# THE SPEAKER REPORT

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

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

VELVET CHAINSAW consulting

*t*agoras™
<inquiry><insight><action>

# Copyright and Disclaimer
## The Fine Print

\*\*\*\*\*

*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 August 3, 2011, to September 10, 2011. A total of 247 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 2011*

# Additional Tagoras Reports
## Virtual Conferences, LMSes, and Learning Technology
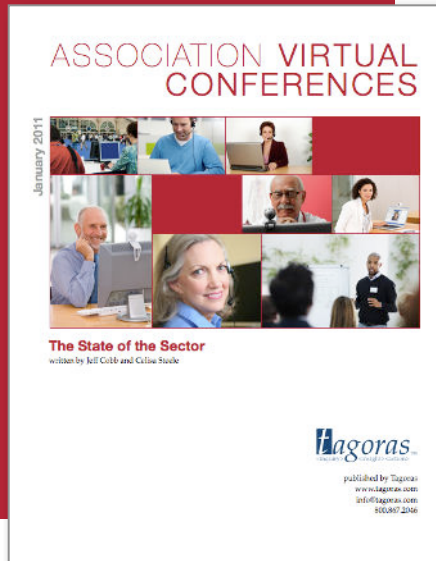


Virtual conferences and trade shows are quickly emerging as one of the most significant new trends in the association sector. *Association Virtual Conferences: State of the Sector* provides the most comprehensive assessment available of how this important new approach to meetings and education is being used by trade and professional associations. If you are charged with developing a virtual event strategy for your organization, this is a must-have resource.

Learn more at http://www.tagoras.com/catalog/virtual-conferences.

*Association Learning Management Systems* is just what you need if you would like to dramatically reduce the time and costs associated with choosing the right learning management system. We've narrowed the field of LMS providers down to a small group dedicated to serving associations and experienced in meeting association needs. We asked the providers to respond to an extensive questionnaire and provide a demonstration of their system.

Learn more at http://www.tagoras.com/catalog/association-lms.
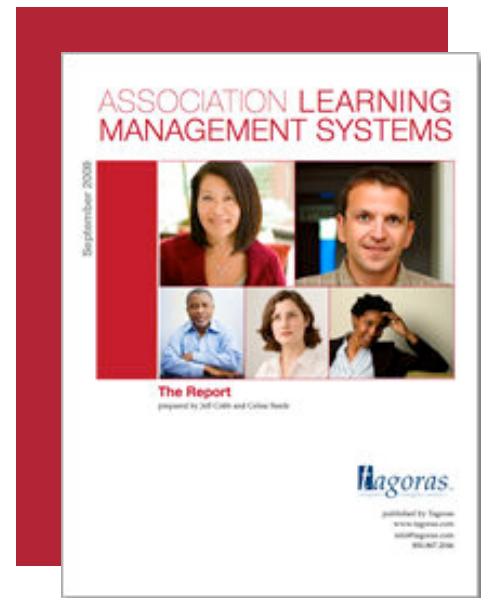


Based on survey data collected from 375 organizations as well as on interviews with 27 associations and 10 technology and service providers, *Association Learning + Technology: State of the Sector* is a 121-page, comprehensive report on technology-enabled learning in the association sector. Associations serious about launching an e-learning initiative or growing a current online education program won't want to be without it.

Learn more at http://www.tagoras.com/catalog/association-learning-technology.
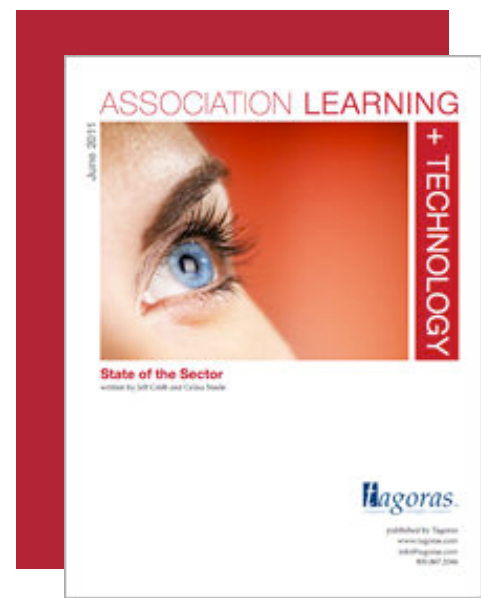
# Introduction
## About the Use of Speakers in the Meetings Market

*The Speaker Report: The Use of Professional and Industry Speakers in the Meetings Market* offers some of the most comprehensive information available on how speakers fit into the educational landscape. This report looks at 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.

### The Data

At the core of the report is data from an online survey conducted from August 3, 2011, to September 10, 2011. We received 247 responses to this survey. Some 83.8 percent were from individuals who indicated their organization hires professional speakers, and 79.1 percent were from organizations that hold a meeting attended by at least 500 people.

The 170 organizations that indicated they have an annual budget of at least $5,000 for hiring professional speakers were asked questions about

their use of professional speakers, and we asked questions on their use of industry speakers of the 163 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 four 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? (206 responses)**
Nearly 80 percent of respondents to the survey hold a meeting attended by at least 500 people.

● Hold a meeting attended by ≥ 500
● Don't hold a meeting attended by ≥ 500

20.9%

79.1%

16.2%

83.8%

● Hire professional speakers
● Don't hire professional speakers

**Does your organization hire professional speakers for its meetings? (241 responses)**
Nearly 84 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, 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 contemplate changes.

*Jeff Hurt*
*jhurt@velvetchainsaw.com*

*Jeff Cobb*
*jcobb@tagoras.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. 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. **Education deserves some respect.**
   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 (48.3 percent) or a manager (10.1 percent). Organizations need to ensure they have someone responsible for driving education at the strategic level. As more free or low-cost Webinars and online learning solutions compete with more traditional meetings, the need for organizations to invest in their internal education resources and staff is going to increase. We're seeing more senior-level job postings at major associations. If your annual budget is more than $3 million or your organization provides certification or continuing education, a senior education team member on staff should be part of the plan. And that senior education person will need some support. With a median overall staff size of 24.5 and an education staff of 3.0, only 12 percent of an organization's head count focuses on education. If education is a primary reason people become—and remain—affiliated with an organization, it seems there's room for growth in the resources devoted to that function.

2. **Big names aren't a big draw.**
   The speaker-registration connection is not particularly strong. Only about a third of those surveyed believe that a big-name

speaker is very or extremely important for attracting attendees, which may suggest the dollars reserved for celebrity speakers could be better spent.

3. **Sponsorship is mainstream.**
   Nearly 87 percent of respondents at least sometimes seek sponsors to underwrite the cost of professional speakers, sessions, or content tracks at their meetings. With exhibitors wanting to be associated with thought leadership, we expect to see more organizations using sponsors frequently rather than only sometimes.

4. **Content should be current.**

> It seems only reasonable to expect the content at an organization's main meeting be current.

   Of respondents whose organization holds a meeting with at least 500 attendees and issues a call for papers (CFP), 62.5 percent close the CFP eight or more months before the meeting, and 49.0 percent of organizations with professional speaker budgets of $5,000 or more select those speakers eight or more months before the meeting—making it hard, in today's fast-paced world, to argue the content is current. We'd like to see organizations reexamine their deadlines for securing speakers and sessions and shrink it to under six months, or whatever the minimum truly is. If it's not practical to leave the CFP or professional speaker process open longer, organizations can stick to a longer timeline for programming most sessions but reserve some slots that can be filled with relevant, timely topics closer to the meeting. Announcing newly added sessions in the weeks leading up to the meeting in a drip-marketing campaign can help attract additional registrants.

5. **Speakers need coaching.**
   Sending out e-mails or links to speaker portals isn't enough—they're too easy to ignore and often focus on logistical needs versus education excellence. Provide advice that helps speakers prepare content that is up-to-the-minute and includes audience participation (only 52.9 percent of those surveyed provide training for better presentations while 88.2 communicate with their speakers about logistics). On average, it takes eight hours to prepare a one-hour presentation. Are your presenters putting in this much time? A common attendee complaint is, "There wasn't enough time to cover all the content." Make sure presenters are focused on the three to five things they want the learner to recall. Content reduction and laser focus on core concepts should be their mantra.

6. **Most learning happens at the session level and is led by individual speakers.**
   While almost every organization (96.2 percent) surveyed collects formal evaluations at its major meeting, only 68.2 percent ask for evaluations of each speaker. If organizations want to improve, they must have better data. Session evaluations should evaluate each speaker's knowledge and delivery and whether the presentation matched the learning objectives. The best speakers (maybe the top quarter) can be invited back while still leaving room for new faces on the agenda.

7. **Determining educational impact should be a priority.**
   Only 41.9 percent of survey respondents measure whether learning occurs at their major meeting, and a mere 7.6 percent conduct post-session assessments or follow-ups—although long-term retention and application are arguably *the* purpose of meetings.

8. **Live streaming should grow.**
   Only about 20 percent of the organizations surveyed offer live video streaming of all or some of their keynote sessions at their major meeting, and less than 17 percent do so for their concurrent sessions. We expect to see growth in both content capture and live

**An overwhelming 97.9 percent of survey respondents said they are very or somewhat satisfied with their meetings overall.**

streaming over the next couple of years as an increasing array of platforms make hybrid events technologically and financially feasible.

9. **When is success bad?**
   An overwhelming 97.9 percent of respondents said they are very or somewhat satisfied with their meetings overall, and 97.2 rated their meetings as very or somewhat successful. While it's reassuring in many ways to see so many so happy with their meetings, we wonder if such numbers might lead organizations to rest on their laurels rather than working to make their meetings even better. We hope not.

## 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.

# Demographic Data
## Who Answered the Survey

Responses to the survey were distributed across a broad range of organizations—from those with no paid staff and annual budgets of less than $100,000 to those with 50,000 staff and budgets over $100 million.

The largest clusters of survey respondents overall were nationally focused organizations (45.0 percent), organizations with annual budgets between $1 million and $5 million (33.9 percent), professional societies (41.8 percent), and organizations working in professional, scientific, and technical services (17.9 percent). The median paid staff size across all organizations was 24.5; the median number of paid staff who spend more than half their time working in education or professional development was 3.0. The most common membership size was between 1,001 and 5,000 individuals (22.2 percent).

**Which best describes the geographic focus of your organization (i.e., which best indicates the areas in which you actively solicit membership)? (180 responses)**
Organizations with a national focus were the biggest group.

- 🟣 **Single-community or municipality focus**
- 🟡 **Multiple-community focus in one state**
- 🔴 **Single-state or province focus**
- 🔵 **Multistate or multiprovince focus**
- 🟠 **National focus**
- 🔵 **International focus**

2.2%
6.1%
11.7%
1.1%
33.9%
45.0%

**What is your organization's annual budget? (168 responses)**
Budgets between $1 million and $5 million were most common.

- 🔵 **Less than $100,000**
- 🟡 **$100,001 to $500,000**
- 🟠 **$500,001 to $1,000,000**
- 🔴 **$1,000,001 to $5,000,000**
- 🩷 **$5,000,001 to $10,000,000**
- 🟣 **$10,000,001 to $25,000,000**
- 🟢 **$25,000,001 to $50,000,000**
- 🔵 **$50,000,001 to $100,000,000**
- ⚫ **More than $100,000,000**

1.2%
4.8%
11.3%
33.9%
14.9%
10.1%
8.9%
7.1%
7.7%

**Which of the following best characterizes your organization? (182 responses)**

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

The clusters were similar for respondents indicating an annual budget of at least $5,000 for professional speakers, though trade associations (41.2 percent) beat out professional societies (36.5 percent) as the largest group in that segment; paid education staff remains steady with a median of 3.0 individuals, but overall staff numbers rise to a median of 28.0. Among these respondents, health care and social assistance (15.8 percent) just edges out professional, scientific, and technical services (15.1 percent) as the primary industry focus.

For organizations holding a meeting with at least 500 attendees, the clusters again are similar to those for all survey respondents, but both educational staff (median of 4.0 versus 3.0) and overall staff (median of 30.0 versus 24.5) rise.

## Leading Education and Professional Development

For well over half of respondents, the title of the most senior member of their organization's education or professional development function is director (48.3 percent) or manager (10.1 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.

| 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. (179 responses) | |
|---|---|
| Administrative and support and waste management and remediation services | 0.6% |
| Agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting | 1.1% |
| Arts, entertainment, and recreation | 1.1% |
| Construction | 4.5% |
| Education services | 13.4% |
| Finance and insurance | 5.0% |
| Healthcare and social assistance | 15.6% |
| Information | 4.5% |
| Management of companies and enterprises | 3.4% |
| Manufacturing | 4.5% |
| Mining | 1.1% |
| Professional, scientific, and technical services | 17.9% |
| Public administration | 2.2% |
| Real estate and rental and leasing | 2.8% |
| Retail trade | 3.4% |
| Transportation and warehousing | 0.6% |
| Utilities | 1.7% |
| Wholesale trade | 0.0% |
| Other | 16.8% |



**What is the title of the most senior member of your organization's education or professional development function? (178 responses)**

- ● VP
- ● Director
- ● Manager
- ● Other

## Certification and Continuing Education

Almost the same percentage of respondents' organizations do *not* offer a formal certification program as *do* offer continuing education credit for their meetings.

