

# Importance of the convention bureaus tourism essay



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A convention bureau can be seen as an organization that works on levels that represent all factors in terms of hotels, restaurants, convention facilities, tour operators, attractions, transport, retail and commercial attractions, all of great importance to visitors in a city. Convention bureaus are dependent on financial resources in order to pursue their business operations. Members will not support convention bureaus with funding unless they get something in return; therefore it is vital for convention bureaus to have a successful image.

For my part, I had the opportunity to carry out my internship during a period of almost 5 months with the Dubai Convention Bureau division of the Department of Tourism and Commerce Marketing DTCM. Their objective to “strengthen Dubai’s economy and increase the city’s global tourism position by increasing the number of congresses, incentives and events held in Dubai.

In that report, we will highlight the importance of the Convention Bureaus in general and see what are their roles and importance in today’s destinations.

Then we will focus on tourism, and in this case which is more important for us, we will emphasize on the business tourism in general and assess Dubai’s potential within this segment.

To finish, we will give a description of the entire mission which have been entrusted to me during my work experience. Please note that the significant works which have been carried out will not be printed because of the organization’s policy to save the environment, the will be located in the CD-ROM as PDF files.

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### Tourism Impact

Tourism has a variety of economic impacts. Tourists contribute to a destination's sales, profits, jobs, tax revenues, and income. Primary tourism sectors, such as lodging, dining, transportation, amusements, and retail trade, are affected directly: most other sectors are impacted by secondary effects. An economic impact analysis of tourism activity usually focuses on regional tourism-related changes in sales, income, and employment.\*

### Economic Impact:

World Travel and Tourism Council's latest Economic Impact Research shows that world Travel & Tourism continues to grow in spite of continuing economic challenges.

- Despite progressive downgrades to growth forecasts through 2011, the industry grew by 3% over the course of the year (in terms of Travel & Tourism's contribution to GDP).
- Tourism's direct contribution to GDP in 2011 was US\$2 trillion and the industry generated 98 million jobs.
- Taking account of its direct, indirect and induced impacts, Travel & Tourism's total contribution in 2011 was US\$6. 3 trillion in GDP, 255 million jobs, US\$743 billion in investment and US\$1. 2 trillion in exports. This contribution represented 9% of GDP, 1 in 12 jobs, 5% of investment and 5% of exports.

- Growth forecasts for 2012, although lower than anticipated a year ago, are still positive at 2.8% in terms of the industry's contribution to GDP.
- Longer-term prospects are even more positive with annual growth forecast to be 4.2% over the ten years to 2022.\*

### Business Tourism Impact

More and more countries, regions, cities and resorts have been trying to attract all kinds of business tourism because it is seen to be the most economically beneficial form of tourism. Surveys all over the world tend to show business tourists, and particularly conference delegates, spending between two and four times as much money as tourists as a whole. However, the picture is much more complex than this fact might suggest.

The below chart attempts to provide a realistic picture of the economic impact of business travel and tourism. As you can see the situation appears to be that, in general, the economic impacts outweigh the economic costs in relation to business travel and tourism.

Tourism Research Laboratory at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

<http://www.wttc.org/research/economic-impact-research/>

[http://www.hotelmule.com/management/attachments/2010/10/26\\_201010120521511toKq.gif](http://www.hotelmule.com/management/attachments/2010/10/26_201010120521511toKq.gif)

Convention Bureaus

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## Structure and Funding

The segment of convention bureaus can sometimes differ in terms of the range of size from small meetings up to major conventions with several thousands of delegates. Due to this it is necessary that convention bureaus are able to search for information such as if the city has access to transportation or the number of hotel rooms available that are desired for a convention in order to fulfill the needs of the meeting delegates.

