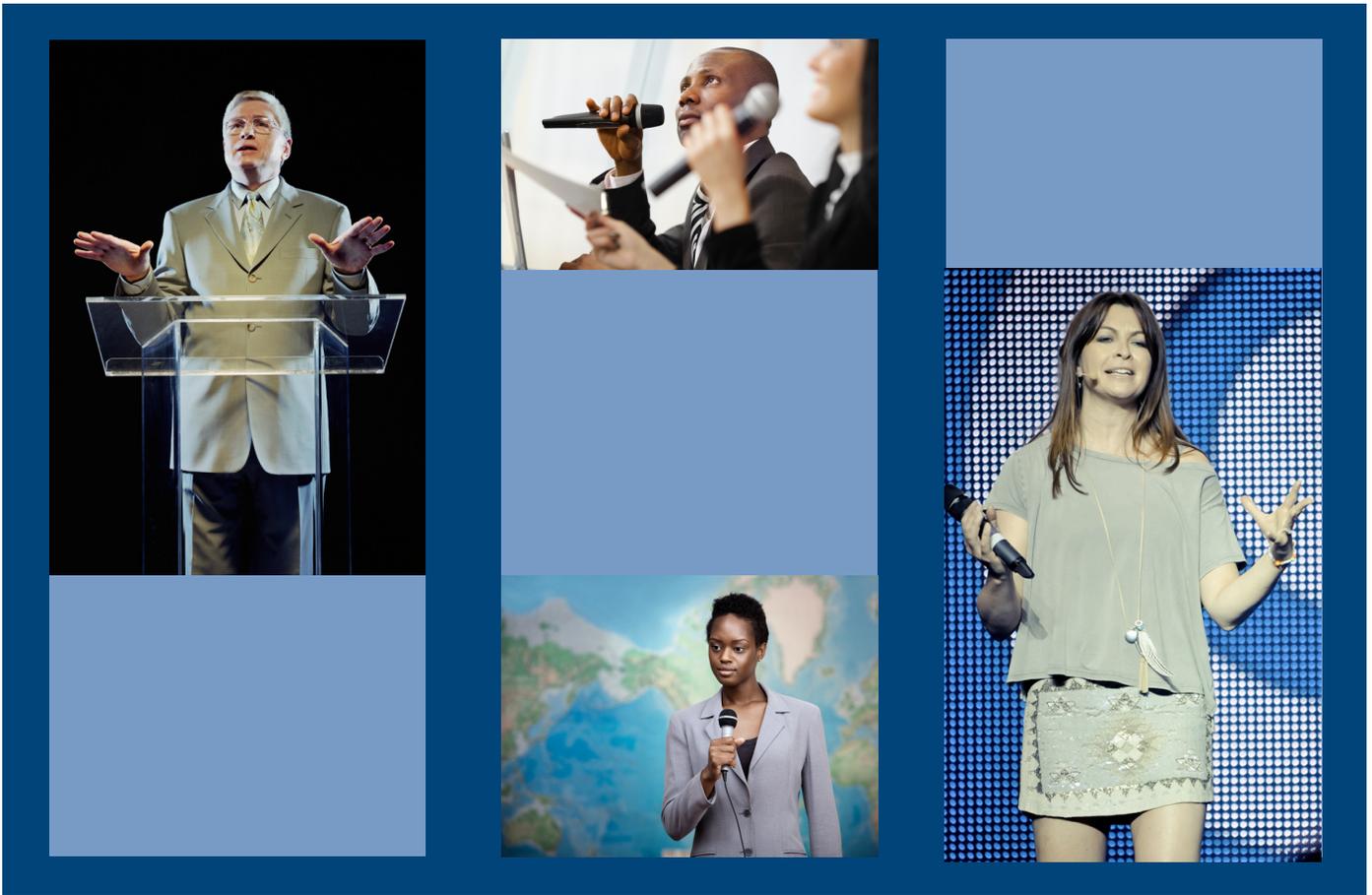


# THE SPEAKER REPORT

November 2013



## The Use of Professional and Industry Speakers in the Meetings Market

written by Jeff Cobb, Jeff Hurt, Dave Lutz, Sarah Michel, and Celisa Steele  
published by Tagoras and Velvet Chainsaw Consulting



[www.velvetchainsaw.com](http://www.velvetchainsaw.com)  
[info@velvetchainsaw.com](mailto:info@velvetchainsaw.com)  
330.474.1047



[www.tagoras.com](http://www.tagoras.com)  
[info@tagoras.com](mailto:info@tagoras.com)  
800.867.2046

# Copyright and Disclaimer

## The Fine Print

© 2013 Tagoras, Inc. and Velvet Chainsaw Consulting. This report, published by Tagoras and Velvet Chainsaw Consulting, is made available under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-Share Alike 3.0 United States License. To view this license, go to <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/3.0/us>.

Any reproduction of this work in whole or in part must attribute Tagoras and Velvet Chainsaw Consulting and contain links to <http://www.tagoras.com> and <http://www.velvetchainsaw.com>.

\*\*\*\*\*

*The contents of this report are based on data gathered from a variety of sources, including a Web-based survey conducted by Tagoras and Velvet Chainsaw Consulting from June 10, 2013, to July 18, 2013. A total of 175 individuals participated in the survey. Neither the sampling method nor the size of the sample can be considered statistically valid, so the results offered here should be considered informative but not definitive in nature. While we deem these sources, including subjective estimates and opinions of the report authors, to be reliable, Tagoras and Velvet Chainsaw Consulting do not guarantee the accuracy of the report's contents and expressly disclaim any liability by reason of inaccurate source materials.*

### Declaration of Independence

This report was independently researched and produced by Tagoras and Velvet Chainsaw Consulting. Tagoras and Velvet Chainsaw Consulting do not accept any form of compensation for including specific individuals, organizations, or companies in their research. Neither Tagoras nor Velvet Chainsaw Consulting compensates any individual, organization, or company for contributing to the report.

# Table of Contents

## *The Speaker Report 2013*

### **Introduction | 9**

The Data 9

What This Report Includes 10

### **Key Findings | 11**

### **Demographic Data | 13**

Leading Education and Professional Development 14

Certification and Continuing Education 15

What's Next 15

### **Professional Speakers | 16**

Costs and Numbers 16

Professional Speaker Budgets 16

The Number of Professional Speakers 17

Per-Speaker Costs 18

Sponsored Speaking 19

Finding and Hiring Speakers 20

The Search for Speakers 20

Speakers' Marketing Tools 21

Speaker Bureaus 21

Who Decides? 23

Timelines and Registrations 24

Booking Professional Speakers 24

The Speaker-Registration Connection 25

What's Expected of Speakers 26

Attributes of a Successful Speaker 26

Beyond the Dais 27

What's Next 28

16 Ways a Professional Speaker Can Kill Her Shot at a Referral 29

## **Industry Speakers | 30**

Numbers and Compensation 30

Industry Speaker and Session Tallies 30

Changes to Come 30

Calls for Proposals 32

Proposal Acceptance Rates 33

Prepping Industry Speakers 33

Compensating Industry Speakers 36

Evaluations and Measuring Learning 37

Rewriting Session Submissions 39

Live Streaming and Content Capture 39

What's Next 40

## **A Look at Satisfaction and Success | 41**

Satisfaction and Success by the Numbers 41

What the Numbers May Mean 42

## **About Velvet Chainsaw Consulting | 44**

## **About Tagoras | 45**

## **Appendix: Survey Data | 46**

All Respondents 46

Use of Professional Speakers 46

Meeting with 500 or More Attendees 46

Respondents Who Spend at Least \$5,000 on Professional Speakers 46

Annual Professional Speaker Budget 46

Number of Professional Speakers Per Year 46

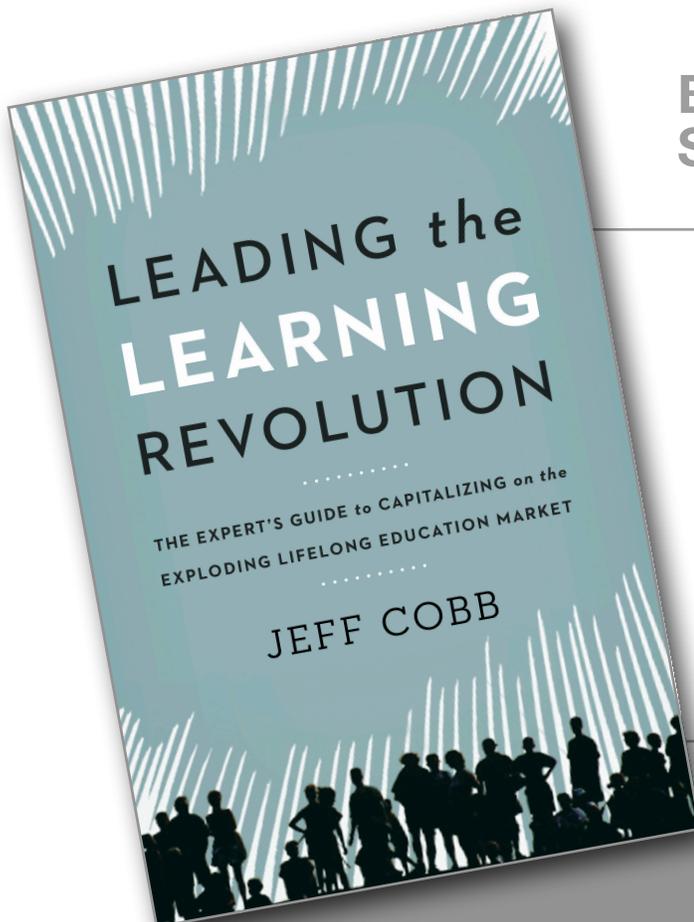
Frequency of Use of Speaker Bureaus 47

Change in Use of Speaker Bureaus 47

Value of Speaker Bureaus 47

Idea Sources for New Professional Speakers	47
Hiring Authority for Professional Speakers	48
Importance of Professional Speaker Marketing Tools	48
Timeline for Professional Speakers	48
Impact of Professional Speakers on Registrations	49
Importance of Factors for Professional Speaker Success	49
Frequency of Use of Sponsors	49
Change in Use of Sponsors	49
Planned Use of Sponsors	50
Doing More Than Speaking	50
Non-Speaking Requests and Requirements	50
Respondents Who Hold a Meeting with at Least 500 Attendees	50
Number of Industry Speakers at the Major Meeting	50
Number of Sessions at the Major Meeting	51
Use of Call for Presentations	51
Acceptance Rate For Call for Presentations	51
Timeline for Call for Presentations	51
Speaker Preparation	51
Content of Speaker Preparation	52
Method of Speaker Preparation	52
Speaker Compensation	52
Types of Speaker Compensation	52
Formal Evaluations	53
Types of Formal Evaluations	53
Collection of Formal Evaluations	53
Measuring Learning	53
Method of Measuring Learning	53
Rewriting Learning Objectives	54

Live Video Streaming of Keynotes	54
Live Video Streaming of Concurrent Sessions	54
Repurposing Content	54
Satisfaction, Success, and Profile Data for Qualifying Respondents	54
Overall Satisfaction with Meetings	54
Satisfaction with Specific Items	55
Overall Success of Meetings	55
Geographic Focus	55
Type of Organization	55
Certification Program	56
Continuing Education	56
Individual Membership	56
Organizational Membership	56
Classification	57
Overall Staff	57
Education Staff	57
Most Senior Education Staff Title	57
Budget Size	58



## Build a Platform. Start a Revolution.

---

**For speakers who want to reinvent their business models by building a thriving, global online education and training business...**

**For associations that want to take their education businesses into the 21st century as rapidly as possible...**

***Leading the Learning Revolution* is the go-to resource.**

---

The Web is littered with educational content from innumerable competitors, but few have the solid foundation required for building a sustainable business. *Leading the Learning Revolution* helps you weave together nimble technology, educational best practices, subject matter expertise, and a consistent focus on value to create unique, irreplaceable learning experiences that build strong connections with users—for a lifetime.

Get your copy today at [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com) or any other major bookseller.

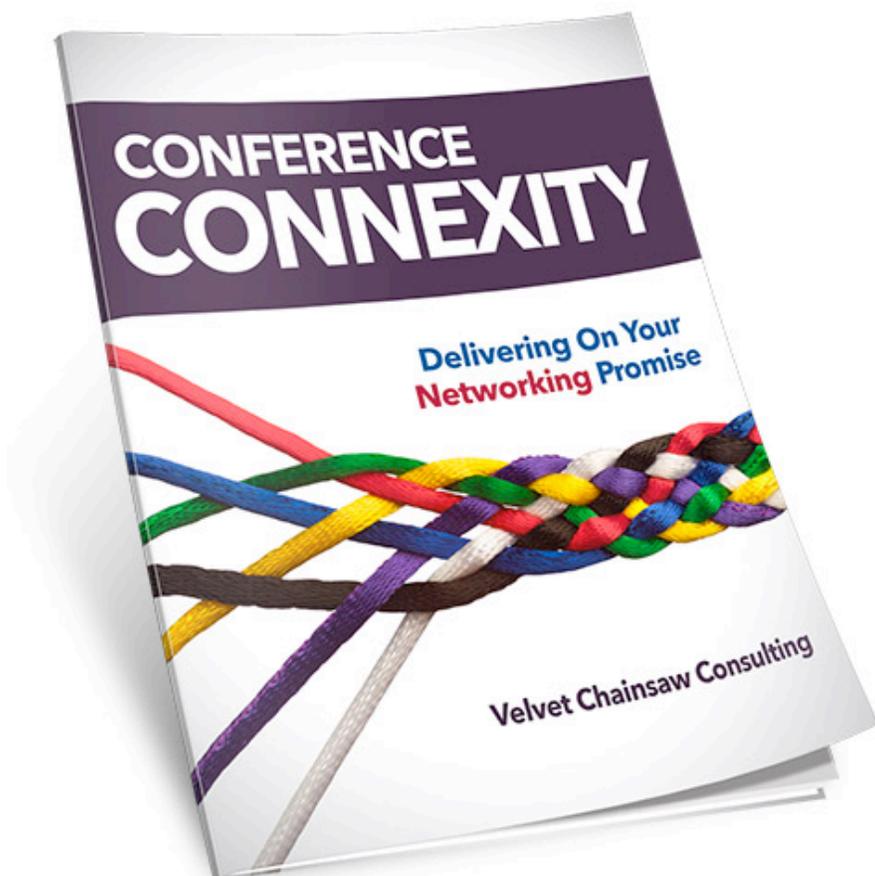
Written from the perspective of a seasoned entrepreneur in the global market for lifelong education, *Leading the Learning Revolution* is a treasure chest of practical insights and strategies for launching an education business or transforming the business you already have. Key topics covered include:

- Exciting new business models for online education, like Purpose x Passion (P2) learning communities, virtual conferences, and massive courses
  - Techniques for fueling your content marketing and value creation engine
  - Essential practices for delivering high-quality experiences that rise far above the “junk” learning that floods the market
  - Hands-on tools and tips for creating the most popular forms of educational content
  - Strategies for positioning and pricing that will set you far apart from the competition
-

# Where Community and Connecting Intersect Is *Connexity*

Conference organizers need to be in the connexity business, making connections and building communities. We all have this driving hunger to be with people who understand us and have challenges similar to ours. We want to belong.

Learn how to design better connexity experiences at <http://tinyurl.com/nqa576b>.



## Introduction

# About the Use of Speakers in the Meetings Market

A desire to better understand how organizations use professional and industry speakers at their meetings, conferences, and other events—how they select them, what they expect from them, and how their educational impact is measured—prompted us to release the first version of *The Speaker Report* in December of 2011. This second version carries that initial effort forward and offers the most comprehensive and up-to-date information available on how speakers fit into the educational landscape.

### The Data

At the core of the report is data from an online survey conducted from June 10, 2013, to July 18, 2013. We received 175 responses to this survey. Some 84.8 percent were from individuals who indicated their organization hires professional speakers, and 84.1 percent were from organizations that hold a meeting attended by at least 500 people.

The 130 organizations that indicated they have an annual budget of at least \$5,000 for hiring professional speakers were asked about their use of

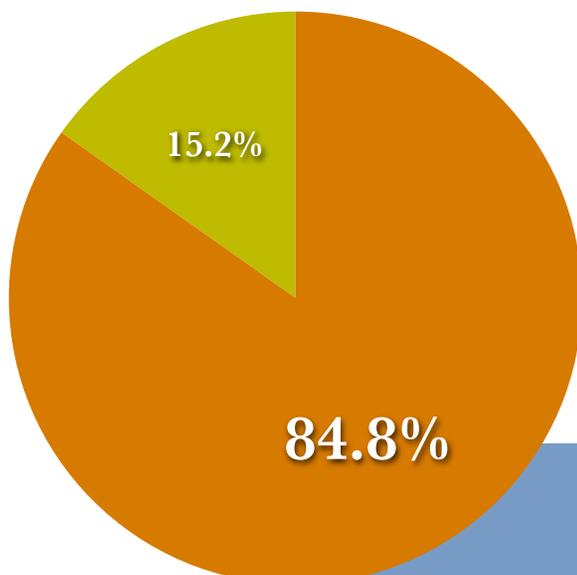
professional speakers, and we asked questions on their use of industry speakers of the 127 organizations reporting they hold a meeting attended by 500 people or more.

While we used the term *meeting* in the survey and use it in this report, we know that organizations may favor other terms—*conference* or *event*, for example. When you see *meeting*, know that we're using the term as generically and broadly as possible, including conferences and other events.

We (the authors of this report) have worked in the learning and meetings space for decades. Throughout the report we provide our own analysis of the information collected through the survey, and we draw on our own experience to offer perspectives that may not be readily apparent from the data. Our approach to doing this is relatively conservative, based not only on the limitations naturally imposed by a non-statistical survey, but also on an understanding that meetings come in all shapes and sizes and that overly broad conclusions can mislead.

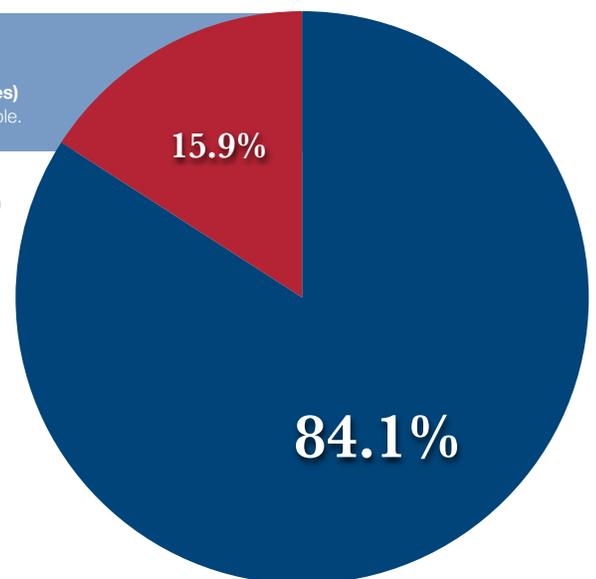
Does your organization hold a meeting attended by 500 people or more? (151 responses)  
Just over 84 percent of respondents to the survey hold a meeting attended by at least 500 people.

- Hold a meeting attended by  $\geq 500$
- Don't hold a meeting attended by  $\geq 500$



- Hire professional speakers
- Don't hire professional speakers

Does your organization hire professional speakers for its meetings? (171 responses)  
Nearly 85 percent of respondents to the survey hire professional speakers.



## What This Report Includes

The report is structured into the following sections:

1. This brief introduction
2. The key findings, where we outline our top take-aways from the data and suggest what they might mean for how organizations approach meetings
3. The demographic data
4. A section that looks at how professional speakers are chosen, what impact they have on the meetings where they appear, and what they cost
5. A section that addresses key aspects of the use of industry speakers at meetings—whether organizations issue a call for proposals, how many industry speakers and how many sessions fill out meetings, whether the speakers are compensated and prepped for their presentations, and what role evaluations play
6. A section on organizations' satisfaction with and success in their meetings
7. Information about Velvet Chainsaw Consulting and Tagoras (joint publishers of this report) and us (Jeff Cobb, Jeff Hurt, Dave Lutz, Sarah Michel, and Celisa Steele, authors of this report)
8. An appendix that provides the raw online survey data (parts of which are cited throughout the report)

Our sincere hope is this report proves useful to organizations as they assess their use of professional and industry speakers at their meetings and to speakers looking to better understand the meetings market.



*Jeff Cobb*  
*jcobb@tagoras.com*



*Jeff Hurt*  
*jhurt@velvetchainsaw.com*

*Sarah Michel*  
*smichel@velvetchainsaw.com*



*Dave Lutz*  
*dlutz@velvetchainsaw.com*



*Celisa Steele*  
*csteele@tagoras.com*

## Key Findings

### Top Take-Aways from *The Speaker Report*

Here are our top take-aways that emphasize changes since the 2011 survey and report. You can read more on these items in the later sections. This short list of our key findings is here to whet your appetite and for your reference.

**1. Organizations use professional speakers more and spend more.**

In 2011, the average number of professional speakers used per year was 11.2. In 2013, the average is 14.6. The 2013 survey respondents are also spending more for their professional speakers. In 2011, under half of respondents (45.7 percent) had an annual speaker budget over \$30,000. In 2013, over half (53.5 percent) have a budget over \$30,000. These increases are accompanied by an increase in sponsorship support—27.3 percent of organizations report using sponsorship more in the past two years, up from 16.2 percent in 2011.

**2. Speaker bureaus are one option for do-it-yourselfers, not a sole source.**

While only 7.3 percent of 2013 respondents say they always use a speaker bureau for recommending and hiring professional speakers, 74.2 percent use bureaus frequently or sometimes. Many meeting and education professionals are opting for a blended approach to finding and hiring professional speakers that combines a speaker bureau with their own independent research or sources—of nine named idea sources for new professional speakers, speaker bureaus ranked right in the middle, after the more DIY options of recommendations from peers, members, and staff.

**3. Hiring decisions are shifting from the C-suite to the education department.**

In 2011, the VP or director of education or

professional development decided which professional speakers to hire only 13.5 percent of the time. Among 2013 respondents, this jumped to 22.7 percent. In 2011, the C-suite ranked first among decision-makers; in 2013, the top dogs have dropped to third, behind the board or a volunteer committee and the VP of education.

**4. Organizers expect more from their professional speakers.**

In 2013, 66.1 of the survey respondents who hire professional speakers are looking for them to put in more than just their time on stage. This is up from 56.6 percent two years ago. Conference organizers want to get more value from their speaker investment, especially when it comes to leveraging content marketing and maximizing sponsors' return on investment.

