

event  
pay ✓  
check

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# Introduction

ESP International is delighted to bring you the 4th annual Events Industry Salary Survey for the Middle East, 'Event Pay Check', Middle East. In conjunction with SourceMe. The questionnaire was sent out to over 3000 events professionals and the respondents represented a cross section of people from all sectors of the industry, throughout the GCC and have received continued support from so many people, allowing us a broad set of figures from which we collated the dated and produced the following report.

Each year the survey evolves to consider variations in the market and individual requests, which shows how driven we are to offer a thorough, respected research project for our industry, providing invaluable information on salaries, influences and trends, straight from you, the beating heart of our industry.

This year sees a change once more in average salaries and what motivates people, in line with continued volatility in world markets and locally, and an ensuing knock on effect to the employment market, levels of employment and a clear and widespread adjustment in salaries.

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:

- Latest market trends and changes
- Detailed information about salary levels within different sectors and changes year on year
- Compensation and benefits analysis
- Key motivators for events professionals
- Comparisons with the 2016 version of the survey

The data is taken from a cross-section of respondents from small, medium and large companies, and also freelancers, in different countries and cities within the GCC. We give significant consideration to these factors when analyzing and reviewing results.

Once again we'd like to thank all those who took the time to complete the confidential survey; without whom we cannot conduct our research and produce such a comprehensive report.

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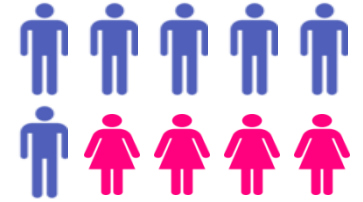
# About Our Respondents

Business Owner	2%
Employed	85%
Freelance	5%
Self-Employed	1%
Unemployed	6%

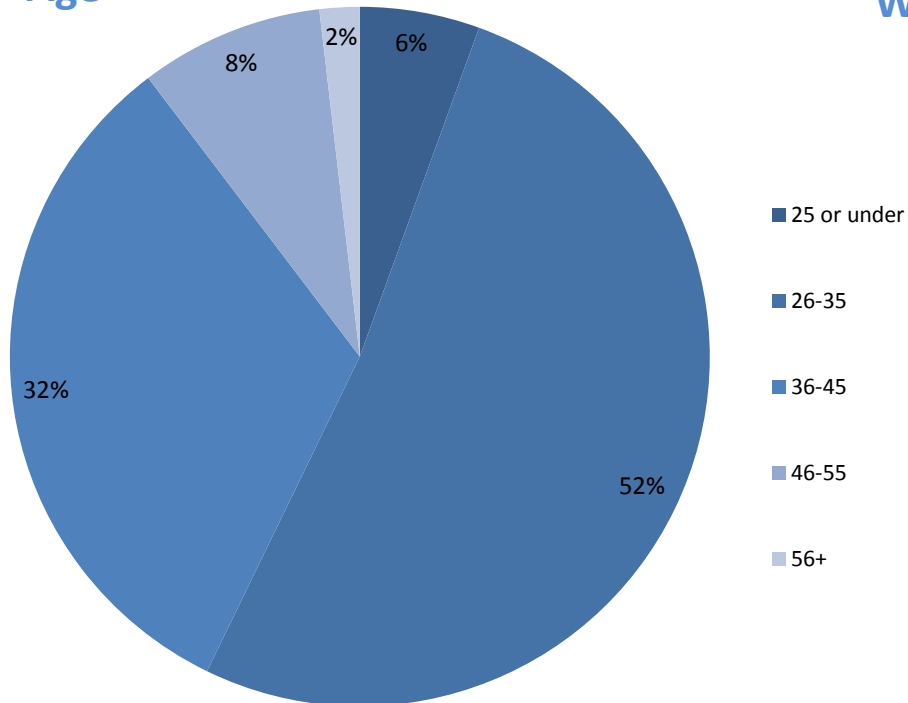
The number of self-employed or freelance respondents has remained the same but we see a shocking rise of 5% in the number of unemployed

Over 80% of respondents this year are manager level or above, hence the higher average monthly income.

