DESTINATIONS INTERNATIONAL

DMAP
DESTINATION MARKETING ACCREDITATION PROGRAM

ACCREDITATION STANDARDS

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I. ORGANIZATIONAL EXCELLENCE

Governance 1.0

	Standard	Description	Guidelines
1.1	The destination organization or its parent organization has articles of incorporation (or similar legal documentation) filed with or provided by its governing jurisdiction.	Provide copy of current articles of incorporation or governing body approved document(s).	Articles of Incorporation: Also referred to as the Certificate of Incorporation or the Corporate Charter. These are generally filed with a state, province, country or other regulatory agency. May also be a city or county ordinance, charter, resolution or other official documents adopted by the governing body that outlines the way the destination organization will operate. May also be a copy of the destination organization's contract for services with the governing body investing in the destination organization's program of work. For American not-for profit destination organizations, also provide a copy of the exemption letter issued by the IRS.
1.2	The destination organization (or its parent organization) maintains a current set of operating bylaws, operating standards and/or guidelines.	Provide copy of current bylaws or similar legal documentation that guides the governance of the organization, approved by the destination organization's governing body (with approval date).	Bylaws are a set of rules or laws established by an organization to regulate itself, as allowed or provided for by some higher authority. The higher authority, generally a legislature or some other governmental body, establishes the degree of control that the bylaws may exercise. These should be reviewed regularly to assure they are still appropriate for the organization's priorities and/or contracted obligations. Note: We acknowledge that public/governmental entities may not have bylaws; in this case, please provide the standard operating procedures or policies for the governing entity.
1.3	The destination organization has developed statements reflecting the organization's vision, mission, core values and purpose.	Provide proof of vision, mission, core value and purpose statements. If the organization does not operate with some of these guiding statements, provide a narrative with like-statements that identify these important concepts.	Vision Statement: Outlines the destination organization's vision for the future of the destination. Mission Statement: Defines how the organization will work to achieve its Vision Statement. Core Values: A statement of the values with which the destination organization pledges to operate in its execution of its mission. Purpose: A statement that identifies "why" the organization was created and exists. These may be published in a variety of places, including on the organization's website, within a strategic plan or marketing plan, etc. These should be reviewed regularly to assure they are still appropriate for the organization's priorities.

Governance 1.0

	Standard	Description	Guidelines
1.4	The destination organization shall develop and maintain a current strategic plan.	Provide a copy of the current strategic plan that must include: Vision and mission statements and long range organizational and destinational goals, objectives and strategies for several years. Applicant must provide evidence the governing body of the destination organization has adopted and regularly monitors the strategic plan...and updates the plan at least every 5 years (with a strong preference for every 3 years). Applicant must also offer evidence that the strategic plan is connected to specific organizational outcomes as well as to destination outcomes. If thesStrategic plan includes a fiscal implication for the destination organization (for example, investing in a feasibility study for a convention center expansion), funds for that (study) should be noted in the budget and included in the application.	Strategic Plan: Unlike a destination organization marketing or business plan, a strategic plan is the governing board's process of defining its strategy. This is the board's action plan and identifies how board members will, individually and collectively, utilize their influence in moving both the organization and the destination forward. Strategic plans are more broad than a marketing and/or sales development plan; strategic plans serve as a roadmap for the entire organization, including the board, and will often focus on the destination's needs, as well as those of the organization. Evidence of the adoption of the plan may be in the form of minutes, or a signature on the document by the board chair (or an equivalent government agency). While generally preferred, nothing in this standard requires that the destination organization must utilize the services of an outside consultant.
1.5	The destination organization shall follow an approved board/governance policy.	Provide copy of approved governance policies.	The organization should maintain a current written document specifying all policies and procedures related to board/governance responsibilities. Examples of such to include: conflict of interest, attendance policy, code of ethics, records retention policy, etc.
1.6	The organization shall strive to seat a governing board that represents the diversity of the community it serves.	Provide documentation regarding how board members are selected / appointed.	If a destination organization is to represent its community to the world, it's governing body must be representative of the community. For organizations that have appointment authority over their board, provide a matrix that shows an intentional process to seat an appropriately diverse board. For organizations that have a board appointed by others, there should be a statement regarding how the organization attempts to influence diversity in board appointments or, if it is barred from doing so, a statement to that effect.

I. ORGANIZATIONAL EXCELLENCE

Governance 1.0

	Standard	Description	Guidelines
1.7	The destination organization shall utilize a formal (and documented) process for the annual orientation of new and existing governing body members.	Outline and table of contents for orientation process. Description of how face-to-face orientation is conducted.	Governing body orientation serves as an introduction to the organization's policies and procedures and is designed to meet the information needs of new and existing board members and/or elected or appointed officials. This document should include (but not be limited to): • History, mission, current focus and services of the agency. • An explanation of the operating budget and the various funding streams that power the work of the organization. • Identification of the roles and responsibilities of board/governing body members. • Review pertinent parts of the board manual to the organization's programs, services and personnel policies and procedures. • Identification of committee descriptions as well as responsibilities for committee officers and members.
1.8	The destination organization shall develop and follow conflict-of-interest policy(ies) in governance and administration.	Copy of approved policy(ies) as part of an employee handbook and any board governance documentation.	A conflict of interest exists when someone with a fiduciary responsibility is in a situation where their own self-interest and the interests of the organization might be in conflict. Organizations are often advised to have a written conflict of interest policy that everyone who is in a position to experience such a conflict accepts, often by signing a pledge. To test whether a conflict exists, one can determine if the person or the company will benefit the action. The policy must address avenues for conflicts of interest to be reported, whether it is with management, staff, volunteer leadership, etc.
1.9	The destination organization's governing body (or its parent organization) shall approve an operating budget on an annual basis.	A copy of the portion of the approved minutes indicating approval of the most recent budget.	The approval must be for the overall annual budget of the organization. If the destination organization operates on a multi-year structure (i.e., biennially), documentation for the current operating budget and its approval should be provided.
1.10	The destination organization's governing body (or its parent organization) receives and reviews, no less than quarterly, financial reports including income and expense statements and a balance sheet.	Copy of agenda and portion of board minutes indicating review of financial reports; minutes submitted should include documentation that those financial reports were approved/accepted by the board. If an organization's board meets less frequently or has issues with quorum, a statement indicating this unavoidable diversion from the standard should be included in the application.	This showcases a regular review of the organization's financials by the governing entity and is reflective of sound fiscal management.

