

# Visit South Walton

Meeting Planner Study

February 2019

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# Study Objectives

- Explore meeting and event planners' perceptions of South Walton as an event/meeting destination

# Survey Methodology

- Internet surveys with the following types of meeting planners:
  - 1) “**Contemplators**” - Considered South Walton as a destination for one of their meetings/events, but ultimately chose another destination
  - 2) “**Choosers**” - Chose South Walton for one of their meetings/events
  - 3) “**Avoiders**” - Did not consider South Walton for their meetings/events
  
- A total of 274 meeting/event planners were surveyed
  - 84 Contemplators
  - 136 Choosers
  - 54 Avoiders



# Conclusions & Strategic Thoughts

# Prioritize Efforts

## Follow the Tried & True Marketing Philosophy

- Focus most marketing efforts on Choosers<sup>1</sup>
  - The probability of securing business is greatest with repeat customers – in every line of business!
- Focus remaining marketing efforts on Contemplators<sup>1</sup>
  - The second most efficient target market will be Contemplators
  - There will be no wasted money/effort to make them aware of SW
  - Over half of Contemplators will definitely consider SW for meetings
- Avoid “Avoiders<sup>1</sup>”

<sup>1</sup>“**Contemplators**” - Considered South Walton as a destination for one of their meetings/events, but ultimately chose another destination

“**Choosers**” - Chose South Walton for one of their meetings/events

“**Avoiders**” - Did not consider South Walton for their meetings/events

# Prioritize Efforts

## Focus on Qualified Leads

- Samples of meeting planners for this study emanated, in part, from lists provided by hotels and properties.
- Marketing to Choosers and Contemplators on these lists will be more efficient and more effective than marketing to other prospects since these meeting planners have already held meetings in SW or inquired about doing so.

# Keeping Business – Focus on Choosers<sup>1</sup>

## Key Findings

- Profile of Chooser
  - Book Annual Meetings, Professional Development meetings & Retreats in SW
  - Require 100 to 125 peak night rooms
  - Have 150 to 250 meeting attendees
  - Attendees stay 3 to 5 nights
  - Want a \$100 to \$200 ADR
- Choosers identified the following competing destinations
  - Amelia Island
  - Destin
  - Golden Isles
  - Gulf Shores
  - Atlanta
  - Orlando
  - Tampa
  - Savannah
  - Dallas
  - Miami
  - New Orleans
  - Nashville

<sup>1</sup>**“Choosers”** - Chose South Walton for one of their meetings/events

# Keeping Business – Focus on Choosers

## Key Findings

- Reasons Choosers choose destinations
  - Sufficient meeting space
  - Affordable ADR
  - Ease/cost of transportation
  - Type/configuration of space
  - Logistics
- Attendees at Choosers' meetings want to:
  - Visit the beach
  - Eat at a variety of restaurants
  - Golf

# Keeping Business – Focus on Choosers

## Key Findings

- Choosers became aware of South Walton (SW) via:
  - Leisure trip there
  - Employees' suggestions
- Choosers source meetings through:
  - Direct contact with hotels
  - Independent online research
  - 3<sup>rd</sup> party site selection

# Keeping Business – Focus on Choosers

## Key Findings

- Accessibility
  - Driving to meetings is not seen as an obstacle by Choosers
  - SW rated by Choosers as more accessible by car and plane
- Advantages of SW
  - Beaches/sand
  - Weather
  - Great place to relax
  - Golf
  - Activities for guests/spouses
- Limitations of SW
  - Properties unavailable when needed
  - High total package prices
  - Too few (direct) flights
  - Crowded/congested

# Keeping Business – Focus on Choosers

## Key Findings

- Significant %s of Choosers will consider meetings in SW in:
  - October – 51%
  - May – 40%
  - September – 39%
  - April – 38%
- Choosers describe meetings in SW as:
  - Fun with business
  - Family friendly
  - Relaxed
  - Conducive to learning

# Strategy for Choosers

## Leverage leisure visitors

- Use the “Pull” distribution strategy from retailing
  - Promote to the end user (meeting attendee) rather than to the “middleman” (meeting planner)
- Target leisure travelers in-market
  - 36% of Choosers have vacationed in SW
- Post flyers at coffee houses, public areas, etc., encouraging leisure travelers to lobby their organizations to hold meetings in SW
- Develop tools to give to leisure travelers to facilitate communicating with colleagues
- Start a “Meet in SW” social media game, blog, etc., to encourage meetings in SW

# Strategy for Choosers

## Leverage leisure visitors

- Focus on meeting planners in leisure traveler markets:
  - Atlanta
  - Dallas/Ft. Worth
  - Nashville
  - Houston
  - New Orleans
  - Northern Gulf Coast
- Focus on meeting planners in large, direct flight markets:
  - Atlanta
  - Charlotte
  - Nashville
  - Dallas/Ft. Worth
  - Houston
  - Washington DC/Baltimore
- Excellent overlap between key leisure origin markets and direct flight markets

# Strategy for Choosers

## Coordinate selling efforts with hotels/properties

- Twice as many Choosers source directly with hotels than with other types of sourcing
- Utilize lists of Choosers provided by hotels for this study
  - Greatest probability of success from marketing efforts is with repeat customers (meeting planners)

# Strategy for Choosers

## Play to SW's strengths in marketing efforts

- Key selling points
  - Fun, relaxed, gorgeous destination
  - Bring your spouse/friend and learn, live, love
  - People learn better in a relaxed environment
- Focus on small meetings

# Gaining New Business – Focus on Contemplators<sup>1</sup>

## Key Findings

- Profile of Contemplators
  - More likely to book annual meetings & retreats
  - Require 100 to 125 peak night rooms
  - Have 125 to 250 attendees
  - Attendees stay 2 to 4 nights
  - Want \$100 to \$200 ADR
- Contemplators identified the following competing destinations
  - Destin
  - Amelia Island
  - Charlotte
  - Atlanta
  - Miami
  - Orlando
  - Tampa
  - Biloxi
  - Charleston
  - Miami
  - New Orleans
  - Savannah

<sup>1</sup>“Contemplators” - Considered South Walton as a destination for one of their meetings/events, but ultimately chose another destination

# Gaining New Business – Focus on Contemplators

## Key Findings

- Reasons Contemplators chose destinations
  - Affordable ADR
  - Sufficient meeting space
  - Types of meeting rooms/configuration of space
  - Trust (been there)
  - Ease/low cost transportation from airport to meeting
- Attendees at Contemplators' meetings want to:
  - Eat at a variety of restaurants
  - Visit the beach
  - Go shopping
  - Golf

# Gaining New Business – Focus on Contemplators

## Key Findings

- Contemplators became aware of SW via:
  - Leisure trip there
  - Trade show/conference
- Contemplators source meetings by:
  - Direct contact with hotels
  - Sourcing sites
  - 3<sup>rd</sup> party site selection

# Gaining New Business – Focus on Contemplators

## Key Findings

- Accessibility
  - Driving to meetings is perceived as an obstacle by Contemplators
  - Direct flights are acceptable; 1-stop is less acceptable
- Advantages of SW
  - Beaches/sand
  - Weather
  - Great place to relax
  - Unique/different
  - Activities for attendees
- Limitations of SW
  - High room prices
  - Too few (direct) flights
  - Logistics (airport to meeting site)

# Gaining New Business – Focus on Contemplators

## Key Findings

- 52% of Contemplators will “definitely” consider SW as a meeting site in the future
- Significant percentages of Contemplators will consider meetings in SW in:
  - October – 52%
  - April – 50%
  - March – 44%
  - May – 43%
- Contemplators describe meetings in SW as:
  - Great fit for a variety of meetings
  - Friendly
  - Relaxed

# Strategy for Contemplators

## Strategy for Contemplators should be similar to the strategy for Choosers

- Contemplators & Choosers hold the same size meetings
- Many Contemplators' & Choosers' meetings are held nearby and/or at difficult to access destinations
  - Destin
  - Amelia Island
  - Biloxi
  - Savannah
  - Charleston
- Contemplators & Choosers want their attendees to do similar things outside the meeting
  - Eat at a variety of restaurants
  - Visit the beach
  - Go shopping
  - Golf

