

Main Sale After Report 2019

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Overview

The main sale was a couple nights ago, and while no servers crashed and no detrimental bugs impeded sales, we know a significant number of people who participated didn't get a ticket and are very frustrated.

Transparency is important to us. The ticketing team is run by volunteers and the process is one of that has been developed over the past five years to be as painless as possible for everyone involved. With this we wanted to offer some insight into how things are set up.

This is a participatory process—that means that talking about the parts that are frustrating and the parts that work can help us as we move forwards from year to year.

Let's take a look at sales by the numbers first.

Sales By The Numbers

Everyone who is taking part at Burn in the Forest has to buy a ticket, even the most senior volunteer crew, the production folks, and those running theme camps. Burner events only work because we participate, so we recognize those contributions with access to a number of different types of sales.

We have 5 different sales where you can acquire a ticket:

Low Income Ticket: ~100

Past Volunteer Advance Sale: ~200

Directed Tickets: ~600

Main Sale Tickets: ~650

Last Minute Sale: Remaining Unclaimed Tickets

Total Tickets: ~1500+

(You can read more about the ticket sales, their timeline and stipulation here:

<https://burnintheforest.com/ticketing>)

This year, there were 1200 registrants, all with the option to buy up to Two (2) tickets, and there were only 650 tickets available. That means there was a demand of close to 2400 tickets, but only 27% of that demand was fulfilled.

The registrant count is up 45% from last year (840), but the number of main sale tickets available has not increased. We have kept the numbers similar to last year as a result of having to move the event to a new site and volunteer levels being about the same.

The sale “**booked out**” instantly (all tickets were claimed inside a checkout process) and the sale “**sold out**” 30 minutes later later once the remaining tickets became available after cart abandonment. This has been consistent with the past 4 years of this format.

Why is it setup like this?

In the past (about 5 years ago) we had 2 separate open sales. Each sale would sell out instantly and it caused problems.

It was a frustrating experience, servers would crash, payments wouldn't go through (or would go through twice) and people were upset; the limited pool of tickets was spread too thin, and it was hard to understand how to get them.

Demand outstripped what we could handle as an event; we wanted to make sure that those who were bringing significant contributions through volunteering and art were to able do so via directed access to tickets.

One of the big revelations that we had was that by moving these sales *ahead* of the main sale we ended up taking a lot of pressure off the main sale.

This structure favours those who are involved early and offers a reasonable opportunity to outsiders, or those who are not involved at the same level, access to tickets.

We feel this system aligns well with some of the community principles:

1. **Radical Self Reliance** - We invite people to read about the various sales and how they might apply to you. We get the information on how to acquire a ticket out months in advance and we make available on the website: <https://burnintheforest.com/ticketing>. Should you want a ticket, there's more than 5 avenues to acquire one.
2. **Communal Effort** - We reward those who are working hard to contribute to the community, not by offering free tickets, but by working with them to bring their visions to life. This is so you can worry less about tickets and more about your project. Just tell us in advance and we'll support you as much as we reasonably can.
3. **Radical Inclusion** - We maintain this open main sale because BitF is open to everyone and no prerequisites exist for participation in the community. Even though we have ideas of who we want to include, BitF isn't created it's co-created and celebrated by those who align with and promote its purpose and value.

Frustrations We're Hearing

A lot of preparation went into the sale this year; we spent a lot of time testing the system, making sure it could handle the load. We also worked hard on our communications plan, ensuring that all of the information needed was available in an easy-to-access way.

Despite a sale that ran extremely smoothly, we still heard some discontent directed at our team. I'd like to address that directly:

We understand it's frustrating, we understand how being excluded can make you feel, we understand that sometimes it doesn't work out how you want it to, but we're as frustrated as you are in trying to find an equitable way to distribute these limited number of tickets.

That being said, we've heard some valuable feedback (as we always do) on some UI quirks, and we'll work with Quicket to address those in the next sale.

Our group has been doing this for 4 years and myself for nearly 6. I've heard it all, but even 6 years in, it really hurts to hear some of the attacks and criticism aimed at the registration team and the process we work so hard to come up with. Please be understanding.

Options Going Forward

The system for theme camps, artists, volunteers and past volunteers is working well within the ticketing system.

We're hearing that the open main sale could use a review. We're going to do that, with your feedback in mind. This doesn't guarantee a change, but it does mean we're going to weigh out new ideas in an effort to find the best way forward.

