



MEETINGS OUTLOOK™

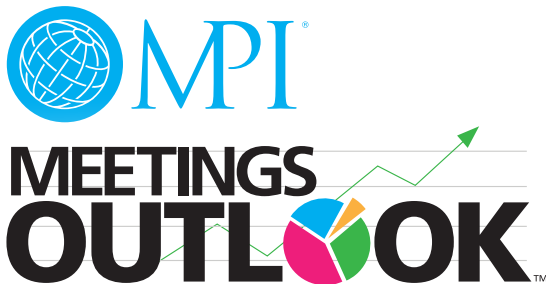


Expectations for in-person attendance, budgets and the overall business landscape dropped sharply this quarter as event professionals reveal the ways and extent to which recent U.S. executive orders and policy changes are impacting meetings and events.

2025 Q2 EDITION



EVENT BUSINESS OPTIMISM Drops Amid Uncertainty



By Michael Pinchera

A majority of meeting and event professionals anticipate negative business conditions over the next year, according to MPI's Q2 2025 Meetings Outlook survey; only 31% of respondents expect favorable conditions.

It's important to understand that the data revealed in this survey represents a single quarter in which prior trends were disrupted; it's a snapshot of the period in which survey responses were collected.

Between March 31-April 11, the Q2 2025 Meetings Outlook survey received a total of 230 unique responses (53% from suppliers, 47% from planners). When evaluating the data, consider the greater economic and geopolitical landscape leading up to the survey and while responses were being collected.

That period of time saw significant volatility in financial markets and geopolitics as U.S. President Trump announced new tariffs for goods from most countries (April 2), to which China and other countries responded with new tariffs of their own on U.S. goods. On April 9, Trump announced a 90-day pause on some of the new tariffs, sending many financial markets back up.

Meeting and event professionals are clearly seeing how uncertainty injected by such volatile shifts can cause nearly instant ups and downs that reverberate around the globe and can disrupt myriad aspects of the event business. Yet, even if some of the root causes of the current challenges are resolved overnight, the uncertainty felt throughout the meeting and event industry could well remain, pending longer-term stability.

“We are already seeing a 40% decline. I think attendance will only continue to drop for our events in the U.S. I also anticipate we are not the only organization facing this challenge and it will have a ripple effect on the industry.”

KIMBERLY GAIENNIE

MPI At Large

Deeper into the data: Budgets, attendance

While the overall business projection data this quarter is the least-positive ever seen in Meetings Outlook, several other data points—such as budget and in-person attendance projections—remain better than in 2020. Thus, even though there are some similarities between the present data and that of the early pandemic, the variables driving these shifts differ in many ways and may require different solutions to overcome.

Nearly half of survey respondents (48%) expect in-person event attendance to decrease over the coming year. That’s the greatest expectation for a decline in live attendance seen in the survey since Q1 2021.

Herein is a significant difference between the latest data and that collected as the pandemic took hold. As concerns of viral spread grew, many in-person events were shifted to virtual platforms to help safeguard attendees and overcome travel-related issues. As live attendance expectations plummeted in 2020, virtual

attendance expectations surged to the highest we’ve ever seen because remote tech offered a viable alternative for many.

This quarter, however, while virtual attendance expectations show an optimistic boost, that doesn’t cover the decline expected with in-person attendance.

An additional divergence is seen in current budget expectations. In every quarter for the past three years, a majority of Meetings Outlook respondents shared “favorable” event budget expectations. Through much of that time, event-related costs were also on the rise due to supply-chain problems, inflation, etc., often growing at a greater rate than budgets. In the Q2 2025 Meetings Outlook survey, however, only 36% of respondents cited “favorable” budget expectations for the year ahead.

The impact of executive orders, new policies

With numerous executive orders and policy changes

BUDGET PROJECTIONS

Budget expectations also show a stark reversal this quarter—compared to the past several years of consistently positive budget projections—with only 36% of respondents expecting “favorable” budgets in the year ahead.

	Q3 '24	Q4 '24	Q1 '25	Q2 '25
Favorable	72%	71%	66%	36%
Flat	16%	21%	21%	23%
Negative	12%	8%	14%	40%

from the new U.S. presidential administration, this survey also sought to identify how, if at all, event professionals are being impacted as a result.

A majority of respondents report experiencing significant negative impacts on their event business

due to some of these orders and policy shifts.

