



VSG Survey 2015

Visitor Studies: Embracing Change?



Which three visitor studies related areas are your top priorities for 2015?



A wide variety of priorities, probably reflecting of the variety of roles in visitor studies. Comments revolved around these main areas:

- Audience development
- Community engagement
- Presenting/embedding findings

What do you consider the biggest challenges for your organisation in 2015 that might influence your work/visitor studies?



Responses cluster around:

- Resources/funding
- New displays/new building projects
- Embedding visitor studies/having impact

What do you think are the most important skills and knowledge needed in visitor studies to tackle these main challenges?



Responses cluster around:

- Building the profile of visitor studies
- Interpretation, presentation and marketing skills
- Research, analysis skills and rigour
- Best practice, confidence, networking
- Working with limited resources and managing change

“Influencing decision makers to understand importance of cultural data”

“Valuing visitor studies as a field of study in its own right and realising it is more than measuring the number of visitors”

“understanding of research best practise and statistics”

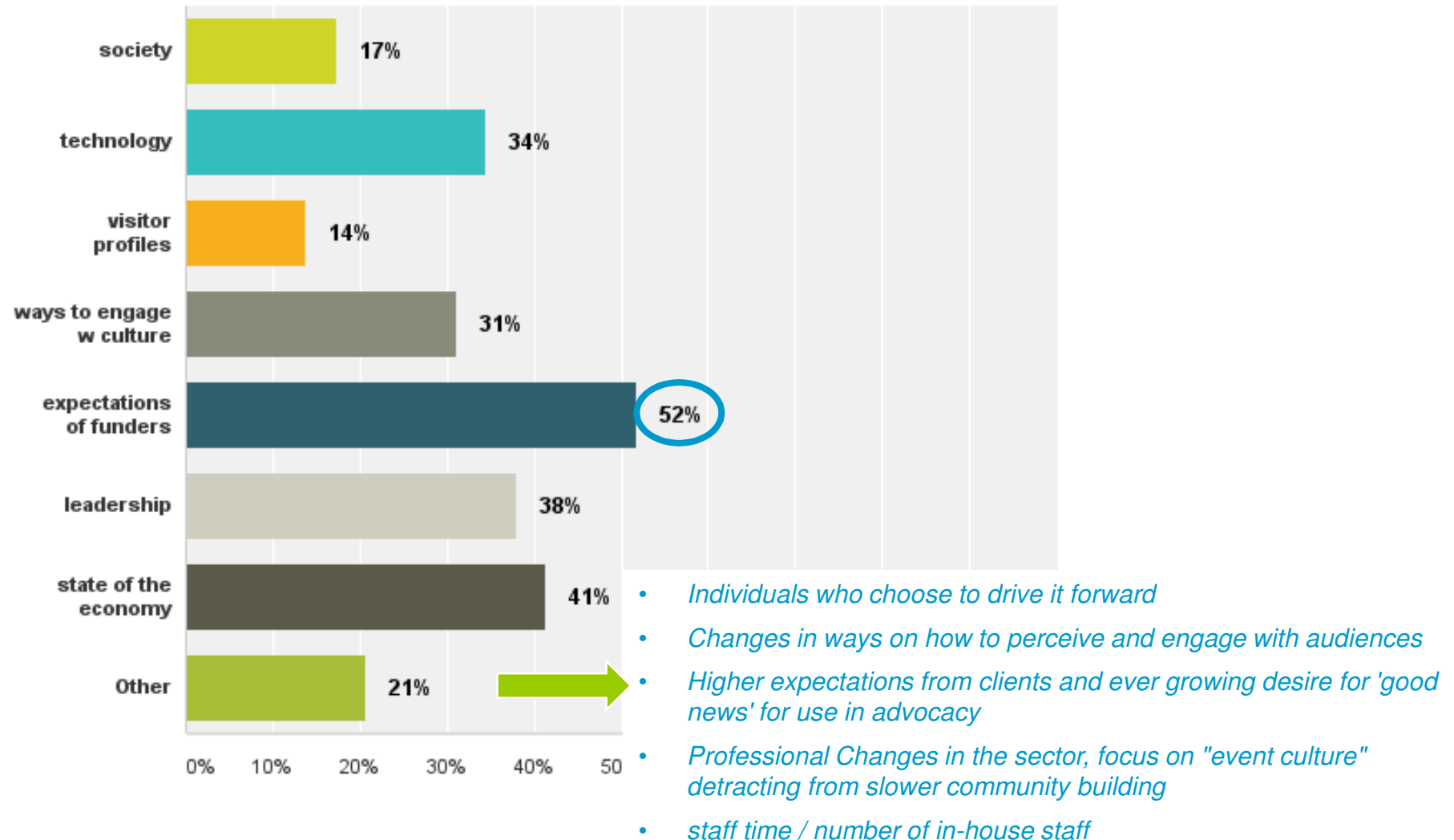
“Adaptability, proactive ideas, entrepreneurship”

