

Women's Issues

The Facts About Workplace Challenges
for Meeting Planners & Suppliers

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Women's Issues

A joint survey of female meeting planners and suppliers by SITE and Prevue Meetings & Incentives replaces assumptions about the challenges faced by women in the meetings and incentives industry with the facts.

Careers

Few Women in Top Management

The hospitality industry is known to lag behind others when it comes to the percentage of women who advance to top positions—and our research found the same to be true. On the supplier side, more than half of respondents (52.9 percent) reported that fewer than 30 percent of C-level positions in their companies were occupied by women. Only 12.8 percent of respondents worked in companies where the top management positions were held by women. Digging deeper, the vast majority of respondents' companies where women held the top positions were small ones: 81.8 percent had fewer than 50 employees.

- ✓ Glass Ceiling
- ✓ Pay Inequity
- ✓ Sexual Harassment

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81.8%

of respondents reported that companies where women held the top positions had fewer than 50 employees

Methodology

This research report consists of two surveys, one for women suppliers and one for women meeting planners, that were deployed by the Society for Incentive Travel Excellence (SITE) and Prevue Meetings & Incentives in August and September of 2018, yielding a total of 708 usable responses—534 from meeting planners and 174 from suppliers. On the planner side, respondents consisted of primarily direct in-house planners (56.87 percent) and independent planners (34.84 percent). On the supplier side, respondents were a mix of hotels (31.79 percent), third parties (28.32 percent) and DMCs (21.97 percent), with a smaller percentage of other suppliers, including CVBs and cruise lines. All meeting planners were based in the US, the supplier group was half US-based, with the remainder coming primarily from Canada (22.81 percent), Western Europe (14.04 percent) and Central and South America (8.77 percent).

Perceived Pay Inequity

Are women meeting planners paid less than men?



Forty-eight percent of women meeting planners and 42 percent of women suppliers feel they are not paid equally to their male counterparts at their companies. In both cases, the respondents are spread equally across the various age groups.

The survey also found that almost half (47.3 percent) of the women meeting planners who believe they are paid unequally have more than 20 years of industry experience—a sign that this perception is strongest among the most senior planners.

Percentage of respondents who have been in a job where they believe being a woman prohibited them from advancing therein



About half of respondents, both planners and suppliers, reported holding positions where they believed that being a woman had prohibited them from advancing therein. Interestingly, 61.5 percent of planners and 65.4 percent of suppliers who reported this had 16+ years of experience. In both cases, the vast majority who felt discriminated against (around 75 percent) ended up changing jobs as a result.

Work-Life Balance

It Takes a Village

The survey pointed to a fairly supportive environment for meeting planners who were working mothers, with almost 58.6 percent of respondent saying their employers were very flexible when they needed to take time for medical reasons for their children and 32.9 percent calling them somewhat flexible. Supplier companies were even more flexible, with 71.4 percent of supplier respondents calling their companies very flexible and 23.1 percent somewhat flexible.

Overall, the majority of women (72.5 percent of suppliers and 63.5 percent of meeting planners) did not feel they were passed over for a role, program or opportunity because they were mothers. On the flip side, almost a third of women meeting planners (30 percent) felt they were denied opportunities because they were mothers.

Among those respondents who did not have children, there was reported alienation by other women and men by 40.2 percent of meeting planners and 42 percent of suppliers.

71.4%

of supplier companies are very flexible about time off to care for children

23.1%

of supplier companies are somewhat flexible about time off to care for children



Unpaid Time Off

Most likely due to a combination of job demands and economic constraints, only 38.7 percent of supplier respondents and 33.6 percent of planners said they would take unpaid time off to be with their families.

14.7%

of planners are not interested in taking unpaid time off to be with their families

13.3%

of suppliers are not interested in taking unpaid time off to be with their families

#MeToo

Sexual Harassment: The Facts

A majority of women meeting planners—56.4 percent—reported having been sexually harassed at some point in their careers. The percentage of suppliers was slightly less, at 45.1 percent.

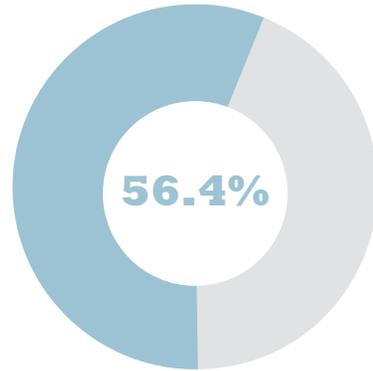
Impact of Age & Industry Experience

Among meeting planners, the survey found a correlation between the level of industry experience and those women who reported they had been sexually harassed in their careers or had experienced unwanted advances from customers or colleagues.

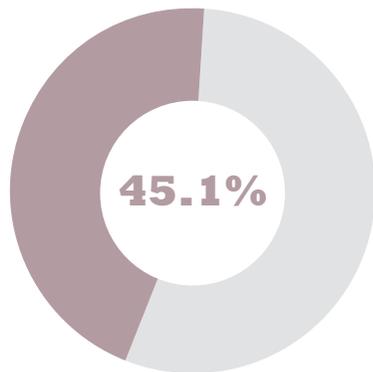
Almost 60 percent of those who had been harassed had 16+ years of industry experience and 61.9 percent of those who reported having experienced unwanted advances had 16+ years of experience.

