

# SALT LAKE CUSTOMER ADVISORY BOARD

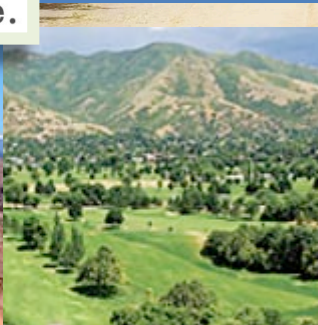


Different by Nature.

## SALT LAKE CUSTOMER ADVISORY BOARD May 8, 2015 Meeting Minutes *Confidential*

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**Board Members (in Attendance)**

Lisa Dyson  
Nelson Fabian  
David Grindle  
Lori Ionntiu  
Lori Jenks  
Dave Jennings  
Cherian Koshy  
Alexandria Murphy  
Peter O’Neil  
Michelle Randall  
Susan Root  
Janiece Sneegas

TESOL – International Association  
Center for Priority Based Institute  
US Institute for Theatre Technology  
Convention of the Episcopal Church  
Emerald Expositions, Inc.  
Community Associations Institute  
National Speech & Debate Association  
Meeting Expectations, Inc.  
American Industrial Hygiene Association  
National Communication Association  
IEEE  
Unitarian Universalist Association

**Salt Lake Leadership & Host Committee**

Scott Beck  
Dan Hayes  
Gerry Kingston  
Doug Koob  
Erin Litvack  
Mark White

Visit Salt Lake  
Salt Palace  
Delta Air Lines  
Marriott Salt Lake City Center  
Salt Lake County  
Visit Salt Lake

**Meeting Facilitator**

David Kliman

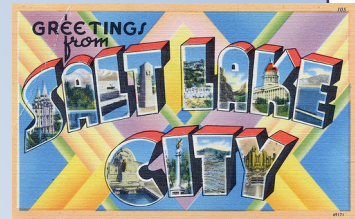


The Kliman Group

**Graphic Recorder**

Sophia Liang

Graphic Footprint



**Gallery Attendees**

Dusty Allred  
Caryn Bradshaw  
Eddie Canaday  
Jay Garret  
Jeff Gassaway  
Frank Harris  
Dan Crooker  
Kimberly Leary  
Michael Mack  
Kyle Myers  
Todd Ness  
Bob O’Neil  
Sally O’Neill  
Fred Parker  
Chris Peterson  
Jeff Protzman  
Julie Rhoads  
Troy Rushton  
Tina Stark  
John St Martin  
Cannon Tarbet  
Eric Thompson  
Nicole Walker

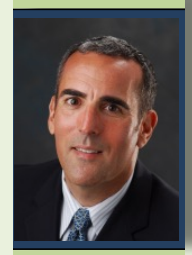
Visit Salt Lake  
Visit Salt Lake  
Visit Salt Lake  
Marriott City Creek  
Visit Salt Lake  
The Grand America  
Snowbird  
Visit Salt Lake  
Visit Salt Lake  
Hilton Downtown  
Visit Salt Lake  
Marriott International  
Visit Salt Lake  
Courtyard by Marriott  
Visit Salt Lake  
Hilton Salt Lake City Center  
Visit Salt Lake  
Visit Salt Lake  
Orchid Event Solutions  
Salt Palace  
Visit Salt Lake  
Visit Salt Lake  
Holiday Inn Express



### Opening Comments:

#### Scott Beck, Mark White and David Kliman

Scott and David welcomed the Board and thanked them for their time and commitment to Salt Lake. The Board was asked to speak honestly and openly on behalf of the meetings and convention industry as well as their respective organizations. Salt Lake will listen and learn from the Board and appropriate action will be taken on its recommendations.



