



# State of Sales Kickoff Meetings

An examination of how (and how successfully) companies motivate and align their sales forces

*A survey by Brainshark*

# Overview: State of Sales Kickoffs

Trying to drive motivation, morale, momentum and results with your annual sales kickoff (SKO) meeting? Many companies may be falling short, according to our *State of Sales Kickoff Meetings* survey. Despite billions of dollars spent on these events annually (not to mention hours upon hours of preparation), **three out of four attendees (74%) say their company's SKO doesn't merit an "A" grade**, with 29% rating it a "C" grade or below – leaving ample room for improvement.

What's causing companies to lose out on maximizing their events' ROI? One item we found is that many organizations structure and plan their SKOs as isolated events – rather than springboards for the entire fiscal year – and neglect to prepare their sales team, pre-SKO, or follow up afterward. For example, **84% of organizations don't conduct sales rep training in advance of their SKO for context, and 71% don't deliver post-work or follow-up training** to reinforce what was learned. A surprising 42% of participants said they wished their company would integrate their SKO's theme and messaging into the rest of the year.

For this study, we surveyed 107 sales representatives, sales managers and other leadership at companies of all sizes and across industries. The survey covered their experiences and impressions at SKOs they've attended, including salient areas executed well, along with items for improvement. Full results are in this exclusive report. Enjoy!

# Overall SKO Impressions

## Do SKOs “Make the Grade”?

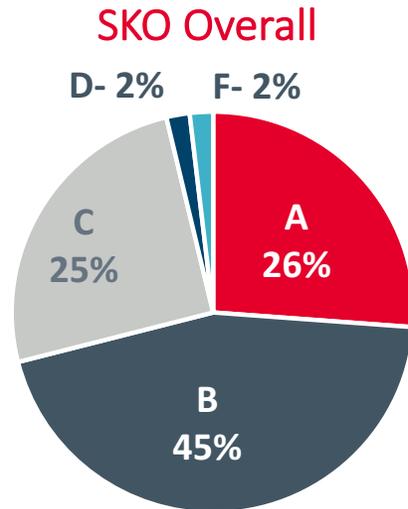
Participants saw room for improvement in the kickoffs they’ve attended:

- 3 out of 4 (74%) say their company’s SKO, as a whole, doesn’t merit an “A” grade
- 29% give their company’s SKO a “C” grade or below
- In terms of individual SKO components, social/networking activities got the most favorable grades (35% rated them an “A”)
- Keynote presentations fared worst (only 16% graded them an “A”)

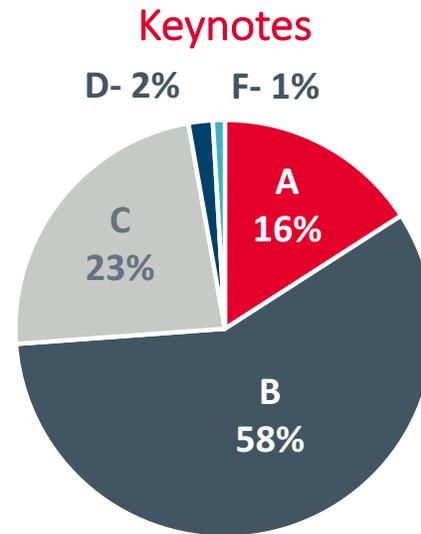
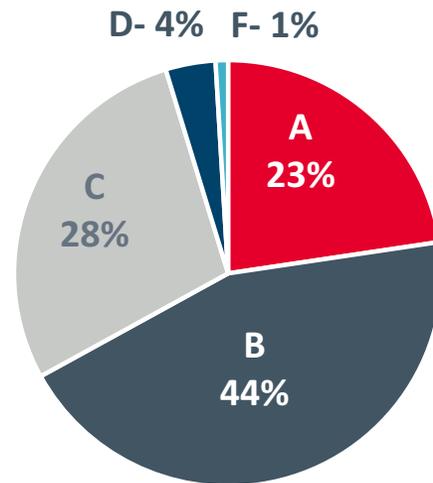
*See more on the following chart*

