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on business or
personal affairs

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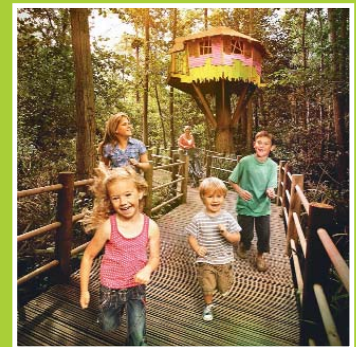
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Eastern Daily Press  LARKING GOWEN

tourism business survey



HEN and HAMMOCK

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POTTERS Leisure
LEISURE RESORT **Target**
DISTRIBUTION SERVICES

Norfolk tourism

We have so much to offer

Tourism is a significant contributor to the wealth of Norfolk, contributing more than £2.4bn to the economy, writes **Elaine Maslin**, acting EDP business editor.

What we have to offer holidaymakers in the UK and abroad is hard to beat – we have a magnificent coastline, a vibrant city packed with culture and retail, modern resorts, the Broads, boutique hotels, country retreats and the list goes on.

For the people of Norfolk, the industry equates to jobs for more than 47,000 people.

In our campaigns, Holiday Here and the Tourism in Norfolk Awards, the EDP recognises the strength of the sector and the need to support it.

In the EDP Larking Gowen Tourism Business Survey 2010, we hope to go one step further.

Here, and for the first year also online on a microsite, www.edp24.co.uk/tourismsurvey, we have brought together research for you on the issues facing the county.

Sustainability is now high on the agenda for many, alongside the need to continuously invest.

But there are challenges. Can we gain from the London 2012 Olympics? Can the industry recruit



the right staff – and pay them? Do we promote the county to the outside world enough?

Chris Scargill (left), tourism and leisure partner at Larking Gowen chartered accountants and business advisors, says there is an opportunity here to help businesses address those questions.

“Undertaking a survey dedicated to the tourism businesses in Norfolk helps to provide a unique opportunity against which those in the sector can benchmark themselves and gain a greater understanding of the issues affecting the sector,” he said.

“We are grateful to all those businesses who participated in our fourth annual survey. Once again the results indicate that the tourism sector in Norfolk is expanding and, despite the economic climate, has been fairly robust.

“While turnover does not mean “profitability”, it does indicate that the business is there, along with the opportunity to profit from all that it brings.

“One of the areas measured is the anticipated



What a great success story



Norfolk has a great story to tell about the success of tourism in our county. In a constantly-evolving and complex sector, year after year, the companies involved in Norfolk tourism are proving themselves innovative and adaptable – and always willing to make the most of the wonderful natural resource that is our business.

So, as the leading visitor information distribution service across Eastern England, Leisure Target Tourism Services is proud to be associated with the EDP-Larking Gowen Tourism Business Survey.

Once again, it highlights key trends in the industry, which will help to shape decision-making, while building up a database of information.

Andrew Hird

Managing Director, Leisure Target Tourism Services

increase in turnover compared to actual performance.

“Following a fairly successful summer in 2007, 59pc of the businesses anticipated 2008 would offer further increases in turnover.

“However, 2008 was the beginning of the economic recession and only 45pc of businesses saw an increase materialise.

“The negativity of the economic situation resulted in only 32pc forecasting an increase in 2009.

“As the results within the survey show, and has been well documented, the impact of the “staycation” phenomenon actually meant that 61pc of Norfolk’s tourism businesses saw an increase in 2009.

“For 2010, our survey indicates that 46pc of businesses anticipate an increase. This positivity is exceptionally good news for the sector and for Norfolk’s largest industry and the jobs that rely on it.”

The EDP would like to thank our sponsors, Potters Leisure Resort and Leisure Target Group, and Larking Gowen, who have been the lynchpin for the research that has gone into this guide.

Let’s hear it – the louder, the better



Tourism is a diverse and fragmented industry, but that takes nothing away from its economic importance both nationally and locally - and as such the louder the tourism voice the better.

Whether you sell accommodation, food and drink, retail goods or receive your income from tourism support services, a survey may gather dust, but on the other hand it offers a chance to promote and increase the voice and awareness of the vital role and importance of tourism to our region.

This is why Potters Leisure Resort was keen to become involved in this survey. After all, it’s another chance to get our message over to a new government that is hopefully less hard of hearing than the last.

Brian Potter

Chairman, Potters Leisure Resort

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ANTHONY KELLY

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Investment

Confidence is running high

Investing in your business can seem a daunting prospect when times are tough. It appears, however, that most of Norfolk's tourism firms are acting optimistically — though some are feeling the squeeze thanks to the banks.

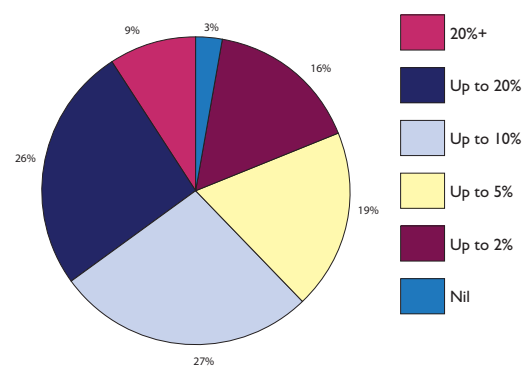
When the economy is in difficulty, it can be tough for businesses to know whether to invest for the future or try to steady themselves and weather the storm.

The results of the Larking Gowen Norfolk Tourism Survey provide an interesting insight into their thinking on this issue.

The businesses' responses regarding turnover give a snapshot of current confidence levels in the industry. According to 62pc of those who participated in the survey, turnover had increased within the past 12 months, with 21pc saying it had stayed the same and only 17pc saying it had decreased. Meanwhile, 47pc said they expected turnover to grow in the next 12 months and 40pc thought it would stay the same, with only 13pc expecting a drop in turnover.

And as well as the amount of cash coming in, there remains a healthy attitude towards investing money back into the business. In all, 77pc had increased the amount of money they had invested in their businesses in 2009.

What proportion of turnover do you put back into improving the business each year?



Optimistic: Chris Starkie, left, and Michael Timewell expect 2010 to be an even better year for the sector.

"That is excellent news for the tourism industry in Norfolk," says Michael Timewell, head of Norfolk Tourism. "It shows that they have confidence in their product and in their marketplace, and the county as a whole. To me that is great news for the future."

Chris Starkie, chief executive of Shaping Norfolk's Future, shares his confidence in the sector. He said that 2009 was "undoubtedly a good year for tourism, with a combination of factors such as the weak pound and increased appetite for holidaying at home, thanks in part to the EDP's Holiday Here campaign, which meant that businesses across the county saw, on average, an increase of between 10pc and 20pc."

"The signs are that 2010 could well exceed those figures. Tourism is a really important sector for the Norfolk economy, and it is one that has helped us to weather the economic downturn."

Many of the respondents' comments are encouraging, speaking of a need "to remain competitive", and that "we

Expansion: Les and Vanessa Scott, owners of Strattons Hotel, Swaffham, have reinvested by adding more bedrooms and a café deli.



