

*Fifth Edition*

# Meetings, Expositions, Events, *and* Conventions

## An Introduction to the Industry

George G. Fenich



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*Fifth Edition*

**George G. Fenich, PhD**



330 Hudson Street, NY NY 10013

*Dedicated in memory of Loretta Lowe, San Francisco MEEC industry  
veteran and faculty member at San Francisco State University*

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# PREFACE

The meetings, expositions, events, and conventions (MEEC, pronounced like *geese*) industry continues to grow and garner increasing attention from the hospitality industry, colleges and universities, and communities. This book gives a broad overview of this industry and is, thus, an introduction. It is not meant to provide a hands-on or step-by-step method for handling gatherings in the MEEC industry. The latter is addressed in two books by Fenich: *Planning and Management of Meetings, Expositions, Events, and Conventions* and *Production and Logistics in Meetings, Expositions, Events, and Conventions*. Both of the books are based on and aligned with the Meeting and Business Event Competency Standards (MBECS).

This book is being produced at this time for a number of reasons. One is the continued growth of this industry; in spite of the ebbs and flows of the economy, the MEEC segment of the hospitality industry remains resilient. Communities continue to build or expand MEEC venues unabated, and the private sector has also become a player in convention center construction and operation. People still feel a need for face-to-face meetings. The MEEC industry appears to be on a growth curve, and is of interest to many people.

Also, college faculties have indicated a need for a book such as this. I have been teaching an introductory MEEC course for many years and have found myself having to continually supplement the existing books to make them both current and more complete in addressing the various segments of the MEEC industry. Therefore, I began to contemplate the development of a book on the subject. Then, at a meeting of the Convention Special Interest Group at the International Council on Hotel, Restaurant, and Institutional Education (iCHRIE) Convention in 2001, the need for a new text was discussed. The members of this group all noted the need, and I volunteered to spearhead an effort to put together a new book using faculty and industry experts to write various chapters. This book is the culmination of that effort. The result is a text where some of the best and most notable people in the MEEC industry have made contributions; as you will see, there is a balance of educators and practitioners among the chapter contributors.

The approach to deciding on topics was unusual. Rather than have a list of topics or chapters based on people's willingness to contribute, a more scientific method was used. I reviewed existing books, both theoretical and practical, to ascertain which topics to cover. Topics that appeared in more than one text were compiled into a list. Then a number of meetings were held with educators, and the relative importance of topics was discussed, which led to the development of a comprehensive list of topics. This list was sent to educators and practitioners, who were asked to rank the importance of each topic as critically important, important, or not important. Results were used to pare down the list, and this iterative voting procedure (called the Delphi technique) was used to reach the decision as to what topics to include in this book. This fifth edition has not only updated material and statistics, but has also relied on feedback from adopters and reviewers to make improvements to the previous edition.

It should be noted that this industry is referred to in many ways: meetings and events, events, meeting planning, and others. A very common acronym, and one used extensively in Asia is "MICE," which stands for "meetings, incentives, conventions, events" and is pronounced as the plural of mouse. This acronym was purposely *not* chosen for the title of this text. The reason is that most programs of study deal with incentives or incentive travel very little, if at all. Furthermore, the incentive travel segment has evolved significantly in the past few years, moving away from trips that were strictly for pleasure (as a reward for performance) toward trips that have notable education and training

components. Thus, they are now much more like sales training meetings, motivational meetings, or team building exercises, but on a more grandiose scale. Thus, this book deals with meetings, expositions, events, and conventions.

## New in This Edition

- Case studies have been included at the end of each chapter and enable the student to apply the content in each chapter to real-life scenarios.
- All data has been updated to reflect the current state. This includes charts, tables and figures.
- The chapter on technology has been totally rewritten and updated, and artificial intelligence and big data have been added to the chapter.
- All-new chapters Chapter 13, Planning MEEC Events and Chapter 14, Producing MEEC Events are included.
- Chapter 15, International, features additional regions of the world, including Nigeria and Senegal and cities, including Kazan, Beijing, Sydney, and Rio De Janeiro.
- Chapter 16, Putting It All Together, is designed to tie all the other chapters together by providing an in-depth, detailed case study.
- The Glossary has been updated to include all key terms found in the chapters.

*Meetings, Expositions, Events, and Conventions* should be of interest to practitioners, educators, students, and the general public. It is the most up-to-date book on the MEEC industry, and will provide users with an overview of the industry. It is also comprehensive and covers a wider range of MEEC topics than any other book available. It can easily serve as the basis for an introductory college course on the subject, or for orientation sessions for new employees in the industry. It should meet the needs of anyone interested in knowing more about the MEEC industry.

## Online Supplements Accompanying the Text

An online Instructor's Manual, PowerPoint slides, and TestGen are available to Instructors at [www.pearsonhighered.com](http://www.pearsonhighered.com). Instructors can search for a text by author, title, ISBN, or by selecting the appropriate discipline from the pull-down menu at the top of the catalog home page. To access supplementary materials online, instructors need to request an instructor access code. Go to [www.pearsonhighered.com](http://www.pearsonhighered.com), click the Instructor Resource Center link, and then click Register Today for an instructor access code. Within 48 hours after registering, you will receive a confirming email including an instructor access code. Once you have received your code, go to the site and log on for full instructions on downloading the materials you wish to use.

# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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The Vancouver Convention Center is a unique venue.  
*David Wei/Alamy Stock Photo*

# CHAPTER 1

## Introduction to the Meetings, Expositions, Events, and Conventions Industry

### Chapter Objectives

- Define the foundational concepts relating to the meetings, exhibitions, events, and conventions industry.
- Outline the history of the events industry.
- Detail the evolution and maturation of the events industry.
- Articulate the ways in which ethical practices are important factors in the events industry.
- Discuss career definitions and opportunities for the meeting or events professional.
- Outline ongoing trends in the MEEC industry.

The meetings and events industry is a complex and multifaceted business and the professionals who support the planning and execution of events must bring a diverse set of skills and knowledge to the job.





The Olympic Games are one of the many aspects of the MEEC industry.  
rommma/Shutterstock

## What Is the Meetings, Expositions, Events, and Conventions Industry?

The **meetings, expositions, events, and conventions (MEEC)** industry is large and touches virtually every aspect of the hospitality industry. MEEC includes business sectors, such as travel and hospitality, convention and visitors' bureaus, corporate meeting planning, event venues, equipment providers, and more. The types of events that are part of the industry include: sporting events, such as the Olympics and Super Bowl; Social events like family reunions and weddings; corporate events, such as sales meetings and strategic planning meetings; business events, such as trade shows, consumer shows, county fairs, and much more.

The global MEEC industry is set to reach \$1.245 billion in 2023 which represents a 7.5 percent growth rate between 2017 and 2023. In the United States alone, more than 1.8 million events, conventions, and meetings occur each year with a combined total impact of almost \$400 billion. The MEEC industry contributes more to the gross domestic product than the motion picture, spectator sports, performing arts, and sound recording industries. Almost two million people in the United States are employed in this industry, and the event planner profession is projected to grow by 33 percent over the next ten years. Being a MEEC planner has been identified as one of the best business jobs.

Performing poorly at any of the hundreds of potential failure points, or “moments of truth” in a meeting or event, can affect the ability of the event organizers to achieve the objectives of the event and meet the needs of the participants. Poor performance can have financial and reputational impacts for years to come. A good experience by each attendee will result in praises; on the other hand, a negative experience tends to spread to even more people.

### Industry Terminology and Practice

We have always, generically, referred to gatherings of two or more people as meetings. This term could also encompass meetings that are called conventions, congresses, symposia, and so on, some of which could have tens of thousands of people in attendance. If one

adds displays of materials or products to a meeting, the meeting then has a trade show or **exposition** or **exhibition** component. When sporting, social, or life-cycle activities are added, then a generic term that encompasses them all is events. Even broader, and more generic, is the term gathering. One must be conscious of how your stakeholders or target audience will interpret the name that is applied to a specific gathering.

The following list of terms is important for anyone involved in the MEEC industry to know. The terms were developed by the terminology panel of Accepted Practices Exchange, a part of the Events Industry Council, and are a small sample of the thousands of words that apply to this industry. The complete glossary of terms used in the MEEC industry can be found online at [www.eventscouncil.org](http://www.eventscouncil.org). Terms from the Events Industry Council are used throughout this book with their permission.

### MEEC INDUSTRY TERMS

- **Assembly:** (1) A general or formal meeting of an organization attended by representatives of its membership for the purpose of deciding legislative direction, policy matters, and the election of internal committees; and for approving balance sheets, budgets, and so on. Consequently, an assembly usually observes certain rules of procedure for its meetings, mostly prescribed in its articles and bylaws. (2) The process of erecting display-component parts into a complete exhibit.
- **Break-Out Sessions:** Small group sessions, panels, workshops, or presentations offered concurrently within an event, formed to focus on specific subjects. Break-out sessions are separate from the general session, but within the meeting format, and formed to focus on specific subjects. These sessions can be arranged by basic, intermediate, or advanced information; or divided by interest areas or industry segment.
- **Clinic:** A workshop-type educational experience where attendees learn by doing.
- **Conference:** (1) A participatory meeting designed for discussion, fact-finding, problem solving, and consultation. (2) An event used by any organization to meet and exchange views, convey a message, open a debate, or for publicity of 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. *See also:* Congress and Convention.
- **Congress:** (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 can be either semiannual or annual. Most international or world congresses are of the former type, whereas national congresses are more frequently held annually. (2) The European term for a convention. *See also:* Conference and Convention.
- **Convention:** Gathering of delegates, representatives, and members of a membership or industry organization convened for a common purpose. Common features include educational sessions, committee meetings, social functions, and meetings to conduct the governance business of the organization. Conventions are typically recurring events with specific, established timing. *See also:* Meeting, Exhibition, Trade Show, and Consumer Show.
- **Event:** An organized occasion, such as a meeting, convention, exhibition, special event, gala dinner, social gathering, and so on. An event is often composed of several different yet related functions.
- **Exhibition:** An event at which products, services, or promotional materials are displayed to attendees visiting exhibits on the show floor. These events focus primarily on business-to-business (B2B) relationships (same as an Exposition or Trade Show).
- **Exposition:** *See* Exhibition.
- **Forum:** (1) An open discussion with an audience, panel, and moderator. A meeting, or part of a meeting, set aside for an open discussion by recognized participants on subjects of public interest.

- **Institute:** An in-depth instructional meeting providing intensive education on a subject.
- **Lecture:** An informative and instructional speech.
- **Meeting:** An event where the primary activity of the attendees is to attend educational sessions, participate in meetings/discussions, socialize, or attend other organized events. There is no exhibit component to this event.
- **Panel Discussion:** An instructional technique using a group of people chosen to discuss a topic in the presence of an audience.
- **Seminar:** (1) A lecture and dialogue allowing participants to share experiences in a particular field under the guidance of an expert discussion leader. (2) A meeting or series of meetings of 10 to 50 specialists who have different, specific skills but have a specific common interest, and come together for training or learning purposes. The work schedule of a seminar has the specific objective of enriching the skills of the participants.
- **Social Life-Cycle Events:** Events that mark the passage of time in a human life, such as weddings, bar and bat mitzvahs, anniversaries, and, today, even funerals.
- **Symposium:** A meeting of many experts in a particular field, during which papers are presented and discussed by specialists on particular subjects with a view to making recommendations concerning the problems under discussion.
- **Trade Show:** An exhibition of products and/or services held for members of a common or related industry that is not open to the general public. If it is open to the public, it is called a Consumer Show. Compare with Gate Show, Public Show, and Consumer Show. *See also:* Exhibition, Gate Show, Public Show, and Consumer Show.
- **Workshop:** (1) A meeting of several persons for intensive discussion. The workshop concept has been developed to compensate for diverging views in a discipline or on a subject. (2) An informal and public session of free discussion organized to take place between formal plenary sessions or commissions of a congress or of a conference, either on a subject chosen by the participants themselves or on a special problem suggested by the organizers. (3) A training session in which participants, often through exercises, develop skills and knowledge in a given field.

## The Organizational Structure of the Hospitality Industry: How MEEC Fits in

MEEC is a part of, and encompasses, many elements of the hospitality and tourism industry. To understand how MEEC is related to the hospitality and service industry, one must understand the organization and structure of the tourism and hospitality industry itself.

There are five major divisions, or segments, of the tourism and hospitality industry: lodging, food and beverage, transportation, attractions, and entertainment.

The hospitality and tourism industry is multifaceted. The framework offered in the following list is meant to help provide a basic understanding of the industry, and is not intended to be an all-inclusive inventory.

