

Freeman⁷ Trends Report

The Pre-Event Edition:
How People Find, Choose, and Prep
for Your Event

2026 Q4



Within this report

Total number
of respondents

3,459

Attendees

2,272

Exhibitors

1,187

- Respondent breakdowns:
 - Attendee margin of error: +/- 2.1%
 - Trade show 70%, Conference 30%
 - Exhibitor margin of error: +/- 2.9%

Callouts you'll see



NowGen Event Goers (NGEG), aged 23-46, are shaping trends, driving innovation, and redefining what value means. This callout represents NowGen data segmentation.



Throughout this report, we've modified a few charts to highlight the top responses. When you see this callout, it means that the full dataset can be found in the appendix.



These callouts show where Learning-focused, Networking-focused, and Commerce-focused attendees respond differently from the overall.

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Executive Summary

The value starts before the event does

Event organizers typically know how many people registered and how many booths and how much square footage got sold.

What they don't often know is the story behind those numbers: how participants found the event, why they decided it was worth the resources, and what they need to get real value upon arrival. **But it's exactly this story that shapes their event experience.**

Before the event doors open, most participants move through three (primary) stages that determine whether they come and what they expect to gain:

Discover. Evaluate. Prepare.

It's these pre-event stages that determine participant decision-making ... or lack thereof.

Attendees want an event that helps them solve a real problem. Exhibitors want an audience worth the investment and a plan to engage with them.

Understanding those goals pays off twice. Acquisition sharpens as the right message reaches the right people and interest turns into registrations and booth sales. Preparedness rises as participants come with a plan to make the most of every moment. They're the ones who see a return — and return next year as a result.

This report examines how participants discover events, what drives them to attend or exhibit, and what they need to prepare.

XLNC Framework

Every decision to attend an event starts with identifying a primary objective. Over the last several years, we boiled those objectives down to four primary drivers: eXperience, Learning, Networking, and Commerce, or XLNC for short.

Our most recent 'Unpacking XLNC' series double-clicked on each objective, exploring what attendees and exhibitors want and how organizers can deliver.

Missed one? Every report is linked [here](#). Keep XLNC in mind as you read on, too. It shows up throughout this report as a guide to what attendees are coming for.



EXPERIENCE

Have fun, achieve my objectives, enjoy the environment



LEARNING

Be inspired, learn something new, receive training



PART 1



PART 2



NETWORKING

Make connections, socialize with new and existing contacts



COMMERCE

Evaluate vendor offerings, build awareness, discover new products/services



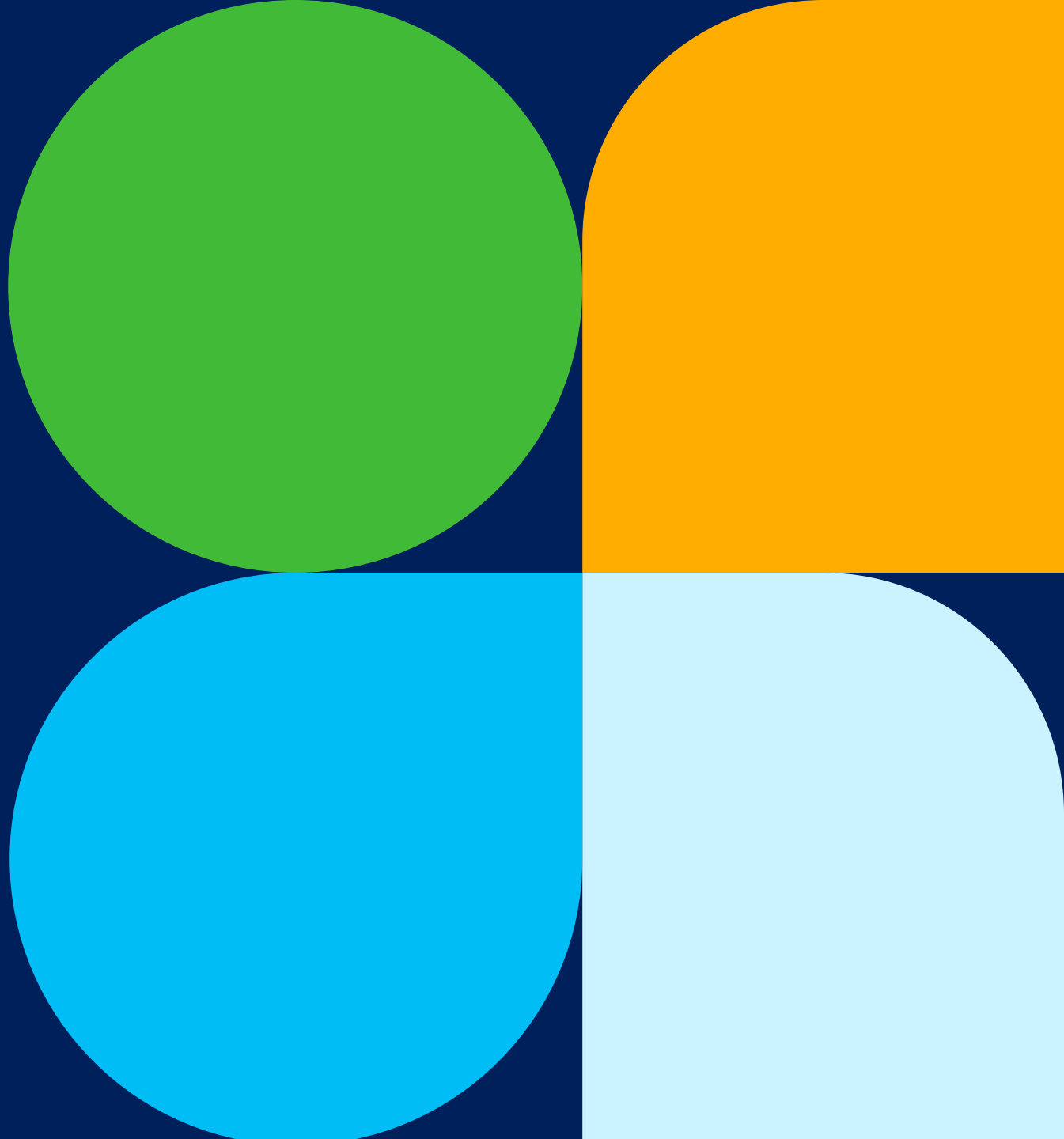
Part One **Attendees***

*Or guests, delegates, visitors,
members, conventioners ...
we're not picky.



Why and where do **attendees** discover in- person events?

What propels attendees to consider an in-person event? When they realize they'll need to go beyond their sphere to grow as a professional — and turn to sources they trust for recommendations.



ATTENDEE QUESTION

What challenges or areas of interest are most likely to prompt you to seek resources outside of your organization (such as attending an in-person conference or trade show, webinar, podcast, outside training, etc.)?

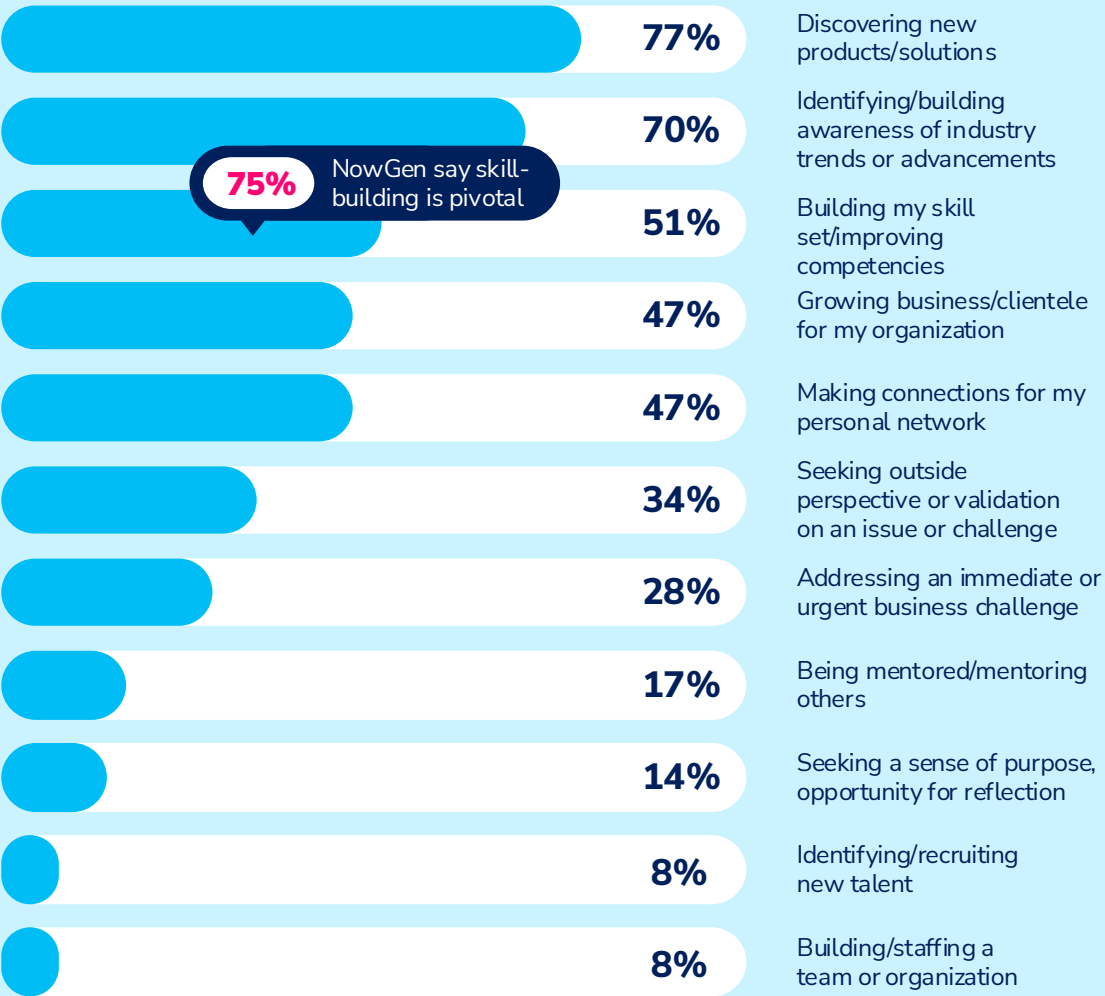
Attendees seek outside resources to help discover new products and identify industry trends

Here’s some news-that-shouldn’t-be-news to organizers: Discovering new products and solutions is a huge draw for prospective attendees. So is getting to know the latest industry trends and, especially for NowGen attendees, building new skills.

These are the primary reasons attendees seek outside resources. If your event doesn’t deliver one of these outcomes (or worse, if you don’t know your event’s primary value prop), you’ll have a hard time recruiting prospects to register.

More data in appendix

Challenges/Interests That Prompt Outside Resources



ATTENDEE QUESTION

Which resource types are you most likely to consider for addressing the areas you selected in the previous question?
Select up to 3 sources for each area.

In-person events are the external resource of choice

Whether an attendee needs to build skills, make connections, grow their business, or discover new products, in-person events are the clear resource of choice (compared with online events, professional organizations, blogs, etc.).

The takeaway: **Event organizers still have an in-person advantage.** Now they just need to prove that their event will solve attendees' professional challenges.

% Selecting In-person Events to Address Challenges

 More data in appendix



ATTENDEE QUESTION

For the challenges/interest areas where you prioritized attending an in-person conference or trade show, what are your reasons for doing so? Select all that apply.

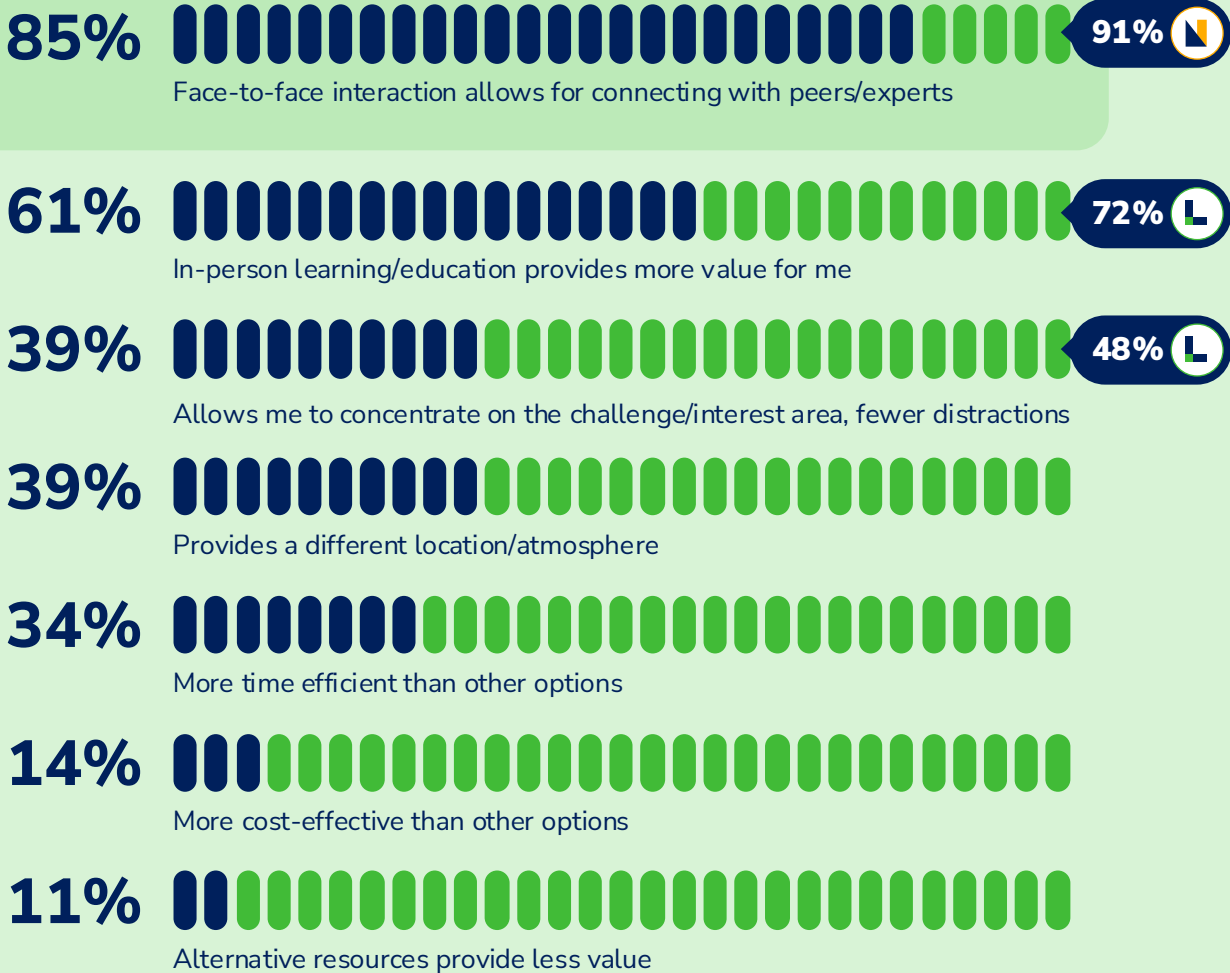
Attendees prioritize in-person events for face-to-face connection and in-person learning

We know in-person events are attendees’ top resource for tackling professional challenges — and the format itself is a big reason why.

85% prioritize in-person events because face-to-face interaction lets them connect with peers and experts. 61% say in-person learning gives them more value.

If you’ve kept up with our [previous reports](#), this shouldn’t come as a surprise. **The channel itself is part of your value, so own it.** And make the face-to-face connections and focused learning that only happen in person a central part of your promotional strategy.

Challenge/Interest-Driven Reasons for Prioritizing In-Person Events



ATTENDEE QUESTION

For the areas where you did NOT select an in-person conference or trade show, what is driving that choice? Select all that apply. In-person conferences or trade shows ...

Travel costs continue to rise, but events can earn the trip

When attendees chose another resource over an in-person event, nearly half (49%) said the travel cost and time weren't matched by the value, and 36% said the event cost too much compared with similar resources.

But costs will always be part of the equation, and [data shows](#) that they'll likely continue to rise. And let's be honest: That's out of your hands. **Value is the part you control.**

Programming that isn't targeted enough (27%) and learning that isn't differentiated (18%) make the trip harder to justify, and both are fixable.

By making the payoff clear from the first touchpoint, you can keep travel costs from weighing as heavily.

Reasons for Not Prioritizing In-Person Events for Addressing Challenges/Interests



49%

Travel cost/time to event does not provide commensurate value



36%

Are too expensive relative to other resources of comparable value



27%

Are too crowded, chaotic



27%

Event programming is not targeted enough for my needs



22%

Do not provide any additional value than other resources



18%

Learning is not differentiated from other sources



14%

Connecting with those I want to meet is too challenging



8%

Do not feature new trends, advancements



7%

Was not an option based on how quickly I required CE credits



Action Item

Think like an attendee

The discovery stage is full of opportunity to help attendees understand your event's true value. First things first:

Understand what they're after

Get to know our XLNC framework (if you haven't already) and attendee profiles. Then, put on your 'attendee hat' by asking the same questions they'll ask: 'What will I learn? Whom will I meet? And what new products or solutions can I discover?' Lean on current registration questions and past-attendee survey insights for guidance.

Make the value worth the trip

Attendees will always weigh the time and cost of getting there. Show them what they can only get in person, and how your event speaks to their specific challenges, so the answer to 'Is it worth it?' is clear from the first touchpoint.

ATTENDEE QUESTION

Through what sources are you most likely to learn about in-person professional events that would be relevant for someone in your industry/role? Select up to 5 options.

People are the most powerful channel for event discovery

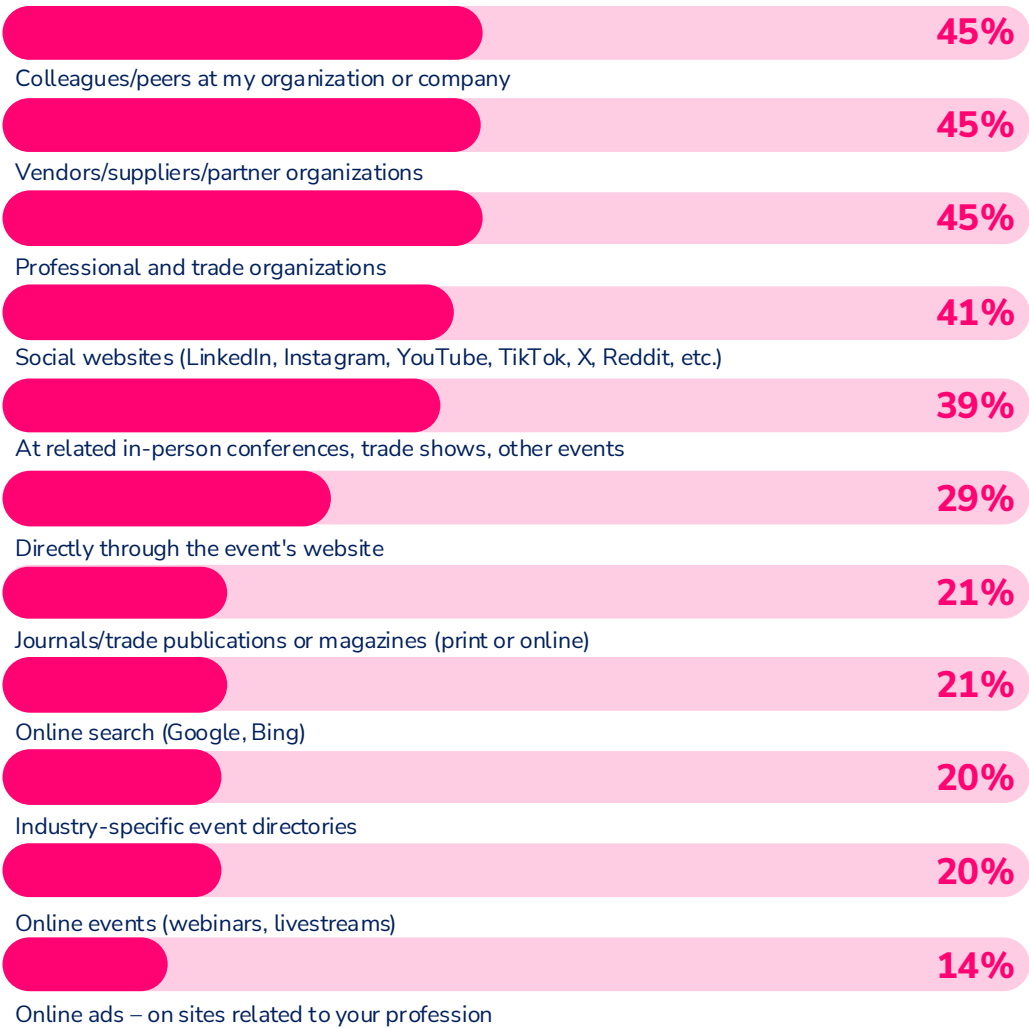
When attendees look for their next event, they turn to people they trust. Colleagues and vendors tie as the most likely and most influential sources.

