



Implementing the Model: A Blueprint for Growth

Beginner Conversion Test Site Research Final Synthesis of Findings

July 2003

Introduction

This document provides a final overview of the NSAA Beginner Conversion research work conducted during the 2002/03 winter season. The summary below synthesizes feedback from beginners and new entrants to the sport (both in focus groups and online surveys), as well as the perspectives of some industry executives and managers provided in panel sessions at the NSAA National Convention and Trade Show in San Diego, CA.

This final deliverable for the 2002/03 season represents a continued effort on the part of NSAA to fully document and understand the experience of beginners and new entrants, with the goal of increasing the rate at which these skiers and snowboarders adopt the sports as a true lifestyle (“conversion”).

This research effort will continue in the 2003/04 winter season, with additional ski areas incorporated into the Beginner Conversion program, as well as a longitudinal study of respondents from this season’s customer research. The new entrant research will continue to delve into the key motivators for trial and predictors of conversion, and the longitudinal study will enable us to document ongoing conversion success.

The program for the coming winter season will also incorporate more of a concentration on youth entrants (kids and teens), with focus group sessions in three market areas and surveys specific to kids and teens. With this attention on youth entrants, we hope to gain a better understanding of the best programs and strategies for kids and teens, to ensure that our industry continues to prosper in the future.

The focus on conversion is intended to prepare us as an industry for the final step in the Model for Growth long-term strategy: an increase in trial. Resorts that have refined and perfected the steps for conversion will be ready to take the next step and welcome a larger number of new entrants. Only those resorts that have successfully improved the key aspects of the beginner experience will thrive when reaching out to new entrants.

The format of this deliverable is to integrate both the key findings from the Test Site consumer research with feedback from industry panelists at the NSAA National Convention in late May 2003. The findings and recommendations outlined below represent opportunities for ski areas to improve the beginner experience and beginner conversion rate at their own resort and for the industry as a whole.

Executive Summary

This section briefly outlines the highlights from the research program. For more details on these and other topics, please refer to the body of the report.

- Most ski areas are focusing their conversion efforts on the never-ever segment with aggressively priced and merchandized “learn to ski” and “learn to ride” programs. Realize, however, that **over half of beginners are not never-evers** (meaning that they have skied or boarded in the past); creating a program tailored to those who have participated in the past is important as well.
- Motivations for trying skiing and snowboarding can be broadly categorized into three groupings: 1) **intrinsic motivation**, which has a high likelihood of conversion, 2) **tag-along motivation**, which has a low likelihood of conversion, and 3) **social motivation**, which is the largest group and has a neutral likelihood of conversion.
- The large majority of beginners (81 percent) rented equipment, meaning that your resort has the **highest likelihood of interacting with beginners in the rental shop** (as opposed to the lesson, which only about 65 percent of beginners take). In the rental shop, helpfulness of staff and level of personal attention were generally well received, whereas level of crowding and the fit/comfort of boots were the most problematic aspect of the experience.
- The results of the research show that the **level of satisfaction with the lesson declines steadily for group sizes of eight students or more**. The importance of class size goes hand in hand with the compatible grouping of students. Staffing beginner lessons with the **most senior, experienced instructors** has been a key strategy for improving the lesson overall and increasing beginner conversion at some resorts.
- Other areas related to the learning center include: the observation that **three-day learning packages** are more effective at conversion than a single group lesson; a primary concern of beginners is the **level of crowding in the beginner area**; and **roving instructors** are important for non-lesson taking beginners (which account for 30 to 35 percent of all beginners).
- New guests seek out sources of pre-arrival information, including the resort web site and talking to family or friends. The results of this study indicate that **beginner web pages receive active use and are important in communicating with new entrants**.
- Resorts with conversion success employ **guest services staff at key locations to interact with all guests, including beginners**. Such employees might be located at a parking lot drop-off location, a rental shop, or other key locations of the ski area.
- **Inviting a guest back** – even before they leave the ski area – should be standard practice for all customers, but especially for beginners. Opportunities are numerous to invite the guest back: at the end of the lesson, when returning rental equipment, in the shuttle back to the parking lot, and others. An additional tactic for beginners in particular is to **send them a postcard, letter, or email** thanking them for their participation and inviting them to return, perhaps even with a coupon for a discounted lift ticket or other special deal.
- The age classification of the beginner group is quite diverse. While kids and young teens clearly constitute a large segment of beginners, this survey research focused on participants 15 and older. Overall, the **average age was 32.2 years**, with about one-third of beginners in the 25 to 34 age range. Additionally, the ethnic makeup of the beginner participants was quite diverse, and much broader than the riding and skiing population as a whole. While each resort’s beginner customer base showed some variation, the overall results indicate that **77 percent of the beginner population is considered to be Caucasian American** (compared to approximately 87 percent of all snowboarders and skiers and 68 percent of United States citizens nationally).

Methodology

Surveys were conducted at eight NSAA Beginner Conversion Test Site resorts, which were selected in part because of their focus on beginner programs and updated beginner facilities, including reorganized rental shops and improved beginner terrain. As well, the group of resorts was selected for its diversity in terms of geography, size of ski area, and customer base (day versus overnight). Over 1,200 completed surveys were collected via the Internet from new entrants at the following ski areas:

- *Bogus Basin, ID*
- *Holiday Valley, NY*
- *Hunter Mountain, NY*
- *Mt. Hood Meadows, OR*
- *Northstar-at-Tahoe, CA*
- *Wachusett, MA*
- *Wintergreen, VA*
- *Winter Park, CO*

The number of surveys from each resort was weighted to represent the estimated number of beginners at that ski area. Thus, the overall figures are representative of beginners at these eight areas.