# Strategy for Contemplators

## Strategy for Contemplators should be similar to the strategy for Choosers

- Contemplators & Choosers perceive the same SW advantages
  - Beaches/sand
  - Weather
  - Great place to relax
- Contemplators' & Choosers' primary sourcing is through direct contact with hotels
- Contemplators & Choosers are willing to hold meetings in SW during shoulder months
  - October
  - May
  - April
- Many Contemplators & Choosers are familiar with SW as a leisure visitor

# Strategy for Contemplators

## Critical differences between Choosers & Contemplators

- Affordable ADR is more important to Contemplators & high ADR is seen as a limitation of SW
  - SW shoulder months can be focused on in marketing to Contemplators since ADR is lower
- Sufficient meeting space & types of meeting rooms and configuration of space is more important to Contemplators
  - Need to be more creative in working with properties to meet Contemplators' needs



# Executive Summary

# Meeting/Event Planners Who Considered South Walton

## The typical **Contemplator**:<sup>1</sup>

- Required 109 rooms on peak-night for 149 attendees
- Required attendee accommodation for 3.3 nights
- Sought attendee accommodations at a price range of \$100 - \$199 for each room per night (58%)
- Chose destinations based predominately upon affordable room prices (42%)



<sup>1</sup>Considered South Walton as a destination for one of their meetings/events, but ultimately chose another destination

# Meeting/Event Planners Who Chose South Walton

- The typical **Chooser**:<sup>1</sup>
  - Required 114 rooms on peak-night for 196 attendees
  - Required attendee accommodations for 4.6 nights
  - Sought attendee accommodations at a price range of \$100 - \$199 for each room per night (59%)



<sup>1</sup>Chose South Walton for one of their meetings/events

# Meeting/Event Planners Who Did Not Consider South Walton

## ■ The typical **Avoider**:<sup>1</sup>

- Required 398 rooms on peak-night for large meetings and 40 rooms on peak-night for small meetings for 149 attendees
- Required accommodations for 830 attendees for large meetings and 74 attendees for small meetings
- Required attendee accommodations for 5.5 nights for large meetings and 4.8 nights for small meetings
- Sought attendee accommodations at a price range of \$100 - \$199 for each room per night (55%)
- Chose destinations based predominately upon sufficient meeting space (72%)



<sup>1</sup>Did not consider South Walton for their meetings/events

# Types of Events

- All meeting & event planners surveyed held more annual meetings than any other type of meeting
- Planners also planned the following meetings/events in 2018:

Annual meeting



Board meeting



Incentive meeting



Sales meeting



Professional development



Retreat



# Other Event Destinations

- **Contemplators** and **Avoiders** held many of their events in the following destinations:

Amelia Island/Jacksonville



Tampa



Miami



Atlanta



- **Choosers** also considered other Florida destinations, such as Amelia Island/Jacksonville, Destin, Orlando, and Panama City, as well as other destinations in surrounding states, such as Savannah, Atlanta, Gulf Shores, and New Orleans

# Activities

- Planners prefer their attendees engage in the following activities outside of meetings:

Eat at restaurants



Visit the beach



Golf



Go shopping



# Awareness of South Walton

- **Contemplators** are more likely to be aware of South Walton due to having visited previously for leisure than by other means (31%)
  - 36% of **Choosers** also became aware of South Walton due to having visited previously for leisure
- 30% of **Avoiders** became aware of South Walton as a potential meeting destination through trade shows and conferences



# Meeting Sourcing

- All planners source their meetings more through direct outreach to hotels than through any other sourcing methods



# Limitations

- Planners consider the following as the most significant limitations of South Walton as a meeting destination:

High room prices



Difficult air travel



Logistical difficulties



Expensive airfare



High package prices



Unavailable properties



# Advantages

- All planners described the following advantages of South Walton as a meeting destination:

Beautiful beaches/ocean



Great weather



Place to relax and unwind



# Traveling

## ■ Contemplators:

- Rated the logistics of driving to South Walton as “excellent” or “good” (40%)
- Rated the logistics of flying to South Walton as “excellent” or “good” (32%)

## ■ Choosers:

- Rated the logistics of driving to South Walton as “excellent” or “good” (75%)
- Rated the logistics of flying to South Walton as “excellent” or “good” (35%)

## ■ Avoiders:

- Were unsure how to rate the logistics of driving to South Walton (39%) or rated the logistics of driving as “fair” or “poor” (41%)
- Were unsure how to rate the logistics of flying to South Walton (41%) or rated the logistics of flying as “fair” or “poor” (38%)



# Trips to South Walton

- 52% of **Contemplators** will definitely consider South Walton as a meeting destination in the future
- 5% of **Avoiders** will definitely consider South Walton as a meeting destination in the future
- 50% of **Contemplators** will definitely return to South Walton for vacation
- 21% of **Avoiders** have visited South Walton for vacation



# Potential Meetings in Shoulder Months

- Contemplators will consider meetings in SW in the following shoulder months
  - October (52%) • April (50%) • March (44%)
- Choosers will consider meetings in SW in the following shoulder months
  - October (51%) • May (40%) • September (39%)
- Avoiders will consider meetings in SW in the following shoulder months
  - February (43%) • April (38%) • October (38%)



# Meetings Held in 2018

- The majority of **Choosers** and **Avoiders** held 10 meetings or fewer in 2018
- The majority of **Contemplators** held 20 meetings or fewer in 2018
- In 2018, no planners reported that there was a given month where their organization did not hold meetings
- **Choosers** held relatively more of their 2018 meetings in April and October
- **Contemplators** held relatively more of their 2018 meetings in March and October





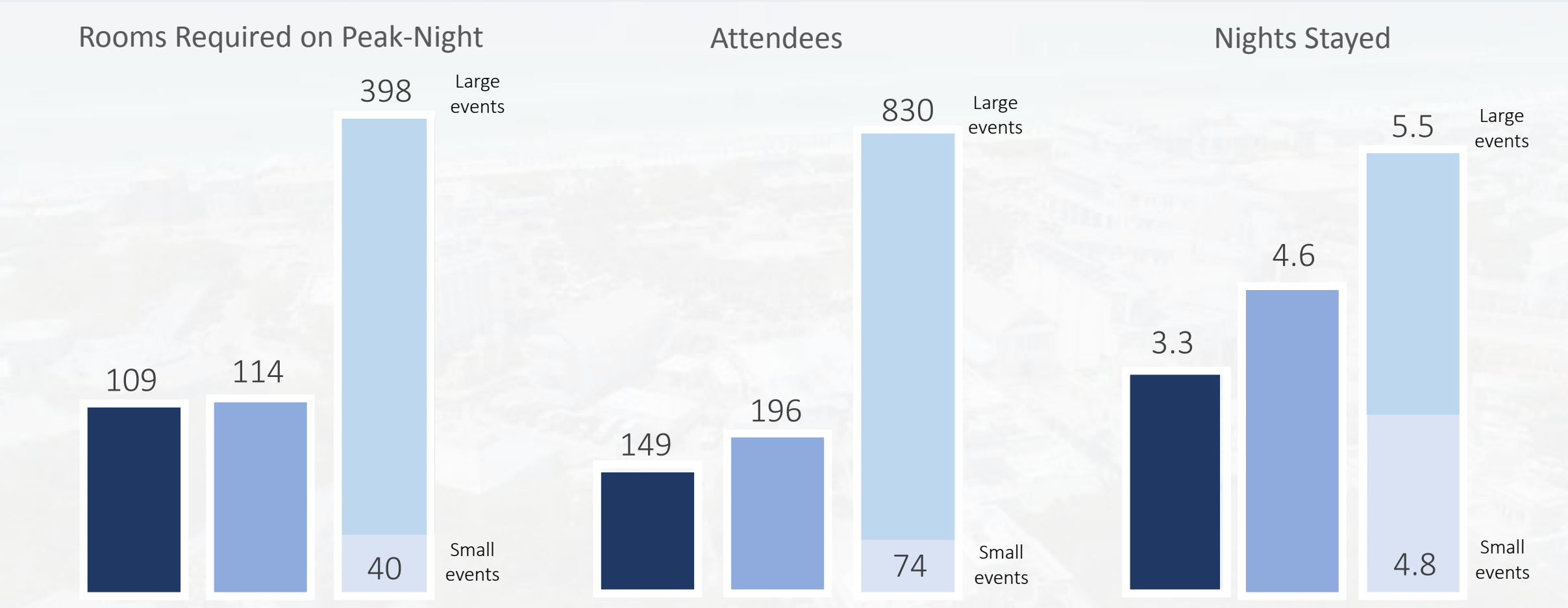
# Detailed Findings

# Types of Events

- All meeting planners surveyed held more annual meetings than other types of meetings
  - **Contemplators** planned more retreats
  - **Avoiders** planned more board meetings, marketing/sales meetings, and professional development meetings

