

Monterey County Convention & Visitors Bureau

Meetings Advisory Board

Winter 2015 Meeting

Minutes

Welcome & Introductions • Nancy Morrell Swanson

Nancy Morrell Swanson, President, Global Marketing Services, Inc., welcomed Board members to the March 2015 Monterey County Convention & Visitors Bureau (MCCVB) Meetings Advisory Board meeting. Board members and the Monterey team introduced themselves with brief professional descriptions.

Destination & MCCVB Overview • Tammy Blount

Session Objective: To give Board members an update on the destination.

Tammy Blount, President and CEO, MCCVB, gave an overview of industry trends and an update on the city and the MCCVB.

- *Trends.* Ms. Blount is also a volunteer board member with DMAI and is co-chairing the *DestinationNext* initiative. The two-year project is funded by the DMAI Foundation and has uncovered important trends about the DMO industry. A diagnostic tool is under development that will help engage communities, customers and boards in the ongoing evolution of a DMO. Top trends include social media, smart technology, geo-targeting, big data and mobile engagement platforms. *DestinationNext* surveys indicate that customers want more one-on-one engagement, faster online ordering and peer-to-peer buyer influence, and that the importance of brand has increased for both group and leisure segments. Destination branding, campaigns and messaging are especially important in the group segment. Opportunities for sales and marketing include customizing the message to speak to a specific audience. Technology, brand marketing and strong leadership roles in the community are important elements.
- *Update on the MCCVB.* Since the last Advisory Board meeting, there have been changes to the sales strategy, a new Vice President of Sales was hired, the sales force has been doubled, and new offices opened in Chicago, Dallas and Northern California. The number of leads by the sales team has doubled. The strategic client services team continues to be redesigned to strengthen the value proposition offered to meeting planners, to customize relationships and make customer decisions easier. There has been positive turnover and a solidifying of the management team. The Content Marketing Manager position was added to focus on integrating everything on social media, digital media and in other marketing channels. Priorities have been aligned accommodate current trends and customer needs. (Pop-up events are continuing, showcasing Monterey's culinary and wine. There are two more this year – in New York next week and in Minneapolis next quarter. The next series (2015-16) will have a media focus.
- *Update on Monterey.* A renovation is planned for the Monterey Conference Center. Funding is in place and announcements will be forthcoming. Downtown Monterey is undergoing a revitalization; both public and private projects are underway. The transient occupancy tax was up 10% year-over-year as of July 2014. There is healthy growth in Monterey's tourism industry.

The Portola Hotel and Spa has invested over \$10 million updating rooms, technology, meeting space and guestrooms. Additional plans yet to be unveiled will complement the convention center renovation. Quail Lodge Golf Course was just reopened after some renovations. Carmel Valley Ranch is adding 20 rooms and a new pool, to be completed this summer. Carmel Valley Lodge recently upgraded rooms and outdoor fire pits. The new owner is focused on wellness. The Bernardus Lodge and Spa is scheduled to reopen in April 2015 following guestroom and restaurant renovations. Pebble Beach is undergoing some room renovations over a three-year period. There will be no disruptions to service. Gray Line is expected to open in Monterey in 2016 and will be opening a new ticket center office on Cannery Row. They will be offering new tours and daily runs.

Sales Overview • Scott Wilson

Session Objective: To give Board members an overview of MCCVB's sales initiatives.

Scott Wilson, Vice President of Sales, MCCVB, gave an overview of sales initiatives.

