

Disruptive Guests: Survey Results



Strategies for Dealing with Disruptive Guests: Survey Results

RLPSA commissioned a survey with the goal of better understanding how Disruptive Guests impact our restaurant members and to understand what best practices they employ to deal with this critical issue:

- 34 Total Responses
- Survey ran from May 6 to July 1, 2019



Executive Summary

Managing Disruptive Guests is a major, frequently occurring issue that restaurant operators are dealing with across multiple different concepts and environments:

- On a scale of 1 to 5, 67% of Operators rate managing Disruptive Guests as either a “4” or “5”
- 39% of locations reportedly experience a Disruptive Guest at least once per week with 24% of those locations dealing with several incidents per week
- Respondents were drawn from across restaurant concepts with QSR, Fast Casual, and Table Service representing 62%, 26% and 21% of survey respondents, respectively

There are a variety of attributes that characterize a Disruptive Guest but the two most prevalent are “shouting and/or acting hysterically” (94%) and “verbally abusing employees or other patrons” (91%).

As with the above, there are a variety of responses that LP Professionals believe are appropriate to handle Disruptive Guests/diffuse an incident with the four most prevalent:

- Summon police if Disruptive Guest refuses to leave (97%)
- Zero tolerance policies for unwanted touching physical contact (94%)
- Employees asking Disruptive Guest to leave premises for observed drug/alcohol use (91%)
- Among Operators who serve alcohol, 91% train wait staff to avoid “over serving” patrons

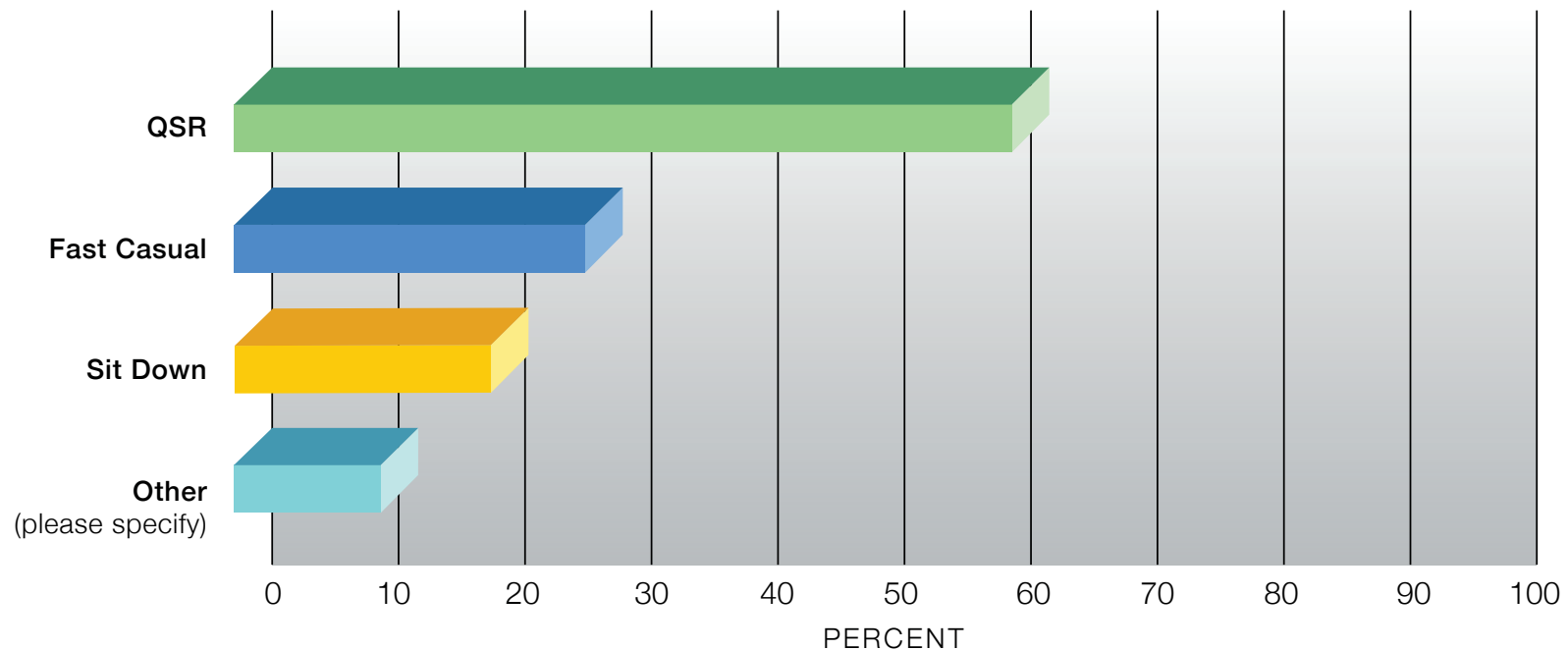
LP Professionals have developed tactics and practices to mitigate the risk from a Disruptive Guest with CCTV and Manager escalation (in the case of a heated argument), by far the most prevalent.