Meetings Booked	Contemplators	Choosers	Avoiders
Annual meetings	49%	53%	72%
Board meetings	34%	23%	48%
Incentive/sales meetings	23%	9%	22%
Marketing/sales meetings	27%	16%	37%
Professional development	38%	32%	43%
Retreats	40%	32%	35%
Other	9%	10%	13%

# Number of Rooms, Attendees, & Nights for Meetings in 2018



# Rooms, Attendees, and Nights

- **Contemplators** had comparable peak-night rooms required and average room-nights required to **Choosers**.
- **Avoiders** require significantly more peak-night rooms to accommodate more attendees, as their large events require nearly 3.5 times the number of rooms to accommodate 4 times the number of attendees.
- South Walton has adequate capacity for smaller meetings of **Avoiders**, as these events require fewer rooms to accommodate fewer attendees than typical meetings held in South Walton.

# Room Price Range

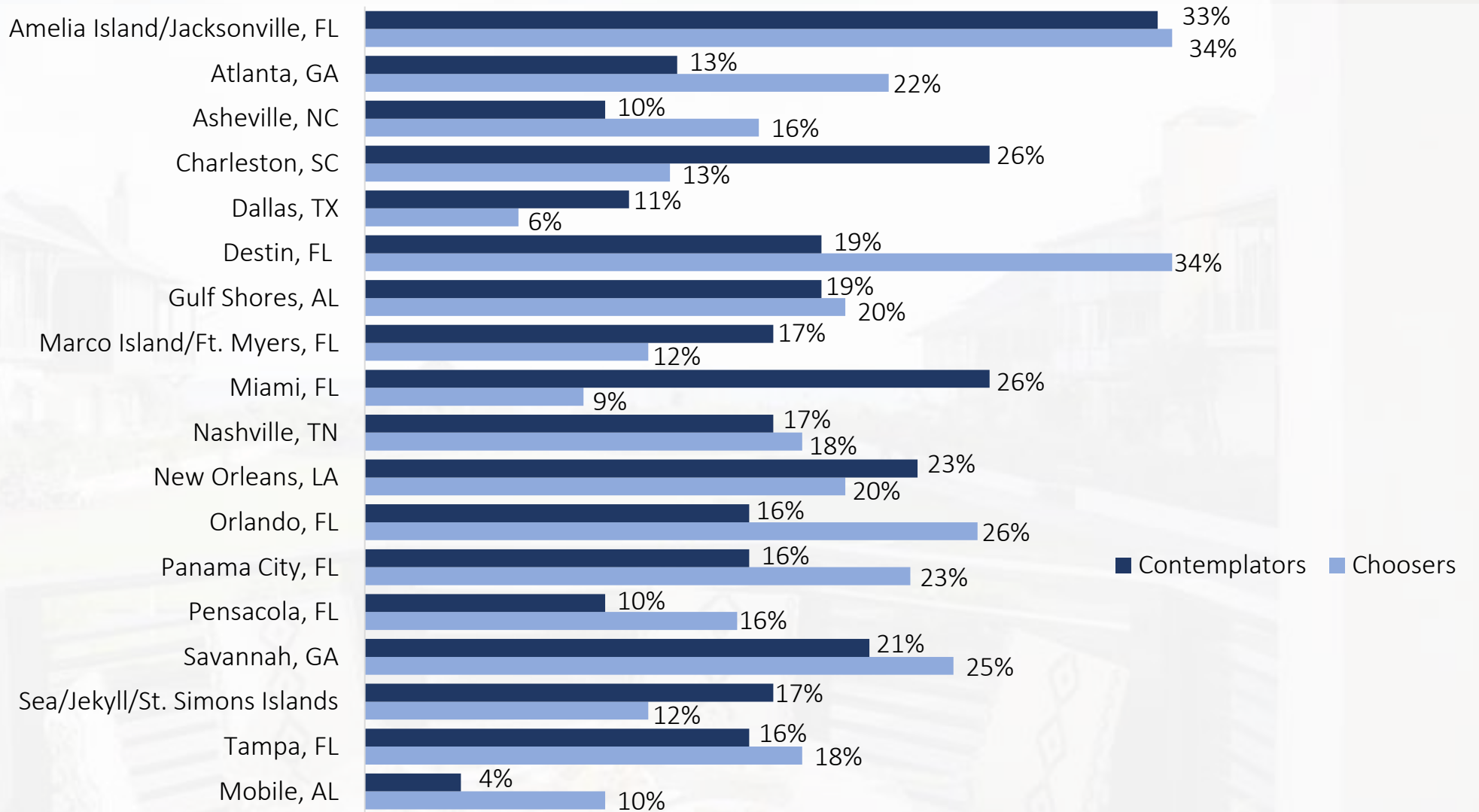
- Room prices appear not to be an obstacle to holding more meetings in SW.
- Over half of all meeting planners seek accommodations for attendees at room prices of \$100 to \$199 per night
- Fewer than 1 in 10 meeting planners seek accommodations for attendees at room prices of \$300+ per night

Room rates	Contemplators	Choosers	Avoiders
\$100 - \$199 per night	58%	59%	55%
\$200 - \$299 per night	34%	35%	43%
\$300 - \$399 per night	7%	4%	2%
\$400 - \$499 per night	1%	2%	0%

# Other Event Destinations

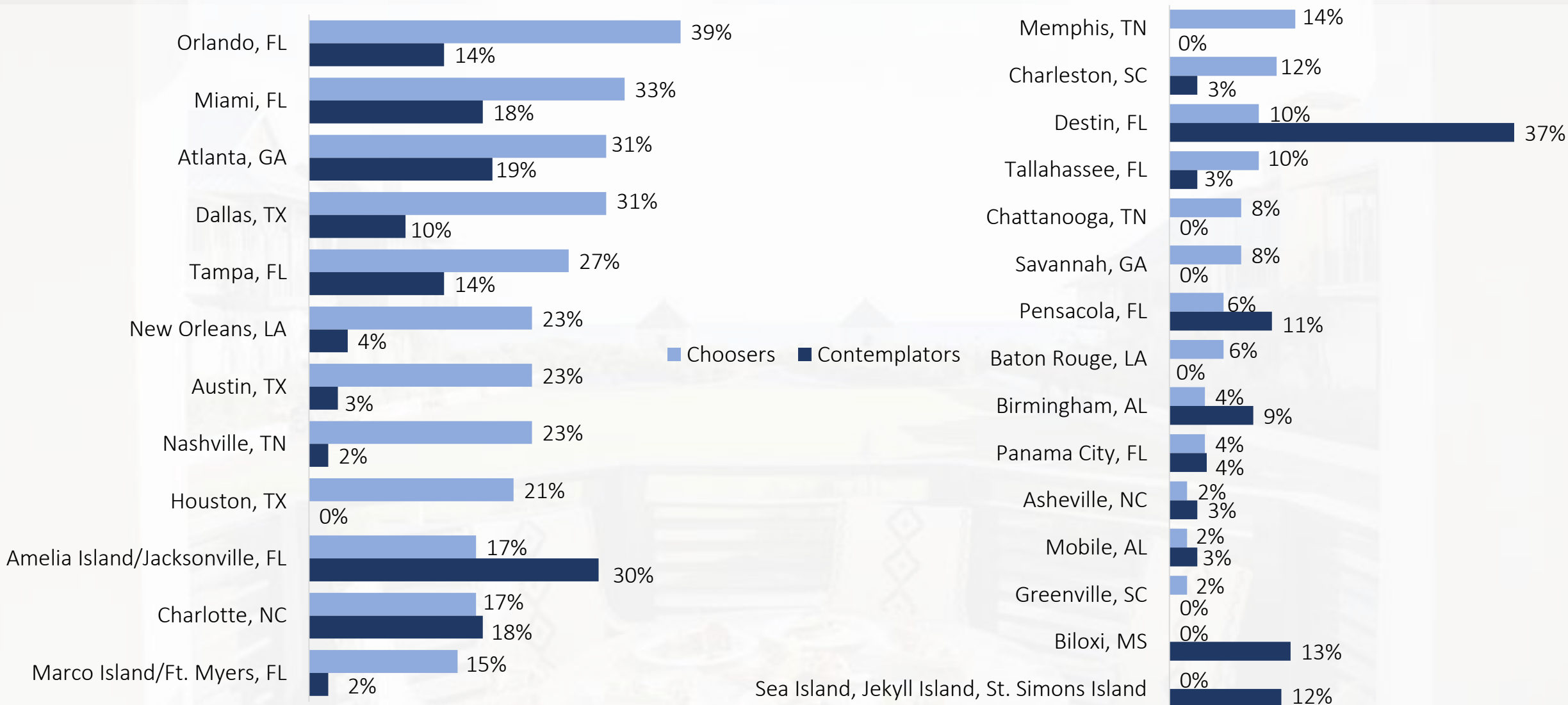
- **Contemplators** held the majority of their events in Amelia Island/Jacksonville, Destin, Atlanta, Charleston, Miami, Orlando, Sea Island/Jekyll Island/St. Simons Island, and Tampa.
- **Choosers** also considered Amelia Island/Jacksonville, Destin, Orlando, Savannah, Panama City, Atlanta, Gulf Shores, and New Orleans.
- **Avoiders** held their 2018 events predominately in large cities, such as Orlando, Miami, Atlanta, Dallas, and Tampa.

