

The Next Decade of MICE

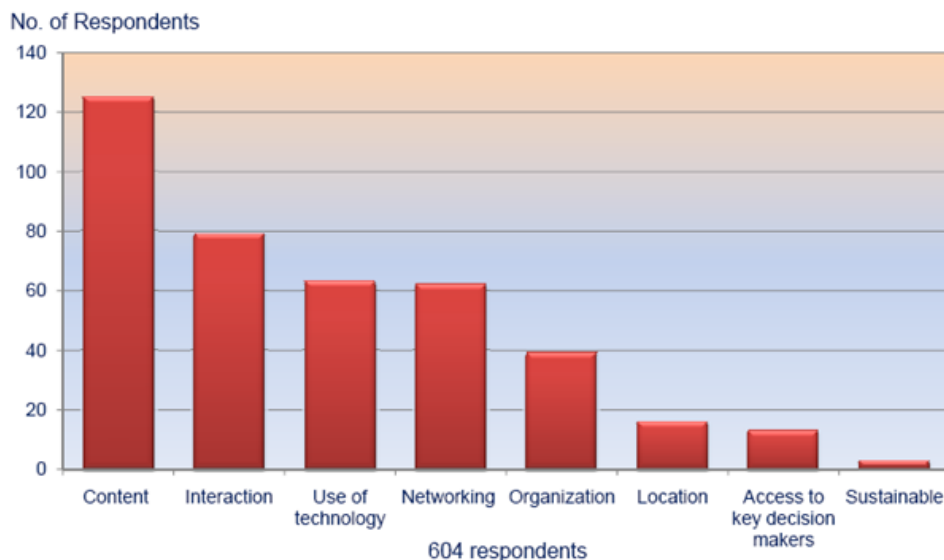
The economic, political and technological challenges faced by the meeting and event industry have played a part in how the industry will evolve. A number of studies, including *Convention 2020-The Future of Exhibitions, Meetings and Events* sponsored by the International Congress and Convention Association (ICCA), have been conducted with the aim of helping members of the meetings industry prepare for the future and keep their competitiveness. The survey for *Convention 2020-The Future of Exhibitions, Meetings and Events* ran from November 2009 to January 2010 with a total 1125 respondents from 76 countries. The three largest groups of respondents came from the US (22%), Germany (12%) and the UK (11%). The largest regional response came from Europe (59%) followed by North America (23%). Their interesting results reported the following.

The Industry today

The factors considered to be the main drivers of today's events were the quality of the content, high levels of interaction between delegates and speakers, and effective use of technology. On the contrary, the biggest barriers to event effectiveness were seen to be the costs of attending events, poor organization and a lack of focus in the design of events. The last two items highlighted the increasing importance of the role of event design/ meeting architecture in mapping out the entire meeting experience.

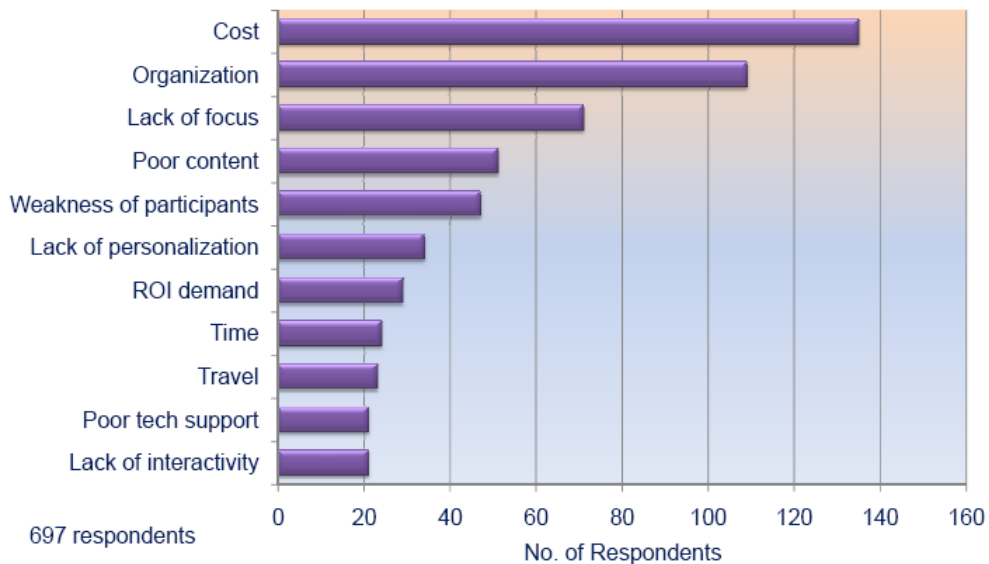
Drivers of Useful and Exciting Events

What are the most useful and exciting events you have attended recently and why?



Barriers to Effectiveness

What do you consider are the biggest problems today that stop conferences and exhibitions from being fully effective?



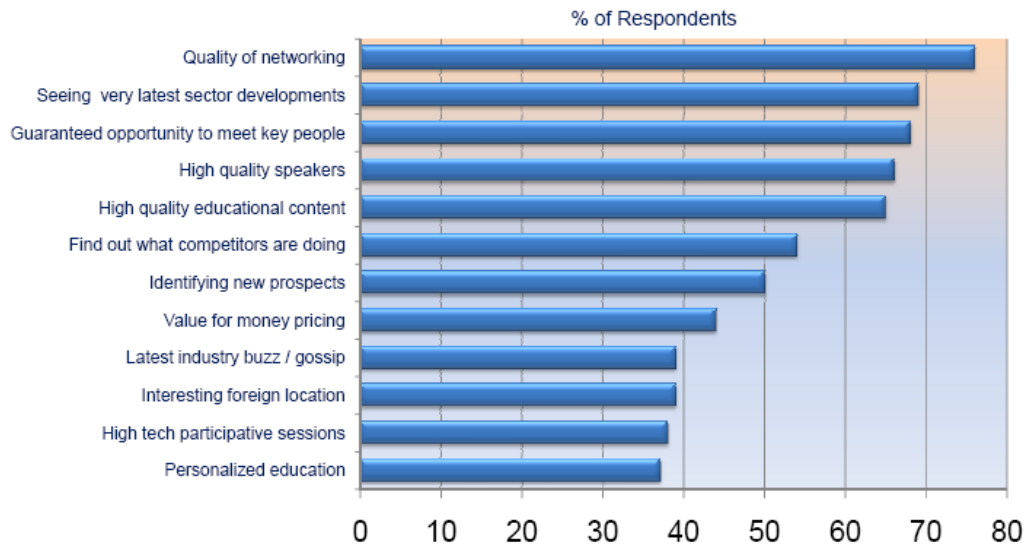
Events in 2020

Reasons to attend any conferences and exhibitions

The top three reasons seen by the participants as important factors that will encourage them to attend live events such as conferences and exhibitions in the decade ahead are: quality of networking (76%), seeing the very latest developments in my sectors (69%) and a guaranteed opportunity to meet key people (68%). Despite the increasing highlighting on the importance of technology in events, the top ten factors stated were not directly technology related. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that given the growing debate about whether virtual events will replace live ones, only 1% said they would not attend live events at all.

