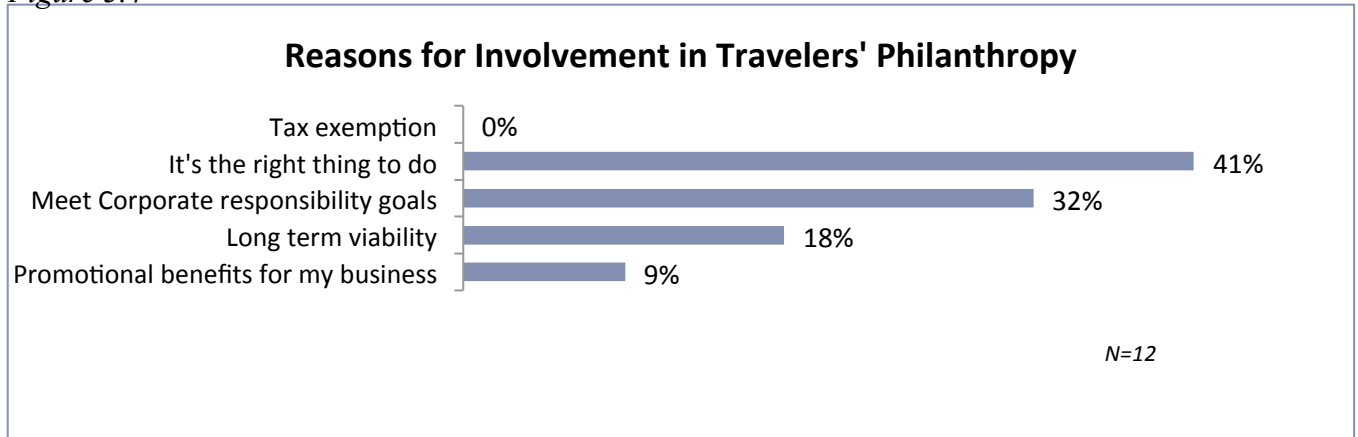
Figure 3.3



Businesses gave several reasons for why they are involved in travelers' philanthropy. Over 70% said it is the correct thing to do or it helps to meet their CSR (corporate social responsibility) goals,

while about 20% said it was good for either the long term viability or the reputation of their business. None listed that they give because they get a tax deduction – in fact, it is unclear from this study whether or not local organizations have the capacity to make receive tax exemptions

Figure 3.4



Measuring the Impact of Donations

Ten businesses (83%) reported to following up on specific donations, while the remaining two said that they do not follow up. Site visits to the projects of organizations receiving support was listed as the most common way to check on how donations are being used; others say they talk to the beneficiaries. Several reported that since the donation was done at the local level, it was easy to see what was happening with it. Others ask for receipts or document the processes with film. Several report that following up was key to determining future involvement in community initiatives, since this allows them an opportunity to determine the impact of their contributions. For the two businesses that report they do not follow up, one cited time constraints while the other stated that they would get reports once the organization’s strategic plan was ready and published.

