



## vFairs Report

# Outlook for 2022 Events & Beyond



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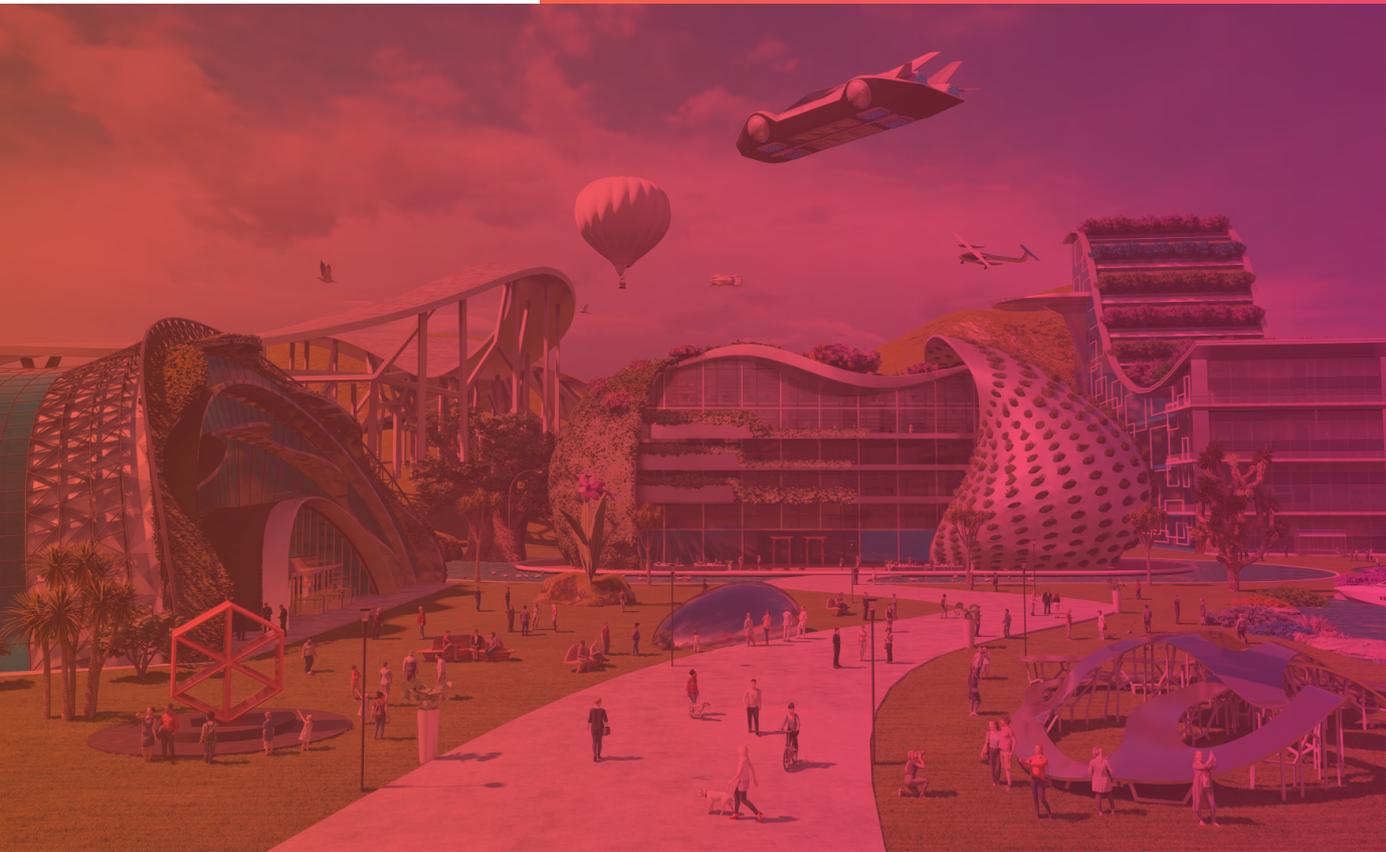
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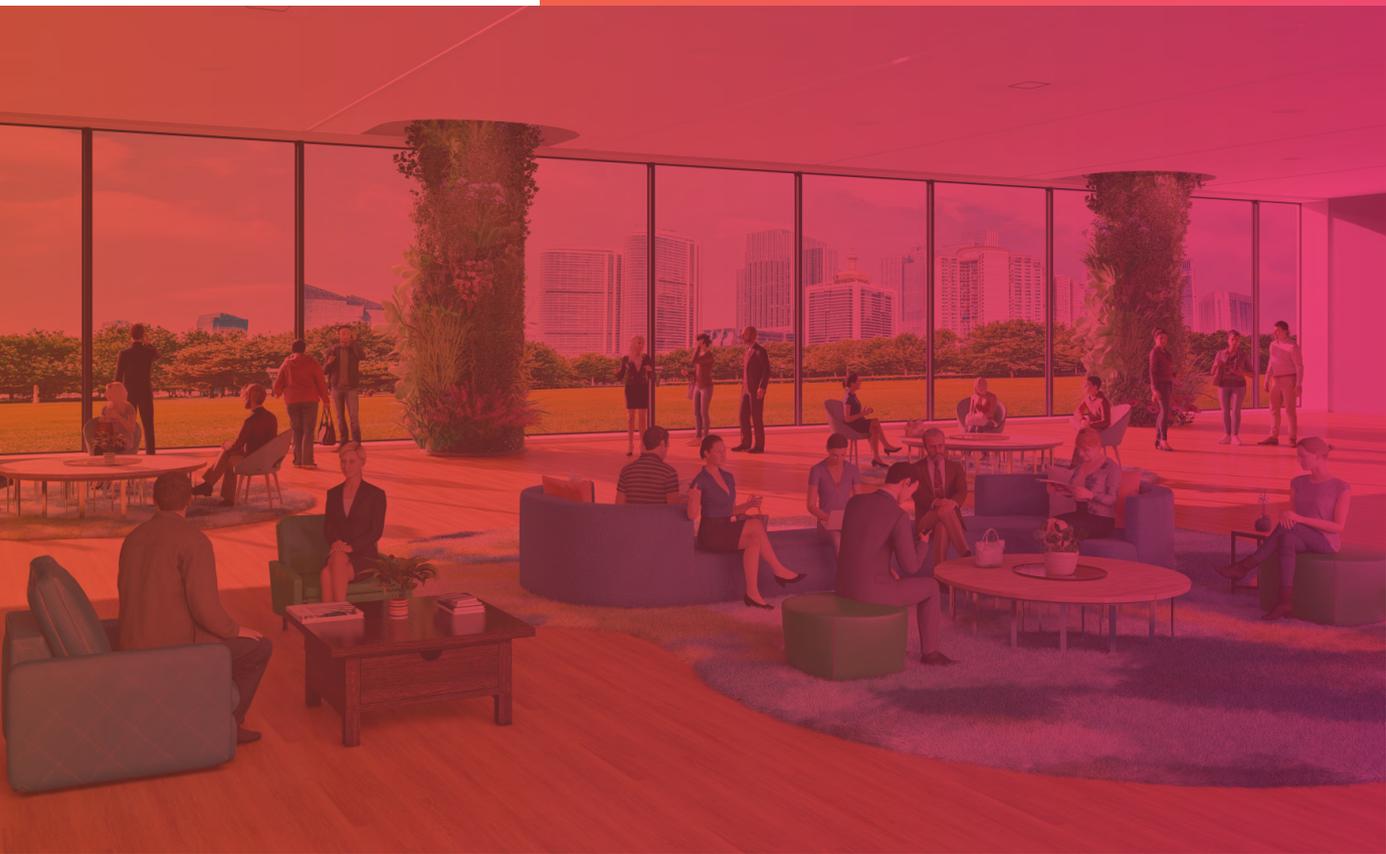


# Introduction

2022 has been a welcome change from the dread of 2020 and 2021. Now that COVID-19 restrictions have eased, event pros are excited to be able to interact with people face-to-face again.

Just as the pendulum swung toward virtual events at the start of the pandemic, events appear to be shifting back to in-person. But virtual and hybrid events are still around. Where does that leave us with the future of events?

In 2022, vFairs carried out a survey on “The Future of Virtual Events” to gain a deeper comprehension of this topic



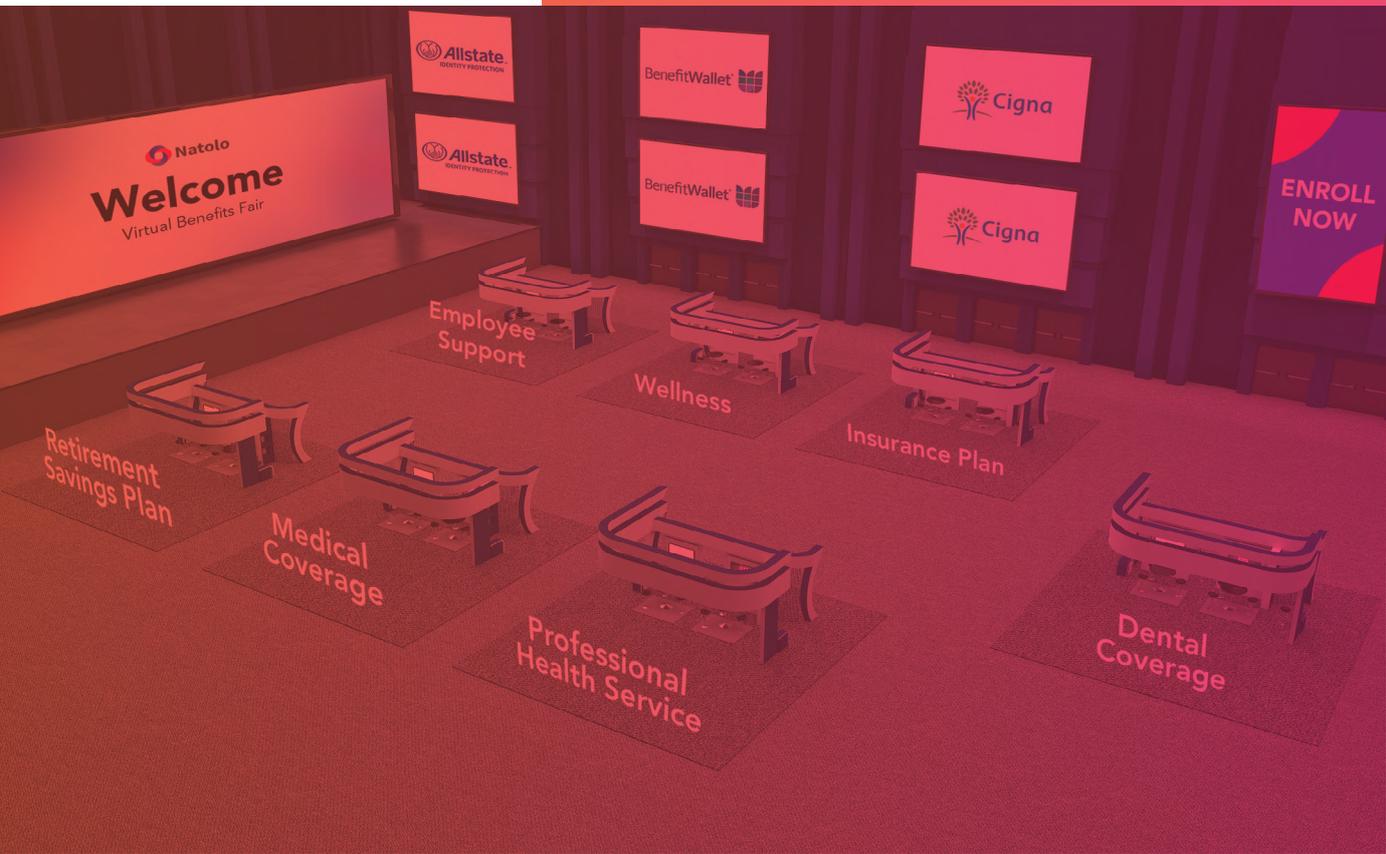
## About the Survey

We got in touch with event pros from around the world to learn more about their experience and find out their long term event strategies. These respondents belonged to various industries around the world including corporate, healthcare, government, and event services.