At the end of the report, some feedback from the Test Sites on the programs and practices that contributed to the overall level of conversion success is included.

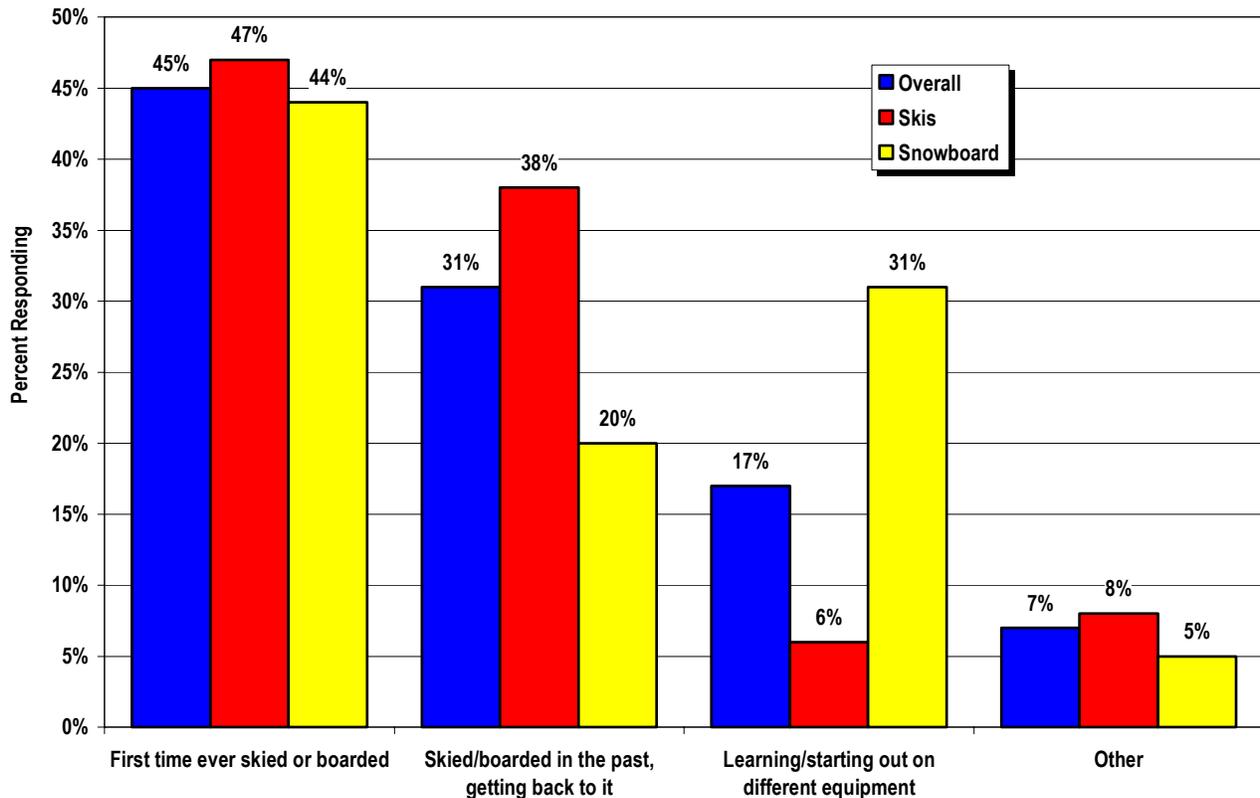
Key Highlights/Observations

1. Profile of Snowsports Participants

- Less than half of respondents (45%) were skiing or snowboarding for the very first time – the true “never-ever”. Another twenty-nine percent had skied or boarded before, but were getting back into it (“revivals”), and the final 17 percent had skied or boarded before, but were trying out different equipment (“crossovers”). This finding suggests that the term “beginner” and “never-ever” are not interchangeable. Thus, it is important to realize that **many participants who have been out skiing or riding several times still consider themselves beginners.**
- Most ski areas are focusing their conversion efforts on the never-ever segment with aggressively priced and merchandized “learn to ski” and “learn to ride” programs. Realize, however, that **over half of beginners are not never-evers**, and creating a program tailored to those who have participated in the past is important as well (such as Wachusett’s “Return to Learn” series – check out: http://winter.wachusett.com/learn/learning_center/return_to_learn/). Such a program would incorporate the student’s prior experience and build on it, rather than starting from scratch.
- The high proportion of revival skiers and riders returning to the sport after an initial effort in the past is significant; it indicates that these respondents are giving the sport another chance. Note that a larger proportion of skiers (38 percent) than snowboarders (20 percent) are revivals. Because of their past experience, and because they came back to try skiing/boarding again, they are much more likely to continue. **This segment is ripe for conversion and represents a great opportunity.** Make sure you have programs in place to appeal to this large segment of beginners.
- The age classification of the beginner group is quite diverse. While kids and young teens clearly constitute a large segment of beginners, this survey research focused on participants 15 and older. Overall, **the average age was 32.2 years**, with about one-third of beginners in the 25 to 34 age range. As well, the second largest age cohort was aged 35 to 44 (26 percent of respondents). The older the customer, the more likely he or she is to be a revival participant, as

opposed to a true never-ever. Recognizing that the majority of adult beginners are over the age of 25 is an important consideration in staffing, programming, follow-up, and other tactics in effectively reaching the beginner.

