

PCMA CONVENE

COVID-19 SURVEY

SURVEY DATES: NOVEMBER 16-19

# COVID-19 Recovery Dashboard

Survey and analysis by **PCMA Convene** editors

Charts and design by Point Five

The pandemic has made this year seem interminable — days, weeks, and months blur together. But the period between the last COVID-19 Recovery Dashboard, conducted Oct. 19-22, and the survey we sent out Nov. 16-19, has been punctuated by a few major events. In the U.S., the election took place and we (seem) to have a new President and administration come January.

And as we were sending out the invitation to participate in this survey, the world had just gotten word of the second highly effective vaccine: Moderna announced a week after Pfizer that its vaccine has proven to be around 95-percent effective in trials, similar to Pfizer's results.

At the same time, coronavirus cases have been spiking throughout the U.S. and in pockets around the world. Experts warn that we need to hunker down for a long winter and keep social contact to a minimum.

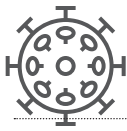
On the one hand, we have reason for optimism. On the other, we are resigned to the fact that there is more sickness, death, and heartbreak in store before we come out on the other side of this crisis. Which seemed to follow the way 570 participants — 363 planners and 207 suppliers — responded to our survey this month: In some ways they were more and in other ways they were less hopeful.

Last month we asked respondents to share how they were feeling in general, and for planners, this question elicited more hopeful responses than last time — 43 percent reported feeling hopeful compared to 33 percent in the last survey. Around the same percentage of suppliers (38 percent) checked off “hopeful” as in the last survey, but 6 percent more this time said they were doing their best to get by (42 percent vs. 36 percent last month).

With our new question this month — In the wake of the U.S. election, has your business outlook changed? — we wanted to see if this current event has changed our industry's sentiment about a recovery. Around half of both planners and suppliers said they were more optimistic following the election, and a higher percentage of suppliers than planners reported feeling less optimistic: 20 percent vs. 14 percent. For 34 percent of planners and 29 percent of suppliers, the election results had no impact on their outlook.

Here are some differences that stood out to us when comparing the results from this month to last month.

- **Shifting emphasis on reskilling** — A higher percentage of planners are focusing their reskilling efforts on designing live experiences in post-COVID-19 physical environments this time around: 66 percent vs. 57 percent last month, suggesting that planners are preparing for hybrid as well as digital events. And six percent more suppliers this month said they are developing new business models (46 percent vs. 40 percent last month), as the pandemic wears on and our traditional ways of doing business continue to be unfeasible for the near future.
- **Greater satisfaction with tech solutions** — A higher percentage of planners this month reported feeling satisfied with their tech solutions for the digital events: 58 percent vs. 46 percent. Those who were unsatisfied expressed the desire to find a platform that served as an all-in-one solution and offered features that improved virtual trade-show and networking experiences.
- **Not all that worth it** — When we asked if the face-to-face events that respondents had recently attended had been worth all of the precautions and safety measures necessary, suppliers were less enthusiastic this time around: 72 percent said yes vs. 82 percent last month, and slightly more said they didn't see it as a viable option for most groups (23 percent vs. 18 percent last month). Their in-person experience convinced 34 percent of planners that it wouldn't work for groups compared to 30 percent last month.

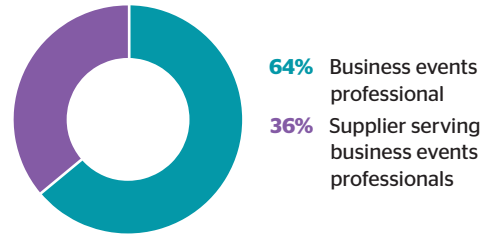


- **A greater unwillingness to travel themselves for business** — Perhaps in response to spikes in coronavirus cases over the past month, both planners and suppliers seem less inclined in this survey to travel at all to a business event until there is a widely distributed vaccine. Thirty-nine percent vs. 33 percent of planners last month said they would not travel and 27 percent vs. 18 percent of suppliers last month said the same.

