



**THE
JOY
OF
RESEARCH**

**Membership &
Marketing Research**

**Georgia Society of
Association Executives**

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Overview

- In this session:
 - ◆ We will discuss the reasons why we need to ask questions ... surveys, interviews, focus groups ...
 - ◆ then apply what we learn to deliver greater value
- This entails
 - ◆ How to ask some of the key questions
 - ◆ When and whom to ask
 - ◆ How to analyze and communicate what we learn
 - ◆ We will present/discuss varied examples, mini-case studies of organizations translating 'research into value'

My Viewpoint/Perspective ...

- My perspective & case studies come from:
 - ◆ Nonprofits: 20-year veteran of federal government, large associations, large charities.
 - ◆ Academic: 2 PhD programs in economics/industrial org. Faculty at Loyola College, instructor at Institute (W & NE).
 - ◆ Service provider: Former marketing agency account director, conducted research studies for 100+ orgs as a consultant.
 - ◆ Marketing & research perspectives:
 - Conducting primary research (quantitative/qualitative)
 - Conducting association audits (marcom, conferences)
 - Data mining
 - Managing marketing campaigns (membership, conferences)





AMERICAN OSTEOPATHIC ASSOCIATION



Nonprofit Federation



First, A Word About Why



How Research Can Create Value

- Specific Products: Compensation, operations, profit & loss, economic conditions studies.
- Program Support: Documenting common business or professional practices & impediments for advocacy programs, issue identification.
- Decision Support: Helping Boards make right, fact based decisions on program launches, sunsets, dues levels, etc.
- Background: Documenting membership profile, populating demographic database, supporting trend analysis.

Decisions that Need Data

Decisions, decisions...

- Staff up/down
- Do more/less
- Do something new/
drop something old
- Do something different

Implications *(if done right)*

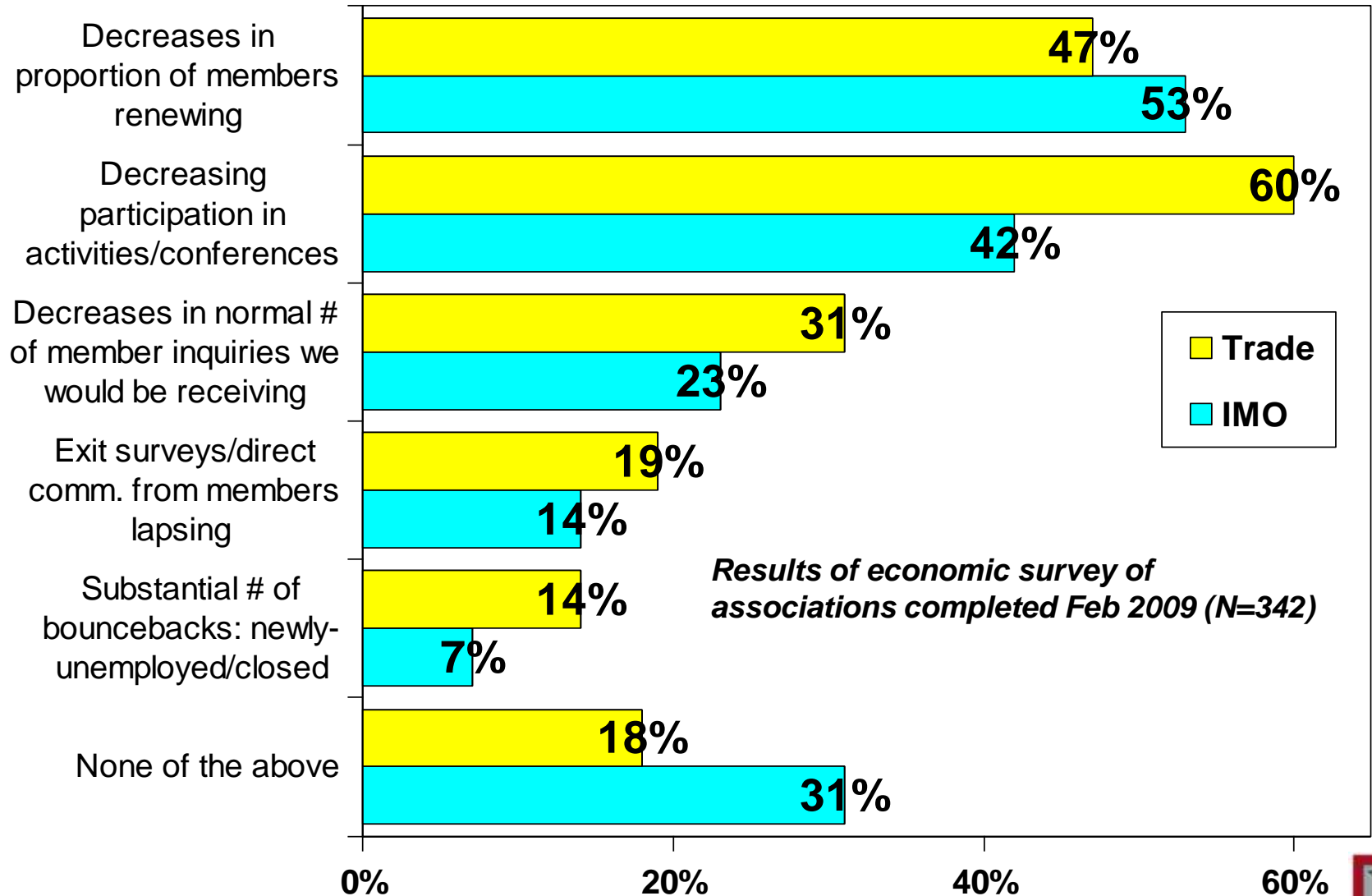
- More effectiveness; better ROI
Greater value in “bundle”
- Better focus, minimal fallout
- Launch excitement, greater
relevance & footprint
- Cut budgets/free resources, retool
the service portfolio
- Demonstrate responsiveness, be
dynamic in the face of change