**“Big name” speakers may be just that—a name and nothing more.**

**5. What's in a name? Maybe not that much.**

Under a third (28.3 percent) of 2013 respondents believe a “big name” speaker is very or extremely important for attracting registrants.

**6. Proposal review is too nice.**

A third (33.3 percent) of 2013 respondents indicate they accept 60 percent or more of submissions that come in through their call for proposals, and almost another third (29.0 percent) accept between 40 and 59 percent of submissions. Organizations that want to lead their industry and differentiate with the highest-quality education probably need better filters.

7. **Compensation for industry speakers is soft.** With tight budgets, conference organizers use the soft benefit of complimentary registration for industry speakers much more frequently than forking out for travel, lodging, or honoraria.
8. **Shifting evaluations to digital isn't a layup.** While moving to mobile and online evaluations appeals to meeting planners for all the obvious reasons (less waste, easier analysis, etc.), low response rates and technological headaches (one respondent described her organization's mobile survey as a "clunk") dampen enthusiasm. The old tactic of putting a piece of paper on each chair or in the attendee packet still tends to result in better completion rates. To reverse this trend, speakers should be coached to bake in time for attendees to complete the evaluation during the last five minutes of the session
9. **Content capture hasn't taken off—yet?** Two years ago, we predicted we'd see organizations do more live streaming and content capture to amplify their best conference content. It didn't happen—the 2013 numbers are on par with the 2011 responses. Our new prediction is that more

organizations will embrace a strategy of content capture with scheduled replays, and we don't anticipate much growth in live streaming in the future.

10. **Education still isn't getting the respect it deserves.**

Similar to the 2011 findings, for well over half of our respondents, the title of the *most senior* member of their organization's education or professional development function is a director (46.7 percent) or a manager (8.9 percent). Organizations that want to use their education to differentiate need a senior education professional on the executive team. We're seeing a few organizations employ chief learning officers, but many more who list education as their primary mission don't have a top-ranking person involved with their high-level education strategy.

## What's Next

The next sections dive into survey respondents' demographics, their experience with professional and industry speakers, and their sense of satisfaction and success with their meetings.

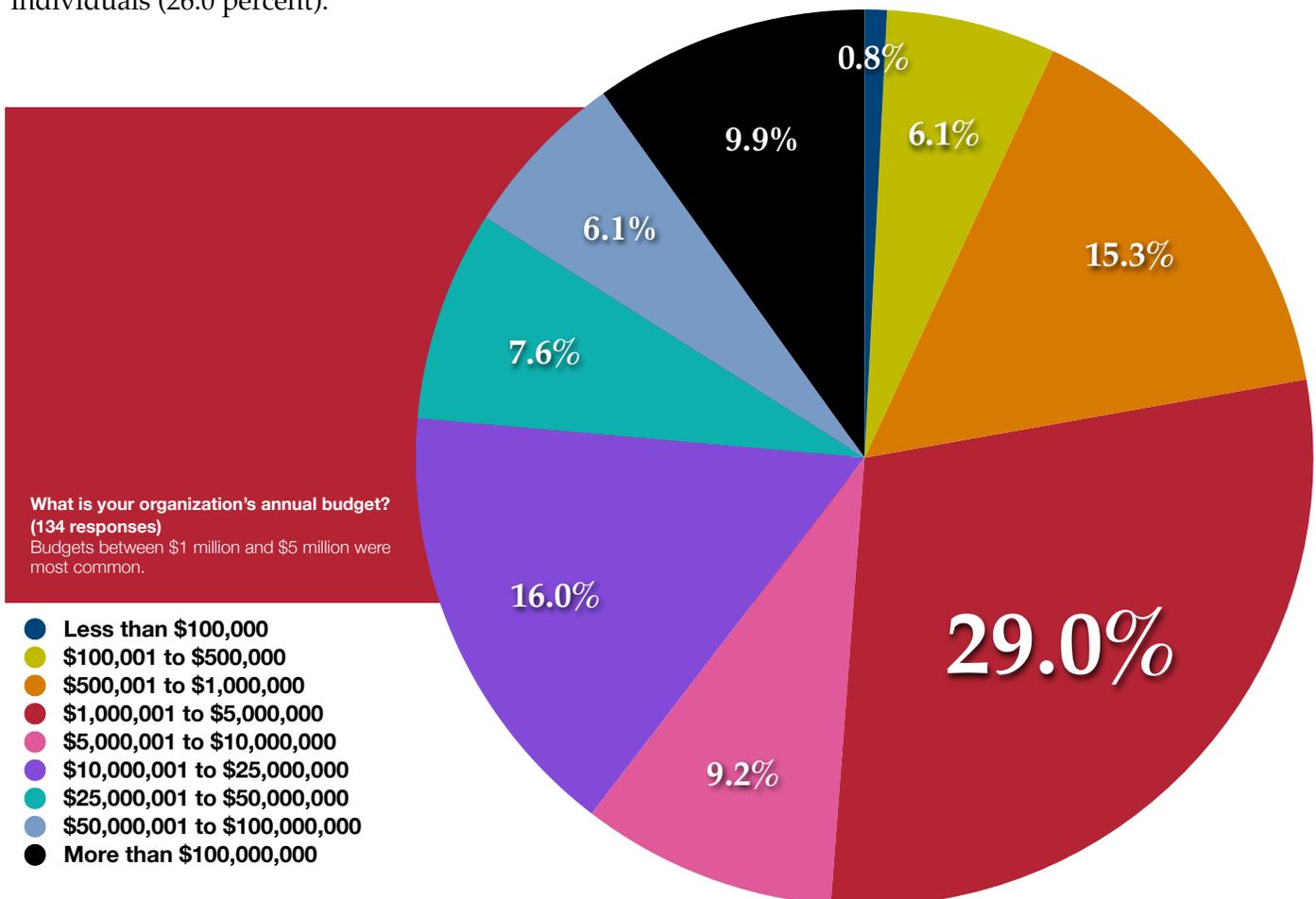
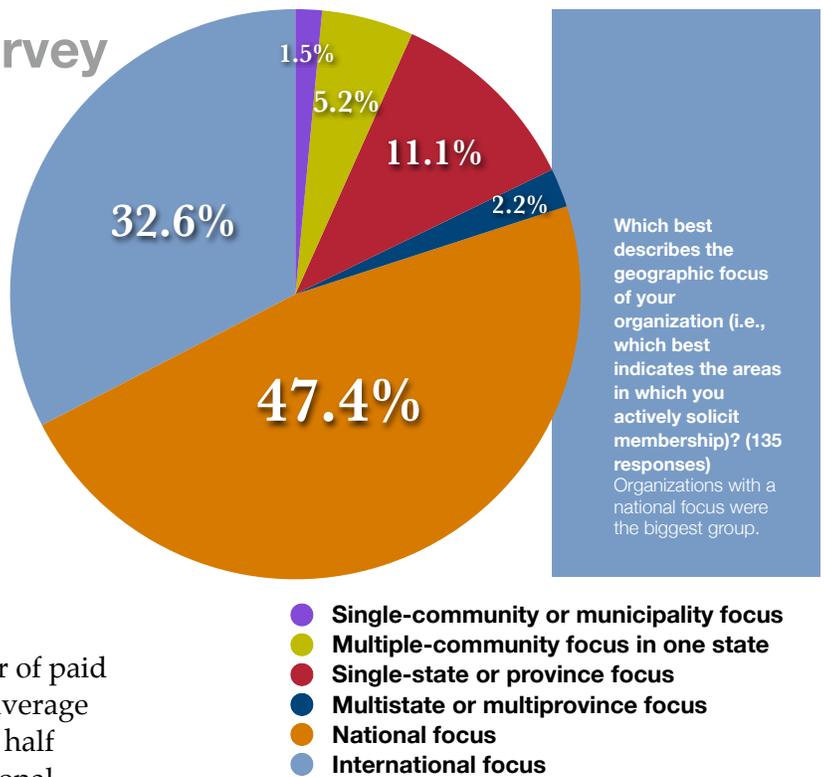
Will more organizations embrace a scheduled-replay strategy for captured content?



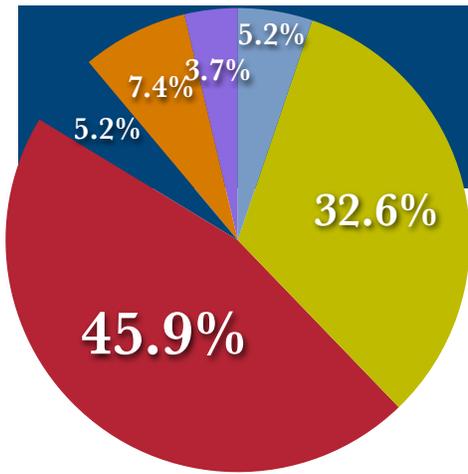
## Demographic Data Who Answered the Survey

Responses to the survey were distributed across a broad range of organizations—from those with one paid staff person and annual budgets of less than \$100,000 to those with more than 900 staff and budgets over \$100 million.

The largest clusters of survey respondents overall were nationally focused organizations (47.4 percent), organizations with annual budgets between \$1 million and \$5 million (29.0 percent), professional societies (45.9 percent), and organizations working in professional, scientific, and technical services (17.0 percent). The average number of paid staff across all organizations was 84.9; the average number of paid staff who spend more than half their time working in education or professional development was 8.9. The most common membership size was between 1,001 and 5,000 individuals (26.0 percent).



Which of the following best characterizes your organization? (135 responses)



- Charitable or philanthropic organization
- Trade association
- Professional society
- Educational institution
- For-profit corporation
- Other

Which of the following classifications (from the North American Industry Classification System, or NAICS) most closely aligns with the audience served by your organization? If you wish to review the classifications to see where your organization fits, you may do so at <http://www.census.gov/cgi-bin/sssd/naics/naicsrch?chart=2007>. (135 responses)

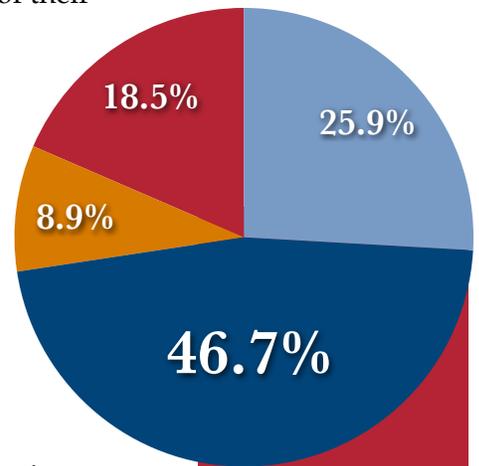
Administrative and support and waste management and remediation services	0.7%
Agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting	1.5%
Arts, entertainment, and recreation	2.2%
Construction	1.5%
Education services	14.1%
Finance and insurance	7.4%
Healthcare and social assistance	16.3%
Information	3.0%
Management of companies and enterprises	2.2%
Manufacturing	5.2%
Mining	0.7%
Professional, scientific, and technical services	17.0%
Public administration	1.5%
Real estate and rental and leasing	4.4%
Retail trade	3.0%
Transportation and warehousing	0.6%
Utilities	2.2%
Wholesale trade	0.7%
Other	14.8%

The clusters were similar for respondents indicating an annual budget of at least \$5,000 for professional speakers, though health care and social assistance (16.7 percent) edges out professional, scientific, and technical services (15.7 percent) as the primary industry focus, and the overall paid staff and education staff averages drop a bit to 74.5 and 6.9 individuals, respectively.

For organizations holding a meeting with at least 500 attendees, the clusters again are similar to those for all survey respondents, but health care and social assistance (16.8) and education services (16.0) beat out professional, scientific, and technical services (15.1) as the primary industry focus.

### Leading Education and Professional Development

For almost half of respondents, the title of the most senior member of their organization's education or professional development function is director (46.7 percent). We advocate groups, especially those that provide certification or continuing education, lead their learning (often the *raison d'être* of the organization) at the executive and VP level so they can remain relevant in increasingly competitive times.



What is the title of the most senior member of your organization's education or professional development function? (135 responses)

- VP
- Director
- Manager
- Other

## Certification and Continuing Education

Some 63 percent of respondents' organizations do *not* offer a formal certification program while 68.1 percent *do* offer continuing education (CE) credit for their meetings.

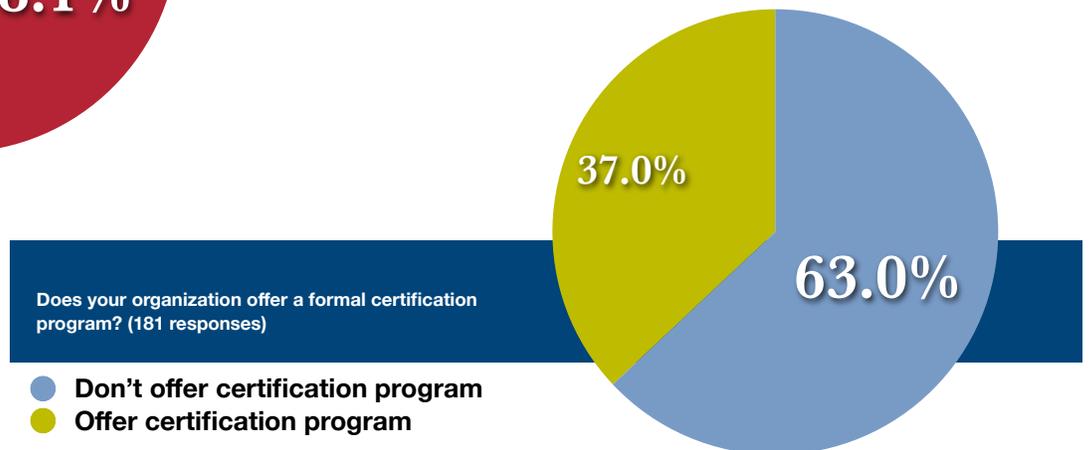
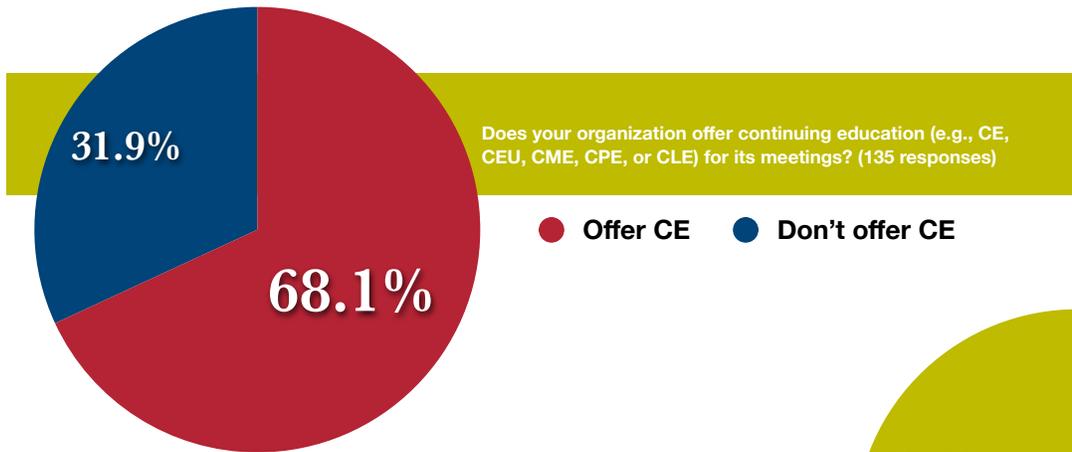
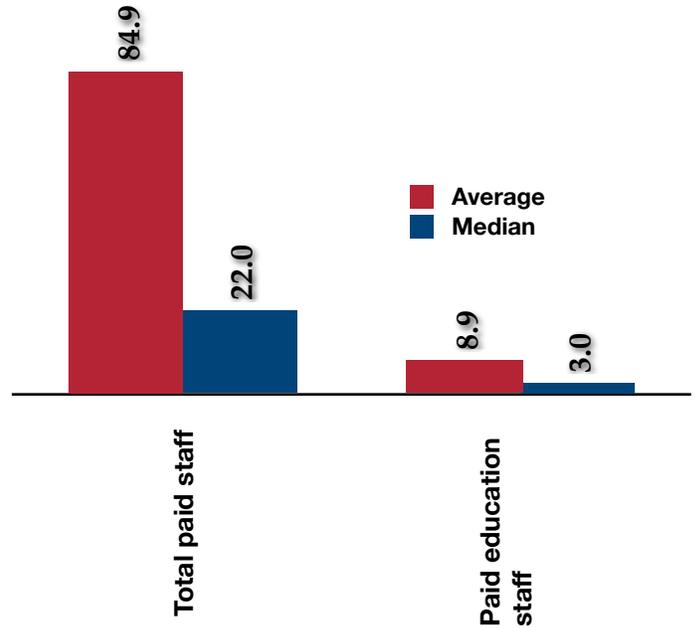
The breakdowns—about 37 percent offering formal certification programs and about 68 percent offering continuing education credit for meetings—aren't radically different for organizations indicating an annual budget of at least \$5,000 for professional speakers and for organizations hosting a meeting with at least 500 attendees.

## What's Next

In the next section, we dig into the data provided by respondents to the online survey about their organization's use of professional speakers—how the organization finds professional speakers, what it spends for them, what it expects of them, how they impact attendance, and more.

How many paid staff does your organization currently have? (106 responses)

How many paid staff does your organization have who currently spend more than half their time working in to education or professional development? (106 responses)



# Professional Speakers Selection, Impact, and Price

Some 84.8 percent of survey respondents indicated their organization hires professional speakers, and, of those, 91.5 percent, or 130 organizations, have an annual budget of at least \$5,000 for professional speakers. We asked those 130 organizations, a series of questions about their use of professional speakers in general, across all their meetings, to learn how professional speakers are chosen, what impact they have on the meetings where they appear, and what they cost the organizations.

## Costs and Numbers

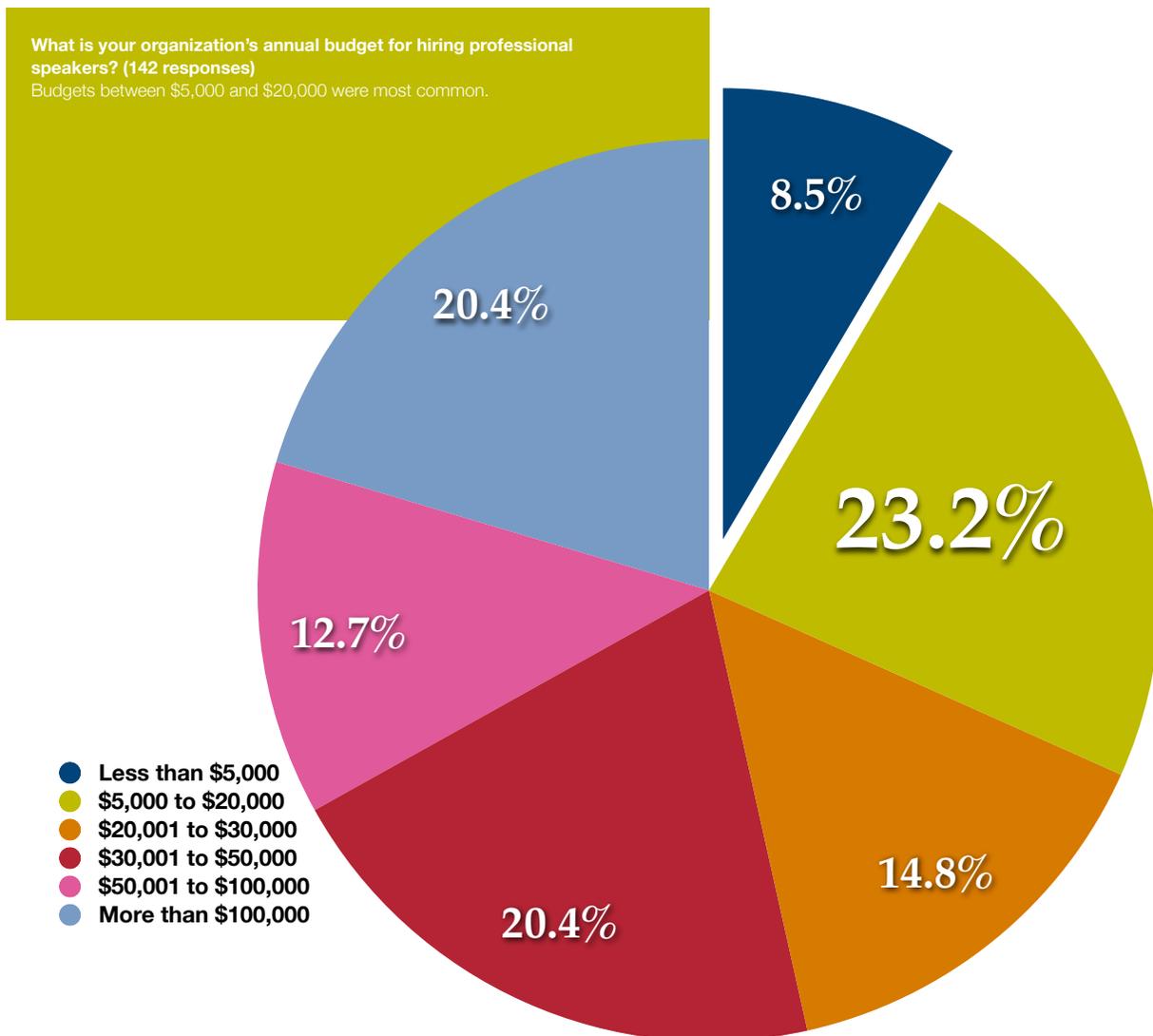
### PROFESSIONAL SPEAKER BUDGETS

Professional speaker budgets between \$5,000 and \$20,000 were most common, reported by 23.2 percent of respondents, with the \$30,001-to-\$50,000

and more-than-\$100,000 options tying for a close second, with 20.4 percent each. Overall, 2013 respondents are spending more on professional speakers. In 2011, under half of respondents (45.7 percent) had an annual speaker budget over \$30,000 compared to over half (53.5 percent) this year.

The \$5,000-to-\$20,000 range is more heavily favored by charitable or philanthropic organizations (66.7 percent) and professional societies (34.0 percent) than the other types of organizations surveyed. A third (33.3 percent)—the largest grouping—of the trade associations reported professional speaker budgets of more than \$100,000.

