

Spring 6-2014

# Adventure Tourism Management

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# Adventure Tourism Management

**Nikki Fabrizio**

PACE UNIVERSITY

### Abstract:

Adventure tourism management is one of the fastest growing sectors in the tourism market, and while much is known about the rapid expansion of this niche as well as the consumers of it, little is known about its management side. This study seeks to discover why managers enter this industry and what keeps them here, while also gathering demographic data. The data gathered from this study will help flesh out the little information there currently is about the managerial aspect of the industry. The results of this study can be used to better recruit and train future employees, a vital aspect for such an expansive industry. To gather the data necessary for this study, a questionnaire was sent out to adventure tourism operators around the globe. The most vital questions from this asked respondents what caused them to enter to industry, what keeps them in the industry, and what factors they rank as their top reasons for choosing their current job. The results of this study show that the answer to the question “Why do managers enter the adventure tourism industry?” is in fact, the industry. Individuals flock to this industry because of their love of adventure activities, their desire to travel, and the fun associated with the industry. This study also illustrated that managers stay with the industry because they enjoy their jobs and the industry they’re in. The data gathered also helps show that many entrepreneurs in the industry can be classified as lifestyle entrepreneurs. This research has gathered previously unknown insights to the industry. The data gathered shows the driving factors behind those running the industry, and helps shed light on what could be done to further improve the work they do.

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Adventure Tourism is one of the least discussed, but most rapidly growing types in the tourism industry. As a conglomerate of a variety of activities, it can be defined as guided tours where the main attraction is an outdoor activity which focuses on the natural environment, requires specialized equipment and operators, and has an element of risk for the involved clients. (Buckley, 2006) The Adventure Travel Trade Association defines Adventure Tourism as involving three elements: physical activity, cultural exchange, and an interaction with the environment. (Adventure Travel Trade Association and The George Washington University, 2013) Some of the activities most commonly associated with Adventure Tourism include whitewater activities, skydiving, bungee jumping, caving, climbing, abseiling, snowboarding, skiing, diving, ballooning, and mountain biking, among other activities. (Buckley, 2006) One of the most common characteristics of these tours is that “different clients on the same tour may have different skills, demographics, emotions, expectations and experiences, but they still all bought the same tour.” (Buckley, 2006, p. 1)

Adventure Tourism is a niche market with large recorded growth and the potential to keep expanding. In 2006, it constituted about a fifth of the tourism industry; in aggregate this made up almost a tenth of global GNP. (Buckley, 2011) From 2009 to 2012, the market for Adventure Tourism had an approximate average yearly growth of 65%, with a 2012 market worth of \$263 billion, up from \$89 billion in 2010. (Adventure Travel Trade Association and The George Washington University, 2013) From Europe and North America, the percentage of international travelers who classified themselves as adventure travelers rose from 26.3 percent in 2009 to 41.9 percent in 2012. (Adventure Travel Trade Association and The George Washington University, 2013) Adventure travelers also increased their spending per trip, from \$539 in 2009

to \$947 in 2012, which is a yearly increase of nearly 20 percent. (Adventure Travel Trade Association and The George Washington University, 2013) These numbers show that as time passes, more travelers are entering into the adventure tourism market and spending more money on their activities. Trends that are experiencing sustained growth within the industry are: increase in adventure destinations and events; the development of larger and more complex multi-activity product portfolios and combo packages; growth in upmarket luxury products; and a growing number of expedition tours. (Buckley, 2011) Because of the overall growth in the industry, it is an attractive area for portfolio development for specialty tour operators, and the number and range of adventure products offered will most likely grow due to the establishment of new operators. (Swarbrooke, Beard, Leckie, Pomfret , 2003) Due to this growth, more research should be conducted on the industry.

Much is known about the profile of the “Adventure Traveler.” The typical adventure traveler is male, single, and has never been married. These travelers tend to be younger, with an average age of 36, and over a quarter of them having earned a four-year degree. They have an income of \$46,800, read publications like National Geographic and Cosmopolitan, and post about their travels to Facebook and YouTube. (Adventure Travel Trade Association and The George Washington University, 2013) Most available research on the industry focuses on the travelers involved or the risks involved for operators in the industry; after all, this is an industry based around perceived risk. (Adventure Travel Trade Association and The George Washington University, 2013) (Bentley& Page, 2001) (Ryan, 2003) However, there is little to no research on a vital part of the industry- the management. Little is known about the employees who run these operations and give tourists the opportunity to experience thrills and adrenalin rushes each and every day. As this industry continues to grow, there is a need to know more about the

management behind the scenes. Data gathered about managers in the industry has a wide range of uses, such as better job recruitment.

## I. The Current State of Research

For managers, the adventure tourism industry is highly enticing. A combination of exotic locations, natural environments, and activities that have an element of risk provide an interesting and challenging business opportunity. (Ewert & Jamieson, 2003) The amount of research on all areas of this topic can be slim, and when it comes to the managerial aspects of the industry, there is nearly no research information or data. This is backed up by Ewert and Jamieson (2003), who states: “It should be noted that Adventure Tourism as an academic line of inquiry is a relatively recent entry.” (pg. 67) Research on the business side of the industry is vital- as its growth skyrockets, it becomes more and more important to figure out what works to run these businesses and what does not, to better benefit both companies and the consumers.

The industry has several characteristics that make it unique. For one, many operators are small scale and specialize in either one particular activity or a specific region. (Swarbrooke et al., 2003) *Adventure Tourism* specifies that “the tour operating industry has witnessed the emergence of an increasing number of small tour operating businesses. Many of these adventure operators report growth rates of between 15 and 2 per cent annually, an indication of the current popularity of packaged adventure holidays and their future expansion.” (Swarbrooke et al., 2003, p. 275)

These small businesses often show a special growth pattern as many of these businesses are started by people passionate about a particular activity. These owners are often experienced consumers for their marketed product, so they enter the industry to either make a profession out



of their hobby or to seek consumer solutions in their niche. (Peters, Frehse & Buhalis, 2009) As Peters, Frehse and Buhalis point out, “For example many people who run, diving or extreme sport centres are themselves involved in these activities and are keen to experience their hobby through their work.” (2009, p. 401) So that they can maximize the amount of time they spend doing this activity, they start a small-scale operation; as this grows, they realize they have a full time business on their hands. (Swarbrooke et al., 2003) These businesses then either expand or sink.

Many operators in the industry are entrepreneurs, and many of them would be considered lifestyle entrepreneurs, as supported by Peters et al. when they state that, “The tourism and hospitality industries are dominated by small business and the vast majority of the entrepreneurs are lifestylers rather than rational professionals.” (2009, p. 394) Lifestyle entrepreneurs are defined as individuals who own and operate a business that supports their personal interests, beliefs, values and passions. (Marcketti, Neihm & Fuloria, 2006) These entrepreneurs don’t create their businesses to start a career, but as a “life strategy to achieve self-fulfillment.” (Marcketti et al., 2006, p. 242) In relation to the tourism industry, it makes sense that many business owners would be lifestylers. As Peters et al. points out, “The perceived nice life, often close to the beach or to the alpine regions or at attractive parts of the city, has frequently motivated entrepreneurs to leave their job and adventure in tourism and hospitality.” (2009, p. 397)

These businesses often go against the grain; as stated in *Adventure Tourism*, “Many entrepreneurs in this sector clearly do not try and make as much money as possible, but instead endeavor to achieve a high quality, balanced lifestyle that provides enough money to allow them and their families to live comfortably while giving them enough free time to enjoy leisure

activities or time with their family.” (Swarbrooke et al., 2003, p. 150) This quest for life quality over monetary gain is illustrated throughout research on lifestyle entrepreneurs; one case study discovered that nearly one-third of tourism entrepreneurs were motivated by non-economic factors, another surveyed over 1,300 small tourism firms in the U.K and discovered that nearly 80% gave more significance to non-economic motives. (Shaw & Williams, 2004) The abundance of these lifestyle entrepreneurs in the industry is not big surprise though: as Swarbrooke points out, the act of creating a new business and becoming an entrepreneur is an adventure in itself! (Swarbrooke et al., 2003)

Because these are small operations, and not large multinational corporations, special problems emerge. These can include obtaining financing, knowing the necessary knowledge to run the business, difficulties with economies of scale, and of course, the recruitment of quality employees. Because many enter the industry due to their passion for the activity rather than for their business know-how, problems arise. As Shaw and Williams point out, “The non-economic motives in themselves were not a full determinant of strategy, but when they combined with a lack of business experience and an aging owner, then entrepreneurial activity was extremely limited. If they had any aspirations for development, these tended to be ill-defined and lacked any coherent business strategies.” (2004, p. 102) This absence of management expertise highlights a prevalent problem currently plaguing the industry: the lack of trained and competent employees; without proper training, tourists may be faced with tours led by minimally trained operators, leaving them to the possible dangers that come with such incompetence. (Ewert & Jamieson, 2003) While there are many technical qualifications and professional groups that regulate the activities and training for staff in the industry, there is a lack of formal education or training for those on the managerial side. This is highlighted by Peters et al. as a complication

that occurs when entrepreneurs embark on a business created by their leisurely loves, “Quite often this implied primarily following a dream, often with no experience, training or expertise in these areas.” (2009, p. 397) Therefore, it is important for the industry to gather high quality management to improve the experience, ensure the safety of consumers, safeguard the natural environments in which these activities take place, and to also ensure the continued growth and expansion of the industry.

## **II. Research Question**

The primary question is why do managers enter the Adventure Tourism Industry? What drives them to enter an industry with such high-risk management, and What are the forces that keep them there? As the literature shows, there is a preponderance of small-scale enterprises that are operated by entrepreneurs that tend to focus less on the monetary gains of business and more on the experiences. So I sought to discover if my research would prove that entrepreneurs in the industry carried the characteristics of lifestyle entrepreneurs, and if employees overall did not focus on the monetary as much, would money rank lower than other factors, such as the company or the industry? The industry is full of individuals who are passionate about the activities they promote, so it seemed likely that most, if not all, would enjoy activities related to the industry.

I also sought out to discover the demographics behind managers in the industry, so that any trends can be uncovered and analyzed. I was curious to see if the professionals in the industry skew in the same ways as their consumers. I wanted to gather data on this demographic, see if there were any trends present and if so, what affects these trends could have on this industry, both now and as it continues to grow.

### III. Methodology

In order to gather the data necessary to answer my research question, I created a questionnaire that would gather information related to the research question. A questionnaire was chosen as the method of collection for a variety of reasons: it can be completed anonymously, there was no cost to implement it, it's easy to compare and analyze the results, it can easily be administered to a large, and more importantly, a specific group, and it's simple to gather large amounts of data from each individual. Questionnaires provide statistical information, creating the ability to enable correlations. (Mayo, 2014) However, challenges can prevent themselves when using this method. For one, when not communicating questions in person to respondents, they may take questions differently or not answer them to a level that is necessary for the research that is taking place. Other issues can include the wording of the questions, which can cause a bias in responses, no chance to follow up on unclear questions, and they are impersonal. (Mayo, 2014)

To combat these challenges, questions were tested on multiple subjects to make sure that questions were easy to comprehend and that respondents all understood the questions in the same way. Several methods were also taken to reduce question bias. For one, as many questions as possible were based on those available in SurveyMonkey's (the host for the questionnaire) question bank. Their pre-made questions are created by certified survey methodologists; by phrasing questions like theirs, bias was reduced. Question randomization was also used to

minimize order bias and to ensure a higher quality of data collection. Any interval scales used throughout had equal intervals for each category, to prevent bias on the researcher's end. To overcome the impersonal feel of mass emailed questionnaires, each email was personalized to each operator. If the email was being sent to a specific person, then it was addressed to them, and each email was tailored to the specific operator, if possible. By being professional, friendly, and personal, there was a chance more operators would take the time to read the emails, take the survey, and send it onward to other coworkers or industry contacts.

