

International Military Community Executives Association



Tradeshow Analysis

IMCEA's 2011 Fiesta of Flavors

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27 August 2011

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Issue Report

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to assess the performance of IMCEA during the Tradeshow and other events that were planned and executed. In addition, each event will include recommendations for improvement in 2012.

2. Derivation

The Issue Report is derived from the following:-

- Onsite feedback of performance during the events from attendees, exhibitors & members
- Recollection of Tradeshow & events by the IMCEA staff
- Summary planning and discussions leading to the Tradeshow & events
- Survey conducted by IMCEA for the Attendees
- Survey conducted by IMCEA for the Exhibitors

3. Survey Findings

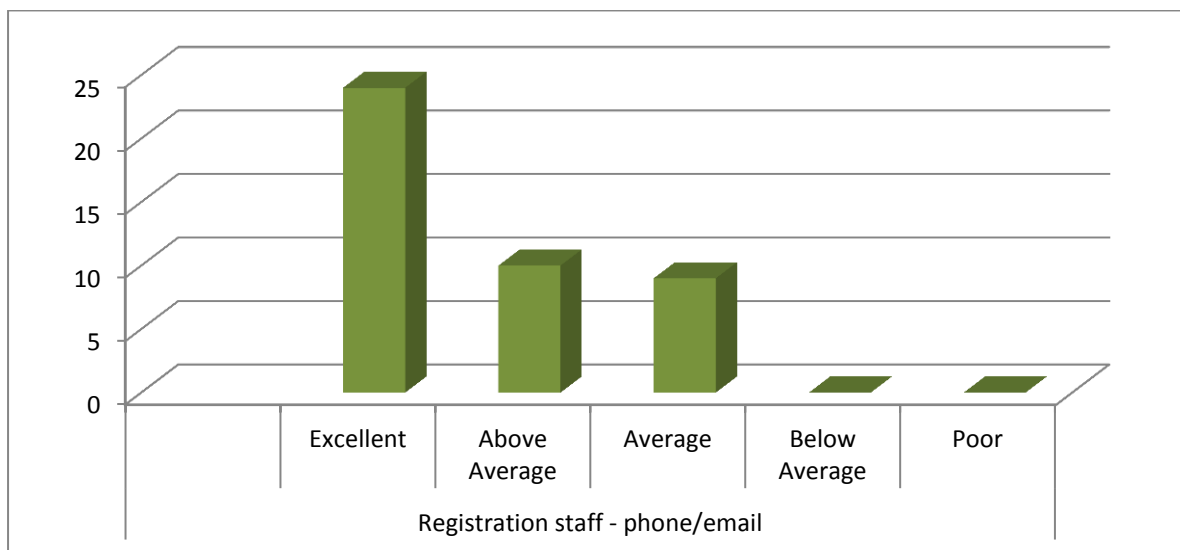
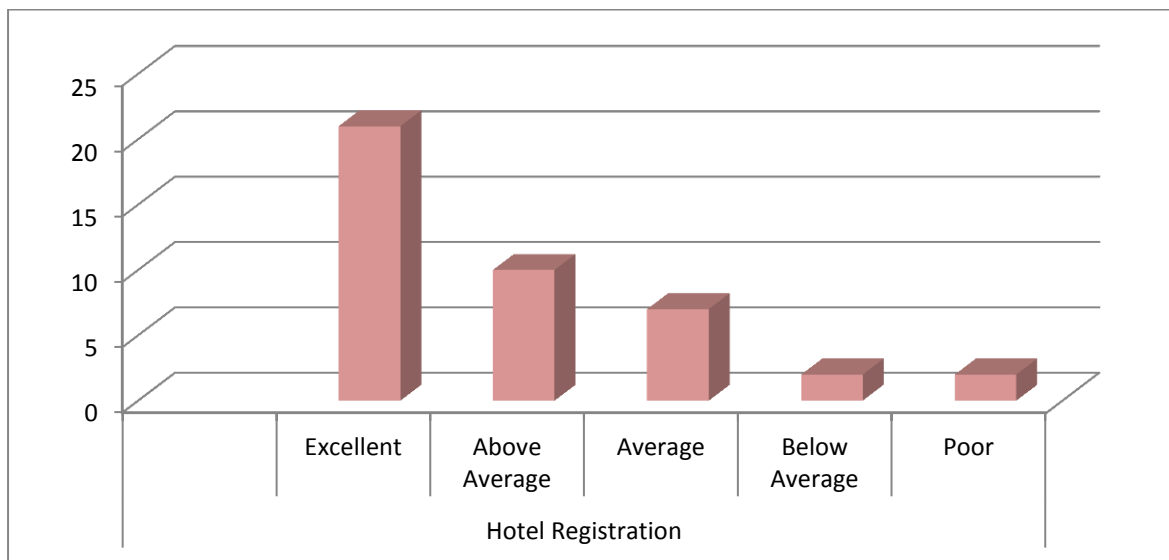
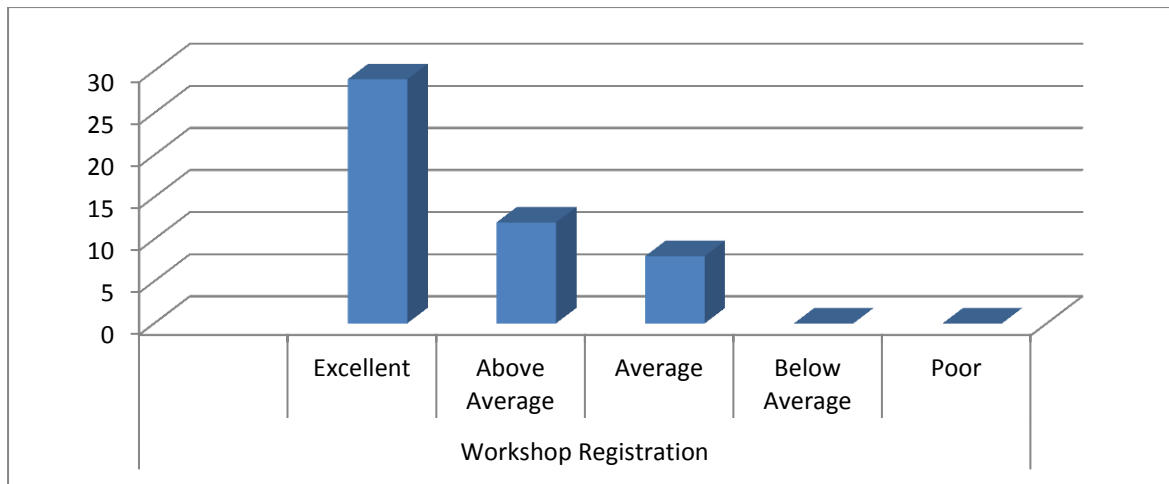
A survey of the Tradeshow attendees & exhibitors was conducted recently to measure the satisfaction rate as well as receiving feedback on the surrounding events. This data should reveal the areas that will need improvement and the areas in which they were performed satisfactorily. In addition, the survey should indicate preferences of the attendees and exhibitors as to what they would like to experience at the 2012 Tradeshow and its related events.

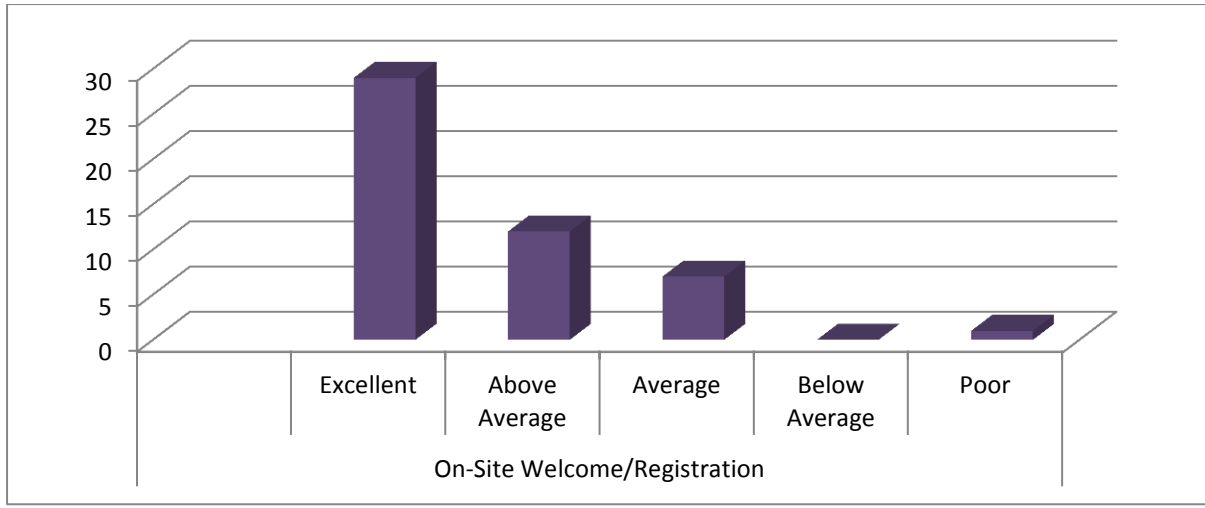
The following charts and explanations are for the attendees who participated in the Tradeshow and the surrounding events. The survey had a 20% participation rate.

Attendee Survey Results:

Rate the Workshop Registration Process:

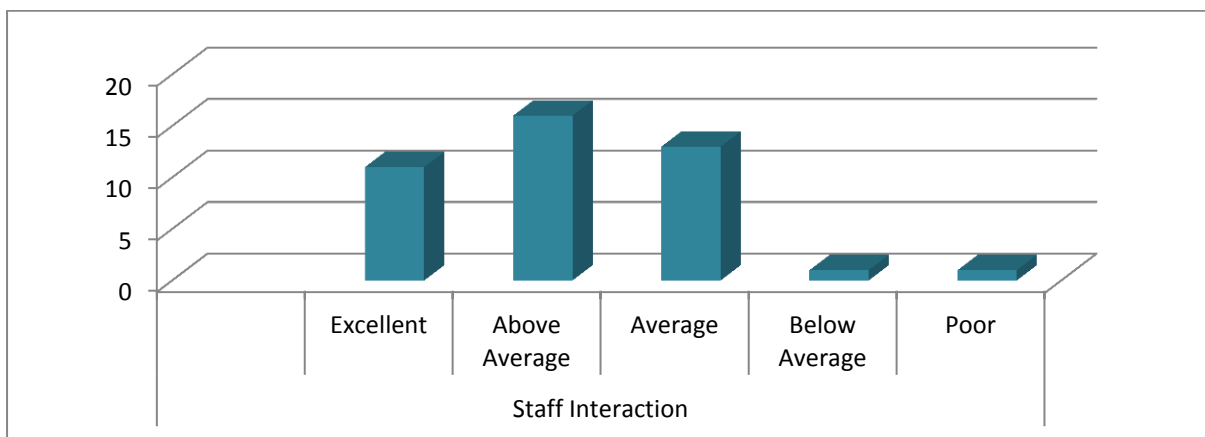
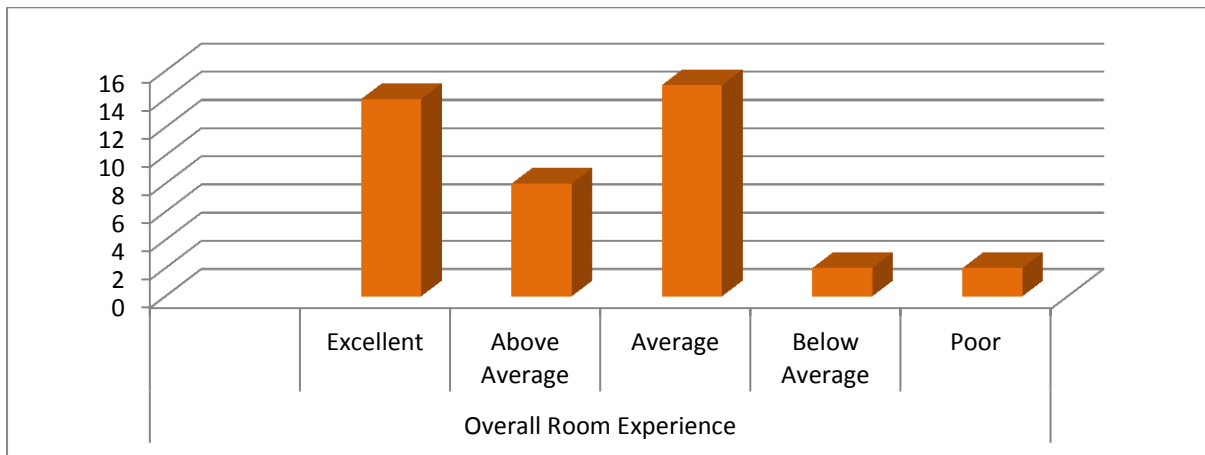
The following survey questions assess the experience that the attendees had with the registration process both at the Tradeshow and prior via online registration. Also, the experience of the hotel registration process during the workshop and Tradeshow registration is depicted. Based on the findings, 80% of those who answered the registration related questions rated their experience as *Above Average or Excellent*.

