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DEFINING
CONVENTIONS
**AS URBAN
INNOVATION AND
ECONOMIC
ACCELERATORS**



Skift.



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WORTH
MEETING ABOUT

Trade shows, exhibitions and conferences bring people together with diverse backgrounds and **expertise**, shaping the future of the industry — or a region. Because when it matters most, when it's important, it's **#WorthMeetingAbout**.

Learn more about Meetings Mean Business and how to get involved: meetingsmeanbusiness.com



MESSAGE FROM MEETINGS MEAN BUSINESS

Meetings Mean Business (MMB) is an industry-wide coalition that showcases the undeniable value that business meetings, trade shows, incentive travel, exhibitions, conferences and conventions bring to people, businesses and communities.

Although the services provided by our industry often go unnoticed, they are a catalyst for economic growth. They have the power to influence how a city takes shape, including who lives there, who works there and who visits year-to-year. What's more, they can determine what other industries flock to the region and whether long-term investment opportunities will succeed or fail.

Take Las Vegas, Austin, New York or Chicago. In these destinations and countless others, it is clear that the contributions our industry makes cannot be defined solely by what happens in a hotel ballroom or convention center.

As this report bears out, meetings and events help drive travel and tourism into communities and are often the lifeblood of visitor spending, jobs and revenue. It is no surprise then that destination marketing organizations (DMOs) are using meetings to impact the communities around them, though the strategies and tactics they have relied on are nothing short of remarkable.

We hope you enjoy reading this report and welcome your feedback.



Paul Van Deventer,
MMBC co-chair and president and
chief executive officer of Meeting
Professionals International



Richard Harper,
MMBC co-chair and executive vice
president of HelmsBriscoe

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.



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ABOUT SKIFT

Skift is the largest industry intelligence platform, providing Media, Insights & Marketing to key sectors of travel. SkiftX is Skift's in-house content marketing studio, working collaboratively with partners on integrated projects including webinars, video, research, and live events.

Visit skiftx.com, or email skiftx@skift.com.

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Cover photo: I.D.E.A. District, San Diego

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The meetings and conventions industry is evolving into a global innovation distribution channel. Over the last decade, convention bureaus have been collaborating more strategically with their local and state governments, economic development agencies, academic and scientific institutions, and local business improvement districts to better leverage the value of conventions in their cities, especially those aligned with their regions' high-priority growth sectors.

The collective goal among those private and public organizations is to attract more conventions in advanced and creative industries to help position their cities as economic and innovation accelerators, in an effort to attract outside corporate investment and talent more effectively in those industries.

In the U.S. today, all state and local governments are competing to expand their innovation economies and drive high-quality job growth. Because science and technology are evolving at such a fast pace, cities have to expand their talent pools of professionals working in the STEM and creative industries more rapidly to remain competitive. Examples of those priority sectors include aerospace in Jacksonville, cleantech in Portland, bio-med in Denver, life sciences in San Diego, healthcare IT in Cleveland, cognitive media in Boston, and eSports in Washington, D.C.

Conventions driving innovation in those demand sectors deliver companies and associations to a city's doorstep. Therefore, convention bureaus, governments, economic development professionals, academics, and researchers have face-to-face access with industry leaders to develop new business relationships, investments, research, and priority sector innovations.

Conventions, of course, have always provided a platform for the exchange of new ideas to drive progress. Today, however, city leaders want to commercialize those ideas much more intentionally, aggressively, and systematically for the benefit of their local communities.

In today's digital platform economy, every public and private stakeholder in the meetings and conventions industry is a node on the global innovation distribution superhighway. Therefore, industry members should be positioned as such — as brokers of innovation. Innovation is the primary currency of most conventions today, with the ability to provide greater economic benefits to a wider breadth of people when city leaders and convention stakeholders focus on long-term economic gains to develop event strategy.

The challenge is mapping and measuring those long-term impacts. Presently, most cities highlight the economic benefits of conventions based on the short-term hospitality and tourism spend during conventions, which are then extrapolated to show the overall impact on jobs and taxes in the region on an annual basis. However, in addition to that, there are many important long-term economic benefits, or "legacy impacts," that conventions deliver to a city that are typically not included in traditional impact reports.

For just a few examples of those legacy impacts, conventions in priority industries help:

1. Implement local and state government initiatives to drive development of industry sector clusters
2. Improve destination brand lift to position a city as a hub of innovation in specific industry sectors
3. Provide a marketing showcase to promote the region's advanced industry, creative, and academic expertise to companies worldwide
4. Encourage corporate expansion, relocation, and/or investment into a region to grow the volume of high-value jobs and increase the local tax base
5. Provide a platform for developing new academic, technological, and scientific research and knowledge sharing to strengthen a region's innovation economy and commercialize new ideas
6. Motivate convention delegates to return as leisure visitors or part- or full-time residents

If, then, U.S. convention bureaus are lacking the necessary research to empirically evaluate the long-term economic impacts of conventions in their priority growth sectors, they're not showing their full impact on their cities' innovation sectors and overall economic output. That hampers bureaus from fully validating and securing the necessary public funding to deliver on their mandates, because the data doesn't exist to support a convention bureau's efforts beyond its impacts on its region's visitor economy

Therefore, the meetings industry needs a new road map that better encapsulates and evaluates the legacy benefits of meetings and conventions to grow a city's competitive advantage, in order to illustrate best practices and guide long-term strategy for a broader scope of regional stakeholders.

Such a road map outlining the potential benefits of stronger public-private collaboration over the long term exploits the breadth of resources — which already exist in a city's innovation ecosystem — that convention bureaus can leverage to engage convention organizers on a deeper level and deliver a more holistic destination experience for attendees.

The meetings industry is not completely bereft of science studying the long-term impacts of conventions on a region's economic growth. Most notably, the "Beyond Tourism Benefits" research series developed by Business Events Sydney and the University of Technology Sydney is considered the benchmark for insight on this subject. The thrust of the research shows that convention bureaus are an integral part of a destination's long-term economic development strategy when they're aligned with local and state government policy.

"Convention bureaus have typically come under the tourism remit," says UTS professor Deborah Edwards, one of the principal architects of Beyond Tourism Benefits. "But what our research shows is that convention bureaus really should come under the remit of the industry and trade ministries, which usually have more funding attached to them."

The purpose of this Skift research report, produced in collaboration with Meetings Mean Business, is to elevate the conversation around the importance of defining the legacy economic impacts of conventions, and explore how the public and private sectors in certain cities are collaborating to build on those impacts more effectively.

1. INTRODUCTION: THE RISE OF THE CONVERGENCE ECONOMY



CES 2017, Las Vegas

Skift Take

The rise of the convergence economy, where governments and innovative companies are collaborating across different industries more holistically, is producing more strategic alliances between cities' public and private sectors to create platforms for long-term economic development.

At their core, cities are horizontally-integrated platforms for many different types of economic value exchange and social interaction. Within the context of the global meetings and conventions industry, cities can be characterized as hardware and software. The hardware is the urban infrastructure: convention centers, hotel districts, restaurants, airports, and public transportation, etc. The software is the matrix of people visiting the city for conventions, combined with those living and working in the destination, each with their own individual economic value.

Positioning cities as hardware and software is key to understanding how the meetings and conventions industry helps drive long-term economic impact in the 21st century. Typically,

urban destinations have been competing for the attention of convention organizers primarily by promoting their hardware. The cities of the future, however, are leveraging their software — their knowledge industry professionals and their expertise in advanced industries — to gain competitive advantage and differentiate the region's value proposition.

Today, without exception, successful cities are giving rise to what the Brookings Institution calls the "Convergence Economy," connecting their public and private sectors across a wider variety of disparate enterprises, agencies, and institutions, to expand advanced industry ecosystems that drive innovation and power economic growth. Motivating that, all state and local governments have identified specific high-growth priority sectors that they want to strengthen, generally based on local industries where they already have existing strengths. Examples include aerospace in Jacksonville, cleantech in Portland, plant sciences in St. Louis, bio-med in Denver, health IT in Cleveland, and life sciences in San Diego, etc.

The emergence of autonomous vehicle technology in a city like Las Vegas is another example.

Las Vegas needs to vastly improve its transportation infrastructure due to record visitor volume every year, but the introduction of driverless cars on the Las Vegas Strip requires an unprecedented convergence of many different entities working in both government and private industry. That includes a combination of automotive, tech, and mobility/logistics companies; advanced artificial intelligence (AI) and IoT scientific research labs; the local/state governments to provide policy, funding and oversight; and myriad city agencies to coordinate infrastructure development.

One way to get outside companies to look at Las Vegas as a potential testing ground for their technologies, and ultimately a base for their operations, is by luring them to the city during conventions like CES, IBM World of Watson, and others. Those conventions provide a robust platform for new idea exchange in autonomous tech, AI, and many corollary industries.

Which means, in this case, conventions like those mentioned above and others are ultimately pumping new knowledge into Las Vegas' tech clusters to help drive long-term economic development for the city, and improve livability standards for area residents.

This is not new.

The first convention bureau in the U.S. launched in Detroit in 1896 to propel economic growth by convincing visiting convention delegates to start or expand manufacturing businesses in the city. The depression in 1893 and the industrial revolution added impetus to the strategy, and Detroit eventually became the wealthiest city in America by the early 1950s, based on the rise of its modern manufacturing sector spanning everything from medical instruments to automotive.

In the last five years, there has been a systemic surge of attention on the exact same strategy among convention bureaus across America. Cities are competing to attract high-tech companies to invest in their region, because to succeed in the 21st century, cities must grow their business,

scientific, and creative industries, along with the necessary talent pool to foster innovation in those industries. And just like in Detroit over 100 years ago during another period of massive technological disruption, cities are again leveraging their convention business to engage specific sectors to catalyze economic growth.

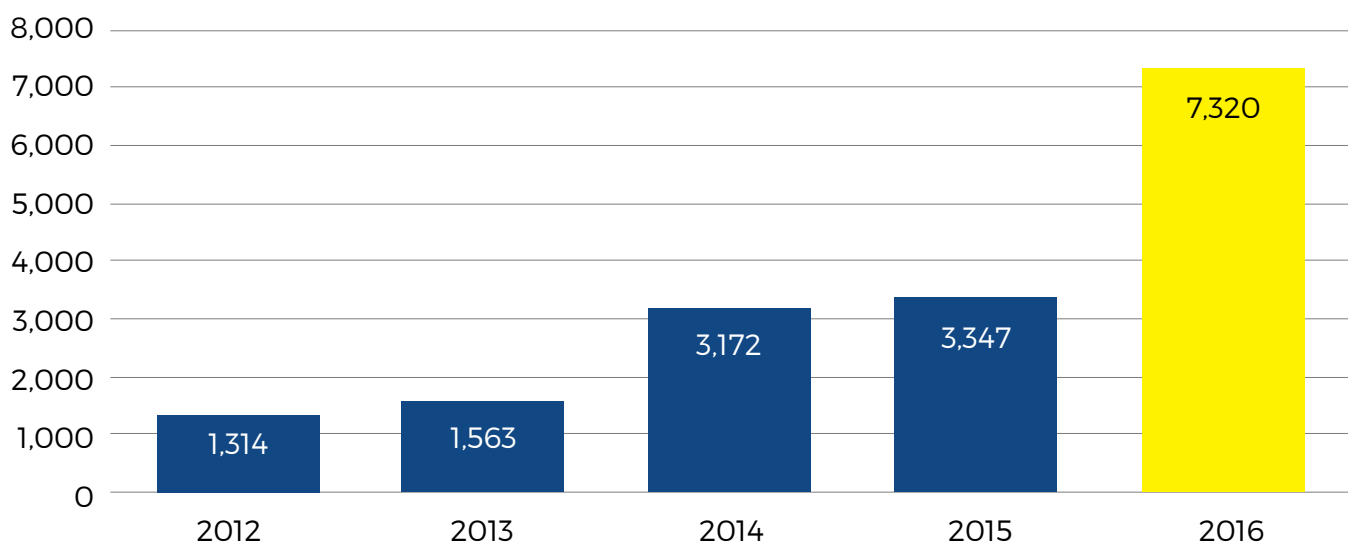
The challenge today is defining, evaluating, and tracking the long-term impact of conventions on a destination's economic development, beyond the traditional short-term metrics. To a large degree, there is relatively little research showing that process in action in the U.S.

1.1 THE GLOBAL WAR FOR HIGH-VALUE JOBS

Skift Take

The competition among cities to attract outside tech and creative industry companies to invest in their region, using conventions to help facilitate that, goes back decades. But the strategy has taken on growing significance in the last few years due to the rapid and all-encompassing digitization of business, requiring new talent to steward that shift.

In 2016, the number of new jobs developed in Southern Nevada with the assistance of the Las Vegas Global Economic Alliance (LVGEA) grew by nearly 5,000 salaried positions (+148%)



Las Vegas Global Economic Alliance

One of the biggest priorities for city and state governments today is driving job growth in the STEM and creative industries. The best way for governments to develop job growth in those industries is by increasing the number of relevant companies that hire people in their region.

“There is a global war for high-value jobs,” said Jonas Peterson, president and CEO of the Las Vegas Global Economic Alliance (LVGEA), kicking off the annual Las Vegas State of Economic Development summit in February 2017. “In this war, regions are rising, regions are falling, and I’m pleased to report that Southern Nevada is a region on the rise.... We’re winning battles for jobs because for the last decade Southern Nevada has been positioning itself as an ideal location for corporate investment.”

In 2009 and 2010, according to Gallup, Nevada ranked last among all 50 U.S. states in new job creation. In 2016, it ranked first. Jared Smith, COO of the LVGEA, told Skift that conventions have played a significant role in luring outside corporate investment and talent to Las Vegas, while driving continued economic growth throughout the state.

“
**AS TOURISM AND CONVENTION
INFRASTRUCTURE CONTINUE
TO GROW, WE SEE THIS AS AN
OPPORTUNITY FOR SOUTHERN
NEVADA TO ATTRACT MORE OUTSIDE
JOBS, INVESTMENT, AND TALENT.**
”

— **JARED SMITH, COO, LAS VEGAS
GLOBAL ECONOMIC ALLIANCE**

“Conventions that come to Las Vegas not only expose the rest of the world to Las Vegas, but also expose the local community to the rest of the world, giving them access to innovation that helps grow the destination’s knowledge of emerging industry trends,” Smith said. “As tourism and convention infrastructure continue to grow, we see this as an opportunity for Southern Nevada to attract more outside jobs, investment, and talent that leads to the creation of more economic diversity in the region.”

The same assertion is shared by almost all mayors, city council members, directors of economic development agencies, and CEOs of convention and visitors bureaus (CVBs), and destination marketing organizations (DMOs) across the country. *[The terms “convention bureau/bureau,” “CVB” and “DMO” are used interchangeably in this report, as well as “conventions” and “conferences,” because industry leaders likewise vary in their usage in quotes throughout this report.]*

The Financial Times in March 2017 highlighted the demand for high-value jobs in the U.S.:

“America is a country of two labour markets, with jobs aplenty for PhDs and even more for burger flippers, but not enough in between. This is a problem in an economy that consists largely of consumer spending. But even if the U.S. was able to reverse globalization and

technological job disruption, the homegrown problem remains: the skills gap. Deloitte points to 3.5 million well-paid manufacturing jobs that will need to be filled in the U.S. by 2025. Yet two million will remain unfilled by Americans because neither high schools nor colleges are turning out enough technology literate and communications savvy students.”

That alludes to another value that conventions in growth sectors bring to a city, which is rarely reported as an economic benefit. As Smith stated, corporate and association conventions provide local students and working professionals with access to new research and business intelligence to support their ongoing education and expand their professional networks of thought leaders in their specific industry.

1.2 POSITIONING DESTINATION MARKETING AS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Skift Take

Many, but not all, convention bureaus are pivotal players in their cities' economic development strategy. However, there are still perception challenges among some elected leaders in terms of exactly how CVBs are driving long-term economic growth. Part of that is because CVBs publish economic impact reports that generally focus on the more tangible economic benefits of conventions, including attendee expenditure, transient occupancy tax, and media value derived from the physical events themselves.

Any strategies revolving around using face-to-face meetings to spur sustainable economic growth in cities begins with government. Albuquerque Mayor Richard Berry, for example, emphasizes that the connection between growing convention business and growing his city's economy is fundamental.

“The idea of bringing thought leaders together from around the world to increase long-term economic development in Albuquerque is one of the foundations of what I've tried to do during my administration,” he says. “When experts and creatives come to your city, they collide and cross-pollinate with our folks, and we gain from that. Those seeds that are planted during conventions can grow into great opportunities over time.”

Because technology is continually shifting the very nature of industry in cities today, economic development organizations are increasingly committed to leveraging the role that high-priority conventions in the tech and creative sectors play in helping develop a city's innovation economy.

“
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DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATION, AND
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AGENCIES TO DISCUSS HOW WE
CAN LEVERAGE OUR MEETINGS AND
CONVENTIONS TO ADVANCE OUR
COMMUNITY’S PRIORITIES.”

— DAVID GILBERT, PRESIDENT AND
CEO, DESTINATION CLEVELAND

we’ve found that San Diego actually has a competitive advantage, or comparative advantage, with other communities in that many of the right conferences are already coming to us. So, it’s been a process over the last few years of first coming to that realization.”

The challenge for some convention bureaus is positioning themselves in the public sphere as economic development engines, versus being perceived merely as “tourism boards.” Changing that perception is among the highest priorities for bureau leaders like Elliott Ferguson, president and CEO of Destination DC.

“It’s important to recognize the fact that economic development organizations have not always viewed tourism and hospitality in the same framework as they look at economic development,” Ferguson explains. “So the first thing is to get people in our city to understand that we, quite frankly, are looking at doing the same thing. What we’re doing is creating jobs, and furthermore, our visitors pay into the hotel tax and other taxes. It’s all economic development at the end of the day.”

David Gilbert, president and CEO of Destination Cleveland, concurs, saying that leaders in urban communities across America sometimes look at CVBs as “a little bit of fluff.” He explains that many elected officials and business people believe that convention attendees are going to come to a destination regardless of what the bureau does to promote convention business.

