



# FEBRUARY 1-2, 2018 MONTEREY CLIENT ADVISORY BOARD Meeting Minutes



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Meeting Moderated and Report by:

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**Legacy and New Client Advisory Board**

Connie Bergeron	Site Selection Solutions, Inc.
MaryAnne Bobrow	Bobrow Associates, Inc.
David Bruce	CMP Meeting Services
Kim Earle	Conference Direct
Nelson Fabian	Priority Based Budget Institute
Judi Frohlich	BCD Meetings & Events
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Kay Granath	Association Management Center
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Danielle Restaino	Genentech
Chirag Patel, CMP	Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics
Pat Zollman	HelmsBriscoe



**Monterey County Convention & Visitors Bureau**

Tammy Blount, FDCME	President & CEO
Rob O'Keefe	Vice President, Chief Marketing Officer
Mark McMinn	Vice President of Sales (in absentia)
Marissa Reader	Director, Strategic Client Services
April Locke	Director, Marketing Communications
Brandi Hardy	Regional Sales Executive
Liz Kara	Regional Sales Executive
Joe Marcy	Regional Sales Executive
Howard Munves	Regional Sales Executive
Lauren Siring	Regional Sales Executive
Christina Lomelia-Anaya	Sales Coordinator
Gina Archuleta	Strategic Business Development Specialist
Nani Almanza	Strategic Client Services Specialist
Eryn Simpson	Strategic Client Engagement Specialist
Robert Row	Market Intelligence Manager
Allyson Ryan	Content Marketing Manager



**Gallery & Hosts**

Monty Demer	Associate Director of Sales - Portola Hotel & Spa
Timothy McGill	Director of Sales & Marketing – Asilomar
Doug Phillips	General Manager - Monterey Conference Center
Christine Russo-Robertson	National Sales Manager, Events - Monterey Bay Aquarium
Tim Ryan	Vice President, Sales - Pebble Beach Resorts
Nancy Whitman	Director of Sales and Events, Monterey Conference Center



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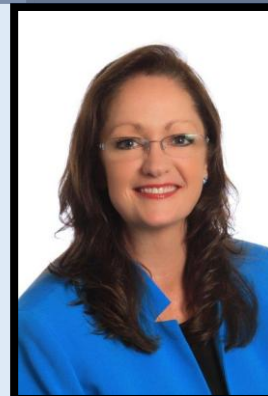


# Joint Meeting of Legacy & New Customer Advisory Boards

## Monterey County Destination Updates

Tammy Blount provided the following updates regarding key Monterey issues:

- The DMO takes the feedback of the CAB very seriously
- Reconstructed DMO website and sales team, changes included, but are not limited to:
  - Newly formed strategic client services department
  - New attendance building services
  - Design of new Monterey Conference Center
  - Marketing Messaging
  - Changed the ways in which the DMO interacts with the community
  - New sales leadership
- Major renovations and improvements to numerous properties including:
  - Inns of Monterey <http://www.innsomonterey.com/>
  - Embassy Suites <https://tinyurl.com/njgap3r>
  - Pebble Beach Fairway One <https://www.pebblebeach.com/accommodations/fairway-one/>
  - L'Auberge Carmel upgrade <http://www.laubergecarmel.com/>
  - Monterey Plaza <https://montereyplazahotel.com/>
  - Portola Hotel <https://www.portolahotel.com/>
  - Marina Sanctuary Beach Resort <https://www.thesanctuarybeachresort.com/>
  - Spindrift Inn upcoming renovation <http://www.spindriftinn.com/>
  - Springhill Suites <https://tinyurl.com/y8bktgcn>
  - Ventana <http://www.ventanabigsur.com/>
  - Wave Street Inn <http://www.wavestreetinnmonterey.com/>
- Community Issues
  - Listening to the community and ensure all feedback is acknowledged and institutionalized whenever possible
  - Very focused on competing effectively, being relevant to the community, visitors and clients



