

IMPACTS OF RELATIONSHIP- BASED ONLINE MARKETING AND SOCIAL MEDIA USE ON COMMUNITY SUPPORTED AGRICULTURE (CSA) PROGRAMS

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CSA ARE

- **A philosophy/mindset for working with customers**
- **A set of relationship building practices**
- **A model for organizing last-mile supply chain**

SOCIAL MEDIA IS...

- **The next stage of the evolving internet infrastructure**
- **A model for engaging with customers**
- **A specific set of technologies for communicating and coordinating**

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- **How do the aspects of CSA models relate to CSA outcomes?**
 - Approach
 - Relational practices
 - Logistical arrangements
- **How do the aspects of social media relate to CSA outcomes?**
 - Technology
 - Relational capabilities
 - Transactional capabilities
- **How do the aspects of CSAs and social media interact?**

METHODS, SAMPLE, AND DATA

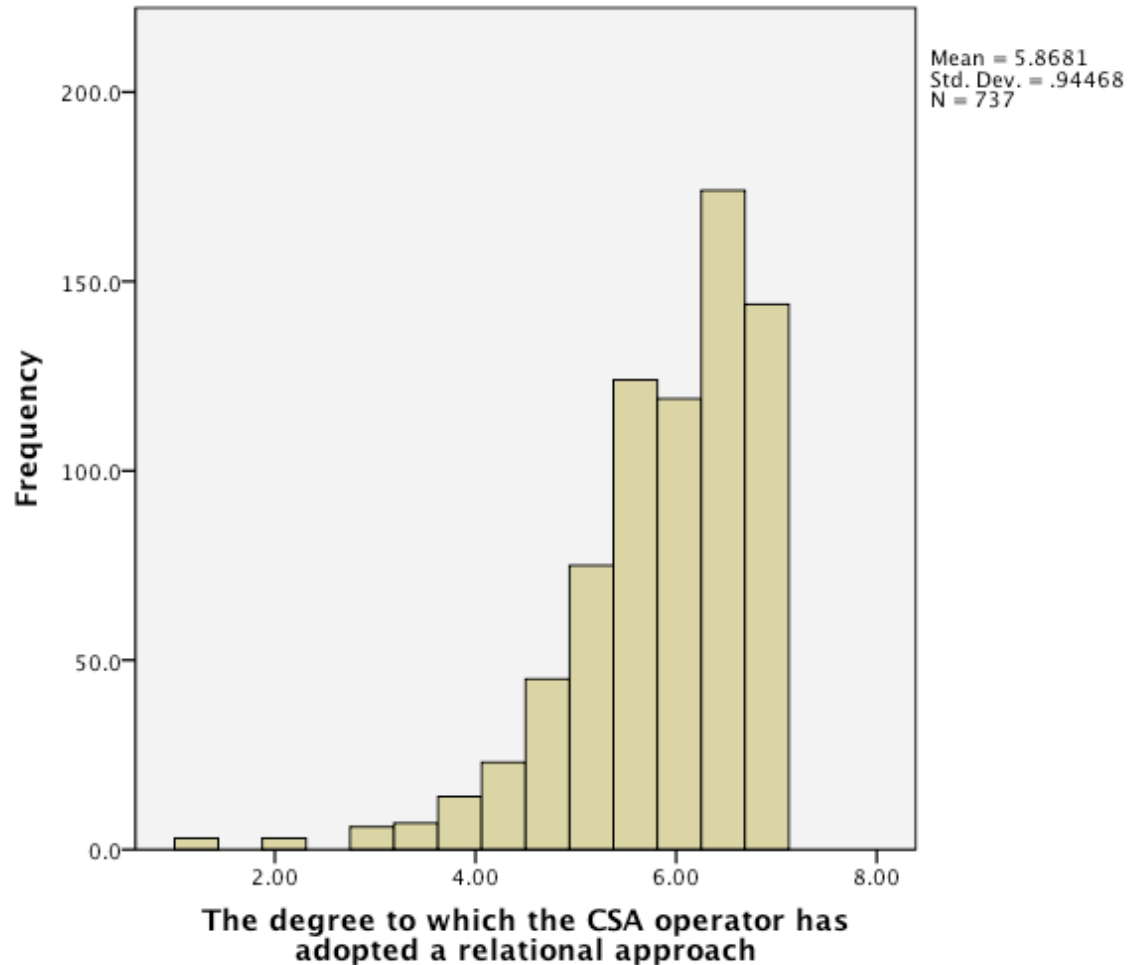
- **Survey of CSA operators**
- **Survey and measure development**
 - Draw from prior literature
 - Interviews and pretests
 - Pilot test (Sample: 100, Responses: 21)
- **CSA operators with an active listing in the LocalHarvest database (N = 4384)**
- **874 Responses (20%)**
- **After data cleaning, N=812**