“So we try to be very deliberate about the quantitative data that shows certain growth in this community wouldn’t happen if we didn’t exist,” Gilbert says. “We see ourselves as an economic development organization, and we’re continually meeting with other economic development agencies to discuss how we can leverage our meetings and conventions to advance our community’s priorities.”

Erik Caldwell, economic development director for the City of San Diego, says his agency has been targeting conventions more consciously in recent years to meet with visiting investors and business leaders. He also says there is a growing examination in San Diego of the long-term economic benefits of that strategy, as well.

“Over the last few years we’ve really started to focus on increasing our global identity, increasing foreign direct investments, and trying to better compete on the business attraction, retention and expansion side domestically,” Caldwell explains. “One of the pieces of hanging fruit that we’ve identified are conferences that come to town, and

1.3 Q&A WITH PHILADELPHIA MAYOR JIM KENNEY

Skift spoke with Philadelphia Mayor Jim Kenney at the South by Southwest (SXSW) conference in Austin in March 2017. Mayor Kenney was on hand to welcome members of Philly's tech and creative industries attending the Amplify Philly dinner, where everyone discussed the impact of Philadelphia's growing innovation economy on redefining Philadelphia's business brand.

Skift: There's a lot of convergence of innovation taking place in Philadelphia lately in the tech, creative, business, medical, manufacturing, academic, and science sectors. What's driving that?

Mayor Jim Kenney: Some of it's organic and some of it's government understanding that they don't have the answers to everything, and sometimes they don't have the answers to anything. We've realized we can play a role by convening people together in the city and at conferences like South by Southwest here in Austin, and then getting out of the way. So we're listening to what these various groups are interested in, what they need, and then trying to get government to respond in a way that makes sense and moves the process forward, instead of, "This is our way, this is the way we do it." Well, we might do it that way now, maybe there's a better way to do it. Or we hear, "We've never done this before." Well, maybe we better start looking at it. So I'm excited about all this brain power in Philadelphia to help to make our services better and grow their businesses.

Skift: How important are conventions coming into Philadelphia to drive your city's economic growth, especially in your high-priority sectors?

Mayor Kenney: All I have to do is look at South by Southwest and the amount of brainpower and diversity everywhere, and the incredible offerings of the tech companies and other companies here to prove the value of conventions. For us, it was important getting the convention center in Philly straightened out. People were not coming for a while there, and we've had medical, scientific, and tech conventions in the past that said we'd never see them again, but now they're re-upping three and four years from now. So, conventions are very important to make Philadelphia known as a place to convene, where outside people can meet our people to continue creating economic growth for them and for our city. I think Austin has done a fantastic job in branding itself as that kind of destination. Philadelphia has the capacity to do that. In some ways we have done it, but there's more opportunity to do it better down the road.

Skift: Speaking with other cities, they're now promoting their local expertise in their innovation economy and knowledge industries as a selling point to attract conventions, versus just promoting a modern convention center and hotel footprint. Are you doing that?

Mayor Kenney: We're doing it ourselves and we're also looking to [our universities and companies like] Drexel and Penn and Comcast and others that can help us do that, and give us more credibility in that space. Governments in general are not always known for being progressive when it comes to allowing new industries and new ventures to grow, but as you can see here, it's something that we have to do. And I think if we take advice from people who know what they're doing and what they're talking about, we'll be much more successful.

Skift: Philadelphia has been developing a few innovation districts around the academic and medical research institutions to bring knowledge professionals together. How is that evolving?

Mayor Kenney: Everyone wants to work in coworking spaces today so they can collaborate with each other. Our innovation districts are popping up around the city where people in different businesses can interact with each other in a relaxed way, and develop their pipelines of innovation. We're seeing that grow on an ongoing basis, and I'm very excited about that.

Skift: Has there been any internal conversation in Philadelphia about measuring the long-term economic impacts of conventions on the growth of your innovation economy?

Mayor Kenney: It's not something I'm aware of but it's certainly interesting to understand the results down the road stemming from our conventions. That would be very useful, not just for the hospitality, tourism, and convention business, but all of tech, modern manufacturing, etc.

1.4 THE LONG-TERM COST OF LOST CONVENTION BUSINESS DUE TO CONTENTIOUS LEGISLATION

On April 8, 2016, the Charlotte Regional Visitors Authority in North Carolina suggested that the state's HB2 "bathroom bill" legislation, which denied various rights for the LGBT community, could result in lost convention business and events revenue worth "multiple millions." On March 27, 2017, the Associated Press (AP) published a special analysis on the long-term impact of HB2, stating: "The law limiting LGBT protections will cost the state more than \$3.76 billion in lost business over a dozen years." Four days later, HB2 was repealed.

That is a significant economic impact, but it doesn't take into account the additional legacy impacts discussed in this report. Aside from the lost revenue resulting from the event cancellations, North Carolina's business brand reputation has been damaged as well. Also, the discriminatory law dissuades members of the LGBT community and others from relocating to the state, visiting for leisure purposes, or investing in businesses, and that sentiment will last for years, irrespective of HB2 going away. That is why there needs to be more focus on evaluating the legacy impacts of conventions so they can be accounted for in these situations.

The AP also suggested that its figure was conservative, because it only calculated lost business based solely on public statements by corporate and association leaders who explicitly said HB2 was why they cancelled proposed or contracted business. "The biggest impact is how many times our phones are not ringing now," Shelly Green, CEO of the Durham Convention & Visitors Bureau, told the AP. She explained that the region lost more than \$11 million in canceled convention business that it knows of, but the number could be much higher because organizations often don't share why they stop considering a city. "There are a lot more meetings that have canceled, but we don't have data on them," Green said.

"I won't place a meeting in North Carolina," adds Jim Clapes, conference manager for the Drug Policy Alliance, who organizes a 1,600-person convention revolving across the U.S. "We won't support cities or states with anti-LGBT policies in place."

1.5 INNOVATION THAT MATTERS: TOP 25 U.S. CITIES PREPARED FOR THE DIGITAL ECONOMY



Startup 1776's "Innovation That Matters 2016" report ranked the most technologically advanced U.S. cities

Skift Take

U.S. convention bureaus are now promoting their expertise in priority sectors, and leaders in those sectors, as a primary sales strategy to engage innovative meeting planners and differentiate their cities' value proposition.

The Startup 1776 incubator in Washington, D.C. published the above chart in its "Innovation That Matters" survey, showing the top 25 U.S. cities that are developing technology to power their economic growth in the 21st century.

Just like certain cities thrived as major commerce centers during the 20th century industrial era, the 25 tech-friendly, highly networked urban metros in the Startup 1776 report are emerging as leaders in the digital era.

“
WE’RE TRYING TO GET PLANNERS TO
UNDERSTAND THAT OUR ASSET BASE
OF EXPERTISE CAN HELP SHAPE
THEIR CONTENT, AND REDEVELOP
THEIR SHOW AS A WHOLE.
”

— MELISSA RILEY, VP OF
CONVENTION SALES & SERVICES,
DESTINATION DC

The preceding chart illustrates how cities are being ranked by their technological progress. This is increasingly important for convention organizers who want easy accessibility to local companies and research institutions within a destination’s technology and digital industries, which applies to both the business and creative sectors. Cities, in turn, are starting to promote to planners the availability of access to their area’s most innovative companies as a main pillar of their regions’ competitive advantage and value proposition.

According to Melissa Riley, VP of convention sales & services at Destination DC, the nation’s capital is elevating the level of conversation with meeting planners exactly this way by highlighting the District’s diverse tech sector. She explains that Destination DC is now actively promoting their advanced industries, and access to the local people leading those industries, to show how meeting planners can integrate a wider range of thought leaders into their event programming.

This is expanding on the typical convention sales conversation promoting the quality of conference centers, hotels, and walkable downtown districts. In effect, it’s a shift from selling a city’s physical hardware to selling its intelligence software and knowledge capital.

“Every city has traditionally sold themselves the same way, where everybody’s got a new convention center, everybody’s got new hotel inventory, everybody’s got great restaurants, great parks, and 40 miles of biking paths,” says Riley. “Now we want to highlight to the meeting planner community and the business community the intellectual assets we have, and our access to government that no one else has. That can help meeting planners enhance their content and programming, drive their exhibitor base, drive delegate counts, and drive sponsorship to make their events more profitable.”

But how is that strategy and messaging resonating with meeting planners?

“It’s resonating more and more,” Riley says. “We’re trying to move beyond dates, rates, and space. We’re trying to get planners to understand that our asset base of expertise can help shape their content, and redevelop their show as a whole. So I would say this is resonating with planners who are more innovative, in general.”

2. HOW THE MEETINGS AND CONVENTIONS INDUSTRY IS UNDERVALUING ITSELF

TOURISM AUTHORITY PROGRAMS DELIVER TOURISM REVENUES

DELIVERING RETURN ON INVESTMENT

With an operating budget of \$32.7 million, SDTA sales and marketing generated 4.7 million room nights for the San Diego Region in FY 2015.*

RETURN ON INVESTMENT*

\$30 TO \$1

* Based on lodging revenue generated for the City of San Diego Tourism Marketing District (FY15).

FY 2016 KPIs (KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS)

GOALS

- Deliver maximum hotel room nights to Tourism Marketing District hotels.
- Produce over 900 million paid advertising gross impressions.
- Generate an estimated 9.3 million visitor inquiries through the website, social media, e-mail and phone.
- Deliver \$27 million in unpaid media exposure through earned media (unpaid editorial), unpaid media promotions and cooperative advertising partners.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- Act as the collective voice of the destination and do what individual organizations can't do by themselves.

- Elevate the San Diego brand and broaden context of San Diego's diverse travel product.
- Leverage all SDTA's marketing assets across **Bought + Earned + Owned** channels in order to increase San Diego's share of voice.
- Focus on developing new markets and audiences for the destination.
- Align programs with Visit California and Brand USA in order to maximize efficiency.
- Deliver strong return on investment for all major programs.
- Support the membership by providing value and opportunity to effectively reach the marketplace.

REGIONAL ECONOMY IS DEPENDENT UPON STRONG TOURISM DEMAND

SAN DIEGO TOURISM INFRASTRUCTURE

Market Composition	89% Leisure, 11% Business (all visitors)
Number of Hotels	473
Number of Hotel Rooms	58,333
Number of Hotel Rooms in the City of San Diego Tourism Marketing District	40,702
Hotel Room Nights Mix	74% Leisure/Transient, 25% Group
Annual Airline Passengers	10 Million
Annual Attendance at Major Attractions	14.6 Million
Total Indian Gaming Properties	10 Casinos
Cruise Passengers	214,671 passengers total, 74,729 embarking passengers
Number of Golf Courses	97
Number of Arts Institutions	85
Number of Craft Breweries	123

SAN DIEGO CONVENTION CENTER (2015)



- 71 Primary Conventions
- 553,283 Attendees
- 693,772 Contracted Room Nights
- \$620M in Attendee Spending

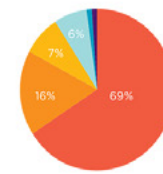
THE POWER OF THE SAN DIEGO BRAND

SAN DIEGO: The San Diego Brand is built on a foundation of inspired optimism and positivity. Our unique blend of great weather, outdoor lifestyle and friendly people infuse our region with an upbeat, anything's possible attitude. San Diego's good vibes are combined with scenic splendor, diverse product and an abundance of activities. This blend of **people + place + climate** is what elevates our customers' mood and makes us a destination like no other.

BRAND PLATFORM—SAN DIEGO OWNS A SUNNY OUTLOOK

THE PEOPLE + THE PLACE + THE CLIMATE = INSPIRED OPTIMISM

SAN DIEGO COUNTY HOTEL ROOM NIGHT MARKET MIX



(% ROOM NIGHTS SOLD)

- Leisure/Business Transient
- Hotel Meetings Groups
- Convention Center Groups
- Government Rate Transient
- Contracted Services
- Leisure Group Tour

Skift Take

Economic development organizations say there's demand for better evaluation of the long-term economic and innovation impacts attributed to conventions. Therefore, new efforts are underway to characterize those impacts with a wider range of case studies illuminating the business outcomes.

Almost all CVBs publish annual economic impact reports publicly, similar to the above 2015 report from the San Diego Tourism Authority. According to the chart, 23 percent of visitor traffic flowing into San Diego was for the purpose of meetings and conventions, resulting in almost one out of four of the 4.7 million room nights booked in the city that year.

Overall, the 553,000 convention attendees spent \$620 million in the destination, delivering significant economic impact to the city and supporting thousands of local jobs.

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WE HAVE A CONFERENCE ALIGNMENT WORKSTREAM
WHERE WE COLLECT CONFERENCES IN OUR HIGH
GROWTH SECTORS, ESPECIALLY IN BIOTECHNOLOGY
AND LIFE SCIENCES, MARITIME TECHNOLOGY, AND
CLEAN TECHNOLOGY.
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— NIKIA CLARKE, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, WORLD
TRADE CENTER - SAN DIEGO REGIONAL ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

However, there are few details about the impacts that conventions in San Diego delivered to the growth of the city's knowledge industries and innovation economy over the long term. The high-tech growth sectors are where the competitive advantage for most U.S. cities exist, and yet, there's relatively no focus on the value of conventions to improve that competitive advantage in most CVB impact studies.

That's slowly evolving to varying degrees in certain cities. For example, there's been a growing effort in recent years among San Diego's economic development agencies to collaborate more effectively with the San Diego Tourism Authority to capitalize on visiting conventions. While that collaboration between the CVB and economic development community is not expressly detailed in the bureau's report, everyone agrees it's an important factor driving economic growth in the city.

"We have a conference alignment work stream where we collect conferences in our high growth sectors, especially in biotechnology and life sciences, maritime technology, and clean technology," explains Nikia Clarke, executive director, World Trade Center - San Diego Regional Economic Development Corporation. "These are the sorts of high-growth industries that we have big globally competitive clusters in, and that we want to continue to engage and develop."

Measuring that long-term economic development in those competitive clusters, however, based on the knowledge sharing taking place at conferences in those sectors, is another thing. "That's something that we don't measure now," says Caldwell. "If somebody could figure out how to quantify that, that would be huge, because ultimately that's the goal."

Clarke supports that, explaining that there are well-measured economic impact reports of particular conferences for their duration in the city, but she questions the ability to expand on that over the long term.

"We can say what the economic impact of Comic-Con or BIO is," says Clarke. "However, in terms of partnering with our research institutions to actually measure the value of our conferences in the long term, that's not something that we've done, either targeted or tactically. It's funny, because my background is in research, and I'm just thinking about that puzzle. It seems like a very difficult thing to measure in a longitudinal way."

Like Caldwell and Clarke, most convention bureau leaders agree that the legacy impacts of conventions as innovation and economic drivers are difficult to measure. Quantifying the spend on hotel rooms, event venues, and restaurant meals during the specific time frame of a conference is easy. Quantifying how a meeting at a conference led to a new medical research facility two years later in the event's host destination is challenging, and impossible to scale destination-wide.

In addition, there is also a general lack of collective understanding when it comes to the entire scope of just what the long-term impacts of conventions are.

"The difficulty here is that every single event has a different set of objectives, so therefore every single event is going to have different kinds of legacies and leave-behinds in the community to measure," says Rod Cameron, executive director of the Joint Meetings Industry Council (JMIC). "We need to make sure that we advance in the area of getting more credible value measurements around the economic policy benefits, as opposed to simply spending benefits, certainly. But to try to generalize it to the point of saying, 'This is the quantified impact that a convention leaves behind in a city,' is, I don't think, ever going to be possible."

Because convention bureaus and economic development agencies don't have those hard measures to meet the test that governments typically want to apply to policy positions, Cameron asserts that the industry needs to instead develop case studies specifically focusing on the economic development legacies of conventions. Toward that end, the JMIC launched "The Iceberg" initiative in 2016 to develop a platform for those types of case studies.

"The interesting thing is that intuitively, most governments get it," Cameron suggests. "They understand the policy benefits and the political benefits associated with hosting a major event in some area that they see as being their economic future, or their community development future. So when you have the conversation with them about these broader benefits that conventions bring, inevitably they pick up on it. And they're usually okay with the story approach because, at the political level certainly, that's where they live."

There's also a new challenge increasingly disrupting how cities and meeting planners measure the short-term impacts of conventions. Gregory O'Dell, president and CEO of Events DC, explains that more attendees are booking outside their dedicated room blocks due to changing business travel behaviors, including the rise of home-sharing. Those room nights are typically not tracked by planners, which therefore is direct economic development that's not accounted for.

"Cities are struggling with how they're capturing the economic benefits around events, because in some cases the traction of room nights is diminishing," O'Dell explains. "When people go outside their block, we may not capture the real benefit of what's happening at an event. But then there's always been this intangible about what the leave-behind is in a city from having leaders of industry and that knowledge base come to your city. So, while I think it's been a long time coming to try to measure that effect, we can all speak to examples anecdotally."

2.1 A LACK OF SPECIFIC U.S. RESEARCH IS HAMPERING THE UNDERSTANDING OF A CONVENTION'S LEGACY IMPACTS

Skift Take

While different stakeholders in the travel industry have produced voluminous research on the economic impacts of tourism development, there is a greater need for more research specifically examining the long-term benefits of conventions on a city's innovation economy.

In the U.S., many leaders in hospitality and tourism point to several economic development and strategy studies in recent years that highlight the economic impact of visitors on a destination's overall growth. A few of the most prominent reports are:

1. Destination Promotion: An Engine of Economic Development; Oxford/Tourism Economics, 2014
2. The Economic Significance of Meetings to the U.S. Economy; Convention Industry Council, 2009-16
3. DestinationNEXT; Destination Marketing Association International, 2014-15
4. The Halo Effect of Tourism; Longwoods International, 2015-2016

The above research projects have proven valuable toward elevating the conversation around the economic impact of business and leisure travel, but none of them focus exclusively or in-depth on the legacy impact of conventions.