Many of Us Are at a Crossroads

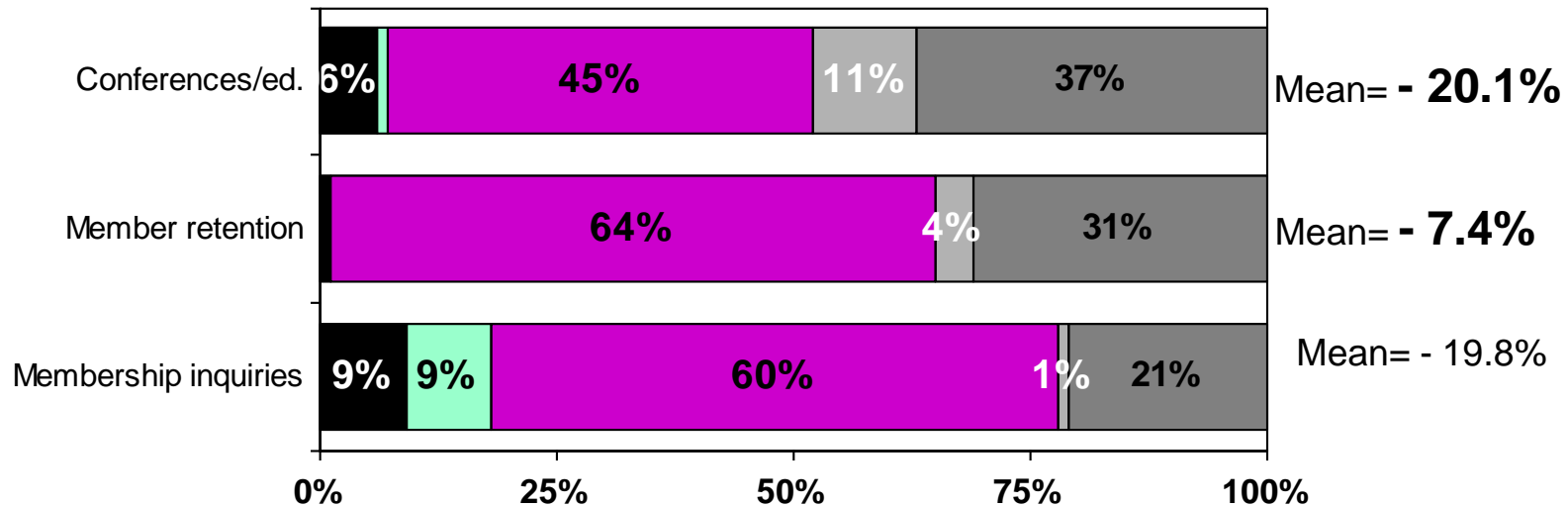
AKA: "It's the Economy, Stupid"