Before you fire up your email client and whip up some words, we ask that you look over some suggestions we've heard in the past:

Some Alternatives And Ideas We've Heard:

- **Civilized Lottery** - Who are we kidding, it's a lottery anyways, lets just make it more civilized.
- **Significantly Decrease Registration Time** - Limit this sale to those who are diligent at monitoring dates with the hopes of reducing the number of people who participate in it.
- **Merit Based System** - Past participation gives you better access to the main sale.
- **Invitation Only System** - Only those who participated last year can invite others into the system.
- **Shrink Main Sale** - Add greater emphasis on Directed Ticketing through participation in art applications and theme camps.
- **Get Rid of the Last Minute Sale** - Either direct them all to the main sale or put these tickets into a **last minute directed sale** for those with last minute art / theme camp applications. Both systems helps individuals plan better, either in advance or at the last minute.

We look forward to hearing your feedback. Please send **constructive ideas** (not gripes) to registration@burnintheforest.com.

Statistics About Who Participated In The Main Sale 2019

For the last 4 years we've been asking some basic questions to people who apply for the main sale in hopes to add data and perhaps dispel some myth about our event being overrun by individuals who aren't aligned with our principles.

BitF Virgins

This is the first year in 4 years we've seen an uptick in the percentage of virgins that are participating in the main sale.

This year we see an increase in Main Sale Participants who've never gone to BitF before by exactly 10% points.

This can also be understood as a 24% increase over last years numbers. The percentage of first timers has normally stayed steady at ~42%, this year is definitely bucking the trend.

The reason for this is unknown, it could be a function of word of mouth, or it could be as a result of all the hard work we've done to move veterans into other channels to acquired tickets.

Burning Man Virgins

A smaller increase was measured in the first time Burning Man attendees. This is by no indication of whether or not they are acculturated to our values, as many of our members who attend regularly have never been to *That Thing In The Desert*.

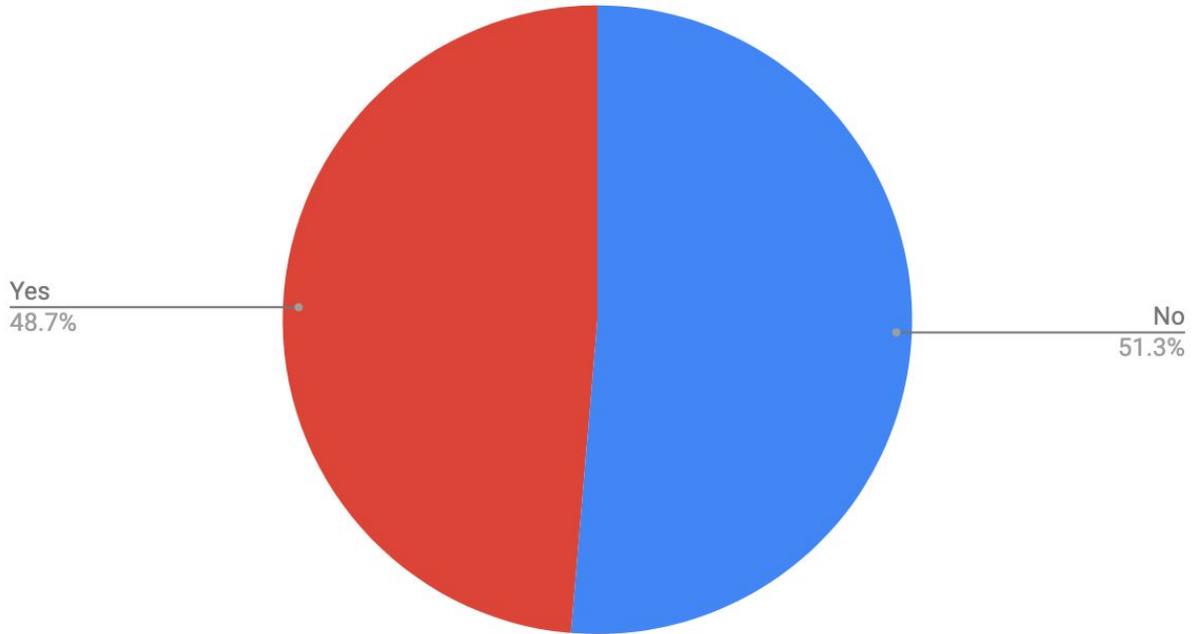
Understanding of the 10 Principles

We only began asking this question in 2018. While most report to have read the 10 Principles there is a 0.4% percentage point increase in those reporting they haven't read them before participating in the main sale.

