

# Event Management Trends & Outlook Study

Survey of convention and exhibition producers and corporate event teams on venue requirements, insurance and online events strategy



September 2020

Conducted by



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# About the Report

The ***Event Management Trends & Outlook Study*** provides event producers and key service providers with insights on some of the important issues and challenges facing the industry. This report is based on multiple surveys conducted in August 2020. The surveys received responses from 232 organizations.

The report covers:

- Venue Requirements
- Changes to venue contracts
- Insurance
- Online events strategy
- And more

Access Intelligence Research & Consulting thanks all of the respondents for their invaluable contributions to the study. For questions, contact Michael Hughes, Managing Director of Research & Consulting at [mhughes@accessintel.com](mailto:mhughes@accessintel.com).

# **Executive Summary**

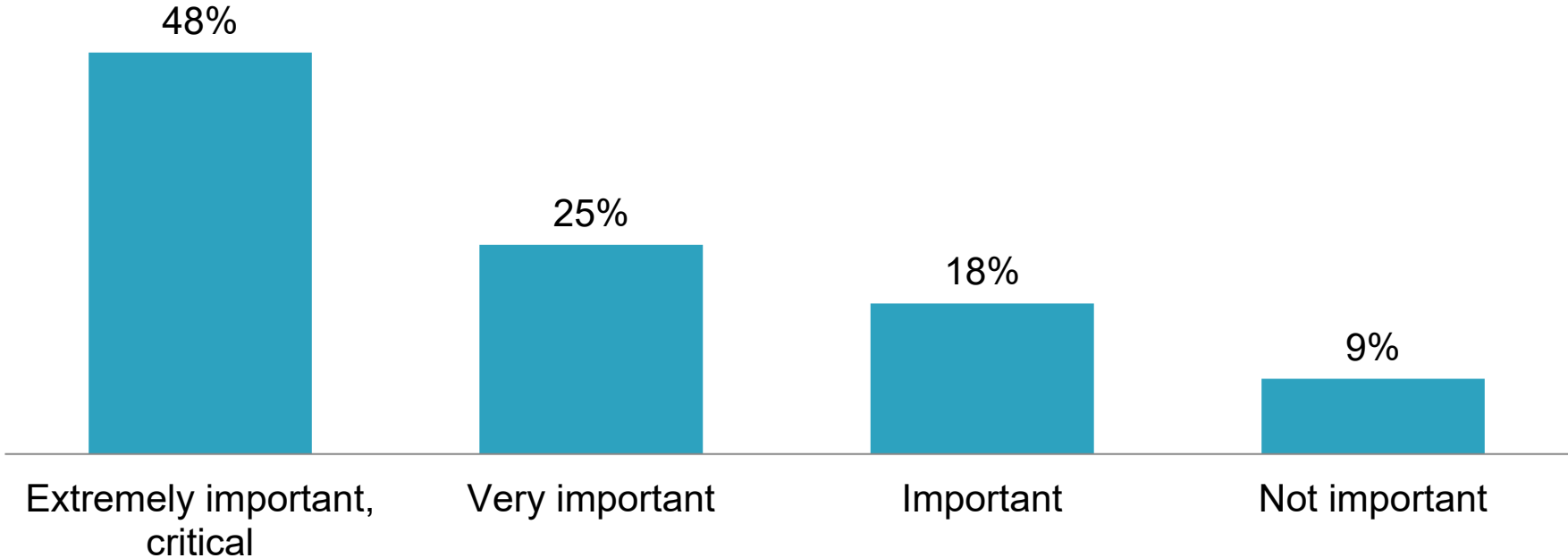
# Executive Summary

- Only 19% of event producers have filed an event business interruption or loss insurance claim due to the impact of pandemic event cancellations and postponements.
- Eighty-two percent of event producers have made changes to their hotel and convention center/venue contracts.
- The majority of event producers (71%) are looking to online events primarily as a way to add value to their community with content and information. Just under half of the respondents say their online events are focused on replacing, as closely as possible, the content aspects of their similar live in-person events. About half are also looking at online events as an experiment with different options and approaches.
- On average, event producers' largest, most important online events are generating over 20,000 total attendee registrations. But the number of these registrants that watch the "live" first run of the event, on average, is just over 12,000, or 58% of the total registration list.
- Forty-nine percent of online events charge for attendee registration.