This builds on what we saw earlier: individuals drive their own decision to attend and shape the decisions of those around them. That makes your exhibitors and attendees some of the most valuable marketers your event has.

Organizers have an opportunity to help participants spread the word, using shareable invites and referral perks.

How Attendees Learn About In-Person Events

% selected (top 5)



More data in appendix

ATTENDEE QUESTIONS

1. Have you used an AI tool to discover professional conferences or trade shows that are relevant for someone in your industry or role?
2. Select your level of agreement with the following statements regarding AI use for discovering professional events. (% agree/strongly agree)

Attendees are asking AI for input on which events to attend

Despite the power of word-of-mouth marketing in event discovery, one in five attendees has asked AI to help find their next event. They use it the way they'd shop for a new laptop or pick a restaurant, cutting a long list down to a few good options. It's working, too.

Among these early adopters, 82% say AI helps them build a short list. 65% say it does the job better than other methods. And more than half (53%) say it has even changed which events they see as worth attending.

The takeaway: [AI is your newest gatekeeper](#). If AI tools can't find clear, detailed information about your event, they can't recommend it. **That's where generative engine optimization (GEO)** comes in: making your event content easy for AI tools to locate and recommend. And you can **test it yourself**. Ask AI to recommend events in your industry — does yours make the list? If not, you've got some work to do.

AI Use for Discovering Events

53%

AI has changed my perspective on professional events I could attend

21%

of attendees have used AI to discover relevant events

65%

AI is more effective than other options for identifying relevant professional events I could attend

82%

AI is helpful for identifying a short list of relevant professional events



Action Item

Make your event content **AI-ready**

The rules for online search have changed. Back in the day, it was all about getting your event website ranked as highly as possible (ideally on the first page) in search results. Now, your event website is more like a library book — and the librarian is an AI agent that scans millions of sources in just a few seconds. Things are different now, but fortunately, it's still possible to stay one step ahead. Here's how:

Make event information easy for AI to scan

Put dates, location, pricing, and speakers in plain text on your event website instead of burying them in PDFs or images. This way, AI tools can easily scrape that material, and put it front and center in search results.

Create content around audience questions

Build FAQs, articles and other content around what potential attendees are actually asking. Focus less on what you want to announce and more on the questions people are using search and AI to answer.

Build authority across the web

Keep key event information consistent wherever it appears and build visibility through credible third-party sources like LinkedIn, industry media, partners, and other relevant websites.

How do **attendees** evaluate events?

What's going on inside the head of a prospective attendee as they're evaluating an event?

Hint: It's not much different from how they make any other consumer decision.

ATTENDEE QUESTION

Once you are aware of the professional events you could attend, how do you determine if an event will deliver the ROI you require? Select all that apply.

Attendees judge an event by how well it fits their objectives

We asked attendees how they decide whether an event will deliver the ROI they need, and **their answers read like a list of objectives (welcome back, [ROO](#))**.

More than half check whether the event offers relevant learning opportunities (54%), and 49% evaluate the program against their professional goals. Others look at whether they'll be able to evaluate solutions (38%) or find people in roles like their own (38%).

You've heard it from us before, and you're hearing it again: Let attendee goals be your guide. That starts with knowing who's coming to your event and whether they're there mainly for Learning, Networking, or Commerce. Only then can you demonstrate the return they need to justify registration.

How Attendees Determine if an Event Will Deliver Required ROI



ATTENDEE QUESTION

What pages/references on an event’s website are you most likely to reference to determine if the event is worth attending? Select up to 5 options.

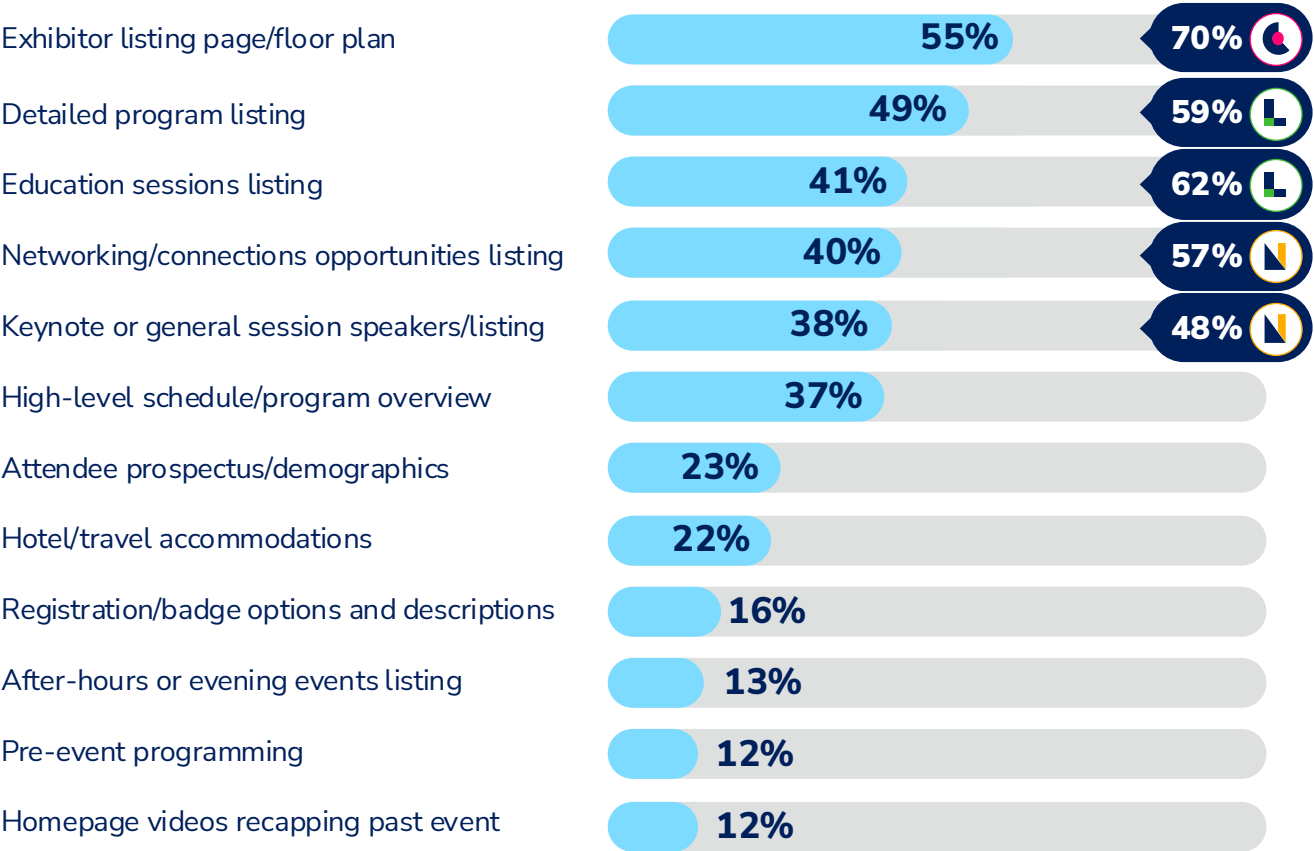
On event websites, the exhibitor, program, and education listings help attendees assess your event

Attendees do their research before they register to determine whether your event is worth considering. Most go straight to the pages that show who’ll be there and what they’ll learn: the exhibitor listing or floor plan (55%), the detailed program (49%), and education sessions (41%).

Where attendees click depends on their main objective — *shocker*. Commerce-focused attendees are the most likely to check the exhibitor listing (70%). Learning-focused attendees head for the program and education session listings (59% and 62%), and Networking-focused attendees look for connection opportunities (57%). (Tip: Using your event webpage analytics can help you ‘predict’ what proportion of attendees fit each of these three personas.)

Once again, we see individuals with clear goals seeking proof that your event can deliver on them. Organizers: Treat these pages as your best sales tools. Keep them detailed, up to date, and easy to find.

Event Website Pages Referenced for Determining Event Attendance



More data in appendix

ATTENDEE QUESTION

Where do events fall short in helping you decide whether to attend? Select all that apply.

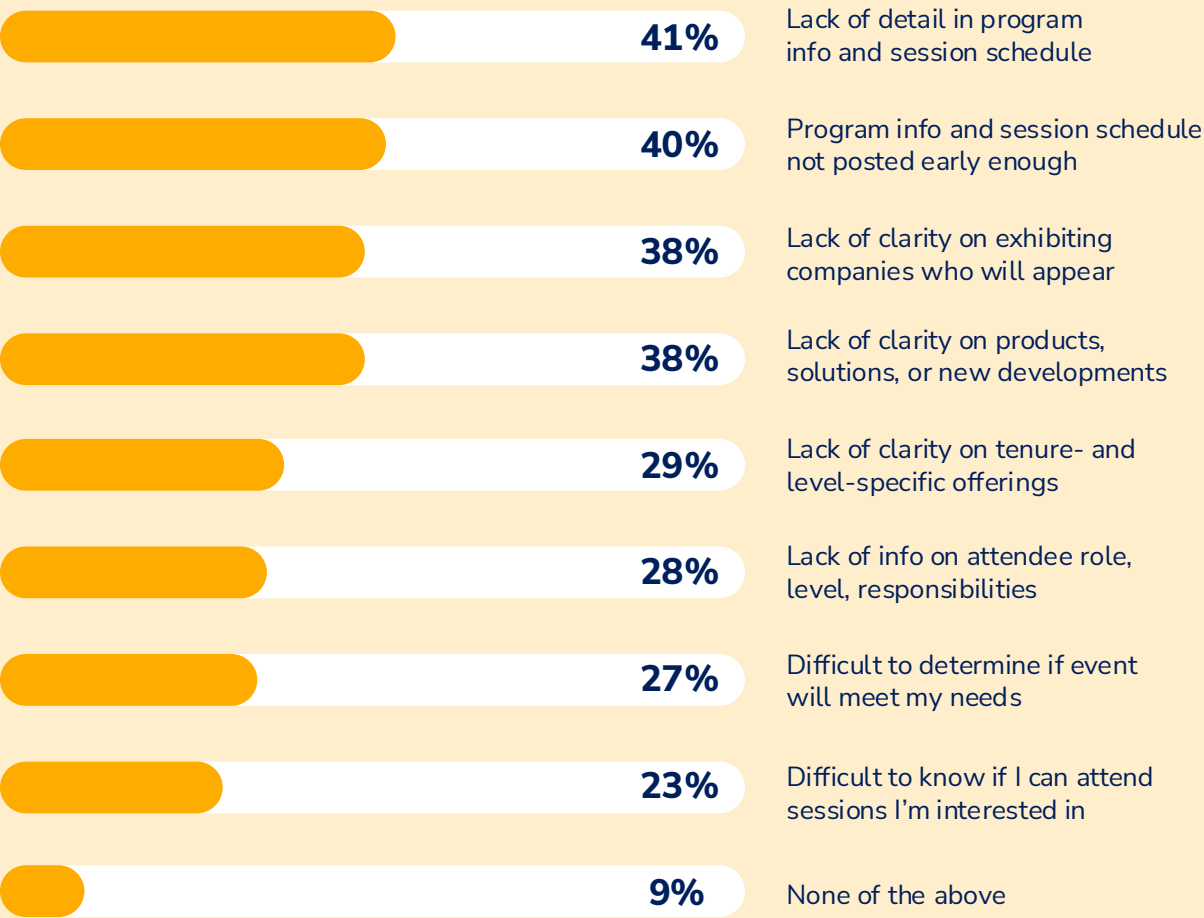
Most believe organizers can do more to help them determine an event’s value

We asked attendees where events fall short when they’re deciding whether to go.

They said programs aren’t detailed enough, aren’t posted early enough, and it’s not always clear which exhibitors will be there or what products they’ll bring.

Addressing these gaps is simpler than it seems. Although a lot of those details are still falling into place months out, **that’s OK. Share what you’ve got as soon as you can and keep adding to it as the rest comes together.**

How Events Fall Short of Helping Prospective Attendees Determine Whether to Attend



ATTENDEE QUESTION

What type of information about who attends an event is most likely to make you feel compelled to register? Select all that apply.

Knowing who else will be there gives attendees a reason to register

Attendees most want to know what types of organizations will be there, the names of industry experts and influencers, and the goals that bring other attendees to the event.

Notice we're not talking about how many people are coming — but who is coming.

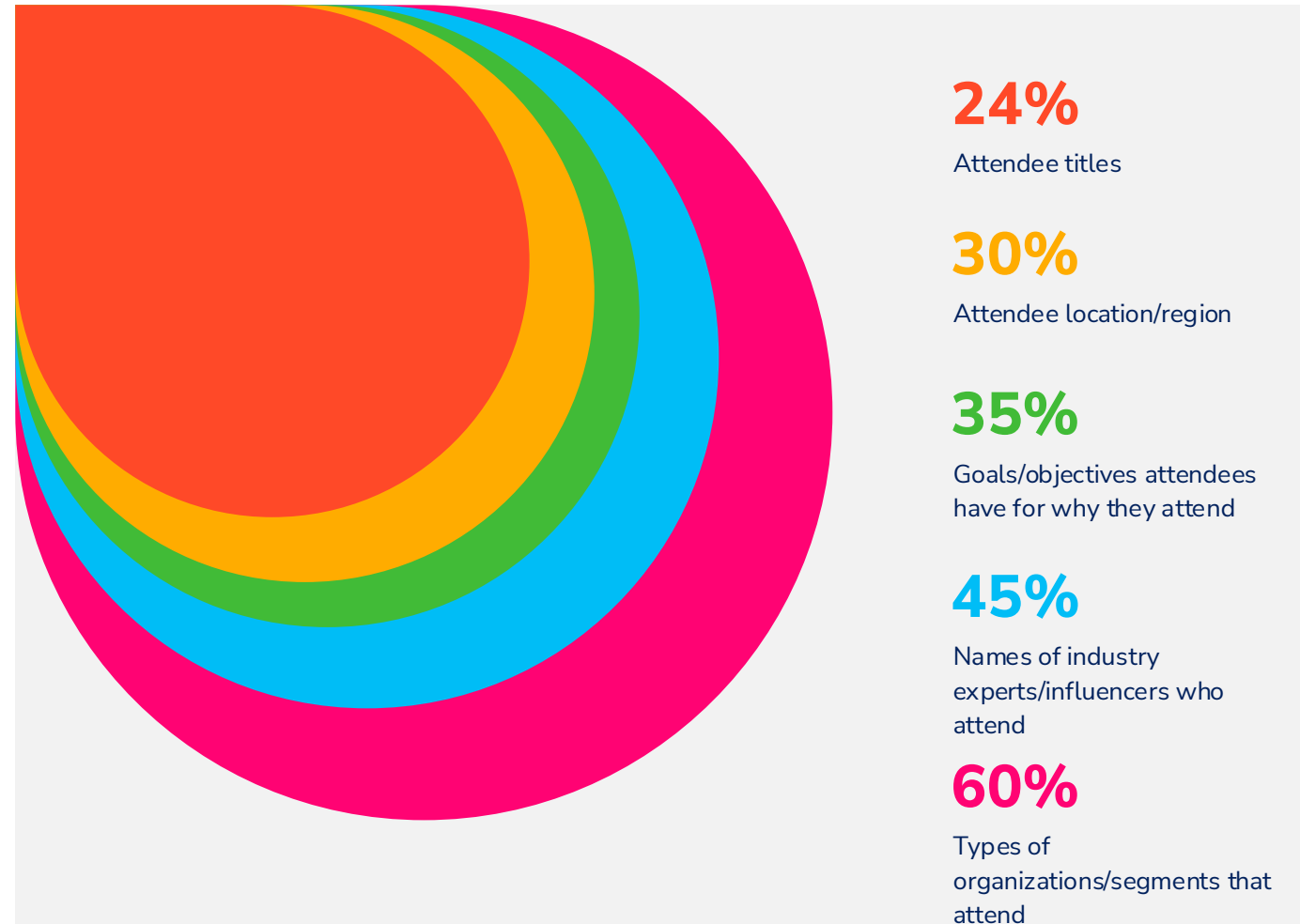
Organizers, let this be your reminder to give prospects a sneak peek at the people in your event crowd as soon as possible. It has more impact on their decision to attend than you think.

And as a reminder: we know you're concerned about data privacy. Our [previous research](#) has shown that attendees will opt in if you tell them why. They want to see and be seen!



More data
in appendix

Required Information Regarding Who Attends



ATTENDEE QUESTION

Consider the most important in-person professional event you have attended in the last 2 years. Which of the following best describes what initiated your attendance at the event?

