

“What’s Under Your Mattress”:
Sales associates’ views of
consumer understanding

High Point University
in collaboration with
Specialty Sleep Association



Purpose

The mattress industry is increasingly aware of the importance of a support system under the mattress to its performance. But is the consumer?

This survey assessed sales associates impressions of the consumer's knowledge and interest in bed support systems, to better inform the industry and promote satisfied customers.

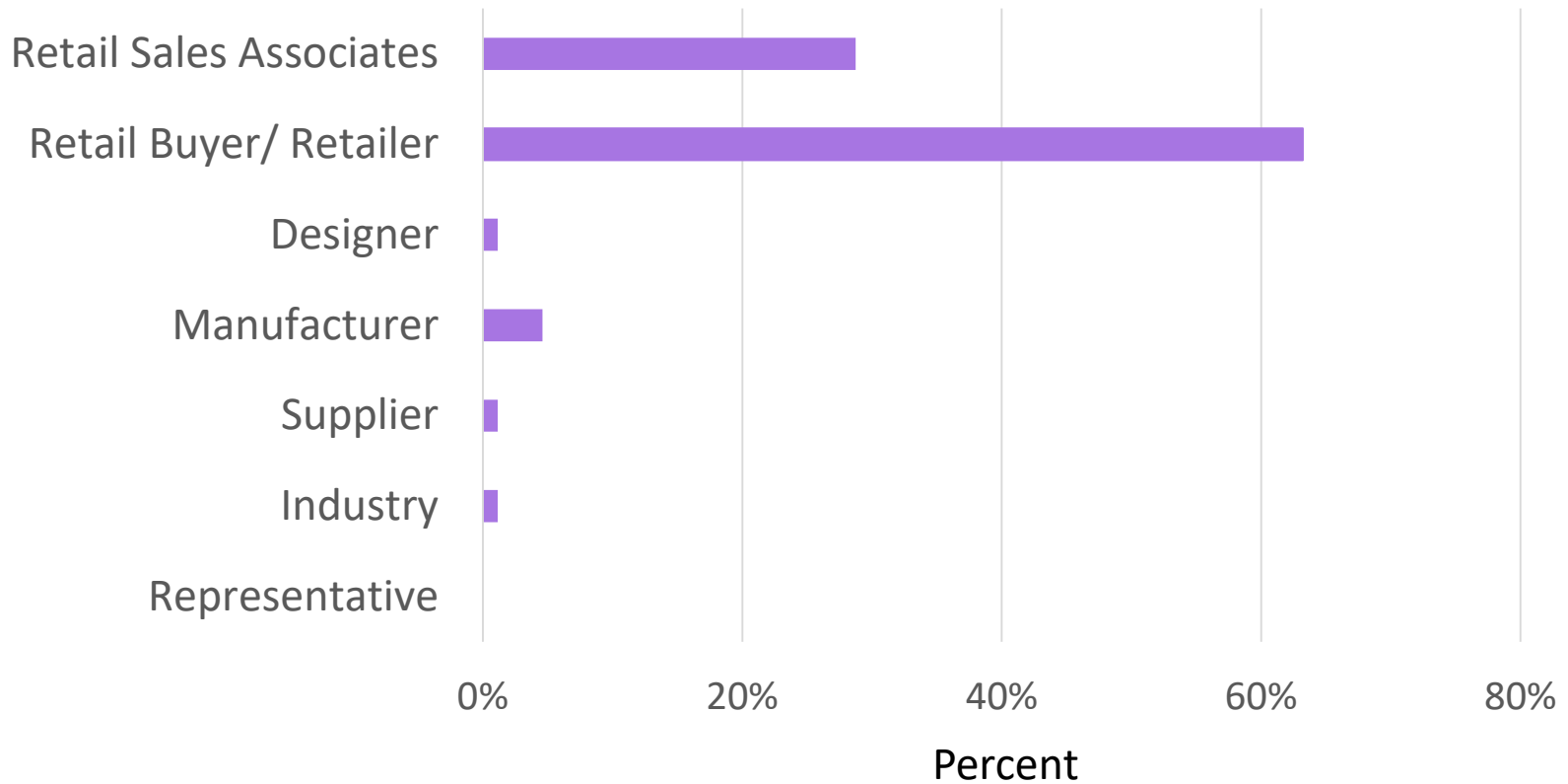


Method

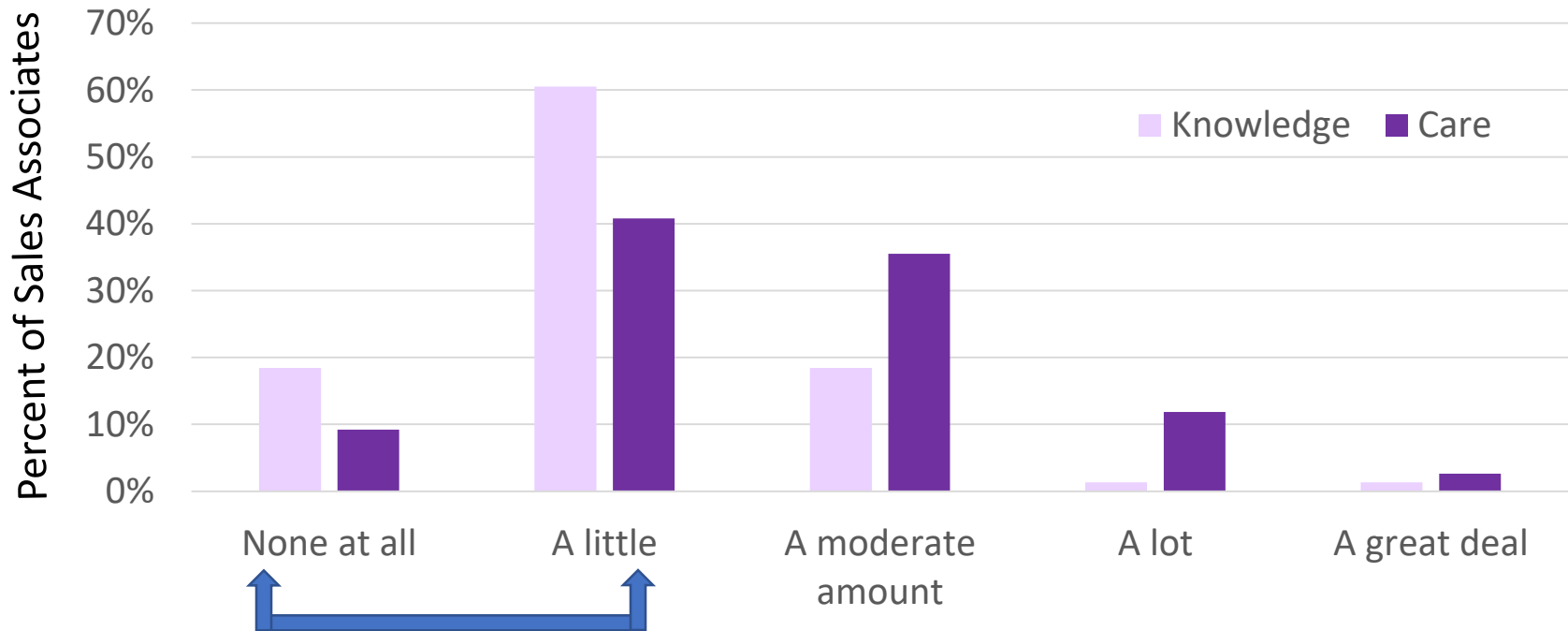
- An online survey was created by High Point University using questions submitted and vetted by members of SSA
- The survey had 17 questions
- Email addresses were provided by SSA and the survey was distributed to 3,236 emails on April 19th, 2018, with reminders on June 6th and July 16th
 - 431 emails were returned undelivered
 - 111 responses were received (of which 60 were completed fully)