# Do SKOs “Make the Grade”?

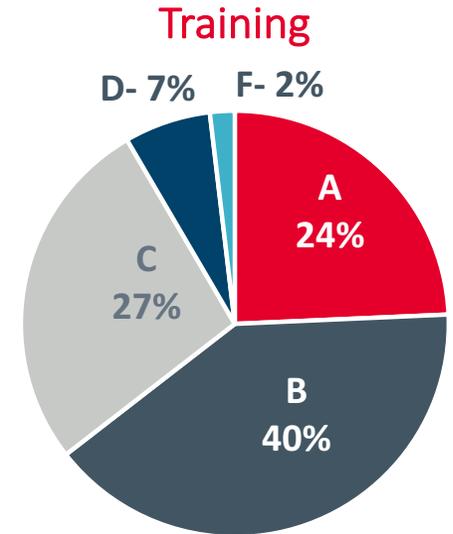
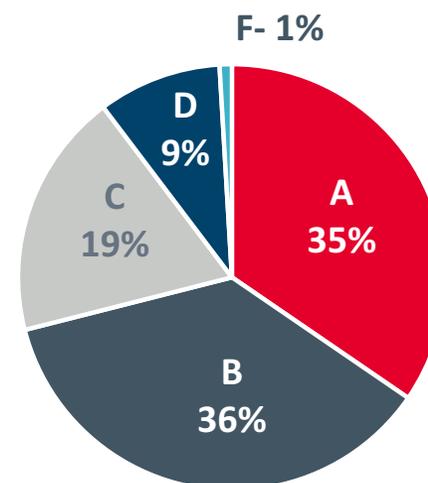
In your experiences throughout your career, how would you grade the following aspects of SKOs you’ve attended?



## Informational Presentations



## Social/Networking Activities



# SKO Planning

## Sales enablement's role

As more organizations establish sales enablement (SE) programs, functions and titles, sales enablement departments can – and should – play an active role in the holistic SKO process.

- Overall, 43% of respondents noted their company has a SE function that supports their SKOs
- Among companies with SE functions, though, this percentage was much higher – nearly 8 out of 10 SE departments (79%) supported SKO planning and execution within their organization

