

Main Street Stakeholders Survey for the Staunton Downtown
Development Association

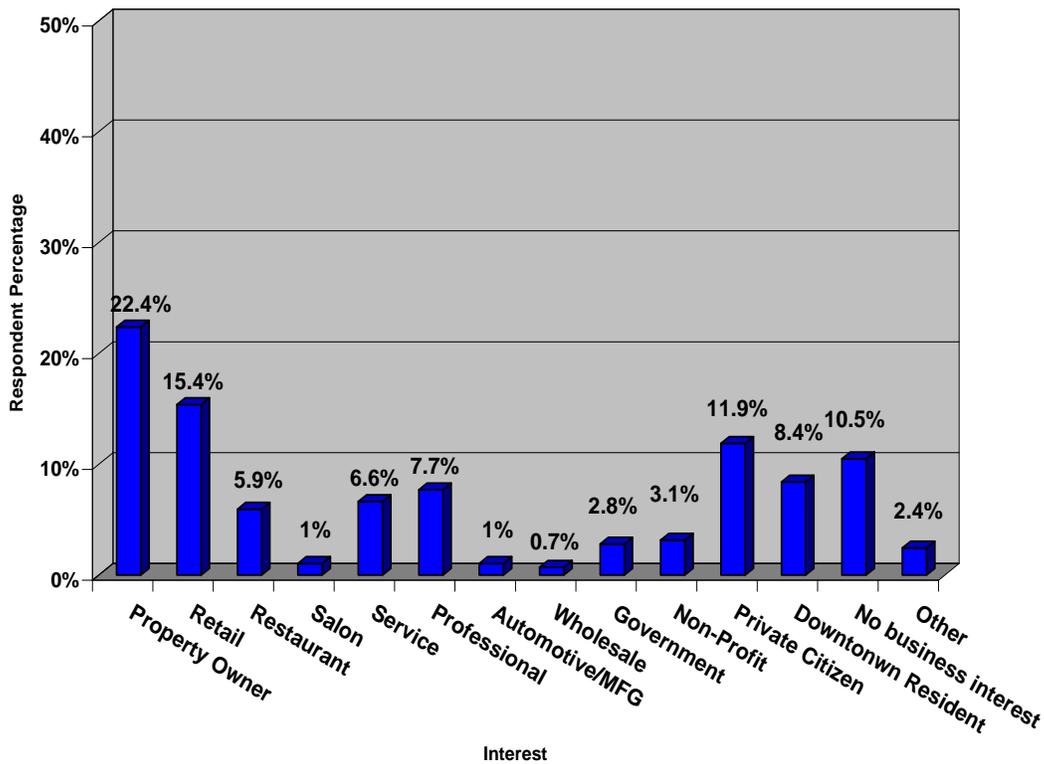
**Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development
March 2010**

The Virginia Main Street Program (Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development) conducted an assessment of the Staunton Downtown Development Association (SDDA), a designated Virginia Main Street Program, to obtain input from SDDA stakeholders and citizens regarding SDDA services and activities. Electronic surveys were distributed to approximately 428 recipients of whom 109 responded. In addition, DHCD received approximately 42 hard copy surveys (containing the same questions). The following data summarizes the 151 responses received from Staunton SDDA stakeholders and citizens.

Question 1: Please indicate your interest in Downtown Staunton. (check all that apply).

Over 60% of respondents indicated their interest was as a property owner (22.4%), in retail (15.4%), a private citizen (11.9%) or that they had no actual business interest in the downtown area (10.5%). Table 1 provides a breakdown of the recipient responses.

Table 1: Interest in downtown Staunton

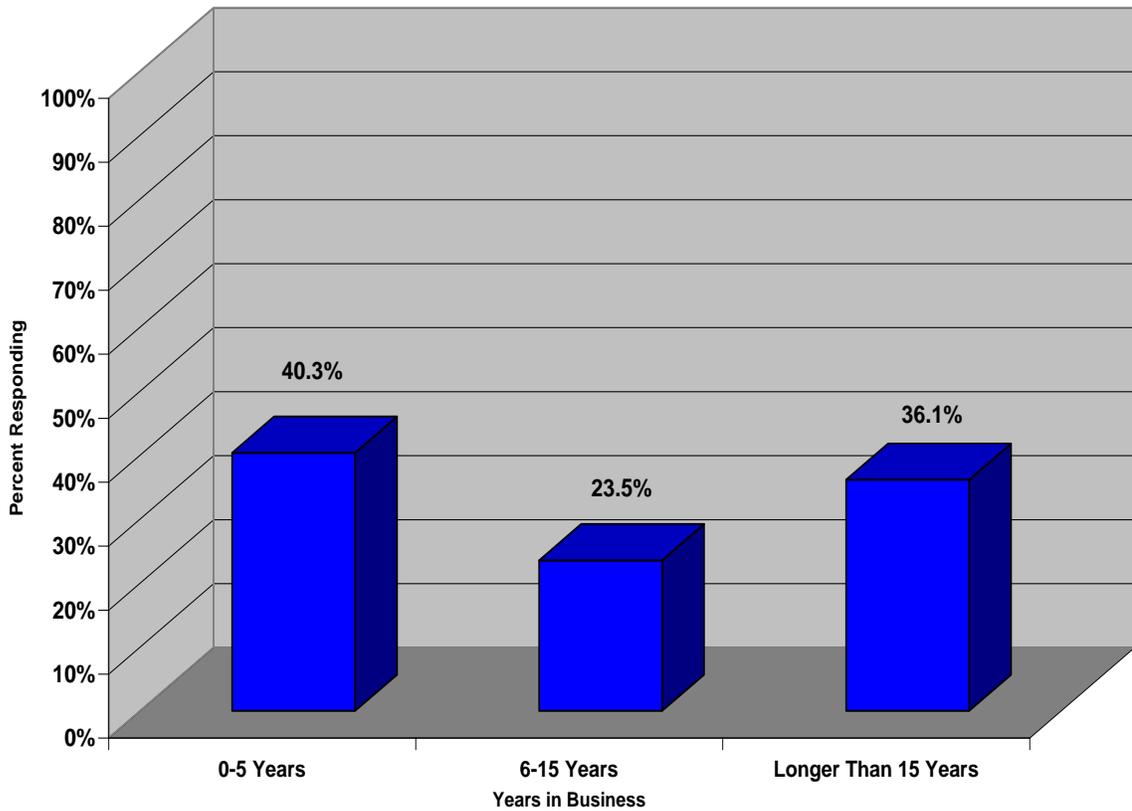


Respondents not having a business interest in downtown Staunton were asked to proceed to Question #7.

Question 2: How long have you been in business in downtown Staunton?

For those respondents with a business interest, the number of years in business is fairly well distributed among the three time frame options provided on the survey. Table 2 provides a percentage breakdown of these findings.

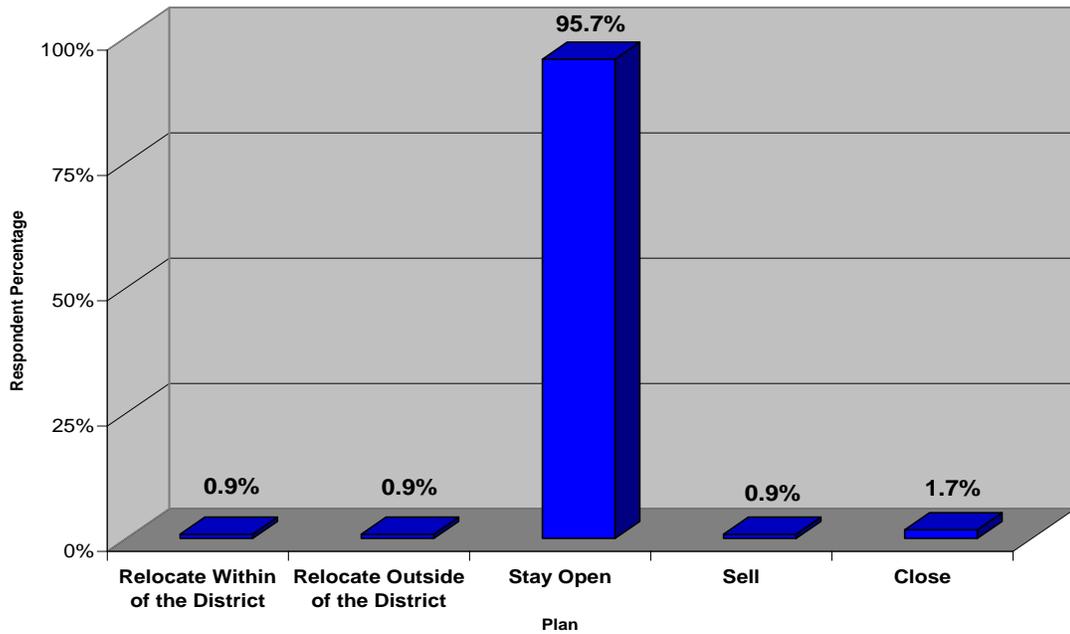
Table 2: Respondent Number of Years in Business



Question 3: In the next year, I plan for my downtown business to...

The responses received indicate a vast majority (95.7%) of business owners intend to remain in business for at least the next year. Table 3 on page 4 displays the percentage breakdown of the plans of business owners for the next year in downtown Staunton.

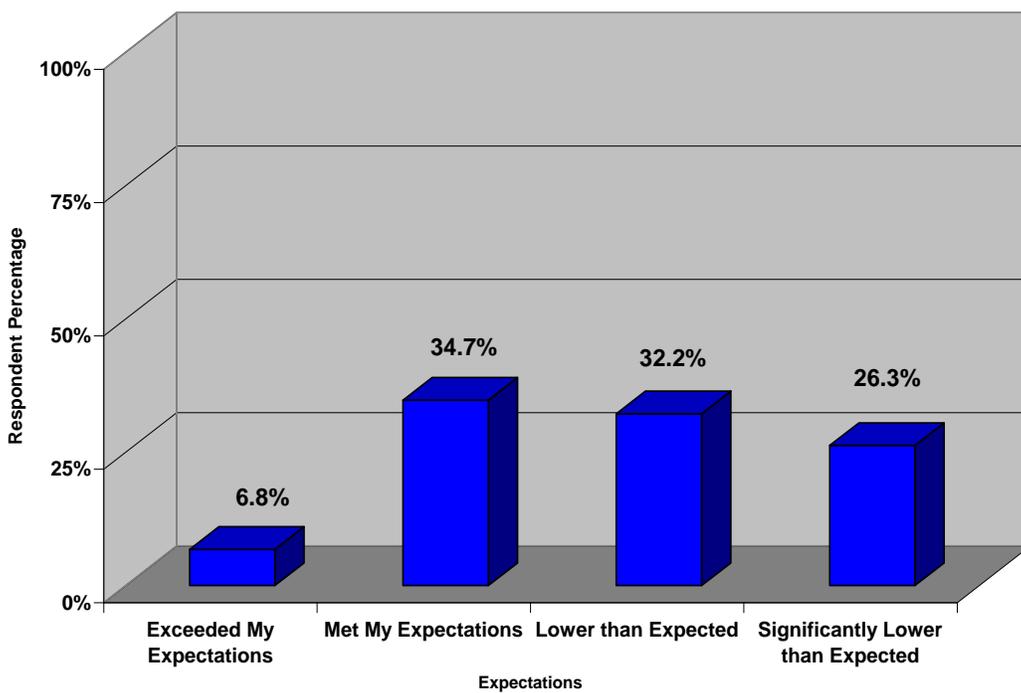
Table 3: Respondent Plans for their business in the next year



Question 4: In the fiscal year 2009, my annual gross receipts have...

The difficult economic climate is reflected in the responses of downtown Staunton business owners with almost 60% of respondents indicating their gross receipts for 2009 were either lower or significantly lower than expected. Table 4 displays a breakdown of the findings.

