

2014: THE SUMMER OF SURVEYS

Mobile Event Apps and You

THE 2014 SUMMER OF SURVEYS REPORT FROM QUICKMOBILE

EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW,
RIGHT HERE IN ONE PLACE

**GRAB A COFFEE,
FIND A QUIET SPOT FOR 20 MINUTES,
AND READ ON.
IT'LL BE TIME WELL SPENT**



SO MANY SURVEYS, SO LITTLE TIME

Mobile apps continue to dominate any discussion on event technology, and with good reason. Mobile is changing everything about how we share, learn, and connect, not just at meetings and events, but in virtually every aspect of our daily lives. In fact, there's a good chance you're reading this report on a smartphone or tablet.

It's no wonder then that so many mobile app vendors are keen to understand what's attracting you, and what's holding you back.

Thanks to no less than 4 separate event technology surveys conducted between April and September 2014, you can now find out more about the preferences, benefits and concerns about mobile event apps than you ever thought possible.

But who has the time to read 4 reports?

From budgeting to favorite features, we summarize it all for you in this single report.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Key Findings	05
The Four Surveys	06
Demographics Each survey reached a distinct audience	07
How Many Events Do You Manage? That depends on the sector you’re in	09
Why Are Event Professionals Using Mobile Apps? To aid in communications and to reduce the use of paper	11
Where To Find The Best Advice On Mobile Apps Nothing beats hands-on experience and the advice of trusted friends	14
What Are the Most Important App Functions? That depends on who asked the question	15
How Much Should A Mobile Event App Cost? Corporate budgets are bigger, but most planners aren’t budgeting for an app	19
Important Perspective on ROI Per person, a mobile app costs less than half of what a planner spends on coffee	22
The Last Word	23

KEY FINDINGS

While each individual report reveals distinct information about the state of mobile event apps, looking at them together offers greater insight.

Should you go mobile?

More than 60% of your peers have for at least ONE of the events they manage. 92% if you're a corporate event professional.

Why?

Because mobile apps improve communication, reduce printing costs and carbon footprints, help you share last-minute changes to schedules, enhance networking opportunities, increase exposure for sponsors, and a whole lot more. Not to mention more and more of your attendees are expecting it. Think about it this way: knowing what you know now, would you ever consider not offering online registration? The same will soon hold true for mobile event apps.

How are apps being used?

Apps are most valued as a tool for organizers to communicate with their attendees and keep them up to date, and to eliminate printing, whether the motivation is cost savings, going green, or both.

Despite the growing adoption of mobile apps, organizers have yet to really take advantage of all that a mobile event app can do. That presents opportunities for mobile app providers to do a better job educating you on the possibilities.

From gamification to integrations with other event and business systems, there is so much more you can achieve through your app, more than enough to justify the perceived extra work load, which, by the way, your app vendor should be able to help with if they're structured to deliver that way. Not all are.

THE FOUR SURVEYS

First up in April was the IMEX Group, with the first annual survey of their attendees from all over the world. IMEX partnered with QuickMobile to help identify the research topics. We then engaged the services of Insights West, a boutique market research firm, to create the online survey, tabulate the results and analyze the findings. [Results](#) were released at IMEX in Frankfurt in May 2014.

Next out the door in mid-September was a report from Guidebook, entitled “State of Mobile Event Technology Annual Report 2014’. As there was no stated industry partner, we presume the respondent list came from Guidebook’s own customers.

In late September, Meeting Professionals International (MPI) released the results of its survey through a report sponsored by DoubleDutch. They co-presented a sneak peak at MPI’s WEC event in late August and released full results to the public a month later.

And finally, IMEX and QuickMobile completed a second wave of research in late September, this time in partnership with the Corporate Event Marketing Association (CEMA). Once again, Insights West ran the survey and tabulated all the results, which were first presented at IMEX America in October 2014.

