



Making the most of our business visitors

"All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy"



"Cities and resorts in Britain can significantly increase their earnings from the conference and exhibition sector by persuading visiting delegates to extend their trips to the destination for leisure and recreational purposes".



Business Tourism leads the way

“When business tourism generates leisure tourism in these ways, everyone involved in the industry stands to gain.

And everyone can play a part in boosting the vast untapped benefits of this most profitable sector of the tourist industry.”

Representing almost a quarter of all tourism in this country, business tourism is comprised of attendance at conferences, trade fairs and exhibitions, incentive trips, corporate hospitality events and individual business trips.

With business travellers spending on average three times more than leisure visitors, this is by far the most lucrative, high spend, high yield form of tourism, bringing a whole host of benefits to the UK such as:

- £15 billion annually, of which £4 billion is from inbound visitors, bringing valuable foreign exchange.
- Jobs for over half a million people in this country which come, directly and indirectly, from business tourism – jobs which are year-round and permanent, just like business tourism itself.
- Regeneration opportunities for our urban and resort areas, through developments such as the construction of conference and exhibition centres.
- Significant inward investment and increased export earnings, stimulated in particular by trade fairs and exhibitions.

The UK's proven record of success at attracting business visitors is not in doubt, and the direct benefits to the UK are huge ...but there is much more you can do to maximise the indirect income generated from our business visitors. You can instantly increase the potential yield from our business visitors by taking some simple steps to encourage them to:

- Add leisure extensions to their business trips.
- Bring along friends or family members as their guests.
- Make the most of extra social events or opportunities to take excursions during their business trip.
- Return on another occasion for leisure purposes.

Reaping the full rewards of business tourism: what do you stand to gain?

Research into incremental expenditure by business visitors in the UK shows that currently:

- 17% of conference delegates are accompanied by a guest who is not a delegate.
- Delegates spend on average an extra 0.8 nights at the destination, before or after the business event they are attending, although this figure is higher for those attending association and academic conferences.
- 39% of delegates claim that they would be likely to return to the destination of the conference for a holiday or short break.

But, although these indirect benefits already represent considerable incremental spending for UK businesses, some of our competitor destinations are also achieving great success at reaping the full benefits of business visitors. For example:

- Conference visitors to France spend on average 4.5 days in that country, exactly one day longer than delegates to conferences in the UK.
- 42% of delegates attending conferences in Sydney are accompanied by one or more guests, compared to 17% for the UK.
- Foreign business visitors to Paris spend on average £170 per trip on shopping for clothes and gifts.
- 20% of foreign conference visitors to Germany combine the visit to the event with a holiday, meaning that half a million international visitors to conferences in Germany also become holidaymakers in that country.

Improving our own take-up of leisure opportunities by business visitors has the potential to create enormous additional benefits:

- If an additional 10% of the annual 6.8 million business visitors to Britain from overseas were to extend their visit by just 1 day for leisure purposes, then an estimated £50 million more would be earned on accommodation, food and drink, entertainment and shopping.
- This represents an extra 1,650 jobs on top of those already created by business tourism.

Add to this the opportunities for encouraging domestic business visitors to spend more time – and money – at their destinations, and the potential benefits to British businesses look even more attractive.

Many UK and overseas suppliers and intermediaries in the business tourism market are already taking steps to maximise the indirect benefits of business visitors, successfully rising to the challenges that must be met.

How do they do this?

1. GIVE EARLY INFORMATION:

It can be very difficult for business visitors to change their return travel dates or organise extra time off work at the last minute, so leisure extensions to business trips need to be planned well in advance. This means that it is absolutely vital to get tourism information and leisure extension ideas to business visitors well in advance of them making their travel arrangements.

Good practice:

The year before any association's conference is due to be hosted in Glasgow, the Glasgow Convention Bureau sends a member of staff to wherever the association is holding its conference that year, to set up a mini TIC promoting Scotland's attractions and pre-/post-conference tours.

Philadelphia Convention Bureau – motto: 'Come early, stay late' – arranges for a brochure promoting the leisure, cultural and gastronomic attractions of their city to be sent out to every convention delegate with the initial invitation to attend the event. The information in the brochure is tailored to the specific leisure interests of the delegates and carries the name and logo of the association. A reply-paid card in the brochure, which asks if delegates are bringing guests and/or extending their trips, is used to request further tourist information.

