

UNLOCK THE FUTURE:

Keynote Speaking Trends for 2024





Where is the conference and keynote speaker industry now and where is it heading?

These are some of the questions we researched in our recent speaking industry survey.

As we all know, the past four years have been a roller-coaster ride and challenging for the speaking industry. After mass cancellations, many virtual events, and false restarts, the speaking industry bounced back strong in 2022 and 2023—and is coming back stronger with more agility.

The Big Picture

Conferences of 2024 and beyond will provide a mix of in-person, virtual, and hybrid events, depending on the needs of the organization or event.

Who Were Surveyed?

To get a sense of where the speaking events industry is and where it's going, BigSpeak Speakers Bureau surveyed clients, customers, and colleagues who booked keynote speakers for events.

These respondents represented managers, directors, VPs, C-suite leaders as well as executive assistants, meeting professionals, and even founders who booked keynote speakers.

The respondents hailed from a wide range of industries, but were largely concentrated in Technology, Finance, Healthcare, Real Estate, Non-profits and Events/Entertainment.



**Other responses: CPG, Manufacturing/Beauty, Trade Association, Construction, Logistics, Accounting, Professional Services, Direct Sales, Executive Consulting, Industry Trade Association, Supply Chain Conferences, Insurance, Agriculture*

What's Happening With Events in 2024 and Beyond?

BigSpeak asked respondents a variety of questions. We wanted to know how many events they planned per year, what types of events they planned for in 2024, their typical budgets, how they planned to change their budgets, the speaking topics they were most focused on, how themes were decided, and how they wanted to work with keynote speakers for events.

The results were promising in terms of event planning. The majority of respondents planned to keep their budgets the same in 2024, focusing on about 2-4 events per year, and were planning on more in-person events, while keeping the option of using virtual and hybrid. The big surprise was how the industry is keeping virtual and hybrid events as part of its overall strategy.

Dominant keynote speaking topics were:

- 66% Leadership and Teamwork
- 50% Motivation
- 49% AI and Machine Learning

Types of Events:

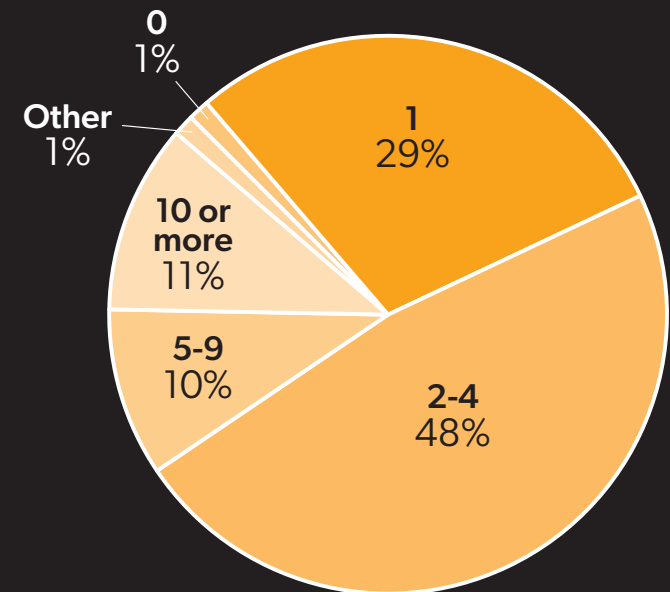
- 89% In-Person
- 53% Virtual
- 49% Hybrid

2024 Budget Plan:

- 17% Increase
- 69% Keep the Same
- 14% Decrease

For the number of events planned per year, about half (48%) planned 2-4 events per year. The other half of respondents were split, with 29% planning 1 event per year and the other 21% planning 5 or more events per year.

EVENTS PLANNED



For types of events planned for 2024, the overall trend was for in-person events. The vast majority, about 89% of companies, planned to hold 1 or more in-person events. Survey results indicate that online events have become a staple of the industry, as it may be easier to secure a big name speaker, the audience can be larger, and the company can invite multiple departments. According to our respondents, 53% planned to hold virtual events, and 49% planned to hold hybrid events (virtual and in-person) in their mix.