### Lodging

The lodging segment consists of all types of places where travelers may spend the night. These can include hotels, conference centers, resorts, motels, bed-and-breakfasts, Air BnB accommodations, and college dormitories. The important characteristics of this segment are that they are available to the public and charge a fee for usage.

### Food and Beverage

Obviously, this segment contains two sub-segments: food service operations, and beverage operations. Food service operations can include the following: table service facilities that can be further broken down by price, such as high, medium, and low; by type of service, such as luxury, quick service, and so on; or by cuisine, such as American, East Asian, Italian, and others. Food service also embraces other types of operations including caterers

and institutional operations (hospitals, schools, nursing homes, and so on). Beverage operations can also be broken down by price or type of service, and whether they serve alcoholic beverages or not.

## Transportation

This segment includes any means or modality that people use to get from one place to another, including walking. The better-known elements include air, water, and ground transportation.

*Air transportation:* This sub-segment includes regularly scheduled airline carriers, such as Delta or Lufthansa, as well as charter air services that can involve jets, propeller aircraft, and helicopters.

*Water transportation:* This sub-segment includes cruise ships, paddle wheelers, charter operations, ferries, and water taxis. Cruise ships are a significant element since they not only provide transportation but lodging, food and beverage, entertainment, and meeting facilities.

*Ground transportation:* This sub-segment includes private automobiles, taxis, limousines, jitneys, buses, trains, cog railways, cable cars, monorails, horse-drawn vehicles, and even elephants and camels.

## Attractions

This segment of the hospitality and tourism industry includes anything that attracts people to a destination. This segment can be further divided into natural and person-made attractions.

*Natural attractions:* This sub-segment includes national parks, mountains, seashores, lakes, forests, swamps, and rivers.

*Person-made attractions:* This sub-segment consists of things made or constructed by human beings, including buildings such as monuments, museums, theme parks, zoos, aquariums, and so on.

## Entertainment

This includes anything that provides entertainment value for a guest, such as movie theaters, playhouses, orchestras, bands, and festivals.

## Overlapping Industries

There are many overlaps between these categories, for example: A hotel may be an attraction in itself, such as the CityCenter in Las Vegas. Hotels often have food and beverage outlets, attractions, and entertainment. Furthermore, some of the businesses mentioned earlier cater to tourists, meeting attendees, and local residents alike. It would seem, then, that the meetings and events industry is involved with all segments of the hospitality and tourism industry.

Understanding the interactions and complexities of the hospitality and tourism industry helps explain why it is difficult to determine the size and scope of these industries. Until the late 1990s, the US government, using its North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) codes, did not even track many elements of these industries.

Because travel and tourism is not a single industry, producing a single product, it cannot be measured in its true form by a singular NAICS code. Travel and Tourism Satellite Accounts (TTSA's) are a relatively new economic statistical method to measure more accurately the impact of the travel and tourism industries on the US economy. Similarly, meetings and events cannot be measured by a single industry measure. The **Events Industry Council (EIC)** undertakes a research project every three or four years to measure the economic significance of the meetings and events industry.



## History of the Industry

Gatherings, meetings, events, and conventions (of sorts) have been a part of people's lives since the earliest recorded history. Archeologists have found primitive ruins from ancient cultures that were used as meeting areas where citizens would gather to discuss common interests, such as government, war, hunting, or tribal celebrations. Once humans developed permanent settlements, each town or village had a public meeting area, often called a town square, where residents could meet, talk, and celebrate. Under the leadership of Alexander the Great, over half a million people traveled to Ephesus (now Turkey) to see exhibitions, which included acrobats, magicians, animal trainers, and jugglers. Andrew Young, the former US ambassador to the United Nations, said at a Meeting Professionals International (MPI) meeting in Atlanta in the mid-1990s that he was sure there would have been a meeting planner for the Last Supper, and certainly for the first Olympics. In Ancient Rome, organized meetings to discuss politics and decide the fate of the empire were held at the Forum. Ancient Rome also had the Colosseum, which was the site of major sporting events such as gladiatorial contests—someone had to organize them. Using excellent roadways, the Romans were able to establish trade markets to entice people to visit their cities. In Old England, there were fictional stories of King Arthur's Round Table, another example of a meeting that discussed the trials and tribulations of the day. Religious gatherings of various faiths and pilgrimages to Mecca are examples of religious meetings and festivals that began centuries ago. The Olympics began as an ancient sporting event that was organized as similar events are today. World's fairs and expositions are still another piece of the MEEC industry.

The First Continental Congress in Philadelphia is an example of a formal meeting; in this case, it was to decide the governance of the thirteen colonies. Political conventions have a long history in the United States and are part of the MEEC industry. Americans



Mardi Gras in New Orleans.  
*Wendy Kaveney Photography/Shutterstock*



have also made festivals and celebrations of every sort, such as Mardi Gras in New Orleans, a part of their lives since the early days of this country, and events like these can also be part of the MEEC industry.

Today, structures supporting the MEEC industry are integral parts of major cities. It is a well-known fact that in order to be considered a *world-class city*, a community must have a convention center and a stadium or arena for sports and events. All the largest cities have them, including New York; Washington, DC; Barcelona; Chicago; London; Moscow; Pretoria; and Hong Kong. These public facilities attract out-of-town attendees for conventions and events, and are an important economic driver for the community.

In spite of the long history of meetings, meeting planning as a recognized profession has only more recently been developed. The development of the first academic meeting-planning program in the United States was approved by the state of Colorado in September of 1976, and was implemented by Metropolitan State College (now University) in Denver. This initiative was closely followed by the meeting-planning program at Northeastern Oklahoma University in Tahlequah. In 1979, Patti Shock started hotel convention service management and meeting-planning classes at Georgia State University (GSU). In 1983, trade show classes were added with the financial support of the National Association of Exposition Managers (NAEM) (now the International Association of Exhibitions and Events, IAEE), and the International Association of Fairs and Expositions (IAFE). Today, there are almost 700 academic programs worldwide, and more than 150 in the United States alone that teach about MEEC.

One factor that contributed to the rapid development of both industry education and academic programs during the 1980s was the development and implementation of the **Certified Meeting Professional (CMP)** examination and designation by the Convention Liaison Council (now the Events Industry Council). This certification gives both status and credence to the person who achieves it. Additional certificate programs have followed, including the Certified Meeting Manager (CMM), Certified Destination Marketing Executive (CDME), Certified in Exhibition Management (CEM), and others.

The Events Industry Council (previously, the Convention Liaison Council) has lead its constituent organizations in the professionalizing of the industry through certification, best practice, and education since its founding in New York in 1949 by four organizations: the American Society of Association Executives (ASAE), American Hotel and Motel Association (AH&MA, now the American Hotel Lodging Association), Hospitality (then Hotel) Sales and Marketing Association International (HSMIA), and the International Association of Convention and Visitor Bureaus (IACVB, now Destinations International).

The basis of today's destination marketing organizations (DMO), which are also called convention and visitor bureaus (CVBs), was put forth in 1895 when journalist Milton Carmichael wrote in *The Detroit Journal* that local businessmen should get together to promote the city as a convention destination, as well as represent the city and its many hotels to bid for convention business. Shortly thereafter, the Detroit Convention and Businessmen's League was conceived to do just that. Carmichael was the head of the group that later evolved into the Detroit Metro CVB, which is now labeled *VisitDetroit*.

The role of CVBs (now referred to as Destination Marketing Organizations or DMOs) has changed over time. As in Detroit, most began by trying to attract only conventions and business meetings to their community. Later, they realized leisure visitors were an important source of business and added the "V," for visitors, to their name. Today, virtually every city in the United States and Canada, and many cities throughout the world, has a DMO or convention and visitors' association (CVA). The DMO (CVB, CVA) is a membership organization that helps promote tourism, meetings, and related business for their cities. In some international destinations, the DMO is a division of government. Many DMOs have now evolved to not only market but to help develop and manage tourism at their destinations. Most recently, the term DMO is being used in place of CVB. In this text, the terms are synonymous and interchangeable.

## Evolution and Maturation of the MEEC Industry

(The following section is adapted from Fenich *Planning and Management of Meetings, Expositions, Events, and Conventions* 1st Edition.)

It can be said that events and meetings have been around since the dawn of time. In America, town hall forums were a type of meeting begun in the eighteenth century. While someone had to plan all of these events, there was neither formal training nor an established set of skills, standards, and abilities for those who organized those events. However, like other industries, such as law and accounting, as the industry evolved and matured there was an increasing need to formalize a set of competency standards to which professionals must adhere. Until very recently, no common set of **knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs)** existed for event professionals.

This dearth of standards changed in 2011 with the development of several competency standards, all of which building off a common platform—The Canadian Human Resources Council Competency Standards, the **Meetings and Business Events Competency Standards (MBECS)**, and the CMP International Standards. While all slightly different for their individual purposes, they all contain similar DNA: a similar set of knowledge, skills, and ability statements required of meetings and events professionals at the different levels of position or purpose.

### MBECS

Using the MBECS as an example, the standards are divided into 12 domains or blocks with 33 skills and almost 100 sub-skills or sub-segments.

The domains and skills are listed in the following figure:

#### MBECS STANDARDS

##### A. STRATEGIC PLANNING

1. Manage Strategic Plan for Meeting or Event
2. Develop Sustainability Plan for Meeting or Event
3. Measure Value of Meeting or Business Event

##### B. PROJECT MANAGEMENT

4. Plan Meeting or Event
5. Manage Meeting or Event Project

##### C. RISK MANAGEMENT

6. Manage Risk Management Plan

##### D. FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

7. Develop Financial Resources
8. Manage Budget
9. Manage Monetary Transactions

##### E. ADMINISTRATION

10. Perform Administrative Tasks

##### F. HUMAN RESOURCES

11. Manage Human Resource Plan
12. Acquire Staff and Volunteers
13. Train Staff and Volunteers
14. Manage Workforce Relations

##### G. STAKEHOLDER MANAGEMENT

15. Manage Stakeholder Relationships

##### H. MEETING OR EVENT DESIGN

16. Design Program
17. Engage Speakers and Performers
18. Coordinate Food and Beverage
19. Design Environment
20. Manage Technical Production
21. Develop a Plan for Managing the Movement of People

##### I. SITE MANAGEMENT

22. Select Site
23. Design Site Layout
24. Manage Meeting or Event Site
25. Manage On-site Communications

##### J. MARKETING

26. Manage Marketing Plan
27. Manage Marketing Materials
28. Manage Meeting or Event Merchandise
29. Promote Meeting or Event
30. Contribute to Public-Relations Activities
31. Manage Sales Activities

##### K. PROFESSIONALISM

32. Exhibit Professional Behavior

##### L. COMMUNICATIONS

33. Conduct Business Communications

These competencies represent all the KSAs an event professional needs to acquire, and be proficient in, during the course of their career. The **Certified Meeting Professional International Standards (CMP-IS)** have adapted these domains and skill statements for the purpose of defining the Certified Meeting Professional (CMP) Exam leading to the CMP credential. The development of these common standards marks a milestone in the MEEC industry. These standards, synopsized previously, represent the first time that the base of knowledge in the meetings and events industry has been codified, and has been a great advancement for the meeting-planning profession, and the individuals who work in the industry, as well as academics, students, and individuals who train the next generation of professionals.

### Uses for Meetings and Events Professionals

Industry professionals can perform a personal-skills assessment of the standards and skills to discover those skills at which they are adept and at which they are not. The resulting gap analysis can help guide their professional and personal development. MBECS can also help plot career paths. Being able to provide an assessment that shows a broad mastery of the subject will enhance employability and mobility across sectors and countries, by allowing an industry professional to promote the attainment of this knowledge and associated skills to employers or clients.

Standards are of great value to employers and managers. The standards can aid in the development of job descriptions and job specifications. This leads to improvements in determining workforce requirements and producing worker solicitations. The standards can also help in developing a sequence of training for employees, as well as a basis for performance assessment and feedback.

### Uses for the Academic Community

These standards provide an internationally accepted basis for developing courses of study and their requisite content. It is up to a given program or institution to determine how the content is delivered: in meeting/event specific courses, in business courses, in general education, or a combination. The significant advantage of using a standard like MBECS is that it is not prescriptive; one size does not fit all. Existing programs can benchmark themselves against the standards with resulting global recognition. The MBECS also provide a platform for dealing with governmental authorities and accrediting bodies. Using MBECS, a program can show the relevance of their course offerings and justify the content based on an international body of knowledge. Students can use the standards to develop their educational pathways and to validate their employability to recruiters. They could also use the standards to determine which educational programs best meet their learning needs. For academics, the standards can help delineate areas or topics in the meetings and events world that are in need of research.

