

COVID-19 Recovery Dashboard

Survey and analysis by PCMA *Convene* editors

Charts and design by Point Five

A slightly higher percentage of planners and suppliers described feeling exhausted and burned out in the February Dashboard survey than in January's survey, but we can probably chalk that up to yet another month of enduring the COVID crisis — we're coming up on a year now since the lockdowns began. And some especially harsh winter weather during February in much of the U.S. likely didn't help the situation feel less interminable for the 704 survey participants (458 planners and 246 suppliers). But other results suggest that respondents are finding the return of in-person events easier to see on the horizon.

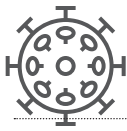
This time around, planners are feeling significantly more hopeful than suppliers — and a larger percentage of planners said they were hopeful than last month (54 percent vs. 48 percent in January). Planners are also feeling less anxious about the future — 31 percent compared to 35 percent the month before. Meanwhile, there hasn't been a big shift in the mood of suppliers month over month.

There are some telling differences between planners and suppliers when it comes to their focus on reskilling. Both are placing more of a priority on designing live experiences in physical environments: 71 percent of planners vs. 66 percent in January, and 39 percent of suppliers vs. 35 percent in January. But suppliers are also setting their sights on designing digital experiences: 41 percent in February vs. 36 percent in the prior month identified that as a skill they are developing. A slightly greater percent of suppliers is focusing on their soft skills and developing sales and marketing approaches best suited to a post COVID-19 world, but the biggest jump is the percentage of suppliers who are working on developing new business models — 7-percentage points above the prior month.

How We'll Move Forward

In terms of a recovery scenario, planners and suppliers again seem to see things somewhat differently. In February, planners' responses seemed to reflect a shift in thinking: One-third versus 26 percent in January said they think local and regional events will thrive, and a smaller percentage — 18 percent compared to 24 percent — think the most likely scenario will be small in-person events that are hybrid, with a digital version for a larger audience. That more are planning face-to-face events is also reflected in what planners identify as their main financial challenges: Fourteen percent vs. 8 percent in January said it was expenses related to enhanced hygiene/sanitary standards at in-person events. There's a corresponding downturn in budgeting for hybrid events — 38 percent cited that as a major challenge compared to 44 percent in January.

Suppliers envisioned the opposite scenario this time, with 30 percent vs. 17 percent in January seeing hybrid as the way forward. And the percentage of suppliers who expect there to be a pent-up demand to meet face-to-face also went down, from 22 percent in January to 16 percent in February, while there was a slight uptick among planners who think there will be a pent-up demand for in-person events.



PCMA CONVENE

COVID-19 SURVEY

SURVEY DATES: FEBRUARY 22-25, 2021

At the same time, as more people are getting vaccinated, 68 percent (compared to 63 percent in January) of suppliers said that is changing their thinking about what is possible and 12 percent of planners (vs. 10 percent in January) are initiating booking event space in light of the vaccinations. But there was less of an interest month over month from both planners and suppliers in requiring proof of vaccinations in order to attend face-to-face events: 31 percent vs. 39 percent of planners and 34 percent vs. 39 percent of suppliers.