I. ORGANIZATIONAL EXCELLENCE

Governance 1.0

	Standard	Description	Guidelines
1.11	The destination organization employs (or contracts with) a chief staff executive with management experience/ credentials and/or a background in destination marketing/management.	A copy of the job description for the chief executive. A copy of CV or resume of CEO or executive director.	The job description should outline the experience and/or credentials required. The CV/resume should provide proof of the CEO's previous management experience/ credentials and/or a background in destination marketing/management.
1.12	The destination organization's governing body (or the designated authority in a parent organization) shall conduct an annual evaluation of the chief staff executive.	A blank template or description of the evaluation process, signed by the board chair or the designated authority should be submitted (not the actual review). Evidence that a review has been completed in the past year can be achieved through such a notation in board meeting minutes. Include documentation of board approved CEO goals for the upcoming year.	The chief executive of the organization is central to the success or failure of the organization. The executive acts both directly and indirectly through others to manage the organization. An annual evaluation of the executive director's performance is inevitably linked to the organization's performance as a whole and is an important component of the governing body's responsibilities. The process should also establish goals and priorities for the upcoming year, and clearly define expectations. The annual evaluation may be conducted by the organization's executive committee or other subset of the board if the full board does not participate in this annual process.
1.13	The destination organization demonstrates accountability and transparency to its reporting/contracting entities in its use of public funds.	Provide a policy statement regarding transparency of expenditures of public funds, as it relates to any applicable laws; the distribution of financial statements to the board with contract or management oversight. Evidence that the destination organization has, at least annually, reported to those entities and agencies that have invested public funds in the destination organization's program of work.	Transparency remains a primary issue for all organizations, and destination organizations have a responsibility to remain in compliance with local requirements.
1.14	The destination organization provides an annual report of its activities and achievements.	Provide a copy of annual report and a narrative indicating how and to whom it is distributed.	An annual report provides a touch point for the board and stakeholders as to the organization's progress - and perhaps, challenges - in the year. This may be a simple report of data and statistics provided to the board and noted as such in the minutes; it may be delivered via video, website, power point or a published document.

I. ORGANIZATIONAL EXCELLENCE

Stakeholder and Local Community Engagement 2.0

2.1	The destination organization has a community relations / public affairs plan and is pro-actively involved in (or leading) the conversation regarding issues impacting the destination and/or the organization.	Provide a copy of a local community relations / public affairs plan or summary of same.	The local community relations / public affairs plan should involve more than just destination organization staff members, and should incorporate members of the board, the visitor, industry community leaders and residents. Plans may include educational outreach within the community to inform regarding the value and/or contributions of the industry (or the organization) to the community's bottom line; the availability of a speaker bureau, utilization of traditional and social media, etc.
2.2	The destination organization demonstrates evidence of stakeholder relationships with critical community entities.	Provide a written statement describing the nature of relationships with multiple key stakeholders in the applicant's community.	Stakeholder relationships: Effective relationships with community stakeholders are critical for successful destination organizations. These relationships can include serving on each other's respective boards, participation in coalitions, involvement in joint ventures, financial support, endorsements, regular communication, etc. Applicants should provide a brief description of the nature of the relationships with their key stakeholder groups to demonstrate compliance with this standard. Stakeholder groups usually include, but are not limited to: • Government agency(ies) • Business organization(s)/Chamber(s) of Commerce • Economic development agency(ies) • Airport authority(ies) • Port authority(ies) • Lodging association(s) • Restaurant association(s) • Parks and recreation authority(ies) • Media • Community leadership organization(s) • Convention center(s) • Sports organization(s) • Arts and cultural organization(s)
2.3	The destination organization has policies and processes in place to proactively engage businesses from traditionally under-represented neighborhoods and communities to enrich both the visitor experience and the economic benefit of the tourism economy for all.	Provide evidence that the organization is proactively working with under-represented interests to broaden economic opportunity for all. This documentation could be found in the organization's strategic plan, business plan or by way of a narrative of intent to engage businesses throughout the destination.	Engaging traditionally under-represented businesses and neighborhoods enhances a destination's unique magnetism by diversifying the experiences that drive consumer interest and trial.
2.4	The destination organization has a collaborative relationship with its convention center and/or other key venues.	Provide examples of ongoing interactions, formal or informal, between the destination organization and the convention center, civic center, arena, sports facility, fairgrounds, rodeo, performing arts hall, etc. If the destination organization does not assist in venue sales or services, a statement to that effect should be submitted.	A collaborative relationship between the destination organization and the convention center, regardless of the facility's oversight or operating structure, should assure the facility remains focused on customer priorities.

I. ORGANIZATIONAL EXCELLENCE

Destination Organization Industry Engagement 3.0

3.1	The organization demonstrates evidence of active involvement in initiatives that advance the destination organization profession.	Provide a written statement discussing how the organization actively participates in professional and industry associations. For example, participation in committees, boards, data sharing, education facilitation and mentoring.	Involvement may include the following organization types: • Regional, state, national and international organizations. • Education institutions. • Industry associations.
3.2	The destination organization demonstrates evidence of active involvement in their state, regional and local community that advances the destination organization profession.	Provide a written statement discussing how the organization actively participates in advancing the professionalism of the industry.	Involvement may include the following organization types: • Local, regional and state organizations. • Education institutions. • Industry associations.