### Uses for Associations

First and foremost, standards provide recognition of the knowledge, skills, and abilities required by the industry. This can then help guide the development of program content and delivery that is consistent with international standards. They can also be used by the members of an association to determine their educational or professional development needs, and how the association can best fulfill those needs.

## Accepted Practices Exchange

Throughout this book, you will hear about the Events Industry Council (formerly the Convention Industry Council) and its **Accepted Practices Exchange (APEX)**.

The Events Industry Council is at the forefront of efforts to advance the meeting, convention, and exhibition industry. It represents a broad cross-section of the industry with more than 30 meetings- and events-related associations as members, representing more than 103,500 individuals, with more than 19,000 firms and properties involved in the meetings, conventions, and exhibitions industry. Formed in 1949, the council provides a forum for member organizations to advance the industry. The council facilitates this by enabling the exchange of information among members through the development of programs to promote professionalism within the industry and by educating the public on

the industry's profound economic impact. By its nature, the council provides an impartial and inclusive forum for the APEX initiative and the development of accepted practices for the industry.

APEX brings together stakeholders in the development and implementation of industry-wide accepted practices to create and enhance efficiencies, as well as solve common problems and address industry issues. APEX also creates resources and tools to address these issues, such as education, white papers, and sample documents.

Some of the results of accepted practices implementation include:

- Time and cost savings
- Eased communication and sharing of data
- Enhanced customer service
- Streamlined systems and processes
- Less duplication of effort and increased operational efficiencies
- Better educated, more professional employees
- Solving common issues and problems

## Ethics

The Professional Convention Management Association (PCMA), a widely recognized authority on convention and meeting management, published *PCMA's Principles of Professional and Ethical Conduct* in 2002.

Open and trusting relationships with your venues, facilities, vendors, and service providers will be priceless over time. Although practicing ethical behavior may not be a matter of law, violation of fair and equitable business practices can be considered illegal. There is a very long list of ethical issues, but a few of the easiest to violate, due to inexperience, are mentioned here.

### Trouble Spots to Avoid

- Refrain from accepting or encouraging gifts or accepting promises of gifts from venues or service providers. This is particularly an issue prior to making decisions on sites, venues, vendors, and other service providers.
- Refrain from using travel points earned from airlines and hotels during business trips for personal travel.
- Refrain from conducting site inspections or accepting invitations to familiarization (FAM) trips sponsored to any location unless your group will seriously consider booking business there.
- Refrain from any activity that would discredit you or your organization.

### What to Practice

- Full disclosure of any rebates, commissions, or incentives accepted for any reason.
- Notice to attendees that a rebate from registration fees will be used to offset an expense; a legitimate example would be a shuttle service expense.
- Fair and equitable negotiations in good times and bad.
- Confidentiality during the bidding process.
- Prompt and professional notification when site and vendor selections have been decided.
- Identify and address unethical behavior in others that could result in damages to your event, organization, or group. Ethics is not limited to your own personal behavior.

## Suggested Industry Etiquette (Professional Courtesy)

- Be prepared, considerate, realistic, and factual in all verbal and written communications.
- Be cognizant of the value of everyone's time, and be timely with all.
- Meet your deadlines and keep your promises.
- Treat venues, facilities, vendors, and service providers as partners rather than subordinates. Everyone has a vested interest in your success.
- Understand the need for your event partners to make a reasonable profit.
- Maintain a calm and courteous demeanor under pressure.
- Work diligently toward agreement and solutions that will be mutually beneficial.
- Don't criticize. Seek resolutions.
- Make every effort to engage in respectful communications with everyone and in every circumstance.
- Resort to confrontation only when there is absolutely no other alternative to fixing an immediate problem.
- Approach working relationships as long term rather than one-time-only, as it is likely you will work with the same service provider companies in other locations, or you will rely on their referrals if they do not provide service where your event will be located.
- Share the glory. When your event is successful, praise your partners and the staff who helped produce it.

## What Does a Meeting or Event Professional Do?

When asked about a typical day in the life of a meeting planner, there are few, if any, who could say that any day is typical, whether they work in an organization or operate an external planning company. The job of a planner is ideal for those who love to multitask, who have broad interests, who enjoy problem solving, and who care passionately about building community through meetings.

Doug Heath, Certified Association Executive (CAE), CMP, and the second executive director of MPI, said many years ago that meeting planners must be more than coffee-cup counters. When Heath said that, it was a time when most meeting planners were concerned only with logistics—ensuring the provision of room sets, coffee and refreshment breaks, meals, and audiovisual setup.

Today, the jobs of an event professional are strategic. Planners are charged with supporting the work toward an organization's bottom line. In order to do this, both when planning, and during a meeting or event, a planner may do any or all of the following, and more:

- Define meeting/event goals and objectives, and develop session content and design.
- Develop a request for proposal (RFP) based on the meeting/event objectives, audience profile, budget, and program (see Appendix of this book for examples).
- Send the RFP to national sales offices of hotel and conference center companies, to DMOs, and to external meeting-planning companies.
- Prepare and manage a budget and expenditures, which can range from a few hundred dollars into the hundreds of millions.
- Negotiate contracts with a facility or multiple facilities, transportation providers, decorators, speakers, entertainers, and all the vendors and venues that will support a meeting/event.
- Market the meeting/event electronically and in print, and track results.
- Invite and manage the needs (travel, lodging, registration, room setup, and audiovisual) for all speakers, trainers, and facilitators involved in delivery of information and knowledge for the meeting/event.



- Invite, manage contracts and manage the needs of entertainers.
- Design food and beverage events, and negotiate contracts for these events. To do so, an event professional must know the audience (age of participants, gender, abilities, allergies, geographic location, and more), the timing for the programs, the budget, and the prices, including labor costs and taxes.
- Prepare a crisis management plan in conjunction with other staff, facilities, vendors, and emergency personnel.
- Register participants, or manage a registration company, ensuring data are accurately entered and processed securely.
- Manage the multitude of changes that happen from the first conceptualization of a meeting or event to the execution and follow-up.
- Monitor industry and business publications for changes in management companies or hotel ownership, as well as for hotel foreclosures, facility and other strikes, and other issues.
- Calm others' nerves and remain calm.

## Careers in and around the MEEC Industry

The MEEC industry is a vibrant, dynamic, and exciting part of the hospitality industry. Many careers in MEEC involve multiple aspects of the hospitality industry. For example, someone who works in convention or group sales in a facility must interface with, be knowledgeable about, and manage people who work with guest rooms, front desk, food and beverage, catering, and all of the meeting facilities.

The MEEC industry is a sub-segment of the hospitality industry, which itself is part of the larger services industry. It encompasses many areas of the hospitality industry. Thus, readers are challenged to conceptualize their personal ideal job and then determine how and where in the MEEC industry they could be employed doing what they dream of.

Some of the careers in MEEC are included in the following figure:

- **Event Planner:** Plans special events like the Olympics, the Super Bowl in football, the Final Four in basketball, festivals, and gala celebrations.
- **Wedding Planner:** A wedding planner is a type of event planner who assists parties in selecting the site, décor, photographer, and other needed vendors, and is often there on the day of the event to ensure smooth operations.
- **Meeting Planner:** Organizes meetings and other gatherings for companies, corporations, and associations. These gatherings can include a small, board of directors meeting, a stockholders' meeting, new product introductions and training, educational seminars, and regional or national conventions. Corporate Meeting/Event Planners fall into this category.
- **Exhibition Managers:** Organizes and manages trade shows.
- **Hotel or Conference Center Sales:** The majority of sales and conventions, or catering service positions in hotels and conference centers deal with groups, and MEEC covers most of these groups.
- **Restaurant Sales:** While most people think of restaurants attracting walk-in clientele, many rely heavily on the MEEC industry for business. Food and beverage (F&B) venues employ significant numbers of people on their group sales staff. In New Orleans, Arnaud's and Emeril's, for example, have group or convention sales teams.
- **Entertainment/Sporting Venue Sales and Services:** Although these places primarily attract individual patrons, most also devote much time and effort to selling, providing space for, and producing events for groups. These off-site venues are often good alternatives for experiential learning.
- **Destination Management:** **Destination Management Companies (DMCs)** function as the local experts for companies and associations, organizing gatherings and events, arranging and supervising transportation, and securing entertainers. People employed for DMCs usually work in either sales or production.
- **Hotels:** Hotels are one of the primary locations where MEEC events are held, using ballrooms, meeting rooms, break-out rooms, and so on, for their gatherings along with sleeping rooms and F&B for their attendees. The hotel departments that deal with the MEEC industry are sales, catering, and convention services.



A Smiling Wedding Planner Sets Up the Wedding Reception Venue by Organizing the Table's Flower Decorations before the Formal Function Begins.  
*Ryan Jorgense-Jorgo/Shutterstock*

- **Convention Centers:** These venues include dedicated facilities, such as McCormick Place in Chicago, the Jacob K. Javits Convention Center in New York, the Congress Center Messe in Frankfurt, Germany, and the Canton Fair in Guangzhou, China—the world's biggest convention center.
- **Multipurpose Venues:** Like the Superdome in New Orleans or the Astrodome in Houston. With these venues, careers are found in either sales or operations.
- **Exposition Services Contractors:** If you like to build things or have thought about being an engineer or architect, you should consider being an exposition services contractor (ESC). ESCs design and erect the booths, backdrops, staging, and so on for exhibitions, meetings, and conventions. The decorations and backdrops for your school prom may have been done by an ESC. Again, career paths exist in sales and production and, increasingly, in design of sustainable/green products and services.
- **Destination Marketing Organizations (Convention and Visitor Bureaus):** DMOs serve to represent a wide range of MEEC companies and to market the destination to business and leisure travelers. DMOs have many departments and careers, including convention sales, tourism sales, housing bureaus, convention services, marketing, research, and member services.

Some of the most important aspects of working in MEEC are business acumen (financial and people management, legalities and risk management, sales and marketing, and ethical practices), envisioning (what can be) and executing ideas into reality, and having knowledge of adult learning techniques. In addition to having knowledge and ability for preparing and delivering virtual and face-to-face meetings, industry professionals must know more about sustainability and going green for meetings and events.

It is often said that MEEC is a relationship industry, that is, it is one built on who you know and with whom you do business. As in many industries, we depend on those we

know to help us learn and grow, and to provide accurate information. These relationships are built over time and always with the understanding that, first and foremost, ethical business practices will be the most important aspect of how we relate.

Think for just a moment about all the individuals and businesses involved in the execution of a single meeting or event. They could include the following:

### **The Meeting Sponsor**

- Association or corporation sponsor
- Meeting planner
- Executive director or chief executive officer
- Staff specialists in departments that include marketing, governance and government affairs, education/professional development/training, membership, information technology, and accreditation
- Others who staff call centers, copy materials, process registrations, manage human resources, control purchasing, and more
- Board of directors
- Committees
- Sponsors

### **The Facility**

- Owners
- Executive staff, including but not limited to: the general manager, revenue manager, resident or hotel manager, directors of sales, marketing, convention services, catering, housekeeping, engineering, maintenance, purchasing, human resources, food and beverage, front office operations, social responsibility, and security
- The thousands of other full- and part-time, year-round, and seasonal staff: groundskeepers, animal handlers, housekeepers, food servers (for banquets, room service, and the outlets), maintenance, security, and engineering

### **The Destination**

- DMO/CVB (president, directors of sales, marketing, convention services, membership, registration, social responsibility, and all support staff)
- Restaurants
- Attractions
- Off-site venues
- Theaters (movie and legitimate)
- Copy and printing companies
- Transportation (buses, airport shuttles, taxicabs, and limousines)
- Airport concessions
- Doctors, medical personnel, and emergency workers
- Pharmacies
- Florists
- Destination management companies
- Audiovisual suppliers
- General services contractors
- Specialty services contractors
- Dry cleaners and tailors
- City, county, and state employees
- IT division and telecommunications department

## All Others Who Provide Services for Meetings

- Talent (entertainers, disc jockeys, bands, and magicians)
- Education (speakers, trainers, and facilitators)
- Sound and lighting
- Transportation (air, rail, car, boat, and travel agencies)
- Printing
- Shipping
- Promotional products
- Off-property food and beverage
- Translators for those who speak American Sign Language and other languages
- Americans with Disabilities Act equipment
- Carpentry
- National sales (hotels and conference centers)
- Third-party or independent meeting planners

Even the president of the United States and Congress impacts our industry by determining trade regulations, travel restrictions, security issues, who needs a visa, and whether or not our country goes to war.

