

# Forrester's Q1 2026 State Of B2B Events Survey – key findings

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# Agenda

Intro and survey overview

Event budgets & satisfaction

The event mix

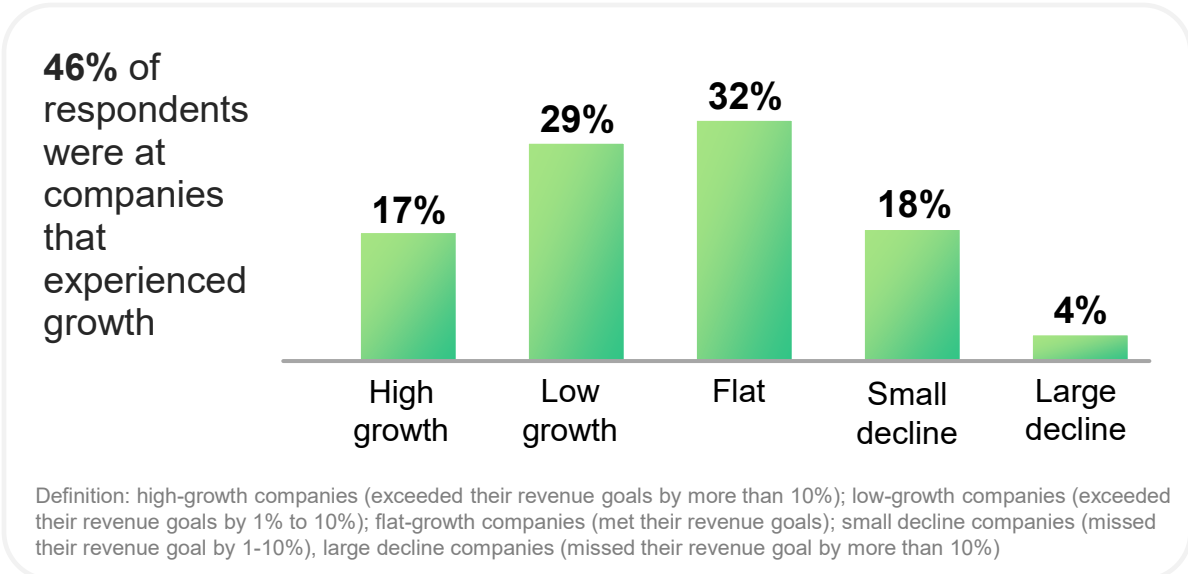
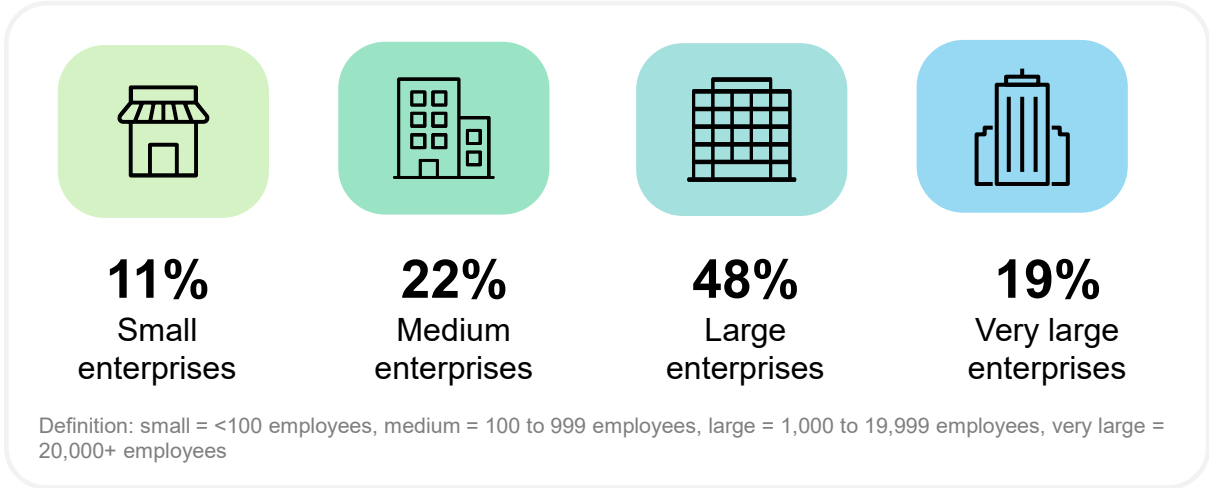
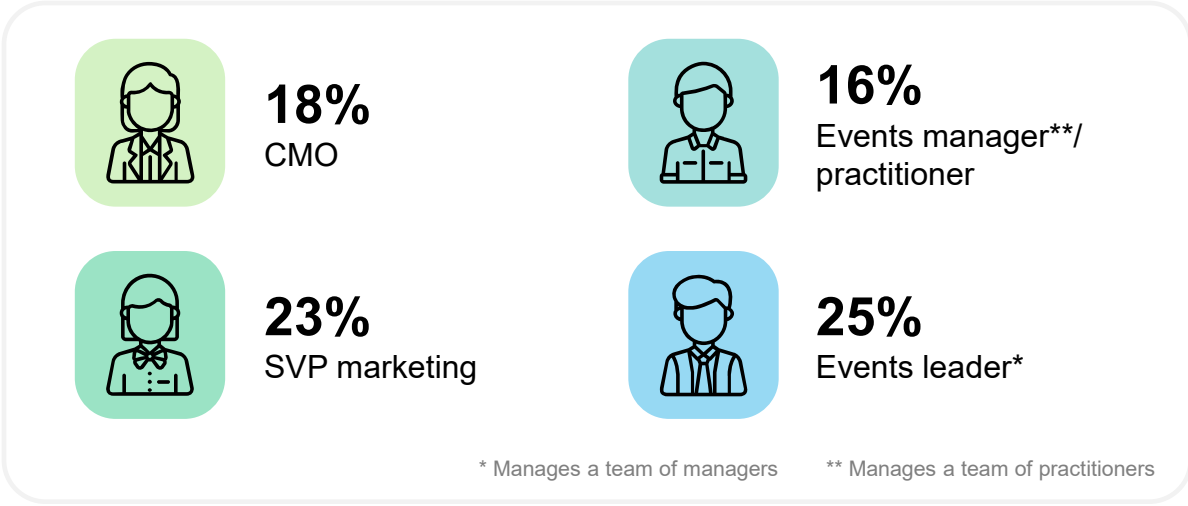
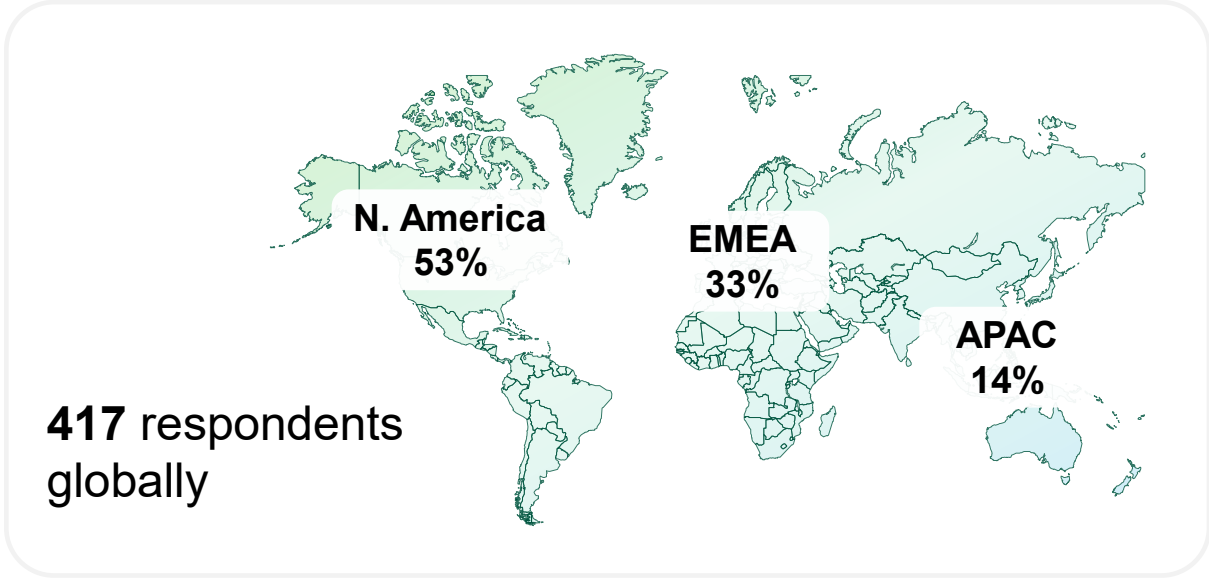
Challenges, priorities & objectives

