



The Meeting Show 2015

The Business Side of Networking

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MEETING PROFESSIONALS INTERNATIONAL

The Meetings Show is the premier event for the UK inbound and outbound meeting industry, held annually at the Olympia Conference Centre in London. Organized by meeting professionals for meeting professionals, it includes a large exhibition, networking opportunities and professional education.

But the most important reason people come onsite is to connect with each other, be it for educational or business purposes, and measuring that connection has become increasingly important to show organizers. MPI in conjunction with researchers at the Leeds Beckett University International Centre for Research in Events, Tourism & Hospitality undertook the opportunity to delve into the networking aspect of The Meeting Show in order to discover why and how attendees were truly connecting with each other.



THE WHY

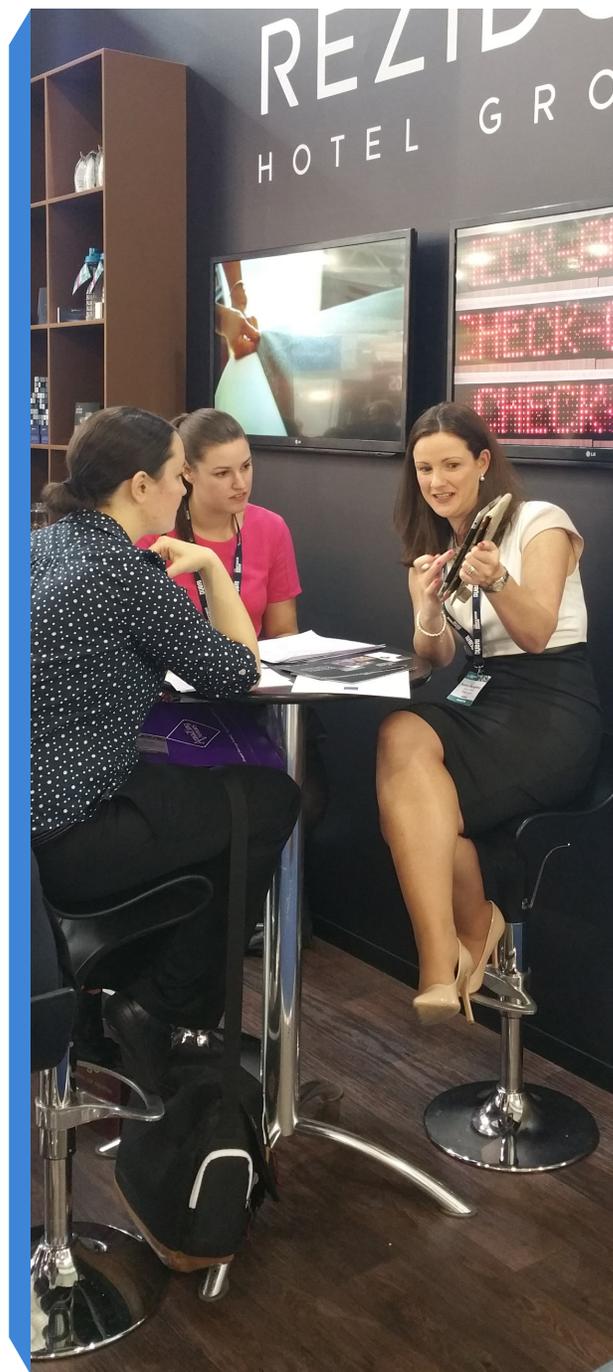
Most (80 percent) of the participants interviewed say they use networking to discuss new ideas in addition to the traditional uses of creating new business and new business relationships. Those who were new to the market aimed to make new contacts, and those who had been in the market a number of years were there to reconnect with established contacts.

Who did they want to meet with?

- › **TENURED SUPPLIERS** - Association planners, association management companies, event management agencies, incentive houses/agencies and venue -finding agencies.
- › **NEW SUPPLIERS** - Association management companies, event management companies, incentive houses/agencies and venue finding agencies.
- › **VENUE FINDERS** - Low preference for any one participant group.
- › **AGENCIES** - Government organizations, corporate companies, incentive houses/agencies and other participants.
- › **EDUCATION EXPERTS** - Corporate participants.
- › **PLANNERS** - Supplier, government organizations, corporate and incentive houses/agencies.
- › **INCENTIVE HOUSES** - Government organizations, event management agencies, incentive houses and marketing/PR representatives.

