



**DESTINATION: EXCELLENCE**  
*Investing in the Future of Destination Marketing*  
**CAMPAIGN CASE FOR SUPPORT**

**June 1, 2009**

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## **Executive Summary – The Challenges We Face**

Destination Marketing Association International (DMAI) and the Destination & Travel Foundation, formerly the DMAI Foundation, are complementary organizations dedicated to ensuring DMAI members are consistently able to improve their effectiveness as Destination Marketing Organizations (DMOs) and that thousands of DMO professionals have the tools, training, research, knowledge and support network needed to succeed.

The last six months have brought unprecedented challenges to the world economy. Travel has become more difficult and we do not yet fully know the effects on the travel and destination marketing industry. Even with the uncertainty of the times, there are definitive reasons to remain optimistic. The United States has been verified as an official destination for the China market; The Travel Promotion Act of 2008 (expected to attract millions of additional international travelers to the United States) has been passed by the United States House of Representatives; and seven new countries have been added to the Visa Waiver Program. In order to remain competitive, DMOs must clearly communicate their core messages to all key constituencies and show renewed resolve with increased marketing and development activity. With the right partner, DMOs can remain vital and ‘relevant’ organizations. DMAI and the Foundation can help DMOs turn the challenges on the horizon into opportunities. ***It is our belief that in the most difficult of times, DMOs do our best work.***

**RELEVANCY...** The issue or theme of ‘relevancy’ has become an increasingly complicated matter for DMOs to address. Traditional sources of funding, particularly in the United States where primary funding relies on a portion of the hotel occupancy tax, are subject to increasing competition from local interest groups. DMOs have a growing responsibility to prove their value with local stakeholders to justify their funding. The recently published Futures Study commissioned by the Foundation and conducted by Karl Albrecht Associates, identified that DMOs have an opportunity to play a role in the marketing and in the development of their destinations. In order to have a seat at the table, they must communicate more effectively with local constituencies, work more closely with their venues and local service providers and demonstrate results. Targeted research and lobbying efforts at the local and state levels, orchestrated with long-term strategic planning, are vital to accomplish this goal.

**TECHNOLOGY...** The wealth of free information now available online has made it even more difficult for the DMO to be seen as the primary ‘voice’ and source of information for its destination and the community it serves. Advancing technology has created a challenging and crowded environment, but also creates opportunities for DMOs willing to make an investment in proprietary tools and applications. DMAI is committed to providing the necessary research and technological innovation to allow DMOs to remain competitive.

**SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY...** Social Responsibility has become much more than a simple buzzword in the marketplace with high-minded connotations. As the travel and tourism customer becomes increasingly sophisticated, DMOs are expected to have well thought-out strategies in the area of Social Responsibility. Given the scope of the facilities associated with a DMO and the population impacted by travel and tourism, organizations are now expected to have a myriad of Social Responsibility initiatives appealing to the consumer while tying into each DMO’s long-term goals.

**The three elements of RELEVANCY, TECHNOLOGY and SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY are the basis upon which the Destination & Travel Foundation intends to launch an industry-wide fundraising effort to raise US\$4,000,000 in gifts and pledges.**

## **DMAI – Yesterday and Today**

In just a few years, Destination Marketing Association International (DMAI) will celebrate the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its founding in 1914. Known for most of its existence as the International Association of Convention and Visitors Bureaus or IACVB, the members of DMAI made the decision to change its name in 2005 to an identity that more closely aligns itself with its members as destination marketing organizations.

DMAI has steadily grown to where it now has more than 1,500 professionals who represent more than 625 destination marketing organizations or DMOs. It has now positioned itself as the worldwide leader and primary resource for its members and the public. DMAI has also embraced the global part of its name with new offices in Brussels, Belgium, and counts more than 25 countries represented among its members, with that number only expected to grow.

