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83% OF AMERICANS WORKING FROM HOME DUE TO COVID-19 SAY THEY MISS IN-PERSON MEETINGS AND CONVENTIONS

New survey signals strong consumer confidence in the meetings industry and an eagerness to return to face-to-face business events when physical distancing ends

WASHINGTON, D.C. – With more than 300 million Americans under stay-at-home orders to help slow the spread of COVID-19, many are now required to work from home and avoid all non-essential business travel. In a matter of weeks, thousands of conferences, conventions, tradeshows and other face-to-face business events have been postponed or cancelled. Recent estimates from the U.S. Travel Association and Tourism Economics, an Oxford Economics company, predict an unprecedented impact to the meetings and travel industry, which faces losses [seven times greater than 9/11](#) due to the pandemic.

A new survey by APCO Insight suggests that American workers – particularly those who attended in-person meetings and conventions before the pandemic – are eager to return to them when COVID-19 is contained and physical distancing policies are no longer needed.

“Communities across the U.S. have been hit hard due to the COVID-19 pandemic and we do not take the impact of this crisis lightly,” said Fred Dixon, President and CEO of NYC & Company and co-chair of the Meetings Mean Business Coalition (MMBC). “However, it’s encouraging to see that 83% of Americans currently forced to work from home say they miss attending in-person meetings and conventions. As important, 78% say they plan to attend as many or more when the threat of COVID-19 passes and it is safe to do so.”

With lawmakers debating the provisions of a new Phase IV recovery bill, Dixon added that the research sends a critical message to federal legislators and administration officials as they consider ways to bring relief to the [5.9 million Americans](#) whose jobs are supported by meetings and conventions.

When asked if convention centers and event venues should be eligible for federal support and funding, 49% of Americans agreed and only 14% disagreed – whether they previously attended in-person meetings and conventions as part of their jobs, or not. The percent who agreed is roughly on par with other industries that rely on in-person activities, such as the restaurant industry (53% support); personal services such as barbers and hair salons (44%); and grocery stores (43%).

“Even as meetings are being cancelled and business travel is postponed, this research proves what many of us have long suspected to be true,” said Trina Camacho-London, Vice President



of Global Group Sales at Hyatt Hotels Corporation and MMBC co-chair. “Our collective experience of physical distancing has us craving the day that we can all come together again and meet in person. That’s a strong indicator of not only consumer intent, but also of our industry’s value to people, businesses and communities.”

According to Camacho-London, the industry, led by MMBC, is committed to helping meeting and event professionals navigate this crisis and “come back stronger.”

“In lockstep with organizations across the globe, we are pursuing every opportunity to bring economic relief and inspire industry advocates to continue local acts of service – from donating food and health supplies to venue space and funds for community-based organizations. In these challenging times, no act is too small. We urge everyone who is able to [commit to taking action](#), sharing information and advancing best practices.”

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About the Survey

On April 3, 2020, APCO Insight – the research division of APCO Worldwide – conducted an online quantitative survey among 1,000 American adults to understand the social impact of COVID-19. Their work is based on a national sample provided by Dynata, balanced by age, gender and region. For further details about this poll, please visit apcoworldwide.com/coronavirus.

About Meetings Mean Business

Meetings Mean Business is an industry-wide coalition to showcase the undeniable value that business meetings, trade shows, incentive travel, exhibitions, conferences and conventions bring to people, businesses and communities. Comprised of over 60 members, the coalition unites the meetings industry with one strong and powerful voice. For more information, visit meetingsmeanbusiness.com.

The coalition remains active during these times and in lieu of face-to-face meetings and events, is supporting industry-wide opportunities to engage with MMBC and the broader meetings industry, starting with virtual events on Global Meetings Industry Day, April 14. To learn more and join our efforts, visit meetingsmeanbusiness.com/gmid.