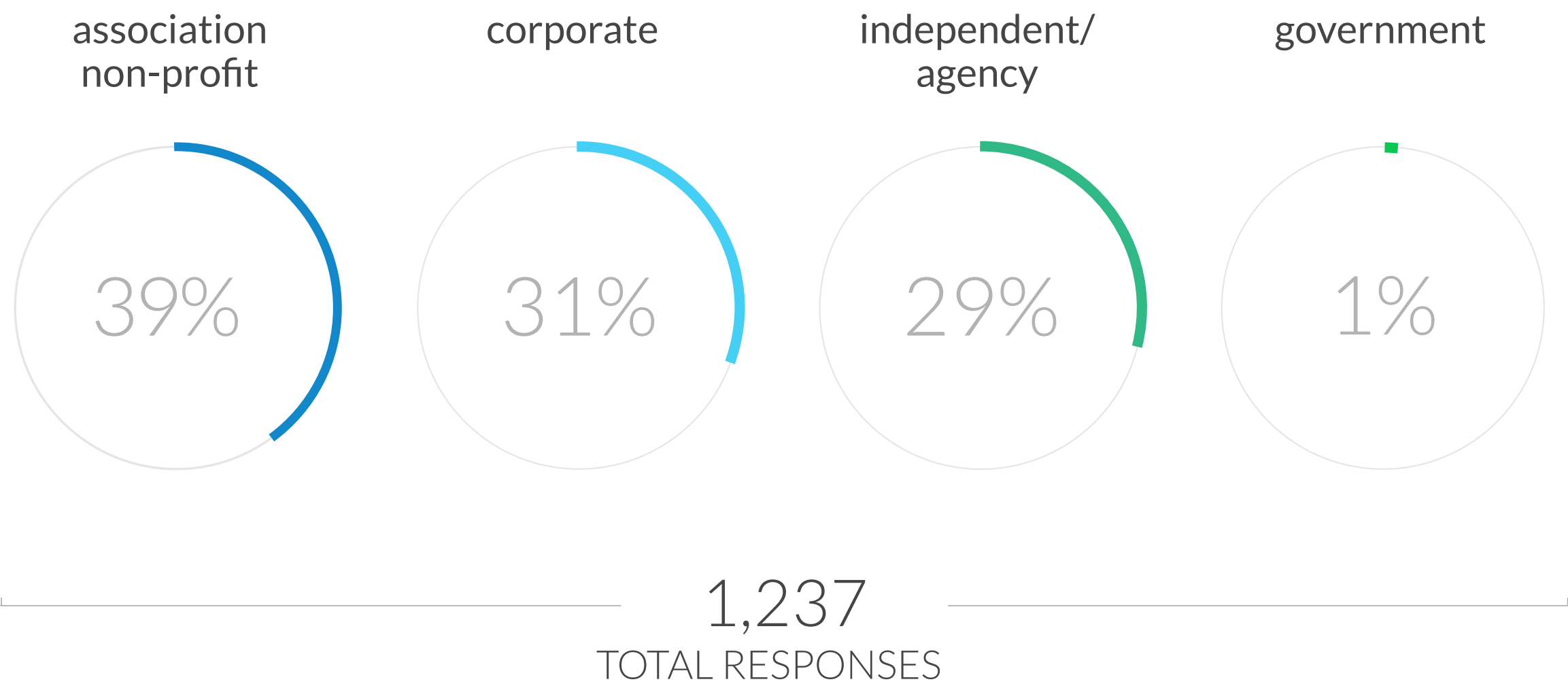


DEMOGRAPHICS

Each survey reached a distinct audience

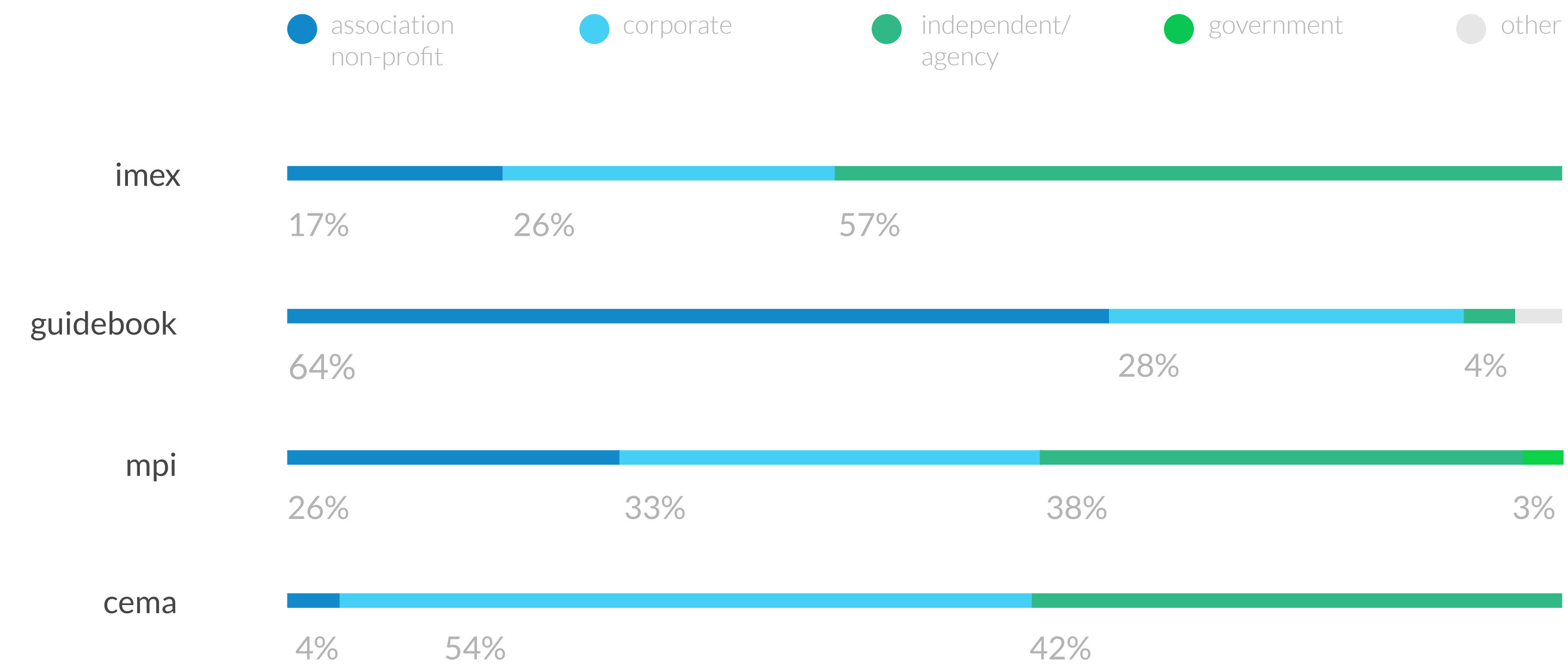
A total of 1,237 respondents participated in the “Summer of Surveys”. Below is the breakdown by segment.

Figure 1 - Percentage respondents by segment, all surveys combined



Despite a fairly balanced overall mix of respondents, it’s important to note that each individual survey targeted its own unique audience. Depending on which type of planner you are, you may want to dig into one specific report. See the next page for details.

Figure 2 - Percentage respondents by segment, by survey



If you're from the association/nonprofit segment, the Guidebook survey is closest to home.

If you're a corporate event professional, the CEMA study best reflects your needs.

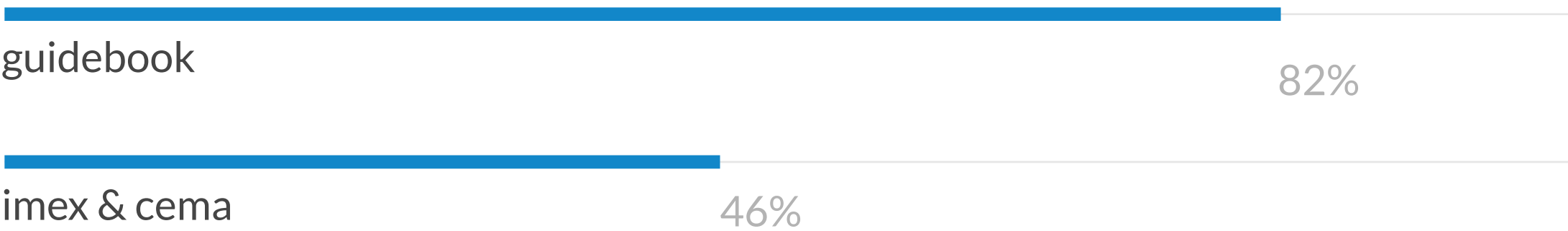
And if you're on the independent or agency side, then the first IMEX report is your best bet, followed by CEMA and then MPI.

HOW MANY EVENTS DO YOU MANAGE?

