The background features a complex abstract design. On the left, there's a grid of colored squares (orange, grey, teal, red, blue) with a large teal circle and a white ring. A large teal diamond shape is positioned in the upper center. On the right, a vertical blue gradient bar contains the year '2021' in white outline font. The bottom right corner has a white arrow pointing down and to the right.

The 2021 Virtual Events Benchmark Report

Demographics & Methodology

We analyzed proprietary data from virtual events powered by the Bizzabo platform. The explosion of virtual events tells us these industry stats will be invaluable to organizers as they plan virtual events in 2021.

Data

1850 Virtual Events

Dates

July 1, 2020 - October 31, 2020

Virtual Event Pricing & Accessibility

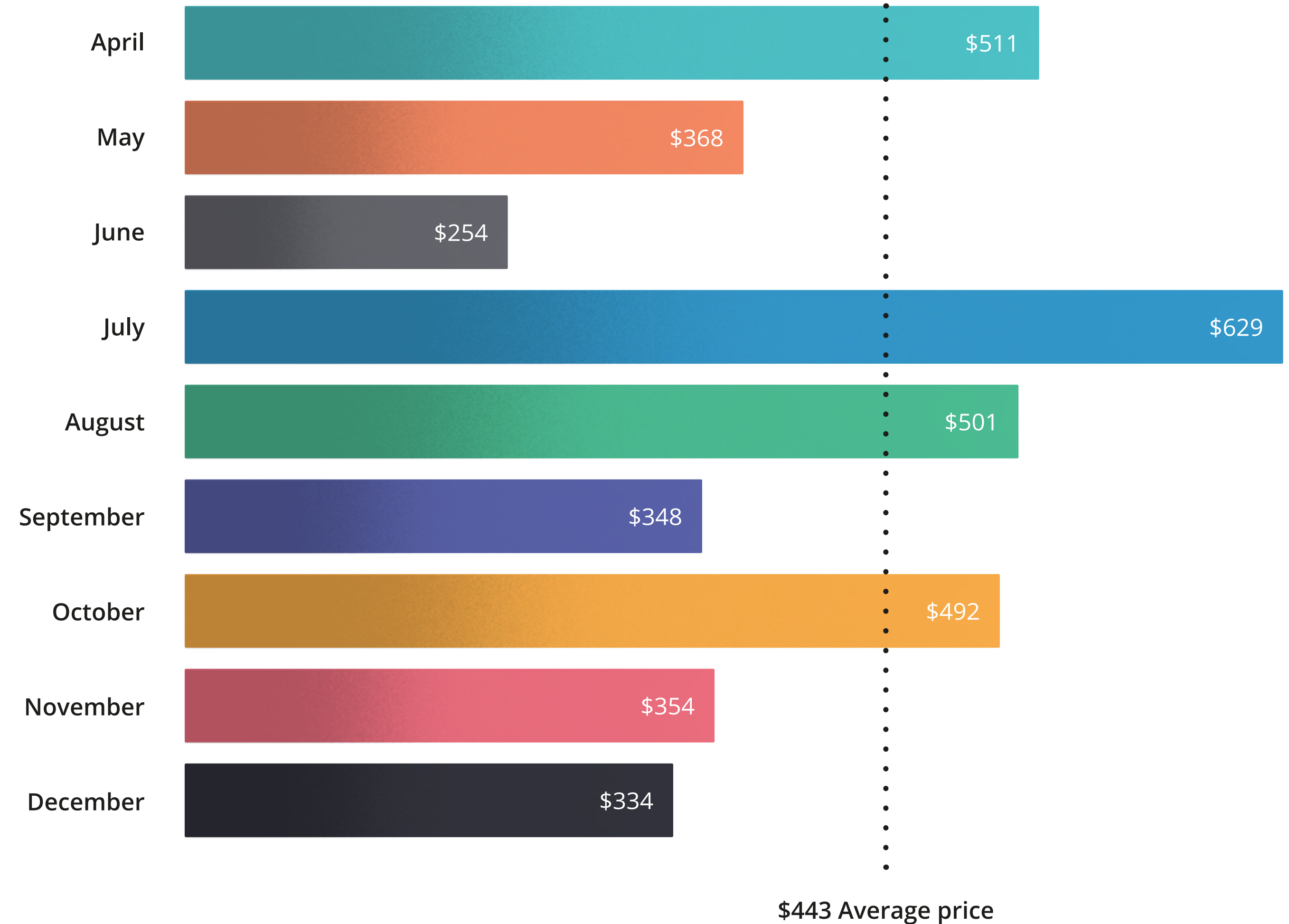
Benchmark #1

The average price for a paid virtual event in Q3 & Q4 2020 was \$443

While the averages are not far apart, each month has shown a significant fluctuation. For instance, in June the average price was \$254 and in July the average price was \$629.

The changing trend of virtual event ticket pricing over the past year suggests that event marketers are continuing to test the balance between larger audience reach and event revenue. We will continue to follow the average virtual event ticket price month over month to see how it evolves.

Virtual Event ticket pricing between April and December 2020



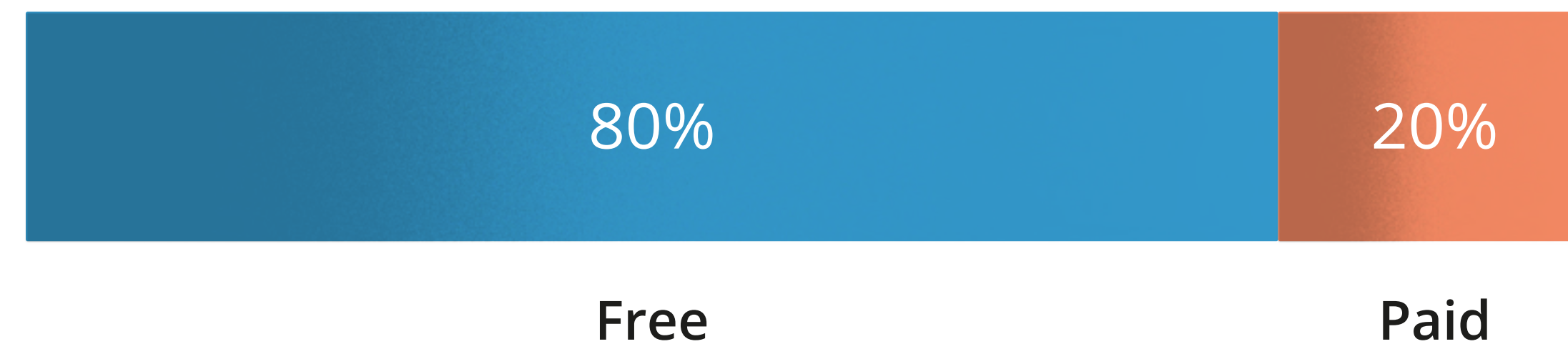
Benchmark #2

80% of virtual event registrations are free

Greater Audience reach is the number one benefit that event organizers have seen as a result of shifting to virtual events according to our recent Evolution of Events report. One reason might be a lower cost barrier of entry. In 2020, an average 80% of virtual event registrations were free, and remarkably, that percentage has stayed consistent throughout the year.

In immediate reaction to COVID-19, many event organizers opted for free virtual experiences. And while many events have been free this year, that doesn't necessarily mean that paid virtual events are getting any cheaper. In fact, paid virtual registrations create ample opportunities for event planners to create innovative pricing models for their virtual experiences.

The majority of virtual event registrations are free.



“We kept PRIDE free because we wanted to make it truly accessible in every single way.... Keeping it free was a huge part of accessibility, but also anyone can join online, people from other countries got to be a part of it and feel part of the magic”

Leanne Pittsford

Founder at Lesbians Who Tech



Virtual Event Engagement

Benchmark #3

50% of registrants convert to virtual event attendees

We're seeing a high average conversion rate (50%) from people who registered to those who actually attended virtual events in 2020.

Overall, this is still a surprisingly positive show-up rate given that 80% of registrations are free.