Recent Changes Seen in Membership Due to Economy



How The Economy Has Hit Us Where It Hurts



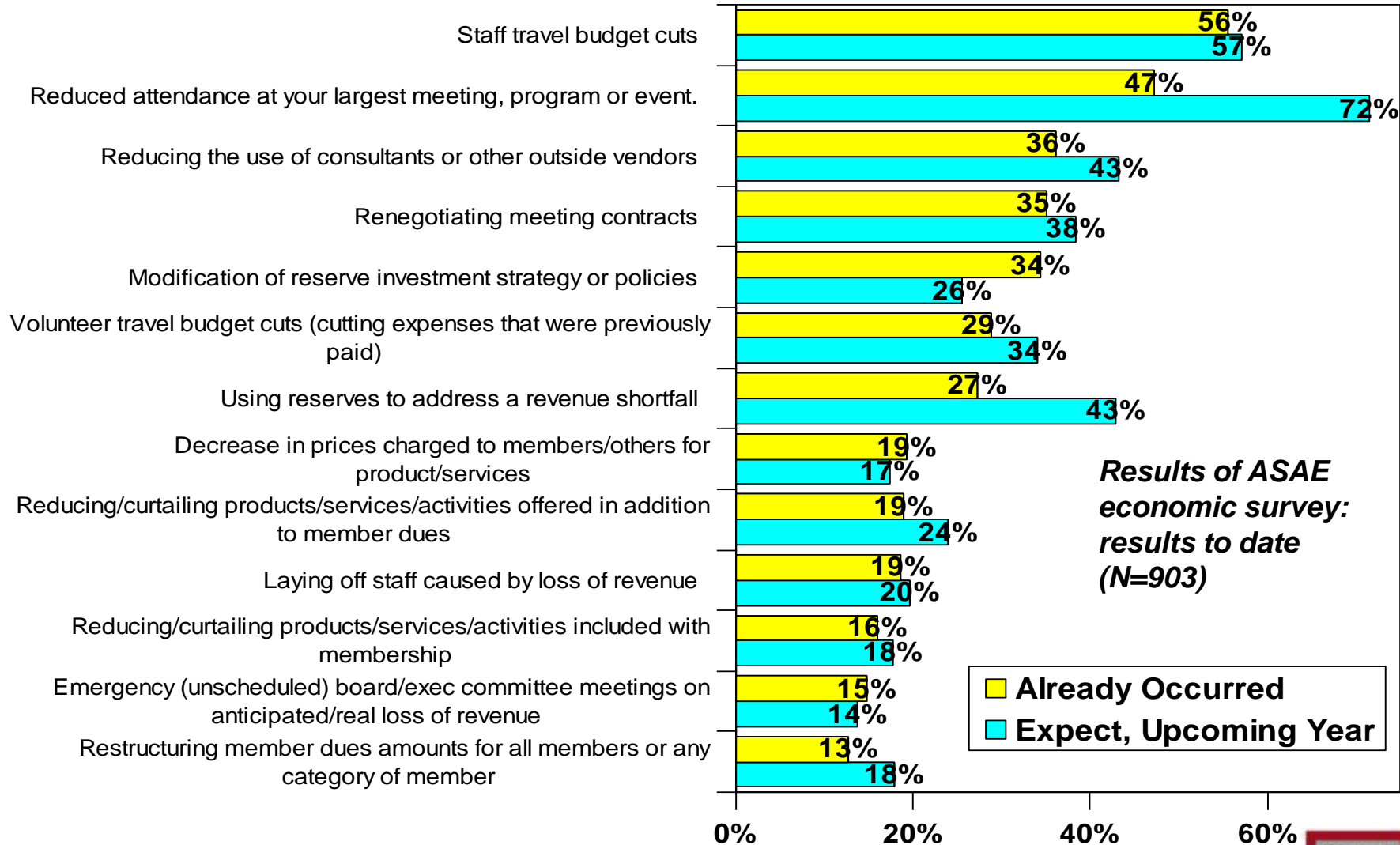
	Membership inquiries	Member retention	Conferences/ed.
■ Significant decrease	21%	31%	37%
■ Moderate decrease	1%	4%	11%
■ Slight decrease	60%	64%	45%
■ About same	9%	0%	1%
■ Increase	9%	1%	6%

