

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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IRF's 2025 Incentives Industry Outlook Available

The Incentive Research Foundation's [*Industry Outlook for 2025: Merchandise, Gift Cards and Event Gifting*](#) reports a positive outlook for non-cash rewards in 2025 across both North America and Europe following a year of uncertainty for the incentives industry. North American economic optimism rebounds from near historic lows to 23%, signaling a stronger outlook for 2025. Economic optimism in Europe increased from 29% last year to 56% heading into 2025.

"North American spending was down in 2024, and incentive professionals were more cost-conscious when using gift cards, merchandise, and event gifts. However, in Europe, per-person spend showed positive growth, with increased use of mid- to high-value rewards," said Stephanie Harris, IRF President. "After an uneven year, the outlook for 2025 shows signs of improvement. We see high rates of economic optimism, budget increases, and anticipated increases in the use of merchandise, gift cards, event gifting, and experiential rewards."

Key findings, benchmarks, and year-over-year comparisons reported in the report include:

- In North America, 59% of organizations expect an increase in their overall budgets for reward and recognition programs, marking a positive shift from 2024's financial outlook.
- A striking 74% of European respondents expect an increase in their overall rewards budgets, with only 6% anticipating reductions.
- Technology is a critical driver of growth, and investments in program technology are on the rise.
- Channel programs are spending more on non-cash rewards than employee programs in both North America and Europe.
- Merchandise / gift card program retention is increasing, with a steep decline in program discontinuations in 2024.
- A net increase in use of merchandise rewards in 2025 was reported by both Europe (57%) and North America (39%).
- Gift card values are increasing in Europe, with third-party providers favoring higher-value gift cards (€211 on average) compared to corporate entities (€179 on average).
- Both North America (65%) and Europe (77%) are anticipating increases in event gifting budgets.
- The design and implementation of incentive programs is driven by the company's financial forecast, according to over 90% of all respondents.

View or download a copy of the study at the [Industry Outlook for 2025: Merchandise, Gift Cards and Event Gifting webpage](#). See related **webinar announcement** below.

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.

SMM Article: How B2B Marketing Must Drive Revenue

In an era where economic uncertainty and tighter budgets dominate C-Suite discussions, one thing is crystal clear: Revenue is the ultimate metric, and every part of the organization, including marketing, must align with that objective.

To read click [here](#).

IRF Webinar: European Incentives Industry Outlook for 2025 Tuesday, January 21, 10:00 - 10:45 am EST

The European outlook for non-cash rewards in 2025 remains positive. During our upcoming IRF webinar, we'll talk about the expectations for incentive travel, merchandise, gift cards and event gifting in Europe in 2025. Our panel will discuss insights and benchmarks reported in *Industry Outlook for 2025: Merchandise, Gift Cards and Event Gifting* and the *2024 Incentive Travel Index*. Focusing on European data from both studies, we will discuss where spending is up, which rewards are increasing in use, and how incentive professionals are addressing current challenges, including economic uncertainty and rising costs.

For more information click [here](#).

SITE GLOBAL CONFERENCE 2025 TULUM MEXICO MARCH 3-6, 2025

Connect with incentive travel professionals from all over the world, learn the latest from the greatest, discover a scintillating destination and celebrate SITE and the incentive travel industry. SITE has identified several topics and themes that will impact destinations and the entire incentive travel supply chain in 2025 and beyond.

For more information click [here](#)

ASI Show Ft. Worth, TX March 29-31, 2025

Join us at ASI Show® Fort Worth, where the traditional product and supplier sourcing experience transforms into something extraordinary! This isn't just an event; it's a vibrant hub of interaction, relevant discussions and hands-on training designed to elevate your selling strategies. What you learn here won't just impact your immediate spring and summer sales—it's invaluable all year long.

For more information click [here](#).

PPAI: Legislative Education and Action Day Washington, D.C. April 7-8, 2025

At the forefront of LEAD's agenda is the crucial task of informing legislators and their staff about the industry's significance, not just to the U.S. economy, but also to the approximately half a million Americans it employed.

For more information click [here](#).

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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