

Report Highlights: 2024 Trends in Conferences & Exhibit Strategies in the Life Sciences

Study Overview and Objectives

Study Overview



BioInformatics, part of Science and Medicine Group, conducted market research to understand the beliefs and attitudes of scientists towards scientific conferences*.

Specific objectives include:

- Map out the trends in scientific conferences with preferred sizes and number of conferences attended per year
- Understand demographic trends in conferences and the parameters of an ideal conference
- Determine the professional and logistical factors that influence selection of a scientific conference
- Understand scientists' strategies and expectations when visiting exhibit halls using 2023 experiences to understand 2024 preferences
- Understand what attracts scientists to exhibit booths



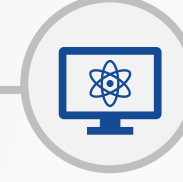
BioInformatics, part of Science and Medicine Group, designed an online quantitative survey to address the objectives.

- The survey contained 45 questions (including demographics) and on average took 20 minutes to complete.
- The survey was fielded to 363 respondents, who were members of the Science Advisory Board (SAB) -- a segment of the scientific community with a demonstrated willingness to participate in market research activities.



The qualification criteria for this survey in brief:

- Must work in Academia or Industry
- Must currently work in North America or Europe
- Must have attended an in-person scientific conference in 2023



A summary of the results is presented in this webinar.

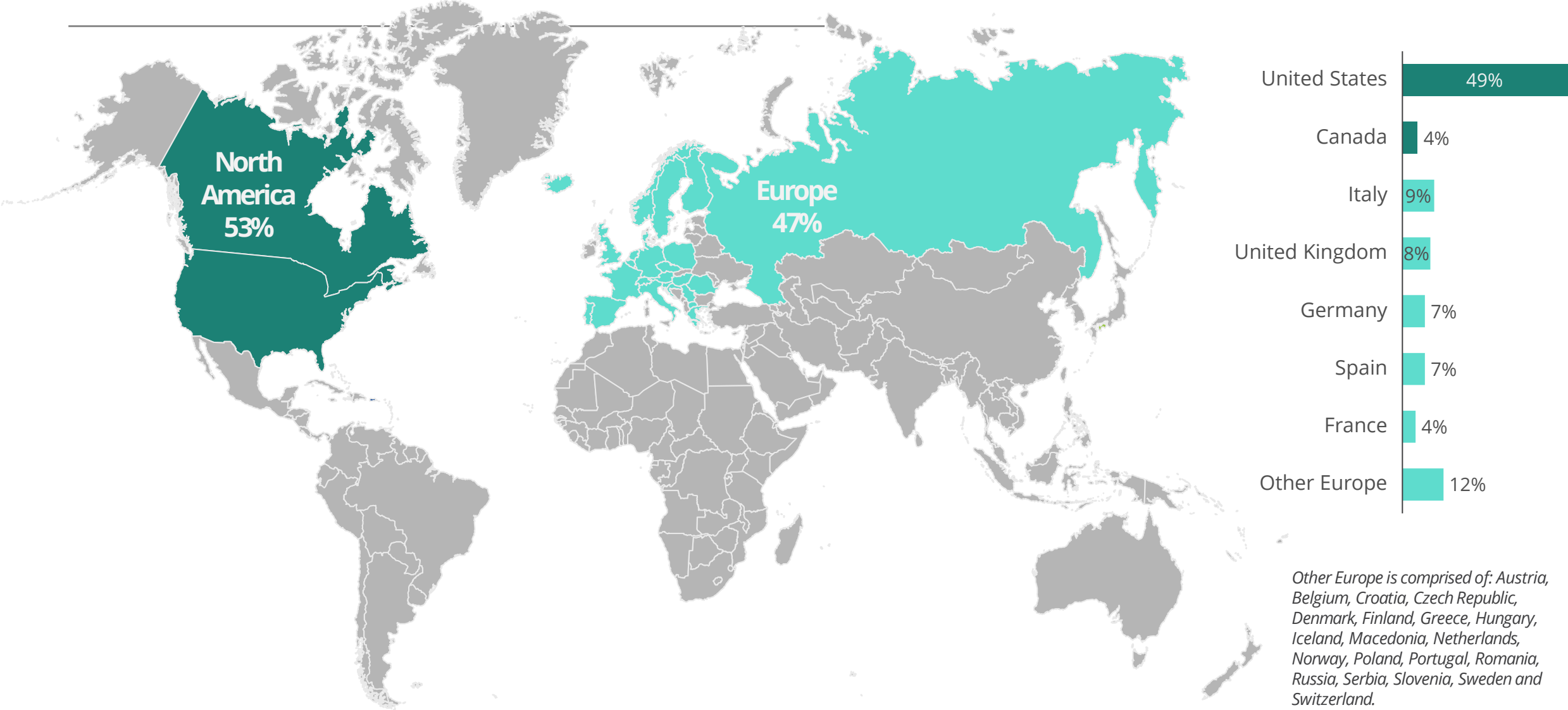
The full report is available on the [BioInformatics website](#) and [SMG Knowledge Center](#).

**Conferences were defined to respondents to include any gathering, symposium, seminar, scientific meeting, workshop, or any other organized, formal meeting where people assemble to coordinate, exchange, and disseminate information, or to explore or clarify a defined subject, problem, or area of knowledge. Please see the full Methodology for all definitions.*



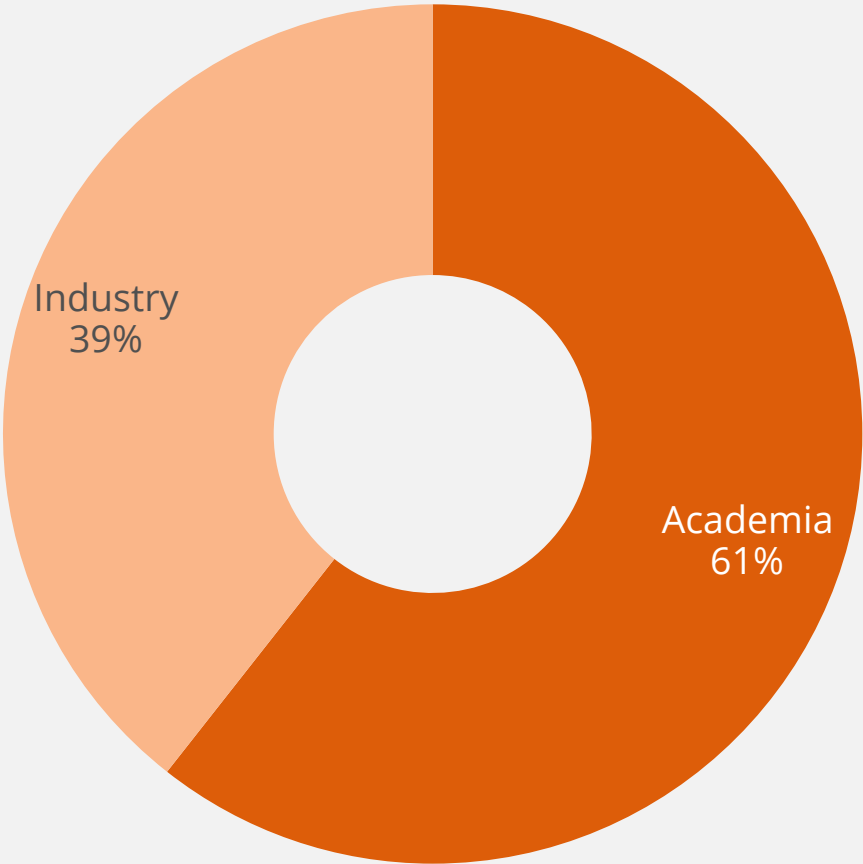
Demographics

Region (n=363)