### Salt Lake Destination Updates:

Scott Beck provided an update regarding key Salt Lake issues; the following summarizes his comments:

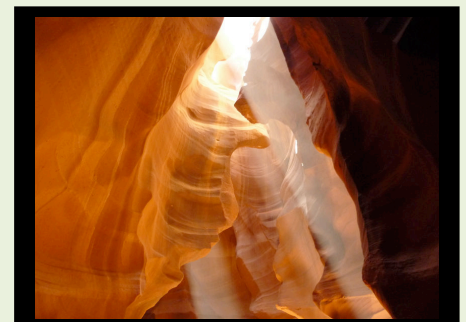
- Scott is currently the volunteer Chair of DMAI <http://www.destinationmarketing.org> His role has provided new perspective of the tremendous impact meeting professionals have on destinations of all sizes
- Action Items from the 2014 meeting were reviewed, a full report is found at the end of this report and on the CAB microsite [www.visitsaltlake.com/cab](http://www.visitsaltlake.com/cab)
- *Ski City* is a new Salt Lake brand; [www.skicity.com](http://www.skicity.com); shifts focus from mountains to metro; has benefited greatly and unintentionally from the severe drought in other western states; Salt Lake's ski season typically runs from around Thanksgiving to May or June depending on snow fall and climate
- Visit Salt Lake has made a very conscious shift from traditional marketing focus to segmentation and customization; outside experts have been retained to target customers specific needs including a social media content manager with a strong focus on developing LinkedIn for business users
- Hosting ASAE 2016 offers a major opportunity to shift customer and stakeholder perceptions

### New Hotel Development

- Working on development of a new convention center hotel, Legislation was passed which created a new public subsidy, it's a post performance tax resource of up to \$80 million over 26 years. The RFP specified that the winning developer must finance all aspects of the project; Omni was the only bidder and won the contract by default
- Process is taking longer than expected and has now been narrowed to three sites
- Legislation dictates a minimum of 800 rooms and the site must be located within 500 feet of the Convention Center
- Shilo Inn has been rebranded to Holiday Inn Express; transformational for the destination
- New Marriott Courtyard and Hyatt House now open on West Side
- 500 new hotel rooms are expected to open within one year plus another 1,000 new rooms within 2 years; all are in a variety of small, limited service properties

### Convention Bookings & Pipeline

- 2014 was best year ever, Salt Lake now has more business on the books than ever before
- Strong pipeline for 2015 and 2016; ahead of pace for 2016, but 2017 is not as strong
- Sales segmentation personalization strategy is paying off



## Salt Palace

- 2015 is a banner year, 80% occupancy is a record
- SMG manages the Center and 200 other facilities around the country
- Strong funding pipeline
- Capital projects include:



- \$3+ million improvements including 6 new escalators serving North Side 55 room space
- North Lobby renovated including new carpet and lighting
- New carpet all East Side rooms
- All new ceiling tiles in East Side and West Lobby
- New Wi-Fi systems conversion to AC radio to enhance performance; backup updates continue in 2016
- 1 Gig dedicated circuit will increase to 2Gig
- Public Art Program will be installed at main tower; to be completed June 2016; will replace the existing fountain
- 160 point rigging installed in the Ballroom

## Salt Lake Personality

Feedback from recent ASAE Focus Group took place in Washington, D.C. was outlined; attendees were Association Executive Directors who were not familiar with Salt Lake. Attendees were asked to outline Salt Lake's destination personalities; the following summarizes their comments:

- Initially silence regarding Salt Lake personality; then some mentioned Mormons and LDS Church, "conservative", "Donny & Marie" (Osmond) "can't get a drink," "nothing to do"; "lacks any real personality"

## Advisory Board Feedback

- Salt Lake' urban product is unique to Utah; attendees identified a strong need to refine "things to do" in Salt Lake and shift the perception from mountains and recreation to metro/cosmopolitan
- Content (of the meeting) is paramount for association executives
- Attendees participate in meetings in order to network, learn and engage with their peers
- The Number 1 reason Salt Lake loses a potential piece of business is because a Board (or decision maker) doesn't think Salt Lake has adequate destination appeal and won't draw attendees
- Attendees are often surprised by the high level of culture and history in Salt Lake
- The city's abundant restaurants and walkability factor is often not well understood
- Key assets include:
  - \* *Vibrant, strong labor force*
  - \* *Great air access*
  - \* *Music & Art*
  - \* *Good weather most of the year*