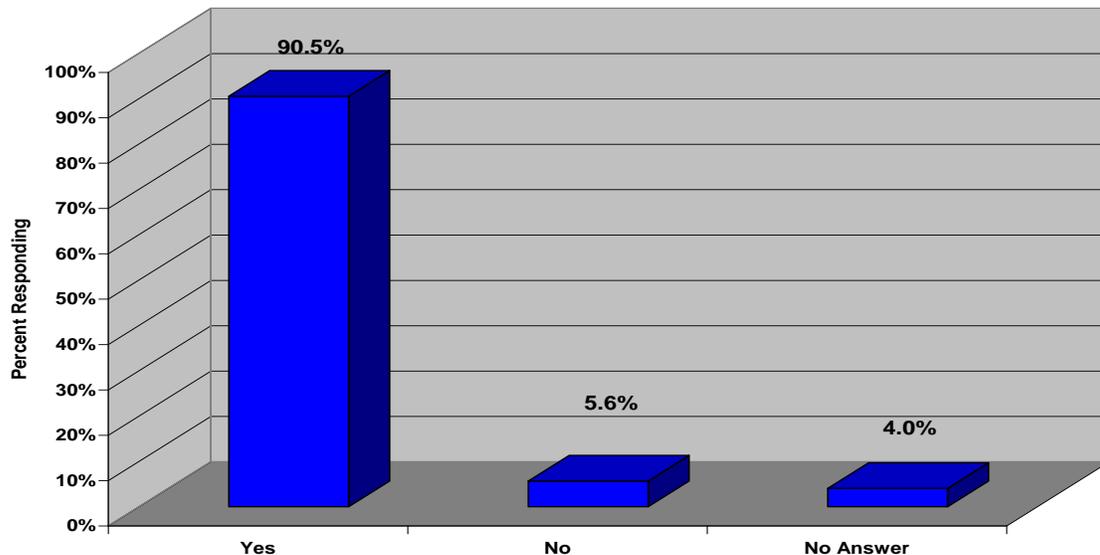
Table 4: Fiscal Year 2009 Annual Gross Receipts



Question 5: Do you look for opportunities to buy goods and services from your Downtown neighbors first?

A large majority (over 90%) of respondents indicate they first look for opportunities to buy goods and services from downtown Staunton businesses before looking elsewhere. Respondent comments concerning the question follow Table 5. Comments are transcribed verbatim.

Table 5: Buying first from Downtown neighbors



Respondent Comments:

1. Not Related
2. We are committed to the success of downtown businesses, but unfortunately we often have to buy outside the area to find what we're looking for.
3. Convenience and desire to keep the business community vibrant.
4. Convenience. Mutual support.
5. I try and support people who support me.
6. We live here and want to support our local economy.
7. Convenience
8. Because the only way we grow is helping each other's business. It brings business downtown to everyone.
9. Local Merchants support me at the Farmer's Market. I will exercise EVERY opportunity to support them in return.

10. We must support the downtown local economy.
11. I want to shop locally to help our downtown and Newtown (adjoining historical district) business people make it in this tough economy- plus I believe that we have a wonderful variety of goods available at good prices.
12. The downtown marketplace does not have items or supplies we use. We do eat downtown and use printing companies downtown.
13. It's vital to keep a vibrant downtown.
14. To support downtown business.
15. I support local businesses first, always. I hope my neighbors do the same for me. This makes our downtown stronger and keeps the money in Staunton.
16. I try to but they are mostly specialty shops and expensive.
17. Revenue within city limits, networking with local businesses
18. to help each other
19. A rising tide lifts all ships
20. But basic needs are not available there.
21. There aren't that many services or goods left in downtown Staunton. All of the businesses are leaving due to no support.
22. I support local businesses
23. Economy for sure...lack of City Promotion as a destination! We collect plenty of Transit Lodging and Meals tax to advertize but all the tax is diverted to the General Fund.
24. I believe we should support each other whenever possible.
25. I like to support other merchants.
26. although sometimes higher priced.
27. All boats rise when we support other downtown businesses.
28. I try to buy locally but price drives me to the chain stores more than I like.
29. It's important to shop/eat locally.
30. to support all of the business' in Staunton, for the survival of the downtown area
31. Easy to get—support other businesses.

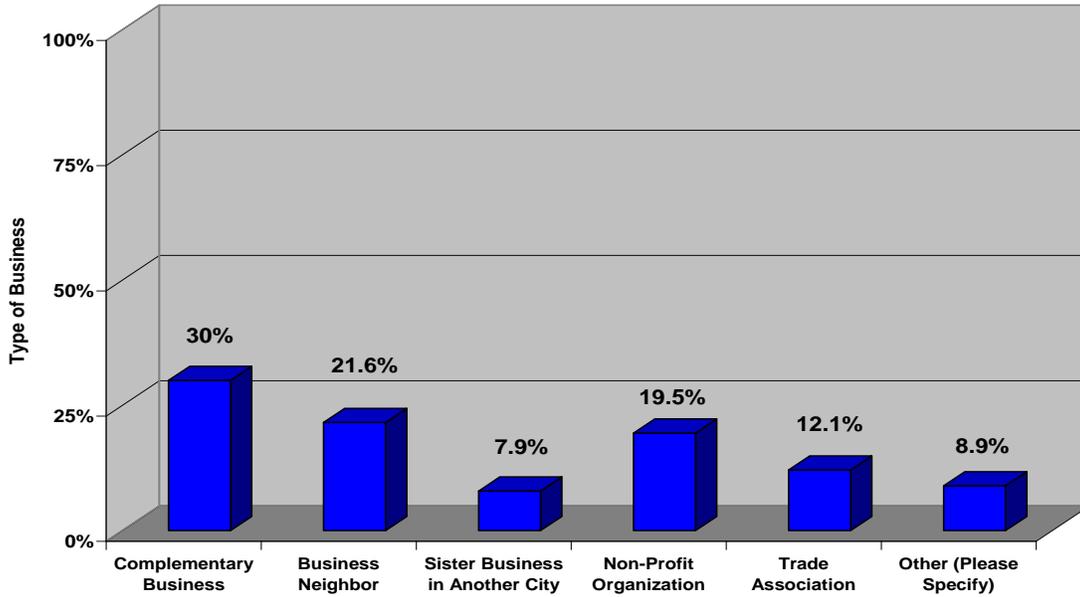
32. Hoping they would do the same for me. Times are tuff
33. Support downtown
34. To try to help keep Staunton growing.
35. This survey seems to be target strictly to business not property owners. I would suggest the next time you have two surveys and have us choose on the way in which one to take. I am sure there must be something you want to know about how the investors in real estate in the District feel about their investment and how the District is doing.
36. I shop Staunton first to support my fellow business owners!
37. Buying local is always the preferred method.
38. Firmly I believe in supporting the local economy.
39. I try to support businesses as often as I can because I would like to see Downtown Staunton remain open.
40. To retain wealth in the area.
41. i like to spend my money with people I know and like
42. I love downtown and want to see it thrive.
43. It's good for business to say that we use ingredients from downtown merchants. Also, I'm friends with some of them so it's easy and convenient to do business.
44. It is a joy to be able to deal with our group of businesses. If we take good care of each other we can survive.
45. I wish to see my downtown business community succeed as well as to support those retail businesses that offer the type of service or merchandise I would like to see in Staunton; also, I would hope for them to feel similarly when considering services like the type (professional) which I provide.
46. I need to have good neighbors. If I don't shop with them then they, as a whole, won't support me. If a customer comes in and I don't have what they need we try and send them to another downtown business.
47. Liking and knowing them and their families makes me A LOT more interested in giving them my hard earned money first. We all support each other so I get back what I spend. The services downtown are much better than out of downtown.
48. They don't' buy from me
49. Convenience
50. Convenience and personal relationships

51. I want to support local businesses. The merchandise is interesting.
52. We as a whole draw more people and together we are stronger. I want my fellow store owners to stick around and I enjoy buying from them.
53. As applicable. This survey is geared toward business owners vs. property owners.
54. All of the downtown merchants are vital to the success and survival of our business.
55. It's the right thing to do.
56. Mostly restaurant. Books, jewelry and kitchen. Not much else interests me or is available.
57. We use every opportunity to utilize businesses in the Downtown Service District first. We feel obligated, we want to strengthen DT business and we want to know that those dollars go directly back into the city through taxes.
58. When possible
59. Feel it's important to keep downtown businesses thriving.
60. Supporting each other is key to keeping the variety of downtown businesses strong.
61. This is Staunton Visitors Center.
62. (begin hard copy) Lack of choice, poor parking.
63. Prices are very high – I hear that a lot.
64. To support my neighbors
65. Convenience and I want to support a vibrant downtown
66. Ease of pickup/delivery

Question 6: What other businesses or organizations do you partner with to promote your business?

Table 6 shows the partnerships of owners are with a variety of businesses / organizations.

Table 6: What other businesses do you partner with?



Question 7: Please rate both the importance and effectiveness of the following services offered by SDDA.

The following tables (tables 7-16) show respondent attitudes as to both the importance and the effectiveness of 10 different SDDA services. Please note that Table 7 may not be representative of the attitudes of all respondents as the question (“Service of SDDA”) was inadvertently not included in the electronic survey but was included in the hard copy survey. Nineteen respondents to the hard copy survey evaluated the “Service of SDDA.” As such, out of the total number of surveys received (151), Table 7 represents the attitudes of only 12.5% of all respondents.

