

PULSE SURVEY

**NEW  
DATA**

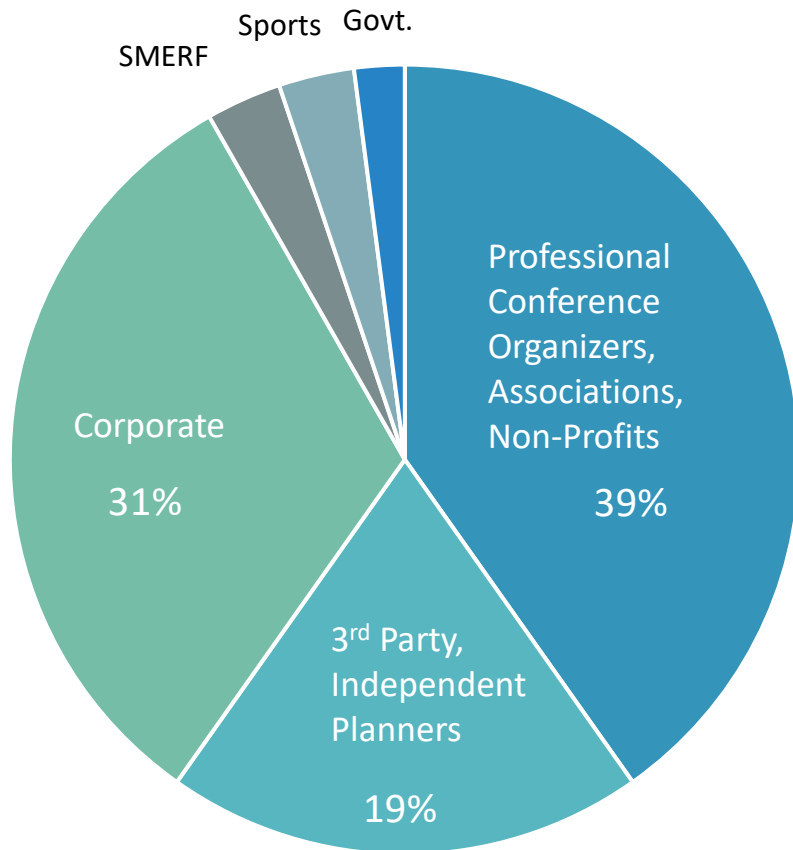
# **THE FUTURE OF MEETINGS AND EVENTS IN THE ERA OF COVID-19**

APRIL 15, 2021

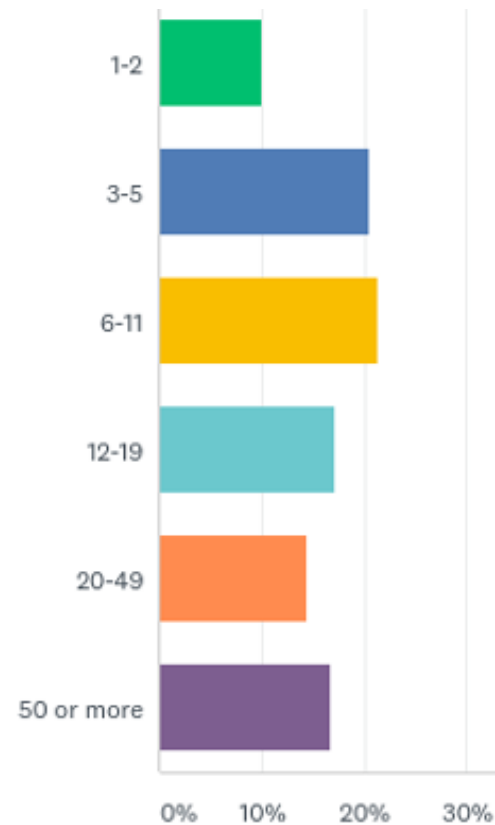


# Respondents By Type, Volume and Size

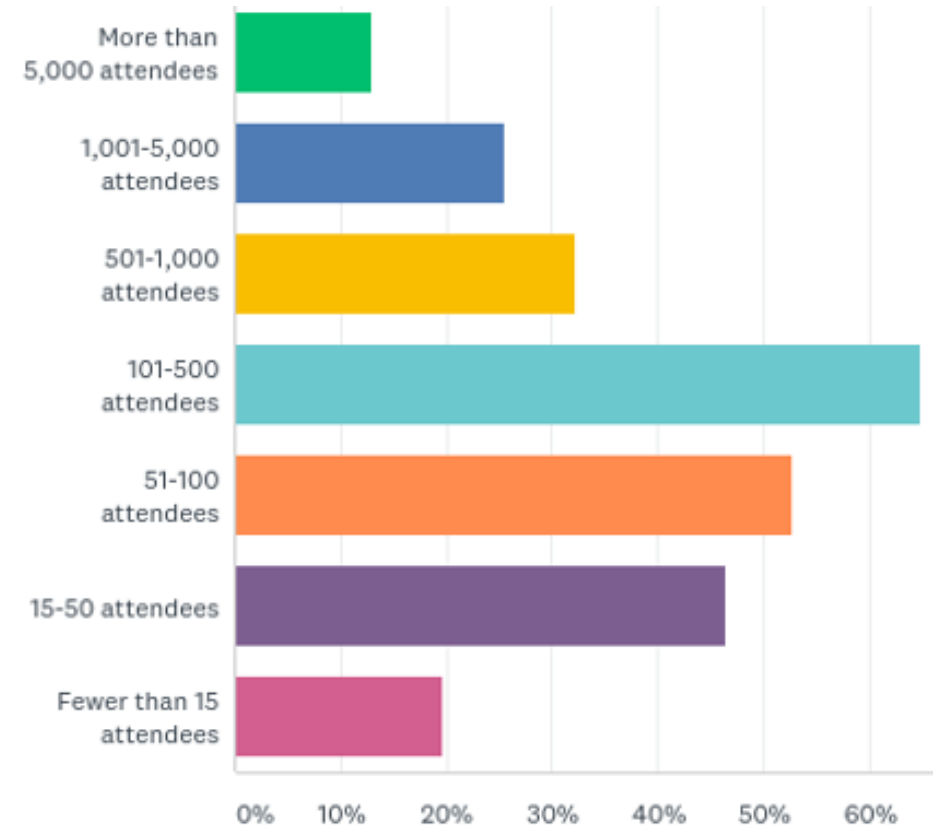
632 Valid Planner Responses



Type



# of Meetings



Size of Meeting

# New Business, Sourcing Continue to Rebound

## Booking Activity Up 50%; Sourcing and Researching Also Up

For the first time, indicators of new business activity grow month over month as the recovery gains momentum.