The Oxford Economics report (produced by the organization's Tourism Economics division) examines how investments in the visitor economy impact more than the tourism and hospitality sectors. This report is the industry benchmark for insight into the growing relationship between tourism and economic development. However, the report highlights the meetings and events industry only briefly — just five pages in the 60-page report — with minimal discussion dedicated to the impact of conferences driving a city's innovation sectors.

The Convention Industry Council's paper, produced by PricewaterhouseCoopers, focuses on the "direct, indirect, and induced effects" of conferences in general, and the macro/micro scope of the industry at length, but not the impacts of conferences specifically on a city's knowledge industries. This research is continually being updated, and it's potentially one of the better platforms to expand on the discussion of legacy impacts with more detailed case studies.

DMAI's extensive DestinationNEXT research polled over 340 international DMOs for their insight into trends disrupting the destination marketing industry. The research resulted in three "transformational opportunities" for bureaus to pursue moving into the future, including: more strategic

collaboration between DMOs and economic development agencies; more strategic two-way, content-driven digital communications; and a more active role in product development and destination management. The DMAI research discussing DMO alignment with economic development, however, doesn't delineate significantly between leisure tourism and convention business.

The Longwoods research on the Halo Effect of tourism promotion has earned positive reviews from many destination marketers, economic developers, and governments, because the insights

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I THINK EVERYONE NOW IS LOOKING MORE AT THE ECONOMIC SIGNIFICANCE OF A MEETING, DEEPER THAN WE EVER HAVE BEFORE, BEYOND JUST WHAT IT MEANS IN THE SHORT-TERM.

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**— DON WELSH, PRESIDENT AND CEO,
DESTINATION MARKETING ASSOCIATION
INTERNATIONAL**

prove how mass-market tourism advertising campaigns influence overall brand perception and drive relocation. However, again, the research doesn't examine the economic and innovation drivers directly related to conferences in high-growth sectors.

For the Oxford/Tourism Economics report, seven U.S. city and state DMOs

partnered to support the research: Explore Asheville, Visit California, Choose Chicago, Destination Cleveland, Visit Denver, Louisiana Travel, and Visit Phoenix. Don Welsh, president and CEO of Destination Marketing Association International (DMAI), was the head of Choose Chicago when the report was produced.

“The Tourism Economics report opened people's eyes, and I think everyone now is looking more at the economic significance of a meeting, deeper than we ever have before, beyond just what it means in the short term,” Welsh says. “In Chicago, the tech, scientific, and engineering conferences helped spawn the creation of 1871, which is a tech incubator that now has hundreds of different organizations, big and small, and we worked on developing that in conjunction with World Business Chicago.”

David Gilbert, president and CEO of Destination Cleveland, says his organization was the catalyst that brought DMAI and the six other DMOs together to produce the Tourism Economics research.

“I think the Tourism Economics report got a little light bulb to go off in people's minds, because before when we tried to find research that connected travel and tourism to economic development, we found that really nothing existed,” he says. “But I think looking at the long-term benefits that meetings and conventions specifically deliver to a community is the next great evolution. It's difficult to measure, but I would say it's something that we need to do a better job of exposing.”

2.2 BUSINESS EVENTS SYDNEY RESEARCH: LOOKING BEYOND THE DELEGATE SPEND

Skift Take

U.S. convention bureau, economic development, and academic leaders should study Business Events Sydney's thought leadership around the legacy impacts of conventions to develop a similar research template for their own cities.

From a global perspective, the conversation around evaluating the legacy impacts of conventions in high growth sectors began in earnest in 2010 with a joint research venture between Business Events Sydney (BESydney) and the University of Technology Sydney (UTS).

The following four reports, published under the umbrella name of "Beyond Tourism Benefits," form the most comprehensive blueprint framing the growing collaboration between convention bureaus, economic development agencies, academic institutions, and governments to leverage conventions for the long-term benefit of both the host destination and all participating stakeholders and attendees:

- A Scoping Study of Business Events: Beyond Tourism Benefits; BESydney/UTS, 2010
- Beyond Tourism Benefits: Measuring the Social Legacies of Business Events; BESydney/UTS, 2011
- FCCI/Beyond Tourism Benefits: Building an International Profile; BESydney/UTS, 2014
- Conferences: Catalysts for Thriving Economies; BESydney/UTS, 2016

Lyn Lewis-Smith, CEO of Business Events Sydney, and professors Deborah Edwards and Carmel Foley at University of Technology Sydney, are the principles behind the development of the Beyond Tourism Benefits research.

"The Beyond Tourism Benefits report was commissioned because we wanted to educate and inform our government at the time about the benefits of the convention industry," says Lewis-Smith. "My personal belief was that the legacy of business events benefits were beyond, and much greater than, the delegate expenditure, and governments were too focused on the numbers and not the greater good, if you like."

With the newly published research in hand in 2011, Lewis-Smith approached a variety of different ministers who were instrumental in developing the regional government's new 20-year "Infrastructure New South Wales" strategy at the time. The government's strategic framework was designed as a road map to guide the future development of critical public infrastructure.



From "Conferences: Catalysts for Thriving Economies"; BESydney/UTS, 2016

Lewis-Smith's primary message to the ministers emphasized that the value of conferences shouldn't be measured by attendee spend alone, and the long-term economic development generated by conferences can take as long as 10 years or more to reach fruition sometimes.

She supported her message with examples from the Beyond Tourism Benefits research, including the development of the US\$213 million Charles Perkins Centre that conducts research into obesity, diabetes and cardiovascular disease at the University of Sydney, which in part resulted from hosting the International Congress of Obesity in 2006.

That combined convention growth and economic development strategy continues to this day. As someone who's in a position to decide what events BESydney bids on, Lewis-Smith still meets regularly with government ministers to describe the most important conferences in each of the elected leader's relevant sectors. Furthermore, she says, the Beyond Tourism Benefits research informed the decision to build the new ICC Sydney convention center that opened in late 2016.

"So we're not just going to a tourism minister; we're also meeting with the health minister, the minister of industry, the minister of trade, and then we use our research to demonstrate how we will attract international business events to deliver on the objective of the government's industry strategies," explains Lewis-Smith. "That's how all of this first really unfolded. We got the government's attention with Beyond Tourism Benefits, and that ultimately influenced the decision

to build a new convention center. That partnership with government to attract some of the biggest events today, I'm hoping, will solve some of the big issues here in Australia, which are also global issues."

To begin to collect the necessary data to support their initial Beyond Tourism Benefits research, professors Edwards and Foley surveyed the delegates of five major Australian conferences between 2007 to 2010. The first report, "A Scoping Study of Business Events: Beyond Tourism Benefits (2010)," reads:

"The [five] events brought the world's best practice and international knowledge to local sector researchers and practitioners in the fields of medicine, law, sport, and the environment. Growing Australian knowledge has contributed to capacity building within each sector. The events have exposed delegates to new knowledge and ideas which have been incorporated into educational offerings. Delegates have been exposed to local knowledge, research capacity, sites and facilities, and this has increased the attractiveness of Sydney's education sector. This growth in the education sector has wider benefits for increasing the future capacity of New South Wales in the various sectors. The events have provided Sydney organisations, associations, and research centres with new funding from both the Federal Government and private sector. This has allowed growth in the research capacity of each sector."

"One of the key things for host destinations is that locals have access to information they might not have otherwise," Professor Foley explains. "At the same time, new networks are formed to increase international collaboration. These events also bring into the destination cutting-edge researchers,

techniques, and technologies.... The evidence in our research showed to government that these events are energizing key sectors in many ways that the government is interested in supporting."

That initial intelligence provided the foundation for subsequent reports, leading up to the 2016 research:

"Conferences: Catalysts for Thriving

Economies." Part of that research includes three synopses outlining the legacy impact of conventions specifically for governments, associations, and local communities. According to Professor Edwards, the biggest message coming out of the Beyond Tourism Benefits framework suggests that convention bureaus should be positioned as economic development organizations.

"Convention bureaus have typically come under the tourism remit," she says. "But what our research shows is that convention bureaus really should come under the remit of the industry and trade ministries, which usually have more funding attached to them."

"We're not in the tourism business," sums up Lewis-Smith. "We're in the business and innovation business."

“
WE’RE NOT IN THE TOURISM BUSINESS. WE’RE
IN THE BUSINESS AND INNOVATION BUSINESS.
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— LYN LEWIS-SMITH, PRESIDENT AND CEO,
BUSINESS EVENTS SYDNEY

3. DEFINING AND PRIORITIZING THE LEGACY IMPACTS OF CONVENTIONS

Skift Take

While convention bureau leaders understand the legacy economic impacts of conventions, the benefits are not clearly defined for city stakeholders and the meetings industry at large.

Before city leaders and the U.S. meetings industry can begin to evaluate the business outcomes of conventions over the long term, there needs to be a greater consensus about what those legacy impacts actually are.

Skift polled 25 U.S. CVB senior executives to gauge how much importance they attribute to a variety of long-term economic impacts derived from convention business. Questions were posed in different formats, requesting either percentage evaluations or open-ended answers.

QUESTION #1: How much importance do you place on the following economic impacts of conventions on your community's long-term growth?

	Critical	Important	Nice to have	N/A
Motivate attendees to return as tourists	81%	12%	7%	0%
Position the destination as a regional hub of innovation	46%	38%	12%	4%
Attract outside talent in knowledge and creative industries	38%	42%	20%	0%
Implement local/state government initiatives to drive sector development	35%	42%	19%	4%
Promote local academic and scientific community to a global audience	35%	31%	27%	7%
Provide opportunities for local businesses to develop new customers	31%	35%	31%	3%
Provide a range of networking opportunities for young professionals	31%	31%	35%	3%
Attract outside corporate investment and relocation	27%	62%	11%	0%
Promote local industry sector expertise to a global audience	27%	54%	19%	0%
Support the development of new academic and scientific research facilities	23%	27%	35%	15%
Promote the destination as a potential place to live	19%	42%	39%	0%
Promote the destination as a potential place to attend university	19%	19%	50%	12%
Inspire collaborative research projects between local and visiting scholars	15%	42%	35%	8%
Increase opportunities for cultural exchange and knowledge sharing	8%	54%	35%	3%
Generate opportunities for two-way trade	4%	58%	31%	8%

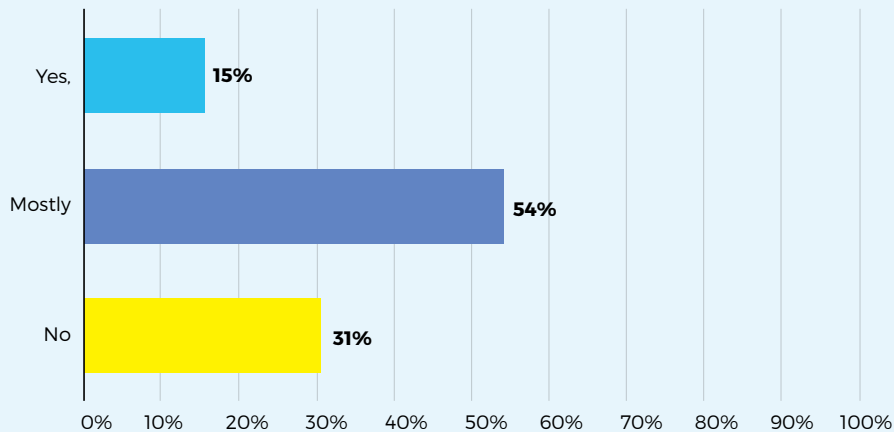
QUESTION #2: What do you feel are the most valuable impacts of conventions on your destination, NOT including hotel/tourism spend?

#	Responses
1	Showcasing our area for future business development, especially in the science and engineering arena. Outside investment from companies who are looking for opportunities. Exposure and collaboration with local economic development experts.
2	Exposing our destination's core competencies to national thought leaders and influencers. Providing a forum for local experts to engage with visiting groups related to their area of expertise.
3	Opportunity to create positive economic benefits for small businesses and minority businesses. Connecting local products, services and amenities to conferences is a tie to the destination and increased interest for delegates to buy those products/services post-convention.
4	Enhancing perceptions of our community, leveraging (and showcasing) local knowledge-base assets, supporting redevelopment in the urban core and providing retail amenities to residents that couldn't be supported without convention activity.
5	Awareness of the destination, value of the conference in education to local stakeholders, and potential prospect of a future resident, employee or company relocation because they met in the destination.
6	Motivate attendees to return as tourists, and help position the destination brand as a stronger regional hub for innovation.
7	In addition to revenues provided to local communities, it's the amenities made possible through visitor taxes as well as the strength and stabilization of quality of life outlets, including restaurants and retail.
8	Some businesses have chosen to relocate after being at a conference here. There is also segment of individuals who have chosen to move their families here. We work closely with our ED office on companies and developments they recruit... always have.
9	Motivate attendees to return as tourists, re-locate, and/or invest in community.
10	Exposure to a new audience that may not have traveled to our destination otherwise. Opportunity for our community to be showcased as a place to bring business, i.e. relocate or open a new facility.
11	Help to implement local and/or state government initiatives to drive economic development initiatives!!
12	Exposure to the destination, connections for the conference/conference attendees to local corporations and businesses.
13	Exposing new people to our community as a place to live, start a business or grow a business. It all starts with a trip and that happens many times through conferences.
14	Definitely helps the local government drive economic development initiatives.
15	Build repeat business, future conference, bleisure and leisure vacation visits, creates jobs, saves local county taxes, builds economy, grows tourism. Jobs, did I say JOBS!
16	Opportunity to introduce city for future economic development opportunities and for talent recruitment.
17	Exposure to the destination to generate return stays.
18	Introducing business leaders to our community.
19	Able to introduce our city to others and connect to our business sector.
20	Awareness, new buyers.
21	Jobs.

QUESTION #3: Where do you see the biggest challenges to evaluate the long-term impacts of conventions on your innovation economy?

#	Responses
1	No formal standardized methodology or mechanism in place currently to measure and track impact in above noted categories.
2	Finding the right people to be aware of these conventions - for the media to cover these conferences and for the local economic development professional to understand the value of these conferences to their organizations.
3	Multiple destinations under our brand. Being fair to all areas.
4	Political environment is skeptical of impact.
5	Translating that information into "news you can use" for the general public and elected officials, using references and language that matter to Joe/Joan Public.
6	Real, dependable measures.
7	Budget and lack of research data to share with stakeholders.
8	Staff and funding.
9	The challenge is in working with local government and other economic development groups to reach the common goal of strong community growth. Working to develop and build long-term plans that are implemented is a challenge.
10	Lack of resources (staff and money).
11	Quantifiable impact information. People like numbers and sometimes those are hard to get without significant research investment.
12	Having a local government believe in what we are doing and be on board with our mission because in the end, it will only benefit the progress of our community.
13	Building and keeping the focus on the collaboration locally after events have come and gone.
14	Politics and lack of appreciation. Small CVB teams have no staff to get the word out locally and no funding for local promotions to blow their own whistle. Lack of interest due to lack of education on the impact of meetings and tourism.
15	Ability to track if a conference actually had an impact.
16	Actual metrics to support claim.
17	Conferences are less than 9% of our tourism mix and hotels rarely share information on the conferences unless it came from one of our leads, so we really can't tell a story.
18	While intuitively appealing and true, the concept of legacy impacts is abstract and difficult to quantify as there are not clear cause-effect pathways.
19	Our destination doesn't have a sales tax so it's difficult to quantify the impact to local businesses, although we use economic impact calculators. There are also silos in business sectors where tourism/conventions are not seen as a value add as much as tech and other traded sectors.
20	Advocacy and education of municipal and elected officials.

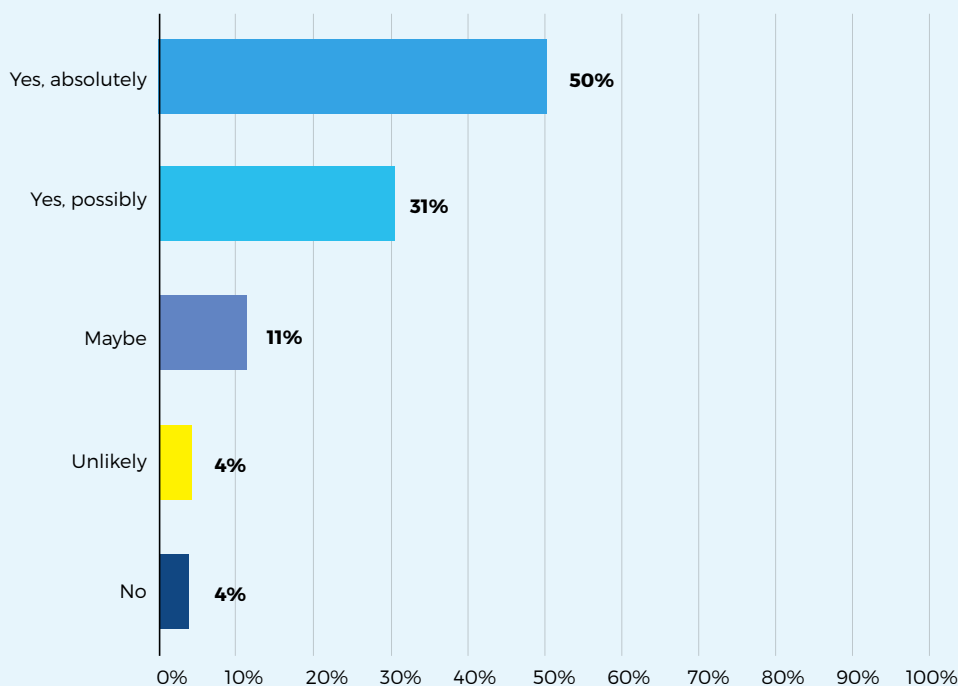
QUESTION #4: Based on the variety of aforementioned economic impacts delivered by conventions over the long term, beyond the hotel/tourism spend, do you feel your bureau is adequately communicating the full impact of conventions to your local government and business community?