As might be expected, as an organization's overall budget rises, so too does its speaker budget. For the



overall budget categories from under \$100,000 up to \$5 million, those organizations are most likely to spend \$5,000 to \$20,000 on professional speakers (44.3 percent), but for overall budget categories above \$5 million, the professional speaker budgets rise commensurately; \$100-million-plus organizations are most likely to budget more than \$100,000 for professional speakers (60.0 percent).

For organizations with a narrower-than-national focus, a little under half (46.2 percent) of the budgets fall in the \$5,000-to-\$20,000 range, but well over half (63.4 percent) of nationally and internationally focused organizations budget more than \$30,000 for professional speakers.

Organizations that measure, through assessments or evaluations, whether learning occurs at their meetings are more likely to have a professional speaker budget of at least \$5,000 than those that don't measure learning—only 2.0 percent of those that do measure learning spend less than \$5,000 on professional speakers, compared with 13.5 percent of those that don't measure learning.

**THE NUMBER OF PROFESSIONAL SPEAKERS**

On average, organizations with annual professional speaker budgets of at least \$5,000 hire 14.6 speakers per year (up from an average of 11.2 in our previous report), but the actual numbers vary widely—from 1 to 250. This year, in a new question, we asked survey respondents how their use of professional speakers has changed over the past two years. A

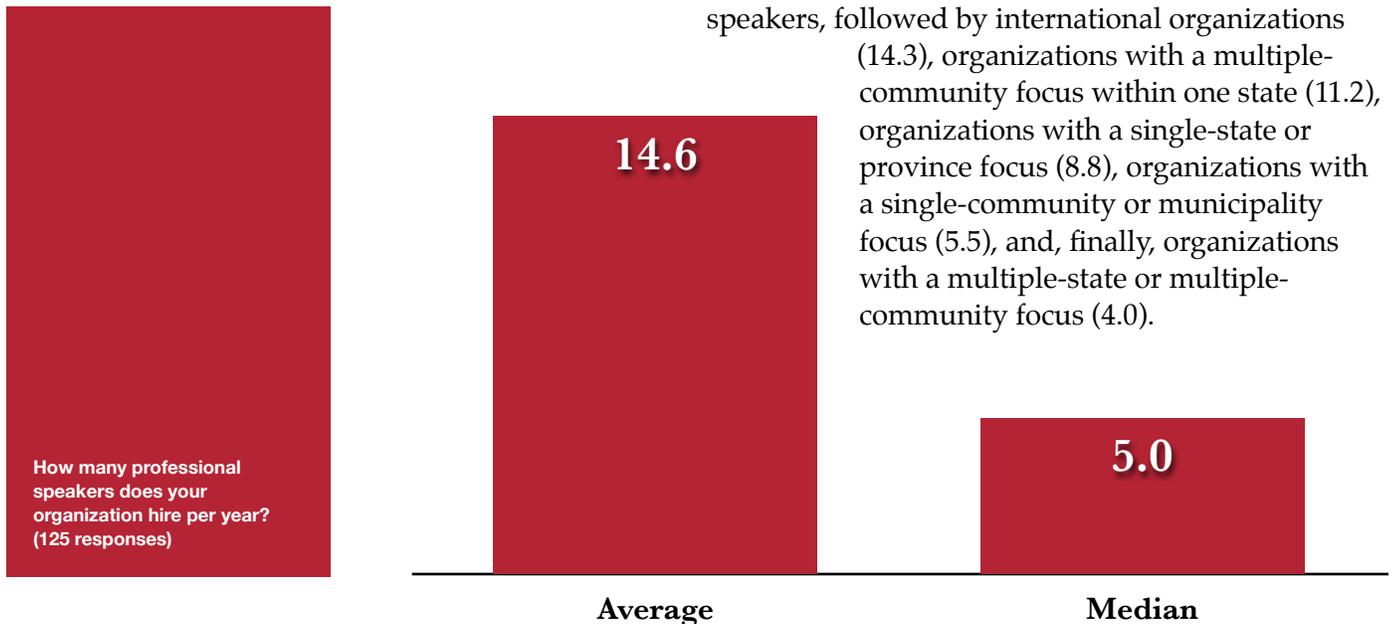
clear majority (71.8 percent) report using about the same number of professional speakers, while 15.3 percent report using more, and 12.9 percent report using fewer professional speakers

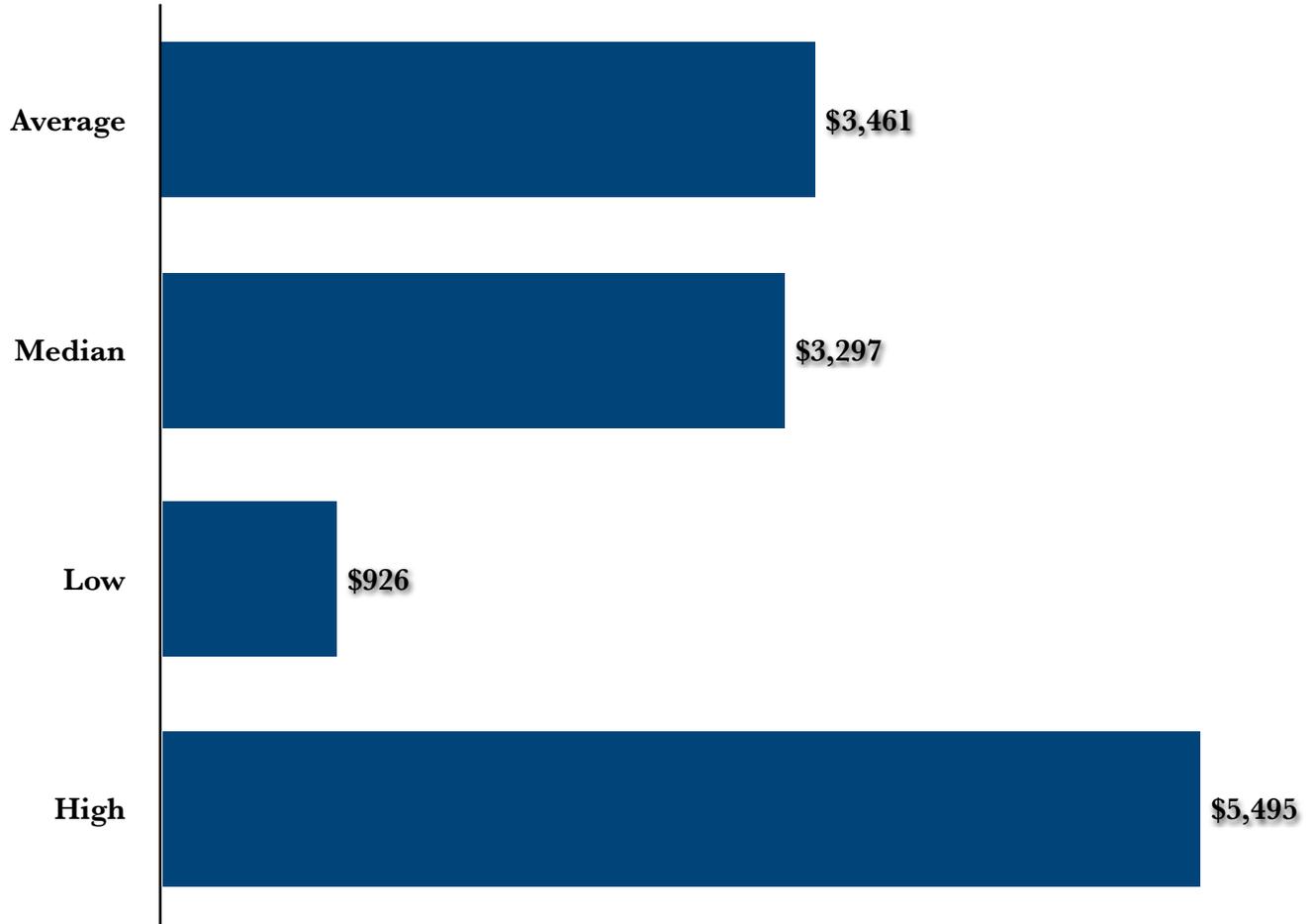
As we would expect, the number of individuals hired rises with the professional speaker budget; organizations spending \$5,000 to \$20,000 hire, on average, 5.4 professional speakers, while organizations spending more than \$100,000 hire 32.3—a noticeable sixfold increase. Similarly, as the organizations' overall budgets grow, the number of professional speakers hired rises; organizations with budgets under \$5 million hire an average of 9.3 professional speakers versus 25.9 hired by organizations with budgets over \$100 million.

By organizational type, for-profit corporations hire the most professional speakers at 46.5 per year, compared with 12.8 at trade associations, 8.6 at professional societies, 5.0 at educational institutions, and, at the low end, 4.8 for charitable or philanthropic organizations.

Taking a geographic view, nationally focused organizations hire the most (14.7) professional speakers, followed by international organizations (14.3), organizations with a multiple-community focus within one state (11.2), organizations with a single-state or province focus (8.8), organizations with a single-community or municipality focus (5.5), and, finally, organizations with a multiple-state or multiple-community focus (4.0).

**Organizations that measure whether learning occurs at their meetings are more likely to have a larger professional speaker budget than those that don't.**





**Derived per-speaker costs**  
 The mean and median averages come in at \$3,461 and \$3,297, respectively, and the values range from \$926 to \$5,495.

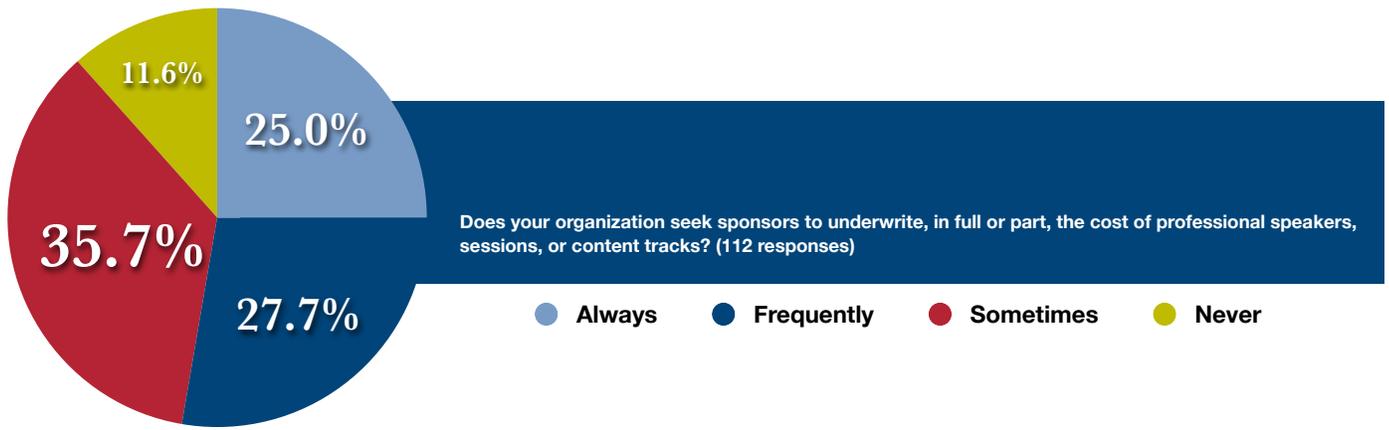
**PER-SPEAKER COSTS**

We didn't directly ask survey respondents about per-speakers costs, but we can derive some cost information using the data the respondents provided on professional speaker budgets and the number of individuals hired annually.

Dividing the high and low ends of the professional speaker budget ranges used in the survey by the average number of professional speakers hired annually by organizations with budgets in those ranges yields an average per-speaker cost of \$3,461 and a median of \$3,297 for those organizations who have budgets of at least \$5,000. (Remember only organizations with a

professional speaking budget of at least \$5,000 were asked follow-on questions about speakers, including how many are hired each year.)

The bottom price tag we can compute comes in at \$926, and the top price tag is almost 6 times that. Keep in mind that the \$5,495 top price is just the limit of what our data can reveal—the highest budget range in the survey was defined simply as over \$100,000, with no top value specified, and we're dealing with approximations rather than reported per-speaker costs. We know from experience that organizations working with top speakers are shelling out many, many, many times more than \$5,495.



### Sponsored Speaking

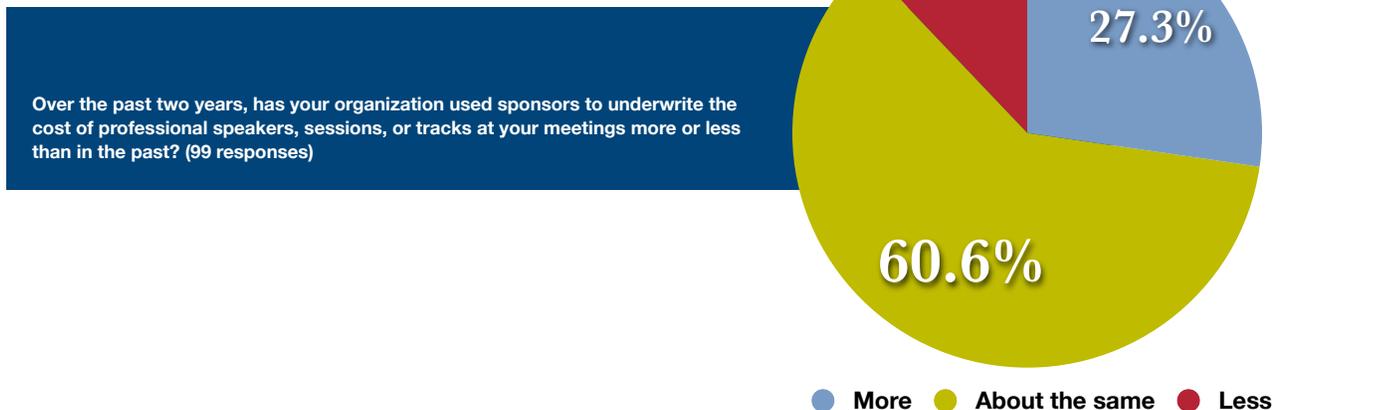
There’s more than one way to skin a cat, and organizations don’t always pay their own money for professional speakers. Sponsorship is another option—and one most survey respondents are exploring, as over 88 percent indicate they at least sometimes seek sponsors to underwrite the cost of professional speakers, sessions, or content tracks at their meetings.

We could argue that sponsors can help shore up smaller budgets, which seems a reasonable enough assertion; 38.9 percent of organizations spending between \$20,001 and \$30,000 on professional speakers annually report always seeking sponsors while only 22.7 percent of those spending \$30,001 to \$50,000 and 11.8 percent of those spending \$50,001 to \$100,000 do. The lowest and highest budget bands, though, complicate the assertion—those with budgets of \$5,000 to \$20,000 report always seeking sponsorship only 20.0 percent of the time, and those with budgets over \$100,000 always look for sponsors 32.0 percent of the time. One explanation may be that the smaller-budget organizations have fewer staff and feel they can’t or shouldn’t focus employee efforts on securing sponsorships;

conversely, big-budget organizations have bigger staffs, meaning they have the workforce to deploy against seeking sponsors.

Of the 11.6 percent who report never seeking sponsors, well over half (69.2 percent) seem content with their current approach and say they do not plan to pursue sponsors in the coming two years, but 30.8 percent say they’re not sure, saving sponsorship as an option to explore in these tight economic times.

The use of sponsors has held relatively steady in the recent past, as 60.6 percent of organizations report using sponsors about the same amount now as over the past two years. Only 12.1 percent report using sponsorship less, and 27.3 percent report using it more, up from 16.2 percent in our last survey. We aren’t surprised by this increase in the use of sponsors, as we predicted in the last report that we’d see just such a rise, as exhibitors want increasingly to be associated with thought leadership.



## Finding and Hiring Speakers

### THE SEARCH FOR SPEAKERS

How organizations get ideas for new professional speakers can be summed up in a few words: from trusted sources. The top three avenues for ideas are recommendations from peers (84.0 percent), members (78.2 percent), and staff (69.7 percent). Recommendations from speaker bureaus are in the middle of the pack (fifth out of nine named idea sources), with 57.1 percent of respondents indicating they rely on those entities. In our work in the industry, we're seeing many meeting and education professionals adopt a blended approach to finding and hiring professional speakers that combines use of a speaker bureau with their own independent research or sources.

In the do-it-yourself hiring paradigm, professional speakers who have a strong Web presence (often buoyed by book publication and social media activity) are better off. We know of an organization

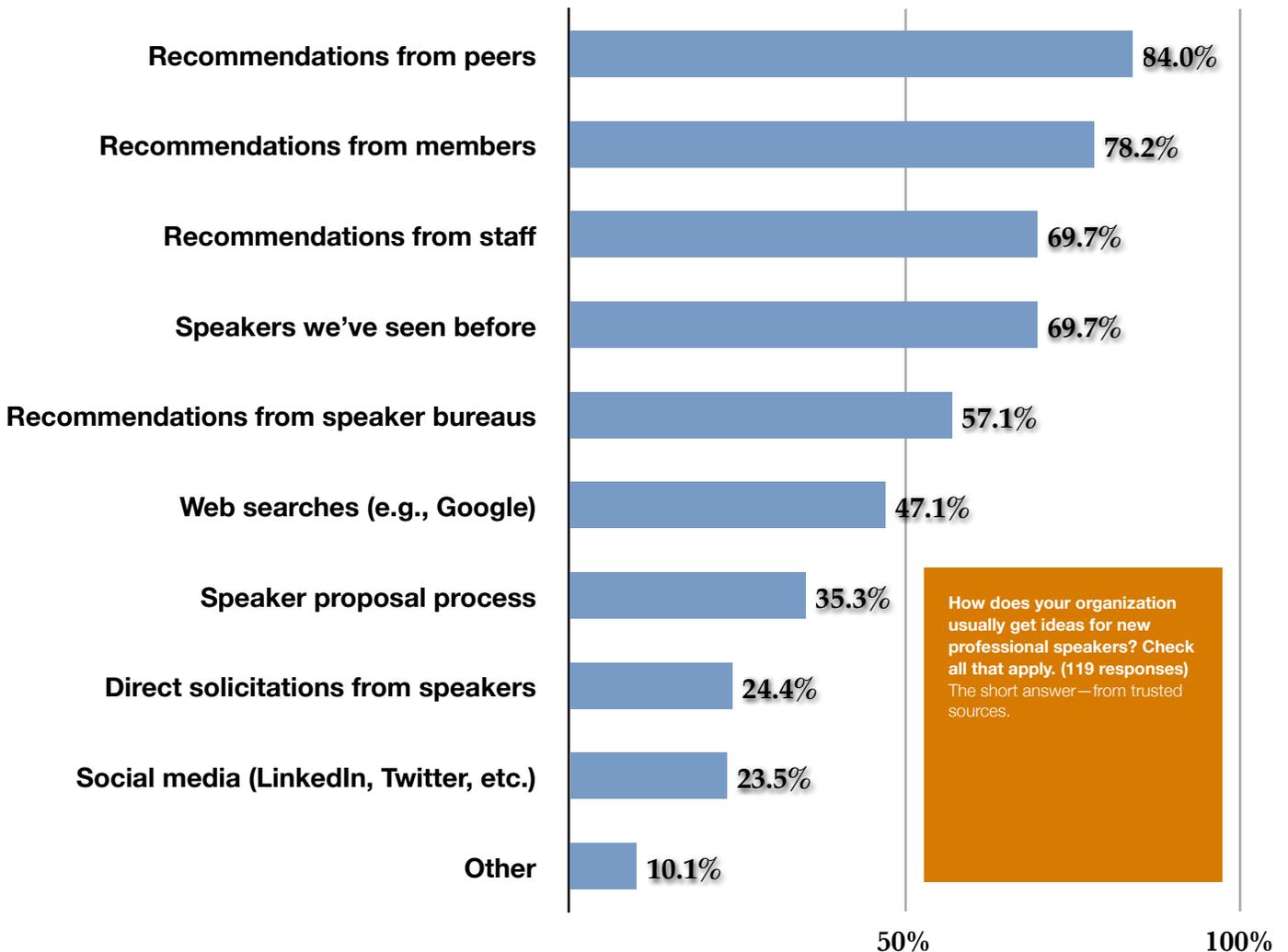
that found a professional speaker through a Google search—and hired him for \$40,000.

Tied to recommendations from peers but based in the DIY ethic is the opportunity to cherry-pick. Meeting and education professionals are researching speakers used by other industry-leading conferences to create their short list.

The other option that garnered a majority (speakers the organization has seen before, 69.7 percent) is just a slight twist on the trusted-source theme—we tend to trust what we've seen and heard with our own eyes and ears.

Managing a proposal process and sifting through direct solicitations can be time sinks for organizations, which may explain why only 35.3 and 24.4 percent of survey respondents employ those approaches, respectively.

While the technology-driven options of Web searches and social media rank lower (47.1 percent

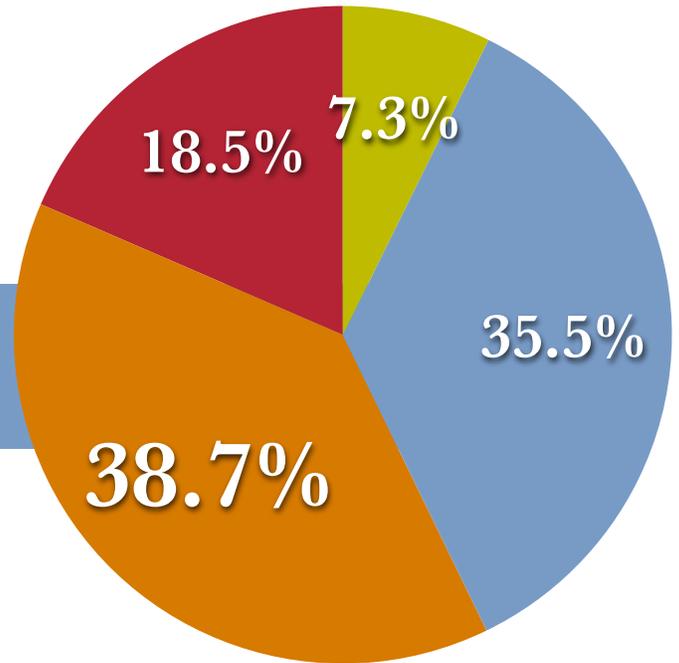


and 23.5 percent, respectively), we argue it's still useful for speakers to be found via Google, LinkedIn, Twitter, and the like.

Some conference professionals responding to the survey reported staying current on TED speakers and perusing publications and books for new ideas.

Does your organization use a speaker bureau for recommending and hiring professional speakers? (124 responses)  
Over 81 percent use speaker bureaus at least sometimes.