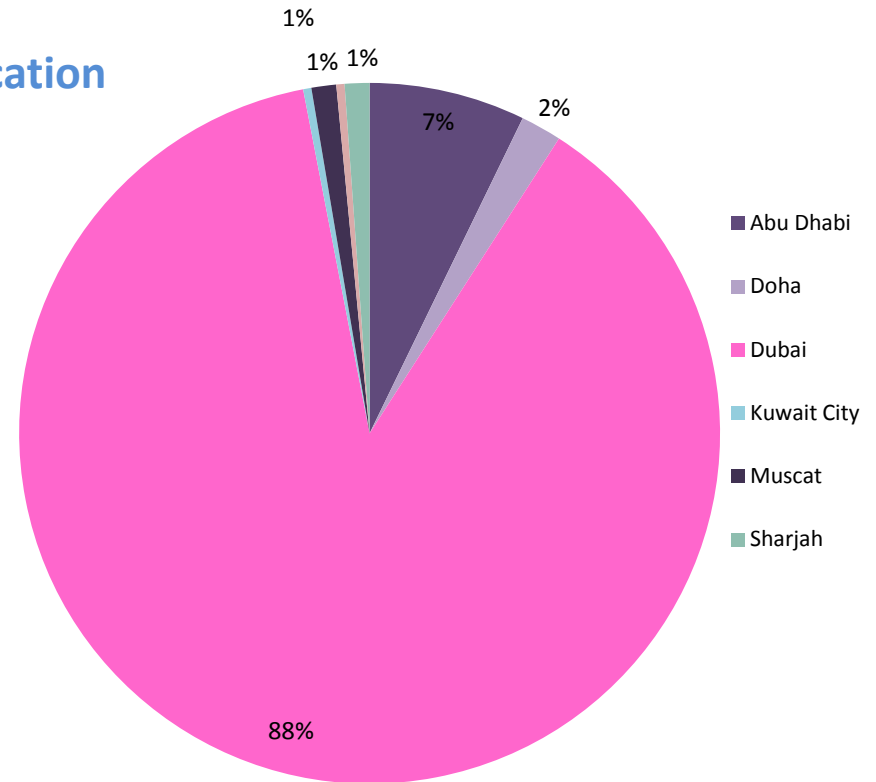
## Male/Female Split



## Age



## Work Location



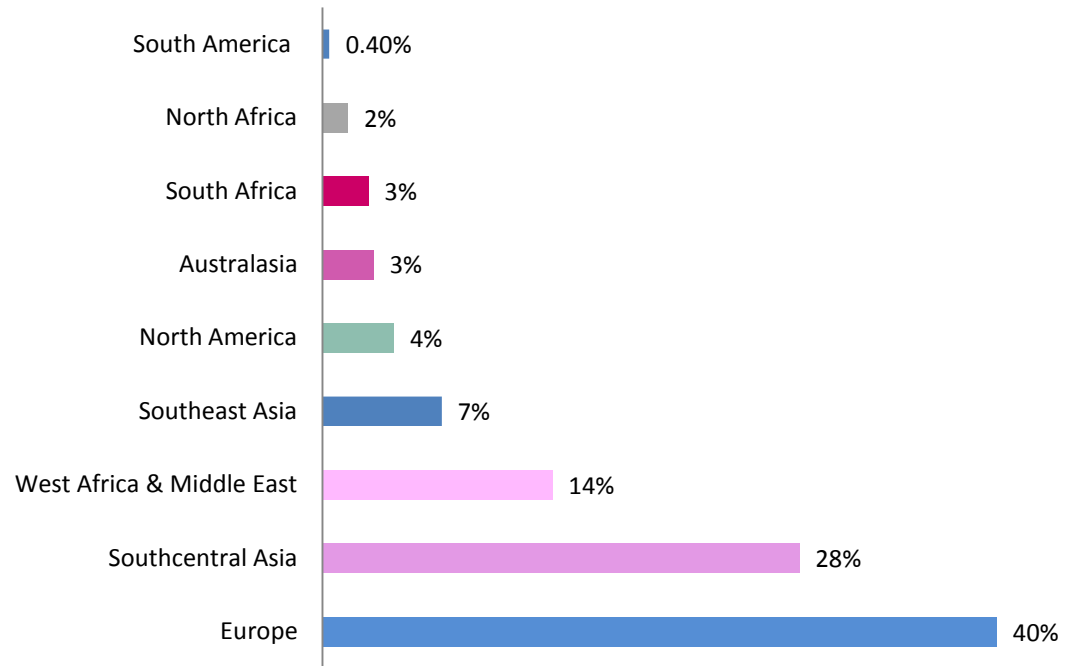
# The Lowdown

The majority of respondents originate from Europe, then South Central Asia.

88% of respondents are based in Dubai, the hub of the Middle East events industry.

84% of respondents are under 45, but this percentage is lower than 2016.

1.13% was the average salary increase in 2017 among respondents.