Through this, we were able to get a sense of:

- What do they think about the success of virtual events?
- How has their experience with virtual events been?
- Why do they opt for virtual events in the first place?
- How do different industries benefit from virtual events?

We also wanted to use these questions to understand the future of virtual events in specific. Our results showed that they will live on. More importantly, organizations around the world will use a mix of virtual, hybrid and in-person events to achieve their business goals.

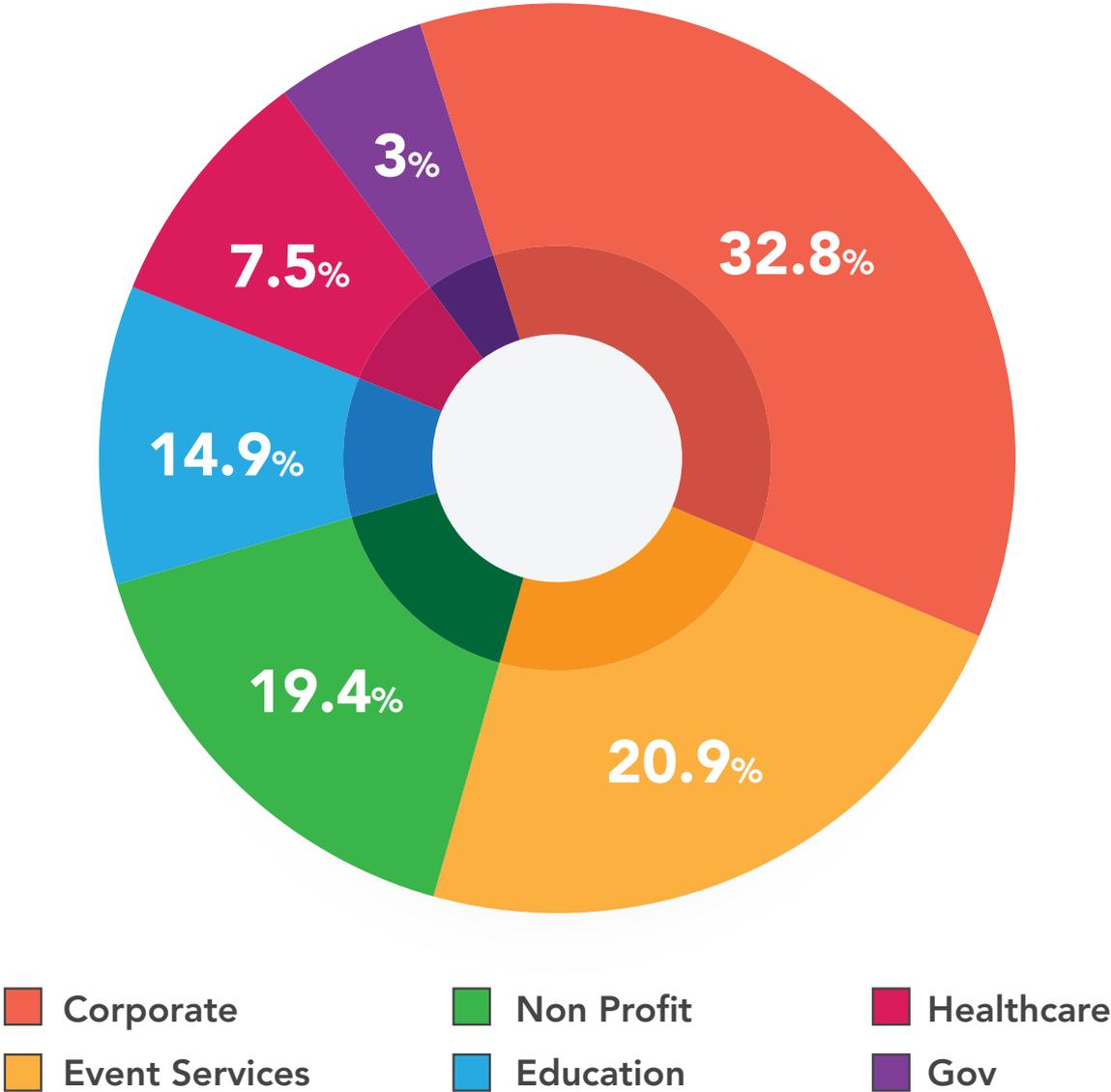


## Who Were The Respondents?

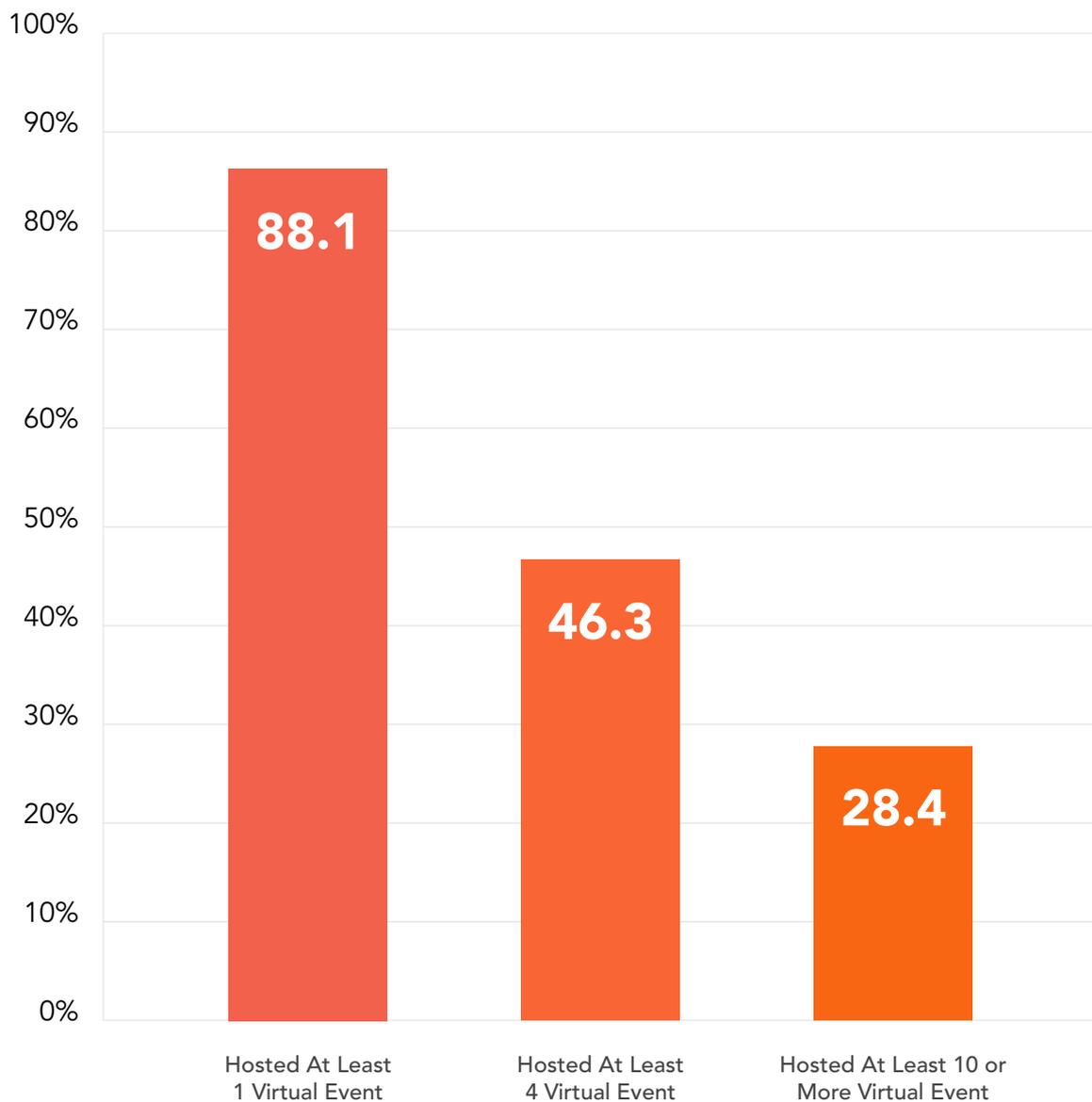
The survey was polled by event professionals with varying levels of experience and expertise – from HR professionals to marketing and communications experts.

Our respondents were from a wide range of industries, with four being most common in the data set:

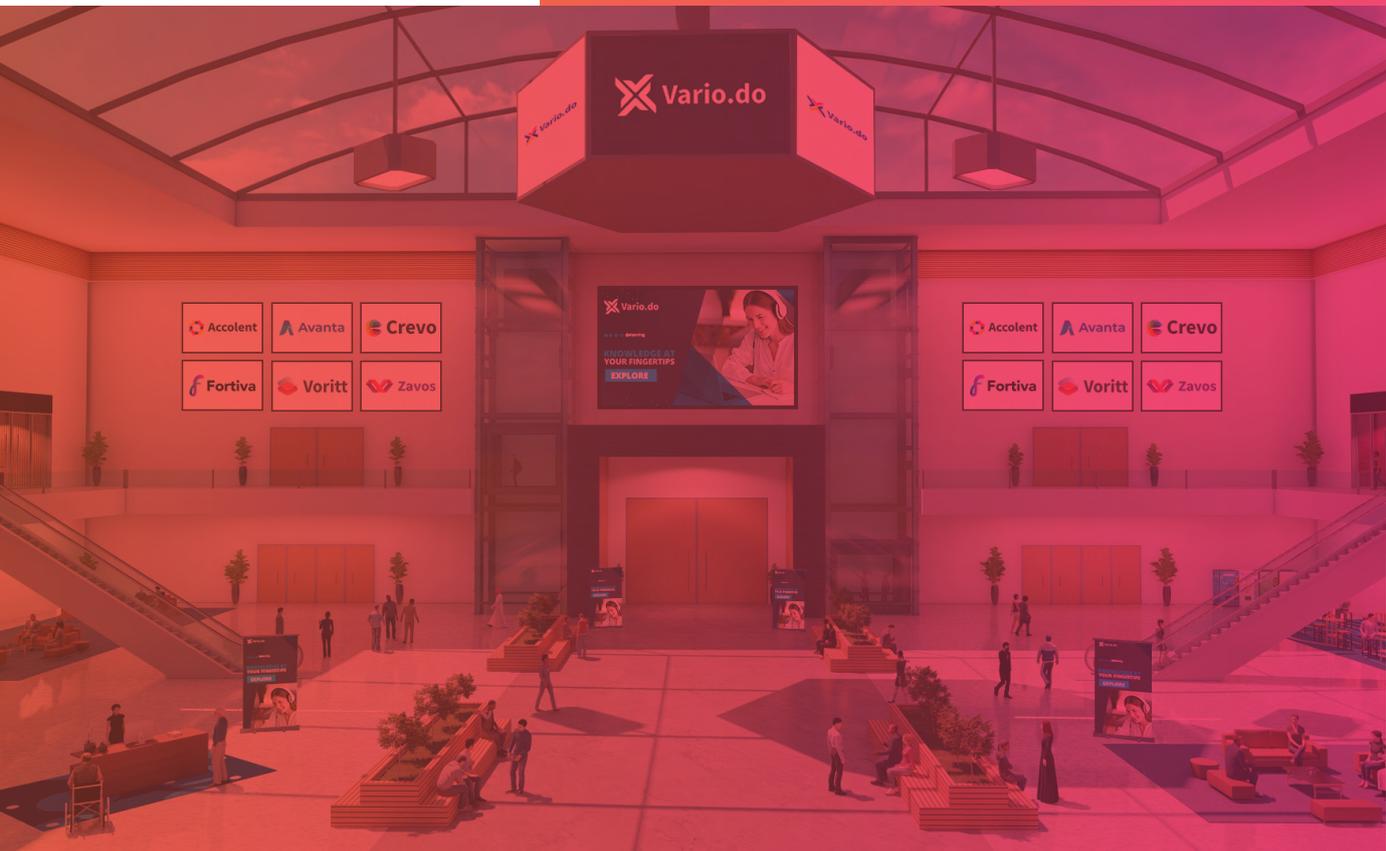
- Corporations: 32.8%
- Event services: 20.9%
- Non-profit organizations: 19.4%
- Education: 14.9%



