
UNIT 30 CONVENTION INDUSTRY

Structure

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30.0 OBJECTIVES

After reading this Unit, you will be able to:

- know in detail about the business traveller,
- define different types of Conventions,
- understand what is meant by Convention Business,
- **profile** Convention customers, and
- learn about the marketing of Conventions.

30.1 INTRODUCTION

People who travel in relation to their work come under the category of business tourism. However, such travel for business purposes is also linked with tourist **activity** like visiting places of tourist attraction at the destination, sightseeing and excursion trips. Business travel is **also** related to what is termed today as Convention business, **which** is a rapidly growing industry in hospitality and tourism. In this Unit, we have attempted to **familiarise** you with the different aspects of Convention business and the dependence of this business on the tourism industry. The Unit starts with a discussion on the business traveller and **familiarises** you with certain conceptual definitions related to the **Convention/Meeting** Industry. It goes on to **identify** the Convention Customers **alongwith** the nature of their demands in choosing Convention Destinations. Lastly, the Unit deals with Convention Marketing. Certain other aspects related to the planning and management of Conventions have been dealt with in the subsequent Units of **this** Block.

30.2 THE BUSINESS TRAVELLER

Travel for business purposes has been there since ancient times and as such it can be termed as one of the earliest forms of tourism. However, the nature of business travel in modern times is very different than it used to be **earlier**. Today, the travel time is considerably short and even the purpose of business travel is very different. From the normal place of employment, a business traveller travels for a short **duration** for a variety of purposes. He or she may be going to attend a meeting or a convention, participate in a trade fair or an exhibition, go for business negotiations, travel for **conducting** market research or a promotion campaign etc. Similarly, persons working in marketing or sales departments are travelling most of the time to carry out their jobs. Hence, in such cases, business travel is a job requirement. **The needs and wants of a business traveller are also different from that of a tourist undertaking a journey for leisure.** For example, a business traveller **may** require instant reservations, secretarial assistance and facilities like Computers, E-mail, Fax, Telephone, etc. **Certain** other characteristics of the business traveller can be described as **follows** :

- The demand of business travel is mostly *city*- oriented. Business travellers frequent cities which are often not tourist attractions. For example Jullandhar in **Punjab** and **Meerut** in Uttar Pradesh are not on the touristic map. However, those business persons who are interested in dealing in sports goods like hockey sticks or cricket bats would be visiting these cities in connection with their business.
- The journey is undertaken by the business travellers irrespective of weather or climatic conditions as and when required for doing work by their **organisations**. Hence, it is less seasonal. However, the duration of the trip is not long.
- Whereas leisure tourism is influenced by economic conditions, business travel is not affected by recession. At times, it may increase because the industry during this period would like to attract as many number of customers or search for new markets.
- Business travellers are frequent travellers. Their demands are price-inelastic. For example, lower or higher prices of the product will not generally effect the market as they have to travel in any case for **conducting** their business.
- In relation to air travel the business travel timings are generally yearly morning or evenings.
- Most of the business travel is in higher class and the business travellers demand special status treatment in terms of services.

Rob Davidson in his book **Business Travel** has pointed out certain important distinctions between business tourism and leisure tourism (see the following Table).

Table

| | Leisure tourism | Business tourism | but ... |
|--|---|--|--|
| Who pays? | The tourist | The traveller's employer or association | Self-employed business travellers are paying for their own trips |
| Who decides on the destination? | The tourist | The organiser of the meeting/incentive trip/conference/exhibition | Organisers will often taken into account delegates' wishes |
| When do trips take place? | During classic holiday periods and at weekends | All year round, Monday to Friday | July and August are avoided for major events |
| Lead time? (period of time between booking and going on the trip) | Holidays usually booked a few months in advance; short breaks, a few days | Some business trips must be made at very short notice | Major conferences are booked many years in advance |
| Who travels? | Anyone with the necessary spare time and money | Those whose work requires them to travel, or members of associations | Not all business trips involve managers on white-collar duties |
| What kinds of destination are used? | All kinds: Coastal , city, mountain and countryside locations | Largely centred on cities in industrialised countries | Incentive destinations are much the same as for up-market holidays |

Source: **Rob Davidson, Business Travel, London, 1994.**

In spite of these distinctions, Davidson is of the opinion that "**business tourism, in particular, can involve a substantial leisure element**" and "**distinguishing business travellers from those travelling for leisure purposes is far from easy**". For example, even for business travellers, sightseeing, entertainment, socialising, accommodation, transport, etc. are necessary components. Many a times the business traveller also has accompanying persons who may be wives or husbands or other family members. In such cases, the business traveller may be busy with **the work**, whereas the accompanying persons will be involved in touristic activities. In some cases, business travellers extend their stay at the destination beyond their work, to get a feel of the destination as a tourist.