Client Charitable Donations

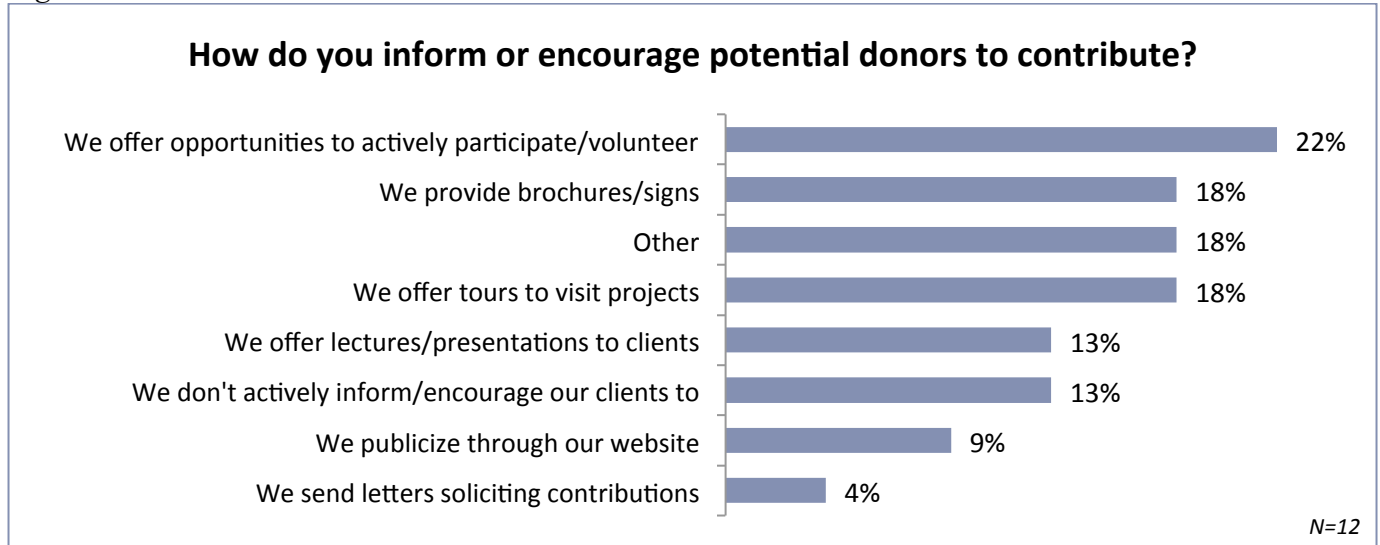
Informing Clients of Philanthropic Opportunities

To inform and encourage potential donors to contribute, businesses most frequently offer clients opportunities to actively participate in or volunteer with projects (22%) (Figure 3.5). Additionally, approximately a fifth of businesses offer tours to visit projects and provide their clients with brochures to clients. Lectures were less frequently offered (13%). Perhaps the greatest area for expanding information to clients is through business websites. Currently, only 9% of businesses report utilizing their website to publicize philanthropic opportunities.

Also apparent from these results is that sending letters through the mail to inform clients of opportunities is rarely utilized (4%). It is unclear why this is the case (e.g., the cost of mailing letters, the shipping delay, perceptions that this form of solicitation is ineffective, etc.).

Businesses listed different methods and approaches to facilitate the transfer of donations from their clients to the target organization. The strategies employed included providing their guests with bank information so they could donate directly, taking donations themselves and transferring them to the local projects, or selling post cards or certificates (for forest conservation, for instance) in order to raise funds.

Figure 3.5



Beneficiaries of Client Donations

The bulk of client donations are channeled into projects and activities with an environmental focus (Figure 3.6). Fifty percent of client donations are directed towards environmental goals through conservation efforts, reforestation activities, and carbon offset programs. Education, the most popular channel for business contributions, is also a popular option of tourist donations.

When asked about what types of projects their guests prefer, respondents most often listed education and environmental conservation initiative. Respondents reported that the types of guests they receive in their hotels generally are in line with environmental, educational and community-based initiatives.