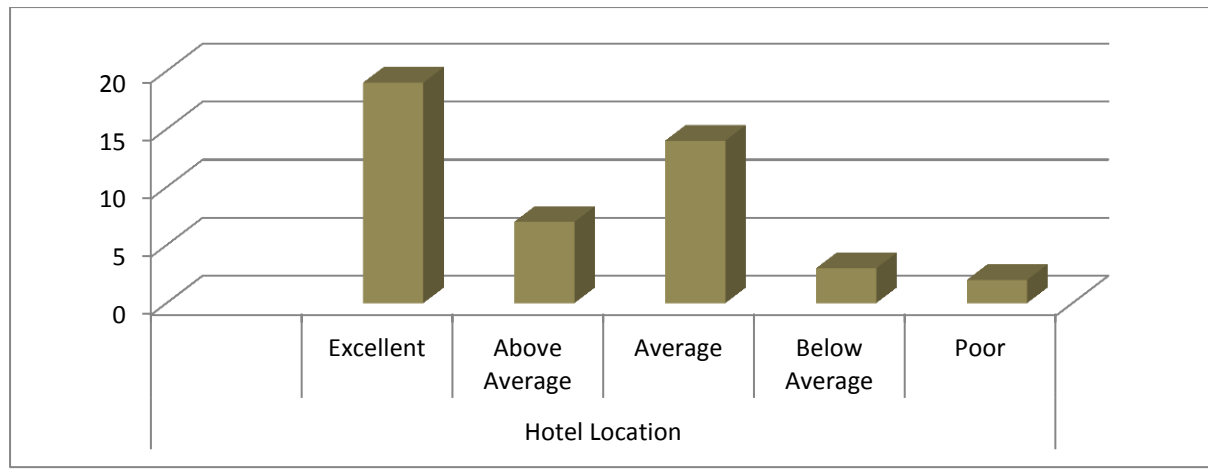




Overall Hotel Experience

In comparison, 59% of the attendees rated their experience at their hotels as *Above Average* or *Excellent*. Despite a lower ranking than the registration, experiences below *Average* were nominal. There were two specific hotels that this experience was derived from, the Crowne Plaza San Antonio Riverwalk, and the Sheraton Gunter.

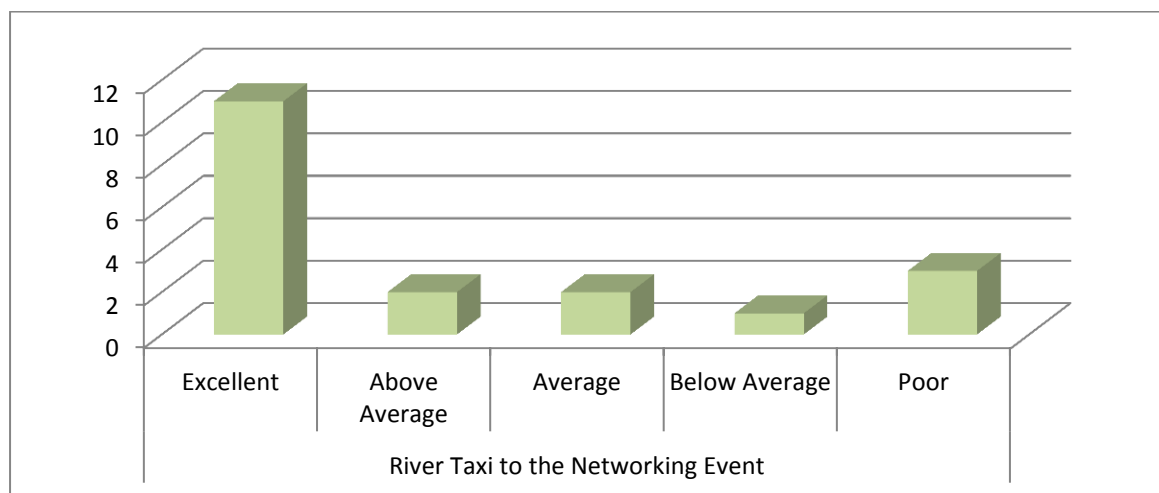


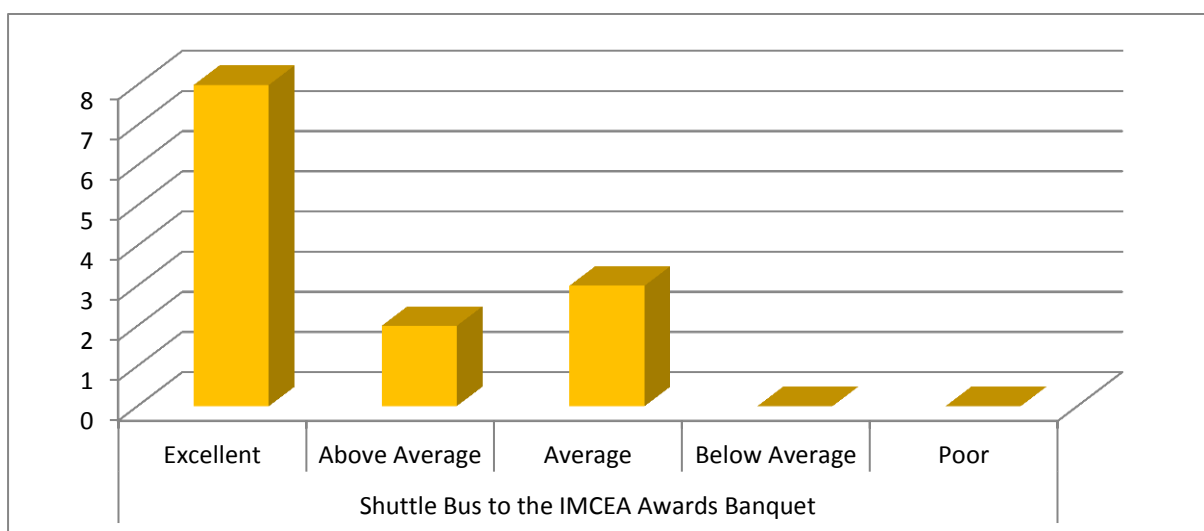
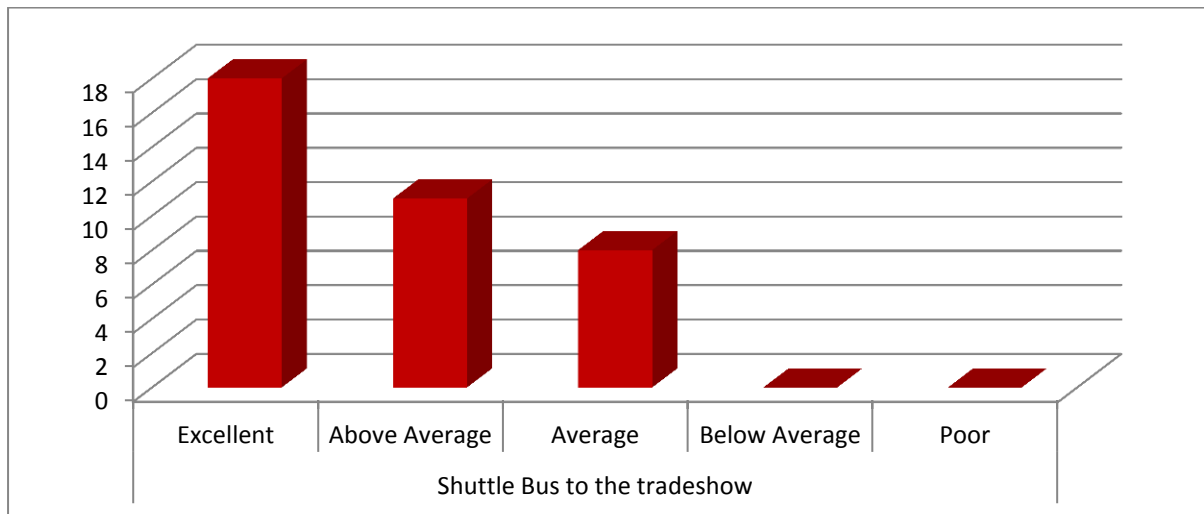
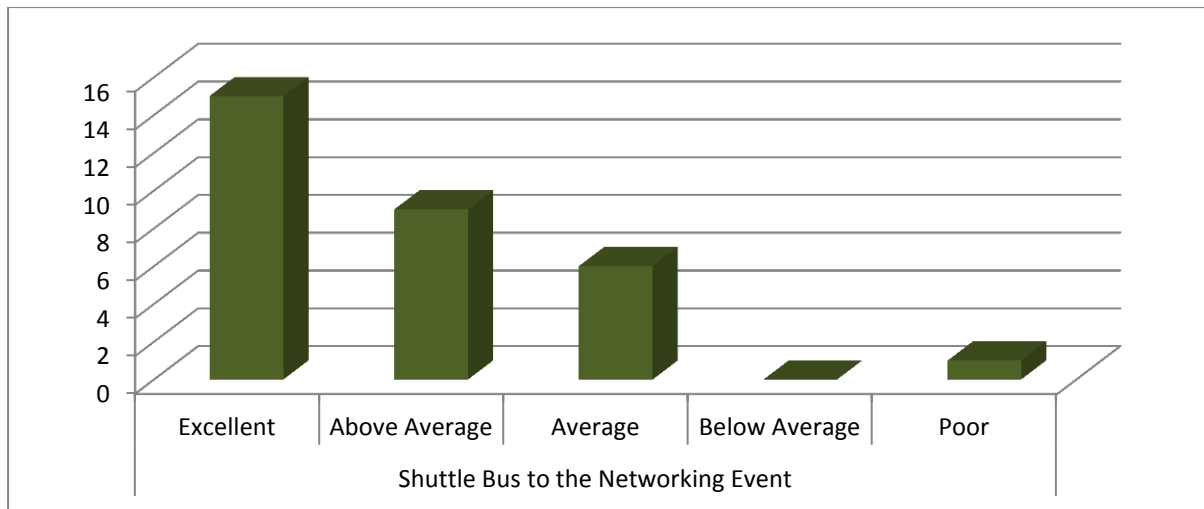


Event Transportation Experience

Whenever having to move your attendees from place to place, several logistical issues can lead to bad service. The more times you are required to do this the greater the chance for miscommunication as well as a host of other problems that can occur. The survey findings look at both the types of transportation options, shuttle bus and river taxis, as well as the specific events they were being used for. The reason for having transportation was the result of having events in different locations. The ability to secure a venue that could eliminate most of the transportation could have a positive effect on financial commitments as well attendee perception and participation.