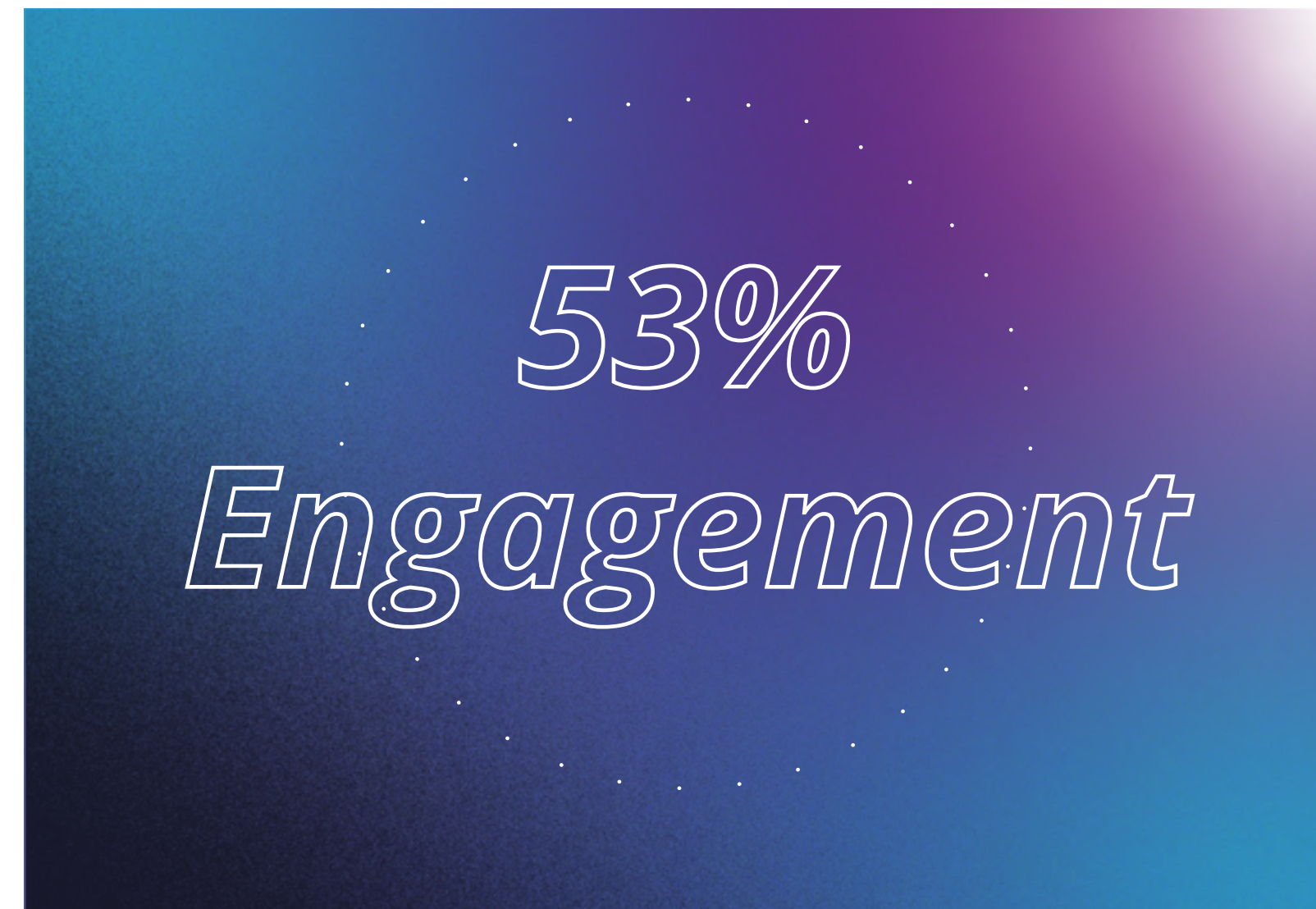


Benchmark #4

Attendees are engaged for 53% of virtual sessions

This stat is a promising number that suggests remote audiences are eager to engage in virtual experiences. According to our Evolution of Events report, engagement and networking are still the top challenges that organizers face in the virtual world.

From our data, we also found that attendees watched 61% of 60-minute sessions. When you account for virtual fatigue, work-from-home distractions, and general attendance drop-off, it's great to see people engaging with this much of the content.



