

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT TO
INCREASE NOT-FOR-PROFIT SUSTAINABILITY

By

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Community Engagement to Increase Not-for-Profit Sustainability

Abstract

The Boys & Girls Club of Bowling Green (BGCBG) is a youth-serving not-for-profit (NFP) located in Bowling Green, Kentucky. BGCBG currently has three full-time administrative employees and a 20-member Board of Directors. Discussions with BGCBG leadership identified a need to diversify funding streams, focusing on building and expanding local business partnerships. These conversations guided the creation of the following research questions:

RQ1: What is the current level of awareness of BGCBG within the Bowling Green community?

RQ2: How can BGCBG increase engagement with current and potential stakeholders?

Inductive grounded theory coding and descriptive statistics were used to investigate the awareness level of BGCBG and internal and external perceptions of current engagement efforts.

In short, results indicate:

1. there is a low level of awareness of BGCBG within the Bowling Green business community;
2. the community views BGCBG as a community asset;
3. once people become involved with the club, they stay with the club;
4. donors feel less recognized for their contributions than volunteers do; and
5. champions need additional tools to spread information about the club.

Based on findings and relevant literature, we recommend that BGCBG:

1. add an action section to the existing one-page club accomplishments shared at board meetings;
2. restart and restructure meals with board members;

3. create a community event potentially led by the new BGCBG staff member;
4. adjust the automated donor ‘thank you’ email;
5. implement handwritten ‘thank you’ letters from board members, and
6. hold a training session for board members and staff to learn how to promote BGCBG

Introduction

The purpose of this capstone project is to understand the current level of community awareness of the Boys & Girls Club of Bowling Green (BGCBG) to provide the club with appropriate tools and strategies to increase community engagement. Through surveys and focus group interviews with BGCBG leadership and community stakeholders, we seek to understand the current level of awareness of the club throughout the business community in Bowling Green, Kentucky. Then, this data is utilized to determine how the club can expand community outreach and engagement with additional for-profit organizations.

Heightened community engagement will ideally lead to the club’s diversification of financial support, which is essential given BGCBG’s heavy reliance on personal contributions as a primary source of income. Understanding community awareness levels of BGCBG and providing tools to the club to increase these levels is crucial in addressing the overarching goal of this capstone project: Empowering BGCBG to increase engagement with current and potential stakeholders, thereby expanding financial support to promote their long-term sustainability.

Theory of Change

Through a review of the literature and initial scoping conversations with BGCBG leadership, a theory of change, depicted below in Figure 1, was developed. In this theory of change, the activities or outputs of the not-for-profit (NFP) organization increase the number of community touchpoints, leading to a higher level of community awareness. As awareness of the

organization grows, additional business to not-for-profit partnerships in the form of monetary donations, in-kind donations, technical support, and volunteerism present themselves to the not-for-profit. This increase in partnership opportunities leads to improved financial sustainability for the NFP. This project focuses on the early steps of this theory of change, including NFP activities and community touchpoints.

Figure 1.

Theory of change



Client/Program

The Boys and Girls Club of Bowling Green (BGCBG), located in Bowling Green, Kentucky, is designed to be a safe and positive youth service not-for-profit organization that provides crucial after-school programs aimed at advancing student success. Established in 1950, the club’s mission is to enable all youth to fulfill their potential as responsible and caring citizens. In 2019, their average daily attendance was 175 youths (Boys & Clubs of America, 2020). As a member of the national organization, BGCBG has access to a wide variety of evidence-based programming for kids of all ages.

Current programs offered at BGCBG include education, career, life skills, art, and sports. For example, Power Hour is a program where students receive assistance and supervision in completing their daily homework while also learning how to become self-directed learners. Other programs include Passport to Manhood and SMART Girl, both of which focus on areas of character building while allowing youth to build relationships within affinity groups. All of the

work done in the club culminates in the Youth of the Year program, which focuses on service to the community and the club, academic achievement, moral integrity, and the ability to speak in public. The winner of the BGCBG Youth of the Year competition goes on to compete at the state, regional, and national levels with the opportunity to receive up to \$50,000 in scholarship funds if named National Youth of the Year. In 2015, the BGCBG Youth of the Year recipient was named Kentucky Youth of the Year.

BGCBG prides itself on being affordable for all within the community, charging only \$15 per year per student for before- and after-school programming. The club does not charge additional fees to any family for programs in which the children might be involved. Furthermore, each child receives a snack and an evening meal after school. BGCBG is open to all 6 to 18-year-olds within the community, including at-risk youth who benefit from these services the most, which promotes equitable access and opportunity. For this low-membership fee business model to be sustainable, additional funds in the form of donations, grants, and sponsorships are crucial. In 2019, the club's budget was \$1,422,552, and the primary sources of income were foundation contributions and grants (30%), individual contributions (26%), special events (12%), corporate contributions (10%), other income (10%), government funding (5%), United Way donations (4%), and member dues (3%) (Boys & Clubs of America, 2020).

BGCBG currently has three full-time administrative employees, 18 part-time programming staff members, and a 20-member Board of Directors meeting monthly to discuss strategic initiatives and club advancement. For example, the Board of Directors recently approved a new full-time staffing position, focusing on resource development, marketing, and public relations. This new position is vital to the club's community outreach strategy as, before the pandemic, BGCBG held events, such as breakfast and lunch gatherings, so that community

members could hear firsthand club news and activities. However, as these events have not occurred in the past few years, this new staffing position will be instrumental in enhancing community efforts with business and nonprofit organizations.

While Bowling Green has multiple youth service organizations within the community, BGCBG is unique due to its name recognition and national backing. The club has some corporate support, including Dairy Queen, United Way of Southern Kentucky, Fourteen Foods, Houchens Industries, and Whas Crusade for Children. Given that corporate donations make up just 10% of the club's overall budget, additional business partners are needed to help expand the availability of services for more youth.

Problem of Practice

“No money, no mission” is a common saying in the not-for-profit world, so while NFP leaders spend much of their time focused on the service provided to their community, they are often preoccupied with the need to increase funding. This challenge is especially true for small NFPs that rely predominantly on grants, sponsorships, and donations from their local communities. The Boys & Girls Club of Bowling Green falls within this category.

In 2016, 49% of national NFP revenue came from fees for services provided by the NFP (National Council of Nonprofits, 2019). This figure is impossible for BGCBG to attain since the annual cost of membership to youths served is just \$15; in fact, member dues account for just 3% of the annual revenue for the organization. Therefore, BGCBG must identify other revenue sources that can subsidize the cost of programming. As mentioned above, BGCBG's primary funding sources are foundation contributions, grants, and individual donations, providing 56% of revenue. On the other hand, two revenue sources with room for growth are corporate contributions and special events; these two categories currently account for 22% of BGCBG's

revenue.

Initial scoping discussions with the BGCBG leadership led us to a problem of practice guided by the low percentage of financial support received from a small portion of the business community. Furthermore, there is a lack of understanding of how the business community views BGCBG or how they could engage with the club. Lastly, club leadership indicated concern regarding the club's ability to engage with the business community in a way that would lead to increased support.

By reaching additional business partners, BGCBG can continue to grow and provide services to more youths within the community. This support is essential following the COVID-19 pandemic as children have experienced a dramatic loss of learning, both academically and related to social-emotional growth (Donnelly & Patrinos, 2021). This loss results in an increased need for well-supported and evidence-based programming for youths outside of the school systems. BGCBG's mission to provide a safe space for children to learn and grow within the community makes the organization a prime candidate to provide these vital tools. Additional funds are required to grow and provide these needed services. Based on the club's current revenue sources, there is an opportunity to increase partnerships with the business community.

To foster partnerships, BGCBG should develop specific and timely community engagement opportunities and clarify narratives to share with potential business partners. These efforts also require both internal leaders and board members to be well-versed in how to share the club's impact and needs with the people in their spheres of influence (Lockshin, 2021). In instances where this is lacking, club leaders can work with board members to develop this skill, thus expanding the club's reach within the community. This focus is significant in small not-for-profits with a working board of directors rather than an expansive resource development team.

All leaders can benefit from training to cross boundaries related to race, ethnicity, and socio-economic status (Kretzmann et al., 2005), especially when working to provide services for community members who might not share the same background as the leadership team. By focusing on diversity, equity, and inclusion when sharing the club's story, leaders can increase support and mobilize the community to meet the needs of the youths served (Kretzmann et al., 2005).

By increasing the number of corporate sponsors with whom they partner, BGCBG can diversify its financial support to promote its long-term vitality. Therefore, this capstone project aims to empower BGCBG to increase engagement with current and potential stakeholders to increase the club's sustainability. The results of this performance improvement project will allow the BGCBG leadership to spend more time on focused efforts to increase community engagement and build partnerships. Through understanding the level of awareness of BGCBG in the community, the leadership team will be able to spend their time on targeted initiatives based on frequency, structure, and direct execution of identified strategies. Finally, this project will also organize insights and feedback from the community, so the club can continue developing best practices for community engagement.

Literature Review

The literature review for this capstone focuses on five distinct areas: (1) the role of not-for-profits in the community, (2) community awareness, (3) not-for-profit sustainability, (4) not-for-profit community engagement, and (5) business to not-for-profit partnerships. These five topics follow a sequential pattern as it is necessary first to understand what not-for-profits aim to accomplish prior to identifying sustainability best practices.

The Role of Not-for-profits

Not-for-profit organizations play a vital role in our communities, “delivering services, strengthening communities, and facilitating civic engagement” (Faulk et al., 2021). While the nonprofit sector contains a wide variety of individual organizations, the value of NFPs can not be understated. There are approximately 1.8 million NFPs across the country with expenditures nearing \$2 trillion (Faulk et al., 2021), but the majority of NFPs are small and community-focused, with 88% of NFPs having expenditures less than \$500,000 per year (National Council of Nonprofits, 2019). Since the turn of the century, fewer households across the country have been donating to NFPs, a trend primarily impacting small NFPs focused on meeting local needs (National Council of Nonprofits, 2019). One reason fewer households are donating to NFPs is due to increased disparities in income and wealth (National Council of Nonprofits, 2019). As a result of this, many NFPs have begun looking for other ways to ensure they meet annual budgetary needs, including expanding their community outreach with potential business partners.

Community Awareness

For NFPs to be successful, community members must be aware of the organization’s services and their impact on the community. Without community awareness of an NFP, the organization will not be able to attract participants for their programming or local support. Furthermore, if an NFP does not have strong brand awareness in their local community, there will not be a high level of attachment from the community (McDougle, 2014). Unfortunately, overall awareness of NFPs is alarmingly low, with various surveys showing that one-third to one-half of respondents cannot describe what the term nonprofit means (Hamidullah et al., 2022). NFPs are fighting an uphill battle when working to build a base of donors and volunteers.

One way to determine the level of awareness of any organization or business is to look at top-of-mind awareness (TOMA), a technique in which people state which brand names come immediately to mind without prompting from the questioner (Doyle, 2016). While this is a common brand research technique, it can be helpful to obtain a base-level understanding of areas in which an NFP needs to work to improve name recognition within their community. TOMA is viewed as the most stringent brand awareness level as it is entirely unaided (Hamidullah et al., 2022).

Not-for-profit Sustainability

Not-for-profit sustainability is the ability of the organization to “fulfill its commitments to its clients, its patrons, and the community in which it operates” (Weerawardena et al., 2010, p. 347). While for-profit businesses can create a product for a targeted audience and obtain funding by selling that product or service, an NFP’s quest includes finding both funders and clients, essentially doubling the required work (Strang, 2018). Once funding is secured, an NFP must operationalize success within the organization to share that message with their communities and potential funders to continue receiving support for their services. Therefore, sustainability encompasses more for NFPs than for-profits, including monetary and non-monetary factors (Singh & Mthuli, 2020).

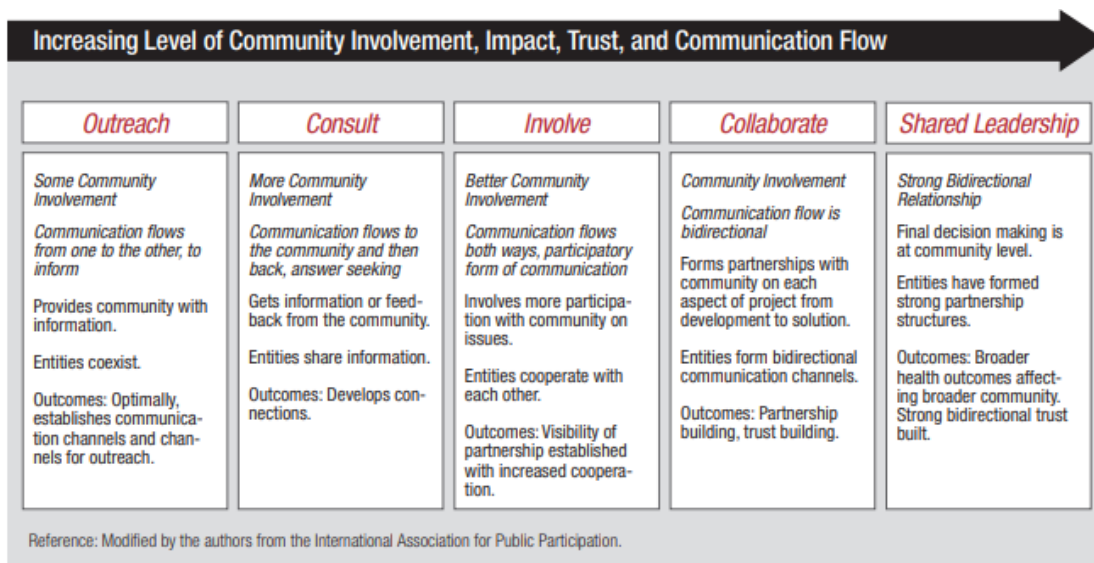
Various factors influence an NFP’s sustainability rate, including strategic planning, leadership and structure, financial management, accountability practices, and performance evaluations (Strang, 2018). These factors have been encapsulated further into the need of NFPs to balance fiscal survival and the organization’s mission, creating the term “double bottom line” to indicate an NFP’s need to balance financial and mission-driven success (McDonald et al., 2015). With the double bottom line in mind, the two categories of sustainability efforts are

fiscally-driven and mission-driven. Mission-driven strategies include reaching a high level of service efficacy, engaging in public relations and education activities with the community, and cross-promotion of services with other NFPs (McDonald et al., 2015). On the other hand, fiscally-driven strategies focus on enhancing revenue and donations by generating corporate sponsorships, engaging in relationship fundraising with individuals, and holding fundraising events (McDonald et al., 2015). Analysis of these categories reveals that mission-driven strategies are commonly directed inward at the work the NFP is doing, while fiscally-driven strategies have a more community-based approach. In addition to mission and fiscally-driven considerations, community engagement allows for forming equitable partnerships. According to scholar Trudy Arriaga, these partnerships provide an opportunity for family, school, and community engagement that are culturally inclusive (Clark-Loque et al., 2020). For these reasons, these researchers decided to explore community engagement for NFPs as a strategy to increase financial sustainability for BGCBG.

Community Engagement for NFPs

Community engagement is a multidimensional phenomenon, and there is no one-size-fits-all approach (Satar, 2019). According to task force members from the Clinical and Translational Science Awards (CTSA), the literature reflects a broad spectrum of community engagement definitions and concepts (2011).

One way it is helpful to view community engagement is through a continuum of community involvement, such as this one presented by the National Institutes of Health (2011).

Figure 2.*Community Involvement Continuum*

As individuals or organizations move through this continuum, increasing involvement within their community, they build more effective relationships, ultimately developing strong leadership within their community. According to Woronkowicz (2018), community engagement may be more effective when an organization strategically targets the community members and organizations with which to engage and collaborate. For example, based on an NFP's age, history, culture, and competitive status, there is less to gain from engaging with all organizations equally and more motive to prioritize certain groups that align with the NFP's mission and goals (Woronkowicz, 2018).

Research shows positive links between perceived community engagement and ownership with perceptions of an organization (Mullenbach et al., 2019). Given their considerable personal investment in the neighborhoods in which they reside, community members are crucial stakeholders who can provide valuable input if actively engaged (Mullenbach et al., 2019). Perceived ownership fosters feelings of care, responsibility, and stewardship among community

members (Pierce et al., 2001). Through shared commitment, stakeholder engagement can effectively gain organizational buy-in and support in decision-making processes (Manetti, & Toccafondi, 2014).

Business to Not-for-profit Partnerships

Business to not-for-profit (B2N) partnerships are prevalent in the NFP community. B2N partnerships allow for the two sectors to align for mutually advantageous purposes. These partnerships allow businesses to align themselves with NFPs that meet societal expectations while the NFPs receive economic advantages (Shumate et al., 2018). B2N partnerships can function in various ways, including transactional and short-term or more integrative to the fabric of the NFP (Selsky & Parker, 2005). According to Selsky and Parker (2005), businesses are more likely to partner with NFPs in areas that show direct impacts, such as education or job development, rather than with NFPs focusing on societal issues with less direct impact, like social mobilization or advocacy.

