

PULSE SURVEY

**NEW  
DATA**

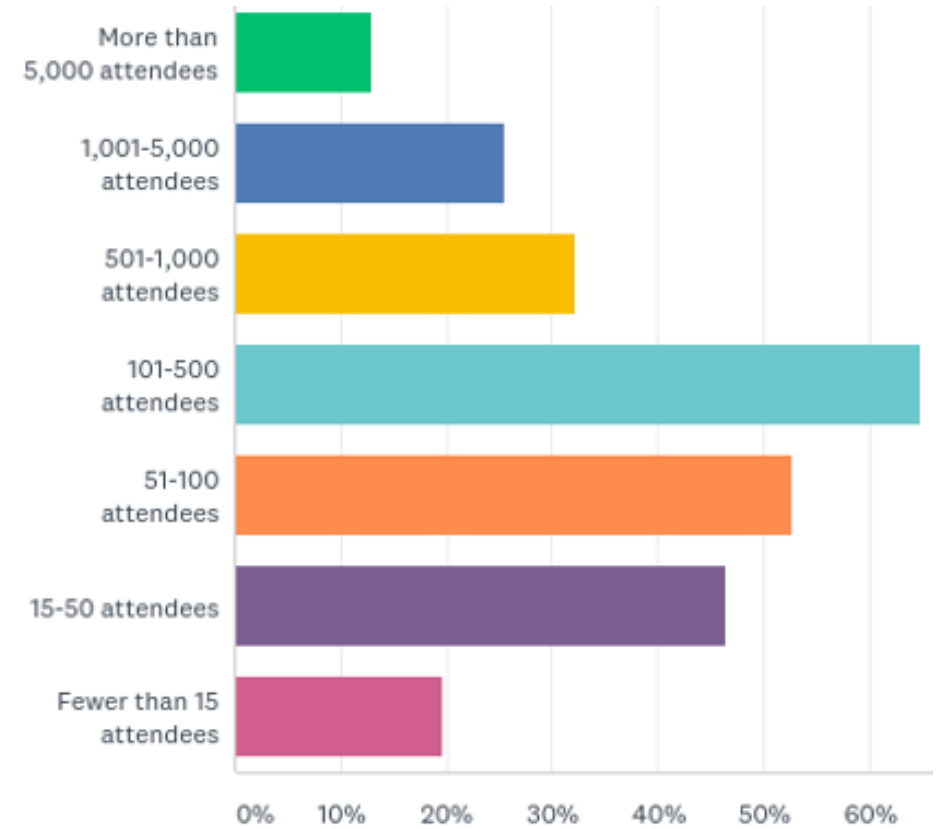
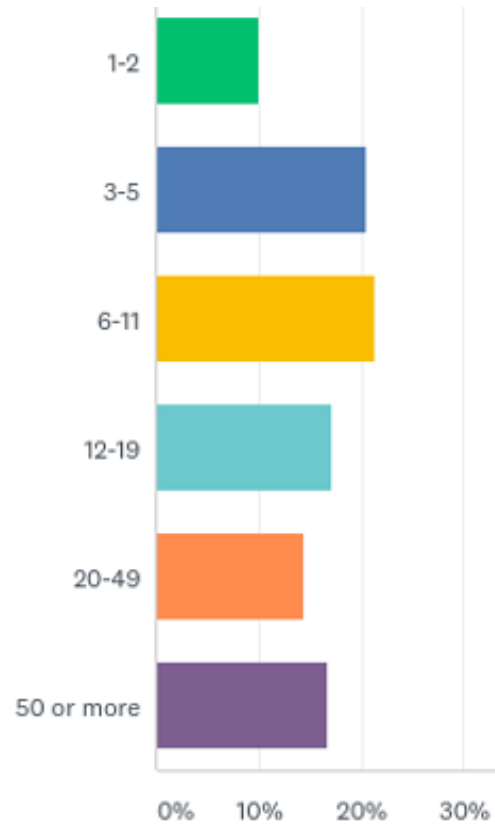
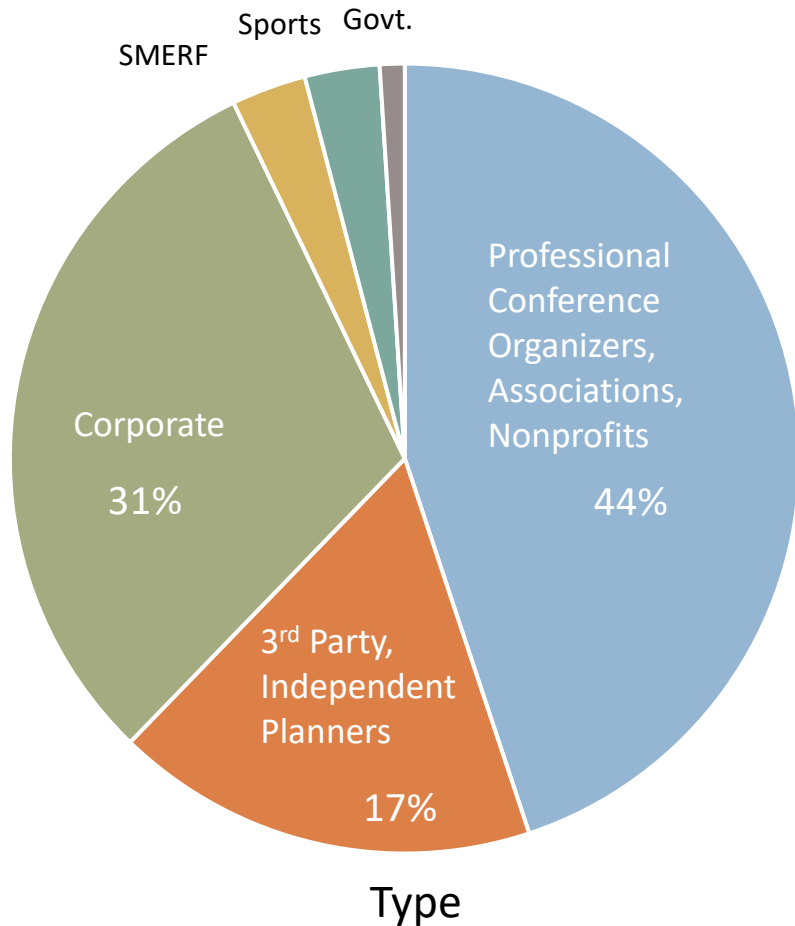
# **THE FUTURE OF MEETINGS AND EVENTS IN THE ERA OF COVID-19**