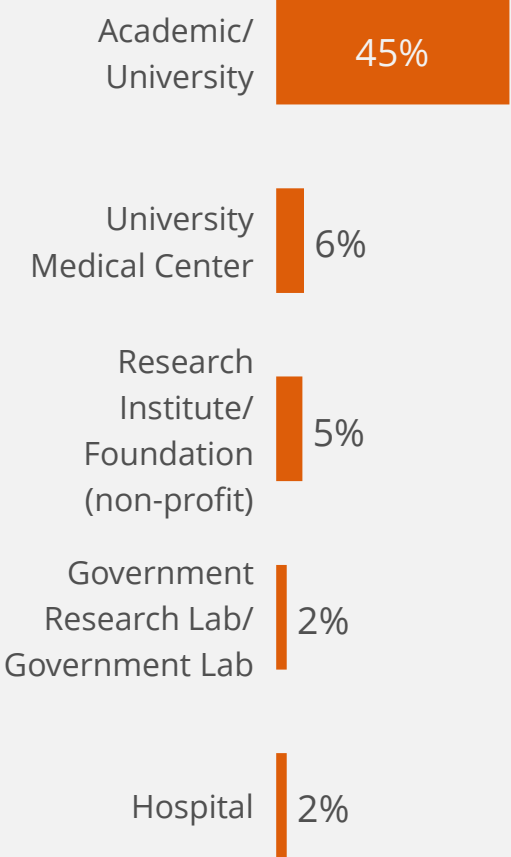


Respondent Profile (n=363)