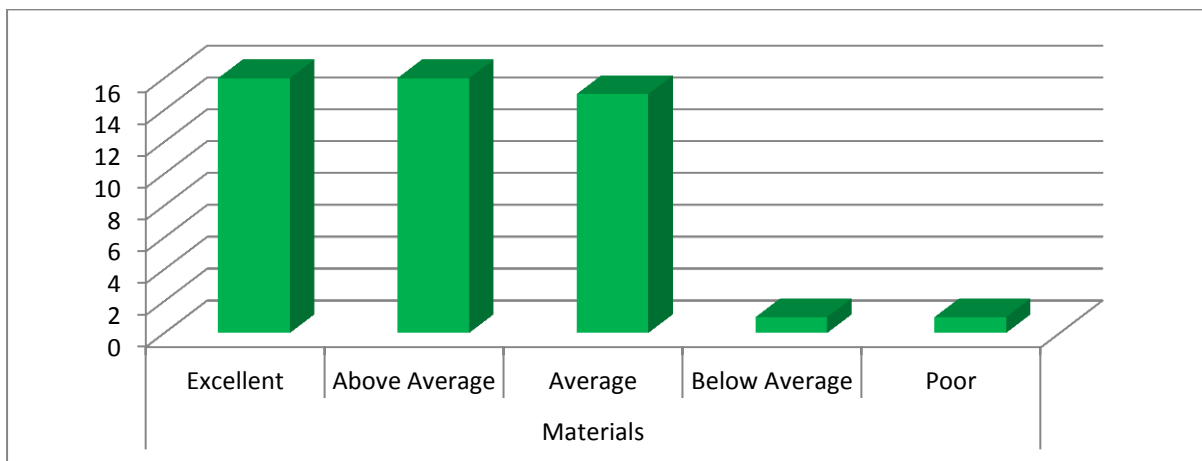
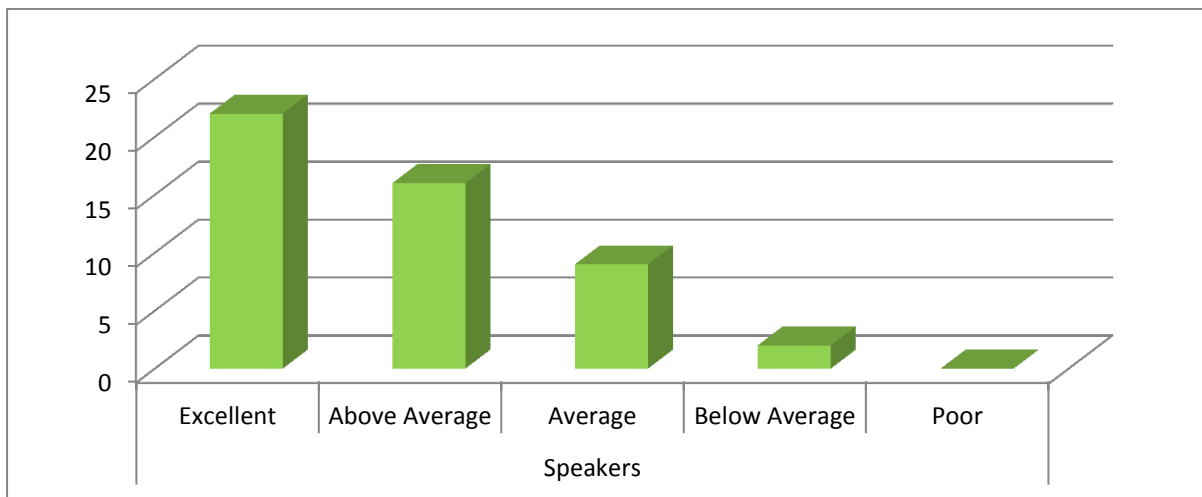
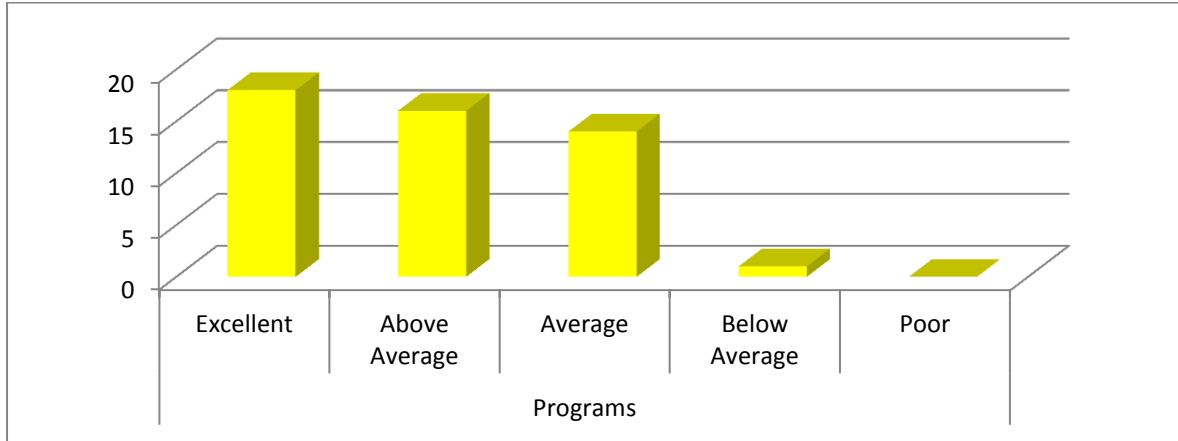
Overall, 76% of the attendees surveyed rated their transportation experiences as *Above Average or Excellent*. One area that may have lowered some of the rating percentages includes the mechanical problem with one of the chartered river taxis causing a delay for some of the attendees trying to attend the event.





Workshop Experience

In this section of the survey, the workshop experiences of the attendees are rated. Based on the survey findings, 71% of the attendees rated their workshop experience that included the programs, speakers, and materials given, *Above Average or Excellent*.

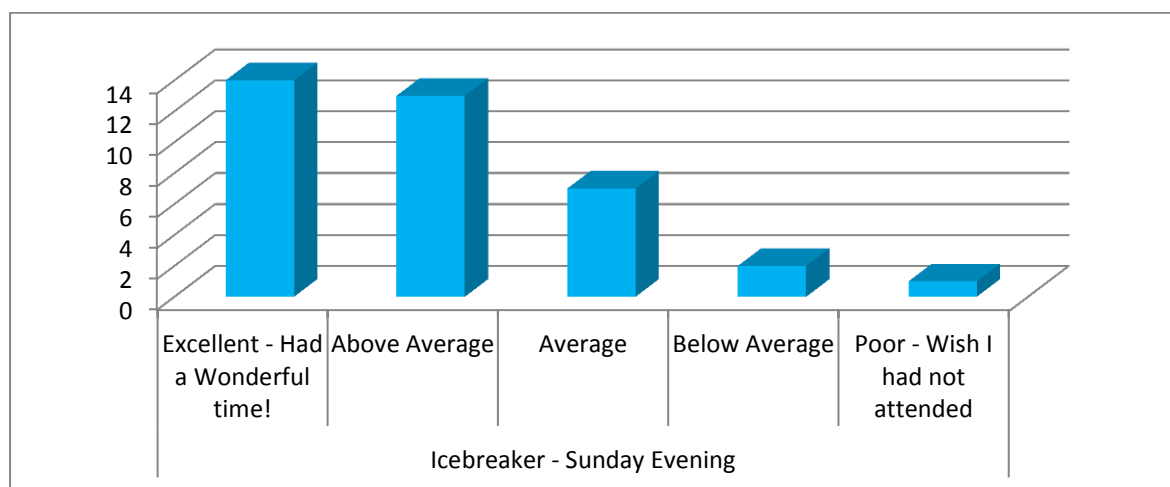


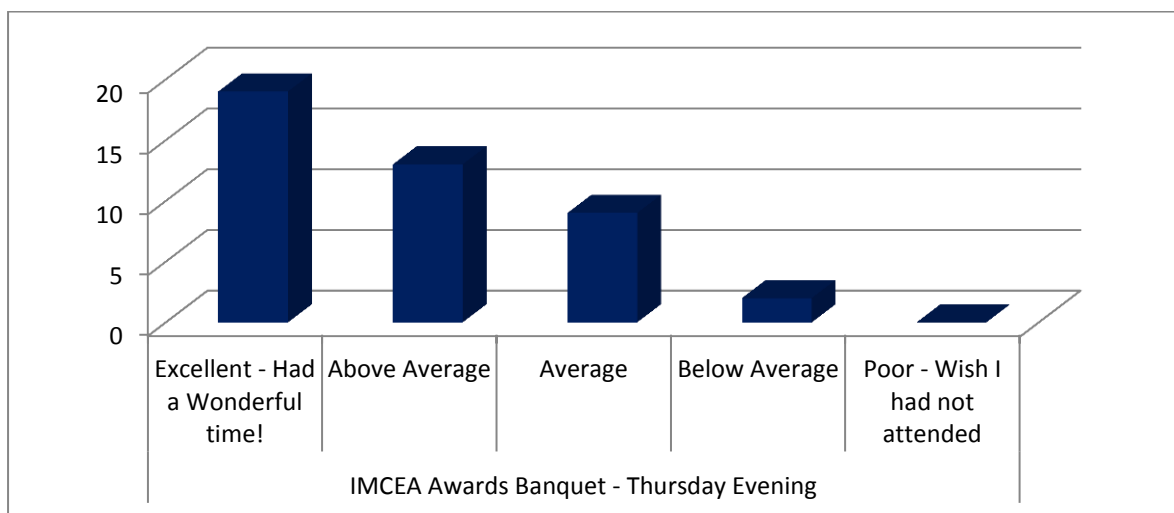
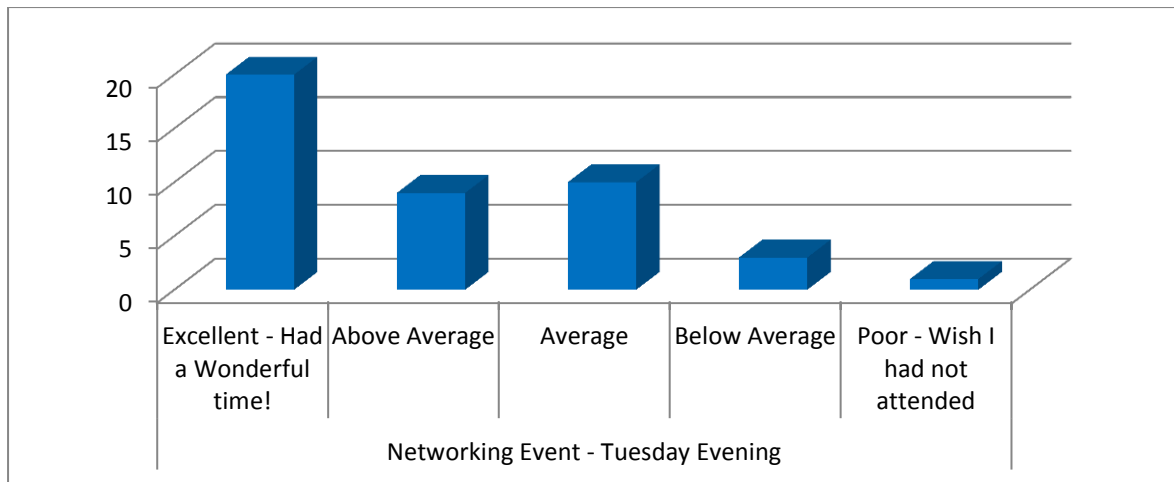
There were several comments made to the open ended question “What would you like to see at the next Armed Forces F&B Workshop?” The following is a sample of what was said:

- ✚ More nutrition information, a sharing of what is working/not working in other locations/Services.
- ✚ Breakout sessions with different topics.
- ✚ More variety to days, too many big sessions in a row.
- ✚ More hands on interaction and even contests among the different groups....vendor provided items from which teams could set up a special event. Something that keeps people involved and not just having slides read to them.
- ✚ I thought the workshop was excellent. I would not change a thing.
- ✚ Speakers, content, and practical information that is relevant to what we do and where we are going in the future.
- ✚ Focus on better food--fresh food and food trends. A lot of the food talk referred to pre-cooked, canned or frozen items. What about fresh foods? Farmers Markets? Local products? Sustainable foods?
- ✚ I would like to see more breakout sessions that presented more material to specific areas. There is such a wide range of attendees that some of the presentations in the general session did not pertain to many people.
- ✚ More cooking experts.
- ✚ I would like to see more beverage topics perhaps some bartending demos, which would be exciting. Even some real cooking demos.

Special Events Experience

Several events that IMCEA planned occurred throughout the week and included events such as the Icebreaker, Networking event, and the IMCEA Awards banquet. The combined events also received a rating from the attendees of 71% as either *Above Average or Excellent*.



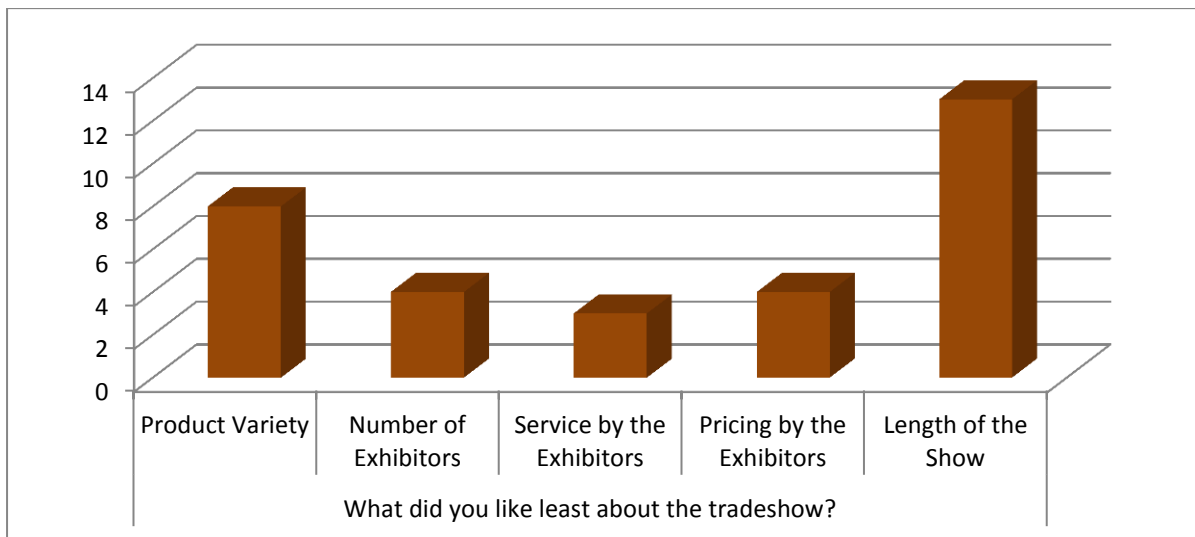
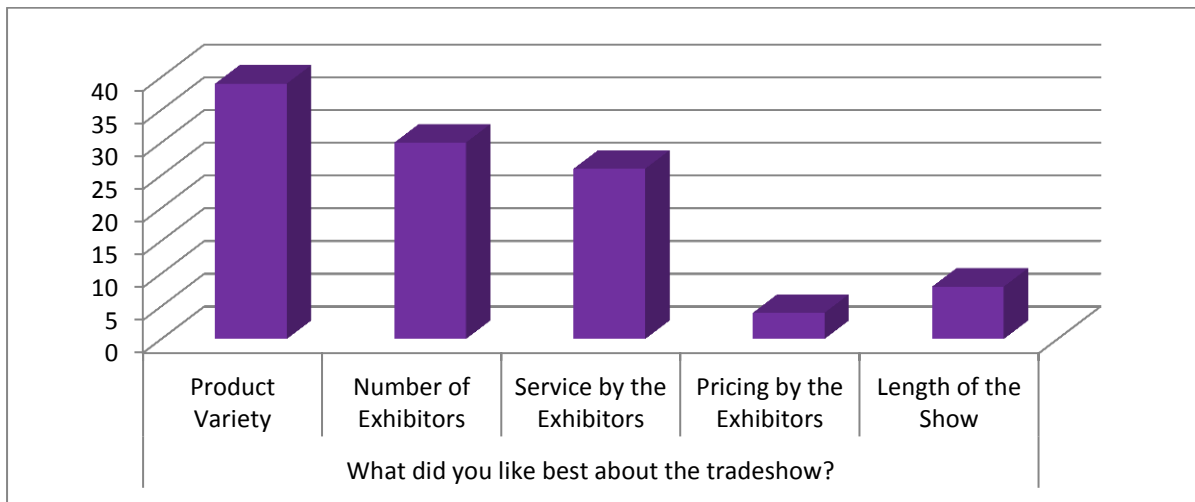


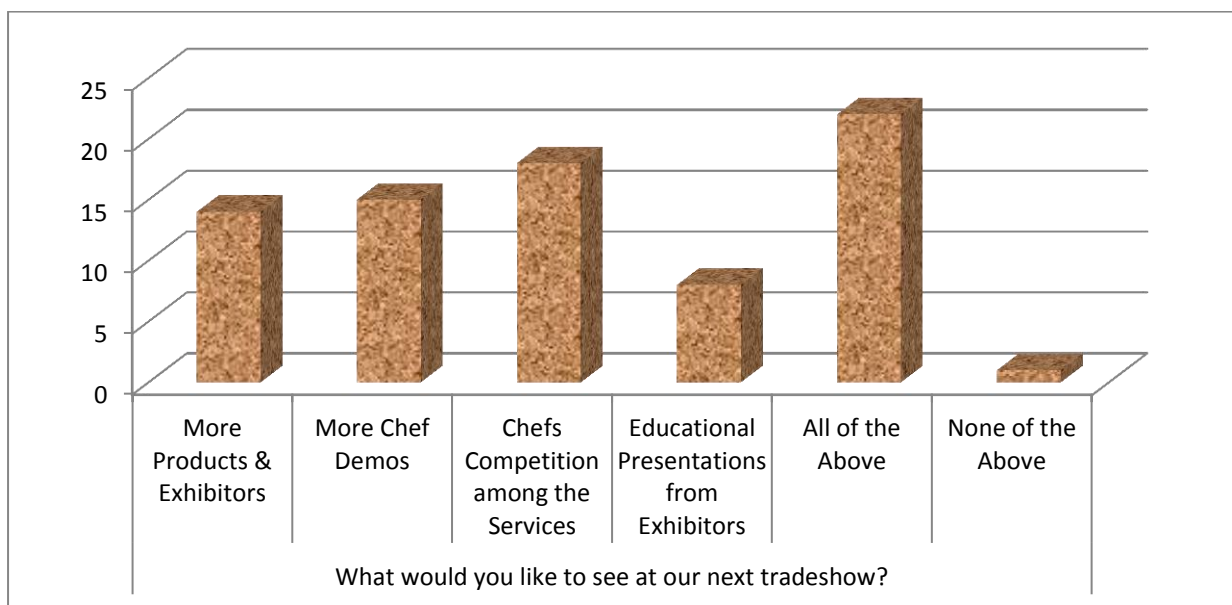
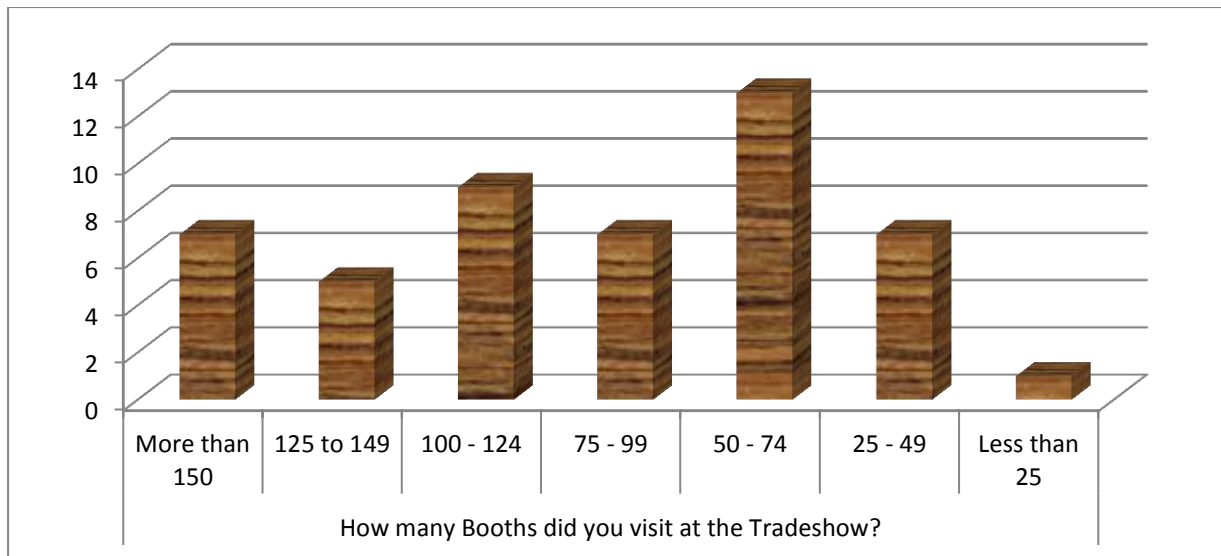
There were some interesting comments that revealed what attendees liked and disliked with their experience with the various IMCEA events:

- ✚ Thanks for a wonderful time.
- ✚ The organization of the event and the flow all seemed flat and jerky. Need a better rhythm and flow and more "oomph" at the different recognition and junctures where folks were getting recognized.
- ✚ Food and beverage costs were extremely high for the amount/quality of food received.
- ✚ Great job to all who planned the events.
- ✚ Well done service by waiters, very fast service.
- ✚ Kept running out of food Tuesday night and the boat was 45 minutes late so a lot of original items were gone. The replacement items were not as good. Great service at banquet.