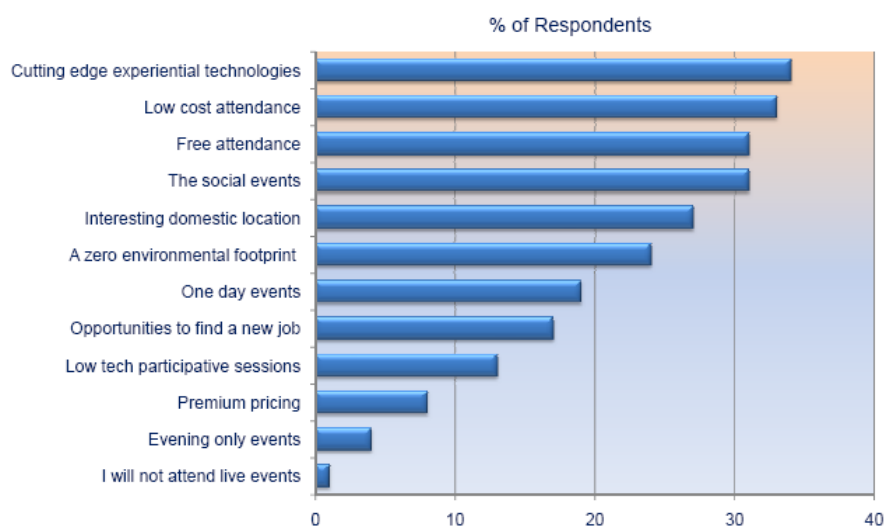
Factors influencing the decision to attend in 2020 (%) – 1 of 2

Imagine your life in 2020, what are the factors that would encourage you to attend live events such as conferences and exhibitions?



Factors influencing the decision to attend in 2020 (%) – 2 of 2

Imagine your life in 2020, what are the factors that would encourage you to attend live events such as conferences and exhibitions?

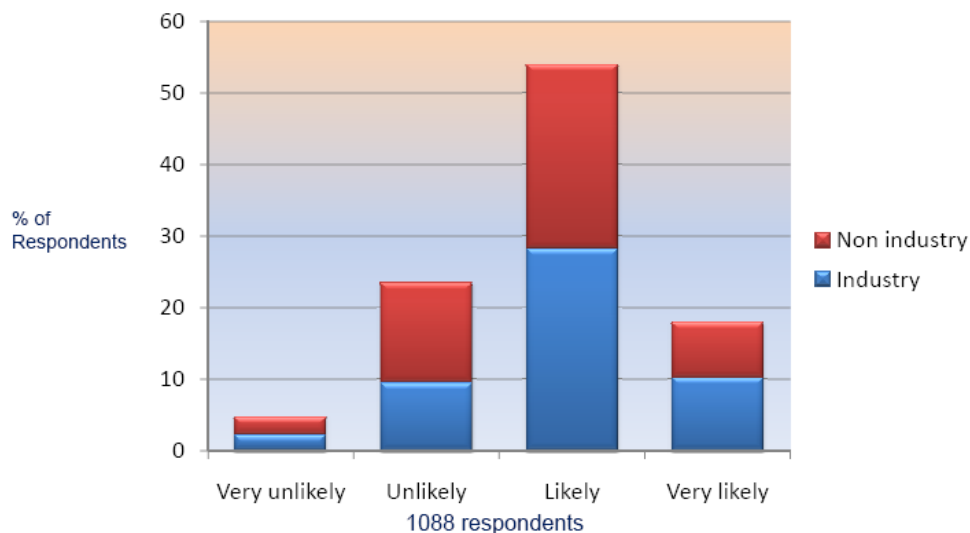


Meeting Demand

The respondents were presented three scenarios for their reflection: 1) whether or not their corporations would invest time and money in organizing conferences and exhibitions; 2) whether saving time and costs would be a concern for their corporations in allowing their staff to travel to conferences and exhibitions and 3) whether their corporations would invest money in alternatives to conferences and exhibitions. The results revealed that, for scenario 1, most of the respondents expected organizations to maintain a strong commitment to live events with 74% stating it was likely or very likely that “compared to today, in 2020, my company/organization will still invest at least as much time and money in organizing conferences and exhibiting at trade shows as they do at present”. This scenario, however, gained more support from those in the meeting industry than those outside it. As for scenario 2, more respondents from outside the industry (57%) than the 43% of those within the industry believed that “compared to today, in 2020, my company/organization will be unwilling to allow staff to travel to as many conferences and exhibitions in order to save time and money”. Finally, a majority of the respondents (59%) chose to agree that it was likely or very likely that “by 2020, my company/organization will be investing far more money in alternatives to conferences and exhibitions than they do today.” This was supported 71% by those outside the sector compared to only 51% within it.

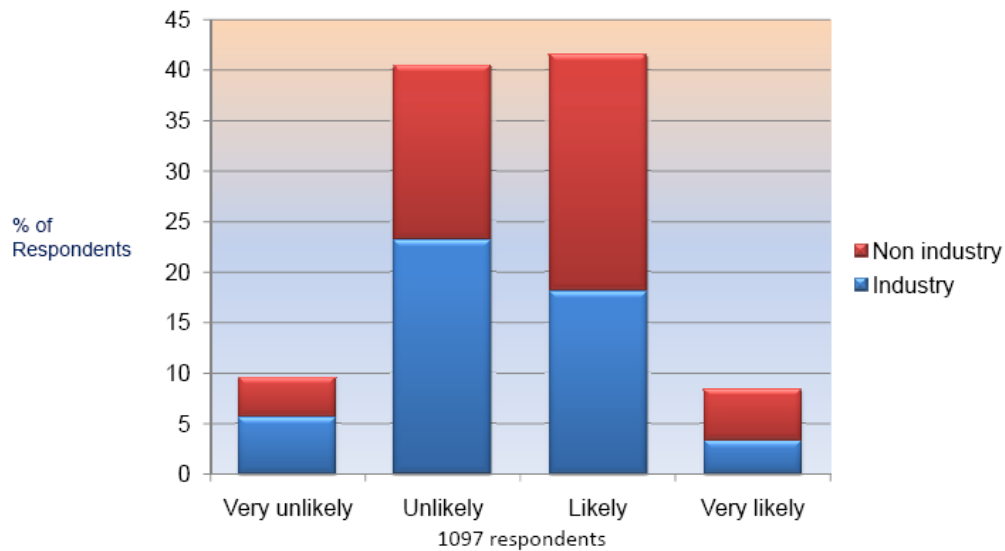
Will Investment in Meetings Hold Firm?

Compared to today, in 2020 my company/organisation will still invest at least as much time and money in organising conferences and exhibiting at trade shows as they do at present.



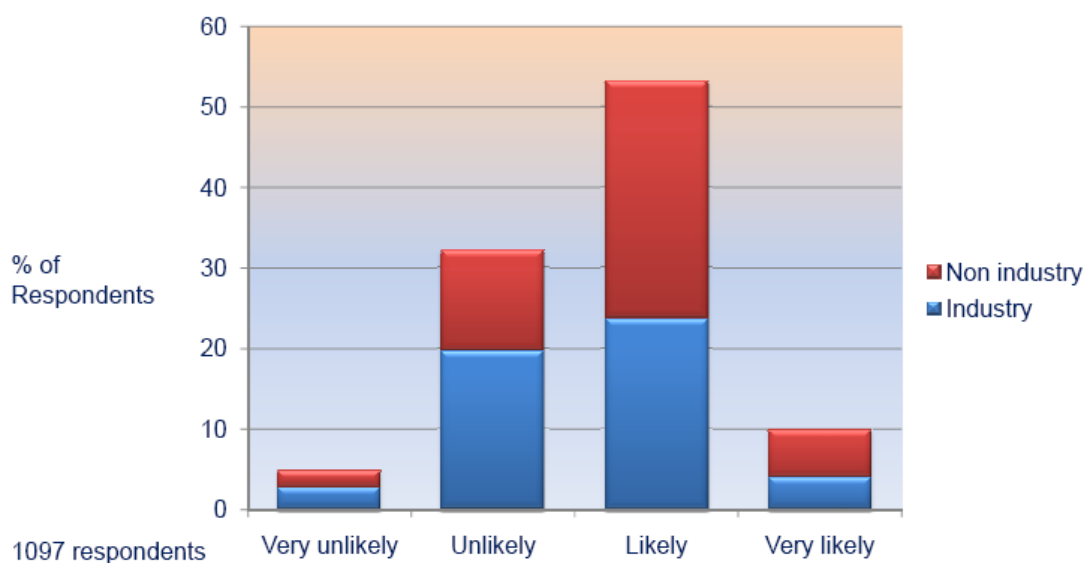
Impact of Time and Cost Pressures

Compared to today, in 2020 my company/organisation will be unwilling to allow staff to travel to as many conferences and exhibitions in order to save time and money.



