

Women in Meetings & Incentives

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Women in Meetings & Incentives

BY PREVUE STAFF

Prevue's survey of women, conducted in partnership with the Society for Incentive Travel Excellence (SITE)'s Women IN Leadership Committee, confirms that the glass ceiling above the meetings and incentives industry remains more or less intact. Women still have a long way to go when it comes to salary disparity and taking their place in the top roles at many companies. Half of the respondents reported that just a third of C-Level/Senior Management positions in their companies are occupied by women, and 24% said that 10% or fewer of top positions were held by women.

In fact, when asked if they have ever been in a job where they believed their gender would prohibit them from advancing any further, more than half (58%) of respondents said yes. Of those who said yes, 77% were meeting planners vs. suppliers.

When Prevue asked that same question to meeting industry planners and suppliers in 2018, just under half of respondents answered yes.

The disparity is also evident when it comes to salary, with half of the respondents saying they believed they are not paid at an equal rate as men in the same position.

Though #MeToo has had a positive effect when it comes to sexual harassment awareness, more respondents to this survey

than not said they had been sexually harassed. When Prevue asked that same question to meeting industry planners and suppliers in 2018, the results were slightly higher, at 56%.

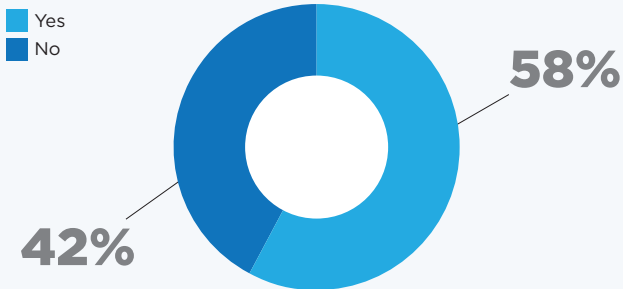
One respondent, who asked to remain anonymous, still recalls multiple incidents of harassment decades ago when she was in her mid-20s, from a manager who was practically three times her age. "It was a male-dominated industry, and I was working with a group of engineers. I literally did not know what to do. I wanted to report him, but I didn't want to risk losing my job. And when I finally went to our head of HR, she was extremely uncomfortable with the exchange."

It was a couple of years later that her company finally put a sexual harassment training program into place. "I recall him joking about it as he sat in the audience during the training. I'm glad those days are over in most companies."

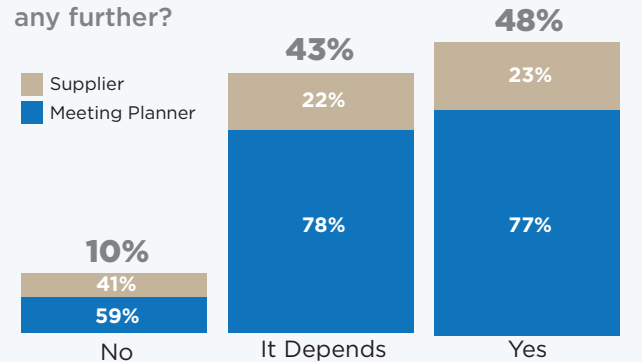
Work/Life Balance

Since COVID, there has been a greater awareness of work/life balance, and survey results mirror that trend for women in this industry: 44% responded that they feel they have adequate work-life balance, and 42% said it was somewhat adequate. Only 14% did not feel their situation was balanced—a

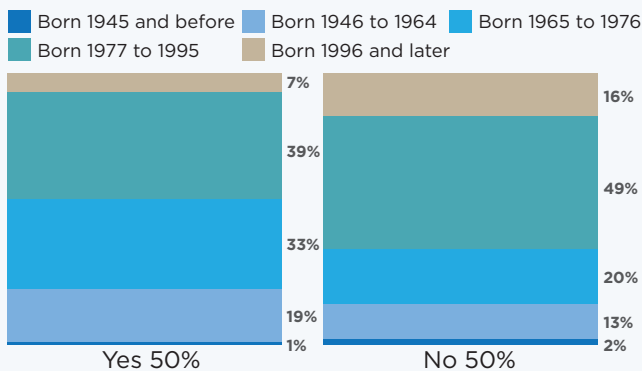
Have you ever been in a job where you believed your gender would prohibit you from advancing any further?



