

New Forest Tour - Customer Feedback 2007

Introduction

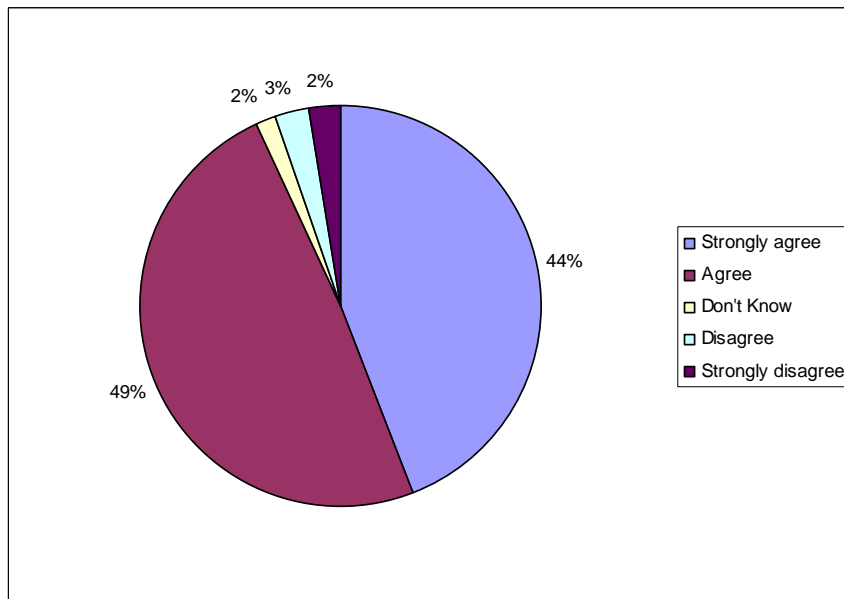
For 2007, all customers using the New Forest Tour were handed an 'Official Guide' as they boarded the bus. This guide included a customer feedback form which customers were encouraged to complete and return.

250 customers (representing a 3.8% response) completed the form and the results are presented below.

Questions 1 to 8 asked customers to rate statements based on 5 options ranging from strongly agree through to strongly disagree. Questions 9 to 16 sought to identify information about the customers' wider New Forest Tour and New Forest experience. The questionnaire concluded with a free text box for more general comments.

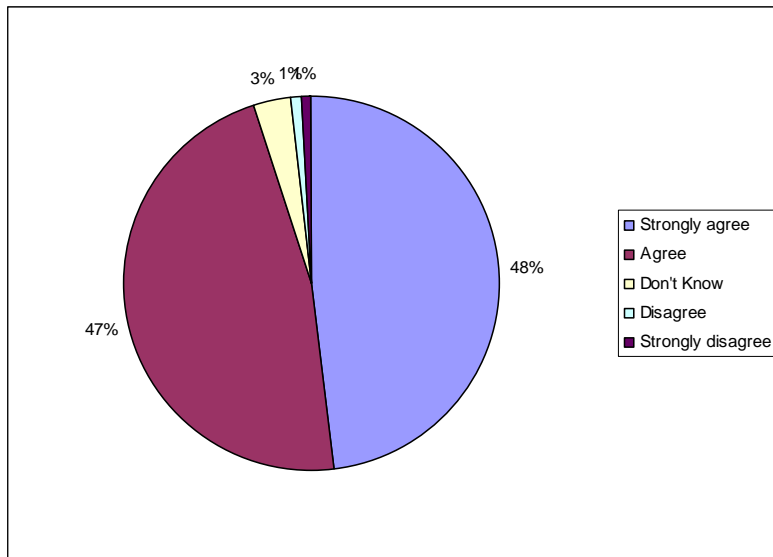
Question 1: The New Forest Tour improved my understanding and enjoyment of the New Forest

Results show that 93% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with this statement, demonstrating the link between the New Forest Tour and delivery of the National Park Authority second purpose.



