



National Meetings Industry Day 2006 Re-Cap

Summary

National Meetings Industry Day was held April 6, 2006 in Vancouver, Calgary, Edmonton, Winnipeg, Toronto, Ottawa, Montreal and Halifax. This is approximately the 8th NMID annual event that has been held across Canada. Total attendance at the event across the country was 600+, an average of 75 people per location, although attendance varied from a high of 175 in Ottawa to 45 in Halifax. Non-member participation is unclear from the chapters in most cases, but seems to be around 15-20%. The theme of the event was the economic impact of meetings. The goal of the event was link to *Pathways to Excellence* objective 2: *to increase awareness and influence about the values of meetings with senior decision making executives at corporations, associations and organizations.*

As such, the primary goal was *to raise awareness of the Meetings Industry and communicate the value of meetings to the broader business community and community at large, through the hosting of an "influence event" on April 6th, 2006.* Secondary goals were to 1. promote MPI and the MPI Foundation Canada; 2. unite the chapters; and 3. initiate media attention on the value of meetings.

To do this, the objectives we put in place were:

1. Put in place a consistent format between chapters to create a high profile "influence summit" event and provide a "turnkey" for chapter leaders that is transferable to other chapters across North America and globally.
2. Set national discussion topics, and bring in regionally significant speakers to discuss and debate the impact of the industry in each chapter;
3. Record the discussions in each city for use in creating a white paper or other resource to document the state of the industry in Canada; provide a benchmark for progress and trends; and to use this resource to influence others about the impact of the industry.
4. Leverage the impact of NMID, by maximizing consistency nationally
5. Focus attention on specific topics nationally and regionally
6. Create an event that raises awareness and discussion of the impact of the industry and is worthy of media attention
7. Engagement of senior industry leaders and leaders from outside the industry
8. Increase membership through an increase in national profile
9. Create a national education opportunity for our members and future members

Many of these goals and objectives were met. The diversity of the chapters is one of MPI's enduring strengths in Canada, and that a key purpose of NMID is to celebrate and acknowledge the different paths we pursue toward a common goal. Having all Canadian Chapter's NMID activities culminate on one day of unity is a powerful statement.

Partners in the event included the Convention Centres of Canada, The MPI Foundation Canada, and The Meeting and Travel Group.

Consistent Format

To promote consistency, the following elements were recommended for each chapter to incorporate:

1. Education
 - a. Panel Session to discuss the impact and value of meetings*
 - b. White paper produced nationally to document outcomes and future actions and discussion topics. *
2. Influence
 - a. Declaration of NMID by City and/or Province
 - b. Media campaign *
 - c. Press conference
 - d. National newspaper inserts and/or editorial *
3. Advocacy
 - a. Visits to political officials, both local and provincial, to communicate the value of meetings and discuss ways to work closer together to make it easier for groups to come to meet in your community.
 - b. Meetings with industry associations or related organizations discuss the challenges and how industry can work together to achieve greater success. E.g. TIAC, CTC, local tourism authorities
4. Outreach
 - a. NMID Awards Program
 - b. Invite other industry associations to participate i.e.: CASE, PCMA, ISES, CAPS etc.
 - c. Invite local Chamber or Commerce to Board of Trade to participate in event, setting the stage for making it a "joint session" next year.
 - d. Invite leadership from tourism industry organizations to be members of the audience and actively initiate dialogue i.e.: CTC, TIAC, DMO's

National Discussion Topics

Theme: "The Value of Meetings"

Format: Modified panel, recommended 1.5 - 2 hours in length

To create more interaction and involvement from both the panel and the audience we are recommending a modified format be considered using one of 2 options:

- Fishbowl set up – a moderator facilitates a core panel of 2-3 presenters and then a secondary set of sub-panelists or responders pose specific questions at the core panelists to generate dialogue. Room can be set in a round or crescent shape to stimulate discussion.
- Living room set-up – a moderator facilitates interviews with 3 or 4 panel members and then group dialogue in a talk-show style format with living room furniture set on a stage.