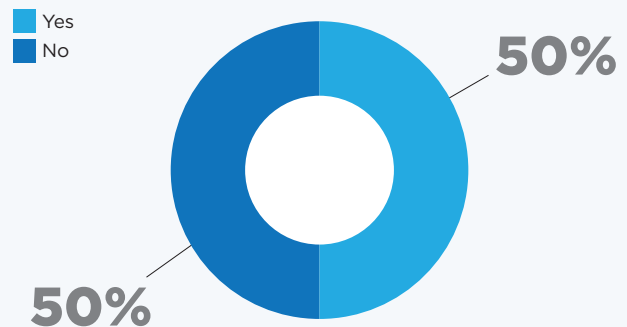
Have you ever been in a job where you believed your gender would prohibit you from advancing any further?



Do you believe you are paid equally as men in similar positions in your company?



Do you believe you are paid equally as men in similar positions in your company?



surprisingly low number for such a demanding industry, on both the planner and supplier sides.

When asked how flexible their employers have been when they needed to take time off to care for a child/parent/loved one, almost half of respondents said "Very Flexible" and a little over a third said "Somewhat Flexible." Only 19 people said their employers were "Not Flexible." The same was true with taking time off for illness. When asked how flexible their employers were, only 10% said they were not accommodating.

"Work/life balance will always be a challenge, especially for those who are high achievers," says Rhonda Brewer, CIS, CITP, VP of Sales at Motivation Excellence and a founding member of SITE's Women IN Leadership Committee. "We want to be our best in everything we do, and when you have that drive, balance will always be difficult. You have to learn how to prioritize and understand where you can give and take.

"Your family should always come first and there will be times when it doesn't feel that way. You have to learn how to not be so hard on yourself, and most important, that work/life balance is more about work/life management. The two need to coexist to be successful."

Mentorship is at the core of SITE's Women IN Leadership Committee, and the survey results show that this practice is alive and well among respondents. A full 77% of respondents said they rely on female mentors/advisers to learn and grow in their careers, and 86% said they mentor/advise other women in their careers.

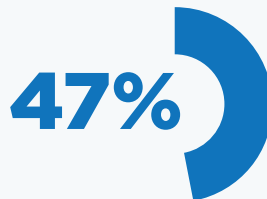
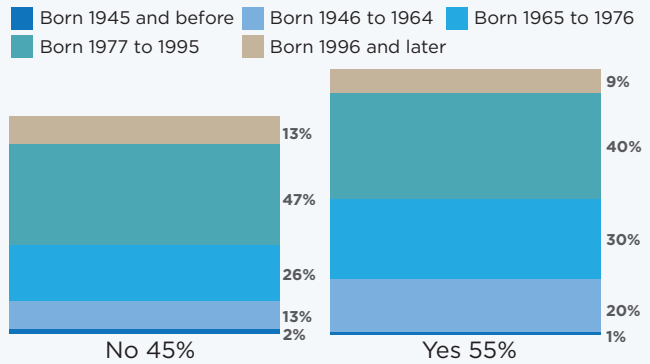
Anne Marie Rogers, CIS, CTP, Director, Meetings, Incentive & Events at Direct Travel and Chair of SITE's Women IN Leadership Committee, has seen this firsthand with the committee's mentoring program. "It was designed as a program where more experienced career women could share knowledge with emerging young leaders, but it really is a two-way mentorship where we all learn from each other."

The lessons she learned from mentors have shaped who she is today. "As I try to share some of the industry knowledge I have learned with my mentees, I am so impressed with how smart, strong, confident and curious they are, and how much I can learn from them!" she said. "This truly underscores the importance of always being openminded and being on a quest to learn new things at every point in our careers."