Further steps were taken to make the questionnaire both simpler for respondents and to increase the amount of questionnaires that would be completed. These steps included placing open-ended questions near the end as they take longer to complete and respondents are more likely to answer them having already completed most of the questionnaire, and considering a large range of categories for questions such as marital status, so that respondents did not feel excluded. (Mayo, 2014) Similar-type questions were also grouped together in the same sections to prevent respondent fatigue from switching back and forth between subject types; such fatigue could affect the quality of response. (Mayo, 2014) Demographic questions were also placed at the end, as individuals can be reluctant to share personal data, but may be more willing to if it is at the end of a questionnaire they just took the time to complete. To further increase the responses rates, an incentive was added. While there was no budget for any kind of monetary or object based incentives, respondents were told that they could request a copy of the completed study. By allowing respondents to have a copy of the study they would realize that their input would actually be used for legitimate research, and that they themselves would be able to see exactly how their input attributed to this research.

When emailing operators, the purpose of the questionnaire and research was described in the email and in the questionnaire itself. By providing a clear description of what was being asked of respondents, individuals would be better able to provide more accurate information, and would hopefully be more likely to respond. These explanations also made it clear that responses would be anonymous and confidential, and that the information gathered would only be used for this particular study. This information, as well as informing them of how long the questionnaire would take to complete, helped build trust. (Mayo, 2014) Providing information on how to reach me for questions, comments, or concerns was also used to help garner trust. These steps led into addressing any privacy or permission concerns.

One of the most important aspects of creating and distributing this questionnaire were privacy and permission concerns. Permission was asked of each respondent by first inviting them to participate in the survey. How the information gathered would be used was explained, and it was made clear that a university was overseeing this study. By providing this information, respondents could be sure of what exactly was taking place, and were informed that there was higher oversight on the project other than just the student conducting it. No personally identifying information was gathered from respondents, such as name or company, to help ensure that all responses would be anonymous and untraceable back to the original responder. Participants were informed that their involvement was completely mandatory, that they could withdraw from taking the questionnaire at any time, and that there were no physical or emotional risks from taking part. Participants were also informed that the paper may be published in the future, so that they were fully informed of how far-reaching the study based off their data could be.

The target audience for these questions was adventure tourism operators. Non-probability sampling was used, as respondents were chosen specifically for their job and position. The population frame was selected by researching the operators for specific activities within the industry; for example, gathering tour operators for skydiving, then white-water rafting, etcetera. Operators were also chosen by contacting those that were featured in previous papers written on the industry, such as the list included in Buckley's study Adventure tourism products: Price, duration, size, skill, remoteness. Companies were also selected from throughout both the country and the world, so that any regional or country-related biases would be minimized, and so that a more diverse and representative group of data could be gathered. Operators were contacted in one of the following ways: in-person, or via email. When possible, I contacted operators in person, as this led to a greater chance of individuals taking the questionnaire, and often led to more responses from each individual company. In-person contact was made by either going to the closest office for the operator, or attending travel trade shows that featured adventure tourism operators, such as the New York Times Travel show. When operators couldn't be contacted in person, which was most of the time, email addresses were gathered from their websites and emails explaining the survey and research purpose were sent to them, along with a link to the questionnaire. It was explained to these companies that the survey was intended for those in managerial positions, so that the target audience would be the ones taking it, and not every employee at the company.

The questionnaire consisted of 21 questions; 16 of which focused on their involvement in the industry and what both drew and kept them in the industry, the remaining five questions gathered demographic data. One issue that could affect the collected data would be individuals who were not on the managerial level submitting a questionnaire. To combat this, the first

question asked was “What is your current job title?” By asking this, it could immediately be determined if a response qualified to be entered into the data pool or if it should be removed. This question also helped erase any acquiescence bias; if respondents answered the questionnaire merely to help out, even if they weren’t fully qualified to, this lack of qualification would be noted by their job title and their data could be removed from the data pool. The industry questions also sought to discover if there are any position related trends throughout the industry. These included whether jobs tend to be full-time or part-time, year-long or seasonal, if employees tend to work exclusively within the industry, and how long they’ve been within the industry.

The most important questions of this section were the following: “How did you discover your current job?”, “Why did you enter the adventure tourism industry?” and having responders rank their reasons for choosing their current jobs. These questions aimed to answer the primary research prompt of why managers enter the industry. The first two questions were left open ended; while this makes it more difficult to analyze the data as a whole, I believed that this is an area with such personal, specific reasons that it should be left open to how respondents wanted to answer it. It also left the opportunity for respondents to give more details and reasoning behind their decisions; at the heart of it all, this research focuses on human motives, therefore, respondents should be able to fully explain their decisions. The third question in this category asked respondents to rank their reasons for choosing their job on a number scale; their options were: The pay, the people, The Company, Job Security, The industry and the location. Having respondents rank their motivators allows us to not only determine a correlation- those options most often ranked highly will illustrate how those variables affect a respondents relation to their job- but will also allow for the discover of causation. Ranking allows us to view to what extent



an option motivates a respondent in relation to their job selection. Having a wide range of options to choose from helps reduce the amount of outside factors that could affect the ability to prove causation.

The demographic portion of the questionnaire asked respondents about their age, gender, marital status, degree of education and if applicable, what degree they received. This data was gathered to determine if there are any trends in the industry, for example, if those in managerial positions tend to skew male, or if employees tend to be on the younger side. By asking respondents about their education, it can be deduced whether those with a higher education tend to occupy these positions; by asking for their major, we can see if respondents enter the industry with related degrees, such as management or marketing, or if they have education in other arenas such as the liberal arts.

## **IV. Results**

### **Industry Related Data**

A total of 22 individuals responded to the questionnaire. All respondents stated job titles that qualified their responses for the research, and the respondents displayed a varied range of the managerial sides. This question was open ended, so that participants could write in their specific title. The most common word to arise in the given titles was “Manager”, which was present in 30% of responses. The second most common word was “Marketing”, present in 20% of responses. “Sales” and “Specialist” followed, each arising in 10% of responses. The full range of responses were:

## Adventure Tourism Management

**Q1 What is your current job title?**

Answered: 21 Skipped: 1

#	Responses
1	General manager
2	owner/guide
3	Sales
4	Regional Representative at Waterways Surf Adventures
5	Surf Travel Specialist/Head of Central & South America Bookings at WaterWays Surf Adventures
6	Front Line Sales
7	On-Snow Services Manager
8	director of mountain operations
9	Vice President, Development and Real Estate
10	VP of Marketing
11	Vice-President & General Manager
12	CEO
13	Marketing & Communications Manager
14	Office Manager
15	Digital Marketing Manager
16	Receptionist with training responsibility
17	Manager
18	Mayor
19	Tour leader
20	Media Specialist
21	Vp, marketing and communications

Figure 1, Job Title Chart

Most respondents worked in snow sports, with 64.3% (n=xx) listing that as their category of the industry. This was followed by water activities (28.6%, n=xx) and skydiving (7.1%,

n=xx). Because this industry is so diverse, an open-ended option was provided for those who felt their company did not fit into any of the included categories. The most common words in the open ended section were “Adventure Travel” and “Climbing”, which both appeared in 22.2% (n=xx) of responses. Free-response submissions (which accounted for 71.4%, (n=xx) of responses) were:

## Q2 In what category of adventure tourism are you currently working?

Answered: 14 Skipped: 8

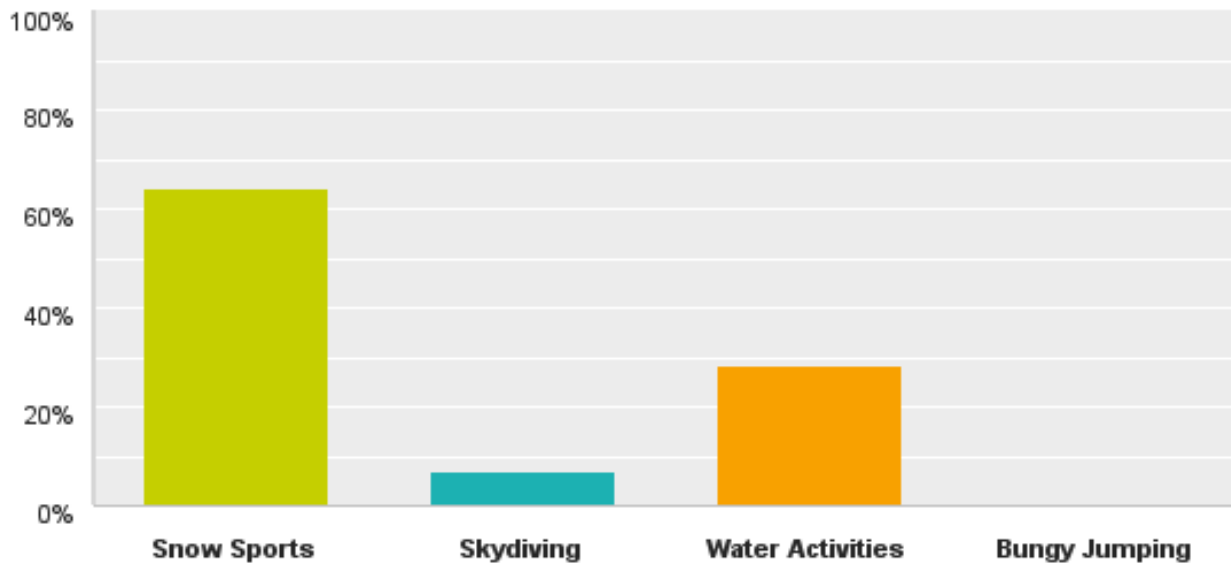


Figure 2.1, Job Category Chart

#	Other (please specify)
1	Outdoor activities, mountain climbing, scuba diving, trekking, exploring etc.
2	Bushwalking
3	Kayaking, Polar Snorkelling, Polar Scuba Diving, Climbing, Traverse
4	Surf
5	Surfing Specifically
6	Hiking, Rock Climbing, Backpacking, Mountaineering
7	small group sustainable adventure travel
8	bicycling
9	bicycle travel
10	adventure travel trade association

Figure 2.2, Job Category Free Responses

Most responses came from North America, with 77.3% (n=xx) claiming it as their current location for work. 9.1% (n=xx) were from both Oceania and South America, and 4.6% (n=xx) were from Europe. No responses were received from either Asia or Africa.

