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Facilities and Site Selection

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ABOUT THE CEM LEARNING PROGRAM

This workbook is intended to serve as the student's guide for the CEM Learning Program on Facilities and Site Selection. It is based upon the Curriculum Blueprint approved by the CEM Commission. Much of the content is taken from The *Art of the Show*, 5TH Edition (AOS), which is an optional resource for this and other CEM Learning Program courses. This workbook is based on Chapter 13 (Facilities) and Chapter 14 (Site Selection). While the AOS is not an obligatory CEM Learning Program textbook, it is an additional resource and optional reference for this and other CEM Learning Program courses.

The CEM Learning Program is not a basic introductory course of study. It is designed for adult learners who have accrued at least three years of full-time work experience in the exhibitions and events industry. Its goal is to provide students with enhanced knowledge, skills and insights derived from their interactions with peers who are also learners, from CEM faculty who serve as subject matter experts, and from the readings and exercises that are assigned.

CEM Learning Program courses are available for in-person and online classes. The content and final exams for each course are the same for both learning options. Classroom based students are expected to read the CEM workbook prior to their classroom attendance. Students taking a CEM online course will be assigned sections of the workbook to read throughout the length of the course.

Students will be tested on the knowledge they acquire from this course. It is important to understand that the information provided in this workbook may differ from the practices and experiences of each student.

The examination is made up of 40 multiple choice and true/false questions. To pass the examination, a student must achieve a score of at least 30 out of 40. CEM faculty do not have access to the CEM exams, nor are they aware of any questions that may appear on each examination. Exam questions are based only on information contained in this course workbook (Appendix is not included).

Throughout this workbook, the terms "exhibition manager" and "show organizer" are used interchangeably. Their meanings are the same - the individual who is responsible for overseeing the planning, management and execution of an exhibition.

Since general business fundamentals apply to multiple aspects of exhibition management, core concepts relevant to more than one course topic may appear in several learning courses. Students with little or no foundation in marketing and finance are encouraged to take the Event Marketing and/or Finance, Budgeting and Contracts courses early in the course of their CEM Learning Program studies.

Key terms are identified in this module by bold face type and accompanied by a definition. Those noted with an asterisk (*) are from the Events Industry Glossary developed by the Events Industry Council (https://insights.eventscouncil.org/Industry-glossary).

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LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After completing this course, students should be able to:

- Evaluate and select a geographical location and a facility that meets the goals of the stakeholder, as well as the exhibition and/or event
- Differentiate between the types of facilities that host exhibitions and/or events
- Discuss the similarities and differences between U.S. and non-U.S. facilities
- Articulate the value and economic impact of the exhibition on the host city
- Identify potential revenue streams for facilities to aid in negotiations
- Discuss and apply the key components of conducting a site visit
- Gain an understanding of the essential elements required in a request for proposal (RFP)
- Discuss the importance of both strategic and operational aspects of site selection
- Identify members of the site-selection committee

INTRODUCTION

Understanding suitable venue types and the potential influence of venue selection on financial success are important elements in the venue selection process. Key components that influence a venue's ability to meet or exceed the exhibition organizer's service expectations include booking policies, pricing structures, available services, organizational structure, capital funding, sales/marketing policies and governance commitment to the venue.

Most exhibition venues supporting the trade and consumer show industry have similar attributes (e.g., exhibition/meeting spaces, food, utility and technology services), but they also have unique characteristics that influence customer interaction. All these attributes represent variables that exhibition organizers must identify and understand when negotiating the best business arrangement for the exhibition.

TRADITIONAL EXHIBITION VENUE OPTIONS

Venue options include the venue type, the nature of its ownership and how it is operated.

Most common venue types:

- Convention centers
  - Publicly held
  - Privately owned
- Conference centers
- Hotels with dedicated or adaptable exhibition space
- Fairgrounds
- Expo centers
- Multi-purpose facilities

CONVENTION CENTERS

Modern **convention centers** in the U.S. had their origin as municipal civic centers, which were designed to support local community and consumer events. These venues typically included a large multi-purpose hall capable of hosting a variety of events (e.g., local banquet to the traveling circus). In addition, some civic centers included an auditorium or an attached arena. The meeting space in these venues often lacked the amenities and finished quality expected by the conventions/exhibitions of today.