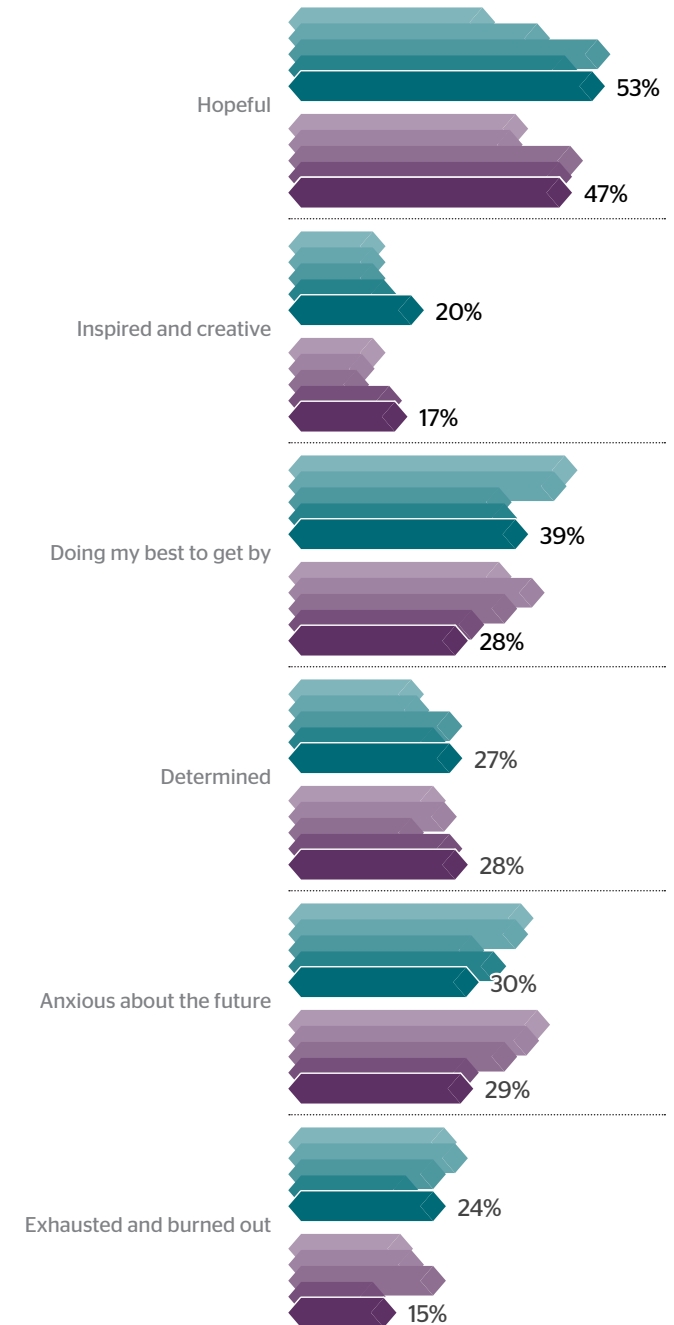
The severe economic and job-market impact of COVID is more evident among suppliers in the February survey, with 28 percent vs. 21 percent in the January survey seeing 2021 revenue declines of greater than 75 percent. And their goals for joining community groups online have shifted: Twenty-three percent vs. 10 percent in January are looking for jobs and 34 percent vs. 19 percent are seeking help with reskilling. There is also less of a desire to share ideas, with 84 percent compared to 94 percent citing that as their reason for joining.

When it comes to their own appetite to travel to face-to-face events, both planners and suppliers indicate a greater willingness in February than January. Only 34 percent vs. 44 percent of planners said they would not travel. And 30 percent vs. 25 percent of planners and 37 percent vs. 31 percent of suppliers said they would go any distance if the program was worth it.

We asked a new question in February: If you are planning an in-person or hybrid event in 2021, what kind of overall registration numbers are you expecting compared to the same 2019 event? Nearly one-third expect declines of at least or greater than 50 percent. But the majority of responses reflect that while planners may think we're getting closer to holding in-person events, they recognize that the COVID situation remains fluid. Fifty-three percent said they are unable to estimate attendance until they get closer to their scheduled event date.



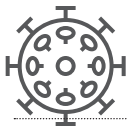
We appreciate your input in this survey. We'd like to check in with you first. What best describes how you're feeling right now? (Choose all that apply.)



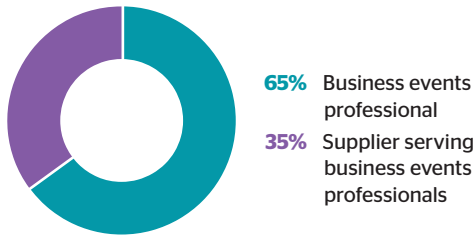
PLANNERS SPEAK

"I'm also MAD — my career was taken away from me through no fault of my own!"

