2010 Public Events Council Survey Report:
Public Events Industry Report 2010
9 December 2010

In 2009, IAEE's Public Events Council prepared a survey report, *Public Events in 2009: How They Fared During the Worst Economy in Fifty Years*, based on a survey of public event organizers across 22 industry sectors to examine overall industry performance in 2009. The report identified which industry sectors fared well, which sectors struggled and their expectations for the future. As a follow-up to that report, the Public Events Council released a survey asking the same information to examine overall industry performance in 2010. This report of findings provides individual statistics for 2010 as well as comparative results using 2009 benchmark data.

OVERVIEW BY SECTOR:

Existing Event Expectations

Organizers were asked to indicate their general expectation for outcomes for 2010 events conducted in each of the 22 identified sectors.

In comparing specific industry sectors for existing events from 2009 to 2010, many sectors such as **Agriculture-Farm-Ranch, Craft-Hobby-Woodworking, Fairs-Festivals and Food-Beverage** remained the same, *meeting or exceeding expectations*.

Sectors showing *substantial improvement* from 2009 are **Antiques-Collectibles, Automobile** and **RV**. It should be noted that RV sales are a fairly accurate indicator of economic change (positive or negative). The indications of positive change in this sector are encouraging for the industry and economy in general.

Sectors that should be encouraged due to a *slight improvement* in their 2010 expectations include **Boating-Marine** at 33 percent and **Computer-Electronics** improving to 50 percent *meeting or exceeding* expectations; both were 100 percent below general expectation outcomes in 2009.

Those sectors reporting a *slight decline* from 2009, but meeting or exceeding expectations for 2010 include **Gift-Gem-Jewelry, Home-Garden, Miscellaneous** (see note under Table 1 for a list of events in the **Miscellaneous** sector), **Sportsman-Hunting-Outdoors and Travel**.

The **Kids-Family-Lifestyle-Pets** and **Women's** sectors were substantially down from 2009 expectations to 2010. One factor that could explain the fluctuations (positive and negative) in general expectations is that in several sectors, more events submitted data in 2010. **See figure 1 for a complete breakdown.**

EXISTING EVENTS: INDUSTRY SECTOR	2009 EVENTS	% Met or Exceeded Expectations	% Below Expectations	2010 EVENTS	% Met or Exceeded Expectations	% Below Expectations
Agriculture-Farm-Ranch	13	100%	0%	2	100%	0%
Antiques-Collectibles	5	0%	100%	13	100%	0%
Arms-Guns-Knives	0	-	-	3	0%	100%
Automobile	1	0%	100%	3	67%	33%
Aviation	0	-	-	0	-	-
Boating-Marine	12	0%	100%	9	33%	67%
Bridal	0	-	-	2	100%	0%
Business-Franchise-Entrepreneur	0	-	-	2	100%	0%
Computer-Electronics	1	0%	100%	5	50%	50%
Craft-Hobby-Woodworking	2	100%	0%	2	100%	0%
Education-College-Career	0	-	-	0	0%	100%
Fairs-Festivals	1	100%	0%	2	100%	0%
Food-Beverage	3	100%	0%	6	100%	0%
Gift-Gem-Jewelry	1	100%	0%	7	67%	33%
Home-Garden	39	80%	20%	15	60%	40%
Kids-Family-Lifestyle-Pets	7	100%	0%	2	50%	50%
Miscellaneous	17	75%	25%	25	50%	50%
RV	21	0%	100%	33	67%	33%
Retirement-Golden Age-Senior	0	-	-	0	-	-
Sportsman-Hunting-Outdoors	5	100%	0%	14	75%	25%
Travel	2	100%	0%	13	67%	33%
Women's	2	100%	0%	3	50%	50%
TOTAL	**131**			**161**		

Figure 1

(**Miscellaneous** category includes: urban development, construction, books, professional beauty, video games, MMA fan events, Star Wars event, industrial, healthcare and medical, fashion, and private label events.)