Table 7: Service of SDDA: Importance vs. Effectiveness

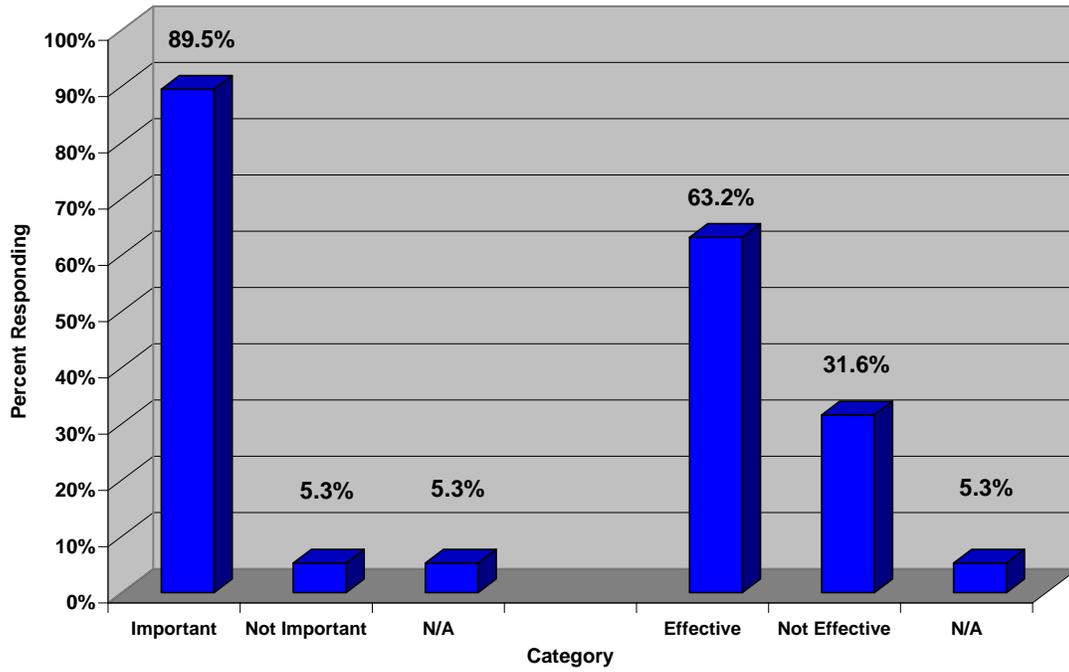


Table 8: Regional Marketing and Advertising: Importance vs. Effectiveness

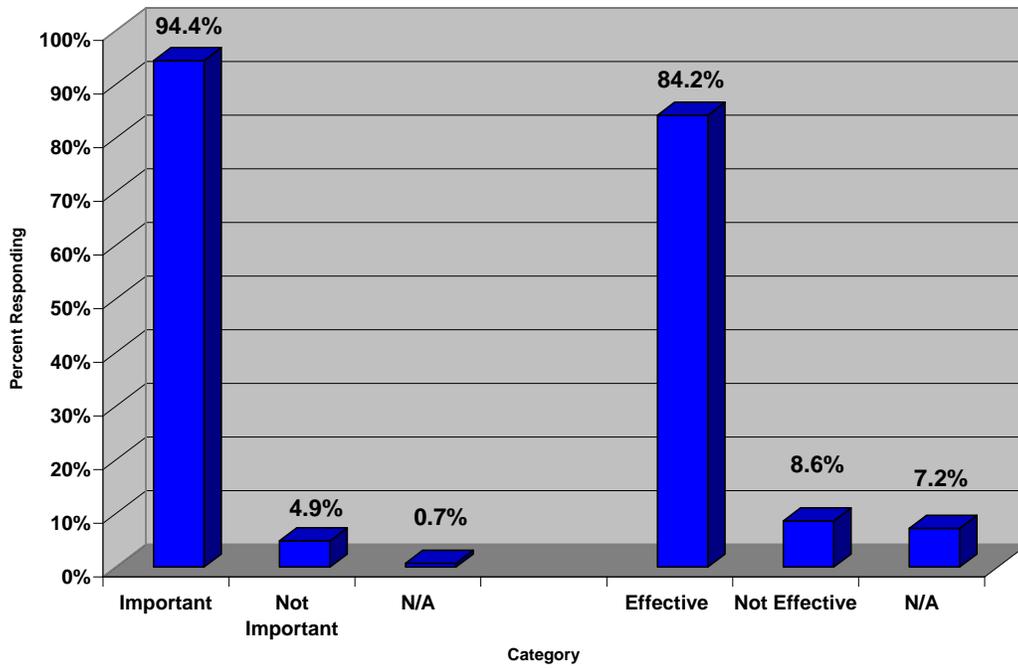


Table 9: Public Space Design and Planning: Importance vs. Effectiveness

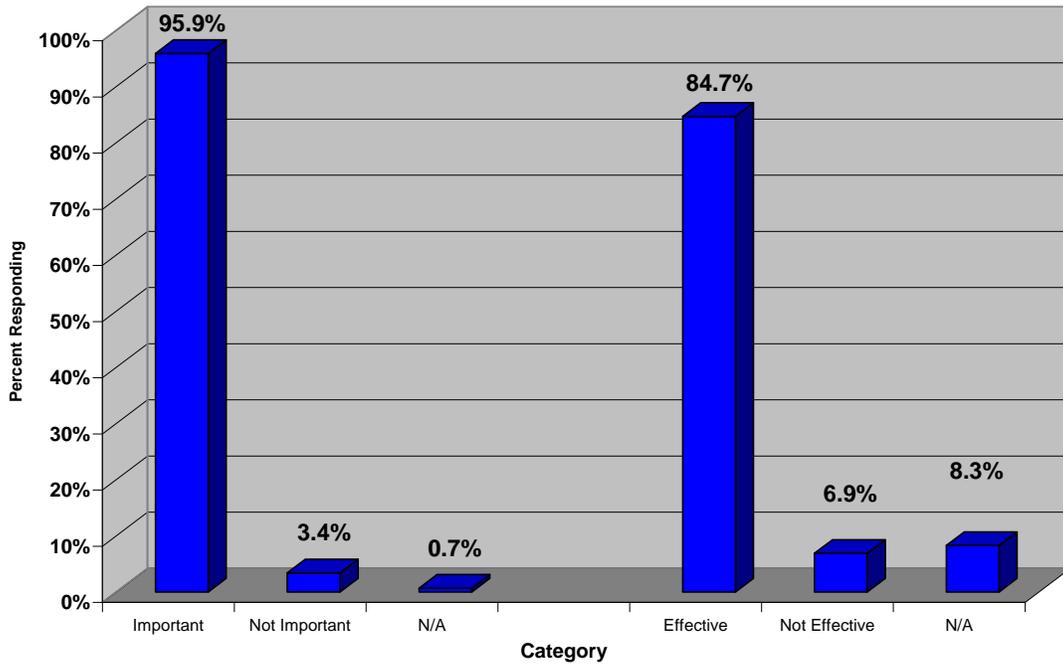


Table 10: Merchant Networking and Seminars: Importance vs. Effectiveness

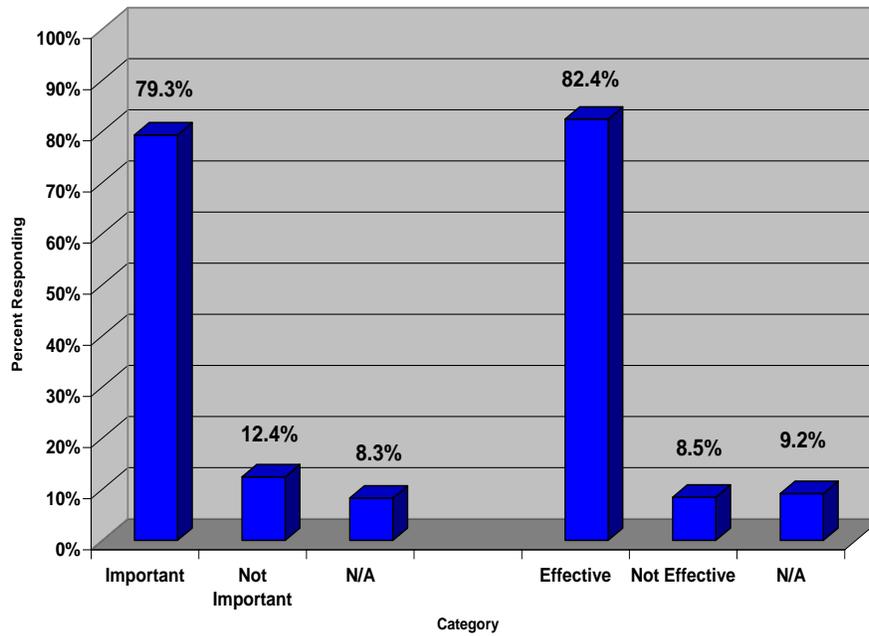


Table 11: Private Property Development Assistance: Importance vs. Effectiveness

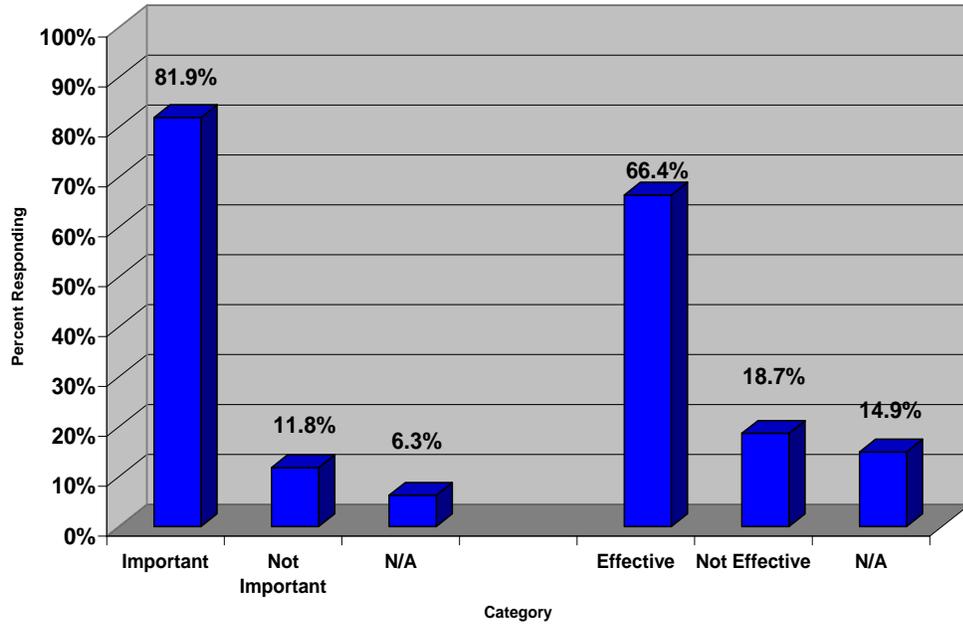


Table 12: Community and Promotional Events: Importance vs. Effectiveness

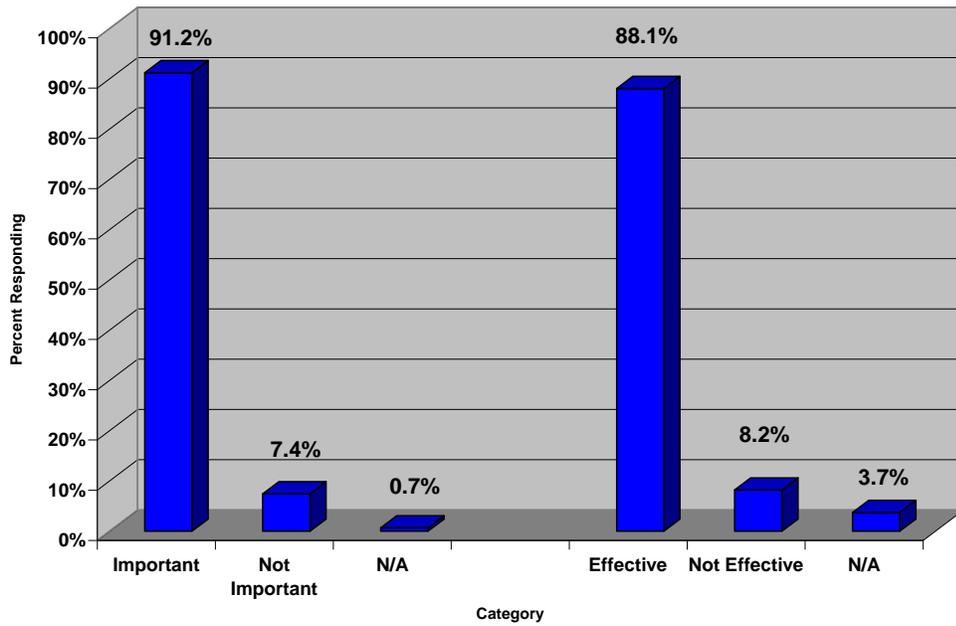


Table 13: Marketing and Customer Retention Programs: Importance vs. Effectiveness