Meeting Alternatives

By 2020, my company/organisation will be investing far more money in alternatives to conferences and exhibitions than they do today.

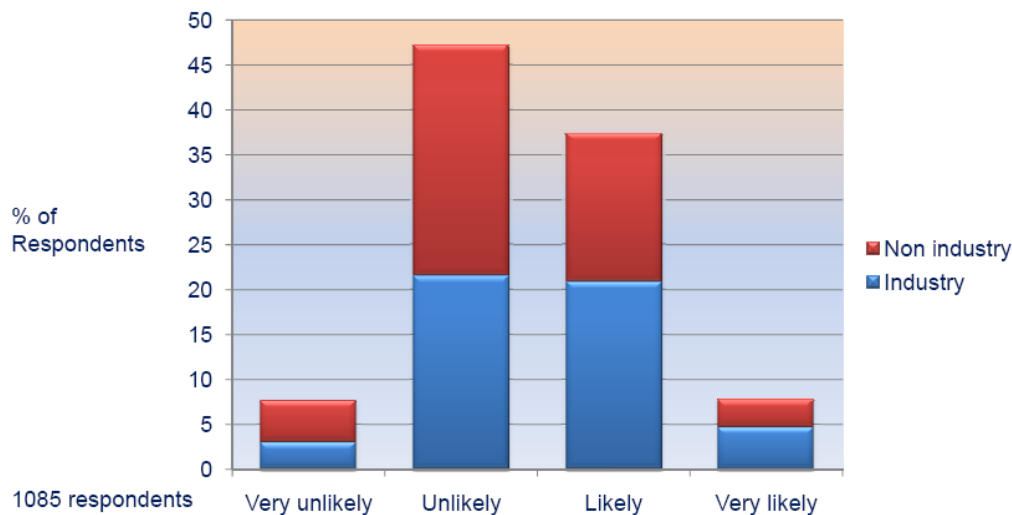


Meeting Supply

49% said that there would be fewer but larger events, while 79% expected a growth in greater choices of smaller more specialized meetings. In addition, only 48% thought that there would be an explosion in the number of free or very low cost evening only meetings held in low cost venues such as libraries, wine bars, and schools. The same results were also reported in a research on *Association Meetings: Forecasts and Trends 2010* by IMEX and ICCA during October 2009, where the majority of respondents agreed that they intend to significantly cut down on costs at future meetings, as well as to select lower cost destinations/venues for future meetings.

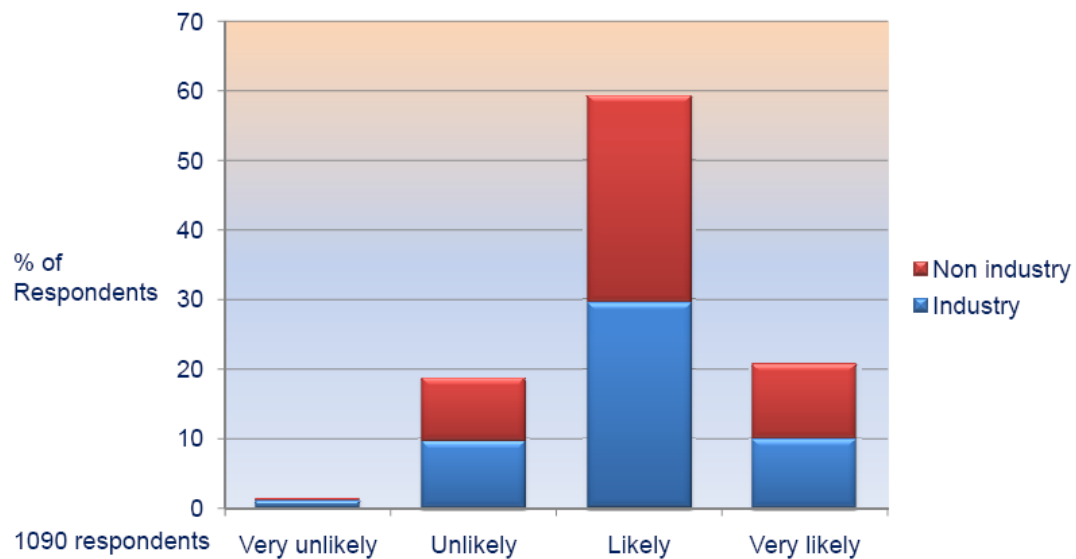
Less but Bigger?

By 2020, compared to today, I expect there to be fewer but larger conferences and exhibitions covering wide topics, industry sectors, or "communities of interest" - with less choice of which events to attend, but much more choice within the events themselves.



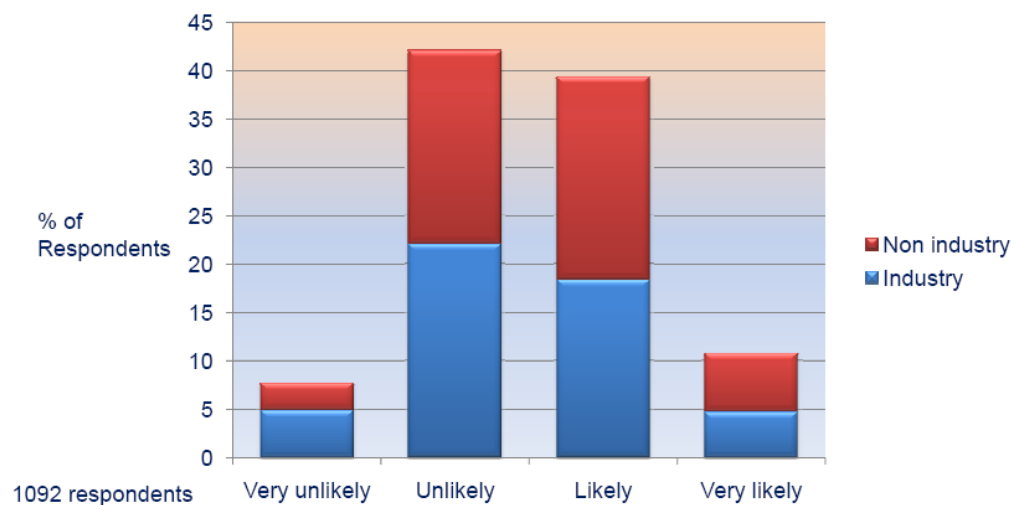
More, Smaller and Specialised?

By 2020, compared to today, I expect there to be a greater choice of many more smaller, highly specialised conferences, exhibitions and meetings - there will be much more competition from events wanting me to attend.



Free and Local?

By 2020, there will be an explosion in the number of free or very low cost evening only meetings held in low cost venues such as libraries, wine bars, and schools.

