# How effective are events within the IT industry?

Over the past few years we have noticed that there has been a significant move towards planning and hosting events in the IT industry. This raised a number of questions here at TechKnow.Online. What is the real driving force? Who is being targeted? Is the event market becoming saturated? Are they worthwhile and is ROI being recorded? We decided to conduct a survey of senior contacts within the IT channel to build a picture of how events are being utilised.

This is what we discovered…

Survey response breakdown and comment:

What types of events will be run in 2016?
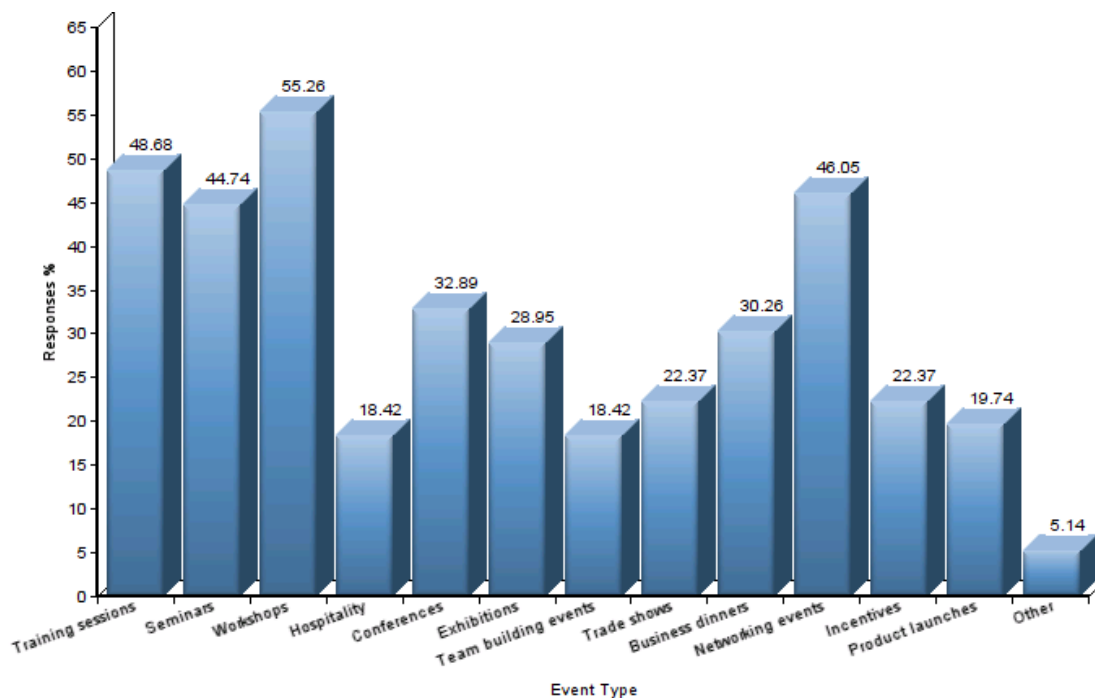
As you can see, there is an even split as to what type of events are planned for 2016. The most popular event types are training sessions, seminars and workshops, with around **50%** of all respondents planning to run such events in 2016.