II. BUSINESS & OPERATIONS

Management & Operations 4.0

4.1	The destination organization has a management structure that shows clear lines of reporting responsibility.	Organizational staffing chart listing all current, regular positions and the reporting responsibility for each.	Clear lines of reporting reflects employee reporting hierarchy illustrating the relations between people within an organization. Such relations might include managers to sub-workers, directors to managing directors, chief executive officer to various departments.
4.2	The destination organization maintains a current policy and procedures manual specifying standard operating procedures for the various services and programs provided.	Provide a copy of the current policy and procedures manual; samples of "desk manuals" for positions within the organization are acceptable as well.	Standard operating procedures (SOP) are a detailed explanation of how the destination organization manages its programs and services. Purpose of SOPs: • Serves as framework for organizational policy, providing direction and structure • Written documentation of best practices • Tells what, how, when, why, and who • Provides foundation for: job descriptions, employee training, corrective action and discipline, and performance reviews.
4.3	The destination organization maintains insurance coverage sufficient to cover the potential estimated liabilities of its operations and services.	Provide the cover sheet from the insurance company summarizing all policies and amounts of coverage. At the very least, applicants should show proof of General Liability Insurance and Director & Officers Insurance.	NOTE: Many public entities are self-insured; in this case, please provide documentation that specifies this.
4.4	The destination organization has an emergency operations plan in the event its physical location is damaged.	Provide a copy of emergency operations plan that details how information may be accessed remotely, and how technology processes may continue with minimal interruption.	This plan outlines the course of action developed to mitigate the damage of potential events that could endanger an organization's ability to function. Such a plan should include measures that provide for the safety of personnel and, if possible, property and facilities. This is different than the crisis communications plan and deals with operational issues, not communications. This plan may also include any required or defined interaction with a local Office of Emergency Management.
4.5	The destination organization maintains a business continuity plan specifying how the organization will continue to conduct business in an emergency situation.	Provide a copy of the business continuity plan for continuing operations in the case of an emergency, (e.g., earthquake, tornado, flood, pandemic, war, etc.).	A business continuity plan details how the organization will continue its business operations in the event of a disaster or emergency, such as a fire or natural disaster. It should include items such as: how in-town groups will be communicated with and/or serviced, how staff members will "report" when the office is not accessible, how staff members will continue to get paid if the payroll system is not available, etc.

Management & Operations 4.0

4.6	The destination organization has a privacy policy covering personal information gathered from consumers.	Provide a copy of the organization's consumer privacy policy.	A consumer privacy policy establishes clear expectations by explaining to visitors exactly what information is being collected. This includes information entered directly by the visitor, such as e-mail addresses, as well as the use of technologies, such as cookies, that track data not explicitly provided by the user. This is more than just an opt-out policy, with examples of how and where the privacy policy is posted for consumers.
4.7	The destination organization utilizes specific policies and procedures for the management and supervision of contractors or outsourced service providers.	Provide a highlighted copy of policies and procedures for the management and supervision of contractors or outsourced providers of services or a section of a contract which states the policies and procedures.	Detailed outline of how the destination organization manages and monitors the activities of third party service providers. This standard only applies to organizationss that utilize contractors or outsource services. This is more than just procurement procedures; it ensures that management is tracking performance and any performance issues so that in the event of a contract dispute, documentation is readily available. Samples of contracts typically managed by the organization may include: advertising agency, public relations firm, visitor guide publisher, technology support, office janitorial, convention center operations, etc.
4.8	The destination organization practices sustainable office operations to make as low an impact to the environment as possible.	The destination organization has an emergency Provide a written description of office practices that are environmentally responsible. plan in the event its physical location is damaged.	Some fundamental approaches to workplace sustainability include setting the default on printers to print on both sides, utilizing light switches that automatically dim when there is no activity, recycling office papers, composting coffee grinds, etc. Some organizations may implement changes to work schedules to reduce the number of days staff members are required to be in the office, so as to reduce the number of vehicles on the road; mass transit discounts may also be utilized.

II. BUSINESS & OPERATIONS

Human Resources 5.0

5.1	The destination organization complies with all applicable labor and employment laws.	Provide a statement verifying compliance with labor and employment laws.	
5.2	The destination organization maintains current job descriptions for all paid positions, which are reviewed regularly by the staff members holding the positions, as well as by their supervisors.	Provide examples of job descriptions representing management and support staff positions (regular and part-time), a statement verifying the existence of current job descriptions for all paid positions, and the process by which they are routinely reviewed and updated.	
5.3	The destination organization strives to maintain a professional staff that represents the social, cultural and ethnic community it serves.	Provide documentation that the destination organization has participated in Destinations International's Social Impact Assessment Tool (or a similar assessment protocol). Documentation should also show guidelines utilized in the organization's hiring process. Such guidelines should outline how job openings will be publicized locally, regionally and, if appropriate globally. If an applicant is barred from collecting demographic information because of prevailing laws, a statement to that effect should be included.	To represent a destination (be able to extract the best stories from a diverse set of cultures and communities), professional staff must, as closely as possible, mirror the community it serves. This standard does not require professional staff to be completely representative of the community; only that there is evidence of an intentional process with which to achieve that goal.
5.4	The destination organization maintains a formal orientation program for all professional staff and volunteers.	Provide documentation of the orientation process (e.g., outline of the agenda, slide deck, etc.).	An in-depth employee orientation program ensures that new recruits understand why destination organizations exist, how they are funded, who they serve and how the professional staff works together to accomplish organizational goals. This brings the employee up to speed faster, as well as prepares them to successfully represent the organization in public.
5.5	The destination organization conducts periodic and consistent formal performance reviews of all regular staff.	Provide a performance review policy or procedure; a template of the review document.	
5.6	The destination organization maintains a human resources (personnel) manual that is provided to all employees.	Copy of table of contents page (chapter headings) from current human resources (personnel) manual.	All organizations should maintain a current written document specifying policies and procedures related to topics such as employment, leave, benefits, safety, ethics, general codes of conduct and similar or related topics. DMAP does not require any specific content to demonstrate compliance with this standard, but all applicants are expected to maintain a written manual dealing with human resource needs specific to their employees. "Manual" does not have to refer to a formally "published" handbook, but instead may be a digital resource to which all employees have access.

