

What is the Incentive Federation and who are its members?

The Incentive Federation, Inc. is a 501(C)(6), non-profit, tax-exempt organization whose membership and leadership includes the industry's national trade associations, as well as individual industry companies. It is under The Incentive Federation umbrella that the collective interests of the Incentive Marketing Association (IMA), the Promotional Products Association International (PPAI), The Recognition Professionals Association (RPI), the Society for Incentive Travel Excellence and The Incentive Research Foundation (IRF) are represented.

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IFI Membership Renewals Underway

Please be looking for your 2025 membership renewal notices which were sent in February. If you have already sent your payment, thank you very much. The Federation needs your support to continue representing the industry and providing services like the 2022 Marketplace Estimate Research Study which was released in August 2022. Also check the IFI website for the IFI's latest member benefit, presentation documents entitled "Tax Considerations for Incentives, Recognition and Safety Programs," a compilation of various industry papers published by industry experts.

PPAI's Legislative Education and Action Day Program Focused on Tariffs, Trade, Legislative Threats and Independent Contractor Status

PPAI's LEAD 2025 drew more than 70 industry professionals from across the country on April 7 and 8 to the nation's capital to address issues of particular importance to promo. Whether experienced attendees or first-timers, all were eager to share the promotional products industry's scope, influence and needs with representatives, senators and their staffers.

"Over the two days at LEAD, we came together with unmatched passion, purpose and professionalism. With 100 appointments and 100% participation from congressional offices, we made our voices heard," said PPAI President & CEO Drew Holmgreen.

As reported by PPAI's media team, at the top of the LEAD legislative agenda, attendees expressed opposition to the SWAG Act. This bill would prohibit government agencies from using federal funds on promotional products, which are often used to help educate citizens about public safety programs and health initiatives.

A PPAI team met directly with Sen. Joni Ernst (R-Iowa), lead sponsor of the bill, to discuss the potential harm the bill could cause, not only to the promo industry but to the federal agencies that rely on promotional products to communicate vital information to the public.

A significant portion of promo's sales force intentionally consider themselves to be independent workers. Rule changes in the past few years from the Department of Labor have jeopardized their status, and PPAI has long been advocating to protect independent work relationships. The Modern Worker Empowerment Act would amend the Fair Labor Standards Act

and provide a clear definition that is more favorable to independent workers.

For an industry highly dependent on imported goods from Asia the recent tariff announcements have created a lot of concern for both promotional products suppliers and distributors. The day after PPAI members visited Capitol Hill, the president announced a 90-day pause on reciprocal tariffs for countries that haven't retaliated against the United States, **dropping tariff rates to 10%** on imports from most countries. However, tariffs on China were raised to a total of 145%, effective immediately. The announcement comes on the heels of China's finance ministry vowing to **impose 84% tariffs on U.S. goods** starting Thursday, April 10, in response to Trump raising tariffs on China to 104%. China has announced higher tariffs on exports since then. PPAI encourages all industry professional to join the efforts to reach elected officials.

The association provides tips and tools to help individuals connect with their Senators and Representatives.

You can call the Capitol switchboard at 202-224-3121 to reach a live operator (during business hours) who can direct your call to the desired office.

For more detailed contact information, you can also **find your members of Congress here**, then you'll have to click through to their websites to locate their contact information. Each official's office handles this differently – some feature a "Contact Me" button at the top of the homepage, while others are less prominent. Once you have the numbers, each call should take only a couple of minutes.

For more details about PPAI's recent Lead program and how to help influence Congress, click [here](#).

UK Government Bans Spending on Branded Merchandise

As reported in PPAI media, for anyone who doubts that promotional merchandise remains vulnerable to government restrictions, look no further than what is occurring in the United Kingdom.

The UK government is cracking down on what it deems to be the unnecessary spending of taxpayer dollars. Included in that evaluation is **government-branded merchandise**.

- The U.K. government claims that "thousands" of pounds have been spent in recent years on products with department slogans or logos. It claims that money could be used for "strengthening our borders."
- A qualification is made that such merchandise will be permitted "only when essential for delivering the government's agenda, for example, in overseas trade and diplomacy."