Facilitator: Preferably a high profile person in the industry who is able to interact with panel members and pose questions and ideas and keep the flow of dialogue between the audience and panel. Could be a professional facilitator or media host but would need to be well scripted with questions and content.

Panel Members:

1. Past City-wide convention client, who brought a successful event to your community in the past 2 years. They will talk about the legacy their meeting left on the city and also the legacy it has had in their organization and the impact on the local constituency i.e.: research and profile to the university etc.
2. A high profile restaurateur or other related business owner i.e.: taxi company, vineyard, boutique owner to talk about the impact meetings and conventions have on their business.
3. The Convention Centre General Manager or senior executive to talk about the value of a convention centre to the community, the development and growth of the city and impact meetings have on the city/province.
4. A local Corporate or Association Executive to talk about the value of the role meetings place in their organization.

Sub Panel Members: – if the fish bowl format is preferred it is important to designate 2 or 3 industry leaders to act as “responders” to the panelist and to challenge and build on the comments of the panel members. Good candidates would be the Chair of the Hotel Association, Chamber of Commerce, and CVB

MPI Foundation Canada Representative – A Foundation representative should be included in the program as a special guest speaker or possible panel/sub panel member to talk about the Foundation’s leadership in initiating the quantification and measurement of economic impact of the meetings industry in Canada.

Media Coverage

Through the MPI global office, press releases were sent to both trade and business press. Templates for chapter use were sent to each chapter. The resulting media coverage was local, national and international:

- Toronto Star Business Section: http://www.thestar.com/NASApp/cs/ContentServer?pagename=thestar/Layout/Article_Type1&c=Article&cid=1144360211964&call_pageid=970599119419
- Halifax Herald Business Section: <http://www.herald.ns.ca/Business/495311.html>
- Yahoo Finance: http://biz.yahoo.com/cnw/060403/tx_meetng_prof_canada.html?.v=1
- Meetings Focus: <http://www.meetingsfocus.com/news.asp?#6638>
- MeetingsNet: http://meetingsnet.com/news/mp_i_national_meetings_day_2006/
- Travel Daily News: http://www.traveldailynews.com/new.asp?newid=28798&subcategory_id=96

Speaking points were also sent to each Chapter President for use on NMID. They become useful when USAE contacted several chapters to discuss the Influence Awards.

Involvement of Senior Industry Leaders and Leaders Outside the Industry

Perhaps the most significant involvement came this year through the involvement of the Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT). At their own request, they attended the events in Ottawa and Toronto to discuss the impact of the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative on the economic factors of the cross-border meetings industry. They also requested to send representatives to Montreal and Vancouver. Although the Montreal chapter declined involvement, the representative to the Vancouver event was prevented from attending by missing flight connections. The DFAIT representatives that attended were senior, including Director General Bill Crosbie (Ottawa) and Douglas Challborn, Deputy Director Foreign Affairs (Toronto).

At the chapter level, there were successes in involving senior industry leaders as well:

British Columbia: Rick Antonsen, President and CEO of Tourism Vancouver; Charles Gauthier, Executive Director Downtown Vancouver's Improvement Association; and Barbara Maple, President, Vancouver Convention and Exhibition Centre.

