

The Events Industry Salary Survey

Middle East

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Index

Now in its second year (after 15 years of salary surveys in the UK), ESP International is delighted to bring you the annual Events Industry Salary Survey for the Middle East.

In conjunction with SourceMe, the questionnaire was sent out to over 3,000 events professionals and the respondents represented a cross section of people from all sectors of the industry, throughout the GCC. We are delighted to have seen a 40% increase in responses this year.

Whilst this allows us to get an even more accurate overview of the market and trends, it does also mean that there are significant variations in some of the answers compared to last year, from the opinions and perspective of hundreds of new and different respondents. You will see accompanying commentary where necessary to explain such changes.

In response to constructive feedback from our readers we have this year added features on the AV and 2D&3D design sectors to give an even broader market assessment. We methodically analysed the data to provide the statistics and facts you will find in this document.

The results presented in the tables, charts and accompanying statements are used and valued by employers and HR managers to benchmark against industry standards, and employees seeking affirmation that their salary is in line with their peers and industry levels.

The salary survey includes:

- Comprehensive salary comparisons across all levels of the events industry
- Detailed information about salary increases across the sector
- Analysis on education, experience and earnings of expats and GCC nationals
- Compensation and benefits, and what motivates people in events
- Commentary from industry experts on the findings and trends
- Comparisons with the 2014 version of the survey

The information in this survey is taken from people representing a range of small, medium and large companies, and also freelancers, in different countries and cities within the GCC. It is therefore important that consideration is given to different factors when comparing results.

We would like to thank all those who took the time to complete the confidential online questions, without whom we cannot conduct the research and present these figures and findings. We hope that you find this report beneficial.

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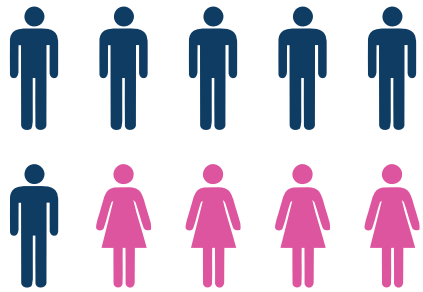
About Our Respondents

Employed	88%
Self employed	8%
Between jobs	4%

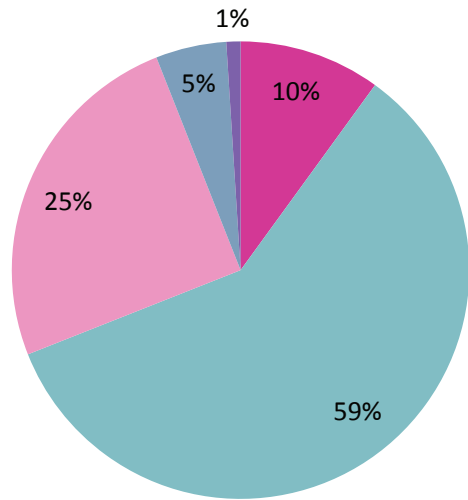
The largest proportion of respondents work within event/exhibition services

Average number of years in events is 8 - more experience leads to higher salaries

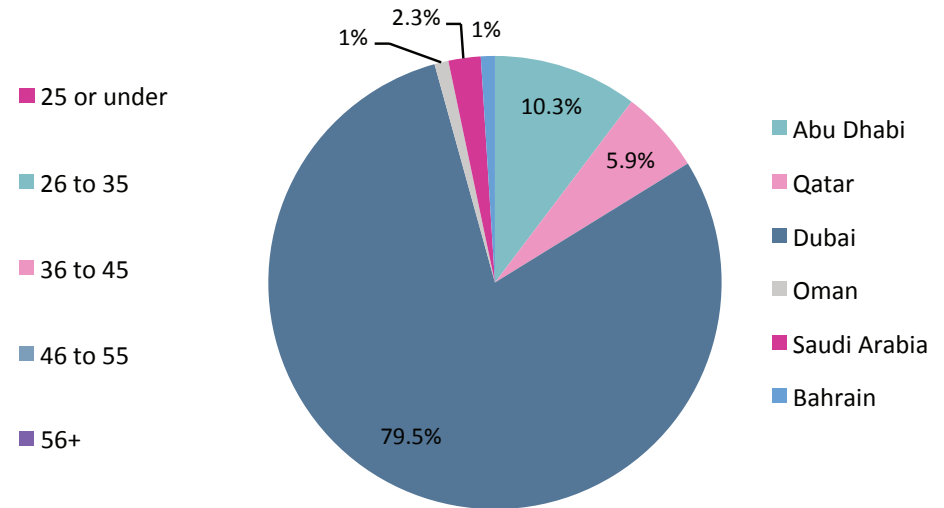
Male/female split



Age



Work location



The Lowdown

AVERAGE INCOME ACROSS THE MIDDLE EAST EVENT INDUSTRY

AED 18,193.50

The high average salary is attributed to a legacy of pre-recession salaries when the region was considered a hardship posting, and the high level of seniority and educational qualifications of respondents.

AVERAGE PAY RISE

- 44% in events received NO pay rise over the last 12 months
- 30% received between 1 and 6%
- 15% received 10% or higher
- Average pay rise across the Middle East as a whole is 5%*
- On average, the highest salaries in the region are Qatar at AED 20,300 per month, with Dubai at AED 18,795 and Abu Dhabi at AED 18,221

The Lowdown continued

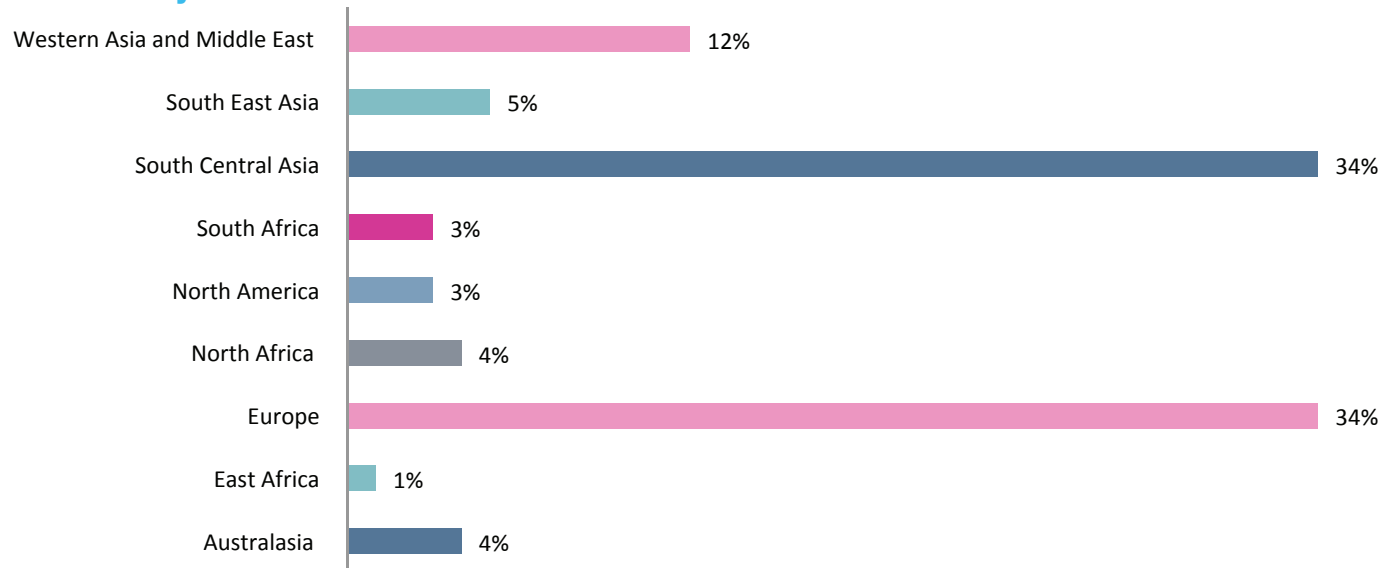
The industry in the Middle East is relatively young with 94% of our respondents being under 45