CSA RELATIONAL APPROACH

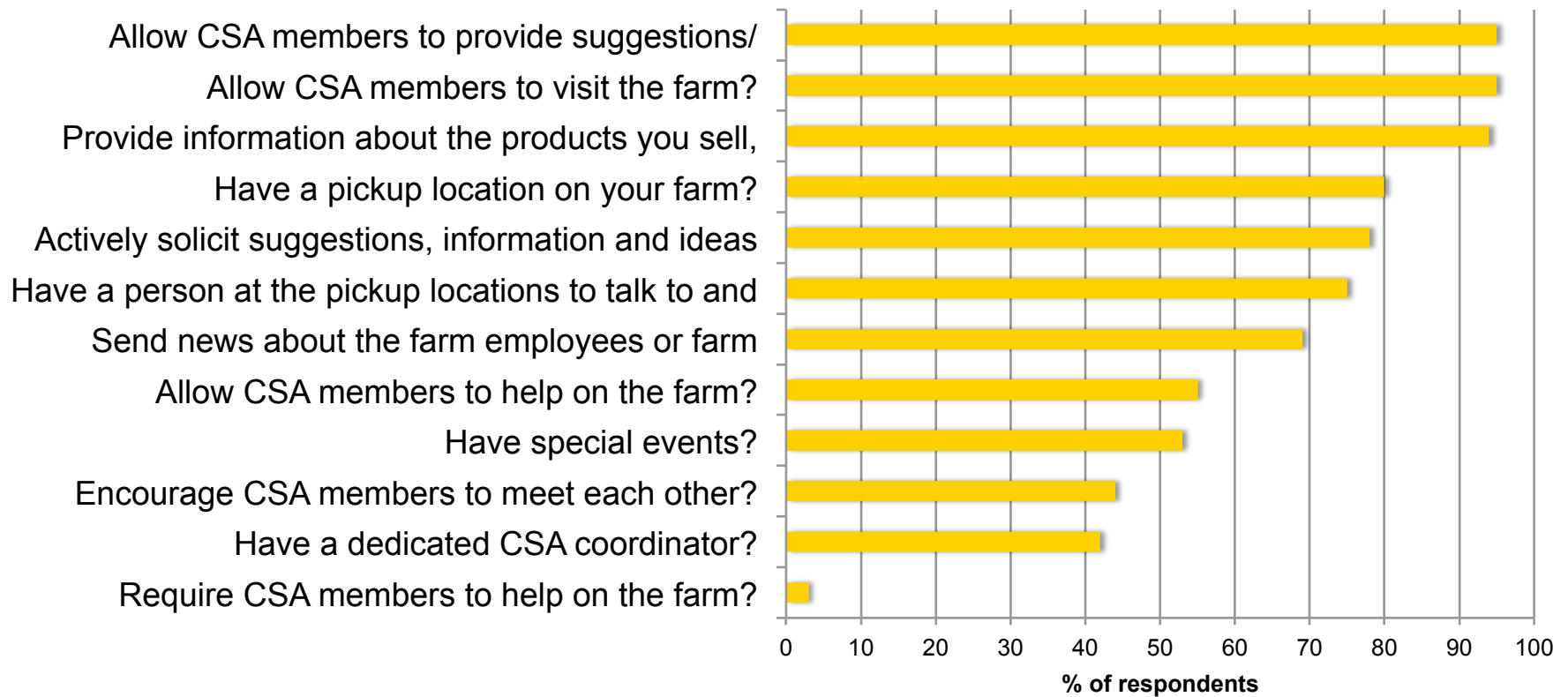
- **Multi-item measure, 7 item Likert scale, Cronbach alpha = 0.864**
- **Items**
 - In our CSA, the focus is on building long-term relationships with specific customers
 - Our CSA marketing communications involve personally interacting with individual customers
 - Our contact with our CSA customers is personal
 - When a customer signs up for our CSA, we believe they expect one-on-one personal contact with us.
 - When we meet our CSA customers, our interaction is informal and social.
 - Our CSA activities are intended to develop cooperative relationships with our customers.
 - Our CSA planning focuses on issues related to specific customers we deal with.
 - Our CSA resources (e.g. people, time, money) are invested in establishing and building personal relationships with individual customers.

