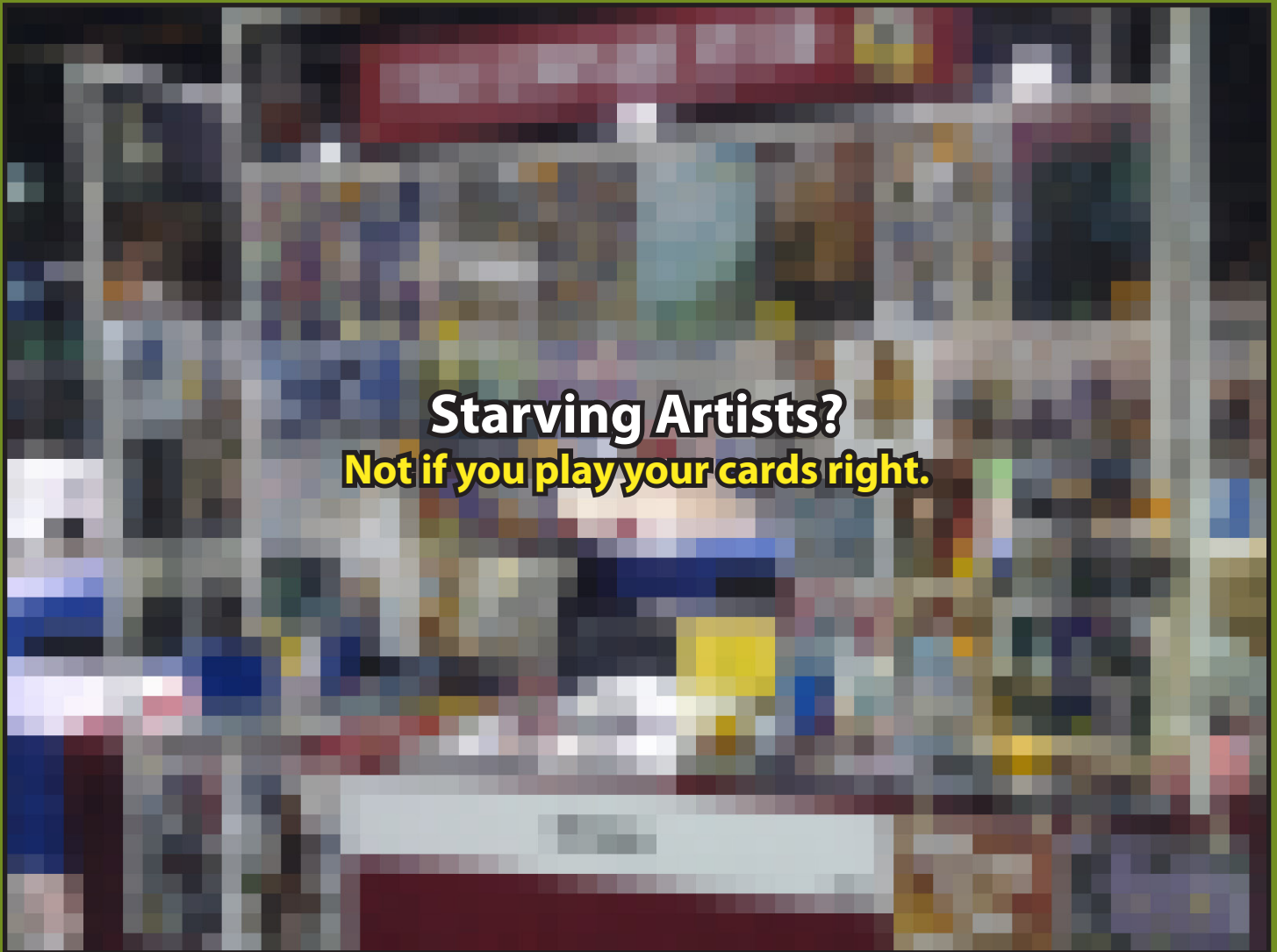


2014

Anime Convention ARTIST VENDOR SURVEY



**Starving Artists?
Not if you play your cards right.**

compiled & presented by
KIRISKA



with thanks to
**ARTIST ALLEY NETWORK INTERNATIONAL
& HOW TO BE A CON ARTIST**

An Introduction

In 2013 and 2014, *The Devastator* and *The Beat* put out a survey for independent comic artists and exhibitors vending at various North American comic conventions. The **published results** had a lot of interesting numbers and statistics, and I really wanted to see similar data for vendors at anime conventions. So I created a survey myself.

To make things more manageable, I only collected data for the 13 largest North American anime conventions. Because of a mistake in attendance-checking though, it turns out that the conventions included in this survey weren't actually the largest anime cons of 2014. Still, all of them are strong contenders for the list in 2015.

Approximate 2014 Attendance Numbers of Surveyed Conventions

Anime Expo -- 86,000

Otakon -- 34,000

Anime Central -- 29,700

Anime North -- 28,500

Fanime Con -- 27,000

A-Kon -- 26,400

Anime Boston -- 25,500

Sakura-Con -- 22,000

Anime Weekend Atlanta -- 20,000

Anime Matsuri -- 19,500

Otakuthon -- 17,700

San Japan -- 14,700

Katsucon -- 13,000

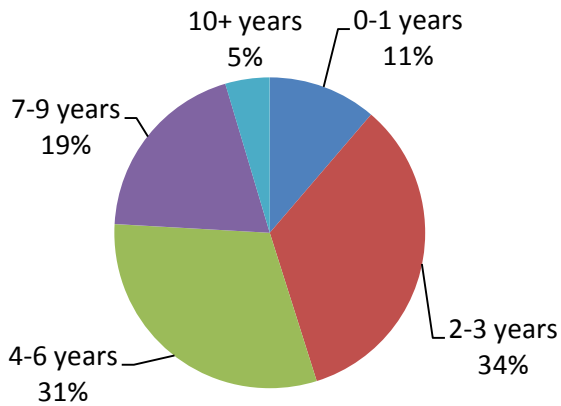
Regrettable exclusions were Youmacon with 16,300 attendees and MomoCon with 14,600.

Responses were collected between January 23rd, 2015, and February 23rd, 2015. The survey was anonymous and geared towards artists and artisans selling their own wares. There were a total of 195 responses from an unknown number of artists. Each artist could respond once per convention, so a single artist might have provided data for 13 conventions, if they attended all of them.

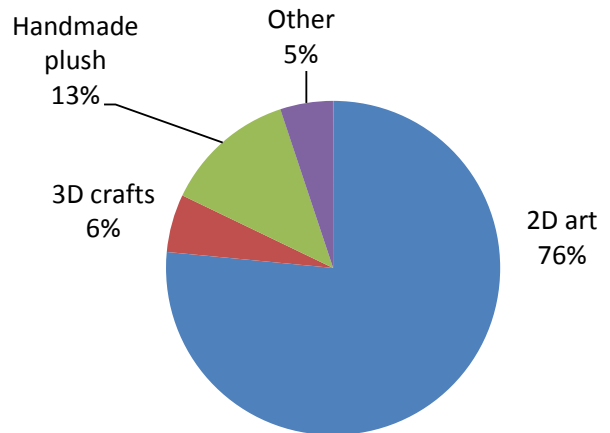
I would've liked to have a larger dataset, but this isn't a bad start. Hopefully these numbers prove useful to both artists and convention organizers, and there will be more respondents for the 2015 survey. :)

Overall Respondent Makeup

Experience of Overall Respondents

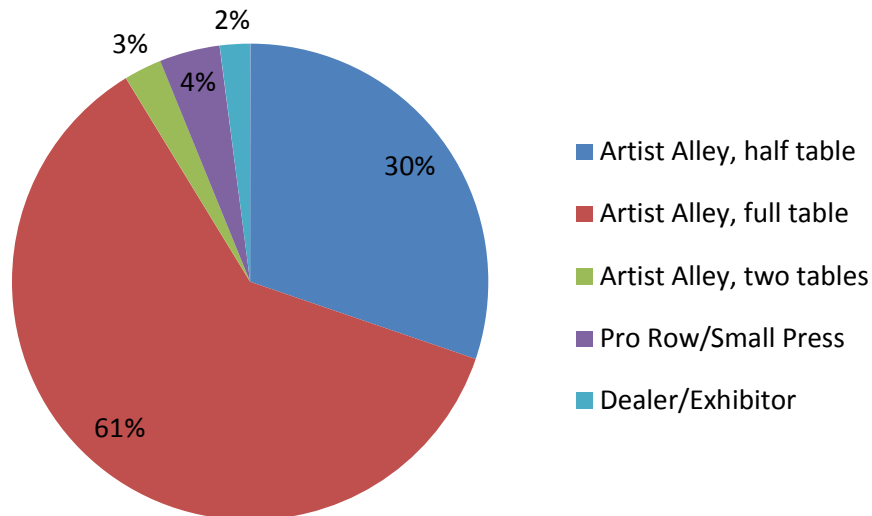


Primary Products Sold



Notes: The "2D art" category of products includes all printed items that feature 2D art, which, along with prints, also includes charms, buttons, zipper bags, pillow cases, etc. The "other" category of products includes apparel, etching, glassware, pottery, zines, comics, and all other products that don't belong elsewhere.

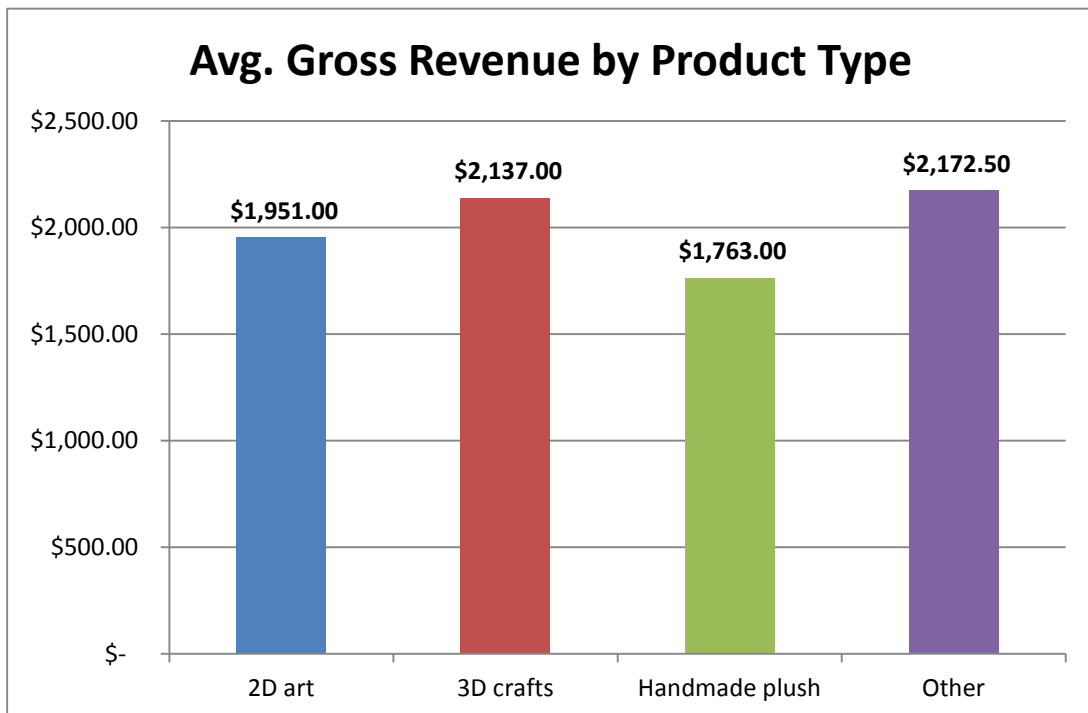
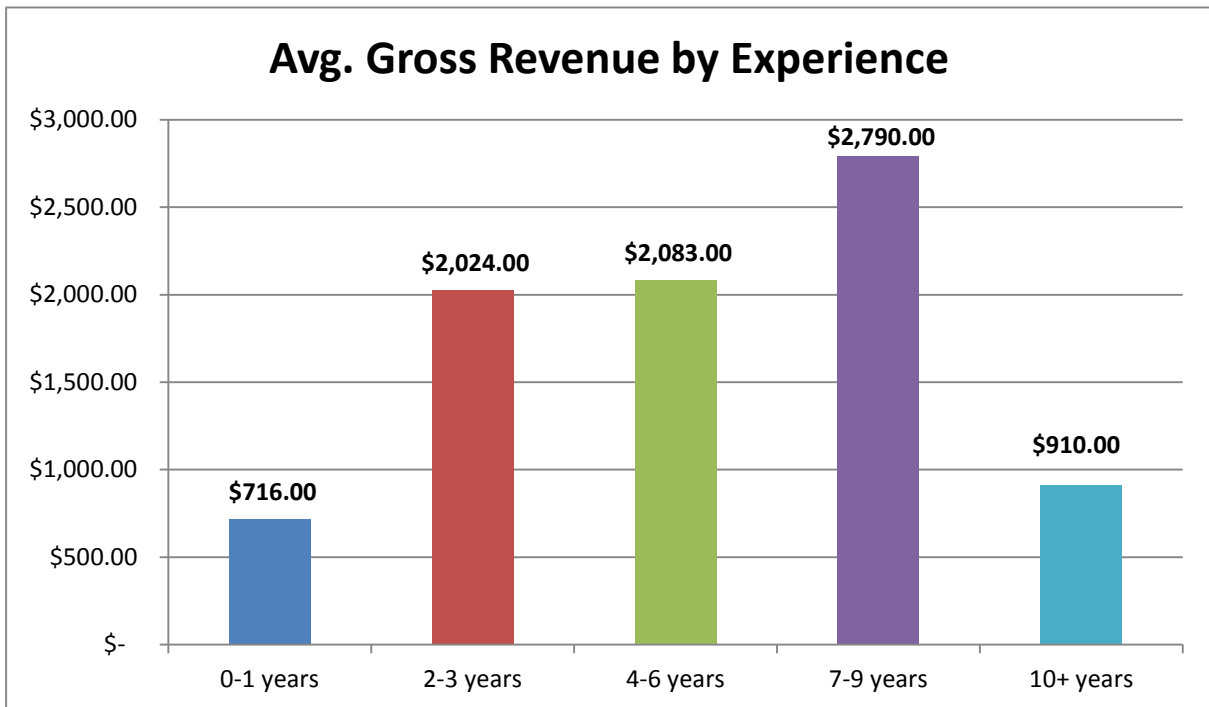
Exhibiting Space of Overall Respondents