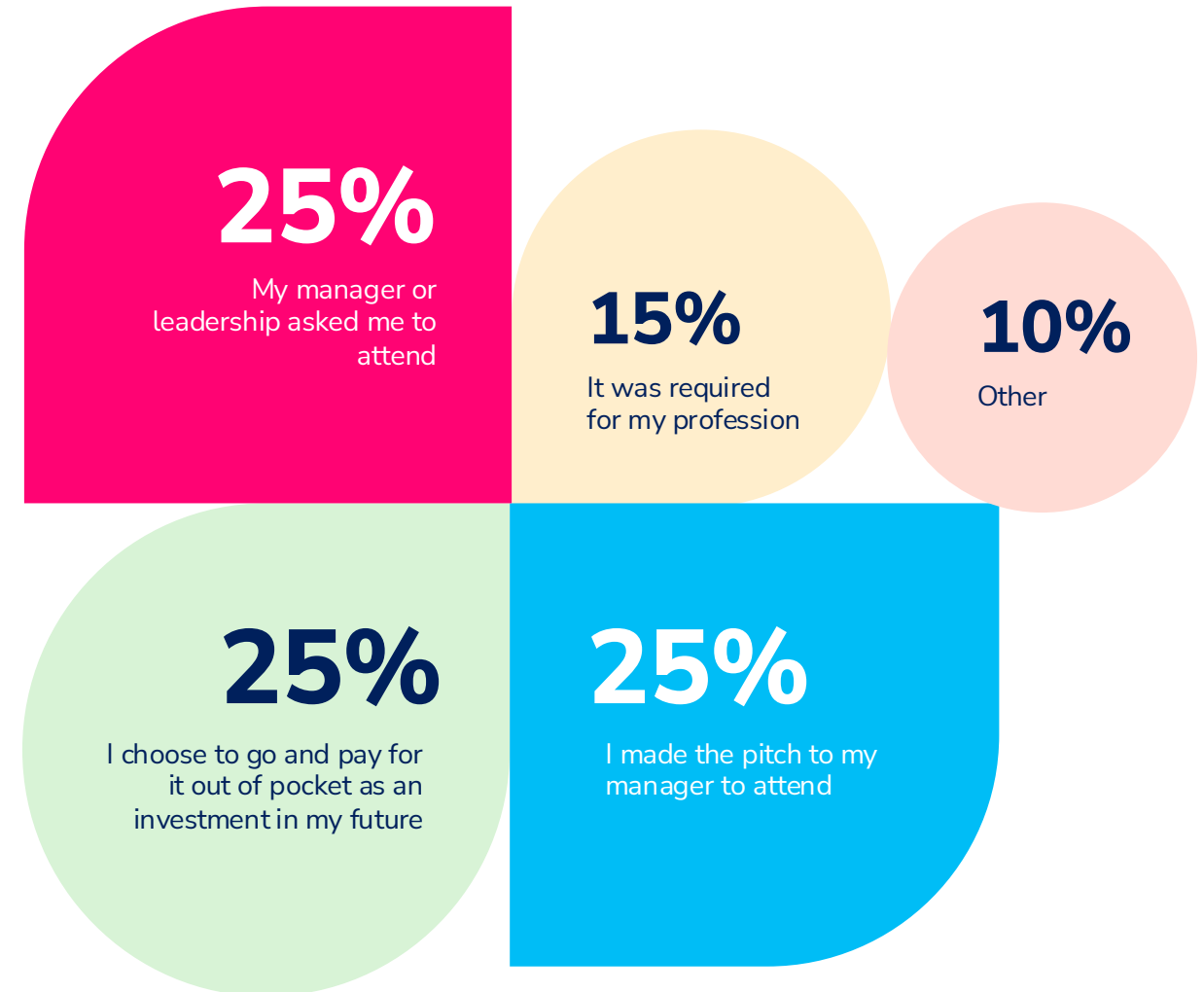
Attendees advocate for their own professional development

When we asked attendees who initiated their event attendance, half said it was their own idea.

A quarter paid their own way, and another quarter pitched the event to their manager. Just one in four went because leadership asked them to.

That makes the individual (not the organization) your most important audience. Attendees are coming with their own challenges and goals, and when your event speaks directly to them, they're willing to go to bat for it. Which means it's increasingly important for organizers to provide the context and justification attendees need in advance.

Reasons for Initiating Event Attendance





Action Item

Arm attendees with **any information** you've got

We get it — it's not always possible to have all the information you'd ideally like to share with attendees. Still, the evaluation stage is when attendees decide whether your event is worth their time, and organizers have more influence over that decision than they might think. Here's how to help:

Don't let great be the enemy of good

It's OK if your program, speaker list, or floor plan still has a few placeholders. Most attendees just need enough to picture their experience. Remember: Today's attendees care less about quantity of sessions, attendees, and exhibitors and more about quality. So, post what you have as early as possible and fill in the rest as it comes together.

Make every update a 'drop'

The best brands build buzz by progressively releasing products and updates, and your event can do the same. Pick a rhythm, like new speakers announced every Tuesday, and tell people to 'stay tuned for what's coming next.' Every drop gives prospects a reason to stay engaged, and one more reason to register.

Don't let competing voices keep you from sharing

We know it can be hard to share info more frequently — especially if it hasn't been the case historically. When in doubt, stay the course and know that your attendees will benefit.

Help them make the case

Half of attendees push for their own attendance. Make it easier with a ready-to-send justification kit that includes a letter template and the sessions and exhibitors most relevant to their role.

What moves an attendee from ‘maybe ...’ to ‘all in!’?

An attendee has made a short list of events that piqued their interest. Choosing which event is ultimately worth their time and expense isn't an easy process, but organizers can do more to help make it a simpler (and faster) one.

ATTENDEE QUESTION

What do you need to demonstrate to get funding to attend a professional event? Select all that apply.

To secure funding, attendees must show that new products and skills will benefit their organization

Once attendees decide they want to go, most still need someone to sign off.

Only 18% approve their own funding. **Everyone else has to prove what's in it for them and for their organization.** The strongest cases rest on the products and solutions that could benefit the company (46%) and the skills attendees will bring back (44%).

Organizers: You have an opportunity — nay, a responsibility — to help attendees secure the funding they need. Spell out which products they'll see and what they'll learn, so they can make the case to their boss with confidence.

Requirements for Event Funding

46%

The products/solutions featured at the event that could benefit my organization



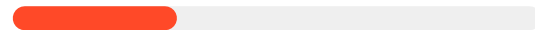
33%

Advancing an existing or potential partnership



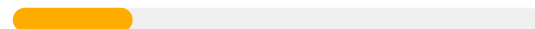
28%

What I will be able to teach others in the organization from what I learn at the event



18%

N/A — I approve my own funding for event attendance



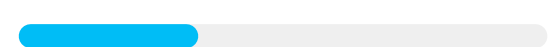
44%

How attending the event will enhance my skills/improve how I do my job



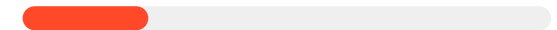
31%

What I/my team will be able to put into practice immediately after the event



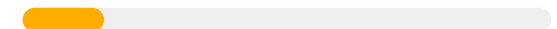
20%

An expert I will be able to meet that I can stay in touch with



15%

Opportunity to earn continuing education (CE) credits



ATTENDEE QUESTION

Does the fear of missing out (FOMO) play a role in making you feel compelled to attend a professional event that is relevant for your industry/profession?

The fear of missing out influences an attendee's decision to register

For more than 40%, the fear of missing out (FOMO) plays a moderate or key role in their decision to register.

That makes sense. An in-person event happens once, in one place, and the conversations and discoveries that happen there can't be replicated later. **Nobody wants to be the one left out of the loop when colleagues come back buzzing about who they met and what they learned. That thought alone can be the push an on-the-fence attendee needs to commit.**

But what exactly drives that fear? Keep reading to find out.

Role of FOMO in Registering

60%

FOMO plays no role in whether I attend a professional event

31%

FOMO plays a moderate, but not pivotal role in whether I attend a professional event

10%

FOMO plays a key role in whether I attend a professional event



ATTENDEE QUESTION

What elements contribute to professional event FOMO? Select up to 5 options.

Attendees fear missing out on the latest and greatest products and solutions

New products and solutions drive FOMO most (45%), followed by experts available to network with (36%), and the chance to reconnect with past contacts (33%).

FOMO also grows when attendance is visible. Knowing that people from top companies (29%) or their own organization (22%) are going adds to the pull. The more people see others saying, 'I'm in!' the more they want to say it, too.



More data
in appendix

What Contributes to Event FOMO



ATTENDEE QUESTION

Which statement best characterizes how complete/built out the event schedule or program needs to be for you to determine if the event is worthwhile.

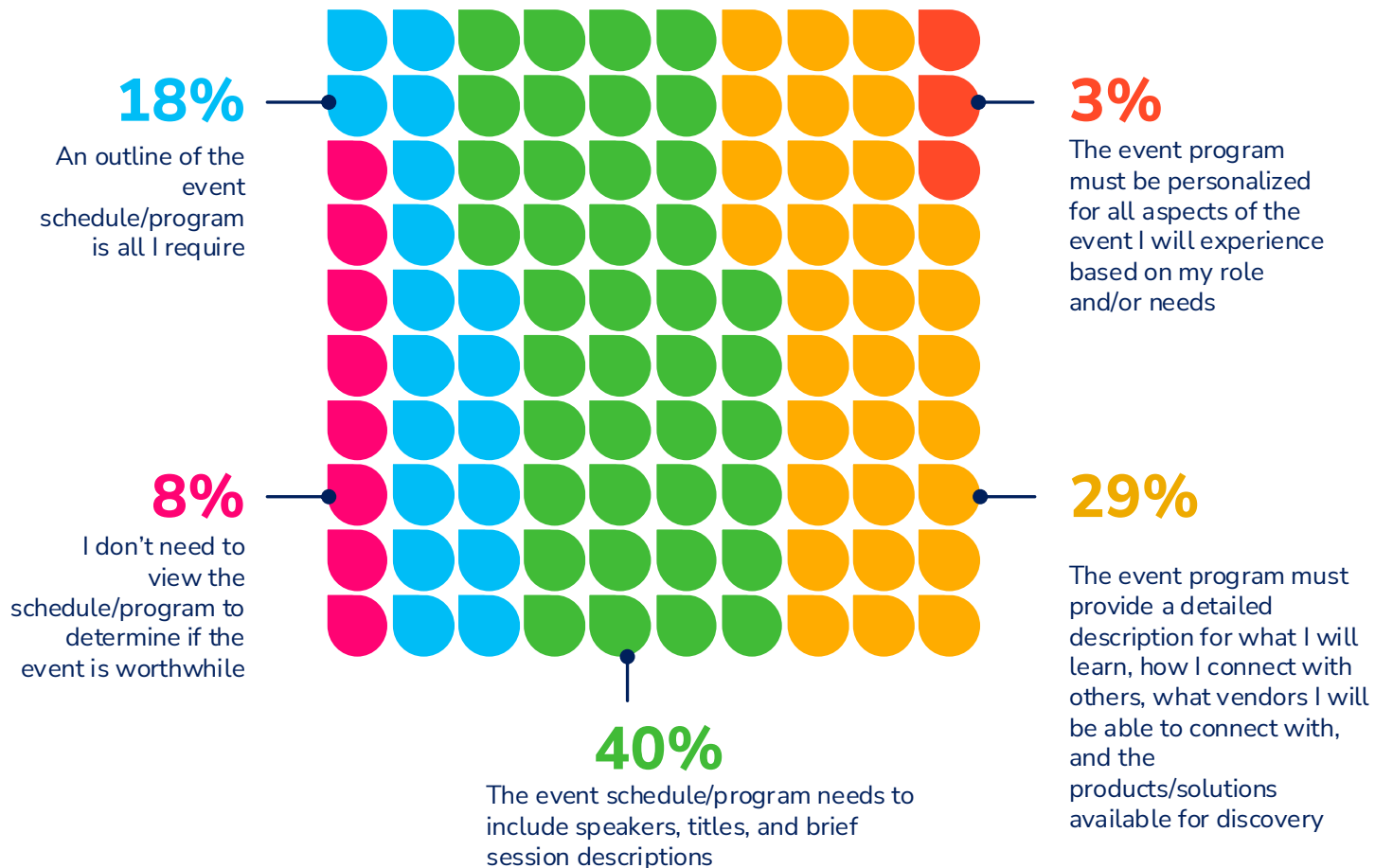
Speaker names, titles, and session descriptions help attendees commit

We know [attendees want more program detail, sooner](#) — even if organizers don't have it all at once.

This data shows which details actually help them decide. For most (40%), **it's speaker names, titles, and brief session descriptions**, which tell them whom they'll hear from and what they'll learn. Another 32% want to go deeper, with a **clearer picture of who they'll connect with and what they'll find on the show floor**.

Speakers and session topics are often confirmed well before the full agenda comes together. So, treat it like a '[scarcity drop](#),' by releasing what's available as it comes in. It's a win-win: You generate more excitement, while clarifying the all-important question: **'What's in it for me ... and my organization?'**

Desired Event Program Developments



ATTENDEE QUESTION

At what point do you consider it too late/last minute to register for a professional event?

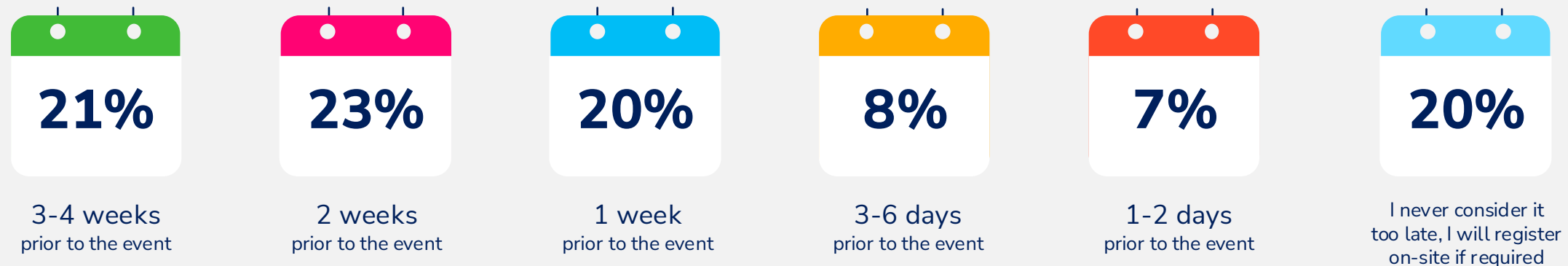
‘Late registration’ is just ‘registration’

Full disclosure, this finding may grind some gears: For most attendees, registering a few weeks out from the event is perfectly normal. The most common cutoff is one to two weeks before. **And 1 in 5 say it’s never too late — they’ll register on-site if they have to.**

Before you keep reading, take a deep breath. This isn’t late registration so much as late decision-making. Often, attendees are just waiting on a compelling reason to commit.

So instead of sulking about it, plan for it. Give attendees that reason sooner, and keep adding fresh details through the final weeks, so late deciders have new reasons to say yes.

Attendee Perception of When It’s Too Late to Register



ATTENDEE QUESTION

How far in advance of registering for the event do you determine that you will attend/block the time on your calendar?

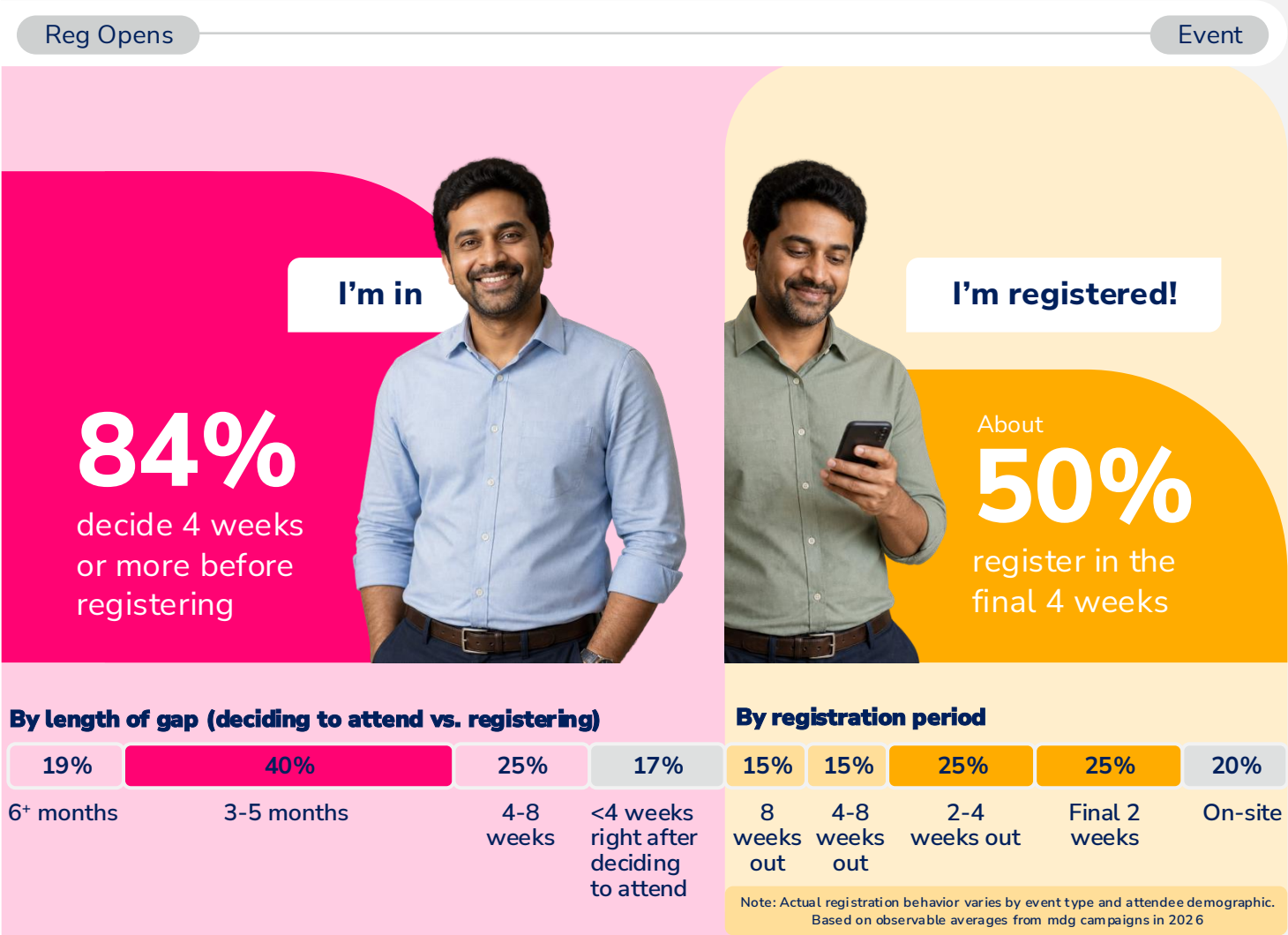
‘I’m in’ comes well before ‘I’m registered’

Most attendees (84%) decide to go to an event one month or more before they register. Specifically, 19% decide 6 months in advance, 40% decide between 3-5 months in advance, and another 25% decide between 4-8 weeks in advance.

Yes, you read that right: **An attendee won’t always register the moment they decide.** Meanwhile, internal data from mdg shows that about half (50%) of registrations arrive in the final four weeks, which is also where typical campaigns concentrate their biggest pushes.

Think of it like a wedding RSVP — guests know they’re coming long before they send back their ‘Yes.’

Timeframe for Determining Attendance



ATTENDEE QUESTION

Would any of the following make you more likely to register for professional events earlier than you selected in the prior question? Select up to 3 options.