# Venue Requirements

# How important will convention center and venue design and layout changes be post-pandemic

Nearly half of event producers feel it is “extremely important/critical” for convention centers and venues to make facility design, layout and inside environmental changes to accommodate new safety, security and medical protocols.



Survey Question: Looking out to when the pandemic is past, how important do you feel changes to convention centers and venues will be in terms of facility design, layout, inside environmental factors and other areas to accommodate potential new safety, security and medical protocols?

# What event producers are planning to do in terms of instituting cleaning and safety-related operational tasks or changes on-site at live in-person events

	%
Adding hand sanitizer/cleaning stations/areas throughout the event	88%
Increasing the cleaning schedule frequency	84%
Providing training and information for staff	83%
Increasing cleaning staff and processes	79%
Adding signage related to cleaning and related procedures	75%
Increasing event footprint for social distancing/throughput/traffic	64%
Providing training and information for partners and vendors	61%
Providing training and information for attendees	61%
Adding additional cleaning measures beyond the venue's responsibilities	48%
Reducing/eliminating food and beverage services offerings	43%
Working with government, medical and public safety officials on plans	38%
Increasing security staff and processes	30%

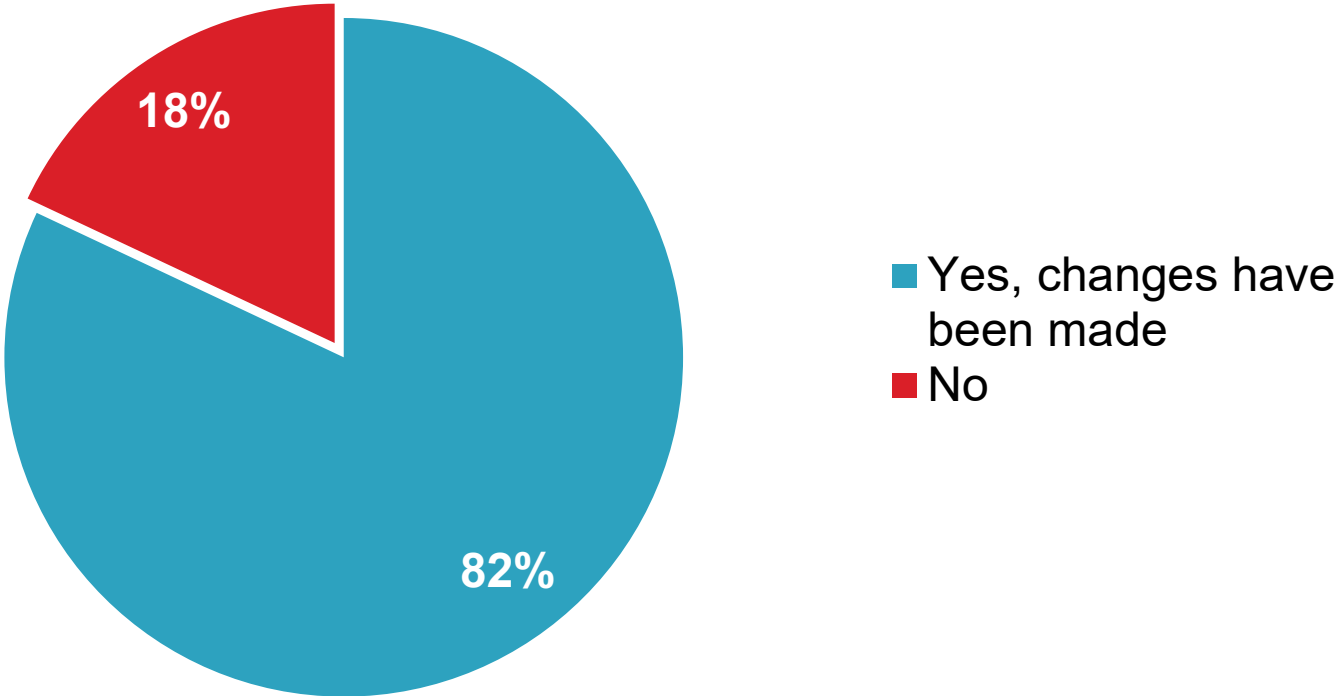
Survey Question: What have you done or are planning to do in terms of instituting cleaning and safety-related operational tasks or changes on-site at live in-person events and experiences?



