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SPEAKING INDUSTRY BENCHMARK REPORT



SPEAKERS

AN INSIDE LOOK

It's no secret that the event industry is constantly evolving. Sometimes the changes are massive shifts that seem to happen all at once, but more often, our industry is going through smaller, incremental changes thanks to emerging technologies and new audience preferences.

Event professionals and speakers are able to thrive in the midst of these changes because of their ability to pivot and adapt. At AAE Speakers Bureau, we get a front row seat to how our clients turn challenges into opportunities to improve their process and elevate attendee experience.

Knowing how to pivot and adapt in this dynamic industry depends on reliable, insightful data. In this 2023 Speaking Industry Benchmark Report, a follow-up to our award-winning 2022 report, that's exactly what we're bringing you. You'll find insider knowledge from event professionals and keynote speakers on the entire event planning process — from choosing a speaker to orchestrating an unforgettable event experience — as well as predictions and reflections on what lies ahead for our industry.

Let's jump into the numbers!



"With events, we often find ourselves attempting the impossible: forecasting the future. This 2023 Speaking Industry Benchmark Report, while purely a prediction, gives us all a clearer look at the months ahead, opening the door to better informed, data-driven decisions. Thanks to the hundreds of participants who shared their insights, we are in a better position to create dynamic event experiences for attendees in 2023."

— **Greg Friedlander**, CEO and Founder, AAE Speakers Bureau

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



ECONOMIC UNCERTAINTY is driving event organizers' decisions on format, budget.

81.25% of event organizers said they are concerned about the impact of economic uncertainty on their 2023 event plans. 75.25% of those said it impacts their decisions around event format, and 68.23% said their budget for speakers would be lower because of it.

1



CONTROVERSIAL TOPICS: event pros likely to ask for tweaks, speakers likely to oblige.

We asked event organizers how likely they would be to ask a keynote speaker to tweak their presentation if they thought their views could be polarizing. The overwhelming majority (72.83%) said they would consider it. Almost all (95.86%) speakers said they would consider tweaking their presentation if asked.

2



WHAT EVENT PROS WANT: speakers to drive engagement, attendance, and education.

The most important goals event organizers have for their booked speakers are audience engagement (69.57%), education for the audience (51.63%), and increased attendance (41.03%).

3



WHAT SPEAKERS WANT: ideal fees, topic relevance, and values alignment.

The three things that make speakers most likely to accept an offer are whether the event pays their ideal fee (62.76%), whether the topic is relevant to their expertise (61.38%), and whether the event or organization aligns with their values (41.38%).

4



EVENT BUDGETS DOWN slightly in 2023, while speaking fees are up.

33.15% of event organizers said their budgets are lower in 2023, while 24.45% said they were higher. 53.11% of speakers said their fees are increasing. 44.14% said their fees are not changing this year, and just 2.76% said they were decreasing. However, the number of events planned in 2023 is up by 26% on average.

5



PRIORITY SPEAKING TOPICS for event pros held steady from 2022 to 2023.

The topics event strategists are prioritizing in 2023 are diversity, equity, and inclusion (55.98%), leadership and motivation (55.98%), mental health and mindset (43.75%), the future of work (29.62%), and corporate culture (27.72%).

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ABOUT AAE SPEAKERS



AAE Speakers Bureau is a full-service speakers bureau and talent agency that exclusively represents the interests of meeting and event professionals to select, book and execute events with keynote speakers and entertainment to leave a lasting impact on their audiences. We work tirelessly for event professionals as their centralized, trusted, and impartial partner in the talent booking process.

With our expansive industry experience and exceptional customer support, AAE has connected more than 10,000 events with their perfect speaker, host, celebrity, or performer since 2002. We have booked over \$300M of celebrity talent on behalf of thousands of the most respected companies and organizations in the world.

If you have any questions related to this report, please contact Jennifer Best or Evan Owens at jennifer@aaehq.com and evan@aaehq.com, respectively.

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