FIGURE 1
CHARACTERIZATION OF RECENT BEGINNER EXPERIENCE
BY EQUIPMENT TYPE

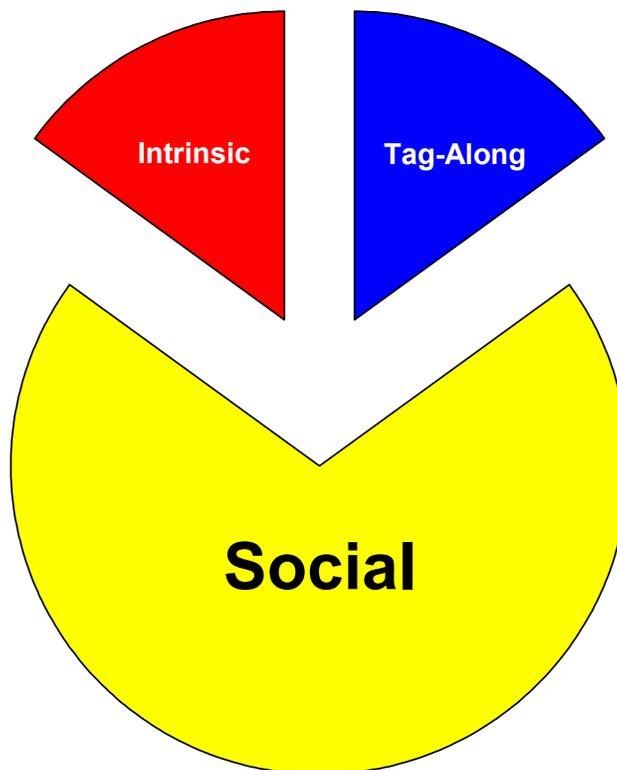


- Additionally, the ethnic makeup of the beginner participants was quite diverse, and much broader than the riding and skiing population as a whole. While each resort’s beginner customer base showed some variation, the overall results indicate that **77 percent of the beginner population is considered to be Caucasian American** (compared to approximately 87 percent of all snowboarders and skiers and 68 percent of United States citizens nationally). Seven percent of beginners in the study identified themselves as Asian American, 3 percent were Hispanic American, 2 percent African American, 1 percent Indian/Native American, 6 percent an “other” ethnicity, and 4 percent declined to state on the survey form.

2. Motivations for Trying Snowsports

- In order to more fully understand the motivating factors behind trial, and how they relate to the likelihood of future conversion, we examined how the importance ratings of different motivating factors grouped together via a statistical technique called exploratory factor analysis. Broadly speaking, what we uncovered were three general classes of motivation among beginners:
 1. Intrinsic motivation. A relatively small percent of individuals who try skiing/boarding do so because of strong intrinsic motivation and a general enthusiasm for the sport and the experiences it provides. Despite its small size, **this group of individuals is very likely to become core skiers or snowboarders**.
 2. Tag-Along motivation. Another relatively small group try the sport primarily because of situational factors; they have no particular embedded interest in enjoying the types of experiences skiing/riding can provide, and are therefore unlikely to ever become core skiers or riders.

FIGURE 2
CLASSES OF PRIMARY MOTIVATION
APPROXIMATE PROPORTION OF BEGINNER POPULATION



3. Social motivation. The third, and largest, segment of people who try skiing/riding do so because of the **influence of a friend or family member**. These individuals are relatively neutral with regard to continuing with the sport. Depending on their initial experience, they can either continue on and convert to core skiers/riders, or drop out of the sport entirely. This segment is the most critical to conversion, as they “sit on the

fence” about their intent to continue. Efforts to increase conversion should take the motivations of this segment into consideration when formulating strategies and tactics.

- The pie chart in Figure 2 illustrates the approximate size of these three segments of beginner riders and skiers. Note that while a factor analysis does not quantify the specific sizes of each segment (it provides more of a spectrum of groupings, rather than specific separation), the approximate sizes are presented, showing that the social motivation is the largest group of those who try skiing and snowboarding. Thus, this group represents the greatest opportunity for the industry as a whole.
- Beginners typically have multiple motivating factors that drive their decision to try the sport, however one of these three factors typically has a dominant or primary influence. Table 1 below provides descriptions of these primary motivating styles and indicates the extent to which each relates to the likelihood of conversion.