Data & measurement

Technology & AI

# About Forrester's Q1 2026 State Of B2B Events Survey

The survey was fielded January to February 2026



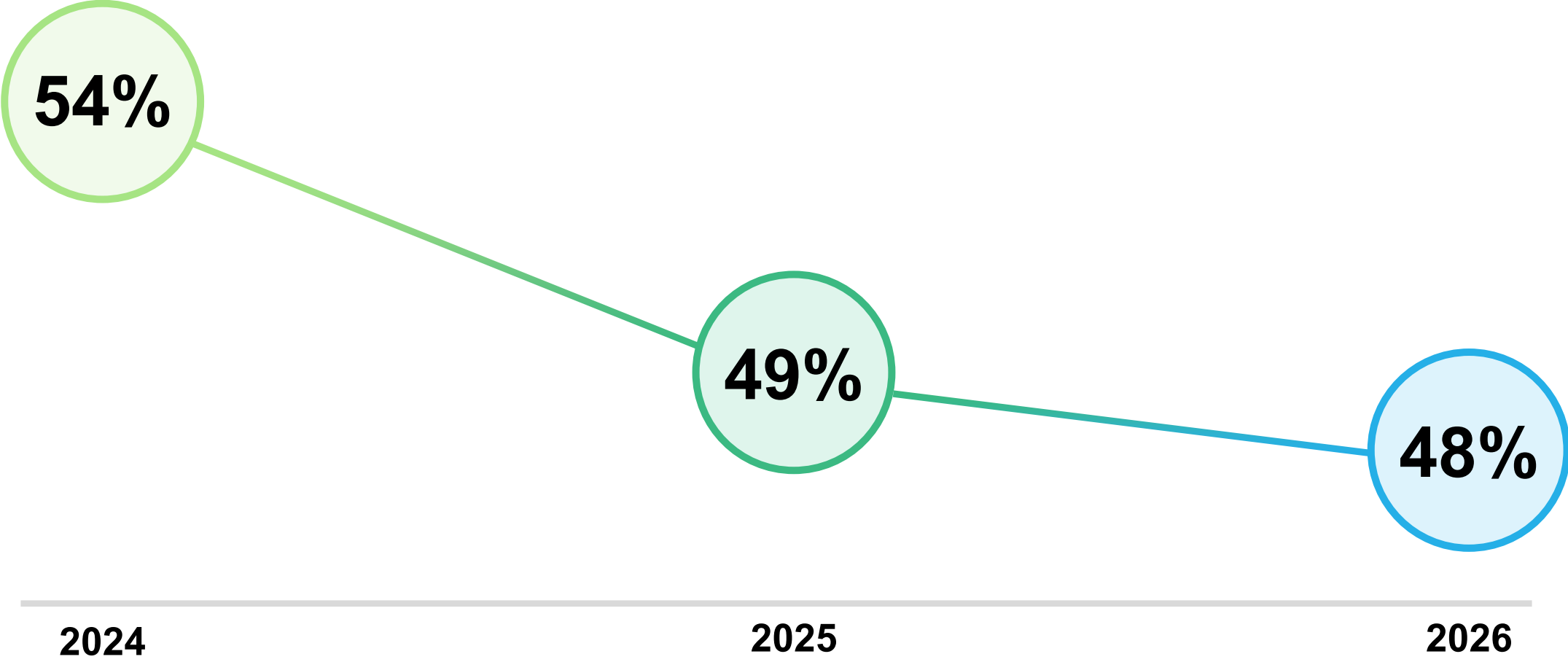
# Event budgets and satisfaction

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# Satisfaction levels continue to decline albeit more slowly

