

# MEETINGS TRENDS 2014: AMERICAN EXPRESS FORECASTS AN INCREASE



The authors of the American Express Meetings & Events 2014 Global Meetings Forecast believe that there will be a decline in meetings per organization heading into 2014, because of two years of activity increases and moderate budgets. Policies related to meetings have been formulated to see to it that meetings are in compliance with company guidelines and as a result of these, industry activities seem to stabilize.

Compared to past years, meetings organizers are still likely to face challenges across all regions as they struggle to achieve more. Flat budgets are expected as well.

**Almost half of planners expect an increase in meetings though slight in 2014, and also an increase in the number of attendees in North America.** However, the overall number of meetings is expected not to change in Europe. Number of attendees and the meetings spend inside the organizations are also expected to reduce slightly in the same region by almost 1.8 percent. United Kingdom and Germany are however, expected to witness increases in all categories most likely because of stronger economies.

Asia Pacific region is expected to have a decrease of about 1.2 percent in the number of meetings, despite the fact that there was predicted increase in the number of events. The region is most likely to shift to larger spend control, and thus expected to have the largest decline of almost 3.6 percent.

The overall meetings for each organization are expected to decrease while the number of all meetings should remain flat in the Central and South America. There is also the possibility of increased meetings in Argentina because of increase in tax of purchases in the country. The same is expected for Brazil.

According to Said Issa Jouaneh, the vice president of American Express Meetings, **events and meetings are likely to remain the critical drivers that organizations align on business objectives.** According to him, the future will be exciting as they redefine meetings experience and investment management by incorporating digital meetings solutions.

The number one destination choice for meetings for two consecutive years is Orlando, Florida. Chicago, Atlanta, San Diego, Georgia and Illinois and California rank higher as compared to past years while Florida, Miami and Washington D.C. went down in ranking.

Global Meeting Planning Trends according to American Express

- Increasing engagement through Mobile Apps and social media. The use of social media and Mobile Apps is expected to rise slightly in the region. The planners expressed their desire to learn the best way to utilize the Apps for their personal meetings. The planners, are faced with pressure more than before to use social media since it facilitates greater efficiency and engagement with the attendees during and after the meeting.

- Regional meeting trends. Meeting planners disclosed that most companies expect to hold meetings within their region most likely because of the time, cost and compliance associated with meetings

away from the region.

- Meeting approvals are becoming more challenging. Due to the expected delay in approvals, there is most likely to be a shift to external meetings that focuses more on revenue.

- Group fares. Meeting planners are yearning to optimize costs by incorporating group fares. The planners are getting to know the benefits and flexibilities associated with these costs and thus group rates are more likely to become important in meetings.

- Non-traditional properties. A survey conducted in 2013, revealed that non-traditional properties such as universities, aquariums and outdoor meetings are being considered as meeting places.

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Article link: <http://www.tourism-review.com/survey-shows-meetings-trends-2014-news3893>