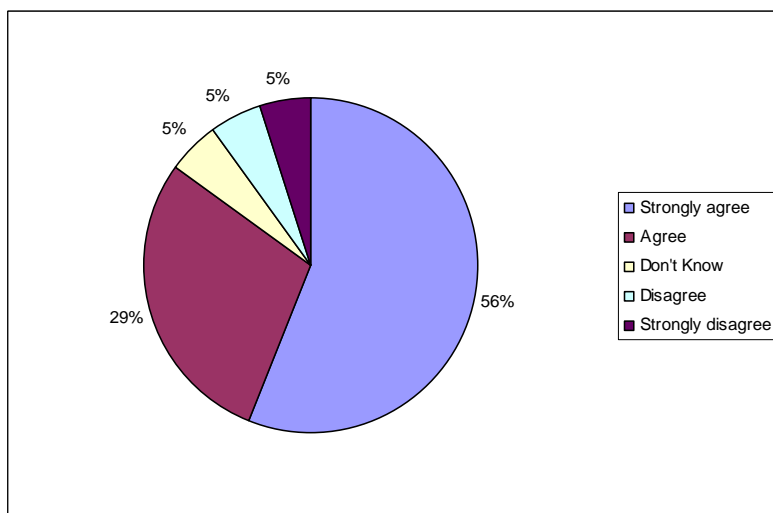
Question 2: I found the guidebook useful

Again, a very high level of respondents (95%) either agreed or strongly agreed with this statement. The guidebook was offered to all customers on boarding the bus and includes a written commentary, walking and cycle routes, and discount vouchers for use in local attractions and other services.



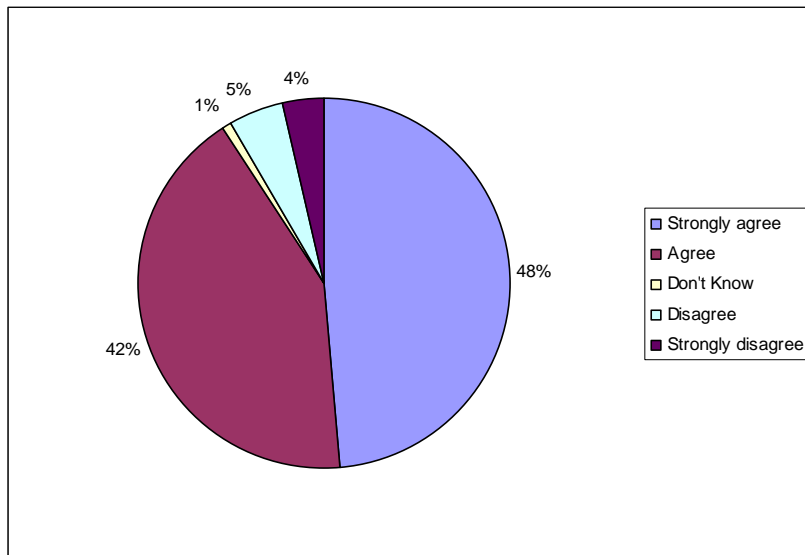
Question 3: I found the information given by the driver interesting and enjoyable

Just over half of respondents (56%) agreed with this statement, whilst 10% disagreed or strongly disagreed. There have been issues in 2007 with the quality of the audio commentary. This will be improved and made more consistent for 2007.



