

For Immediate Release

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The Knowland Group Releases Follow-Up Oil Spill Survey Findings

Effects of Oil Spill on Hospitality Industry Mirror Oil Slick's Slow Crawl

McLean, VA, 05/18/10 – [The Knowland Group](#), the world's largest data firm in the global meetings and conventions industry, today released their follow-up survey findings on the effects of the Gulf oil spill on the region's hospitality industry. Knowland surveyed 50 hotels across the Gulf Coast that host meetings and events, and found 42% of hotels experiencing group booking cancellations; up 7 percentage points from the [survey conducted two weeks ago](#). The slow creep in increased cancellations mirrors the oil slick's slow approach towards the Gulf Coast.

Hotels are also beginning to confront difficulty in booking future events. 64% of hotels surveyed have said the impact is minimal at the moment, with 8% and 14% reporting moderate and significant impacts respectively. Those booking difficulties are more near term rather than long term, with 44% of hotels surveyed stating that they have immediate booking issues and 40% stating issues with bookings over the coming three to six months.

Some hotels are reaping the benefits of the influx of petroleum industry officials, members of the media, and environmental groups. Transient business is accounting for a slight uptick in room occupancies, with one hotel in Mobile, AL reporting that they are completely booked with occupants related to the oil spill.

As for the reasoning behind the cancellations, hoteliers are quick to hold the media responsible first: "The media is making it out to be worse than what it really is," stated one Panama City, FL hotel. 56% of hotels surveyed blamed the media hype for decreased bookings, with 48% citing the potential effect on the beach, and only 14% citing guest concerns about a potential petroleum odor in the air.

In the meantime, hotel management companies and operators are putting plans in place to deal with increased cancellations if the spill continues to expand. One St. Petersburg, FL hotel noted that "if the spill does hit our beach we will implement the same plan of action as 1991," referring to the 1991 oil spill in the Florida Keys. 56% of hotels responding to the question noted they had either a corporate or property level plan at the ready.

Knowland Group CEO [Mike McKean](#) stated that, "Right now the spill seems to be impacting bookings between the present and the next 6 months, which gives hoteliers time to plan ahead to ensure they

maintain business. If things do get worse, hoteliers should consider new ways to proactively increase their sales and needed revenue.”

This survey was conducted over a two day period from May 16-17, 2010. The full survey results can be found below.

1. Have you had group booking cancellations that you attribute to the oil spill?
Yes – 42%
No – 58%
2. Is the oil spill having a negative impact in your ability to book **future** events?
If yes, would you characterize the impact as:
 - a. Significant – 14%
 - b. Moderate – 8%
 - c. Minimal – 64%
3. What time frame for future events is being most adversely affected?
 - a. Right now – 44%
 - b. 3-6 Months – 40%
 - c. 6-12 Months – 8%
 - d. Over 1 year – 0%
4. Which, if any, reasons are most frequently cited for not holding or cancelling a future event:
 - a. The spill’s potential affect on the beach – 48%
 - b. The odor associated with the spill – 14%
 - c. The media hype surrounding the spill – 56%
 - d. Other – 8%
5. Have you seen an increase in transient bookings related to the oil spill from:
 - a. Guests associated with the petroleum industry – 36%
 - b. Guests associated with the media – 12%
 - c. Guests associated with environmental groups – 40%
 - d. Other – 8%
 - e. No – 46%
6. Do you have a specific plan in place to deal with the spill?
Yes – 56%
No – 44%
7. Has your state tourism bureau or conventions and visitors bureau contacted you to help with response to the spill?
Yes – 75%
No – 25%

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About The Knowland Group

The Knowland Group is a proven innovator, developing intuitive marketing products and services that

streamline and support event and group sales in the hospitality industry. The company, headquartered in Salisbury, MD, serves over 2,000 hotel clients and 17,000 users globally. Recently featured on the *Inc. Fast 500 List*, The Knowland Group is the second fastest growing company in the travel industry. For more information, visit www.KnowlandGroup.com, call 410-860-2270 or follow us on Twitter [@knowlandgroup](https://twitter.com/knowlandgroup).