- *Overview.* Changes were made to the sales team in response to a research study last year, of which Advisory Board feedback was a part. Three new people were hired in three new markets: Chicago/Midwest, Dallas/Southeast and San Francisco/Pacific Northwest. Existing staff covered San Diego/Southwest, Sacramento/Mountain States and Washington, DC/Northeast. Top recommended target segments in the study included technology and software, agriculture, financial, medical, education, insurance and manufacturing. The sales team has been directed to these higher-rated corporate segments. The highest rated segments for RevPAR were corporate, incentive, association, SMERF and government. According to meeting planners, the ideal meeting types for Monterey County are corporate, incentive and association; these are the sales team's focus. All sales target opportunities vary by market.
- *Update on Board recommendations.* Based on recommendations from the previous Advisory Board meeting, a strategic client services department was developed to provide services and help with sales support, tradeshow, RFPs, site inspections and other tasks. The customized microsite has been successful, and a cobranded, custom mapping site has been created to work in conjunction with microsites. Registration and housing services are also offered, the latter of which is provided for free through the *Meeting Max* program. The new *Flash Your Badge* program offers discounts to attendees at local attractions, restaurants and bars. *Monterey Medical Meetings* has been launched to teach hotel teams how to work with medical and pharma regulations. Ten hotels have gone through the program. A number of CSR programs are also available through the MCCVB.

Board Feedback: Sales Initiatives

Board Recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The <i>Monterey Medical Meetings</i> program will be very helpful and will save time. The needs of these groups are seldom understood by hotels and often neglected in a seller's market. Having proactive contact with DMO representatives familiar with these needs would be a differentiator. In particular, rates need to match the per-diem costs indicated on the RFP. ➤ Ask customers how they work with a website for clients. In some cases, microsites do not synchronize well with customer sites. ➤ Provide a video on the website highlighting all of the services offered by MCCVB.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Separate science meetings as a market segment with unique needs. Monterey has a legacy as a destination for scientific meetings. ➤ Add the medical equipment sector. These groups need to follow pharma guidelines and would be easy to target. ➤ The medical segment should be expanded to include health. Public health and research organizations must also adhere to pharma regulations. ➤ Have a Monterey presence at specialized medical conferences to showcase what the city has to offer these groups. ➤ Other destinations have not undergone as much effort to appeal to medical and pharma meetings. ➤ Potential customers may avoid the Monterey booth at tradeshow because it is perceived as expensive. Instead, bring meeting planners to the city for educational sessions and certification programs. ➤ Ensure that local restaurants are also familiar with the needs of medical groups. Many need special menus or private rooms for dinner presentations. ➤ For some government groups, not all attendees are government employees. Issues arise when hotels expect a government ID from every attendee. ➤ Some of the targeted corporate markets will not be able to change their meeting patterns to fit Monterey's need to fill Sundays through Thursdays. However, revisit these prospects months later to see if their pattern has become a better fit.
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<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Board Recommendations</i></p>	<p>Board Feedback: Building Relationships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ All members agreed that they will be more likely to do business with people with whom they have built a business relationship. ➤ Take the time to get to know potential customers and do not contact them unless familiar with their business. LinkedIn is a good tool for getting information. ➤ Ask existing customers for referrals to others likely to use Monterey. ➤ Be involved with boards and committees to network and meet new prospects. ➤ Be collaborative and offer subject-matter expertise when appropriate. ➤ Stay involved with industry associations like MPI. ➤ Do not make cold calls. If connections are made through cold calls, they will be with younger staff members, not decision makers. ➤ Instead of just focusing on new business, incentivize existing customers so they will come back to Monterey and feel that their business is valued. ➤ Notate prospects who have said they are not interested so they are not contacted multiple times. ➤ Take the time to make an effective transition during sales turnover. Tell customers where the salesperson is going and introduce them to the new contact. Keeping them informed shows customers that their business is valued.
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<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Action Item</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Create a microsite for the Advisory Board so they can test it and offer feedback at the next meeting.
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Trends in the Meetings Industry • Nancy Morrell Swanson

Session Objective: To gain planner perspective on the economic outlook in each market segment of our industry. To dialogue about trends in our industry and the impact they will have for destinations, hotels and meetings. To further explore the relationship between the DMO and the planner.