New Launch Expectations

The majority of new launches, **including Arms-Guns-Knives, Craft-Hobby-Woodworking, Home-Garden** and **Sportsman-Hunting-Outdoors,** *met or exceeded* expectations in 2010.

The **Antiques-Collectibles** and **RV** sectors actually reversed from 100 percent below expectations in 2009 to 100 percent *meeting or exceeding* expectations for 2010.

Two sectors, **Education-College-Career** and **Miscellaneous**, were the only sectors with events performing *below expectations.*

Overall, the new launch data provides encouraging results moving into 2011. **See figure 2 for a complete breakdown.**

NEW LAUNCHES: INDUSTRY SECTOR	New Launches 2009	% Met or Exceeded Expectations	% Below Expectations	New Launches 2010	% Met or Exceeded Expectations	% Below Expectations
Agriculture-Farm-Ranch	6	50%	50%	0	-	-
Antiques-Collectibles	1	0%	100%	2	100%	0%
Arms-Guns-Knives	0	-	-	1	100%	0%
Automobile	0	-	-	0	-	-
Aviation	0	-	-	0	-	-
Boating-Marine	0	-	-	0	-	-
Bridal	0	-	-	0	-	-
Business-Franchise-Entrepreneur	0	-	-	0	-	-
Computer/Electronics	0	-	-	0	-	-
Craft/Hobby/Woodworking	1	100%	0%	2	100%	0%
Education/College/Career	0	-	-	1	0%	100%
Fairs/Festivals	0	-	-	0	-	-
Food/Beverage	1	100%	0%	0	-	-
Gift/Gem/Jewelry	0	-	-	0	-	-
Home/Garden	2	100%	0%	1	100%	0%
Kids/Family/Lifestyle/Pets	1	100%	0%	0	-	-
Miscellaneous	4	100%	0%	11	67%	33%
RV	1	0%	100%	1	100%	0%
Retirement/Golden Age/Senior	0	-	-	0	-	-
Sportsman/Hunting/Outdoors	0	-	-	3	100%	0%
Travel	0	-	-	0	-	-
Women's	1	0%	100%	0	-	-
TOTAL	**16**			**22**		

Figure 2

EVENT REVENUE, EXHIBIT SPACE SALES (NSF) and ATTENDANCE

Organizers were asked if their event **revenue**, **NSF** and **attendance** for their most profitable event in 2010 was *better*, *nearly the same* or *worse* as compared to 2009. **See figures 3-5 for comparative data.**

In 2009, revenue and attendance results were generally nearly the same or better than 2008, while exhibit space sales (NSF) suffered.

In 2010, organizers reported *better* results across the board when compared with 2009, with **revenue** and **NSF** showing *substantial increases*.