IAN BURTT

“
 Tourism is a really important sector for the Norfolk economy, and it is one that has helped us weather the economic downturn.
 ”

have a policy to reinvest and don't see the economic climate as a reason to move away from this".

But others warn that the banks' changes of policy have created a trickier working environment. The survey shows that 26pc of businesses had found it harder to obtain funding, loans or overdrafts from banks in the previous year, although 29pc said they had found it no harder.

Just over 60pc of businesses surveyed said that their bank charges had stayed the same as they had been in the previous year, while 33pc said they had increased.

To quote one respondent: "Higher bank lending rates have stopped further development. Also the uncertainty in the economy has been a large factor — not much faith in growth whilst there are still high levels of unemployment and no prospect of serious recovery in the economy."

CASE STUDY

"Our policy has always been to re-invest in our product," says Hannah Scott, director at Strattons Hotel in Swaffham. "The last couple of years have been no different and, despite the economic downturn, we have continued with our building project to increase the number of bedrooms and add a café deli by redeveloping a former print workshop on our site.

"The four new rooms and a deli opened in April of this year. This has been three years in the planning, one year in construction and has been created out of the buildings formerly owned by the Coe family, who ran a printing business from the site in Ash Close.

"Local architect Paul Lucas was commissioned to draw up the project because he has a broad experience in housing, conservation, and commercial projects, as well as studying at the Centre for Alternative Technology in Wales. His company focuses on environmental and sustainable design. Local builders Quinns have completed the build.

"The printing company of W J Coe was founded in 1885 by William John Coe, a member of a long established Swaffham family.

"When Les and Vanessa Scott first bought the building in Ash Close that they fashioned into Strattons, Edwin and Pauline Coe were first to welcome them to the town.

"The development offers two self-contained apartments, two more hotel rooms and a coffee shop and deli selling real local produce — literally the ingredients that will be used to make up the food served."

Promotion

Why marketing makes sense

When the economic climate turns stormy, it is often the case that marketing budgets are among the first to be cut. And the Larking Gowen Norfolk Tourism Survey suggests that some local businesses have been thinking this way.

When asked "What is the single most important factor that will affect your turnover in 2010?" only 13pc said "marketing", whereas 46pc cited the economy and 25pc the weather. In addition, when asked "What proportion of your turnover is spent on promotion/marketing?", 37pc of people said "up to 5pc", and 34pc of them said "up to 2pc".

Of course, the weather is a serious factor in determining the fortunes of many businesses in Norfolk's tourism economy. Of the types of business making up the sector, some pray for the rain to stay away — for instance, the many Broads boat-hire businesses, or the zoos and other outdoor animal attractions — while others, such as museums and historic buildings, benefit from people wanting to stay indoors.

The survey suggests that there is a significant degree of scepticism about the way that the county is marketed. Just over half (53pc) think that Norfolk is sufficiently well promoted as a tourist destination, but among the 47pc who disagree, there are certain recurring themes.

"Too many agencies all trying to do the same thing," states one respondent. "There ought to be a one-stop shop for Norfolk, where everyone can look for events, a calendar, places of interest. It would be better for advertising, better for clients."

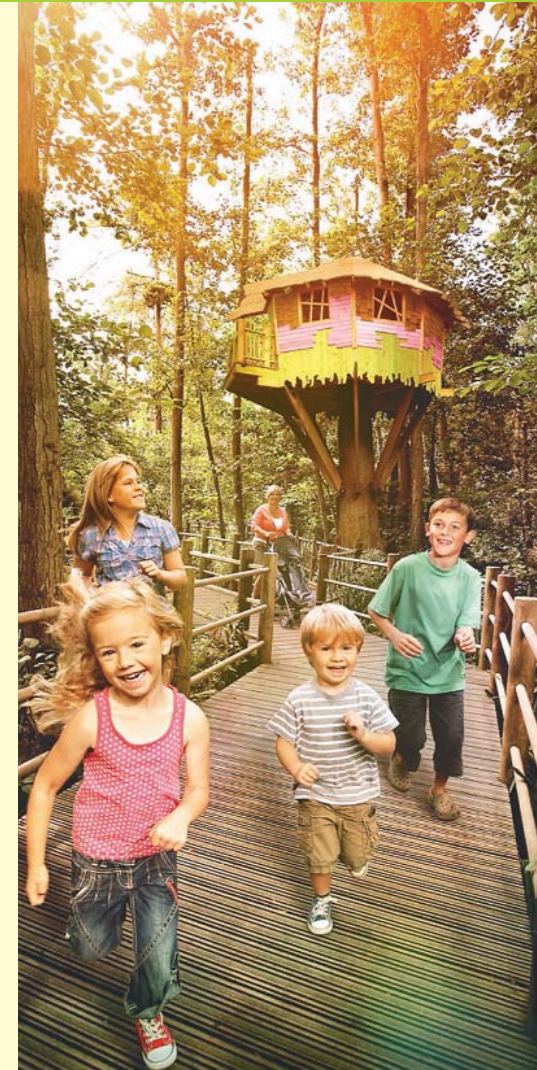
Others strike the same chord, citing a "lack of joined-up promotion among the various stakeholders and tourism bodies", or saying that "the relationship between what the county offers and the distinct destinations, for example the Broads, remains haphazard" and there are "too many publicly funded organisations with differing and self-interested agendas".

Michael Timewell, a director of Blue Sky Leisure and head of Norfolk Tourism, perhaps unsurprisingly, rejects the idea that there is a lack of cohesion.

“There ought to be a one-stop shop for Norfolk, where everyone can look for events, a calendar, places of interest.”

"I don't think that that's the case," he says. "We work very hard to bring the different organisations together. All these people have been involved in the drawing up of a sector marketing plan. There is co-ordination, and maybe we need to bang the drum a bit more. Perhaps we need to start communicating that more effectively. And maybe they (business owners) need to start to engage more with us."

Chris Scargill, tourism and hospitality partner at Larking Gowen, chartered accountants and business advisors, says of these comments: "It was interesting to see that 47pc of businesses say that Norfolk is not sufficiently promoted. We have seen elsewhere in the survey positive growth in Norfolk tourism business so something must be working somewhere! There does seem to be concern that there needs to be greater collaboration between the likes of Visit Norwich, Visit Norfolk, the Broads Forum, the Greater



Go wild: Children have fun at BeWILDerwood, whose reputation is largely spread by word of mouth.

CASE STUDY

Jo Artherton is marketing manager at BeWILDerwood, the woodland adventure park near Wroxham, which has quickly become a children's favourite.

"The two key components of our marketing strategy, I would say, are our leaflet and word of mouth. The fact that we've got such a unique offering and the whole team has worked so hard to get it where it is today, goes a long way to our customers spreading the word about what a great day out BeWILDerwood is.

"We are part of the Broads Tourism Forum, which helps promote the Norfolk Broads as a destination — we exhibited as a group at the Caravan and Boat Show this year. The strength of a joint venture such as this really does help raise the profile of us and other attractions within the area.

