

Second Edition



# BUSINESS EVENTS

---

ROB DAVIDSON

---

# Business Events

The dynamic and fast-expanding business events sector plays a vital role in the professional lives of hundreds of millions of people worldwide by providing settings in which they can meet for the purposes of negotiation, deliberation, motivation, the dissemination of knowledge, and the celebration of their greatest career-related achievements.

This book provides a sound practical and theoretical context for the study of this subject by covering, in depth, all categories of business-related events including corporate meetings, association conferences, political events, incentive travel, exhibitions, corporate hospitality, awards ceremonies and SMERF (social, military, educational, religious and fraternal) gatherings.

This new edition has been extensively revised and updated to reflect recent developments in business events, including:

- Five new chapters on business events destination marketing, knowledge, sustainability, ethics and technology
- New 'It's my job' voice boxes offering practical insights from people employed in the business events industry
- A wide range of new case studies illustrating business events throughout the world, including emerging business events destinations such as Russia and the Middle East

Written in an accessible yet analytical manner, *Business Events* is essential reading for all students of events, tourism and hospitality management.

**Dr Rob Davidson** is the Managing Director of MICE Knowledge, a consultancy specialising in research, education and training services for the business events industry. He is also a Visiting Professor in four European universities (Strasbourg, France; Karlsruhe, Germany; Lugano, Switzerland; and Krems, Austria) and he is a Visiting Fellow at the University of Greenwich in London, UK.



**Taylor & Francis**

Taylor & Francis Group

<http://taylorandfrancis.com>

# Business Events

Second Edition

Rob Davidson

Second edition published 2019  
by Routledge  
2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon, OX14 4RN

and by Routledge  
52 Vanderbilt Avenue, New York, NY 10017

*Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business*

© 2019 Rob Davidson

The right of Rob Davidson to be identified as author of this work has been asserted by him in accordance with sections 77 and 78 of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reprinted or reproduced or utilised in any form or by any electronic, mechanical, or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publishers.

*Trademark notice:* Product or corporate names may be trademarks or registered trademarks, and are used only for identification and explanation without intent to infringe.

First edition published by Pearson 2002

*British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data*

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

*Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data*

A catalog record for this book has been requested

ISBN: 978-1-138-73574-3 (hbk)

ISBN: 978-1-138-73576-7 (pbk)

ISBN: 978-1-315-18634-4 (ebk)

Typeset in ITC Stone Serif  
by Apex CoVantage, LLC

Visit the eResources: [www.routledge.com/9781138735767](http://www.routledge.com/9781138735767)

This book is dedicated to Marion.  
In loving memory.



**Taylor & Francis**

Taylor & Francis Group

<http://taylorandfrancis.com>

# Contents

<i>List of figures</i>	x
<i>List of tables</i>	xi
<i>List of images</i>	xii
<i>List of case studies</i>	xiv
<i>List of 'It's my job' voice boxes</i>	xv
<i>Preface</i>	xvii
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	xix
<b>1 An introduction to business events</b>	<b>1</b>
Introduction to business events: concepts and definitions	1
The distinguishing characteristics of business events	2
Terminology	6
The benefits of business events	10
Measuring the benefits of business events	13
The costs of business events	16
<b>2 Corporate meetings</b>	<b>21</b>
Corporate communications	21
The uses of corporate meetings	23
The distinguishing characteristics of corporate meetings	27
Corporate meeting planners	30
The corporate meeting planning process	32
<b>3 Association conferences</b>	<b>61</b>
The role of associations	62
The distinguishing characteristics of association conferences	66
Planning association conferences	74
<b>4 SMERF meetings</b>	<b>105</b>
A sense of community	106
The SMERF meetings market	108
The distinguishing characteristics of SMERF meetings	110



Targeting and servicing the SMERF market	113
Planning SMERF events	116
<b>5 Awards ceremonies</b>	<b>123</b>
Recognising achievement	123
The distinguishing characteristics of awards ceremonies	127
The value of awards ceremonies	129
The market for awards ceremonies	134
Designing and delivering awards ceremonies	136
<b>6 Political meetings</b>	<b>157</b>
The uses of political meetings	157
The distinguishing characteristics of political meetings	164
Planning political meetings	168
<b>7 Incentive travel</b>	<b>183</b>
Motivation in the workplace	184
The distinguishing characteristics of incentive travel	186
The value of incentive travel	187
The market for incentive travel	190
Designing and delivering incentive travel programmes	195
<b>8 Exhibitions</b>	<b>219</b>
Marketing communications	220
The distinguishing characteristics of exhibitions	221
The value of exhibitions	224
The market for exhibitions	228
Organising exhibitions	237
<b>9 Corporate hospitality</b>	<b>265</b>
Relationship marketing	265
The distinguishing characteristics of corporate hospitality	267
The benefits of corporate hospitality	269
The challenges in using corporate hospitality	271
The corporate hospitality market	274
Planning corporate hospitality events	278
<b>10 Destination marketing for business events</b>	<b>291</b>
A history of convention bureaus	291
The governance and funding of convention bureaus	294
The marketing activities of convention bureaus	297
Convention bureau services for business events planners	313