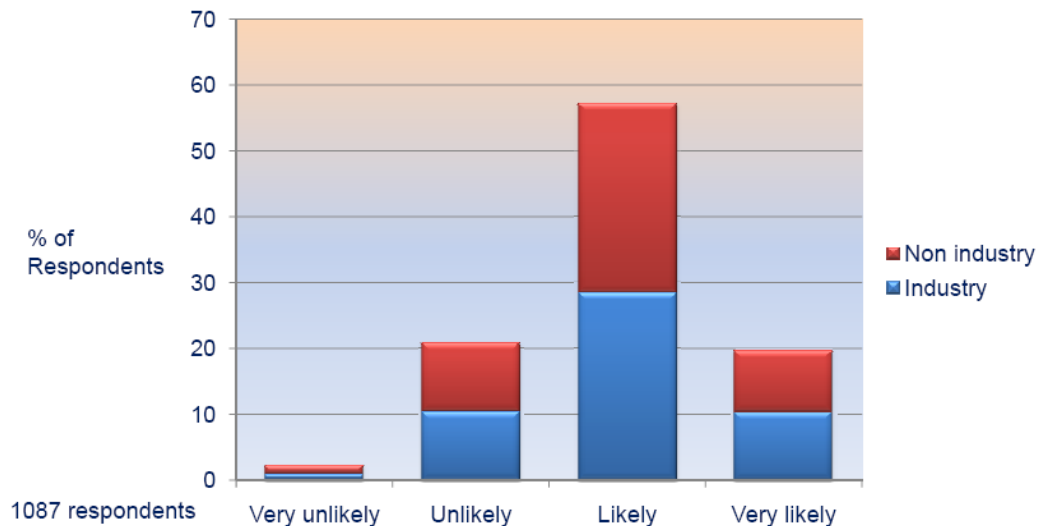


New Business Models

The economic downturn, technological advances and growing competition for events in many sectors have resulted in the urge to identify new business models. 77% of the respondents believed there was a likelihood that conferences and exhibitions would need to offer strong price-based incentives to attract desired delegates. Apart from that, 60% believe it likely that participants will want to pay based on the value they receive and that the event owners will have to guarantee quantifiable return on investment. In other words, 60% expect to see a rise in pay as you go/ pay per session type models. In addition 76% think there will be far more opportunities to sample and purchase products and services or conduct transactions at an event than they do today in the future.

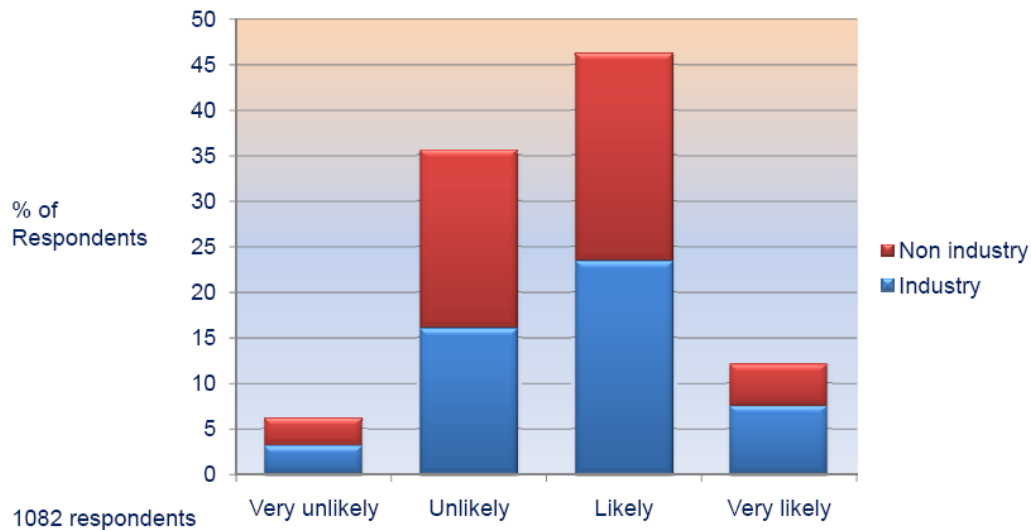
New Pricing Models

By the Year 2020 In order to attract the right sort of participants, conferences and exhibitions will have to offer strong price incentives (e.g. free attendance, subsidised travel to "buyers", sponsors pay for key senior delegates to be present).



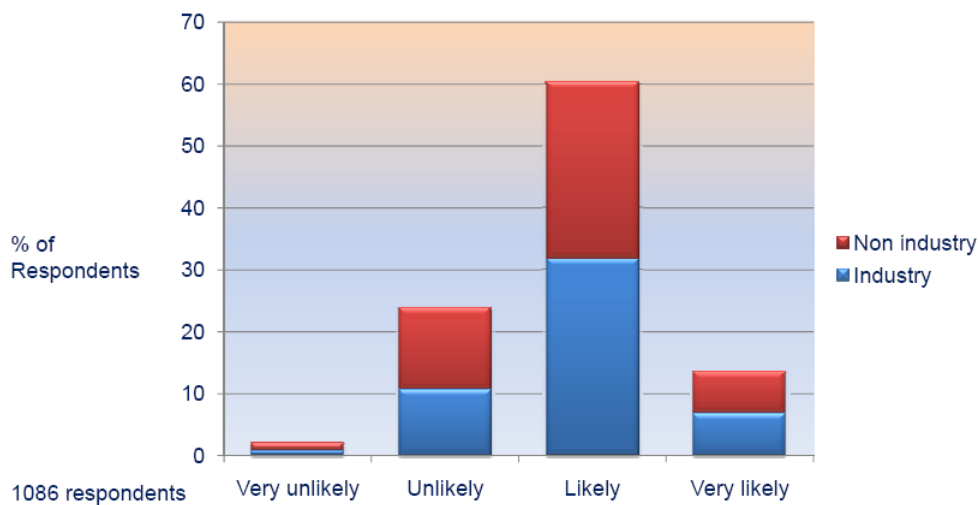
Pay as You Go

In 2020, participants at conferences and exhibitions will pay according to the returns they obtain from attending - e.g. sales appointments booked, individual education sessions attended. Organisers will have to guarantee quantifiable "returns on investment". Simply paying a flat fee to attend or exhibit will decrease in frequency.



Increasing Commercial Opportunities

In 2020, conferences and exhibitions will include far greater opportunities to sample and purchase products and services than they do at the moment - there will be vastly more business opportunities at conferences and exhibitions than there are today.



Event technology

Despite that the technological advancement that continues to develop rapidly in the marketplace, participants adopted a somewhat conservative view when selecting those that would be most commonplace from a list of 14 possible technology advances by 2020. The most commonly expected developments stated by 75% of respondents, was 'Live video streaming to remote participants', a technology which is, to a large extent, available today. The next expected developments included 'a social network before, during and after events' (70%) and 'all event content downloaded to our mobile phones' at 64%. Despite the widespread excitement and abundance of applications for smartphones such as the Apple iPhone, only 32% expected such technology to be commonly used at events by 2020. Whilst most advanced and experiential technologies were not ranked as highly as individual developments, there was strong support for their potential applications when discussed subsequently in scenarios for personalization. These included 'remote attendees participating as 3D holograms' (33%), 'every object has built-in intelligence and can interact with the people around it - e.g. chairs, walls, tables (17%) and 'intelligent avatars participating in virtual events on our behalf' (15%).

Event Technology in 2020 (%)

Which of these technologies do you think will be commonplace in conventions and exhibitions by 2020?

