

THE FUTURE OF MEETINGS AND EVENTS IN THE ERA OF COVID-19

April 21, 2020







EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The worldwide pandemic has been particularly harsh for the meetings industry, but a deep dive into planners' individual experiences and expectations reveals that a majority are working on future business and anticipating fundamental changes, according to Northstar Meetings Group's PULSE Survey, conducted from April 14 to April 21, 2020.

"The future of events is changing, and we can shape it but we don't have much control over it at the moment," commented one respondent. At the same time, planners are looking ahead and preparing for significant changes in the post-COVID-19 meetings world.

These insights are based on 1,045 meeting planner respondents from across the globe, with about three-quarters located in the United States. Survey participants represent a wide range of industry segments, including association and convention planners (one-third), third parties (26 percent) and corporate planners (19 percent).

Planners Are Still Working

Regardless of location, size and type of meeting or event, meeting planners' experiences are remarkably similar. First, the majority have held onto their jobs, with 83 percent still working full time. Fourteen percent have been furloughed, either full- or part-time. Just three respondents are out of work and don't plan to stay in the meetings industry, while another 23 who have lost their jobs are hoping to find new employment in meetings and events.

Meanwhile, the business of meeting planning has not stopped: Forty percent of those working are currently sourcing and booking events, and 36 percent are researching for future events but not yet booking at this time.

For many, this is a tough time to do business, the survey confirms. Twelve percent are finding it "very difficult" to work with meeting suppliers, and another 47 percent report "it's been more difficult than usual." This finding is consistent across geographies.





Getting Back to Business

Planners in the U.S. are slightly more optimistic about meetings returning as early as this summer than those in other regions. Eighteen percent are holding steady to rescheduled dates for events that will take place prior to September, while somewhat fewer share that expectation in Canada (14 percent), U.K./Europe (12 percent) and Asia (13 percent).

At the same time, respondents predict a downward trend in the number and size of events they will plan after the COVID-19 pandemic passes. Twenty-seven percent expect to plan fewer meetings overall, while 35 percent say it's too soon to speculate.

Large Events Will Lag Behind

The most significant dip is anticipated by those who plan large meetings of more than 5,000 delegates; nearly half (47 percent) expect a decrease in the number of such events they will plan when business returns. Meanwhile, many expect to see a greater number of small gatherings, particularly those with 50 or fewer attendees.

Furthermore, planners foresee a decline in the number of events they will plan in specific meeting categories, including international meetings (48 percent), festivals and fairs (41 percent), trade shows (35 percent), sports/esports events (32 percent), corporate meetings (32 percent) and government meetings (31 percent).

Among other key findings:

• Large venues will lose business. Coinciding with a decrease in large events, planners expect to use large venues less often. Nearly two-thirds (61 percent) of respondents will use cruise ships less frequently following the COVID-19 pandemic, followed by fewer bookings of gaming properties (32 percent), sports facilities (31 percent) and convention centers (26 percent).





- New skills and services are needed. Recognizing the need to pivot, fully 82 percent expect an increased need for
 virtual event platforms, along with virtual site visits (76 percent), education specific to health/safety (74
 percent), virtual hosted-buyer events (66 percent) and professional services for ensuring the health and safety of
 meeting participants (64 percent).
- New precautions will be necessary on-site. From hand sanitizers to room design, an overwhelming majority of
 planners are considering the following for their future events: providing hand sanitizers (88 percent),
 implementing social responsibility best practices/protocols (75 percent), displaying signage addressing
 prevention and controls (74 percent), new meeting room designs to allow distance between attendees (66
 percent) and measures for reducing and managing crowd densities (65 percent).
- There's still a lot to worry about. Amid such an all-encompassing crisis, concerns are many and all relative, but
 the ones that planners are "very concerned" about from a business perspective are policies restricting business
 travel, cited by 53 percent, reduced meeting/event budgets (47 percent), less demand for in-person meetings
 (42 percent), hotel and venue safety preparedness (40 percent) and establishing or adopting new best practices
 for gatherings (38 percent).