MAY 27, 2021

 NORTHSTAR  
meetings group

# Respondents By Type, Volume and Size

305 Valid Planner Responses



# New Business, Sourcing Continue to Rise

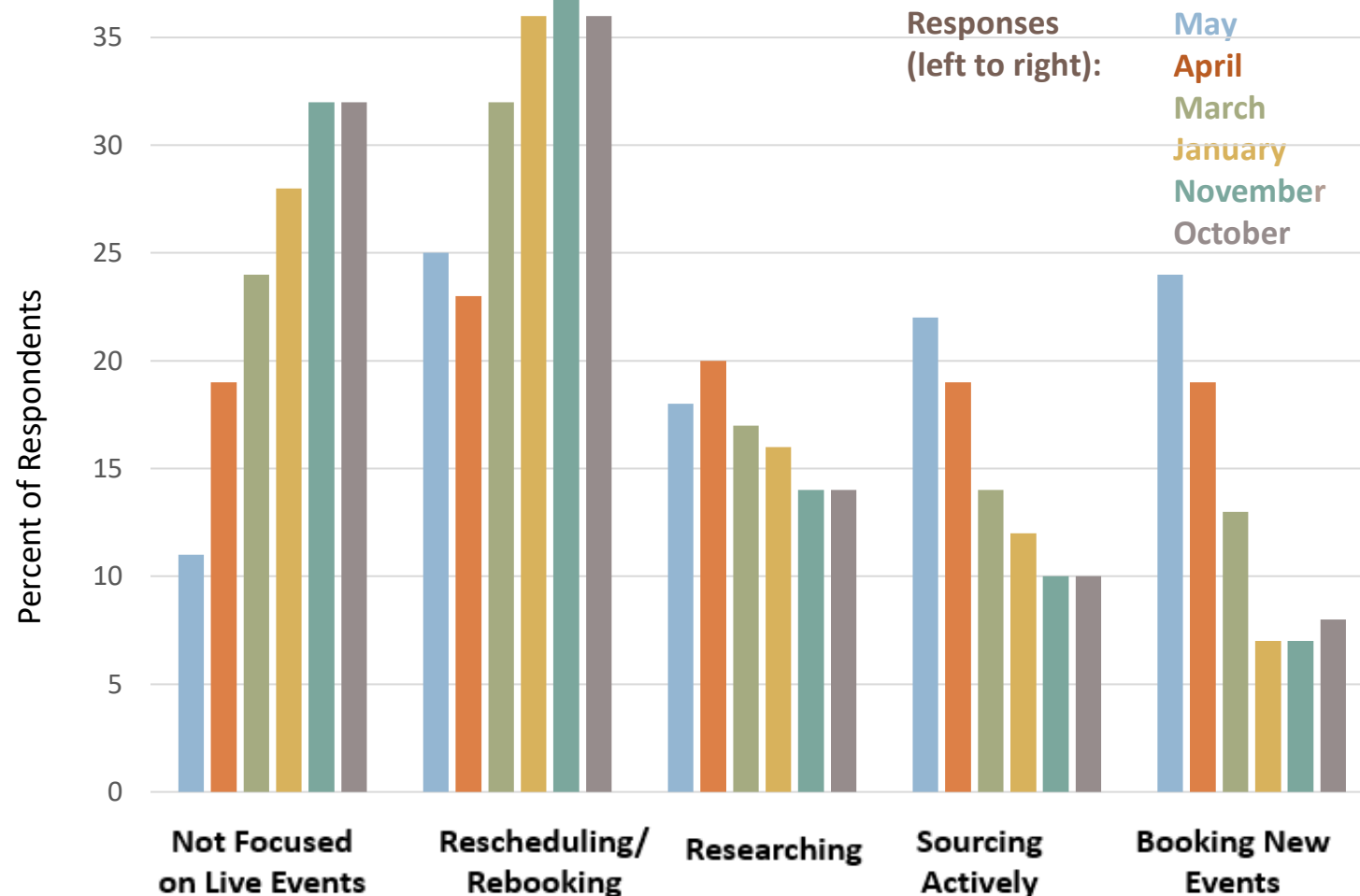
## Nearly 90% of Planners Now Focused on Live Events

Momentum grows for recovery as planners booking new events nearly matches those who are still rescheduling.

What is your current primary focus as it pertains to your live, in-person events?

Responses as of May 25, 2021

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
I am rescheduling or rebooking events	24.63%
I am researching potential new events, but not ready to issue an RFP or lead	18.38%
I am actively sourcing (issuing RFPs or leads) for new events	22.43%
I am booking new events	23.53%
I am not currently focused on live, in-person events	11.03%



# Who Is Booking New Events Now?

## Characteristics of Planners Booking New Events

These are the planners whose *primary focus* now is booking new events.

Professional Conference Organizer	3.17%
Association/Nonprofit Organization or Association Management Company	39.68%
Third Party/Independent Planner/	17.46%
Exhibitions/Trade Show Organizer	0.00%
Government	0.00%
Travel Agency	6.35%
Social, Military, Education, Religious, Fraternal	4.76%
Sports	1.59%
Pharmaceuticals, Healthcare, Medical	6.35%
Finance, Insurance, Banking, Real Estate	6.35%
Manufacturing	0.00%
Technology/Communications	4.76%
Services/Other	6.35%
Multilevel Marketing	1.59%
Other Corporate	1.59%

### Planners Who Are Booking Now Are:

- More likely to be association planners, independents and healthcare/pharma/medical/finance/services (among corporate planners).
- More likely to expect to produce their next live event in Q2 2021 versus others who are targeting Q3.
- Expecting to plan more events and larger events than the general planner population.
- More concerned about event production issues – especially hotel and venue staffing.
- More actively engaged in currently planning hybrid events and much less likely to be planning virtual events exclusive of live events.
- Decidedly less confident in the ability of virtual events to meet their constituents' needs.