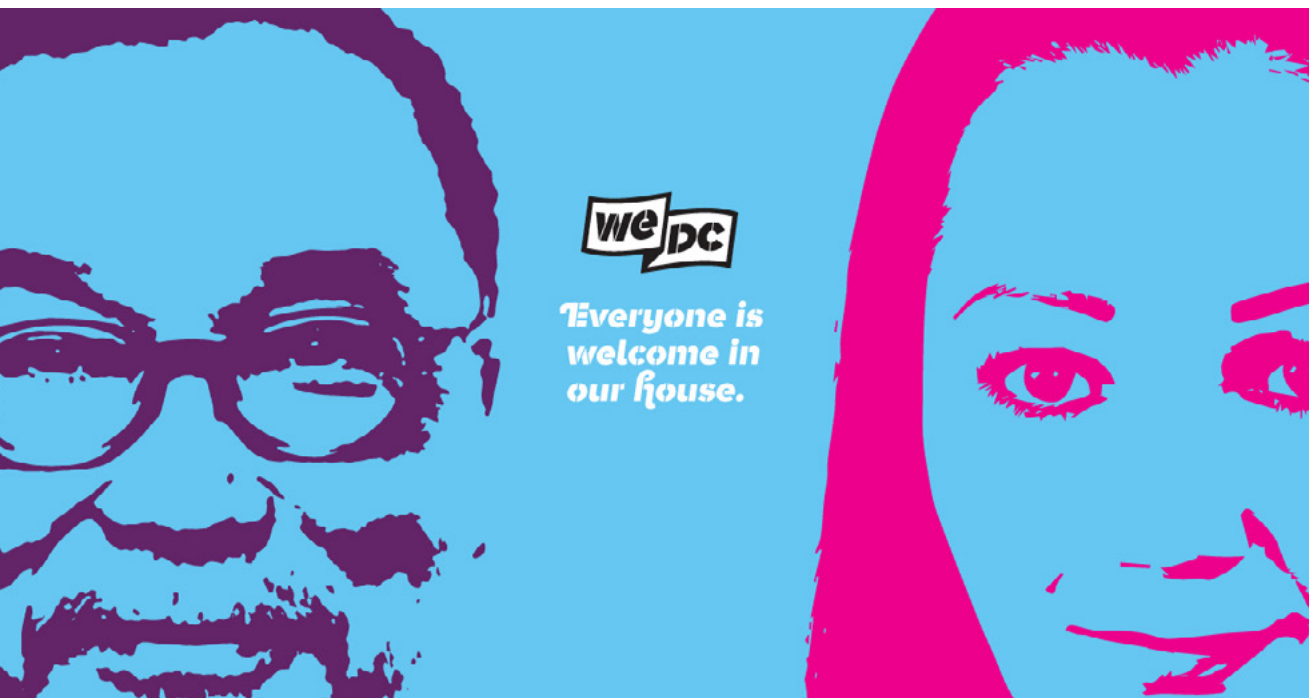
Two more poll questions asked if respondents feel there is a direct correlation between evaluating the long-term economic impacts of conventions and the level of funding a CVB receives to promote the destination to convention organizers.

More than four out of five (81%) responded 'Yes' or 'Yes, possibly' that there is a positive correlation.

QUESTION #5: Do you feel if your bureau was better able to show research proving the long-term economic impacts of conventions on your destination's innovation economy, beyond the immediate hotel/tourism spend, it could help further validate and/or support requests to increase public funding?



4. CASE STUDY: WASHINGTON, DC LEVERAGES CONVENTIONS TO DEVELOP ITS TECH SECTOR



Skift Take

The Washington, D.C. Mayor's Office is leading a citywide initiative to position the nation's capital not just as one of the country's leading technology hubs, but also its most inclusive. Adopting the banner of "Inclusive Innovation," the District is leveraging its high percentage of minorities and women in the local tech sector to attract more tech conventions with a diverse audience base.

Washington, D.C. was ranked the #2 city for tech jobs in the U.S. by Bloomberg in 2017, and a top five most future-ready city by Dell, which both acknowledge the emergence of the city as a global technology leader over the last decade.

To capitalize on that local knowledge base and drive continued growth in the city's startup community, Destination DC published a new white paper in early 2017 showcasing the region's tech sector in an effort to attract more tech industry meetings and conventions. The report, "Innovation Capital: Meetings & Conventions in a Tech Hub," provides comprehensive information on the growth of the tech scene for tech companies considering hosting a meeting or investing in the city. The content highlights items such as the number of VC funds in the city, the percentage of higher

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**WE ARE THE #1 CITY FOR FEMALE ENTREPRENEURS
AND THE BEST PLACE FOR PEOPLE OF COLOR
IN ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND INNOVATION. SO
WE ALREADY HAVE THOSE BASIC COMPETITIVE
ADVANTAGES. WE JUST REALIZED WE NEEDED TO
TALK ABOUT THEM A LOT MORE.**
”

— **BRIAN KENNER, DEPUTY MAYOR FOR PLANNING
AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, WASHINGTON, D.C.**

1,000 startups, five of the top 100 investors in early startup tech and biotech companies, and 185,000 high-tech employees.

The payoff of that growth is the increasing volume of tech industry conferences taking place in the city. For example, the TechConnect World Innovation Conference in D.C. in May is going to co-located for the first time by the Nanotech 2017 Conference, the National Innovation Summit, and the National SBIR/STTR Conference, the latter of which caters to small business entrepreneurs.

The research around tech meetings also provides a new platform to support Destination DC's convention sales efforts to position D.C. as a tech capital. According to Elliott Ferguson, president and CEO of Destination DC, many established global tech companies have lobbying offices in the city, but they haven't always traditionally regarded D.C. as a tech powerhouse. That's changing because there's now a critical mass of leaders in the local tech economy that's appealing to the companies that D.C. is wooing for both meetings and long-term investment.

“The city is investing in real estate and infrastructure that meets the needs of a lot of these types of tech companies,” Ferguson explains. “It's important that those organizations that we're trying to attract recognize what's happening here, and how we can make our tech sector work for them and their meetings. The Innovation Capital report is an important part of that process.”

Melissa Riley, VP of convention sales & services for Destination DC, adds, “We always highlight the city's attractions to motivate meeting planners to choose D.C., but now we're also talking about the amount of tech and digital innovation coming out of the universities, hospitals, and our more than 1,000 startups. Their ambassadors and founders can point conferences in a whole new direction.”

Gregory O'Dell, president and CEO of Events DC, says making the D.C. tech sector work for visiting companies means delivering a more connected convention delegate experience that helps attendees more easily meet the relevant people in the local tech economy.

degrees in STEM fields per capita, and private tech companies like the Startup 1776 incubator, which was one of the city's early tech accelerator success stories back in 2013.

The strategy to build the tech sector in D.C. began in earnest in 2010 when The Office of the Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development (DMPED) published an Innovation Strategy report to foster and support the growth of startups. Today, the D.C. region now includes more than

"But it's not just about bringing tech events here; it's also about looking at a broader picture about bringing an expanded tech ecosystem here as well," says O'Dell. "For example, right now we're looking at eSports, or e-gaming, events that we think our destination would be perfectly suited for. When you see places like 1776 and other tech companies growing here, that's been fertile ground to draw even more new tech companies to come here. So now we're building and attracting the support for an entire eSports industry ecosystem, versus working just to attract eSports events."

The Rise of Inclusive Innovation

D.C. Mayor Muriel Bowser is intent on differentiating the tech sector and the tech meetings experience in her city by focusing on the District's high level of diversity in advanced industries, compared to national averages. For 2016, U.S. Census figures show that Washington, D.C. has the highest percentage of African Americans working in STEM jobs in the country, and the Institute for Women's Policy Research states that D.C. is the #1 city in the U.S. for women's employment and earnings, with the lowest gender pay gap in the country.

In late 2016, Mayor Bowser rolled out the citywide "Inclusive Innovation" campaign to promote the District's diversity in its tech sector. Providing the foundation for the initiative, the Mayor's Office published the "Pathways to Inclusion" report in November 2016, which profiles the current state of inclusion in D.C.'s tech economy.

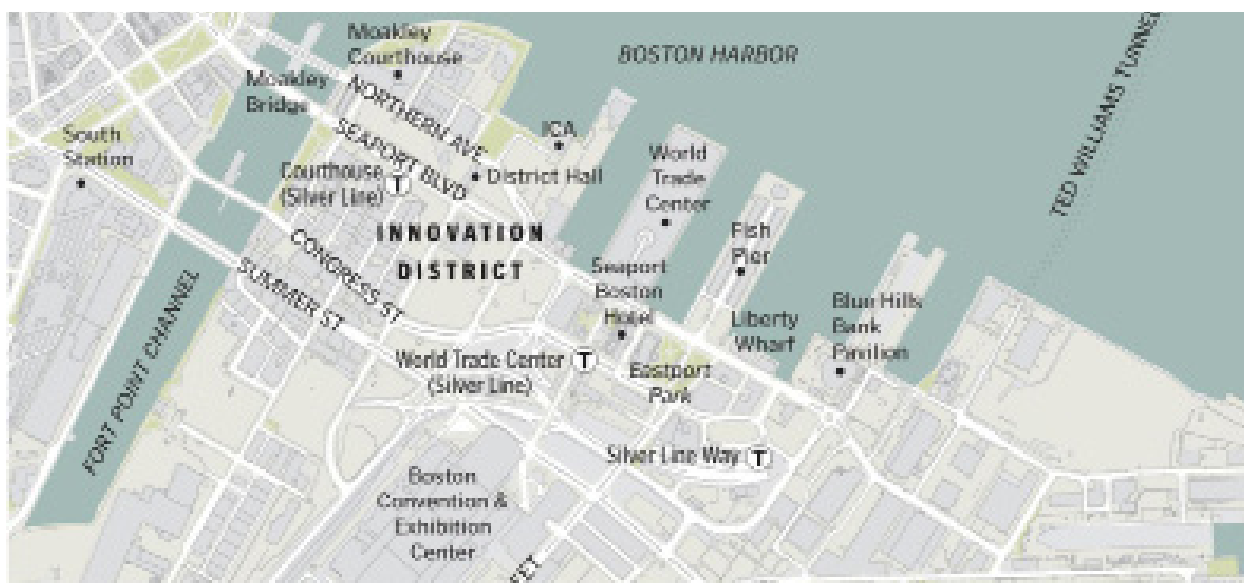
The announcement for the report reads: "The 'Pathways to Inclusion Report' was cultivated from a commitment by Mayor Bowser and her Innovation Technology Inclusion Council to expand on the District's innovation economy in a way that will serve as a national model for inclusion and diversity. This report is the first of its kind for the District, providing a road map to create an inclusive ecosystem where the tech and innovation economy can grow."

The overarching goal is to communicate to corporate leaders that all of their employees, regardless of who they are or where they come from, will feel welcome in the capital. It also emphasizes to convention organizers, who have groups with diverse demographics, that all of their attendees will be welcomed with the same level of hospitality.

"We are the #1 city for female entrepreneurs and the best place for people of color in entrepreneurship and innovation," says Brian Kenner, deputy mayor for planning and economic development in D.C. "So we already have those basic competitive advantages. We just realized we needed to talk about it a lot more. We want people who may not look like every tech founder in London or Silicon Valley to think – when they come here to start a company or visit for a conference – 'D.C. is a place where I can feel at home.'"

According to Kenner, the city's diversity and focus on inclusivity is also supporting significant population and corporate relocation growth in the region. "Part of what's driving Inclusive Innovation is based on the fact that companies are increasingly saying they want to be located where their future employees are located, so we've been very intentional about how we're trying to market ourselves," he explains. "Washington, D.C. has really benefited from that positioning, because we're seeing about 1,000 people move to the city per month."

5. CONVENTION BUREAUS AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AGENCIES ARE POSITIONING CITIES AS KNOWLEDGE COLLISION SPACES



The Boston Innovation District has completely reshaped the Boston Seaport and convention center area.



Skift Take

Cities are repositioning their downtown cores as “Innovation Districts” to better connect their high-tech and creative industries, research institutions, cultural venues, and convention center districts. The goal is to create a richer attendee experience with more opportunities for organic networking and knowledge sharing between local and visiting industry leaders.

In 2014, the Brookings Institution launched a research series called “The Rise of Innovation Districts,” profiling the emergence of a new urban model sweeping across many of the world’s revitalized downtown cores. Innovation districts are characterized by a convergence of startup and legacy high-tech companies, business and creative industry professionals, academic and cultural institutions, and mixed-use commercial development, often in close proximity to a city’s convention center.

For the purposes of this report, think of innovation districts as urban co-working spaces for convention attendees and local professionals, where there’s a high compression of the brightest and most creative minds congregating in a communal environment.

“
OUR MOST CREATIVE INSTITUTIONS, FIRMS, AND
WORKERS CRAVE PROXIMITY SO THAT IDEAS
AND KNOWLEDGE CAN BE TRANSFERRED MORE
QUICKLY AND SEAMLESSLY.

”

— BRUCE KATZ, FOUNDING DIRECTOR OF THE
BROOKINGS INSTITUTION'S METROPOLITAN
POLICY PROGRAM

The Boston Innovation District is one of the most well-established examples of these knowledge hubs in the U.S., which has completely revitalized the Boston Seaport surrounding the Boston Convention & Exhibition Center. The district has become a magnet for new startups in the tech and media industries that convention organizers can integrate into their programming.

Cities from Tallahassee to Chattanooga are adopting the innovation district label for their high-tech and creative industry hubs, while others are branding them differently, such as Cleveland's "Health Tech Corridor." But the idea is the same. These are designated areas designed as a platform for spontaneous conversations between creative people to bridge innovative thinking across all sectors.

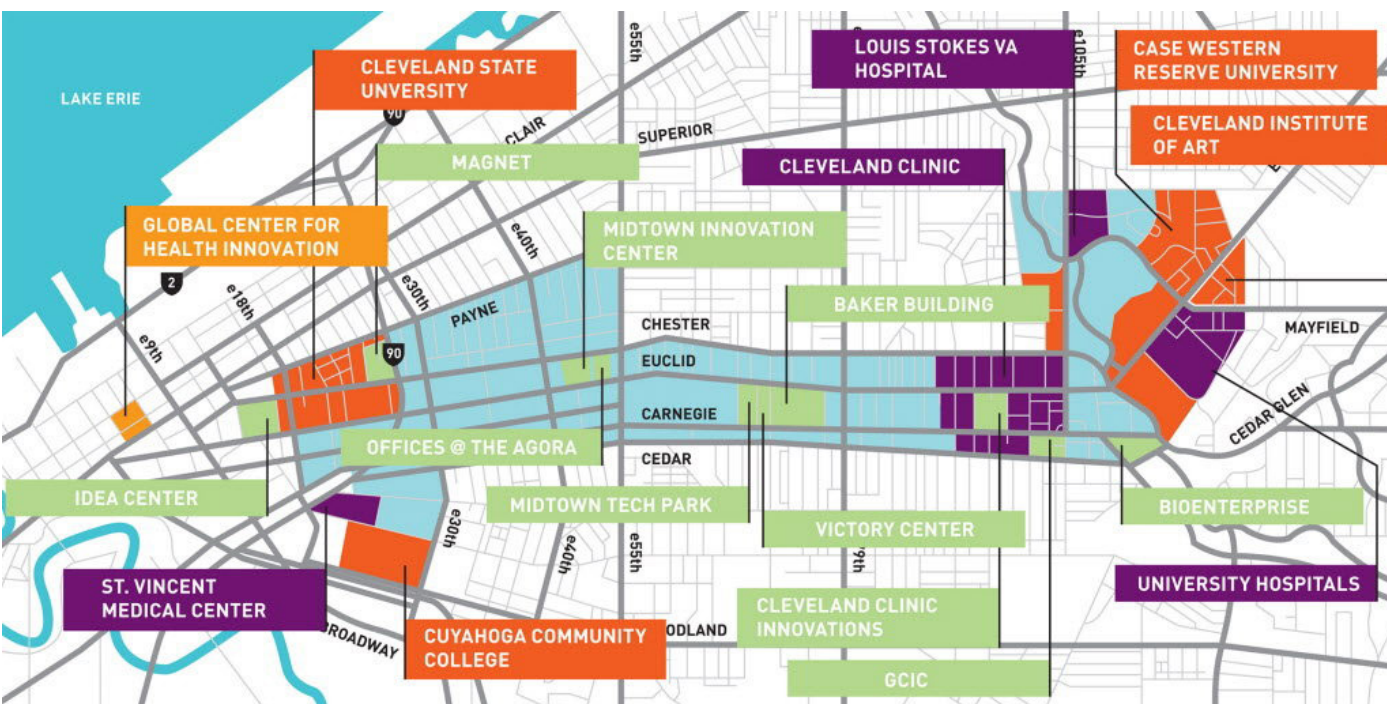
"Our most creative institutions, firms and workers crave proximity so that ideas and knowledge can be transferred more quickly and seamlessly," explains Bruce Katz, founding director of the Brookings Institution's Metropolitan Policy Program, and co-author of The Rise of Innovation Districts. "Our open innovation economy rewards collaboration, transforming how buildings and entire districts are designed and spatially arrayed."

The fast-growing number of innovation districts are evolving as a new option for collaborative breakout spaces where visiting delegates can meet with local business and academic influencers. Meaning, the traditional convention center package is now expanding to encompass more of the downtown core, encompassing a wider swath of innovative businesses and university campuses to help disperse attendees throughout more parts of the city.

In effect, innovation districts are the physical manifestation of many government strategies today toward driving innovation in advanced industries to spur long-term economic growth and create competitive advantage in the war for high-value STEM jobs. It's industrial placemaking for next-gen professionals. Equally important, innovation districts offer a proven way for both first- and second-tier markets to reposition their destination brands as hubs of innovation.

"It's a very powerful thing to have a conference in an innovation district, or 'precinct,' as we call them," says professor Deborah Edwards at the University of Technology Sydney. "I think London has shown this exceptionally well with their London Tech Week. That was a specific sector that the local and national government wanted to develop, within a specific environment in London's technology district where there's a vital community supporting that sector."

5.1 CLEVELAND'S HEALTH TECH CORRIDOR CONNECTS THE CITY'S MEDICAL LEADERS WITH THE WORLD'S BUSINESS LEADERS



Cleveland's Health Tech Corridor is shaded in light blue.