Average change in bouncebacks due to unemployed, out of business: ↑ 13%

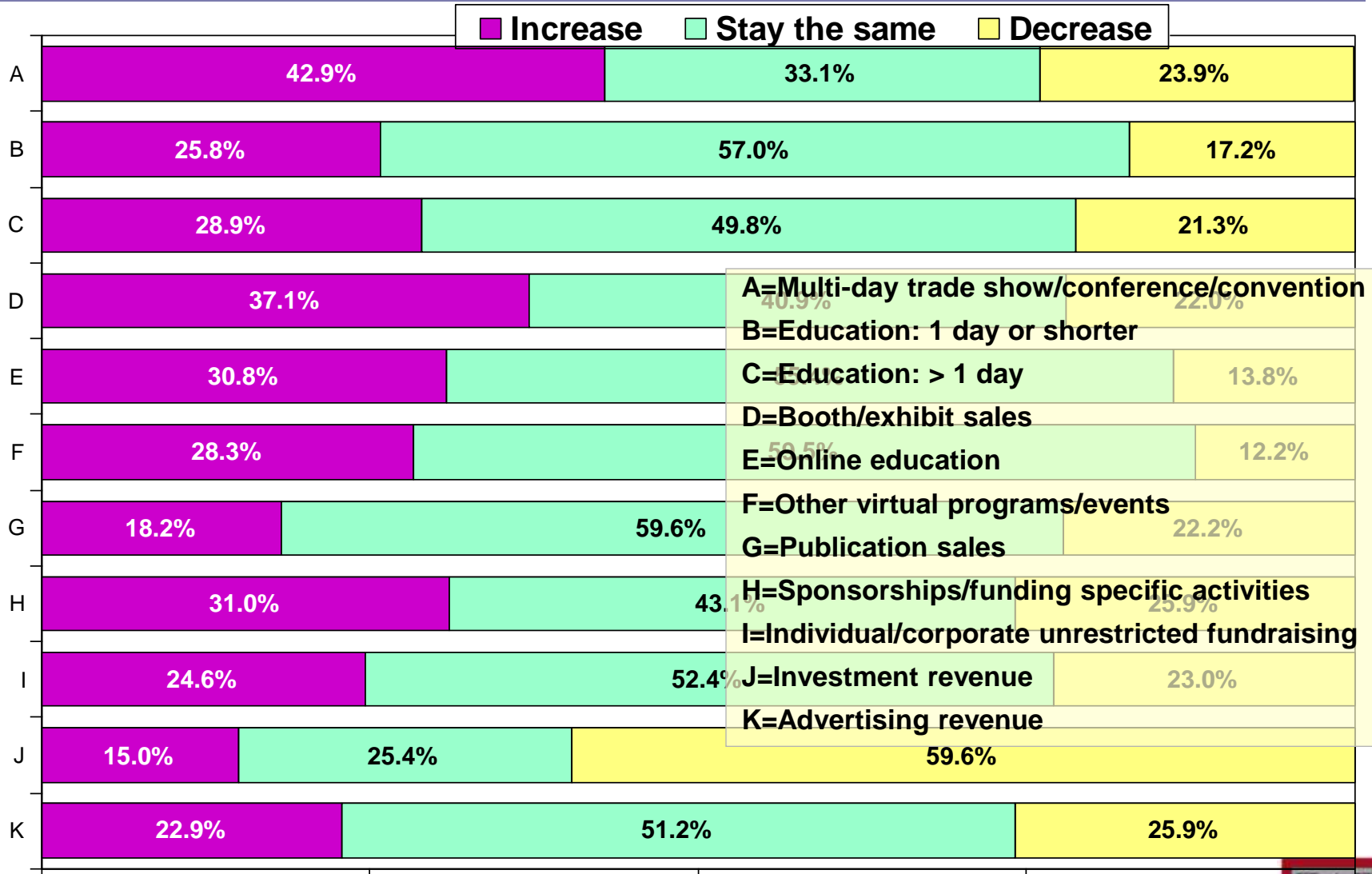
Average change in exit surveys referencing the economy: ↑ 38%