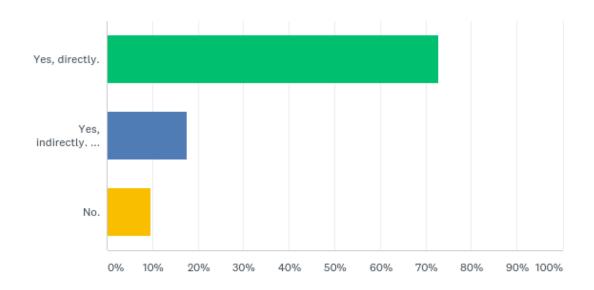
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WEDNESDAY, APRIL 22, 2020



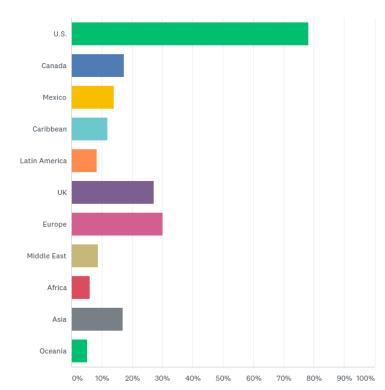
Q1: Prior to March 1, 2020, were you an organizer/planner of meeting and/or events of any type?

Answered: 1,155 Skipped: 1



Q2: What is the primary location of your business and your clients' businesses? Please check all that apply, if you work with multiple clients.

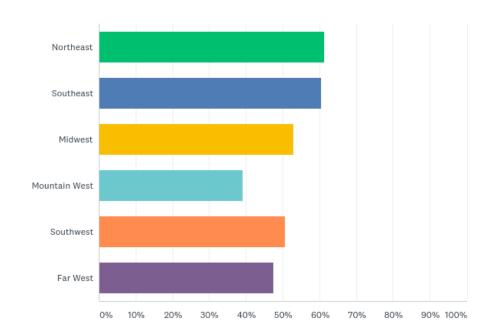
Answered: 1,030 Skipped: 126



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
U.S.	78.25 % 806
Canada	17.28% 178
Mexico	13.98 % 144
Caribbean	11.84% 122
Latin America	8.35 % 86
UK	27.18% 280
Europe	30.10% 310
Middle East	8.74% 90
Africa	6.12% 63
Asia	16.89% 174
Oceania	5.24 % 54
Total Respondents: 1,030	



Q3: If your business or your clients' businesses are in the United States, which regions are you in?

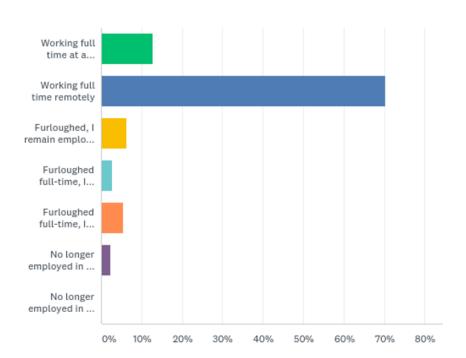


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Northeast	61.30%	480
Southeast	60.54%	474
Midwest	52.87%	414
Mountain West	39.21%	307
Southwest	50.57%	396
Far West	47.51%	372
Total Respondents: 783		



Q4: Currently, what is your employment status?

Answered: 971 Skipped: 185



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPON	ISES
Working full time at a business location	12.77%	124
Working full time remotely	70.34%	683
Furloughed, I remain employed but I am now working part-time.	6.18%	60
Furloughed full-time, I remain employed but I am currently not working for a DEFINED period.	2.68%	26
Furloughed full-time, I remain employed but I am currently not working for an UNDEFINED period.	5.36%	52
No longer employed in the job I had prior to March 1, 2020, and I intend to seek work in the meetings/events industry.	2.37%	23
No longer employed in the job I had prior to March 1, 2020, and I do not intend to seek work in the meetings/events industry.	0.31%	3
TOTAL		971