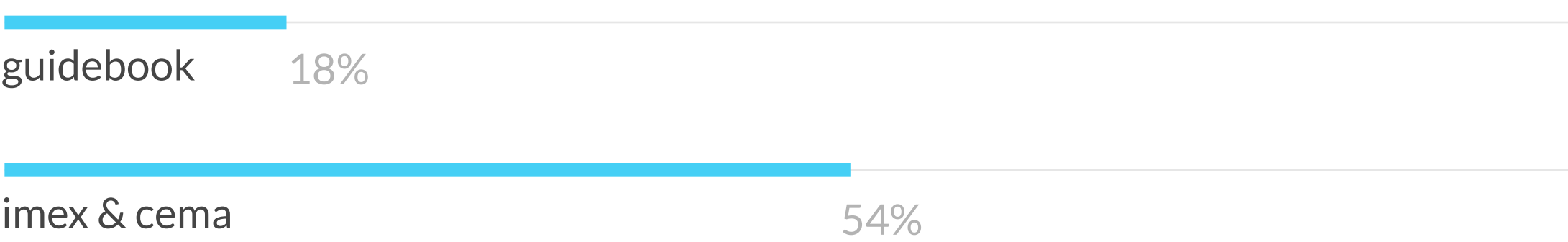
That depends on the sector you're in

Figure 3 - Number of events managed

≤ 10 EVENTS



> 10 EVENTS

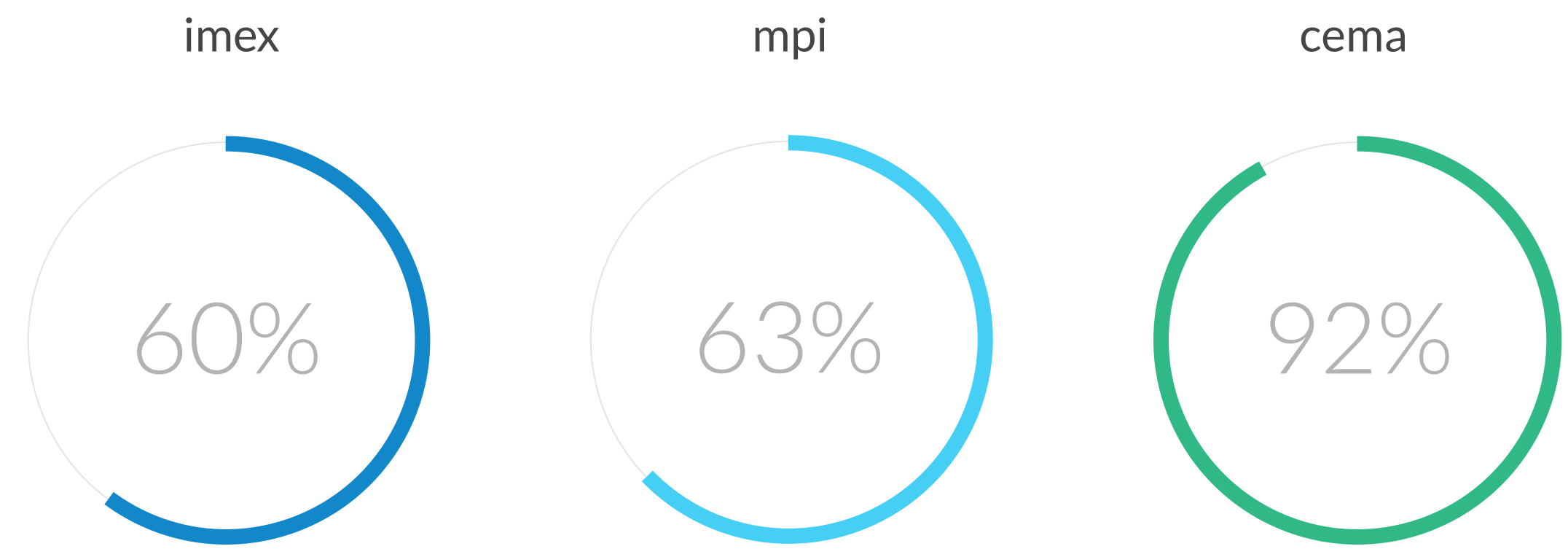


Only the IMEX, Guidebook and CEMA surveys asked this question.

The Guidebook study, with its emphasis on associations and nonprofits, leaned heavily toward the under 10 group at 82%. IMEX and CEMA were consistent, with 46% managing under 10 events and 54% managing more than 10.

Finally, in terms of respondent experience with mobile event apps, IMEX and MPI were fairly close at 60% and 63% respectively. The CEMA study turned in a massive 92% response to this question, indicating a much higher familiarity with mobile event apps among corporate event marketers than their association/nonprofit and agency counterparts. As we'll see below, the CEMA group offered some other standout results.

Figure 4 - Have you used a mobile event app for at least one of your events in the past 2 years?



It's important to note that these surveys asked respondents whether or not they had used an app at one of their events, but did not ask how many of the events they managed had a mobile app. For that reason, these results do not reflect the true market adoption rate.

Guidebook was not included in this figure as they did not ask this type of question.

WHY ARE EVENT PROFESSIONALS USING MOBILE APPS?

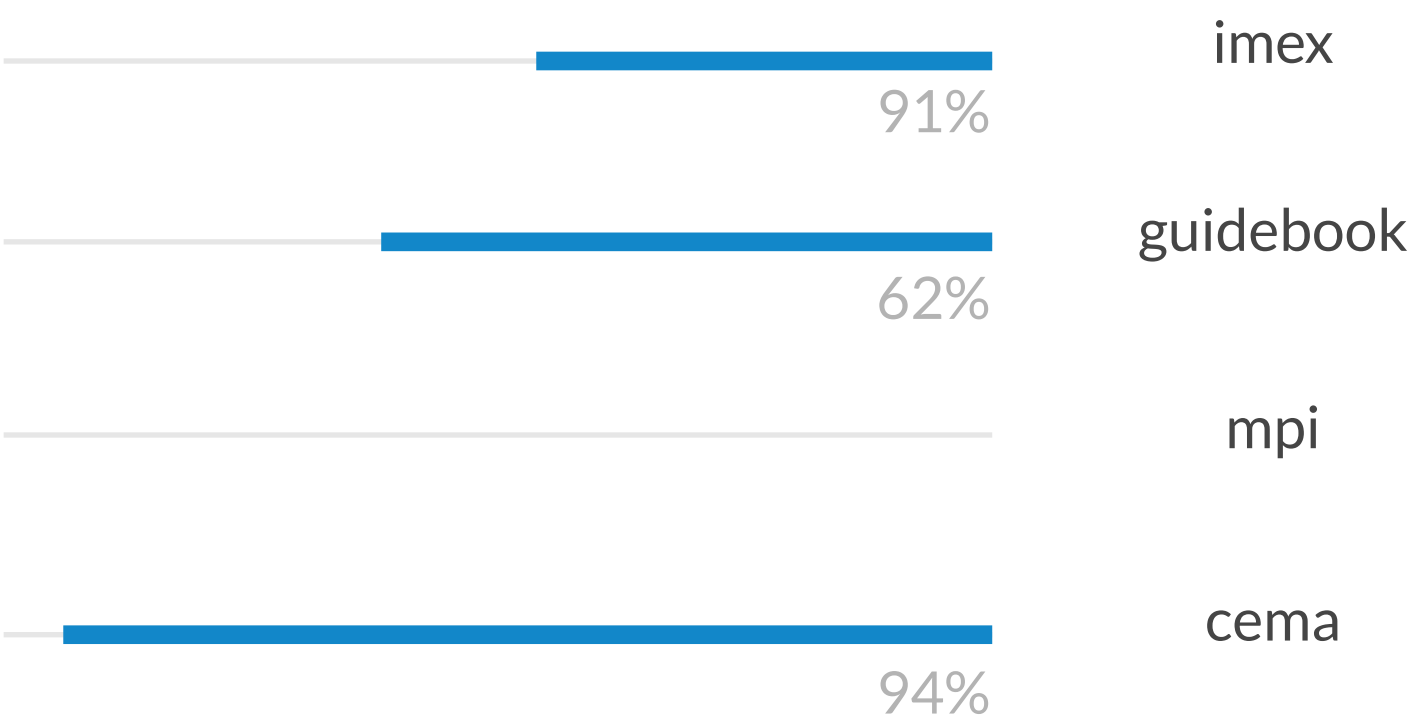
To aid in communications and to reduce the use of paper

