

Chief Commercial Officer Itinerary



Welcome to Summer Summit, an invitation-only gathering of travel industry leaders designed to create space for candid conversation, fresh thinking and meaningful connections across the industry. Additionally, you have been invited to participate in our new Chief Commercial Officer Track, a pilot designed specifically for senior commercial executives and growth leaders.

WEDNESDAY, JULY 29

10:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m. **EVENT CHECK IN** | Loggia Courtyard

5:30-7:00 p.m. **WELCOME RECEPTION** | Santiago Courtyard

7:00-9:00 p.m. **CHIEF COMMERCIAL OFFICER DINNER** | Buena Vista Terrace (Veranda Restaurant)
Invitation Only

THURSDAY, JULY 30

7:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m. **EVENT CHECK IN & CONCIERGE** | Aragon Foyer

7:00-7:45 a.m. **CHIEF COMMERCIAL OFFICER BREAKFAST** | Catalina Ballroom
Invitation Only

8:00 a.m.-12:30 p.m. **SUMMER SUMMIT PROGRAMMING** | Aragon Ballroom

WELCOME & OUTLOOK: WHAT COMES NEXT FOR TRAVEL

U.S. Travel President and CEO Geoff Freeman opens the Summit with reflections on what the organization is hearing from members across the industry, how those conversations are shaping strategy and why this moment calls for travel leaders to come together, compare notes and think bigger about what comes next.

UP TO THE MINUTE POLITICS: WHAT ACTUALLY MATTERS NOW

The pace of change in Washington isn't slowing, but not everything carries equal weight. In this keynote, **Jim VandeHei, co-founder and CEO of Axios**, cuts through the noise to focus on the signals leaders should be paying attention to now. From shifting narratives to real policy implications, he breaks down what's driving the moment - and what it means for markets, the travel industry and decision-making in the months ahead.

THE POLICY LANDSCAPE: PROGRESS, PRESSURE & PRIORITIES

From inbound travel policies to aviation and surface modernization, the policy environment surrounding travel is becoming more consequential and complex. **Erik Hansen, Senior Vice President and Head of Government Relations at U.S. Travel**, will unpack the issues driving U.S. Travel's advocacy agenda, where the association is gaining traction and where industry alignment and engagement will matter most in the months ahead.

BUILDING A \$1B COMMERCIAL ENGINE IN THE EXPERIENCE ECONOMY

In this behind-the-scenes look at how the **U.S. Soccer Federation** transformed itself from a traditional sports property into a modern commercial platform fueling the growth of soccer, **David Wright, Chief Commercial Officer**, shares how his team built a billion-dollar commercial engine spanning partnerships, media, fan engagement and infrastructure, as well as how that strategy performed in real time during the men's 2026 World Cup.

DON'T RETREAT, REDIRECT: WHAT LATAM'S GROWTH TELLS US ABOUT THE FUTURE OF U.S. INBOUND

The narrative around U.S. inbound travel has centered on decline—but the reality is more uneven. While some markets soften, Latin America continues to show growth, challenging assumptions about where international demand is headed next. In this conversation, **Simon Hawkins, Managing Director, International Sales at American Airlines** joins Managing Director, International Inbound Travel at U.S. Travel, Tyler Gosnell to offer a grounded view of what's driving continued demand. This session gives a focused look at where growth is still emerging and what it takes to capture it.

BREAK

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8:00 a.m.–12:30 p.m.

SUMMER SUMMIT PROGRAMMING | Aragon Ballroom

PULSE POINT

Zartico reveals the universal drivers of event success.

MEETINGS MEET THE MOMENT: THE COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE OF COMING TOGETHER

As organizations face increasing pressure to justify every investment, the value of meeting in person cannot be taken for granted. **Kevin Hinton, Managing Director of Group Travel at U.S. Travel** examines the research behind the Meetings Meet the Moment initiative, offering a data-driven case for why face-to-face engagement remains a critical driver of relationships, faster decision-making and business performance.

PULSE POINT

MMGY shares how the speed of technology is reshaping travel behavior.

A CONVERSATION ON THE EVOLVING CONSUMER

Chris Gabaldon, President and CEO of Moët Hennessy North America, shares how consumer behavior is changing, what defines value today and how leading brands stay relevant without losing their edge. From redefining luxury to elevating personalization and experience, this conversation explores what it takes to truly connect with today's consumer.

COMPETING BEYOND YOUR CATEGORY: THE NEW COMPETITIVE SET

Today's winners aren't just competing within their industry—they're competing for consumers' time, attention and spending against every other option travelers have. **Jason Liberty, Chairman and CEO of Royal Caribbean Group**, joins Geoff Freeman to discuss how competition has changed, what it takes to make bold long-term bets in an uncertain environment and where the next decade of travel growth will come from.