While some communities rebranded their civic centers as convention centers, many others invested in the design and construction of new facilities expressly designed to host conventions and exhibitions and have become known as **purpose-built convention centers**. These latter developments often reflected the collaborative work among exhibition organizers, suppliers and venue operators. This collaboration resulted in improved facility functionality, amenities and operational efficiency coupled with a stated objective for enhancing the customer experience.

Convention centers, regardless of ownership or management structure, have some commonalities. Pricing policies vary by center, but a common approach is to set a basic rental fee with additional charges that may include:

- Electrical
- Plumbing
- Housekeeping
- Communication services
- Dumpster hauling
- First aid

Meeting and ballroom fees generally include one set-up for how the room will be laid out, (e.g., table rounds and chairs set in the room) for the duration of the event and use of permanent sound and lighting systems, with set-up changes resulting in additional fees.

Exhibition space may be offered as a daily flat rate or based upon a per-net-square-foot/meter basis. While some venues will aggressively discount rental fees, others may not. The exhibition organizer can determine the potential flexibility of posted rates only through negotiation.

Most convention centers have rules and regulations documents that are considered part of the lease between the center and the exhibition organizer. During the site-selection process, the venue's rules and regulations should be carefully reviewed. The exhibition organizer must identify rules or regulations that could diminish the exhibition's effectiveness. In turn, some of these restrictions need to be built into the exhibitor contract for booth/stand rental.

GOVERNMENT-OWNED CONVENTION/CONGRESS CENTERS

The nature of a convention center's ownership may affect its operating policies. Most convention centers in the U.S. today are publicly owned and constructed by a city, county, state or tribal entity with the goal of providing a positive economic impact for the venue ownership.

Outside the U.S., convention centers (known as **congress centers**) are generally owned by federal or regional government agencies or private enterprises. Venues that are owned by a city, state/provincial, regional or national government are known as **government-owned convention centers.**

Because local laws and regulations vary significantly from location to location, convention centers incorporate different laws and regulations into their lease agreements. It is essential, therefore, that the show organizer determine the details of all rules and regulations before entering into a lease contract.

The capital costs for convention centers in the U.S. have been supported principally by **transient occupancy taxes (TOT)** also referred to as **bed tax, room tax, city tax, or tourist tax** which is assessed by the public ownership within their taxing jurisdiction. However, as convention facilities expanded and amenities improved, additional revenues to support capital and operating costs were needed. For example, car rental taxes, additional hotel room taxes and surcharges, restaurant taxes, special taxing districts and alcohol beverage taxes provide additional revenue streams.

AUTHORITIES

Besides outright ownership of a convention center by a government agency, another form of ownership and operations is an **authority**. Authorities can be formed by cities, counties, states and tribal agencies in the U.S. The authority's governance is often under an appointed board of directors or governors, who often have an entrepreneurial approach to business. Authorities thus enjoy the power and control of government but the latitude of private enterprise.

MANAGEMENT

Some publicly owned centers are administered as a department of the government entity, while others have management agreements with third-party organizations or private management companies.

How a convention center is managed varies and is not necessarily consistent with the nature of its ownership. In some cases, a government department operates a publicly owned convention center while in other cases the buildings are operated under third-party management agreements or by private facility management firms.

About ten percent of all convention centers in the U.S. are privately owned - a higher percentage compared to other nations, where units of government own most facilities, either municipal, provincial, regional or national. Many merchandising marts offer exhibit space, and some hotels also could be included in this category.

INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION CENTERS

Known as congress centers outside of the U.S. and Canada, the physical characteristics of exhibition hall space, loading and unloading areas, and exhibitor services are analogous to most U.S.-based venues, although the amount of meeting and ballroom space may be more limited in comparison to U.S.-based venues.