Board Feedback

Board Input & Recommendations

Corporate

- Business for the financial and insurance market has been impacted. Training programs for Affordable Care Act and compliance issues have added additional meetings. Lead times for these events are at six months, and the events are on a Sunday through Wednesday pattern. These are expected to continue.
- Success for the life insurance sector is tied to interest rates. Business has gone down as interest rates decrease. Broker/dealer meetings are doing well. Women are a primary target demographic as the market has shifted away from males as the traditional breadwinner. Hotels can take advantage of this shift through target marketing to women's conferences. Carmel and Monterey are ideal locations for these events. While annual incentives continue, regular meetings have been cut tenfold. Meetings are more strategic and consolidated. Lead times need to be longer to find the right locations.
- Other corporate groups have experienced growth. Budgets need to increase to adapt to changing market demands. Dates are not flexible and sourcing requires creativity. There is more awareness about market trends. Short lead times mean that sites selected may be less than perfect and there may be more RFPs.
- The success of the agriculture business is tied to commodity pricing. While last year was positive, trends are down this year. The meeting schedule will stabilize after crops are harvested. More meetings are held domestically due to costs, world affairs and health issues associated with some regions. The ease of travel and safety are also factors. The sector has taken a conservative approach to meetings, with a trend toward more video conferencing.
- Attrition is an issue for another corporate group. Meetings cancelled by clients last year have returned with a more conservative approach. In the past, 10% to 20% attrition was acceptable, but now clients are trying to extend final contracting as long as possible to determine how many people qualify for the events. This forces short lead times. The company educates their clients about having optional dates or destination choices available.
- An accounting firm has always recognized the importance of meetings and is now targeting a more female demographic. The management business is very successful, and three new events have been added this year. In addition to these internal meetings, client events have been added. Groups are encouraged to book further in advance; even sourcing for 2016 is becoming difficult.
- With an emphasis on billable hours, a law firm has been trying to combine internal meetings and client events. One group will meet separately prior to a larger, combined event. The company is working with hotels to consider different times of the year. Litigation meetings are held in hotel rooms. Arbitration meetings are sourced with the same parameters as regular meetings, with the exception of longer durations of stay. These have short lead times and are often booked at hotels near courthouses or council. Patterns will remain static for several years.
- A pharmaceutical company has increased the size of its meetings, possibly due to the practice of combining meetings by area. Events have grown outside of the US and more people are eligible. Pharma still has strict compliance parameters because of perception. While pharma was attractive to hotels as short-term business, there is now more competition for space. For international pharma meetings, there are fewer European attendees due to increased disclosure regulations. The exchange rate also plays a role.
- There has been a resurgence of incentive events as companies seek better employee motivation. Time away from home is respected as valuable, so

events may be closer and shorter; Monterey is a good destination for groups that want to stay close to home. Air travel costs are a consideration. Companies are looking for both employee and customer-based incentives. There is some concern about ROI but retention is the top goal. Because employees spend more time out of the office, incentives may be the only time to meet with senior leaders. Incentive groups are willing to spend more to get what they want in an event. Booking is farther in advance, with groups sourcing for 2018 at this time. Availability is an issue. As rates go up, demand is increasing. Some groups want all-inclusive rates. There is more bundling for international programs, with event components in the US, Asia and Europe. Educational sessions may be included based on the client. Monterey is a good destination for inbound incentive customers from South America, for which California is an ideal location.

- Corporations are combining meetings and business travel spend as leverage to negotiate better rates with hotels.

