

BUILDING THE BUSINESS CASE FOR

Multiculturalism

NEW AND NOTABLE DATA FROM MPI'S MULTICULTURAL INITIATIVE

MPI Multicultural Initiative Founding Committee

HATTIE HILL, CHAIR
Hattie Hill Enterprises, Inc.

CARLOS CONEJO
Multicultural Associates

GERALD "GERRY" FERNANDEZ
Multicultural Foodservice & Hospitality Alliance

MARC GARCIA
Greater Phoenix Convention & Visitors Bureau

DAVID KLIMAN, CMP
The Kliman Group

ROMONA RISCOE
Riscoe & Associates

LUE RUSSELL
formerly with New Orleans
Multicultural Tourism Network

LINDA SIMPSON
Hilton Hotels Corporation

TED TENG
Wyndham International

MELVIN TENNANT, CAE
San Antonio Convention & Visitors Bureau

DAVID DUBOIS, CAE, CMP
MPI Foundation

KAREN M. GARCIA, CMP
MPI Foundation

It's All About

BUSINESS

This research, conducted by Meeting Professionals International (MPI), focuses on multiculturalism within the meeting industry. The purpose of this research project is to...

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PREPARING MEETING PROFESSIONALS FOR THE FUTURE

- Explore leading issues which can enhance the success of multicultural meetings
- Collect and communicate demographic information which enhances the industry's understanding of multicultural characteristics
- Prioritize key issues to improve the success of multicultural meetings
- Gain direction regarding the Initiative's role in addressing multicultural meeting market needs

Baseline

RESEARCH

The initial research phase gathered key data for the creation of an on-line survey, which was sent to MPI members. Association Insights, an independent market research firm, conducted 120 in-depth telephone interviews with a random sample of MPI members; 30 with each targeted cultural group (African-American/Black, Asian, Hispanic/Latino) as well as Caucasian/White who, for the purposes of this survey, were considered a non-targeted group. These telephone interviews revealed topics of greatest importance to each culture's meeting success, their demographic characteristics, the recommended role for the MPI Multicultural Initiative in advancing multicultural meeting opportunities and key motivators within each culture.

Only MPI members were surveyed and this report represents a snapshot in time. The work of the Multicultural Committee is ongoing.

Report of Findings from Telephone Interviews

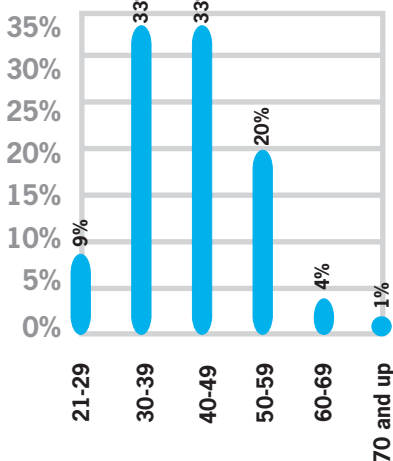
- **72%** of all respondents reported they would describe a successful business meeting in similar terms as someone of a different race or culture. They generally felt all cultures define successful meetings in similar terms.
- **80%** of all respondents noted that organizations which provide meeting services need to be sensitive to specific needs of meeting attendees from various races or cultures. Even though most respondents felt successful meetings are similarly described by people of various cultures, they also felt the achievement of a successful meeting required different awareness and behavior towards people of various cultures.

Telephone respondents described numerous areas for exploration regarding cultural sensitivity (not listed in priority order):

- Mixed ethnic group management
- Business meeting protocol
- Social customs
- International cultural identification
- Dietary requirements
- Language barriers and communication solutions
- Religious recognition and readiness
- Cultural education and awareness training for organizations
- Selection of speakers/presenters
- Solutions to budget restrictions
- Specific and general characteristics/customs of meeting delegates from the following geographical regions (Asia, South America, Europe)
- Scheduling suggestions

Respondents expressed a variety of reasons for their belief in the importance of these areas,

Age of Respondents



depending upon their own culture, professional responsibilities and experience. These areas provided a sound foundation for measurements in the next phases of this research, which were conducted with a substantially larger sample.