MIX OF EVENTS PLANNED



89%
In-Person

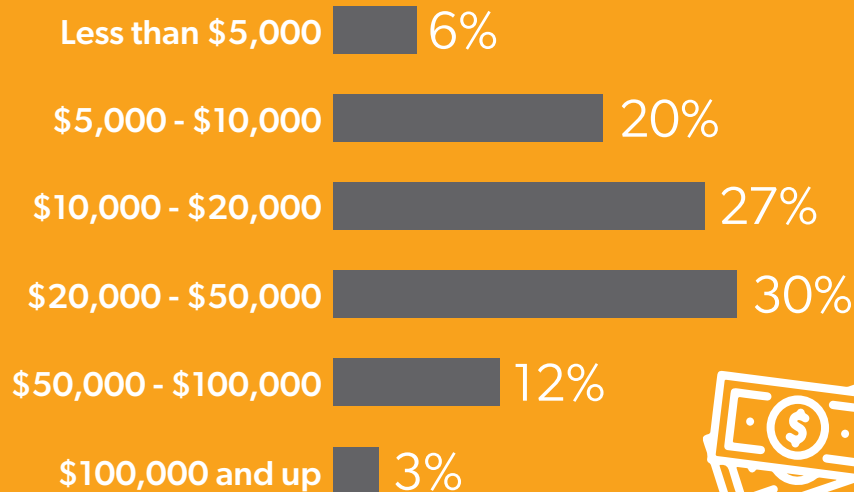


53%
Virtual



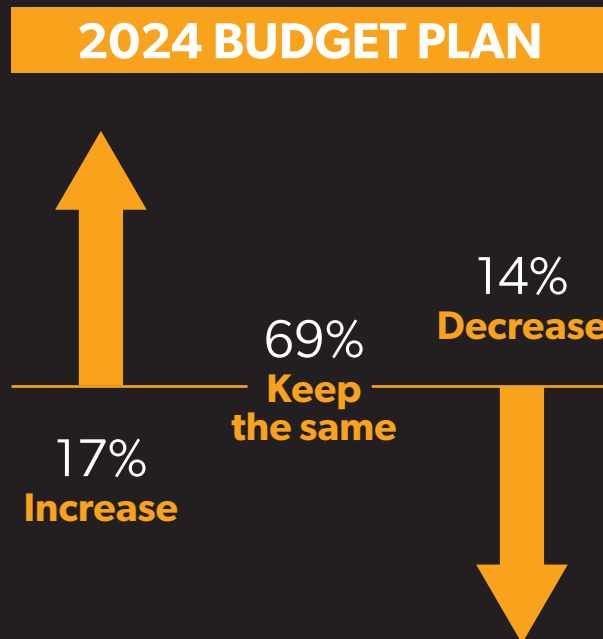
49%
Hybrid
(audience in-person & virtual)

SPEAKER BUDGET



For event budgets for speakers in 2023, the majority of respondents, 57%, had a budget between \$10,000 – \$50,000 to book a speaker. The remainder were split, with 26% having \$10,000 or less to book a keynote speaker and 15% having \$50,000 and up to book a keynote speaker.

For event budget planning in 2024, the vast majority of respondents, 69%, were holding the line and keeping the budget the same as 2023. The rest of the respondents were split, with 17% intent on increasing budgets and 14% intent on decreasing them.



For keynote speaking topics planned in 2024, there was a continued focus on leadership and teamwork (66%), motivation (50%), and AI and machine learning (49%), which has become more and more popular. Organizations are also focused on corporate culture (43%), the future of work (38%), and DEI (35%). See the complete list of topics and their popularity below.



For how organizations decided on a theme for an event, about half (56%) decided by committee, followed by the top leaders choosing at 18% and following current events at 11%.

DECISION MAKER



18%
C-Suite



56%
Committee



11%
Current Events



3%
Sole Decision Maker



12%
Other

For requests made of keynote speakers, the majority of respondents wanted onsite tech checks (70%), more than one pre-event call (49%), a video recording of the event (48%), and participation in a meet and greet (46%). For the popularity of other requests, see the chart below.

ADDITIONAL REQUESTS



Onsite tech check
(day of or day prior)
70%



Pre-event publicity
25%



More than one pre-event call
49%



Social media promotion
25%



Video recording
(of live presentation)
48%



Workshops
(onsite or virtual)
20%



Meet and greet with attendees
46%



Pre-event recording
15%



Photo Ops
33%



Other
10%



Book signing
27%



Virtual events
9%



Meeting with executives or employees
27%



Podcasts
5%

Where, How and When to Book Keynote Speakers?

