Meeting professionals from around the country indicate that the meetings, conventions and special events industry has reached a level of stability and is growing at a healthy pace, according to a survey recently conducted by ConventionSouth.

Asked about their predictions for 2017, all (100 percent) of the meeting planners from across the country who participated in the survey said that they expect the number of meetings they plan next year to stay the same or increase slightly. Since 90 percent of the respondents said that the number of meetings they planned in 2016 stayed the same or increased slightly as compared to 2015, it seems evident that planners are enjoying a period of stability, and feel a bit of cautious optimism about the near future.

Another indication of industry stability can be seen in the number of meetings these professionals plan, with more than one-quarter reporting that they planned more than 50 meetings in 2016. Additionally, a large majority (82 percent) indicated that their meetings involved more than 100 attendees, on average, and a significant number (23 percent) said their events involve more than 1,000 participants. Another indicator was that 37 percent of the respondents booked more than 1,000 hotel rooms for their events held in 2016.

While meeting expenditures are rising across the board, the greatest increases are in food and beverage, guest room rates and a/v equipment. However, planners indicated that hotels are offering concessions to gain meeting business, with reduced costs for Internet access, resort fees and food and beverage offered most often.

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**Average Attendance**

What is the average attendance at your largest meeting?

- Fewer than 100: 18%
- 101-500: 41%
- 501-1,000: 18%
- More than 1,000: 23%

**Comparison of Average Attendance**

In 2016, compared to the year before, how would you describe your attendance rates?

- Increased Slightly: 50%
- Increased Greatly: 18%
- Decreased Slightly: 14%
- Stayed About The Same: 18%

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**How Do You Use CVBs?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Initial Destination Research</td>
<td>47.62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site Visits</td>
<td>47.62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing Bureau</td>
<td>4.76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Materials to promote meeting</td>
<td>57.14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Registration assistance</td>
<td>19.05%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tour planning/arrangements</td>
<td>57.14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>28.57%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Hotel Room Nights**

In 2016, my meetings/my organization’s meetings resulted in...

- More than 1,000: 37%
- 501-1,000: 18%
- 201-500: 18%
- 100-200: 9%
- Fewer than 100: 18%
First Tier or Second Tier or Smaller Destinations
Most of the meetings I plan are held within...

First-tier 55%

Second-tier or Smaller 45%

Where Do You Hold Your Events?
What types of facilities do you use most frequently for your meetings/events?

Hotels 75%

Convention Centers 15%

Conference Centers 10%

What’s Your Role?
Which best describes your role as a meeting planner?

Corporate 10%

Association 50%

Government/Nonprofit 20%

Independent 10%

Other 10%

Percentage of Meeting Planners

Transportation
What method of transportation do your attendees typically use?

41% of meeting planners say: More than 50% of their attendees DRIVE to meetings

36% of meeting planners say: More than 50% of their attendees FLY to meetings

24% of meeting planners say: A mix of FLY-IN & DRIVE-IN attendees

What’s Your Biggest Challenge?
What is your biggest challenge as a meeting planner?

Providing attendees with a great meeting while sticking to your budget 43%

Increasing Attendance 29%

Negotiating Contracts 14%

Finding a supplier that will work with your budget 9%

Other 5%

Percentage of Meeting Planners

Travel
From where do your attendees typically originate?

55% National

4% Regional

14% Local

18% Statewide

9% Worldwide

ConventionSouth | October 2016

www.conventionsouth.com
**Negotiating Concessions**
Compared to one year ago, which of the following items are hoteliers more willing to give concessions for?

- **Room Rates** 20%
- **Food & Beverage** 35%
- **Internet Access** 55%
- **Meeting Space** 40%
- **Meeting Services** 15%
- **Cancellation Fees** 10%
- **Attrition Fees** 20%
- **Resort or Amenity Fees** 20%

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**Social Media**
What social media avenues to you use most often and in which of the following ways are you using social media tools?

- Facebook
  - 47% To market my meetings
  - 47% To connect to attendees

- Twitter
  - 16% To share ideas about event planning
  - 33% To connect with other meeting planners

- LinkedIn
  - 16% To connect with suppliers/vendors

- YouTube
  - 5%

- Instagram
  - 5%

- Pinterest
  - 0%

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**Event Expenditures**
In 2016, as far as your event expenditures........

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Spending more</th>
<th>Spending less</th>
<th>Spending the same</th>
<th>Not applicable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Guest rooms/housing</td>
<td>50.00%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>31.82%</td>
<td>18.18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meeting rooms</td>
<td>19.05%</td>
<td>4.76%</td>
<td>52.38%</td>
<td>23.81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programming/content</td>
<td>31.82%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>59.09%</td>
<td>9.09%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food &amp; Beverage</td>
<td>59.09%</td>
<td>4.55%</td>
<td>27.27%</td>
<td>9.09%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audio/Visual</td>
<td>45.45%</td>
<td>4.55%</td>
<td>45.45%</td>
<td>4.55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Off-site events or parties</td>
<td>18.18%</td>
<td>9.09%</td>
<td>50.00%</td>
<td>22.73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incentives/rewards</td>
<td>22.73%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>22.73%</td>
<td>54.55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation</td>
<td>27.27%</td>
<td>4.55%</td>
<td>36.36%</td>
<td>31.82%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>