

[Register Now](#)

[Print](#)

Tuesday, August 13

7:30am - 2:00pm

7:30am - 2:00pm

Experience

- [Registration](#)

Sponsored by

[Dotdash Meredith](#)

Eisenman

Greater Columbus Convention Center

7:30am - 4:00pm

7:30am - 4:00pm

Experience

- [Destiny and Mercury Awards Lounge](#)

Sponsored by

[Love Communications](#)

Union Station Concourse

Greater Columbus Convention Center

[Details](#)

The Destiny and Mercury Awards Lounge makes its annual return for you to take a look at each finalist's submissions, media files, and judges' comments. Stop by the lounge to view the top three finalists from each category in the digital gallery. Award winners will be announced on Tuesday, August 13 at ESTO's Awards Dinner and Presentation. The ESTO Awards enable states and destinations to showcase their creative accomplishments and foster the continued development of imaginative marketing and profitable promotional programs and campaigns in destination marketing. The Destiny Awards recognize marketing and promotion at the city, local and regional level. The Mercury Awards recognize state and territory destination marketing and promotion.

- [Engagement Zones](#)

Sponsored by

[AdTheorent](#), [CrowdRiff](#), [Longwoods International](#), [Smithsonian Media](#), [Tourism Economics](#)

Union Station Concourse

Greater Columbus Convention Center

[Details](#)

Engagement Zones are opportunities for attendees to engage in experiences created by our sponsors. Learn more about what our sponsors have planned for you at each Engagement Zone:

AdTheorent

Please stop by to learn how AdTheorent uses machine learning and privacy-forward programmatic advertising solutions to drive business outcomes like visitation, in-market sales and bookings for travel and destination marketers.

CrowdRiff

Come say hello to some of the friendliest faces in the room at CrowdRiff's Engagement Zone. Caitlyn, Evan, and Vinita will be on hand all week to discuss working with local Creators, sourcing high-quality UGC, and their fav summer ice creams.

Set yourself a reminder to swing by at lunch on Monday when Columbus' fav Jeni's Ice Cream will be passing out local treats.

Longwoods International

Be sure to schedule a time or meet with our Longwoods International team members in our upstairs Engagement Zone at the Greater Columbus Convention Center! Have your questions about market research answered, find out what's new, or just ask for an overview of our current offerings for destinations! Our team is here to help answer the questions that are on your mind! Our team and best in class methodologies are at your service!

Smithsonian Media

Baseball. Hot Dogs. Apple Pie. Smithsonian. And Cornhole? Beanbags will be flying at Smithsonian Media's spot in the Engagement Zone. Join us for a quick game and learn more about Smithsonian Media while you enjoy one of summer's favorite pastimes. Show off your skills and enter to win a free dedicated email blast to 100,000 Smithsonian Media subscribers. Smithsonian is America's storyteller.

Tourism Economics

Knowledge is power. Come power up with the award-winning Tourism Economics team and benefit from the same strategic insights we offer to hundreds of destinations, travel businesses and associations worldwide. Bring your questions and be the first to know about game-changing new services, partnerships and tools—such as attribution and benchmarking—on the horizon.

8:15am - 9:00am

8:15am - 9:00am

Networking

- [Networking Breakfast](#)

Sponsored by

[Priceline | KAYAK](#)

Union Station Ballroom
Greater Columbus Convention Center

8:30am - 4:30pm

8:30am - 4:30pm

Experience

- [**U.S. Travel Hub**](#)
Across from Registration
Greater Columbus Convention Center
[Details](#)

Visit the U.S. Travel Hub to engage with knowledgeable staff and connect with fellow travel professionals. The Hub will have specialty coffee service Monday & Tuesday from 11 to 2 pm, as well as plenty of space for meaningful conversations and strategic networking. The U.S. Travel Hub is where connections are made, ideas are born, and the future of travel is shaped.

9:00am - 10:00am

9:00am - 10:00am

Main Stage

- [**Keynote: Exploring the Transformative Power of Travel**](#)
Sponsored by
[Gray Destination Marketing](#)
Battelle Grand
Greater Columbus Convention Center
[Details](#)

Travel is essential to the U.S. economy, communities across our nation, and businesses large and small. Industry leaders will demonstrate travel's role in economic stimulation, business growth, community development, cultural exchange, and social cohesion. This session will leverage data and insights from the four segments of travel: group, business, leisure and international to explore travel's profound impact and give concrete examples to ensure that message resonates.

10:00am - 11:00am

10:00am - 11:00am

Main Stage

- [**Keynote: Different is Better Than Better**](#)
Sponsored by
[Simpleview](#)
Battelle Grand
Greater Columbus Convention Center
[Details](#)

Win the moment. Impress and influence. Disrupt and defy. Inspire and aspire. Overdeliver, outthink, and outperform. Yes, it's good to be better. But, it's better to be different. In this session, we'll dive into why we're impressed by certain people and brands – and how to capitalize on your own. Join Sally Hogshead – a New York Times bestseller, a Global Brand Guru, and “force of nature” who “changed the face of North American advertising” to dive into what makes us each different based on our own results from Sally's personal brand measurement, which identifies your most fascinating and impressive qualities. Be sure to take THE FASCINATE® TEST ahead of time to fully engage with this keynote.