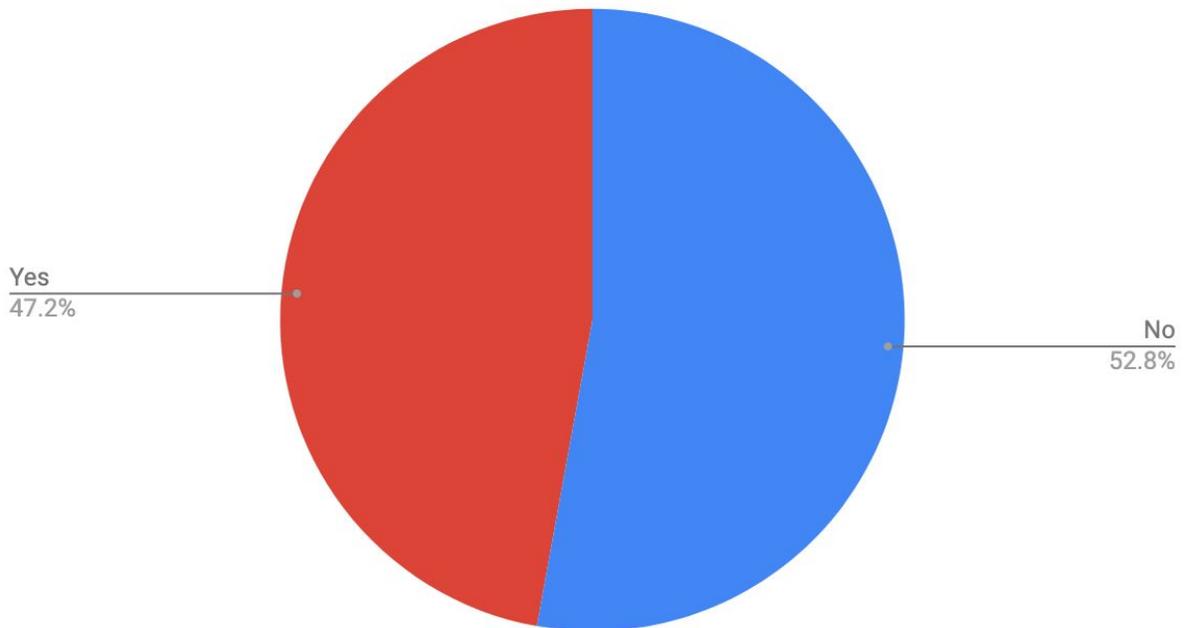
Question	2019	2018	2017	2016
Have you been to BitF in the Past?	48.7% YES 51.3% NO	58.7% YES 41.3% NO	56.7% YES 43.3% NO	58.5% YES 41.5% NO
Have you been to Burning Man in the Past?	47.2% YES 52.8% NO	51.6% YES 48.4% NO	53.3% YES 46.7% NO	61.0% YES 39.0% NO
Have you read or know the 10 Principles	99.1% YES 0.9% NO	99.4% YES 0.6 % NO	N/A	N/A
How many tickets do you plan on purchasing	Two (2) - 72.2% One (1) - 27.8%	Two (2) - 71% One (1) - 29%	Two (2) - 72.8% One (1) - 27.2%	Two (2) - 69.2% One (1) - 30.8%

2019

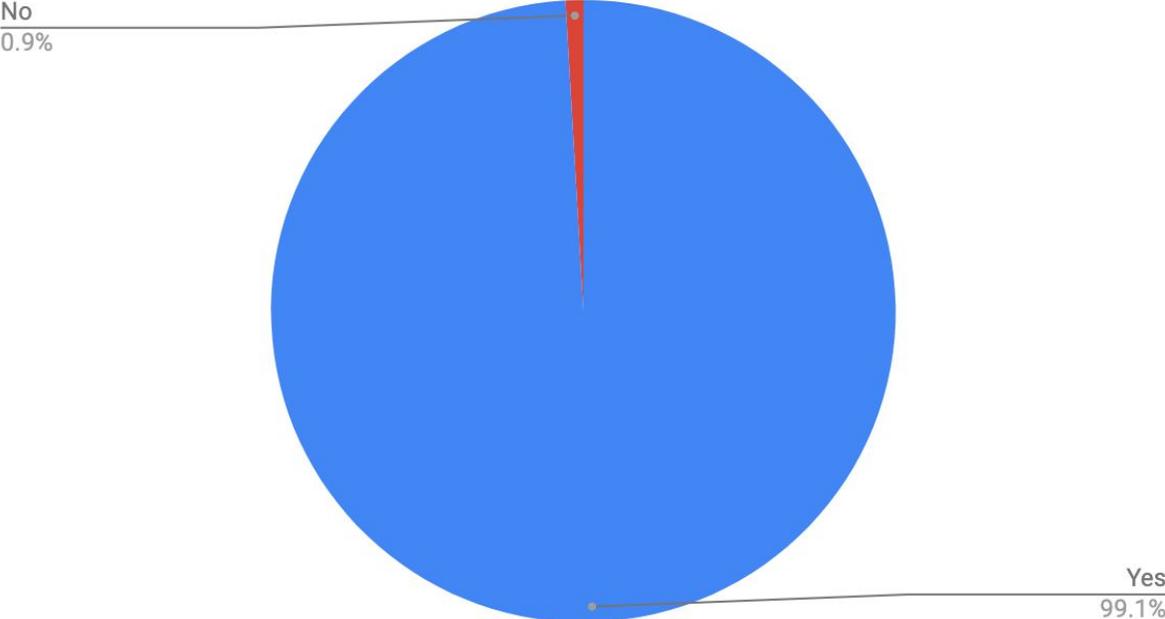
Have you been to BitF in the past? (2019)



