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Surveys Offer Mixed Look on International Events Travel

New reports find that while the overall health of events is good, travelers into the U.S. remain anxious.

By Mark Athitakis | May 20, 2025

Recent reports on business travel in the United States offer a cloudy picture of industry growth in the coming year, as international travel is complicated by tariffs and White House immigration policies.

The [Hospitality Group & Business Performance Index](#) [PDF] for the first quarter of 2025, released May 8, was produced by Cendyn and Amadeus, hotel and travel technology firms. Its study found that its overall health index reached its highest level in four quarters. The report credits and increase in group travel, greater events volume, and growth in space used compared to last year.



which outpace the overall health index. Top group markets identified by the survey were New Orleans, Philadelphia, Washington, D.C., San Francisco, and Chicago.

Association events, according to the survey, represented a slightly smaller proportion of overall events: 7.2 percent, compared to 7.4 percent last year. (Charity/nonprofit/social services events increased the most, from 5.2 to 6 percent.)

“The National Travel and Tourism Office found that business travel declined 9 percent in April.”

The report offered some good news for the travel industry in the face of growing concerns in recent months. An [April report from the Global Business Travel Association](#) found a substantial proportion of professionals expecting declines in international business travel and travel volume due to tariffs and international travel restrictions.

And a May 15 report from the National Travel and Tourism Office, an agency administered by the U.S. Department of Commerce, found that [business travel declined 9 percent in April](#); though travel from the Middle East increased 9 percent, the number of business travelers from Western Europe declined almost 18 percent, according to the report. Air travel from Mexico declined 12 percent, and air travel from Canada dropped 20 percent compared to last year.

Leslie Andrews, a board member of the Global Business Travel Association Foundation, told the Associated Press she expects business travel to slow further in the wake of further economic and geopolitical disruptions.

“What I am hearing is, ‘Things were good in the first quarter,’ but in the second quarter it’s a matter of, ‘Must you take that trip?’” Andrews said. “They’re pulling in the reins a bit to make sure only purposeful travel is happening as things grow and evolve.”

Similarly, the U.K.-based World Travel & Tourism Council released a report May 13 that said it anticipates the United States will face a [\\$12.5 billion drop in international travel spending this year](#).

In a release, WTTC CEO Julia Simpson said, “The world’s biggest travel and tourism economy is heading in the wrong direction, not because of a lack of demand, but because of a failure to act Without urgent action to restore international traveller confidence, it could take several years for the U.S. just to return to pre-pandemic levels of international visitor spend, not even the peak from 10 years ago. This is about growth in the U.S. economy—it is doable, but it needs leadership from DC.”