In a study of twelve of the most high-impact NFPs in the country, researchers found that when NFPs find ways to “help companies do well while doing good” (Crutchfield & Grant, 2012, p. 76), they can attract additional partners to harness the economic benefits of B2N partnerships. One way to do this is to develop a value proposition to share with potential business partners, including how the monetary contribution will help the NFP meet its mission and provide information that would help the business see how the donation affected its measurable outcomes (Ansbach, 2010).

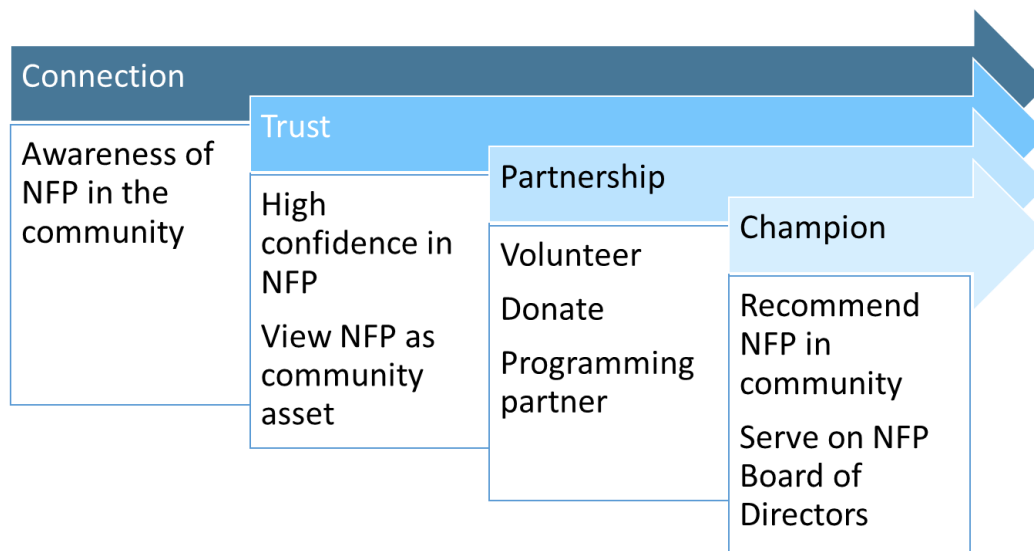
NFPs can also work to build long-lasting B2N partnerships by fostering relationships that are not based solely on monetary donations. According to Colón (2010), corporate philanthropy programs want to find ways to innovatively partner with NFPs so that their contributions have a

stronger and more direct impact on their community's basic needs. To this end, corporations are more likely to encourage volunteerism among their employees, increase in-kind donations (including skill-based services), and increase product donations (Colón, 2010; Gagnon et al., 2021).

One example is the B2N partnership between the Boys & Girls Club of America (BGCA) and Kimberly-Clark, a manufacturing company specializing in personal care products, which has been in place since 1977. According to an executive at Kimberly-Clark, the partnership began as general support of the BGCA mission, but since 2005 has become much more specific so that the foundation's support is directly focused on BGCA's work to strengthen families. This topic resonated with the foundation as it spoke to Kimberly-Clark's overall goal: to provide families with essential products and resources (Mizera, 2013).

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework guiding this performance improvement study was adapted from The Community Roundtable, an organization that supports clients by developing practical strategies to promote community success (Abram, 2022). To view the original Community Roundtable Framework, please reference Appendix A. The adaptations shift the framework's focus from a marketing engagement framework to one that focuses on engagement as a tool to increase partnerships within the larger community.

Figure 3.*Community Engagement Framework*

Not-for-profits promote civic engagement within their communities in four distinct ways: (1) engaging with volunteers and donors, (2) providing direct and indirect services and programs to community members, (3) collaborating with other community resources, and (4) creating community education and awareness initiatives (Shier et al., 2014). These categories informed the creation of the community engagement framework by identifying how community members can interact with the NFP, allowing us to create a spectrum of engagement, with connection as the base level and champion as the highest level of engagement.

Figure 3 graphically represents the four levels, which include (1) connection, (2) trust, (3) partnerships, and (4) champion. Each level provides opportunities for community members to engage with the NFP. For example, community members at the connection level have a level of awareness of the NFP, while the next level, trust, must show a high level of confidence in the NFP and view the NFP as an asset to the community. The third level, partnership, includes those community members who have actively engaged with the NFP, through volunteer activities,

donations, or programming partnerships. Finally, the fourth level, champion, is reserved for those community members who are the most engaged with the NFP. Champions include Board of Directors and individuals who actively promote the NFP within their sphere of influence.

The framework presented is notable in that each level within it builds from the previous level. Therefore, as an NFP utilizes the framework to understand more about the businesses and community members that make up their community, they will be able to understand how to move an individual or business from one level on the spectrum to another. Thus, the conceptual framework links back to the theory of change presented in Figure 1, with each touchpoint in the community building upon the previous one until true partnerships result in additional resources for the organization. For example, champions are most likely cultivated from current partners, such as donors and volunteers.

Study Design

Research Questions

Two research questions guide this project to gain a more in-depth understanding of the current perceptions of Boys & Girls Club of Bowling Green (BGCBG) and ways to increase community engagement.

RQ1: What is the current level of awareness of BGCBG within the Bowling Green community?

RQ2: How can BGCBG increase engagement with current and potential stakeholders?

The first question seeks to investigate the current perceptions of BGCBG within the Bowling Green community, which will create a baseline for perceptions and gauge the club's top-of-mind awareness (TOMA) (L. M. McDougle, personal communication, June 22, 2022).

The second question will elucidate how BGCBG can increase community engagement with the support of existing and potential stakeholders. This additional research will help provide information regarding community member engagement and interest in expanding the organization's support. Responses to these questions will provide insights connected specifically to organizational community engagement strategies, key stakeholder feedback, and information regarding potential partnerships. The findings from these questions will inform our community engagement recommendations for BGCBG.

Data Collection

To address our research questions, we (1) administered an 8-10 minute digital survey via Qualtrics (Appendix B), (2) conducted an hour-long focus group, and (3) investigated BGCBG artifacts and club materials to understand community engagement efforts better. Table 1 below highlights the research questions addressed, as well as the corresponding research data collection methods.

Table 1. Research Questions and Data Collection Method

Research Question	Data Collection Method
RQ1: What is the current level of awareness of BGCBG within the Bowling Green community?	1. Survey 2. Focus Group 3. Investigation of Artifacts
RQ2: How can BGCBG increase engagement with current and potential stakeholders?	1. Survey 2. Focus Group 3. Investigation of Artifacts

Survey Design

The survey aimed to gauge Bowling Green community members' awareness of BGCBG. The survey structure involved five parts with different question types to gain insights regarding brand awareness, involvement, partnerships, volunteer experiences, and interest in learning more

about partnership opportunities. Questions aimed to address each section of the conceptual framework were included, including three questions to ascertain the level of connection with the club, three to understand the level of trust within the community, 14 to understand partnerships, and three to identify the level of championing for the club within Bowling Green.

The researchers developed the Qualtrics survey, drawing on literature and other surveys focused on community engagement. Part one of the survey began with an unaided recall test of nonprofit brand awareness to understand which Bowling Green NFPs are top-of-mind (McDougle, 2014). The first question was: “When thinking of nonprofits in the Bowling Green area, what are the first three organizations that come to mind?” This question was added to the survey following personal communication with Lindsey McDougle, a thought leader in the field of nonprofits and philanthropy. McDougle and her colleagues included the question (focused on the San Diego community) in a survey for their research on exploring individual predictors of variation in public awareness of nonprofits (Hamidullah et al., 2022).

Part two of the survey disclosed our partnership with BGCBG, and questions included: “How familiar are you with BGCBG (on a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being most familiar)?” and “Please describe in your own words the services that BGCBG provides to the community.” The latter enabled us to ascertain participants' perceived familiarity with BGCBG's mission and practices.

Part three determined if respondents have personally volunteered or donated to BGCBG in the past, how easy or difficult this process was, how well BGCBG recognizes volunteers for their contributions, and how likely they are to work with BGCBG again. Part four of the survey centered around organizational support of BGCBG, with questions such as: “Has your organization supported BGCBG in the past 5 years?” with checkboxes for selecting types of

involvement and/or support. Finally, part five asked if they would like to hear about future BGCBG partnership opportunities.

Prior to deploying the survey, these researchers conducted a cognitive interview with Liz Ranfeld, an Associate Professor of English with an extensive background in survey design. She stated that the survey was intuitive and her test responses met the researchers' expectations. Utilizing her feedback, these researchers finalized the survey and sent it to BGCBG for their final review. The club approved the survey prior to survey deployment.

The researchers recruited participants for the digital survey from the Bowling Green Area Chamber of Commerce website, with the criteria being active involvement in the local business community. By selecting this population to receive the survey, these researchers ensured that all respondents were part of the Bowling Green business community and could respond to an electronic survey. The survey was sent to all Chamber of Commerce members with an email address listed in the Chamber of Commerce directory in an effort to mitigate a potentially low response rate. The estimated time for survey completion in Qualtrics was 8-10 minutes. The survey was distributed to 1,051 email addresses in the local chamber of commerce directory. A total of 51 survey responses were received, which is a 4.9% response rate. All participants were entered into a randomized drawing for three \$20 Amazon gift cards to promote engagement. The recruitment did not disclose which organization the researchers partnered with, as the survey began with TOMA recall questions. Participants were informed that their participation was voluntary, and responses were kept confidential to ensure that participation or nonparticipation would not impact their relationship with the nonprofit organization partnering with the researchers for this project. The collection of responses was confined to a two and a half week period.

Focus Group Design

To understand internal perceptions of community awareness, the researchers held a focus group with internal BGBCG leaders and board members. Twelve focus group questions were created to gain a deeper understanding of the values held by the participants, the strengths of the existing partnerships, and potential partnerships that could be explored within the community.

Careful consideration was given to the creation of each focus group question listed in Table 2, and all were created using inclusive language and the OARS methodology (Qureshi, & Ünlü, Z, 2020). OARS is an acronym for open-ended questions, affirmations, reflective listening, and summaries (Qureshi, & Ünlü, Z, 2020) to ensure participants' psychological safety in the focus group.

Table 2. Focus Group Questions

1. What are some strengths of BGCBG?
2. Can you please describe the relationship between your organization and your local community?
3. In what ways does your organization engage with the community and its members?
4. Are any board members willing to share their elevator speech describing the organization's mission and accomplishments?
5. What strategies do you use to increase community awareness about BGCBG? (ask probing questions related to each strategy raised)
6. What accomplishments has BGCBG experienced within the community?
7. How do you leverage internal resources to increase community awareness?
8. What challenges have you experienced when developing a strategy to increase community awareness? How would you remove those barriers? What strategies need to be changed?
9. How do you measure the effectiveness of the community awareness strategies currently used by BGCBG?
10. What else could you share about community awareness strategies?
11. How do you discuss community engagement strategies during board meetings?
12. What additional thoughts and ideas do you have to improve community engagement?

An hour-long focus group was held with BGCBG board members and key leaders within the club. A randomized drawing for one \$20 Amazon gift card was offered to increase focus

group participation. The focus group was held via Zoom and was audio and video recorded. The BGCBG CEO sent invitations to all 20 board members and three club leadership members to provide a broad spectrum of experience, support, and partnership engagement. The focus group consisted of five members (22% participation rate) and resulted in a more in-depth understanding of existing knowledge and perceptions of BGCBG and its community engagement impact.

Investigation of Artifacts

Documents provided by BGCBG leaders supplied information regarding the organizational structure and composition of key stakeholders. These artifacts included marketing materials, event programs, survey data, and historical community engagement records.

Data Analysis

Focus Group

For the focus group analysis, we used inductive grounded theory coding, a method to generate theory from the data collected during the focus group (Qureshi, & Ünlü, Z, 2020). Grounded theory allowed for the creation of thematic codes using thick, rich descriptions (Ravitch & Carl, 2021). To develop the codes, a structured approach was utilized, while remaining flexible to emerging themes from key stakeholders, community leaders, and other study participants (Christie et al., 2005). These findings were documented with the initial coding also anchored in the conceptual framework. The codes were developed using the four-step approach of grounded theory introduced by Ünlü (2015), wherein we identified codes (stage 1), interpreted concepts (stage 2), devised categories (stage 3), and finally, created overarching themes (stage 4) informed by the focus group discussions.

Figure 4.

Four-step approach to grounded theory coding



Note. The image was created using Delve’s Steps for Coding Qualitative Data. From *Essential guide to coding qualitative data*. Delve. (n.d.). Retrieved November 1, 2022, from <https://delvetool.com/guide>

Focus Group Data Coding. Each researcher used an individual template to track the main ideas gleaned from the responses. Using the four-step systematic approach (highlighted in Figure 4), the template was used to create codes and categorize insights separately. Each researcher independently reviewed the transcript and noted the issues raised and key takeaways from each response. The transcript provided opportunities to examine specific analytical constructs within each response. Throughout this process, researchers ensured active discussion before finalizing each stage of the coding process. Once individual reviews were completed, the researchers collaboratively discussed the main ideas and created initial codes based on the real-world context of board and staff members' feedback.

The coding process was anchored in grounded theory using an inductive process of analysis. Delve’s online software and learning center program was used to analyze the qualitative data to allow researchers to track comparisons of different phrases and excerpts. Delve also provided note-taking tools to track discoveries made throughout the coding process. This open-ended approach provided more flexibility and creativity for code creation. Delve’s fluid format enabled researchers to move codes in order of importance once created. The collaborative note-

taking tools also captured initial ideas and revisions of researchers throughout the code development process.

To provide a methodical approach to analysis, researchers divided the focus group questions and responses, and each researcher individually coded three focus group questions in Delve. To increase validity and reliability and decrease researcher biases, all researchers then reviewed all questions, adding and modifying codes as needed. Thirty codes were identified in this first phase, including the club's messaging, relationships, partnerships, safe environment, and other sites/locations.

Table 3. Focus group codes

Code	n	Code	n	Code	n
Club's messaging	16	Partnerships	15	Relationships	13
Awareness	9	Support	9	Family	9
Collaboration	8	Competition	7	Access to resources	7
Financial strength	7	Special events/projects	7	Safe environment	7
Donors	6	Social media	5	PR/Marketing	5
Community	5	Educational innovation	5	Impact	5
Trust	4	Board members	4	Student needs	4
Other sites/locations	7	Leadership	5	Stigma	2
Committee	2	People	2	Champion	2
Privilege	1	Conversations	1	Recognition	1

The next phase in the coding process was a collaborative effort, with all researchers working together to identify concepts that arose from the open coding process, this time using axial coding (Ravitch & Carl, 2021) to identify connections between various codes. While some connections were easily made and agreed upon by all researchers, such as the connection

between “partnership” and “relationship,” others required some discussion. One example of this was the discussion that took place surrounding the code “champion” and whether it made more sense to connect it with “support” or “leadership.” After discussion, all researchers felt confident that “champion” should be connected to “support.” After this phase, the 30 codes were grouped into 13 concepts.

Table 4. Focus group concepts

Community	Club’s messaging	Support
Financial strength	Student needs	Champion
Trust	Educational innovation	Leadership
Impact	Committee	Unity
Board members		

Next, the researchers conducted another round of axial coding, this time grouping various concepts into categories. This process was extremely similar to the previous step. There were some concepts that were easily connected to make categories, such as “board members” and “committees.” One area that required considerable discussion surrounded the concept of “support.” The focus group data showed multiple types of support, and some researchers wanted to connect it with the concept of “student needs” while another thought that it should be connected to “financial strength” because the research questions are anchored in the idea of creating financial sustainability. In the end, it was agreed that using “support” as the category allowed for both “student needs” and “financial strength” to be included. Certainly, it is necessary for students to be understood so that the Club can generate the support needed to become financially sustainable. At one point, discussion took place about whether important codes, like “stigma” and “privilege” had gotten lost in the coding process and if they should be

extracted from the concept to which they had been connected (student needs) and made into a category of their own. At the end of this stage, six categories were identified: club’s messaging, community, support, trust, educational partnerships, and leadership.

Table 5. Focus group categories

Community	Club’s messaging	Support
Trust	Educational innovation	Leadership

Finally, the researchers looked at each of the categories to identify themes. Initially, it seemed difficult to narrow down the categories any more than had already occurred without losing important details within the research. At this point, the coding process was taken out of Delve to more easily see each category at a glance. Significant discussion took place surrounding some of the categories, such as “education partnerships.” At one point, all three researchers agreed that it should remain its own theme. After refocusing on the research questions and the data gathered from the focus group, it was decided that it should be categorized with “community” because while BGCBG is developing innovative connections in education partnerships, the partnerships themselves are related to the community. After further discussion, the researchers also decided to place the community concept under a theme called “support.” Once this was decided, all agreed that the concept of “trust” should be placed under “support” as well since trust is an essential component when working to obtain support from any group of people.

Similar discussions occurred surrounding “club’s messaging” and “leadership.” These two concepts appeared a significant number of times within the qualitative research, but which one should be included as an overarching theme within the data? While arguments were made that the leadership of BGCBG is responsible for solidifying and producing the club’s messaging,

that argument could be made for all of the codes found within the data. Reflecting once again on the research questions themselves, then it was determined that a theme of “club’s messaging” would be most likely to have a significant impact on the problem of practice.