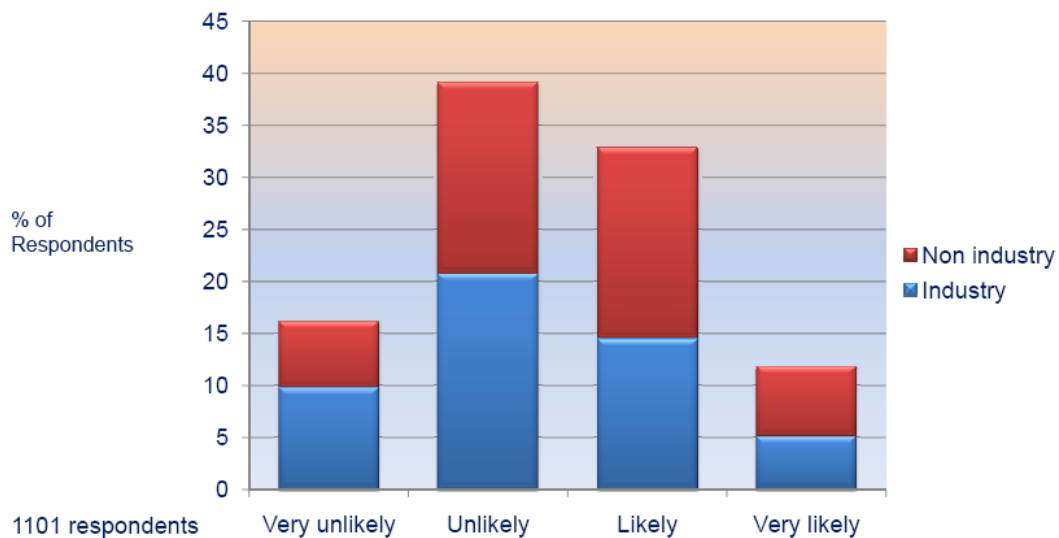


The mobile phone has become an essential tool in our daily lives and, with over 4 billion phone owners globally, it has become the first truly omnipresent technology. At the same time, the sale of smartphones are now outstripping those of laptops and the prospect of projection screens and keyboards for our phones proclaims the possibility of the mobile phone replacing the laptop as our core computing device in the near future. With these developments in mind, two scenarios were tested on the survey respondents. The first asked whether, by 2020, the provision of information on demand anytime and anywhere would replace the role of conferences and exhibitions in delivering such information. While 42% overall considered this a likely or very likely scenario, it was rated higher by those outside the meetings industry (50%) than those working within it (39%). The second scenario posed gained more widespread approval across all respondents, with 92% considering it likely or very likely that "in

2020, my ability to communicate, share data, and negotiate at any time and in any place with clients, suppliers, and business partners will be vastly greater and more efficient than today, thanks to technology.”

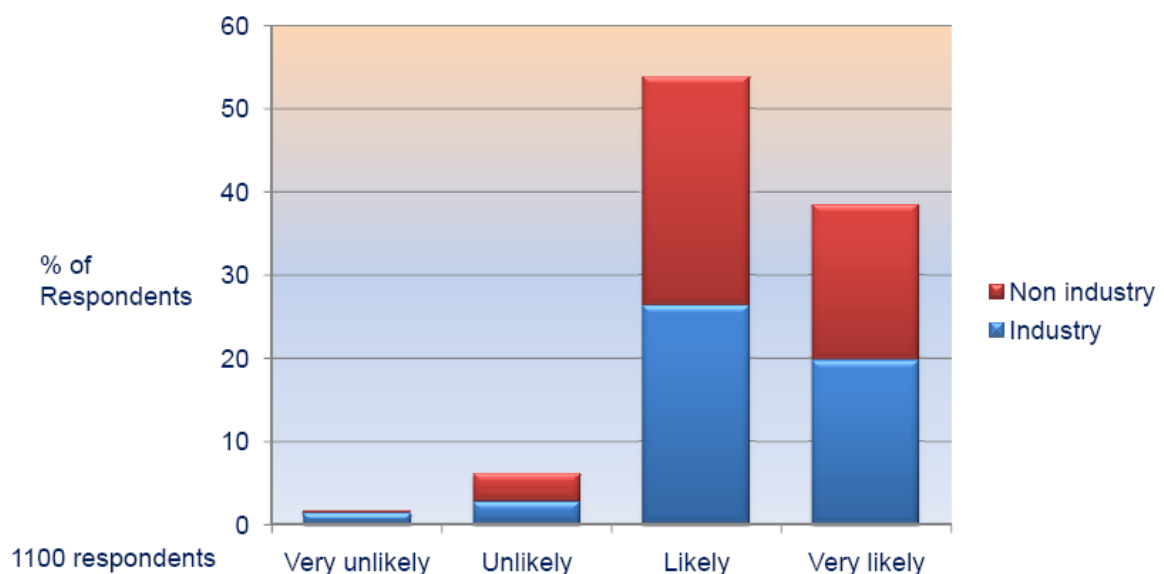
How Will ‘IP Everywhere’ Impact Events?

By the Year 2020 The latest mobile technology will allow me to access any factual information wherever I am located at any time. So I won't need to attend conferences or exhibitions to obtain this type of information.



Connected World

In 2020, my ability to communicate, share data, and negotiate at any time and in any place with clients, suppliers, and business partners will be vastly greater and more efficient than today, thanks to technology.



Personalization

One of the opportunities being put forward for the industry is the use of visualization and interactive experiential technologies to personalize the delegate experience. Three scenarios were tested on the respondents.

Those in the events sector were particularly attracted to the scenario of, “By 2020 all conferences and exhibitions I attend will offer a totally personalized experience, tailor-made to my needs, and offering whatever technological tools are needed to make the event fully interactive so I can engage with and influence the content of the event”, with 80% considering it likely or very likely compared to 69% from outside and 77% overall. 70% felt that it was likely or very likely that personalization would extend across the event experience and that, “In 2020, the personal comfort of attendees will be much more important to organizers than today. Individuals will be able to obtain personalized menus at meals, there will be many options for entertainment and relaxation, e.g. customized seating. Organizers will make far better use of information about individual attendees than they do today.” Despite the evident concerns over privacy, almost all respondents (93%) considered it likely or very likely that, “In 2020, almost everything that happens at events will be measured and stored as useful data for organizers and participants to use in real time, including sessions that individuals attend, interactions between attendees, appointments that are made and the educational and business interests that individuals express (before, during and after the event).”