This is one area covered – somewhat differently – by every study. The IMEX, Guidebook and CEMA surveys asked respondents to rate a list of benefits from Not Important to Very Important, while the MPI survey asked respondents to identify the single most important reason.

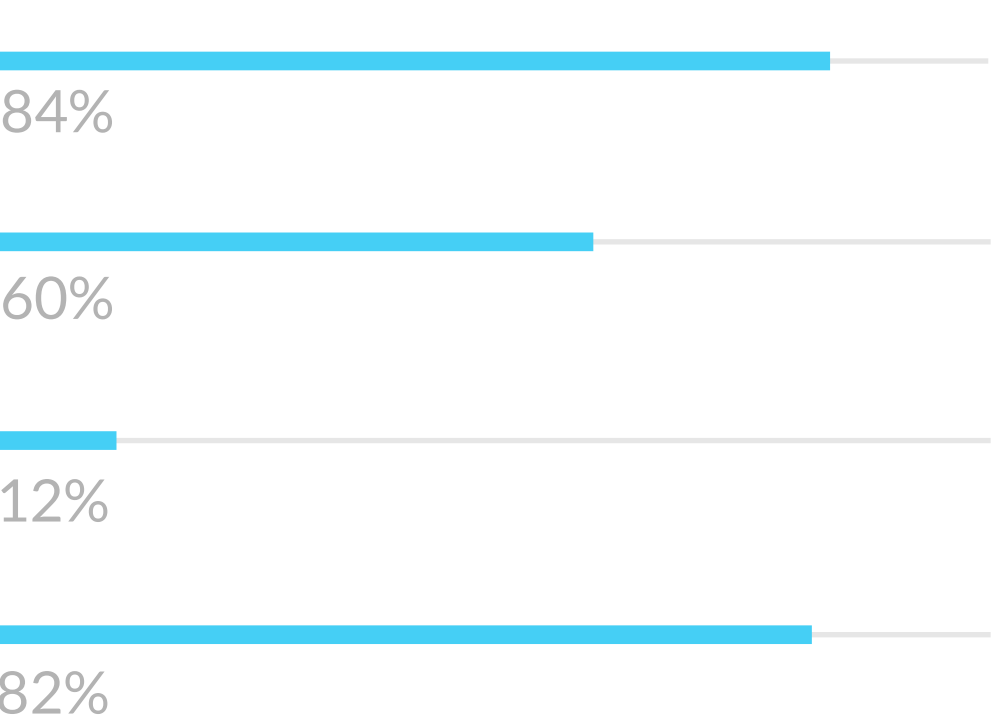
The top 2 reasons for having an app are:

Figure 5 - Top benefits of a mobile event app (for the planner)

ORGANIZER-TO-ATTENDEE MESSAGING



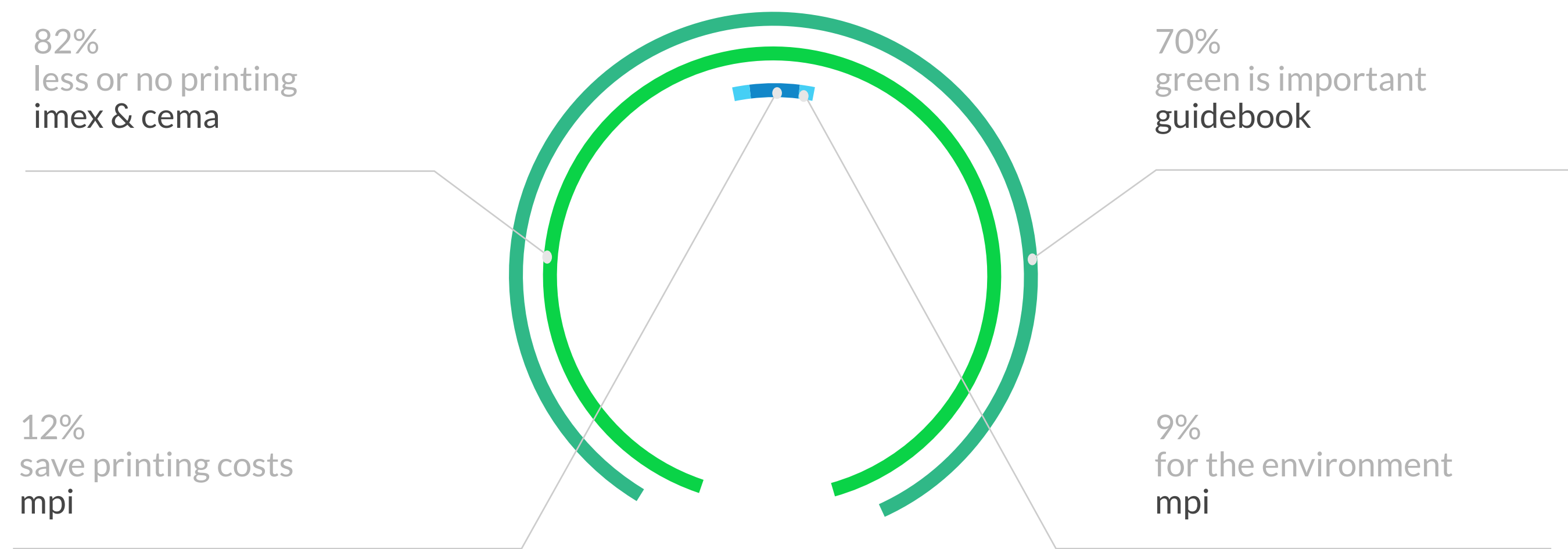
REDUCTION/ELIMINATION PAPER



other benefits:

- changes to the schedule
- attendee to attendee networking
- attendee convenience
- insight into attendee behavior

Figure 6 - How important is going green?