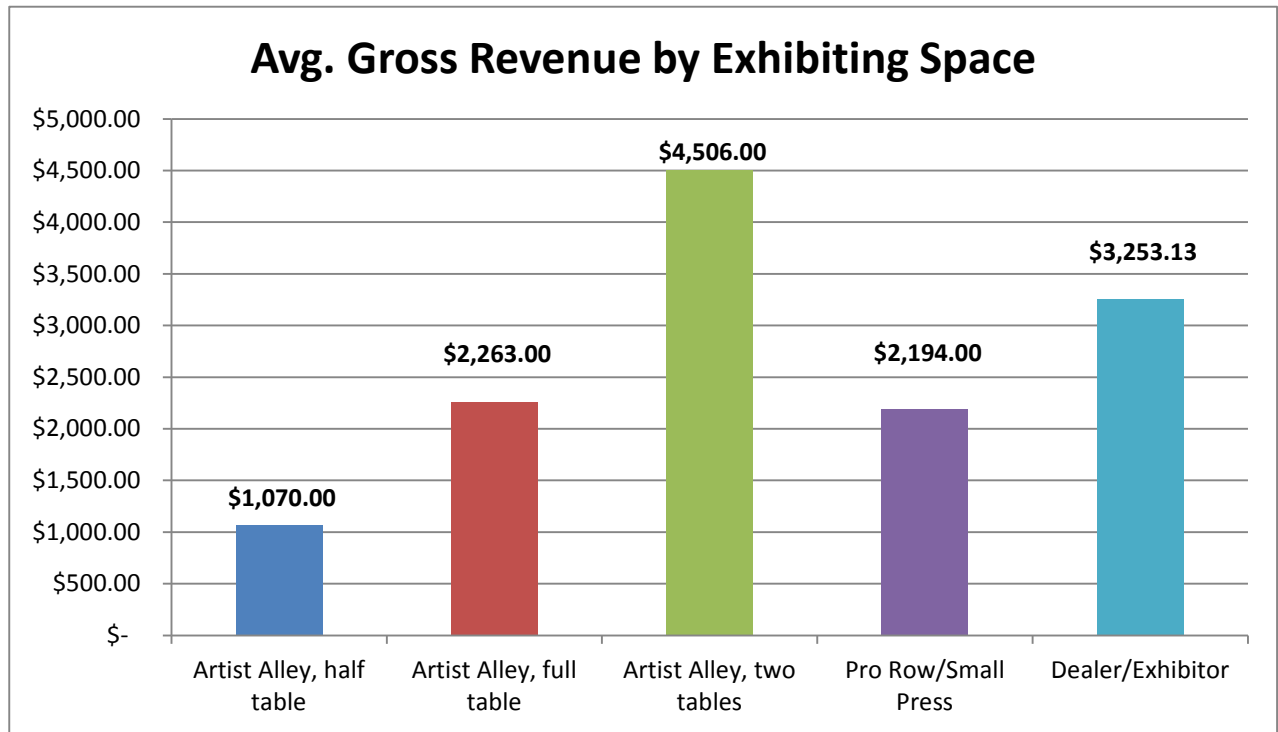
Overall Results

Per Show Average*: \$ 2,160

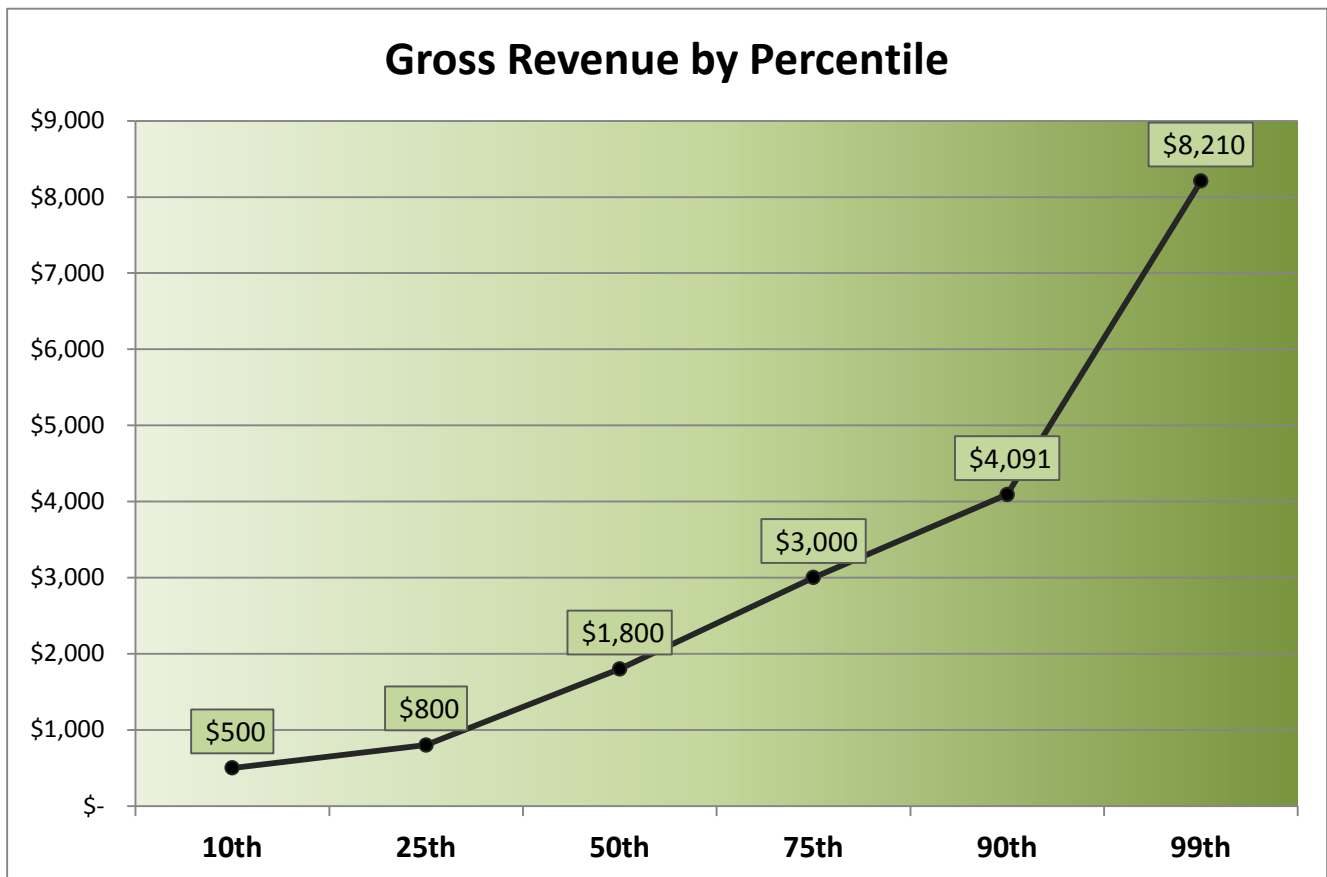
* this number is the average of the mean and the median, to account for outliers. Also remember: only data for 13 large conventions were collected, so this figure is not indicative of smaller shows.