Overall event satisfaction fell by 1% YoY

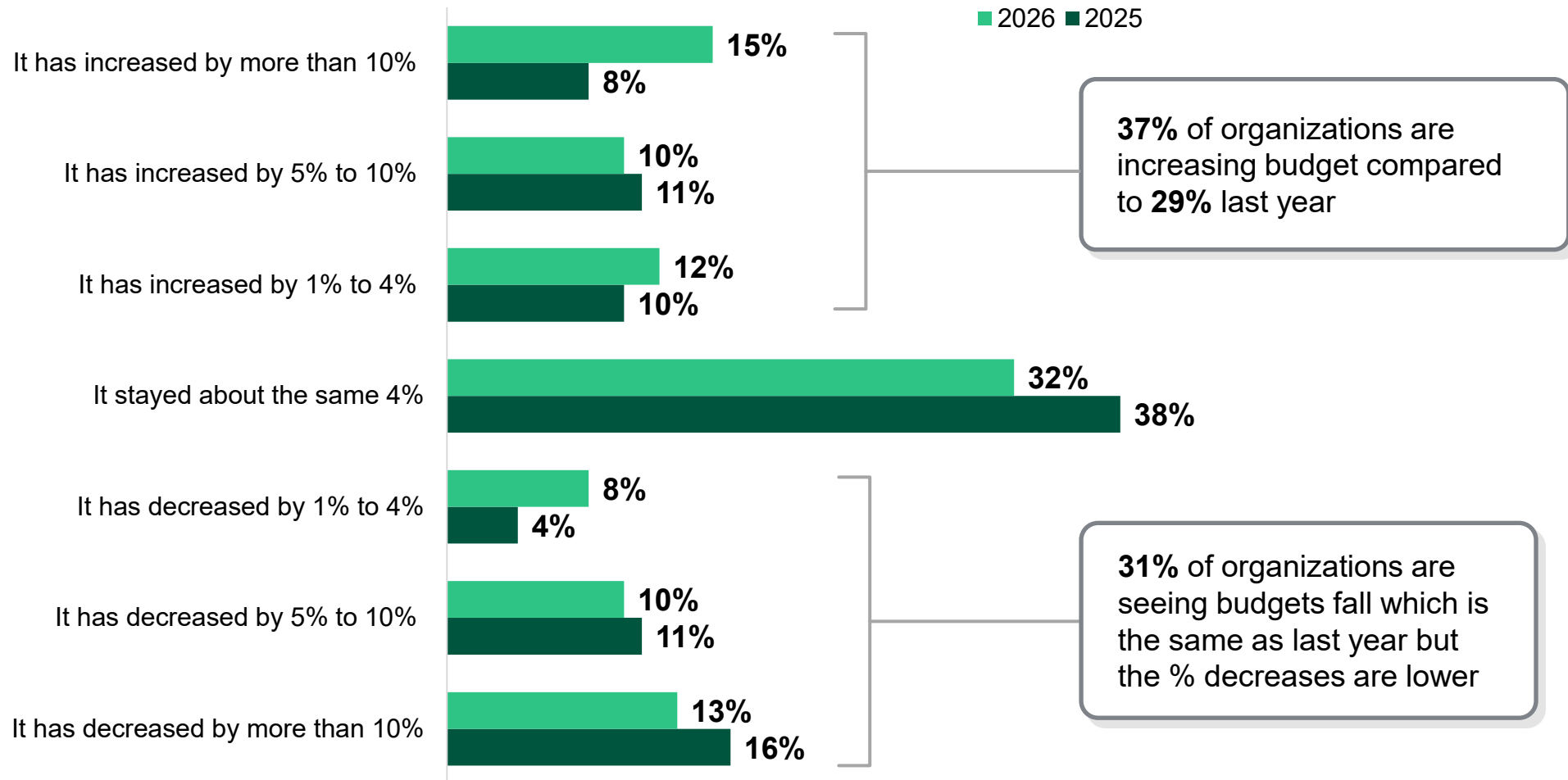
“How satisfied were you with the overall performance of your organization’s B2B event strategy over the past 12 months?”



# The pressure on event budgets eases slightly

More positive for first time in 2 years

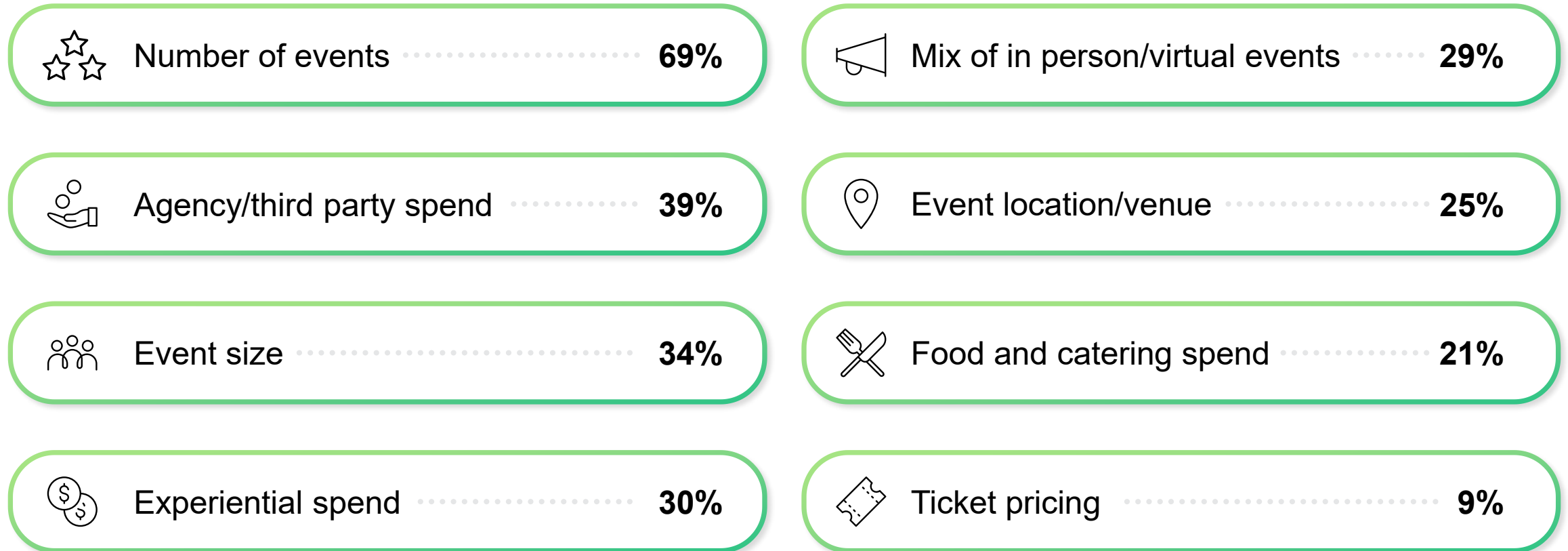
“How does your overall B2B event budget for 2026 compare to 2025?”



Base: 247 (2026) and 208 (2025) B2B marketing professionals with responsibility for events at their company;  
Source: Forrester's Q1 2026 State of B2B Events Survey, Forrester's Q1 2025 State Of B2B Events Survey

# What businesses are doing differently with flat or declined budget

“You said your overall B2B event budget for 2026 would be the same or less than 2025. Given a flat/declining budget, what are you adjusting? (Select all that apply) - Selected Choice”