The majority of respondents were from Central Asia and the UK

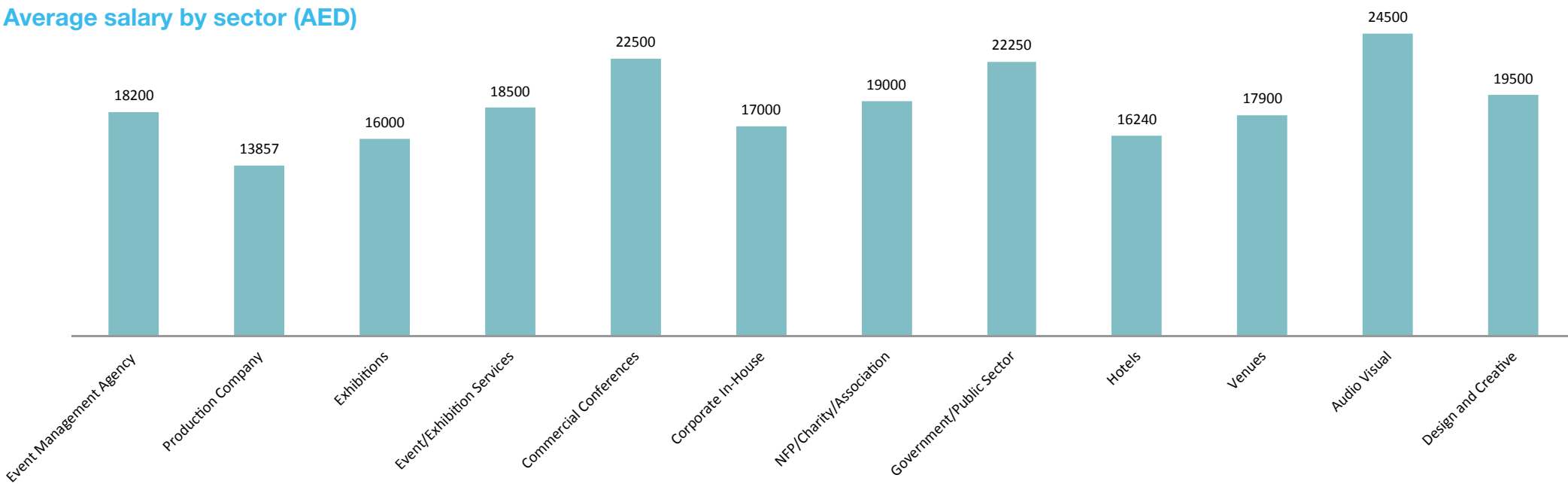
79.5% of respondents work in Dubai

76.5% of respondents are Manager/Team Leader level or above, contributing to the high average monthly income

Where are you from?



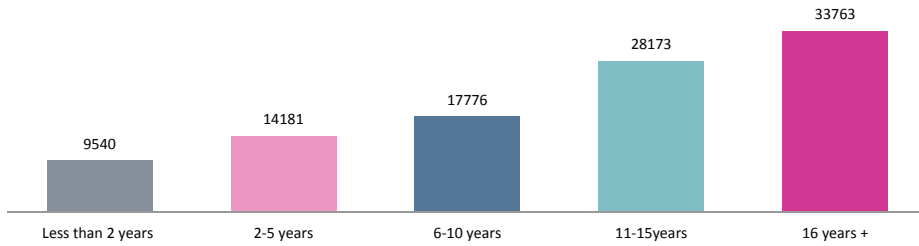
Average salary by sector (AED)



It is important to state that these average salaries are based on respondents and are not necessarily an accurate representation of the market as a whole, given that people take part from all levels of employment.

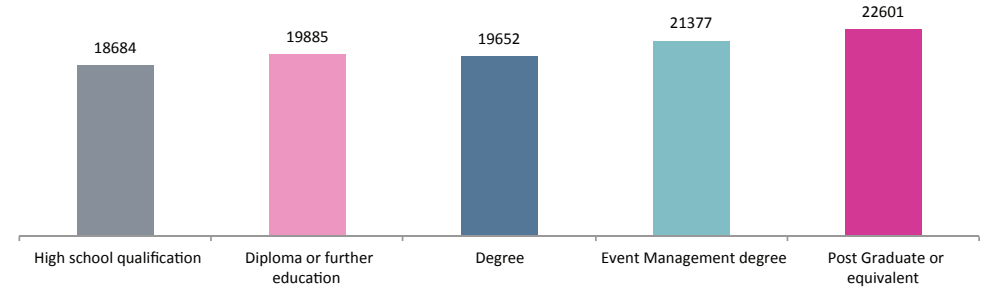
Average Salaries

Average salary vs experience



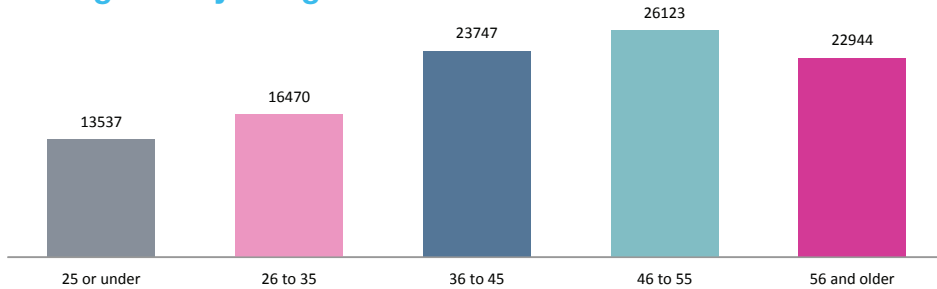
This shows a good steady upward correlation in terms of salary when workers have more experience. Please note that these are average salaries and that specific industry salary figures shown later in the report will give more accurate individual comparisons. These salaries still represent higher figures than UK salaries for the level of experience.

Average salary vs level of education



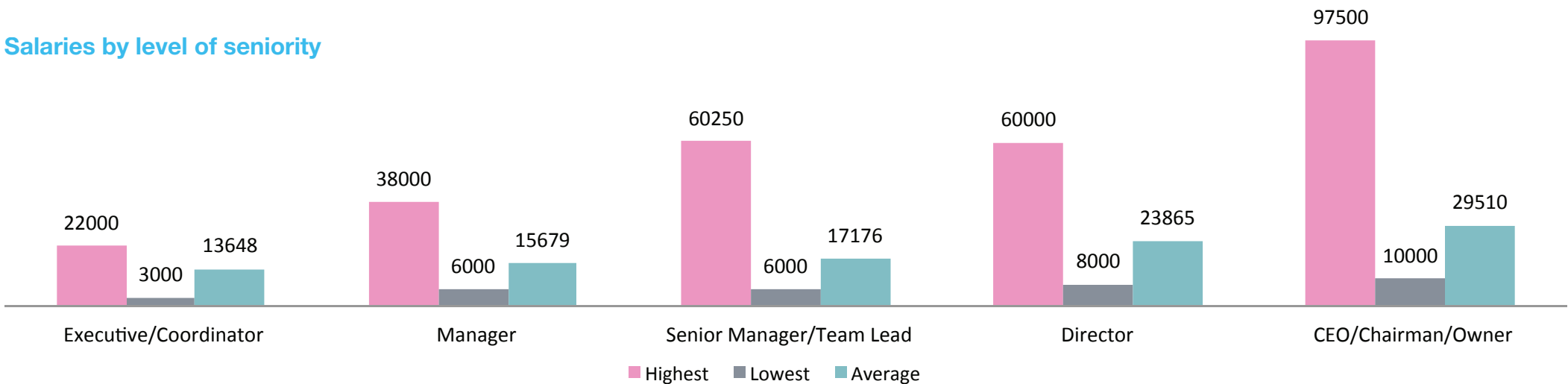
This years' figures show a positive reading for the argument that higher education pays off, and more importantly that an event management degree means slightly higher salaries. From our experience whilst degrees are not necessarily a requirement within the events profession, those that have one can fast track through the career ranks at a slightly faster pace than those without one, although this is by no means the case for everyone.

