

Conference Planner 2008

Wondering which of next year's meetings will be worth your time? More than 800 of your colleagues weigh in to help take the guesswork out of that decision.

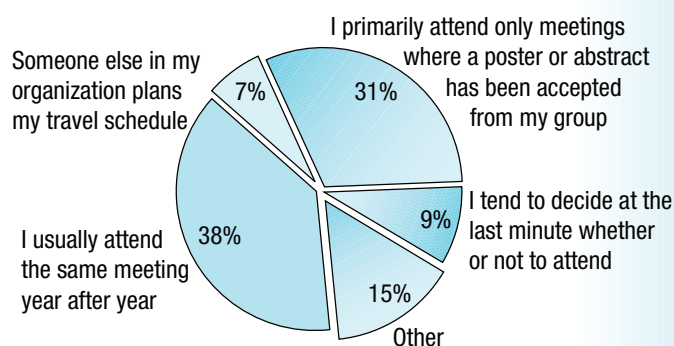
By Meredith W. Salisbury

If you're like the majority of our survey respondents, you probably attend just one or two conferences per year. So how do you make sure you pick the right one or two from an ever-growing field of dozens and dozens of meetings?

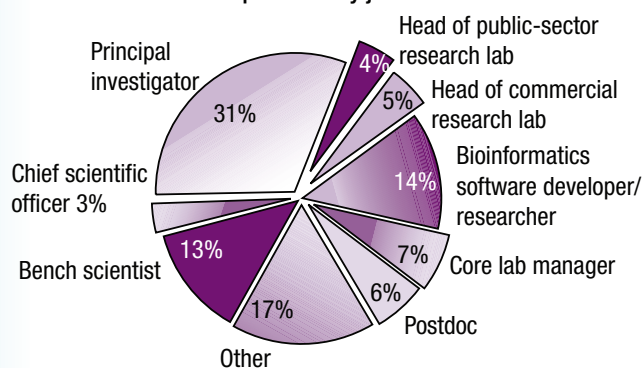
For one thing, you can't go wrong, it seems, going to Cold Spring Harbor's Biology of Genomes meeting (that's assuming you can get in — the meeting was wildly oversubscribed this year, as it has been in years past). That meeting was the most recommended of all the conferences listed in our survey this year, just as it was in our first conference survey in 2005.

But there are tons of other meetings out there, and that's the point of this survey — to help you find out more about those conferences without having to test them all yourself. Many thanks to the 842 respondents who took the time to complete the survey so that we could bring you great data about which meetings have the best scientific content, speakers, poster sessions, networking opportunities, and more. Our survey included more than 45 conferences; in the pages that follow, we list the ones attended and recommended by the most people. You'll also find information on how much your colleagues spend on conference travel each year, what factors are most important in choosing meetings, and who spends the most time in exhibit halls and poster sessions.

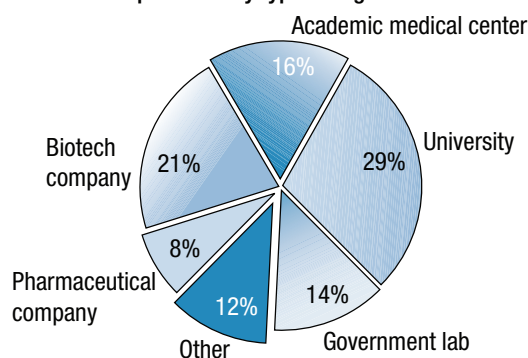
How do you generally decide which conferences to attend?