## CAB Microsite

<https://www.seemonterey.com/client-advisory-board-17-18/?guid=419e919d-b7ac-4d3f-865e-2a8a134a1c12&preview=true>

- Membership roster, annual reports, business plans, meeting agenda and minutes etc. are posted on the site

## DMO Partnerships

The following summarizes the CAB feedback:

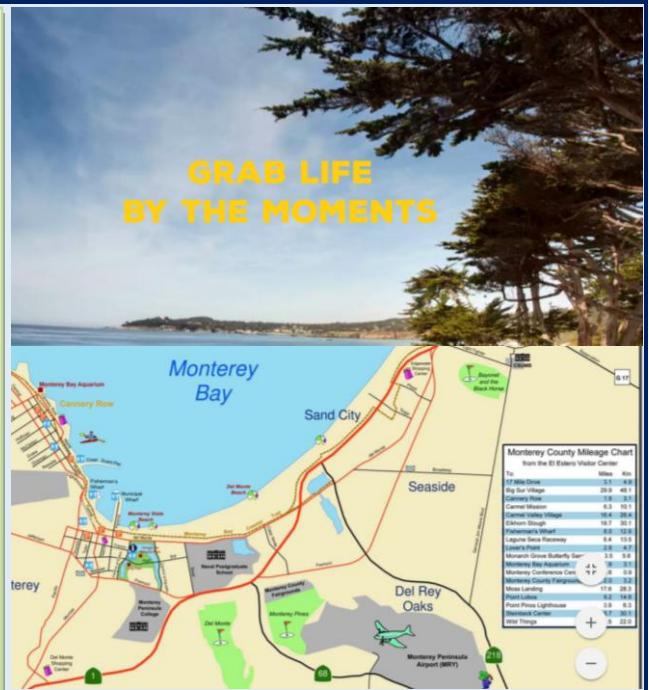
- Collaborations and partnerships between like-minded DMOs help planners during the search process
- It's important to ensure that any potential partnership DMOs are well matched to Monterey's value proposition (Inspiration) and values as a destination (Sustainability, Community)
- The following destinations were cited as potentially well suited for partnerships

- Key West
- Hilton Head
- Charlotte (\*)
- Irving
- Galveston
- Palm Springs
- West Palm Beach
- Aspen
- Whistler
- Tucson
- Sedona

(\*) Lack of consensus by the CAB that Charlotte fits the profile for partnership

## Key Take Away (Marketing)

- Far too many DMOs try to be like each other; DMOs market and communicate in a “sea of sameness”
- Strong consensus expressed that Monterey can “own”, communicate and market the deep emotional connection visitors feel here
- Monterey shouldn’t focus on its pragmatic details (dates, rates, space are considered “table stakes”); instead the focus should be on the inspirational and aspirational aspects abundantly found on the Monterey Peninsula
- Put messages regarding sustainable initiatives and Strategic Client Services up front as part of value proposition
- Incorporate the Conference Center renovation into the inspiration message (i.e.: inspired meetings happen here) and that center was co-created with planners



## Monterey Conference Center Feedback <http://www.montereyconferencecenter.com/>

The CAB provided the following feedback regarding the Conference Center renovation:

- It’s “beautiful”, looks clean and well laid out
- Great use of natural woods and natural light
- The look and feel is inspirational
- 18-foot ceiling height “is great”
- Open conversation areas are well designed and highly usable
- Flexible floorplan upstairs is highly usable
- Rest rooms relocation on lower floors was well thought out
- Colors and design were cited as “simple, attractive and good”
- Outdoor terrace and fire pit are great
- Flat screen monitors outside rooms are well designed
- Lack of storage spaces for groups using the full facility is problematic
- Truck access now at back of Steinbeck Ballroom
- New water fountains offer water bottle refill stations with digital meter which indicate water savings vs. use of plastic water bottles
- Need to develop visual displays to document and explain the renovation/design for visitors
- Need better signage/wayfinding to indicate indoor connection between the Portola Hotel and the Center
- Conference Center was co-created and designed by planners; it’s the Center that planners built