# Top Destinations Considered\*



\*Other destinations considered at lower frequencies. Question not posed to **Avoiders**.  
Multiple responses permitted.

# Where Events Were Held



# Reasons for Choosing Destinations

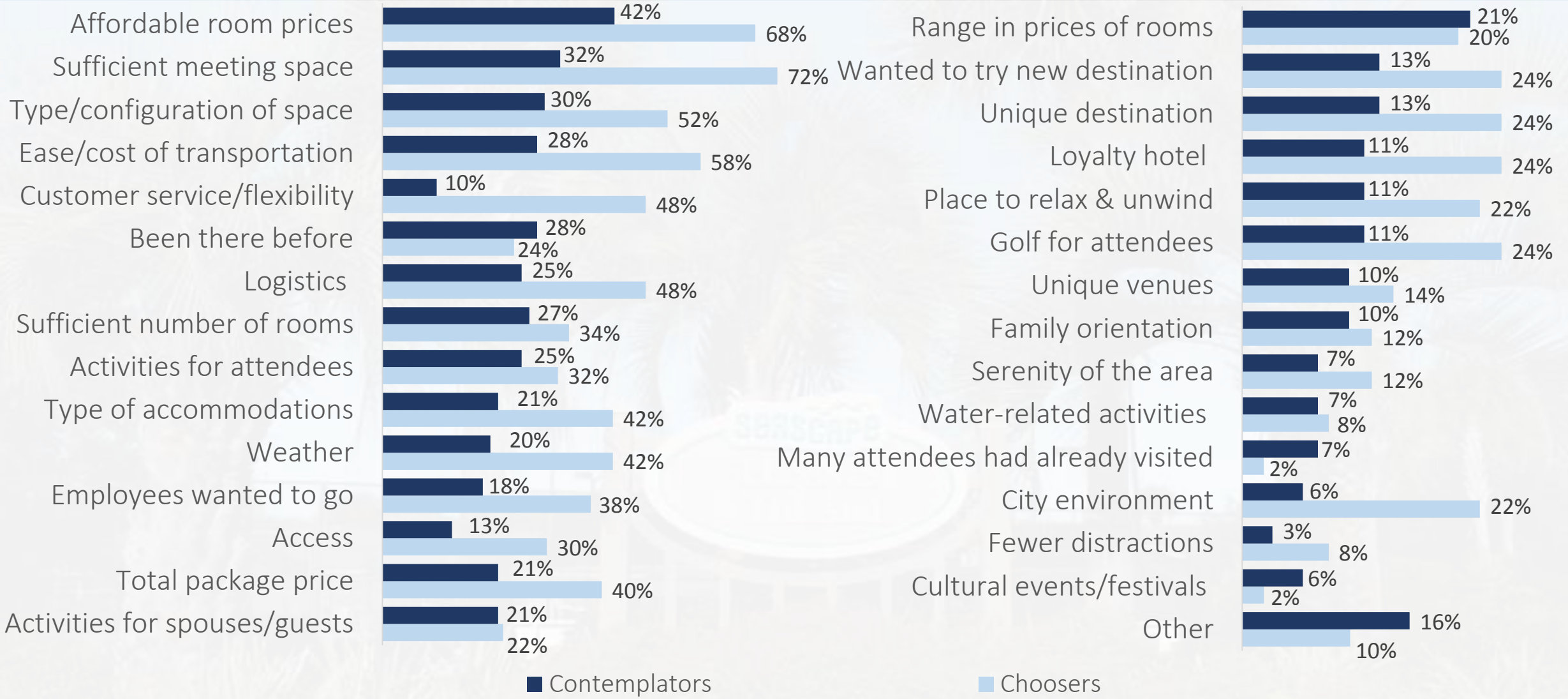
- **Contemplators** choose destinations based predominately upon:

- 1) Affordable room prices
- 2) Sufficient meeting space
- 3) Types of meeting rooms and configuration of meeting space
- 4) Having been there before/trusting them to perform
- 5) Ease and low-cost of transportation from airport to meeting sites

- **Avoiders** choose destinations based predominately upon:

- 1) Sufficient meeting space
- 2) Affordable room prices
- 3) Ease and low-cost of transportation from airport to meeting sites
- 4) Types of meeting rooms and configuration of meeting space
- 5) Customer service and flexibility
- 6) Logistics

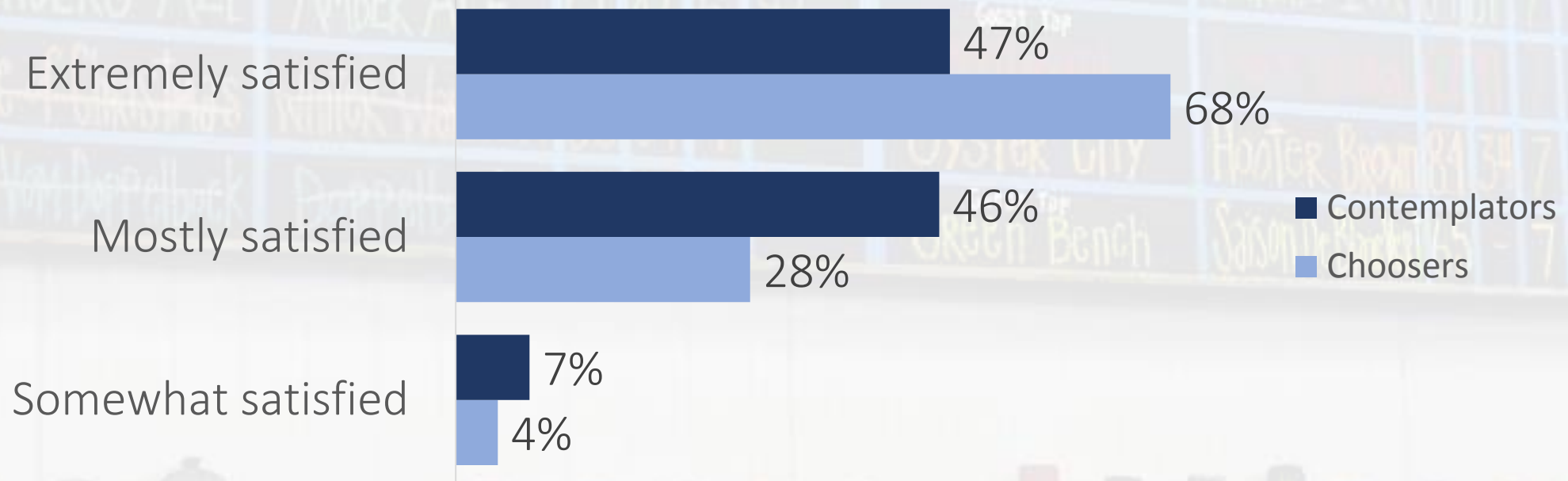
# Reasons for Choosing Other Destinations\*



\*Question not posed to **Choosers**. Multiple responses permitted.

