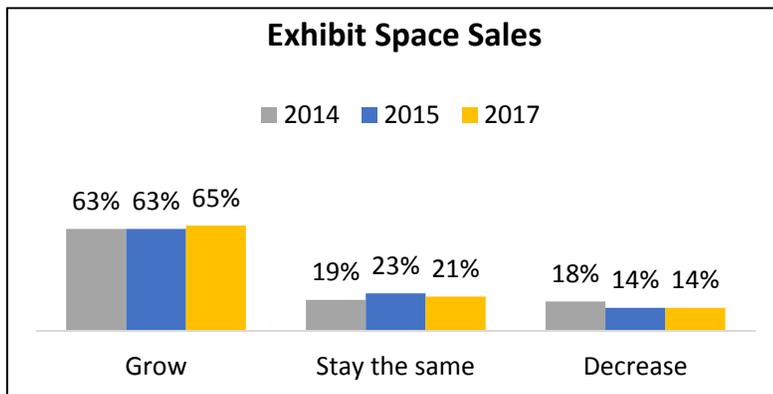


## 2017 Benchmarks & Trends in Exhibit and Sponsorship Sales Executive Summary

An online survey was conducted from February 20, 2017 to March 8, 2017. The survey sample consisted of exhibition and event organizers from the databases of *Trade Show Executive Magazine*, Lippman Connects, and Exhibit Surveys. Two hundred twenty exhibition and event organizers responded and answered questions based on their largest event.

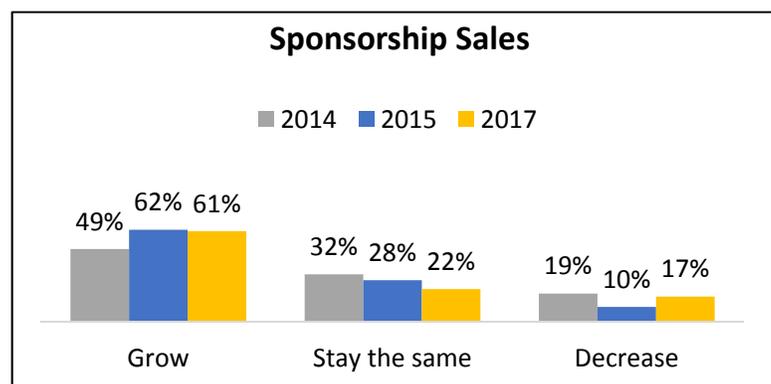
**Exhibit Surveys** collected **14 performance benchmark metrics** that it uses in its **HealthCheck™ dashboard**. **New** this year are **benchmarks on sponsorships** including percentage of sponsoring companies retained and the percent of first time sponsors. In this year's report there are two benchmark worksheets. One compares the performance of association and independent events. The second compares smaller shows (those with less than 125 net square feet) and larger shows (those with 125 net square feet or more). The major trends uncovered in the study are detailed below.



Consistent with the past two years, **two-thirds indicated their exhibit space sales grew**. The top reasons given this year were: more aggressive sales effort, growth in the industry sector represented by their event, growth in attendance, and improved marketing materials. Among the **approximately one third** whose events were either **staying the same or decreasing**, the most cited reasons were the lack of growth in their event's industry sector, competing events, and change in location.

The **top challenges faced in selling exhibits** are the need to grow event attendance (46%), mergers and consolidations (43%), and companies only interested in access to attendees but not in exhibiting (37%). More than four out of ten indicated that increasing costs including on-site labor, shipping, drayage, travel, and hotels were a concern. When asked about connecting attendees and exhibitors, nearly half of respondents provide direct mail opportunities while **less than one third provide attendee email addresses to exhibitors**. Only 7% find providing direct mail opportunities is an effective incentive for selling exhibit space, where one third find **providing attendee email addresses is impactful** when selling exhibit space. Over half (53%) increased their price per NSF of exhibit space this year. They did so by an average of 5%. 46% kept their prices the same.

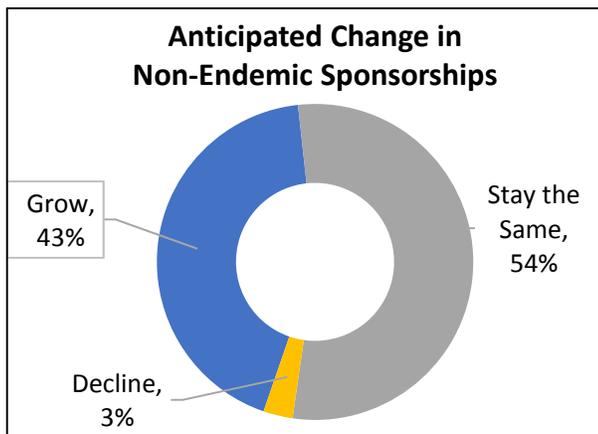
**Consistent with last year but significantly up from two years ago, more than six out of 10 (61%) indicated that sponsorship sales grew** for their most recent event. The most cited reasons for growth were that they offered new sponsorship opportunities, followed by offering customized sponsorship packages, and a more aggressive sales effort. For the **39%** whose sponsorship sales **stayed the same or decreased**, there was a cluster of reasons given – competing events, the lack of



proper sales effort, the lack of growth in their industry sector, and the lack of growth in the economy overall.

**The top challenges in selling sponsorships** are pricing sponsorships, finding the right person with buying authority, and explaining new sponsorships.

**Over half sell sponsorships to non-exhibiting companies** (57%), and nearly one third of them (29%) do not place additional requirements on sponsors who are not exhibiting. Those that do place special requirements may require non-exhibiting sponsors to pay an increased amount (30%) or may only sell to companies that do not make sense to exhibit (21%).



**Over half (55%) offer sponsorships to non-endemic companies.** Non-endemic companies were defined as companies not directly related to the primary theme or focus of the event but ones that shared a common target audience. Non-endemic sponsors make up an average of 6% of sponsors and provide an average of 8% of sponsorship revenue. Nearly half (43%) expect the percent of non-endemic sponsors to grow over the next year, while 54% expect that percent to stay the same. **Top techniques for acquiring non-endemic sponsors include prior relationship with sponsoring company, a lead from a colleague, and direct personal emails.**

Down slightly from last year, **60% of total event revenue is from exhibit space sales** (62% in 2015).

**Sponsorship sales increased** 3% from 11% in 2015 to 14% in 2017. Association organizers generate 20% of their revenue from education programs, while Independent organizers only generate 10%.

### Composition of Respondents

- 100% of respondents are involved in exhibit and/or sponsorship sales. They have been involved for an average of 14 years. 72% of respondents have director level or higher titles.
- 73% of respondents are Association organizers. 38% of respondents represent large events over 125,000 net square feet. The most represented industries are medical/healthcare, building/construction, and business services.
- For the respondents' events, the average net attendance is 12,686, net square footage is 206,821, and total revenue is \$5,572,750. The average event has 512 exhibiting companies and 43 sponsoring companies.

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