COVID-19 Recovery Dashboard

Survey and analysis by PCMA
Charts and design by Point Five

Since March, PCMA has issued regular surveys of the business events industry globally. In this latest installment of the COVID-19 Recovery Dashboard survey series, we've focused exclusively on the APAC region, including Australia, New Zealand, South East Asia, China, India, Korea, and Japan. The region covers a culturally and linguistically diverse cluster of countries that have had vastly different experiences of the COVID-19 pandemic, including when it hit, government intervention, number of cases, and second-wave impacts.

In what is the largest business events industry survey conducted for this region to date, 531 event industry professionals — 342 planners and 189 suppliers — participated.

Planner Track

We asked planners if they have or will have a digital component in an existing face-to-face event within the next three months: Thirty-two percent said the event will be entirely online; 46 percent will add a digital component; and 22 percent will only have a face-to-face element.

However, the majority — more than 65 percent — of planners said that the use of digital-event technology will *highly* impact or *extensively* impact their face-to-face

attendance at events in the next six months. When considering events over the 2021 year, this dropped to 51 percent, showing that planners believe face-to-face attendance will start to somewhat come back.

Half of planner respondents believe that smaller local and regional events will thrive before national and international groups gather; 28 percent believe small in-person events will go hybrid, with digital versions for larger events; the rest are split between believing people will be hesitant to travel to meet face-to-face (16 percent) and those who think there will be a pent-up demand for all groups to meet face-to-face (12 percent).

Despite the optimism for a return to face-to-face events, at least for small
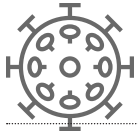
events in 2021, more than half (52 percent) said COVID-19 has impacted their revenue by greater than 75 percent when compared to the same period in 2019, while around one-quarter said they had a decline of revenue of between 51-75 percent.

Forty percent believed their revenue would be down 25-50 percent in 2021, and 24 percent said would be down 51-75 percent. Of greater concern is that 10 percent said their revenue would be down more than 75 percent next year.

Participants cited their biggest financial challenge regarding planning as being able to budget for a hybrid event coupled with how to budget for expectations for face-to-face attendance. Not surprising, almost three-quarters (72 percent) of participants ranked designing digital event experiences as the top skill they need to pursue for professional success.

In terms of movement around the region, two-thirds (60 percent) of participants said they would only travel within their own country for a business event in 2020, while 10 percent would travel in the APAC region and only 2 percent would consider traveling to the United States.

Supplier Track

On the supplier side, 68 percent agreed that the rise in the use of digital-event technology will impact face-to-face attendance over the next six months. However, they were slightly more optimistic about the return to in-person events than planners in 2021 — 40 percent expected digital events will impact face-to-face events vs. 51 percent of planners.

Forty-three percent of suppliers also said that they see smaller local and regional events thriving before national and international groups gather and 23 percent (compared to 28 percent of planners) believed that small in-house events will be hybrid with a digital version for larger audiences.

The COVID-19 impact to the overall supplier revenue for 2020 was greater than for planners, with 66 percent of suppliers compared to 52 percent of planners noting a decline greater than 75 percent.

In order to prepare successfully for the business events industry in the recovery, suppliers said they needed to develop sales and marketing approaches best suited to a post-COVID-19 market (66 percent), learn how to design live experiences with more stringent hygiene standards (55 percent), and upskill in how to design digital event experiences (44 percent).

Less than half (48 percent) of suppliers would only travel within their country for a business event in 2020, however 22 percent they would go anywhere if the program was worth it. Seventeen percent would travel within APAC and nearly none — 1 percent — would consider traveling to the United States.

China in Focus

In terms of recovery scenarios, Chinese suppliers and planners are more inclined to think there will be a pent-up demand for face-to-face events than APAC respondents.

At the same time, Chinese planners seem more likely to redesign face-to-face events to a digital platform in the short term than APAC planners, since only 12 percent of Chinese planners vs. 23 percent of APAC planners are not planning a digital event. This may be attributed in part to China's overall digital infrastructure and how the Chinese have quickly adopted digital technology over the past few years (e.g., face-recognition software employed at events).