Today, most of the destinations promote their facilities, attractions and services to business travellers because of the advantages that business tourism brings to a destination. You are already aware of the advantages of leisure tourism for a destination (see Unit 33 of TS-1). However, let us **have** a brief look at the advantages of business tourism:

- i) We all know that tourism is seasonal in nature. However, business tourism is an ongoing activity throughout the year. For example, the summer months are a lean tourist season

in India but because of changes in economic policies and growing industrial development, many business travellers from foreign countries come to India even during these months in relation with their work. You can imagine the impact **this** has on the hospitality industry **in** terms of **business**. In many cases, the principal suppliers like hotels, airlines, **etc.** offer discounts during offseason and this acts as an incentive to certain **organisations** for holding their meetings or conferences during this period. For **example**, summer and monsoon months are a lean period for the tourism industry in Goa. But, many organisations have started holding their meetings or conventions **etc.** in Goa during these months.

- ii) The socio-economic profile of business travellers is often of the upper or middle management ranks. Davidson has mentioned that "**business tourism is relatively high cost and therefore is high yielding**". This brings more benefits to the destination.
- iii) A business traveller may be visiting a destination alone for the first time because of work. But, the attractions of the destination may **influence** him **or** her to make a repeat visit for a holiday either alone or **alongwith** family and friends. Similarly, if the, quality of convention facilities is good, he or she may also praise it to others and hence become a promoter of the destination. Remember, that business travellers are **influential** people and their opinions about the destinations will be highly regarded by those who have not visited the destination earlier. Many companies provide incentive travel to their employees and a good image of the destination in the minds of top managers can also **influence** the management in determining the destination of incentive travel for the employees.

It is because of these reasons that today there is intense competition among the destinations for having business travellers, hosting **conventions** or conferences, **organising** trade fairs, exhibitions or special events etc. No doubt, **this** depends on the infrastructure, availability **and** government policies.

303 SOME DEFINITIONS

As mentioned earlier a business traveller travels because of different business reasons. Generally, attending conventions, meetings, workshops etc. are some of the reasons for business travel. Hence, we must have clear definitions about such events **though** in relation to tourism business, they all come under the umbrella of meetings industry, convention industry or conventions, expositions and meetings industry (CEMI). **According** to Davidson "**for the purposes of the business tourism industry, a meeting is an organised event which brings people together to discuss a topic of shared interest. The purpose of the meeting may be commercial or non-commercial; the meeting may be attended by half a dozen people or by many hundreds; it may last a few hours or a week. But the essential characteristic which makes a meeting qualify as part of the business tourism market is that it engages some of the services of the tourism industry, and this usually means being held away from the premises of the company or organisation running it**".

Let us explain this by an example. If a company which holds a meeting in its own premises, drawing upon its own resources for transportation of people, uses its own **canteen** for tea and lunch etc., such a meeting will not be a part of business tourism. However, if the same company holds the meeting in a hotel, using the hotel's infrastructure, services and facilities, it becomes a part of business tourism because the company has drawn upon the services of the tourism industry. The demands made on the tourism industry vary widely and this we will be dealing with, in detail separately.

Let us, for the purposes of clarity, give you **some** definitions regarding different types of meetings.

- 1) **Assembly** : When a large number of people or representative groups gather together for deliberations on a particular subject or agenda, it is termed as an Assembly.
- 2) **Colloquium** : This is a meeting where area specialists deliver addresses on specified topics and answer queries.
- 3) **Conference** : A meeting of people for discussing formally matters of **common** concern, is termed as a Conference. These are **primarily** concerned with **planning**, solving

management problems or obtaining information. They are generally **confined** to the members or representatives of the same profession, organisation or association. They are aimed at encouraging collective participation for achieving the stated objectives of the organisation. The numbers involved may range from 30 to 200 delegates.