# Changes to Venue Contracts

# Percentage of event producers made changes to hotel, convention center and venue contracts

Over eight out of ten event producers have made changes to their hotel and convention center/venue contracts.



Survey Question: Have you made changes to your hotel, convention center/venue booking contractual language or business terms?

## Examples of hotel or venue contractual changes

*Select quotes from event producers on the hotel and venue contract changes they have made or requested:*

- “Added clearly defined Force Majeure and contingency event cancellation clauses.”
- “Added or revised force majeure language to be more specific and include terms like ‘inadvisable’ as a valid reason for force majeure.”
- “Adding to the first paragraph of the contract: statement of purpose and key critical details regarding the audience and speakers (if known at the time of contracting). Adding frustration of purpose and impracticability statements. Asking for revised cancellation policies that allow for rebooking and applying cancellation fees (rather than liquidated damages) to rebooking within a certain number of years. Asking for deposits be put into escrow accounts.”
- “Additional liability notices, insurance coverage.”
- “Attrition/performance clauses, F&B minimum obligations, etc.”

Survey Question: If you have made important hotel or venue booking contractual changes, please describe what has been changed?

## Examples of hotel or venue contractual changes, continued

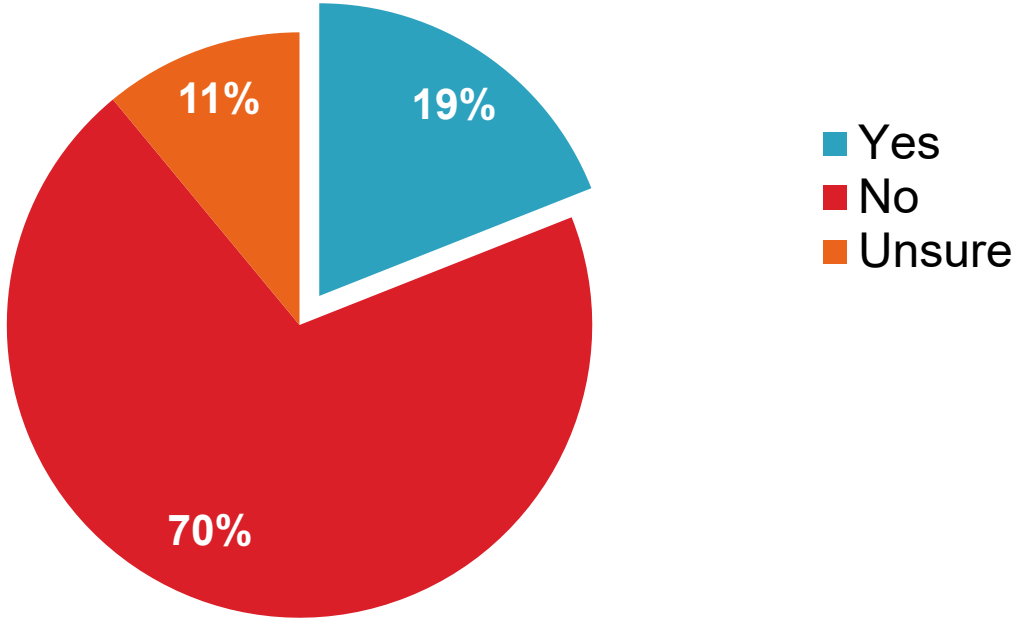
- “Contingency clause in the event that local authorities restrict in person events.”
- “Deposits to be held in escrow, greater attrition.”
- “Enhanced Force Majeure clauses to include illnesses and local city regulations that could impact size/scale of event; Hotel deposit requirements need to be tied to venue; so if cant host due to venue, hotels can't hold liable.”
- “Later payment dates. Later contract commitments in case the situation doesn't get better.”
- “More flexible with revisions, but higher non-cancellable deposits and fees.”
- “No penalty cancellation.”
- “The inclusion of "pandemic" and how it affects attrition and cancellations.”