Tradeshow Experience

This portion of the survey focused on the attendee experience with the Tradeshow as well as their experience with the exhibitors and their products. Questions included what the attendees liked best about the Tradeshow to what they would like to see at future Tradeshows. Although the question “What did you like least about the Tradeshow?” was asked, interpreting the findings cannot be determined. Though the most frequent answer was “length of show”, the question cannot be determined if it is because the Tradeshow was either too long or too short. Since attendees were free to leave at their own discretion, it is difficult to affix the reason as being too long of a Tradeshow. Based on actual observations, most of the attendees had left before the end of the Tradeshow lending reason as the show being too long.





Some of the comments related to the attendee experience at the Tradeshow include the following:

- ✚ I visited all but spent time at about 75%. Liked that there was time to actually talk to vendors. Booths were well manned and everyone was knowledgeable and wanted to talk to me.
- ✚ There was a lot of discussion throughout the workshop about moving towards fresh, from scratch cooking. However, most of the food vendors represented premade products. It would have been nice to see more vendors presenting scratch ideas.
- ✚ Great event, very informative. I found many timely items of interest to bring back to my Command.
- ✚ Put one team or service in charge for the year so that you have continuity. It is hard to judge/or evaluate the strength and weaknesses of the program/week overall because so many hands made important, but disconnected decisions. Also, develop a way to report

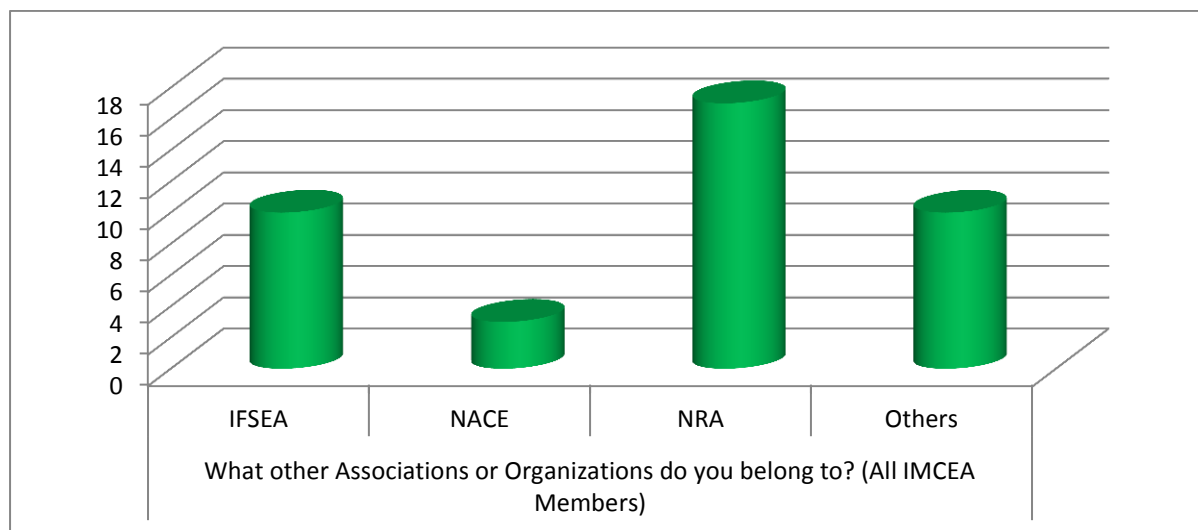
back to each base whether or not their respective representative/attendee actually came to sit in the sessions. This year there were way too many empty chairs after the first morning.

- ✚ It is a shame that an event of this calibre and in attendance is not held on a military installation. We should be putting government dollars back into our military installations. I know we would want the opportunity!
- ✚ Put service breakouts early/first thing in the week.
- ✚ I really appreciate all the work they did. Need to have more healthy food.

Exhibitor Survey Results:

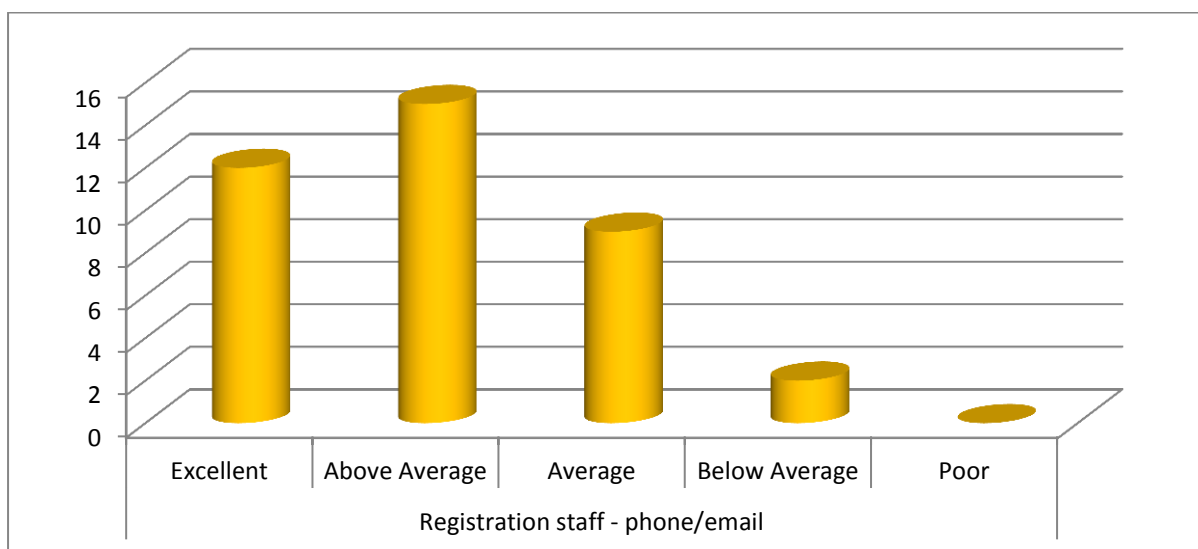
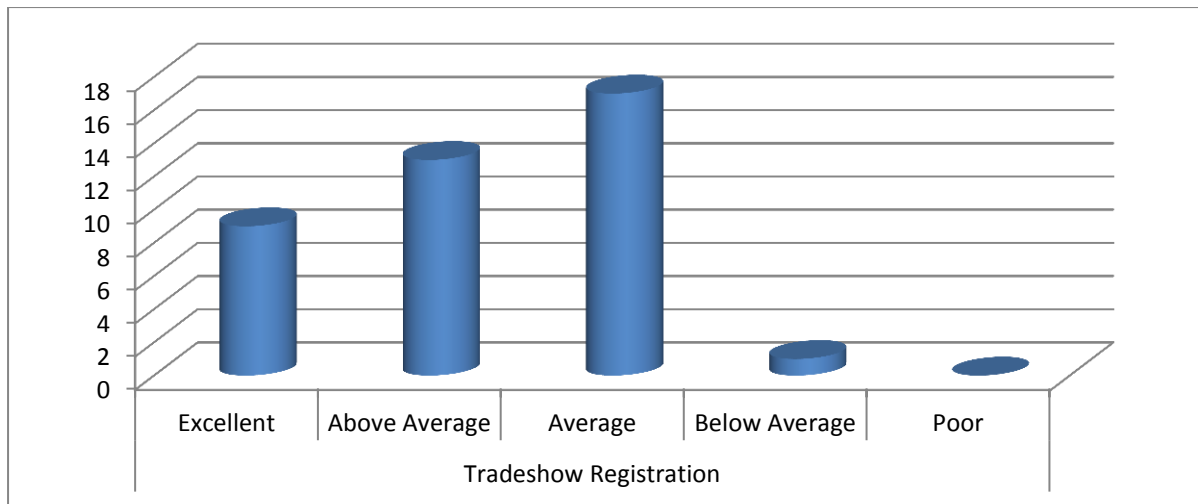
What other Associations or Organizations do you belong to?

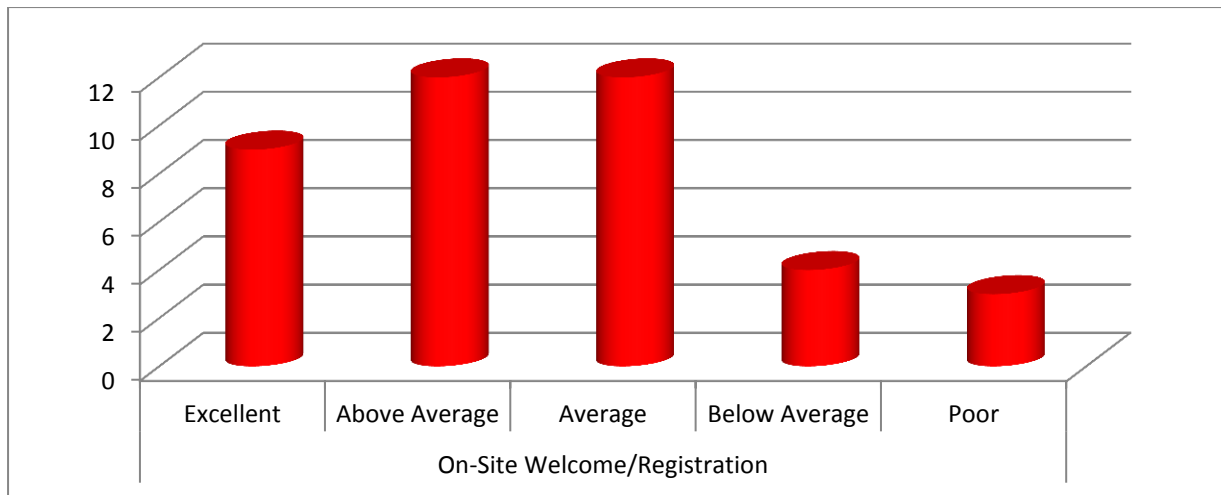
This was the first question posed to our Tradeshow exhibitors. The reason for this question was to gage what other potential organizations might IMCEA want to forge new alliances with. It also appears to validate our continued interest and collaboration with IFSEA and the NRA, two of the preceding conferences and Tradeshows that IMCEA had representation at.



Exhibitor Registration Process

In these set of questions, the performance and assessment was rated for the online registration to exhibit, the online hotel registration, the registration staff, and the onsite registration experience. 60% of the respondents rated the overall registration experience as either *Above Average* or *Excellent*. The onsite experience only rated at 53%. This was due to some of the staffing concerns that are discussed later in the report.