92% of Survey Respondents were Sales Associates



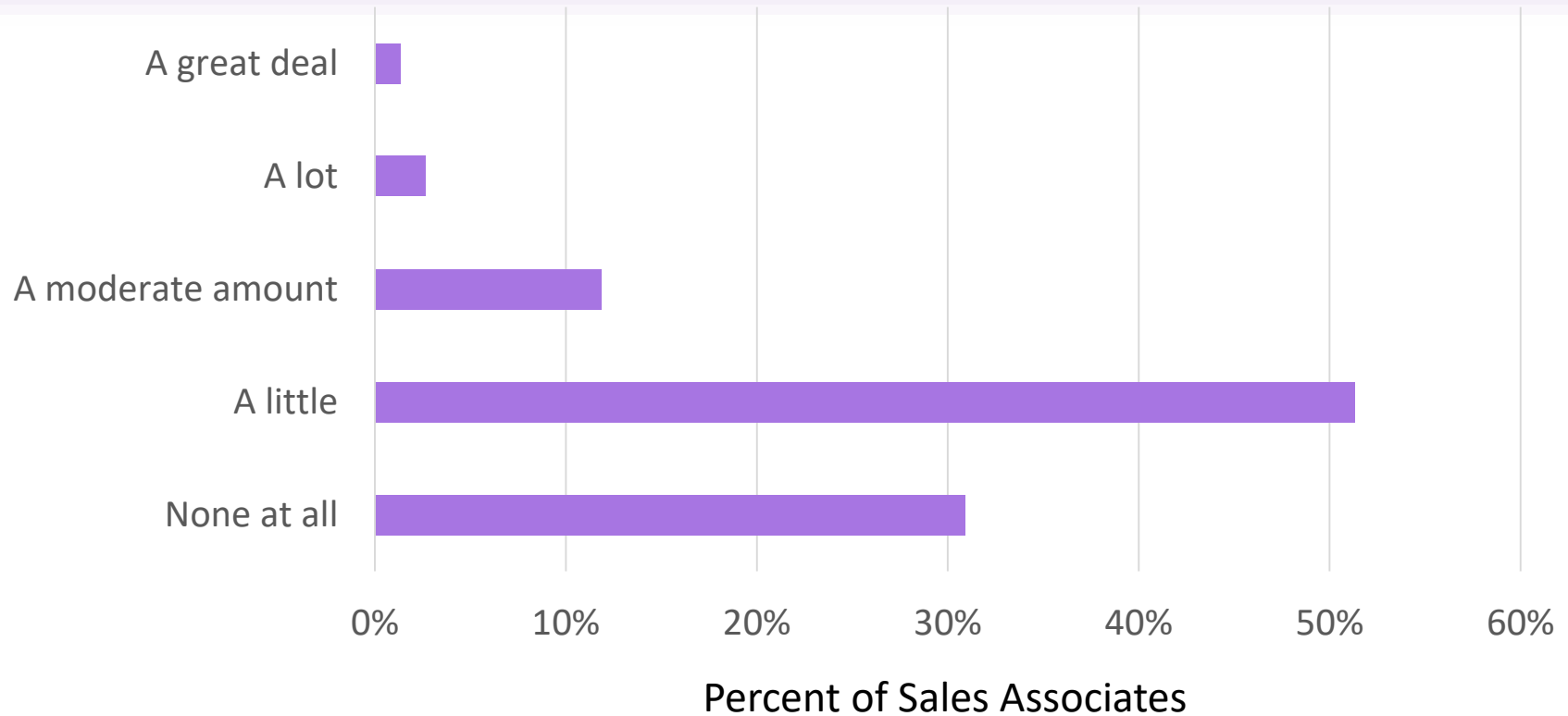
How much customers know and care about mattress support systems



