

MEETINGS, INCENTIVES, CONFERENCES & EXHIBITIONS



WHAT IS MICE?

Meetings

Meetings are typically held in hotel conference rooms, or conference or convention centres. They are single-day events that bring together a group of professionals/colleagues to address a key challenge, opportunity or to set goals for the organization. They are typically booked within a short window of 30-90 days in advance of the meeting date.

Example: BC Cattlemen's Association Annual General Meeting

Incentives

Incentives are travel rewards provided by a company to its employees, dealers, commission sales people or other partners to show appreciation for their performance. Incentive destinations are typically resorts, high-end hotels or other popular hospitality venues. There may be a small meeting component but the focus is on enjoyable off-site activities such as golf, dining, and other forms of recreation. Incentive trips are typically planned 12 months in advance of the trip.

Example: ReMax top performing agents invited to a luxury resort

Conferences

Conferences are multi-day meeting events typically held by larger corporations or regional, provincial or national associations. They generally have an opening plenary session followed by breakout meetings. Meals are offered on site and organizers prefer to have their attendees stay in the venue. There may or may not be a tradeshow or exhibition component to the event. Preferred hotel rooms for these events are in walking distance from the meeting venue. Larger conferences are typically booked on a geographic rotation choosing their destination/venues 18-24 months in advance of the event.

Example: Association of Nurses BC

Exhibitions

Exhibitions are trade or consumer shows where the focus is on exhibiting products. There may be a meeting component to the event as well but the organizer looks for sufficient exhibition space, easy move in/out logistics, ceiling height etc. as a priority. Exhibitors and attendees will book a wide range of accommodation options. Consumer shows are open to the public while trade shows focus on a specific business/industry.



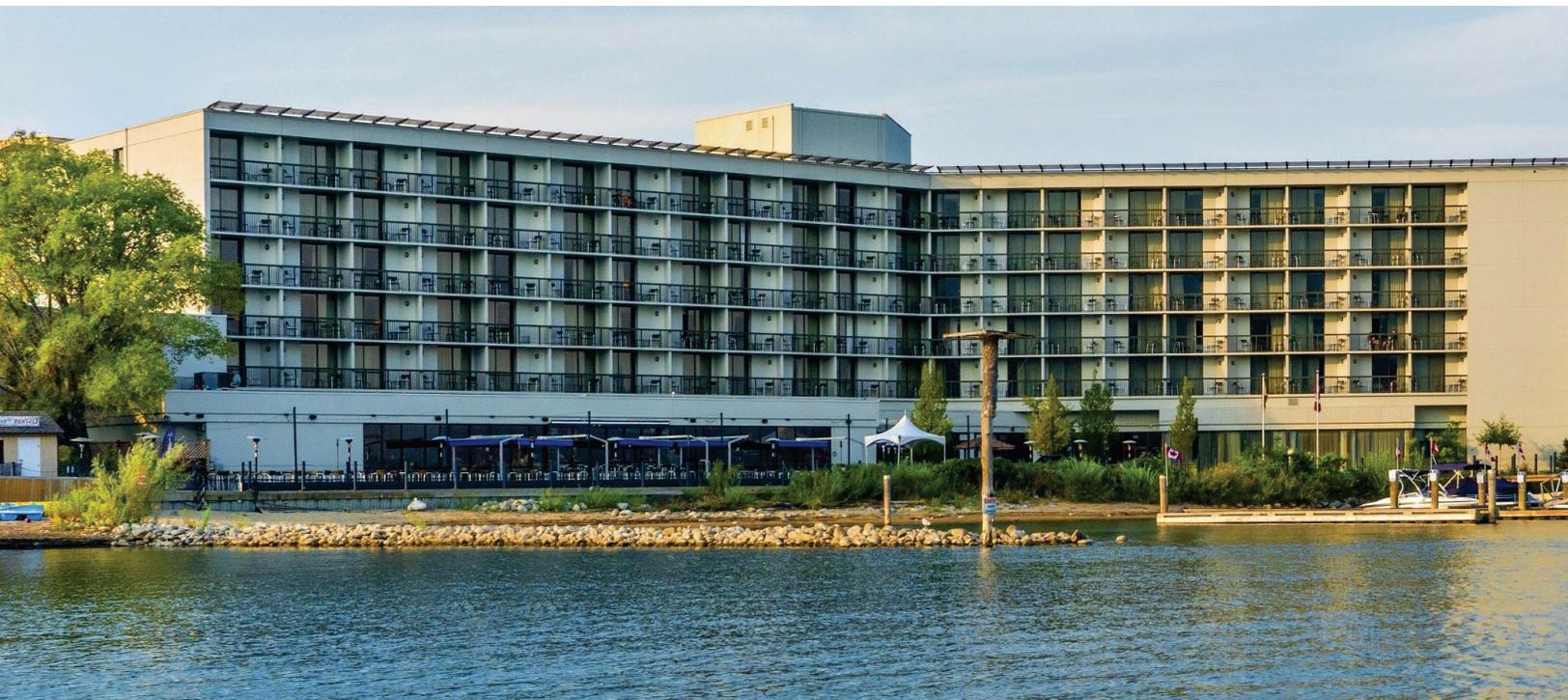
WHY SHOULD PENTICTON PROACTIVELY AND STRATEGICALLY PURSUE THE MICE MARKET?