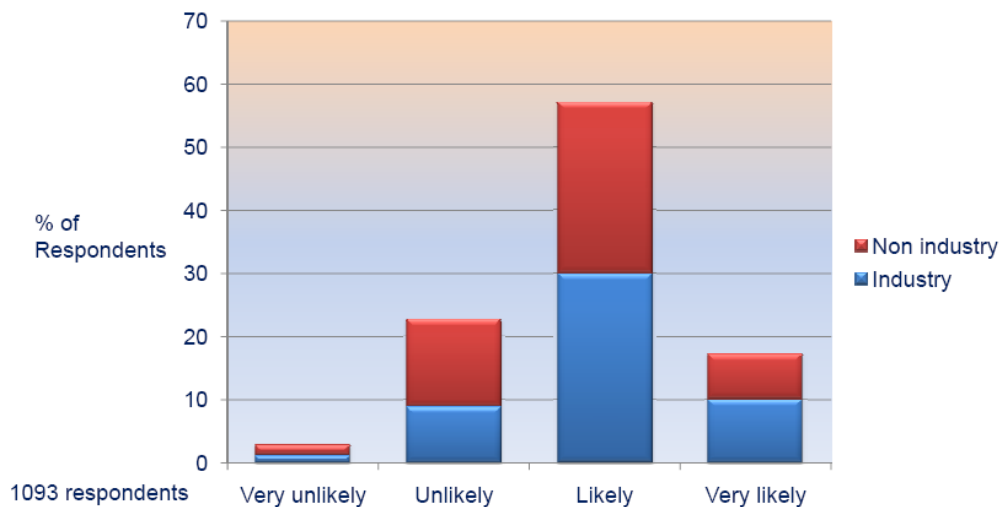
Interestingly, the effect of technology on the meetings and events industry, along the pattern above, was also forecasted in the three scenarios thoroughly studied and presented in “What will the exhibition industry look like in the year 2020” at 74th UFI Congress by Professor Dr. Oliver Klante of HSBA Hamburg School of Business Administration which was supported by HHL Leipzig Graduate School of Management and AUMA (Association of the German Trade Fair Industry). The first scenario, “personal-continental-profiled”, stated that with political reforms towards a strong Europe, unlimited mobility, global exhibition groups without own exhibition space, continental leading trade shows and *high tech and high touch* impact, the following would emerge: a power of the big exhibitors, a growing relevance of exhibition company branding and trade show branding, changes in the value creation by customer integration, and exhibition space that is no longer a cost unit. The second scenario, “cross-linked-fragmented-eventful”, addressed that, with the prospect of Europe being pressured by a new ‘gravitation centre’, a restricted mobility due to numerous existing conflicts, an exhibition industry being highly fragmented and under extreme stress of competition, there would be focused special trade shows within the domestic market and less globally industry/branch trade shows, performance consumption based on new media technologies, intense efficiency-and service-orientation, and renaissance of consumer-shows. The third scenario, “virtual-customised-anytime”, emphasized that with the global multi-polar world with its economical centre in Asia, highly restricted mobility due to numerous existing conflicts, *virtual trade shows* and less physical trade shows, there would be an extreme shortage of time for every market player, a new business model like www.google.com, and rapidness and knowledge as driving forces for the exhibition industry.

The Convention 2020 TrendWiki Dashboard that presents an aggregated view of some of the most recent issues and trends of the event industry also revealed the same findings regarding the impact of new technologies and materials on the events industry. Some of the examples included: “new gadgets and materials will revolutionise the event experience”, “product individualization will become the norm within the events industry”, and “attendees will expect an all inclusive integrated event experience, where their profile, preferences and opportunities are best served without asking for input all the time”. It also provides a sample taken from the anticipated event industry

i.e. Procter & Gamble expands its strategic meetings management program to include virtual events as a result of mobile technology.

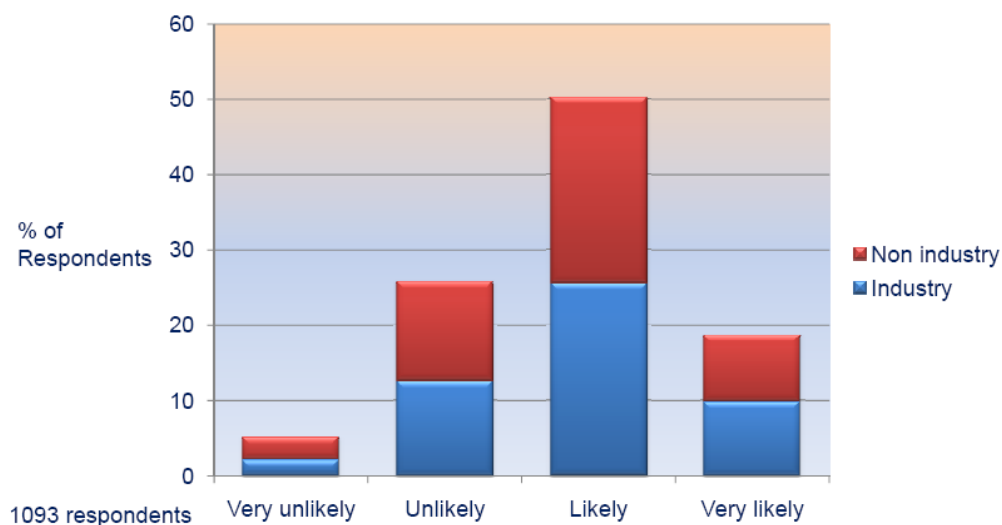
Technology Gets Personal

By 2020 all conferences and exhibitions I attend will offer a totally personalised experience, tailor-made to my needs, and offering whatever technological tools are needed to make the event fully interactive so I can engage with and influence the content of the event.



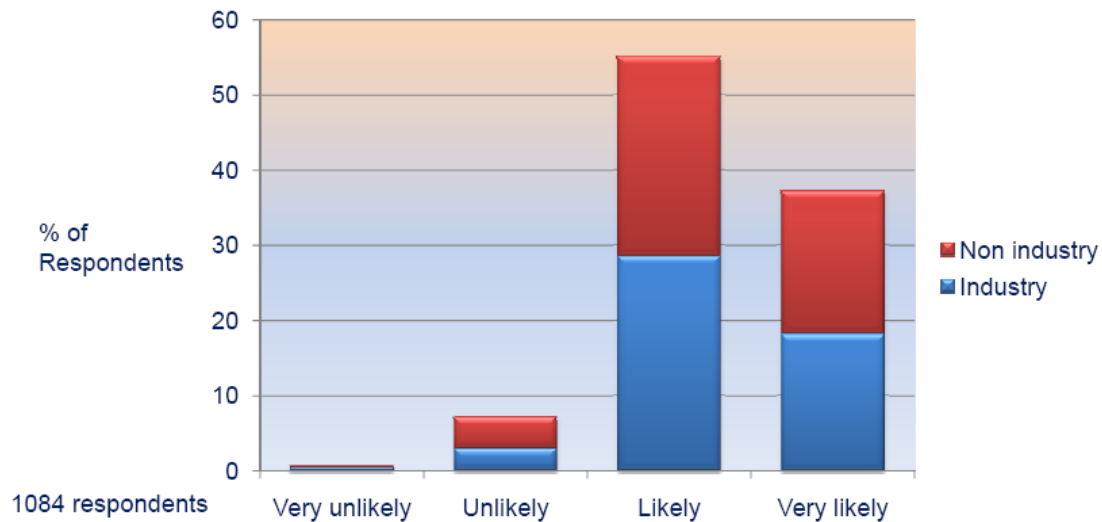
Total Customisation

In 2020, the personal comfort of attendees will be much more important to organisers than today. Individuals will be able to obtain personalised menus at meals, there will be many options for entertainment and relaxation, e.g. customised seating. Organisers will make far better use of information about individual attendees than they do today.



Full Event Capture

In 2020, almost everything that happens at events will be measured and stored as useful data for organisers and participants to use in real time, including sessions that individuals attend, interactions between attendees, appointments that are made and the educational and business interests that individuals express (before, during and after the event).



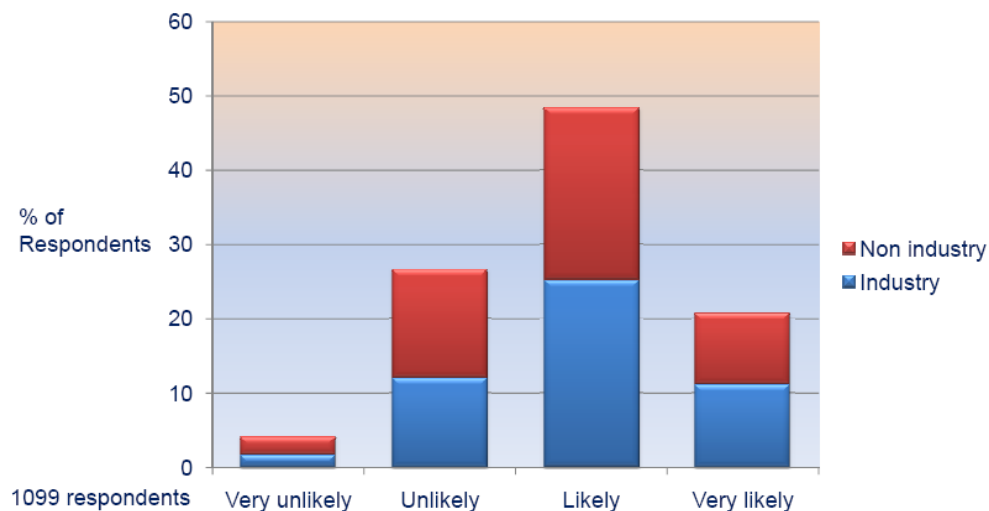
Sustainability

A common perception among respondents in their comments was that issues such as ethics, reducing the environmental footprint and security would remain important considerations for attendees. The majority of the respondents (70%) said ethical and environmental factors will influence the decision to attend.