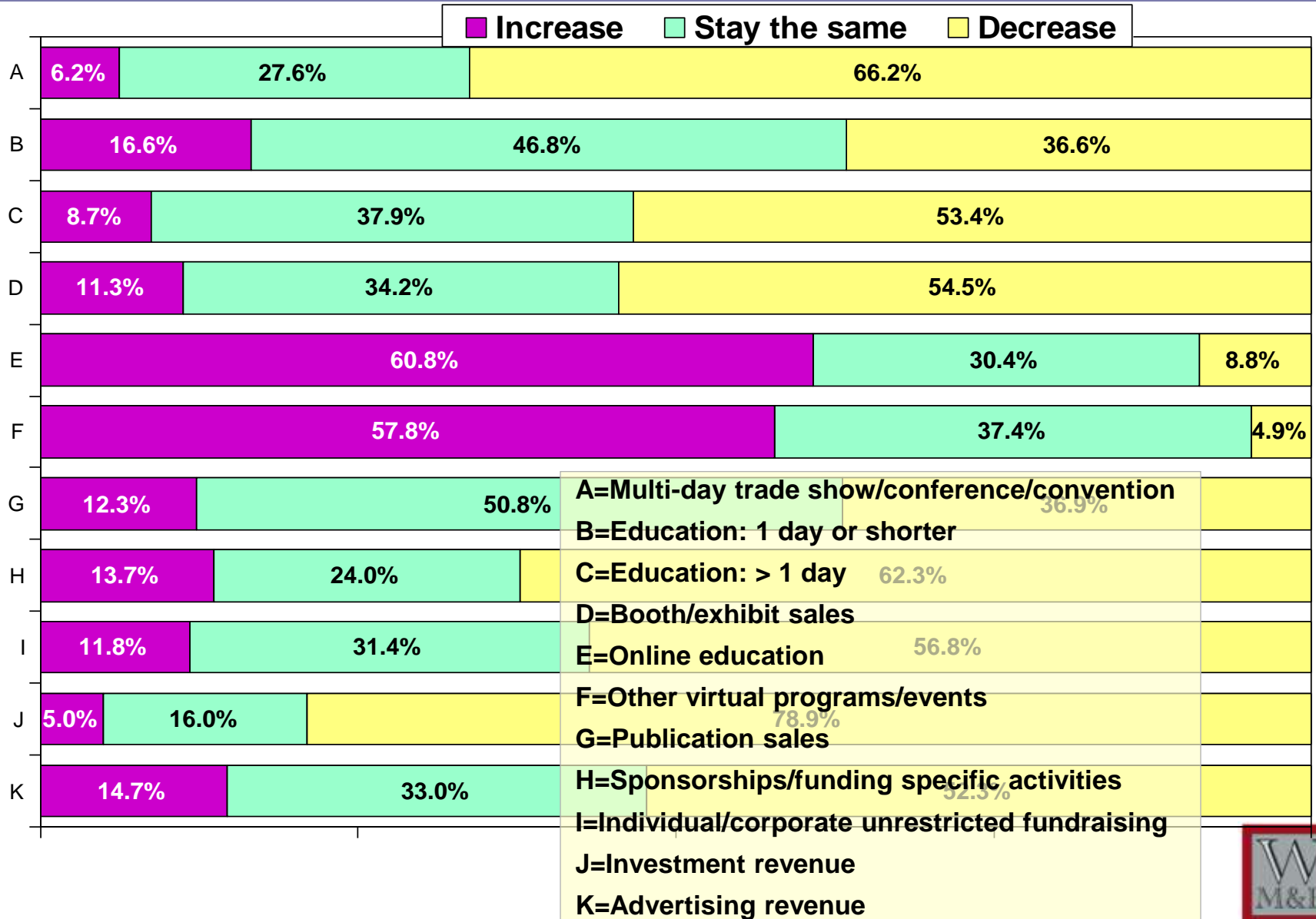
Expected Changes Driven by Economy, This Year