## Conference Center Cost Perceptions

- Meeting space is generally free in hotel, but most perceive meeting space isn’t free in a Conference Center; hard to justify paying for meeting space in Monterey when it’s free when same meeting is self-contained in a hotel

## LEED Certification <https://new.usgbc.org/leed>

The CAB was asked if LEED certification is meaningful (or an expectation) during the site selection decision making process; the following summarizes their comments:

- Some clients look for LEED certification and include it in the decision grid
- “It’s an expectation, especially in new buildings”
- While sustainability “should be part of the DNA” of the business, for many it’s not a decision factor, while for others, “it’s part of the basic factors in the decision matrix”, it’s “table stakes” and basic price of entry



## Sustainability Efforts

- Giving Good was cited as effective <http://givinggood.com>
- Hilton Light Stay was cited as effective <http://newsroom.hilton.com/index.cfm/newsroom/detail/3094>
- Many planners look to suppliers to manage food waste more effectively, MGM Las Vegas cited as doing an effective job <https://www.reviewjournal.com/local/southwest/reducing-food-waste-is-good-for-business-las-vegas-companies-say/>
- The DMO has a unique opportunity to link its sustainability efforts to the overall sustainability values of the destination

## When asked how Monterey's messages can resonate and get planner's attention, the CAB provided the following feedback:

- Messages and images should share what's unique in Monterey, not what makes it similar to others; capture Monterey's emotional sensation
- Messages should capture and share the pride the DMO has for Monterey
- Understand what customers are seeking, what attracts them, then share how Monterey can deliver on those desires
- The old Conference Center was a barrier to use (due to outdated quality and layout), now the new Center opens the door for planners to use the Center; however, images of the building shouldn't be the lead in marketing. There are a lot of nice buildings all over the country.
- Monterey's low turnover staff rate and effective local partnerships are genuine differentiators
- Planners want sales contacts to share insider information that's not published on the DMO website
- Package and share the inspirational sense and feeling visitors get when "driving over the hill and first seeing the Bay and Ocean come into view"
- Deliver on the Monterey's inspiration promise
- The spectacular geography/scenery of the Monterey Peninsula sells the destination

## Customer Advisory Board Survey

Rob O'Keefe provided a summary of the findings from the recent CAB survey; the survey results are published on the CAB microsite. The following summarizes Rob's and CAB members' comments:

- Monterey is focused booking on group business, especially groups that haven't used Monterey previously
  - Groups from technology, agriculture, specialty medical, security related industries including cyber and military are targeted
- Medical certification meetings and "cause" related political groups are growing
- Attendance building should include testimonials regarding safety and walkability
- Generational shifts are changing planner demographic profiles, now need to attract young and younger minded people with short videos and no long emails
- Geographic Accessibility
  - Accessibly from San Jose airport <http://www.flysanjose.com/flights> and other Bay Area locations is not well understood, especially by planners from outside Northern California
  - Potential Denver and Dallas nonstop service

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**The CAB was asked to define factors of the “perfect” CVB,** they recommend sales and service teams:

- Proactively sell the emotional/inspirational aspects of the destination
- Recommend hotel based on clients’ history in other destinations (don’t offer 5 star hotels when 3 star is needed)
- Know all aspects of the planner’s business, group history and goals
- Best promotional materials include:
  - Group microsites (customized)
  - Email templates (perfect 50, 100 words etc.)
  - Video streams
  - Case Studies, show clients what worked for others groups and provide measurement
  - Generic information is best used at the start of the process
  - Provide connections to local intellectual capital
  - Provide ideas regarding educational experiences available outside the formal meeting setting such as beach hikes, etc.
  - Provide examples of past successful group activities
  - It was noted that too many DMOs provide generic non-customized materials

#### **DMO Examples of Excellence**

- Boston stays involved continually and “acts as an extension of planners’ teams”
- San Diego is a great partner
- Grand Rapids team does a great job
- Some destinations don’t manage clients well after the sale; they’re disconnected from clients after contracts are signed