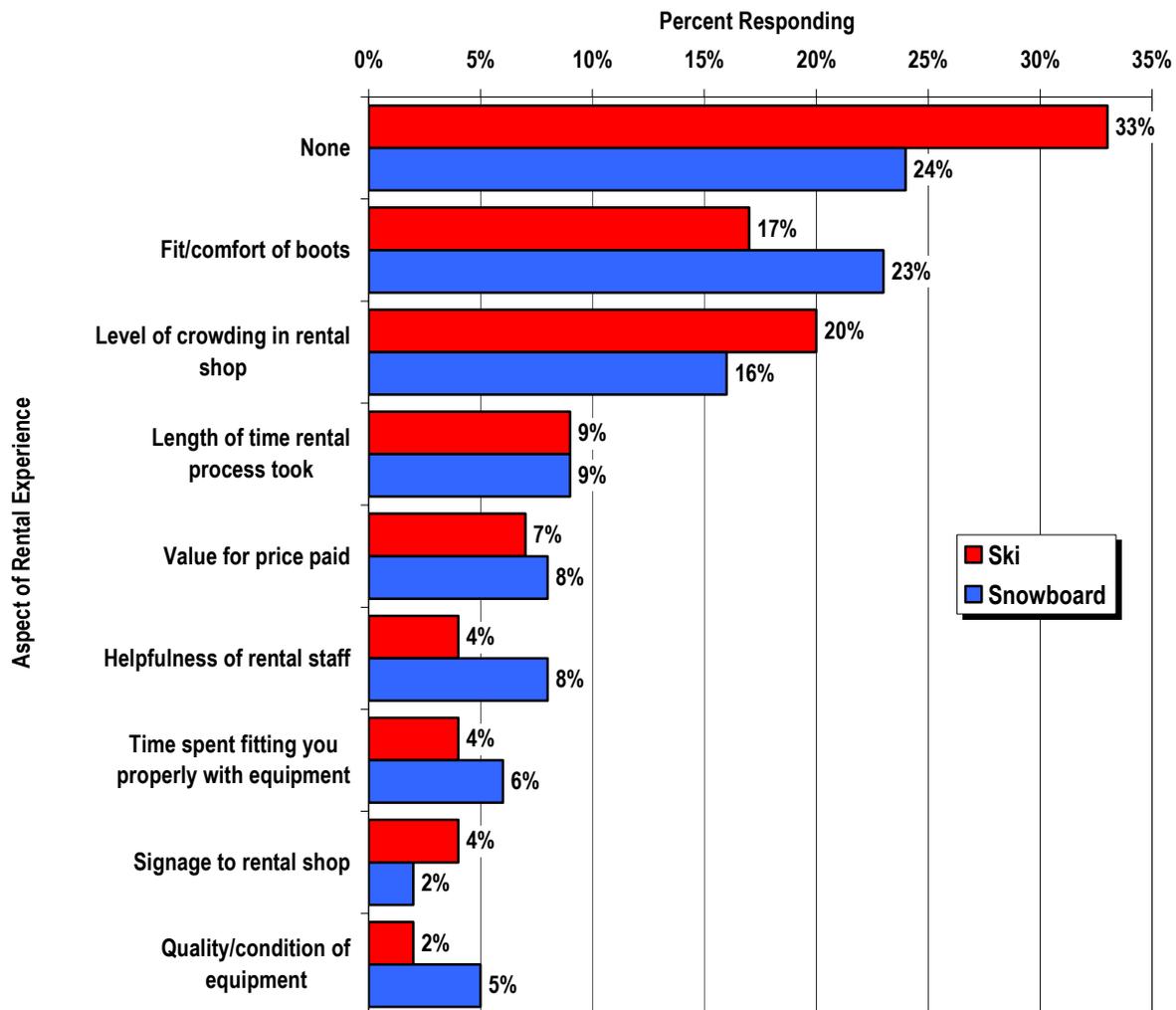
TABLE 1
 DESCRIPTIONS OF MOTIVATING STYLE AND RELATION TO LIKELIHOOD OF CONVERSION

<p>Intrinsically Motivated Skier/Boarders are generally enthusiastic about most aspects of the skiing/boarding experience but particularly so by...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being outside in the winter • The challenge/ excitement • To get away • The scenery/ beauty • Health and good exercise • To make new friends/ acquaintances <p>And are NOT drawn to the sport by...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A formal group/ club • To be with family 	<p>Tag-Along Skier/Boarders are generally drawn to the sport because of situational factors such as...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Something they read or saw on TV • Special promotion/ offer/ deal • Went with a formal group/ club <p>And are NOT drawn to the sport by...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The challenge/ excitement • Being outside in the winter • To try a new sport/ experience 	<p>Social Skier/Boarders are drawn to the sport...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To be with family • The scenery/ beauty <p>And are NOT drawn to the sport...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To try a new sport/ experience
<p>Finding: Likelihood of Conversion?</p>		
<p>↑ HIGH</p>	<p>↓ LOW</p>	<p>↔ NEUTRAL</p>

3. Rental Shop Findings

- The large majority of beginners (81 percent) rented equipment, meaning that your resort has the **highest likelihood of interacting with beginners in the rental shop** (as opposed to the lesson, which only about 65 percent of beginners take). Thus, the importance of a positive experience in the rental shop is important. Further, the rental shop is not only one of the first parts of the day for a beginner, but is also generally the final opportunity for your resort to have a positive interaction with the beginner at the end of the day. Make sure that **the day both starts and ends on a positive note** by providing a high-quality experience in the rental shop.
- The best aspect of the rental shop for beginners was the helpfulness of the staff and the level of personal attention received, a testament to customer service training for these employees. These results indicate that **customer service training is definitely worth the investment**.
- Each of the successful rental shops employs a greeter at the main entrance to the shop to direct customers, answer questions, inform about wait times, and to generally serve as a “traffic cop.” This staff person was seen as invaluable, and several shop managers noted that this employee was the last person sent home on a slow day. Each rental shop should **strongly consider employing a greeter at the resort rental shop**.
- The most successful rental shops also understand how to **balance the amount of personal attention given with the overall time for the rental process**. Certain beginners need more attention than others, and the ability to identify those who need additional hand holding and then deliver that personalized attention makes all the difference. At the same time, efficiently processing customers who don’t need the extra help is equally important. Hunter Mountain utilizes an orange dot sticker on the lift tickets of beginners, enabling their entire staff, including rental shop staff, to easily identify beginners without stigma; such a program ensures the beginner receives a bit more hand holding and special attention.
- The observation above is borne out in the most problematic attribute of the rental shop, the **fit/comfort of boots**. One in five respondents noted that this was the area most in need of improvement in their experience with the rental shop. Taking the time to properly fit beginners with boots is a very critical component for the rest of their day on the slopes. Your rental shop staff should be trained to explain how the boot is supposed to fit and to allow the customer to try on several pairs if necessary. Your rental shop should have ample room for customers to sit down and try on boots. Also, make sure your rental boots are dry and in good condition.
- The other problematic attribute of renting equipment was the **level of crowding in the rental shop**. This finding speaks to the necessity of balancing the personal attention with speed of processing, the importance of customer service training, and the need for a greeter at the entrance to the rental shop to tell guests how long the rental process will take and manage the expectations of the guest.