### Advisory Board Feedback (continued)

- Youth and student groups don't care about Salt Lake's negative alcohol perceptions; but the student's parents are interested in food and drink
- Destination education trips often overly focused on food and drinking; consider combining fam trips with festivals; don't lead with food & wine, lead with the emotional connection
- Google Cardboard product virtual reality <https://www.google.com/get/cardboard/>
- Two Days in Seattle cited as highly effective <http://www.2daysinseattle.com>
- Use appropriate key leisure assets to market to planners and stakeholders
- Snap Chat My Stories <https://support.snapchat.com/a/view-stories> helps create connections and allows attendees to feel their event is personalized
- Salt Lake's historic identity and authenticity are key brand factors
- Pioneering Mormon ethos created the Salt Lake of today which is rich in family, education, safety, entrepreneurship and culture
- Can "Mormon be made sexy"?
- Salt Lake offers an urban experience, but with very limited urban problems which many other cities face; downside is the extreme lack of diversity in Salt Lake
- Salt Lake's LDS foundation is its greatest strength and its greatest weakness
- "Things to do" mean different things to different people and groups



*The Advisory Board feedback regarding perception issues are found at the end of this report*

### Mobile Technology/ Mobile Websites

DMAI *Destination Next* is looking at what DMO will look and act like going forward

<http://www.destinationmarketing.org/topics/destination-next>

The number 1 trend from DMAI's in-depth research relates to use of mobile platform technology. Salt Lake has retooled its database to reflect a destination tool, not a membership search tool. The new tools were purchased from [www.infousa.com](http://www.infousa.com), which also provides information to [www.yelp.com](http://www.yelp.com). Salt Lake can create customer mobile websites (not an app) for groups. The website use geo-location. The CAB was asked to co-create navigation and content; the following summarizes their feedback:

- MUST seamlessly integrate with their preexisting apps
- Technology providers typically overpromise and under deliver; be cautious of this and line up the app vendors in advance; the back ends must connect
- Do not force attendees to use multiple sites; that's a "deal breaker"
- Use of apps and overall use of mobile devices creates the need for abundant electrical charging stations
- Critical to have free Wi-Fi with abundant bandwidth inside the Convention Center to ensure widespread use of mobile technology
- "Cities that are Smart" are evolving with internet infrastructure; basic Wi-Fi has become considered to be like a public utility
- Dan Hayes outlined current services at Salt Palace:
  - Free basic Wi-Fi with 256kp upload and download speeds in all public space; in discussion to offer it facility wide; designed to accommodate 10,000 simultaneous devices
- Planners need to articulate and share their attendees' technology needs with facility providers
- Many mobile content providers are constantly innovating and it's hard to lead the market, but the DMO can lead with hyper-curated content (top 5 lists in Salt lake)
- Curate what's new, vendors that offer a discount (good to push that information)



## Meeting industry Trends, Key Issues and Problem Solving

### General Trends

- More meetings are taking place outside the United State
- Seeks changing in business models with more paid professional leadership and less volunteer involvement in developing products and services
- Flat attendance; “flat is the new up”
- Major focus on mobile technology and seamless, ubiquitous Wi-Fi access; strong demand for free basic Wi-Fi in Centers and public spaces
- Moving away from apps to interactive custom websites
- 3-D printing is growing, but need to know more about it and it needs to become more affordable
- Printed handouts are a “thing of the past”; resulting in focus on new ways to make money on e-advertising
- No one uses Visitors Guides for their meetings, but some attendees ask for them
- Focusing on enhanced lighting and built in digital displays
- Opportunity to use hotel concierge desks as new smart information center
- Contests and incentives drive attendees interaction

### Boycotts and Political Action

- Socially conscious associations are taking notice of local political events, they monitor current events and many choose to voice their values in their meeting location i.e.: candlelight vigils
- DMOs need to understand that many associations have strong social consciousness
- Some groups “draw the line” based on physical safety
- Some have language in their RFP which allows them to cancel if discrimination is perceived
- Labor costs and regulations force some groups to exclude some destinations; while other associations want to use fair labor destinations

### New models of presentations

- Ted Talk style 15 minute presentations are highly regarded [www.ted.com](http://www.ted.com)