Is there anyone who does not have some influence on the meetings and events industry? A case can be made that every person has an impact, in some way, on each and every meeting—even those meetings of two or three that take place in an office or restaurant. Take a few minutes and add to the jobs or functions previously listed that might affect a meeting, and then think again. Also, create a career pathway for at least one of the careers noted previously.

## Which Career Is Right for You?

The following are some of the career planning questions you might ask yourself to determine if this may be the right profession for you:

- Do you like to plan parties, work events, or just your day, down to the last detail, ensuring everything is locked in?
- Do you have, and regularly update, a date book or Outlook calendar that includes everything you need to do for weeks or even months into the future?
- Has any of the activities or skills outlined in this chapter struck a chord, and made you say, “this sounds like me” or “I have that ability or strength” and I want to be part of that?
- Do you ask good questions, rarely taking anything as a given? Do you think about contingencies or what if “x” happened? How would I adjust?

If you answered “yes” to some of these questions, you may just have the aptitude to be a good meeting professional.

## Trends and Best Practices

The following are ten trends in the meetings and events industry.

1. **Meetings Are Experiences:** Meetings and events today aren’t just face-to-face gatherings for the sole purpose of exchanging business information. Rather, they’re enriching, one-of-a-kind experiences that attendees will treasure forever. Event professionals are increasingly creating these distinctive experiences in a variety of ways, oftentimes by simply choosing unique or unexpected venues that offer a “WOW factor.” Another way to create memorable experiences is by engaging all five senses in what are referred to as multisensory events. Meals are also part of the attendee experience, and in the years ahead, food and beverage offerings will be increasingly tailored, either to reflect the event theme or to serve as special events in and of themselves.

2. ***Content Will Condense:*** Attendees' available time and attention spans are ever shrinking. Meeting schedules are shrinking as attendees' time is more and more consumed by business and family pressures. Content must be concise and it must have hard-hitting, take-home value. Event attendees want to be engaged for the short time they are at our meetings, and then they want to go home.
3. ***Attendees Want a Sense of Place:*** There is growing popularity in incorporating local elements into the meeting or event, giving attendees a taste of the locale they're in, such as offering attendees samples of the regional cuisine. Another way for attendees to experience a destination is to engage in local volunteer efforts or *voluntourism*, which can be included as part of the meeting's program (inclusion), and also plays into the growing interest in and importance of sustainability and corporate social responsibility (CSR).
4. ***Attention to Diversity Will Become Even More Important:*** With various generations—all with different work ethics and characteristics—working alongside each other, and issues related to gender equity and racial diversity still being addressed, companies continue to examine their recruitment and talent development strategies, approaching them with more awareness and creative solutions.
5. ***Mobile Technology Is Here to Stay:*** Having an event website, app, and social media presence used to be nice to have; today, they are required. Other than corporate meetings, all events must have an app. For cost-saving reasons, as well as sustainability reasons, most meetings no longer have printed programs, or there are a very limited number of printed programs. All of the event information is posted on the app. Not only do they allow for on the fly changes, posting of speaker handouts and bios (again, less printed documents), but they also allow for engaging the attendee before, during, and after the event. Mobile technology allows event professionals to not only push information out to attendees, but also get information from attendees to help them craft their programs on the front end, and to make adjustments during the event to provide more value. As a result, access to reliable, universal Wi-Fi will be increasingly expected with sufficient bandwidth.
6. ***Technology Will Get More Connected:*** The MEEC industry will continue to work toward greater connectivity, with the boundaries between online and offline further blurring the term hybrid, as every event moves toward such multifaceted experiences.
7. ***Social Media's Dominance Will Deepen:*** Social media will play a more measurable part in marketing and communication strategies all across the MEEC industry.
8. ***Consolidation in the Hospitality Industry Will Continue:*** Recently, we saw two of the largest hotel companies, Marriott and Starwood, merge into *the* largest hotel company in the world. This trend will only continue, even among the smaller hotel companies. It is hard to imagine that the US government will allow more consolidation in the US airline industry, but who knows. Most thought it would block the American/US Airways merger. Travelers lament the lack of competition in airline choice, let alone the deterioration of service and comfort. This is an unfortunate trend that will continue.
9. ***The Importance of Meetings Will Get Noticed:*** Meetings not only drive local and national economies (as demonstrated by the Events Industry Council's *Economic Significance Study of Meetings to the US Economy*), they also drive business results. An industry coalition called *Meetings Mean Business* promotes not only the economic benefit of meetings, but also tells the story of how meetings drive business forward.



10. *Face-to-Face Is Here to Stay:* Some prognosticators have predicted that technology and virtual gatherings will spell the demise of face-to-face. This is not the case. Human beings are social animals—they have an innate need to physically interact with one another. Technology is, and will continue to be, used to enhance and supplement face-to-face gatherings, especially before and after an event.

For meeting/event professionals, meetings/events never truly end. No matter how we define an event, each is a matter of intense planning and execution, evaluation, follow-up, and starting over. The role of a MEEC professional is critical in ensuring outcomes that contribute to a sound economy.

The success of the industry for individuals who currently work in, or who will choose to work in, MEEC depends on what we do now and how we anticipate and plan for the future. Those who choose to stay in or join this industry must have critical thinking skills and the willingness to consider the impact of all local and worldwide events on one's own meetings and events. Event professionals will need to know more about changing demographics in order to accommodate the needs of broader audiences; adult learning techniques to incorporate experiential learning and technology into face-to-face or virtual presentations, or for blended learning; nutrition and food allergies to ensure healthy and safe participants; climate change to understand its impact on sustainability, the availability of food and water, and the bottom line; current events and projections about world population shifts; and the worldwide economy and its impact on availability of products and services, including safety and security; and so on. The list is even lengthier than those stated.

In order to succeed, the meeting/event professional needs to be curious, informed, and customer focused. They will be planning experiences, not just meetings. They will change how spaces are used in facilities; how content is derived and delivered; and how participants are engaged. Those who succeed will enhance what they learn in classes and sessions by looking outside the industry for information.

## Summary

In this chapter, you have been introduced to the world of MEEC. As we have seen, MEEC is multifaceted and exciting, and offers diverse career opportunities. MEEC is also very large and incorporates many aspects of the hospitality industry. It has tremendous economic impact. You are

now prepared to continue with the remaining chapters in this book. They expand on and provide more details about the concepts and practices of MEEC that this first chapter only touches on.

## CASE STUDY

### The Big Day

Picture this: The sun rises above the horizon, releasing rays of blue and pink light that whisk across the ocean and spill onto the beautifully manicured greens of the resort hotel's championship golf course. Against the backdrop of the crashing surf and pleas of hungry gulls, you can also hear the sounds of morning stirring at the resort hotel. Car doors slamming, muffled voices sharing greetings and farewells, china and silver clashing, and the squeaking wheels of fully laden carts, each heading off to its appointed area under the guiding hand of one of many hotel staff who have arrived before most guests are awake.

Today is a big day. The Association of Amalgamated Professionals (AAP) will open its 35th Annual Congress with an

evening reception, and, before the day is done, 1,900 guests and hundreds of vendors will have descended on this resort hotel. Since there were growing concerns about the image conveyed by using apparently glitzy venues, the venue eliminated the word resort from its name. This was done after the contract was signed.

Todd Cliver, Convention Services Manager for the hotel, convenes a last-minute meeting for the hotel's team handling the Annual Congress. Todd has worked tirelessly for nearly nine months, when the account was turned over from the Sales and Marketing Department of the hotel, coordinating all of the plans, wants, and needs of his client,

(Continued)

the association's Senior Meeting Manager, Barbara Tain. Today represents the culmination of hundreds of emails, phone calls, videoconferences, and personal meetings between Todd and Barbara. Todd interacted with every department in the hotel. Barbara worked closely with AAP staff and volunteers, worked with other vendors, and supervised AAP support staff for the AAP's 35th Annual Congress.

Donna Miller, Director of Sales and Marketing, whose department was responsible for contracting this—the largest meeting the hotel will have ever managed—reports on her client's last-minute changes and concerns, all meticulously logged since her client, Barbara Tain, arrived two days ago. David Stern, Front Desk Manager, recaps the latest report on expected room occupancy and on the timing and numbers of anticipated arrivals. Throughout the day, he will continue to check with his staff to ensure that there will be adequate (and contracted) numbers of front desk clerks to support the check-in flow, bell staff to manage the deluge of luggage and golf clubs, and door staff, valet parkers, concierge and guest services staff, and housekeeping services.

David Fenner, Director of Catering, provides his final status report, commenting on the readiness of the kitchen and banquet staff to serve the equivalent of almost 12,000 meals and untold gallons of juice, milk, coffee, tea, soda, and alcoholic beverages over the next three days. In addition, the hotel's outlets (restaurants and lounges) expect a much higher than average volume and have planned for supplies and personnel accordingly.

Other hotel staff members report to the Director of Sales and the Convention Services Manager. These include those involved with recreation (golf, tennis, health club, and pool), maintenance, security, and accounting. Even the animal handlers, who work with the parrots, an attraction for guests as they enter the property, want to ensure there are only healthy, well-behaved birds to greet the guests.

This one convention has already impacted, and will impact, every area of the hotel's operations. Armed with all this information, Todd leaves for his final preconference meeting (pre-con) with Barbara Tain.

Meanwhile, on the other side of the country, Jane Lever steps onto Concourse B of the Philadelphia International Airport, her airline-boarding pass, e-ticket receipt with its special meeting-discount price, and a US government-issued photo ID firmly in her grasp. She has checked her luggage, making sure it is locked with only the TSA-approved locks for a possible security search. She scans the bank of monitors for her flight information. Before her day ends, she will have touched down at two other airports, eaten one airline snack, grabbed a candy bar on her way through a change of planes at another airport, made numerous cell phone calls, bought a newspaper and a few magazines, and paid for a taxi to the hotel. Around the country, 1,899 other professionals, just like Jane, will do the same thing and travel to the same place for the same purpose—a **meeting**.

In the hotel's destination city, Kathy Sykes, the Owner and President of Skylark Destination Management Company (DMC), is already at her office reviewing final arrangements for ground transportation for VIPs and off-site events, event theme preparations, and entertainment for the AAP meeting. Kathy has already received two complaints from the manager of the headliner rock star booked for tonight's reception: The entertainer wants only chilled glasses for his orange juice, which he expects to be freshly squeezed in his suite, and can only get dressed if he is provided with navy blue towels for his after-shower rubdown. Kathy, of course, will ensure compliance with these requests; she wants to avoid any problems before tonight's event.

With a thunderstorm threatening for tomorrow afternoon, Kathy's mind is also already racing about alternatives for the golf tournament. She knows the golfers can play in the rain, but a thunderstorm would endanger their safety.

Jack Ardulosky, a Senior Technical Engineer for an audiovisual company, pulls into the hotel's delivery area while completing his mental checklist for final site review, satellite link integrity, picture clarity, and sound quality. With three global broadcasts and webcasts, he will have little room for error. He sees the florist unloading the last of the fresh floral arrangements and makes a note to himself that leaves and petals can cause just as much of a viewing obstruction as meeting room columns. He scans the area around him for a parking spot since not much is available with all the trucks and vans unloading the trade show booths. Jack notices the rising ambient temperature and expects a long, hot day. He will feel better if he can find parking in the shade, even if he must walk a greater distance.

Barbara Tain, the Senior Meeting Manager for the association, wipes the beginning of fatigue from her eyes—she has already been on site for two days, and her constant checking of details has not allowed her to sleep as well as she would have liked—and continues her walk-through of the registration area, information center, and cyber café, en route to a meeting with Todd Cliver and David Fenner, ensuring the meeting space will be appropriately set for delivery of the education critical to the meeting's objectives. Having eaten just a few bites of her breakfast during a meeting with association executives and key committee members, she will still be late to her meeting with Cliver and Fenner because of last-minute details and concerns from the meeting with association staff and volunteers.

Only half glancing at the space around her, she again reviews her lengthy checklist: speaker and trainer arrivals and needs, **banquet event orders (BEOs)**, transportation schedules, badges, staffing, centerpiece design and delivery, phone and data lines, computers and printers, Wi-Fi bandwidth, exhibitor booth setup, VIP procedures, concerns about tomorrow's weather, special check-in processes, audiovisual equipment, opening production rehearsal times and needs, PowerPoint files, handouts, arrangements

for participants with disabilities including those who have specified food allergies, and amenities for VIPs—her mind is crowded with details.