At this point, the researchers had narrowed down all six concepts into two themes, but each agreed that something seemed to be missing. After reanalyzing the data collected from the focus group and the codes and categories generated, it became apparent that the needs of the students served by the club had been lost. There was a relatively brief discussion over whether the research questions warranted that the student needs be included as an overarching theme. However, the data collected from the focus group quickly proved that without including this vital component, any recommendations made from the research would be lacking. It was obvious throughout the focus group data that every decision made by the club's leadership revolved around the needs of the students, even those seemingly unrelated. Thus, it was decided that the third and last theme identified from the focus group data should be “student needs.”

In summary, the focus group data led to the identification of 30 codes, from which 13 categories were created, followed by six concepts, and resulting in three themes: club’s messaging, support, and student needs. These themes reveal the board’s perception of current community engagement efforts as well as internal prioritizations and strategic plans. It is important to understand the board’s perception so we can address any discrepancies between perception and reality as supported by survey responses.

Survey

Our survey included 19 quantitative and five qualitative questions. The quantitative questions consisted of 14 Likert scale and five multiple choice questions. Due to the various

question types throughout the survey, both quantitative and qualitative analysis methods were used to understand the information gathered.

Quantitative Survey Questions. The methodology used to analyze the quantitative survey responses was descriptive statistics. Descriptive statistics use a summary of the data to describe relationships between different variables (Privitera, 2015). Through this analysis, we were able to determine whether factors such as longevity in the Bowling Green community, individual philanthropic actions, or organizational support increase engagement with BGCBG. Analysis of quantitative questions was completed using the reporting functionality within Qualtrics. First, the mean, median, standard deviation, and variance were calculated for all relevant questions, such as “How well does the Boys & Girls Club of Bowling Green recognize volunteers for their contributions?” and “How likely are you to donate to the Boys & Girls Club of Bowling Green in the future?” Visualizations were then created for each question so that we could quickly visualize any patterns with the data (Appendix C). Once initial patterns were identified, a variety of comparisons between variables were created to understand the relationship between each variable better.

Table 6. Survey results

Question	Mean	Std Dev	Responses
How familiar are you with Boys & Girls Club of Bowling Green?	3.6	1.15	48
Boys & Girls Club of Bowling Green is a community asset.	4.5	0.70	42
How confident are you that Boys & Girls Club of Bowling Green effectively provides quality services on the public’s behalf?	3.86	0.97	42
How confident are you that Boys & Girls Club of Bowling Green spends money wisely?	3.69	0.99	42
Have you ever volunteered with Boys & Girls Club of Bowling Green?	1.78	0.42	45

How easy was the process of volunteering with Boys & Girls Club of Bowling Green?	4.10	0.83	10
How well does Boys & Girls Club of Bowling Green recognize volunteers for their contributions?	4.20	0.75	10
How likely are you to volunteer with Boys & Girls Club of Bowling Green in the future?	4.10	0.70	10
How likely are you to recommend Boys & Girls Club of Bowling Green as a volunteer opportunity to a friend or colleague?	4.50	0.50	10
Have you ever donated to Boys & Girls Club of Bowling Green?	1.49	0.50	45
How easy was it to donate to Boys & Girls Club of Bowling Green?	4.17	0.82	23
How well does Boys & Girls Club of Bowling Green recognize donors for their contributions?	3.74	1.19	23
How likely are you to donate to Boys & Girls Club of Bowling Green in the future?	4.17	0.76	23
How easy was it for your organization to provide support to Boys & Girls Club of Bowling Green?	4.05	0.84	21
How well did Boys & Girls Club of Bowling Green recognize your organization's contributions?	3.48	1.05	21
How likely is your organization to support Boys & Girls Club of Bowling Green again?	4.19	0.73	21

Qualitative Survey Question Coding. Qualitative survey responses were analyzed using inductive grounded theory coding, described earlier in this paper. The survey included four qualitative questions, where participants answered open-ended questions in the form of a textbox for shorter responses and an essay box for more detailed answers. To utilize grounded theory in analyzing qualitative survey data, the researchers once again worked collaboratively within the Delve online platform to create overarching themes from raw data through the coding process.

Each qualitative survey question was analyzed individually, as opposed to grouped together, due to each question yielding its own set of unique codes. An essay-box question

analyzed in Delve was: “Please describe in your own words the services that Boys & Girls Club of Bowling Green provides to the community.” Researchers began by collaboratively reviewing the data and employing open coding to label discrete sections of the survey responses. Open coding resulted in 11 unique codes, including: “support,” “safe place,” and “programming.” This open coding process allowed the researchers to compare various data elements and ultimately determine the most appropriate codes.

Next, axial coding was utilized to draw connections between the 11 codes established during the first phase of the coding process. After much discussion and debate, “support” and “safe space” were grouped under “social development,” with “social development” becoming a category. It was determined that by BGCBG providing a supportive and safe environment, youth could develop appropriate social skills required to thrive within the community. With this logic, “social development” became the larger category containing these two distinct codes. While there were initial discussions around grouping “support” and “safe space” under the category of “student potential,” researchers eventually agreed that “social development” was a more appropriate categorization given the direct impact of support and safe space on student growth and development. Ultimately, axial coding produced five categories, including “programming” and “privilege.”

Finally, the researchers sought to connect all categories around one core category using selective coding. After further analysis, the core category was determined to be “community.” Survey data consistently mentioned the community, with direct responses stating how BGCBG “provides community assets,” “helps children in the community,” and “provides volunteer services in the community.” In addition to community appearing eight times in the data, the five

categories produced support this theme as well. For example, “social development” fits well within the core category of “community” because as youth develop socially and academically, they can support the community and help move Bowling Green forward. Once this core category was established, the grounded theory coding process was continued for the remainder of the qualitative survey questions.

Artifacts

Artifact analysis and investigation of documents provide information over a long period that may otherwise be forgotten (Bowen, 2009; Merriam, 1998; Yin, 2009). As we were unable to visit BGCBG in person, organization artifacts help provide a picture of the historical work that the club has accomplished. Each researcher reviewed artifacts looking for key concepts related to themes that had emerged from the survey and focus group. Triangulation of findings from the focus group and survey allowed us to corroborate the historical evidence from BGCBG (Bowen, 2009; Yin, 2009). One example of this data triangulation is comparing the resource development artifact compiled in 2017 and our survey results. The triangulation validated our findings by illustrating similarities between the data collected in 2017 and our 2022 results.

Research Validity and Considerations

Utilizing various data collection methods enabled us to gain helpful insights (Denzin, 1970/2009). The three data collection methods were also triangulated by comparing community responses and board perceptions. These comparisons increased research validity and rigor in determining the difference between board members’ perceptions and the reality of other community stakeholders. Research methods and tools were strategically sequenced throughout the process to maximize the alignment of research questions to the specific data collection steps.

Careful consideration was given to the execution of the research design. One concern that was identified is the need to incorporate effective data collection efforts to provide a strong infrastructure. We needed to remain flexible and receptive to emerging themes and insights shared. Another consideration was how carefully we linked our tools and methods to the peer-reviewed literature. Staying grounded in what has been learned from previous studies allowed a keener awareness of our researcher biases and to avoid solutionitis. The knowledge gained from the literature review made us more aware of how our positionality influenced our interpretation of project findings (Ravitch & Carl, 2021; Bryk et al., 2013). The literature review also guided efforts to frame the problems and issues related to this topic of research (Hart, 2018).

Findings

Five prominent findings were identified by reviewing data collected through the focus group, survey, and artifacts. Findings one and two relate to the first research question, “What is the current level of awareness of BGCBG within the Bowling Green community?” while findings three through five relate to the second research question, “How can BGCBG increase engagement with current and potential stakeholders?”

Finding 1: There is a low level of awareness of BGCBG within the Bowling Green business community

The first finding is relatively straightforward. To answer the question, “What is the current level of awareness of BGCBG within the Bowling Green community?” the finding is that there is a low level of awareness of the club within the business community. As described above, the first question in the survey was designed to answer this question. When asked to name the three not-for-profits that first come to mind, just 3.7% of the responses named the Boys & Girls Club of Bowling Green, indicating a low level of top-of-mind awareness (TOMA) for the

organization. This was not a surprise, as focus group participants indicated that the business community had a low level of awareness of the club through statements such as

- “[T]hey were aware of us, but not what we were doing.”
- “We probably don’t toot our horn enough out in the community.” and
- “[P]eople know the name well but they don’t know us well.”

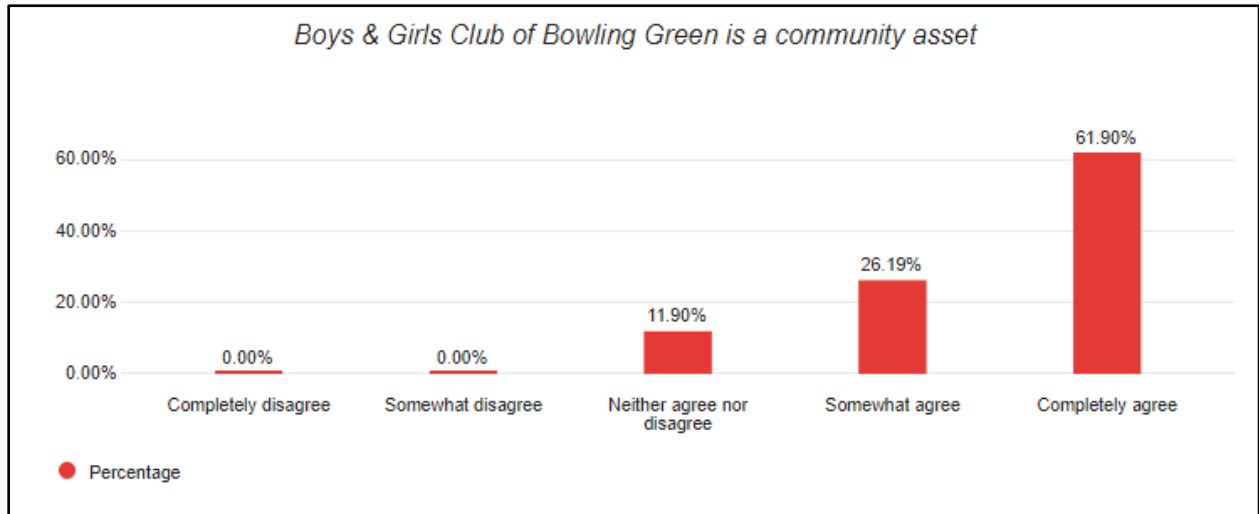
This last statement speaks to the fact that even though Boys & Girls Club is a nationally known program, there is a low level of TOMA of the club among Bowling Green residents. A review of artifacts also supported this finding, as the research development assessment review completed in 2018 included quotes such as “out of sight, out of mind,” referring to partnerships between the club and the local community.

Finding 2: The community views BGCBG as a community asset

The second finding, also related to the level of awareness of the club, is a more positive one in that while there is a low level of TOMA within the community, BGCBG is viewed as a community asset when members are explicitly asked about the club and their work in Bowling Green. When asked about their level of agreement with the statement “Boys & Girls Club of Bowling Green is a community asset,” not a single respondent stated that they completely or somewhat disagreed. More than 88% of respondents completely or somewhat agreed with the statement, as shown in Figure 5 below.

Figure 5.

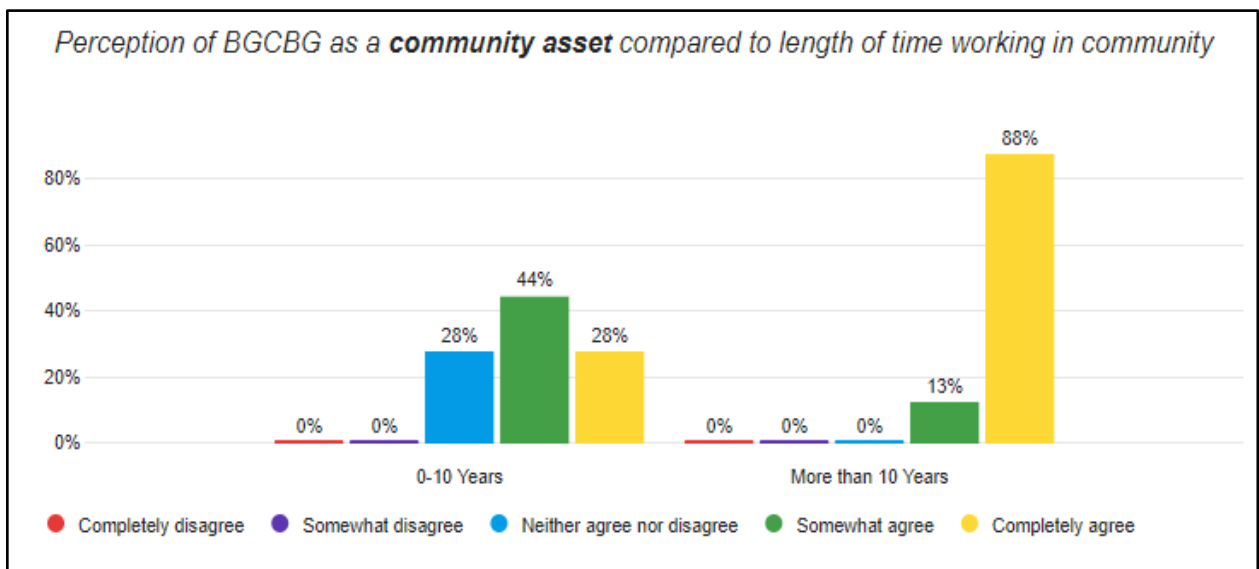
Status of BGCBG as a Community Asset



To better understand the responses, a comparative analysis was conducted between this question and the length of time respondents have worked in the Bowling Green community. The findings indicated that the longer a person lived in the BG community, the more likely they were to agree that BGCBG was a community asset.

Figure 6.

Community Asset Compared to Length of Time Working in Community



Therefore, in addition to understanding that the business community as a whole is likely to think of the club as a community asset, it was determined that individuals who work in the Bowling Green community for more than ten years are the most likely to hold this view.

Finding 3: Once people become involved with the club, they stay with the club

The third finding relates to research question number two and how BGCBG can increase the level of engagement with the Bowling Green business community. Both qualitative and quantitative data reflect that once community members have an opportunity to engage with the club, they are more likely to continue their involvement and support. This point was first mentioned during the focus group when one participant stated, “It really just takes one time that we invite people in, and then they're hooked . . . [T]he magic happens when somebody steps through the door, and they can see it for themselves.” Confirmation of this sentiment was echoed throughout the focus group by both board and staff members and in survey responses.

One survey respondent stated, “When I first came into the organization, the guys were really good to me, helped me out a little bit so I'm gonna stay and help them out” in response to the question about why they volunteered at BGCBG. This response demonstrated a level of reciprocity that was seen in multiple qualitative survey responses.

Other survey responses referred to specific initiatives that anchored their engagement, moved them from volunteer to donor and imbued a level of trust in the organization’s ability to be a good steward of contributions of time, resources, and funds. One example is the following response: “I worked with them on the new teen center addition project and I was impressed with what I saw. I thought they would use the donation well.”

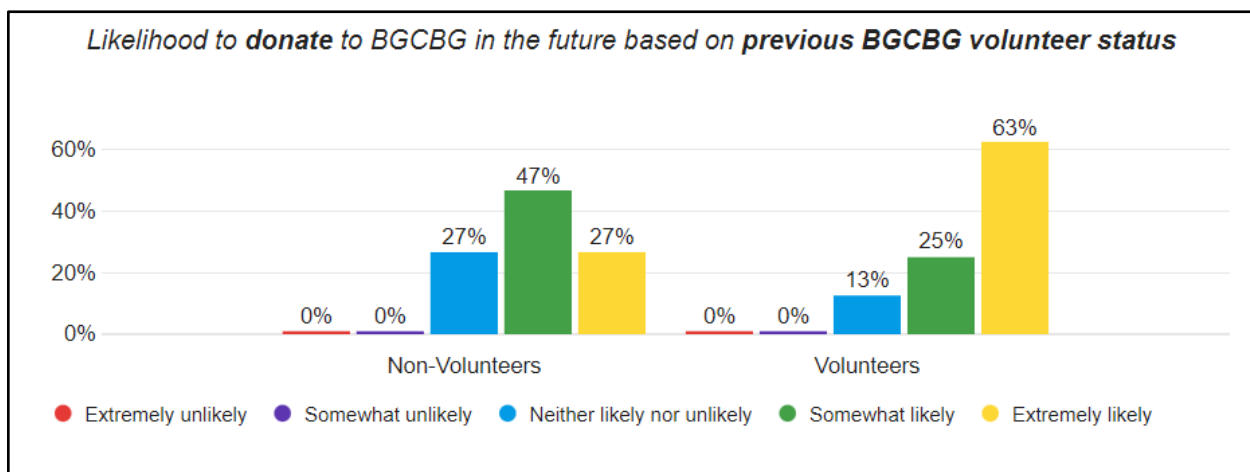
Lastly, some respondents indicated a more complex understanding of the club’s mission and how families are served that can only result from long-term engagement. In response to the

question, “Please tell us in your own words the services that Boys & Girls Club of Bowling Green provides to the community,” one respondent stated, “Boys and Girls Club provide a needed after hours recreational and educational support to an at-risk population. Very familiar with the organization for 20 years.”