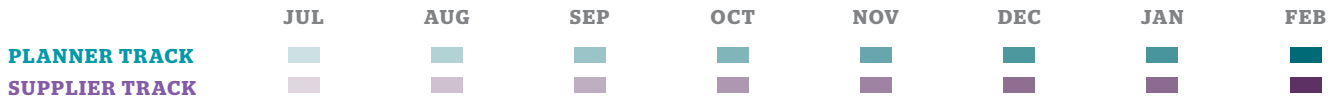
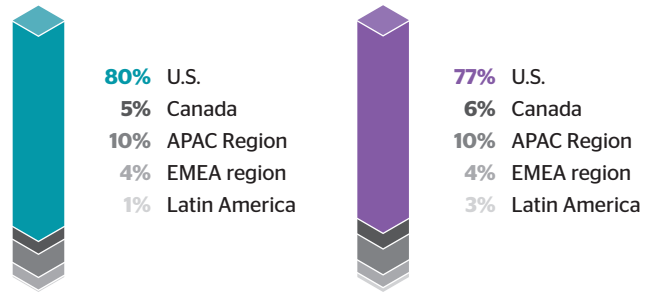
"Challenging times are remaking our business."



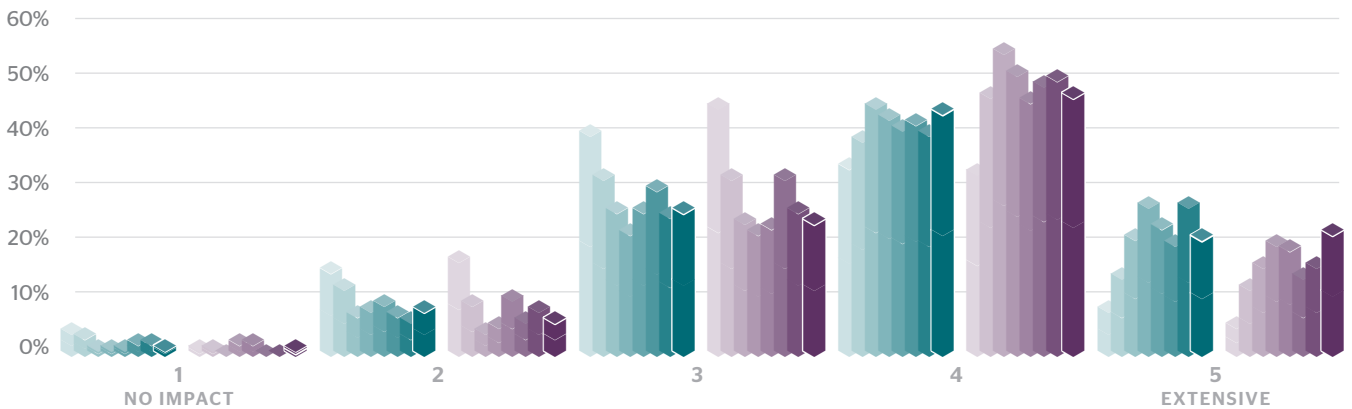
What best describes your role in the business events industry?



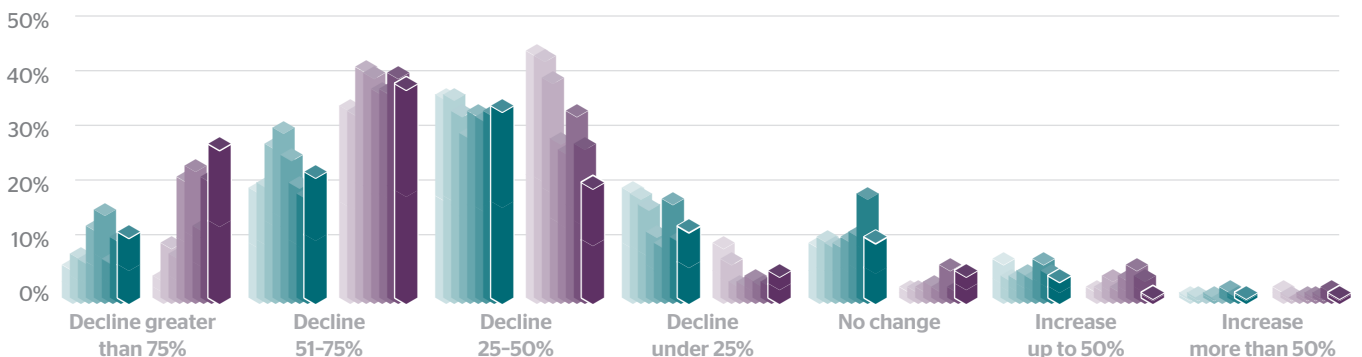
What region best represents where you do the majority of your business?

