
Faculty Presentations

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HD Radio Shouldn't Be This Hard: The High Definition Experiences of Low Tech Community Radio

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HD Radio shouldn't be
this hard: The high
definition experiences of
low tech community radio

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- HD Radio marketing closely tied to commercial sector.
- CPB grants have supported licensing and conversion to HD transmission for qualified noncommercial radio stations.



- 123 noncommercial stations belong to the NFCB.
- Some major metros (WFMU, KQED), but more in mid and small markets (KOTO, KZMU), with (much) smaller budgets.
- Of these, at least 40 have converted to HD transmission.

Research Questions

- What have been the outcomes of the conversion to HD transmission?
- What costs have stations incurred?
- Have the outcomes justified the investment of station resources?

Methodology

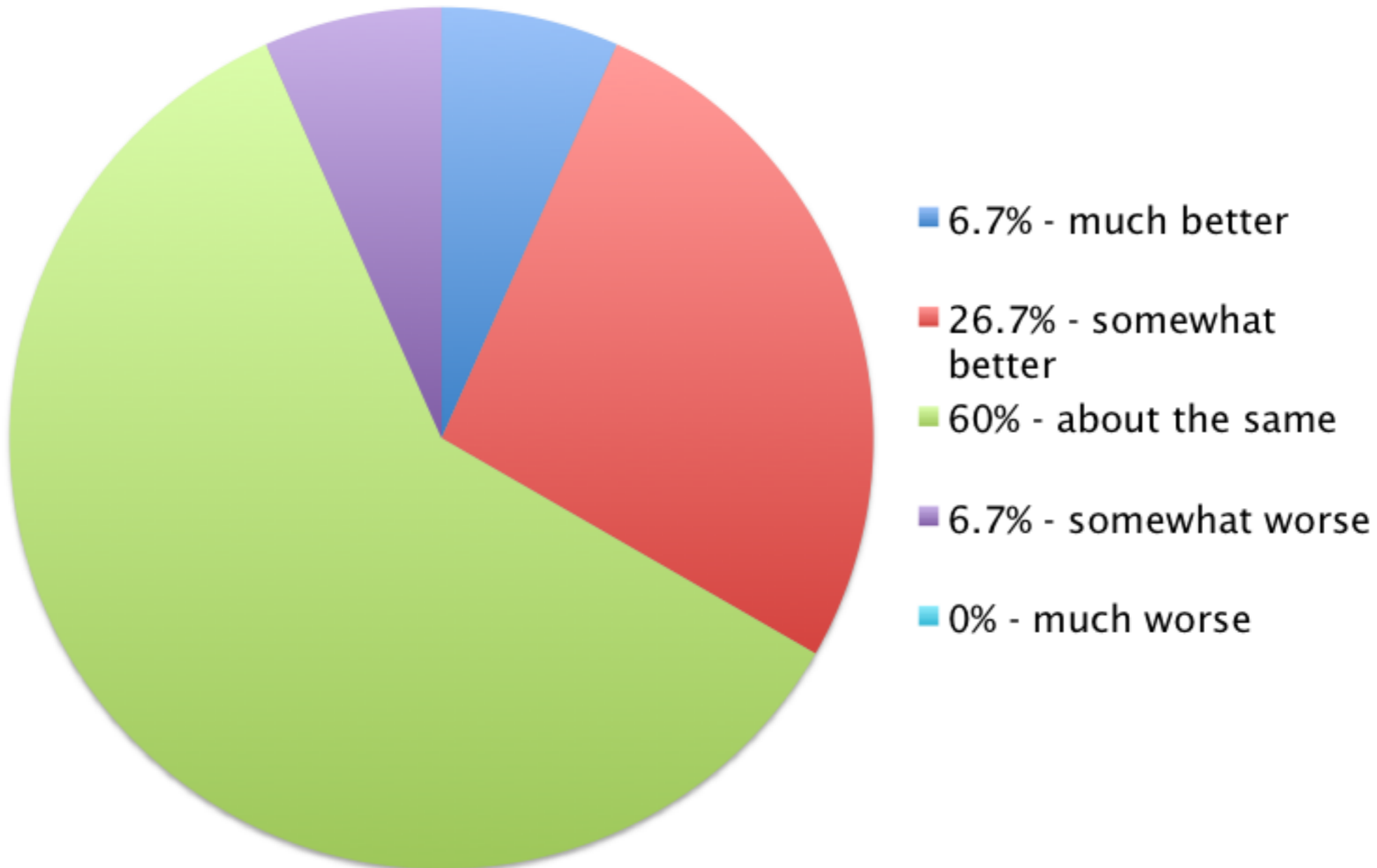
- 10 question survey available on Survey Monkey, limited to one response per participant.
- 3 rounds of invitations to participate sent via NFCB listserv.