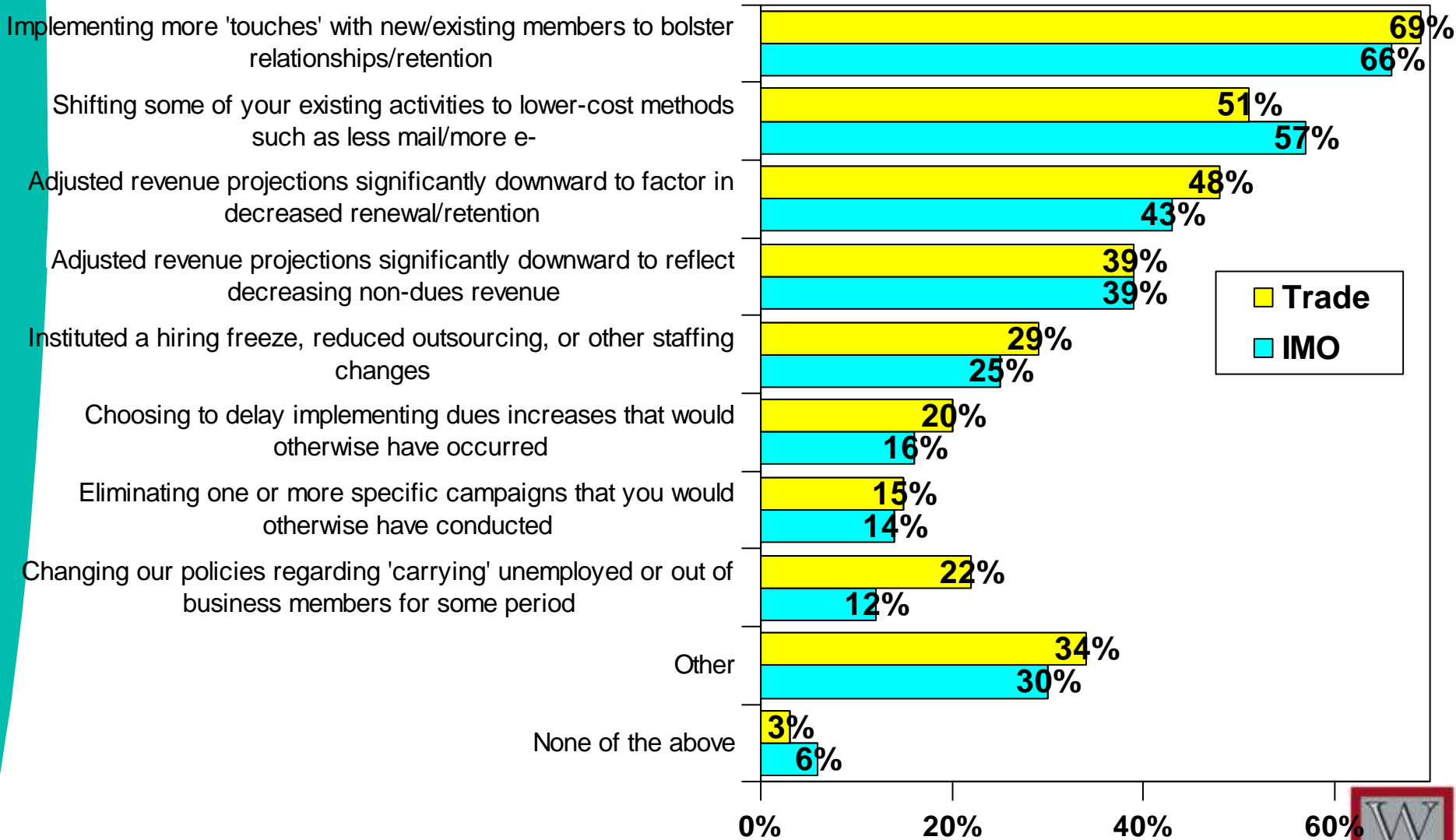
Specific Areas of Revenue Change, Past Year