In 2021, Chinese planners and suppliers anticipate less negative economic impact on their events in 2021 than their APAC counterparts: Only 5 percent of Chinese planners and no suppliers expect declines of greater than 75 percent in 2021 vs. 10 percent of APAC planners and 13 percent of APAC suppliers. This suggests that the Chinese business events community is more confident about the return of events and is further ahead in the recovery cycle.

Finally, Chinese suppliers are far more willing to travel within their own country for an industry event than APAC suppliers: 75 percent vs. 47 percent of APAC suppliers. This suggests Chinese confidence that the virus is under control and their reliance on China's large domestic market, which means suppliers have less of a need to travel farther away, compared to other APAC destinations.
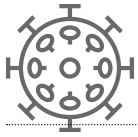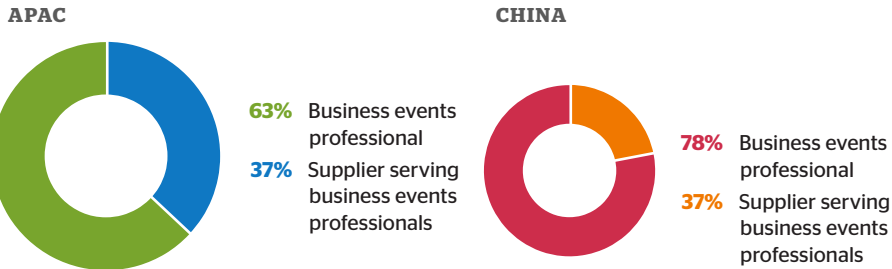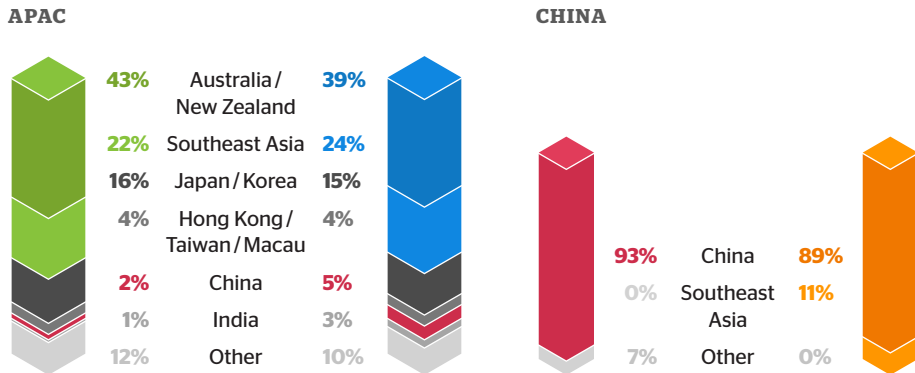
- 🟩 **APAC PLANNER TRACK**
- 🟦 **APAC SUPPLIER TRACK**
- 🟥 **CHINA PLANNER TRACK**
- 🟧 **CHINA SUPPLIER TRACK**

What best describes your role in the business events industry?

APAC

- 63% Business events professional
- 37% Supplier serving business events professionals

CHINA

- 78% Business events professional
- 37% Supplier serving business events professionals

What region best represents where you do the majority of your business?

APAC

43%	Australia / New Zealand	39%
22%	Southeast Asia	24%
16%	Japan / Korea	15%
4%	Hong Kong / Taiwan / Macau	4%
2%	China	5%
1%	India	3%
12%	Other	10%