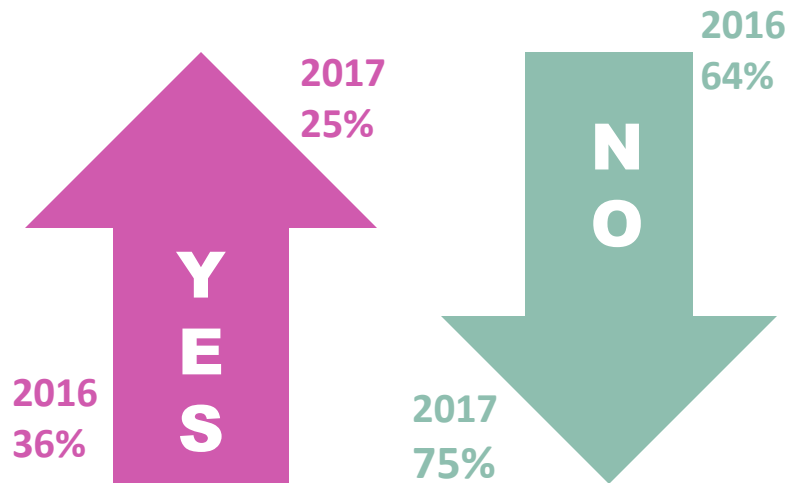


## AVERAGE INCOME ACROSS THE MIDDLE EAST EVENTS INDUSTRY

**AED 21,879**

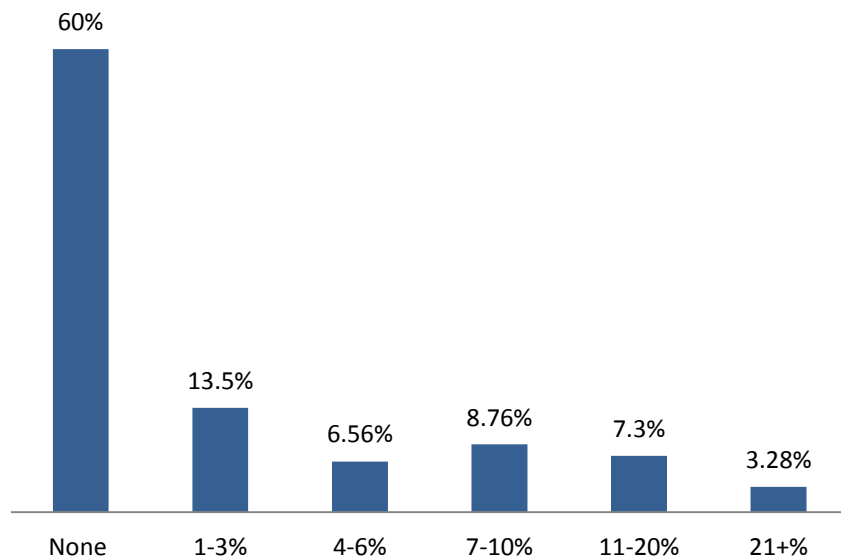
2017 was another really tough year for industry, not just the events sector. The trend of senior employees still earning good salaries has continued, but with middle management and lower level staff falling victim to cutbacks. Whilst the average salary has risen, the number of people employed in events has dropped by a huge 5%. Senior people are generally not leaving jobs, but when they do, they are being replaced by people on a lower salary; the effects of this will not be felt for another year or two.