II. BUSINESS & OPERATIONS

Human Resources 5.0

5.7	The destination organization has appropriate avenues for employees to report and document prohibited activities.	Provide a copy of the policy(ies).	The policy must address avenues for staff to report prohibited activities attributed to other staff members, management, the destination organization executive, volunteer leadership and outside sources. Prohibited activities include discrimination, sexual harassment, hostile conduct or oppression against any employee for any reason. This also may be referred to as a "whistle blower" policy, or a retaliation policy.
5.8	The destination organization has a policy that prohibits retaliation against any employee who files a complaint regarding prohibited activities or participates in any investigation.	Provide a copy of the policy(ies).	The policy must protect employees who report or provide documentation of prohibited activities from any retaliation.
5.9	The destination organization conducts or participates in periodic compensation studies to determine the competitiveness of salaries.	Description of the process used to determine competitiveness of salaries.	Confirmation of regular and regularly updated participation in Destinations International's Compensation & Benefits Reporting Platform satisfies this requirement. Applicants may also share a sample of a peer-set salary survey, including date of the survey's release. For government agencies tied to a government-led compensation study, please provide documentation that specifies that and any detail about the frequency of the process and how the destination organization's data is incorporated.
5.10	The destination organization offers a specified program of benefits for employees and these benefits are reviewed by management on a periodic basis.	List of current employee benefits, policies and plans. • A description of process utilized to periodically review and update the employee benefits. • A description of the frequency of the benefit review.	Benefits may include (but are not limited to): time away from office/paid time off, retirement plans, healthcare coverage, flex time, continuing education, etc.
5.11	The destination organization provides formal training and professional development for professional staff.	Provide a description of the types of training and professional development opportunities provided.	Training and development typically refers to formal training/education programs such as provided by Destinations International, state and provincial tourism conferences, regional tourism conferences, etc.
5.12	The destination organization maintains employee relations and communications through regular department/staff meetings, employee recognition and activities.	Provide description of processes/policies utilized.	Destination organization leadership maintains regular communications with staff and offers programs to acknowledge the contributions and accomplishments of employees.
5.13	If the destination organization has authorized remote work and/or operates satellite offices, policies and procedures are in place to manage these operations.	Provide a copy of the policies and procedures. If you do not offer these employee options, please indicate so in your response.	While flexibility may be a tool in employee recruitment and retention, it is important that any remote work options and/or satellite offices provide structured operating environments and specified expectations. Remote work options may be available as a full-time option, an occasional one, or not at all.

II. BUSINESS & OPERATIONS

Finance & Funding 6.0

6.1	The destination organization has established and follows policies and procedures for the control of the financial operation of the organization.	Provide a copy of the destination organization's financial policies and procedures.	Policies for public entities typically are found in municipal or county ordinances or financial policies and procedures manual.
6.2	The destination organization adopts and utilizes a uniform system of accounting and uniform chart of accounts.	Provide the organization's chart of accounts.	Establishing a consistent uniform system of accounting and uniform chart of accounts allows destination organizations to identify operational strengths and weaknesses as well as to improve organizational efficiency and effectiveness. The chart of accounts should be compliant with the AICPA requirements/recommendations, or those of similar international accounting standards. NOTE: In public destination organizations, the chart of accounts is often established by the municipality or county finance department.
6.3	The destination organization performs a formal annual audit by an independent auditor or a certified public accountant (CPA); a review of financial documents by a CPA may also qualify.	Provide the most recent audit and management letter (if available) and the destination organization's response to the management letter if necessary.	Annual audits are strongly recommended, however bi-annual audits may be recognized as compliant in some cases. At a minimum, a financial review by a certified professional should be conducted annually. Government destination organizations should include the section from the county or city annual audit that captures some review of tourism-related revenues and expenditures as evidence of their audit.
6.4	The destination organization operates with a travel and entertainment expense policy that includes accurate monthly reporting of expenses.	Provide a copy of the travel and entertainment expense policy.	Outside of the fact that maintaining such a document is sound management policy, it also helps to ensure that audits don't uncover lax processes that could lead to lack of public trust in the organization.
6.5	Employees have appropriate avenues to report and document the misuse of funds to the proper level of management, volunteer leadership or outside sources.	Provide a copy of the organization's whistleblower policy and/or procedure.	The documented reporting process ensures employees have avenues to report suspected misuse of funds (or other misconduct). The process should also account for when/if the chief executive (or board leadership) is the person suspected of misuse of funds. This may be a stand-alone policy but is likely found within the employee handbook or manual referenced in Standard 5.5.
6.6	The destination organization maintains a reserve/contingency fund of at least 3 months of operating revenues.	Provide the reserve/contingency fund policy and statement of fund balance. Should an applicant not maintain a reserve fund of at least 3 months, provide a detailed statement of management's plan and timeline to achieve this minimum standard. Applicants who cannot achieve this minimum standard shall provide an explanation of why.	A general rule of thumb for non-profit organizations has traditionally been between 3 to 6 months of operating revenues. Since COVID, many destination organizations (given their typically singular dependence on one primary revenue stream) are targeting 12 months of operating revenue in reserve. Rationale for the reserve, and specific initiatives to be paid with reserves, shall be detailed to protect against criticism relative to excessive reserves.
6.7	The destination organization develops and follows a capital and equipment replacement policy.	Provide policy and/or plan.	Capital and equipment replacement policies serve as both budgeting and financial planning tools to allow the organization to forecast its future needs for what can be significant expenditures. Policies should outline schedules for updating and/or replacing vehicles, servers, computers, furniture, etc.

Finance & Funding 6.0

6.8	The destination organization demonstrates evidence of its knowledge of the stability and sufficiency of its funding.	Provide documentation of laws, rules, or policies related to current revenue streams. Provide documentation of competitive organization budgets and activities, preferably utilizing comparison derived from Destination International's Destination Organization Reporting and Compensation & Benefits platforms.	Research related to the budgets of destination organizations in the applicant's competitive set is critical to being able to effectively communicate the need for the maintenance and growth of organizational revenues to investors and partners. Destination organizations should also understand how their revenues might be diverted based on existing laws and ordinances.

II. BUSINESS & OPERATIONS

Technology 7.0

7.1	The destination organization follows an information technology/ network security policy.	• Copy of policy and description of secure transactions offered • Copy of current internet usage policy • Copy of current email usage policy • Statement of how data is backed up, the frequency of backups and where the data is stored. • Backup and disaster recovery plan and testing schedule; existence of cyber insurance. • Firewalls, data access and storage policy and cloud utilization. • Data privacy policy that includes how data is stored, who has access to it and what happens in the event of a data breach.	The technology/network security policy outlines how the destination organization will respond to a potential network security risk and also involves a process for assessing the risk to the network and building a team to respond. Continuation of the policy requires implementing a security change management practice and monitoring the network for security violations.
7.2	The destination organization conducts a periodic technology assessment from which it establishes a technology plan.	Provide evidence of the performance of regular assessments (no less than every 5 years) and a copy of the resulting technology plan that includes (but is not necessarily limited to): policies regarding (and evidence of) a dedicated funding stream for the replacement / acquisition of hardware and software (including procurement policies), planned upgrades of websites, customer relationship management systems or content management systems and risk management related to the use and dependence upon technology.	A technology plan identifies where an organization is currently and maps out where it needs to be in the future with regard to the technology and its infrastructure in the organization. It is particularly helpful in planning for what can be significant expenditures for certain investments, such as customer relationship management systems or content management systems. The plan should also include procurement policies and replacement strategies.
7.3	The destination organization utilizes an integrated database system.	Provide statement of the integration capabilities and status of the database system.	An integrated database combines multiple forms of data that may reside at one or multiple sources and provides the user with a unified view of this information. For example, an integrated database could combine membership, marketing and research data in a format that facilitates combined search and report capabilities. For destination organizations that are singularly leisure-traveler-focused, this may be the inquiry database.
7.4	The destination organization has a policy regarding "take-home" computer equipment.	Provide copy of the policy. If the organization does not allow employees to utilize the destination organization's equipment away from the office, please state so on your application.	Workforce flexibility is a key, and providing employees the tools necessary to remain productive away from the office is an important asset. However, the organization's physical and fiscal assets must also be protected and maintained.
7.5	The destination organization has developed and maintains a policy regarding the utilization of Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools.	Provide a copy of the policy.	As the utilization of AI continues to spread through all facets of business and life, destination organizations need to be prepared to guide professional staff use of this technology.