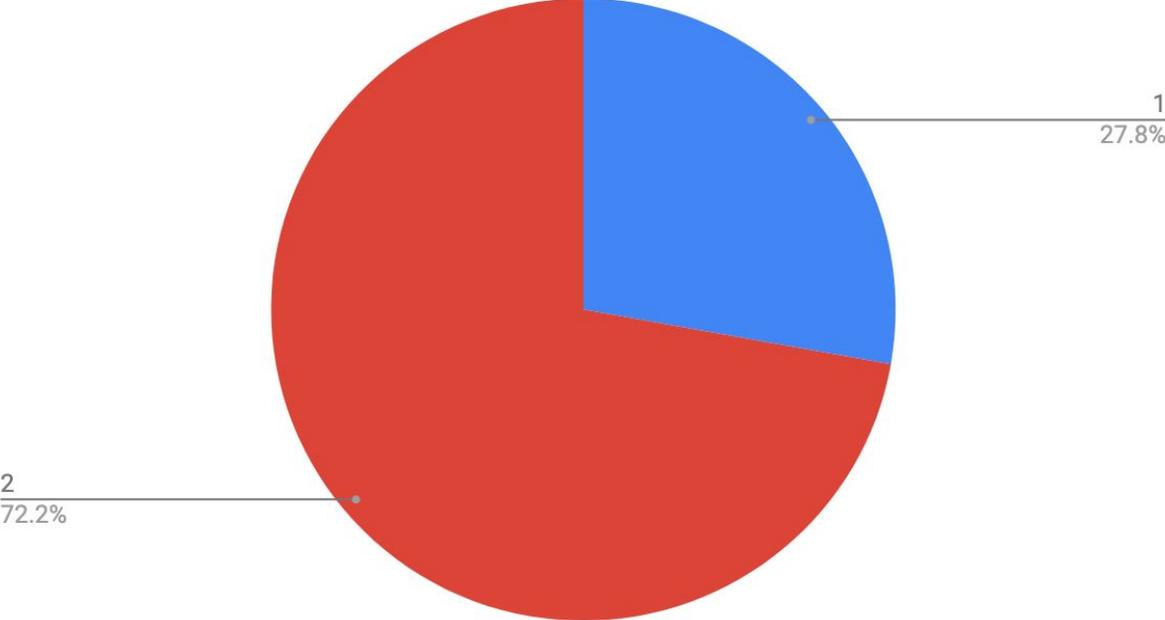
Have you been to Burning Man in the past? (2019)



Have you read or know the 10 Principle of BitF?