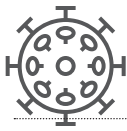


To what extent do you believe the rise in the use of digital-event technology will impact face-to-face event attendance at events **in 2021** on a scale of 1 to 5.



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





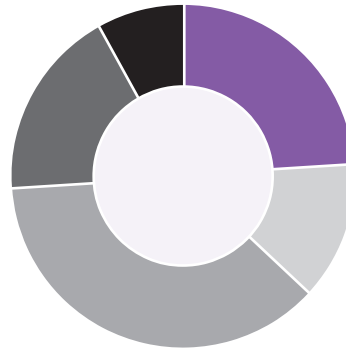
PLANNER TRACK

SUPPLIER TRACK

During the period of time it takes before the COVID-19 vaccine is widely distributed, what is the farthest distance from your home you would consider traveling to a business event, assuming there are no financial or regulatory restrictions placed on travel?



- 34%** I would not travel.
- 13%** Within a two-hour flight.
- 30%** Any distance necessary if the program was worth it.
- 15%** Within a four-hour drive.
- 8%** Within a five-hour flight.



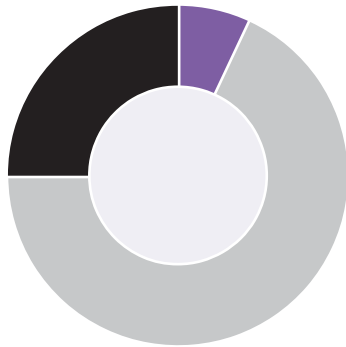
- 24%** I would not travel.
- 13%** Within a two-hour flight.
- 37%** Any distance necessary if the program was worth it.
- 18%** Within a four-hour drive.
- 8%** Within a five-hour flight.



Has the initial rollout of COVID-19 vaccines changed your plans for 2021?

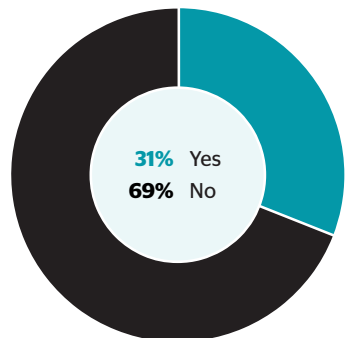


- 12%** Yes, I reserved space or initiated booking space as a result of the news.
- 56%** No action, but it changed my thinking about what might be possible.
- 32%** No, it did not change my plans for 2021.

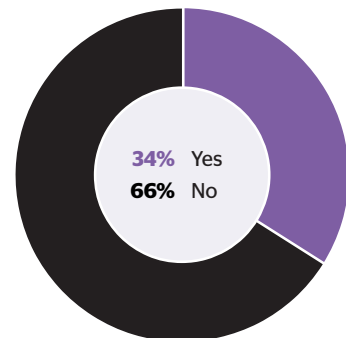


- 7%** Yes, I reserved space or initiated booking space as a result of the news.
- 68%** No action, but it changed my thinking about what might be possible.
- 25%** No, it did not change my plans for 2021.

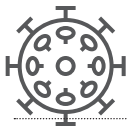
Once the vaccine is widely available, will you require attendees to show proof of vaccination in order to participate in your face-to-face event?



