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A Survey of Certified Athletic Trainers' Knowledge Base, Personal Experiences and
Attitudes Toward Public Relations Methods

by
Christina Pozzi

A Thesis

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the
Master of Arts Degree
of
The Graduate School
at
Rowan University
May 23, 2005

Approved by

Date Approved 6/27/05

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ABSTRACT

Christina Pozzi

A Survey of Certified Athletic Trainers' Knowledge Base, Personal Experiences and Attitudes Toward Public Relations Methods

2004/05

Dr. Donald Bagin

Master of Arts in Public Relations

This study's purpose was to determine athletic trainers' knowledge base, personal experiences and attitudes concerning public relations methods and their effectiveness in promoting the profession of athletic training.

One hundred fifteen athletic trainers completed a 14-question intercept survey. Results indicate that athletic trainers face difficulty promoting their profession without learning proper public relations techniques and which public relations methods are most effective reaching their target audiences.

Sixty-three percent of the respondents created a brochure/pamphlet; 17% distributed a newsletter and 68% have never written a news release. Most respondents (89%) are familiar with the term news release, while 69% have never heard of the Dollar Bill test when creating the layout and design of a publication.

The majority of athletic trainers ranked themselves as being "fair" at creating news releases, newsletters and public service announcements. Respondents ranked themselves most effective at preparing presentations.

Public service announcements were ranked highest (27%) as the most beneficial/effective public relations method to promote athletic training. However, they were also ranked as the least beneficial/effective public relations method by 30% of the respondents.

Implications for further research on the effectiveness of public relations methods used in the promotion of the athletic training profession are discussed.

MINI-ABSTRACT

Christina Pozzi

A Survey of Certified Athletic Trainers' Knowledge Base, Personal Experiences and Attitudes Toward Public Relations Methods

2004/05

Dr. Donald Bagin

Master of Arts in Public Relations

This study's purpose was to determine athletic trainers' knowledge base, personal experiences and attitudes concerning public relations methods and their effectiveness in promoting the profession of athletic training. Results indicate that athletic trainers face difficulty promoting their profession without learning two things: how to properly perform public relations techniques and which public relations methods are most effective reaching their target audiences.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

To Tony, the one person who knows all my imperfections and loves me in spite of them.

Thank you for having a heart of gold.

To my family, thank you for your encouragement and support. I wouldn't be where I am today without all of you.

To Mr. Whedon, for giving me the opportunity to reach my potential. Thank you for believing in me.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Background:

Certified athletic trainers (ATCs) are allied health care professionals working in various settings, including high schools, colleges and universities, professional sport teams, hospitals, sports medicine clinics, military branches and industrial/commercial settings. ATCs are experts in preventing, assessing, managing and rehabilitating injuries that can result from physical activity.¹

Athletic trainers are governed nationally by The National Athletic Trainers' Association (NATA) and receive certification through the Board of Certification, Inc. (BOC). In addition to certification, ATCs have to meet state licensing and regulation requirements.

The practice of athletic training is currently regulated in 43 states. ATCs may be licensed, registered, certified, or exempted from allied medical practice acts. All allied healthcare personnel have a limited scope of practice under the direction of a physician. Therefore, athletic trainers have the freedom to apply their knowledge, but within a narrow scope of practice. The lack of uniform athletic training legislation allows for state-to-state alterations in ATCs' scope of practice. Due to the influence of other allied

¹ National Athletic Trainers' Association, 2002-2003 Media Guide. (on-line); accessed 23 October 2004; available from <http://www.nata.org/publicrelations/NataMediaGuide.pdf>

healthcare professionals, athletic training is the only allied healthcare profession that defines the patient group on which ATCs can practice.²

Athletic training specializes in six major performance domains: prevention; recognition, evaluation and assessment; immediate care; treatment, rehabilitation and reconditioning; organization and administration; and professional development and responsibility.

Unfortunately, the general public does not recognize or understand the athletic training profession by name alone. Often unaware of the ATC's educational requirements and professional responsibilities/duties, people commonly confuse ATCs with personal or fitness trainers. The Athletic Trainers' Society of New Jersey's (ATSNJ) president Casey Christy, MA, ATC, CSCS, states, "The lack of awareness about athletic training inhibits the profession's reputation and respect among the general population, limits its growth, and impacts employment opportunities and adequate compensation."³

The NATA:

The NATA formed in 1950. Founding members consisted of a core group of about 200 athletic trainers. Today, NATA represents more than 30,000 members internationally. Ninety percent of the total membership represents athletic trainers practicing in the United States.⁴

² James M. Rankin and Christopher D. Ingersoll, Athletic Training Management Concepts and Applications, (Boston: McGraw Hill, 2001), 264.

³ Casey Christy, The General Public's Knowledge and Perceptions of the Certified Athletic Trainer's Professional Role and Educational Background (thesis), Rowan University. 2002

⁴ NATA, The FACTS About Certified Athletic Trainers and the National Athletic Trainers' Association, (on-line); accessed 23 October 2004; available from <http://www.nata.org/publicinformation/index.htm>

The growth of athletic training increased tremendously over the past two decades. NATA members increased from 4,200 members in 1974 to more than 28,000 in 2001--an overall growth rate of over 520 percent⁵.

Its mission is “to enhance the quality of healthcare for athletes and those engaged in physical activity and to advance the profession of athletic training through education and research in the prevention, evaluation, management and rehabilitation of injuries.”⁶ The NATA sets professional and educational standards, publishes the *Journal of Athletic Training* (a quarterly, scientific journal) and the *NATA News* (a monthly magazine).⁷

Eastern Athletic Trainers’ Association:

In January 1949, athletic trainers in the northeastern part of the United States gathered for a meeting. The purpose was to provide a free exchange of ideas in an informal, friendly environment. Attending members chose to call the new organization the Eastern Athletic Trainers’ Association (EATA).⁸

The EATA encompasses two regional districts established by the NATA. District I is comprised of the New England States. Delaware, New Jersey, New York and Pennsylvania comprise District II.

NATA members who reside within these geographic boundaries are automatically members of the EATA. There are no dues required for being an EATA member. A joint district meeting is held on an annual basis. The EATA awards two scholarships for undergraduate students pursuing the athletic training profession. A research grant is also

⁵ NATA, Your Future (on-line); accessed 23 October 2004; available from <http://www.nata.org/about/future.htm>

⁶ NATA, NATA (on-line); accessed 23 October 2004; available from <http://www.nata.org>

⁷ NATA, Member Public Relations Kit, Dallas, TX.

⁸ EATA, History of the EATA (on-line); accessed 11 February 2005; available from <http://www.goata.org>

awarded to assist athletic trainers in producing original research in the field of athletic training.⁸

National Athletic Training Month:

In March 2001, the NATA launched National Athletic Training Month, one of its largest public relations campaigns. National Athletic Training Month focuses on improving the public image of the certified athletic trainer.⁸ It devises helpful ways for the public to fully understand the role of the ATC and the important service ATCs provide at all levels of competition and physical activity.⁹

NATA's Public Relations Committee Chair Al Green, MS, ATC, EMT, states, "National Athletic Training Month is one of our most visible opportunities to spread the NATA key messages and educate people about certified athletic trainers."¹⁰

Initially, members received promotional packets outlining a step-by-step five-month plan for the event. The packets contained promotional and publicity tips, a sample news release and governmental proclamation, a camera-ready logo and sample public service announcements.

Today, members receive a National Athletic Training Month poster with an issue of their *NATA News*. The NATA web site provides members access to the following resources: a sample proclamation; sample news releases, calendar listings, public service announcements and media alerts; a PR tool kit; a print ad; athletic training e-cards; logos; promotional items; how to build a winning media contact list; and how to enter the PR

⁸ Jerry Koloskie, *NATA News*, Jan. 2001.

⁹ Jerry Koloskie, *NATA News*, Aug. 2000.

¹⁰ *NATA News*, Feb. 2002.

contest. Members are encouraged to apply a promotional plan within their individual working environments that attract public attention and media recognition in local and state areas.

PR Contest:

In 1998, the NATA started conducting a PR contest to recognize outstanding achievements in promoting the profession. The contest honors the most effective PR work done by NATA districts, states, or individuals. Originally, public relations activities being entered into the contest must have taken place between Jan. 1 and Dec. 31 of the same year.¹¹ However, in 2002, the PR Contest changed its focus to concentrate only on PR programs for National Athletic Training Month. Any activity entered must have been developed and implemented by one of more ATCs, or by someone working under the direction of an ATC. All work must also reflect the NATA key messages.

In 2004, three new categories for the contest were created: Most Creative, Best Grassroots Effort and Greatest Impact. Two honorable mention awards are given in each category.¹²

The winning entry receives recognition and a gift certificate for \$150 in NATA logo merchandise.

¹¹ NATA News, Dec. 1999.

¹² NATA News, March 2004.

The Need for a Study:

The profession of athletic training is constantly evolving. Therefore, it is essential for ATCs to evaluate the status of their profession to gain professional acknowledgment and keep current among healthcare professionals. “To overcome the misinformation or lack of information about athletic trainers, we need to promote athletic training.”²

And, how do ATCs know their professional promoting is paying off? “To date, few studies have been published to evaluate the profession’s current status with the general public or the effectiveness of such public relations programs.”³

This study attempts to gain ATCs’ knowledge base and attitudes toward public relations methods. It attempts to determine effective and beneficial public relations methods used to promote the athletic training profession.

Purpose of the Study:

The purpose of the study was to evaluate, through a written survey, ATCs’ knowledge base, personal experiences and attitudes concerning public relations methods and their effectiveness in promoting the profession of athletic training. More specifically, the objectives of the study were to determine the following:

1. Whether significant differences existed in an ATC’s general knowledge of public relations methods.

² James M. Rankin and Christopher D. Ingersoll, Athletic Training Management Concepts and Applications. (Boston: McGraw Hill, 2001), 264.

³ Casey Christy. The General Public’s Knowledge and Perceptions of the Certified Athletic Trainer’s Professional Role and Educational Background (thesis). 2002.

2. Whether significant differences existed among which public relations methods ATCs found most effective and beneficial to promoting the athletic training profession.
3. Whether significant differences existed in an ATC's personal experiences using public relations methods to promote the athletic training profession.

Procedure:

Athletic trainers need to determine the effectiveness of the public relations methods they use to promote their profession. To evaluate ATCs' knowledge and attitudes toward public relations methods, a 14-question intercept survey (See Appendix A) was distributed and completed by 115 ATCs attending the EATA conference in Boston, Mass., January 7-10, 2005.

Limitations:

1. Only ATCs attending the EATA conference were surveyed.
2. Responses to the survey dealing with the effectiveness of specific public relations methods were based on perceptions from individual ATCs.

Definitions:

Allied Healthcare Professional-a person who has a limited scope of medical practice within the healthcare system.

Certification-an individual who has submitted minimum credentials of eligibility and has taken some form of a state administered exam.

Licensure-the strictest form of state regulation to practice athletic training. Individuals must meet educational and testing requirements. There are measures for enforcement and penalties for violating the code.

Practice Act-refers to the state code that defines the scope of practice for athletic trainers.

Scope of Practice-what an athletic trainer is prepared to do, qualified to do and authorized to do through education.

Standard of Care-the level of medical sophistication and competency that must be demonstrated by someone who has similar education and training to other members of a particular group.

Proclamation-a written statement by a governmental office such as a town mayor or state governor.

Chapter Two

Review of Related Literature

Studies evaluating athletic trainers' knowledge base and attitudes toward public relations methods are non-existent. In fact, as of this writing, no results were found in the following databases:

- Academic Search Premier
- ERIC-EBSCO
- Lexis Nexis Academic
- PubMed
- Vale

NATA PR Manager Ellen Satlof confirms that no studies or articles have been published in either the *Journal of Athletic Training* or the *NATA News* (See Appendix B).

Chapter 3

Methodology

Population:

The 2005 EATA Conference registration provided the total population from which the sample population for this study was drawn. A total of 1043 ATCs registered for the EATA Conference. A non-random sample of 115 ATCs completed the questionnaire. Only ATCs registered for the EATA Conference were eligible for selection. Athletic training students were excluded.

Instrument:

A survey instrument, designed by the researcher, sought to gather data on the knowledge base, personal experiences and attitudes of ATCs concerning public relations methods and their effectiveness. The instrument consisted of four parts (See Appendix A).

The first part consisted of six questions designed to gather demographic data from the respondents. This section sought to gather information on the gender, age and work setting of the respondents. Other information the questionnaire sought dealt with the number of years respondents practiced athletic training, the district where they practice athletic training and their highest level of education.

The second part of the questionnaire consisted of five quantitative questions about ATCs' exposure and knowledge base of public relations methods.

The third part of the questionnaire consisted of two questions dealing with ATCs' attitudes and perceptions toward public relations methods and their effectiveness for promoting the athletic training profession.

The fourth part of the questionnaire consisted of one qualitative question trying to gather ATCs' thoughts and ideas on promoting the profession of athletic training.

Procedure:

A 14-question intercept survey was randomly distributed to ATCs attending the EATA Convention in Boston, Mass., on January 8-9, 2005. One hundred and fifteen respondents completed the survey.

Data Analysis:

After all the data were received, responses from parts one through four of the questionnaire were tallied. Those data are presented in Chapter IV.

Conclusions and recommendations based upon this information are presented in Chapter V.

Chapter Four

Research Data

The author conducted a study to determine athletic trainers' knowledge base, personal experiences and attitudes concerning public relations and their effectiveness in promoting the profession of athletic training.

Of the 1043 ATCs attending the 2005 EATA Conference, 115 completed the 14-question intercept survey (See Appendix A). Each question was tabulated based on the number of respondents or responses to that particular question. The following are the total number of respondents or responses for each question of the survey:

- Questions 1-3: 115 respondents
- Question 4: Eight respondents listed working at two settings making the total number of responses 123.
- Questions 5-8: 115 respondents
- Questions 9-11: One respondent did not answer the questions making the total number of respondents 114.
- Question 12: Eight respondents did not answer the question making the total number of respondents 107.
- Question 13: Seven respondents did not answer the question making the total number of respondents 108.

- Question 14: Twenty-one respondents did not answer the question and seven questionnaires could not be tabulated due to the poor legibility of responses making the total number of responses 154.

In this chapter, the author presents the questionnaire results. She also presents a question-by-question breakdown, frequency, percentages and cross tabulations, of how the 115 ATCs answered the questionnaire. Graphs are provided to illustrate responses by ATCs.

