

PRESIDENT & CEO

San Francisco Travel Association | San Francisco, CA





San Francisco

Why do people come to San Francisco? The sights and scenery. The one-of-a-kind events and world-class food. The welcoming people, the diversity and rich history. But perhaps it's because no other city is as adept at combining disparate elements to create something new: taking the familiar and marrying it to the unknown, merging people's expectations to moments of unpredictability, uniting long-held notions with startling innovations. On any day, from any angle, you'll notice something different—and something special—in the City by the Bay. [San Francisco](#) is a landmark of possibility and promise, where culture, fearlessness, and innovation collide.

What makes San Francisco one of the world's most compelling destinations? [Its many icons](#). Recognized around the world as being synonymous with San Francisco, these seven legendary attractions each have their own fascinating history:

[The Golden Gate Bridge](#) | [Alcatraz](#) | [Cable Cars](#) | [The Painted Ladies](#) | [Fisherman's Wharf](#) | [Lombard Street](#) | [Coit Tower](#)

EXPLORE

A walk around San Francisco can feel like traveling the world without leaving city limits. That's because of our city's incredible diversity and unique [neighborhoods](#), each with its own distinct character and charm. Some of the most visited ones include:

[Chinatown](#)

San Francisco's Chinatown is North America's first and largest. Full of historic sites, legacy businesses, and incredible dining, Chinatown is a must for all visitors.

[Union Square](#)

In a city full of great shopping, Union Square is the neighborhood with the most abundant retail therapy, not to mention fine hotels, great meals, and green spaces to sit outside and enjoy San Francisco's temperate climate.

[The Castro](#)

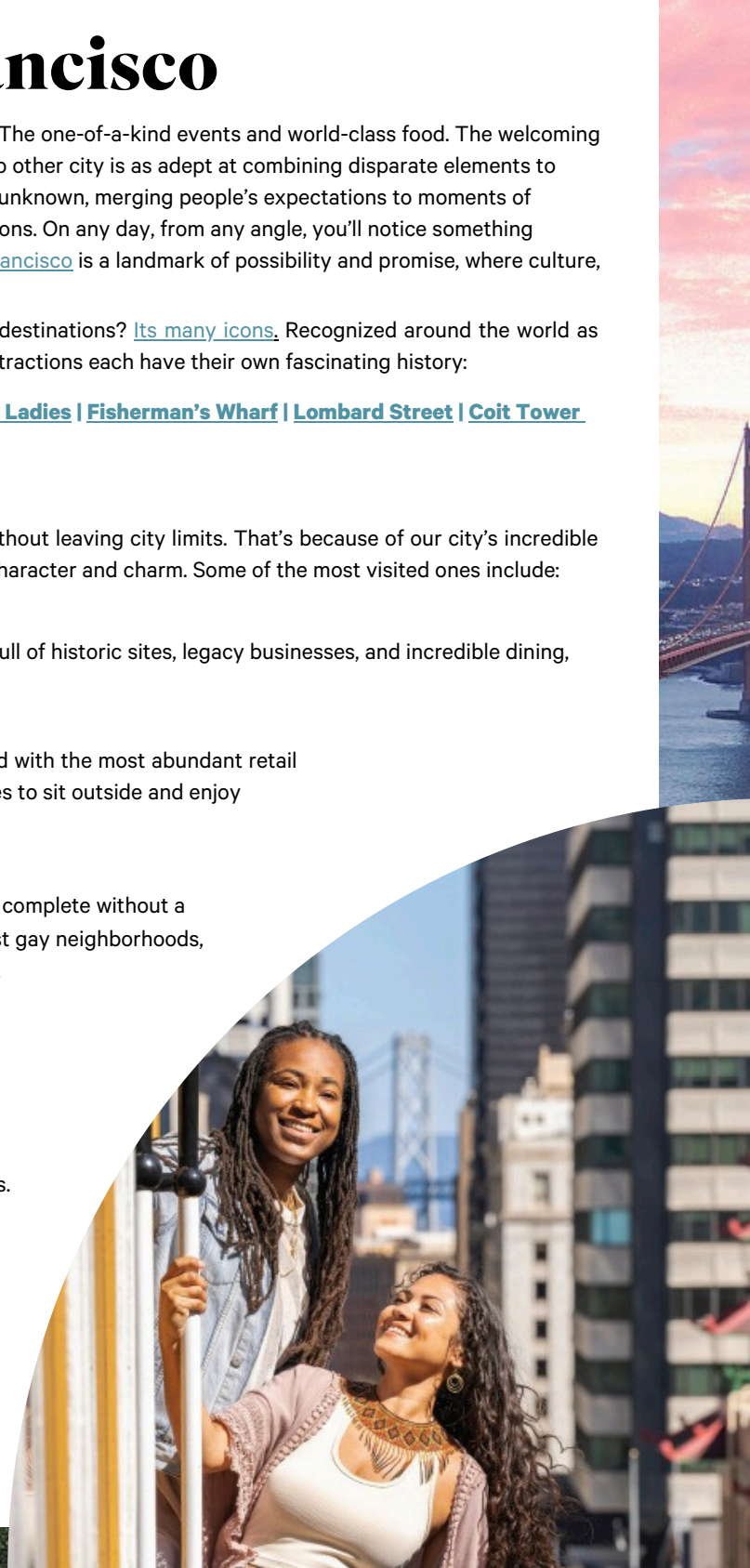
Regardless of your sexual orientation, no trip to San Francisco is complete without a visit to the world-famous Castro District, one of the country's first gay neighborhoods, where modern activism for LGBTQ rights began—and continues.