Almost a third (30.1 percent) of meeting planners reported having dealt with a situation where one of their attendees reported being sexually harassed by a superior or another attendee.

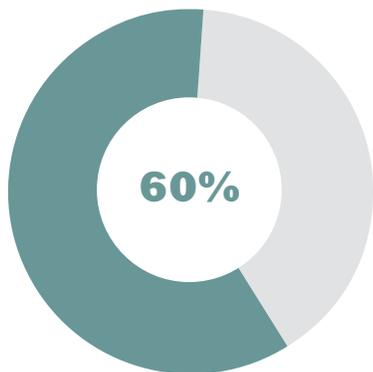
The age of the respondents saying they had been sexually harassed was spread among the generations, with GenXers accounting for the largest group (37.8 percent).



of planners reported having been sexually harassed at some point in their careers



of suppliers reported having been sexually harassed at some point in their careers

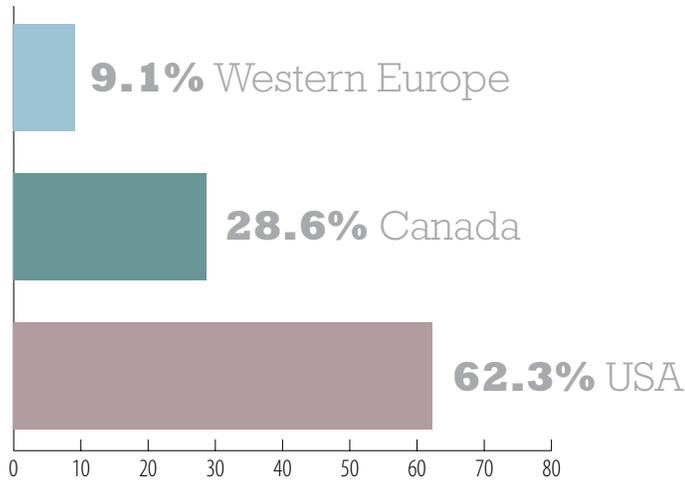


of those who had been sexually harassed had 16+ years of industry experience



A US Phenomenon?

The majority of suppliers who answered that they had been sexually harassed at some point in their careers came from the US (62.3 percent), followed by 28.6 percent from Canada and 9.1 percent from Western Europe.



Most Sexual Harassment Goes Unreported

Many cases of sexual harassment go unreported—and it's no different in the meetings and incentives industry. Only 19.8 percent of supplier respondents have ever approached human resources about an incident of sexual harassment or a hostile work environment; that number is slightly higher, but still a minority, among meeting planners (31.8 percent).

Women were slightly more comfortable confronting the harassers themselves: 28.2 percent of suppliers and 40.5 percent of planners reported doing so.

Mixing Sex & Business

An astonishing 75 percent of Baby Boomer female suppliers responded that they have been offered business in return for sex. That number dropped to 12 percent of GenX suppliers, and no Millennials answered yes.

On the planner side, 62.5 percent of Baby Boomer respondents said that at some point in their careers they were offered business favors in return for sex. That number dropped to 16.7 percent among the youngest group of meeting planner respondents.

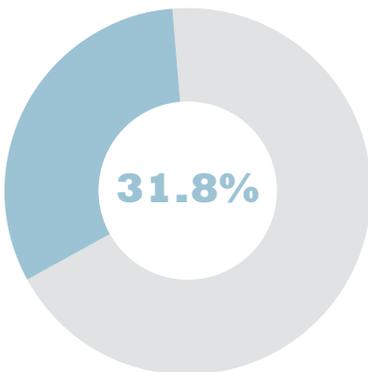
Many point to the availability of free-flowing alcohol as a possible contributing factor to these behaviors, with 33.1 percent of planners and 34.3 percent of suppliers saying alcohol “makes women more vulnerable to unwanted advances,” and about 40 percent of both groups saying it could possibly be a factor.

75%

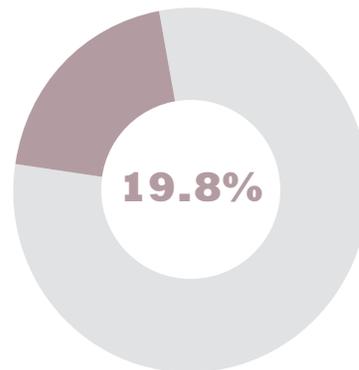
of Baby Boomer female suppliers responded that they have been offered business in return for sex

12%

of GenX female suppliers responded that they have been offered business in return for sex



of planners approached human resources about incidents of sexual harassment or an uncomfortable/hostile atmosphere at work



of suppliers approached human resources about incidents of sexual harassment or an uncomfortable/hostile atmosphere at work