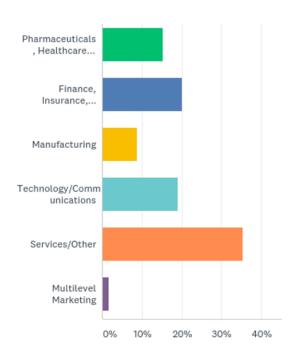
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPO	ISES
Professional Conference Organizer	12.24%	118
Association/Non-Profit Organization or Association Management Company	21.47%	207
Third Party/Independent Planner	25.73%	248
Exhibitions/Trade Show Organizer	3.11%	30
Travel Agency	5.71%	55
Social, Military, Education, Religious, Fraternal	3.22%	31
Sports	6.43%	62
Corporation	18.57%	179
Government	3.53%	34
TOTAL		964

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPO	ISES
Yes, sourcing and booking future business	39.46%	292
Researching for future meetings but not booking	35.68%	264
Not planning, but staying in touch with destination and venue partners	19.73%	146
Not planning and not staying in contact at this point	3.92%	29
Not employed	1.22%	9
TOTAL		740



Q6: If you work for a corporation, which industry are you in?

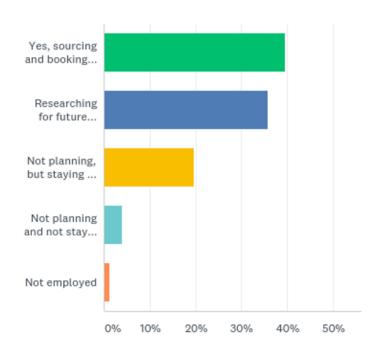
Answered: 184 Skipped: 972



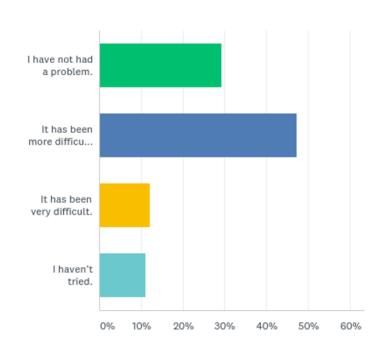
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Pharmaceuticals, Healthcare, Medical	15.22%	28
Finance, Insurance, Banking, Real Estate	20.11%	37
Manufacturing	8.70%	16
Technology/Communications	19.02%	35
Services/Other	35.33%	65
Multilevel Marketing	1.63%	3
TOTAL		184



Q7: If you are currently employed (and/or furloughed) as a meeting planner, are you working on future meetings?



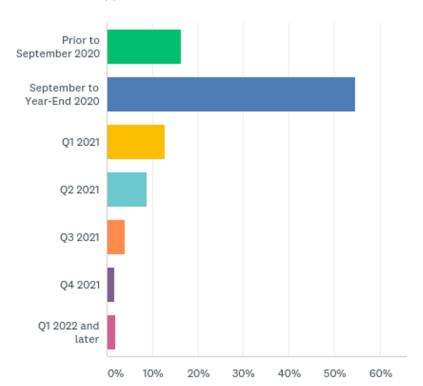
Q8: What is your current experience in reaching out to suppliers of meeting services (hotels, venues, destination marketing organizations, destination management companies, etc.)?



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
I have not had a problem.	29.39%	221
It has been more difficult than usual.	47.21%	355
It has been very difficult.	12.23%	92
I haven't tried.	11.17%	84
TOTAL		752



Q9: When is the earliest you are RESCHEDULING meetings and events?