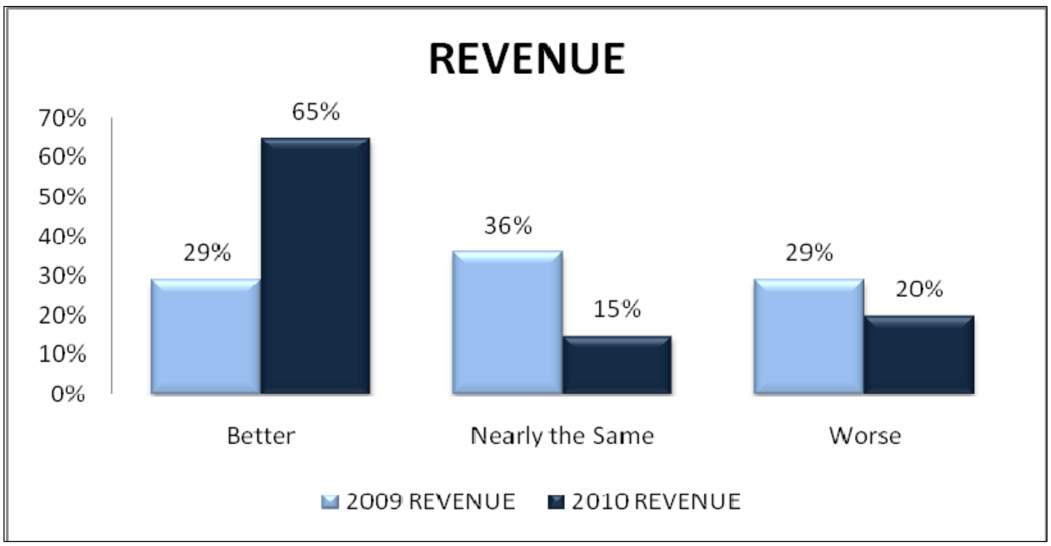

Figure 3

Sixty-five percent of 2010 respondents reported *better* **revenue** results than in 2009. Eight percent of those reporting better **revenue** *increased their revenue figures above 26 percent*.

It is interesting to note that when asked if **revenue** results were better, and by what approximate percentage, *69 percent* responded between *one and 15 percent improved*.

When the same question was asked if **revenue** results were worse, and by what approximate percentage, the results were very similar with *60 percent down by one to 15 percent*.

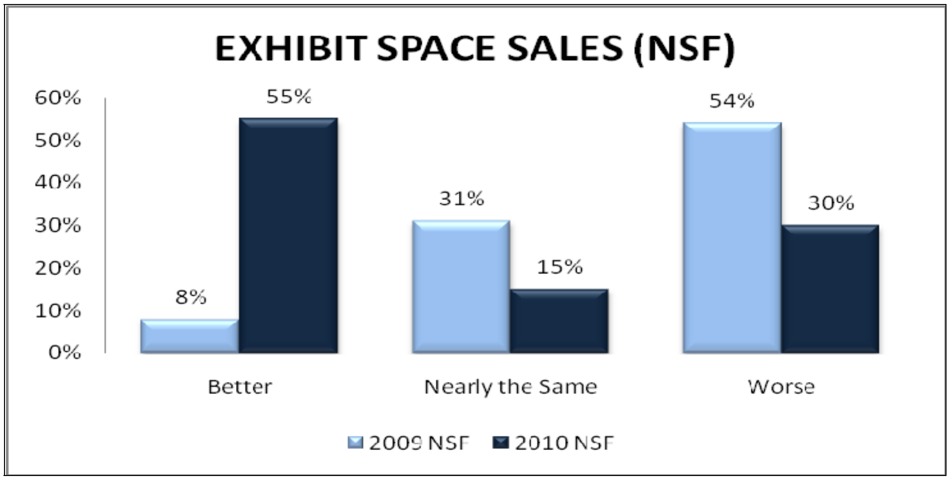

Figure 4

NSF figures for 2009 were eye-opening with 54 percent reporting worse results than the previous year.

In 2010, there was *marked improvement* with 55 percent of respondents indicating their **exhibit space sales** were *better* than in 2009. Only six percent reported *worse* sales. It is unclear whether the 55 percent reporting *better* results in exhibit space sales is an indicator of recovery or a reflection of 2009 space sales at such a low that any improvement proved noteworthy.