68%

of Operators have a formal policy toward handling Disruptive Guests and have begun training their workforces

Most Respondents are QSR, however 45% of Respondents are Fast Casual or Sit Down

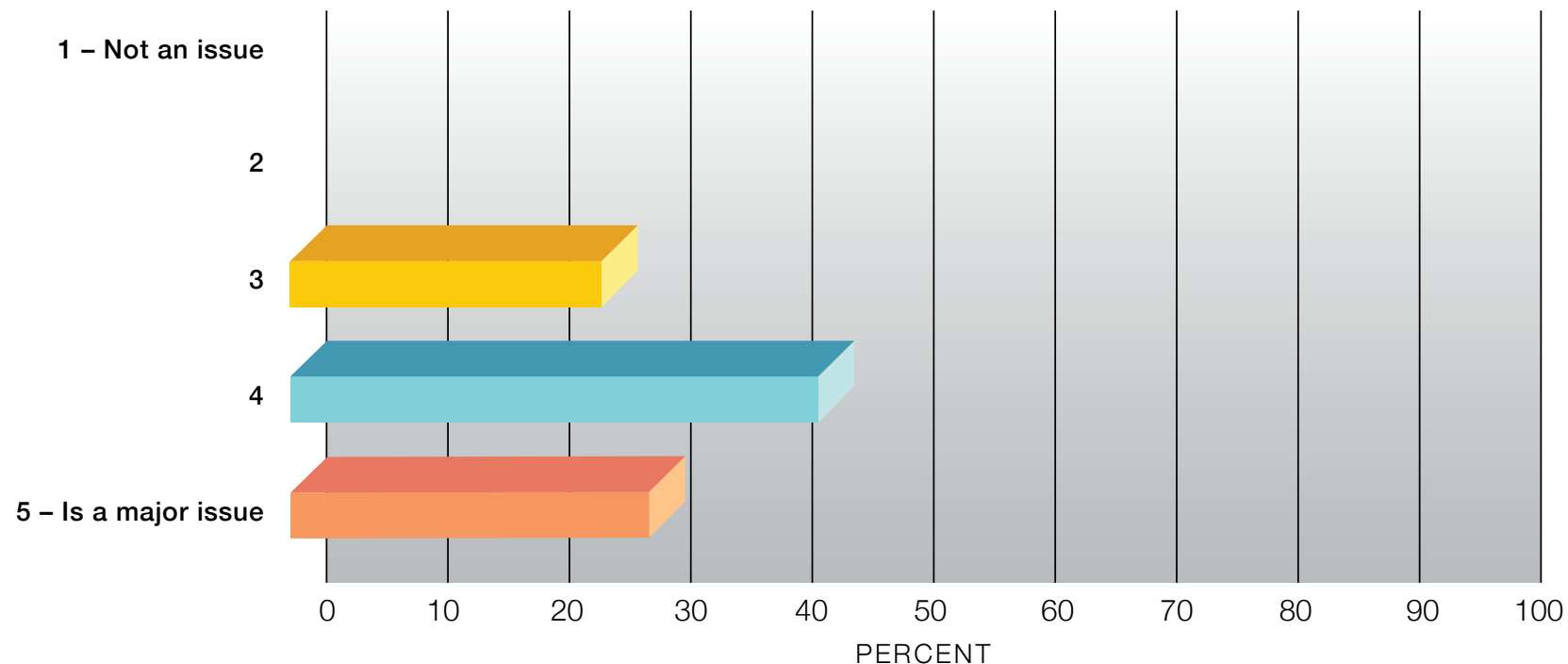
Answered: 34 Skipped: 0



On a Scale of 1 to 5 (Where “5” Means Managing Disruptive Guests is a Major Issue), 75% of Respondents Rate the Issue as a 4 or 5