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Prior to September 2020	16.29 % 122
September to Year-End 2020	54.61% 409
Q1 2021	12.68 % 95
Q2 2021	8.81% 66
Q3 2021	4.01% 30
Q4 2021	1.74% 13
Q1 2022 and later	1.87% 14
TOTAL	749

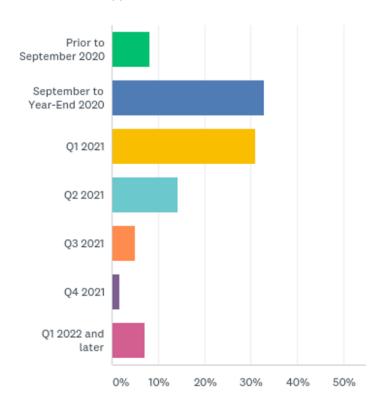


Q9: When is the earliest you are RESCHEDULING meetings and events (by region)?

Count Percent of to Row percents Column perce	age	Q2 What is the p	vimary location o	of your business a	nd your cilents' busin	nesses? Please check all 1	that apply, if you	work with multi					
		U.S.	Canada	Mexico	Caribbean	Latin America	UK	Europe	Middle East	Africa	Asia	Oceania	Total
Q9 When is the earliest you are RESCHEDU LING meetings	Prior to September 2020	106 14,17% 87,6% 17,79%	20 2.67% 16.53% 13,99%	17 2.27% 14.05% 14,41%	11 1,47% 9,09% 11%	9 1,2% 7,44% 12,68%	25 3.34% 20.66% 12.02%	29 3.88% 23.97% 11.93%	9 1,2% 7,44% 13,43%	8 1.07% 6.61% 16%	16 2.14% 13.22% 13.22%	5 0.67% 4.13% 10.42%	121
d events?	September to Year-End 2020	321 42.91% 78.48% 53.86%	76 10.16% 18.58% 53.15%	72 9.63% 17.6% 61.02%	60 8.02% 14.67% 60%	41 5.48% 10.02% 57,75%	121 16.18% 29.58% 58,17%	141 18.85% 34.47% 58.02%	36 4.81% 8.8% 53.73%	28 3.74% 6.85% 56%	63 8.42% 15.4% 52.07%	27 3.61% 6.6% 56.25%	409
	Q1 2021	69 9.22% 72.63% 11.58%	19 2.54% 20% 13.29%	13 1.74% 13.68% 11.02%	10 1.34% 10.53% 10%	11 1.47% 11.58% 15.49%	34 4.55% 35.79% 16.35%	40 5.35% 42.11% 16.46%	15 2.01% 15.79% 22.39%	9 1.2% 9.47% 18%	16 2.14% 16.84% 13.22%	7 0.94% 7.37% 14.58%	95
	Q2 2021	50 6.68% 75.76 % 8.39%	15 2.01% 22.73% 10.49%	10 1.34% 15.15% 8.47%	12 1.6% 18.18% 12%	7 0.94% 10.61% 9.86%	16 2.14% 24.24% 7.69%	23 3.07% 34.85% 9.47%	5 0,67% 7,58% 7,46%	3 0.4% 4.55% 6%	16 2.14% 24.24% 13.22%	6 0.8% 9.09% 12.5%	66
	Q3 2021	26 3.48% 86.67% 4.36%	7 0.94% 23.33% 4.9%	0.27% 6.67% 1.69%	3 0.4% 10% 3%	0 096 096 096	6 0.8% 20% 2.88%	0.67% 16.67% 2.06%	1 0.13% 3.33% 1,49%	0.13% 3.33% 2%	3 0.4% 10% 2.48%	0 0% 0% 0%	30
	Q4 2021	13 1,74% 100% 2,18%	4 0.53% 30.77% 2.8%	4 0.53% 30.77% 3.39%	0.53% 30.77% 4%	2 0.27% 15.38% 2.82%	4 0.53% 30.77% 1.92%	0.53% 30.77% 1,65%	1 0.13% 7.69% 1.49%	1 0.13% 7.69% 2%	3 0.4% 23.08% 2.48%	0.27% 15.38% 4.17%	13
	Q1 2022 and later	11 1.47% 78.57% 1.85%	0.27% 14.29% 1.4%	0 0% 0% 0%	0 0% 0% 0%	1 0.13% 7.14% 1.41%	0.27% 14.29% 0.96%	1 0.13% 7.14% 0.41%	0 0% 0% 0%	0 0% 0% 0%	4 0.53% 28.57% 3.31%	0.13% 7.14% 2.08%	14



Q10: When is the earliest you are scheduling NEW meetings and events?