Research & Marketing Intelligence 8.0

8.1	The destination organization demonstrates a commitment to customer and resident research.	Show evidence of customer research reports (published or unpublished) including interpretation of findings. Provide evidence of inquiry tracking and analysis of tracking data. Show evidence of local resident perception research and the organization's response to findings.	Customer Research: an organized effort to gather information about current or potential customers. It is an extremely important component of any business strategy. Customer research provides important information to identify and analyze the customer needs, preferences and opinions. Resident Perception: if a destination organization is to truly be a steward and leader in its community, it must regularly assess the attitudes of the residents they serve. Data gained from such research can help predict when residents are beginning to push back on the visitor economy when it is perceived to negatively impact local quality of life. This does not need to be expensive, outsourced research data. This data may be collected by the destination organization internally or through a local educational facility and reported to stakeholders on a regular basis. Resident perception data may also be acquired through other local sources (e.g., media, other community development agencies, etc.).
8.2	The destination organization uses standard business return on investment (ROI) approaches or the Destinations International Event Impact Calculator (or similar modeling tool) to quantify the financial impact on its local community for convention/group and/or leisure travel.	Provide a copy/summary of findings and summary of process that quantifies the financial impact of the destination organization on its local community for convention/group and/or leisure travel.	This does not need to be expensive, outsourced research data. This data may be collected by the destination organization internally or through a local educational facility and reported to stakeholders on a regular basis.

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Brand Management 9.0

9.1	The destination organization demonstrates development of a brand strategy.	Provide a copy of the brand strategy.	A long-term plan for the development of a successful brand is necessary in order to achieve specific goals. A well-defined and executed brand strategy affects all aspects of a business and is directly connected to consumer needs, emotions, and competitive environments.
9.2	The destination organization has protected its brand, and the usage of it by others.	The organization owns the trademark for the brand, and/or is able to encourage, regulate or control the usage of the brand by other parties in the destination.	A technology plan identifies where an organization is currently and maps out where it needs to be in the future with regard to the technology and its infrastructure in the organization. It is particularly helpful in planning for what can be significant expenditures for certain investments, such as customer relationship management systems or content management systems. The plan should also include procurement policies and replacement strategies.
9.3	The destination organization engages stakeholders and customers in the development and maintenance of its brand.	Provide a description of the process that is (or has been) used to engage stakeholders in the development and maintenance of the brand.	The adoption and culturalization of a brand depends heavily on many entities outside of the destination organization. Engaging these agencies, groups and individuals on the front end of the process should allow for greater success in the implementation of the brand strategy and the delivery of the brand promise.
9.4	The destination organization has developed a brand promise or commitment.	Provide a copy of the brand promise statement or commitment.	A brand promise or commitment sets the consumer's expectations for the brand. Customers can trust that the brand will deliver on those in every interaction.
9.5	The destination organization continuously assesses the health and efficacy of the brand.	Provide documentation of the review process utilized to ensure that the brand is still effective and viable (date, scope, etc.). Documentation should include narrative that shows how the brand position was determined and what methods the destination organization uses to reinforce and manage that brand. The result of the review could also be a reaffirmation of the current brand position.	A brand review provides an opportunity to evaluate the strength of a brand, to underscore the value of the brand with its customer base, and to reposition the brand, if necessary, to reflect changes in the marketplace. This standard is, by no means, an encouragement to change a brand that is universally embraced and working. Only that the destination organization should honestly evaluate whether the brand is still on point.

III. PROGRAMMING

Marketing 10.0

10.1	The destination organization has a comprehensive marketing plan that is consistent with its current budget cycle. The marketing plan includes strategies and goals for key market segments, ensuring that marketing efforts are representative of the community, and is updated on a regular basis.	Provide the sections of the marketing plan and the pages that identify strategies and goals for key market segments.	This is often a one-year document for the current or upcoming budget year. Within this domain, the plan should speak specifically to marketing objectives (although it may also incorporate sales and communications objectives). In some organizations, this may be delivered as an annual business plan or program of work. The marketing plan must cover measurable marketing objectives, outcomes, and specific strategies tied to departments within the destination organization.
10.2	The destination organization maintains a comprehensive website with content aligned with identified requirements of key market segments and a statement demonstrating the alignment of the content; the site is frequently updated and revised.	• Identification of web address • Outline/statement of plan for content management and site revisions • Statement demonstrating the alignment of content with requirements of key market segments	
10.3	The destination organization provides printed or digitally updated collateral materials to meet the needs of visitors and/or meeting professional/travel trade.	Provide a link to written or digital samples including: visitor guide and other materials; may also include samples of advertising.	Examples include: meeting planner guide, online advertising, visitor guide, etc.
10.4	The destination organization has a policy which offers its group customers (e.g., convention planners, travel/tour trade, tournament directors, etc.) and its leisure travel market subscribers the option to opt out of communications (e.g., newsletters, news blasts, faxes) from the destination organization.	Provide written policy and/or procedures and example of its use.	
10.5	The destination organization provides destination information in a responsive design style designed to render properly on all devices.	Provide a screen shot of an application or mobile optimized website.	Whether the destination chooses to implement responsive design in its website, or has created a destination-specific app, the destination organization must strive to make its information easily accessible on a wide range of formats.