Digging a little deeper into the second benefit – reduction/elimination of paper – we find that there are two main motivators here: reducing printing costs, and reducing the event’s carbon footprint. The Guidebook survey reveals that 70% of respondents believe that going green is important, and of those, 95% point to cutting back on printing and shipping as the best way to achieve going green.

The other surveys approached this topic differently. 82% of IMEX and CEMA respondents ranked reduction/elimination of paper as either Somewhat or Very Important. Again, the MPI survey only allowed respondents to choose one response. 12% (3rd overall) chose ‘To save the cost of paper printing’, while another 9% (8th overall) chose ‘To decrease environmental impact by decreasing paper usage’. Combining these two would result in a score of 21%, making it the single biggest reason for having an app among MPI respondents.

—
EVEN THE MOST EXPERIENCED PLANNERS
ARE STILL DISCOVERING THE FULL SCOPE
OF WHAT A MOBILE EVENT APP CAN DO.

YOUR CHOSEN VENDOR SHOULD BE ABLE
TO HELP YOU MAKE THE MOST OF YOUR APP
STARTING WITH A CLEAR UNDERSTANDING
OF YOUR EVENT AND BUSINESS GOALS.



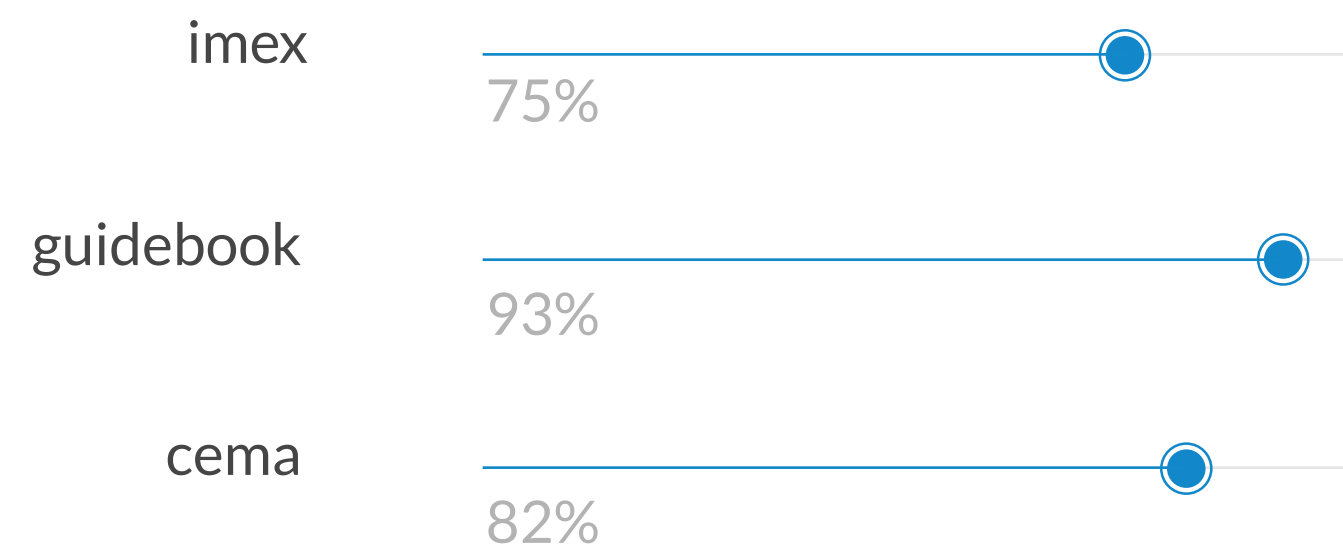
WHERE TO FIND THE BEST ADVICE ON MOBILE APPS

Most stay close to home

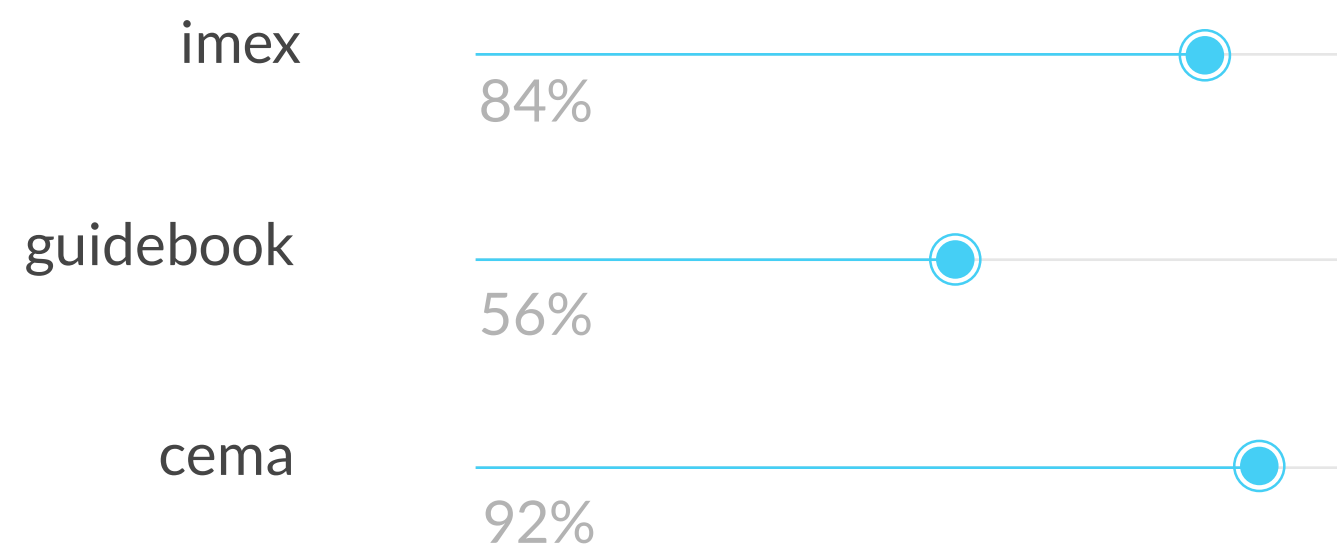
If you’re wondering where to go to learn what a mobile event app can do for you, using an app at another event and talking to peers and colleagues is how your counterparts are doing it (although less so for the latter in the association/nonprofit segment). Turns out that nothing beats hands-on experience and the advice of trusted friends.