The same criteria used in U.S.-based exhibitions can generally be applied for assessing exhibition venues at international venues. Researching the destination, ownership structures, operating principles and costs are important tasks. Some of these facilities are privately owned with a profit goal. Historically, many convention centers outside of North America have owned and produced their own exhibitions. Commonly, the events they produce center around products/services that are associated with the city or region in which the facility is located.

Exhibit space pricing internationally is similar in nature to U.S. pricing structures. Options include either a daily flat-rate rental fee, or a per-net-square-meter fee, since exhibit space is advertised and sold according to the metric system, with additional charges for services such as electrical access, plumbing and lighting.

Some convention centers outside of North America own and produce the exhibitions occurring in that facility. Typically, exhibitions owned by convention centers promote the community's primary industries and business interests. Also, owning their own exhibitions ensures higher revenues and a higher occupancy rate.

Organizations like the International Association of Exhibitions and Events® (IAEE), UFI – The Global Association of the Exhibitions Industry, International Congress and Convention Association (ICCA), The European Major Exhibition Centre Association (EMECA) and others have succeeded in creating industry standards and best practices for servicing exhibitions in the global marketplace. The adopted international standards of convention center management allow most facilities to be very similar in design and functionality, despite the location.

CONFERENCE CENTERS

The International Association of Conference Centers (IACC) defines **conference centers** as venues in "uniquely designed settings, providing superior services and support, through a dedicated, professional staff to give maximum results." A conference center may be a rustic mountain retreat or a luxurious resort by the sea. Many corporations own and operate centers for their own use as well as marketing to other non-company events. Religious and social organizations also own and operate conference centers that facilitate their primary mission.

Conference centers typically lack exhibition facilities or the amenities necessary to support exhibitions (e.g., adequate electricity and plumbing). Appropriately sized loading docks and ramps to facilitate exhibitor move-in may be limited or non-existent. A conference center may include sleeping accommodations or may simply offer meeting space. Generally, conference centers rent space and services for a flat fee, as a package plan that includes conference rooms, guest rooms, three meals, continuous refreshment service, conference services and conference technology. Non-residential packages include conference rooms, lunch, continuous refreshment service, conference services and conference technology.

HOTELS WITH CONFERENCE CENTERS

Conference centers with guest rooms or hotels that include conference center amenities, provide on-site sleeping accommodations conveniently located near the conference meeting facility. These types of meeting facilities provide meeting planners with venues that can accommodate their event under one roof, minimizing an attendee's movement from hotel room to meeting room to exhibition hall. Hotel conference centers principally focus on the corporate and convention meetings market.

Although the meeting and ballroom space in a hotel and conference center may be used as exhibition space, rarely does this type of facility have adequate exhibition hall space or the amenities necessary to successfully host a larger exhibition.

The meeting and ballroom spaces in a hotel conference center are typically rented on a daily basis. Hotel accommodations generally are required when using this type of event facility. Further, depending on seasonal demand, meeting and ballroom rental may be reduced or waived, based upon room-night utilization and/or food and beverage revenues. Should meeting or ballroom space be used for exhibits, the daily rental fee likely will apply versus traditional exhibition hall or convention center pricing structures.

A hotel conference center will be most successful when the venue is matched with the physical needs and objectives of the event. The exhibition organizer should examine the goals and objectives of the event and compare those to the venue's ability to help meet those goals and objectives. With this assessment, a hotel conference center is selected if that best addresses the exhibition's needs.

Although conference centers lack exhibition facilities, they do have the capability to set up table-top exhibits. These table-top exhibits provide displays that fit in smaller spaces and do not require the amenities of the typical large exhibition with standard booth/stand spaces.

FAIRGROUNDS

In the U.S., many states and local municipalities own a **fairground.** Fairgrounds developed from county, regional and state fairs emphasizing agricultural expositions and entertainment. Many of these annual events bring a huge boost to the local economy. Over time, these communities have built permanent facilities to house the annual exhibition.