This promo-averse rhetoric has also become part of the discussion in the U.S.

The "Stop Wasteful Advertising by the Government Act," or the **SWAG Act**, was introduced in the U.S. Senate in 2019 by Sen. Joni Ernst (R-Iowa) and introduced again in January by her, as well as in the House of Representatives by Rep. Michael Cloud (R-Texas). The SWAG Act would make it illegal to use federal funds on promo products.

Both in the U.K. and the U.S., these legislators tend to speak about branded merchandise as if it is miscellaneous spending without acknowledging **its track record** as an advertising method with proven ROI.

See, PPAI's media coverage [here](#).

SITE Reveals Latest Installment of Its inSITEs Series

SITE Foundation has always been steadfast in its mission to advance the understanding and value of incentive travel through education and research. With the release of Destination inSITEs, we are proud to add another essential chapter to our acclaimed inSITEs series. Following in the footsteps of previous studies — Corporate inSITEs, Leadership inSITEs and Participant inSITEs — this fourth installment provides unparalleled insights into the factors influencing destination selection in 2025 and beyond.

From uncovering the drivers behind destination choice to assessing the role of budget, marketing strategies, and best practices, Destination inSITEs delivers actionable insights for DMOs, DMCs and other destination suppliers. This study reveals emerging preferences for new and unique destinations, highlighting a growing focus on safety, security, and cost considerations.

Drawing on exclusive data from SITE's own Incentive Travel & Motivational Events (IT&ME) survey and the annual Incentive Travel Index (ITI), Destination inSITEs provides unparalleled clarity on what matters most to planners. This essential resource equips you to align with buyer needs and adapt to a rapidly evolving incentive industry landscape.

To learn more click [here](#)

Research Report Examines Issues Shaping Global Business Events Industry

The Events Industry Council (EIC), the global voice of the business events industry on advocacy, research, professional recognition, and standards, released its **Futures Landscape Report 2025** examining the issues likely to shape the global business events industry in the years to come. The report was aided by a grant from the **SITE Foundation**.

The final report draws from a series of “Think Tank” workshops where leaders from EIC's 60+ members, strategic partners and volunteer leaders shared insights and perspectives from their unique vantage points, as well as a global survey of business event stakeholders.

“The Futures Landscape Report as a foresight tool is intended to assist business event professionals and organizations better understand a wide swath of macro forces and correlating trends facing our global society and economies and to better understand the benefit of reflection in preparing and adapting,” said EIC President and CEO Amy Calvert.

To learn more, click [here](#)

Things to Know and Think About

To find other important meetings, trade events and educational offerings in the coming weeks and months, check the Incentive Industry Calendar at www.incentivefederation.org. Provided exclusively by the Incentive Federation, Inc.

Northstar: Incentive Pulse Survey

A series of economic, social and political changes have occurred since our October 2024 Incentive PULSE Survey. Are your programs being affected by changes? Which other trends and challenges are shaping incentive trips you are booking now?

Please [add your voice](#) to the [April 2025 Northstar/Cvent Incentive PULSE Survey](#), and you'll be entered to win a stylish TUMI Navigator backpack. You will also receive the complete survey report prior to publication.

SMM: The Case for Including Non-Sales Employees in Incentive Travel Programs

Incentive travel has long motivated sales teams, with programs like NCR's 1910 trip for top sellers marking its early use. While traditionally tied to revenue-driven roles, companies now recognize that cash incentives lose effectiveness beyond a certain point.

Research shows that travel rewards are highly valued for fostering connections and offering unique experiences. Despite its high cost—averaging \$4,900 per person—well-structured programs can pay for themselves by driving revenue. Industries like automotive, finance, pharmaceuticals, and tech continue to invest in these programs to maintain a competitive edge.

[Download](#) this white paper and learn more.