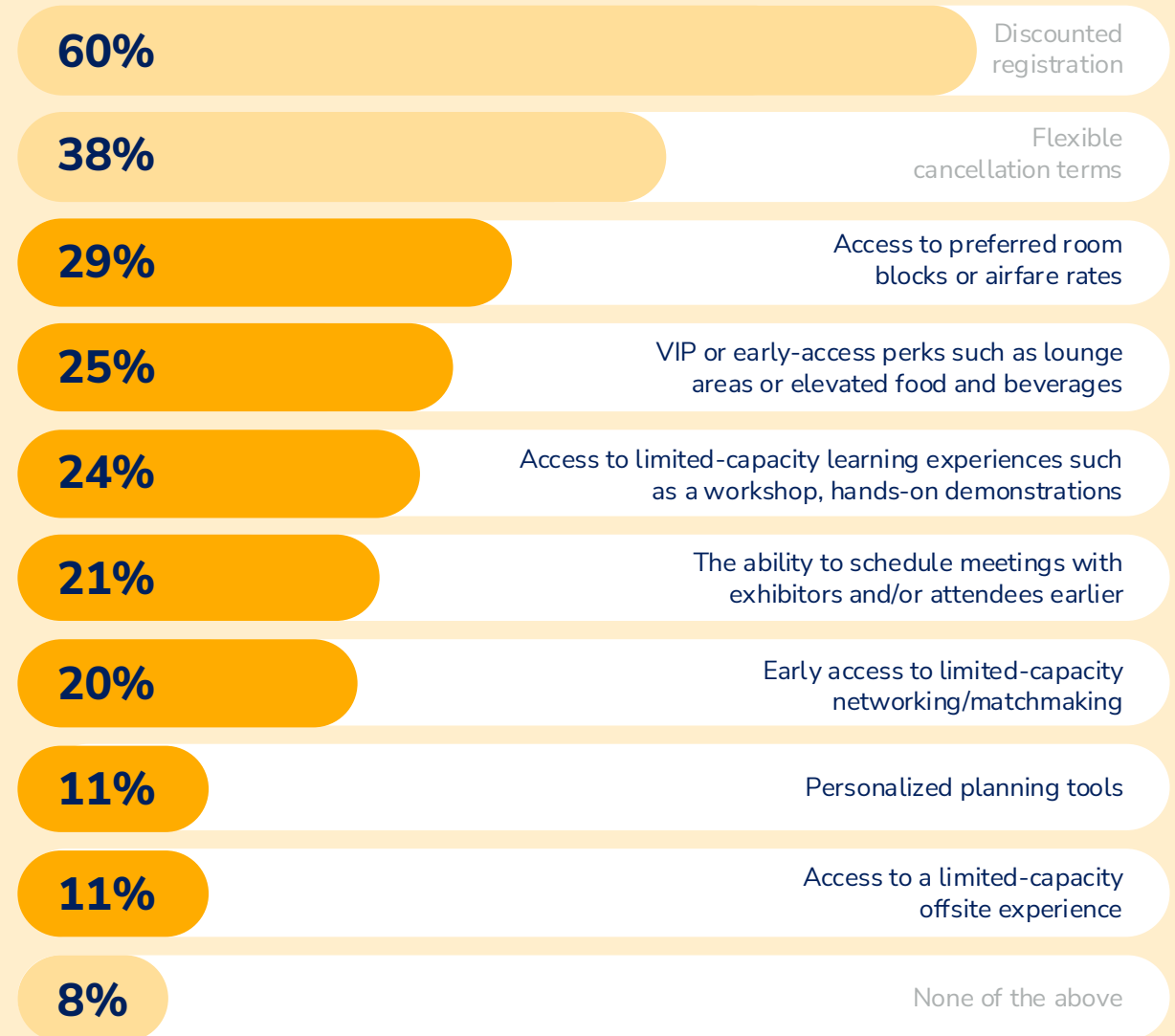
Registering is easier (and likely earlier) when there's something in it for attendees

We asked attendees what would get them to register earlier. The answers show that every attendee has a 'What's in it for me?' (WIFM) monster, and it's always hungry.

A discount is still its favorite snack. If you're rolling your eyes, we get it. It's not the best option for your event, so know that attendees are also drawn to flexible cancellation terms and preferred room blocks.

The lever you may not have pulled yet is access. VIP perks, a spot in a limited-capacity session, first dibs on exhibitor meetings: each one gives attendees a head start on the event itself. Better still, feeding the monster this way won't take a bite out of your price.

Increasing Likelihood of Earlier Registration



ATTENDEE QUESTION

How does a registration cancellation policy (i.e., you receive only a partial or potentially no refund on your registration if you cancel the registration) impact when you register for an event?

Strict cancellation policies cause 7 in 10 attendees to wait and see

Partial- or no-refund policies, along with other practices like nontransferable tickets, may seem like a safeguard ... but they also make attendees hesitate to commit. **This may come as a surprise: 7 in 10 attendees say a policy like this would push their registration closer to the event, and 29% would wait significantly longer.**

That hesitation makes sense. Many hotel and travel bookings now come with free cancellation, so **attendees are used to that kind of flexibility everywhere else.** Flexible cancellation terms were also the second most popular reason to register early ([see the previous slide](#)).

Loosening your cancellation policy may be one of the simplest ways to get people to register sooner. And if you're in doubt, engage more with those who didn't register to see what kept (or is keeping) them on the fence.

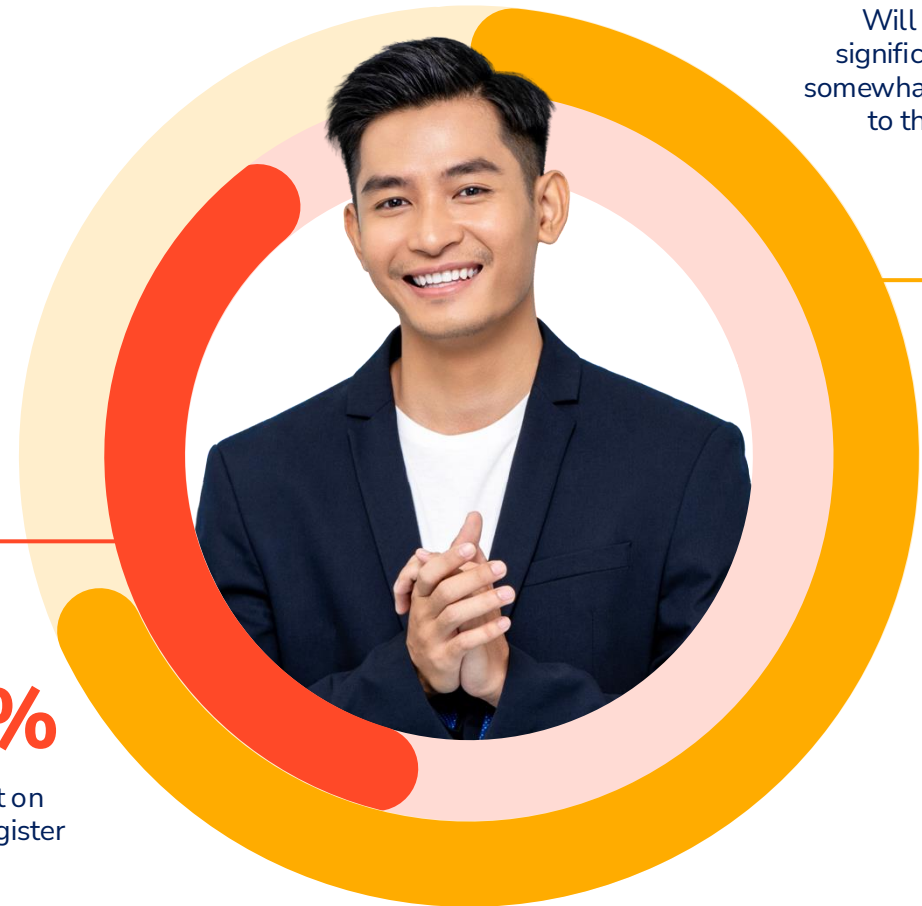
Impact of Registration Cancellation Policy

69%

Will register significantly or somewhat closer to the event

31%

No impact on when I register



ATTENDEE QUESTION

Once you register for a professional event, do you encourage peers or others in your industry or profession to register for the event?

Attendees are already promoting your event... and with a little reward, they'll work harder

58% of registered attendees encourage peers to sign up, too. Most spread the word through email, LinkedIn, and good ol' word of mouth. Some go even further, sharing which speakers and vendors will be there or setting up meetings with the people they invite.

Right now, attendees do all this on their own, with no reward. That's a lot of free marketing.

But most 'referral programs' today are a marketing play: a shareable graphic or post, with nothing on the menu for the person doing the sharing. **Give their 'What's in it for me?' monster a real reward, and you can turn that natural enthusiasm into a steady source of registrations.** Picture attendees earning points toward VIP access, the same perk [25% said](#) would get them to register earlier.

Encouraging Peers to Register

58%

Encourage peers to register for an event after they do

What attendees are saying:

'Email, post on LinkedIn, share on social media, word of mouth.'

'Talking it up and saying it will be a great networking opportunity.'

'Listing other details like specific vendors or speakers or keynotes that will be at the event.'

'Letting folks know that I am attending and often set up a meeting/lunch with the invitee.'

'By sharing the event information directly with colleagues and industry peers.'

'Mentioning the event in conversations, meetings, etc.'



Action Item

Get real about referrals

Forget everything you learned in elementary school — peer pressure is awesome! How can you take advantage of its magical powers? By building an event referral program.

This doesn't need to be complicated. Here are three components it should have:

A points system that leans into exclusivity

This can be super simple: A certain number of points gets you VIP access to special products and solutions, for example.

A concrete reward for each referral

Grant a specific number of points to an attendee each time they refer someone, building up to that VIP access.

Nudges to keep earning

Send reminders to registered attendees. Or, if you're feeling bold, build a simple tracker that registered attendees can use to track their progress.

Rewards like these don't require you to cut into registration revenue, and they'll likely mean more to attendees anyway. After all, only a quarter pay their own way, so a discount mostly helps their company's budget. A better experience helps *them*, with more access and more valuable connections to bring back to their team.

When and how do attendees plan their experience?

Once registered, an attendee begins preparing for an event — right? Not always. In some cases, attendees begin preparing before they physically register, which means the stakes are that much higher for organizers to deliver the information attendees need to make informed decisions.

ATTENDEE QUESTION

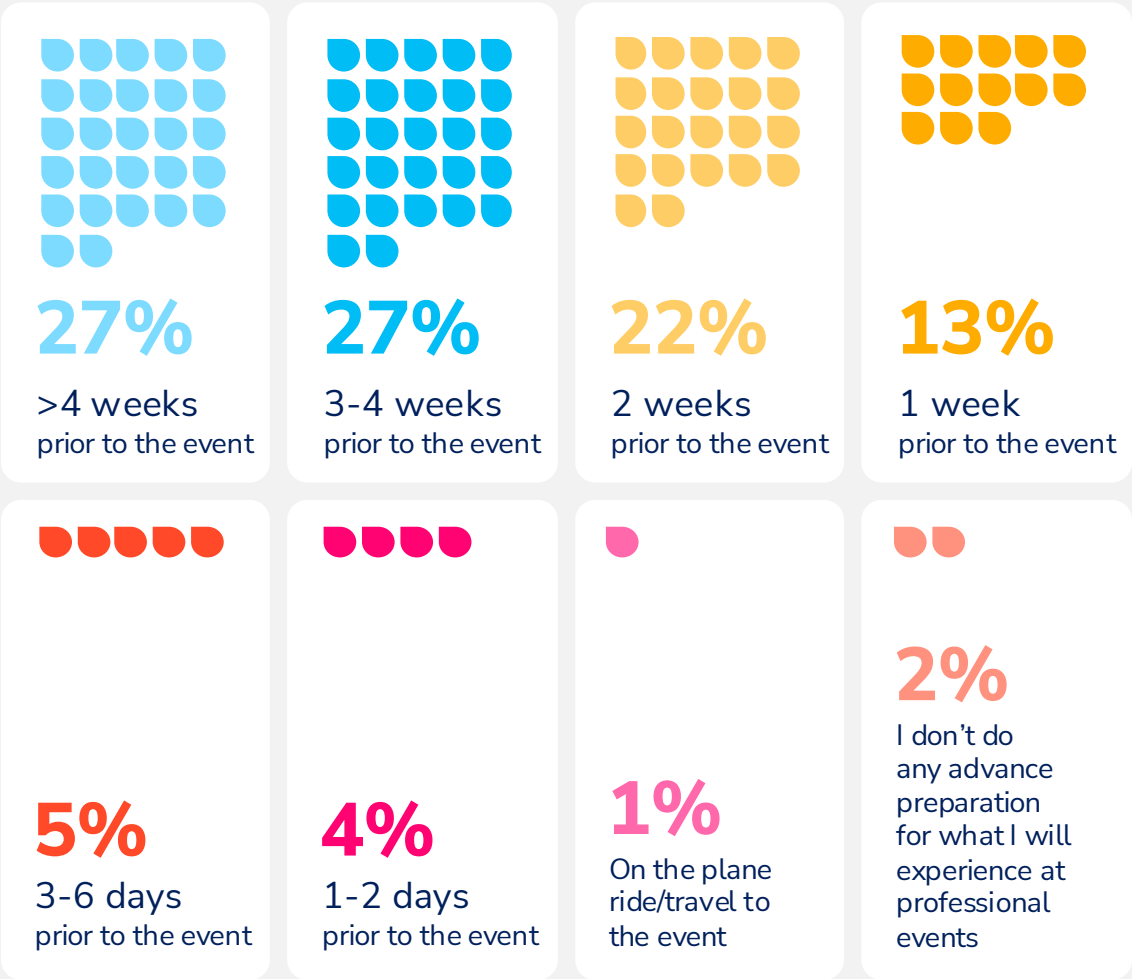
How far in advance of an event do you typically start preparing for what you will do while there (i.e., plan your schedule, identify who you want to connect with, what you will do in the expo hall/what vendors you will meet, etc.)?

Attendees start planning weeks ahead, if you give them something to plan with

More than half of attendees (54%) start planning what they'll do at an event three or more weeks out. That includes mapping their schedule, whom they want to meet, and which exhibitors to visit. Fascinatingly, it's around the same time many are still deciding whether to register.

Attendees are ready to plan early. They just need something to plan with. **At the risk of sounding like a broken record: The sooner speakers, sessions, and exhibitors are posted, the sooner attendees can build their plan, and the easier it gets to commit.**

When Do Attendees Begin to Prepare for Events



ATTENDEE QUESTION

How important is it for you to prepare for each of the following in advance of attending professional events? (% very/extremely important)

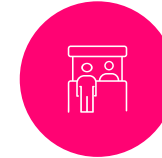
Attendees prep for the show floor, the session schedule, and the people they'll meet

When attendees prepare for an event, figuring out which exhibitors to visit tops the list (63%). Close behind are the products worth investigating (58%), the sessions to attend (57%), and the people they want to connect with (56%).

The scores sit close together, which says attendees prepare for every reason they come: Commerce, Learning, and Networking.

Give them what they need for all three, from exhibitor lists and product details to session descriptions and a look at who else is coming, and they'll arrive with a plan.

What Attendees Prepare for When Attending an Event



63%

Identify exhibitors I should visit



58%

Determine the products/solutions I should investigate



57%

Determine the sessions I should attend



56%

Identify the attendees/experts I should connect with



47%

Create a personalized schedule/agenda for what I will experience

ATTENDEE QUESTIONS

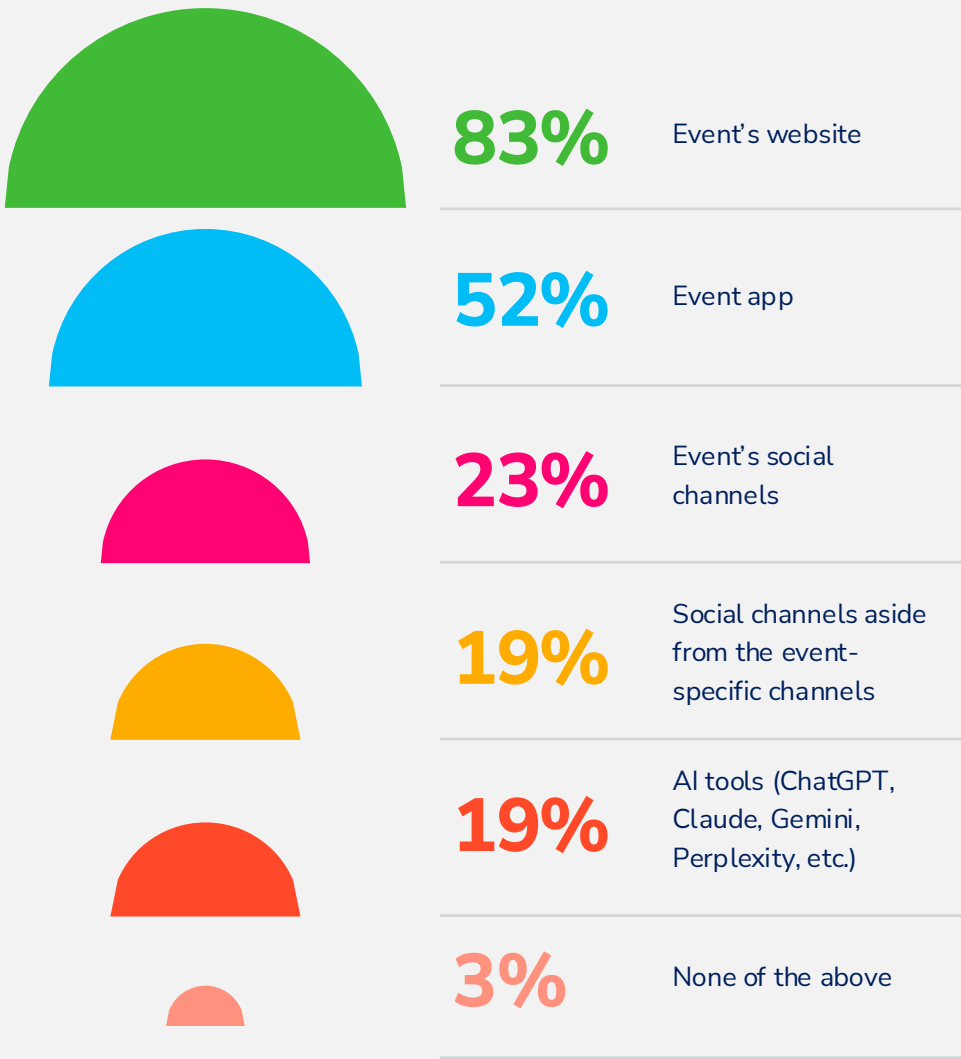
- 1. Which resources or channels do you use when preparing to attend professional events? Select all that apply.
- 2. From the resources or channels you selected, which one do you use closest to the event?

As an event gets closer, attendees rely on the event app nearly as much as the website

Most attendees (83%) rely on the event website as their go-to resource to plan their participation — as you’d expect. The event app reaches about half of attendees, but once the event gets closer, the two resources run neck and neck.

Note: nearly 3 in 10 attendees switch back and forth between channels, so any mismatch shows up quickly. A session time that’s changed in the app but not on the website is the kind of detail attendees catch right before they arrive. **Keeping both in sync means they can trust whatever they’re looking at.**

Channels Used to Prepare for Event Attendance



Used closest to the event %

32%

30%

3%

2%

3%

29%

I use channels/ resources interchangeably

ATTENDEE QUESTION

What role would you like AI to play in helping you prepare for attending a professional event? Select all that apply.

Most attendees would welcome AI’s help preparing for events

Today’s AI users are a small group, but interest is only growing.

Two-thirds of all attendees would like AI to play a role in their prep, from personalizing their schedule to mapping out the experiences they shouldn’t miss (31% each). Only 33% said AI should play no role in helping them prepare for events.

As we said earlier, an AI tool can only plan with what it can find. The more detail you publish on exhibitors, sessions, and speakers, the more useful it becomes for every attendee who turns to it.

More data in appendix

Desired Role of AI in Event Preparation



ATTENDEE QUESTION

If 'AI tools' was selected — What role(s) does AI play in helping you prepare for attending a professional event? Select all that apply.

