



Key Messages for the Meetings Industry

A list of “Positive Points” regarding the industry is outlined in the JMIC Guide to Community and Government Relations. However, some types of communications may need more detail to fill out the information package. A more detailed version of some messages and concerns follows, and should be modified/adapted as local circumstances and opportunities dictate.

This detail is as follows:

1. Meetings and conventions generate uniquely high-yield economic benefits and attract influential visitors:

- > The average daily expenditures of meeting delegates far exceed those of leisure visitors. In most cases, this is by a factor of between two and three times what is generated by leisure travelers. This means that for any given investment, the absolute return from delegates is much higher than for a comparable number of leisure visitors. For example, for most M&C events, the low-yield VFR (visiting friends and relatives) component which makes up a large proportion of leisure travel is negligible.
- > The economic benefits associated with meetings and conventions go well beyond the expenditures of individual delegates. There are also the production costs associated with staging the event and providing food and beverage, entertainment and other components of the overall meeting experience which are paid for by event organizers. In addition, there are also the considerable expenditures by exhibitors which typically accompany conventions and are generally much higher than expenditures by delegates.
- > Participants in meetings and conventions are typically much more influential than other visitors and are more likely to offer broader benefits to a community. At the same time, they are likely those who would not otherwise be attracted to a particular region were it not for their participation in the event itself.
- > The economic benefits of meetings and conventions are widely dispersed amongst many sectors, ranging from

2. Meetings generate a wide variety of other economic and community benefits.

These are diverse, and address those areas which are critical to the business, scientific, professional, educational and cultural life and development of a community.

- > Meetings attract investment by attracting an often influential audience of participants, and creating opportunities for showcasing local products, services, and investment opportunities;
- > Meetings enhance professional development by bringing regional and international expertise into the community where it is accessible to local professionals. This professional enhancement is inevitably passed on as a benefit to the rest of the community through improved knowledge, skills and access.
- > Meetings enhance science and technology. Apart from generating new forms of technology itself and improving understanding and access to it, they help improve local knowledge and skills by bringing outside information and technology into the host community and providing a vehicle for local businesses and professionals to access the latest developments in their respective fields.
- > Meetings promote cultural exchange by providing new forums for cultural exchange and new opportunities to expose local culture to national and international audiences. Due to the nature of the meeting experience, the quality of these opportunities is seldom available to other kinds of visitors.

3. Meetings and conventions generate incremental tourism by:

- > attracting visitors who would be unlikely to visit a destination otherwise
- > creating new forms of destination exposure through the promotional activities surrounding an event, and
- > encouraging pre and post event travel. The greater distance a delegate travels, the more likely they are to engage in these kinds of activities and the longer they tend to stay.
- > attracting visitors during non-peak seasons. Many meetings take place in what would be shoulder seasons for leisure travel, simply because event organizers don't want to have meetings conflict with vacation periods. In this respect, they represent complementary business to that of the leisure sector.

4. Meetings and conventions promote the profile of a city or region and its role in national and international affairs.

They create a greater sense of presence and prestige for an area through associating it with international events and figures. At the same time, they generate a new audience for destination promotion through cooperative attendance-building efforts with event organizers. In essence, a major convention creates an entire new sales force for a destination.

Overall, convention delegates tend to be a much more influential group than other visitors, and are often those who would be unlikely to come for any other reason. Meetings thus serve to attract a unique and potentially significant

5. Meetings are directly connected to the key issues of the day.

Meetings, conventions and exhibitions are important forums and an important part of the solution for most of the key issues of the day. They are vehicles for international trade development at a time of economic crisis. They are the way that international health issues and crises get resolved. They are...

6. Meetings play an important role in building better understanding amongst different groups and countries throughout the world.

Meetings and conventions are at root a vehicle for bringing together people from many different cultures and geographic areas to exchange information of issues and disciplines of common interest. They are, therefore, a critical element for building global understanding, acceptance and cooperation.

In the troubled political climate of today, this role alone makes the meetings and conventions deserving of support and attention

But...

1. The meetings business is highly competitive, as the benefits are recognized and pursued by many communities throughout the world.
2. As a result, there is a need for an ongoing commitment to facilities, technology and service in any given community in order to for the industry to survive in the market.
3. Because meetings are logistically complex, they are highly sensitive to many areas affected by government policy including ease of access, security measures, transportation issues and taxation levels.
4. In addition to good facilities, meetings also rely on a positive and well promoted destination image in order to attract business.