● Always ● Frequently ● Sometimes ● Never



### SPEAKERS' MARKETING TOOLS

Of seven named marketing tools, 43.0 percent of respondents rank speaker video as the most important when choosing a professional speaker. Meeting and education professionals don't want promotional videos; they want to see several short clips of real-life presentations. Video quality is less important than seeing the speaker deliver a customized presentation—and the audience respond favorably. The infamous one sheet is ranked lowest by 46.2 percent of respondents.

While social media (including a blog) ranks relatively low (sixth of seven), it can boost a speaker's ability to be found when integrated with a strong Web site. Similarly, published books, while ranking low (fifth), help generate initial inquiries.

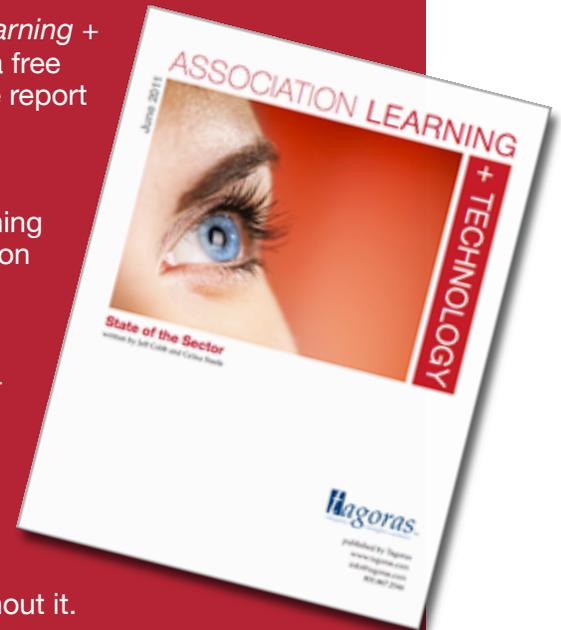
### SPEAKER BUREAUS

While 57.1 percent of organizations reported using speaker bureaus for ideas for new presenters, 81.5 percent of those responding to a separate question reported using bureaus for recommending and hiring professional speakers at least sometimes (regardless of whether they're new).

Organizations that offer continuing education credit are more likely to use speaker bureaus at least sometimes than those that don't (85.7 percent compared

### Free Report—and New Version to Come

*Association Learning + Technology* is a free comprehensive report on technology-enabled and technology-enhanced learning in the association sector. Associations serious about launching an e-learning initiative or growing a current online education program won't want to be without it.



A completely updated version is due out in December 2013 and will also be available for free.

Learn more at <http://www.tagoras.com/catalog/association-learning-technology>.

with 77.4 percent), as are organizations that offer a certification program compared to those that don't (88.1percent versus 80.3 percent). Interestingly, the increase in frequency of use among organizations offering CE is accompanied by a small drop in the perceived value of speaker bureaus—50.0 percent of organizations not offering CE at their meetings find the bureaus very or extremely valuable compared with 43.9 percent of organizations offering CE.

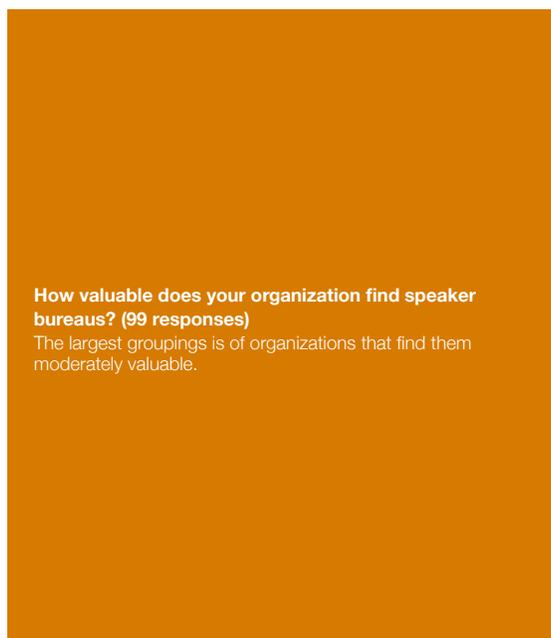
Organizations that use assessments and evaluations to measure whether learning occurs at their meetings are less likely to see greater value in using speaker bureaus—38.4 percent said they are extremely or very valuable compared to 48.8 percent of non-measuring organizations.

The size of the professional speaker budgets appears correlated with the perceived value of speaker bureaus. Only 28.6 percent of organizations with professional speaker budgets of \$5,000 to \$20,000 find bureaus extremely or very valuable versus an impressive 69.2 percent of organizations with budgets over \$100,000.

Use of speaker bureaus is high and holding steady for most organizations (59.0 percent) but is on the decline for over a quarter of respondents who reported their organization used speaker bureaus less over the last two years than previously. Only 14.0 percent reported an increased use of speaker bureaus over the last two years.

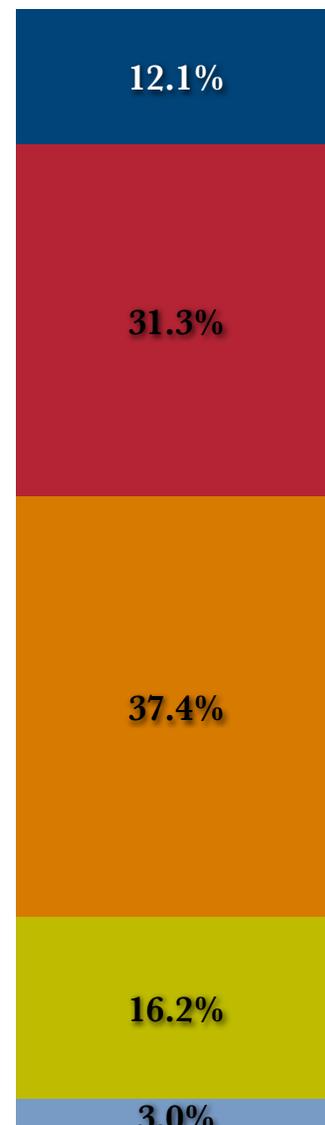
Nearly 57 percent of respondents rated speaker bureaus as only moderately or slightly valuable or not at all valuable—faint praise for what could be a high-value service. It seems there's a love/hate take on bureaus, and a bad experience delivered by one penalizes the reputation of all bureaus. We see an opportunity for speaker bureaus to be strong partners, which may require them to make recommendations outside their portfolio to gain long-term trust.

We believe speaker exclusivity (which forces organizations to use particular speaker bureaus) may partially explain the apparent discrepancy between the high use of speaker bureaus and the comparatively lower satisfaction with their value. Given that situation and that 43.4 percent of organizations *do* find them very or extremely valuable, speaker bureaus are likely to remain one important way of finding those star speakers.



**How valuable does your organization find speaker bureaus? (99 responses)**  
The largest groupings is of organizations that find them moderately valuable.

- Extremely valuable
- Very valuable
- Moderately valuable
- Slightly valuable
- Not at all valuable



**WHO DECIDES?**

Who makes the final decision to hire professional speakers is all over the org chart. The top answer is *not* by the education or professional development department, where logic might place it, given the important learning function of many meetings.

Final decisions for professional speakers are most frequently made by a board or volunteer committee (24.4 percent). The vice president or director of education or professional development (22.7 percent) ranks next, showing a trend that’s moving in what we think is a good direction—in 2011, the VP or director of education or professional development decided which professional speakers to hire only 13.5 percent of the time. The head of the organization ranks third this year (with 20.2 percent), versus coming in first in 2011. The vice president or director of meetings and staff committees play decision maker just 10.9 and 6.7 percent of the time, respectively.

Of the relatively large slice of “other” decision makers (15.1 percent), many of the open-ended responses reveal a combined approach (e.g., selection is done by staff *and* a volunteer committee or a vice president and the CEO) or a varied approach (the decision maker changes depending on the particular meeting).

Keep in mind that while we asked about *final* decisions, availability and pricing information is often collected by a lower-level staff person, who can’t sign anyone up—but can scratch names off the list.

Organizations with annual budgets over \$5 million tend to make speaker decisions by staff, especially by meetings staff, rather than putting decision-making in the hands of volunteers or board members. Those organizations use board or

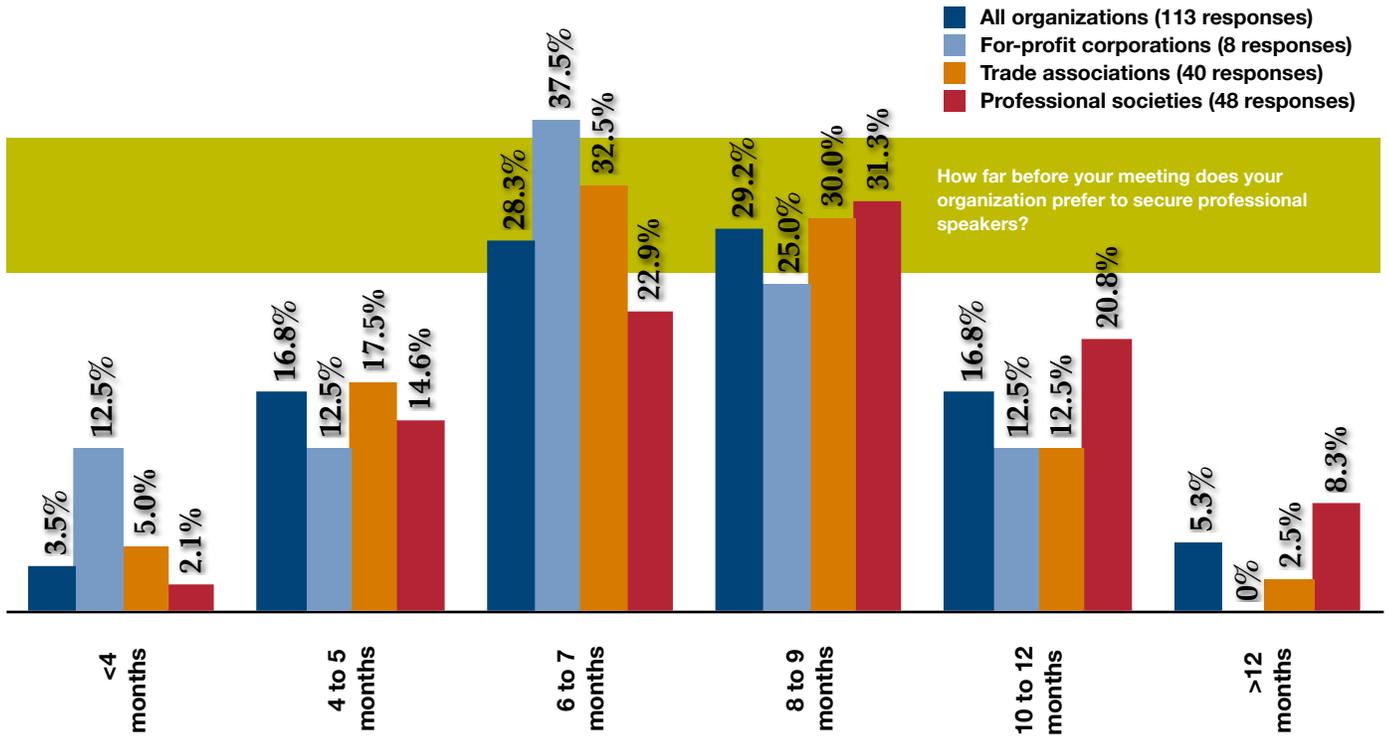
volunteer committees only 18.0 percent versus a third of organizations with budgets of \$5 million or less and rely on the head of education or professional development 28.0 percent of the time compared to 19.3 percent of the time for organizations with the lower budgets.

Not surprisingly, smaller organizations are more likely to rely on the top dog for decisions—those reporting the CEO or executive director makes the final call have an average staff size of 32.2, fewer than organizations reporting reliance on the head of education or professional development (47.4 staff), staff committees (84.0 staff), board or volunteer committees (107.5 staff), or the head of meetings (121.0 staff).

Organizations that use evaluations and assessments to measure learning at their meetings are more likely to use a board or volunteer committee to make the final hiring decision than those that don’t (29.2 versus 17.8 percent), perhaps because they’re focusing internal resources on developing the means of determining whether learning is happening.

A larger education staff does not mean the organization is more likely to rely on that group for final decisions. For organizations saying the vice president or director of education or professional development makes the call on professional speakers, the average number of individuals spending more than half their time working in education or professional development is just 4.5, compared with an average education staff of 14.3 among organizations using a board or volunteer committee to finalize the professional speaker hires.





## Timelines and Registrations

### BOOKING PROFESSIONAL SPEAKERS

Almost 58 percent of survey respondents said they prefer to secure professional speakers six to nine months before the event, which is essentially the same percentage as 2011. Frankly, we’re a little surprised that timelines didn’t shrink, as our work in the field indicates that decisions can and are being made faster, particular in organizations that

are dedicated to providing the most relevant content, which is often late-breaking.

Organizations offering CE for at least some of their meetings are more likely to finalize the professional speaker line-up early—26.0 percent make decisions 10 or more months out, while their non-CE-offering counterparts only do so 12.9 percent of the time. This may indicate that getting approval from governing bodies takes time that impacts even the hiring of speakers.

Almost 58 percent of organizations secure their professional speakers six to nine months out.

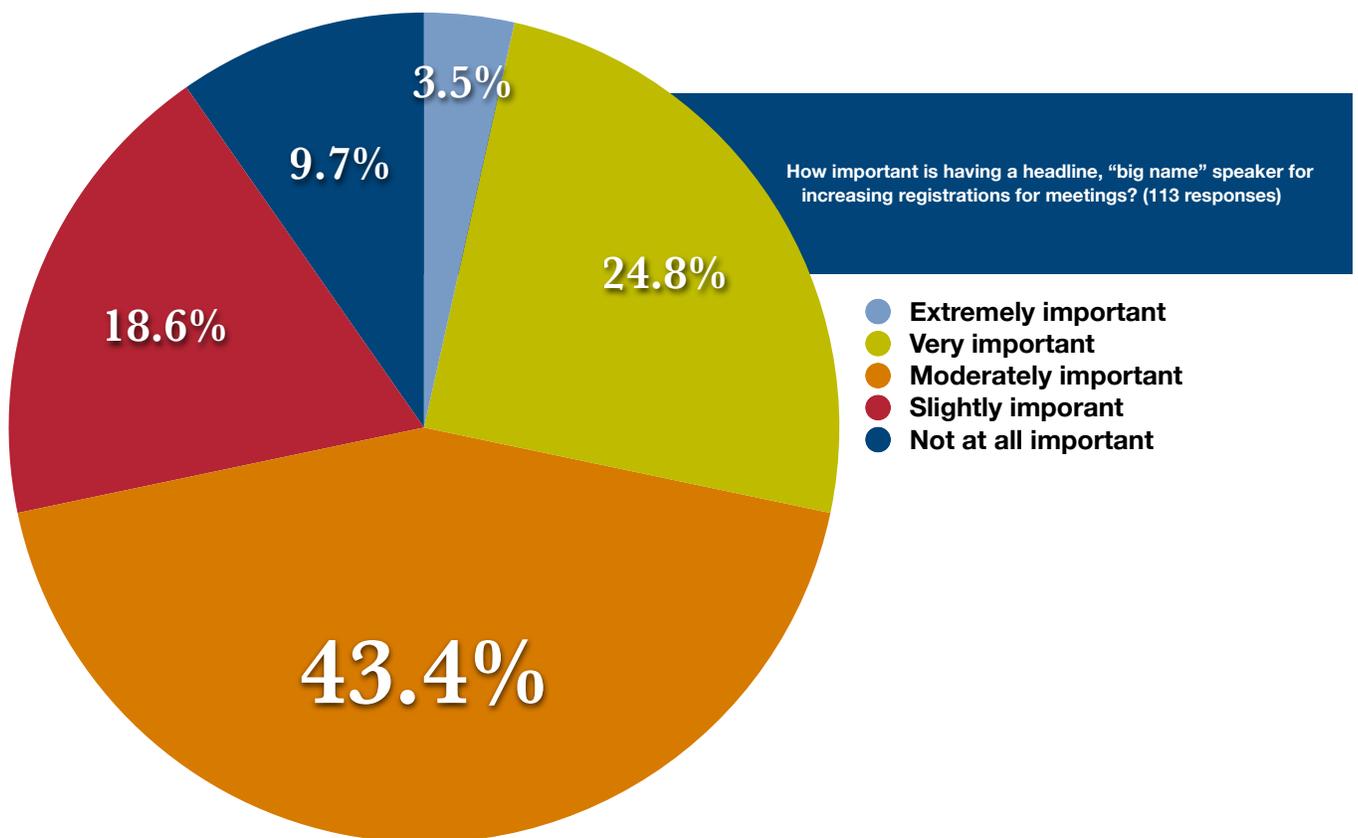
It seems that making professional speaker decisions way in advance may be a coping mechanism for smaller organizations. Those finalizing the line-up more than 12 months out, have an average of 18.8 staff overall and 2.2 education staff, the smallest numbers of any of the other groupings.

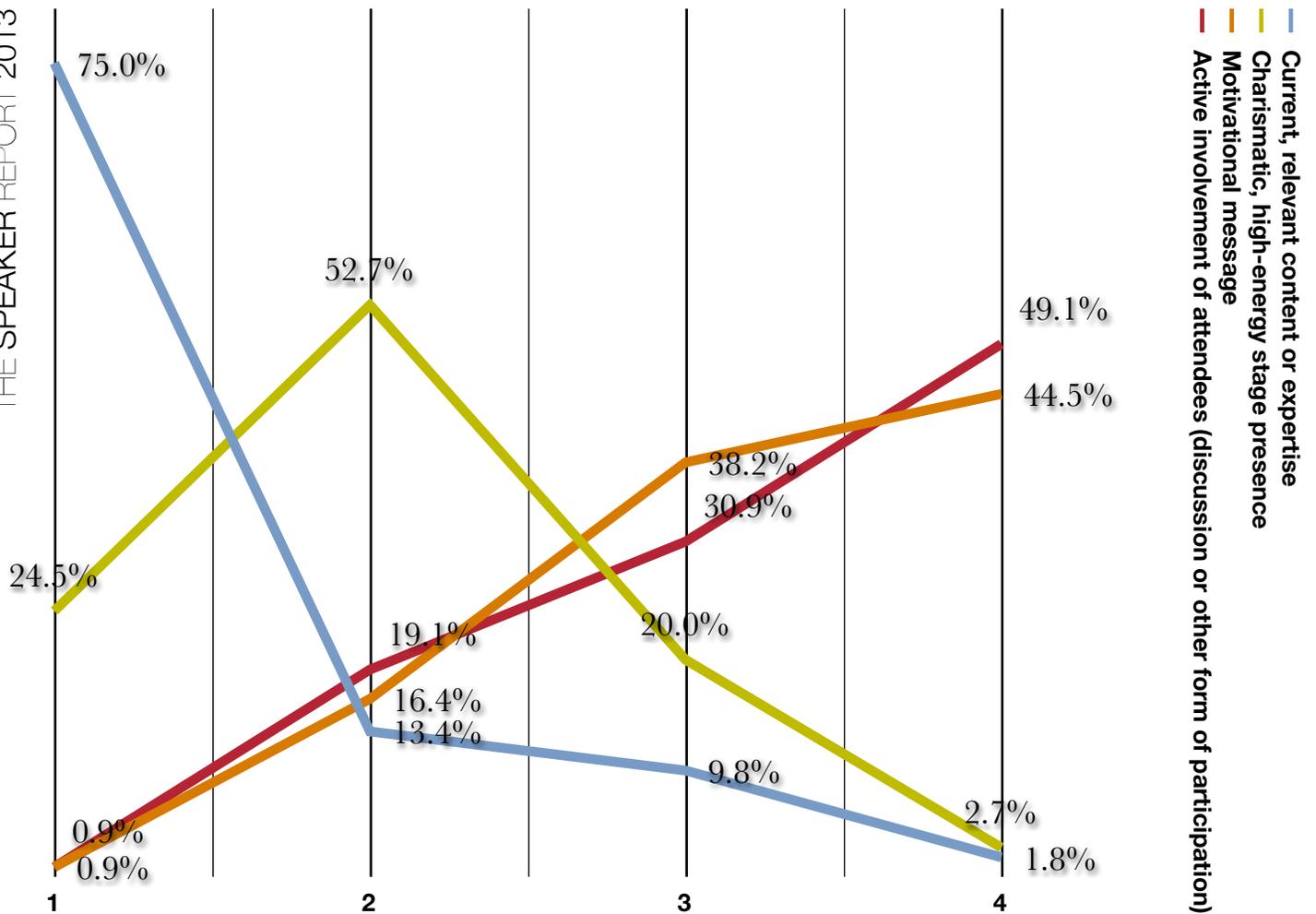
Professional speakers are unlikely to get a gig less than four months out, as only 3.5 percent of respondents wait that long to book. But this could represent an opportunity for conference organizers to take a gamble with later choices and lower fees for short-term bookings.

**THE SPEAKER-REGISTRATION CONNECTION**

Under a third (28.3 percent) of those surveyed believe a “big name” speaker is very or extremely important for attracting registrants. The other two-thirds plus either don’t use big name speakers or don’t believe they’re a primary driver of registrations.

Organizations with annual budgets over \$5 million have a greater tendency to subscribe to the theory that delivering a star speaker drives registrations, as 42.0 percent of them said big names are very or extremely important for registration numbers versus only 15.8 percent of organizations with budgets of \$5 million and under.





## What's Expected of Speakers

### ATTRIBUTES OF A SUCCESSFUL SPEAKER

As in 2011, survey respondents were very clear on the most important factor in a professional speaker's success: 75.0 percent say the speaker's content or expertise must be current and relevant. For us, a key component of relevance is customizing for a particular meeting's audience.

Being charismatic with high-energy stage presence was the next most important factor; over half (52.7 percent) of respondents rank it second. Providing a motivational message ranked third, and active involvement of the attendees by the speaker (for example, through discussion) came in last. Just 0.09 percent of respondents ranked a motivational message or audience participation of the utmost importance. A lack of emphasis on learning could explain the low ranking of attendee involvement. If more education professionals were sitting at the executive table, we might see participation score higher on this list, and we believe this is a factor that's likely to gain importance. For up and coming speakers, the ability to engage the audience will be key. Engagement has to be built into the session design for learning to stick.