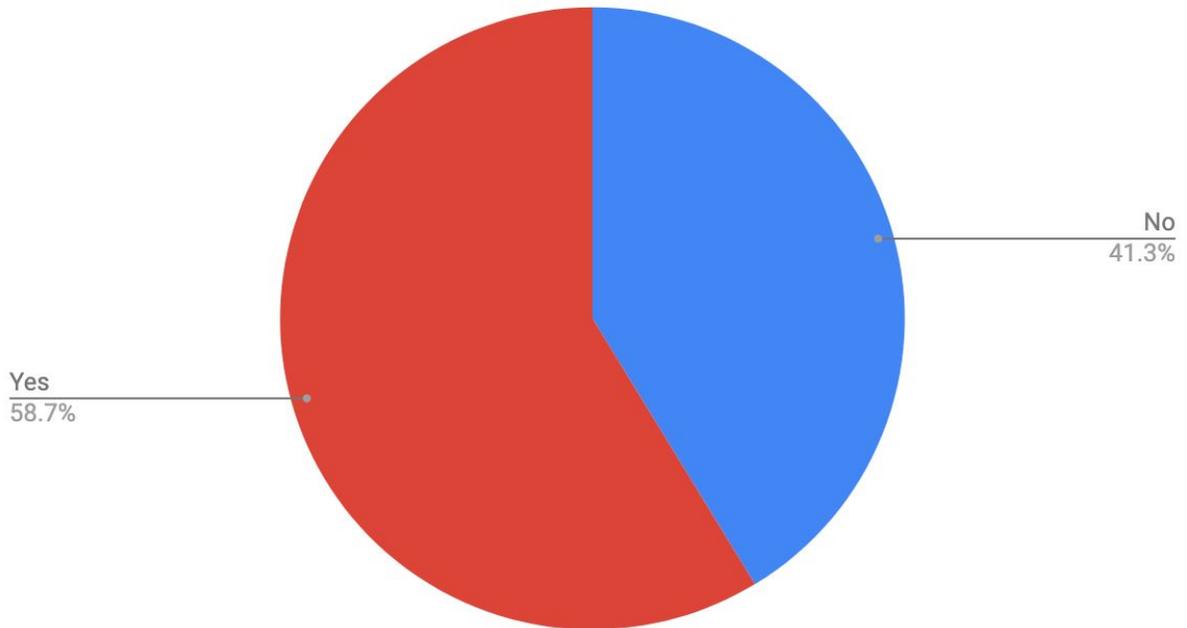


How many tickets do you plan on purchasing? (2019)

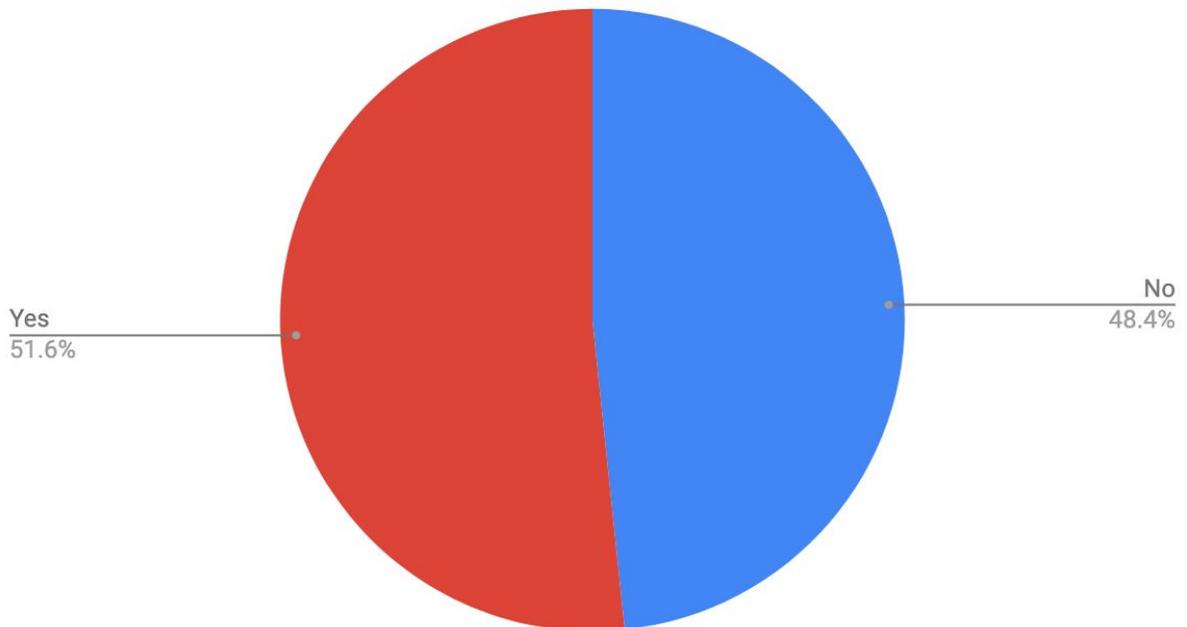


2018

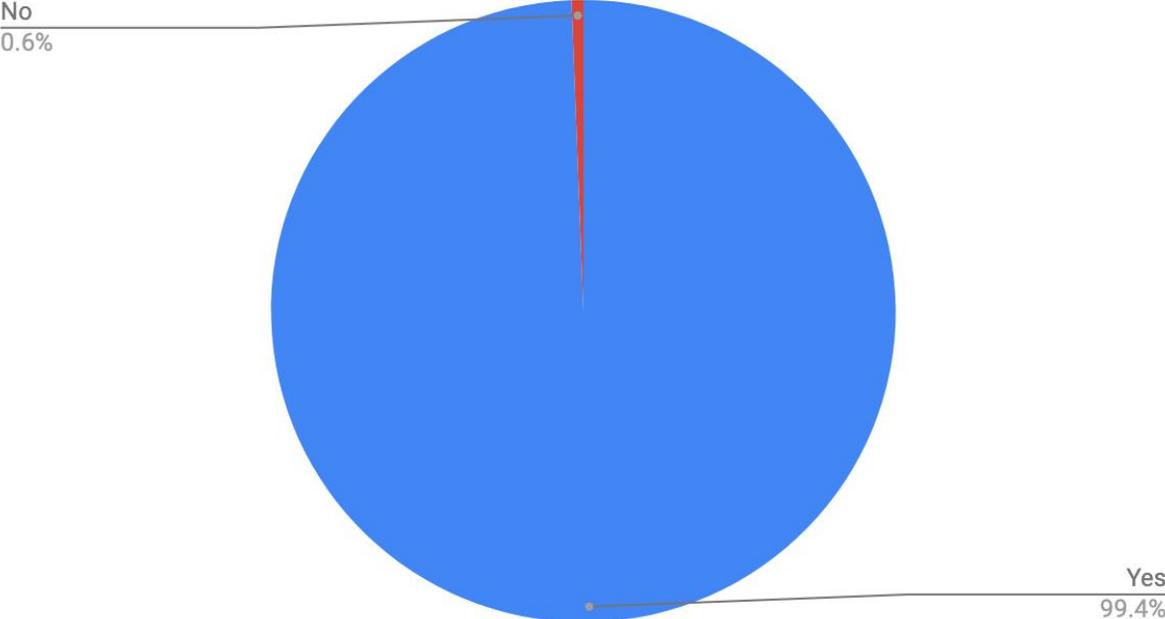
Have you been to BitF in the past? (2018)