Figure 3.6

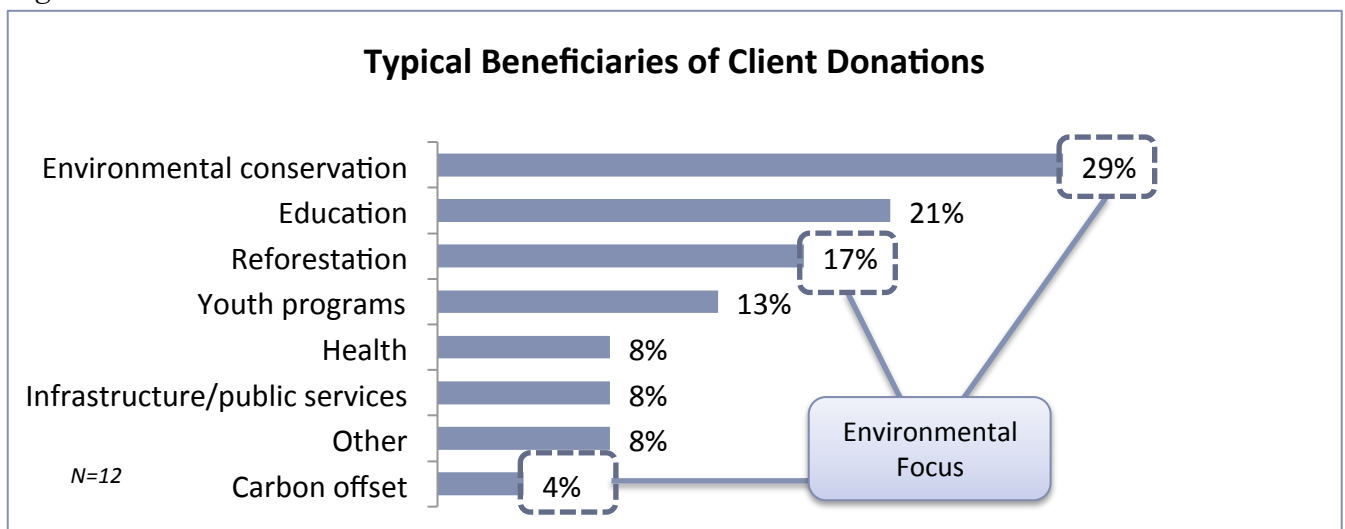


Figure 3.7