A fairground exposition hall may be little more than a large barn-like structure designed to display livestock and heavy equipment. Other buildings at a fairground may include meeting rooms, banquet space and kitchens. Since fairgrounds rarely get used by the owning government agency more than once a year, some agencies rent the buildings located on the fairgrounds, primarily for consumer shows and local community events. Rental fees are typically assessed daily according to the size of the space occupied. On-site vehicle parking or public transportation is typically very accessible and affordable at fairgrounds, although the facility may lack nearby hotel accommodations.

Some non-U.S.-based exhibition venues refer to exhibitions as **fairs**, while in other locations the term fairground references a convention center. In contrast, in some locations around the globe, fairgrounds refer to fun fairs, complete with rides, carnivals and socialization opportunities, which are not conducive to an exhibition.

As the word "fair" obviously has different meanings in different cultures, the condition, appearance and

purpose of fairgrounds are quite varied. The selection process warrants considerable research and a site inspection of the venue to ensure it meets the needs of the exhibition.

EXPOSITION (EXPO) CENTERS

A facility that primarily hosts consumer shows or community events is commonly referred to as an **exposition center**, also known as an **expo center**. These centers are either privately owned or owned by a public or private partnership formed to create economic development. Many have meeting space and hotel facilities nearby but often lack the higher quality standards commonly found in convention centers. Like fairgrounds, many expo centers are located convenient to public transportation and have ample surface parking. Fees for the rental of exhibit space are typically charged on a per-day basis.

MULTI-PURPOSE FACILITIES

Public facilities or complexes featuring configurations that can be changed to provide a variety of venues and uses are referred to as **multi-purpose facilities**.

ECONOMIC IMPACT

Economic impact is a term used to describe the consequences of an event on the economy in a certain area such as a neighborhood, city, region or nation, or even upon the entire world. It often can be measured by changes in business income, profits, personal wages, tax revenue and/or jobs. The successful exhibition organizer knows the economic impact of the exhibition and will use the information to negotiate date availability and rental rates at the venue.

Facilities generally consider the economic impact a proposed event may have on their own profit centers outside of just rental fees (see Other Revenue Streams for Facilities on page 12). Depending upon an event's perceived value, a facility may be inclined to negotiate and/or grant concessions in order to secure the business. Another important factor is how the proposed event's scheduling may fit into the facility's calendar. If the event would occupy an otherwise vacant period, the facility likely would be more inclined to secure the event than if the proposed dates fall within a peak demand period for the facility.

CALCULATING EXHIBITION ECONOMIC IMPACT

Economic impact for a single exhibition is best calculated by multiplying the number of hotel **room nights** (contracted by the event) times the amount of money attendees and exhibitors spend in the community each day they attend an exhibition. This is commonly referred to as the **daily spend.**

Most Destination Management Organizations (DMOs) have economic value calculators that help in determining the economic impact of an event.

Factors that contribute to an economic impact assessment include exhibitor spending for contractor services (drayage, booth space, floral, electrical, utilities, carpet, etc.), hospitality events hosted, local employment and sales taxes, travel costs for both attendees and exhibitors (airfare, meals, hotel rooms), and labor spend per exhibitor during move-in and move-out. These factors can be shown as evidence of an exhibition's value to the local economy and as an argument for higher priority in obtaining prime dates at a venue.

Additionally, the publicity generated by an event may be considered as part of the exhibition's value. For instance, an event that results in a lot of positive attention by the media may not use a high number of hotel rooms, but the event could be considered a priority due to the media attention and public appeal.

The Center for Exhibition Industry Research (CEIR) offers a free online tool called the Event Performance Analyzer. This tool is designed to provide insights and analytics on any show by comparing their performance against both the overall exhibition industry's performance as well as the sector performance relevant to their event and can be found at https://www.ceir.org/tools/.

The Events Industry Council produces the Global Economics Significance Studies in collaboration with Oxford Economics. The 2021 study, along with past studies, can be downloaded at https://www.eventscouncil.org/Leadership/Economic-Significance-Study. These studies show the economic significance of the global business events industry.