The same breakdowns—about 40 percent offering formal certification programs and about 65 percent offering continuing education credit for meetings—hold true 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? (180 responses)**

**How many paid staff does your organization have who currently spend more than half their time working in to education or professional development? (178 responses)**



Bar chart:
- Total paid staff: Average 802.1, Median 24.5
- Paid education staff: Average 67.5, Median 3.0
- Legend: Average, Median
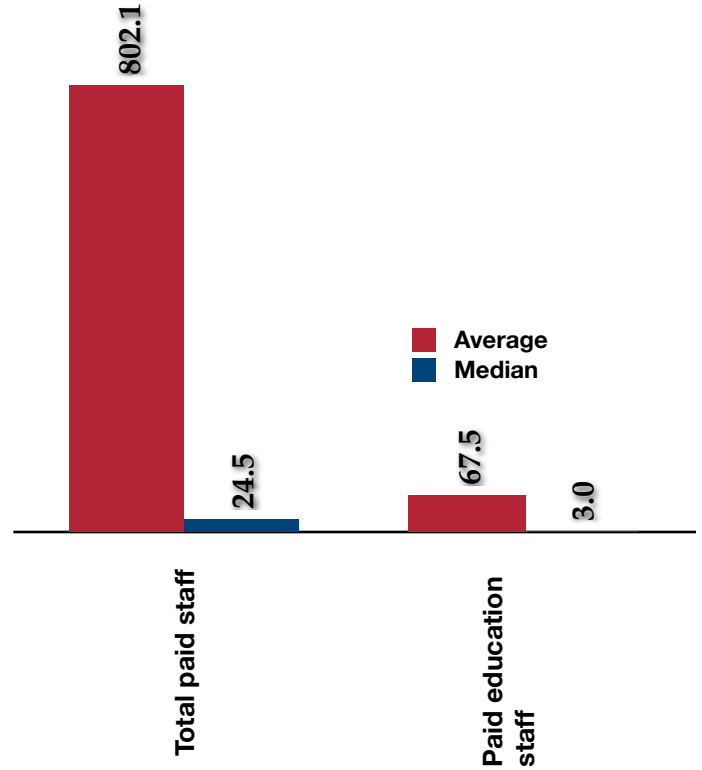
**Does your organization offer continuing education (e.g., CE, CEU, CME, CPE, or CLE) for its meetings? (180 responses)**

- Offer CE
- Don't offer CE



Pie chart: 34.4% (Don't offer CE), 65.6% (Offer CE)
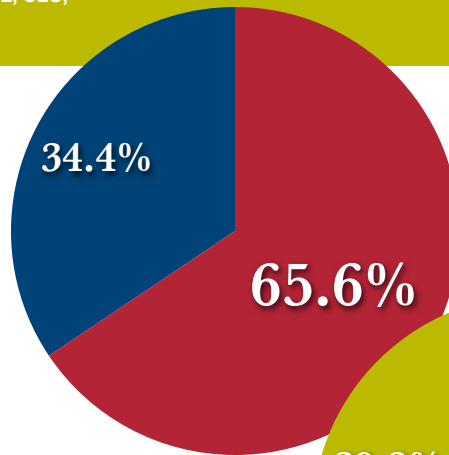
**Does your organization offer a formal certification program? (181 responses)**

- Don't offer certification program
- Offer certification program



Pie chart: 39.2% (Offer certification program), 60.8% (Don't offer certification program)
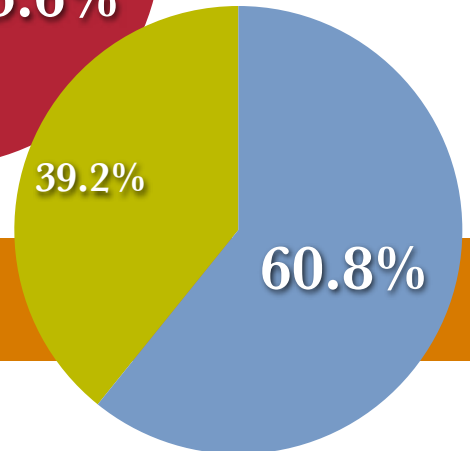
# Professional Speakers
## Selection, Impact, and Price

Some 83.8 percent of survey respondents indicated their organization hires professional speakers, and, of those, 89.5 percent, or 170 organizations, have an annual budget of at least $5,000 for professional speakers. Of those 170 organizations, we asked 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 29.5

percent of respondents, with the more-than-$100,000 option placing with 18.9 percent.

The $5,000-to-$20,000 range is more heavily favored by charitable or philanthropic organizations (75.0 percent) and educational institutions (83.3 percent) than the other types of organizations surveyed. While the percentage of for-profit corporations with budgets of $5,000 to $20,000 (31.3 percent) is about the same as for all respondents, the same percentage of for-profits have budgets of more than $100,000.

As might be expected, as an organization's overall budget rises, so too does it 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,

**What is your organization's annual budget for hiring professional speakers? (190 responses)**
Budgets between $5,000 and $20,000 were most common.



Legend:
- Less than $5,000
- $5,000 to $20,000
- $20,001 to $30,000
- $30,001 to $50,000
- $50,001 to $100,000
- More than $100,000

10.5%
18.9%
29.5%
10.5%
16.3%
14.2%
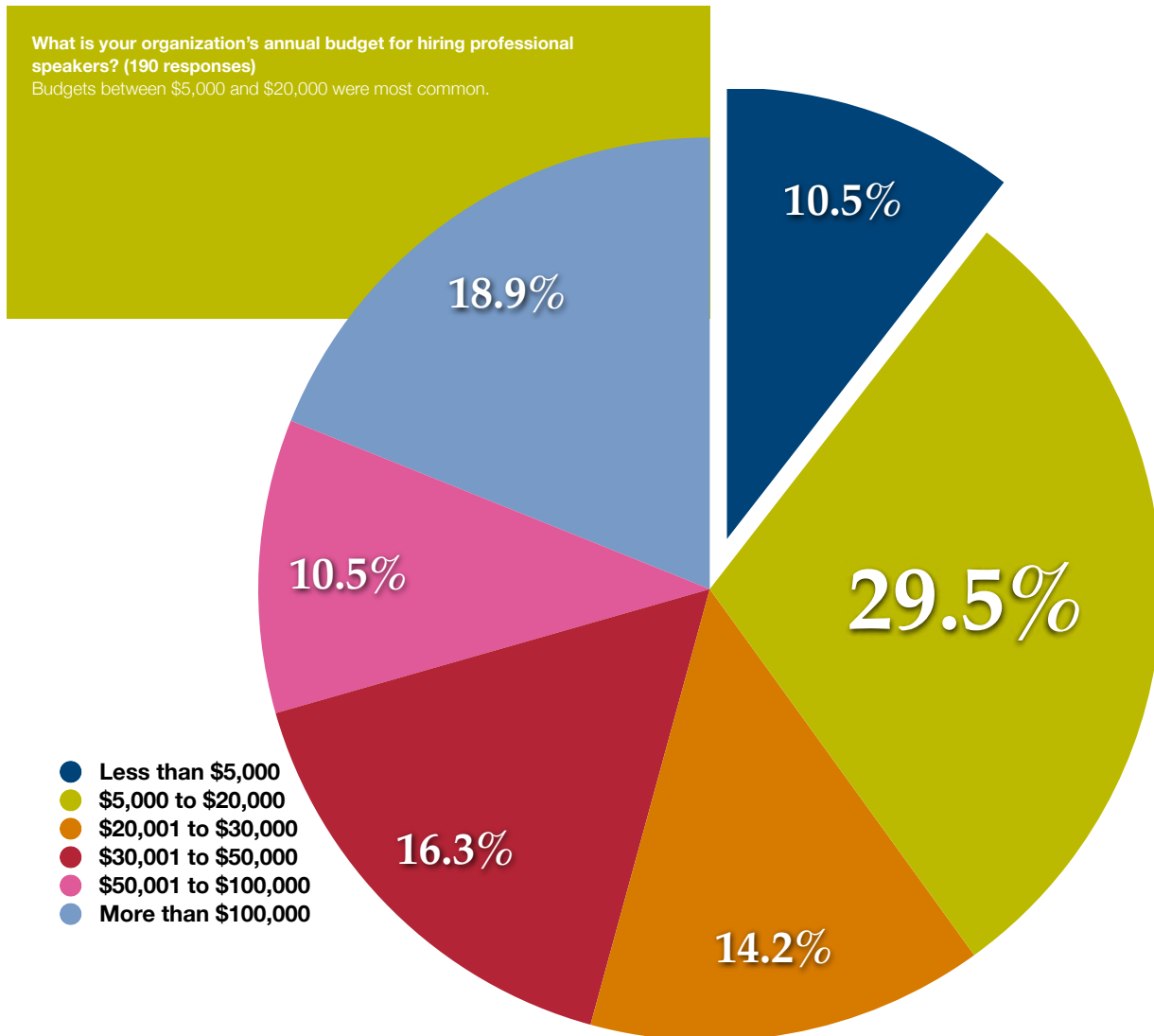
but for overall budget categories above $5 million, the professional speaker budgets rise commensurately; $100-million-plus organizations are most likely to budget more than $100,000 for professional speakers.

For organizations with a narrower-than-national focus, roughly half the budgets fall in the $5,000-to-$20,000 range (54.5 percent of organizations with a multiple-community focus within one state, 44.4 percent of organizations with a single-state or province focus, and 50.0 percent of organizations with a multistate or multiprovince focus), but that drops to about a quarter with nationally and internationally focused organizations (21.7 and 25.0 percent, respectively).

Organizations who measure, through assessments or evaluations, whether learning occurs at their meetings are more likely to have a professional speaker budget of more than $100,000 than those who don't measure learning (29.5 percent versus 17.6 percent).

### THE NUMBER OF PROFESSIONAL SPEAKERS

On average, organizations with annual professional speaker budgets of at least $5,000 hire 11.2 speakers per year, but the actual numbers vary widely—from 1 to 500.

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, 4.0 professional speakers, while organizations spending more than $100,000 hire 32.6—a noticeable eightfold 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 18.4 professional speakers versus a whopping 78.3 hired by organizations with budgets over $100 million.

By organizational type, trade associations hire the most professional speakers at 17.3 per year, compared with 8.5 at professional societies, 7.6 at for-profit corporation, 5.3 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 (15.4) professional speakers versus the lowest number (6.7) at organizations with a multiple-community focus within one state. International organizations hire an average of only 10.1 speakers, a fact that may reflect the greater cost and red-tape that can be associated with far-flung events and long-distance travel across borders.

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

**How many professional speakers does your organization hire per year? (168 responses)**

**11.2**

**5.0**

**Average**

**Median**

**Average** — $5,783

**Median** — $4,478

**Low** — $1,250

**High** — $15,625
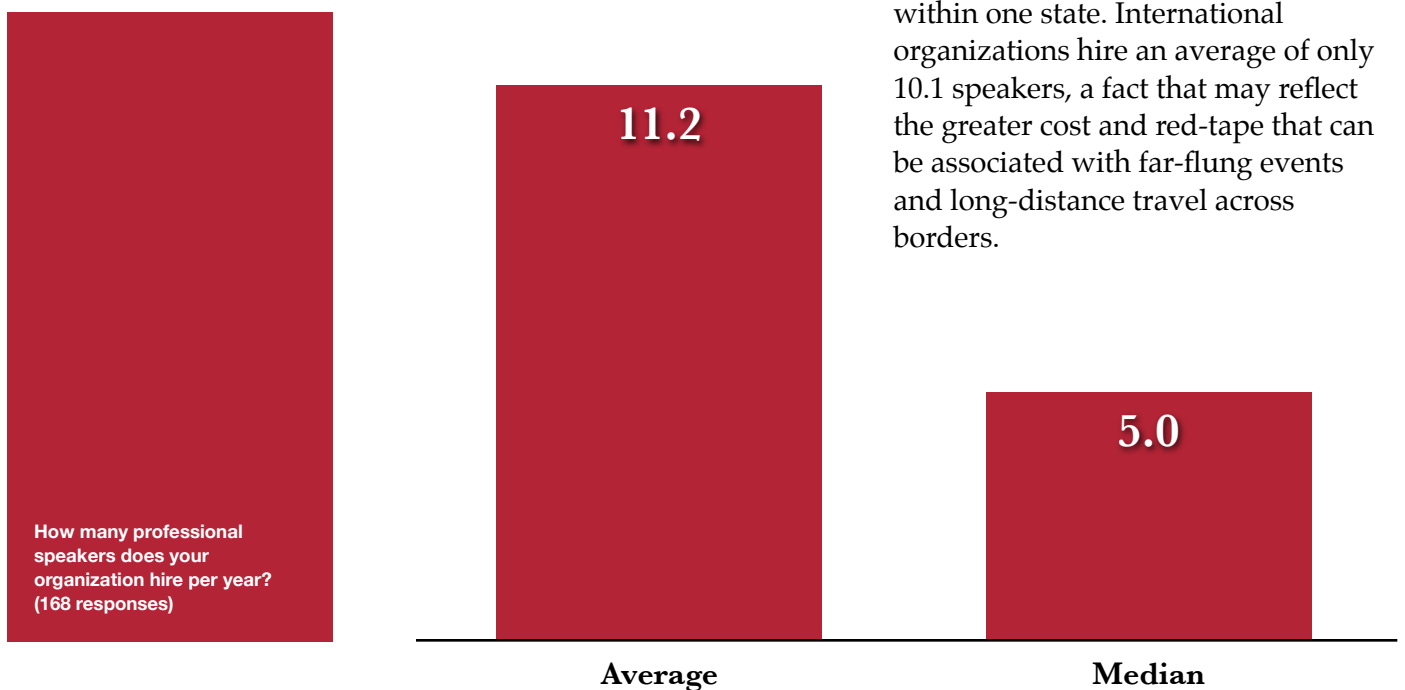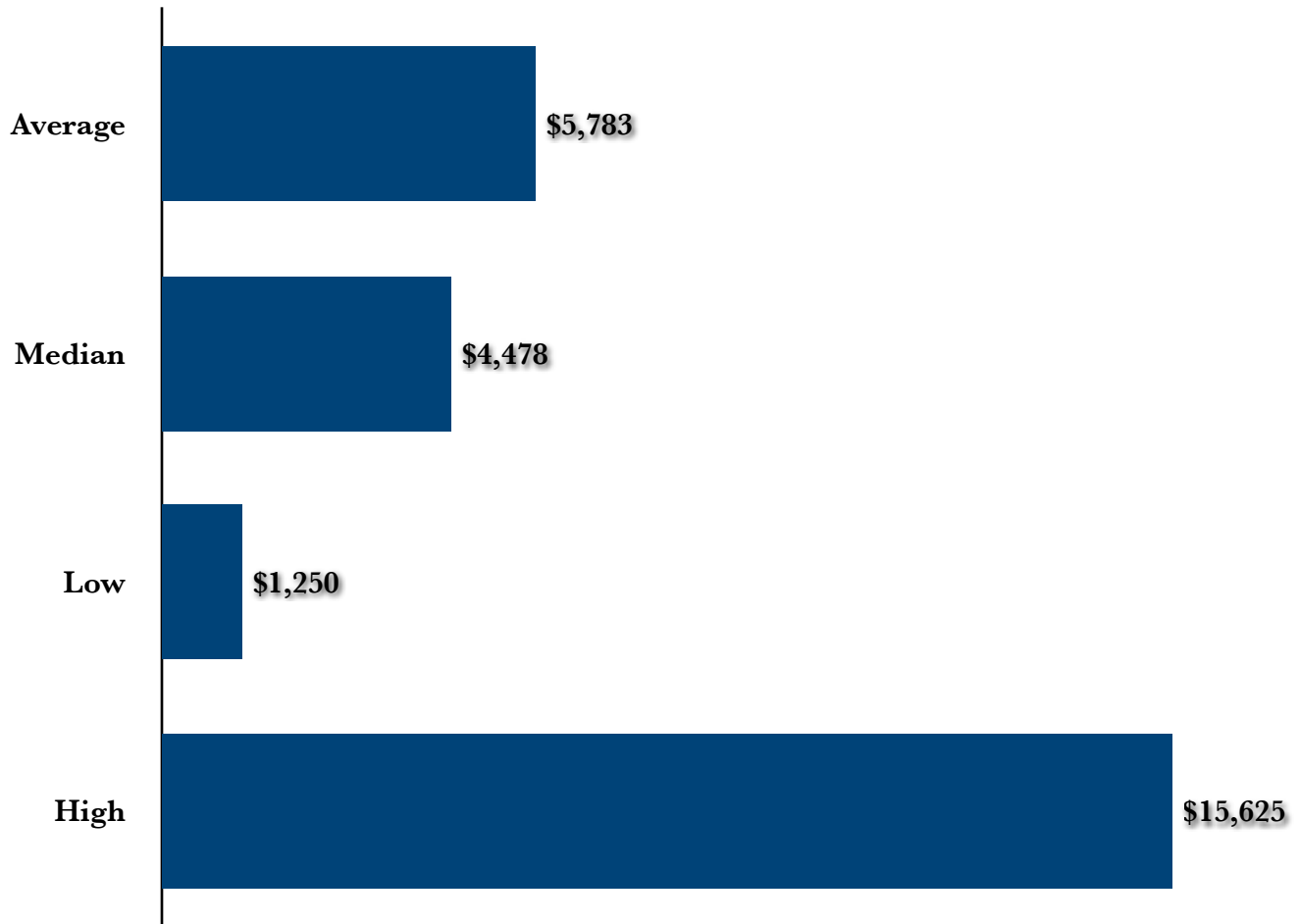
**Derived per-speaker costs**
The mean and median averages come in at $5,783 and $4,478, respectively, and the values range from $1,250 to $15,625.

