

Key Takeaways

Travel's Essential Contribution to Economic Development

Travel Impacts Communities Across America

- Investing in tourism promotion stimulates visitor demand, which in turn generates tax revenue benefiting local residents. Lawmakers and community leaders who understand and invest in the value of travel are able to reduce the tax burden on their constituents and are in a more favorable financial position to fund essential services that make their communities stronger.

Collaboration Creates Attractive Communities—for both Residents and Visitors

- Investing in the improvement of a destination makes it not only more attractive to visitors, but also to talent. What may begin as an effort to bolster the livability of a place can turn into a travel boom that offsets costs and creates an unexpected tourism economy with lasting value.

Destination Marketers are Economic Developers

- Quality of life is increasingly important to relocation decisions. Destination marketing organizations are skilled storytellers that can empower and enliven efforts to entice businesses to headquarter or grow in an area.

Destinations Create a Sense of Place and Pride for Residents

- The residents of a community are at heart the decision-makers—their opinions matter. Residents who take pride in their community are valuable advocates for its storytelling, serving as a trusted resource to friends and family and other potential visitors.

Destination Marketers are Small Business Champions

- Small businesses make a destination unique, vibrant and more attractive to visitors. Not only is travel a significant part of the small business community, travel promotion can stimulate small business growth by generating visitor demand.

Destination Marketers Build Bridges to Rural Communities

- Destination marketing organizations are champions of rural regions, shining a spotlight on places that may be otherwise overlooked by visitors and invigorating economies of underserved areas.

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Destinations are Crisis Managers

- Destination marketers are unexpected—but critical—resources during a crisis situation. During a crisis, DMOs, CVBs or tourism offices often serve as a source of credible information for both visitors and residents. During recovery, destination marketers are also uniquely positioned to get the word out that an area is open for business.

Destinations are Brands Worth Investment

- Brand awareness alone does not guarantee returns. The investment in cultivating brand affinity creates an emotional bond to a destination that will differentiate it from the competition and deliver greater long-term value.

What's at Stake When Promotion is Cut

- Without effective promotion, states and cities cede the economic benefits to competing destinations and fall behind the competition. It is a mistake from which it takes many years to recover. And it is a mistake that is easily avoided when governments take a long view on their economic outlook.

Misguided decisions to cut or eliminate investment in tourism promotion usually ends in regret, followed by reversal. The bad experiences of other jurisdictions should serve as a cautionary tale—slashing marketing costs visitors, which costs their spending, which costs tax revenue. The outcome is almost always the opposite of the intended 'savings

– Roger Dow, president and CEO, U.S. Travel Association