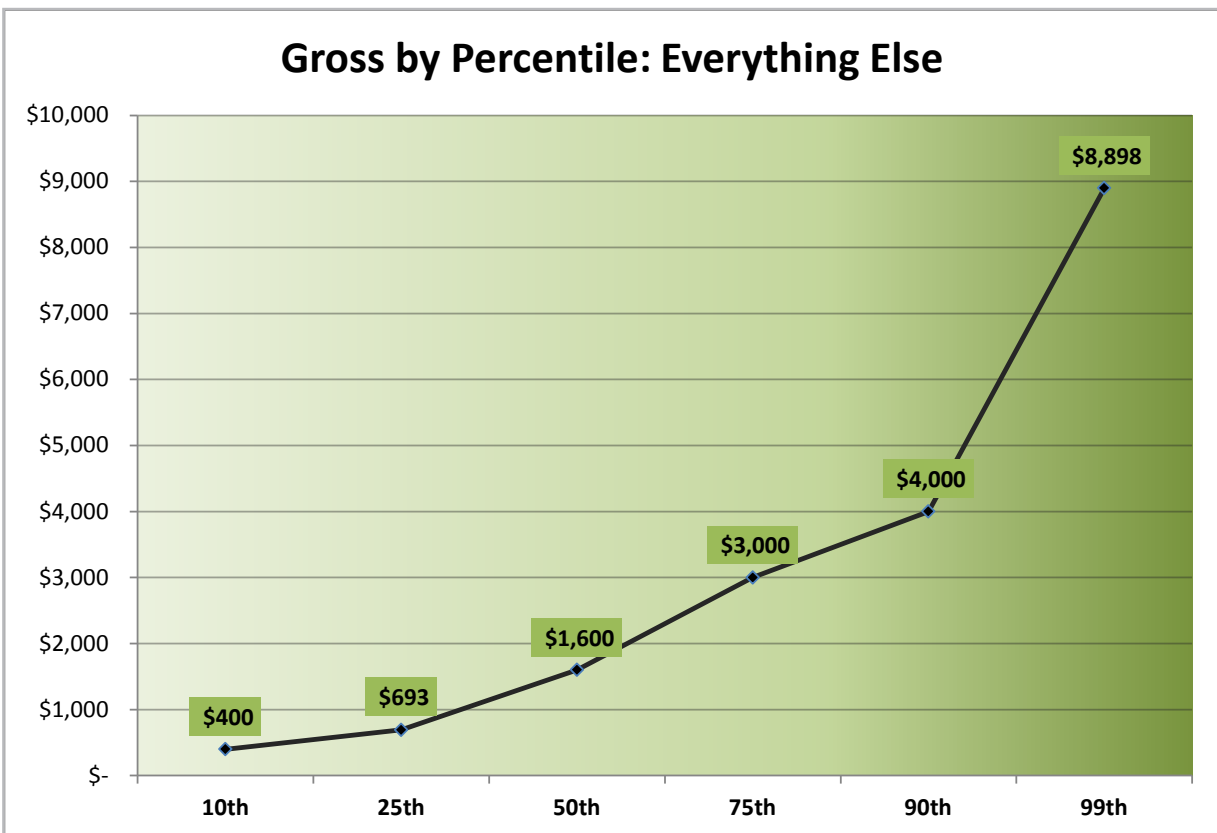
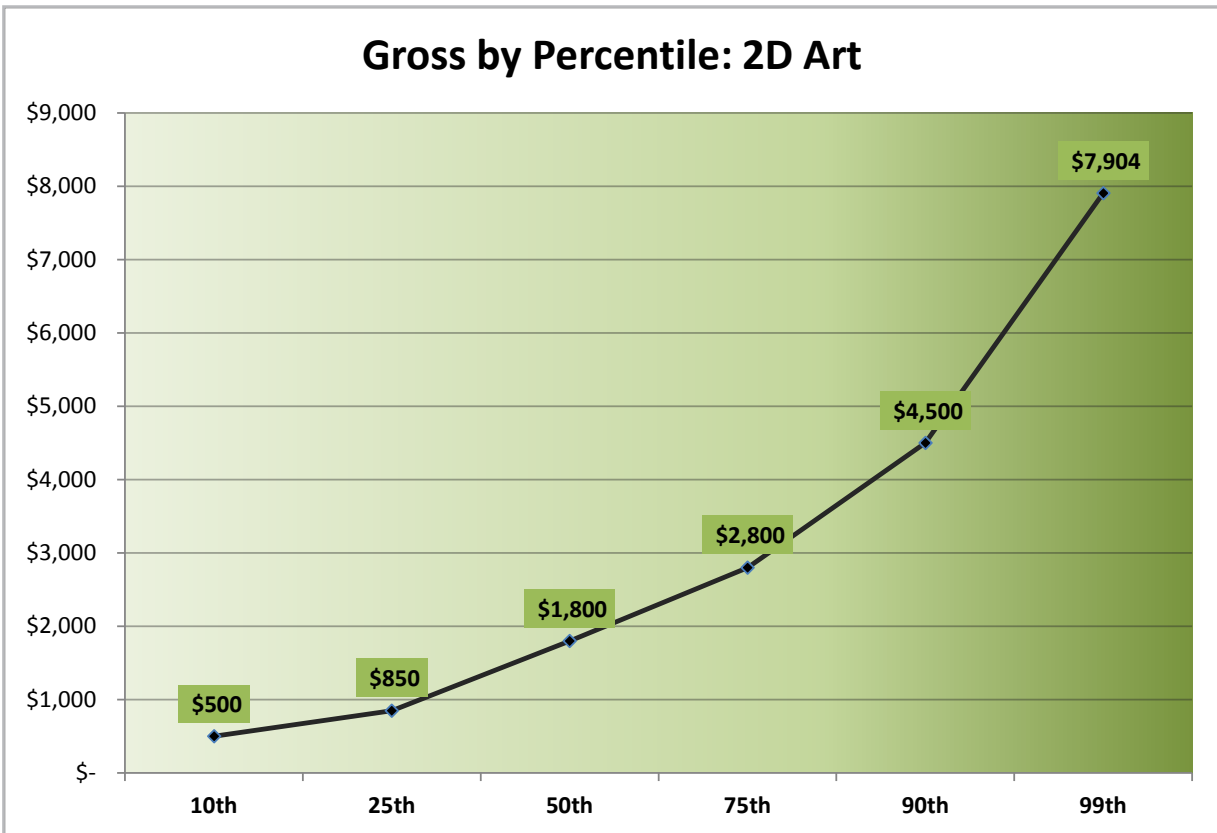
Overall Results



Notes: Pro Row/Small Press and other premium tables are not always larger than standard AA tables, but they are always more expensive and often have special requirements or restrictions.



Overall Results



Overall High Scores

Solo Gross Revenue

\$12,000 @ Anime Boston
\$11,000 @ Anime North
\$8,000 @ Anime Expo
\$7,800 @ Otakon
\$7,200 @ Anime Expo

Avg* Gross Revenue

\$2,570 @ A-Kon
\$2,481 @ Otakon
\$2,435 @ Anime Boston
\$2,039 @ Anime Expo
\$2,011 @ San Japan

* average of mean & median

Overall Rating

Anime Boston -- 4.3
A-Kon -- 4.1
Katsucon -- 4.1
Anime North -- 3.9
Otakuthon -- 3.8

Con Organization

Anime Boston -- 4.5
Otakuthon -- 4.1
Sakura-Con -- 4.1
Katsucon -- 4.0
San Japan -- 4.0

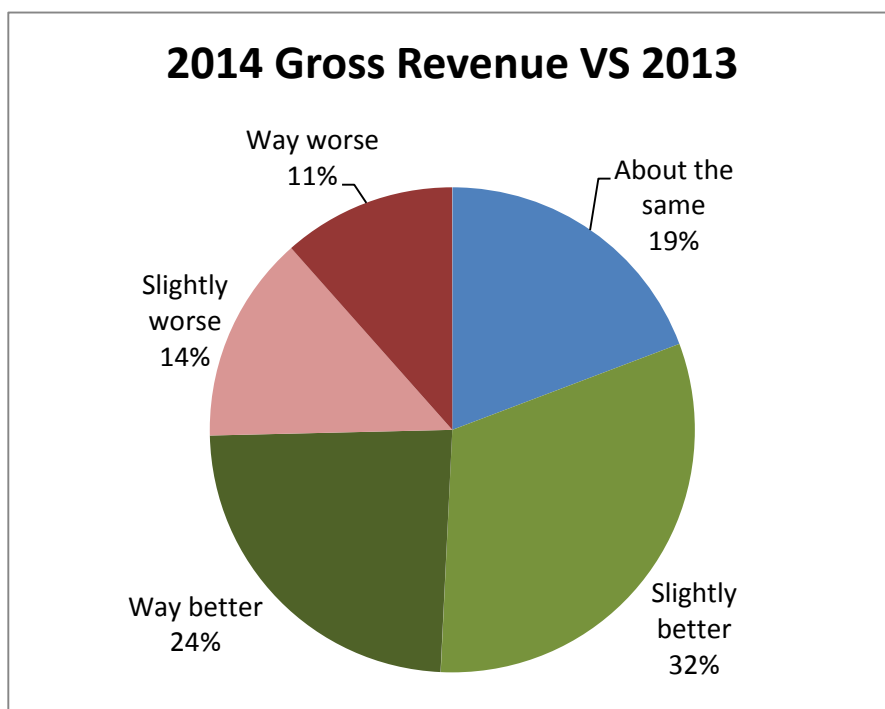
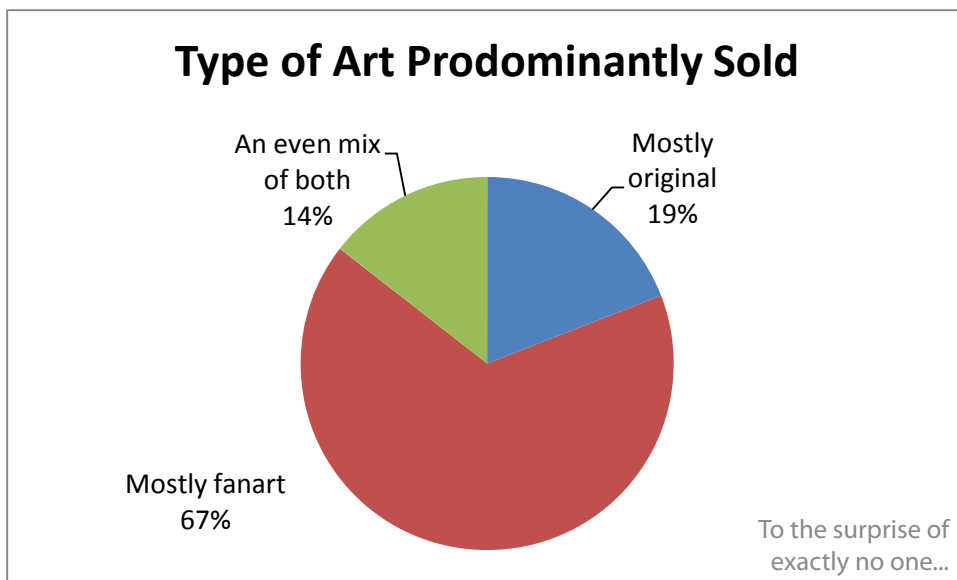
Buying Interest

A-Kon -- 4.2
Katsucon -- 4.2
Anime Boston -- 4.1
Fanime -- 4.0
Anime North -- 3.9

Attendee Engagement

Otakon -- 4.3
A-Kon -- 4.2
Katsucon -- 4.2
Anime Boston -- 4.1
Anime North -- 4.1

Other Overall Data



Quick thoughts: It's interesting to see the huge dropoff in average revenue for vendors with 10+ years experience -- this was also the case in the comic con survey. Of course, the 10+ bracket also had the smallest number of respondents, so outliers weighed more heavily, but I do think some older vendors haven't adapted to the huge changes in the AA scene the last few years and gross less as a result.

I'm not surprised to see that premium tables don't affect sales much, though artists will continue to go for them if it means skipping out on increasingly stressful first come, first serve sign-ups.

All surveyed conventions follow with solo reports except Anime Matsuri, which did not receive enough responses (≥ 10) for a meaningful evaluation.

Anime Expo 2014

21 total responses

Gross Revenue

High: \$8,000

Low: \$50

Mean: \$ 2,477

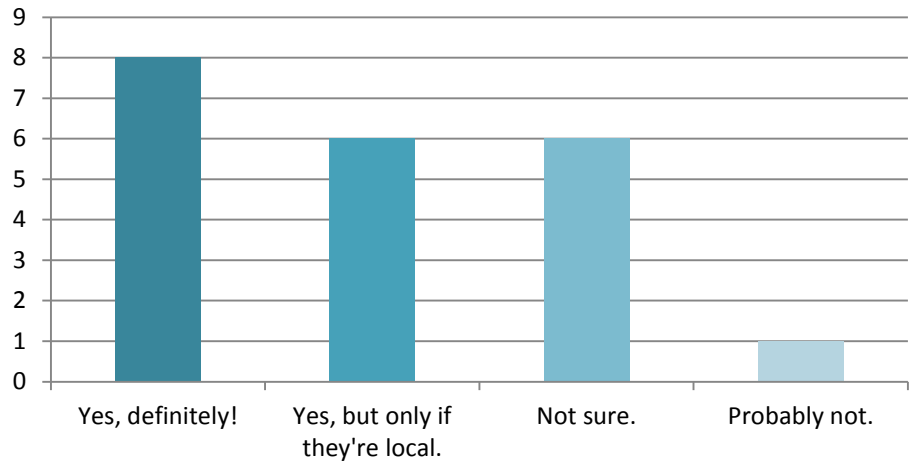
Median: \$1,600

Average: \$2,039

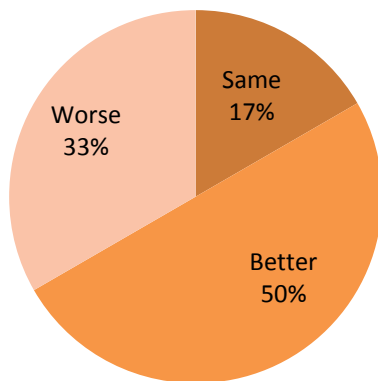
Artist Alley table: \$200

Badge: \$50-75

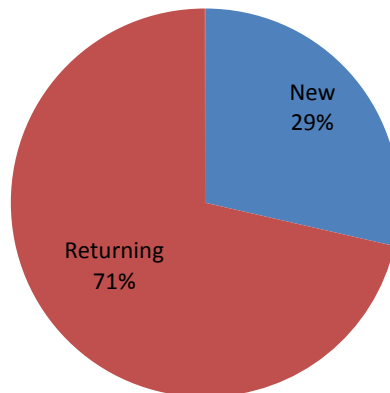
Would you recommend this con?