Skift Take

Few cities in America have integrated their convention center district, academic institutions, scientific research labs, and local business community together better than Cleveland to attract high-value conventions in a specific sector.

Not many cities in the world can deliver as innovative a platform for medical meetings as Cleveland, because of the way the healthcare companies, scientific research institutions, startup community, convention facility infrastructure, and venture capital companies are so well integrated.

Adjacent to the downtown Huntington Convention Center of Cleveland, the \$465 million Global Center for Health Innovation is a gathering space for the world's leading medical and health tech organizations. Three miles inland, the famous Cleveland Clinic, Case Western Reserve University, Louis Stokes VA Medical Center, and University Hospitals form a cluster of medical research facilities known as "University Circle." And joining the two knowledge sector hubs, the fast-growing Health Tech Corridor is a blossoming innovation district attracting leading medical tech companies at the nexus of the city's innovation economy.

The result of that connectivity has positioned Cleveland as one of the Midwest's medical meetings capitals. In fact, in summer 2016, the city was rebranded as "The Medical Capital" by BioEnterprise, which is a non-profit biomedical company that helps companies in biotechnology, health IT, and medical devices raise funding to expand operations. At TheMedicalCapital.com website, healthcare industry convention planners have access to the many partners behind the platform, including Cleveland Clinic and Case Western.

"About 43 percent of our overall book of business in the Huntington Convention Center is healthcare and medical, which is a high number due to the advantage of having the Global Center located adjacent to the convention center," says Dave Johnson, director of communications at the Huntington Convention Center. "Medical industry meeting planners are particularly interested in the Global Center because it offers unique sponsorship and partnership opportunities with more than 45 companies and organizations based there, as well as an outstanding group of potential speakers for educational and breakout sessions."

“
THE HEALTH TECH CORRIDOR ALLOWS US TO
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MEDICAL-RELATED MEETING OR CONVENTION HERE.
”

— DAVID GILBERT, PRESIDENT AND CEO,
DESTINATION CLEVELAND

Johnson adds that the economic impact of the convention center and Global Center on the entire Northeast Ohio region includes more than \$100 million in “new money” injected into the region, driving new job creation, and international media attention focusing on Cleveland’s revitalization and strengths in healthcare and device manufacturing.

One of the most interesting developments of late in Cleveland is the growth of the Health Tech Corridor (HTC) between the convention and medical districts. Anchored by the Midtown Innovation Center, the corridor is attracting a high number of medical companies moving into the area, so it provides another portal for planners to access local innovation, and it's driving economic development in underserved neighborhoods nearby.

"The interesting thing about the Health Tech Corridor is the nature of collaboration it's created," says Jeff Epstein, director of the HTC. "When you link all of the assets, it's really fascinating because this package is creating a holistic laboratory of amazing innovation."

Medical conferences play a big part in driving Cleveland's growth because visiting business leaders want to plug into Cleveland's innovation economy, which everyone in the local health tech industry wants to make as accessible as possible. CEOs operating in the HTC say the district is really an expertise connector designed to bring visiting convention delegates together with local healthcare leaders.

"Doctors will ask me, 'Can you give me a behind-the-scenes tour of the Cleveland Clinic?'" says Jake Orville, CEO of Cleveland HeartLab, which is a medical device manufacturer based in the HTC. "And I'll say, 'Sure, of course.' I mean, if you go to Boston, who would you even ask for a behind-the-scenes tour of Harvard Partners or Brigham? Here it's just easy. We have a bit of a chip on our shoulder because we want to prove we can compete with any city in the world when it comes to medical innovation."

According to David Gilbert, president and CEO of Destination Cleveland, there's been a marked shift in the last few years where more planners are asking for those kind of introductions, which the convention bureau is helping facilitate in growing numbers. He cites how Cleveland's destination brand reputation has successfully transcended beyond that of a "flyover city" because of the volume of convention business growing year-over-year.

"Our research shows that there is an enormously wide gap in perception among those who have visited Cleveland versus those who have never visited," explains Gilbert. "Now we have the Corridor where developers are building this whole new tech quarter area, building numerous headquarters and incubation innovation spaces, particularly related to healthcare, IT, and medical device companies. And so that helps elevate Cleveland's reputation in medical innovation circles as a hub for medical innovation."

Also, in terms of site selection for convention breakouts, the HTC provides meeting planners with a new inventory of experiences hardwired into Cleveland's innovation economy.

"The Health Tech Corridor allows us to offer meeting planners these incredible opportunities for connection, for tours, for people to see some of these spaces themselves," says Gilbert. "And there are times when that opportunity can be the difference maker in deciding to host a medical-related meeting or convention here."

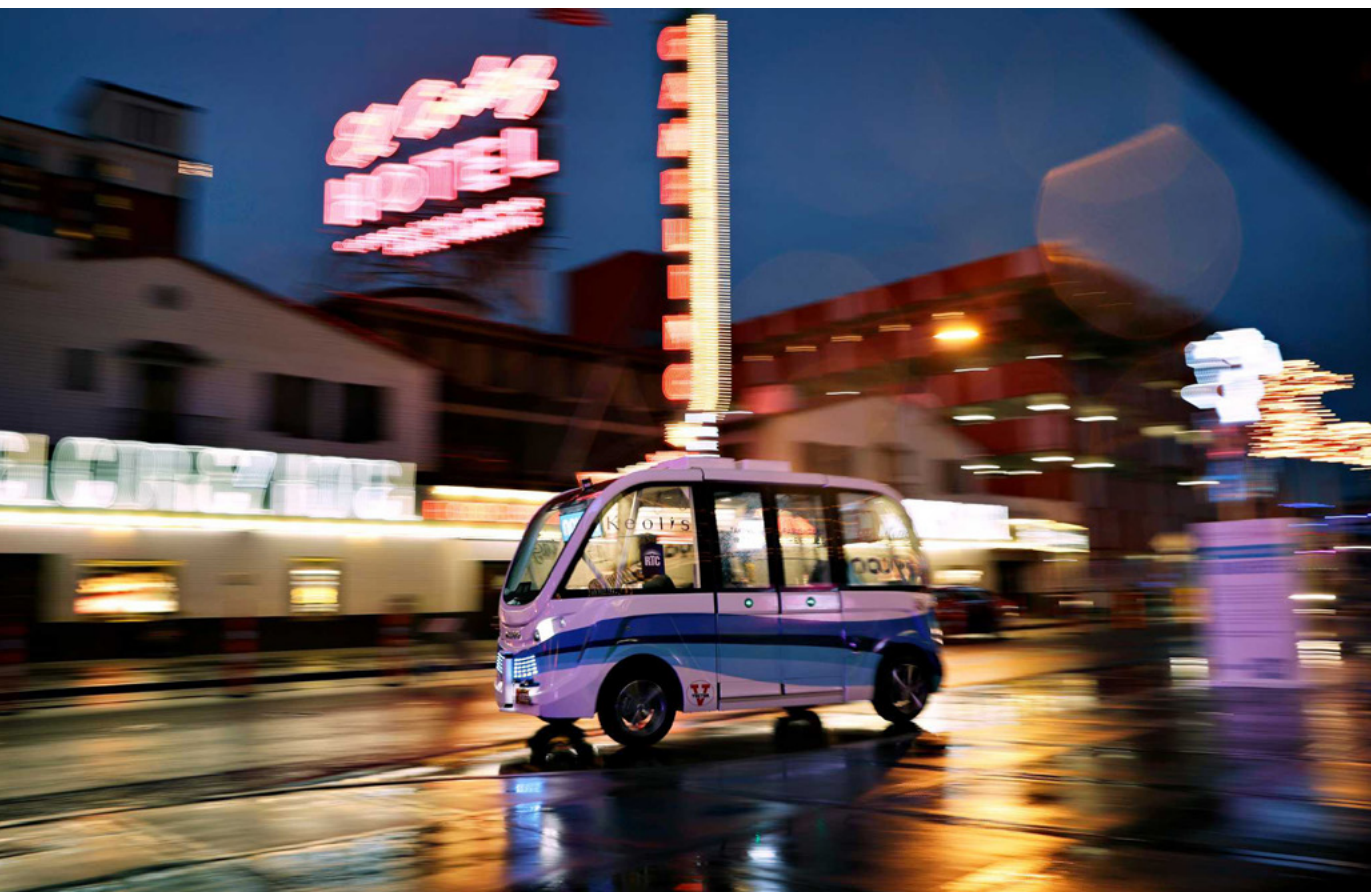
Aram Nerpouni, president and CEO of BioEnterprise, adds that the HTC is now driving economic development throughout the neighboring communities located between University Circle and the convention district.

"The Corridor is really creating a very specific connection between those two pieces, and we're starting to see an exponential growth in the number of companies and the number of buildings that are showing up with all these young companies moving in," he says. "Now we're trying to make sure we're creating better connectivity to the neighborhoods around that."

Nerpouni, like so many other economic development influencers across the U.S., stresses that inclusivity is an important part of the city's strategic plan.

"That's a big part of this evolution," he says. "So not only are we spinning out young companies that grow rapidly and create these very high-paying jobs, but now we want to make sure that we're connecting that growth into the surrounding communities, so that everyone's seeing some benefit from the amazing innovation and wealth creation in Cleveland."

5.2 LAS VEGAS TECH AND MEDICAL MEETINGS SUPPORT THE DEVELOPMENT OF NEW INNOVATION HUBS



The Paris-based Nayva company tested its self-driving shuttle in Las Vegas in January 2017.

Skift Take

Las Vegas is a prime example of how a city has pivoted its business brand by positioning itself as a hub of tech innovation based on its roster of conventions. The repositioning of the urban core as the “Las Vegas Innovation District” is also helping strengthen the attractiveness of the region to high-value sectors.

The Las Vegas Convention & Visitors Authority (LVCVA), the City of Las Vegas, and the Las Vegas Global Economic Alliance (LVGEA) have strived to diversify the city’s tourism economy to better weather market disruptions. The city leaders are especially targeting technology and medical conventions to motivate companies in those sectors to establish footprints in Southern Nevada, create jobs, and improve the region’s quality of living. The CES technology conference in January, other tech events hosted by companies ranging from Amazon to HP, and all of the high-profile medical conventions throughout the rest of the year are some of the city’s highest priorities to nurture long-term economic growth.

Together, the LVCVA and LVGEA, along with multiple universities and private business development organizations, have produced strategic policy frameworks that outline collaborative efforts to boost the tech and medical sectors in Las Vegas. Those plans include directives to seek out partnerships with companies visiting the city for conventions that can potentially provide innovative strategies to improve the transportation infrastructure, develop smart city technologies, and bring more healthcare professionals and health tech companies to the region, among many other relationship-building tactics.

“Our role is growing in how we provide connections between our medical and technology conferences, and all of the exhibitors that they have coming in, with the local stakeholders who are most relevant to those industries,” explains Cathy Tull, CMO of the LVCVA. “We now have a bigger stake in making sure that all of those economic development meetings in Las Vegas are taking place across our networks.”

That process begins with long-term strategic planning. In December 2015, for example, the Regional Transportation Commission of Southern Nevada (RTC) released the giant 2,370-page “Transportation Investment Business Plan.” The document states: “Tourism and resident growth will overwhelm the existing capacity of Las Vegas’ transportation infrastructure and greatly affect the future economic health of Southern Nevada.” The TIBP concludes that the city’s current infrastructure will reach a breaking point within the next decade, placing at risk the Core Area Economy (aka, the Las Vegas Strip), which supports 37 percent of all jobs in the region, \$50 billion

in economic activity, and \$1.5 billion in state and local taxes.

“
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SURE THAT ALL OF THOSE ECONOMIC
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TAKING PLACE ACROSS OUR NETWORKS.**
”

— **CATHY TULL, CMO, LAS VEGAS
CONVENTION & VISITORS AUTHORITY**

Therefore, the state and local governments want autonomous vehicles and delivery drones in the city, sooner than later. Meanwhile, CES is the world’s largest showcase of smart car and drone technology, taking place in Las Vegas, so the LVCVA and LVGEA are tapping into that tech innovation to develop new partnerships with the city.

For example, directly following CES 2017, the first-ever driverless shuttles on U.S. public roads started ferrying passengers around downtown Las Vegas. The launch is the result of a partnership between the Paris-based Nayva electric shuttle manufacturer, the Keolis fleet logistics provider, and the City of Las Vegas. In addition, Phoenix-based Local Motors is launching its driverless, 3D-printed Olli shuttle with IBM Watson AI connectivity in Las Vegas in late 2017. And, the pending opening of the Henderson Unmanned Vehicle Range (HUVR) next to Nevada State College is attracting drone manufacturing and drone delivery logistics companies to set up shop in Las Vegas.

“Tech events like CES have really benefited the community in that they’re bringing those innovative companies to town, and when they see what they can do here, then they start building relationships,” says Tull. “When companies are coming to Las Vegas, they’re coming with new technologies and new ideas and having new conversations, but that requires a lot of collaboration on our side. So you can draw those linkages between conventions — where business groups are coming to Las Vegas and being exposed to the city — to our elected officials and economic development agencies that are also helping promote that piece of the pie.”

The Medical Meetings Segment

Another high-priority sector, the global medical tourism market is expected to grow 15.7 percent on average annually through 2022, according to the April 2016 report, “World Medical Tourism Market — Opportunities and Forecasts, 2014-2022,” produced by Allied Market Research. The report explains: “The major factors that boost market growth include affordability, availability, and accessibility of superior quality healthcare services with healthy support and assistance from tourism departments and local governments.”

Las Vegas HEALS is a membership-based organization set up like a chamber of commerce, representing more than 34,000 healthcare professionals who share a mandate to improve the level of healthcare in Southern Nevada and strengthen the medical tourism infrastructure. In 2014, the group published the “Las Vegas Regional Strategic Plan for Medical & Wellness Tourism,” supported by the LVCVA, LVGEA, and the University of Nevada Las Vegas (UNLV). Part of that plan includes strategies to better leverage the volume of convention business in the city related to healthcare.

“We need to take advantage of this flow of convention delegates that comes into Las Vegas, and demographically profile these folks to understand who they are,” says Doug Geinzer, CEO of Las Vegas HEALS. “So we need to align with the meeting planners to identify their organizations and their practitioners visiting here for those meetings.”

“
**WE NEED TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THIS FLOW
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”

— DOUG GEINZER, CEO, LAS VEGAS HEALS

However, Geinzer continues, that’s only half the equation. He says medical tourism also drives long-term economic impact throughout the local community.

“We also talk a lot to the planners’ target audiences, because when conventions come to Las Vegas, the local community now has access to continuing education opportunities that they would not have otherwise,” Geinzer says. “In the medical space, continuing education is huge. Everybody needs to get their CME’s, and a lot of those continuing education opportunities are tied to a professional association conference.”

The Las Vegas Innovation/Medical Districts

The growing push in Las Vegas to strengthen the medical and technology sectors inspired the City of Las Vegas in 2016 to announce the development of the Las Vegas Innovation District. Encompassing the redeveloping downtown core and the Las Vegas Arts District, the area is being designed as “a center for testing groundbreaking technology in the areas of alternative energy, citizen participation, transportation, and social infrastructure. It is also a proving ground for collaborative efforts between the city and its new technology partners.”

An example of that, Audi chose Las Vegas leading up to CES 2017 to test out its new “Vehicle-to-Infrastructure” (V2I) technology, where Internet of Things (IoT) systems in the cars communicate with IoT devices throughout the city to make intelligent predictions about traffic patterns.

“So when you look at things like the Audi test, they could have done that anywhere, but they chose Las Vegas,” says Tull. “They understand how we work together. They see how things are linked here. Again, it’s another opportunity to expose business leaders who are here during conferences to what the Las Vegas environment has to offer.”

The Las Vegas Innovation District is directly adjacent to the Las Vegas Medical District where the new UNLV School of Medicine is opening in 2017. The city has invested more than \$36 million into the medical district’s infrastructure in the last four years, and it is scheduled to inject another \$97 million in 2018 and beyond. By 2030, the medical school is projected to have an economic impact of \$1.2 billion, according to a December 2013 report by consulting firm Tripp Umbach.

There’s also another significant long-term economic impact in terms of revitalizing the downtown core and driving new business development. The medical and innovation districts are located in two Las Vegas neighborhoods that fell into serious neglect in the late 20th century, so their redevelopment is paramount to diversify the city’s economic base beyond the Strip.

Tull says that all of this urban innovation is proving the validity of the collaborative efforts between the City of Las Vegas, LVCVA, and LVGEA. She emphasizes that the consequences of the agencies’ actions are greater than the sum of their parts to drive long-term economic growth.

“We need to continue to align ourselves with economic development, and really explain the benefits to local politicians, by showing that not only is there economic impact in regards to bringing more conventions to Las Vegas, there’s economic impact that trickles throughout the community here,” she explains.

“It’s really about exposing new industries and technology and platforms to our local elected officials, and also those in economic development, so that we can all have that conversation around: ‘How do you get a drone company to relocate to Las Vegas?’”

5.3 THE SAN DIEGO TOURISM AUTHORITY IS HELPING BUILD THE DESTINATION'S BUSINESS BRAND AROUND TECH INDUSTRY



San Diego collaborated with *National Geographic* to highlight the city's tech sector.

Skift Take

San Diego is competing against two megawatt meeting cities — L.A. and San Francisco — and its reputation has always been firmly entrenched in leisure tourism. So the San Diego Tourism Authority is investing in retooling that image to show how the city is also a global leader in biotech, cleantech, and urban livability, and it's relying heavily on conventions to accomplish that.

In 2015, *National Geographic* profiled San Diego as one of nine global smart cities — ranked on talent, tolerance, and technology — in an hour-long documentary distributed to 247 million households in more than 60 countries. The San Diego Tourism Authority was instrumental in developing the content to position San Diego as a booming innovation capital and leader in advanced industries ranging from life sciences to cleantech to maritime logistics.

"We drove it and we figured out how to pay for it," says Joe Terzi, president and CEO of the San Diego Tourism Authority. "The content is all about the business side of San Diego, but then we also included the arts and sciences side, and the unique educational institutions we have here."