# When's Your Next Live Event?

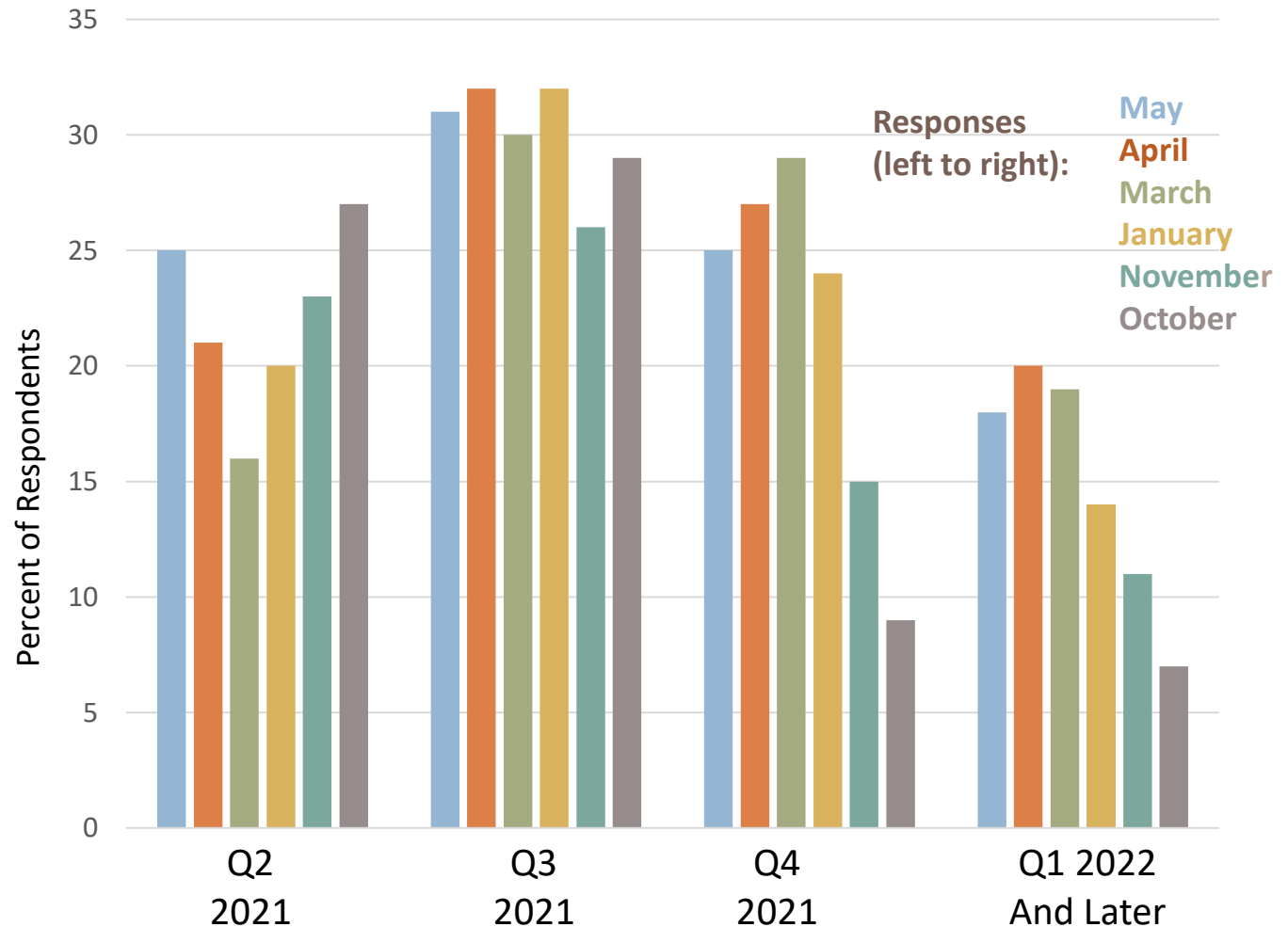
Confidence grows for near-term events as majority of planners expect to be "live" by October 1.

When at the earliest do you expect to hold your next in-person or hybrid meeting or event?

Responses as of May 25, 2021

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Q2 2021	25.37%
Q3 2021	31.25%
Q4 2021	25.37%
2022 or later	18.01%

May 25, 2021

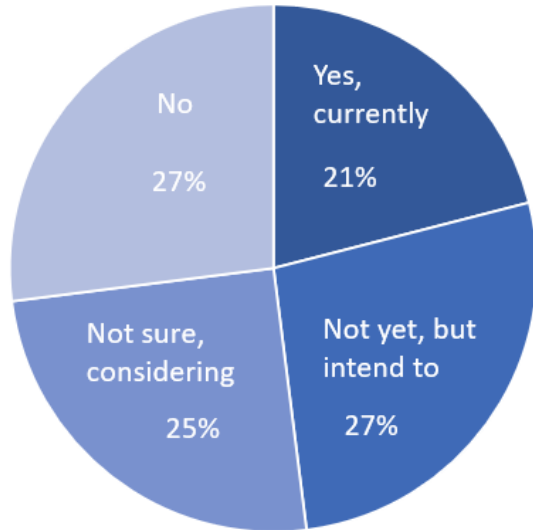


# Hybrid Model: Intent Becomes Action

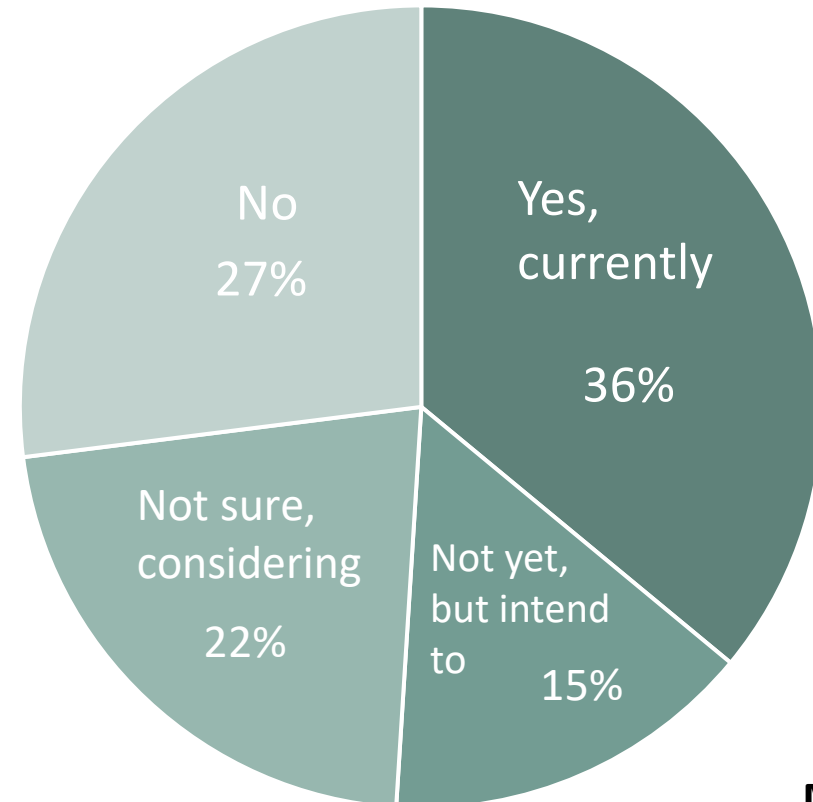
Many planners are reporting they're "off the fence" and actively planning hybrid now.

Are you currently planning hybrid events (with both in-person and virtual audiences)?

Are you currently planning hybrid events (with both in-person and virtual audiences)?