Many of our respondents had experience hosting virtual events within the past year, with over 46.3% noting they had hosted at least four events in 2021 and 28.4% that had hosted 10 or more. This level of experience with virtual events was invaluable to providing vFairs with accurate predictions about the future of virtual events.



Let's dive in to see what the future holds for virtual events, and how you can use this information to better inform your event plans in the future.



## Key Takeaways

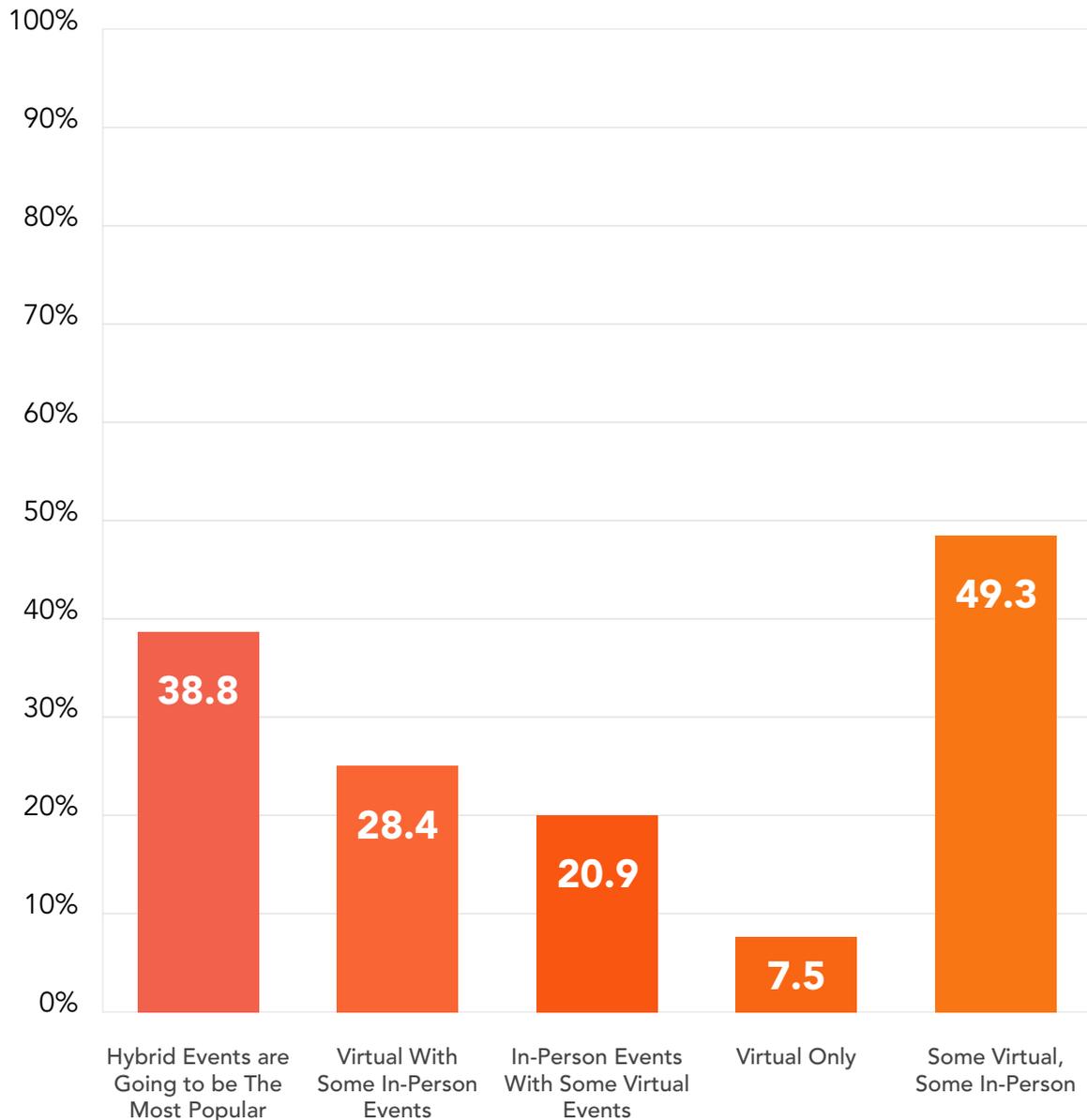
- **Virtual events were extremely common during the COVID-19 pandemic.** Around 88.1% of people surveyed at least hosted 1 virtual event in 2021 whereas 46.3% of people hosted at least 4 virtual events.
- **Virtual events have higher attendance than in-person.** Around 93.2% of people surveyed stated that their virtual event was successful when considering attendance rates. In fact, 77.2% of individuals surveyed said that they prefer virtual events because of their ease of attendance.
- **People are less dependent on virtual events, however, they do not wish to rely solely on them.** 49.3% of people surveyed stated that they would like to host some virtual and some in-person events. On the other hand, 95.5% of people surveyed said that at least some form of a virtual event will be a part of their events strategy.



# What Kind of Events Will People Host Post-Pandemic?

People want to host a mix of events. The large majority of respondents from our survey shared that they'll keep neither in-person nor virtual events out of their event plans in the long term.

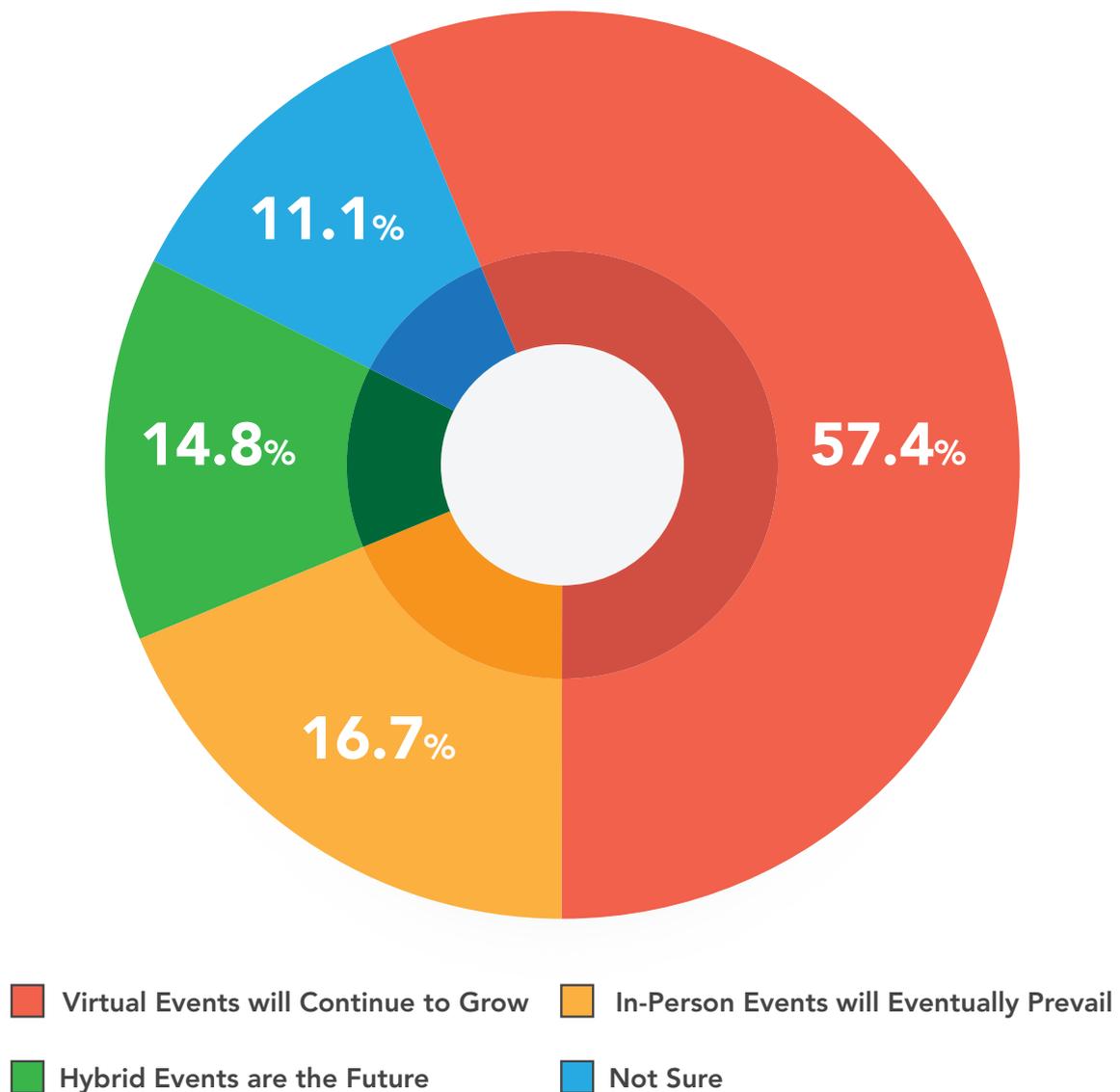
In fact, **95.5% of people said that at least some form of a virtual event is going to be a part of their events strategy.** This could manifest itself in many ways, especially as new event technologies emerge to support better virtual and hybrid events and to create even more engaging and connected in-person event experiences.



Some of the reasons that people stated for sticking to in-person events are: expensive virtual event software and missing the pleasant ambiance of hotels and halls.

## Hybrid Events Will Take Center Stage

If you sat with an event prof in 2021 and asked them where the future of events was headed, they might likely reply that hybrid is the future. In fact, in a [survey vFairs conducted in 2021](#), **57.4% of event professionals replied that "Hybrid events are the future"**



In 2022, the answer remained the same. 38.8% of our respondents stated that they will be hosting hybrid events in the future.

## Many Will Use Both Virtual & In-Person Events

We also saw that a lot of event pros want to use both virtual and in-person events throughout the year to solve different problems and cater to different target audiences. Alternating between both event types will allow organizations to meet more people and build deeper relationships.