Survey Question: If you have made important hotel or venue booking contractual changes, please describe what has been changed?

# Insurance

# Percentage of event producers that have filed an event business interruption or loss insurance claim

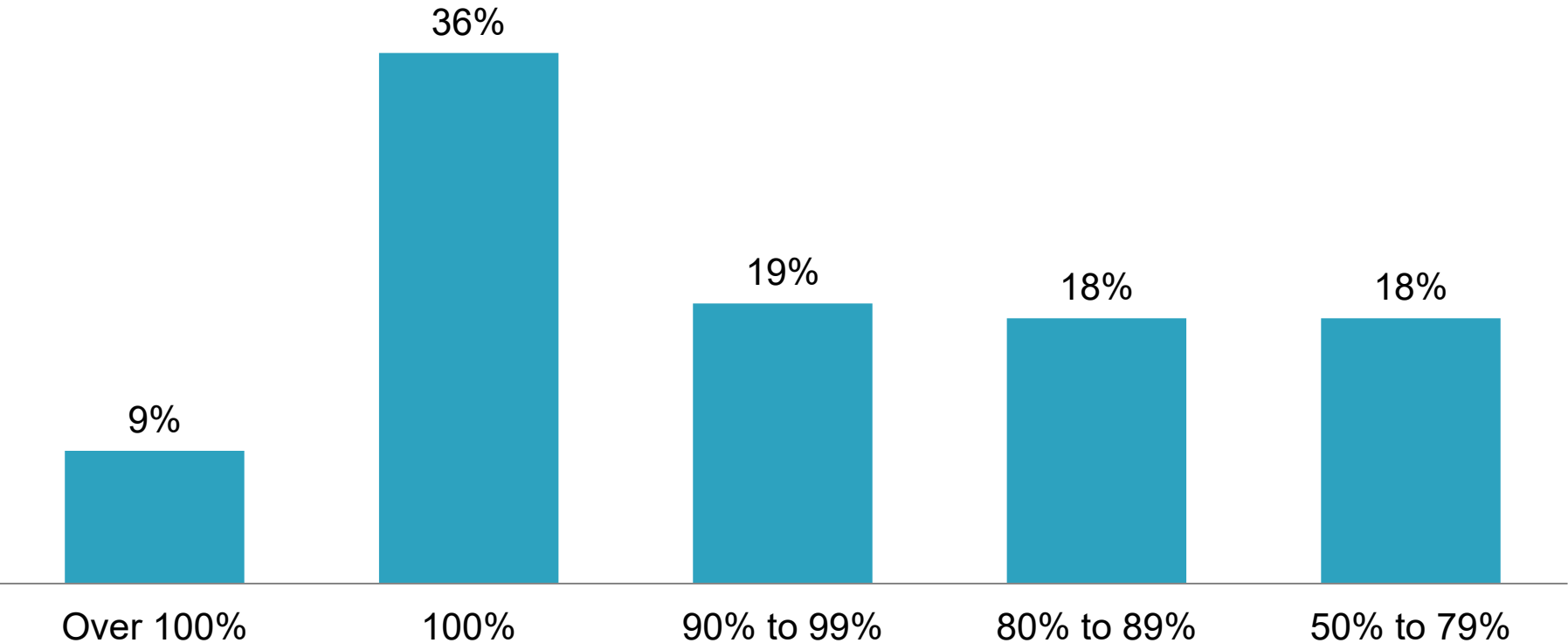
Only 19% of event producers have filed an event business interruption or loss insurance claim due to the impact of pandemic event cancellations and postponements. This finding seems low. This may be the case as often insurance claims may be considered confidential, although this is speculation and it is still somewhat early in the pandemic recovery process for many locations.



Survey Question: Has your organization filed an event cancellation, postponement or related business interruption / loss insurance claim due to disruption from the pandemic?

# Percentage of total lost revenue is being claimed

Of the event producers that have filed an insurance claim, 9% are asking for more than 100% of the lost revenue and 36% are asking for 100%.



