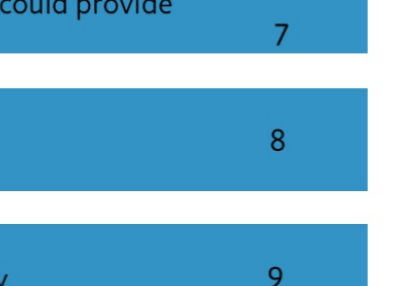


# Understanding the Career Path of Destination Marketing Professionals

White Paper based on findings of study conducted by Destination Analysts on behalf of DMA West Education & Research Foundation



Prepared for DMA West Education & Research Foundation by Destination Analysts, Inc.

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## Section 1 Introduction

### Importance of the Travel Industry

The Travel Industry is one of the largest and most stable industries within the U.S.

Because of this, the Travel Industry is supported by several organizations. This includes DMA West which serves as a regional resource for employees and those aspiring to become a part of this thriving and vibrant industry.

"America's sixth-largest employer, the travel industry supports 14.4 million American jobs and directly employs more than 7.5 million Americans. Travel employs individuals working in transportation, hotels, restaurants, entertainment and many other sectors."

Source: U.S. Travel Association, Travel Creates Opportunities & Launches Careers (2013)

### About DMA West

The Destination Marketing Association of the West (DMA West) is a regional membership organization of more than 145 destination marketing organizations (DMOs).

The CEOs and staff members of these member-organizations are committed to improving organizational effectiveness, implementing engaging marketing and communications strategies, successfully representing their local stakeholders and advancing the destination-marketing profession.

The DMA West Education & Research Foundation commissioned Destination Analysts to conduct a study of DMA West's membership in order to develop an understanding of the career path of those within destination marketing.

## Section 1 Introduction

### About the Research

In fall 2015, member DMOs were invited to complete an online survey.

Overall, there were 76 fully completed surveys out of the 161 members. Of the 76 completed surveys, 63 of those responses were from DMO chief executives.

**76 completed surveys**

**47% completion rate**

### Objectives

Gain an understanding of the workings of career advancement in the destination marketing industry, as well as DMO internships and talent-recruiting practices.

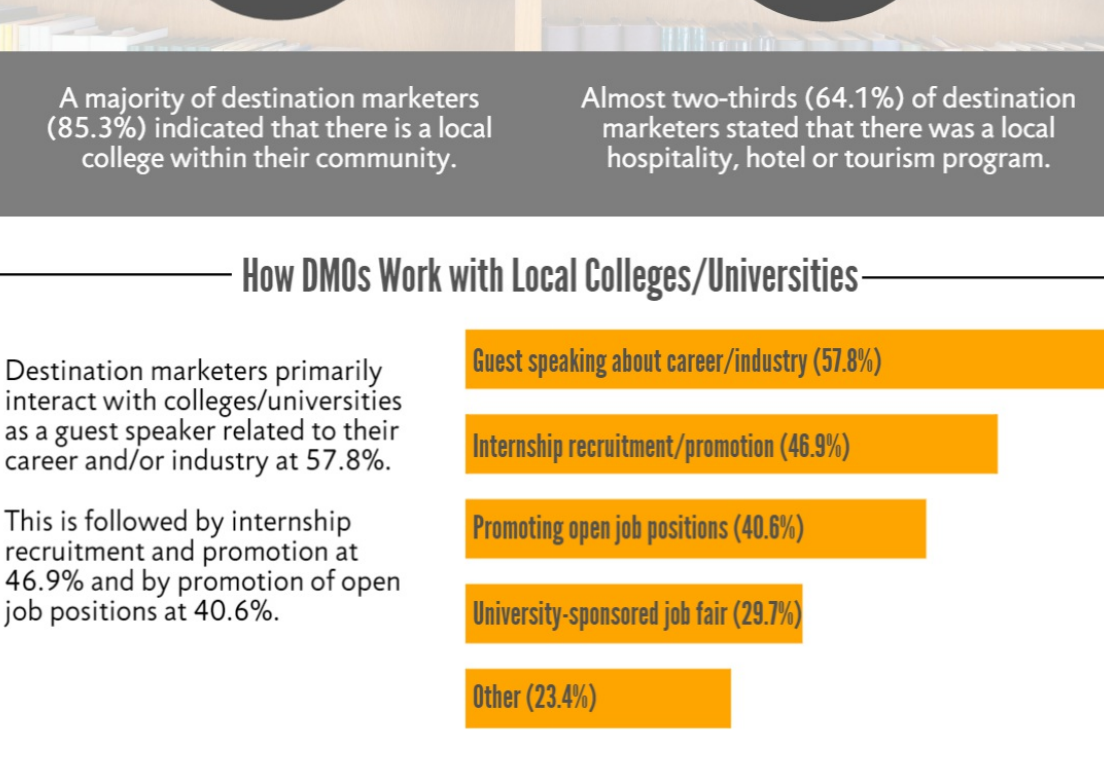
This research attempts to develop an understanding of existing practices within the industry as well as the need for potential innovation.

