

## **Convention and Meeting Planner Survey Findings and Responses**

### **Methodology and Summary of Findings**

Randall Travel Marketing (RTM) conducted in-depth interviews with 20 convention and meeting planners that have brought conventions and meetings to Saint Charles or those who have considered the area and not brought a meeting to date. The purpose of these interviews was to ascertain perceptions of the marketing effectiveness of the Saint Charles Convention and Visitors Bureau (GSCCVB).

The specific interview questions and the aggregated responses follow. The average rating for each response is provided and any specific comments made are preceded by a bullet point. Every effort has been made to present the comments exactly as stated by the interviewee while deleting any direct references that might identify the person who made the comment and thus ensure anonymity.

Each question that was asked is stated in the document followed by the responses provided by those interviewed.

**1. Please rate the overall appeal of Saint Charles as a destination for your meetings on a 1 – 5 scale (where 1=poor and 5=excellent)**

The meeting planners gave Saint Charles an overall average rating of 4.2.

**2. Have you held meetings in Saint Charles? \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No  
[IF NO GO TO 2B-1]**

Sixty percent (60%) of those interviewed had held a meeting in Saint Charles, while slightly less, forty percent (40%) of those interviewed had not.

**2A. If you have held a meeting in Saint Charles, would you return?  
\_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No**

Four out of five respondents or eighty percent (80%) indicated they would return to Saint Charles or they would hold a meeting in Saint Charles in the future.

**2B. How many meetings have you held in Saint Charles?**

Responses to this question varied from one (1) to over ten (10). The average number of meetings held in Saint Charles was 1.5.

**1. What is the average number of delegates who attend?**

The average size of meeting groups ranged from 130 to 1,000.

**2. Approximate number of room nights utilized per meeting?**

The approximate number of room nights utilized ranged from 250 to 1,000.

## **Convention and Meeting Planner Survey Findings and Responses**

### **3. What are the strengths of Saint Charles as a meeting destination?**

#### **VERBATIM RESPONSES:**

- Σ **Central convenient location (13)**
- Σ **Main street area – historical district (7)**
- Σ **Shopping (5)**
- Σ **Close to airport (4)**
- Σ **Saint Charles CVB wonderful to work with, accommodating (4)**
- Σ **New Saint Charles Convention Center, Embassy Suites attached (4)**
- Σ **Nice place to visit; lovely, small quaint with big town amenities (4)**
- Σ **Great hotel selections (4)**
- Σ **Saint Louis access (3)**
- Σ **Size; easy to get around (3)**
- Σ **Variety of restaurants (3)**
- Σ **Attractions (3)**
- Σ **Population and Income level**

### **4. What are the weaknesses of Saint Charles as a meeting destination?**

#### **VERBATIM RESPONSES:**

- Σ **Airport shuttle missing for Embassy Suites ( 2)**
- Σ **Lack of medium size meeting facility that includes lodging**
- Σ **Parking fees in addition to facility cost**
- Σ **Public shows – not a big enough facility**
- Σ **“Nickel and Dime exhibitors” – unexpected cost**
- Σ **License and fees cumbersome for exhibitors**
- Σ **Signage for Convention Center on interstate not adequate**
- Σ **No upscale shopping and restaurants**
- Σ **Too long of a commute for attendees from south**
- Σ **Embassy Suites and Convention Center do not interact well  
nor do they have a very good working relationship**
- Σ **Not centralized enough for statewide event**
- Σ **No name recognition**

**Convention and Meeting Planner Survey Findings and Responses**

**5. Using the same 1-5 scale, how would you rate Saint Charles in its overall appeal on the following:**

<b><u>Saint Charles's Overall Appeal</u></b>	<b><u>Avg.</u></b>
Meeting space quality in Saint Charles	4.7
Geographic location of Saint Charles for your meetings	4.5
Lodging quality in Saint Charles	4.4
Restaurants that appeal to meeting attendees	4.2
Meeting space quantity in Saint Charles	4.1
Affordable and accessible air transportation	4.1
Nighttime entertainment	4.0
Attractions that appeal to meeting attendees	4.0
Lodging Properties cost	3.8
Retail shopping for meeting attendees	3.8