# Is Your Pay Cheque in Check ?

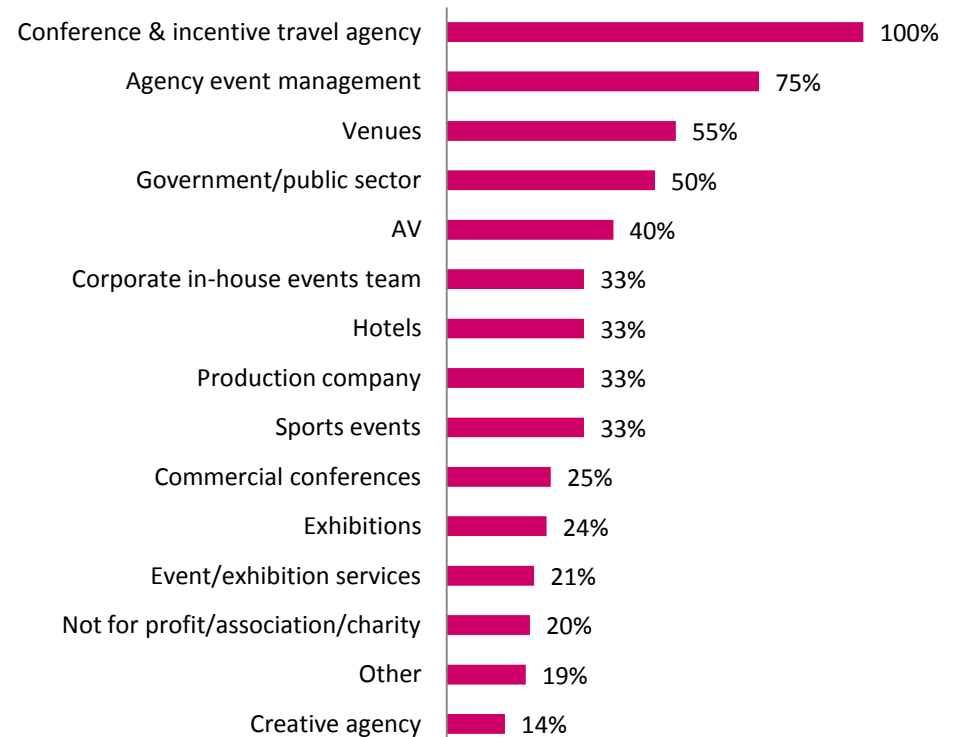


An increase of 11% of respondents claim they aren't paid their worth, with only 25% satisfied with their salary. This is a disappointing result that reflects tough times.

## Salary increases across the industry within the last 12 months

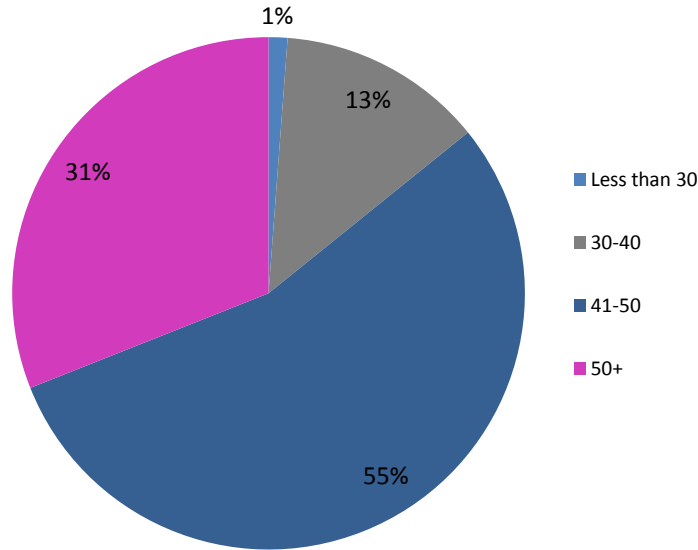


## Which sectors are most satisfied with their salaries



# Work/Life Balance

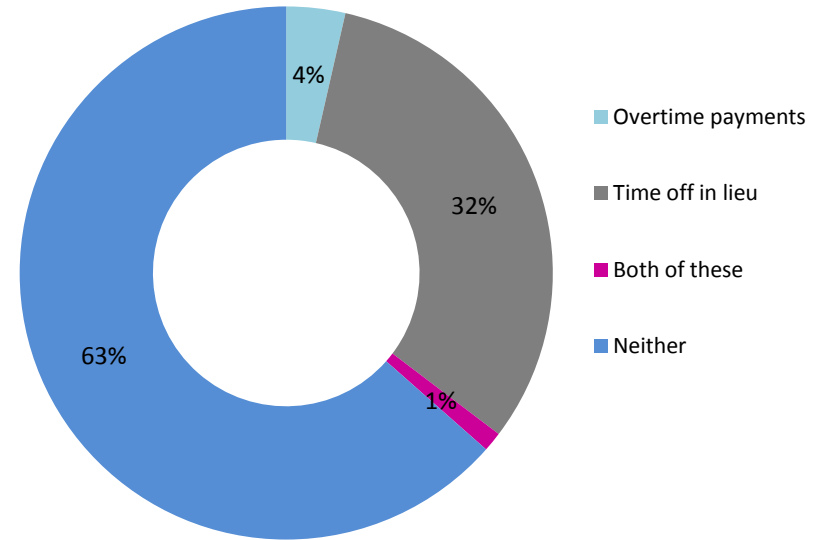
## Average number of hours worked per week



50+ hours  By 9% from 2016

40-50 hours  10% from 2016

## All work and no play..?



We've seen a 9% shift in those working 40-50 hours/week last year, to working over 50 hours. A huge 86% work over 40 hours/week.

All self employed work over 50 hours a week, 10% longer than employees.

# The Lure of the Middle East

How long have our respondents been in the Middle East?

**32% of respondents have been in the Middle East for over 10 yrs – that's a long time!**

**It represents the appeal of a still-developing economy, a challenging business environment and enviable lifestyle.**

**Despite pay reductions, without tax, salaries are still higher than other regions.**

**The main motivation to move to the Middle East**

Career progression is key.  
24% moved here for a better job and salary.

