Planning and Management of Meetings, Expositions, Events, and Conventions

George G. Fenich

PEARSON

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AND MANAGEMENT
OF MEETINGS,
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Dedicated to the hard working professionals of the
Meetings and Business Events Competency Standards Task Force and
the Curriculum Guide Task Force, without whom this book would not be possible.

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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, government officials and communities. This book provides a comprehensive view of planning and management in MEEC. It is meant to provide a hands-on or step-by-step method for planning and managing gatherings in the MEEC industry.

Planning and Management of Meetings, Events, Expositions, and Conventions is based on the work of two task forces initiated and supported by Meeting Professionals International: the Meeting and Business Event Competency Standards Task Force and the Meeting and Business Event Competency Standards Curriculum Guide Task Force. This book should be of interest to practitioners, educators, students, and government officials. It is the most up-to-date book on planning and management in the MEEC industry and covers a wide range of topics dealing with those two functions. This book can easily serve as the basis for a college course on the subject, for training sessions for new employees in the industry, and for educational delivery by industry associations. It should meet the needs of anyone interested in knowing more about planning and management in the MEEC industry.

George G. Fenich, Ph.D.

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To access the supplementary materials, instructors need to request an instructor access code. Go to www.pearsonglobaleditions.com, where you can register for an instructor access code. Within forty-eight hours after registering, you will receive a confirmation email, including your 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.

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Introduction

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Chapter Outline

PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT OF MEETINGS, EXPOSITIONS, EVENTS, AND CONVENTIONS

Meetings, Expositions, Events, and Conventions (MEEC, pronounced like geese) are a part of the larger field of tourism. This is an exciting career area. Regardless of the attitudes and interests of the potential MEEC professional, they should be able to find a satisfying employment niche in MEEC. It is expected that the reader of this book has some knowledge of the MEEC industry. It should be noted that in some parts of the world this industry is referred to as MICE: meetings, incentives, conventions, events. The "incentive travel" aspect of this industry has diminished in magnitude and has morphed to become much more like a meeting or convention, albeit more upscale. Thus, the acronym MEEC seems more appropriate. While there are multiple aspects

and theories in MEEC, the operationalization of MEEC falls into only two categories: planning and producing. Planning is considered to be "determining or figuring out, in advance, what you want to do and how you want to do it." Producing, or logistics, involves the actual setting up of a meeting, event, or convention. This book is meant to focus on the **planning** aspect of the MEEC industry. Production of MEECs is dealt with in another text.

THE MEEC INDUSTRY

Components or Elements

The MEEC industry is quite diverse and multifaceted. The following provides some insight into MEEC divisions or segments:

a. Conventions and Meetings
   i. Political National Convention
   ii. National Restaurant Association Convention in Chicago
   iii. PCMA Annual Conference
b. Expositions
   i. Where Suppliers Meet Buyers
   ii. Education
   iii. Entertainment
c. Corporate Events
   i. Holiday Parties
   ii. Annual Dinners
   iii. Company Picnics
   iv. Meetings
   v. Sales Training
   vi. Conventions
d. Festivals
   i. Marketplace of Ancient Days
   ii. Community Event
   iii. Fair (not for profit)
   iv. Festival (for profit)
e. Social events
   i. Wedding
   ii. Anniversary
   iii. Birthday
   iv. Reunion
   v. Bar Mitzvah (Bat Mitzvah)
f. Religious Events
   i. Papal Inauguration
   ii. The Hajj (Mecca)
   iii. Easter
   iv. Quanza
g. Special Events:
   i. Civic Events
   ii. Centennials
   iii. Founder's Day
h. Mega-Events
   i. Olympics
   ii. America's Cup
   iii. Hands Across America
   iv. World's Fairs

    i. Retail Events
        i. Long Range Promotional Event
        ii. Store Opening
        iii. New Product Rollout
            1. Xbox
            2. iTunes
    j. Sporting Events (occurring relatively infrequently)
        i. Super Bowl
        ii. World Cup
        iii. Yacht Races

Along with the above, there are many occupations and industries that, in part, support MEEC.