The survey also investigated the logistics of booking keynote speakers. Respondents were asked how they searched for keynote speakers, what social media they used, and how long before the event they went searching.

The responses were enlightening for how to market to organizations looking to book keynote speakers. The survey showed that word-of-mouth and working with a bureau were tied as the top way for organizations to find speakers (67%), that LinkedIn was the top social media site used (69%), and that most respondents, 40%, started searching about 2-3 months before their event.

For searching for keynote speakers, the top way to find a keynote speaker, at 67%, was a tie between using a **speakers bureau** they had worked with previously and using **personal recommendations**. The next two most popular ways to choose a keynote speaker were personal experience with the keynote speaker, 52%, and using a Search Engine 49%.



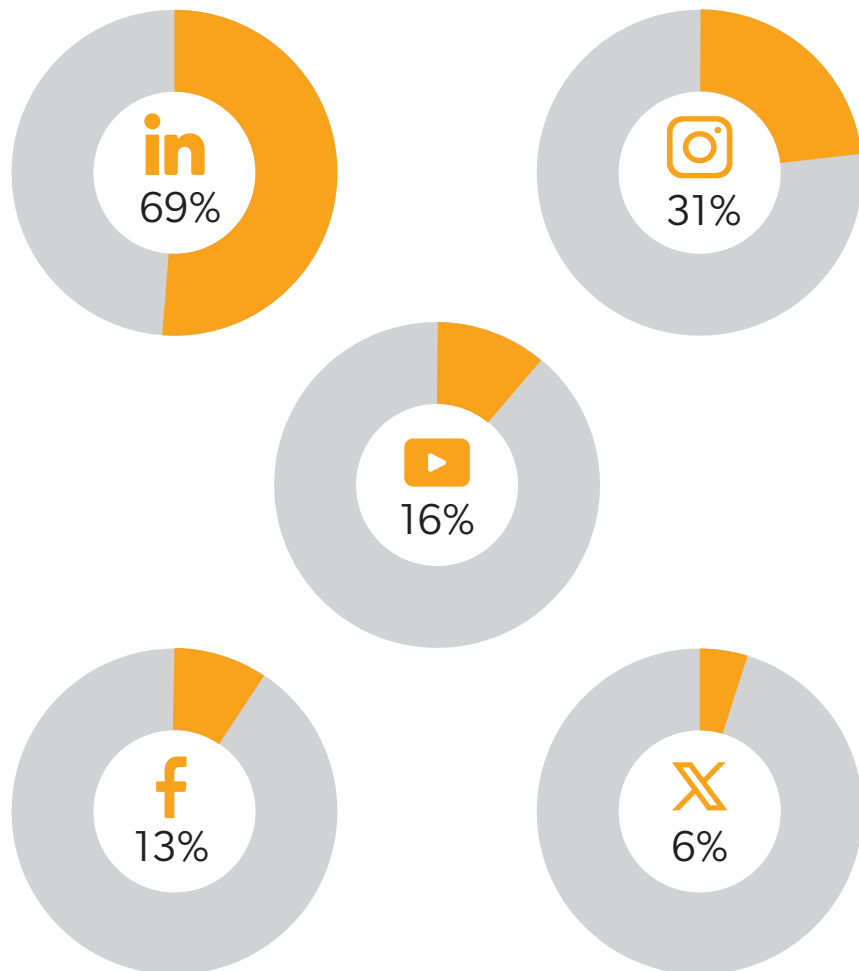
SEARCH METHOD

I go directly to a speaker bureau website that I work with	67%
Personal Recommendations (word-of-mouth)	67%
Personal Experience (saw at another event or conference)	52%
Google/Bing search	49%
Books (Authors)	26%
TV or Podcasts	22%
Social Media (Facebook, Instagram, Threads, Twitter/X, Other)	22%
Video (YouTube, TikTok, Vimeo)	20%
Other*	6%
A.I. Recommendation (Chat GPT, Bard, Google Search AI, Alexa, etc)	5%
Email campaigns	5%

*Other: Team curates a wish list based on goals and organizational needs, Committee recommendations, Top 100 lists

