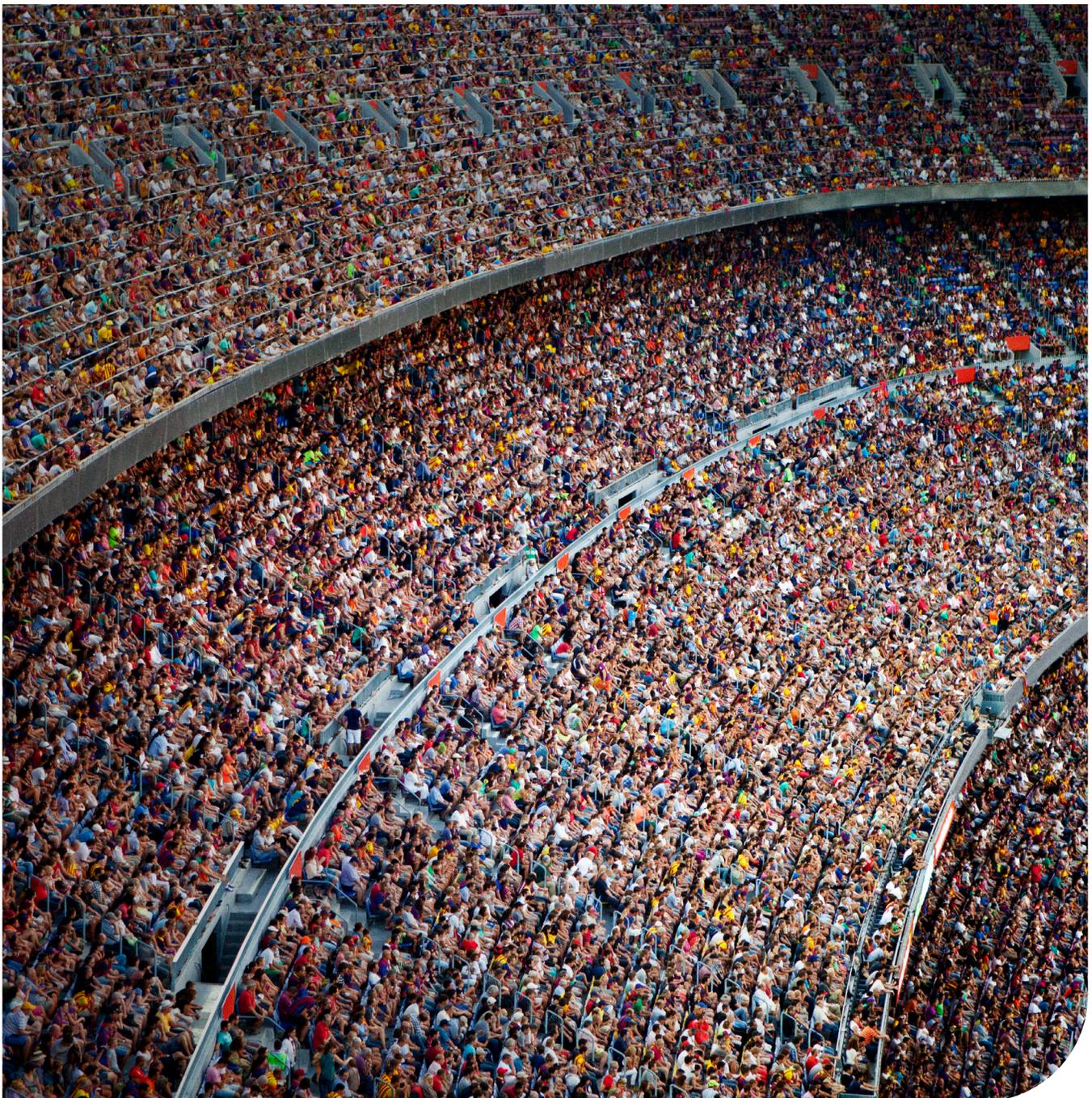


A dirty restroom is as bad as...

Together with Ipsos, Essity Professional Hygiene (formerly SCA), has conducted research on individuals' experiences of public restrooms. The main objective of the research was to find out what effect the restroom experience has on the overall experience of a public event.

The research was conducted via questionnaire across several markets in Europe and the USA. Participants were between 18 and 69 years old, had all attended a big event within the last nine months, and included visitors of both men's and women's restrooms. Although there were some differences in the answers from market to market, a common finding is that bad restroom experiences do affect individuals' overall event experience.



Summary

The study results reveal several customer pain points. In particular, hygiene levels are a key concern for respondents. In addition, respondents are unsatisfied with the hand-drying facilities in large event restrooms, with the majority of respondents citing issues with both method and availability.

Restroom avoidance

For one third of the respondents, the main issue they have with public restrooms is “unhygienic conditions”.

Every fourth respondent avoided using the public restroom even when they had to go. This was most often due to “unhygienic conditions”.

Half of the respondents used the restroom before going to the event to avoid having to use the public restroom at the venue. And one third of the respondents would rather “hold it in” or limit their intake of food and drinks than use the public restroom at an event.

Negative experiences

Over 70% of respondents reported having had bad restroom experiences at events, and for all of them, this had affected their overall event experience. However, only half of these respondents had complained to the venue about the restroom.

Nine out of ten respondents who had reported negative restroom experiences said that it affected the overall event experience at least a little. Five percent of respondents went as far as to say that it had completely ruined the event for them.

In general, women who have had bad restroom experiences voice their complaints to friends and family, while men either confront someone responsible at the venue or don't say anything at all about their negative experience.

Hand drying situation

95% of the respondents who reported having used the restroom at an event, also responded that they had washed their hands after.

According to the respondents, air dryers are slightly more common than paper hand towels. However, paper hand towels are rated higher than air dryers in terms of user satisfaction.

