

# The Virtual Events Benchmark Report

Q2 2021

Insights from 900+  
Virtual Events

# Preface

Last year, virtual events were [a key channel](#) for businesses aiming to engage with their audiences. In 2021, virtual continues to play a [pivotal role](#) as the events industry moves toward a hybrid model — where in-person and virtual experiences are meaningfully combined.

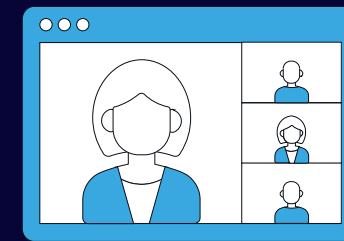
Following up on our Virtual Events Benchmark Report from Q1 2021, this report illustrates how virtual has changed with the goal of helping you make informed decisions for your event strategy.

# Demographics & Methodology



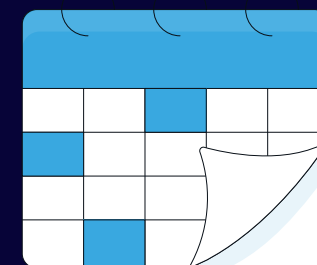
Source

**Proprietary data from  
virtual events powered  
by the Bizzabo platform**



Number of Virtual Events

**988**



Date Range of Analysis

**Jan 1, 2021 - April 1, 2021**

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# Virtual Event Pricing & Accessibility

Amid the seismic shift in the events industry to virtual, event organizers re-evaluated their key objectives and operating business models.

We saw this manifest through adapted pricing models in service of increased monetization, and an effort to meet their return on events.

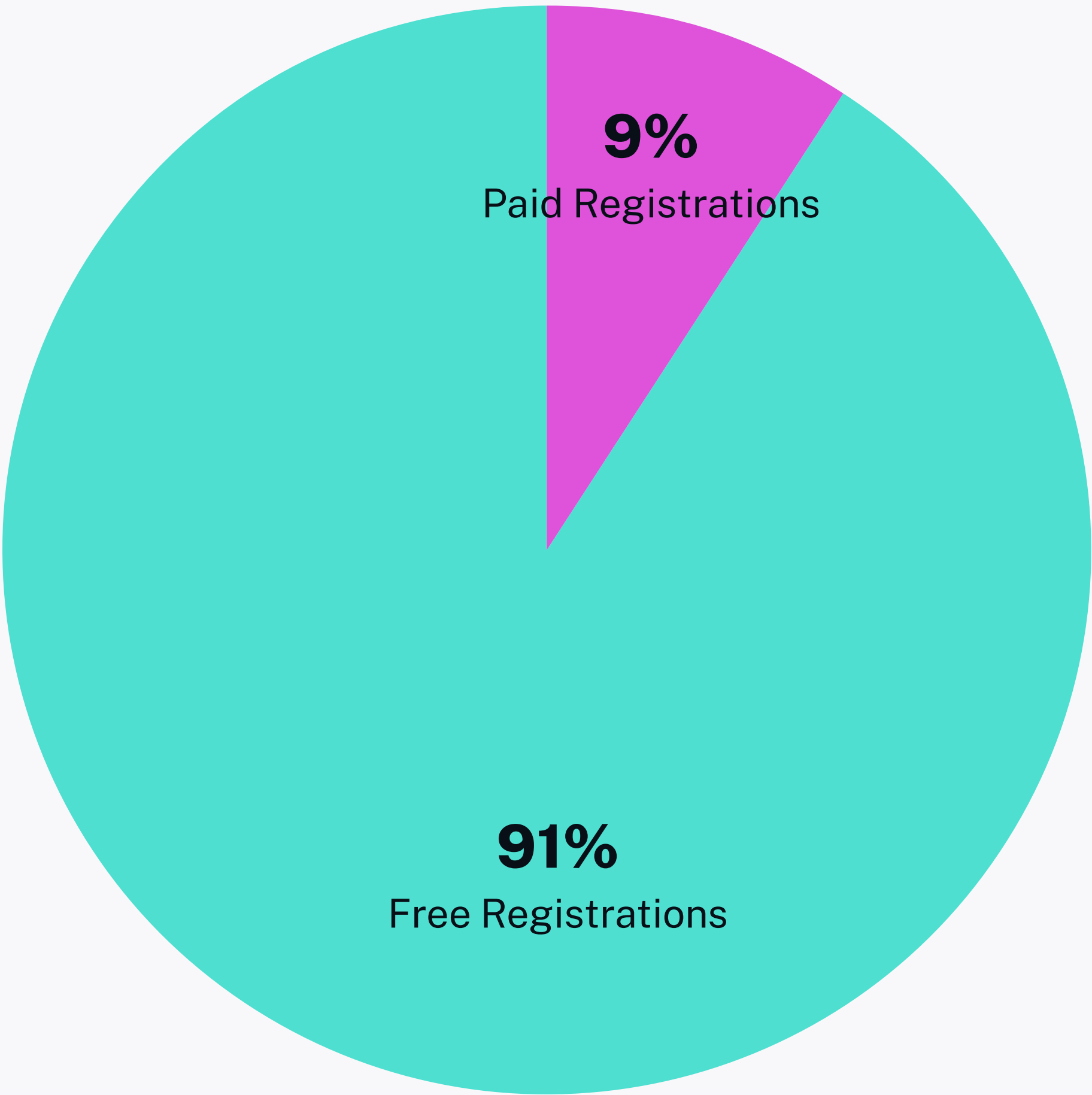
■ Benchmark #1

**Free virtual events jumped from 80% in 2020 to 91% in Q1 of 2021**

From our research, we identified a few hypotheses to explain this behavior:

- Attendees are starting to feel the effects of ‘Zoom fatigue,’ leading organizers to create more free tickets in hopes of driving registrations.
- Organizers are getting more sponsor dollars than before because of virtual events’ unique value proposition.
- Event organizers are measuring success on more than just dollars generated, but rather through account engagement, lead generation, or retention and expansion