With all this and more going through her mind, her most dominant thought is, “What could go wrong over the next three days: weather; delayed arrivals; delayed departures; the illness, or worse, death, of a participant, vendor, or speaker; or a natural disaster like an earthquake? How prepared am I? Is the hotel, our vendors, and off-site venues ready to respond quickly and effectively?” The fact is, although it is almost never apparent to a meeting participant, some things may not proceed as planned. The meeting planner and CSM are never more important than at that moment when a crisis must be anticipated and then averted.

### It Is Opening Day at Last, and Everything Is in Motion

It is the end of the first day of the AAP’s 35th Annual Congress, which Barbara Tain refers to as the Annual or Annual Meeting, and so far all has gone well.

Barbara will have had formal, prescheduled meetings with Todd Clive. Barbara will also have spoken with Todd and many others who work for the hotel via radio (walkie-talkie) and/or mobile device, as well as by chance and scheduled meetings. These talks include a review of banquet checks with various departments, one of which will include accounting. Barbara will have talked with those on the AAP staff and in volunteer leadership, and with outside vendors.

She will also check the weather many times on her smart phone, television, radio, and, if there is one, the newspaper. Barbara will have eaten on the run, tried to find a few minutes to check office voice mail and email, and, through it all, kept a smile on her face, even while her feet hurt.

At the end of the day, she will review her notes and check room sets for the next morning’s sessions and crawl into bed for a few hours of sleep before it all begins again.

When the final curtain closes on the AAP’s 35th Annual Congress, Barbara Tain will be one of the last to leave the hotel. Before leaving for the airport to fly home, she will review all the master account charges, conduct a post-convention (post-con) meeting with the property staff and her vendors, and make notes for next year’s meeting. Once back in the office, she’ll work with the vendor companies that conducted the evaluations, review all the bills, and ensure timely payment, and write thank you notes.

Face-to-face meetings will continue because there is a need for human interaction. These meetings and events will succeed because they are enhanced by virtual audiences who add to the energy and diversity prior to, during, and after the meeting or event. (Think Twitter and the hashtags being used now for meetings, and envision even greater involvement in the future.)

You’ve thus far decided to read this text and to learn about this dynamic industry. *You* are the future; you bring to it your experiences and insights. Observe, learn, and take action to keep MEEC moving forward.

## Key Words and Terms

For definitions, see the Glossary

Accepted Practices Exchange (APEX)	Destination Management Companies (DMCs)	Meetings and Business Events Competency Standards (MBECS)
banquet event orders (BEOs)	Events Industry Council (EIC)	meetings, expositions, events, and conventions (MEEC)
Certified Meeting Professional (CMP)	exhibition	meeting
Certified Meeting Professional International Standards (CMP-IS)	exposition	
conference	knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs)	
convention		

## Review and Discussion Questions

1. What are meetings?
2. Describe some events from the past that were meetings.
3. Describe some current aspects of MEEC industry jobs.
4. Who attends meetings?
5. What can be accomplished by convening or attending a meeting?
6. What are five key jobs in a facility (hotel, resort, or conference center) that contribute to the successful outcome of a meeting?
7. What is the CIC?
8. What is APEX, and what is its impact?
9. What is the impact of meetings on the US economy?
10. What is MBECS?
11. What is the future of electronic meetings?
12. Create your own career pathway in the MEEC Industry.
13. Create a list of situations in the MEEC industry where ethics would come into play.

## About the Chapter Contributors

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Industry Associations are significant organizers of expos and trade shows such as the E3 Electronic Expo organized by The Entertainment Software Association (ESA).  
*logoboom/Shutterstock*

## CHAPTER 2

# Meeting, Exhibition, Event, and Convention Organizers and Sponsors

### Chapter Objectives

- Understand the major types of organizations that hold gatherings, and differentiate the types of meetings and the planning required for each.
- Identify the associations that support the professional development of those responsible for producing gatherings.
- Outline the major trends facing MEEC organizers and sponsors.

This chapter focuses on explaining the entities that organize and sponsor different types of gatherings. Each of these segments creates gatherings to satisfy its unique needs and target attendee population. Whether the organization is a nonprofit association or a corporation, a government agency or a private company that produces exhibitions, it has goals that may require a MEEC gathering to commemorate an event. The purpose



of this chapter is to identify who these organizing/sponsoring organizations are, the types of gatherings they hold, how much time they must have to plan an event, who their attendees are, and how they build attendance. The people who play a major role in producing the gatherings are identified, as are the professional associations who provide them with support and professional development.

## Who Holds Gatherings?

The three most significant entities that organize and sponsor MEEC gatherings are (1) corporations, (2) associations, and (3) the government. Other organizations who arrange gatherings are also discussed here.

### Corporations

Although there are numerous kinds of corporations, for the purposes of this chapter the term **corporations** will refer to legally chartered enterprises that conduct business on behalf of their owners with the purpose of making a profit and increasing its value. These include public corporations that sell stock on the open market, and have a board of directors who oversee the affairs of the corporation on behalf of the shareholders (or owners) who elected them. Private corporations have the same fundamental purposes as public corporations, but their stock is not sold on the open market.

Virtually all businesses have needs that require them to plan and execute gatherings. Publicly held companies have a legal requirement to hold an annual shareholders meeting. Many companies hold press conferences or a ribbon-cutting ceremony. Organizations also have continuing needs to train personnel in matters of company policy and procedures, and to further develop new policies and procedures to improve their effectiveness. Client groups may be brought together to capture their opinions in a focus group, or to introduce them to a new product or service. Incentive meetings are held to reward top producers within a corporation. Executive retreats may be held to improve communication or to develop long-term business plans. Gatherings are also held to honor employees (for promotion or retirement), to celebrate holidays, and to build overall morale within the organization. Companies may also be involved with a sporting event or entertaining clients in VIP areas at major sporting events, such as the US Open or the Super Bowl.

Many corporate meetings are booked as needed, typically less than six months before the meeting will take place, and are normally held at a hotel when exhibit space is not needed. When a corporation decides to hold a gathering, it determines what the budget will be, where the gathering will be held, and who will attend. Since the corporation typically pays for all expenses associated with attending the meeting, the corporation is in complete control. The decision to hold a corporate meeting is typically made by persons in positions of key responsibility within the corporate hierarchy. Officers and senior managers in the sales and marketing area may call for a meeting of their regional sales managers to develop sales strategies for new product lines; or senior financial managers and controllers may call a meeting of their dispersed staffs to discuss budgets for next year. Most of the attendees of a corporate gathering or event are members of the corporate family or are persons who have a close business relationship with the company. Attendance by corporate personnel is usually mandatory.

In terms of marketing, while the purpose of corporate meetings should be carefully crafted, attendance at these meetings is mandatory for most of the attendees. Therefore, sending invitations or notices to those who will attend constitutes the majority of promotional activity. Company websites are normally updated with the information regarding the meeting, its theme, and objectives. The company should create excitement prior to the meeting so attendees arrive eager to learn, listen, and enjoy their time out of the office. Even though it may be a command performance, this does not lessen the need to make the meeting informative, productive, and enjoyable for those attending.

## Types of Corporate Gatherings and Events—Their Purposes and Objectives

Corporations have a variety of needs that can be satisfied by scheduling a gathering. What follows should not be viewed as a comprehensive list, but rather as an indication of the types of gatherings sponsored by corporations:

**Stockholder Meetings** Voting shareholders of a corporation are invited to attend the company's stockholders meeting. This is an annual meeting that is usually held in the city where the company is headquartered, although there has been an emerging trend to move it to different locations to be more accessible to the stockholders. Attendees are presented with reports on the state of the corporation and can vote on issues of corporate significance. While most stockholders do not attend this meeting, they do participate in the governance of the corporation by filing a proxy statement in which they identify how they want their shares voted. According to *Meetings & Conventions magazine*, the average stockholder meeting has 79 attendees, lasts 1.7 days, and is planned with 5.2 months lead time.

**Board Meetings** The board of directors is the governing body of a corporation and typically meets several times a year, usually in the city where the corporation is located. While a board meeting may be held in the corporate headquarters, these meetings may require lodging, dinners, and related activities, which are often held at local hotels and other types of venues.

**Management Meetings** There are numerous reasons for a company to hold management meetings. Every major division of a corporation may have a need to bring its decision makers and other important personnel together to develop plans, review performance, or improve their processes. While some of these meetings may occur on a scheduled basis, others may be called spontaneously to solve problems and address situations that require immediate attention. According to *Meetings & Conventions magazine*, the average management meeting has 42 attendees, lasts 2.2 days, and is planned with 3.5 months lead time.

**Training Meetings** As companies undergo change, it may be necessary to hold training meetings to bring managers and key employees up-to-date on improved methods of job performance or to gain skills needed to operate new systems and equipment. Companies may also use training meetings to introduce new managers to corporate procedures and culture. Some of these meetings may be held on a regularly scheduled basis, while others may be held when conditions dictate. According to *Meetings & Conventions magazine*, the average training meeting has 73 attendees, lasts 2.5 days, and is planned with 3.7 months lead time.

**Sales Training and Product Launches** Sales training and product launches are a specific type of training meeting. These events are often held to upgrade the performance of the sales staff, distributors, and retailers, and to introduce new products and services to distribution networks and the general public. These events are designed to educate and motivate those who have a significant impact on the success of the corporation.

**Professional and Technical Training** Professional and technical training are another specific type of training meeting. These meetings may be held to bring managers and others up-to-date on issues relevant to their role within the company and to enhance the knowledge of their service providers. For example, a company may have a meeting of its unit and regional controllers to discuss changes in tax law and company policies.

**Incentive Trips** Many corporations offer **incentive trips** to reward their top performers based on certain criteria. At these meetings, there is a large amount of time spent on fun activities that the employees see as rewarding them for a job well done, such as a golf tournament, sightseeing tours, and outdoor adventures. However, there is a trend towards incorporating more business related sessions into incentive trips, thus making them more akin to conferences. Those winning these trips may be employees, distributors, and/or customers. Companies may bring together these top performers with their corporate leadership



Corporations organize a significant number of MEEC events, such as this Shaklee company meeting.  
dycj-Imaginechina/AP Images

to create a more synergistic organization. While these trips are often to exciting and glamorous destinations, an emerging trend is to schedule several activities for the participants to provide an added value to the sponsoring corporation. According to *Meetings & Conventions magazine*, the average incentive trip has 130 attendees, lasts 5.0 days, and is planned with 8.2 months lead time.

**Public Shows** **Public shows** (also called consumer shows) are gatherings where businesses sell their products directly to the general public. This is often in the form of trade shows where exhibitors display products that the locals will have an interest in and would be excited to attend. This is the reason they are called public shows. Examples of these types of events are boat shows, car shows, winter sport shows, and art shows. There is normally a fee for each attendee to get into the event. Corporations that sell the types of goods on display at a public show own and sponsor these events. To attract the public to attend, the organizers use social media, local radio and television stations, newspapers, and, often, local billboards to announce the event. Rarely are there educational sessions associated with these types of events.

### Department and/or Individuals Responsible for Organizing and Planning

Corporate planners are really a hybrid group. Many of the people who plan corporate meetings have responsibilities beyond, or in addition to, the planning of meetings. Corporate planners spend about three-quarters of their time planning meetings. While about half of these meeting planners have meeting planner/convention management titles, the remaining majority have job titles that do not identify their meeting planning responsibilities (executive or management, 27 percent; general administration or management, 20 percent; sales and marketing, 14 percent; and other, 21 percent).

Therefore, at smaller corporations, since the typical meeting planner's job title does not specifically indicate meetings as part of their responsibilities, it should be no surprise that the majority do not work in a meeting-planning department. They tend to work in the departments that hold the meetings (sales and marketing, human resources, or finance) and have assumed meeting-planning responsibility at the request of their supervisors. For larger corporations, like Microsoft, Coca-Cola, Exxon-Mobile, and Cisco,

meeting planning departments are large, as these organizations have many large and small meetings throughout the year.

Many corporate meeting planners join associations to support their professional development. These planners are members of these organizations so they can always be on the cutting edge of their profession, and they are well respected within their organizations. The associations that they most often join include Meeting Professionals International (MPI), Professional Convention Management Association (PCMA), the Society for Incentive Travel Excellence, and the Association of Insurance and Financial Services Conference Planners. Of the corporate meeting planners who have earned professional certifications, 32 percent were Certified Meeting Professionals (CMP) and 11 percent were Certified Meeting Managers (CMM).

### CORPORATE MEETING PLANNING

Mary Jo Blythe, CMP  
President, Masterplan, Inc.