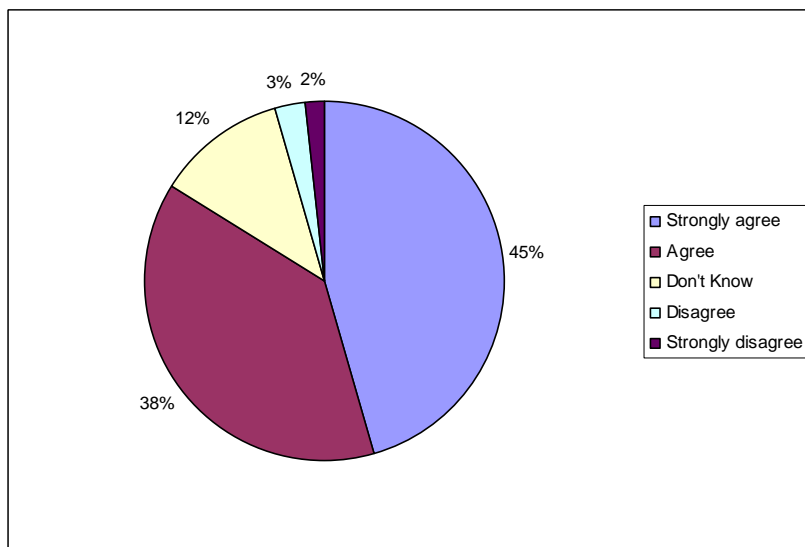
Question 4: The service was comfortable and reliable

90% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with this statement. For the vast majority of the season, the buses used were 'nearly new' models which used a bespoke New Forest Tour livery. On the few days that these buses were unavailable, older 'orange' buses were used which may have been reflected by the 9% of respondents who disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement.



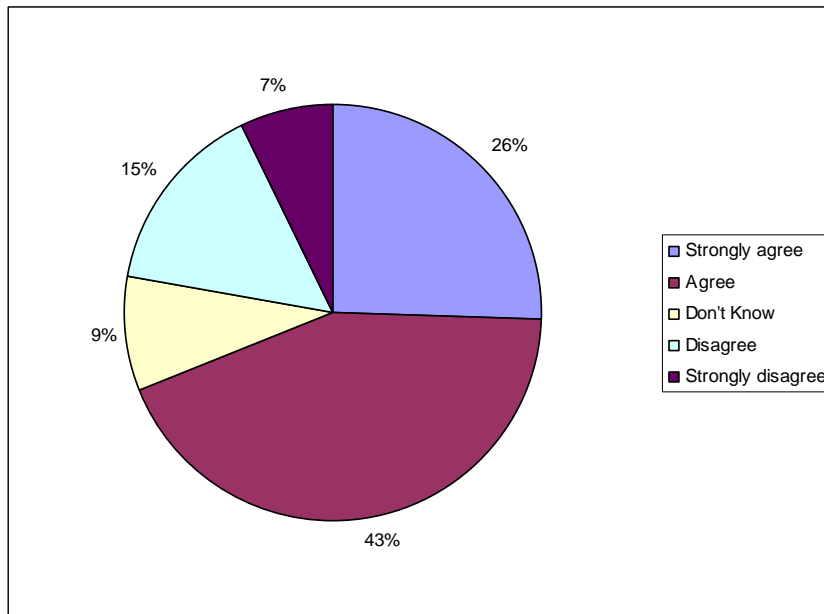
Question 5: In comparison to other visitor attractions in the area, the New Forest Tour was value for money

This question sought to gain customers opinion on product pricing. The results show that 83% of respondents regarded the New Forest Tour as value for money when compared to other local attractions. Only 5% disagreed with this statement.