Quantitative data also supports this finding. For example, an analysis of the likelihood of future donations by individuals compared to their BGCBG self-reported volunteer history showed that volunteers are much more likely to donate in the future than non-volunteers. The results below depict increased trust in the organization; as volunteers donate their time, they are more likely to donate financial resources.

Figure 7.

Likelihood to Donate to BGCBG Compared to Volunteer Status



As the figure above shows, 63% of volunteers state they are extremely likely to donate to BGCBG in the future, while only 27% of non-volunteers are extremely likely.

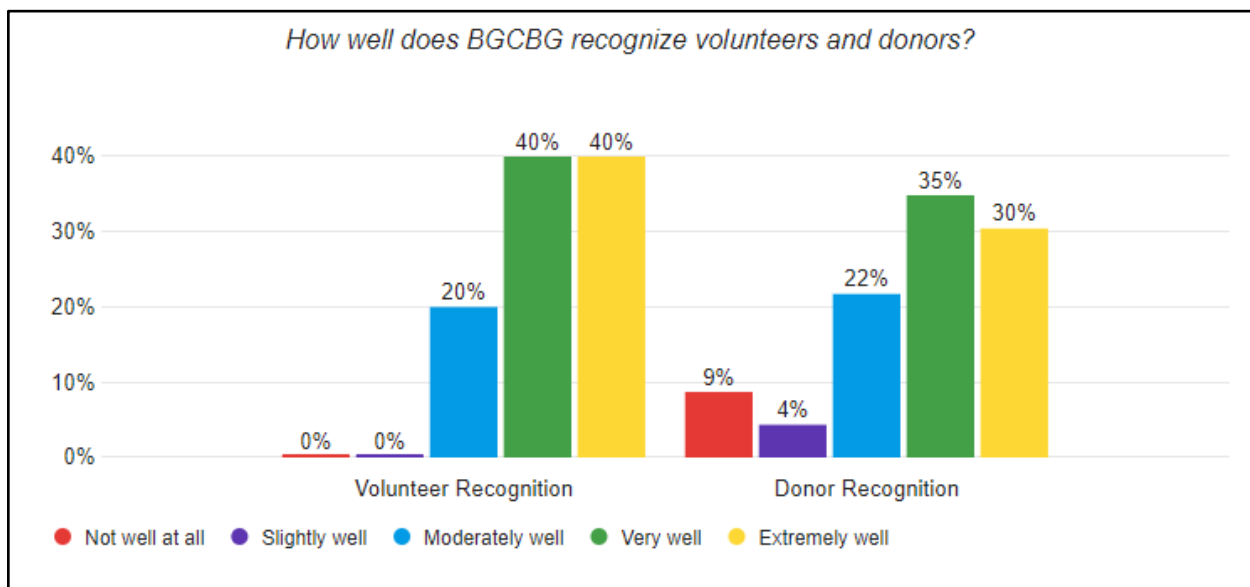
Qualitative and quantitative data show that once community members engage with the club, they seek to continue that engagement and expand upon it, moving from volunteer to donor to board member.

Finding 4: Donors feel less recognized for their contributions than volunteers do

The fourth finding also relates to research question number two, and the quantitative survey analysis showed an acknowledgment by BGCBG volunteers that the club recognizes their contributions well. In fact, 80% of respondents who had previously volunteered stated they were recognized very well or extremely well. On the other hand, only 65% of donor respondents stated the same thing. In fact, 9% of donors reported they did not feel recognized at all for their contributions. Therefore, the fourth finding identified is that BGCBG donors do not feel as recognized for their contribution to the club as BGCBG volunteers.

Figure 8.

Volunteer Recognition Compared to Donor Recognition



Finding 5: Champions need additional tools to spread information about the club

The fifth and final finding, also addressing research question two, involves how club leadership and board members can effectively tell their story to enhance perceptions of BGCBG within the Bowling Green community. When asked to share their thirty-second elevator speech describing the organization's mission and accomplishments, participants admitted they probably

do not give it as much attention as they should. This was a common theme throughout the focus group with statements such as

- “How can we get the word out about the club...”
- “We need to let people know...”
- “We have to highlight those successes.” and
- “We could definitely do more of our public horn tooting.”

These statements suggest that leadership is acutely aware of the club's important work but acknowledges that their good work is not highlighted within the community. Therefore, the researchers found that club champions require additional tools and strategies to better spread information about BGCBG and its achievements.

Recommendations

Once the five findings above were identified, the researchers worked to create actionable recommendations for BGCBG to consider, focusing on areas that could be realistically implemented given the club's current structure. Researchers aimed to develop SMART goals to ensure each recommendation is specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (Doran, 1981).

Recommendation 1: Consider adding an action section to the existing one-page club accomplishments shared at board meetings

The first recommendation helps support finding five, which revealed that champions need additional tools to spread the club's message. This recommendation is to consider modifying an existing document shared at monthly board meetings and adding a section detailing action items for board members to share with their sphere of influence. According to the book *Nine Habits of Project Leaders*, finishing every meeting with an action item list increases accountability and

creates a sense of ownership (Singhal & Bhatt, 2017). Many focus group participants expressed an interest in strengthening this area of expertise by requesting specific tools to help their efforts. The researchers acknowledge the importance of these resources to help stakeholders inform, celebrate, invite and champion its successes and upcoming projects. For example, the monthly action item could be as simple as sharing Facebook posts about annual events, telling three friends about new educational partnerships, or promoting other special projects. Following up during the next meeting regarding the previous month's focus will help increase board members' accountability. This follow-up will improve the TOMA status with potential stakeholders and community members as board members begin sharing news of the club more frequently. Additional support on how to share these talking points can be provided by the marketing/public relations staff member.

Recommendation 2: Consider restarting and restructuring meals with board members

Prior to COVID-19, BGCBG held breakfast and lunch events with community members who could hear firsthand club news and activities. Researchers learned how valuable these meals were given the opportunity to interface with members of the business community and share the mission and vision of BGCBG. Unfortunately, these events have not occurred in the past few years due to the global pandemic.

Now that the club is functioning at its pre-pandemic capacity, researchers recommend restarting these important community events for the board to highlight the club's programming, partnerships, and direct benefits to the community. Furthermore, to ensure consistency, accountability, and fairness, researchers recommend assigning each board member the responsibility of hosting one breakfast or lunch per year and inviting 10-12 business community members to their event. By dividing the work in this way and adding additional structure, board

members can feel empowered to independently host one meal each year for various members of their professional circles.

According to research, get-togethers hosted by board members can cultivate new supporters, provide an opportunity for personal connection, and create an environment where others can learn more about the organization and become increasingly engaged in the work (Polivy, 2013). Since data indicates people stay with the club once they become involved, the researchers recommend implementing these events in the short term to drum up excitement within the business community about the important work BGCBG is doing in Bowling Green. Given finding three, the researchers feel confident that the club can gain new, long-term community partners by getting potential stakeholders through the door and introducing them to the passionate board members.

Recommendation 3: Consider creating community events led by new BGCBG staff member

As previously discussed, a new staffing position was recently approved that will focus on resource development, marketing, and public relations. This role will enable BGCBG to network within the community and, ideally, bring new business partners. In alignment with finding three, researchers recommend hosting an event at BGCBG where business community members can visit the club, learn about programming and opportunities, and, most importantly, meet the youth to learn more about their needs.

An event BGCBG can consider hosting in the medium to long term is an annual “Just Desserts” auction where community members auction for desserts, which are then served by the boys and girls at the club. This event was recently held at the Boys and Girls Club of Muncie (BGCM) with great success. BGCM’s theme for their “Just Desserts” event was “Smart Girls”, which promotes health, self-esteem, and good decision-making for girls at the club (BGCM,

2020). By tying the “Just Desserts” auction to a specific program, community members gained in-depth knowledge of Smart Girls and greatly enjoyed interacting with the girls who directly benefit from this programming. There are other club specific events throughout the country that BGCBG could model after. One example is the Blue Door Gala hosted by the Boys and Girls Club of Indianapolis, which brings community members together to celebrate the Youth of the Year winners (Blue Door Gala, 2022). Another example is a Chocolate Fantasy event hosted by the Boys and Girls Club of Greater Redlands-Riverside, where the club hosts a chocolate tasting for community members, including entertainment and live and silent auctions (Boys and Girls Club of Greater Redlands-Riverside, 2022).

Similarly, the researchers recommend BGCBG’s new staff member host a “Just Desserts” or similar annual event that brings the community in and allows them to personally experience the club and witness its impact on their youth.

Recommendation 4: Consider adjusting automated donor ‘thank you’ email

The researchers aimed to understand the donor experience given that survey data showed donors feel less appreciated for their contributions than volunteers do. To understand how BGCBG demonstrates appreciation for its donors, these researchers made a small monetary donation to the club via the BGCBG website. Immediately upon making this contribution, researchers received a short automated message stating:

“Thank you very much for your donation. It is through the generosity of people like you that we are able to continue our work. Your support truly makes a difference! Our tax identification number for your tax purposes is: 61-0482972”

While there is technically nothing wrong with this messaging, the automated email seems brief and impersonal to the researchers, with no mention of how the donation will be utilized or

additional ways to become involved with the club. Therefore, the researchers suggest adjusting this automated message, so donors feel their contributions are meaningful and impactful.

As a short-term recommendation, the researchers suggest BGCBG adjust its donor ‘thank you’ messaging to be more personal and notable. For example, the club can consider using the below language:

Subject: We are so grateful for your support, [Name]!

Dear [Name],

Thank you very much for your donation of [Dollar Amount]! Through the generosity of people like you, we can continue our work of enabling all young people, especially those who need us most, to reach their full potential as productive, caring, and responsible citizens. Your support truly makes a difference! Because of your [Dollar Amount] donation, we will be able to support [Specific Program - i.e., Torch Club] for [Number] boys and girls. This program aims to [Program Goals].

Thank you once again for your generous contribution, and we hope you will consider other ways to get involved, including volunteering at the club and engaging in special projects. More information can be found here: <https://www.bgcbg.org/volunteer/>

With gratitude,

[Name, Title]

Please Note: Our tax identification number for your tax purposes is: 61-0482972

Including the donor’s name in the subject line and body of the email gives this messaging a personal touch and demonstrates the donor is recognized and appreciated (Koenig, 2020). By specifying to donors how their money will be used, individuals will feel more connected to the work and, therefore, more likely to contribute again (Koenig, 2020). Additionally, indicating the

unique programming and number of individuals impacted by their contribution enables the donor to feel directly connected to the club's impact and also allows them to learn more about the exciting programs occurring within the club. Ideally, this encourages donors to become further involved. Lastly, by giving donors opportunities to expand their support, individuals may volunteer with the club or support the organization in other ways (Koenig, 2020).

By making a monetary contribution, donors demonstrate their openness to a relationship with the organization (Koenig, 2020). BGCBG adjusting their 'thank you' email will allow donors to feel more appreciated and valued for their contribution, no matter how big or small, and encourage them to continue supporting the club.

Recommendation 5: Consider handwritten 'thank you' letters from board members

To further address the finding of donors feeling less appreciated for their contributions than volunteers, researchers suggest a medium to long-term recommendation of board members writing handwritten 'thank you' letters to donors. These researchers recommend that during the first five minutes of every board meeting, attendees each receive three donor names along with their donation amount, address, and stamped envelopes. Board members will then spend this short period writing letters to thank each donor for their contribution personally.

While these handwritten letters are not time-intensive, they have a sizable impact. According to research, something as small as a handwritten note can elicit positive feelings that play a lifelong role in the donor's experience with the nonprofit organization (Polivy, 2013). Ideally, this gesture of appreciation will demonstrate to donors that their contribution matters and propel them to continue donating to the club in the future.

Recommendation 6: Consider holding a training session for board members and staff to learn how to promote BGCBG

Our sixth and final recommendation, addressing the finding that board members would like additional tools, is medium-term in scope. The researchers suggest that BGCBG hold a training session for both board members and staff to learn how to promote BGCBG in the community better. This training session can potentially be facilitated by appropriate leadership or community members. This effort expands upon recommendation one in that they will be able to use the talking points provided in the monthly one-pager but will receive specific training on how to insert strategic talking points in their conversations with members of their sphere of influence. As part of this training, the marketing staff member may provide customized opportunities for participants to draft their narratives and practice their presentations. Special consideration should be devoted to how to share the work BGCBG is doing with marginalized groups, vulnerable populations, and broader audiences. This training will prepare board members in particular to share the narrative regarding their involvement with BGCBG during the breakfast or lunch event that we recommended earlier. Key club and meeting spaces may be used for the training sessions. Assisting board and staff members to refine and practice their narratives strategically will result in a higher level of community engagement by creating a mechanism for board members to invite volunteers, donors, and other experts to join these efforts. According to Amabile and Kramer, team leaders can help support team members to increase their fulfillment and satisfaction in this collective creative work (2011). Strategic partnership development in this area with internal, external local, and national members will strengthen narratives, community engagement opportunities, and understanding of best practices within the organizational structure.

These efforts of strengthening community engagement increase a sense of belongingness and accountability among stakeholders. Each participant develops their story while learning from others how they help the club with their time and resources. According to Ibarra in *Act Like a Leader, Think Like A Leader*, team leaders may engage the other participants by discovering their stories, core values, and community involvement (2015). As a long-term recommendation, to expand on this foundational training session, club leadership may also consider hosting nonprofit collaborative meetings, panel discussions, leadership trainings, and other mutually beneficial opportunities for internal and external community stakeholders and other club leaders within the national organization. These expanded events will increase cohesive organizational engagement, the exchange of ideas, and a higher level of awareness for the club's brand and community involvement. Information about further growth and strategic plans for other partners and national organizational members will invite innovation and resource sharing to promote long-term financial sustainability.

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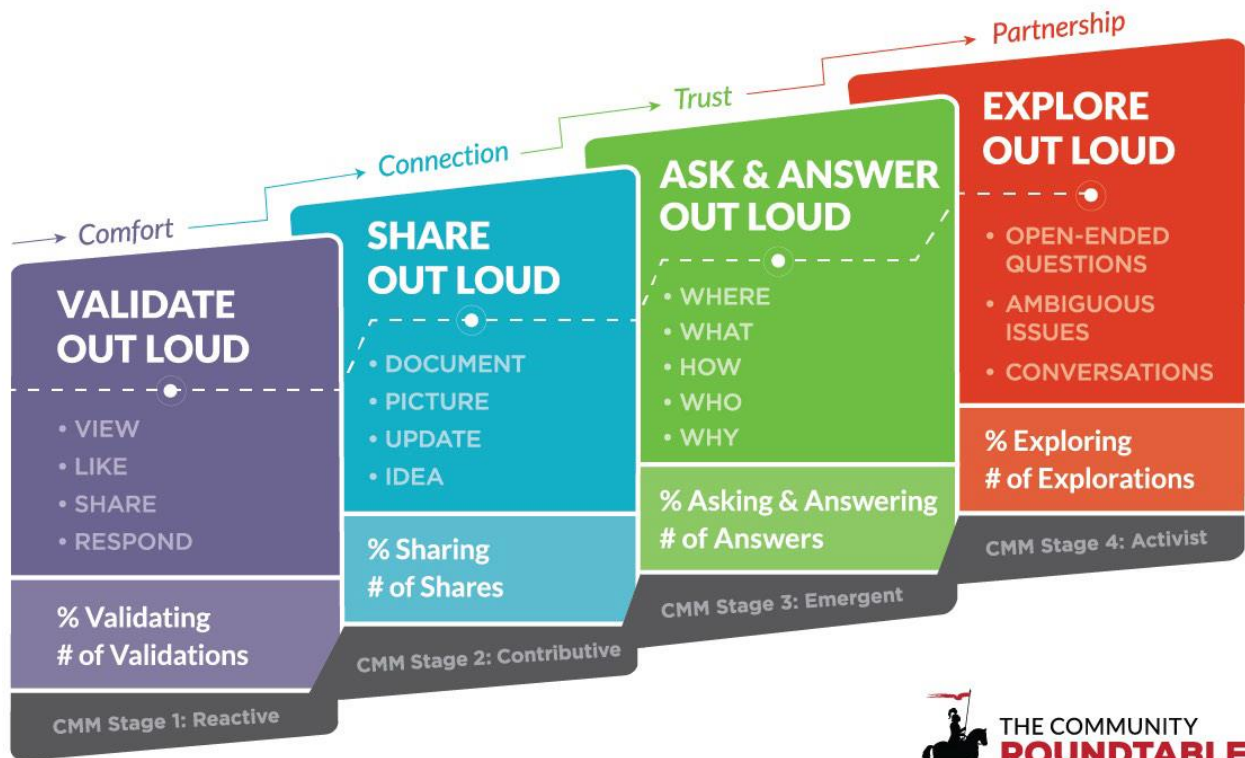
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Community Engagement Framework™



Appendix B: Survey Instrument

Bowling Green Community Engagement

Q1.1 This survey is part of a doctoral-level capstone, studying community engagement within the Bowling Green, Kentucky community, with a focus on one nonprofit organization. All information gathered through this survey will be used to identify the level of community engagement and provide recommendations for the nonprofit on how to increase engagement with a goal of diversified sustainability.