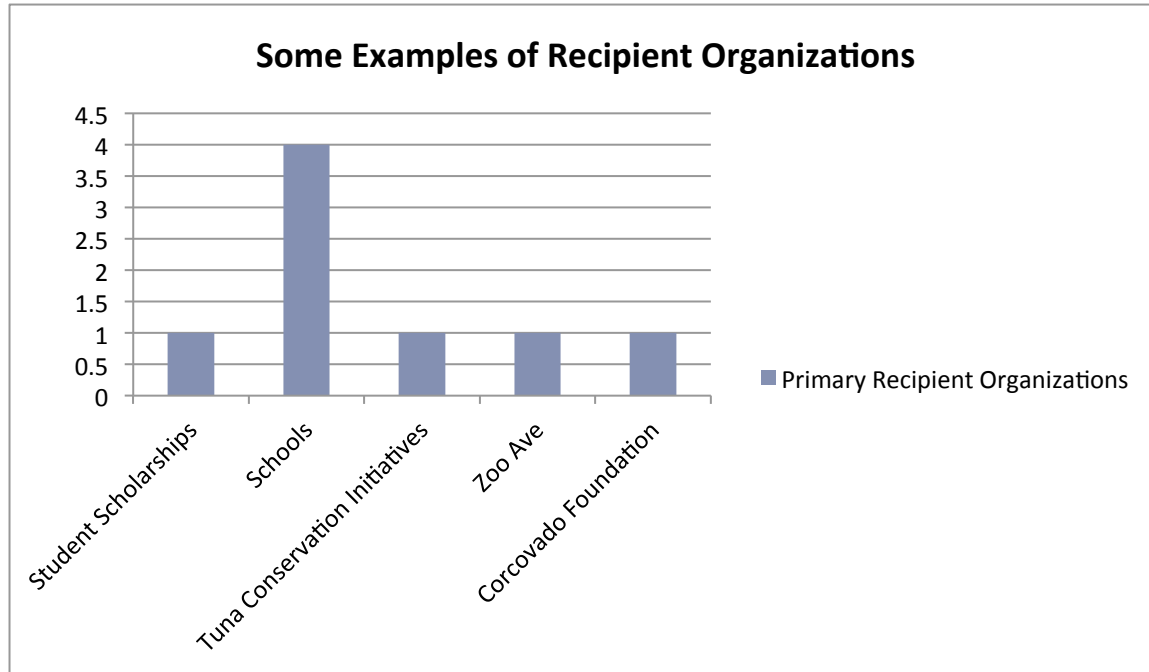
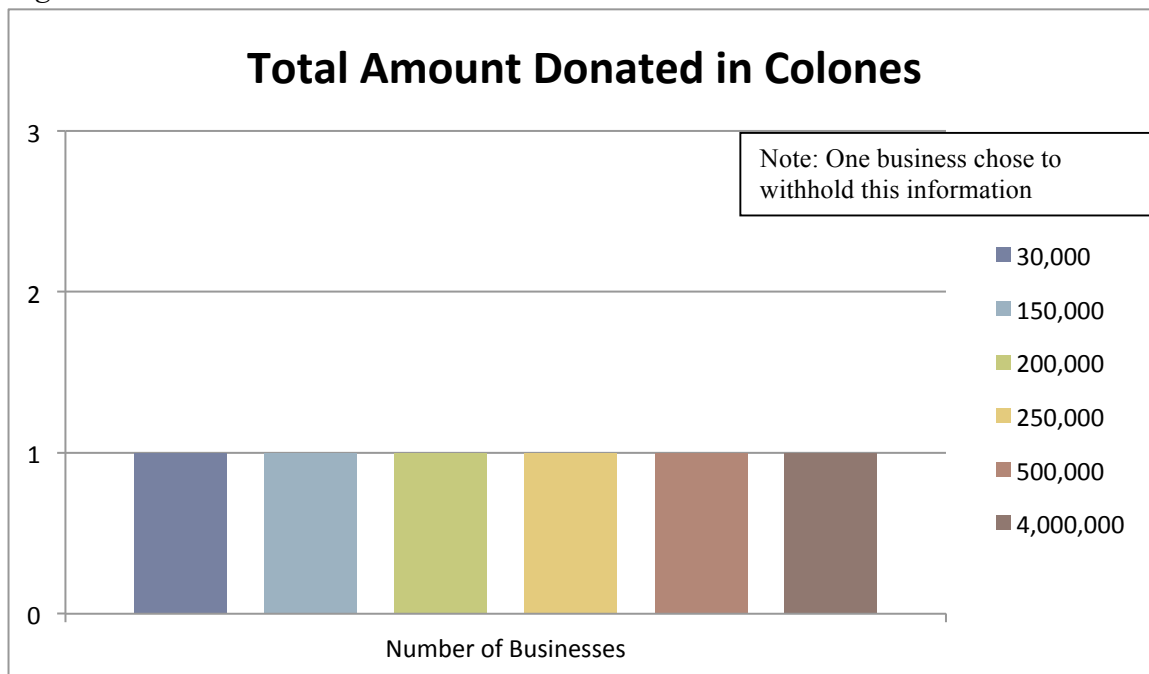