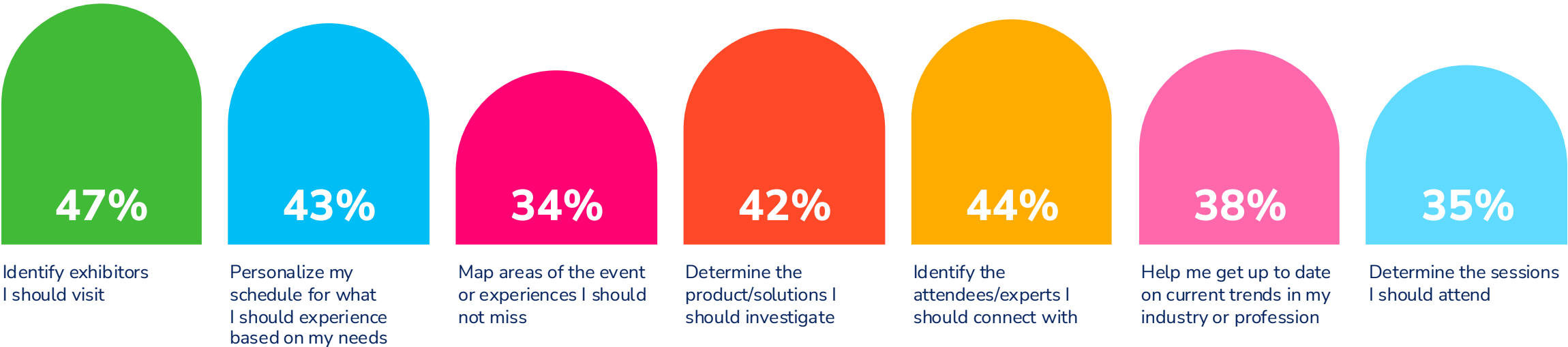
Attendees who leverage AI do so as a personal event planner

Attendees who use AI to prepare mostly ask it which exhibitors to visit (47%), whom to connect with (44%), and how to build a personalized schedule around their needs (43%).

That last one is telling. [We saw previously](#) that only 3% said they need a personalized program to decide whether to attend, yet plenty are building one themselves in the preparation phase.

For these early adopters, AI is acting as a personal event planner.

Current Role of AI in Event Preparation



ATTENDEE QUESTIONS

1. What kind of AI do you prefer to use to prepare for a professional event? Select all that apply.
2. Select your level of agreement with the following statement: I expect the event to provide its own AI to guide how I prepare for an event.

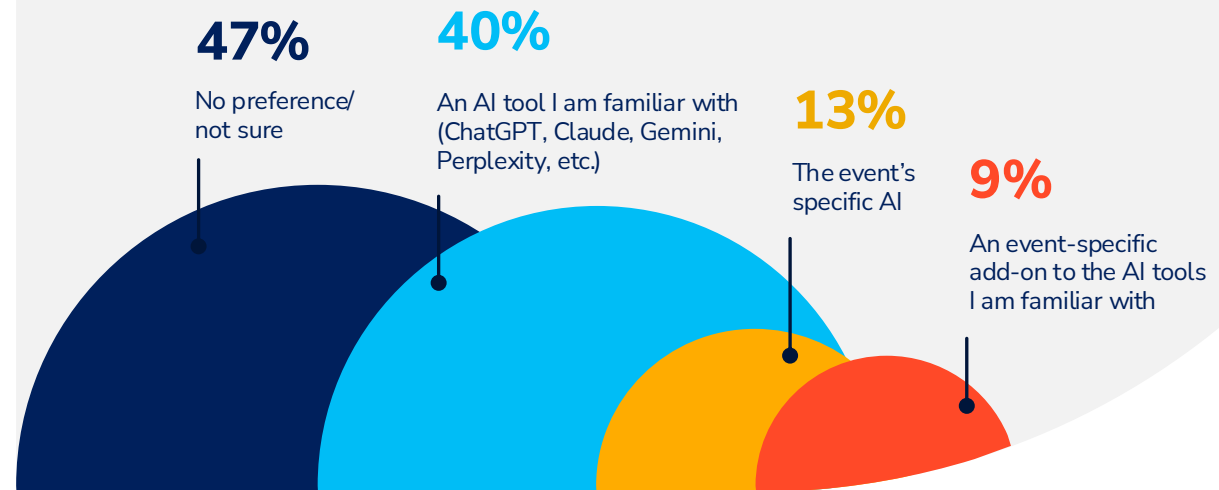
Attendees aren't asking events to build their own AI

Only a quarter of attendees expect an event to provide its own AI to help them prepare, and nearly half have no opinion either way. When they do have a preference, it leans toward tools they already know, like ChatGPT, Claude, or Gemini (40%), over an event-specific tool (13%).

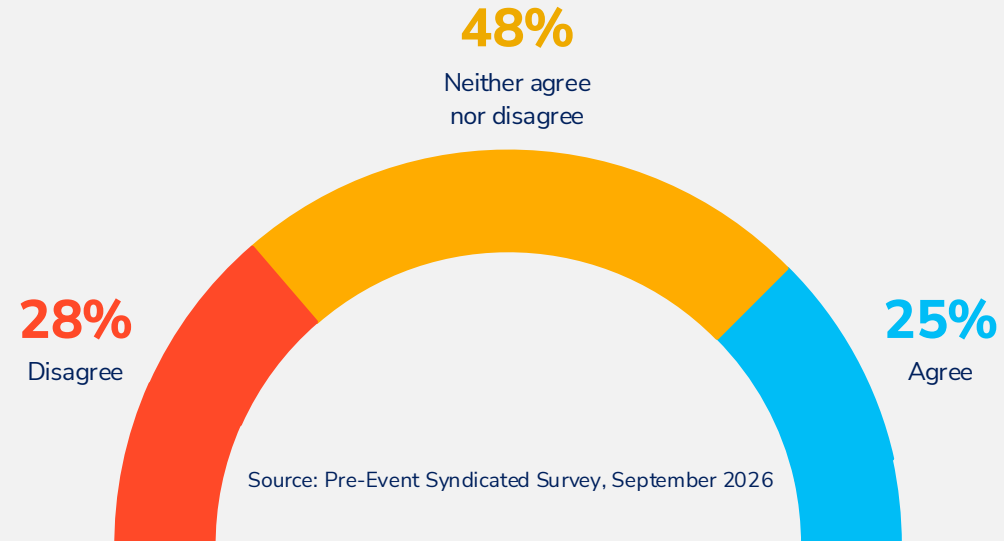
That takes some pressure off. Organizers can likely skip building a custom AI tool and focus on making their event details easy for the tools attendees already use to find.

AI Type Preferences for Event Preparation

AI Tools Type Preference (Question 1)



Event-specific AI Expectations (Question 2)



ATTENDEE QUESTIONS

1. At professional events you attend with other members of your team/organization, how do you typically go about preparing to attend?
2. Do other members of your team influence how you prepare for professional events?

Nearly half of attendees divide and conquer with their team before the event

When colleagues attend together, nearly half (46%) meet beforehand to decide who covers which sessions and exhibitors. And a third say teammates shape how they prepare, whether that's a briefing on which exhibitors to see or aligning on priorities before they go. Splitting up lets teams cover more ground and bring more back to their organization.

Team/Organization Impact on Event Preparation

46%

We meet as a group to parse out who will attend certain sessions, visit certain exhibitors, etc.

28%

I typically attend events solo rather than with others from my team/organization

26%

Each registrant prepares for the event individually with little coordination between the group

What attendees are saying:

'Based on schedules, I'll try to go to different sessions so we can share learning afterward.'

'We will map out coverage of the event and what we do together vs. separate. We will also plan vendor events or group meals.'

'We discuss how we'll walk the floor and divide up learning sessions if needed.'

'We coordinate internally to align priorities, identify key meetings and stakeholders.'

ATTENDEE QUESTION

In general, how effective are 'Know Before You Go' emails or webinars (i.e., an email/webinar from the event organizer providing important details about the event, usually sent within a couple days of the event start) for the professional events you attend?

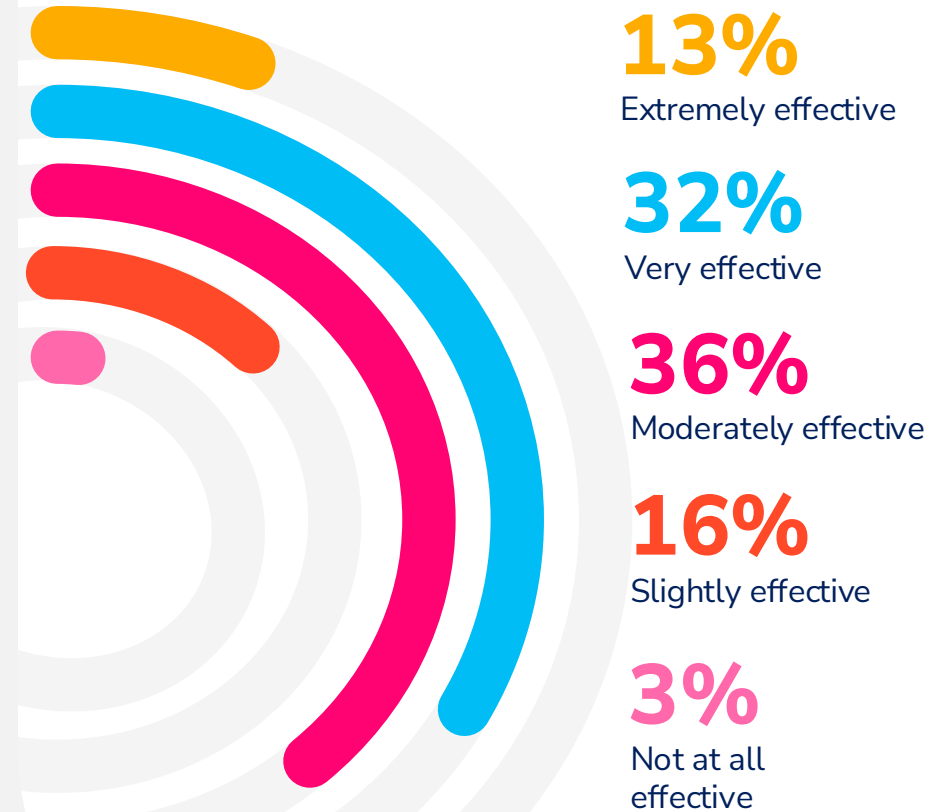
'Know Before You Go' emails work, and they'd work even better if shared sooner

Nearly half of attendees (45%) find 'Know Before You Go' emails very or extremely effective.

However, more than half say they're only moderately effective, slightly effective, or not effective at all. Yikes.

Why the discrepancy? Timing could be a factor. These emails usually land a couple of days before the event, but [we know that most attendees start planning three or more weeks out](#). Send that same practical, here's-what-to-expect content earlier, even to prospects who *haven't* registered yet, and it can help them plan and decide.

Perspective on 'Know Before You Go' Emails/Webinars



ATTENDEE QUESTION

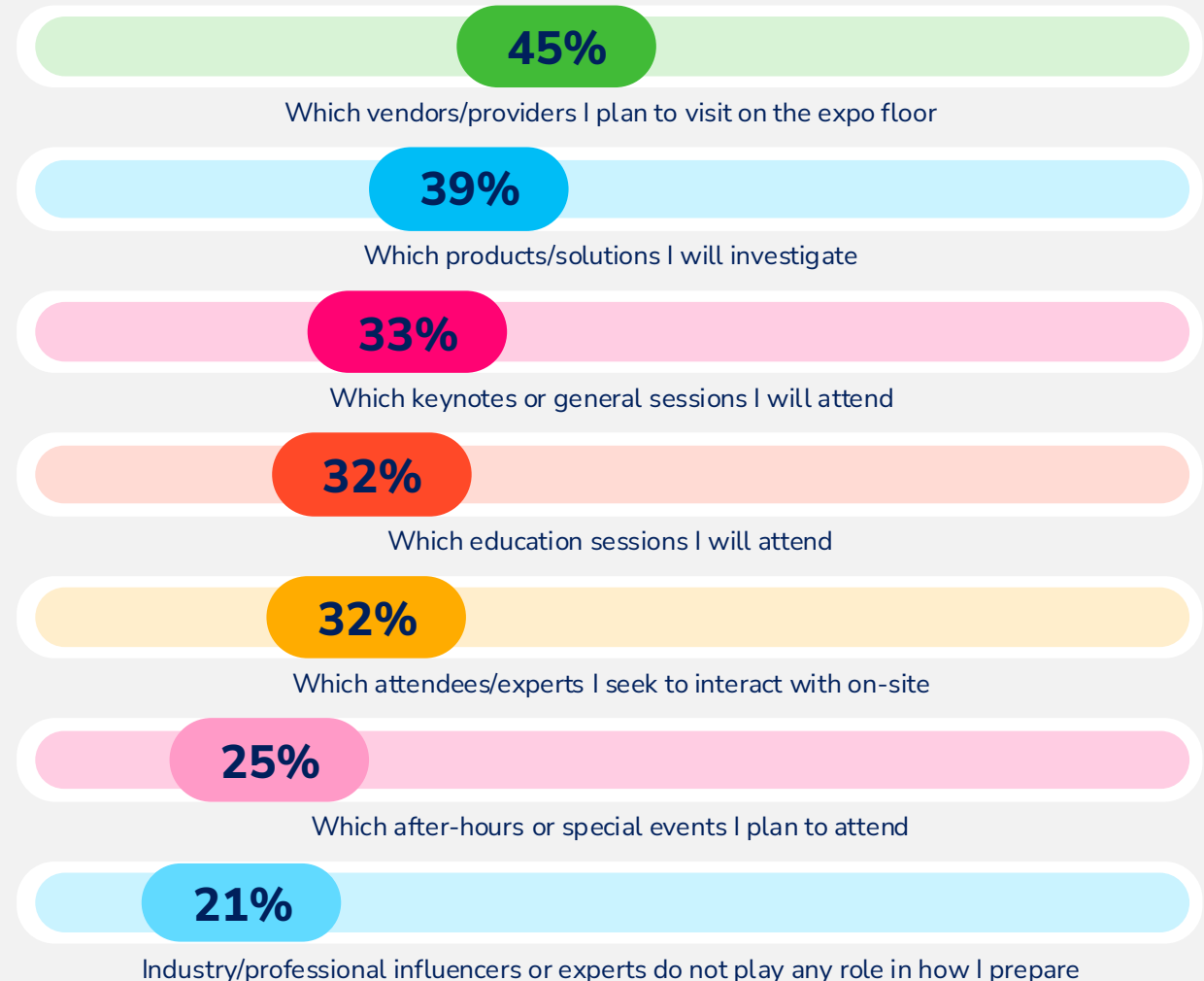
What role do industry/professional influencers or experts play in how you prepare for what you will experience at the event? Select all that apply.

Industry influencers and experts help attendees plan

Most attendees say industry influencers and experts shape how they prepare for an event. Mostly, they're steering attendees toward which vendors to visit on the expo floor (45%) and which products to check out (39%).

That's a bigger role [than we saw influencers play in the evaluation phase](#), when only 24% look at what they're saying to judge an event's value. Once attendees are registered, industry experts become trusted guides. **Influencers are highly, *ahem*, influential, so bring them into your pre-event promotion** with partnerships, guest content, or expert picks for what not to miss.

Role of Industry Influencers on Event Preparation





Action Item

Help attendees plan before they arrive

Attendees start planning weeks before they arrive, and what they find in that window shapes how they experience the event. Here's how to help them show up ready:

Move 'Know Before You Go' up the calendar

Most attendees start planning three or more weeks out, so send that practical, here's-what-to-expect content earlier, and consider sharing it with prospects who haven't registered yet.

Make it personal

Lead with the reason each attendee is coming. (Not sure what that is? A one-question prompt at registration will tell you.) See the next slide for an example of what that could look like.

Plan for teams, not just individuals

Nearly half of colleagues who attend together divide and conquer. Shareable agendas and exhibitor lists make that easier and more productive.

Put industry experts to work

Attendees lean on influencers to decide how to spend their time. Bring them into your pre-event promotion with expert picks or guest content.

How to make 'Know Before You Go' content more personal and helpful

Subject lines by primary objective:

Learning: Your can't-miss sessions at [Event], picked for you

Networking: Who you'll meet at [Event] (and how to find them)

Commerce: The exhibitors worth your time at [Event]

eXperience: Everything you need for a great [Event], all in one place

Hi [First name],

You told us you're coming to [learn/connect/find new solutions/make the most of the experience]. So let's start there.

Your sessions: A few sessions matched to your role, plus a heads-up on the limited-capacity ones that fill fast.

Your people: Who's coming, by organization type and role, plus the meetups and matchmaking you can book now.

Your solutions: Exhibitors in your areas of interest, where to find them on the floor, and how to book a meeting before the crowd.

Your essentials: Badge pickup, hours, and getting around, plus the perks that make the trip worth it.

P.S. Coming with colleagues? Forward this so you can divide and conquer.



Action Item

Part Two

Exhibitors*

*Or sponsors, vendors, suppliers, partners ... same great people, different name tags.



Why and how do **exhibitors** discover events?

Like attendees, exhibitors lean on people and organizations they trust to find events, with a growing assist from AI. Once an event is on their radar, they want one thing above all: a clear picture of who'll be in the room.

EXHIBITOR QUESTION

What objectives/challenges are most likely to prompt you/your organization to consider exhibiting/sponsoring at an in-person professional conference or trade show? Select up to 5 options.

Exhibitors seek in-person events to generate brand awareness and fresh leads

Building brand awareness and generating new leads are the two main reasons exhibitors consider an in-person event. Close behind are the chance to meet lots of customers and prospects in one place and to keep existing relationships strong.

Very few exhibitors seek events because other channels are falling short on lead quality or quantity. In other words, your event is not a backup plan. It's competing with channels most exhibitors seem satisfied with.

So, make your event worth their while by delivering on what brought them in: visibility, plus a steady stream of qualified prospects. Then build your exhibitor marketing around proof that your event does it better than those other channels can.

Objectives That Prompt Exhibiting at Events



EXHIBITOR QUESTION

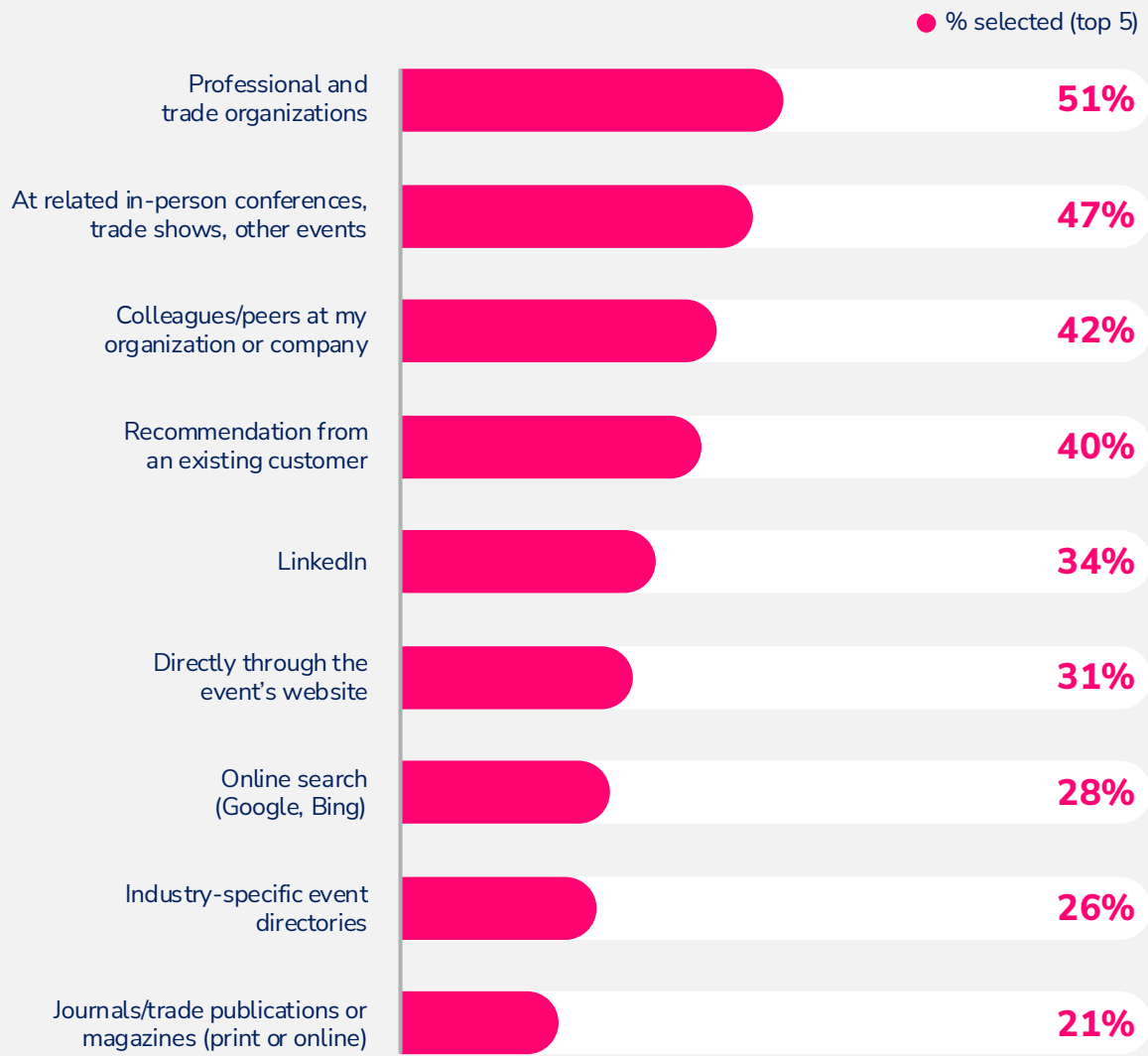
Through what sources are you most likely to learn about in-person professional events that would be relevant for your organization to exhibit at and/or sponsor? Select up to 5 options.