IMA Webinar Recording: Incentive & Recognition Insights - Research Results Info Session – Available At Your Convenience

Thank you to everyone who joined the IMA webinar on March 11! The presentation provided an overview of the research methodology, industry-wide highlights and standout statistics that capture insights. Additionally, we shared how members can access the final reports to dive deeper into the findings.

Couldn't make it? No worries! Watch the recording [HERE](#).

IMA Webinar: Unlocking the Power of Research: Transforming Insights into Actionable Strategies for B2B Gift Card Success- Wednesday, April 23, 2025, 12:00 pm ET

Join the us for a deep dive on the IGCC Incentive & Recognition research report. In this member conversation, we'll provide an overview of the research methodology and cover highlights and standout statistics from this global study on gift cards in the Incentive and Recognition marketplace. We'll also discuss how to apply these findings in your day-to-day roles! Don't miss out on this opportunity to hear the IGCC's comprehensive research report in an engaging, easily digestible format, showcasing actionable insights and practical applications!

To register click [here](#).

SITE WEBINAR: Finding Calm in Chaos: Navigating Geopolitical Effects on Events - Friday, April 25 at 10am Chicago | 4pm Dublin | 11pm Singapore

Incentive travel continues to thrive as organizations invest in programs that drive company culture and business results. However, recent geopolitical shifts are threatening business meetings and international access, and the speed and degree of these changes can make us feel helpless. What are steps we can take now to gain perspective and a sense of control in the midst of so much change?

To register click [here](#)

ASI: fASIIlitate - Daytona Beach, FL., April 28 – May 1, 2025 Delray Beach, FL., May 19 – 22, 2025

fASIIlitate is an exclusive four-day hosted-buyer event for distributors who produce \$1 million or more in sales each year. The unique format is designed to **foster new relationships with high-level professionals** using a combination of private, one-on-one meetings with four- and five-star suppliers and informal networking.

For more information, click [here](#).

2025 IMRA CONFERENCE - CHARLOTTE, NC., May 4-6, 2025

This event is for IMRA members. Nonmembers are subject to approval. This three-day event is focused on connecting suppliers and representatives in the incentive industry. With a schedule full of networking events, company sales meetings and more, you will discover strategic tools & tips to advance your programs. Get ready for new connections and actionable takeaways that will pave the way for your continued success.

For more information click [here](#).

PPAI: NORTH AMERICAN LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE – Chicago, IL., May 12-14, 2025

PPAI's NALC features engaging sessions and exclusive speakers tailored specifically for top-level executives and industry visionaries. NALC provides insights and strategies aimed at fostering innovation and entrepreneurship within the promotional products industry.

For more information, click [here](#).

INDUSTRY EVENT: WORLDATEWORK: TOTAL REWARDS 25 - Orlando, FL., May 19-21, 2025

Join us in Orlando, Florida for the premier Total Rewards event of the year! Experience a remarkable gathering where you'll meet and learn from industry experts, engage in dynamic workshops, and connect with your peers from around the world. Discover cutting-edge practices for rewarding talent and explore strategies that can truly impact your bottom line. Don't miss this opportunity to be part of the leading Total Rewards event in the industry.

For more information, click [here](#).

PPAI: INTERNATIONAL LEADERSHIP SUMMIT – Brussels, Belgium, May 19 – 21, 2025

Bringing together global thought leaders for an impactful dialogue on international business in the promotional merchandise industry, the International Leadership Summit is a collaboration of PPAI and the [European Associations Cooperative](#). ILS will cover key topics such as sustainability, digital transformation and the evolving dynamics of cross-border politics.

For more information, click [here](#).

SITE NITE EUROPE - Frankfurt, Germany – May 19, 2025

Taking place the night before IMEX, SITE NITE Europe is your perfect opportunity to build & bridge cultures with over 400 incentive travel professionals gathered in Frankfurt for the show. For more information, click [here](#).

INDUSTRY EVENT: IMEX FRANKFURT - FRANKFURT, Germany – May 20-22, 2025

IMEX is where every part of the global events industry comes for a high-value, high-return boost of real business, real relationships and insights, all designed to make working life easier and more profitable.