***Respondents rated the various meeting facilities in Saint Charles and thusly:***

<b><u>Event Center Facilities</u></b>	<b><u>Avg.</u></b>
<i>Saint Charles Convention Center</i>	4.4
<i>Heart of Saint Charles Conference Center</i>	4.0
<i>Columns Banquet and Conference Center</i>	4.0
<i>Family Arena</i>	3.8
<i>Wentzville Crossing Exposition &amp; Convention Center</i>	3.0
<i>Stegton Regency Conference Center</i>	N/A
<i>Memorial Hall</i>	N/A

## Convention and Meeting Planner Survey Findings and Responses

**6. *How aggressive is the sales team at the Saint Charles CVB compared to other CVBs that you have worked with?***

- 1. More aggressive = 35%**
- 2. Less aggressive = 0%**
- 3. About the same as others = 65%**

The respondents were split on this issue. Thirty-five percent (35%) answered “more aggressive” and sixty-five percent (65%) stated “about the same”. RTM interprets this data to indicate that the CVB staff is appropriately aggressive in their sales efforts.

In addition, RTM further analyzed the responses to this question by tabulating only those respondents who had indicated they had not booked a convention or meeting in Saint Charles, representing the “lost bookings” segment of the market. Of this group, the data tabulated as follows:

- 1. More aggressive = 13%**
- 2. Less aggressive = 0%**
- 3. About the same as others = 87%**

Thirteen percent (13%) of respondents answered “more aggressive”, while eighty-seven percent (87%) responded, “about the same as others”. This data reconfirms for RTM the Saint Charles CVB is appropriately aggressive in their marketing and recruitment efforts.

**7. *Please rate the Saint Charles CVB on the following using the same 1 – 5 scale:***

**Saint Charles CVBs Marketing Efforts**

Attendance at trade shows	<b>4.3</b>
Recruitment effort in bringing meetings to Saint Charles	<b>4.2</b>
Direct sales efforts	<b>4.2</b>
Development of effective marketing materials and advertising from meetings	<b>4.0</b>
Wise use of CVB funds for meeting recruitment	<b>4.0</b>

## **Convention and Meeting Planner Survey Findings and Responses**

**8. *What is needed to increase the appeal of Saint Charles as a meeting destination?***

**VERBATIM RESPONSES:**

- Σ **Improve the Embassy Suites Hotel and Convention Center working relationship (4)**
- Σ Parking costs at Saint Charles Convention Center need to be eliminated
- Σ Improved signage for the new Saint Charles Convention Center
- Σ Incorporate a medium meeting facility with lodging and applicable pricing
- Σ Capitalize more on historical district
- Σ Implement a more consistent message
- Σ Nothing
- Σ Increase exhibitors space
- Σ Implement license and fees with facility rental cost
- Σ Increase number of site visits
- Σ More upscale restaurants and shopping
- Σ More marketing to associations

**9. *What one thing could be done to attract more meetings to Saint Charles?***

**VERBATIM RESPONSES:**

- Σ **Improve the Embassy Suites and Convention Center working relationship (3)**
- Σ **Parking fees waived or included in rent of facility (2)**
- Σ **Higher end shopping and restaurants ( 2)**
- Σ More information on options
- Σ Play up the historical district
- Σ A facility that better accommodates medium size meetings that include lodging and applicable pricing
- Σ Provide a more consistent message
- Σ Continue to emphasize site visits
- Σ Encourage local businesses to work with meeting and event planners to promote each to the other
- Σ Provide a package offering group tours for “days off”

## **Convention and Meeting Planner Survey Findings and Responses**

**10. Does it help you to receive sales information mailings direct from the lodging properties?**

Respondents were split on this issue with 13 respondents answering yes, 7 respondents answering no. Most asked that they not be bombarded with information and that all information from lodging properties include pricing.

**11. What sales information do you want to receive? From whom should this be sent? What format of mailings works best for you (what to include in the mailings?)**

**VERBATIM RESPONSES:**

- Σ All-Inclusive Package from the Saint Charles CVB via Mail (17)
  - Lodging, conference materials; space layout and capacity
  - Pamphlet; prices, menus at hotels
  - “New” information
  - Restaurant information; menus
  - Shopping information
  - Attraction information
- Σ Newsletter from Saint Charles CVB quarterly (17)
- Σ Nothing; do not mail anything; no need (3)
- Σ What new things are available?
- Σ E-mail information

**12. How often should the CVB contact your organization?**

**VERBATIM RESPONSES:**

- Σ 1 time a year (3)
- Σ 2 times a year (8)
- Σ 3 times a year (6)
- Σ Don't need to (3)