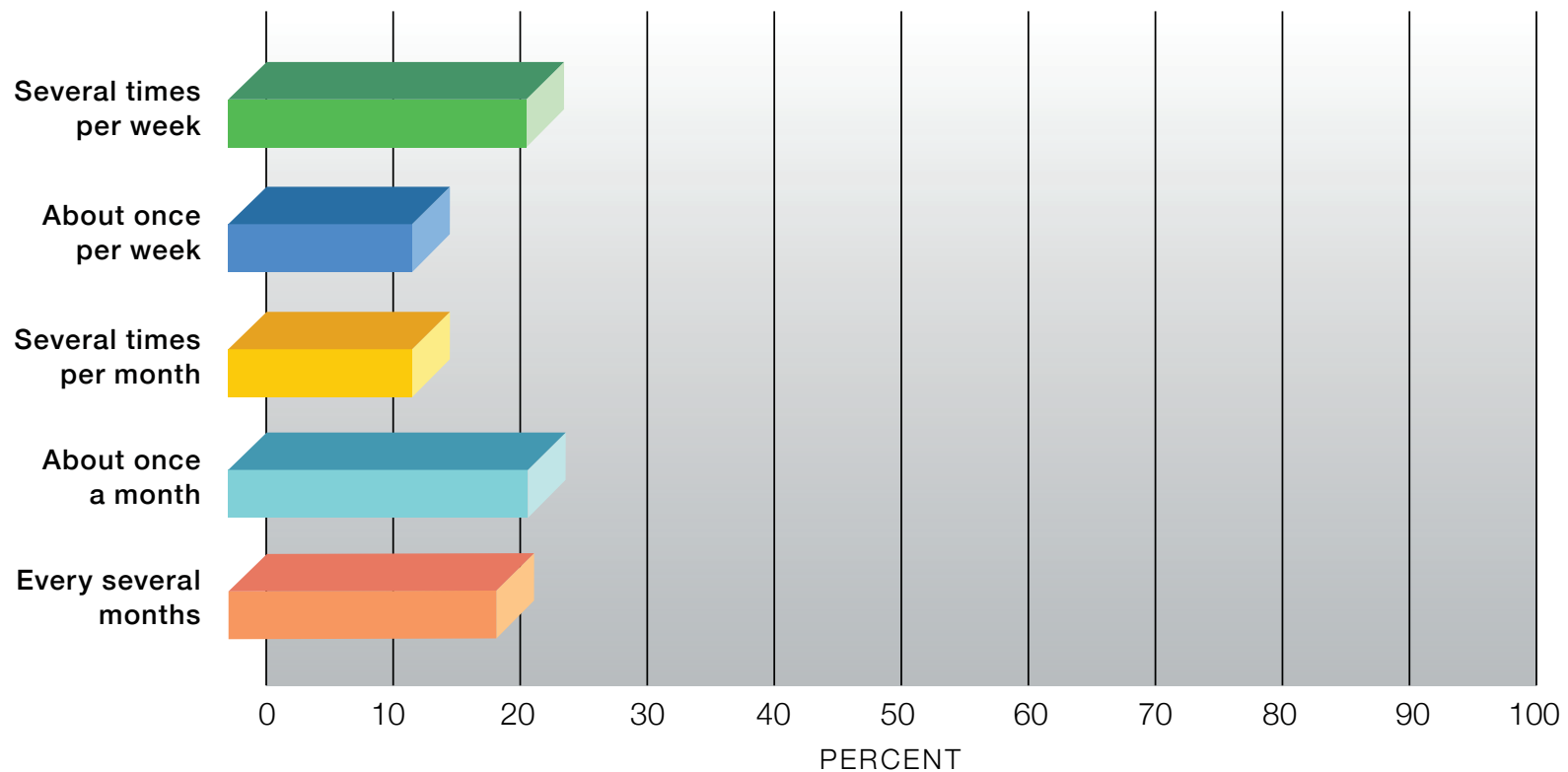
Answered: 34 Skipped: 0



Q4: For purposes of this question we define a “Disruptive Guest” as one who disrupts the normal operation of a business with any of the following: aggressive or illogical behavior or responses to staff or patrons; undesired behavior such as loitering, panhandling, “showing” in the restroom, etc.; making verbal threats or threatening gestures. Poses, in general, a perceived safety or security risk; disrupts the dining experience of other patrons.

40% of Locations Experience a Disruptive Guest At Least Once Per Week

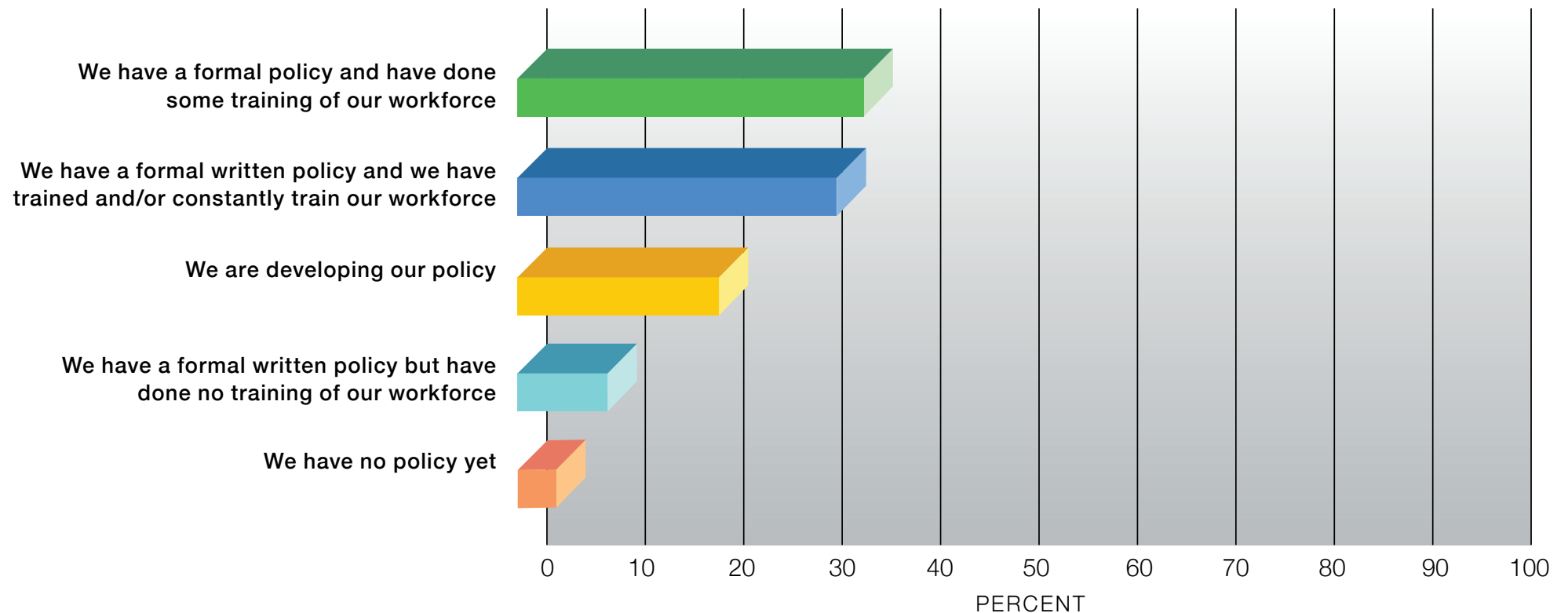
Answered: 33 Skipped: 1



70% of Operators Have a Formal Policy and Have Conducted or Conduct Training Frequently