Association

- Associations have lower budgets than corporate customers. The focus is on ROI since conference profit drives all other programs. Clients are booking for 2018 and beyond because of the lack of availability as associations compete with corporate business. Meetings are growing in small increments, based on location.
- It is becoming more difficult to hold Thursday through Sunday meetings because of the lack of guestroom availability on Saturday nights. Airlines no longer give discounts for Sunday return flights. One group has shifted schedules so that attendees can fly out on Saturdays.
- According to an ASAE study, association meeting income is increasing. This is due to sponsorship revenue rather than attendance.
- In the government sector, meetings have decreased significantly due to regulations restricting travel. Federal employees are particularly affected as there is more risk allowed at the local level. Lobbying efforts are underway to encourage more a more common-sense approach. The issue is addressed through US Travel Association's *Meetings Mean Business* initiative. An event is upcoming in Washington, DC with 400 DMOs to discuss solutions.
- Local government organizations have had good attendance. The focus is on sponsorships and exhibits to provide a more meaningful attendee experience.
- Many trade associations lost members during the economic downturn. Companies went out of business and are now struggling to rebuild. Providing good value to attendees at association meetings is crucial. Members are still hesitant and cautious, and attendance has not returned to previous levels.
- Medical associations have little flexibility and need a perfect fit for their meeting space. Attendance is down.
- The traditional exhibit booth model will have to change for association events. Organizations are working to change their presentation quickly because the typical booth is no longer relevant. This affects the way space is used at conference centers and in hotels.
- Technology has become an expectation for attendees in all association sectors. Capacity, capability and price are all important considerations.
- Piracy and poaching have become issues in association meetings.

Third party

- One company is entering its fifteenth year as a third party. Business is 60% site selection and 40% planning. Annual growth is at 7%. Budgets are increasing and people are meeting more.
- Board members who use third parties said that they are a crucial team member for site selection and contracting. For the pharma sector, strict

	<p>regulations make it difficult to work with third parties, but it could be done if there was a focus on only one meeting segment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Ask the customer preference regarding contacts for those working with third parties. Some groups want hotels and CVBs to speak to their third party representatives as if speaking directly to the customer. Others prefer direct contact with a copy to the third party. Some third-party clients are not dedicated meeting planners, so they do not have time to speak with hotels or the CVB. ➤ Ensure that hoteliers include attachments to proposals that will help them stand out to the third party representative. Do not assume that a personal presentation designed for the client will be seen directly. Make sure you convince the third party that you have the best product for the client. ➤ Bring destination representatives to the site inspection and deliver the best presentation to sell Monterey. F&B is an important element. ➤ Leveraging the CVB is the best opportunity for finding the right fit within a city.
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<p><i>Board Recommendations</i></p>	<p>Board Feedback: Reasons to Book Monterey</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Monterey is an attractive destination and pleasant environment for a retreat. ➤ The destination has a variety of activities, such as the coastline, the vineyards and the aquarium. Add more venues outside the hotels. ➤ When rates fall within the per-diem amount, Monterey is a fit. ➤ Monterey’s availability is perfect for small sized groups. ➤ The destination is a short drive for some attendees. ➤ Monterey’s downtown area is walkable and close to restaurants. ➤ There is a good selection of hotels in several tiers. ➤ With its good weather, Monterey is a good option for incentive events in the fall. ➤ Monterey is a good destination for a lower-priced incentive compared with international locations.
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<p><i>Board Recommendations</i></p>	<p>Board Feedback: Obstacles to Booking Monterey</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Several board members mentioned that both perceived and actual airlift issues are problematic. Attendees do not like the inconvenience of both a connecting flight and additional ground travel to reach an area, particularly if they are traveling from the east coast or internationally. ➤ If rates are not within the per-diem amount, Monterey will not be a fit. ➤ Repeat groups need new things to do in the city. ➤ Availability is an issue for larger groups. ➤ There is a lack of knowledge about Monterey for those who live outside California. More education about the destination and how it is different from other California coastal destinations is needed. ➤ Weekends are too busy in Monterey for those on a Thursday-Sunday schedule.
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	<p>Monterey Conference Center • Nancy Williams</p> <p><i>Session Objective: To give an update on the Monterey Conference Center project and gain new ideas that could be incorporated into the new plans. To discuss how the “new” MCC can appeal to different market segments.</i></p> <p>Nancy Wilson, Senior Sales Manager, Monterey Conference Center and Monterey Meeting Connection, gave an update on the MCC project.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Overview. Board members viewed architect renderings of the center
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renovation design. The second level is currently divisible into two spaces. The renovation will move this area to a mezzanine level and will add moveable walls. There will be two small boardrooms and a room for staff offices. Another escalator will be installed. The third floor will become the second floor and will contain a junior ballroom and some smaller rooms with flexible space. This area will feature a protected outdoor terrace, pre-function space and digital signage outside of the rooms. There will also be a loading area and space to move in vehicles. Additional space will be added to the first floor. Technology will be designed to appeal to new clients. The Monterey Marriott will be connected via a sky bridge. Hotel Pacific is located behind the center, and the Custom House Plaza features space that can be used as a tented offsite venue. Development in around the center includes new apartment buildings, a new brewery, expanded shops and more outdoor seating areas. The rotunda will have a smoother traffic flow, and its development is a separately funded project. A pavilion will be added to retain business during the renovation, which will occur between November 2015 and August 2016. The official grand opening will be held in January 2017. During the interim, the two hotels will be open and available for meetings. The Golden State Theater and other walkable locations will be used as relocation areas while the center is closed. The city council will help set the rates for the new building.

