



Prepared for New Hampshire
Division of Travel of Tourism
Development

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DMO leaders are increasingly worried about funding grabs and budget cuts

Tourism boards are increasingly worried about politicians and budget cuts, according to a recent survey.

A total of 433 tourism board executives in 52 countries, including 200 respondents from U.S. agencies, were surveyed.

The results were analyzed to assess the:

- degree to which the trend will have positive or negative impact on the destination organization;
- degree of control the organization has to influence and/or capitalize on the trend.

Executives indicated hotel taxes being diverted to non-tourism projects and governments feeling pressure to cut funding were the most threatening and uncontrollable problems they faced.

Recent budget battles in both Florida and Texas have been vivid reminders of how budgets may be at risk even when tourism promotion agencies have compelling stories to tell.

Florida lawmakers were called into special sessions by Gov. Rick Scott to restore funding for VISIT FLORIDA, which saw its allocations slashed in a dispute over a \$1 million contract the agency awarded to rapper Pitbull to promote tourism in the state.

Lawmakers in Austin cut the Texas tourism funds in half — from a budget of \$67.7 million in 2015 to \$34 million. Funds are used to market Texas as a travel destination and conduct research about the state's tourism economy during the next two years.

Sources: Travel Smart News and Destinations International



Consumers unfazed by political boycotts

A new report out by Destinations International (formerly Destination Marketing Association International) details how consumers are responding to travel boycotts that result from political policies.

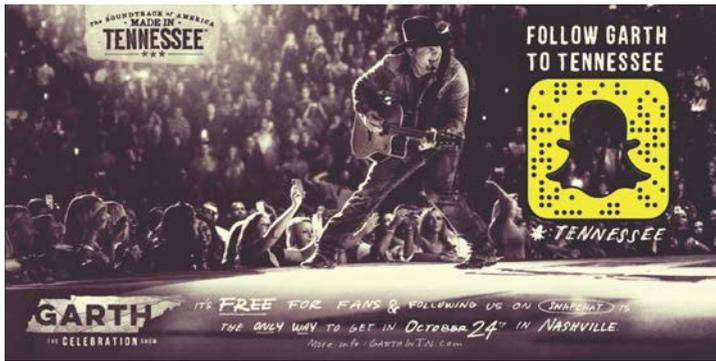
In "The Weaponization of Travel," APCO Insights details consumers' awareness of travel boycotts, their

attitudes about the boycotts and the issues surrounding them as well as their impact on travel.

The report focused on states that have recently passed legislation or had public policy discussions surrounding marriage equality, immigration, and gender identity.

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Snapchat promotions by Tennessee included outdoor ads.



Attracting visitors in their 20s could be a snap

Destinations have found Instagram, Facebook and Twitter comfortable and accessible platforms to engage customers. But as destinations look to woo younger visitors, some are making the transition to Snapchat. Bronwyn White from MyTravelResearch.com asserts that destinations do need to be on Snapchat if a target market is youth travel and those in their 20s.

“The fact that the snap disappears is what makes the app so exciting – because what you are viewing is practically live and only available to see once before it turns into a memory. Snapchat is designed to be highly ephemeral,” she says.

But maintaining a DMO Snapchat account is no easy task. White suggests five ways to utilize Snapchat for destinations:

1. Influencer marketing
2. Snapchat takeovers (where a leading social media influencer takes over a company's Snapchat output for a short time)
3. Snapchat geofilters
4. Working with coupon and

discount codes

5. Running hashtag campaigns.

One of the most daunting tasks for DMOs is acquiring followers on the platform. Tennessee's state tourism office had recent success in the launch of their Snapchat channel through an engagement with singer Garth Brooks. The agency worked with Brooks to produce a concert, and the only way to get tickets was to follow the state tourism office on Snapchat.

Through a \$300,000 paid media campaign that included outdoor, promoted posts on Facebook, national print ad, and the use of social influencers and paid search, Tennessee was able to spread the word about the concert and the Snapchat channel.

Although Snapchat doesn't provide the number of followers, only the number of views, the Garth Brooks campaign has generated more than 12 million views on Snapchat for the state of Tennessee.

Source: Hospitalitynet.org and The Travel Vertical

Boycotts

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This included a review of awareness and impacts of policies in North Carolina, Arizona, Indiana, Tennessee and Mississippi.

In general, consumers are unaware of travel boycotts, with North Carolina having the most top-of-mind awareness (18%) of their issues surrounding a boycott (the state's "bathroom bill" that addressed gender identity).

Travelers are split on their support for (39%) or opposition to (40%) travel boycotts, with the division falling along party lines. Democrats more often support (58%) and Republicans oppose (57%) the use of boycotts. There is consensus, however, that travel boycotts hurt businesses in the hospitality industry.

Although some consumers may indicate they are less likely to visit a state embroiled in a controversy that leads to a travel boycott, rarely is there actual follow-through. The states evaluated are viewed just as favorably as their neighbors who have not experienced boycotts.

In SMARInsights' experience, the impact from political and social issues is primarily seen in the meetings and convention industry. While consumer behavior changes little, meeting planners are far less likely to book a destination debating a controversial issue that could turn attendees off.

Source: Destinations International "The Weaponization of Travel," July 2017