<b>11 Business events knowledge</b>	<b>335</b>
The professionalisation of the business events industry	336
The role of formal education in business events	337
Defining the body of knowledge for business events	340
Professional development for the business events workforce	343
Research on the business events industry	346
<b>12 Sustainability for business events</b>	<b>367</b>
A history of sustainability	368
Business events and the natural environment	369
Business events and social legacy	378
Support for business events sustainability initiatives	383
<b>13 Business events ethics</b>	<b>403</b>
Personal ethics and professional ethics	404
Codes of ethics	404
Ethical issues in business events	407
Ethical codes for business events professionals	414
<b>14 Business events technology</b>	<b>421</b>
Technological innovation	421
Technology usage by the business events industry	422
Using the established technologies in business events	424
Using the emerging technologies in business events	432
Technology for exhibitions	435
Venue bandwidth	439
Looking ahead	441
<i>Index</i>	455

# Figures

1.1	Key motives and outcomes for meetings and events	13
2.1	The corporate meetings supply chain	33
2.2	The general objectives of corporate meetings	35
2.3	Seating configurations	39
3.1	The destination selection process for association conferences	69
3.2	The relative importance of conference destinations in delegates' motivation to attend	79
7.1	The use of intermediaries in incentive travel	195
9.1	The ladder of loyalty	267
10.1	YCB – 2018/2019 marketing and sales calendar	316
11.1	Development of the MSc in Business Events	359
13.1	Meetings & Events Australia code of ethics	417
14.1	New meetings technologies introduced from 2012–2017	423
14.2	Predicted uses of bandwidth 2017–2022	441

# Tables

1.1	The strategic purposes of face-to-face meetings	5
1.2	The categorisation of meetings	6
2.1	Venue types	37
3.1	Comparison of PCO and in-house management of association conferences	76
3.2	Association conference communications schedule	85
5.1	Types of awards	125
5.2	Examples of business events industry awards	126
6.1	G20 Summits since 2008	171
8.1	The principal industrial sectors for exhibitions	224
8.2	Exhibitions at the Dubai International Convention and Exhibition Centre in March 2018	229
8.3	Revenue of exhibition companies worldwide	236
8.4	The growth of Caf�x	245
9.1	Uses of corporate hospitality	270
10.1	Advantages and disadvantages of convention bureau governance and funding models	295
10.2	Business events online publications	302
10.3	Major business events exhibitions	308
10.4	Convention bureau assistance for event planners	315
11.1	Events industry certifications	345
11.2	UFI Exhibition Management degree modules	354
12.1	APEX/ASTM Environmentally Sustainable Meeting Standards	386
13.1	The growth of corporate codes of conduct	415
13.2	Ethical or not?	415
14.1	Attendify app features	444

# Images

2.1	ASOS Assembles	48
2.2	Siemens PLM Software Conference	51
2.3	Spacebase	53
2.4	Paul Bergamini	55
2.5	Erman Hendem	56
3.1	ISTH In Montpellier	88
3.2	WAML In Baku	93
3.3	Mathias Posch	98
3.4	Shani Kupershmidt	100
4.1	Ryan Lewis, NAFWB Convention Manager	118
5.1	Football Business Awards	142
5.2	Sensix	145
5.3	Serbia Tourism Flower Award	150
5.4	Matt Riley	151
6.1	The St Petersburg International Economic Forum	174
6.2	Lucie Čapková	177
7.1	Sage Platinum Elite	202
7.2	Goodyear incentive trip	205
7.3	Stéphanie Strika	208
7.4	Eda Ozden	210
7.5	Michelle Muscat	212
7.6	Lluís Amat	215
8.1	Caféx	241
8.2	InPrint	246
8.3	Fashion & Lifestyle Expo	253
8.4	Helga Boss	259
9.1	Epsom Downs	283
9.2	Emanuela Stigliani	286
10.1	European Lift Association	317
10.2	Prague Ambassador Awards Evening 2018	321
10.3	Marketa Rutova	323
10.4	Taubie Motlhabane	325
10.5	Birgitte Nestande	327
10.6	Olivier Ponti	330
11.1	CCMEP	349
11.2	EMD	352