FIGURE 3
ASPECT OF RENTAL SHOP MOST IN NEED OF IMPROVEMENT

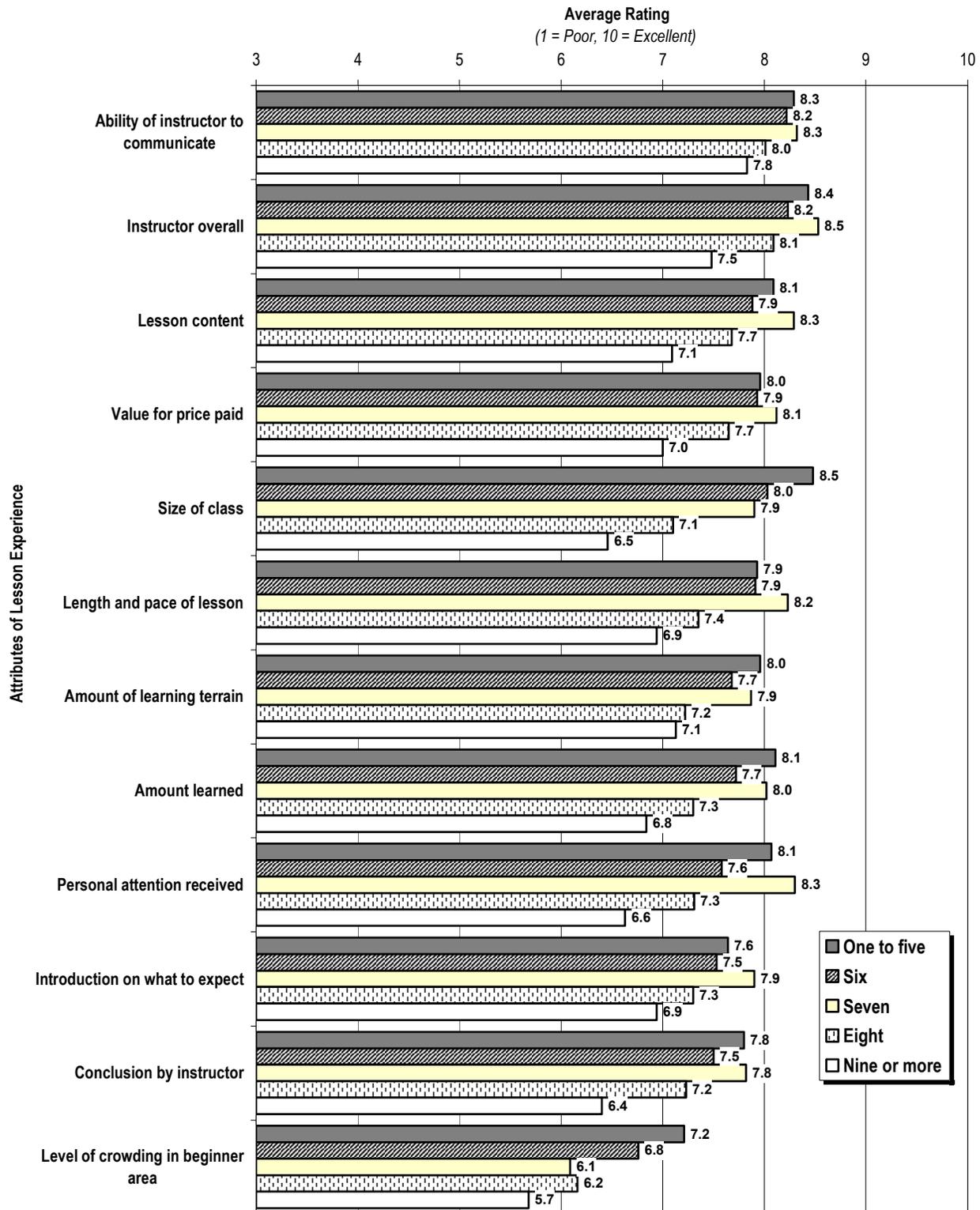


- Those renting snowboard equipment were generally less satisfied with their rental experience than were skiers. Notably, while some snowboarders ranked the fit/comfort of boots as a positive attribute of the rental experience, a **significant proportion of snowboarders indicated that the fit/comfort of boots was most in need of improvement**. This finding is counter to the general perception that snowboard boots are generally comfortable and places further emphasis on the boot fitting process for all equipment renters. See the graph in Figure 3 for an illustration of this finding.
- Recall that about 30 percent of beginners in this study were revivals. As well, **45 percent said that they had rented equipment before**, indicating a large percentage of renters with prior experience. This segment is thus familiar with the rental process and can be dealt with in a more efficient manner than the true never-ever.