## Elements included (and lacking)

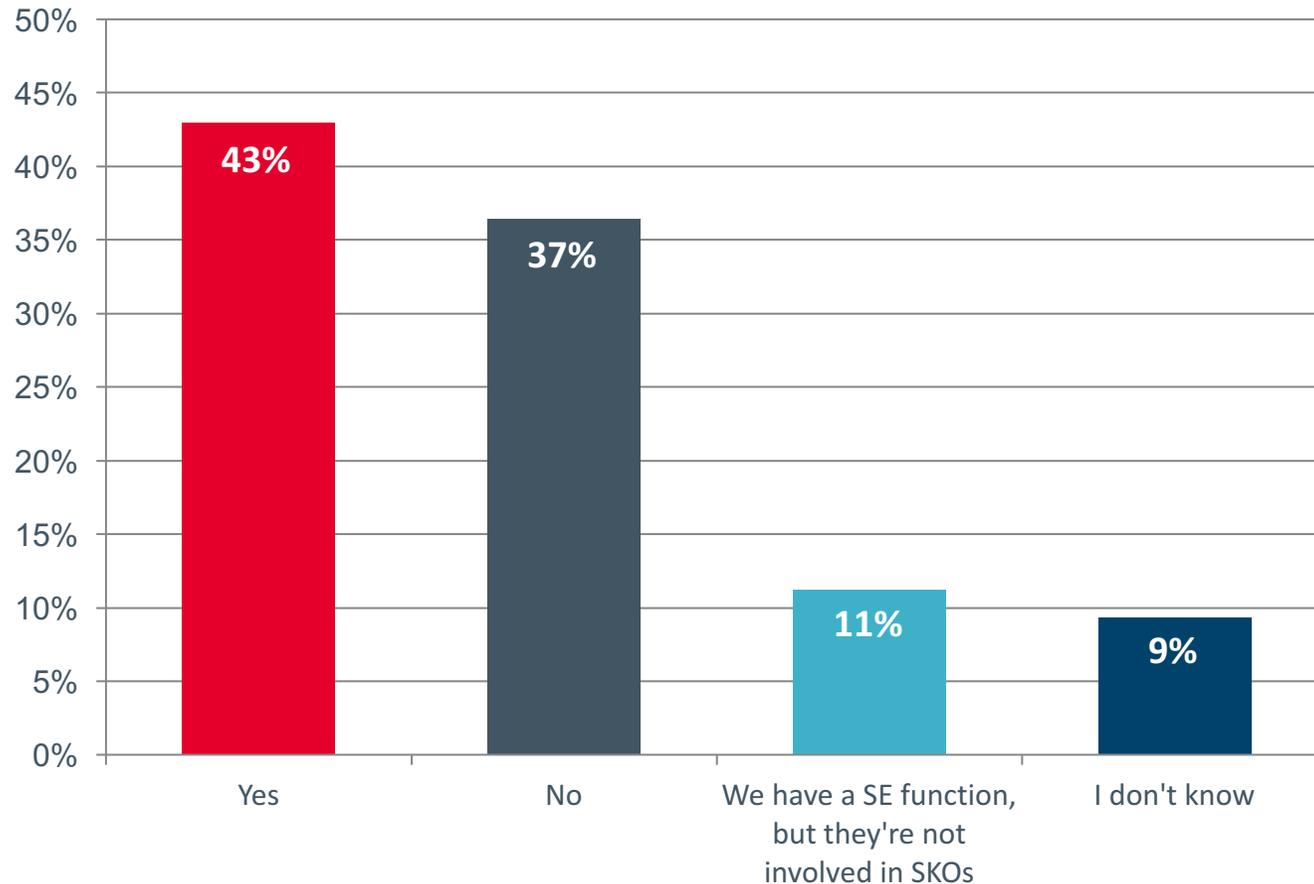
Still, many organizations take a limited approach to SKO planning – approaching the kickoff as a single event in isolation:

- More than 6 out of 10 (62%) don't deliver pre-work to sales reps in advance of their SKO
- 84% don't conduct training in advance, neglecting to provide a foundation on the skills and topics that will be covered
- 7 in 10 (71%) don't deliver post-work or follow-up training as reinforcement
- 28% don't make presentation slides available post-SKO

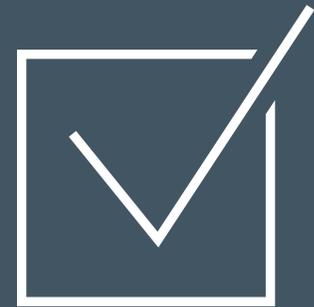
*See more on the following charts*

# Sales Enablement Plays a Key Role in SKOs

Does your company have a dedicated sales enablement function that supports the preparation and execution of your sales kickoff events?