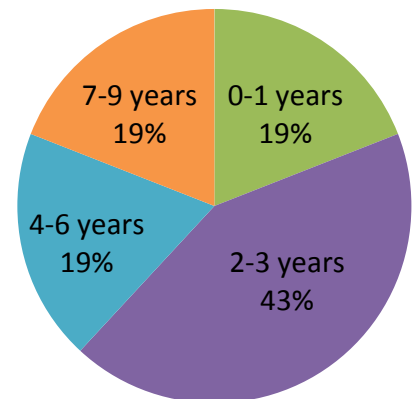
2014 VS 2013 Sales



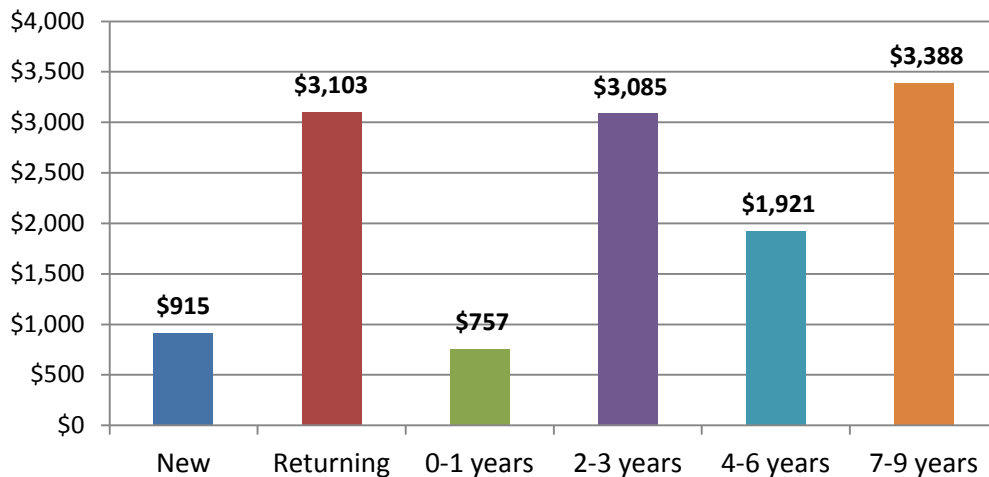
Respondent Makeup



Respondent EXP



Avg Gross by Con & Overall Experience



Ratings

Overall

3.5

Organization: 3.3
 Buying Interest: 3.8
 Engagement: 3.3

Otakon 2014

23 total responses

Gross Revenue

High: \$7,800

Low: \$120

Mean: \$ 2,462

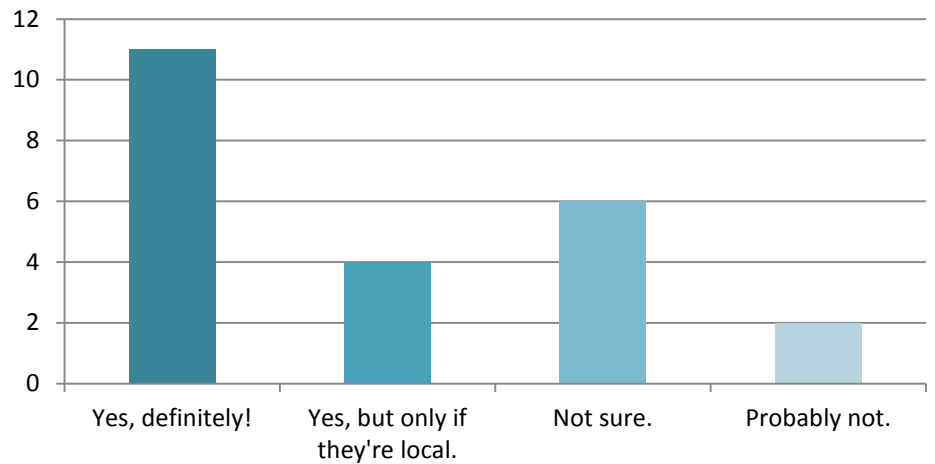
Median: \$2,500

Average: \$2,481

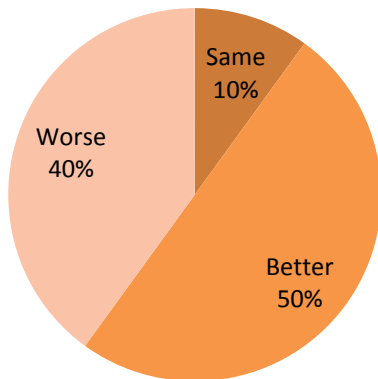
Artist Alley table: \$200

Badge: \$35-75

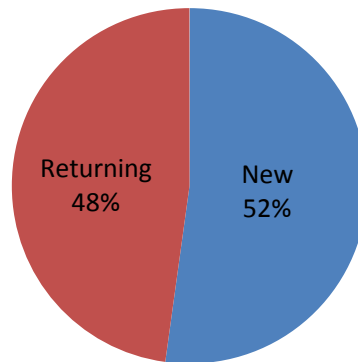
Would you recommend this con?



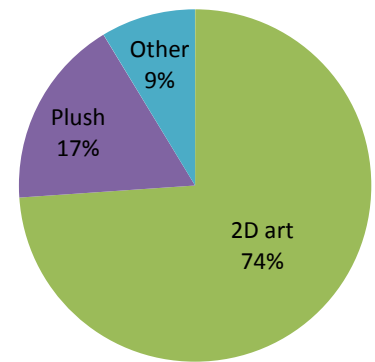
2014 VS 2013 Sales



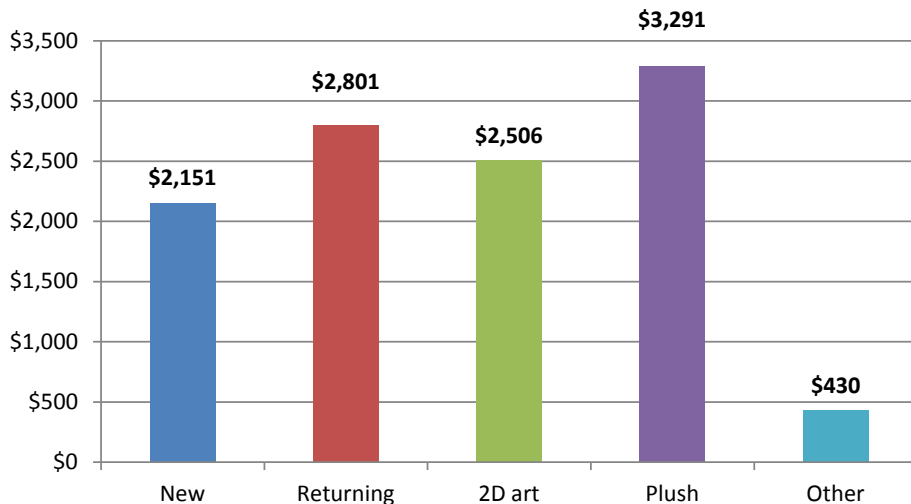
Respondent Makeup



Respondent Products



Avg Gross by Experience & Product



Ratings

Overall

3.8

Organization: 3.1
 Buying Interest: 3.9
 Engagement: 4.3

Anime Central 2014

12 total responses

Gross Revenue

High: \$2,650

Low: \$700

Mean: \$ 1,670

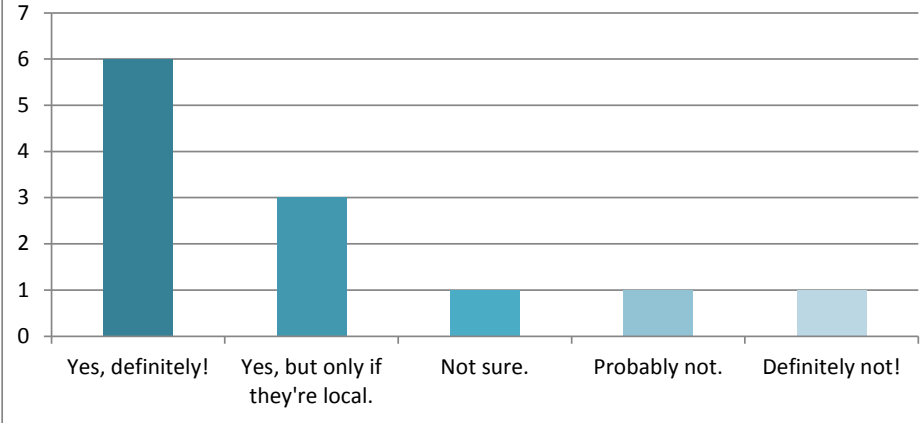
Median: \$1,700

Average: \$1,685

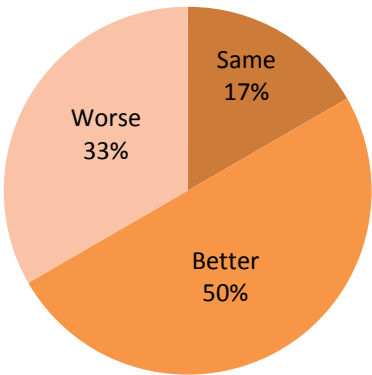
Artist Alley table: \$65

Badge: \$48-55

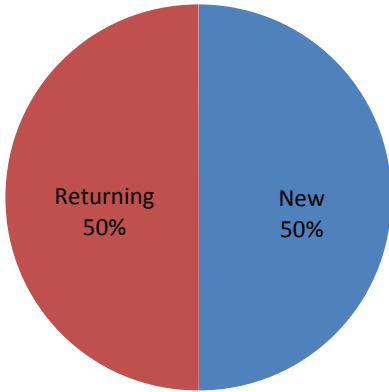
Would you recommend this con?



