



## CWRT RISK FACTORS SURVEY SURVEY ANALYSIS

Inasmuch as the purpose of the CWRT Congress is to assist CWRTs remain or become sustainable, it is important to understand the risk factors involved when leaders decide to close their round tables.

This survey had an N = 122 with an 82% completion rate. We began the analysis by removing 23 incomplete responses. (None of those provided identification of which CWRT was represented.) Then, sixteen duplicate CWRT responses were identified. Some were eliminated as the respondent did not rank-order their risk factor responses. Three were deleted as the responses were duplicated by the same individual. There were seven duplicates that were randomly removed as they all responded that their CWRT was not in jeopardy in the next five years. After this process, seventy-eight responses remained.

**Please note** that one respondent identified the organization as 76NY. Although an email was sent to the respondent, no subsequent response was received to clarify if that is a CWRT, an SUV chapter or what. But, because of the possibility it is a CWRT, it remains in the analysis.

We divided the survey into four focus areas: Leadership; Membership; Systems; and Community. Each focus area was further divided into four areas of interest. The shocking results is the number of CWRTs that responded they are at risk of closure, that they know that that is a real possibility and that they have identified their area(s) of weakness.

### **SUMMARY**

This survey provides the following BEST PRACTICES for counting CWRT members:

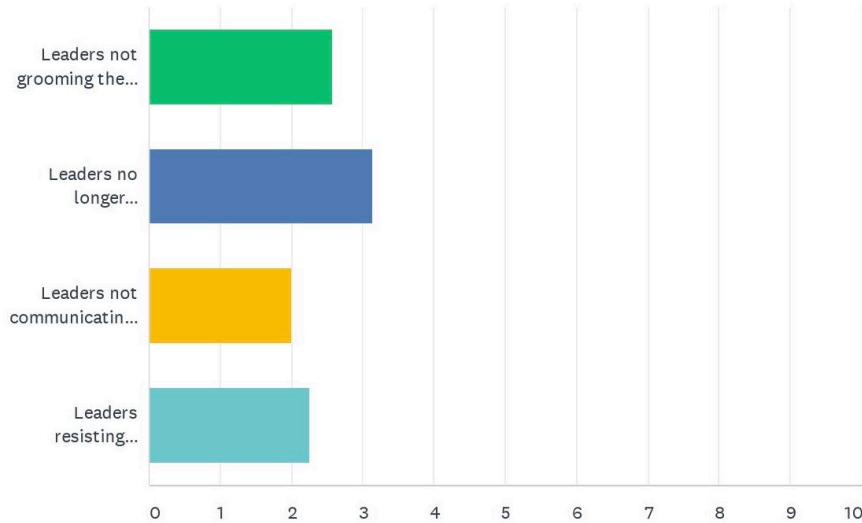
1. CWRTs with formal structure should diversify duties from a single person responsible for an area of operation to a committee basis. This spreads the elements of that operation to others thereby making the overall responsibility less onerous.
2. Board decisions are traditionally made through voting. On specific issues of change, this creates an us-against-them result. Rather, board decisions that could become divisive should be made on a consensus basis...creating an "I can live with that" mentality.
3. Marketing is important to any membership drive. Develop a multi-phased marketing plan that includes distribution dependencies on historical societies and museums,

genealogical groups, veteran organizations, re-enactors and heritage groups, corporations, K-12 and colleges, community groups (i.e., home-owner association, neighborhood groups, retirement communities, condominiums, etc.).

4. Induce CWRT leadership to set membership goals for the organization. (For example, increasing membership from 10 to 15 members by June 1, 2020.) Then, brainstorm with the membership on how that can be accomplished. Consider, those things that influenced members to join in the first instance and use those as a guide.
5. Stepping down from leadership can be painful and depressing for many. However, CWRTs with embedded leaders are significantly at more risk of closure than others since no one is usually trained to take over should the embedded leader leave the picture. CWRTs should ensure that functionaries rotate on a continuous basis, that replacements are identified who become “advisors” and those who step aside are feted in tangible ways for their contributions.
6. Changing meeting locations can be extremely challenging for any organizations. Multiple changes within a short period of time can become the death nell. Whenever this type of change is necessary, rather than the board making the decision for the CWRT, members should be consulted as to geographical areas they wish to be considered. This simple step can mean the difference between success and failure.