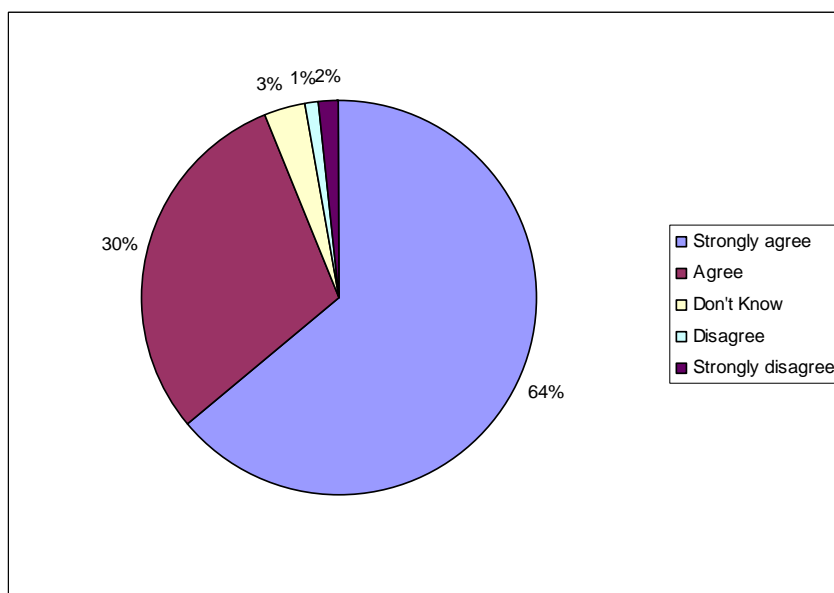
Question 6: The weather affected how much I enjoyed the experience

The weather for the 2007 season can at best be described as poor. The success of an open top recreational bus such as the New Forest Tour is heavily influenced by the weather. The results of this question reflected the changeable weather, with 69% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing that the weather affected their experience.



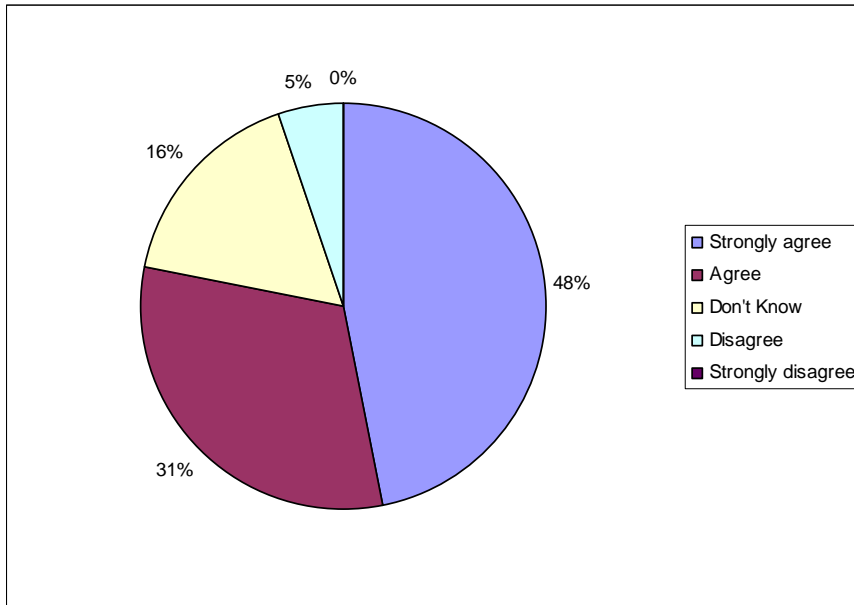
Question 7: I would recommend the New Forest Tour to my friends

94% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they would recommend the service to their friends. This is clearly a pleasing statistic which demonstrates a high level of satisfaction with the product.