Average salary vs age



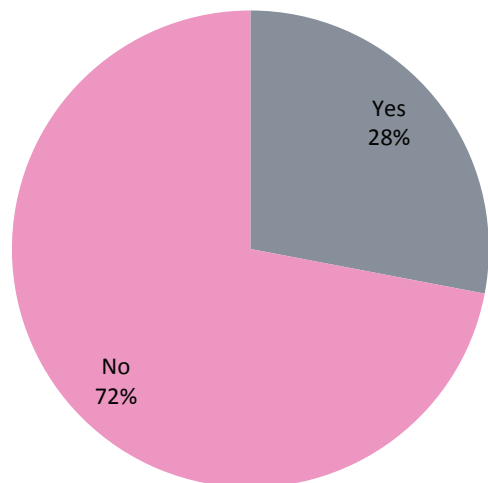
It is important to note that this is across all industry sectors so again it is worth cross-referencing against the salaries within your specific industry segment.

Salaries by level of seniority

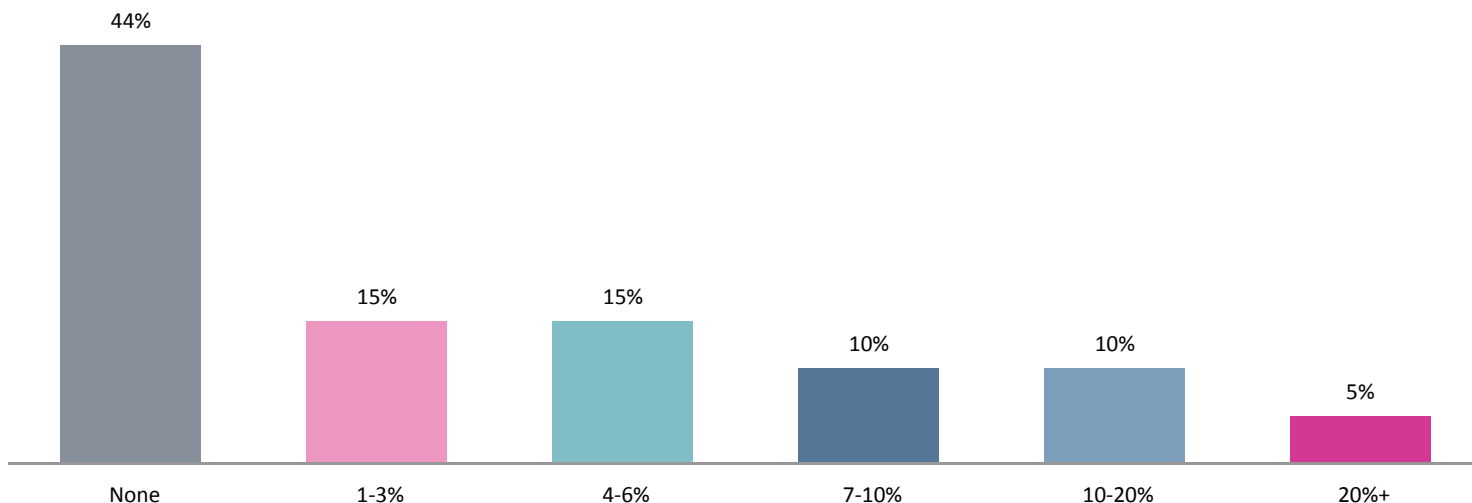


NB the average is not calculated from the highest and lowest salaries in each category, but the mean range of figures.

Do You Think You Are Being Paid What You're Worth?



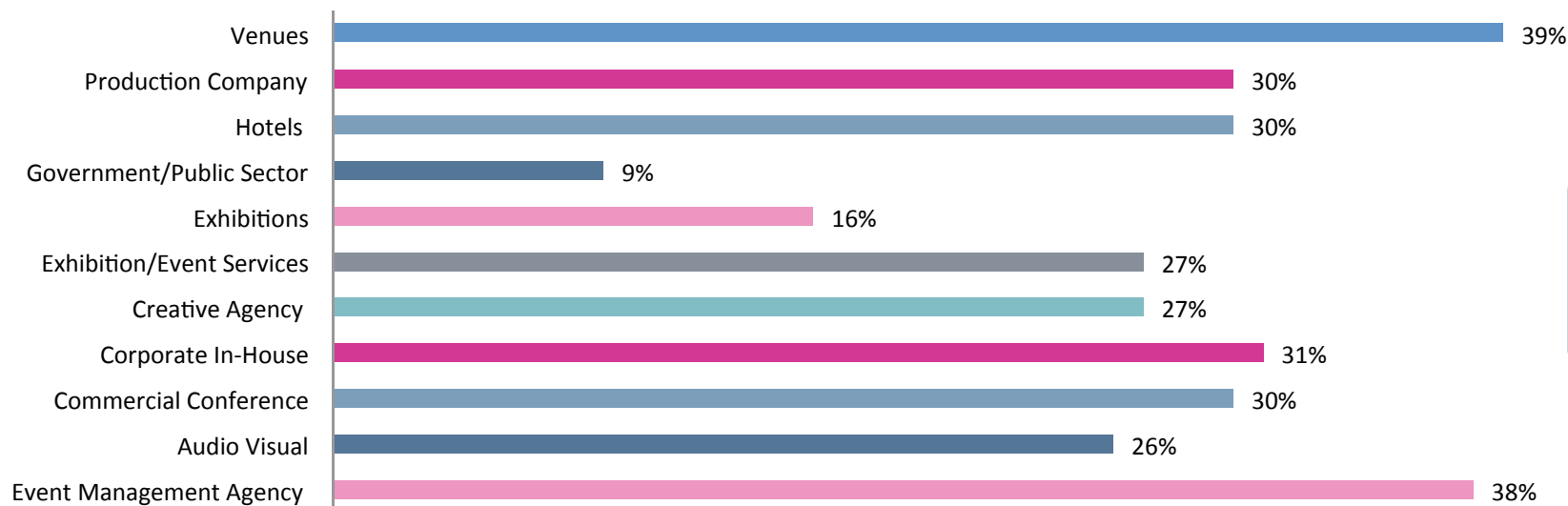
Salary increases across the industry within the last 12 months



72% of respondents do not feel they are paid their worth. Whilst marginally lower (2%) than last year, this is still a high figure. This sentiment was felt most within the government and exhibition sectors.

Sadly this is a shocking increase of 7% on last year in the number of employees not getting a pay rise. This is an unwelcome trend that needs to be addressed, especially in light of the number of people receiving bonus and commission reducing too; yet it remains the 2nd biggest motivator, with 43% of respondents citing bonus payments as their biggest motivator.

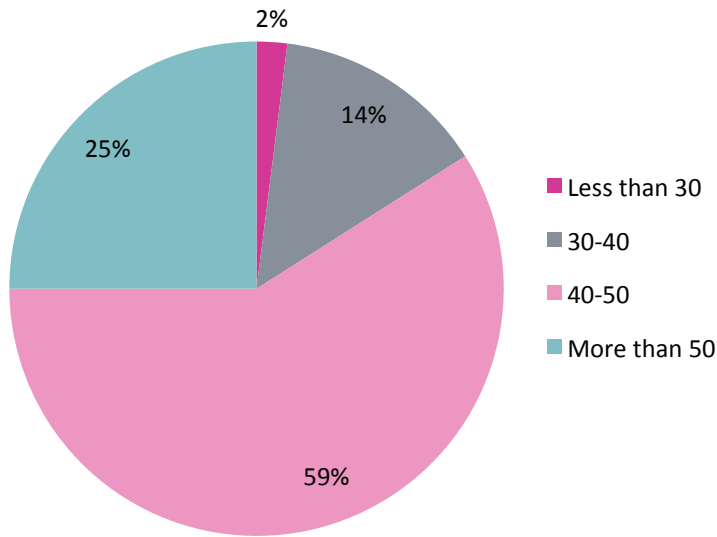
Which sectors are the most satisfied with their salaries?