11.3	Nellie Swart	360
11.4	Judith Mair	363
12.1	Glasgow's green convention team	388
12.2	Urban Agriculture Lab	391
12.3	Jenny Yu-Mattson	393
12.4	Guy Bigwood	396
14.1	NextCon	443
14.2	Foundry 45	446
14.3	Peter Komornik	447
14.4	Johnny Martinez	449

## CASE STUDIES

2.1	ASOS Assembles 2018	48
2.2	Siemens PLM Software's Converge European Consulting Conference	50
2.3	Spacebase	52
3.1	The International Society on Thrombosis and Haemostasis in Montpellier	88
3.2	The 23rd World Congress of Medical Law in Baku	93
4.1	The 81st National Association of Free Will Baptists Convention, Louisville, Kentucky	118
5.1	The Football Business Awards	142
5.2	Sensix Communications & Events: Involving the non-winners at an awards ceremony	145
5.3	The Asia Pacific Screen Awards	147
5.4	The Serbia Tourism Flower Award	150
6.1	The G20 Summit meetings	170
6.2	The St. Petersburg International Economic Forum 2017	174
7.1	Sage Platinum Elite 2017	202
7.2	Goodyear incentive trip	205
8.1	Caféx, Cairo	241
8.2	InPrint, the industrial print technology exhibition, Munich	246
8.3	Fashion & Lifestyle Expo, Skopje	253
9.1	The Investec Derby at Epsom Downs Racecourse	283
10.1	The European Lift Association conference in Lucerne	317
10.2	The Prague Convention Bureau Ambassador Programme	321
11.1	The Certified Croatian Meetings and Events Professional programme	349
11.2	The UFI Exhibition Management Degree	352
11.3	Edinburgh Napier University's MSc in Business Events	357
12.1	Glasgow Convention Bureau's sustainability initiatives	388
12.2	Montreal convention centre's Urban Agriculture Lab	391
14.1	The Attendify mobile event app at NextCon	443
14.2	Foundry 45 at Hannover Messe	446

## 'IT'S MY JOB' VOICE BOXES

Paul Bergamini, Project Director, Incite Group	55
Erman Hendem, Groups, Conventions and Events Sales Executive, Hilton Istanbul Bosphorus	56
Mathias Posch, President and Partner, International Conference Services Ltd	98
Shani Kupershmidt, Meeting Planner, Kenes Group	100
Matt Riley, Founder and CEO of The Conference Agency, Ltd	151
Lucie Čapková, Association Meetings Manager, Prague Convention Bureau	177
Stéphanie Strika, Incentive Project Manager, Experience Scotland	208
Eda Ozden, Director of Business Development, Meptur, Turkey	210
Michelle Muscat, Senior Account Manager, Destination Marketing Services, Sydney, Australia	212
Lluís Amat, Director, KLASS Representaciones Turísticas, Barcelona	215
Helga Boss, Exhibitions Manager, Messe Dornbirn	259
Emanuela Stigliani, Corporate Hospitality Manager, Federazione Italiana Rugby	286
Taubie Motlhabane, Executive Director, the Tshwane Convention & Visitors Bureau	325
Birgitte Nestande, Project Manager Events, Norway Convention Bureau	327
Olivier Ponti, Manager, Research, Amsterdam Marketing	330
Dr. Nellie Swart, Senior Lecturer at the University of South Africa	360
Dr. Judith Mair, Senior Lecturer in Event Management, University of Queensland	363
Jenny Yu-Mattson, Executive Director of Global Sustainability at Las Vegas Sands Corporation	393
Guy Bigwood, Group Sustainability Director, MCI	396
Peter Komornik, Co-founder and CEO of Slido	447
Johnny Martinez, Head of Marketing and Business Development, Shocklogic	449





**Taylor & Francis**

Taylor & Francis Group

<http://taylorandfrancis.com>

# Preface

At first sight, business events may understandably appear to lack much of the excitement, colour and glamour of their counterparts in the cultural, sports and social domains. After all, who doesn't enjoy a family wedding, a party, a rock concert, a football stadium packed with cheering fans? Events such as these are already familiar to and appreciated by most people even before they enter adulthood. By way of contrast, the words 'business events' – especially for those who have no direct experience of them – often conjure up uninspiring images of middle-aged men in suits sitting in windowless rooms struggling to keep their attention focused on protracted PowerPoint presentations of last month's sales figures.

