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## **MEETINGS MEAN BUSINESS CO-CHAIRS PREVIEW 2019 ADVOCACY PLANS AT PCMA'S CONVENING LEADERS CONFERENCE**

*Joined by U.S. Travel Association president and CEO Roger Dow, coalition co-chairs Julie Coker Graham and Trina Camacho-London announced annual priorities and new programming*

**PITTSBURGH, PA** – The Meetings Mean Business Coalition (MMBC) announced this week plans to continue promoting the value of face-to-face meetings and protecting the industry from financial or reputational threats. During a press conference at PCMA's Convening Leaders Conference, coalition leaders Julie Coker Graham and Trina Camacho-London shared MMBC's approach for building on 2018 – a year of record success – and laying the groundwork for 2020.

"We made a concerted effort last year to create deeper, more sustained engagement among those who influence the meetings economy," said Coker Graham, MMBC co-chair and president and CEO of the Philadelphia Convention and Visitors Bureau. "To do this, we introduced a new advocacy strategy and tailored our communications to the motivations of our target audiences – including decision makers outside of our industry in business and government."

In 2019, Coker Graham added, MMBC will bring its strategy to scale by growing its program of work in four ways:

1. **Mobilizing internal audiences to engage external ones** – and making it easier for industry professionals to become advocates;
2. **Recruiting highest-priority validators** from business and government;
3. **Deploying new messaging and materials** that are tailored-made for seven target markets; and
4. **Socializing proof points about the industry's value** by leading with economic impact data and influencers' stories.

To meet these objectives, the coalition will expand what works; build engagement from the inside out; and create shared value through new and existing programming, including [Global Meetings Industry Day \(GMID\)](#).

On April 4, GMID will bring together industry professionals from around the world for the fourth consecutive year. "GMID helps raise awareness of the industry's value all over the world," said Camacho-London, MMBC co-chair and Vice President of Global Group Sales at Hyatt Hotels Corporation. "It also helps promote involvement in MMBC from our global partners."



According to Camacho-London, MMBC's second international chapter, Meetings Mean Business India, will take off in 2019. Its first international chapter, [Meetings Mean Business Canada](#), will also continue operations and recently unveiled a new growth strategy.

In the U.S., a focus on reaching business leaders and policymakers will continue to guide the coalition's work, especially as the nation gears up for 2020 elections. Supporting this work will be new content and engagement opportunities, including but not limited to:

- **Explainer videos**, including [one for policy elites](#) that was debuted by the coalition at PCMA.
- **A new Advisory Council** to tap into the expertise and professional networks of 10-12 director-level industry professionals who work at companies in MMBC's priority business sectors – healthcare, financial services and technology.
- **A suite of resources** to help meeting and event planners prepare for and respond to travel bans and boycotts, based on research commissioned by Destinations International and MMBC in 2018.

"MMBC remains an insurance policy for the meetings industry," said Roger Dow, president and CEO of the U.S. Travel Association, MMBC's founding member. "The coalition's work safeguards against potential threats, which we know could include anything from an economic slowdown to a security issue to the weaponization of meetings through a travel ban or boycott. I'm thrilled with the plans to expand our program of work this year."

***To get involved in MMBC's work this year, industry professionals and third-party supporters can visit [meetingsmeanbusiness.com/join](https://meetingsmeanbusiness.com/join).***

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### **About Meetings Mean Business**

Meetings Mean Business is an industry-wide coalition that showcases the undeniable value that business meetings, trade shows, incentive travel, exhibitions, conferences and conventions bring to people, businesses and communities. By rallying industry advocates, working with stakeholders, conducting original research, engaging with outside voices and more, the coalition brings the industry together to emphasize its importance. Comprised of over 60 members, the coalition unites the meetings industry with one strong and powerful voice. For more information, visit [www.MeetingsMeanBusiness.com](https://www.MeetingsMeanBusiness.com).