4. Learning Center Findings

- The results of the research show that the level of satisfaction with the lesson declines steadily for **group sizes of eight students or more**. Having strategies in place ahead of time to deal with peak crowding and still provide a quality experience is critical to the operation of your Learning Center. Note in the graph in Figure 4, which shows the average level of satisfaction with various attributes of the lesson by the number of students in the class, the satisfaction levels drop consistently for groups of eight or more students. The importance of class size goes hand in hand with the **compatible grouping of students**.
- **Staffing beginner lessons with the most senior, experienced instructors** has been a key strategy for improving the lesson overall and increasing beginner conversion at some resorts. Consider adopting such staffing at your resort, though it might be a cultural shift. Buy-in from upper management and adjusting your pay scale will be important in making such a shift more streamlined.
- Many programs that are successful at conversion involve **three or more days on the snow**. Consider moving away from the emphasis on the single day package and instead stress a three-day learn to ski/ride package, whether it is three consecutive days or three weekends out of four. Such programs are much more successful at achieving conversion and are also well received by customers. Resorts that have marketed and merchandized these multi-day programs, in combination with a consumer-friendly pricing structure, have reported large levels of success in the number of participants and the conversion of these skiers and riders.
- The **level of crowding in the beginner area** was the most problematic aspect of the lesson. Get creative about where and when you teach beginner lessons, and consider alternate locations. Beginners need plenty of space to feel comfortable and safe, essential elements in the snowsports learning process.
- Having a program or tactics in place to serve **non-lesson taking beginners** is critical to your overall conversion strategy. Most commonly, resorts have started to experiment with **roving instructors to offer tips to non-lesson taking beginners**. These instructors have been successful in spreading goodwill as well as motivating these non-lesson takers to enroll in Learning Center programs. Commonly, instructors are assigned not to a lesson but to the beginner area in general. They are trained to identify and approach struggling beginners in a friendly and non-intimidating manner. After offering a tip or two, the instructor could even describe the types of lessons offered at the ski area and give the guest a coupon or business card for a lesson in the future. The next section discusses non-lesson taking beginners in greater detail.
- Some different approaches to lessons include **station teaching** and **lessons on demand**. While only about 3 percent of beginners in the survey participated in a station teaching lesson, the approach can be effective during crowded times. However, those in station teaching lesson groups were generally less satisfied with the experience compared to their group lesson-taking counterparts. Nevertheless, considering different lesson tactics is an important component of the overall beginner conversion strategy.