**Paid Vs. Free Events**



■ Benchmark #2

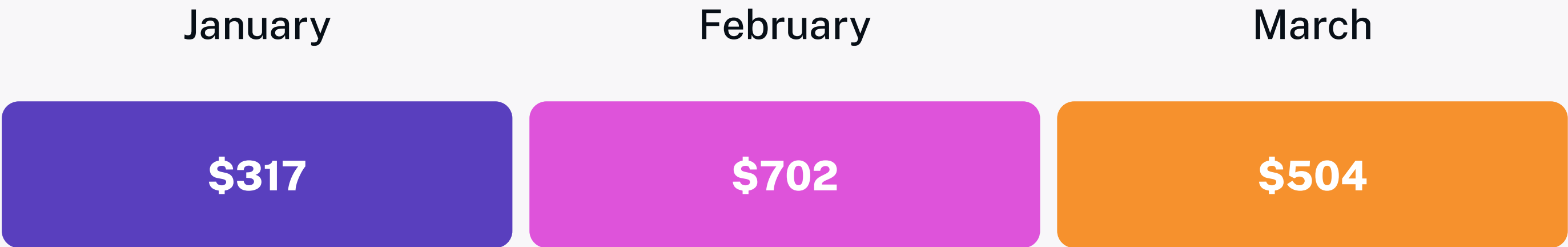
For paid events, the average ticket price jumped 15 percent.\*

The average price for a paid virtual event in Q1 2021 was \$508. This is almost a 15% increase from the price of virtual tickets in 2020, which averaged \$443.

While it’s difficult to speculate the reason for the price increase, it is clear that some organizers have embraced a more aggressive pricing model when it comes to virtual event programs.

*\*The average virtual event ticket price was \$508 in Q1 2021 and \$443 in 2020.*

Average Paid Ticket



# Virtual Event Types & Session Length

Event organizers have continued to test how they can leverage session length and type to deliver content in the most effective way.

We saw this illustrated in a shift in the number of virtual sessions and their length in favor of shorter and fewer sessions.



■ Benchmark #3

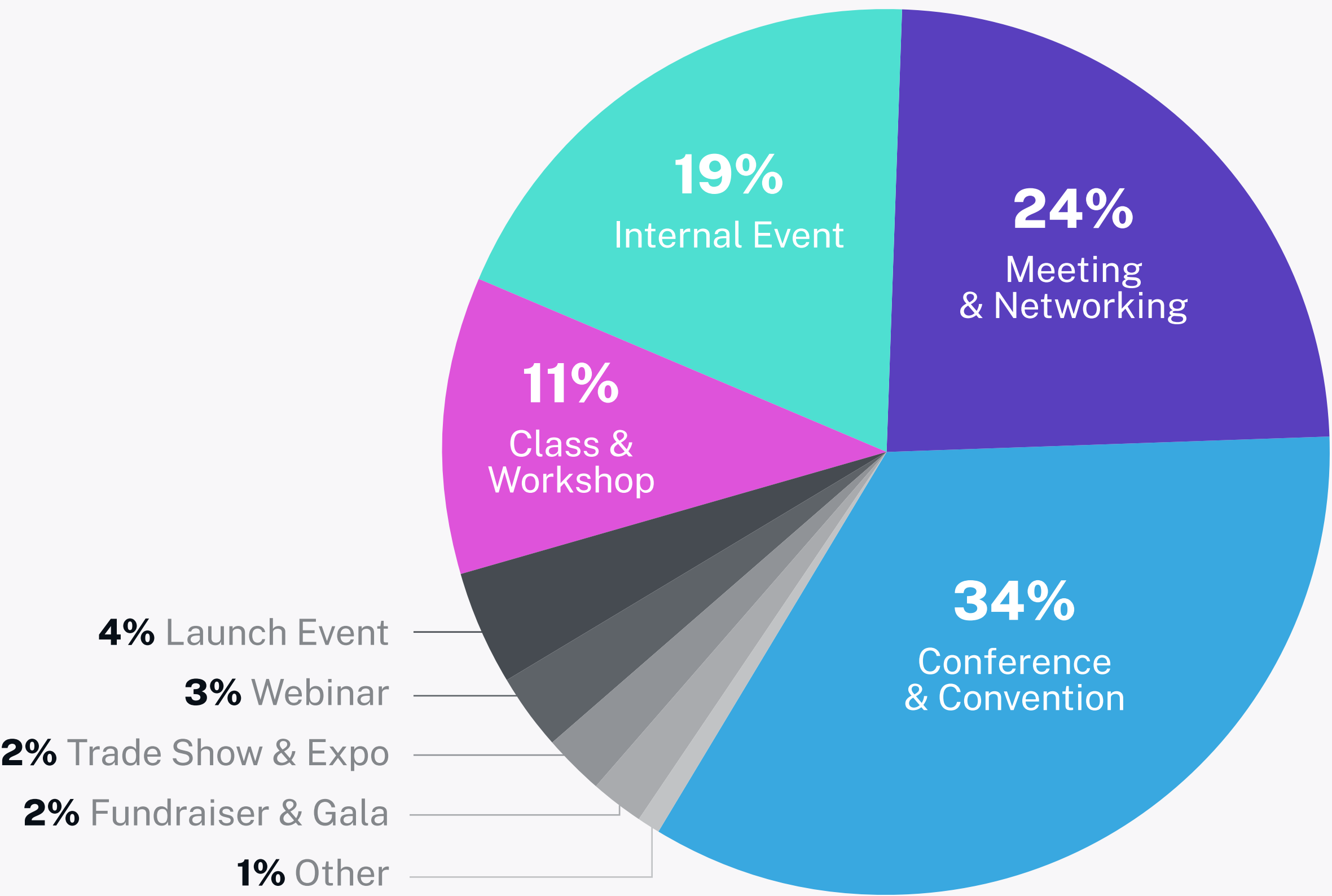
# Conferences remain the most popular Virtual Event Type

The most popular virtual event types has shifted slightly from last year. In Q1 2021, conferences accounted for 34% of all online events, down from 43% in 2020.