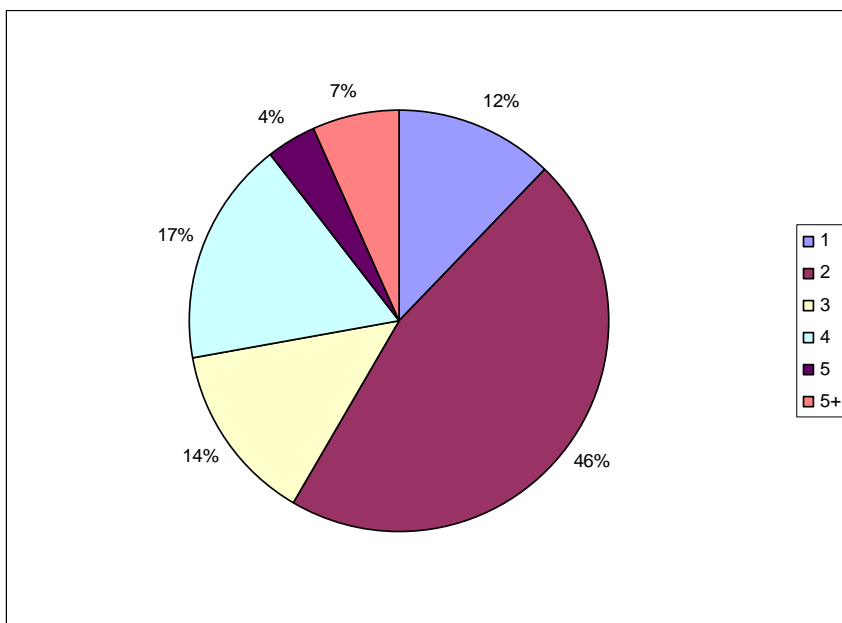
Question 8: The New Forest Tour will help to reduce the impacts of traffic in the New Forest.

This question sought to quantify customers' wider appreciation of the New Forest Tour in the context of the New Forest transport. Again, a high level of respondents (79%) agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, which is encouraging. No respondents strongly disagreed.



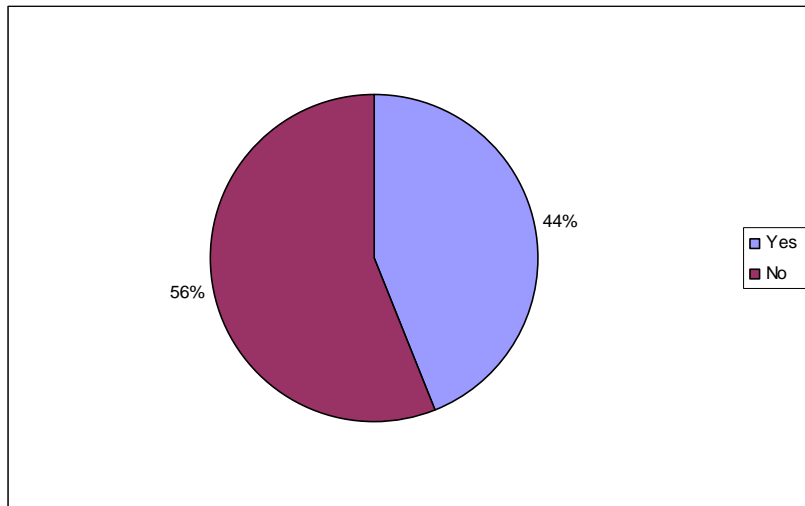
Question 9: How many people were travelling in your party today?

This question sought to establish the size of the group travelling. The results show that nearly half (46%) of respondents travel in groups of 2. The New Forest Tour also appears to be popular with large groups (5+) with 7% of all respondents categorising themselves into this field.



Question 10: Did you, or do you plan to follow any of the promoted cycling and walking routes in the guidebook?

Included in the guidebook are a series of walking and cycle routes, situated in locations easily accessible from bus stops on the New Forest Tour route. The results show a high proportion (44%) of respondents either planned to, or undertook these options.



If so which did you find most appealing?