Questionnaire Responses:

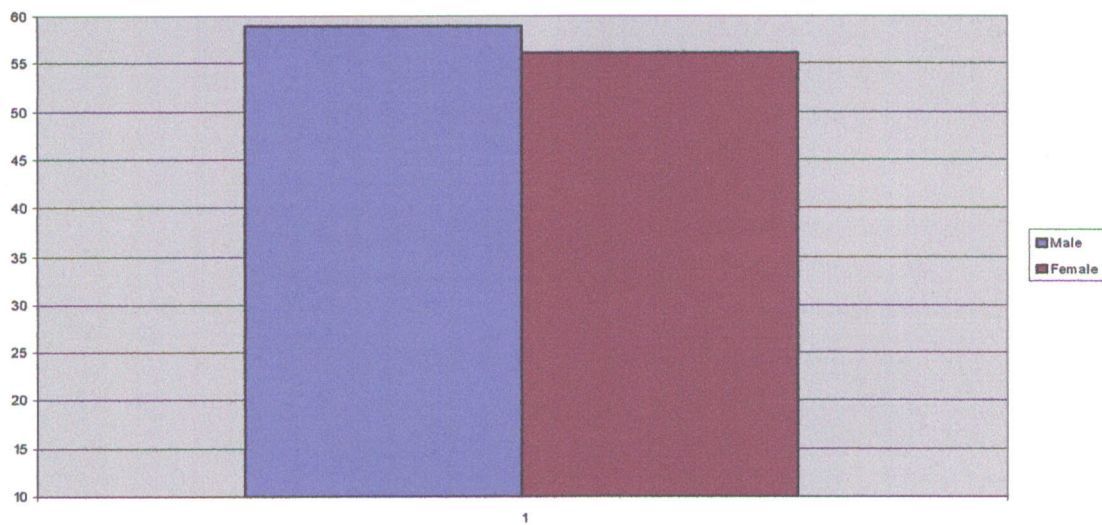
Question 1

Gender

Total Number of Respondents: 115

Gender	Male	Female
Number of Respondents	59	56
Percentages	51%	49%

Number of Male and Female Respondents



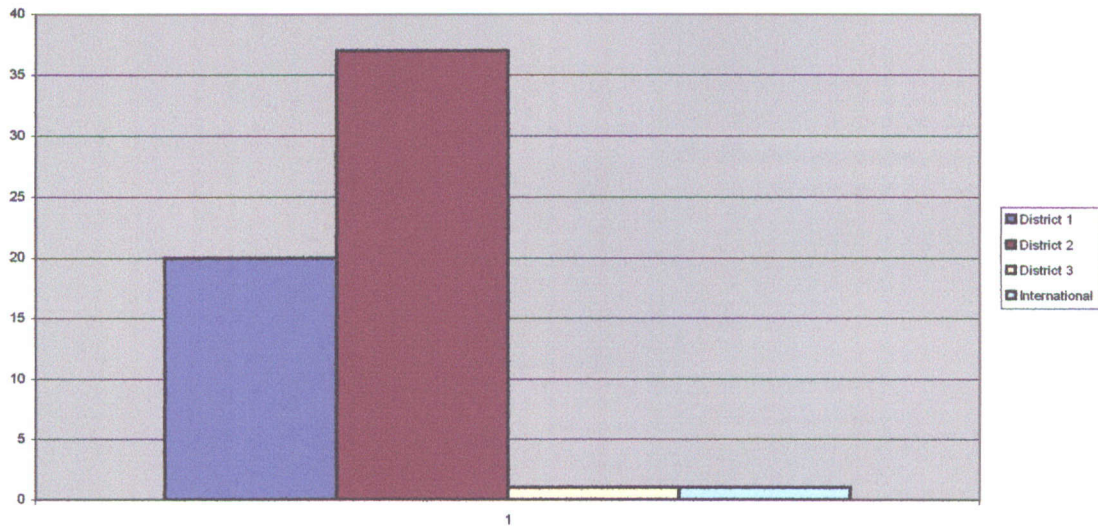
Question 2

What district are you a member of?

Males

	District 1	District 2	District 3	International
Totals	20	37	1	1
Percentages	34%	63%	2%	2%
Percentages from total number of respondents	17%	32%	1%	1%

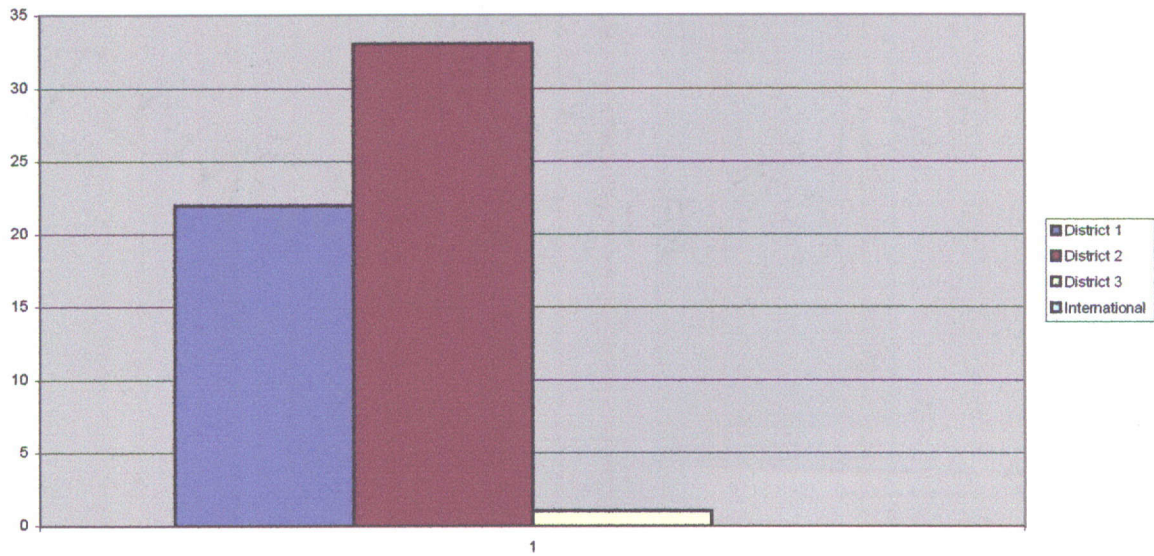
Number of Male Respondents in the Following Districts



Females

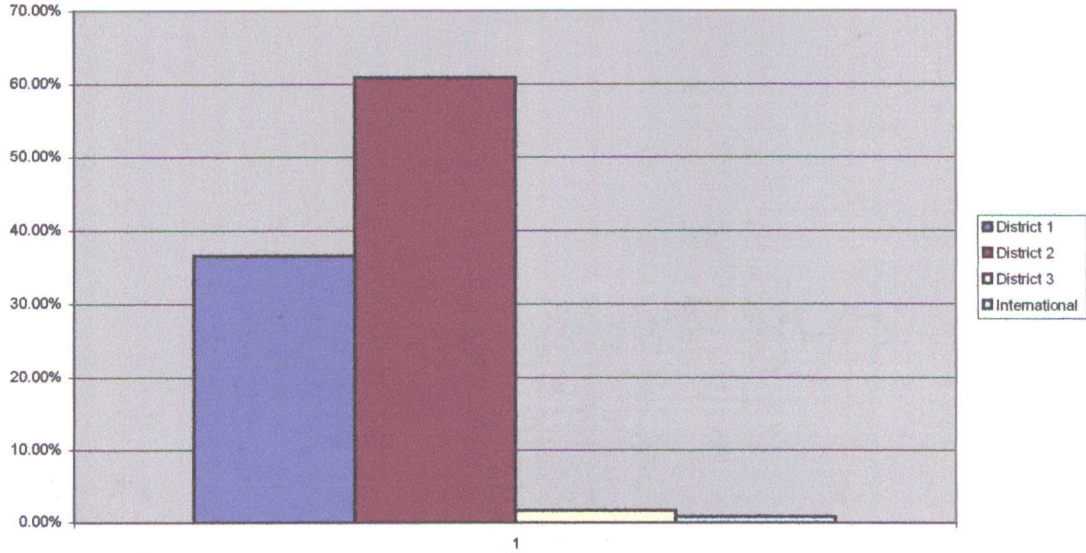
	District 1	District 2	District 3	International
Totals	22	33	1	0
Percentages	39%	59%	2%	0
Percentages from total number of respondents	19%	29%	1%	0

Number of Female Respondents in the Following Districts



	District 1	District 2	District 3	International
Totals from all respondents	42	70	2	1
Percentages	36.5%	60.8%	1.7%	.8%

Percentage of District Members from the Total Population



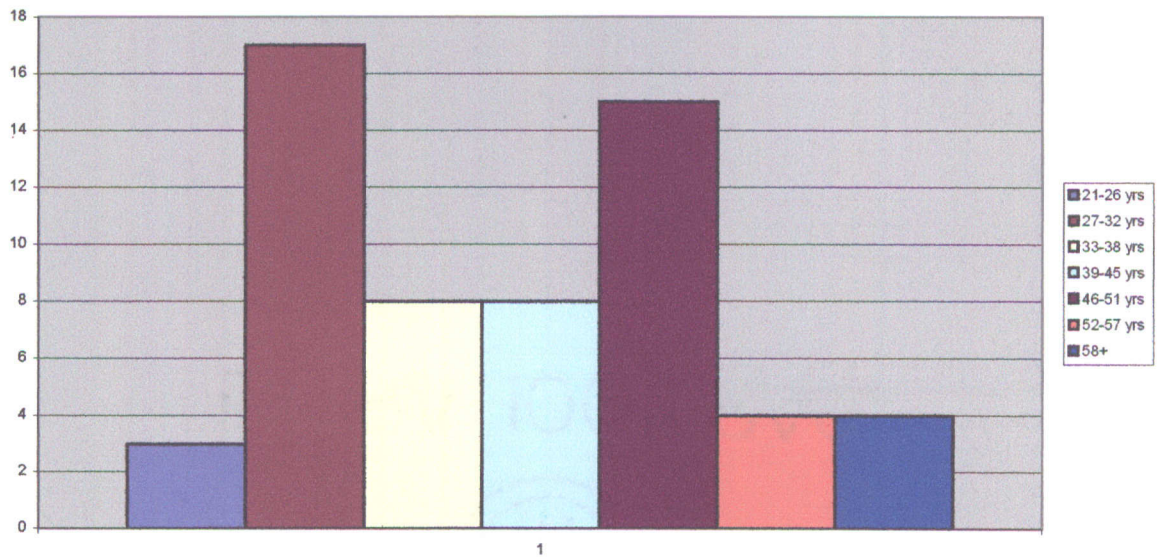
Question 3

What age group are you in?

Males

	21-26 yrs old	27-32 yrs old	33-38 yrs old	39-45 yrs old	46-51 yrs old	52-57 yrs old	58+ yrs old
Totals	3	17	8	8	15	4	4
Percentages	5%	29%	14%	14%	25%	7%	7%
Percentages from total number of respondents	3%	15%	7%	7%	13%	3%	3%

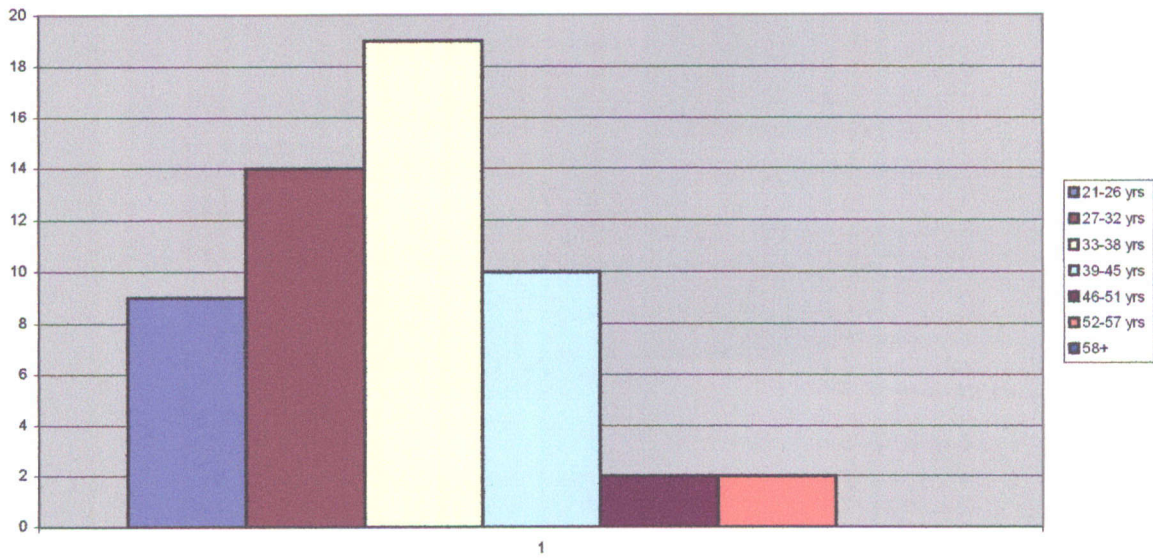
Number of Male Respondents in the Following Age Groups



Females

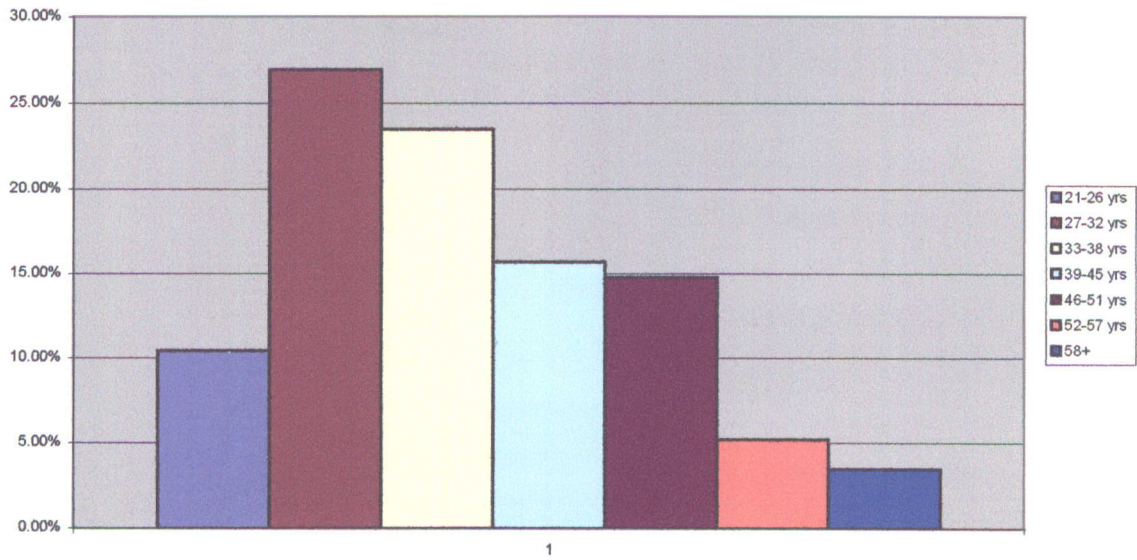
	21-26 yrs old	27-32 yrs old	33-38 yrs old	39-45 yrs old	46-51 yrs old	52-57 yrs old	58+ yrs old
Totals	9	14	19	10	2	2	0
Percentages	16%	25%	34%	18%	4%	4%	0
Percentages from total number of respondents	8%	12%	17%	7%	2%	2%	0

Number of Female Respondents in the Following Age Groups



	21-26 yrs old	27-32 yrs old	33-38 yrs old	39-45 yrs old	46-51 yrs old	52-57 yrs old	58+ yrs old
Totals from all respondents	12	31	27	18	17	6	4
Percentages	10%	27%	23%	16%	15%	5%	3%

Percentage of Age Groups from the Total Population



Question 4

Where do you practice athletic training?