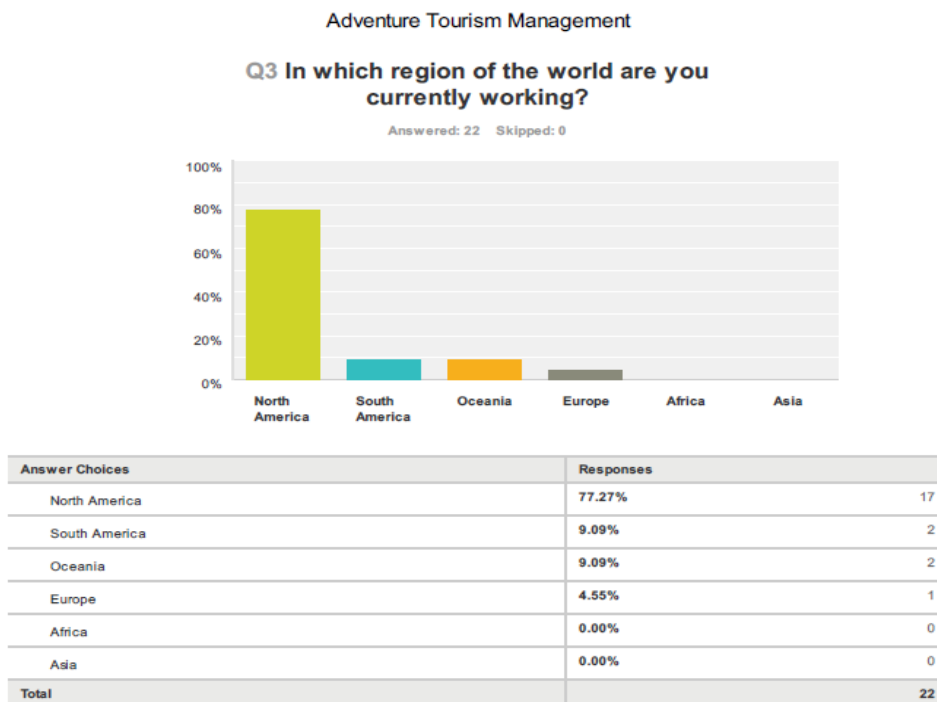
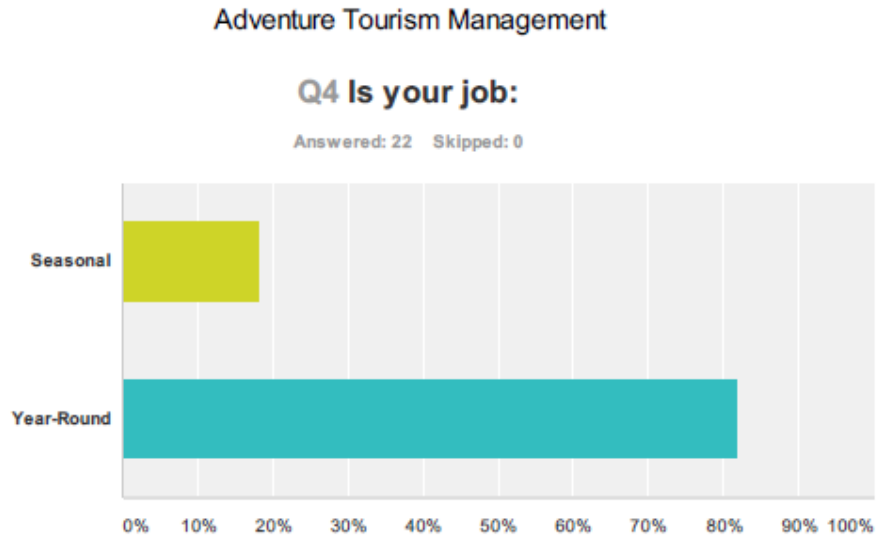


Figure 3, Respondents Current Location

Most respondents described their jobs as year round positions, with 18.2% (n=xx) claiming their job is seasonal.



Answer Choices	Responses	
Seasonal	18.18%	4
Year-Round	81.82%	18
Total		22

Figure 4, Job Seasonality

All of the above were primarily full-time, with 90.9% (n=xx) of respondents listing their jobs as full-time.

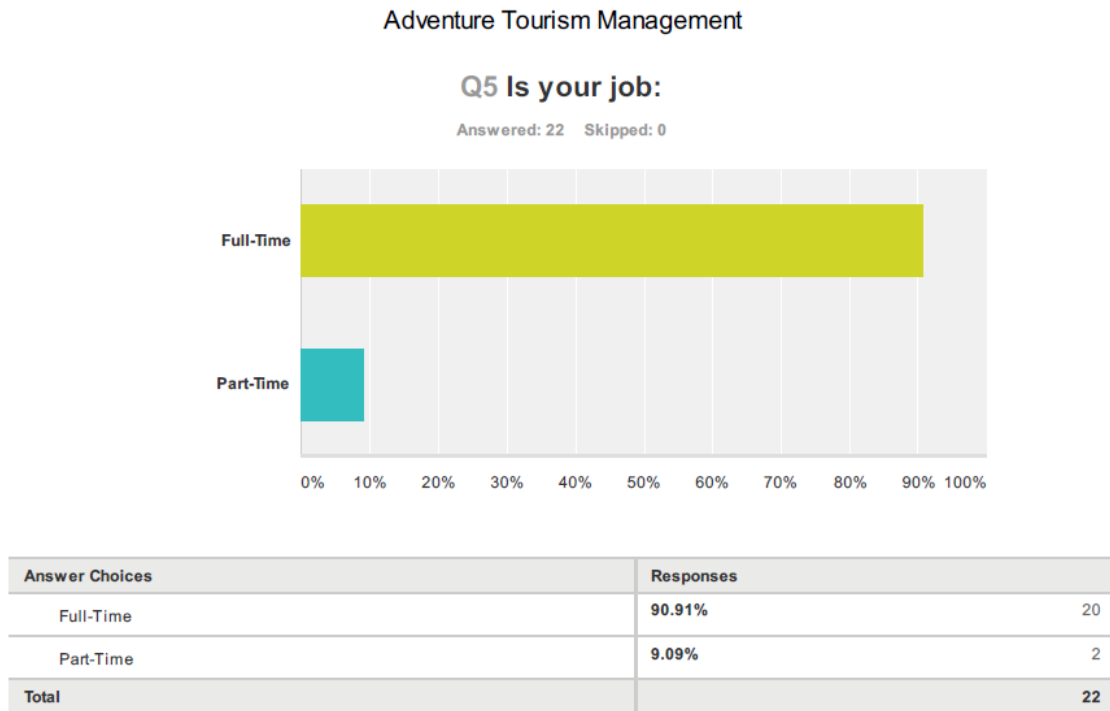


Figure 5, Full or Part Time

Over half of the participants (63.6%, n=xx) involved have either been at their current employer for over 10 years, or have only been working there for between 1-2 years. The time period for respondents broke down as follows: Over 10 years at 36.4% (n=xx) of responses, 1-2 years at 27.3% (n=xx) less than one year, 5-6 years, and 7-8 years at 9.1% (n=xx) and 3-4 years and 9-10 years at 4.6% (n=xx).

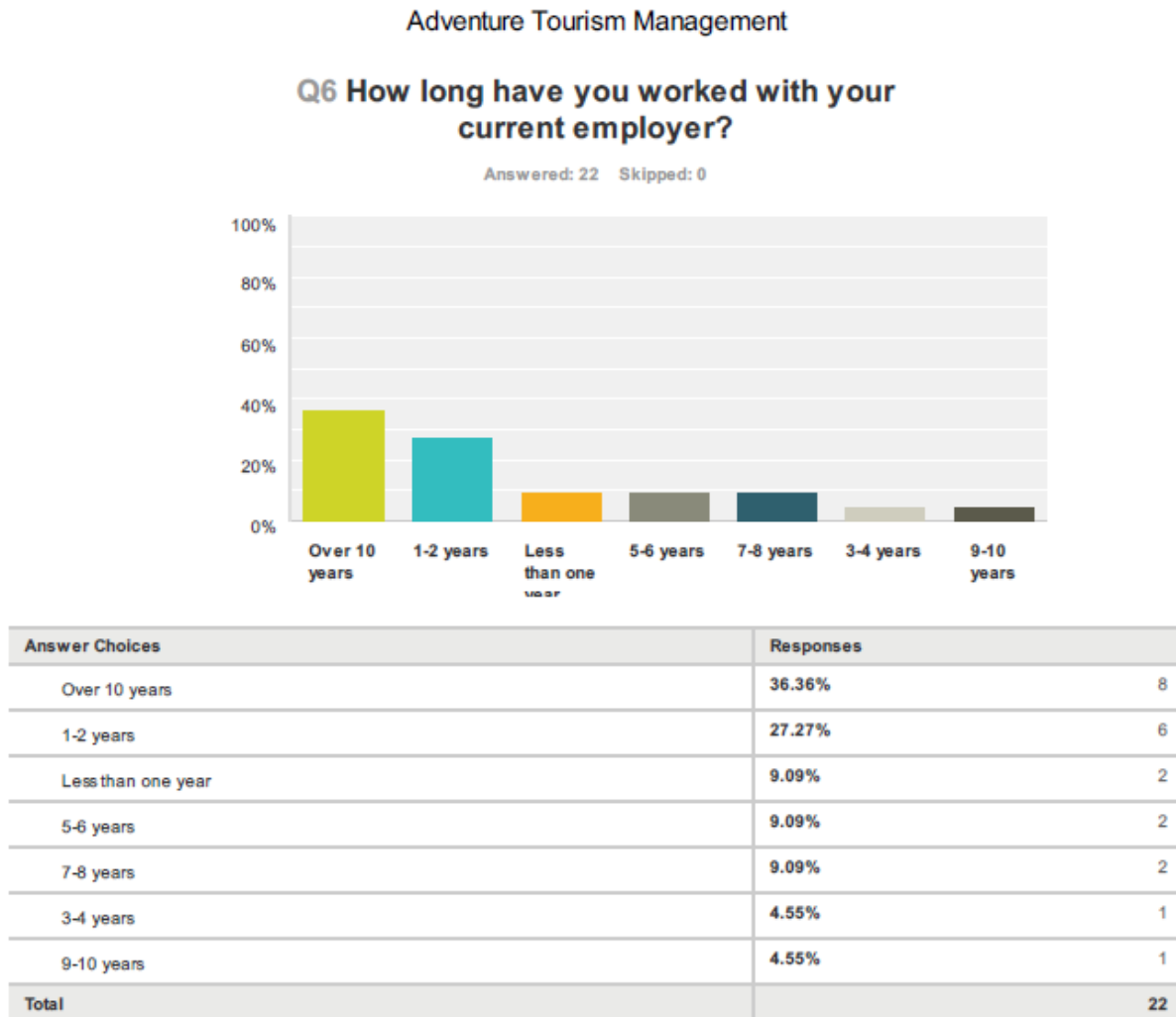


Figure 6, Time at Current Employer

While respondents may have been working with their current employer for a while, they have been in their current jobs for a much shorter period of time, with 36.4% (n=xx) having been in their current position for 1-2 years. However, after this segment, over 30% (n=xx) of respondents have been in their position for over 7 years, with 18.2% (n=xx) having been in the position for either 7-8 years or over ten years. The remaining respondents broke down as follows: 9.1% (n=xx) at less than one year and at 9-10 years, and 4.6% (n=xx) at 3-4 years and 5-6 years.