The second most popular event type, meeting and networking events, changed slightly from 23% in 2020 to 24% this quarter. Internal events increased from 13% to 19% and classes and workshops took the fourth spot at 11%.

Organizers who plan workshops and conferences in service of learning and development will be successfully aligned with attendee goals. In our recent [Virtual Attendee Experience Report](#), we learned that attendees cite learning and development as their top goal for online events, while networking takes a backseat.

Most popular virtual event types - Q1 2021



■ Benchmark #4

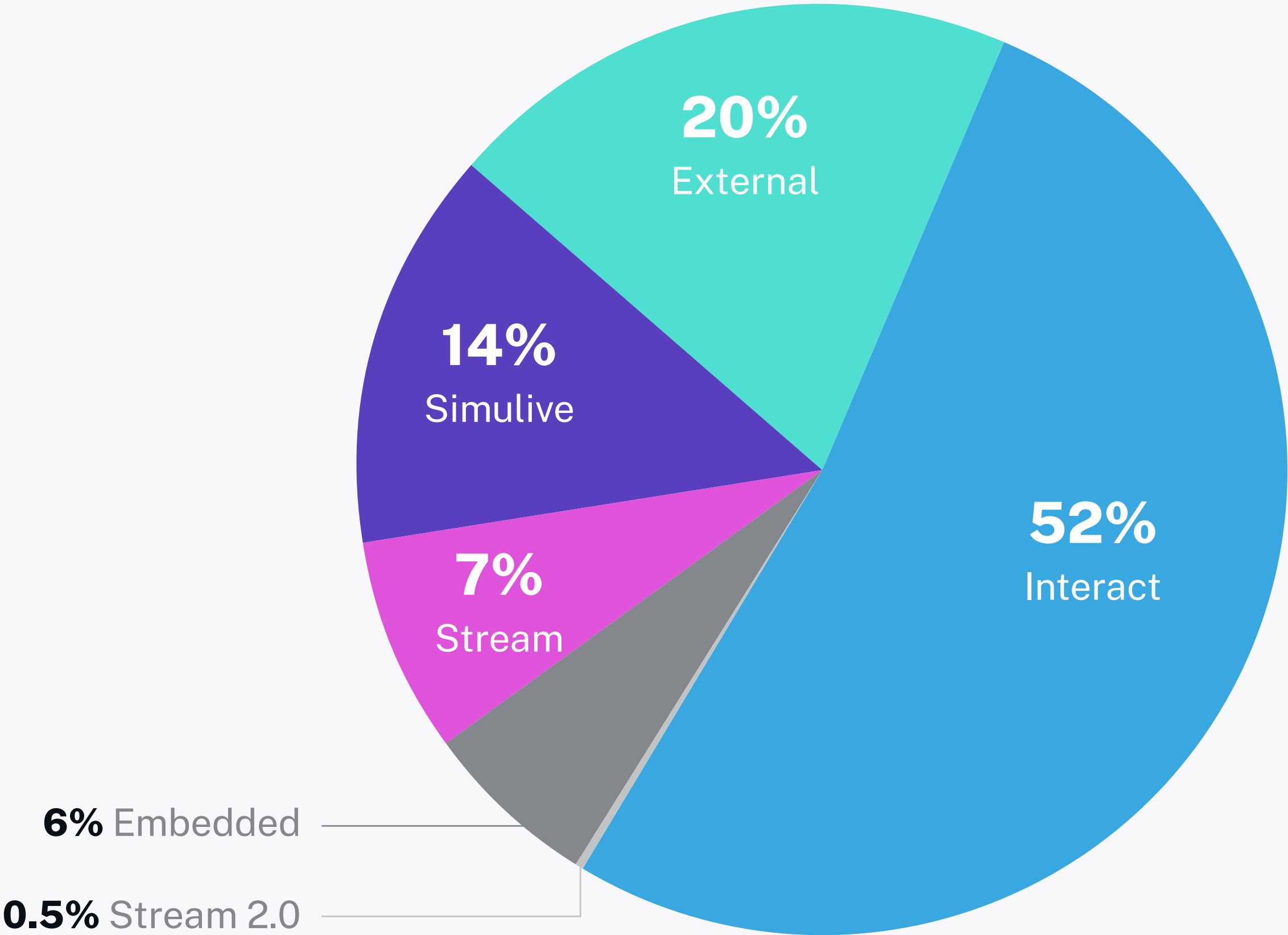
**52% of virtual sessions focus primarily on interaction**

The most popular session type in the first quarter of 2021 was Interact (52%). These interactive sessions are a virtual offering that allows attendees to have more intimate conversations and interact with each other by going “on-stage” and using breakout rooms. In 2020, this number was at 58%. The decrease could be attributed to attendees placing less focus on networking and more emphasis on learning and growing their skills -as we learned from our [Virtual Attendee Experience Report](#).

The second most popular is external (20%), where organizers can use external video solutions like Vimeo or Youtube and link directly to them.

The third most popular is simulative (14%), which allows organizers to pre-record content and then stream it in real-time to create a live experience and minimize room for error.

**% Sessions per provider type - Q1 2021**



“It’s important to target your event for the right buyers and then do that event at the right cadence. We do a lot of conference sponsorships and we think of those as top of funnel net new leads. As you go down the funnel do panels, workshops, something that gives your mid-funnel targets that extra step of value.”

**Erin Flannery**

**Head of Events, Lattice**

## ■ Benchmark #5

### On average, virtual events have 15 sessions

In 2020, the average virtual event had 20 sessions. In the first quarter of 2021, virtual events had an average of 15 sessions. This is a 25% decrease in the number of sessions organizers are programming into their virtual events.