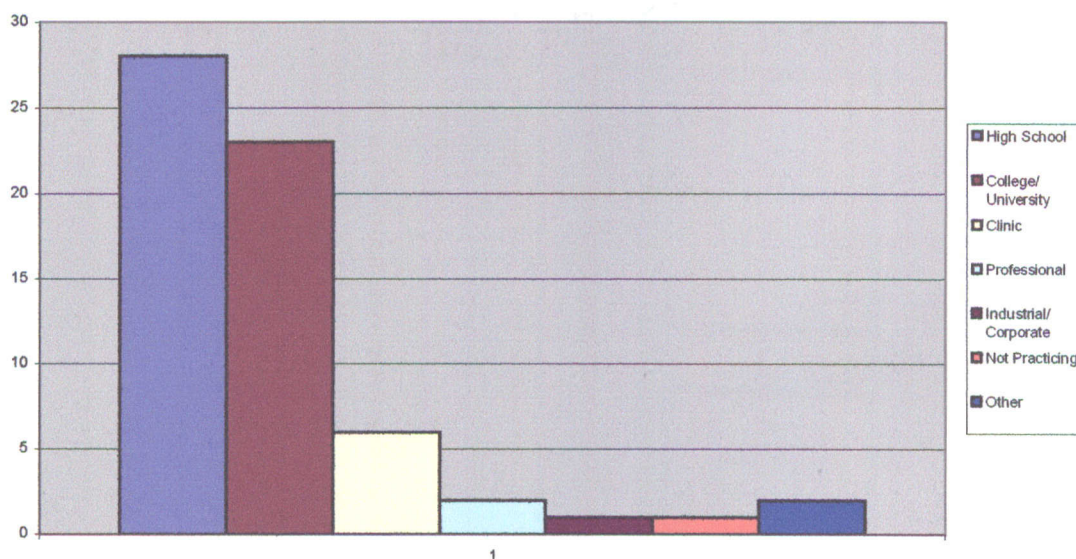
Males

	High School	College/ University	Clinic	Professional	Industrial/ Corporate	Not Practicing	Other
Totals	28	23	6	2	1	1	2
Percentages	44%	37%	10%	3%	2%	2%	3%
Percentages from total number of responses	22%	17%	5%	2%	1%	1%	2%

* Total number of male responses: 63

* Four male and four female respondents listed working at two settings making the total number of male responses 123.

Male Professional Settings



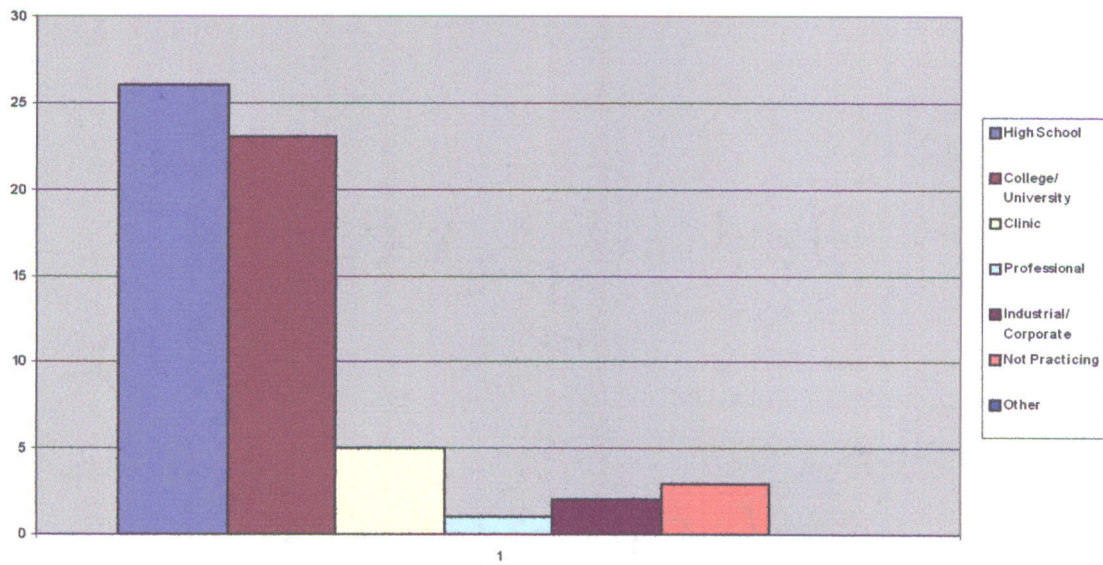
Females

	High School	College/ University	Clinic	Professional	Industrial/ Corporate	Not Practicing	Other
Totals	26	23	5	1	2	3	0
Percentages	43%	38%	8%	2%	3%	5%	0
Percentages from total number of responses	21%	17%	4%	1%	2%	2%	0

* Total number of female responses: 60

* Four male and four female respondents listed working at two settings making the total number of male responses 123.

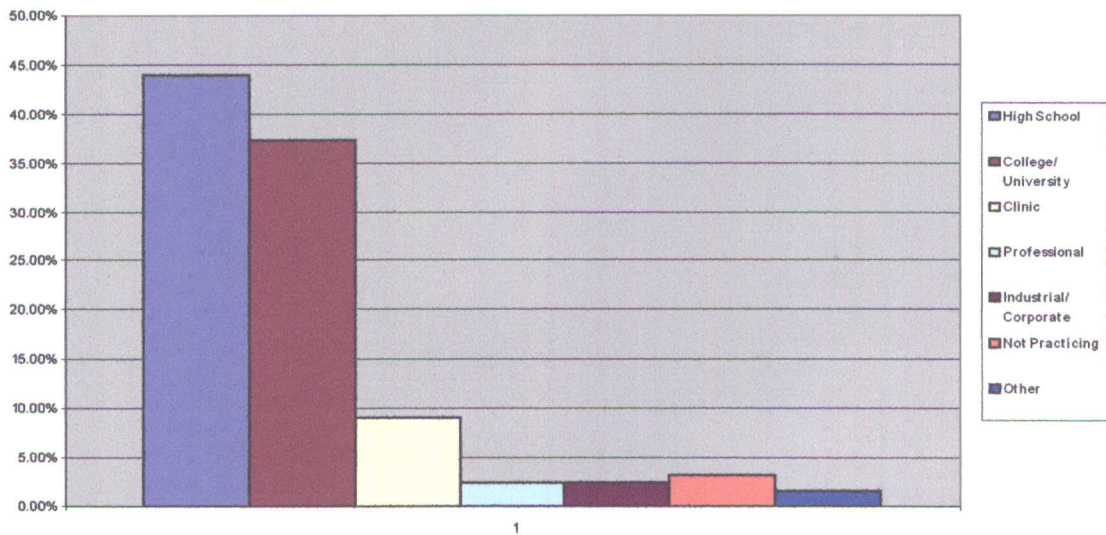
Female Professional Settings



	High School	College/ University	Clinic	Professional	Industrial/ Corporate	Not Practicing	Other
Totals from all respondents	54	46	11	3	3	4	2
Percentages	44%	37%	9%	2%	2%	3%	2%

* Four male and four female respondents listed working at two settings making the total number of male responses 123.

Percentage of All Respondents' Professional Settings



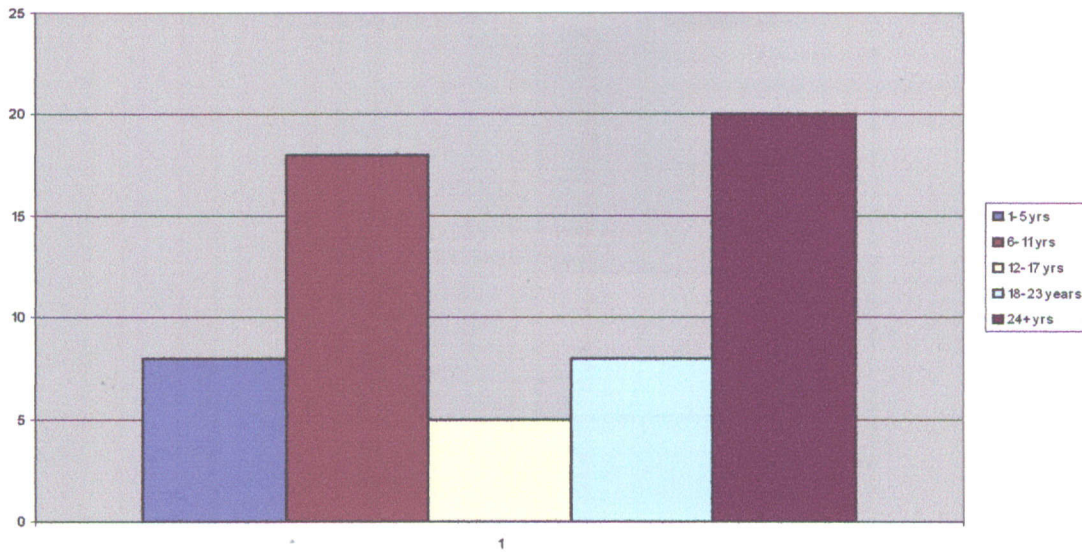
Question 5

How many years have you been practicing athletic training?

Males

	1-5 yrs	6-11 yrs	12-17 yrs	18-23 yrs	24+ yrs
Totals	8	18	5	8	20
Percentages	14%	31%	8%	14%	34%
Percentage from total number of respondents	7%	16%	4%	7%	17%

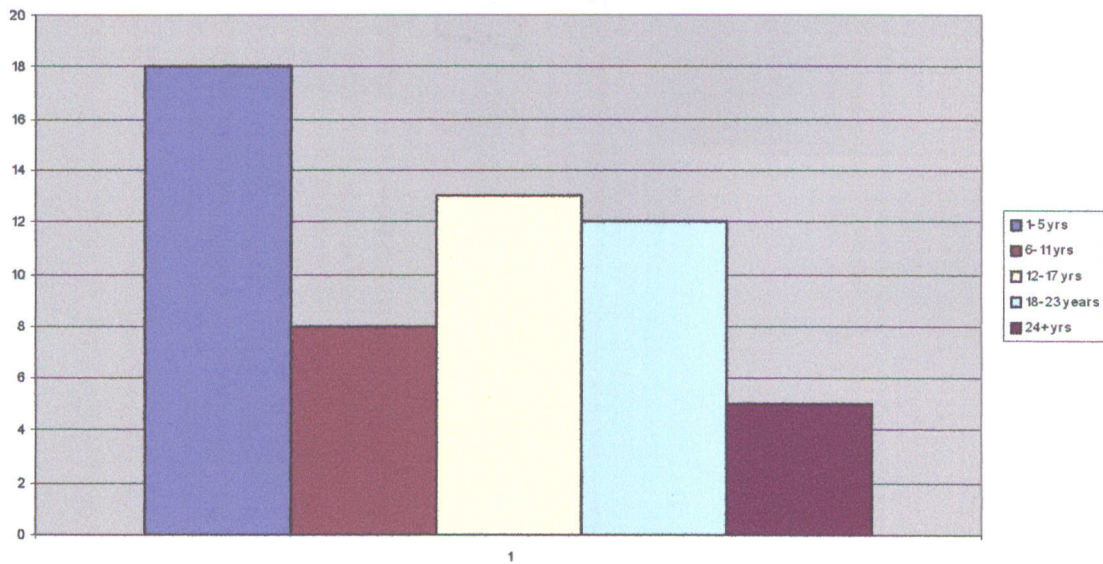
Number of Years Practicing Athletic Training--Males



Females

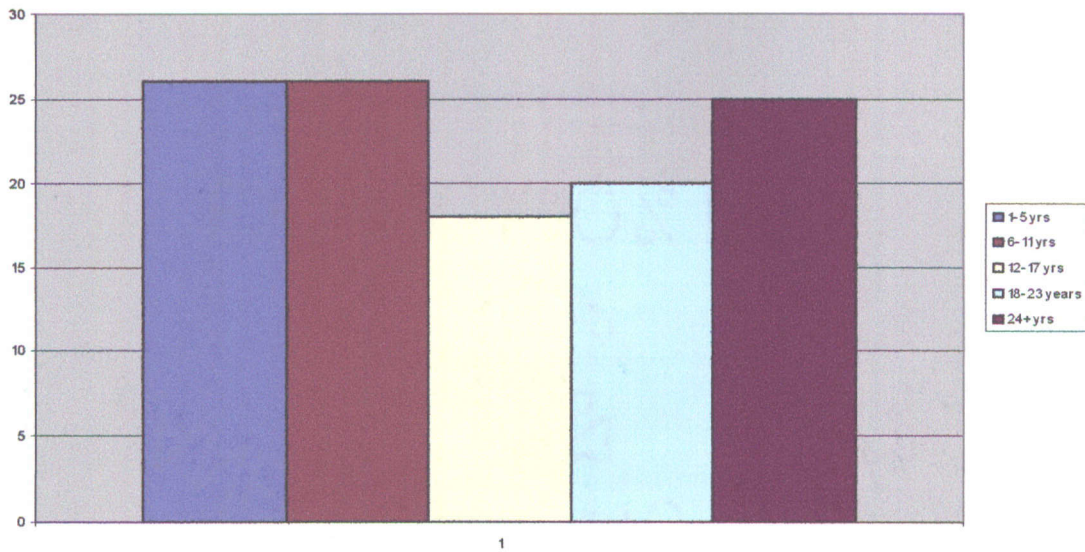
	1-5 yrs	6-11 yrs	12-17 yrs	18-23 yrs	24+ yrs
Totals	18	8	13	12	5
Percentages	32%	14%	23%	21%	9%
Percentage from total number of respondents	16%	7%	11%	10%	4%

Number of Years Practicing Athletic Training--Females



	1-5 yrs	6-11 yrs	12-17 yrs	18-23 yrs	24+ yrs
Totals from all respondents	26	26	18	20	25
Percentages	23%	23%	16%	17%	22%

Respondents' Years of Experience



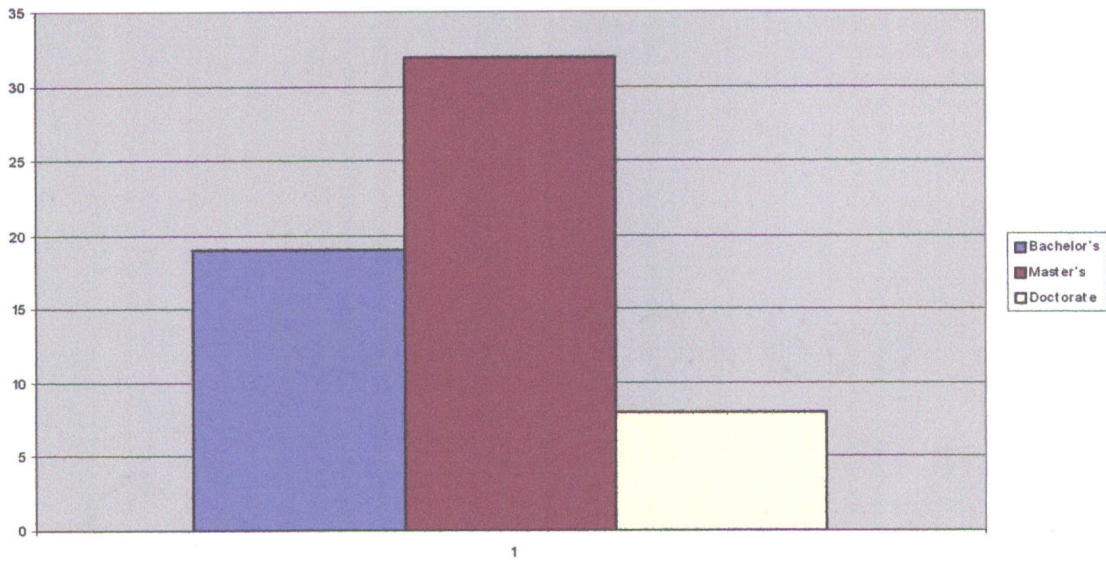
Question 6

What is your highest level of education?