CHINA

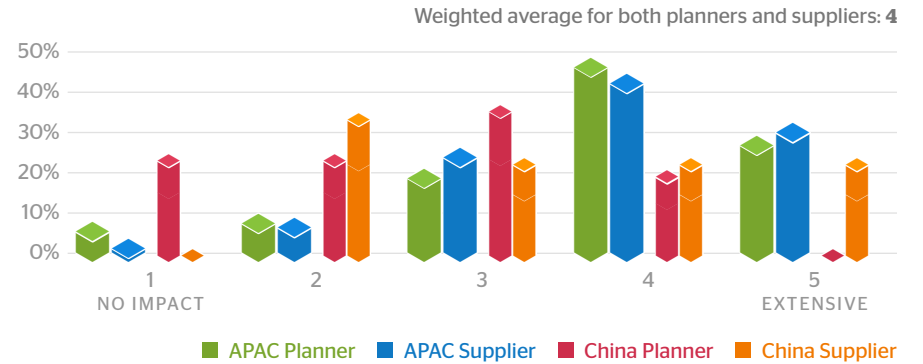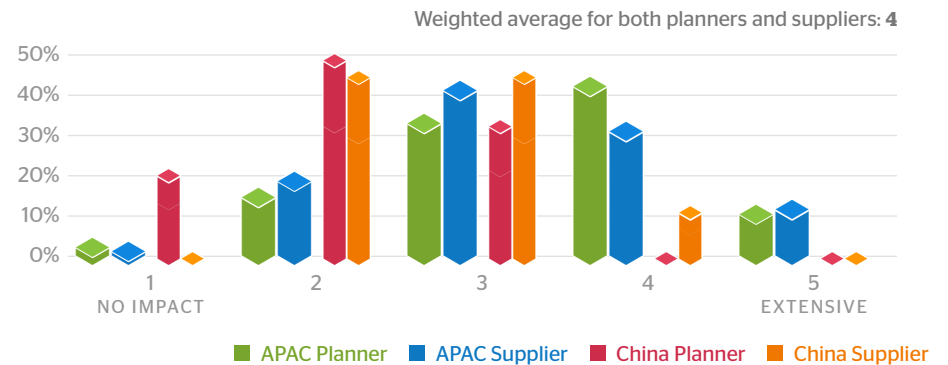|		
93%	China	89%
0%	Southeast Asia	11%
7%	Other	0%

51%

OF APAC-BASED PLANNERS ANTICIPATE THAT DIGITAL EVENT TECHNOLOGY WILL HIGHLY OR EXTENSIVELY IMPACT FACE-TO-FACE ATTENDANCE AT THEIR EVENTS IN 2021.

To what extent do you believe the rise in the use of digital-event technology will impact face-to-face attendance at your event/s in the **next six months** on a scale of 1 to 5?

Weighted average for both planners and suppliers: 4

1 — NO IMPACT … 5 — EXTENSIVE

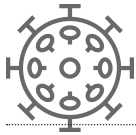- 🟩 APAC Planner
- 🟦 APAC Supplier
- 🟥 China Planner
- 🟧 China Supplier

To what extent do you believe the rise in the use of digital-event technology will impact face-to-face attendance at your event/s in the **in 2021** on a scale of 1 to 5?

Weighted average for both planners and suppliers: 4

1 — NO IMPACT … 5 — EXTENSIVE

- 🟩 APAC Planner
- 🟦 APAC Supplier
- 🟥 China Planner
- 🟧 China Supplier

■ **APAC PLANNER TRACK**   ■ **CHINA PLANNER TRACK**
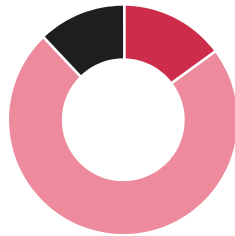■ **APAC SUPPLIER TRACK**   ■ **CHINA SUPPLIER TRACK**

Have you or are you planning to redesign an existing face-to-face event for a digital platform in the next three months?

APAC PLANNERS

CHINA PLANNERS

APAC		CHINA
34%	Yes, the entire program will be online.	**15%**
43%	Yes, there will be a digital component.	**73%**
23%	No	**12%**

APAC PLANNERS SPEAK

"Corporates are very hesitant to have any face-to-face events, this year or early next year. No corporate wants to be in the headlines for a crisis situation or outbreak. So far, it's a waiting game. However, once the crisis passes, the feeling is that smaller events and some digital components will go ahead, which really reduces the suppliers involved and management time."

"Events will become hybrid. Those who can travel or feel comfortable traveling to attend a face-to-face conference will do so, but others will be online attendees."

"There will be pent-up demand for all groups to meet face-to-face with a hybrid component."