(Adapted Modified from: Homburg, Mèuller, & Klarmann, 2011)

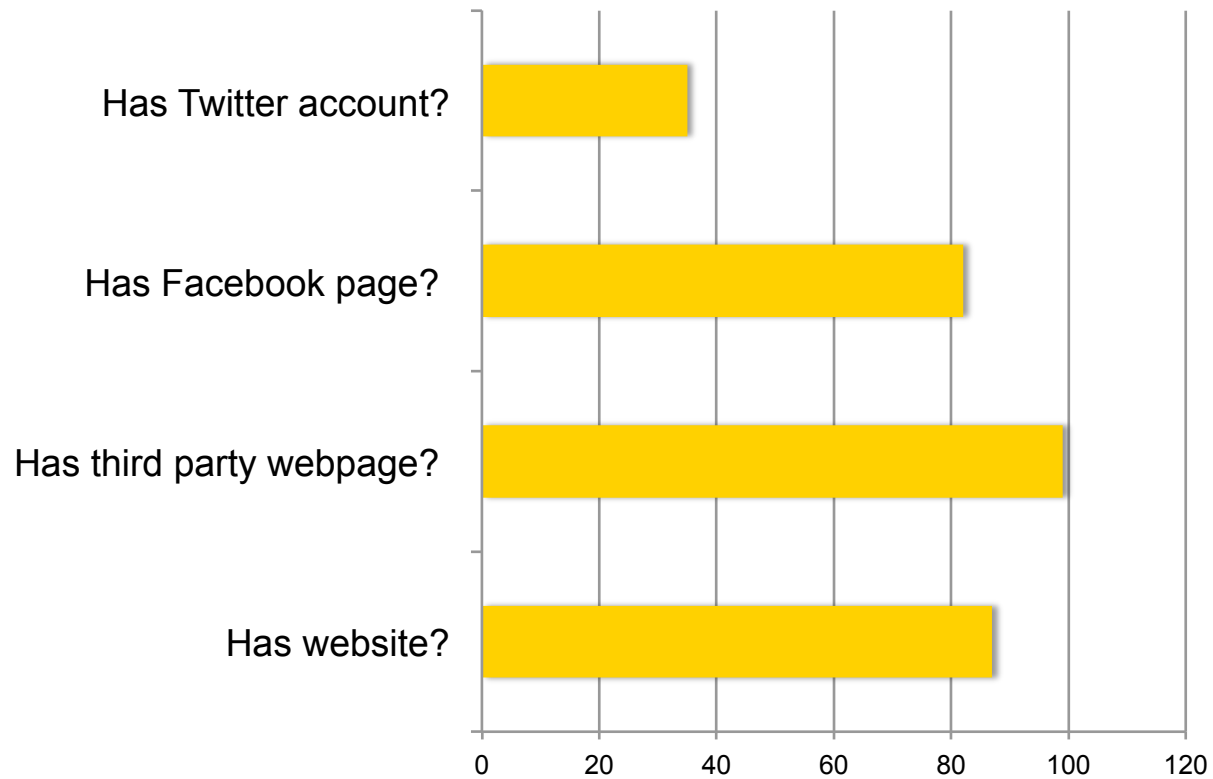
CSA RELATIONAL APPROACH



CSA RELATIONAL PRACTICES



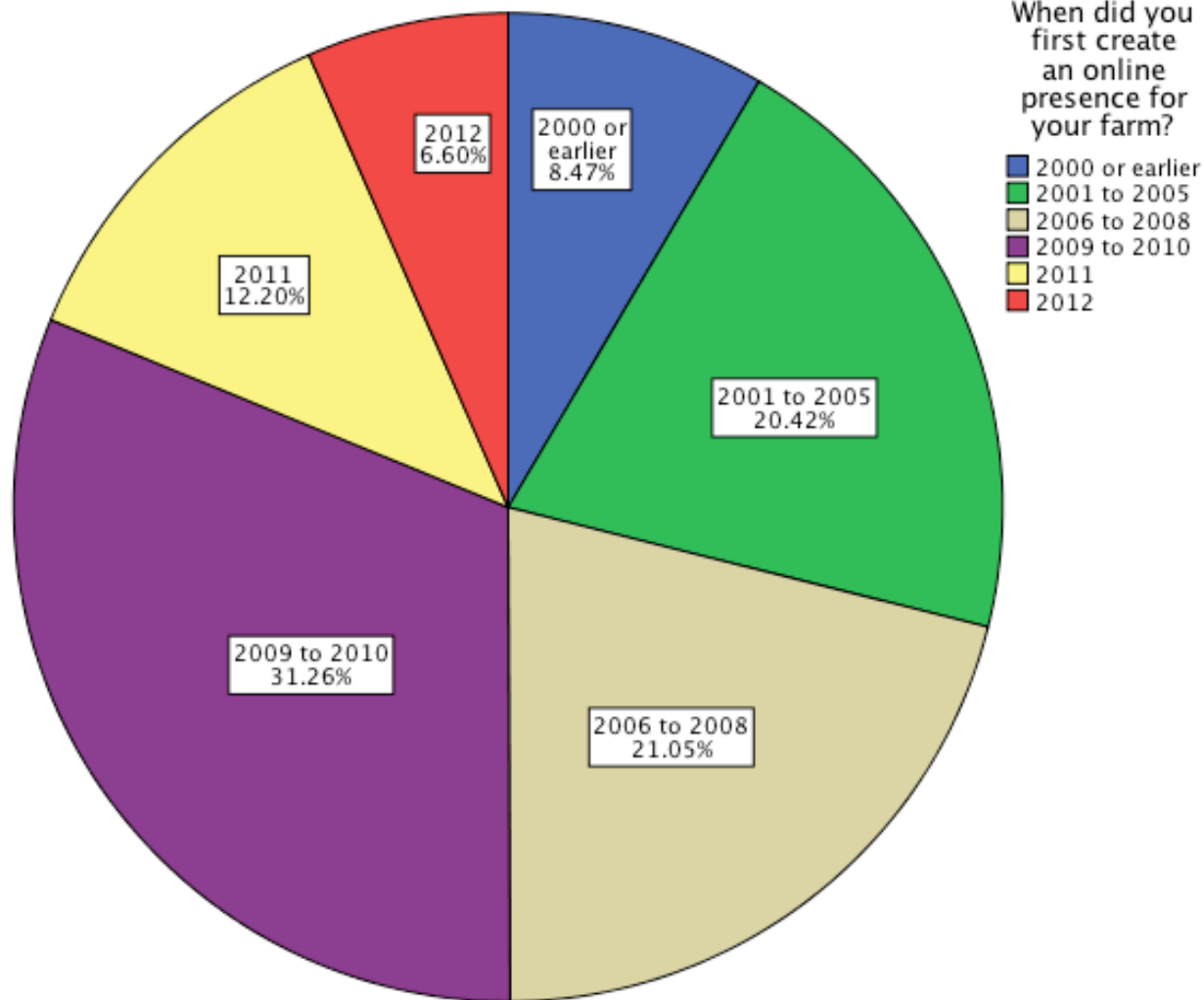
SOCIAL MEDIA INFRASTRUCTURE



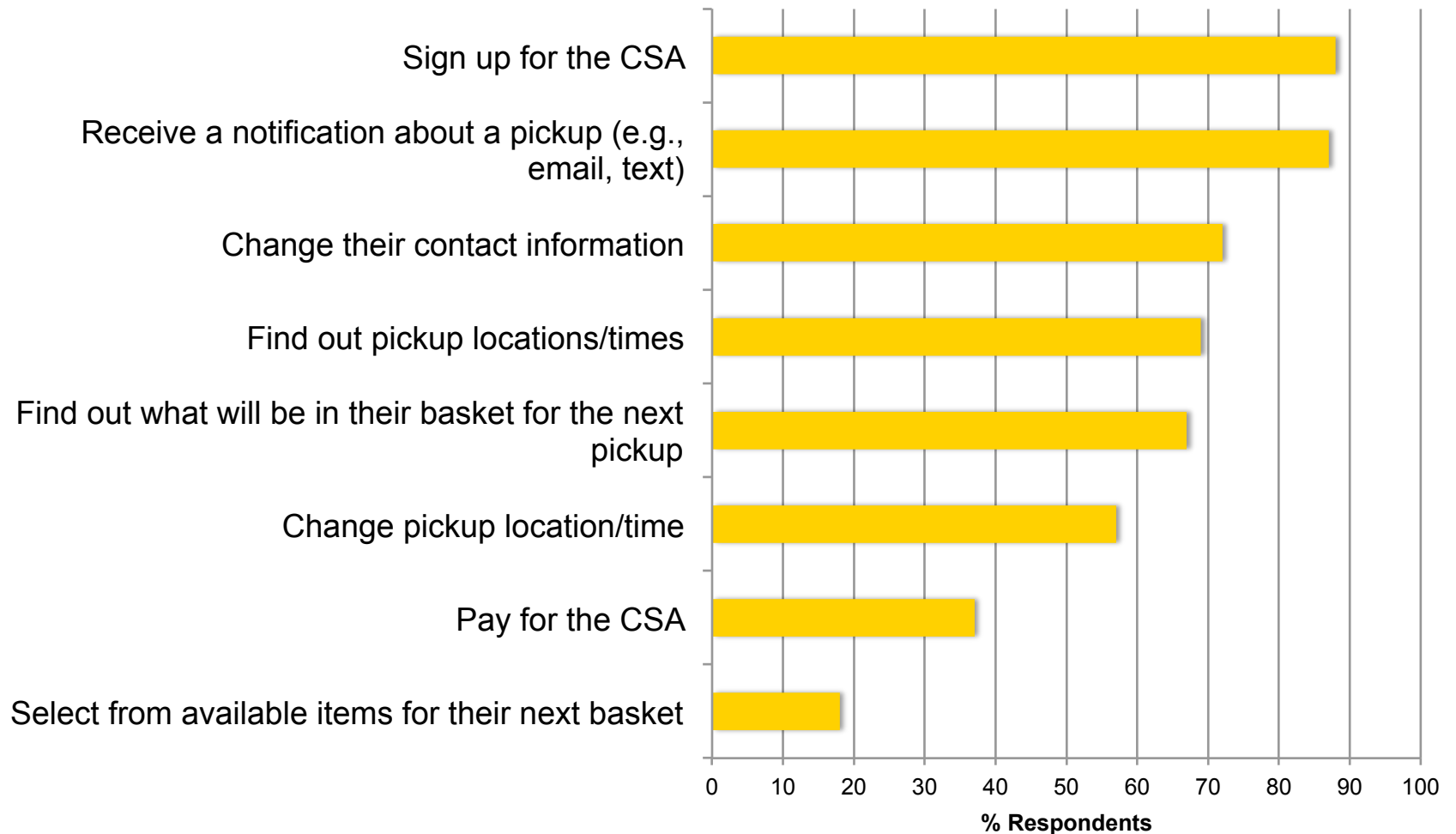
SOCIAL MEDIA ACTIVITY

- How often is your website updated?
 - Mean Response: Between a few times a year and monthly
- How often is your third party webpage updated?
 - Mean Response: Less than a few times a year
- How often is your Facebook page updated?
 - Mean Response: Monthly – weekly
- How often is your Twitter account updated?
 - Mean Response: A few times - weekly

