



TM

MICEACADEMY TRENDS

2020



Connecting The Dots

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1. Overview



The South African MICE market is changing.

The economy, politics, standards, services, technology, pricing coupled with satisfaction-levels are all playing a part.

As an observer with experienced eyes, viewed from differing MICE perspectives – The MICE Academy details the most significant trends, some underway as we draft this document. Dependent on which side of the fence you, the reader represent - suggested methods of overcoming the more questionable trends may be worthy of heeding.

To have a better understanding of the MICE industry as applied within this MICE Trends 2020 – approximate South African end-user market segments and percentage break-down are:

- (a) 65% corporate (private sector)
20% association (both member & industry- centric)
15% government (public sector)

- (b) The segmented MICE tasks are:
(1) Conceptual (2) Logistical (3) Financial (4) Post-mortem – in that order.

The main objectives within MICE Trends 2020 are to progress to higher professional standards in the desire for more successful event outcomes - irrespective of capacity and type.

‘Vision is a picture of the future that produces passion’

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2. Venues



As a highly limited number of events can take place without a venue – venues are the main sub-contractors to the MICE industry hence form an integral part of the MICE Trends 2020. In the main urban areas the amount of venues continues to increase - creating a formidable over-supply. This growth is mainly in the less 200 capacity - both with and without accommodation links.

All types of venues have entered the market from B&Bs, recreation halls, corporate HQs et al. Due to the economy and technology, commercial property owners and their agencies provide highly-reduced square meter rates in order to have any form of increased rent-bearing occupancy. Part of this take-up is MICE service providers and associations who have ‘tagged-on’ in-house MICE facilities in the form of large boardrooms, open space showrooms/warehouses and the like.

Except for the high capacity convention centres where end-user choice is limited – the traditional venues - primarily hotels - are taking strain.

Apart from the leisure market (more groups, smaller capacities) the greater MICE link with the travel trade is clear^① (less groups, larger capacities).

A variety of compelling all-inclusive packages have a certain amount of traction yet the bookings schedule are failing to reach the halcyon days of times gone by for the traditional hotel venue.

① See Advent of Travel Trade into the MICE market

‘One can have the most up-to-date and multi-faceted designed MICE venue – yet with untrained operational personnel, ongoing potential clients will remain limited’

1. End-users and their planners – utilising unconventional venues - should pay specific attention to health and safety regulations as applied within the hospitality and sporting industry with special attention on SASREA as a guide. Despite insurance back-up the gathering of people irrespective of purpose or commercial aspects, contains responsibilities which should not be overlooked. In fact end-users should be equally questioning of conventional venues in this regard as our research in producing the required certifications has indicated either un-informed personnel or out-of-date documentation.
2. Hotel management education & training provides limited inclusion on servicing the MICE market. Conventional venues should ensure their service and follow-through for the MICE clients are beyond reproach. Ongoing training and knowledge updates specifically for MICE venue personnel should be implemented, monitored and rewarded with their regularly updated achievements and acknowledged accordingly.

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3. Technology & the Millennial² Generation



There is little doubt that technology has significantly altered the MICE industry. Logistics in particular as far as administrative tasks such as registrations with varying permutations and allocations has had a profound, positive effect on the MICE drudgery aspects.

On the other hand, potential negativity occurs with interactions between the people & podium and vice versa. The reason appears to be primarily the un-even playing field of varying technology devices interacting with individual members of the audience and inherent knowledge.

Unless the vast majority are on the same wavelength – clued-up millennial's interest in the proceedings will be abandoned. In turn the event's objectives are unlikely to be realised.

② **Millennials** Teenagers, twenty- and thirty-somethings have been dubbed the Millennial Generation, or simply Millennials. **Generation Y Definition** The Millennial Generation is also known as Generation Y, because it comes after Generation X — those people born between the early 1960s and the 1980s. sourced: Douglas Main September 08. 2017 Human Nature

'The great, growling engine of change – technology'
- Alvin Toffler

Similarly to the planning standard of knowing who are the majority of the audience in order to ensure end-users, presenters and the like can pinpoint specific topic focus – the same should be applied by the IT gurus. Knowledge of device type, one or two in-depth questions geared to being able to focus the on-line, on-the-day applications – effectively - should be essential. Pre-preparing prior to the event day as well as prior to commencement should be mandatory. In this manner, individuals are unlikely to be left-behind or feeling alienated.