January 20, 2021



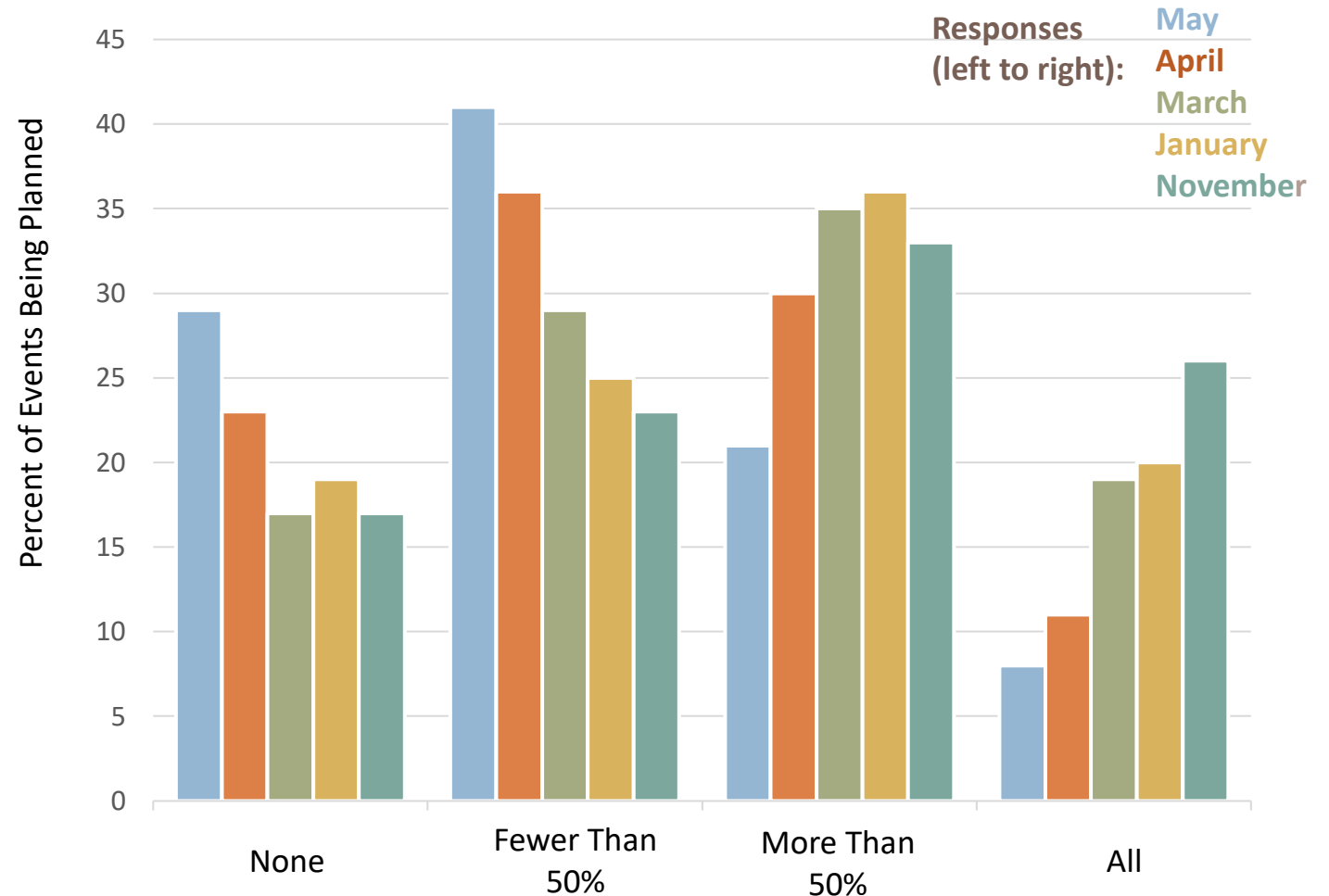
May 25, 2021

# What percentage of the events you are now planning will be online only?



May 25, 2021

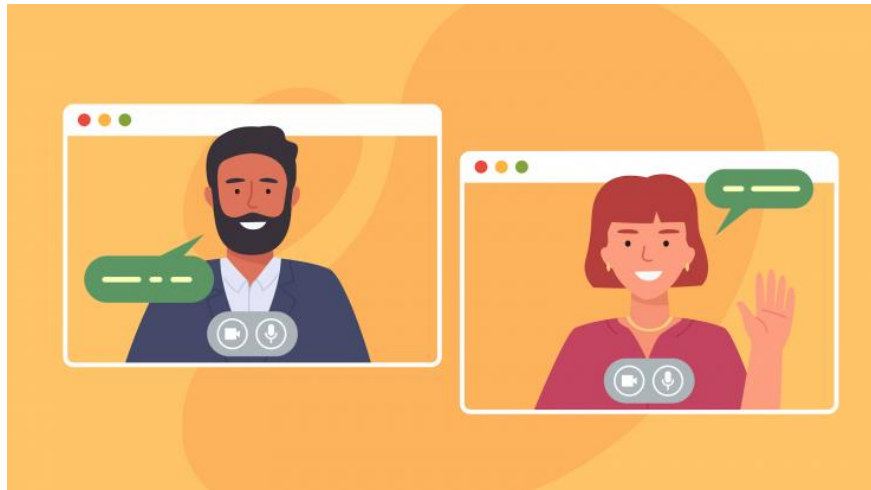
As planners shift to planning and booking in-person, they shift further away from virtual.



# Are Planners Feeling Better About Virtual Events Now That They're Not the Only Option?

Since October, planners' expectations for the success of their virtual events had fallen consistently but now that planners are relying less on them, confidence in their success has grown.

How successful will virtual events be for your constituents?  
(with 1 = not at all confident; 5 = highly confident)



October	3.13
November	2.98
January	2.81
March	2.80
April	2.92
May	2.96



Out of 5

May 25, 2021



# More US Planners Will Attend Meetings Soon, Indicating Growing Confidence

Do you plan to attend any in-person meetings or business events over the next three months?