# Satisfaction with Destinations

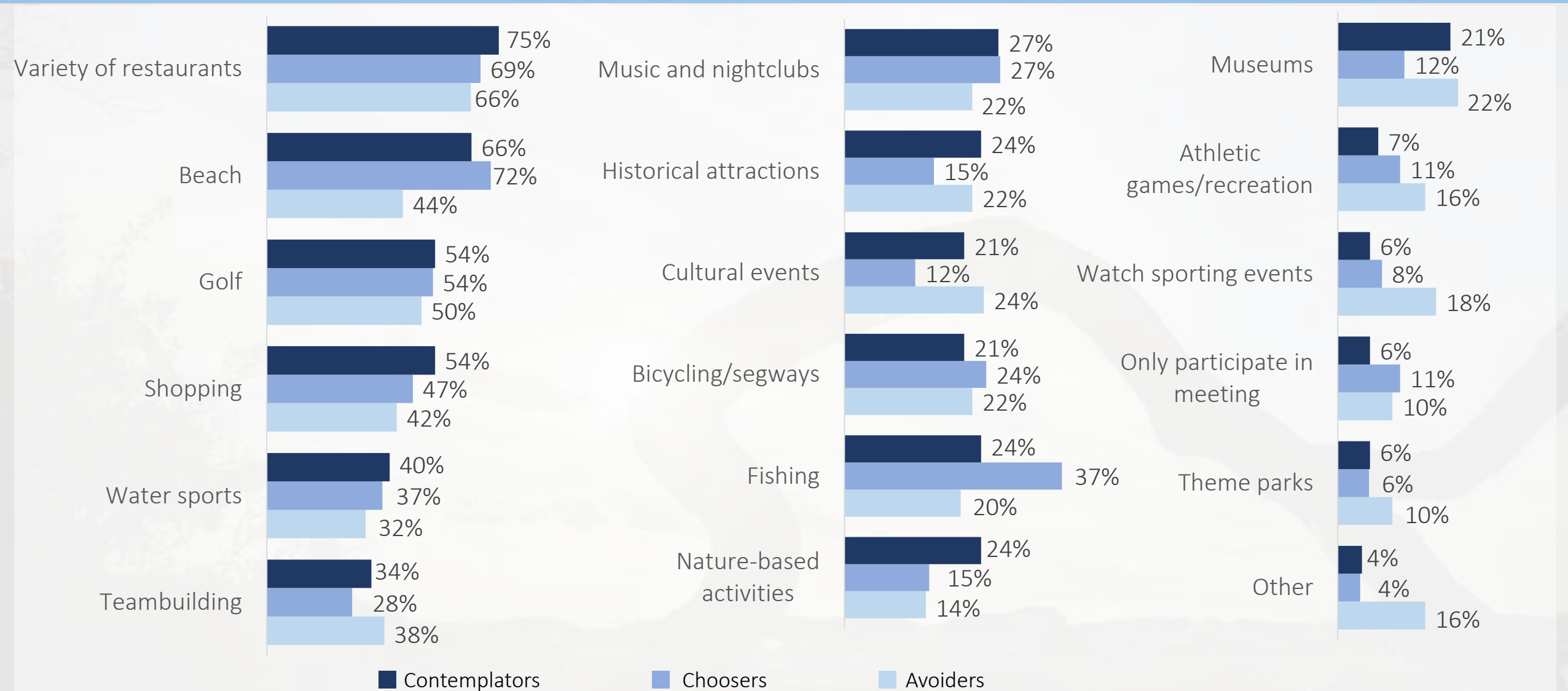
- All **Contemplators** were satisfied with the destination they selected
- All **Choosers** were satisfied
  - More **Choosers** were “extremely satisfied” with their decision than planners who ultimately chose another destination



# Activities Planners Emphasize for Attendees

- Outside of meetings, **Contemplators** prefer their attendees to:
  - 1) Eat at a variety of restaurants
  - 2) Visit the beach
  - 3) Go shopping
  - 4) Golf
- **Choosers** prefer their attendees to:
  - 1) Visit the beach
  - 2) Eat at a variety of restaurants
  - 3) Golf
- **Avoiders** prefer their attendees to:
  - 1) Eat at a variety of restaurants
  - 2) Golf
  - 3) Visit the beach

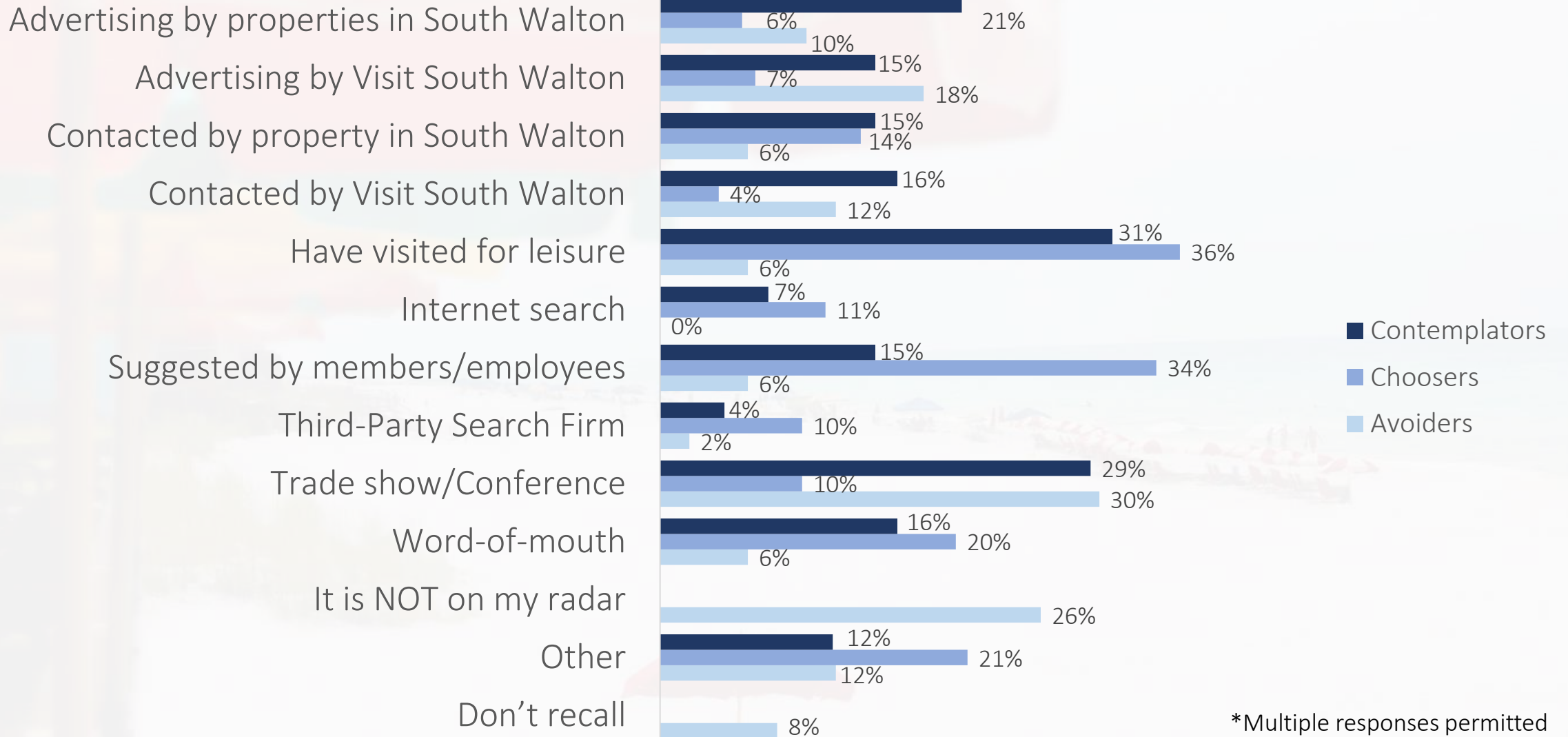
# Activities Planners Emphasize for Attendees\*