Survey Question: If your organization has filed an insurance claim, what percentage of total lost revenue is being claimed?

# Online Event Strategies



# Event producers' strategies and approaches to online events

The majority of event producers are looking to online events primarily as a way to continue to add value to their community with content and information. It's important to note that just about half of the survey respondents are with associations. Just under half of the respondents say their online events are focused on replacing the content aspects of a similar live in-person event as closely as possible. About half are also looking at online events as an experiment with different options and approaches.

	%
Add value to the community and/or members with content and information	71%
Replace as closely as possible the content aspects of a similar live in-person event	48%
Experiment with different options and approaches	48%
Drive revenue from sponsors	43%
Develop a completely new online event different from our previous in-person event(s)	38%
Drive revenue from paid registrants/attendees	38%
Drive revenue from exhibitors	33%
Mainly as a "place holder" until live in-person events can be held	33%
Goal is to provide a hybrid event with mix of live in-person and online components	31%

Survey Question: Which of the following are important parts of your online event strategy and approach?

# Number of attendees registered for online events

On average, event producer organizations' largest, most important online events are generating over 20,000 total attendee registrations. But the number of these registrants that watch the "live" first run of the event, on average, is just over 12,000, or 58% of the total registration list.

## Average Total Number of Registered Attendees

- 20,843

## Average Number of Registered Attendees that Actually Attend the "Live" Online Event

- 12,152

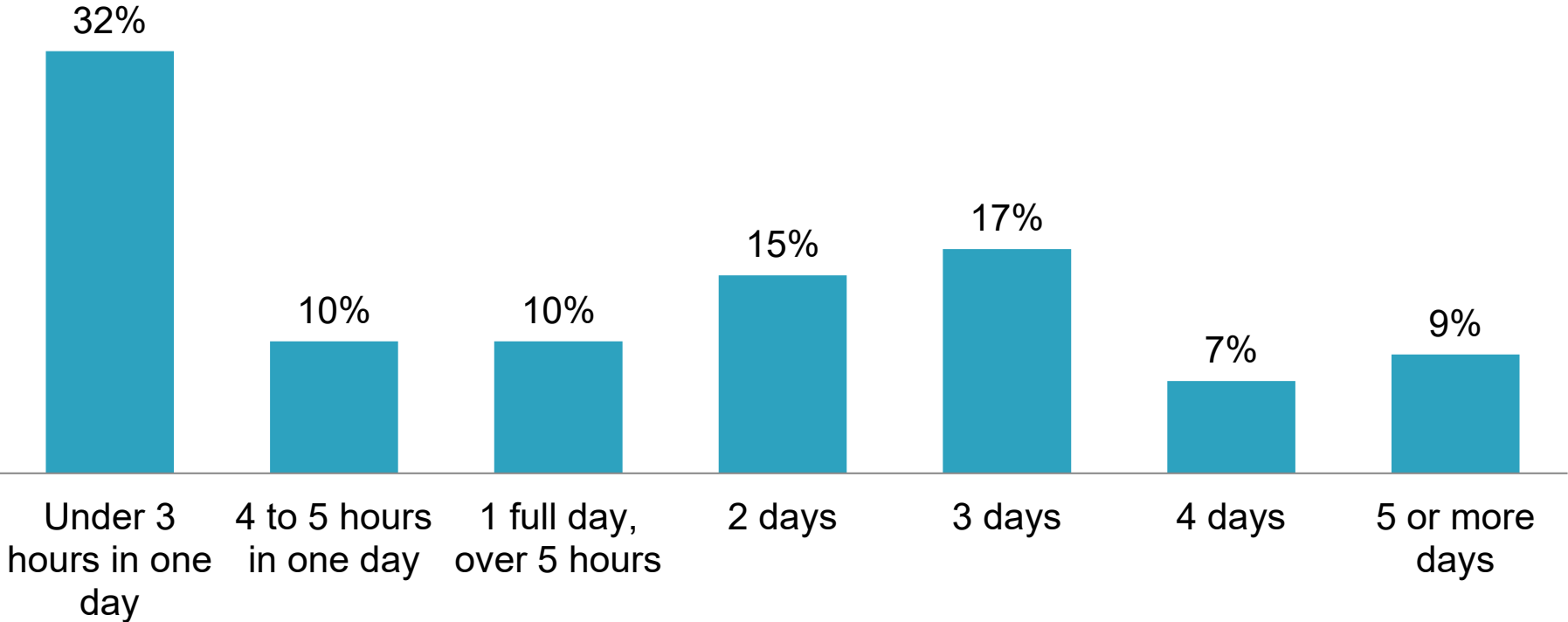
## Average Number of Registered Attendees that Watch an Archived or "On Demand" Event or Content Re-Play

