

Britain For Events



**A report on the
size and value of
Britain's events industry,
its characteristics,
trends, opportunities
and key issues**

Executive Summary

Business Visits & Events Partnership



LEADING THE WAY FOR BRITAIN'S EVENTS

Events will shape Britain's future

Britain's business visits and events industry is a vibrant sector of the visitor economy but also has an active role in the creative industries, trade development and in growing cultural appreciation.

Britain has a well-developed infrastructure of destinations, venues and service suppliers offering an array of facilities and a depth of expertise to ensure the successful staging of events and a guarantee of a memorable experience for those attending them. The creative and production skills of the event organising companies located in Britain are second-to-none, as evidenced by their superb track record in designing and staging some of the highest-profile events in the world, from the opening ceremonies of the Olympic Games to the summits of the G8 political leaders, from major industrial, commercial, medical, scientific and educational conferences and trade exhibitions to leading edge motivational events.

Servicing business visitors and delivering world-class events also means providing stimulating careers and employment opportunities. Some 530,000 people are estimated to be working in the sector. Details on these opportunities and how to access them are included in this Report.

With so many diverse areas, including meetings and conferences, exhibitions and trade fairs, outdoor events, incentive travel, corporate hospitality, cultural and sporting events and festivals, its leading organisations are intent on working together to support a competitive, high quality and more profitable events sector in Britain.

The Business Visits and Events Partnership (BVEP), celebrating its 10th anniversary in 2010, has worked together with the support of the entire events community to compile this Report in order to communicate the value of this vital industry and influence policies favourable to its continued growth.

The Report is one of a number of initiatives undertaken by the BVEP to position the sector at the forefront of thinking by both the Government and the wider business community. The Report reveals the scope and characteristics of the sector's various segments. It identifies trends and opportunities and highlights key issues and challenges which, if not addressed, could undermine Britain's position as one of the leading players in this highly competitive, global marketplace.

Properly supported, Britain's events can help rebuild and re-balance Britain's economic prosperity.

*Michael Hirst OBE, Chair
Business Visits & Events Partnership
October 2010*

Executive Summary

- The sector is worth over £36 billion per annum to the national economy. Business visitors spend on average £131 per day - 72% more than the amount spent by leisure visitors on a daily basis, while visitors to UK exhibitions from overseas spend 193% more per day than leisure visitors to Britain.
- Non-discretionary business visits (e.g. trips by sales representatives to meet a client or by a lorry driver to deliver a cargo) are estimated to be worth at least £7 billion per annum.
- Additionally, trade transacted at exhibitions and other business events held in the UK is conservatively estimated to be worth over £100 billion.

Employment

- There are over 25,000 businesses in the sector including event organisers, venues, suppliers, destination marketing organisations (DMOs), destination management companies (DMCs), and others. The best estimates are that the sector sustains at least 530,000 full-time equivalent (FTE) jobs.

Export Earnings

- Events and exhibitions are important not just for the national benefits of expenditure generated and jobs created and sustained through activity here in the UK, but also for the 'invisible' benefits of their export earnings potential. Many of the leading exhibition

The Value of Britain's Events Sector - by segment

- Conferences and meetings - £18.8 billion*
- Exhibitions and trade shows - £9.3 billion*
- Incentive travel - £1.2 billion
- Corporate hospitality - £1 billion
- Outdoor events - £1 billion
- Festivals and cultural events - £1.1 billion
- Music events - £1.4 billion
- Sports events - £2.3 billion
- **TOTAL** for discretionary (ie. influenceable) events = **£36.1 billion**

* in terms of net revenue to venues and the wider economic benefit to destinations through expenditure by delegates on travel, entertainment, eating out, shopping, etc.

organising companies operating globally are UK companies, leading the world in the development of cutting edge, business-to-business (B2B) and business-to-consumer (B2C) exhibitions and trade fairs. The profits generated from staging events across the world return significant export income to UK Plc.

Investment

- Britain has an excellent track record of investing in its event facilities and supporting infrastructure.

London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games

- More than a fifth of tourism benefit from the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games will come from additional business visits expenditure, equivalent to £433m at 2006 prices.