- 4) **Congress** : These are usually general sessions of delegates belonging to a particular **organisation** or a body engaged in special studies. It is also an expression for a full membership meeting of an organisation and the numbers attending are usually large.
- 5) **Convention** : This **is** an assembly of people meeting for a common purpose to formally discuss the policies. Generally, this term is used for annual political party members, meetings, etc.
- 7) **Conclave** : **This** is a private-meeting or a secret assembly generally held among political heads of different countries or among heads of different business houses to discuss and negotiate issues of common concern.
- 8) **Meeting** : The coming together of persons or an assembly for a common purpose to discuss **and/or** decide on issues is termed as a meeting.
- 9) **Seminar** : Short intensive course of study or meeting of a small group **for discussion** and research.
- 10) **Summit** : A meeting of topmost officials is termed as a summit.
- 11) **Symposium** : A formal meeting at which many specialists deliver brief addresses on a pre- decided or given topic is known as a symposium.
- 12) **Workshop** : A seminar, discussion group or the like, where exchange of ideas and the demonstration or application of techniques, **skills** etc. takes place.
- 13) **Exhibition** : Presentations of products or **services** to an invited audience or public with the aim of inducing a sale or informing the visitor. They are also known as **trade shows** or **trade fairs** as the situation *may* be. In relation to tourism industry, exhibitions are used for demonstrations, displays or product promotion and they are vital for tourism industry because various **groups** of people (sellers, exhibitors, buyers, **etc.**) undertake travel to see them.

All types of above mentioned meetings can be local, regional, national, continental or international.

We have given you these general definitions but from the point of view of business tourism or as mentioned by **Denney G. Rutherford** "to more accurately define a modern meeting or a convention, we must also pay attention to the fact that such assemblies may often:

- occur at specific places called facilities,
- involve food and beverage service,
- provide for **specialised** technical support such as audio-visual equipment,
- require transportation,
- involve exhibition of products, and
- require convention or meeting delegate entertainment.

Besides meetings the above aspects are also relevant in the case of **trade shows, trade fairs, exhibitions and displays** which in certain cases are held simultaneously **alongwith** the different types of **meeting/gatherings** mentioned above.

Check Your Progress-1

- 1) How would you define a business traveller?

2) What are the advantages of business travellers for destinations ?

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3) Define the following:

a) A meeting from the point of view of business tourism industry.

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b) Convention

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c) Summit

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30.4 THE CONVENTION BUSINESS

There are a number of players in the convention business. On the one hand are the customers or the consumers and on the other hand are the principle suppliers like hotels, transporters etc. **Besides, there** are special tour operators who package convention **tours, travel** agencies which handle convention travel and there are **professional meeting planners** or **convention consultants** who offer their **services to convention** customers for a fee. We will be dealing with the customers in a separate Section. In this Section we will briefly mention the role of the suppliers in the convention business.

- 1) **Hotels:** Any meeting or convention which has participants from outside the host city will depend on the hotel and lodging industry for accommodation and food. **However, the** role of hotel and lodging industry has assumed wider dimensions in the context of modern convention business. Hotels have become major providers of convention facilities like convention and meeting halls, secretarial services, audio-visual facilities, most modern communication systems, etc. Many hotels are increasingly including convention requirements in their product design. **This** is because the convention requirements have a bearing on their various departments and operations. For **example, the** Food & Beverage department will have to cater to the large number of convention delegates besides taking **care** of such services in the restaurants and room service. **Similarly, the** operations at the front office have to be geared accordingly.

If there is a **large** convention being **organised** in a **city, not** one but many hotels get 'business, though the venue for the convention may be the hall of one **hotel, This** is because delegates have to be provided accommodation. Hosting conventions is big business for hotels and even in small towns such facilities are being provided by non-star category hotels for holding meetings or seminars etc.

- 2) **Transporters:** Convention transportation has emerged in itself as a **specialised** area of operations. Many leading airlines have separate executives or even departments which **specialise** in handling the convention market. Complimentary tickets to convention planners or to the VIPs have become a part of their marketing strategies. Practically all airlines offer business class travel and have frequent flier's programmes for the business travellers. They also offer their planes as special charter flights for business and convention delegates.

The local tourist transport operators at the convention destination play a major role for local transportation of delegates either to the venue or for **excursions, sightseeing** and entertainment. Different types of vehicles are used for ground transportation in this regard.