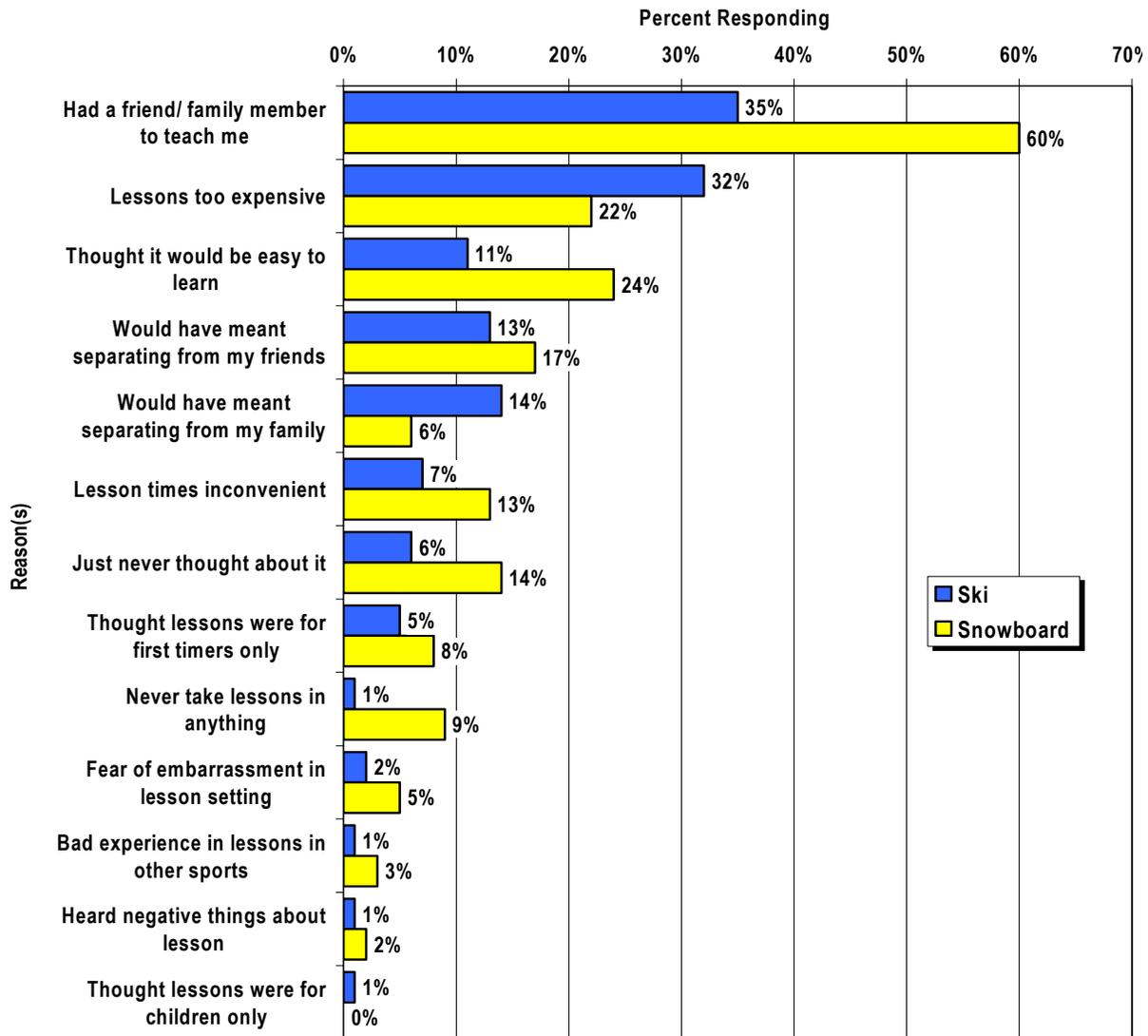
FIGURE 4
AVERAGE SATISFACTION WITH LESSON ATTRIBUTES
BY LESSON SIZE



5. Non-Lesson Taking Beginners

- About 25 percent of the sample in this study decided to learn without a lesson, though nationally the figure is probably closer to 35 to 40 percent (based upon results from the NSAA National Demographic Survey). The reason for the relatively low proportion of participants taking the non-lesson learning path is the source of the participants, which was primarily lesson rosters and rental forms from the NSAA Beginner Conversion ski areas.
- Resorts that **focus only on Learning Center programs clearly miss a large proportion of beginners**. Thus, the other aspects of the experience – arrival at the resort, the rental shop, the experience on the snow, the base lodge, employee friendliness and helpfulness, among others – become the defining attributes of skiing and snowboarding for these beginners. Resorts that do not give attention to these other attributes are at increased risk of losing beginners.

FIGURE 5
REASON FOR NOT TAKING A LESSON
BY EQUIPMENT TYPE



- The most substantial reason for not taking a lesson was **having a friend or family member to teach the participant**, which was particularly true for snowboarders. The expense of lessons was another important reason for not taking lessons, though this time a more common reason among skiers than snowboarders. These findings suggest the continued importance on aggressive price points for new entrant lesson packages that many resorts have already adopted.
- Respondents also said that they thought it would be easy to learn – those who were on snowboarding equipment were more likely to cite this reason for not taking a lesson than were those on skis. Other reasons for not taking lessons include separating from friends, separating from family, inconvenient lesson times, and just never thought about it. The graph in Figure 5 illustrates the findings from this question, with the results segmented by the equipment type of the participant.

6. Marketing/Communications Findings

- Understanding that the conversion of beginners goes well beyond the lesson program is critical; the entire spectrum of the beginner experience must be considered. The start of that spectrum is with **pre-arrival information sources**. Similar to anyone trying a new experience, becoming educated about what to expect ahead of time is important to skiers and riders. Three-quarters said that they talked to friends to find out what skiing/riding would be like, and another 32 percent said they talked to family. Clearly, word of mouth is the greatest factor in learning about skiing and snowboarding.
- The only other information source of significance was **visiting the resort website**, with 52 percent responding that they used it to learn what snowsports would be like before arriving at the resort. Eighteen percent used a resort brochure prior to arrival. Only seven percent said they did not seek out any information prior to arrival at the ski area.
- In terms of any material provided by the resort (web site, brochure, etc.), information tailored specifically to a beginner is important. Make sure such collateral explains in detail what to expect at the resort and how to prepare for skiing/snowboarding. Such information might include an introduction of skiing/snowboarding to new entrants, what to wear (including sunscreen and goggles/sunglasses), what to bring, where to go upon arrival, when to arrive, how to rent equipment, directions to the ski area, and other information. The results of this study indicate that **beginner web pages receive active use and are important in communicating with new entrants**.
- Resorts with conversion success employ **guest services staff at key locations to interact with all guests, including beginners**. These greeters are very important in the arrival location at the resort, in front of the ticket window, and in the rental shop. As well, clear and well-placed signage throughout the resort should make locations and directions clear not only to beginners, but also to all new guests of the ski area.
- Inviting a guest back – even before they leave the ski area – should be standard practice for all customers, but especially for beginners. Opportunities are numerous to invite the guest back: at the end of the lesson, when returning rental equipment, in the shuttle back to the parking lot, and others. An additional tactic for beginners in particular is to **send them a postcard, letter, or email** thanking them for their participation and inviting them to return, perhaps even with a coupon for a lift ticket discount or other special deal. However, the timing and method of delivery of such a message is something to consider carefully. For instance, one resort found greater

success in sending an offer to beginners in the following season rather than in the same season. Make sure you have developed strategies to keep in touch with your customers and to invite them back to your ski area.

- “What gets measured gets results.” Measuring conversion, or the rate at which first timers return to your ski area, is a critical step in the process of conversion. The most progressive resorts have a **database of beginners who visit their resort**, and these ski areas track these customers via an electronic card or pass. Consequently, these resorts can measure how their conversion efforts are working (though knowing if and how often they visit *other* ski areas is not possible). Database management and tracking of results are important for all guests, but particularly important for new entrants.