Calgary: Deputy Mayor; David Beck, Calgary Exhibition and Stampede

Edmonton: Ruth Kelly, Publisher and Editor in Chief, Alberta Venture Magazine; Bob Dunham, Edmonton Tourism

Toronto: Douglas Challborn, Deputy Director, Foreign Affairs Canada US Relations Division; Jim Phillips, President and CEO, CAN/AM Border Trade Alliance

Ottawa: Cyril Leeder, Ottawa Senators Hockey Club; Bill Crosbie, Director General, Foreign Affairs; Joan Culliton, Executive VP, Ottawa Congress Centre; Chris Henderson, CEO Delphi Group and co-Chair of the Ottawa Partnership

Montreal: Margaret Booth, Tourism Industry Association of Canada; Didier Rabette, VP, Business Development, Tourism Montreal

Atlantic Canada: Pat Lyll, CEO, Destination Halifax; Scott Ferguson, Executive VP, World Trade and Convention Centre

NMID White Paper

Each city (with the exception of Halifax) had a writer present to record the discussion. These documents will be taken and fused into a white paper to document the state of the industry in Canada and the pertinent discussion topics. This white paper will be delivered by the end of April for review.

NMID Influence Awards

To assist in reaching the goal of raising awareness of the industry, a National Award Program was designed to recognize people or organizations outside the direct industry which have supported the development of Meetings and conventions or the development of policy and programs impacting the industry. Each chapter was to recognize one person or organization in their community who has made a difference to the meetings industry *but is not actively involved in it*

Some examples given were:

- A downtown business association who has developed a program to welcome visitors by staffing volunteers to give directions and information
- A city councillor/official who has supported events by speaking at conferences or attending conference bids or promotions
- A local business person who has championed a meetings industry cause such as an expansion of the convention centre, changing in city zoning etc.

The chapters that incorporated this element into their program reported that it was very successful. The following awards were given (the award was produced nationally but given from each chapter):

British Columbia: Bob Warnock, Canada Customs

Greater Calgary: WestJet

Greater Edmonton: Edmonton Airport Authority

Manitoba: Manitoba Film and Sound

Toronto: Toronto Film Festival

Montreal: La Cite de l'énergie

Toronto Tourism has offered to sponsor the 2007 NMID Influence Awards across the country.

Attendance

Attendance at each event was varied by city. Approximate numbers are:

British Columbia: 120
Calgary: 40-50
Edmonton: 60
Manitoba: 64
Toronto: 50
Ottawa: 175
Montreal: 81
Atlantic Canada: 45

NMID Wrap Up Survey Results

A survey was sent to chapters Presidents, NMID chapter leads, Foundation representatives and IBOD representatives the week following NMID. There were 16 responses, eleven from chapters and five from Foundation/IBOD representatives. One chapter gave responses from three representatives; another had two representatives respond.

What were the elements of NMID that you view as being successful?

- Having solid educational session; the WLI reception at the end of the day was also a nice touch.
- The fact that it is a day all Canadian chapters share. Industry awareness is increasing but will still take some time to kick in
- Engaging senior members of the meetings industry, expanding outside of our general membership for attendance, media coverage. Additionally, Claire Smith was of enormous help.
- The success has been the buzz around the national aspect of the day. It was important to hire a project manager to ensure that there was this national component at all of the chapters. The fact that the Dept. of Foreign Affairs wanted to participate was a bonus
- Heighten awareness of the importance of meetings and the benefits that meetings brought to our communities and stakeholders.
- Panel structure was solid.
- Participation by the Deputy Mayor (Calgary), and non-MPI members as panellists.
- Use of an advance member survey to set priorities for a full-day educational program * Strong partnerships with some (though not all) local industry organizations * Economic impact as a Canada-wide theme
- The attempt to try and truly be Canada wide.
- Programming that was both informative and educational and addressing industry issues, such as was presented in Montreal: ROI, US passport issue and green meetings.
- In Vancouver-the panel discussion and the Wosk Centre worked out really well.
- Venue/location - Good topic and program content
- The panel participants and the panel discussions. Great feedback from the audience regarding future educational sessions the Chapter could provide as a result of the some of the discussions.
- We had good representation from key people involved in meetings, conventions and special events in Winnipeg.
- Gathering cross section of industry professionals to give state of the industry address.
- *The 1st Annual NMID Award. *Talk Show Setup Discussion with a Facilitator and 4 Industry Panellists. *The Partnership with the Shaw Conference Centre which allowed us to put on a great event.