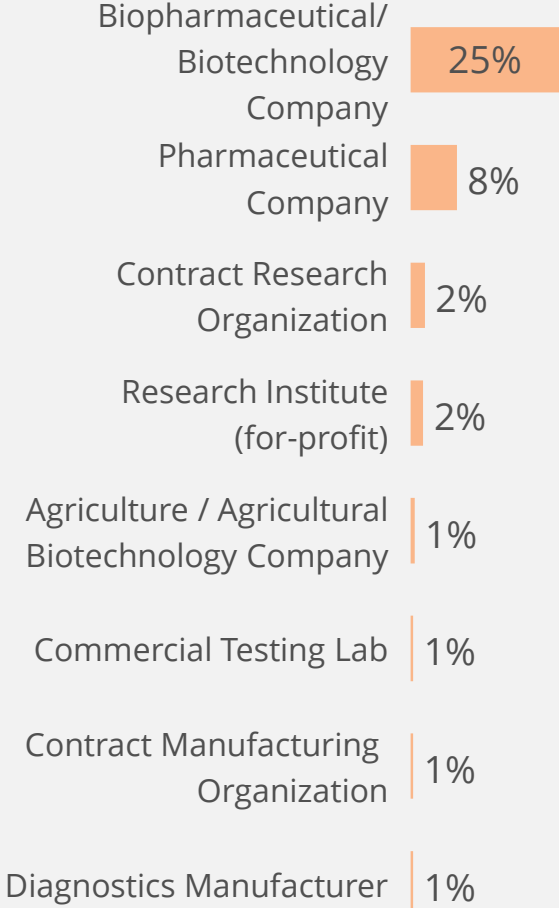
Organization Type



Academia

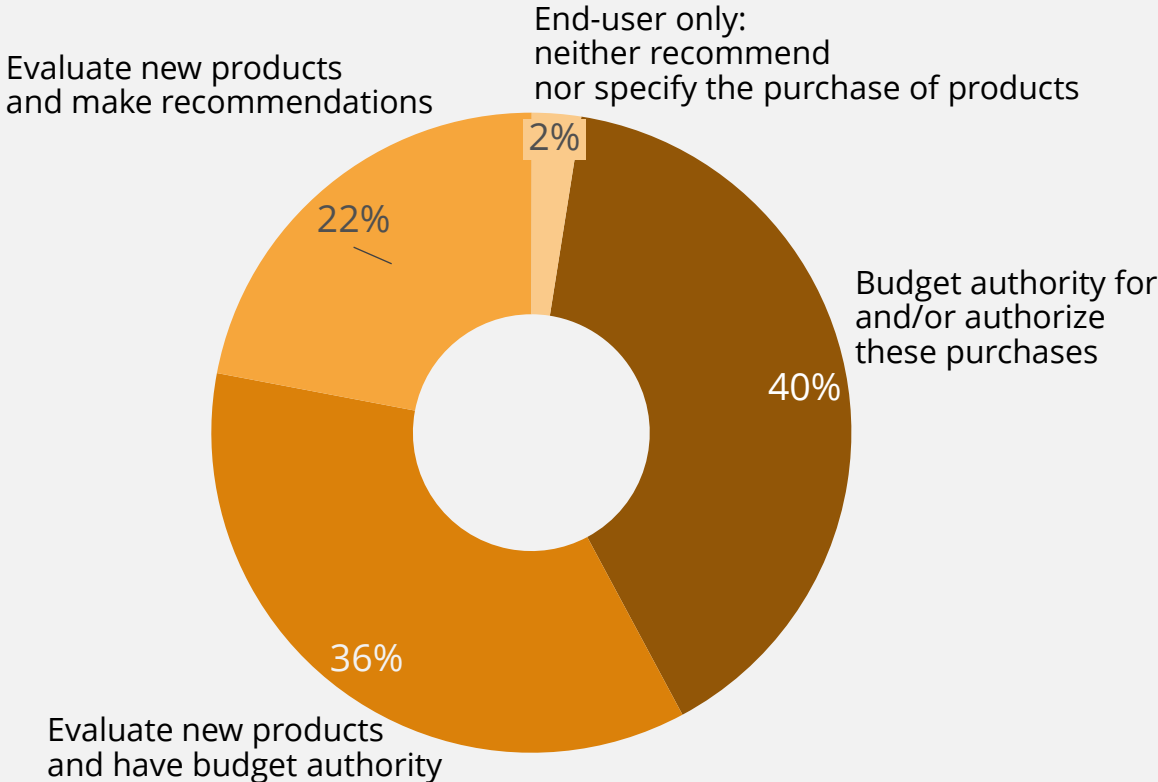


Industry

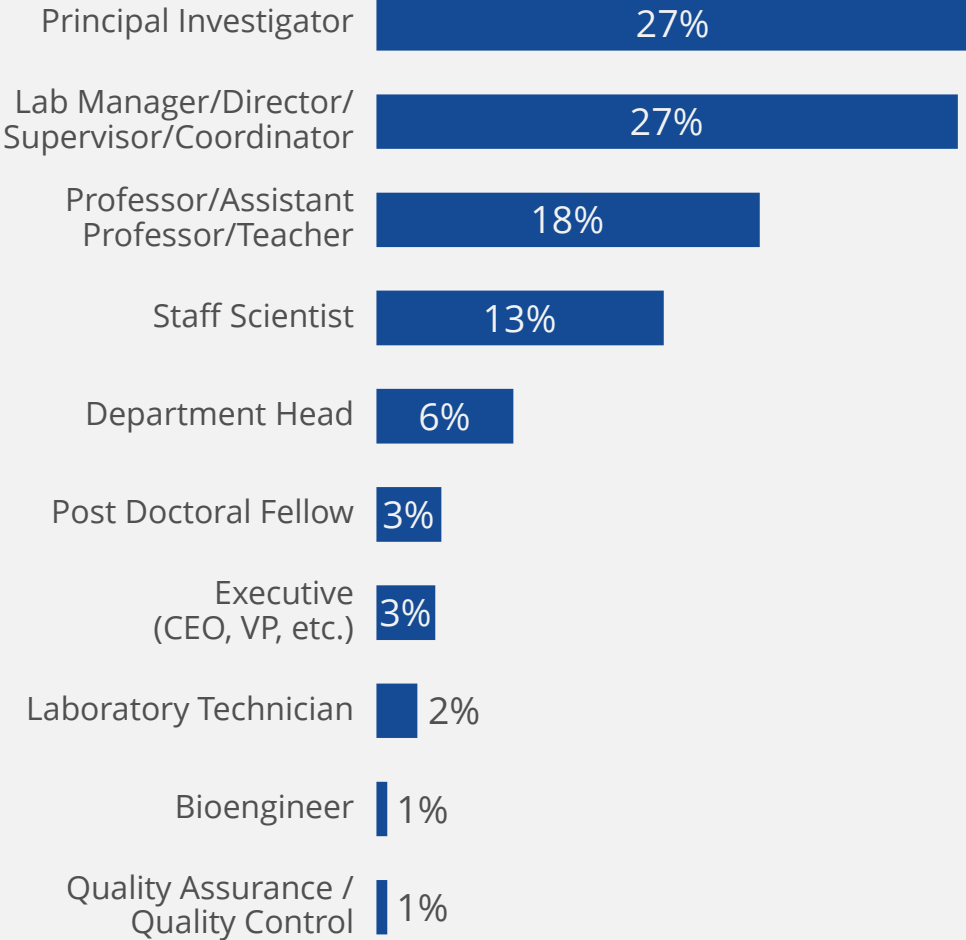


Respondent Profile (n=363)

Role in Selection of Products

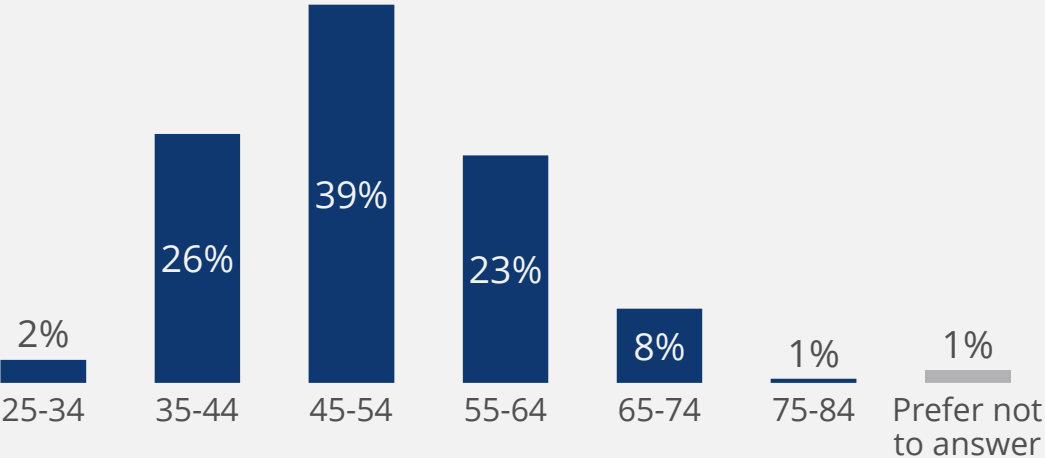


Job Position

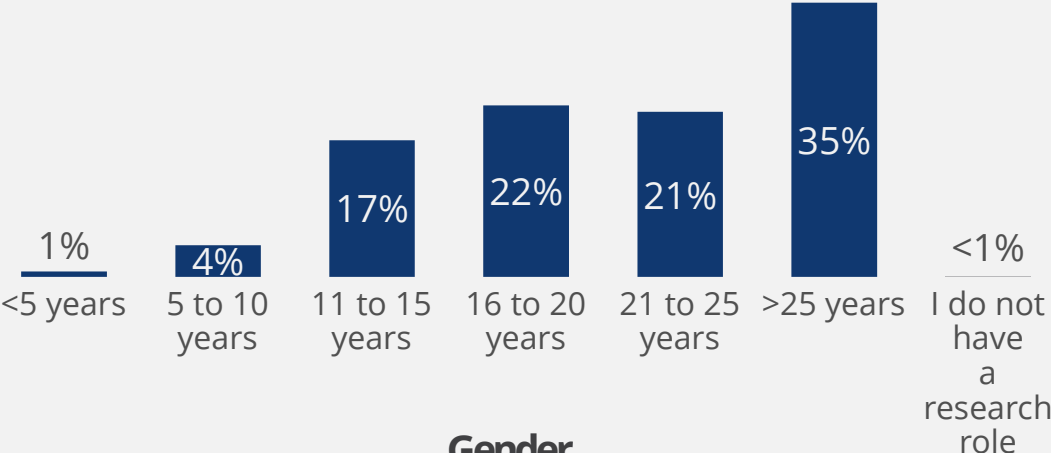


Respondent Profile (n=363)

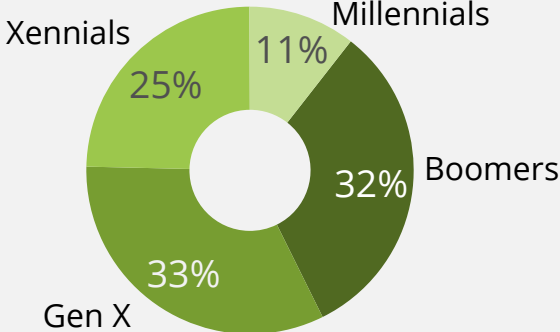
Age Group (Years)



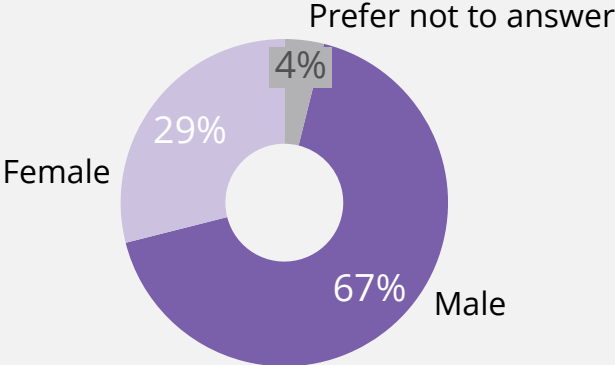
Years Conducting Research



Generation*



Gender



*Results exclude respondents who indicated they prefer not to answer.

A photograph of a man in a suit speaking at a podium, viewed from behind. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue filter. The speaker's right hand is raised in a gesture. In the foreground, there are two laptops on stands. The background shows a large, blurred audience in a conference hall.

Key Highlights

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Scientists indicate in-person conferences are essential for professional development.

Conferences, Attendees & Societies

- 79% of respondents indicate they are members of scientific societies, led by AACR, ACS, ASCB, and ASM.
 - Respondents mention 118 unique societies of which they are members, many of which are regional or dedicated to a specific scientific discipline.
- 62% of respondents see in-person conferences as highly important for their professional development.

Selecting a Conference

- Respondents' top three cited factors influencing conference attendance are travel cost, registration fee, and the city where the conference is to be held.



Trends in Conferences

- While respondents mostly attended mid-sized in-person conferences, virtual conferences have been more popular than a hybrid-style in the past three years.