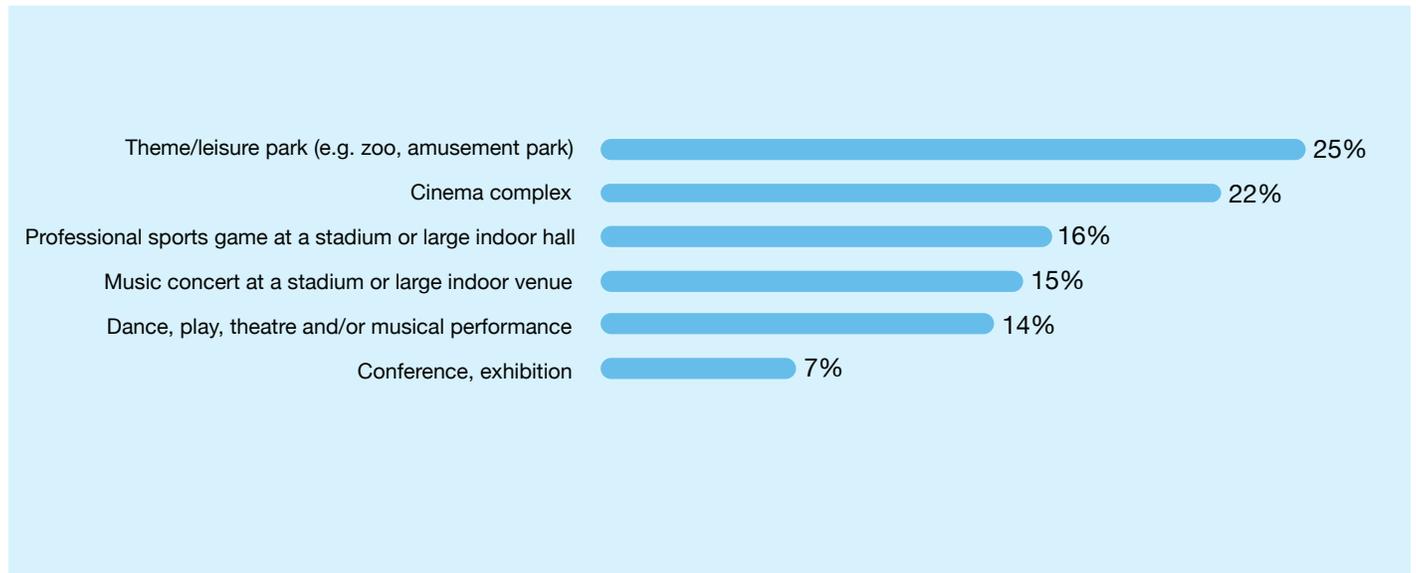
Most of those respondents who did not dry their hands did not do so due to the paper hand towels having run out and/or issues with or concerns about air dryers.





The study was conducted with a representative sample of visitors from various types of events and venues.

Most recently visited event
(n=3016)



When choosing their top two issues, respondents' main concerns were hygiene-related, where the overall main issue was "unhygienic restroom conditions". This was a bigger issue for respondents than "aggressive atmosphere", "long entry lines" and "low quality of food and drinks".

When asked about top 2 issues.
(n=3016)





When choosing their top 3 issues, respondents' main concerns were still "unhygienic restroom conditions".

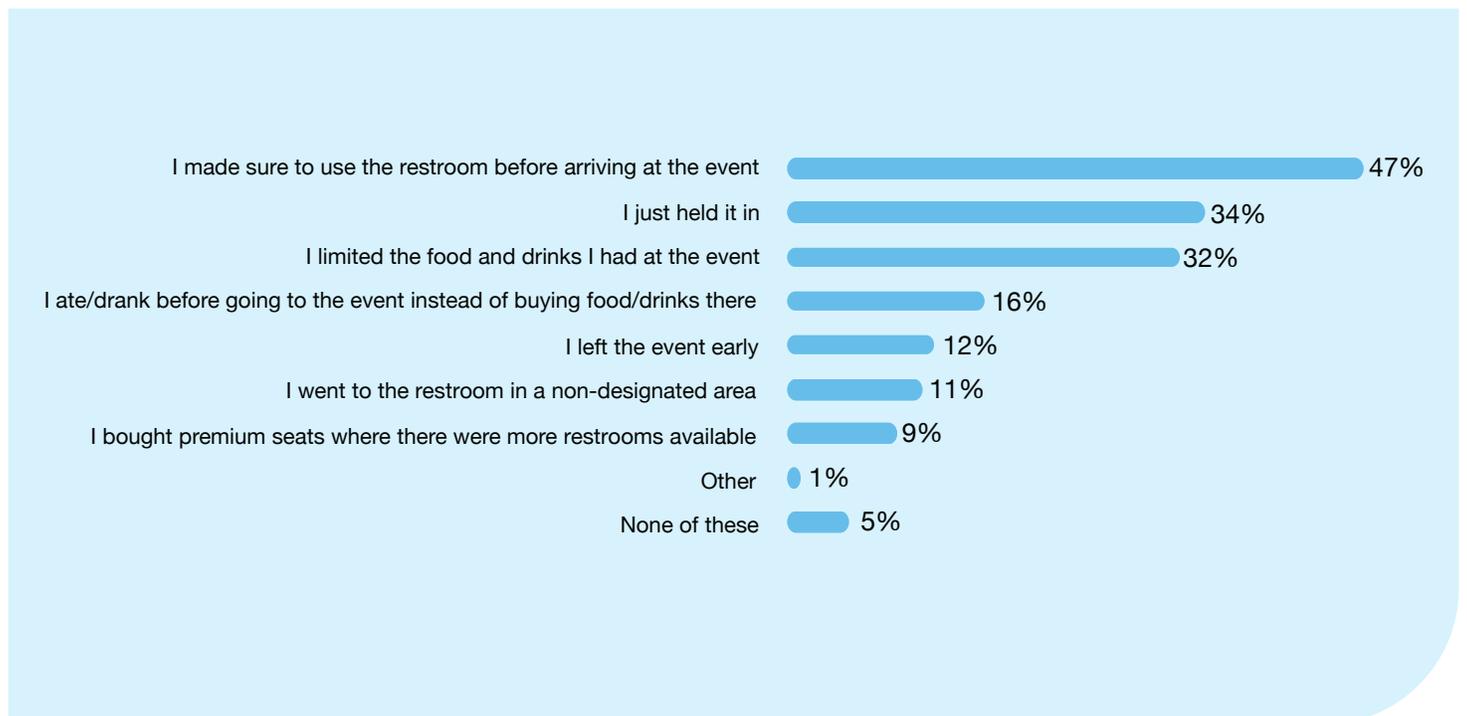
When asked about top 3 issues.
(n=3016)



“Unhygienic restroom conditions” was such a big concern for respondents, that more than half of them actively avoid using the event restrooms by using the restroom before arriving at the event, “holding it in” or limiting their intake of food and drinks at the venue.