## PER-SPEAKER COSTS

We did not directly ask survey respondents about per-speakers costs, but we can derive some cost information using the data the respondents did provide 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 $5,783 and a median of $4,478 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 $1,250, and the top price tag is 12.5 times that. Keep in mind that the $15,625 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 approximations rather than reported per-speaker costs. Our experience tells us that organizations paying top dollar for speakers are shelling out much more than $15,625.

Does your organization seek sponsors to underwrite, in full or part, the cost of professional speakers, sessions, or content tracks? (150 responses)

● Always  ● Frequently  ● Sometimes  ● Never

## Sponsored Speaking

There's more than one way to skin a cat, as we're proverbially told, and organizations don't always have to pay their own money for professional speakers. Sponsorship is another way—and one most survey respondents are exploring, as nearly 87 percent indicated they at least sometimes seek sponsors to underwrite the cost of professional speakers, sessions, or content tracks at their meetings.

Sponsors can help shore up smaller budgets; 39.6 percent of organizations spending between $5,000 and $20,000 on professional speakers annually report always seeking sponsors, but only 21.9 percent of those spending more than $100,000 do.

Of the 13.3 percent who reported never seeking sponsors, most (55.0 percent) seem content with

their current approach and say they do not plan to pursue sponsors in the coming two years, but 40.0 percent say they're not sure, perhaps saving sponsorship as an option to explore in these tight economic times.

The use of sponsors has held steady in the recent past, as 72.3 percent of organizations reported using sponsors about the same amount now as over the past two years. Only 11.5 percent reported using sponsorship less, and 16.2 percent reported using it more. With exhibitors wanting to be associated with thought leadership, we expect to see the frequency of sponsorship for professional speakers increase, with more organizations moving beyond the sometimes camp into the frequently and always realms.



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? (130 responses)

● More  ● About the same  ● Less
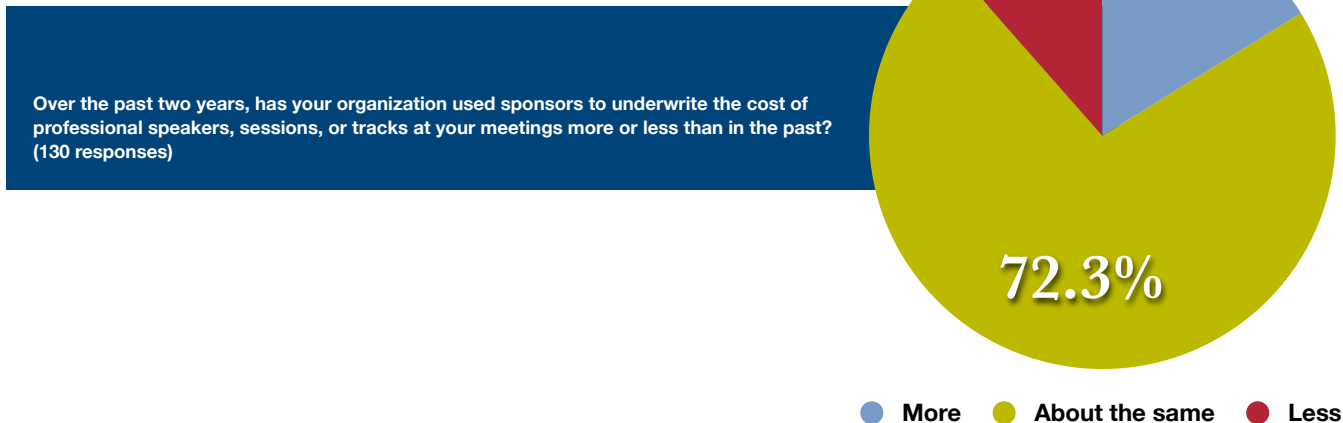
## Finding and Hiring Speakers

### 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 (88.4 percent), members (84.8 percent), and staff (78.0 percent). Recommendations from speaker bureaus rank fifth, with 61.6 of respondents indicating they rely on those entities.

The other option that garnered a majority (speakers the organization has seen before, 76.8 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.

Sifting through direct solicitations or managing a proposal process can be a time sink for organizations, which explain why only a quarter of survey respondents employ those approaches.

While the technology-driven options of Web searches and social media rank lower (44.5 percent and 18.3 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 scanning the agendas of other organizations' meetings, staying current on TED speakers, and perusing publications and books for new ideas.

| Source | Percentage |
|---|---|
| Recommendations from peers | 88.4% |
| Recommendations from members | 84.8% |
| Recommendations from staff | 78.0% |
| Speakers we've seen before | 76.8% |
| Recommendations from speaker bureaus | 61.6% |
| Web searches (e.g., Google) | 44.5% |
| Direct solicitations from speakers | 24.4% |
| Speaker proposal process | 24.4% |
| Social media (LinkedIn, Twitter, etc.) | 18.3% |
| Other | 11.0% |

**How does your organization usually get ideas for new professional speakers? Check all that apply. (164 responses)** The short answer—from trusted sources.

50%        100%

## SPEAKER BUREAUS

While slightly under two-thirds of organizations reported using speaker bureaus for ideas for new presenters, in a separate question, over 86 percent of those surveyed reported using bureaus for recommending and hiring professional speakers at least sometimes (regardless of whether they're new).
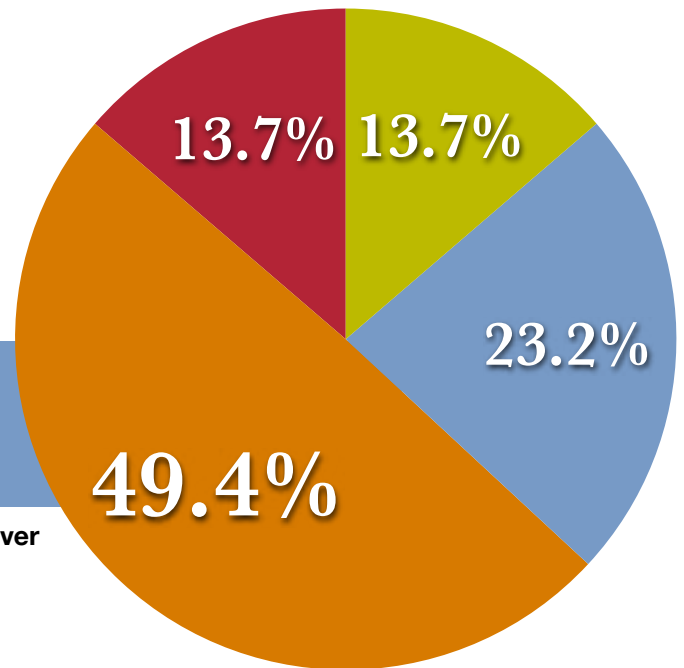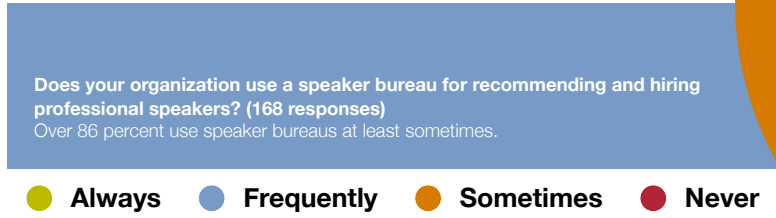
**Does your organization use a speaker bureau for recommending and hiring professional speakers? (168 responses)**
Over 86 percent use speaker bureaus at least sometimes.

- ● **Always**
- ● **Frequently**
- ● **Sometimes**
- ● **Never**

13.7%  13.7%
23.2%
49.4%

Organizations that offer continuing education credit for their meetings are more likely to use speaker bureaus frequently or always than those that don't (43.8 percent compared with 33.3 percent), as are organizations that offer a certification program compared to those that don't (45.0 percent versus 36.7 percent). But while that increase in frequency of use among organizations offering CE is accompanied by an uptick in the perceived value of speaker bureaus (44.8 percent of them find the bureaus very or extremely valuable, while only 35.7 percent of organizations not offering CE at their meetings do), there's no significant change in the perceived value among organizations with certification programs.

Organizations that use assessments and evaluations to measure whether learning occurs at their meetings are also more likely to see greater value in using speaker bureaus—32.1 percent said they are very valuable versus only 20.7 of non-measuring organizations.

The size of the professional speaker budgets also appears correlated with the perceived value of speaker bureaus. Only 4.8 percent of organizations with professional speaker budgets of $5,000 to $20,000 find bureaus extremely valuable versus an impressive 34.4 percent of organizations with budgets over $100,000.

Use of speaker bureaus is high and holding steady for most organizations (66.2 percent) but is on the decline for almost a quarter of respondents who reported their organization used speaker bureaus less over the last two years than previously. Only 9.2 percent reported an increased use of speaker bureaus over the last two years.

### Free resource

For an overview of how the social Web is impacting the way that learning happens, download our free *Learning 2.0 for Associations* resource at http://www.tagoras.com/learning20.

LEARNING 2.0
FOR ASSOCIATIONS
by Jeff Cobb

Second Edition: Fall 2010

tagoras

published by Tagoras
www.tagoras.com
info@tagoras.com
800.867.2046

THE SPEAKER REPORT 2011
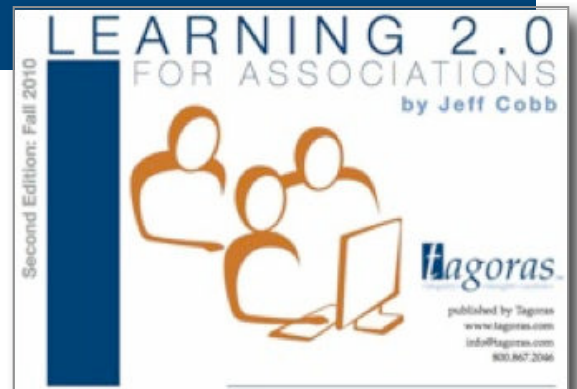
Nearly 60 percent of respondents rated speaker bureaus as only moderately or slightly valuable or not at all valuable. This makes us wonder if speaker bureaus won't be subject to more scrutiny in these belt-tightening times unless speaker bureaus capitalize on the huge opportunity to position themselves as true partners and respected consultants, which may require them to make recommendations outside of their portfolio or without speaker incentives to gain long-term trust.

We believe speaker exclusivity (which forces organizations to use particular speaker bureaus) may explain the apparent discrepancy between the high use of speaker bureaus and the comparatively lower satisfaction with their value. Given that situation and that 41.7 percent of organizations *do* find them very or extremely valuable, speaker bureaus are likely to remain an important way of finding those star speakers.

15.3%

26.4%

36.8%

18.1%

3.5%

**Relative to the cost of using one, how valuable does your organization find speaker bureaus? (144 responses)**
The largest groupings is of organizations that find them moderately valuable.

■ **Extremely valuable**
■ **Very valuable**
■ **Moderately valuable**
■ **Slightly valuble**
■ **Not at all valuable**

19 ■ PROFESSIONAL SPEAKERS

## 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 the head of the organization (25.8 percent) or a board or volunteer committee (20.2 percent). The vice president or director of meetings (15.3 percent) or of education or professional development (13.5 percent) rank next. Staff committees play decision maker just 8.6 percent of the time.

Of the relatively large slice of "other" decision makers (16.6 percent), many of the open-ended responses reveal a combined approach (e.g., selection is done by staff *and* a volunteer committee) 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 it in the hands of volunteers or board members. Those

**Decision makers crop up all over the org chart.**

organizations use board or volunteer committees only 12.5 percent versus 25.6 percent of organizations with budgets of $5 million or less and rely on the head of meetings 23.6 percent of the time compared to just 10.0 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 54.9, which is marked less than organizations reporting reliance on staff committees (356.3 staff), board or volunteer committees (263.7 staff), and the head of education or professional development (169.2 staff).

Organizations that use evaluations and assessments to measure learning at their meetings are more likely to give meetings people the hiring authority than those that don't: 27.1 versus 11.9 percent.

A larger education staff does not mean the organization is more likely to rely on that group for final decisions. The median number of individuals spending more than half their time working in education or professional development for organizations saying the vice president or director of education or professional development makes the call on professional speakers is just 2.0, compared that to the 3.0 median education staff for all respondents.