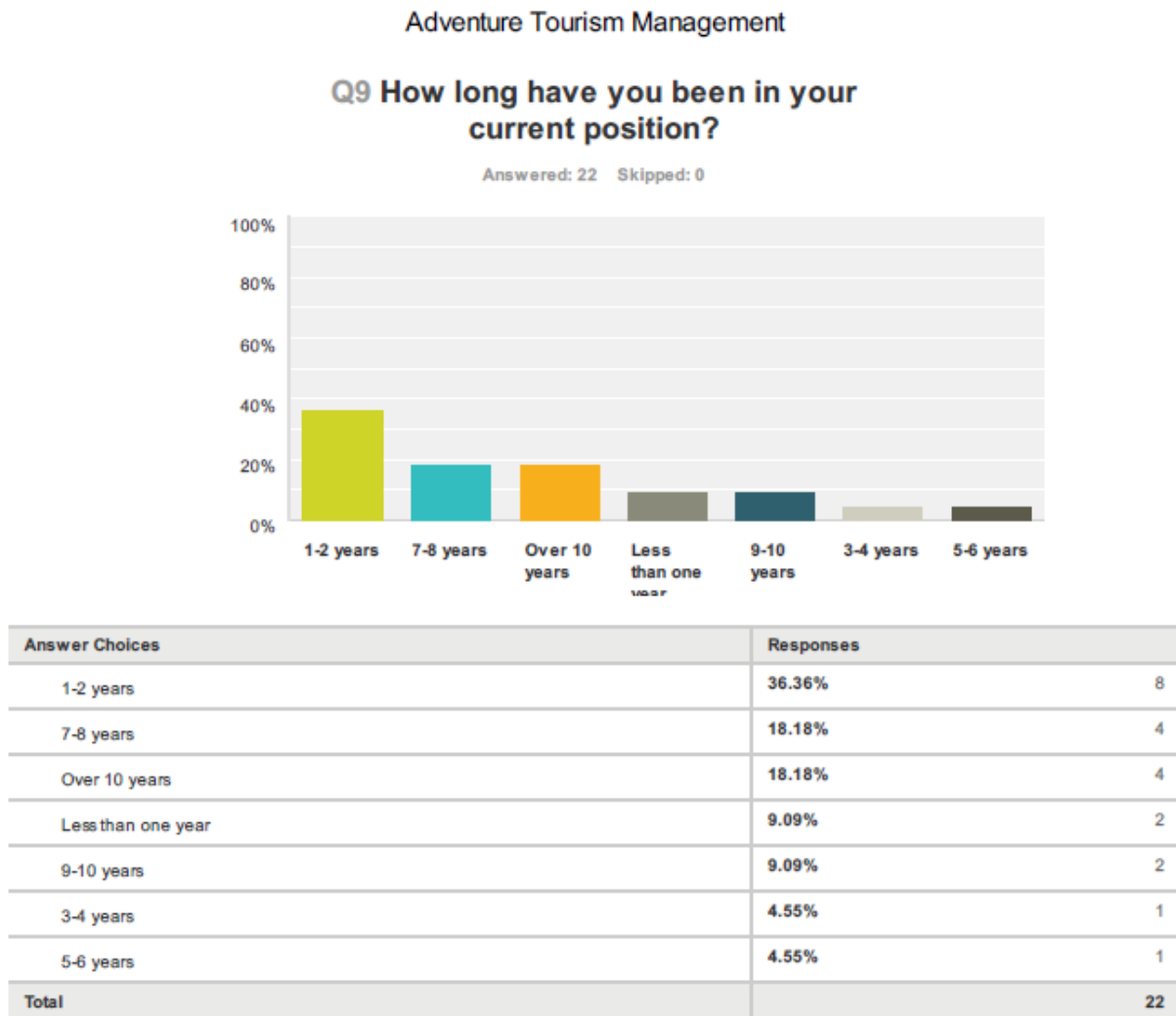


Figure 7, Time in Current Position



Regarding their career path, only a little over half of the test group (54.6%, n=xx) believed they have a defined career path.

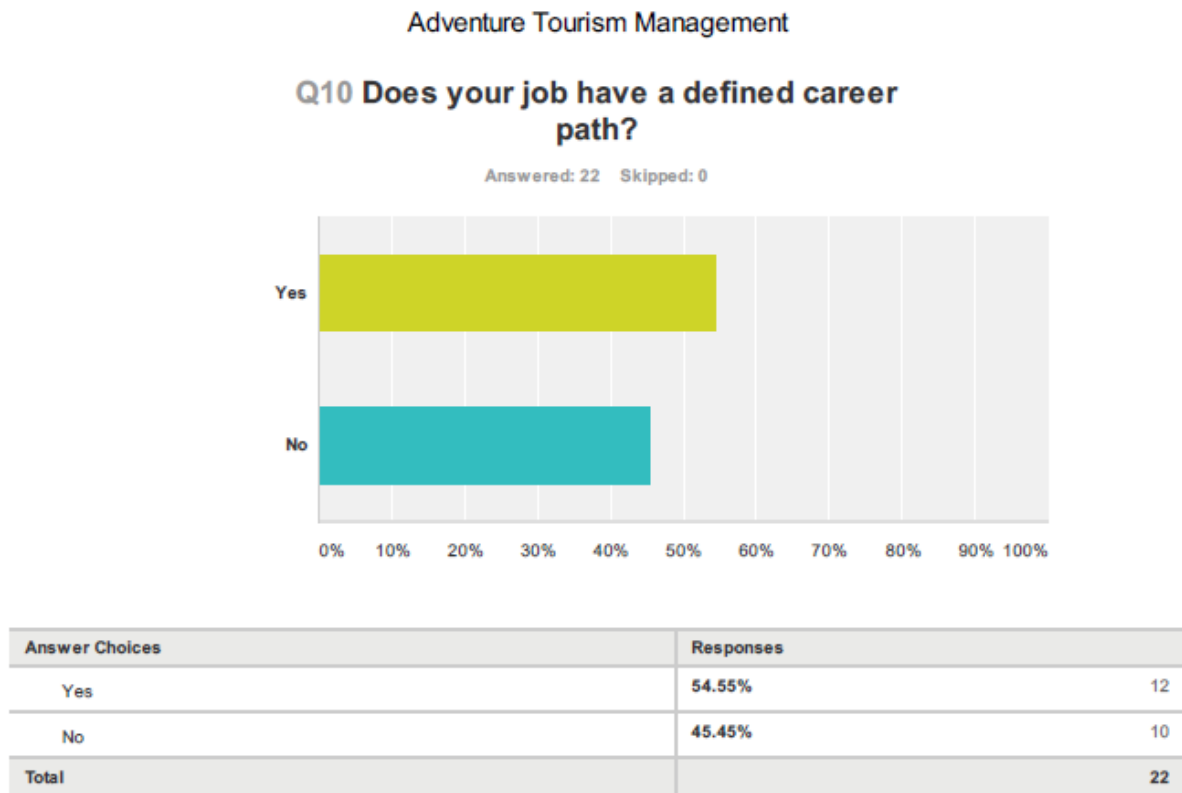
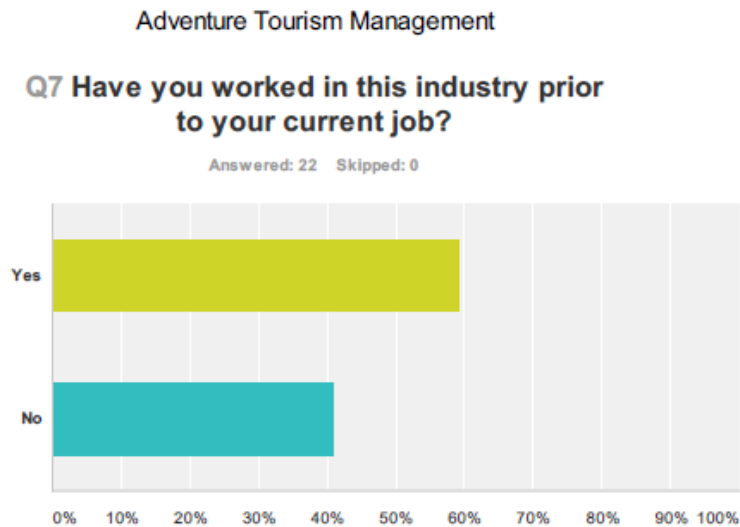


Figure 8, Career Path Chart

Just over half of respondents have worked in the industry before their current job, at 59.1% (n=xx).



Answer Choices	Responses
Yes	59.09% 13
No	40.91% 9
Total	22

Figure 9, Industry Work Prior to Current Job

The industries where respondents have worked in prior were diverse and often far from related. The two most frequently used words in this free-response were “Hospitality” and “Services”, each appearing at 15% of the time, followed by “Management” and “Tourism”, which appeared 10% of the time each. Past industries of respondents were:

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**Q8 Please list in what other industries you have worked:**

Answered: 20 Skipped: 2

#	Responses
1	Just Tourism over 25 years
2	Education – teaching math & science
3	Coach Tours
4	Air New Zealand, Robert August Surfboards, Quiksilver Travel
5	Surf Guide Services
6	Hospitality, Pharmaceuticals, Athletics
7	Landscaping, Excavating, Hospitality
8	Mechanical
9	ski, environmental, carpentry
10	Consulting, waste management, energy
11	Waterpark and hospitality
12	Farming
13	Adult Film
14	Nonprofit, Business Services, Marketing and Advertising, Restaurant Management
15	Catalog
16	Restaurant Tourism
17	Non profit
18	University research
19	Publishing
20	Banking and photo services

**Figure 10, Past Industries of Respondents**

Large portions of the respondents were young when they entered the industry, with 63.6% (n=xx) stating they entered between the ages of 22 to 34. And, 27.3% (n=xx) were under 21 when they entered. The remaining data continued the trend, with the 35-44 and 45-54

brackets each having 4.6% (n=xx) of the respondents. No entries were received for the 55-64 and 65 and over brackets.

