

# World Travel & Tourism Council

Our mission is to maximise the inclusive and sustainable growth potential of the Travel & Tourism sector. Join the conversation #WTTC

## Shock Waves

Resilience through crisis.



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While in university, I worked to pay for school; I worked as a Deputy Sheriff in California. One of the first things I learned was that I was rarely going to succeed in prevention of crime, and that most of my job would be in dealing with the aftermath of typically bad events — homicides and fatal accidents. I also learned that I could not undo the event once it occurred; the only thing I could do was to not make it worse for the people involved. That is crisis management. It is about managing the consequences of an event, not about prevention or mitigation. Today, at [Kenyon](#), I continue to focus on consequence management. The big difference is, of course, the scope and scale of the crisis.

Sadly, many governments and businesses do make crises worse both for the people directly affected and those of the communities that are involved. Not intentionally mind you, but because they fail to recognise the consequences and react quickly enough to manage them. They do this because their entire focus has been on prevention, and it has failed. They did not have a thought process for what to do when prevention didn't work. **It is right to focus on prevention because you can prevent many things, but not all things. At times terrorists will succeed, natural disasters will occur, and because we are human accidents will happen.**

For the Travel & Tourism market, the impacts of these events are becoming clearer. A recent WTTC [report](#) shows that *"in countries where attacks have happened, visitor exports, which is money spent by foreign visitors in a country has suffered. The impacts of the initial attacks are compounded by inaccurate or extended travel advisories, and consumer reaction to seek perceived "safer" places of their vacations."*

When a crisis has occurred it is about response and recovery; not making it worse. You can't make the crisis better; the only thing you can do is not make it worse. This means you have to accept things will happen, understand the consequences and how to manage them, devote resources to them, and, most importantly, when they occur provide the leadership and focus on the response and recovery. Too often I see leaders, those ultimately doomed to failure, focusing on "what has happened" not on "what is being done in response." This is a fatal mistake. The event has occurred, denying it, minimising it, or trying to allocate blame are not response strategies.

Unfortunately, extended travel warnings, hasty mass evacuations, endless coverage of the inability of a government to prevent attacks, and lack of transparency are much more common, and therefore the reaction to each subsequent attack becomes worse. It becomes worse because the focus is on that the event should not have happened, not what we are doing because it did happen.

In 2016, Belgium saw a 4.4% decrease in tourism spending, France a 7.3% decrease, and Turkey a staggering 22% decrease in tourism spending following attacks in 2016.

Success is understanding the needs of survivors, the impact on the community, the needs and desires of the governments whose citizens are affected, and caring for the dead and their families. It is being able to coordinate resources and then with clarity and transparency communicate to people. Communicating in different sources, locations and languages on what is being done to care for them, and most importantly how they will transition to their new normal. People will accept what has happened; unfortunately, they really have no choice. What causes the ongoing frustration, anger and blame is not knowing in the aftermath of a crisis what is next. All crises are predictable; therefore they can be managed and should not be a surprise. Successful governments and businesses understand this and they respond by acknowledging the event, and then leading people through it. These governments and business are focused on looking forward, not back.

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The graphic is a promotional banner for 'The GLOBAL SUMMIT'. On the left, there is a logo for the 'WORLD TRAVEL & TOURISM COUNCIL' in a blue square. Next to it, the text 'The GLOBAL SUMMIT' is written in a large, serif font, with 'BANGKOK, THAILAND 26-27 APRIL 2017' in a smaller, pink font below it. In the center, there is a portrait of Robert Jensen, a middle-aged man with short grey hair, wearing a blue suit, white shirt, and a patterned tie. He is smiling slightly. Behind him is a faint, stylized image of a city skyline with traditional Thai architecture. Below the portrait, there is a yellow rectangular button with the text 'wtcc.org/livestream' in black. At the bottom left, the hashtag '#GSBKK' is written in pink. The overall background of the graphic is a light grey gradient.

Written by Robert Jensen, CEO, Kenyon International. You can watch the livestream of Mr. Jensen's Meet the Experts session at the Global Summit 2017 in Bangkok, Thailand where he and Peter Fankhauser, Group Chief Executive Officer, Thomas Cook Group discuss man-made and natural disasters and what they mean for the future of the Travel & Tourism

sector, as well as how we can promote both open borders and better security.

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