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Prior to September 2020	8.17% 61
September to Year-End 2020	32.80 % 245
Q1 2021	30.92 % 231
Q2 2021	14.32 % 107
Q3 2021	5.09% 38
Q4 2021	1.61% 12
Q1 2022 and later	7.10% 53
TOTAL	747

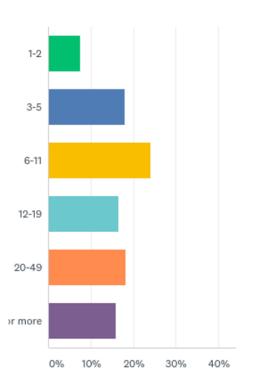


Q9: When is the earliest you are scheduling NEW meetings and events (by region)?

Count Percent of tot Row percenta Column perce	ige .	Q2 What is the p	rimary location o	f your business ar	nd your clients' busin	nesses? Please check all t	hat apply, if you	work with multip	le clients.				
		U.S.	Canada	Mexico	Caribbean	Latin America	UK	Europe	Middle East	Africa	Asia	Oceania	Total
Q10 When is the earliest you are scheduling NE	Prior to September 2020	49 6.56% 80.33% 8.22%	9 1.2% 14,75% 6.34%	7 0.94% 11,48% 5.88%	4 0.54% 6.56% 4%	5 0.67% 8.2% 7.14%	14 1.87% 22.95% 6.76%	15 2.01% 24.59% 6.22%	4 0.5496 6.5696 5.9796	6 0.8% 9.84% 12%	9 1,2% 14,75% 7,44%	3 0.496 4.9296 6.1296	61
meetings nd events?	September to Year-End 2020	185 24.77% 75.51% 31.04%	5,49% 16,73% 28,87%	36 4,82% 14,69% 30,25%	32 4,28% 13,06% 32%	19 2.54% 7.76% 27.14%	70 9.37% 28.57% 33.82%	72 9.64% 29.39% 29.88%	21 2.8196 8.5796 31.3496	13 1.74% 5.31% 26%	33 4,42% 13,47% 27,27%	20 2,68% 8,16% 40,82%	245
	Q1 2021	187 25.03% 80.95% 31.38%	46 6.16% 19.91% 32.39%	42 5.62% 18.18% 35.29%	36 4.8296 15.5896 3696	26 3.4896 11.2696 37.1496	74 9.9196 32.0396 35.7596	84 11.24% 36.36% 34.85%	23 3.08% 9.96% 34.33%	13 1,74% 5,63% 26%	39 5.22% 16.88% 32.23%	11 1,4796 4,7696 22,4596	231
	Q2 2021	85 11.38% 79.44% 14.26%	18 2.41% 16.82% 12.68%	15 2.01% 14.02% 12.61%	15 2,0196 14,0296 1596	9 1.296 8.4196 12.8696	21 2.8196 19.6396 10.1496	37 4,95% 34,58% 15,35%	10 1,3496 9,3596 14,9396	12 1,61% 11,21% 24%	18 2,41% 16,82% 14,88%	9 1,2% 8,41% 18,37%	107
	Q3 2021	32 4.28% 84.21% 5.37%	13 1.7496 34,2196 9.1596	9 1.2% 23.68% 7.56%	5 0.67% 13.16% 5%	4 0.5496 10.5396 5.7196	14 1.87% 36.84% 6.76%	14 1.87% 36.84% 5.81%	6 0.896 15.7996 8.9696	3 0,496 7,8996 696	9 1,296 23,6896 7,4496	0.27% 5.26% 4.08%	38
	Q4 2021	10 1.34% 83.33% 1.68%	0.1396 8.3396 0.796	4 0.54% 33.33% 3.36%	3 0.496 2596 396	0 096 096 096	3 0.4% 25% 1.45%	0.2796 16.6796 0.8396	0 0% 0% 0%	0 096 096	0 096 096	0 096 096 096	12
	Q1 2022 and later	48 6.43% 90.57% 8.05%	14 1.87% 26.42% 9.86%	6 0.8% 11.32% 5.04%	5 0.67% 9.43% 5%	7 0,94% 13,21% 10%	11 1.47% 20.75% 5,31%	17 2.28% 32.08% 7.05%	3 0,4% 5,66% 4,48%	3 0.496 5.6696 696	13 1.74% 24.53% 10.74%	4 0.54% 7.55% 8.16%	53