Board Feedback: Renovation

<p><i>Board Recommendations</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Consider changing the name from Monterey Conference Center to Monterey Convention Center to attract larger groups. A conference center is perceived to be a smaller venue, while a convention center represents the city. Anaheim, Long Beach and San Diego centers are all named "convention center." ➤ Consider expanding the Monterey airport to better compete with San Diego. ➤ Ensure that the Marriott and Portola have effective plans in place to accommodate customers during the center renovation. ➤ Reach out to affected customers first about the renovation plans. ➤ Contact customers before plans are released to the press. ➤ Some exhibitors were concerned about plans for the construction that were announced on the website without more details provided. ➤ Have honest conversations with the customers about any noise issues that will arise due to construction. Don't be short-sighted about trying to keep a piece of business through the construction if there is a chance it could jeopardize the future relationship. ➤ Provide a webcam stream showing the construction as it occurs. This makes customers feel like part of the process. ➤ Have "teasers" throughout the construction process showcasing new features that will set the facility apart from the competition. ➤ Show the construction progress in Monterey exhibit booths at tradeshow. ➤ Provide examples of different ballroom setups in photos on the website so that customers can get a feel for the facility before they are able to see the finished center in person. ➤ Keep communication with existing customers on a personal level throughout the process to maintain good relationships. ➤ Provide sufficient branding capabilities throughout the center. ➤ Have better renderings for the website so customers can visualize the site. ➤ Have a single sign-in for all Wi-Fi throughout the building and hotels. ➤ Make LED lighting flexible so customers can change lighting colors. ➤ Provide USB plug-ins for charging to avoid extra rental costs for charging stations.
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Board Feedback: Grand Opening*Board Recommendations*

- Board member opinions were mixed as to whether to provide a single grand opening celebration or to have a series of FAM trips introducing customers to the new center. FAM tours may appeal to local groups. However, customers will not want tours occurring during their events.
- Create a scavenger hunt with clues throughout the property so customers can learn about the new building. Have F&B at every station.
- Show customers different ways to use the new spaces.
- Provide examples of the green initiatives and technology in the new building. Explain bandwidth capacities by group size.
- Create a mobile application to showcase how seamless the internet connection will be in the center.
- Reno held their grand opening as a formal evening affair with synchronized fireworks off the rooftop.
- Provide different grand opening festivities for locals and non-locals. Denver had an educational forum focused on local pride. While locals may be able to attend a "hard hat site inspection," others may not have time for such an event.
- Consider a fortieth anniversary celebration theme.
- Focus on showing customers how they will be able to use the new spaces to create a memorable experience for their attendees. Showcase the opportunities to engage partners and create a visual sensory experience.
- The grand opening should encompass Monterey as a whole, not just the conference center. Include hotel partners, restaurants and shops as part of the experience.
- Provide a video tour on the website. Consider filming from a drone flight within the conference center.
- When bringing in customers from San Jose, make the arrival a fun experience after the long drive.
- Consider sending teaser items to encourage planners to make a site visit. New Zealand sent customers a single glass; the next glass was given onsite. Another destination sent 3D glasses for use at their onsite event.
- Record video testimonials at the grand opening where planners describe how they like the changes and how it will be successful. Have them address other planners.
- Although grand opening events are fun, a statement about Monterey and the package now available in the community is more effective. Show that Monterey has taken the next step to meet customer needs. Make the messaging customer-centric. Highlight the benefits for the meetings.