Communications 11.0

11.1	The destination organization has a documented communications strategy.	Provide a copy of the documented communications strategy.	A destination organization communications strategy should include an internal (organization, community and members) component as well as an external (in sync with primary market segments) component. This plan may be a separate part of the annual marketing plan dealing with public relations and communications to internal staff, media, and community and industry stakeholders.
11.2	The destination organization maintains an updated crisis communications plan.	Provide a copy of crisis communications plan.	This plan should outline what the destination organization will do to communicate with its customers and stakeholders before, during and after a crisis situation. It should indicate who the destination organization spokesperson is and how the messaging will be delivered if normal channels are disrupted. This plan can be a separate part of the destination organization's communications plan, but must specifically address procedures when communications channels are interrupted due to a crisis situation. Applicants are encouraged to review the Barcelona Principles for best practices in this field.
11.3	The destination organization has documented media protocols.	Provide a copy of written media protocols.	Different from a crisisplan (Standard 11.2), a media protocol designates who in the organization will communicate to the press/media on behalf of the organization, and specifically outlines the escalation levels and appropriate spokesperson (PR director vs. destination organization executive vs. board chair), depending on the sensitivity of the messaging.
11.4	The destination organization maintains an updated media/press kit.	Provide copy of media/press kit or link to the appropriate page(s) on the organization's website.	
11.5	The destination organization has formalized procedures for responding to user generated content.	Provide copy of procedures.	Procedures define who is designated to "officially" respond to user-generated content regarding the destination, whether on sites managed by the destination organization or on third-party sites.

III. PROGRAMMING

Sales & Service 12.0

12.1	The destination organization has a comprehensive sales plan, with specific goals and strategies that is updated at least every two years and is consistent with the budget cycle.	Provide a copy of the sales plan and description of goals and strategies.	The sales plan details the way the destination organization will allocate its people and resources to achieve sales goals that are connected to its marketing plan and, consequently, its overall strategy. It must have its own measurable objectives, strategies and implementation plan. The document itself may be a stand-alone document, or may be delivered as part of an overall annual business plan, or marketing plan.
12.2	The destination organization provides its trained staff with destination sales and customer service expertise to meet the needs of the meetings / group market.	Provide a list of staff serving the needs of the group market and their respective training/expertise.	Include examples of training completed/educational credentials earned by staff members.
12.3	The destination organization has at least one (1) or more sales position(s).	Provide the title and job description for sales position(s).	If the organization doesn't have at least one staff position dedicated to group sales, applicants should not complete this section.
12.4	The destination organization provides its sales staff continual education and training opportunities regarding the destination's venues, attractions and amenities.	Provide a description of process and identification of sales staff destination training opportunities.	A continual and organized process for educating sales staff on the destination's attractions, venues, and offerings.
12.5	The destination organization solicits feedback from its hotel community on sales priorities for the short- and long-term.	Provide a description of methods used to elicit input from hotel community regarding market needs and sales priorities.	May be conducted through regularly scheduled meetings with hotel sales personnel/directors of sales, annual needs surveys, etc.
12.6	The destination organization maintains a qualified lead distribution and referral system and policy based on customer needs.	Provide a sample of a lead and the written policy on the qualified lead and referral system. If the destination organization does not provide leads to partners, outline the philosophy and process for handling group leads internally.	This policy states how the destination organization will work with convention/meeting/group planners to determine what parameters are important to selecting a hotel or service for their meeting purposes. It explicitly states how leads are distributed based on the parameters requested and that blanket leads are not acceptable and are not a practice of the destination organization at any time. This is often called a "blind lead." This opt-out policy is different than the consumer opt-out policy. Should an applicant not share leads, preferring to work directly with the planner, please share a document that explains the philosophy behind that decision.
12.7	The destination organization has a policy or procedure that offers any customer the choice to receive or not receive communication from the recipient of destination organization leads.	Provide written policy and example of its use (this would be a policy and/or procedure that ensures that this is followed throughout the destination organization's operations).	
12.8	The destination organization conducts and/or facilitates a proposal/bid fulfillment process at no charge to the client.	Provide a sample letter or table of contents of bid document.	If the applicant does not manage bid fulfillment, state the reason(s) why.
12.9	The destination organization has a policy(ies) for and facilitates site/fam inspections, sales (pre-sale) and convention services (post-sale).	Provide a copy of written policy(ies) and a sample itinerary for a site visit.	A set of policies for site inspections and FAMs is important to ensure that the destination organization is providing a service to the destination without bias toward favored partners.

Sales & Service 12.0

12.10	The destination organization offers meetings and/or convention services for meeting planners and event organizers.	Description of meeting and/or convention services offered for meeting planners which may include (but not not necessarily be limited to): • Registration/staffing assistance • Housing coordination • Lead distribution • Destination information • Site inspections facilitation based on customer need • Business referral services	If the applicant does not offer meeting / convention services, state the reason(s) why.
12.11	The destination organization solicits regular partner feedback on its sales processes.	Provide a description of the process used to collect partner feedback on the sales process.	Should include a comprehensive process to collect feedback from industry partners (i.e., hotels, attractions, etc.) on the effectiveness of the destination sales and services process. May include web-based surveys, focus groups, and customer interviews.
12.12	The destination organization solicits client feedback on the group experience in the destination.	Provide description of process used to collect customer and client feedback on the experience in the destination.	Post-event surveys of the customer / client may be used to elicit feedback regarding the overall destination experience. This may also be done through a customer advisory board.

Visitor Services 13.0

13.1	The destination organization has policies and procedures to respond to visitor inquiries in a timely manner.	Provide a copy of procedures utilized for responding to visitor inquiries.	If a destination organization does not offer visitor services, it should be allowed to opt out of this Standard with a clear description of why this service is not offered.
13.2	The destination organization provides trained staff with destination and customer service expertise to meet the needs of the leisure visitor market.	Identification of one (1) or more staff serving the leisure visitor market and their respective training/expertise. If the destination organization does not deploy personnel to interface with the consumer, provide documentation that explains why such a decision has been made.	
13.3	The destination organization makes information readily available for the visitor once in the destination.	• Address(es) of visitor information center(s), kiosks, or ambassador stations. Hours for same. • Description of services offered. • Rules and operating procedures for any of the above visitor information services.	Information is easily available to visitors through any of these means: a visitor center with regular hours; mobile visitor information vehicles; responsive web design or a destination app; visitor kiosks with published locations; or an ambassador program. Information may also be made available through partnerships within the destination, i.e., airport, chamber of commerce, third-party brochure distribution systems, etc.
13.4	The destination organization has a policy(ies) to ensure it is providing its visitors full destination information, regardless of membership/partnership.	Provide written policy(ies).	There is an understanding that some traditional membership destination organizations may have policies that compel them to lead with member businesses, but there needs to be an evident pathway for the organization to connect the consumer with non-members.
13.5	If the destination organization utilizes volunteers to interface with visitors, it provides training for those volunteers.	Provide at least one of the following: • Table of contents or description of volunteer training. • Review/evaluation of process of volunteer training. If the destination organization does not utilize volunteers, provide a statement to that effect.	A volunteer is a non-paid position; destination organizations often utilize volunteers as docents, tour guides, visitor/ information center resources, etc.