The May 2010 IMEX Research titled 'New IMEX Global Insights Report reveals greater optimism for the year ahead' also echoed the same concerns as their results revealed that 'corporate social responsibility (CSR) continues to be an important topic for meetings and events industry' with comments that a move towards "smaller more intimate CEO-level events" and that "meetings and conventions are more and more environmentally friendly". Another IMEX Research on 'Association planners upbeat New IMEX survey indicates positive outlook for 2010' also said that the issue of climate change and the association's carbon footprint appears to be growing in importance for planners in 2010. In addition, a research on *Association Meetings: Forecasts and Trends 2010* by IMEX and ICCA during October 2009 also reported that a majority of respondents (52%) undertake socially-responsible activity in the host community.

Ethical and Green

In 2020, ethical and environmental decisions will play a big part in determining which events are attended (e.g. is the meeting environmentally sustainable; can the delegate justify the carbon cost of travelling to this destination)

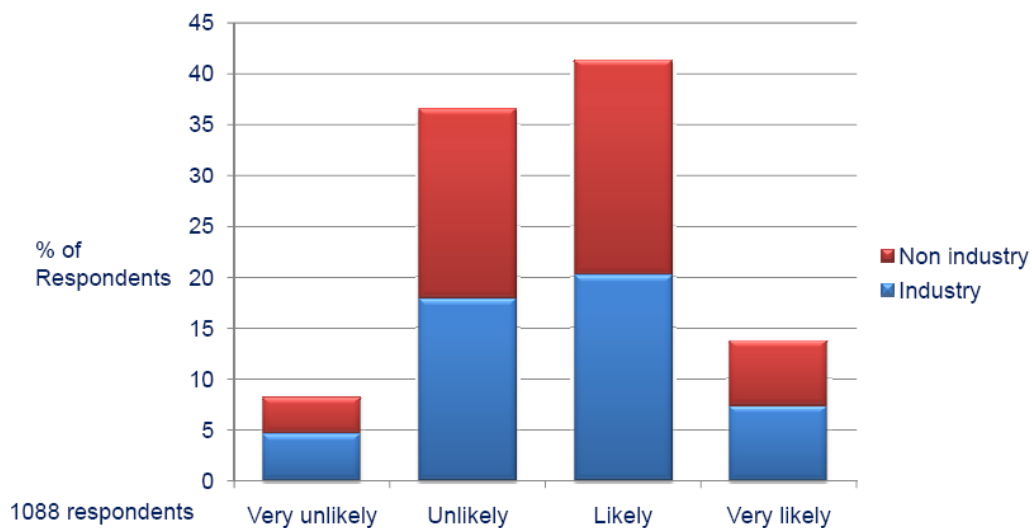


Security concern

Interestingly, an equal proportion of both respondent groups (55%) considered that security would likely continue as a prime concern.

Security Conscious

In 2020, those attending conferences and exhibitions will be even more concerned about personal security than today, and will avoid attending any events or destinations where there are perceived high risks.

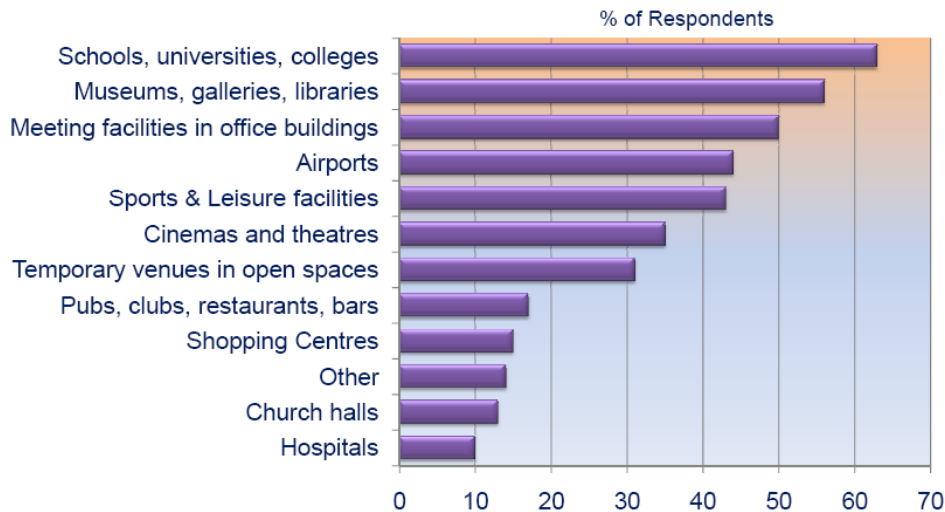


Convention centre challenges

Convention centers face a number of competitive pressures, particularly from the expansion of capacity taking place in the sector and from the growing number of alternative venues as diverse as museums and church halls. 'Schools, universities and colleges' were selected as facilities that could be competing with convention centers to host meetings (63%), followed by 'Museums, galleries and libraries' (56%) and 'Meeting facilities in office buildings' (50%). The three most popular alternative uses for convention centers selected from a list of options supplied were Educational Institution (51%), Mixed Use Development (49%) and Museum/ Gallery (45%). Only 4% felt they could be converted to Prisons and 3% to Domestic Housing.

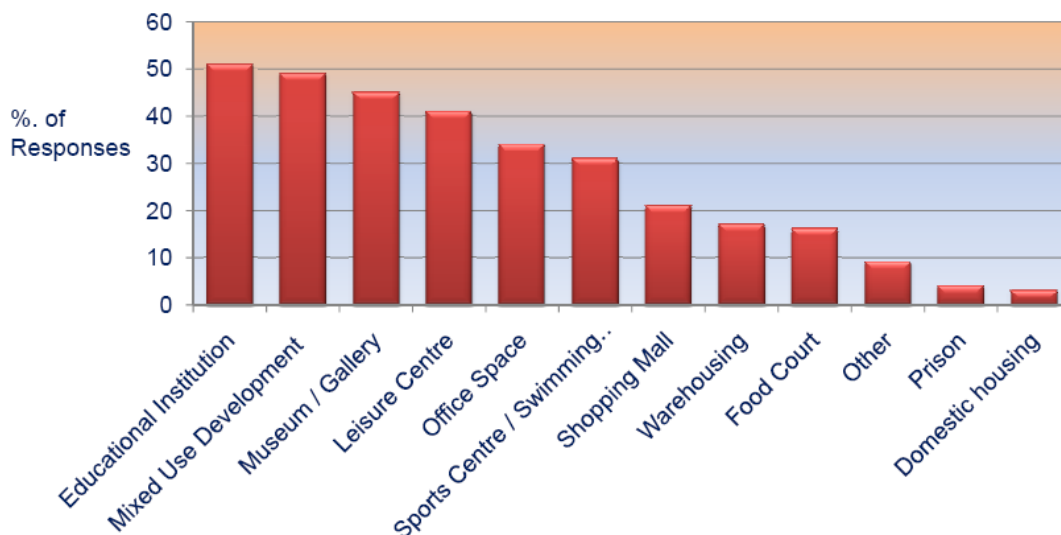
Competition to Convention Centres

Which of the following do you think could be competing with Convention Centres to host meetings, conferences and exhibitions by 2020?