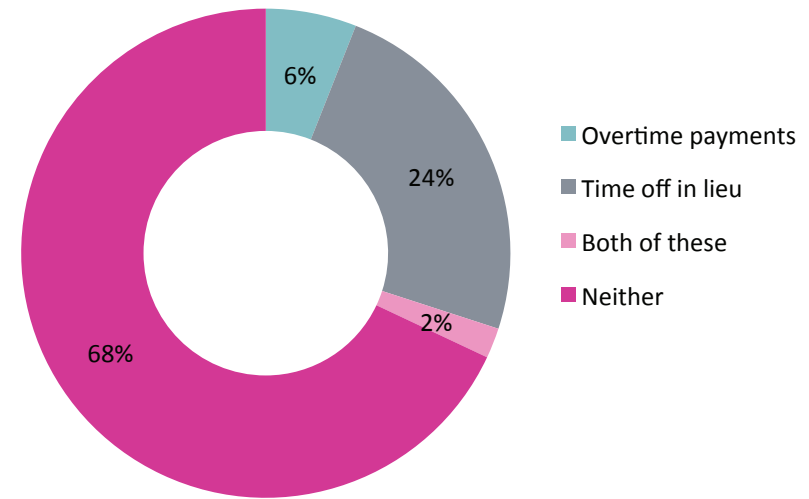
Ironically the sector with the highest average salary, the public sector, are least satisfied with their salary.

All Work and No Play?

Average number of hours worked per week



Compensation

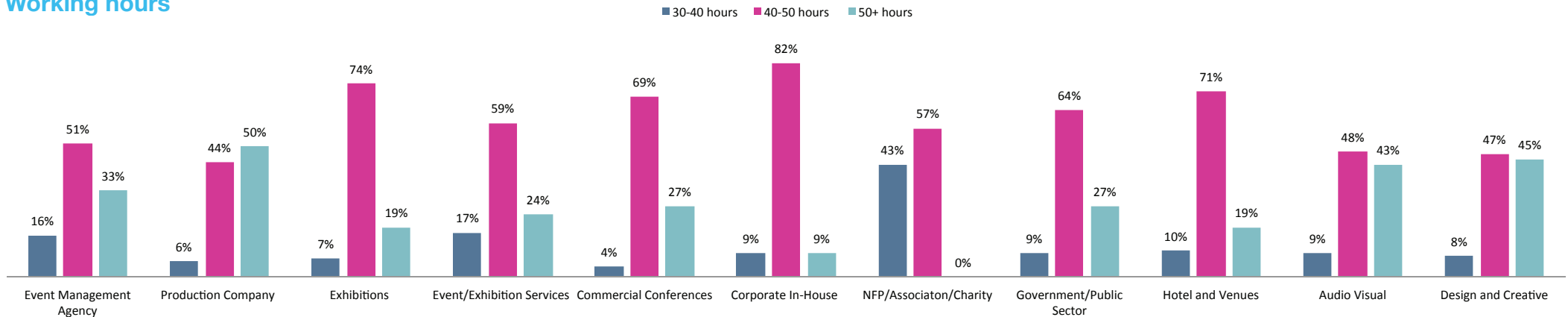


52% of self employed respondents work over 50 hours per week, whereas only 43% of employed respondents do the same amount of hours.

The majority of events staff work an average of 40-50 hours a week, but nearly a 3rd work more than 50, and only a 3rd receive time off in lieu in recognition of the extra hours put in - there's no change there, that's life for the events professional!

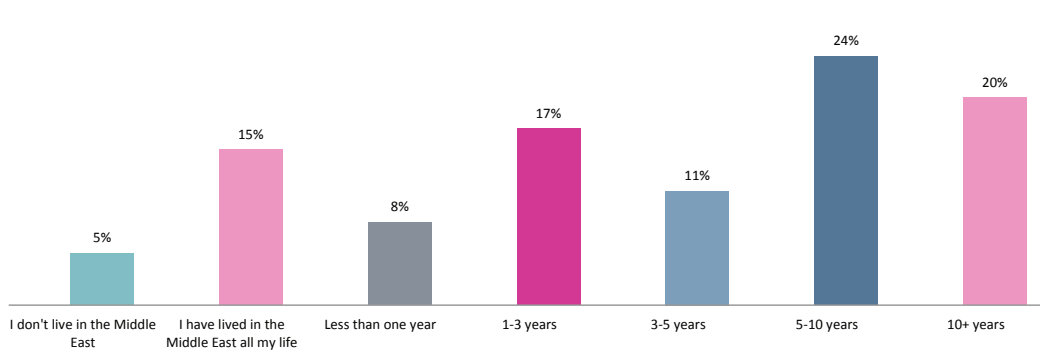
In a significant increase from last years' statistic, 68% of respondents don't receive overtime or time off in lieu. It does seem however that employers in the region would prefer to offer days off than pay overtime.

Working hours

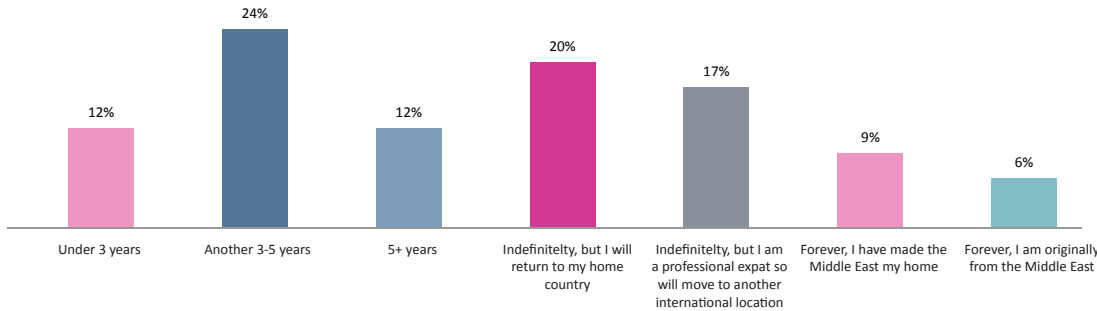


The Lure of the Middle East

How long have our respondents been in the Middle East?

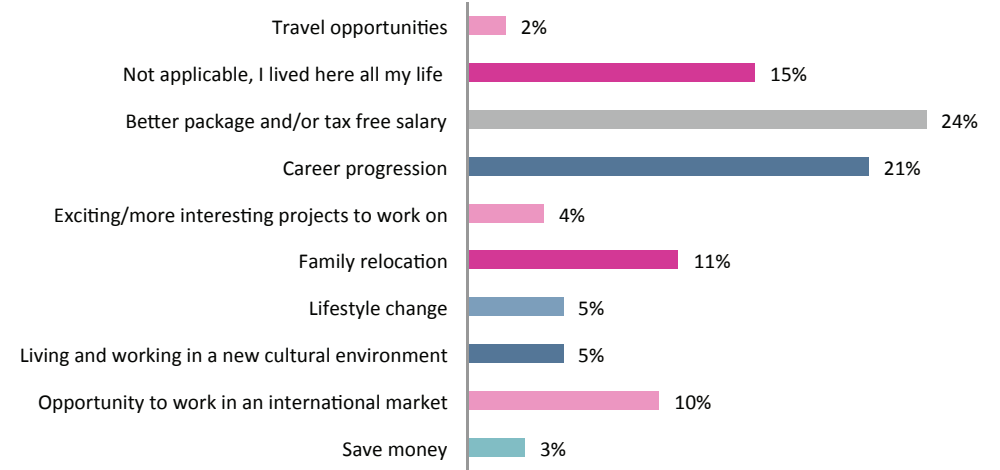


How long are people planning to stay?