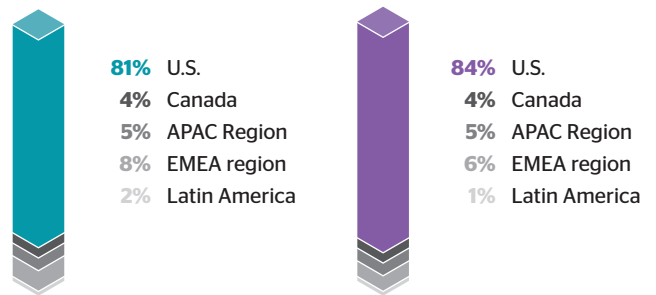
- **Seeking support** — This month, a smaller percentage of both planners and suppliers reported joining online community groups to help navigate the crisis, and those who joined a group did so for different reasons. The vast majority — nearly 90 percent — of both planners and suppliers continue to seek out community groups for idea-sharing, but the objective for 35 percent of planners (vs. 24 percent last month) is reskilling, whereas 20 percent of suppliers — vs. 12 percent last month — said they are job seeking.

This supplier respondent had a suggestion for his peers: “Anyone with audiovisual production skills, get ready to see a huge, sudden spike in demand for your skills to help corporations make the transition to hybrid meetings.”

What best describes your role in the business events industry?



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



### PLANNERS SPEAK

*“Disappointed in people in general, for not trying to help one another by simply wearing a mask.”*

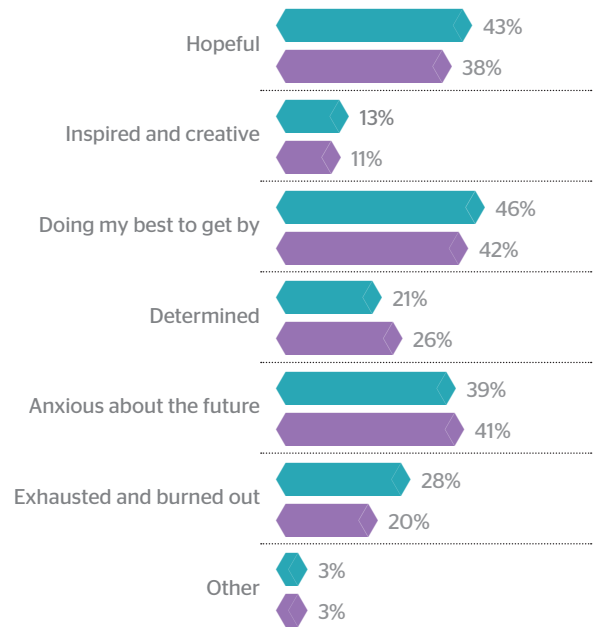
*“Hopeful about the two vaccines and the election. Still not sure when the public will be comfortable to travel and convene at trade shows.”*

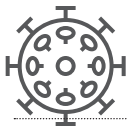
*“Ineffective and struggling to know what is the right direction to take to best benefit our members.”*

### SUPPLIER PERSPECTIVE

*“Some days can be difficult, but I have learned to turn my mindset to a positive outlook with prayers, meditation, and exercise.”*

We appreciate your input in this survey. We'd like to check in with you first. What best describes how you're feeling right now? (Choose all that apply.)