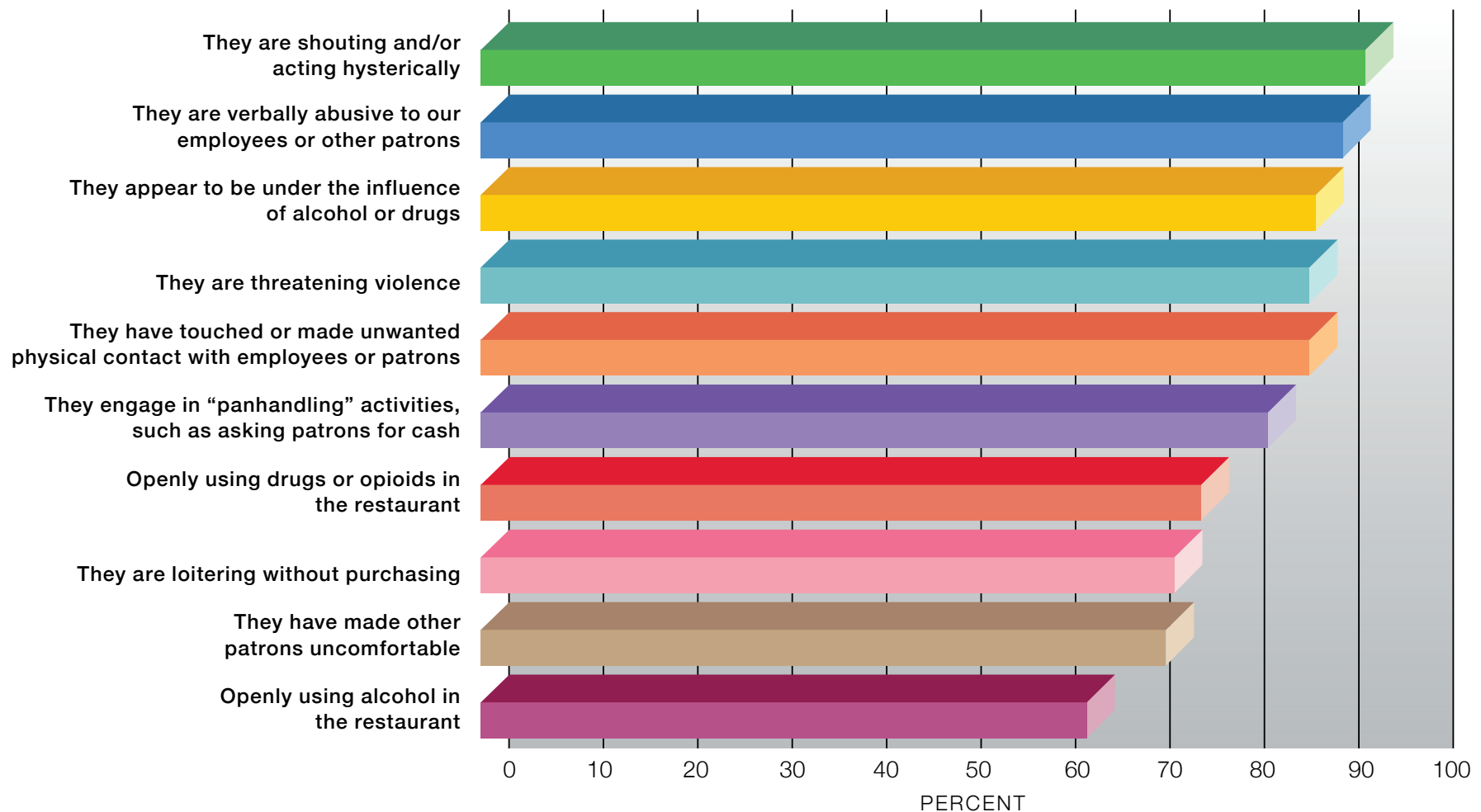


Answered: 34 Skipped: 0



The Following are The Top 10 Attributes Characterizing a “Disruptive Guest(s)”