- 8,077

Survey Question: How many attendees have you been registering and attracting to your most important, highest profile online events? *(Events with less than 500 registered attendees excluded.)*

# Length of online events

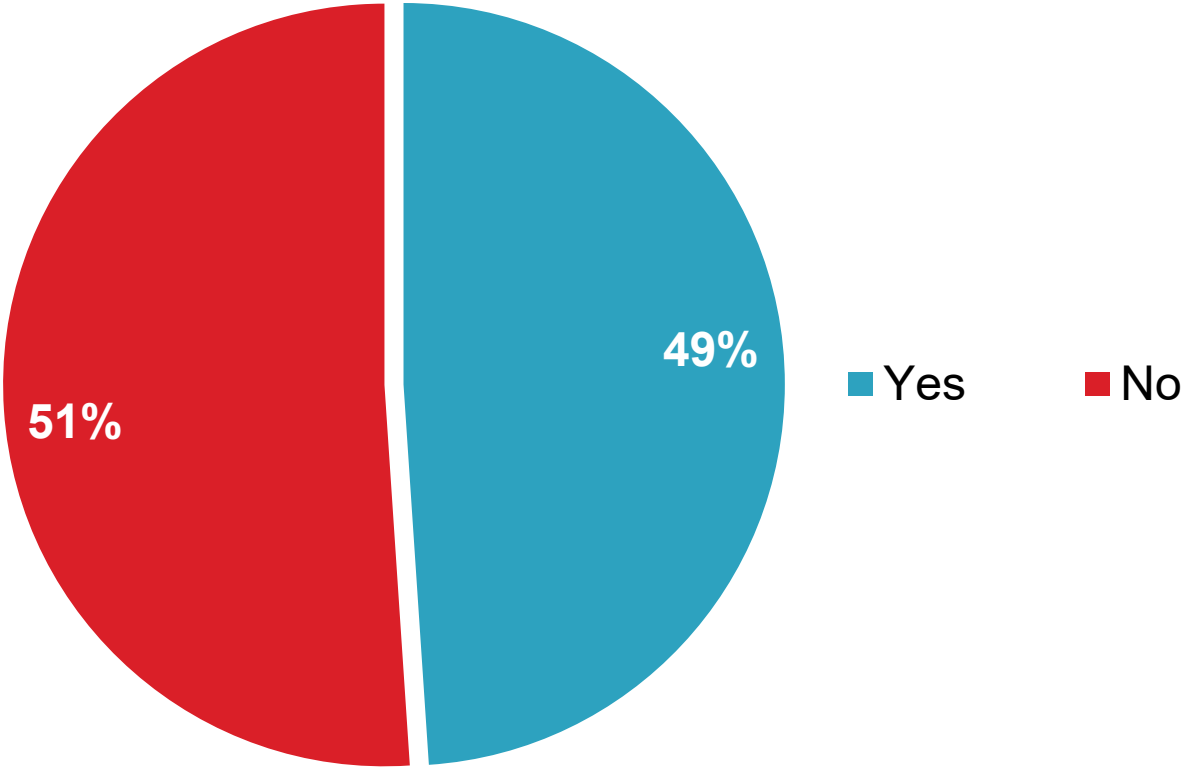
While 32% of online events are under three hours, 20% are four hours or more (if held on one day). A total of 39% of online events are held between two to four days.



Survey Question: Typically, how long are your most important online events in terms of hours or days?

# Are online event attendees charged fee to attend?

Forty-nine percent of online events charge for attendee registration. The average fee based on the data provided by the respondents is \$280.