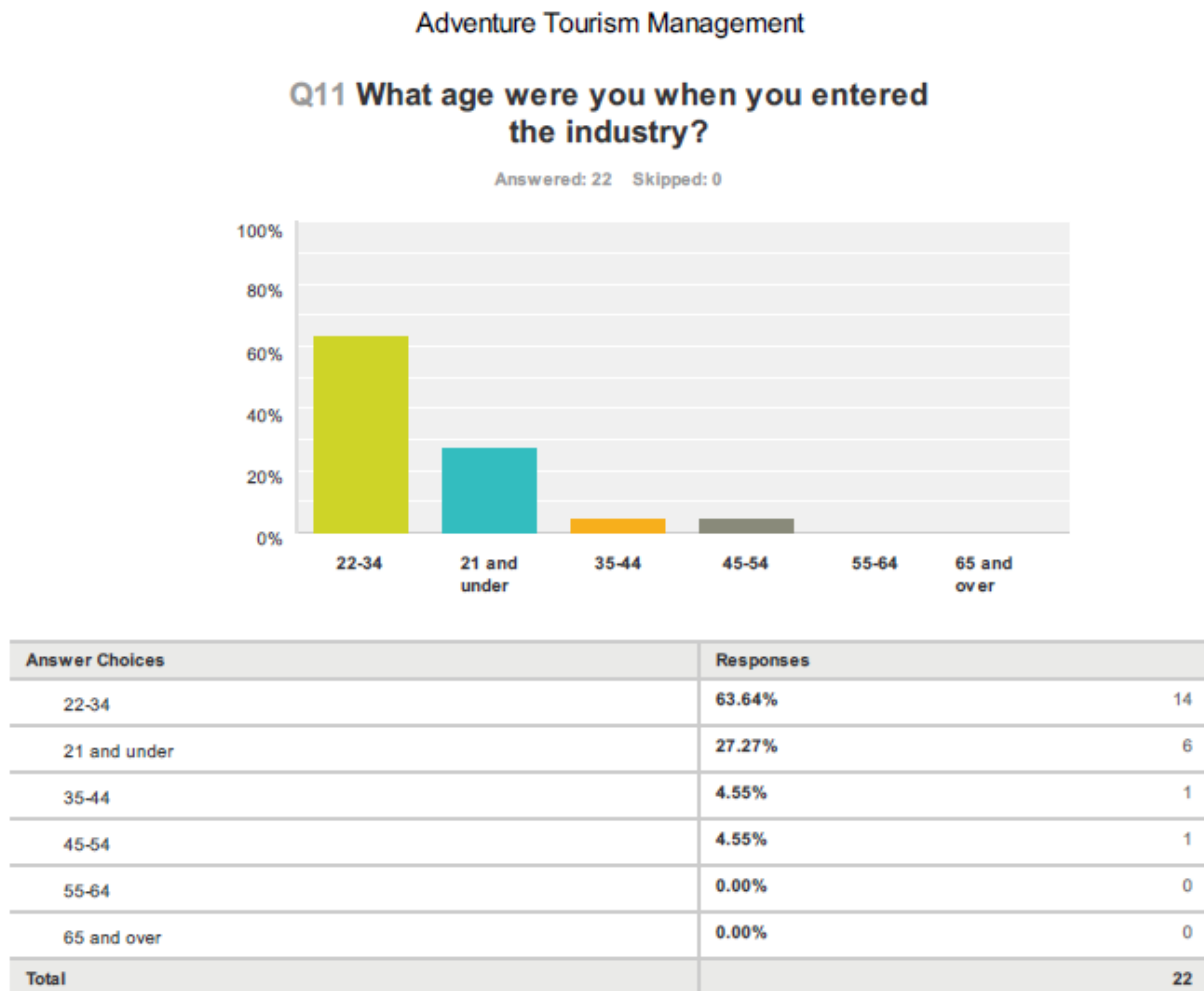


Figure 11, Age When Respondents Entered Industry

Most respondents discovered their current job through “Word of Mouth”, a phrase that appeared in 22.7% (n=xx) of responses to this prompt. Other responses showed that many reached their current position through promotions or through other connections they had to the company. Responses for this section included:

## Adventure Tourism Management

**Q12 How did you discover your current job?**

Answered: 22 Skipped: 0

#	Responses
1	it discovered me.
2	Crfeated it
3	Word Of Mouth
4	competition
5	Word of mouth
6	word of mouth
7	I was a seasonal employee of the resort and moved up from there.
8	worked at another ski area in the vacinity
9	advertisement
10	Through a newspaper advertisement
11	online listing
12	Worked in High School
13	Founded the company
14	Facebook
15	Through an on-going relationship with the owner after having used the company's services myself.
16	Word of Mouth
17	Ad in the paper + word of mouth
18	local.....
19	internal promotion - original job was via online posting
20	website of organization
21	Friend....
22	i was with an adventure company thatwas a member of our trade association, ATTA

Figure 12, How respondents discovered current job chart

The number one reason respondents listed for entering the industry was “Travel”, which appeared in 31.8% (n=xx) of responses. The other words that appeared most often in responses included “Love” (22.7%), “Fun”, “Industry”, and “Job” (13.6%), and “Enjoyed” and Skiing” (9.1%). The full responses to this question were:

Adventure Tourism Management	
Q13 Why did you enter the adventure tourism industry?	
Answered: 22 Skipped: 0	
#	Responses
1	because I discovered my passion for the travel industry
2	Seemed like a good idea
3	Interested in that field
4	travel perks
5	Love of surfing & travel
6	fun, fast paced, work environment
7	I enjoyed the type of work that I was doing and the people I worked with.
8	enjoyed being outdoors and skiing
9	decent job in nice area
10	I have always been a skier, and like the industry
11	passionate about the industry
12	Loved skiing. Liked outdoors
13	Passion for adventure travel.
14	\$\$\$\$
15	I love interacting with and meeting new people. When my previous job ended, it seemed like a fun opportunity.
16	I love snowboarding!
17	Random + one of the few options around where I live
18	rivers have my heart
19	wanted a job where i could have fun and work for a social enterprise
20	share passion of bicycle travel
21	love of cycling and travel
22	love to travel and marketing

Figure 13, Reasons for Industry Entry

There are always a variety of reasons for why people choose their jobs. This question allowed respondents to rank from 1-6 which factors were most important to them, from high to low. The number one factor for respondent's job choice was the industry, with 36.4% (n=xx) choosing it as their number one reason. The ranking of each factor descended from there as the company 40.9% (n=xx), the people 36.4% (n=xx), the location 18.2% (n=xx), the job security 40.9% (n=xx) and with nine people choosing it as the lowest factor for selecting their job, the pay 45.5% (n=xx).

#### Adventure Tourism Management

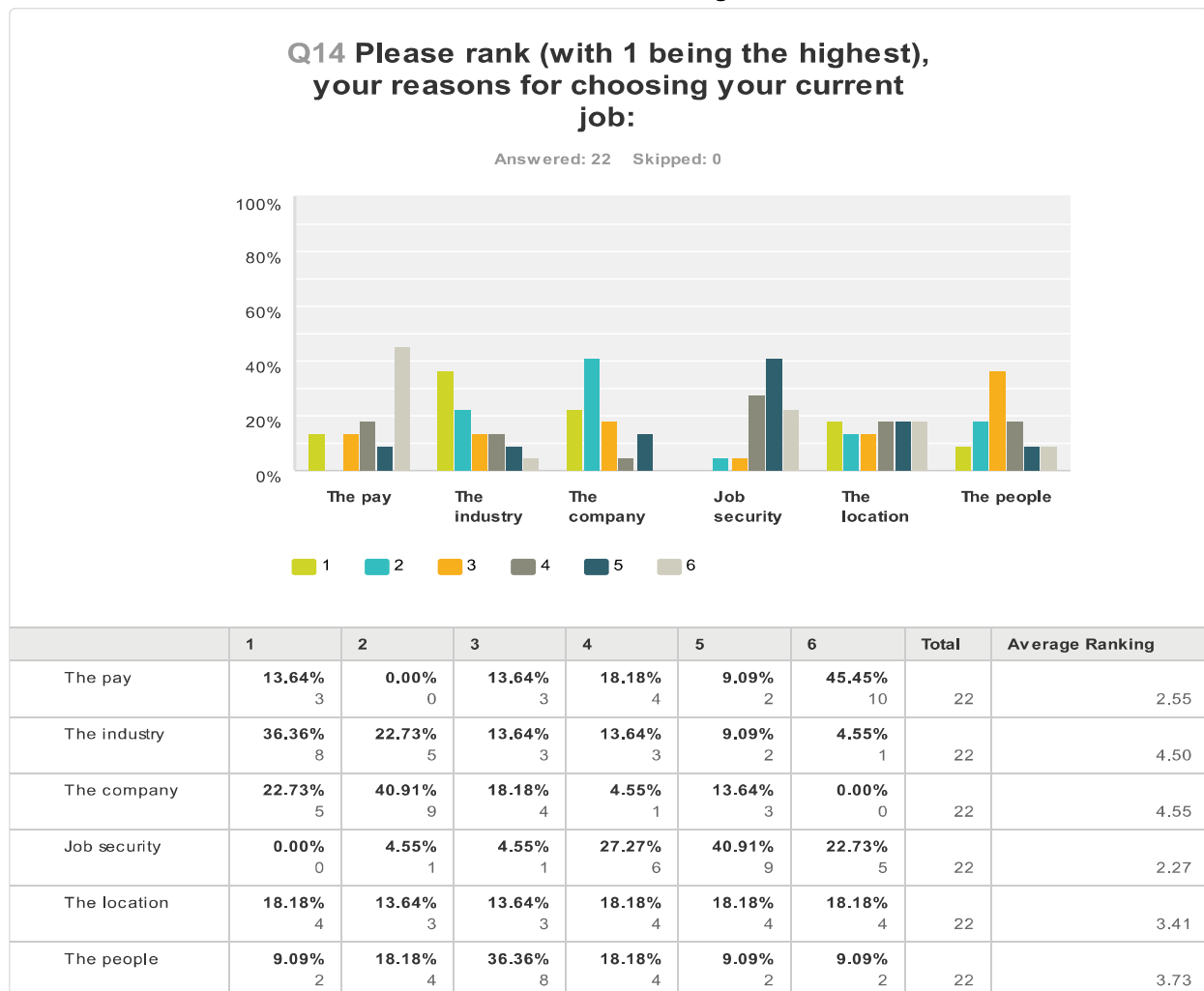


Figure 14, Reasons for Choosing Job

When asked where they saw themselves in five years, most respondents said they saw themselves either in the same job or moving up in their company or the industry. The responses from this section included:

### Adventure Tourism Management

#### Q15 Where do you see yourself 5 years from now?

Answered: 21 Skipped: 1

#	Responses
1	Having success in this company
2	Semi-retired
3	.
4	New Business Development Opportunities with Waterways Surf Adventures
5	Living the dream
6	In a management position somewhere
7	I see myself in the same position, but with more responsibility. In hopes of becoming the VP of mountain operations after our current VP retires.
8	hopefully continuing to grow in an ever changing industry
9	Doing what I am doing today. I love my job, the company and the people I work with, and for.
10	Probably in the same/similar role
11	Same Job
12	Same industry
13	Becoming a lumberjack
14	Running my own business in the marketing industry
15	Still in the snow sports industry - maybe working for a brand as opposed to a resort
16	In a management position within the tourist industry -preferable in HR
17	No idea
18	Bringing happiness around the world
19	Same position
20	Working same job part-time
21	As overall vp of the org

Figure 15, Respondents Future Goals



To conclude the industry related section of questions, respondents were asked if they personally enjoyed participating in activities related to adventure tourism. Unsurprisingly, one hundred percent of respondents said they do.