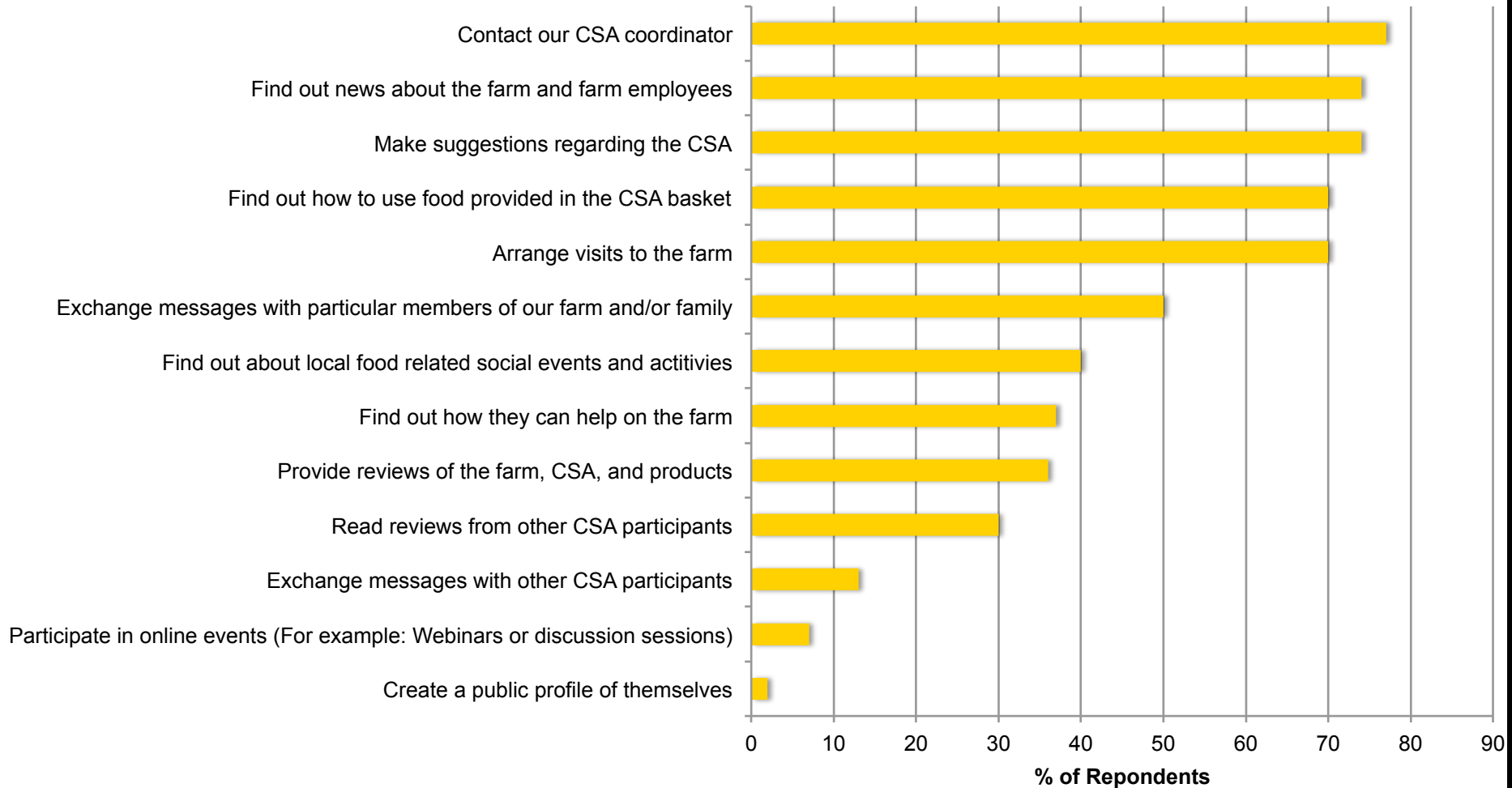
ONLINE PRESENCE – HOW LONG



TRANSACTIONAL CAPABILITIES ONLINE



RELATIONAL CAPABILITIES ONLINE

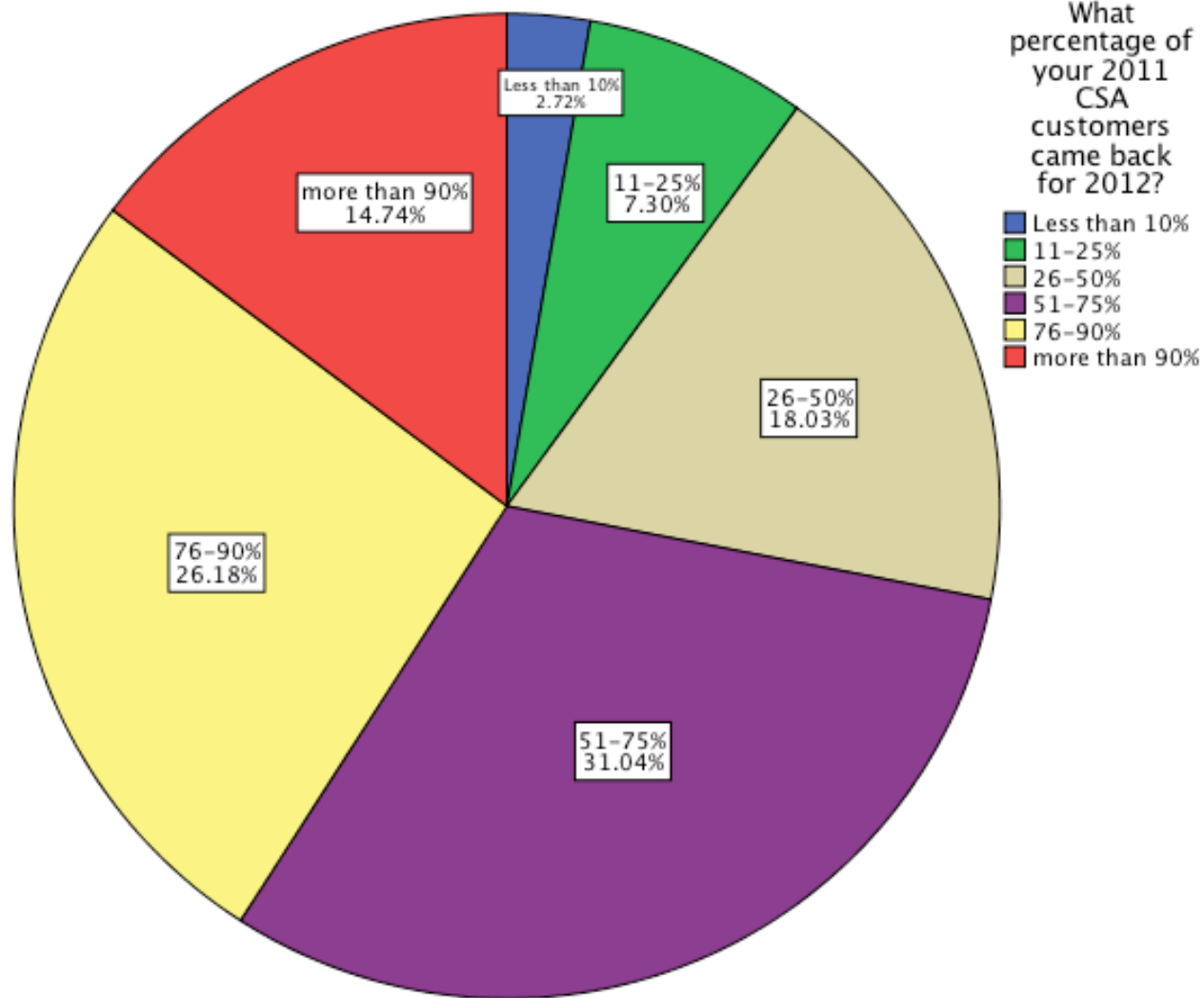


CSA OUTCOMES

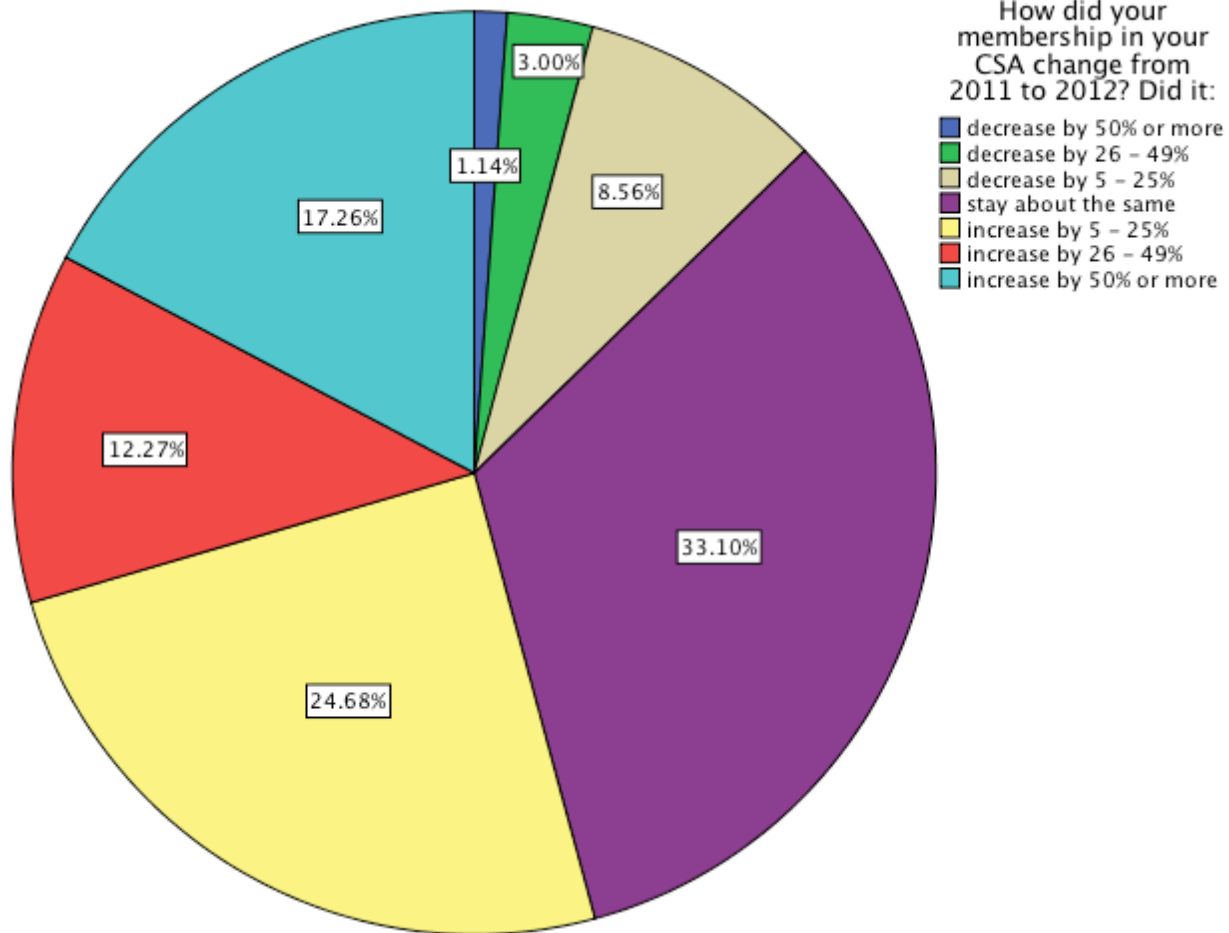
- **Financial outcomes**
- **Participant growth/acquisition [single item]**
- **Participant retention (i.e. turnover) [single item]**
- **Participant Satisfaction**
- **Product and Process efficiency**
- **Revenue, demand, and price uncertainty**
- **Farmer satisfaction with the CSA**

(Multi-item measures, 7 item Likert scale, unless otherwise noted)

PARTICIPANT RETENTION



PARTICIPANT GROWTH/DECLINE



FINANCIAL OUTCOMES

- **My CSA is profitable.**
- **My CSA contributes to the overall viability of my farm.**
- **My CSA allows me to sell products I would otherwise throw away.**
- **In general, I receive a higher selling price for products distributed through my CSA**

(First 2: Cronbach alpha: 0.71)

PRODUCT OUTCOMES

- **Because I have a CSA:-I am able to provide fresher products to my customers.**
- **Because I have a CSA:-I can offer higher quality products.**
- **Because I have a CSA:-I am able to provide a larger variety of products to my customers.**
- **Because I have a CSA:-I am able to offer more specialized products to my customers.**

Cronbach Alpha: 0.866

PROCESS OUTCOMES

- **Because I have a CSA**
 - The efficiency of my farm has improved.
 - My planning has become more efficient.
 - I am more efficient at product distribution.