My primary reason for writing this book is to fundamentally change that perception and to inspire readers by sharing with them my long-standing passion for business events and their power to bring people together to share their ideas, interests and enthusiasm with each other. Business events play a crucial role in the business, intellectual, and political lives of communities worldwide by providing settings in which people can congregate for the purposes of negotiation, education, deliberation, motivation and the celebration of their greatest professional achievements.

Events such as conferences, seminars and colloquia are important occasions for the creation and transfer of knowledge between participants which produce a wide range of outcomes, from innovative business practices and problem-solving to breakthroughs in scientific research that benefit society as a whole. Exhibitions play a vital role in providing companies and other organisations with an environment in which they can display their goods and services to potential buyers and network with others in the same industry. And incentive trips and award ceremonies are exciting, celebratory occasions designed to recognise and reward the successes and outstanding achievements of the participants.

The contents of this book are structured as follows. After an introductory chapter, eight chapters analyse the principal sectors of the business events industry: corporate meetings, association conferences, SMERF (social, military, educational, religious and fraternal) gatherings, awards ceremonies, political events, incentive travel, exhibitions and corporate hospitality. The topic of business events destination marketing is explored in Chapter 10. And this is followed by four thematic chapters focusing on knowledge, sustainability, ethics and technology for business events. The vast majority of chapters conclude with a number of real-life case studies illustrating some of the key points covered in the chapters. Many of these case studies are written in the words of young men and women from around the world who have chosen business events as their career paths.

Their obvious enthusiasm and their dedication to their work should reinforce my overall intent in writing this book: that it should become a source of inspiration for others who may be motivated to invest their talent, creativity and energy in the business events industry of tomorrow.

Rob Davidson  
London 2018

# Acknowledgements

This book could not have been written without the cooperation of the many people all over the world who kindly provided detailed information for the case studies. I am indebted to all of them for their valuable time and patience, as well as their very positive attitude towards this project.

Jane Ali-Knight, Edinburgh Napier University  
Lluís Amat, Klass Representaciones Turísticas  
Paul Barron, Edinburgh Napier University  
Stella Bedeur, European Lift Association  
Jörg Beier, Global Association of the Exhibition Industry  
Marie-Dominique Bellamy-Clauzel, Office de tourisme & des congrès Montpellier  
Méditerranée Métropole  
Paul Bergamini, Incite Group  
Guy Bigwood, MCI  
Jared Bodnar, Attendify  
Helga Boss, Messe Dornbirn  
Adem Braco Suljić, MEETEX  
Simon Burton, Exposure Communications  
Tatiana Canaval, BCD Meetings & Events  
Lucie Čapková, Prague Convention Bureau  
Michael Caplan, Sensix Communications & Events  
Daniel Cooper, The Jockey Club  
Aileen Crawford, Glasgow Convention Bureau  
Jovan Dragić, Serbia Tourism Organisation  
Amanda Evans, Primary  
Ranko Filipović, Croatian Meeting Professionals Association  
Isaline Grichting, Lucerne Convention Bureau  
Michael Hawkins, Asia Pacific Screen Awards  
Erman Hendem, Hilton Istanbul Bosphorus  
Lisa Hurley, Special Events Magazine  
Julian Jost, Spacebase  
Tzveta Kambourova, Prague Convention Bureau  
Peter Komornik, Slido  
Shani Kupershmidt, Kenes  
Ryan Lewis, National Association of Free Will Baptists  
Chrystine Loriaux, Palais des congrès de Montréal

Judith Mair, University of Queensland  
Vugar Mammadov, World Association for Medical Law  
Johnny Martinez, Shocklogic  
Omar Massoud, Events Middle East  
Taubie Motlhabane, Tshwane Convention & Visitors Bureau  
Robert Metzger, 24 Degrees  
Louise Murray, ASOS  
Michelle Muscat, DMS  
Birgitte Nestande, Norway Convention Bureau  
Daria Ostrovskaya, Russia Convention Bureau  
Eda Ozden, Meptur  
Olivier Ponti, Amsterdam Marketing  
Mathias Posch, ICS  
Thomas Reiser, International Society on Thrombosis and Haemostasis  
Jan Rienermann, 24 Degrees  
Matt Riley, The Conference Agency  
Ognena Ristovska, Momentum  
Sergio Roth, Lucerne Convention Bureau  
Markéta Růtová, Prague Convention Bureau  
Dan Stevens, Primary  
Emanuela Stigliani, Federazione Italiana Rugby  
Stéphanie Strika, Experience Scotland  
Nellie Swart, University of South Africa  
Stefanie Thiele, Mack Brooks Exhibitions Group  
Mandy Torrens, Reed Travel Exhibitions  
Laraine Wilkinson, Foundry 45  
Jenny Yu-Mattson, Sands