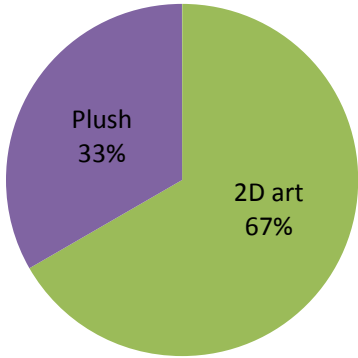
2014 VS 2013 Sales



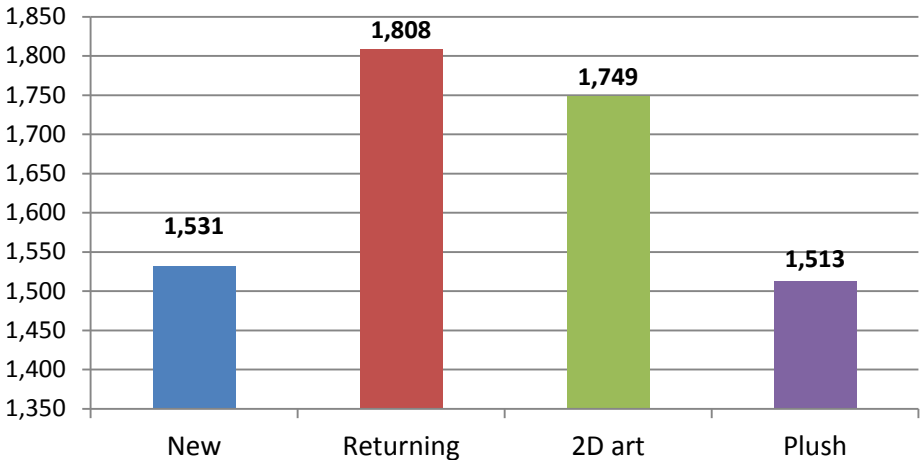
Respondent Makeup



Respondent Products



Avg Gross by Experience & Product



Ratings

Overall

3.7

Organization: 3.9
 Buying Interest: 3.3
 Engagement: 3.6

Anime North 2014

17 total responses

Gross Revenue

High: \$11,000

Low: \$101

Mean: \$ 1,967

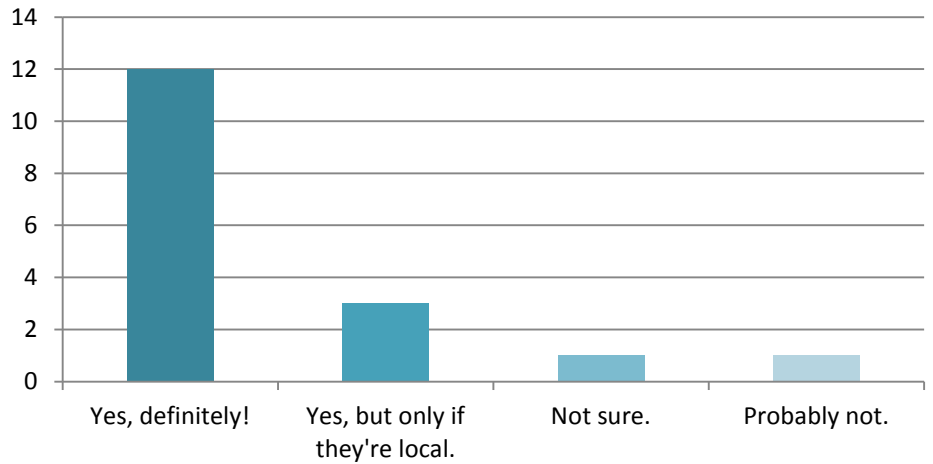
Median: \$1,800

Average: \$1,883

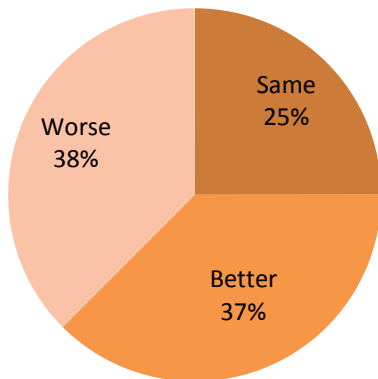
Artist Alley table: \$145 CAD

Badge: 1x included

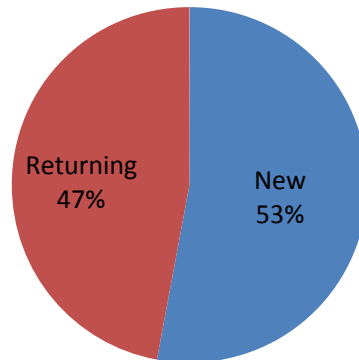
Would you recommend this con?



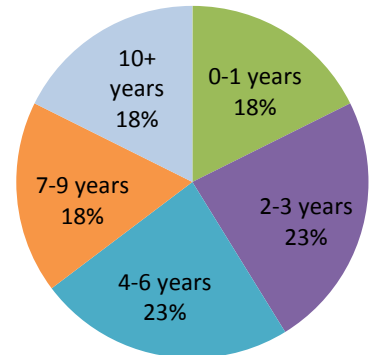
2014 VS 2013 Sales



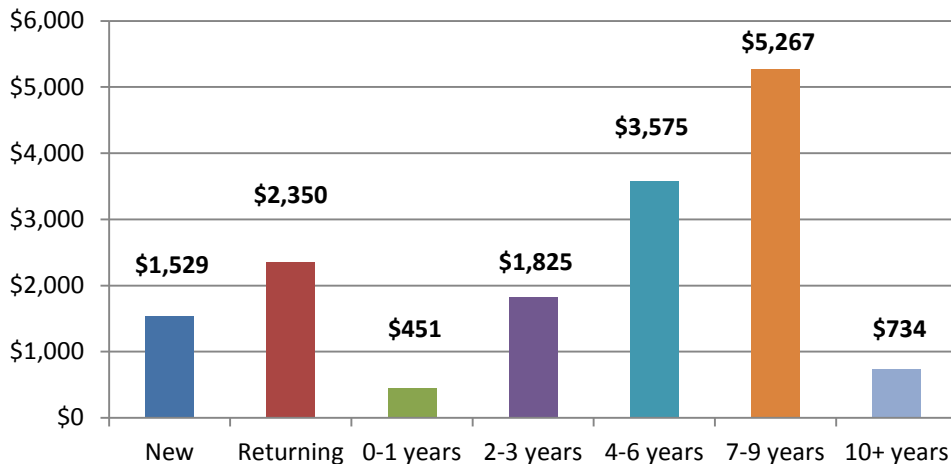
Respondent Makeup



Respondent EXP



Avg Gross by Con & Overall Experience



Ratings

Overall

3.9

Organization: 3.6
 Buying Interest: 3.9
 Engagement: 4.1

FanimeCon 2014

22 total responses

Gross Revenue

High: \$6,500

Low: \$200

Mean: \$1,287

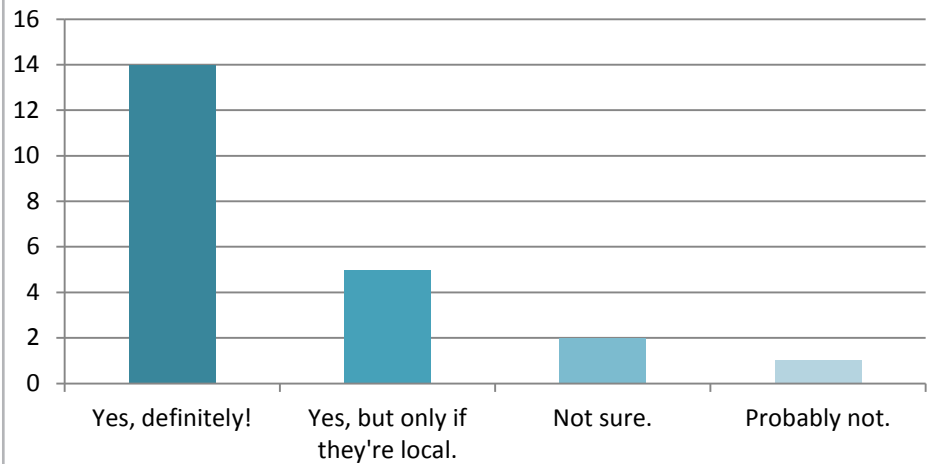
Median: \$1,700

Average: \$1,692

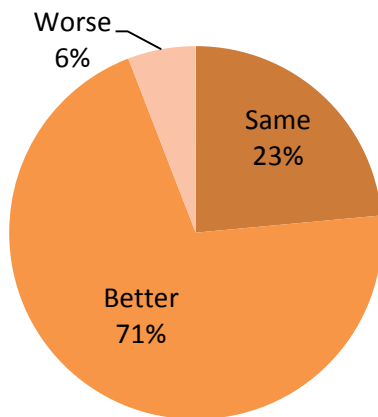
Artist Alley table: \$100

Badge: \$55-65

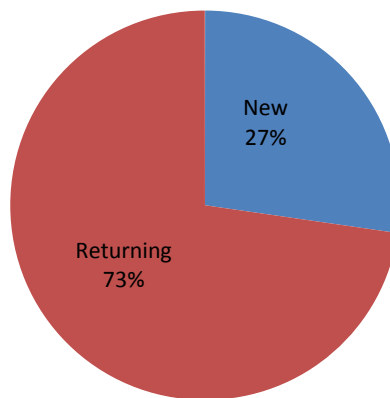
Would you recommend this con?



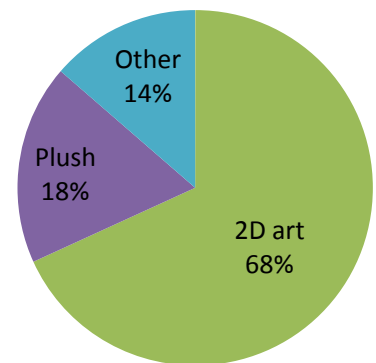
2014 VS 2013 Sales



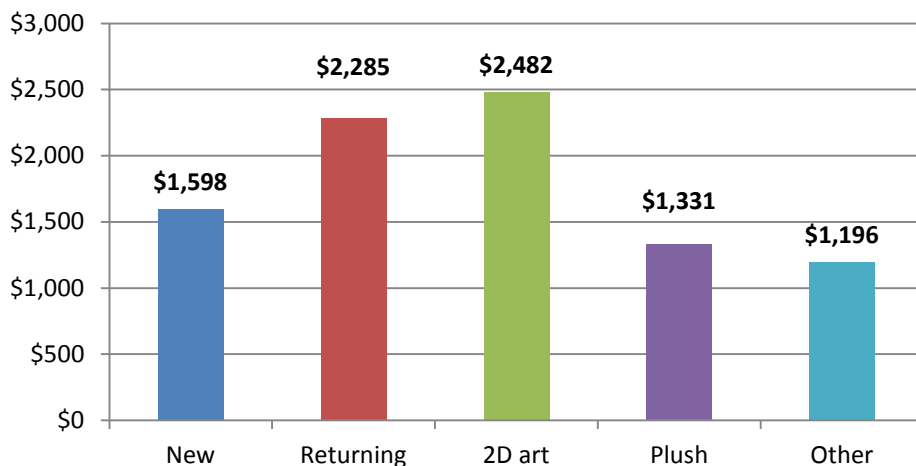
Respondent Makeup



Respondent Products



Avg Gross by Experience & Product



Ratings

Overall

3.6

Organization: 2.8
 Buying Interest: 4.0
 Engagement: 3.8

A-Kon 2014

15 total responses

Gross Revenue

High: \$5,000

Low: \$655

Mean: \$ 2,741

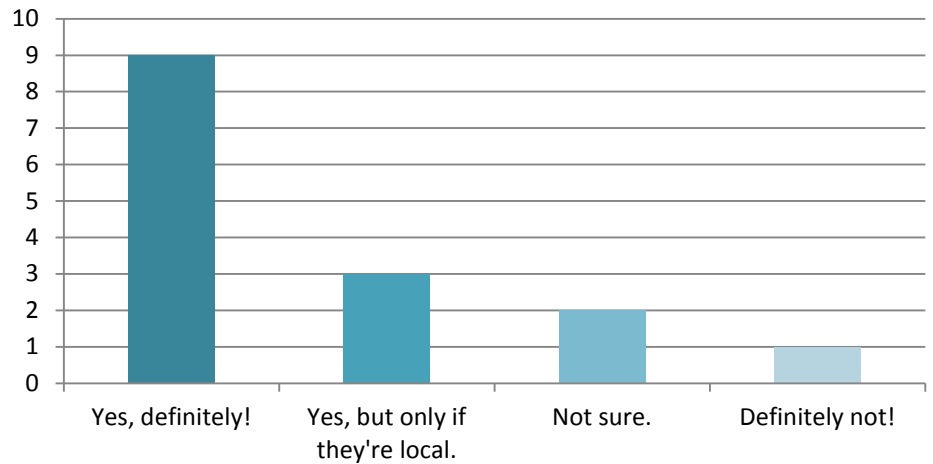
Median: \$2,400

Average: \$2,570

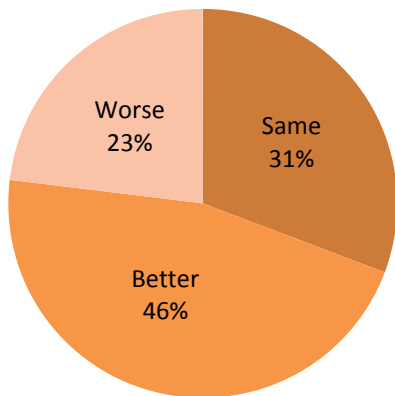
Artist Alley table: \$150

Badge: 1x included

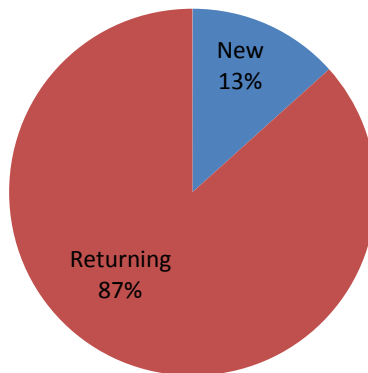
Would you recommend this con?