[Haight-Ashbury](#)

On the corner of Haight and Ashbury streets sits a beacon that calls to all who visit San Francisco: a street sign marking the heart of the neighborhood where 1960s flower power blossomed. These days, colorful Victorian houses brighten the hillsides, and the streets are filled with restaurants and boutiques.

[The Mission](#)

The Mission District is one of San Francisco's most of-the-moment neighborhoods, packed with trend-setting boutiques, restaurants, and more. It's also the heart of the city's large and diverse Latino community.





THE MOSCONE CENTER

[The Moscone Center](#) is San Francisco's premier convention venue and a world-class hub for innovation. The facility has hosted some of the most important conventions and product announcements in recent memory, providing the space for businesses and organizations from the U.S. and beyond to celebrate their achievements.

The Moscone Center is in the heart of the SoMa/Yerba Buena neighborhood, within walking distance of more than 19,000 of San Francisco's 35,000+ hotel rooms, world-class dining, shopping, and cultural venues. It features more than 502,000 square feet of contiguous exhibition and meeting space; three floors of column-free meeting space, including a 56,000-square-foot ballroom; and more than 25,000 square feet of secure outdoor terraces. It has also been accredited by the Global Biorisk Advisory Council's STAR program; ASM's Global VenueShield Environmental Hygiene program; and the U.S. Green Building Council's LEED program, achieving platinum certification, which is the highest possible level.

The San Francisco Travel Association serves as the booking agent for The Moscone Center and is tasked with bringing meetings and events to the space all year long.

Economic Impact

In 2023, the Moscone Center, San Francisco's largest and most in-demand convention venue, hosted 34 events, including the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation. Restoring our meetings and events business is a key priority for us. In the end, 2023's citywide and self-contained conventions contributed \$635M in direct spending to the city's economy.

ABOUT SAN FRANCISCO TRAVEL

The San Francisco Travel Association was founded in 1909 by a group of hoteliers and merchants in the wake of the devastating earthquake and fire just three years earlier to bring visitor business back to the city.