Figure 7 - Sources of information about event apps

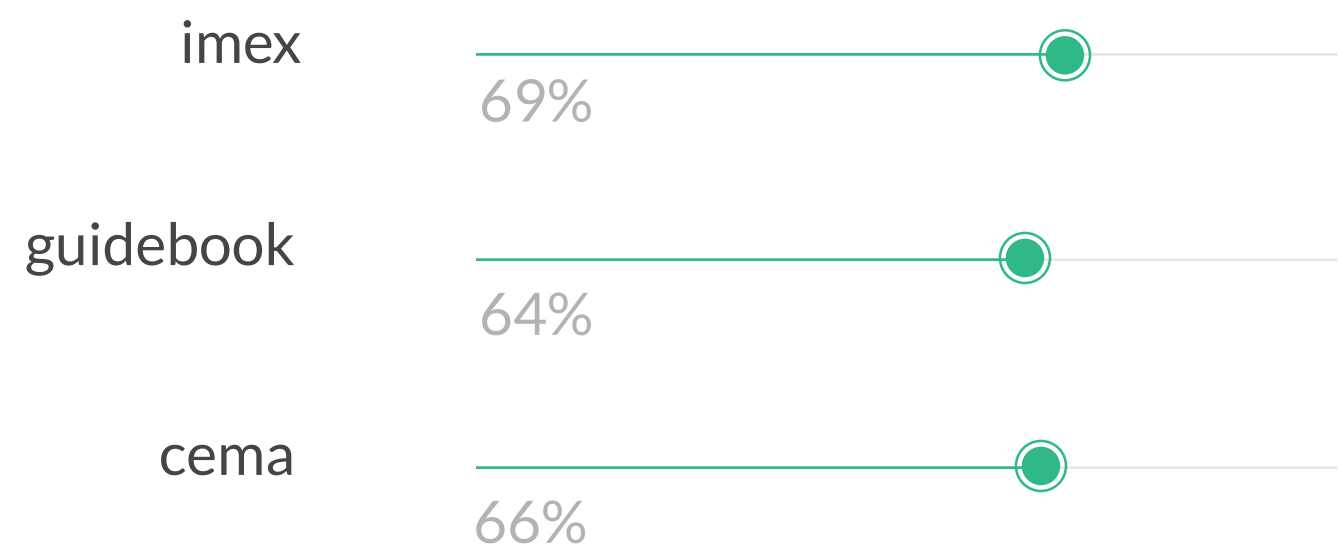
OTHER EVENTS



PEERS AND COLLEAGUES



TRADE PUBLICATIONS & BLOGS

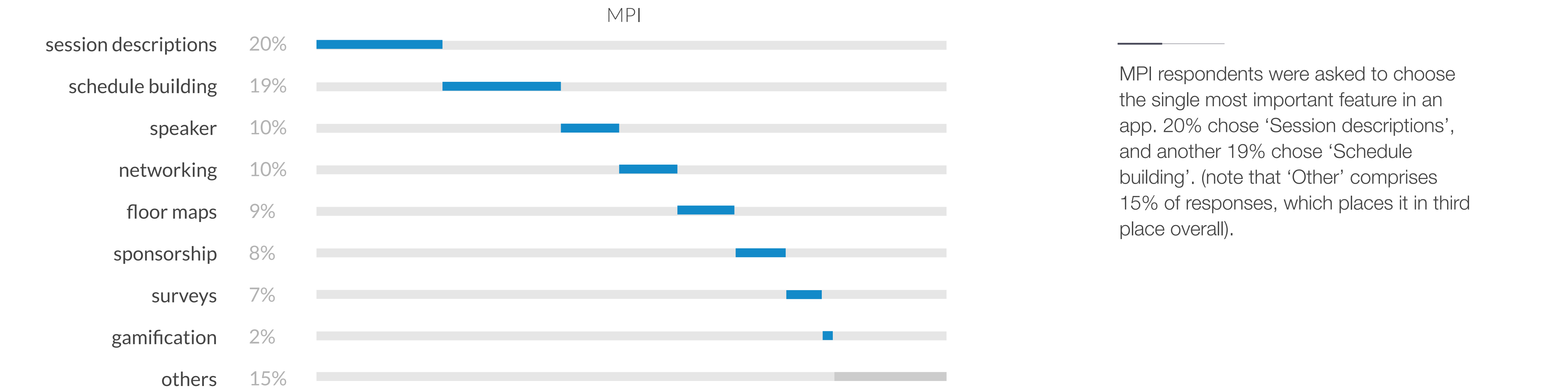


WHAT ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT APP FUNCTIONS?

That depends on who asked the question, and how

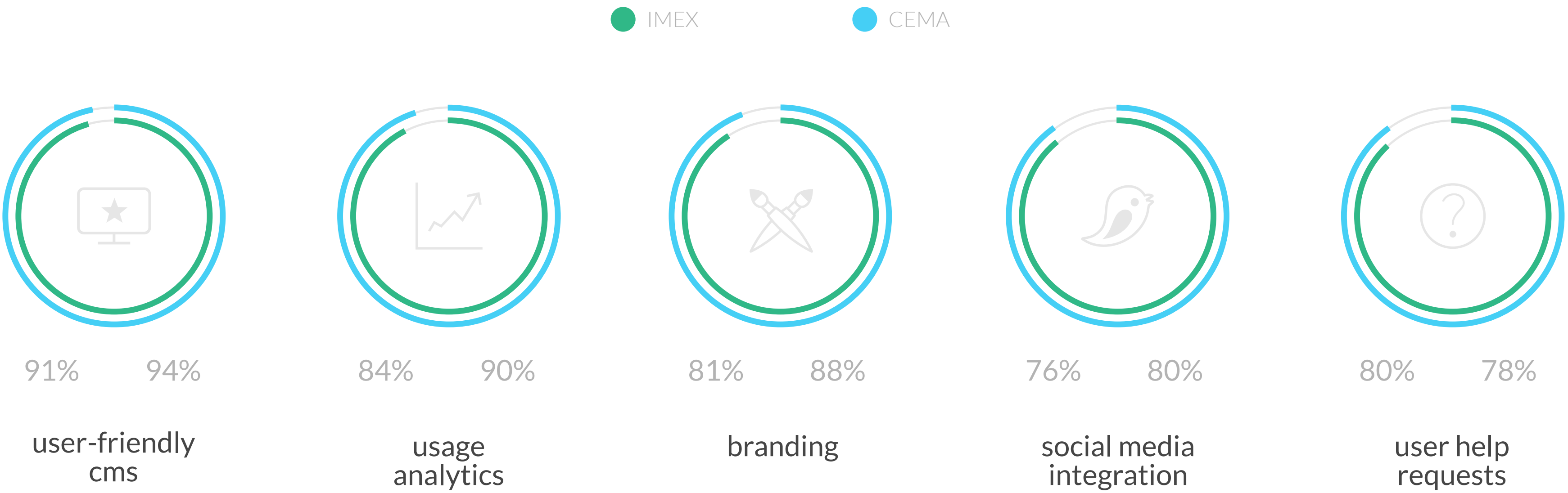
We would expect that an app’s desired functionality would align with the reasons for having an app in the first place. As we learned above, the top two perceived benefits of an app are organizer-to-attendee communication and reduction/elimination of paper. It’s no surprise then that an app’s most important features are communication based, but not in the way you might think.

