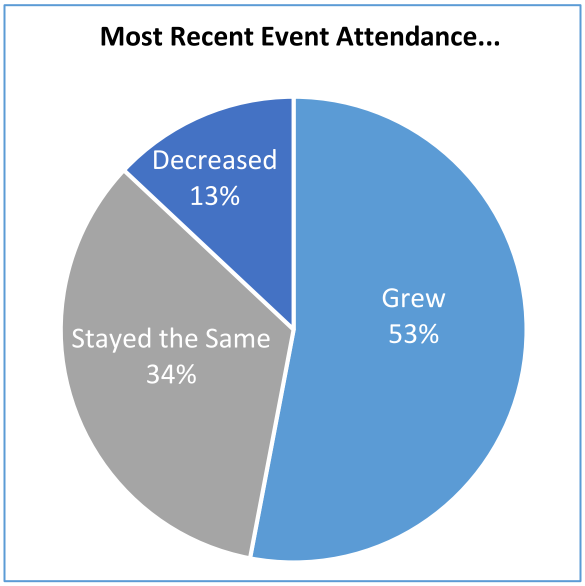
Attendee Acquisition Benchmarks & Trends, Winter 2018
Executive Summary

An online survey was conducted by Exhibit Surveys, Lippman Connects, and *Trade Show Executive Magazine* from January 9, 2018 to January 25, 2018. One hundred seventy-six attendee acquisition/attendee marketers responded. Respondents answered questions based on their largest event. Exhibit Surveys collected 8 performance benchmark metrics that it uses in its HealthCheck™ dashboard among them are average event spending on attendee promotion, attendee promotion spending as a percent of event's total cost and average promotion cost per net attendee. The major trends uncovered in the study are detailed below.

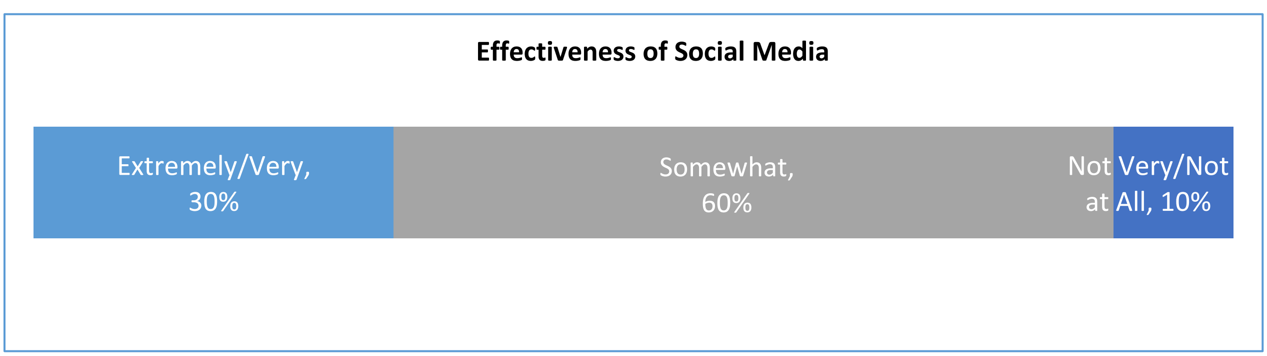


53% of respondents indicated attendance growth for their most recent event. Increase use of social media, improved targeting of email, improved content of email and improved educational programming were the main initiatives taken to grow their attendance.

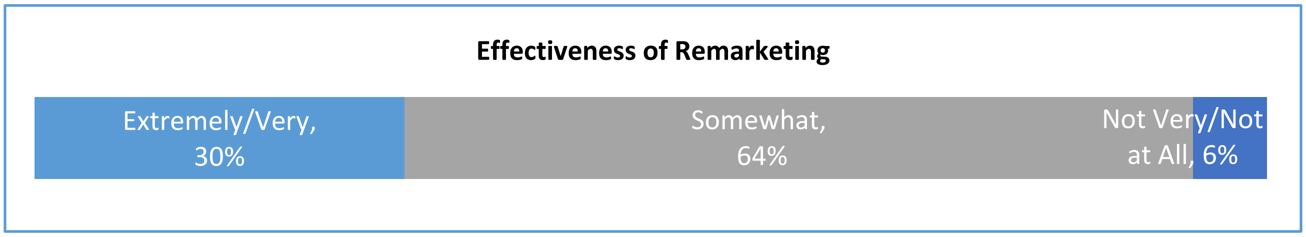
A total of 47% indicated attendance either stayed the same (34%) or decreased (13%) for their most recent event. They cited lack of growth/market maturity in sector represented by event, competing domestic events and change in location/venue as the main reasons for flat or declining attendance.

9 out of 10 events are using social media, digital advertising, email marketing, event website and database management marketing tools. 8 out of 10 are using video production, public relations, direct mail and print advertising. Only half (52%) are using telemarketing. Six out of ten (59%) expect their social media budget to increase and four out of ten (43%) expect their email marketing budget to increase. However print advertising and direct mail budgets are each showing a double digit decline of approximately 15%.

Use of social media is a work in progress. Six out of ten feel their use of social media is only somewhat effective, while only 30% believe it is highly effective (extremely/very). Sixty percent measuring the success of their social media tools by number of followers, attendee registrations and content views. Facebook and Twitter are considered highly (extremely/very) effective social media sites by 37% and 36%, respectively.



Re-marketing/re-targeting is defined as using automated tools to reengage visitors/customers based on recent interactions with your brand. Fifty five percent have used or currently are using re-marketing/re-targeting efforts in their attendee marketing program. Another quarter (25%) are considering using them. Of those who have used or are currently using these tools, only 30% find them to be extremely/very effective. 36% of users are planning on increasing their re-marketing budget.



Digital marketing is now getting **almost half (45%) of the attendee marketing budget** and this budget is **increasing an average of 10%,** while traditional marketing at 49% continues to have a slightly higher share of the budget, spending on traditional marketing is only going to increase by an average of 2%.

Support by management appears to be healthy. **A third of shows** have **added or plan to add marketing staff** as well as an **agency or consultant** to augment the marketing staff.

Composition of Respondents

- 100% of respondents are involved in attendee acquisition/attendee marketing. 77% have director level or higher titles. Over half (52%) have an average of 15 years involvement in attendee acquisition.
- Respondents are from a mix of Association organizers (57%), Independent organizers (33%), and organizers of corporate events (10%). Of the Association organizers, 54% are Professional associations (organizations which represent the interest of individuals engaged in a specific profession) and 46% are Trade associations (organizations founded and funded by businesses that operate in a specific industry).
- Respondents' events are from 14 industries. Medical & Healthcare (14%), Education (14%), Business Services (11%) and Communications/IT (10%) are the most represented.
- Fifty-seven percent hold events in rotating cities, and 43% are in the same city for each occurrence. For the respondents' events, the average net attendance is 10,398 and net square footage is 204,467. The average event has 483 exhibiting companies.

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*For information about the **Attendee Acquisition Roundtable**, contact Sam Lippman at 703-979-4904, sam@lippmanconnects.com, or visit lippmanconnects.com/aar.*