**15 Sessions**

## ■ Benchmark #6

### The average virtual session is 54 minutes

There's been a lot of talk around shorter, more digestible sessions when it comes to virtual events. However, what does that really mean? The most recent round of data shows that it may be all relative.

On average in Q1 2021, virtual session lasts almost an hour. We'll explore more regarding this surprising trend in page 13. Additionally, for sessions between 31 and 60 minutes, attendees view an average of 68% of the entire session.



**54 Minutes**

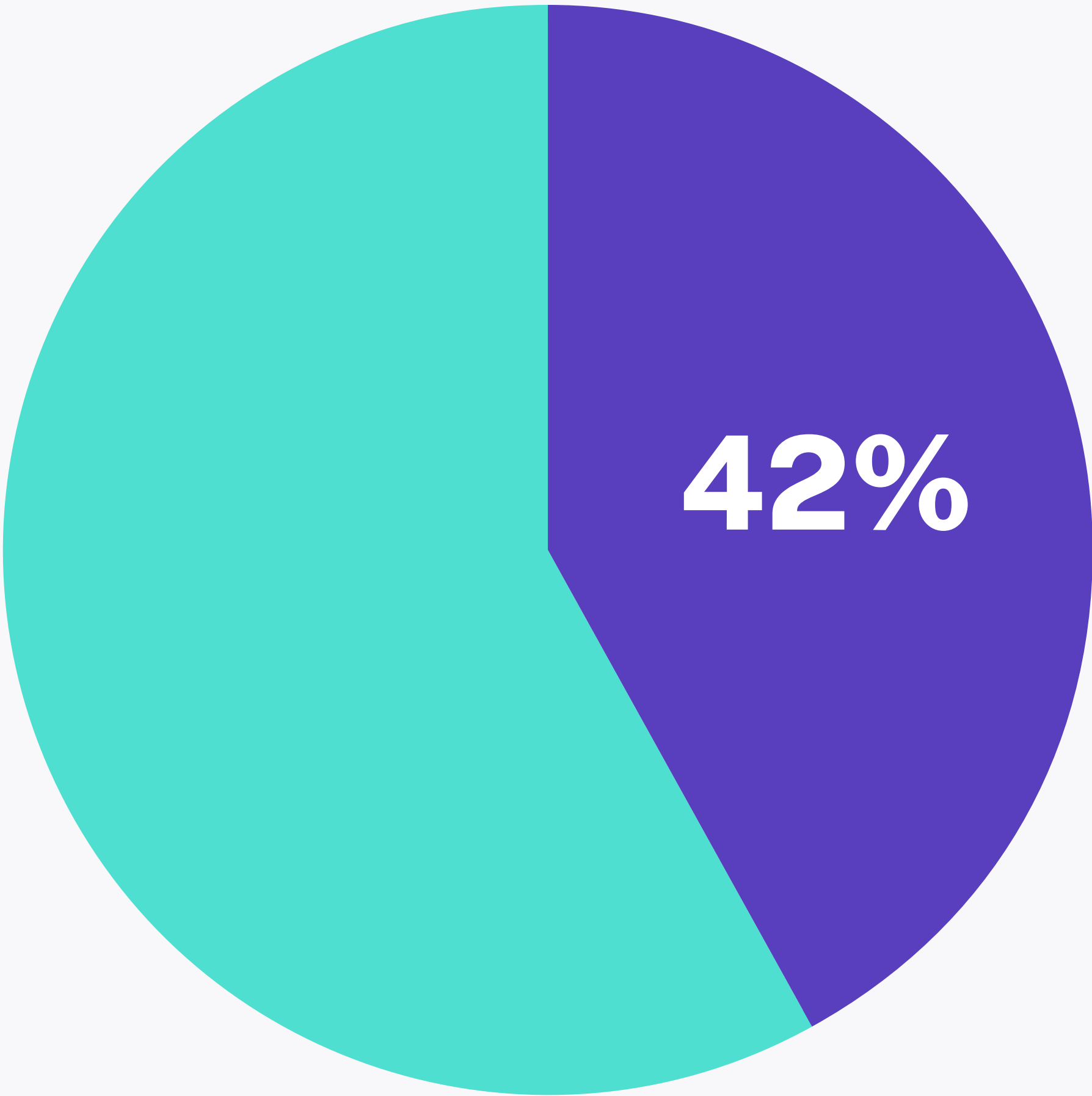
■ Benchmark #7

**42% of attendees watch the entirety of a virtual session\***

Almost half of virtual attendees watch the entirety of a virtual session. While we can't speculate on how engaged they are during that time, we can see that attendees are online and tuned in.

*\*A completed view refers to any attendee who watches more than 90% of a virtual session.*