Figure 8 - What are the most important features of your mobile apps?



The IMEX and CEMA studies probed this question a little differently, asking more about buckets of functionality than specific features. In this context, the most desirable capabilities are:

Figure 9 - What are the most important features of your mobile apps?

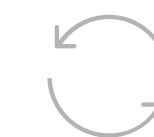



ABOVE ALL ELSE AND BY A HEALTHY MARGIN, IMEX AND CEMA RESPONDENTS WANT THEIR MOBILE APP TO BE EASY TO MANAGE ON THE BACK END (THE CMS).

WHATEVER THE MOTIVATION – LACK OF TIME, LACK OF EXPERTISE, OR SOMETHING ELSE – IT'S NOT SURPRISING TO LEARN THAT FOR TECHNOLOGY TO HAVE A POSITIVE IMPACT, IT HAS TO BE EASY TO USE.



Other options in the IMEX and CEMA surveys include:

-  **Ability to register for the event through the app**
73% and 64% respectively
-  **Year-round engagement**
61% and 54% respectively
-  **Social enterprise integration (e.g. Jive, Chatter, Yammer)**
44% and 58% respectively

Comparing results from the MPI survey with those from IMEX and CEMA is not possible, since each study approached the topic of functionality from a different perspective. MPI’s answer options focused on features from the app user’s perspective, whereas the IMEX and CEMA answer options focused on the event planner.

HOW MUCH SHOULD A MOBILE EVENT APP COST?

Corporate budgets are bigger, but most planners aren't budgeting for an app

Let's look at the data on budgeting first. Across the board, respondents from all surveys acknowledge that budgeting for an app is a challenge. 84% of Guidebook respondents said that budgeting for a 'new event technology tool' is Somewhat or Very Difficult; 35% of MPI respondents said that they don't currently have an app for any events because they are 'Too Expensive' or they 'Cannot get budget approval'; and 70% of combined IMEX and CEMA respondents 'Rarely' or 'Never' include an app in their event budgets. There was a significant difference between these two groups, with 42% of IMEX respondents never budgeting for an app vs. 18% of CEMA respondents.

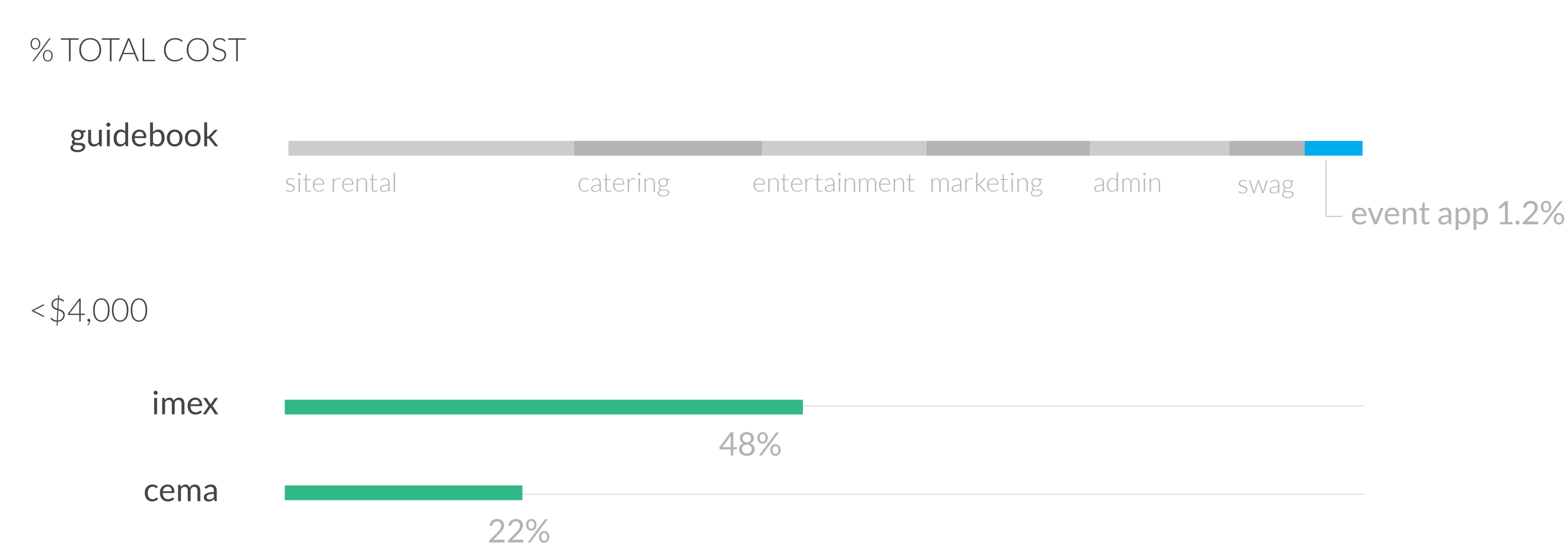
The likely outcome here is that without a budget, event planners are either unable to get an app for their event even if they want one, or they end up making a purchase decision based more on price (limited funds) than desired capabilities and service levels. This is likely a major source of stress for event planners.

WITHOUT A BUDGET, PLANNERS ARE LIKELY SACRIFICING PERFORMANCE AND SERVICE FOR A LOWER PRICED APP.

THE CONCLUSION HERE IS THAT IF YOU INTEND TO GET AN APP FOR YOUR EVENT, THEN YOU SHOULD BUDGET FOR ONE JUST AS YOU DO FOR VENUE RENTAL, FOOD, ENTERTAINMENT, AND EVERY OTHER ASPECT OF YOUR EVENT.

In terms of what planners are spending on their apps, we have two very different perspectives. Guidebook asked respondents to state app costs as a percentage of total event costs. They spent an average of 1.2% of their budget per attendee on event apps, less than half of what they would spend on print. IMEX and CEMA asked for a specific price range. 48% of IMEX respondents spend less than \$4,000 on an app, compared to 22% of CEMA respondents.