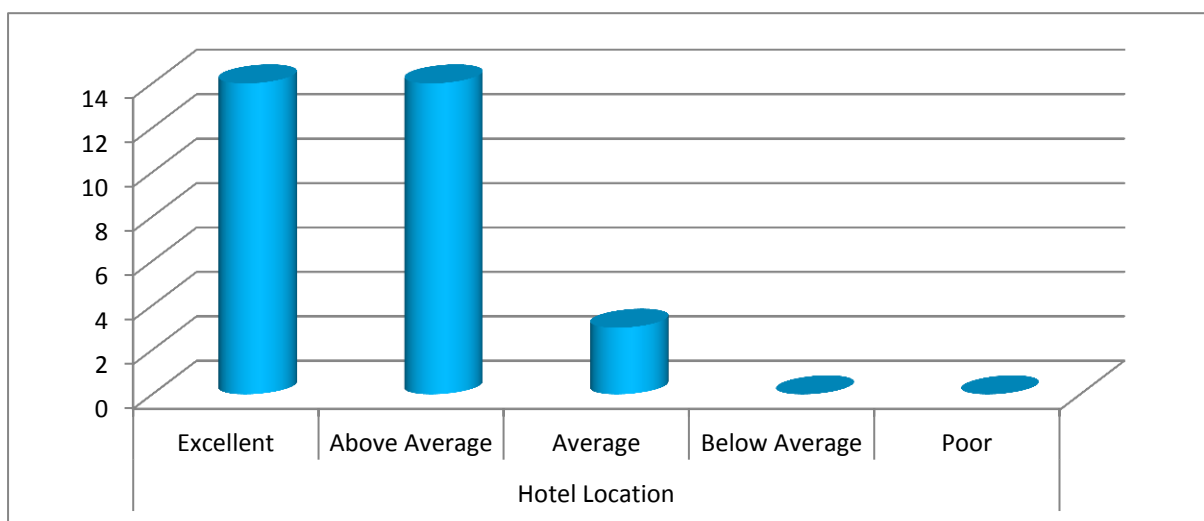
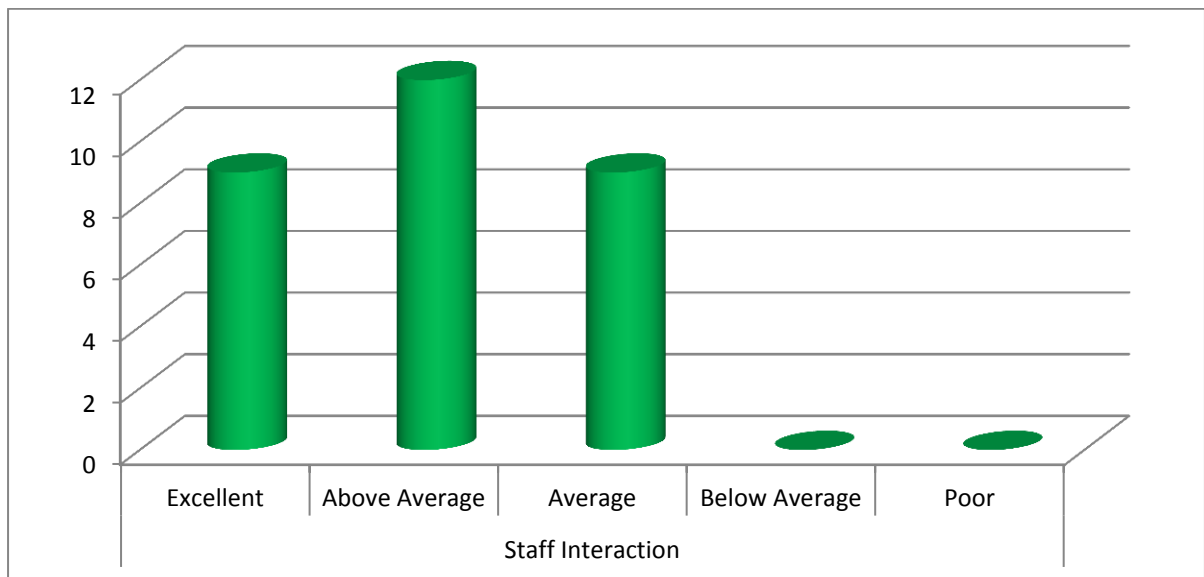
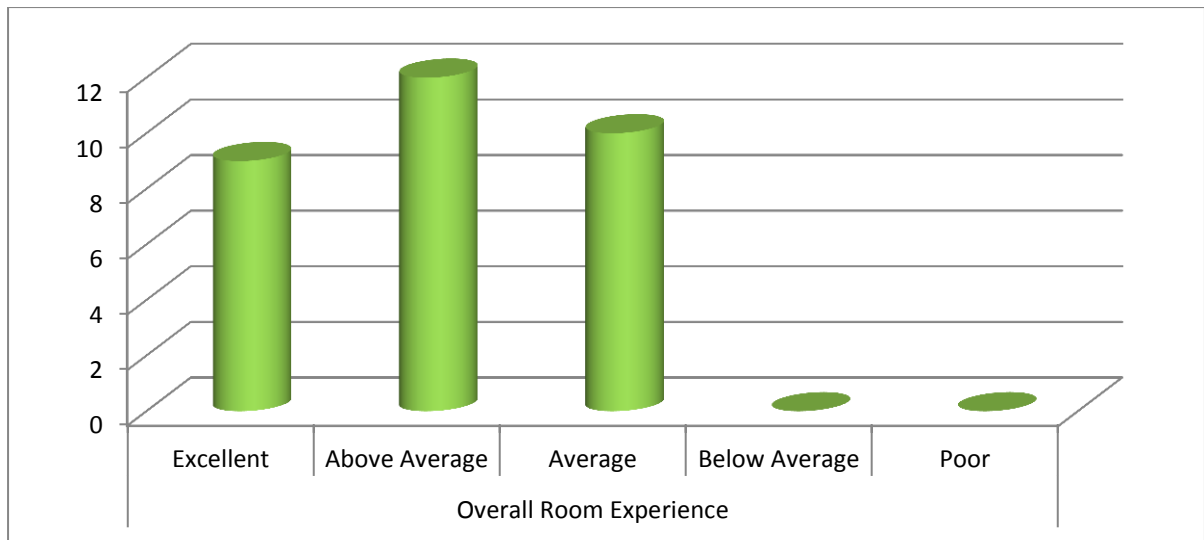
Here are some of the comments that easily reveal the staffing issues that were encountered by the exhibitors and how that affected their experience:

- ✚ No welcome packet, had no clue where to go or what to do, just grab a badge and go?
- ✚ Two registration agents working at time of initial setup. Long line, 45 min wait.
- ✚ Need to have more staff for check in for badges.
- ✚ There was only one person registering when we arrived so it was a little time consuming.
- ✚ Our vendors did not have packets available to them at the beginning of the show. Nametags were not available to many until quite a bit of time into the show.
- ✚ Everyone was as friendly and helpful as can be.
- ✚ Toni, Alex, and Susan are AWESOME! You made me feel so welcome and excited to be there.

Overall Hotel Experience

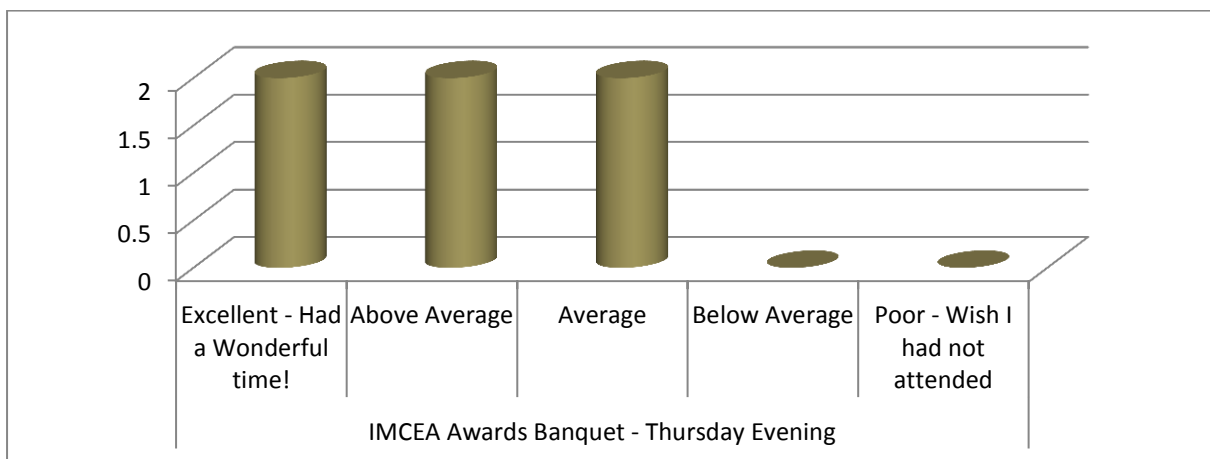
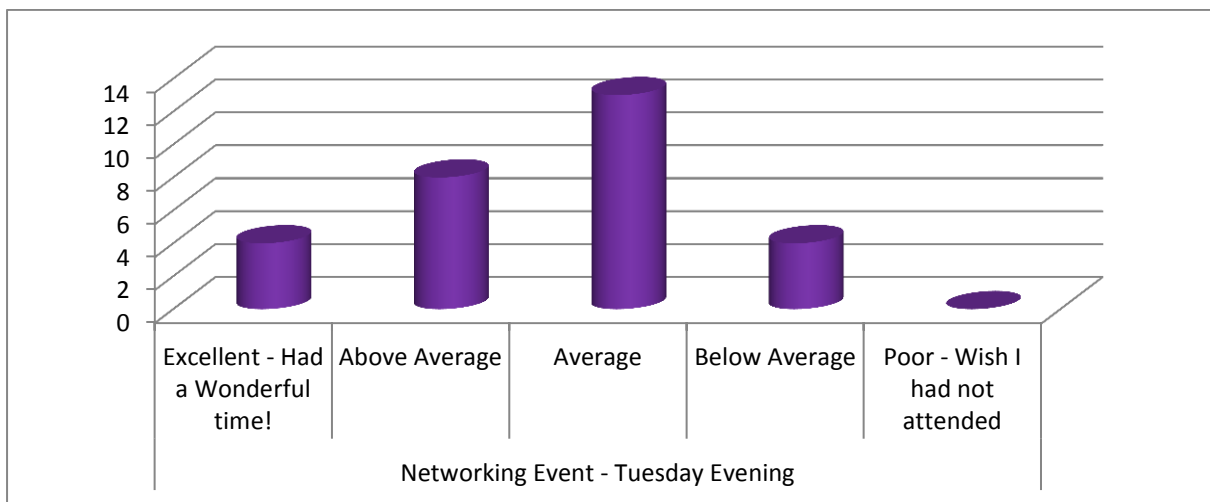
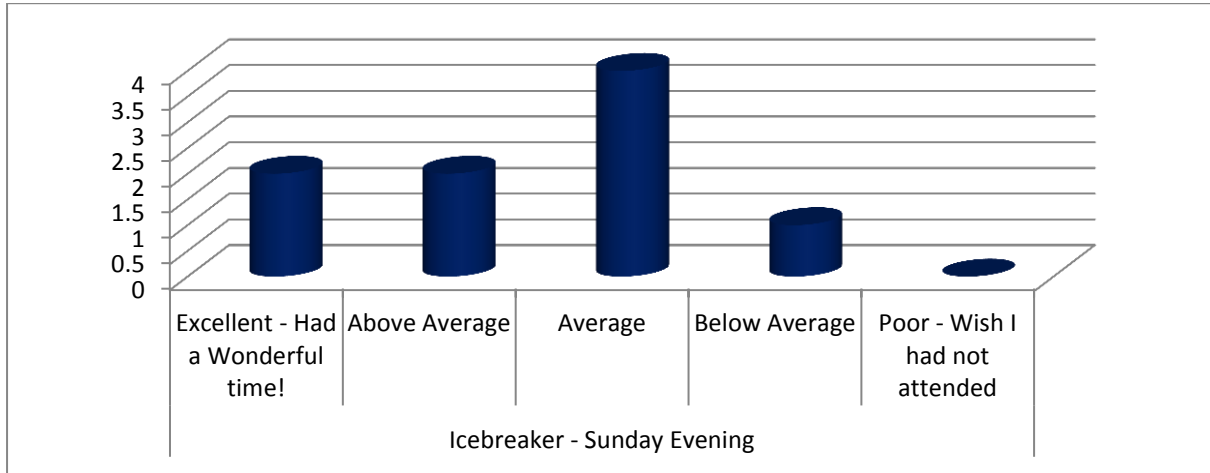
This overall experience is predominantly a reflection of the assessment of the Hilton Palacio del Rio. This hotel was the official hotel for the Tradeshow exhibitors. The overall experience was rated at 76% as either *Above Average* or *Excellent*. This is in sharp contrast with the attendee's hotel experience rated at 59%.

