World of Concrete 2021, June 7-10, attracted more than 58,000 registered professionals and hosted more than 1,564 leading-industry suppliers across more than 746,000 net square feet of exhibit space at the Las Vegas Convention Center, according to lasvegashowto.com. Other estimates put that number closer to 30,000, but one thing is true: With tens of thousands of participants, it was the largest trade show to be held in Las Vegas since the pandemic, attracting a good deal of attention in both the trade-show industry media and the local Las Vegas press.

Whether World of Concrete set the stage (or laid the foundation) for the return of large in-person events remains to be seen. In some respects, the fact that it had just taken place might have influenced the responses of 119 planners and 45 suppliers who participated in the June edition of the PCMA Convene Recovery Dashboard.

Planners said they were feeling even more hopeful than in May (69 percent vs. 61 percent) and more determined (27 percent vs. 21 percent). A smaller percentage of suppliers (64 percent vs. 70 percent last month) identified with feelings of hopefulness, but 17 percent more (39 percent vs. 22 percent in May) said they were feeling inspired and creative and 12 percent more (30 percent vs. 18 percent) checked on the “determined” option.

Of course, that may also be due to the fact that vaccination rates continue to climb. For the first time in our Dashboard series, we asked respondents if they had been vaccinated, and nine out of 10 said yes — 75 percent of planners and 76 percent of suppliers have been fully vaccinated; 15 percent (both) have received one dose; and 4 percent of planners and 10 percent of suppliers plan to get the vaccine.

Regardless of their own vaccination status, respondents — 60 percent of planners and 41 percent of suppliers — remain averse to making proof of vaccination a requirement for events.

In a major switch over the past month, 56 percent of planners — vs. 30 percent in May — said the new CDC guidance that fully vaccinated individuals no longer had to wear masks in uncrowded indoor spaces and outdoors made it easier for them to plan in-person events.

Indeed, planners were more inclined to think that the new CDC recommendation would result in higher attendance at events — 45 percent vs. 28 percent in May, with only 43 percent (vs. 62 percent last month) thinking it will make events more appealing but fail to translate to more attendees. Suppliers, on the other hand, were less apt to think that more attendees going mask-free would mean more attendees overall — only 43 percent vs. 52 percent in May said
it would make the prospect of in-person events more attractive, and 45 percent vs. 40 percent said it would not result in greater attendance.

A smaller percentage of both planners and suppliers are focusing their reskilling efforts on designing live experiences safely in a living-with-COVID world — 50 percent of planners in June vs. 67 percent in May and 21 percent vs. 35 percent of suppliers. Instead, they are focusing more of their efforts on creating new business models: 38 percent vs. 31 percent of planners and 42 percent vs. 36 percent of suppliers.

Perhaps at this point, they are more confident that the correct protocols are in place at event venues, requiring less of their attention. But the open-ended responses indicate that not all are equally enthusiastic about a full-on return to physical events. “There will be a pent-up demand for face-to-face, but when you live in a state where there is no mask mandate per our governor, that also includes non- or partially vaxxed people,” wrote one respondent. “No one is wearing their mask anymore, which is not good just yet. They are completely jumping the gun, and I hope it doesn’t backfire. There is also no social distancing or capacity limitations, which make it even worse.” Those sentiments were echoed by this respondent: “I think people’s desire to meet seems to be surpassing the ability to keep common-sense practices in place.”

This respondent clearly seemed to think World of Concrete was jumping the gun: “I think 30,000-person trade shows are a little early for now — Q4 or 2022 for sure.”

Still, there’s no denying that some are relishing having the chance to once again design in-person events — regardless of their size — like this planner: “People are so excited to start attending conferences. Let’s have something new for them to enjoy. I need ideas for volunteer events (like stuffing parties), activities (like excursions to divide people into groups and teams), [and having] fun together [with] teambuilding activities to help people network and build friendships with a group throughout the conference.”
What best describes your role in the business events industry?

- 73% Business events professional
- 27% Supplier serving business events professionals

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

- 75% U.S.
- 8% Canada
- 11% APAC Region
- 4% EMEA region
- 2% Latin America

To what extent do you believe the rise in the use of digital-event technology will impact face-to-face event attendance at your event/s in 2021 on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being no impact and 5 being extensively?