Membership & Partnerships 14.0

14.1	The destination organization establishes terms and conditions for membership/ partnership and dues with specific categories and stated benefits.	Provide a description of one or more membership/partnership categories with published terms and conditions for membership/ partnership which includes categories, fees (if applicable), and benefits.	Should a destination organization not offer a membership or partnership program, it should provide a statement to that effect, explaining the reason(s) why.
14.2	The destination organization provides multiple opportunities annually for members/partners to be engaged in the work of the organization on behalf of the destination.	Provide a copy of calendar of events or sample of event invitations offered for the membership (e.g. networking events, membership mixers, annual meeting, etc.).	
14.3	The destination organization has a strategy for engaging businesses in previously underserved neighborhoods to become members / partners of the organization.	Provide documentation that exemplifies how the organization is prioritizing these businesses and developing programming that appeals to them.	If a destination organization desires a diverse cadre of businesses with which to attract visitors, it cannot simply expect many of those businesses to find the organization on their own. A concerted, targeted effort must be designed to attract businesses that may never have considered tourism and hospitality to be a market for them.
14.4	The destination organization solicits periodic member/partner feedback.	Provide a description of the process and frequency for soliciting member/partner feedback.	Should include a comprehensive process to collect feedback from the membership/ partnership in a simple and systematic manner. May include web-based surveys, focus groups, and CRM systems. Feedback should be requested at least every two years.

Destination Development & Sustainability 15.0

15.1	The destination organization is actively engaged in leading and participating in the process to enhance the destination.	Submittal should note in detail the organization's active leadership in the development of the destination. This may include staff and/or board members serving on a destination development-related board, committee or task force. This may also include leadership in specific projects that enhance the destination's product offerings. This could also include a grant program led by the organization that supports enhancements, improvements, amenities, activities, etc. that help develop the destination. And, this could also be exemplified by efforts to enhance and/or package existing experiences being offered by industry partners.	Destination development is the continuous process of coordination and development of amenities, facilities, ordinances, policies, products and services that support host communities to deliver quality experiences for visitors and enhance residents well-being. Including but not limited to assessing infrastructure, new opportunity markets and/or community needs.
15.2	The destination organization is committed to preserving the aspects of the region that makes it unique.	Provide evidence of a strategy or policy(ies) that addresses sustainability of the destination experience for future generations.	
15.3	The destination organization has a strategy for engaging businesses in underserved neighborhoo	Documentation that exemplifies how the organization is prioritizing these businesses and developing programming that appeals to them.	If a destination organization desires a diverse cadre of businesses with which to attract visitors, it cannot simply expect many of those businesses to find the organization on their own. A concerted, targeted effort must be designed to attract businesses that may never have considered tourism and hospitality to be a market for them. This Standard mirrors Standard 14.3. Applicants that maintain partnership or membership programs may replicate their response to Standard 14.3.

IV. ASPIRATIONAL

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A-1	The destination organization has conducted a broad-based assessment of the destination and has adopted a Tourism or Destination Master Plan that addresses the needs and opportunities identified.	Provide a recently executed master plan document and commentary on how goals are being addressed.	A master or vision plan will provide destination organizations with practical actions and strategies for sustainable success in a dramatically changing world.
A-2	The destination organization shows a commitment to constant and never-ending improvement, and is actively engaged in non-industry learning, through membership or attendance in related but indirect organizations.	Provide a description of employee, board or organization engagement with atypical, non-industry organizations, conferences, events, etc.	The horizontal nature of the destination organization's efforts and impacts also allow destination organizations an opportunity to interact with and learn from a wide range of organizations, outside of our core industry. These may include, but are not limited to, groups such as: CEOs for Cities, CityNationPlace, American Planning Association, Americans for the Arts, UNESCO Creative Cities of Crafts & Folk Art, International Council of Shopping Centers, Urban Land Institute, Projects for Public Spaces, TED, Design Life Digital, OffGrid, South by Southwest, Cities for Tomorrow, Brand New Conference, International Economic Development Council, World Design Summit, Future of Places Conference, etc.
A-3	The destination organization demonstrates recent (within the past two years) evidence of innovative practice(s) that improve the operation and/or performance of the organization.	Provide written description of innovative practice(s) and a discussion of the related impact(s)/benefit(s).	Innovative practices: include any new idea, device, or methods introduced to enhance the management and/or marketing of the destination. Examples of innovative practices can include organizational, community, economic development and/or sustainable tourism initiatives.
A-4	The destination organization shows a commitment to accessibility.	Provide examples of how the destination organization is actively working with local experts and industry partners to identify and market experiences that are available to those with disabilities. Evidence of the presence of a professional staff member that is trained and certified is preferred.	
A-5	The destination organization's governing body or its parent organization shall conduct a formal (documented) and periodic self-evaluation process. This process shall include a review of individual and collective governing body performances.	Provide evidence the self-evaluation was accomplished or a template of the process.	Evaluating the performance of the governing body is an important process to ensure members demonstrate a continued commitment to the governance and objectives of the organization. NOTE: The boards of some public entities may elect to make the board evaluation process a self-evaluation only, in order to not subject this information to open records requests. If the evaluation process directs board members who believe their own performance has room for improvement or who believe the board's performance as a whole has room for improvement, that indivudal should meet individually with the board's leadership to discuss.
A-6	One or more of the management staff has active (current) designations in destination organization management, association management, closely related disciplines and/or their particular profession.	Provide a list of management staff with current credentials and identification of these designations. These would include such designations as: CDME, CMP, CAE, aPHR, SHRM-CP, etc.	While not proof of organizational excellence, that management staff has earned industry credentials such as CDME indicates that there is a commitment to being they best they can be.
A-7	The destination organization has a written process for holding its membership/partnership to a code of ethics.	Provide a copy of the membership/partnership code of ethics, and detail of the policies and procedures in place to enforce it.	The Code of Ethics states the values to which the destination organization will expect its membership/partnership to commit to abide by.