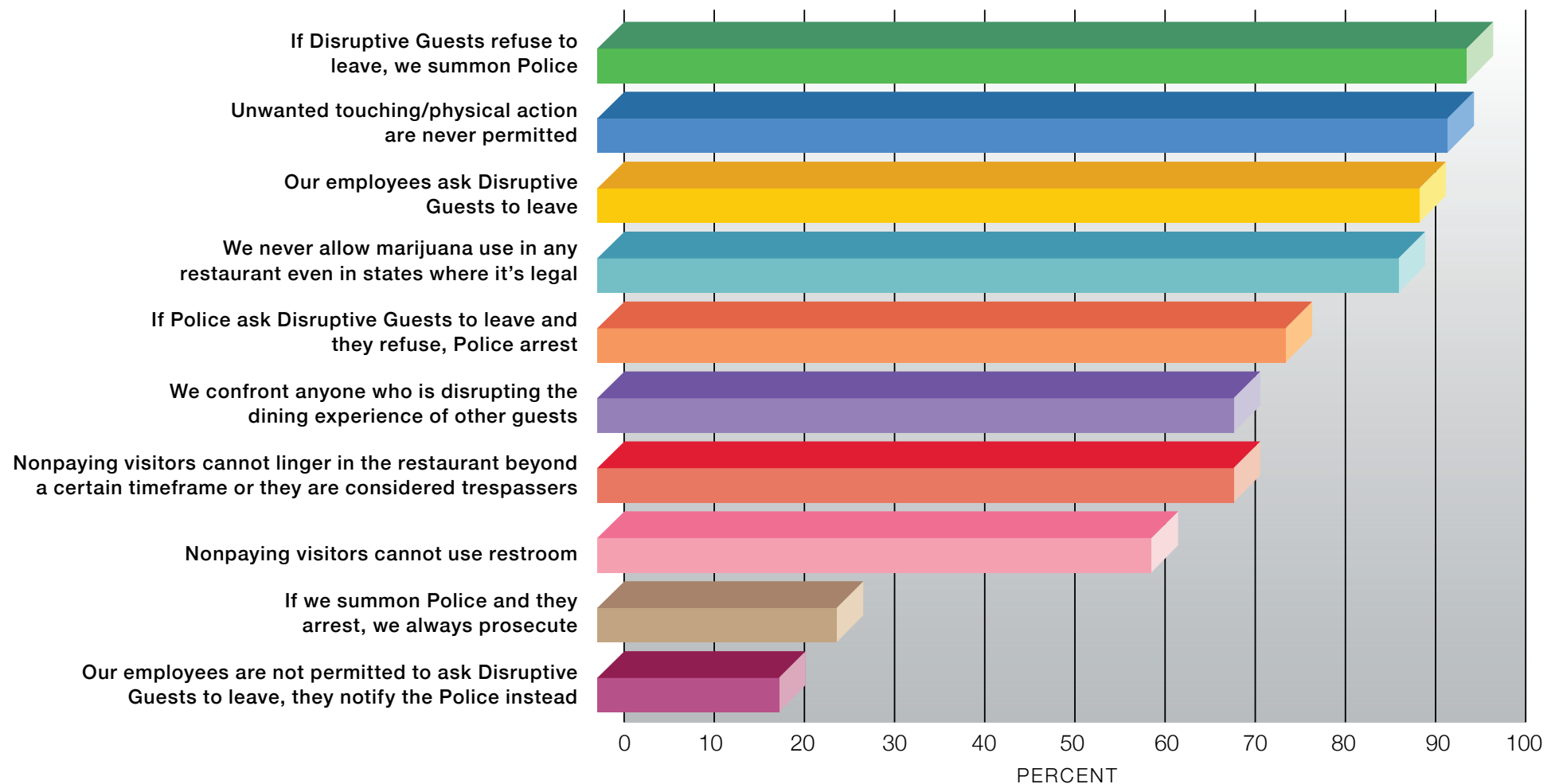
Answered: 34 Skipped: 0



LP Personnel Believe the Following are the Top 10 Most Appropriate Responses to Disruptive Guests

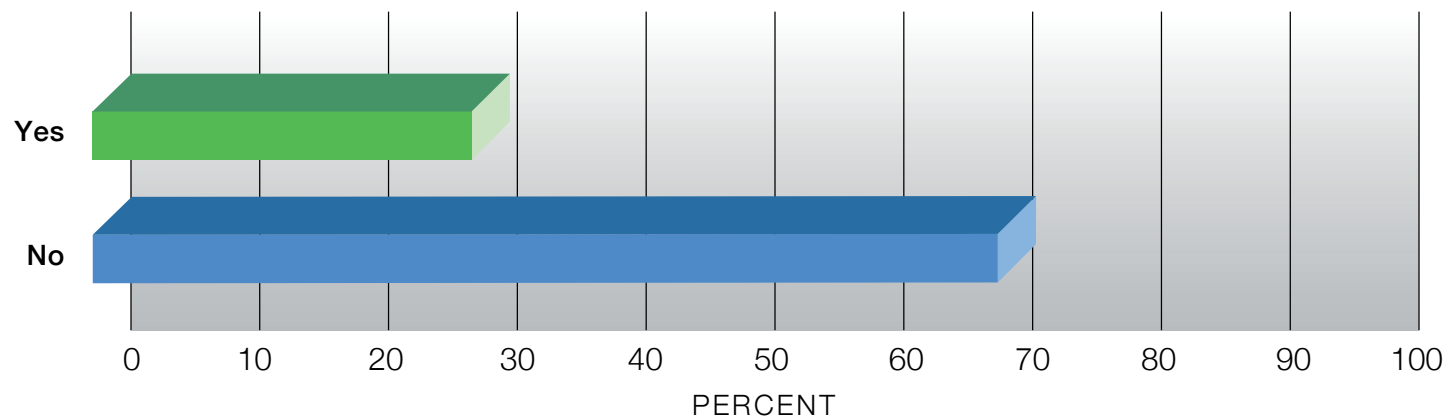


Answered: 34 Skipped: 0



Most Operators Do Not Serve Alcohol in their Operation (Recall QSR = 63% of Sample)