Males

	Bachelor's	Master's	Doctorate
Totals	19	32	8
Percentages	32%	54%	14%
Percentages from total number of respondents	17%	28%	7%

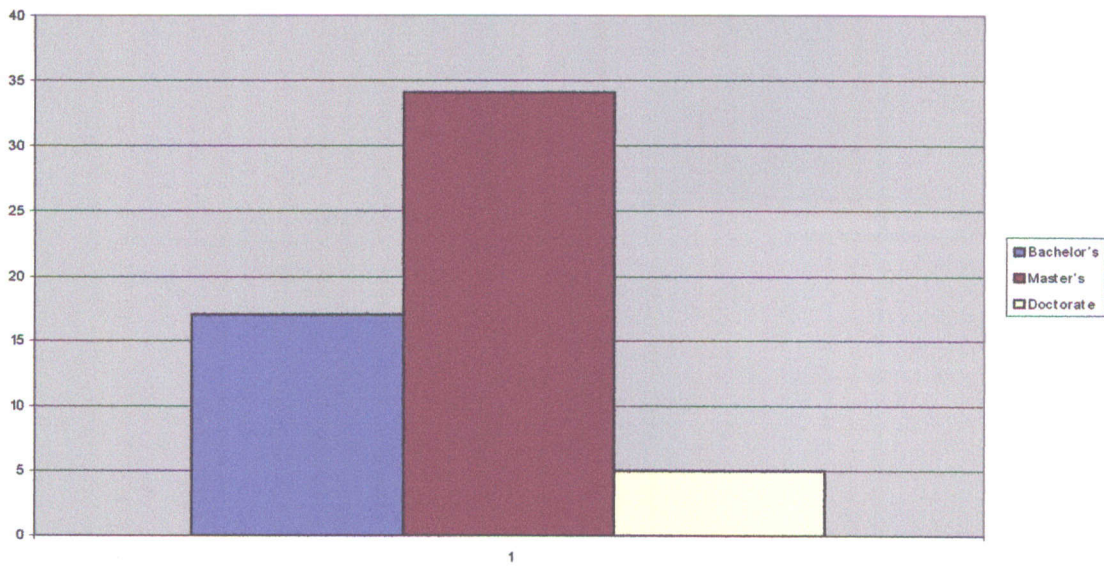
Level of Education--Males



Females

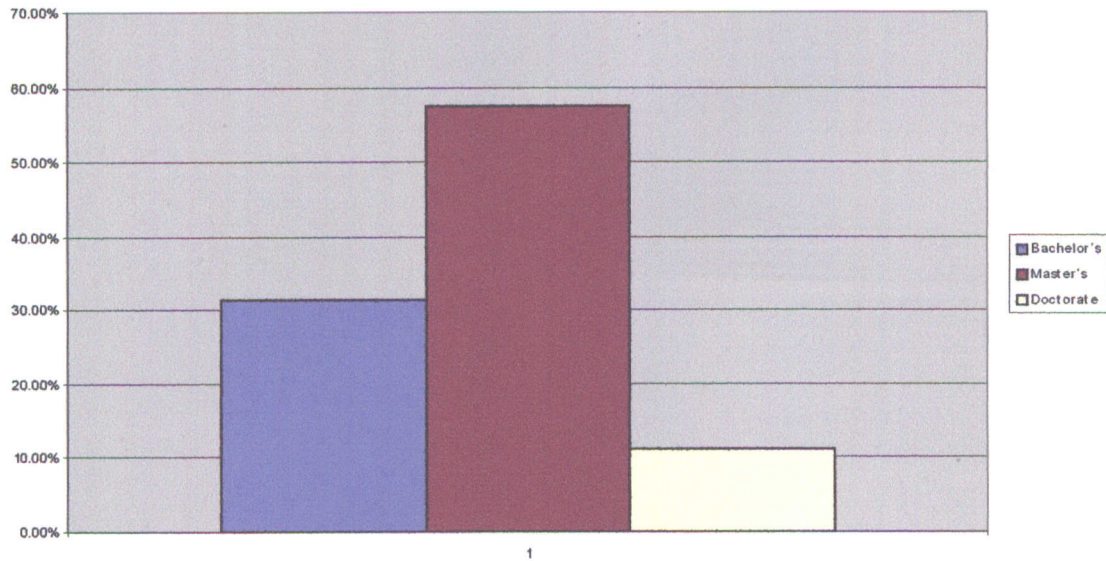
	Bachelor's	Master's	Doctorate
Totals	17	34	5
Percentages	30%	61%	9%
Percentages from total number of respondents	15%	30%	4%

Level of Education--Females



	Bachelor's	Master's	Doctorate
Total from all respondents	36	66	13
Percentages	31%	57%	11%

Percentage of All Respondents' Level of Education



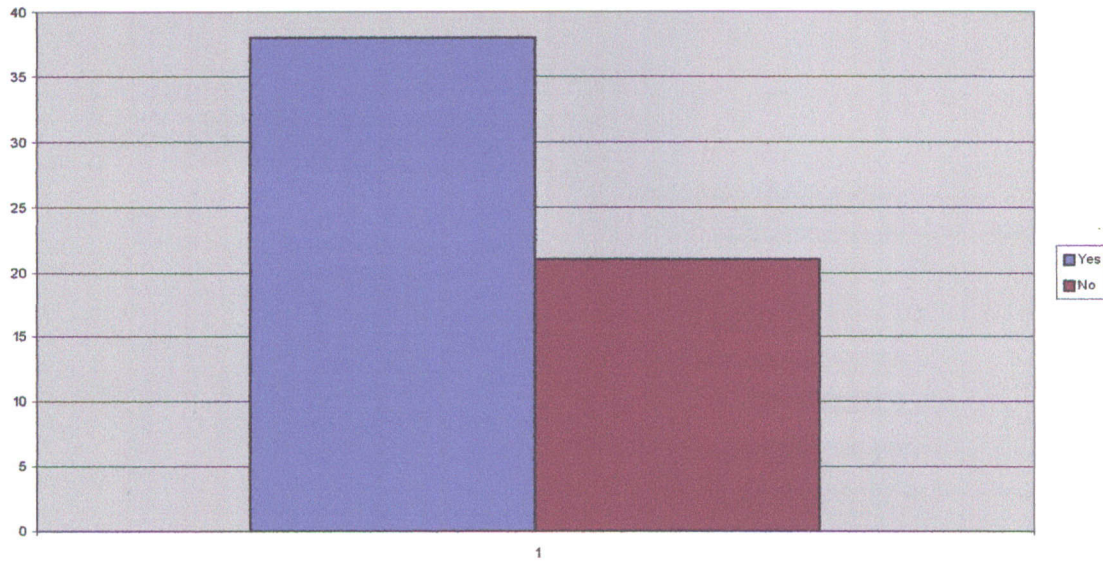
Question 7

Have you ever created a brochure/pamphlet?

Males

	Yes	No
Totals	38	21
Percentages	64%	36%
Percentages from total number of respondents	33%	18%

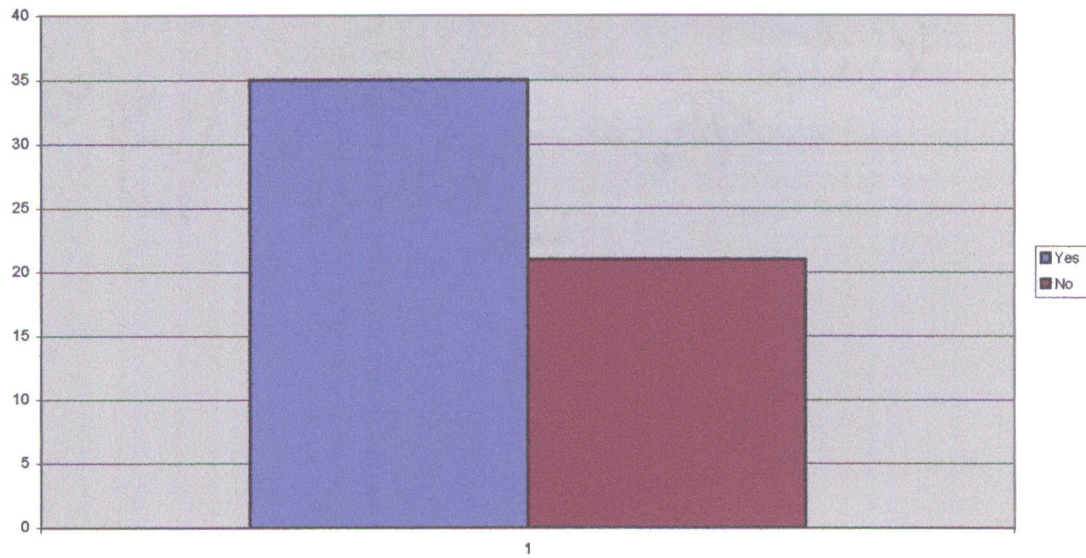
Created a Brochure/Pamphlet--Males



Females

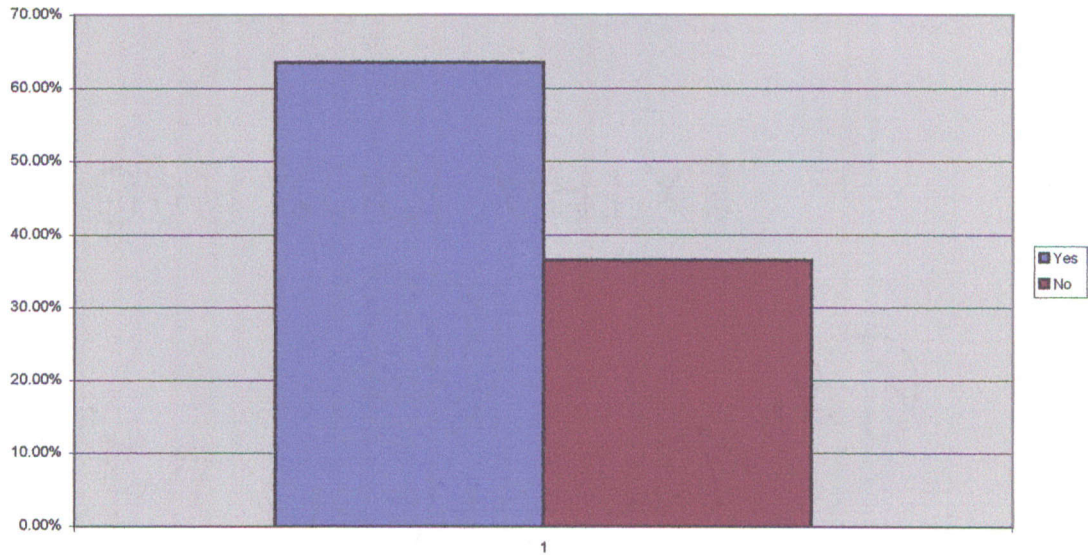
	Yes	No
Totals	35	21
Percentages	63%	38%
Percentages from total number of respondents	30%	18%

Created a Brochure/Pamphlet--Females



	Yes	No
Total from all respondents	73	42
Percentages	63%	37%

Percentage of All Respondents' Creating a Brochure/Pamphlet



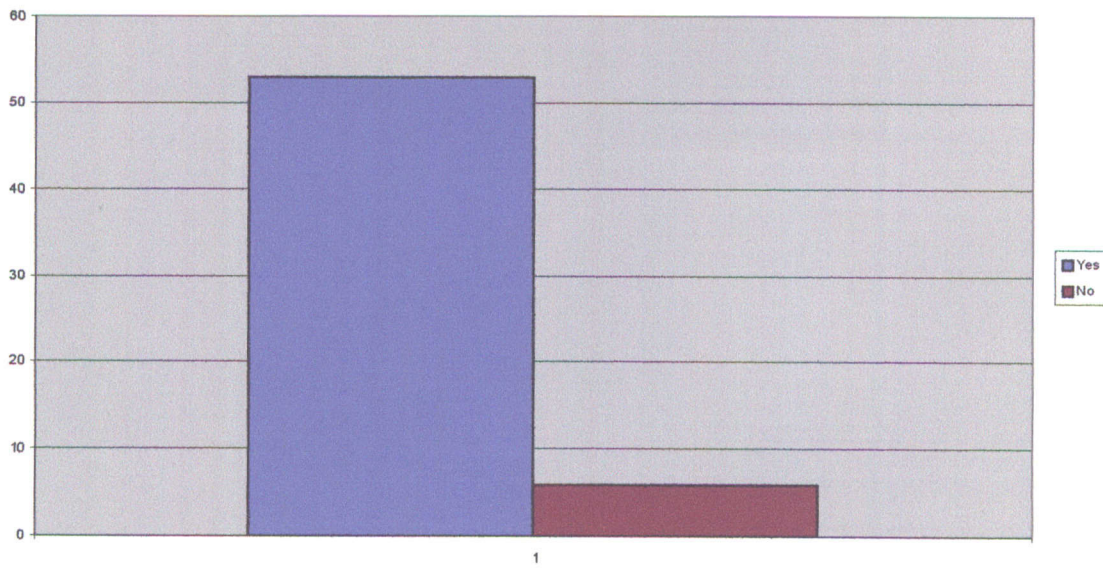
Question 8

Are you familiar with the term news release?