For decades, DMAI has served as the voice of its members surrounding the conventions, meetings and destination marketing industry. It ensured that individuals and organizations were using sound professional practices in the solicitation and servicing of meetings and conventions, as well as addressing the complexities of the tourism business both nationally and internationally. Early industry leaders embraced the value of travel and tourism for their communities as a catalyst that provided jobs and tax dollars for the improvement of local services and infrastructure. Becoming involved with an organization that would assist and help promote the long-term development of communities through a travel and tourism strategy was an easy decision for them to make.

Today, DMAI provides its members – professionals, industry partners, students and educators – the most cutting-edge educational resources, networking opportunities and marketing benefits available worldwide. The role of DMOs has become increasingly complex with constant challenges regarding their composition and the scope of their annual budgets, as well as identifying, recruiting and retaining top-level sales and management talent. Another challenge is that potential customers require detailed information about the unique benefits of any possible destination. Plus, today's savvy meeting planner and tourism consumer want to see a DMO and its destination as socially responsible in terms of conservation plans and environmentally sensitive strategies for both the short- and long-term. This includes understanding and satisfying the needs of growing diverse markets.

**DMAI is a stronger and more powerful organization poised to meet the needs of its members now more than ever before:**

- **The world's largest and most reliable resource for official destination marketing organizations (DMOs);**
- **More than 1,500 professional members from over 625 DMOs;**
- **Members in all 50 U.S. states and 25 countries;**
- **Providing members with cutting-edge educational resources, networking opportunities, and marketing benefits available worldwide.**

## Opportunities We Have

The DMAI Foundation, created over 15 years ago and recently renamed the Destination & Travel Foundation to reflect the integration of US Travel Association's Foundation, has long been in the forefront on key initiatives and challenges faced by DMAI and its members. The Foundation has provided the research, vision and resources needed to tackle the most pressing issues of the day and the vexing problems that lie ahead. It has addressed these opportunities by engaging industry leaders and experts in a number of fields to look at the problems from every angle and determine innovative and creative strategies to turn these challenges into opportunities that will give their members every possible option for dealing with the rapidly changing business environment. In today's changing atmosphere, the Destination & Travel Foundation will efficiently and cost-effectively serve both the destination and travel constituencies.

At the 2008 Annual Convention in Las Vegas, the Foundation's Board of Trustees determined there are many pressing needs facing DMAI and its members. The recently completed Futures Study had a goal of "establishing a framework that destination marketing organizations can use to plan the future." As a result of the Futures Study, there were several clearly identified opportunities to engage industry members and friends in a special effort to provide the new Destination & Travel Foundation with the necessary financial resources to meet these new needs through a major fundraising campaign, while maintaining its existing vital programs and services.

Three key areas of focus have been identified by DMAI members as having the greatest opportunity for impact on the industry:

- 1. Relevancy**
- 2. Technology**
- 3. Social Responsibility**

A subsequent research survey has confirmed that these topics are seen as key priorities for the entire industry. The Foundation has created a Research Committee and plans to focus future grant monies and research projects in these three key areas. In addition, Destination & Travel Foundation plans to create steering committees made up of members for each of these key areas to provide insight and direction and to ensure that members have a voice in how the funds are spent. Historically, the most successful campaigns utilize the most compelling aspects of the organization's plan or vision for the future as the bedrock of their fundraising strategy. Potential donors and leaders have an agreed upon set of research, tools, projects and resources as their intended destination and the campaign provides the "vehicle" to get the organization where it needs to go.

### ***Accomplishments since 2001 include:***

- *Underwritten more than US\$2,000,000 in grants to improve DMOs;*
- *Maintained an endowment of US\$2,000,000+ during a difficult economic time; and*
- *Remained self-sustaining while maintaining all priorities & campaign objectives!*

***The Foundation has the tools, talent and vision to be the catalyst for this change.***

## **Destination & Travel Foundation - A Catalyst for Change**

Formerly known as the DMAI Foundation, the Destination & Travel Foundation has a strong and solid track record in being an organization worthy of the trust of DMAI members and supporters. It has also been an excellent steward of the monies entrusted to the Foundation from *The Destination Ahead Campaign*, which raised more than US\$3,000,000 in gifts and pledges on its goal of US\$2,500,000 almost eight years ago and, again, during a difficult economy. The Foundation kept the promises it made and has exceeded expectations in many other areas that have had a lasting impact on the industry.