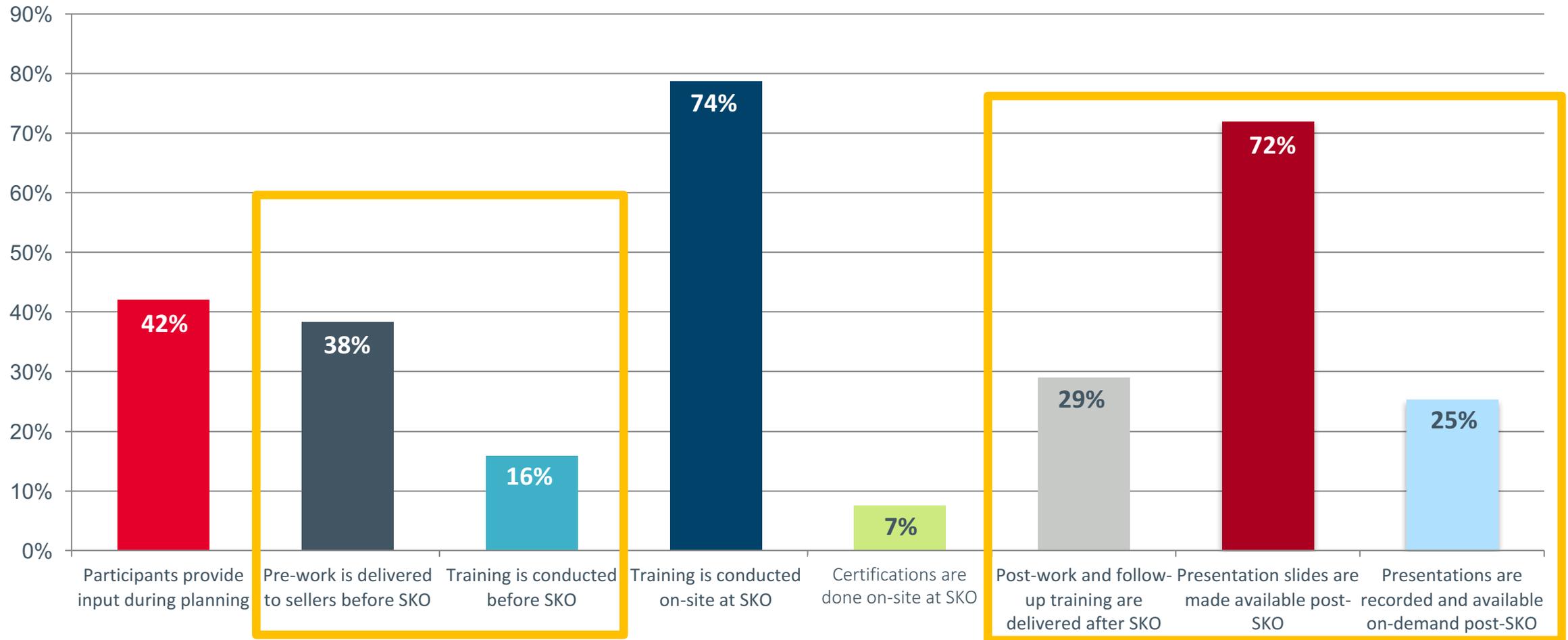


Among companies with sales enablement departments, 79% of those departments supported SKO planning and execution.



# SKOs as Isolated Events? Absence of 'Before' and 'After' Components

Which of the following are true of your organization's approach to SKOs? Please check all that apply.



# SKO Improvements

## What's on the 'Wish-List'?

Sales reps and executives desired multiple improvements to drive better SKO effectiveness and ROI. Not surprisingly, these underscored a desire to treat the meetings as much more than point-in-time training and motivational tools – but, rather, as catalysts for the entire fiscal year. Suggestions included:

- Provide training and/or coaching prior to the event (41%)
- Follow up SKO training with ongoing reinforcement (62%)
- Follow through on using the kickoff theme and messages the rest of the year (42%)