Results

- 32% response rate (39/123 responses).
- 41% of respondents have converted to HD transmission (16/39 responses).
- 2 conversions also involved antenna relocations.

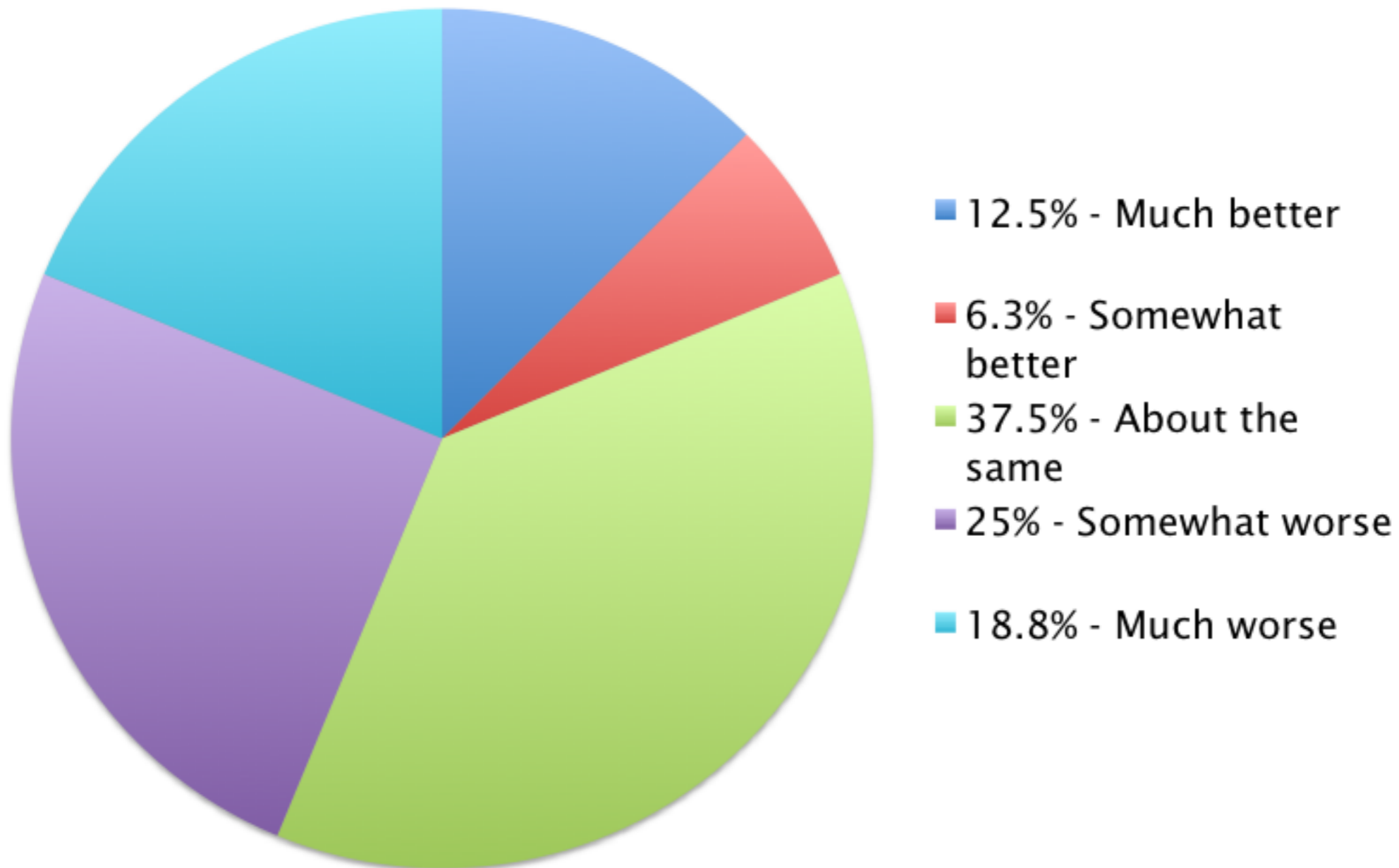
Results

Q4. On a scale of 5 (much better) to 1 (much worse), how would you rate the quality of your ANALOG FM signal coverage (compared to your coverage with your previous analog-only transmitter)?