All responses to the survey will be kept confidential. No personally identifiable information will be reported back to the nonprofit unless you state at the end of the survey that you would like to hear about partnership opportunities. Additionally, your responses will be combined with those of many others and summarized in a report to further protect your anonymity.

Each respondent who completes the survey in its entirety will be registered to win one of three (3) \$20 Amazon gift cards. Winners will be notified by email once the survey is closed for responses.

Q1.2 What is your name?

Q1.3 What is your job title?

Q1.4 What organization do you work for?

Q1.5 How long have you worked in the Bowling Green, KY community?

- Less than 1 year
- 1-5 years
- 6-10 years
- 11-25 years
- 26 or more years

Q1.6 What is your email address?

Q2.1 When thinking of nonprofits in the Bowling Green area, what are the first three organizations that come to mind?

Q2.2 In the past 5 years, have you done any of the following with a Bowling Green nonprofit organization? (Check all that apply.)

- Volunteered
- Served on a Board of Directors
- Donated
- None of the above

Q2.3 Please list the nonprofits with which you have volunteered, served on a Board of Directors, and/or donated in the last 5 years.

Q3.1 Now that you have provided information regarding your general awareness and confidence with nonprofits in the community, it should be known that this study is focused on **Boys & Girls Club of Bowling Green**. For that purpose, **all questions throughout the remainder of the survey focus on the Boys & Girls Club of Bowling Green**.

Q3.2 Please respond to the following question.

	Not at all familiar	Not very familiar	Neither familiar nor unfamiliar	Somewhat familiar	Very familiar
How familiar are you with Boys & Girls Club of Bowling Green?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q3.3 Please describe in your own words the services that Boys & Girls Club of Bowling Green provides to the community.

Q3.4 To what extent do you agree with the following statement?

	Completely disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Completely agree
Boys & Girls Club of Bowling Green is a community asset.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q3.5 Generally speaking, how confident are you that Boys & Girls Club of Bowling Green . . .

	Not at all confident	Slightly confident	Moderately confident	Confident	Very confident
Effectively provides quality services on the public's behalf?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Spends money wisely?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q4.1 All questions in the next two sections of the survey are related to **YOUR PERSONAL EXPERIENCES** with Boys & Girls Club of Bowling Green. Please **DO NOT** include organizational commitments in your responses to the following questions.

Q4.2 Have **you** ever volunteered with Boys & Girls Club of Bowling Green?

Yes

No

Q4.3 Please respond to the following question.

	Extremely difficult	Somewhat difficult	Neither easy nor difficult	Somewhat easy	Extremely easy
How easy was the process of volunteering with Boys & Girls Club of Bowling Green?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q4.4 Please tell us in your own words why you chose to volunteer with Boys & Girls Club of Bowling Green.

Q4.5 Please respond to the following question.

	Not well at all	Slightly well	Moderately well	Very well	Extremely well
How well does Boys & Girls Club of Bowling Green recognize volunteers for their contributions?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q4.6 How likely are **you** to . . .

	Extremely unlikely	Somewhat unlikely	Neither likely nor unlikely	Somewhat likely	Extremely likely
Volunteer with Boys & Girls Club of Bowling Green in the future?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Recommend Boys & Girls Club of Bowling Green as a volunteer opportunity to a friend or colleague?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q5.1 Have **you** ever donated to Boys & Girls Club of Bowling Green?

Yes

No

Q5.2 Please respond to the following question.

	Extremely difficult	Somewhat difficult	Neither easy nor difficult	Somewhat easy	Extremely easy
How easy was it to donate to Boys & Girls Club of Bowling Green?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q5.3 Please tell us in your own words why you chose to donate to Boys & Girls Club of Bowling Green.

Q5.4 Please respond to the following question.

	Not well at all	Slightly well	Moderately well	Very well	Extremely well
How well does Boys & Girls Club of Bowling Green recognize donors for their contributions?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q5.5 Please respond to the following question.

	Extremely unlikely	Somewhat unlikely	Neither likely nor unlikely	Somewhat likely	Extremely likely
How likely are you to donate to Boys & Girls Club of Bowling Green in the future?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q6.1 All questions in this section of the survey are related to **YOUR ORGANIZATIONAL EXPERIENCES** with Boys & Girls Club of Bowling Green. Please **DO NOT** include personal commitments in your responses to the following questions.

Q6.2 In the past five (5) years, has **your organization** supported Boys & Girls Club of Bowling Green in any of the following ways?

- Volunteering at community events
- Sponsoring BGCBG programming
- Direct financial support
- In-kind support
- None of the above

Q6.3 Please respond to the following question.

	Extremely difficult	Somewhat difficult	Neither easy nor difficult	Somewhat easy	Extremely easy
How easy was it for your organization to provide support for Boys & Girls Club of Bowling Green?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q6.4 Please respond to the following question.

	Not well at all	Slightly well	Moderately well	Very well	Extremely well
How well did Boys & Girls Club of Bowling Green recognize your organization's contributions?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q6.5 Please respond to the following question.

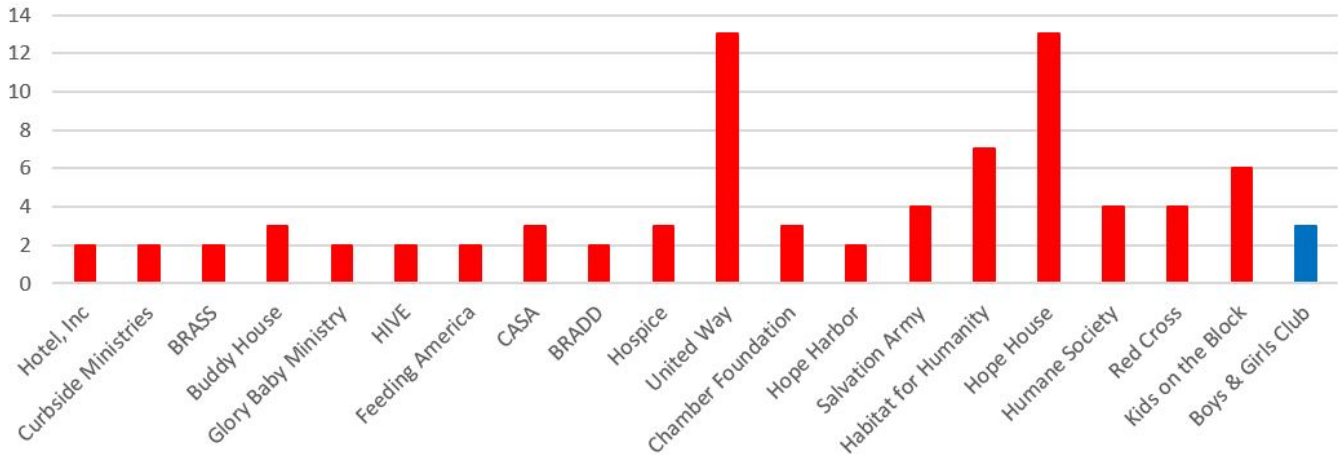
	Extremely unlikely	Somewhat unlikely	Neither likely nor unlikely	Somewhat likely	Extremely likely
How likely is your organization to support Boys & Girls Club of Bowling Green again?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q7.1 Would you like to hear about future Boys & Girls Club of Bowling Green partnership opportunities?

Yes

No

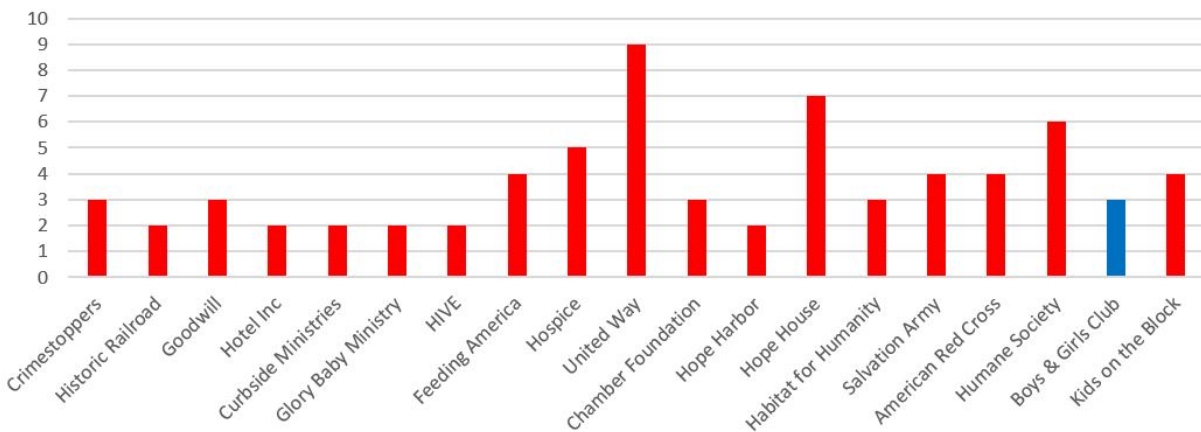
Q2.1_1 - When thinking of nonprofits in the Bowling Green area, what are the first three organizations that come to mind?



Interpretation:

This question was asked prior to announcing that the majority of the questions throughout the survey would pertain to the Boys & Girls Club of Bowling Green in order to assess top of mind awareness (TOMA) within the business community. Out of 82 mentions of NFPs in this question, only 3 were Boys & Girls Club, resulting in just a 3.7% rate of TOMA for the club.

Q2.3_1 - Please list the nonprofits with which you have volunteered, served on a Board of Directors, and/or donated in the last 5 years.



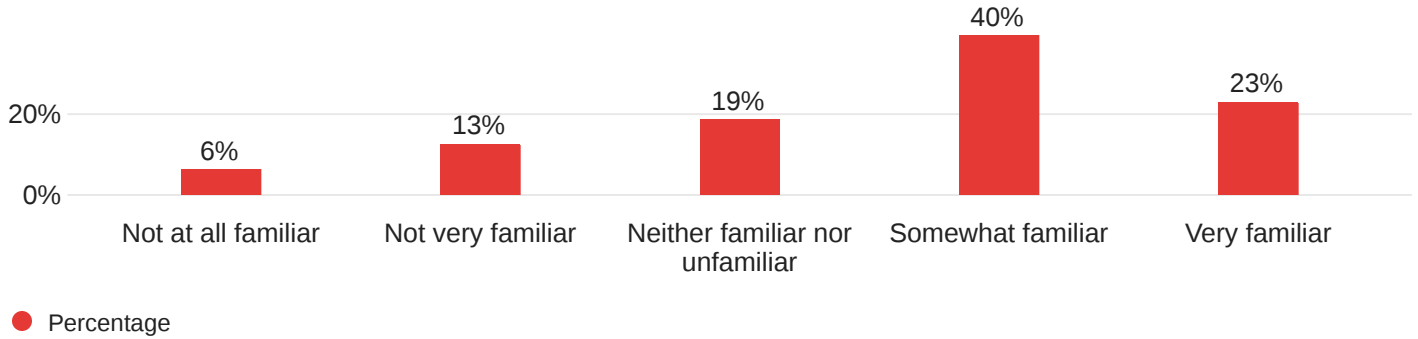
Interpretation:

This question was included to ascertain the engagement of the business community at the Boys & Girls Club of Bowling Green. There were 70 mentions of NFPs in this question, with three mentions of BGCBG, resulting in a 4.3% rate of engagement with the club.

Q3.2_1 - How familiar are you with Boys & Girls Club of Bowling Green?

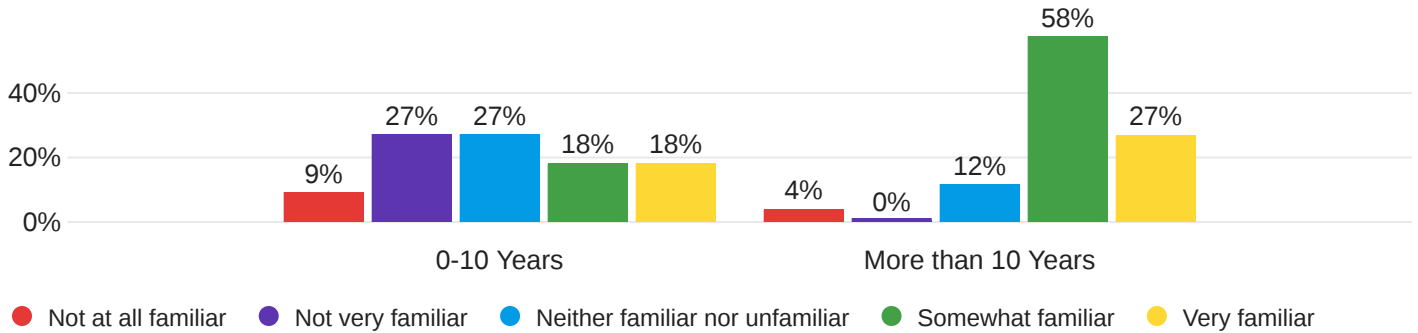
Field	Min	Max	Mean	Standard Deviation	Responses
How familiar are you with Boys & Girls Club of Bowling Green?	1.00	5.00	3.60	1.15	48

48 Responses



BGCBG familiarity compared to the length of time working in Bowling Green

Q3.2_1 - How familiar are you with Boys & Girls Club of Bowling Green?



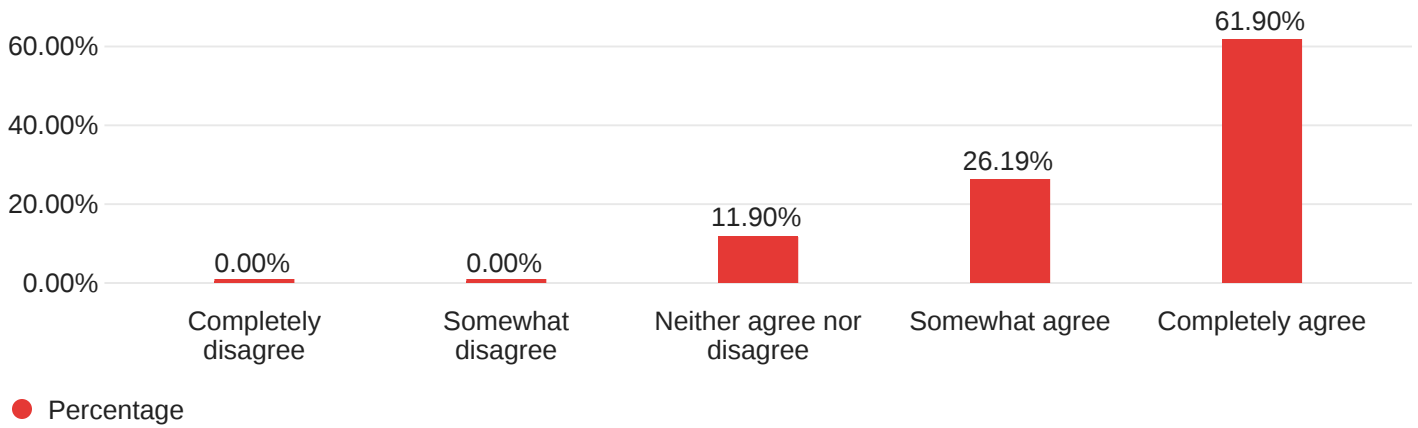
Field	Min	Max	Mean	Standard Deviation	Responses
0-10 Years	1.00	5.00	3.09	1.24	22
More than 10 Years	1.00	5.00	4.04	0.85	26

Interpretation:

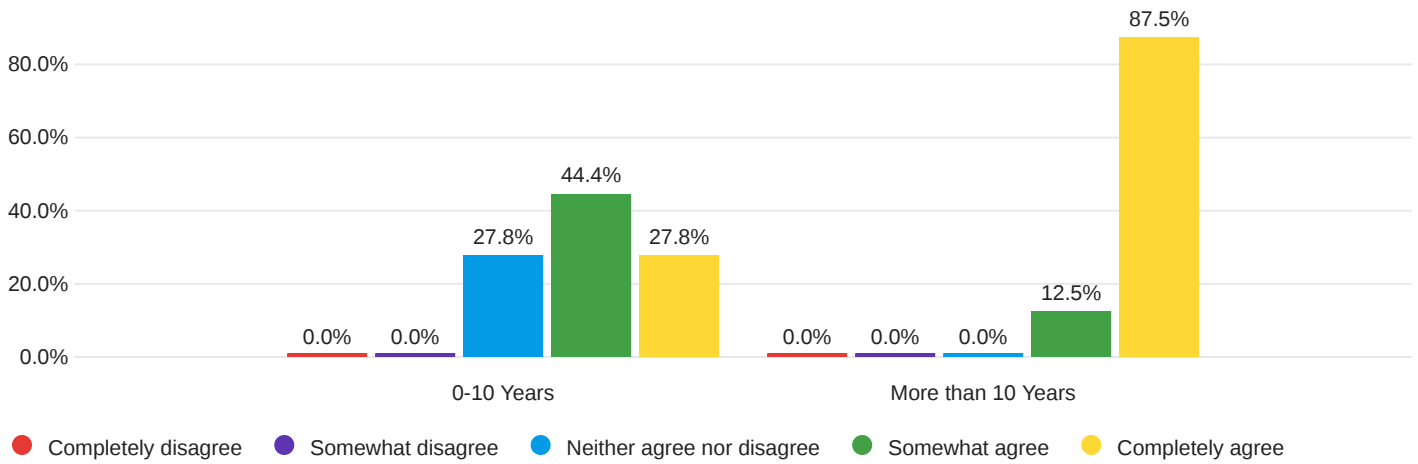
While previous questions showed a low rate of TOMA or engagement from the business community with BGCBG, this question indicated that nearly two-thirds of respondents perceived that they were somewhat familiar or very familiar with the club. To better understand this population, we analyzed the question compared to the length of time respondents have worked in Bowling Green. This analysis shows that the longer respondents have worked in the community, the more familiar they are with BGCBG.