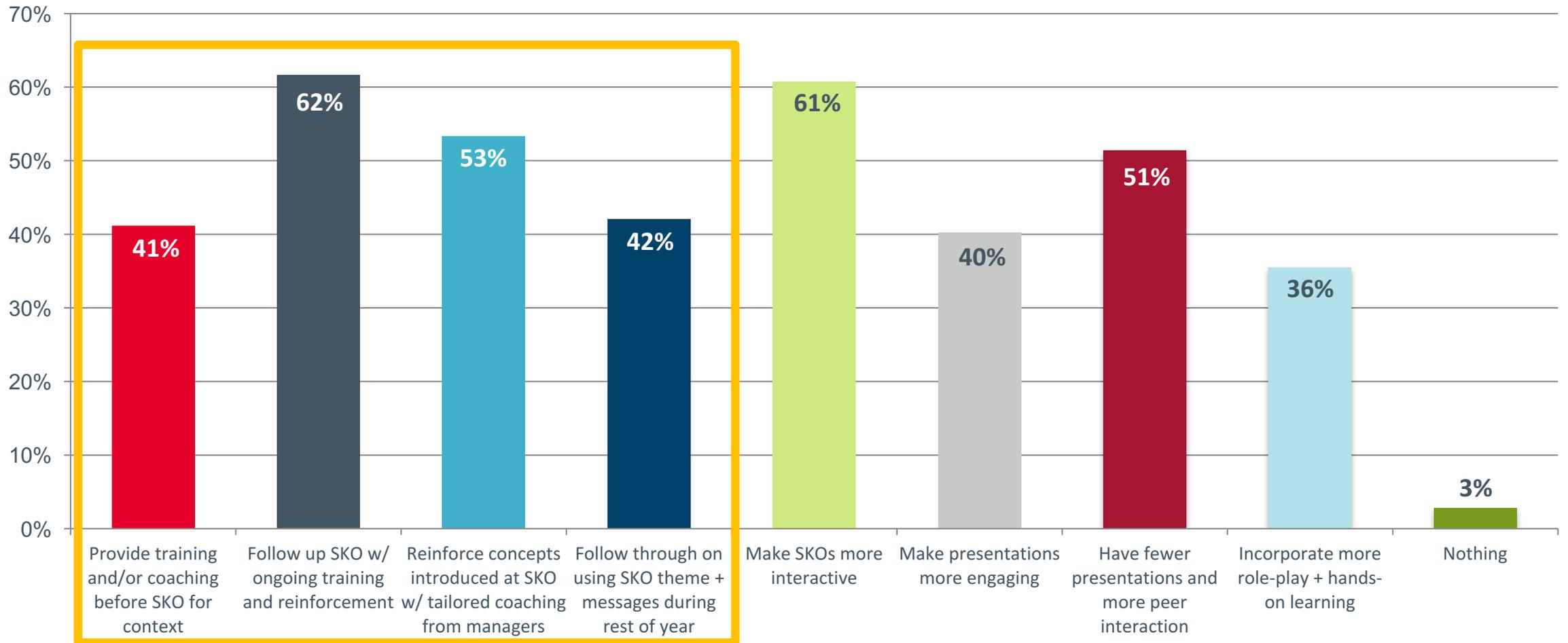
If respondents had unlimited planning power and no restrictions on budget, they'd also improve items including:

- The SKO's guest sales-focused speakers (56%)
- SKO motivational speakers (50%)
- The venue (39%)
- Food options (23%)

*See more on the following charts*

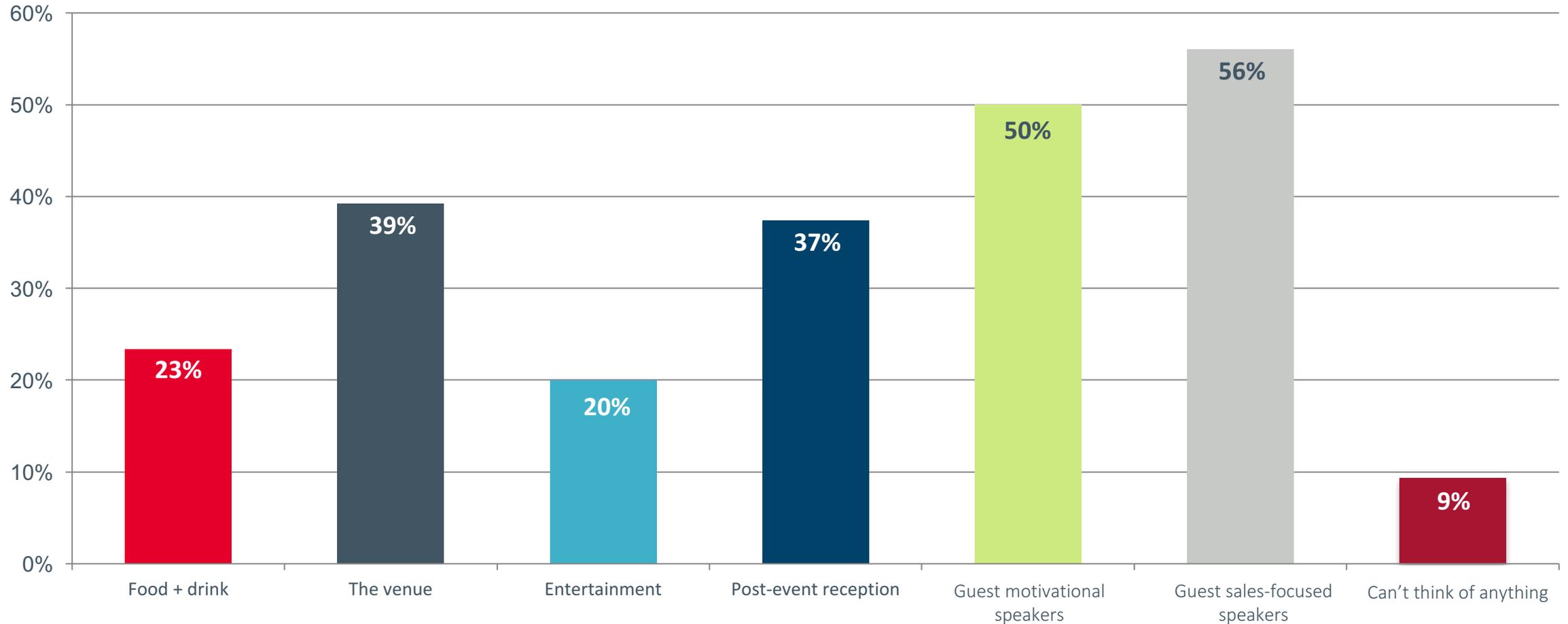
# Wish-List for Improvements: Focus on 'Before' and 'After' Elements