How many events does each company plan to run in 2016?
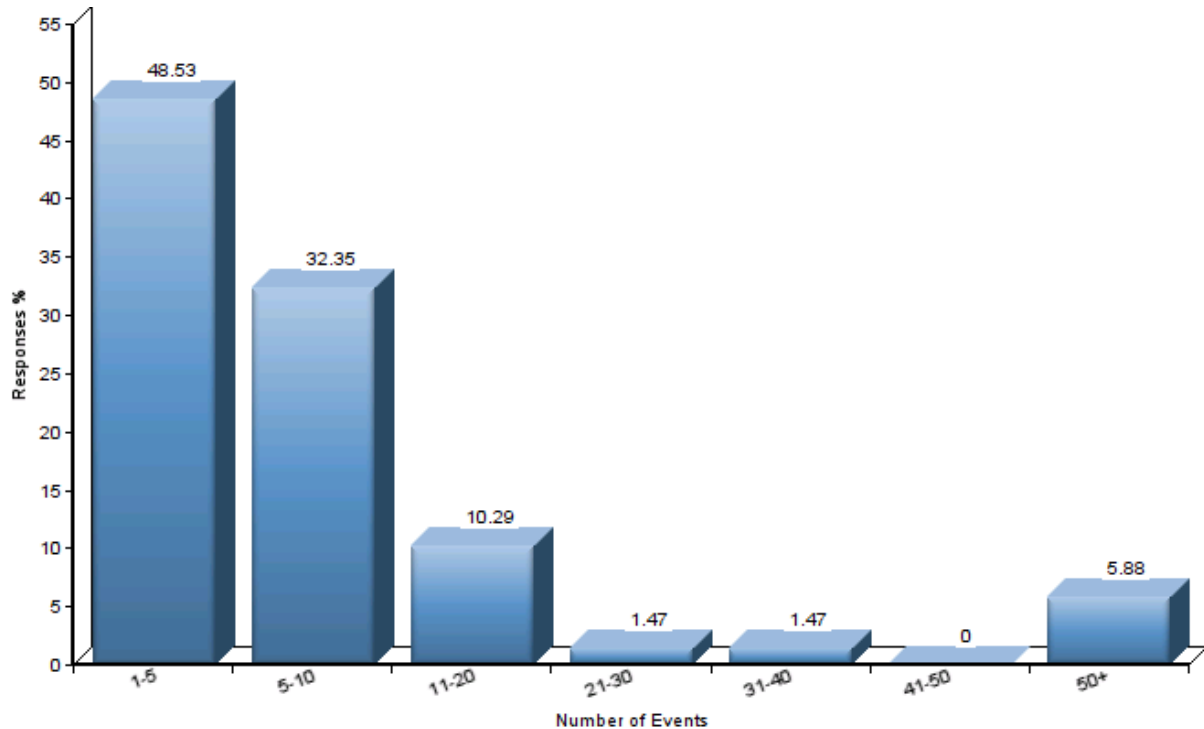
Running approximately 1 event every 2 months seems to be the trend within the channel with a huge **80%** of respondents stating that they plan to carry out between 1 and 10 events in 2016. This isn't wholly surprising considering the drain on resources events can be, however, with training, workshops and seminars being the most popular types of events being run we expected this to be slightly higher as these have a lower delivery cost.

Will the capital spend on events increase, or decrease, in 2016?

10%

The positive shift towards events is showing little sign of declining with only **10%** of all respondents believing that their spend on events in 2016 would decrease. This serves to reinforce the popularity and perceived value of events within the IT channel.

On average, how many attendees do you hope to attract to each event?

Considering the complexity, cost and logistics of larger events and that training, workshops and seminars were the most popular event type, it doesn't come as much of a surprise that a high percentage of respondents (**82%**) were expecting to attract less than 50 attendees per event.

82%
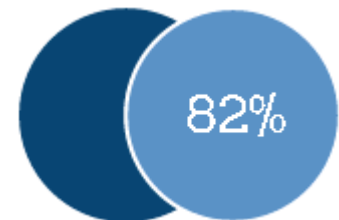
12% of respondents are hoping to attract over 200 attendees per event, these are likely to be larger organisations with a significant internal communications or sales function.