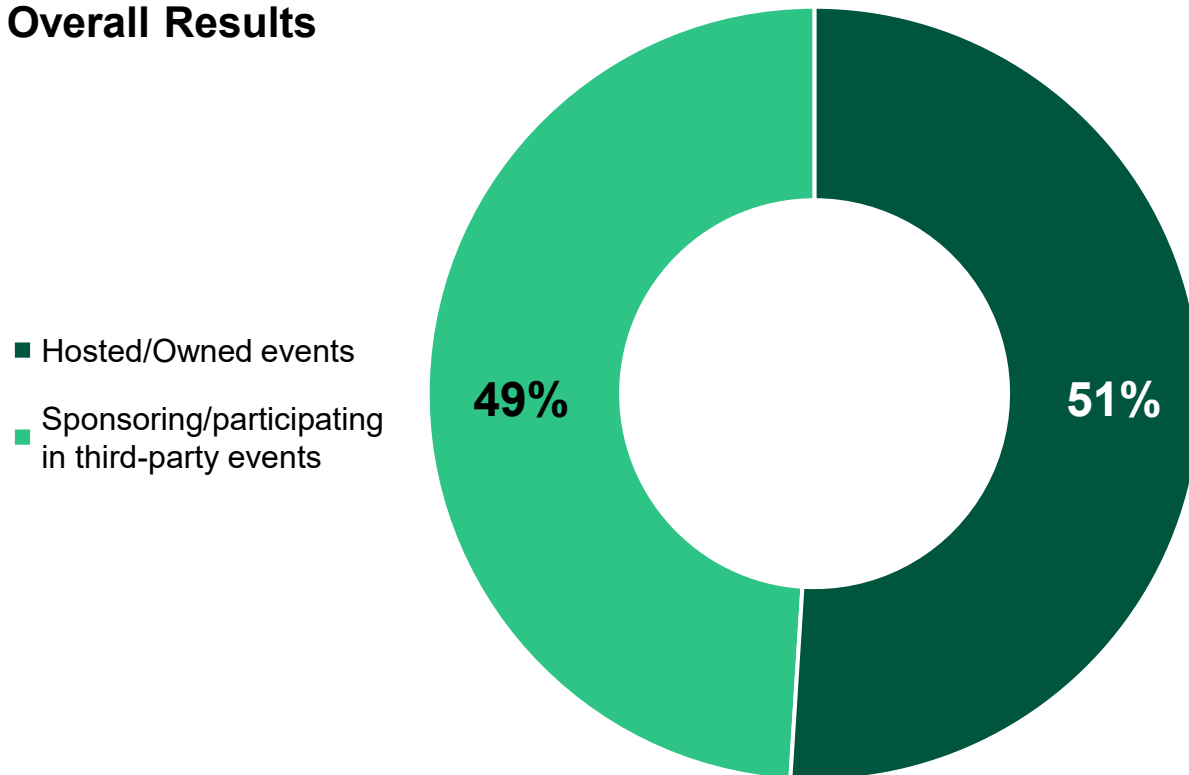


# Hosted vs. third-party event budgets

Leading organizations are prioritizing their own events

“Approximately what percentage of your overall event budget will be spent hosting your own events versus sponsoring third-party events this year?”

## Overall Results



Organizations that are satisfied with event performance spend **more** on owned hosted

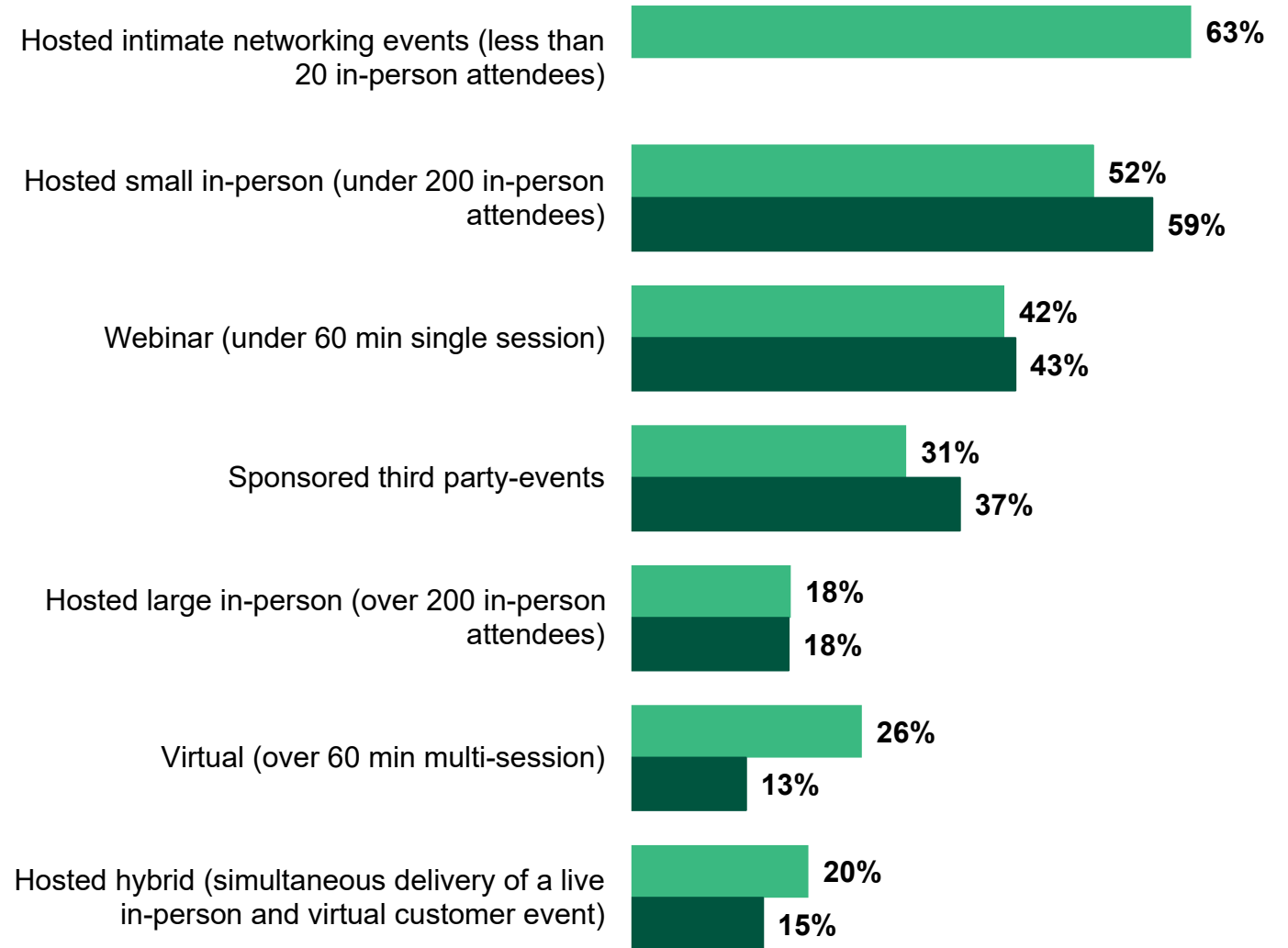
# The event mix

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# The event mix continues to evolve

Smaller hosted events continue to dominate with a resurgence of virtual and hybrid event formats.