When the pandemic crisis passes, what scenario do you think best describes the recovery of face-to-face meetings for the business events industry in your geographic region?
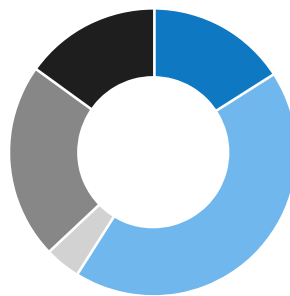
APAC PLANNERS

CHINA PLANNERS

APAC		CHINA
13%	There will be pent-up demand for all groups to meet face-to-face.	**24%**
39%	Smaller local and regional events will thrive before national and international groups gather.	**36%**
15%	People will be hesitant to travel to meet face-to-face.	**0%**
27%	Small in-person events will be hybrid, with a digital version for a larger audience.	**40%**
6%	Other	**0%**

APAC SUPPLIERS

CHINA SUPPLIERS
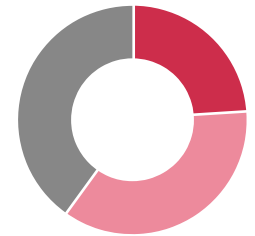
APAC		CHINA
15%	There will be pent-up demand for all groups to meet face-to-face.	**33%**
43%	Smaller local and regional events will thrive before national and international groups gather.	**22%**
15%	People will be hesitant to travel to meet face-to-face.	**0%**
22%	Small in-person events will be hybrid, with a digital version for a larger audience.	**44%**
4%	Other	**0%**

APAC SUPPLIER PERSPECTIVE

"Every aspect of our country's economy is dependent on the airlines. Meetings and business events will stand still until this is addressed. We are a totally airline-dependent economy, and across tourism, business events, until we drive something resembling airline stability and access, we are at a standstill, and cannot hope to drive meetings and events business that has any yield."

"Pent-up demand exists but we anticipate delegate numbers will be reduced from what was originally expected."
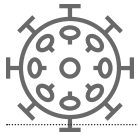
- **APAC PLANNER TRACK**
- **APAC SUPPLIER TRACK**
- **CHINA PLANNER TRACK**
- **CHINA SUPPLIER TRACK**

What do you believe will be the overall revenue impact of COVID-19 on your events-related business for the **rest of 2020**?

Decline greater than 75%
- APAC Planner: 55%
- APAC Supplier: 66%
- China Planner: 23%
- China Supplier: 78%

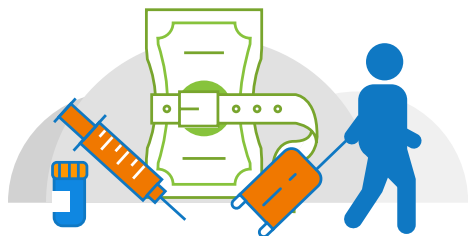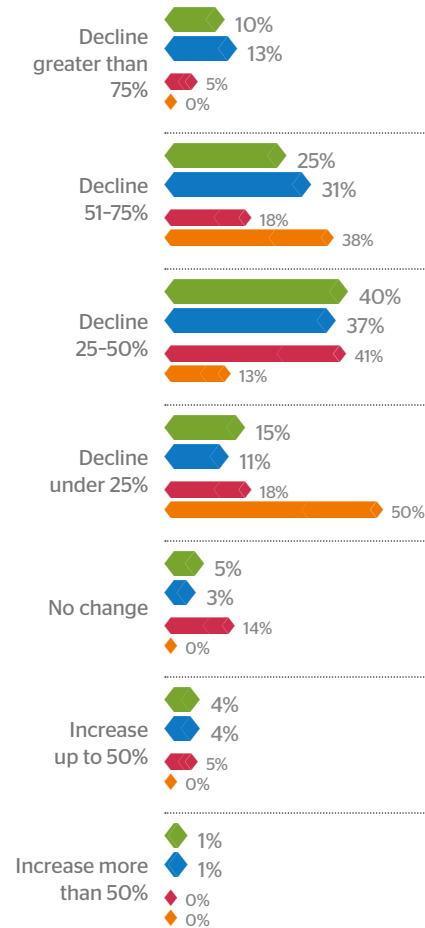**Decline 51–75%**
- APAC Planner: 26%
- APAC Supplier: 21%
- China Planner: 27%
- China Supplier: 0%

Decline 25–50%
- APAC Planner: 10%
- APAC Supplier: 8%
- China Planner: 23%
- China Supplier: 22%

Decline under 25%
- APAC Planner: 5%
- APAC Supplier: 3%
- China Planner: 23%
- China Supplier: 0%

No change
- APAC Planner: 4%
- APAC Supplier: 1%
- China Planner: 5%
- China Supplier: 0%

Increase
- APAC Planner: 1%
- APAC Supplier: 1%
- China Planner: 0%
- China Supplier: 0%

What do you believe will be the overall revenue impact of COVID-19 on your events-related business for **2021**?