Q3.4_1 - Boys & Girls Club of Bowling Green is a community asset.

Field	Min	Max	Mean	Standard Deviation	Responses
Boys & Girls Club of Bowling Green is a community asset.	3.00	5.00	4.50	0.70	42



Perception of BGCBG as a **community asset** compared to length of time working in community



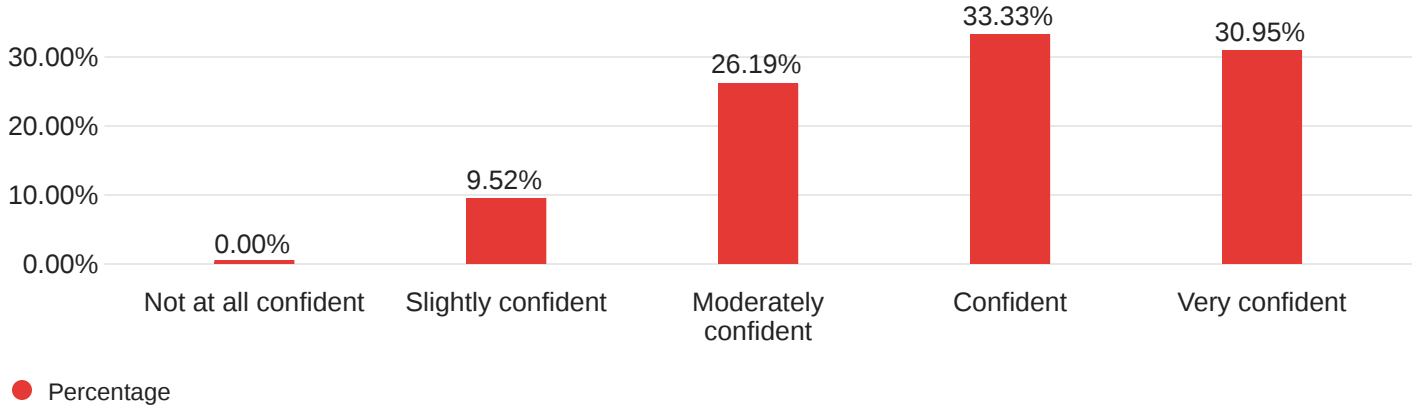
Field	Min	Max	Mean	Standard Deviation	Responses
0-10 Years	3.00	5.00	4.00	0.75	18
More than 10 Years	4.00	5.00	4.88	0.33	24

Interpretation:

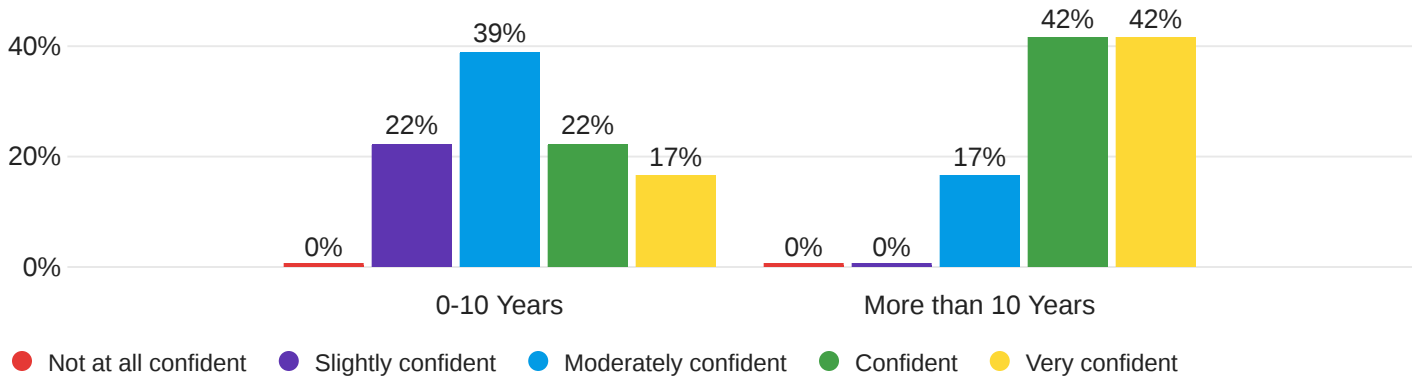
This question shows that in general, the community believes that BGCBG is an asset to the community. Further analysis shows that the longer an individual works in Bowling Green, the more they see the club as a community asset.

Q3.5_1 - Effectively provides quality services on the public's behalf?

Field	Min	Max	Mean	Standard Deviation	Responses
Effectively provides quality services on the public's behalf?	2.00	5.00	3.86	0.97	42



Perception that BGCBG provides **quality services** compared to length of time working in community



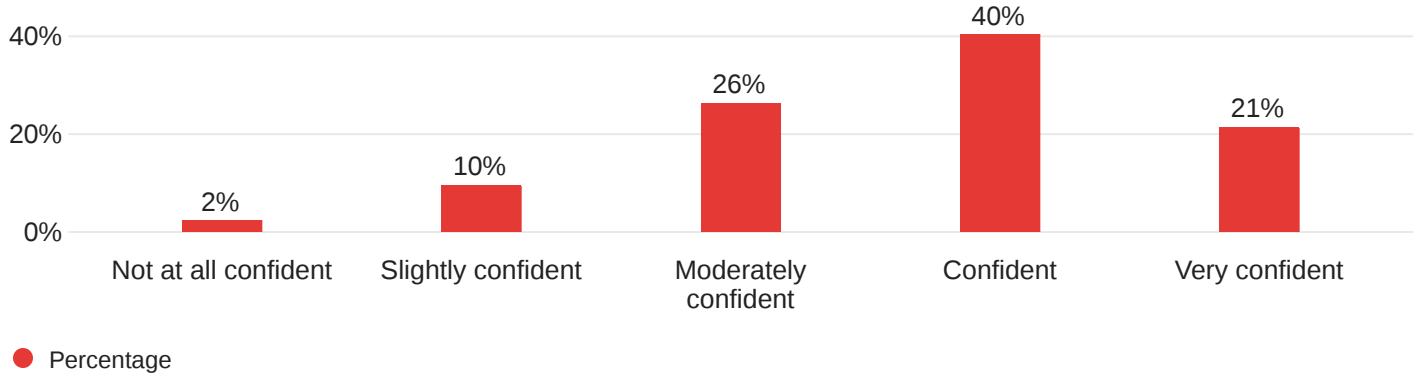
Field	Min	Max	Mean	Standard Deviation	Responses
0-10 Years	2.00	5.00	3.33	1.00	18
More than 10 Years	3.00	5.00	4.25	0.72	24

Interpretation:

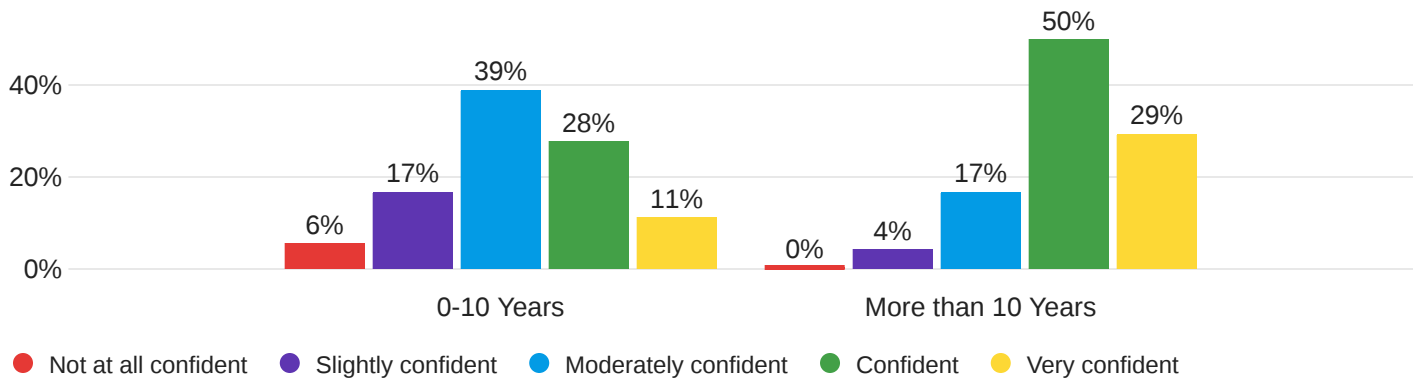
More than 90% of respondents stated that they are moderately confident, confident, or very confident that BGCBG provides quality services to the community. Comparing this to the length of time working in Bowling Green, the level of confidence increases. In fact, the only respondents who were slightly confident about the quality of services reported working in Bowling Green for five years or less. There were no respondents that reported having no confidence in the quality of services provided.

Q3.5_2 - Spends money wisely?

Field	Min	Max	Mean	Standard Deviation	Responses
Spends money wisely?	1.00	5.00	3.69	0.99	42



Perception that BGCBG spends money wisely compared to length of time working in community



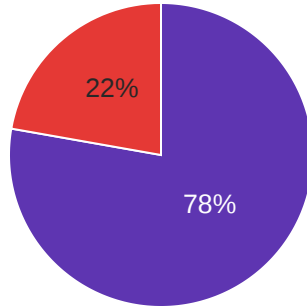
Field	Min	Max	Mean	Standard Deviation	Responses
0-10 Years	2.00	5.00	3.33	1.00	18
More than 10 Years	3.00	5.00	4.25	0.72	24

Interpretation:

A total of 88% of respondents stated that they are moderately confident, confident, or very confident that BGCBG spends money wisely. Comparing this to the length of time working in Bowling Green, the level of confidence increases. In fact, only one respondent who was slightly confident about the use of funds reported working in Bowling Green for more than five years.

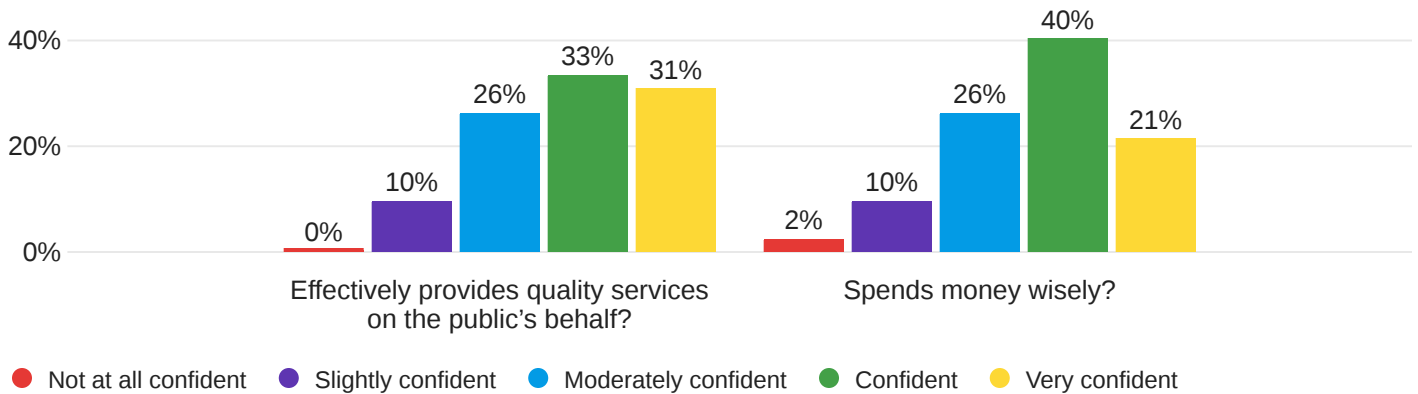
Q4.2 - Have you ever volunteered with Boys & Girls Club of Bowling Green?

Field	Min	Max	Mean	Standard Deviation	Responses
Have you ever volunteered with Boys & Girls Club of Bowling Green?	1.00	2.00	1.78	0.42	45



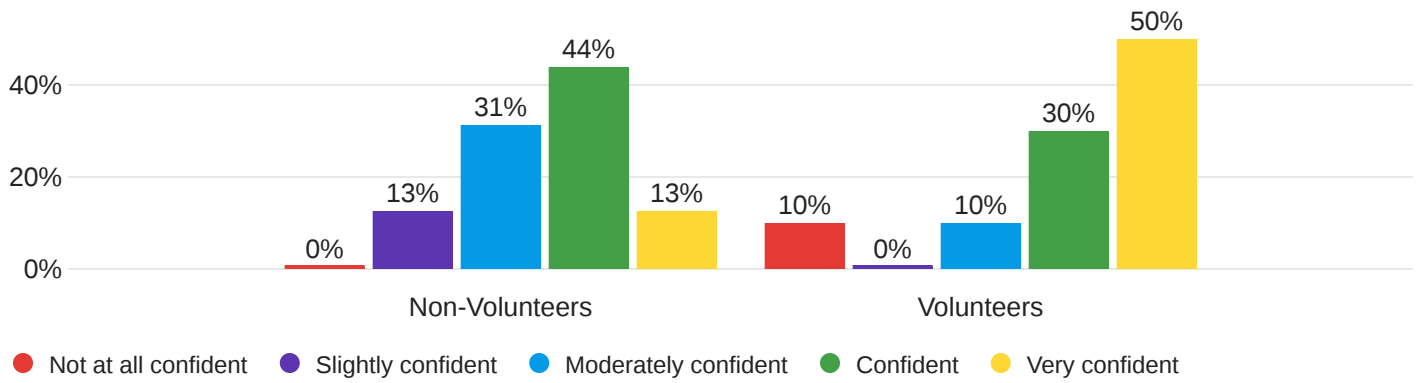
● No ● Yes

Likelihood to view BGCBG as providing quality services based on BGCBG volunteer status.



Field	Min	Max	Mean	Standard Deviation	Responses
Not at all confident	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Slightly confident	1.00	2.00	1.75	0.43	4
Moderately confident	1.00	2.00	1.82	0.39	11
Confident	1.00	2.00	1.86	0.35	14
Very confident	1.00	2.00	1.62	0.49	13

Likelihood to view BGCBG as **spending money wisely** based on BGCBG volunteer status.⁷⁴



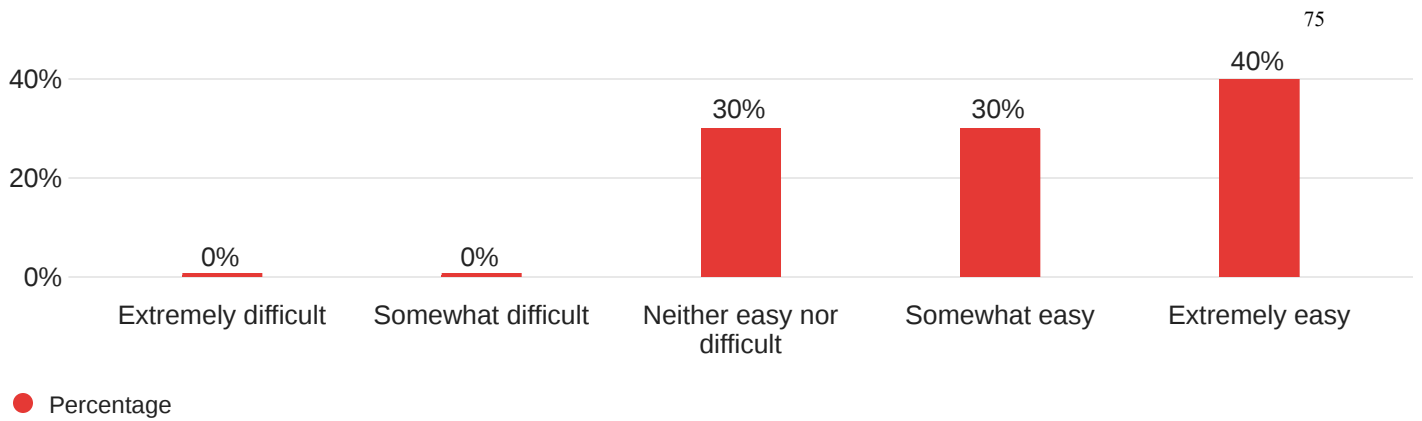
Field	Min	Max	Mean	Standard Deviation	Responses
Not at all confident	1.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	1
Slightly confident	2.00	2.00	2.00	0.00	4
Moderately confident	1.00	2.00	1.91	0.29	11
Confident	1.00	2.00	1.82	0.38	17
Very confident	1.00	2.00	1.44	0.50	9

Interpretation:

Nearly a quarter of respondents stated that they had previously volunteered with BGCBG. When compared to BGCBG volunteer status, we see that those who have volunteered with the organization are also more likely to see the club as providing quality services to the community. Similarly, respondents were more likely to be very confident that the club spends money wisely if they had previously volunteered at BGCBG, although the only respondents who were not at all confident that the club spends money wisely also reported having volunteered at BGCBG.