Measures taken to avoid restroom visit

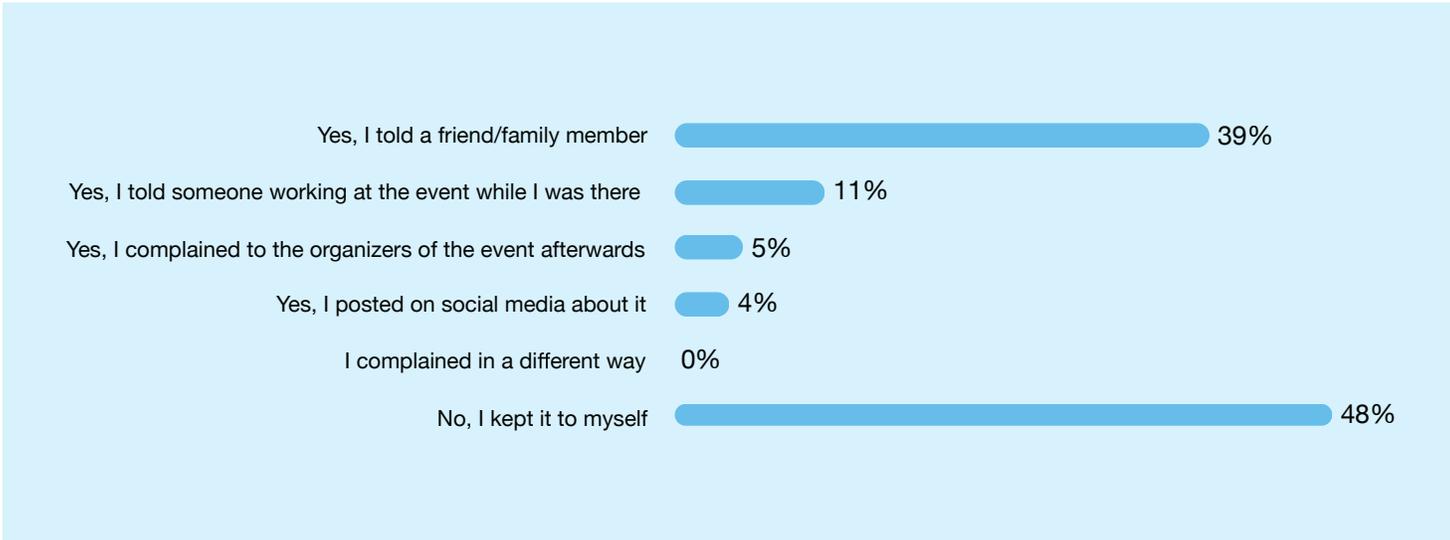
(Respondents who did not go to the restroom even though they had to, n=196)





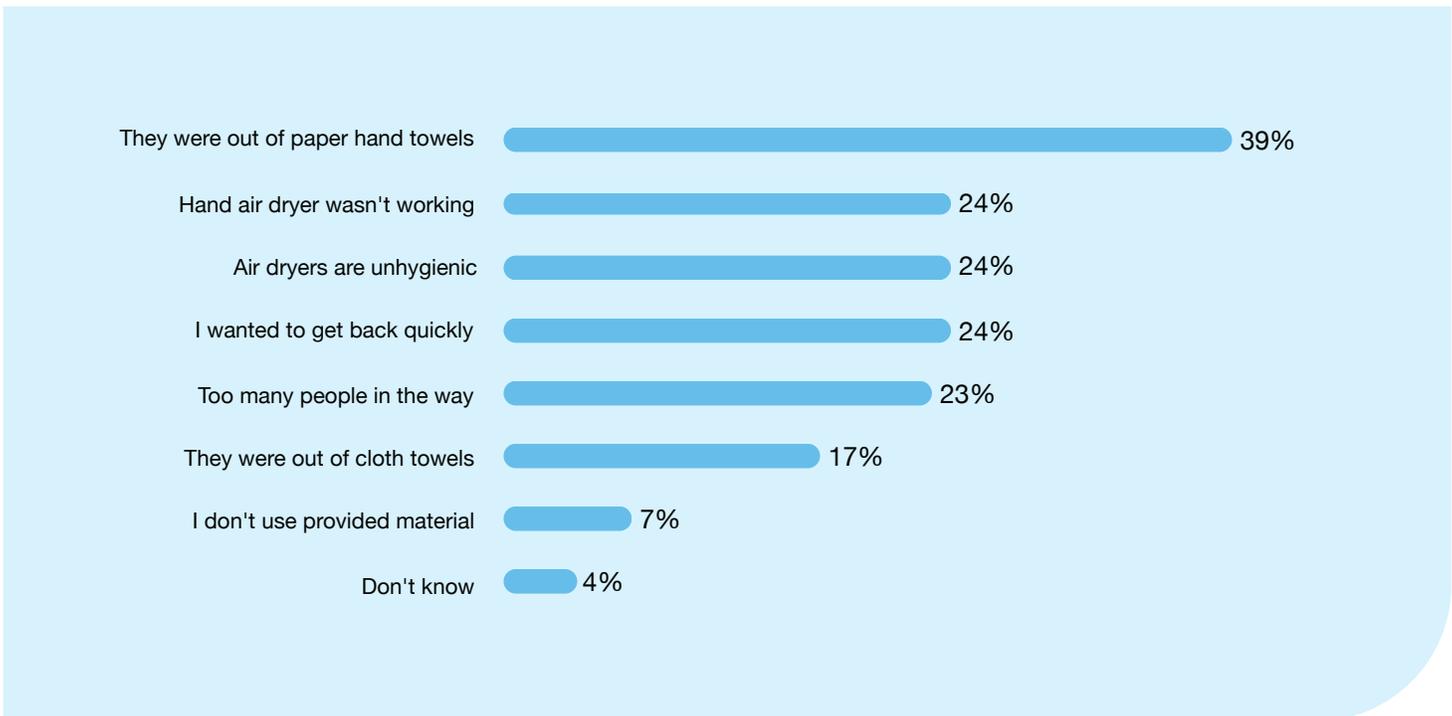
7/10 respondents reported bad restroom experiences, and expressed that the unhygienic restroom affected the overall event experience. A successful event/venue is dependent on many factors beside the actual main attraction. However, this issue is relatively hidden in statistics since only half of the respondents talked to someone about their bad experience.