Figure 3.7 depicts the primary reported beneficiary organizations that the respondents work with. Figure 3.8 below, shows the estimated total annual of donations that guests make to local initiatives.

Figure 3.8



When asked to estimate the average amount that each guests donates, responses ranged from \$1 to \$100, with an averaged response of \$47. Similarly, averages of 20% of guests were reported to donate to community initiatives.

Marketing & Giving

Sharing Details of Contributions with the Community

Slightly fewer than half of business respondents share details of their charitable donations with community members (Figure 3.9). Businesses that actively seek to publicize their philanthropic activities rely on the company website, internal marketing materials, and guides and personnel to disseminate information (Figure 4.0). Other sources for publicizing philanthropic activities are notification in a local magazine and dissemination at local meetings.

Figure 3.9

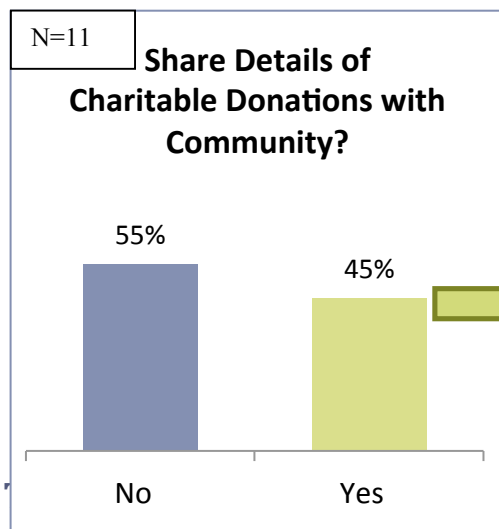
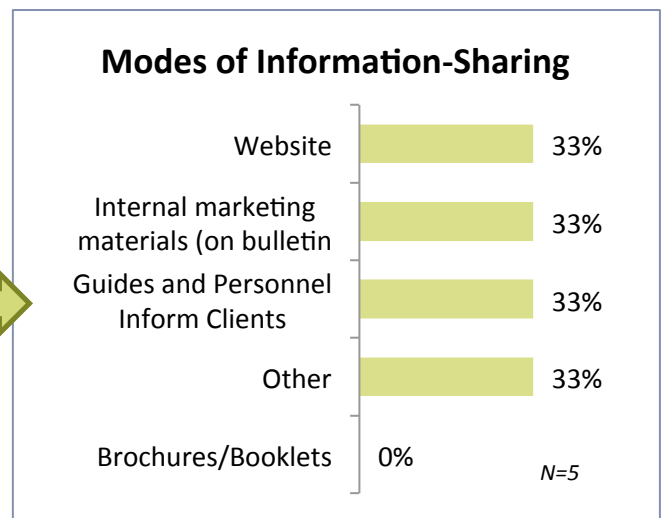


Figure 4.0

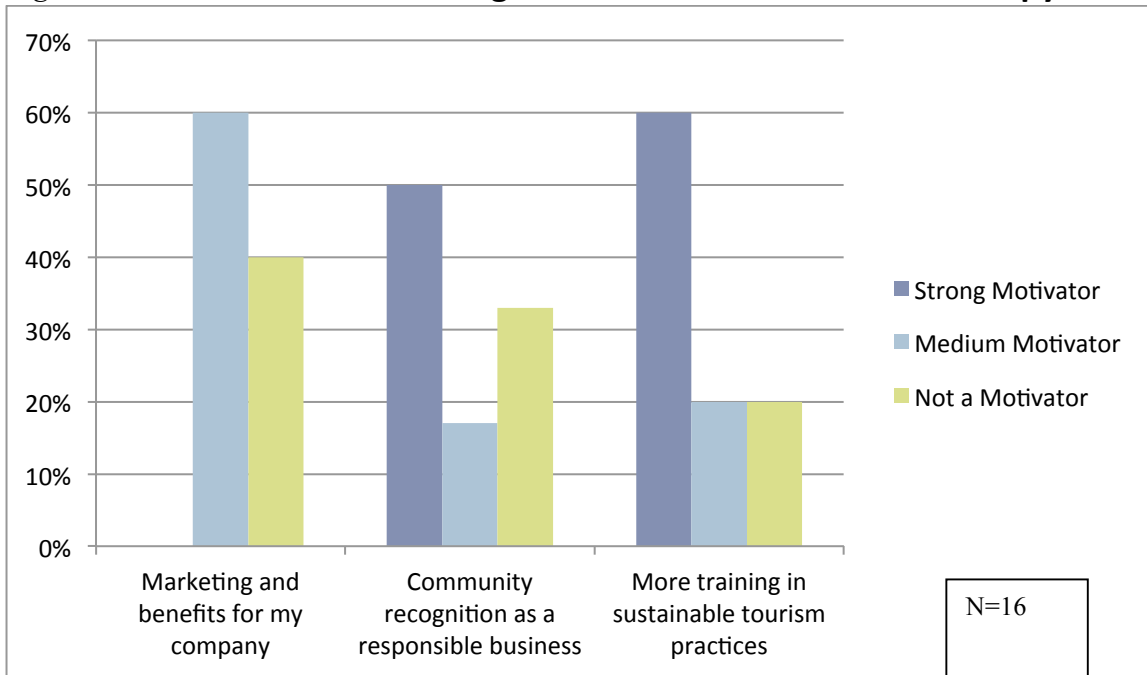


Potential Involvement with Travelers' Philanthropy

Businesses not currently participating in any travelers' philanthropy initiative were asked about their interest in becoming involved in such efforts. Those that expressed interest in participating did so with somewhat ambiguous responses. For instance, respondents stated that they would participate through a centralized program where all donations could be amassed, or that they could contribute with facilities or resources. Several who expressed interest in participating stated that they would need more information. Of those that stated no interest stated reasons such as the Osa is not a cohesive location, burnout with community involvement, and the need to align the initiatives with their strategic business.