Board Feedback: Technology*Board Recommendations*

- To attract more Silicon Valley customers, keep up with fast-moving technology like Apple Pay.
- Ensure that the Wi-Fi has sufficient bandwidth to support multiple devices throughout the center without gaps, interruptions or dead zones. Give customers clear information about internet speed and capabilities.
- Provide pull-down screens and other technology options that will save customers money versus bringing in their own equipment.
- Charging additional fees for Wi-Fi needs above the basic free offering is acceptable. However, be sure to educate planners about what is provided so they do not pay too much or find the service lacking at the event.
- Ask customers for Wi-Fi usage reports to help determine the groups' needs.
- Have the client services staff educate customers about technology needs, particularly for groups with inexperienced planners.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Retain hardwire capabilities for those customers who need the security of hardwired technology.
	<p>Board Feedback: Pricing</p>
Board Recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Monterey's flexibility is an advantage. Work with customers on an individual basis to determine prices that work for the group. Honoring lower price requests may help ensure future business. ➤ Know what competitors are offering and charging. ➤ Thresholds for free conference center space will vary on a case-by-case basis for different factors like peak, repeat business, open windows and other elements.

General Session

	<p>All Things Marketing • Rob O'Keefe <i>Session Objective: To discuss branding and marketing of the Monterey Convention Center. To gain feedback on new initiatives for group marketing.</i></p> <p>Rob O'Keefe, Vice President and Chief Marketing Officer, MCCVB, gave an overview of branding and marketing initiatives.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>Overview.</i> Many potential customers are aware of Monterey but are not familiar with the area. Based on research and Board feedback, the brand messages that best fit Monterey are "inspired moments in meetings" and "grab life by the moments." The goal is to position Monterey as the most inspirational meetings destination on the west coast. The focus when selling the destination is on media relations and digital/social content. The goal of publication advertising is to direct users to the Monterey website, the hub of all information related to the destination. Website tools are under development, including a drone-filmed video of the destination and live video of the conference center. <i>Monterey Moments</i> pop-up events help introduce the city to new audiences; an event will be held in New York. ➤ <i>Brand Positioning.</i> The goal is to build awareness about Monterey and its conference center and to create anticipation. A blog may be one strategy. A word cloud was created about the city; some relevant phrases included "tech savvy," "open space," "personality," "success-oriented," and "open minds." Branding will showcase innovations and features unique to Monterey, such as its historical status as the first capital of California and the city's vibrant downtown area. Important factors for meeting planners include Monterey's logistics, room sizes and meeting spaces. The transformative experience differentiates the city.
	<p>Board Feedback: Awareness Event Best Practices</p>
Board Recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Use creativity when planning awareness events. Some destinations have hosted "jean bars" where attendees are fitted for blue jeans, manicure-pedicure events and shopping excursions. ➤ Monterey's cooking class held in Sacramento was enjoyable, memorable and valuable. Attendees are still talking about the event. ➤ Host interactive events that get the sales team from the CVB staff involved with meeting professionals ➤ Hold a two- or three-hour informational reception in the afternoon with several hotel partner presentations. Include regional representatives. ➤ One hotel hosted a food truck event that was enjoyable and unique.