Three-quarters (75%) of survey respondents said these actions are already having a negative impact on their business. In fact, 62% of respondents report *only* negative effects. And, for most, these negative effects

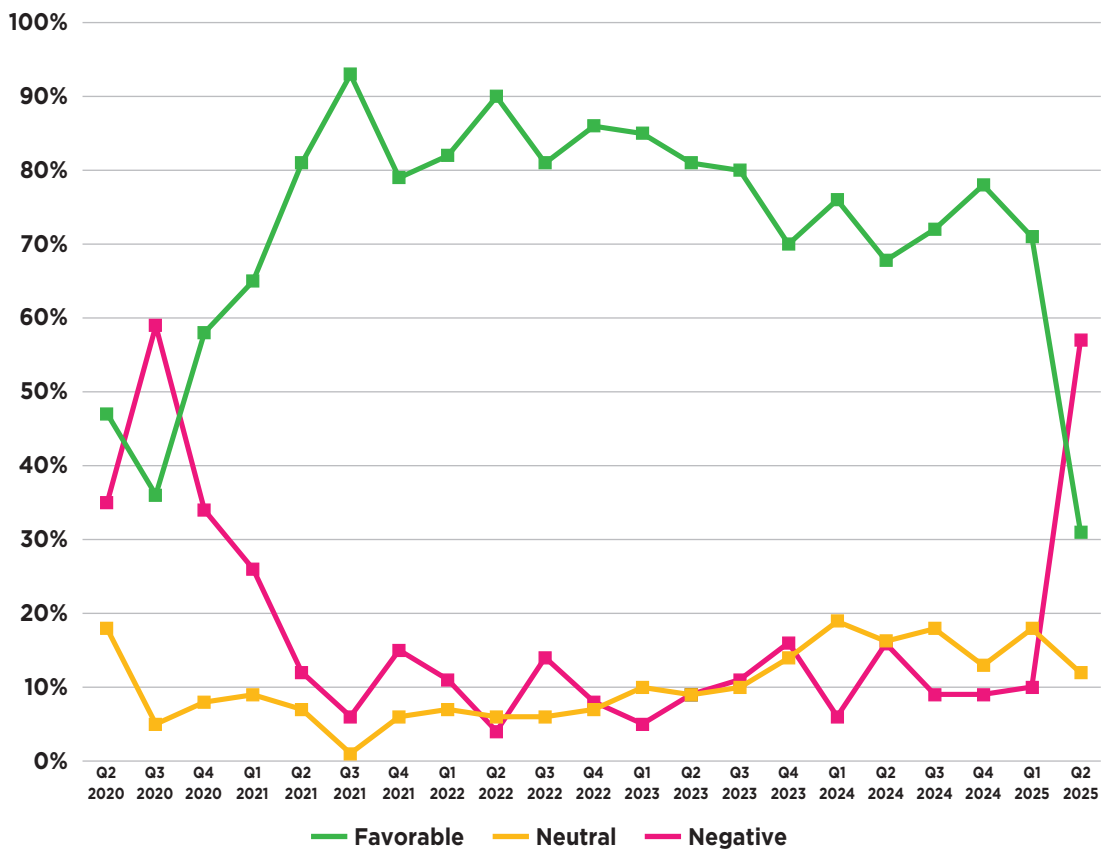
BUSINESS CONDITIONS

A majority of meeting and event professionals anticipate negative business conditions over the next year, with only 31% of respondents expecting favorable conditions.

	Q3 '24	Q4 '24	Q1 '25	Q2 '25
Favorable	72%	78%	71%	31%
Neutral	18%	13%	18%	12%
Negative	9%	9%	10%	57%

Projected business conditions over the next 12 months

Here's a look at this data point over the past 21 quarters, tracking event professionals' business expectations for "the next 12 months," from the first half of 2020—the start of the pandemic—to April 2025.



“We have lost contracted business due to the DOGE cutbacks. We will see a decline in RFPs for organizations that have lost their funding. This will have a negative impact on our overall contracted revenue.”

LYNNE KREKELBERG

MPI Carolinas Chapter

aren't minor: 76% of affected respondents labelled the severity of these impacts as “very significant” or “moderately significant.”

While many respondents attributed negative effects to the newly announced tariffs, it was clear in the survey comments that other recent U.S. actions appear to be having a deleterious effect on many event professionals' businesses.

The reported effects are wide ranging, including existential uncertainty; cost increases; funding cuts; speakers, attendees and exhibitors unable or unwilling to travel; and more. Many survey respondent comments specifically cite fear.

“We hold global events for an international audience across the globe. Attendees no longer feel safe traveling to or want to support our events in the U.S.,”

GOVERNMENTAL IMPACTS

Three-quarters (75%) of survey respondents said recent U.S. executive orders and/or government policy changes are already having a negative impact on their business. In fact, 62% of respondents report *only* negative effects. And, for most, these negative effects aren't minor: 76% of affected respondents labelled the severity of these impacts as “very significant” or “moderately significant.”

Are recent U.S. executive orders and/or government policy changes impacting your organization or business, either positively or negatively?

<i>Yes, both positive and negative impacts</i>	13%
<i>Yes, only positive impacts</i>	1%
<i>Yes, only negative impact</i>	62%
<i>Unsure</i>	15%
<i>No</i>	9%

How significant is the negative impact of these changes on your organization or business?