What is your current primary focus as it pertains to your live, in-person events?

Responses as of April 14, 2021

### ANSWER CHOICES

I am rescheduling or rebooking events

I am researching potential new events, but not ready to issue an RFP or lead

I am actively sourcing (issuing RFPs or leads) for new events

I am booking new events

I am not currently focused on live, in-person events

### RESPONSES

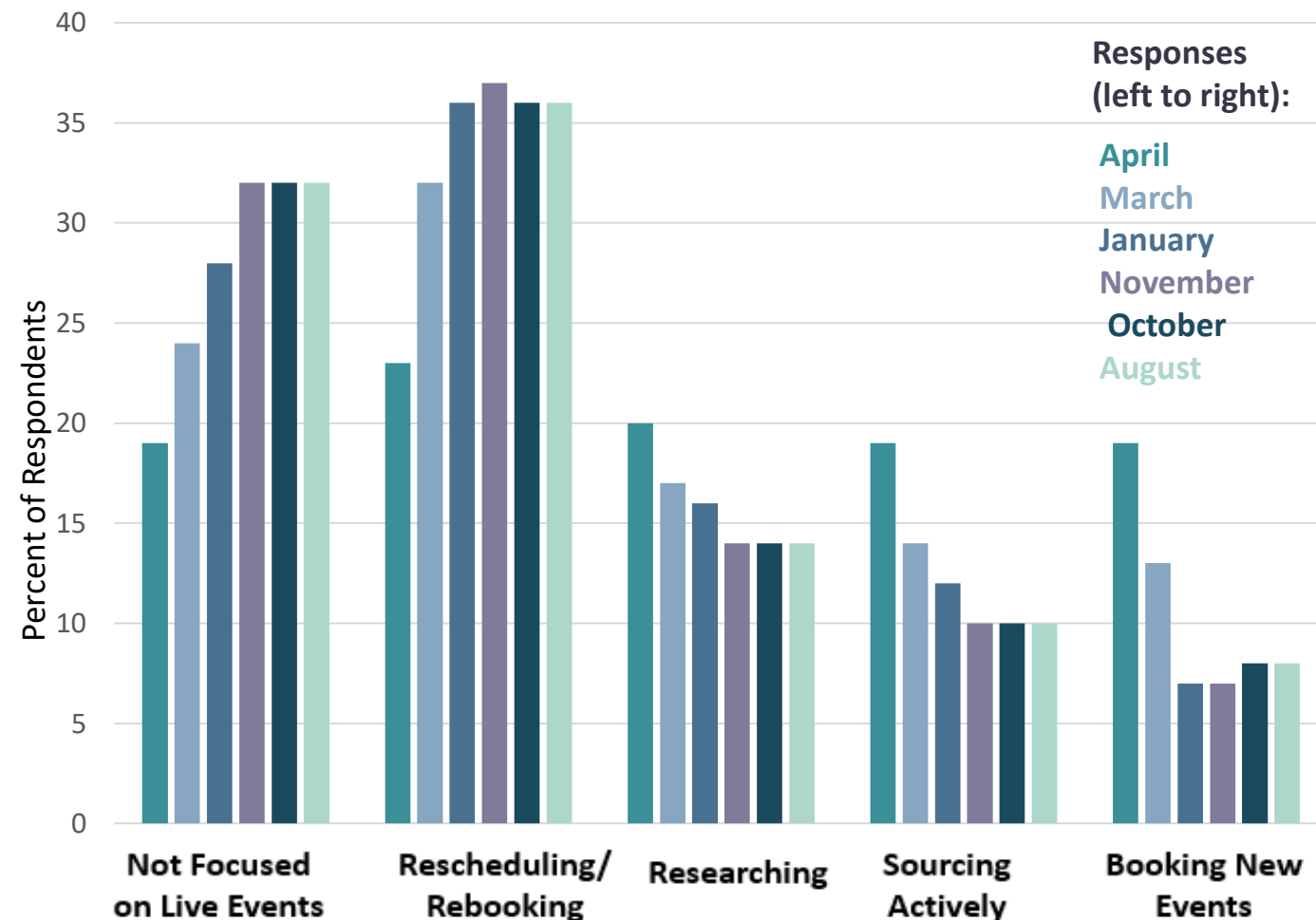
22.81%

20.35%

19.30%

18.77%

18.77%



# Who Is Booking New Events Now?

## Characteristics of Planners Booking New Events

These are the 107 planners (out of 623 total) whose *primary focus* now is booking new events.

Professional Conference Organizer	7.48%
Association/Nonprofit Organization or Association Management Company	28.97%
Third Party/Independent Planner/	25.23%
Exhibitions/Trade Show Organizer	3.74%
Government	0.00%
Travel Agency	3.74%
Social, Military, Education, Religious, Fraternal	2.80%
Sports	2.80%
Pharmaceuticals, Healthcare, Medical	25.23%

### Planners Who Are Booking Now Are:

- More likely to be association planners, independents and healthcare/pharma/medical (among corporate planners).
- More likely to expect to produce their next live event in Q2 2021 versus others who are targeting Q3.
- Expecting to plan more events and larger events than the general planner population.
- More actively engaged in currently planning hybrid events and much less likely to be planning virtual events exclusive of live events.
- Decidedly less confident in the ability of virtual events to meet their constituents' needs.
- Twice as likely to attend meetings/events themselves over the next three months.