For example, there is a company called Accent on Arrangements that provides child care and activities for conventions and attendees around the United States. Their employees travel extensively and consist of people with an aptitude for working with small children but who are not interested in being schoolteachers. The company regularly employs college students. Another opportunity is for someone who loves flower arranging to work for a specialty service contractor who supplies floral arrangements for trade show booths. Still another opportunity is to work as a princess or Snow White for special events at Disney. The work and career opportunities in MEEC are endless and are available in every corner of the world.

The individuals who work in MEEC are known by many different names, including: planner; meeting planner; corporate meeting planner; event planner; wedding planner; hotel or conference center salesperson; entertainment/sporting venue sales and services; destination management; service contractors; and more (adapted from Fenich, G. G., 2012). In this book any of these individuals are referred to as **event professionals**.

Definitions

All of the definitions used in this book are based on the glossary developed by the Convention Industry Council and found at http://www.conventionindustry.org /StandardsPractices/APEX/glossary.aspx/. **The APEX Glossary is a product of the Convention Industry Council (Copyright 2011) and is used with permission:** www .conventionindustry.org.

The following are four definitions that the event professional must know:

1. **Meeting:** An event where the primary activity of the participants is to attend educational sessions, participate in discussions or social functions or attend other organized events. There is no exhibit component.
   a. See also: Consumer Show, Convention
2. **Exposition:** Exhibition that is open to the public, usually requiring an entrance fee.
   a. 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.
3. **Event:** An organized occasion such as a meeting, convention, exhibition, special event, gala dinner, and so on. An event is often composed of several different, yet related, functions.
   a. Special Event: One-time event staged for the purpose of celebration; unique activity
4. **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.
   a. See also: Consumer Show, Exhibition, Meeting, Trade Show

What all of the above have in common is that they must (1) be planned and (2) must be produced. This planning and subsequent production is done by a meeting and event professional, sometimes called a meeting planner or an event professional.

Magnitude of the MEEC Industry

As can be seen above, the MEEC industry is quite broad and diverse. Thus, it is difficult to ascertain the size, magnitude, and economic impact of MEEC. Based on the statistics from the International Association of Professional Congress Organisers (IAPCO, 2010), the estimated economic impact of the events their members plan was 3.431 billion (pound sterling) with an average delegate spend of 1620 (pound sterling) per meeting. According to the *American Express Meetings to Events 2013 Global Meetings Forecast* (MPI, 2012b), Asia Pacific, with its relatively strong economy, is likely to see the strongest growth among regions in both spending and the number of meetings.

The *Economic Significance of Meetings to the U.S. Economy* study reveals that the U.S. meetings industry directly supports 1.7 million jobs, $263 billion in spending, a $106 billion share of the GDP, $60 billion in labor revenue, $14.3 billion in federal tax revenue and $11.3 billion in state and local tax revenue each year. In the MEEC industry in the United States alone, 205 million attendees participate in the nation's 1.8 million conventions, conferences, congresses, trade shows and exhibitions, incentive events, and corporate/business meetings (CIC, 2010).

Trends in MEEC

MEEC is an ever evolving industry. Thus, event professionals must consider trends in MEEC when planning their events. A major trend is the growing globalization of the industry and the blurring of country borders and boundaries: i.e., the formation of the EU. With globalization comes growing concerns about safety, both physical and medical, along with security and worries about delegates. International travel is increasingly risky whether it is delegates traveling *to* places with problems or coming *from* those places. Thus, event professionals must develop contingency plans, risk management strategies, and appropriate safeguards for their attendees. Staff must be trained to be ready to take action in emergencies (MPI, 2012a).

Another trend is the growing recognition that multiple generations are attending meetings and events, including pre-boomers, baby boomers, and Gens X, Y, and Z. With them come very diverse wants and needs, which means event professionals must vary the content and delivery in their events. Compounding the generational issue is that people from wider cultural backgrounds are also attending these events and have different expectations (MPI, 2010).