Expected Areas of Change, This Year



Actions Taken or Planned to Address Lowered Expectations



How Change Affects the “Association Industry”

- ◆ Economic impact on our members:
driven by unemployment, expense cuts, policy changes
- ◆ Flows through budgets, with a somewhat delayed reaction
 - Downside: affects non-dues revenue sources (conferences, other education, publications), dues income (lower retention, fewer new/acquisition members)
 - Upsides: Creates greater needs for effective programming; gives us an “excuse” to streamline and re-evaluate
 - Long-term: Possible mergers, ‘rightsizing’ staff & budgets
- ◆ Key roles for your association: more critical now
Content Aggregator, Mentor, Lead/Employment Clearinghouse
- ◆ Fundamentals: dynamics driven by internet, 2.0, generational trends
 - Increasing importance of networking
 - Value of information may be temporarily lower in a “free media” world
 - Depth/severity of reaction depends on “our” economy



Case Studies/Vignettes: How Associations Address Problems with Research



Examples of Good Research (*mine, anyway*)

Membership Audit: Relocated, 4 years' new E.D., great turnaround.

- Key Questions: What is our image today? How much and how should we spend over time on membership marketing? How should we spend now, given the economy?
- Methods: Stakeholder interviews with staff. Review materials.
- Outcomes: Adjust budget/spending levels. Adjust forecasts of performance. Encourage strong outreach to help announce “we have arrived” to non-members.



Strategic Planning: State IMO needs to “data-feed” its strategic plan.

- Issues: Maintain/improve relevance. Grow market penetration. Translate successful tradition of service delivery into greater value.
- Key Questions: Determining key sources of value. Identifying who belongs to national AICPA, local chapters. How do members define expectations on each level?
- Methods: Personal interviews with top leaders, some rank-and-file, all senior staff. Conduct online/print surveys among sample of members & non-members.



Examples: an SAE and a Trade

Member Census: Society merges chapters 5 years ago: assess quality/challenge

- Issues: Sacramento, Los Angeles, San Diego, San Francisco distinct markets
How are members/vendors served in this environment?
- Key Questions: How to get members to attend? How to build community across the state?
- Methods: Online surveys of member/non-member primary/associate members and personal interviews.
- Outcomes: Survey findings overall, by region, member status and type. Also element of “teach us to fish” that helps ensure future in-house, efficient data collection.



Readership/Media: Trade association determines # of members “going digital.”

- Issues: Needs assessment for Board review: several very specific, excellent questions.
- Key Questions: How many have substituted electronic for print professional resources in recent past? How many plan to shift some learning from face to face to distance learning (CD/online)?
- Methods: Online/print surveys of members/non-members. Just a few questions in a much larger study. Modules provide opportunity to measure targeted information.
- Outcomes: Showed that RBMA, others are “training” members away from print, many non-members resistant. Far fewer plan to migrate to newer education formats.



Examples: Federation & an IMO

National/Chapter Report Card: Assess membership, apprenticeship, other programs in 90-chapter federation.

- Issues: Local associations collect dues, dominate the member relationship; repurpose national content. How do we assess/improve value?
- Key Questions: How and why members value each level?
- Methods: Survey local staff/officers, current/never-members: “report card” on services at both levels.
- Outcomes: Long survey with spectacular response. Provides basis for identifying “strong/weak” (i.e. supportive) local assns.



Conference Planning: Why non-attendees avoid major event.

- Issues: ACR Annual Scientific Meeting draws well but some never attend.
- Key Questions: Why don't they attend; what can be done to draw them?
- Methods: Identify and invite select group to attend (free travel and registration) who wouldn't have otherwise. Conduct focus group and secondary analysis of past educational needs survey.
- Outcomes: Impediments vary by basic scientists & clinicians; culture/community; new features and copy/messaging.