Corporate meetings range from small VIP board of directors' meetings to large sales meetings, customer incentive meetings, and lower tiered staff training meetings. One common thread between them is that they are always paid for (hosted) by the corporation. The funds come from a department or individual budget, thus creating a VIP(s) host(s) at the meeting. This VIP(s) usually expects special treatment, and it is the planner's job to ensure that the VIP(s) is taken care of well.

The planner must also embrace the corporate culture and ensure that it is depicted in all aspects of the meeting, from hotel selection to airport transportation, to menu choices and social activities. Flashy companies will have flashy meetings, and conservative companies will have conservative meetings. The planner is the ultimate controller of this element, and it is the planner's job to make sure that all entities hired to help execute the event are aware of this culture, and what is expected from management and attendees.

The meeting objectives will typically include motivation, training, camaraderie, brainstorming, and reviewing goals. There is also quite often an emphasis on the social events at a corporate meeting. Although perceived as recreation, the opportunity for sidebar conversations and networking at non-meeting functions will often impact future corporate decisions. Social events should be strategically planned to ensure that the proper people are sitting together at dinner, or assigned to the same foursome at the golf outing.

Corporate meetings, although a category of their own, can be as diverse as corporations themselves. Paying special attention to your VIPs, embracing the corporate culture, and knowing your objectives get the corporate meeting off to a successful start.

## Associations

In the United States, 315,000 association meetings and events occur each year, which are attended by 60 million people. Spending in this category is anticipated to grow at about four percent per year. This is a segment of the industry that cannot be ignored. The term **association** is defined as a group of people organized for certain common purposes, whether that be for professional, industry, educational, scientific, or social reasons. This definition of the word is true in MEEC as well. Gatherings, such as annual conventions, topical conferences, world congresses, and topical workshops and seminars are held for the benefit of the association's membership. Internally, meetings, such as board of directors' meetings, committee meetings, and leadership development workshops, need to be held for the betterment of the association. Many associations have an affiliated exhibition held in conjunction with their annual convention, at which products or services of interest to the attendees are displayed by various vendors. Besides providing value to the members of the association and potential recognition for the association, these gatherings also generate a significant revenue stream for the organization. According to *PCMA Convene Magazine 26th Annual Meetings Market Survey* (February 2017), associations derive 32 percent of their organization's income from conventions, exhibitions, and meetings.

Although 60 percent of all national meetings and trade shows have an average attendance of 300 or less, the average attendance of all conventions is approximately 1,500 people (“Recent Meetings Market Report” by *Meetings & Conventions* magazine). Association meetings, especially conventions, can range from several hundred to tens of thousands of attendees. Two thirds of conventions are held in conjunction with a trade show or exhibit. The average convention has 265 exhibitors and requires approximately 56,000 square feet of exhibit space. This size issue can eliminate many smaller cities and venues from being selected as the location for these events. This limited availability of size-appropriate venues can create increased demand by larger associations for big cities and venues that can accommodate their meetings/events. It also creates increased competition among the larger destinations to capture the larger associations’ business. This business means big dollars to the cities and venues, and can have a big economic impact on the city as a whole. To adjust to these supply and demand factors, larger associations typically book their major gatherings five to ten years, or even more, ahead of the scheduled date to ensure that they have the space needed for their event. Small associations have a broader selection of locations, including second tier cities that can accommodate their gatherings and, therefore, require less lead time to secure needed accommodations and facilities. However, unlike corporations, associations with smaller meetings still tend to book their meeting locations at a minimum of one year before the meeting date.

The decision-making process for association meetings is rather complex and goes through several distinct stages. Once it is decided that a meeting will be held (usually by the board of directors or as stated in the association’s constitution or bylaws), the objectives of the meeting are first to be established. No planning of any meeting should begin until these objectives are established. The next step is to decide on the location where the meeting will be held. Some organizations rotate their meetings through their geographic regions, thereby dispersing hosting opportunities and responsibilities throughout their total membership. The specific city to host the meeting is sometimes decided by the association’s board of directors, and at other times is dictated by the executive director based on the report of site visitations by the association’s own meeting planner or by a contract meeting management provider. This report will give a summary of reasons why a destination is being recommended: hotel prices, convention center prices, available **air lift** (number of daily flights and quantity of seats) into the city, weather expected at the time of the meeting, availability of enough hotel rooms in the city, cost per attendee to visit the city, history of the meeting being held in the same city in the past, labor rates in the city, and overall ease of doing business in the city.

Once the choice has been narrowed down to a specific city, the meeting planner, based on site visits and inspections, will locate a venue (e.g., hotel and/or convention center) that is both available on the desired dates and well suited to the needs of the meeting. Typically, the meeting planner makes the recommendation to the association’s board and leadership and, if approved, negotiates the financial and meeting details with the facility. This results in a contract that is eventually signed by both the venue and the association’s senior staff person (usually the executive director or chief financial officer).

According to *CVENT*, the top cities that hosted meetings include:

United States	Europe	Asia Pacific
1. Orlando	1. London	1. Singapore
2. Chicago	2. Barcelona	2. Sydney
3. Las Vegas	3. Amsterdam	3. Kuala Lumpur
4. Atlanta	4. Paris	4. Bangkok
5. San Diego	5. Berlin	5. Hong Kong



### ASSOCIATION MEETING PLANNING

Susan Reichbart, CMP

Director, Conferences, and Meetings (Retired)

College and University Professional Association for Human Resources

Associations offer their members opportunities to enhance their professional development at conferences, seminars, and workshops. These events may combine structured educational sessions of several hours or days with informal networking events, such as receptions, golf tournaments, and dinners. These activities encourage collegiality and allow members to exchange information in a relaxed social setting.

Associations encourage their members to become involved so that meetings *for* members are planned with input *from* members. The meeting planner works with member committees from the initial planning stage through the final production of the event. Committee members can suggest program topics and speakers that their colleagues will find appealing and, at best, compelling. Local committee members may suggest local venues for social events, tourist attractions and tours, entertainment options, and golf courses for a conference tournament. One particularly enterprising volunteer once researched local options and put together a comprehensive notebook rivaling those found at hotel concierge desks. Working under the supervision of the meeting planner, volunteers perform a myriad of duties during the event, such as giving out badges to preregistered attendees at registration, monitoring recreational events, and hosting social events—all duties that save the association the cost of hiring temporary staff. Member assistance is a value-added and integral part of planning that helps ensure an event's appeal and success.

Association events are a source of revenue for associations. The greater the number of paid attendees, the greater the revenue, and the more lucrative the event is to the association. However, since members must pay registration fees and spend additional funds for travel and lodging, the association must provide programs that its members will find too valuable to miss. The meeting planner develops a marketing strategy that promotes benefits to entice members and prospects to attend. The marketing plan may feature keynote speakers, concurrent session programs, an appealing location, and exciting social and recreational events. This information may be posted on the association's website, highlighted in newsletters, mailed in comprehensive preliminary programs, posted on social media, and sent as email blasts. In addition to promoting all facets of the event to members and prospects, additional marketing emphasis may be directed at targeted groups, such as past attendees.

Association meeting planners work with their member committees to develop worthwhile programs and then design effective marketing plans to maximize participation. The combined focus results in events that are beneficial to members and the association.

### Types of Associations

As defined by the leading association for association planners, the Professional Convention Management Association (PCMA) has segmented the association category into four types: professional, medical or health, trade, and SMERF.

**Professional** A professional association is an association where membership is comprised of persons from the same industry. Membership exists at the individual level and each person is responsible for paying his/her own membership dues. According to *PCMA Convene Magazine 26th Annual Meetings Market Survey* (February 2017), professional associations comprise 47 percent of all associations.

**Medical or Health** This is an association where membership is comprised of persons specifically from a medical or health area. According to *PCMA*, this segment encompasses 28 percent of all associations.

**Trade** This is an association where membership is comprised of organizations from the same industry. Membership exists at the company level, and individuals employed by the member company become members by extension. According to *PCMA*, this segment encompasses 18 percent of all associations.

**SMERFs** This term refers to small associations with members who join for Social, Military, Educational, Religious, and Fraternal reasons. Educational groups could include universities, for-profit education groups, or high schools. Fraternal groups could include Kiwanis, Elks, or university fraternities and sororities. Persons attending these meetings tend to pay their own expenses; accordingly, this category tends to be very price sensitive. According to *PCMA*, this segment encompasses six percent of all associations.

Any of these association segments can take place at a local, state, regional, national, or international level, which is dictated by where the association members are located. Additionally, in the United States, any of these categories can have a special tax-exempt status granted by the Internal Revenue Service. Although tax-exempt associations do not have a profit motive, these associations need to be run efficiently and must have their revenues exceed expenses. Since all revenues are used to support the mission of the organization, excess funds (like profits in the corporate world) are allowed to stay with the organization, tax-free. On average, associations derive one-third of their annual operating revenues from excess revenue (profits) derived from their annual meeting/convention.

## Types of Association Gatherings and Events—Their Purposes and Objectives

**Conventions** According to the accepted practices exchange (APEX), a convention is a gathering of an industry organization convened for a common purpose. Common features include educational sessions, committee meetings, social functions, and meetings to conduct the governance business of the organization. Many conventions have an exhibition (or trade show), which may be a major source of revenue for the association. Exhibitors pay to participate in these events because these events offer them an opportunity to show their products and services to a well-targeted group of potential buyers at a much lower cost than making individual sales trips to meet with the association members individually. Conventions are supported, in part, by **sponsors**: companies or entities that will benefit from exposure to attendees at the convention.

**Board Meetings** The association's board of directors typically meets several times a year to provide collective advice and direction to the association. These meetings are usually the smallest association meetings held. Oftentimes these will be held face-to-face.

**Committee Meetings** Many association committees will hold their own smaller meetings to discuss the affairs related to their purpose (e.g., government relations, convention host committee, national conference program committee, and publications committee). Depending on the committee, these are oftentimes conference calls.

**Regional Conferences** Organizations with a regional structure often schedule one or more events each year to bring together members who are in the same geographic area.

**Training Meetings** Associations often offer their members opportunities to upgrade their professional skills and knowledge through meetings targeted to specific topics. Many professions require continuing education (e.g., continuing medical education for different medical specialties). Members will earn **continuing education units/credits (CEU)** by attending training meetings. Some associations offer training meetings to develop the leadership potential of the association's elected national and regional officers.

**Educational Seminars** Association meetings led by experts that allow the participants to share their views and experiences.

## Marketing and Attendance

One major difference between association and corporate gatherings is that attendance at association meetings is voluntary, not mandatory. Since attendance at association meetings is voluntary, the meetings must offer appealing programs to draw members to the events.

Another difference is that many of the attendees are personally responsible for their own registration cost, transportation, hotel, and related expenses. In some instances, employers may fund the attendance of employees at industry and professional association events that are work related and are seen as having an educational value for the employee.

The marketing of association meetings is critical to their success. All good association marketing should begin with an understanding of who the members are and their needs. This focus should be brought into the development of all meetings. In today's business world, attendees are reluctant to spend too much time out of the office in order to attend a meeting. It is the association's job to plan a robust program that entices the attendee and gives him or her a true and valuable reason to travel to a meeting. Many attendees must prove the value of the meeting to their boss to get permission to attend. Good marketing material is crucial to demonstrate this value.

If the meeting provides genuine opportunities for the members to satisfy their needs, the promotional aspect of marketing the meeting becomes much less intense. Since the primary group of attendees is members of the association, the key elements of marketing include providing advance notification of the date and location of the upcoming meeting, along with information about the planned content, speakers, and special activities. Later, detailed registration information and a preliminary program will need to be provided.

The vehicle for communicating this information to members has traditionally been through direct mail and notices or advertisements in the association newsletter and magazine. Today, this has changed as technology and cost considerations have moved many associations toward the use of electronic media to communicate with their members. There has been a rapid growth in the use of emails and social media to promote a meeting that emphasizes that recipients should visit the association's website to seek out details. Promoting and marketing next year's meeting or convention at the current year's event is also recommended so that attendees can block these dates on their calendars and can begin to create excitement one year in advance.

To expand the number of attendees at the gathering, many associations send promotional materials and notices to non-members who have been targeted as sharing an interest in the meeting's purpose. Since the non-member fee to attend the meeting is usually higher than the member fee, this effort, if successful, could result in attracting new members to the organization and can raise additional revenue for the association.