This rating encompassed the room experience, staff interaction, and hotel location. None of the respondents rated their hotel experiences as either *Below Average* or *Poor*.



Special Events Experience

Several events that IMCEA planned occurred throughout the week and included events such as the Icebreaker, Networking event, and the IMCEA Awards banquet. The combined events also received a rating from the exhibitors at 46% as either *Above Average* or *Excellent*.

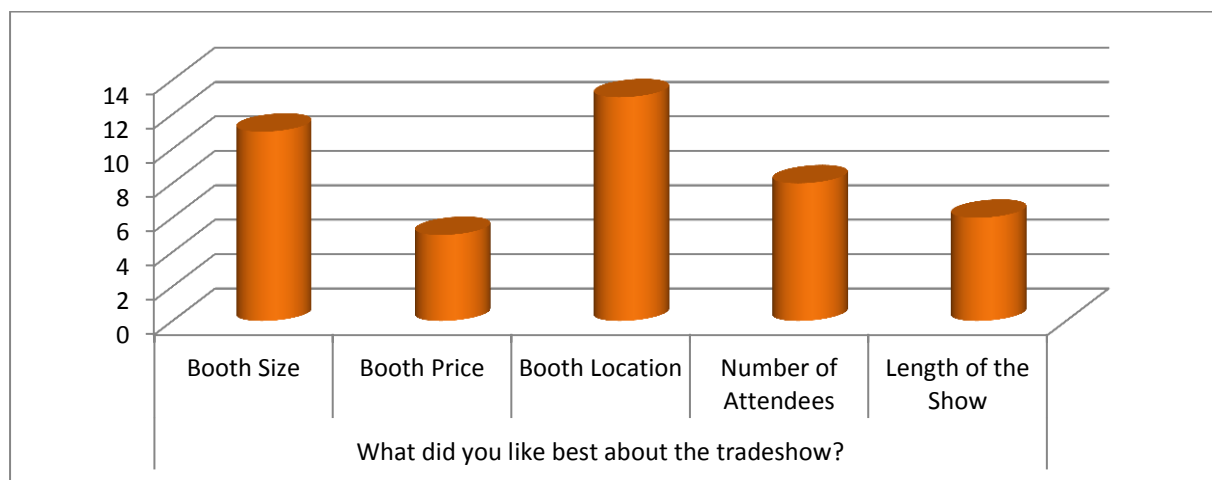


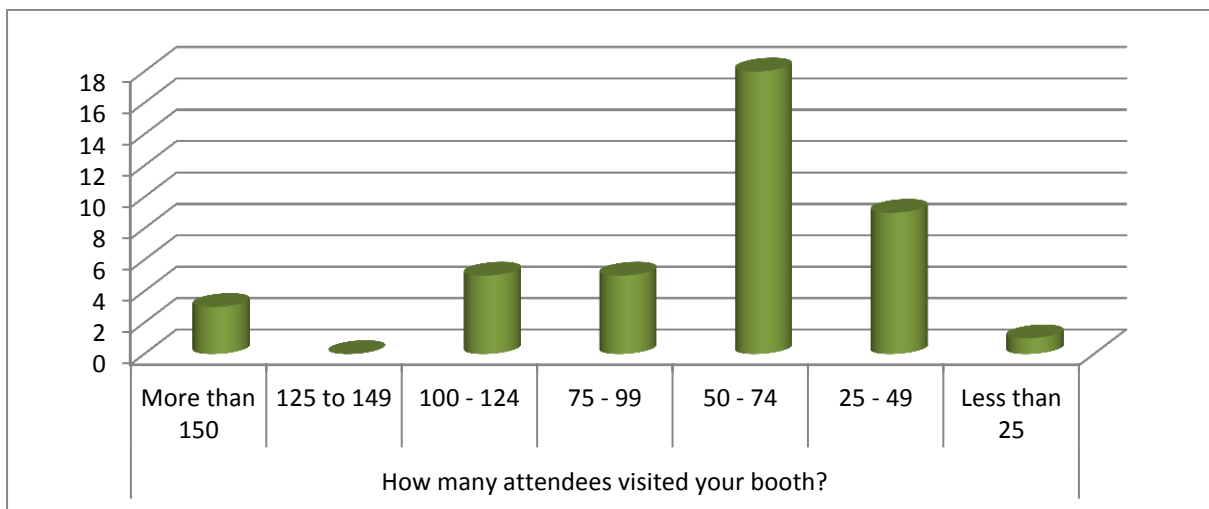
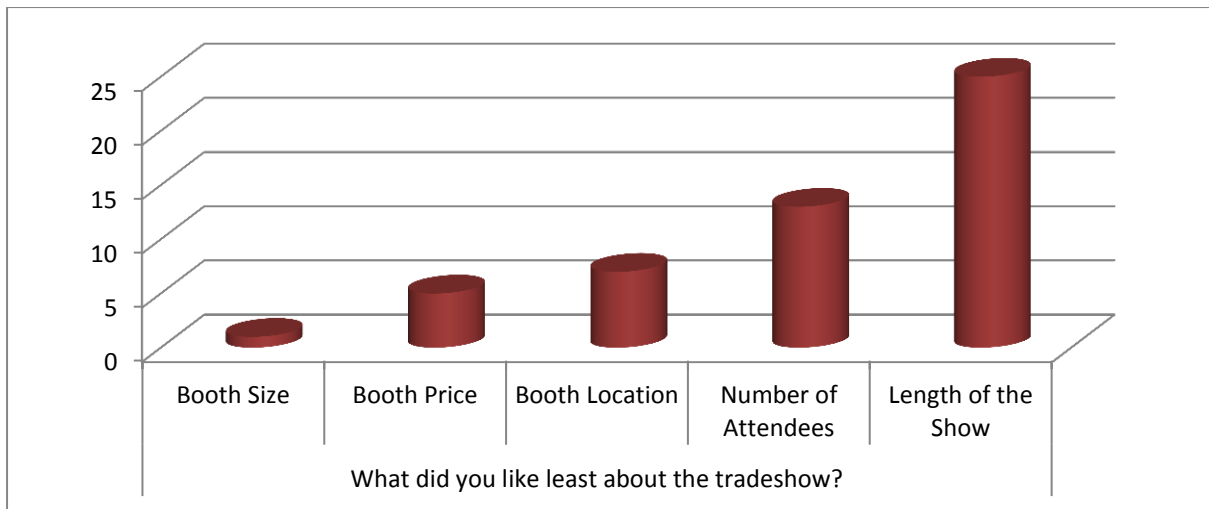
There were several comments made by the exhibitors that reveals why the ratings were as low as they were. Some of these comments were related to exhibitor recognition as well as their experience and environment of the Networking event. It is important to recognize that this event was not held in its original location. It was moved to a smaller venue due to weather conditions.

- 🚩 Venue for Networking Event was too small and very hot. Beverages were too expensive and the wait time too long. Food was great. Only stayed 30 min. as it was just too crowded.
- 🚩 Networking event was good - however, it would have been nicer if you raised the rate by \$25 and gave everyone four drink tickets instead of a paid bar. It would balance with those that don't drink and goes a long way on good will.
- 🚩 The karaoke sent me on my way much faster...
- 🚩 Do to travel conflicts we were not able to attend these. However, I am sure these were beneficial and will plan on attending
- 🚩 I was not invited to Sunday and Thursday and was not feeling well on Tuesday. Jackie, my colleague went on Tuesday and thought it was great.
- 🚩 I was an exhibitor at the Icebreaker Sunday evening - it was very poorly organized and not much notice given to people for displaying.

Tradeshow Experience

In this portion of the survey, several aspects of the floorshow experience were rated. These included what exhibitors liked and disliked the most about their experience. In addition, their opinions were sought on issues such as length of Tradeshow, the amount of attendees that visited their booth and their experience with the convention contractor GES.








The following are some of the comments made on a variety of issues that were important to the exhibitors.

Morning segment of the Tradeshow

This definitely revealed what seemed obvious and that the morning session should not have been planned. This is not to say that with better planning the experience could have been better, but targeting attendees who are not necessarily familiar with IMCEA can be difficult.

-  The added morning hours were a bust.
-  Way too few attendees and too late in the day for them to arrive. Length of show was way out of bounds.
-  Show hrs. - 8-12 was worthless - was open to public but no attendees-poor advertising to public.

- ✚ It was a waste of our time to be there that morning. Suggest the show run from 10-2.
- ✚ The morning session was a total waste of time. Would strongly suggest not doing that again. We are there to spend time with the military folks and we want them to be trying our products, not others.
- ✚ This show is for the military - don't open it to the street. Run the show 11-4 at most.

Convention Contractor & Convention Services

The following comments are related to the experiences and performance of both the convention contractor GES as well as the set-up workers used by GES. The performance of GES is analysed further in the Issue Summary.

- ✚ Cost in total very high. You sneeze and it cost you something. Hassled as we tried to bring things in.
- ✚ The fees for additional storing of frozen product were expensive.
- ✚ The price of the guys to move the two crates 100 ft. was not great. It cost \$1200 to bring the 2 crates from the loading dock which didn't arrive until 6pm.
- ✚ The booth information sent out prior to the show did not truly explain the venue and that a person could not carry in their own equipment and samples. It was also very hot and there should have been air conditioning on.
- ✚ The show was difficult to set up, difficult to run food to booths from kitchen on a different level, length of show was too long, cost to have your set up items brought into show was unacceptable and not a normal cost of doing such show - given all of the obstacles, it did not seem worth all of the preparation and effort.
- ✚ Fact that the set-up was delayed because GES wasn't ready for the vendors at the appointed time.

4. Financial Performance

Based on the Pro-forma statements, IMCEA's actual financial performance was within 1% of revenue projections and our actual expenses were 13% under than what was projected. Overall, the Tradeshow met or exceeded our projections. Future Tradeshow performance will again hinge on the number of attendees, the number of exhibitors, and the location of the Tradeshow. Many new expenses were incurred from the previous year because of separate venues for the Tradeshow and special events mostly reflected in transportation costs.

IMCEA Actual vs ProForma Profit and Loss Statement AF F&B Workshop/Fiesta of Flavors			
	Actual		Pro Forma
Income			
Tradeshow Booths	221,945.00		222,395.00
Sponsorship	12,500.00		12,500.00
Workshop Registrations	33,538.40		32,348.20
Total Income	\$267,983.40		\$267,243.20
Expenses			
Joint Services Events	22,542.26		30,000.00
Transportation/Workshop Expenses	8,958.40		15,000.00
Other IMCEA Events	27,565.54		25,000.00
Booth Costs	21,199.18		25,875.00
Convention Center	9,558.07		10,300.00
Security	1,523.13		3,000.00
Scholarships	1,000.00		1,000.00
Awards/BOD Gifts	2,006.00		2,000.00
Printing	221.33		3,500.00
Travel and Meals	5,422.94		4,500.00
Supplies	2,544.39		1,750.00
SAIMCEA	4,000.00		4,000.00
Awards Banquet	26,952.75		30,000.00
NRA ServSafe Books	5,872.84		4,705.00
Credit Card Fees	5,606.15		5,700.00
Total Expenses	\$144,972.98		\$166,330.00
Net Income	\$123,010.42		\$100,913.20

5. Issue Summary

This discusses the various issues that affected the Tradeshow and events in a negative manner. A brief description of the issues are included as well as the potential causes in addition to future solutions.