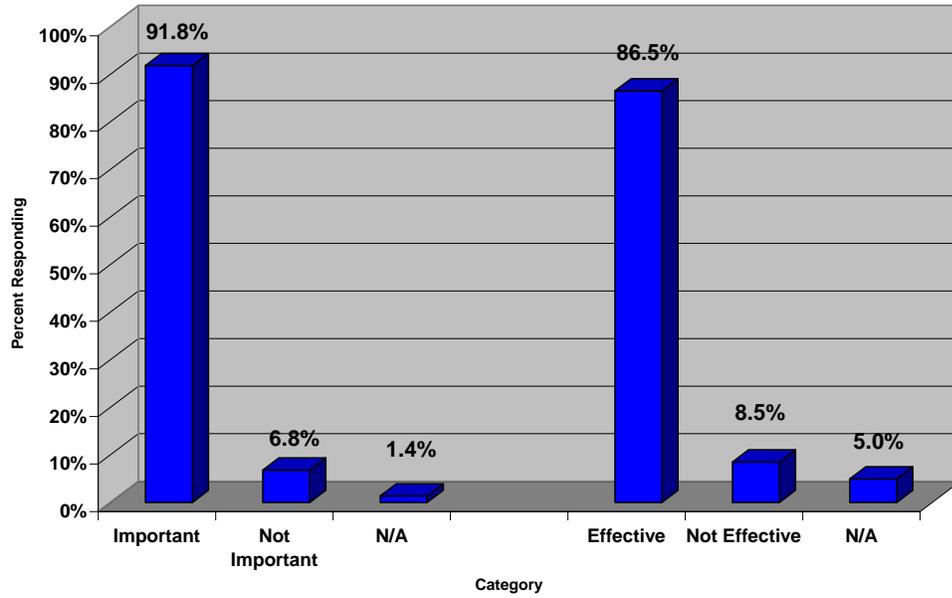


Table 14: Communication: Importance vs. Effectiveness

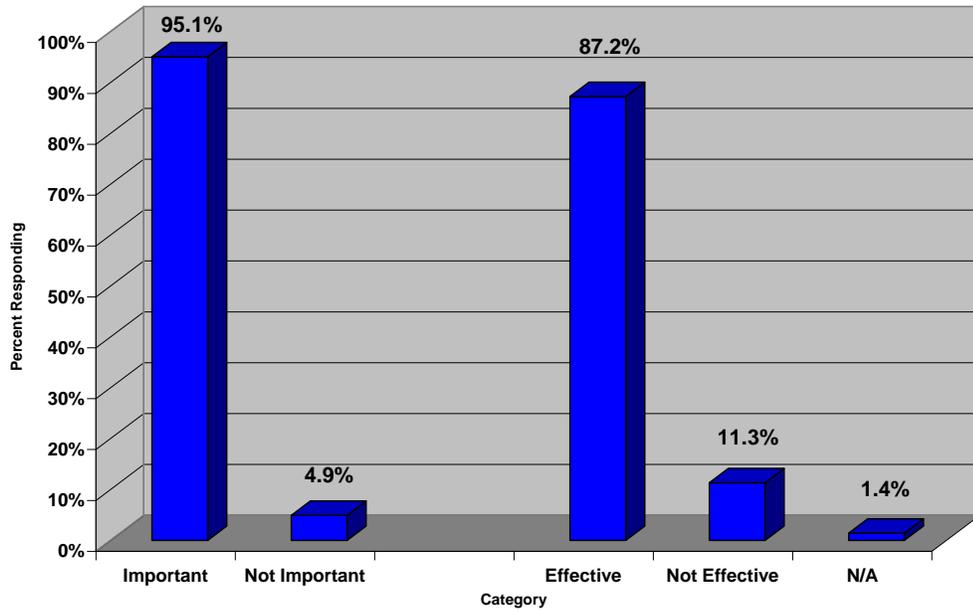


Table 15: Community Development Liaison: Importance vs. Effectiveness

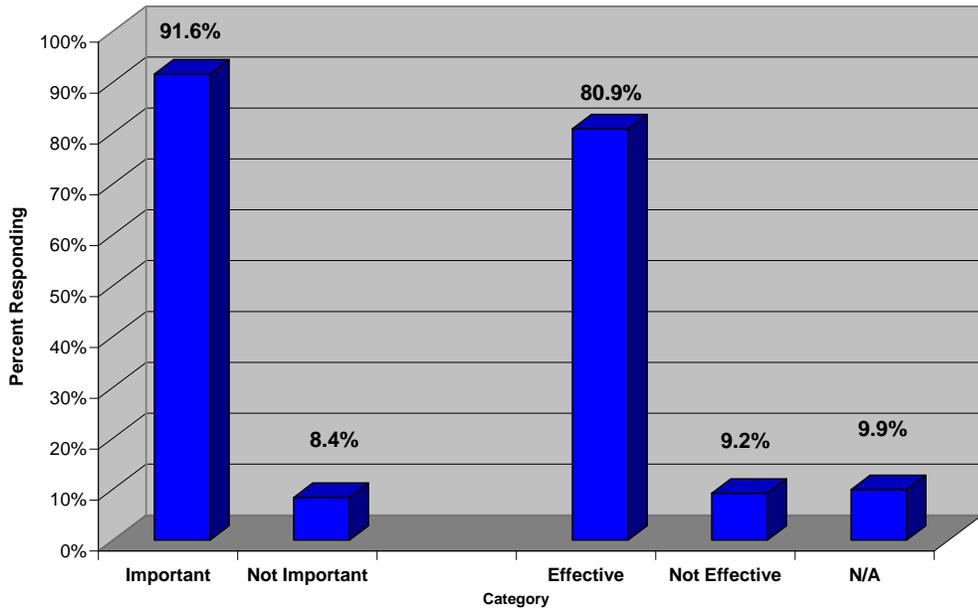
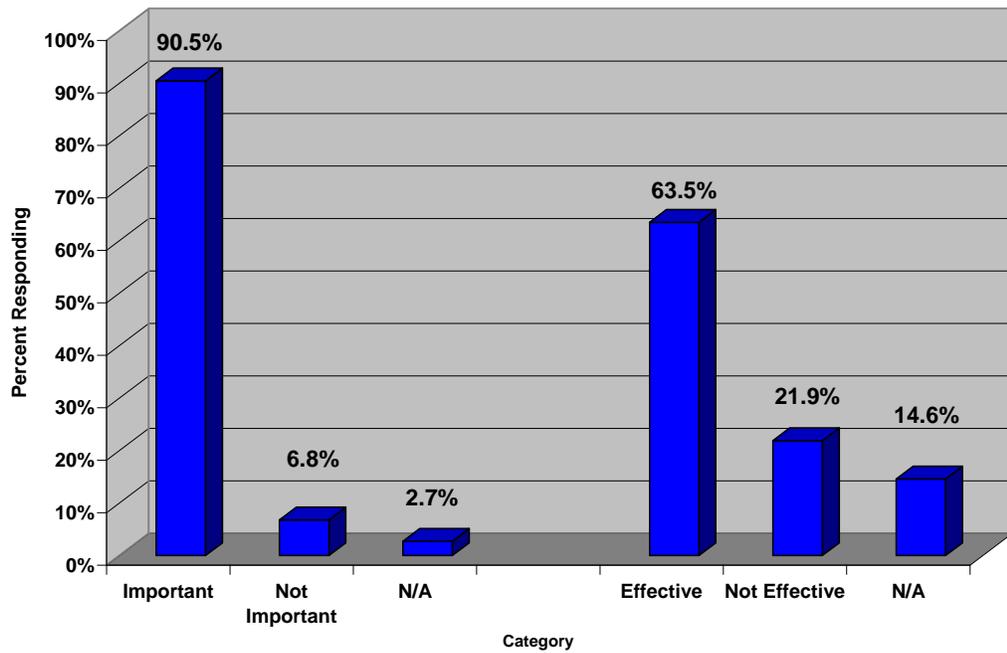


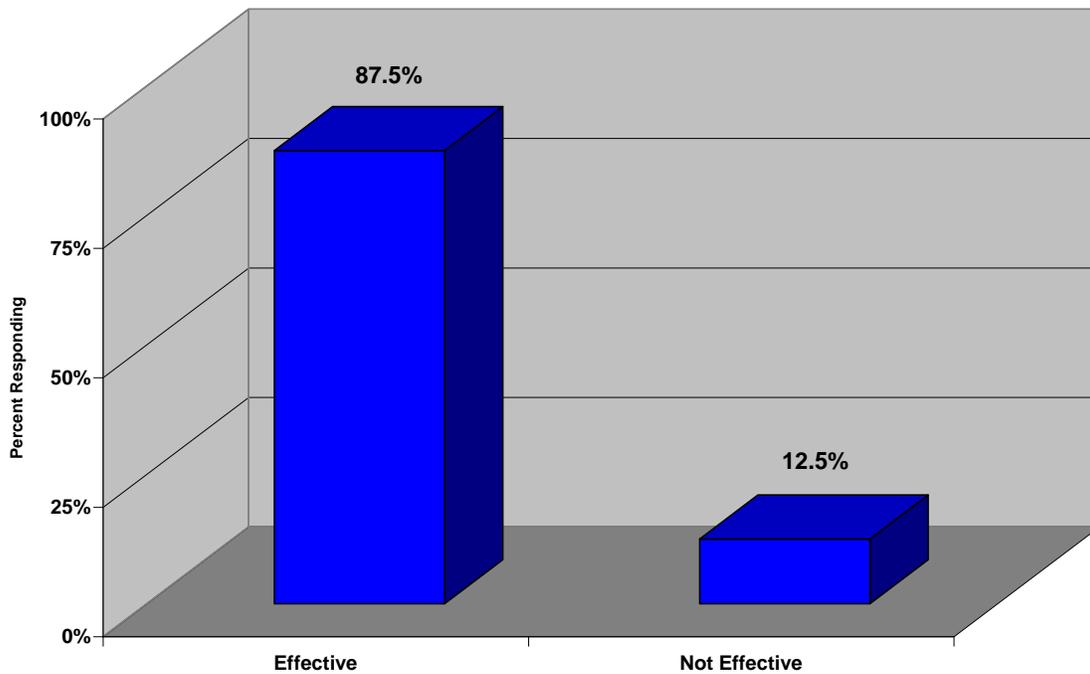
Table 16: Economic Development: Importance vs. Effectiveness



Question 8: Overall, how effective do you think SDDA has been in meeting the needs of the downtown commercial district, its businesses, property owners and customers? And why?

Survey respondents gave SDDA strong marks in meeting the needs of its area, with almost 88% of respondents agreeing that the entity was either very effective or effective in its efforts. Table 17 aggregates the “Very effective” and “Somewhat effective” scores. Respondent comments on this question follow the table. Comments are transcribed verbatim.

Table 17: SDDA Effectiveness in Meeting Local Needs



Respondent Comments:

1. I know it's not easy, but recruiting truly useful downtown businesses is very important to me. We need more doctors/dentists and professional services for residents and more food stores and ethnic restaurants for both residents and visitors. I also often hear that the vacancy rate here is acceptable compared to other downtowns, but significant empty storefronts are a big issue of perception.
2. The image of SDDA has turned around in the last few years since Julie Markowitz became director. It seems to have a good relationship with the city and with the downtown merchants. Lots of good publicity.
3. Empty buildings downtown. Need more economic development including residences downtown. I don't see a focused effort to identify & recruit the specific businesses that make up successful downtowns.
4. The advertising campaigns and promotional events that are used are outdated and

underutilized by the community. The director can be difficult to work with when she feels threatened by an outside thought.

5. There are many business leaving the downtown and doing holiday promotions is not enough to keep businesses here. SDDA has to work more effectively with Economic Development and tourism to get businesses and customers downtown
6. The newsletters are poorly organized, repeat information, and include huge attachments. All of this could be better organized on the website and newsletters could include links. Other than that, the SDDA is doing a phenomenal job!
7. Previous downtown business owner.
8. This is a mature program. SDDA's overall effectiveness can be seen in the increase of feet on the street, increase in tax revenues and the overall positive feeling that permeates the downtown.
9. The Eblasts keep me, as a private citizen, very aware of what's going on in a weekly format... has encouraged me to participate in some offers.
10. I have worked with the SDDA as Farmers' Market vendor, Farmers' Market President, Community Bazaar vendor. SDDA is an outstanding resource for connecting customers and business. Without SDDA there would have been no Community Bazaar and much less community involvement with the Farmers' Market. I very much value this office.
11. I believe their effectiveness has been somewhat hamstrung by the City. The trolley funding takes from SDDA. Some City staff is argumentative with the design committee. Business recruitment is more of a job of the economic development department and/or a partnership with SDDA. The SDDA staff has been effective with their communication efforts. The Sparkle and Sweets format should be used to develop more open house Friday nights etc. throughout the year. It is successful, vibrant, and brings an energetic crowd. Build upon success.
12. The director and assistant director are always involved with happenings downtown and bring in new ideas and work hard at keeping things that have worked in the past fresh. There is always room for improvement - but overall I believe that Staunton has a strong SDDA
13. We have an active director who has good ideas for the downtown. A brighter economy would help. There is room for improvement but overall the staff is trying hard to promote Staunton and keep people coming downtown.
14. I believe the merchants who work hard at thier businesses really appreciate and benefit from the special events in the downtown.
15. I have seen a more concerted effort of getting out there and doing more this year.
16. Over the last difficult year for retailers...SDDA has done a great job in getting people to Staunton(tourists). A few of our months in sales have been higher than in 2008.
17. I think the SDDA is a wonderful organization and does a terrific job. I would like to see them continue to do a great job and expand their effectiveness.
18. communication is excellent
19. recent development of downtown and general excitement about the downtown
20. I am a board member of one of the three non-profits in the Smith Center, as well as a Smith Center LLC member, and a member of the gift store committee. We would like more partnership involving how to market the unique space, opportunities, and programs offered at the Smith Center. We have limited staff and mostly rely on busy volunteers to get the word out and put on programs.