- 31%** Yes
- 69%** No



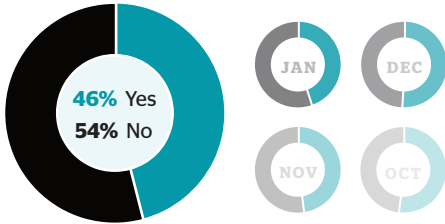
- 34%** Yes
- 66%** No



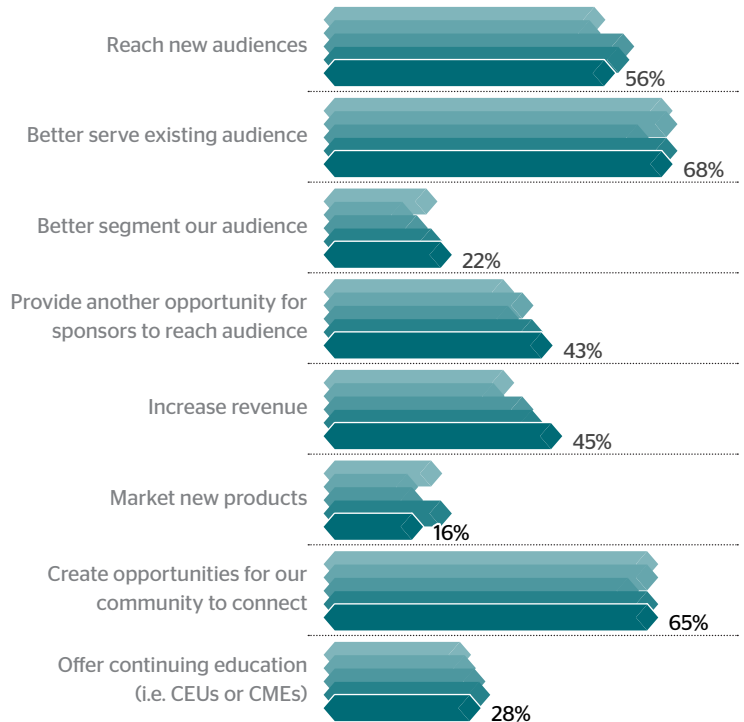
PLANNER TRACK

OCT ■ NOV ■ DEC ■ JAN ■

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



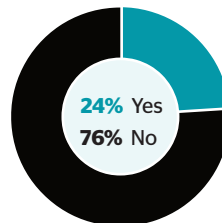
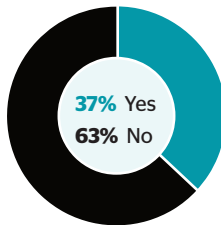
What are your goals for this new event?
(Choose all that apply.)



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

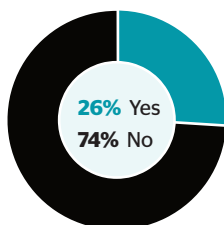


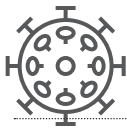
Are you seeking out broadcasting facilities in your site-selection efforts for future hybrid events?



Assuming you're attracting a more global audience to your events, are you planning on offering translation services?

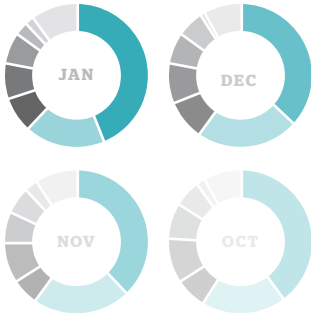
Do you offer transcriptions of your recorded online sessions?





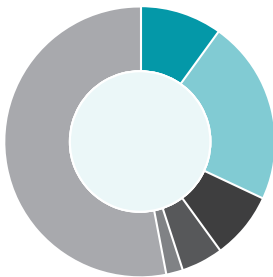
PLANNER TRACK

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
- 20%** How to budget in terms of face-to-face attendance expectations
- 14%** Expenses related to enhanced hygiene and sanitary standards at a face-to-face event
- 8%** What to charge digital participants
- 5%** What to charge digital event exhibitors/sponsors
- 5%** Expenses related to event marketing and communications in a post COVID-19 world
- 2%** Deciding on registration pricing for face-to-face participants
- 8%** Other

If you are planning an in-person or hybrid event in 2021, what kind of overall registration numbers are you expecting compared to the same 2019 event?



- 9%** Decline greater than 50%
- 21%** Decline up to 50%
- 8%** Same
- 5%** Increase up to 50%
- 2%** Increase of more than 50%
- 53%** Unable to estimate until we get closer to the scheduled event date due to a fluid COVID environment

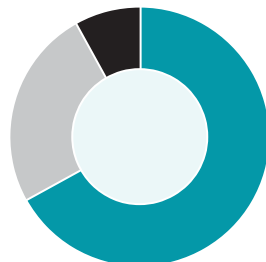
PLANNER TRACK

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.