A FASCINATE® TEST code is available to all registered attendees.

10:00am - 3:00pm

10:00am - 3:00pm

Experience

- [Columbus Pop-Up Shop Experience](#)

A Pod Concourse

Greater Columbus Convention Center

[Details](#)

Don't leave Columbus without strolling through the pop-up shop experience, perfect for those searching for locally made artisan objects, retail and fashion items, goodies, and souvenirs. With a rotating slate of vendors each day, shoppers will get a peek at Columbus' diverse and unique local businesses, including those from the Experience Columbus Minority Business Program.

10:30am - 1:30pm

10:30am - 1:30pm

Experience

- [Wellness Lounge](#)

Sponsored by

[Future Partners](#)

A Pod Concourse

Greater Columbus Convention Center

[Details](#)

The Future Partners' Wellness Lounge is a place to relax, enjoy a quiet conversation, or reflect on the importance of travel and key insights from the conference.

Relax with a massage or get energized with a juice shot. There are many ways to show self-care and we invite you to take care of yourself while in Columbus.

11:00am - 11:30am

11:00am - 11:30am

Break

- [Networking Beverage Break](#)

Sponsored by

[Ampersand](#)

Union Station Concourse

Greater Columbus Convention Center

11:30am - 12:30pm

11:30am - 12:30pm

All Access

- [Coopetition: Creating Synergy Across Destination and State Partners](#)

A210 - A215

Greater Columbus Convention Center

[Details](#)

Collaboration or competition between destination partners is an age-old story. This session will explore coopetition and how to leverage these unique relationships to share innovative efforts, distribution channels, marketing campaigns, costs and risks, and much more. Hear how destinations have worked with their “competition” and the success stories of joint marketing campaigns to elevate not only their own destination but their neighboring destinations to create a valuable experience for all. Hear how destination leaders have worked together beyond advocacy and how to collaborate differently.

- [Customizing Travel Experiences Amid Evolving Consumer Trends](#)

A120 - A125

Greater Columbus Convention Center

[Details](#)

Understanding and adapting to new consumer demands and trends is essential for a destination’s success. This session will delve into the evolving consumer landscape and examine how leading travel brands are engaging today’s dynamic consumer. From luxury travel to culinary adventures to digital detoxes and everything in between, this session will explore how to use data-driven insights into the consumer trends reshaping how we connect with and market to travelers.

- [Score! Boosting Tourism Through Sports](#)

A110 - A115

Greater Columbus Convention Center

[Details](#)

As the United States gears up to host upcoming major sporting events over the next couple of years, including the 2026 World Cup and 2028 Olympics, the spotlight turns to sports-related travel, along with the benefits and hurdles of this growing segment. Hear how the State Department is planning and preparing for a “mega-decade” of sports and the concrete steps needed to streamline aspects of the travel experience for millions of anticipated visitors. Best practices will be shared from the cities and organizations that are preparing to host. This session will delve into the implications for destination marketers and how to capitalize on the immense opportunities presented by sports travel.

- [Grassroots Advocacy 101: Empowering Advocates in Travel](#)

A220 - A222

Greater Columbus Convention Center

[Details](#)

Advocating for the travel industry begins at the grassroots level, where local efforts can significantly influence policies and perceptions. This session aims to empower travel industry professionals, destination marketers, and community leaders with the fundamental skills to effectively engage with elected officials at local and federal levels. Learn actionable insights from industry peers who have become advocacy experts so you can walk away with a better understanding on how to amplify your voice, build lasting relationships with policymakers, and effectively advocate for policies that support and promote the transformative power of travel.

CEO/CMO

- [Tapping into a People First Leadership Approach](#)

A223 - A225

Greater Columbus Convention Center

[Details](#)

In today's fast-paced business environment, effective leadership hinges on more than just strategic vision—it's also about harnessing the full potential of your team. Join us for a transformative session, featuring Keynote Speaker Sally Hogshead, creator of the Fascinate System™ as she provides insights into her assessment tool as a means to support a people-first leadership approach by helping executives create a common language for their team to skillfully navigate productive conflict, enable clear expectations for the individual and the team, and coach individuals to be their best. Join fellow CEOs and CMOs for an open forum conversation on how assessment tools can help leaders facilitate team development by providing insights that can inform decision-making, optimize team strengths, and ultimately achieve greater success.