The City of San Diego and the San Diego Regional Economic Development Corporation (SDREDC) also promoted the film to their audiences. Leading up to the show's launch, San Diego Mayor Kevin L. Faulconer said, "We've talked a lot about how San Diego is a place of innovation and opportunities, and the world is taking notice."

“
WE ARE VERY INVOLVED IN HELPING
THE INNOVATION ECONOMY GROW BY
BRINGING CONVENTIONS HERE,
BECAUSE WE KNOW THEY BECOME A
STRONG FEEDER FOR OUR INDUSTRIES.”

— JOE TERZI, PRESIDENT AND CEO,
SAN DIEGO TOURISM AUTHORITY

The *National Geographic* documentary builds on an earlier project produced by the SDREDC and SDTA called: "They Came Here." It highlights business leaders in San Diego who relocated to the city to launch successful new tech and medical companies, such as Jonas Salk, who opened The Salk Institute for Biological Studies in La Jolla, and Dr. Ivor Royston, who founded the first biotech companies in San Diego.

The collaboration between San Diego's destination marketing and

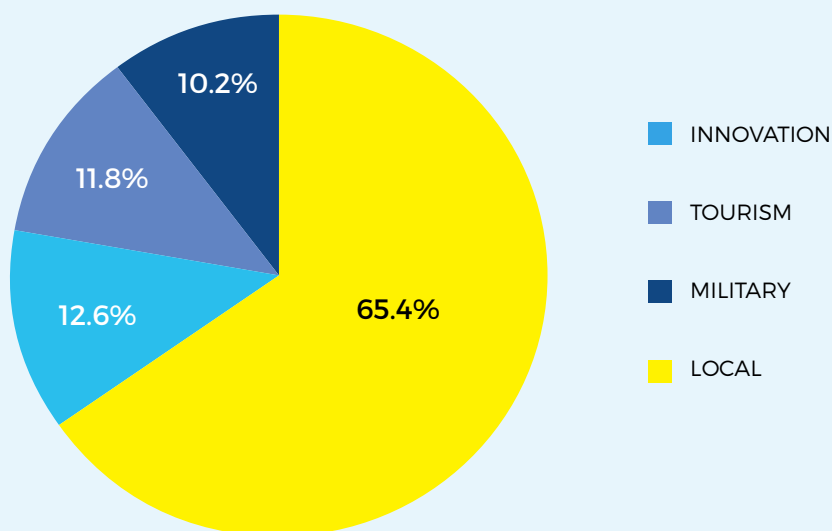
economic development organizations, with the full support of the mayor, have helped elevate the city onto the world stage of advanced healthcare research. However, San Diego doesn't have the volume of large corporate headquarters like nearby Los Angeles and San Francisco, so that's forcing San Diego to capitalize on conventions to bring those corporate leaders to the city's doorstep.

"We're at a bit of a disadvantage because we're not a significant base for corporate America, so we rely heavily on large meetings and conventions to meet with their top executives," says Terzi. "We are very involved in helping the innovation economy grow by bringing conventions here, because we know they become a strong feeder for our industries."

The biggest industry in San Diego's innovation economy is life sciences, with 65 percent of all VC money in the city pumped into the biotech sector and big pharma. According to the "United States Life Sciences Report 2016," it reads: "Life sciences employment [in San Diego] grew at a faster rate than total private employment, 5.6 percent compared to 2.7 percent, respectively. The notable life sciences cluster is partly attributable to some of the world's largest biotech, pharmaceutical, and non-profit research institutes."

The BIO International Convention, which is the biotech industry's biggest annual gathering of business and research leaders, took place in San Diego in 2014, and it's returning in June 2017. The resulting exposure for the city has supported San Diego rise as one of the country's top three hubs for the life sciences sector. According to SDREDC figures, the region is home today to more than 1,100 life sciences companies and 80 research institutes employing over 50,000

Employment Comparisons Across the San Diego Region's Economies



The size of San Diego's innovation economy has surpassed the city's tourism economy

people in the biotech cluster, which accounts for more than \$31.8 billion in total economic impact locally. Furthermore, the Biocom life science association is based in San Diego, working on behalf of more than 825 members to "drive public policy and accelerate the innovation ecosystem in San Diego."

With life sciences and the overall biotech industry well established in San Diego, Nikia Clarke, executive director of the SDREDC, and Erik Caldwell, economic development director for the City of San Diego, both say that their roles are now focused on expanding economic development throughout a wider breadth of the destination.

"Every time BIO comes to San Diego, everyone gets inundated with tours and requests, so one of our priorities is to get folks from the convention center out into the economy, so we can provide them with an understanding of the opportunities that are presented by the San Diego region," Clarke says. "We also want to facilitate more B2B experiences for the delegates."

To help accomplish that, the city is launching a new online platform this summer in time for BIO, which will be used for other conventions as well. It's going to be a portal for visiting attendees and exhibitors to explore companies and institutions prior to an event to help better connect visiting delegates with local industry colleagues in the area.

"All the assets, the relevant tours, and the trade services available in the region will all be there with additional information, and then delegates can reach out directly," explains Caldwell. "We'll facilitate on the back-end, streamlining where those requests go."

5.4 SAN FRANCISCO TRAVEL COLLABORATES WITH THE MAYOR'S OFFICE OF ECONOMIC AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT TO SUPPORT THE CITY'S LONG-TERM GROWTH VISION



Salesforce's Dreamforce conference has a direct economic impact of \$265 million during the event.

Skift Take

San Francisco Travel shows how convention bureaus are increasingly collaborating with their economic development colleagues to pool their resources to co-create new business development and branding opportunities, and they're often using conventions as launch pads.

While CVBs in the U.S. have long collaborated with their city's economic development organizations and local government leaders to drive their individual mandates for the collective good of the community, some cities are more effective than others when it comes to delivering results.

According to Joe D'Alessandro, president and CEO of San Francisco Travel, the benefits of strategic collaboration between convention bureaus and economic development agencies are best demonstrated by the long-term economic impacts of conventions in advanced industries. Nowhere is that more evident in North America than in the Bay Area.

“That type of collaboration has been on our radar for a long time because San Francisco is a global city, but a very small city at the same time, so it’s really hard to separate the meetings industry from our general economic development,” says D’Alessandro. “We’re lucky because we have the industry sectors that are growing so fast, and that have a global presence, but we continually rely on meetings and conventions to help foster and encourage that growth.”

In 2007, the San Francisco Mayor’s Office of Economic and Workforce Development outlined the vision for the city’s long-term growth in the report, “Sustaining Our Prosperity: The San Francisco Economic Strategy.” The strategy framework focused on the cross-pollination and development of four key sectors to drive the city’s growth: knowledge, experience, human resources, and infrastructure.” (The visitor economy falls within the experience sector.)

“
**IT’S REALLY HARD TO SEPARATE THE
MEETINGS INDUSTRY FROM OUR GENERAL
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.**
”

**— JOE D’ALESSANDRO, PRESIDENT AND CEO,
SAN FRANCISCO TRAVEL**

The report reads: “Of the four sectors, the experience and the knowledge sectors are especially important. Both of them have demonstrated a capacity for further growth over the long term, based on their growth trends in the past; and as the main components of the city’s export base, their competitive performance will largely determine the trajectory of the entire San Francisco economy.”

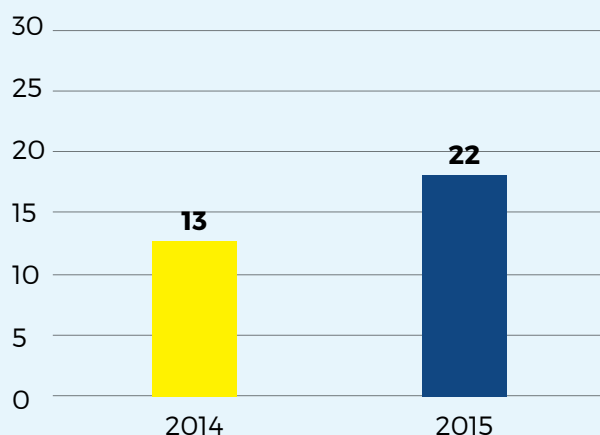
“It’s really the experience sector and knowledge sector that we’ve collaborated with the most,” D’Alessandro explains. He cites examples where the CVB has helped develop iconic conventions such as those hosted by Apple, Oracle, and Salesforce, which have helped define and differentiate San Francisco’s business brand. “The experience sector, and that includes meetings, goes hand-in-hand with the knowledge sector, which reflects all of our high-tech industry that’s such a strong player in the Bay Area economy.”

Todd Rufo, director of the San Francisco Office of Economic & Workforce Development, says he and D’Alessandro have had a long and close-working relationship to develop advanced sectors in the city, going back to before those sectors almost even existed.

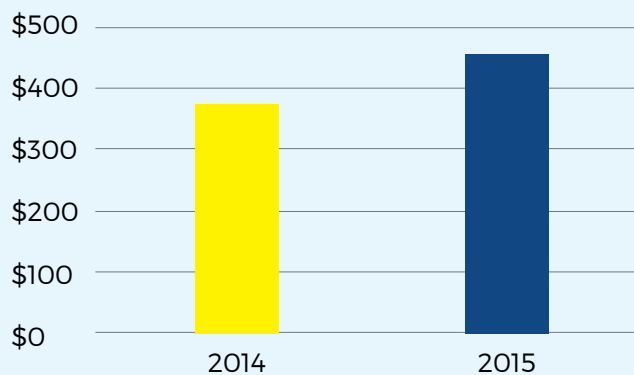
In 2008, for example, there were two companies developing research in life sciences. Today, there are more than 200. Rufo attributes part of that to events like the BIO International Convention, which took place in San Francisco in 2016.

“It was really synergistic when BIO decided to bring their conference back to San Francisco last year,” Rufo explains. “It proved to be a successful model, because not only were they able to have an amazing conference in San Francisco, but they were able to have tons of business meetings with the companies and the research institutions in the Bay Area. It’s the economic and workforce development strategy going hand-in-hand with the strategies and goals of the initiatives at San Francisco Travel.”

ChinaSF Companies Landed



ChinaSF Investment Recruited (\$M)



ChinaSF continues to recruit more companies each year. From 2014 to 2015, ChinaSF recruited roughly 40% more companies to San Francisco, and brought in 22% more investment.

ChinaSF Initiative

The City of San Francisco's ChinaSF initiative is a prime example of a convention bureau and economic development agency collaborating to attract foreign investment. Since it began in 2008, ChinaSF has supported the expansion of more than 60 Chinese companies in San Francisco, and it has helped countless Bay Area-based companies make important business connections in China.

In 2015, ChinaSF recruited 22 new companies to San Francisco, attracting roughly \$450 million of Chinese capital to projects such as the First and Mission development, led by Oceanwide Real Estate, which is a ChinaSF recruit. Building on that in January 2016, the City hosted the ContinuumSF Innovation & Credit Conference for over 400 attendees, with international speakers and panels discussing trends and best practices in cross-border investment, crowdfunding, healthcare innovation, real estate, and online payment security.

"We work closely with our partners, including SF Travel to help make sure we are getting these folks connected to the right people," says Rufo. "We have since expanded that model. ChinaSF was the first, but now we also have a LatinSF initiative to focus on Latin America and another focusing on Southeast Asia called SFAsia.

"We're fortunate because we have such a close relationship with SF Travel," Rufo continues. "We are all sort of in the same vein, really. Promoting travel is an economic and workforce development function in much the same way that our work is an economic and workforce development function."

5.5 ST. LOUIS AND THE CORTEX INNOVATION COMMUNITY ARE PIVOTING THE CITY'S BUSINESS BRAND IMAGE



The Brookings Institution ranked Cortex Innovation Community as one of the top 10 U.S. innovation districts.

Skift Take

St. Louis has one of the most robust startup communities in the Midwest, so the local CVB and innovation district are leveraging that by introducing convention attendees to local entrepreneurs inside a batch of incubator facilities near the convention center. The two organizations also partnered on the launch of a new innovation conference to give the city a fresh story to tell.

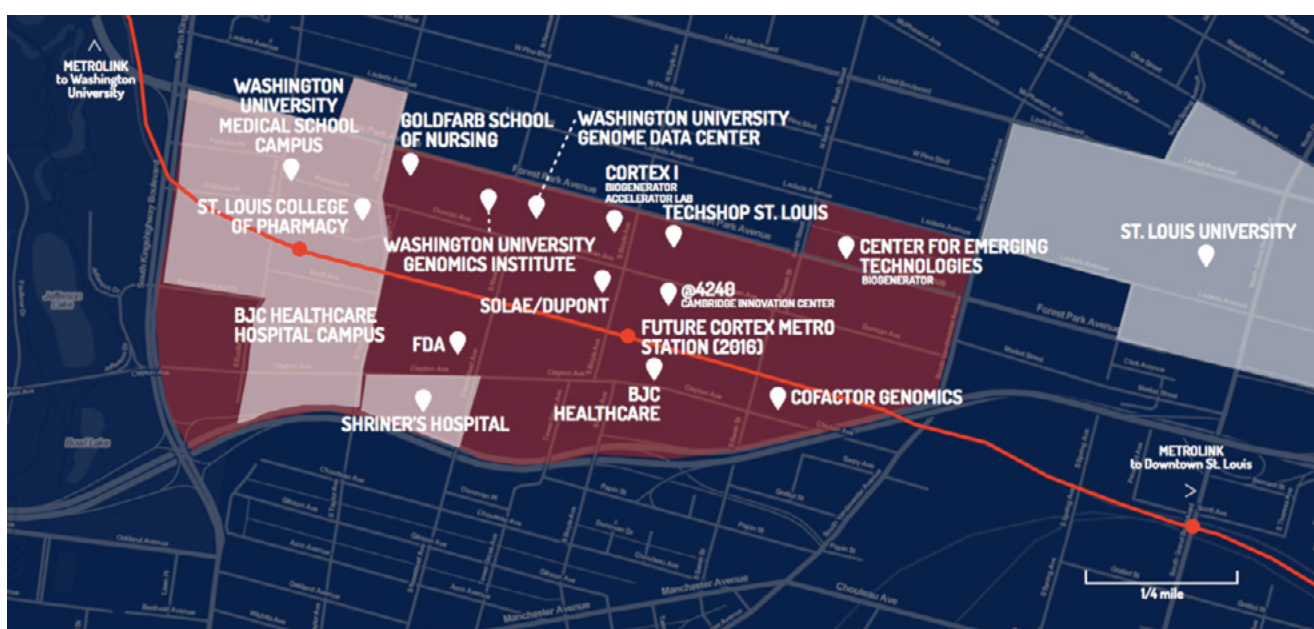
The Cortex Innovation Community in St. Louis illustrates the rise of innovation districts and their impact on a city's growth. Encompassing 200 acres of downtown St. Louis, Cortex was founded by the area universities and research facilities to help attract and support startup companies in biotech and life science, which has proven highly successful. Today, St. Louis ranks second in the U.S. for jobs in biotech and pharmaceuticals, and every year more than 2,800 students graduate from the local universities with a degree in plant or life sciences.

The Explore St. Louis convention bureau has been collaborating closely with Cortex to help pivot the city's reputation from a rust belt city to a brain belt city. For example, the public and private organizations collaborated in 2016 to launch the inaugural Murmuration Festival, with the tagline: "A Convergence of Art, Music, Science and Tech," bringing together the region's

knowledge industries and cultural community in a format based on Austin's popular South by Southwest conference.

According to Brian Hall, CMO of Explore St. Louis, events like Murmuration and the First Robotics competition, sponsored by the local Boeing headquarters, are helping shift the national perception of St. Louis as an emerging leader in advanced industries with a burgeoning creative mindset.

“Cortex and other innovative companies represent the replacement of the tired old narrative about St. Louis,” says Hall. “They shine a light on everything that is positive and productive about our community. Especially when you look at the ethos of typical Millennials in our city, they’ve been quick to embrace the innovation movement. They want to connect with it because they realize this is about a new awakening in St. Louis.”



Downtown St. Louis and the Cortex Innovation Community

Explore St. Louis is now using the Cortex Innovation Community more and more as an extension of the America's Center Convention Complex. In effect, the city itself is evolving into a multi-tiered series of meeting venues weaving organically throughout the urban core to drive economic development to a broader cross-section of community stakeholders.

For example, Cortex will be hosting sessions during the upcoming 6,000-attendee ACSESS association event, bringing together academic and scientific leaders in plant sciences.

“That benefits a lot of our communities in many ways,” says Hall. “The Plant Science Foundation is based here so the international ACSESS conference raises our profile on a world stage, and that helps attract new investment into different parts of the city.”

“
**THE LIFESTYLE CHOICES OF TODAY’S
INNOVATION WORKFORCE DEMANDS AN
ENVIRONMENT THAT IS ACCESSIBLE, CRUNCHY,
CONNECTED TO THE COMMUNITY, AND TALKING
ABOUT THINGS THAT MATTER.**
”

— **DENNIS LOWER, PRESIDENT AND CEO,
CORTEX INNOVATION COMMUNITY**

Cortex is continuing to expand with new buildings and new tenants like Microsoft, which is relocating to the innovation district this year. Likewise, the new TechShop is a cool maker space that hosts events for visiting delegates who can use new technologies like 3D printing machines and laser cutters.

“We now have an opportunity to bring groups from the convention center to the Cortex Innovation Community for breakout sessions at places like Venture

Cafe, @4240, or the Center for Emerging Technology,” explains Hall. “I’ve been in the destination marketing business for 30 years and I’ve never seen a level of collaboration between our economic development agencies and the private sector that we’ve experienced here in St. Louis. I think that it’s particularly instrumental for the effective brand positioning of a place in the meetings industry.”

Dennis Lower, president and CEO of Cortex Innovation Community, adds that the percentage of Millennials working within the Cortex district is about 60-65 percent, compared to 30 percent in the U.S. general population. Therefore, he says, the attraction of Cortex for meeting planners is just as much about the culture of the innovation district’s community as it is about the actual innovation.