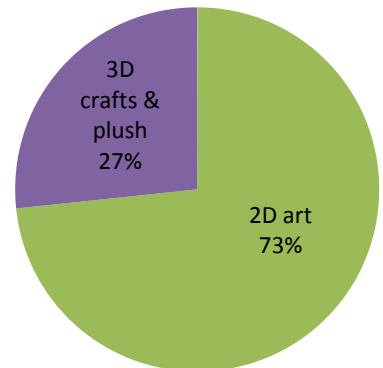
2014 VS 2013 Sales



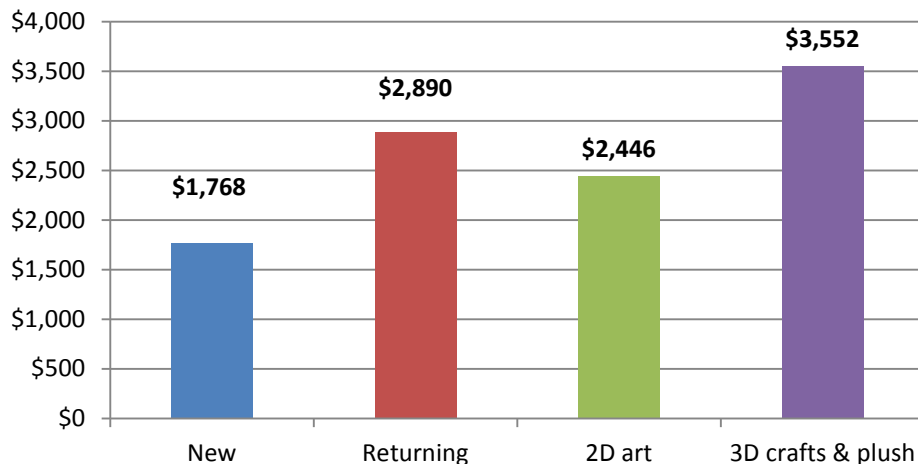
Respondent Makeup



Respondent Products



Avg Gross by Experience & Product



Ratings

Overall

4.1

Organization: 3.9
 Buying Interest: 4.2
 Engagement: 4.2

Anime Boston 2014

19 total responses

Gross Revenue

High: \$12,000

Low: \$300

Mean: \$2,308

Median: \$1,933

Average: \$2,121

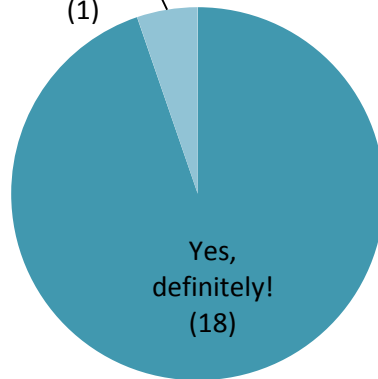
Artist Alley table: \$120

Pro Row: \$300

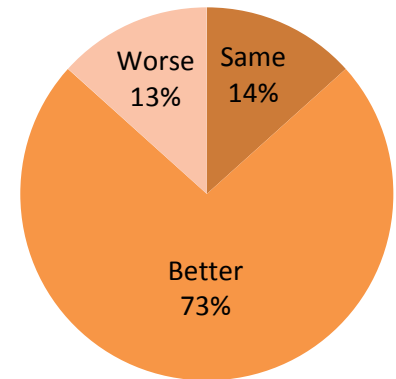
Badge: \$50-60

Recommend?

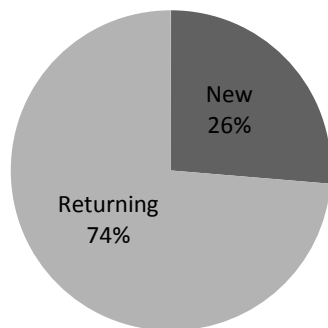
Not sure.
(1)



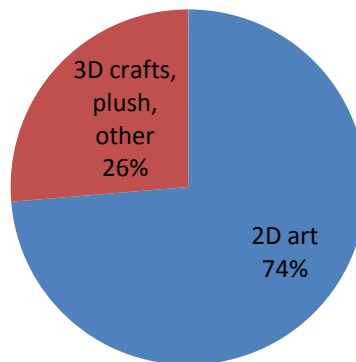
2014 VS 2013 Sales



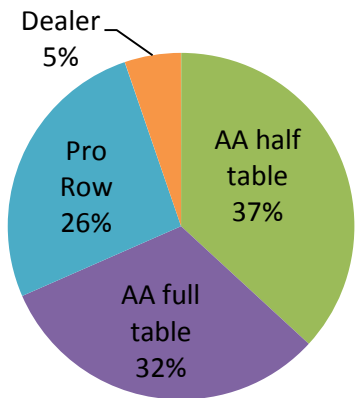
Respondent Makeup



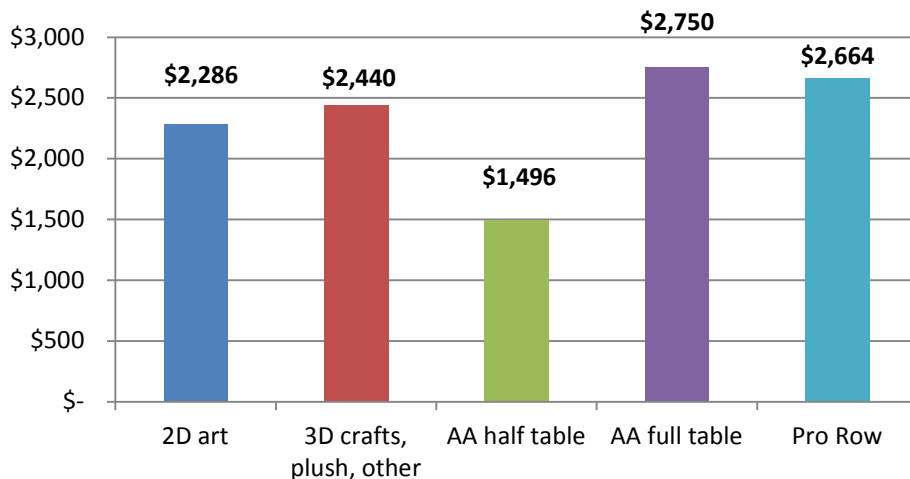
Respondent Products



Vending Space



Avg Gross by Product & Space



Ratings

Overall

4.3

Organization: 4.5
Buying Interest: 4.1
Engagement: 4.1

Note: Dealer not included in graph since they were the outlier. ;)

Sakura-Con 2014

11 total responses

Gross Revenue

High: \$5,000

Low: \$200

Mean: \$1,800

Median: \$1,600

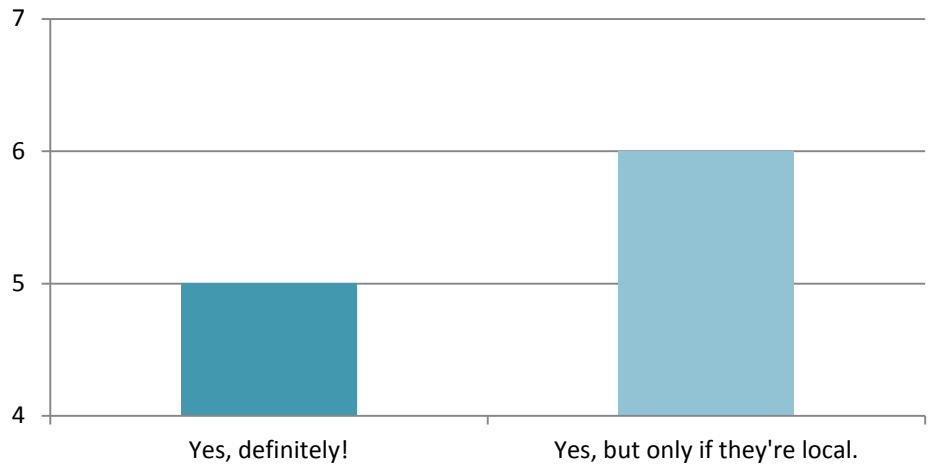
Average: \$1,700

Artist Alley table: \$100

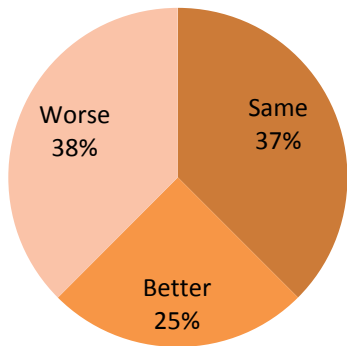
Small Press: \$350

Badge: \$35-55

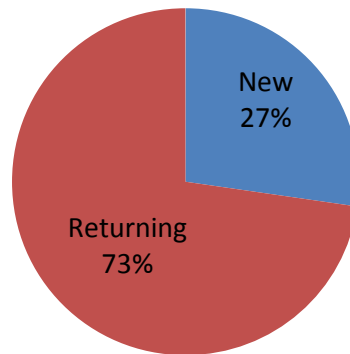
Would you recommend this con?