For more information, click [here](#).

INDUSTRY EVENT: LOYALTY EXPO 2025 - Orlando, FL., May 20-22, 2025

Presented by Loyalty360 — the Association for Customer Loyalty — Loyalty Expo will provide the knowledge and best practices necessary to guide your team and brand on your customer loyalty journey. Join the top

event where attendees learn from the best-in-class brand leaders, technologists, and service providers you need in a rapidly evolving customer loyalty landscape.

By attending, you'll have the opportunity to network with hundreds of your fellow marketers and hear how they are reaching their customer relationship-building goals. Market leaders will be sharing their experiences and insights on customer retention strategies and trends. Attendees will leave Loyalty Expo with an understanding of new research, technologies, and solutions to aid their organizations on the customer loyalty journey.

For more information, click [here](#).

IGCC EDUCATION FORUM - Richfield, MN, Best Buy Headquarters – May 21, 2025

This event is designed for gift card industry professionals and will delve into payment and B2B trends, emerging technologies, and the evolving landscape of the gift card market.

For more information, click [here](#).

2025 IRF INVITATIONAL - Cancun, Mexico – June 1-4, 2025

The IRF Invitational is the premier industry event dedicated to education and networking. This exclusive event provides over 500 invited attendees with direct exposure to the industry's preeminent voices and applicable analysis of the IRF's research. The IRF's noteworthy education programming will feature industry experts, a compelling keynote, IRF research, and interactive discussion groups. Networking opportunities include exciting destination activities and dazzling evening receptions.

For more information, click [here](#).

NORTHSTAR: INCENTIVE LIVE - Farjardo, Puerto Rico – June 8-10, 2025

Incentive Live offers a compelling agenda that makes this event a must-attend for industry professionals. In addition to one-on-one appointments with top incentive destinations, hotels/resorts, cruise lines, DMCs, DMOs, merchandise and technology providers, gift cards, and tourism offices, Incentive Live presents leading industry experts providing the latest perspective on industry trends and best practices that will help take your incentive programs to the next level.

For more information, click [here](#).

ASI: FASILITATE – Nashville, TN – June 9-12

fASIllitate is an exclusive four-day hosted-buyer event for distributors who produce \$1 million or more in sales each year. The unique format is designed to **foster new relationships with high-level professionals** using a combination of private, one-on-one meetings with four- and five-star suppliers and informal networking.

For more information, click [here](#).

IMA EUROPE BRUSSELS 2025 – Brussels, Belgium – June 12, 2025

All are welcome to attend. Discover the future of incentives at the heart of Europe! Join us in Brussels for the IMA Europe 2025 event. Network with European incentive experts, share

knowledge, and discover the latest trends shaping the industry. Together, we'll build a sustainable and innovative future for incentives.

To learn more, click [here](#).

PPAI: WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP DONFERENCE – Coronado, CA – June 23-25, 2025

Attendees will join women from diverse professional backgrounds as they exchange empowering business insights and celebrate successes.

WLC is the place to make connections, toast the PPAI Women of Achievement and broaden horizons on everything from corporate finance to AI and the value of keeping a beginner's mindset.

For more information click [here](#).

SITE: INCENTIVE SUMMIT EUROPE – St. Moritz, Switzerland – June 29 – July 2, 2025

Boutique by choice and intimate by design, SITE's Incentive Summit series convenes an elite group of incentive travel professionals in an incentive-ready location for 3 wonderful days of networking, education and destination immersion. If you're a buyer of incentive travel experiences and would like to be considered for inclusion on the guest list, please email us on snicastro@siteglobal.com.

The Federation in 2025

If you have ideas or opinions about what the IFI should be focused on, or if you have questions, advice for the Board, or want to raise issues for the Board to think about, contact our Chair Richard Blabolil at rblabolil@marketinginnovators.com or Steve Slagle, IFI managing Director at steves3309@gmail.com or 864-710-6739.

Here's wishing everyone a an outstanding and productive 2025!

2025 IFI Board of Directors

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