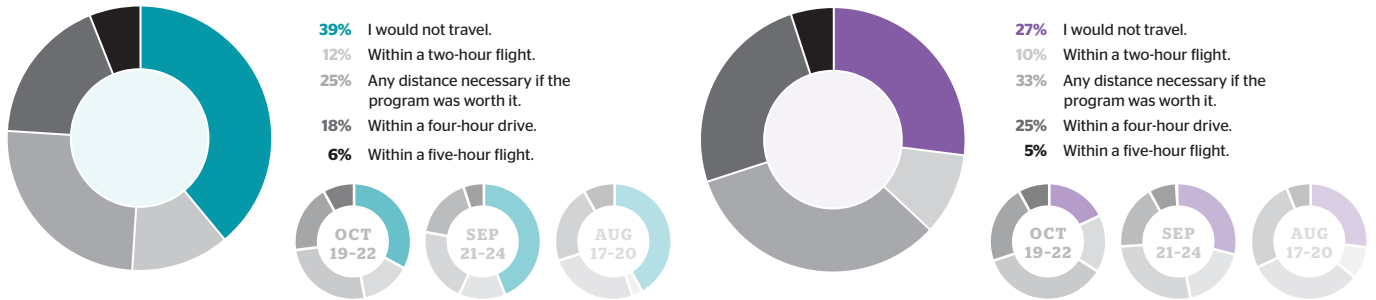




## PLANNER TRACK

## SUPPLIER TRACK

In the absence of a widely available therapeutic treatment or vaccine, what is the farthest distance you would consider traveling to a business event, assuming there are no financial or regulatory restrictions placed on travel?



