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EIGHT IN TEN AMERICANS WORKING FROM HOME DUE TO COVID-19 SAY THEY MISS IN-PERSON MEETINGS AND CONVENTIONS

Survey shows eagerness to return to face-to-face business events as organizations demonstrate ability to meet safely and effectively

WASHINGTON, D.C. – A new survey by APCO Insight affirms that Americans working from home are eager to return to in-person meetings and conventions. The survey finds that even after adapting to the new digital workplace, 81% of professionals who attended in-person meetings and conventions before the pandemic miss doing so and would be just as likely – if not more likely – to attend in-person conferences, conventions, trade shows and other business events in the future.

The survey echoes similar [findings from April 2020](#), which showed that 83% of Americans working from home missed attending in-person meetings and conventions. One year later, a majority agree that in-person meetings and conventions will be critical for their professional development, noting that such opportunities facilitate better relationship-building, enhance internal team engagement, allow for clearer communication and help build trust.

“It is encouraging to see that many of those who are working from home are just as eager to get back to in-person meetings and events as we are,” said Michael Massari, Chief Sales Officer of Caesars Entertainment and co-chair of the Meetings Mean Business Coalition (MMBC). “Communities across the country continue to suffer from the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting decline in business travel. Our industry is starting to come back and has taken critical steps to assure health and safety.”

In-person meeting cancellations and postponements have contributed to a [70% decline in business travel spending](#), according to the U.S. Travel Association.

In accordance with guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention as well as local authorities, successful in-person meetings and events are possible and taking place safely. Meetings industry professionals have adopted new policies and protocols to ensure that people are able to meet in-person while mitigating the spread of COVID-19.

“We are diligent in following guidelines set forth by public health authorities and are uncompromising in our commitment to ensuring the safety of every meeting attendee,” said Fred Dixon, President and CEO of NYC & Company and MMBC co-chair. “Meeting health and safety standards is a necessity, not an option. As an industry, we are committed to doing the right thing, the right way.”

The survey research, Dixon noted, is also very telling as lawmakers debate the latest pandemic relief bill, the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021. When asked if convention centers and event venues should be eligible for federal support and funding, 45% of Americans agreed – whether they attended in-person meetings and conventions prior to the pandemic, or not.



“While COVID-19 has changed so much, this survey reaffirms the industry’s value to people, businesses and communities,” Dixon said. “After a year of social distancing, we all have a newfound appreciation for coming together and meeting in person.”

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About the Survey

On February 17-19, 2021, APCO Insight – the research division of APCO Worldwide – conducted an online quantitative survey among 1,000 American adults to gauge opinions around in-person conferences, conventions and business meetings. The survey is based on a national sample provided by Dynata, balanced by age, gender and region.

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. By rallying industry advocates, working with stakeholders, conducting original research, engaging with outside voices and more, the coalition brings the industry together to emphasize its importance. Comprised of over 60 members, the coalition unites the meetings industry with one strong and powerful voice. For more information, visit meetingsmeanbusiness.com.