Communication of the bad restroom experience
(Respondents with bad restroom experience in the past, n=2130)



Most respondents who did not dry their hands did not do so because the restroom was out of towels, and/or because they had concerns regarding the air dryers.

Why didn't you dry your hands/dry your hands with toilet paper/dry your hands on your clothes?
(n=480, 773 answers in total)

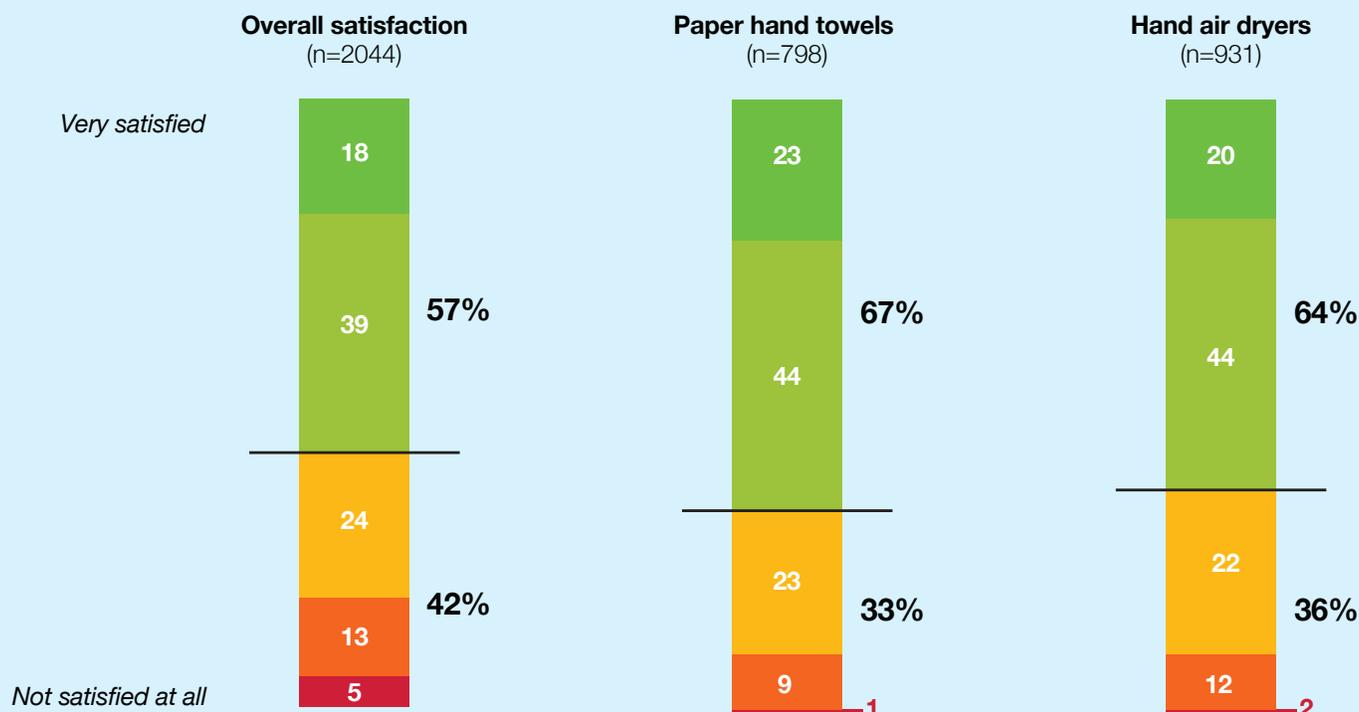
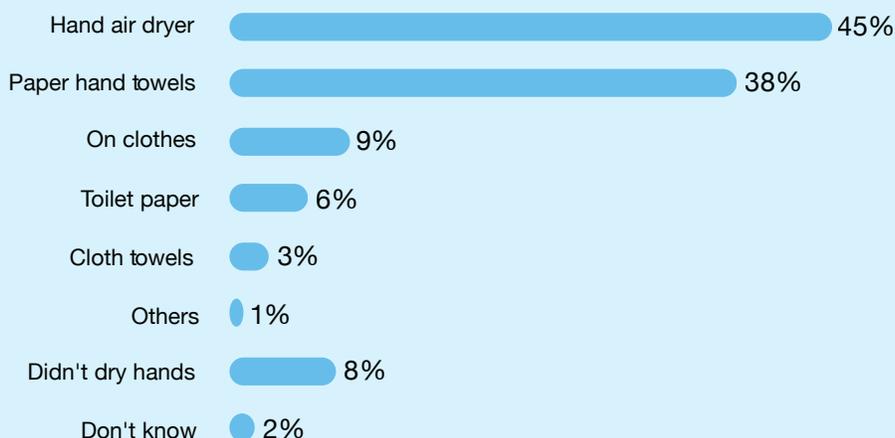




Use of hand air dryers is slightly more common than use of paper hand towels to dry one's hands after washing them at an event. However, the respondents who used paper hand towels to dry their hands were more satisfied with the results than those who used air dryers. Many respondents chose not to dry their hands at all or to dry them on their clothes. This could be due to paper hand towels being out of stock or to respondents preferring not to use air dryers.