Figure 4.1 depicts the perceived strength of motivators for becoming involved in an initiative such as travelers' philanthropy. The strongest motivators reported by respondents included receiving more training in sustainable tourism practices and being recognized by the community as a responsible business. Marketing and potential benefits for their companies were perceived by 60% to be a medium motivator.

Figure 4.1 Reasons for Becoming Involved in Travelers' Philanthropy



Successes and Challenges

Those surveyed reported that they would view philanthropic initiatives as successful if they served to establish of positive relationships between the business and the surrounding community, led to completion of projects thanks to business contributions and community support, produced cleaner beaches, and improved economic conditions for some local families. The most common challenge reported was that of mainstreaming or up-scaling the philanthropic initiative so that it can impact a wider population. Related to this, was the difficulty of coordinating efforts from multiple stakeholders so as to maximize impact.

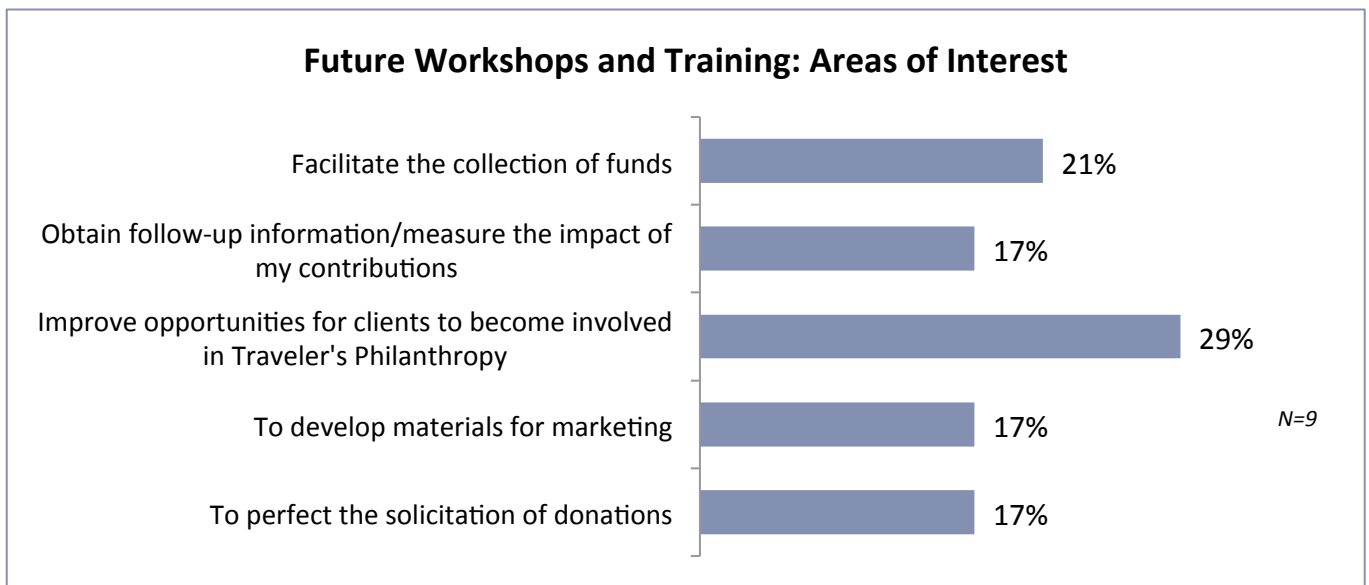
Future Involvement

Interest in Future Training, Conferences and Pilot Project

Respondents are interested in attending Travelers' Philanthropy workshops that covers a wider range of topics (Figure 4.2). High interest topics include training on how to facilitate the collection of client funds and how to improve opportunities for clients to become involved in Travelers' Philanthropy. Also of interest are workshops to develop marketing materials and training to obtain follow-up information on measuring the impact of contributions.