Benchmark #5

80% of Organizers enable on-demand for virtual sessions


An overwhelming majority of event planners (80%) who hosted virtual events also enabled on-demand access for at least one of their sessions. On-demand sessions have proven to be a key value-add for virtual experiences by enabling organizers to further amplify their event sessions, after the event itself has included. It allows attendees in different locations and time zones to engage with your content on their own time.



“Content is king...focus on content that is relevant to your audience...You need to have content that captivates the attention of whoever is watching. Then on top of that, you need to create something that is engaging and creates dialogue. It has to be more than passive watching.”

Leon Winkler

Director, International Events at Ubisoft



Virtual Event Types

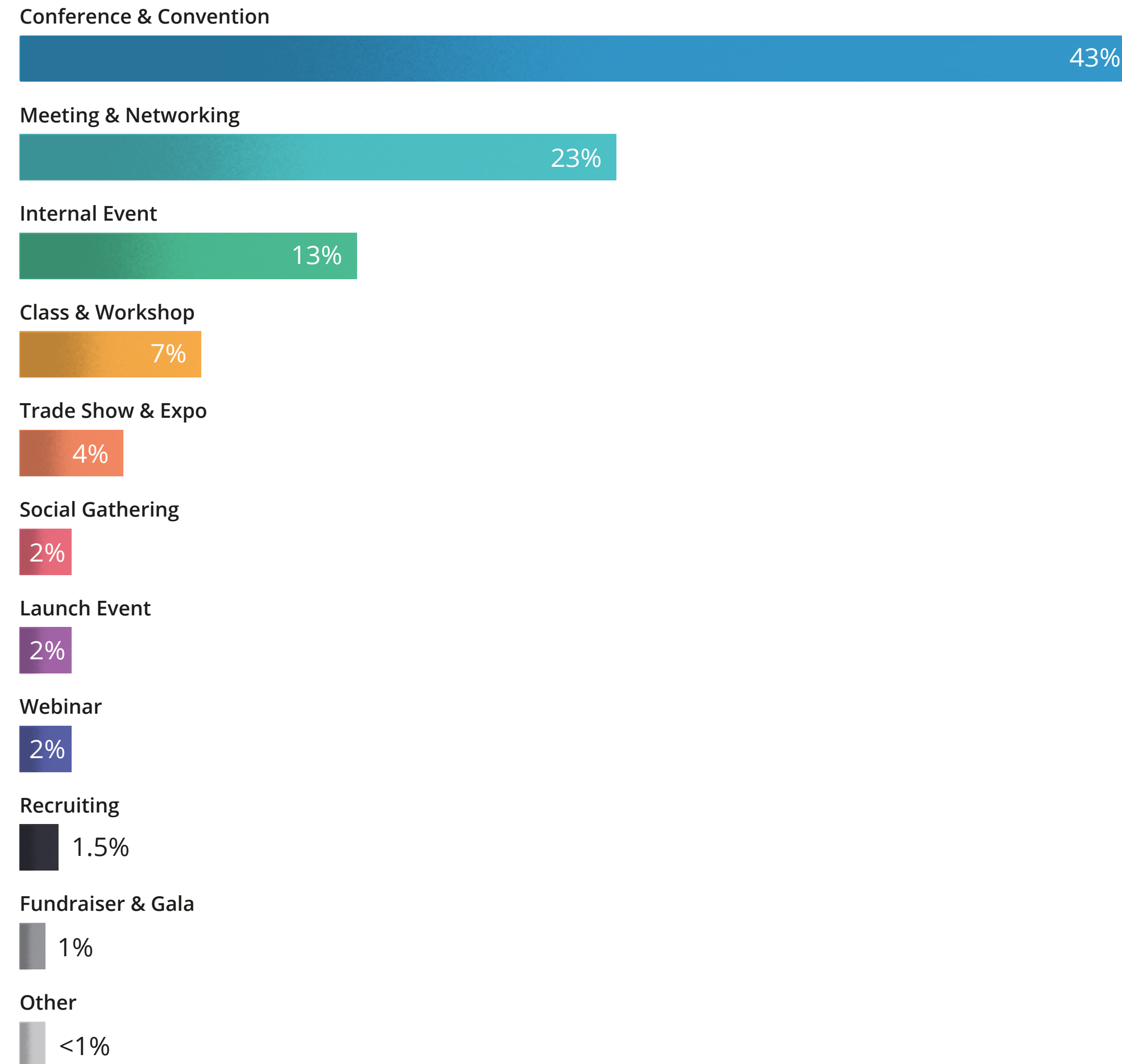
Benchmark #6

Conferences are the most popular Virtual Event Type

Given that virtual conferences account for 43% of all digital events reviewed in this study, it appears that large-scale events still are the go-to for many organizations moving to virtual.