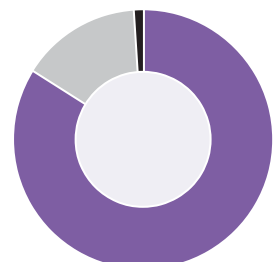
21% Yes

- 67%** It was worth all the precautions and safety measures – I would do it again.
- 25%** It was okay, but I don't see this as a viable option for most groups.
- 8%** Not at all enjoyable – I wouldn't do it again.



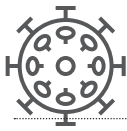
34% Yes

- 84%** It was worth all the precautions and safety measures – I would do it again.
- 15%** It was okay, but I don't see this as a viable option for most groups.
- 1%** Not at all enjoyable – I wouldn't do it again.



79% No

66% No



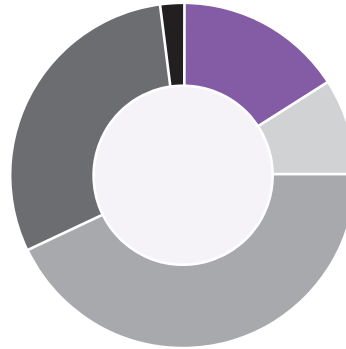
PLANNER TRACK

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?*



- 24%** There is/will be pent-up demand for all groups to meet face-to-face.
- 19%** People are/will be hesitant to travel to meet face-to-face.
- 33%** Smaller local and regional events will thrive before national and international groups gather.
- 18%** Small in-person events are/will be hybrid, with a digital version for a larger audience.
- 6%** Other



- 16%** There is/will be pent-up demand for all groups to meet face-to-face.
- 9%** People are/will be hesitant to travel to meet face-to-face.
- 43%** Smaller local and regional events will thrive before national and international groups gather.
- 30%** Small in-person events are/will be hybrid, with a digital version for a larger audience.
- 2%** Other

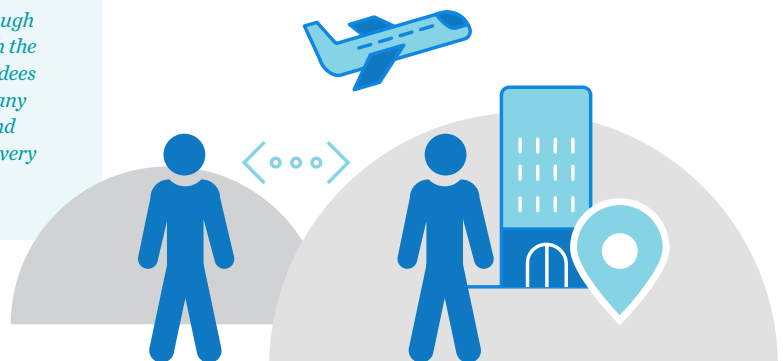


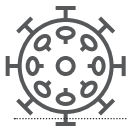
* In October, participants could choose more than one response.