Survey Question: Do you charge registrants/attendees to access your most important online events? (And) If you charge registrants/attendees for online events, what is the fee or fee range?

# Most effective marketing strategies, tactics or messaging approaches driving online event registrations (select comments)

- “Additional content pre/post event.”
- “Company packages, expanded on-demand viewing periods.”
- “Digital marketing.”
- “Earn CEUs.”
- “Email, the relevance of the content to the attendee.”
- “Flexible, Economical, Accessible, Relevant.”
- “Offering gift cards for early registrants and gift cards for early attendees.”
- “Providing an experience that allows for more interaction as networking vs. a webinar.”
- “Still delivering great content but in a new format.”
- “That it is free to members.”

Survey Question: What has been the most effective marketing strategies, tactics or messaging approaches to drive online event registrations?

Source: Access Intelligence Research & Consulting

# Fostering engagement and networking for online event attendees and/or sponsors/exhibitors

Select write-in comments:

- “Attendee chat connectivity within the environment. Zoom discussions built into programming.”
- “Chat box, polling, annotations.”
- “Creative programming, one-on-one appointments, and tracking digital reach.”
- “Games, marketing messages in and out of the platform.”
- “Interactive demo and chat rooms.”
- “Introducing lucky draws.”
- “Live chat in networking lounge.”
- “Social media and directly contacting attendees.”

Survey Question: How are you fostering engagement and networking for your online event attendees and/or sponsors/exhibitors?

## Fostering engagement and networking for online event attendees and/or sponsors/exhibitors, continued

- “Utilizing a platform which has networking ability and 1:1 meetings, etc.”
- “Virtual booths offering prizes for engagement.”
- “Virtual games and entertainment, provide opportunities to win gift cards, 1-on-1 meetings with buyers/procurement officials.”
- “Virtual happy hour with exhibitors.”

Survey Question: How are you fostering engagement and networking for your online event attendees and/or sponsors/exhibitors?

## How event producers are adding value to exhibitors and sponsors at your online events (select comments)

- “Attendee lists, doing things to drive traffic to booths.”
- “By allotting them 10-minute speed sessions.”
- “Chat bots, and post-call center to contact attendees.”
- “Created customized virtual sponsorship opportunities and branding.”
- “Each sponsor is live on the zoom platform, we show their prerecorded video then do Q&A for that sponsor and then move to the next.”
- “Encouraging exhibitors to activate sponsorships via interactive contests and to upgrade their company listing to stand out in a website.”
- “Host of Zoom Discussions on sponsor topic of choice. Sponsor 'Poll of the Day.' Sponsor Showcases (greater focus on educational content exchange than buying-selling). Branding, branding, and more branding. Launched and Promoted "Solutions Guide" (formerly exhibit directory) in May and run through end of year (extended value).”

Survey Question: How are you adding value to exhibitors and sponsors at your online events?

Source: Access Intelligence Research & Consulting



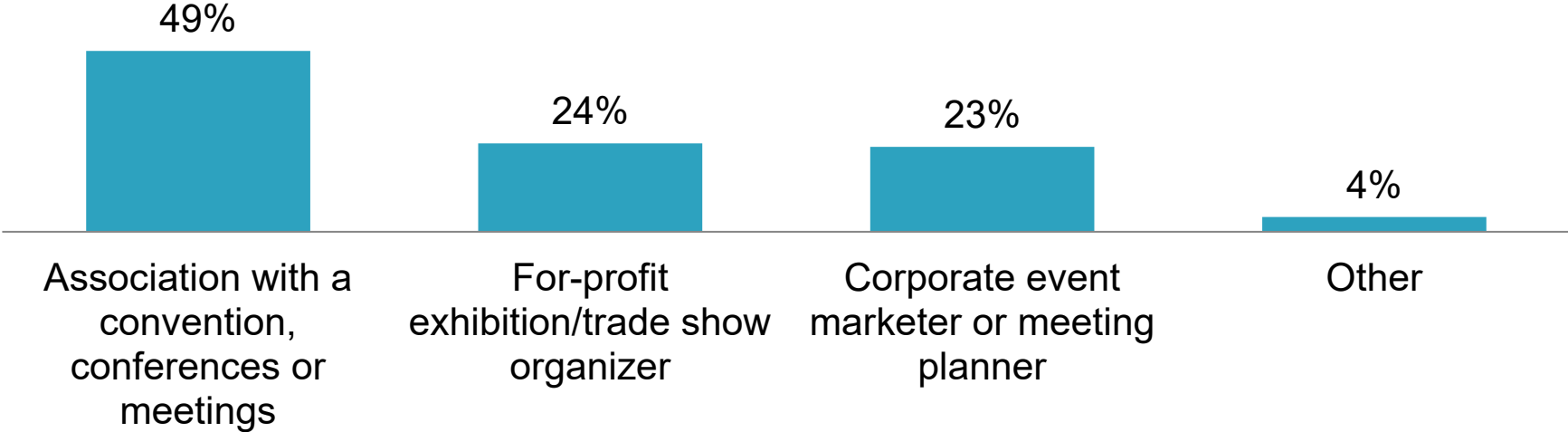
## How event producers are adding value to exhibitors and sponsors at your online events, continued