The second most popular event type is Meeting & Networking, making up 23% of virtual events. According to the Evolution of Events report, networking is one of the key challenges facing attendees. Specifically producing events to cater to this gap appears to be one of the ways that organizers are adapting. Internal events are also being held online, accounting for 13% of virtual event types.

Most popular event types



Benchmark #7

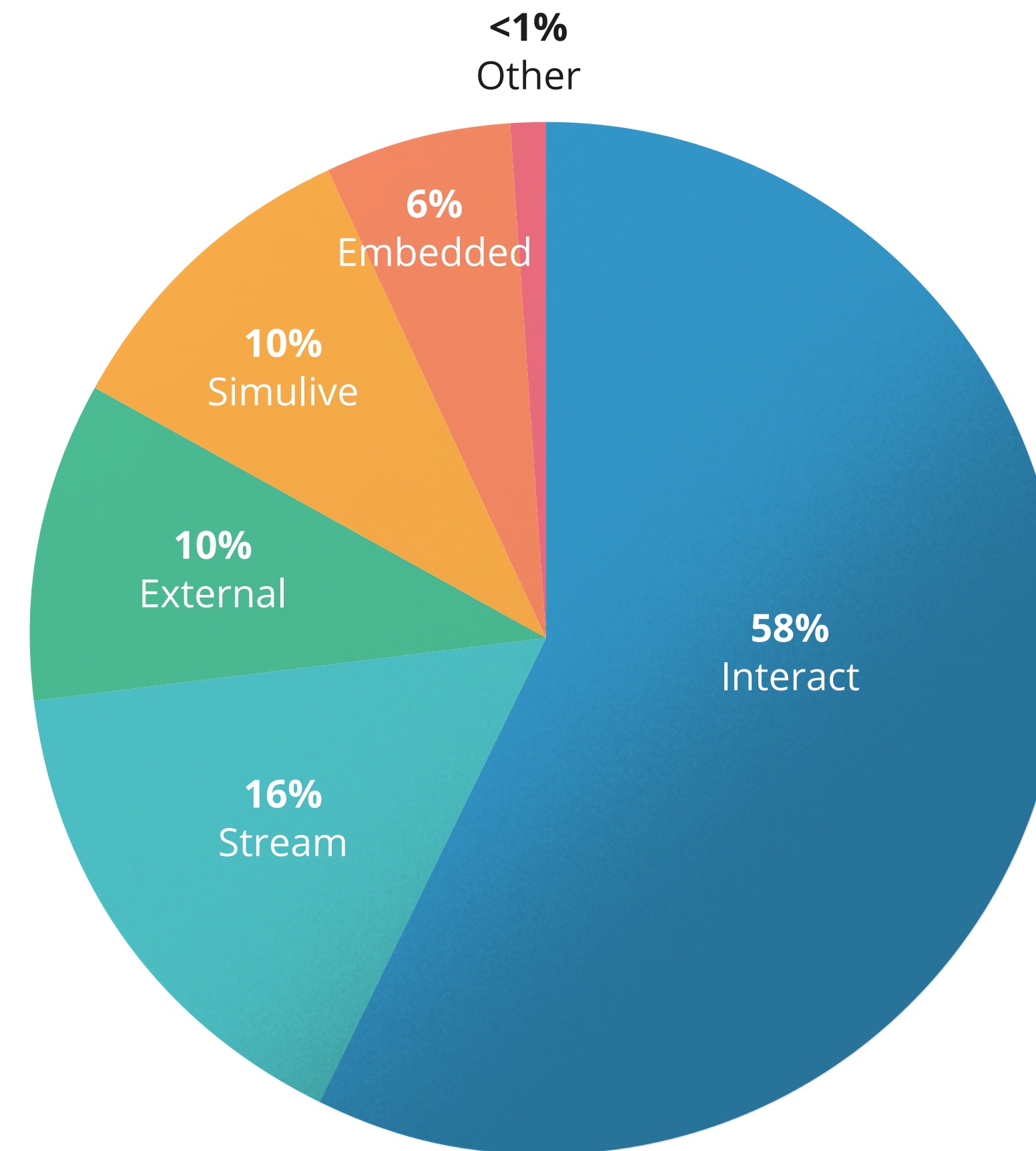
58% of virtual sessions are smaller and more interactive