**Who in your organization makes the final decision on which professional speakers to hire?  (163 responses)**

- ● CEO or executive director
- ● Board or volunteer committee
- ● VP or director of meetings
- ● VP or director of education/professional development
- ● Staff committee
- ● Other

Pie chart values: 25.8%, 20.2%, 15.3%, 13.5%, 8.6%, 16.6%

How far before your meeting does your organization prefer to secure professional speakers?

**All organizations (153 responses)**
**For-profit corporations (15 responses)**
**Trade associations (61 responses)**
**Professional societies (54 responses)**

| | <4 months | 4 to 5 months | 6 to 7 months | 8 to 9 months | 10 to 12 months | >12 months |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| All organizations | 5.9% | 18.3% | 26.8% | 28.1% | 16.3% | 4.6% |
| For-profit corporations | 26.7% | 33.3% | 20.0% | 20.0% | 0% | 0% |
| Trade associations | 3.3% | 13.1% | 27.9% | 31.1% | 21.3% | 3.3% |
| Professional societies | 3.7% | 20.4% | 24.1% | 31.5% | 14.8% | 5.6% |

## Timelines and Registrations

### BOOKING PROFESSIONAL SPEAKERS

Almost 55 percent of survey respondents said they prefer to secure professional speakers six to nine months before the event.

For-profit corporations appear to operate on a shorter timeline, with 26.7 percent reporting they finalize decisions less than four months before the meeting, although we should note that the small sample size (15) makes us hesitant to place too much emphasis on this point.

Organizations that have a formal certification program tend to finalize a bit sooner. The largest segment of certifying organizations make decisions eight to nine months out (36.7 percent), while their non-certifying counterparts only do so 24.1 percent of the time, preferring instead to wrap things up closer to the meeting's date.

**Almost 55 percent of organizations secure their professional speakers six to nine months out.**

## THE SPEAKER-REGISTRATION CONNECTION

A little over a third of those surveyed believe that a "big name" speaker is very or extremely important for attracting registrants. The other two-thirds 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 prescribe to the theory that delivering a star speaker drives registrations, as 45.9 percent of them said big names are very or extremely important for registration numbers versus only 25.6 percent of organizations with budgets of $5 million and under.
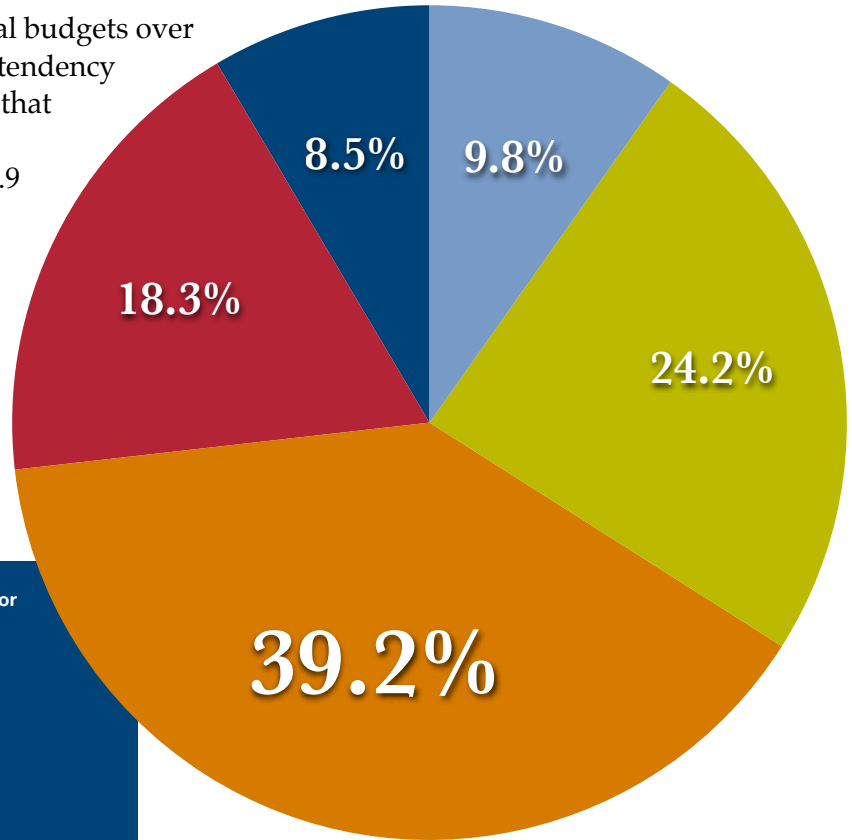
**How important is having a headline, "big name" speaker for increasing registrations for meetings? (153 responses)**

8.5%

9.8%

24.2%

18.3%

39.2%

● Extremely important
● Very important
● Moderately important
● Slightly imporant
● Not at all important

Legend:
- Current, relevant content
- Charismatic, high-energy stage presence
- Motivational message
- Active involvement of attendees (discussion or other form of participation)

Data points:
- 64.2%
- 48.3%
- 53.1%
- 40.3%
- 36.9%
- 31.3%
- 26.9%
- 25.0%
- 19.3%
- 14.8%
- 12.2%
- 8.8%
- 8.1%
- 5.5%
- 3.4%
- 2.0%

Axis labels: 1, 2, 3, 4
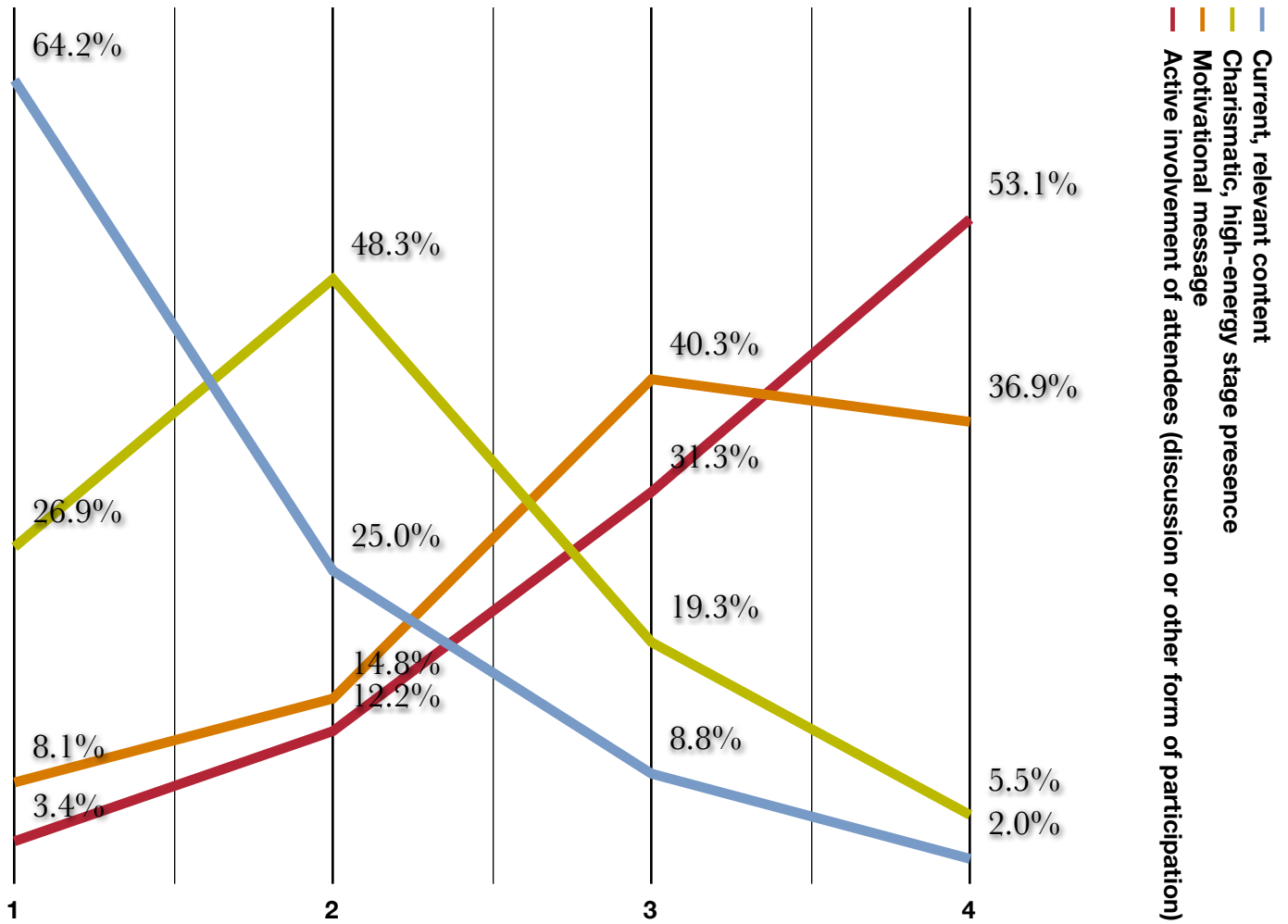
## What's Expected of Speakers

### ATTRIBUTES OF A SUCCESSFUL SPEAKER

Survey respondents were very clear on the most important factor in a professional speaker's success: the content 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, with almost half of the respondents ranking it second.

Providing a motivational message ranked third, and, for a solid majority of respondents (53.1 percent), active involvement of the attendees by the speaker (for example, through discussion) came in last—and just 2.0 percent ranked it 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.

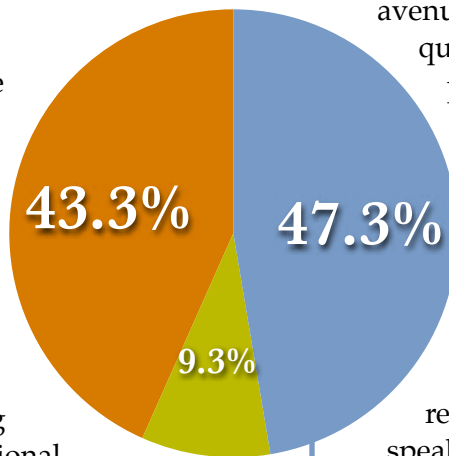**For your meetings, rank the importance of these factors of professional speaker success. Only one item may be marked most important, and only one may be marked least important. Use 1 for the factor your organization considers most important, 2 for the next most important, and so on down to 4, the least important item. (151 responses)**

**BEYOND THE DAIS**

Among survey respondents who hire professional speakers, 56.6 percent are looking for them to put in more than just their time on stage, with the largest grouping simply requesting more (only 9.3 *require* more).

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 trying to carry on conversations after the fact—we suspect we'll see an increasing number of organizations requesting and requiring more of their professional speakers.

What, specifically, do organizations that are asking speakers to do more want of them? A majority reported asking their speakers to participate in other elements of the meeting (65.1 percent) and to write

an article or be interviewed (53.5 percent). About a third of respondents to this question said they ask their speakers to record a promotional video. (34.9 percent) and participate in a pre-meeting online conversation via LinkedIn, Twitter, or another avenue (32.6 percent), and about a quarter ask their speakers to write a post for their organization's or meeting's blog (26.7 percent) and present or facilitate a pre- or post-meeting Webinar (25.6 percent).

The open-ended responses provided by those who selected "other" show that book signings and meet-and-greets, including VIP receptions, are often asked of speakers.

## What's Next

Next we look 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.

**43.3%** **47.3%** **9.3%**

- Yes, request
- Yes, require
- No

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)? (150 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. (86 responses)

| | |
|---|---|
| Participate in other elements of the meeting | 65.1% |
| Write a newsletter or magazine article or be interviewed | 53.5% |
| Record a promotional video | 34.9% |
| Participate in a pre-meeting online conversation | 32.6% |
| Write a post for the organization's or meeting's blog | 26.7% |
| Present or facilitate a pre- or post-meeting Webinar | 25.6% |
| Other | 27.9% |

# 15 Ways Professional Speakers Really Annoy

Organizations that use professional speakers have to deal with them, which can sometimes be quite a chore. Here are 15 of the biggest pet peeves we heard from survey respondents.

1. Behaving like an arrogant prima donna
   This peeve covers a range of speaker requests—from "I only fly first class, and you'll need to pay for my spouse's airfare too." to "My dog needs to fly with me." A little humility can go a long way.
2. Selling instead of speaking
   One respondent used the term "self-promotional buffoon." Openly selling products and services rubs a lot of organizers the wrong way.
3. Using a canned speech
   Organizations want speakers to customize their message, which means the speaker has to take the time to understand the audience and its needs.
4. Not delivering well
   No visuals, reading from the slides—poor delivery makes for a poor presentation.
5. Being high maintenance or needy
   Meetings are a busy time for the organizations running them, so speakers who require a lot of hand-holding or insist on specific requests can really grate on planners' nerves.
6. Employing inept handlers and assistants
   Planners have to be able to get their questions answered and the necessary paperwork done. If the speaker's assistants are MIA, that's a major headache.
7. Not checking in
   To save staff unnecessary stress about a no-show, speakers should let organizers know when they arrive at the meeting.
8. Waiting until the last minute to arrive
   This is another huge stress-maker for meeting professionals.
9. Not allowing the presentation to be recorded or shared
   This peeve is becoming a deal breaker as more organizations repurpose content.
10. Over-promising and under-delivering
    It's still better to under-promise and over-deliver on commitments.
11. Making last-minute requests
    Most conference organizers have a process for requests and forms for AV, travel, and other needs. Waiting until the eleventh hour and circumventing those processes only make it harder for busy staff.
12. Not communicating
    Conference organizers usually ask professional speakers the best way to communicate with them—e-mail, text, or phone—and they expect a response.
13. Being inflexibility
    Some contracts read like the demands of royalty with outrageous riders.
14. Leaving immediately after the presentation
    Meeting professionals like the speaker to stay around for a while to answer questions or even lead a post-presentation to continue the conversation.
15. Forgetting who the customer is
    Too many speakers see themselves as the customer, not the organization and its audience.