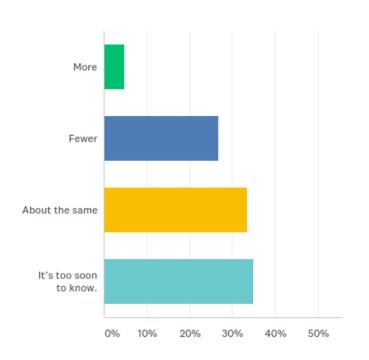
Q11: Prior to March 1, how many off-site meetings, trade shows, conventions and/or incentive travel programs in total were you involved in planning per year?



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
1-2	7.44% 56
3-5	17.93 % 135
6-11	24.04 % 181
12-19	16.47 % 124
20-49	18.19% 137
50 or more	15.94% 120
TOTAL	753



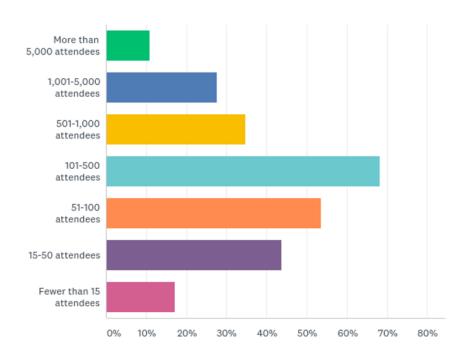
Q12: Once the threat of COVID-19 has passed, over the subsequent 12 to 18 months, will you be planning more or fewer meetings than previously?



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
More	4.91%	37
Fewer	26.69%	201
About the same	33.47%	252
It's too soon to know.	34.93%	263
TOTAL		753



Q13: Prior to March 1, what sizes were your meetings and events? (Select all that apply.)



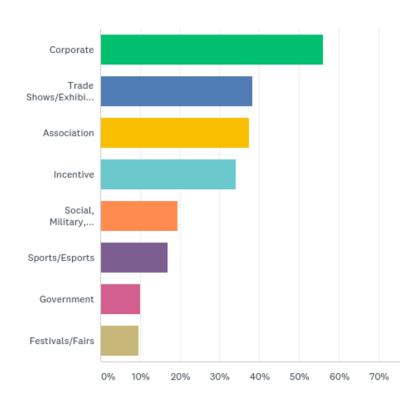
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
More than 5,000 attendees	10.89%	82
1,001-5,000 attendees	27.62%	208
501-1,000 attendees	34.79%	262
101-500 attendees	68.13%	513
51-100 attendees	53.65%	404
15-50 attendees	43.69%	329
Fewer than 15 attendees	17.13%	129
Total Respondents: 753		



Q14: Once the threat of COVID-19 has passed, over the subsequent 12 to 18 months, will you be planning more or fewer meetings of the size(s) you noted above? Please choose one in each row, and select N/A (not applicable) where appropriate.