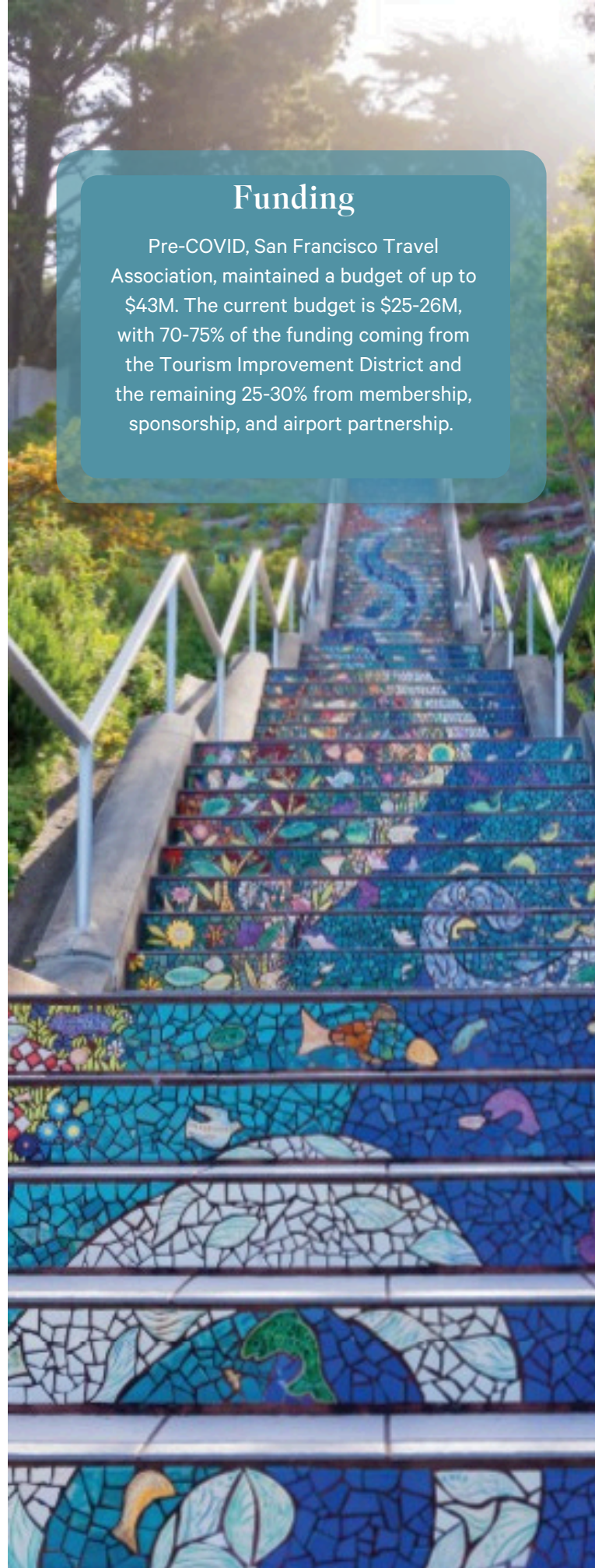
Since then, San Francisco Travel has become the voice of the visitor for the hospitality and tourism industry in San Francisco. Acting as a specialized economic development agency, San Francisco Travel works to promote the destination worldwide while ensuring that tourism, the top generator of outside revenue into the city's economy, is kept at the forefront as citywide decisions and policies are made.

Governed by a Board of Directors made up of San Francisco Travel partners, the Association operates as a 501(c)(6) private, not-for-profit, mutual benefit corporation with roughly 54 team members.

- Vision: To be the most compelling destination in the world.
- Mission: To promote the San Francisco region as a top global destination by leading the way in performance, innovation, and sustainability.
- Values:
 - Embrace Change.
 - Spirit of Service.
 - Be Accountable.
 - Empower and Champion Talent.
 - Drive Excellence.
- Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility Statement: In San Francisco, all are welcome, and differences are celebrated. The San Francisco Travel Association is committed to diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility to promote unique San Francisco experiences and elevate voices in the community that speak to travelers from around the world. We aim to be a thought leader in our industry, city, and community.
- Membership: San Francisco Travel is a member-based organization. We encourage local businesses to join our Association so that we can connect them with the lucrative visitor market, as well as with each other. Currently, we count more than 700 Bay Area businesses as members.
- Leadership: You can explore our executive and board leadership on [our website](#).