## PLANNER TRACK

APR 23

MAY 21

JUN 18

JUL 16

AUG 20

SEP 24

OCT 22

NOV 19

## SUPPLIER TRACK

APR 23

MAY 21

JUN 18

JUL 16

AUG 20

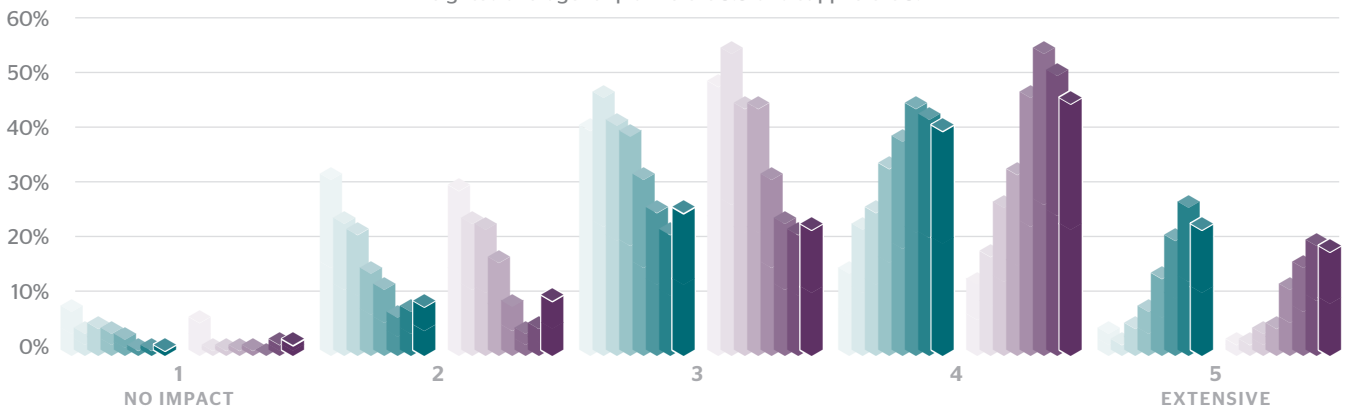
SEP 24

OCT 22

NOV 19

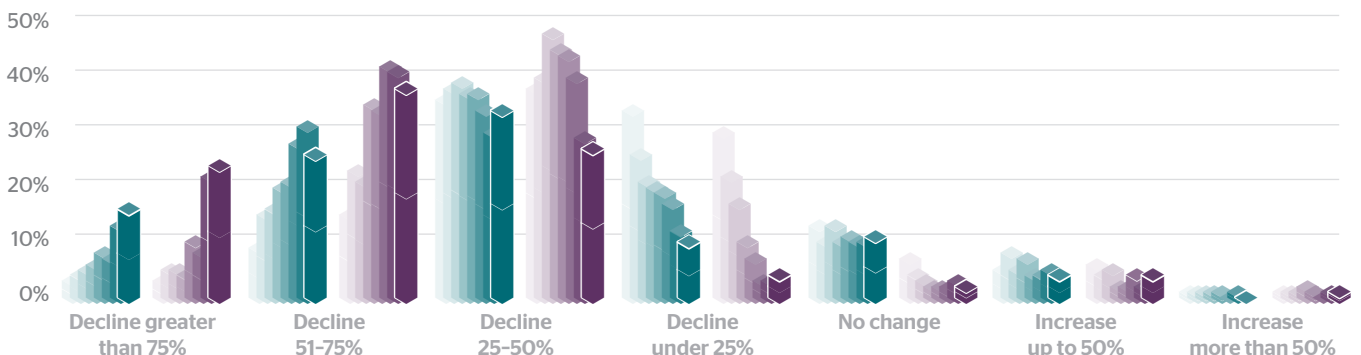
To what extent do you believe the rise in the use of digital-event technology will impact face-to-face event attendance at events **in 2021** on a scale of 1 to 5.

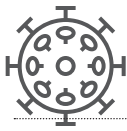
Weighted average for planners is **3.9** and suppliers is **3.7**



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

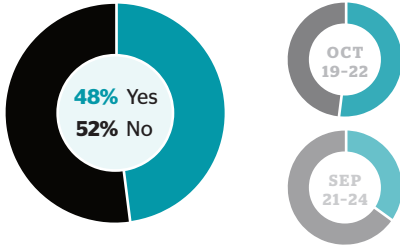
Weighted average for planners is a decline around **25%** and suppliers is a decline around **35%**



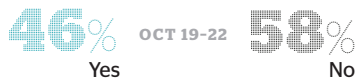


## PLANNER TRACK

Are you planning to launch a new digital event that was not previously held face to face?

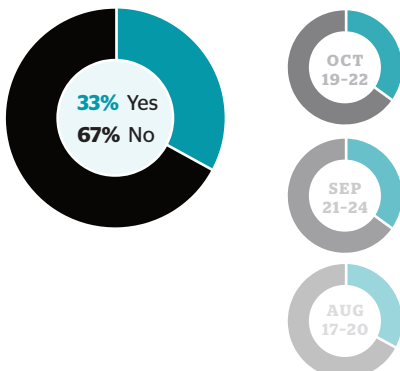


Are you satisfied with your tech solutions for your online events?

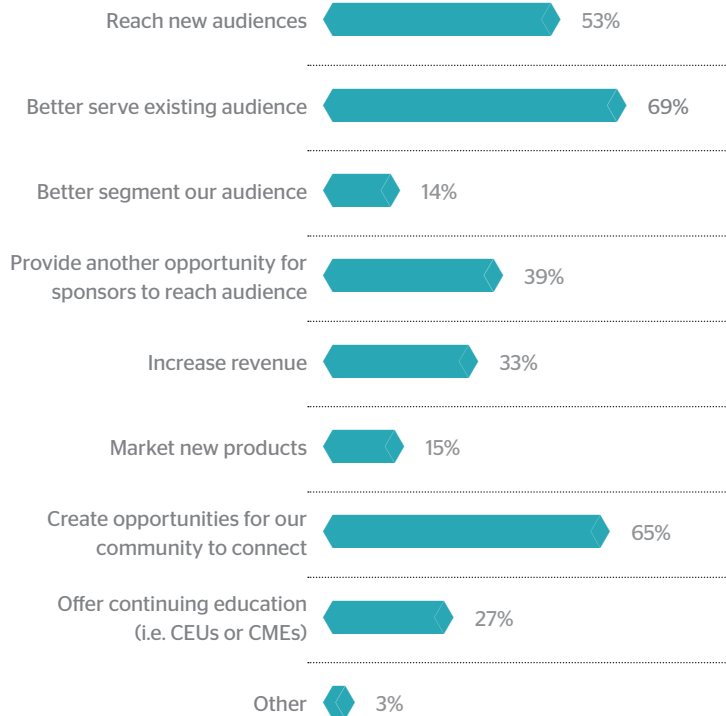


Zoom is once again the top tech solution mentioned. Other receiving multiple mentions include GoToMeetings, GoToWebinar, vFairs, Cvent, On24, Bizzabo, Intrado, Digitell and HUBB.