	MORE	FEWER	ABOUT THE SAME	TOTAL
More than 5,000 attendees	2.61% 4	47.06% 72	50.33% 77	153
1,001-5,000 attendees	5.58% 15	36.06% 97	58.36% 157	269
501-1,000 attendees	5.04% 18	33.89% 121	61.06% 218	357
101-500 attendees	4.90% 29	31.42% 186	63.68% 377	592
51-100 attendees	10.93% 61	26.16% 146	62.90 % 351	558
15-50 attendees	20.20% 103	16.27% 83	63.53% 324	510
Fewer than 15 attendees	19.06% 65	15.54% 53	65.40% 223	341

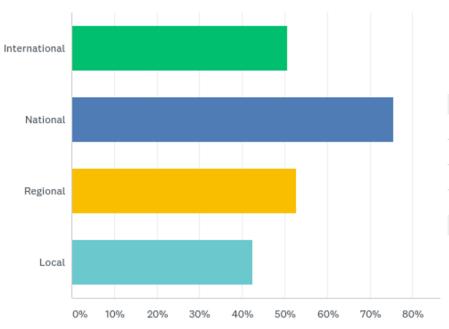
Q15: Prior to March 1, what types of meetings, events and incentive programs did you plan? (Select all that apply.)



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Corporate	56.04%	422
Trade Shows/Exhibitions/Congresses	38.25%	288
Association	37.45%	282
Incentive	34.00%	256
Social, Military, Education, Religion, Fraternal	19.52%	147
Sports/Esports	17.00%	128
Government	10.09%	76
Festivals/Fairs	9.56%	72
Total Respondents: 753		



Q16: Prior to March 1, where were the meetings, events and incentive programs you planned held? (Select all that apply.)



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
International	50.60%	382
National	75.50%	570
Regional	52.72%	398
Local	42.38%	320
Total Respondents: 755		



Q17: Once the threat of COVID-19 has passed, over the subsequent 12 to 18 months, relative to before the crisis, do you expect to plan more, fewer or about the same number of the meeting types and locations noted above?

	MORE	FEWER	ABOUT THE SAME	TOTAL
International	4.47% 19	48.00% 204	47.53% 202	425
National	9.87% 61	26.38% 163	63.75% 394	618
Regional	19.89% 105	21.21% 112	58.90% 311	528
Local	24.44% 119	17.25% 84	58.32% 284	487
Trade Shows/Exhibitions/Congresses	3.72% 12	34.98% 113	61.30% 198	323
Association	4.58% 14	22.22% 68	73.20% 224	306
Corporate	8.33% 34	31.62% 129	60.05% 245	408
Government	12.96% 14	30.56 %	56.48% 61	108
Social, Military, Education, Religion, Fraternal	11.56% 20	27.17% 47	61.27% 106	173
Sports/Esports	10.74% 16	32.21% 48	57.05% 85	149
Festivals/Fairs	9.82% 11	41.07% 46	49.11% 55	112



Q18: Once the threat of COVID-19 has passed, over the subsequent 12 to 18 months, do you expect any change in the types of facilities you select for off-site meetings? For each venue type, please indicate "more," "fewer" or "about the same".

	MORE	FEWER	ABOUT THE SAME	TOTAL
Downtown Hotel	5.56% 34	16.01% 98	78.43% 480	612
Suburban Hotel	10.00% 46	14.13% 65	75.87% 349	460
Boutique Hotel	9.40% 41	15.14% 66	75.46% 329	436
Airport Hotel	6.73% 23	22.22% 76	71.05% 243	342
Resort	9.38% 47	16.37% 82	74.25% 372	501
Golf Resort	5.35%	20.75% 66	73.90% 235	318
Conference Center	5.83% 26	22.65% 101	71.52% 319	446
Convention Center	6.04% 23	25.72% 98	68.24% 260	381
Sports Facility/Stadium/Arena	8.57% 18	31.43% 66	60.00% 126	210
Gaming Facility	6.94%	32.37% 56	60.69% 105	173
Cruise Ship	7.74% 12	60.65% 94	31.61% 49	155
Other	15.65% 23	12.24%	72.11% 106	147

Q19: Once the threat of COVID-19 has passed, over the subsequent 12 to 18 months, do you expect you will require more or fewer of these products/services to plan your meetings and events? (Check all that apply.)