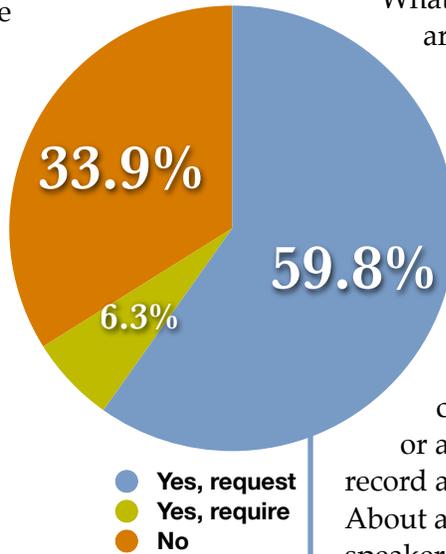
For your meetings, rank the importance of these factors of professional speaker success. Only one item may be marked most important, and only one may be marked least important. Use 1 for the factor your organization considers most important, 2 for the next most important, and so on down to 4, the least important item. (113 responses)

**BEYOND THE DAIS**

Among survey respondents who hire professional speakers, 66.1 percent (up from 56.6 in our 2011 survey) look for them to put in more than just their time on stage, with the largest grouping simply requesting more. Conference organizers want to get more value from their speaker investment; especially when it comes to content marketing and maximizing sponsors' return on investment.

Some organizations may not realize they could request or require speakers to do more, but with the growing trend to extend learning beyond the face-to-face meeting—building anticipation beforehand and carrying on conversations after the event—we suspect we'll see an increasing number of organizations requesting and requiring more of their professional speakers. And smart speakers will

realize that these are easy and effective ways to touch the audience beyond a short presentation and that delivering value in any of these areas will help future referrals.



What, specifically, do organizations that are asking professional speakers to do more want of them? Three-quarters report asking professional speakers to participate in other elements of the meeting (75.3 percent). Around two-fifths ask professional speakers to write a newsletter or magazine article or be interviewed (41.1 percent); participate in a pre-meeting online conversation via LinkedIn, Twitter, or another avenue (41.1 percent); or record a promotional video (39.7 percent). About a quarter ask their professional speakers to write a post for their organization's or meeting's blog (24.7 percent) or present or facilitate a pre- or post-meeting Webinar (23.3 percent).

Does your organization request or require that the professional speakers it hires provide more than a face-to-face presentation (e.g., write a blog post or article, record a promotional video, sign books, or participate in a VIP experience)? (112 responses)

What in addition to a face-to-face presentation does your organization request or require of the professional speakers it hires? Check all that apply. (73 responses)



The open-ended responses provided by those who selected “other” (23.3 percent) show that book signings and meet-and-greets, including VIP receptions, are often asked of professional speakers.

We’re also seeing in our work a growing emphasis on speakers adding value through the event organizers’ social media channels. A speaker who is perceived as someone who cares and connects with the participants before and after her presentation benefits from positive word of mouth.

## What’s Next

Next we take a look at the top pet peeves of dealing with professional speakers before moving on to the information about organizations’ use of industry speakers at their major meeting.



### Marketing Advice from Conference Professionals to Speakers

By far, the most frequent recommendation from conference professionals is that you, as a professional speaker, show them you know their organization. Cold calls, mass mailings, and other spray-and-pray tactics will kill your chance of getting a deal. Organizers expect speakers to look at their Web site and understand who they serve and what business they’re in, before making initial contact. Look at who else they’ve hired to speak.

Understand the audience’s problems and how your message fits in. If you can’t explain how your message helps the audience with its problems, organizers will never believe you will deliver a customized (not canned) presentation.

Videos, references, and testimonials must be relevant. If you can’t provide examples of similar groups or situations where you made a difference, you’re fighting an uphill battle. Videos of live speaking (which you can host on your own YouTube channel) are more important than an interview or marketing clip.

Planners are busy. Often they receive 10 times more speaker inquiries than they have slots to fill. A sure-fire way to not make the short list is being unresponsive or overly aggressive. Take the middle road—show you’re easy to work with and want to give them what they need to make an intelligent decision. They appreciate it when you build a positive relationship.

If you’re giving a speech in a prospect’s backyard or to a similar group, invite the prospect to come or view you via live streaming or on tape.

Offer additional value. How can you help with promotion? How can you help extend the learning? Will you do a book signing or spend quality time with a VIP group before or after your presentation? Can you do multiple presentations for the same price?

## 16 Ways a Professional Speaker Can Kill Her Shot at a Referral

Organizations that use professional speakers have to deal with them, and sometimes that's quite a chore. Here are 16 pet peeves we heard from survey respondents. There are no real surprises—what was annoying two years ago still is.

1. Crazy demands. Arrogant riders. Being egotistical, high-maintenance, and difficult to work with. Lacking humility.
2. Being a self-promoting huckster. Selling from the back of the room at a professional conference.
3. Canned presentations when customization for the attendees is needed. Failing to do a little research on the industry.
4. Not understanding what it takes for learning to happen.
5. A guaranteed fee rather than pay based on performance.
6. Reading from slides or relying on poor visuals. Boring.
7. Using a clueless bureau, handler, or assistant instead of giving meeting professionals direct access to the speaker they're paying.
8. Canceling because of a better gig.
9. On-site heart attacks—arriving late or not communicating whereabouts.
10. Being inflexible about recording the speech or sharing content.
11. Not submitting materials by the agreed-on date, which jeopardizes content marketing. General lack of responsiveness to requests.
12. Last-minute requests or add-on demands that cost money. Give me an inclusive price.
13. Pushy sales calls and stalking tactics.
14. Being difficult to do business with. Pain-in-the butt contracts.
15. Running out the door immediately after presenting.
16. Acting like the hiring organization works for the speaker, instead of the other way around.

## Industry Speakers

# Selection, Compensation, Preparation, and Evaluation

Some 84.1 percent of survey respondents indicated their organization holds a meeting attended by at least 500 people. We asked those 127 respondents for information about how they use industry speakers at their major meeting. We left the definition of *major* up to respondents but suggested they might use their meeting with the largest attendance (over 500 people), the meeting that produces the most revenue, or the meeting their organization considers most strategically important.

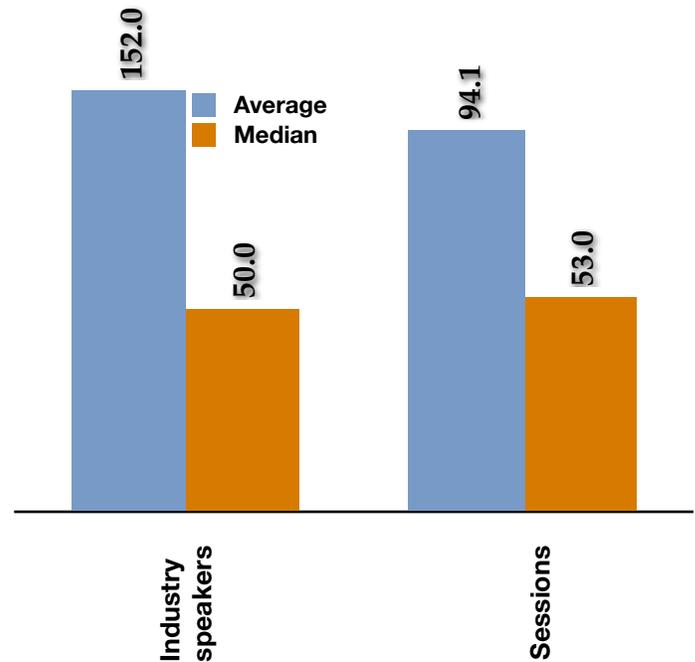
However they defined their organization's major meeting, they were asked to keep that one particular meeting in mind as they responded to the survey questions that addressed key aspects of the use of industry speakers—whether the organization issues a call for proposals (CFP), the timeline for the CFP, how many industry speakers they secure, how many sessions they hold, whether the speakers are compensated and prepped for their presentations, what role evaluations play, and more.

### Numbers and Compensation

#### INDUSTRY SPEAKER AND SESSION TALLIES

On average, 152.0 industry speakers present at the survey respondents' major meeting; the median, though, is just 50.0 speakers. The average number of sessions at that meeting is 94.1, with a median of 53.0. So the median speaker-to-session ratio is almost exactly 1:1, but the average is closer to 3:2, suggesting multiple speakers are presenting at the same session, perhaps in a panel or combined mini-sessions approach (e.g., multiple Ignite presentations under a single session heading in the program). From our experience in the field, though, particularly work with professional societies, we often see a ratio of 3:1 or 4:1, as they're traditionally panel-heavy.

At professional societies' major meetings, an average of 170.0 industry speakers present versus 70.8 at trade associations' major meeting, and professional societies schedule, on average, 106.1 sessions at their major meeting versus 65.2 at trade associations' major meeting. So the speaker-to-session ratio for trade associations is much closer to



How many industry speakers present at this meeting? (121 responses)

What is the total number of sessions offered at this meeting? (120 responses)

1:1 than for professional societies, which tend to have some 60 percent more speakers than sessions, suggesting, again, a prevalence of co-presenters or panel formats.

One could argue trade associations have an opportunity to increase their educational value by programming more sessions that help attract and deliver deeper value to the segments they hope to grow. On the other hand, one could also conclude professional societies offer too many alternatives and water down their education—and quite a few survey respondents mentioned they're considering cutting back the number of sessions and increasing the time allotted for at least some sessions.

#### CHANGES TO COME

We asked survey respondents to describe any changes they were making or considering making to the number of sessions or industry speakers at their major meeting. From the 66 responses, we gleaned seven trends.

### 1. Cutting back

Many respondents indicated their organization is cutting back—the number of sessions most commonly but also the number of speakers, the session length, or all of the above. While a quality-over-quantity mindset and a realization that more speakers and more sessions don't necessarily mean more attendees are driving some of these adjustments, economics are clearly another reason for cutbacks; as one respondent phrases it, "To manage costs, we are trying to cut back on speakers and to use speakers in multiple sessions, rather than having unique speakers for every session." Some organizations are shifting basic and intermediate content to online delivery to allow face-to-face meetings to focus on advanced topics.

### 2. More relevant speakers and content

As a corollary to the cutback trend, organizations are looking to make what they do offer as effective as possible, which translates to more industry speakers (versus "motivational" presenters) for some, fewer industry speakers for others (that favor instead non-industry, customer, or other presenters), and more applicable content (versus "entertainment"). We expect to see speaker training and speaker recruitment processes that stress facilitation skills grow as organizations acknowledge sessions' success depends largely on the quality of facilitation—indeed, several respondents commented on the importance of good facilitation, like the one who said that plans for the future include "increased speaker orientation and coaching.... For our core workshops we have an extensive training program."

### 3. Innovative session formats

Quite a few organizations reported using formats that deliver bite-sized presentations (e.g., Ignite and Pecha Kucha), focus on informal learning (e.g., by following an open space technology approach), and increase participation. We see savvy organizations reinforcing these innovations in their call-for-proposals process and their recruitment of speakers who can invigorate their offerings.

### 4. Varying session lengths

Whether as a part of their experimentation with innovative formats or as a separate effort, several organizations said they're experimenting with session times tailored to fit the content, rather than assuming a blanket 60- or 90-minute approach. Deep dives might run two or three hours or even all day. Participatory sessions need more time for meaning-making and discussion. Short formats like Ignite and Pecha Kucha push organizations the other direction, toward 30- or 45-minute time slots that conglomerate multiple mini-presentations.

### 5. Reducing panelists

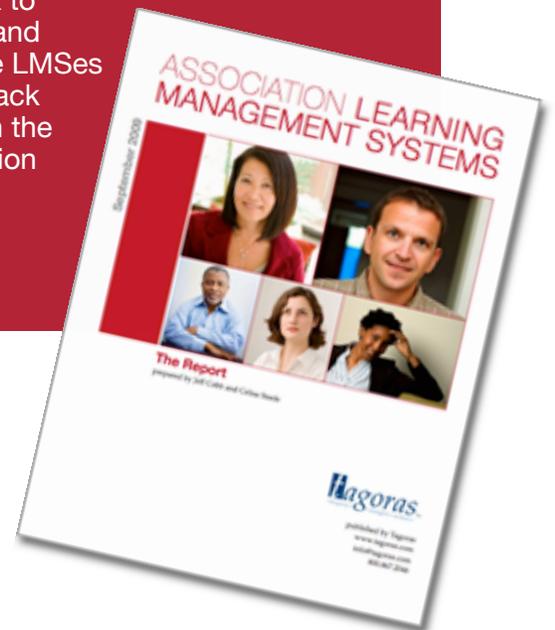
Several organizations mentioned reducing the number of presenters in panel sessions. By giving fewer speakers more time, they hope to overcome the disjointedness of kitchen-sink panels.

### 6. Improving diversity

Diversity concerns are by no means a new trend, but they persist, and more than one respondent indicated consciously looking to improve diversity not only in ethnic and gender terms but also in opinion, generation, and location. One way to do this is to avoid always going to the same speakers.

#### Let Us Save You Time

In *Association Learning Management Systems* (<http://www.tagoras.com/catalog/association-lms>), we've done the work to identify and compare LMSes with a track record in the association sector.



### 7. Repurposing the best

Some organizations are doubling down on their best speakers by inviting them back for encore sessions or by repeating popular sessions during the program. Others are asking a handpicked group of speakers to allow them to offer their session via Webcast for attendees who can't be there in person.

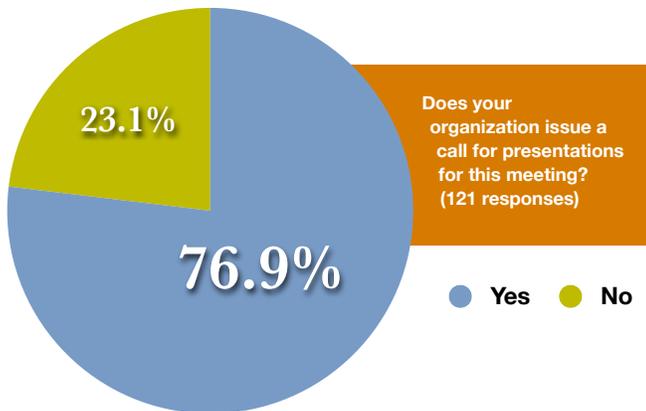
Of course, for each trend, there's at least one organization doing the exact opposite. Some respondents aren't making any changes, and some (although fewer than those reporting cutbacks) are expanding their meetings, adding sessions and speakers.

Across the board, the changes are driven by a desire to address budget issues, improve the meetings, or both—maybe the silver lining of the scrutiny of spending is a renewed focus on the effectiveness of meetings.

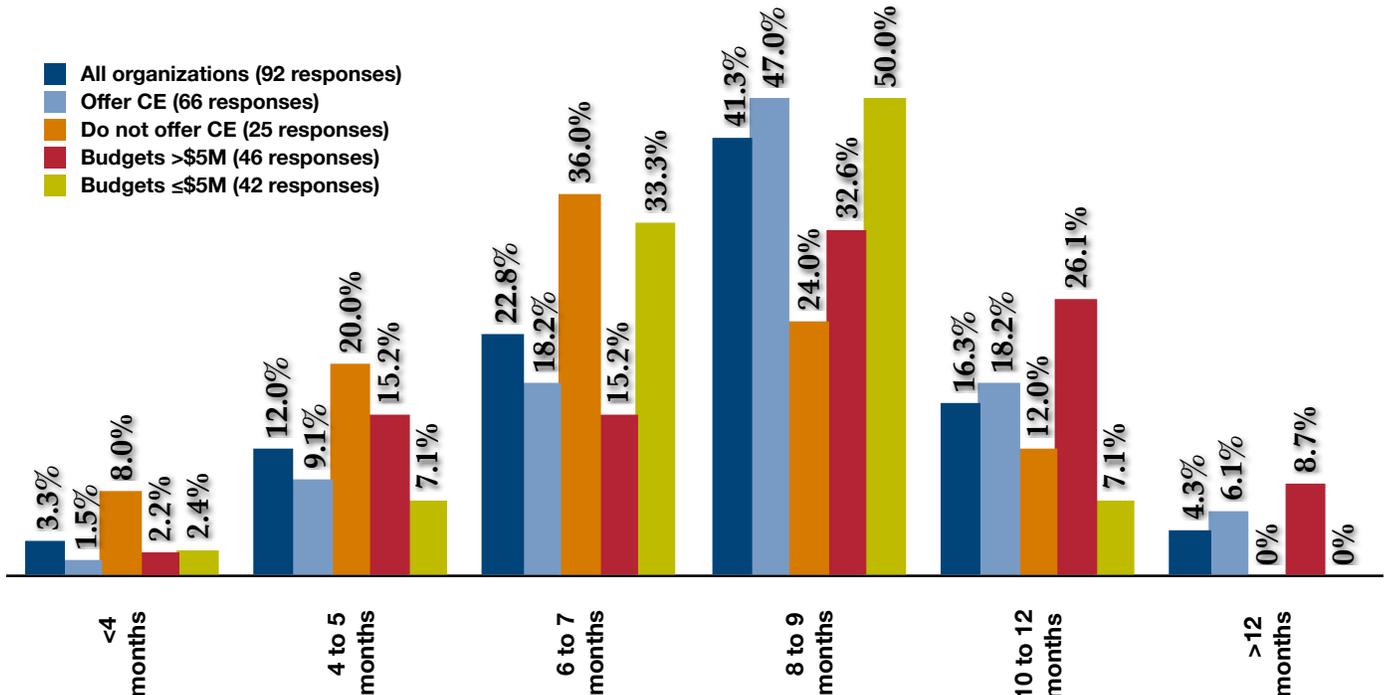
### Calls for Proposals

Over three-quarters of survey respondents indicate they use a call for proposals or presentations (CFPs) to help source session content. Professional societies (83.3 percent) tend to use a CFP more than trade associations (74.4 percent), as do organizations with a formal certification program (85.1 percent of which issue a CFP, compared to only 70.8 percent of organizations without a certification program) and organizations that offer continuing education for their meetings (79.5 percent of which issue a CFP versus 69.4 percent of organizations that don't offer CE).

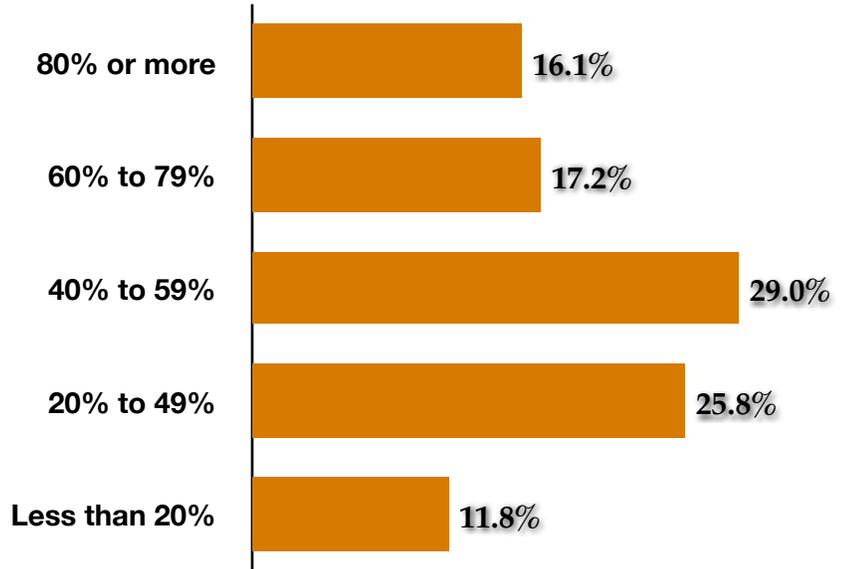
Over 40 percent of the CFPs close 8 to 9 months prior to the major meeting, a little over a fifth close the process 6 to 7 months prior, and another fifth cut off submissions 10 or more months before the meeting, down from a third reporting in our 2011 survey that their CFPs close 10 months or more in advance, evidence that marketing timelines are softening. Organizations that do not offer CE for meetings and with smaller overall budgets are more nimble, suggesting red tape may be the culprit for the longer timelines. Some 24.3 percent of organizations offering CE close 10 or more months out, but only 12.0 of organizations not offering CE



How many months before this meeting does the call for presentations close?



How many proposals submitted in response to your call were accepted the last time you held this meeting? (93 responses)



end the process that far out. Organizations with budgets of \$5 million and under heavily favor (83.3 percent) ending the CFP 6 to 9 months out, and only 7.1 percent of respondents in this category cut things off 10 or more months out. For organizations with budgets over \$5 million, 34.8 percent end the CFP process 10 or more months before the meeting.

We're seeing more progressive organizers move to a two-step process. In addition to the initial proposal call, they add a second call closer to the meeting to fill programming holes with late-breaking, relevant content. Another emerging trend is to reduce the timeframe for submissions to create a sense of urgency. Some organizers only accept submissions during a two- or three-week window.

### PROPOSAL ACCEPTANCE RATES

This year we added a survey question to shed more light on the call for proposals process. A third (33.3 percent) of respondents indicate they accept 60 percent or more of submissions that come in through their call for proposals, and almost another third (29.0 percent) accept between 40 and 59 percent of submissions. Our suspicion is that these organizations are setting the bar low and using the CFP process as an attendance justification ticket. These programs have the potential of evolving into a conference of speakers speaking to speakers.

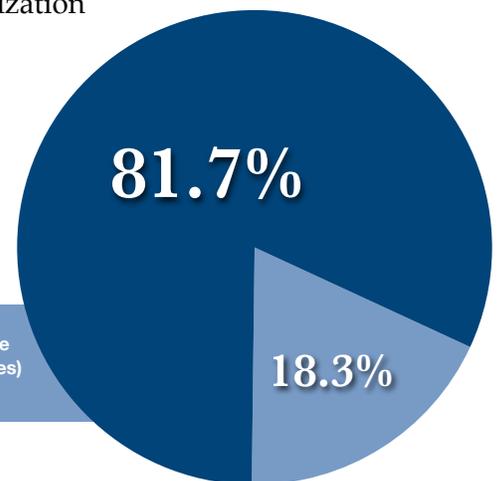
Organizations with acceptance rates over 50 percent need to consider adjusting their quality filters to increase credibility for the review process.

Some organizations take things a step further and don't rely on the CFP process as the only source for content selection. They program around the problems their target audiences are trying to solve and invite presenters who address those topics, embracing a curation model instead of relying on the best, most relevant sessions to come to them via the CFP process, which is, in the end, a crapshoot.