OTHER REVENUE STREAMS FOR FACILITIES

Along with rental fees for use of the space, additional fees for use of other infrastructure elements such as electricity are profitable supplemental revenue streams for facilities. As exhibition facilities and hotels seek additional revenue streams to improve or ensure profitability, many services traditionally handled by the **official service contractor (OSC)** are now provided by the facility. Some facilities act as labor dispatchers for contractors working within their exhibition halls, thus controlling who works inside their facilities. In addition, facilities may claim a portion of the revenue generated by the exhibition.

A few facilities within the U.S. require exclusive, in-house contracting relationships with potential exhibitors, either through their own company or an affiliated contractor. These venues may be able to offer potential exhibitors a contractor who knows the facility and may offer price breaks due to efficiencies gained through an in-house arrangement. However, many exhibition organizers prefer to work with OSC's and other contractors selected through a competitive bid process and who travel with the exhibition from city to city.

FOOD SERVICES

Food service is typically exclusive in all types of facilities, because the facility generally will maintain a full-time kitchen and staff within the facility. Catering services, especially for large functions, may or may not be an exclusive service of the in-house company. Food service is a predominant revenue generating enterprise.

SERVICE PROVIDERS AT FACILITIES

Many facilities, such as large convention hotels or privately-owned exhibition halls, have exclusive, preferred or recommended relationships with contractors, defined as follows:

Exclusive provider (contractor)- a contractor appointed by a facility as the sole agent to provide specific services or products, which is the only provider of a given service that can operate in the facility.

Preferred provider (contractor) - a contractor given more consideration for securing the contract than other providers; generally, the facility has a positive relationship with this provider. Additionally, preferred providers may be the only one or one of a few providers in this category.

Recommended provider (contractor) - a contractor recommended by the facility when asked for a list of potential providers. Usually, the facility has a positive history with any recommended provider, and the facility may list multiple providers in this category.

When revenue sharing is part of the contract, the facility gains a specified percentage of the contractor's revenue, sometimes referred to as "ancillary spend". As a result, the facility encourages clients who book the facility to select from the list of recommended or preferred contractors.

When revenue sharing is not part of the provider contract, the status of exclusive, preferred or recommended provider serves as a method for quality control. With these designations, the facility can eliminate providers who do not have adequate resources to serve the facility's customers in accordance with quality standards set by the facility.

UNIQUE FACILITIES AND SERVICES

Beyond convention centers, conference centers, fairgrounds and expo centers, the exhibition organizer has a variety of venues as options that could provide more than just space for exhibits. Selecting such a venue should be based upon the exhibition's mission and purpose, as well as preferences of key stakeholders and the target audience. Putting an exhibition in an unusual venue can attract attendees, but an unsuitable venue might prove to be a detriment to the objectives set by exhibitors. Unique venues require careful consideration by the exhibition organizer.

LARGE PUBLIC VENUES

Large public venues, such as museums, sports facilities, universities and even zoos, can be creative sites that dramatically support the purpose of an exhibition by providing dynamic experiences for attendees and exhibitors.

Advantages of large public venues:

- Purpose-built to host large audiences
- Ample parking/restrooms
- In-house security, knowledge of venue
- Concessions

Disadvantages of large public venues:

- Venue may be open to the public during exhibition-related functions
- Environment or local ordinances may limit activities
- Lack of on-site kitchens/outside catering in less than ideal conditions
- Often do not provide services required for an exhibition

PRIVATE VENUES

Private venues tend to be smaller in size and therefore may not have the facilities and services that are available at large, public venues. Private venues include:

- Stand-alone facilities
- Banquet halls
- Private houses
- Ships

These venues provide a more intimate setting and may be suitable for smaller exhibitions and events. Because of their size, private venues may have remedial facilities and services. The host organization may be left to find and contract with the specialty providers and, depending on location, those providers may be difficult to attract to the selected venue.

SITE SELECTION

Site selection is the process of choosing a venue, both in terms of destination and a specific facility, for an event. It is often confused with **site inspection**, a component of the site selection process which consists of an in-person on-site review and evaluation of a venue or a location.