A third trend, albeit not necessarily new, is that corporate social responsibility (CSR) will be a continuing interest for meeting and event professionals' organizations and a potential differentiator for companies and associations that can demonstrate a strong commitment to effective CSR programs. CSR policies and initiatives within top-ranked, multinational companies have generated an expectation of CSR practice in *all* industries at *all* levels. In a similar vein, clients are expecting more and more environmentally sensitive event professionals and events and a continuing of the "green movement" (MPI, 2012a).

All of the above, and more, impact on how event professionals plan their meetings and events. Only those professionals who stay aware of trends in MEEC can be successful and create satisfied clients.

Evolution and Maturation of the MEEC Industry

It can be said that events and meetings have been around since the dawn of time. The Romans had the Forum where meetings took place and the Coliseum where events took place. Religious pilgrimages have taken place for thousands of years. 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 established sets of skills, standards, and abilities for MEEC professionals. However, like other industries, such as law and accounting, as an industry evolves and matures there is an increasing need among clients, employers, and governments to have a codified set of competency standards to which professionals must adhere. Until very recently no common set of knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) existed for events professionals.

This dearth of standards changed in 2011 with the release of the *Meetings and Business Events Competency Standards (MBECS)*. MBECS contain the KSAs required of meetings and events professionals. It builds on previous work done by Silvers along with work by the Canadian Tourism Human Resources Council where standards for special events professionals were put forth. MBECS are the result of almost two years of work by a task force consisting of both industry practitioners and academics supported by the MPI Foundation.

MBECS

The MBECS are divided into twelve domains or blocks with thirty-three skills and almost 100 sub-skills or sub-segments. The domains and skills are listed below:

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
  1. Plan Meeting or Event
  2. Manage Meeting or Event Project
C. RISK MANAGEMENT
  1. Manage Risk Management Plan
D. FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT
  1. Develop Financial Resources
  2. Manage Budget
  3. Manage Monetary Transactions
E. ADMINISTRATION
  1. Perform Administrative Tasks
F. HUMAN RESOURCES
  1. Manage Human Resource Plan
  2. Acquire Staff and Volunteers
  3. Train Staff and Volunteers
  4. Manage Workforce Relations
G. STAKEHOLDER MANAGEMENT
  1. Manage Stakeholder Relationships
H. MEETING OR EVENT DESIGN
  1. Design Program
  2. Engage Speakers and Performers
  3. Coordinate Food and Beverage
  4. Design Environment
  5. Manage Technical Production
  6. Develop Plan for Managing Movement of People
I. SITE MANAGEMENT
  1. Select Site
  2. Design Site Layout
  3. Manage Meeting or Event Site
  4. Manage On-site Communications

    J. MARKETING
      1. Manage Marketing Plan
      2. Manage Marketing Materials
      3. Manage Meeting or Event Merchandise
      4. Promote Meeting or Event
      5. Contribute to Public Relations Activities
      6. Manage Sales Activities
   K. PROFESSIONALISM
      1. Exhibit Professional Behavior
   L. COMMUNICATIONS
      1. Conduct Business Communications

The list above represents all the KSAs event professionals need to acquire, and be proficient in, during the course of their career. That these are, in fact, those KSAs event needed by professionals was validated when the Convention Industry Council (CIC) adopted MBECS as the primary basis for their new Certified Meeting Professional International Standards (CMP-IS) and for the CMP Exam. The development of these standards marks a milestone in the MEEC industry. For the first time all players in this industry have a common benchmark or point of reference.

Uses of the Standards

The standards synopsized above represent the first time that the base of knowledge in the meetings/events arena has been codified. Thus, moving forward, the industry profession, academics, students, professionals, human resources staff, and so on can work from the same base.