In addition, 55% (n=5) of respondents said they were interested in receiving more information about the International Travelers' Philanthropy Conference to be held in San Jose and Monteverde. Further, 77% interest in receiving more information about a CREST workshop to be held in an area close to their businesses, and in applying to be part of a Travelers' Philanthropy pilot initiative (n=7).

Figure 4.2



Summary and Recommendations

Respondent Profiles

Key Points

Osa-based businesses surveyed: included heavy sampling of hotels (82%), lesser sample of tour and attraction activity operators, and no transport business representation

Businesses handle between 100 and 7,000 guests/tourists per year (average 1,735)

Heavy reliance on American, European and Costa Rican clients; to a lesser extent, Canadians, Mexicans, and other Central Americans

Slightly more than half of businesses (50%) have sustainable tourism certification, 66% through CST, 33% through the Rainforest Alliance, and four through other agencies

Moving Forward: Recommendations/Insights

For Future Survey

- Use quota-sampling strategy to ensure proportional representation of business types
- Continue sampling until quotas for each industry segment are met

Interpreting the Data

- Caution should be used when interpreting all data due both to low sample size and because hotel owners are overly represented in the sample

Tremendous Philanthropic Potential

- Though Osa businesses see relatively few clients compared to other areas of Costa Rica, the limited clientele based provides opportunities for more tailored and specialized philanthropic activities targeted to a more specific client base. Further, business owners report that the type of clients that come to Osa are for the most part interested in sustainable practices, environmental conservation and community development.

Travelers' Philanthropy

Key Points

Less than half of businesses (44%) have heard of travelers' philanthropy, but three-quarters (74%) of businesses expressed interest in future involvement, suggesting high opportunity for further growth and expansion of the concept in the Osa region

Compliance with Social Corporate Responsibility is a major motivator for participating in Traveler's Philanthropy. When discussing travelers' philanthropy with business owners, it is important to highlight this benefit, as well as the idea that philanthropy is the right thing to do. Social responsibility was a major motivator in participation!

Respondents are eager to take advantage of a range of training opportunities on a range of topics that could be offered through travelers' philanthropy workshops

Moving Forward: Recommendations/Insights

Creating Interest & Motivation

- 90% of business respondents found positive publicity/reputation to be somewhat or very important motivation. Ensure that informational materials about travelers' philanthropy emphasize these points!
- The strongest motivators for becoming involved in philanthropic initiatives are being recognized their communities as a responsible business and learning more about sustainable practices. Both areas should be highlighted when recruiting potential business partners.
- If possible include information about successful community initiatives already carried out, with observations from business owners, guests and community members.

Training & Workshops

- Provide businesses with training on how to solicit donations, while also improving opportunities for client involvement, how to market materials, and how to measure and report on the impact of the contributions.

Measuring Impact

- Strategies to measure impact of projects are varied. Provide training that stresses the benefits of using complementary, standardized measures to assess the longitudinal impact of donations and compare impacts across organizations and activities.

Business Charitable Giving

Key Points

The majority of businesses are involved in some form of charitable giving. Most of the contributions reported are ongoing, and they are divided into monetary, volunteers and materials.

Nearly all businesses make contributions towards education; environmental and health projects/activities are also common. The “environment” is key in beneficiary selection, even for educational and health foci.

Employers use a range of strategies to identify beneficiaries, but generally a single person (the owner or general manager, or the coordinator of the business' sustainable practices) decides how funds will be allocated. Most businesses are proactive in their search of community partners, so this information should be shared with community organizations so they can strive to increase their visibility.

Based on this survey, the average business donates more than \$6,700 in charitable donations each year, though there is wide variation among the businesses. As such, the median value (\$800) may be more indicative of annual donations.