Figure 10 - Cost of an event app



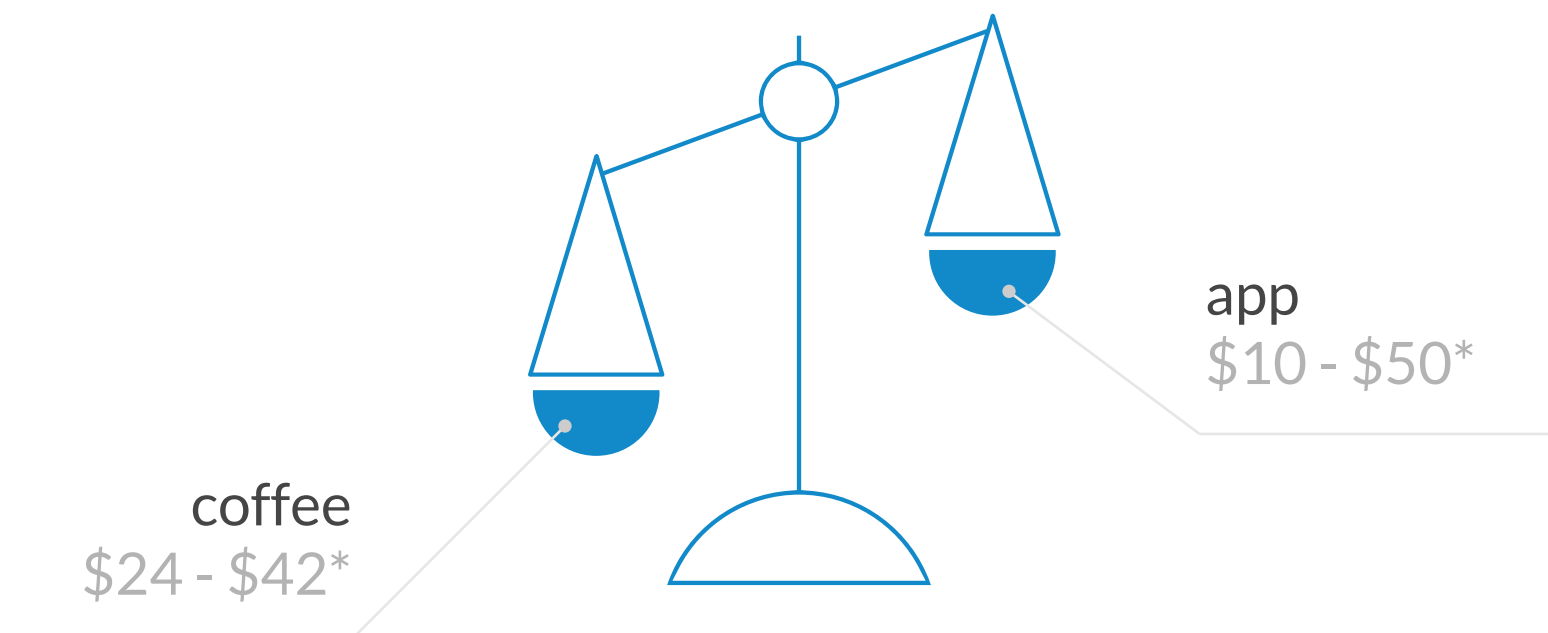
According to Guidebook’s web site, the price for a stand-alone branded event app is \$6,000, which at 1.2% of budget translates into an overall event budget of \$500,000. We leave it to you to determine what type and size of an event you can manage with this budget, and whether you would consider using a mobile event app for it.

MPI did not ask about actual app costs.

IMPORTANT PERSPECTIVE ON ROI

Per person, a mobile app costs less than half of what a planner spends on coffee

Everyone knows that return on investment is critical for any budget line item, but setting the ROI threshold can be an art as much as it can be science. For example, imagine a 3-day conference with 400 attendees, and two coffee breaks per day. You can spend anywhere from \$24 to \$42 per person just on coffee, not including tax and gratuity. In contrast, a mobile event app can cost as little as \$10 per person. While you might not be able to imagine an event without a coffee break, in terms of ROI, the results are fairly obvious. Cutting back on coffee costs and diverting that money into an app will yield a much greater return on investment for your event.



*Per person. Based on a 3 day event, 400 attendees, 2 coffee breaks a day. Does not include tax and gratuity.

THE LAST WORD ON MOBILE APP USAGE

When we sat down to digest all the survey results from this past summer, we made a substantial effort to try to get a sense of just how big the mobile opportunity is for meetings and events, and what percent of meetings are really using mobile event apps today.

The most comprehensive source of market sizing information is a report from [PricewaterhouseCoopers \(PwC\)](#) from January 2014 that put some hard numbers to the meetings and events industry based on data from 2012ⁱ. By their account, there were more than 1.8 million meetings in the United States alone in 2012.

In July of 2013, Frost & Sullivan published “A Survey of Meeting and Event Planning Professionals and Hotel Operators” which sizes the global market at 5 million meetings annually.

The PwC definition of a meeting is “10 people or more, gathered for at least 4 hours, in an off-site contracted venue”. This is important because this definition excludes all the meetings happening in non-contracted venues such as the office auditorium or similar on-site locations. So the real number is even larger.

The early adopters of mobile apps – conferences, trade shows and conventions – comprise only 15% of the US total, or roughly 280,000 events. If we assume a 63% adoption rate that was implied in the IMEX, CEMA and MPI surveys, that’s 175,000 meetings with mobile apps. Assuming an average price of \$4,000, that’s a total US-only market value of more than \$700 million. Adding in the rest of the world suggests that more than \$1.9 billion dollars has changed hands buying and selling mobile event apps. We are nowhere near that.

At QuickMobile, we believe usage rates are somewhere between 10-20% for meetings with more than 50 people in attendance. But the wave is coming fast and the next 2-3 years should see tremendous growth as planners embrace and get comfortable with mobile technology at meetings and events, and mobile-first strategies prevail within organizations of all sizes. The maturation of event app technology will enable rapid, enterprise-wide adoption via a single platform and will certainly speed things along.

Want to know more? Don’t miss our 2015 Mobile Event Technology Predictions.

ⁱThe Economic Significance of Meetings to the US Economy, Interim Study Update for 2012. Commissioned by the Convention Industry Council. January 2014.

THE MISSING LINK

During the time it took to sort through the 2014 summer of surveys, we realized there were two important questions that nobody asked:

1) How many meetings and events do you or your client typically have per year?

Defined as any gathering of at least 25 people for at least half a day, either on site or off site. This includes all national, regional and local meetings and events of any type, internal and external. We're talking all meetings and events here, including those not managed by you and/or your team.

2) How many of your events regularly include a mobile app?

We'd like to ask you that now.

let us know

CONTACT US TODAY TO GO MOBILE WITH YOUR MEETINGS AND EVENTS

Opportunity awaits!

[request a demo](#)

“As with any technology solution, functionality is only part of the equation; what really made the difference with our event app were the services and support we got from QuickMobile before, during and after our event. Their expertise in user experience and content management was invaluable, and their support team exceeded every expectation on responsiveness and problem solving. It’s what you would expect – but don’t often get – from a technology partner, and we’re excited about what we’ll accomplish at future events.”

LAURA BAUMGARDNER,
SENIOR PRODUCT MARKETER - THOMSON REUTERS ELITE



www.quickmobile.com

SOURCE

2014 Global Event Planning and Mobile Event Technology Report

State of Mobile Event Technology Annual Report 2014

Official MPI Research: The State of Event Apps