#### **Site Inspection Concepts & Best Practices**

The following summarizes the CAB comments regarding ways to create memorable and meaningful site inspections:

- Create ultra-personalized experiences and share wide scope of assets; tailor site inspection to the client’s exact needs and their industry
- Returning clients only need to see new assets, first timers should see all appropriate assets
- Get executive committee to meet and talk with meeting planners/clients
- Create “site experiences”, not site inspection, evoke a memorable emotional connection
- Offer access to exclusive assets
- Read and understand the RFP exactly, pay close attention to detail
- Research and understand all aspects of the prior year event
- Listen to planners, don’t waste time, don’t show 5 star hotels when 3 stars is needed (don’t waste time)
- Meet all the players, let planners know the suppliers will take care of their group and deliver great experiences, generate memorable emotional connections
- Majority of business is lost at the site inspection stage
- Set meeting rooms up for client’s event, demonstrate what the space can do
- Most memorable site inspection examples include:
  - Experiential and unique experiences
  - Offered 15-minute foot massage in hotel spa during a long day of touring
- Work in planner education opportunities where possible, make the time spent useful to them not just for product knowledge.
- Tap into local intellectual capital, there’s a great opportunity to connect planners to the remarkable intellectual assets available in Monterey County
- Seattle’s new program isn’t really a site inspection, instead it’s an Executive Forum experience positioned as a thought leadership event
- Disney Executive Experience <https://disneyinstitute.com> was focused on understanding event production; planners experienced Disney magic first hand
- When asked if financial support from a DMO is required for planners; feedback was split along industry lines as follows:
  - Corporate and government planners will pay own expenses for site inspections
  - Association planners often look for financial support for sites
  - Financial support for shuttle, attendance building, opening events etc. may be expected for both self-contained and citywide groups depending on size



### Monterey Country Brand Evolution

Rob O'Keefe led a discussion regarding Monterey's brand evolution; the following summarizes his comments and the CAB feedback:

#### Group Marketing Portfolio Campaign Co-Creation

- Blank slate
- Invigorate the soul
- Inspired moments in meetings
- Grab life by the moments

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Inspired moments in meetings.®

#### Brand position

- Premier West Coast destination for hosting inspired and invigorating meetings

#### Competitive Set

- Consider expanding competitive set beyond California destinations

#### Familiarity

##### What Catches Your Eye in Ads and marketing

- Something that makes me want to be there
- Emotional, beautiful, aspirational and unique images

##### What make you investigate further?

- Leave me asking more questions
- Show me something I don't see elsewhere
- Make me change my mind about something
- Be authentic
- What's in it for me? Will it solve my issues?
- Show what my group can embrace there
- Share remarkable site experiences

##### Where do you get Information?

- Word of mouth, peer to peer, especially when the destination is new

##### Content Marketing (convergence of advertising, public relations and social media)

##### Paid Ads

- Industry publications have zero impact on planners' opinions or buying decisions
- Trade magazine are only meaningful online, not in print

##### Public relations

- Share event design concepts
- Include "what's in it for me" factor; give me something I can use for my meetings

##### Social Media

- Instagram and Facebook are used for ideas and inspiration primarily for Gen X & Y planners
- Leisure channels are used for meeting inspiration
- LinkedIn Groups Meeting Planners Unite <https://www.linkedin.com/groups/12095344>

##### Personalization

- Can be creepy, but if based on personal relationship, not ripped off social media, it can be very effective; photos of family and pets, favorite food, care package in advance of annual etc.