**1 IN EVERY 2  
EVENT PROFS**

**WILL USE BOTH VIRTUAL  
& PHYSICAL EVENTS  
IN THEIR LONG TERM  
EVENT STRATEGY**

## The Emergence Of A Comprehensive Event Strategy

More interestingly, organizations are realizing that there are specific, unique benefits to each event format. This is why we saw all three event types come together to create a more comprehensive event strategy.

In-person events are great for:

- Helping people feel more connected
- Networking more naturally
- Get instant feedback about attendee experiences

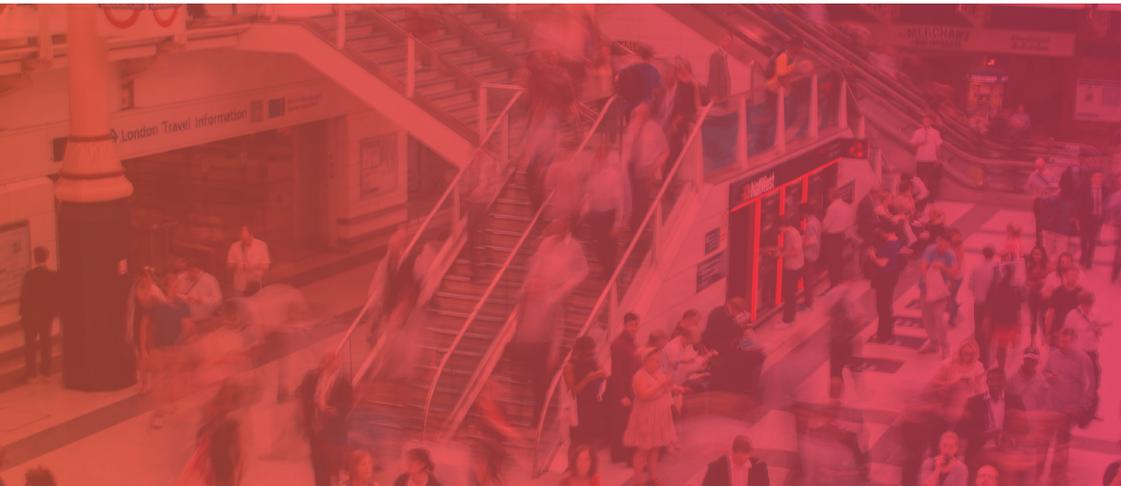
In comparison, virtual events are more:

- Cost-effective
- Eco-Friendly
- Accessible
- Wide-Reaching

Organizations can now evaluate which suits their goals and their audiences better, and host various event formats throughout the year.

One interesting new trend for in-person events is the increased adoption of event technology at in-person events. Event technology has been around for long before the COVID-19 pandemic started, but **it's now commonplace to see a mobile app powering networking and engagement at events.**

In this sense, virtual and in-person are beginning to work together to deliver better onsite experiences. These will be combined with hybrid events to create more diverse, inclusive, and accessible event experiences.



## Case Study: Collision Conference

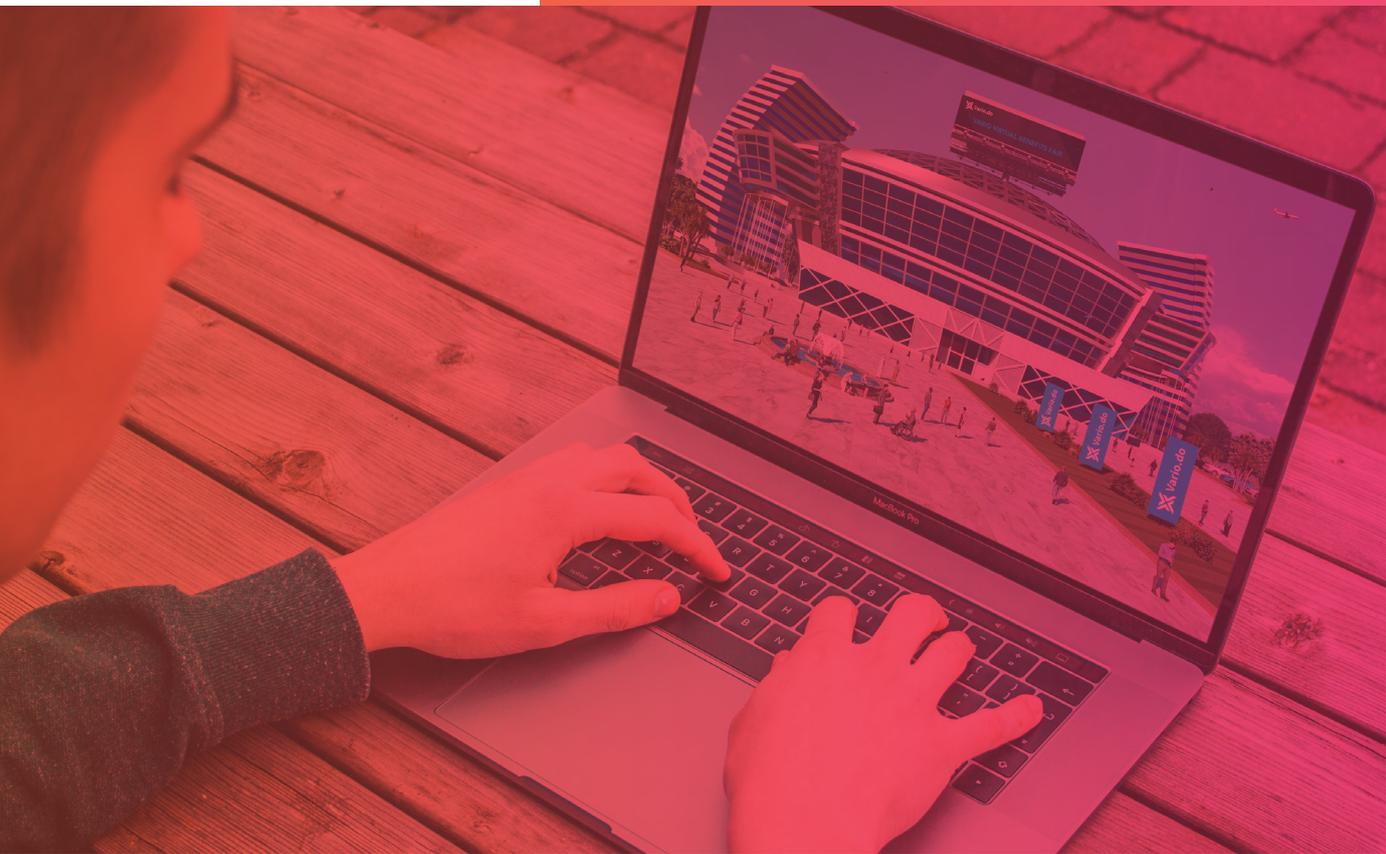
An interesting case worth discussing here will be the Collision Web Summit that happened in Toronto in June 2022. The global techconference was attended by more than 35,000 people from 130 countries, a huge increase from the 25,711 attendees of the previous Collision in person, also in Toronto, in 2019. Powering it was a robust, interactive mobile event app.

Collision provided digital assistance for their in-person events far before the majority of event organizers shifted to technology-supported interface tactics. The app created for Collision 2019 acted as a ticket, networking interface, and schedule for attendees. Not only did the app facilitate registration and event planning, but it also lets guests engage with one another prior to, during, and after the event.

Attention to purposeful experience design also showed how the physical space worked with the app technology to bring together different types of tech players both on purpose and by chance. Aside from the sponsor booths and the three main stages where 20-minute sessions were held, the space had areas set up like galleries where startups could show off their projects to the people who walked by. Attendees could browse the agenda, add sessions of interest to their personal calendars, and use the app's interactive map to navigate to the various stages and booths.

Additionally, contacts could browse other attendees within the event app, message them and then meet on-site. Without the app, people would have still made connections, albeit much less efficiently. Missed connections would have been much more prominent without the help of virtual event networking features.





## Why Do Companies Host Virtual Events?

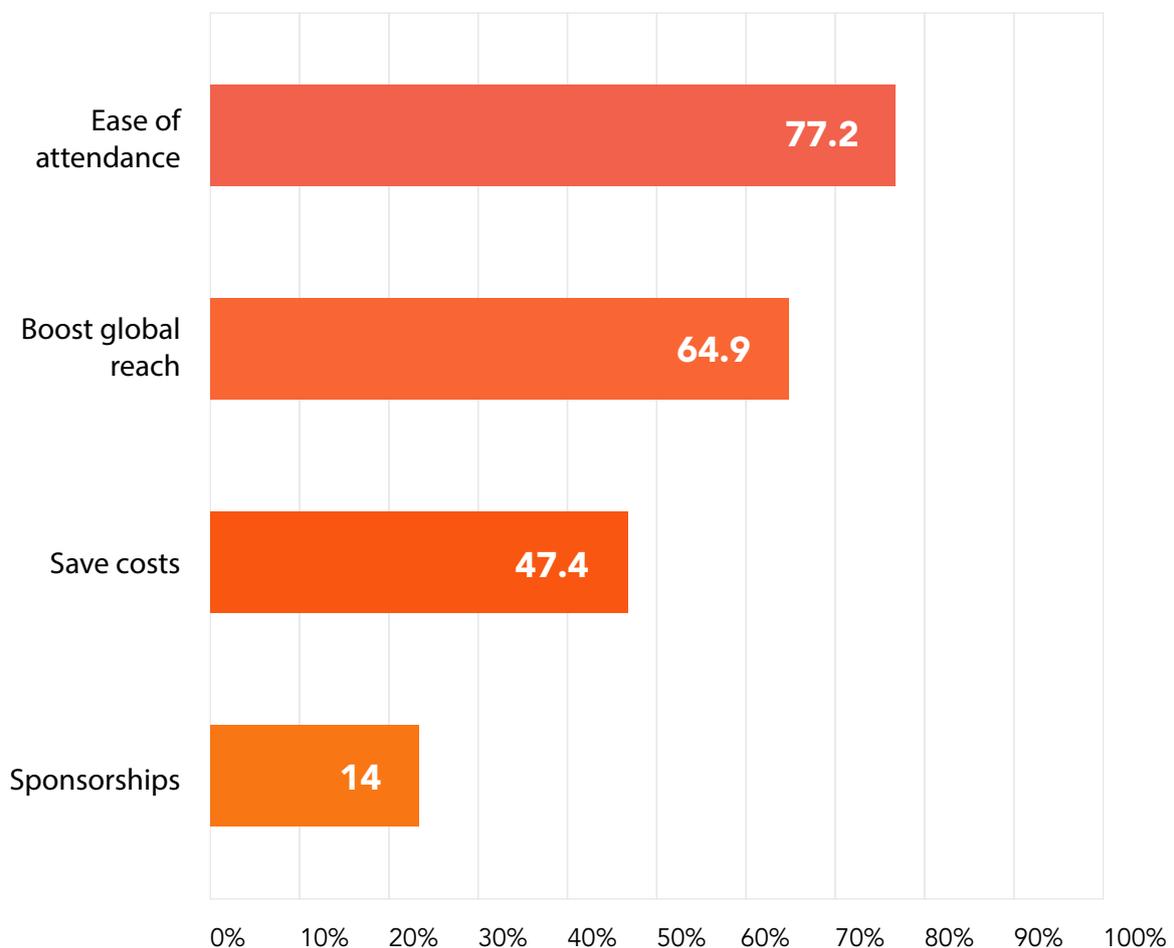
There are some undeniable advantages to hosting events virtually. Organizations around the world have been able to realize just how powerful they are - something that might not have happened if it weren't for the pandemic.