<i>Very significant</i>	37%
<i>Moderately significant</i>	39%
<i>Slightly significant</i>	19%
<i>Not significant at all</i>	1%
<i>Unsure</i>	3%



Kimberly Gaiennie (MPI At Large), head of events at Scrum Alliance in Colorado, shared in her comments. “We are already seeing a 40% decline. I think attendance will only continue to drop for our events in the U.S. I also anticipate we are not the only organization facing this challenge and it will have a ripple effect on the industry.”

A U.S.-based domestic association planner who requested anonymity shared: “A lot of our members/attendees are federally funded, and the [executive orders] have either made it more difficult to fund their organizations and/or programs or more difficult to use federal funds for career advancement. Our members are theoretically funded until the end of the government’s fiscal year, [but] we are anticipating severe cuts for FY2026 as we anticipate the U.S. administration and Congress viewing the funding of our members as ‘waste.’”

Numerous other event professionals also shared existential concerns in which they fear that funding cuts to their attendees or members will, in turn, eat away at their own businesses and events.

Another U.S.-based planner who requested an-

onymity said: “I have clients that have lost funding due to DEI initiatives being cut as well as government employees being let go and those still in place not able to travel for conferences in April and funding lost for a conference in October. My clients are reconsidering what services that we normally provide they can cut for overall savings.”

Brett Augustine (MPI Dallas/Fort Worth Chapter), SVP client engagement at Manor Hill Productions, also mentioned a resulting pullback in business.

“Our clients are planning to scale back their production and/or are planning to have less meetings in general,” Augustine explained in his survey comments. “Some are afraid that funding for their organization will be randomly terminated by outside sources such as DOGE. I think many international groups will shift their meetings outside of the U.S.”

In fact, DOGE—the Elon Musk-backed Department of Government Efficiency initiative—appeared as a factor in multiple comments relating to loss of funding or complete shutdowns of event programs.

“We have lost contracted business due to the DOGE cutbacks,” said Lynne Krekelberg (MPI Caroli-

ATTENDANCE FORECASTS

Nearly half of respondents (48%) expect in-person event attendance to decrease over the coming year. Virtual attendance expectations, meanwhile, saw an optimistic boost.

Projected Live Attendance

	Q3 '24	Q4 '24	Q1 '25	Q2 '25
Positive	76%	75%	76%	36%
Flat	13%	16%	12%	16%
Negative	11%	9%	12%	48%

Projected Virtual Attendance

	Q3 '24	Q4 '24	Q1 '25	Q2 '25
Positive	22%	22%	18%	32%
Flat	34%	39%	35%	38%
Negative	44%	38%	47%	30%

“Our clients are planning to scale back their production and/or are planning to have less meetings in general. I think many international groups will shift their meetings outside of the U.S.”

BRETT AUGUSTINE

MPI Dallas/Fort Worth Chapter

nas Chapter), corporate and SMERF sales manager at Windsor Hospitality Group. “We will see a decline in RFPs for organizations that have lost their funding. This will have a negative impact on our overall contracted revenue.”

While 75% of all Meetings Outlook respondents reported a negative impact on their business from recent U.S. executive orders and policy shifts, professionals involved with association and government events appear to be slightly more impacted (79% and 83%, respectively). Further comments indicate that scientific, medical and academic events, specifically, may be more prone to greater disruption.

Insights on the positive effects

The U.S. administration’s actions are credited with creating positive effects on event businesses, too, with 13% of respondents experiencing both positive and negative effects—but just 1% citing *only* positive effects.

In addition to the positive effects being much less widespread than the negatives, the data suggests the positives are also, overall, less significant than the negatives. (Because so few respondents cited any positive effects, we can only say that the data “suggests” this.)

Additionally, respondents reporting positive impacts are predominantly from outside of the U.S., with Canada a standout.

One Canadian supplier respondent who requested anonymity commented that they’re experiencing only positive effects as a result of the U.S. executive orders

and policy changes because groups—especially domestic Canadian associations and international associations—are seeking host destinations specifically *not* in the U.S.

Yet even though that supplier’s business is bolstered by more groups booking events in Canada, they expect these same actions will cause some negative side effects in the future, noting specific concerns that attendance will be hindered if delegates or exhibitors from the U.S. are unable or afraid to participate.

Tim Whalen, CMP (MPI Toronto Chapter), strategic manager of resort sales, Fallsview Casino Resort, noted similar impacts—both positive and negative.

“The meeting industry as a whole will be hurt by lack of travel across the Canada-U.S. border,” Whalen said in his survey comments. “[But] as a venue that books mostly Canadian business, we hope to see more business staying home in our country [from] groups that typically go to the U.S.”

Keep doing what you do best

Looking back at MPI’s survey data during other major disruptions—notably, the 2008 financial crisis and the pandemic—reveals the resilience of the global meeting and event industry in response to sudden, severe downturns. The initial impacts may be abrupt and unsettling, but we’ve repeatedly seen that event professionals consistently adapt, expanding their skill set through professional education and community connections and staying up to date on the indicators of and expectations for the business landscape of tomorrow.



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