Even in the case of rail transport, meeting facilities are being offered. Recently, the **Gujarat Tourism Department** has introduced meeting **facilities** on their tourist train – the **Royal Orient** with facilities like a meeting coach which can accommodate 19 persons. In fact, the **Indian Association of Tour Operators (IATO)** had been demanding such a facility in order to package business travel tours combined with leisure.

- 3) **Convention Centres :** At many destinations convention centres have been constructed as venues for hosting conventions. Since the construction costs are **high, these** have been mostly built by governments or **big business organisations**. Many educational institutions also offer their buildings for hosting conventions on a commercial basis.

As per the variations in the **type** of conventions and meetings, there are also differences regarding convention centres. Whereas convention centres are constructed to take **care** of large conventions, a **conference centre** differs in terms of size and facilities as it caters to a smaller number of delegates. Similarly, facilities are provided for small size meetings, seminars, training programmes and workshops also.

While planning a **convention/conference** centre, location is a prime consideration for its success. Generally, these should be located in areas which have easy access to airports. Peter Murphy in his book **Tourism - A Community Approach** has suggested the following five considerations regarding the location of a convention centre :

- i) Site size is critical since space varying from half to a full city block, is needed to house the main **building**, plus possible support buildings **alongwith** delivery and service areas, parking, and entrances (which is why airport locations are often favoured because the land is available at a reasonable price).
- ii) The site should be central and accessible to quality accommodation and major inter-city transportation terminals for domestic delegates.
- iii) The site should be close to major shopping and entertainment districts (which is why **downtown convention** centres **are** not **uncommon**) or regional shopping centres.

- iv) Plenty of **parking** is necessary **within** the centre, or close by, again because many domestic delegates will drive there, and international delegates, as well as domestic air arrivals, will often rent cars at the airport.
 - v) Proximity to recreation facilities and attractive **surroundings** is important.
Many convention centres also market their facilities for trade shows, fairs or exhibitions.
- 4) **Tour Operators and Travel Agencies** : You are aware that the tour operators package special tours as per the requirements of the customers. Besides packaging leisure tours, they have also started catering to the demands of the **convention/meeting** customers. These packages take into account the customers' needs in *this* area and accordingly they arrange for convention facilities, accommodation, transportation, entertainment etc. This trend has started growing in India also. We have earlier talked about the efforts of the airlines to cater to the convention clients and at the same time, travel agencies are also coming forward to meet the transportation, bookings, **etc.** Such travel agencies not only book tickets but also handle cargo, travel documentation and liaison.
- 5) **Tourism Departments** : Conventions and conferences alongwith the business traveller bring certain advantages to a destination and we have already listed some of these earlier. Since the prime task of the National Tourist Organisation is to promote their country as a destination, the Tourism Departments (National as well as State level) play a major role in promoting convention destinations overseas.
- 6) **Exhibition Organisers** : Generally, a convention or a conference is also linked with displays, trade shows or exhibitions. In most of the cases, the **conference/convention organisers** now seek the **services** of professionals in *this* area.
- 7) **Sponsors** : In many cases, business **organisations**, as a part of their marketing and promotional activities sponsor certain activities, during the **conference/conventions**. These include sponsoring a dinner, a lunch, cocktails or sightseeing tours etc.

Besides these major players and suppliers in the **conference/convention** business, there is a hidden chain of suppliers adding to or supporting the efforts of the principal suppliers. Like the multiplier effect of tourism on economy, the business travel or convention tourism also **has** a multiplier effect as one chain leads to another

30.5 CONVENTION CUSTOMERS

Generally, you are aware that meetings, conferences, conventions are attended or **organised** by different types of people. But as a tourism professional, this general information is of no help. **The way we profile the tourists or look at the characteristics of the tourism-generating markets, we also have to profile the convention customers and the characteristics of the convention markets.** At the same time, it is essential to understand the factors which are taken into account for decision **making** regarding the selection of the convention venue by the convention organisers.

30.5.1 Types of Customers

The market for the convention industry can be categorised into two segments:

- 1) The Corporate Sector
 - 2) **Professional** and Voluntary Associations
- 1) **The Corporate Sector**

It consists of companies, business houses or business **organisations** which hold meetings for a variety of purposes. Some of these purposes are:

- a to discuss sales and marketing strategies,
- a launching of new products,
- a training workshops for employees, and
- a to carry out promotion campaigns, etc.