- 0% 1
- 10% 2
- 20% 3
- 30% 4
- 40% 5

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

- 0% Decline greater than 75%
- 10% Decline 51-75%
- 20% Decline 25-50%
- 30% Decline under 25%
- 40% No change
- 50% Increase up to 50%
- 60% Increase more than 50%
What do you think the surge in leisure travel over the coming months means for face-to-face event attendance?

**PLANNER TRACK**
- **10%** People will travel to attend regional and domestic events Q2.
- **17%** People will travel to attend regional and domestic events Q3.
- **15%** People will travel to attend regional and domestic events Q4.
- **42%** There may be pent-up demand for F2F events, but budget cuts, the economy, and/or job insecurity will limit attendance.
- **16%** There may be pent-up demand for F2F events, but until there is herd immunity, organizations will avoid assuming business travel risk.
- **0%** No change — attendees have grown accustomed to digital events and will participate virtually.
- **0%** Other

**SUPPLIER TRACK**
- **76%** Yes, I’m fully vaccinated.
- **15%** Yes, I’ve had one dose and am scheduled for my second.
- **4%** Not yet, but I plan to get the vaccine.
- **0%** I don’t plan to get the vaccine.
- **6%** I prefer not to answer.

What scenario do you think best describes the recovery of face-to-face meetings for the business events industry, according to the industry or field you represent?

- **41%** There is/will be pent-up demand for all groups to meet face-to-face.
- **13%** People are/will be hesitant to travel to meet face-to-face.
- **27%** Smaller local and regional events will thrive before national and international groups gather.
- **13%** Small in-person events are/will be hybrid, with a digital version for a larger audience.
- **40%** There may be pent-up demand for F2F events, but budget cuts, the economy, and/or job insecurity will limit attendance.
- **29%** There may be pent-up demand for F2F events, but until there is herd immunity, organizations will avoid assuming business travel risk.
- **0%** No change — attendees have grown accustomed to digital events and will participate virtually.
- **2%** Other

Have you been vaccinated against COVID-19?

- **75%** Yes, I’m fully vaccinated.
- **15%** Yes, I’ve had one dose and am scheduled for my second.
- **4%** Not yet, but I plan to get the vaccine.
- **0%** I don’t plan to get the vaccine.
- **6%** I prefer not to answer.
- **0%** No change — attendees have grown accustomed to digital events and will participate virtually.
- **5%** Other

Have you been vaccinated against COVID-19?

- **76%** Yes, I’m fully vaccinated.
- **15%** Yes, I’ve had one dose and am scheduled for my second.
- **10%** Not yet, but I plan to get the vaccine.
- **0%** I don’t plan to get the vaccine.
- **0%** I prefer not to answer.
- **6%** Other

Have you been vaccinated against COVID-19?

- **75%** Yes, I’m fully vaccinated.
- **15%** Yes, I’ve had one dose and am scheduled for my second.
- **4%** Not yet, but I plan to get the vaccine.
- **0%** I don’t plan to get the vaccine.
- **6%** I prefer not to answer.
- **0%** No change — attendees have grown accustomed to digital events and will participate virtually.
- **2%** Other

Have you been vaccinated against COVID-19?

- **76%** Yes, I’m fully vaccinated.
- **15%** Yes, I’ve had one dose and am scheduled for my second.
- **10%** Not yet, but I plan to get the vaccine.
- **0%** I don’t plan to get the vaccine.
- **0%** I prefer not to answer.
- **2%** Other
PLANNER TRACK

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

- **39%** Budgeting/pricing for a hybrid (in-person + digital) events
- **25%** How to budget in terms of face-to-face attendance expectations
- **5%** Expenses related to enhanced hygiene and sanitary standards at a face-to-face event
- **7%** What to charge digital participants
- **4%** What to charge digital event exhibitors/sponsors
- **6%** Expenses related to event marketing and communications in a post COVID-19 world
- **8%** Deciding on registration pricing for face-to-face participants
- **6%** Other

What best describes the industry you represent?

- **Health care/science**: 11%
- **Media**: 1%
- **Manufacturing**: 2%
- **Tech**: 8%
- **Consumer goods**: 4%
- **Nonprofit**: 42%
- **Professional services**: 9%
- **Financial services/insurance**: 4%
- **I’m an independent planner with clients in a variety of industries**: 13%
- **I’m an independent planner specializing in a particular field**: 6%

Has the latest CDC guidance allowing vaccinated people to not wear masks outdoors and in uncrowded indoor spaces made it easier for you to plan in-person events?