Most of the convention bureaus work independently while there are some who belong to governmental bodies. When there has been a rapid growth worldwide among convention bureaus importance in societies regarding destinations image, many bureaus have seen more flexibility in the independent market place that results in empowerment regarding the image of the destination. A strategy that is commonly used among many convention bureaus worldwide is the use of the largest convention halls and largest hotels in a city (Gartrell, 1994).\*

\*members image of convention bureaus a study of göteborg convention bureau

Another strategy in the attractiveness regarding potential meeting cities is what meeting rooms, banquet/ballroom facilities, and numbers of hotel rooms are within walking distance. Hotels that are located within walking distance to dining and entertainment are also prioritized since most delegates only stay during the occasion of the meeting or event (Buchanan, 1995). The responsibility of the convention bureau is the “ competitive bid”,

where hotels, restaurants and convention facilities are used as attractive tools aimed for up- coming conventions and trade shows (Gartrell, 1994).

### Roles and Mission

It can be said that the mission and main task of convention bureaus worldwide is to promote and sell cities. When the convention bureaus are creating a certain image that goes well with how the city is positioned in the global community, they market destinations for upcoming events and congresses. It is crucial that convention bureaus emphasize the concept of unity within the areas of local, political, civic, business and the people in the visitor industry into one connecting unit that is working towards the same goal, namely the result of powerful image regarding a destination (Gartrell, 1994).

Those convention bureaus that have obtained this concept of unity in all these areas are the ones with absolutely the most successful output in terms of reaching a desired image for a destination.

### Convention Bureau Roles

Lead generation and tracking; - to identify business tourism opportunities;

Bidding and bid support - with associations, meeting planners and venues;

Delegate boosting - marketing support for specific meetings;

Business tourism destination marketing – stimulating awareness of a tourism destination from a business perspective – the attractions and business tourism services of a region;

Product development and accreditation;

Impact assessments and Co-ordination\*

\*members image of convention bureaus a study of göteborg convention bureau

## STAKEHOLDERS

Groups that are most critical to organizations in terms of support or action are stakeholders. Whatever task they are assigned, they are always involved in the outcome regarding a company, in terms of funds and support (Freeman, 1984). To create successful relationships is always a critical factor when it comes to the nature among an organization like convention bureaus and their stakeholders.

Examples of stakeholders are people who have a strong connection to an organization. Freeman (1984) means that stakeholders and organizations create strong impacts on each other. When people have a link to an organization, they also have a stake in it. A stakeholder is therefore “ any individual or a share group who can affect or is affected by the actions, decisions, policies or goals of the organization” (Freeman, 1984). Therefore, stakeholders are perceived to be involved in organizations and have a stake regarding its policies and operations. Stakeholders usually get involved when they believe or conclude that an area is critical for them. From the <https://assignbuster.com/importance-of-the-convention-bureaus-tourism-essay/>

perspective of the stakeholders, when things are done either in a legitimate or distorted way, it may end up as a result of gaining or losing support to an organization such as convention bureau.\*

## **Who are the major target markets of convention centers?**

Mostly, the target markets of CVBs and Convention centers are state, national, and regional meeting planners including corporate organizations and associations that hold trade shows, conventions and corporate meetings. Since national associations lead larger groups of attendees, the conventions will make large economic impacts. Thus, it is inevitable to understand the preference and characteristics of each of the following categories in order to determine niche market for HCC.

### STRATEGIES

## **Why are strategic plans so important to tourism success?**

KEY INSIGHT: Sales and marketing development activity undertaken in a strategic vacuum can never realize its true potential and results. Successful destinations fully understand and meticulously apply this most fundamental of principles to all their marketing.

\*members image of convention bureaus a study of göteborg convention bureau

Integrated marketing and development strategies are particularly vital to the tourism futures of destinations (whether local, regional, or state) with one or more of the following characteristics:



Newly emerging, or facing intensive competition (including an oversupply of visitor destinations);

Have an embryonic mix of niche attractions – whose combined potential is unrealized;

Possess insufficient existing attractions or known experiences – but opportunities exist;

Can now only offer largely aging attractions of diminishing quality, depth and appeal;

Possess great natural attractions at risk of losing their appeal – if not properly conserved, managed and planned. (Or alternatively, highly distinctive or authentic built environments and heritage sites.)