“How to keep going in a constantly changing environment; arguments to advocate for change; examples of where change has happened successfully to encourage and inspire”

Q6 Which changes do you think have the biggest impact on visitor studies, if any?

Changes in...

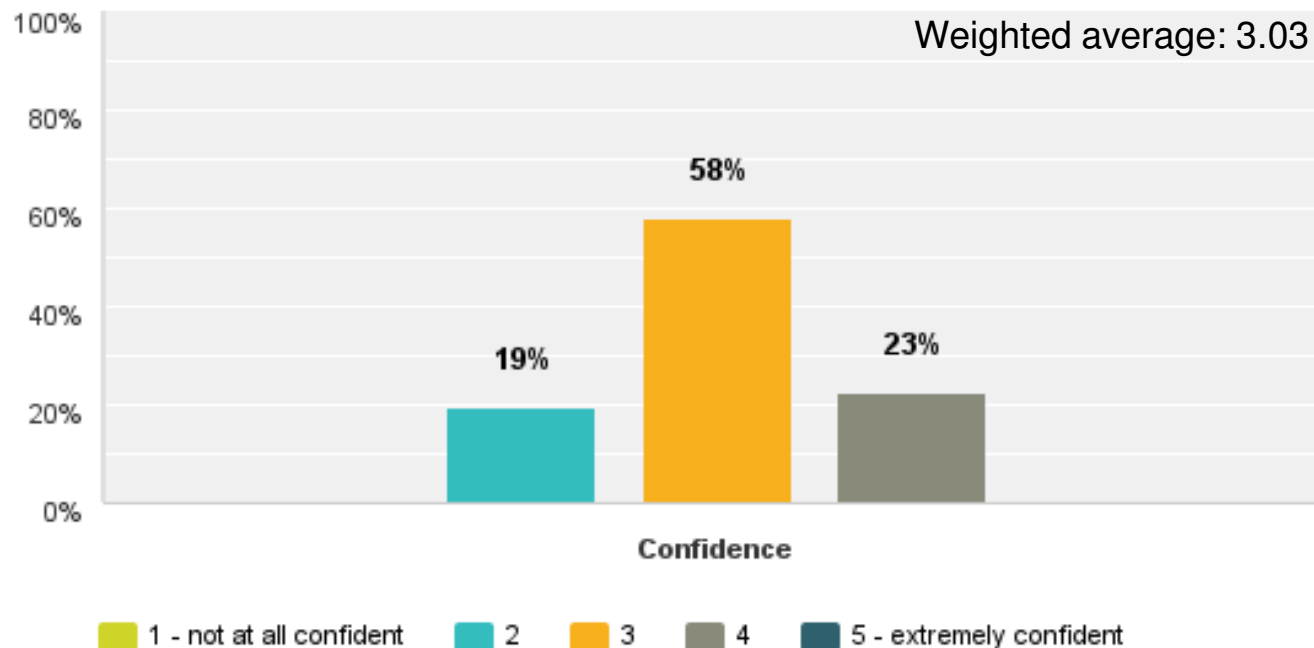
Answered: 29 Skipped: 24





Q7 How confident are you that visitor studies as a discipline is well prepared for the changes and challenges that organisations face?