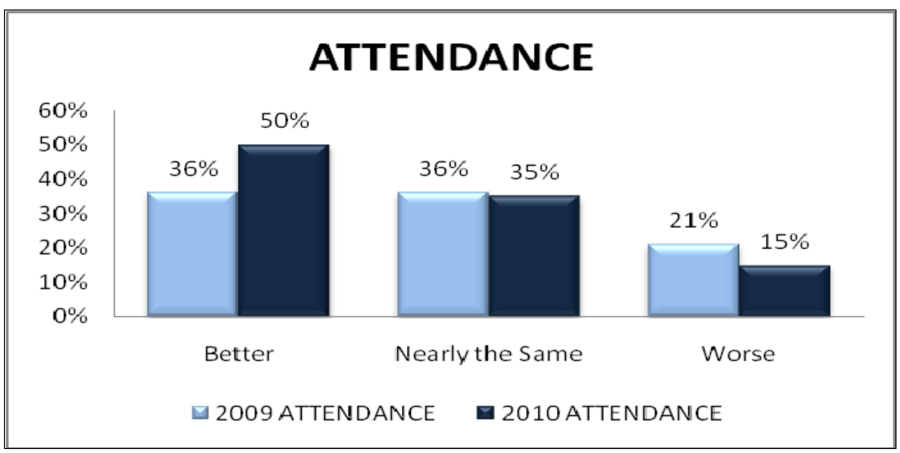

Figure 5

Attendance in 2010 showed improvement over 2009 (with 50 percent reporting *better* results and 35 percent *nearly the same*); however, organizers report slower growth here than in the other two categories when looking at the year-over-year results.

To summarize this portion of the findings, the rebound for 2010 exhibit space sales combined with the positive results achieved in revenue and improvements to attendance point in a positive direction for the public events industry and the overall exhibitions and events industry in general.

ARE EXHIBITORS WAITING LONGER TO SECURE EXHIBIT SPACE?

When compared to 2009 statistics, there is vast improvement in the responses. Ninety-three percent of respondents in 2009 reported that exhibitors waited somewhat (31 percent) to substantially (62 percent) longer to secure exhibit space.

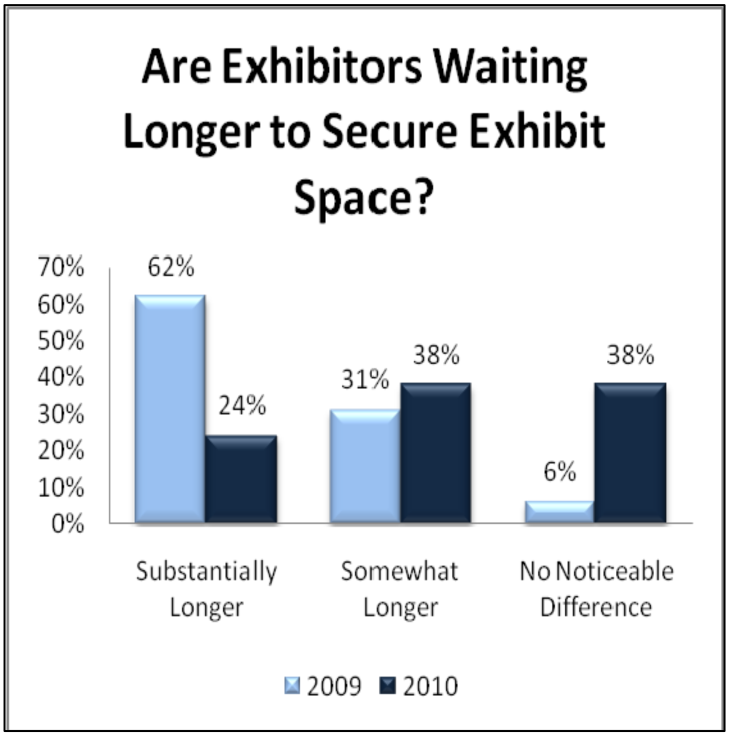

Figure 6

In 2010, that number dropped to 62 percent (38 percent *somewhat longer* and a big drop for *substantially longer* at 24 percent). In 2009, six percent indicated *no noticeable difference*, whereas in 2010, the response was 38 percent.

This is a positive indicator for the public events industry as it shows the exhibitor is gaining confidence in the economy and is willing to commit to exhibit space earlier in the process offering more stability for the event, the organizer and potential attendees.

EVENT CANCELLATIONS AND WORKFORCE REDUCTION

In 2009, 50 percent of survey respondents cancelled events due to economic circumstances and nearly three-quarters had no plans to reschedule.

Indicating the largest comparative difference between 2009 and 2010 results, only five percent of the 2010 respondents cancelled an event due to economic circumstances. Of that five percent, 100% of them have no plans to reschedule.