79% of sales associates believe that customers know very little about mattress support systems and 50% do not think they care



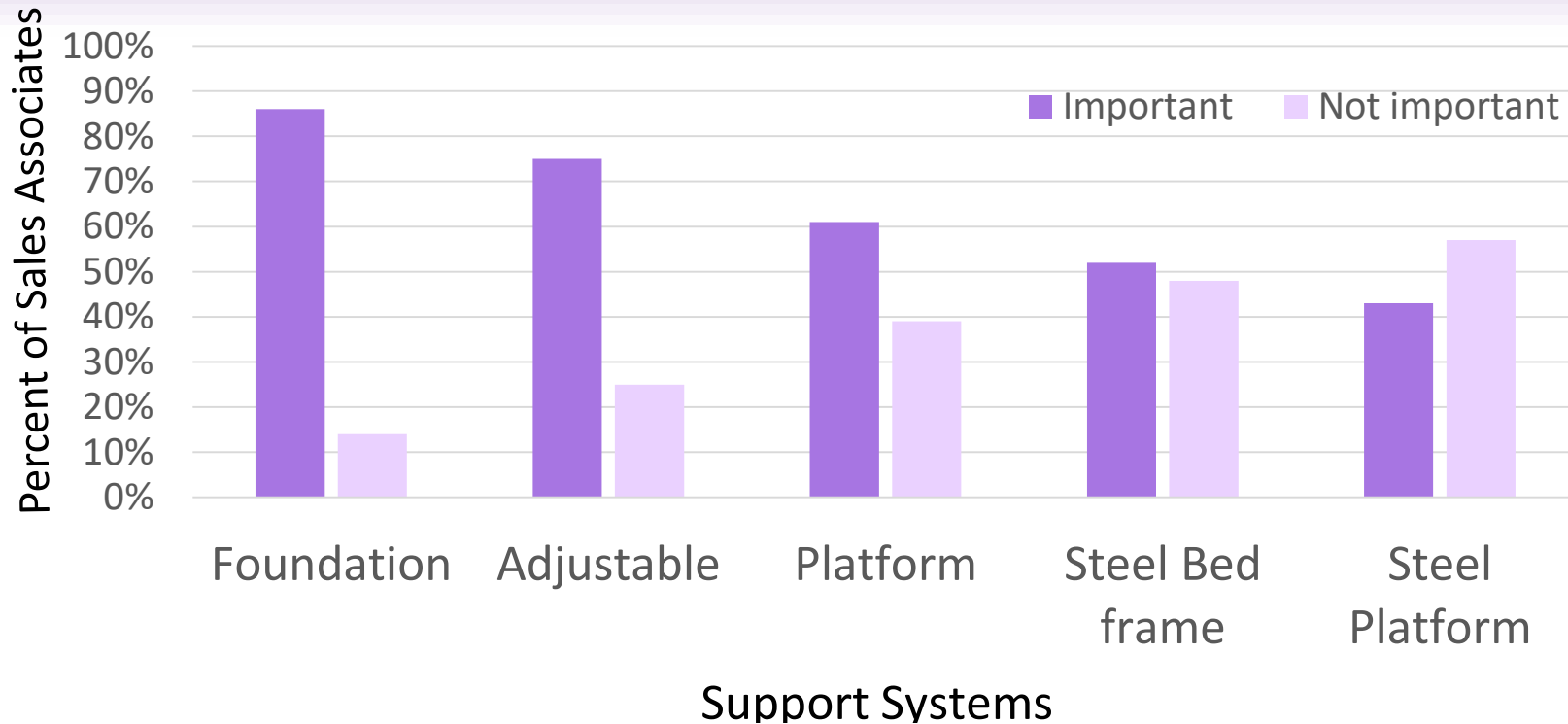
Sales associates' expectations of customers' views on the importance of the support system to quality of the mattress