# 1

# An introduction to business events

## Business events in the 21st century

- 3,000 of the world's leading experts on robots gathered in Brisbane, Australia for the International Conference on Robotics and Automation. The 5-day event offered a series of interactive presentations, seminars and a technical tour of Queensland University of Technology's laboratories.
- Over 15,000 managers and owners from the hospitality industry attended The Hotel Show Africa in South Africa's Gallagher Convention Centre to view a vast range of products for hotels and restaurants, from furnishings and catering equipment to staff uniforms and surveillance systems.
- 64 educators from all over Canada received their nation's highest honours for excellence in teaching at a prestigious awards ceremony in Ottawa, attended by the Prime Minister.
- Ten top-performing Hong Kong-based distributors of Young Living Essential Oils won an all-expenses-paid incentive trip to Croatia, which included a visit to the company's premises in Split, where flowers are grown for use in Young Living's products.

## Chapter objectives

On completion of this chapter the reader should be able to:

- Understand the role played by business events in society.
- Identify the principal distinguishing characteristics of business events.
- Understand the various terminologies used to describe business events.
- Appreciate the various benefits of business events and how they may be measured.
- Appreciate the environmental and economic costs of business events.

## Introduction to business events: concepts and definitions

It is impossible to imagine how human society could have evolved into our highly interconnected and globalised modern world if the type of events analysed in this book had

not existed in various forms since the earliest days of mankind's use of language. The human drive to meet for the purposes of conferring and trading has been one of the principal factors in our remarkable evolution as a species. Whether the gathering was a tribal sharing of hunting knowledge or ancestral stories; or whether it was the more formal gatherings of ancient Greek or Roman patricians for the seeking of consensus on law and government; or whether it was a medieval fair at which artisans and farmers displayed their products for sale, such events have been an essential element in the development of civilisation and the advancement of human achievement.

In the 21st century, face-to-face business events continue to represent a vital channel for trade and for knowledge transfer and knowledge creation, playing a crucial role in the business, intellectual, and political lives of communities worldwide. They also constitute a major global economic activity, as an entire industry has emerged, comprising the specialist professionals who plan, design and host business events. The activities of many of these individual professions will be highlighted in the pages of this book.

Fundamental to all business events is the basic objective of facilitating *communication* between the participants. Accordingly, they may be defined as planned, time-bound events that bring together colleagues from similar industries, professions or interest groups to connect with each other in order to share ideas and information, to make decisions, or simply to enjoy and celebrate their work-related achievements. But while most business events have multiple purposes, the fundamental objective is almost always to change the behaviour of the participants in some way, through the facilitating of education, negotiation, inspiration, motivation, celebration and business connections between participants.

Individual chapters of this book analyse the specific characteristics and uses of the principal types of business events and the ways in which they may be designed and planned for maximum effectiveness: corporate meetings, association conferences, SMERF (social, military, educational, religious and fraternal) gatherings, awards ceremonies, governmental and political events, incentive travel, exhibitions, and corporate hospitality. It can be seen from this list of sectors of the business events industry that the definition of 'business' employed here goes beyond simple commerce and trade to encompass, for example, the business of government and the business of associations, whether they represent a particular profession or an interest or cause entirely unrelated to the members' employment.

## The distinguishing characteristics of business events

While business events take a great number of different forms, they demonstrate several characteristics that are common to all types.

### *Location*

The vast majority of business events take place in towns and cities. These are the most commonly used destinations as most of them offer the supporting infrastructure required for the

hosting of conferences, exhibitions and political events – for example: venues, hospitality suppliers and multiple transport connections. They also tend to offer the type of prestigious sporting and cultural events that are the focus of most corporate hospitality experiences.

But there are exceptions to this rule, and business events are not exclusively confined to urban centres. Incentive trips, for example, may take place in resorts and spas or in wilderness areas offering nature-based activities for participants. And, for security reasons, high-profile political conferences such as the gatherings of the G20 group of nations have occasionally been held in remote communities such as mountain villages or on small islands, where the participants can be more easily protected from disturbances created by protestors. These examples are, however, fairly rare exceptions to the general rule that business events are predominantly urban-based.

### *Timing*

In terms of days of the week, by far most business events are held between Monday and Friday, which tend to be the working days of the majority of participants in Western societies. For corporate meetings in those countries, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays are usually the peak periods, as witnessed by the higher rates often charged by venues for meetings held on those days. Spring and autumn are the peak seasons for business events, which generally avoid the summer months, when potential participants' ability to attend can be limited by their personal holiday plans.

