



Associations delegates want to meet in person, not virtually

2021-10-19

New research has revealed that association conference delegates long to go back to normal events and want to meet in person, not virtually.

Based on a survey by [Bramcote](#) International and the Association of British Professional Conference Organizers (ABPCO) among 350 representatives of associations, almost all of them – 93 per cent – miss networking and social interactions at the events in which they participate.

The survey has also confirmed that vaccination plays a huge role in building trust. Of those surveyed, three-quarters (75%) were satisfied with attending the event in person if they were fully vaccinated. Among those who have not received a double dose of vaccine, the number had dropped to 47 per cent.

Surprisingly, only a third (34%) said they wanted additional safety and hygiene measures at their conference, which indicates growing confidence in the effectiveness of the vaccination program.

The survey included questions about financial issues. As many as 71 per cent of respondents wanted flexible cancellation conditions for registration fees if they were unable to attend the event due to Covid.

Seventy per cent of respondents said that they would take part in the next event before March 2022. One-third will come by car, 43 per cent by train and 20 per cent by plane.

Heather Lishman, director of ABPCO, said: 'This survey is a piece of great news for our industry as it highlights what we can do to encourage people to return and participate in our events. The results of the survey show that conference participants miss the personal contact of the conference – although they are aware that digital platforms offer great opportunities for knowledge sharing and learning, they miss human interaction the most. Only 15 per cent said they did not want to attend the event "live" in the near future'.

Catherine Newhall-Caiger, Managing Director of Bramcote International, said: 'We've always known that networking, social interaction and meeting people is a key factor in social events. Our role as PCOs, venues and CVBs is to create networking opportunities that people engage in, resulting in new business contacts and relationships that enable learning, collaboration and friendship. We just need to listen to our customers and use the feedback to create the right event at the right time for the right audience'.

Full survey available upon request by email at heatherlishman@abpc.org.

Author: Anna Górska