## What type of audience do your events target?
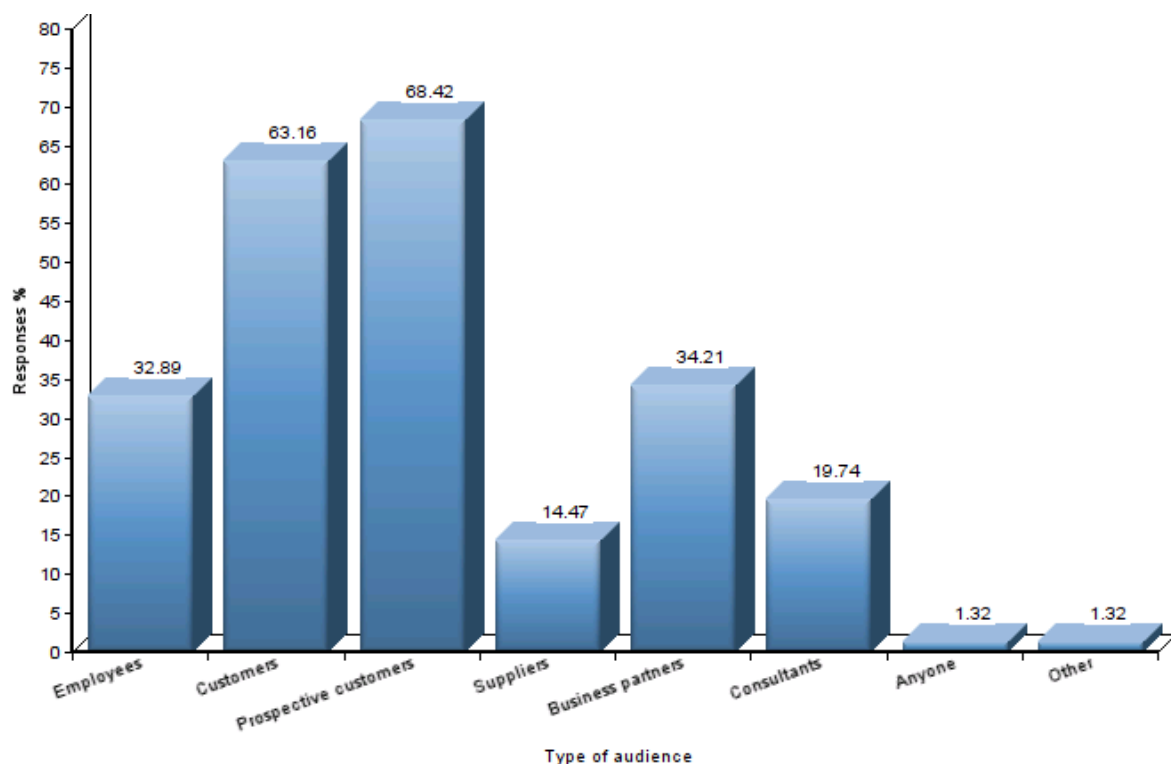
As you can see **68%** of respondents run events for prospective customers. This is only slightly higher than the number of people who run events for their current customer base. This activity does support the statistic that it is much easier to generate business from your existing customer base than to find new customers and therefore event budget is better spent consolidating and up/cross selling rather than trying to attract new customers.

## In which geographical areas do you organise events?

It came as no surprise that the organisations we surveyed ran the majority of their events (**84%**) within the UK. Very few go overseas but those that do are evenly split between Europe and the rest of the world.