Conference Activities

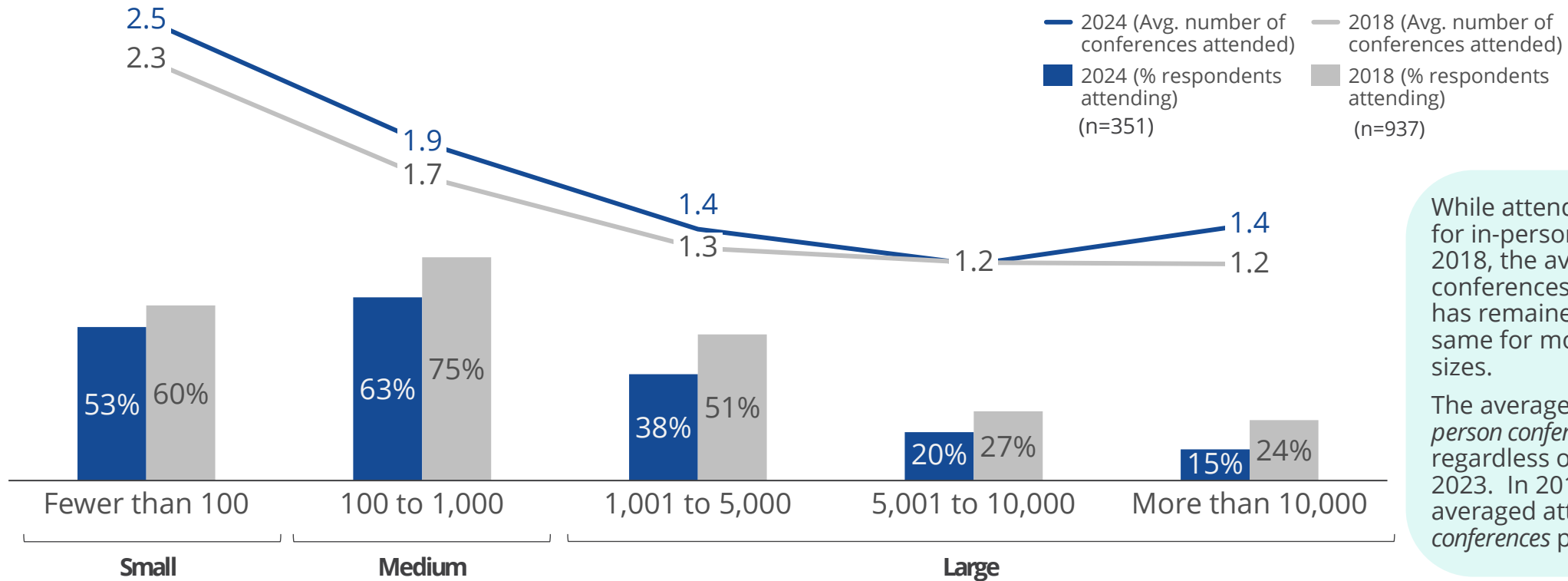
- For approximately one-third of respondents, the conference exhibit hall is used to gather information for consideration during the purchase decision process.
- Vendor exhibits are most important in helping respondents learn about or evaluate instrumentation they plan to purchase for their lab.

Trends in Conference Attendance



Most respondents prefer mid-sized* conferences.

Number and Size of In-Person Conferences Attended Annually by Year



While attendance has dropped for in-person conferences since 2018, the average number of conferences attended per year has remained statistically the same for most conference sizes.

The average number of *in-person conferences* attended, regardless of size, was 3.4 in 2023. In 2018, respondents averaged attending 3.9 conferences per year.

Q1. How many in-person scientific conferences did you attend in 2023, and approximately how many people attended each scientific conference? (please specify a number for each row, including 0 if applicable)

Note: Averages for number of conferences attended at each conference size excludes 0's and outliers (more than 2 standard deviations away from the mean).

*Mid-sized is defined as 100 to 1,000 people who attended the conference.

Over the past 3 years, respondents have attended 4-5 virtual conferences and 2-3 hybrid conferences on average.

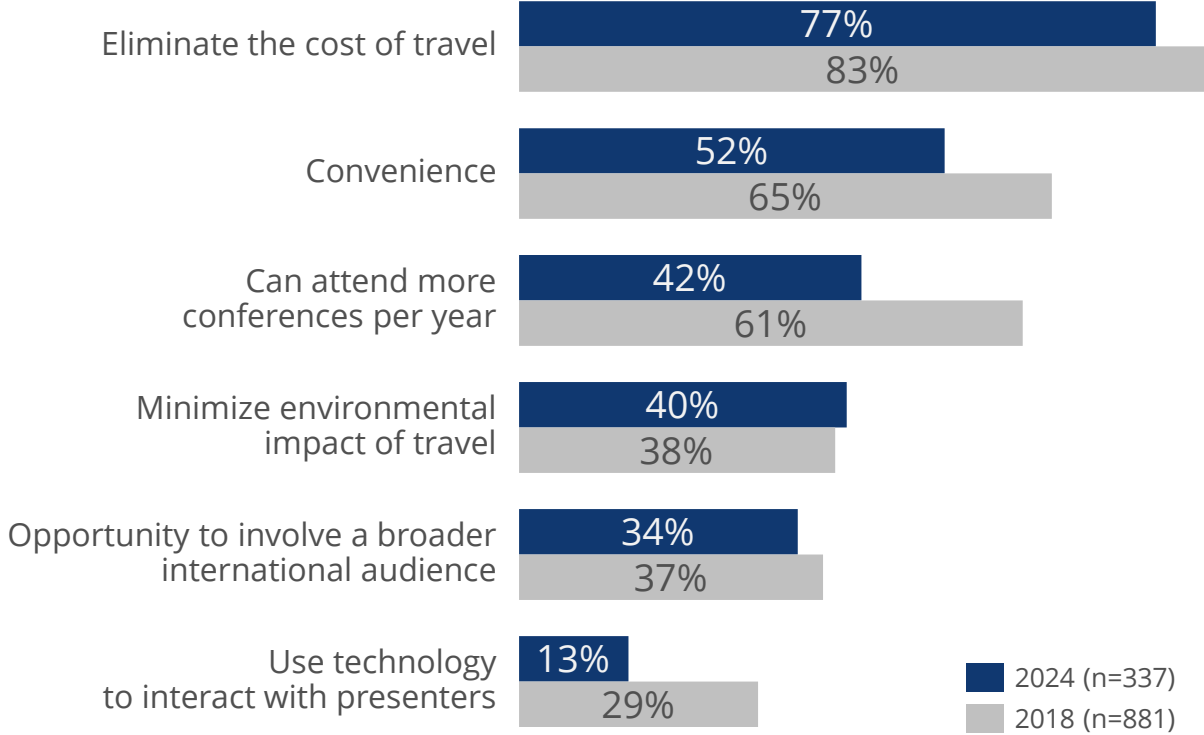
Average Number of Conferences Attended in the Past Three Years (n=356)

4.6 Virtual conferences

2.5 Hybrid conferences

Elimination of travel costs remains the best advantage to virtual conferences.

Perceived Advantages of a Virtual Conference*



Q2. How many “virtual” (livestream) scientific conferences or hybrid style (combination of in-person with virtual options for attendance) conferences have you attended in the past three years? (please specify a number for each)

Q4. What do you see as the advantages of a virtual (livestream) scientific conference? (check up to three)

Note: Averages for number of virtual and hybrid conferences exclude outliers (more than 2 standard deviations away from the mean).