## Q1 Rank-order these leadership risk factors that can cause a CWRT to close.

Answered: 74 Skipped: 4



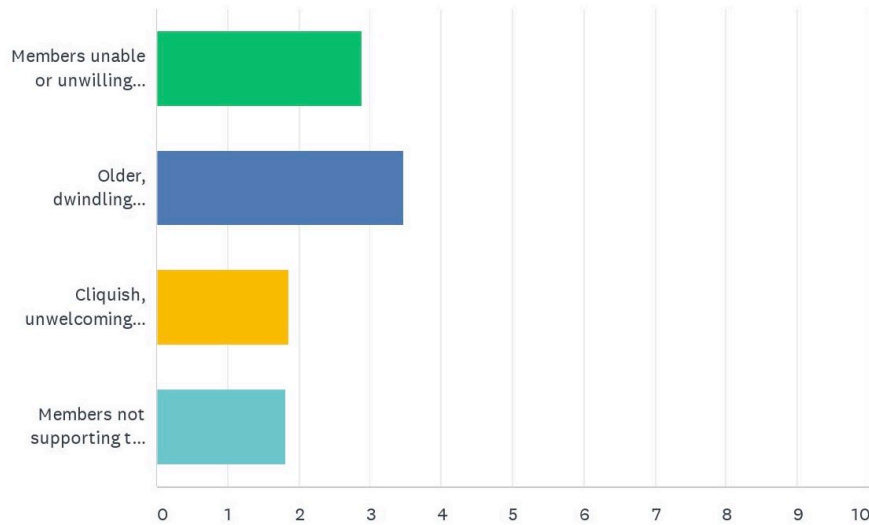
	1	2	3	4	TOTAL	SCORE
Leaders not grooming their replacements	29.58% 21	25.35% 18	18.31% 13	26.76% 19	71	2.58
Leaders no longer performing their duties	49.30% 35	28.17% 20	8.45% 6	14.08% 10	71	3.13
Leaders not communicating details of critical duties	2.86% 2	24.29% 17	44.29% 31	28.57% 20	70	2.01
Leaders resisting proposed change	16.90% 12	22.54% 16	29.58% 21	30.99% 22	71	2.25

The top two issues around CWRT leadership are leaders no longer performing their duties and not grooming new leaders. For many CWRTs having a clearly defined set of behavioral standards and a leadership team willing to hold one another responsible to perform to that standard may be the key.

Failing to groom new leaders to take over positions has a couple components. First, is one of identifying and attracting replacements. The second is that many leaders are comfortable in the position and may not have the CWRTs sustainability among their priorities.