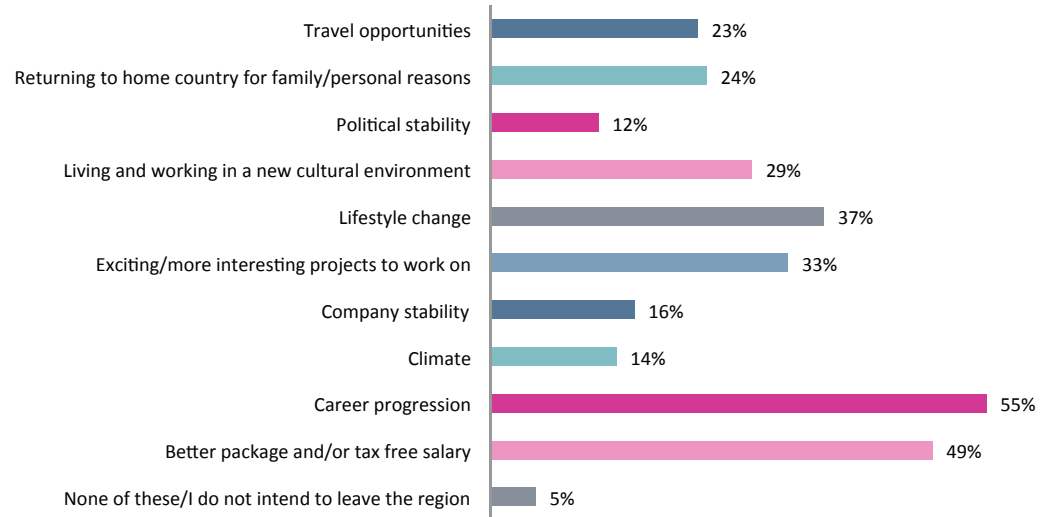


These figures have changed noticeably year on year which could be due to a change of heart based on business environment or simply that new respondents had a different opinion.

Main motivations behind a move to the Middle East

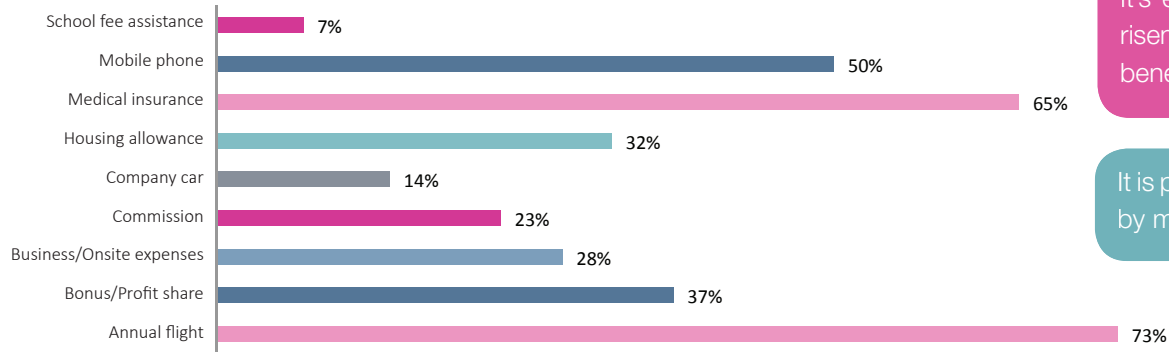


Why would people choose to leave the Middle East?



Benefits and Motivation

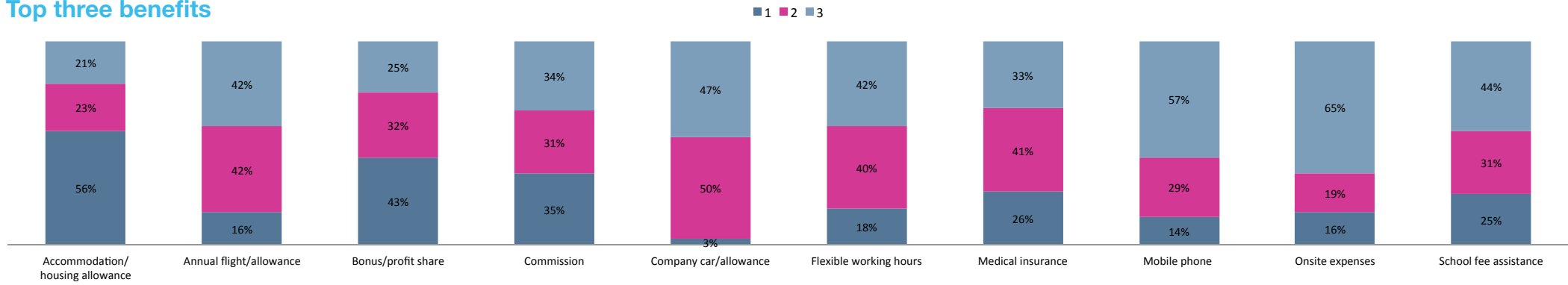
Benefits received



It's encouraging to see that the number of people receiving health insurance has risen and when it becomes compulsory for companies of a certain size to provide this benefit next year, we expect to see a significant uplift in the figures.

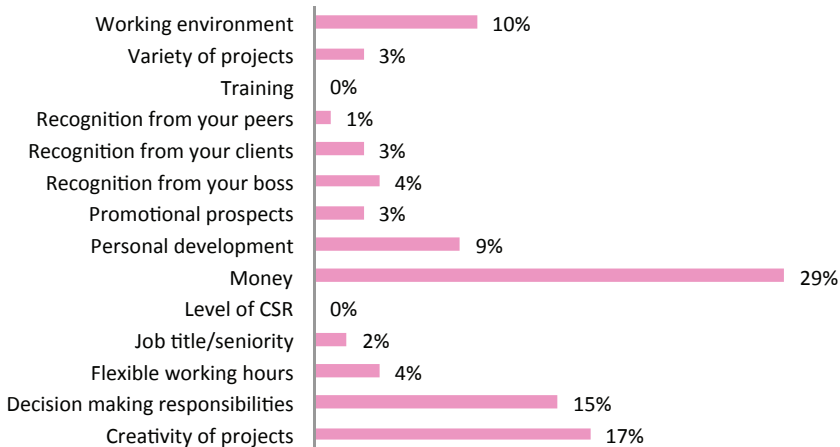
It is possible that in the light of fewer people getting pay rises, they feel more motivated by money than they were last year, as suddenly it is on their mind.