**How long people are planning to stay ?**

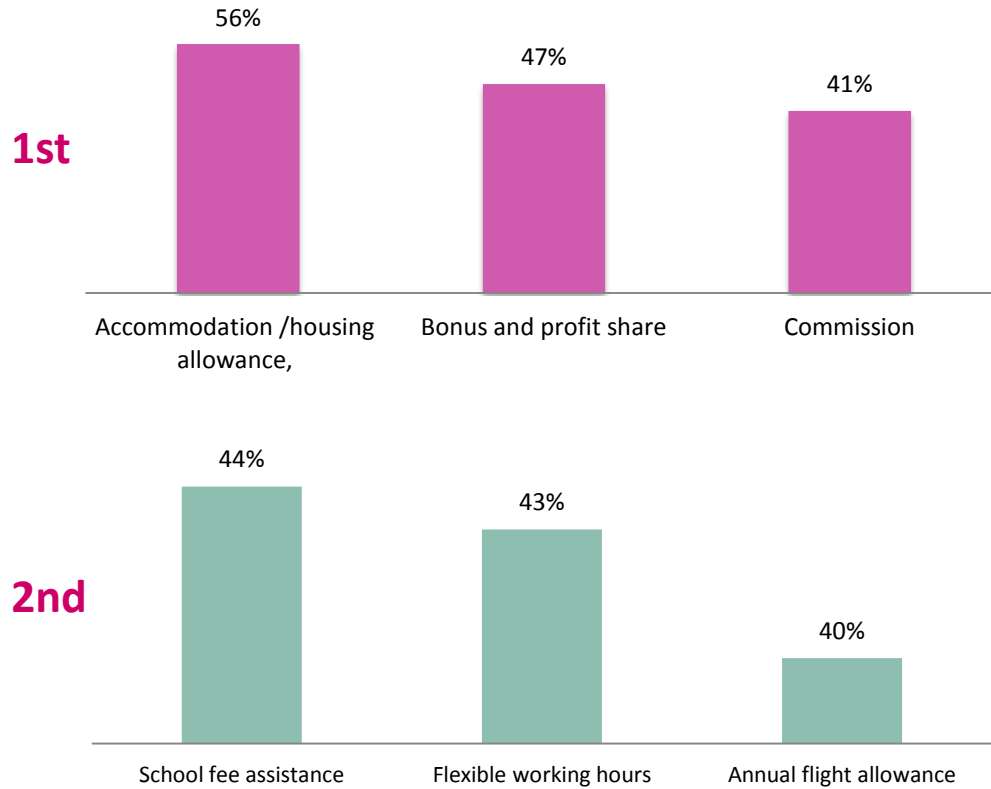
An increased number, 25% will eventually move back to their home country.

**Motivation for leaving the Middle East**

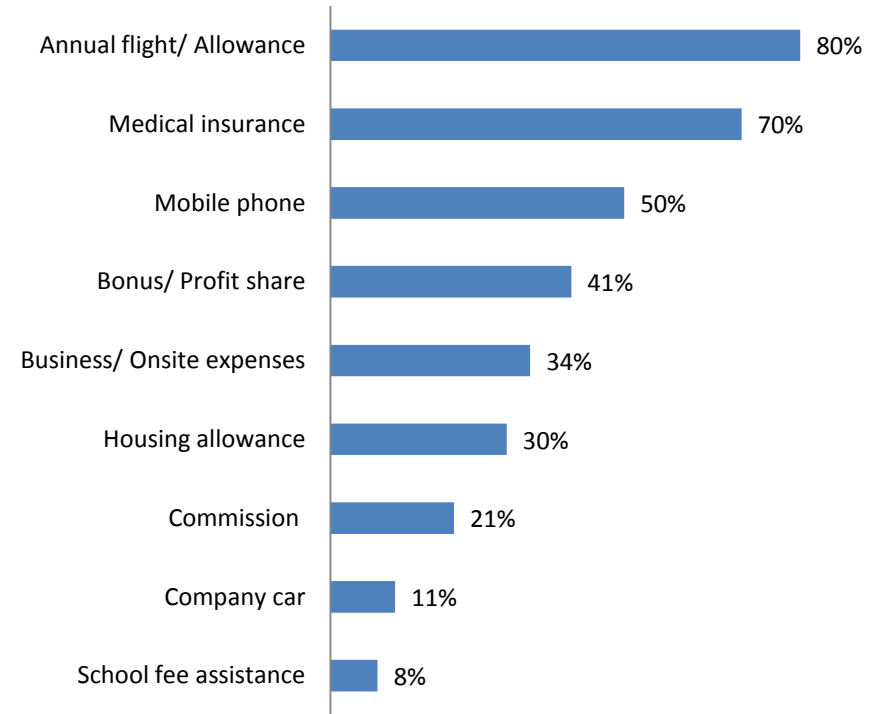
If leaving is the only way to further their career, then that's what they will do.