Uses for Meetings/Events Professionals

The MBECS represent the KSAs a practitioner must possess in order to be successful in the field. Industry professionals can perform a personal "skills assessment" of those standards and skills at which they are adept and those that 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. This also allows an industry professional to promote their KSAs to employers or clients.

    The MBECS 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

The MBECS provide the 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 meetings- or events-specific courses, in business courses, in general education, or a combination. The significant advantage of using MBECS are that it is not prescriptive: One size does not fit all. A companion "MBECS Curriculum Guide" has also been developed (see MPI website). 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, the 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/events world that are in need of research.

Uses for Associations

First and foremost the MBECS provide recognition of the KSAs required by the industry. This can then help guide the development of program content and delivery that is consistent with international standards. MBECS 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 (Fenich, 2012b).

Translating MBECS into Educational Content

The MBECS are a tremendous resource and reference. However, given that they cover almost eighty pages in an outline format, they can be daunting to comprehend and understand. Thus, after the MBECS task force concluded its work, a Meeting and Business Event Competency Standards Curriculum Guide task force was constituted. Its charge was to translate the content of MBECS into ideas and tools for providing relevant and quality programming for any individual or academic delivering MBECS-based content. This could apply to the faculty in a university, trainers for an association, or CMPs who lead study groups in preparation for taking the CMP exam.

The Curriculum Guide Task Force reviewed MBECS and analyzed each skill and sub-skill in terms of learning outcomes, depth of knowledge, and time to master the skill. The entire set of 100 MBECS skills and sub-skills fell into three categories in terms of depth of knowledge: what someone who is employed at the meetings/events COORDINATOR level should know, what someone who is employed at the MANAGER level should know, and what someone employed at the DIRECTOR level should know. Thus, MBECS can be covered in a sequential fashion that, generally, follow the career path of a professional from an entry level position (coordinator), advancing to management (manager), and ultimately to executive level (director). The task force further determined that the coordinator and manager level skills could and should be possessed by someone graduating from an undergraduate college/university program. The director level skills would be obtained through continuing education and professional seminars.

PLANNING AND MANAGING MEETINGS, EXPOSITIONS, EVENTS, AND CONVENTIONS

This content of this book is based on MBECS. It was developed using the output from the two task forces mentioned earlier. It is assumed that the reader has some basic knowledge of the MEEC industry and MEEC terminology. This knowledge can be obtained through a minimum of one or two years working in the industry or through formal education using books such as *Meetings, Expositions, Events, and Conventions: An Introduction* by Fenich.

With this knowledge in hand, the reader can work through the content of this book. This book contains all of the knowledge related to planning of meetings and events that is expected of people who are to be employed at the coordinator and at the manager level. It does not deal with knowledge of planning that should be possessed by an event management professional at the director or executive level. There is a companion text, *Production and Logistics in Meetings, Expositions, Events, and Conventions* that covers material related to MBECS knowledge regarding putting on or producing meetings and events.

There are 14 chapters in this book. The topics range from strategic management to financial management, program planning, and various aspects of marketing. Each chapter begins with learning objectives and a chapter outline, both of which tie directly

to MBECS. At the conclusion of each chapter there is a chapter summary, chapter review questions, and a biography of the event professional who contributed the chapter content. Most importantly there is also a checklist that indicates exactly what MBECS standards and skills were covered in the chapter. Thus, after finishing this book, the readers can compile a self-assessment relative to MBECS standards and skills and determine what they know, and what they do not. It is hoped that this book will provide content that helps prepare existing and potential event professionals.

SUMMARY

This chapter is meant to provide an introduction to the MEEC industry and to the book. It provides insight into the magnitude of the industry and the various career opportunities that exist. The chapter provided a basic underpinning regarding terminology and definitions used in MEEC. It also provided a discussion of the historical evolution of MEEC from the early days through the development of a common set of knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) required of an event professional. There is an overview of the Meetings and Business Events Competency Standards (MBECS) that incorporates these KSAs as well as a discussion of how MBECS can be used. The end of the chapter covered how the content in this book is based on MBECS.

