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Let’s stop wondering and start wandering—adventure is just ahead. #LetsGoThere
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A lot of progress... but the road to recovery is long
Outdated guidance leaves the meetings, convention and trade show industry vulnerable.

**CDC Definition:**

Large gatherings bring together many people from multiple households in a private or public space. Large gatherings are often planned events with a large number of guests and invitations. They sometimes involve lodging, event staff, security, tickets, and long-distance travel. CDC’s large events guidance might apply to events such as conferences, trade shows, sporting events, festivals, concerts, or large weddings and parties.
Why is this important?

• Be prepared. Protect the future and stability of the industry.

Boris Johnson extends current lockdown rules in England due to concerns over delta Covid variant

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Campaign objectives

• Accelerate the return of PME and business travel everywhere

• Educate officials on the difference between PMEs and other “large gatherings”

• Communicate to business leaders the importance/value of face-to-face meetings and examples of how they are being done safely now
The Scientific-Based Evidence for Conducting Safe and Healthy Professional Meetings and Events (PMEs)

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Introduction

During 2020, the world experienced a rapid change to virtual settings to conduct business during the COVID-19 pandemic. Although virtual meetings and events facilitated the ongoing conduct of business, professional continuing education, and networking, the challenges of 2020 caused significant hardships for millions of American citizens and for the U.S. economy. As the nation reopens following the first year of the pandemic, Americans are eager for a return to their pre-pandemic routines. For many, that includes business travel. It is important to recognize the value that professional meetings and events (PMEs) provided prior to the outbreak and return to them as safely as possible to enhance career and occupational well-being as well as to stimulate business and propel the economy forward. PMEs employ millions of Americans; many of these people are unemployed or have been working significantly less throughout the pandemic. Companies and organizations have continued to hold virtual meetings and events, which emphasizes the importance for carrying on their work. Whether through re-energizing employees and networking, informing healthcare providers about new and innovative treatments and practices, or receiving guidance and best practice strategies from organizations, PMEs are an integral part of business and organizational operations.

Several in-person PMEs have started to resume; examples are provided further in this paper. These events have been important to have been organized so that colleagues are able to safely connect with one another face-to-face and build stronger and more meaningful business relationships. Events provide social and economic benefits that must be balanced with public health safety considerations. As the relaxation of protective measures continues, a context in which the U.S. is striving to vaccinate more of the population and outbreaks worldwide remain a threat. Organizers seeking to put together large-scale events must consider science-based public health recommendations so that they do not mistakenly create super-spreader opportunities, especially among unvaccinated attendees.

As COVID-19 transmission rates continue to decline and vaccination is widely available, a re-evaluation of risk mitigation measures is warranted to ensure the public health response to the pandemic continues to be relevant to the conditions on the ground — including holding...
Science says: Large meetings and events can be safe

- PMEs have “the advantage of being structured and well-organized large gatherings where mitigation factors can be enforced to protect the health and safety of those in attendance.” Such as:

  - Mask Wearing
  - Physical Distancing
  - Disinfecting Surfaces
  - Proper Ventilation and Airflow
  - Individually Packaged Food and Beverage
  - Health Screening
Science says: Large meetings and events can be safe

- PMEs “have not been super-spreader events.”
- “A reevaluation of risk mitigation measures is warranted to ensure the public health response to the pandemic continues to be relevant to the conditions on the ground.”
- “A layered approach to risk mitigation reduces the risk of COVID-19 transmission and increases the health and safety of all attendees, including those staffing the event.”
If you reside in a state where RESTRICTIONS REMAIN...

✓ Communicate the **economic importance** of the meetings and events industry in places that are open

**@SOCIALHANDLE**

Now is the time to lift the remaining restrictions on in-person professional meetings and events (PMEs). The science confirms that it’s safe to do so. Find out more at LetsMeetThere.travel #LetsMeetThere

**In-person PMEs pose a near-zero (0.001%) risk of COVID-19 transmission to attendees—even for large events.**

#LetsMeetThere
If you reside in a state where RESTRICTIONS REMAIN...

✔️ Write your state officials to reinforce the importance of reopening. Be sure to add your localized perspective.

SAMPLE LETTER TO ELECTED OFFICIAL

[Letter content]

When writing, also consider collecting multiple signatures from your state/community.
Federal, state and local officials need to reevaluate restrictions to reflect the current science on large in-person professional meetings and events. Professional meetings aren’t just any large event—they are structured gatherings. Find out more at LetsMeetThere.travel #LetsMeetThere

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**Key Messages**

**Fact Sheet: Making the Case for PMEs**

**Fact Sheet: The Business Value of Meeting Face-to-Face**

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…and more!
Collectively reach the BUSINESS COMMUNITY: those driving the decision-making on company policy around travel.