Top three benefits

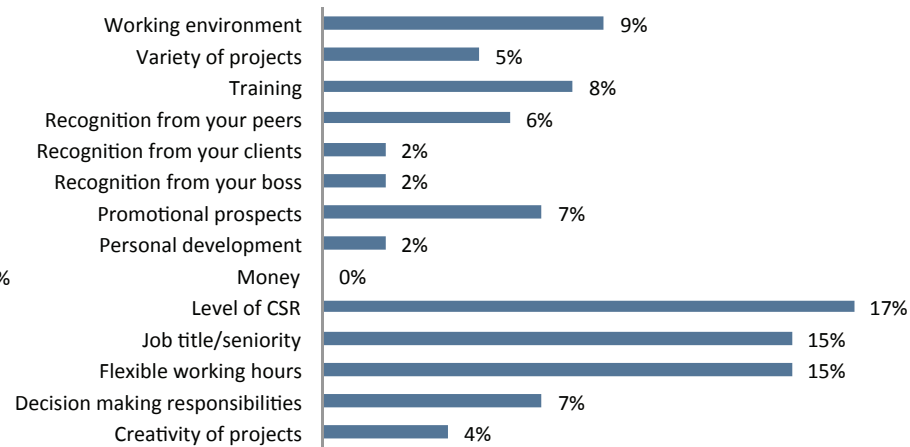


Key motivators

Most important



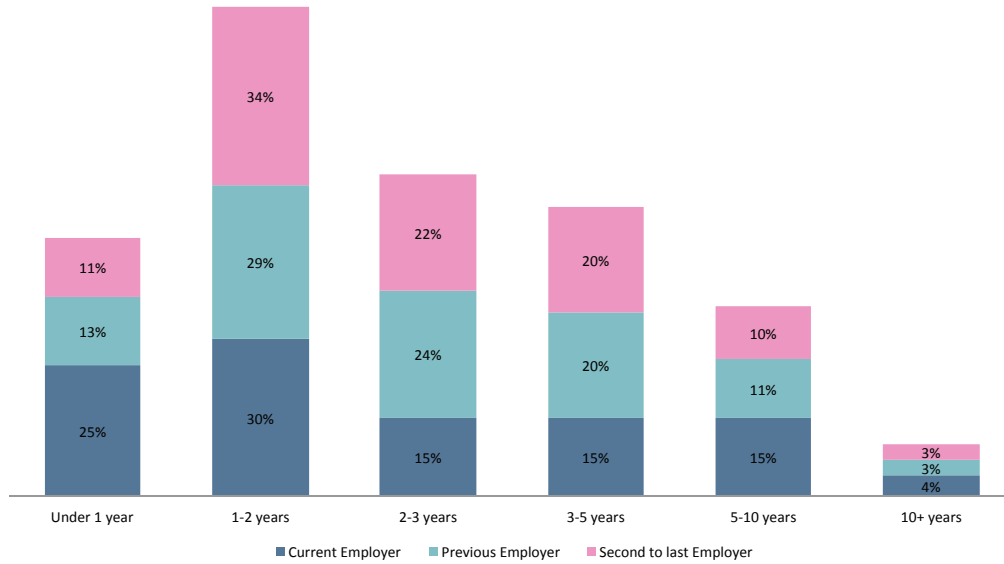
Least important



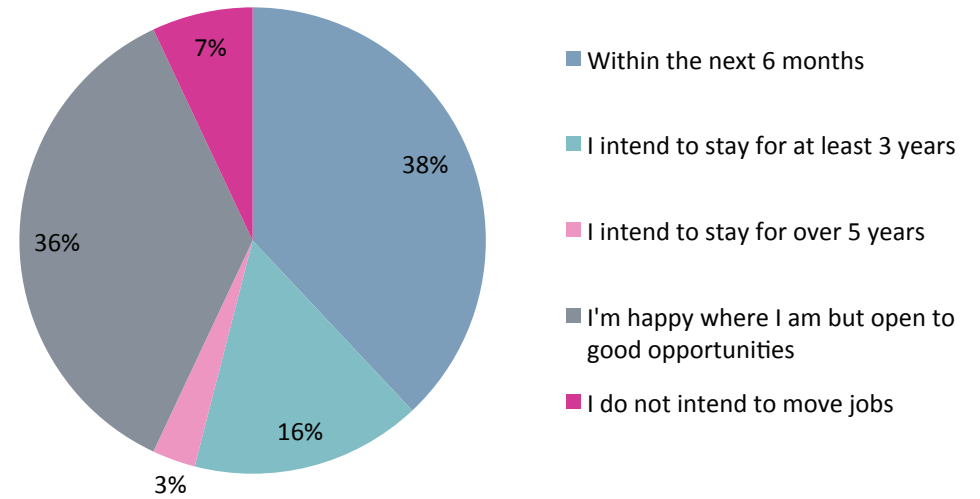
Accommodation remains the most sought after benefit, probably in the light of rent rises across the region, but still only 36% of respondents receive an allowance for their housing.

As per last year, the preferred benefits can all be quantified in cash terms, key to most employees.

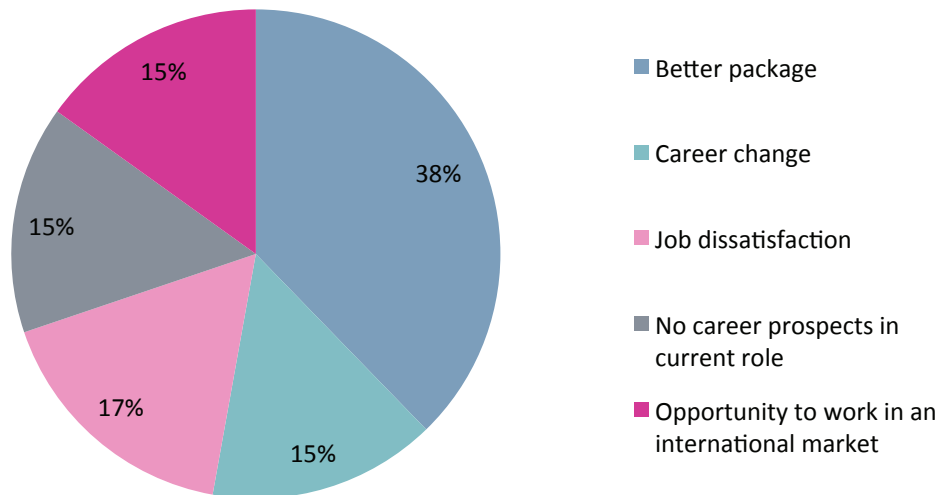
How long do people stay in their roles?



When do people intend to move jobs?



Top 5 reasons for leaving a role



The reasons people cited for leaving their job have changed significantly since last year with job dissatisfaction sadly featuring in the rankings, and at 17%, which is a high number, but clearly the reasons relate to salary and career prospects, and probably the lack of pay rise.

In an industry where people tend to move through the ranks fairly quickly and an emerging market like the Middle East, it's good to see that only 15% feel that they have a poor career path in their current role.

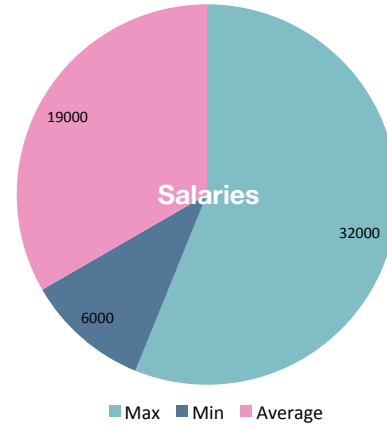
The figures compared to last year remain really similar although the fact remains that 74% of people are ready to move jobs, if the right role comes along. This is the case all round the world though as for so many people it's human nature to progress and feel they are paid their worth, in line with the fact that most people still leave for a better package.

The market has really picked up in terms of people moving jobs and there seems to be a wider range of different opportunities, although not necessarily more jobs, as new companies open and others contract.

Key

	Accommodation		Medical
	Bonus		Money
	Commission		Personal development
	Corporate social responsibility		Recognition from boss
	Creativity of projects		Recognition from clients
	Decision making abilities		Variety of work
	Flexible hours		Working environment
	Flight		

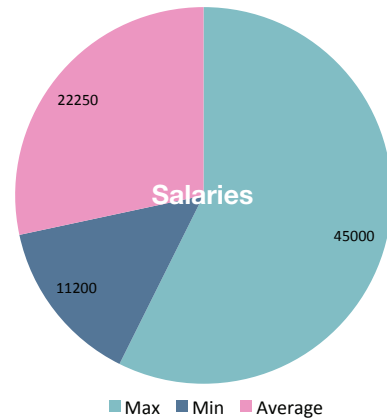
NFP/Charity/Association



	Minimum	Maximum	Average
Marketing Coordinator	6000	18000	11750
Marketing Manager	12000	32000	18000
Event Coordinator	7000	14000	12000
Event Manager	14000	24000	16500
Head of Events	25000	32000	28000

TOP 3 MOTIVATORS			
MOST IMPORTANT BENEFITS			

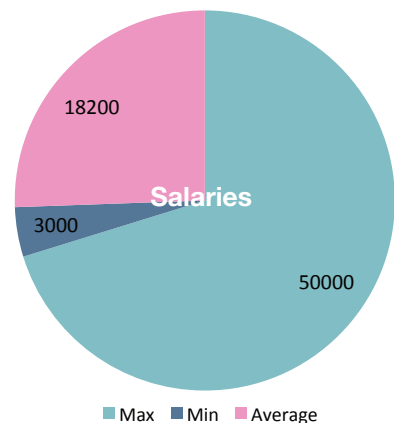
Government/Public Sector



	Minimum	Maximum	Average
Marketing Manager	18000	30000	23000
Event Executive	11200	26000	13000
Event Manager	24000	30000	25550
Head of Events	32000	45000	38250

TOP 3 MOTIVATORS			
MOST IMPORTANT BENEFITS			

Event Management Agency



This year the working environment featured as a key motivator in place of decision making for event management agency staff, which is possibly representative of the fun loving nature of people within the sector. Money has come up a position to number 2, but is still not the biggest driver for the passionate people within our industry.