## Q2 Rank-order these membership risk factors that can cause a CWRT to close.

Answered: 76 Skipped: 2

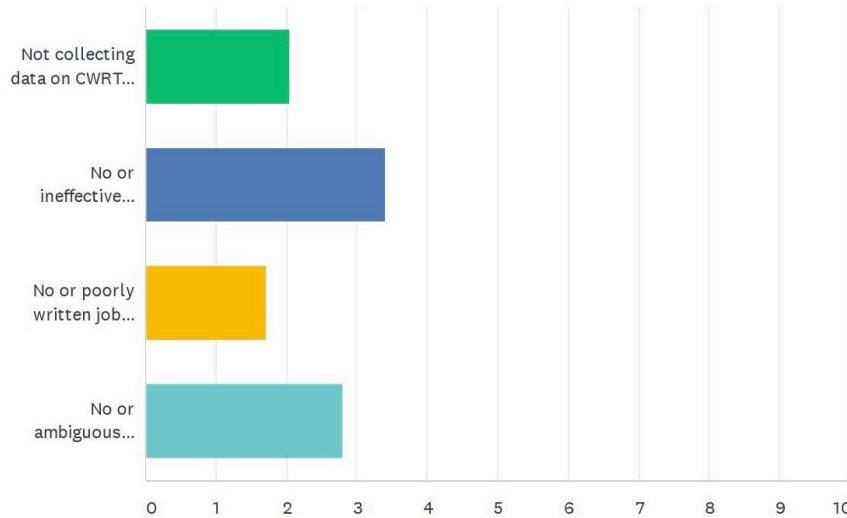


	1	2	3	4	TOTAL	SCORE
Members unable or unwilling to become leaders	27.40% 20	45.21% 33	16.44% 12	10.96% 8	73	2.89
Older, dwindling membership	62.16% 46	27.03% 20	6.76% 5	4.05% 3	74	3.47
Cliquish, unwelcoming members	8.11% 6	14.86% 11	32.43% 24	44.59% 33	74	1.86
Members not supporting the CWRT financially	4.00% 3	13.33% 10	42.67% 32	40.00% 30	75	1.81

In terms of membership risk factors, the top two are having an older, dwindling membership and members unable or unwilling to step forward. These factors seem almost universal among CWRTs. To attract younger and more diverse members, the CWRT must seek to have and promote ideas, activities and/or events with which new potential members can identify and that involve families and fun. Whatever planning the CWRT goes through, it should include input from the targeted group. Consider the grandchildren of members as a starting point.

### Q3 Rank-order these systems risk factors that can cause a CWRT to close.

Answered: 73 Skipped: 5

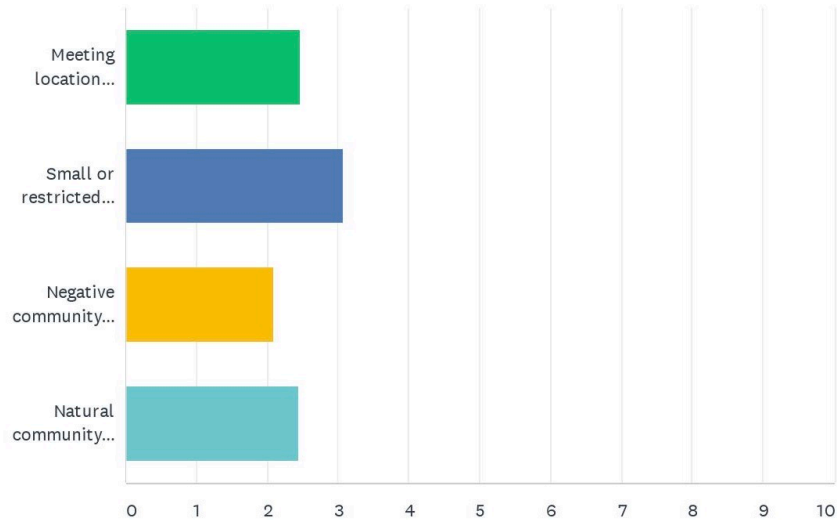


	1	2	3	4	TOTAL	SCORE
Not collecting data on CWRT operations	8.82% 6	20.59% 14	36.76% 25	33.82% 23	68	2.04
No or ineffective marketing/fundraising	58.57% 41	28.57% 20	8.57% 6	4.29% 3	70	3.41
No or poorly written job descriptions	4.55% 3	7.58% 5	42.42% 28	45.45% 30	66	1.71
No or ambiguous organizational goals	30.43% 21	39.13% 27	11.59% 8	18.84% 13	69	2.81

In terms of systems risk factors, the top two are no or ineffective marketing/fundraising and no or ambiguous organizational goals. Both of these are easily overcome with skill development and the board taking leadership in setting a couple organizational goals. Once those goals have been determined with the assistance of the members, it will be important to continuously communicate them to members and to secure their commitment to goal attainment.