Funding

Pre-COVID, San Francisco Travel Association, maintained a budget of up to \$43M. The current budget is \$25-26M, with 70-75% of the funding coming from the Tourism Improvement District and the remaining 25-30% from membership, sponsorship, and airport partnership.





POSITION SUMMARY

San Francisco Travel is currently searching for a visionary leader to fill the role of President & CEO in one of the world's top-tier destinations. The President & CEO will drive the growth of leisure tourism, meetings and conventions, and membership business segments by developing and executing effective marketing, sales, and engagement strategies to further elevate San Francisco's iconic status.

The selected candidate will be able to provide strategic leadership and oversight of SF Travel in all aspects of its culture, operations, and mission. This includes managing the budget, supervising staff, building strong community and government relations, and ensuring effective board governance.

As the President & CEO, the incumbent can advocate for tourism as a shared community value to elected business and industry leaders. They will serve as a leader and spokesperson for the power of travel, championing the DMO and community's business events and tourism industry. Additionally, they will ensure that diversity, equity, and inclusion are a part of SF Travel's culture. This is a remarkable opportunity for a leader to promote San Francisco as a premier destination for travelers worldwide.

Reports To: A Board of Directors.

ESSENTIAL DUTIES & RESPONSIBILITIES

Administrative

- Oversees all administrative, operating, and marketing functions of SF Travel.
- Advises the Chair of the Board, the Board of Directors, and other designated committees. Provides information, analysis, and recommendations to the Board of Directors for decision-making or approval as required.
- Informs the Board of Directors, constituents, and elected officials on progress with the utmost accuracy and makes all documents and reports available to them as outlined in the bylaws.

Sales and Marketing

- Drive the growth of leisure tourism, meetings and conventions, and membership business segments.
- Ensure the development and execution of effective marketing, sales, and engagement strategies.
- Provide leadership and direction to SF Travel's CSO and CMO.

Financial Management

- Oversees the creation and execution of the annual budget and the annual audit reports per procedures approved by the Board of Directors.
- Able to read and understand financial measurements and forecasting using data tools from CBRE, STR Data, and others, along with a general sense of market performance compared to the budget.
- Directs the preparation of the annual budget that supports these activities and presents it to the Board of Directors for approval.
- Directs financial programs to fund new and continuing activities and manages the financial functions towards the achievement of higher productivity through more effective utilization of its human, physical and financial assets.
- Prepares and submits applications for external funding.
- Negotiates office leases in conjunction with finance.

Policies and Goals

- Responsible for strategic and operational direction of SF Travel, long-term and short-term planning, goal setting, budgeting, performance reporting and evaluation, and action plans. Implementation and achievement of SF Travel's long-term and short-term quantitative goals relating to visitation, economic impact, bookings, room nights and leads, tourism activity, and FAM trips.
- Develops and maintains effective organizational policies and ensures all SF Travel activities are implemented within these established policies, guidelines, laws, and ethical standards.
- Establishes goals for individual departments and assists staff in order to meet those goals.

ESSENTIAL DUTIES & RESPONSIBILITIES

Communications

- Develops and supervises the implementation of an annual operating and marketing plan in order to promote the destination to local, state, regional, national, and international audiences.
- Develops positions on major industry-related proposals and initiatives and constructively participates in tourism-related community affairs.
- Attends all meetings of the membership, the Board of Directors, and other designated committees in a voting capacity based on by-laws.
- Establishes and maintains ongoing effective communications with members, government leaders, business and cultural institution leaders, convention and event planners, and the local tourism industry. Affects two-way communications with the public, media, industry professionals, members, civic and community organizations, and personnel.
- Represents SF Travel at selected local, state, regional, and national conventions that serve to foster the betterment of SF Travel's mission.
- Represents the tourism industry to policymakers servicing as a resource as issues are debated, examined, and developed.
- Ensures that the impact on the tourism industry is a consideration for policymakers. Serves as the primary advocate for the industry as well as the focal point of industry knowledge and research.
- Serves as the official spokesperson for SF Travel.