Decline greater than 75%
- APAC Planner: 10%
- APAC Supplier: 13%
- China Planner: 5%
- China Supplier: 0%

Decline 51–75%
- APAC Planner: 25%
- APAC Supplier: 31%
- China Planner: 18%
- China Supplier: 38%

Decline 25–50%
- APAC Planner: 40%
- APAC Supplier: 37%
- China Planner: 41%
- China Supplier: 13%

Decline under 25%
- APAC Planner: 15%
- APAC Supplier: 11%
- China Planner: 18%
- China Supplier: 50%

No change
- APAC Planner: 5%
- APAC Supplier: 3%
- China Planner: 14%
- China Supplier: 0%

Increase up to 50%
- APAC Planner: 4%
- APAC Supplier: 4%
- China Planner: 5%
- China Supplier: 0%

Increase more than 50%
- APAC Planner: 1%
- APAC Supplier: 1%
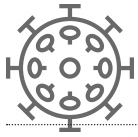- China Planner: 0%
- China Supplier: 0%

66% **OF APAC-BASED SUPPLIERS** EXPECT A REVENUE DECLINE OF GREATER THAN 75 PERCENT FOR THE REST OF 2020; ONLY 13 PERCENT EXPECT THE SAME IN 2021.

78% **OF CHINA-BASED SUPPLIERS** EXPECT A REVENUE DECLINE OF GREATER THAN 75 PERCENT FOR 2021; NONE EXPECT THE SAME FOR 2021.

■ **APAC PLANNER TRACK**   ■ **CHINA PLANNER TRACK**
■ **APAC SUPPLIER TRACK**   ■ **CHINA SUPPLIER TRACK**

In the absence of a therapeutic treatment or vaccine for the COVID-19 virus, what is the farthest distance from your home you would consider traveling to a business event in 2020, assuming there are no financial or regulatory restrictions placed on travel?

What are your biggest financial challenges with regard to planning a business event in 2021? (Please rank from 1 to 7 with 1 being the biggest challenge.)

APAC PLANNERS

CHINA PLANNERS

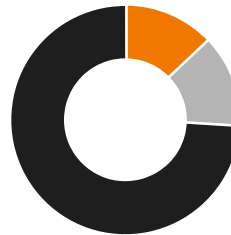|		
17%	Any distance necessary if the program was worth it	**25%**
2%	To USA	**0%**
2%	To EMEA	**5%**
10%	Within APAC	**5%**
9%	Within Asia	**15%**
61%	Within my country	**50%**

APAC SUPPLIERS

CHINA SUPPLIERS

23%	Any distance necessary if the program was worth it	**13%**
1%	To USA	**0%**
2%	To EMEA	**0%**
17%	Within APAC	**13%**
10%	Within Asia	**0%**
47%	Within my country	**75%**