Two walks and two cycle rides are offered, these being:-

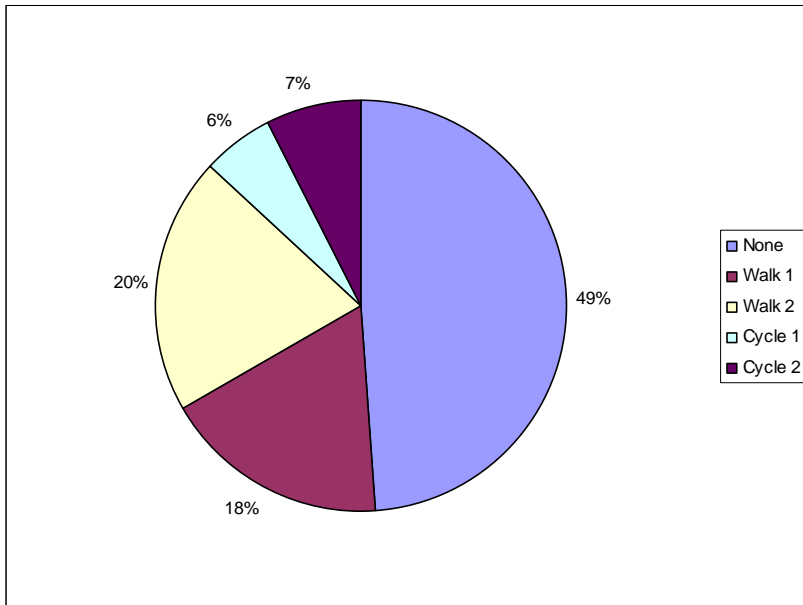
Walk 1: Standing Hat Woodland Walk: A short walk around the Pignal Inclosure.

Walk 2: Beaulieu River Walk: Beaulieu village to Bucklers Hard and back

Cycle 1: Parkhill Cycle Ride: Hollands Wood to Beechen Lane

Cycle 2: Queens Meadow Cycle Ride: Brockenhurst to Rhinefield and New Park (Circular).

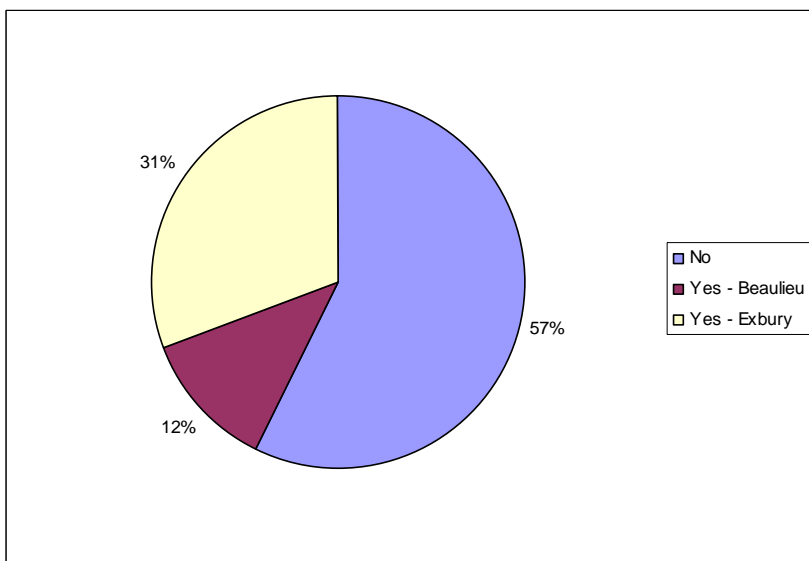
The results show that the walk options were much more popular than the cycle route options, with 38% of respondents favouring either walk 1 or walk 2. Only 13% of respondents favoured the cycle routes, although clearly the availability of a bike would have influenced this decision. Nearly half of respondents suggested that none of the 4 offerings were appealing.



Question 11: Did you visit any of the other visitor attractions on the route of the New Forest Tour today?