# Benefits

## Most popular Benefits



## Benefits Received



Interesting to see that flexible hours dropped off the list of top benefits. Many are really feeling the pinch, benefits that contribute directly to the bottom line are ultimately all-important.

It's interesting that only 70% receive medical when it is a mandatory benefit. Despite the new law, enforcement has not been widely implemented.



# Motivation

## Key Motivators



Money remains the key motivator, more popular than last year, which we see when times are tough – it's at the forefront of peoples' minds.

## TOP Motivators

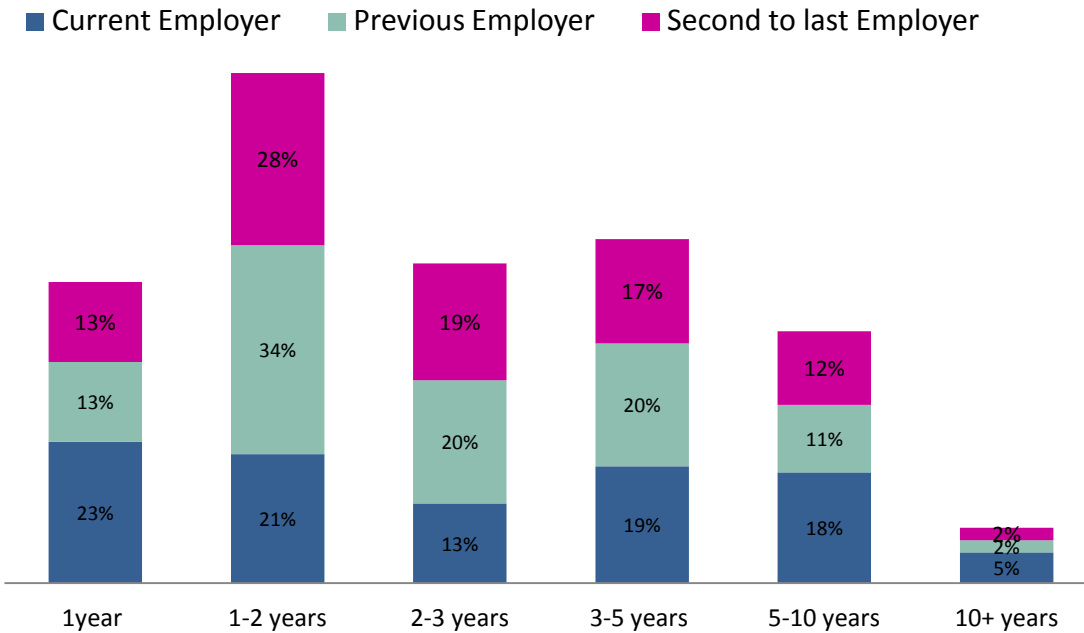


## KEY

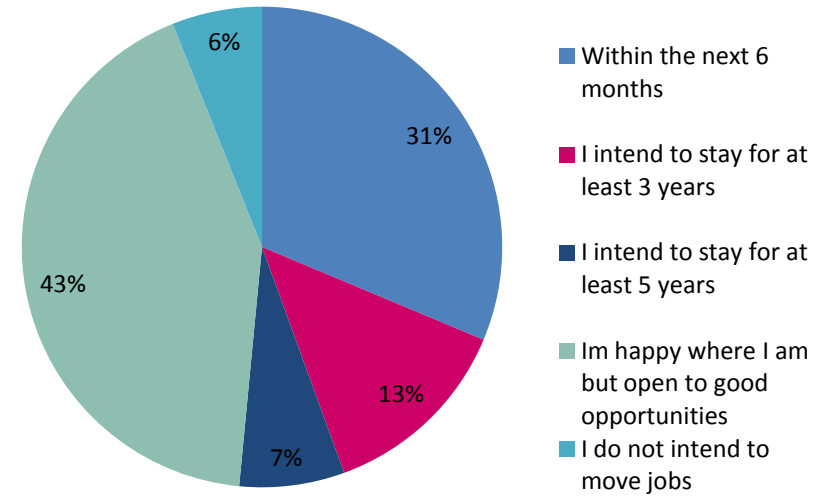
-  Accommodation
-  Bonus
-  Commission
-  Creativity of Projects
-  Decision Making Abilities
-  Money

# Is the Grass Always Greener?

## How long do people stay in their roles?



## When do people intend to move jobs?



For the second year running there is more movement in the job market and shorter time spent in roles, no doubt due to more redundancies.