**% of Attendees Who Watch a Session in Full\***

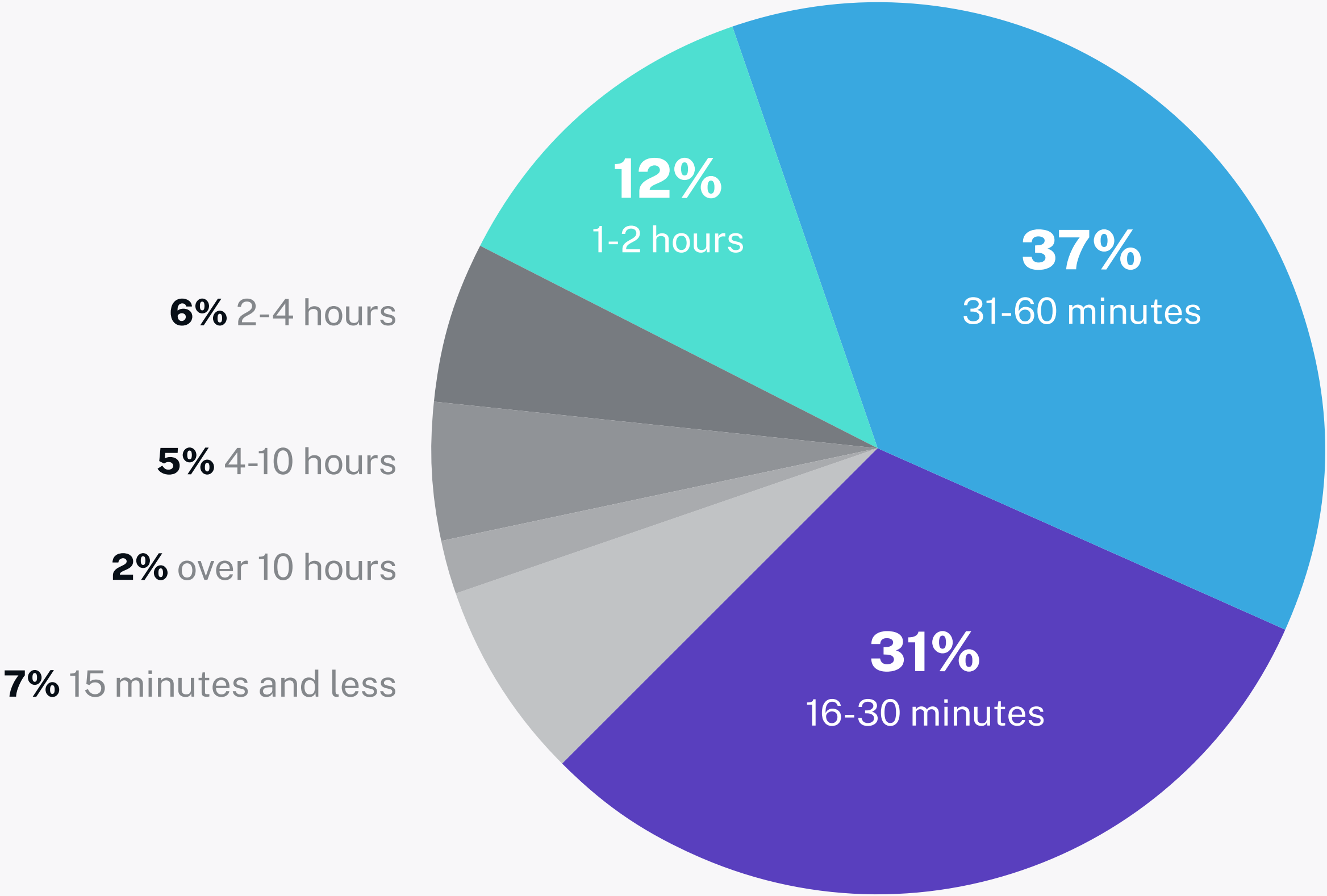


■ Benchmark #8

**68% of virtual sessions are between 16 minutes and one hour long**

The most popular virtual session length is between 31 and 60 minutes, accounting for 37% of all sessions. The second most popular session length is 16 to 30 minutes, with 1-2 hour sessions making up 12% and under-15 minute sessions making up just 7% of all virtual sessions.

**Session Length Distribution**





**Benchmark #9**

**The optimal virtual session length is up to 2 hours inclusively**

Virtual attendee engagement is relatively the same from 0-2 hours. This surprising observation may help organizers better understand the attention span of virtual attendees.

For events under 15 minutes all the way to 2 hours in length, the average view duration remains between 68% and 70% with the average completed views staying between 41% and 44%. This is a relatively small difference in engagement compared to the overall attendee engagement rate.

**Virtual Session Metrics by Session Length Group**

Session Length	Avg % View Duration	Avg % of Completed Views
15 min and less	<div></div> 69%	<div></div> 40.9%
16-30 minutes	<div></div> 68%	<div></div> 41.8%
31-60 minutes	<div></div> 68%	<div></div> 43.1%
1-2 hours	<div></div> 70%	<div></div> 44%
2-4 hours	<div></div> 60%	<div></div> 36.9%
4-10 hours	<div></div> 35%	<div></div> 13%
over 10 hours	<div></div> 26%	<div></div> 5.5%