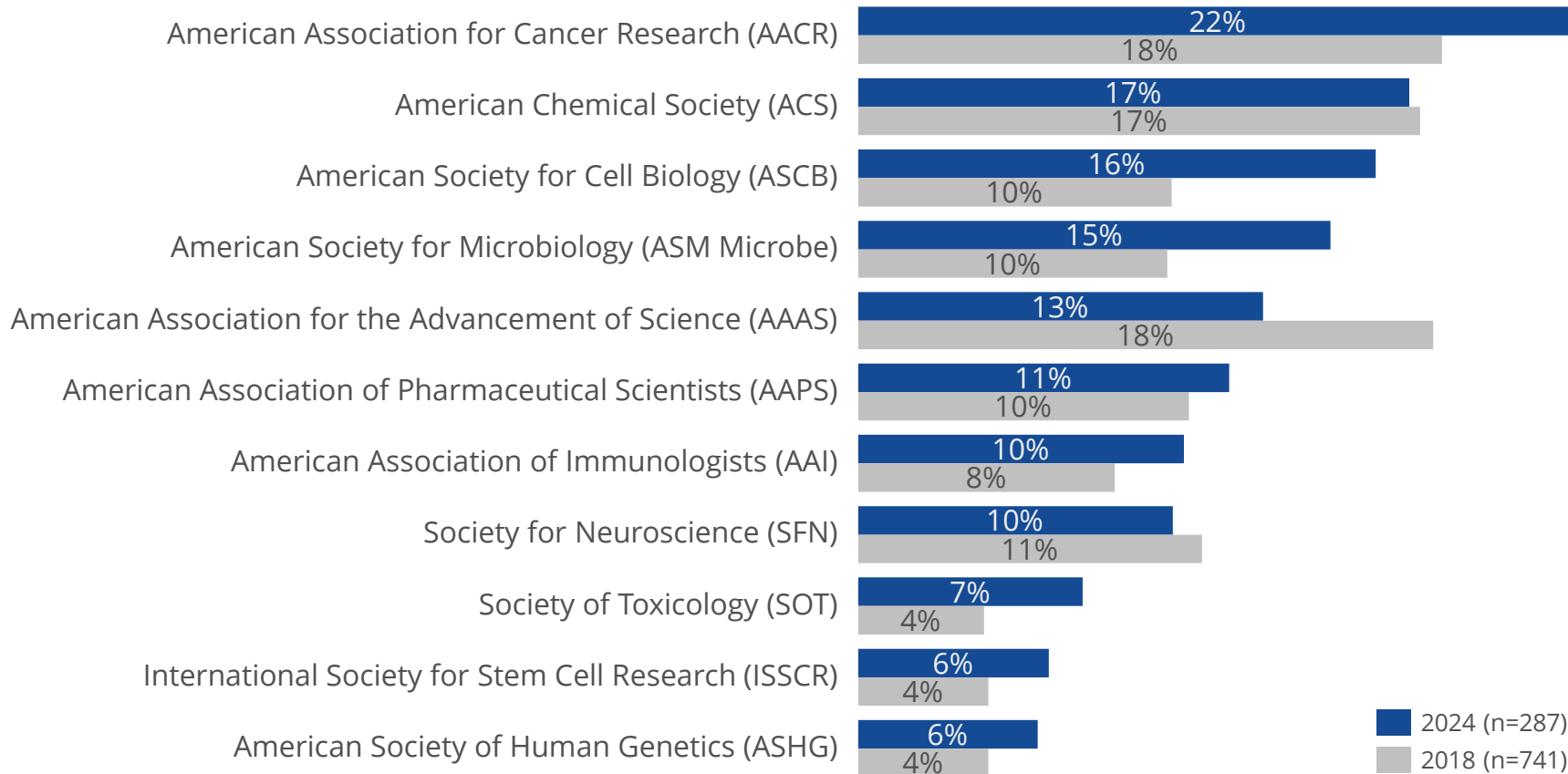
*Results exclude respondents who indicated “No advantages” (7% of all respondents in 2024 and 6% in 2018).



Conference Attendees

79% of respondents indicate they are members of scientific societies, led by AACR, ACS, ASCB, and ASM.

Membership in Scientific Societies or Associations by Year



118
unique
mentions in
2024

The multitude of societies cited by respondents (in "other") tend to have a regional focus and/or speak to a specific scientific discipline.

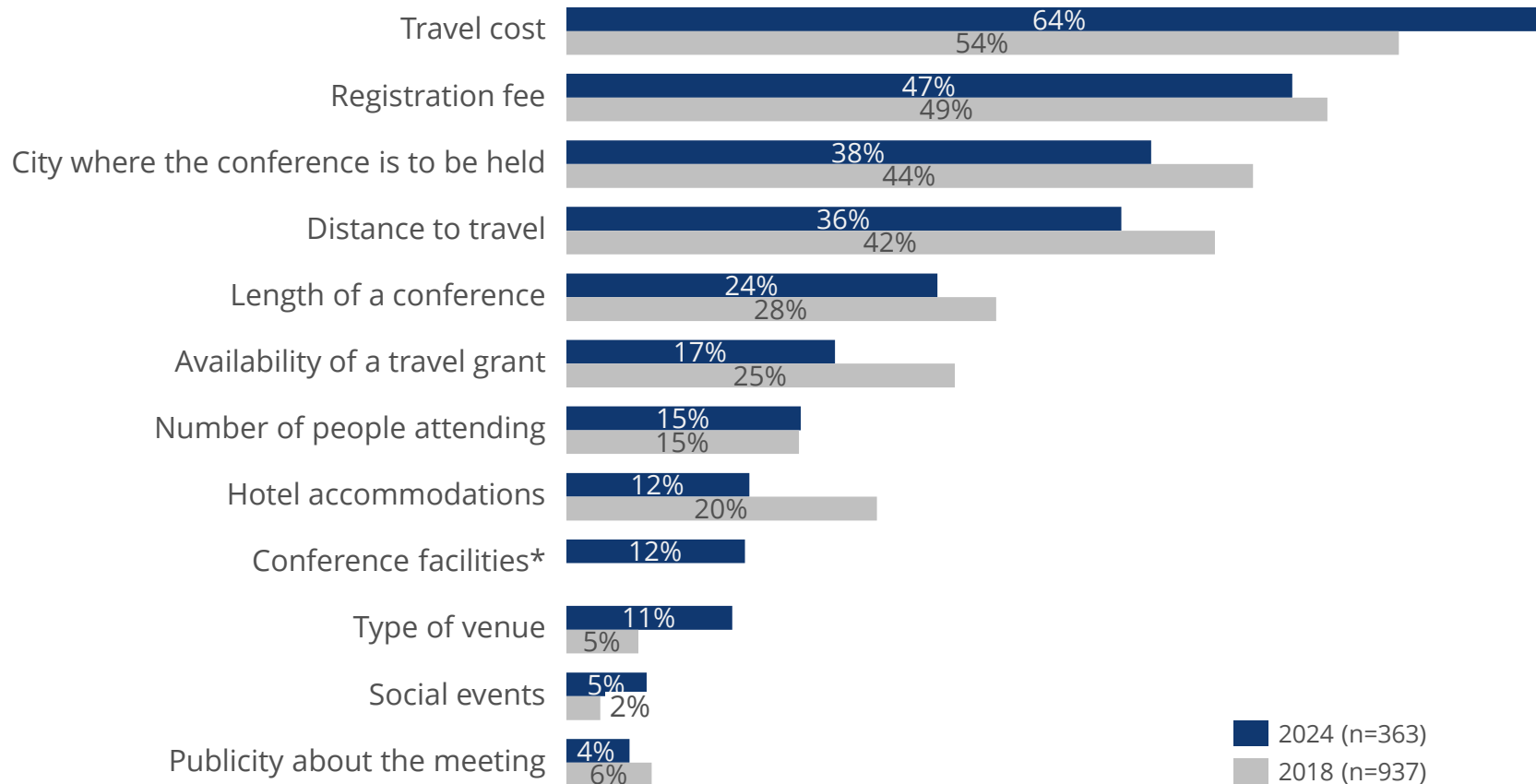
The increases and decreases in society memberships from 2018 to today speak to the shifting research focuses of the respondents.