Hand Drying Method

(Respondents who dried their hands after washing them, n=2080)

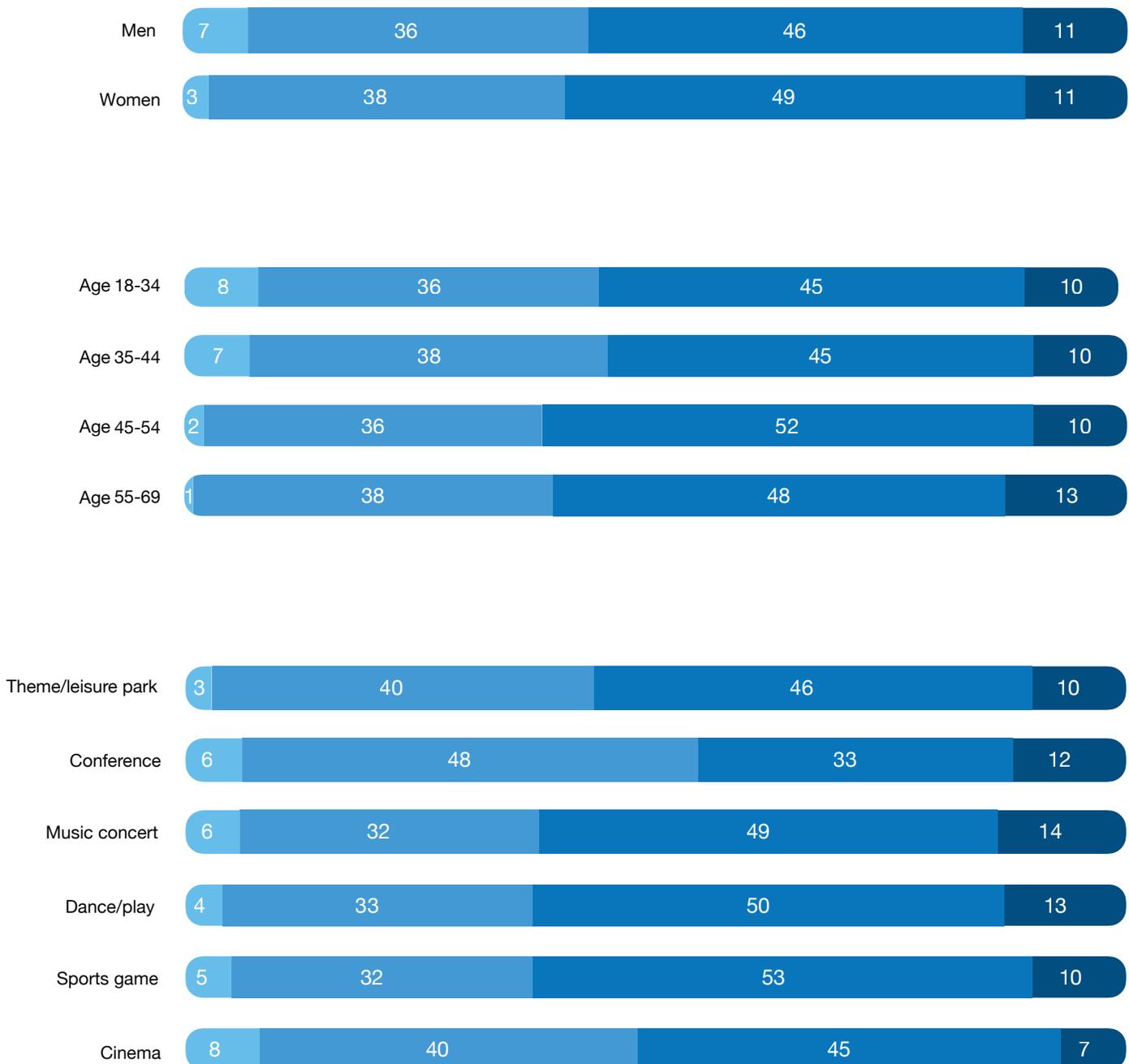




It is clear that a bad restroom experience will affect the overall experience of visiting a venue or attending an event. Young people and conference and cinema visitors are especially sensitive to this factor.

Effect on overall impression of event
(Respondents with bad restroom experience in the past, n=346)