Males

	Yes	No
Totals	53	6
Percentages	90%	10%
Percentages from total number of respondents	46%	5%

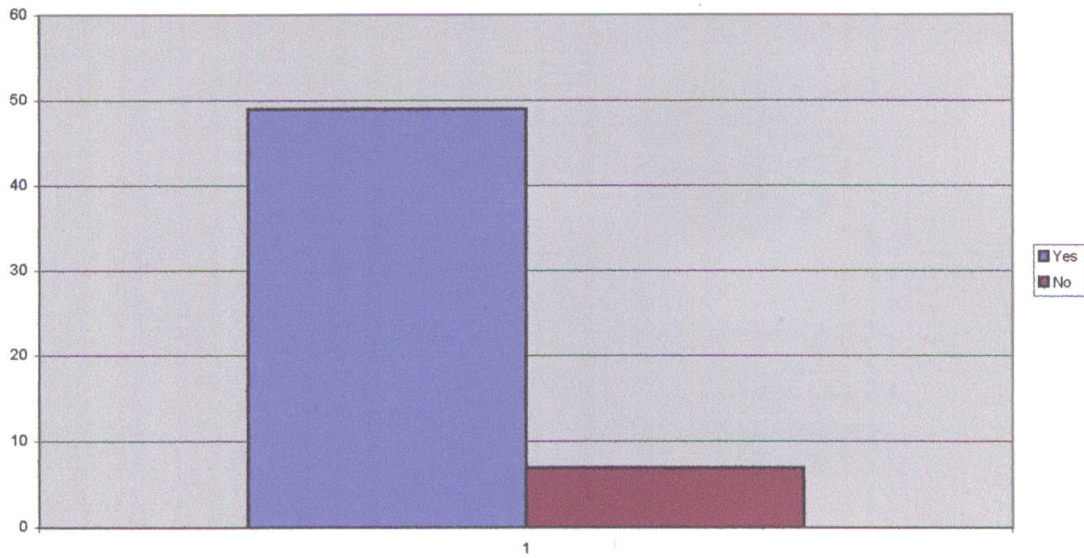
Males Familiar with the Term News Release



Females

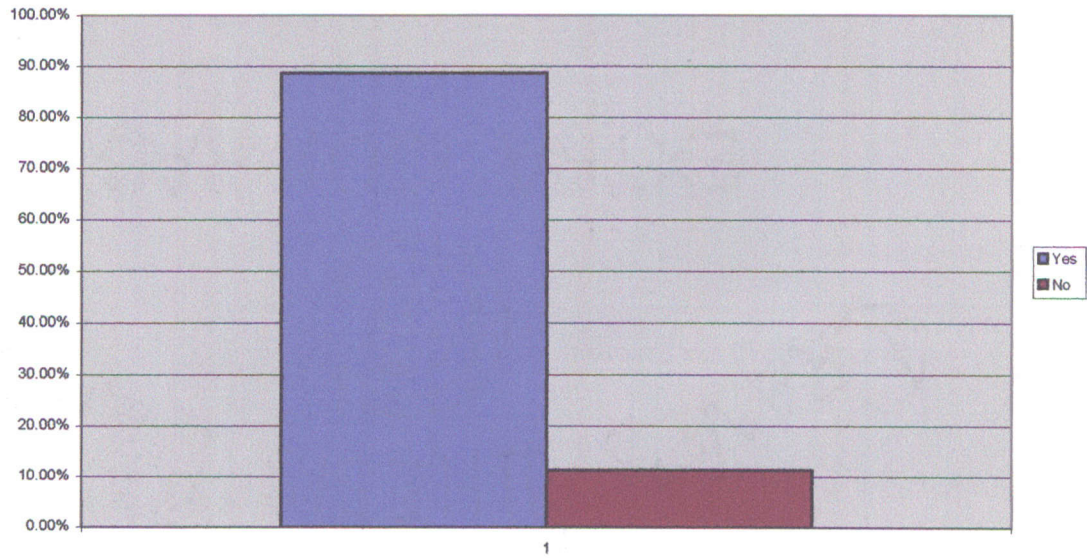
	Yes	No
Totals	49	7
Percentages	88%	13%
Percentages from total number of respondents	43%	13%

Females Familiar with the Term News Release



	Yes	No
Total from all respondents	102	13
Percentages	89%	11%

Percentage of All Respondents Familiar with the Term News Release



Question 9

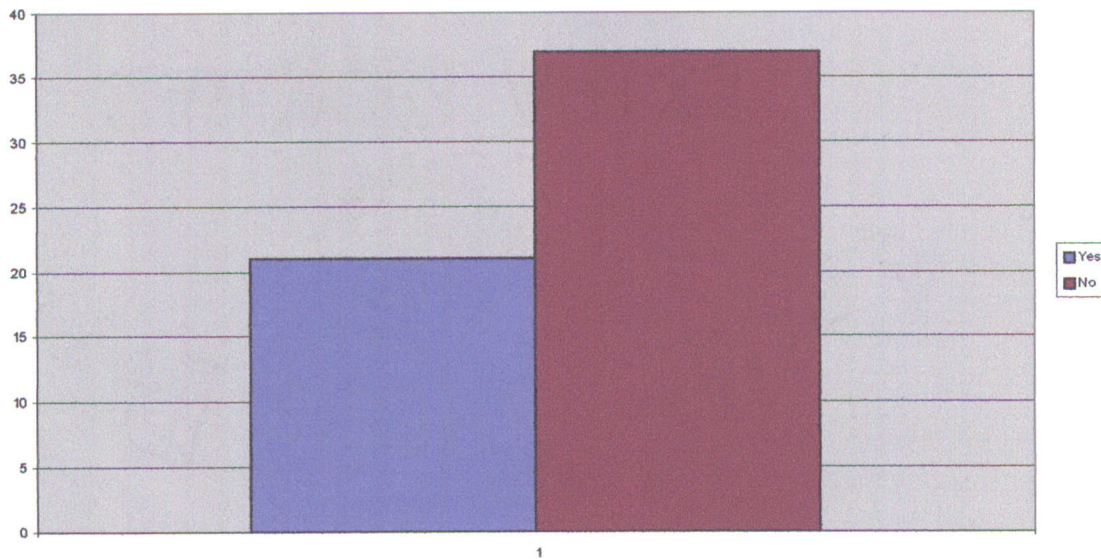
Have you ever written a news release?

Males

	Yes	No
Totals	21	37
Percentages	36%	64%
Percentages from total number of respondents	18%	32%

* One respondent did not answer the question making the number of male respondents 58 and the total number of respondents 114.

Written a News Release--Males

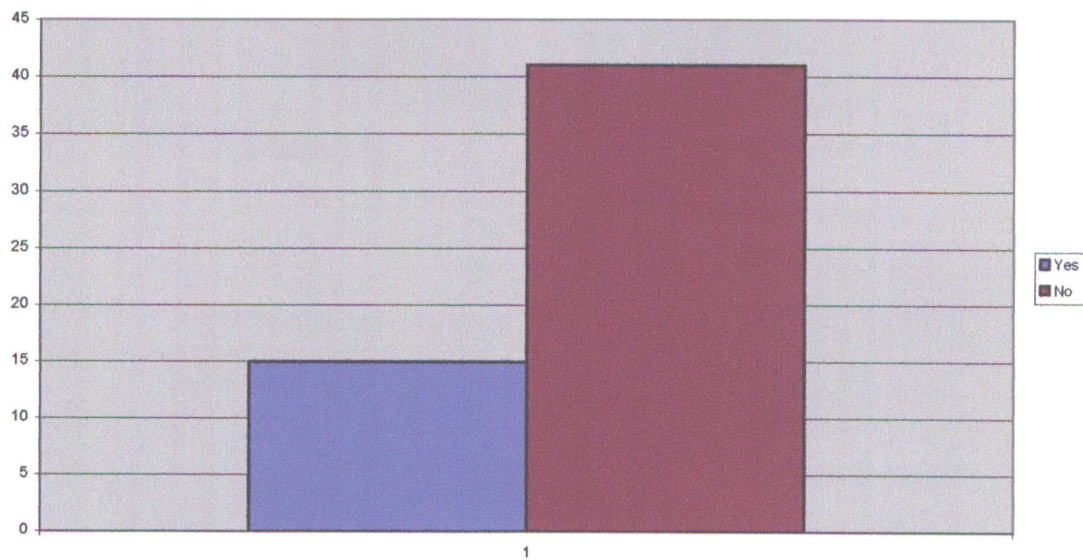


Females

	Yes	No
Totals	15	41
Percentages	27%	73%
Percentages from total number of respondents	13%	36%

* Total number of respondents: 114

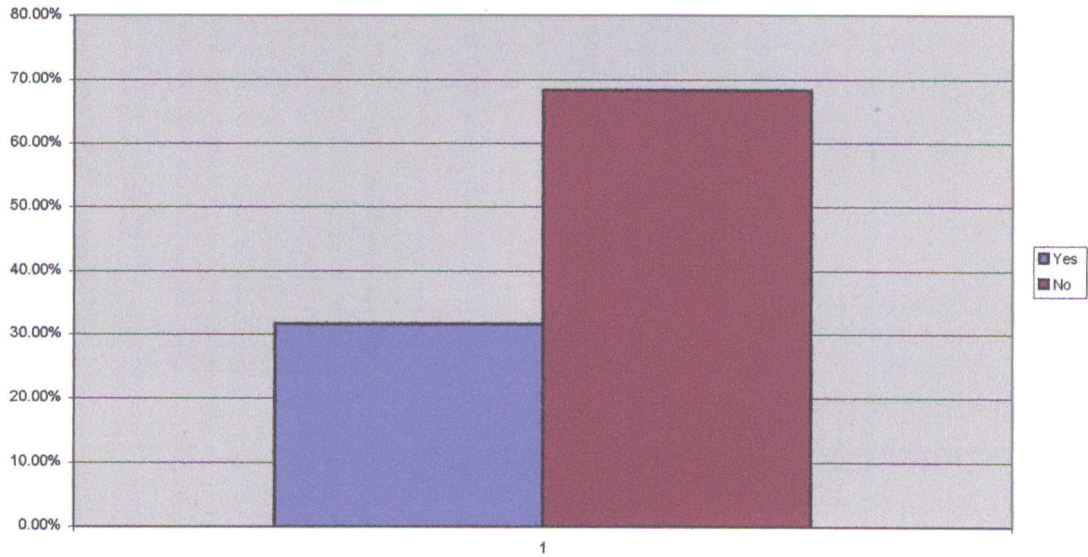
Written a News Release--Females



	Yes	No
Total from all respondents	36	78
Percentages	32%	68%

* Total number of respondents: 114

Percentage of All Respondents that have Written a News Release



Question 10

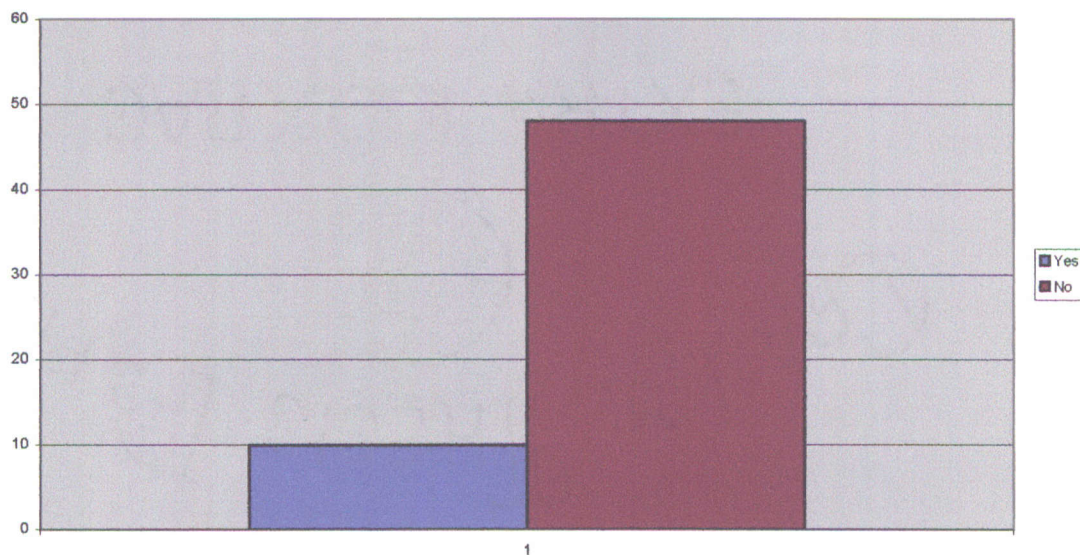
Do you distribute an athletic training newsletter?

Males

	Yes	No
Totals	10	48
Percentages	17%	83%
Percentages from total number of respondents	9%	42%

* One respondent did not answer the question making the number of male respondents 58 and the total number of respondents 114.