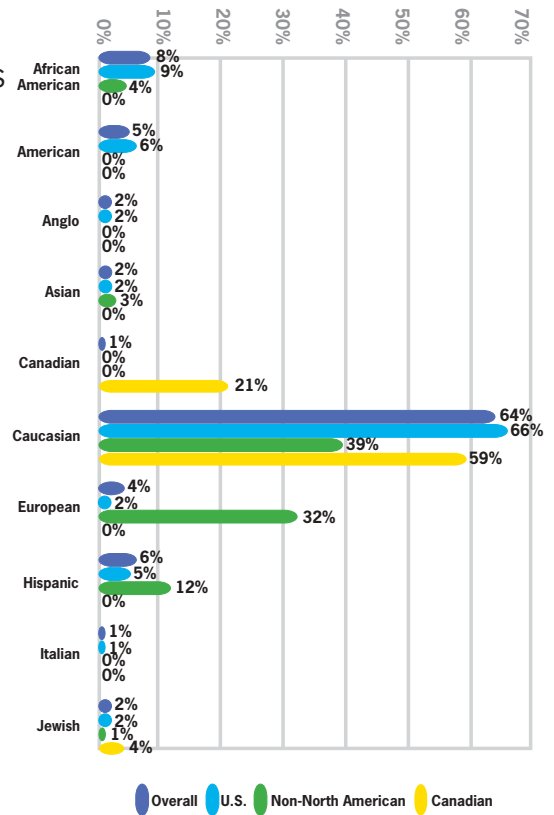
Global Member Research

MPI commissioned a global online research survey to 16,293 MPI members to discover the issues and strategies affecting successful meetings with various cultural and ethnic groups and to understand:

- What the term “multicultural” means to MPI members
- How members understand the topic
- How to communicate with members regarding the topic
- How organizations can better serve multicultural markets
- The general characteristics of successful meetings
- The most important elements of successful multicultural meetings
- The greatest deficiencies in how organizations meet multicultural needs
- Best practices among organizations.

A total of 1,743 MPI members participated in this Internet-based survey. These diverse respondents were born in 61 various countries, and ranged in age from 21 to 75 years old.

Self-Defined Culture of Respondents



Comprising the remaining 5% for overall respondents are Armenian, British, French, Gay/Lesbian, German, Indian, Lebanese, Middle Eastern, Native American, Pacific Islands, Scottish.

More than three-fourths of respondents (76%) were female.

The survey resulted in 6,890 open-ended* responses describing respondents’ thoughts regarding what “multicultural” meant to them, their own cultural identities, how organizations should be sensitive to multicultural needs, and examples showing how organizations have been most successful with business-to-business meetings. Respondents also rated and measured the importance of areas regarding cultural sensitivity.

* Open-ended questions allowed respondents the ability to answer questions freely and in their own words.

Summary of FINDINGS

The most significant of findings is the difference between the perceptions of the term “multicultural” when used to describe a meeting to residents of the U.S. compared to the perceptions of “multicultural” when used to describe meetings to respondents living in other countries. From respondents living in the U.S., “multicultural” meetings are often described as meetings of people from various ethnic backgrounds, including religions and races. Respondents living outside the U.S. more often described “multicultural” meetings as meetings of people from various nations.