**60%**

*Now Say "Yes"*



May 25, 2021

As of January 20, 2021



**76%** Said "No"

As of March 2, 2021



**69%** Said "No"

As of March 2, 2021



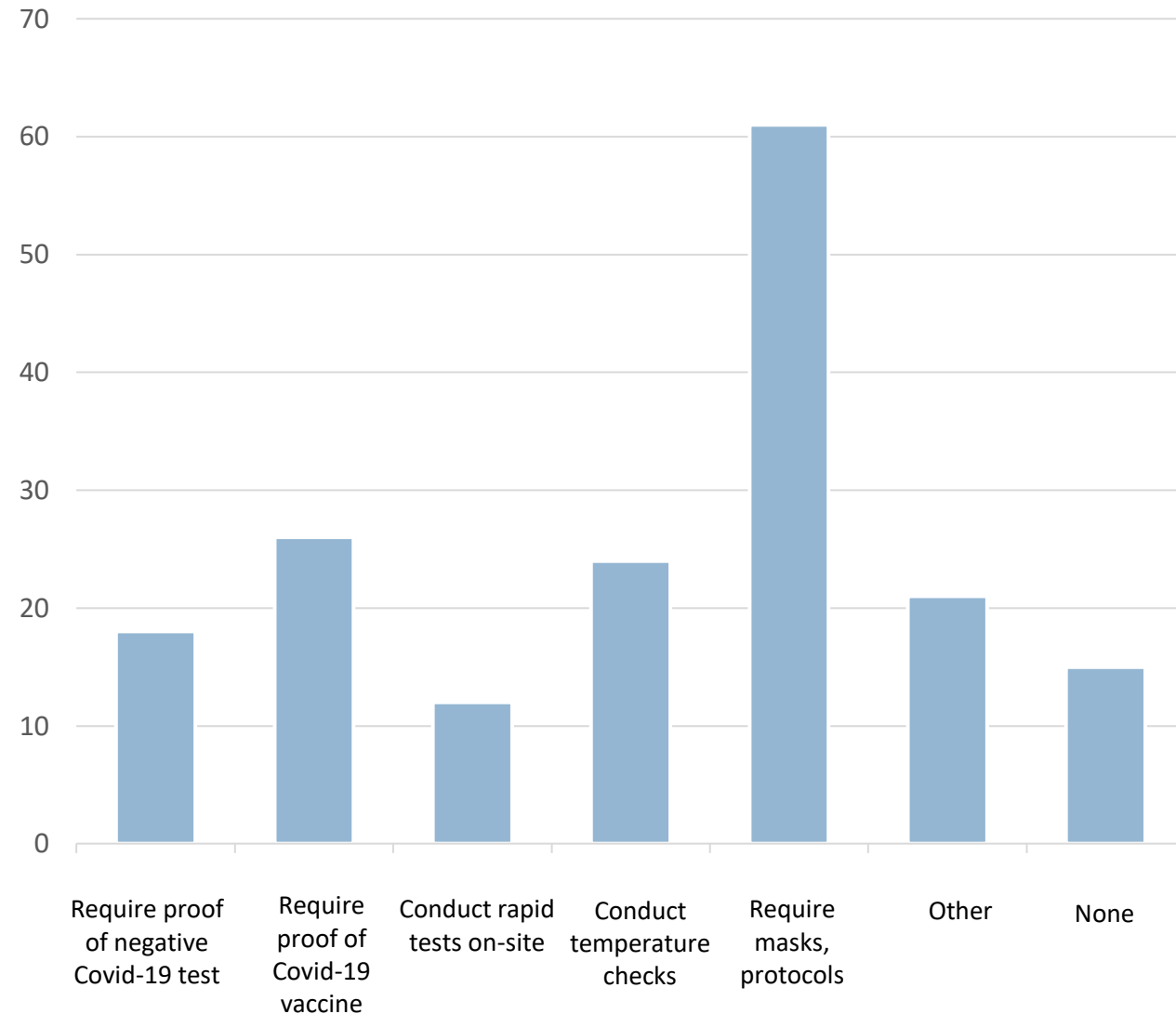
**54%** Said "No"

# What Measures Do You Expect to Enact at Your Next In-Person Event?

Many Say “It Depends” on Circumstances and Guidance at the Time of Their Events



May 25, 2021



# Top Challenge: Staffing at Venues and Hotels

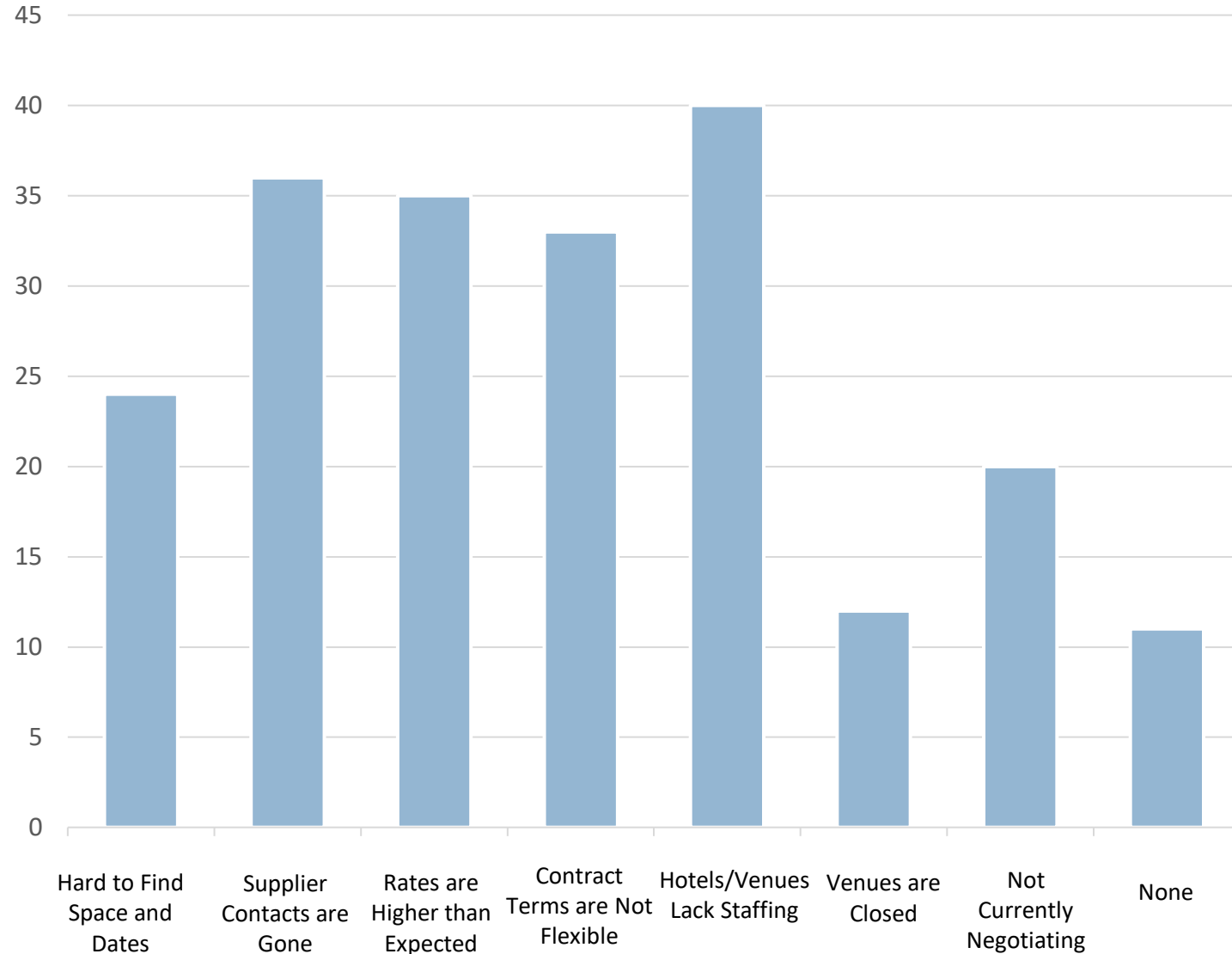
If you are working with hotels and venues for future meetings or events, are you experiencing any of these difficulties? (Select all that apply.)