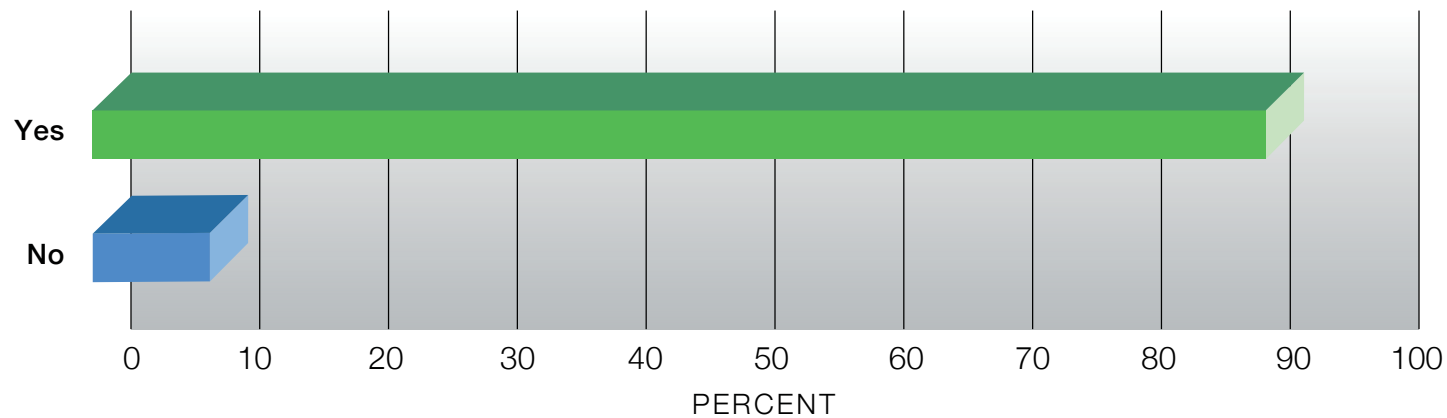
Answered: 34 Skipped: 0



Among Those Who Do Serve Alcohol, Almost all Train Wait and/or Bar Staff to Avoid “Over Serving” Patrons.