### AirBnB and Shared Economy

<http://www.fastcompany.com/3027107/punk-meet-rock-airbnb-brian-chesky-chip-conley>

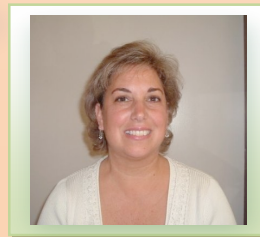
- Amazon contracting with boutique hotel brands to sell hotel rooms
- AirBnB represents the “democratization of travel”– CEO of Hilton
- AirBnB now being offered within room blocks in San Francisco
- Social economy trends are unstoppable
- Some using PCMA model in which attendees must book HQ hotel or a higher registration fee is charged

### Shifting Market Trends

- Hotels forced planners into much shorter window of availability once space is held
- Orlando DMO now only books citywides, no self contained meetings
- Some planners don't trust DMOs to be intermediary with local hotels
- Relationships are being undermined by the hard sellers’ market. Many hotels aren’t respecting and taking in to account the long view; this erodes relationships
- Revenue Managers are totally focused on monthly or quarterly results, not long term planner supplier relations; this is counterproductive and short sighted
- Some hotels aren’t honoring contract terms
- Some planners feel managing attendance building is their job, not the DMO

### Delta Air Lines - Gerry Kingston

Gerry provided an overview of Delta’s products and services; her PowerPoint presentation is attached to the minutes



**The following Members have completed their terms and where thanked for their service:**

- Nelson Fabian
- Susan Katz
- Lori Ionntiu
- Kate Hurst

**Open Issues**

- Deregulation of taxi service has created confusion, DMO is working aggressively to address this issue
- UberX and Super Shuttle now operating in Salt Lake
- Hot meeting destinations must have a headquarter hotel attached to the Center and include:

*\*Austin   \*Houston   \*San Antonio*  
*\*Indianapolis*  
*\*Baltimore   \*Nashville*



**Wrap Up**

The Board was thanked for their commitment to the process of continuous improvement for Salt Lake. Their feedback is tremendously helpful; their recommendations and comments will be put to good use.

**Recommendations and Actions Items are found below**

**Recommendations and Action Items from the May 2015 meeting  
Salt Lake Perception & Image**

- While exhibiting at industry show, (ASAE, PCMA, IMEX etc.) consider utilizing some or all of the methods used by international exhibitors including interactive hard wall booth with food & beverage experiences, entertainment and education in the booth space
- Move away from ski images, share metropolitan, cosmopolitan images
- Focus on content, “not the mountains” in meeting related market materials
- Take into account that inclusivity and neutrality is very important for many organizations, especially STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) groups
- Consider the effectiveness of the Canada Tourism Commission’s sales model that sells Canada first and the destinations second; are there lessons for Salt Lake?
- Share more widely The Mayor’s strong leadership on sustainability; this is major selling point
- Highlight ability to access local intellectual capital as a unique selling proposition
- Keep message simple and clear (Vegas Means Business was cited as highly effective)
- Identify brand champions and bloggers to curate authentic experiences
- Create an Advisory Board curated Salt Lake cocktail; use as an ongoing marketing tool; bring a hipster bartender to industry events to mix and serve cocktails
- Don’t disown the past, need to embrace the positive
- Capitalize more on LDS based tenant of “welcoming”
- Share successful attendance numbers with meeting professionals and boards and provide cost benefit analysis
- Consider focusing on highly personalized understanding of key issues impacting the customer; go far beyond dates, rates and space
- Consider more consumer advertising (Conde Nast, Travel & Leisure etc.) to garner attention of decision makers but cost is very high; Visit Salt lake is aggressive regarding earner media i.e. recent Economist article
- Capitalize more on the Sundance Film Festival is THE original festival; many groups are linking their shows to festivals such as SXSW <http://sxsw.com>
- Highlight positive changes in hotel products, especially modern public space (i.e. major brands new hotel lobby and public space redesign)
- Promote Salt Lake’s very cohesive hospitality community
- Promote SMG’s very strong positive reputation
- Change images on sample title slide, move away from outdoor recreation to metropolitan images