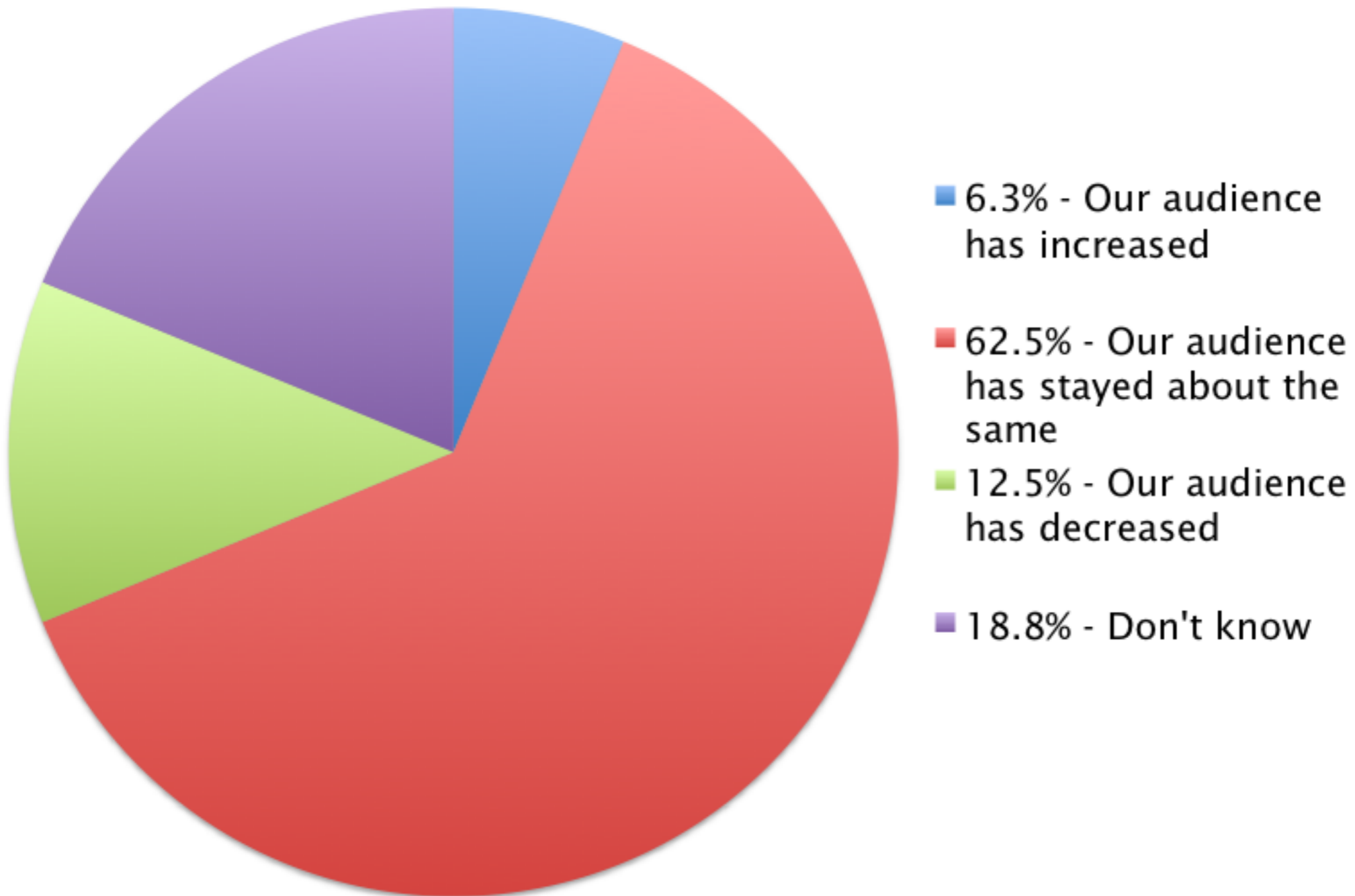
Results

Q3. On a scale of 5 (much better) to 1 (much worse), how would you rate the quality of your DIGITAL FM signal coverage (compared to your coverage with your previous analog-only transmitter)?