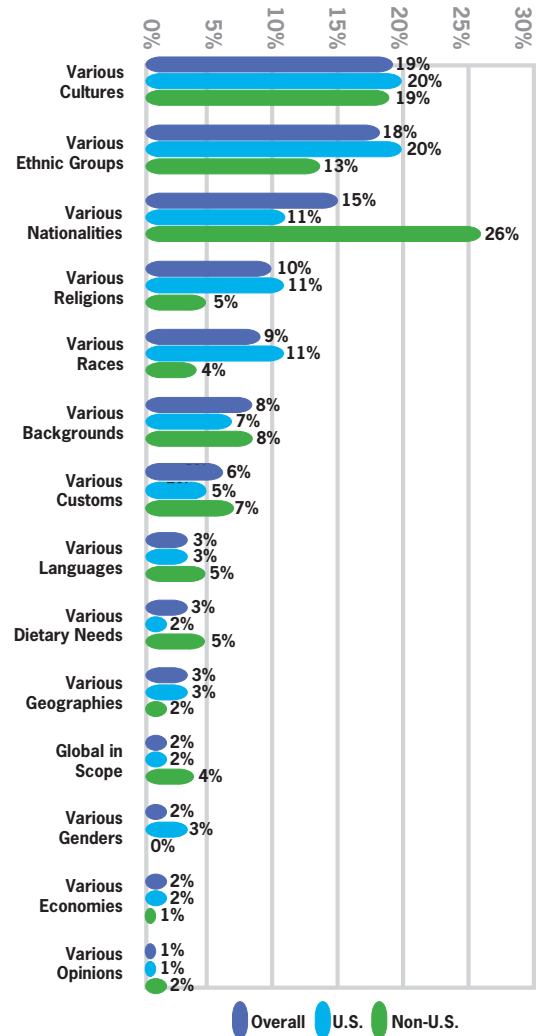
Respondents who were born in countries outside of the U.S., but who now reside in the U.S., expressed the same opinions of “multicultural” meetings as those who were born in the U.S. and still reside in the U.S. Regardless of a respondent’s background or culture, the term “multicultural” has a different implication in U.S. than in other countries.

Respondents were asked “What race or ethnic culture do you identify with most closely?” People residing in the U.S. frequently described their own culture in terms of race or ethnicity, such as African-American, Caucasian or Hispanic. Those residing outside the U.S. often described their own culture in terms of geography or country, such as European or Canadian.

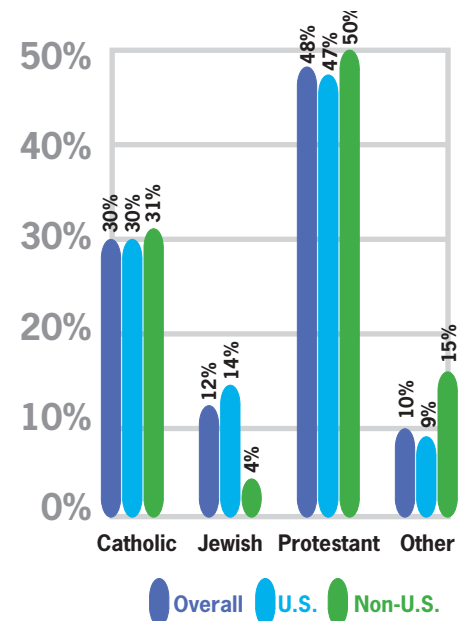
This finding will have a significant impact on the way MPI’s Multicultural Initiative develops strategies for marketing, communication, professional development and setting standards for best practices.

Religion was often cited as a cultural distinction by respondents. Because of the deeply personal nature of spiritual belief, recognition of religious customs, holy days and dietary requirements is essential to creating successful multicultural meetings.

What Multicultural Means to Respondents



Religion



Other = Agnostic, Atheist, Buddhist, Hindu, Muslim, Shinto, etc.

Respondents, regardless of residence or birthplace and regardless of their own perception of what “multicultural” means, projected a 20% annual growth rate in the number of multicultural meetings.



Based on respondents’ answers, there is a unified perception that meetings are not as homogenous as they were in the past. Therefore, the importance to meet the growing needs of diverse delegates is imperative for a successful multicultural meeting.