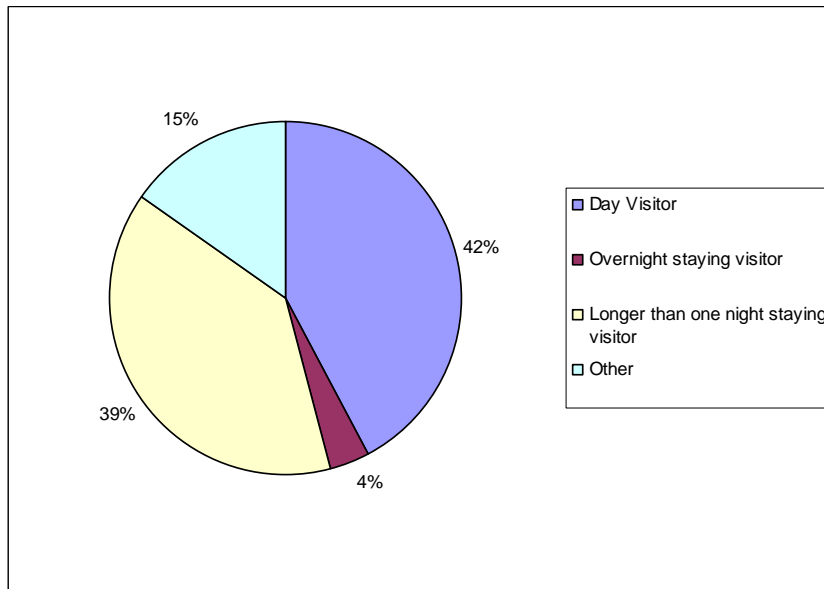
The New Forest Tour route includes stopping at Beaulieu National Motor Museum and Exbury Gardens, to collect and drop off customers. The results of this question show that Exbury Gardens proved to be the most popular of the two visitor attractions on route, with 31% of customers paying an entrance fee to visit the gardens.

Both attractions offer New Forest Tour customers special incentives to visit, with Beaulieu National Motor Museum offering £2 off one adult admission price (when accompanied by one adult paying full admission price) and Exbury Gardens offering a free steam train ride to those paying an entrance fee to the gardens.



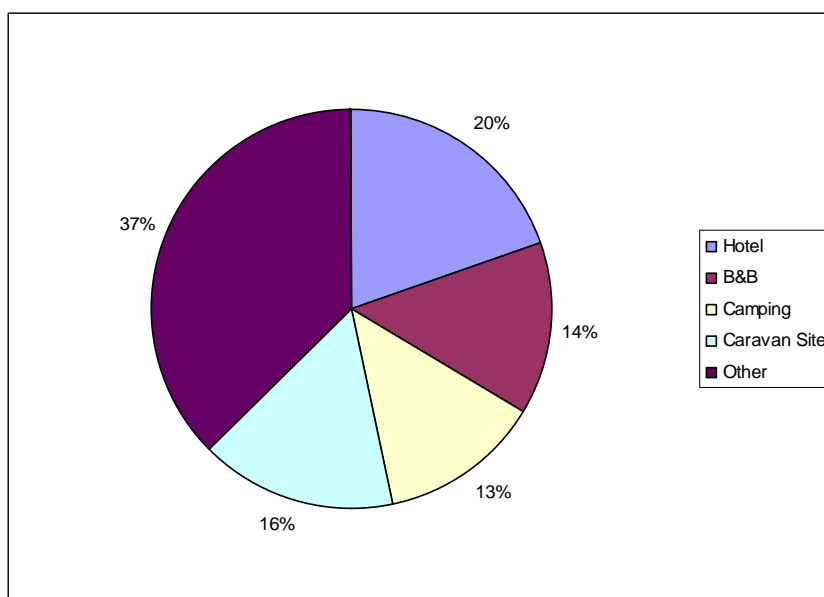
Question 12: Which of the following would best describe your visit to the new forest on this occasion?

Customers were asked to categorise their visit to the New Forest. The two largest segments were day visitors, with 42% and Longer than one night staying visitor, with 39%. Only 4% of respondents were Overnight staying visitors (1 night).