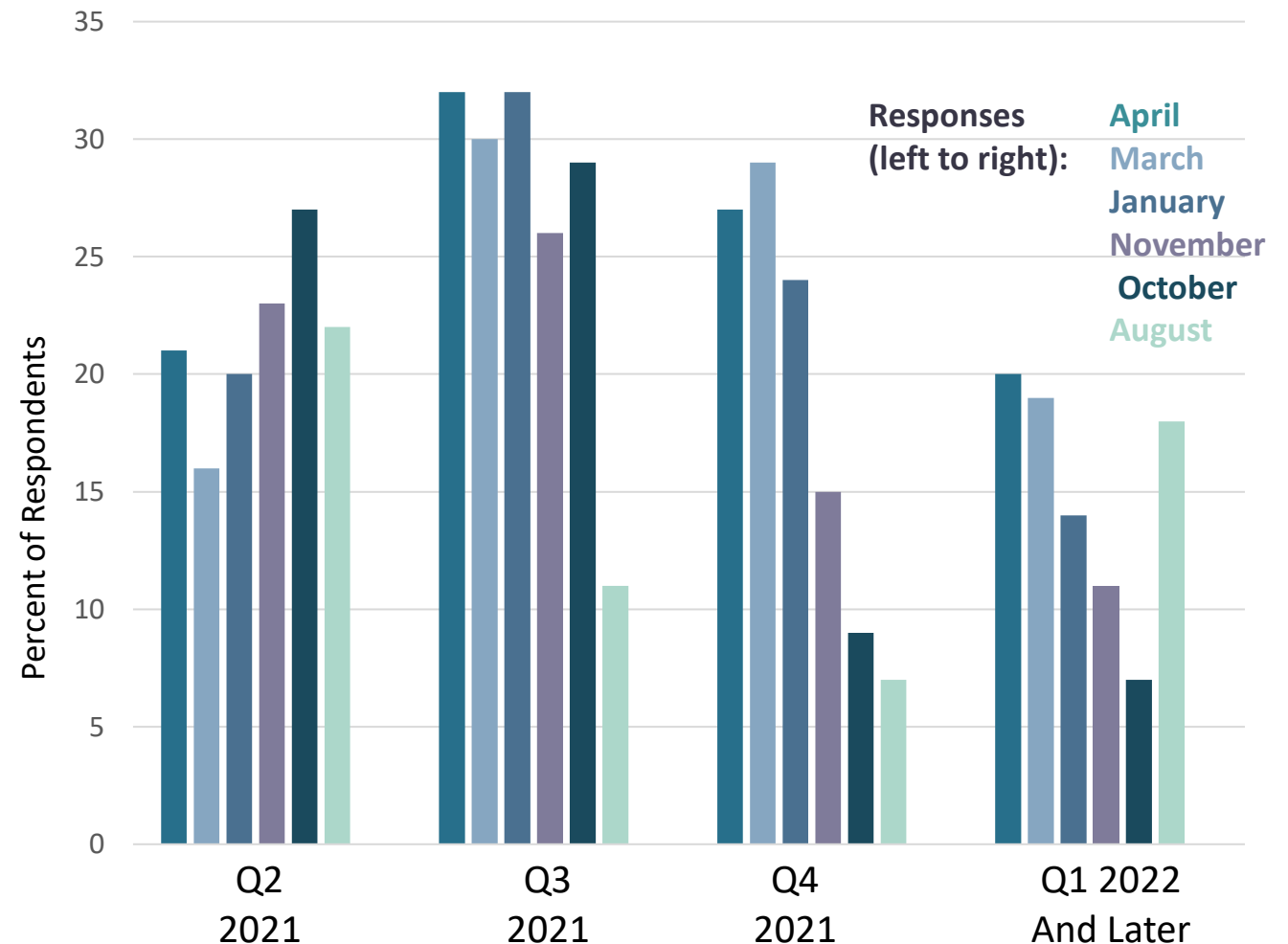
# When's Your Next Live Event?

60% of planners expect to be live in the back half of '21, while 20% look to Q1 2022 and later.

**When at the earliest do you expect to hold your next in-person or hybrid meeting or event?**

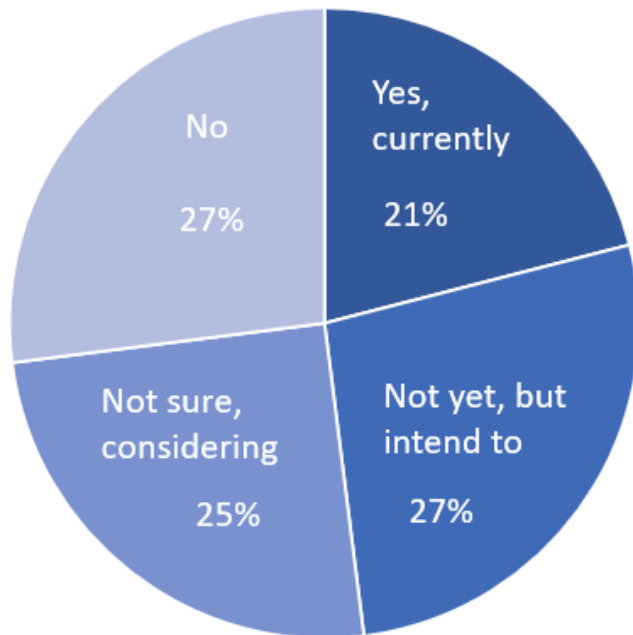
Responses as of April 14, 2021

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Q2 2021	21.25%
Q3 2021	31.96%
Q4 2021	26.79%
2022 or later	20.00%