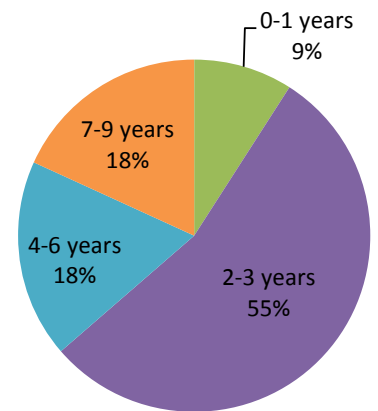
2014 VS 2013 Sales



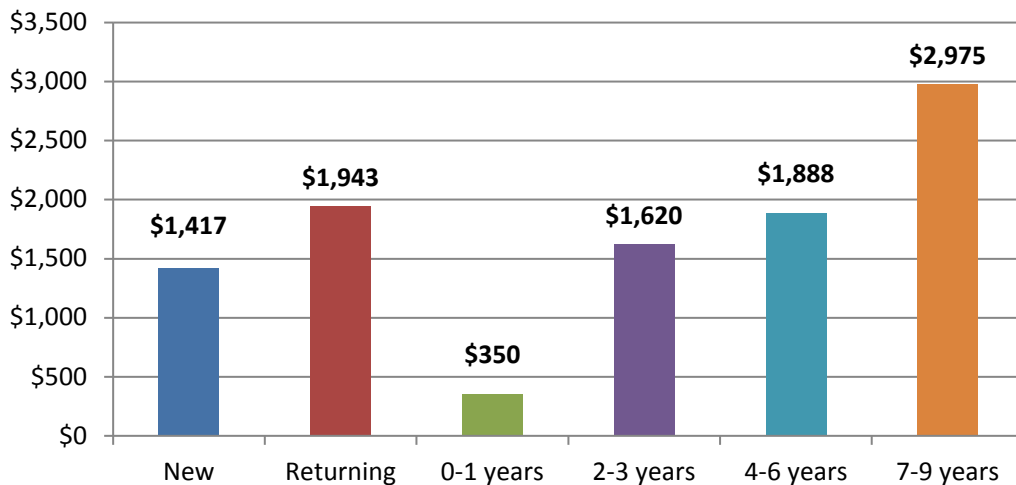
Respondent Makeup



Respondent EXP



Avg Gross by Con & Overall Experience



Ratings

Overall

3.8

Organization: 4.1
 Buying Interest: 3.4
 Engagement: 3.9

Anime Weekend Atlanta 2014

14 total responses

Gross Revenue

High: \$3,000

Low: \$550

Mean: \$1,450

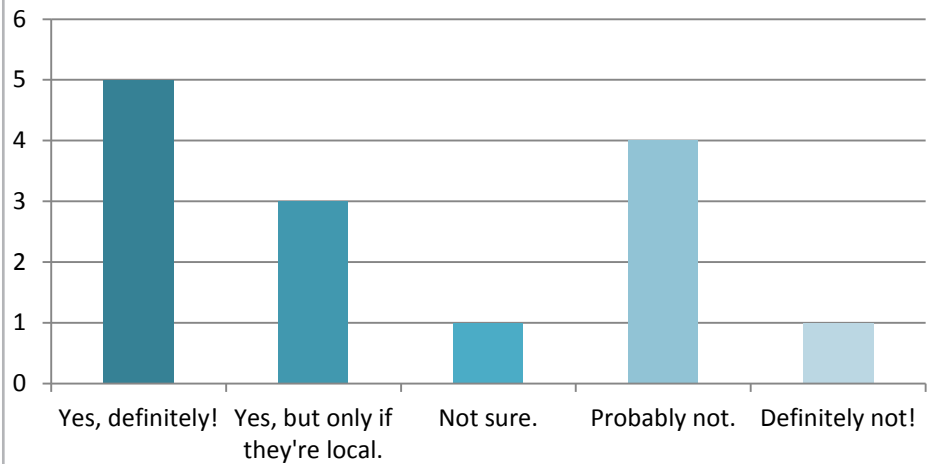
Median: \$1,128

Average: \$1,289

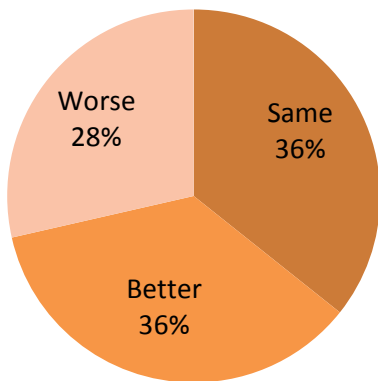
Artist Alley table: \$100

Badge: \$45-65

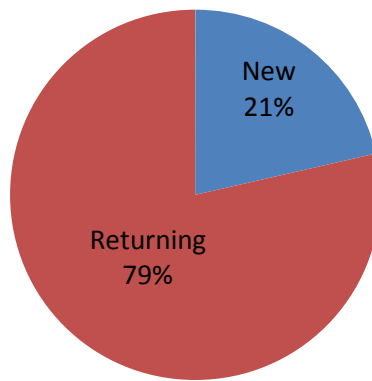
Would you recommend this con?



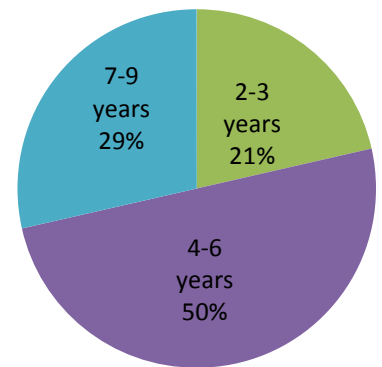
2014 VS 2013 Sales



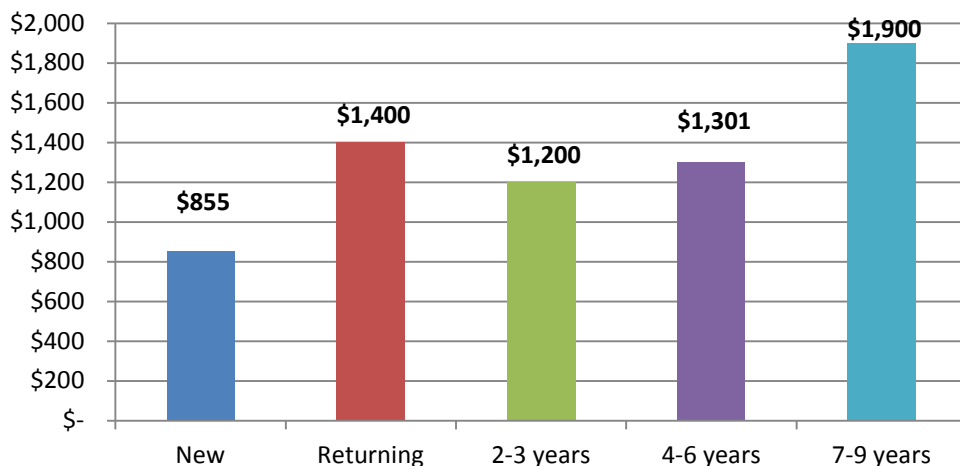
Respondent Makeup



Respondent EXP



Avg Gross by Con & Overall Experience



Ratings

Overall

3.4

Organization: 3.9
 Buying Interest: 2.8
 Engagement: 3.3

Otakuthon 2014

10 total responses

Gross Revenue

High: \$3,600

Low: \$180

Mean: \$1,273

Median: \$1,100

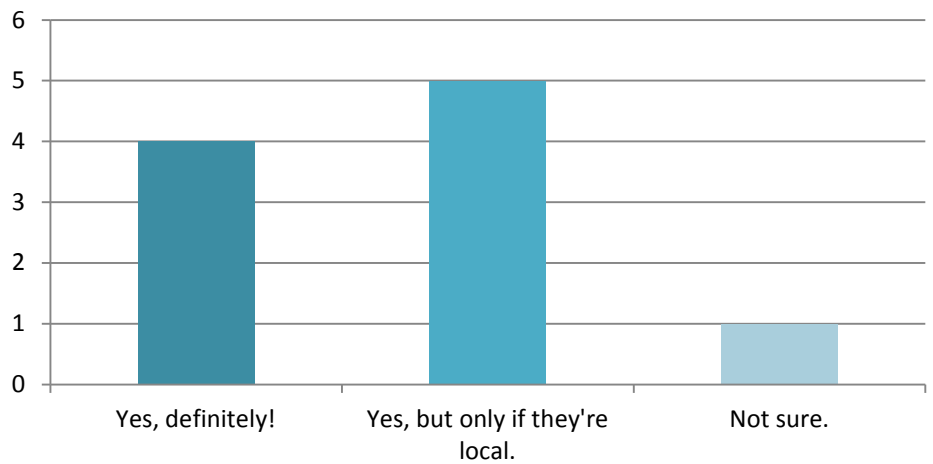
Average: \$1,187

Artist Alley table: \$130 CAD

Premium table: \$200 CAD

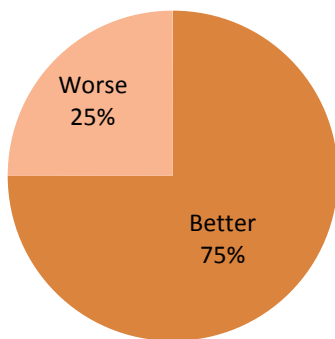
Badge: 1x included

Would you recommend this con?

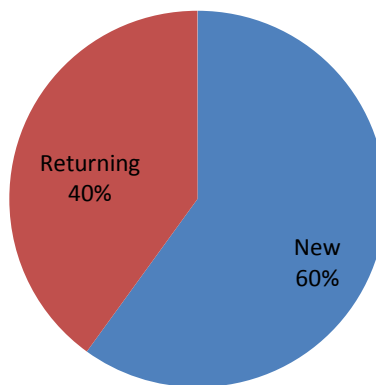


Note: Highly recommended vendors be capable of speaking basic French.

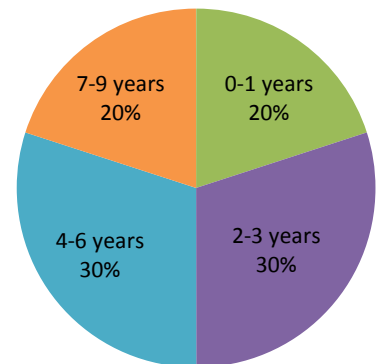
2014 VS 2013 Sales



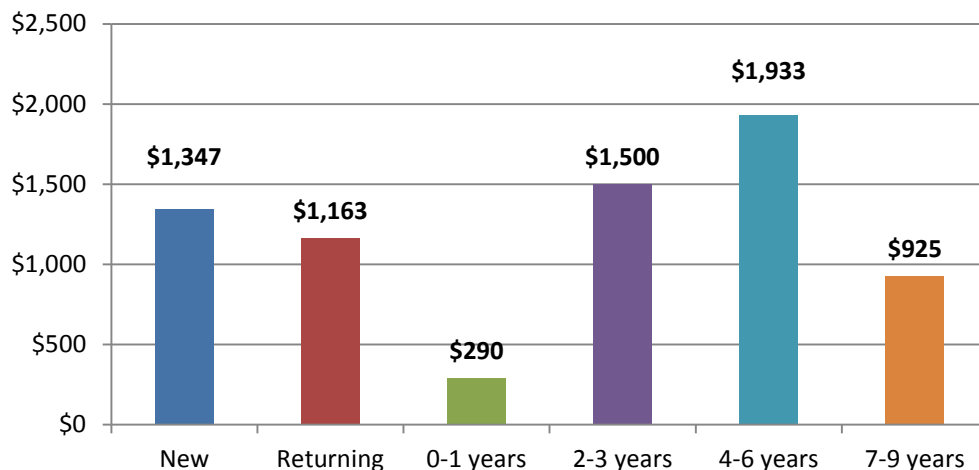
Respondent Makeup



Respondent EXP



Avg Gross by Con & Overall Experience



Ratings

Overall

3.8

Organization: 4.1
 Buying Interest: 3.4
 Engagement: 3.7

San Japan 2014

14 total responses

Gross Revenue

High: \$6,000

Low: \$250

Mean: \$2,190

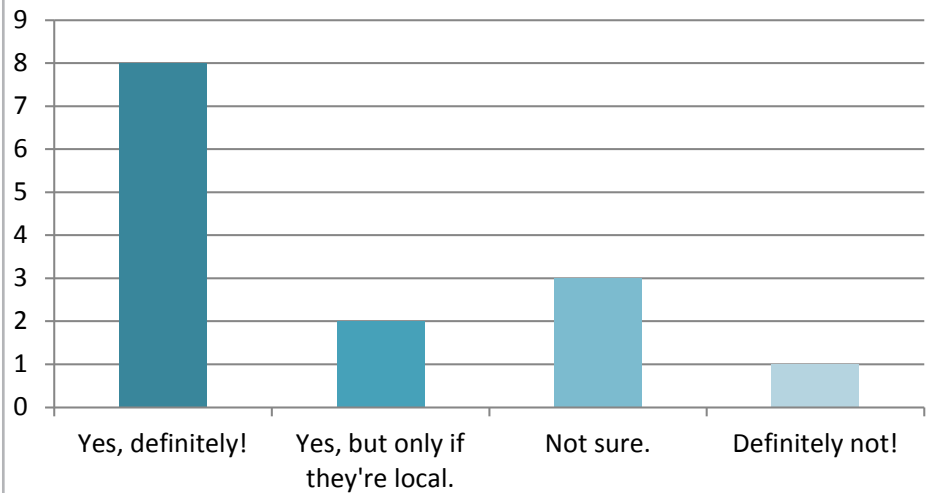
Median: \$1,7832

Average: \$2,011

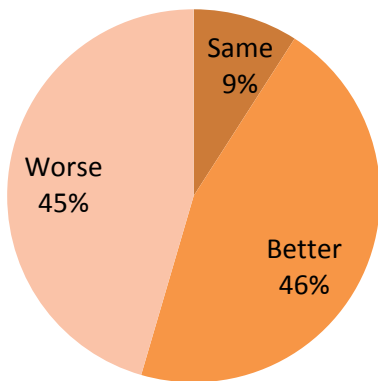
Artist Alley table: \$125

Badge: 1x included

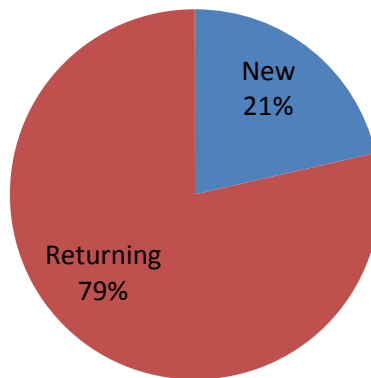
Would you recommend this con?