Exhibitors discover events through their professional networks and the people closest to them

Like attendees, exhibitors mostly find events through their professional communities: trade organizations (51%), other events (47%), and colleagues (42%). That makes it a two-way street. Attendees often hear about events from vendors, and exhibitors listen closely to their customers. **Every exhibitor and attendee you bring in can help recruit the other.**

 More data in appendix

Sources for Discovering Events



EXHIBITOR QUESTION

Select your level of agreement with the following statements regarding AI use for discovering professional events. (% agree/strongly agree)

AI is starting to change where exhibitors choose to show up

One in four exhibitors has used AI to find events where their organization could exhibit or sponsor.

Among them, 90% say it's helpful for **building a short list**, though it takes more digging to pick the most worthwhile event.

For more than half, it has even changed their view of where to show up. That's kind of a big deal. **An event that shows up well in AI results can win over exhibitors who weren't even considering it.**

25%

Have used AI to discover professional conferences or trade shows where their organization could exhibit/sponsor

90%

AI is helpful for identifying a short list of relevant professional events, but more work is required to identify the most worthwhile event

63%

AI is more effective than other options for identifying relevant professional events where my organization could exhibit/sponsor

52%

AI has changed my perspective on professional events where my organization could exhibit/sponsor

AI Use for Discovering Events

Freeman¹



Action Item

Show up where exhibitors are looking

Exhibitors find events through their **professional networks**, **trusted recommendations** and, increasingly, **AI**. Here's how to get your event on their radar:

Lead with visibility and pipeline

Brand awareness and new leads are what get exhibitors to consider an event in the first place. Put whom they'll reach, and the business they can generate, at the front of your exhibitor marketing.

Show up where exhibitors are already looking

Most find events through trade organizations, other events, and colleagues. Build partnerships with those groups and encourage attendees and current exhibitors to mention your event to the companies they work with.

Make your event easy to find and size up

Keep your exhibitor list and attendee prospectus current, public, and detailed, so both exhibitors, and the AI tools they use, can quickly see who'll be at the event.

How do **exhibitors** evaluate events?

Once an event is on an exhibitor's radar, they want one thing above all: a clear picture of who'll be in the room. Unfortunately, right now, they're not getting that picture.

EXHIBITOR QUESTION

What pages/references on an event's website are you most likely to reference to determine if the event is worth attending? Select up to 5 options.

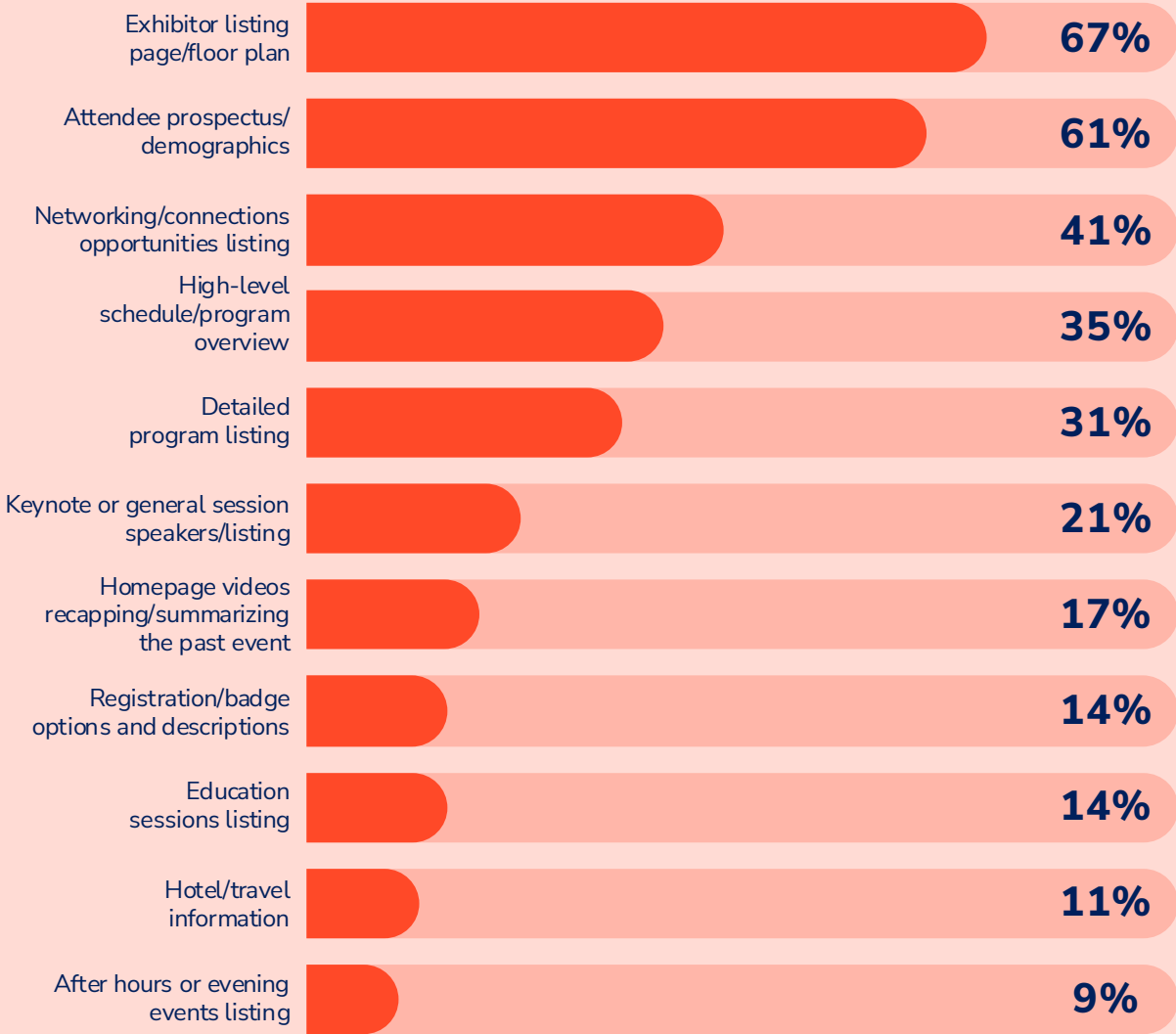
Before committing, exhibitors want to size up the competition and the customers

What webpages do exhibitors use to assess events? **They go straight to the exhibitor listing and attendee prospectus** to check two things: whether companies like theirs are exhibiting, and whether the buyers they're after will be there.

Providing this information up front does double duty. Attendees reference the exhibitor listing more than any other page, too, and most (60%) say knowing what types of organizations will attend would compel them to register.

Also keep in mind who's often doing the checking: a marketing team reporting to a CMO. They're splitting one budget across traditional and digital channels, and your event is just one line item competing for it. So let them see who's on the floor and how that crowd lines up with their ideal customer. Then put it in the terms they already use to compare channels.

Event Website Pages Referenced for Determining Event Participation



EXHIBITOR QUESTION

In general, how effective are professional events at explaining the ROI you will receive from exhibiting/sponsoring?
(% very/extremely effective)

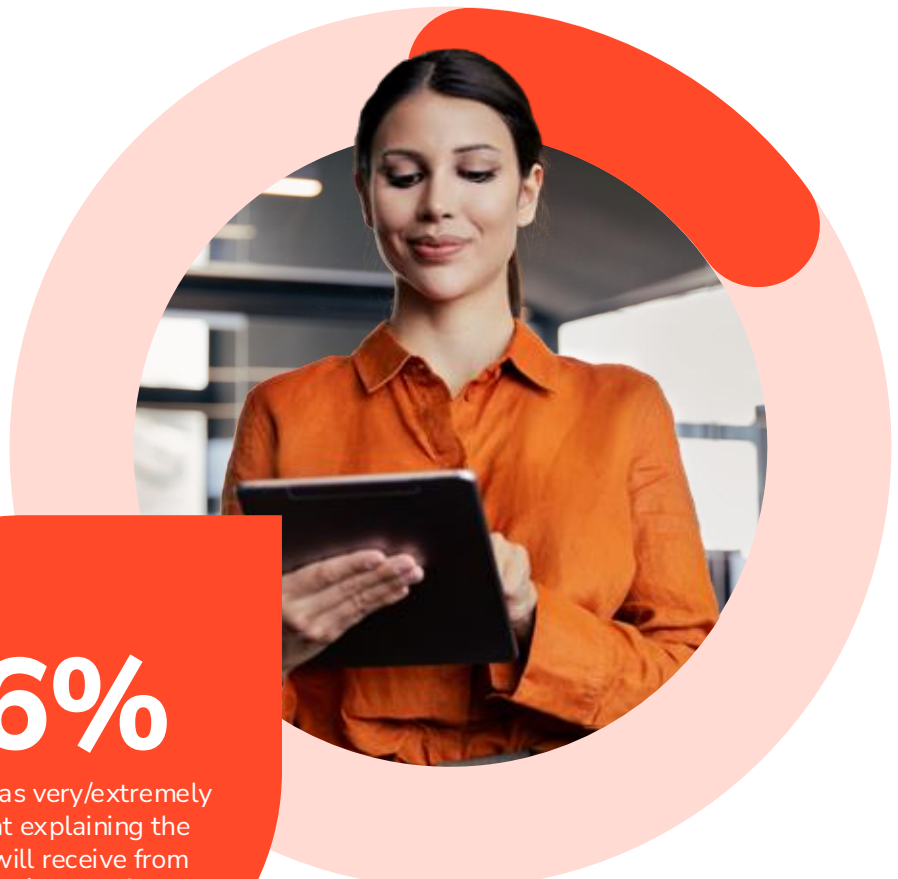
Few exhibitors say events effectively explain ROI

Only 16% of exhibitors say events are very effective at explaining the return they'll get from exhibiting. That leaves more than 8 in 10 **piecing together the answer on their own**, often by asking colleagues and digging through event websites.

What they're trying to figure out is mostly about the room: which customers will be there, which competitors are exhibiting, and whether the right organizations and roles will show up.

The event that makes its ROI story easy to see gives exhibitors one less reason to hesitate.

How Exhibitors Determine if an Event Will Deliver Required ROI



16%

rate events as very/extremely effective at explaining the ROI they will receive from exhibiting/sponsoring

EXHIBITOR QUESTION

Where are events falling short in how they help you/your organization determine if it is worthwhile for exhibiting/sponsoring? Select all that apply.

Exhibitors want a clearer picture of who's attending

Asked where events fall short, exhibitors point to the audience. Their biggest gaps are missing details on the **types of attendees** coming, no easy way to **gauge ROI**, and a weak attendee profile.

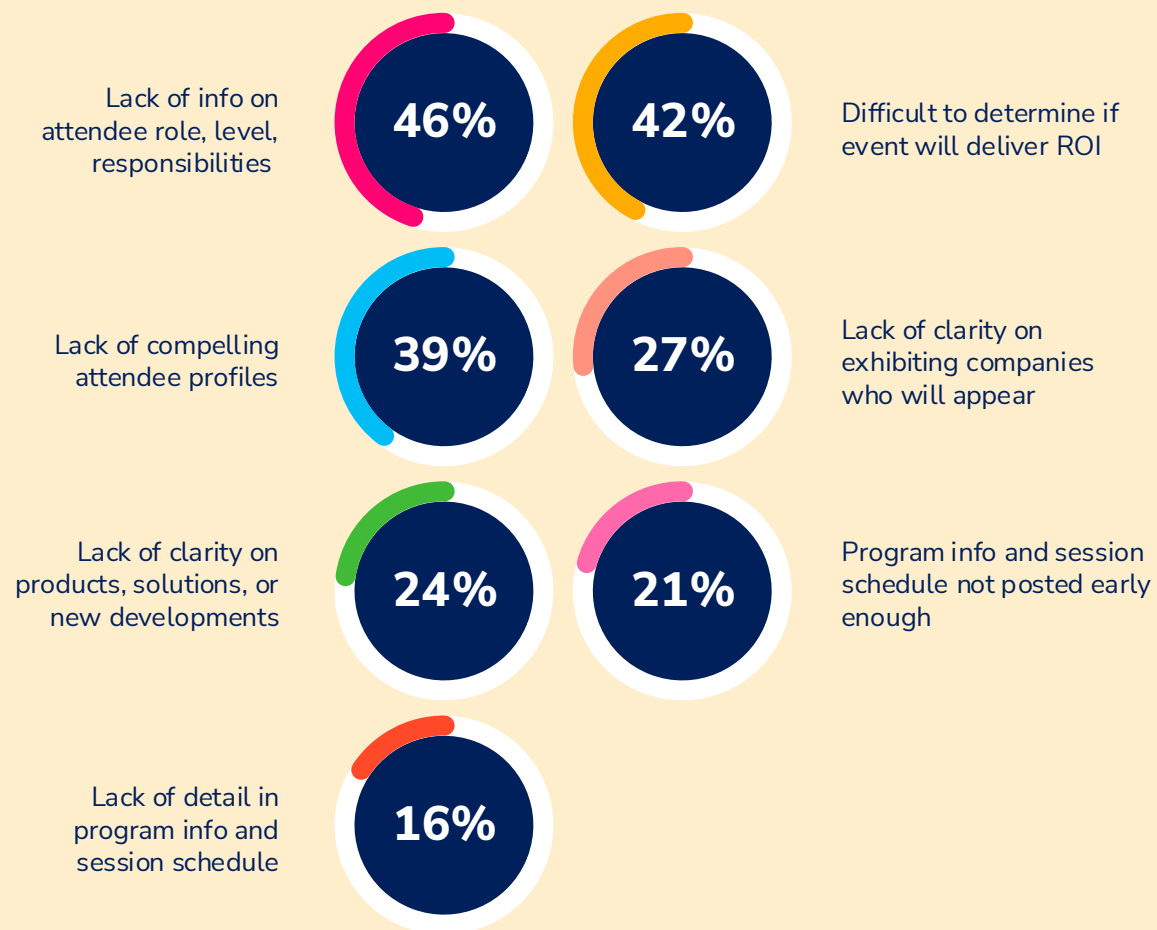
Those gaps are connected. A **detailed attendee profile** is often the fastest way to show exhibitors **'What's in it for me?'** and it's one of the first things they look for when **deciding whether to buy a booth**.

The earlier organizers share this information, and the easier they make it for exhibitors to absorb, the more success they'll have in driving registration.



More data
in appendix

How Events Fall Short of Helping Prospective Exhibitors Determine Whether to Participate



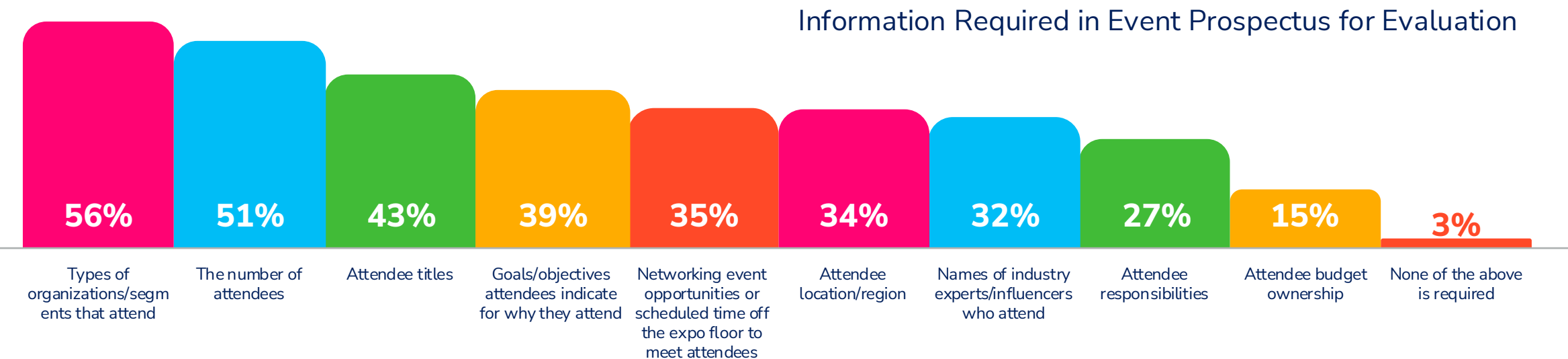
EXHIBITOR QUESTION

What type of information in an event's prospectus or information regarding who attends the event is most likely to encourage your organization to exhibit/sponsor? Select all that apply.

The best prospectus tells exhibitors who's coming, not just how many

Organization type tops exhibitors' prospectus wish list (56%), just edging out total attendance (51%). **Attendee titles** (43%) and the **goals** that bring people to the event (39%) round out the top four.

That's what a strong attendee profile looks like in practice: **a clear breakdown of the organizations and roles behind the headcount.**



EXHIBITOR QUESTION

Does the fear of missing out (FOMO) play a role in making your organization feel compelled to exhibit/sponsor at relevant professional events?

FOMO is real for exhibitors, too

The fear of missing out — FOMO — plays at least a moderate role for more than half of exhibitors (57%). It's rarely the deciding factor on its own, but it can tip the scales. **In case you needed another reason to share exhibitor and attendee lists sooner... this is it.**

Role of FOMO in Exhibiting/Sponsoring

33%

FOMO plays no role in whether my organization exhibits/sponsors at a professional event

44%

FOMO plays a moderate, but not pivotal, role in whether my organization exhibits/sponsors at a professional event

13%

FOMO plays a key role in whether my organization exhibits/sponsors at a professional event

EXHIBITOR QUESTION

What factors contribute to you feeling professional event FOMO? Select all that apply.

Exhibitors fear losing out to the competition

What stirs up exhibitor FOMO the most? **It's all about the competition.** Seeing competitors on the exhibitor list and the thought of **missing out on new prospects** top the list, followed by missing the opportunity to **advance relationships with existing customers.**

 More data in appendix

What Contributes to Event FOMO



EXHIBITOR QUESTION

What does your organization need to demonstrate to get funding to exhibit/sponsor at a professional event?
Select all that apply.