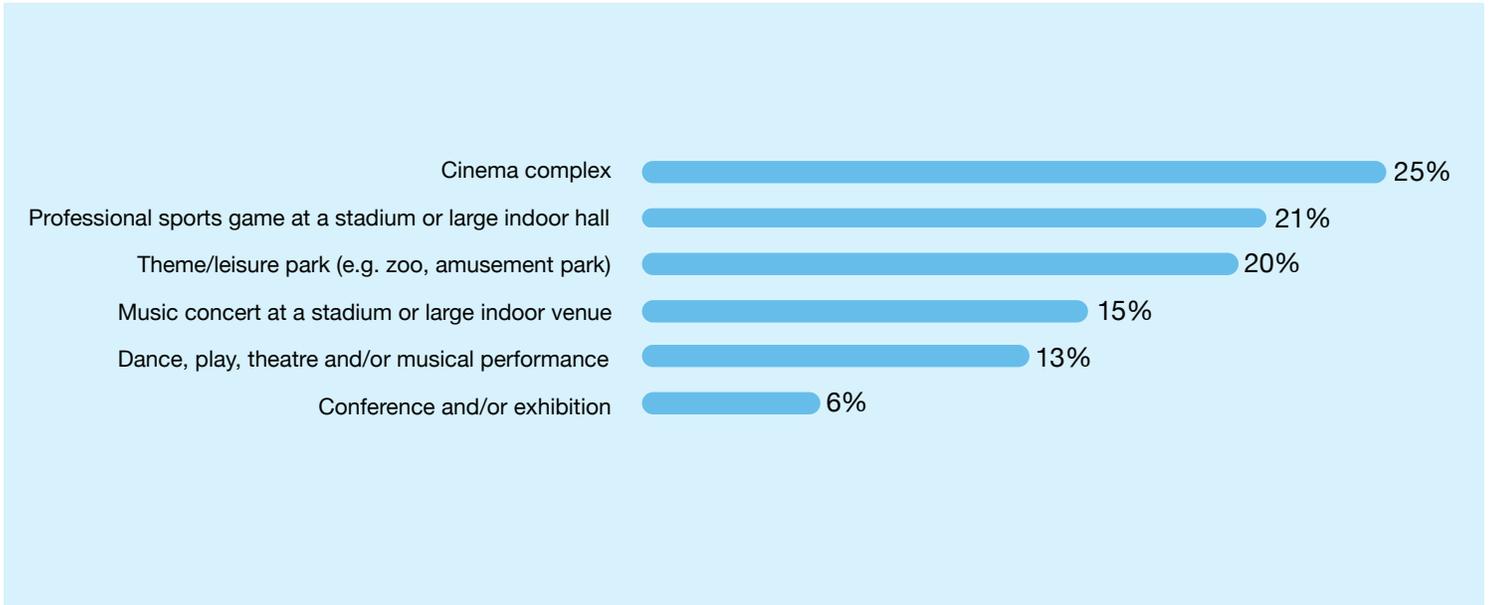
■ Ruined my experience ■ Affected my experience a little negatively ■ Didn't affect my experience much ■ Didn't make a difference at all





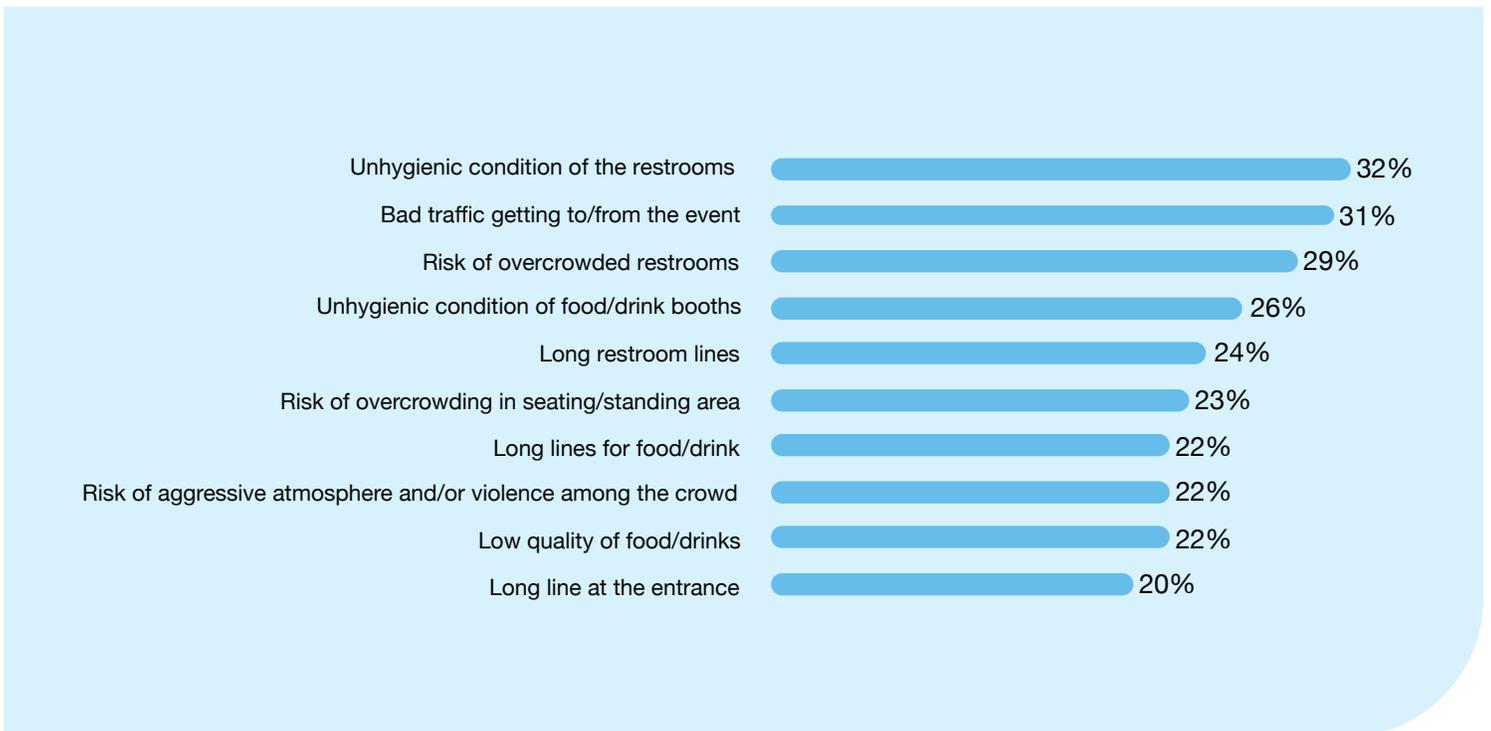
Cinemas, sports games and leisure parks were the most common recently visited events/venues among American respondents.

Most recently visited event
(n=500)



Responses in the American study are in line with international statistics, i.e. unhygienic restroom conditions are the main issue for Americans visiting an event/venue, closely followed by unhygienic conditions of food/drink booths.