- “Lower prices on 'booths', gamification.”
- “More digital exposures.”
- “One-on-one appointments and pre-conferences.”
- “Prestige access.”
- “Providing metrics for attendees' engagement with exhibitor/sponsor on day of event and for 6 weeks afterwards.”
- “Publication ads, web page, blog post.”
- “The virtual platform will be available to registrants for five months, so exhibitors and sponsors will be able to track leads over a much longer time period than the in-person conference, for a small fraction of their usual investment.”
- “With the ability to share content.”

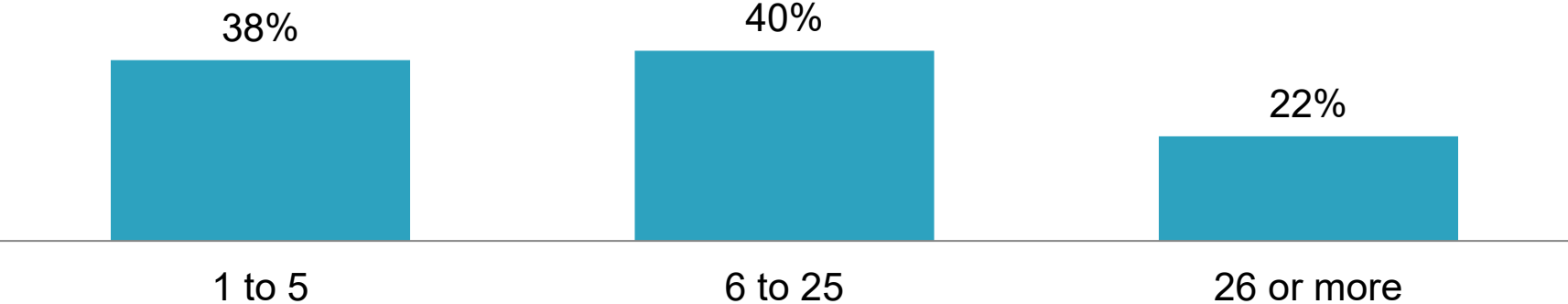
Survey Question: How are you adding value to exhibitors and sponsors at your online events?

Source: Access Intelligence Research & Consulting

## About the Respondents: Type of Organization



## About the Respondents: Number of Events in 2019



# About Access Intelligence Research & Consulting

Access Intelligence Research & Consulting helps leaders in the event, venue and corporate marketing industries analyze data and information to make more informed decisions. We leverage our trusted brands, industry leading data and market expertise to provide clients with insights to improve their business performance. Access Intelligence Research & Consulting is unique in maintaining expertise in the following sectors:

- Event marketing and corporate events
- Conventions, exhibitions and conferences
- Convention centers, venues and hotels
- Business-to-business media
- Digital media, marketing and e-commerce
- Esports



Contact: Michael Hughes, Managing Director of Research & Consulting  
(480) 241-9405 / [mhughes@accessintel.com](mailto:mhughes@accessintel.com)

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