Males that Distribute an Athletic Training Newsletter

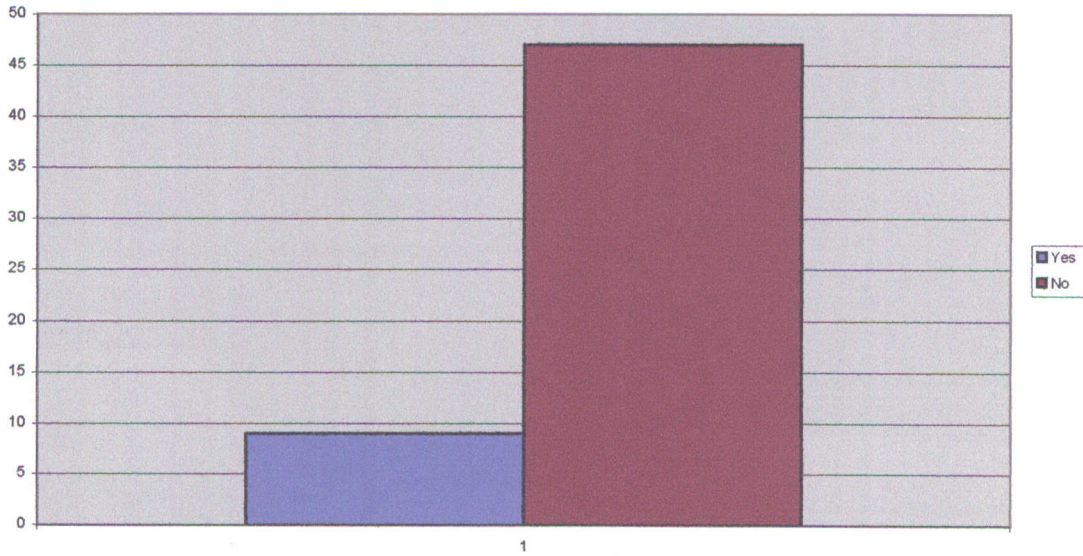


Females

	Yes	No
Totals	9	47
Percentages	16%	84%
Percentages from total number of respondents	8%	42%

* Total number of respondents: 114

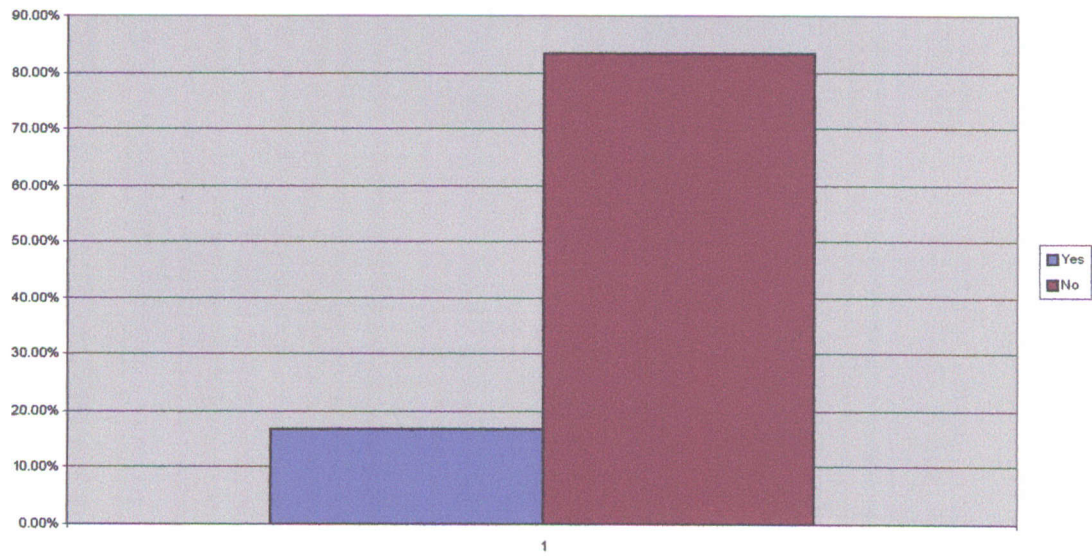
Females that Distribute an Athletic Training Newsletter



	Yes	No
Total from all respondents	19	95
Percentages	17%	83%

* Total number of respondents: 114

Percentage of All Respondents that Distribute an Athletic Training Newsletter



Question 11

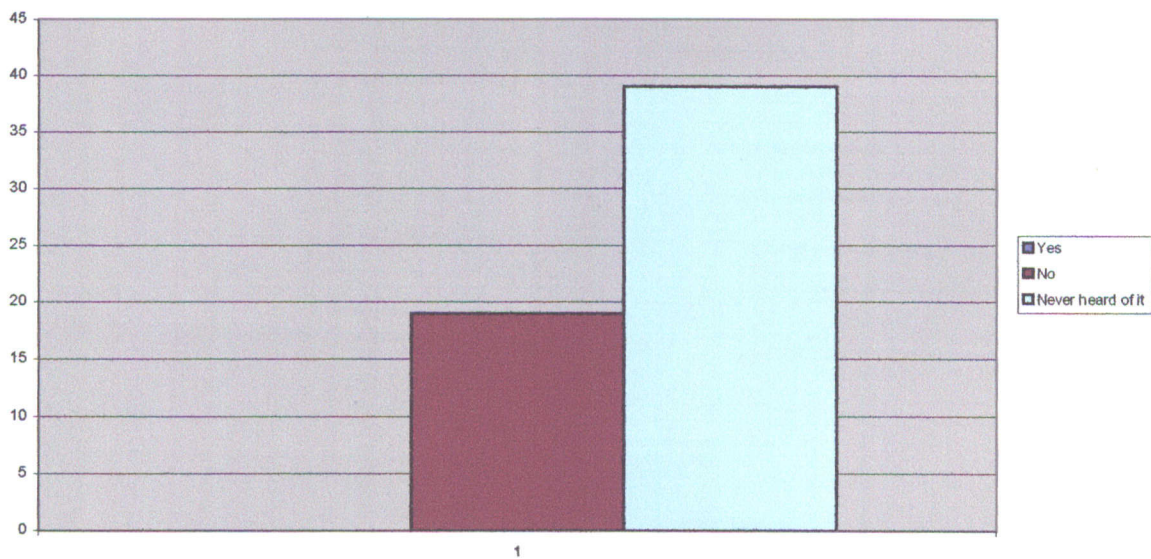
Have you used the “Dollar Bill Test” in the layout and design of a document?

Males

	Yes	No	Never heard of it
Totals	0	19	39
Percentages	0	33%	67%
Percentages from total number of respondents	0	17%	34%

* One respondent did not answer the question making the number of male respondents 58 and the total number of respondents 114.

Using the Dollar Bill Test--Males

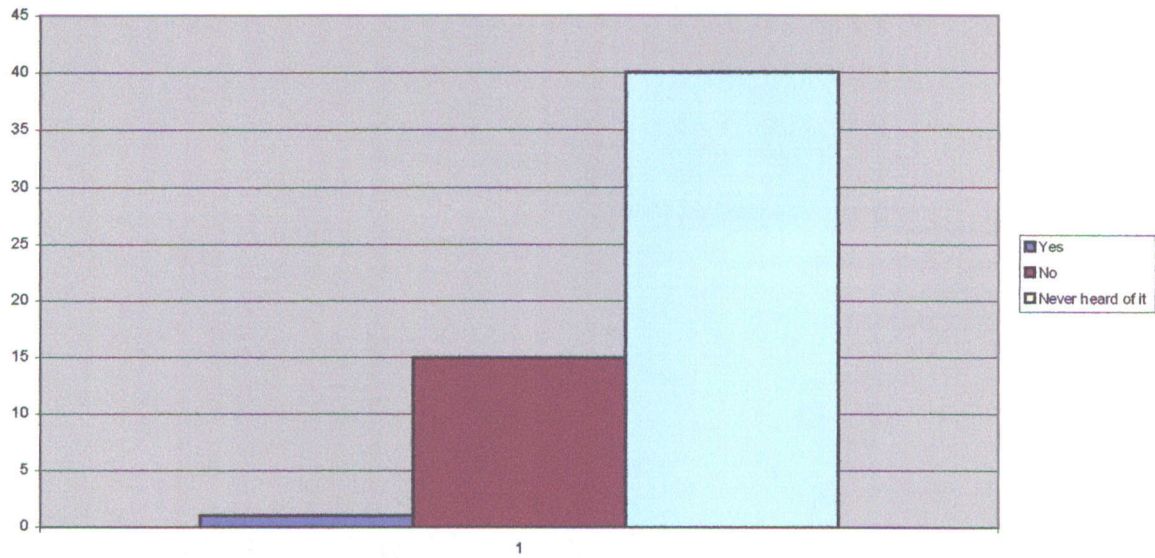


Females

	Yes	No	Never heard of it
Totals	1	15	40
Percentages	2%	27%	71%
Percentages from total number of respondents	1%	13%	35%

* Total number of respondents: 114

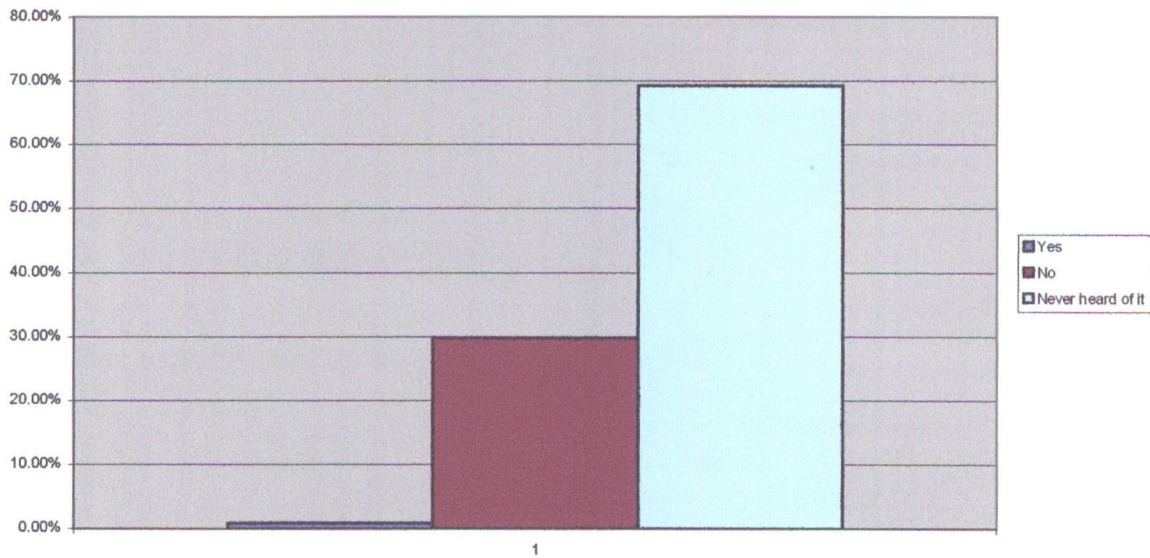
Using the Dollar Bill Test—Females



	Yes	No	Never heard of it
Total from all respondents	1	34	79
Percentages	1%	30%	69%

* Total number of respondents: 114

Percentage of All Respondents Using the Dollar Bill Test



Question 12

Please rank in order which PR method you find most beneficial/effective in promoting the athletic training profession (1=most effective, 5=least effective)

Males

1--Most Beneficial/Effective PR Method

	Newsletter	Brochure/ Pamphlet	News Release	Presentations	Public Service Announcements
Totals	6	4	15	14	16
Percentages	11%	7%	27%	25%	29%
Percentage from all respondents	6%	4%	14%	13%	15%

* Number of male respondents: 55

* Four male and four female respondents did not answer the question making the total number of respondents 107.

2--Beneficial/Effective PR Method

	Newsletter	Brochure/ Pamphlet	News Release	Presentations	Public Service Announcements
Totals	8	7	15	13	12
Percentages	15%	13%	27%	24%	22%
Percentage from all respondents	7%	7%	14%	12%	11%

3--Beneficial/Effective PR Method

	Newsletter	Brochure/ Pamphlet	News Release	Presentations	Public Service Announcements
Totals	14	11	15	10	5
Percentages	25%	20%	27%	18%	9%
Percentage from all respondents	13%	12%	2%	9%	16%

4--Beneficial/Effective PR Method

	Newsletter	Brochure/ Pamphlet	News Release	Presentations	Public Service Announcements
Totals	14	20	8	8	5
Percentages	25%	36%	15%	15%	9%
Percentage from all respondents	13%	17%	7%	7%	5%

5--Least Beneficial/Effective PR Method

	Newsletter	Brochure/ Pamphlet	News Release	Presentations	Public Service Announcements
Totals	13	13	2	10	17
Percentages	24%	24%	4%	18%	31%
Percentage from all respondents	12%	12%	2%	9%	16%

Females**1--Most Beneficial/Effective PR Method**

	Newsletter	Brochure/ Pamphlet	News Release	Presentations	Public Service Announcements
Totals	3	10	12	14	13
Percentages	6%	19%	23%	27%	25%
Percentage from all respondents	3%	9%	11%	13%	12%

* Number of female respondents: 52

* Four male and four female respondents did not answer the question making the total number of respondents 107.

2--Beneficial/Effective PR Method

	Newsletter	Brochure/ Pamphlet	News Release	Presentations	Public Service Announcements
Totals	7	9	17	8	11
Percentages	13%	17%	33%	15%	21%
Percentage from all respondents	7%	8%	16%	7%	10%

3--Beneficial/Effective PR Method

	Newsletter	Brochure/ Pamphlet	News Release	Presentations	Public Service Announcements
Totals	16	12	6	10	8
Percentages	31%	23%	12%	19%	15%
Percentage from all respondents	15%	11%	6%	9%	7%

4--Beneficial/Effective PR Method

	Newsletter	Brochure/ Pamphlet	News Release	Presentations	Public Service Announcements
Totals	12	15	11	9	5
Percentages	23%	29%	21%	17%	10%
Percentage from all respondents	11%	14%	10%	8%	5%

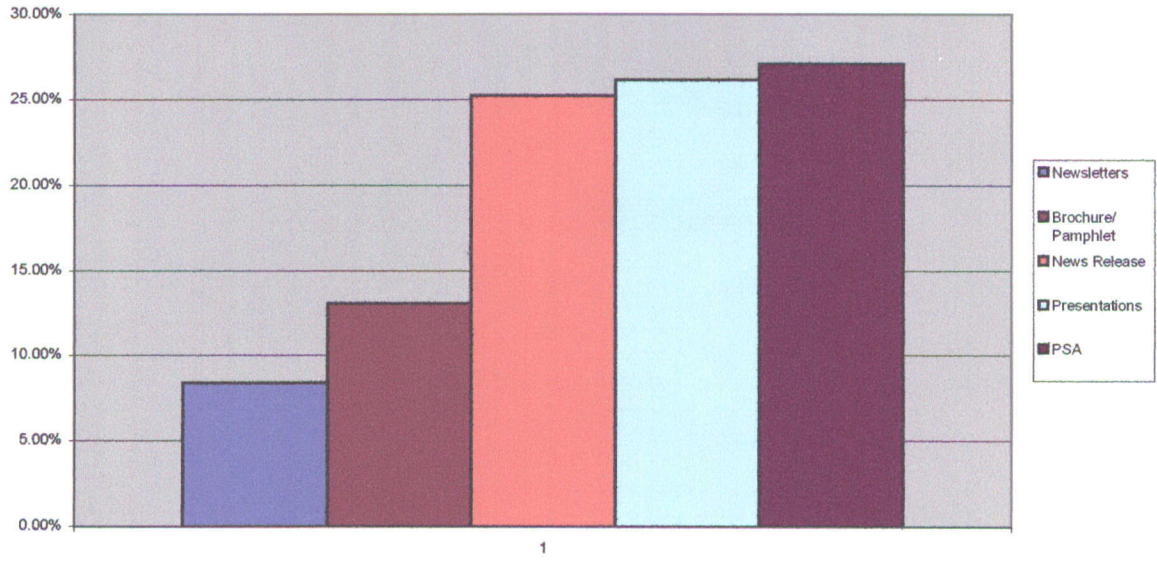
5--Least Beneficial/Effective PR Method

	Newsletter	Brochure/ Pamphlet	News Release	Presentations	Public Service Announcements
Totals	14	6	6	11	15
Percentages	27%	12%	12%	21%	29%
Percentage from all respondents	13%	6%	6%	10%	14%