It should not be acceptable to an IT guru and indeed an event planner that technology should only be explained and implemented in-situ³

③ On-the-day and in place with no fore-warning



4. Advent of Travel Trade



Technology continues to have a profound effect on the travel industry with consumers seeking instead a number of on-line options. Hence the opportunity to increase the travel bottom-line by infiltrating the MICE sector has taken place

Previously on the periphery – the travel industry continues to become greater competitors to the traditional independent event planners. At this time - industry member associations have been penetrated to get a bigger slice of the event market. The MICE industry is rapidly evolving into being perceived as a part (or ‘step-child’) of the tourism industry.

This is most suitable to the tourism authorities (national & provincial tourism plus convention bureaux) who are willing to finance a member association’s endeavours to tap into the international MICE market in particular.

*‘A delegate should not be treated as a tourist
with a company expense account’*

While the MICE component remains a line item on a total ‘shopping list’ of travel, accommodation, ground arrangements et al[Ⓐ] with around a 5% fee negotiated with client and added to the total bottom-line – the planning of MICE tasks is likely to remain a potential haphazard undertaking within the various types of travel / tourism components.

The travel industry per se should alter their general perception that the MICE included within the travel / accommodation requirements are merely the ‘gateway’ to a greater bottom-line. Their attitude needs to have a 360 degree turn in realising that the MICE component is the *raison d’être*[Ⓑ] to the traditional travel / accommodation / ground arrangement requirements. Thereafter ongoing briefings and MICE updates primarily within the logistical MICE tasks are essential with authentic[Ⓒ] certification as proof thereof.

Ⓐ Each line -item is usually marked-up through negotiated volume ‘take-up’

Ⓑ Reason or justification for existence

Ⓒ The individual being tested on that task update and NOT awarded credits for attending a session /conference only



5. Dawning of Event Design 'Crafter'



Taking account of the total range of suppliers and services making-up an event - it is not news that events are expensive undertakings. In tandem with the financial commitment are the millennials, pressed for time and limited concentration abilities that require the event's purpose to be reached as swiftly and effectively as possible. More than any previous period in the history of events – is the importance of event design in ensuring total message retention, long after the event has been completed – will crafting be so important.

In turn, effective event crafting leads on to ensuring the next stage of the outcomes are progressed as event outcomes are not an end in itself.

A brand's identity and reputation can be permanently blurred and indeed tarnished – whether private or public sector – if the laborious, ego-centric platform presenters drone on even with 'dynamic' audio visual backup.

Hence the crafting of an event to reach the set objectives while mindful of the audience with focus on knowledge levels, age et al will need to be constantly top of mind. The planning of a successful event will pivot on a new generation of event design crafters.

*'In crafting there are no mistakes –
only unique communication creations.....that works'*

Professional presenters will need to develop their skills beyond being a form of convincing business 'entertainment'. Although much time and effort goes into current presentation assignments – the need to 'educate' the client towards the fulfilment of the objectives is likely to become increasingly important. Creative individuals should be sought to encourage a greater understanding of the events industry in portraying sight, sound and participation within a simple technology framework that all - within the audience - will enthusiastically (& confidently) embrace.

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6. Expense Justification



Management - within the corporate sector in particular which makes-up over 50% of events undertaken in South Africa - primarily procurement and human resources continue to grapple with amounts of event funding that cannot be pinpointed. In the many guises of the internal salaried event planners, greater emphasis on event purpose coupled with practical, follow-up outcomes is likely to be pursued by corporate management. In this manner the expense in the total event undertaking will be justified.

'Justification before judgement is what everyone forgets'
- Apoorva Goud

Independent planners, suppliers and services are likely to be required to produce more detailed descriptions of costs against various types of expertise and provisions. Besides the actual planning undertaking - smart planners should project their sights on the follow-up to meeting the event objectives. Essentially the event purpose is likely to be financially accountable going forward.

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7. Relationships



1. Attitudes & Loyalties

Suppliers & services with strong social relationships based on client recommendations may find that forgiving poor delivery due to social bonds is not likely to be favoured in 2020 and beyond.

Smart independent planners will significantly add to the brief by ensuring unanticipated value to the benefit of the client is put forward.

2. Clients / End-users

The event decision-makers - primarily in the corporate market - may portray a more fickle and demanding attitude towards those who plan, supply & service their events.

The events industry should take heed of the types of professional expectations which is not assured via initials behind an individual's name alone – unless totally authenticated - but by effective, positive and continuous demonstration going forward.

***Professionalism:
It is not the plan
It is how the plan is done***

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