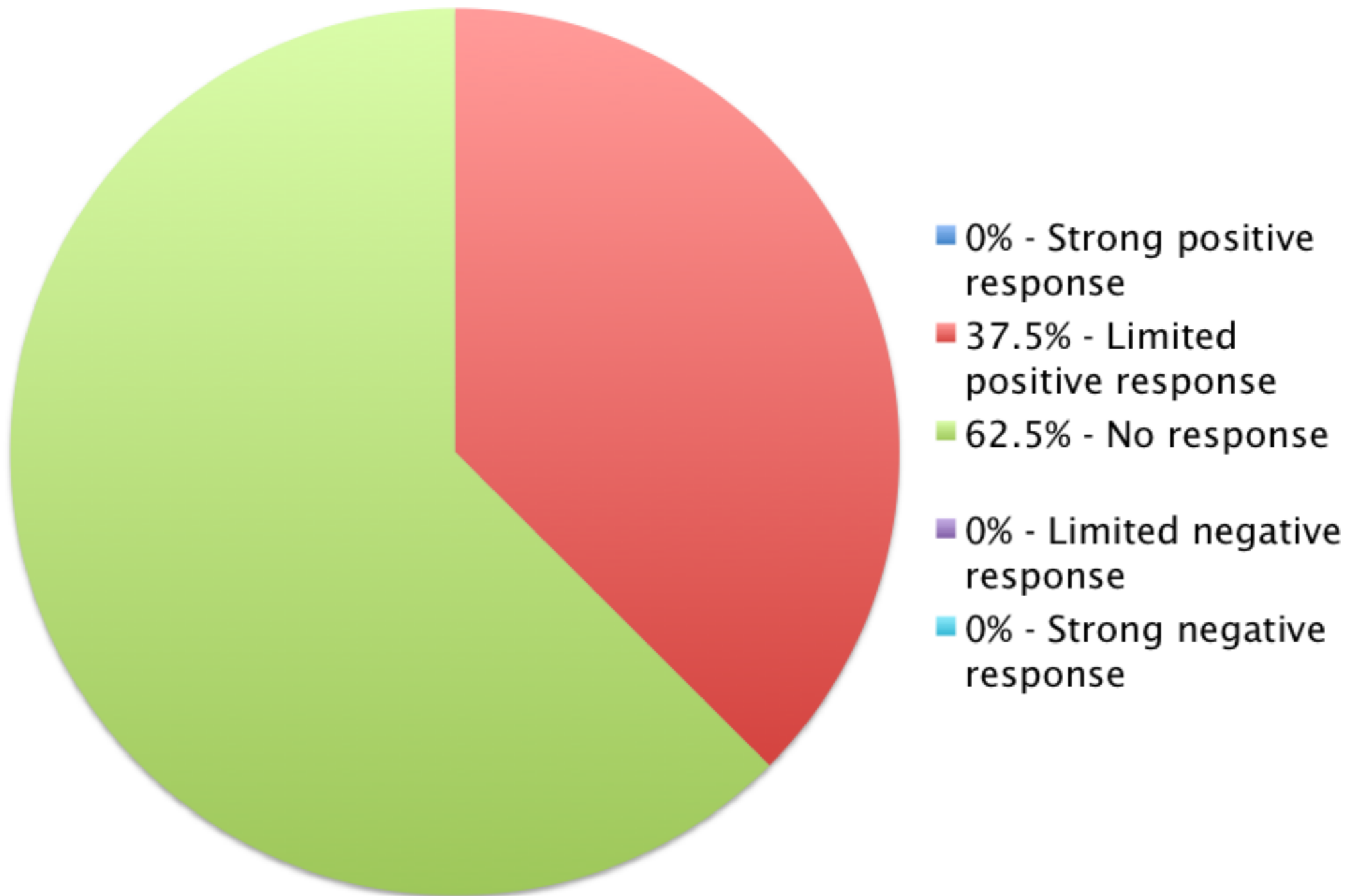
Results

Q5. Since converting to HD Radio, has your audience increased, stayed about the same, or decreased?