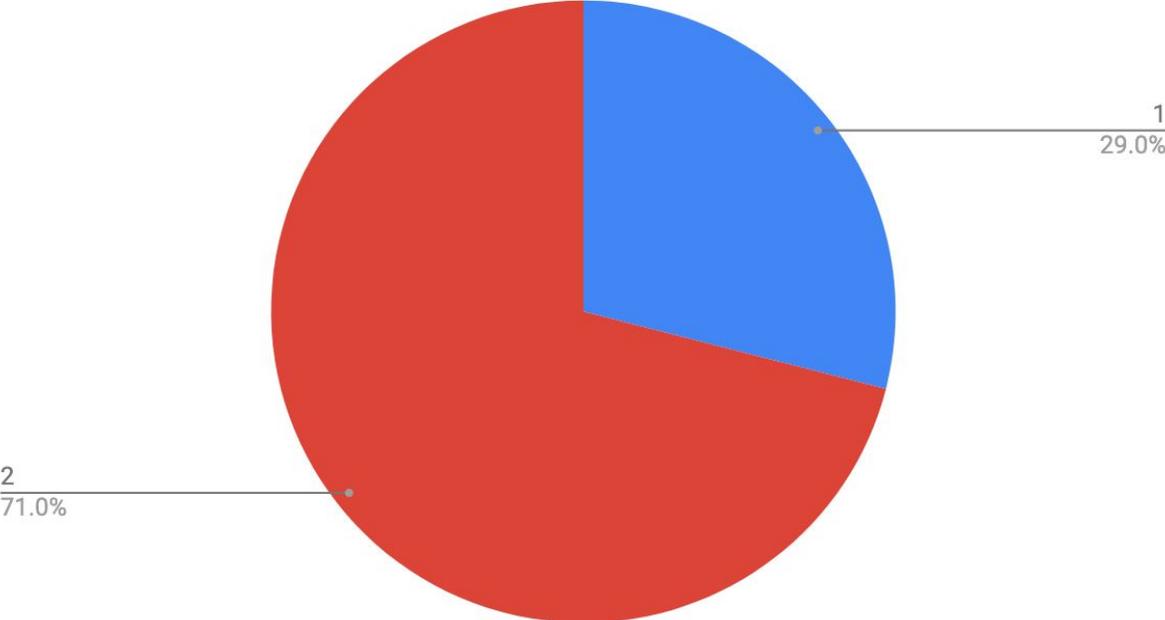
Have you been to Burning Man in the past? (2018)



Have you read or know the 10 Principle of BitF? (2018)