It can be seen from the above patterns that the timing of most business events is complementary to the seasonality of leisure travel, most of which takes place at weekends and during the traditional holiday period of the summer months. This complementarity with leisure travel adds to the appeal, for destinations and suppliers such as hotels, of hosting business events, which can offer them a means of levelling out the peaks and troughs of tourism's seasonality patterns.

### *Mobility*

With very few exceptions, the organisers of business events are able to use a degree of discretion in their choice of destinations for the events they plan, because such events tend to be extremely flexible in terms of where they are held. For example, annual events such as association conferences and incentive trips almost always change their destination from year to year, as a means of making themselves more attractive to potential participants. Even exhibitions, which may be held in the same venue and destination for many years, are also capable of being moved by the organisers to a different location if there is a strong business case for doing so. This characteristic of business events makes them an important focus of the marketing and promotion strategies of destinations and suppliers aiming to influence the organisers' decisions as to where the events are held. The techniques used by destination marketing organisations to win business events for their countries and cities are explored in Chapter 10.

The mobile quality of business events is often contrasted with the non-discretionary nature of individual business travel, the destinations of which are generally determined



by the location of the assignment to be carried out by the traveller. The objective of such trips could be, for example, to 'visit clients to close deals, pitch for business or provide product support; and visit sub-contractors and suppliers to monitor quality control or negotiate new business' (Beaverstock et al., 2010:1). Opportunities for destinations to attract individual business trips are extremely limited, as the locations of such trips are pre-determined and beyond the influence of the promotional activities of destination marketing organisations and individual venues.

### *Fusion*

Although the different sectors of the business events industry – corporate meetings, association conferences, SMERF gatherings, awards ceremonies, governmental and political events, incentive travel, exhibitions, and corporate hospitality – are widely accepted to be discrete types of events, each with its own objectives and formats, in practice they are often combined into hybrid forms. For example, many large conferences include an exhibition of products and services of interest to the participants. Accordingly, a major conference for dentists may have, running in parallel in the same venue, an exhibition of dental tools, equipment and drugs that participants can visit during breaks in the conference programme. Similarly, most exhibitions are accompanied by an educational seminar programme, whereby visitors are able to attend presentations by experts and panel discussions related to the topic of the exhibition. And many incentive trips include a work element such as a half-day training session or a brainstorming meeting. This fusion between different types of business event is characteristic of this industry and it offers the potential to add considerable value to the events, from the participants' point of view.

### *In-person interaction*

Even in the age of widespread electronic communication, the type of in-person interaction facilitated by business events represents a major aspect of their distinctive and enduring power. From a psychological perspective, there are a number of characteristics of face-to-face events that give them considerable advantages over other forms of communication. Arvey (2009) outlines these as follows:

- Face-to-face meetings allow members to engage in and observe verbal and non-verbal behavioural styles not captured in most computer-mediated communication.
- Face-to-face meetings occur in 'real time' as opposed to non-synchronised time. Computer-mediated communications can be delayed for a variety of reasons, not always received, and sometimes disrupted because of technical problems.
- Face-to-face business meetings provide human contact, which is a fundamental primitive need among human beings, as we are social creatures.
- Face-to-face business meetings afford participants opportunities to develop transparency and trust among each other in ways that are not always possible with other forms of communications.

- Face-to-face business meetings allow members to evaluate and judge the integrity, competencies and skills (for example, the verbal skills) of other participants and leaders in ways that are not easily evaluated in computer-mediated communications.

Nevertheless, it is undeniable that the extraordinary advances in technology-enabled communication formats in the 21st century have produced systems that, for the organisers of some types of event, provide an attractive alternative to in-person events at which all participants are physically present. This theme is explored in Chapter 14, which focuses on technology.

McEuen and Duffy (2010) contend that the decision as to whether to use technology-enabled formats for meetings or to bring the participants physically together is an extremely important one, because face-to-face meetings require the greatest investment of all meeting types, and thus carry the greatest expectations for a high return on investment. But these authors highlight three business situations in which they believe that a face-to-face format is most likely to be the best approach:

- 1 *To capture attention:* when participants' full attention is required, as the objective of the event is to initiate something new or different, such as a new or different relationship, culture, strategy or product
- 2 *To inspire a positive emotional climate:* when, in recognition of the power of inspiration and the importance of a positive emotional climate as a real currency of business, the event is designed to energise and inspire participants
- 3 *To build human networks and relationships:* when, in acknowledgement of the fact that information and resources are not the only things needed for work to get done effectively, the objective of the event is to build human networks and relationships.

Table 1.1 provides examples of business events in these three categories.