## Q4 Rank-order these community risk factors that can cause a CWRT to close.

Answered: 75 Skipped: 3



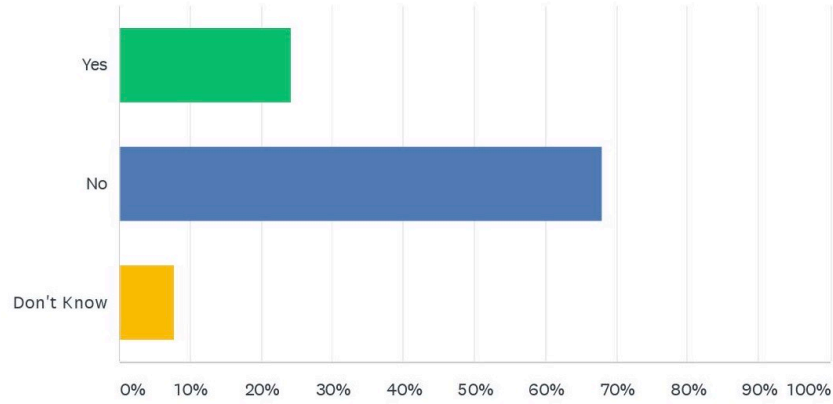
	1	2	3	4	TOTAL	SCORE
Meeting location changes	30.00% 21	17.14% 12	21.43% 15	31.43% 22	70	2.46
Small or restricted market	38.03% 27	36.62% 26	21.13% 15	4.23% 3	71	3.08
Negative community opinion about the Civil War	12.86% 9	18.57% 13	32.86% 23	35.71% 25	70	2.09
Natural community partners in competition with CWRT for members and funding	21.92% 16	28.77% 21	21.92% 16	27.40% 20	73	2.45

The top two community risk factors are having a small or restricted market and having natural community partners in competition with CWRT marketing and fundraising. As to the competition aspect, different organizations are attractive to different people. Those interested in supporting museums and their mission may only have an overlapping attraction to those preferring CWRT-type of involvement. Once CWRT leaders decide to support their local organizations through membership, marketing or other actions, the competitive attitude may disappear.

In terms of a restricted market, much of the problem is a matter of perception and the creativeness of the CWRT board/membership. For example, gated communities, condominium administrators or home-owner associations can be reached through articles in their newsletters, postings on community bulletin boards or by presentations to members. Although the list of potential community organization partners in item #3 in the summary is not extensive, it does provide a starting point for all communities.

## Q5 Do you feel your home or primary CWRT is at-risk of closing its doors in the next 5 years?

Answered: 78 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	24.36%	19
No	67.95%	53
Don't Know	7.69%	6
TOTAL		78

As you can see, 19 respondents feel their CWRT is at risk of closure while another 5 were unsure.

## Q6 From your perspective, what are the three things causing your CWRT to be at-risk?

### REASONS<sup>1</sup>

Members lost interest.

Age; No or limited marketing; failing to work with like-minded groups; and older membership

1. Declining membership 2. Unable to find new leaders 3. Loss of interest in the Civil War

1) Lack of members willing to take leadership roles 2) Poor marketing 3) Member(s) conduct  
Inability to attract younger members, an aging membership base, and lack of interest in the subject matter among the community.

1) No one is willing to take a leadership role; 2) aging membership; 3) limited ability to attract new, sustaining members

Lack of members

Unwillingness to change marketing methods, few younger members, meeting location

1 - The \_\_\_\_\_ is so large and afternoon traffic is so bad, folks use it as an excuse not to attend. 2 - Our meeting venue is excellent, but possibly a little pricey for some folks. Although you can attend only the lecture for a reduced price, the buffet dinner and lecture is rather expensive and the food is a little better than average. 3 - The demographics of \_\_\_\_\_ has changed dramatically the past decade or two. American history, \_\_\_\_\_ history, and CW history in particular are extremely low priorities on a large segment of the current population.

No outreach; Small membership

Apathy

Aging membership; Competing interests Ineffective leadership

Lack of members to step up and take leadership roles. Older membership - losing members through death or sickness.

Lack of teaching history in schools. Little interest from the community, Lack of advertising.

Older membership, new venue in a different county and no new leadership stepping up.

Older, dwindling membership, members unwilling to step up in a leadership role. Several other CWRT in the \_\_\_\_\_ area.

Dwindling membership, lack of speakers for monthly meetings, and "current controversies," e.g., Confederate monuments, battle flags, etc.

Dwindling membership and difficulty finding members willing to serve as club officers.

Aging membership; Members unwilling to step into leadership; Inability to recruit new and younger members

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<sup>1</sup> CWRT Congress has recused the names of at-risk CWRTs, their respondents and the areas in which they reside due to privacy reasons.