- The event will provide an unrivalled opportunity to show the world just how good Britain is at planning and delivering major international events.
- One of the principal legacies of the Games is expected to be an increase in the volume of international conferences and exhibitions taking place in the years following 2012.

Event Social Impacts

- The benefits of meetings and events are not just economic. Meetings and events have other positive impacts on society, contributing to health and wellbeing, education, social diversity, community spirit and cohesion, and civic pride. Events help to foster diversity in our local culture and heritage, providing opportunities for further destination expansion and growth.

Changing Perceptions and the Profile of Business Events

- Meetings and conferences play a vital role in economic, professional and educational development. They should be thought of as a key component in the global knowledge economy, rather than as a branch of tourism.
- Events are still essential to communicate, educate, inform, to enable networking, to motivate teams and to achieve business objectives. The task is to demonstrate the absolute value of the meetings and live events industry as a quantifiable investment, not a frivolous cost.

Opportunities to Increase Association Conventions

- The demands made upon conference venues catering for national association conferences will continue to grow, both in the provision of electronic communications technology but also in requirements for space (e.g. increasing use of syndicate/breakout rooms, greater need for exhibition space), better accessibility for disabled delegates, and for higher levels of security
- Organisers are likely to seek more integrated infrastructures with high quality transport systems to and within a destination, plus venue, accommodation, restaurants and attractions in close proximity.

- Winning and hosting key international conferences is seen as a major economic boost to the host city and many cities use the conference sector to support and facilitate urban renewal and regeneration.
- The national and international association conference segments also provide continuous economic benefit in times of recession, either local or worldwide. While corporate events diminish at such times, association events continue, although delegate numbers may be less than when economies are buoyant.

Benefits of Exhibitions and Similar Live Events

- Exhibitions play a vital role in the UK economy in generating exports. Many exhibitions held in the UK have established themselves as a strong base for international trade.
- Recent research confirms that, before an exhibition or similar live event, 36% of people say attendance makes it easier to decide to buy, but this rises to 76% after experiencing an event.
- New technology is used to enhance, not replace, exhibitions, as there is no substitute for the face-to-face contact, customer interaction and the ability for the customer physically to feel, see, taste, smell, test and try the product.

- More organisers are looking to increase the number of public shows. Public shows are seen as being informative, as well as providing marketing and sales opportunities, brand building and entertainment, all of which add to customer value and experience.
- The exhibition industry is continually endeavouring to increase the 'internationality' of its shows in order to enhance the opportunity for exhibitors to increase their export markets.

Incentive Travel and Performance Improvement

- The London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games provide a great opportunity to showcase Britain as an incentive destination and to grow inbound incentive trips for Britain after the Games.

Corporate Events

- There is no doubt that events are now seen as a powerful communication medium that can change perceptions, attitudes and behaviours and create genuine brand experiences.
- In common with the rest of the B2B sector, corporate events and corporate hospitality are increasingly being required to prove their worth with client companies under pressure to demonstrate return on investment.

Outdoor Events

- The world of outdoor events has developed into a highly professional and high quality industry.

Music Events and Festivals

- The music and festivals market will grow significantly in future years. Although the recession has had an impact on some events, particularly some of the smaller festivals that do not always have the resources behind them to underwrite difficult years, the long term trends towards greater leisure time and demand for entertainment are positive.
- The UK's strong musical and festival heritage also makes this a potentially strong market for attracting visitors to the UK.
- As well as generating significant employment in the UK, festivals and events can make a considerable contribution to the wider economy in areas where they take place, drawing in visitors to use local facilities.
- The impact of this can be seen from research carried out by the Association of Festival Organisers which found that the value of folk festivals alone was some £76.98 million.

- Music festivals are attractive to major companies and brands. The challenge is to ensure that any sponsorship and on-site marketing is authentic and credible.

Sporting Events

- Sport helped to attract more than three million visitors to Britain in 2008, nearly one in ten of all visitors, with a spend of £2.3 billion, approximately 14% of total inbound visitor spending in 2008. This annual spend is estimated to support more than 50,000 jobs across Britain.
- The total economic benefit of hosting the Rugby World Cup in 2015 will be up to £2.1 billion while, if England's bid to host the Football World Cup in 2018 is successful, this could attract three million international visitors and add £3 billion to the UK economy.