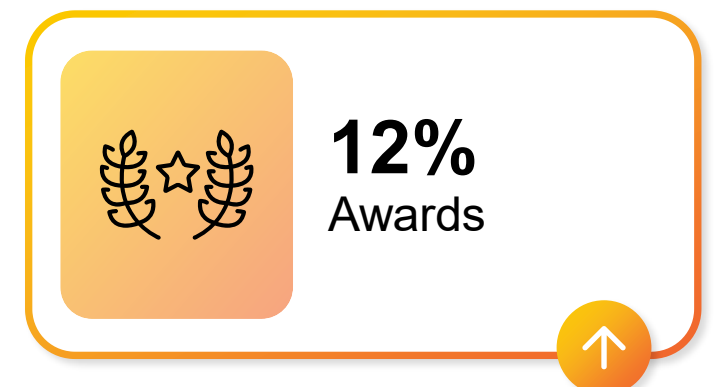
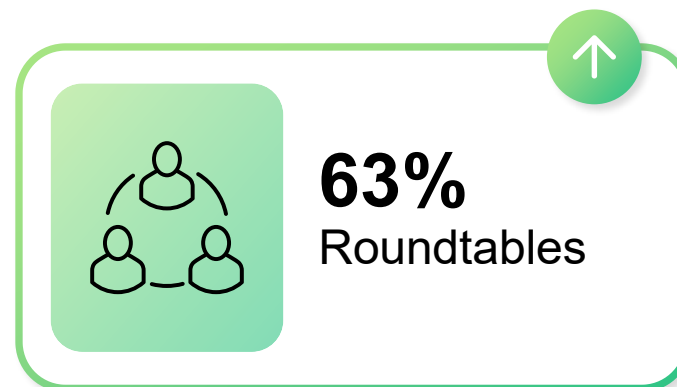
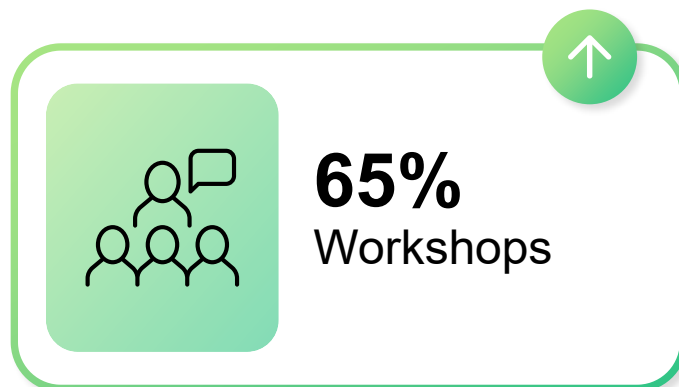
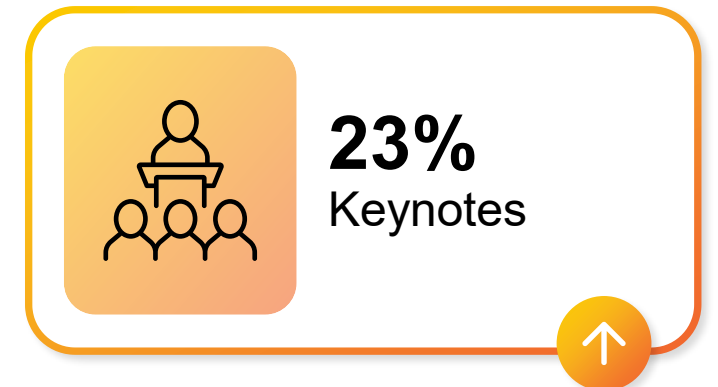
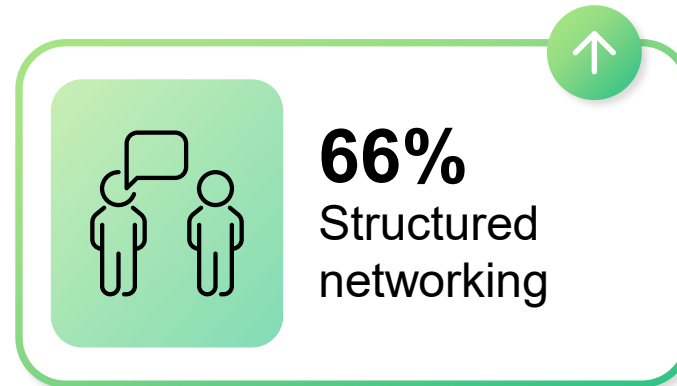
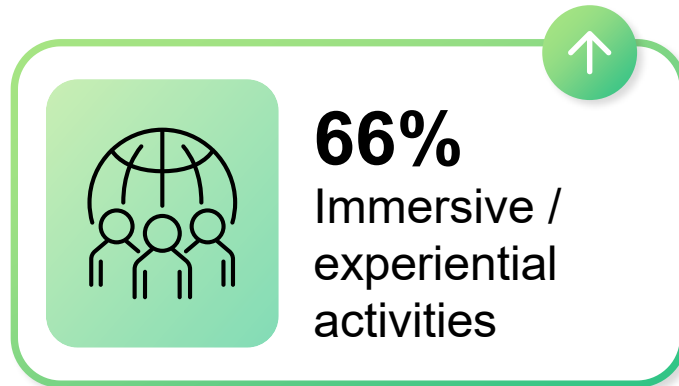
“Over the next 12 months, is your organization planning to host/sponsor more or less of each event type as compared to the previous 12 months?”



■ 2026  
■ 2025

# Attendee content preferences

“In your opinion, do attendees want more, less, or the same quantity of the following types of session/content at your events:”