31% of people are actively looking to move jobs in the immediate future, slightly up on last year; reflecting the desire for a better package after several years without a pay-rise for most.

### Top 5 reasons for leaving a role

1. Better package
2. Job dissatisfaction
3. Career change
4. Redundancy
5. More exciting projects to work on

# Industry Comparisons

It is important to note that variations in salary portrayed throughout the report are attributed to 2 main factors:

1. A change in respondents from year to year which can skew the figures
2. Fluctuations in actual salaries over time. In a few cases where there is an extreme high/low salary, we use our expert knowledge and in-house data to recommend appropriate market levels for each salary.

Business owners get their own section as the salaries are vastly different to general managers and MD's which ensures average salaries are realistic across individual sectors.

## INDUSTRY COMPARISON : Business Owner/ CEO/ MD

### Business Owner/ CEO/ MD

Minimum	Maximum	Average	Y on Y
30,000	150,000	75,221	+

### Marketing

	Minimum	Maximum	Average	Y on Y
Marketing/ Communications Executive	3,500	6,000	8,100	N/A
Communications/ Marketing Manager	12,000	16,000	15,716	N/A
Group Marketing Director	23,600	35,000	29,300	N/A

In a change to previous years we have given the marketing function it's own category - apart from in exhibitions.

We're charting salaries of marketers across agency and event and exhibition services. Salaries haven't reached the level they should be. Employers need to recognise the value of this function and pay staff accordingly.

# INDUSTRY COMPARISONS: Agency Event Management and Design & Creative

## Event Management Agency

	Minimum	Maximum	Average	Y on Y
Sales/ Business Development Manager/ Account Manager	5,000	35,000	16,071	+
Sales/Development Director/ Account Director	22,000	66,000	31,750	+
Event/ Project Coordinator	8,000	12,000	10,250	-
Event/ Operations Manager	8,500	28,000	16,816	-
Senior Project Manager	15,000	37,100	25,625	-
Event Director	21,000	30,000	26,500	-
Client Services Manager	14,500	35,000	24,750	+
General Manager/ Vice President	40,000	55,000	46,666	+
Technical Production Director	30,000	50,000	38,666	N/A
Production Executive/ Manager	12,000	19,000	14,333	N/A

We've added two Production titles in this year to represent all respondents and a trend within agencies to increase in-house production resources.

## Agency Creative's

	Minimum	Maximum	Average	Y on Y
Graphic Designer	5,200	13,000	10,240	-
Exhibition/ 3D Designer	4,500	22,000	10,833	-
Creative Director	24,000	40,000	33,375	+

The average salary for this sector is highly dependent on the size of the company, if employees offer international experience, and the size and value of the events they organise.

# INDUSTRY COMPARISONS: Production Company, Audio Visual and Corporate In-House

## Production Company

	Minimum	Maximum	Average	Y on Y
Business Development Manager/ Account Manager	15,000	22,000	17,750	+
Project/ Production/Operations Manager	9,000	27,000	18,000	+
Head of Production/ Event Director	29,000	50,000	37,250	+
COO/ Regional Director	41,500	50,000	45,750	N/A

There is some consolidation of titles in this category but a good representation of all of our respondents.

## Audio Visual

	Minimum	Maximum	Average	Y on Y
Technician	6,600	16,000	9,657	+
Production/Project Manager	18,000	28,000	23,600	-
General Manager	42,000	50,000	46,000	N/A
Bus Dev/ Account/ Sales Manager	12,000	28,000	20,000	N/A
Sales Executive	8,000	12,000	9,666	N/A
Account/ Sales Director	31,000	50,000	39,000	N/A

We've added in sales positions for this sector as there were a significant amount of respondents in this category.

## Corporate In-House

	Minimum	Maximum	Average	Y on Y
Event Coordinator	9,000	20,000	15,000	=
Event Manager	12,000	25,000	19,750	+
Group Marketing Manager	25,000	17,000	20,666	N/A

With less respondents from corporates this year, we have only featured the 3 most common roles.

# INDUSTRY COMPARISONS: Event/ Exhibition Services and Exhibitions

## Event/ Exhibition Services

	Minimum	Maximum	Average	Y on Y
Sales/ Account Executive	5,000	12,000	8,666	-
Sales/ Account Manager	7,500	32,250	19,107	+
Sales/ Account Director	14,000	36,000	24,600	-
Marketing Manager	13,000	18,000	15,666	-
Project Coordinator/ Executive	4,000	15,500	8,300	-
Project Manager	5,560	23,000	13,312	-
Operations Manager	7,000	40,000	21,500	-
General Manager/ Director	20,000	45,000	36,000	-
Production Manager	9,000	31,230	22,450	+

The majority within the services sectors has seen a drop in salaries sadly. Service providers are often hit hardest in a tough economy.