Are you seeking out broadcasting facilities in your site-selection efforts for future hybrid events?



What are your goals for this new event? (Choose all that apply.)



## PLANNERS SPEAK

What are you missing or seeking out in a platform of tech solution?

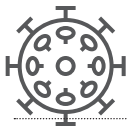
*“Anti-racist training — because it is necessary.”*

*“To keep the conversation going on important topics featured in our 2020 virtual annual conference.”*

*“Engage members”*

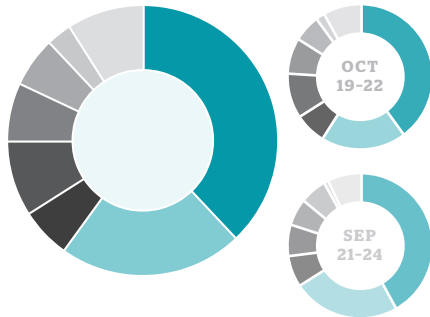
*“Internal sales kickoff”*





## PLANNER TRACK

What is your biggest financial challenge with regard to planning a business event **in 2021**? (Please choose one.)



- 38%** Budgeting/pricing for a hybrid (in-person + digital) events
- 22%** How to budget in terms of face-to-face attendance expectations
- 7%** Expenses related to enhanced hygiene and sanitary standards at a face-to-face event
- 9%** What to charge digital participants
- 7%** What to charge digital event exhibitors/sponsors
- 6%** Expenses related to event marketing and communications in a post COVID-19 world
- 2%** Deciding on registration pricing for face-to-face participants
- 9%** Other

## PLANNERS SPEAK

*"Keeping attendees engaged and active during a virtual event."*

*"Resurgence of COVID-19 impacting business needs."*

*"A combination of the expenses/investment in the short term for marketing hybrid/virtual and B2B expo – can/should we operate in 3-6 months? Can we meet ROI/ROE and avoid financial loss."*

*"Getting leads from virtual events."*

*"Have canceled all events in 2021."*

*"Contracts are already in place with the venue and hotels for an in-person conference in August 2021. If we end up with a hybrid event, there will be a reduction in attendees reserving hotel rooms and I am not sure the hotels will work with us to reduce room-block numbers and/or attrition rates."*

*"Overall increased cost of tech across the board as well as the increased production time."*

*"AV has become a monopoly, and contracting clauses for both force majeure and AV third-party usage."*

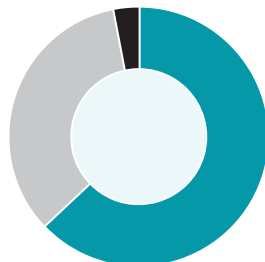
## PLANNER TRACK

## SUPPLIER TRACK

Have you attended a face-to-face event in the last few months requiring the use of PPE and other safety protocols? If you answered "yes," please choose the statement that best describes your experience.

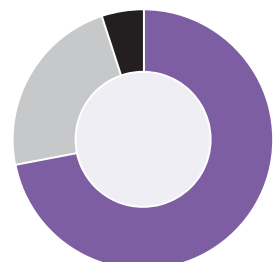
**21%** Yes

- 63%** It was worth all the precautions and safety measures – I would do it again.
- 34%** It was okay, but I don't see this as a viable option for most groups.
- 3%** Not at all enjoyable – I wouldn't do it again.



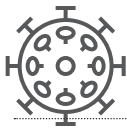
**31%** Yes

- 72%** It was worth all the precautions and safety measures – I would do it again.
- 23%** It was okay, but I don't see this as a viable option for most groups.
- 5%** Not at all enjoyable – I wouldn't do it again.