Q4.3_1 - How easy was the process of volunteering with Boys & Girls Club of Bowling Green?

Field	Min	Max	Mean	Standard Deviation	Responses
How easy was the process of volunteering with Boys & Girls Club of Bowling Green?	3.00	5.00	4.10	0.83	10

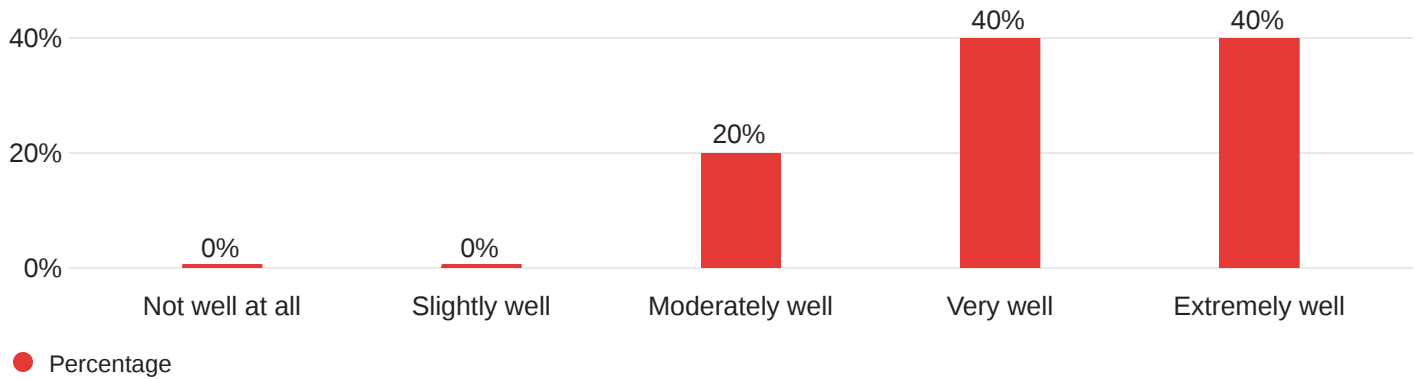


Interpretation:

No respondents who have previously volunteered at BGCBG stated that the process to volunteer was difficult.

Q4.5_1 - How well does Boys & Girls Club of Bowling Green recognize volunteers for their contributions?

Field	Min	Max	Mean	Standard Deviation	Responses
How well does Boys & Girls Club of Bowling Green recognize volunteers for their contributions?	3.00	5.00	4.20	0.75	10



Interpretation:

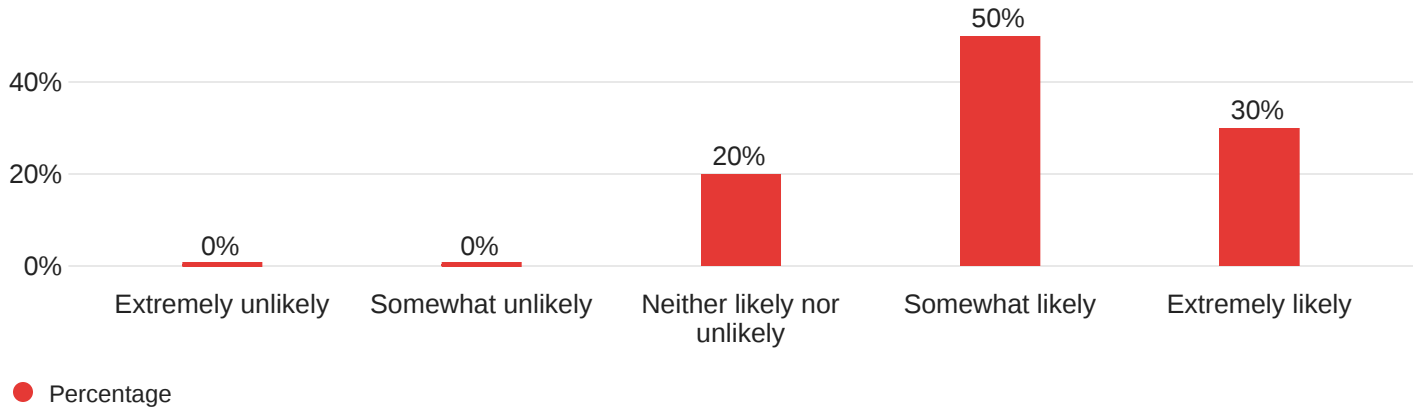
More than 80% of respondents with BGCBG volunteer experience stated that BGCBG recognizes their volunteers very well or extremely well.

Q4.6_1 - Volunteer with Boys & Girls Club of Bowling Green in the future?

Field	Min	Max	Mean	Standard Deviation	Responses
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Volunteer with Boys & Girls Club of Bowling Green in the future?

3.00 5.00 4.10 0.70 10

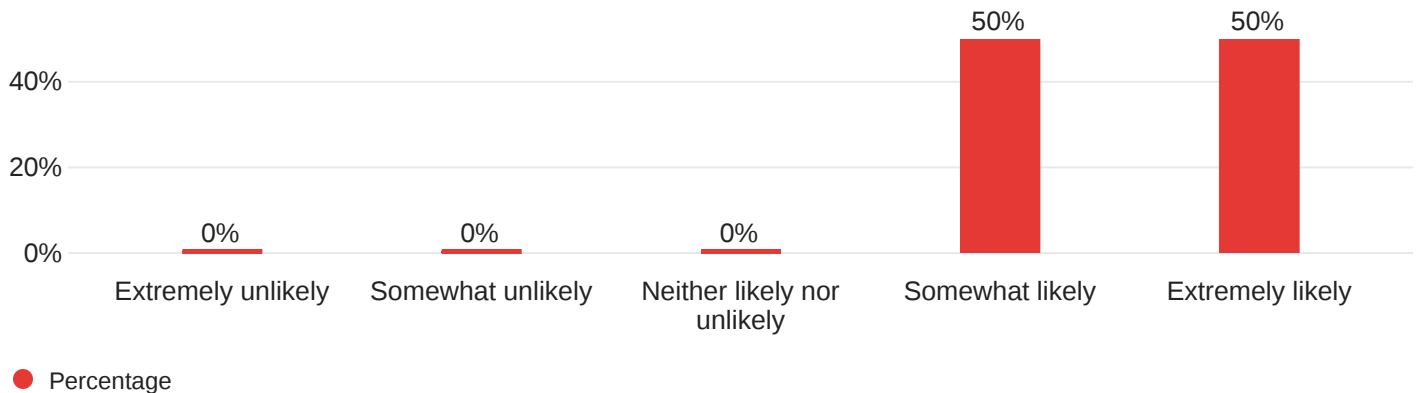


Interpretation:

No respondents with previous BGCBG volunteer experience state that they are unlikely to volunteer in the future.

Q4.6_2 - Recommend Boys & Girls Club of Bowling Green as a volunteer opportunity to a friend or colleague?

Field	Min	Max	Mean	Standard Deviation	Responses
Recommend Boys & Girls Club of Bowling Green as a volunteer opportunity to a friend or colleague?	4.00	5.00	4.50	0.50	10

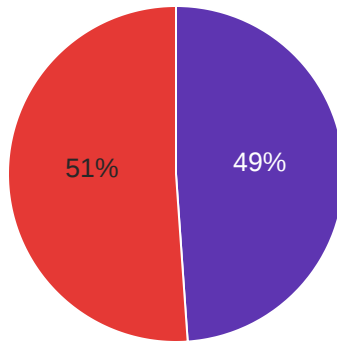


Interpretation:

All respondents with previous BGCBG experience stated they would be somewhat or extremely likely to recommend BGCBG as a volunteer opportunity to friends and family.

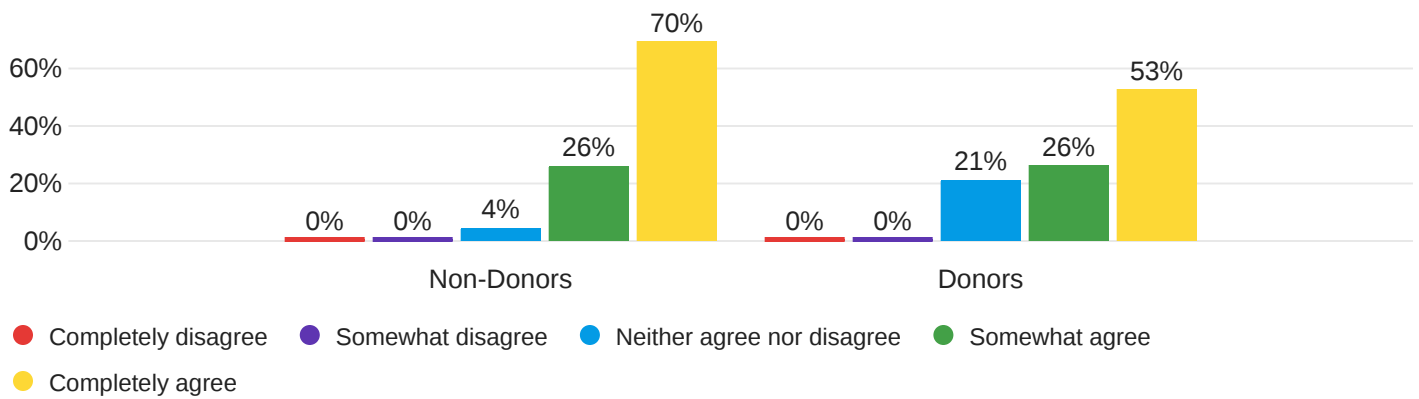
Q5.1 - Have you ever donated to Boys & Girls Club of Bowling Green?

Field	Min	Max	Mean	Standard Deviation	Responses
Have you ever donated to Boys & Girls Club of Bowling Green?	1.00	2.00	1.49	0.50	45



● No ● Yes

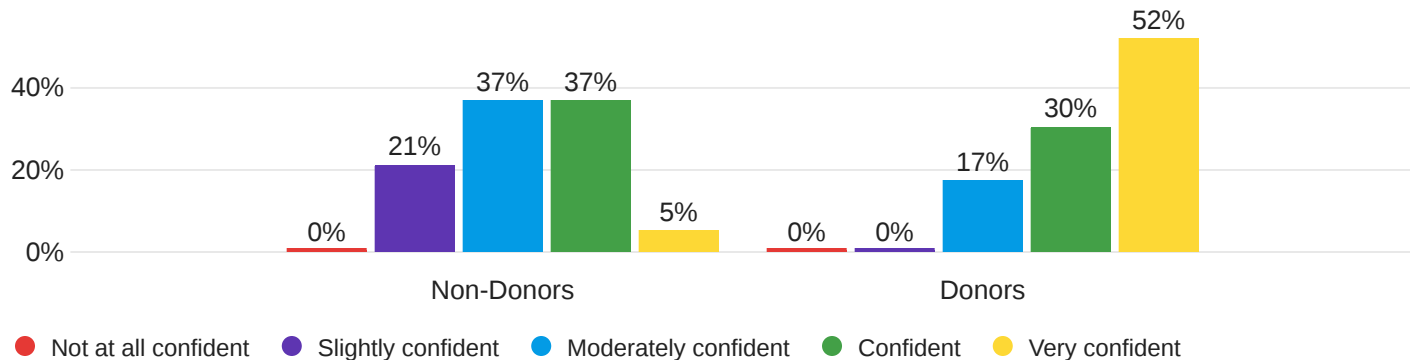
*Likelihood of BGCBG donors to view BGCBG as a **community asset***



Field	Min	Max	Mean	Standard Deviation	Responses
Completely disagree	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Somewhat disagree	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Neither agree nor disagree	1.00	2.00	1.80	0.40	5

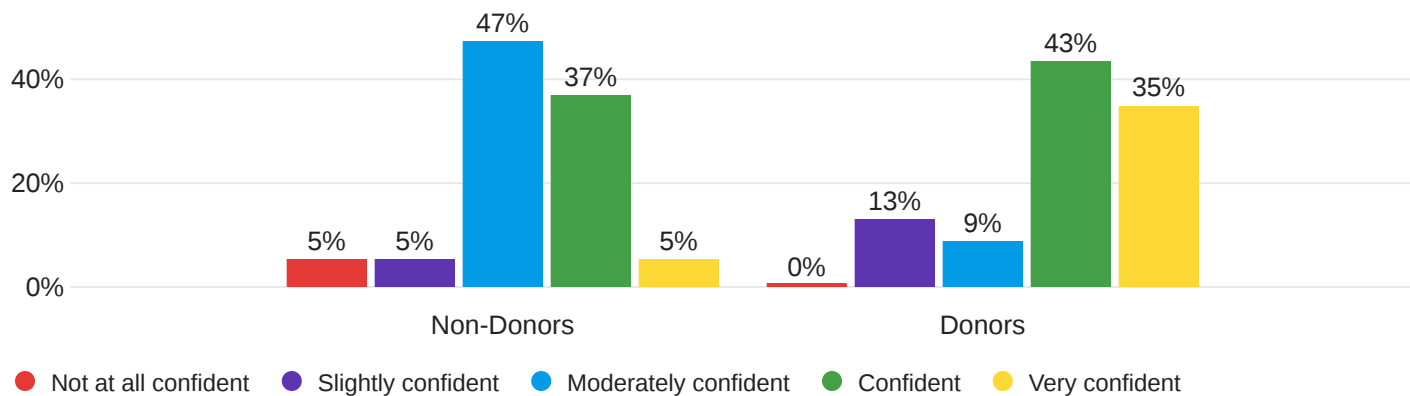
Somewhat agree	1.00	2.00	1.45	0.50	11
Completely agree	1.00	2.00	1.38	0.49	26

Likelihood of BGCBG donors to view BGCBG as providing quality services



Field	Min	Max	Mean	Standard Deviation	Responses
Not at all confident	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Slightly confident	2.00	2.00	2.00	0.00	4
Moderately confident	1.00	2.00	1.64	0.48	11
Confident	1.00	2.00	1.50	0.50	14
Very confident	1.00	2.00	1.08	0.27	13

Likelihood of BGCBG donors to view BGCBG as spending money wisely



Field	Min	Max	Mean	Standard Deviation	Responses
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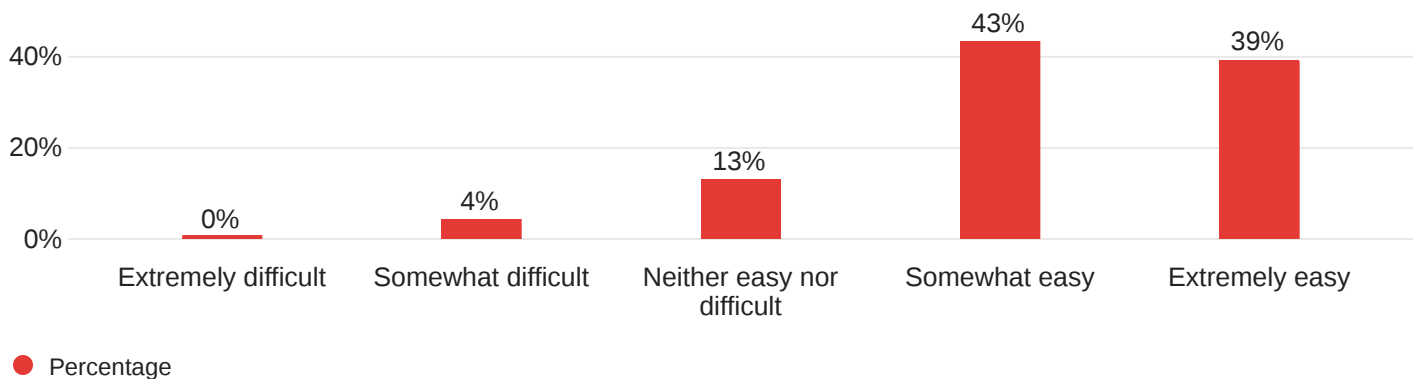
Not at all confident	2.00	2.00	2.00	0.00	1
Slightly confident	1.00	2.00	1.25	0.43	4
Moderately confident	1.00	2.00	1.82	0.39	11
Confident	1.00	2.00	1.41	0.49	17
Very confident	1.00	2.00	1.11	0.31	9

Interpretation:

More than 51% of respondents stated they had previously donated to BGCBG. Further analysis shows that respondents working in the community for 26 years or longer are the most likely to have donated, with those working 1-5 years in Bowling Green being the second most likely group to donate. Past donors also responded with more confidence that BGCBG is a community asset, provides high-quality services, and spends money wisely, showing that those who provide monetary donations to the organization also have a higher rate of trust in the organization.

