



## Meetings *Do* Make the World Go ‘Round

Amid daily news reports of continuing economic trouble for companies in all industry sectors, it is easy to buy into the idea that you need to hunker down and not spend if you can help it. In light of the unflattering media attention over AIG’s incentive meeting for independent insurance agents, business leaders are understandably nervous. It is reasonable that they do not want to be perceived as frivolous, excessive, or imprudent – which they run the risk of being labeled if they have a business meeting or incentive function in a city or at any property that hints at comfort or luxury.

The truth of the matter is that hunkering down, and not meeting with our employees, customers, and key stakeholders is one of the worst things that we can be doing for the future of our companies and our local, regional, state, national and global economies.

Meetings drive business, support business, and enhance business...for associations, corporations, non - profits and government organizations of all sizes in all industries throughout the United States and abroad.

If you are helping your organization decide whether or not to book that next sales meeting, customer event or incentive function, consider some of the value of face - to - face meetings and business travel.

Businesses, especially ones that are vested in relationships, are being tested now more than ever. There is nothing more important in a troubled economic climate, than bringing people together to reaffirm the path forward through the economic challenges they are facing.

- According to the Meeting Professionals International Foundation/George P. Johnson EventView study, Fortune 1000 Chief Marketing Officers view meetings and events as having the highest return on investment of any marketing channel or initiative.
- Business meetings do get results – they can solidify partnerships, develop needed solutions to business issues and increase productivity.
- Sales conferences and performance incentive programs are powerful business tools that drive sales and generate results.

Just as companies invest in R&D in their products and services, they’ll also need to continue to invest in their employees and executive leadership to survive these economic times. Sometimes when salaries or bonuses need to be cut, a trip or attendance at a convention, conference or educational meeting in a nice destination outside of the office can be perceived as higher in value and more significant than the monetary value lost. Measurement and ROI will reveal the value of meetings and trips and the effect to the organization’s bottom line. These trips are not cost centers; they’re profit centers.

The next time your are faced with the decision to book a meeting, or continue with a meeting you already have booked, consider what you would be losing by making the decision not to meet.

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