Penticton is fortunate to have the facilities to service the MICE market already in place. We have the Penticton Trade and Convention Centre, the South Okanagan Events Centre, the Lakeside Resort and Conference Centre and several smaller hotel properties with meeting capacity. Unlike many communities that are trying to find capital funding to build these assets, our job in Penticton is to maximize the use of our facilities in a way that optimizes their economic impact through visitation, spending and overnight stays in our need periods.

The majority of meetings, conferences and events are held in the spring and fall – times of year when Penticton hotels have unused capacity. One large ‘city-wide’ event will fill hotels proximate to the meetings and exhibition facilities and will cause other travellers that overnight at the same time to ‘compress’ into other properties, so every hotel and motel benefits either directly or indirectly.

Meeting attendees, conference delegates, exhibitors and show attendees are most often travelling for business and have latitude for expenses such as restaurant meals, spa services etc. The spending per person per day is generally greater than a typical leisure traveller. Larger events like to work with a destination to offer pre/post stay activities to their attendees as well as spousal programs during the conference itself. In this way all of Penticton’s activity operators can benefit as well.

Meetings, conferences, exhibitions and events are the single greatest opportunity Penticton has to grow its shoulder season visitation and tourism revenues.



HOW WILL PENTICTON WIN THE MICE MARKET?

1. **Destination Awareness & Appeal**

Planners and event organizers need to be aware of Penticton as a meeting, conference and exhibition destination and then be sold on the many reasons why Penticton is their best option. This requires a coordinated approach to market through direct sales missions, attendance at industry events (Meeting Planners – BC Chapter; Canadian Society of Association Executives etc.), information resources specific to planners (floor plans, capacities, transportation options, tours/activities, audio visual services etc.), CVENT supplier listings, familiarization tours and media exposure.

2. **Quality Meetings Facilities & Event Servicing**

Clean, modern facilities equipped with access to the latest technology to meet the evolving needs of planners, paired with an exceptional event services/food and beverage team are essential for repeat business and favourable referrals. Quality hotel rooms proximate to the meeting space are important for some groups while others are more flexible. Penticton has a great track record of servicing meetings, events and exhibitions and continued improvements to our facilities and the addition of more hotel rooms within walking distance strengthen our offer and competitiveness.

3. **A Professional & Coordinated Approach to Market**

Meeting and event planners, whether working directly for a corporation, an association or hired as a third party planner, are all extremely busy. A planner's success and reputation is based entirely upon the success of the most recent event they are organizing. When choosing a destination, beyond its appeal and attractiveness and the quality of the facilities, planners are looking for a professional, well-organized team that is going to support them through the entire, sometimes multi-year process, and ultimately deliver an outstanding event with the least hassle for them and the assurance of no surprises.



WHY PENTICTON NEEDS A CONVENTION BUREAU

The first impression of a destination must be professional, coordinated and responsive or the planner will go no further – they simply will not take the risk. Planners are used to calling the local Convention Bureau and working with one person who develops an understanding of their event requirements and facilitates the gathering of information, suppliers, room blocks and rates.

This is a relationship business – if Penticton can meet the planner’s needs from the first point of contact all the way through to post-event evaluation, that planner will return with the same event on a rotation and also will recommend Penticton to their other clients and to their associates. It’s a small industry and an unforgiving one – everyone knows everyone and word travels quickly. We have done well so far. But for Penticton to reach its full potential in the meetings, conference and exhibition/event marketplace, a more coordinated and professional approach is essential. This is best managed centrally through a convention bureau.