A specific question was asked directly to those respondents reflecting the 50 percent in 2009 to cancel events (and the three-quarters with no plans to reschedule). When asked if they ***did*** reschedule any of the cancelled events,the response was 100% "*no*".

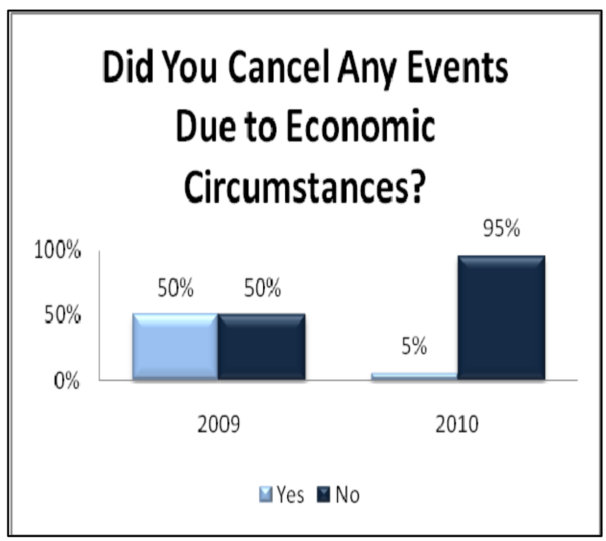

Figure 7

Workforce reduction slowed in 2010 with only 29 percent of the respondents laying off employees compared to 44 percent in 2009. Of the 29 percent, 100 percent of the workforce reduction was between one and 15 percent. When asked if they would consider rehiring in 2011, zero percent reported *yes*, 43 percent were *unsure*, and 57 percent stated *no*.

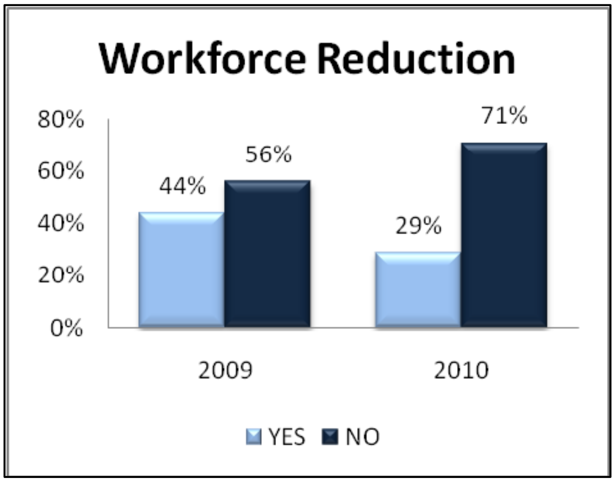

Figure 8

As a comparison, of the 44 percent who reduced their workforce in 2009, 73 percent reduced between one and 15 percent while 28 percent reduced it by 16 to 20+ percent. Eighty-three percent of survey respondents were *unsure* or *not planning* to rehire those laid off employees in 2010, while 17 percent responded *yes*.

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

Organizers were asked in general, and based on 2010 events, what their attitude is toward 2011.

Over three-quarters of the 2010 respondents (77 percent) were *optimistic* or *very optimistic* for 2011. In 2009, 53 percent indicated they were optimistic or very optimistic for 2010.

Fourteen percent were *undecided* in 2010 compared to 40 percent in 2009, while 10 percent indicated they were *pessimistic* as compared to seven percent from 2009.

While the overall attitude toward next year is *optimistic*, it is unclear why a higher percentage in 2010 are pessimistic compared to 2009.