Q36. Of which of the following scientific societies or associations are you a member? (check all that apply)

Note: Results exclude respondents who indicated "I am not a member of any scientific society or association" (21% of all respondents in 2024 and 2018). Chart excludes societies/associations selected by less than 5% of all respondents in 2024.

Travel cost, registration fees, and location are key logistical considerations.

Logistical Factors Influencing In-Person Conference Attendance by Year



The top 3 factors have not changed from 2018.

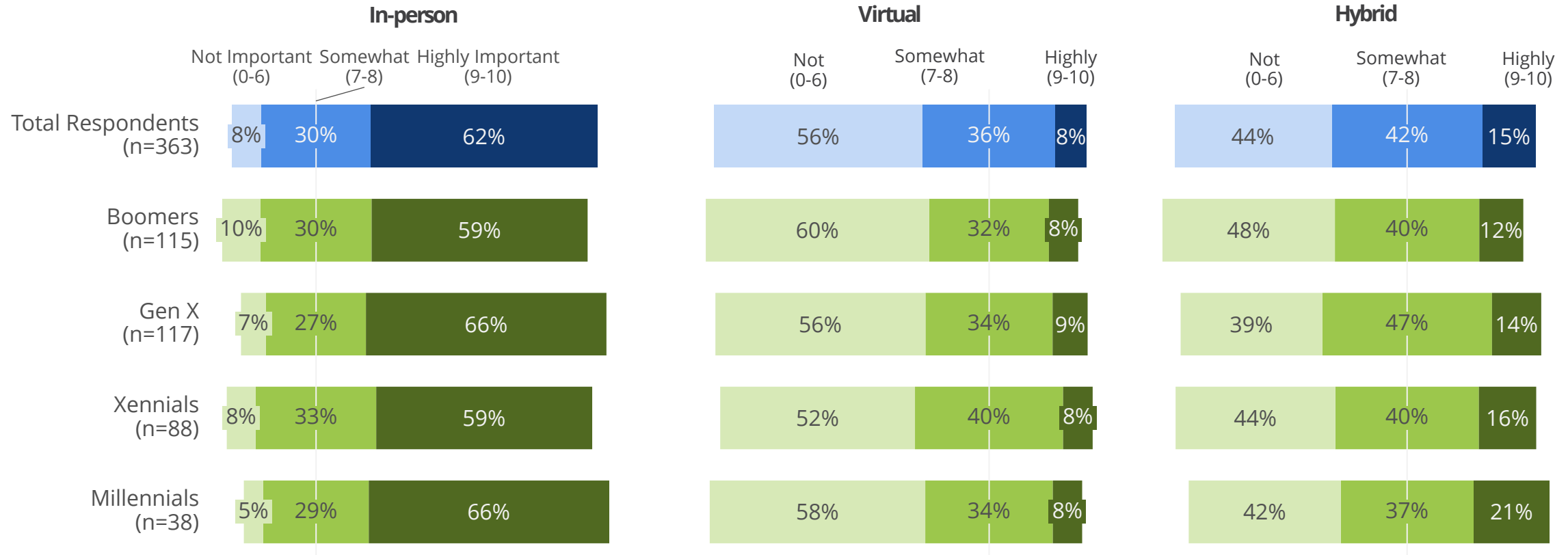
Q11. What are the THREE most important LOGISTICAL factors that influence your decision to attend a particular in-person scientific conference? (check up to three)

**New answer choice in 2024.*

62% of respondents see in-person conferences as *highly important* for their professional development.

Perceptions indicate that virtual and hybrid conferences do not offer the same level of engagement and opportunity for professional development. High importance on in-person conference attendance is seen across generations.

Importance of Attending Conferences for Professional Development by Generation

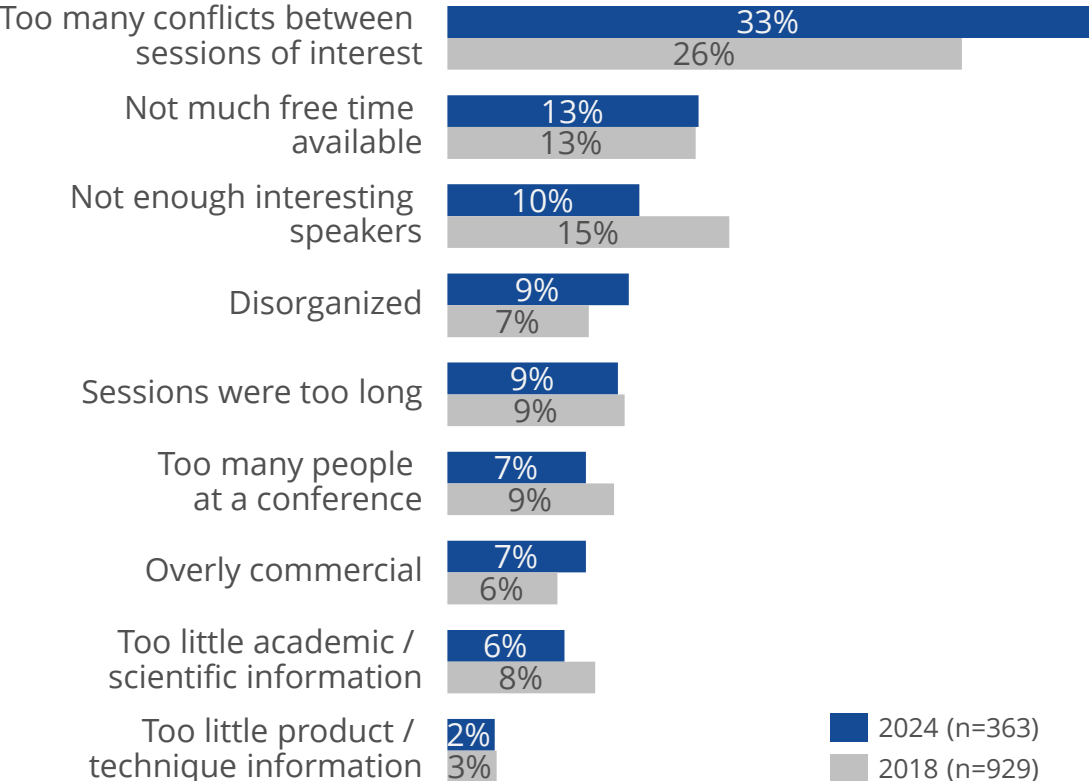


Q5. Please indicate how IMPORTANT attending the following types of scientific conferences is for your professional development. (choose only one for each)