More than 90% of respondents, regardless of cultural background, felt organizations need to be sensitive to culture and ethnicity. Respondents also ranked the following services and practices according to greatest importance for the success of multicultural meetings:

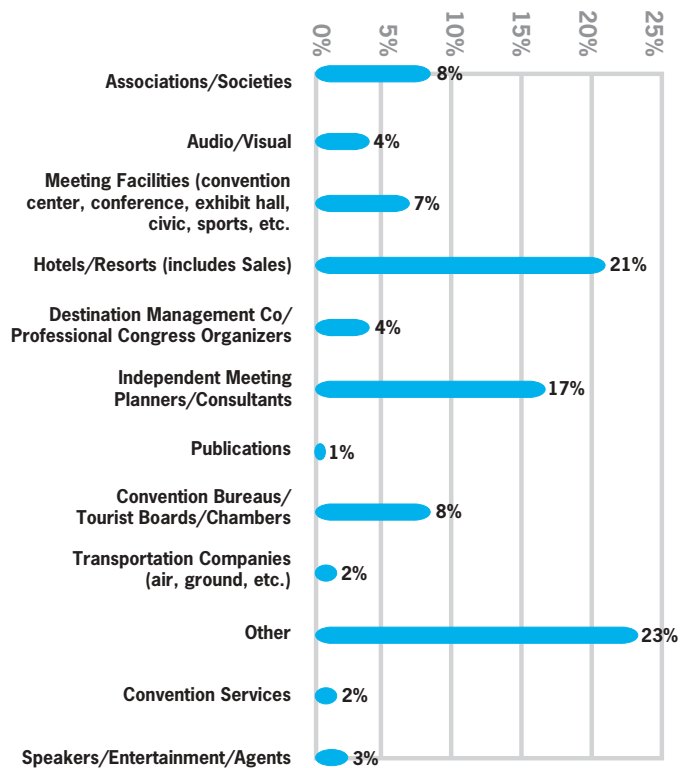
- **Speaker/presentation screening**
- **Awareness and recognition of social cultures (customs, traditions, etc.)**
- **Awareness of dietary requirements**
- **Cultural education and awareness training for organizations**
- **Understanding regional cultural differences**
- **International cultural differences**
- Universal communication and signage

- Social functions as a part of business
- Awareness of religious preferences
- Understanding racial preferences
- Appropriateness of venue
- Meeting protocol/the order of business
- Selection of entertainment
- Multilingual staff
- Alternatives for various budgets
- Staff members who identify w/attendees
- Décor, color and lighting

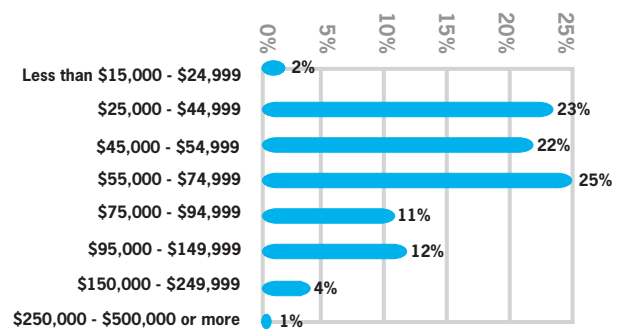
All of the items listed above are important; however, the first six items listed were indicated as the aspects requiring greatest attention.* These six items (noted in bold type) were identified using a gap analysis comparing the importance of various services and practices to the actual execution of these services and practices. Attention to these six issues will require the greatest amount of resources from the meeting industry in order to improve the success of multicultural meetings.

* Summary reports and case studies to follow in a four-part series. See back cover for more details.