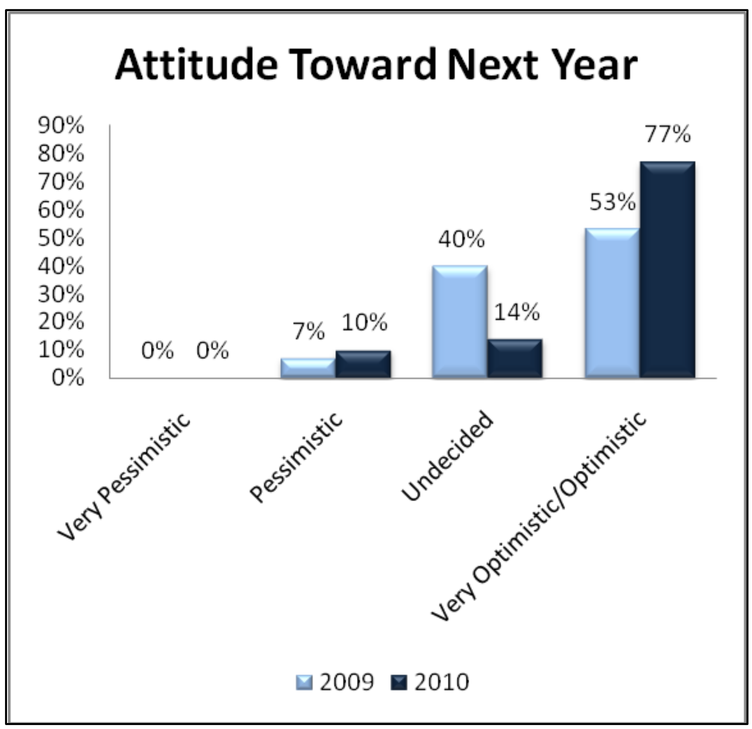

Figure 9

When asked about **launching new events** in 2011, 60 percent of 2010 respondents chose "*yes*" while 40 percent were *unsure* or *not planning* to launch new events.

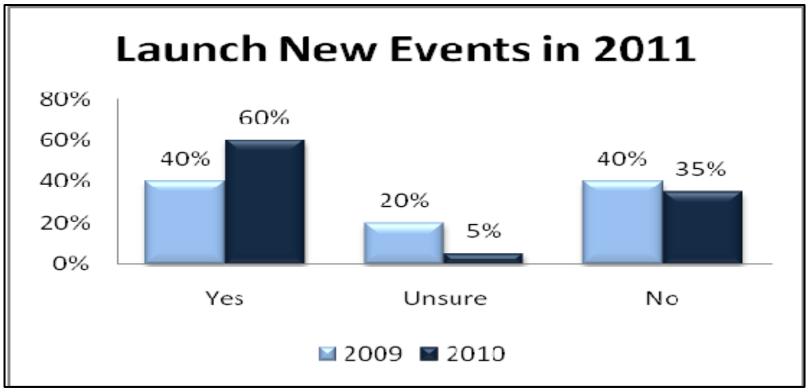

Figure 10

It is interesting to note that 2009 responses were the exact opposite, with 40 percent indicating they *were planning* to launch new events while 60 percent were *unsure or not planning* to.

Sponsorship revenue in 2011 should increase if the 2010 responses are an indicator. Thirty-eight percent expect *better* sponsorship revenue, with 48 percent anticipating *nearly the same* and only 14 percent expecting *worse* than in 2009.

For 2009 in anticipation of 2010, the responses were 27 percent expecting better, 33 percent nearly the same and 40 percent anticipating worse sponsorship revenues.