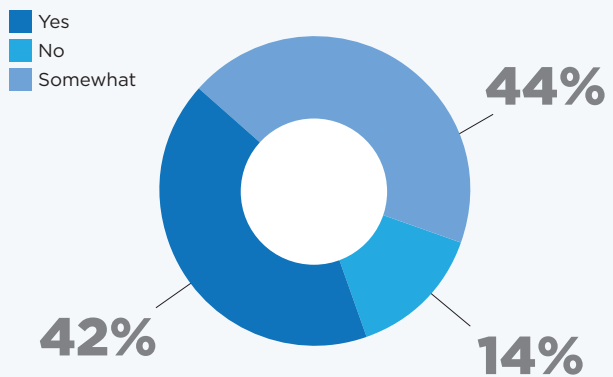
of respondents reported having been sexually harassed at some point in their careers

Have you ever been sexually harassed during your career?

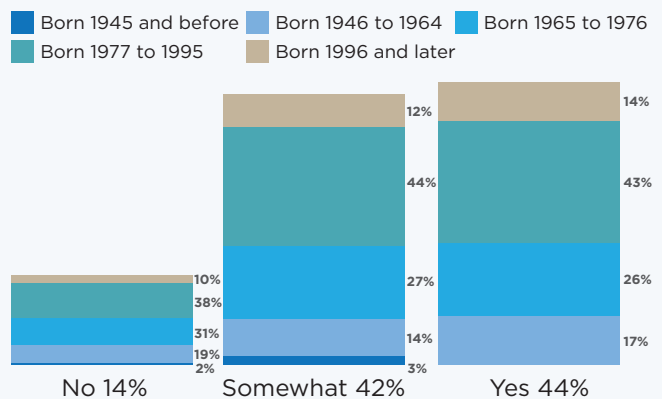


of respondents said they would take unpaid time off to spend more time with their families

Do you feel you have adequate work/life balance?



Do you feel you have adequate work/life balance?



Methodology

There were 302 respondents to Prevue's Women in Meetings + Incentives survey, which was deployed in July of 2024. 228 were meeting planners and 74 were suppliers. Of the respondents, the majority were Middle Management (39%), followed by 27% in Top Management, 16% with the title of C-Level Executive/Owner and just 4% in Administrative/Support positions. The respondents had a high level of meeting and incentive industry experience: Half had more than 15 years and 11% had 21+ years in the business.



From being one of the top cities for women in legislation to being consistently ranked in the top ten for share of women-owned businesses, Seattle is a beacon for female leaders.

Commitment to Women-Owned Businesses

Seattle was ranked the #1 city for women entrepreneurs in 2023. Beyond the numbers, many of the women-led brands in Seattle influence the city's culture—from local favorites like Fran's Chocolates, led by Fran Bigelow, to nationally recognized brands like Sub Pop Records, helmed by CEO Megan Jasper.

Visit Seattle has made it a practice to frequently connect convention groups with local, women-owned suppliers to help enrich the attendee experience. For instance, Visit Seattle worked with the Refugee Artisan Initiative—a nonprofit that provides training to refugee and immigrant women—to supply more than 3,000 upcycled bags for the APEC Senior Officials' and Ministerial Meetings (SOM 3), held in Seattle last July.

Commitment to Uplifting Women

Visit Seattle is also a founding partner of the PCMA Ascent program, which promotes diversity and inclusion across the business events industry. Visit Seattle's SEA for SHE initiative celebrates the accomplishments of women across the industry by inviting them to select "Badges of Honor" that represent their unique strengths.

Whether your event has a strong female attendee base, or you seek to underscore the impact of women in your industry, Seattle creates a powerful, inclusive backdrop for your meeting. Dig in and learn more at SEAforSHE.org.

About Visit Seattle

Visit Seattle has served as the official destination marketing organization (DMO) for Seattle and King County for more than 50 years. A 501(c)(6) organization, Visit Seattle enhances the economic prosperity of the region through global destination branding along with competitive programs and campaigns in leisure travel marketing, convention sales, and overseas tourism development.

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