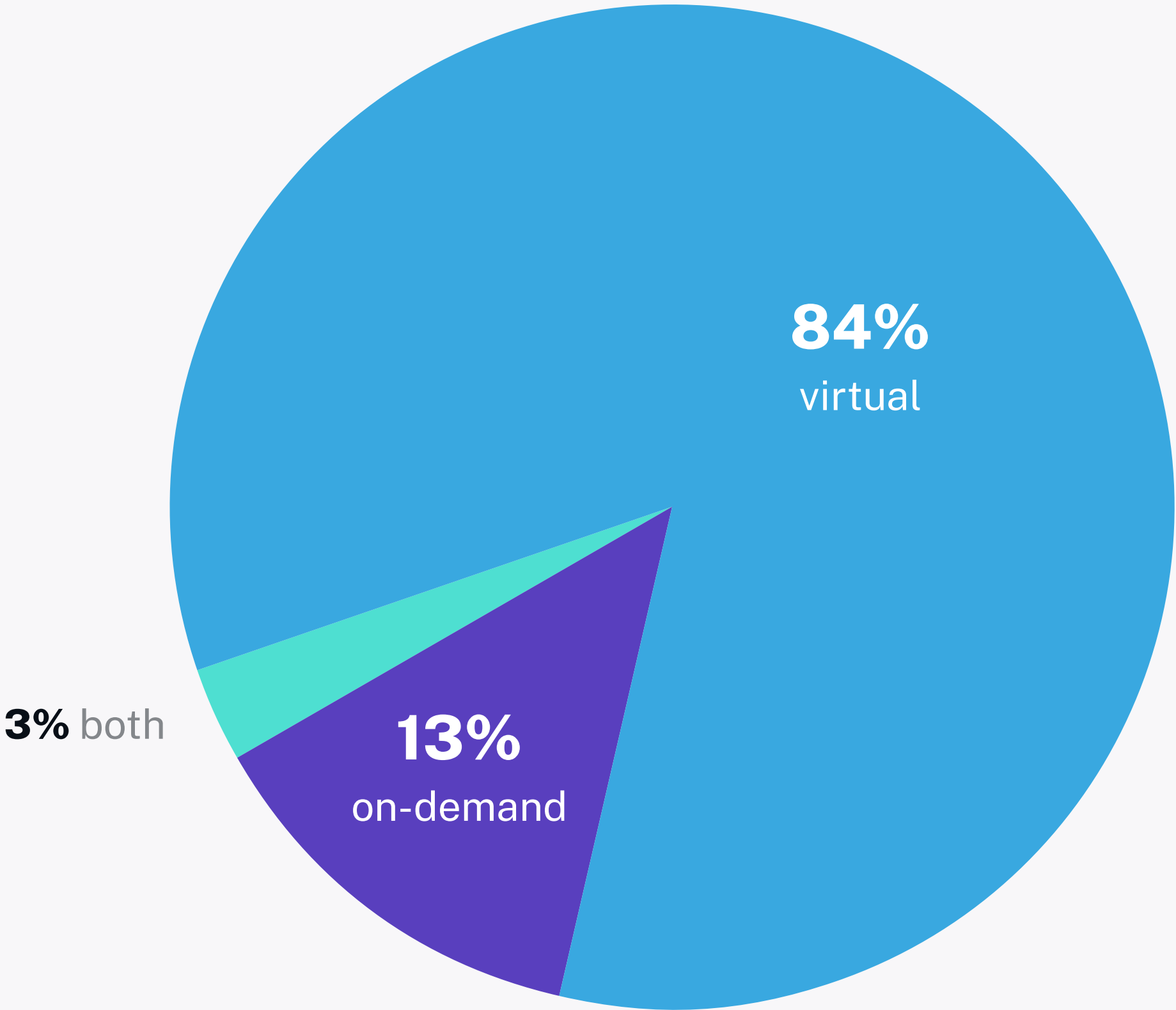
■ Benchmark #10

**13% of attendees watched via on-demand**

On-demand has greatly extended the lifetime of events with 13% of all virtual attendees tuning in via on-demand and 3% of watching both live and on-demand.

For those who are curious if it's worth it to enable on-demand access, consider that over 10% of attendees are viewing content that way. On-demand makes it easier to reach more of your audience where they are, whether they are in different time zones or simply can't make the live event, you can give more of your attendees access to your content with this impactful feature.

**Session views by attendee type**



“You really need to be empathetic to your audience. For me, if I’m invited to a virtual event, my expectations are that it might be shorter or it might be done by the time that my work day is done. There’s other people that might be looking more towards a happy hour or networking opportunity. And I think that the only real way to figure out what works best for what audience is to test that, and just try to understand and optimize for as much of the group as you can.”

**Jessica Vogol**

**VP Marketing, Movable Ink**

# Virtual Event Engagement

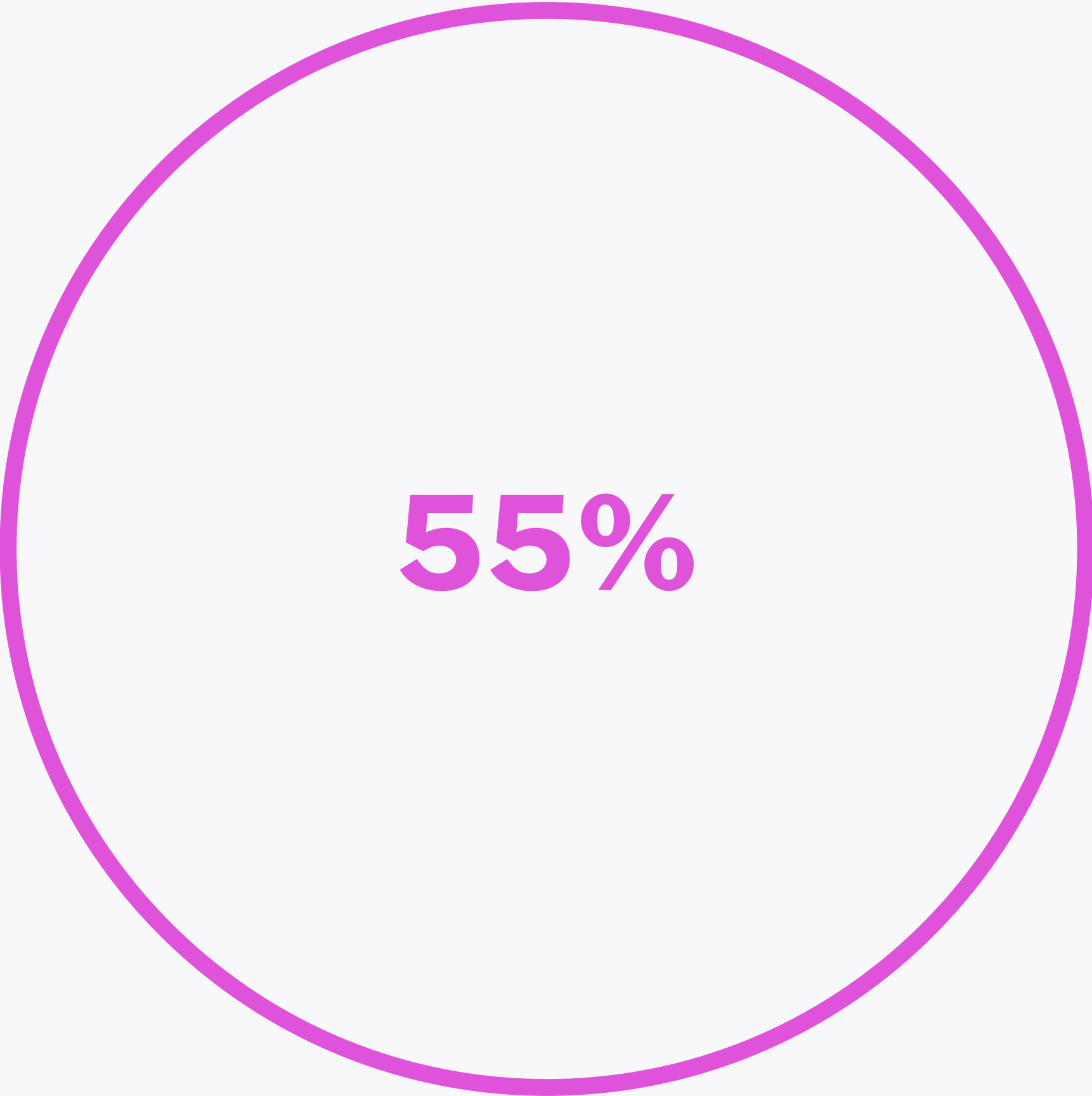
According to our [Evolution of Events Report](#), attendee engagement remains the top concern of event planners.