The smaller, more distant, or less well known a destination is, the more it also needs to develop the best tourism strategy plans possible – on a local and/or regional basis.

Even the most fortunate and dynamic of destinations are in need of sound, action-based strategies as well. The more astute of these already know that thorough market research, strategic analysis and flexible planning (e. g. over 1 to 3 years) is a necessity, if they are to remain competitive against other active visitor destinations with the same or higher appeal.

Investing extra time & effort in strategic planning is about knowing where you are going and how to get there. It's about doing smart things for the right reasons to get the best results.

“ Tourism strategies that are innovative and powerful demonstrate... their ability to integrate and see issues and possibilities as a whole.

Rather than just carrying on in bits and pieces in a ‘ business as usual’ mode – a mode that is blind to sharpening outcomes and new (more effective) ways of achieving greater results.

This is where the competitive edge really lies.”-

### **Henry Mintzberg (The rise & fall of strategic planning)**

<http://www.develop tourism.com/Tourism%20Strategy%20Plans%20-%20Their%20Importance%20-%20TCDS.htm>

It’s about being more systematic, thoughtful and imaginative ... By way of example, consider the remarkable, longer term strategy-led successes of New Zealand (including its world famous ‘ adventure capital’, Queenstown), Costa Rica (eco-tourism) and Australia – with all achieving creditable growth in visitation and source-market desirability. Results achieved despite the comparatively small scale of their tourism industries, and the perception (at least) of an arduous and costly international trip to reach their shores.\*

<http://www.develop tourism.com/Tourism%20Strategy%20Plans%20-%20Their%20Importance%20-%20TCDS.htm>

DUBAI AND THE BUSINESS  
TOURISM: MICE SECTOR

#### MICE DEFINITION

MICE is an acronym for the Meetings, Incentives, Conventions and Exhibitions tourism segment.

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This is therefore a business-oriented segment, involving obligatory (or non-discretionary) travel. The Incentives part of MICE is the odd one out – though it is related to business, as it is usually provided to employees or dealers/distributors as a reward, it tends to be leisure based.\*

World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) President Jean-Claude Baumgarten said: “ Dubai has always been characterized as a place to trade and conduct business, a place where markets and merchants come together. This characteristic element gives Dubai the momentum to thrive while defining a new, modern emirate.

“ Dubai’s travel and tourism sector continues to grow at an impressive rate. Hundreds of thousands of business visitors and exhibitors increase the demand for accommodations, restaurant services, transportation and other related amenities”.\*\*

The MICE sector continues to expand and contract throughout the many facets of the industry. Destinations continue to look for ways to be competitive, creative and provide exceptional experiences within this highly competitive marketplace.

Whether a destination focuses on inspirational experiences (Incentives Groups), large scale congresses (above 1, 500 pax), large scale exhibitions (above 10, 000 gross SQM), small meetings/conferences or a combination of all of these segments, they must be able to provide a bid package that serves the customer’s needs. The customer’s needs continue to evolve as competition grows, technology advances and financial circumstances prevail.

\*<http://www.onecaribbean.org/content/files/MICE.pdf>

\*\* <http://www.ameinfo.com/153813.html>

Dubai is well positioned to tackle the challenges of the MICE industry. This prominent positioning comes from three primary attributes: geographic location, accessibility/infrastructure and price/value propositions. The geographic location of Dubai has long played a valuable role in the development of trade and commerce throughout its history. For the MICE industry the close proximity to India, China and Africa plays a key role in the attractiveness of the destination. Dubai's accessibility and infrastructure have advanced to the level where few cities can match the structural offering that Dubai has for both organizers and attendees, it is easy to reach and easy to get around. Dubai's hotels and convention center have been able to offer pricing that is much more competitive in the international marketplace. A range of price points among a varied level of star ratings is important to our large scale event proposals.

Dubai can offer very competitive rates and rarely lose business for reasons related to hotel or rental costs. Airfare continues to be a concern due to the long haul status of most of our source markets. Dubai must continue to prove the value and bench mark our air costs against our primary competitors.