## Section 2 Knowledge about DMO Industry

The majority of responding DMA West members (63.2%) stated they learned about the DMO industry through previous work. More specifically, nearly a third (32.9%) learned about the industry through the public sector followed by Hotel Work at 17.1%.

Surprisingly, not many destination marketers became knowledgeable about the DMO industry through the sectors you would expect. These segments are: Recruiter/Job Center (9.6%), Interest in Tourism (5.3%) and Internship (2.6%).

### How Individuals Learned about the DMO Industry



## Section 3 Interest and Recruitment in DMO Industry

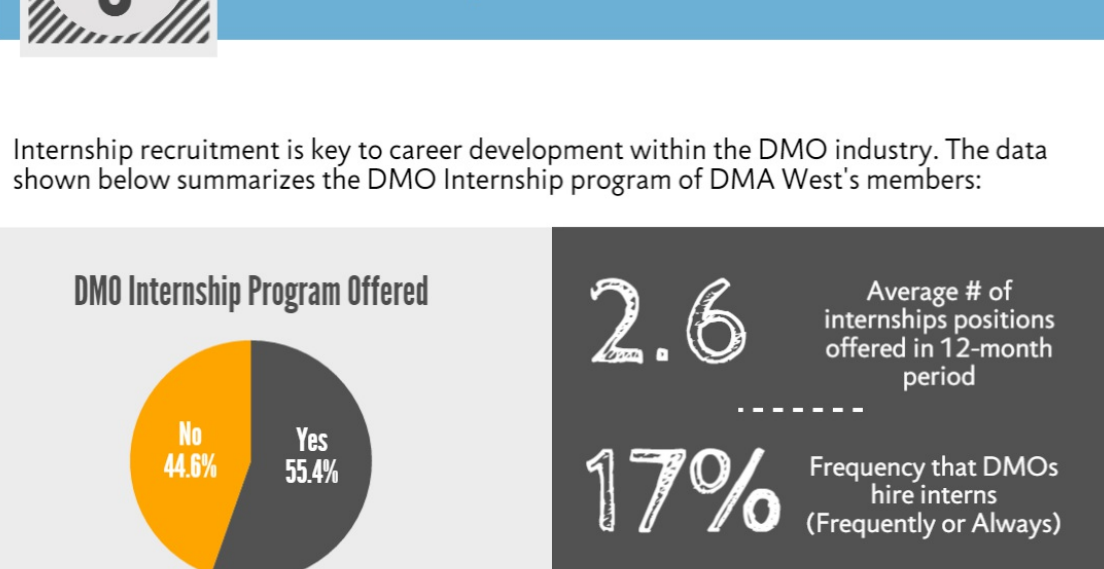
### Why Destination Marketers Decide to Work within the DMO Industry

One in five destination marketers (20.0%) decided to work in the DMO industry because there was a job opening or they were recruited. This is closely followed by the enjoyment of working within the industry (17.3%).



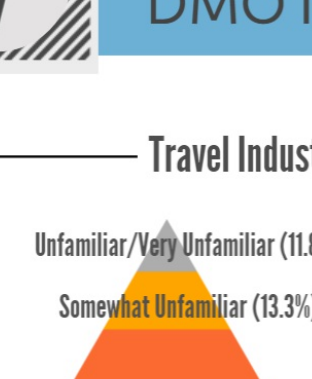
### Most Effective Recruiting Strategies

Below are the top strategies destination marketers cited as the most effective in recruiting quality talent:



## Section 4 Working with Colleges/Universities

Since "Interaction with Colleges/Universities" is the most effective strategy in recruitment, it is important to understand the potential opportunities and barriers in working with local Colleges/Universities.



A majority of destination marketers (85.3%) indicated that there is a local college within their community.



Almost two-thirds (64.1%) of destination marketers stated that there was a local hospitality, hotel or tourism program.

### How DMOs Work with Local Colleges/Universities

Destination marketers primarily interact with colleges/universities as a guest speaker related to their career and/or industry at 57.8%.

This is followed by internship recruitment and promotion at 46.9% and by promotion of open job positions at 40.6%.



## Section 5 Useful Services DMA West could provide to DMOs

Almost two-thirds of destination marketers indicated that the most useful service the DMA West Foundation could offer was to provide DMOs the opportunity to post internship opportunities on the DMA West website. This is closely followed by sample internship job descriptions at 61.8%.

### Useful Services Provided by DMA West Education & Research Foundation



## Section 6 Internships

Internship recruitment is key to career development within the DMO industry. The data shown below summarizes the DMO Internship program of DMA West's members:



## Section 7 Familiarity/Awareness of DMO Industry

### Travel Industry's Familiarity with DMO Jobs



More than half of destination marketers surveyed (52.6%) believe that the greater travel industry is somewhat familiar with a DMO's job.

Only 11.8% of respondents believe that the travel industry is unfamiliar or very unfamiliar with a DMO's job.

### Local Community's Awareness with DMOs

Destination marketers primarily interact with colleges/universities as a guest speaker related to their career and/or industry at 57.8%.



## Section 8 Skills/Experience gained for Advancement

### Most Beneficial Skills and Experience to Advance in a DMO

Destination marketers rank general marketing and public relations/communications as the most beneficial skills for advancement within a DMO.