## What challenges do event organisers face when planning events?
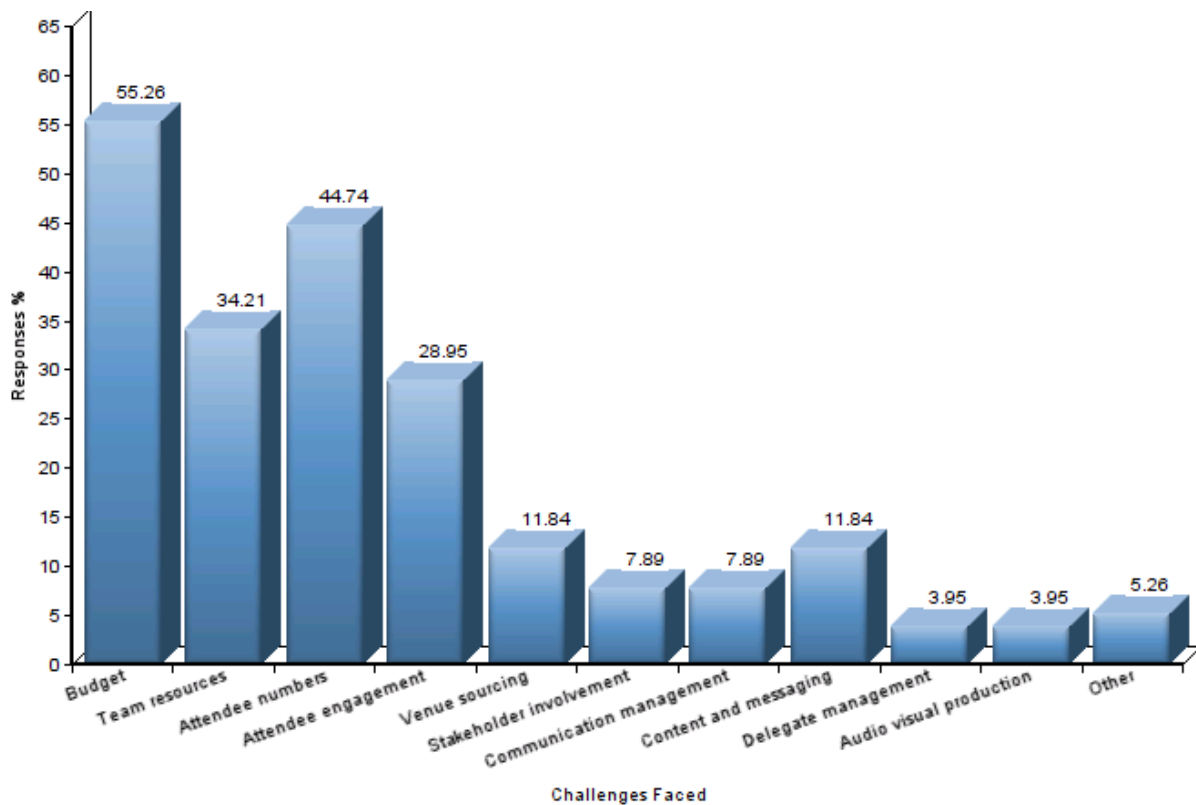
The biggest challenge facing event organisers is budget, with **62%** of respondents endorsing this. Second on the list of challenges was 'attendee numbers' (**51%**) and then 'team resource' (**39%**). These 3 challenges dominating selections underline the general feeling within the marketing industry that budget and resource can be significant obstacles to delivery and generating ROI.

If you ran events in 2015, did you see a good return on investment?

40%
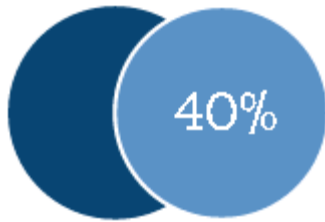
13% of respondents didn't see a return on investment on the events they ran in 2015. But with over **40%** claiming that they have seen proven ROI, it is clear why running events is as popular as ever and we expect this trend to increase in 2016.