We polled our respondents on why they would choose to host a virtual event over other event formats, and here's what they replied with. The data showed that ease of attendance, access to a global audience, and reduced costs are the three key factors in cementing virtual events prominence.

Here's a look at the results:

- Ease of attendance: 77.2%
- Boost global reach: 64.9%
- Save costs: 47.4%
- Sponsorships: 14%

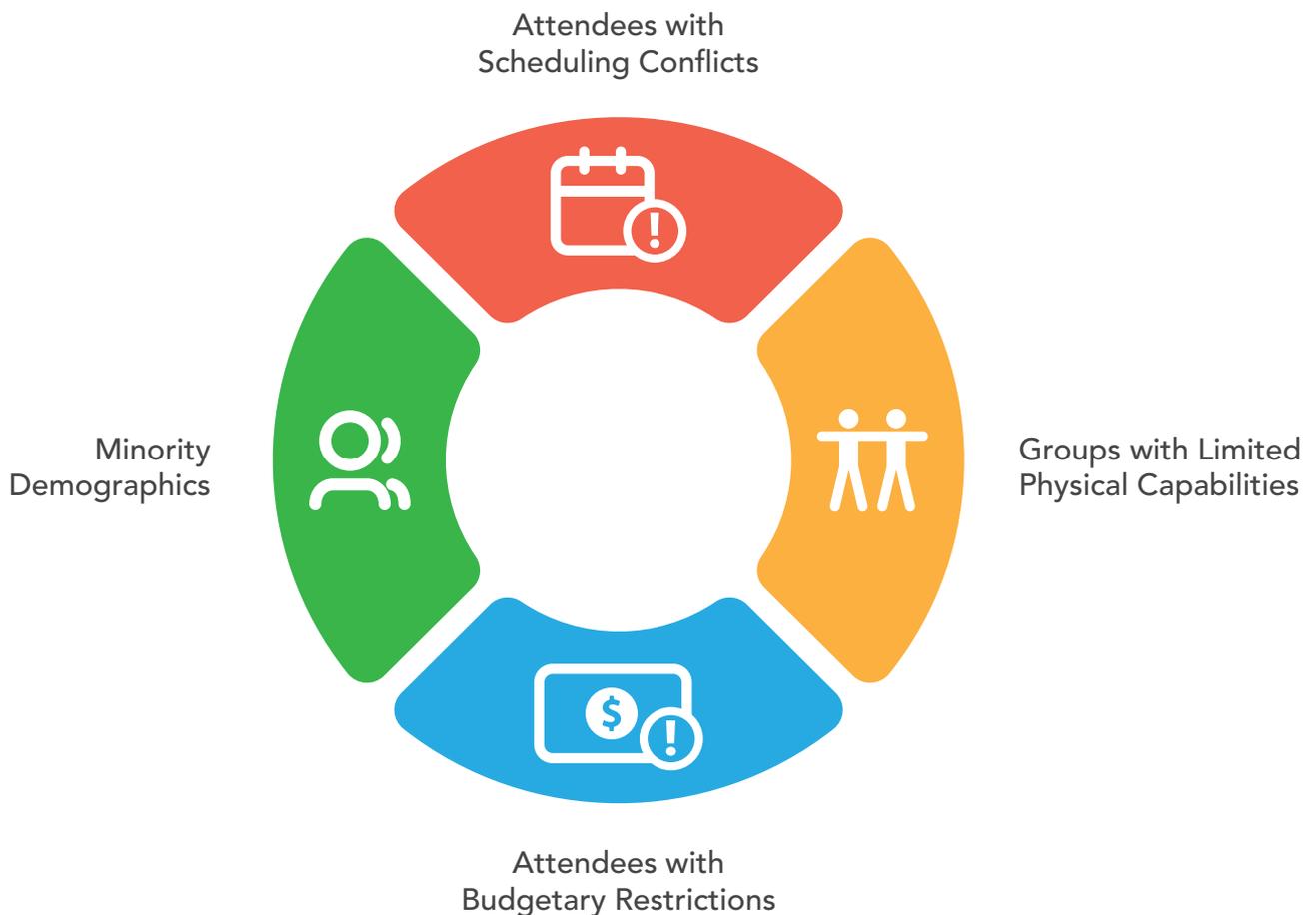
Other reasons that people reported for keeping virtual events in their arsenal were boosting inclusivity, reducing administrative hassle, and allowing people to attend events regardless of their schedule and location. This kind of flexibility simply cannot be offered by in-person events.



Let's dive into each of these benefits a bit more.

## Ease of Attendance

As long as you have a desktop or mobile device and access to the internet, you can attend a virtual event. This ease of access also eliminates barriers of entry for a wide range of groups.



Virtual events bring them an element of accessibility and inclusivity that physical events just can't achieve. This helps improve the user experience and positive perception of your organization.

## Access to Global Reach

A huge advantage to hosting virtual events is the natural reach you can achieve. This is helpful for lots of different use cases, most popularly.



### Virtual Trade Shows

Benefit: Sell to new markets

### Virtual Hiring Fairs

Benefit: Recruit from a larger pool of candidates



### Virtual Conferences

Benefit: Expand networks beyond your local area

### Virtual Summits

Benefit: Share information with more experts around the world



Even if you're not looking to go global with your event, you can access many more attendees just outside of your local area. Many event organizers choose to go virtual simply to reach more people in their country or state.



## Save on Costs

Virtual event costs usually come from the event tech and speaker sourcing. In contrast, in-person events have several costs that multiply with the number of days that you're going live for. By going virtual, organizations eliminate the costs associated with: venue rentals, equipment rentals, WiFi, catering, A/V and onsite tech, travel and accommodations.