In Europe and America, many researches have been conducted to study the corporate meeting market. **W. Ken McClearly** has identified certain characteristics of the corporate meetings market, which are different from the association market.

- 1) The majority of corporate meetings involve less than 50 persons, thus smaller lodging operators can capture a portion of this market.
- 2) Because corporate meetings are smaller, lodging facilities can take several groups simultaneously and may use small meetings to fill in around larger conventions.
- 3) Corporate groups tend to meet more frequently, are not tied to a north-south-east-west geographic pattern as are many associations, and tend to spread their meetings throughout the year. This allows the lodging operator to use the corporate market to fill shoulder periods (off-season periods).
- 4) Corporate meetings are generally better spenders, require fewer price concessions, and tend to utilize the other profit centres of the hotels, including the restaurants, lounges, and recreation areas.

Today, most of the corporate sector organisations are introducing the job of a **meeting planner** in their organisations. The duties of a meeting planner include planning and detailing the requirements of meetings of various types and sizes. The convention suppliers deal with the meeting planner in an organisation to market their facilities because it is the meeting planner only who negotiates on behalf of the corporate organisation for meeting facilities, establishes meeting designs and standards, prepares the budget for the meeting and takes decisions on behalf of the organisation for selecting meeting venues and facilities.

We will deal with certain other aspects related to the profiling of convention customers etc. in the Section on **Convention Marketing**.

2) **Professional and Voluntary Associations**

All types of associations where people have grouped themselves because of common interests activities or purpose have to meet at different intervals of time. Such meetings could be general body meetings consisting of all members or executive committee or sub-committee meetings. Under the associations, we put both the categories i.e. **professional associations** as well as **voluntary associations**. Under the professional category, the members are those who join these associations because of the nature of their jobs. For example, doctors becoming members of the Indian Medical Association or historians becoming members of the Indian History Congress. Voluntary associations have a large gambit of human life which covers an entire range that is outside the working life of the people. Associations differ in size, geographical spread and objectives. You may have an association of something at the local level, there may be a regional or state level association, a national level association or an association having international membership. In many cases, national and international associations have their regional branches or regional chapters. In such cases, the meetings are not confined only at the national or international level but these other branches and chapters also have their meetings. Whereas the international level associations contribute to international travel, the national or regional level associations contribute to domestic travel. Initially such associations used to depend on their own resources for meeting purposes but now more and more of them are seeking the help of professional convention organisers for their meetings.

In the fast changing world today, however, we can not confine the convention customers to the above two categories only, as many educational institutions, public sector undertakings and government departments are also using the services of the convention suppliers. At the local levels say even a small city or town, you can always look for meeting customers like the local level medical association, chamber of commerce, etc. Here you must also remember that the delegates coming to attend the meetings or conventions are of different types and the profiles of delegates will vary according to the concerned associations. For example, a convention of civil engineers will have delegates from that specialised area only or the medical association convention will have doctors as delegates. At the same time, there are conventions with a cross section of people like a convention on rural development may have economists sociologists and scientists etc. The nature of participants also vary as per the decisions taken by the organisation in terms of financial aspects. For example a convention may be held by public funds where all the expenditure is borne by the organisers. In another convention the delegates might have to pay from their own pocket for participation or in some cases the

organisation to which they belong would take care of their expenses for attending the meeting or convention. This kind of segmentation is useful for the suppliers of convention industry to understand the participants better.

30.5.2 Choosing a Destination

We have already mentioned the job of meeting planners and a crucial part of their job is to decide or select a venue (destination) for the meeting or convention. In those organisations where there is no person holding the job of a meeting planner, such decisions are taken by the executive heads or a manager asked by the management to carry out such functions. From the point of view of conventional suppliers, it is very essential to know the aspects which a meeting planner takes into consideration to decide on a venue. This, of course, varies from organisation to organisation as per their requirement and budget but certain characteristics are common to all alike:

- 1) **Accessibility and Transportation** : This takes into account the accessibility of the venue and the type of transportation available. The venue should be well connected in terms of travel modes be it air travel or ground service transport. For example, the UK Conference Market Survey conducted in 1990, revealed that the top three criteria for organisers for venue selection are, being:
 - close to a motorway,
 - within one hour of a major city, and
 - within one hour of a major airport.
- 2) **Accommodation and Food** : The venue should be able to accommodate not only the delegates but also take care of the food requirements. However, these aspects are now considered standard and the meeting planners are paying more attention to conference facilities.
- 3) **Conference Facilities** : Leo Renaghan and Michael Z. Kay conducted a survey on what meeting planners want in 1987. Some of the conclusions drawn out from this survey are as follows:
 - Meeting rooms that have the greatest ratio of space to people offer a competitive edge,
 - Break-out rooms should be located close to the main meeting room whenever possible,
 - Standard audio-visual equipment is preferable because meeting planners do not trust facility employees to operate complicated alternatives, and they are not willing to risk something going wrong,
 - Inside the meeting rooms it is crucial that control of the climate and lighting be in the hands of the group instead of the staff,
 - Price is not nearly as important as might be expected. Planners are willing to pay more to get quality, which ultimately translates into a successful meeting.

Besides these, the availability of communication links like - E-mail, Fax, Telephone, etc. also affect the venue choice. The atmosphere and environment also have a bearing and the organisers have their choices in this regard. For example, one corporate organisation may like to have a meeting at a beach resort and another in a metropolitan city. With growing threat to peace, **security considerations are also affecting the venue choices**. This is more so the case in relation to international and national conferences or where VIPs are invited to attend the meeting. Other variables that affect the venue selection decision include the **level of the quality of the service of hotels, restaurants and convention centres** and in many cases **price levels**. Price may not be such an important consideration in the case of the corporate sector but in the case of voluntary associations and government departments, it certainly influences the venue choice. Certain customers also take into account the facilities available for exhibitions, industrial shows or trade shows while selecting a venue. However, such considerations are organisation-specific.

Meeting Planners, Convention Consultants or Professional Event Organisers (PEOs) advise the customers in the selection of venues taking into account the customer needs.

Check Your Progress-2

1) What role do hotels play in convention business?

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2) Who are the major convention customers?

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3) What aspects are taken into account while deciding the venue of a convention?

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30.6 CONVENTION MARKETING

Like any other service product, the convention suppliers have to adopt a sound marketing policy. This includes all the elements of marketing starting from marketing research, profiling of customers, product design, pricing strategies, promotions, advertisements and hard selling, alongwith establishing linkages with the suppliers of different services. **McClearly** has mentioned the following characteristics of marketing in meeting services :

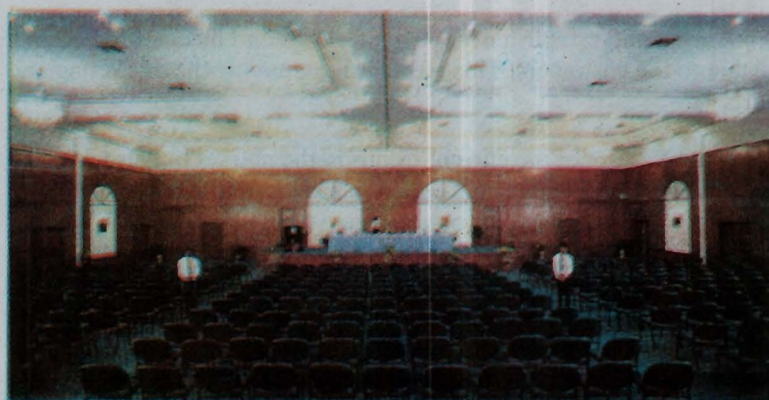
- 1) Meeting services are purchased with an element of uncertainty since the benefits are not guaranteed owing to the intangibility aspect,
- 2) There is no transfer of ownership as with products,
- 3) Meeting services are produced and consumed simultaneously,
- 4) Uniform performance standards are difficult to attain, and
- 5) A low price.

One must take into account the following aspects while deciding on the marketing strategy for the convention market:

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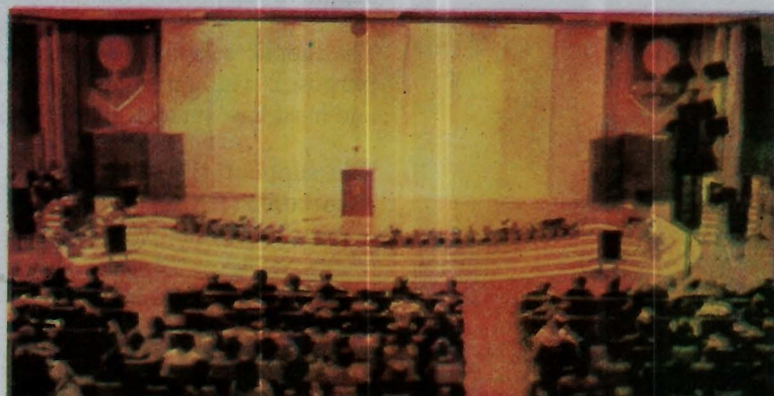
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FOR
500