Since 2001, the Foundation has underwritten more than US\$2,000,000 in grants and has established and maintained an endowment of more than US\$2,000,000. In addition, the Foundation, through its annual fundraising efforts, has been able to support its ongoing operating costs while ensuring the completion or undertaking of all the campaign's major initiatives. The Destination & Travel Foundation truly fulfills its mission *to enhance and complement the destination marketing profession and the travel industry by supporting research, visioning, and travel industry partnerships.*

A selection of the projects funded by *The Destination Ahead Campaign* include:

- ☑ Conducted landmark, industry-wide *Futures Study* 2000 and 2008;
- ☑ Origination of Research Department to produce regular products such as the bi-annual *DMO Compensation & Benefits Survey*, the *Organizational & Financial Profile Report* and the *DMAI/IAAM Convention Center Sales & Operations Best Practices Report*.
- ☑ Seed/ongoing funding for Destination Marketing Accreditation Program (DMAP);
- ☑ Scholarships and education grants for DMAI's professional programs such as the Certified Destination Management Executive (CDME), Destination Marketing & Management Institute (DMMI) and Annual Convention; and
- ☑ Special initiatives, such as relief for the immediate restoration of the hospitality sector devastated by the effects felt from Hurricane Katrina.

### **CALL TO ACTION...**

In order to maintain the current level of funding for existing programs and services, while tackling the challenges and opportunities we have been presented as an industry, new investment is required for the future. Therefore, the former DMAI Foundation Board of Trustees, with support of the DMAI Board of Directors, have launched a new fundraising campaign to meet the needs of our members called...

**DESTINATION: EXCELLENCE:**  
*Investing in the Future of Destination Marketing*

# DESTINATION ➔ EXCELLENCE: *Investing in the Future of Destination Marketing*

The Destination ➔ EXCELLENCE Campaign seeks to raise US\$4,000,000 or more in gifts and pledges from industry members and friends payable over a three- to five-year period in three main areas:

## 1. Relevancy of the DMO ..... US\$1,500,000

### **Objective:**

The funding sources traditionally associated with and allocated for destination marketing have come under attack in many cases by non-industry stakeholders laying claim to these increasingly scarce resources. DMOs have found their roles are not as uniquely defined as in the past and therefore risk being seen as less relevant and losing valuable and vital funding. In the recent Futures Study, participants listed the greatest perceived threat as the “*Competition for Destination Marketing funds*” and the most critical success factor as “*Reliable Sources of Funding.*”

### **Project Snapshot:**

DMAI plans to provide the tools DMO executives need to maintain adequate levels of funding by helping stakeholders understand the critical role the DMO plays in promoting their destination. By creating a pool of funds focused on highlighting the relevancy of the DMO, DMAI and the Foundation can provide necessary intelligence to support regional and local Advocacy and Public Policy efforts. Each DMO needs research at their fingertips to shed light on the true results that DMOs are able to generate and quickly prove the return communities are receiving on their investment in DMOs. Especially with the face-to-face meetings industry under attack, the Destination & Travel Foundation must help DMOs create a compelling story and a deeper understanding of what they contribute to their destinations.

### **Initiatives to be launched could include establishing a Public Advocacy Committee:**

- Communicate the impact visitors have on the local economy’s tax coffers and identify practices that make your DMO an integral part of the community’s fabric;
- Create a summary of research that may be useful for buttressing arguments in favor of DMO funding and serve as the go-to source for statistics to show the return-on-investment in a DMO and as a partner when relevancy is questioned;
- Conduct additional research and collaborate with supporting organizations (such as the U.S. Conference of Mayors, US Travel Association, JMIC, CIC member organizations and other publically funded organizations) to further study the impact of visitor discretionary spending and the value of DMO services for a local community;
- Create a step-by-step process for creating a compelling story and provide DMOs with concrete and user-friendly templates that can be personalized for their community and help them stay in front of decision makers before funding challenges occur;
- Organize advocacy events regionally and locally; and,
- Educate stakeholders about Best Practices for Convention Centers & DMOs.