### Department and/or Individuals Responsible for Organizing and Planning

According to *PCMA Convene Magazine 26th Annual Meetings Market Survey* (February 2017), 80 percent of the respondents said that meeting planning was their primary job responsibility. The person in charge is most likely to hold the position of manager (41 percent) or director (28 percent). Three percent are vice presidents and eight percent are CEOs. They tend to be more experienced, with an average of 15 years of work experience in the meetings field. Seventy-seven percent of respondents have at least ten years of meeting management experience, and more than two-fifths (42 percent) have 20-plus experience. More than half of the respondents (63 percent) have earned an undergraduate degree (with 19 percent having earned a post-graduate degree). According to the *Convene 2016 Salary Survey*, 91 percent of meeting planners have earned the CMP designation, 6 percent have earned the CMM, and 5 percent have earned their Certified Association Executive (CAE) certificate.

Association meeting planners join professional associations in greater numbers than their corporate counterparts. Those associations include the PCMA, the American Society of Association Executives (ASAE), the Center for Association Leadership, MPI, and the Religious Conference Management Association. There are also many local organizations for meeting planners that provide support and professional development opportunities.

Table 2-1 provides characteristics of the major sponsors and organizers of meetings and conventions.

**TABLE 2-1**

Comparison

	Corporation	Association	Government
Definition	Legally chartered enterprises that conduct business on behalf of their owners with the purpose of making a profit and increasing its value	A group of people organized for certain common purposes, whether that be for professional, industry, educational, scientific, or social reasons	Subdivisions of federal, state, or local government
Purpose	Training, team building, and incentives	Primarily educational and networking with some trade show components	Primarily training and educational
Decision Makers	Centralized (typically leaders in the corporate hierarchy)	Decentralized (oftentimes committee decision)	Managers who decide to have the meeting and fund it from their departmental budget
Attendees	Members of the corporation or have a close business relationship with the company	Members of, or people interested in, that particular industry	Government employees and, depending on the event, the general public
Spouse Attendance	Rare	Common	Rare
Attendance	Mandatory	Voluntary	Mandatory for personnel; voluntary for public
Size	Varies by company; typically less than ten to one thousand	Several hundred to tens of thousands	Varies by event
Marketing	Minimal; invitation or notice to all attendees	Crucial; often includes mailers, magazines, and electronic marketing	Internally, similar to corporate; when the public is invited, similar to association
Location and Site Selection	Convenience, service, and security are valued	Seek attractive locations to help build attendance; amenities and nearby attractions are important	Convenience, service, and security are valued
Lead Time	Less than six months	Large associations—five to ten years or more; Smaller associations—minimum one year	Less than three to four months
Payment	Corporation pays for everything	Attendee pays for travel, hotel, and registration; registration and sponsorships cover cost of the conference	Funding is awarded through legislative process; department allocates meeting budget
Planner	Corporate planner, most likely a part of someone's job, could be any department in the company	Association planner and board, or outsourced to association management company	Similar to corporate planners who are spread throughout the agency; will outsource an independent planner if outside of their internal capabilities
Professional Associations	Meeting Professional International (MPI), Professional Convention Management Association (PCMA), Society of Incentive and Travel Executives (SITE), and the Association of Insurance and Financial Services Conference Planners	Professional Convention Management Association (PCMA), the American Society of Association Executives (ASAE), Meeting Professionals International (MPI), the Center for Association Leadership, and the Religious Conference Management Association	Society of Government Meeting Professionals (SGMP), Professional Convention Management Association (PCMA), and Meeting Professionals International (MPI). If responsible for organizing exhibitions—International Association of Exhibitions and Events (IAEE).

## Government

Government entities at all levels find it necessary to hold gatherings since they have continuing needs to communicate and interact with many constituent bodies. These meetings may involve the attendance of world leaders, with large groups of protestors and supporters, or a small group of elected local officials holding a legislative retreat. Different than corporate and association meetings, government meetings are subject to various rules. The federal

government and many state governments have established **per diem rates** that set limits on the amount of money a government attendee can spend per day for lodging and meals. Facilities where federal meetings are held must be able to accommodate persons with certain physical limitations, as per the Americans with Disabilities Act, and they must meet fire safety certifications. Since the list of per diem rate tables is so extensive, it is recommended that those in need of the current federal domestic per diem rates go to the General Services Administration (GSA) website at [www.gsa.gov/](http://www.gsa.gov/).

Managers at government agencies are typically those who identify the need to hold a meeting and have the responsibility to provide funding through their departmental budget process or to locate other sources of funding. Meetings, like other parts of an agency's budget, are very dependent on funding provided through the legislative process. Accordingly, as political interest in an agency's mission grows or diminishes, the budget will increase or decrease, as will its ability to sponsor gatherings. Public backlash and policies by the US government can severely curtail off-site meetings by employees of government agencies, which has happened in the past.

Government meetings have characteristics typical of both corporate and association meetings. The purpose of many government meetings is the training of government workers. On the federal level, many of these meetings are replicated in several areas of the country to minimize travel expenses for the employees of an agency's branch offices. Other government meetings may involve both agency employees and those in the general public who may have an interest in the topic of the meeting. Meetings, such as those to discuss prescription drug proposals or the future of social security, are likely to go on the road to gather input from the public. Attendance by employees at government meetings would generally be mandatory, while attendance by the general public would be voluntary. Mandatory attendance by government employees requires only that sufficient notice be provided so that participants can adjust their schedules in order to attend. Attracting voluntary attendees may require additional promotion.

There has been some movement by government agencies to hold virtual meetings with the goal of reducing costs.

### Security

There is no segment of the MEEC industry more attuned to safety and security than government. They work on a regular basis with the Department of Homeland Security in the United States since many of their attendees are high-profile leaders. Although this list is in no way comprehensive, the following are some suggestions for implementing security:

- Plan and prepare
- Refine the pre-convention meeting to emphasize security issues
- Be sure there is coordination of all parties involved
- Establish a security team and its decision makers
- Provide education on security for attendees
- Be proactive rather than reactive
- Stay informed and alert to incidents

### Department and/or Individuals Responsible for Organizing and Planning

Government meeting planners resemble their corporate counterparts, as they are located throughout their agencies. While some government meeting planners devote all their work time to planning meetings, others handle meetings as one of their extra assigned duties.

Many government agencies hire meeting management companies or independent meeting planners to handle meetings that fall beyond their internal capabilities. In the Washington, DC area, there are several meeting-planning companies that specialize in managing government meetings. There are very strict guidelines within the government as to what a government-meeting planner can provide to the attendees in terms of food and beverage, and outside activities. It is imperative that the government-meeting planner study these regulations and be prepared at any time to go through a financial audit at the conclusion of the meeting.



Meeting planners who work for the government and/or independent meeting management companies are likely to join associations to support their professional development. These organizations will help the government-meeting planner learn and understand the strict financial guidelines described earlier. Regulations change yearly, and staying on top of these changes is crucial for the planner's success. These associations include the Society of Government Meeting Professionals (SGMP) and its local or regional chapters, the PCMA, and MPI. Those who have responsibility for organizing exhibitions are likely to join the International Association of Exhibitions and Events (IAEE).

### GOVERNMENT MEETINGS ARE DIFFERENT FROM A US PERSPECTIVE

Meetings for the government have characteristics that set them apart from other types of meetings. They are different from any other type of conference. Why is this so? Because these meetings are bound by government regulations and operating policies that do not apply to other types of meetings.

First, consider rates for sleeping rooms. To save the government money, the GSA Office of Government-Wide Policy sets per diem rates for lodging, meals, and incidental expenses for individual travelers for all locations in the continental United States. In most cities, these rates are below those charged to conference groups, which take up a larger amount of a hotel's inventory of rooms than transient travelers. To offset this problem, GSA allows government-meeting organizers to negotiate a rate up to 25 percent above the lodging allowance. Also, GSA's Federal Premier Lodging Program offers government travelers guaranteed rooms at guaranteed rates and enters into contractual relationships with hotels in the top 70 US travel markets. Additionally, meetings may only be held in properties that comply with the Hotel and Motel Fire Safety Act of 1990. Government regulations regarding travel are located at [www.gsa.gov](http://www.gsa.gov).

Federal procurement policies also distinguish the government meeting. Bids for meeting supplies and services must be obtained from *at least* three vendors for all but the smallest purchases. Additionally, government-meeting planners usually are not the people who commit federal funds. All purchases must be approved and contracted for by a federal procurement official. In some cases, meeting planners have been trained by their agencies in procurement practices, so they are able to commit a limited amount of money (e.g., \$2,500, \$10,000, or \$25,000). But private-sector meeting suppliers should be forewarned to determine who has the authority to commit funds and sign contracts.

Hotel contracts are not considered official by the government. A hotel contract may be attached to the paperwork submitted to the procurement official, but, in all cases, the government contract—not that of the private sector—is the prevailing authority. This applies to all procurements for meeting services. Funds *must* be approved before the service is rendered, not after. In addition, the government *must* be able to cancel a contract without liquidated damages if funding for an event is withdrawn, if there are furloughs or closures of government facilities, or if other government actions make it inadvisable to hold the meeting. The government cannot pay for services not received. Furthermore, the government cannot indemnify or hold harmless anyone who is not a government employee conducting official business.

Other characteristics that make government meetings unique include the following:

- ***There is a short turn-around time for planning government meetings.*** While associations plan their conferences with many years of lead time, most government meetings are planned only months—or even weeks—before the event. This is true for large, multifaceted meetings as well as small gatherings.
- ***Government meetings do not fit a particular mold.*** They may be elaborate international conferences for high-ranking dignitaries or small scientific conclaves for 8 to 12 researchers. Some meetings may be held only once and, therefore, have no history.
- ***Government meetings often require a disproportionately large amount of function space relative to the number of sleeping room nights booked.*** This may be because only a small percentage of attendees are coming from out of town.
- ***Policies for meetings can vary from agency to agency.*** Some agencies collect registration fees to cover expenses. Others will not allow appropriated fees to pay for lunches; collections often must be made on-site from attendees. In addition, as GSA allows each agency to implement the “up to 25 percent” allowance as they see fit, government lodging allowances may vary from agency to agency.

- **Government meetings frequently bring together representatives from the Uniformed Services and non-Department of Defense agencies.** Often, these groups share software applications designed for their *own* purposes, such as encrypted messaging and global directory systems that list only those who “need to know” the information. Frequently, such meetings are classified and are required to be held in a secure facility, whether at a government building or a public facility secured by trained personnel.

Government-sponsored meetings are far more complicated than most private-sector conferences because they are often planned by people who are not full-time meeting planners. They may be budget analysts, public affairs officers, scientists, secretaries, or administrative officers. And, as government meetings are perceived to provide less revenue for a hotel, they may be assigned to junior members of the hotel sales staff.

All government-meeting organizers are bound by a code of ethics that prohibits them from accepting anything from a vendor that is valued at more than \$50. Those who work with the government should realize this and not put the planner in a compromising position.

Thankfully, there is an organization that specializes in providing education and resources to government planners and suppliers—the Society of Government Meeting Planners (SGMP).

## Other Organizations Arranging Gatherings

### Political Organizations

Aside from their subject matter, political events do not differ much from non-political events, with primary differences being in security, press, and venue management. Political events could include major conventions and special events, such as inaugurations, trade shows, fundraising events, and local events. Oftentimes, conventions tend to be significantly larger than non-political conventions, which can create challenges for crowd control. Since attendees are highly passionate about their cause, and political speakers can be very polarizing, specialized security agencies are utilized; and disruptive guests are handled in a much harsher fashion, which could result in formalized legal action. The press is a known presence; and dedicated space, such as press boxes, press risers, and a room for multiple cameras, is expected.



The inauguration of US President Obama was a complicated and highly secure government event.  
*Alex Wong/Getty Images*

### Labor Unions

The labor union market has seen a steep decline in private sector union membership, going from 24.3 percent in 1973 to 6.6 percent in 2014. Despite this, there are still over 150 unions in the United States that hold meetings regularly, such as The Teamsters, Service Employees International, and the Pipe Fitters Union. Union meetings are typically held every other year, and are only held at unionized properties. They tend to be large because all members attend. Oftentimes, prominent political speakers are featured in the meeting. National conventions typically have sponsored functions, social programs, high-spouse attendance, and high-per-person expenditures.

## Entities That Help Organize Gatherings

There are many categories of organizations that are key players in aiding corporations, associations, government and other entities in producing their meetings and events. They include exhibition and meeting management companies.

### Exhibition Management Companies

There are several companies that are in the business of owning and managing trade shows and expositions. These companies both develop and produce shows that profit their companies, as well as produce events for sponsoring corporations, associations, or government clients. While trade shows and expositions are both events at which products and services are displayed for potential buyers, the **trade show** or exhibition is generally not open to the public, while expositions are usually open to the public and charge an admission fee. Depending on the nature of the exposition, the attendees vary greatly. For exhibitions, the market is well defined by the trade or profession. For public shows, the attendees are basically defined by their interests and geographic proximity to the show location.