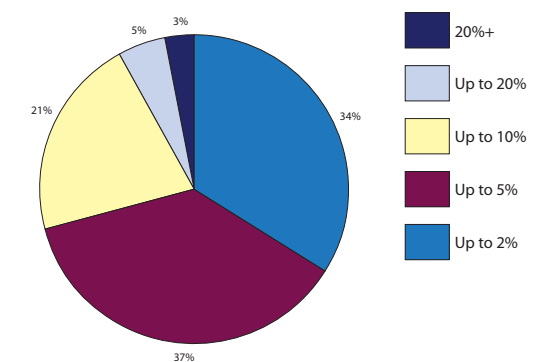
"In terms of our marketing strategy, we focus primarily on local advertising and marketing. So we advertise with Archant, Heart FM and the local Tindle Radio stations (Beach, North Norfolk and Norwich) as well as a few other local publications. We also list ourselves on the main tourism websites for the area (Visit Norwich, Norfolk Tourism, East of England Tourism, Norfolk Tourist Attractions Association, to name a few) as well as specific sites regarding days out with children. We do some advertising further afield but mainly within a 1hr 30m driving distance, as we have found through research that this is the average distance people are willing to travel for day trips to the area.

"Winning tourism and attraction awards has helped us gain national recognition and raise our profile further afield, with the help of Jungle PR. We are finding that we are becoming a destination, for short breaks, in our own right. By researching our customers we're finding that more and more holidaymakers are choosing to come to Norfolk because of us, which is fantastic news!"

Yarmouth Tourism Authority and other similar bodies but I believe that is happening to a certain extent but may not yet necessarily be promoted as such.

"Of the 47pc of businesses desiring greater promotion, some 73pc state that they would not be willing to pay any more to better promote the county which suggests, by implication, that they believe it is Local Government funding that should start the ball rolling, rather than it being something for the private sector. With the current economic climate and cut-backs, this is not going to happen, and therefore the challenge for the tourism bodies is to obtain greater "buy in" from the many businesses in the sector who can, when working together, offer a greater promotion product."

What proportion of turnover is spent on promotion and marketing



Our environment

Going 'green' is way forward

We are always being told to be more environmentally friendly — but are the costs prohibitive? The survey suggests that most Norfolk tourism businesses are keen to go green.

Environmental experts regularly cite the benefits to business of "going green" and it appears that the issue is close to the hearts of many Norfolk businesses. Responses repeatedly state that working in the countryside gives a strong understanding of environmental issues, while being based on the coast makes them wary of the risk of rising sea levels. Just over half (54pc) say that they will look to reduce their environmental impact in the coming year.

Comments include that "the Broads rely on responsible tourism"; "we encourage our guests to help us recycle as much as possible — also reducing energy increases profit".

However, almost half (49pc) stated that they thought going 'green' would increase their costs, while 29pc thought it would have no financial impact. Only 22pc thought it could save them money.

Another respondent notes that they "need to reduce carbon footprint", and it is here that there is a potential lack of information and a little more cause for concern. Only 8pc of

businesses know their carbon footprint, and of the other 92pc there are mixed messages about whether they intend to act on this issue.

Although 58pc knew where to get advice on the environmental performance of their business, there would appear to be an educational opportunity to target the 42pc who did not and, at the same time, show them the benefits and cost savings they could make.

Some seemed not to want to know, with comments such as "sick to death of hearing about people going green" and "the scare tactics employed are to provide an excuse for raising yet more tax". One person states: "We invest to get a return. If we installed a heat pump, wind turbine and solar panels, we would be in debt very quickly!"

More typical are comments citing time and costs as prohibitive.

However, as the graph shows, 83pc said that environmental issues were important or of some interest to their business. Of course there will always be some aspects of tourism that can only go so far. As one person says of their business, "a steam railway is, per se, not environmentally friendly!"

But overall the issue appears to be simply a case of not knowing where to start.

Marcus Armes, of the CRed carbon reduction unit at UEA, said: "It was encouraging to see that 54pc of the companies taking part in the survey intend to act to reduce their carbon footprint in the next 12 months. Unsurprisingly, many businesses cited cost savings as the major driver for reducing their energy demand. As fuel prices continue a relentless upward march, I am sure that future surveys will see even greater numbers taking resource efficiency seriously.

"Interestingly, cost also featured as a reason for inaction, particularly when it comes to installing renewable energy, which many respondents felt was simply too expensive

Viable: Andrea Bramhall, of Burnham Deepdale Backpackers, with Jasper.



IAN BURTT

“It was encouraging to see that 54pc of the companies taking part in the survey intend to act to reduce their carbon footprint in the next 12 months.”

despite the rising costs of oil and gas. It is unreasonable in the current economic climate to expect businesses to put long-term savings ahead of short-term profits, or in some cases, sheer survival. Therefore, if we are to encourage the uptake of renewables, then we have to reduce their cost to business.

"I think the most worrying aspect of the survey was the large number of organisations which were totally unaware of their carbon footprint.

"Even if a business does not accept the need for action on climate change, surely it makes sense to monitor energy use more closely, as it is only when you start to meter and monitor energy use that you can really start to make a stab at reducing the costly waste of energy."

CASE STUDY

Louise Smith and Andrea Bramhall run Burnham Deepdale Backpackers, an environmentally friendly campsite with hostel accommodation in north-west Norfolk.

"The idea behind Burnham Deepdale is that we are as environmentally friendly as possible as long as it's viable from a business perspective," says Andrea.

"So, for example, we won't install new technologies that come along if they don't have an economically viable basis, for example if the payback period would be too long for a small business such as ourselves.

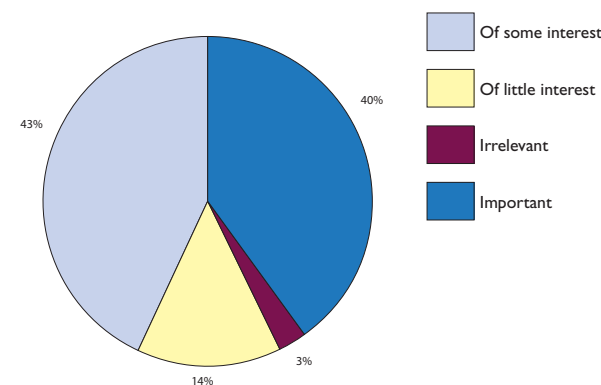
"Current photovoltaic technology would take 20 years to pay back and for us at the moment that is too long.

"However, there's a new generation that will be available in the next three years and that should reduce the payback time to seven years, which is well worth looking at.

"In our day-to-day thinking, we are always trying to think of how we can reduce our consumption of resources. One example would be that our office has gone paper-free. Another example is with the washing up bowls in our campsites and hostels. Rather than having people pour the water down the drain, we ask them to water the plants and hedges around the site.

"We try to let people have a good holiday and enjoy Norfolk. I don't see that the two are mutually exclusive."

Are environmental issues important or irrelevant to how you run your business?



Employment

Skilled staff are key to growth

Norfolk tourism appears to have weathered the economic storm in terms of maintaining sufficient levels of quality. But while there is cause for a confident outlook, the broader skills gap applies here too.