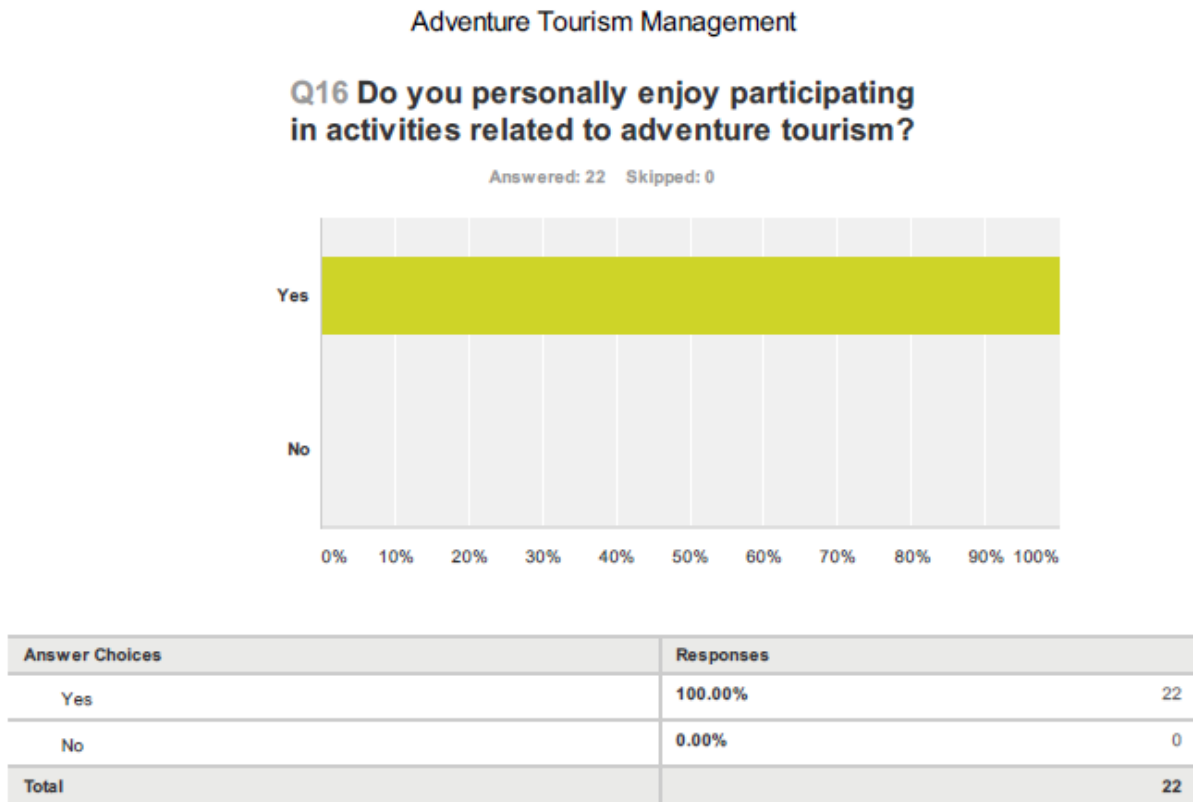


Figure 16, Enjoyment of Adventure Activities

## Demographic Data

In terms of age, over 60% (n=xx) of participants were between the ages of 22 and 44. The percentage breakdown for this was 36.4% (n=xx) between the ages of 22-34, 31.8% (n=xx) between the ages of 35-44, 13.6% (n=xx) between the ages of 45-54 as well as 55-64, 4.6% (n=xx) for 65 and over, and no respondents were aged 21 or under.

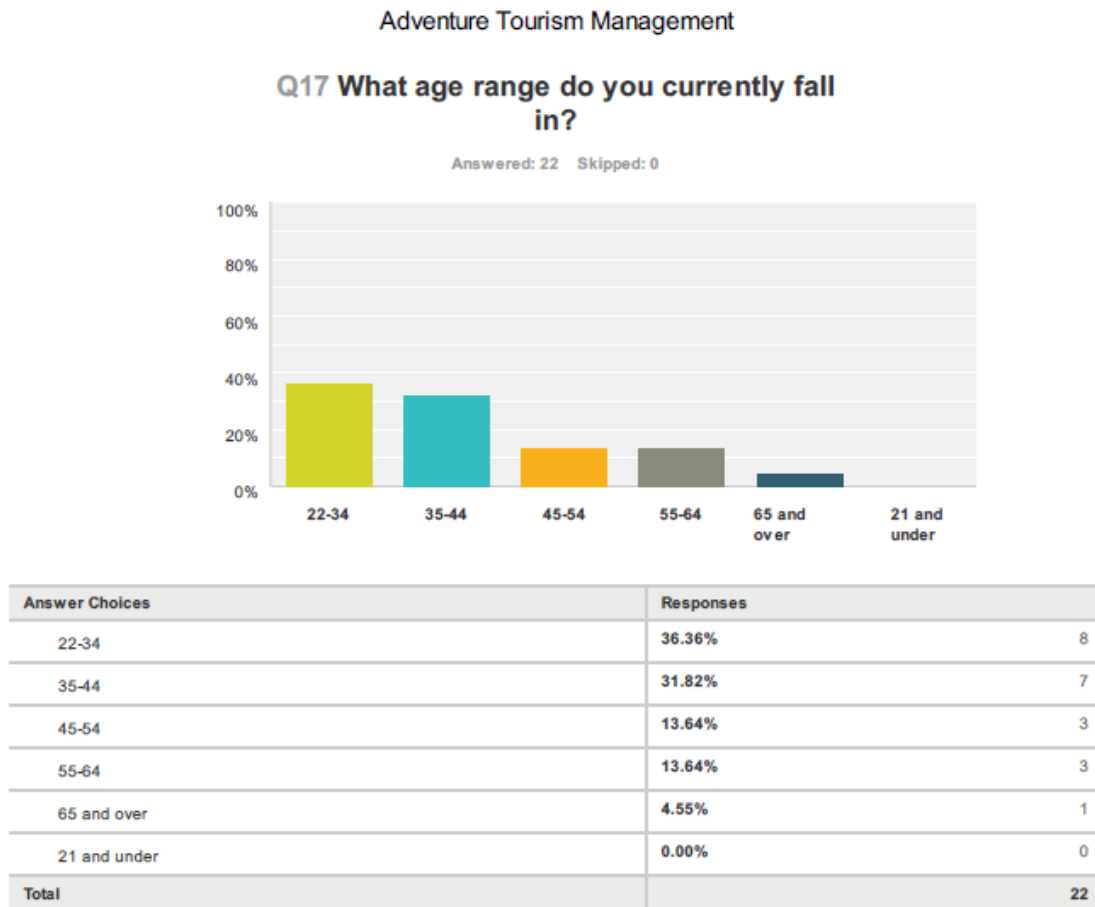
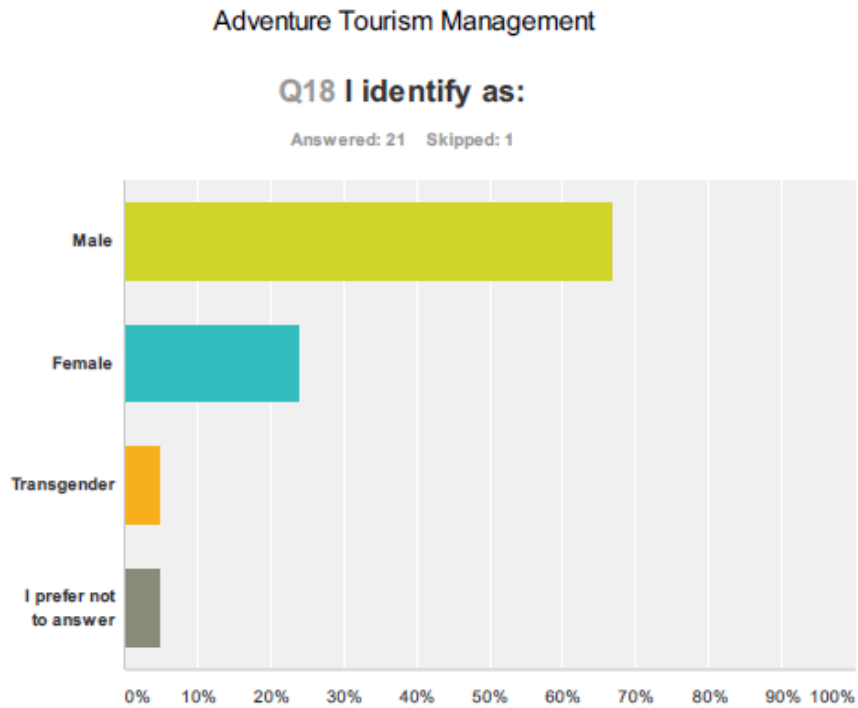


Figure 16, Age of Respondents

When it came to gender, 66.7% (n=xx) of respondents identified as male. This was followed by female, at 23.8% (n=xx), and transgendered or preferred not to answer at 4.8% (n=xx) each.



Answer Choices	Responses
Male	66.67% 14
Female	23.81% 5
Transgender	4.76% 1
I prefer not to answer	4.76% 1
Total	21

Figure 17, Identity of Respondents

Most respondents were married, at 59.1% (n=xx). The remaining sections that followed were single, at 36.6% (n=xx) separated at 4.55% (n=xx) and there were no responses for divorced or widowed.