21. After a talk with the Director, I was dismayed to compare her assessment of empty storefront with my count--more empty by my count. The Augusta corridor also seems to be ignored.
22. when a business exits downtown, they never do an exit interview to learn why or what could change. they sit and do the same things over and over whether they work or not. The entire downtown is starting look just like it did back in the 80's when Belk left...a ghost town. There are more unkept empty store fronts now than in the past 20 years. There is no incentives economically or otherwise for small businesses to come to downtown Staunton.
23. The director and her staff, first rate!
24. Visibility.....member involment.....Gross sales.....Member attitude---commitment to keep on keeping on at the member level because they are motivated and encouraged by how aggressive and positive face presented by SDDA Staff and activities.
25. We'd all like to have more customers, but I can't think of anything to suggest beyond the things they already do (or changes to current activities to suggest, either).
26. Marketing and promotion are my big things, and I'm glad SDDA also puts these at a priority. Without good marketing, we're dead! SDDA is there whenever downtown businesses are taking it on the chin -- speaking up at City Council, contacting movers and shakers, etc.
27. I go downtown less and less. Shops that are still in business are beyond my budget.
28. my experience dealing with SDDA as a business
29. success of the programs and the opinions of the retailers
30. I work with a neighborhood association and we relay the SDDA eblasts to our members. The blasts are very helpful. Members appreciate the information on downtown events and also important notices about street closures, trash pickup etc.
31. As a non-business owner, there are many of these facets that I am not exposed to
32. I have been in business since long before the SDDA and really don't see where they have affected my business whatsoever. It has been really tough since 9-11-01 and the state of the economy isn't helping a thing. I know it is not the SDDA's place to remove snow but it would have been nice to have had my street cleared the week of Christmas like the streets were up town.
33. Not enough time spent in recruiting new business. Vacancy rate up. Not producing new businesses for downtown locations.
34. I see year round attempts to bring customers downtown. Some of the events are strictly for PR but that's a postive goal also-creating a "liveness" in downton Staunton. All of the events sceduled for downtown are not going to please everyone. Personally I would rather have Staunton Jams somewhere other than Main Street. The folks that like it would like it a block away and still visit the restaurants and as for the other buisnesses it would probably be better for business to NOT have the musical events on Beverley.
35. Not everyone reads the emails, needs to be more on tv and radio and signage throughout the city. I live very close to Gypsy Hill and not sure all the events that go on there nontheless what goes on downtown.
36. Don't see much with the SDDA label. You may be doing more than we see but we only know what we see. Newsletter are great but there need to be more than that and it needs to have a visible SDDA label so people give you credit for what you are doing. Otherwise it seems to many that you are not doing anything but sending out newsletters.
37. They rarely include the needs of businesses on Central Ave. We support the SDDA. Please support us.

38. Due to some of their programs that were held downtown, I went downtown to be a part as well as shop. Love the special events - Christmas parade, Sparkles and Chocolates, and the shop downtown promotions. Would love to see all the vacant shop space rented OR even set up an artisan's cooperative shop. Would like to see more of a general craft shop (like a mini Michael's with fabric).
39. They are out there doing what they advertise to do, so I will continue to support SDDA through my membership.
40. Level of participation and satisfaction shown by merchants and consumers during the last year that I have personally observed by attending activities and talking with other residents and business owners.
41. I have found that the staff from SDDA have been very cooperative, helpful and basically are great people to work with.
42. We have been here for 7 years and downtown walk in trade has been losing business every year. We are here only because of the internet trade.
43. i just don't see what happening sometimes. I feel like i'm out of the loop in what is going on around my business
44. Having a family business in Staunton for 49 years shows how dedicated we have been to keep ourselves here. We have been invited MANY times to move and we have not. I believe in Staunton. I need to be more envolved with SDDA. They provide a wonderful service for us.
45. The ebb & flow of businesses, esp. new businesses, within a wavering economy; my awareness of businesses already strapped with startup or business-maintenance expense to also support the burden of the additional Business District special tax. For the most part, I think the SDDA does all that it can reasonably do, given the economy and the temperament of individual, independent business owners.
46. SDDA can always do better. We need a consistent and generic marketing plan to the community. We need to remember that consistence of hours is better than sporatic night and Sunday hours. We need the SDDA employees on the street, not just the interns. Interns need training.
47. I think the downtown looks fantastic. I have lived in Staunton since 1979 and on E. Beverley Street since 1999. Downtown just gets better and better.
48. IF the business takes advantage of the offerings of the SDDA, they can very effectively be helped. If not, their loss.
49. too much money.. no results
50. Does great work promoting businesses and convincing them to stay open later.
51. I feel that the consistency of marketing materials across all programs is somewhat lacking. Ads and flyers, posters, etc are not as professional looking as they should be. Website is not attractive or effective in conveying information to SDDA members or to consumers. I think the ideas are great and the enthusiasm is certainly there, but that maybe a more simplified, consistent marketing compaign is what's required. I am also concerned about what seems like antagonism from Staunton and County residents outside of Downtown. I see so many negative comments from readers on newsleader.com; it's really a downer! What can we do to address this?
52. On the positive side are the weekly eblasts, marketing services, the look of downtown, and the extra programs during the year. Additionally I do see people downtown eating out and shopping. On the negative side, we have quite a bit of empty business space for rent

downtown so recruitment for new businesses could be an area to focus on. I do realize with the economic downturn it is not a great time to start a new business.

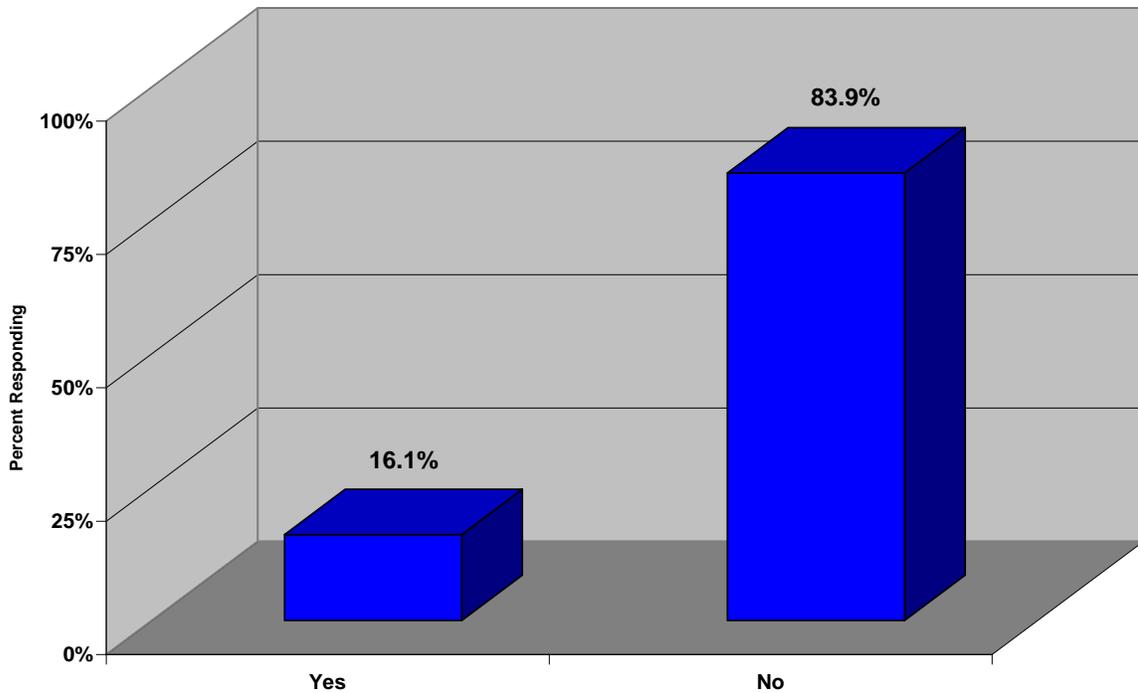
53. Promotional events that drive business to your door. SDDA has helped to organize a lot of these events that have increased traffic and sales.
54. Others may have had a different experience than my perspective. SDDA has been ineffective based on my perspective as a property owners. No question that SDDA seems involved in a number of activities, but based on the loss of tenants, the need for property owners to reduce rents to keep remaining tenants (due to tenant poor income), plummeting values as a result of poor rents and high cost, lingering critical issue of reworked flood zone -- these are critical development factors that seem to be worsening, so it is difficult to say SDDA is effective in downtown development.
55. Our opinion of the effectiveness of the SDDA is measured in community response demonstrated by attendance and increased sales as a direct result of promotions and downtown awareness efforts of the SDDA.
56. The requirement to follow SDDA's recommended hours of operation in order to participate in advertising/marketing efforts limits participation and effectiveness of the program.
57. Promotions efforts seem to be the main focus. Marketing is too scattered to be effective. Website is ineffective. Events are popular. I am not aware of some of the design, planning and development activities that were previously mentioned.
58. Increased property values (over 300% since 1994), streetscape/ preservation and reuse mark DT as a tourist attraction, development of arts and culture creating a strong creative class, almost 300 business created, almost 1000 jobs created.
59. Events and promotions are usually very effective in bringing people downtown and into our businesses.
60. Feel the SDDA has done a fantastic job in the last few years making their presence known and felt in the community, and brought downtown Staunton to life!
61. Focus on getting people downtown - marketing As independent private merchants we can't always afford a lot of marketing on our own.
62. This is a challenging economic environment. Promoting downtown has to overcome the noise from those who do not appreciate the value of a thriving downtown or who believe that downtown sucks money out of the city budget without giving back. If this is true, we need to fix it and if not we need to make it known that it is not a budget buster.
63. Most of the time questions have been answered in a timely manner.
64. E-blasts and ad kiosks have been great, SDDA employees are available and reliable
65. Don't know, but probably doing ok.
66. ? A place where tourists want to be – very charming downtown area
67. Need to communicate better – well in advance regarding programs
68. If SDDA went away – no noticeable change
69. I think it's getting stronger as residents get used to expecting it.
70. It's the only organization available to assist businesses
71. Don't even know who is on SDDA!
72. I don't know
73. Depends on who you are LOL

- 74. They try- but there has to be new blood on the committees-
- 75. Too much focus on “retail association” not enough focus on getting people downtown to enjoy what is here/available

Question 9: Do you serve on an SDDA Committee? Why or why not?

Approximately 84% of survey respondents indicated they had not served on an SDDA Committee. Table 18 displays the survey data, and respondent comments on this question follow the table. Comments are transcribed verbatim.

Table 18: Do you serve on an SDDA Committee?



Respondent Comments:

1. I have served
2. Board and Design Committee.
3. I have served my time, but I pay my dues.
4. Busy
5. I had hoped to make a difference I was mistaken.
6. Not active downtown
7. In order to help influence outcome.

8. I am not a business owner or retailer and just haven't been asked. Not sure what committees exist or whether I would have anything to contribute to them.
9. I don't have the disposable time at this point.
10. I have to admit I am not a regular attendee of meetings do to schedule conflicts. More people serving brings more expertise and talent to the table.
11. Time - I am very involved in other areas of the community, family, and self.
12. Have not been asked.
13. not been asked
14. I want to be involed in downtown and perhaps bring something to the table as a customer instead of a business owner.
15. No time.
16. I do not serve because even though I own a business in Staunton, it is not in the only place that seems to matter, "Downtown"
17. resident, not business owner
18. I have not been asked.
19. never been asked
20. Haven't been asked.
21. no time
22. very busy with our own organization
23. I am already on too many committees. If you could figure out how to add more hours to the day....
24. Timing of meetings.
25. It is nothing but a social gathering. Nothing ever gets accomplished.
26. Like to support downtown
27. Hard to leave my shop during the day is why I don't volunteer. Members MUST support SDDA Staff, activities and promotions for success of the Whole....is why I SHOULD volunteer. And I will do more/something in 2010. Thanks for this kick in the ass!
- 28.
29. No time: meetings are usually during my open hours, & I can't afford to close so I can attend ... plus I'm already busy w/ several other community groups in my 'off hours.'
30. I have served in the past and recently volunteered to serve again. But sometimes going to meetings just drives me crazy and I don't want to spend any more time doing that!
31. I do not feel qualified
32. no time
33. No time.
34. I do a great deal of other volunteer humanitarian work that occupies my time. I can't do it all, and this is not my area of interest.
35. Don't really see the point
36. Don't feel that I'm experienced enough to have valuable input.
37. Wasn't aware that I could join.

38. I was ask to serve and choose not to because i feel its closed minded to new ideals and maybe a more 2010 marketing.
39. Have not been asked.
40. Time
41. Never been asked to serve
42. I only joined in the second half of 2009. I drive in from an hour away to run my business in the late afternoon/evening, and then drive home at 9 each night. So when I am in Staunton, I am working. When I am not working, I am not in running my other businesses in Charlottesville.
43. I really don't have time.
44. We are no longer members.
45. i work 60+ hours a week. it is hard just running my business these days
46. Honestly I'm too lazy.
47. Time has always been a factor. Hopefully that will change soon.
48. To try and support the purposes of the SDDA and to join with others to improve the downtown business environment.
49. To be have a hand in decisions and to know what is going on.
50. Just not a committee person.
51. been there done that
52. Time constraint
53. Very busy
54. I give my volunteer time to other causes.
55. I try to go to the promotional committee meetings because events do increase traffic and sales.
56. Not in town.
57. Serve to assist the SDDA with identifying our target market and focuss on promotions and atmosphere that create an appealing downtown.
58. I serve on all the committees.
59. No time.
60. Have not been contacted
61. By being involved I have an input in decisions and am more aware of events and how they came to be. If you're not involved you can not complain about how something is done after the fact.
62. I am a private citizen, new enough to SDDA to doubt my value to a committee.
63. Time
64. No time

Question 10: Please list additional services or activities that you think SDDA should undertake to help downtown businesses thrive. (Comments transcribed verbatim).