# How Planners Became Aware of South Walton

- **Contemplators** became aware of South Walton through a previous vacation or via a trade show/conference
- **Choosers** became aware of South Walton through a previous vacation or through suggestions by members/employees
- 1 in 4 **Avoiders** reported that South Walton was not on their radar when they planned their meetings/events, while 3 in 10 became aware of South Walton at a trade show/conference

# How Planners Became Aware of South Walton



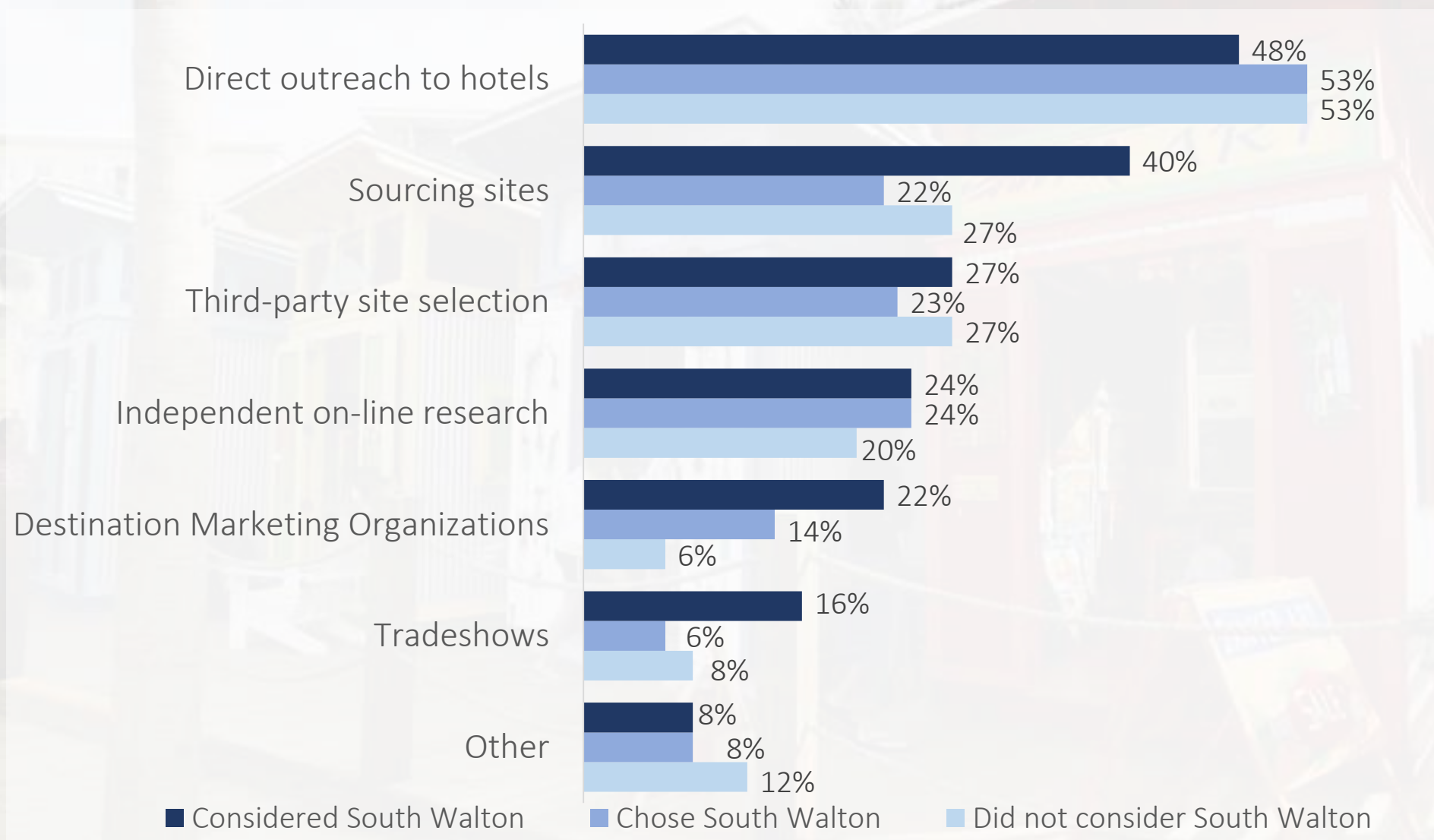
\*Multiple responses permitted

# Meeting Sourcing

- All planners source their meetings through direct outreach to hotels more than through any other sourcing methods
- Fewer than 1 in 10 **Choosers** source their meetings through tradeshow
- Less than 15% of **Avoiders** use their Destination Marketing Organizations or tradeshow to source their meetings

	Contemplators	Choosers	Avoiders
Sourcing sites	40%	22%	27%
Third-party site selection	27%	23%	27%
Independent on-line research	24%	24%	20%
Tradeshows	16%	6%	8%
Direct outreach to hotels	48%	53%	53%
Destination Marketing Organizations	22%	14%	6%
Other	8%	8%	12%