Cronbach Alpha: 0.863

PARTICIPANT AFFECTIVE COMMITMENT

- **Based on your experiences with your customers, indicate your agreement with the following**
 - The CSA at your farm has a great deal of personal meaning for your customers.
 - Most CSA customers feel a strong connection to your CSA.
 - Most CSA customers feel like they are a part of the CSA at your farm.
 - Most of your CSA customers have a real emotional attachment to the CSA at your farm.
 - There is a strong sense of belonging to your CSA for most of your customers.

Cronbach Alpha: 0.935

PARTICIPANT SATISFACTION

- **Our customers are very satisfied with...**
 - the CSA in general.
 - the information we provide about the CSA.
 - the delivery and pickup of their CSA order.
 - the quality of the items in the CSA order.
 - the number of different items they get in their CSA baskets.

Cronbach Alpha: 0.847

REVENUE STABILITY

- **Because I have a CSA**
 - I am certain of my revenue stream.
 - The revenue of my farm is reliable.
 - There is an increase in the stability of my revenue.
 - The farm's revenue is more predictable.
 - Unexpected events are not a threat to my farm's profitability.

Cronbach Alpha: 0.847

DEMAND/PRICE STABILITY

- **Because I have a CSA**
 - I am certain of the demand for my products
 - Demand for my products is more stable.
 - I am more certain about the prices I will receive for my products.
 - The prices I charge are more stable.
 - Unexpected price changes from competitors will not affect my prices.

Cronbach Alpha: 0.89

FARMER SATISFACTION

- **I am satisfied with my CSA.**
- **My expectations regarding the CSA overall have been fulfilled.**
- **Having a CSA is a useful part of my business.**
- **I'm glad I have a CSA.**

Cronbach alpha: 0.848

OUTCOMES AND CSA RELATIONAL APPROACH

	CSA Relational Approach
Participant Retention	0.138**
Participant Growth	0.141**
Profitability of the CSA	0.142**
Product Quality Impacts	0.192**
Process Efficiency Impacts	0.185**
Participant Commitment (Affective)	0.542**
Revenue Stability	0.407**
Farmer Satisfaction with the CSA	0.201**

Partial correlation controlling for number of CSA participants.

** : $p \leq 0.001$

ONLINE PRESENCE AND CSA OUTCOMES

Has a website?

- Profitability (Higher) & Retention (Lower)

Has a Facebook page?

- None significant

Has a twitter account?

- None significant

How often ___ is updated

- Website & Participation Satisfaction (positively associated)
- Twitter & Participant Satisfaction (negatively associated)

TRANSACTIONAL CAPABILITIES AND CSA OUTCOMES

Sign up on line

- Lower retention

Pay online

- Lower retention, higher growth

Finding out pickup and location times

- Lower retention, higher growth

Find out what's in the upcoming box

- Higher process efficiency, Lower retention

Change Contact info

- None significant

Notification of a pickup

- Higher product quality, Higher farmer satisfaction, Higher retention

Select what is in the upcoming box

- Higher affective commitment, Higher retention

Results based on MANOVA analysis, N = 812

TRANSACTIONAL CAPABILITIES AND CSA OUTCOMES

- **Providing “set-up” activities online is associated with higher participant growth...and lower participant retention**
- **Providing information and options for individuals boxes is associated with higher participant retention**

RELATIONAL CAPABILITIES ONLINE AND CSA OUTCOMES

- **Contact the CSA coordinator**
 - Lower retention
- **Exchange messages with particular members of the farm/CSA**
 - Higher participant satisfaction and affective commitment
- **Find out about local food events, make suggestions about the CSA, arrange visits to the farm**
 - Not significant
- **Participant in online events**
 - Lower product, process outcomes
 - Lower revenue and demand stability
 - Higher affective commitment
- **Find out how they can help on the farm**
 - Higher product, process outcomes
 - Higher revenue and demand
 - Lower retention

CONCLUSIONS

- **Its not just a matter of having social media infrastructure – it’s how you use it.**
- **Transactional capabilities**
 - Providing “set-up” activities online is associated with higher participant growth...and lower participant retention
 - Providing information and options for individuals boxes is associated with higher participant retention
- **Relational capabilities**
 - Non-trivial interactions with the logistical arrangements, relational practices, and CSA overall approach