“Innovation districts are not about buildings; they’re about programs and people and interactions, and to be successful, they have to be responsive to the people who work there,” says Lower. “The lifestyle choices of today’s innovation workforce demands an environment that is accessible, crunchy, connected to the community, and talking about things that matter.”

Meaning, the rise of innovation districts as meeting venues and gathering spaces also inspires an elevated focus on modern workplace culture across corporate America.

“For a lot of companies who establish a footprint in Cortex, or visit for a conference, the reason they do it is not just to access Millennial talent, but to help with the culture change that they know they have to go through,” explains Lower. “That’s a whole area where innovation districts are beginning to serve the larger business community in ways that we had not thought about before.”

5.6 ALBUQUERQUE'S NEW INNOVATION CENTRAL DISTRICT IS DESIGNED TO COMMERCIALIZE IDEAS



The Innovate ABQ facility anchors Albuquerque's new Innovation Central district.

Skift Take

Albuquerque has long been home to some of the country's most advanced space and science research labs. Now the city is investing heavily to reposition the city's brand around its new innovation district, which is designed to provide a creative and convenient place for local and visiting scientists and entrepreneurs to meet.

Gary Oppedahl, director of economic development for the City of Albuquerque, says there's a greater awareness today in New Mexico of how economic growth depends on a more intentional and strategic convergence between the city agencies overseeing meetings development and economic development.

"We're more conscious of how important it is to match up everything happening on the entrepreneurial and business development side with how we position Albuquerque for the acquisition of more conventions," Oppedahl says. "We see tourism, convention, and economic development as two sides of the same coin."

The City of Albuquerque is investing heavily in its new Innovation Central district, which connects the Albuquerque Convention Center and University of New Mexico (UNM). It's designed to be a gathering place for people working in the many scientific and space research companies located in the region, the growing number of tech startups moving into the city, the university's numerous research labs, and all of the visiting conference delegates working in advanced industry.

“
**OUR INNOVATION DISTRICT IS DESIGNED TO
CREATE COLLISIONS BETWEEN SMART AND
CREATIVE PEOPLE IN DIFFERENT FIELDS OF
MEDICINE, SCIENCE, AND ENGINEERING, WITH
THE IDEA THAT YOU CAN COMMERCIALIZE
IDEAS AT SOME POINT AND CREATE JOBS.**
”

— **ALBUQUERQUE MAYOR RICHARD BERRY**

Anchoring Innovation Central, the new \$35 million Innovate ABQ facility will house UNM's Innovation Academy and residences for visiting scholars and entrepreneurs.

The city is also spending \$29 million to upgrade the adjacent convention center and \$39 million to create the One Central Entertainment District.

The end goal is to develop an innovation campus for conference

attendees to engage with local thought leaders in a wide variety of professional and casual environments day and night, seven days a week.

“Our innovation district is designed to create collisions between smart and creative people in different fields of medicine, science, and engineering, with the idea that you can commercialize ideas at some point and create jobs,” says Albuquerque Mayor Richard Berry. “That’s an upward spiral in our community. So the conferences that we bring to Albuquerque do a lot more than put heads in beds. We know that matters, but this is about science, technology, enterprise, entrepreneurship, and creating a culture of innovation on par with almost anywhere in the world.”

Oppedahl adds that his office and Visit Albuquerque are collaborating more closely than in recent years to create programming for visiting conference attendees that embeds them more strategically into their relevant local sectors in New Mexico.

“We have thought leaders guarding the nation’s nuclear secrets, so we’re putting together programs where people coming here for conventions can engage with someone who literally is a rocket scientist at one of the national labs,” he explains. “People are not even aware of it, but we’re on top of the biggest trends in industries like material sciences and directed energy.”

To help make more people aware of that, the 160,000 square-foot Innovate ABQ building is positioned as an “entrepreneurial ecosystem,” and the 155 two-bedroom residences on the top floors are designed to make the facility a work/live/play environment for visiting professionals.

According to UNM's "Innovate ABQ Development Framework" white paper:

The City was our clear partner in the project. In the fall of 2013, the City's \$2 million funding for Innovate ABQ was approved by voters, local financial institution Nusenda Credit Union pledged \$3 million to the project, and the EDA grant was approved for \$1.5 million. The County of Bernalillo came on board as well with a \$1 million commitment. The UNM Regents voted unanimously to move forward with the purchase of the Central/Broadway site for an innovation center in downtown Albuquerque, with widespread testimonial support from representatives of the campus community including from the EDC. Innovate ABQ has been formed as a UNM-owned corporation, and in July 2014 the property was purchased. The Development Framework for Innovate ABQ was completed and a Request for Proposal was distributed to developers in April 2015.

Today, the Innovate ABQ Inc. Board has entered into a due diligence agreement with the development group Signet Development, Goodman Realty Group and Dekker/Perich/Sabatini to develop the core site. Research and business districts that are designed to cultivate the idea of an innovation ecosystem that moves freely, is highly diverse and rapidly connects and collaborates from the bottom up is the future basis for innovation economies. Innovation is driven by people and the ability of people to share and develop ideas together. Innovate ABQ integrates the community because it's designed to be multi-dimensional, interconnected, collaborative, and near its technology generating pipeline (UNM). When these elements come together, the community also benefits from economic growth. For UNM and the New Mexico community, this economic engagement effort to build a research and innovation district brings all the pieces together — innovation, talent and place.

With Innovate ABQ anchoring the Innovation Central district, Visit Albuquerque now has an exciting new meetings destination anchor to complement the convention center for groups wanting to plug into a turn-key knowledge hub.

"There's going to be a caliber of innovative thinking taking place here that's really going to resonate with meeting planners," says Tania Armenta, president and CEO of Visit Albuquerque. "We see Innovation Central as a definite win, and we've been heavily promoting it to planners."

But is this level of collaboration between the convention bureau and economic development agency something that is evolving as a new trend? Is there a strategic shift presently taking place here?

"I don't want to say that we haven't collaborated with economic development in the past, because we've always understood our anchor institutions and our strategic alliances, but I definitely think it's a different conversation today than used to occur," says Armenta. "Absolutely, there's the recognition from both parties, and an additional respect level, for the roles that meetings and conventions can play on our sustained growth when we work together to position the city as a hub of innovation in our key sectors."

“
THERE'S GOING TO BE A CALIBER OF
INNOVATIVE THINKING TAKING PLACE
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RESONATE WITH MEETING PLANNERS.
”

— TANIA ARMENTA, PRESIDENT AND
CEO, VISIT ALBUQUERQUE

6. HOW GLOBAL CVBS AND ASSOCIATIONS ARE CO-CREATING THEIR LEGACY IMPACTS



Dubai Design District

Skift Take

Convention bureaus are developing strategies to help international associations define their long-term vision and legacy impacts.

The BestCities Global Alliance is a partnership of 12 convention bureaus worldwide that share best practices for hosting international association conventions. In November 2016, the bureaus gathered in Dubai for the inaugural BestCities Global Forum. The theme of the event – “From Success to Significance for Events and Destinations” – examined how CVBs can provide consultative assistance to help associations deliver on their long-term visions, on an ongoing basis, versus just providing one-off logistics support.

Paul Vallee, CEO of BestCities Global Alliance, says that international association executives often feel their host convention destinations focus primarily on securing the event and delivering business to their hotels, but when it’s over, there’s a sense that the two parties aren’t going to see each other again for potentially a decade or more. So there’s rarely any subsequent communication between the association and CVB after the fact.

“Not that destinations just sort of say they’re going to wash their hands and they’re done, but they are kind of moving on to the next thing,” says Vallee. “So, from an alliance standpoint, because we’re a network of 12 cities, we started discussing when associations hold a congress, we can keep that bond with that association from city to city to city. And maybe, we can find a way that we can work with them to help them develop their legacies on a longer term basis.”

The first step in the process is creating consensus between the association and CVB leaders about what the purpose of the association is, and how that is evolving in today’s age of technology and digital platform disruption. There are growing challenges around how associations engage their membership in the digital economy, and how they deliver education and networking opportunities offline at conventions and online pre/post-event.

CVBs can enhance those face-to-face and virtual engagement opportunities by bringing a wider breadth of the destination to play a role in convention programming and communications, which also expands the legacy impacts for both the destination and the event.

“I think, in many respects, this notion about legacy impacts is relatively new, especially from the destination standpoint,” says Vallee. “Part of this is the evolution of DMOs taking on a wider role as association developers. DMOs and CVBs are generally becoming much more well informed, and providing guidance for associations beyond the traditional practical support. From our standpoint, it’s about building those local connections into a sort of global network.”

One of the key takeaways for Vallee coming out of the BestCities Global Forum was, for associations who meet on an annual basis, the only way to build a legacy is by having a more long-term perspective around their overarching goals. He says that will also require BestCities’ member bureaus to expand their mindset to think more long-term, as well.

As an example, a medical association’s goal might be to develop new research in a specific area of medical technology. Therefore, a convention bureau wishing to attract that association, should build a stronger relationship with its university’s medical school, and it should build on the past successes of any associations in a related field that have previously convened in the destination, or any partner destinations. That’s not a new concept, but it’s not well codified at most bureaus.

“You can only build event legacies when you’re thinking many years in advance, so whether that legacy is to influence public policy, or to enhance funding for research, or to simply build awareness, these things aren’t done overnight,” Vallee says. “I also think one of the things that’s becoming more important for us and our partners is making this notion of legacy more practical.”

Dubai Business Events was the host bureau for the BestCities Global Forum. Steen Jakobsen, director of Dubai Business Events, says the relationship between convention bureaus and associations can be much more mutually beneficial. Bureaus can bring their destination partners together to provide knowledge that will help associations engage their members in the region better, he says, and associations can help bureaus build their destinations’ innovation economies.

“Associations have told us, ‘You can provide value to us if you help us develop and plan programs that allow us to create stronger legacies around our organizations’ events,’” Jakobsen explains. “The

way that we've approached our business development in BestCities over the years has primarily been of a transactional character. We've found that if we are to provide real value to organizers of association conferences, then it needs to go beyond just those transactional conversations."

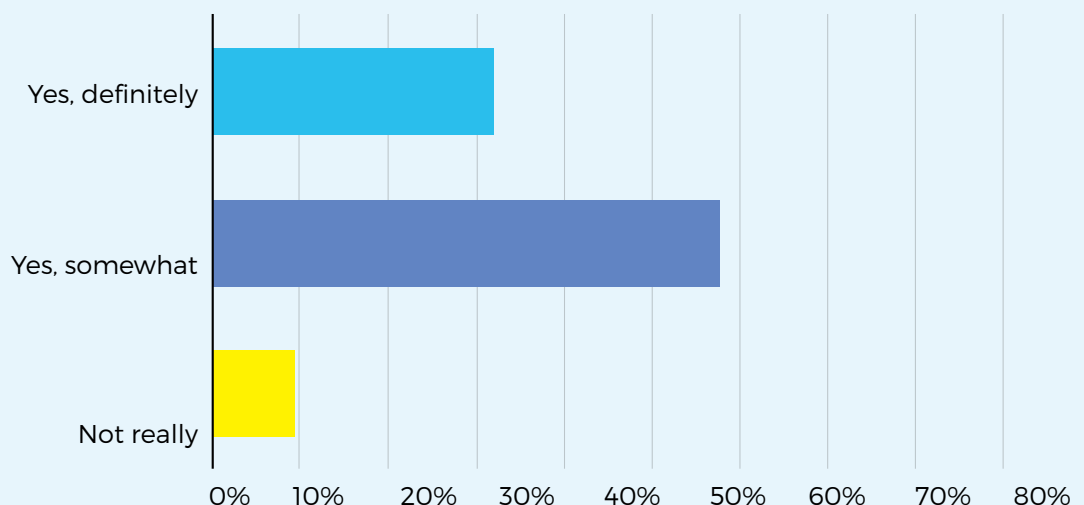
Dubai provides a good example of a destination striving to build a strong legacy for a major event for both visitors and locals, by investing heavily to diversify its economy and position itself as a regional hub of innovation in advanced industries. That's illustrated by the theme of Expo Dubai 2020: "Connecting Minds, Creating the Future," organized around the pillars of "opportunity, mobility, and sustainability." In effect, one event is being designed to inform the development of the entire Middle East.

"Dubai is now at the stage where it wants to transition into a full knowledge economy," says Jakobsen. "That transition is driven by a number of different initiatives and policies spearheaded by the government. In that context, Expo is really seen as an accelerator of that transformation into a knowledge economy. It represents a shift from being a more industrial society, which is focused around trade, to one where we're moving full steam ahead into becoming a knowledge society."

6.1 SKIFT TRENDS RESEARCH: HOW ASSOCIATIONS ARE DEVELOPING THEIR LEGACY IMPACTS

Skift and BestCities polled a select group of 40 senior executives leading international associations to explore how they're defining their long-term legacy. A full 90 percent of respondents confirmed this is an important, or somewhat important, subject for them.

QUESTION #1: Is your association focusing significantly on the long-term legacy impacts of your events, and how they drive the development of your host destinations and future growth of your organization?



A second poll question asked respondents to rate the degree of importance they place on a series of motivating factors driving associations to define their legacy impacts. A third question (next page) asked respondents how they're shifting the design of their conventions to act on their legacy vision.

QUESTION #2: Rank the following in importance as each relates to motivating your organization to focus on the long-term legacy impact of your events.

Each is aligned with one or more of BestCities' legacy currencies: Financial, Physical, Educational, Emotional, and Social.

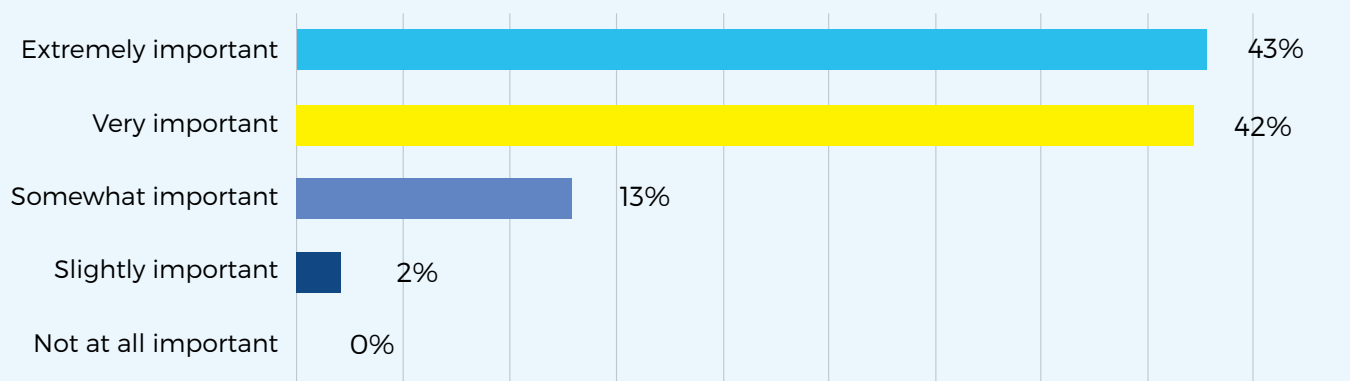
	Critical	Important	Nice to have	Negligible
Build a global network of collaborators to share knowledge more effectively within our industry	61%	29%	10%	0%
Support the development of new academic and scientific research	61%	26%	13%	0%
Establish a global network of influencers and thought leaders in our industry	58%	32%	10%	0%
Promote our academic and scientific community to a global audience	58%	29%	9%	4%
Build more effectively on the learning (knowledge, experience, and best practices) taken from one conference to the next	52%	39%	3%	6%
Provide opportunities for young professionals entering our industry	48%	39%	13%	0%
Improve the depth of engagement with our members	45%	45%	10%	0%
Help strengthen or pivot our organization's brand as a catalyst for innovation	39%	42%	19%	0%
Increase opportunities for cultural exchange and knowledge sharing among different audiences	39%	42%	19%	0%
Help raise long-lasting awareness of issues of importance to our organization among the general public	39%	42%	6%	13%
Help define and evaluate our organization's long-term vision	36%	52%	6%	6%
Influence public policy decisions at the global national and local level	36%	36%	19%	10%
Be a more significant and recognized participant driving innovation in our industry	32%	42%	23%	3%
Help attract outside knowledge, investment, and talent to our industry	26%	52%	19%	3%
Desire to give back to business and academic communities in the host destination	26%	45%	23%	6%
Develop business relationships between our members and the thought leaders that we engage with in host destinations	23%	48%	23%	6%
Support the development of new facilities and/or infrastructure aligned with our organization's mandate	16%	48%	13%	23%
Forge stronger networks of local businesses and thought leaders within the host destination	13%	48%	29%	10%
Help drive outside investment and talent into the host destination	9%	39%	39%	13%

QUESTION #3: How are you changing the design of your conventions to create a stronger legacy impact for both your host destinations and your organization?

#	Responses
1	Networking with local and international participants. Pre/post congress educational tours hosted by locals.
2	Including more awareness of local businesses that are members and working with media outlets to show the impact of bringing business leaders to town that could lead to having them invest in the area.
3	Raising leadership awareness of the opportunities and responsibility of initiatives at local level.
4	Smaller, more frequent conferences are being considered.
5	More and more involving local leaders and stakeholders in the preparation of the scientific program, as well as in the organization of the event, carefully taking into account the regional characteristics and expectations.
6	We have a few initiatives where we work with our local hosts to figure out the greatest need in the local market and try to address this. This includes free workshops to local businesses, site visits to social organizations, volunteer efforts, and promotion of local activities and initiatives at our conferences.
7	Providing scholarships to our investigators (members), and fellowships to attend meetings.
8	By taking sub-meetings and integrating all together into one main area to allow for cross discipline exchange.
9	Pro-active advocacy for increased awareness on issues my organization feels very strongly about: access, inclusion and empowerment for all persons with diverse abilities in the life and activities of their communities and societies.
10	Increased focus on partnership with destination, involve destination in event design from start, search for true win-win between destination, event and delegates.
11	Our on-line education platform allows us to share information from our World Congress to a wider audience and to sustain educational activity between congresses. This serves both as a legacy and stimulus for our congresses.
12	Innovative products. More interaction possibilities.
13	Evaluating scale of meeting and accessibility.
14	Decisions about site dictated by previous experience.
15	By applying and implementing feedback as a catalyst for change.
16	We are currently studying this and will be conducting a society-wide needs assessment to address this.
17	Working with the CVB to look at public engagement options within the city.
18	The events are conceived in close collaboration with local stakeholders; the added value is obvious for both sides.
19	We're still assessing the impact of our new legacy initiatives at this time.
20	Open up to more young talent and broaden the prospectus of the research that is presented.
21	Round table sessions with members to glean their thoughts and requirements.
22	More involvement of the attendees in defining long-term goals and strategies.