# Industry Speakers
## Selection, Compensation, Preparation, and Evaluation

Some 79.1 percent of survey respondents indicated their organization holds a meeting attended by at least 500 people. We asked those 163 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 that their organization considers most strategically important.
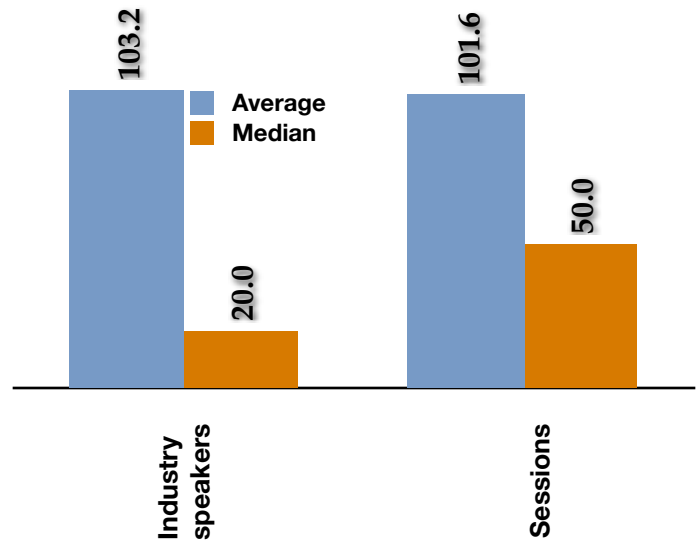
However they defined their organization's major meeting, they were asked to keep that one particular meeting in mind as they responded to the survey questions that addressed key aspects of the use of industry speakers—whether the organization issues a call for proposals, the timeline for the CFP, how 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, 103.2 industry speakers present at the survey respondents' major meeting; the median, though, is just 20.0 speakers. The average number of sessions at that meeting is 101.6, with a median of 50.0. So the average speaker-to-session ratio is almost exactly 1:1, but the median is 2:5, suggesting industry speakers are presenting multiple sessions, professional speakers are rounding out the agenda, or both.

At professional societies' major meeting, 176.5 industry speakers present versus 45.7 at trade associations' major meeting, and professional societies schedule, on average, 151.8 sessions at their major meeting versus 49.6 at trade associations' major meeting. So while the speaker-to-session ratio for both types of organizations is roughly 1:1, professional societies tend to have slightly more speakers than sessions (suggesting a prevalence of co-presenters or panel formats), but trade associations tend to have slightly more



**Average**
**Median**

103.2 — Industry speakers
20.0 — Industry speakers
101.6 — Sessions
50.0 — Sessions

**Industry speakers**
**Sessions**

How many industry speakers present at this meeting? (160 responses)

What is the total number of sessions offered at this meeting? (160 responses)

sessions than speakers (suggesting, again, industry speakers presenting in multiple sessions or the use of non-industry speakers as presenters).

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 are considering cutting back the number of sessions and increasing the length of 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 75 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 do not necessarily mean more attendees are driving some of these adjustments, the tight economic times are clearly another reason for cutbacks. 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 and fewer industry speakers for others (that favor instead non-industry, customer, or other presenters) and more immediately applicable content (versus "entertainment"). We expect to see speaker training and a speaker recruitment process that stresses facilitation skills grow as organizations acknowledge sessions' success depends largely on the quality of facilitation.

3. **Innovative session formats**
   Quite a few organizations reported testing the waters with formats that deliver bite-sized presentations (e.g., Ignite and Pecha Kucha), focus on informal learning, and increase participation. We see savvy organizations reinforcing these innovations in their call-for-proposals process and by recruiting speakers who can breathe new life into 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 one-size-fits-all 60- or 90-minute approach. Deep dives might run two or three hours or even all day, and 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**
   At least a couple 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.

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.
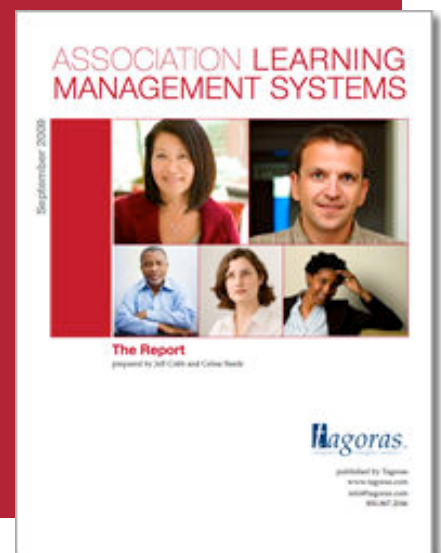
Of course, for each of these trends, there's some organization doing exactly the opposite. Some respondents aren't making any changes—one averred, "We are *not* making changes," as things have been the same for at least the past seven years —and some (although fewer than those reporting cutbacks) are expanding their meetings, adding sessions and speakers.

## Calls for Proposals

About 75 percent of the survey respondents indicated they use a call for proposals or presentations (CFPs) to help source session content. Professional societies (82.6 percent) tend to use a CFP more than trade associations (only 64.7 percent), as do organizations with a formal certification program (82.5 percent of which issue a CFP, compared to only 70.2 percent of organizations without a certification program) and organizations that offer continuing education for their meetings (79.2 percent of which issue a CFP

**Three-quarters of survey respondents issue a call for proposals.**
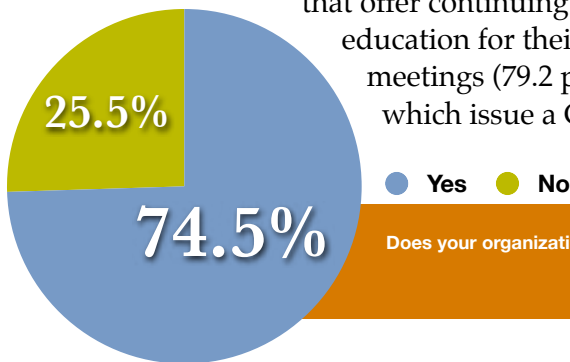
versus 66.0 of organizations that don't offer CE).

Almost 30 percent of the CFPs close 8 to 9 months prior to the major meeting, and a third cut off submissions 10 or more months before the meeting. 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 35.7 percent of organizations offering CE close 10 or more months out, but only 27.2 of organizations not offering CE end the process that far out. For organizations with budgets over $5 million, ending the CFP process 10 to 12 months before the meeting was the most popular response (31.6 percent), and 15.8 percent shut down the CFP more than a year in advance. Organizations with budgets of $5 million and under pretty heavily favor ending the CFP 8 to 9 months out (42.6 percent), but a quarter (25.9 percent) keep the CFP open until 6 to 7 months before the meeting, and only 3.7 percent cut things off more than 12 months out.

**25.5%**

**74.5%**

● Yes ● No

**Does your organization issue a call for presentations for this meeting? (161 responses)**

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

■ All organizations (120 responses)
■ Offer CE (84 responses)
■ Do not offer CE (33 responses)
■ Budgets >$5M (57 responses)
■ Budgets ≤$5M (54 responses)

| | <4 months | 4 to 5 months | 6 to 7 months | 8 to 9 months | 10 to 12 months | >12 months |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| All organizations | 5.8% | 9.2% | 22.5% | 29.2% | 23.3% | 10.0% |
| Offer CE | 2.4% | 7.1% | 24.1% | 33.3% | 23.8% | 11.9% |
| Do not offer CE | 15.2% | 15.2% | 21.2% | 21.2% | 21.2% | 6.1% |
| Budgets >$5M | 3.5% | 12.3% | 19.3% | 17.5% | 31.6% | 15.8% |
| Budgets ≤$5M | 5.6% | 5.6% | 25.9% | 42.6% | 16.7% | 3.7% |

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

● Yes  ● No

73.3%

26.7%

**Content at a major meeting should be current.**

We find this data a bit disturbing—content offered at a major meeting should be relevant, which usually means current. Organizations need to reevaluate their timeline and reengineer it to take advantage of the speed of modern digital marketing.

We see smart organizations taking things a step further and not relying solely on the CFP process for content ideas. They leave slots open on the agenda to add late-breaking content after the initial marketing push, and they use drip marketing to announce the new sessions—giving attendees more reasons to register.

## Prepping Industry Speakers

Nearly three out of four organizations with a meeting with more than 500 attendees help prepare their industry presenters for their major meeting. Trade associations are more likely than professional societies to help prep speakers (78.4 versus 65.2 percent), as are organizations with a formal certification program (81.0 versus 68.1 percent) and those that offer continuing education for their meetings (77.4 versus 64.0 percent). Just over 85 percent of organizations that measure whether

learning occurs at their major meeting prep speakers—a full 20 points higher than organizations that don't measure whether learning occurs (65.6 percent). Of organizations that close their call for presentations eight months or more before the meeting, 81.3 percent prep their speakers compared to only 66.7 percent of those that close the CFP seven months or less before the meeting; while this could be taken as a happier corollary to the troubling realization that so many organizations set the content for their meetings far in advance, we know it's possible to conduct useful speaker training on short timelines.

When organizations that provide speaker preparation were asked what content they provide, venue or session logistics (88.2 percent) and information about the expected attendees (85.7 percent) were the most popular topics. Communication about overarching themes and contract tracks came in third (75.6 percent), and even the last two choices (training or tips for better presentations and information about the speaker or session evaluation process) were selected by a majority (52.9 and 51.3 percent, respectively).

As for how organizations prep their speakers, e-mail and conference calls are the most popular media (85.5 and 65.0 percent, respectively). Not quite a third (30.8 percent) said they provide speakers with a dedicated Web site or portal, and individual coaching and online meetings are used by at least a fifth of organizations (23.9 and 20.5 percent, respectively).

In our opinion, the organizations providing training for better presentations and information about the evaluation process are on the right track, as those types of communication might improve the quality of the meeting content—but, remember, those are the topics covered by the fewest survey

**What type of content does your organization provide to prepare industry speakers for this meeting? Check all that apply. (119 responses)**

Venue or session logistics — 88.2%

Information about expected attendees (e.g., number, interests, or skills) — 85.7%

Information about overarching themes or content tracks at the meeting — 75.6%

Training or tips for better presentations — 52.9%

Information about the speaker or session evaluation process — 51.3%

Other — 14.3%

E-mail — 85.5%

Conference call — 65.0%

Dedicated Web site or portal for speakers — 30.8%

Individual coaching — 23.9%

Online meeting — 20.5%

Other — 6.8%

**How does your organization prepare industry speakers for this meeting? Check all that apply. (117 responses)**

respondents. We also feel that 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 may only be skimmed if not ignored outright, and conference calls, to which participants often assign only a corner of their attention as they multitask their way to the designated end time.
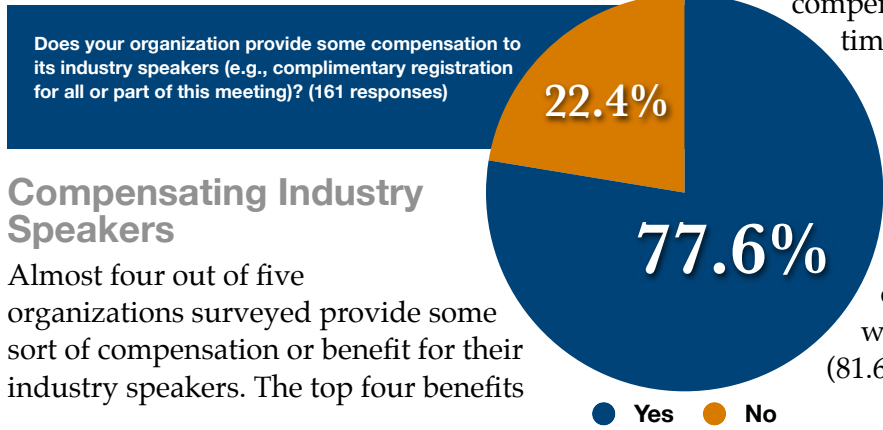
Organizations that offer CE for their meetings are more likely to provide presenters with information about the meeting's evaluation process (59.0 versus 37.5 percent). Those that measure whether learning occurs at the meetings are more likely to give speakers tips and training on presenting (59.6 versus 46.8 percent) and more likely than their non-measuring counterparts to provide that information via individual coaching (30.4 versus 18.0 percent).

are registration for the full meeting (67.7 percent), lodging costs (57.3 percent), an honorarium or stipend (46.8 percent), and transportation expenses (41.9 percent).

Some respondents indicated they pay industry presenters a per diem or provide compensation for meals. Others noted that compensation depends on the speaker's "level"—with higher-level, bigger-name presenters presumably getting more than the lesser-knowns. In a modern twist on prophets not being without honor except in their own home, benefits seem to be greater for non-member speakers than for member speakers.

Trade associations are more likely than professional societies to compensate industry speakers (84.3 versus 75.4 percent), and organizations in the health care and social assistance industry provide compensation a notable 91.7 percent of the time.

**Does your organization provide some compensation to its industry speakers (e.g., complimentary registration for all or part of this meeting)? (161 responses)**

22.4%

77.6%

● Yes　● No

## Compensating Industry Speakers

Almost four out of five organizations surveyed provide some sort of compensation or benefit for their industry speakers. The top four benefits

Organizations measuring whether learning occurs at the meeting are more likely to compensate than those that don't (86.6 versus 71.0 percent), as are organizations with budgets over $5 million compared to those with budgets of $5 million or under (81.6 versus 72.5 percent), but,

**Which forms of compensation does your organization provide to its industry speakers for this meeting? Check all that apply. (124 responses)**

| Form of compensation | Percent |
|---|---|
| Complimentary registration for the full meeting | 67.7% |
| Complimentary lodging or reimbursement for lodging | 57.3% |
| Honorarium or stipend | 46.8% |
| Complimentary transportation or reimbursement for transportation | 41.9% |
| Complimentary registration for part of the meeting | 28.2% |
| Reduced registration rate | 16.9% |
| Other | 16.9% |

interestingly, the smaller-wallet groups are *more* likely to fork over cash and pay a honorarium or stipend (54.0 percent) compared to those with the bigger budgets (38.7 percent).

## Evaluations and Measuring Learning

Almost every organization surveyed (96.2 percent) collects formal evaluations at its major meeting. Nearly as many (93.5 percent) conduct an overall meeting evaluation; about 10 percent less collect evaluations at the session level, and less than 70 percent ask for evaluations of each speaker.

As seen in the chart on the following page, a much more modest 41.9 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 (75.8 percent). Although long-term retention and application are the goal, only 22.7 percent take the next step and conduct broad post-meeting assessments or follow-ups, and a mere 7.6 percent of survey respondents conduct post-session assessments or follow-ups.