##### Direct Mail

- Humorous, non-traditional mailings get planners' attention

##### Trade Shows

- Help maintain and build relationships
- Not all trade shows are created equal; IMEX Americas cited as best in class <https://www.imexamerica.com>
- Cvent Connect worthwhile for Cvent product awareness
- Hosted buyer shows force more business-minded behavior from buyers
- Share Monterey's emotional dream on trade show floor, use video and virtual reality tools





## Monterey County Brand Evolution - Continued

### Millennials

- Look at whole population, don't overly focus on them

### Worth Getting To

- Desire to go to places that are truly inspirational
- Publish map with radius indicating time from Bay Area
  - Share "Did you know" information regarding the arrival experience, seeing the ocean as you drive over the hill - "over the hill is not so bad"

### Is Monterey worth Paying For?

- Perceived as high end for some
- Corporate markets find rates very accessible

### Decision Making

- CAB members' influence ranges from "guided democracy" to "significant influence" to "no influence"

### The Invaluable CVB

- Share insider information that can't be found elsewhere; be the true destination expert
- Make it easy for me to put my meeting in unique non-traditional venues i.e.: create "meeting on the beach" in a box
- Trusted relationships, understand the client, intelligent selling and great execution
- Ensure all staff is able to articulate the remarkable inspirational aspects of the destination

### Ken Peterson, Senior Communications Strategist - Monterey Bay Aquarium

<http://www.montereybayaquarium.org/>

Ken provided an overview of the Aquarium history, work and mission; the following summarizes his comments:

- Monterey Bay is a National Marine Sanctuary <https://montereybay.noaa.gov/>
- Consumers can send a signal to business that they don't want single use plastic products
- Seafood Watch <http://www.seafoodwatch.org/>
- Businesses are sending signals to their food chain suppliers to transition to sustainable sea food
- Major initiative in Southeast Asia to help aquaculture communities embrace sustainable practices
- Four Fish book <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/08/01/books/review/Sifton-t.html?pagewanted=all>
- Working to ensure people who produce seafood are treated fairly; anti-slavery efforts are working with seafood companies to address this human rights abuse <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/green/reports/2016/12/15/295088/seafood-slavery/>
- Anti-plastic pollution efforts have multipronged focus including educating school children
- Carmel has new law banning single use plastics in food service
- Junior Ocean Guardians <http://www.jroceanguardians.org/>
- Strawless in Seattle <https://www.strawlessocean.org/seattle/>
- Lonely Whale <https://www.lonelywhale.org/>
- Green Sheep Water <https://www.greensheepwater.com/>
- New venue Center of Ocean Education and Leadership opens in Summer 2019, three floor program space and rooftop 80-person meeting room and green roof garden event space <https://www.montereybayaquarium.org/support-us/ways-to-give/center-for-ocean-education-and-leadership-donate>
- Partnerships with the Arts Council for Monterey County <http://arts4mc.org/>
- PBS Frontline Fish on My Plate <http://www.pbs.org/video/the-fish-on-my-plate-nsxhez/>





## Client Advisory Board Roles and Responsibilities

- Next meeting is expected to take place in fiscal year 2018-19, exact dates to follow
- Additional CAB members will be recruited
- CAB members are asked to serve 2 year terms
- Post videos on CAB website
- CAB members are asked to be ambassadors for Monterey and provide candid constructive feedback
- We will reach out for intermittent feedback between meetings on specific topics

## Meetings Industry Trends & Peer-to-Peer Problem Solving Session

CAB members brainstorm the future meetings and significant changes to the marketplace; the following summarizes their comments:

- Increased consolidation of association meetings resulting in more regional conferences
- Medical industry seeing more continuing medical education “destination” meetings and family oriented meetings
- Growing population of mid-level medical professionals resulting in need for destinations which can offer lower price point for CME meetings, ideal for Monterey
- Corporate market continues to see short term bookings, volume not changing
- Risk Management, emergency preparedness are key issues
  - Planners need tactical venue details and transparent risk management plans
  - Planners are digging deeper with on-site security personnel and look to DMO to provide an honest assessment regarding key issues
  - Incident command managed by security professionals (not planners)
  - Planners need to know evacuation and communication plans
  - New initiative to establish a national convention center security standard
  - <https://www.iaee.com/resources/security-initiative/>
  - Some groups hire private firms to research potential threats
  - Some groups print emergency phone contacts on reserve side of attendee name tags
- CAB members expect other hotel companies will follow Marriott in reducing commission payment to third parties
- Marriott dominance in market share concerns planners