REFLECTIONS ON A REMARKABLE CAREER: A FIRESIDE CHAT WITH CAROLINE BETETA

In this fireside chat, Geoff Freeman sits down with the **retiring CEO of Visit California, Caroline Beteta** for a candid conversation reflecting on a remarkable tenure, lessons learned and the evolution of the industry.

CLOSING REMARKS + AUCTION PREVIEW

12:30–1:30 p.m.

LUNCH | Aragon Terrace

1:30–4:00 p.m.

CHIEF COMMERCIAL OFFICER PROGRAM | Santiago Ballroom

Invitation Only

5:00–6:00 p.m.

ANNUAL BATTLE OF THE BEST WINE TASTING* | North Lawn

Tickets Required to Attend | [Purchase Tickets](#)

6:00–10:00 p.m.

SUMMIT AUCTION, RECEPTION & DINNER* | Bernardo Ballroom

The Summer Auction, U.S. Travel's premier fundraising event, features exclusive travel packages and experiences curated by your industry peers, with proceeds directly supporting our advocacy efforts on and off Capitol Hill.

[Complete Prior Approval](#)

VIEW AUCTION INFO



**Optional childcare is available from 5:00–10:00 p.m. in the Catalina Ballroom. Advance registration required.*

FRIDAY, JULY 31

7:30 a.m.-2:00 p.m. **EVENT CHECK IN & CONCIERGE** | Aragon Foyer

7:30-9:00 a.m. **BREAKFAST** | Aragon Terrace

8:30 a.m.-12:00 p.m. **SUMMER SUMMIT PROGRAMMING** | Aragon Ballroom

TODAY'S STAGE SETTING

Geoff Freeman, President and CEO, U.S. Travel

BEST PRACTICES FOR ASSOCIATION ADVOCACY IN WASHINGTON

In this session, **Mike Gottlieb, Managing Partner of Penta Group** will unpack how the travel industry is perceived today—in Washington and beyond, based on data-driven insights. He'll highlight where perception aligns with reality and where gaps exist that the industry must actively address.

BRAND REVEAL: BUILT FOR WHAT'S NEXT

Travel is essential to America's economy, competitiveness and global standing. The brand representing this industry should reflect that reality. During this session, **Senior Vice President of Communications, Allison O'Connor**, will offer a first look at the evolving **U.S. Travel** brand identity, including a preview of the new logo. She'll share the journey that brought us here and how this work will help tell a stronger industry story and better reflect the leadership role U.S. Travel plays on behalf of the travel industry.

PULSE POINT

Sojern explores what the World Cup is really telling us.

WHAT THE ECONOMY IS REALLY TELLING US

The data says one thing. Reality often says another. **Diane Swonk, Chief Economist, KPMG and CEO of DS Economics**, brings clarity to a complex economic environment, connecting the big-picture forces shaping the global economy with the on-the-ground realities facing businesses today. From inflation and labor markets to consumer behavior and growth, she'll break down what's driving the current landscape and what to watch in the months ahead.

PULSE POINT

Karsh Hagan Madden discuss trendlines vs. headlines, and why only one of them should be driving your strategy.

BREAK

PULSE POINT

Google shares how generative AI is rewriting travel search.

THE FORCES YOU DON'T SEE COMING

In this conversation, **Nitin Chadda, President, Global Political Risk Advisory at Teneo, and Co-Founder and Managing Partner at WestExec Advisors**, offers an insider's view on the geopolitical forces reshaping the global landscape. From shifting power dynamics and economic fragmentation to policy decisions with far-reaching consequences, this conversation focuses on what leaders may be underestimating and how those risks translate into real-world business impact.

LEADERSHIP REFLECTIONS FROM AN UNPREDICTABLE TERM

In this closing conversation with Geoff Freeman, **Bill Hornbuckle, CEO and President, MGM Resorts International** will reflect on his time and share perspectives shaped by his tenure as chairman: what's changed, what's been challenged and what travel leaders should be preparing for next.

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8:30 a.m.-12:00 p.m. **SUMMER SUMMIT PROGRAMMING** | Aragon Ballroom

ENDURANCE UNDER PRESSURE

Will Jimeno, a World Trade Center September 11 survivor, retired Port Authority Police Officer and U.S. Navy veteran, shares a story of resilience in the face of unimaginable circumstances. As the 25th anniversary of 9/11 approaches, his perspective offers a powerful reminder of what it takes to persevere, adapt and lead through uncertainty. ***Guests invited. Discretion advised.***

CLOSING REMARKS

12:00-1:30 p.m. **LUNCH** | Aragon Terrace

1:00 p.m. **GOLF SHOTGUN START** | Promenade

1:30 p.m. **OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES** | [Various Locations](#)

6:30-8:30 p.m. **CLOSING DINNER** | Aragon Lawn

Summer Summit programming and community meetings are reserved for Board members and Chief Commercial Officer Program attendees. Families and guests are welcome and encouraged to join all other activities.