Event Service Suppliers

- The UK has a strong infrastructure of highly experienced and professional suppliers to the events sector.

Subvention

- VisitBritain does not have a subvention fund to provide support for international event bids, a factor which puts Britain at a competitive disadvantage in many international event bids.

Event Sector Qualifications and Professional Development

- In order to ensure that there is clear progression into and across the sector, available qualifications will be matched against specific job roles and their individual needs.
- There has been considerable research and time spent on exploring the feasibility of an Institute of Event Management. This will be established in 2011 as an autonomous body to accredit the education offerings of educational institutions, trade associations and private training providers.
- Given the lack of focused information on career opportunities in the events industry, there is an opportunity to produce a dedicated guide that outlines the range of careers opportunities, including entry and development routes and snapshots of those already working in the sector.

Recommendations

1. Recognise and expand the contribution that the Events Sector makes economically, socially and culturally to Tourism, Trade and Creative Enterprise.
2. Britain should do more to utilise its strengths, especially its established network of world-renowned university and college venues to influence academic conventions to come to the UK.
3. Working together across destinations, best practice and resource-sharing would help the UK to raise standards and enjoy an increased market share.
4. There should be a greater focus on attracting and staging international exhibitions and events in the UK, supported by the development of a national subvention fund, possibly in conjunction with UK Trade and Investment, to strengthen Britain's bidding capabilities.
5. Align international exhibitions, conferences and events held in the UK with the Government's priority sectors for the national economy.
6. The economic importance of conferences to a country is far more recognised by the UK's main competitor countries than it is in the UK. Obtaining governmental support for a conference bid is still difficult and slow - it needs to be made easier and bids need to be processed more expeditiously.
7. The whole business events sector should support the comprehensive study into the value of the UK meetings and incentive segments planned for 2011.
8. Appropriate support for attracting more international events to be held in Britain should include the reinstatement of allowances on activities that seek to bring business and events to Britain to include Inward Missions, bidding for major events, and entertaining to grow exports.
9. There is a need to ensure more co-operation between event organisers, local authorities and the local tourism sector to include - accommodation, transport, tourist information and restaurant operators and to make the most of domestic and international promotional opportunities. Local authorities need to be made more aware of the benefits that accrue from events, economically, socially, culturally and to destination place marketing.
10. Government bodies and local authorities should recognise, even more so during this time of fiscal restraint, the immense value of live events as a highly efficient and productive platform for communication, motivation and education, and therefore ensure appropriate support is given to this activity.

About the Business Visits & Events Partnership

The Business Visits & Events Partnership's aim is to lead the way in supporting a competitive, high quality and more profitable business visits and events sector in Britain.

The Partnership seeks to provide a cohesive industry voice and works with VisitBritain and other government departments and agencies to influence and develop policies and practices favourable to the growth of tourism, trade and creative enterprise from business visits and events and with the support of the leading trade and professional organisations and government agencies with an interest in conferences, meetings, exhibitions, trade fairs, incentive travel, corporate hospitality, and business, sporting, cultural and festival events.

Members of the BVEP include:

- Association for Conferences and Events
- Association of British Professional Conference Organisers
- Association for Events Management Education
- Conference Centres of Excellence
- Department for Culture, Media and Sport
- Eventia
- Events Industry Alliance
- Events Industry Forum
- Hotel Booking Agents Association
- International Congress & Convention Association
- International Special Events Society
- Meeting Professionals International
- Meetings Industry Association
- National Outdoor Events Association
- Northern Ireland Tourist Board
- Site Global
- VisitBritain
- VisitEngland
- Visit London
- VisitScotland
- Visit Wales

To view the main 'Britain For Events' report as a PDF, please visit:

www.businessvisitsandeventspartnership.com

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The Business Visits & Events Partnership supports 'Britain for Events' - the awareness raising campaign run by VisitBritain to encourage businesses in the UK to keep communicating through meetings and events. Find out more at **www.britainforevents.co.uk**

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