What elements could we improve on?

- PR coverage in local press (Ottawa). I also didn't think the "central content development" for the Economic Impact session worked all that well; the information was obtained from Claire too late. I

realize this was due to how late she got the contract, etc. But any central element, in the future, should be ready for the Chapters to implement by early fall (ergo the answer on Q10).

- Advance preparation Everything was being thrown at us at the last minute
- Timing for confirmation of venue. Generally getting started a bit earlier. Also, clarifying in more detail the roles for all involved, including the Chapter, the Partners and Sponsors and the Project Manager.
- Timing of the planning. Starting plans in January is too late. We decide on the date at the Leadership Conference. We should not be waiting until January to get direction from the Canadian office. I realize that there were many aspects that needed to be ironed out, but planning needs to start sooner. This is one of the reasons why Chapters just decide they are going to do their own thing.
- Involvement and participation by politicians.
- Each chapter must be organized. When one is not as organized as the rest, it really shows.
- The event seemed a little last-minute on the planning side, so I expect it wasn't very well promoted. Attendance was good, but could have been better.
- * Timeliness at all levels -- local planning didn't begin until early to mid-November, and some Canada-wide elements fell into place too late for local volunteers to respond * Balance between a Canada-wide facility partnership and the need for local flexibility * Continuing local concern that Canada-wide elements of NMID (the economic impact theme, the award program) are being imposed by Canadian office The fishbowl format for the economic impact panel was a qualified success. In retrospect, we had too many speakers for the available time -- and that was before the last-minute addition of a Foreign Affairs Canada representative to discuss the WHTI. The result was that, while the content was strong, opening statements were rushed and the interaction among panellists was limited. Even with fewer speakers or a longer session, I'm not sure the majority of the panel would have been open to the degree of spontaneous, free-flowing debate we were trying to open up -- but I suspect that has more to do with the topic and the cast of characters, as opposed to the session format.
- Consistency from chapter to chapter
- obtaining media coverage - I don't think any media were present for the day
- Improve on the communication of the foundation and the chapter and how that is to be integrated.
- Notice - Improved program schedule, and longer time for speakers, and/or script what they are to stay. Speakers excessively long compared to agenda schedule. - - Did not know who was in attendance, no name badges.
- Press releases and media relations.
- If you are going to create a template to work from, receiving the information much sooner would have been helpful.
- We (our chapter) didn't take advantage of enough cross-country promotion.
- I can't think of anything at this time.

Did your chapter use the press templates provided?

Seven chapters yes; one no.

Was the 2006 NMID Influence Award well-received?

All chapters that utilized the program responded yes.

Do you believe that the event met its goal of raising the awareness of the industry?

75% Yes

25% No

Did you find having a national NMID project manager helpful?

6 chapters Yes

2 chapters No

Should the overall direction for NMID continue to come from the Canadian office?

87.5% Yes
12.5% No

Do you think that NMID is a worthwhile event?

100% Yes

If NMID is held again next year, on what date would be most appropriate? Please keep in mind these important dates: PEC-Europe March 18 - 20 Palm Sunday April 1 Passover April 3 - 10 Good Friday April 6 Easter April 8 Easter Monday April 9

Wednesday, April 18 th	0%
Thursday, April 19 th	37.5%
Wednesday, April 25 th	0%
Thursday, April 26 th	6.2%
Wednesday, April 11 th	6.2%
Thursday, April 12 th	6.2%
NMID should be the week of April 16 – 20 th	18.8%
NMID should be the week of April 23-27 th	12.5%
Other	12.5%

Our partner this year was the Convention Centres of Canada. Was this a good partnership?

How can we improve it?