## How do you drive attendance to your events?
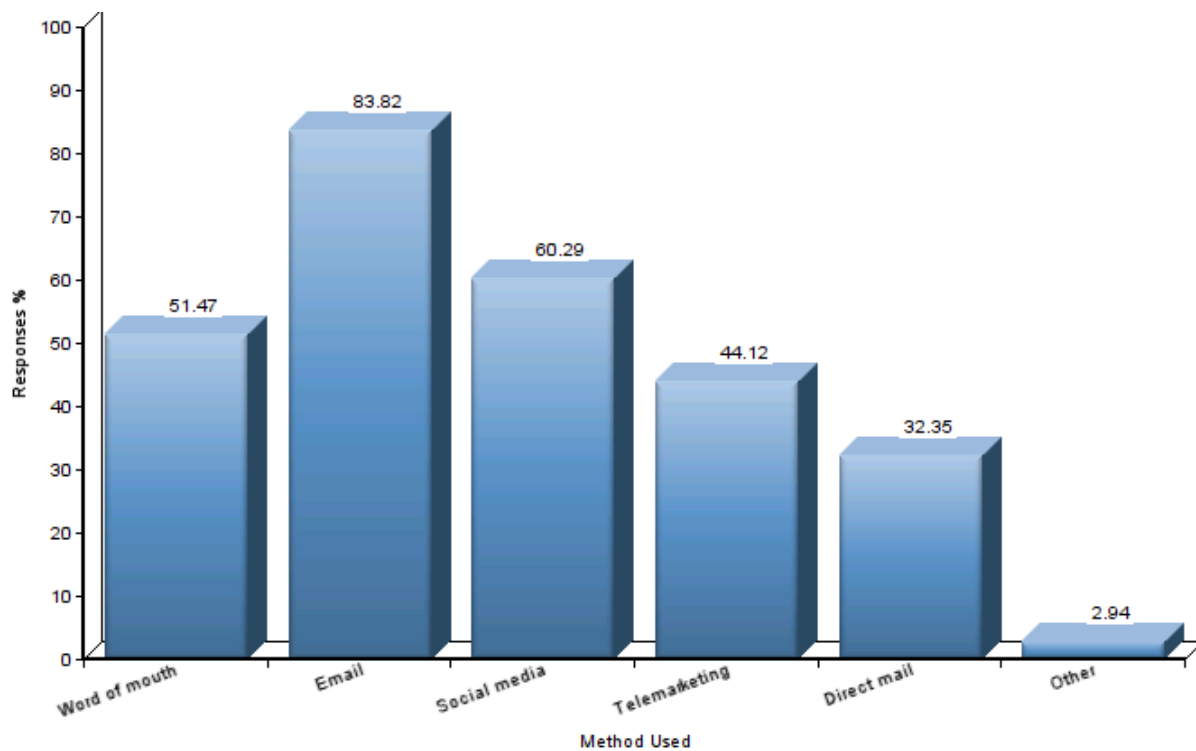
Email is still the dominant force when it comes to driving attendance to events, with 84% of respondents using this medium. Social media is next with over **60%** which goes to show how much it has been adopted in recent years and how it has now become a ubiquitous force in event management and promotion.

We issue a note of caution here as although respondents are stating that they drive attendance to their events through these various mediums, the results don't reflect how successful each method is. It could be argued that telemarketing could be more successful because of the human to human factor, but because of its cost implications, this method is less widely adopted.

Do you organise events in-house or use an external agency?

Organising events in-house is clearly the preferred option in the IT industry with over **73%** of respondents stating their internal marketing teams deliver events. Whether this is due to preference or budget it is difficult to determine, however, and this does reinforce the fact that 'team resource' is a challenge when organising events.

73%
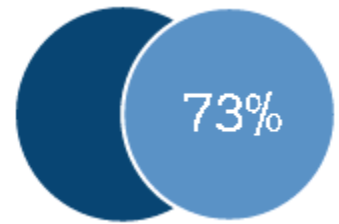
Do you use any event management or marketing automation software?

31%
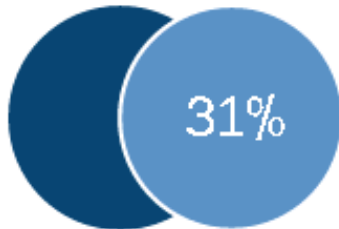
It's surprising how few IT organisations haven't adopted event management or marketing automation software with only **31%** of respondents using it. This again reinforces the drain running an event has on resources, when identifying the challenges organisations face. It would be interesting to see how the responses and trends would differ if more companies were to use event management or marketing automation software.

Conclusion:

Running events seems as popular as ever in the IT industry and this trend is showing little sign of slowing. It's interesting to learn that organisations are targeting current clients just as much as prospective clients and seem to favour running educational type events over showcase type, larger scale and larger budget events.

It came as no surprise that budget, attendee numbers and team resource dominated the challenges faced when running events, however, these challenges seem to be compensated by a high percentage of organisations receiving good ROI. We would expect to see an increase in organisations adopting event management and marketing automation tools to alleviate the 'team resource' issue over the coming months/years, especially if they have a growing event schedule and are targeted on delivering consistent ROI.