Answered: 31 Skipped: 22



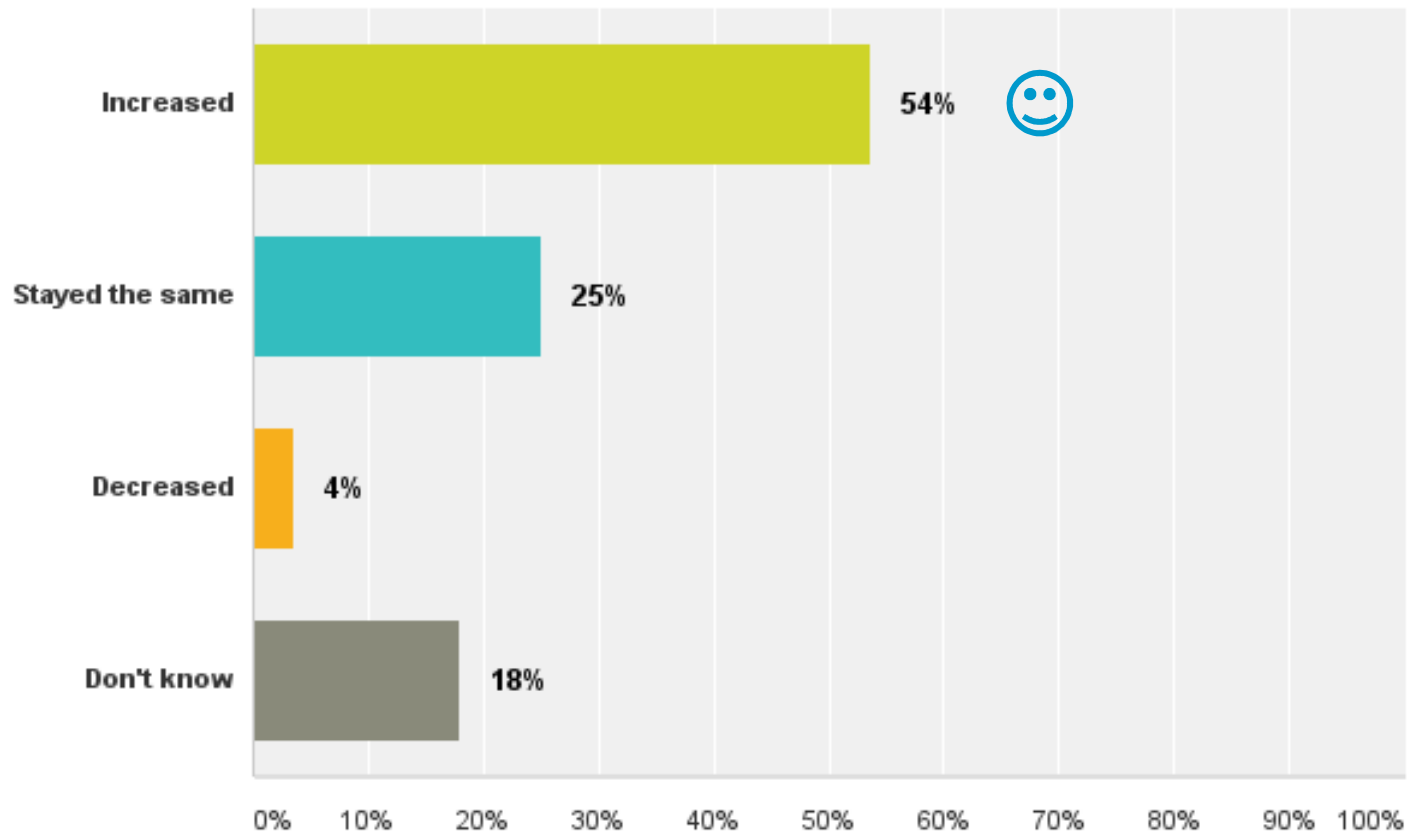
Confidence is average

Comments show that it really depends on the organisation: commitment and funding

"If visitor studies are truly part of an organizational plan then visitor studies will be as prepared as the organization it is working in or with for future changes. I don't think of it as a separate entity"

Q8 Looking BACK over the past 3-5 years, do you think the importance of visitor studies in your organisation has:

Answered: 28 Skipped: 25

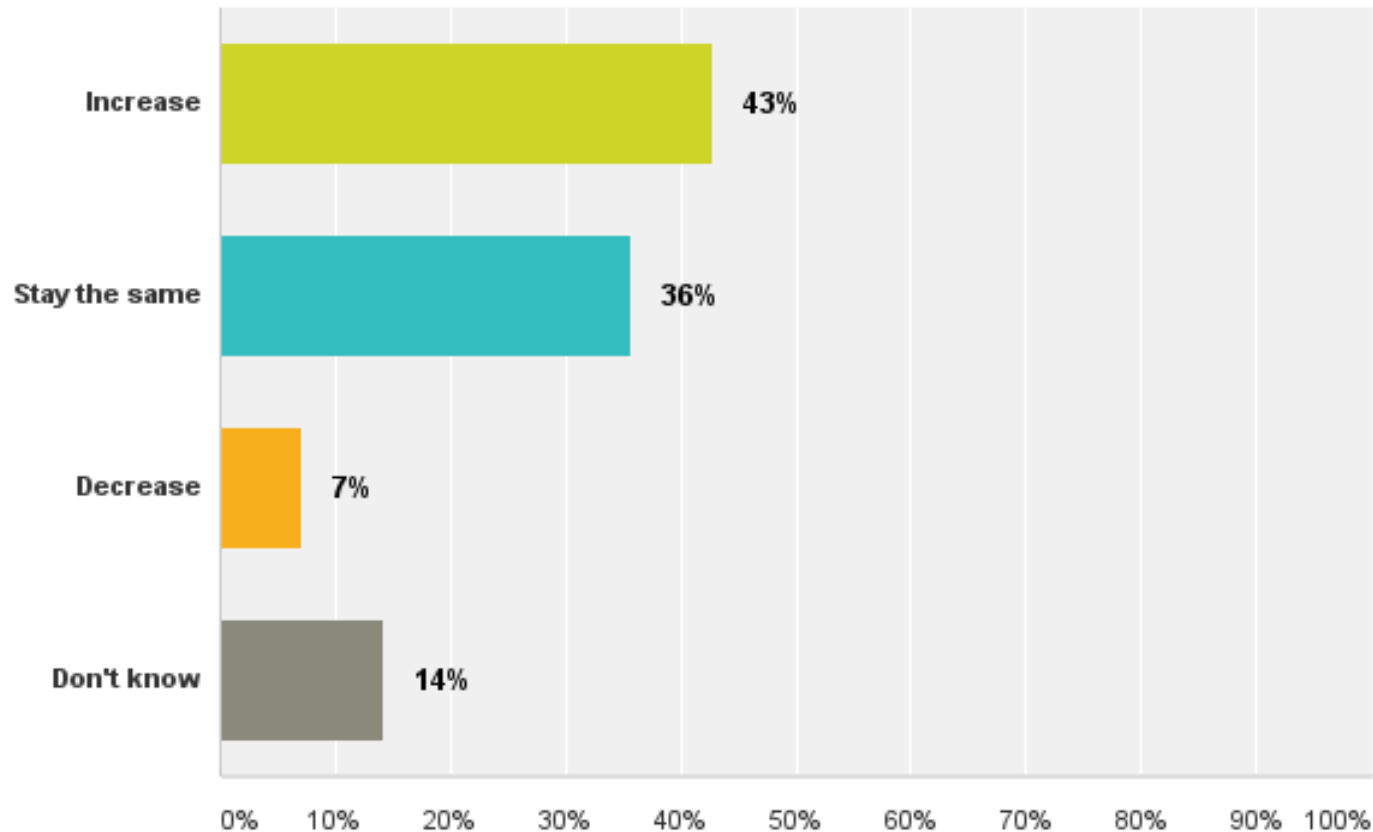


Good news

New posts have been created and tighter funds require more visitor understanding

Q9 Looking AHEAD 3-5 years, do you expect that the importance of visitor studies in your organisation will:

Answered: 28 Skipped: 25



Good news: expectations that it will stay the same or increase
There seems to be more appetite for visitor studies but funds remain tight