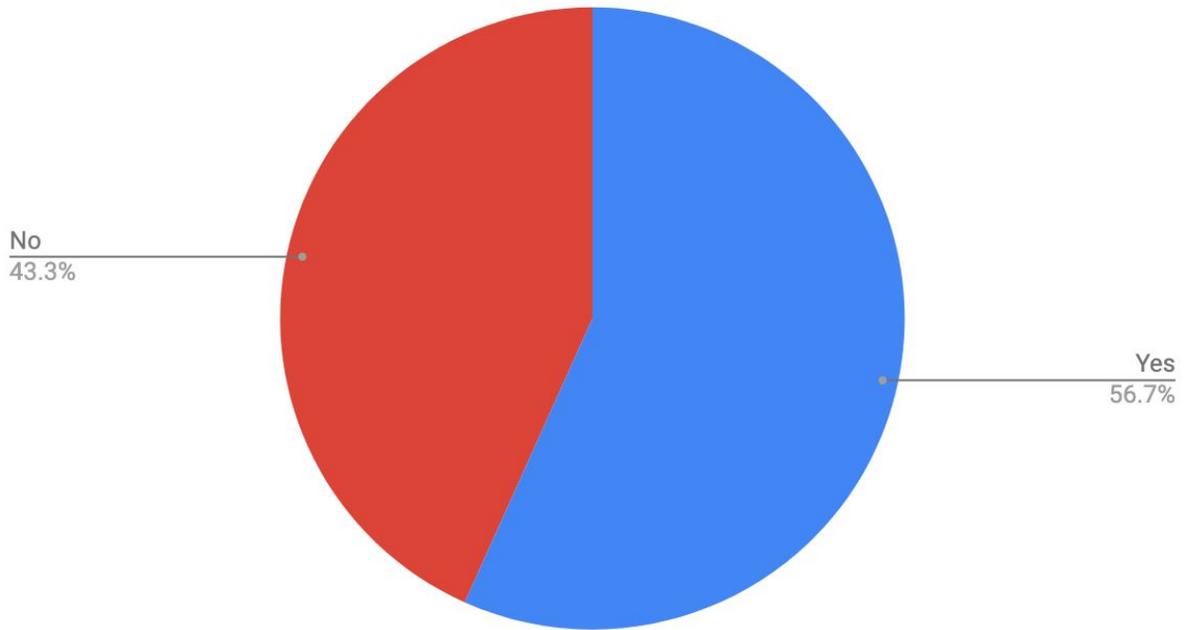


How many tickets do you plan on purchasing? (2018)

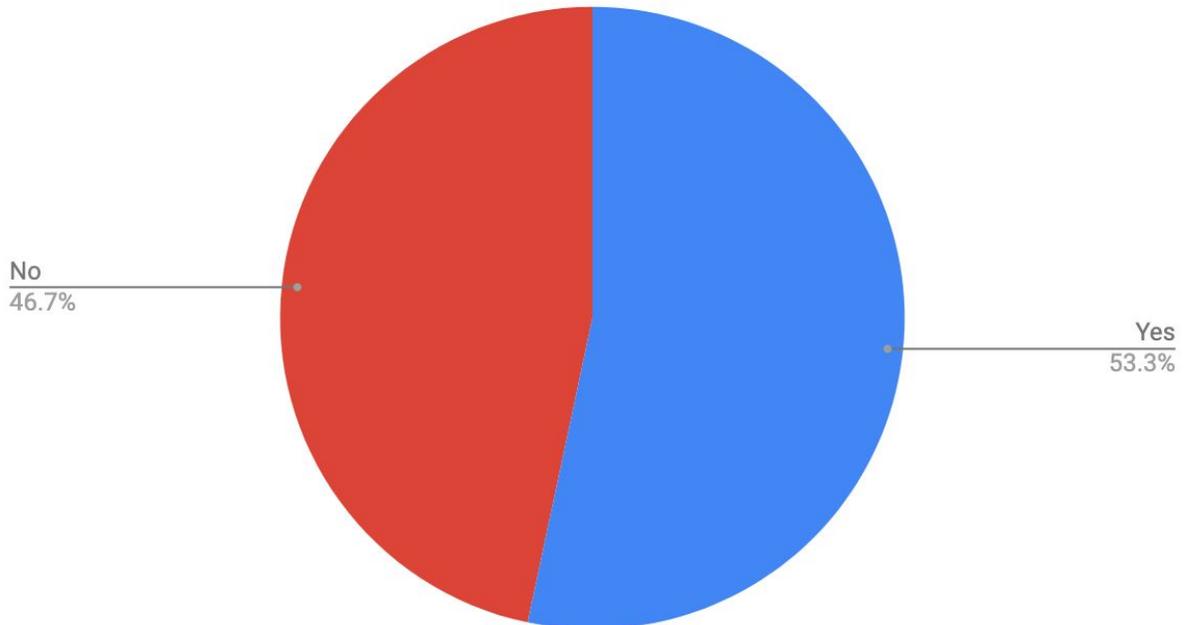


2017

Have you been to BitF before? (2017)