- Unfortunately, the local convention centre facility was not available for April 6th. The partnership could be improved with earlier space confirmation.
- Yes, a good partnership. Inquire more in advance about availability. All Convention Centres should support their chapter even if the space is not available. We are very grateful to the Palais des Congrès de Montréal for being our main sponsor
- Yes, this is a good partnership.
- It turned out to be good for our Chapter in the end. It is always a challenge for us to find a large enough venue for the event.
- It would be helpful if they had secured April 6, 2006 for NMID. I hope we can have their commitment early in the game, so that we can have the next NMID at the VCEC.
- Sure.
- Yes
- The CCoC partnership is a mixed blessing. In some ways, and to some degree, the local facility went above and beyond to accommodate us, and it seemed clear at one point that the national agreement was the catalyst for local decisions. But there were some concerns that NMID was placed in "hand-me-down space," to quote one of our committee members, and a number of small details in the relationship were more difficult to negotiate than they might have been. For 2007, the local NMID committee is quite determined to confirm a location by early fall -- not only to avoid the worry of having no confirmed space until December or January, but so that other organizational and promotional tasks can begin much earlier than they did this year. If that location is not the local congress centre, we'll presumably have to find some other way of involving them in the conference and acknowledging CCoC's pan-Canadian participation.
- Yes, if we take advantage of their help.
- I think having greater flexibility with the date i.e. designating the week as NMID would have allowed the event to take place in a convention centre, thereby using the occasion to showcase the facility as a sponsor. Hopefully this will continue to be a concern if the Convention Centres of Canada renew their sponsorship.
- We need to define what that partnership entails
- Yes. Strategic partnership that benefits both organizations.

- Yes, their sponsorship is very much appreciated and we generally get very good participation from the local Convention Centre as well. The location is convenient, especially for an early morning event.
- yes it works well
- Excellent! Special thanks to the Halifax WTCC for their support!
- It is a good partnership as this solidifies our relationship with the Shaw Conference Centre for other potential future partnerships.

NMID 2007: Planning Ahead

Partner: The Convention Centres of Canada are partnering for NMID in 2007, in year two of a two-year agreement. Please contact your Centre once the new chapter Board is in place.

Suggested date: Thursday, April 19th, 2007. This is with the understanding that if the Convention Centre does not have the 19th open, one day that week will be chosen as an alternate. The Convention Centres of Canada have been notified of the date as of April 13th, 2006 and are checking space.

Suggested Topic: Economic Impact of Meetings. The MPI Foundation Canada will be well into its economic impact study at that time.

Suggested Format: Panel Discussion involving local industry leaders, government and leaders from outside the industry

Press: Press release templates will be provided from the global office in February 2007, along with speaking points

Logo: The NMID logo will be updated to reflect the 2007 date as of September 2006, and made available to chapters at this time.

Website: Once the logo, location and date are confirmed, each chapter will please put this information onto their websites early in the new fiscal.

2007 Influence Awards: Please plan to include these awards in your plans for NMID 2007. Tourism Toronto has offered to sponsor these awards nationally in 2007 (awaiting confirmation).

Conclusion

National Meetings Industry Day 2006 was a success. The goal of the event was *to raise awareness of the Meetings Industry and communicate the value of meetings to the broader business community and community at large, though the hosting of an "influence event" on April 6th, 2006*. To reach this goal, it met many, if not most, of its objectives, including:

- Consistent format provided
- National discussion topics set
- Recording of the event for use in developing a white paper
- Creation of an event worthy of media attention
- Engagement of senior leaders within the industry and those outside of it
- Creation of a national education opportunity
- Greater awareness of the MPI Foundation Canada

It also created a "winner" in terms of the Influence Award give at the chapter level.

Problems were encountered in the areas of:

- Timing of the event. Organization nationally needs to happen sooner.
- Availability of space at local convention centre. This is related to the timing issue, above.
- Reluctance of a small percentage of chapters to follow national guidelines. This also may relate to the timing issue.
- Media attention at a local level in some areas.

These elements have been recognized and steps are being taken to rectify them for NMID 2007.