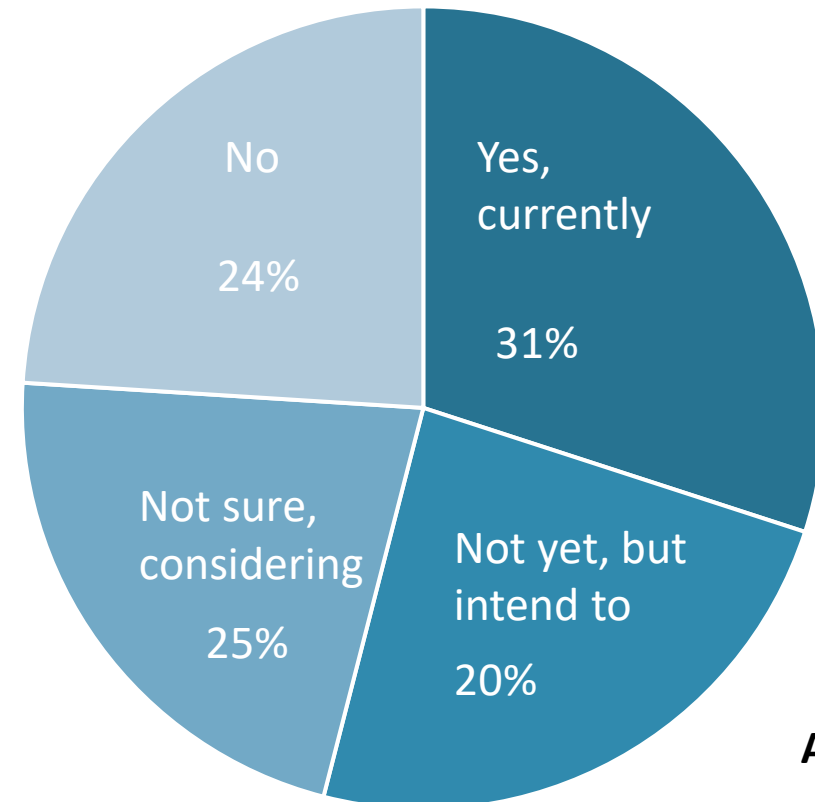
# Hybrid Model Continues to Be Viable for Many

Are you currently planning hybrid events  
(with both in-person and virtual audiences)?



January 20, 2021

Are you currently planning hybrid events  
(with both in-person and virtual audiences)?



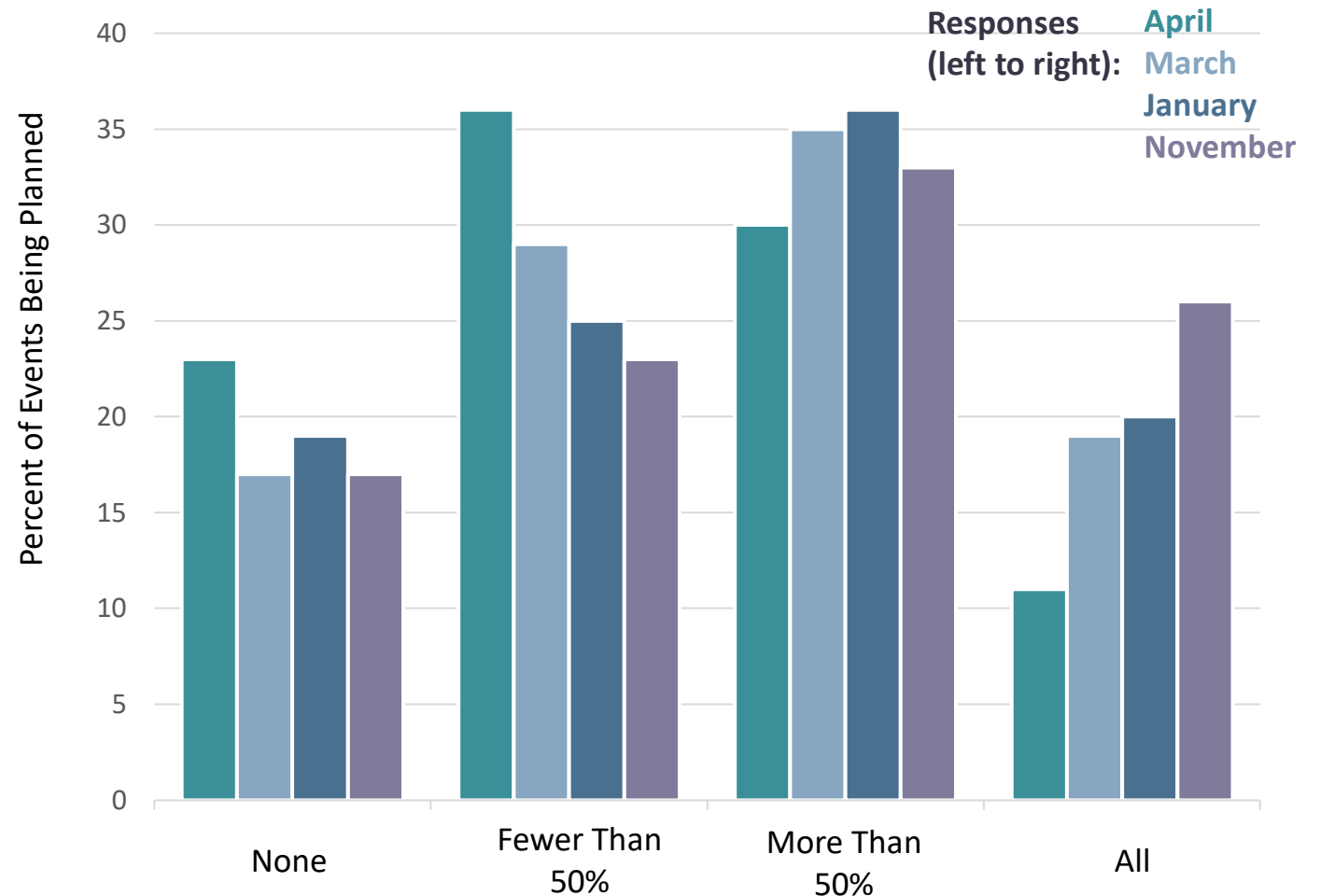
April 14, 2021



What percentage of the events you are now planning will be online only?



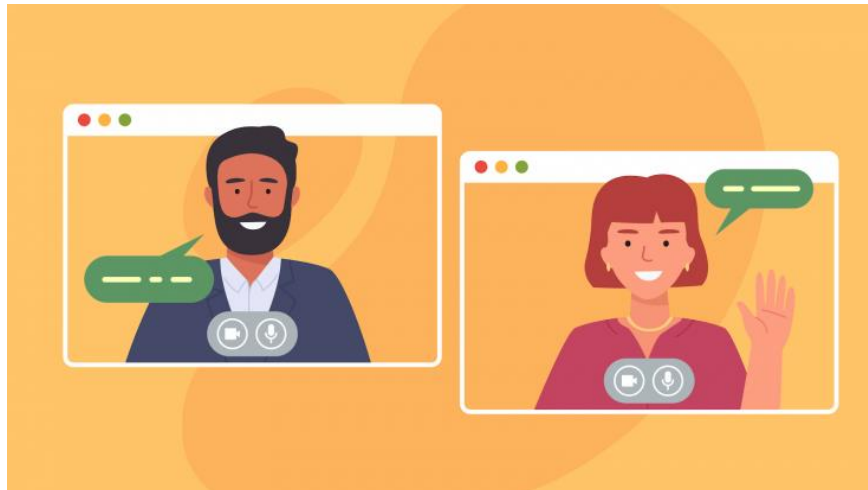
As planners shift to planning and booking in-person, they shift further away from virtual.