In your opinion, what are the most important things your company can do to improve SKO effectiveness and ROI?  
Please check all that apply.



# More on the SKO Wish-Lists (Pretty Please!)

If you had free rein (no restrictions!) over your company's SKO budget, what are some of the most important elements you'd improve? Please check all that apply.



# Additional SKO Resources

For more information on SKO planning, best practices and errors to avoid, please see:



<http://bit.ly/bnsk-sko-ebook>

The image is a screenshot of a blog post from the Brainshark website. At the top left is the 'BRAINSHARK' logo. To the right are navigation links: 'SALES READINESS', 'SOLUTIONS', 'SUCCESS', and 'RESOURCES'. The post is dated 'NOVEMBER 16, 2017' and written by 'JIM NINIVAGGI'. The author's profile picture and name 'Jim Ninivaggi' are shown, along with his title 'Chief Readiness Officer, Brainshark' and his Twitter handle '@jninivaggi'. Below the author information are 'TAGS' and 'SHARE THIS POST' buttons for Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and Google+. The main title of the post is '5 Mistakes That Can Sink Your Sales Kickoff'. Below the title is a photograph of four business professionals sitting at a conference table, looking towards the right. The text of the post begins with 'Many companies are in planning mode for their sales kickoff meetings – hoping to set the strategy, motivation, and momentum for a successful FY18. I've been at kickoffs where the excitement and electricity in the room were palpable. They had that spine-tingling moment we all know: where the hair on the back of your neck stands up because you're so energized and inspired. Pity the competition, we thought – they have no idea what they're in for!' The post concludes with 'On the flip side, I've also attended kickoffs where ostensibly well-laid plans went awry, giving way to lackluster, boring, and unsuccessful events. In cases like these, a domino'.

<http://bit.ly/bnsk-sko-mistakes>

# About Brainshark

Brainshark sales readiness software equips businesses with the training, coaching and content authoring capabilities to achieve sales mastery and outsell the competition.

With Brainshark, companies can: prepare sales teams with on-demand training that accelerates onboarding and keeps reps up-to-speed; validate readiness with sales coaching that ensures reps master your message; and empower sales organizations with rich, dynamic content that can be created quickly and accessed anywhere.

Thousands of companies – including more than half of the Fortune 100 – rely on Brainshark to identify and close performance gaps, and get better results from their sales enablement initiatives.

Learn more at [www.brainshark.com](http://www.brainshark.com) or by calling 781-370-8200.

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