We saw a general increase in attendee engagement from 2020 to the first quarter of 2021 regarding attendance and watch time.

■ Benchmark #11

**The average virtual attendee conversion rate is 55%**

Attendees are growing increasingly likely to follow through and actually attend events that they express interest in. Attendee conversion relates to the percentage of people who register compared to how many actually attend a virtual event. This number has gone up to 55% in Q1 2021, meaning over half of those who register end up attending an event live. This percentage was at 50% in 2020.

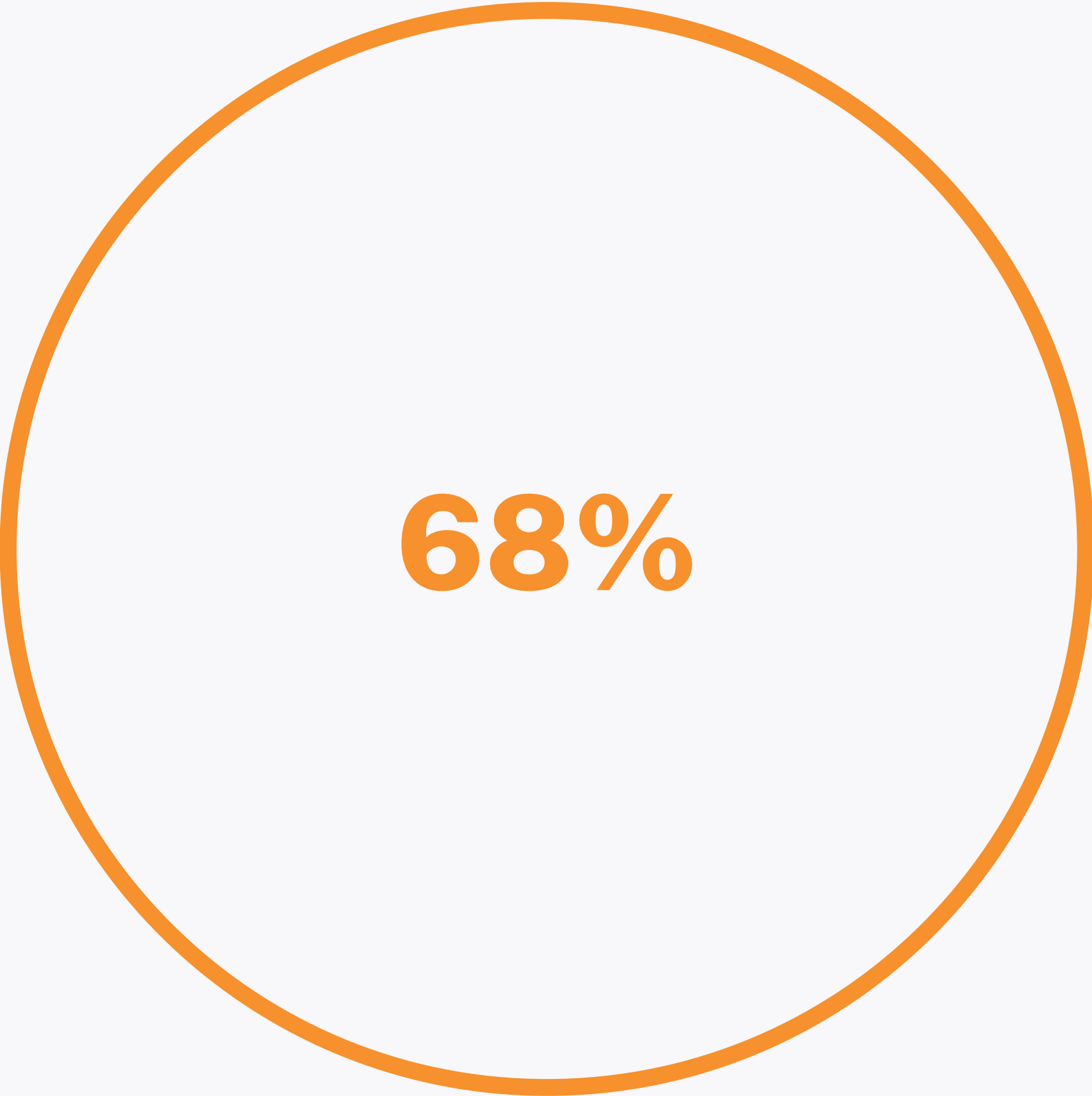


■ Benchmark #12

**Attendees are engaged for 68% of a virtual session**

One the biggest challenges event planners continue to confront is audience engagement. In the virtual space, ‘zoom fatigue’ and other distractions can have a major impact on attendees and their ability to stay engaged.