1. Making Staunton a dining destination
2. More powerful business recruitment program.
3. Close West Beverly Street to automobiles. Recruit a grocery store to the district. Parkify Central Avenue
4. SDDA needs to get more local people to use the downtown.
5. Work with landlords to realize importance of fair rents and property upkeep.
6. I'm not sure what else they can effectively do.
7. Expand the downtown promotionals with more special events.
8. I don't think "additional" is appropriate, unless you're speaking of additional funds. Additional funding will allow this office a greater pool of resources to do what they do best.
9. More downtown living promotion.
10. can not think of any at this time...
11. A workers cooperative offering a bank of reliable temporary store clerks who can step in and man most any retail shop downtown for a small fee, part of which would go to the SDDA.
12. Nothing ADDITIONAL - maybe something different.
13. You should think about all businesses in Staunton and not just the ones located within someone's specific idea of "downtown".
14. more business to business networking opportunities
15. I really can't think of any.
16. More help with signage; more joint marketing and advertising. Help brainstorm on ways to get more local customers and more tourists in to the downtown. Partner more with the regional tourism efforts (GART, SVTA, etc.)
17. Can't think of any.
18. first- they should meet with property owners about possible rent reductions to fill all of the empty stores. They should also try to set up a "small business" incentives with economic development. Many small businesses don't employ 4 people or more. Hence the term "small" They should also try to implement more programs that don't "cost" to participate. Also, there "trick or treat" or "bunny hop" is a joke. It is just a way to contribute to the obesity problem and does not generate 1 sale. Once again it cost without any return.
19. Continued marketing activities. More activities downtown. Work more on keeping businesses open late & on weekends More focus on Christmas decorations downtown.
20. more events
21. Brainstorming sessions as to how to stimulate our downtown businesses....Weekly or monthly Roundtable ways to coop advertise or trade with each other.
22. sorry - drawing a blank!
23. co op buying of merchant supplies and what services other merchants use, such as phone, computer building maintenance

24. Well . . . I'm not sure they could take on any more and still stand up! A mentoring program between new and experienced businesses might be something to think about. And I'd like to see an even stronger Buy Local campaign.
25. Work with building owners to make rents cheaper, especially for start-ups. I would like to see a permanent farmer's market all year round selling affordable produce. We need better bakeries and ice cream shops. Existing shops are not good or affordable enough. Also, we should encourage antique stores to capitalize on the city's history. Would like an open-air antique market in good weather to complement the farmer's market.
26. high speed internet hot spot downtown
27. work with economic dev to establish financial incentives for business
28. I would like to see more advertising--television etc.
29. These aren't additional, but they are what I'd know about coming from the 'potential customer' base: Build on the shop local theme. Work with building owners to lower rents on all these empty buildings. Find uses and displays. The newspaper used to feature new businesses. Continue to find ways for businesses to get the word out on their products and on the customer service and knowledge they provide. Anything to alert people to what businesses have and what their hours are. Post phone #s or emails so customers can confirm before they make the trip. Support website development and links.
30. If you could do a promotion along the lines of offering a "punch card" to tourists -- well, anyone for that matter -- that if they get their card punched at, what, 5 merchants, 10 merchants? they earn one free ticket to Blackfriar's Theatre. ("Punched" could mean punched with a special punch, or initialled, or stamped with a merchants stamp, etc -- not sure the best way to it). I can see a couple of ways to do this: 1) a card gets punched only when they make a purchase of "x" dollars or more; 2) a card that, once punched by 40 downtown merchants -- no purchase necessary, just getting people to come downtown and make them walk into a business -- would earn them that ticket. That might also entice new patrons of Blackfriars, if they could earn a free ticket. Instead of Blackfriars tickets, a variation on the same thing could be done with cash giveaways, or some other discount or reward.
31. no opinion
32. more services & promotions for businesses/members located outside the downtown area
33. Put more effort into business recruitment. Publicize the strategy and tactics. Track results - vacant store fronts.
34. I would like to see a downtown antique show on Beverley, promoted throughout VA and nearby states. New Oxford and Gettysburg PA have such an event and Abington VA all have a weekend that antique dealers (and we have lots in our area) set up in the downtown to have a show. This would be perfect in the fall and maybe even would work to have it in the evening during the Expo antique show.
35. More advertisements and letting those who live here know what is going on.
36. Help control rents so more businesses can afford to be downtown.
37. SDDA Budget used toward more, Street Directories, Better signage for businesses, marketing on our trolley's, working toward using our Government local TV station for businesses to reach our local people. Promotional events when it is the slow season not just holidays, they market them selves, restaurants bring alot of business to the down town area use restaurant receipts for discounts in business to bring people back during there hours, work on neighborhood hours like Goergetown all businesses required to stay open

past 5:00pm by working with the city to give property owners savings on taxes when they require this from renters and in turn property owners give one month free rent to compensate for employee payroll needed which in the long run increase sales, which increase taxes collected, which raises value in property, which allows owners more competitive rent due to more activity, which increases the longevity of businesses staying open, as well as desire to locate to downtown and full buildings create the cluster marketing (the more there is the more people you attract. Thank you for asking!

38. Economic development
39. With the recent snow, could we have had something last minute - build the biggest snowman with hot chocolate at the Split Banana? More activities that draws us in and before we know it, we are eating, drinking and shopping. One thing we did in the town that I lived in was to have the Budweiser Clydesdales, the wagon and Spot the dog come through town delivering cases of beer to restaurants and bars. Then there was a pub crawl. Tee shirts for the bar crawl were purchased ahead of time and only those with the Tee shirts were allowed in. The whole town came out to see the Clydsdales, take pictures and eat downtown (done at dinner time). A great community event.
40. Improve sdda website, as it is fairly horrendous at the moment.
41. work with merchants to have more consistant hours of operation and later hours at least a couple of evenings a week, especially during Nov. and Dec.
42. I really cannot answer this question because of the shape the economy is in. I think the staff of SDDA is very capable and is working hard to come up with anything that might help Staunton thrive.
43. Downtown weekly raffles. Take away the restaurant tax. Varied contests to draw people. The more action downtown the more free publicity we will get.
44. help with promoting your business, presenting information to help improve your business. especially as far as advertizing in today's markets
45. Help decorate and organize things to beautify downtown.
46. I think they have provided a great service thus far.
47. n/a
48. React sooner to economic conditions
49. In my experience, more attractive financing options would have been helpful.
50. close
51. Focus on attracting business
52. I think the city should clear the sidewalks of snow at least on Beverly St. I know there a regulation for all properties to remove snow with 24 hours after the snow event but if the city did the job then all the sidewalks would be equally accessible for shoppers.
53. Find a way to enhance marketing of rental spaces - beyond the insiders.
54. Promote efforts of downtown SDDA promotions to attract our target market and Holiday and weekend visitors. What activities would visitors of our local Hotels and Bed and Breakfast Inns like to see downtown? Local crafts, artwork etc., as a sidewalk event to encourage them to stroll down our sidewalks?
55. Better website to serve property owners. More facebook type WOM buzz.
56. We should provide a better webiste wiht blogging and interactive components. Create programs for Senoirs and teens. Create a business incubator and entrepreneur package.

Work with the City to create more marketable incentives, where the SDDA, enabling to present this directly to the entrepreneur to strengthen recruitment.

57. None
58. Would love to see a portion of downtown Staunton become a pedestrian mall.
59. unknown
60. Have X-mas parade on a Sat. am- keep parade goes in town afterwards to shop. Not on a school night.
61. No additional, just do the ones listed well!
62. Help market empty space (I assume SDDA does this)
63. Extend business district west
64. Develop a strategy to preclude downtown workers from monopolizing the best parking
65. SDDA should be advertising in Richmond, Washington, Philadelphia, - most (90%) of our customers are from outside the area – not locals
66. I would like more major advertising efforts- Money is an issue (I know)
67. Promote what can be found downtown. Compare prices of key items with big box stores. Focus on quality of product.
68. I think they should continue to expand the activities currently on their plate- SDDA has more an enough stuff to do.
69. Better promotion of our downtown as a whole! Businesses should promote their stores
By example is a good step for council, board members, tourism
70. The warf area and train station needs more promotion not just Beverly Street
71. THEY SHOULD TREAT ALL BUSINESSES EQUAL. THEY SHOULD DEAL WITH THE DOWNTOWN BUSINESSES!
72. Pressure property owners to fix up their properties to a higher standard other than “handyman” quality.
73. Group Health Care
74. Come look at all of the empty buildings- ask local residents what they truly think about “our town” – don’t blame just SDDA – a lot of it falls on city hall and council.
75. Events, festivals, anything that brings people downtown!
76. More emphasis on commercial development & promotion of downtown rental (?) Current and accurate info on downtown business rents, square footage, uses, etc.

**Question 11: What would you like to see SDDA accomplish within the next few years?
(Comments transcribed verbatim).**

1. Draw more local and tourist visitors.
2. Bring in key businesses for locals (doctors and professional services) and visitors (truly unique boutiques selling local crafts/goods instead of generic home decor places :))
3. Helping downtown stay afloat while and until the economy recovers.
4. Create a high tech/ green zone downtown with very aggressive benefits recruit incubation businesses from nearby educational institutes. Create a theater based tourist destination

- downtown. Integrate MBC.
5. See above
 6. See #14
 7. Reevaluate its focus on first floor retail with its emphasis on Beverly ST. It is a very short term feel good approach. Effective long term strategies are hard to implement when short term results dominate the demand.
 8. Fill the empty stores with a variety of shops, especially men's and women's clothing and products for the home (other than gift store type inventory).
 9. I would like to see the SDDA have a public "face" There a bunch of initials behind a great number of activities. Let the community see who the people behind the initials are! Make it more personal.
 10. The Central Avenue area must be addressed effectively. The sewer project is a start. Must get the City to openly engage in its redevelopment.
 11. I suppose more advertising maybe - but the best form of advertisement is word of mouth, so I guess just getting people to come into town to experience what we have to offer - we have a wonderful downtown and I believe slowly we are getting more recognition by local citizens and visitors.
 12. Come up with a list of types of businesses that downtown needs and begin to actively recruit them to the area to fill specialized niches.
 13. We need more people living downtown. We need to encourage more people to convert their second and third floors to residential.
 14. I would like to see the Staunton Economic Development Dept. work with the SDDA to fill some of the empty store fronts.
 15. Increase joint advertizing outside of Staunton to bring in more tourists.
 16. Expand your services to include businesses in Staunton besides the ones located just downtown. Other Staunton businesses help with the local economy as well!!!
 17. promote, help, create more businesses downtown
 18. Recruiting new businesses and help finding retailers for the empty Grand Piano building.
 19. Grow the retail stores in the downtown area
 20. continue focus on community involvement
 21. continue to flourish
 22. Have every space possible filled with people flocking from other areas to come spend money in downtown Staunton and have those people leave feeling that they have really gotten their money's worth.
 23. Include businesses off Beverley in their focus.
 24. There are so many problems that the "next few years" would help.
 25. District should be expanded up West Beverley. More fully integrate north end of district. Create an artisans market, where local products can be sold similar to Farmers Market. Partner with MBC, Governors School & Lee for staffing support.internships.
 26. more events
 27. GEt the stores to stay oen till 7 PM and be open on Sundays in season (s).
 28. increased business downtown overall, & hopefully increase the variety of businesses by