According to business travelers, in-person meetings are twice as likely to convert prospects to customers than without one. It’s time to get back to business. Find out more at LetsMeetThere.travel #LetsMeetThere

Nearly $100 billion was lost in direct spending generated by the meetings, conventions and trade show industry in 2020

Source: Tourism Economics

#LetsMeetThere
Face-to-face meetings offer competitive advantages through relationship building and knowledge transfer that cannot occur during virtual meetings. Don’t get left behind. It’s time to get back to business. LetsMeetThere.travel

#LetsMeetThere

Business Leaders Messaging

To accelerate the return of business travel, meetings, and events, it is essential to reach the business community through the decision-making on company policy around travel and face-to-face meetings will be essential to building business back.

The messages below emphasize the competitive advantage businesses have by returning in-person business travel and meetings. Use the copy and graphics to drive home the importance of professional meetings and events to business performance, employee engagement and job fulfillment.

Leverage your leadership’s LinkedIn following to post about the importance of getting back to face-to-face meetings to their network. Encourage other business leaders to resume in-person meetings and events and share a personal perspective from your organization or destination.

Lead by Example: Executives Can Play a Critical Role in Reviving Business Travel

After more than a year of Zoom calls, mute button issues and virtual meetings, think we are all in agreement: there is nothing like an in-person, face-to-face connection.

In-person professional meetings and events (PMEs) are more productive and meaningful and are critical to forming business-building relationships. Despite these benefits, business travel is making a sluggish recovery for those that dominate the domestic leisure travel segment. In fact, it is expected that corporate travel, professional meetings, conventions and events are expected to take four years or more to recoup.

This is particularly alarming when you consider that, despite accounting for just 2% of total trip volume pre-pandemic, business travelers account for 40-60% of lodging and air revenue. Evidently, a full recovery of the travel economy is simply not possible without the return of business travel.

That is why the industry is turning its focus to the next chapter of the Let’s Go There initiative: Let’s Meet There. The phase will seek to elevate the value of in-person PMEs and advocate for updated policies that remove barriers to resuming in-person business travel.

As business leaders, it is crucial that we lead the charge on this important initiative, educating employees and partners about the value of in-person meetings and events. We must continue to advocate for policies that support the safe return of business travel and meetings.

#LetsMeetThere
In-person meetings are irreplaceable and drive commerce and networking:

**JOB FULFILLMENT**
- Advances professional growth - 90% agree
- Reinvigorates employee engagement - 87% agree
- Increases productivity - 84% agree
- Attracts and retains top talent - 84% agree
- Improves job performance - 82% agree

**STRONGER RELATIONSHIPS**
- Fosters stronger leadership skills - 88% agree
- Benefits company culture - 88% agree
- Broadens cultural understanding - 88% agree
- Eight in 10 prefer in-person brainstorms and collaborative meetings over virtual ones
- Creating valuable meaningful business relationships has been more difficult since the pandemic began - 60% agree

**INDUSTRY EDUCATION AND TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES**
- Ability to gain and share new ideas and best practices
- Ability to learn about the latest technologies, innovations and insights

**INCREASED CULTURAL UNDERSTANDING**
- Broadens cultural understanding - 88% agree
- Increases empathy - 82% agree

Following the Great Recession, companies that maintained levels of business travel, **OUTPERFORMED companies that cut back.**

Companies and industries that continue to invest in business travel—despite economic downturns—generally experience greater growth and increased profits in the long-run. Find out more at LetsMeetThere.travel

#LetsMeetThere

**More than 4 in 5 decision makers** believe business travel leads to increased profit and revenue.

#LetsMeetThere

**SOURCE:** Tourism Economics
Lead by Example: Executives Can Play a Critical Role in Reviving Business Travel

After more than a year of Zoom calls, mute button issues and virtual meetings, I think we are all in agreement: there is nothing like an in-person, face-to-face connection.

In-person professional meetings and events (PMEs) are more productive and meaningful and are critical to forming business-building relationships. Despite these benefits, business travel is making a sluggish recovery, far slower that of the domestic leisure travel segment. In fact, it is expected that corporate travel, professional meetings, conventions and events are expected to take four years or more to recover.

This is particularly alarming when you consider that, despite accounting for just 20% of total trip volume pre-pandemic, business travelers account for 40-60% of lodging and air revenue. Evidently, a full recovery of the travel economy is simply not possible without the return of business travel.

That is why the industry is turning our focus to the next chapter of the Let’s Go There initiative: Let’s Meet There. This next phase will seek to elevate the value of in-person PMEs and advocate for updated guidance differentiating these meetings from other informal, large gatherings.
GRASSROOTS: WE NEED YOUR VOICE

**Key Messages**

**Fact Sheet:**
Making the Case for PMEs

**Fact Sheet:**
The Business Value of Meeting Face-to-Face

**Social Media Guides:**
*Business Leaders*
*Elected Officials*

**Sample Letter to Elected Officials**

**Social Media Directory (by state)**

For more information please visit
letsmeetthere.travel/action-center
MARTHA SHERIDAN
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