## 2. Technology ..... US\$2,000,000

### **Objective:**

DMOs exist in a knowledge-intensive environment rapidly becoming more and more sophisticated. To ensure that our members are taking advantage of the latest technology, innovations in digital marketing, Web 2.0 strategies and trends in customer behavior, funds will be allocated to building expertise on how DMOs use or interact with technology. Our goal is to research how DMOs stay competitive in an information intensive business and provide solutions. Destination & Travel Foundation plans to make the primary beneficiary of this renewed commitment to technology empowerMINT.com, formerly the Meeting Information Network (MINT). MINT is a long-standing proprietary meetings database that has served our industry very successfully for many years. However, the system has not been updated since 2004. Large-scale upgrades and additional functionality are required to continue MINT's success. Significant upgrades in platform and general performance are scheduled to be completed in May 2009.

### **Project Snapshot:**

The new empowerMINT.com initiative will provide DMOs with a more powerful room night booking resource to benefit their local stakeholders. With more robust information and collaborative lead sharing, the upgraded MINT effectively creates a national networking resource allowing the DMOs to access commission-free services, resulting in savings of thousands of dollars for hotels.

### **Initiatives to be launched under this case element could include:**

#### ***MINT Upgrade and Launch of New empowerMINT.com Application:***

- Update the current technology backbone to eliminate the need for double data entry, provide faster results, increase the user-friendliness of the system and maintain the historical integrity of the data;
- Add a Dates/Rates/Space segment: CVB HotRates will become empowerMINT.com, potentially allowing DMO customers and potential clients access to room availability and destination profiles therefore increasing leads from DMOs; and
- Lead Generation: Extend existing software tools to provide greater collaboration and lead sharing among DMO subscribers, and the ability for meeting professionals to access and update certain meeting profiles which will lead to more accurate database information.
- Additional empowerMINT.com information and Frequently Asked Questions are available in the Appendix of this document.

#### **Other potential projects may include but are not limited to:**

- Create an educational platform and/or online forum to discuss best practices on utilizing technology and discover best trends and future opportunities for delivering content;
- Landscape Report of the Digital Challenges Presented by Travel Web Sites including hosting a symposium connected with Annual Convention to share reports and allow for information exchange with DMOs providing practical solutions; and
- Conduct an Industry Survey on Online Purchasing Behavior of Customers including creating discussion through online forums/educational sessions on trends and best practices.

### 3. Social Responsibility ..... US\$500,000

Social Responsibility is a multi-faceted subject encompassing environmental consciousness or “going green”; purchasing/requesting FairTrade/Equal Exchange products; cultivating communities through inclusion and engagement; fighting poverty and social ills through community activism activities; and more.

#### **Objective:**

It has become increasingly obvious that the travel customer, client and government leaders have gained a greater understanding and affinity for being socially responsible. DMAI members are not yet prepared to be the strategic resource on the social responsibility initiative in their destination. DMOs must advocate a realistic balance in the social responsibility conversation, promoting intelligent trade-offs and synergistic solutions that combine a rewarding travel experience with sustainable economic development.

#### **Project Snapshot:**

DMAI plans to integrate into research the role social responsibility plays in the site-selection process for meeting planners and leisure travelers, therefore helping DMOs build their bottom line and be better prepared to satisfy the growing demand for Social Responsibility.

#### **Initiatives to be launched could include:**

- Create a culture of inclusion and multiculturalism for the industry by:
  - Designing focused educational tracks on leadership and succession planning;
  - Reaching out to diverse communities and students about industry opportunities;
  - Providing DMOs the resources to better understand and attract diverse markets;
  - Providing scholarships for professional development, certifications and events; and
  - Creating an Executive Leadership Program in conjunction with but not limited to CDME.
  