KEY WORDS

Planning   Event Professionals

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What is common to meetings, expositions, events, and conventions?
2. What led to the development of MBECS?
3. How can MBECS be used in career development?
4. What is CMP-IS?
5. What is planning?
6. What are the trends in the MEEC industry?

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Strategic Planning in Meetings, Expositions, Events, and Conventions

Strategic planning is a winding road. Jim Parkin, Shutterstock

Chapter Objectives

Upon completion of this chapter, the reader should be able to:

- Define the strategic planning
- Articulate the purpose of creating a strategic plan for a meeting or event
- Identify four key steps in the strategic planning process

Chapter Outline

INTRODUCTION TO STRATEGIC PLANNING

Strategic planning for an organization and specifically for meetings and events is a critical business activity. This process serves as a road map to achieve the goals and objectives of the meeting or event while aligning with the organizational vision and direction. The purpose of meeting/event strategic planning is to articulate high-level event initiatives and to tie that vision to tactical, operational projects. Often, the strategic plan is too conceptual and it fails to translate into the day-to-day operations of the event team. This chapter will provide insight into the purpose of creating a strategic plan for meetings/events and provide four key steps in crafting a strategic direction.

WHAT IS STRATEGIC PLANNING?

Strategy is simply defined as carefully developing and carrying out a plan of action to achieve a vision or goal. It is sometimes referred to as a road map; a path is constructed to reach an end vision. The most important part of implementing the strategy is ensuring the organization is headed in the right direction and does not steer off the path toward the end vision.

Strategic planning is an organization's process of defining its strategy, or direction, and making decisions on allocating its resources to pursue this strategy. Strategic planning helps the organization to match its resources to its changing environment and, in particular, its markets, customers, and clients, so as to meet stakeholder expectations (Johnson and Scholes, 1993). This planning process is a systemic tool for planning and managing all activities of the organizations, including events, and are aligned to ensure competitive advantage, profitability, consistency of the brand, and many other activities. Essentially, this is planning for good business.

The planning process requires a commitment to personnel time, money, and other resources. According to Schmidt and Laycock (2012), the timing needs to be appropriate and the resources proportional to the task and intended outcome. Strategic planning is important whether the organization's direction needs reviewing, whether its priorities have changed, or whether the means of achieving desired objectives need to be updated due to internal or external forces impacting delivery.

As it relates to the meetings or events of the organization or business, they may be addressed in the strategic planning process or the event professional may have to take the strategic plan and implement an event strategy based on its direction. Most importantly, the strategic planning of the organization must be parallel to the corporation or organizations' vision, mission, goals, and objectives. If the meeting or event's goals and objectives are not tied to the organization's vision and mission, success of the program cannot be guaranteed or measured.

Why is strategic planning important?   There are multiple reasons that strategic planning is important for any organization, business, or event professional. Critical decisions have to be made based on a sound rationale, creditable data, and logic. The strategic plan should aid organizational leaders when daily or difficult decisions need to be made. The plan should be widely distributed, reviewed, and discussed often.

Beyond making decisions, strategic planning should be used to interact with key internal and external stakeholders. **Stakeholders** are individuals or groups that have an interest in the organization. **Internal stakeholders** can range from executives to department heads to mid-level managers and employees. **External stakeholders** can be defined as customers, the local community, vendors, or media contacts.

The strategic plan also ensures that all stakeholders are on the "same page" and have a clear, united direction for the organization. Stakeholders can have differing

> ## MCI Strategic Plan
>
> Sebastien Tondeur, president of MCI, posted the company's strategic plan on its public website. He states clearly in his video introduction of the "Painted Picture," (company's strategic plan) that sharing their core ideologies will inspire their customers and serve as a road map for alignment and growth. The MCI board is committed to the success of the "Painted Picture" and reviews portions of the strategic plan at every meeting, and the staff refers to it in retreats and in daily discussions when implementing programming. MCI sees sharing the plan as a way to share their vision to be entrepreneurial and to be thought leaders in the meetings and events industry.

views and unique agendas. However, the strategic plan should steer everyone toward a common end goal and build consensus and understanding.