Respondents by job title

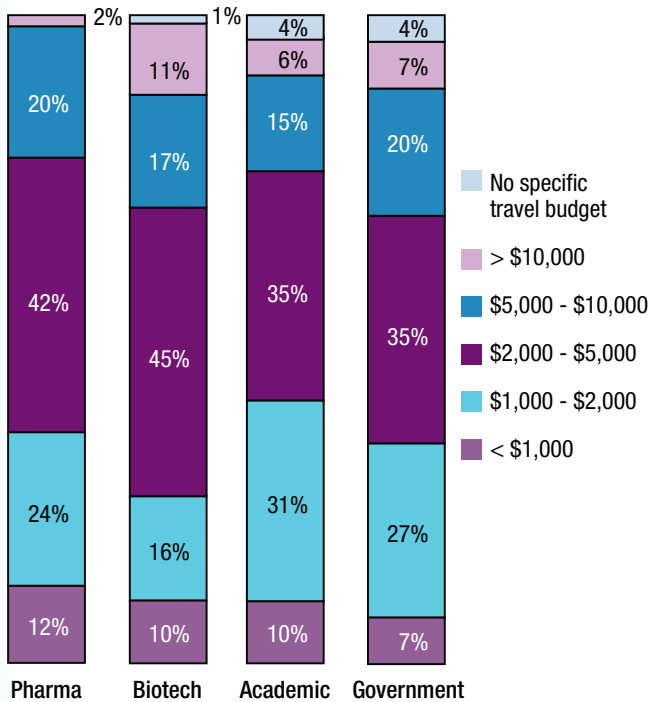


Respondents by type of organization

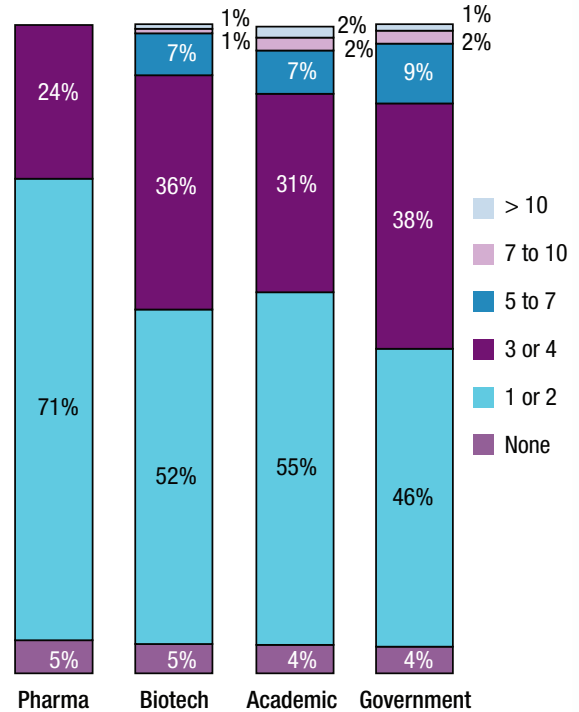


Conference attendance and interests by organization type

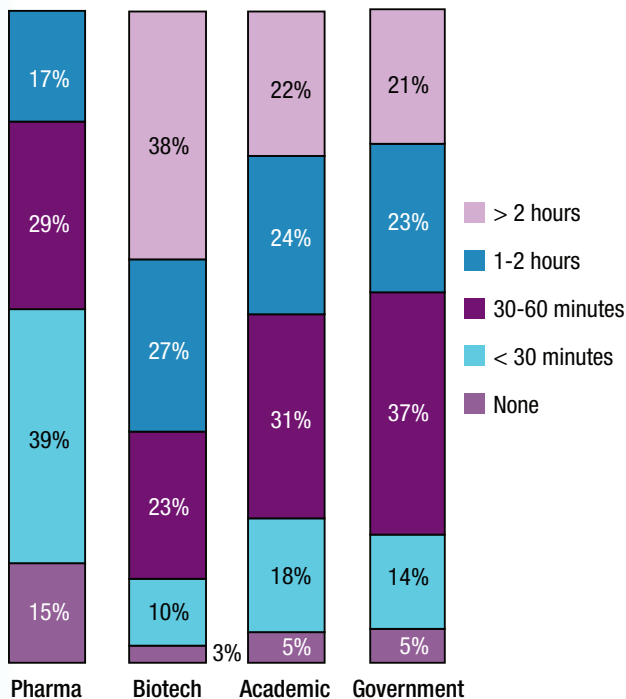
How much did you spend to attend meetings in the past year?



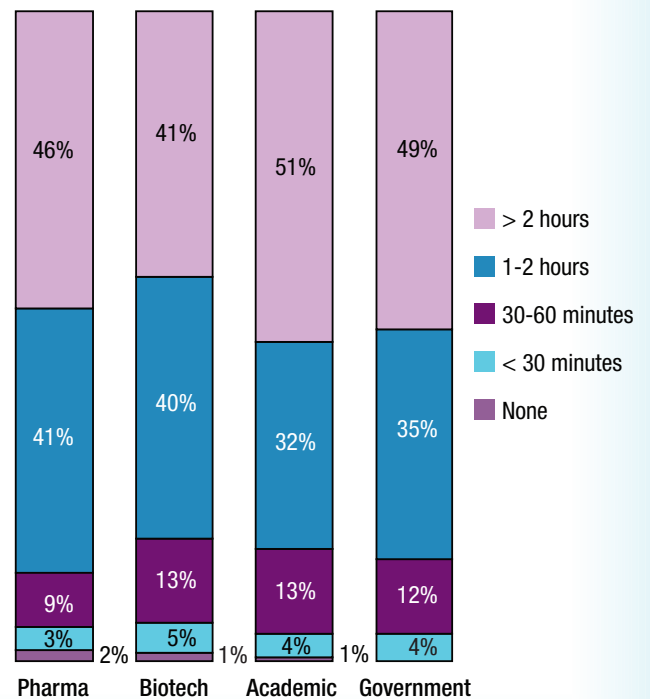
Number of conferences attended in the past year