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FOR
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Convention Advertisement in Print Media

- 1) The convention customers should be carefully identified and simultaneously grouped together in terms of their requirements. For example, hosting of international conventions or meetings can be grouped as one category while dealing with big business houses will be another category. Similarly, a grouping should also be made in terms of professional organisations or voluntary organisations because the demands of each organisation vary as per their requirements. Yet, some common features can be identified as a basis to move further. The demands of the customers need to be translated into products through proper product planning and product design.
- 2) The supplier should maintain a comprehensive data base of the customers and organisers. Such data base may include the number of meetings such organisations have in a year, the types of meetings and the various requirements etc. This data base will be useful for market segmentation and analysing market opportunities.
- 3) The way **fam trips** are conducted for tourism promotion, similar fam trips should be organised for promoting conference destinations and facilities.
- 4) The conference organisers use print as well as electronic media for advertisement and selling purposes. At the same time, conference suppliers are displaying their products in the travel and tourism markets also, like ITB Berlin, WTM London or the PATA Travel Marts, etc.
- 5) The convention suppliers should establish necessary networks and linkages for making their products available to the customers. This means strengthening the marketing and public relation efforts.
- 6) It is necessary not only to be aware of the current trends in the market but also have an eye on the future trends. For example, the convention market is getting more and more segmented from the point of view of size, purpose, delegate profile, etc. and the number of organisations and associations is also going up. Similarly, the customers will be demanding more and more technological facilities. In case of corporate sector customers, the lead time may continue to shrink and there may be more demand for exhibitions and displays. Competition also is going to increase in the future and the suppliers will have to constantly upgrade their products in terms of service and facilities along with value addition. For example, the number of women delegates is going to increase and the suppliers can provide certain special services as per their requirements.
- 7) The suppliers should be very cautious in detailing their staff for convention/conference purposes. The staff should be properly trained for the responsibilities to be performed and must have an idea about the linkages with different departments.
- 8) The suppliers should establish linkages with **International Congress Convention Association (ICCA)**.

Check Your Progress-3

- 1) How would you segment the convention market?

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- 2) What tools would you use for promotion purposes?

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30.7 LET US SUM UP

This Unit **familiarised** you with the characteristics of the business traveller and introduced to you the various players in the **convention/meeting** industry business. Besides giving you certain **definitions** related to the meeting industry, the Unit also **familiarised** you with the type of convention customers and the considerations they have for identifying a convention venue. Certain aspects related to convention marketing were also dealt with in this Unit. All the aspects **discussed** in this Unit are equally relevant for both big as well as **small** meetings. More and more organisations are depending upon convention professionals to meet their requirements. The business travellers as well as convention tourism are to be treated as a **specialised** area.

30.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

Check Your Progress-1

- 1) A business traveller is one who travels to another place from **his/her** place of **work** for work purposes. See **Sec.30.2** for details.
- 2) You are already aware of the advantages of tourism for a destination and in **Sec.30.2** you will **find** the advantages of business travellers for destinations.
- 3) The definition has been given in Sec.30.3.

Check Your Progress-2

- 1) No convention can be held without proper accommodation facilities and it is here that the role of hotels becomes **important**. **Not** only this the leading hotels provide convention halls and other convention facilities also. See point 1 of Sec.30.4.
- 2) There are various categories of convention customers. Read **Sub-sec. 30.5.1** for your answer.
- 3) In **Sub-sec.30.5.2**, we have listed the various aspects that **are** considered while deciding a convention venue.

Check Your Progress-3

- 1) Market segmentation can be done on the basis of the nature of **organisation**, the level of conference, the number of delegates, duration of the conference, etc. Read **Sec.30.6**.
- 2) **The promotional tools adopted by the convention suppliers are similar to those adopted by the hotels, travel agencies or tour operators. Read Sec. 30.6 for your answer.**