	MORE	FEWER	ABOUT THE SAME	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Virtual event platforms	81.61% 497	4.76% 29	13.63% 83	609	1.32
Virtual site visits	76.25% 443	4.99% 29	18.76% 109	581	1.43
Education specific to legal matters	62.10% 326	2.67% 14	35.24% 185	525	1.73
Education specific to health/medical safety matters	73.50% 405	2.72% 15	23.77% 131	551	1.50
Engagement of professional legal advisory services	47.60% 238	3.00% 15	49.40% 247	500	2.02
Engagement of health/medical safety advisory services	64.13% 320	3.81% 19	32.06% 160	499	1.68
In-person, hosted-buyer events and fams to support buying decisions	22.35% 116	26.59% 138	51.06% 265	519	2.29
Virtual hosted-buyer events and fams to support buying decisions	65.57% 278	10.38% 44	24.06% 102	424	1.58
Event management software	25.76% 136	7.01% 37	67.23% 355	528	2.41
Event marketing software	26.67% 120	5.78% 26	67.56% 304	450	2.41
On-site attendee-tracking tools	28.54% 137	7.92% 38	63.54% 305	480	2.35
Improved RFP tools	32.07% 152	5.27% 25	62.66% 297	474	2.31



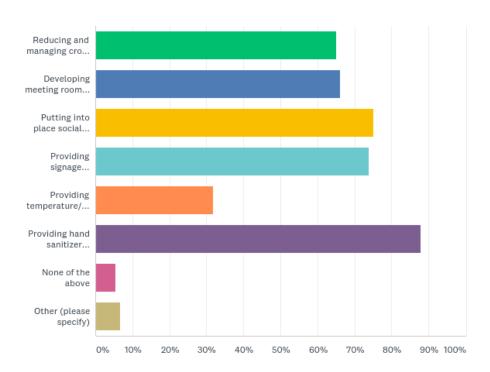
Q20: How concerned are you about the following, relative to conditions before March 1, 2020? (Choose one in each row.)

	VERY CONCERNED	SOMEWHAT CONCERNED	NOT CONCERNED	TOTAL
Reduced demand for in- person meetings and events	42.39% 309	38.27% 279	19.34% 141	729
Reduced meeting and event budgets	47.28% 348	36.14% 266	16.58% 122	736
Travel policy updates restricting business travel	52.86% 388	31.74% 233	15.40% 113	734
New best practices for gatherings	38.08% 278	40.41% 295	21.51% 157	730
Airline accessibility	32.17% 221	40.17% 276	27.66% 190	687
Airline fares	31.54% 217	39.10% 269	29.36% 202	688
Hotel and venue health and safety preparedness	39.56% 288	38.32% 279	22.12% 161	728
Hotel and venue availability	25.86% 187	40.66% 294	33.47% 242	723

	VERY CONCERNED	SOMEWHAT CONCERNED	NOT CONCERNED	TOTAL
Hotel and venue service levels	29.86% 215	36.81% 265	33.33% 240	720
Hotel and venue pricing and rates	34.76% 252	40.97% 297	24.28% 176	725
Hotel commission policies	28.23% 179	32.97% 209	38.80% 246	634
Food-and-beverage safety	33.56% 243	35.64% 258	30.80% 223	724
Food-and-beverage pricing	29.32% 212	41.91% 303	28.77% 208	723
DMO availability and service levels	16.64% 91	36.01% 197	47.35% 259	547
DMC availability and service levels	16.93% 95	35.12% 197	47.95% 269	561



Q21: Are you considering any of the following in the planning of future events? (Select all that apply.)



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPON	ISES
Reducing and managing crowd densities	64.97%	486
Developing meeting room designs to encourage physical distancing	66.04%	494
Putting into place social responsibility best practices, including protocols for attendees who are ill	75.13%	562
Providing signage regarding prevention and control measures (shaking hands, washing hands, etc.)	73.93%	553
Providing temperature/health screening	31.82%	238
Providing hand sanitizer on-site for staff and attendees	87.97%	658
None of the above	5.35%	40
Other (please specify)	6.68%	50
Total Respondents: 748		