Exhibitors need an idea of how the event will likely deliver ROI

We asked exhibitors what they need to show their organization to get funding for an event.

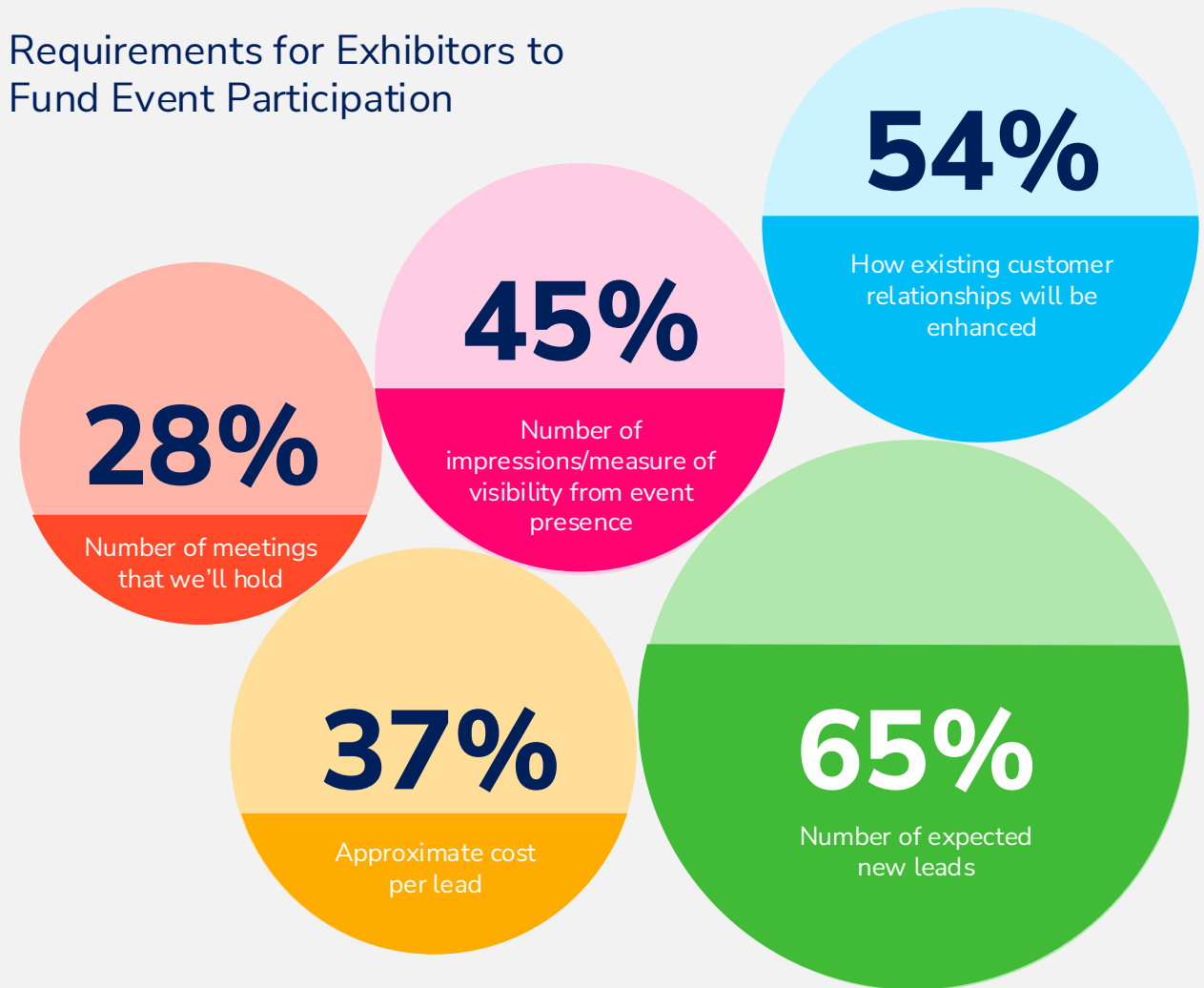
Most said they expected **new leads**. More than half said proof of how the event will **strengthen existing customer relationships**. And nearly half said they need to demonstrate a measure of the **visibility** they'll get.

[As we saw earlier](#), few organizers are effectively sharing those projected returns.

But remember, **the person weighing your event usually has to win over someone else before they can book a booth**.

So, it's time to step it up, organizers. **Think about offering benchmarks from past events**, like typical booth traffic, lead volume, or attendance by segment, to give them real numbers to make their case.

Requirements for Exhibitors to Fund Event Participation





Action Item

Share the **right insights**, at the **right time**, with the **right people**.

Exhibitors need to know whom they'll meet and what those connections can do for their business, but few say events make that clear in advance. Here's how to make the most compelling case:

Break down the headcount and tell the ROI story for them

Don't leave exhibitors to piece it together on their own. Translate your audience data into what matters to their business, like titles, goals, and segments represented. That breakdown is what exhibitors use to spot their customers in the crowd.

Keep the picture fresh

Update your attendee profile and exhibitor list as registrations grow, so exhibitors weighing a booth always see the latest view of who's coming.

Look beyond the exhibit manager

The person weighing that value is often a marketer comparing your event with every other line item in their channel plan.



Action Item

Make it **easier** to make the business case

Wanting to exhibit is one thing. Getting the budget approved is another, and that approval depends on numbers organizers are in the best position to provide. Here's how to get exhibitors closer to 'yes':

Build a business-case kit

Remember the justification kit we suggested for attendees? Exhibitors need one, too. Share lead retrieval results from past events where you have them, visibility and engagement metrics, and an early snapshot of who's registered. That gives exhibitors what they need to estimate the leads their leadership will ask about.

Pitch the customers they have AND the ones they want

Exhibitors go where their customers will be, but budgets get approved on new leads. Make the case for both in the same breath.

Let the competition do the talking

For exhibitors, FOMO is mostly about rivals. Publish your exhibitor list early and update it often. It's the page exhibitors check first, and one that attendees find valuable, too.

Make their math easier, and the decision to purchase a booth gets easier with it.

How do **exhibitors** prepare?

Big news: Exhibitors prepare for events earlier, and with a unique set of questions, compared with attendees. Even bigger news: The majority of what will move the needle is already within organizers' control to share.

EXHIBITOR QUESTION

What is one key thing that an event organizer can provide your organization in advance to ensure you are well-prepared/show up well as an exhibitor/sponsor?

Good prep starts with attendee intel, all in one place

When asked for the one thing that would help them prepare, exhibitors most often said attendee **intelligence**, **schedules**, and **logistics**. To make exhibitors' lives even easier, try to put all that information in one place.

What Exhibitors Require from Event Organizers to Prepare

Top Comment Categories*

40%

Attendee intelligence

26%

Schedules and guidance

25%

Logistics and booth planning

19%

Connections and visibility

What exhibitors are saying:

'Clear and simple information in one location.'

'Clear definition of attendees and scope of program sessions so we can determine if our demographic is attending and adjust messaging and pre-show training accordingly.'

'We need agendas, housing, and expo hours much sooner. As a sponsor, we don't want to hold events when attendees will be busy, so learning our open windows ASAP will help us secure space, know our hours, and better execute on our budgets.'

'Detailed attendee demographics and company information, including attendee job titles, responsibilities, and the types of organizations expected to attend.'

*Will not sum to 100%; comments can fall into multiple categories or other categories not displayed

EXHIBITOR QUESTION

How far in advance of the most important professional event where your organization exhibits/sponsors do you begin to prepare your presence?

Most exhibitors start preparing six or more months before an event

We've noted many similarities between how exhibitors and attendees prepare for an event. One huge difference? On average, exhibitors prepare for an event **6-8 months in advance** (and nearly one in four exhibitors prepare 12 months or more in advance).

That long runway gives organizers plenty of chances to **share insights, engage prospective exhibitors, and prove ROI** while they're still deciding where to go. And once the booth is booked, keep the conversation going.

Sponsorship decisions often come later, as exhibitors spend the last of their budget. **When those final dollars are up for grabs, make sure your sponsorship options are the first thing they see.**

Timeframe for When Exhibitors Prepare for Events



EXHIBITOR QUESTIONS

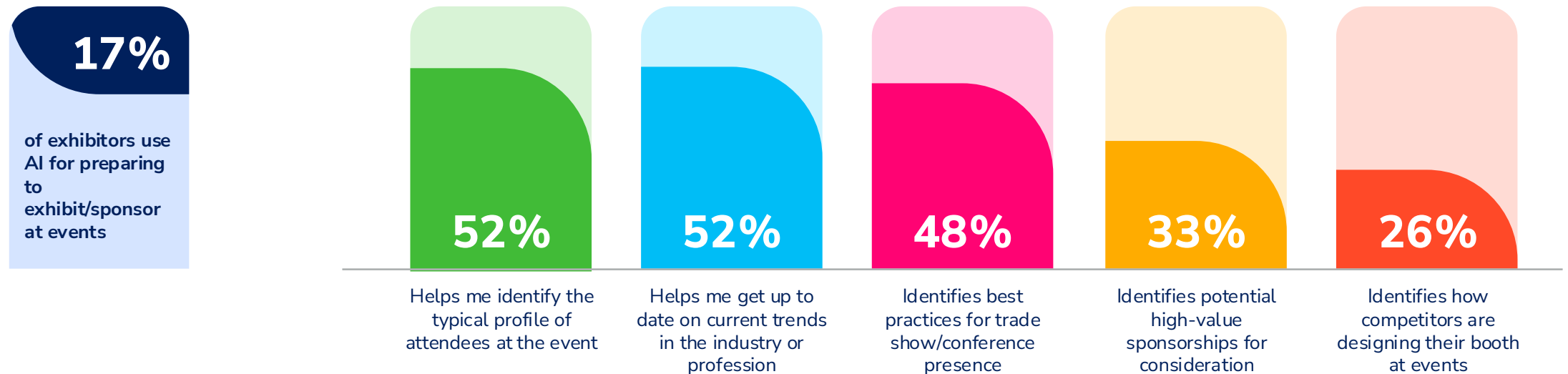
1. Do you use AI in preparation for exhibiting/sponsoring at professional events?
2. What role(s) does AI play in helping you prepare for exhibiting/sponsoring at a professional event? Select all that apply.

Exhibitors are asking AI for the attendee intel events aren't giving them

About 1 in 6 exhibitors use AI to prepare for events. They mostly ask about the typical attendee profile, current industry trends, and best practices for making the most of their presence.

Exhibitors can find this information on their own, **or you can be the hero who hands it to them before they have to ask.**

Current Role of AI in Event Preparation



EXHIBITOR QUESTION

Please select your level of agreement on the following statements regarding subject matter expert (SME) participation at the most important events where your organization exhibits/sponsors. (% agree/strongly agree)

Exhibitors count on their experts, and many want them better prepared for the floor

If you've read our [previous reports](#), you'll know that subject matter experts (SMEs) do a lot of the heavy lifting at events. This remains true. More than two-thirds of exhibitors say SMEs are pivotal to their conversations with customers and prospects, and most send them just as often as they send their sales reps.

Yet 44% say their SMEs need more training to be successful at events. That's a chance for organizers to step in and provide simple resources like conversation guides, booth tips, or a pre-show webinar that helps SMEs arrive ready.

As a result, exhibitors get more out of their experts, attendees get better conversations, and organizers get participants who see returns.

Exhibitor Perspective on Subject Matter Expert (SME) Participation



68%

SMEs are pivotal to the interactions we have with customer/prospects



62%

We prioritize sending SMEs to the same degree as sales personnel



44%

SMEs at my organization require more upskilling on how to be successful at events





Action Item

Equip exhibitors to arrive ready

Exhibitors start planning their event experience early and need a lot from organizers to feel prepared. Here's how you can best help them:

Create a single source of truth

Exhibitors hear from organizers, partners, and venues across too many channels. Consolidate everything into one hub built around what they asked for most: attendee intelligence, schedules and deadlines, logistics, and connection opportunities. Post agendas and expo hours early, so exhibitors can plan meetings around when attendees are actually available.

Feed the AI tools they already use

Exhibitors who use AI in their planning process are most interested in attendee demographics and current trends, so make this information front and center. Notice that we're not suggesting building your own tool but publishing enough details so that AI can generate accurate, helpful answers when prompted.

Coach the SMEs

Subject matter experts are pivotal to exhibitor success, yet nearly half of exhibitors say they need upskilling. To fill this gap, create a brief toolkit on how to lead a demo, ask customers good questions, and close with a clear next step.

So, what now?



So, what now?

We get it: You're stretched thin.

The people you're trying to reach aren't a mystery, though, and reaching them doesn't take a bigger budget.

Attendees and exhibitors choose an event by asking, **'What's in it for me?'** and their organization. They lean on people and sources they trust. And they commit once they have enough information and a good reason to act now.

Each of those points to something you can do. **Make the value clear for their specific goals.** Get your attendees, exhibitors, and industry voices talking about your event. And share what you have early, then keep adding to it, so no one has to wait on you to decide.

Want a sharper picture of your own audience? **Ask lapsed attendees and would-be exhibitors what held them back.** Check your website analytics to see which pages people visit first, a clue to whether they're coming to learn, network, or buy. And ask your exhibitors what they need to show to get their booth funded.

You'll find a more detailed list of recommended actions on the next two pages.



Action Items to Help Attendees

Think like an attendee

Attendees want to know what they'll learn, whom they'll meet, and what they'll discover. Answer those questions from the start, and 'Is it worth the investment?' answers itself.

Make your event content AI-ready

AI is your newest gatekeeper. Put key event details in plain text, get your community talking about your event, and test a few AI tools to see if they recommend events like yours.

Arm attendees with any information you've got

Don't wait for a finished program or a big headcount to start sharing. Post what you have, add to it as details come together, and give attendees a ready-made case to pitch their boss.

Get real about referrals

Your attendees are already promoting your event, with no reward. Harness that enthusiasm with a simple points-based referral program that earns them a better experience, not a discount.

Help attendees plan before they arrive

Most attendees start preparing for an event three or more weeks out. Send 'Know Before You Go' content earlier, give teams shareable agendas and exhibitor lists, and let industry experts point attendees to what they shouldn't miss.



Action Items to Help Exhibitors

Show up where exhibitors are looking

Exhibitors find events through trade organizations, other events, and trusted colleagues, and one in four have used AI. Lead with visibility and pipeline, and keep your exhibitor list and prospectus easy to find.

Make the ROI explicit

Help exhibitors out by breaking down your headcount by organization type, title, and goals. And keep it all current, so they can more easily make the connections they need.

Help exhibitors make the business case

Exhibitor budgets get approved on numbers. Share past results and early registration snapshots, and pitch both current customers and new leads. Post an early exhibitor list, and let competitive FOMO do the rest.

Equip exhibitors to arrive ready

Give exhibitors one hub for preparing, and put attendee demographics and trends front and center for their AI tools. Then help their SMEs lead better demos and conversations.

Get ready for ‘during’

This report tracked attendees and exhibitors from the first time they hear about an event to the moment they pick up their badge. The stretch between registration and badge pickup is one of the biggest black holes in the events industry. Now event organizers have a few ways to fill it.

But the story doesn't end at the badge counter. Our next report heads through the doors and onto the floor to explore how participants navigate the event, what they expect once they arrive, and what makes the experience worth their time.

And after that? We'll tackle what happens once the event wraps, when next year's registrations quietly begin.

See you at badge pickup.



Connect with Freeman

Whether you need data-fueled direction or on-the-ground expertise, Freeman Strategy, and our agency team from mdg, equip you with the tools to lead successful events.

**For details,
reach out to:**

Tyler Day

tyler@mdg.agency

Ken Holsinger

ken.holsinger@freeman.com

Community Needs Discovery

Uncover unmet learning needs among past and current attendees and exhibitors through targeted surveys, helping you design unstructured learning experiences that align with what your community actually wants.

Show Your Value

Give your event a clear identity with attendee personas, creative concepts, and a messaging platform that connects with the people you most want to attract.

Know Your Value

Stop guessing what attendees want and start building on real insights, with registration analysis and value proposition development that show where your event stands apart.

Share Your Value

Put your event in front of the right audience with an influencer strategy and paid media campaign built around voices they already listen to.

Appendix

Attendee Demographics

Attendee Demographics

Job Title/Function	%
Corporate Management	36%
C-level	6%
Owner/Partner/President	13%
EVP/SVP/VP	3%
Director/Manager	14%
Sales/Business Development	12%
Healthcare	8%
Technical	8%
Production/Operations/Maintenance	5%
Marketing/Advertising	5%
Buyer/Purchasing	5%
Consultant	4%
Government	3%
R&D	3%
Other	11%

Industry	%
Medical/Healthcare	11%
Consumer Goods	10%
Industrial/Heavy Machinery and Finished Business Outputs	8%
Business Services	7%
Technology/Communications/IT	7%
Food/Beverage	7%
Building/Construction/Home and Repair	7%
Retail	6%
Government	6%
Raw Materials/Agriculture/Utilities	5%
Education	4%
Transportation	3%
Financial, Legal and Real Estate	2%
Other	16%

Type of Event Attended	%
Conference	30%
Tradeshow	70%

Purchase Decision Making Status	%
Key/sole decision-maker	33%
Significant influence	34%
Some influence	23%
No influence/end user	10%

Decision Making Status on Event Attendance	%
Sole decision-maker	40%
Significant influence	35%
Some influence	19%
No influence	6%

Attendee Demographics Continued

Organization FTEs	%
1-100	53%
101-500	16%
501-2,000	10%
2,001-5,000	6%
More than 5,000	15%

Generation	%
Gen Z	11%
Millennials	34%
Gen X	38%
Boomers	17%

Location	%
United States	77%
International	23%

Gender	%
Male	57%
Female	39%
Non-binary/non-conforming	1%
Choose not to specify	3%

Exhibitor Demographics

Exhibitor Demographics Continued

Organization FTEs	%
1-100	46%
101-500	23%
501-2,000	11%
2,001-5,000	7%
More than 5,000	13%

Generation	%
Gen Z	9%
Millennials	37%
Gen X	40%
Boomers	14%

Gender	%
Male	56%
Female	40%
Choose not to specify	4%

Exhibitor Demographics

Job Title/Function	%
Corporate	
President, Partner, Owner	11%
VP, EVP, SVP, GM	6%
Director	5%
Sales & Marketing	
VP	4%
Director/Manager	31%
Other role sales/marketing	11%
Exhibits/Events	
Director	2%
Manager	6%
Other role exhibits/events	7%
Sponsorships	
Director	2%
Manager	4%
Other role sponsorships	4%
Other	7%

Industry	%
Consumer Goods	14%
Industrial/Heavy Machinery and Finished Business Outputs	12%
Food/Beverage	10%
Technology/Communications/IT	8%
Building/Construction/Home and Repair	7%
Medical/Healthcare	7%
Business Services	6%
Raw Materials/Agriculture/Utilities	5%
Government	4%
Transportation	4%
Retail	3%
Education	2%
Other	18%

Additional Data

ATTENDEE QUESTIONS

Question 1: What challenges or areas of interest are most likely to prompt you to seek resources outside of your organization (such as attending an in-person conference or trade show, webinar, podcast, outside training, etc.)? Select up to 5 options.

Question 2: How pivotal are those challenges or areas of interest to your professional objectives, goals, or development? (% very/extremely pivotal)

Challenges/Interests That Prompt Outside Resources

■ % selected (top 5) ■ % very/extremely pivotal



ATTENDEE QUESTION

Which resource types are you most likely to consider for addressing the areas you selected in the previous question?
Select up to 3 sources for each area.