ANSWER CHOICES

RESPONSES

None of the above	10.89%
It's hard to find the space and dates I want	23.74%
Many of my supplier contacts are gone	35.80%
Rates are higher than expected	34.63%
Contract terms are not as flexible as needed	33.07%
Hotels/venues lack adequate staffing	39.69%
Venues I would like to use are closed	12.45%
Not currently negotiating	19.84%

May 25, 2021



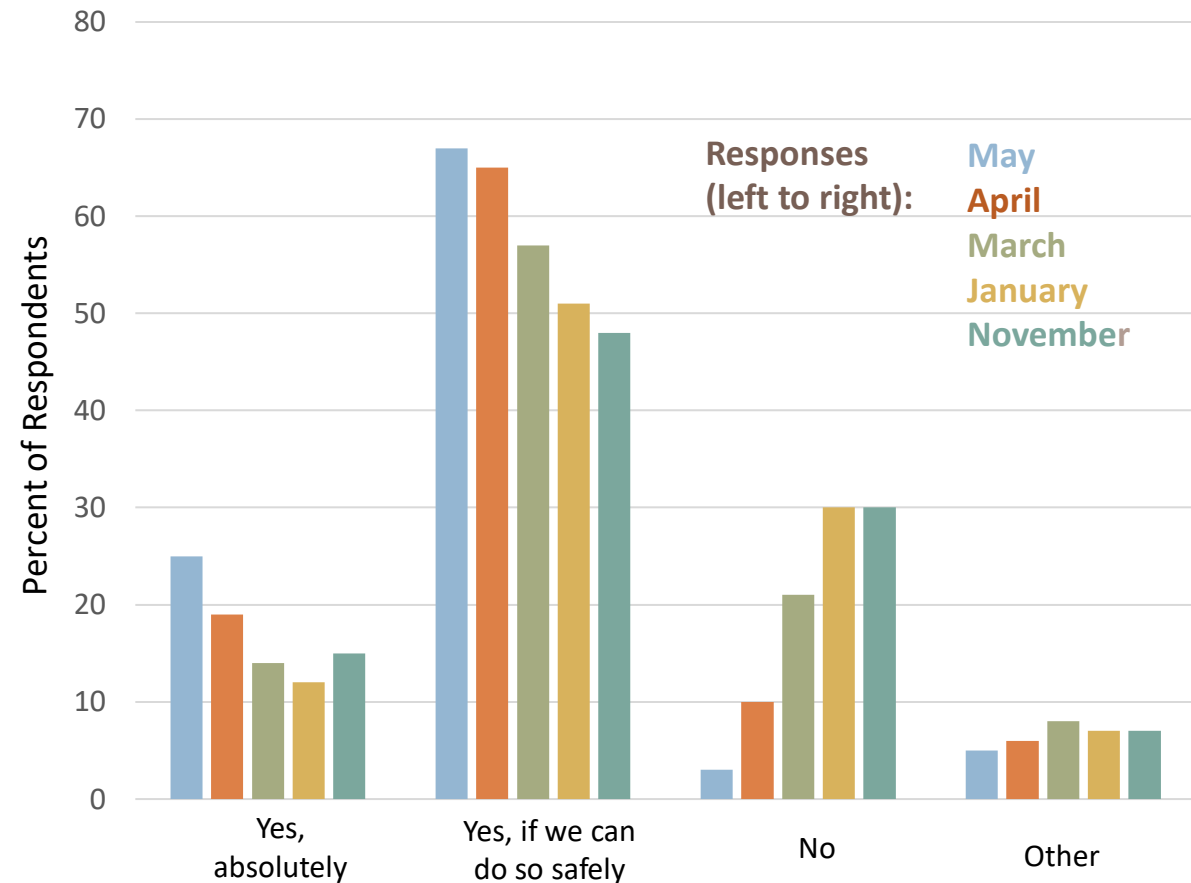
# Meeting Planners Want to Meet



**Only 3% don't want to meet, down from 30% in January.**

May 25, 2021

**Should meetings industry organizations or related businesses be holding in-person meetings?**



# More Planners Expect the Same Number of Meetings

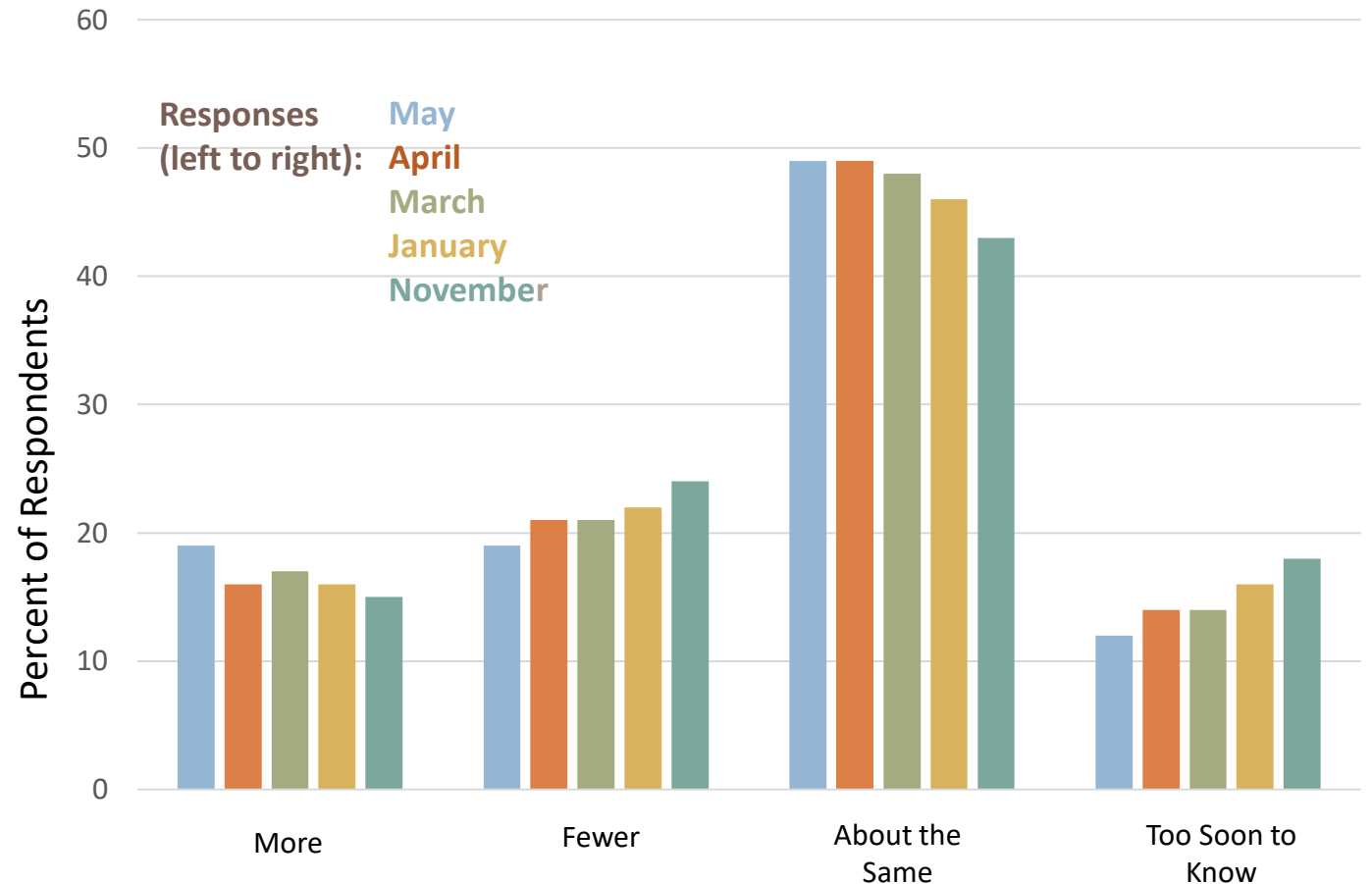
Expectations for the size of meetings has not changed (much) as fear of contagion declines.