7. Executive Findings

- One of the pitfalls seen in discussing conversion with Test Site resorts is getting **buy-in from management and resort staff**. Getting your various departments who interact with beginners – rental shop, ski school, guest services, ticketing, and other departments – on the same page and working together is a challenge but essential to providing a seamless experience for the guest. Communication between departments, whether a weekly meeting or a daily memo, is one of the best ways to coordinate these various departments.
- Some selected capital improvements to enhance the skiing/boarding experience for beginners might be appropriate at your area. **Conveyor surface lifts are seen as an effective investment**, as they alleviate the anxiety over riding a chairlift and allow new entrants to focus instead on learning the on-snow skills they need. When allocating capital dollars, make sure you consider beginner improvements in the mix of possibilities.
- New entrants are **much more ethnically diverse than the overall population of skiers and riders**. Achieving conversion among this segment has its own special challenges, and each resort is particularly unique in terms of the mix of ethnicities. Some strategies might include providing alternate language collateral material (including web sites), projecting images of ethnically diverse participants in resort material, targeted hiring of staff who interface with beginners, keeping family groups together during lessons, and other ideas.
- Like anyone trying something for the first time, beginner skiers and snowboarders thirst for information about **what it will be like and what to expect their first time**. Many resorts have effectively delivered this information via a prominent page on their web site. Important basics include what to wear and where to go; also important are communicating what the experience as a whole will be like and the value of taking a lesson.
- Be observant and creative about the needs of your beginners and all customers, and recognize situations at your ski area that might represent an opportunity. For example, Northstar realized that parents and other relatives of some beginner kids came to the resort not to participate with their child, but rather to observe. Most of these adults did not have footwear suitable to standing in the snow for very long, and were sometimes getting in the way of the lesson. The resort decided to build a small set of bleachers adjacent to the beginner area for spectators to watch their kids in the lesson.

8. In Their Own Words

The Test Site participants were asked to reflect on the programs and practices at their resorts that have the greatest positive impact on conversion. Some selected feedback from the resorts includes the following:

Hunter Mountain, NY

- A separate 33,000 square facility and operational changes have helped integrate key departments and the entire learning experience. We designed the Learning Center to provide guests a seamless flow from curbside drop-off and greeters to on-demand lessons and abutting learning zone. The teaching terrain for both adults and children is spacious and ideal.
- Beginners, identified by a small orange dot on their lift ticket and rental form, are helped throughout the day by caring staff and supported from the ownership level on down. The emphasis on beginners includes paid and specialized instructor training and a rotation system for all instructors, including the best and most experienced, to teach first-timers.
- Three visit packages and incentives for guests that purchase a one-day experience continue to be very successful in getting first-timers back to the mountain. Three visit package see a small percentage of breakage.
- For the 2003-04 season, a fail-safe tracking system that offers rewards for beginners is being implemented. We look forward to the provided data and increased conversion.

Holiday Valley, NY

- Several things contributed to our success last season. Primarily, it highlighted this resort's ongoing and consistent message of dedication to its guests (both new and established). Holiday Valley is a well-run, customer-oriented resort, and it is that "common thread" that ties all departments together.
- The obvious highlight of last season was our "one-stop" shopping for beginner skiers and riders, The Creekside Lodge. This was a perfect example of the teamwork that is needed to make a concerted effort to both keep pace with and exceed our guests' (both present and future) expectations.
- This centrally-located, state of the art building was a perfect example of "The Valley Team" at work. Several seasons before construction began, all departments who would be involved were asked for their input. This included but was not exclusive to, equipment rentals, mountain ops, customer service, ski and snowboard school staff, resort administration and building maintenance. Everyone's input was considered and included, up to and through the actual construction process. Changes and concerns were addressed, as they arose (by committee), and resolved usually with a consensus of opinion. The result was a well-planned, efficient and beautiful multi-use building, designed in such a way, that each individual who enters it feels exclusive and welcome.
- In a nutshell, convenience of one place to go, a consistent message to new participants, easy access to beginner terrain, constant vigilance and empowerment of staff, plus using our most experienced and talented teachers, and a delightfully appointed and beautiful building all contributed to continuing Holiday Valleys commitment of excellence in service to new participants ... and all our guests!

Mt. Hood Meadows, OR

- At Mt. Hood Meadows this past season, we de-emphasized the one-time learn to ski or snowboard package (\$50), and aggressively promoted the 3 Time Learn to Ski or Snowboard Passport - for \$99. The Passport included coupons for the first three visits which included a beginner lift ticket, 90 minute group lesson and equipment rentals. A fourth coupon offered our Mountain Master package (all mountain lift, rental equipment and 90 minute lesson) for half price. There were also coupons for a discount in our sport shop and a free hot chocolate.
- The Passport was promoted at the Portland Ski Show, was prominently featured in our Resort Guide and web site, and featured large format displays at our rental shop. More than 1,300 packages were sold, which was impressive considering that past attempts to sell a three-time beginner package for \$99 at the ski show netted less than 100. Oregon Snowsports Industries Association in partnership with Fox and Subaru also funded a \$120,000 TV advertising campaign in Oregon and produced 10,000 brochures announcing that every ski resort in Oregon had a three time learn to ski or snowboard package.
- This season we will continue to promote the Passport and develop tracking programs which will show individual usage and redemption (conversion), as well as setting up systems to dialogue with Passport holders following trips to the mountain.

Wachusett, MA

At Wachusett, there were four things that contributed greatly to our success last season:

- The two program names we gave to our first and second visit person. For first timers we had the Learn To Turn, a one-day package for \$65. Then for \$30 more we had the Return To Learn, a second visit offer.
- The instructor business card incentive program, which provided incentive for instructors to offer that second visit purchase before the person left the premises. Each business card that was turned in earned the instructor a \$5 credit.
- Once the person purchased the second visit they received a \$30 Gold Passport to skiing that afforded them \$7 off all future tickets for the season.
- And finally, we instituted a program called Today and Everyday, which is a list of what an employee needs to do on an ongoing basis so all guests are treated well.