A business is only as good as the people who work for it. In many aspects of tourism, customer service is everything, whether in the form of hotel management, restaurant service or holiday reps at leisure resorts.

While most businesses (84pc) are satisfied that they can attract the right calibre of staff, there are sufficient negative comments within the other 16pc of responses to suggest a small problem here.

To take a few examples, there are claims that "staff are not willing to do the work properly"; "I have a very high standard that most staff find it hard to follow", and "people do not want to work for minimum wage when they can get more on benefits".

There was, however, a suggestion that in some areas there are insufficient well-trained and motivated young people.

Michael Timewell, head of Norfolk Tourism, has a strong message for anyone who would rather be on benefits than work in the tourism sector.

"Frankly, if that is their attitude we don't want them," he said. "We want people who are committed. With 47,000 people in Norfolk working in tourism, we want people who are committed to work in the sector. We have to make sure that the skills are available and in place."

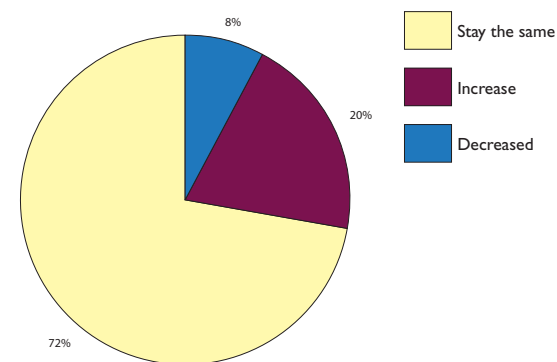
The EDP recently reported that there is a "skills gap" evident in Norfolk across all sectors of industry, and quoted Chris Starkie, chief executive of Shaping Norfolk's Future, as saying that improving skills levels across the county was "critically important" to its economic performance.

But he is broadly encouraged by the survey's results for the tourism sector.

"I would say that the fact that more than 80pc of businesses are able to get the staff that they want is proof that there isn't a critical problem," he says.

"However, there's no doubt that to enable tourism

In the coming 12 months, do you expect staff numbers to



businesses to succeed and continue growing in a competitive world, it is important to have suitably skilled employees.

"As a partnership Norfolk Tourism is working with organisations such as Norfolk County Council to look at ways of ensuring that tourism businesses are able to get staff with the skills they need to help businesses grow.

"Shaping Norfolk's Future has just secured European funding to try to understand better the needs of employers, so that training can be employer-led and not college-led."

The survey suggests that there is cause for confidence when it comes to staffing and recruitment. In the past year, 58pc of businesses' staff numbers have remained the same, while only 18pc have decreased and almost a quarter (24pc) have increased.

And, looking forward, there seems to be little pessimism. Only 8pc think that staff numbers will decrease, 72pc think they will stay the same and 20pc think they will increase in 2010.

Great outdoors:
 Pensthorpe staff
 Imogen Checketts,
 left, digs deep and,
 right, Chrissie Kelly
 feeds the swans.



MATTHEW USHER

“With 47,000 people in Norfolk working in tourism, we want people who are committed to work in the sector.”

”

But from the employees' perspective, there is some cause for concern on the matter of pay. While only 2pc of businesses say that they expect to pay their staff less in the coming year, 60pc will impose a pay-freeze and only 38pc plan to award any pay rises.

"What we are seeing in tourism is being reflected in most other sectors," said Mr Starkie. "One reason that unemployment hasn't risen as much as we expected in Norfolk is because most employers are freezing wages rather than letting staff go."

Elsewhere the survey confirms that the majority of Norfolk tourism businesses are small operations. Almost a third (31pc) have from one to five members of staff and 25pc have none. Only 7pc of businesses employ 51 people or more. Meanwhile, 14pc have six to 10 staff, 12pc employ 11 to 20 people and 11pc have 21-50.

CASE STUDY

Jonathan Briggs, the general manager at Pensthorpe Nature Reserve, explains how he recruits and keeps hold of quality staff.

"For the large part we don't have to go out and recruit. A lot of interest comes to us. It's the place, that attracts people. It's the setting and the enthusiasm that our staff have for the place. Working with those sort of people is enticement enough.

"Being based near Fakenham, it's a rural community and there are not a lot of other opportunities, so we become a main target for approaches. The downside is that we get inundated with applications, which can be speculative, but the positive side is that there is a lot of interest.

"But, when necessary, we use specialist publications for recruitment, or conservation websites or organisations which we belong to.

"It's interesting, there are two types of staff here. Staff turnover isn't a problem. But we tend to get, because we have a seasonal tourism base, a seasonal turnover of people working in cycles. They might start at 16 years old and continue through their studies and then continue to work for us through loyalty.

"With respect to the other jobs, there tends to be strong loyalty so turnover tends to be less. They are passionate about what they do.

"Including seasonal helpers, staff numbers can be up to 50 people. We have given staff a pay rise, as opposed to many tourism businesses that have imposed a pay freeze. We have found our business to be growing, and therefore the staff are working that bit harder and should get some benefit from that. We have been going through a successful period and people can lose touch with that if it is not recognised."

Olympics 2012 Seize this golden opportunity

In 2012 the world's biggest celebration of sport comes to London. So when the Olympics arrive, will Norfolk be placed to secure a piece of the action?

South Norfolk is 90 minutes from London. In 2012 the capital will see a huge influx of sports fans from around the world arrive for the fortnight-long Olympic Games.

Having travelled that far it is likely that they will look to explore further afield than London during or after their stay, and indeed tourism-related businesses as far away as the West Country are known to be looking to make the most of this.

But, according to the survey results, few Norfolk businesses are optimistic about benefiting from the Games. A small majority (55pc) said that the Olympics would not bring any benefit to Norfolk, and there are dozens of comments on the same themes: that Norfolk is too far away and the transport links are not good enough.

"The fact is that 54pc don't feel that the impact will be of any relevance to Norfolk," says Chris Scargill, tourism and hospitality partner at Larking Gowen chartered accountants.

"If you are in Norwich you are less than two hours from Stratford. Surrey is two hours away from Stratford given the

traffic, but they are having a big push. You have to ask whether we have a parochial mentality."

Some of the comments in the survey suggest this to be the case, baldly stating: "It's 100 miles away", "Why would they visit Norfolk?" or "It will be London-centric and short-lived".

Others cite poor transport links as negating the relatively short distance to London.

"I am unaware of what Norfolk is doing to prepare for 2012," says one. "A faster, more frequent and reliable train service would make a difference."

"If they don't, it will be because we haven't got off our backsides and taken advantage of the opportunity and we haven't got the trains to run fast enough," says another.

A comment from further in the county states: "It may make a difference to Norwich but I do not feel this will spread very far beyond Norwich, and even this will be hindered by the current poor transport links to Norfolk, both road and rail."

Ian Hacon, chief executive of Blue Sky Leisure and the tourism expert at Norfolk Chamber of Commerce, said that this shows the importance of the Norwich in 90 campaign, which is pressing for better rail links to the city from London.