When in-person gatherings are no longer restricted, do you expect more or fewer in-person or hybrid meetings than before Covid-19?

May 25, 2021, Responses

More	18.96%
Fewer	19.33%
About the same	49.44%
It's too soon to know.	12.27%

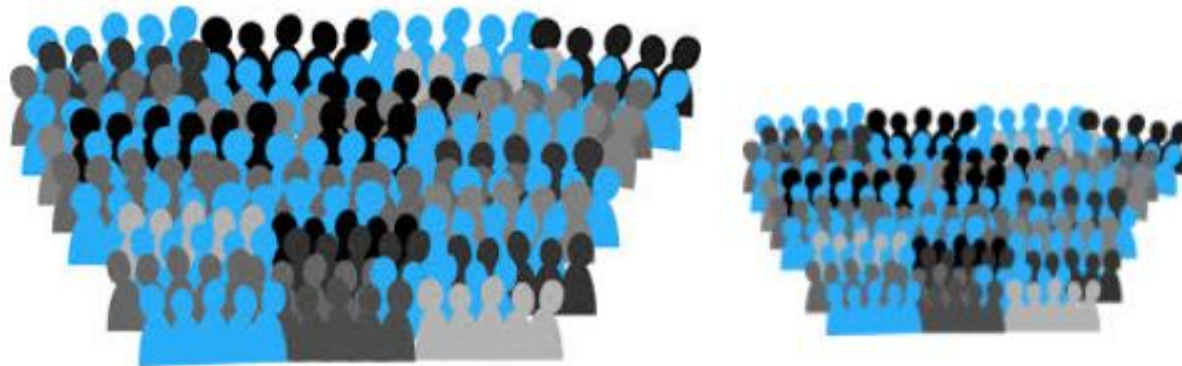
May 25, 2021



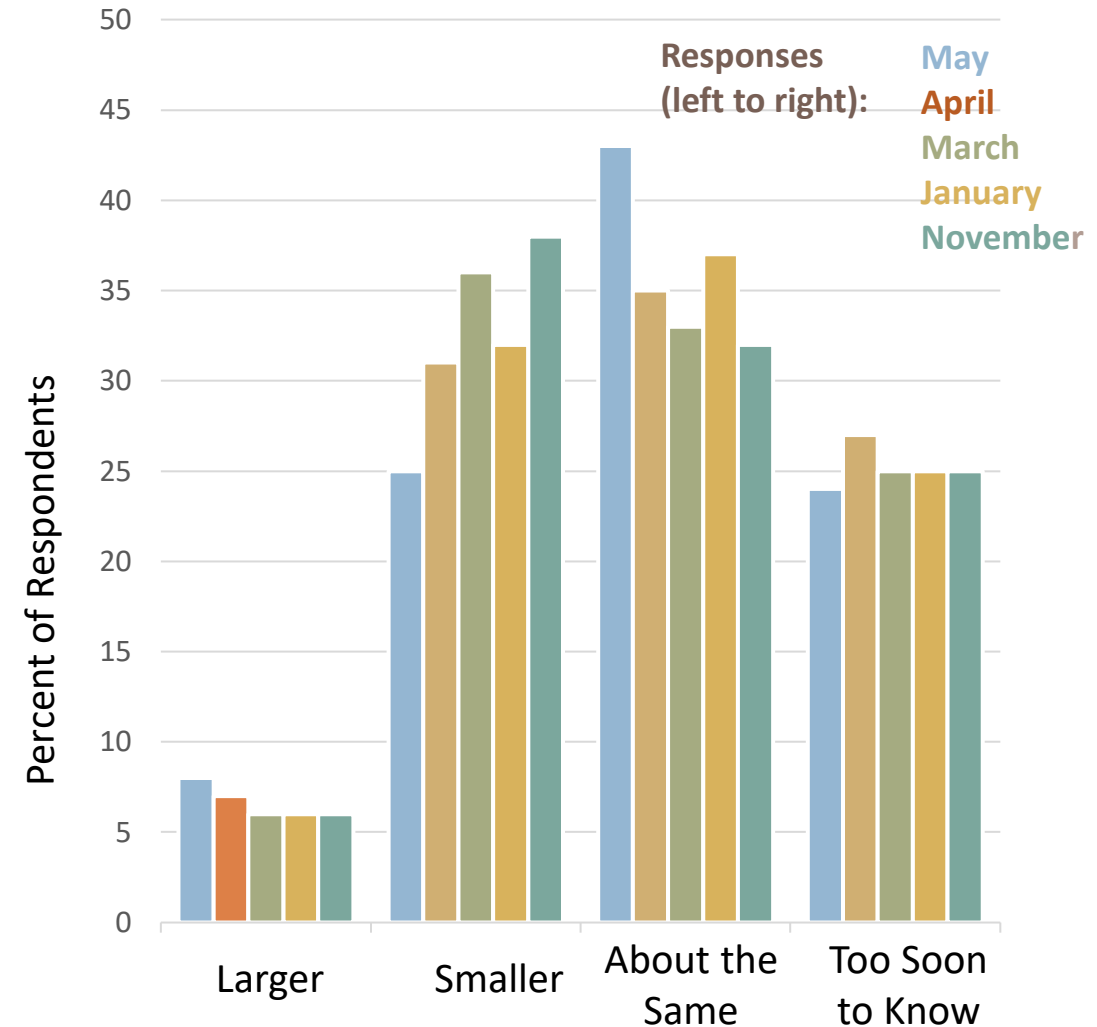
# Fewer Planners Expect Smaller Meetings

As confidence builds, more planners think meeting attendance will be “about the same” as before.