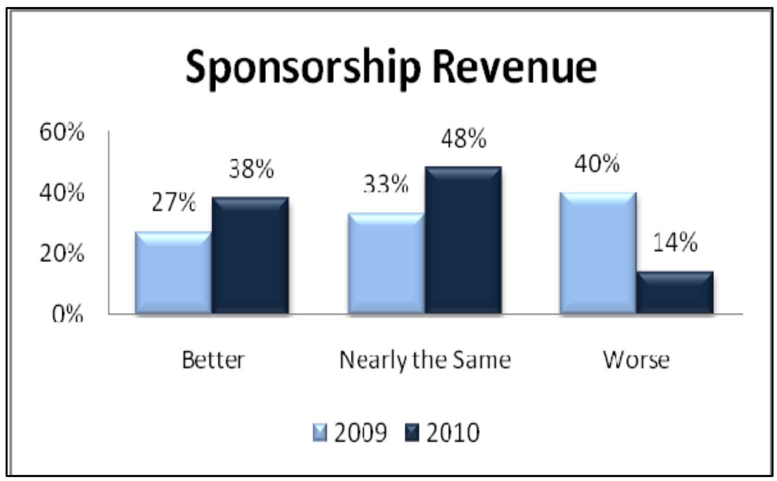

Figure 11

SIGNS OF RECOVERY

Organizers were asked if they were seeing any **signs of recovery** as 2011 approaches. As shown in figure 10, most public event industry sectors are seeing signs of recovery for 2011, including the **Agriculture, Antiques, Arms-Guns, Automobile, Bridal, Kids-Family, Miscellaneous, RV, Sportsman, Travel and Women's** sectors. The **Boating, Computer, Education-College, Food-Beverage, Gift-Gem-Jewelry, and Home-Garden** sectors struggled in 2010 and are therefore *unsure* or *not seeing* signs of recovery at this point.

In 2009, most respondents fell into the "*unsure*" and "*no*" categories with a few notable exceptions; the **Agriculture, Home-Garden, Kids-Family-Lifestyle-Pets,** and **RV** sectors, reporting signs of recovery for 2010. The 2010 survey results are a vast improvement from 2009.

There is room for optimism for the most part as *more than half* of the industry sectors are reporting *more* **signs of recovery** *than not*.