6.2 MELBOURNE CONVENTION BUREAU: THE POSTER CHILD FOR CONVENTIONS IN THE CONVERGENCE ECONOMY

How important will the destination experience be for promoting a conference in the future?



From "The Future of Business Meetings Industry Report," Melbourne Convention Bureau (2017)

Skift Take

The Melbourne Convention Bureau provides a template for best case practices illustrating how convention bureaus and governments are aligning efforts to engage a broad scope of destination stakeholders with visiting conventions to further the region's economic strategy.

In 2016, the Victoria state government in Australia launched the Visit Victoria platform and VisitVictoria.com website to bring together the functions of Tourism Victoria's marketing division, the Victorian Major Events Company, and the Melbourne Convention Bureau "to form a single, unified organization dedicated to growing Victoria's visitor economy through tourism marketing and event acquisition."

Melbourne Convention Bureau is already one of the world's most forward-thinking organizations of its kind in terms of incorporating the full scale of the city's innovation economy into the convention bid process and overall delivery. The new Visit Victoria initiative is designed to further coalesce the resources of the region's local stakeholders to provide a broader spectrum of potential partnerships for visiting organizations to integrate into their conventions. It was also created to improve the levels of engagement between the state government and the local public and private sectors.

"What that has done for us, we now have a lot more access to government," says Karen Bolinger, CEO of the Melbourne Convention Bureau. "We've always had access but we were still a bit at arm's length. Now we have our tentacles a little bit deeper, so we get better access into what the government is looking at in terms of their priority sectors, and access to ministers to support bids. Sometimes it's just a matter of having more ability to walk across the floor and say, 'Hey Governor, what do you think?'"

In March 2016, the Victorian government launched the "Future Industries Sector Strategies" series, which is part of the Sector Growth Program, to codify the region's vision to build up its priority sectors. That includes greater collaboration with the Melbourne Convention Bureau to develop a variety of industry-specific conventions.

Here's more from one of the Sector Strategies reports — "Victoria's Future Industries: Medical Technologies and Pharmaceuticals Sector Strategy":

"Through partnerships with the Melbourne Convention Bureau, industry associations and the sector, we will continue to attract and support networking events and activities that encourage organisations to connect both locally and globally. Activities will focus on targeted collaborative opportunities and seek to engage groups across and outside of the sector (e.g. venture capital, clinicians, ICT companies). We will also work with the sector to establish industry working groups to provide a single forum for government engagement and to create a collaborative environment for shared learning and best practice."

That increasing collaboration between the bureau and government to develop conventions in growth industries expands the bureau's capability to engage convention organizers in those industries.

The bureau also stresses the sector expertise and academic thought leadership throughout the state of Victoria, and the increasing role of government to support conventions in specific sectors, to deliver a richer attendee experience.

"The Victoria government are the ones who are charged with moving industry forward so they have an incredible amount of sector knowledge, sector engagement, and connections and networks," says Bolinger. "So there's absolutely a deeper collaboration now, and that's what we're bringing to the table more than we ever have before."

But why is that important to association executives and planners who might be considering Melbourne to host their convention?

"It's important because everything is much more competitive, so we actually have to demonstrate and understand each one of the associations when we're bidding for their conference," explains Bolinger. "We have to have not just the infrastructure in the city, but the intellectual capacity to make sure their programs and content are world class."

Overall, the new Visit Victoria platform is designed to raise Melbourne's exposure on the world stage by promoting a broader scope of the destination experience. In February 2017, the Melbourne Convention Bureau published "The Future of Business Meetings Industry Report" to show how the global meetings industry is evolving "through the influences of social trends, new technology, and changing attendee expectations."

“
**OUR CONVENTIONS ARE USING THE CITY IN A
BROADER SENSE RATHER THAN JUST BEING IN
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IN AN ENVIRONMENT THAT FACILITATES THE
EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION.**”

— **KAREN BOLINGER, CEO OF THE
MELBOURNE CONVENTION BUREAU**

Toward that end, the Melbourne Convention Bureau is increasingly working with creative partners in the city to continually add new layers to the way attendees can plug into the city's innovation economy.

One of those partners is the Carlton Connect Initiative (CCI) "innovation precinct" anchored by the University of Melbourne, with a mission to "drive partnerships between different sectors and disciplines to address global challenges that can't be solved by one sector alone." Melbourne Convention Bureau is seeing a rise of requests from conference organizers to explore the CCI and meet with its science and academic leaders.

"Our conventions are using the city in a broader sense rather than just being in a building, because our delegates want to get hands-on, and they want to be in an environment that facilitates that active exchange of information," says Bolinger.

"There's a little bit more freethinking these days, I think," she sums up. "Carlton Connect and those kinds of things are a value-add for our bids, because these people go to buildings all the time, and now with this they get a better feel for what's going on around them. It's not about sitting in a room and hearing people talk all day, but having the chance to ask a hundred questions and coming up with solutions as a group. It's really about the future of how we absorb information to develop new knowledge."

One of the survey questions asked: "How important will the destination experience be for promoting a conference in the future?"

A full 85 percent responded that it is "extremely important" or "very important," while another 13 percent responded "somewhat important."

The survey data highlights the importance of a convention bureau, which develops and curates the destination experience for visiting delegates.

6.3 THE ROLE OF UNIVERSITIES IN EVALUATING THE LEGACY IMPACT OF CONVENTIONS

Skift Take

Convention bureaus and universities have an opportunity to support each other much more effectively. To accomplish that, there needs to be a process whereby serious academic research is streamlined into actionable information that is more accessible for industry. Academic research with clear policy directives is the only way that convention bureaus, economic development agencies, and governments can better evaluate the long-term economic impacts of conventions, and develop new strategies to build on their value moving forward.

Every discussion about the long-term economic impact of conferences begins with the previously discussed “Beyond Tourism Benefits” research developed by Business Events Sydney and the University of Technology Sydney going back to 2010. The most significant takeaway that city leaders can glean from the success of that collaboration is the role that the academic research played to support the growth of conventions in Sydney and their impact on New South Wales’ collective innovation economy.

“I never went with my hand out asking for money, because that is the first thing that government ministers are expecting you to do when you walk through the door,” says Lyn Lewis-Smith, CEO of Business Events Sydney. “So you have to do a lot of work to get to that point. If you can demonstrate the outcomes with that end in mind, then the money begins to flow.”

Rob Davidson, managing director of the London-based MICE Knowledge consultancy, is a prolific academic researcher specializing in the convention industry. He says he characterizes conferences as “temporary clusters,” where people from all over the world come together to share knowledge, not unlike a typical university campus.

“But it’s more than just knowledge transfer at conferences; it’s really about generating new knowledge when people discuss their research and product development, and then go on to work together to produce the kinds of innovations that all businesses need,” Davidson suggests.

“To take a wide view of it, the collaboration at business events ultimately leads to benefits for society,” he continues. “I think it’s that type of impact that we really need to emphasize much more. It’s not understood very well, and it’s difficult to measure, of course, but I think it is absolutely imperative to look at what happens after conferences, and ultimately the value of the new discoveries they lead to.”

According to Davidson, the biggest challenge right now is creating better collaborative research partnerships between convention bureaus and academia. The bureaus are always looking for help with their research to develop destination marketing and development strategy, and the universities are continually looking for things to research. He adds, however, there's a great disconnect and significant lost opportunities because destination marketers and professors are not talking to each other enough to explore their shared values and shared potential for the

betterment of both their business and academic communities.

“
**THERE'S A BIG GULF NOT ONLY BETWEEN
LOCAL UNIVERSITIES AND THEIR CONVENTION
BUREAUS, BUT BETWEEN ACADEMIA AND THE
WHOLE BUSINESS EVENTS INDUSTRY.**

”

— **ROB DAVIDSON, MANAGING DIRECTOR,
MICE KNOWLEDGE**

“There's a big gulf not only between local universities and their convention bureaus, but between academia and the whole business events industry,” says Davidson. “There's all of this university research and journals dedicated to business events, but trying to get people to read that research is a real upward struggle. And I think that universities are really under-

recognized for their contributions that they can make.”

Universities have always propelled economic development in their communities. U.S. Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan once said, “If you want to build a great city, create a great university and wait 200 years.” But the rise of the tech sector over the last three decades, and the global war for high-tech jobs, has elevated universities to a new prominence in terms of the leadership they can provide to a world uncertain about the long-term impact of technology in business in general.

Stowe Shoemaker, dean of the William F. Harrah College of Hotel Administration at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV), notes that Silicon Valley in Palo Alto exists where it does because of the computer science labs at Stanford and Berkeley, which in turn attracted so many tech companies.

“The role of a university, and especially what we would call an urban campus university, is to help drive economic development to the community,” says Shoemaker. “As academics we do a lot of research that creates patents, and patents then lead to companies that get started by our graduates. Academic institutions are a major driver for innovation and the launch of startups.”

As an example, he says, UNLV grads are starting companies in Las Vegas manufacturing indoor drones and developing AI-powered video game bots, thereby contributing to the local innovation economy and creating high-value jobs. However, connecting that energy in the local universities and local startup community with the region's base of travel suppliers is not happening enough, Shoemaker feels, which hampers any attempts to actually evaluate the economic value of those potential connections.

Shoemaker asserts that much more can be accomplished in tourism and hospitality schools to show the long-term impact of a city's visitor economy on its overall economic growth in the 21st century. But, he and many other academics say universities in the U.S. often don't have the personnel or resources to conduct policy research without significant private investment.

That's why UNLV's Hotel College is presently seeking funding to build a Center for Tourism Policy and Studies, which Shoemaker says would be a natural place for research exploring the legacy impact of conventions.

As a successful model for tourism research in U.S. academia, Shoemaker cites the Tourism and Economic Development Center of Economic Excellence at the University of South Carolina. The research facility was established for professors to conduct research that's directly applicable to tourism and economic development in South Carolina. The faculty, as such, is freed up from teaching to focus almost exclusively on tourism-related research for the purposes of advancing economic development strategy statewide.

"The advantage of having a tourism research center is that you have academics whose primary goal is answering research questions that come through from a policy level," explains Shoemaker. "They almost become consultants, except they wear an academic hat, but they're not teaching undergraduates, and they're not serving on university committees. They're primarily there to help move tourism policy forward."

Deborah Edwards, associate professor at University of Technology Sydney adds that the ongoing challenge for many convention bureaus is they don't have the in-house research teams to tackle this subject, especially with so much emphasis now on data analytics. Therefore, she suggests, bureaus should consider partnering with research professionals more proactively, who know how to collect data and draw insights from that data.

Except, cautions Edwards, "Universities are expensive so convention bureaus must be willing to put the necessary resources into the research."

Davidson, meanwhile, suggests that the industry needs more professionals who can collect and paraphrase relevant academic papers to make them more usable for convention bureau leaders, and help build a better working relationship between industry and academia.

"What's needed is an intermediary who can take those academic pieces of research and strip them down to what people in the industry really need to know," he says. "People in the industry do not need to know about the literature review, the scientific methodology, and all of the conceptual research framework. They want to know how this research helps me win more meetings for my convention center."

"Those findings are there but raw academic papers are long, and they're full of jargon. We need someone to make that information more accessible, but we don't have enough of those people now. That's the dilemma."

8 KEY TAKEAWAYS TO LEVERAGE CONVENTIONS TO DRIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- 1. The meetings industry is a global innovation distribution channel** – Meetings and conventions should be positioned more upstream as global innovation distribution channels that support the networking and knowledge exchange required to build companies in today's digital platform economy. The meetings industry has long been identified as solely transactional, working downstream to drive the visitor economy in cities during off-peak periods. To elevate the perception of conventions as innovation and economic accelerators within the meetings industry, forward-thinking convention bureaus should position themselves more intentionally as nodes, or gatekeepers, on the global innovation distribution superhighway. In effect, they are launch platforms for government strategy to develop advanced and creative industry sectors.
- 2. Convention bureaus are importers/exporters of knowledge and brokers of innovation** – Cities have always been the central hubs of innovation and progress going back to the Silk Route, but in the meetings industry, cities are often promoted to planners simply as a collection of venues and experiences near an airport. The most innovative CVBs today are connecting high-tech companies and international associations with a wider matrix of local stakeholders in their city's innovation economies, beyond the tourism sector. They're also using a broader scope of the urban geography as "knowledge collision platforms" for next generation meetings, spurring long-term economic development for more neighborhoods and more members of the local host community. There's an enormous opportunity for CVBs to rebrand and reposition their value proposition for convention organizers as brokers of innovation and engines of economic development beyond the visitor economy.
- 3. Convention organizers should leverage a city's innovation economy for program content** – As cities develop their high-growth business and creative industries, spread across both startup and established companies, there is an ongoing commercialization of ideas in high-priority growth sectors. That is the definition of innovation, and there's a growing number of convention attendees who want to engage with local people who are leading that innovation to tap into their creative process and business intelligence. Therefore, government, CVBs, economic development agencies, and universities should collaborate more diligently to develop more integrated, consumer-facing resources and platforms, both online and offline, to spread that message and connect organizers with their city's intellectual capital.
- 4. Make economic development more tangible and understandable** – Economic development organizations are the backbone of progress for any city, and they're collaborating much more intentionally with convention bureaus today to engage visiting industry experts before, during and after conventions. However, the economic development process is often murky and not immediately understandable for meeting planners interested in elevating their role from meeting planners to business-minded meeting strategists. Explaining the process more fully across the meetings industry will paint a clearer picture of how cities are evolving into the future, and how planners can tap into that energy and leverage that innovation.

- 5. Embrace the concept: “Convergence is the new innovation”** – Innovation has been the key mantra for the business and government arenas since the birth of the digital economy, but the next evolution revolves around convergence. Cross-pollinating innovation with innovation across sectors and institutions is delivering new enterprise strategies for economic growth by bringing once-disparate industries together. Everything is now part of a larger ecosystem, but often one part of the system doesn’t know what the other parts are doing. That is the biggest value proposition for next-generation convention organizers when they can facilitate networking across sector ecosystems where the common language is creative solution-building. Events like SXSW and C2 Montreal have already provided the template for the future “festivalization of meetings” that converges the commercial and creative industries, and numerous cities are rightly copying that formula and tweaking it to make it their own.
- 6. Understand the contexts of the city’s long-term strategic vision** – Every city publishes a variety of economic strategy and policy positioning reports on an ongoing basis to provide long-term direction and goals for the community, strengthen high-priority growth sectors, develop infrastructure, and improve living and education standards. In today’s convergence economy, everything is related to everything. Only when all public officials and private stakeholders in a city have a collective understanding of the vision for the future of their region can they drive progress effectively by collaborating with visiting corporate and association convention leaders to their full potential.
- 7. Define the future of cities as a connected platform for value exchange** – The smart city, or “city as platform” phenomenon, is not just about traffic lights with sensors, although too often the future of cities are characterized solely by the Internet of Things. From a holistic standpoint, a smart city is an interoperable, online/offline platform for value sharing and convergence building, where anyone anywhere can plug into that platform to connect with the people and organizations populating a city’s innovation economy. If more convention bureaus and convention organizers viewed cities like any digital platform, such as Airbnb or Amazon, that would dramatically shift the conversation around how conventions can crowdsource intelligence in local communities, extend the window of engagement beyond the physical event, and expand audience reach worldwide.
- 8. Engage academia to define the full economic impacts of conventions** – The most effective convention bureaus are economic development organizations, but there needs to be a huge upswell in research at the local level evaluating the long-term economic impacts of the conventions that bureaus are responsible for attracting. Traditional impact reports that primarily show delegate expenditure and the impact on local service and retail jobs are only telling half the story, if that. To facilitate the development of that research, there should be an expanded industry-wide conversation about increasing and improving the actionable value of academic research focusing exclusively on the meetings and conventions industry. Convention bureaus and universities have to develop closer collaboration, in general, before they can proceed to develop meaningful research around the long-term impact of conventions on a city’s economic growth.

SOURCES AND FURTHER READING

1. [Convention Industry Council: The Economic Significance of Meetings to the U.S. Economy](#)
2. [Oxford Economics' Destination Promotion: An Engine of Economic Development](#)
3. [DMAI DestinationNEXT Research](#)
4. [Longwoods: The Halo Effect of Tourism](#)
5. [BESydney/UTS: Beyond Tourism Benefits Research Series](#)
6. [The Launch of Iceberg to Support JMIC Campaign](#)
7. [The Rise Of Innovation Districts: A New Geography Of Innovation In America](#)
8. [The Past As Prologue: Predicting The Future Of The Convention And Visitor Bureau Industry On The Basis Of Its History](#)
9. [Mayor's Office of Economic and Workforce Development Sustaining Our Prosperity: The San Francisco Economic Strategy](#)
10. [Washington, D.C. Is Trying to Sell Meeting Planners on Inclusiveness](#)
11. [Pathways to Inclusion - DC Tech Report](#)
12. [Innovation Capital: Meetings & Conventions in a Tech Hub](#)
13. [Startup 1776: Innovation That Matters 2016](#)
14. [Las Vegas Regional Strategic Plan - Medical & Wellness Tourism](#)
15. [Nevada Climbs From Last Place to First in Job Creation](#)
16. [Cleveland Carves Out a Clever Niche as Home to World Class Medical Meetings](#)
17. [St. Louis Tries to Rebrand the City for Meetings With a New Music and Tech Festival](#)
18. [Can Spaceships and Startups Attract Conventions to Albuquerque?](#)
19. [Innovate ABQ Development Framework](#)

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