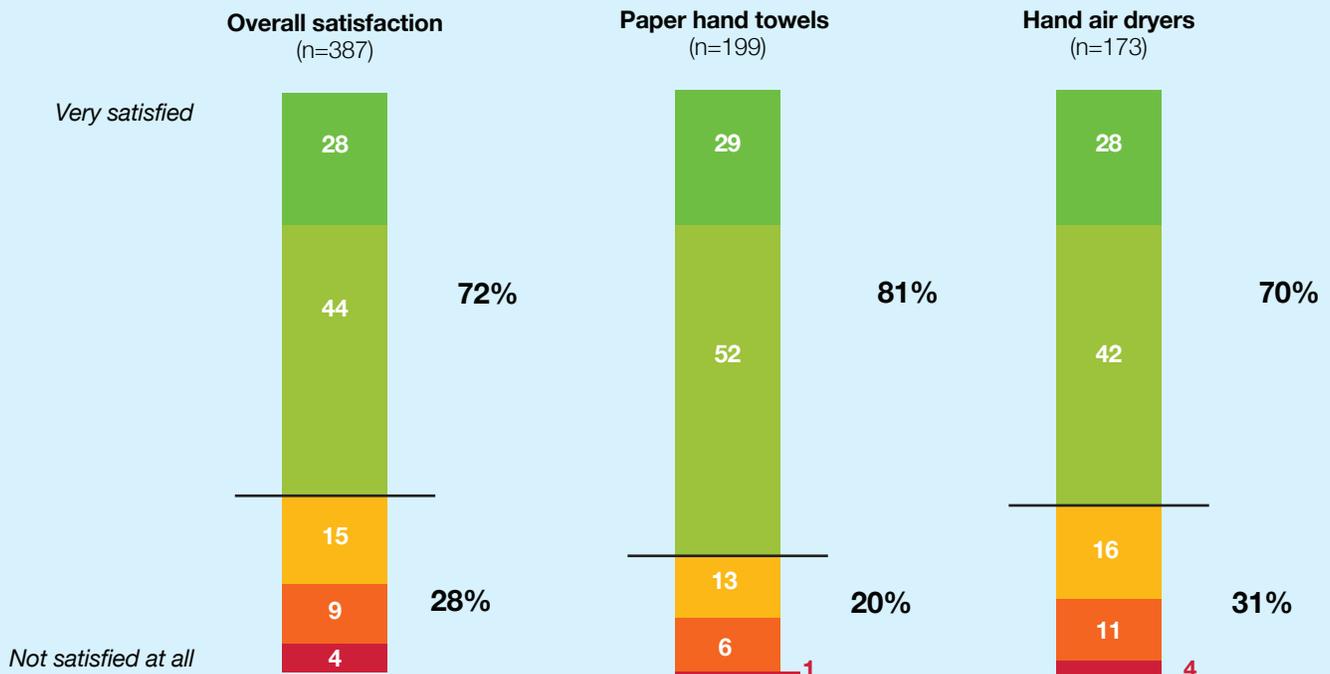
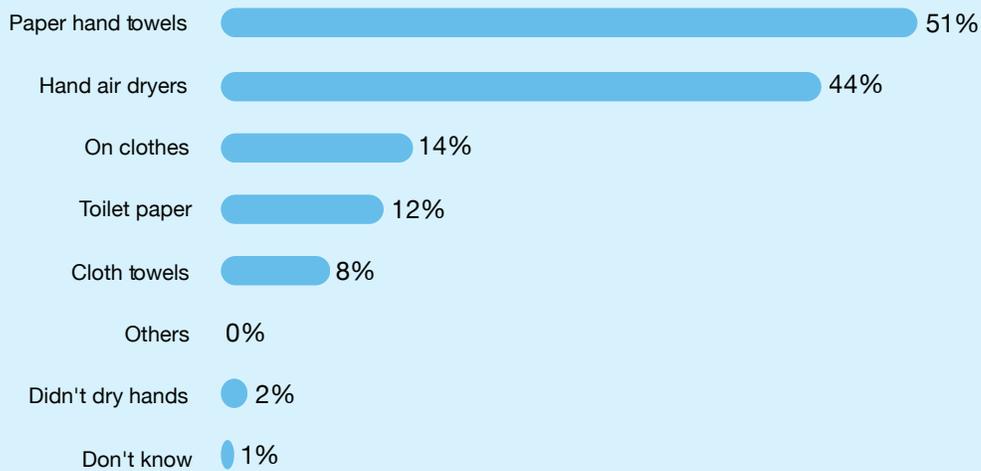
When asked about the top 2 issues.
(n=500)





American respondents who dried their hands after washing them preferred doing so using paper. Surprisingly, many chose to dry their hands on their clothes, which could be due to paper hand towels being out of stock or because of concerns with using a hand air dryer. 3/4 were satisfied with the hand drying facilities.