"We can relate this to the campaign that the chamber is doing at the moment. Stratford is very close but, at present, people can get from London to York in the same



Campaign: Better rail links are key to attracting visitors during the Olympics, says tourism expert Ian Hacon.

Opportunities:
The Holiday Inn Norwich North is one Norfolk hotel with plans to make the most of the 2012 Olympics.



ANTHONY KELLY

“Stratford is very close but, at present, people can get from London to York in the same time as they can get to Norwich.”

”

time as they can get to Norwich.

"If they are coming from abroad and are thinking about a day trip while the athletics, or whatever they're interested in, isn't happening, then maybe they are more likely to have heard of York and want to go there as it's a more famous destination than Norfolk."

But for Chris Starkie, chief executive of Shaping Norfolk's Future, there are still opportunities to be grasped by local tourism businesses.

"We are working with our regional partners to ensure that we maximise the Olympics' benefits for Norfolk," he said.

"The visitors who are coming from overseas and other parts of the UK should be encouraged to use Norfolk as a base to go to the Games.

"We are working to promote Norfolk and Norwich as 'Closer Than You Think', and that applies when it comes to the Games."

CASE STUDY

Devin Grosse is the general manager of the Holiday Inn Norwich North. He believes the Olympics could bring new opportunities for the hoteliers of Norfolk in 2012.

"InterContinental Hotels Group, which owns Holiday Inn, as a company is sponsoring the Olympics," he says. "They are going to run the Olympic Village in London."

"With Holiday Inn, most of the hotels are franchises. We have a small company that has got five hotels. We buy into that to a certain degree. We have a lot of collateral and are allowed to use the 2012 logo."

"However, in terms of placing (guests at hotels) in 2012, it's still a long way away, so we are not trying to place people yet."

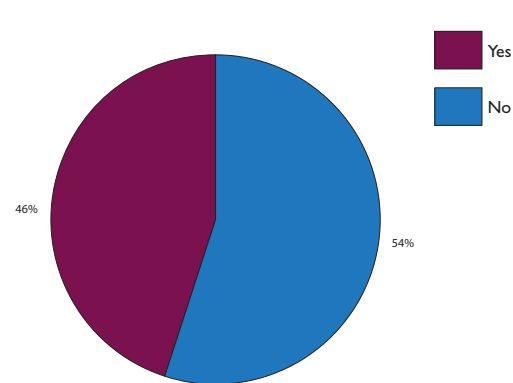
"Because of the economic climate we have got next month and the month after to think about – this business is quite short-term at the moment. We are not specifically looking to fill those six weeks at this moment."



"But I certainly would believe it will be something to look at nearer the time. Our understanding is that, in Beijing, a lot of the teams were staying two hours away and we are less than two hours away from London, so I believe there are opportunities."

"We know that there's a lot of work being done by the local authorities in terms of bringing people to the area, and it is something that has been discussed at the Hotels Association on many occasions."

Will the 2012 Olympics make a difference to Norfolk?



Internet Ignore the web at your peril

Almost every business has a website nowadays — but not all are optimising their internet presence.

There are few businesses nowadays that do not have a website. The survey reflects this: 95pc of Norfolk tourism businesses have an online presence. But more important is the question of whether businesses are getting the most out of the internet.

The majority (52pc) of the businesses surveyed were unable to take bookings online. And while there are signs that more than a quarter of businesses are really making their websites work for them, a number seem to have little appetite in drawing more people in through the web.

The survey shows that 18pc take more than 75pc of their trade from the web, and 9pc take up to 75pc. But one in 10 people had no idea how much business their website brought in, and for nearly a quarter (24pc) it only provides 10pc of their business.

“When it comes to the internet, you have to ask whether some businesses are sticking their heads in the sand and may be missing out on opportunities to attract and win customers,” says Chris Scargill, of Larking Gowen. “It is encouraging that 27pc are taking 50pc or more of their business from the internet, which emphasises the power of the web if used appropriately.”

So how is this likely to change? The past year’s trends suggest that internet activity is moving in an encouraging direction. Only 1pc say that web bookings have decreased in the past 12 months, while 55pc say that they have increased (26pc stayed the same).

However, the remainder again suggest a slight lack of monitoring their websites’ value, as 18pc do not know whether web-led bookings have increased or fallen.

It also appears that the majority of businesses do not keep an eye on their online reputation: 54pc say that they do not regularly check travel review websites such as Trip Advisor. And when it comes to dealing with negative online reviews,

“When it comes to the internet, we have to ask whether we are sticking our heads in the sand and may be missing out on opportunities.”

13pc said they would simply ignore such a review, 3pc said they would try to have it removed from the website, but the rest, 84pc, were more positive and said that they would reply immediately on the same website with an explanation or apology.

Matthew Ware is head of news at Tribe PR in Norwich. The company is responsible for the World Class Norfolk campaign, which celebrates the county’s many strengths and aims to reconfigure people’s ideas of what is “Normal for Norfolk”.

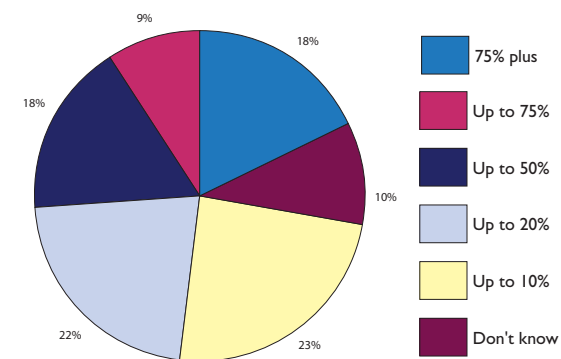
He explained how the campaign acts as an example for other businesses working in the tourism sector.

“Tourism is a key plank of the Norfolk economy and the



Easy access: The redeveloped Potters home page.

What proportion of your business is generated via your website?



campaign encouraged people to upload images of the county’s world class coastline and attractions.

“The campaign used social media monitoring software to target influential bloggers and Tweeters, successfully changing perceptions among national journalists and politicians, among others.

“With more and more people turning to the internet to order goods and book holidays, plus scouring social media for recommendations among their peers, it is now more important than ever to use all of these channels to promote businesses and engage with potential customers.”

CASE STUDY

“The Potters’ website saw an extensive redevelopment in January 2009,” says marketing manager Richard Lennox. “Our ongoing aim is to improve the website experience for people visiting www.pottersholidays.com with regards to how easy information can be accessed, and how people visiting the site consume that information.

“With this in mind we have introduced new elements to the site such as on-site searching and filter systems on our Break Planner, to allow much faster access to information.

“We have also introduced video to the site, to better demonstrate the various areas of the resort, and hopefully give visitors a more interactive idea of what awaits them on their holiday at Potters.

“Other additions to the website include the ability to calculate the cost of a holiday at Potters Leisure Resort using the interactive Break Quotation calculator. Visitors can make an informed decision on the type of break, chosen accommodation and any celebratory items they would like to add to their holiday, before sending the quotation to the reservations team.

“Because of the diverse range of breaks and accommodation types that Potters offer, we have made the decision not to take full bookings online and to instead contact every guest by telephone. We feel that because of the diverse nature of breaks and the variance of accommodation that is on offer at Potters, we can help guests to make the very best choice for their holiday, and meet their requirements any way we can.