Role	Minimum	Maximum	Average
Sales Executive	7000	10000	9000
Sales Manager	12000	35000	18600
Sales Director	25000	40000	28750
Marketing Assistant	3000	12000	8900
Marketing Manager	13000	35000	25750
Event/Project Coordinator	5000	27500	18700
Event/Project Manager	12500	42000	23000
Event Director	18000	50000	30750
Account/Business Development Executive	4000	15000	10500
Account/Business Development Manager	6000	20000	14000
Account/Business Development Director	21000	25000	22000
Client Services Manager	12000	32000	17000
Director/CEO/Board Director	20000	45000	40000

Minimum	Maximum	Average
7000	10000	9000
12000	35000	18600
25000	40000	28750
3000	12000	8900
13000	35000	25750
5000	27500	18700
12500	42000	23000
18000	50000	30750
4000	15000	10500
6000	20000	14000
21000	25000	22000
12000	32000	17000
20000	45000	40000

TOP 3 MOTIVATORS	Lightbulb	Stack of Money	People at Computers
MOST IMPORTANT BENEFITS	Home	Money Bag	Heart with Pulse

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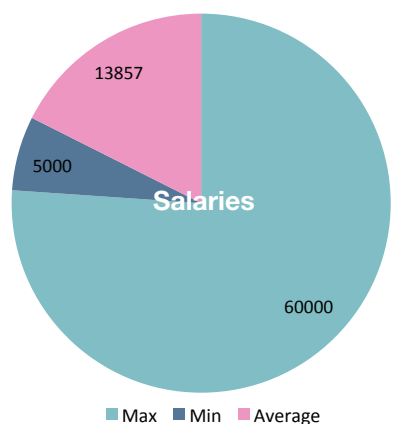
This is a significant drop on last year that will be partly down to a different set of additional respondents but is also in some way representative of a slightly changed market place, where there are more candidates than jobs and this generally drives salaries down a little. It represents a certain degree of 'levelling-out'.

**

The vast difference/significant change in these 2 figures is down to a combination of a lower paid respondent last year and a higher paid respondent this year which has skewed the figure. From the figures and our market knowledge we feel the figure should be 35,000 aed/month, which represents a slight decrease from last year.

We have seen a general upward rise in the calibre of support staff being hired, as employers focus on the importance of keeping their teams happy, which would explain the increase in this case.

Production Company



Business Development Coordinator	5000	12000	8250
Business Development Manager	9000	18000	16250
Project/Production Coordinator	6000	15000	13000
Project/Production Manager	12000	50000	24000
Head of Production/Events	25000	60000	35000
Technical Production Manager	10000	35000	24500
Technical Production Director	28000	40000	38750

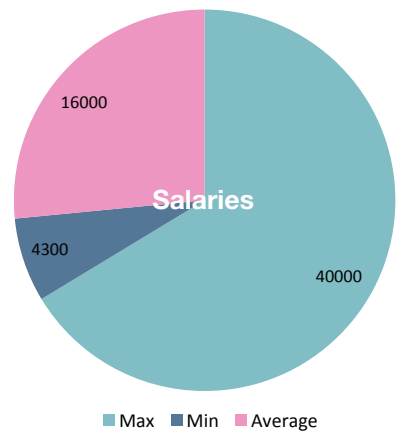
Minimum	Maximum	Average
5000	12000	8250
9000	18000	16250
6000	15000	13000
12000	50000	24000
25000	60000	35000
10000	35000	24500
28000	40000	38750

TOP 3 MOTIVATORS	Lightbulb	Clipboard	Gears
MOST IMPORTANT BENEFITS	Home	Money Bag	Heart with Pulse

For production company staff interestingly money does not feature in their top 3 benefits; clearly being challenged through projects and creativity and having a degree of responsibility is paramount.

In general the salaries have decreased at the mid to senior level and increased at the lower level, with a few exceptions, this is due to a leveling out of salaries and greater choice of candidates; it's an employers market.

Event/Exhibition Services



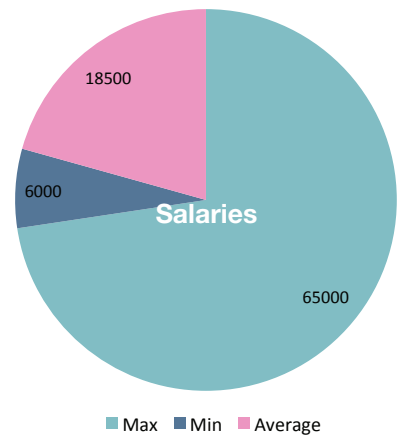
Salaries remain unchanged since last year, in this sector.

	Minimum	Maximum	Average
Sales/Account Executive	10000	20000	14450
Sales/Account Manager	4300	27000	16000
Marketing Executive	7000	10000	8500
Marketing Manager	14000	35000	18000
Project Executive/Coordinator	7000	21000	16000
Project Manager	12000	25000	18750
Production Executive/Coordinator	8500	16000	12000
Production Manager	12000	23500	17000
Operations Executive	9000	15000	11375
Operations Manager	9500	33000	25700
CEO/Owner/GM/MD	19000	40000	30000

TOP 3 MOTIVATORS

MOST IMPORTANT BENEFITS

Exhibitions



	Minimum	Maximum	Average
Sales Executive	8000	14000	10710
Sales Manager	12000	23250	16000
Sponsorship Sales Manager	10000	22000	14800
Marketing Executive	6000	14000	10380
Marketing Manager	13000	24000	18300
Marketing Director	21500	35000	26000
Operations Executive	7000	12000	9500
Operations Manager	10000	24000	16500
Senior Operations Manager/Head of Operations	20000	40000	26250
Exhibition/Project Manager	10500	35000	18000
Exhibition Director	14200	40000	26000
GM/MD	25000	65000	48000

TOP 3 MOTIVATORS

MOST IMPORTANT BENEFITS

*

This is a significant drop on last year that will be partly down to a different set of additional respondents but is also in some way representative of a slightly changed market place, where there are more candidates than jobs and this generally drives salaries down a little. It represents a certain degree of 'levelling-out'.

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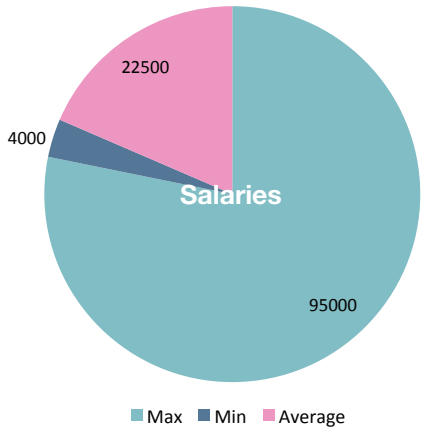
The decrease in salary portrayed here is down to one or more higher paid respondents last year which has skewed the figure. From the figures and our market knowledge we feel the figure should be more like last years.

The decrease in salary portrayed here is down to one or more higher paid respondents last year which has skewed the figure. From the figures and our market knowledge we feel that the midpoint of both years average salaries would be representative of the true market level for a marketing director.

The average salary for this position is highly dependant on the size of the show and company. The bigger international organisers pay a higher salary of 30-35,000 aed/month, and the smaller show organisers and companies pay an average of 26,000 aed/month.

It is interesting to see that creativity of projects has gone off the list in favour of personal development as a key motivator for exhibition staff this year, in an industry that has had to become increasingly creative. Perhaps the more creative people are, the more they seek personal development...?