Service Provided by Member Organization

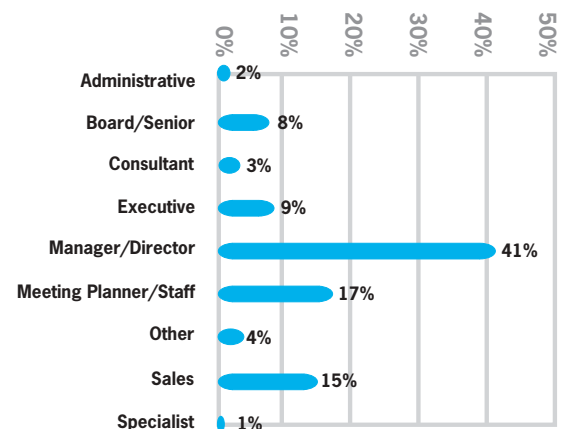


Respondent Income U.S. Dollars



Survey respondents represent all walks of life.

Respondent Position



About MPI

MULTICULTURAL Initiative

The Multicultural Initiative,

a project funded by Walt Disney Parks and Resorts and the MPI Foundation is focused on doing business in a changing world where multicultural markets can provide a substantial economic impact. The Initiative addresses the needs of these untapped markets (currently African-American/Black, Asian, Hispanic/Latino) by providing information and leadership opportunities for the meeting industry.

The Initiative fully recognizes the importance of diversity and the rights of all groups involved in the meeting industry. In order to best leverage the resources of this volunteer-driven organization, MPI has focused its initial multicultural work on the three fastest growing business markets whose combined buying power exceeds \$1.3 trillion (2000 U.S. Census figures). MPI fully expects other groups will be incorporated as the Initiative matures.

Meeting Professionals International

(MPI) was established in 1972 and MPI is the leading global community committed to shaping and defining the future of the meeting and event industry. As the largest trade association for the \$102.3 billion meeting industry, MPI defines the return on investment and strategic value meetings bring to individuals, organizations and the global economy. MPI helps its members enhance their professional value by providing them with best practices, superior education, the latest research and trends, professional development and networking opportunities. MPI has nearly 19,000 members in more than 60 countries.

This survey was conducted by the MPI Multicultural Initiative with assistance from Association Insights, an independent market research company based in Smyrna, Georgia and serving associations, societies and organizations. www.AssociationInsights.com

Design and layout of this paper by Williamson Creative Services Inc., Carrollton, Texas.
RobinWmson@aol.com

The Multicultural Initiative

Committee has representation from MPI membership and focuses on educating the meeting and hospitality industries about conducting multicultural business in the evolving global economy as a strategic advantage.

Objectives for the committee are to:

- Collect and maintain research to benchmark business opportunities with multicultural markets in the meeting industry
- Establish a forum and serve as a clearinghouse that will foster industry partnerships
- Strengthen MPI's alliances with multicultural organizations.

The committee also works to expand personal and professional development opportunities for members, faculty, leadership, vendors, and staff, in addition to creating awareness regarding the impact of the MPI multicultural brand.

Meeting Professionals International

Foundation was founded in 1984 by Meeting Professionals International. The Foundation is a self-sustaining, self-governed organization operating solely on the voluntary contributions from individuals, corporate suppliers, MPI chapters and other affiliated organizations. The Foundation's focus is on research and the development of new ways to improve the meeting planning process, function and management. It also directs the research and development of the Multicultural Initiative and the Women's Leadership Initiative.

The MPI Multicultural Initiative will deliver a four-part series following this report to specifically address services and practices organizations can use to recognize multiculturalism in all aspects of their businesses.

The next four parts in the series:

- **Why it is Important for Organizations to Embrace Multicultural Needs**
- **Are you Prepared for Today and the Future? Planning and Implementing Successful Multicultural Meetings**
- **The Importance of Cultural Sensitivity & Multicultural Business Protocol**
- **International, Domestic, Regional Meetings... Key Success Criteria**

Contact info:

KAREN M. GARCIA, CMP
Managing Director

MPI Multicultural Initiative
MPI Foundation
4455 LBJ Freeway, Suite 1200
Dallas, TX 75244
tel 972.702.3047
fax 972.855.2047
email kgarcia@mpiweb.org
www.multicultural.mpiweb.org

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