



# Business Events

## Global Market Insights

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October 2021

travel | tourism | business events

davies  
tanner

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Producing regular insights into buyer behaviour and sentiment help us shape our communication strategies to develop and deliver far more effective campaigns for our global clients.

# Introduction

This brief summary report contains highlight information relating to the current sentiment of both business events destinations and meeting planners, along with insights into the future market outlook. It has been produced to assist our clients to gain a better understanding as to the existing opinions that exist globally, and to specifically help develop content and communication strategies that reflect the current landscape.

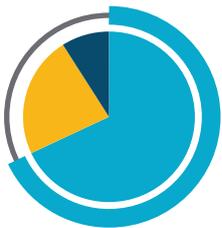
# Scope

This report focussed on two key audiences; destinations and meeting planners.

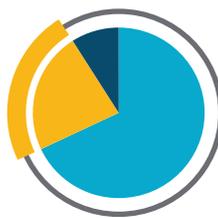
For the destinations, we conducted online research across 226 destinations whose purpose included attracting business events to their region. This included a mix of Destination Marketing Organisations (DMO's) National Tourism Organisations (NTO's) and Convention & Visitor Bureaux (CVB's).

For meeting planners, this consisted of a sample of 556 planners from corporate, association, incentive and agency across three key regions of Europe, North America and Asia Pacific. The information was gained through a combination of online surveys, desk based research and sector round tables.

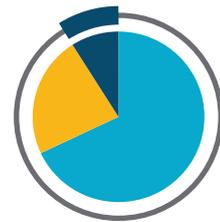
# Geography



EUROPE



NORTH AMERICA



ASIA PACIFIC

# Synopsis

This is the third Global Market Insights we have produced since early 2020, designed to provide our clients with a snapshot of current sentiment and outlook for the business events sector, and it's fair to say the situation continues to be blurred, with a very fragile recovery, despite the lifting of restrictions across many regions.

From a destination perspective, there are positives to be found, with almost all Tier 1 and Tier 2 cities surveyed now back to a full programme of marketing and engagement activity. However, the biggest challenge continues to be rebuilding a disrupted network and damaged pipeline due to the displacement of many planners during the pandemic. There also continues to be a need to maintain confidence in both international travel and the hosting of live events generally.

In the short term, funding appears to be relatively secure, but in the long term, questions remain around investment, especially within destinations whose funding is predominately from public sector sources.

In terms of meeting planners, the focus appears to be simply in getting events back on the calendar as part of their organisations overall marketing programmes. Longer term, there is a strong focus on how to deliver such programmes on a far more sustainable basis, with an emphasis on using events as way to improve well-being and drive societal change. This is something that the entire industry should be seeing as an indication of what is likely to come.

As we look to the future, business essential travel and events will undoubtedly become a theme, as will the increased focus on delivering sustainable events against a background of a severe skills shortage, high government debt and the inevitable increasing of taxation.

# INSIGHTS

## Destinations

- Destinations contact networks have been severely disrupted because of the pandemic
- There is now an urgent need to reacquire connections and rebuild pipeline
- Destination partners have lost sales resources and are struggling to recruit
- There is however a high demand from partners to attend events
- There is global disparity in both recovery timelines and in short term funding models
- Destinations are looking for specific restart support to boost recovery

- 90% of destinations project a full return to market engagement by October 2021
- 37% of destinations have seen a short-term reduction of funding during 2020
- 28% of destinations have seen an increase in funding during 2020
- 28% project a higher future investment in communication and market engagement during 2021
  
- The most popular marketing channels to aid recovery during 2021 will be:
  - 93% social media
  - 68% PR & media
  - 65% online advertising
  - 65% virtual events
  - 51% trade shows & exhibitions
  
- Additional recovery activity will include:
  - 51% enhanced Ambassador programs
  - 49% integrated marketing campaigns
  - 33% increased subvention/bid funding

# INSIGHTS

## Meeting Planners

- Specific roles have changed/merged/disappeared during the pandemic
- There continues to be a high degree of flexible/remote working
- There does still exist a strong need for events to drive growth
- There are pressures to use live events to support new product launches
- There is concern over growing 'essential travel' policies linked to sustainability
- Planners themselves are looking for environments that support wellness and wellbeing
- There is a need to focus on events that deliver social purpose and social good
- Planners now have a desire to engage with brands that support societal change
- They want supplier brands to solve specific problems
- They are no longer interested in what could be regarded as vanity content
- Planners now place greater importance on professional self-development and personal improvement
- There is a need for more content, solutions and support around sustainability

# INSIGHTS

## Outlook

- The recovery in business travel and events will lag consumer travel
- Business travel will move to 'business essential' for some organisations
- Sustainability will become integral in business events – especially destinations
- There will be a rise in 'localism' for the business events sector
- There will be a focus on events that deliver social purpose
- Buyers will be looking for more storytelling in brand engagement
- Rising Government debt and borrowing will impact future funding models for some destinations
- There will be an increase in skills shortages and a greater need for professional development across the industry

# About Us

With over 24 years of working in this industry, business events are now part of our DNA. We are the recognised leaders in providing brand communications services to the global meetings and events community, including strategy development, media relations, content marketing, social media, digital storytelling stakeholder engagement and public affairs.

We are proud to support some of the most well-known and trusted destinations , venues and brands across the UK and Europe, North America Middle East and Asia Pacific, helping them to navigate their way from recovery to revival.

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