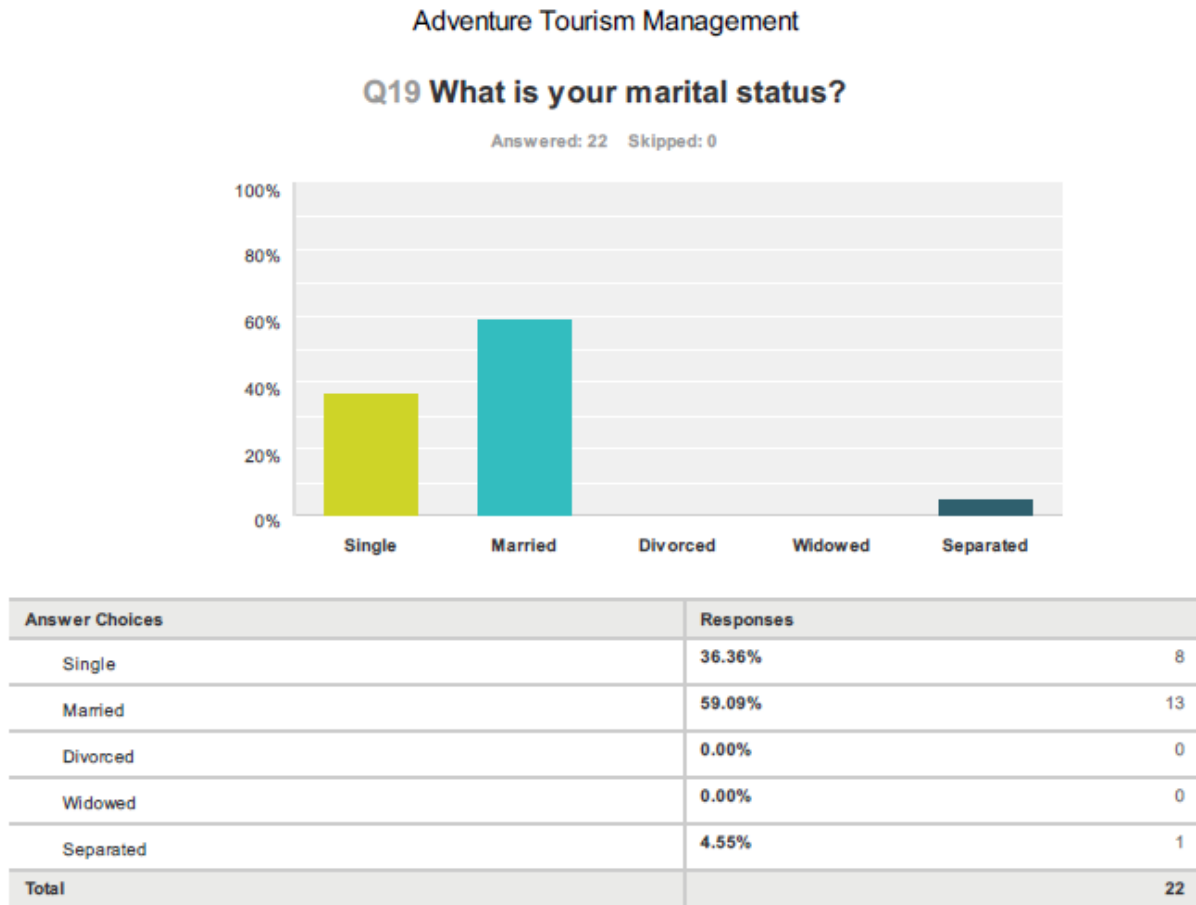
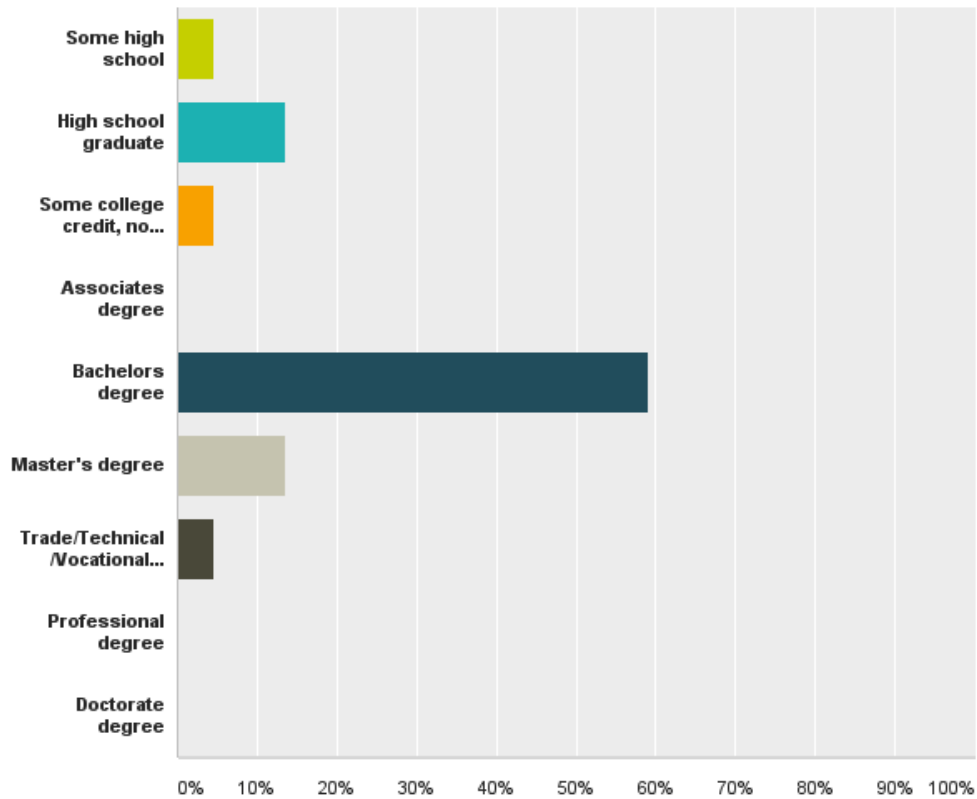


Figure 18, Marital Status

Regarding their education, over 75% of participants have achieved some type of degree from a higher education institution. Of the responses gathered, 59.1% (n=xx) had achieved a bachelor's degree, 13.6% (n=xx) had received a master's degree or had graduated high school, and 4.6% (n=xx) has either had some high school education, some college credit with no degree earned or had attended a trade/technical/vocational school. No participants had achieved an associate's, professional or doctorate degree.

### Q20 What is the highest degree of school you have completed?

Answered: 22 Skipped: 0



Answer Choices	Responses
Some high school	4.55% 1
High school graduate	13.64% 3
Some college credit, no degree	4.55% 1
Associates degree	0.00% 0
Bachelors degree	59.09% 13
Master's degree	13.64% 3
Trade/Technical/Vocational training	4.55% 1
Professional degree	0.00% 0
Doctorate degree	0.00% 0
<b>Total</b>	<b>22</b>

Figure 19, Level of School Completed

The types of degrees earned were varied, with “Management” appearing in the responses 25% of the time. This was followed “Engineering” at 15% and then “History” and “Science” at 10% for each. The individual responses for this question were:

### Adventure Tourism Management

#### Q21 What major is your degree in?

Answered: 20 Skipped: 2

#	Responses
1	Mechanical Engineering
2	Master's Masters in science education
3	Tourism
4	History @ UCLA
5	Double Major: American Studies & History
6	Business Management
7	environmental science
8	Engineering Technology
9	Economics and German - double major
10	Resort Recreation Management from Lyndon State Colleg, Lyndonville VT
11	Master's Business
12	Veterinary Medicine
13	Marketing and Management
14	Management/Technological Entrepreneurship
15	Organizational theory and management
16	General.....
17	communications\PR
18	Master's Engineering
19	Anthropology
20	English

Figure 20, Degrees of Respondents

## V. Analysis

### Industry Related

The main purpose of this study was to discover why managers enter the adventure tourism industry. What draws individuals in from other niches of tourism and from other sectors of work in general? There are several factors that pull people in, but in the end, the number one reasons managers enter the industry is for the industry itself. Over a quarter of respondents, 36.4% (n=xx) chose it as their number one reason for choosing their current job, followed by the company they currently work for. When asked why they entered the industry, over one fourth of respondents used the word travel in their answer, followed by fun, industry and job. Most answers illustrated respondents an interest in the field, their enjoyment of the outdoors and a passion for a specific activity. Of the answers collected, 36.4% (n=xx) mentioned the individuals' enjoyment of a specific adventure activity, which links to the fact that 100% (n=xx) of respondents stated that they enjoy participating in activities related to adventure tourism. What does this show? This confirms that managers enter the industry for the joy of it; this is an industry that draws the passionate and the adventurous in at all levels.

Another relevant question this study asked was what keeps managers in this industry? With such a high level of risk management, it would not be farfetched to envision a high turnover rate in the industry. Respondents gave a variety of answers when asked where they see themselves five years from now, but the majority stated that they see themselves remaining in their current company or elsewhere within the industry. Out of the 22 responses to this question, only three gave an answer that may not relate to their current industry. The most common words

that appeared in their responses, “Industry”, “Job” and “Position” illustrate that most individuals remain in the industry because they love the industry. They are passionate about what they do, and they want to either remain where they are, if they do make a move, it will either be up the corporate ladder or to another company within the industry.

For time at their current job, 40.9% (n=xx) of respondents had been there less than five years; however, over 35% had been there for over ten years. In terms of their time at their current position, most had attained their new roles fairly recently, with 36.4% (n=xx) there for only a year or two. When these two sets of data are compared, as shown in graph 1, it shows that 27.3% (n=xx) of respondents have had at least one change in position during their time with their current employer. This links to respondents ideas about career paths in the industry.

Over half the respondents, 54.6% (n=xx), stated that they believe that their job has a defined career path, yet only half of that percentage has actually changed position. This is illustrated in graph 2. The majority of those that have changed jobs in their time with their company have done so within a time frame of 1-5 years.

When compared to the specific area of the industry individuals work in, the data shows that individuals in the same niche and perhaps even the same company have different views on their career paths. Those in water activities split in half over their opinion on career paths, while those in snow activities were near half as well, with 55.6% (n=xx) believing there was a defined career path, as shown in graph 3. This data shows that there is indeed room to grow within the industry; however, a career path may not be as attainable as many believe.

When the information about individuals’ times at their current job is compared to their responses to whether they’ve worked in the industry before, the growth of the industry can be



seen. 40.9% (n=xx) of respondents answered that they have been working for their current employer for less than five years. When compared to the data from “Have you worked in the industry prior to your current job?” 18% (n=xx) of individuals who claimed they had not had entered their current jobs in the last five years, showing the entrance of new workers into the industry.

### **The Link to the Lifestyle Entrepreneur**

Two of the respondents of the questionnaire indicated that they are the Owner or CEO of the company they currently work for, allowing for a small case study of whether they line up with the characteristics of the lifestyle entrepreneur. These are individuals who work full-time and year-round for their company, and have had these companies for over ten years. While both hold master's degrees, only one holds one related to business, and neither had worked in the tourism industry prior to their current position. Neither of them was in the same age group when they created the business, and while one stated that their passion for adventure travel was their inspiration to start their company, the other claims that they thought it seemed like a good idea. Their reasons for choosing their job were similar, with both ranking their company and the industry as their top reasons for their job and job security and pay coming in last. And of course, both state that they enjoy adventure tourism activities. These individuals show the close connection between the consumption and production of this industry, which is a major factor in lifestyle entrepreneurs. They also illustrate the difference between this sector and other economic sectors through the detail that money is of less importance to them than other aspects of their careers. Their answer to why they entered the industry show that their main priority for entry is life style over factors such a profit and growth, another characteristic of this niche of

entrepreneurs. (Peters, 2009). While it is an extremely small sample size, this small snapshot from the overall study shows that for many entrepreneurs, and for those they employ, their many draw is their passion for an activity and the industry, not the potential profits. While they may not have the background education for a certain industry, their enthusiasm and personal inputs can help their business thrive and grow within this continually growing industry.

## Demographics

For marital status, most individuals skew away from their consumer base, with over half (59.1%, n=xx) being married. This illustrates that most working behind the scenes in the industry have families, which links them back to the idea of the lifestyle entrepreneur who goes into the business to have more time to spend with their families.

Most respondents were male, at 66.7%, which is consistent with the average industry consumer. In terms of age range, most of the respondents were in their mid 20's to 30's, with 36.4% (n=xx) between 22 and 34. With the next most common age group being aged 35-44 (31.8%, n=xx) this also aligns with adventure tourism consumers, whose average age is 36.

For education, over half of respondents (59%, n=xx) had bachelor's degrees, with 13.6 % (n=xx) having a masters and two participants each having either some college credit or having attended a trade school under their belt. This illustrates that a large number of those on the managerial side do have an extended education. However, as predicted, these individuals majored in a large variety of topics, with most (53.3%, n=xx) earning a degree in the arts and sciences. This was followed by those with a degree in a business topic (26.7%, n=xx), and then those with a STEM education at 13.3% (n=xx). This illustrates that many in the industry do not

attend secondary education for the purpose of going into tourism, management or even business in general; their push into the industry appeared after they had completed their education. More importantly, this shows that many enter the industry without a formal education related to management or tourism. This is problematic as it can seriously impede entrepreneurs, who are already facing the struggles that come with starting a new business from scratch. The two respondents who indicated that they created their current company both hold master's, one of which is in business; both have been operating their respective companies for over ten years, which is no small feat for the entrepreneur. This is just a small example of how higher levels of education can help entrepreneurs face the problems they may encounter. Current research shows that there is a gap in the knowledge of adventure tourism operators; this study just solidifies the importance of creating training programs and assisting those who may be managing something for the first time. A passion for the industry does not always translate to knowledge of how to effectively run an operation in the industry.