Operations

- Ensures that all staff are trained, supervised, and evaluated.
- Oversees the work environment and quality of life at SF Travel, including compensation and benefits policies, general working conditions, and overall employee well-being.
- Provides inspiration, leadership, and accessibility to ensure that the objectives of SF Travel are achieved.
- Provides resources and empowers subordinates with grants of authority to carry out responsibilities.
- Evaluates the performance of all direct reports and ensure fairness and consistency in performance evaluations and changes in job classifications. Direct supervision and management of functional areas and contracts.
- Models good ethics through actions, including SF Travel reporting to constituency's personal adherence to policy manual, expense reports, and time off. Follows through with commitments; establishes and reports accurate accountability measures and their successes and shortcomings; holds self and others accountable for achieving results; uses industry standards and generally accepted accounting principles.
- Oversees the implementation of discipline and termination procedures for all staff members.
- Promotes the vision of diversity, equity, and inclusion in personnel at all levels.

Supervisory Responsibilities

- Carries out supervisory responsibilities in accordance with the organization's policies and applicable laws. Responsibilities include oversight of interviewing, hiring, and training employees; planning, assigning, and directing work; monitoring performance; rewarding and disciplining employees; and addressing complaints and resolving problems.

QUALIFICATIONS & EXPERIENCE

- A four-year college degree is preferred.
- 7-10 years of senior management experience within the DMO, convention hotel, tradeshow, or travel industry is preferred. Current experience leading convention and leisure sales, marketing, and communications is highly desired.
- Ideally, experience as a CEO or Executive Leader of a DMO of like size and business/market mix that offers a variety of leisure, event, convention, and international opportunities.
- Convention hotel or hotel regional leadership experience is a plus.
- Good communication and public presentation skills and proven ability to work with a diverse group of individuals and groups. Must be people-oriented, have high stamina/high energy levels, and be very "goal-oriented."
- Other important characteristics are proven problem analysis and resolution skills with exceptional analytical skills that work with a very diverse group of partners.
- To perform this job successfully, an individual should have knowledge of general office computer programs such as Microsoft Office Suite, as well as familiarity with computerized sales tracking systems.
- Must be able to travel independently, both domestically and internationally.

KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- Strategic
- Visionary
- Genuine
- Collaborative
- Transparent
- Credible
- Passionate
- High EQ
- Engaged
- Approachable
- Politically Astute
- Respectful
- Confident
- Builder/Creator
- Innovative
- Can Empower
- Accountable
- Excellent Listener
- Visible

TOP PRIORITIES



Develop a thorough understanding and ongoing assessment of SF Travel's current sales and marketing plans and deployment of strategies and make changes to achieve short-term and long-term goals.

Understand the budget and funding sources.

Pursue alternative sources of revenue and adjust the allocation of spend, as needed, based on priorities.



Begin to develop strong and meaningful relationships and trust with customers, board, city and county officials, hospitality leaders, partners, and vendors.

Build confidence and trust with the internal team.

Develop strong relationships with the media to continue the messaging on San Francisco as a world class destination.



Ensure that Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion are woven into the fabric of the organization and strategic plan.



Mark Gnatovic

Executive Vice President
SearchWide Global
info@searchwideglobal.com
Direct/Cell: 817.789.9879

If interested in learning more about this great opportunity, please send your resume to our SearchWide Global Executive, Mark Gnatovic.

SearchWide Global is a full-service executive search firm primarily for companies in the event, tradeshow, convention, tourism, and hospitality industries. We specialize in C-Level, Director, and Management level executive searches for companies ranging in size from Fortune 500 corporations to mid-sized public and private companies.