“We recognise that Potters Resort offers a unique social environment, where guests have met many new friends and regularly return to meet them again on holiday. We have tried to recreate this feeling of community online with the addition of our Facebook and Twitter groups, allowing past guests to share their comments, talk to one another and even suggest future activities that they would love to see on their holiday.”

Your business is our pleasure



- Conferences •
- Seminars •
- Activity Days •
- Corporate Awards Evenings •
- Corporate Gala Dinners •
- Team Away Days •
- Weddings & Celebrations •

Business & Pleasure at Potters Leisure Resort – the perfect cliff top location to host a wide range of events with an excellent variety of venues; our new multi-purpose, state of the art, **Zest Rooms** for 12-350 delegates, 30 acre Activity Field, the **Atlas Theatre** with 800 seats, and, ideal for Trade Shows and Exhibitions **The International Arena & Suite** for up to 1,000+ delegates. Plus our unique dining experience the **Black Rock Grill** Restaurant, commanding beautiful views over the Norfolk Coastline.

Zest – the perfect venue for your business event

Zest is a new two storey venue featuring 3 inter-connectable rooms all boasting the latest technology and high end design, incorporating 3 state of the art projection systems, 4 plasma screens and 140 speakers generating 32,000 watts of sound.

Our creative Conference & Banqueting Head Chef has produced a variety of mouth watering menus and the presentation is impeccable – from a simple working lunch for 12 to a five course Gala Dinner for 290.

With a contemporary, fresh and bright interior, Zest is the perfect venue for business or pleasure. So whatever the occasion your group is guaranteed a memorable event.

Contact Jill O'Loughlin our Conference & Events Manager for a brochure, for further information or a personal show-round of our facilities.



Call : 0845 437 9896

Email : events@pottersholidays.com

Visit : www.pottersholidays.com/business-and-pleasure



Zest Rooms Potters Leisure Resort Coast Road Hopton-on-Sea Norfolk NR31 9BX

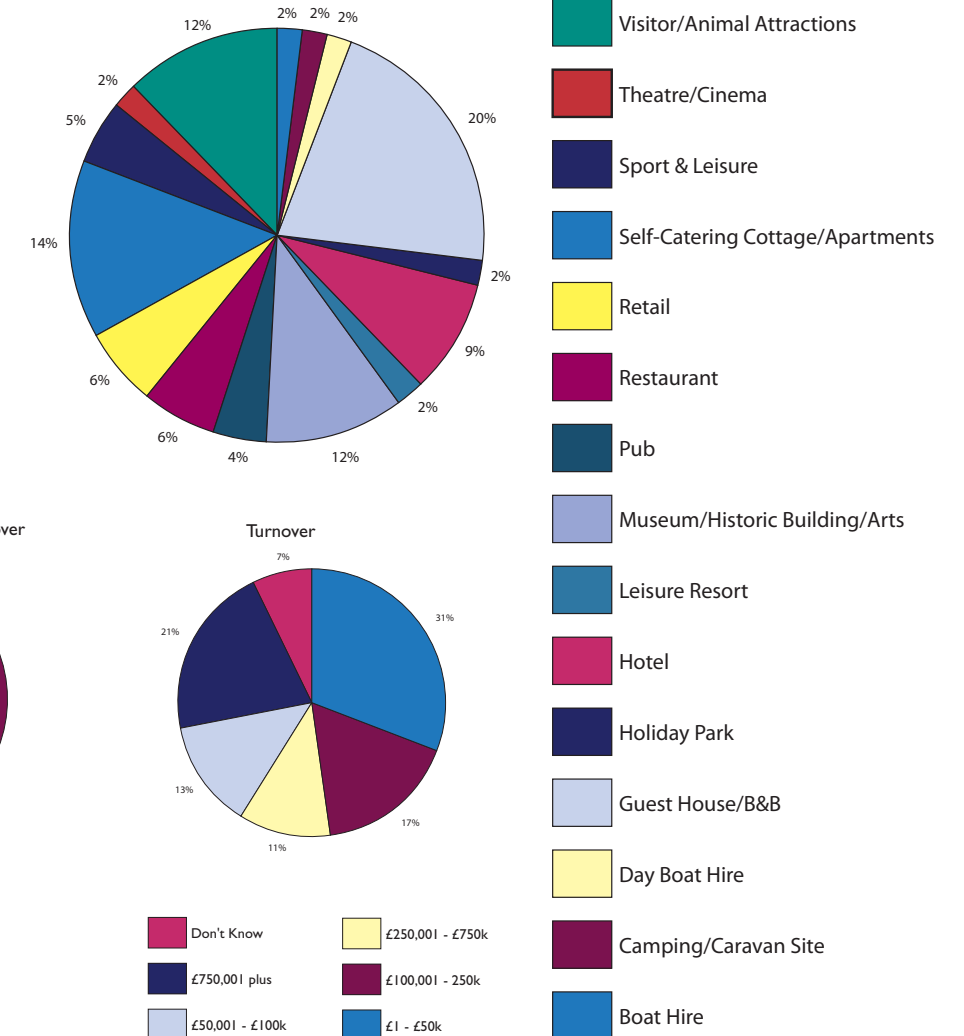
Tourism in Norfolk

Tourism is key to Norfolk, and the need to support the sector is recognised by the EDP and its partners. Here we show you the results of the latest EDP Larking Gowen Tourism Business Survey 2010.

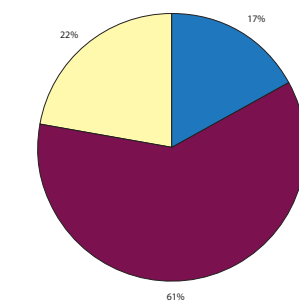
As you can see, the county has a diverse and rich offering, with companies ranging in size from one-man operations to large resorts.

A full copy of the data is available on request from tourism@larking-gowen.co.uk

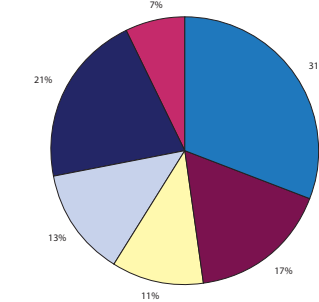
Type of Business



During the last 12 months, has turnover



Turnover



- Remained the same
- Increased
- Decreased

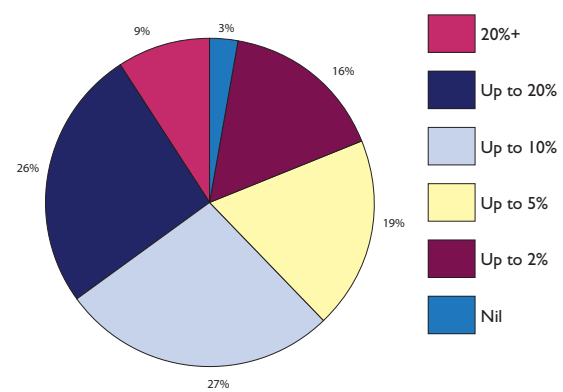
- Don't Know
- £750,001 plus
- £50,001 - £100k
- £250,001 - £750k
- £100,001 - 250k
- £1 - £50k