Not unsurprising then, 82% of sales associates rated customers as unlikely to link the foundational support of their mattress to its performance



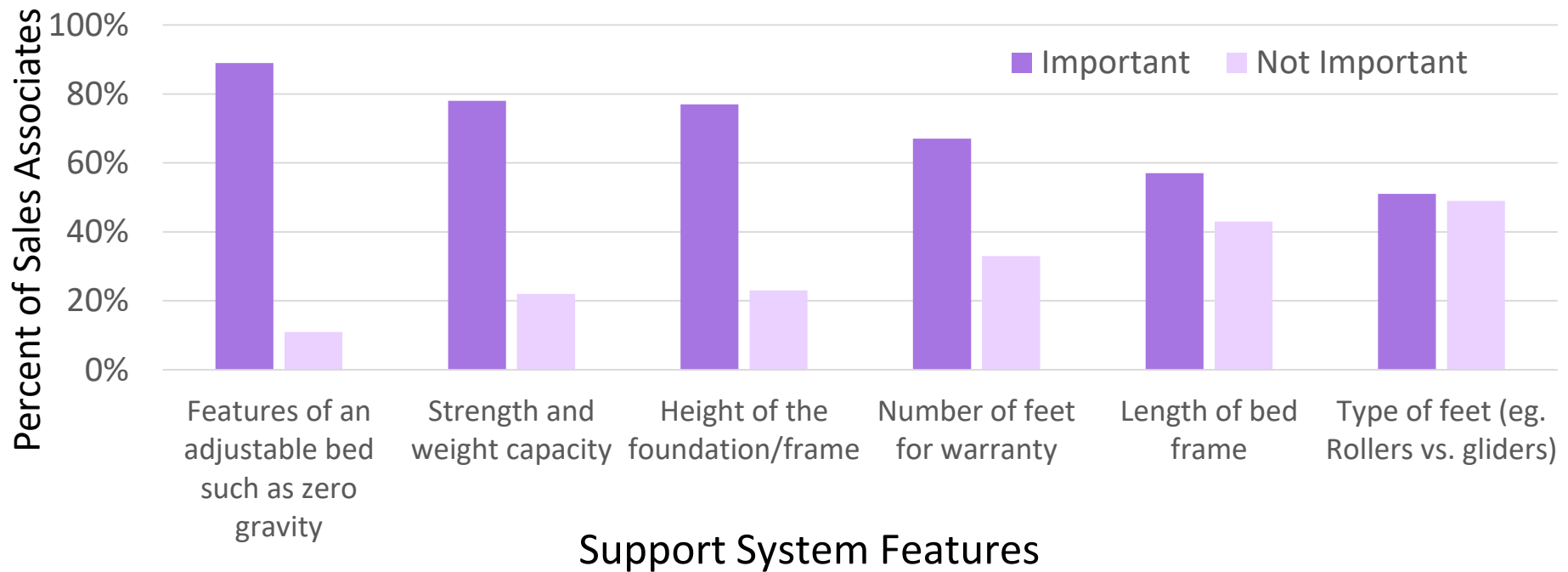
Sales associates' views on how important varying support systems are to the consumer



Sale associates find foundations most important to customers, followed by adjustable beds and platforms