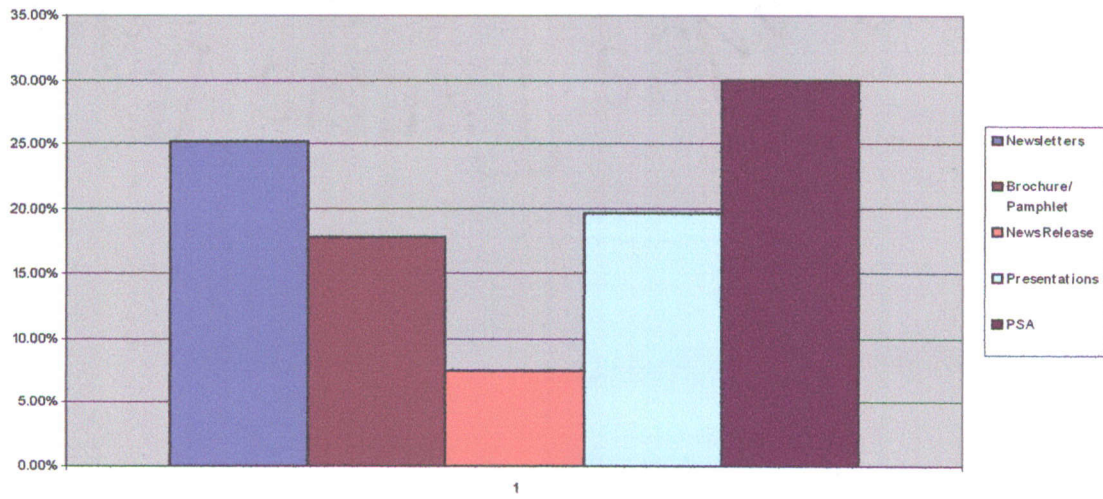
All Respondents

	Newsletter	Brochure/ Pamphlet	News Release	Presentations	Public Service Announcements
1-most beneficial/effective					
Totals	9	14	27	28	29
Percentages	8%	13%	25%	26%	27%
2-beneficial/ effective					
Totals	15	16	32	21	23
Percentages	14%	15%	30%	20%	21%
3-beneficial/ effective					
Totals	30	23	21	20	13
Percentages	28%	21%	20%	19%	12%
4-beneficial/ effective					
Totals	26	35	19	17	10
Percentages	24%	33%	18%	16%	9%
5-least beneficial/ effective					
Totals	27	19	8	21	32
Percentages	25%	18%	7%	20%	30%

Percentage of the Most Beneficial/Effective PR Method in Promoting Athletic Training



Percentage of the Least Beneficial/Effective PR Method in Promoting Athletic Training



Question 13

Please rank your effectiveness in the following areas:

- Creating a news release
- Creating a newsletter
- Creating a brochure/pamphlet
- Creating a Public Service Announcement
- Preparing Presentations

Males

Creating a news release

	Excellent	Very Good	Fair	Poor	Very Poor
Totals	3	12	31	6	3
Percentages	5%	22%	56%	11%	5%
Percentages from total number of respondents	3%	11%	29%	6%	3%

* Number of male respondents: 55

* Four male and three female respondents did not answer the question making the total number of respondents 108.

Creating a newsletter

	Excellent	Very Good	Fair	Poor	Very Poor
Totals	4	14	29	6	2
Percentages	7%	25%	53%	11%	4%
Percentages from total number of respondents	4%	13%	27%	6%	2%

Creating a brochure/pamphlet

	Excellent	Very Good	Fair	Poor	Very Poor
Totals	8	17	22	7	1
Percentages	15%	31%	40%	13%	2%
Percentages from total number of respondents	7%	16%	20%	6%	1%

Creating a public service announcement

	Excellent	Very Good	Fair	Poor	Very Poor
Totals	3	11	31	8	2
Percentages	5%	20%	56%	15%	4%
Percentages from total number of respondents	3%	10%	29%	7%	2%

Preparing presentations

	Excellent	Very Good	Fair	Poor	Very Poor
Totals	18	27	9	1	0
Percentages	23%	49%	16%	2%	0
Percentages from total number of respondents	17%	25%	8%	1%	0

Females**Creating a news release**

	Excellent	Very Good	Fair	Poor	Very Poor
Totals	3	9	30	7	4
Percentages	6%	17%	57%	13%	8%
Percentages from total number of respondents	3%	8%	28%	6%	4%

* Number of female respondents: 53

* Four male and three female respondents did not answer the question making the total number of respondents 108.

Creating a newsletter

	Excellent	Very Good	Fair	Poor	Very Poor
Totals	6	23	22	0	2
Percentages	11%	43%	42%	0	4%
Percentages from total number of respondents	6%	21%	20%	0	2%

Creating a brochure/pamphlet

	Excellent	Very Good	Fair	Poor	Very Poor
Totals	11	18	20	2	2
Percentages	21%	34%	38%	4%	4%
Percentages from total number of respondents	10%	17%	19%	2%	2%

Creating a public service announcement

	Excellent	Very Good	Fair	Poor	Very Poor
Totals	2	6	31	7	7
Percentages	4%	11%	58%	13%	13%
Percentages from total number of respondents	2%	6%	29%	6%	6%

Preparing presentations

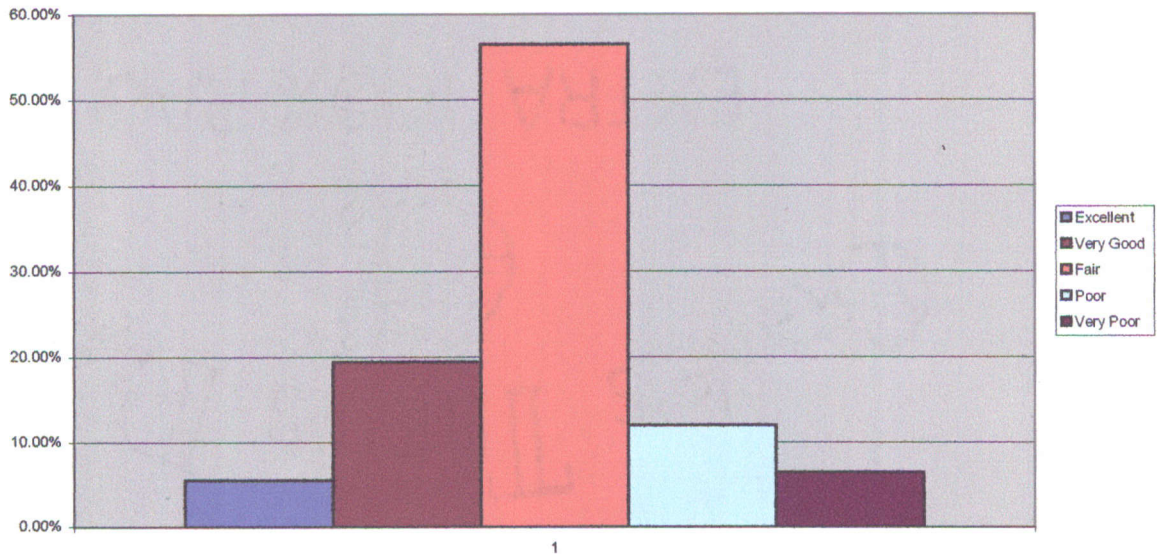
	Excellent	Very Good	Fair	Poor	Very Poor
Totals	16	21	13	1	2
Percentages	30%	40%	25%	2%	4%
Percentages from total number of respondents	15%	19%	12%	1%	2%

All Respondents

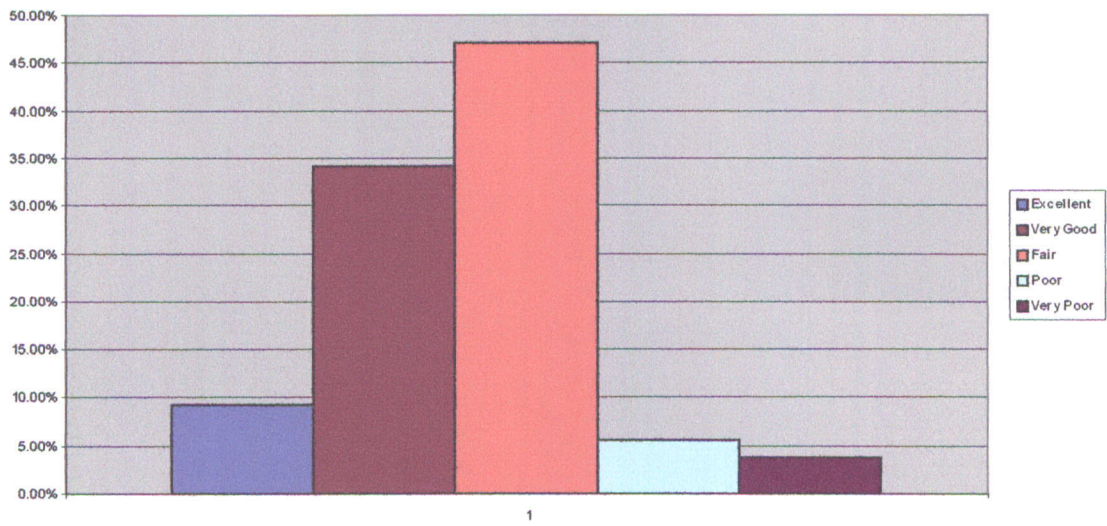
	Excellent	Very Good	Fair	Poor	Very Poor
Creating a news release					
Totals from all respondents	6	21	61	13	7
Percentages	6%	19%	56%	12%	6%
Creating a newsletter					
Totals from all respondents	10	37	51	6	4
Percentages	9%	34%	47%	6%	4%
Creating a brochure/ pamphlet					
Totals from all respondents	19	35	42	9	3
Percentages	18%	32%	39%	8%	3%
Creating a public service announcement					
Totals from all respondents	5	17	62	15	9
Percentages	5%	16%	57%	14%	8%
Preparing presentations					
Totals from all respondents	34	48	22	2	2
Percentages	31%	44%	20%	2%	2%

* Total number of respondents: 108

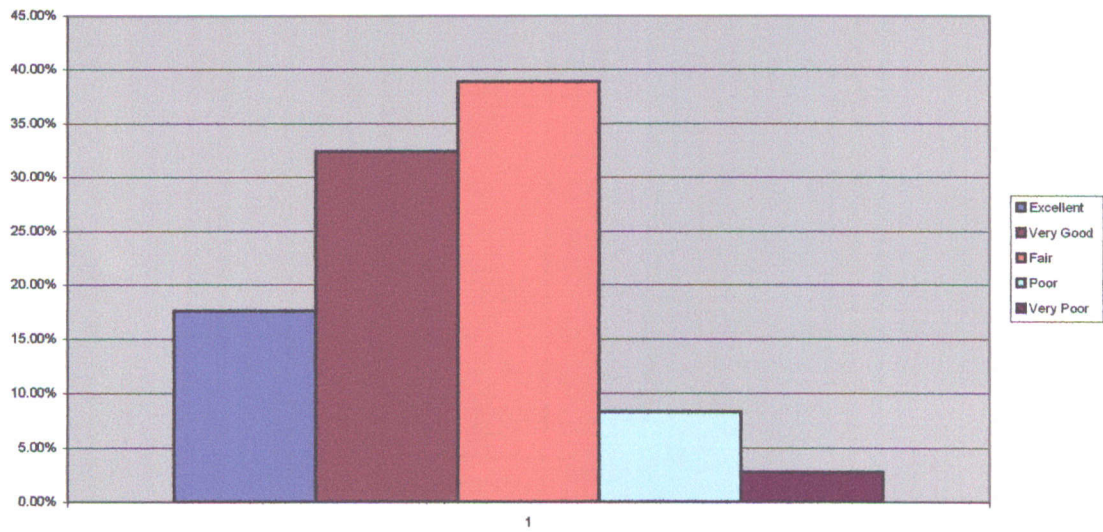
Percentage of All Respondents' Effectiveness in Creating a News Release



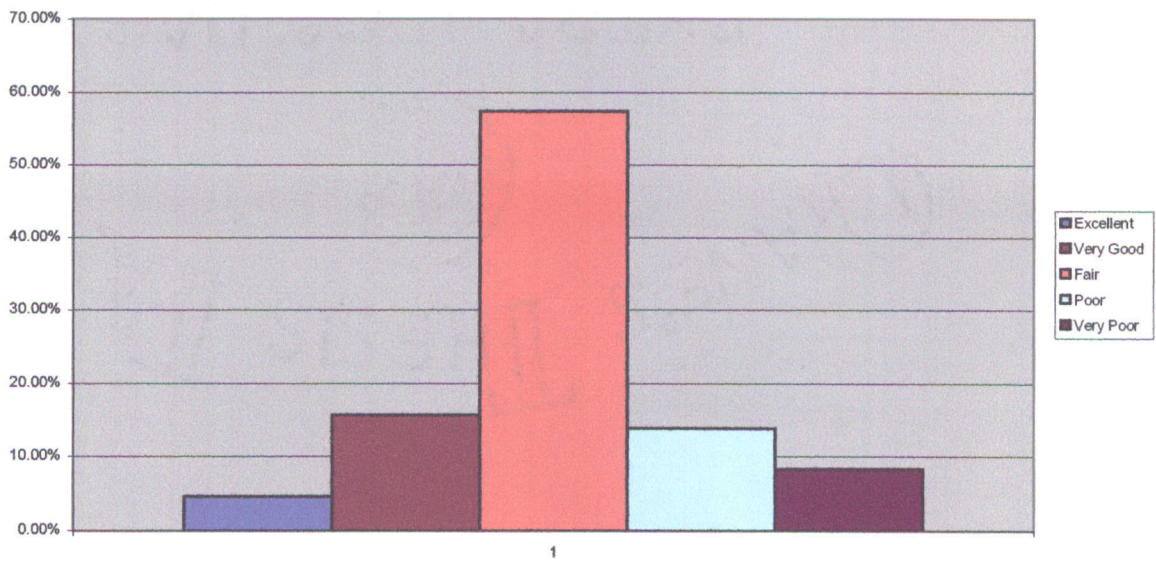
Percentage of All Respondents' Effectiveness in Creating a Newsletter



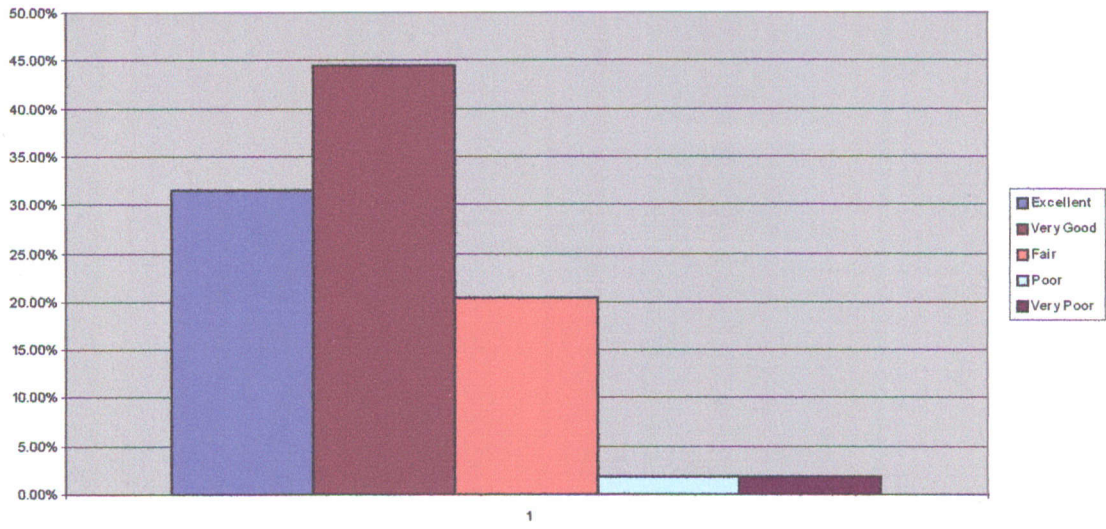
Percentage of All Respondents' Effectiveness in Creating a Brochure/Pamphlet



Percentage of All Respondents' Effectiveness in Creating a Public Service Announcement



Percentage of All Repondents' Effectiveness in Preparing Presentations



Question 14

If you had unlimited funds to promote athletic training, how would you use them?