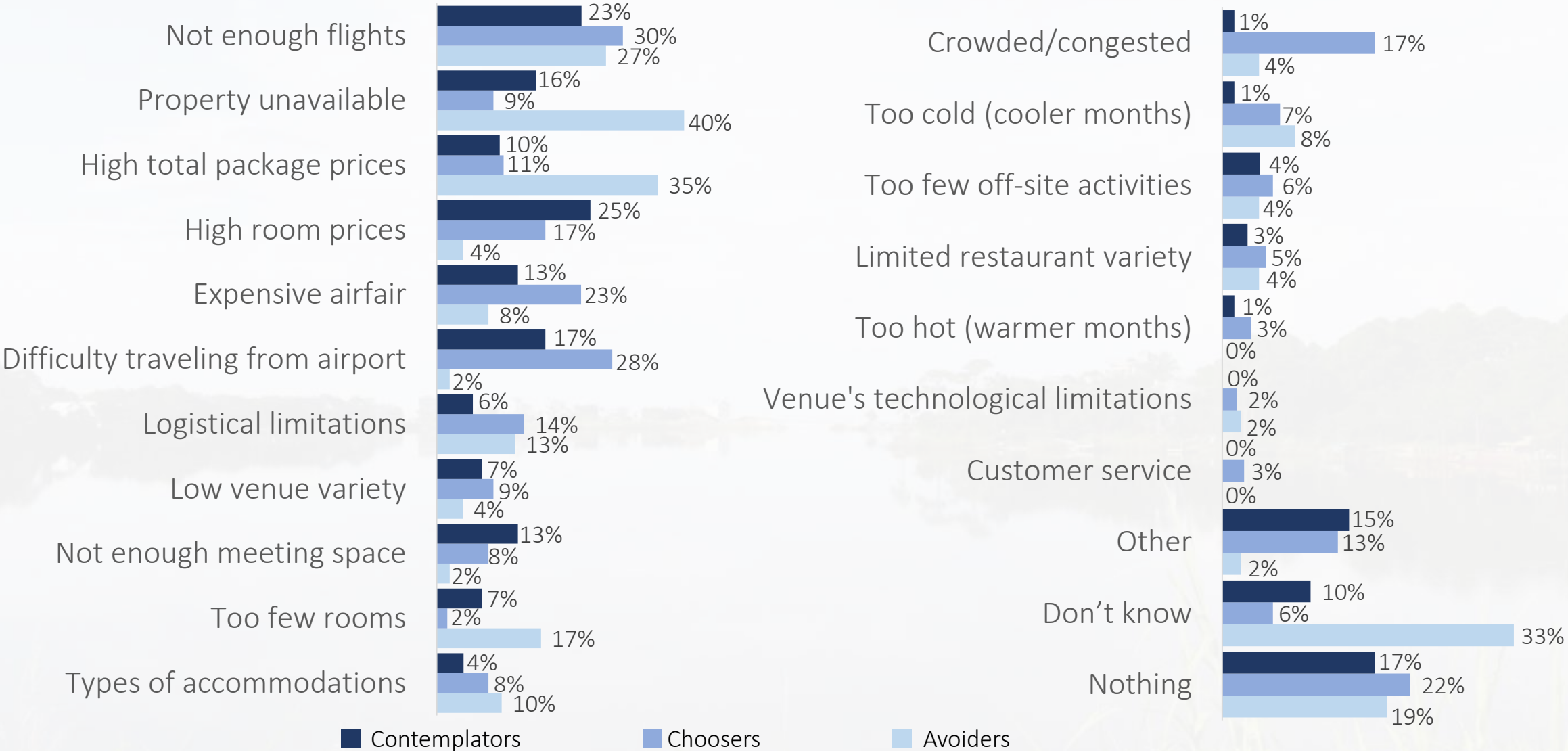
# Meeting Sourcing\*



# Limitations of South Walton as a Meeting Destination

- The most significant limitations of South Walton as a meeting destination to **Contemplators** were:
  - High room prices
  - Too few flights into the area, especially direct flights
  - Logistical difficulties getting from the airport to the venue
- The most significant limitations of South Walton as a meeting destination to **Choosers** were:
  - Too few flights into the area, especially direct flights
  - Logistical difficulties getting from the airport to the venue
  - Expensive airfare
- The most significant limitations of South Walton as a meeting destination to **Avoiders** were:
  - Properties being unavailable when they needed it
  - High total package prices
  - Too few flights into the area, especially direct flights

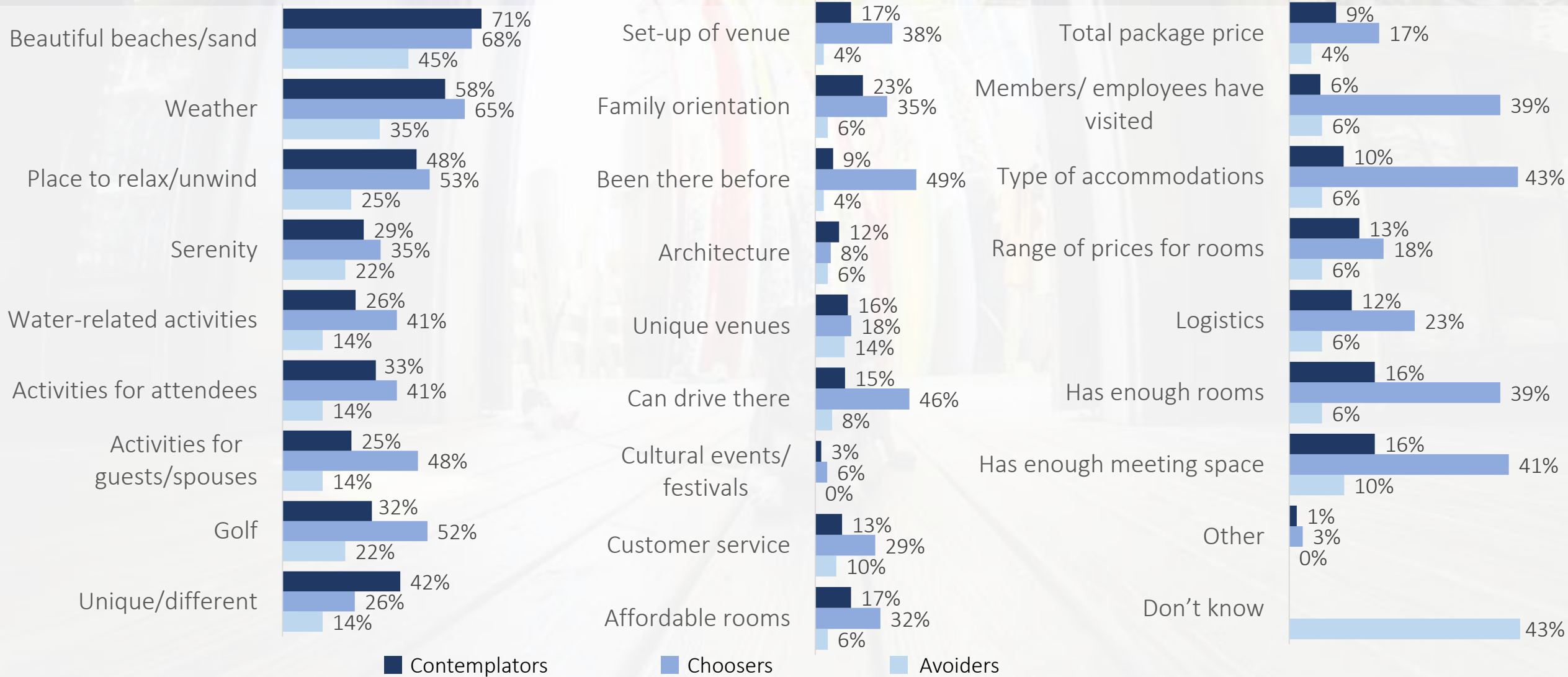
# Limitations of South Walton as a Meeting Destination\*



# Advantages of South Walton as a Meeting Destination

- All planners described the following advantages of South Walton as a meeting destination:
  - 1) Beautiful white sand beaches and turquoise blue water
  - 2) Great weather
  - 3) Place to relax and unwind
- 43% of **Avoiders** could not think of any advantages of South Walton as a meeting destination

# Advantages of South Walton as a Meeting Destination\*



# Reactions to Driving to South Walton

- Nearly 1 in 5 **Contemplators** perceive the destination as a difficult drive for meeting attendees
- 36% of **Choosers** perceive the drive to the destination as easy for attendees, compared to the 16% who perceive the drive as difficult
- 1 in 4 **Avoiders** perceive the destination as a difficult drive for meeting attendees, while 4 in 10 don't know how difficult the drive would be for attendees

	Contemplators	Choosers	Avoiders
Excellent	8%	36%	6%
Good	32%	39%	14%
Fair	28%	8%	16%
Poor	19%	16%	25%
Don't know	13%	1%	39%

# Reactions to Flying to South Walton

- **Choosers** have a more favorable view of air travel to South Walton than **Contemplators**
  - 8% of **Choosers** perceive flying to South Walton as an easy travel destination with reasonably-priced tickets and direct flights, compared to 4% of **Contemplators** with the same perception
- Over 4 in 10 **Avoiders** are unsure of whether there are reasonably-priced tickets and direct flights to the destination

	Contemplators	Choosers	Avoiders
Excellent	4%	8%	2%
Good	28%	27%	19%
Fair	31%	35%	20%
Poor	16%	8%	18%
Don't know	18%	14%	41%
South Walton is too close/expensive to fly	3%	8%	0%