During the year of 2010, the MICE industry witnessed good growth across much of the globe. The Middle East benefited from this strengthening with many destinations hosting more international association events than in previous years (according to the ICCA\* 2010 ranking report).  
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The Meeting Professionals International's FutureWatch 2011 study predicts that the number of meetings will rise by 8% and the average spend by 5% globally in 2011. MPI's research also says that 2011 will be the year that virtual events and collaboration through social media will become standard business practice. This prediction is certainly supported by companies providing better technology to push the meetings industry into a more virtual environment.

According to the 2011 GIBTM/MeetMe study, 71% of surveyed buyers predict an increase in the number of events they hold in the year ahead and a further 25% said the number of events will stay the same, a very positive outlook for 2011.

\*ICCA : International Congress and Convention Association

The different types of events being organized for the year ahead show almost equal numbers for association conferences, corporate conferences and incentive programs with a lower number of exhibitions.

The DCB will continue to watch industry trends to be able to better serve our stakeholders and customers. They will continue to evolve to remain competitive and to deliver success for Dubai.

THE DUBAI CONVENTION BUREAU (information available on [www.dcb.ae](http://www.dcb.ae))

The Dubai Convention Bureau is the MICE (Meeting, Incentive, Conferences and Exhibitions) division of the Department of Tourism and Commerce Marketing (DTCM). Their objective to "strengthen Dubai's economy and

increase the city's global tourism position by increasing the number of congresses, incentives and events held in Dubai.”

## **Vision**

We will position Dubai as the leading tourism destination and commercial hub of the world.

Mission: to strengthen the Dubai economy through:

The development of sustainable tourism.

The provisions of a unique visitor experience combining quality service and value, in a safe environment for all our employees, contractors, and visitors.

The innovative promotion of Dubai's Commerce and Tourism opportunities

## **Primary goals:**

Increasing the number of new business opportunities for Dubai stakeholders,

Increasing the overall service experience of customers holding events in Dubai,

Expanding the knowledge and experiences of the DCB staff.

DCB will continue to seek collaboration with stakeholders, overseas representation offices and our industry networks to achieve our goals.

“ Most people talk, we do things. They plan, we achieve. They hesitate, we move ahead. We are living proof that when human beings have the courage

and commitment to transform a dream into reality, there is nothing that can stop them. Dubai is a living example of that.”

HH Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum,

Vice President and Prime Minister of U. A. E. and Ruler of Dubai

MY MISSIONS

**Please kindly note that all the most significant works have been attached at the end of the whole report.**

Most of my missions were separated between Research, Marketing and Sales department. A brief description of the overall missions below.

### **1. ICCA Research**

Identify congresses taking place in Dubai in 2012 for ICCA Submission

Identify social media sources to capture more meetings in Dubai

Qualify events for ICCA

### **2. EBMS Update**

Verify and update individual contacts on EBMS for 3, 4 & 5 stars hotels

EBMS Update: Updated contact hotels 3, 4 and 5 stars by telephone and email. All alumni contacts over a year located in the CRM (Customer Relationship Management). Software name: EBMS

### **3. Marketing Magazine Subscription**

Identify business related magazines and newspapers on the local or international level for DCB to subscribe

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Identify subscription process, fees, or way of getting complimentary copies

Identify medical related magazines for advertisement opportunity

#### **4. Research Subscription**

Identify databases on local and international level for DCB to subscribe

Identify subscription process, fees, or way of getting complimentary access

#### **5. Stakeholders Partners**

Identify Marketing Managers with contact details of the following institutions:

Mall of Emirates

Majid Al Futtaim Group (Deira City Centre, Mirdiff City Centre)

Dubai Festival City

Wafi City

Burjuman

#### **6. Student Volunteer Programme (Work on the CD-ROM)**

Identify academic institutions that offers tourism-related courses

Give a brief profile of the academic institutions and the tourism courses

Establish an enrollment form for the students to become a volunteer and highlight the following points:

Description of DCB and DTCM and its involvement in MICE development



Volunteer Scope of Work (Delegate Boosting at Destination Booth)

Benefits and learning area for the volunteer

## **7. Design template for Meetings Industry Trends Report**

## **8. Social Legacy Program (work on the CD-ROM)**

Identify relevant Dubai based community activities that can be included as a part of the Social Legacy Program

Identify potential Dubai based organizations for social legacy program

9. MICE Survey Design for Stakeholders and Clients

10. Sports Strategy

Developing a whole strategy on Dubai's potential to attract Sports Events.