- Visitor/Animal Attractions
- Theatre/Cinema
- Sport & Leisure
- Self-Catering Cottage/Apartments
- Retail
- Restaurant
- Pub
- Museum/Historic Building/Arts
- Leisure Resort
- Hotel
- Holiday Park
- Guest House/B&B
- Day Boat Hire
- Camping/Caravan Site
- Boat Hire

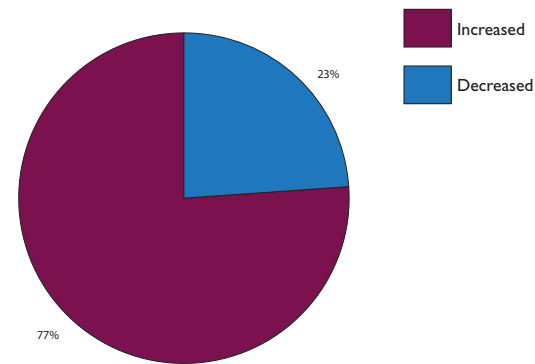
Investment

A majority of Norfolk's firms are optimistic about the future and are investing in their businesses.

What proportion of turnover do you put back into improving the business each year?



Have you increased or decreased the amount you put back into the business in the last 12 months?



What they said...

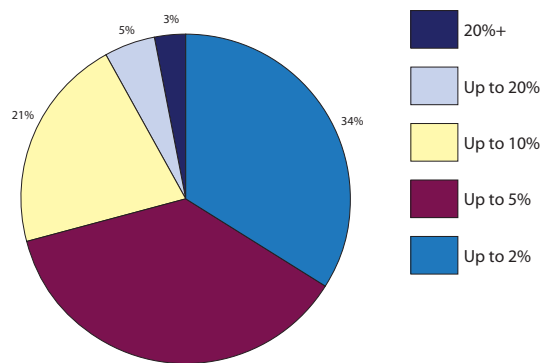


This is a much-expanded attraction, and I have increased (investment) to upgrade my business.

We have a policy to invest and don't see the economic climate as a reason to move away from this.

The market is fluid and we believe you must keep updating and improving all the time.

What proportion of turnover is spent on promotion and marketing



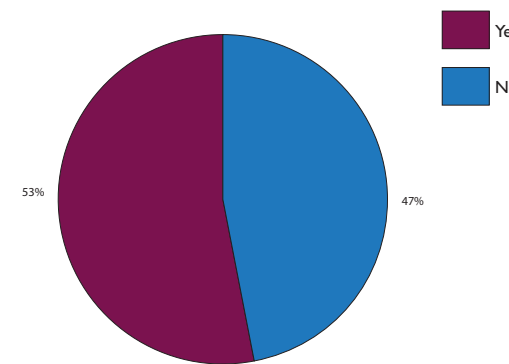
We have found that our visitors would like us to expand into a wider more educational offering, which would appeal to all age groups. It's too easy to have a quiet year and underestimate customer expectations.



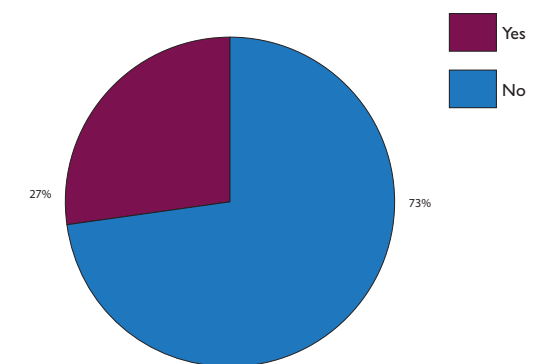
Promotion and The Olympics

Do Norfolk businesses and tourism bodies do enough to promote themselves?

Is Norfolk sufficiently well-promoted as a tourist destination?



Would you be prepared to pay a sum to help better promote Norfolk?



What they said...

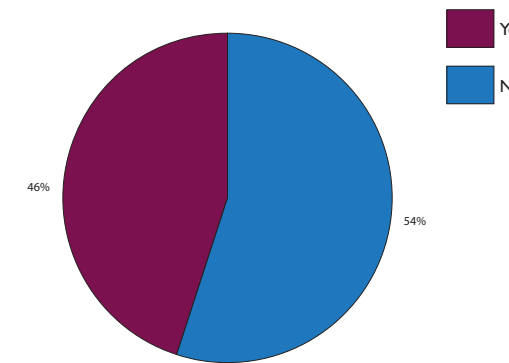


The Olympics will attract a different set of people, who are (predominantly) too far from us here.

It could be great for Norfolk if we make sure we promote the region effectively.

The Games might make a difference in Norwich, but I don't feel this will spread very far beyond the city.

Will the 2012 Olympics make a difference to Norfolk?



I think we're probably too far away from the main venues to benefit during the competition weeks. We could benefit, though, from visitors who choose to have a holiday pre or post the Games – but then they could go anywhere in the country.





There are thousands of potential visitors out there. We'll help you bring them in.

Providing high quality support to the tourism industry for over 10 years, Leisure Target delivers leaflets and other publications to over 2500 locations in the Eastern region. We also assist with campaign planning and marketing, helping you to reach as many visitors as possible.

Tel: 08454 707606
 Email: sales@leisure-target.co.uk
 www.leisure-target.co.uk

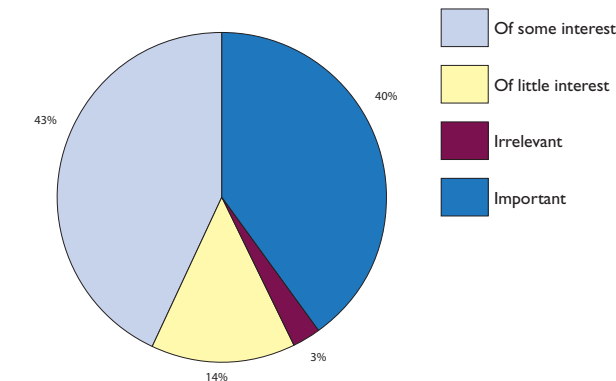


Winner of the 2008 EDP Tourism in Norfolk Award:
Most Valued Industry Supplier

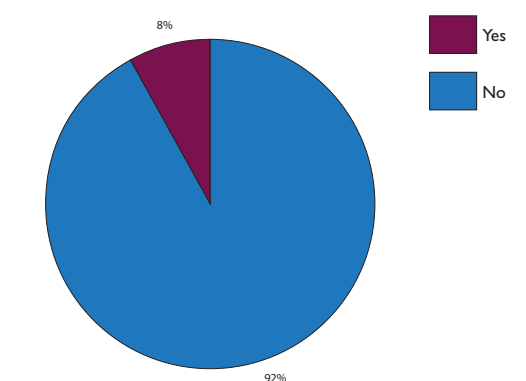
Our environment

Norfolk's businesses believe 'going green' is the way forward

Are environmental issues important or irrelevant to how you run your business?