- encouraging 'missing elements' to open ... but don't ask me how!
29. Fill the empty stores
 30. Market ITSELF well to all stakeholders. Continue with the "if it puts feet on the street" standard for deciding where to spend energy and resources. Recruit a pharmacy for downtown. Expand the number of high-end residents who live downtown. Street entertainment every Friday night May through November.
 31. All of the above.
 32. high speed internet hot spot downtown
 33. Sdda does a good job.
 34. help keep businesses going
 35. no opinion
 36. Fill up vacant spaces downtown
 37. Do whatever can be done to help fill up the empty spaces. Work with property owners to encourage affordable rents to fill up stores with a variety of shops.
 38. Possibly get bigger businesses downtown to attract people down there in hopes that they will visit and shop the private businesses.
 39. Fill all the downtown stores.
 40. Same as above.
 41. staff be more visible- "walk the street". and keep a record of contacts
 42. Provide services equally to all areas of "downtown".
 43. Fill all the vacant space, make it a diversified downtown as far as shops go, continue with monthly events.
 44. Get free wifi to the downtown area, as I was first promised when considering Staunton for my business.
 45. a couple of new merchants would be nice to fill some of the empty spaces.
 46. Faciliate more networking and partnering opportunities between local organizations and businesses that will strengthen the flow of information and use of resources more effectively.
 47. n/a
 48. Help fill all the empty stores.
 49. just not sure
 - 50.
 51. If we could bond together, which again takes our time, and support SDDA better, we could be a stronger force when talking with our city government about our concerns. Our street projects have put a strain on our downtown merchants. It would be great if we could receive some tax abatement until all this work is finished.
 52. n/a
 53. Better support for all businesses! More generic buy local advertising. Events are not as important as consistent general advertising!
 54. Continue the great job it is now doing.
 55. close

56. Retain more businesses
57. I would like to see a budget that includes a PR professional who can take our existing assets (established programs and logo) and wrap it all into a simple, effective marketing campaign that includes a website, print ads and radio. I also would like to see some additional outreach to the community at large, addressing concerns that they seem to have (like that perception that downtown gets a disproportionate share of tax dollars from the City).
58. I think that with the arts emphasis in Staunton we may be able to support and benefit from a weekend music program during the summer perhaps on Friday nights so as not to take away from the concerts in the park. (Think about Friday night music in Floyd, Va). We have so many music groups in the area and small groups who play in businesses downtown that we may be able to support something like that.
59. Try to get 100% of downtown businesses to be members and be part of the events. Not sure why a lot of business don't take advantage of this great resource.???
60. I don't have the answers, but I remain concerned about low property values despite renovation and improvements because the rent potential remains far below the investments. There is a disconnect between cost of property and the likely return. Need more alluring draws to downtown to increase business (tenant) revenue so that properties can become viable.
61. Staunton is becoming a weekend destination for travelers and we need to attack the big issues of walking traffic. Among some are trash pickup and recycling, signage to guide visitors using downtown maps or business listing by street names displayed on corners. A study of other successful small downtowns can be enlightening. We want to promote the downtown but then ensure that once they arrive we have created a pleasant visit and they will want to return.
62. Shift focus from promotions to recruitment and occupancy retention.
63. We should provide a venue for more public art, performance in a programmed fashion, with City support. Complete the Streetscape development in the entire District, focusing on the areas North on Central Avenue, Augusta and Lewis Streets. Encourage businesses and property owners to join the District to increase size and tax collection to connect with related development around District boundaries.
64. Continue doing great job.
65. Continue to promote downtown and available parking to Augusta County residents so they will support our City!
66. 1)Economic miracles. Go for it. 2)Reduce perception of downtown as elitists sucking off the government dime.
67. unknown
68. It would be nice if they worked with the historic district so all businesses would have approved signage eblasts, meet me downtown
69. Finish bricking the sidewalks as promised years ago, to tie in the entire downtown.
70. Focus more on small merchants- Quite feeding Shakespeare and so many of the “artsy” shows-
71. Focus on maintenance, business retention & recruitment
72. Expand the area it serves – probably extend toward W. Beverley More

73. Fill empty stores and help adv. Businesses
74. Keep high profile for downtown
75. All business fronts filled by a business
76. Anything!
77. More advertising – extended hours cost us money – don't tie advertising to extended hours
78. Work with all businesses in Staunton
79. A marketing plan targeting professional not based on children events – Enough with children and candy
80. Become the Chamber of Commerce for Staunton. Progressive dinner at area restaurants.
81. Look at downtown merchants and listen to all the merchants needs and stop trying to please the city
82. A big weekend scale event specifically for downtown that can be repeated and eventually become part of who Staunton is (i.e., Roanoke's Dickens of a Christmas, Galax Music Festival, art in the park),
83. Educate local government, newspapers, and residents of importance of shopping locally. Use of 350 project.net to better understand budgeting esp. to younger adults who shop box stores on internet.
84. Focus on the smaller businesses not just the high end people or not just people who have time to support the SDDA.
85. Attract more business.
86. DO SOMETHING PRODUCTIVE TO KEEP BUSINESSES DONWTOWN!
87. As a professional (illegible) I look to SDDA to support my retail neighbors and restaurants to keep “downtown” vibrant, I don't know what these members need – they would be in a better position to say.
88. Expand to include businesses within the Newtown Corridor.
89. Help every business not just some
90. More effective marketing of vacant properties
91. Work on the entranceway into city. (Streetscapes – homeless and mission folks who frequent this area!) Bad first impression!
92. Be more effective – more downtown events – Julie is doing a good job but you have to have city hall and council behinds businesses and they aren't
93. Privatize and we could use a Downtown Retail Association but is should not depend on government funding. SDDA is little more than a voice for city government/staff

Question 12: What's the most important think SDDA has done to help your or your business or property? (Comments transcribed verbatim).

1. Promotion
2. Help us coordinate with local merchants.
3. n/a

4. Website
5. Networking opportunities
6. nothing
7. N/A
8. Effectively promote the downtown to others outside the city.
9. It has helped me stay "in the loop" of downtown development as a private citizen.
10. They began the Downtown Community Bazaar 2 years ago. That helped me, as a vendor, sell my products at the start of the Christmas shopping season. The feedback from my customers has been AMAZING!
11. Downtown design and streetscape, encourage evening hours.
12. SDDA is always willing to add any activity that our business is conducting to their eblasts (emails, which has an extensive mailing list) which they do twice a week. Also this eblast has been put together in a good format and easy to read.
13. Kept downtown as popular and as active as possible.
14. Not sure
15. Support the Red Brick District.
16. By providing the large scale promotions to increase the traffic for downtown businesses during the holidays and throughout the year.
17. Let me know what the businesses downtown are doing and what the city government is doing.
18. Promoting Staunton and advertising in out of town publications.
19. the eblast has been great
20. monthly news letter
21. working to help develop our particular part of the downtown economy and activity
22. Helped with joint marketing.
23. Keeping me informed of events and opportunities.
24. Let me borrow a sign that said "Another new business in downtown Staunton" 5 years ago. That is it.
25. NA
26. event promotions
27. Advertise...PR Promotions....Advertise....Free promotions and exchanges with NPR and NP TV....Charity auctions---silent auctions. TRAVEL WRITERS.....Invite and entertain writers from any and all newspapers and magazines.
28. hmmm ... help me promote my in-shop events, I suppose
29. email lets us know what is going on but should have more events listed such as conventions at the Stonewall Jackson Hotel
30. 1. Be a cheerleader! 2. Field great events that bring people downtown. 3. Keeping the awareness of Staunton's downtown community -- its challenges and its victories -- high just be existing and working so hard.
31. advertise
32. Cooperating on the eblasts has been very effective, helpful for both customers and businesses.

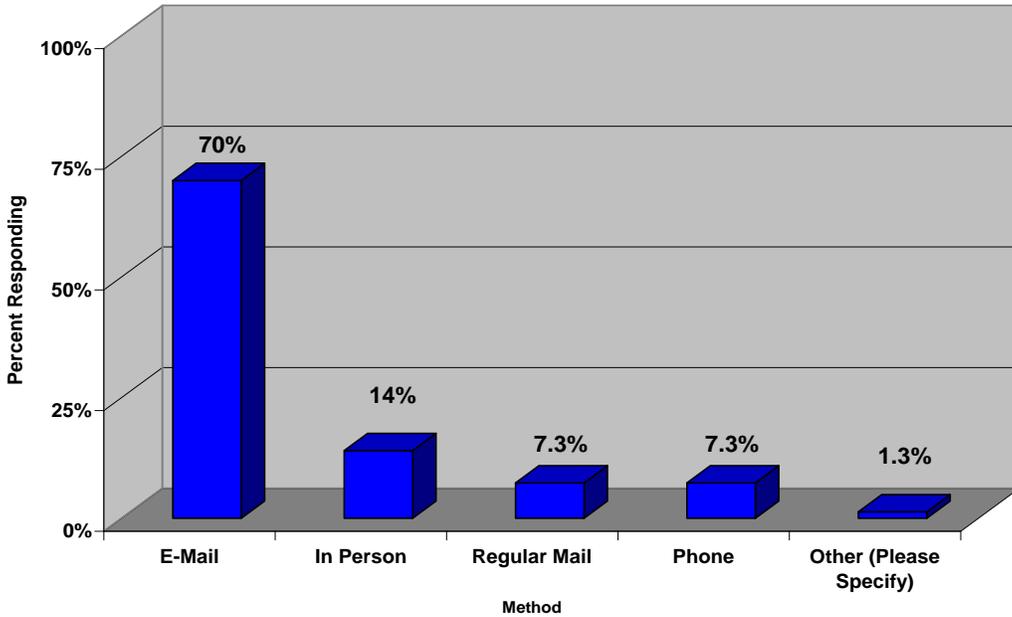
33. not a thing
34. Acquired advertising prizes for downtown which I personally love and they have excelled in the promotion of downtown in general.
35. As a private citizen, keeping me informed of activities downtown.
36. They always ask what do you need? They keep affordable member prices, and encourage businesses to work together.
37. SDDA has always been responsive to our questions. We enjoy the Friday night festivities,
38. I won a promotion this year!
39. My business is listed (and hyper-linked) on the sdda site, though the site is pretty bad. My business has been mentioned a couple of times in the e-blast. That's about it.
40. Wonderful advocate for those who live and work downtown--create a very positive atmosphere!
41. They are great in keeping retailers informed.
42. Nothing that we are aware of.
43. network downtown businesses, help in advertising
44. Make me more aware of my business neighbors and the changes occurring in the city.
45. My business specifically, not too much. Possibly, in the most general terms, to create a downtown business environment or milieu that is energized enough so as to be conducive to providing professional services.
46. clearing house for promotions, advertising and events
47. My business joined SDDA in 1996. SDDA referred me to my first tenant. Since selling my building in 2004, I became an individual member. I now find information dissemination the most helpful service.
48. cut the SDDA assessment to 0%
49. Publicizing us
50. Promote downtown as a destination
51. Events like Sparkles & Sweets.
52. SDDA has done marketing of my properties when I was looking for renters.
53. Promotions! Again, planning events that drive customers to your door.
54. I've lost tenants and had to reduce rents and am expecting to lose more. I am not aware of any leads. It's been on the market for several years. Very discouraging. Downtown is attractive, but doesn't seem very viable as a business enterprise. Again, perhaps others have had a different experience. I cannot answer this question.
55. Promote awareness to our beautiful Historic Downtown.
56. Advertisement
57. Street entertainment, facade improvement, event support.
58. Events & promotions. Eblasts update & newsletters.
59. Keep us abreast of what is going on in the City
60. Help develop and maintain a viable business community in downtown.
61. everything

62. Eblasts, Meet me downtown
63. They keep track of commercial rental space available, occasionally I get a referral from this.
64. Out of town promotions
65. SDDA has more retail focus than professional services.
66. SDDA hasn't really had an impact on our businesses
67. Help market the property
68. Nothing
69. Little
70. ?
71. Promotions
72. Attract high end shoppers – not accomplished by Halloween candy, Easter Candy – Back to Champagne and Chocolate – pay the ABC license.
73. Nothing!
74. SDDA liaison between city and constituents. SDDA has made great strides in hearing what the businesses really want and need. They have improved greatly in public space w/better garbage pickup – (illegible) of sandwich boards and merchant seminars
75. Joint Holiday promotions. The more the merrier.
76. Can't think of anything for my business. I know others have benefitted.
77. Special events
78. Nothing!!!
79. Promotion and care taking , downtown encourage beautification Help new businesses.
80. Helped promote and support my retail/ restaurant neighbors
81. n/a
82. O or close
83. Touting the message of Staunton
84. Help find tenants for bldgs
85. Promote groups coming into town in conjunction with our business.
86. Nothing- we have done it ourselves
87. SDDA has become more effective at communicating with downtown business and becoming a liaison between the city and businesses.
88. zero

Question 13: What method of communication from the SDDA are you most likely to respond to?