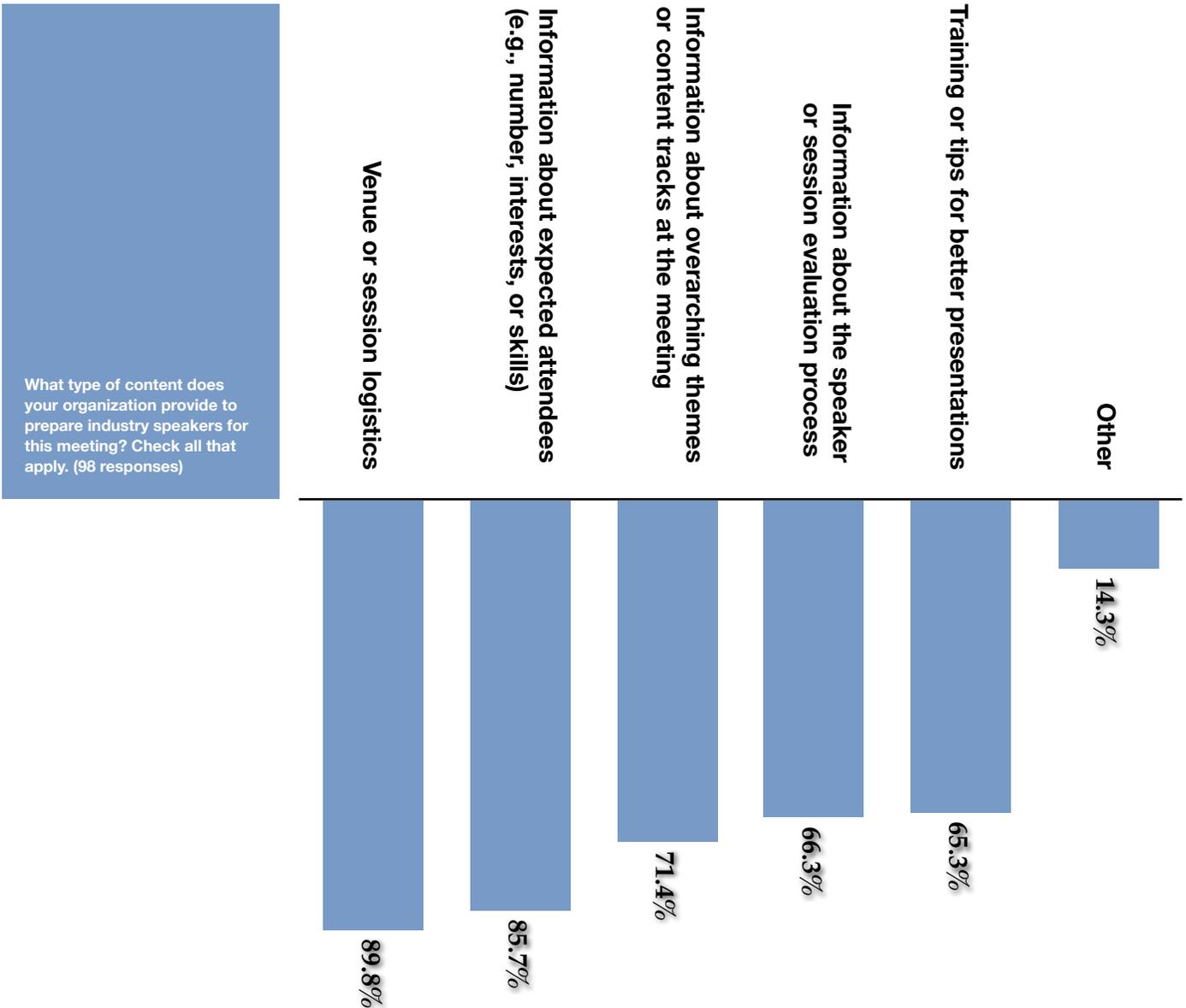
### Prepping Industry Speakers

Speaker prep is on the rise—per the current survey, 81.7 percent of organizations with a meeting of more than 500 attendees help prepare their industry presenters compared to 73.3 percent in the 2011 survey. Trade associations are more likely than professional societies to help prep speakers (89.7 versus 75.9 percent), and the greater the number of industry speakers, the more likely an organization is to help them prepare.

● Yes  
● No



Does your organization prepare industry speakers for this meeting (e.g., hold a conference call to discuss logistics or provide an online speaker portal)? (120 responses)



Respondents that provide prep have an average of 158.1 industry speakers, compared to 87.9 for those that don't. This suggests organizations with smaller speaker pools may have trouble justifying the time and costs of preparation.

When organizations that provide speaker preparation were asked what content they provide, venue or session logistics (89.8 percent) and information about the expected attendees (85.7 percent) were the most popular topics. Communication about overarching themes and content tracks came in third (71.4 percent), and even the last two choices (information about the speaker or session evaluation process and training or tips for better presentations) were selected by more than three-fifths of the respondents (66.3 and

65.3 percent, respectively). While, clearly, the onus is on the organization to provide event-specific details about the venue and themes, it's telling that the lowest ranking area of prep—tips for better presentations—is the one that has the strongest potential for improving the learning that happens, especially if the organization were to highlight adult learning principles.

That said, the trend is headed in the right direction. In 2011, 52.9 percent of respondents provided training and tips for better presentations; in 2013, the number rose to 65.3 percent. More good news to our ears, more organizations are communicating expectations of the speaker and session evaluation process in advance (66.3 this year versus 51.3 percent in 2011).

As for how organizations prep their speakers, e-mail is by far the most popular medium (91.8 percent), probably at least partially due to its asynchronous nature—organizations send information when ready, and speakers to review it according to their own schedules, presuming the e-mail doesn't languish unopened in the inbox. Conference calls come in a distant second (62.2 percent). Over 38 percent said they provide speakers with a dedicated Web site or portal, and, interestingly (given the implied intensiveness of a one-on-one approach) almost a quarter use individual coaching. Online meetings are used by over a fifth of respondents.

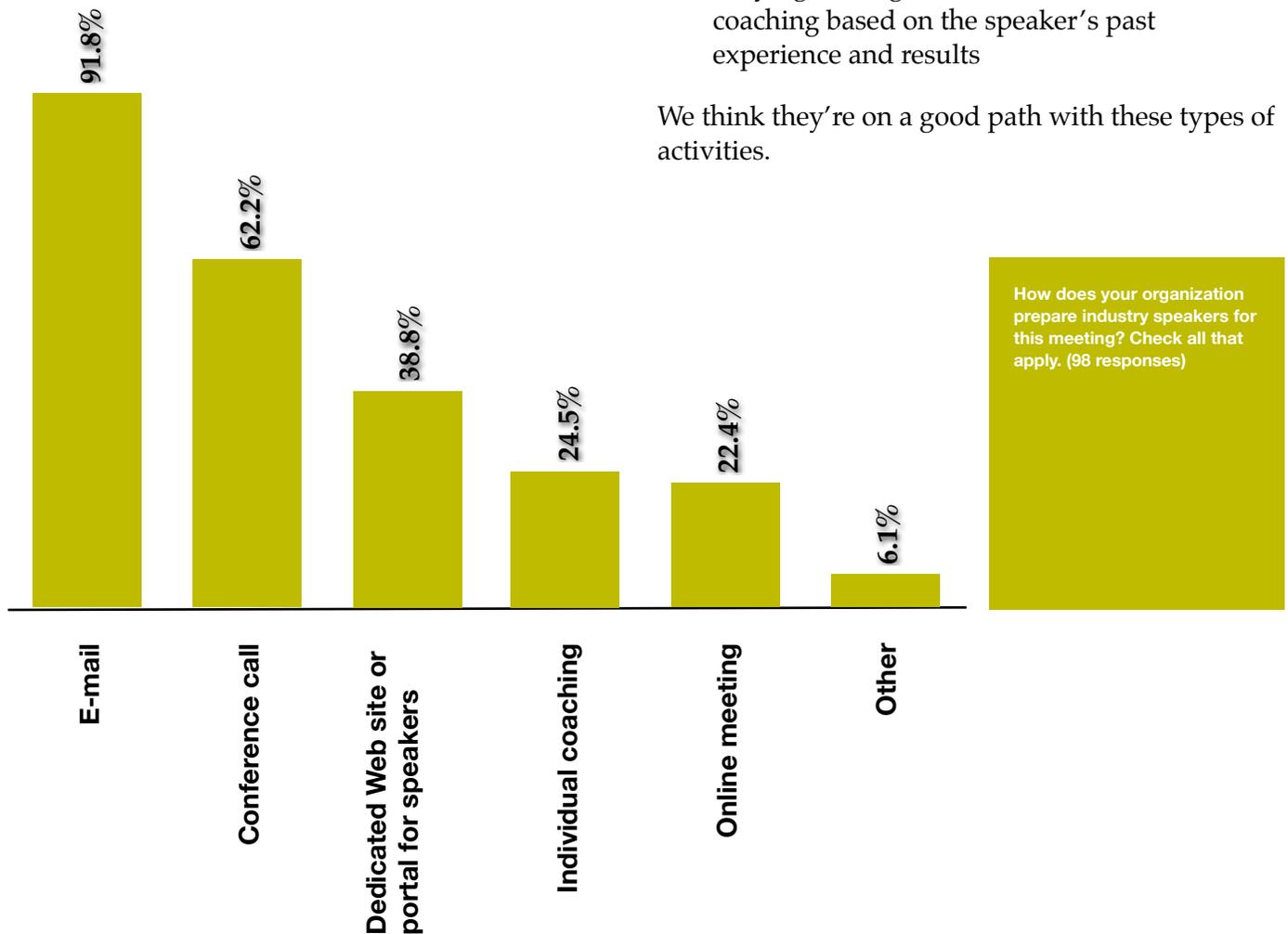
We feel the more interactive communication channel of individual coaching, while arguably time-intensive and therefore costly, is more likely to be effective than e-mail, which can be easily ignored, and conference calls, to which participants often pay only partial attention as they multitask their way to the designated end time.

Organizations that offer a formal certification program are more likely to provide presenters with information about the meeting's evaluation process (76.3 versus 60.0 percent) and to provide tips on to presenter better (73.7 versus 60.0 percent). Those that measure whether learning occurs at the meetings are more likely to give speakers information about the meeting's evaluation process (76.1 versus 57.7 percent).

In free-text responses to questions about their speaker prep, respondents reported doing the following:

- Providing feedback and coaching based on previous session and speaker evaluations, when available
- Sharing best practices in adult learning, interactivity, and audience engagement
- Conducting individual calls (some via Skype or other online technology) to assess skill level and commitment of the selected presenters
- Varying the degree of communication and coaching based on the speaker's past experience and results

We think they're on a good path with these types of activities.

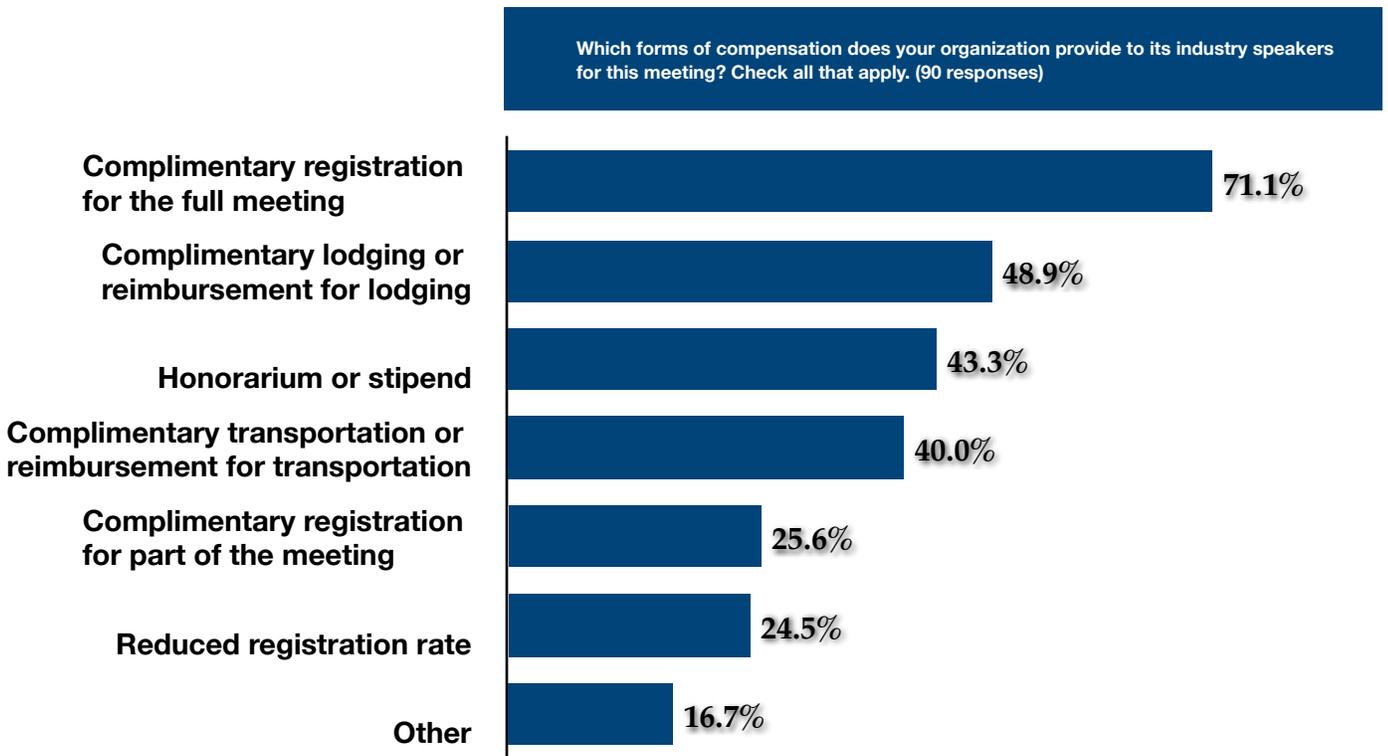


## Compensating Industry Speakers

Three-quarters of organizations surveyed provide some sort of compensation or benefit for their industry speakers. The top four benefits are registration for the full meeting (71.1 percent), lodging costs (48.9 percent), an honorarium or stipend (43.3 percent), and transportation expenses (40.0 percent). Comping the meeting registration (a soft-dollar benefit) is notably more popular than the out-of-pocket costs for travel, lodging, and stipends.

Some respondents indicated they pay industry presenters a per diem or provide compensation for meals. Others noted that compensation depends on factors like membership status, employer, location, and whether she was invited to present or accepted based on a submission process (e.g., non-members, speakers working for the government, or those traveling from out of state receiving greater compensation).

Trade associations are more likely than professional societies to compensate industry speakers (82.1 versus 66.7 percent). Organizations that offer continuing education credit at their meetings are *less* likely to compensate industry speakers (only 72.3 percent) than their non-CE-offering counterparts (83.3 percent), as are organizations that offer a formal certification program when compared to those that don't (only 63.8 percent versus 83.3 percent).



## Evaluations and Measuring Learning

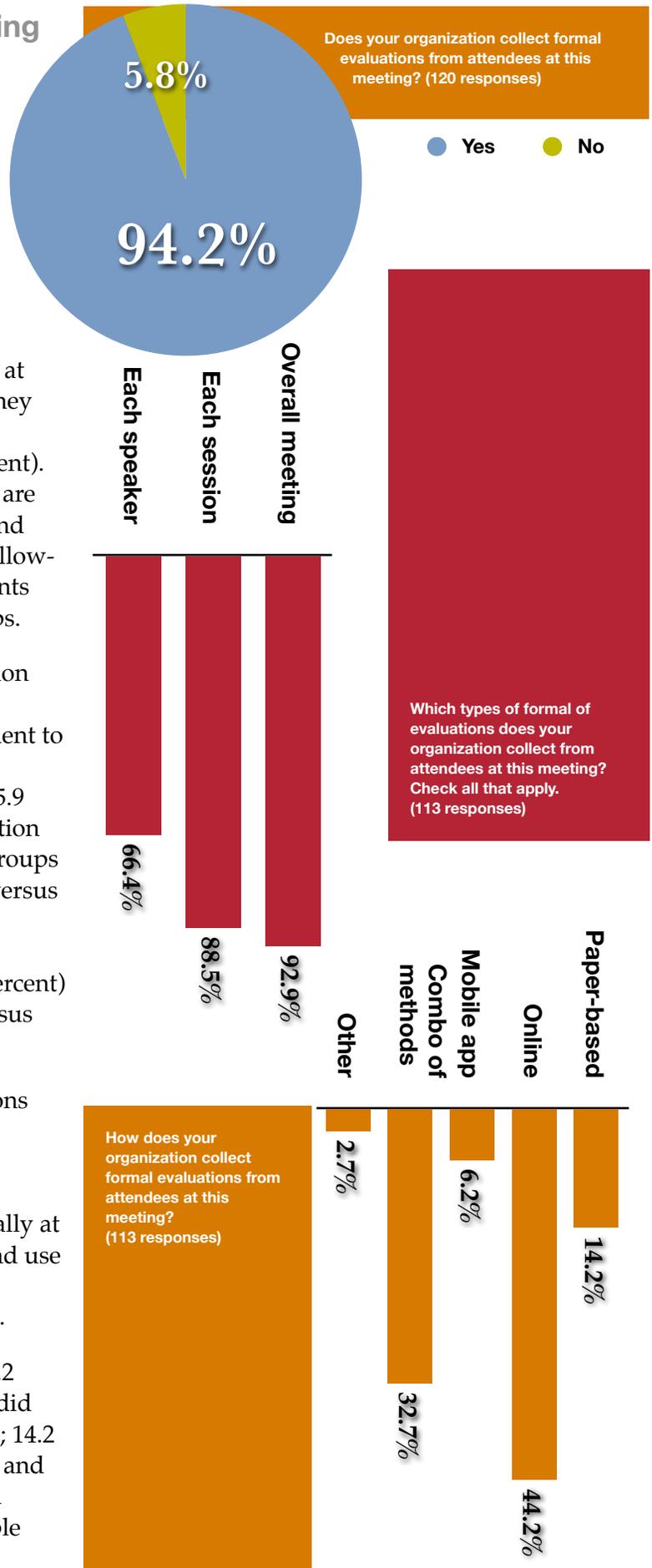
Almost every organization surveyed (94.2 percent) collects formal evaluations at its major meeting. Nearly as many (92.9 percent) conduct an overall meeting evaluation; 88.5 percent collect evaluations at the session level, and two-thirds ask for evaluations of each speaker.

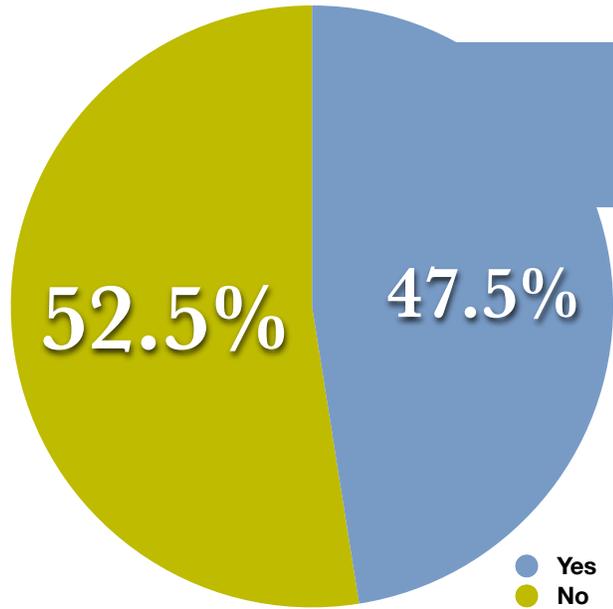
As seen in the chart on the following page, a much more modest 47.5 percent of survey respondents measure whether learning occurs at their major meeting. The most common way they do that measurement is through evaluation questions tied to learning objectives (75.4 percent). Although long-term retention and application are the goal, only 21.1 percent take the next step and conduct broad post-meeting assessments or follow-ups, and only 14.0 percent of survey respondents conduct post-session assessments or follow-ups.

Organizations that provide continuing education credit at their meeting are more likely to use a combination of pre- and post-meeting assessment to determine whether learning happens than organizations that don't offer CE (15.4 versus 5.9 percent). Organizations with a formal certification program are more likely than non-certifying groups to measure learning at the session-level (21.7 versus 9.1 percent) but *less* likely to measure learning through evaluation questions that align with learning objectives (69.6 percent versus 78.8 percent) or by using pre- and post-assessments (8.7 versus 15.2 percent).

We see room for growth in the use of evaluations and assessments at meetings. Organizations dedicated to raising the bar on their meetings should ask more questions at the session and speaker level; properly assess learning, especially at the session level and well after the meeting; and use what they learn from those endeavors for benchmarking and future speaker recruitment.

Of the organizations surveyed, a small slice (6.2 percent) rely only on mobile applications (we did not ask specifically about mobile apps in 2011); 14.2 percent rely solely on paper-based evaluation; and the largest group, 44.2 percent, rely entirely on online evaluations. A third make use of multiple methods to collect evaluations.





Do you measure whether learning occurs at this meeting (e.g. through assessments or evaluation questions tied to learning objectives)? (120 responses)  
Under half of survey respondents measure whether learning occurs at their major meeting.

While the time and money savings of technology-enabled surveys has attracted many organizations, some respondents whose groups have switched from paper-based surveys said they felt unable to get the granular, speaker- and session-level data they wanted in an electronic form because they can't get all attendees online after each session and that they were dissatisfied with the return rate. One respondent shared, "We have tried electronic evaluations but get poor response rates, so we use paper-based evaluations and e-mail a follow-up evaluation to these who did not turn in a paper eval."

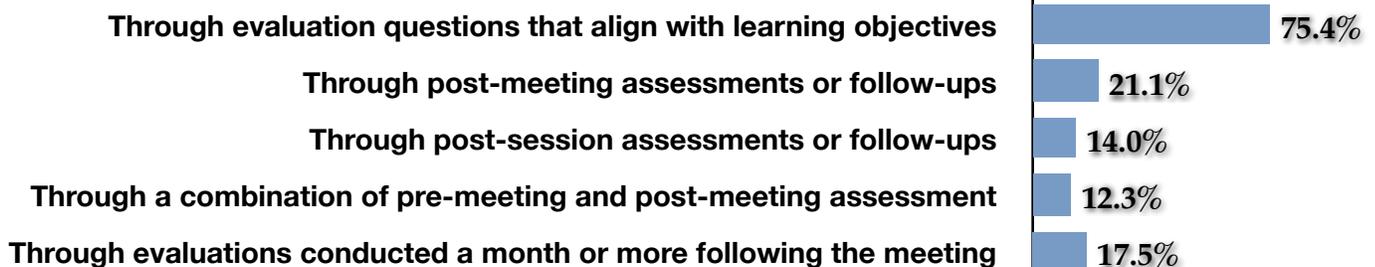
Many respondents' comments indicate that organizers are struggling with survey response rates. As a knee-jerk reaction, some are cutting back on the number of questions. With the move away from paper, some are realizing it's more critical than ever to set time aside at the end of each session for attendees to provide immediate feedback. Some

organizations that offer CE credit are only releasing the code for credit after an evaluation is completed.