- Seattle has a unique glass blowing event. Attendees network while waiting for their turn at glass blowing.
- One local hotel hosted a professional “headshot” photography session.
- One New York event featured a Nike fitting and a caricature artist.
- Another destination holds several events at different times of day.
- Keep events on a time schedule.
- Meeting planners from Orange County and San Diego came together for a train ride to Los Angeles.
- Another group hosted a wellness event with yoga, healthy food and health education. Participants made holistic herbs and lotions.
- Toronto holds an *Imaginarium* event at their conference center. Each year features a different project like decorating shoes for kids, making jewelry bags or a hair styling event. The program is by invitation only and is imaginative and memorable.
- Some groups use upscale private homes for unique events. This is a draw because attendees are curious to see the homes.

Board Feedback: Brand Positioning

Board Recommendations

- Most members had positive reactions to the branding initiatives. Other cities have not associated a building with an idea. “Inspire” is a word that invokes emotion.
- Ensure that branding is authentic and consistent.
- Have targeted messaging. Include specifics about Monterey for leaders who are sold by facts rather than the inspirational message. Include five bullet point facts for each segment of the industry.
- Brand the sensory experience. Use examples for all five senses to maximize the message, i.e., culinary for smell and artwork for vision.
- Ultimately, attracting the attendee is the most important goal.
- Showcase innovations that have happened in Monterey to attract science-minded groups and individuals.
- Have a planner blog with videos that answer questions meeting planners might have about Monterey.
- Include messaging about outdoor spaces of historical relevance in the area. These can be built into an appealing experience for attendees.
- Show groups like the TED conference that Monterey is capable of providing a non-traditional learning environment.
- The campaign is risky because it is difficult to ensure innovation as a meeting outcome. Hire a consultant to help customers connect their objectives to the meeting experience. Show them how Monterey means innovation.
- Utilize the consultant for experience mapping to help groups make strategic decisions for their future events. Ensure that the consultant understands each group’s goals and objectives.
- Good air transportation and a one-stop shop model are important site decision factors for meeting professionals.
- The word “innovation” is more relevant for a conference center rather than convention center. Members had mixed opinions about whether to call the center conference or convention.
- Board members read *Convene*, *Collaborate*, *Successful Meetings*, airline magazines, *Pharma Executive*, *Meetings Next* and other publications.

Board Feedback: Content Marketing and Social Media

*Board
Recommendations*

- Content needs and reasons for choosing Monterey as a destination vary by industry and by customer.
- Encourage people to check in on Facebook when visiting Monterey attractions to raise awareness about the city.
- Decision makers use *Conde Naste, Travel & Leisure* and *TripAdvisor*. Some are particularly concerned about negative comments on *TripAdvisor*.
- Use Twitter and Instagram to showcase Monterey's beauty. Include hashtags on local signage.
- Content sources vary by individual. Younger attendees use mobile applications, but older CEOs may not be tech-savvy.
- Content is useful for engagement between attendees and for local sales meetings, push notifications for specific content, and sponsorship opportunities.
- Some groups have a dedicated team to control social media messaging.
- Live Twitter feeds during an event can be distracting.

Board Feedback: Website Content and Messaging

*Board
Recommendations*

- Include information about local city officials on the website so customers can contact them and invite them to events. Other cities have this information.
- Have information on the website about the drive from San Jose and how it compares with O'Hare, Atlanta or other destinations that take the same amount of time from airport to hotel. San Diego has maps on the website that showcase drive times from the airport.
- Show drive times rather than miles, and include drive times from small nearby towns to Monterey.
- Be clear about area messaging. The beach cities in California are similar in description and can be confusing for non-locals. Show the differentiation.

Wrap-Up • Tammy Blount and Scott Wilson

Ms. Blount and Mr. Wilson thanked Board members for their time and participation and recognized outgoing members MaryAnne Bobrow, Diane Elliot, Judi Froehlich, Kay Granath, Jan Hennessey, Jamie Hillegas, Judy Johnson and Donald Potter. The next Monterey County Convention & Visitors Bureau Meetings Advisory Board meeting will be announced soon.