A-8	The destination organization recognizes the value of social responsibility for its employees.	Provide a description of programs or policies supporting community engagement by employees.	Destination organization leadership encourages and supports staff engagement within the community as a means to develop and nurture staff, as well as to extend the organization's reach in to the community, as budget and resources allow. This may also be demonstrated through participation in events such as blood drives, school supply fundraisers, participation in youth leadership or mentoring programs, etc.
A-9	The destination organization recognizes the value of employee wellness.	Provide a description of programs or policies regarding employee wellness.	The destination organization provides opportunities for the staff to maintain a healthy lifestyle, through such opportunities as "lunch and learn" programs, training, walking programs, etc, as resources allow. The destination organization encourages employees to sustain a work-life balance, through efforts such as supporting initiatives such as Project: Time Off, that encourage employees to maximize the benefits available to them.
A-10	The destination organization utilizes workplace flexibility, or a "results-only work environment" (ROWE).	Provide a copy of the policy that allows employees to: have varying starting or quitting hours; work some hours remotely; take time off without loss of pay during the workday to attend to important family or personal needs; or other similar flexible benefits.	Workplace flexibility is an effective employee recruitment and retention tool, making the work environment better for the both the destination organization and the employee. A "results-only work environment" keeps office productivity the main priority, and while not applicable in all roles or positions, philosophically defines a different means of achieving the same organizational goals.
A-11	The destination organization conducts exit interviews with all employees departing voluntarily.	Provide an example of an employee exit interview form or process.	The exit interview allows the employee to provide constructive feedback and leave on a positive note, and provides the opportunity to ask if there are any open issues of which the destination organization may need to be aware.
A-12	The destination organization creates opportunities for visitors and/or meeting planners and attendees to further contribute to the destination through volunteer efforts in the destination.	Provide written evidence describing the volunteer information the destination organization provides and/or volunteer program(s) the destination organization recommends. • Examples include: volunteer match programs, lists of volunteer opportunities for meeting planners and/or leisure visitors, or participation with a "voluntourism" organization.	This is not meant to include volunteer efforts taken on by the destination organization staff. This is about opportunities provided to visitors to make an additional positive impact on the community by undertaking a community service initiative while they are in the destination. Food bank drives and programs such as Habitat for Humanity are typical examples. Participation by the destination organization in PCMA's Giving Good program is an example of ways the destination can support this standard.
A-13	The destination organization shows a commitment to active industry leadership and engagement.	Describe how you or your destination organization routinely "gives back" to the industry, through mentoring, leading classes, contributing to resource libraries, etc.	The industry can be at its best when its leaders are actively and routinely engaged in its betterment.
A-14	The destination organization offers access to staff and/or resources with multiple language speaking capabilities and for visitors who may have hearing or sight challenges.	Provide a list of multi-lingual speaking staff and/or other resources offered for the leisure market.	

IV. ASPIRATIONAL

A-15	The destination organization participates in training with external partners in the destination.	Provide examples of training programs the destination organization has participated in with external partners, such as hoteliers, attractions, front-line employees, convention center sales, other customer service positions, etc.	Collaborative training allows for a common mindset and approach in such things as customer service, sales, etc.
A-16	The destination organization participates in "mystery shopping" initiatives.	Provide examples of mystery shopping program that evaluates destination organization sales and/or customer service efforts.	
A-17	The destination organization's community engagement has led to the inclusion of visitor needs and priorities in non-destination organization long-range community planning documents.	Provide examples of visitor needs and/or priorities included in other community long-range planning documents, such as a comprehensive land plan, parks master plan, economic development strategic plan, community strategic plan, etc.	
A-18	The board or governing body shall, at least annually, analyze opportunities to stabilize, increase or diversify organizational revenue streams.	Provide evidence of the board or governing body at the least discussing revenue streams at a board meeting, through minutes of a specially convened task force or committee or as part of the strategic planning process. Such meetings do not necessarily have to be public; as a potentially competitively sensitive topic, the conversations may well take place in closed or executive session meetings, as allowed by local laws.	Diversification and growth of revenue streams is critical to the future success of all destination organizations in an increasingly competitive environment. This should include a discussion and strategy that targets both public and private sector options. Boards should, at least annually, discuss expanding revenues through such methods as membership/partnership, corporate sponsorship, co-op marketing, private sector investment into workforce or brand initiatives and/or special assessment districts.
A-19	The destination organization has established a succession plan for its executive staff.	Provide a description of the succession plan (names and timing details should not be published) and method for how it is communicated with the governing body. For destination organizations with less than 5 employees, a succession plan for the chief executive will suffice. All succession plans should provide a pathway for both internal and external candidates to be considered.	Destinations (and those entities that invest in the work of their destination organizations) deserve to know that the agency is mindful of the need to be intentional about continuity in leadership. While this may be difficult to document for government and subsidiary organizations that don't perform this kind of advance planning, documentation of how executive searches will be undertaken is desired.
A-20	The destination organization actively works with industry partners to develop visitor experiences that enhance the destination's appeal.	Provide examples of how the destination organization has actively assisted in the development of unique experiences to attract new consumers (or extend existing visitor stays) to the region.	Beyond visitor services, visitor experience development seeks to create additional reasons for visitors to choose a destination. Destination organizations are uniquely positioned to work with their industry partners to create and promote such experiences.
A-21	Wild Card		The DMAP Program strives to be as complete as possible, but it is also possible we missed something important to your destination. Here's your chance to offer a standard that may be unique to your situation but should not be overlooked in your pursuit of accreditation.
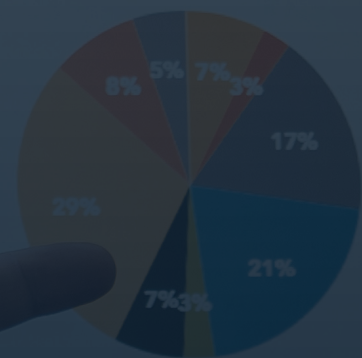
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