## Exhibitions

	Minimum	Maximum	Average	Y on Y
Sales Executive	6,500	11,030	9,176	-
Sales/Business Development Manager	15,000	22,930	16,783	N/A
Sponsorship Sales Manager	15,000	23,000	19,300	+
Marketing Executive	12,000	21,000	14,183	+
Marketing Manager	13,400	23,000	15,733	-
Marketing Director	23,000	25,130	23,782	-
Operations Executive	7,500	12,000	9,750	+
Operations Manager	8,500	23,000	15,933	-
Senior Operations Manager/Head of Operations	17,000	30,000	22,836	-
Exhibition/Project Manager	16,300	16,500	19,266	+
Exhibition Director	20,000	41,360	30,352	+
Commercial/Business Development Director	14,100	44,000	25,000	N/A
Senior Project Manager	20,000	38,000	29,952	N/A
Group Exhibition Director	45,000	66,000	53,000	N/A

The average salary for exhibitions is highly dependant on the size of the show and company. The bigger international organisers pay significantly higher salaries and the smaller show organisers pay less.

# INDUSTRY COMPARISONS: Not for Profit, Commercial Conferences and Hotels & Venues

## NFP/ Charity/ Association

	Minimum	Maximum	Average	Y on Y
Event/Project Coordinator	7,000	19,000	12,666	+
Event Manager	14,000	25,100	19,025	-
Event Director/ Head of Events	24,000	41,500	31,833	+

## Commercial Conferences

	Minimum	Maximum	Average	Y on Y
Sales Manager	12,895	23,000	16,723	+
Sales Director	22,000	33,000	26,666	-
Conference Producer/ Manager	6,500	23,000	14,683	+
General Manager/ Divisional/ Conference Director	12,000	45,000	27,760	+
Head of Production/ Production Director	22,000	28,000	25,000	N/A

## Hotels & Venues

	Minimum	Maximum	Average	Y on Y
Sales Manager	10,000	25,000	16,650	+
Sales & Marketing Director	22,000	45,000	27,750	-
Event Manager	13,000	23,000	18,000	=
Event/ Venue Director	12,000	43,000	23,600	-

The increase in the head of events role is noticeable here, and could be skewed by a new respondent on a higher salary, although we feel the average is the right level for this role and sector.

Venue employees tend to earn more in the same role as a hotel person, but will have fewer benefits.

# Conclusion

With the ongoing caution in local and world economies and a series of redundancies during the course of 2016 and yet more in 2017, in which middle management were hardest hit, we have seen employment within the events industry contract even further. Despite some negative results, we still remain positive and passionate about our amazing events industry.

Key conclusions this year are as follows:

- There was a rise in the average salary across the board of nearly 7% (N.B. this is average figure).
- The majority, a massive 60% of respondents, received no pay rise, up 6% on last year.
- The average pay rise is just 1.1%, representative of regional averages across other industries.
- 75% of respondents do not feel they are paid their worth.
- Money is once again the biggest motivator, as individuals struggle without pay rises for a 3<sup>rd</sup> year.
- 9% of our respondents were made redundant from their last role.
- The unemployment figure is at 5%, up from 1% last year.

So it seems that those who have a job are very lucky; stability and a good work environment are paramount, a pay rise is secondary. But for employees who have lost jobs, they need to remember their strengths and passion, and get out there and seek out opportunities, with some essential personal re-positioning, flexibility when it comes to salary expectations, and open-mindedness as to the job and location they consider.



# Conclusion

As a result of stagnating pay rises, we are seeing people take control and make necessary changes such as to move out of prime residential areas, into more affordable communities slightly further out, which is a nod to 'normalisation'; this is what happens in all established cities and enables employees to reduce their outgoings in the face of lower disposable incomes.

The knock on effect is that employees are 'staying put' as job-seeking goes on hold, so although traditionally in a period of economic cut-backs it becomes an 'employers market', actually the candidate pool has reduced when it comes to some key job functions, with the best people staying in good jobs within good companies. So whilst redundancies are high, staff turnover could still remain static or reduce.

Employers need to be objective and decisive when it comes to staffing levels, and make changes where necessary to adapt to the ongoing caution in the market and ensure they are 'right-sized', and can continue to compete. We're in a phase where strong management and strategic planning is all-important to become future-proofed, leaner and stronger.

Looking forward, there is still much to be positive about with the reported higher levels of senior recruitment and renewed positivity for the new year. Furthermore, the advent of VAT in January 2018, should contribute to a boost in the economy, and when we do come out the other side, we will finally be more resistant to volatility, and ready for tomorrow's challenges.

Bring on 2018!