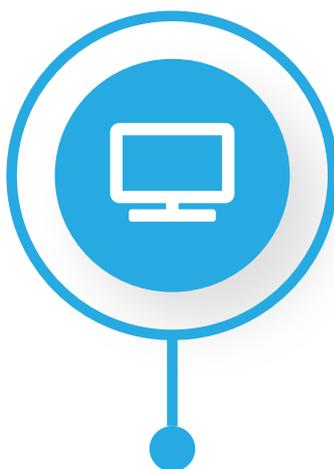
Venue Rentals

Equipment Rentals



WiFi

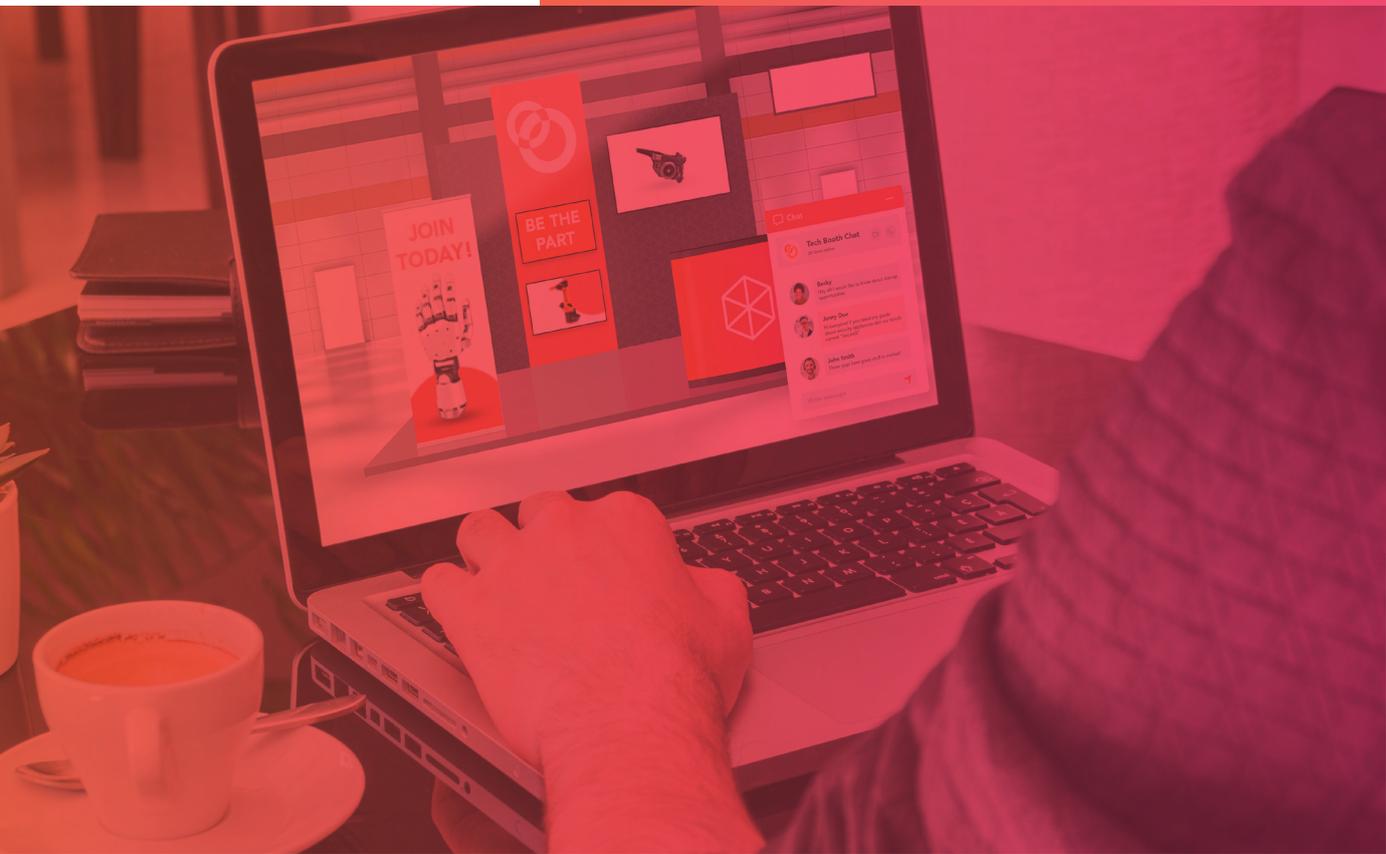
Catering



A/V and Onsite Tech

Travel and Accommodations

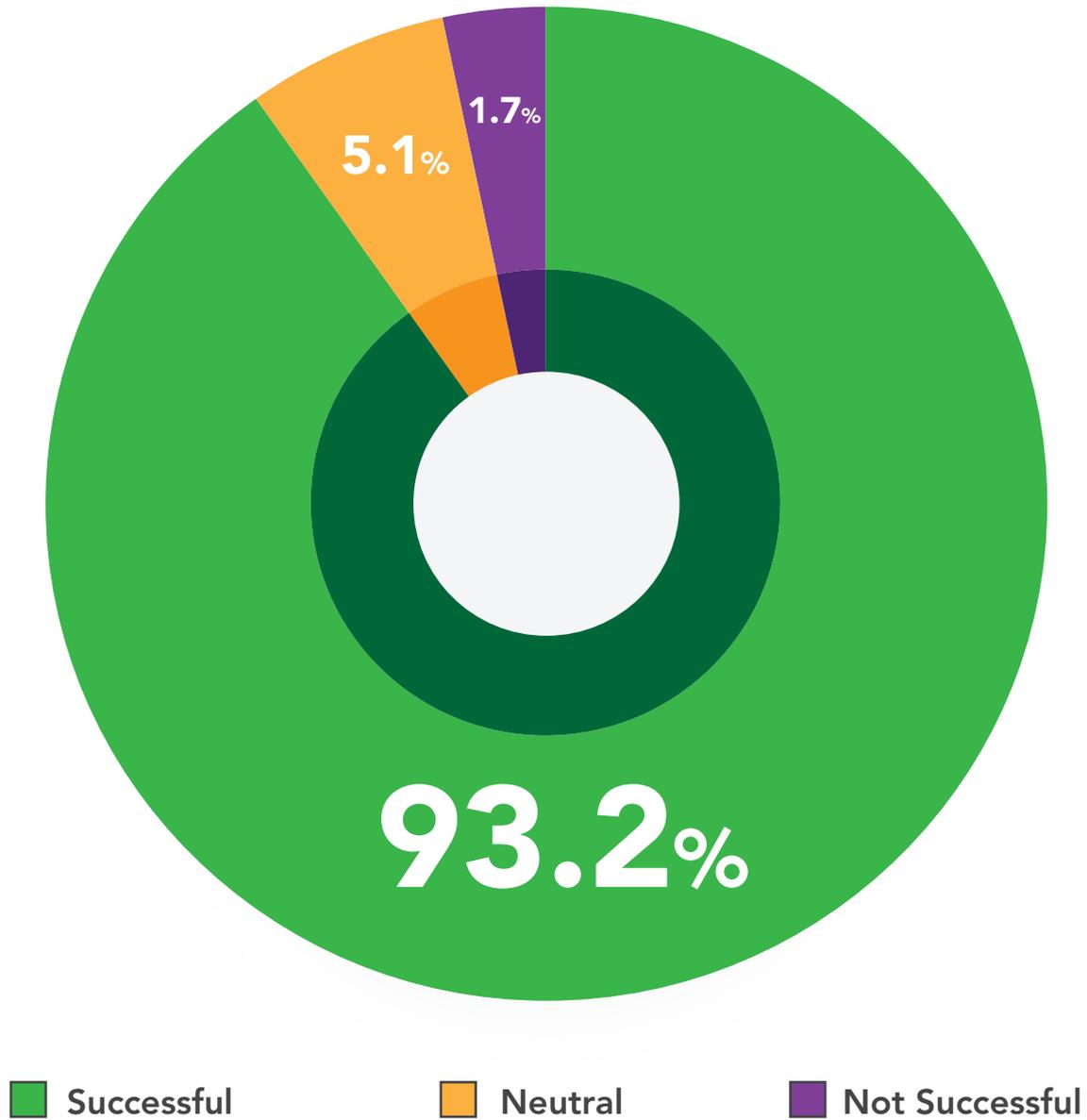


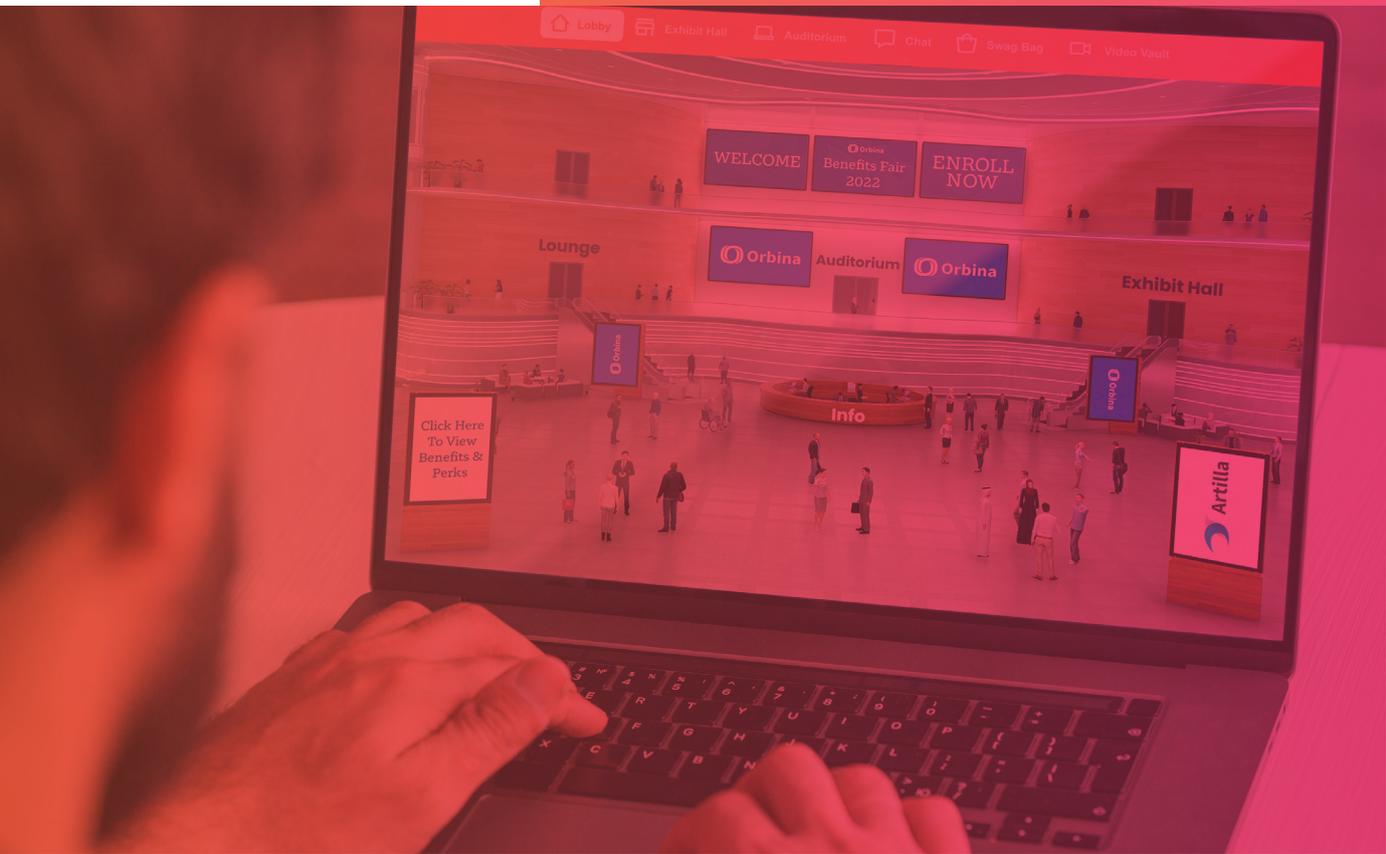


## Are Virtual Events Successful?

When you host a virtual event, you are more likely to boost attendance and reach, save on costs, and make sure the event is accessible to everyone regardless of demographics, capabilities or budget. Choosing to host virtually based on these attributes makes it easier to achieve event success.

In fact, according to our survey, 93.2% of individuals considered their past virtual events successful!





## What Types of Virtual Events Do Different Industries Host?

Event types vary industry by industry. We wanted to find out which events were most popular to each. So, we polled our respondents based on the industry they work in.

Based on our experience and client base, we've identified four key industries that host virtual events:

- Corporate
- Education
- Event Services & Agencies
- Non-Profit Organizations & Associations

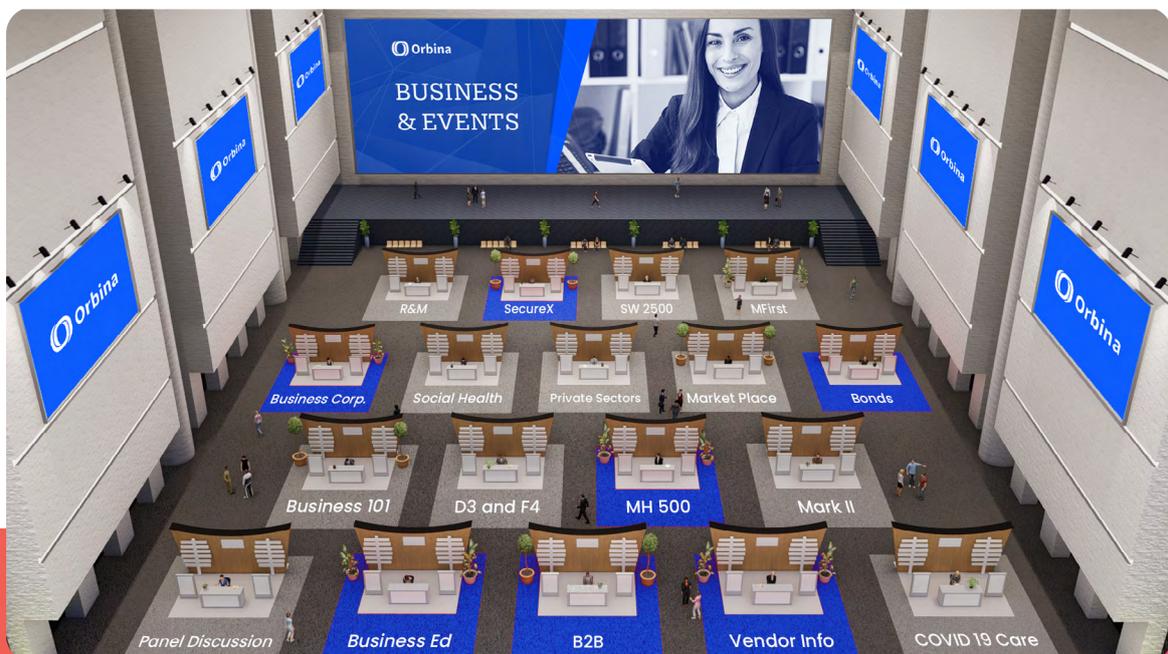
Let's have a look at the most popular events by industry below.