Do you know the carbon footprint of your business?



What they said...



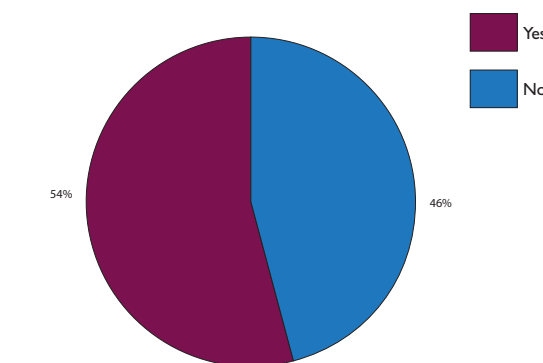
As we live in the countryside, I believe it's important to care for our environment and make visitors aware too.

Being situated right on the coast, the impact of rising sea levels and sea defences are pivotal to our business.

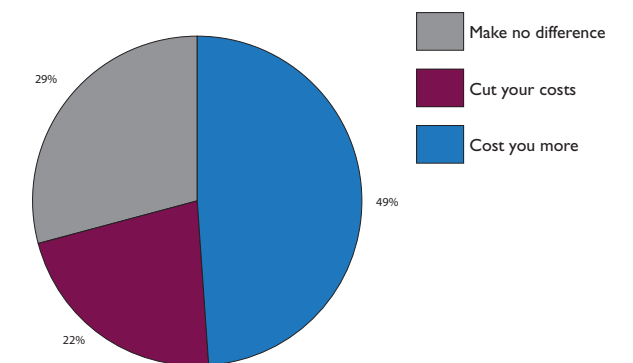
There should be a corporate commitment to energy efficiency, and we should wish to lead by example.



In the next 12 months, do you plan to reduce the environmental impact of your business?



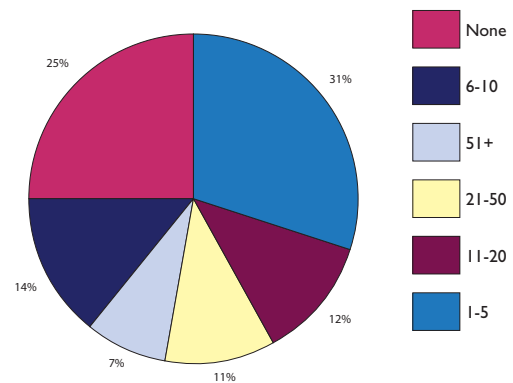
Do you think going green would?



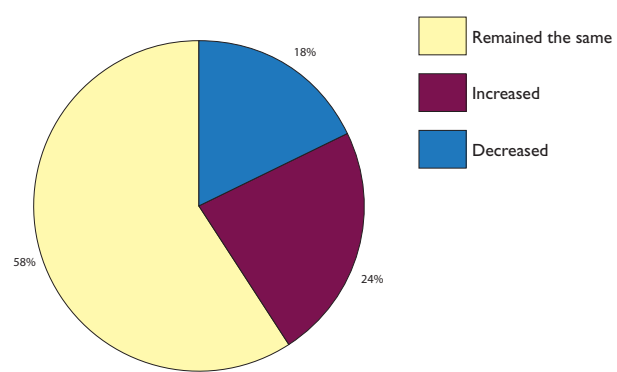
Employment

Skilled staff are the key to growth, but can companies find – and pay – them?

How many people do you employ, full & part time?



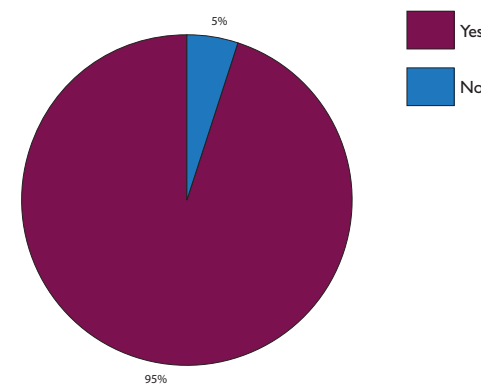
During the last 12 months, have staff numbers



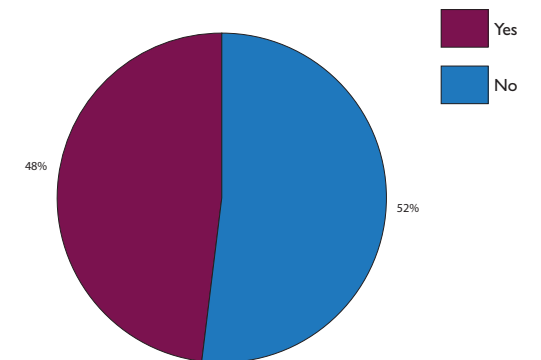
The Internet

Ignore it at your peril! Those who've gone online are reaping the benefits.

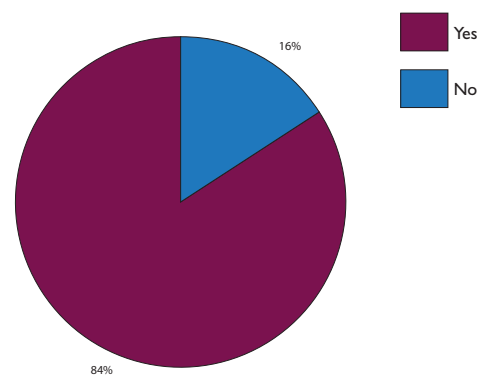
Do you have a website?



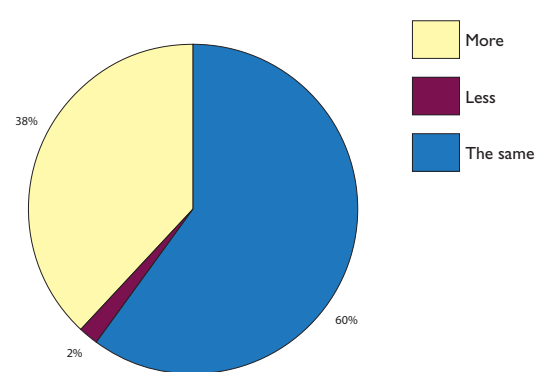
Are you able to take bookings online?



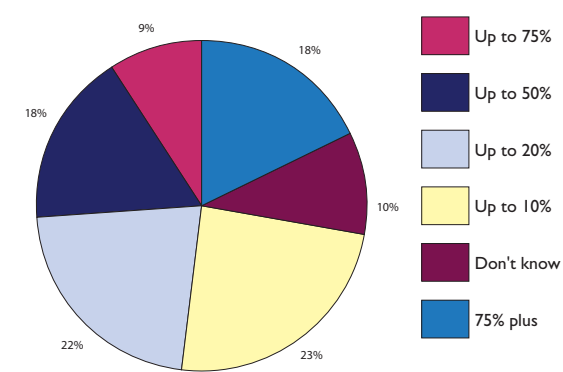
Are you able to attract the right calibre of staff?



This year, do you expect to pay the staff



What proportion of your business is generated via your website?



In the last 12 months, have web bookings