Organizations that provide continuing education credit at their meeting tend to track more data at the industry speaker level (71.2 percent versus 59.6 percent of their non-CE-offering counterparts) and are more likely to assess learning a month or more after the meeting (19.1 versus 10.5 pe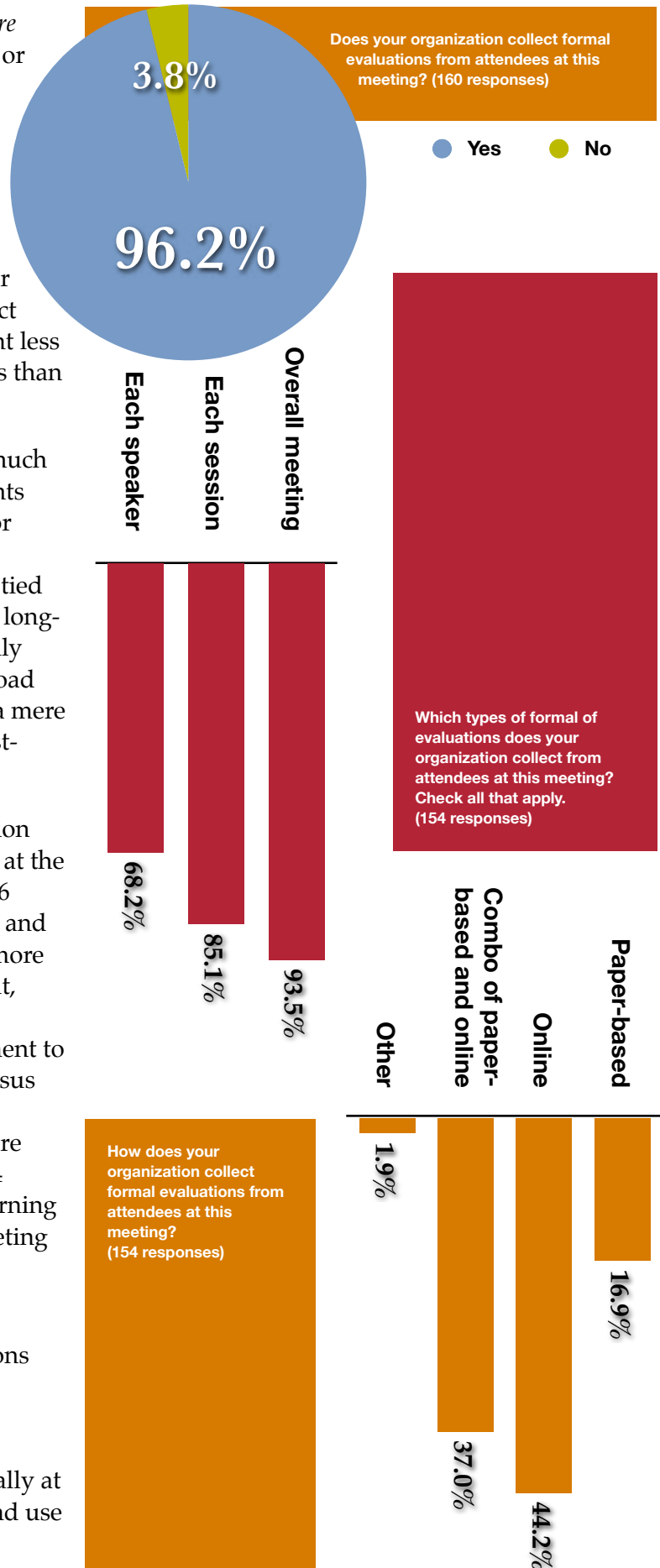rcent), but, counterintuitively, they are *less* likely to use a combination of pre- and post-meeting assessment to determine whether learning happens (10.6 versus 21.1 percent). Organizations with a formal certification program are more likely to measure learning using pre- and post-assessments (21.4 versus 7.9 percent) and focus on long-term learning via assessments a month or more after the meeting (21.4 versus 13.2 percent) than non-certifying groups.

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
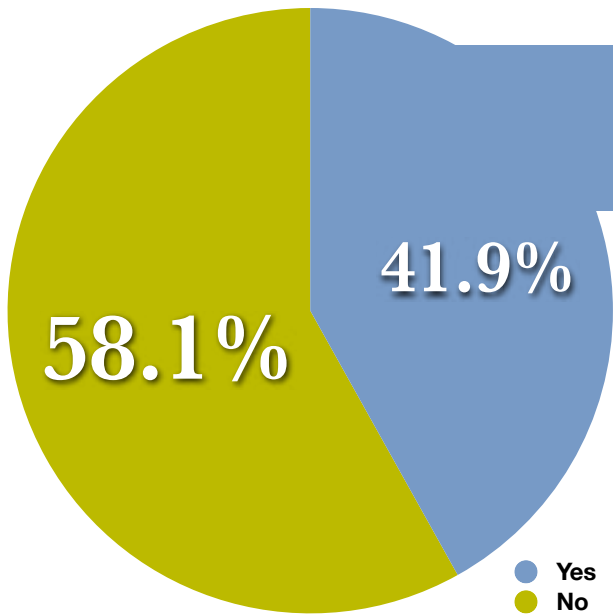
**Does your organization collect formal evaluations from attendees at this meeting? (160 responses)**

● Yes    ● No

3.8%

96.2%

**Which types of formal of evaluations does your organization collect from attendees at this meeting? Check all that apply. (154 responses)**

Each speaker — 68.2%
Each session — 85.1%
Overall meeting — 93.5%

**How does your organization collect formal evaluations from attendees at this meeting? (154 responses)**

Other — 1.9%
Combo of paper-based and online — 37.0%
Online — 44.2%
Paper-based — 16.9%

**41.9%**

**58.1%**

● Yes
● No

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, including the following:

- Changed venue or destination
- Adjusted meeting length (e.g., one day less) or start and end times
- Tweaked experience elements like food and beverage and wifi availability
- Refined session topics, descriptions, and learning objectives
- Played into speaker selection and improvement (e.g., only speakers who score 4 or higher on a 5-point rating scale, where 5 is excellent, are invited to future meetings; speakers who cross the sales line and go commercial during a session are blacklisted; or organizations work more closely with speakers to ensure they deliver what's promised)
- Increased time between sessions ("white space") for meaning-making and networking
- Offered more advanced content
- Set the theme and content for the next major meeting
- Programmed more peer-to-peer roundtable sessions
- Moved to having multiyear chair of meetings to avoid the same old, same old and allow more time for innovation in the programming

what they learn from those endeavors for benchmarking and future speaker recruitment.

Some 81.2 percent of the organizations surveyed use online tools exclusively or in part to collect evaluation data, and only 16.9 percent rely solely on paper. While the time and money savings of online surveys has attracted many organizations, some respondents whose groups switched from paper-based to online surveys said they were dissatisfied with the return rate or felt unable to get the granular, speaker- and session-level data they wanted in an online form because they can't get all attendees online after each session. A number of respondents are considering adding survey capability within a conference mobile app.

We believe organizations that provide multiple completion options (including on paper) and that build in time to complete the survey at the end of each session will receive the greatest return rates and the best input for improvement.

| | |
|---|---|
| Through evaluation questions that align with learning objectives | 75.8% |
| Through post-meeting assessments or follow-ups | 22.7% |
| Through post-session assessments or follow-ups | 7.6% |
| Through a combination of pre-meeting and post-meeting assessment | 13.6% |
| Through evaluations conducted a month or more following the meeting | 16.7% |
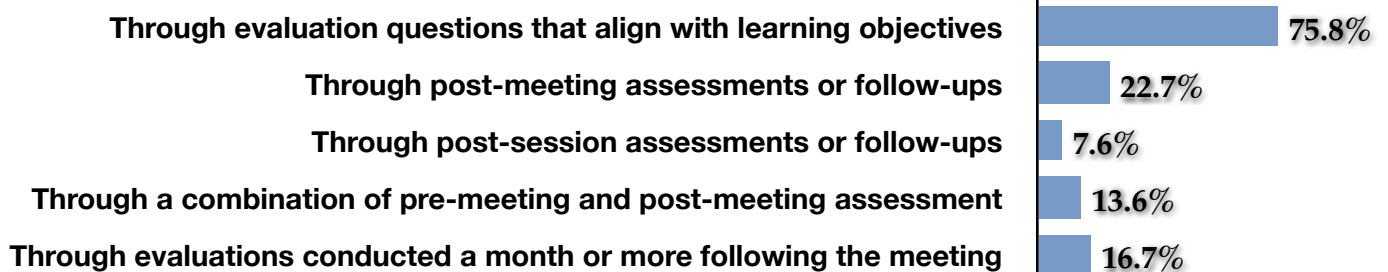
## Rewriting Session Submissions

Nearly 90 percent of those surveyed rewrite speaker session submissions, including titles, descriptions, and learning objectives, for their major meeting. While certain edits may be part of a standardization effort, we can't help but wonder what may be lost in the translation—and whether the changes are even being conveyed back to the speakers. Our fear is that marketing may be the driving force behind many edits, which can be dangerous when the sessions' purpose is education.

One way to minimize changes is for organizations to provide speakers with examples of well written session titles, descriptions, and learning objectives. Having a consistent format is important, but delivering education that matches the description and learning objectives is much more important—and something speakers need to own and be held accountable for. But in order for the speakers to assume that responsibility, they need to be involved in the rewriting process.

## Live Streaming and Content Capture

Only about 20 percent of the organizations surveyed offer live video streaming of all or some of their keynote sessions at their major meeting, and less than 17 percent do so for their concurrent sessions. Approximately 70 percent of organizations capture and repurpose at least some keynote or concurrent session content via audio or video recording.

**Does your organization re-write any of your speaker session submissions (e.g., titles, descriptions, or learning objectives) for this meeting? (159 responses)**
With nearly 90 percent of organizations rewriting session submissions, what's being lost in translation?

10.7%
12.6%
22.0%
54.7%

- ● Always
- ● Sometimes
- ● Frequently
- ● Never

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 (27.6 versus 11.6 percent), but those bigger organizations are not much more likely to stream concurrent sessions, which may be an indication they feel the return on investment isn't there for that content. While more of the bigger-budget organizations capture and repurpose content than do the smaller organizations (77.3 versus 63.2 percent), that's still a significant slice of smaller organizations, making us think organizations have had more success to date in monetizing captured content than they have with live streaming content.

Organizations that measure whether learning occurs at the meeting are more likely to provide live video—31.4 percent stream at least some keynotes

**Does your organization provide live video streaming of keynotes at this meeting? (160 responses)**

**Does your organization provide live video streaming of concurrent sessions at this meeting? (159 responses)**

- ● Keynotes
- ● Concurrents

4.4%
0.6%
16.3%
15.7%
79.4%
83.6%

All
Some
No

**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)? (157 responses)**

12.7%
19.7%
37.6%
29.9%

- ● Keynotes only
- ● Concurrents only
- ● Keynotes and concurrents
- ● No

# hy·brid e·vent

*noun* \\ˈhī-brəd i-ˈvent\\

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

versus 12.9 percent of non-measuring groups, and 28.4 stream at least some concurrents versus 7.6 percent.

While it seems organizations providing continuing education for their major meeting would have a greater probability to monetize on-demand views, they are not significantly more likely than the non-CE-offering organizations to capture and repurpose content. However, non-certifying organizations do less content capture than organizations with a formal certification program (33.3 versus 25.8 percent). This difference may be the result of the tepid way external certification bodies have responded to issuing CE for e-learning; some have been slow to allow self-paced online learning to qualify for CE, and others have placed onerous requirements on e-learning that carries credit. When the organization offers its own formal certification program, they get to control what education qualifies, and they may be more open to allowing repurposed content because they're more familiar with the content and quality.

We expect to see growth in both content capture and live streaming over the next couple of years as certifying bodies better address how e-learning might qualify for credit and as an increasing array of platforms make hybrid events technologically and financially feasible.

## 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?

See the *Association Virtual Conferences* report at http://www.tagoras.com/catalog/virtual-conferences for more on associations' use of virtual conferences.

ASSOCIATION VIRTUAL CONFERENCES

January 2011

The State of the Sector
written by Jeff Cobb and Celisa Steele

tagoras

published by Tagoras
www.tagoras.com
info@tagoras.com
800.867.2046
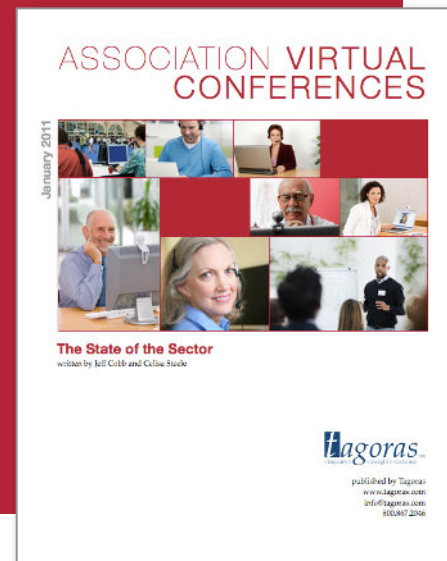
# A Look at Satisfaction and Success
## How Respondents View Their Meetings

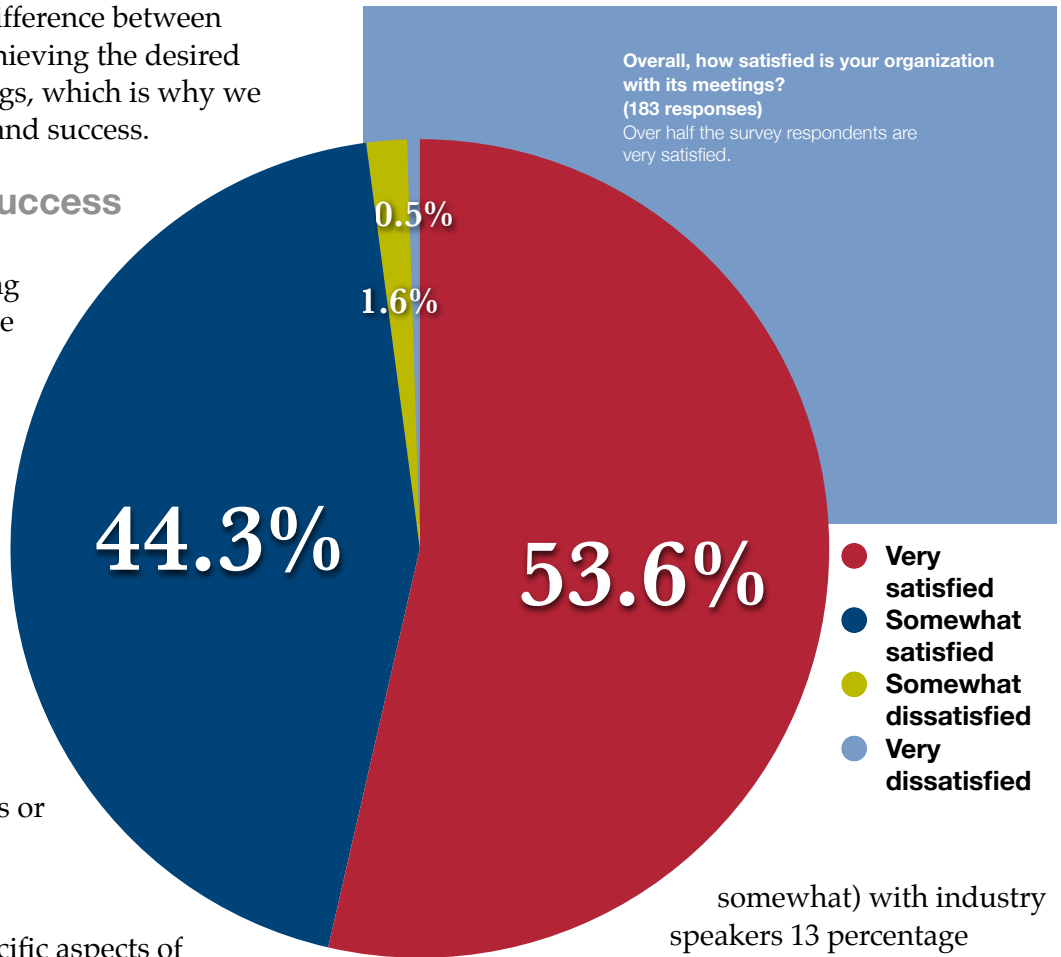Meetings, conferences, and other events are deeply ingrained in organizations' operations. But there can be a world of difference between holding meetings and achieving the desired results with those meetings, which is why we asked about satisfaction and success.