Due to the small sample size of this study and its limited scale, it's inherently difficult to prove that the trends and data that have been gathered relate to the larger population. With more resources and respondents, a larger study could have been conducted, which would have gathered more concrete proof of the ideas laid out above. However, this small slice of the industry helps introduce the managerial side to scholarly research. It can only be hoped that with this small start, more research will occur, allowing for a full scholarly review and analysis of adventure tourism management.

## VI. Conclusion

The adventure tourism industry, while one of the newer players to the game, is quickly showing its brute through its rapid growth and expansion. Despite the growing research on the consumers of this industry, little is known about the producers, especially the management side.

This study has shown that individuals don't enter this industry for the money, they come because of their passion for their personal hobbies and for their love of the industry and the companies they work for. They don't plan on leaving the industry, but instead growing professionally and helping the industry continue its record growth. This is an industry whose entrepreneurs are lifestyle entrepreneurs who deem their companies and their industry the most important part of their jobs, with monetary gain falling by the wayside. While they may not have planned to go into tourism or any sort of management, this is where life has led them and they couldn't be happier.

This research has opened a new gateway into a previously untouched area of the industry. While this is just a minor portion of the hundreds and thousands of workers in adventure tourism management, the small amount of data gathered shows the many unique aspects throughout this niche, which will hopefully lead others to conduct more research and flesh out the general knowledge and data that is available. This kind of data could be used to show that better training could be created for those entering the industry so that management is at the proper level to ensure that industry growth continues smoothly, while ensuring the safety of all consumers. This type of training could also be used to help lifestyle entrepreneurs manage their businesses in a way that they can maximize their profits and impact, while still maintaining their time for their families and for their passions, which led them here in the first place.

This data also shows the disconnect between the general consensus of career paths in the industry and how many actually change positions. From here, HR management can use this to help create positions within companies, which will help employees further their career paths and grow within their companies, strengthening the companies as a whole.

From this research, I have several recommendations. Those who are interested in entering the industry should consider where they want their career to take them, and research to see if the positions they are seeking will lead them down that path. For entrepreneurs looking to create a business centered on adventure tourism, they should ensure that they have enough knowledge of both the risks of the industry, and how to effectively start a new business, particularly when it comes to expanding the business as it grows. For those who are teaching this topic, it is vital to point out the rampant growth and unique characteristics of both the industry as a whole and those who run it. By educating students about the weaknesses in the industry's management, more steps can be made by the very individuals who could become the future management of the industry. When it comes to the industry as a whole, it would be beneficial to create programs to help entrepreneurs who may not have prior business experience learn the basics of how to run a business in this niche. The industry should also do its own further, more in-depth research into industry management so that it can figure out how to make large-scale solutions for the problems that appear throughout.

The management behind adventure tourism is not your typical kind of management and therefore needs its own research. Adventure tourism is known for its no holds barred, risk taking, adrenaline thriving consumers, and this carries over to its management as well. As the industry continues to expand, so must its management, and as it does, these passionate, joyful individuals will build an empire of thrills for all to enjoy.

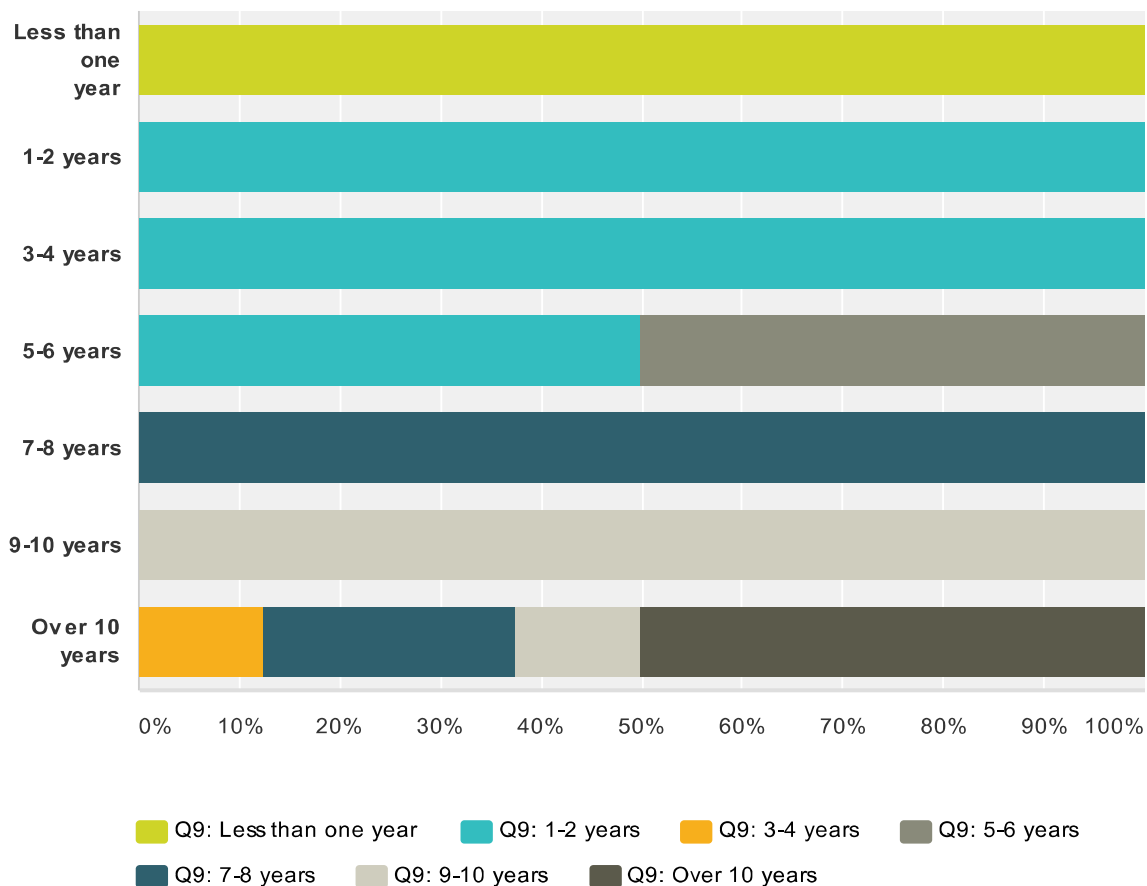
## Appendix

**Graph 1, Time with Current Employer vs. Time in Current Position**

Adventure Tourism Management

### Q6 How long have you worked with your current employer?

Answered: 22 Skipped: 0

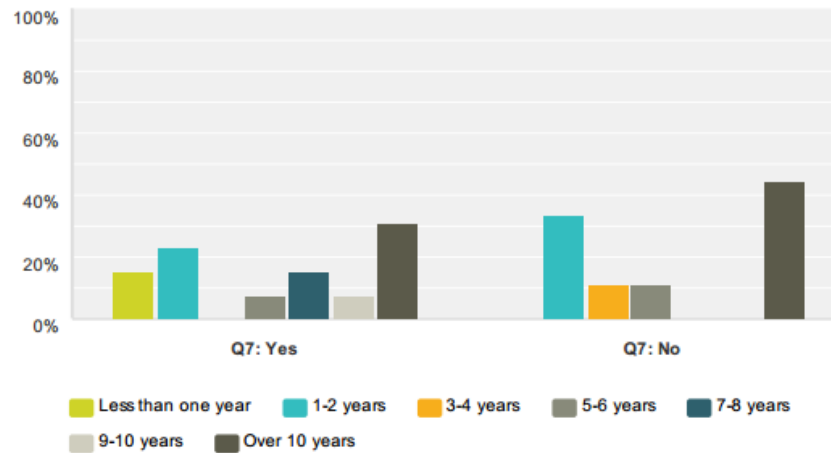


## Graph 2, Time with Current Employer vs. Career Path

### Adventure Tourism Management

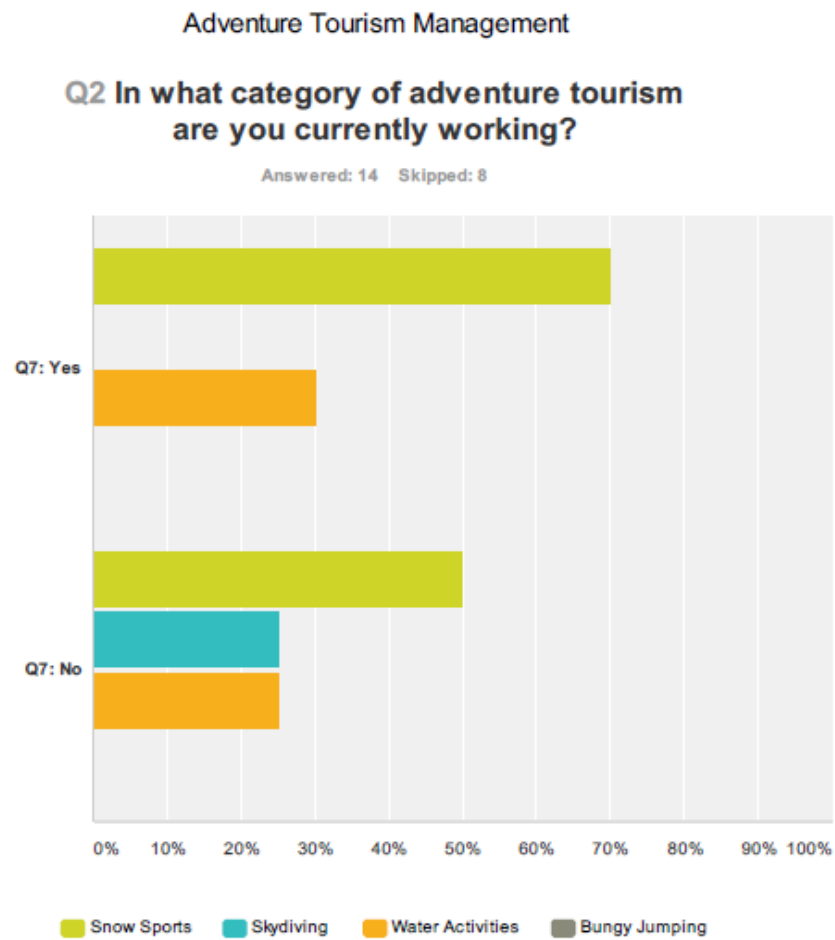
#### Q6 How long have you worked with your current employer?

Answered: 22 Skipped: 0



	Less than one year	1-2 years	3-4 years	5-6 years	7-8 years	9-10 years	Over 10 years	Total
Q7: Yes	15.38% 2	23.08% 3	0.00% 0	7.69% 1	15.38% 2	7.69% 1	30.77% 4	13
Q7: No	0.00% 0	33.33% 3	11.11% 1	11.11% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	44.44% 4	9
Total Respondents	2	6	1	2	2	1	8	22

Figure 3, Career Path Compared to Industry Area



	Snow Sports	Skydiving	Water Activities	Bungy Jumping	Total
Q2: Yes	70.00% 7	0.00% 0	30.00% 3	0.00% 0	10
Q2: No	50.00% 2	25.00% 1	25.00% 1	0.00% 0	4
Total Respondents	9	1	4	0	14
	Other (please specify)				Total
Q2: Yes	5				5
Q2: No	5				5



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