## Corporate

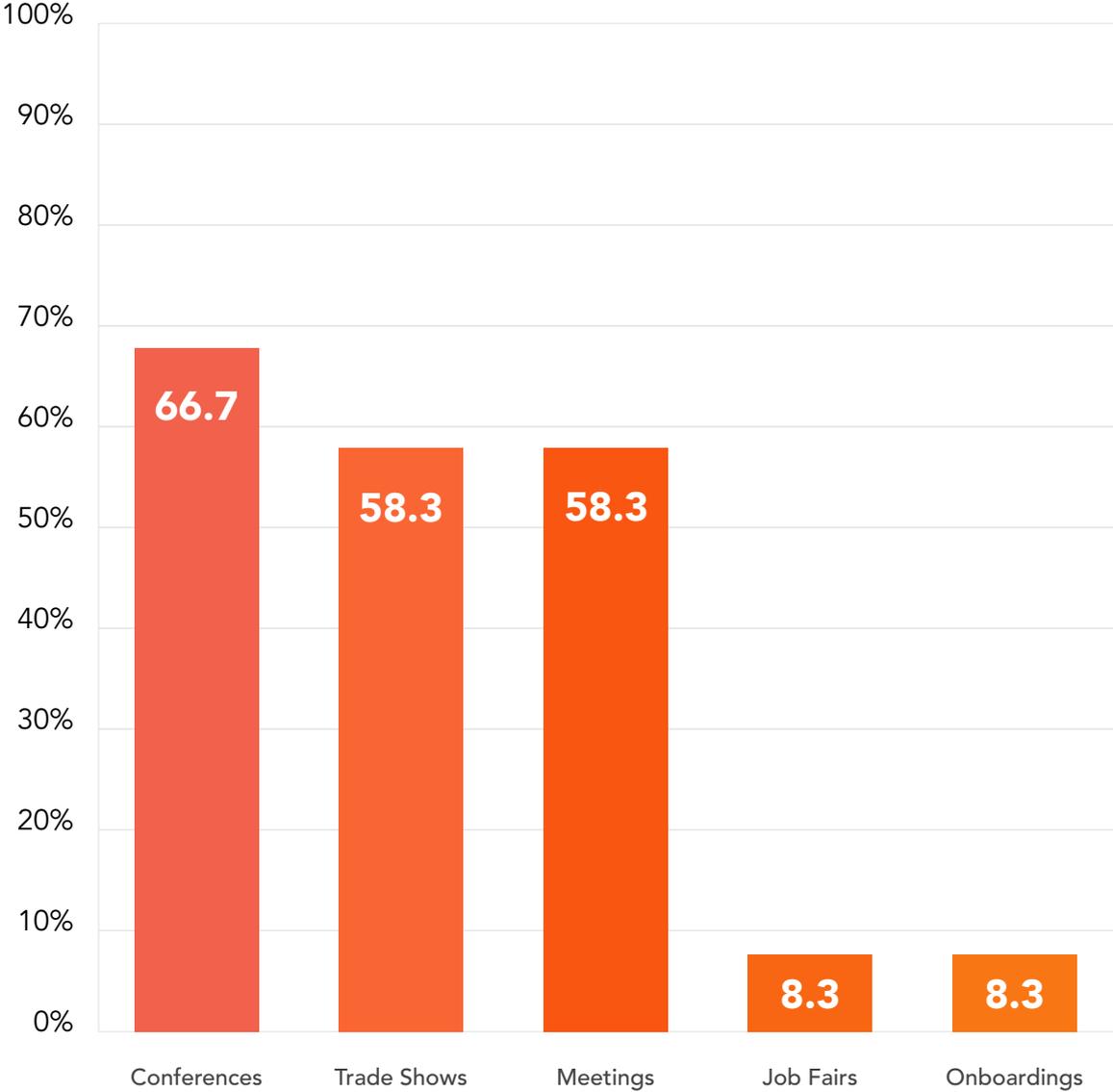
Unsurprisingly, corporations are conducting mostly conferences, trade shows and meetings virtually. Being able to network with a larger group of potential leads, partners and internal contacts globally is a huge factor in deciding to go virtual.

Businesses can share information globally at a lower cost as compared to hosting an in-person conference, trade show or meeting. This is a definite advantage for hosting virtual events.

Of course, job fairs and onboarding events are key processes in any corporate organization. So why aren't they as popular virtually? It could be the lack of in-person interaction that's needed for assessment, training and making candidates and employees feel connected to the organization.



That face-to-face interaction seems to be preferred, though is not impossible to conduct virtually. In fact, one of vFairs' most popular event types is virtual hiring fairs!



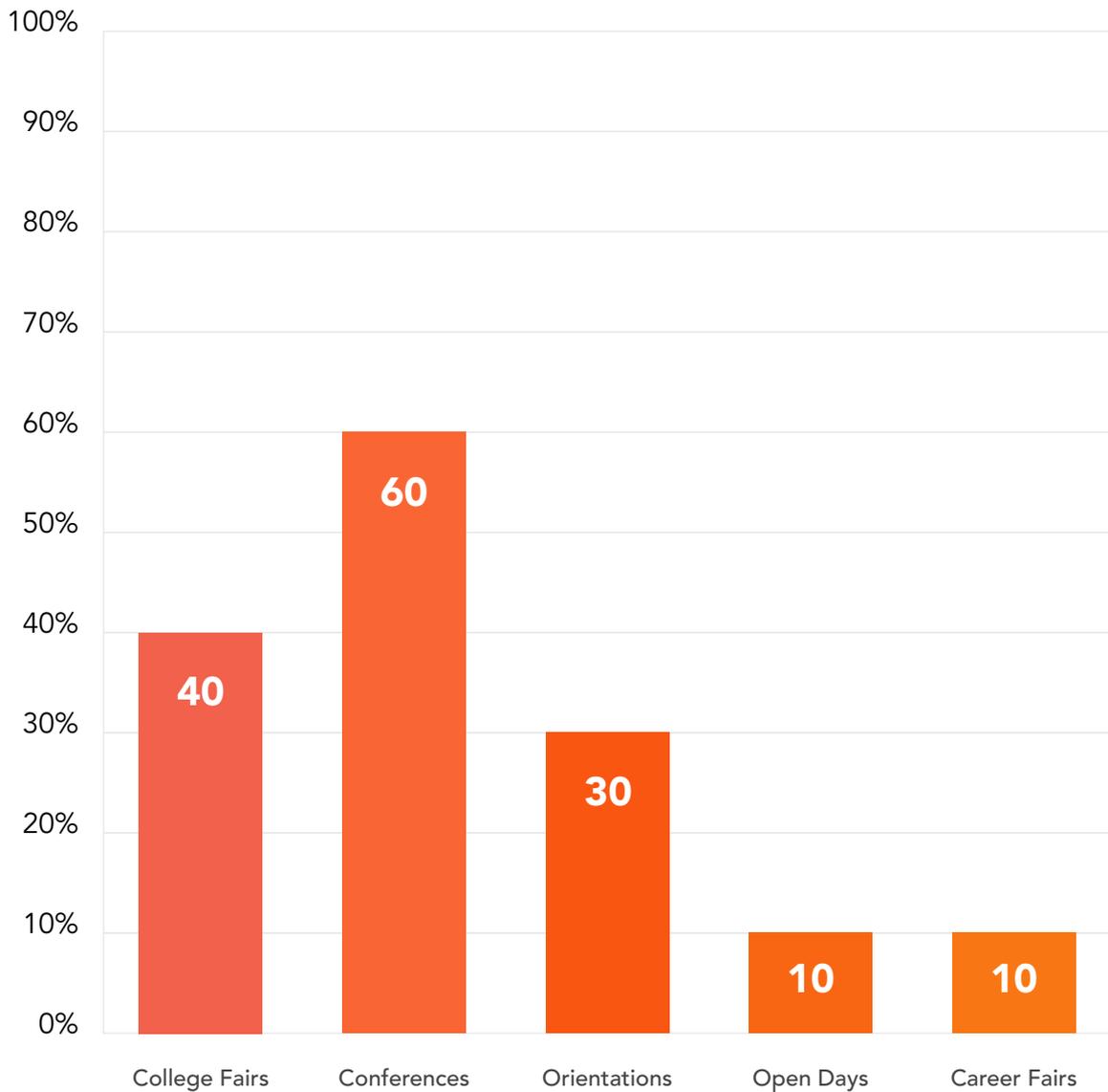
## Education

Education institutions have a lot to accomplish. They're constantly recruiting and initiating new students, showcasing academic research, sharing expertise, and trying to help their students find real-world work experience.

So, it comes as no surprise that the most popular virtual event type in the education space are conferences. Virtual conferences allow universities to easily connect with others around the world and share knowledge, network and present new findings from their research labs.



Of course, virtual student onboarding is extremely important in this day and age as well. That's why virtual college fairs and orientations rank so high too. Whether schools are recruiting students from outside their region or initiating international students online, going virtual opens up an opportunity to reach more people.



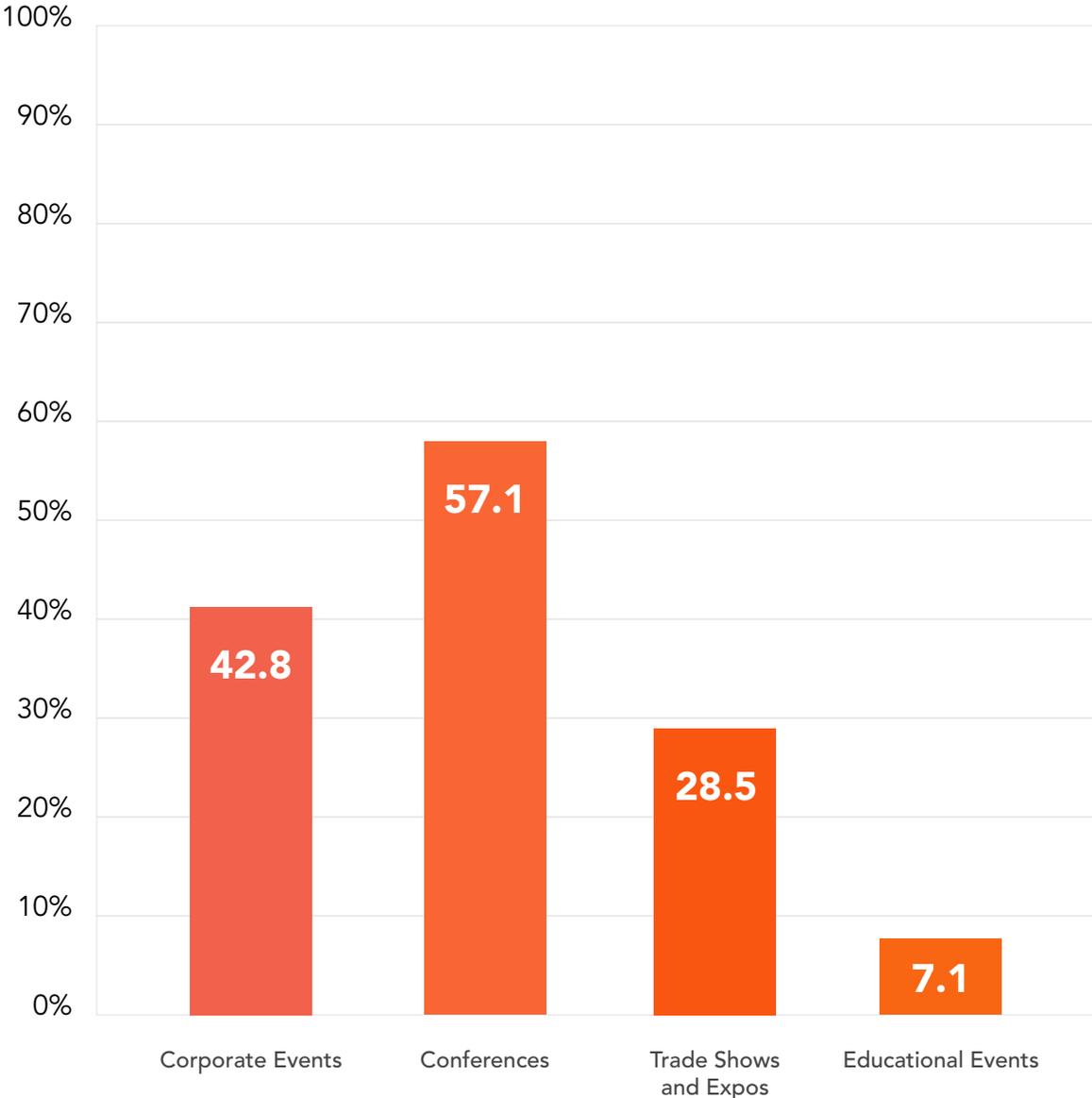
## Event Services

Events services providers generally plan events on behalf of their clients, making virtual conferences, corporate events and trade shows their highest priority.

Being able to shift their services to a virtual format seems to have proven impactful not just through COVID-19, but into the future as well. Event planners are using virtual formats to help their clients continue networking, building leads and prospects around the world while saving on costs.