### 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), an overwhelming 97.9 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 (53.6 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 46.4 percent). The top response for the other five areas (attendance, revenue, professional speakers, industry speakers, and attendee feedback) was somewhat satisfied, with percentages in the 40s and 50s.

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

**Overall, how satisfied is your organization with its meetings?**
**(183 responses)**
Over half the survey respondents are very satisfied.

0.5%

1.6%

44.3%

53.6%

- ● **Very satisfied**
- ● **Somewhat satisfied**
- ● **Somewhat dissatisfied**
- ● **Very dissatisfied**

somewhat) with industry speakers 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 20.5 and 16.6 percent, respectively, are either very or somewhat dissatisfied). So while feedback from attendees isn't an area of concern for many organizations, they do worry whether those folks will attend again and bring in the bucks.

Over half (51.6 percent) of respondents consider their organization's meetings very successful, and another large chunk (45.6 percent) consider them somewhat successful, leaving only a handful (under 3 percent) in the very unsuccessful and somewhat unsuccessful camps.

**Chart: Overall satisfaction by specific item**

Legend: Very satisfied | Somewhat satisfied | Neutral | Somewhat dissatisfied | Very dissatisfied | Not applicable

**Attendance:** Very satisfied 19.9% | Somewhat satisfied 56.4% | Neutral 3.3% | Somewhat dissatisfied 18.8% | Very dissatisfied 1.7% | Not applicable 0%

**Revenue:** Very satisfied 21.5% | Somewhat satisfied 48.6% | Neutral 11.0% | Somewhat dissatisfied 14.9% | Very dissatisfied 1.7% | Not applicable 2.2%

**Connection to strategic plan or direction:** Very satisfied 46.4% | Somewhat satisfied 36.9% | Neutral 13.4% | Somewhat dissatisfied 1.1% | Very dissatisfied 0% | Not applicable 2.2%

**Professional speakers:** Very satisfied 28.3% | Somewhat satisfied 43.9% | Neutral 18.3% | Somewhat dissatisfied 4.4% | Very dissatisfied 0% | Not applicable 5.0%

**Industry speakers:** Very satisfied 29.8% | Somewhat satisfied 55.2% | Neutral 11.0% | Somewhat dissatisfied 2.2% | Very dissatisfied 0% | Not applicable 1.7%

**Feedback from attendees:** Very satisfied 34.3% | Somewhat satisfied 54.7% | Neutral 6.1% | Somewhat dissatisfied 3.9% | Very dissatisfied 1.1% | Not applicable 0%

**Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied is your organization with its meetings in terms of these specific items? (182 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 97.9 percent of respondents for this report who are very or somewhat satisfied with their meetings and the 51.6 percent who view their meetings as very successful. Those gaps may be partially attributed to the fact that technology-enabled learning is a much newer phenomenon 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 see what comparing those very satisfied with their meetings overall to the only somewhat satisfied might tell us. In many aspects, the groups look the same, suggesting achieving the highest success and satisfaction may be as much art as science, but we did uncover some differences.

**Pie chart: How would you rate the success of your organization's meetings?**

Legend: Very successful | Somewhat successful | Somewhat unsuccessful | Not successful

Very successful 51.6% | Somewhat successful 45.6% | Somewhat unsuccessful 2.2% | Not successful 0.5%
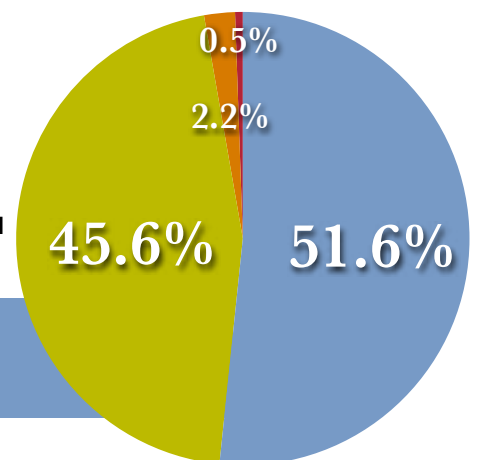
**How would you rate the success of your organization's meetings? (182 responses)**
Over 97 percent of respondents characterized their meetings as very or somewhat successful.

- Very satisfied organizations are more likely than their somewhat-satisfied counterparts to help their industry speakers prepare for meetings by providing them with information about the expected attendees (89.6 versus 79.6 percent) and about the meetings' themes and content tracks (82.1 versus 65.3 percent).
- The very satisfied are less likely than the somewhat satisfied to compensate industry speakers (26.4 versus 17.4 percent) and less likely to give those speakers cash—only 41.5 percent of the very successful pay an honorarium or stipend compared to 55.4 percent of the somewhat satisfied.
- The very satisfied are more likely to do a formal evaluation of the overall meeting at their major event (98.8 percent versus 87.9 percent of the somewhat satisfied) and of each speaker (71.4 versus 62.1 percent).
- The very satisfied are more likely to measure whether learning occurs through post-meeting assessments or follow-ups (27.9 percent versus 17.9 percent of the somewhats).
- The very satisfied are more likely to provide live streaming of some or all keynotes (25.3 percent compared to 13.0 percent of the somewhats).

When we looked at organizations that measure whether learning occurs at their meetings, we saw they are more likely to be very or somewhat satisfied with their professional speakers (78.8 versus 64.5 percent) and industry speakers (92.4 versus 79.1 percent) and to be very satisfied with their attendee feedback (38.8 versus 26.4 percent).

We also found some interesting relationships between certification and continuing education and success and satisfaction.

- Organizations offering formal certification programs are less likely to be very satisfied with their meetings in general than their non-certifying peers (45.1 versus 59.1 percent) and with revenue in particular (14.1 versus 26.6 percent).
- Groups that offer CE for their meetings are less likely than groups that don't offer CE to be very satisfied with attendance (15.3 versus

29.5 percent), less likely to be very satisfied with feedback (30.5 versus. 41.0 percent), and less likely to rate their meetings as very successful (48.3 versus 58.1 percent).

We don't suggest abandoning your certification program or CE in a search for greater satisfaction and success. Our hunch is that the processes and thinking that organizations undertake when they offer CE or a certification may make them more critical of their meetings and bring higher expectations to the table. And all the news for organizations offering CE isn't bad—they are more likely to be very or somewhat satisfied with revenue (73.7 versus. 62.3 percent) and their professional speakers (75.5 versus 65.6 percent) than groups that don't provide CE.

All in all, the data suggests the very satisfied organizations approach meetings with a focus on the educational aspect, as testified to by the greater commitment to providing speakers with information about the attendees' interests and skills; by measuring whether learning occurs at the meeting; by a commitment to formal evaluation, especially over time; and by streaming at least key content so those who can't be there in person can still benefit.

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.

**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) and Tagoras, Inc. Velvet Chainsaw provides expert advice for improving annual meetings and events, education, exhibitor and sponsor programs, and integrated marketing strategies (social media and traditional marketing). Our clients desire these results:

- Improve conference education and participation.
- Attract next-generation attendees.
- Spark innovation for stagnant conferences.
- Increase attendee networking value.

### About the Authors

All the research and writing for this report were done by Velvet Chainsaw team members Jeff Hurt and Dave Lutz and Tagoras principals Jeff Cobb and Celisa Steele.

### JEFF HURT

Since January 2010, Jeff has served the clients of Velvet Chainsaw as director of education and engagement. For over 20 years, Jeff has worked in professional development and education roles with leading organizations like Keep America Beautiful, Keep Texas Beautiful, Meeting Professionals International, Promotional Products Association International, and the National Association of Dental Plans.

Jeff is considered one of the leading authorities in the meetings industry on adult education, conference design, and social media for events and associations. During his career he has hired over 1,500 professional speakers and coached countless industry speakers. In 2011, Jeff was recognized by the Professional Convention Management Association (PCMA) as educator of the year. Jeff speaks and blogs frequently about evolving trends, the future of conference education, adult learning, and all things meetings.

### DAVE LUTZ

Dave is managing director of Velvet Chainsaw, a company he founded in 2006. Prior to going down the consulting road, Dave was the president of both Conferon and ExpoExchange (now known as Experient). He was a significant contributor and leader for the largest meeting and event planning company for over 20 years. Dave has considerable experience in improving exhibitor and sponsorship products, leveraging technology, and developing partnerships. He knows how to compete, win, and sustain growth.

Since 2006, Dave has penned a monthly column in PCMA's *Convene* magazine. Many of the articles focus on annual meeting improvement and best practices.



*Jeff Hurt*

*Dave Lutz*

# About Tagoras
## A Publisher of the Report

This report is co-published by Tagoras, Inc. (www.tagoras.com) and Velvet Chainsaw Consulting. Through a combination of independent research and strategic consulting, Tagoras helps organizations maximize the reach, revenue, and impact of their educational 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 National Association of Corporate Directors (NACD), the Healthcare Financial Management Association (HFMA), the National Institute of Governmental Purchasing, Nurses Improving Care for Healthsystem Elders (NICHE), Booke Seminars (a Division of Aon), Advanced Energy, and CASTLE Worldwide. Other Tagoras reports include *Association Learning Management Systems*, *Association Virtual Conferences*, and *Learning 2.0 for Associations*.

*tagoras*™
<inquiry> <insight><action>

### About the Authors

All the research and writing for this report were done by Tagoras principals Jeff Cobb and Celisa Steele and Velvet Chainsaw's Jeff Hurt and Dave Lutz.

### JEFF COBB

A managing director at Tagoras, Jeff has nearly two decades of experience in the world of marketing, education, 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 an award-winning teacher, author of the highly popular *Learning 2.0 for Associations*, and co-author of *Shift Ed: A Call to Action for Transforming K-12 Education* (www.shiftedtransformation.com), published by Corwin. 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

and the editorial board of Innovate, a leading resource for information about technology and education.

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.

### 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).

# 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? (241 responses)

| | |
|---|---|
| Yes | 83.8% |
| No | 16.2% |

#### MEETING WITH 500 OR MORE ATTENDEES

Does your organization hold a meeting attended by 500 people or more? (206 responses)

| | |
|---|---|
| Yes | 79.1% |
| No | 20.9% |

### 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? (190 responses)

| | |
|---|---|
| Less than $5,000 | 10.5% |
| $5,000 to $20,000 | 29.5% |
| $20,001 to $30,000 | 14.2% |
| $30,001 to $50,000 | 16.3% |
| $50,001 to $100,000 | 10.5% |
| $100,000 or more | 18.9% |

#### NUMBER OF PROFESSIONAL SPEAKERS PER YEAR

How many professional speakers does your organization hire per year? (168 responses)

| Mean | Median |
|---|---|
| 11.2 | 5.0 |

## FREQUENCY OF USE OF SPEAKER BUREAUS

Does your organization use a speaker bureau for recommending and hiring professional speakers? (168 responses)

| | |
|---|---|
| Always | 13.7% |
| Frequently | 23.2% |
| Sometimes | 49.4% |
| Never | 13.7% |

## CHANGE IN USE OF SPEAKER BUREAUS

Over the past two years, has your organization used speaker bureaus more or less than in the past? (142 responses)

| | |
|---|---|
| More | 9.2% |
| About the same | 66.2% |
| Less | 24.6% |

## VALUE OF SPEAKER BUREAUS

Relative to the cost of using one, how valuable does your organization find speaker bureaus? (144 responses)

| | |
|---|---|
| Extremely valuable | 15.3% |
| Very valuable | 26.4% |
| Moderately valuable | 36.8% |
| Slightly valuable | 18.1% |
| Not at all valuable | 3.5% |

## IDEA SOURCES FOR NEW PROFESSIONAL SPEAKERS

How does your organization usually get ideas for new professional speakers? Check all that apply. (164 responses)

| | |
|---|---|
| Recommendations from peers | 88.4% |
| Web searches (e.g., Google) | 44.5% |
| Social media (LinkedIn, Twitter, etc.) | 18.3% |
| Speakers we've seen before | 76.8% |
| Recommendations from members | 84.8% |
| Recommendations from staff | 78.0% |
| Recommendations from speaker bureaus | 61.6% |
| Direct solicitations from speakers | 24.4% |
| Speaker proposal process | 24.4% |
| Other | 11.0% |

## HIRING AUTHORITY FOR PROFESSIONAL SPEAKERS

Who in your organization makes the final decision on which professional speakers to hire? (163 responses)

| | |
|---|---|
| CEO or executive director | 25.8% |
| Board or volunteer committee | 20.2% |
| VP or director of meetings | 15.3% |
| VP or director of education/professional development | 13.5% |
| Staff committee | 8.6% |
| Other | 16.6% |