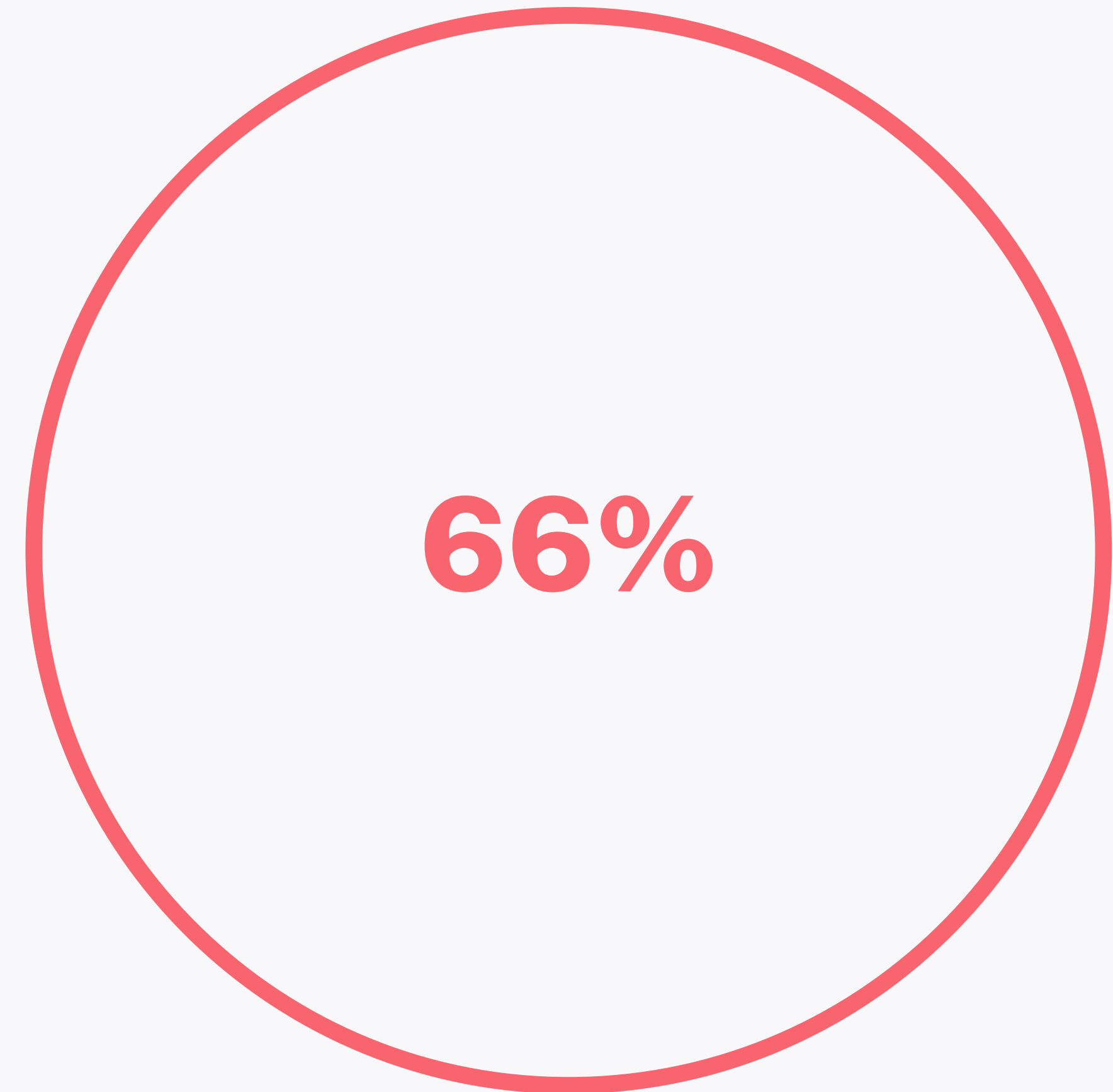
However, we’ve seen a major improvement in audience engagement from 2020 to Q1 of 2021. Last year, attendees stayed for roughly 53% of a virtual session, but so far this year, they’ve been engaged for almost 68% of a session. That’s more than a 28% increase.



## ■ Benchmark #13

### **Attendees are engaged for 66% of 60-minute virtual sessions**

In addition to the rising engagement among all virtual sessions, we've seen an increase in engagement for hour-long sessions in particular. While some event organizers might assume an hour is a long time for a session, attendees are actually watching 66% of 60-minute sessions, which is up from 60% in 2020.



“Everyone has a lot of demands on their attention today. And we aren’t owed people’s time. So when they attend an event that we’re hosting, whether it’s in-person or it’s virtual, it’s truly a gift. And we need to treat it accordingly. And so I always use that as my mindset when approaching what a program for an event will look like.”

**Lauren Lawson**

**Director of Events and Engagement Programs,  
National Audubon Society**

# Virtual Event Sponsorship

Organizers report an average confidence level of 6.5% when it comes to virtual sponsorship.

We saw a slight decrease in the number of virtual sponsors per event and will continue to monitor this trend throughout the year.



■ Benchmark #14

**The average event has 13 sponsors**

In Q1 2021, the average virtual event had 13 sponsors, down from 14 in 2020. While this number has decreased slightly from last year, it's clear that virtual event planners are still bolstering their virtual programs with sponsorships.



“For sponsors, it’s about finding a way to make their thought leadership shine in addition to brand awareness. At our Marquee Invest Global event, one of our premier sponsors kicked off the day by setting the state presentation. Rather than the usual opening remarks, it was tailored to their expertise. It was beneficial to them, a seamless integration, and added value across the program.”

**Jennifer Hoffmann Roach**

**Head of Audience, Bloomberg Live**

# How Fluke Reliability Delivered a Personalized Attendee Experience With Bizzabo

**READ THE CASE STUDY**