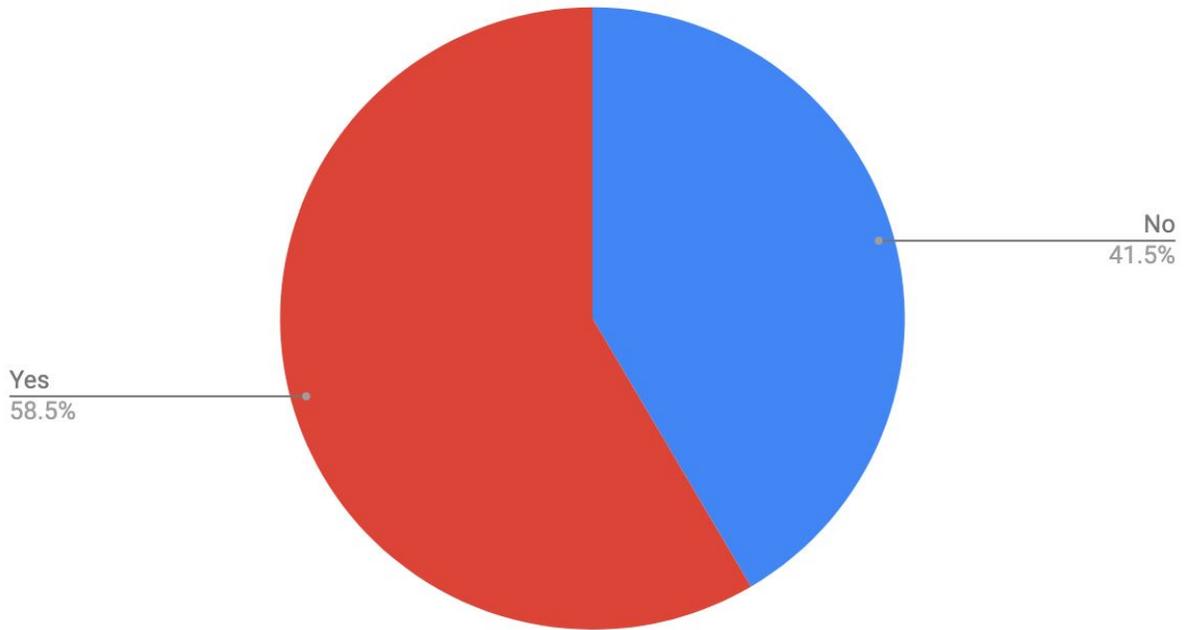


Have you been to Burning Man before? (2017)

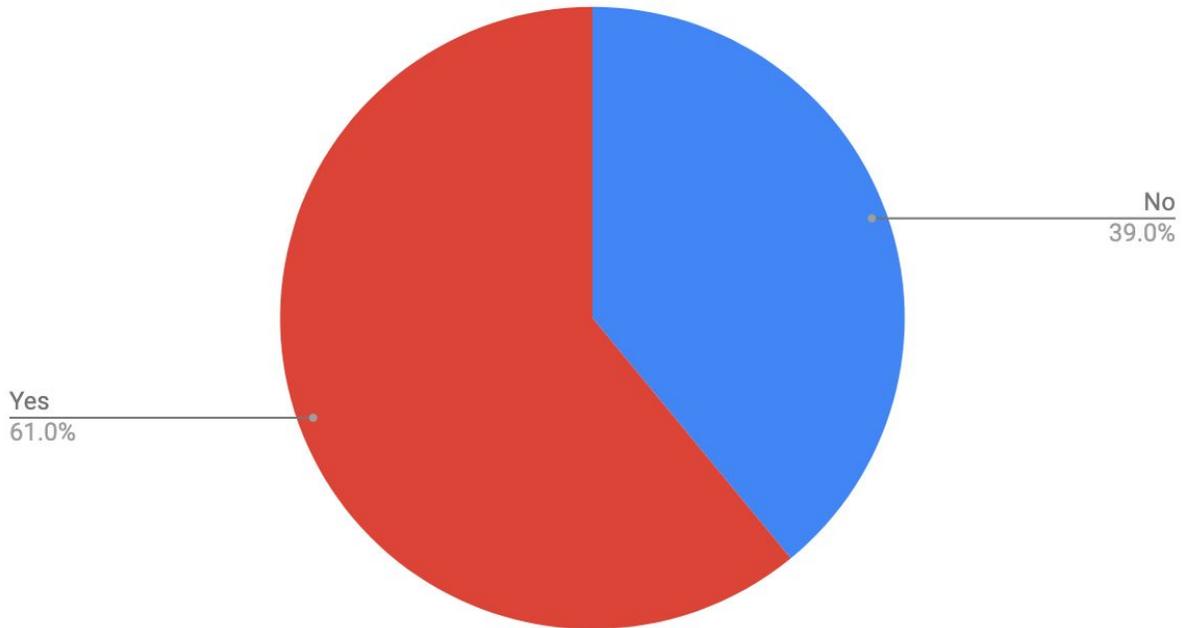


2016

Have you been to Burn in The Forest before? (2016)



Have you been to Burning Man before? (2016)



Summary

There's a lot of change for us ahead this year: there's a new venue with what will hopefully be an amazing experience ahead of us. With the Last Minute Sale ahead there is still one more opportunity to secure a ticket through our system, and the Facebook page also presents an opportunity to connect with other Burners that may not need one or both of the tickets that they have purchased.

Thanks for taking the time to read through this. While it's not possible to guarantee everyone a ticket, participating and volunteering does make it easier to ensure you get one. Dustcovery in the fall and Recharge in the winter are a great way to get the volunteer hours needed to get access to either the Past Volunteer or Directed Ticket sales.