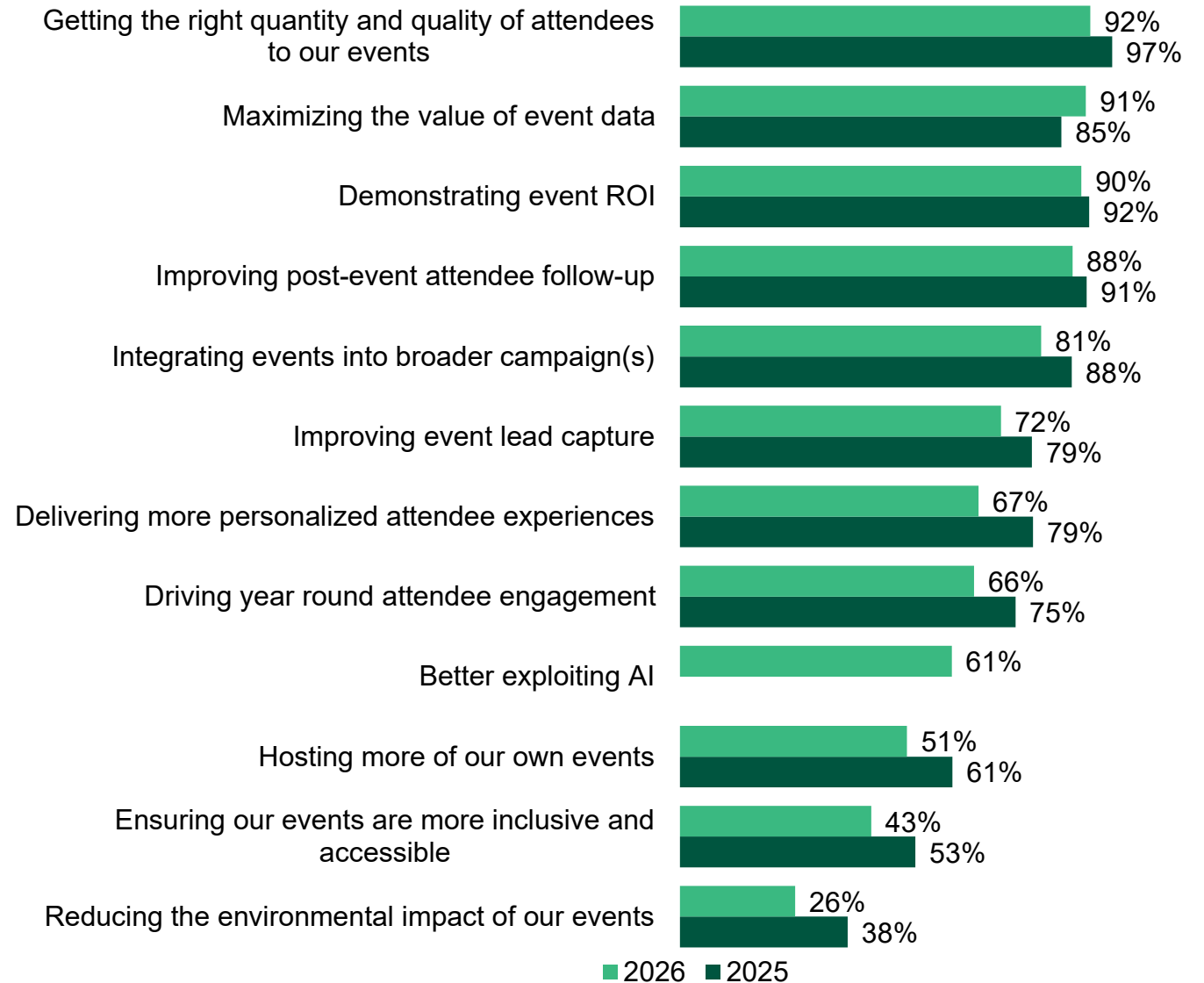


# Challenges, priorities & objectives

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# Audience, data, and measurement remain key priorities

“How important are the following areas as you consider your event priorities for the next 12 months?”

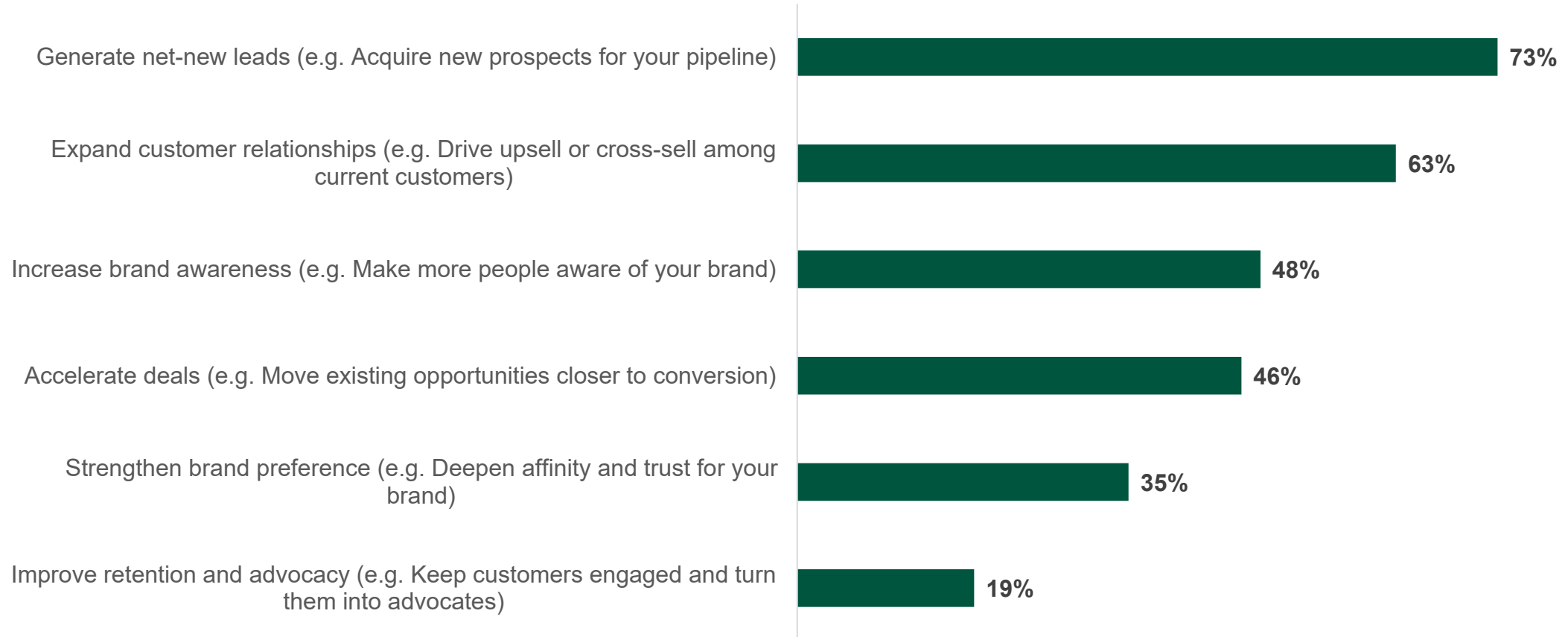


Note: Better exploiting AI was added in 2026.

Base: 209 (2026) 193 (2025) B2B marketing professionals with responsibility for events at their company;  
Source: Forrester's Q1 2026 State Of B2B Events Survey , Forrester's Q1 2025 State Of B2B Events Survey

# Organizations are looking for their events to support multiple objectives

“What are your primary objectives for events? (Select three answers)”



# Data and measurement

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# There is growing recognition that event data is underutilized

“In which ways do you use your use you event data?”



# A majority of organizations struggle to show event impact

“How do you measure your events?”



**44%**

We measure event impact (e.g. ROI, ROO (Return On Objectives), ROE (Return On Experience))



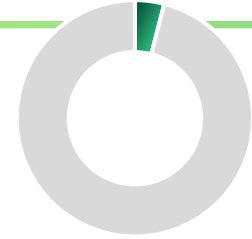
**30%**

We use a wide range of metrics but struggle to show event impact



**21%**

We use 'activity' level metrics (e.g. number of attendees, number of booth scans)