Alternative Venue Uses

If your nearest convention centres had to find alternative uses for their space, which of the following do you think would be the most successful?

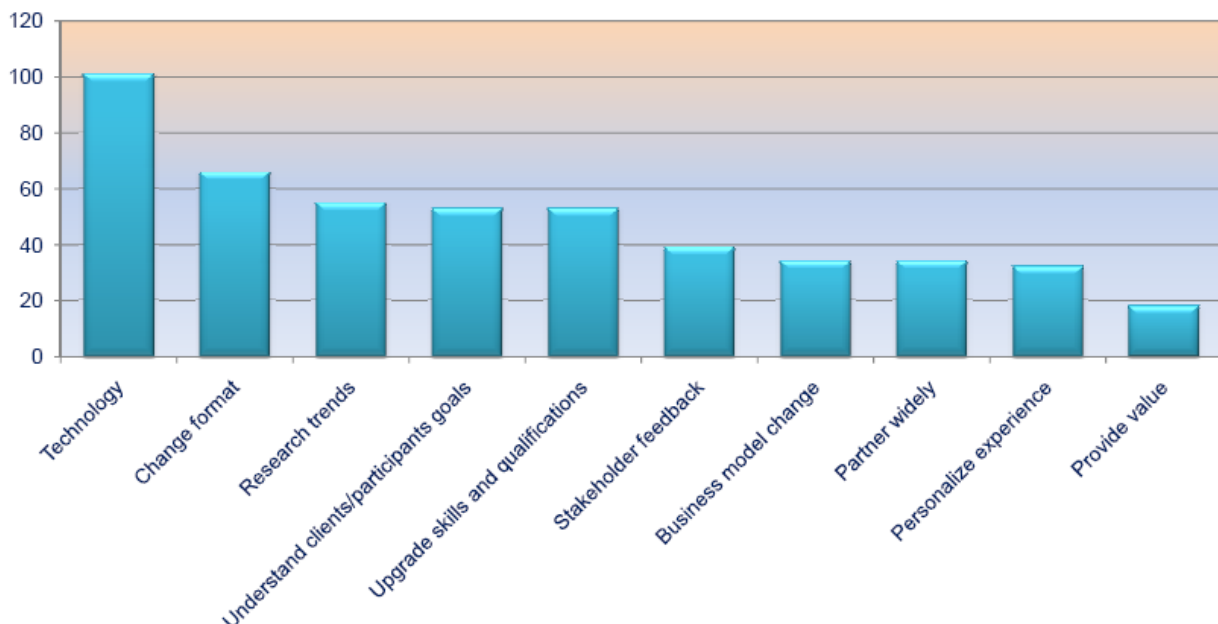


Preparation for event owners and venues for 2020

The respondents were asked to reflect on what event owners and venues must do in order to prepare themselves for the market in 2020. For event organizers, the main comments focused on the need to improve the use of technology before, during and after an event to maximize the delegate experience and improve the efficiency of their own operations and marketing. The next two most frequently raised issues were the need to innovate on event formats and to research and act on trends in the external environment, in their target markets and in the events industry. For venues, the need to improve the technology offered and to stay up to date or ahead of the curve received almost four times as many comments as any other issue. A common issue was the need to provide free broadband access as charging was considered similar to charging them for the air, electricity or water used at the event. The following two most frequently raised issues for venues focused on the need for far greater flexibility, firstly, at an organizational level to address changing customer needs and, secondly, in terms of how the physical space can be configured to serve a constantly growing set of event design requirements.

Preparation for 2020 - Events

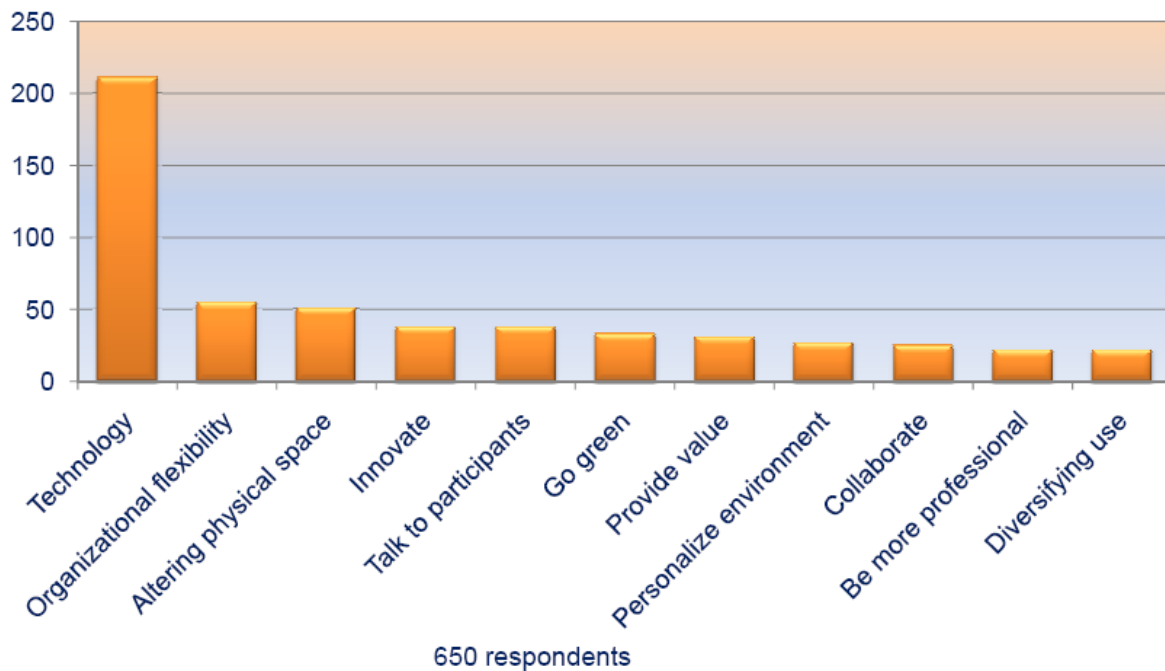
What do you think event organisers should be doing today to prepare themselves for the market of 2020?



641 respondents

Preparation for 2020 - Venues

What do you think venues such as convention and exhibition centres should be doing now to prepare themselves for the conferences and exhibitions of 2020?



In summary, technological development together with economic recovery have challenged traditional events and how they operate as these important factors have an impact on streamlining the flow of information and how people can work more efficiently. As a result, the event industry is facing time and cost pressures, which require more consideration to be placed on ROI and value justification. This has led them to foresee personalization and customization as a way forward for the conventions and exhibitions industry. Additionally, environmental responsibility by companies/organizations has become more apparent as the issues of climate change and the need to be more environmentally friendly continue to rise. It is without a doubt that all players within the events industry cannot overlook technological improvement and must keep an eye on how they can be efficiently integrated with the way conventions and exhibitions are to be organized.

References

1. *Convention 2020-The Future of Exhibitions, Meetings and Events*
2. *IMEX Research, New IMEX Global Insights Report reveals greater optimism for the year ahead*
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7. *Slides presentation of Professor Dr. Oliver Klante-HSBA Hamburg School of Business Administration on 'What will the exhibition industry look like in the year 2020?'*
8. *IMEX and ICCA Research, Association Meetings: Forecasts and Trends 2010*
9. *CEIR Index, An Analysis of the 2009 Exhibition Industry and Future Outlook*