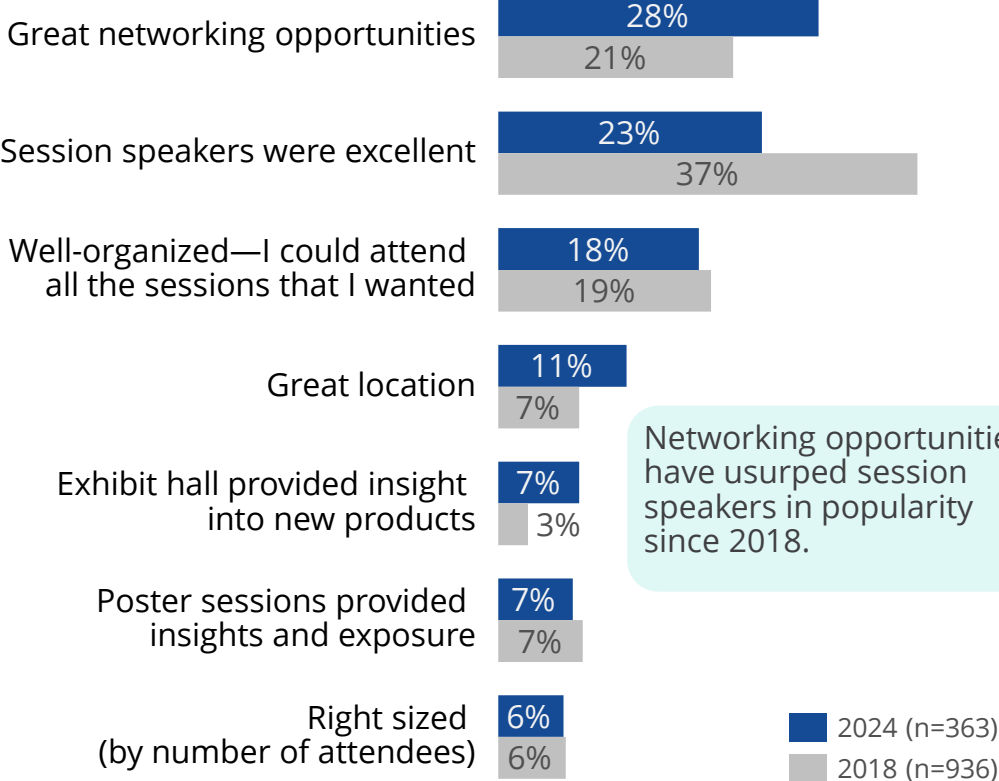
Attendee Needs and Expectations

Conference organizers should minimize conflicts between sessions and provide more opportunities to network.

Most Disliked Factors of Last In-Person Conference by Year



Most Liked Factors of Last In-Person Conference by Year

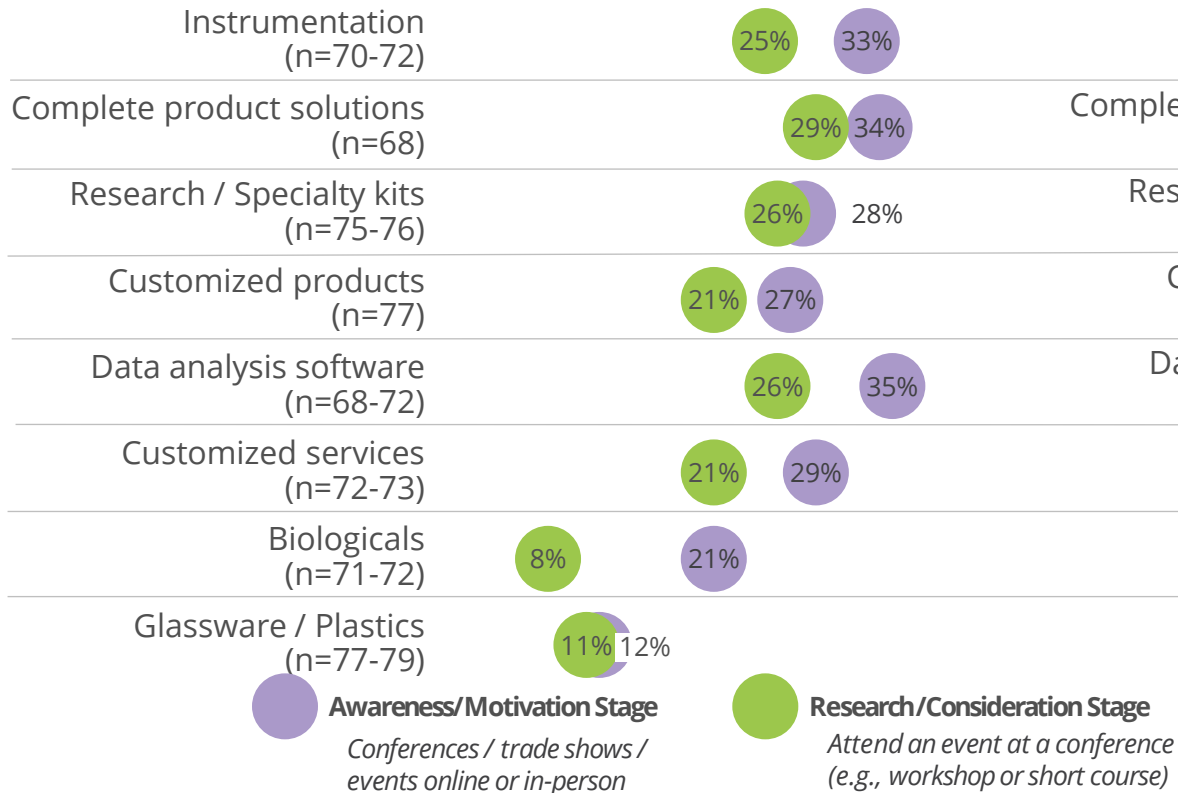


Networking opportunities have usurped session speakers in popularity since 2018.

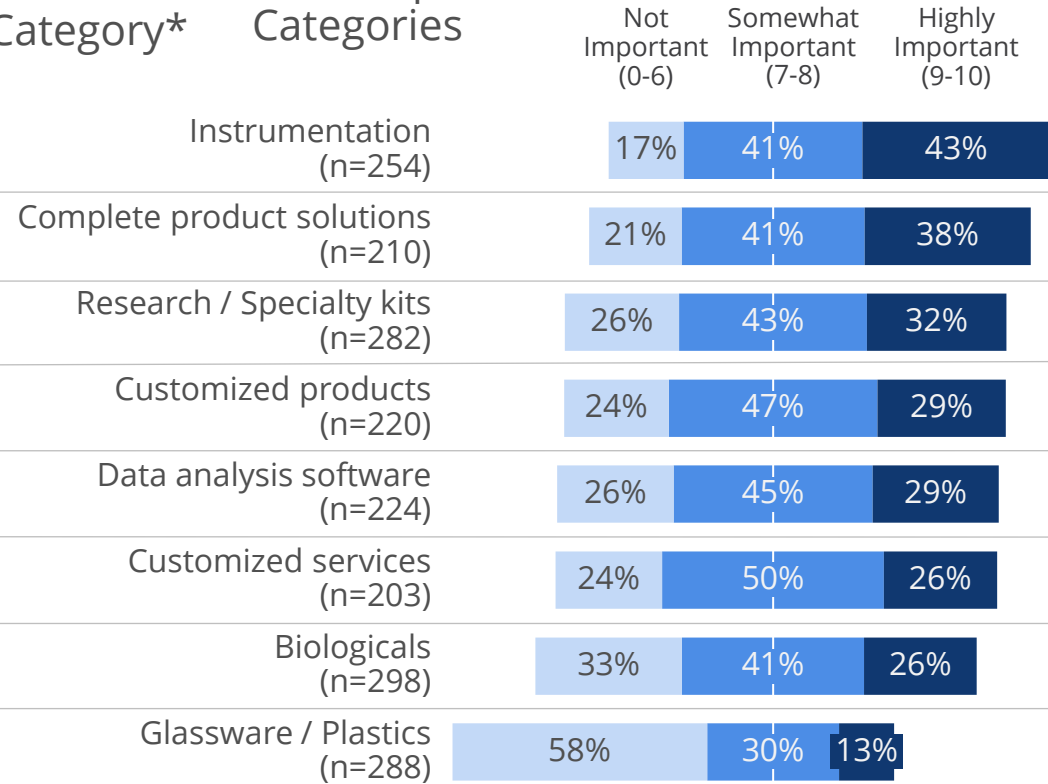
Q18. What did you MOST dislike about the last in-person scientific conference you attended? (choose only one)
 Q19. What did you MOST like about the last in-person scientific conference you attended? (choose only one)

Vendor exhibits are most important in helping respondents learn about or evaluate instrumentation they plan to purchase for their lab.