- Establish a Sustainability Web-based Resource Center serving as a clearinghouse on sustainability issues through myDMAI or a similar tool:
  - Aggregate and organize existing DMO-relevant data and conduct new research in gaps;
  - Provide a definition of “sustainable destination” and a synopsis of its business case;
  - Provide recommended tools and resources that can be customized for DMOs;
  - Create tips and tools for communicating, marketing and measuring sustainability initiatives;
  - Identify other sustainable accreditation sources by working beyond LEED and facility design in addressing the green practices of a facility; and
  - Work with stakeholder organizations to adopt or develop a “Green Certification” check list.
  
- Convene a Social Responsibility Forum and create an educational track during Annual Convention.

# APPENDIX



## 2008 - 2009 DMAI MINT Enhancement Project

### Background

The premier convention and meetings database, Meeting Information Network (MINT) houses more than 34,000 unique meetings from 17,000 organizations including associations, corporations, military reunions, sporting events and government institutions in a Web-enabled format.

The database is a unique collaboration between DMAI and its member DMOs, which voluntarily report detailed meeting history information held in their cities. DMAI houses and manages the data and DMAI members subscribe on an annual basis. Only Official Destination Marketing Organizations who are members of DMAI are eligible to access MINT.

The database was originally developed over 60 years ago and access to the database was one of the primary benefits of DMAI Membership. Over the years DMAI has invested and developed the database according to the latest meeting trends and available technology. The last major update to the system was conducted in 2004.

From assembling marketing blitzes, prospecting and authoring convention center feasibility studies, MINT provides countless research opportunities that translate into a valuable business tool. Additionally, 50% of all meetings in the database have less than 200 rooms on peak nights, making it a valuable resource for your DMOs of all sizes.

The *Post-Convention Report (PCR)* is the cornerstone of MINT and provides detailed historical information on meeting demographics, contact names, room pick-up, and future bookings, just to name a few. The *Query Builder* is a powerful prospecting tool that makes identifying and targeting potential business easy. That data can then be tailored to individual DMO needs in a variety of flexible formats such as Microsoft Excel and Access and HTML.

### MINT Enhancement Goals

Over the last year, DMAI has held several committee and working group discussions regarding the next technology update of MINT and (from a sales and marketing perspective) additional components that could be added to the system to make it an even more valuable sales and marketing intelligence tool-exclusively for DMOs.

The idea of marketing as a DMO brand the over 2,000 DMO sales persons, the amount of collective business that DMOs generate, and the need for a commission-free marketing intelligence system that supports these efforts were agreed upon as priorities and were recommended by the Sales & Marketing Advisory Council to the DMAI Board of Directors for consideration. At its December 2007 meeting, the DMAI board moved forward with a major enhancement and technology upgrade to MINT. The vision is to create an exclusive DMO market intelligence and sales system that would include the following enhancements.

### **Proposed Enhancements**

- **Historical:** Update the current technology backbone to eliminate the need for double data entry, provide faster results and increase the user-friendliness of the system;
- **Dates/Rates/Space:** Through an exclusive partnership, CVB HotRates will become empowerMINT.com, potentially allowing DMO customers and potential clients access to room availability and destination profiles therefore increasing leads from DMOs.
- **Lead Generation:** Purchase existing software to provide service for DMO subscribers.

### **Benefits of Enhanced System**

- Promote the exclusive sales network of 2,000 sales professionals
- Promote the proprietary system
- Create a customer profile database of 100,000 unique customers
- Create 1,000 leads annually
- Ability for meeting professionals to access and update certain meeting profiles which will lead to more meetings within the database
- Lower customer acquisition costs and increase efficiency by partnering with PCMA and ASAE encouraging their members to use our dates, rates and space system.
- Enhanced accuracy and updating of data

### **Business Model**

The initial financial investment needed to implement the aforementioned system over the next three years is US\$2,000,000. In addition, the business model once completed will provide new revenue streams that are anticipated to double compared to current MINT revenues of US\$600,000 annually by 2011, at which time it would be self-supporting (current MINT product produces net income of US\$400,000).