**Table 1.1 The strategic purposes of face-to-face meetings**

Broad Business Need	Examples of Specific Business Needs
Capture Attention for Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Initiate a new strategic direction for the organization.</li> <li>• Launch a new product or suite of products.</li> <li>• Merge two cultures into a new culture.</li> <li>• Renew focus and attention on an existing strategy.</li> </ul>
Inspire a Positive Emotional Climate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Annual or semi-annual meetings to energize people around company goals, values, and priorities.</li> <li>• Inspirational events to build community and cohesion toward a shared interest or goal.</li> <li>• Recognition events to celebrate top performing individuals and teams.</li> <li>• Celebration events that mark important milestones.</li> </ul>

(Continued)

Table 1.1 (Continued)

Broad Business Need	Examples of Specific Business Needs
Build Human Networks and Relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Annual or semi-annual meetings to enable cultural cohesion and relationship-building.</li> <li>• For dispersed workforces, a regular rhythm of face-to-face meetings to build trust and effective working relationships.</li> <li>• Practitioner, user group, and professional community conferences.</li> <li>• Dynamic knowledge-sharing and innovation summits.</li> </ul>

Source: McEuen, M. B., & Duffy, C. (2010).

## Terminology

Davidson and Hyde (2014) observe that any analysis of the business events industry inevitably encounters problems of terminology. Despite the rapid growth of the industry – or perhaps, *because* of that rapid growth, there is still a lack of standardised, universally accepted terminology for discussion of the industry as a whole and its constituent sectors. Many terms are used interchangeably, and even within the English language terminology, there are marked differences between how certain concepts are labelled in North American English and in English as the language is used in Europe. For example, the designations ‘conference’, ‘convention’ and ‘congress’ are variously used in the UK, the US and the European continent, respectively, to define large-scale meetings (Marques and Santos, 2017). The nuances between the various uses of these three terms are demonstrated in Table 1.2, together with additional definitions as proposed by the Convention Industry Council.

Table 1.2 The categorisation of meetings

Conferences/ Conventions/ Congresses	A general term covering all non business-oriented gatherings of participants at a predetermined site and time to attend an organized meeting in which they have an interactive, debating, seminar, and/or competitive role, and of which the theme or purpose may be of any nature. These are hosted by professional, trade, or other non-corporate organisations. (See also specific definitions below).
Conference	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Participatory meeting designed for discussion, fact-finding, problem-solving and consultation.</li> <li>2) An event used by any organization to meet and exchange views, convey a message, open a debate or give publicity to some area of opinion on a specific issue. No tradition, continuity, or periodicity is required to convene a conference. Although not generally limited in time, conferences are usually of short duration with specific objectives. Conferences are generally on a smaller scale than congresses.</li> </ol>

Convention	<p>1) A general and formal meeting of a legislative body, social, or economic group in order to provide information, deliberate or establish consent or policies among participants. In the United States, the term is used to describe large, usually national meetings of business circles, for discussion and/or commercial exhibition.</p> <p>2) An event where the primary activity is to attend educational sessions, participate in meetings/discussions, socialise, or attend other organised events.</p> <p>There is a secondary exhibition component.</p>
Congress	<p>1) The regular coming together of large groups of individuals, generally to discuss a particular subject. A congress will often last several days and have several simultaneous sessions. The length of time between congresses is usually established in advance of the implementation stage and may be pluri-annual or annual. Most international or world congresses are of the former type while national congresses are more frequently held annually.</p> <p>2) Meeting of an association of delegates or representatives from constituent organizations.</p> <p>3) European term for convention.</p>
Seminar	<p>1) Lecture and dialogue allowing participants to share experiences in a particular field under the guidance of an expert discussion leader.</p> <p>2) A meeting or series of meetings from 10 to 50 specialists who have different specific skills but have a common interest and come together for learning purposes. The work schedule of a seminar has the specific objective of enriching the skills of the participants.</p>
Trade show/business exhibition	<p>1) An exhibition of products and/or services held for members of a common industry. The primary activity of attendees is visiting exhibits on the show floor.</p> <p>These events focus primarily on business-to-business relationships, but part of the event may be open to the general public.</p> <p>2) Display of products or promotional material for the purpose of public relations, sales and/or marketing.</p>
Incentive event	A reward event intended to showcase persons who meet or exceed sales or production goals.
Corporate/business meeting	<p>1) Business-oriented meeting usually hosted by a corporation, in which participants represent the same company, corporate group or client/provider relationships.</p> <p>2) Gathering of employees or representatives of a commercial organisation. Usually, attendance is required and most expenses are paid for by the organisation.</p>

Source: Adapted from Convention Industry Council (2011).