Q5.2_1 - How easy was it to donate to Boys & Girls Club of Bowling Green?

Field	Min	Max	Mean	Standard Deviation	Responses
How easy was it to donate to Boys & Girls Club of Bowling Green?	2.00	5.00	4.17	0.82	23

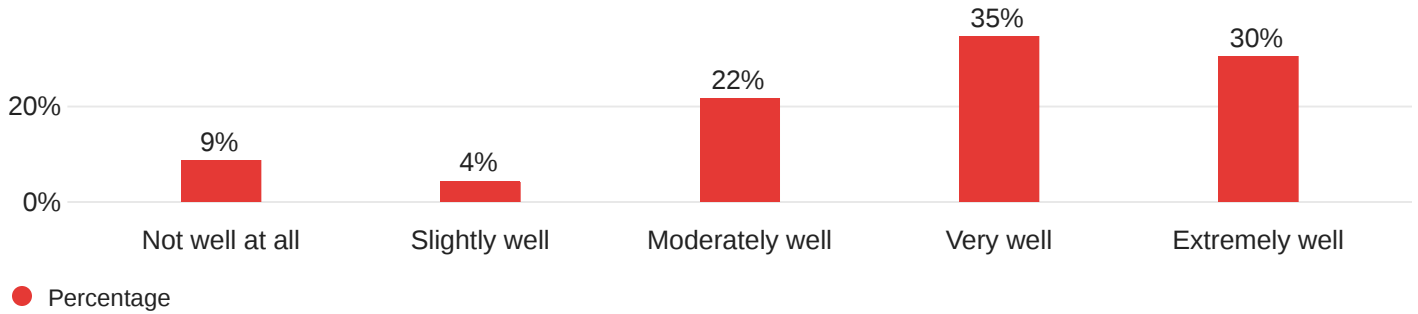


Interpretation:

82% of respondents who had previously donated stated that the donation process was somewhat or extremely easy.

Q5.4_1 - How well does Boys & Girls Club of Bowling Green recognize donors for their contributions?

Field	Min	Max	Mean	Standard Deviation	Responses
How well does Boys & Girls Club of Bowling Green recognize donors for their contributions?	1.00	5.00	3.74	1.19	23

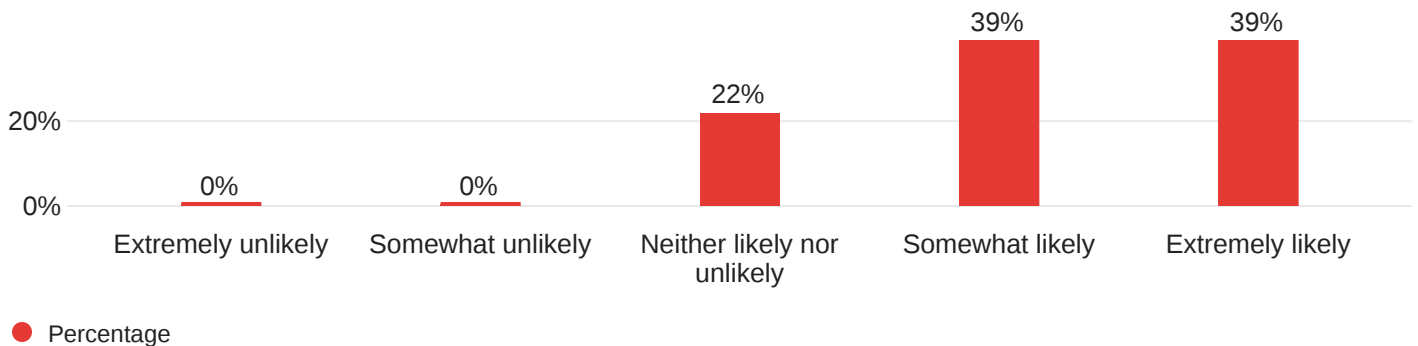


Interpretation:

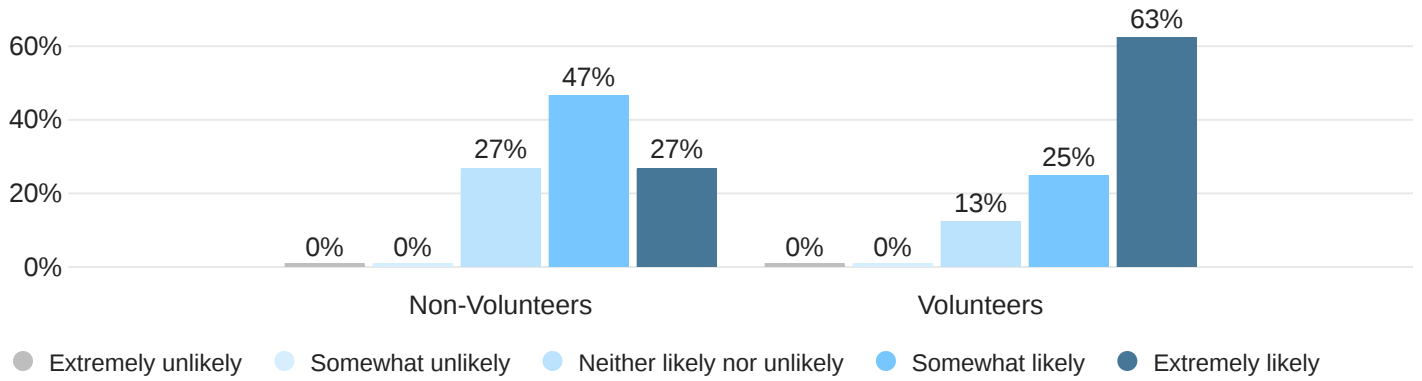
Nearly two-thirds of the respondents with previous BGCBG donation experience stated that the club recognizes their donors very well or extremely well. This rate is lower than the rate of recognition for volunteers, so there might be an opportunity for the club to increase their efforts to recognize donors.

Q5.5_1 - How likely are you to donate to Boys & Girls Club of Bowling Green in the future?

Field	Min	Max	Mean	Standard Deviation	Responses
How likely are you to donate to Boys & Girls Club of Bowling Green in the future?	3.00	5.00	4.17	0.76	23

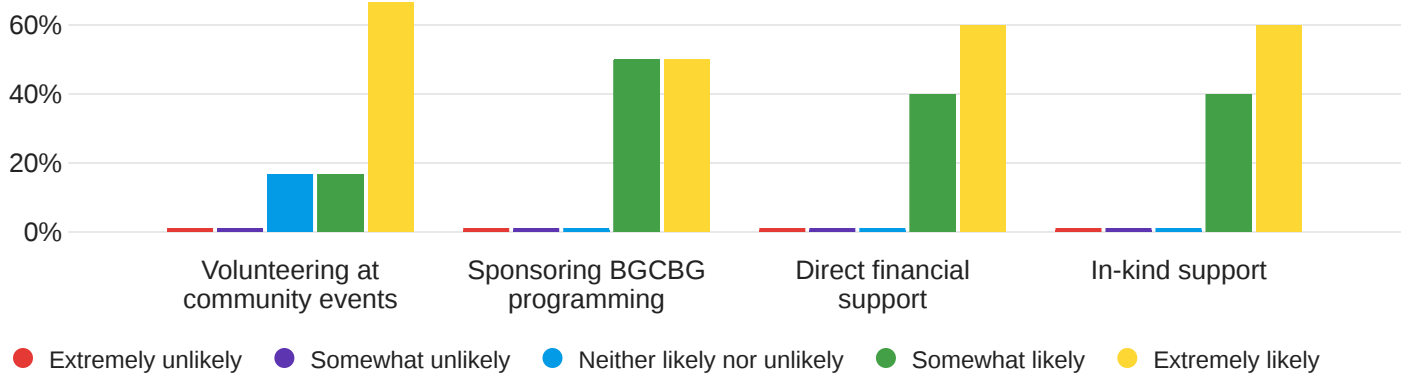


Likelihood to **donate** to BGCBG in the future based on **previous BGCBG volunteer status**



Field	Min	Max	Mean	Standard Deviation	Responses
Non-Volunteers	3.00	5.00	4.00	0.73	15
Volunteers	3.00	5.00	4.50	0.71	8

Likelihood to **donate** to BGCBG in the future based on **previous organizational support type**



Field	Min	Max	Mean	Standard Deviation	Responses
Volunteering at community events	3.00	5.00	4.50	0.76	6
Sponsoring BGCBG programming	4.00	5.00	4.50	0.50	4
Direct financial support	4.00	5.00	4.60	0.49	5
In-kind support	4.00	5.00	4.60	0.49	5

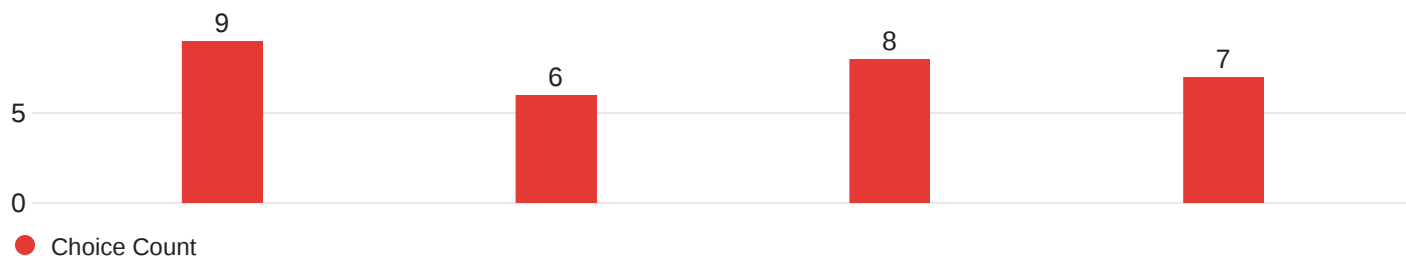
Interpretation:

More than three-quarters of respondents with previous BGCBG donation experience stated that they would be somewhat or extremely likely to donate again in the future. The donor population was further analyzed compared to those who had volunteered. More than 60% of respondents who had donated and volunteered at BGCG stated that were extremely likely to donate again, while approximately 25% of donors who had not volunteered at the club stated they were extremely likely to donate again. This shows that community members who volunteer with the club are more invested in the club and are therefore more likely to contribute financially.

Q6.2 - In the past five (5) years, has your organization supported Boys & Girls Club of Bowling Green in any of the following ways?

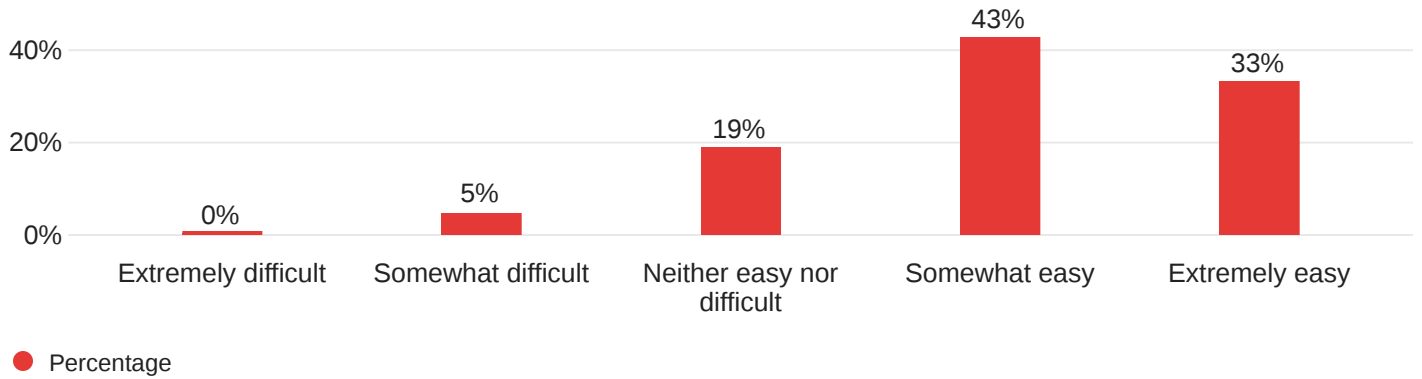
Field	Choice Count
Volunteering at community events	9
Sponsoring BGCBG programming	6
Direct financial support	8
In-kind support	7

Q6.2 - In the past five (5) years, has your organization supported Boys & Girls Club of Bowling Green in any of the following ways?



Q6.3_1 - How easy was it for your organization to provide support for Boys & Girls Club of Bowling Green?

Field	Min	Max	Mean	Standard Deviation	Responses
How easy was it for your organization to provide support for Boys & Girls Club of Bowling Green?	2.00	5.00	4.05	0.84	21

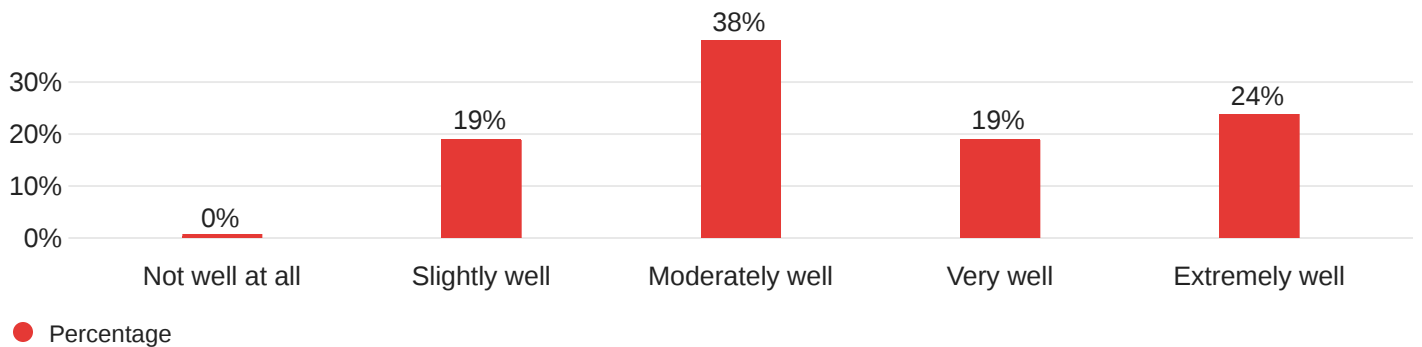


Interpretation:

More than three-quarters of the respondents whose organization's have supported BGCBG reported that it was somewhat easy or extremely easy to provide support.

Q6.4_1 - How well did Boys & Girls Club of Bowling Green recognize your organization's contributions?

Field	Min	Max	Mean	Standard Deviation	Responses
How well did Boys & Girls Club of Bowling Green recognize your organization's contributions?	2.00	5.00	3.48	1.05	21

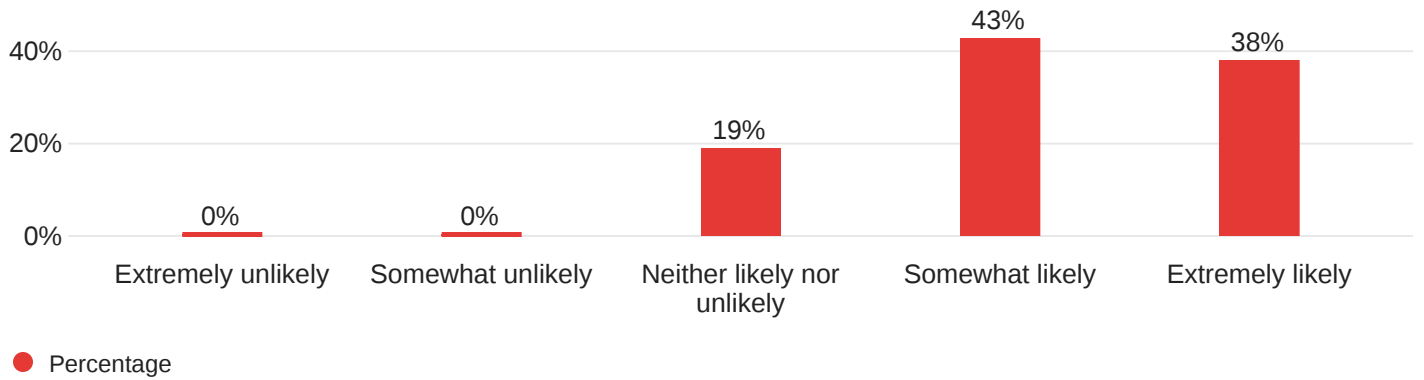


Interpretation:

Unlike individual volunteers and donors, respondents whose organizations have supported BGCBG did not overwhelmingly respond that the club recognized the support very or extremely well. The most common response was moderately well, indicating that additional recognition of organizational support would be well received among the community.

Q6.5_1 - How likely is your organization to support Boys & Girls Club of Bowling Green again?

Field	Min	Max	Mean	Standard Deviation	Responses
How likely is your organization to support Boys & Girls Club of Bowling Green again?	3.00	5.00	4.19	0.73	21



Interpretation:

More than 80% of respondents stated that their organization would be somewhat or extremely likely to provide support to BGCBG in the future.