# Virtual Event Confidence: No Change Among U.S. Planners

Since October, planners' expectations for the success of their virtual events had fallen consistently but now that planners are doing fewer of them, confidence in them has grown.

How successful will virtual events be for your constituents?  
(with 1 = not at all confident; 5 = highly confident)



October

3.13

November

2.98

January

2.81

March

2.80

April

2.92



Out of 5



# More US Planners Intend to Attend Meetings Soon, Indicating Growing Confidence

Do you plan to attend any in-person meetings or business events over the next three months?

*Only*  
**54%**

*Now Say*  
**“No”**



As of November 19, 2020

**71%** Said “No”

As of January 20, 2021

**76%** Said “No”

As of March 2, 2021

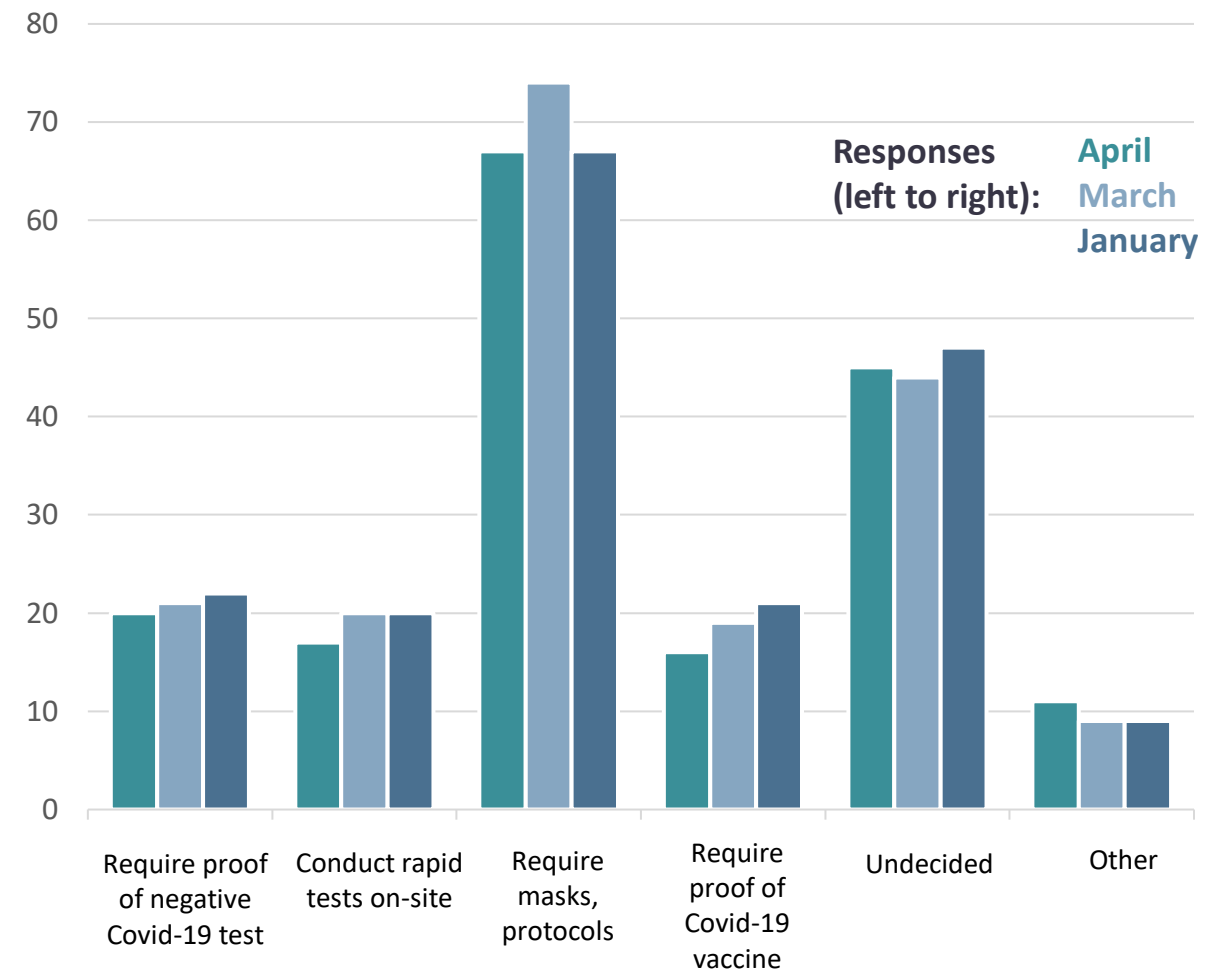
**69%** Said “No”

# Support for Requiring Masks, Protocols Ebbs



Even though 80% of planners intend to meet this year, one in three do not plan to require masks and other safety protocols.

Which of the following measures do you expect to enact at your next in-person event?