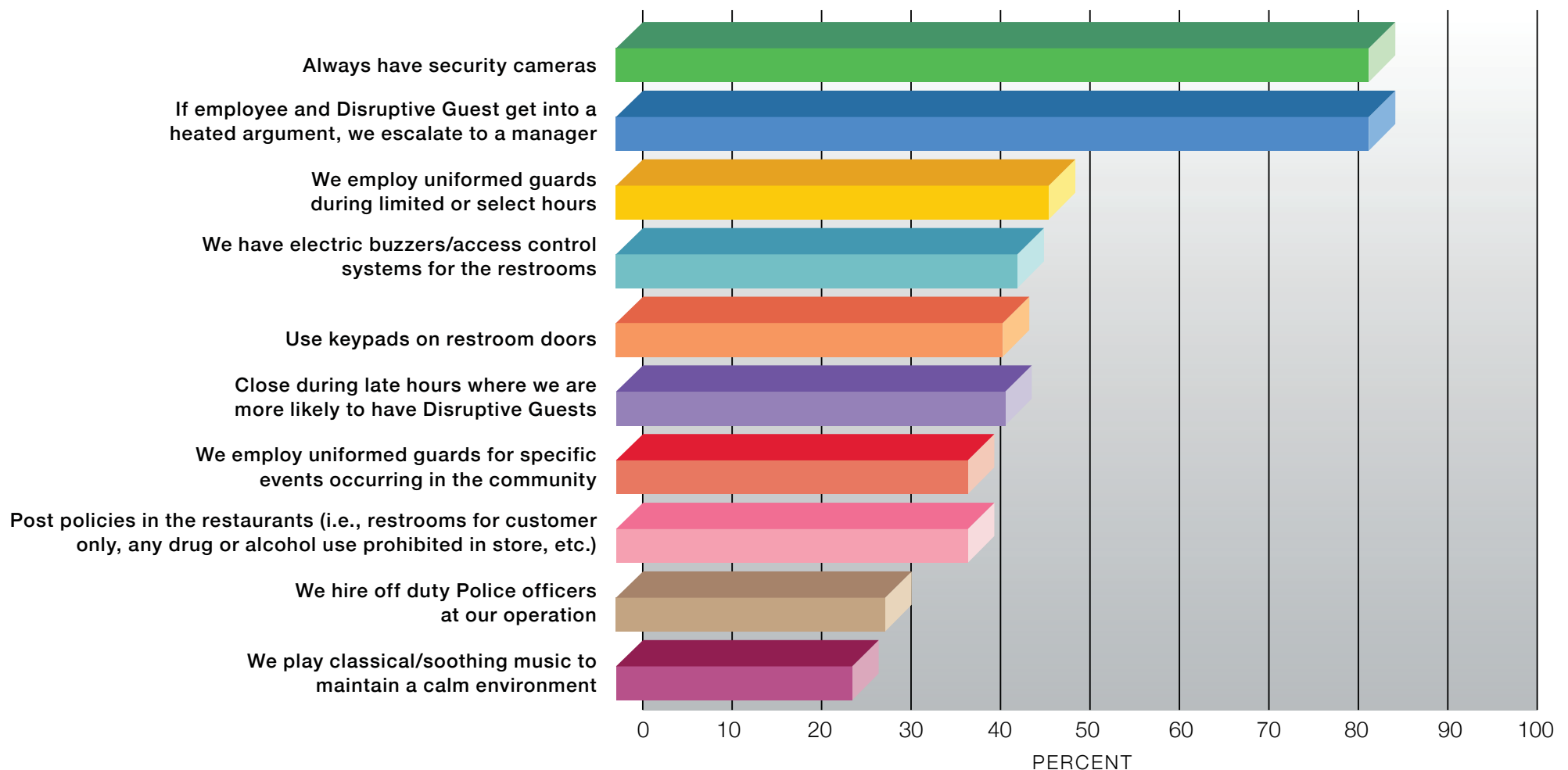


Answered: 11 Skipped: 23



LP Professionals Cite The Following Top 10 Business Practices to Lower the Risk of Disruptive Guests with CCTV and Manager Escalation, By Far, the Most Prevalent

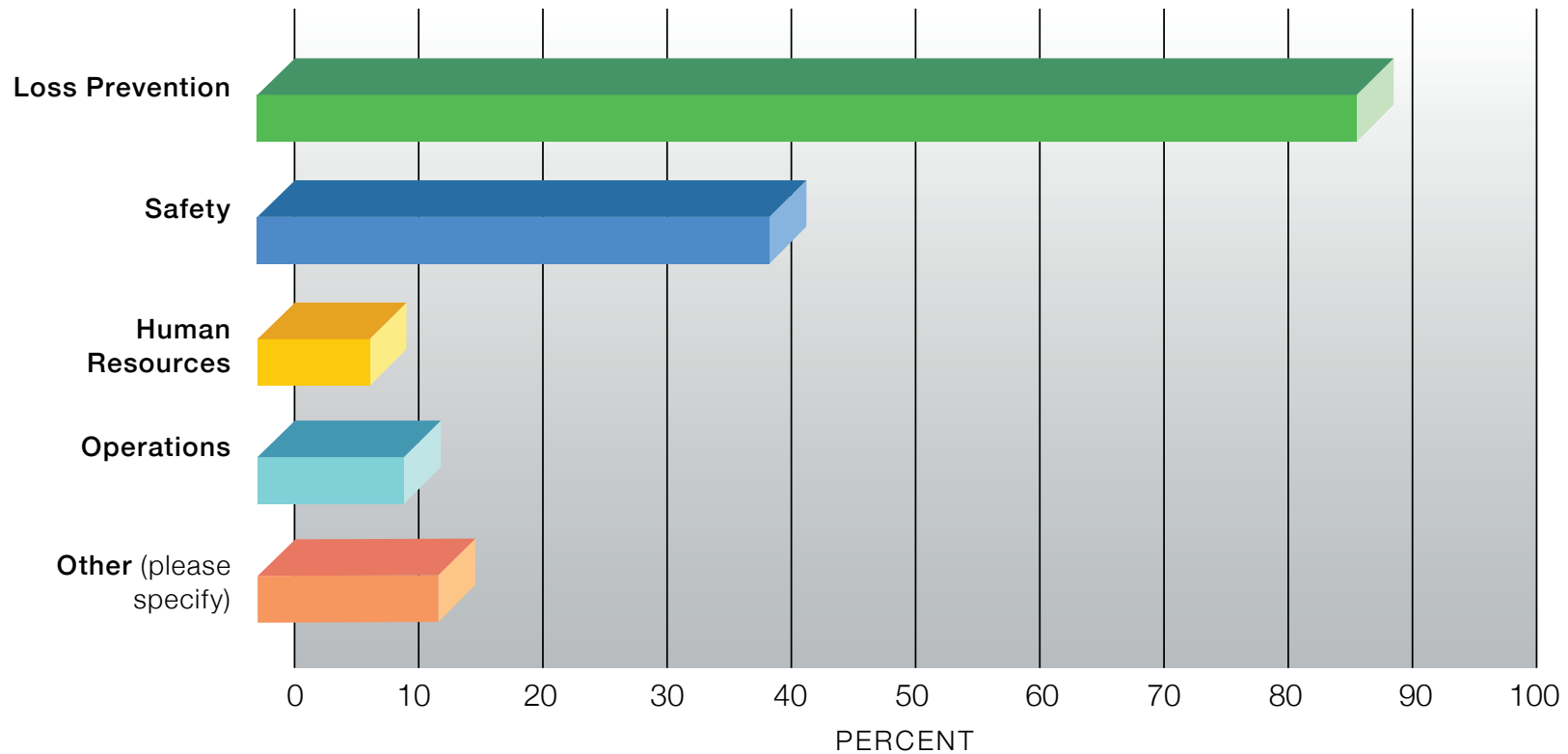
Answered: 33 Skipped: 1



Q1: What are your Duties in the Organization?