Responses were placed in the following categories:

- Media advertising
- Media outlets
- Presentations
- Education
- Research
- Hire a professional lobbyist
- Change professional title
- Create a more professional attitude within membership

Males

Media Advertising

	Totals
Media Advertising/Ad Campaign	5
Commercials	3
Billboards	1
Radio Ads	2
Magazine Ads	3
News Releases	5
TV Ads	5
Newspaper Ads	1
Public Service Announcements	2
Banners	1

Total Category Responses	28
Percentage from total of male responses	36%

* Total number of male respondents: 44. Eleven male respondents did not answer the question.

* Four questionnaires could not be tabulated due to poor legibility of the responses.

* Total number of male responses tabulated: 77

Media Outlets

	Totals
Television	12
Radio	4
Newspaper articles	1
Internet/email	3
Movies	1
Media Campaign	3

Total Category Responses	24
Percentage from total of male responses	31%

Presentations

	Totals
Presentations	7
Open Houses at Schools	1
Board of Education, PTA, School Administration	3

Total Category Responses	11
Percentage from total of male responses	14%

Education

	Totals
Educate the Public	3
Enhance Educational Programs/ Requirements	3
Fund Nationwide College Club	1
Brochure/Pamphlet	1
Newsletter	1
Third Party Reimbursement	1

Total Category Responses	10
Percentage from total of male responses	13%

Research

	Total
Research	2

Total Category Responses	2
Percentage from total of male responses	3%

Hire a Professional Lobbyist

	Total
Hire a Professional Lobbyist	1

Total Category Responses	1
Percentage from total of male responses	1%

Change Professional Title

	Totals
Rename Athletic Training Professionals	1

Total Category Responses	1
Percentage from total of male responses	1%

**Females
Media Advertising**

	Totals
Commercials	5
Billboards	1
Magazine Ads	2
News Releases	3
TV Ads	5
Newspaper Ads	2
Public Service Announcements	5
Promotional Items	5

Total Category Responses	28
Percentage from total of female responses	36%

* Total number of female respondents: 43. Ten female respondents did not answer the question.

* Three questionnaires could not be tabulated due to poor legibility of the responses.

* Total number of female responses tabulated: 77

Media Outlets

	Totals
Television	13
Newspaper articles	1
Movies	1
Media Campaign	2

Total Category Responses	17
Percentage from total of female responses	22%

Presentations

	Totals
Presentations	4
NCAA, Coaches, Athletic Directors. Etc.	1
Board of Education, PTA, School Administration	3
Youth Sports Organizations	1
Health Club, Rehab Facilities, Clinics	1

Total Category Responses	10
Percentage from total of female responses	13%

Education

	Totals
Educate the Public	6
Enhance Educational Programs/ Requirements	1
Brochure/Pamphlet	7
Newsletter	1
Announcers & Commentators at Sporting Events	1
Coaches & Administration	2
Celebrity Testimonials/ Endorsements	2
Videos on Athletic Trainers' Duties/ Responsibilities	1

Total Category Responses	21
Percentage from total of female responses	27%

Create a Professional Attitude Among Membership

	Totals
Create a Professional Attitude Among Membership	1

Total Category Responses	1
Percentage from total of female responses	1%

**All Respondents
Media Advertising**

	Totals
Media Advertising/Ad Campaign	5
Commercials	8
Billboards	2
Radio Ads	2
Magazine Ads	5
News Releases	8
TV Ads	10
Newspaper Ads	3
Public Service Announcements	7
Banners	1
Promotional Items	5

Total Category Responses	56
Percentage from total number of responses	36%

* Total number of responses: 154

Media Outlets

	Totals
Television	25
Radio	4
Newspaper articles	2
Internet/email	3
Movies	2
Media Campaign	5

Total Category Responses	41
Percentage from total number of responses	27%

Presentations

	Totals
Presentations	11
Open Houses at Schools	1
NCAA, Coaches, Athletic Directors. Etc.	1
Board of Education, PTA, School Administration	6
Youth Sports Organizations	1
Health Club, Rehab Facilities, Clinics	1

Total Category Responses	21
Percentage from total number of responses	14%

Education

	Totals
Educate the Public	9
Enhance Educational Programs/ Requirements	4
Fund Nationwide College Club	1
Brochure/Pamphlet	8
Newsletter	2
Third Party Reimbursement	1
Announcers & Commentators at Sporting Events	1
Coaches & Administration	2
Celebrity Testimonials/ Endorsements	2
Videos on Athletic Trainers' Duties/ Responsibilities	1

Total Category Responses	31
Percentage from total number of responses	20%

Research

	Total
Research	2

Total Category Responses	2
Percentage from total number of responses	1%

Hire a Professional Lobbyist

	Total
Hire a Professional Lobbyist	1

Total Category Responses	1
Percentage from total number of responses	.65%

Create a Professional Attitude Among Membership

	Totals
Create a Professional Attitude Among Membership	1

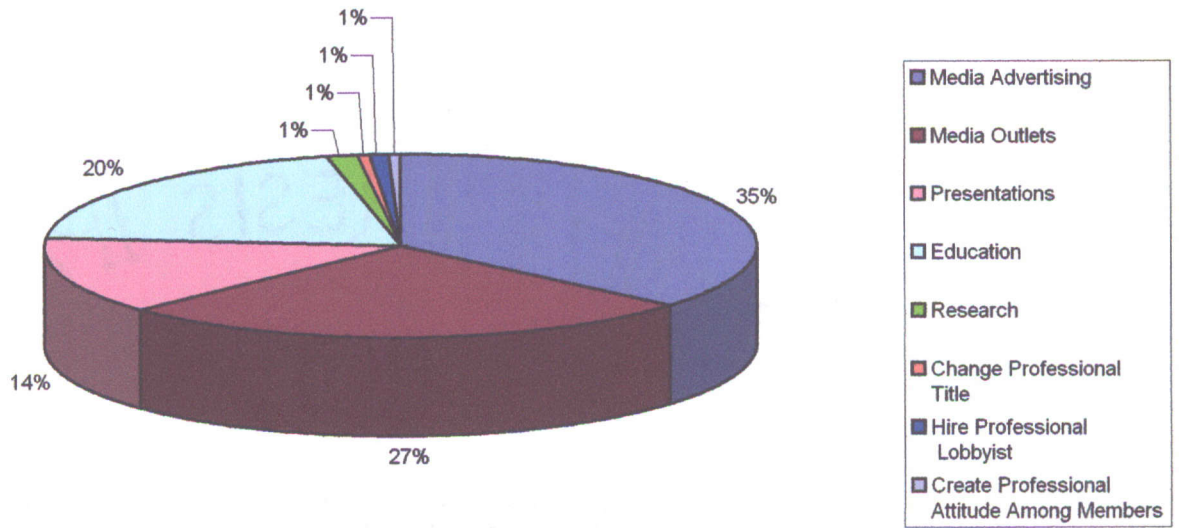
Total Category Responses	1
Percentage from total number of responses	.65%

Change Professional Title

	Totals
Rename Athletic Training Professionals	1

Total Category Responses	1
Percentage from total number of responses	.65%

Percentage of Response Categories



Chapter Five

Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations

Summary:

The purpose of this study was to evaluate, through a written survey, athletic trainers' knowledge base, personal experiences and attitudes concerning public relations methods and their effectiveness in promoting the profession of athletic training. The objectives of the study were to determine the following:

- An ATC's general knowledge of public relations methods.
- ATCs' personal experiences using public relations methods to promote the athletic training profession.
- Which public relations methods ATCs found the most beneficial/effective to promoting the athletic training profession.

A 14-question intercept survey was distributed and completed by 115 ATCs attending the EATA conference in Boston, Mass., January 7-10, 2005.

Conclusions:

To determine an ATC's general knowledge of public relations methods two questions were asked: Are you familiar with the term news release; and have you used the "Dollar Bill" test in the layout and design of a document? The majority of respondents (69%) never heard of the Dollar Bill test when creating the layout and design of a publication such as a newsletter or brochure/pamphlet. Only one respondent stated using the Dollar Bill test in the layout and design of a publication. Eighty-nine percent of the respondents are familiar with the term news release.

The majority of athletic trainers may be familiar with the term news release; yet only 32% of them have written one. Do ATCs really know what goes into writing an effective news release: formatting, leads, writing style and contacts with the media?

Of the 93% of respondents that ranked their own effectiveness in creating a newsletter or brochure/pamphlet as "excellent" or "very good," how many of them know about the principles of design, readability levels and formatting?

Results are inconclusive of an ATC's true general knowledge of public relations methods. The survey questions needed to be more specific to identify if ATCs have knowledge of all the components that make up a public relations method. Athletic trainers will continue to have difficulty promoting their profession without learning proper public relations techniques.

Sixty-three percent of the ATCs responded that they have created a brochure/pamphlet; 32% have written a news release; and 17% distributed an athletic training newsletter.

Eighty-three percent of the ATCs do not distribute an athletic training newsletter; yet 34% responded that they are “very good” at creating them. Of the 63% of ATCs that have created a brochure/pamphlet, half of the respondents ranked themselves as “excellent” or “very good” at creating them.

The majority (56%) of ATCs ranked themselves as being “fair” at creating news releases, yet 68% of them have never written a news release. ATCs ranked themselves most effective at preparing presentations with 31% responding “excellent” and 44% responding “very good.”

Results indicate that an ATC’s effectiveness in his/her own personal experiences using public relations methods is subjective. Many of these responses are suspicious of being influenced by the “halo effect.” After all, how can one know his/her ability at writing a news release when he/she has never written one?

Public service announcements were ranked highest (27%) as the most beneficial/effective public relations methods to promote athletic training. However, they were also ranked as the least beneficial/effective public relations method by 30% of the respondents.

Twenty-six percent of the ATCs ranked presentations as the most beneficial/effective public relations method in promoting athletic training; 25% ranked news releases as the most beneficial/effective public relations method; 13% ranked brochures/pamphlets as the most beneficial/effective public relations method; and 8% ranked newsletters as the most beneficial/effective public relations method to promote athletic training.

Twenty-five percent of the ATCs ranked newsletters as the least beneficial/effective public relations method in promoting athletic training; 20% ranked presentations as the least beneficial/effective public relations method; 18% ranked brochures/pamphlets as the least beneficial/effective public relations method; and 7% ranked news releases as the least beneficial/effective public relations method to promote athletic training.

Results indicate that an ATC's perception of the most beneficial/effective public relations methods to promote the athletic training profession is also purely subjective. For athletic trainers to undertake the responsibility of promoting their profession, they need to understand the best way to reach their target audiences by using individual public relations methods.

Recommendations:

Research evaluating athletic trainers' specific knowledge and experience of public relations methods is suggested to determine appropriate strategies to best educate ATCs on preparing effective public relations methods to promote their profession. Such research will uncover optimal messages, proper channels and tactics needed to reach the target audience.

A study evaluating ATCs' participation in promoting their profession, motivation to promote their profession and understanding of the benefits that come from promoting their profession is also suggested. Public relations efforts are necessary to educate the general public about the role and value of athletic trainers as healthcare professionals.

Additional research should identify what public relations methods were used in the past by the National Athletic Trainers' Association to promote the profession of athletic training and determine if they had their desired effect. New suggestions or ideas should be gathered on how to promote athletic training to provide insight on how to reach a target audience effectively. The NATA can then determine if any changes need to be made to strengthen their public relations efforts. A collection of the material and information should be made available to all members.

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Appendix A
Intercept Survey Questionnaire

Graduate Thesis Intercept Survey

Instructions: Please fill out the entire survey. Answer questions in the order they are presented to ensure validity. Please do not go back and change any answers. Please do not complete a survey if you are not an ATC. Thank you for your participation.

Part I:

1. Gender:

Male Female

2. What district are you a member of?

District 1 District 2

3. What age group are you in?

21-26 years old 27-32 years old 33-38 years old 39-45 years

46-51 years old 52-57 years old 58 years or older

4. Where do you practice athletic training?

High School College/University Clinic

Professional Industrial/Corporate Not Practicing

5. How many years have you been practicing athletic training?

1-5 years 6-11 years 12-17 years 18-23 years 24 years or more

6. What is your highest level of education?

Bachelor's degree Master's degree Doctorate

Part II:

7. Have you ever created a brochure/pamphlet?

Yes No

8. Are you familiar with the term news release?

Yes No

9. Have you ever written a news release?

Yes No

10. Do you distribute an athletic training newsletter?

Yes No

11. Have you used the "Dollar Bill Test" in the layout and design of a document?

Yes No Never heard of it

Part III:

12. Please rank in order which PR method you find most beneficial/effective in promoting the athletic training profession (1=most effective, 5=least effective)

- ___ newsletter
- ___ brochure/pamphlet
- ___ news release
- ___ presentations
- ___ public service announcements

13. Please rank your effectiveness in the following areas:

	Excellent	Very Good	Fair	Poor	Very Poor
Creating a news release					
Creating a newsletter					
Creating a brochure/pamphlet					
Creating a public service announcement					
Preparing presentations					

Part IV:

14. If you had unlimited funds to promote athletic training, how would you use them?

Appendix B
Letter from NATA



May 27, 2005

Ms. Christina Pozzi, ATC
620 Covington Ct.
Sewell, NJ 08080

Dear Ms. Pozzi,

I received your request for any studies or articles on athletic trainers' knowledge base, personal experiences and attitudes concerning public relations methods and their effectiveness in promoting the profession of athletic training.

To the best of my knowledge, no studies or articles on that subject have been published in either the *Journal of Athletic Training* or the *NATA News*.

Good luck with the remainder of your thesis!

Sincerely,

Ellen Satlof

National Athletic Trainers' Association
PR Manager

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