An expected completion date of April 1, 2009, the US\$2,000,000 needed over the next three years:

### **Annual Budget:**

<b>Sales &amp; Marketing and Management Expenses.....</b>	<b>US\$200,000</b>
<b>Technology Upgrades and Development Expense .....</b>	<b>US\$260,000</b>
<b>Data support .....</b>	<b>US\$200,000</b>

- to cleanse, update and enhance data gathering.

**A little history**—DMAI’s members have collaborated to generate meeting leads for nearly a century – sharing information about meetings was actually the core function for which our association was founded in 1914! Over the years, the process of sharing this information has evolved as technology has advanced. At the first gatherings, convention secretaries (as convention sales representatives were called at the time) actually passed around a box with note cards containing information about the meetings they had hosted. In 1985 the system went electronic, and INET was created. In the last two decades, the evolution of technology brought two major transformations to the system. With both of these milestones the systems took on new names: CINET, and then MINT.

**Present day**—Last year, the DMAI Board, the Sales & Marketing Advisory Council, the MINT Committee and MINT subscribers tasked DMAI with creating the next evolution of a more robust system, powering additional lead generation and directly engaging the customers (something MINT has never directly done before).

### **Q1: What is empowerMINT.com?**

**A1:** empowerMINT.com is the only official national sales effort exclusively designed for the DMO industry. The website effectively creates a one-stop shop where meeting planners can manage a single profile to transact business across the DMO network. This advanced technology product is offered to meeting and event planners searching for new event sites or information. Planners will access the **BEST**, most professional sales network, providing immediate assistance more efficiently than ever before. DMO’s will access the **MOST** reliable database of bookings and post event information for targeting potential business for their destination.

### **Q2: What is included with participation?**

#### **A2:**

- **Unlimited access to the proprietary historical database of DMO meetings and events** (the most advanced historical database available)
- **Featured Destinations Listing** -- Raised Awareness from over 20,000 meeting planner visits each month
- **FastTrack RFP Engine for new lead generation**
- **Space, Dates, and Rates** -- Unlimited postings for your partner hotels, convention centers, and unique venues
- **Robust lead tracking and reporting**
- **Search engine marketing** for Featured Destinations and travel partner profiles
- **Email marketing** to over 70,000 meeting and event planners

### **Q3: What are the DMO benefits of the enhanced system?**

**A3:** The empowerMINT.com executive team has outlined a detailed business plan including the following top line benefits of enhanced system:

- **Promote the exclusive sales network of 2,000 DMO sales professionals** – The exclusive network of DMO sales professionals will be realized by utilizing the empowerMINT.com technology to allow DMO sales professionals to access and share information on meeting and events profiles. empowerMINT.com allows DMO sales pros to easily share new leads as well as access historical profile information. The information is exclusive and proprietary and enables our network to be more intelligent regarding potential business. The end result is a better informed sales force providing a much more rewarding experience for customers.
- **Create a customer profile database of 100,000 unique customers** – Participating DMO partners pledge to support the program by reporting and maintaining confirmed bookings and detailed post event information including sleeping room flow, room pick-up, and exhibition space utilized.

- **Create 1,000 unique RFPs annually** – empowerMINT.com enables planners to manage and update their profile including contact info, confirmed bookings, and historical information. In addition, planners have access to a robust search engine allowing them to find special incentives, open dates, space, and group rates all in an easy to use website.
- **Lower customer acquisition costs** and increased efficiency by partnering with PCMA and ASAE encouraging their members to use our dates, rates and space system. empowerMINT.com technology can be easily “privately branded” to allow potential customers from outside sources to access their profile and search tools from partner websites.
- **Better and more valid data** resulting from better technology that allows the customers to participate as well as streamlining the reporting and data sharing opportunities with DMO members.