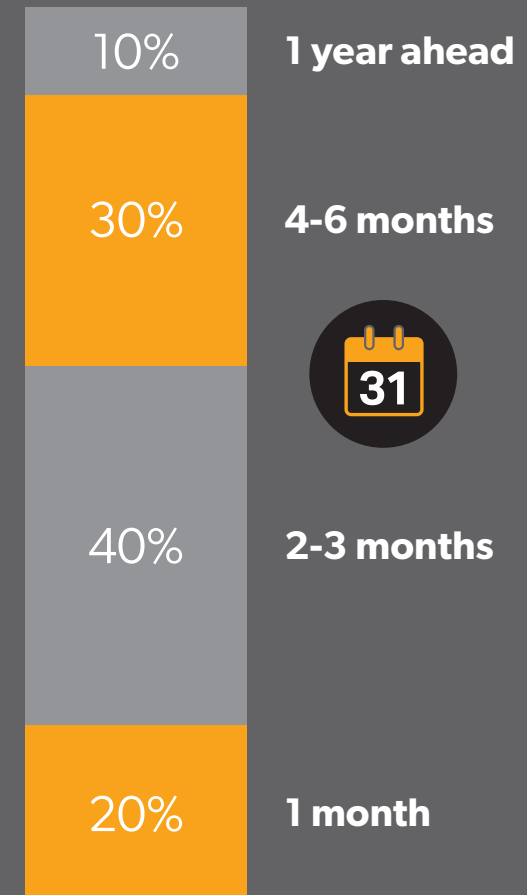
For the people who use social media to search for a keynote speaker, the vast majority used LinkedIn (69%), followed by Instagram 31%, Facebook 12.5%, and YouTube 16%. Threads and Twitter/X were the least popular.

SOCIAL MEDIA SITES



For when they began to search/find a speaker, the vast majority (80%) were giving themselves plenty of time to find and book a keynote speaker. The sweet spot for respondents was 2-3 months before the event at 40%, followed by 4-6 months 30%, and one month 20%.

TIME



Why Use Speaker Bureaus?

Another part of the survey looked at how organizations are using speakers bureaus and what they want from them. To find out what organizations needed, the survey asked respondents the top reasons they worked with bureaus, how they worked with advisors for speaker recommendations, what services they needed from bureaus for events, and how they liked to work with bureaus after booking a speaker.

After reviewing the answers, the majority of respondents choose speakers bureaus that were easy to work with (61%), had a wide variety of speaker options (59%), and were responsive to the clients needs.



REASON

Bureau is easy to work with and makes me a priority	61%
Prices (low fee options are important to my organization)	59%
Selection of Speakers (I like bureaus with more speaker options)	59%
Responsiveness	42%
Diversity of speakers (It is important to me or my organization that we partner with a bureau that values diversity.)	41%
Exclusive Speakers to the bureau	13%
Brand recognition or Reputation of the Bureau	7%
Additional event support like online portal, helping with logistics	11%
Other*	5%

**Other: Ability to work with us on terms and pricing. Ability to support with the client demands, Expertise, Bureau can offer suggestions on speakers and find the right fit for my company and event theme/goals.*



BIGSPEAK SPEAKERS BUREAU IS HERE TO HELP YOU!


BigSpeak works with the best keynote speakers, top business speakers, and most booked leadership speakers. BigSpeak remains one of the top-rated speakers bureaus by making our clients our number one priority. BigSpeak has decades of industry experience and has booked around \$300M of keynote speakers on behalf of thousands of companies across the globe, delivering BigResults.

Discover why over 72% of Fortune 1000 companies partner with BigSpeak to advise and contract on thousands of keynote speakers for events. We are the Experts on the Experts and make certain our keynote speakers deliver BigResults. From conference call to curtain call, our dedicated Advisors and in-house Event Specialists simplify your life, do all the heavy lifting and make you the hero. Whether you want a motivational speaker to inspire your team, a change management guru to generate meaningful organizational transformation or a celebrity speaker to bring high-profile and touch of class to your event, BigSpeak Speakers Bureau is your one-stop solution for booking keynote speakers.

When you're ready to explore hiring a world-class keynote speaker for your in-person or virtual event, please contact us so we can do the heavy lifting for you. We help you find the best speaker, provide awareness on keynote speaker fees, terms, logistics, and reasonable travel expenses. We are committed to being with clients every step of the way, assuring the experience is beyond amazing for the audience. We are serious about providing amazing keynote speakers and atomic customer service!

CONTACT US TODAY!

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