REACHING OUT

2021 ROMBA CONFERENCE FORMAT ANNOUNCEMENT: September 2, 2021

After extensive research and discussions, Reaching Out MBA, a registered 501c3 nonprofit, has made the decision to cancel the in-person portion of this year's ROMBA Conference that had been scheduled to take place from October 7-9, 2021, in Austin, TX.

We considered the following risk factors:

- The CDC has listed the United States at Level 4 (Very High Covid-19 Transmission – the highest possible level). The CDC website states: "Avoid travel to these destinations. If you <u>must</u> travel to these destinations, make sure you are fully vaccinated before travel."
- Per Austin Public Health, Austin-Travis County is currently in Stage 5, the highest level of alert of COVID alert, with gatherings discouraged.
- New cases of COVID in Travis County are at their highest levels since their previous peak in January 2021.
- COVID hospitalizations in Travis County are at their highest point <u>to date</u>, leaving only 5 ICU beds available as of Aug. 31.
- The Governor of Texas has banned vaccine mandates, making it impossible for us to ensure all parties in attendance have been vaccinated.
- The Delta variant has proven to be highly contagious, even for vaccinated individuals. If we were to convene a large meeting, we recognize it is extremely likely that some attendees would contract COVID and place further strain on Austin's already stretched healthcare system or bring the infection back to their own families and communities.

We believe it is our responsibility to act in the best interests of our full community, including Austin residents. When we choose to convene a large gathering, we must focus on the collective risks of that decision, for our community and for all those who will be affected by that decision - in this public health crisis, that's everyone else they come in contact with.

Yours in solidarity,

Aidan Currie

Executive Director, Reaching Out MBA

www.reachingoutmba.org