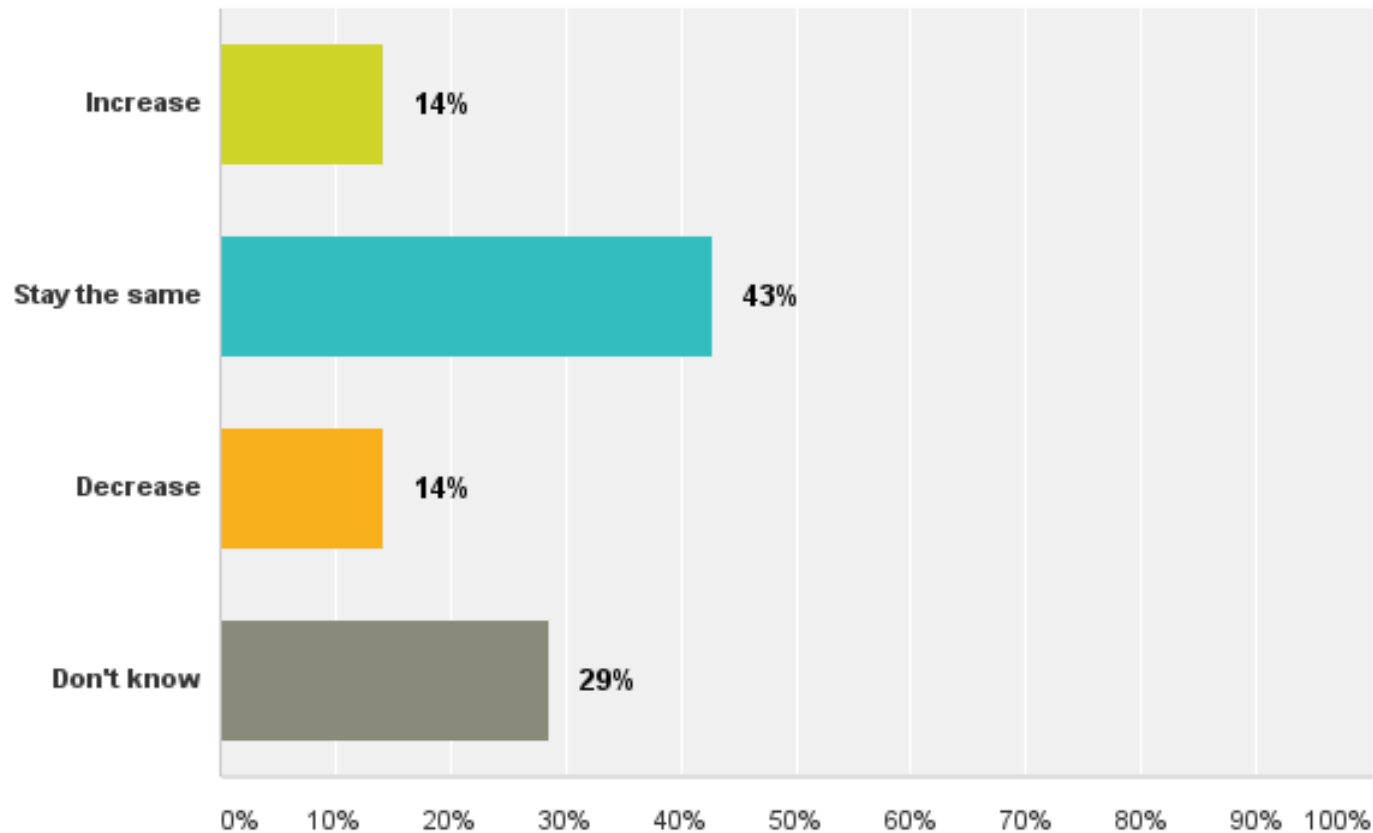
Looking AHEAD 3-5 years...



- *Once we begin to **demonstrate the importance of our results**, I think we will see further commitment to visitor studies.*
- *people are beginning to **recognise its value**, but other issues / concerns will also take precedence*
- *It has been **a slow process** to get to where we are now. Many staff embrace research and evaluation but there are many who still fear it...or don't get it.*
- *Importance will stay at high level - however this doesn't mean there will necessarily be the **resources** to implement work.*
- *Increasingly people are talking about long term visitor research and building our results into **strategic planning***
- *Quite a lot of recent investment, so I expect management will want to see results before committing more to this area of work*
- *funders for new project require that this is done*
- *Myself and my colleagues are committed to understanding audiences and thinking about the social role of the museum*
- *financial pressures*
- *Senior managers are beginning to value it more and more*
- *I hope it will grow steadily but as a consultant your only one member in a larger "band" that is playing..!*
- *We are at the beginning of a new process of engagement*

Q10 Looking AHEAD 3-5 years, do you think the number of roles relating to visitor studies in your organisation will:

Answered: 28 Skipped: 25

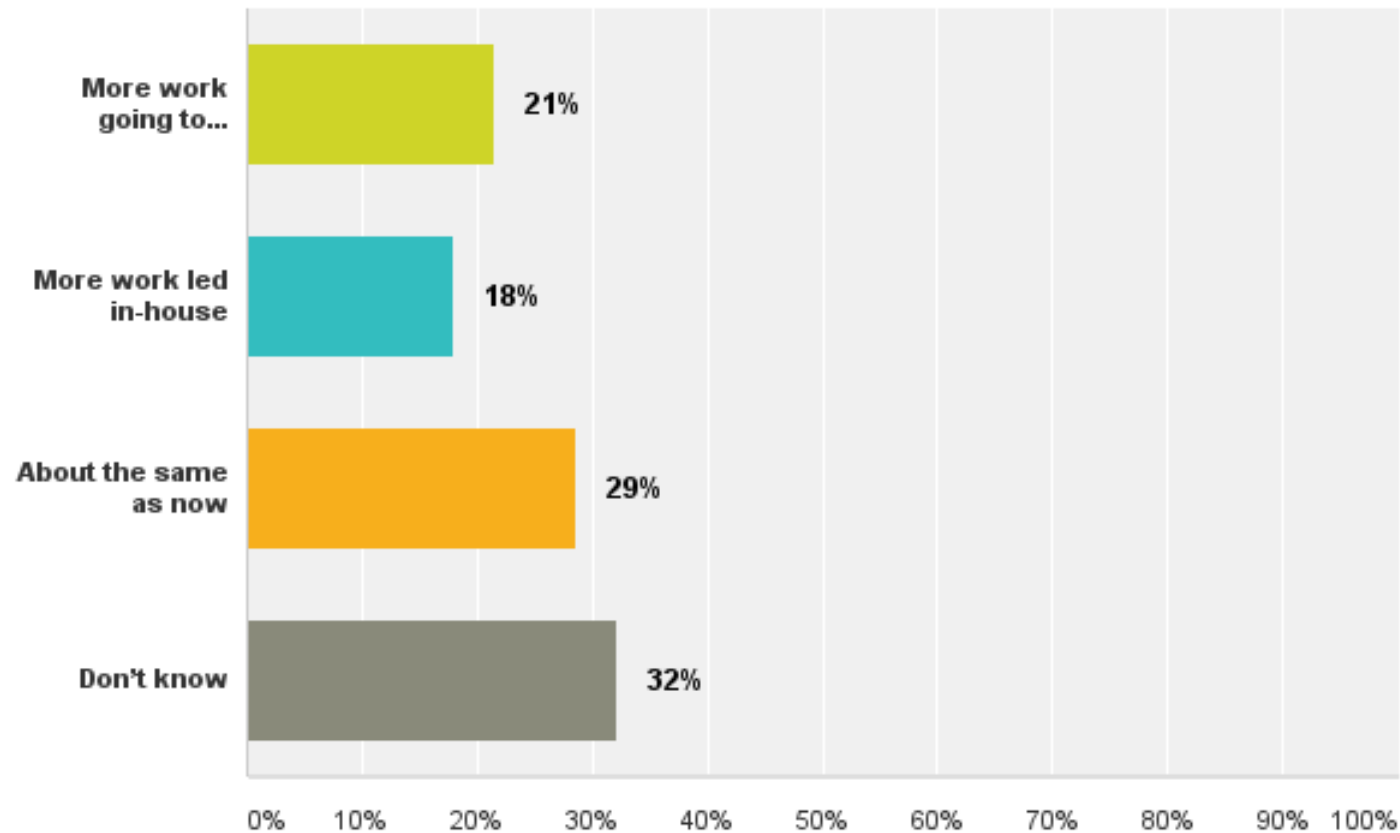


More uncertainty around new roles, related to funding concerns, but no major threat to roles

Q11 Looking AHEAD 3-5 years, do you think the balance of work done by consultants vs. in-house will change?