**79%** No

**69%** No



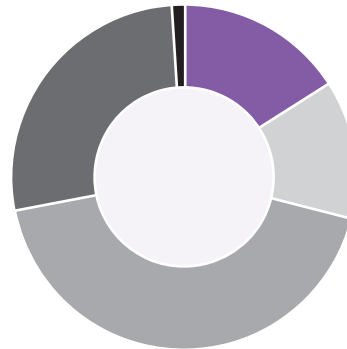
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## SUPPLIER TRACK

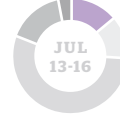
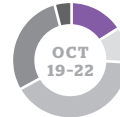
What scenario do you think best describes the recovery of face-to-face meetings for the business events industry in your geographic region?\*



- 16%** There will be pent-up demand for all groups to meet face-to-face.
- 24%** People will be hesitant to travel to meet face-to-face.
- 29%** Smaller local and regional events will thrive before national and international groups gather.
- 25%** Small in-person events will be hybrid, with a digital version for a larger audience.
- 6%** Other



- 16%** There will be pent-up demand for all groups to meet face-to-face.
- 13%** People will be hesitant to travel to meet face-to-face.
- 43%** Smaller local and regional events will thrive before national and international groups gather.
- 27%** Small in-person events will be hybrid, with a digital version for a larger audience.
- 1%** Other



\* In October, participants could choose more than one response.

### PLANNERS SPEAK

*“Live events aren’t possible, and time will tell how many venues and service providers don’t go under. We are going 100-percent virtual for the foreseeable future.”*

*“It is a combination of these scenarios. With a vaccine coming on line there will be some uptick in desire for a face-to-face event, but I think attendees and exhibitors will be anxious for a while. Larger events will be smaller than pre-COVID, and we may end up having to produce multiple events to generate enough revenue to survive. We have a long way to go.”*

*“Attendance will be based on the vaccine availability and travel policies of health-care and academic institutions.”*

*“Now that vaccines are on a nearer horizon, I think events will be postponed until after the vaccines are widely distributed. And proof of vaccination will be required to attend.”*

*“After a proven vaccine is widely in use, face-to-face/hybrid events for companies that still have cash flow will resume.”*

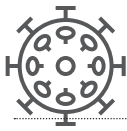
*“When will companies allow employees to travel again for events? They get back into the office and then T&E will probably be the last to be put back into department budgets.”*

*“A large portion of our attendance is missing the F2F but there is a percentage of them that will be hesitant to travel for the foreseeable future.”*

*“I think it will be a mix between pent-up demand and hesitancy. We will have to appeal to both thought mentalities for the foreseeable future. I also think budgetary cuts will affect the ability for attendees, sponsors, and exhibitors to return to face to face.”*

### SUPPLIER PERSPECTIVE

*“Government is currently interfering with free commerce and as an industry we must take a stand. Think about it – if the government was to say ‘all automakers must shut down for six weeks’ or ‘only 50 people can be on the plant floor,’ the UAW would be all over that like white on rice. Sadly we have allowed ourselves to be stepped on.”*