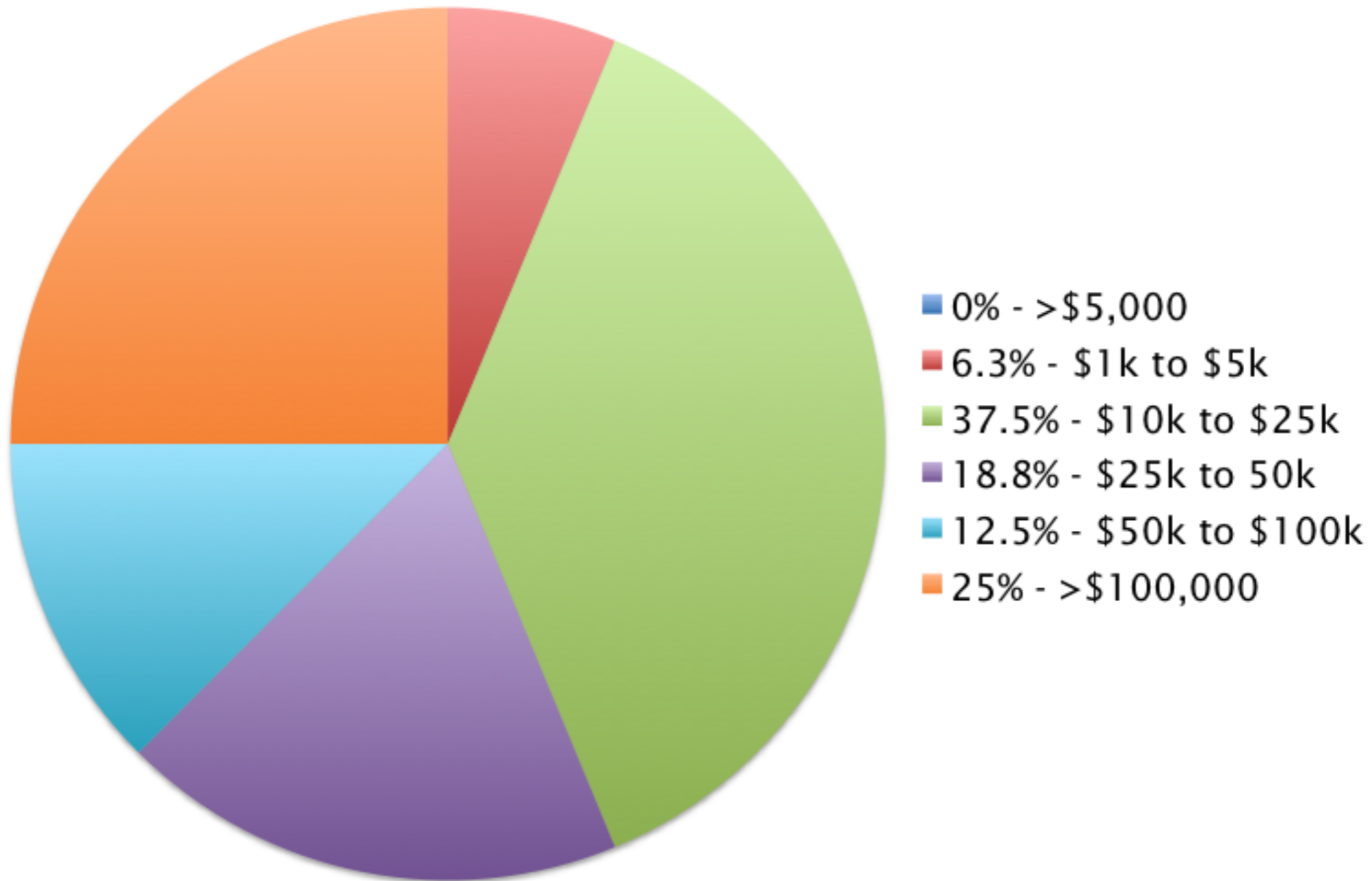
Results

Q6. Since converting to HD Radio, how has your audience responded?