## 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 8, the least important item. (153 responses)

| | 1 (most important) | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 (least important) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| One sheet | 1.5% | 3.0% | 4.5% | 14.3% | 16.5% | 15.0% | 16.5% | 28.6% |
| Web site | 17.8% | 11.9% | 23.7% | 17.8% | 11.9% | 12.6% | 3.7% | 0.7% |
| Social media presence (Facebook page, LinkedIn profile, etc.) | 1.5% | 2.2% | 6.0% | 8.2% | 15.7% | 23.1% | 28.4% | 14.9% |
| Blog | 1.4% | 1.4% | 8.0% | 7.2% | 14.5% | 20.3% | 19.6% | 27.5% |
| Marketing video | 22.7% | 15.9% | 13.6% | 12.9% | 10.6% | 9.1% | 8.3% | 6.8% |
| Published book | 3.7% | 5.9% | 16.9% | 21.3% | 16.9% | 11.0% | 12.5% | 11.8% |
| References (people to ask about their experience with the speaker) | 31.7% | 35.3% | 14.4% | 7.2% | 7.9% | 2.2% | 1.4% | 0.0% |
| Past speaking experience and clients | 26.9% | 31.0% | 17.2% | 9.7% | 6.2% | 3.4% | 2.8% | 2.8% |

## TIMELINE FOR PROFESSIONAL SPEAKERS

How far before your meeting does your organization prefer to secure professional speakers? (153 responses)

| | |
|---|---|
| Less than 4 months | 5.9% |
| 4 to 5 months | 18.3% |
| 6 to 7 months | 26.8% |
| 8 to 9 months | 28.1% |
| 10 to 12 months | 16.3% |
| More than 12 months | 4.6% |

## IMPACT OF PROFESSIONAL SPEAKERS ON REGISTRATIONS

How important is having a headline, "big name" speaker for increasing registrations for meetings? (153 responses)

| | |
|---|---|
| Extremely important | 9.8% |
| Very important | 24.2% |
| Moderately important | 39.2% |
| Slightly important | 18.3% |
| Not at all important | 8.5% |

## 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. (151 responses)

| | 1 (most important) | 2 | 3 | 4 (least important) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Charismatic, high-energy stage presence | 26.9% | 48.3% | 19.3% | 5.5% |
| Current, relevant content | 64.2% | 25.0% | 8.8% | 2.0% |
| Motivational message | 8.1% | 14.8% | 40.3% | 36.9% |
| Active involvement of attendees (discussion or other form of participation) | 3.4% | 12.2% | 31.3% | 53.1% |

## 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? (150 responses)

| | |
|---|---|
| Always | 27.3% |
| Frequently | 23.3% |
| Sometimes | 36.0% |
| Never | 13.3% |

## 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? (130 responses)

| | |
|---|---|
| More | 16.2% |
| About the same | 72.3% |
| Less | 11.5% |

### 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? (20 responses)

| Yes | 5.0% |
|-----|------|
| No | 55.0% |
| Not sure | 40% |

### 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)? (150 responses)

| | |
|---|---|
| Yes, we *request* professional speakers to provide more than a face-to-face presentation. | 47.3% |
| Yes, we *require* professional speakers to provide more than a face-to-face presentation. | 9.3% |
| No | 43.3% |

### 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. (86 responses)

| | |
|---|---|
| Write a post for the organization's or meeting's blog | 26.7% |
| Participate in a pre-meeting online conversation (e.g., Twitter chat or LinkedIn discussion) | 32.6% |
| Record a promotional video | 34.9% |
| Write a newsletter or magazine article or be interviewed | 53.5% |
| Present or facilitate a pre- or post-meeting Webinar | 25.6% |
| Participate in other elements of the meeting | 65.1% |
| Other | 27.9% |

## 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? (160 responses)

| Mean | Median |
|------|--------|
| 103.2 | 20.0 |

## NUMBER OF SESSIONS AT THE MAJOR MEETING

What is the total number of sessions offered at this meeting? (160 responses)

| Mean | Median |
|------|--------|
| 101.2 | 50.0 |

## USE OF CALL FOR PRESENTATIONS

Does your organization issue a call for presentations for this meeting? (161 responses)

| Yes | 74.5% |
|-----|-------|
| No | 25.5% |

## TIMELINE FOR CALL FOR PRESENTATIONS

How many months before this meeting does the call for presentations close? (120 responses)

| Less than 4 months | 5.8% |
|--------------------|------|
| 4 to 5 months | 9.2% |
| 6 to 7 months | 22.5% |
| 8 to 9 months | 29.2% |
| 10 to 12 months | 23.3% |
| More than 12 months | 10.0% |

## 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)? (161 responses)

| Yes | 73.3% |
|-----|-------|
| No | 26.7% |

## CONTENT OF SPEAKER PREPARATION

What type of content does your organization provide to prepare industry speakers for this meeting? Check all that apply. (119 responses)

| Venue or session logistics | 88.2% |
|----------------------------|-------|
| Training or tips for better presentations | 52.9% |
| Information about expected attendees (e.g., number, interests, or skills) | 85.7% |
| Information about overarching themes or content tracks at the meeting | 75.6% |
| Information about the speaker or session evaluation process | 51.3% |
| Other | 14.3% |

## METHOD OF SPEAKER PREPARATION

How does your organization prepare industry speakers for this meeting? Check all that apply. (117 responses)

| | |
|---|---|
| Individual coaching | 23.9% |
| Conference call | 65.0% |
| Online meeting | 20.5% |
| E-mail | 85.5% |
| Dedicated Web site or portal for speakers | 30.8% |
| Other | 6.8% |

## SPEAKER COMPENSATION

Does your organization provide some compensation to its industry speakers (e.g., complimentary registration for all or part of this meeting)? (161 responses)

| | |
|---|---|
| Yes | 77.6% |
| No | 22.4% |

## TYPES OF SPEAKER COMPENSATION

Which forms of compensation does your organization provide to its industry speakers for this meeting? Check all that apply. (124 responses)

| | |
|---|---|
| Complimentary registration for the full meeting | 67.7% |
| Complimentary registration for part of the meeting | 28.2% |
| Reduced registration rate | 16.9% |
| Complimentary lodging or reimbursement for lodging | 57.3% |
| Complimentary transportation or reimbursement for transportation | 41.9% |
| Honorarium or stipend | 46.8% |
| Other | 16.9% |

## FORMAL EVALUATIONS

Does your organization collect formal evaluations from attendees at this meeting? (160 responses)

| | |
|---|---|
| Yes | 96.3% |
| No | 3.8% |

## TYPES OF FORMAL EVALUATIONS

Which types of formal of evaluations does your organization collect from attendees at this meeting? Check all that apply. (154 responses)

| | |
|---|---|
| Evaluations of the overall meeting | 93.5% |
| Evaluations of each session | 85.1% |
| Evaluations of each speaker | 68.2% |

## COLLECTION OF FORMAL EVALUATIONS

How does your organization collect formal evaluations from attendees at this meeting? (154 responses)

| | |
|---|---|
| Attendees complete paper-based evaluations. | 16.9% |
| Attendees complete online evaluations. | 44.2% |
| Attendees complete evaluations using a combination of paper-based and online methods. | 37.0% |
| Other | 1.9% |

## MEASURING LEARNING

Do you measure whether learning occurs at this meeting (e.g, through assessments or evaluation questions tied to learning objectives)? (160 responses)

| | |
|---|---|
| Yes | 41.9% |
| No | 58.1% |

## METHOD OF MEASURING LEARNING

How do you measure whether learning occurs at your meetings? Check all that apply. (66 responses)

| | |
|---|---|
| Through evaluation questions that align with learning objectives | 75.8% |
| Through post-meeting assessments or follow-ups | 22.7% |
| Through post-session assessments or follow-ups | 7.6% |
| Through a combination of pre-meeting and post-meeting assessment | 13.6% |
| Through evaluations conducted a month or more following the meeting | 16.7% |

## REWRITING LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Does your organization re-write any of your speaker session submissions (e.g., titles, descriptions, or learning objectives) for this meeting? (159 responses)

| | |
|---|---|
| Always | 12.6% |
| Frequently | 22.0% |
| Sometimes | 54.7% |
| Never | 10.7% |

## LIVE VIDEO STREAMING OF KEYNOTES

Does your organization provide live video streaming of keynotes at this meeting? (160 responses)

| | |
|---|---|
| Yes, for all keynotes | 4.4% |
| Yes, for some keynotes | 16.3% |
| No | 79.4% |

### LIVE VIDEO STREAMING OF CONCURRENT SESSIONS

Does your organization provide live video streaming of concurrent sessions at this meeting? (159 responses)

| | |
|---|---|
| Yes, for all concurrent sessions | 0.6% |
| Yes, for some concurrent sessions | 15.7% |
| No | 83.6% |

### 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)? (157 responses)

| | |
|---|---|
| Yes, for keynotes only | 12.7% |
| Yes, for concurrent sessions only | 19.7% |
| Yes, for both keynotes and concurrent sessions | 37.6% |
| No | 29.9% |

## 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? (183 responses)

| | |
|---|---|
| Very satisfied | 53.6% |
| Somewhat satisfied | 44.3% |
| Somewhat dissatisfied | 1.6% |
| Very dissatisfied | 0.5% |

### SATISFACTION WITH SPECIFIC ITEMS

Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied is your organization with its meetings in terms of the specific items below? (182 responses)

| | Very satisfied | Somewhat satisfied | Neutral | Somewhat dissatisfied | Very dissatisfied | Not applicable |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Attendance | 19.9% | 56.4% | 3.3% | 18.8% | 1.7% | 0.3% |
| Revenue | 21.5% | 48.6% | 11.0% | 14.9% | 1.7% | 2.2% |
| Connection to the organization's strategic plan or the direction set by the board of directors | 46.4% | 36.9% | 13.4% | 1.1% | 0.0% | 2.2% |
| Professional speakers | 28.3% | 43.9% | 18.3% | 4.4% | 0.0% | 5.0% |
| Industry speakers | 29.8% | 55.2% | 11.0% | 2.2% | 0.0% | 1.7% |
| Feedback from attendees | 34.3% | 54.7% | 6.1% | 3.9% | 1.1% | 0.0% |

## OVERALL SUCCESS OF MEETINGS

How would you rate the success of your organization's meetings? (182 responses)

| | |
|---|---|
| Very successful | 51.6% |
| Somewhat successful | 45.6% |
| Somewhat unsuccessful | 2.2% |
| Very unsuccessful | 0.5% |

## GEOGRAPHIC FOCUS

Which best describes the geographic focus of your organization (i.e., which best indicates the areas in which you actively solicit membership)? (180 responses)

| | |
|---|---|
| Single-community or municipality focus | 2.2% |
| Multiple-community focus within one state | 6.1% |
| Single-state or province focus | 11.7% |
| Multistate or multiprovince focus | 1.1% |
| National focus | 45.0% |
| International focus | 33.9% |

## TYPE OF ORGANIZATION

Which of the following best characterizes your organization? (182 responses)

| | |
|---|---|
| Charitable or philanthropic organization | 2.7% |
| Trade association | 35.7% |
| Professional society | 41.8% |
| Educational institution | 3.8% |
| For-profit corporation | 10.4% |
| Other | 5.5% |

## CERTIFICATION PROGRAM

Does your organization offer a formal certification program? (181 responses)

| | |
|---|---|
| Yes | 39.2% |
| No | 60.8% |

## CONTINUING EDUCATION

Does your organization offer continuing education (e.g., CE, CEU, CME, CPE, or CLE) for its meetings? (180 responses)

| | |
|---|---|
| Yes | 65.6% |
| No | 34.4% |

## INDIVIDUAL MEMBERSHIP

How many active *individual* members does your organization currently have? (180 responses)

| | |
|---|---|
| 1,000 or less | 12.8% |
| 1,001 to 5,000 | 22.2% |
| 5,001 to 10,000 | 12.8% |
| 10,001 to 25,000 | 13.9% |
| 25,001 to 50,000 | 7.2% |
| 50,001 to 100,000 | 5.6% |
| More than 100,000 | 4.4% |
| We have only organizational members. | 13.9% |
| Not applicable (for respondents from for-profit corporations) | 7.2% |

## ORGANIZATIONAL MEMBERSHIP

How many active *organizational* members does your organization currently have? (180 responses)

| | |
|---|---|
| Less than 100 | 11.7% |
| 101 to 200 | 10.0% |
| 201 to 500 | 9.4% |
| 501 to 1,000 | 9.4% |
| 1,001 to 5,000 | 15.0% |
| More than 5,000 | 3.9% |
| We have only individual members. | 29.4% |
| Not applicable (for respondents from for-profit corporations) | 11.1% |

## 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. (179 responses)

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Administrative and support and waste management and remediation services | 0.6% | Mining | 1.1% |
| Agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting | 1.1% | Professional, scientific, and technical services | 17.9% |
| Arts, entertainment, and recreation | 1.1% | Public administration | 2.2% |
| Construction | 4.5% | Real estate and rental and leasing | 2.8% |
| Education services | 13.4% | Retail trade | 3.4% |
| Finance and insurance | 5.0% | Transportation and warehousing | 0.6% |
| Healthcare and social assistance | 15.6% | Utilities | 1.7% |
| Information | 4.5% | Wholesale trade | 0.0% |
| Management of companies and enterprises | 3.4% | Other | 16.8% |
| Manufacturing | 4.5% | | |

## OVERALL STAFF

How many paid staff does your organization currently have? (180 responses)

| Mean | Median |
|------|--------|
| 802.1 | 24.5 |

## 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? (178 responses)

| Mean | Median |
|------|--------|
| 67.5 | 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? (178 responses)

| | |
|---------|-------|
| VP | 25.3% |
| Director | 48.3% |
| Manager | 10.1% |
| Other | 16.3% |

## BUDGET SIZE

What is your organization's annual budget (in U.S. dollars)? (168 responses)

| | |
|---------------------------------|-------|
| Less than $100,000 | 1.2% |
| $100,001 to $500,000 | 4.8% |
| $500,001 to $1,000,000 | 11.3% |
| $1,000,001 to $5,000,000 | 33.9% |
| $5,000,001 to $10,000,000 | 14.9% |
| $10,000,001 to $25,000,000 | 10.1% |
| $25,000,001 to $50,000,000 | 8.9% |
| $50,000,001 to $100,000,000 | 7.1% |
| More than $100,000,000 | 7.7% |