## Monterey Campus

- 41,200 square feet of space at the Conference Center connected to Portola Hotel <https://www.portolahotel.com> with 379 rooms; Monterey Marriott <http://www.marriott.com/hotels/travel/mryca-monterey-marriott> with 341 rooms and Hotel Pacific <http://www.hotelpacific.com> with 115 rooms
  - These combined assets offer 62,000 square feet (85,000 square feet with terraces)
- Monterey County offer a total of 12,000 rooms at 253 properties
  - 16 hotels have significant meeting space
  - Hyatt Regency 550 rooms and 40,000 square feet of meeting space <https://monterey.regency.hyatt.com>
  - Additional 543 combined rooms at Cannery Row with the InterContinental The Clement (208 rooms) <https://tinyurl.com/y87c595y> Monterey Plaza Hotel and Spa (290 rooms) <https://montereyplazahotel.com/> and Spindrift Inn (45 rooms) <http://www.spindriftinn.com/>
  - Sweet spot is 800 rooms downtown; 300 to 500 rooms is very common
- Free trolley service downtown to Cannery Row <https://monterey.org/Services/Parking/Ride-the-FREE-Trolley-Shuttle>

## Recommendations & Action Items: February 2018 Monterey Client Advisory Board

- Ensure Monterey sales and marketing efforts focuses strongly on the destination's unique emotional, inspirational aspects; hotels and venues are clearly important, but the buy-in is based on the entirety of the experience
- Create fact sheet defining air and road accessibility, include graphics highlighting close proximity to San Jose Airport and other San Francisco Bay Area locations. Also play out this concept in an engaging way using video and other content.
- Share emergency plans incorporating all pertinent venues with event professionals
- Include sustainable food and other products information on DMO's meetings webpage
- Share children oriented program and child care information, such as <https://conferencechildcare.com> on DMO's meetings webpage
- Make values more prominent in marketing materials: Promote Giving Good <http://givinggood.com/> to meeting professionals, Sustainable practices and activities, food waste programs...
- Develop enhanced signage to indicate covered connections between The Portola Hotel and the Conference Center
- Develop visual displays to document and explain the MCC renovation/design to visitors
- Improve post event debrief process; ask clients how they want to be contacted. Don't be shy about picking up the phone and calling a client after an event to check in and get feedback
- Encourage CAB members to read [www.skift.com](http://www.skift.com)
- Include memorable "site experiences" and use non-traditional meeting venues as part of future CAB meetings
- Unified messaging is critical – ensure CVB team and hotel/venue partners are on the same page – in terms of how the destination is sold and experienced
- Spousal programs/marketing are key opportunities for the destination.
- Monterey County's intellectual property is unique and can help the destination stand out – explore how to leverage this
- PR content is more effective when it is adding value and/or teaching a planner how to up their game – showcase aspects of conducting a meeting that will inspire planners to do such
- That MCC is renovated is great news but that alone (a state of the art conference center) is table stakes for many meetings – seek to combine the facility within the destination message
- Word of Mouth / Peer-to-Peer are still top ways to create familiarity with new clients – explore ways to use existing planners to connect with new clients
- Consider building City-Pair partnership
- Strengthen/enhance site experiences for Sales and Media FAMs/events
- Consider re-examination of national comp set
- Explore opportunities to ignite catalytic action in the meetings industry (e.g. become known as the destination inspiring a more sustainable platform)
- Authenticity and delivery on brand promise is key – once here and with personal follow up
- Consider reevaluating marketing channels (more focus on digital and content)
- Play up the people—team and community, as part of the experience and reason to come. Also play up year-round climate and activities people can do any time (beach, fire-side meetings on the terrace, etc.)
- Promote unique venues, may be especially attractive to young tech/corp audiences, for product launches, etc.



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