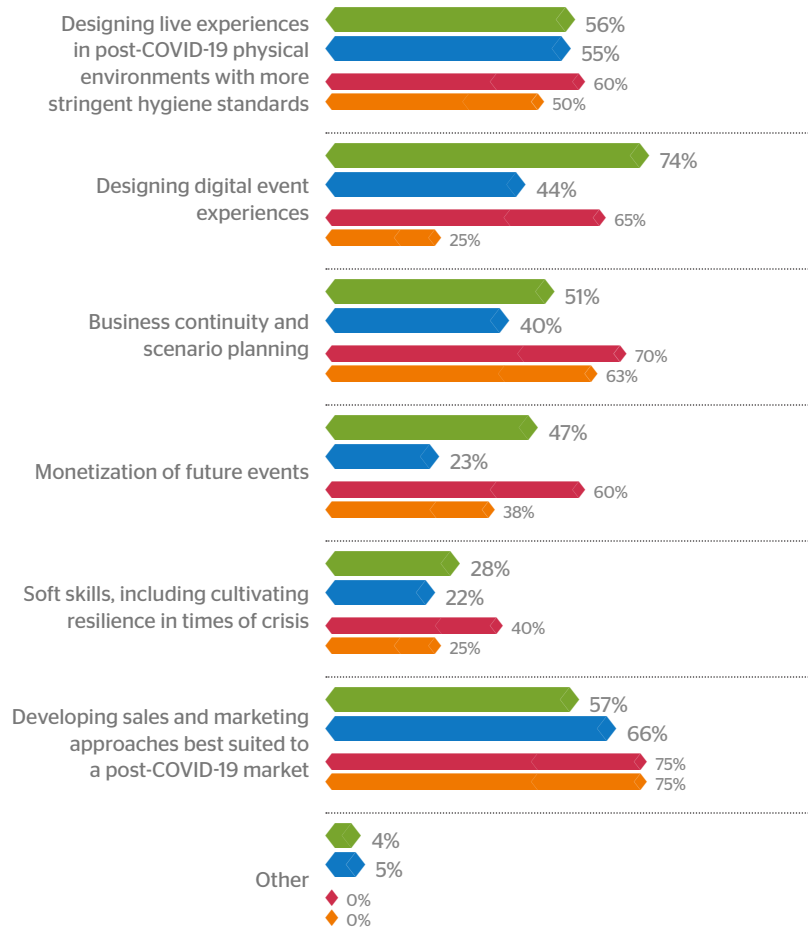| Challenge	APAC Planner	China Planner
Deciding on registration pricing for face-to-face participants	4.1	4.4
How to budget in terms of face-to-face attendance expectations	4.6	4.9
Expenses related to enhanced hygiene and sanitary standards at a face-to-face event	3.8	3.9
Budgeting/pricing for a hybrid (in-person + digital) event	5.2	4.7
What to charge digital participants	3.7	3.1
What to charge digital event exhibitors/sponsors	3.8	4.2
Expenses related to event marketing and communications in a post COVID-19 world	2.9	3.1

■ APAC Planner   ■ China Planner

■ **APAC PLANNER TRACK** ■ **CHINA PLANNER TRACK**
■ **APAC SUPPLIER TRACK** ■ **CHINA SUPPLIER TRACK**

In order to prepare professionally for success in the business events industry during the recovery, which new skills do you think you need to pursue/develop? (Choose all that apply.)

Designing live experiences in post-COVID-19 physical environments with more stringent hygiene standards
- 56%
- 55%
- 60%
- 50%

Designing digital event experiences
- 74%
- 44%
- 65%
- 25%

Business continuity and scenario planning
- 51%
- 40%
- 70%
- 63%

Monetization of future events
- 47%
- 23%
- 60%
- 38%

Soft skills, including cultivating resilience in times of crisis
- 28%
- 22%
- 40%
- 25%

Developing sales and marketing approaches best suited to a post-COVID-19 market
- 57%
- 66%
- 75%
- 75%

Other
- 4%
- 5%
- 0%
- 0%

74%

OF APAC-BASED PLANNERS SAID THAT DESIGNING DIGITAL EVENT EXPERIENCES IS A NECESSARY SKILL FOR THEM TO DEVELOP IN ORDER TO BE SUCCESSFUL.

56%

OF APAC-BASED PLANNERS IDENTIFIED DESIGNING LIVE EXPERIENCES IN A POST-COVID-19 PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT AS A NECESSARY SKILL TO PURSUE.

APAC PLANNERS SPEAK

"[We will need to] learn how to market events to clients and how to encourage them that it's safe to hold events and what precautions we can take to minimise risk. Also learning about insurances/claims/at-fault scenarios if someone catches COVID whilst attending an event. Who is at fault? Can people sue? claim? etc."

APAC SUPPLIER PERSPECTIVE

"Design high-level virtual site-inspection programs."