Respondents felt strongly that e-mail was the most likely form of communication that they would respond to. Table 19 displays the respondent's choices.

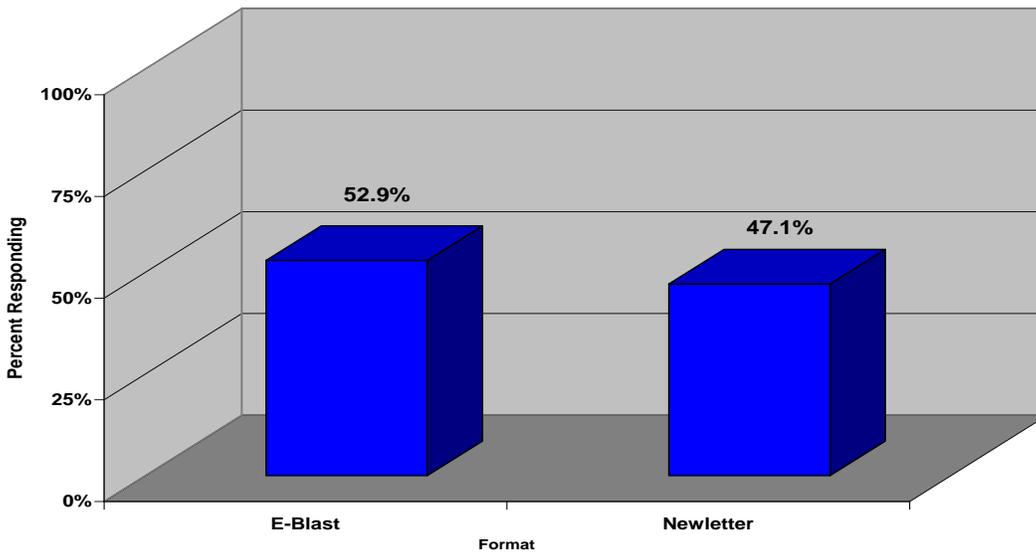
Table 19: What method of communication from the SDDA are you most likely to respond to?



Question 14: Are you receiving SDDA information? (Please check all that apply)

Respondents indicated they were receiving the e-blast and newsletter on an equal basis. Table 20 displays this data.

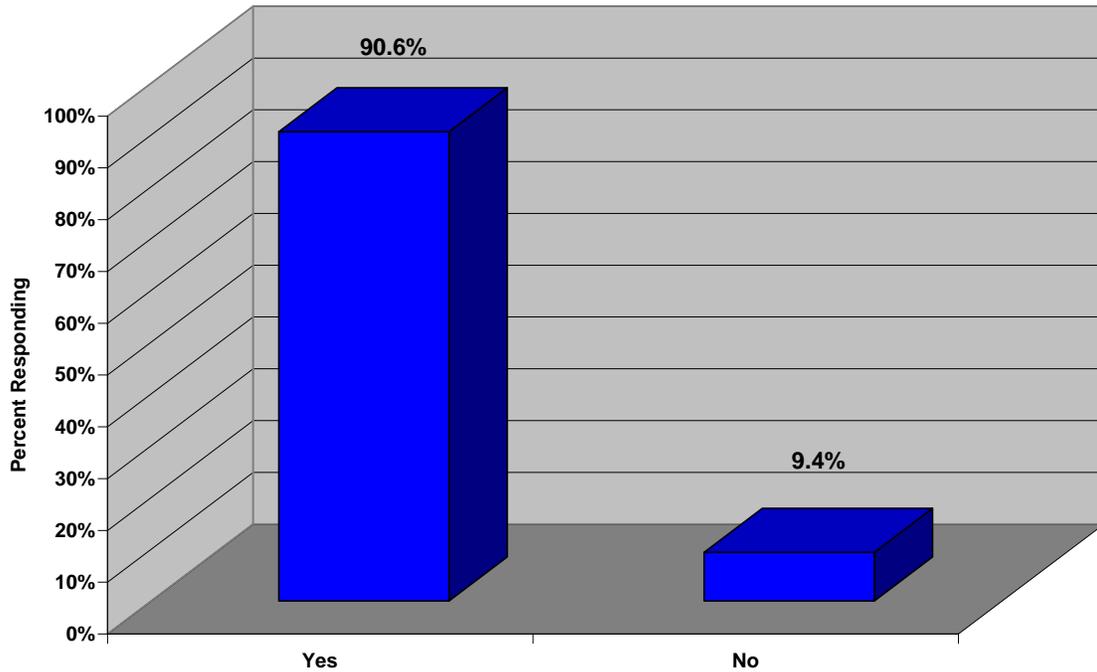
Table 20: Are you receiving the following SDDA information?



Question 15: Are you reading SDDA information? Why or why not?

Respondents overwhelmingly indicated they were reading the information received from SDDA. Table 21 displays their response, and the comments on the question follow the table. These comments are transcribed verbatim.

Table 21: Are you reading SDDA information?



Why are you or are you not reading SDDA information?

1. I like to be informed about what is happening.
2. I skim it, as there's a lot of content.
3. As a former board member, I am interested in what's going on.
4. I read it but much of it is redundant or I feel not applicable to me.
5. I read it to find information about our community
6. See question 11, I believe it was. I addressed this there.
7. Too Lengthy
8. To much short term information.
9. Let's me know about offers I may not have heard about elsewhere. Let's me know when new businesses/restaurants are coming.
10. I want to be informed. It does me no good to have all these wonderful resources at my fingertips, if I ignore them!
11. I almost always read all the information - I have learned about programs/events happening in our area that I have attended and enjoyed - (I do not get the local news

- paper so this is a great resource for me).
12. I read it most of the time but a lot of the times it is the same information. I wish the e-mails could be kept under 1 mb. Anything bigger clogs up my system.
 13. To keep up with everything that's happening in the downtown.
 14. It is important to be informed!
 15. I read all my SDDA information.
 16. read to find out current activities and relevant information re downtown
 17. interest in downtown development and events
 18. I want to keep informed with downtown news to benefit my business.
 19. keeps me informed about various activities
 20. it helps keep me in touch with other downtown businesses
 21. to learn what is happening in the community
 22. it is important to know what is going on
 23. It's important to know what is going on.
 24. I want to know what is going on.
 25. Because it doesn't contain any information.
 26. to know what's going on
 27. Can be very helpful information, but too much and too frequent. Could be streamlined, better email interface
 28. Sometimes too long...I like "bullits" quick and to the point.
 29. need to stay informed!
 30. I read it to keep up with what's going on, and to look for opportunities for bettering my business.
 31. I try to stay aware of what is happening downtown
 32. to know what is going on
 33. keeps me connected
 34. I scan it to see what's going on and to see what to pass on to others.
 35. Sometimes I'm in a hurry and don't read, but usually I skim over it for discounts or deals or to find out what's going on that weekend downtown.
 36. I try to keep up with what is going on
 37. Local info
 38. Don't have the time to read all the ads that come through email.
 39. Can't see the forest for the trees. Format seem disjointed and random so I find it hard to follow. Both seem cluttered.
 40. I like to know what's going on in downtown.
 41. it's a great way to learn what we have going on in the community.
 42. I love getting email communication from SDDA. I have it when the time suits me to read it.
 43. To keep up with the gossip.

44. i'm curious as what is in the newsletter, see what is going on, see what other businesses are offering
45. I usually skim the first half of it.
46. I read it because it is important to my business and me.
47. To keep up with the activities of the various committees, some of which I participate, and to be aware of what is happening in the downtown.
48. To know what is going on. The eblast tend to get monotonous in appearance so it is hard to see what is new. Maybe new info could be highlighted in another color.
49. I find the information well written and timely.
50. i read it but the format is awful
51. I read it sporadicaly, based on my time constraints
52. I usually read the eblast to see what is going on downtown. I read the newsletter for information.
53. I want to stay informed about what is happening so I can plan for my business.
54. Scan it very quickly. Focused more on events and retail interests rather than property marketing interests.
55. The SDDA provides listings of events in Staunton as well as current news that pretains to our neighborhood. It is essential to be well informed as business owner.
56. I read it to keep abreast of downtown events.
57. Eblast can be too mcuh sometimes.
58. I enjoy learning about what's going on.
59. I read the parts that seem most important/applicable to my business.
60. How I get my Downtown Staunton news
61. I say 'yes' because there is no option for 'most of the time'. If I am stressed with daily operations I don't always take the time to read the information.
62. I like to be aware of downtown events as they affect my life.
63. So much information that it becomes cumbersome to sort through
64. To find out what is going on.
65. Don't receive any info
66. To see what our money is being spent on
67. Don't read e-blast. Poor presentation. Sometimes read newsletter
68. Time constraints
69. I get enough to read as it is.
70. Not relevant to anything
71. They don't' do anything to help my business
72. Ok always late
73. To keep up on upcoming events

Question 16: Please share any additional thoughts. If you would like someone from SDDA to contact you directly or if you would like to become a volunteer, please include your name and contact information. (Comments transcribed verbatim).

1. SDDA - Keep up the good work!
2. Keep up the good work!
3. I would like to know why other Staunton businesses have to pay more to be included in things just because we do not operate according to somebody else division of "Downtown" when our taxes go to the city also. Who is to say that we do not encourage or bring business to "downtown" businesses? Kathryn McMillan, owner Clutter Conversions, LLC 540-294-1523 Thank You
4. I appreciate all SDDA does for our organization and for the city
5. Michael Organ Belle Grae Inn 540 886 5151
6. You're/we're doing a great job!
7. Thanks.
8. no opinion
9. I would like you to find some other or additional judges for the window contest.
10. Jane Schwalm 885-0015 would like to volunteer when I am in town
11. Staunton is a beautiful town and has made tremendous progress over the years. I think we have a lot to offer both residents and visitors. I would like to see more people from the city and the county take advantage of the great shops, restaurants and etc.
12. Not at this time.
13. I appreciate the opportunity to share some thoughts.
14. n/a
15. Keep up the great work!
16. close it down and everyone would be fine
17. The elblast is a great tool. You probably have a wide variety of interests among your elblast recipients. So, if you did a weekly or weekend schedule at the beginning of the elblast it would be easier for people to know what is going on downtown without reading all of the information for business and property owners.
18. I have had great experiences dealing with the SDDA. The promotions have been profitable and customers like the events. It has also been in my experiences that anyone who complains about SDDA and its events aren't doing any promoting for their business at all and are struggling because of their own decision and business practices.
19. It is a very difficult times and new approaches are needed to address lingering issues. Nothing in my answers reflects new insight - except some issues (like rents) are getting worse. The key question you asked is effectiveness. There is plenty of activity, but it is important to evaluate the effectiveness of each activity in reaching an overall result of a viable downtown where vacancies are few, businesses are healthy and making money enough to pay the rents necessary to justify owning and maintaining property. I cannot say this result has been achieved, so I cannot say that SDDA has been effective.
20. I,for one,appreciate a personal visit--questions I may have can be answered quickly which provides better understanding for

21. I wish the SDDA could have enough funds to afford a PR firm with a real marketing campaign.
22. Don't mail survey without return postage.
23. If SDDA and the downtown districts included a wider area – perhaps it wouldn't be (illegible) as an elite part of town plus the fortunes of areas outside might improve.
24. SDDA is a total waste of tax money. Businesses get nothing from it. Tax just pays their staff – we never see them. We have all talked to them – they have no interest in listening.
25. Yes
26. Page 1 Question 3 I would like to stay open, but I got on the bad side of the SDDA Chamber of Commerce, Economic Development early on and I better not say anything negative about Staunton. They made it very hard on me so I doubt I will be able to stay in business! ANOTHER DOWNTOWN BUSINESS WILL CLOSE!!
27. Good job – sorry to have to leave Staunton!
28. Thank you for this opportunity-
29. I would like to see SDDA and the visitors bureau work more closely together to create combined brochures and prevent duplication of materials and also co-planning events that highlight the resources and facilities available in our community.