Finally, Some “How-to’s”



Mechanics: Techniques & Methods

- It is easy to do bad research
 - ◆ But it's better than not doing any at all
 - ◆ Learn from your mistakes, and the mistakes of others
- We'll describe the steps ...
 - ◆ and how to avoid mistakes



Key Steps in Qualitative Research

- Plan**
 - Define objectives: identify unmet information needs, collect dangling hypotheses, poll stakeholders.
- Guide**
 - Draft series of core questions, sub-questions or probes, ground rules and introductory language. Review guide for completeness, reasonableness, flexibility and length. Vary by audience.
- Sample**
 - Identify a pool of appropriate participants. Ensure a mix for interviews, in terms of demographics and engagement profile (leaders and rank-and-file). Ensure homogeneity for focus groups when helpful to encourage candid conversation.
- Recruit**
 - Draft invitations, record confirmations, do reminders/other followup with desirable non-respondents to yield representative group.
- Conduct**
 - At scheduled interview time or focus group time/location, manage the session. Interviews are often 30 minutes, focus groups 90.
- Analyze**
 - Transcribe the sessions if possible, then categorize by primary themes, pull call-out quotes. Seek to explain some findings in terms of demographics, other causal factors.
- Report**
 - Write a report/presentation that summarizes overall findings including additional questions that inevitably arise.



Key Steps in Surveying

- Plan**
 - Define objectives: identify unmet information needs, collect dangling hypotheses, poll stakeholders.
- Draft**
 - Hire or assign task: write questions and response items, compile and prioritize vis a vis final objectives.
- Design**
 - Once reviewed, select software, convert questions to its format.
- Pre-test**
 - Draft invitation and reminder language, and administer with small, randomly-selected group selected from your sample or census.
- Administer**
 - Once any appropriate improvements have been made, load address book and transmit personalized invitations and reminders on a set 7-10 day schedule.
- Download**
 - Run some statistics from the survey software, then download all data including closed ended data for coding/cleaning and open-text responses to convert to a document.
- Analyze**
 - Run cross-tabulations on values such as institutional characteristics (size, type), demographics, predicted behaviors, source, satisfaction level & related attitudes.
- Report**
 - Write a report that summarizes overall findings, discusses meaningful differences by segment, embeds graphics, categorized comments and cross-tabulations.



Keeping Surveys Simple

Use good online tool

Supplement it with other info sources:

- Mail surveys (audience coverage)
- AMS data-mining
- Qualitative research:
 - focus groups
 - interviews

SurveyMonkey - My Surveys - Windows Internet Explorer

http://www.surveymonkey.com/MySurveys.aspx

SurveyMonkey.com because knowledge is everything

Logged in as "info@kwhorton.com" Log Off

Home Create Survey My Surveys Address Book My Account Help Center

Current Folder: -- View All Surveys -- Manage Folders Title Search: Search

Survey Title [sort]	Created [sort]	Modified [sort]	Design	Collect	Analyze [sort]	Clear	Delete
CLARB Candidates Final	Tue, 1/13/09 8:09 AM	7 hours ago			305		
CLARB Council Record Holders final	Tue, 1/13/09 8:23 AM	7 hours ago			618		
CLARB MBE	Wed, 12/24/08 8:16 AM	11 hours ago			47		
CLARB Candidates	Wed, 12/24/08 8:42 AM	2 days ago			23		
Short Survey	Wed, 12/31/08 6:58 AM	2 days ago			343		
CLARB Council Record Holders	Wed, 12/24/08 12:40 PM	6 days ago			10		
2007 Health Benefits Survey	Sun, 12/17/06 6:09 PM	9 days ago			826		
State of the Art Evaluation	Tue, 11/4/08 4:28 AM	59 days ago			21		
IPC Member Survey	Fri, 9/26/08 1:48 PM	92 days ago			162		
IPC Non-Member Survey	Fri, 9/26/08 2:14 PM	97 days ago			93		

Showing survey 1 - 10 of 135

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Thank You!

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