Answered: 28 Skipped: 25

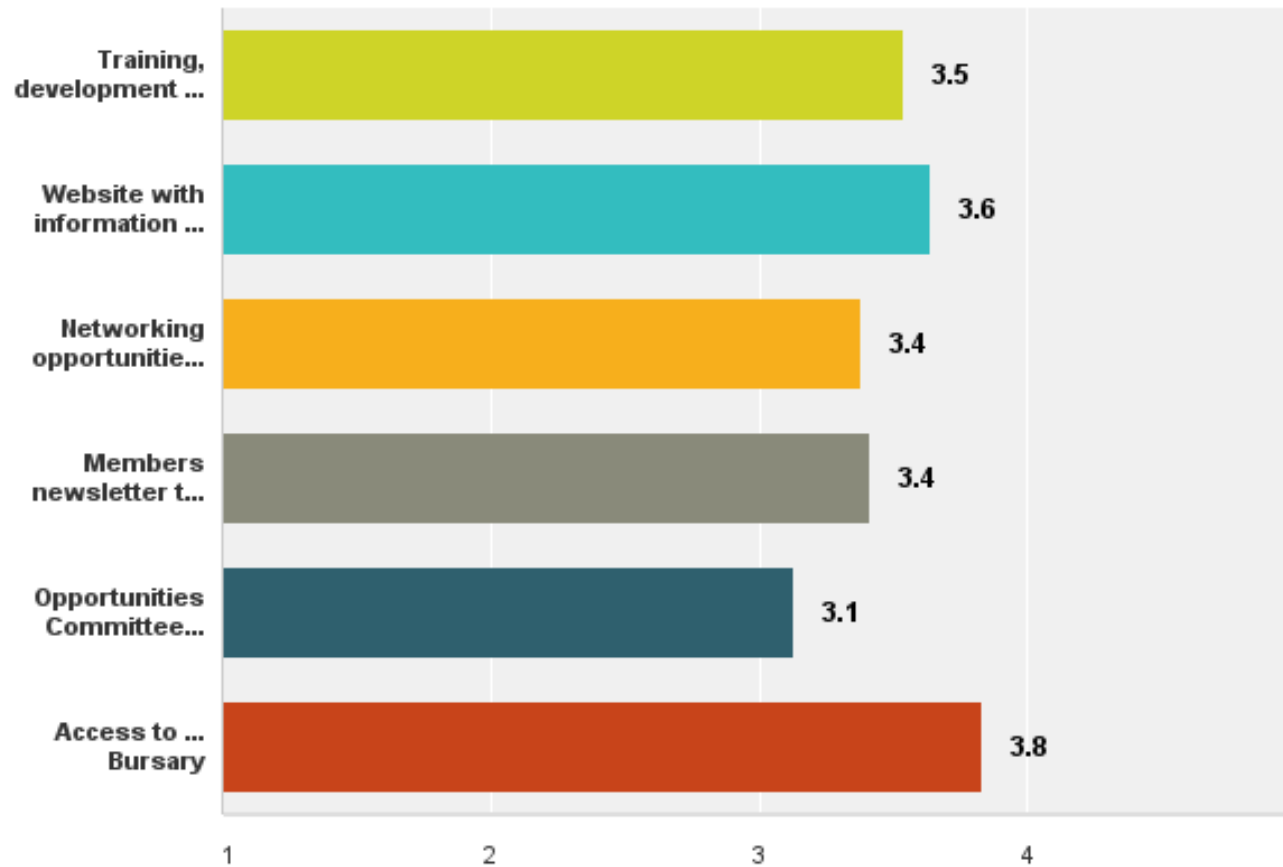


No clear direction.
Looks like it might remain roughly the same

Q12 The VSG strategic plan has a set of aims and benefits to provide for its members. How do you think the VSG is performing on each of these?



Answered: 27 Skipped: 26



Final comments



*The annual conferences and training events are always really good.
Keep up the good work*

*I think the nature of visitor studies has changed immensely over the
past 10 years and will continue to change - I think these changes
should be mapped*

*There is a lot of work still to be done, smaller museum in particular
need support in this area*

*I joined VSA in the US too and VSG seems a lot livelier to me. I hear
more from you*

You're doing a great job and the new website is lovely!

I applaud the VSG for all its efforts to date!

Thank you & continue to join in!



We welcome your comments and input to our work: the VSG is by and for its members!

Join in:

- Join the committee
- Contribute to the newsletter
- Use our website
- Apply for the Alison James bursary
- Suggest ideas, events, training topics...
- Get in touch with other members
- Let us hear your thoughts