The companies who operate these exhibitions are profit-making enterprises that have found areas of economic interest that attract, according to the purpose of the exhibition, either the general public (e.g., an auto, boat, home, or garden show) or members of a specific industry (e.g., high-technology communications networking). Exhibitions provide the opportunity for face-to-face marketing. The owners and senior managers of company-owned shows decide where, when, and how often they will produce their shows. The decision is driven by the profit motive. Offering too many shows could lead to a cannibalization of the market, whereas offering too few shows creates an opportunity for competition to enter the market with their own show. Larger exhibition management companies manage several exhibitions within a given year. They will divide their staff by the various shows so that their time can be dedicated to getting to know the event, growing it, marketing it, and eventually producing it on-site. When the exhibition management company is smaller, all staff members most likely will work as one team on the exhibition. The associations that support the exhibition management industry include the International Association of Exhibitions and Events (IAEE) for the production side of the business. Other related associations include the Exhibit Designers and Producers Association, the Exposition Services and Contractors Association, and the Healthcare Convention and Exhibitor Association.

Some associations hire **exhibition management companies** to manage all or part of their exhibitions. For their efforts, the companies are paid for the services they provide. Among the largest exhibition management companies are Reed Exhibitions, which organizes over 500 events in 41 countries, and Emerald Expositions, which markets and produces over 50 shows. Their shows serve a wide variety of industries, domestically and globally, including aerospace, art and entertainment, electronics, hospitality, security, sport and health, and travel. Other exhibition management companies include International Gem and Jewelry Inc., Cygnus Expositions, and National Event Management Inc.

An exhibition management company is really a marketing company, because it is creating the environment in which need-satisfying exchanges can occur. Their focus is on

selling exhibit space, producing an event that will keep the exhibitors happy and returning year after year, and building buyer attendance. Exhibition management companies have a need to market to two distinctly different yet inextricably linked publics. One group that must be targeted is exhibitors who need to reach potential buyers of their products and services. The others are members of the trade or general public who have a need or desire to view, discuss, and purchase the products and services presented by the exhibitors. The trade group only needs to be informed of the dates and location of the exhibition/trade show. Direct mail, email, and posting the trade show on social media outlets may be all that is needed for an established show. Shows appealing to the general public require extensive media advertising (newspaper, radio, social media, and television) to communicate the specifics within the geographic region. Promotional efforts like the distribution of discount coupons are common. In both cases, it is essential that the marketing effort results in a high volume of traffic at the exhibition to satisfy the needs of the exhibitors.

## Association Management Companies

As the name of this category implies, this type of company is contracted by an association to assume full or partial responsibility for the management of the association based on its needs. A designated person in the association management company is identified as the main contact for the association and interacts with the board of directors and members to fulfill the association's mission. If the association is small and has limited financial resources, the contact person will most likely serve in this capacity for two or more associations. Since these organizations manage more than one association, association management companies were formerly known as multi-management companies. Confusion as to whom they targeted their services to necessitated this change.

Other employees of the association management company support the main contact and provide services as contracted (such as membership, finance, publications, government relations, and meeting management services). With this type of arrangement, the association office is typically located within the offices of the association management company. Examples of these types of companies include SmithBucklin & Associates and the Association Management Group.

## Meeting Management Companies

These companies, also known as **third parties**, operate on a contractual basis. This is like an association management company, but meeting management companies limit their services to providing either selected or comprehensive meeting management services. They may manage all aspects of the meeting or may be focused on meeting planning services (pre-meeting as well as on-site support), city and venue research (also called **sourcing** in the industry), hotel negotiations and contracting, exhibit and sponsorship sales, on-site exhibit floor management, providing registration and housing services, providing lead retrieval equipment/platforms and meeting apps, marketing services, providing virtual meeting platforms, or any combination of these. In many instances, these companies make a large portion of their money from collecting a ten percent commission on each hotel room night booked at the hotel in return for bringing the booking to the property. A full-service third party will use some of these commissions to offset the fee charged to the client for other services provided. The meetings that these companies assist with may be held at convention centers, conference centers, special venue facilities, or hotels. Examples of meeting management companies include Conference Direct, Meeting Management Group, and Experient Inc.

## Independent Meeting Managers

Experienced meeting professionals often use their expertise and contacts to set up their own business of managing meetings, or parts of meetings, for almost any entity that has a need; an association, several associations, corporations, individuals, and so on. An independent meeting manager may be called to plan and run a wedding, run a golf tournament that is an integral part of a gathering, to provide on-site management, or to act in a similar way as a



full-service meeting management firm and handle all logistics for a meeting. There are also times when an independent is hired to handle crises in a meetings department at an organization. Personnel changes in the meetings department shortly before a meeting may require hiring a competent professional to pull the meeting together and bring it to a successful conclusion. The independent model works well for planners who have worked full time for an organization, gained significant knowledge and respect in the industry, and want to go out on their own and determine their own schedule. Independents are paid on a contract basis and can pick and choose for whom they want to work.

The segment of the industry that individuals are associated with will dictate the type of entity that they would likely join to support their professional development. Many will join PCMA or MPI. Others will choose to join organizations like the International Live Events Association (formerly the International Special Events Society), the National Association of Catering Executives, or the Association of Bridal Consultants.

## Professional Congress Organizers

Outside the United States, the term Professional Congress Organizer (PCO) is used to designate a meeting management company. In international destinations, a congress is defined as a conference or convention. According to the Convention Industry Council (CIC) APEX Glossary, a PCO is a local supplier who can arrange, manage, and/or plan any function or service for an event. PCOs are very similar to destination management companies in the United States.

When sponsoring organizations from North America hold international events, they often engage the services of a PCO from the host region to assist them with local logistics. Some countries actually require that a domestic company be contracted to handle the meeting.

## Trends and Best Practices

Experts believe that the face-to-face meeting business will never go out of style. Although technology now allows people to join communities online and interact more frequently, human nature dictates that people enjoy meeting with each other, and need to get together to exchange ideas and to network.

Meetings are also being influenced by emerging technologies and changing business needs. Some of those changing patterns are:

- **Budgetary constraints:** Meetings/events must show value to those organizations that sponsor them and for the individual attendee. Meeting planners are being scrutinized and forced to rethink how they plan meetings and where they spend money.
- **Shortening meetings:** Some sponsoring organizations have clipped off a day or half day from their meetings to reduce lodging and meal expenses for their participants.
- **Changing the frequency of annual meetings:** Some associations are considering holding their major meeting every other year, and focusing on regional gatherings that attendees can drive to at a lower cost.
- **Creating more value for their members:** Some associations are streaming live video of keynote speakers to non-attending members, who in turn will see the enhanced value of their memberships.
- **Increasing the interactivity of meeting sessions:** Social media has been introduced to encourage greater involvement of attendees. The term **gamification** has emerged in the meetings industry, which involves the use of technology to help engage attendees during a meeting. Examples include the use of smartphones as voting devices in a meeting room or for polling attendees. Another example is having Twitter feeds on a large screen in the front of a meeting room, which gives instant feedback to the speaker and is highly interactive in today's meetings.
- **Merging of sponsoring organizations:** Organizations with compatible missions, goals, and objectives, as well as some overlapping members and exhibitors, are



combining their strengths into a single joint meeting. This helps reduce costs to the organizations, as well as allows attendees to attend one single meeting instead of feeling obliged to attend two within one year. The educational track of joint meetings in many instances brings a more robust program and a greater return on investment (ROI) to an attendee. Many attendees must justify to their employers why they want to attend a meeting, and the educational and networking value is one that attendees point to in many cases.

- **Virtual conferences:** Technology has evolved to allow meetings of all sizes to occur via the Internet, thereby eliminating the need for participants to get on a plane and check into a hotel. This type of event, often with limited objectives, serves to complement more traditional face-to-face gatherings. Organizations also believe that if an attendee receives great value from attending a virtual meeting, they might get excited and think that the face-to-face meeting would also be a great personal benefit as well. This is one way to help an organization increase their attendance numbers at their face-to-face meetings.
- **Virtual trade shows:** A wider range of potential buyers can view innovations in their fields. Today's advanced technology allows a virtual attendee to feel like they are walking the aisles at a live trade show. Virtual trade shows can also complement a live trade show where attendees and non-attendees can view the displays and communicate with representatives working the show.
- **Outsourcing:** Some organizations have downsized, or even eliminated their meeting-planning departments as a cost-saving measure. The responsibilities are transferred to independent meeting planners or meeting management companies: entities to which the sponsor or organizer has no long-term commitment.
- **Focus on ROI:** Many organizations, whether they are corporations or associations, are increasingly concerned about the ROI of their meetings and events. They are taking a hard look at costs and benefits with the goal of decreasing the former and increasing the latter. Post-event evaluations are more and more important.
- **Limiting government meetings/events:** The US federal government has come out with laws that limit the number of meetings a government employee can attend in a year. This law is of great concern to associations because many of their members are government employees, and they offer great value to these members. This is a trend that will be monitored over the years to come.

## Summary

The types of organizations that sponsor gatherings are as diverse as the types of gatherings held and the people who attend them. Most of the US population will participate in these gatherings at least once in their lives. For many of them, attending a meeting, convention, exhibition, or other event will be a regular occurrence. The gatherings attended reflect the personal and professional interests of the attendees.

People seeking meeting-planning career opportunities with sponsoring organizations will have to use targeting techniques to locate them, although these positions do exist throughout the nation. The greatest number of these positions can be found in locations where the organizations are headquartered. The metropolitan Washington, DC area is considered to be the meetings capital of the world, with several thousand associations located in and around the city. The federal government, also physically located in Washington, DC, employs many people in the meetings profession as they organize and hold hundreds

of meetings each year. In addition to governmental state agencies, state capitals are home to many state and regional associations, all of which have many meetings of their own that are held annually.

Major corporations tend to be located in large cities. Although many may be in smaller cities and towns, their meetings are typically planned from corporate headquarters.

Employment opportunities with organizations and facilities that host gatherings are in both major cities and small towns. An organization will select a meeting/event location for its proximity to access by its attendees (near a major airport or an interstate highway).

With baby boomers (the largest age group in the US population) approaching retirement age, it is anticipated that there will be an increasing number of employment opportunities in the coming years on both the planner and supplier sides of the meeting, exposition, event, and convention industry.

# CASE STUDY

## Conference Marketing in a Competitive Marketplace

One of the main differences between corporate events and association events is the guaranteed attendee base. Typically, in corporate events, there is a set group of people who must attend (such as a sales meeting or corporate training). Association meetings are not required and, therefore, the organization advertises to the relevant professional community at large to secure attendees. Therefore, marketing is extremely important for these types of events.

The Engineering Association of America is a nonprofit association of members who are professional engineers. This association is the longest running association focused in engineering, but has recently faced sharp competition over the past decade from conferences focusing on specific segments of engineering (mechanical, electrical, etc.) and niche conferences (Women in Engineering, etc). Due to this competition, conference attendance has decreased by over

35 percent in the past five years. You have just been hired as the new Director of Marketing.

1. What is the first thing you would do now that you are hired?
2. When should the association begin to market its annual meeting?
3. What kind of marketing should the association do for potential attendees? What kind of marketing should be done for existing attendees?
4. What kind of marketing should be done for sponsors? What kind of marketing should be done for exhibitors?
5. What new conference experiences could you integrate onsite to generate excitement and positive word of mouth?
6. For this particular group, which social media outlets would you focus on? Why?

# Key Words and Terms

For definitions, see the Glossary.

air lift	exhibition management	public show
association	company	sourcing
continuing education	gamification	sponsor
units/credits (CEU)	incentive trip	third party
corporation	per diem rate	trade show

# Review and Discussion Questions

1. Identify the type of sponsoring organization that holds the greatest number of gatherings, and the type that generates the greatest economic benefit.
2. Which type or types of sponsoring organizations have the greatest marketing challenges to ensure the success of their gatherings?
3. What changes are occurring with incentive trips to provide more value for the corporation sponsoring the gathering?
4. How do not-for-profit associations differ from for-profit organizations?
5. What types of organizations comprise the category of associations known as SMERFs, and what similarities do they share with each other?
6. How do government procurement officers view meeting contracts from their hotel suppliers?
7. Distinguish between the trade show and the exposition.
8. What efficiencies do association management companies bring to the management and operation of small associations?