In 2020, over half (58%) of virtual sessions relied heavily on an interactive environment allowing attendees to go “on stage” and participate. These sessions tend to be smaller and more intimate, capping at 300 live attendees.

Larger sessions that broadcast in a keynote format to thousands of virtual attendees make up a smaller percentage (16%) of event sessions. These broadcast-level virtual sessions limit interaction between the stage and attendees to text-based activities like a live Q&A or polling.

A small percentage (6%) of event marketers are taking advantage of the variety of video players available by embedding external video players—like YouTube and Vimeo—into the session home of their virtual event. This allows for more flexibility when determining which video player to use when streaming live or on-demand sessions.

Most sessions are smaller and more interactive



“Virtual events give us the ability to interact with our prospects and even our customers, allowing them to ask questions during these sessions. You may ask, ‘okay, you prerecorded your sessions, well, how did you make that interaction happen?’ We actually did a simulive where we had the prerecorded session and then brought the speaker in for a live Q&A. We got feedback from our attendees that they really liked being heard and having their questions be answered in real time.”

Brittany Vogel

VP of Marketing, Global Events at DataRobot



Virtual Event Length

Benchmark #8

57% of virtual events are a single-day event

Over half of all virtual events are single-day events. Considering that the average virtual event features 20 sessions, it appears many organizers are investing in multiple and/or concurrent sessions. In addition, we're seeing two-day virtual events comprising the second largest percentage (14%) of virtual events followed by three-day events (9%).

Event marketers prefer single-day events

Single-day event



Two-day event



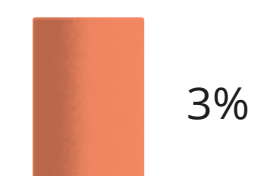
Three-day event



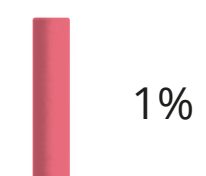
Five-day to Nine-day event



Four-day event



Ten+ day event



Benchmark #9

The average number of sessions per virtual event is 20

This stat suggest that many event organizers are planning more shorter sessions, rather than a few long ones. Virtual events provide a unique opportunity to diversify the type of sessions and event types—including live-streamed keynotes, virtual networking lounges, and pre-recorded entertainment segments. This allows event organizers to explore a variety of sessions during one virtual event.



20
Sessions

“Those shorter, bite-size approaches to the content really allowed people to shut off Slack, shut off their phone, shut off their email, and really focus for 10, 15, 20 minutes on the topic. What we heard from people was, ‘Hey, it was a lot more digestible. I can tune in to the sessions that I wanted to see. I got hard hitting content from a short defined amount of time.’”

Scott Brown

VP of Marketing at Sapphire Ventures



Virtual Event Sponsorship

Benchmark #10

The average event has 14 sponsors

Securing sponsors has always been a challenge for event planners, and it's no different in the virtual world. According to our Evolution of Events report, marketers report an average Confidence of 6.5 in driving value for sponsors. But throughout 2020, event organizers have secured an average of 14 sponsors for their virtual events. This is an optimistic statistic that shows virtual event sponsorship is alive and well.



"I think it's important to realize the context around these events. Sponsors want to partner with us on an activation that is close to their hearts. Whether they want to do something that is philanthropic or something that's for thought leadership or purposeful, you really have to hone in on what they want to get out of the experience rather than just putting their logo on a step and repeat."

Adele Durham

VP of Events at Haymarket Media