Commercial Conferences



	Minimum	Maximum	Average	
Sales Executive	5000	14000	9000	
Sales Manager	8000	17500	11875	
Sales Director	22000	32000	27000	*
Marketing Executive	6000	16000	10000	
Marketing Manager	7500	22000	14250	
Operations Executive	6000	14000	9500	
Operations Manager	8400	30000	19000	**
Conference Producer/Manager	4000	24000	15500	
Conference Director	22000	28000	25400	
CEO/GM/MD	25000	95000	59700	

TOP 3 MOTIVATORS			
MOST IMPORTANT BENEFITS			

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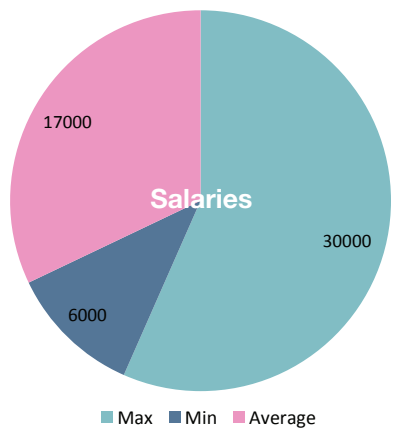
It is encouraging to see a hike in the average salary for this key leadership role within commercial conferences, from a low average last year.

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The average salary for middle management in commercial conferences has also risen from a rather low average last year.

Corporate salaries have dropped for almost all roles, which clearly explains their dissatisfaction with their pay.

Corporate In-House



	Minimum	Maximum	Average	
Marketing Executive	6000	10000	8000	
Marketing Manager	12000	16000	13600	
Event Coordinator	10000	12000	11000	
Event Manager	10000	30000	22000	***

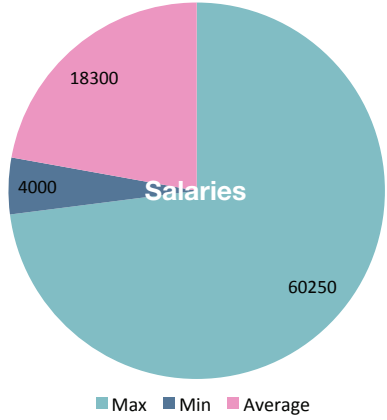
TOP 3 MOTIVATORS			
MOST IMPORTANT BENEFITS			

It is not surprising that money has made it's way into the list of top motivators given that average salaries have reduced in this sector.

In the light of reduced salaries it is not a shock that a bonus becomes an important benefit for people.

INDUSTRY COMPARISONS: Hotels & Venues and Audio Visual

Hotels and Venues



	Minimum	Maximum	Average	
Sales Coordinator	4000	8000	6000	*
Sales Manager	9000	29700	13000	
Sales and Marketing Director	12000	43000	31000	**
Event Coordinator	6000	12000	9500	***
Event Manager	14000	25000	18000	
Event Director	17750	60250	31000	

TOP 3 MOTIVATORS			
MOST IMPORTANT BENEFITS			

*

The increase in salaries this year is excellent news for a traditionally low paid sector and is attributed to the extreme competition within this fast growing area of the industry and a need to attract the best staff to stay ahead of the pack.

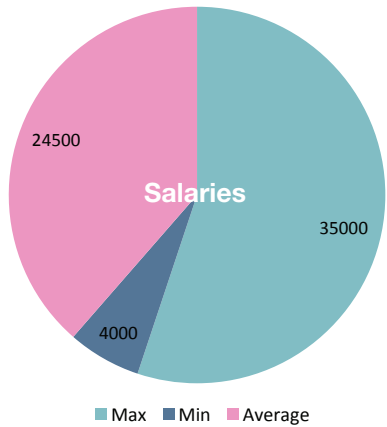
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The increase in salary portrayed here is down to one or more higher paid respondents this year and almost certainly where people are working within international hotel chains. As with many sectors, salaries are dependant on company size and type of clients.

Venue salaries are pushing up this average which for a hotel event coordinator is likely to be around 6-8,000 aed/month all in. Similarly a venue person will earn more in the same role as a hotel person, but will have fewer benefits. This is a high average for the hotel sector, but not unheard of, yet typical of the venue side.

We're delighted to bring you a set of results for the AV sector this year with some healthy salaries to report. It seems that this is a growing and well paid market.

Audio Visual



	Minimum	Maximum	Average	
Lighting Designer	9000	25000	13900	****
Technician	4000	18500	10000	
Technical Production Manager	14000	35000	22800	
Sales Manager	15000	31000	22300	
Project Manager	10000	15500	12400	
Senior Project Manager	11000	32000	23200	
Production Manager	10000	25000	18000	
Head of Department	15000	30000	22000	

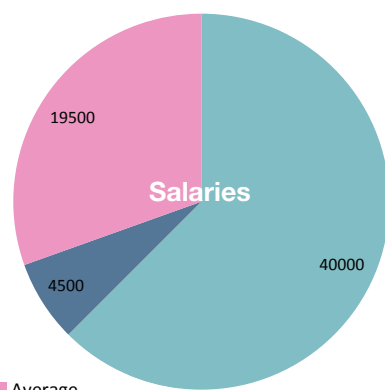
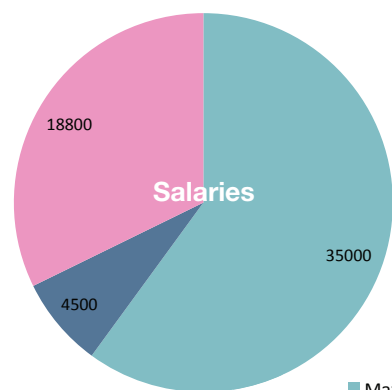
TOP 3 MOTIVATORS			
MOST IMPORTANT BENEFITS			

Unsurprisingly AV professionals are motivated by creative and varied projects, and money.

INDUSTRY COMPARISONS: Design and Creative

Event Management Agency

Creative Agency



■ Max ■ Min ■ Average

EVENT MANAGEMENT AGENCY

	Minimum	Maximum	Average
Graphic Designer	5700	27500	13100
3D Designer	4500	22000	13500
Art Director	10000	35000	16500
Creative Director	22000	33600	25650

CREATIVE AGENCY

	Minimum	Maximum	Average
Graphic Designer	6000	20000	13365
Art Director	4500	25000	17875
Creative Director	20000	40000	27300

TOP 3 MOTIVATORS



MOST IMPORTANT BENEFITS



Across the Board

We're excited to have seen such a great increase in participants of our vital research and to have been able to draw some strong comparisons and start building up a picture of trends and year on year changes in both remuneration and sentiment for the events industry here in the Middle East. We are delighted that this larger sample has given us essential information from which we can draw more conclusions. Despite the higher number of respondents, we are pleased to say that the industry characteristics that were reported last year have remained aligned, in terms of the age of our workforce, career level of respondents, where they come from and how well educated they are, indicating that we are reaching the right people.

Whilst there are many positives, we'll get the negatives out of the way first: The average salary across the board was just marginally less than last year, at 18,193.50 aed/month, while this is a drop, it's not as disappointing as the fact that we're working longer hours than ever before, 68% without time off in lieu or overtime; nearly half of the industry did not receive a pay rise this year; and it is therefore not surprising that people do not feel they are paid their worth. If people did receive a pay rise, amounting to roughly half of respondents, it was in line with other industries in the region but with the average salary across the board at 18,795 aed/month.

On the lighter side there are some key positives that point to greater stability for the region, and that people continue to enjoy a definite work/life balance and the challenge that both work and the business environment provide to a group of like-minded people who clearly like a challenge, creativity and variety in abundance. The ambition of people here is clear, when they move on, it's mainly because they are tempted away by career progression. When compared to other international packages, the Middle East still offers a highly competitive salary and fantastic lifestyle choices and people continue to move here for financial gain and career opportunities.

The enormous and fast paced infrastructure, leisure and hospitality industry growth, (not forgetting EXPO2020) we are experiencing in the UAE and Qatar specifically, is tantamount to the potential opportunities that lie ahead for us all. Whilst our fabulous industry still has a long way to go to be recognized as a true profession and for its impassioned players to be remunerated appropriately, with an active industry trade association fighting our corner and the aforementioned exciting developments, it's far from the doom and gloom that the figures alone would have you believe!



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