2023 Conferences Used for Awareness and Evaluation During Customer Purchasing Journey by Product Category*



2024 Importance of Vendor Exhibits for Different Product Categories



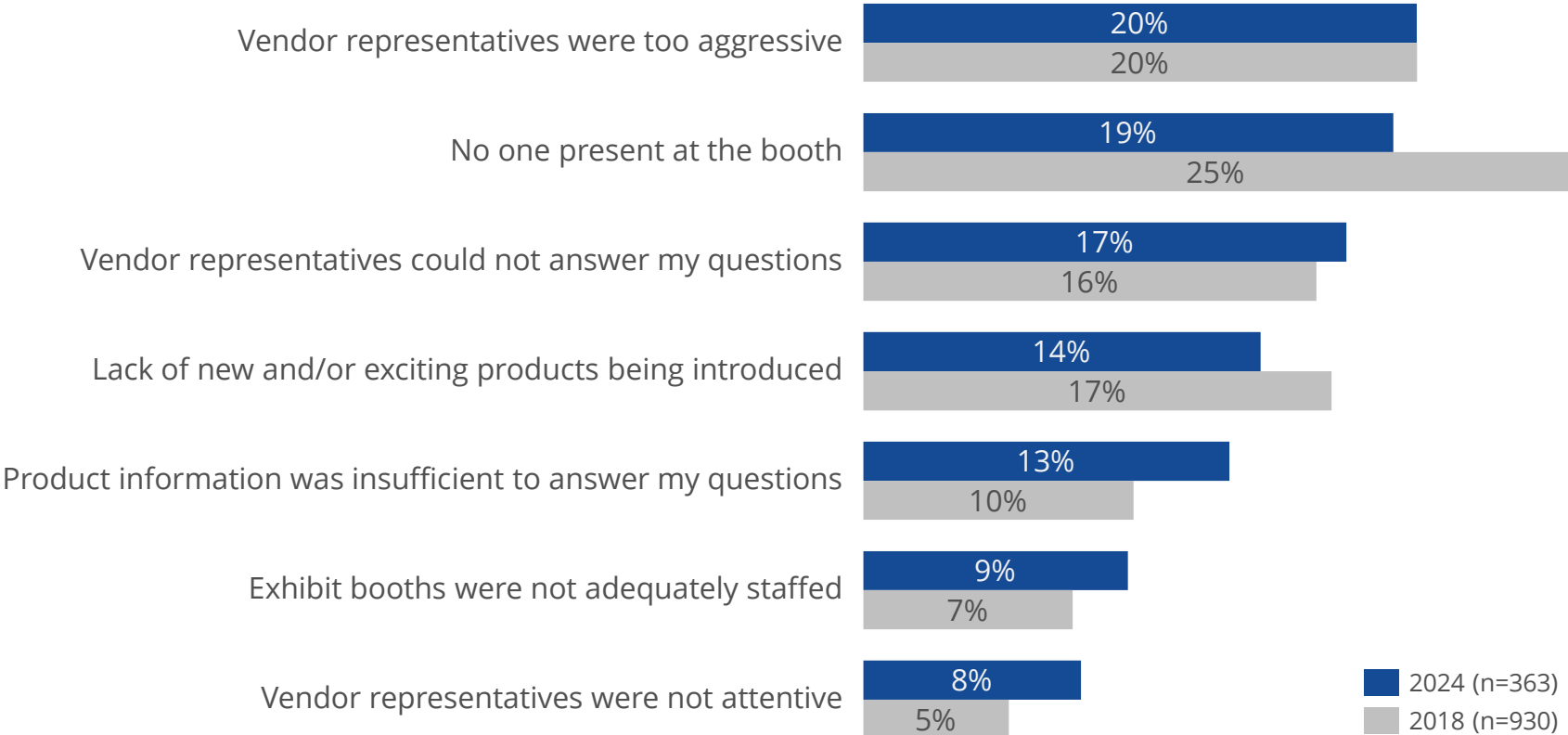
The key takeaway that vendor exhibits are important to the instrumentation product category from this report aligns with the 2023 Life Sciences Customer Purchasing Journey report by BioInformatics.

Q24. For the following product categories, how IMPORTANT are vendor exhibits in helping you learn about or evaluate products and services you plan to purchase for your lab? (choose only one for each)

*Results are from The November 2023 BioInformatics report: Life Science Customer Purchasing Journey 2023: Finding Customers Along the Way (#23-719). Note: for comparison purposes, APAC respondents were excluded from the Customer Journey report analysis.

Respondents dislike visiting a vendor booth with aggressive personnel or when no one is present.

Most Disliked Aspects of Vendor Exhibits by Year



As respondents are only going to vendor booths where they believe they need the vendor's products, not having adequate or any staffing means missing out on potential leads.

Q31. What do you dislike MOST about the vendor exhibits you have visited? (choose only one)

In-Person Conference Attendee Personas

What are "personas"?



A **Conference Attendee Persona** is a representation of the different types of scientists you may find at an in-person conference. The data gathered and analyzed to create these personas focuses on their behaviors, experiences, and preferences for scientific conferences.



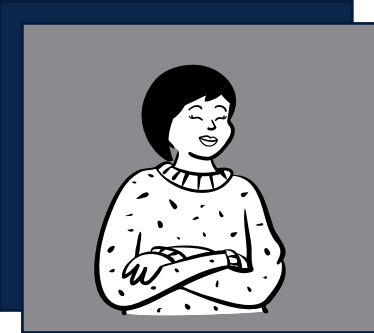
The purpose of the **Conference Attendee Persona** is to help vendors and event organizers understand these scientists' needs, preferences, and pain points to improve the overall experience and maximize the opportunities for interaction with potential customers.



BioInformatics has created **Conference Attendee Personas** by applying multiple segmentation filters (location, employment sector, & generation) to compare how different segments are the same and how they are unique. The information included is based on what the most respondents within a particular segment answered. Because of the multiple filters, the total population for each persona is small and is not generalizable to the target population.

Meet our Academic Gen Xers

Lab Director Lawrencium



 *North America*
 *Lab Manager or Director, Professor,
Staff Scientist*

My top conference choices for 2024 are:
AACR, ASCB, ASM

About me:

- I enjoy conferences the most when they are well-organized.
- I like it when a vendor offers me a USB drive with product information on it.
- I don't like it when a booth doesn't have any new products to show me when I visit or if they run out of samples.

Want to entice me to your vendor booth?





T-shirts get my attention!

3.3

of in-person conferences attended in 2023 (on average).

Professor Promethium



 *Europe*
 *Professor, Principal Investigator,
Lab Manager or Director*

My top conference choices for 2024 are:
ASCB, ASHG, SCAS

About me:

- I enjoy conferences the most when they are well-organized, and I don't enjoy lengthy sessions
- I am likely to collect research articles citing products from different vendor booths.
- At a vendor booth, I expect to see demos and new products.

Want to entice me to your vendor booth?



Offer a USB drive!

4.0

of in-person conferences attended in 2023 (on average).

About BioInformatics

BioInformatics, part of Science and Medicine Group, is **the premier research and advisory firm** serving the life science industry. Since 1994, we have been providing off-the-shelf reports, custom-designed studies, and market analysis that enables companies to understand their market and competitors through the eyes of the most important information source of all the people who buy their products.

By leveraging our online professional network of tens of thousands of scientific customers, we have supported more than 500 companies and provided insights that lead to better business decisions.

Our actionable insights support assessing the size and attractiveness of markets, optimizing product configurations and pricing, validating corporate acquisitions, measuring of customers' brand loyalty, and evaluating of your brand strength and positioning. **We help you grow, adapt, and change in a rapidly evolving market.**

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- **Coming Soon**

- *Digital Marketing/Advertising in Life Science (March 2024)*
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