The lack of standardised terminology presents a number of problems in communication both within the industry and with other stakeholders, not least the challenge of making international comparisons of meetings industry data for statistical analyses, as there is often no consistency in characterising the size and type of meetings, for

example (UNWTO, 2006). In the ongoing absence of a standardised terminology, various acronyms have been used in recent times to define the set of different activities that comprise business events. Marques and Santos (2017) identify some of these as MECE (Meetings, Events, Conventions, Exhibitions), MCE (Meetings, Conventions, Exhibitions), CEMI (Conventions, Exhibitions, Meetings, Incentives), MC & IT (Meetings, Conventions & Incentive Travel) and MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conventions, Exhibitions).

However, it is the last of these, MICE, that has entered furthest into common currency in academic and practitioner circles, joined by three others, business tourism, the meetings industry and business events. Each of these will now be considered in turn:

- *MICE* as an acronym holds considerable appeal as a memorable, shorthand expression, but its use is beset with problems. For example, there is no universally agreed definition of what MICE stands for. In addition to the version cited by Marques and Santos, MICE has been variously defined as Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibitions, and Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Events, with the term 'Congresses' occasionally being substituted for 'Conferences'. However, the main problem with this term is that practically no-one outside this industry understands what it means, not least the politicians whose support is so vital to the industry's growth. It is criticised by many practitioners as being merely a convenient private joke, lacking wider recognition and even presenting an impediment to the industry being taken seriously, due to the term's association with rodents and vermin. Nevertheless, although rarely used in the US, the world's largest market for business events, the term MICE has been widely adopted elsewhere – in particular in those regions in which the industry is growing rapidly, such as the Middle East and South-East Asia. In China, for example, the title of the leading trade publication is *MICE China* and the annual event to celebrate this industry is named World MICE Day ([www.worldmiceday.com](http://www.worldmiceday.com)).
- *Business tourism* is also well established, particularly in academic circles, where tourism educators and researchers have made a substantial contribution to our understanding of this industry, as will be explored in Chapter 11. However, there is growing recognition in academia as well as by practitioners that the link between certain types of business events and tourism is at best tenuous. While the behaviour of participants in some forms of business events somewhat resembles that of leisure tourists – travelling outside their normal places of work and residence and making use of facilities such as hotel accommodation in the same way that holidaymakers do – participation in other types of business events demonstrates a very different pattern of consumption. For example, those attending one-day corporate meetings in a local hotel, an evening awards ceremony in their own town or an afternoon at a nearby corporate hospitality event may travel a very short distance and make no use of accommodation facilities. Moreover, the term is hardly ever used in

North American English, where 'business' and 'tourism' are contrasting terms and to combine them would amount to an oxymoron.

- *The meetings industry* as a term was officially introduced in 2006 as an attempt by a number of organisations including the International Congress and Convention Association, Meeting Professionals International, Reed Travel Exhibitions and the United Nations World Tourism Organization, to create a stronger image for the industry by replacing alternative terms such as MICE. According to this definition, the meetings industry includes activities based on the organisation, promotion, sale and hosting of meetings and other events. It encompasses products and services related to corporate, associative and governmental meetings, corporate incentives, seminars, congresses, conferences, conventions, exhibitions and fairs, whose objectives are related to the motivation of the participants, conducting business, the exchange of ideas, learning, socialising and debates or discussions (UNWTO, 2006). The term is in widespread use, even though the organisers of certain types of more celebratory occasions, such as awards ceremonies, incentive travel and corporate hospitality may not readily classify their events as 'meetings'.
- *Business events* is an alternative term that has been adopted more recently in some major markets such as Australia and Canada, based on the premise that business events have much in common with other types of events (cultural, sports or community events, for example) in the sense that they are planned, temporary occasions taking place in venues and aimed at specific, invited, audiences, with a focus on creating a meaningful experience and a temporary community for those attending or participating.

The Business Events Council of Australia (BECA), an industry body in Australia, defines business events as

any public or private activity consisting of a minimum of 15 persons with a common interest or vocation, held in a specific venue or venues, and hosted by an organisation (or organisations). This may include (but is not limited to) conferences, conventions, symposia, congresses, incentive group events, marketing events, special celebrations, seminar, courses, public or trade shows, product launches, exhibitions, company general meetings, corporate retreats, study tours or training programmes. The demand for a business event is driven mainly by organisations choosing it as a forum to communicate messages, to educate or train, to promote a product, to reward or celebrate, to collaborate on issues and solutions, or to generate resources.

The comprehensiveness of this definition and the fact that the expression is being rapidly adopted by practitioners and academics in the field of events management makes it the term of choice in this book.