Resource Types for Addressing Challenges/Interests

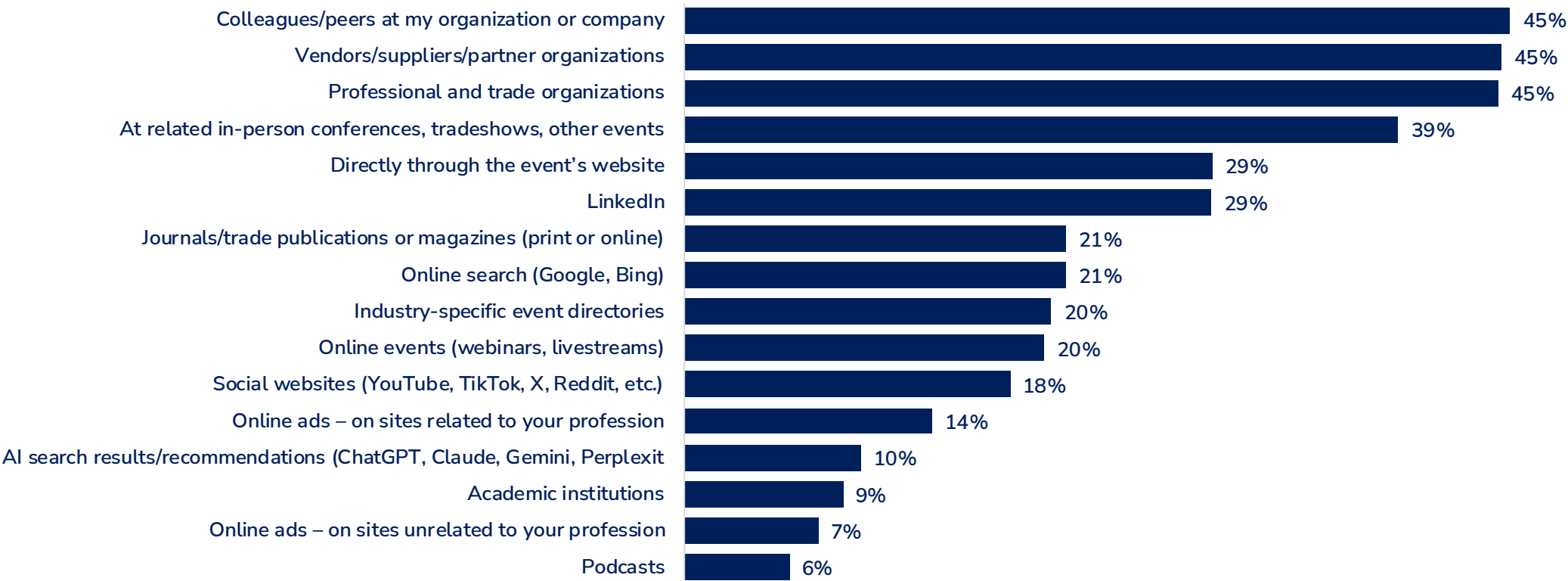
Challenge/Interest Area	In-person conferences or trade shows	Online events (webinars, livestreams, training)	Professional/trade organizations, academic institutions	Books, journals, trade publications	Podcasts, social media, blogs, online forums	Expert referrals	Vendor-hosted training or events
Building my skill set/improving competencies	65%	57%	42%	28%	22%	9%	29%
Making connections for my personal network	89%	18%	45%	4%	14%	23%	32%
Growing business/clientele for my organization	83%	24%	40%	6%	15%	31%	30%
Discovering new products/solutions	85%	32%	26%	21%	22%	16%	37%
Being mentored/mentoring others	67%	35%	42%	13%	20%	20%	25%
Building/staffing a team or organization	62%	23%	40%	12%	19%	36%	19%
Identifying/building awareness of industry trends or advancements	80%	46%	33%	25%	30%	12%	28%
Seeking outside perspective or validation on an issue or challenge	67%	38%	38%	20%	23%	31%	20%
Seeking a sense of purpose, opportunity for reflection	63%	35%	32%	29%	34%	11%	20%
Addressing an immediate or urgent business challenge	62%	33%	34%	19%	18%	41%	26%
Identifying/recruiting new talent	57%	16%	39%	8%	15%	50%	17%

ATTENDEE QUESTION

Through what sources are you most likely to learn about in-person professional events that would be relevant for someone in your industry/role? Select up to 5 options.

How Attendees Learn About In-Person Events

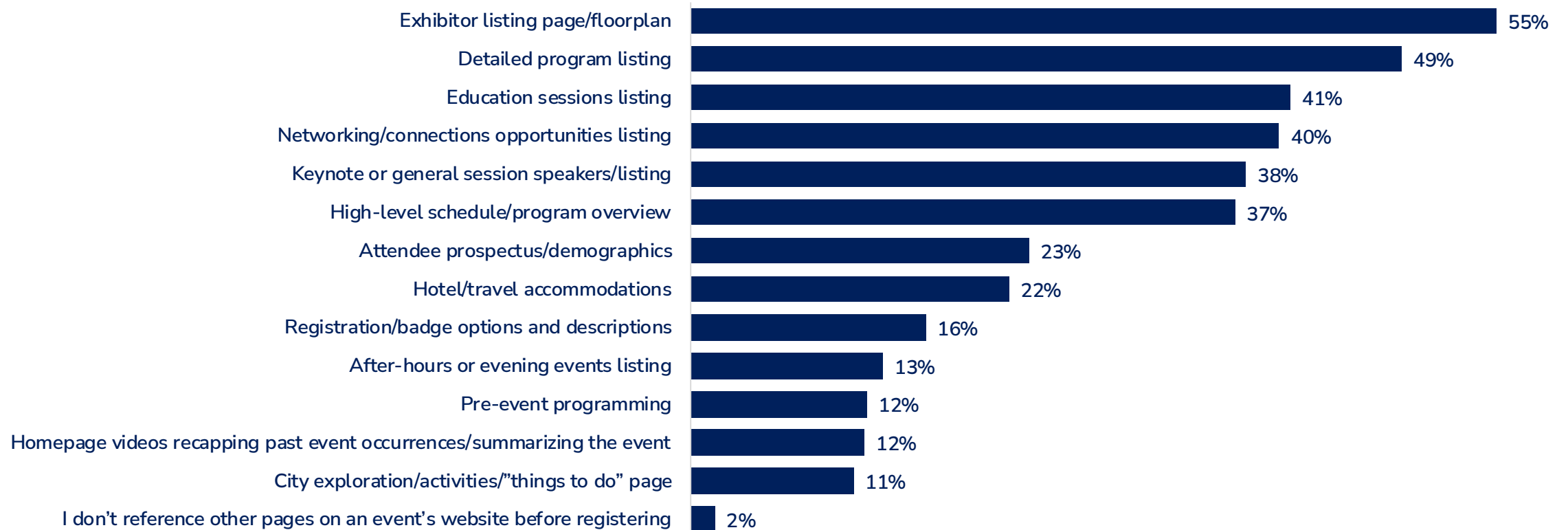
■ % selected (top 5)



ATTENDEE QUESTION

What pages/references on an event's website are you most likely to reference to determine if the event is worth attending? Select up to 5 options.

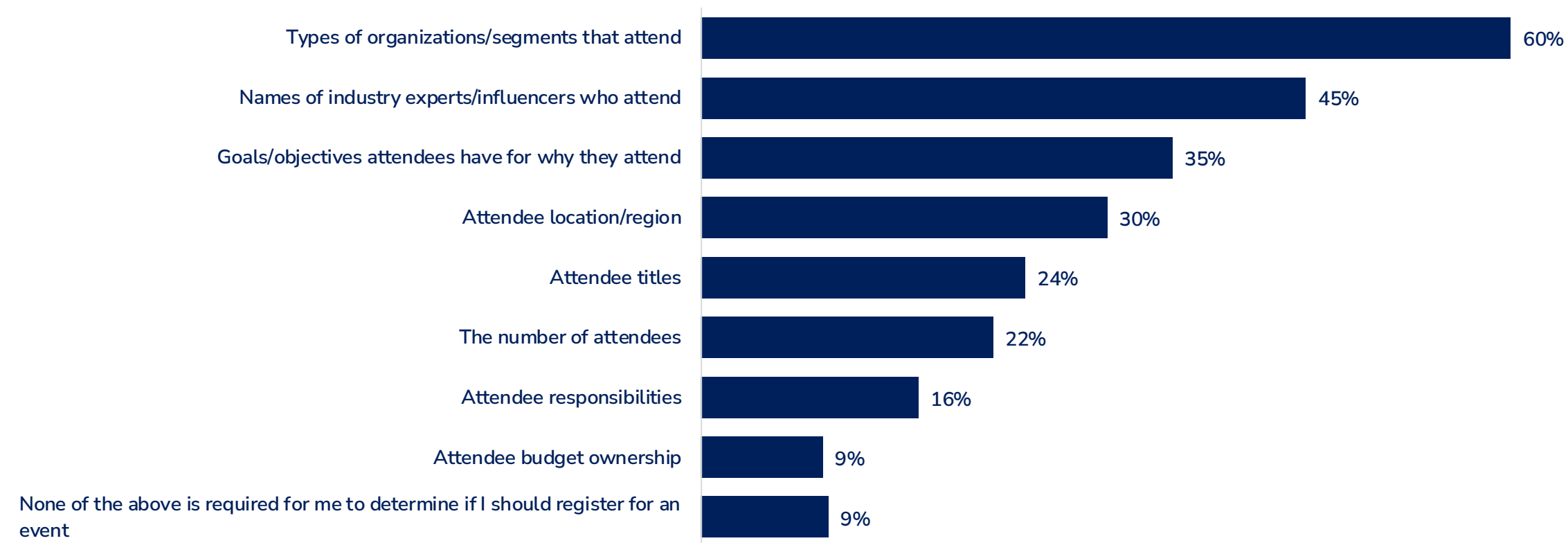
Event Website Pages Referenced for Determining Event Attendance



ATTENDEE QUESTION

What type of information about who attends an event is most likely to make you feel compelled to register? Select all that apply.

Required Information Regarding Who Attends



ATTENDEE QUESTION

What elements contribute to professional event FOMO?
Select up to 5 options.

What Contributes to Event FOMO



ATTENDEE QUESTION

What role would you like AI to play in helping you prepare for attending a professional event? Select all that apply.

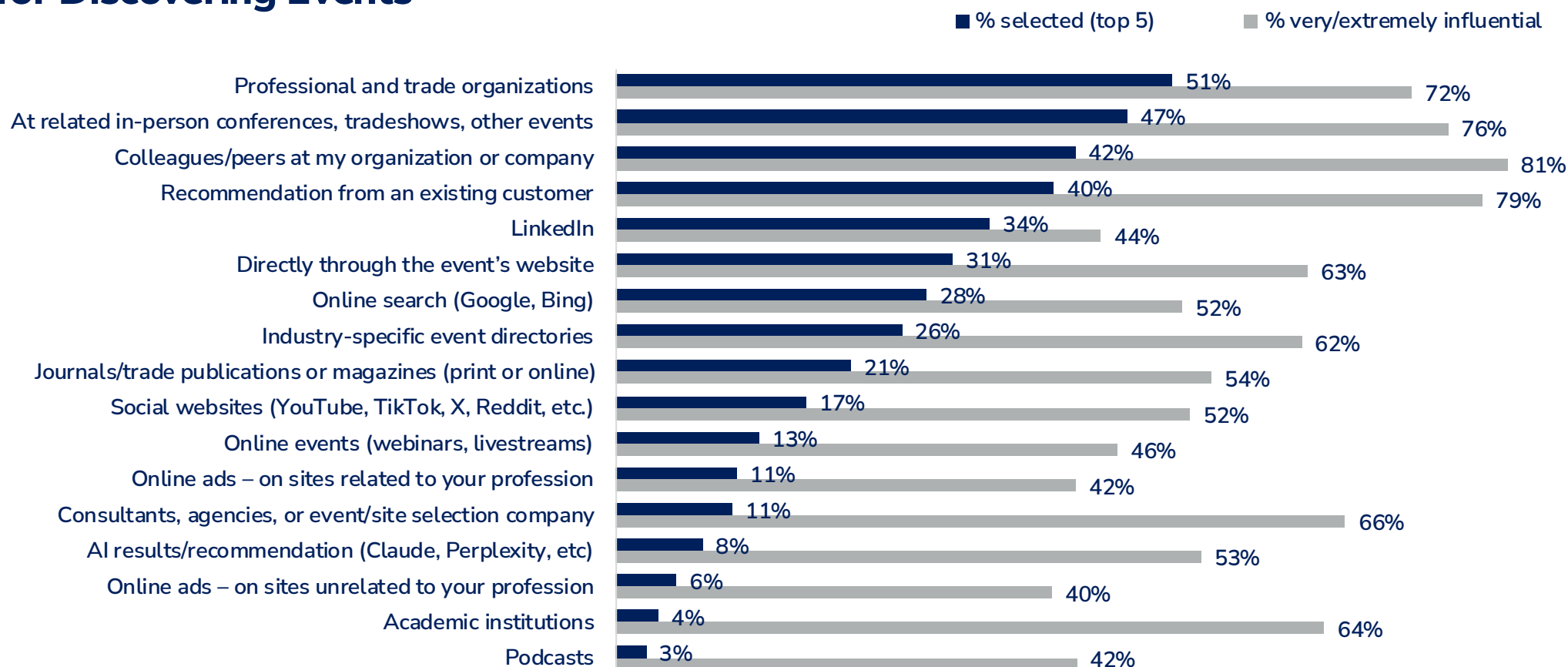
Desired Role of AI in Event Preparation



EXHIBITOR QUESTIONS

1. Through what sources are you most likely to learn about in-person professional events that would be relevant for your organization to exhibit at and/or sponsor? Select up to 5 options.
2. Of the sources you selected in the previous question, rate how influential the source was for prompting your organization to exhibit/sponsor at the event? (% very/extremely influential)

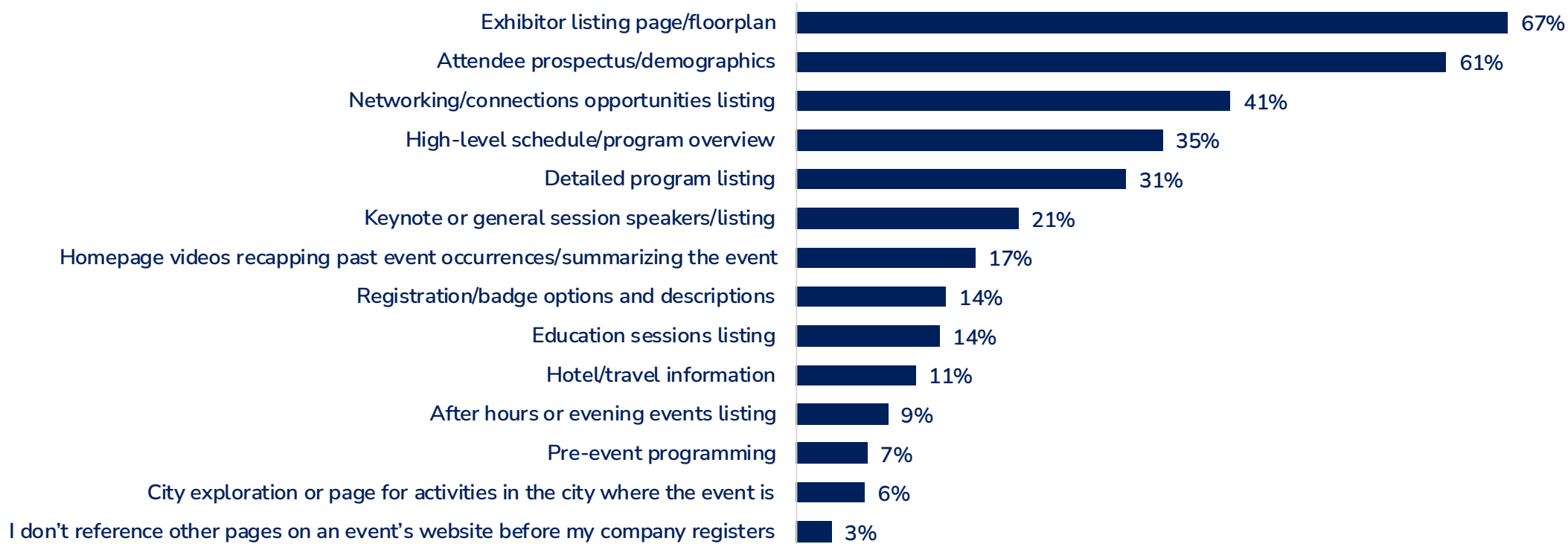
Sources for Discovering Events



EXHIBITOR QUESTION

What pages/references on an event’s website are you most likely to reference to determine if the event is worth attending? Select up to 5 options.

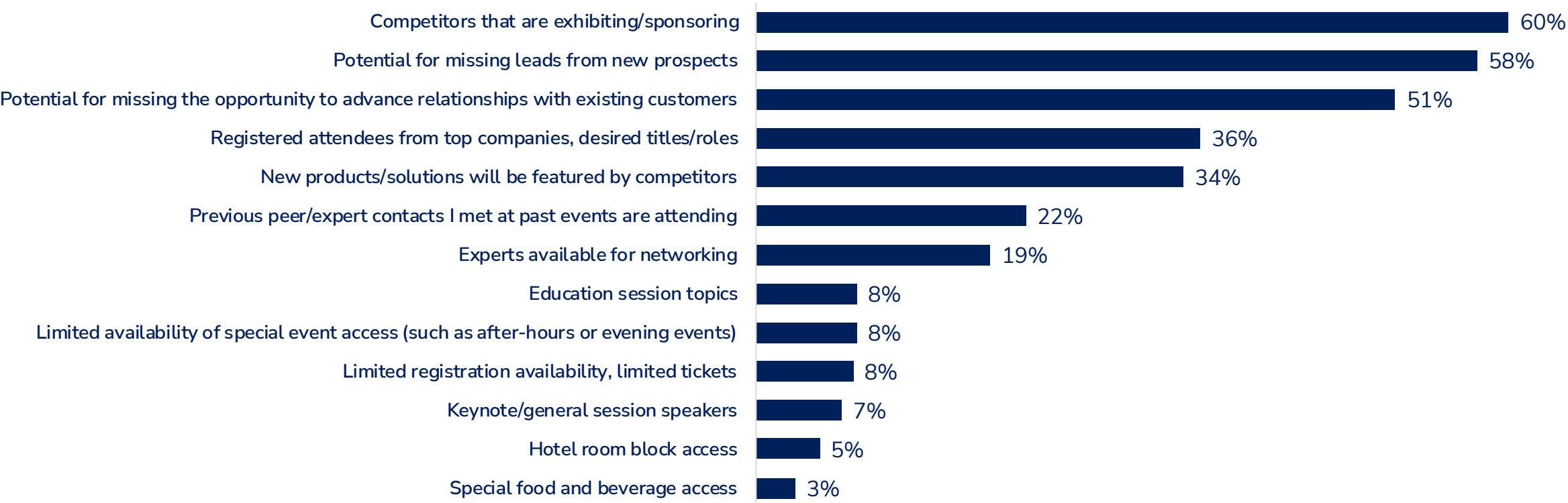
Event Website Pages Referenced for Determining Event Participation



EXHIBITOR QUESTION

What factors contribute to you feeling professional event FOMO?
Select all that apply.

What Contributes to Event FOMO



EXHIBITOR QUESTION

Where are events falling short in how they help you/your organization determine if it is worthwhile for exhibiting/sponsoring? Select all that apply.

How Events Fall Short of Helping Prospective Exhibitors Determine Whether to Participate