Most businesses contribute in order to develop a good reputation in the community and/or because it's the right thing to do.

Moving Forward: Recommendations/Insights

Creating Interest & Motivation

- Emphasize the importance of community perceptions of business practices. This was the most frequent motivator reported, and as such, it should be used when recruiting new business partners.
- Improving monitoring techniques and dissemination means will likely boost morale of those involved while simultaneously increase the visibility of the initiative.
- Including employees in the process likely guarantees free, reputation-boosting, word-of-mouth advertising (a motivator for many businesses) as workers explain their role in the process with friends and family.

Promoting Travelers' Philanthropy

- Emphasize the importance of community perceptions on business practices.
- Emphasize long term stability and prosperity of community, as this ultimately will define whether or not the tourist destination is attractive for visitors.
- Highlight the competitive edge businesses can gain with proper marketing and a good reputation.

Marketing & Giving

Key Points

83% of all contributing business follow up on their contributions, but their methods of documentation and dissemination vary. Emphasize the continuity between following up on donations and marketing. Encourage more dissemination at local levels, since community perceptions of businesses were deemed highly important.

Moving Forward: Recommendations/Insights

Market a Good Reputation

- Most respondents report that at least one motivation for charitable giving is the positive publicity/good reputation associated with it. As stated previously, respondents have varied strategies for sharing details of their contributions. This area is underutilized.
- Emphasize word-of-mouth advertising as a free byproduct of philanthropy and as a powerful tool for building a strong business reputation. Staff feel good about being involved in travelers' philanthropy projects in the local community so participation and decision making within the business should be broad based.

Client Charitable Donations

Key Points

Businesses most commonly use staff and guides to inform clients of charitable opportunities and also offer local volunteer opportunities. The role of the tourism guide and front desk staff are vital in explaining travelers' philanthropy projects to visitors and encouraging donations.

Only one business sends letter to solicit contributions. Therefore this doesn't seem like a worthwhile approach in soliciting donations-- but written letters of thanks and follow up once a donation has been made has proved vital in successful travelers' philanthropy programs in other parts of the world.

More than a quarter of client donations – and the greatest percentage of donations – is channeled into environmental conservation. Highlight the interconnections between the natural and social environment when trying to diversify target projects.

Moving Forward: Recommendations/Insights

Reaching Clients

- In an electronic age, take advantage of online resources!
- Though every business who shared details of its charitable donations did so through a company webpage, no one used the business webpage to solicit client donations.
- By providing clients with information and opportunities to contribute on the website, businesses further indicate to clients their philanthropic goals.
- Use Facebook and Twitter– no one reported using these to solicit donations from clients, despite its wide popularity.
- Follow-up to determine why businesses are not sending letters to solicit donations.
- Offer more lectures and tours
- Few businesses surveyed are currently taking advantage of lectures and/or tours to inform clients of donation opportunities.

Connect the Environment to Other Social Issues

- Most client donations in the Osa are funneled into environmental conservation and reforestation, while local businesses donate to address a wider range of social issues.
- Develop strategies to communicate to clients the connections between the social and environmental realms and provide them with information regarding the social needs of the community.
- In order to provide clients with concrete information on needs, it is important to provide research and/or statistical information regarding specific community needs.
- In addition, provide clients with standardized results that measure the impact of donations – individuals are more likely to make a contribution if they believe it will have a meaningful effect.

Encourage Documenting of Client Contributions

- Few businesses could provide data on client donations.
- Businesses with hard data could use this information to publicize their commitment to philanthropy.
- Moreover, once identified, businesses that solicit a large number of donations and/or large average individual donations can share strategies with other companies to maximize community giving.
- Provide businesses with training on how to solicit donations, while also improving opportunities for client involvement, how to market materials, and how to measure the impact of the contributions.

Measuring Impact

- While most businesses report processes or measurements of success, strategies appear to vary by project and business. Provide training that stresses the benefits of using complementary standardized, measures to assess the longitudinal impact of donations and compare impacts across organization and activities.