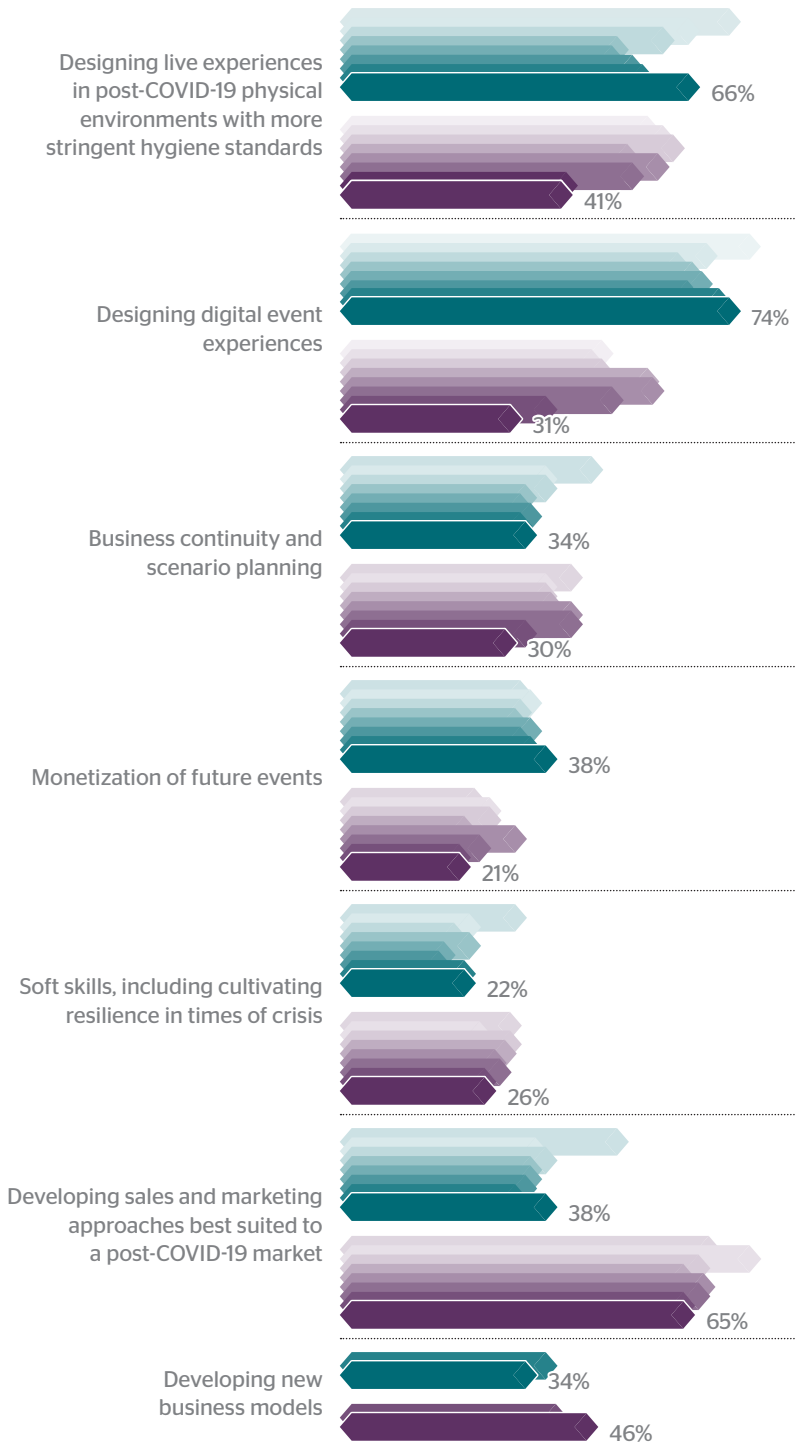
**PLANNER TRACK**

APR 23   MAY 21   JUN 18   JUL 16   AUG 20   SEP 24   OCT 22   NOV 19

**SUPPLIER TRACK**

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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.)



**PLANNERS SPEAK**

*“Designing hybrid events, how to merge the two audiences, and how to make the experiences different, but both valuable in their own ways.”*

*“While meetings and events remain in my portfolio, it is time to change the focus on the other kinds of work that can be generating [revenue] using my skills.”*

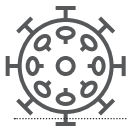
*“Convincing my employer that a meetings team is still important because face-to-face meetings will return.”*

*“As a Covid compliance officer, I can apply the skills I learned taking that class to any position I might take in the future.”*

**SUPPLIER PERSPECTIVE**

*“We spent 111 days of the pandemic creating a new platform that provides live performers for virtual and hybrid events. Even post-COVID, virtual is not going away. We wanted to find a way help people pivot and remain engaged in the online/digital experience and it was a win-win because it also supports the arts and events economies now devastated by COVID. The biggest challenge is getting the word out.”*