- **56%** Yes
- **33%** No
- **11%** N/A

What type of event are you planning in 2021? (Choose all that apply.)

- **In-person only**: 44%
- **Digital/online only**: 46%
- **Hybrid**: 55%
- **None**: 4%
Are you planning to do networking differently to encourage interaction at your in-person or hybrid event(s)?

- **33%** Yes
- **43%** No
- **24%** N/A

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

- **29%** Yes
- **57%** No
- **14%** N/A

What is the anticipated date of your in-person or hybrid event planned for 2021?

- **Q1**: 7%
- **Q2**: 23%
- **Q3**: 43%
- **Q4**: 44%
- **N/A**: 17%

What is your planning window for in-person events in 2021?

- **20%** We are making a go/no-go decision within four months of event date.
- **12%** We are making a go/no-go decision within three months of event date.
- **20%** We are making a go/no-go decision within two months of event date.
- **36%** N/A
- **12%** Other

What kind of overall registration numbers are you expecting for your planned 2021 in-person only event vs. 2019 (or pre-pandemic 2020)?

- **7%** Decline greater than 50%
- **30%** Decline up to 50%
- **17%** Same
- **2%** Increase up to 50%
- **1%** Increase of more than 50%
- **26%** Unable to estimate until we get closer to the scheduled event date due to a fluid COVID environment
- **17%** N/A
If you are planning a hybrid event, how do you foresee it taking shape?

**24%** Simultaneous, small in-person event with streaming video and separate online program for virtual audience, with ability for both audiences to interact via the event platform

**11%** Simultaneous, small in-person event with streaming video and separate online program for virtual audience, without ability for both audiences to interact via the event platform

**15%** Simultaneous, small in-person event with streaming video for virtual audience; no separate online content for digital participants

**3%** Hub-and-spoke model: small regional in-person events held simultaneously with separate content for digital audience

**43%** N/A

**4%** Other

What kind of overall registration numbers are you expecting for your 2021 hybrid event vs. 2019 (or pre-pandemic 2020)?

**3%** Decline greater than 50%

**19%** Decline up to 50%

**13%** Same

**6%** Increase up to 50%

**3%** Increase of more than 50%

**22%** Unable to estimate until we get closer to the scheduled event date due to a fluid COVID environment

**33%** N/A

Do you think the new guidance about mask-wearing will make attending in-person events more appealing and result in higher attendance?

**45%** Yes

**11%** No

**43%** Yes, perhaps in-person events will be more appealing but it won’t translate to higher attendance.

**43%** Yes

**12%** No

**45%** Yes, perhaps in-person events will be more appealing but it won’t translate to higher attendance.

Now that the vaccine is widely available, will you require attendees, staff, and visitors to show proof of vaccination in order to participate in your physical events?

**22%** Yes

**60%** No

**18%** N/A

**30%** Yes

**41%** No

**29%** N/A
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.)

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill Description</th>
<th>PLANNERS SPEAK</th>
<th>SUPPLIER PERSPECTIVE</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Designing live experiences in post-COVID-19 physical environments with more stringent hygiene standards</td>
<td>“Designing hybrid events.”</td>
<td>“I believe our live event experiences better be that: an experience. I can watch a boring speaker and PPT slides at home. What will we all do to make the onsite event worth the added expense to travel and be a part of as opposed to streaming the hybrid. We will have to strategically think about engaging two disparate audience types in a hybrid setting as each group interacts, engages, learns and participates in different manners.”</td>
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<td>Designing digital event experiences</td>
<td>“People are so excited to start attending conferences. Let’s have something new for them to enjoy. I need ideas for volunteer events (like stuffing parties), activities (like excursions to divide people into groups and team), fun together team building activities throughout the conference to help people network and build friendships with a group throughout the conference.”</td>
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<td>Business continuity and scenario planning</td>
<td>“Non-event skills.”</td>
<td>“Career change due to shut down.”</td>
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<td>Monetization of future events</td>
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<td>Soft skills, including cultivating resilience in times of crisis</td>
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<td>Developing sales and marketing approaches best suited to a post-COVID-19 market</td>
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<tr>
<td>Developing new business models</td>
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