When in-person gatherings are no longer restricted, will the size of your live audiences be larger or smaller than before Covid-19?



May 25, 2021



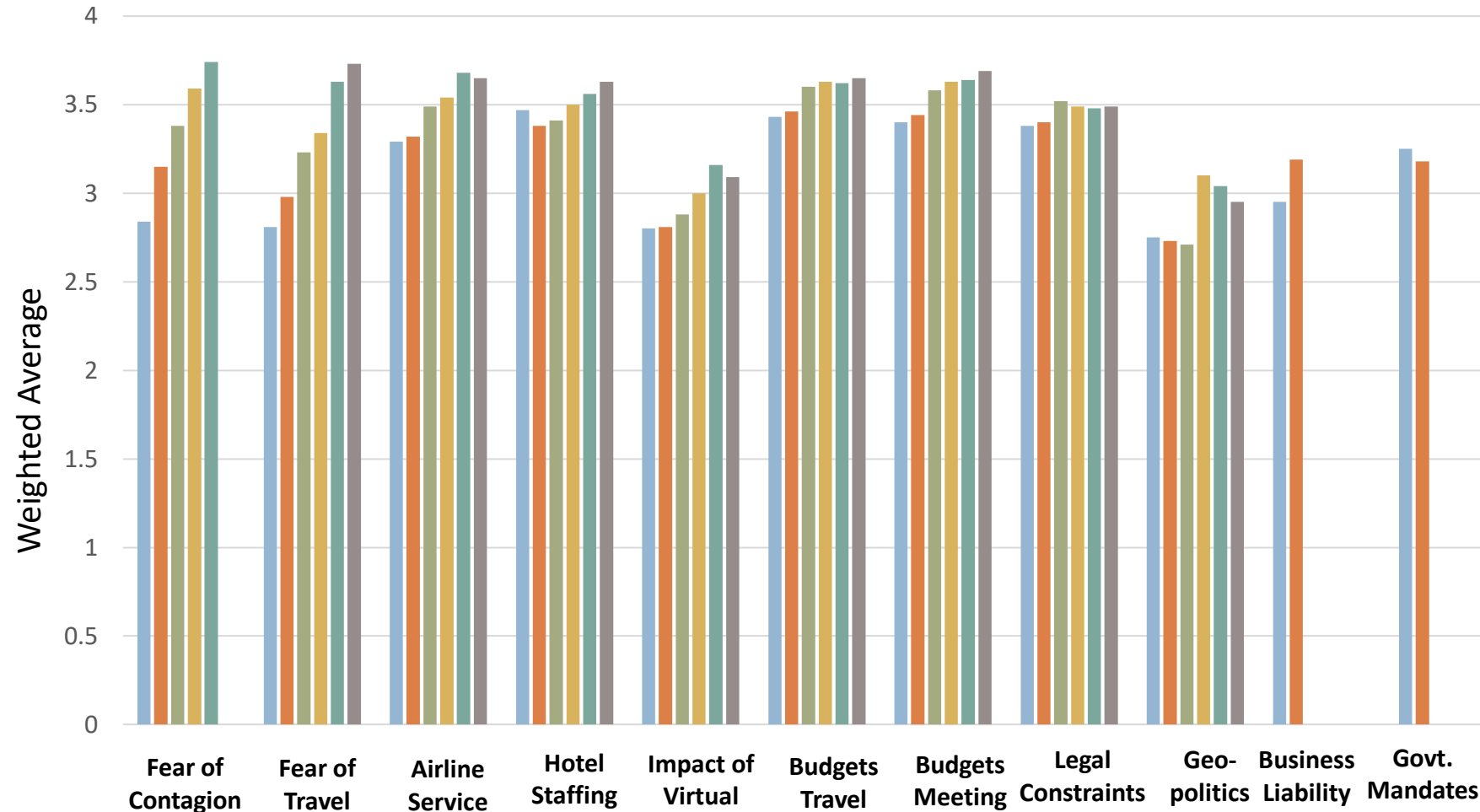
# What's Keeping Planners Up at Night Now?

**Budgets and hotel staffing are planners' biggest concerns now.**

Responses (left to right):  
 May  
 April  
 March  
 January  
 November

*For your future in-person or hybrid events, how concerned are you about the following? Rate each on a scale of 1 to 5 (with 1 being "not at all concerned" and 5 being "extremely concerned")*

**May 25, 2021**



## In Summary:

- ✓ Booking now and actively sourcing has grown, while planners “not focused on live events” has fallen to its lowest level in 15 months.
- ✓ 82% of all planners expect their next live event to be produced in 2021.
- ✓ Hybrid continues to grow – 35% are currently planning hybrid, the majority. That’s up from 31% in April.
- ✓ Concerns continue to swing away from fear of travel and fear of contagion to hotel staffing as the #1 concern.
- ✓ Planners are attending industry events. 60% now plan to attend one in the next three months, up from 46% last month.
- ✓ Fewer planners expect smaller meetings. As fear of contagion declines, confidence in meeting size grows.
- ✓ As the planning of online-only events has fallen, confidence in their success has grown.

## Selected Verbatim Comments:

- “Virtual and hybrid options are allowing the opportunity to reach audiences that we have not before. They also allow us to be more creative and thoughtful in what we're offering. We have had several successful virtual conferences and are planning our first hybrid conference for fall 2021. Based on a polling of our members, we anticipate the hybrid option to be heartily embraced. It will likely be here to stay.”
- “I want to act responsibly, and I also want to make a profit hosting successful events. I wish there was some sort of standardized best practices for the events industry so that I could feel more confident in the choices I make for my future events.”
- “I attended my first in person event last week and the energy in the room was amazing.”
- “We’re ready to get back to in-person meetings but we still feel uneasy about onsite expectations and planning for the unknown.”
- “I’m concerned that the CDC's recent changes to their mask requirements may set us back a bit. This (yet again) complicates how groups approach their return to in-person events -- and raises more questions than it answers in terms of requiring proof of vaccination, mask mandates, waivers, etc. Instead of incentivizing the unvaccinated to get vaccinated, this policy change has now emboldened non-vaxxers to simply unmask -- and groups now need to determine how to address this and develop protocols to keep all participants safe.”