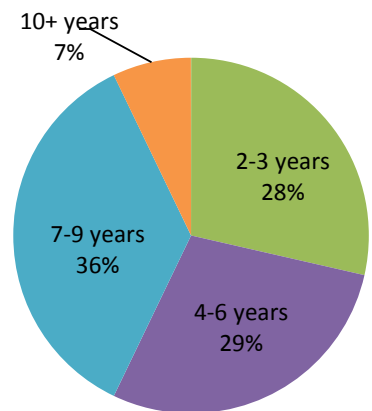
2014 VS 2013 Sales



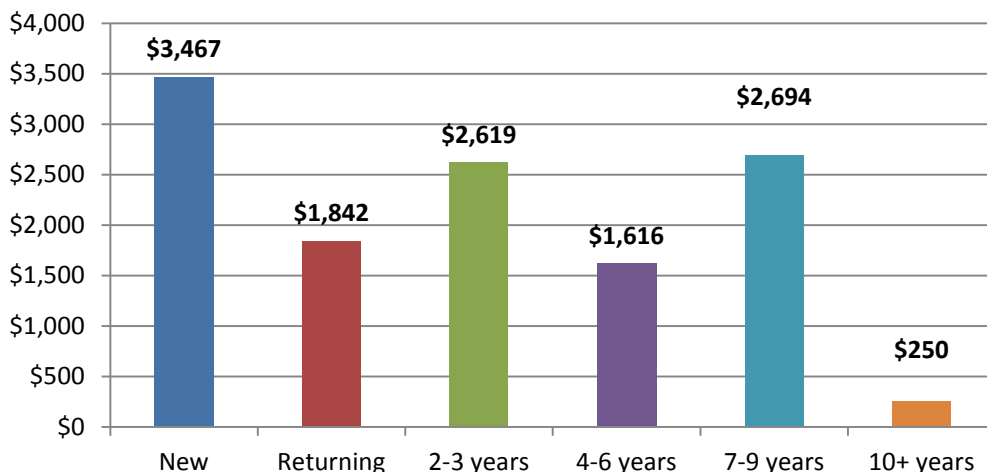
Respondent Makeup



Respondent EXP



Avg Gross by Con & Overall Experience



Ratings

Overall

3.5

Organization: 4.0
 Buying Interest: 3.1
 Engagement: 3.5

Katsucon 2014

11 total responses

Gross Revenue

High: \$4,012

Low: \$300

Mean: \$1,512

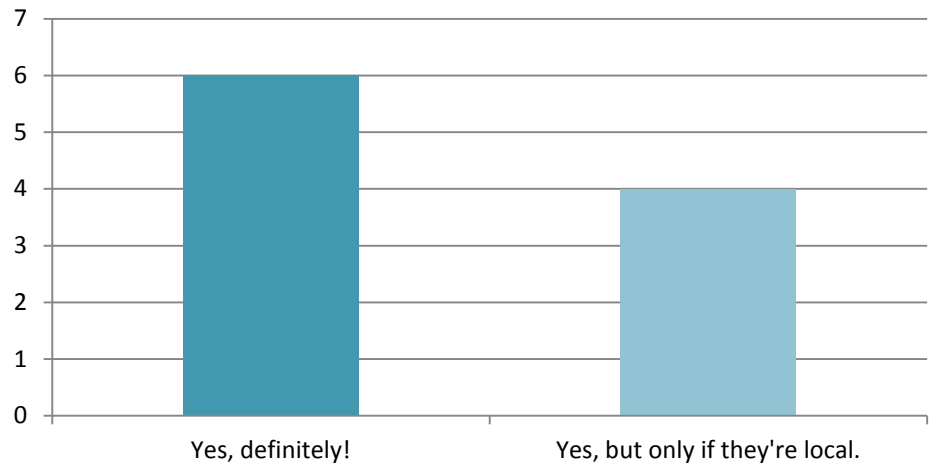
Median: \$1,000

Average: \$1,256

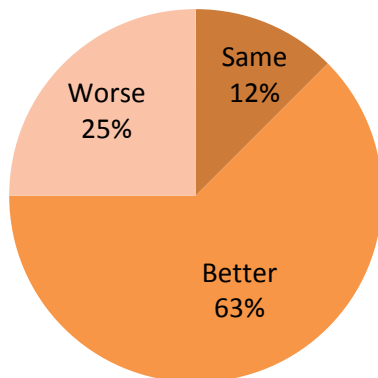
Artist Alley table: \$120

Badge: \$35-50

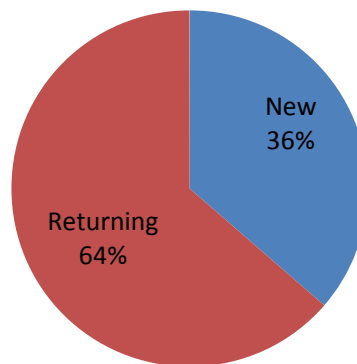
Would you recommend this con?



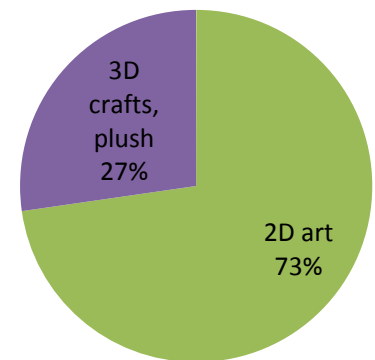
2014 VS 2013 Sales



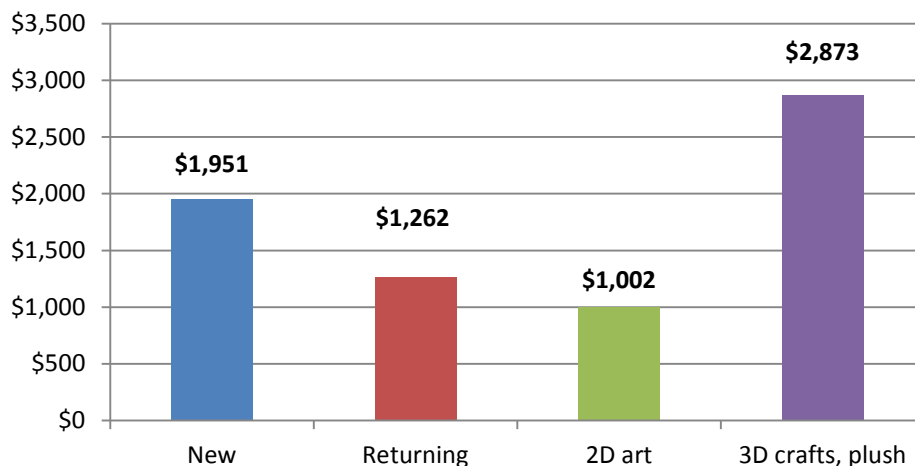
Respondent Makeup



Respondent Products



Avg Gross by Experience & Product



Ratings

Overall

4.1

Organization: 4.0
Buying Interest: 4.2
Engagement: 4.2

Notes: Artist Alley table and badge costs may be inaccurate for some conventions as respondents inputted a wide range of numbers that didn't match up, and convention websites have already removed all pricing information from 2014.

Analyzing average gross revenue by products was the first priority in solo reports. In cases where there wasn't enough variety for a significant assessment, artist experience was used. Only three conventions had premium artist tables and the biggest percentage of artists had them at Anime Boston, so gross by vending space was used for AB.

Respondent Comments

Anime Expo: Several commented that AX has grown too big for its own good, and that its massive, sprawling Artist Alley and Dealer's Room makes it hard to stand out from the crowd. Additionally, long registration wait times heavily affected Friday sales in 2014.

Otakon: Otakon has had various longstanding and relatively well-known problems with staff, including issues with bias, inappropriate behaviour, and on-site efficiency. Nevertheless, most acknowledge that the show yields them strong numbers. Feelings of "worth it" vary.

Anime Central: Highly competitive Artist Alley. Standing out from the crowd and some luck with table placement may be crucial to success.

Anime North: AN's Artist Alley is segmented into different areas by product type and artists cannot have products that don't belong in their area. One respondent noted that staff is a bit crazy.

Fanime Con: One respondent said the following and all other comments agree: "[Fanime is] a world-class Artist Alley with terrible organization. If you can put up with that, it is fantastic." Applicants don't typically know they're accepted into Fanime until 1-2 months prior and artist check-in on-site reportedly has taken up to 3 hours.

A-Kon: Another show with poor, pre-show organization and communication, but strong show numbers. 2014 was the first year where attendees needed a badge to access any part of the Artist Alley and some artists claimed flat or falling sales as a result.

Anime Boston: The darling of the survey, as noted by 18 of 19 respondents "definitely" recommending the convention to their friends. Nothing but praise in the comments section, though one did note that Boston is a very expensive city to stay in.

Sakura-Con: Poor Sakura-Con typically conflicts with Anime Boston (Easter weekend), which showed in the drastically fewer responses. Weaker overall numbers suggest that, given the

choice, artists will continue choosing Boston over Seattle, but both shows are very hard to get into!

Anime Weekend Atlanta: Chatter online after the con suggested that 2014 was a down year for everyone, but a majority of survey respondents did the same or better. Still, several said buyer interest was at a puzzling low and the noise from main events next door did not help.

Anime Matsuri: AM didn't get enough responses for a solo report, but a overall 2.0 rating from its 6 respondents put it at the bottom of the charts. Great guests, but poor organization and poor sales.

Otakuthon: Consensus seems to be that it's a good local show, but not worth traveling for, especially for Americans that can't speak passable French, as many attendees will prefer it.

San Japan: "San Japan is the most consistently well run show I've been to," but "[s]ales [in 2014] were at an all time low." SJ has changed up its Artist Alley layout every year for the last several in response to artist feedback. Seems 2014 didn't have a good one, but maybe they'll figure it out soon.

Katsucon: One respondent sums it up nicely: "[2014's] sales were double what we had, largely due to the inclement weather keeping attendees inside. This is historically a cosplay-centric show with attendees there to be seen and not shop. Attendance numbers should not be considered indicative of potential revenue. Convention organization appears to be unstable, it is not uncommon for there to be problems. Local artists are in a stronger position to profit due to lower costs. Not a con to fly to based on consumer activity and focus of attendees." -- As a Valentine's week convention in Maryland, Katsucon also almost faces weather-related travel problems (delayed flights, slick roads) for non-locals.

2015 Survey

The **2015 Anime Convention Artist Vendor Survey** is [HERE](#) and will be accepting responses through January 15th, 2016. I welcome and encourage all artists to participate and submit responses for the anime conventions they attend this year. The bigger the dataset, the more meaningful the data!

Results will be compiled and collected in a similar document and published in the same spaces:

KIRISKA.com

[ARTIST ALLEY NETWORK INTERNATIONAL](#)

[HOW TO BE A CON ARTIST](#)