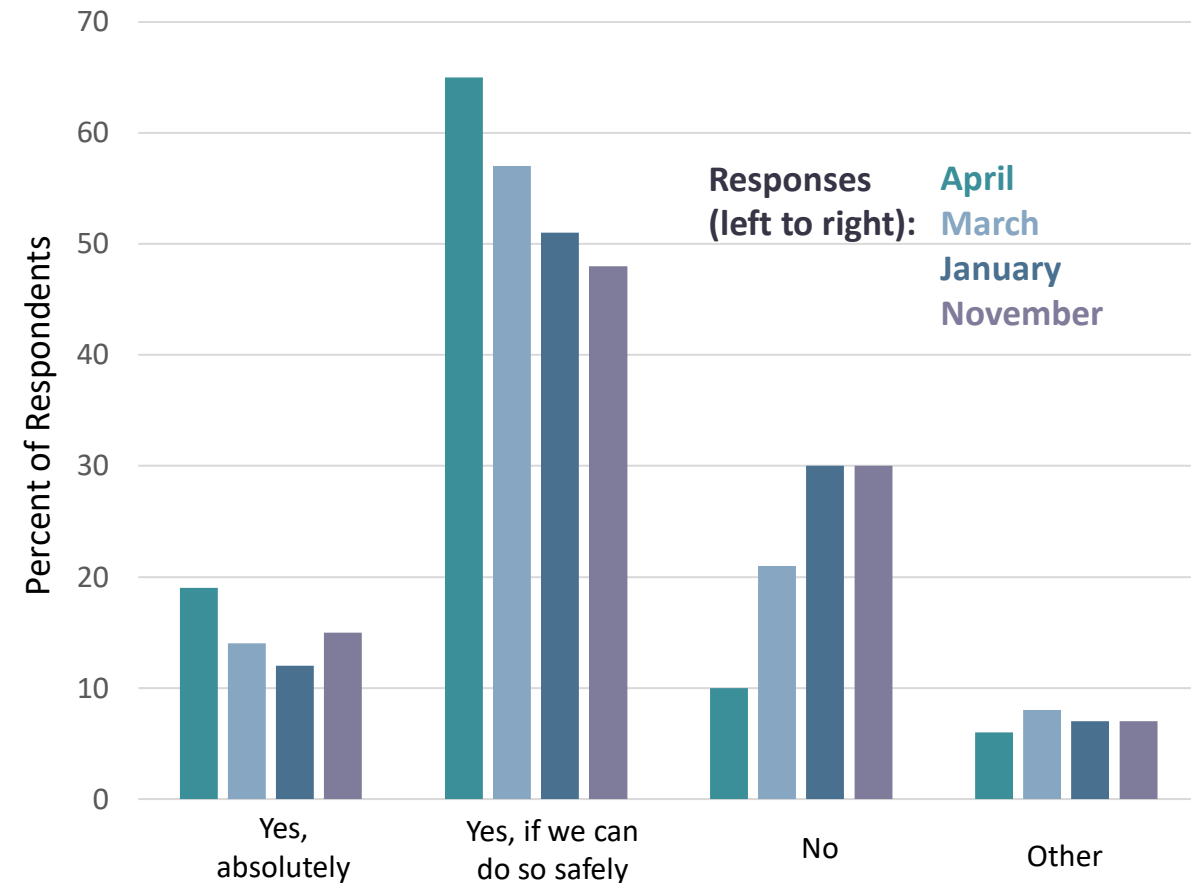


# More Planners Support Industry Meetings



**Most planners think the industry should gather again, safely.**

**Should meetings industry organizations or related businesses be holding in-person meetings?**



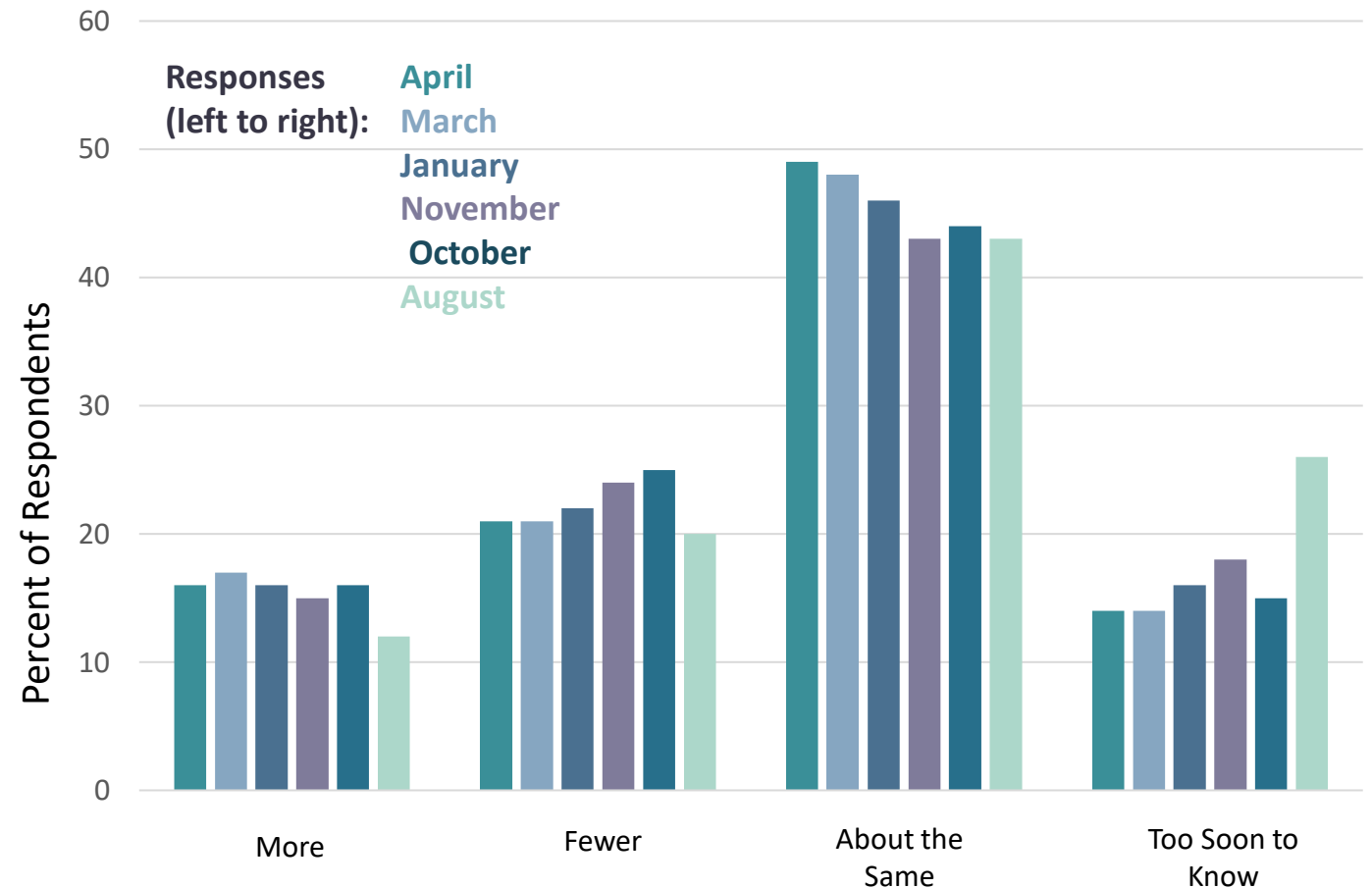
# More Planners Expect the Same Number of Meetings

Although booking has increased, planners' expectations stay flat to previous cycles.