The Vegetarian Society, organisers of the World Vegetarian Congress (Edinburgh, July 2002), used a number of methods to showcase Scotland's tourist attractions and persuade their delegates to spend extra time there. The Society placed a link on the home page of the conference website to www.visitscotland.com and published details of the five-day post-conference tour and other excursions in their magazine.

2. SELL THE DESTINATION:

Understandably, the priority for conference organisers and hosts is for the event to be successful, so their main concern is with the logistics of the conference itself. But most organisers understand that 'selling' the attractions of the destination can be an effective way of boosting attendance figures, particularly in the association conference market. Making conference organisers fully aware of the destination's attractions and leisure opportunities is therefore essential.

Good practice:

In bid documents, Marketing Manchester places considerable emphasis on the options for pre- and post-conference tours, selling the destination as a gateway to more classic tourist destinations such as the Lake District, the Cotswolds and Stratford-Upon-Avon. They also include a section on such tours in any presentations they make to organising committees.

Familiarisation trips and site inspections provide Convention Bureaux and suppliers further opportunities to impress key decision-makers. Again, Marketing Manchester makes full use of these occasions to demonstrate how Manchester's location makes it very easy to reach some of the UK's most beautiful countryside and heritage.

In collaboration with the German National Tourist Board, the focus of the German Convention Bureau's 2003 marketing plan is to link the themed promotion of tourist attractions, cultural events, cuisine, and spa facilities to the marketing of business events. For example, visitors registering for INTERBAD, the Dusseldorf trade fair for swimming pools, pool and bath technology, saunas, and physiotherapy will receive details of German spa holidays; and visitors to ISPO, the ski, snowboard, surf and skating trade fair will be sent information, in advance, on active holidays in Germany.

3. PACKAGE ATTRACTIVE OFFERS:

The price must be right. Association delegates in particular may have already incurred considerable personal expense in attending the event itself, when they are paying out of their own pockets; and in the corporate market, leisure extensions are rarely funded by the delegate's employer. Promotional offers and attractive pricing can play a key role in persuading business visitors to extend their trip and/or bring a guest.

Good practice

The New York City Convention and Visitors Bureau operates a 'Convention Delegates Pass Program' in association with American Express, offering discounts and promotional offers at local restaurants, attractions theatres and shops, to delegates, who present their conference name badge and redeemable coupon and pay with an American Express card. Details of the scheme and participating businesses can be sent to delegates in advance, posted on the conference website, or included in registration packs.

Hilton Hotels operate a Leisure Connections scheme to encourage delegates to return to or remain in their UK hotels for leisure packages. Discounted rates are offered to the employees of Hilton's key corporate clients.

4. MEASURE THE BENEFITS:

It is vital that all stakeholders are made aware of the full value of this type of incremental spending by business visitors. That means taking care to measure the benefits of business visitors who extend their trip, return or bring guests, or any combination of these. Only when these indirect benefits are demonstrated will business tourism's full contribution to the UK economy be recognised.

Good practice:

As well as measuring the volume of extra time spent by delegates at the destination and the proportion of them bringing guests, the Sydney Convention Delegate Study asks business visitors about their plans to return, for leisure purposes. A recent example of this study demonstrated, for example, that while only 36% of international delegates attending conferences in Australia had considered visiting that country prior to their visit, after attending the conference, 76% of delegates said they would return to that country in the next five years

The Detroit Convention and Visitors Bureau's 'Let Us Entertain You' scheme provides conference delegates in that city with a book of coupons offering discounts at local shops and attractions, on car hire and on entrance to special events, if used at weekends. By tracking the number of coupons used in this way, Detroit is able to estimate the volume of business visitors extending their trips over the weekend.

What can you do to be a part of this?

Visitor and Convention Bureaux

You can maximise business visitors' spending at the destination and boost income for local businesses.

- Include information on local tours, attractions and events in familiarisation trips, bid documents and presentations to organising committees.
- Attend association conferences the year before they come to your destination and showcase the leisure opportunities offered by your own city and the surrounding area.
- Provide a Tourism Information desk at larger conferences and trade shows, during the event.
- Encourage Destination Management Companies to tailor tours, guest programmes and excursions to the interests of the particular delegate group.
- Suggest that planners time their events to begin just after, or end just before, key cultural/sports events at the destination.
- Consider setting up a discount scheme for business visitors, by involving local suppliers such as restaurants, shops, car-hire companies and attractions. Remember to publicise this well in advance.
- Offer conference and trade show organisers photographic material and tourism information to be included in their printed publicity material and on their websites.