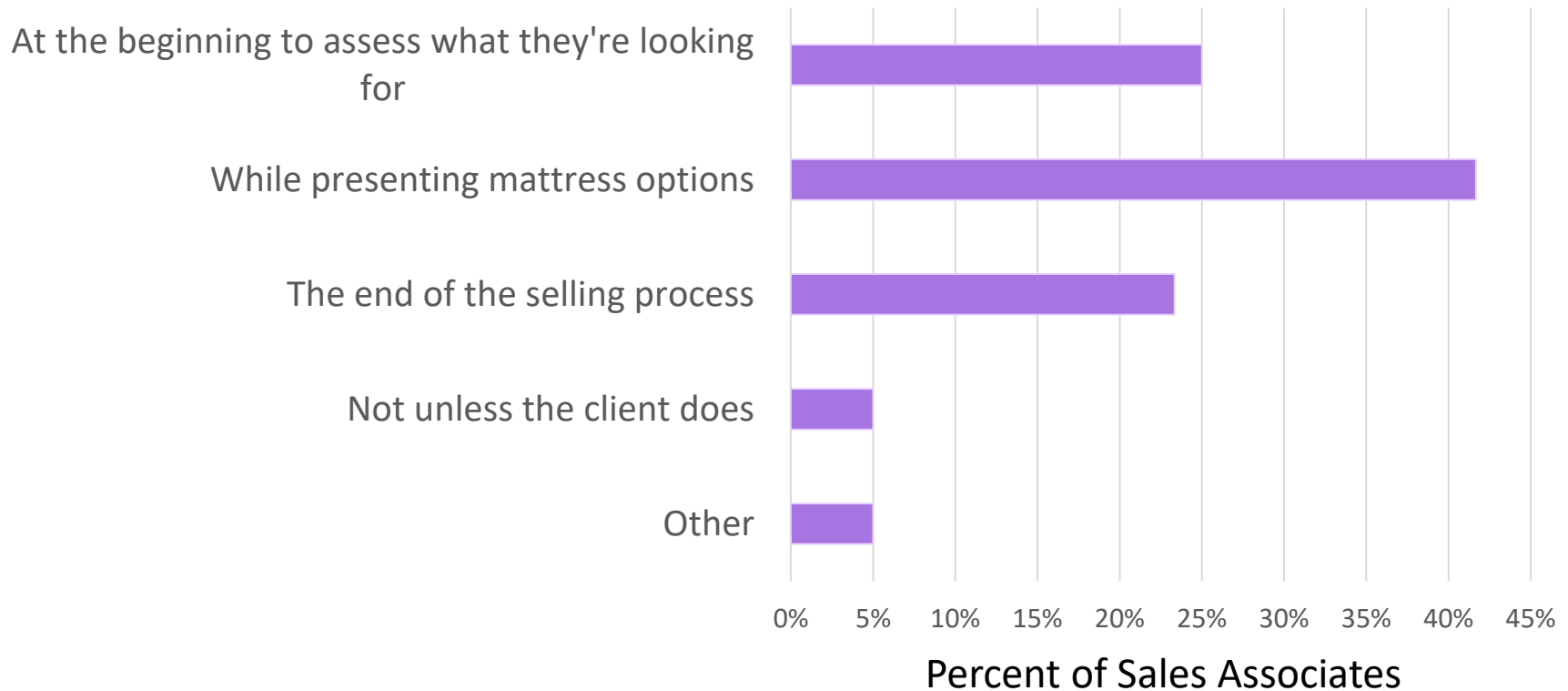
Sales associates views on how important specific features are when presenting a foundation



Special features of the adjustable bed were most important to customers, followed by strength/weight capacity and height of frame



When to raise the issue of the mattress support system!



While 90% of sales associates bring up the mattress support system, only 65% present support options at the beginning or during the mattress presentation.



General expectations about customers

- 40% of customers will be using their old foundation and support which will impact sleep quality
- 38% of the conversation with customers is spent talking about adjustable vs. traditional bed foundations
- 34% of the conversation with customers is spent talking about bed frames
- 4% of mattresses sold were returned because of a foundation or a bed support failure. This can represent nearly one million mattresses.
- 9% of mattresses sold were returned because of a complaint (although there was great variability among responses)



Customer comments for why they balk at buying new foundations

In order of most common to least common:

Bed frames:

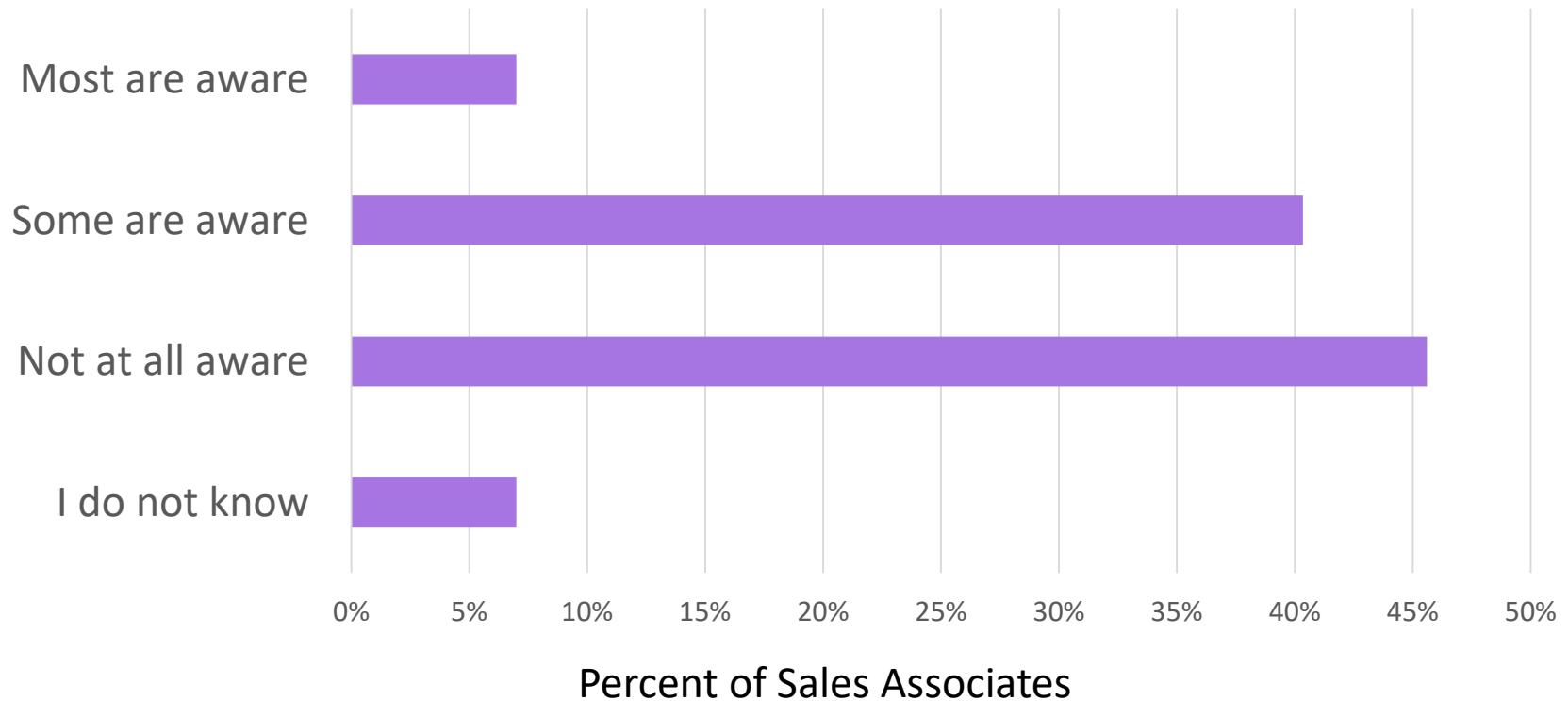
1. the customer will be keeping their old foundation
2. the customer's style preference
3. price
4. customer does not use a foundation

Adjustable beds:

1. price
2. the customer's perception of adjustable beds
3. the customer chooses to keep their old foundation