Many organizations take the feedback they receive to heart and adjust their meetings. Changes implemented as a result of feedback run the gamut from small tweaks to radical restructuring:

- Change the venue or destination.
- Adjust the meeting length (e.g., one day less to minimize time away from the office) or start and end times.
- Fine-tune experience elements, like food (e.g., offer "brain-friendly" yogurt and eggs rather than a pastry-heavy continental breakfast) and wifi availability.
- Select or refine session topics, descriptions, and learning objectives (e.g., eliminate or replace dying topics and identify emerging ones).
- Influence speaker selection (e.g., those who score 3.5 or lower on a 5-point rating scale, where 5 is excellent, are coached or, more radically, blacklisted along with speakers who cross the sales line and go commercial during a session) and compensation by tying pay to performance.
- Provide more "white space" by increasing time between sessions and allow for more networking and Q&A.
- Offer more advanced content.
- Set the theme and content for future meetings.

How do you measure whether learning occurs at your meetings? Check all that apply. (57 responses)

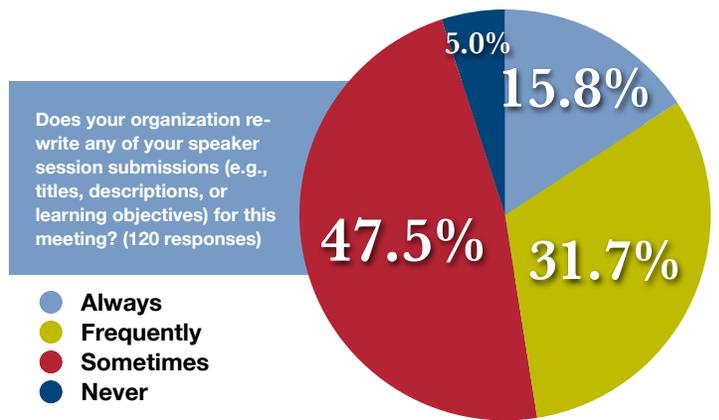


One respondent's organization mines its evaluations and proposals looking for insight: "Evaluations help shape our program formats and identify potential new topics and programs. Even our evaluation process for our submitted proposals is the basis for a trends report that goes to our board every year—this year the report was 32 pages of rich information of observations during the review of submitted proposals."

### Rewriting Session Submissions

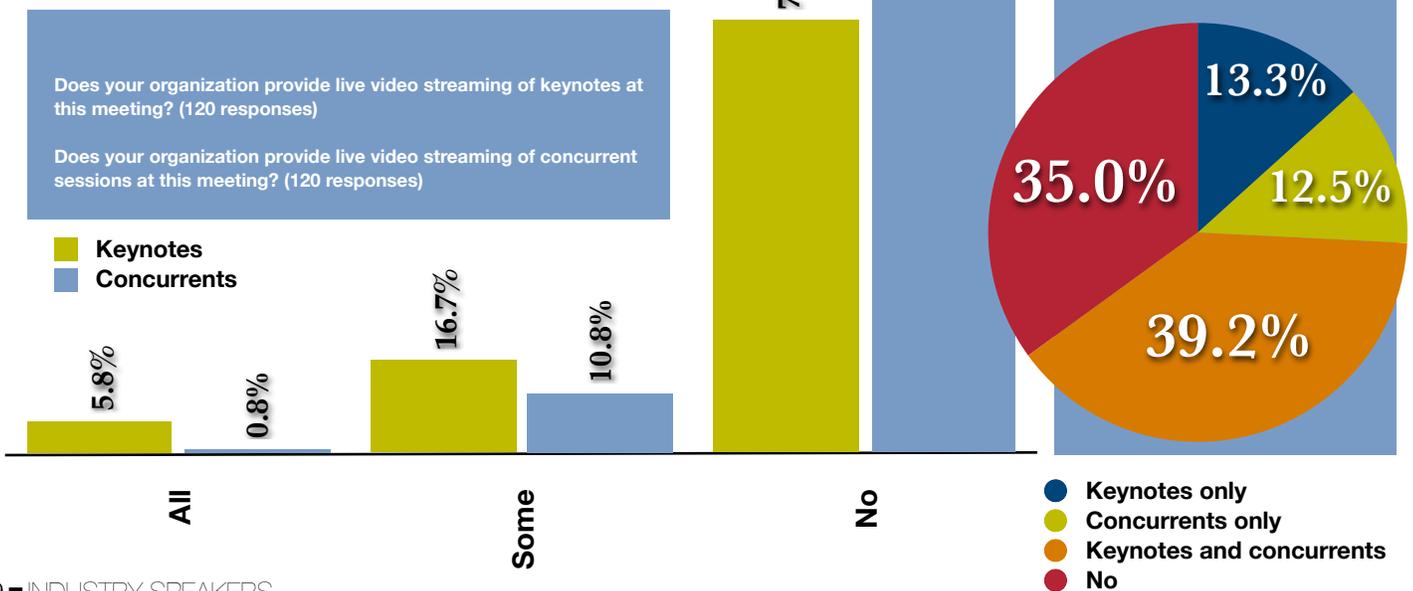
Of those surveyed, 95 percent always, frequently, or sometimes rewrite speaker session submissions, including titles, descriptions, and learning objectives, for their major meeting, and the number of organizations that always or frequently rewrite is up, from 34.6 percent in 2011 to 47.5 percent. While edits may be part of standardization and an effort to make the descriptions appealing to would-be attendees (both laudable), changes must be conveyed back to the speakers.

Progressive organizations are achieving consistency and appeal and reducing their rewriting time and effort by providing speakers with examples of session titles, descriptions, and learning objectives to model. Having a consistent format is important, but delivering education that matches the description and learning objectives is more important—and something speakers need to be held accountable for. But for the speakers to assume that responsibility, they need to be made aware of any rewriting that occurs.



### Live Streaming and Content Capture

Only 22.5 percent of the organizations surveyed offer live video streaming of all or some of their keynote sessions at their major meeting, and less than 12 percent do so for their concurrent sessions. These numbers are essentially the same as those from the last survey, disproving our 2011 prediction that we'd see an uptick in live streaming in the next couple of years. Out in the field, we've heard from and of organizations that opted to monetize live streaming rather than use it as a marketing campaign element to attract future attendees and failed both in business model and in session design—they didn't engage the virtual participants.



## hy·brid e·vent

*noun* \ 'hī-brəd i-'vent \

: a virtual event offered in tandem with and as an extension of a place-based event

Organizations with budgets over \$5 million are more likely to video stream some or all keynotes than groups with budgets of \$5 million and under (32.2 versus 8.8 percent), but only 15.3 percent of those wealthier organizations stream concurrent sessions (compared to 5.3 of the \$5 million and under group).

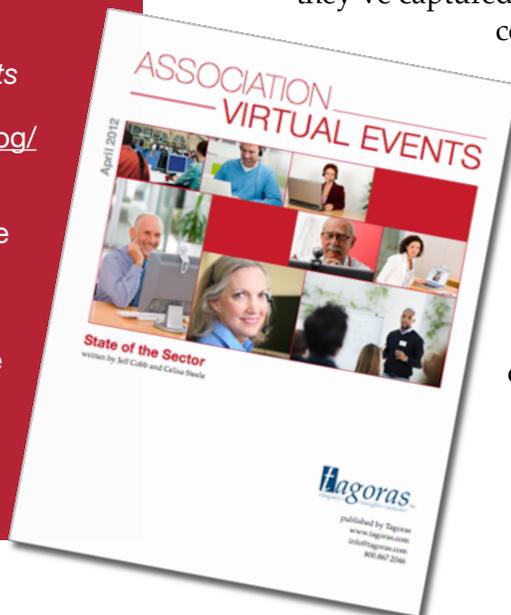
Some 65 percent of organizations capture and repurpose at least some keynote or concurrent session content via audio or video recording. While more (74.6 percent) of the bigger-budget organizations do it, a majority (56.1 percent) of the smaller-budget organizations capture and repurpose content, making us think organizations have had more success to date in monetizing captured content than they have with live streaming content.

Common sense suggests that organizations providing continuing education for their major meeting would have a greater probability to monetize on-demand views, and they are more likely than their non-CE-offering counterparts (69.9 versus 55.6 percent) to capture and repurpose content. While not a large number, 14.5 percent of CE-offering organizations stream some or all concurrent sessions, compared to 5.6 percent of non-CE-offering organizations.

We've heard anecdotally that organizations that have historically marketed recorded sessions (audio synchronized to slides) have seen sharp drops in sales. The value of on-demand views has declined over the past few years. Progressive organizations are using a scheduled replay strategy, where interactivity (e.g., chat) is incorporated into captured content for a more immersive learning experience.

### Ready to Make Virtual Events a Part of Your Strategy?

Then you'll want the *Association Virtual Events* available at <http://www.tagoras.com/catalog/virtual-events>, a comprehensive report designed for trade and professional association decision-makers who want leading edge knowledge to support their strategic planning for virtual events.



We're also seeing a growing number of organizations embrace lower-tech content capture methods (e.g., journalists, bloggers, and graphic recorders). The best organizations then share what they've captured via social channels as part of their content marketing strategy.

### What's Next

In the final section, we look at success and satisfaction rates reported by survey respondents—do they see themselves as successful with their meetings, and how satisfied are they overall and with particular aspects of their meetings?

# A Look at Satisfaction and Success

## How Respondents View Their Meetings

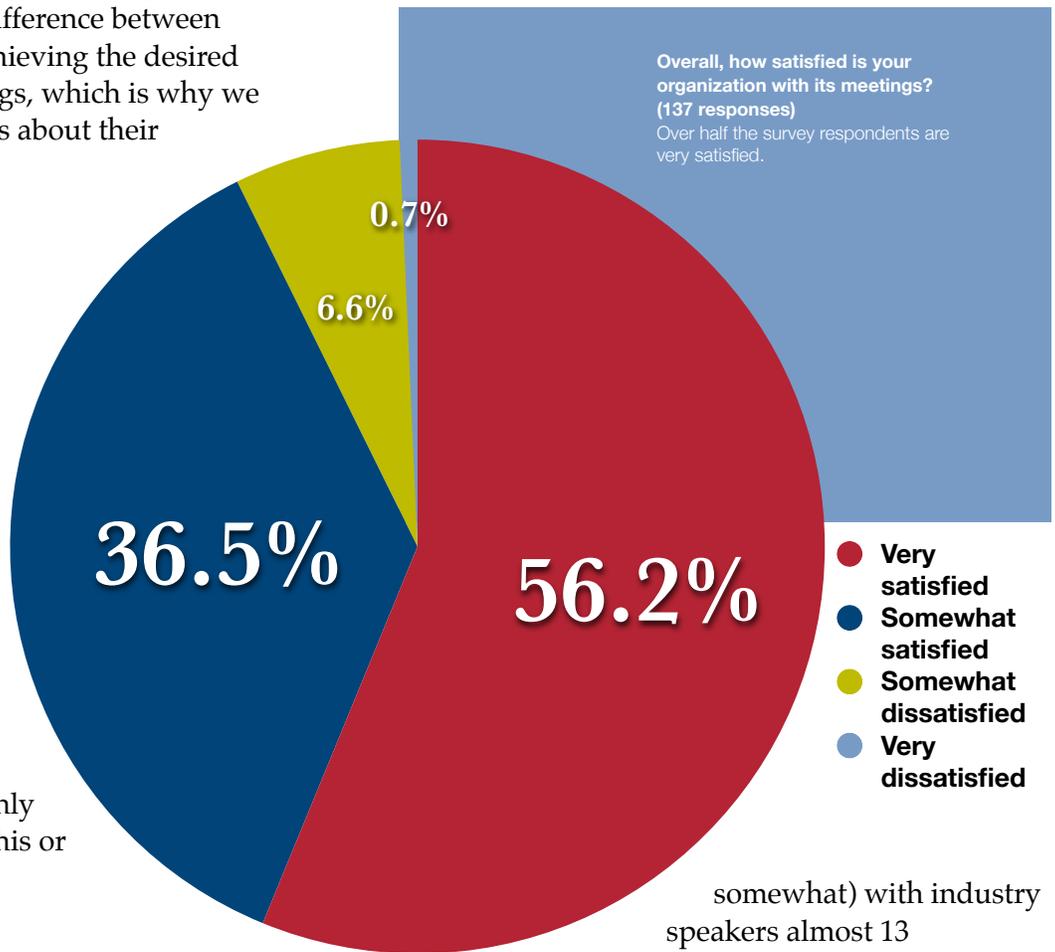
Meetings, conferences, and other events are deeply ingrained in organizations' operations. But there can be a world of difference between holding meetings and achieving the desired results with those meetings, which is why we asked survey respondents about their satisfaction and success.

### Satisfaction and Success by the Numbers

When we asked qualifying survey respondents (those whose organization has an annual professional speaker budget of at least \$5,000, holds a meeting with 500 or more attendees, or both), 92.7 percent said they are very or somewhat satisfied with their meetings overall. Only a single respondent said his or her organization is very dissatisfied.

But when it comes to specific aspects of meetings, the numbers tell a somewhat less enthusiastic story. Whereas the majority of respondents (56.2 percent) said they are very satisfied with their meetings overall, of the six specific areas in which we asked about satisfaction, connection to the organization's strategic plan or the direction set by the board of directors was the only item where the top response was very satisfied, and it wasn't selected by a majority (only 44.4 percent). The top response for the other five areas (attendance, revenue, professional speakers, industry speakers, and attendee feedback) was somewhat satisfied, with percentages ranging from the high 30s to high 50s.

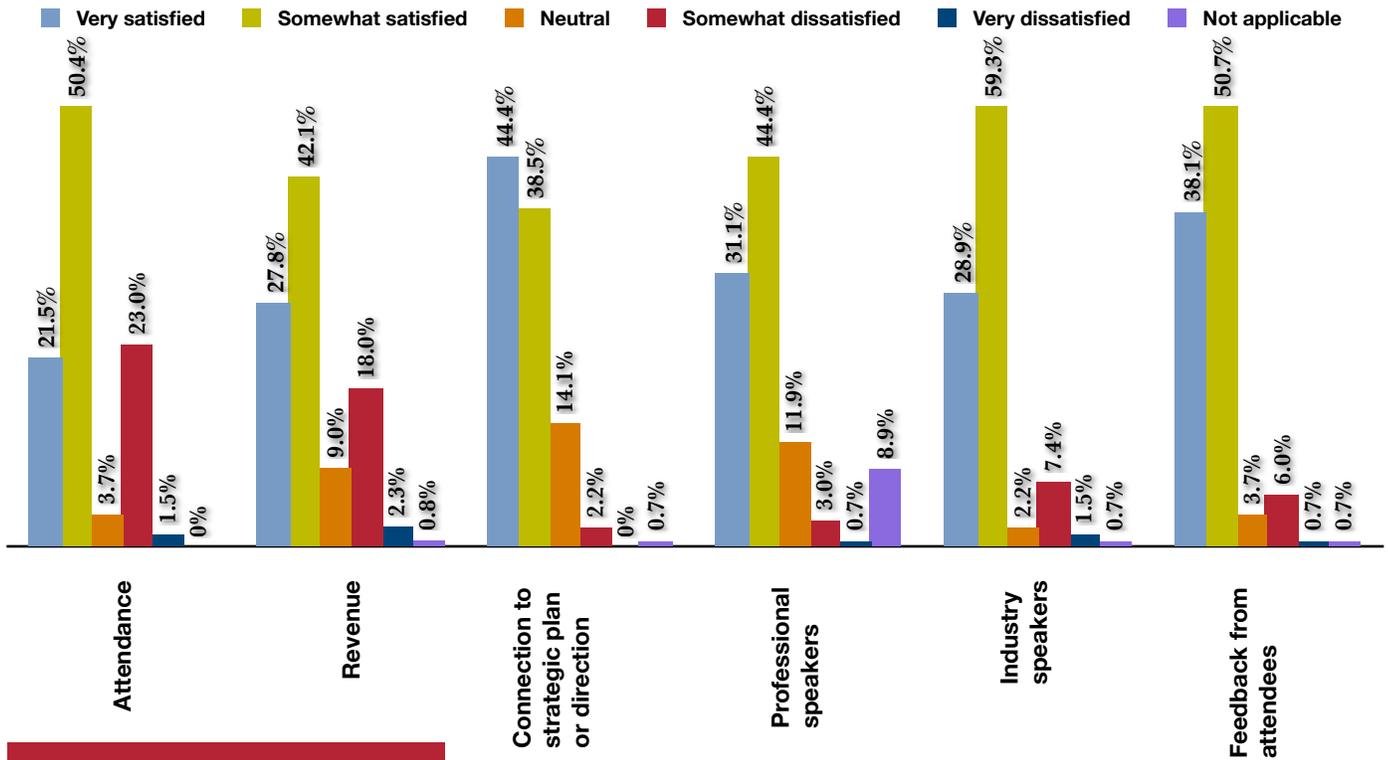
While organizations seem generally happy with both their professional and industry speakers, respondents rated their satisfaction (very or



somewhat) with industry speakers almost 13 percentage points higher than their satisfaction with their professional speakers. Perhaps that's a case of having higher expectations for professional speakers.

The areas with the most dissatisfaction were attendance and revenue (where 24.5 and 20.3 percent, respectively, are either very or somewhat dissatisfied). We see these numbers as indicators that, as professional development dollars become more discretionary, the need to keep raising the bar on the quality of face-to-face conferences is growing.

Over half (54.8 percent) of respondents consider their organization's meetings very successful, and another large chunk (44.4 percent) consider them somewhat successful, leaving only a sliver (0.7 percent) in the somewhat unsuccessful camp and none in the very unsuccessful category.



Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied is your organization with its meetings in terms of these specific items? (135 responses)

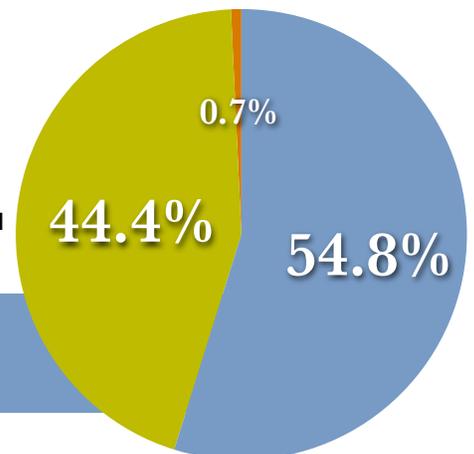
### What the Numbers May Mean

For comparison, 74.3 percent of organizations surveyed in *Association Learning + Technology 2011* (published by Tagoras), were very or somewhat satisfied with their current e-learning initiatives, and only 15.0 percent rated themselves as very successful in their e-learning initiatives—that’s compared to the 92.7 percent of respondents for this report who are very or somewhat satisfied with their meetings and the 54.8 percent who view their meetings as very successful. Those gaps may be partially attributed to the fact that technology-enabled and technology-enhanced learning are much newer phenomena than tried-and-true meetings; meetings and education staff have had the advantage of years of effort and trial and error

to smooth out hiccups and bumps at conferences, and attendees feel they know what to expect at a meeting. We should also remember the survey criteria we enforced—survey respondents had to hold a meeting for at least 500 attendees or have a professional speaker budget of at least \$5,000. Such criteria certainly winnowed out organizations with smaller meetings and budgets and may have also skewed the success and satisfaction ratings.

Given such high success and satisfaction self-ratings, we decided to compare organizations that ranked themselves as both very satisfied and very successful with their meetings to all respondents to see what we might learn. In many aspects, the groups look the same, suggesting achieving the

Very successful      Somewhat successful  
Somewhat unsuccessful      Not successful



How would you rate the success of your organization's meetings? (135 responses)  
An overwhelming 99.2 percent of respondents characterized their meetings as very or somewhat successful.

highest success and satisfaction may be as much art as science, but we did uncover some differences.

- The very successful and satisfied use speaker bureaus more frequently (51.0 percent use them always or frequently versus 42.8 of all respondents) and find them more valuable (56.4 percent find speaker bureaus extremely or very valuable compared to 43.4 percent overall).
- When hiring professional speakers, the very successful and satisfied are more likely to rely on a board or volunteer committee (34.7 versus only 24.4 percent overall).
- Over 90 percent of the very successful and satisfied help industry speakers prepare compared to 81.7 percent overall, and they're more likely to provide training or tips for better presentations (77.1 percent versus 65.3 percent).
- The very successful and satisfied are more likely than respondents overall to measure whether learning occurs through a combination of pre-meeting and post-meeting assessment (21.7 percent versus 12.3 percent).

We also found some correlation between certification and continuing education and aspects of success and satisfaction. Groups that offer CE for their meetings are more likely to be satisfied with their meetings overall (64.1 percent report being very satisfied versus 41.9 percent of groups that don't offer CE) and to be satisfied in particular in the following areas:

- Revenue—75.6 are very or somewhat satisfied with their meetings revenue versus 58.1 percent of non-CE-offering organizations
- Connection to organization's strategic plan or the direction—88.0 percent are very or somewhat satisfied compared to 72.1 percent

- Professional speakers—78.2 are very or somewhat satisfied versus 69.8 percent
- Industry speakers—91.3 percent are very or somewhat satisfied compared to 81.4 percent

Organizations offering CE for their meetings are also likely to characterize their meetings as very successful (58.7 percent compared to 46.5 percent of groups that don't offer CE).

Having a formal certification program ups your chances of being satisfied with meetings revenue. Over 75 percent of those organizations report being very or somewhat satisfied with revenue versus 66.7 percent of non-certifying groups.

All in all, the data suggests the very satisfied and very successful organizations approach meetings with a focus on the educational aspect, as testified to by the greater commitment to providing speakers with training and tips for better presentations and measuring whether learning occurs at the meeting in a way that homes in on the impact of the meeting.

Finally, while it's reassuring in many ways to see almost everyone so apparently happy with their meetings, we can't help but feel a warning may be needed lest the numbers foster a complacency that prevents organizations from looking at what they can do to improve the efficacy and value of their meetings and rise to even higher levels of success and satisfaction, like shifting from smile sheets to the measurement of learning and the application of learning.