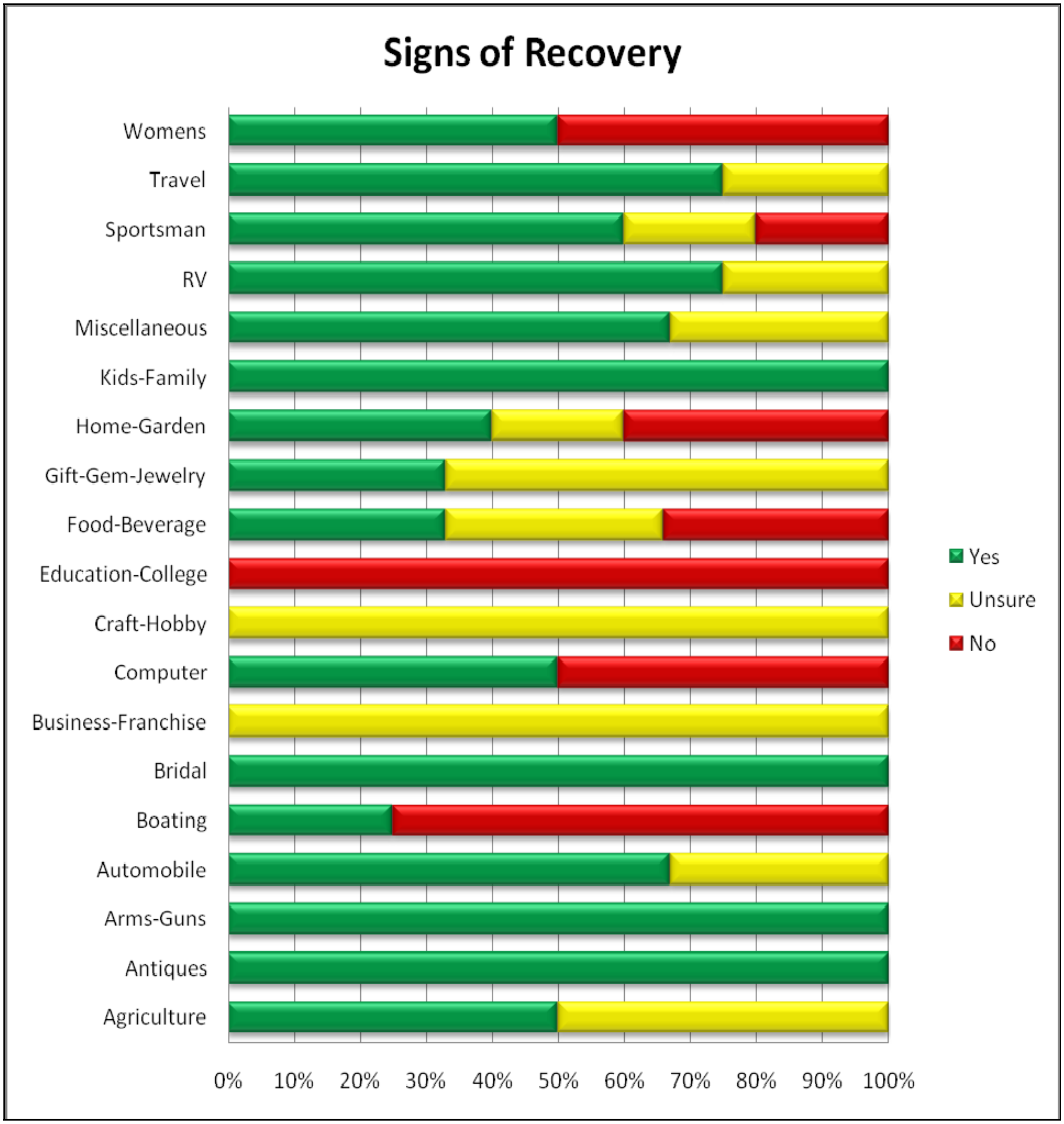

Figure 12

THE MOST IMPORTANT ISSUES FACING THE INDUSTRY TODAY

The **top issues** identified consistently by the respondents to the 2010 survey are:

1. Exhibitor Issues (e.g., exhibitor ROI, keeping exhibitors healthy, exhibitors going out of business, exhibitor training, decrease in number of exhibitors, exhibitors not willing to work harder to draw attendees to booth)
2. The Economy (and the effect on labor costs, spending power of attendees, consumer buying power, staffing, falling revenues and overall budgets)
3. Technology/Digital Marketing (how to keep up with all the changes and incorporating those changes into events while maintaining existing budgets)
4. Facilities/Venues (available dates, appropriate sizes, costs and fees)

In the 2009 survey, the top three responses were the economy, the decline in sponsorship dollars and exhibitors waiting too long to commit. However, as addressed in the 2009 report, the decline in sponsorship dollars and exhibitors waiting too long to commit were both directly related to the economy.

Although the 2010 responses included the **economy** as the second most-identified concern, it is interesting to note that the other three issues (**Exhibitor Issues, Technology/Digital Marketing, and Facilities/Venues**) are by and large event-related. Elements of each can be attributed to the economy, but for the most part, it is back to the business of engaging with exhibitors and embracing technology moving into 2011.

IN CONCLUSION…

In the 2009 report, the economy was the central focus as well as the major effect it had on exhibitions and events in 2009, especially in relation to sponsorship revenue and exhibitors waiting too long to commit to exhibit space. Although the "major purchase" industry sectors struggled in 2009, the majority of sectors met or exceeded expectations and indicated an optimistic outlook for 2010.

For 2010, the results are encouraging. Most existing events as well as new launches report *meeting* or *exceeding expectations* in 2010. Event **revenue** and **exhibit space sales** in particular show *substantial improvement* over 2009 and although attendance growth is slower, the overall increase is *positive*. When results for **exhibitors waiting longer to secure exhibit space** as well as anticipated **sponsorship revenues** are compared, a *vast improvement* is noted in both for 2010. Over *three-quarters* of those surveyed feel **optimistic about 2011** and 60 percent **plan to launch new events**. As the industry looks to 2011 it is important to note that concern about the economy, although still on the organizer's radar, is balanced with issues relating to exhibitors, technology and facilities/venues.

Methodology: *The data for this report was obtained through an IAEE Public Events Council Survey sent to 337 Public Events Show Organizers. Of those 337 organizers, 24 responded reporting on 179 existing and newly launched events in 2010.*