## **Present in the CD-ROM**

### **Market Research: World Tourists Expenditures**

During the first week of my internship, I had the opportunity to discover and familiarize with the company's activities and then learn more about the functions of each department. Since I was assigned in the Dubai Convention Bureau, the department in charge of carrying out Research and implementing Strategies for Tourism Sector in Dubai, the first thing I had to undertake was to carry out research on business tourism across the world.

The main purpose of this task was to evaluate and focus on the top countries in terms of tourist expenditure as this could be an opportunity for Dubai to target, adapt marketing strategies to attract tourists from these countries to

Dubai and thereby increase the country's tourism revenues. The internet was the main tool that used to go through sites like WTO (World Tourism Organization) and other websites which had significant figures on tourists.

## **Dubai Strategic Plan 2010-2015**

While I was doing my work placement in the company, the Dubai Convention Bureau was working on the Dubai Strategic Plan. During this period they reviewed the existing Dubai Strategic Plan 2015 and updated the plan to reflect the current economic situation, identifying pertinent structural changes and their impact.

The aim of the Dubai Strategic Plan is to give a universal understanding of Dubai's vision among the various government entities and to ensure a common framework for the operation of these entities.

The plan serves as a framework under which all government-related initiatives converge to consistently meet the vision and aims set by Dubai's government. The development of the Dubai Strategic Plan was largely based on a 'consultative approach' involving a considerable number of stakeholders from the various sector covered in the plan.

The guiding principle was prioritization; focusing in every phase of the plan on the areas with the highest priority and development potential.

### **The main Missions which are being achieved for the plan are the following:**

To support, maintain and develop this status, the government of Dubai will focus on delivering its mission of:

Achieving comprehensive development and building human resources

Promoting economic development and government modernization

Sustaining growth and prosperity

Protection of nationals' interests, public interest and wellbeing

Providing an environment conducive for growth and prosperity in all sectors

I had the opportunity to be involved in the tourism sector plan for Dubai by working with my mentor.

The main part of the project was to carry out work related to Strategy. For example, I worked on Dubai SWOT. Here in, I had to assess Dubai's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats as far as the tourism was concerned. This involved identifying the factors, both internal and external, that are favorable and unfavorable for achieving the tourism sector objectives of Dubai in order to position Dubai as a leading tourism and commerce hub in the world.

Likewise, a Benchmarking Tool (Appendix) had to be created. I gathered all the relevant information with regard to demand and supply of Dubai Tourism and tried to highlight the things which could lead to a better understanding of the market.

During the process, I also had to create a presentation reflecting the research carried out.

Additionally, I had to complete a research that had been done on Dubai's Challenges. International Strategy is a very difficult subject matter to cope with if the fundamentals haven't been studied first. However, the positive thing about this project was that, not only did I have the chance to apply the theories on Strategy that I had learnt at school but also undertake things that I had not studied earlier. This was indeed a valuable learning experience for me.

## **Company Inquiries**

The Head of Research often receives inquiries from students from all over the world which are mostly questions related to marketing, branding and strategy. There were questions on how Dubai's government has been able to market its tourism infrastructure across the world and create a brand image around the world. The executive secretary forwarded me inquiries that contained these questionnaires (attached at the end) in order that I had to handle.

I was able to cope with most of the questions that were, for example, general information on Dubai. However, when the subject was a bit more difficult, I sought assistance from colleagues from a different department and met managers to get the answers. For instance, there was a student who had sent long questionnaire on Marketing and Branding, and I had to meet with the Director of Media in order to discuss the topics in order to provide the inquirer with accurate information available. It was worthwhile as I gained in depth knowledge on the subjects every time I had to answer to the questionnaires.