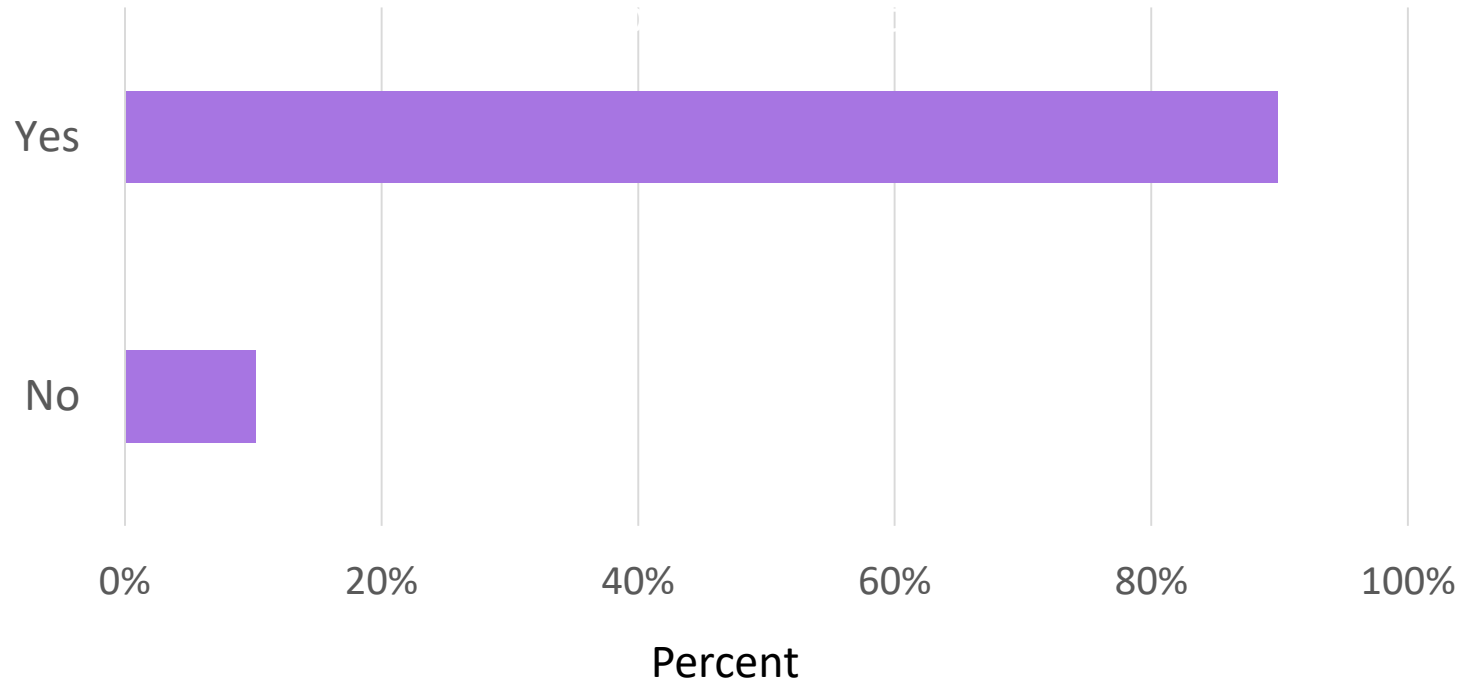
Do customers know bed bugs can be found in the foundation?



46% of sales associates believe customers are unaware of bed bugs in the foundation.



Do sales associates guide PLUS customers to appropriate support systems?



90% of sales associates believe that they should have a conversation with PLUS customers about appropriate foundations for their size



...But they vary according to how they raise the issue

Sales associates commented that they.....

- Bring the issue up diplomatically
- Encourage a heavy duty foundation as being a better support system
- Are frank about body size and support systems
- Use themselves as examples



Conclusions

There is a strong need to educate customers about the role mattress foundations play in sleep quality. Foundations need to be at the forefront of the conversation and tied to mattress quality.



This research was conducted through the collaboration of Specialty Sleep Association (SSA) and High Point University students learning to hone their research skills. The students thank SSA for the opportunity to conduct applied research in a way that matters.