Average time spent in exhibit hall visiting booths and vendors



Average time spent viewing posters



Most recommended conferences by category

LARGE BIOMEDICAL/SCIENTIFIC MEETINGS

- 1 AACR: American Association for Cancer Research
 - 2 **ASHG: American Society of Human Genetics**
 - 3 Experimental Biology (FASEB)
 - 4 ASM: American Society for Microbiology
 - 5 ASCB: American Society for Cell Biology
- First in 2005: ASHG: American Society of Human Genetics

TECHNOLOGY/INSTRUMENTATION MEETINGS

- 1 ABRF: Association of Biomolecular Resource Facilities
 - 2 Chips to Hits / Discovery 2 Diagnostics
 - 3 International Meeting of the Microarray Gene Expression Data Society (MGED)
 - 4 ASMS: Annual Conference on Mass Spectrometry
- First in 2005: Chips to Hits

GENERAL GENOMICS MEETINGS

- 1 Biology of Genomes (Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory)
 - 2 Beyond Genome (CHI)
 - 3 HUGO: Human Genome Meeting
 - 4 AGBT/AMS: Advances in Genome Biology and Technology / Automation in Mapping and Sequencing
- First in 2005: Biology of Genomes (Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory)

MODEL ORGANISM/PLANT AND ANIMAL MEETINGS

- 1 PAG: Plant and Animal Genome Conference (Scherago International)
 - 2 Microbial Genomics (TIGR)
 - 3 **(tie)** International Mouse Genome Conference
Plant Biology (ASPB)
- First in 2005: (tie) PAG and Microbial Genomics

BIOINFORMATICS/IT MEETINGS

- 1 ISMB: International Conference on Intelligent Systems for Molecular Biology
 - 2 Genome Informatics (Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory)
 - 3 RECOMB: International Conference on Research in Computational Molecular Biology
 - 4 PSB: Pacific Symposium on Biocomputing
- First in 2005: ISMB: International Conference on Intelligent Systems for Molecular Biology

SPECIALIZED SCIENTIFIC MEETINGS

- 1 ICSB: International Conference on Systems Biology
 - 2 Annual Systems Biology Symposium (Institute for Systems Biology)
 - 3 Annual Symposium of the Protein Society
 - 4 HUPO Annual Meeting
- First in 2005: ICSB: International Conference on Systems Biology

Which factors do you consider when deciding whether to attend a conference?

MOST IMPORTANT

CHANCE TO HEAR ABOUT
NEW SCIENTIFIC
DATA/RESULTS

RELEVANCE OF
SUBJECT MATTER
TO YOUR WORK

OVERALL QUALITY OF
SPEAKERS AND SESSIONS

OPPORTUNITIES TO
COLLABORATE/NETWORK

LEAST IMPORTANT

QUALITY OF EXHIBIT HALL/
VENDOR DEMOS

SCALE OF
POSTER SESSION

TRAVEL TIME
AND DISTANCE

OFF THE LIST

These meetings were among the most recommended conferences in 2005, but did not make the cut this year:

- AAAS Annual Meeting
- Annual *Drosophila* Research Conference
- Genomes, Medicine, and the Environment (formerly GSAC)
- LabAutomation
- PITCON

The Big 10 Conference Ratings

GT asked readers to rate 10 of the most popular conferences in the field. Respondents scored these 10 meetings for a number of qualities on a scale from excellent to poor.

The results, shown below, represent a

score from 0 to 3 assigned to each conference using a weighting formula: each “excellent” rating earned a conference three points; “good” was worth two, “average” was worth one, and a “poor” rating earned zero points. Points were

tallied for each conference and then divided by the number of respondents to normalize across meetings.

The highest possible score, therefore, is 3.0.