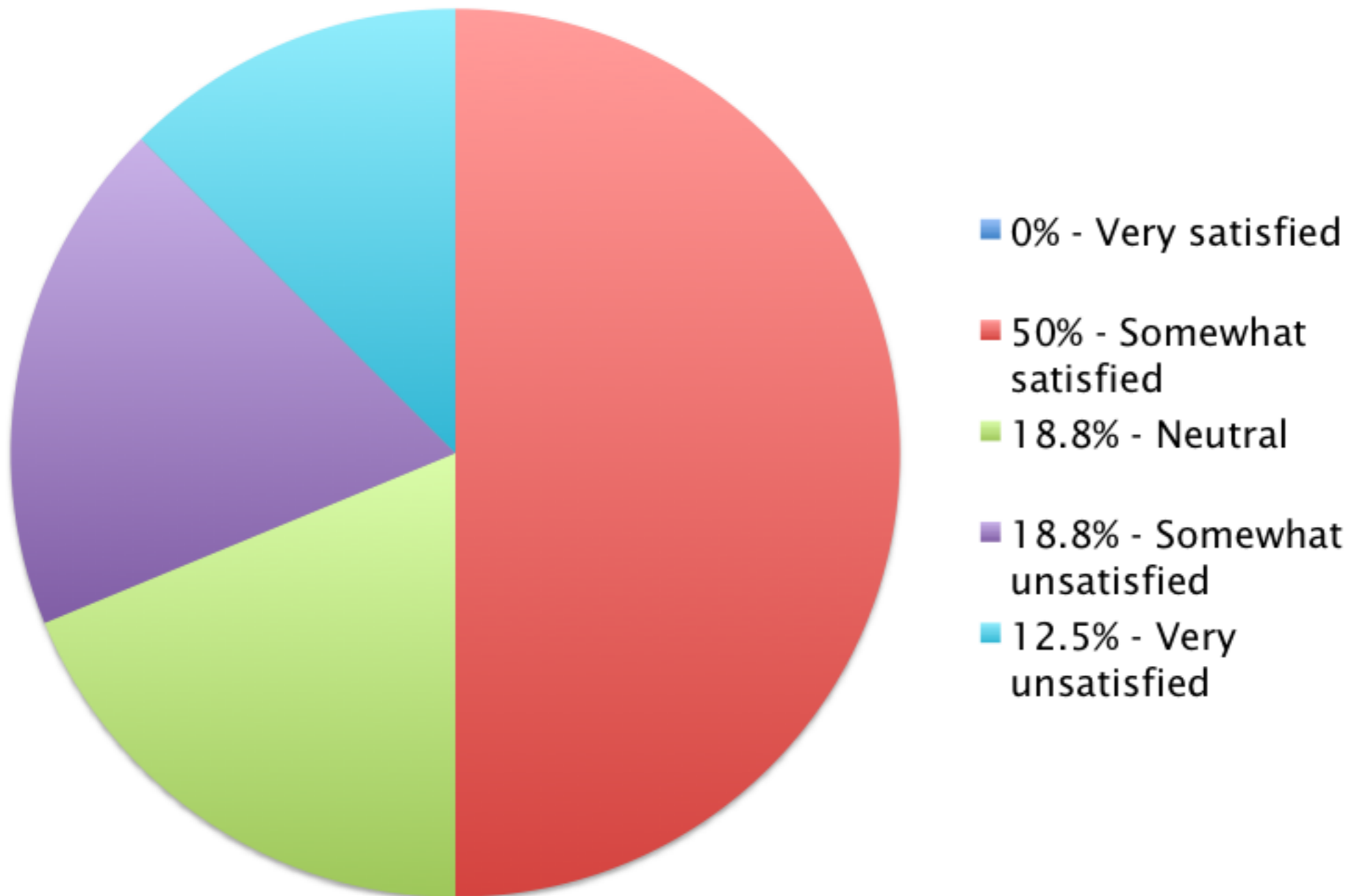
Results

Q7. Estimated station cost (not including CPB, PTFP or other external funds) to convert to HD Radio?



Results

Q9. On a scale of 5 (highly satisfied) to 1 (highly unsatisfied), how would you rate your satisfaction with the outcome of your conversion to HD Radio?





Analysis

- 37.5% incurred local costs of more \$50,000 or more to convert to HD transmission.
- More than 30% saw improvement in analog coverage.
- In HD, less than 20% saw improvement in coverage; more than 40% saw coverage decrease.



Analysis

- More than 60% have seen no change in audience.
- 100% have seen little or no response from listeners.
- 50% neutral or unsatisfied with the outcome.

Conclusions: Immediate opportunity for some

- “We were the first community station to form a partnership with a college station, Bulls Radio at the University Of South Florida, for use of our HD2 signal to broadcast their station. We receive \$35,000 a year contractually.”



Conclusions: Potential opportunity for others

- “Good investment as conversion now provides for three channels as opposed to one channel.”
- “Really excited about our HD2 - and since its not on yet - can't answer with gusto... hope it ends up a very good investment.”



Conclusions: Not bad, but not good either