Issue Details	
Issue identifier	Communications & Planning - decentralized
Description	The ability to exchange pertinent information across services and with IMCEA in the planning and executing of certain events.
Example 1	<i>Change in Workshop/Tradeshow venue</i>
Example Description	The decision to move the venue of the Workshop affected the location of the Tradeshow. There was a failure of communication between those who plan the Workshop and those who plan the Tradeshow. Having to move the Tradeshow to a bigger place caused additional charges in transportation.
Example 2	<i>Military Attendee Participation & Registration</i>
Example Description	It was difficult to receive communication on a good estimate of the number of attendees that were going to attend the Tradeshow. This caused difficulty in communicating a good estimate of the number of attendees to the exhibitors. In addition, late decision to handle all attendee registration caused additional projects to be delayed.
Example 3	<i>ServSafe Workshops</i>
Example Description	Planning of this event was divided by Food Safety and by Alcohol. Instructor/Proctors who were not communicating with each other to better coordinate order of materials. This caused additional shipping charges to be incurred.
Recommendation	To centralize the decision making and communication process and to publish the names of those who are involved with the planning. Plans and strategies should be communicated to all those who are involved. This will foster better understanding of each other's functions as well minimize cross-over interference and generate economies of decision making.

Issue Details	
Issue identifier	Staffing
Description	The ability to have individuals in place to administer, monitor and execute the necessary duties and responsibilities involved in planning and delivering the service needed within the Workshop & Tradeshow.
Example 1	<i>Volunteers</i>
Example Description	Although there were several individuals who gave of their time and expertise, the call for volunteers could have been communicated earlier. In addition, a staffing need request for specific roles was not communicated until near the beginning of the Workshop & Tradeshow. Although staffing was adequate at the Workshop, it was not at the Tradeshow. This caused exhibitors to experience less than desired service.
Example 2	<i>Committee delegations</i>
Example Description	For an event as large as this, there should have been a call for several committees from membership to handle certain logistics and planning with a centralized hub for information.
Example 3	<i>Paid Staff</i>
Example Description	Although the IMCEA Executive Team is paid staff, because of the lack of additional staffing, certain projects and duties were not fully completed or managed. Two areas that suffered from this was the completion of the Tradeshow guide and the on-site Tradeshow floor participation and monitoring by the Executive Team.
Recommendation	To plan further in advance the needs of staffing concerning the week of the Workshop & Tradeshow. Also the need to create certain committees that could offer assistance in the planning of these events. Consider hiring some staff to assist during the week of these events to maximize the time needed for the IMCEA Executive Team to visit with their attendees and exhibitors.

Issue Details	
Issue identifier	GES Tradeshow General Contractor
Description	Tradeshow decorator and general contractor that oversees the construction of all booth pipe & draping including signage and carpeting. Also handles shipping and receiving of exhibitor goods and equipment.
Example 1	<i>Tradeshow Floor Design</i>
Example Description	The design of the Tradeshow floor was not adjusted to account for unsold booths or obstacles in the way of construction. Thus the design had several empty spaces which made the appearance of the design look incomplete.
Example 2	Booth Set-up and Access
Example Description	According to IMCEA requests, exhibitors should have been allowed to begin setting up their booths by 12 noon and no later than 2pm. Several exhibitors expressed the fact that they were not able to do this until 4pm or later.
Example 3	Exhibitor Fees & Contracting
Example Description	Although stated in the contract, it was in fine print and was not clearly communicated to exhibitors of possible added costs.
Recommendation	Based on the surveys from the exhibitors, the majority do not want to see this contract awarded to GES. With that said, it is important that the new contractor not make the same mistakes. GES knew that IMCEA was expanding its Tradeshow beyond experience and that the exhibitors were also not accustomed to the additional fees. GES failed to be proactive in their approach to working with us.

6. Conclusion

Although there were some major concerns and failures that occurred during the planning and execution of the 2011 IMCEA Tradeshow and its corresponding Special Events, based on the surveys received, the overall rating of these events were considered *Above Average*. The ratings did differ between attendees and exhibitor, with attendees rating IMCEA's events higher than what the exhibitors rated us.

Many suggestions were offered to improve our performance in addition to the structure of the events and Tradeshow. These included comments addressing the length of the Tradeshow to the training and education desired.

The financial performance of the Tradeshow and its related events revealed the additional costs incurred with having the Tradeshow and Workshop in different locales and yet IMCEA was still able to generate additional funds to keep IMCEA in operation throughout 2011.

Recommendations made for the 2012 Tradeshow and its Special Events included centralizing the planning process, as well as better and timely communication across Services and with IMCEA. Additional recommendations included planning the staffing needs in a more timely and understood manner, development of committees to assist in planning, and to consider additional hired staff for many of these events. Final recommendations were made on how the Tradeshow General contractor should communicate with our exhibitors and perform on the set-up and preparation of the Tradeshow.

Follow up to the Tradeshow has and is currently being conducted by IMCEA in addition to GES. These follow ups include ways to placate the problems that occurred during the Tradeshow. IMCEA was able to complete the Official Tradeshow guide for 2011 in an electronic interactive version. This was sent out to all attendees as well as exhibitors. IMCEA has been personally writing thank you notes to all of the exhibitors at our Tradeshow. In addition, GES has been working diligently with many of the exhibitors to offer additional credits to their service bills.

As mentioned earlier, there are many areas that IMCEA can improve their planning and performance. With the 2011 Tradeshow "Fiesta of Flavors" behind us, with the added experience learned and the analysis of our execution, the 2012 Tradeshow and events should be better planned and the expected results should also improve across the board. This report should be kept as a tool and reference to measure against for our show in 2012.

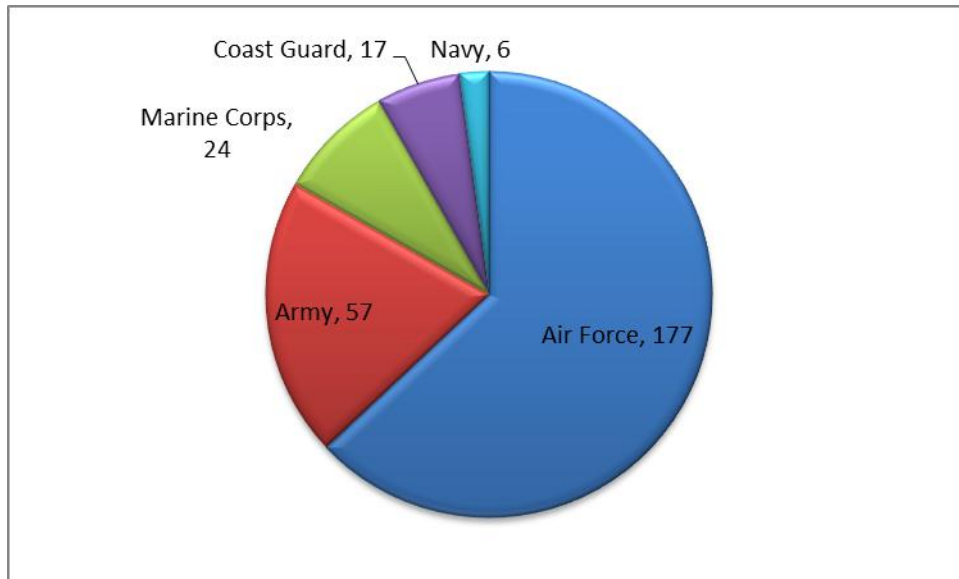
My thanks go out to all of those who took the time to assist us throughout these events. We value your assistance and even more so your opinions.

Sincerely,

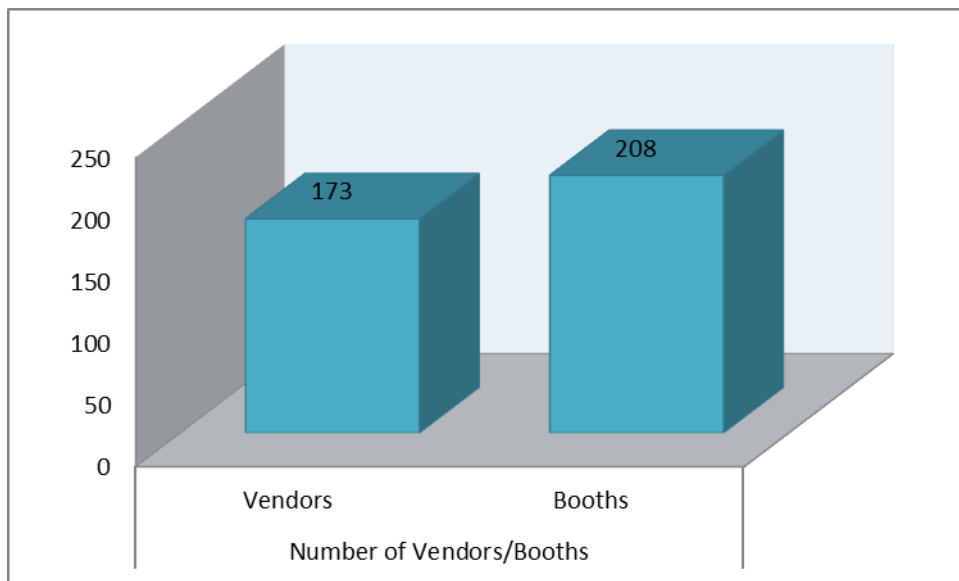
Alex Shortsleeve, MBA
Interim Executive Director
Director of Education & Training

Appendix:

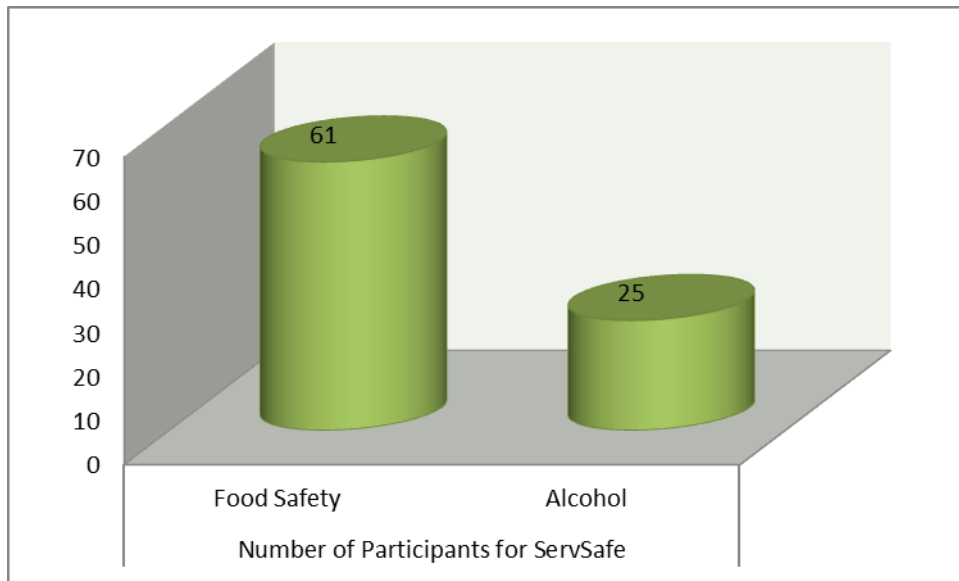
Number of Attendees by Service



Number of Vendors/Booths



Number of Participants in ServSafe



Total Number of Survey Respondents

