



U.S. TRAVEL
ASSOCIATION

What Others Are Saying

“[President Obama] owes us an apology. He owes us a retraction. What is a better place, I say, for [corporate America] to come than here? For them to change their mind and go someplace else and to cancel at the suggestion of the president of the United States – that is outrageous.”

- *Oscar Goodman, Mayor of Las Vegas, Nevada*

“Tough times are a great time to renew trust. When customers and employees see the leadership team standing front and center and delivering the message, it demonstrates that management cares about them and considers them essential to weathering the storm. Cancelling such meetings, except when there are no other alternatives, sends the message that employees and even vendors and customers are expendable.”

- *John Baldoni, author and publisher on Harvard Business Publishing’s Leadership blog Leadership Matter*

“At a time when the Department of Labor reports a loss of nearly 200,000 travel related jobs in 2008 and U.S. Commerce Department data predicts a loss of an additional 247,000 travel related jobs in 2009, it is critical that every effort be made to protect beneficial meetings and events.”

- *Roger Dow, president and CEO of the U.S. Travel Association*

“Meetings and events are essential to motivating sales forces, rewarding high performers, and attracting top talent. Meetings and events are responsible for 15% of all travel in America, create more than \$100 billion in spending annually, generate millions of American jobs, and provide \$40 billion in tax revenue. The travel and tourism industry is made up of a lot of mom-and-pop operations and low-income earners who don’t have the resources to combat a prolonged recession. We should be thinking of ways to help this industry, not undermine it.”

- *Tom Donohue, president and CEO of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce*

“In another example of Pharisaism, Treasury is now requiring the businesses that receive taxpayer money to have fewer and more modest meetings in more dreary locales — certainly not near the beach or in Las Vegas. This is an extremely unsophisticated attitude. I attend many of these meetings each year. The attendees have to work very hard to earn a slot at these meetings. This process actually raises productivity.”

- *Ben Stein, comedian and conservative pundit*

“Today Congress is rightfully looking into how to curb executive compensation and excesses in other areas. What we are concerned about is the unintended consequences of over regulating corporations, particularly their travel and meetings spend. We are very concerned about Congress or the U.S. Department of Treasury becoming the nation’s Corporate Travel or Meetings Manager.”

- *Bill Connors, executive director & COO, National Business Travel Association*

“The problem is that these decisions [to cancel incentive travel] are being made based on ‘impression’ not fact. Because the program gives the impression they are spending money foolishly they don't want to be lionized in the media or within their employee base. The truth is that in many cases, these programs have increased sales or at least allowed the company to maintain sales in a tough economy.”

- *Paul Hebert, human resources consultant and publisher of the blog Incentive Intelligence*

“The current tone of the public conversation has caused an unnecessary ‘stop all meetings, events and incentive trips’ reaction.”

- *Chris Gaia, vice president of marketing, Maritz Travel*

"Congress has done a great job of killing the resort hotel business with the way they've criticized the number of financial firms for having conferences. In fact, I just heard this morning of another investor conference that was canceled by another major investment firm because of the fear of being criticized by members of Congress."

- *Jon Tisch, CEO, of Loews Corp.*

“In this time of economic crisis, meetings and events are not the problem – they are part of the solution to re-energize our economy and protect jobs and communities everywhere.”

- *Bruce MacMillan, president & CEO, Meeting Professionals International*

“Motivational events that reward and recognize top performers are just as important in tough economic times, if not more so, than in good. Utilized properly (and sensitively), these events can literally help companies increase sales and profits and help retain their very best people.”

- *Brenda Anderson, CEO, Society of Incentive Travel Executives*

“No long, boring speeches, no travelogues – just a transfer of great ideas.”

- *Former General Electric CEO Jack Welch describing the annual meeting he held for his 500 top managers in Boca Raton, Florida*