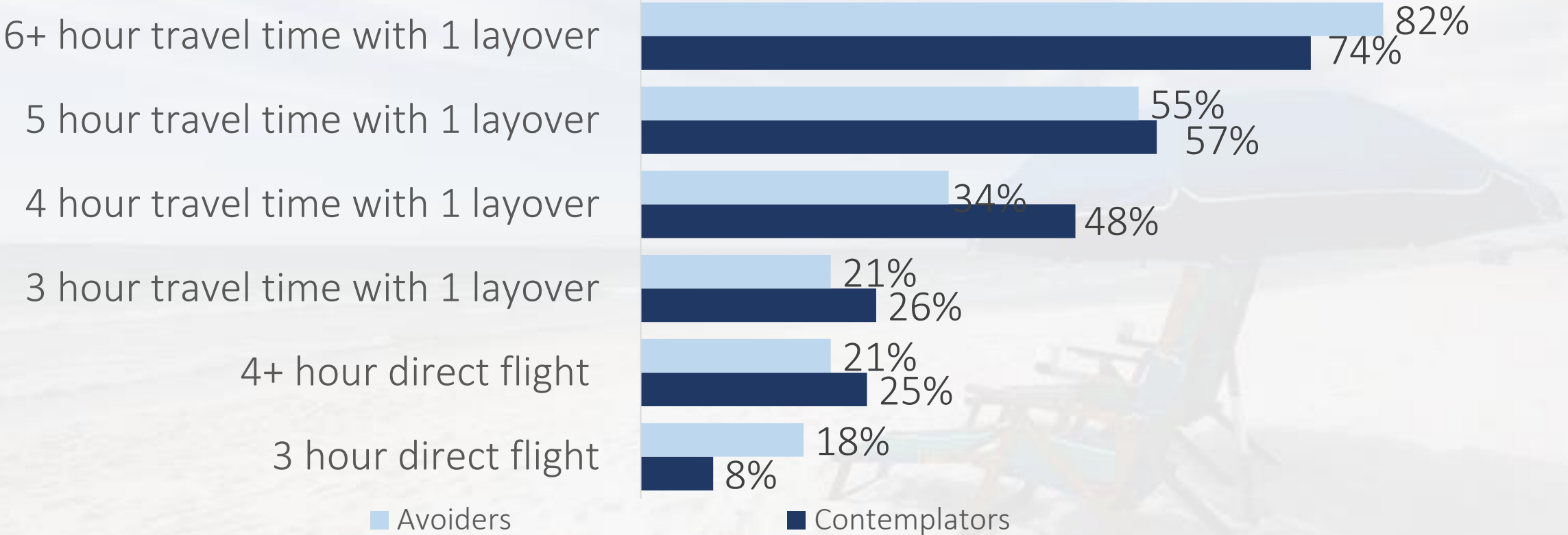
# Driving Scenarios Planners Would Not Expect Attendees to Endure

- Nearly half of **Contemplators** (46%) would not expect attendees to drive more than 3 hours to a destination for a meeting
- Half of **Avoiders** would not expect attendees to drive more than 3 hours to a destination for a meeting

	Contemplators	Avoiders
30 minutes	5%	2%
1 hour	10%	20%
2 hours	30%	12%
3 hours	9%	16%
4 hours	18%	19%
5 hours	10%	4%
6 hours	18%	27%

# Flight Scenarios Planners Would Not Expect Attendees to Endure

- Half of Contemplators (48%) and one-third of Choosers (34%) would not tolerate more than 3 hours in route via air for their attendees.



# Future Consideration of South Walton

- 52% of **Contemplators** will definitely consider South Walton as a meeting destination in the future
- 5% of **Avoiders** will definitely consider South Walton as a meeting destination in the future

	Contemplators	Avoiders
Definitely	52%	5%
Probably	46%	80%
No	2%	15%

# Visits to South Walton

- Half of **Contemplators** definitely plan to visit South Walton for vacation in the future
- 21% of **Avoiders** have visited South Walton before for vacation

Do you plan to return to South Walton for leisure/vacation?	
Contemplators	
Definitely	50%
Probably	38%
No	12%

Have you ever visited South Walton for business or leisure?	
Avoiders	
Yes, for business	10%
Yes, for leisure	21%
No	71%

# Shoulder Months Planners will Consider for Meetings

- There is some potential for more meetings in shoulder months as 43% of **Avoiders** maintain they will definitely consider SW for February meetings, and 38% for April or October meetings.
- There is potential for meetings in October (52%), April (50%), March (44%) and May (43%) among **Contemplators**.
- Choosers** claim they will definitely consider SW for October (51%) and May (40%) meetings.

	Contemplators	Choosers	Avoiders
January	24%	19%	15%
February	29%	29%	<b>43%</b>
March	<b>44%</b>	29%	36%
April	<b>50%</b>	38%	38%
May	<b>43%</b>	<b>40%</b>	23%

	Contemplators	Choosers	Avoiders
August	24%	19%	19%
September	37%	39%	30%
October	<b>52%</b>	<b>51%</b>	38%
November	28%	30%	26%
December	18%	16%	11%

# Descriptions of South Walton: **Contemplators**

- “It is a beautiful area with a number of things to do! It is a great fit for a variety of meetings, from a board retreat to a conference that attendees want to bring their families to.”
- “It looks inviting, relaxing, and an ideal place for business and pleasure.”
- “The festivals, restaurants, and beautiful beaches are what attract me! These are all great factors for creating a unique, one-of-a-kind activity/experience. I believe South Walton can offer a true “WOW” factor that leaves all other meetings seem blasé!”

# Descriptions of South Walton: **Choosers**

- “South Walton is an excellent location to hold a meeting. You can mix a lot of fun into the meeting in South Walton!”
- “Perfect for meetings, family-friendly, and very relaxed. The atmosphere is very conducive to learning, and attendees enjoy the surroundings and immediately become relaxed and enjoy the meeting spaces.”
- “I visited for the first time in November 2018, and it exceeded my expectations. The small-town feel was refreshing, and I did not once feel like a tourist. The boutique hotels are stunning and the beaches are remarkably blue and calm.”

# Descriptions of South Walton: **Avoiders**

- “I have not been yet, but it is perfect for regional, smaller-type meetings. Harder for national, larger meetings. Beautiful setting!”
- “It would be perfect for our mid-year meeting in July!”
- “Luxury meeting on the beach at an affordable price!”

# Improving South Walton: **Contemplators**

- “Keep getting the word out and highlight meeting space availability.”
- “Improve airport arrival experience and transfers.”
- “Lower hotel room costs for visitors where the beach and water are not their primary reasons for coming to the area.”
- “Lower rates during the summer months for groups at the upscale properties.”

# Improving South Walton: Choosers

- “The airport situation is tough, but having ‘98 passable again will go a long way to help improve the impression that South Walton is ‘tough to fly into’.”
- “Keep up-to-date on property renovations and clean beaches, and attendees are happy. It would be easier to get to with a larger airport, but that would ruin its attractiveness as a serene destination.”
- “It would be nice to have additional evening entertainment options, especially in the winter months.”
- “More direct flights!”

# Improving South Walton: **Avoiders**

- “Promote more of what makes South Walton unique– it isn’t clear what is unique about this destination.”
- “Provide more information or incentives to planners to know about this area.”
- “Improve air travel– South Walton needs more direct flights from the East Coast and Midwestern cities.”

# Meetings Held in 2018

- The majority of **Choosers** and **Avoiders** held 10 meetings or fewer in 2018
- The majority **Contemplators** held 20 meetings or fewer in 2018

	Contemplators	Choosers	Avoiders
1 to 5	30%	41%	37%
6 to 10	9%	18%	21%
11 to 20	20%	14%	13%
21 to 30	9%	7%	6%
31 to 40	5%	2%	25%
41 to 50	12%	3%	4%
More than 50	15%	15%	17%
<b>Median meetings held in 2018</b>	<b>16.4</b>	<b>8.5</b>	<b>9.0</b>

# Meetings Held by Month

- In 2018, no planners reported that there was a given month where their organization did not hold meetings
- **Contemplators** and **Avoiders** held more of their 2018 meetings in October
- **Choosers** held more of their 2018 meetings in April and October

	Contemplators	Choosers	Avoiders
January	69%	54%	47%
February	57%	63%	53%
March	<b>75%</b>	55%	<b>57%</b>
April	66%	<b>68%</b>	<b>57%</b>
May	63%	57%	53%
June	62%	58%	47%

	Contemplators	Choosers	Avoiders
July	59%	44%	43%
August	55%	53%	34%
September	<b>72%</b>	60%	51%
October	<b>77%</b>	<b>67%</b>	<b>64%</b>
November	68%	56%	51%
December	48%	44%	34%

# Organization Type

- Relatively more **Contemplators** in this study came from third-party selection sites
- Relatively more **Choosers** and **Avoiders** in this study represented large corporations

	Contemplators	Choosers	Avoiders
Small corporation	18%	13%	10%
Mid-size corporation	2%	5%	13%
Large corporation	15%	24%	21%
Local or state government	3%	4%	0%
Federal government	0%	1%	0%
Local/state/regional association	5%	13%	10%
Non-profit	12%	15%	19%
Third-party selection site	39%	17%	19%
Other	6%	8%	8%

# Visit South Walton

Meeting Planner Study  
February 2019

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