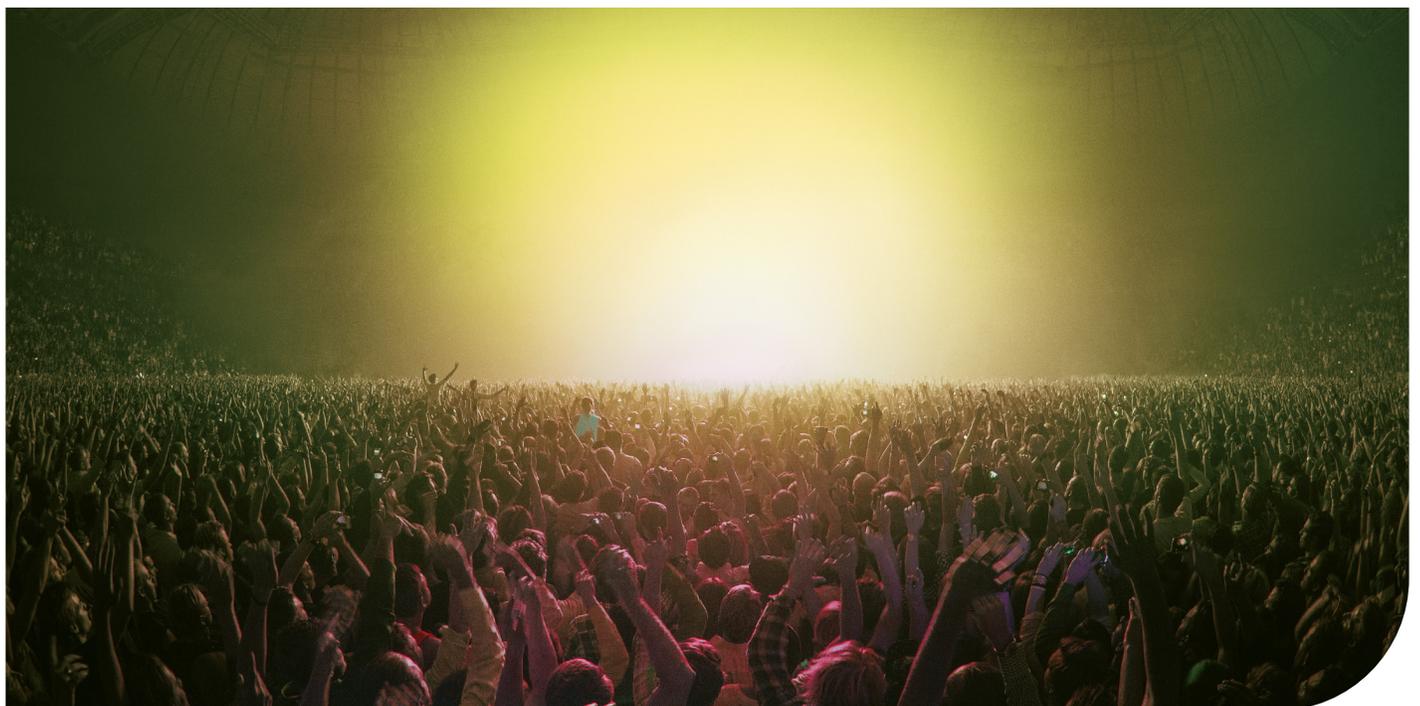
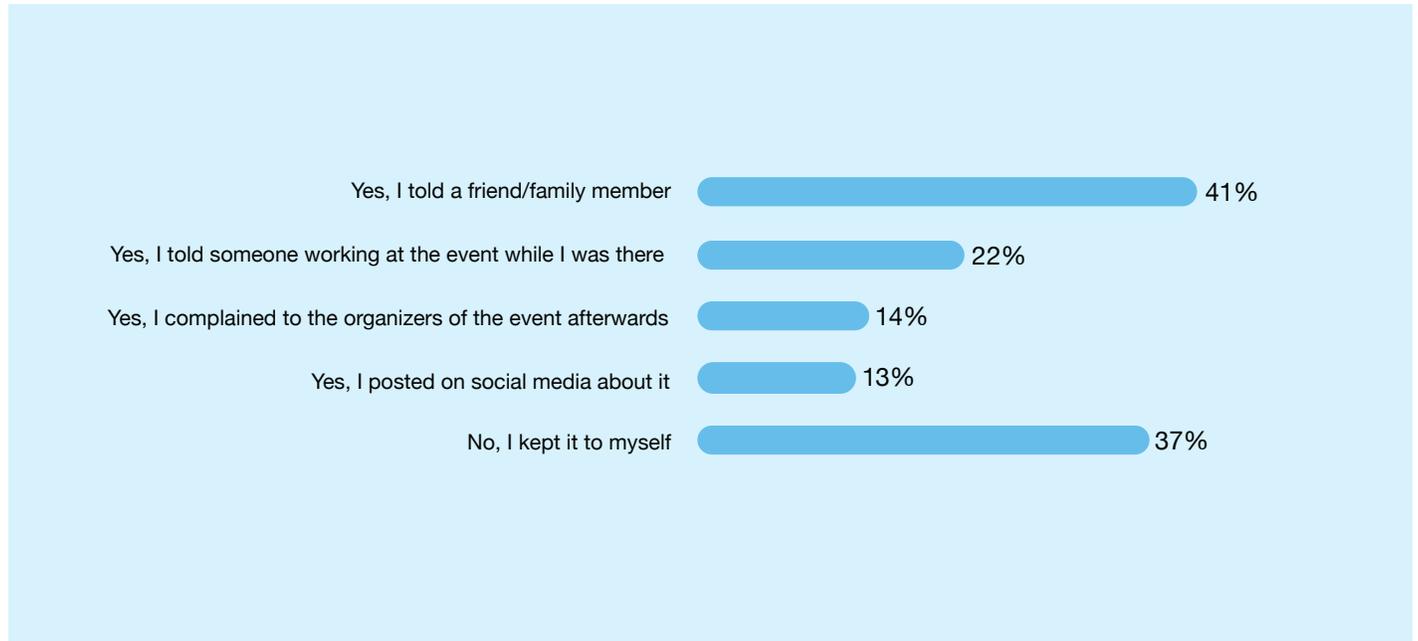
Hand drying method
(Respondents who dried their hands after washing them, n=389)





7/10 American respondents reported bad restroom experiences, and said that the unhygienic restroom affected the overall event experience. A successful event/venue is dependent on many factors beside the actual main attraction. However, this issue is relatively hidden in statistics since only half of the respondents talked to someone about their bad experience.

Communication of the bad restroom experience
(Respondents with bad restroom experience in the past, n=346)





Set up

- Online panel questionnaire
- Questionnaire length: approx. 10 minutes
- Six countries: Germany, UK, USA, Sweden, Poland, France
- N=3016
- Participants of...
 - **both genders**
 - **between 18 and 69 years** old, who
 - visited **a big event** (more than 100 people) **over the last 9 months**
- 500 participants per country, slightly more in UK (n=515) and Sweden (n=501)
- Survey took place within one and a half weeks of fieldwork (09/16/2016–09/27/2016)