PLANNERS SPEAK

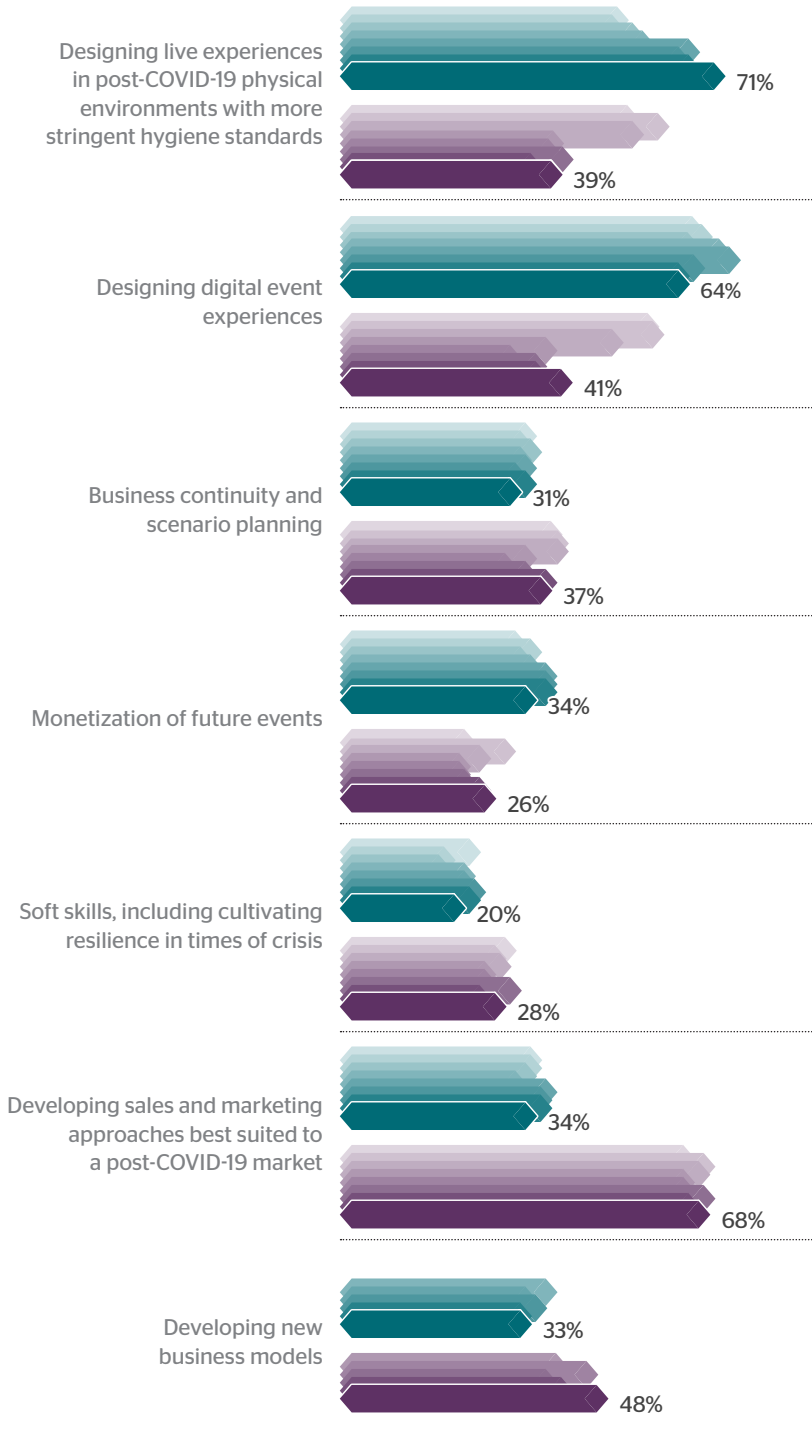
“More emphasis will be placed on the reason to travel and the work that will be done once at the meeting.”

“I believe that we will see medium-sized face-to-face live events with the majority of the attendees coming in through a virtual presence. I think people want to travel but with the slow vaccine rollout and new coronavirus strains, attendees might be more hesitant to travel. Also, there could be many companies that won’t have the revenues to be able to send their staff to education conferences. Budget will still be very tight since the business world is not traveling as of yet.”





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.)

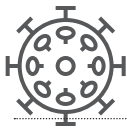


SUPPLIER PERSPECTIVE

“Keeping our facility current with digital equipment and services to support hybrid events.”

“Personally, I am changing careers. This is going to devastate many professionals that work at hotels and venues because we won’t be able to last long enough until business returns.”