Similarly, participants wanted to meet with different people, organizations and positions to accomplish different things. They wanted to connect with:

- › **TENURED SUPPLIERS** - to develop new ideas and closer relationships and to discuss preferred supplier agreements.
- › **NEW SUPPLIERS** - to develop new ideas and learn about their companies, organizations or destinations.
- › **VENUE FINDERS** - to learn about their offerings.
- › **AGENCIES** - to develop new ideas.
- › **EDUCATION EXPERTS** - to develop new ideas and learn about trends in the industry.
- › **PLANNERS** - to develop new ideas.
- › **INCENTIVE HOUSES** - to develop new ideas.



THE HOW

Preparation for the event varied among participants, though the most common action was a review of available educational sessions. That said, with more than 1,600 prescheduled meetings over three days, it's clear that appointment setting remained a key component of event prep.

And attendees said they were much more likely to use the show floor and educational sessions (60 percent) than traditional networking events (40 percent) to make connections with people.

But there were also scheduled events, both at and in conjunction with the show that provided ample opportunities for people to connect. Let's start with the show itself.

› SHOW-FLOOR RECEPTIONS

Like many trade shows, exhibitors were likely to hold receptions in their stands as the day ebbed. From destinations to individual hotels to chains and event solutions companies, afternoons at the show proved to be full of networking opportunities.

But not all were your usual trade-show reception. Visit Belfast held a day-long event on the floor, calling all Game of Thrones fans to dress as show characters and get a selfie (with a chance to win a VIP trip to the destination). Trinity Event Solutions hosted an afternoon tea with Meetings Voice and venuefinder.com.

› OUT ON THE TOWN

Other exhibitors took their buyers out of the hall and into the city. Abbey Road Studios invited guests to its famous studio to record their own songs with the help of professional coaches and engineers. The Spanish Tourism office chose an off-site venue for its evening of cocktails, canapés and entertainment. The Copthorne Tara Hotel brought buyers to its home venue for an exclusive Summer Party. The Meeting Show's own Hosted Buyer reception featured an interactive treasure hunt in partnership with Lime Venue Portfolio.

› AUXILIARY EVENTS

Meanwhile, several organizers co-located their networking events in conjunction with The Meeting Show. The Oysters Summer Party annexed the red-hot Dstrkt night club for UK buyers. Sponsors brought with them tastes of their destinations from Belgium chocolates to Las Vegas showgirls to French gastronomy. A day after show close, the International Corporate Event Awards took over The British Museum. An unlikely Tube strike provided even more networking opportunities as attendees shared taxis and over-taxed London transit double-deckers to get to and from the venue.





THE FOLLOW UP

On average, participants followed up with 20 to 30 percent of the people they connected with at the show. And there was a clear relationship between time spent at the event and the number of contacts. For most categories the number of contacts started to increase significantly after five to seven hours.

Follow up was also related to time; more occurred after that same five to seven hours. For the agencies, none followed up under four hours.



PARTICIPANT CATEGORY	WHO THEY CONTACTED					
	Suppliers	Venue Finders	Agencies	Education Experts	Planners	Incentive Houses
Association	3.83	2.13				
Association Management Company	3.00					
Professional Conference Organizer	7.43	1.00	1.00			0.88
Government Organizer	0.67					
Charity/Non-profit	1.25	1.33			1.00	
Corporate	4.17	1.50	1.00	1.00	0.80	4.75
Event Management Agency	8.09	1.67				
Incentive House/Agency	4.75	1.00	1.43			
Venue-finding Agency	19.08	1.00		1.00	5.00	25.50
Marketing/PR	3.00	1.50				1.00



Lanyon believes that when people get together amazing things can happen. Relationships are built and business gets done. That's why it has created the industry's leading cloud-based software for managing corporate meetings, events and travel programs. For more information, visit www.lanyon.com.

About MPI

Meeting Professionals International (MPI) is the largest meeting and event industry association worldwide. Founded in 1972, the organization provides innovative and relevant education, networking opportunities and business exchanges, and acts as a prominent voice for the promotion and growth of the industry. MPI has a global community of 60,000 meeting and event professionals including more than 17,000 engaged members and the Plan Your Meetings non-traditional meeting planner audience. It has more than 90 chapters and clubs in 24 countries.

For additional information, visit www.mpiweb.org.

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