When in-person gatherings are no longer restricted, do you expect more or fewer in-person or hybrid meetings than before Covid-19?

April 14, 2021 Responses

▼ More	15.50%
▼ Fewer	21.26%
▼ About the same	49.19%
▼ It's too soon to know.	14.05%

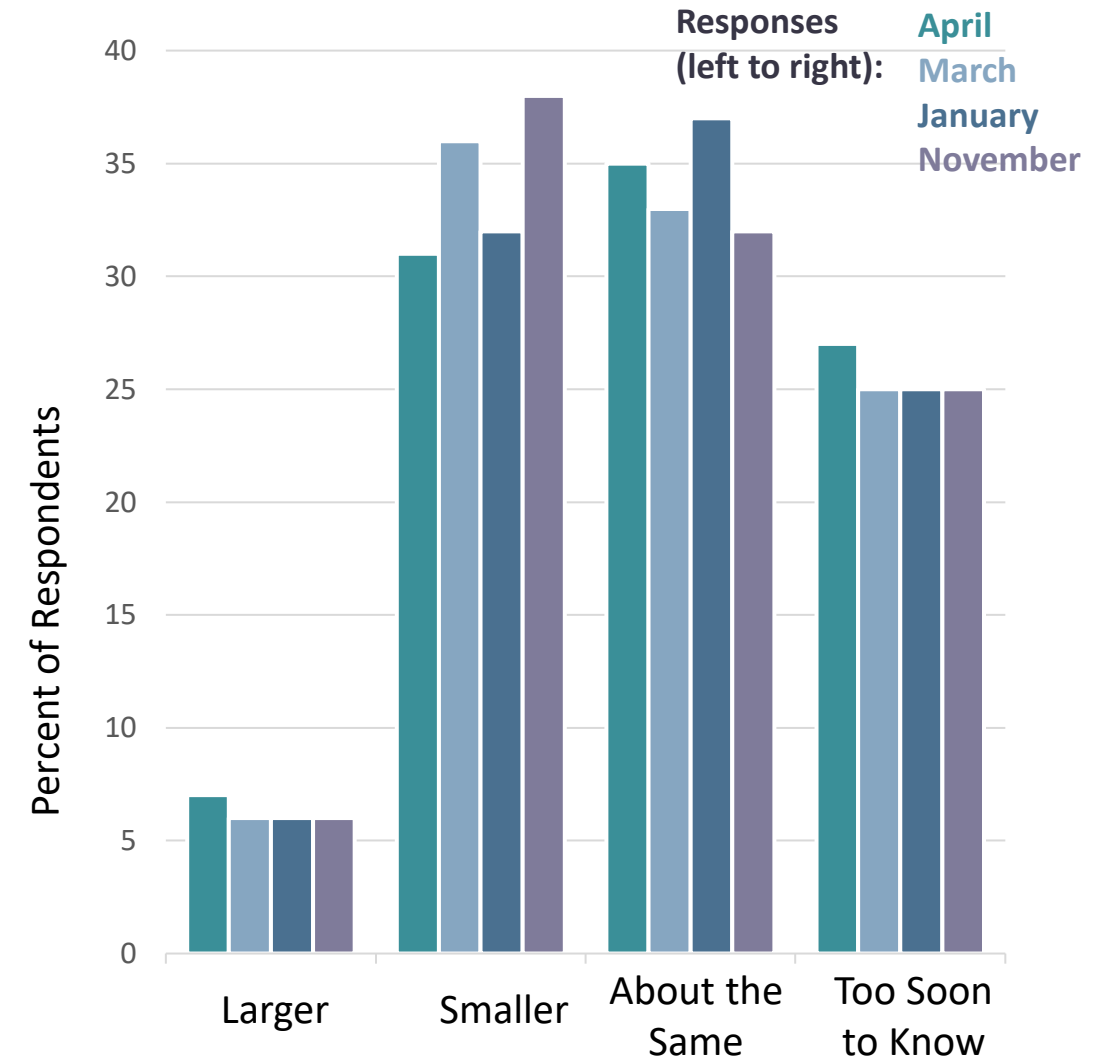
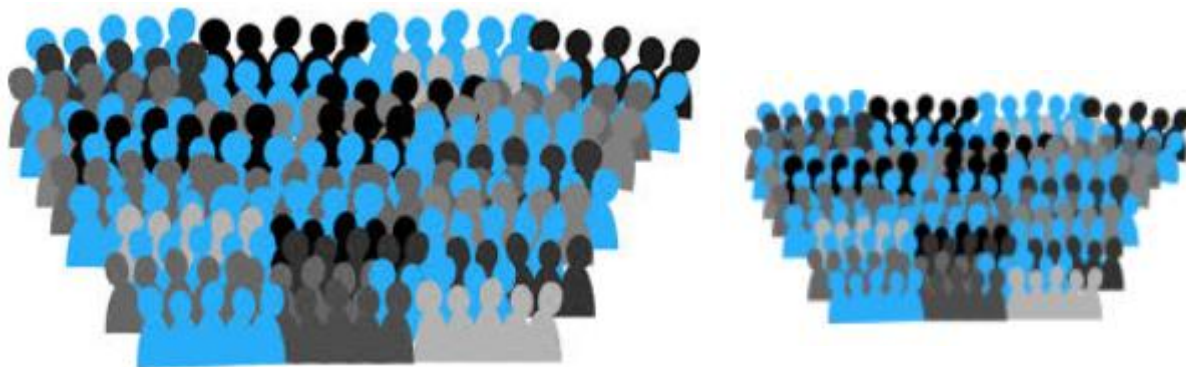




# “About the Same” Is Again the Hope

**As confidence builds, planners are more optimistic that audiences will come back.**

When in-person gatherings are no longer restricted, will the size of your live audiences be larger or smaller than before Covid-19?