Strategic Planning Process

There are multiple formats and approaches to strategic planning. Depending on the objectives and business circumstances, the process can take one day, several months, or even longer. Like any process, an organization needs to answer:

- Who they want to be involved in the strategic planning process?
- What they want to accomplish?
- Where this strategic planning session will take place?
- When should the process begin and end?
- Why is this important now?
- How are we going to allocate resources to the strategic planning process?

The answer to these questions may drive the format and approach of the strategic planning process. Typically, the scope of the plan is viewed as a process for determining:

- Where is our organization heading over the next year (short-term)?
- What is our organization's direction in the next three to five years (long-term)?
- What should our organization's vision be in ten years? twenty years and beyond?

Whether the approach is answering a long-term or short-term question, the intent of the systematic process is to envision a desired future, translate the vision into a specific goal, and define objectives that detail how to achieve them.

The difference between long-term and short-term strategic planning is where to start the process. In short-term strategic planning, most organizations begin by defining the desired end and work backward to the current state. The focus is on what must be done or changed to reach the desired end in a limited time span. On the other hand, the long-term approach begins with the current status and lays down a path to meet estimated future needs. Long-term strategic planning looks at the wider picture and is adaptable as the organization goes down this path. Two approaches are seen in Table 1.

Regardless of the approach, there tends to be four steps in the strategic planning process:

- **STEP 1:** Where are we now?—Analysis of the situation and feasibility study
- **STEP 2:** Where do we want to get to?—Determining your future direction
- **STEP 3:** How are we going to get there?—Strategy development
- **STEP 4:** How will we know when we have gotten there?—Measuring success

  (Johnson and Scholes, 1993).

TABLE 1 Strategic Planning Approaches	
Situation-Target-Proposal	Draw-See-Think-Plan
• **Situation**—evaluate the current situation and how it came about • **Target**—define goals and/or objectives (sometimes called ideal state) • **Path/Proposal**—map a possible route to the goals/objectives	• **Draw**—what is the ideal image or the desired end state? • **See**—what is today's situation? What is the gap from ideal and why? • **Think**—what specific actions must be taken to close the gap between today's situation and the ideal state? • **Plan**—what resources are required to execute the activities?

For the remainder of the chapter, the focus will be on strategic planning, managing, and implementing of the organization's events and meetings, as it relates to its strategic direction. The above questions will be answered for first-time and annual events and meetings.

STEP 1: WHERE ARE WE NOW?—SITUATION AND FEASIBILITY ANALYSIS

Determining "where we are now?" with regard to an organization's meetings and events strategy requires a review of a number of different areas. It is important to first gather information on the organization's current state and provide an objective review of the success of its events and meetings. It is also critical that the review includes the entire picture, is realistic, and is transparent. Covering up an issue or areas of existing concern can have detrimental impacts to the organization and its events moving forward. When considering a new meeting or event, a thorough analysis to determine the feasibility of introducing it to the market is essential. Introducing a new event or meeting to the market when it is not needed or poorly positioned can be the recipe for disaster.

Depending on the scope of the analysis, a situational and feasibility investigation of the organization's meetings and events should take place. Below are some areas to consider:

- Using objective data, provide a picture of how the organization's meeting and event portfolio is performing.
  - Are the events exceeding the organization and attendee/customers' expectations?
  - How have meetings and events contributed to the success of the organization over the years?
  - What needs to be changed to contribute to the organization's success and vision?
  - Is there an opportunity for investment in new ideas?
  - Did the organization's event respond to a major trend or paradigm shift?
  - Did the organization's event change the culture or direction of the organization due to an internal or external factor?
  - What external factors need to be reviewed and considered for future events?
- Who are the organization's stakeholders?
  - Which stakeholders are directly involved in the events and meetings?
  - What is the scope of power and influence of these stakeholders?
  - Who are key decision makers?