

*Book Review*

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## **Book Review: Business Event Legacies**

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Despite the significance of the MICE industry to most global economies, and the high number of related degrees, literature that focuses specifically on business events remains scant. There is a substantial need for pedagogic resources that support the study of business tourism, and for robust research that can influence policymakers in this field. As such, *Business Event Legacies* provides a timely and welcome addition to a small but growing body of knowledge in this domain. Carmel Foley, Deborah Edwards and Karin Weber will be familiar names to anyone who has studied business tourism and their combined prior research in this area confirms them as subject specialists and respected authors. Here, they have created a collection of case studies which span continents and focus on a range of legacy-related topics including the economic impact of conferences, the value of knowledge exchange, collaboration and networking at business events and the role of such events in developing destination profiles.

There are several overarching themes within the ten chapters of this book including the symbiosis of events and tourism and the value of MICE events beyond the direct economic impacts of business tourism. This book also contextualises key trends such as supply chain management, innovation,

building social capital and sustainability within business tourism. The book reports on research that has involved the participation of delegates, convention bureaus, professional conference organisers, venue managers and a range of high-level decision-makers. Across the chapters a range of traditional and innovative research methods are showcased including interviews, questionnaires, return on investment analysis of press coverage, social media metrics and sentiment analysis.

Each chapter of *Business Event Legacies* has a case study of a business event which was designed to generate a legacy other than just direct tourism expenditure. Chapter two looks at and beyond economic impacts to explore the notion of value. Using various international conferences held in Sydney, it proposes ways to maximise event legacies, a theme which permeates the subsequent chapters. Similarly, chapter three looks at drivers of global collaboration, and focuses on sustainable development and social and ecological legacies. Of particular interest in this chapter, is the exploration of the legacy of second-tier business events cities. In this case study it is Kuching in Malaysia, and the chapter goes on to demonstrate the role of business events in raising the profile of such a destination.

In a change of continent, chapter 4 profiles London Tech Week and looks at the broad range of economic impacts and long-term economic legacy that business events can stimulate, and it provides a detailed exploration of in-scope expenditure. In particular, this chapter looks at how this festival of technology leads to foreign direct investment and the professional development of a sector. This is an area of research that is underreported so it is useful to see this discussed here and in chapter 5. Chapter 5 explores professional development, networking, collaboration, and personal recognition through the case study of a conference held in Jönköping, Sweden. This is another innovative chapter which discusses the role of conferences as drivers of spirals of knowledge or 'knowledge spillovers' and the chapter demonstrates how knowledge is acquired at business events and then shared with others, not present at the event but working within the same industry.

Chapter 6 takes the reader back to Sydney and focuses on sustainable practices, notably procurement, and corporate social responsibility (CSR) at convention centres which can lead to an increase in demand for such venues as well as an improvement in delegate satisfaction. Here the case study demonstrates how venues can create legacy benefits for themselves as well as local and regional businesses and communities. The chapter skilfully illustrates how sustainability can be an element of destination and venue competitiveness and how CSR can yield multiple benefits.

With a shift in focus, chapter 7 asks questions about why one should host or attend an academic conference and through the use of a case study based around several European academic conferences, the chapter provides a wide range of answers. This chapter illustrates the many benefits of both attending and hosting academic conferences that tie into the book's central themes of networking, collaboration, professional recognition and knowledge exchange.

This chapter does not shy away from the challenges of delivering business events, and acknowledges the barriers involved in hosting such events and attracting attendance.

Chapter 8 also focuses on how business events can raise the profile of a destination, and this is achieved through a case study of an event which demonstrates the innovative financial technology rooted in Switzerland and in particular, Geneva, where an industry event was hosted. This chapter also discusses the use of business events to realise new ideas and to support the vital work of start-ups.

Chapter 9 is a fascinating section which looks at the role of business events in creating and establishing mutually beneficial trade partnerships. In particular, this chapter illustrates the global reach of conferences by providing a case study of an event which links China, Latin America and the Caribbean. The chapter demonstrates how business events can act as a vehicle for the leveraging of soft power for economic and political gains and additionally it also highlights the power of business events to raise the profile of a destination.

The final chapter of this book draws the key themes to a close, with an important reference to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. It summarises the importance of intentionality when designing the long-term impacts of business events. Chapter 10 confirms that there is a significant mismatch in how governments and stakeholders value business events versus the legacy outcomes that such events can deliver. This chapter presents a valuable 7-step framework for business event legacy planning which can be adapted into teaching as well as policy making. The chapter reviews how most of the legacy contributions that have been illustrated across the chapters are aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. This final chapter also reminds the reader that all the case studies profiled in the previous chapters, were of events that were attended by domestic and international delegates and associations and spanned several countries, thus reflecting the global nature of business events.

Overall Business Event Legacies is a very welcome addition to the small but growing body of literature devoted to the meetings, incentive travel, conference and exhibitions industry. There is growing international demand, from both within industry and academia, for titles such as this one that can provide relevant and up-to-date information on this significant and often underrepresented industry. The particular strengths of this book are that it discusses a range of business event legacies, far beyond the usual reporting of economic benefits. Across the various case studies, a strong picture of the value of business events emerges. In particular this book draws attention to how such events support international collaboration, professional development, knowledge creation and exchange, foreign direct investment, destination

As an academic textbook, Business Event Legacies is a much-needed, up-to-date and innovative exploration of aspects of business events management that are rarely covered. The chapters reflect topics that are currently being taught in higher education and reflect the global approach to the study of the MICE sector. This is a very accessible text, with well-structured chapters in a comparable format. The use of similar headings across chapters, and in particular the concluding 'lessons learned' sections ensures that the book is both informative and a practical aid to learning and teaching. The

format of each chapter, which begins with a case study then followed by a theoretical discussion, is a novel pedagogic approach as the theory usually precedes the application. This works particularly well as student interest is immediately captured through a variety of detailed, illustrated and clear case studies. Following this with a theoretical discussion, allows a deeper exploration of the key learning that has been exemplified in the case study.

In summary, *Business Event Legacies* is a timely and much-needed book that has the potential to inform policymakers, destination management organisations and other MICE professionals. As a textbook, it is well structured and introduces new topics to the study of business event management. The case studies and theoretical discussion make this an informative, practical and accessible text, that will be a welcome and valuable addition to business events teaching and learning practices around the world.

# A MUST-READ AND VITAL RESOURCE!



***Business Event Legacies: Global Industry Case Studies*** provides a cutting edge understanding of the legacy in the field of business events, crucial to the future of the industry. Through eight case studies, it explores how business events are a collision space for ideas, brokering new innovations, generating trade and investment, supporting local communities, academics, industry, and government agendas, and driving knowledge economies.

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