**Will organizations' high opinions of their success and satisfaction be a barrier to improvements in the meetings market?**

## About Velvet Chainsaw Consulting

### A Publisher of the Report

This report is co-published by Velvet Chainsaw Consulting ([www.velvetchainsaw.com](http://www.velvetchainsaw.com)) and Tagoras, Inc. Velvet Chainsaw is a business improvement consulting firm that helps conference organizers grow or transform their major face-to-face programs. Velvet Chainsaw is comprised of a team of industry experts who are change agents for where conferences will evolve. Clients engage the company for large projects to solve these problems:

- Improving attendee acquisition and loyalty (including next-generation participants)
- Differentiating with premium learning experiences
- Fostering more connections and community
- Increasing exhibit/sponsor sales and value

### About the Authors

#### JEFF HURT

Since January 2010, Jeff has served the clients of Velvet Chainsaw as executive vice president of education and engagement. In 2011, he was recognized as the PCMA Educator of the Year. Jeff has held leadership roles with five associations in the education, events, and meetings departments, including Meetings Professionals International and Promotional Products Association International, one of the top 50 trade shows in the industry. Jeff is a leading authority in the meetings industry on adult education, conference design, and event transformation. He speaks and blogs frequently

*Jeff Hurt*



about meeting and technology trends, the future of conference education, adult learning, and all things meetings at [www.velvetchainsaw.com](http://www.velvetchainsaw.com).

#### SARAH MICHEL, CSP

Sarah joined Velvet Chainsaw as the vice president of professional connexity in February 2013. Sarah is a meetings architect with more than 15 years of experience. Her vast knowledge of next-generation learning and facilitation skills helps design dynamic meetings, rich in networking and peer-to-peer interactions. Sarah is a nationally recognized professional speaker and the creator of the NetWORTHing® process. As a certified speaking professional (CSP), Sarah has keynoted and facilitated sessions to help audiences be more effective connectors.

#### DAVE LUTZ

Dave is managing director of Velvet Chainsaw, a company he founded in 2006. Dave has considerable experience in the meetings and convention industry, selling to the C-suite, event technology, and nurturing strategic partnerships. He knows how to develop a winning and focused plan that delivers value and growth for major conference products.

*Sarah Michel*



*Dave Lutz*

## About Tagoras A Publisher of the Report

This report is co-published by Tagoras, Inc. ([www.tagoras.com](http://www.tagoras.com)) and Velvet Chainsaw Consulting. Through a combination of independent research and strategic consulting, Tagoras helps organizations in the business of lifelong learning maximize the reach, revenue, and impact of their offerings. We provide our clients with a unique blend of experience in marketing, technology, and education and back it up with years of successful projects with clients like the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants (AICPA), the Association of American Medical Colleges, the Healthcare Financial Management Association (HFMA), the American College of Rheumatology (ACR), the College Board, Booke Seminars (a Division of Aon), and Castle Worldwide. Other Tagoras reports include *Association Learning Management Systems*, *Association Virtual Events*, and *Association Learning + Technology*.



### About the Authors

#### JEFF COBB

A managing director at Tagoras, Jeff has nearly two decades of experience in the world of marketing, adult learning, and technology. He was cofounder and CEO of Isoph, a leading provider of e-learning technologies and services to associations. He has also served as senior vice president of business development for Quisic, an e-learning partner to top-tier business schools and fortune 500 companies, and as vice president of business development for LearnSomething.

Jeff is a respected expert on the global market for lifelong learning and author of *Leading the Revolution: The Expert's Guide to Capitalizing on the Exploding Lifelong Education Market* (AMACOM 2013). He has served on the Professional Development Section Council of the American Society of Association Executives as well as on the research committee of the eLearning Guild.

Jeff speaks frequently about the impact of new technologies on business, education, and society in



general. More information about his speaking is available on his personal Web site at [www.jeffthomascobb.com](http://www.jeffthomascobb.com).

#### CELISA STEELE

Celisa has led the development of successful online education sites with smaller groups like the Frameworks Institute and the Alliance of Chicago Community Health Services and large national and multinational organizations like the American Red Cross, the American College of Radiology, the Society for Human Resource Management, and WebJunction, an initiative of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

Celisa is a managing director at Tagoras, where she serves as editor-in-chief of the company's research publications. She was cofounder and COO of Isoph, one of the leading providers of e-learning services to the nonprofit sector. Prior to Isoph, she worked in creative services at Quisic, a developer of high-end online course content for major universities and Global 2000 companies. Before joining Quisic, Celisa worked in curriculum development for the not-for-profit Family and Children's Resource Program (FCRP), part of the Jordan Institute for Families at the School of Social Work at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

A veteran of the e-learning world, Celisa served on the research committee of the eLearning Guild and has served multiple times as a judge in Brandon Hall's annual e-learning awards.

Celisa is a published poet ([www.celisasteele.com](http://www.celisasteele.com)) and the current poet laureate of Carrboro, North Carolina.

## Appendix: Survey Data Responses for All Questions

### All Respondents

The following questions were asked of all respondents.

#### USE OF PROFESSIONAL SPEAKERS

Does your organization hire professional speakers for its meetings? (171 responses)

Yes	84.8%
No	15.2%

#### MEETING WITH 500 OR MORE ATTENDEES

Does your organization hold a meeting attended by 500 people or more? (151 responses)

Yes	84.1%
No	15.9%

### Respondents Who Spend at Least \$5,000 on Professional Speakers

The following questions were asked only of respondents who indicated their organization hires professional speakers for its meetings and, excepting the first question below, has a professional speaker budgets of at least \$5,000. They were asked to respond to the questions based on their organization's use of professional speakers *in general, across all meetings*.

#### ANNUAL PROFESSIONAL SPEAKER BUDGET

What is your organization's annual budget for hiring professional speakers? (142 responses)

Less than \$5,000	8.5%
\$5,000 to \$20,000	23.2%
\$20,001 to \$30,000	14.8%
\$30,001 to \$50,000	20.4%
\$50,001 to \$100,000	12.7%
\$100,000 or more	20.4%

#### NUMBER OF PROFESSIONAL SPEAKERS PER YEAR

How many professional speakers does your organization hire per year? (125 responses)

Mean	Median
14.6	5.0

## FREQUENCY OF USE OF SPEAKER BUREAUS

Does your organization use a speaker bureau for recommending and hiring professional speakers? (124 responses)

Always	7.3%
Frequently	35.5%
Sometimes	38.7%
Never	18.5%

## CHANGE IN USE OF SPEAKER BUREAUS

Over the past two years, has your organization used speaker bureaus more or less than in the past? (100 responses)

More	14.0%
About the same	59.0%
Less	27.0%

## VALUE OF SPEAKER BUREAUS

How valuable does your organization find speaker bureaus? (99 responses)

Extremely valuable	12.1%
Very valuable	31.3%
Moderately valuable	37.4%
Slightly valuable	16.2%
Not at all valuable	3.0%

## IDEA SOURCES FOR NEW PROFESSIONAL SPEAKERS

How does your organization usually get ideas for new professional speakers? Check all that apply. (119 responses)

Recommendations from peers	84.0%
Web searches (e.g., Google)	47.1%
Social media (LinkedIn, Twitter, etc.)	23.5%
Speakers we've seen before	69.7%
Recommendations from members	78.2%
Recommendations from staff	69.7%
Recommendations from speaker bureaus	51.7%
Direct solicitations from speakers	24.4%
Speaker proposal process	35.3%
Other	10.1%

### HIRING AUTHORITY FOR PROFESSIONAL SPEAKERS

Who in your organization makes the final decision on which professional speakers to hire? (119 responses)

CEO or executive director	20.2%
Board or volunteer committee	24.4%
VP or director of meetings	10.9%
VP or director of education / professional development	22.7%
Staff committee	6.7%
Other	15.1%

### IMPORTANCE OF PROFESSIONAL SPEAKER MARKETING TOOLS

Please rank the importance of the following speaker marketing tools when choosing a professional speaker. Only one item may be marked most important, and only one may be marked least important. Use 1 for the marketing tool your organization considers most important, 2 for the next most important, and so on down to 7, the least important item. (113 responses)

	1 (most important)	2	3	4	5	6	7 (least important)
One sheet	4.7%	3.8%	5.7%	7.5%	8.5%	23.6%	46.2%
Web site	11.2%	23.4%	16.8%	19.6%	15.0%	12.1%	1.9%
Social media presence (blog, Facebook page, LinkedIn profile, etc.)	0.0%	3.8%	14.2%	13.2%	21.7%	27.4%	19.8%
Speaker video	43.0%	13.1%	11.2%	12.1%	15.0%	3.7%	1.9%
Published book	2.0%	11.9%	17.8%	14.9%	21.8%	12.9%	18.8%
References (people to ask about their experience with the speaker)	28.8%	21.6%	19.8%	16.2%	3.6%	6.3%	3.6%
Past speaking experience and client list	11.2%	26.2%	17.8%	16.8%	15.9%	10.3%	1.9%

### TIMELINE FOR PROFESSIONAL SPEAKERS

How far before your meeting does your organization prefer to secure professional speakers? (113 responses)

Less than 4 months	3.5%
4 to 5 months	16.8%
6 to 7 months	28.3%
8 to 9 months	29.2%
10 to 12 months	16.8%
More than 12 months	5.3%

### IMPACT OF PROFESSIONAL SPEAKERS ON REGISTRATIONS

How important is having a headline, “big name” speaker for increasing registrations for meetings? (113 responses)

Extremely important	3.5%
Very important	24.8%
Moderately important	43.4%
Slightly important	18.6%
Not at all important	9.7%

### IMPORTANCE OF FACTORS FOR PROFESSIONAL SPEAKER SUCCESS

For your meetings, rank the importance of the following factors of professional speaker success. Only one item may be marked most important, and only one may be marked least important. Use 1 for the factor your organization considers most important, 2 for the next most important, and so on down to 4, the least important item. (113 responses)

	1 (most important)	2	3	4 (least important)
Charismatic, high-energy stage presence	24.5%	52.7%	20.0%	2.7%
Current, relevant content	75.0%	13.4%	9.8%	1.8%
Motivational message	0.9%	14.8%	40.3%	36.9%
Active involvement of attendees (discussion or other form of participation)	3.4%	19.1%	30.9%	49.1%

### FREQUENCY OF USE OF SPONSORS

Does your organization seek sponsors to underwrite, in full or part, the cost of professional speakers, sessions, or content tracks? (112 responses)

Always	25.0%
Frequently	27.7%
Sometimes	35.7%
Never	11.6%

### CHANGE IN USE OF SPONSORS

Over the past two years, has your organization used sponsors to underwrite the cost of professional speakers, sessions, or tracks at your meetings more or less than in the past? (99 responses)

More	27.3%
About the same	60.6%
Less	12.1%

## PLANNED USE OF SPONSORS

Does your organization plan to make use of sponsors to underwrite the cost of professional speakers, sessions, or tracks at your meetings in the next two years? (13 responses)

Yes	0.0%
No	69.2%
Not sure	30.8%

## DOING MORE THAN SPEAKING

Does your organization request or require that the professional speakers it hires provide more than a face-to-face presentation (e.g., write a blog post or article or record a promotional video)? (112 responses)

Yes, we <i>request</i> professional speakers to provide more than a face-to-face presentation.	59.8%
Yes, we <i>require</i> professional speakers to provide more than a face-to-face presentation.	6.3%
No	33.9%

## NON-SPEAKING REQUESTS AND REQUIREMENTS

What in addition to a face-to-face presentation does your organization request or require of the professional speakers it hires? Check all that apply. (73 responses)

Write a post for the organization's or meeting's blog	24.7%
Participate in a pre-meeting online conversation (e.g., Twitter chat or LinkedIn discussion)	41.1%
Record a promotional video	39.7%
Write a newsletter or magazine article or be interviewed	41.1%
Present or facilitate a pre- or post-meeting Webinar	23.3%
Participate in other elements of the meeting	75.3%
Other	23.3%

## Respondents Who Hold a Meeting with at Least 500 Attendees

The following questions were asked only of respondents who indicated their organization holds a meeting with at least 500 attendees. They were asked to respond to the questions based on the use of industry speakers at *the organization's major meeting*. Respondents were left to define "major" for themselves—it could be the meeting with the largest attendance (over 500 people), the meeting that produces the most revenue, the meeting that the organization considers most strategically important, etc.—but, however they defined their organization's major meeting, they were to keep this one meeting in mind as they responded to the survey questions.

## NUMBER OF INDUSTRY SPEAKERS AT THE MAJOR MEETING

How many industry speakers present at this meeting? (121 responses)

Mean	Median
152.0	50.0

## NUMBER OF SESSIONS AT THE MAJOR MEETING

What is the total number of sessions offered at this meeting? (120 responses)

Mean	Median
94.1	53.0

## USE OF CALL FOR PRESENTATIONS

Does your organization issue a call for presentations for this meeting? (121 responses)

Yes	76.9%
No	23.1%

## ACCEPTANCE RATE FOR CALL FOR PRESENTATIONS

How many proposals submitted in response to your call were accepted the last time you held this meeting? (93 responses)

80% or more	16.1%
60% to 79%	17.2%
40% to 59%	29.0%
20% to 49%	25.8%
Less than 20%	11.8%

## TIMELINE FOR CALL FOR PRESENTATIONS

How many months before this meeting does the call for presentations close? (92 responses)

Less than 4 months	3.3%
4 to 5 months	12.0%
6 to 7 months	22.8%
8 to 9 months	41.3%
10 to 12 months	16.3%
More than 12 months	4.3%

## SPEAKER PREPARATION

Does your organization prepare industry speakers for this meeting (e.g., hold a conference call to discuss logistics or provide an online speaker portal)? (120 responses)

Yes	81.7%
No	18.3%

## CONTENT OF SPEAKER PREPARATION

What type of content does your organization provide to prepare industry speakers for this meeting? Check all that apply. (98 responses)

Venue or session logistics	89.8%
Training or tips for better presentations	65.3%
Information about expected attendees (e.g., number, interests, or skills)	85.7%
Information about overarching themes or content tracks at the meeting	71.4%
Information about the speaker or session evaluation process	66.3%
Other	14.3%

## METHOD OF SPEAKER PREPARATION

How does your organization prepare industry speakers for this meeting? Check all that apply. (98 responses)

Individual coaching	24.5%
Conference call	62.2%
Online meeting or Webinar	22.4%
E-mail	91.8%
Dedicated Web site or portal for speakers	38.8%
Other	6.1%

## SPEAKER COMPENSATION

Does your organization provide some compensation to its industry speakers (e.g., complimentary registration for all or part of this meeting)? (120 responses)

Yes	75.0%
No	25.0%

## TYPES OF SPEAKER COMPENSATION

Which forms of compensation does your organization provide to its industry speakers for this meeting? Check all that apply. (90 responses)

Complimentary registration for the full meeting	71.1%
Complimentary registration for part of the meeting	25.6%
Reduced registration rate	24.4%
Complimentary lodging or reimbursement for lodging	48.9%
Complimentary transportation or reimbursement for transportation	40.0%
Honorarium or stipend	43.3%
Other	16.7%

## FORMAL EVALUATIONS

Does your organization collect formal evaluations from attendees at this meeting? (120 responses)

Yes	94.2%
No	5.8%

## TYPES OF FORMAL EVALUATIONS

Which types of formal of evaluations does your organization collect from attendees at this meeting? Check all that apply. (113 responses)

Evaluations of the overall meeting	92.9%
Evaluations of each session	88.5%
Evaluations of each speaker	66.4%

## COLLECTION OF FORMAL EVALUATIONS

How does your organization collect formal evaluations from attendees at this meeting? (113 responses)

Attendees complete paper-based evaluations.	14.2%
Attendees complete online evaluations.	44.2%
Attendees complete evaluations using a mobile app.	6.2%
Attendees complete evaluations using a combination of paper-based, online, and/or mobile-app methods.	32.7%
Other	2.7%

## MEASURING LEARNING

Do you measure whether learning occurs at this meeting (e.g. through assessments or evaluation questions tied to learning objectives)? (120 responses)

Yes	47.5%
No	52.5%

## METHOD OF MEASURING LEARNING

How do you measure whether learning occurs at your meetings? Check all that apply. (57 responses)

Through evaluation questions that align with learning objectives	75.4%
Through post-meeting assessments or follow-ups	21.1%
Through post-session assessments or follow-ups	14.0%
Through a combination of pre-meeting and post-meeting assessment	12.3%
Through evaluations conducted a month or more following the meeting	17.5%

## REWRITING LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Does your organization rewrite any of your speaker session submissions (e.g., titles, descriptions, or learning objectives) for this meeting? (120 responses)

Always	15.8%
Frequently	31.7%
Sometimes	47.5%
Never	5.0%

## LIVE VIDEO STREAMING OF KEYNOTES

Does your organization provide live video streaming of keynotes at this meeting? (120 responses)

Yes, for all keynotes	5.8%
Yes, for some keynotes	16.7%
No	77.5%

## LIVE VIDEO STREAMING OF CONCURRENT SESSIONS

Does your organization provide live video streaming of concurrent sessions at this meeting? (120 responses)

Yes, for all concurrent sessions	0.8%
Yes, for some concurrent sessions	10.8%
No	88.3%

## REPURPOSING CONTENT

Do you capture speaker content (audio and/or video) at this meeting and repurpose it (i.e., make all or part of it available after the meeting)? (120 responses)

Yes, for keynotes only	13.3%
Yes, for concurrent sessions only	12.5%
Yes, for both keynotes and concurrent sessions	39.2%
No	35.0%

## Satisfaction, Success, and Profile Data for Qualifying Respondents

The following questions were asked of all respondents who have a professional speaker budget of \$5,000, hold a meeting with at least 500 attendees, or both.

### OVERALL SATISFACTION WITH MEETINGS

Overall, how satisfied is your organization with its meetings? (137 responses)

Very satisfied	56.2%
Somewhat satisfied	36.5%
Somewhat dissatisfied	6.6%
Very dissatisfied	0.7%

## SATISFACTION WITH SPECIFIC ITEMS

Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied is your organization with its meetings in terms of the specific items below? (135 responses)

	Very satisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Neutral	Somewhat dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Not applicable
Attendance	21.5%	50.4%	3.7%	23.0%	1.5%	0.0%
Revenue	27.8%	42.1%	9.0%	18.0%	2.3%	0.8%
Connection to the organization's strategic plan or the direction set by the board of directors	44.4%	38.5%	14.1%	2.2%	0.0%	0.07%
Professional speakers	31.1%	44.4%	11.9%	3.0%	0.7%	8.9%
Industry speakers	28.9%	59.3%	2.2%	7.4%	1.5%	0.7%
Feedback from attendees	38.1%	50.7%	3.7%	6.0%	0.7%	0.7%

## OVERALL SUCCESS OF MEETINGS

How would you rate the success of your organization's meetings? (135 responses)

Very successful	54.8%
Somewhat successful	44.4%
Somewhat unsuccessful	0.7%
Very unsuccessful	0.0%

## GEOGRAPHIC FOCUS

Which best describes the geographic focus of your organization (i.e., which best indicates the areas in which you actively solicit membership)? (135 responses)

Single-community or municipality focus	1.5%
Multiple-community focus within one state	5.2%
Single-state or province focus	11.1%
Multistate or multiprovince focus	2.2%
National focus	47.4%
International focus	32.6%

## TYPE OF ORGANIZATION

Which of the following best characterizes your organization? (135 responses)

Charitable or philanthropic organization	5.2%
Trade association	32.6%
Professional society	45.9%
Educational institution	5.2%
For-profit corporation	7.4%
Other	3.7%

**CERTIFICATION PROGRAM**

Does your organization offer a formal certification program? (135 responses)

Yes	37.0%
No	63.0%

**CONTINUING EDUCATION**

Does your organization offer continuing education (e.g., CE, CEU, CME, CPE, or CLE) for its meetings? (135 responses)

Yes	68.1%
No	31.9%

**INDIVIDUAL MEMBERSHIP**

How many active *individual* members does your organization currently have? (104 responses)

1,000 or less	7.7%
1,001 to 5,000	26.0%
5,001 to 10,000	13.5%
10,001 to 25,000	13.5%
25,001 to 50,000	8.7%
50,001 to 100,000	5.8%
More than 100,000	9.6%
We have only organizational members.	15.4%

**ORGANIZATIONAL MEMBERSHIP**

How many active *organizational* members does your organization currently have? (104 responses)

Less than 100	14.4%
101 to 200	4.8%
201 to 500	8.7%
501 to 1,000	13.5%
1,001 to 5,000	15.4%
More than 5,000	2.9%
We have only individual members.	40.4%

**CLASSIFICATION**

Which of the following classifications (from the North American Industry Classification System, or NAICS) most closely aligns with the audience served by your organization? If you wish to review the classifications to see where your organization fits, you may do so at <http://www.census.gov/cgi-bin/sssd/naics/naicsrch?chart=2007>. (135 responses)

Administrative and support and waste management and remediation services	0.7%	Mining	0.7%
Agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting	1.5%	Professional, scientific, and technical services	17.0%
Arts, entertainment, and recreation	2.2%	Public administration	1.5%
Construction	1.5%	Real estate and rental and leasing	4.4%
Education services	14.1%	Retail trade	3.0%
Finance and insurance	7.4%	Transportation and warehousing	2.2%
Healthcare and social assistance	16.3%	Utilities	1.5%
Information	3.0%	Wholesale trade	0.7%
Management of companies and enterprises	2.2%	Other	14.8%
Manufacturing	5.2%		

**OVERALL STAFF**

How many paid staff does your organization currently have? (106 responses)

Mean	Median
84.9	22.0

**EDUCATION STAFF**

How many paid staff does your organization have who currently spend more than half their time working in to education or professional development? (106 responses)

Mean	Median
8.9	3.0

**MOST SENIOR EDUCATION STAFF TITLE**

What is the title of the most senior member of your organization’s education or professional development function? (135 responses)

VP	25.9%
Director	46.7%
Manager	8.9%
Other	18.5%

**BUDGET SIZE**

What is your organization's annual budget (in U.S. dollars)? (131 responses)

Less than \$100,000	0.8%
\$100,001 to \$500,000	6.1%
\$500,001 to \$1,000,000	15.3%
\$1,000,001 to \$5,000,000	29.0%
\$5,000,001 to \$10,000,000	9.2%
\$10,000,001 to \$25,000,000	16.0%
\$25,000,001 to \$50,000,000	7.6%
\$50,000,001 to \$100,000,000	6.1%
More than \$100,000,000	9.9%