# As Confidence Grows, Fears Begin to Recede

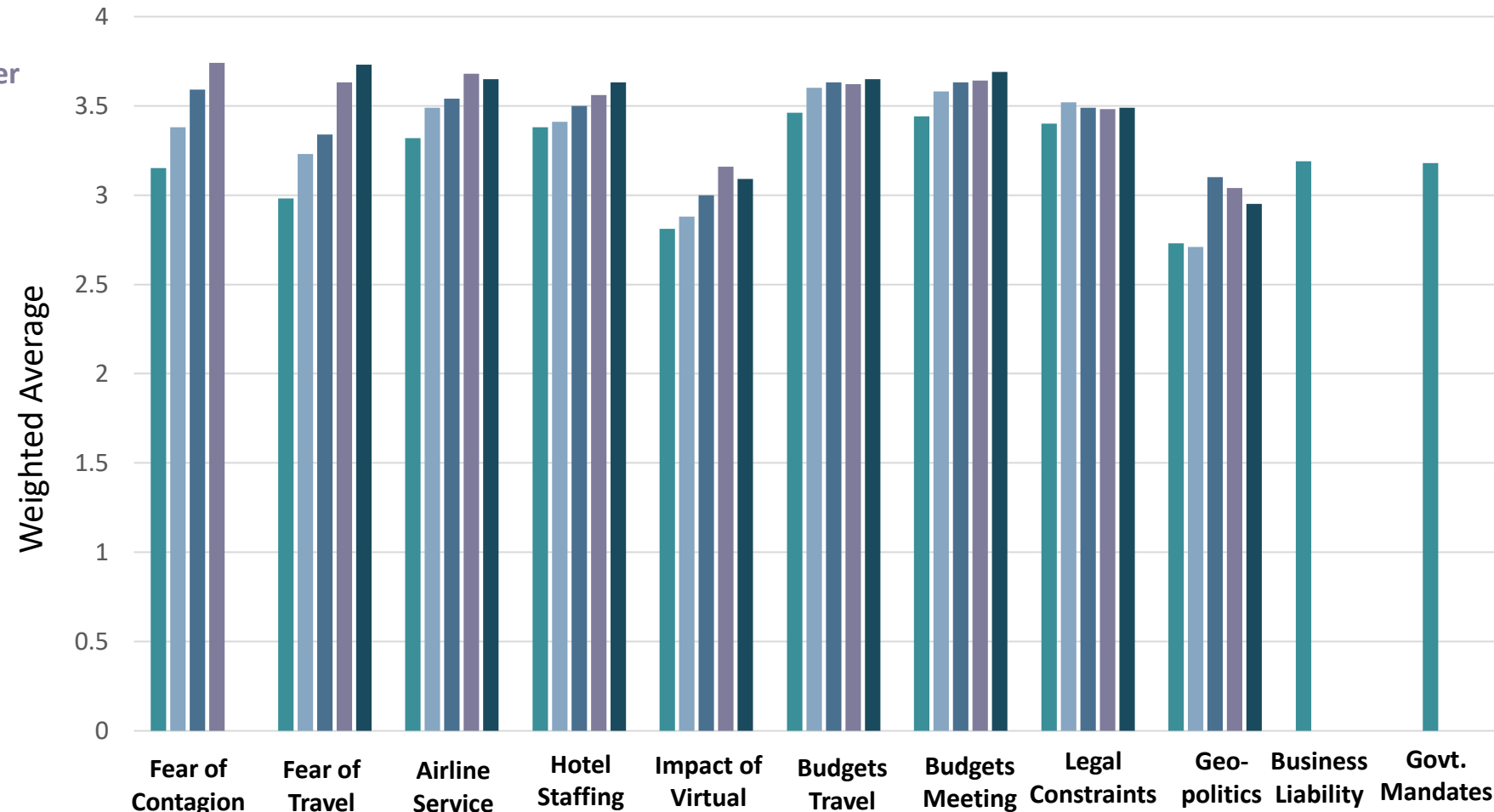
Responses  
(left to right):

April  
March  
January  
November  
October

*For your future in-person or hybrid events, how concerned are you about the following? Rate each on a scale of 1 to 5 (with 1 being “not at all concerned” and 5 being “extremely concerned”)*

**Business liability risk  
and government  
mandates are as  
much a concern as  
fear of contagion.**

**It's More About Budgets Now, Less About Contagion Fears**



## In Summary:

- ✓ For the first time since the pandemic struck, for the second consecutive cycle planners report **increased activity and confidence**.
- ✓ 80% of all planners expect their next live event to be produced in 2021.
- ✓ Hybrid is still happening -- More than 50% of planners are planning for hybrid now or intend to plan for it soon.
- ✓ As planners shift to planning and booking in-person events, they continue to shift away from virtual.
- ✓ More planners are ready to meet again themselves and support industry meetings, boding well for MPI WEC and IMEX America, among others.
- ✓ One in three meeting planners will not require masks at their next event.
- ✓ Fear of contagion becomes less of a concern relative to economic constraints.

## Selected Verbatim Comments:

- “We need to OPEN UP! Texas and Florida have shown that in-person meetings are possible and can be successful.”
- “We are heading into a tricky time for in-person meetings. As restrictions lift, should meeting planners still require masks if the hotel or state has lifted that mandate? Some will want us to, and others are coming back to live meetings because they’re being held in a mask-free state. This will be a hard line to walk for all of us.”
- “I would caution against proceeding with in-person events without gauging the interest of your membership, sponsors and exhibitors.”
- “Restoring confidence is our number-one challenge. Until people are confident that travel and events are safe, secure, responsible and do not present potential liabilities or risks, we will only see gradual recovery.”
- “I see no harm in proving you had the vaccine, but it has become a political football. The well-being of others should take priority. Nothing partisan should enter the conversation. Large gatherings are only going to thrive if people feel safe and their health is protected.”
- “This has been the most trying time of my 20-year meeting-planning career. I find myself wondering if it is time for a career change or job change.”