**4%**

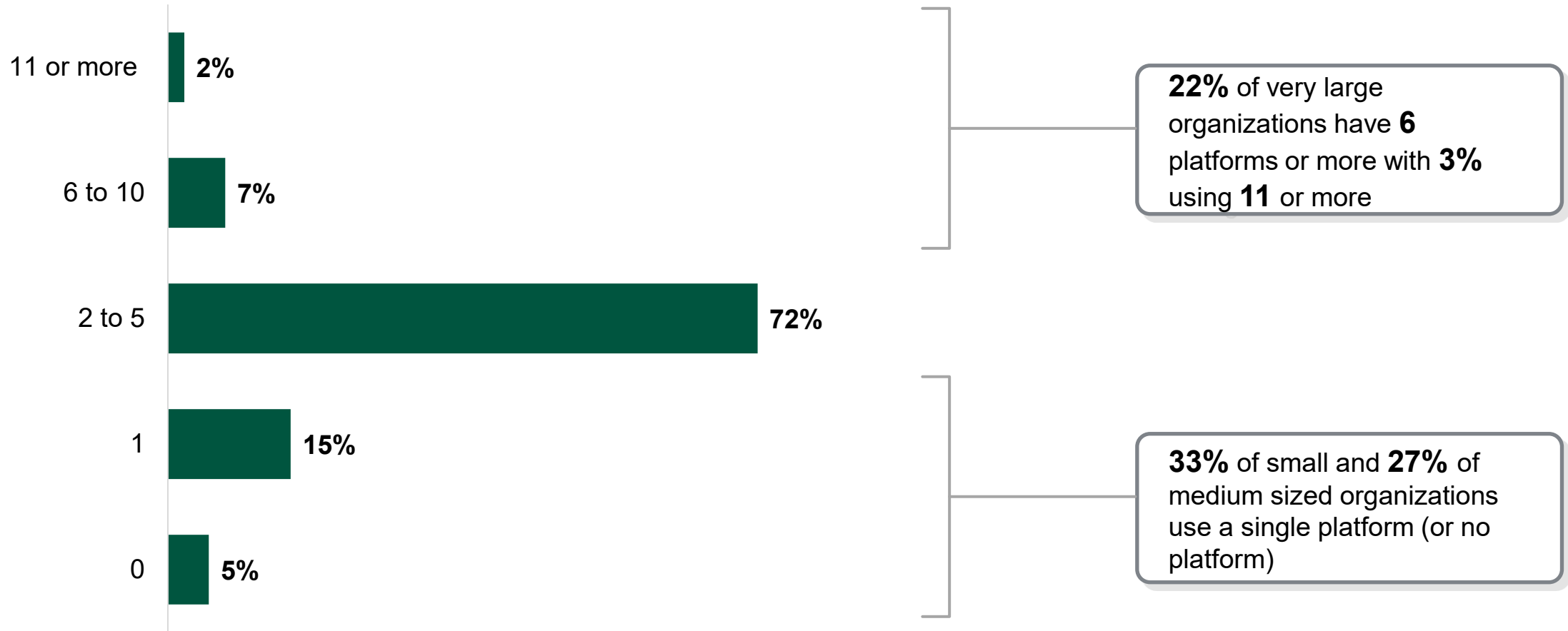
We don't measure our events

# Technology and AI

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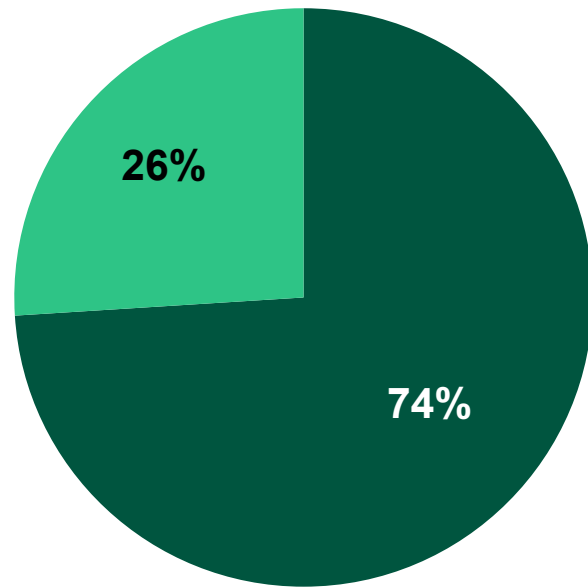
# Larger organizations struggle to control event technology proliferation

“How many different event management technology platforms/solutions do you currently use globally?”



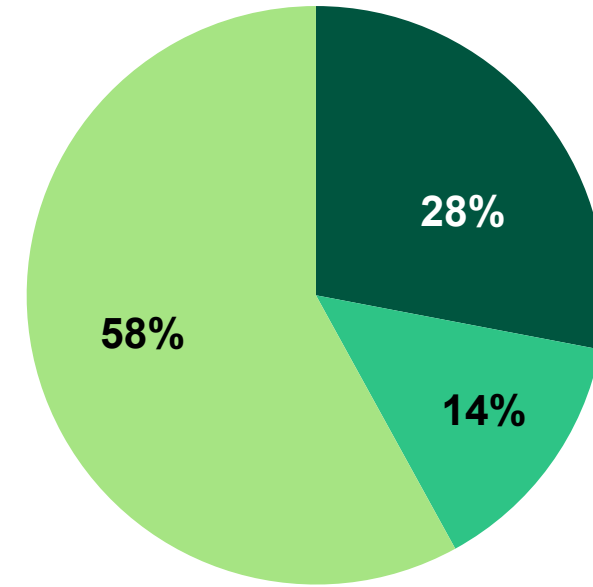
# Organizations are not planning to reduce the number of event tech platforms or spend levels

**Does your organization plan to reduce the number of event management technology partners you work with over the next 12 months?**



■ No ■ Yes

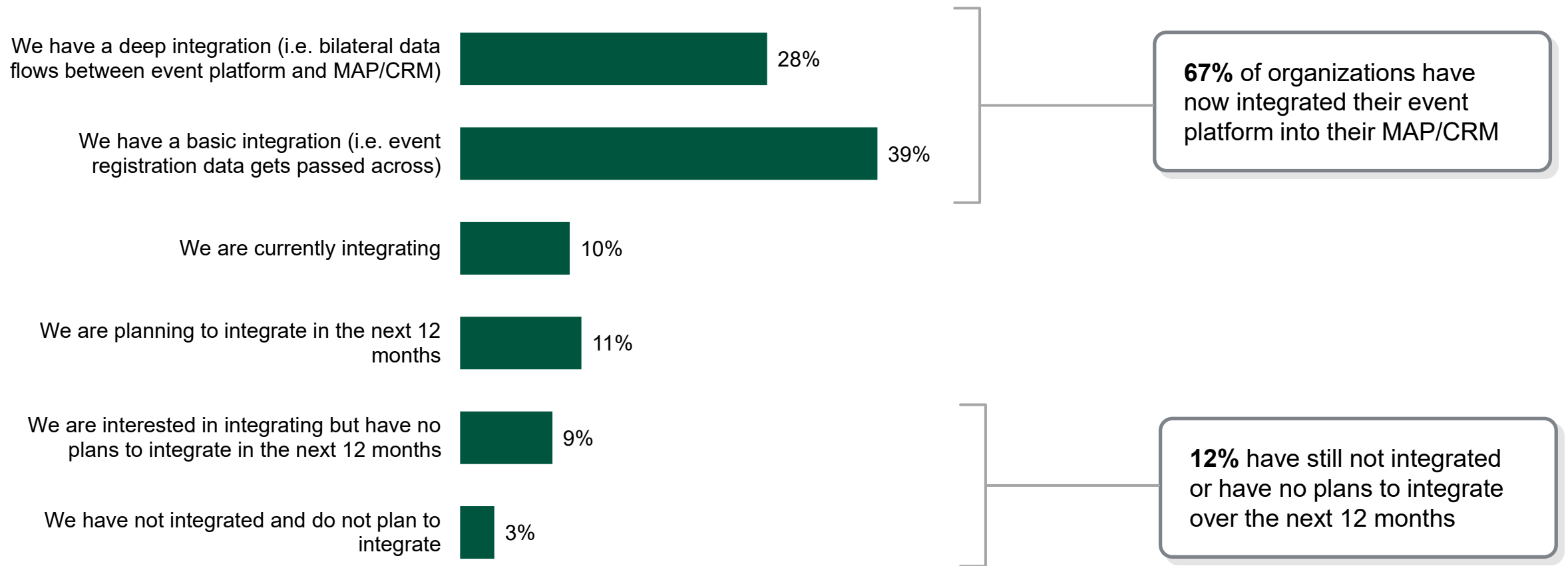
**Does your organization plan to spend more, less, or the same on event management technology over the next 12 months compared to the previous 12 months?**