**Q4: What is the plan to validate and update the contact information in MINT?**

**A4:** The MINT database is one-of-a-kind and contains proprietary and detailed information on over 20,000 organizations. The information includes over 30,000 contacts, 40,000 meeting profiles, and 100,000 post event reports. The MINT contact data has recently been validated using a third-party company to append a valid contact (meeting planner or top sales/marketing) to each of our organization records. Records over 5 years old have been archived. Ongoing validation efforts will continue including:

- Annual third-party validation
- Direct interface with DMO CRM systems
- Direct customer interface

**Q5: Why should I participate?**

**A5:** empowerMINT.com is a proven, cost effective program that generates the following:

- **Proprietary Historical Database of Meetings:** Update the current technology backbone to eliminate the need for double data entry, provide faster results and increase the user-friendliness of the system;
- **Raised Awareness of your Dates/Rates/Space:** empowerMINT.com, welcomes more than 20,000 meeting planner visitors each month. Compared to traditional advertising, empowerMINT.com provides a more cost effective and measurable return on investment.
- **New Business and Lead Generation:** Purchase existing software to provide service for DMO subscribers.

**Q6: How will the program be marketed to planners?**

**A6:** The marketing plan is to target new business and reach planners that typically may not utilize a DMO. This includes casual corporate and association planners as well as SMERF markets. A combination of direct sales and aggressive online marketing, including search engine and email marketing will direct planners to empowerMINT.com. Already, the program averages over 20,000 meeting planner visits each month. Likewise we will market the program to current users of DMOs through our alliances with PCMA, MPI, ASAE, just to name a few.

**Q7: Do hotels and venues have to manage a separate profile including dates, rates, and space?**

**A7:** Hotel and venue participation is completely optional. Currently, we have over 5,000 participating hotels and venues. Meeting planner research shows that finding open dates and group pricing are the top two most critical site-selection criteria. We provide an easy online administration tool for travel partners to provide us with their need dates and special incentives. However, this information is not required for your destination to have a featured profile and receive RFPs.

### **Q8: How was the user interface designed?**

**A8:** The user interface on empowerMINT.com is designed based on research performed over the past 4 years. The research includes studies of meeting planner preferences for travel websites and critical site-selection information used in planning. Informal focus group sessions have been performed at various industry events such as HSMAI's Affordable Meetings, Destinations Showcase, and ASAE Springtime. Ongoing customer communication is the basis of our user interface, programming scope, and future developments.

### **Q9: How does my DMO get credit for new leads?**

#### **A9:**

- empowerMINT.com is 100% funded and supported by the DMO Industry
- empowerMINT.com is the only official lead generation program for DMAI
- DMO's are notified by email for each new RFP
- DMO's manage how new RFPs are forwarded to their travel partners, and RFPs clearly indicate that the lead is from the DMO
- DMO's are responsible for booking confirmation and post event reporting

### **Q10: How will the CRM interface with our DMOs software system work? How will information be input into the system?**

**A10:** DMAI released the Application Product Interface (API) to connect with the DMO CRM Software Systems. The application interface has been publicized and made available to DMO CRM vendors. The integration allows your CRM software to publish information directly to the empowerMINT.com database and eliminate duplicate data entry. If this interface has not been complete and you are still inputting data manually please contact your CRM provider to complete this integration.

### **Q11: What are the subscription fees for participating in empowerMINT.com?**

#### **A11:**

- Annual empowerMINT.com subscription (which includes all benefits) according to DMO budget size.

<b>Al Carte Program Components</b>				
<b>DMO Budget Size</b>	<b>Unlimited access to Historical records database</b>	<b>Featured Destination promotion</b>	<b>empowerMINT.com Discounted Packaged Program</b> (combines unlimited access and Featured Destination Promotion)	<b>Package Savings</b>
Over \$10 Million	US\$5,564	US\$13,500	US\$14,500	(\$4,564)
\$6-\$10 Million	US\$5,564	US\$10,500	US\$13,500	(\$2,564)
\$3-\$6 Million	US\$5,564	US\$7,500	US\$9,500	(\$3,564)
\$1-\$3 Million	US\$5,136	US\$5,000	US\$7,500	(\$2,636)
Less than \$1 Million	US\$5,136	US\$3,500	US\$5,000	(\$3,636)

DMOs may continue to purchase components separately at the normal subscription rates. However, we will be phasing out the current limited subscription to MINT.