12:30pm - 1:45pm

12:30pm - 1:45pm

Networking

- [Networking Lunch](#)

Sponsored by

[Madden Media](#)

Union Station Ballroom

Greater Columbus Convention Center

1:45pm - 2:55pm

1:45pm - 2:55pm

Main Stage

- [Keynote: Crisis Control: Navigating the Communications High Seas](#)

Battelle Grand

Greater Columbus Convention Center

[Details](#)

In today's fast-paced world, effective crisis management and maintaining brand integrity are crucial for any organization and destination. Join Chris Chiames, Chief Communications Officer with Carnival Cruise Line for an insightful conversation into how Carnival responds to crises while balancing media needs and messaging to uphold its brand reputation. Chris will share real-life examples and case studies on how he's handled communications for some of the biggest brands in the industry. Whether you're a seasoned marketer, emerging communicator, or business leader, this keynote promises actionable insights to help you effectively manage communication challenges and uphold brand integrity in an ever-evolving world. Through natural disasters, public health emergencies, politically charged challenges, and whatever comes next – it's imperative for destination marketers to know and understand the strategies that will empower you to protect your destination's reputation and appeal to visitors.

2:30pm - 4:30pm

2:30pm - 4:30pm

Experience

- [Wellness Lounge](#)

Sponsored by

[Future Partners](#)

A Pod Concourse

Greater Columbus Convention Center

[Details](#)

The Future Partners' Wellness Lounge is a place to relax, enjoy a quiet conversation, recharge (yourself and your devices!), or reflect on the importance of travel and key insights from the conference.

Be sure to stop by for a massage during all open hours or get energized with a juice shot. There are many ways to show self-care and we invite you to take care of yourself while in Columbus.

2:55pm - 3:25pm

2:55pm - 3:25pm

Break

- [Networking Beverage Break](#)

Sponsored by

[Ampersand](#)

Union Station Concourse

Greater Columbus Convention Center

3:25pm - 4:25pm

3:25pm - 4:25pm

All Access

- [Beyond Cliches and Tourist Traps: Creating and Marketing Authentic Travel Experiences](#)

Sponsored by

[Afar](#)

A120 - A125

Greater Columbus Convention Center

[Details](#)

In a world inundated by screens, Millennials and Gen Z seek meaningful and authentic connections as gateways to understanding cultures beyond the surface. Community voices and immersive experiences resonate with today's travelers and influence booking decisions. In this session, panelists will share successful approaches to engaging these consumers and driving record-breaking visitation, from partnering with local communities to showcasing unique experiences and bringing to life the heart and soul of a destination. Through case studies and discussions with experts, you'll walk away with insights, best practices, and tactics for creating and supporting authentic travel, building community relationships, and promoting values-driven tourism that resonates with younger audiences and contributes to environmental and cultural sustainability.

- **[Empowering Minority Businesses: Proven Strategies for Community Engagement](#)**

A110 - A115

Greater Columbus Convention Center

[Details](#)

Minority-owned businesses play a pivotal role in building vibrant communities and inclusive travel destinations. Discover practical approaches for fostering collaboration and partnership between destination stakeholders, community organizations, minority-owned businesses, and travelers. This session will explore a range of innovative strategies implemented by destinations that are driving positive change in fostering a more inclusive and prosperous business environment. Participants will gain valuable insights on effectively engaging with minority-owned businesses, securing funding opportunities, and cultivating a collaborative ecosystem that benefits all stakeholders.

- **[The Evolution of Meetings and Group Travel Marketing](#)**

A210 - A215

Greater Columbus Convention Center

[Details](#)

The world of meetings and group travel marketing is constantly in flux. This interactive session explores the most noticeable changes impacting the industry today. Uncover success stories from the past two years and gain firsthand insights from industry leaders who will share their own experiences and winning approaches. Learn how to adapt your marketing efforts and leverage partnerships with tour operators and event planners to remain competitive in this ever-evolving landscape.

4:30pm - 5:30pm

4:30pm - 5:30pm

Networking

- **[ESTO Planning Committee Debrief Meeting and Happy Hour](#)**

Greater Columbus Convention Center

6:10pm - 8:30pm

6:10pm - 8:30pm

Experience

- [Destiny and Mercury Awards Dinner and Presentation](#)

Sponsored by

[Miles Partnership](#)

Battelle Grand

Greater Columbus Convention Center

[Details](#)

Illuminate the Night: A Glitzy and Glamorous White Party

Join U.S. Travel for a dazzling evening to celebrate this year's best and brightest marketing visionaries at the 2024 Destiny and Mercury Awards. Come dressed in your bright whites and glitziest metallics and prepare to be captivated by the most creative destination marketing campaigns.

8:30pm - 11:00pm

8:30pm - 11:00pm

Networking

- [After Party: Short North Speakeasy](#)

Sponsored by

[Zartico](#)

Spark Lobby Bar

Hilton Downtown

[Details](#)

Art, Soul & Spirits by Zartico

Each guest will receive one (1) drink ticket that can be used at Spark, located in the lobby of Tower 402 of Hilton Columbus Downtown. Tickets can be used towards any house draft and bottled beer, house wine, and well drinks. Tickets are valid from 8/10/24 through 8/14/24. Lost tickets will not be replaced.