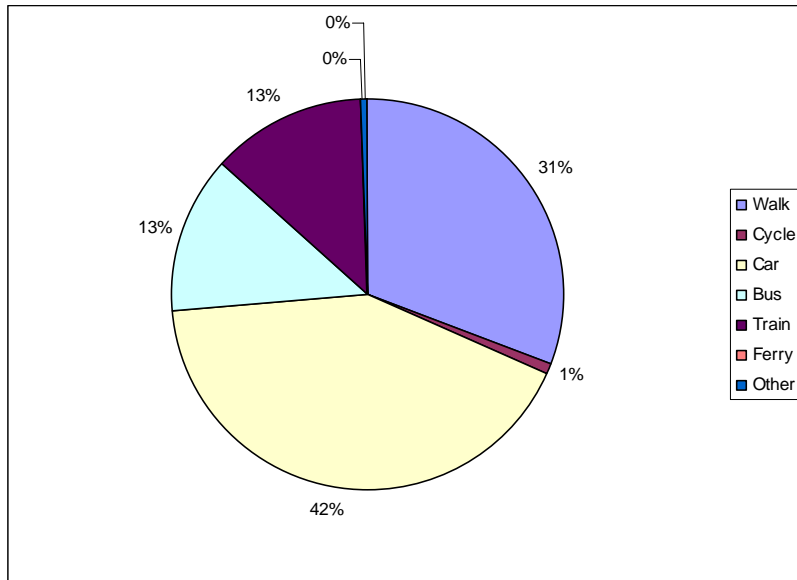
Question 13: If you are staying one night or more, which of the following best describes your accommodation?

This question asked staying visitors to define their accommodation type. Results show that the mix between hotel, B&B, Camping and Caravan accommodation is evenly spread. Perhaps surprisingly, 37% of respondents defined their accommodation as 'other'.



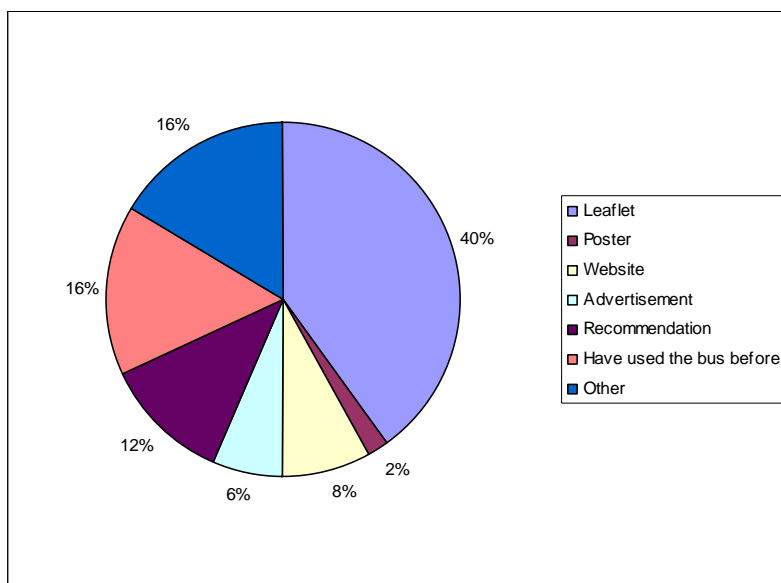
Question 14: What mode of transport did you use to get to the start of the New Forest Tour today?

The private car was the most popular response, with 42% of respondents choosing this mode. Walking was the next most popular option, with 31%, there was then a gap to bus and train, both with 13%.



Question 15: How did you become aware of the new forest tour today?

The results of this question show that the leaflet proved the most useful product awareness tool, perhaps due to its high print run and extensive distribution. Most promotional tools outlined in the marketing plan appear to have been picked up by customers. It is interesting to note that 16% of customers had used the bus before, perhaps reinforcing its popularity with Hampshire Farepass holders.



Question 16: How did you purchase your ticket for the New Forest Tour today?

There are three ways of purchasing tickets for the service, from the bus driver, via the New Forest Tour website, or from Lyndhurst or Lymington visitor information centre (VIC). The results show that most (83%) of respondents purchased tickets from the bus driver, whilst 17% bought tickets from a local VIC. No respondents purchased tickets through the website although overall this option was used by customers in 2007.