**Q12: I contributed to the DMAI Foundation Destination Excellence Campaign. Does my contribution include my empowerMINT.com subscription?**

**A12:** Thank you for your contribution. Foundation gifts do not include your empowerMINT.com subscription\*, but it does support the financial investment needed to implement the aforementioned system over the next three years. The system will still rely on subscription fees to make sure the association can continue to provide this beneficial, proprietary system.

*\*One year of subscription fees will be waived for Signature Shareholder donors as a thank you for their contribution.*

**Q13: Who do I contact with questions or to participate?**

**A13:** The empowerMINT.com program is being led by a capable, proven staff. Donovan Shia, vice president of market intelligence, has 10 years experience in Internet destination marketing and provides the leadership and overall strategy for empowerMINT.com. Donovan has led major Internet destination marketing start-up initiatives for companies like Microsoft and Cendant. In addition, Christine Shimasaki, previously serving as Executive Vice President and Chief Strategy Officer for the San Diego Convention & Visitors Bureau (ConVis), brings over 15 years experience to lead the overall sales, marketing/communications, industry training/support, and customer advocacy. Elaine Rosquist, previously executive vice president of DMAI, now Director of Client Services is utilizing 14 years of experience at DMAI to provide operational oversight and client services. An additional staff of 7 senior technical engineers and account managers contribute deep technical experience and customer service to empowerMINT.com

For questions, or to arrange an online demonstration, please contact us at:

Elaine Rosquist, Director of Client Services, [erosquist@destinationmarketing.org](mailto:erosquist@destinationmarketing.org); +1.202.835.4209

Christine Shimasaki, Managing Director, [shimo@destinationmarketing.org](mailto:shimo@destinationmarketing.org)

Donovan Shia, V.P. Market Intelligence, [dshia@destinationmarketing.org](mailto:dshia@destinationmarketing.org); +1.361.548.5113

To learn from other DMO members, you may also speak with individuals from our 39-person committee (a joint group consisting of the MINT Committee and the Sales & Marketing Advisory Council). A list of current participants is below, and their contact information is available at [www.destinationmarketing.org](http://www.destinationmarketing.org).

Donna Allen, Norfolk  
Eileen Baranik, Las Vegas  
Cleo Battle, Richmond  
Tom Bennett, Sacramento  
Jaki Berggren, Rockford, Illinois  
Kelly Brewer, Cleveland  
Kim Brice, Shreveport-Bossier  
Tiffany Chester, Washington, DC  
Vicki Comegys, Des Moines  
Liz Dane, The Beaches of Fort Myers & Sanibel  
Barbara Dozier, Northern Kentucky  
David DuBois, Fort Worth  
Greg Edwards, Des Moines  
Elliott Ferguson, Washington, DC  
Jason Fulvi, Pittsburgh  
Loren Gold, Raleigh  
Mary Kay Hackley, Austin  
Jeff Hewitt, Charlotte  
Leonard Hoops, San Francisco

Charles Jeffers, Atlanta  
Bradley Jones, Rochester  
Kevin Kamenzind, Phoenix  
Barbara Kirklighter, Los Angeles  
Tom Lang, Kissimmee  
Michael Krouse, Los Angeles  
Ken Mompellier, Las Cruces  
Nikki Nicholson, New Orleans  
Joe Novak, Overland Park  
Barrie Perks, Cincinnati  
Debora Rivera, Kissimmee  
Tammi Runzler, Orlando  
Steve Schell, San Diego  
Margie Sitton, San Diego  
Norwood Smith, Tampa Bay  
Karen Staples, Hartford  
Dennis Tracy, Little Rock  
Richard Vaughan, Tucson  
Meg Winchester, Galveston