Then, at the end when the whole questionnaire was completed, I had to send it back to the executive secretary in order to verify if the information and analyze if the information were relevant or not.

## **Overseas offices feedbacks**

Dubai's long term strategy is to increase the number of visitors each year. To do so, it is vital for the organization to study all the different markets that it needs to tap into. One of the advantages for the DTCM is that it has set up representative offices in key markets of the world. These overseas representative offices are managed by the Overseas Promotion department at the Head Office at DTCM. The function of the Overseas promotions is to create an awareness of what Dubai offers in terms of Tourism and Commercial opportunities.

It promotes DTCM globally directly and through its overseas offices. This is carried out through participation in select Fairs & Exhibitions in the target markets in conjunction with parties from the tourism sectors in Dubai such as the travel trade and from key Dubai Government entities. The exhibitions are in the fields of leisure, tourism, MICE and commerce/trade. Some of the major exhibitions that the DTCM regularly participates in are the ITB (Berlin) WTM (London) EIBTM (Barcelona) IMEX (Frankfurt) and ITME, as well as in smaller fairs like Holiday World (Dublin) and MATKA (Finland).

In order to be able to meet customers' requirements from those countries, each office undertakes research that is linked between Dubai and the office in a particular market. They are rudders to guide tour operators and travel

agencies who want to work with the emirate; they give them comprehensive information and in order to fulfill the main objective to promote Dubai.

The overseas representative offices send a monthly report to the Head office and there are market review meeting held twice a year or as when required. Twice a year, major input is also sent to the Head Office to emphasize on all the major achievements they have done, what changes need to be incorporated for the future and financial requirements in order to enhance the services. These inputs are underlined in the report they sent.

I had to collate and organize all the information received from the overseas offices into an Excel sheet.

LAST PROJECT

## **SPORTS TOURISM STRATEGY**

Sports tourism assumptions have been responsible for a considerable uplift in interest in hosting major sports events and investing in infrastructure and marketing. Protagonists claim huge sums in economic impact and use these to justify hosting fees and the diversion of public funds. These assumptions may be accurate but many cities, regions and countries are unclear as to how to scrutinize them and in many cases what truly constitutes sports tourism.

Part of DTCM's long-term growth strategy is to promote sports tourism within the Emirate, and attracting sport-related events, congresses, tournaments and exhibitions is key to the sport tourism strategy.

In that sense, Dubai assessed such opportunity of developing a “ sports strategy” through the Dubai Convention Bureau. No prior work has been undertaken by them in order to build a long term strategy to be able to attract sports event within the emirate.

Hence by discussing with the Head of Research, I have been entrusted with a project to carry out a “ Sports Tourism Strategy” in order to assess this large tourism segment from a global scale and by highlighting Dubai’s potential to take part of this large pie.

The project will be located in the appendices in PDF format in the CD-ROM.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations:**

In conclusion, I would say, Dubai Convention Bureau is doing well to achieve their vision and mission efficiently. It was a great opportunity to do my internship there and observe the way of handling the tasks. They gave many tasks and made me feel like an actual employee so that I would gain real career experience.

I have some recommendation for the internship program. First of all, it would be better to have separate orientation day for each major (e. g. Business and IT majors could have separate days for orientation) which will give us a better understanding of our requirements towards the internship.

Then, they should shift students to different departments, so he could have a better understanding of the entire organization, and would be able to write better reports.

DCB is a highly established government organization, and I have a few recommendations that would enhance its contribution to employees, society and its stakeholders. Firstly, I feel DCB should have their own building to create a brand identity and also to provide more parking for its visitors. I also recommend that DCB have more public awareness of their activities, since the general public does not know of its existence or they think of the organization as another tour operator. Lastly, I think it will be good initiative if DCB can give some benefits to internship students in terms of cash or material, so interns would work more sincerely and willingness to work.