*“Hybrid meetings will have a huge spike in demand. There will be some workers eager to go back to the office in 2021, and some who are reluctant. The audiovisual demands of a hybrid meeting — where some attendees are in the office setting and others are joining at home — are more complicated than just putting a camera or smartphone in a conference room and hoping for the best.”*



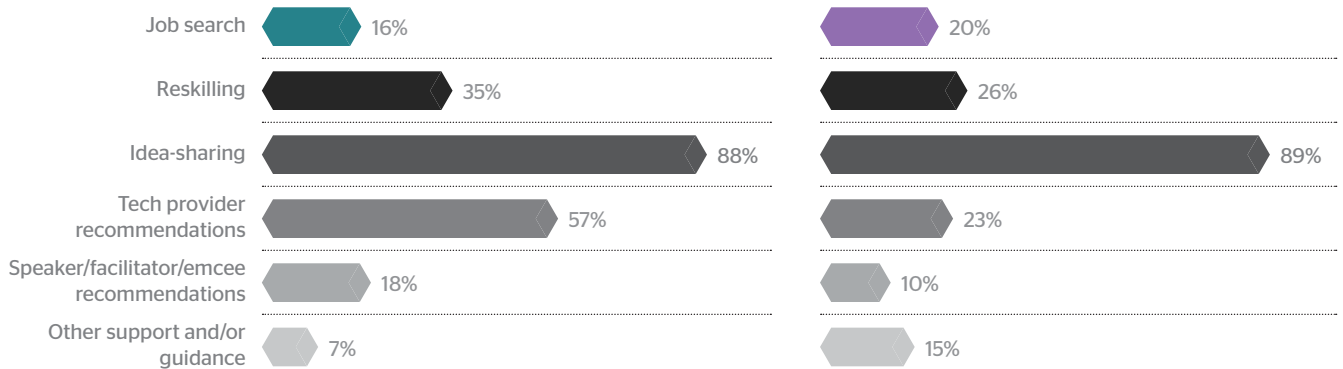
## PLANNER TRACK

## SUPPLIER TRACK

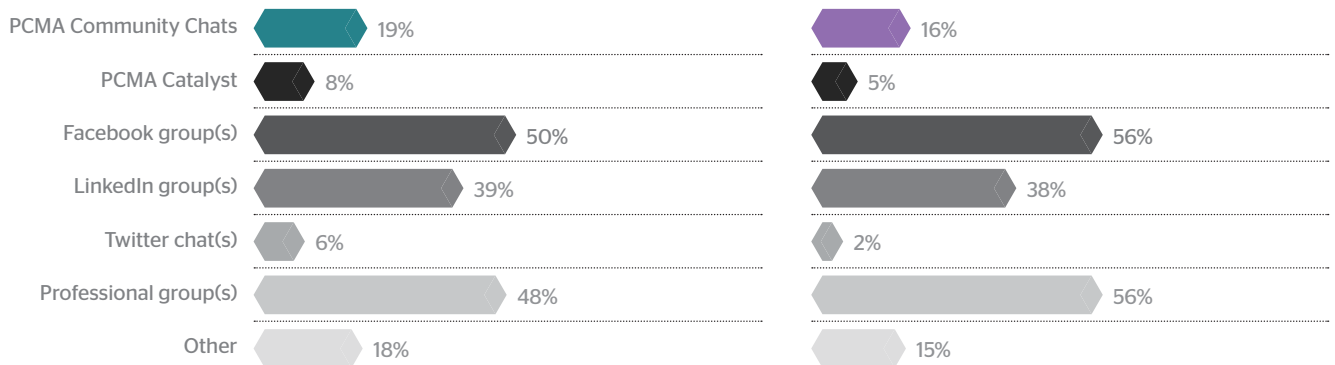
Have you joined any online community groups to help you navigate the crisis?



In what areas are you looking for help from the community group? (Choose all that apply.)



On what channel or platform does the community group you participate in meet? (Choose all that apply.)



In the wake of the U.S. election, has your business outlook changed?