■ More ■ Less ■ The same

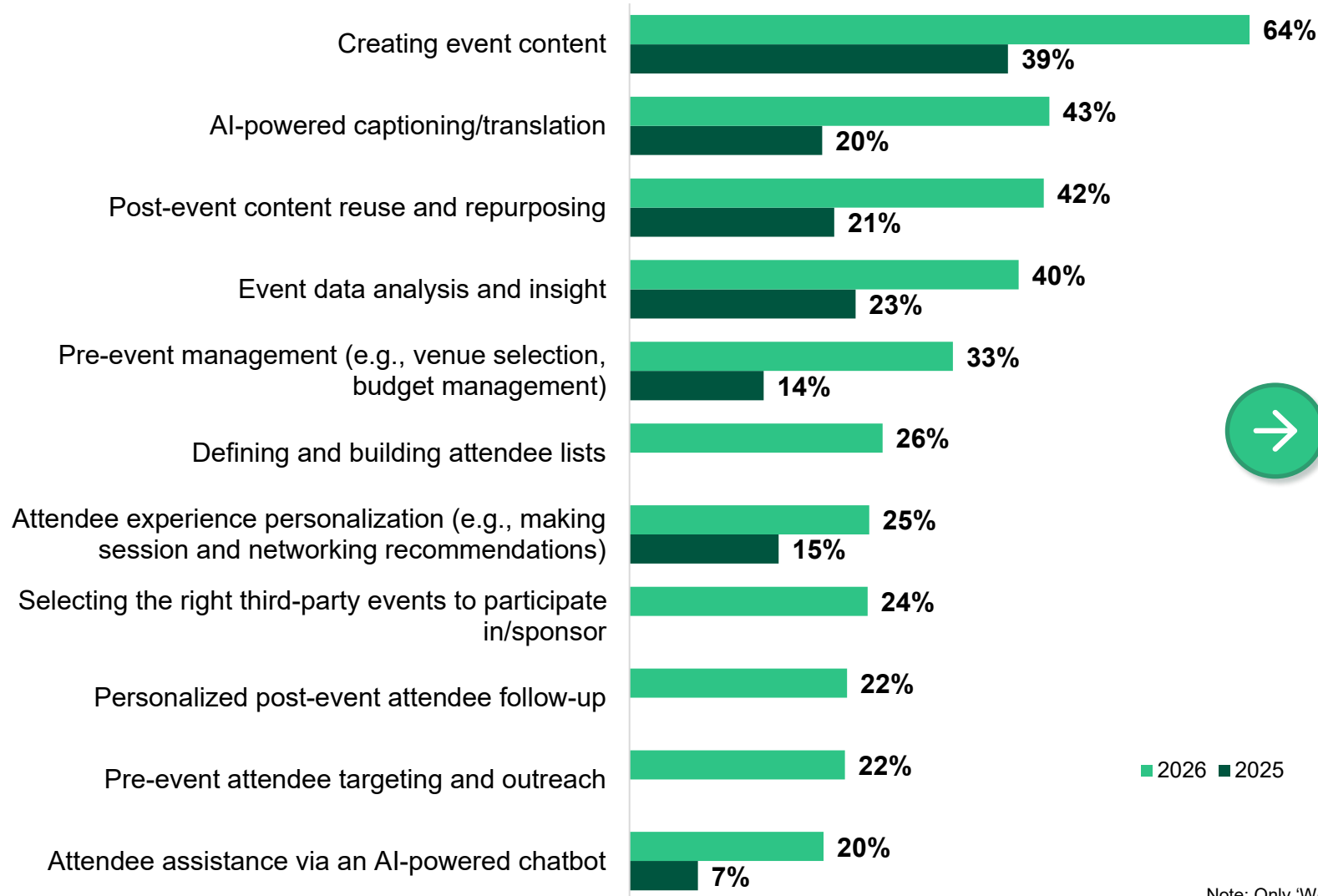
# Two-thirds of organizations have integrated into their wider ecosystem

“What are your organization's plans for integrating your main event technology platform with your MAP (Marketing Automation Platform), revenue marketing platform and/or CRM?”



# AI uptake has grown significantly but there's more to do

“To what extent is your organization using AI to help in the following event-related areas?”



While AI usage has increased massively over the past 12 months; content creation is the only use case >50% adoption

Note: Only 'We already doing this' is shown and some options were added for the 2026 survey  
Base: 186 (2026) to 157 (2025) B2B marketing professionals with responsibility for events at their company;  
Source: Forrester's Q1 2026 State Of B2B Events Survey and Forrester's Q1 2025 State Of B2B Events Survey

# Data quality is the single biggest blocker to AI usage

“When it comes to using AI for your events, how challenging do you find the following areas”



**63%**

Access to high quality data



**62%**

Measuring the value of AI



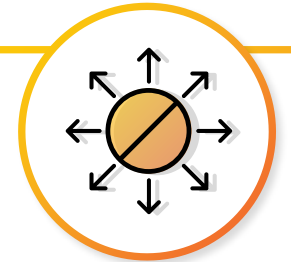
**57%**

Managing data privacy and security requirements



**56%**

Building an AI literate team



**39%**

Organizational restrictions limiting access to AI

Base: 176 B2B marketing professionals with responsibility for events at their company;  
Source: Forrester's Q1 2026 State Of B2B Events Survey

## 5 key takeaways

1. Review your balance of owned vs. third-party events
2. Prioritize interactive and engaging content over talking at your attendees
3. Focus on measuring impact, not activity
4. Work with IT and operations to deeply integrate your event tech into your wider eco-system
5. Move beyond using AI for just content creation and repurposing

Thank You.

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