- “The conversion has had no negative impact on our analog signal or equipment, but has simply added the burden of managing and operating the HD components with out any discernible benefit to our listeners.”



Conclusions: Not worth the investment

- “There is no significant population of HD receivers in our market, nor is there any evidence of consumer interest. Internet radio will be the next wave.”
- “HD is DOA.”



References

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- Online member directory. (2011). In NFCB - The National Federation of Community Broadcasters. Retrieved March 12, 2011, from National Federation of Community Broadcasters website: <http://www.nfcb.org/membership/memberdirectory.jsp>.
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Images

- Research questions: <http://lisas.de/~alex/convergence/convergence-02.jpg>
- Gravestone: <http://mostofyouareaverage.com/wp-content/uploads/2009/03/gravestone.jpg>
- HD Radio Alliance banner: http://www.hdradioalliance.com/marketing_tool_kit
- HD Logo: <http://mobileedgeonline.com/wp-content/uploads/2008/09/hd-logo.jpg>
- Jampro JMPC-HD antenna: <http://www.jampro.com/uploads/images/products/fm/JMPC-HD.jpg>
- NFCB logo: http://1.bp.blogspot.com/_Xptg9Y2nv7s/TULg5rZGX4I/AAAAAAAAAMU/1xyB0uoB7f8/s400/NFCB.jpg