Answered: 34 Skipped: 0





Backup Slides/Data Sets

Q1: What are your duties in the organization?

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Loss Prevention	86.24%	30
Safety	41.18%	14
Human Resources	8.82%	3
Operations	11.76%	4
Other (please specify)	14.71%	5
Total Respondents:		34

Q2: Note the organization and restaurant concept

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
QSR	61.76%	21
Fast Casual	26.47%	9
Sit Down	20.59%	7
Other (please specify)	11.76%	4
Total Respondents:		34

Q3: Which of the following attributes do you believe characterize a “Disruptive Guest(s)?” Please select all that apply.

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
They are shouting and/or acting hysterically	94.12%	32
They are verbally abusive to our employees or other patrons	91.18%	31
They appear to be under the influence of alcohol or drugs	88.24%	30
They are threatening violence	88.24%	30
They have touched or made unwanted physical contact with employees or patrons	88.24%	30
They engage in “panhandling” activities, such as asking patrons for cash	82.35%	28
Openly using drugs or opioids in the restaurant	76.47%	26
They are loitering without purchasing	73.53%	25
They have made other patrons uncomfortable	73.53%	25
Openly using alcohol in the restaurant	64.71%	22
They exhibit anti-social behavior	64.71%	22
Groups of teens/middle school - high school students loitering in or around your location	58.82%	20
Appear to be vagrant	50.00%	17
Appear to be homeless	44.12%	15
They show especially poor hygiene	35.29%	12
They are making outlandish requests to our employees	32.35%	11
They are overly critical customers	26.47%	9
Parents with unruly children	23.53%	8
Other (please specify)	8.82%	3
Total Respondents:		34

Where “5” means managing Disruptive Guests is a major issue for my operation and “1” means it is not an issue at all, how do you rate the issue?

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
1 – Not an issue	0.00%	0
2	0.00%	0
3	26.47%	9
4	44.12%	15
5 – Is a major issue	29.41%	10
TOTAL:		34

Q5: Which statement best describes the policies and training you have in place for managing Disruptive Guests

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
We have a formal policy and have done some training of our workforce	35.29%	12
We have a formal written policy and we have trained and/or constantly train our workforce	32.35%	11
We are developing our policy	20.59%	7
We have a formal written policy but have done no training of our workforce	8.82%	3
We have no policy yet	2.94%	1
TOTAL:		34

Q6: Whether you have a formal policy or not, which responses to Disruptive Guests do you believe are appropriate (please select all that apply)?

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
If Disruptive Guests refuse to leave, we summon Police	97.06%	33
Unwanted touching/physical action are never permitted	94.12%	32
If we observe drugs or alcohol use, we ask to leave	91.18%	31
Our employees ask Disruptive Guests to leave	68.24%	30
We never allow marijuana use In any restaurant even In states where it is legal	76.47%	26
If Police ask Disruptive Guests to leave and they refuse, Police arrest	70.59%	24
We confront anyone who is disrupting the dining experience of other guests	70.59%	24
Nonpaying visitors cannot linger in the restaurant beyond a certain timeframe or they are considered trespassers	61.76%	21
Nonpaying visitors cannot use restrooms	26.47%	9
If we summon Police and they arrest, we always prosecute	20.59%	7
Our employees are not permitted to ask Disruptive Guests to leave, they notify the police instead	8.82%	3
In states where marijuana is legal, we allow marijuana use on premise	0.00%	0
Total Respondents:		34

Q7: Do you serve alcohol in your operation?

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	29.41%	10
No	70.59%	24
TOTAL:		34

Q8: If yes to answer #7, do you train your wait and/or bar staff to avoid over serving patrons alcohol? If no, to question #7, skip to question 9

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	90.91%	10
No	9.09%	1
TOTAL:		11

Q9: Which business practices do you use today that may help lower the risk of Disruptive Guests (please select all that apply)?

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Always have security cameras	84.85%	28
If employee and Disruptive Guest get into a heated argument, we escalate to a manager	84.85%	28
We employ uniformed guards during limited or select hours	48.48%	16
We have electric buzzers/access control systems for the restrooms	45.45%	15
Use keypads on restroom doors	42.42%	14
Close during late hours/hours where we are more likely to have Disruptive Guests	42.42%	14
We employ uniformed guards for specific events occurring in the community	39.39%	13
Post policies in the restaurants (i.e., restrooms for customer only, any drug or alcohol use prohibited in store. etc.)	39.39%	13
We hire off duty police officers at our operation	30.30%	10
We play classical/soothing music to maintain a calm environment	27.27%	9
We have mirrors in the restaurant so we can see who is entering a restroom	18.18%	6
We have shut off switches for the drink dispensers	18.18%	6
Other (please specify)	15.15%	5
We employ uniformed guards during all business hours	9.09%	3
Total Respondents:		33

Q11: How frequently do you think the average location experiences a disruptive guest (please select one)

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Several times per week	24.24%	8
About once per week	15.15%	5
Several times per month	15.15%	5
About once per month	24.24%	8
Every several months	21.21%	7
TOTAL:		33

To receive more relevant research
and other educational benefits, join
RLPSA today at www.RLPSA.com.