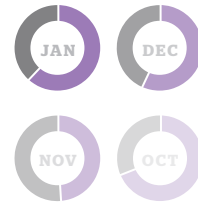
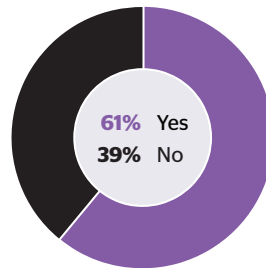
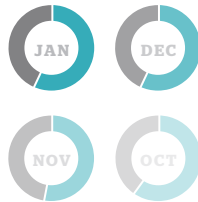
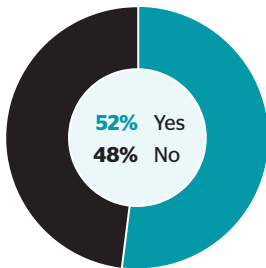




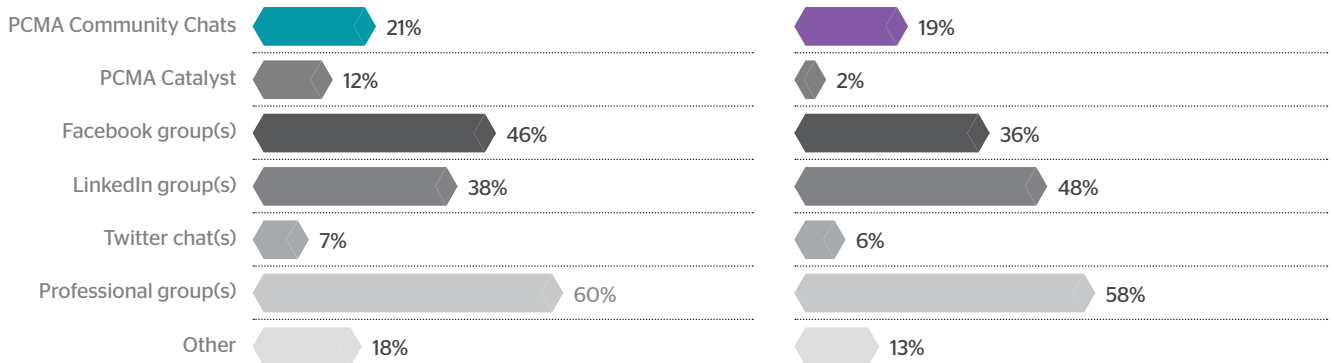
PLANNER TRACK

SUPPLIER TRACK

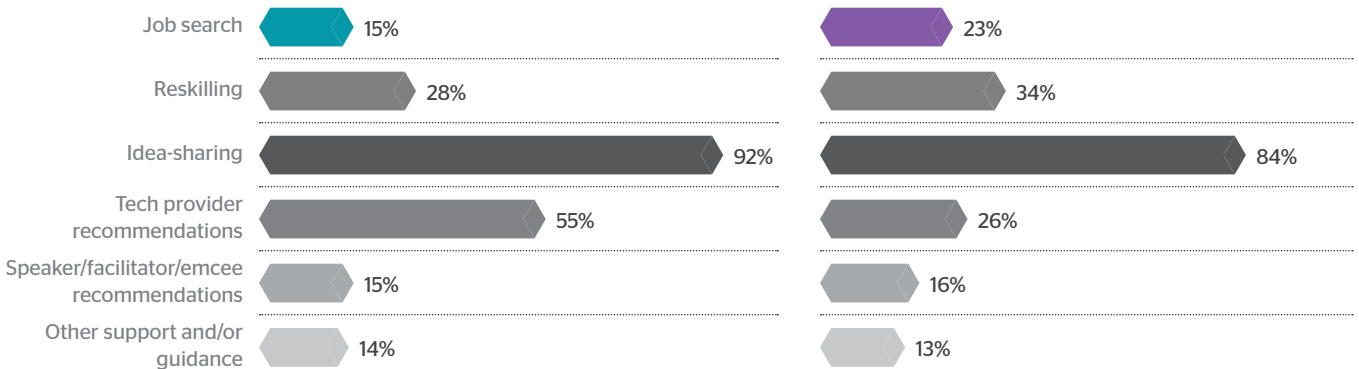
Have you joined any online community groups to help you navigate the crisis?



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



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



PLANNERS SPEAK

"Coping strategies and input about hybrid meeting solutions, exchanging ideas about sales and marketing activities."

"Updated facts from around the country and world from those who are there on the ground."

SUPPLIER PERSPECTIVE

"General consciousness of how the market is doing."

"Networking to transition from hotel meeting sales to planning meetings for associations."