Here’s what a Penticton Convention Bureau would do:

- Coordinate an annual meetings/conference/ exhibition/events sales and marketing strategy that brings all the Penticton meetings/conference/events players together to identify and collaborate on priority sales opportunities, assign responsibilities by event/by market and leverages the combined impact of resources being invested by private businesses, by the City/Spectra and by Travel Penticton
- Build awareness of Penticton as a preferred meetings destination in agreed target markets
 - ◇ Web presence with resources specific to planners
 - ◇ Attendance at key events using a ‘Team Penticton’ approach
 - ◇ CVENT Supplier Network software license and presence
 - ◇ Target, coordinate and host familiarization tours for key clients and planners
 - ◇ Secure media profile in key publications and with key influencers
 - ◇ Select destination advertising
- Serve as the central source of information and first point of contact for meeting and event planners interested in booking Penticton:
 - ◇ Development of consistent messaging and brand direction (as evidenced in tone, content, image selection etc.) to promote Penticton as a meetings, conference and event/exhibition destination within Penticton’s overarching brand hierarchy
 - ◇ Design and production of on-line and print resources and tools including information on venues, floor plans, capacities, hotels, activities, transportation options
 - ◇ Images and video assets specific to meetings/conferences/ exhibitions

- Offer one stop concierge style service for new clients/events requiring multiple accommodation properties. For smaller groups that would fit within one venue, provide that lead to all Penticton qualifying facilities (based upon client defined needs) and provide support and follow up as necessary to ensure planner is getting the information they need to make an informed decision.
- When working with larger, multi-accommodation events
 - ◇ Prequalify event for Penticton (good fit – worth pursuing)
 - ◇ Gather and negotiate with Penticton partners to prepare a professional and competitive proposal (this may require confirmation of room block, gathering of room rates, meeting space costs, complimentary shuttle services, food/beverage options, off-site activities etc.)
- Lead a collaborative effort designed to maximize economic impact from each event and each delegate through coordination of pre and post offers to attendees, exhibitors; through special delegate offers at restaurants, retail shops, activities; through ‘come again’ offers to encourage attendees to return for their leisure/personal vacation.

TRAVEL PENTICTON COULD BE THE CONVENTION BUREAU FOR PENTICTON

Travel Penticton is the logical organization to become the Convention Bureau – in most destinations in North America, this role is held by one central, independent and representative organization that serves the needs of all stakeholders and is best equipped to represent the entire destination. Travel Penticton will act in an unbiased manner representing privately owned and City owned meeting and conference facilities.

Travel Penticton is already the ‘keeper’ of Penticton’s brand and has delivered strong and measurable returns over the past 4.5 years for the leisure sector. The team has the knowledge and the professionalism to leverage its current activities and support attainment of greater returns from the MICE market.

Changing the MRDT rate in Penticton from 2% to 3% will yield approximately \$265,000 in annual revenue based upon 2019 business levels. Travel Penticton is considering utilizing a portion of this extra revenue to create a Convention Bureau function in addition to its current marketing and member service investments. This funding allowance would be contingent upon the City continuing to contribute to sales and marketing activities for City-owned facilities to ensure equitable commitment for publicly owned facilities in collaboration with the MRDT collected at accommodation properties.



CREATION OF A CONVENTION BUREAU

How will we do this?

To establish an effective CB, several steps will need to be taken to initiate the process. The CB will hinge on the approval of the 3% MRDT to help fund the office in conjunction with funding from the City of Penticton. This will help to ensure there is fair representation and financial commitment for both publically and privately owned facilities.

A CB will help to generate consistent messaging, contact with potential clients, fair representation of all facilities, better qualifying client needs and potentially greater ROI for accommodations and other product sectors. Travel Penticton will facilitate the CB and act as a neutral entity when promoting all facilities.

Next Steps

- 1) Approval from Accommodation Properties to initiate the 3% MRDT. *Timeline Deadline: May 30/21*
- 2) Consultation with MICE facility operators (private & public) to determine their needs and establish realistic terms of reference specific to Penticton. Evaluate current structure of MICE facility operations to establish in-place marketing initiatives, effectiveness and ROI. *Timeline: IMMEDIATE*
- 3) Engage an experienced consultant to set up the CB structure including key DMO responsibilities, facility responsibilities, timelines and budget inclusions. *Timeline: Upon Approval of 3%*
- 4) Initiate structure of the CB as at October 1, 2021. Utilize existing MRDT reserves to start the Department prior to 3% MRDT funds coming in for the July 1, 2022 start date. Existing funds would be required to assist the CB department potentially into October 2022. *Timeline: October 1/2021*
- 5) Establish a realistic 2—3 year marketing strategy to promote Penticton MICE facilities with quarterly performance reviews of promotional activities and facility bookings. Current and longer-term COVID restrictions and hangover will influence the strategy creation and implementation. *Timeline: Start October 1/2021*
- 6) Establish a minimum 3 year budget including staffing, administration, marketing, support. *Timeline: Start—June 1/2021 Complete-Aug 20/2021*
- 7) Establish an MOU with the City of Penticton regarding multi-year financial commitment for publically owned facilities. *Timeline: Start IMMEDIATE*

TRAVEL
Penticton