Hotels

You can drive leisure business through your corporate base and increase your occupancy rate at weekends.

- At the time of booking, offer business visitors weekend extensions at a special discount, lower than the conference rate, if the guests are delegates.
- Offer business extenders complimentary 'add-ons' such as dinner.
- As an incentive to your key corporate customers booking meetings in your hotel, offer them special discounts on leisure breaks for their employees.
- Team up with local attractions to offer your business guests special themed packages, based on, for example, spa sessions or attendance at sports/cultural events.

Event Organisers

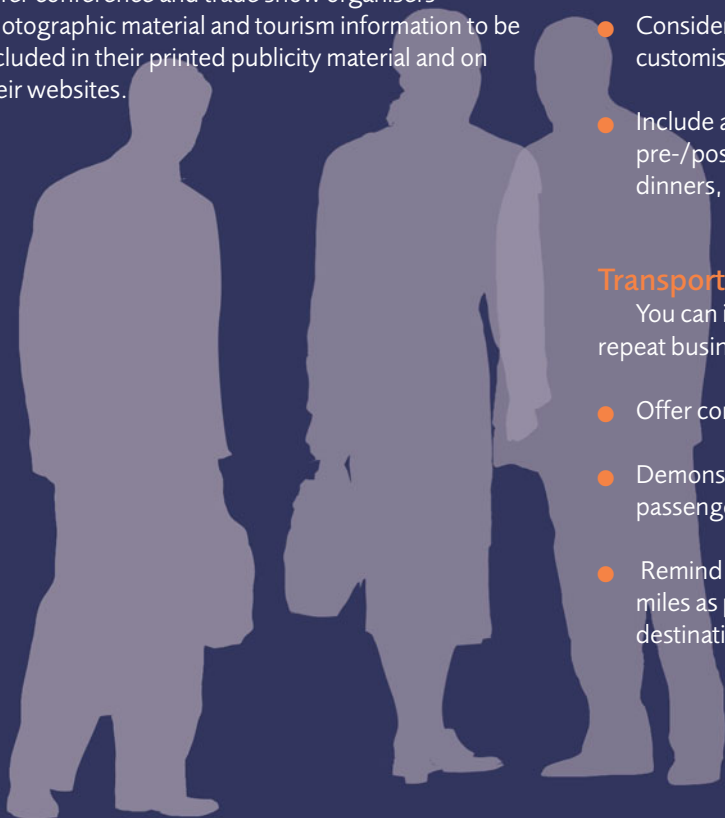
You can boost attendance at events and provide a fuller service to business visitors.

- Use every opportunity to make full use of the destination's tourist attractions to boost attendance figures for your event: in the initial publicity for the event, on your website, through newsletters, etc.
- Consider offering a guest programme of visits, specially customised to suit the interests of your delegates' guests.
- Include ample opportunity – such as organised pre-/post-conference tours, excursions and gala dinners, for your delegates to socialise with each other.

Transport Operators

You can increase passenger loads and encourage repeat business.

- Offer conference fares to delegates' guests.
- Demonstrate more flexibility concerning business passengers' return trips.
- Remind passengers of opportunities to use their air miles as payment for extra hotel nights at their destination at the time of booking,





The Business Tourism Partnership

The Partnership has the leading trade associations and government agencies with an interest in the sector as its members. It exists to lead the way in supporting a competitive, high quality and more profitable business tourism sector in Britain. These are:

- Association of British Professional Conference Organisers
- Association for Conferences and Events
- Association of Exhibition Organisers
- British Association of Conference Destinations
- British Hospitality Association
- British Incoming Tour Operators Association
- British Tourist Authority
- Business Tourism Scotland
- English Tourism Council
- Exhibition Venues Association
- Incentive Travel and Meetings Association
- International Congress & Convention Association (UK & Ireland)
- London Tourist Board & Convention Bureau
- Meetings Industry Association
- National Outdoor Events Association
- Northern Ireland Tourist Board
- Scottish Convention Bureau
- Venuemasters
- Wales Tourist Board

The work of the Business Tourism Partnership has the support of the Department for Culture, Media and Sport and the Department of Trade and Industry.

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BUSINESS TOURISM PARTNERSHIP
Leading the way

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