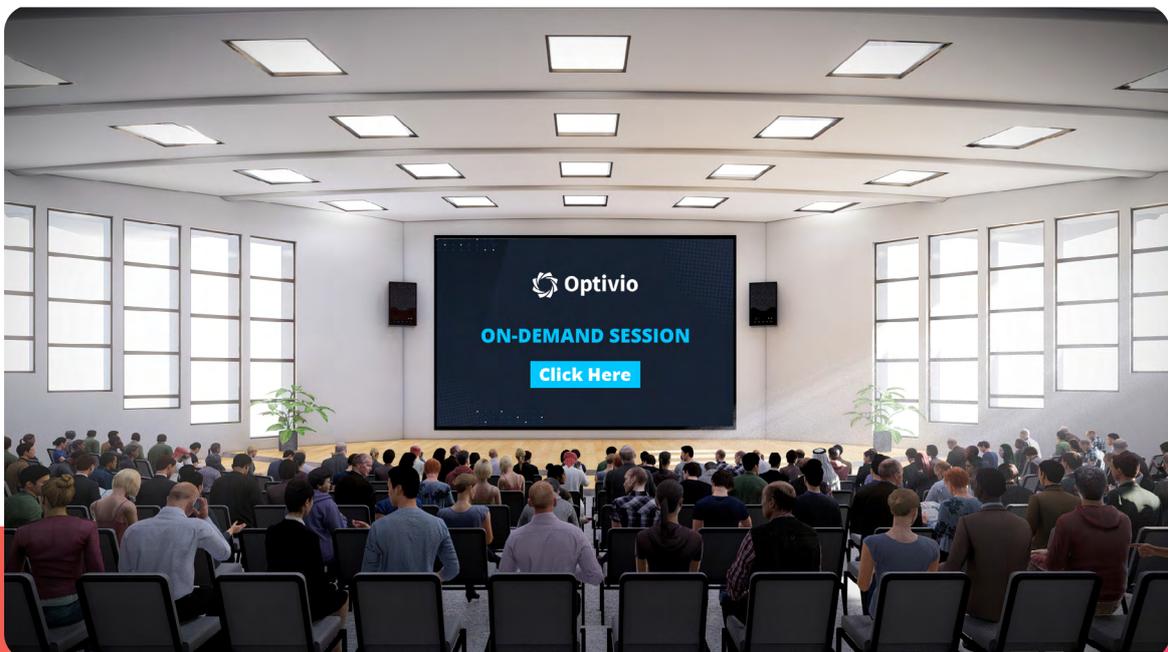
In fact, when polled, 71% of our respondents in the events industry noted that increased attendance was a key consideration for hosting a virtual event, and 57% said that lowered cost was a big reason for going virtual.



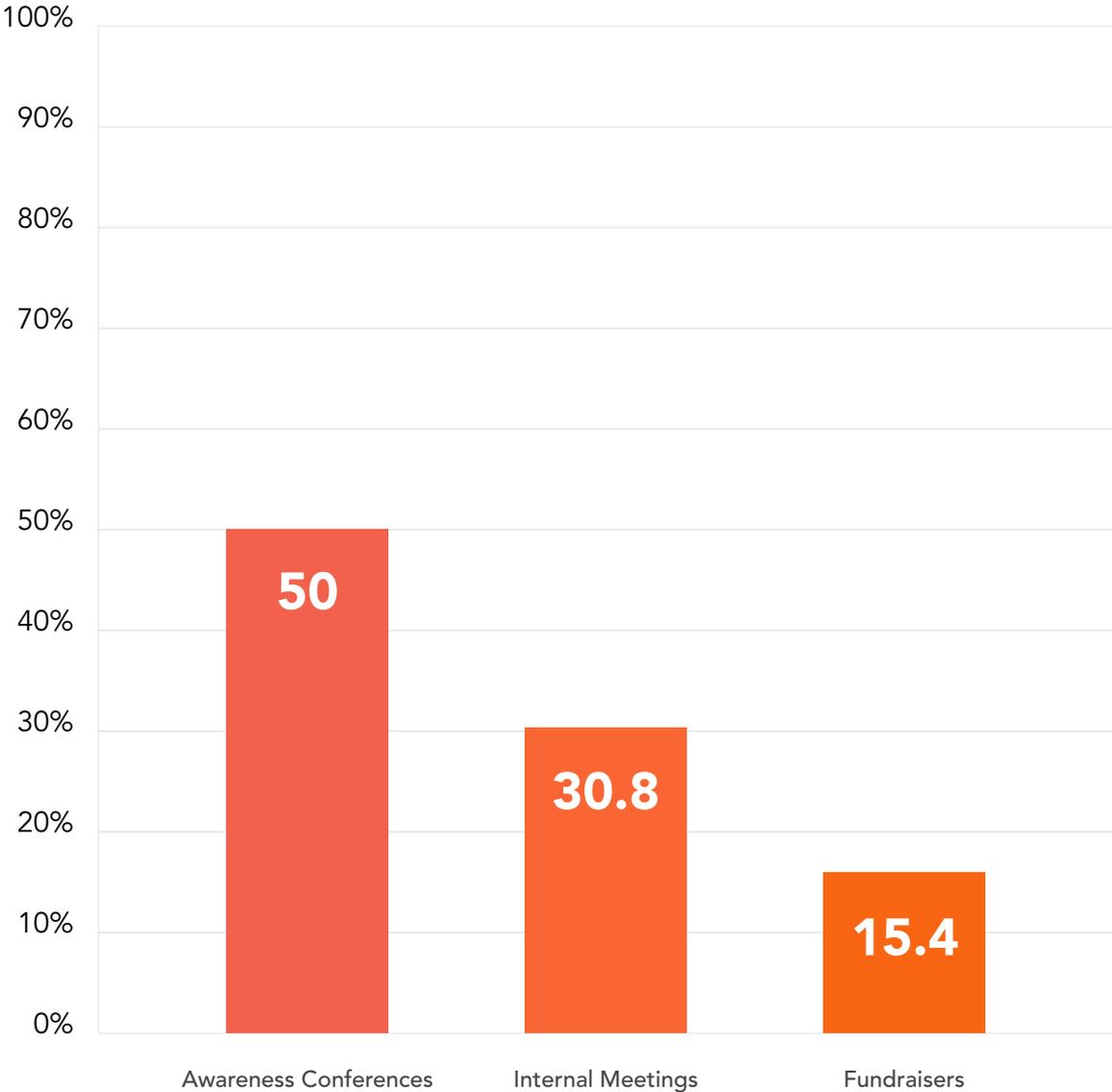
## Non-Profit Organizations

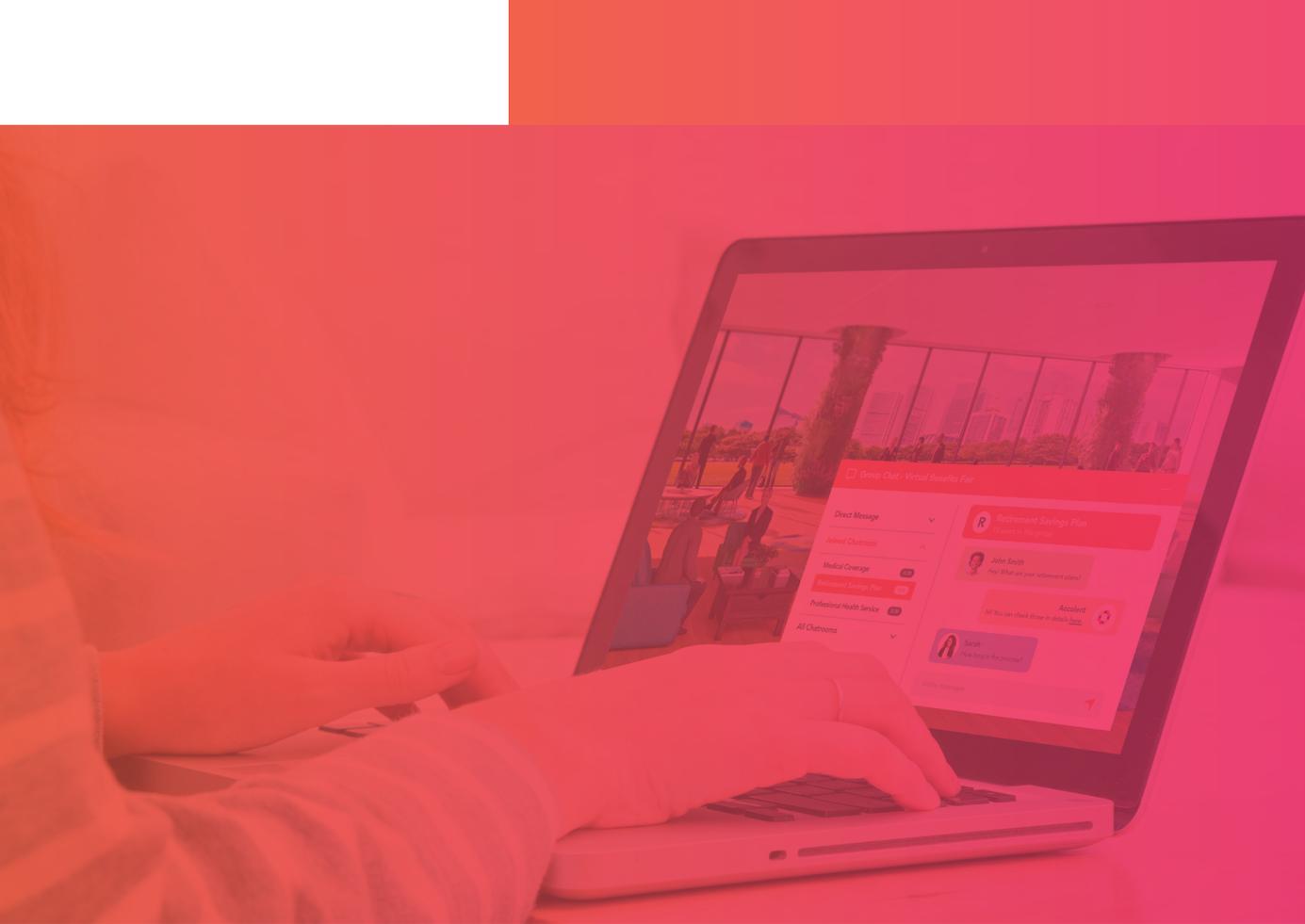
Non-profits have unique goals when it comes to hosting events. Their priorities are mainly to spread awareness and educate new audiences about their cause while saving on costs.

Awareness events by far are the main event type non-profits host virtually, however, internal events that help employees and/or members connect is also a popular option.



While fundraising events are hosted online for some non-profit organizations, having face-to-face contact could be beneficial in trying to solicit donations for their cause.





## Final Thoughts

Virtual events have been an essential tactic for businesses throughout the pandemic. Now that options are shifting, the question seems to have turned from “Which event type is best?” to “Which percentage of each event format will best suit our business?”.

Here are some of the most important findings uncovered in our report:

- Post-pandemic, industries are continuing to consider virtual events as a key part of a larger events strategy.
- The majority of industries attend virtual events because they are easy to attend and have global reach at a lower cost.
- Across industries, organizations are using virtual events to accomplish key tasks.
- Hybrid events continue to be the format of choice for the foreseeable future for many event planners.

The ideal events combine both worlds. A robust event platform like [vFairs](#) can help you with event planning and execution so you can focus on creating amazing experiences for attendees while gathering data to measure ROI and plan future events.

If you'd like to understand how event tech can help elevate your virtual, hybrid and in-person events, feel free to [get in touch today](#).





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