In the **site-selection process**, the exhibition organizer is not as concerned about where each function will be held, but that viable options exist at the facility and that the general layout is conducive to the exhibition's prospective agenda. The focus is on the venue's suitability to the goals of the exhibition. The needs of the various stakeholders will be considered, but specific details will be arranged later. For site selection purposes, a general outline of the final scene is enough to begin the process.

Many exhibitions are planned years in advance, with associations tending towards 10 years from site selection to the execution of the exhibition and corporations tending towards at least a year for planning. As a result, the exhibition organizer will need to conduct another site visit, after a decision has been made to contract with a specific venue. A series of site inspections typically takes place over time to ensure that facilities are kept in proper condition and that changes or new facilities can be considered as potential event sites.

DEVELOPING A SITE-SELECTION PROCESS

The event organizer creates the site-selection process in collaboration with colleagues and the **event planning team**, if a team has been organized. In addition to the typical logistical considerations that come into play when deciding upon an appropriate event site, several additional factors are sometimes evaluated, such as responding to political issues that might make it necessary to rotate sites, financial concerns arising from some venues drawing more attendance than others, marketing, geographic location, demographics, needs analysis, competition, hotel, restaurants, attractions, and transportation access, to name a few.

THE REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

A **request for proposals (RFP)** stipulates what services the organization wants from an outside contractor and requests a bid to perform such services. Greater specificity and definition in the RFP usually will yield a more complete and useful response. An important first step in the site selection process is the creation of a comprehensive RFP, which should contain the following:

- Event name
- Hosting organization name, address
- Where will contracts be signed
- Event profile - market segment, total attendance
- Event overview/description (brief)
- Event goals/objectives (brief)
- Attendee demographics and psychographics
- Event space accessibility/special needs
- Space requirements
- Hotel room block - desired dates, start and end date, dates to avoid, concessions, accessibility/special needs, rate history or expectations
- Location and dates of past and future events

- Deadline for proposal submission
- Decision timeline
- Union Jurisdiction

UNION JURISDICTION

Review union contracts in each facility to make sure you understand jurisdiction for both installation of live event and broadcasting a digital component of the event. The DMO representative or facility CSM can assist you with this information as well as adding this to the RFP to have a clear understanding of what can be negotiated.

In the U.S., there may be different union agreements in various locations as well as different union agreements from facility to facility within a city location. Many facilities and General Service Contractors utilize staff from union labor for various types of work i.e. stage hands, teamsters, carpenters, etc., it is important to learn of the jurisdictional issues that might be present at a site and whether current union rules/agreements expire and or are subject to modification before the potential exhibition is scheduled to occur.

When reviewing union rules and regulations for a digital component of the event:

- Look for terms like "broadcast" circumstances/fees or "shadows" over AV positions that may add additional fees
- When live streaming in a Union town, ask if the broadcast is open to the public or only to members/attendees.
- In many Union facilities, if a live stream is available and advertised to the general public then it's considered a "Broadcast" and falls under a different set of rules.
- If you are "broadcasting" then all jobs and gear must be operated by a Union technician. Even if not broadcasting, some cities will require a union shadow for streaming technicians.

Information on number of hours union personnel can work will help with labor costing and savings. The biggest way to save time and money when dealing with local unions is to communicate early and often.

Responses to an RFP often contain detailed information from the property about its ability to meet the organizer's requirements, with a focus on the infrastructure and architectural elements of a building and accompanying marketing materials such as photographs and **virtual tours**.

RANKING CRITICAL FACTORS FOR SITE SELECTION

Although a detailed and unambiguous RFP makes the process of reviewing responses much more efficient, comparing terms and issues across several different proposals can be challenging.

The exhibition organizer can ease the complexity of comparing different proposals by creating a ranking system that assigns a numeric value to different elements. Adopting a systematic ranking system allows the exhibition organizer to identify important differences in each of the proposals being reviewed. Using a ranking system also provides more objectivity to the evaluation process.

The simple ranking system illustrated below provides a scorecard for each facility to be viewed, and assignment of a rank for each feature (the higher the rank, the more important the feature). A score of

one (poor) to 10 (ideal) is given to each property visited and then multiplied by its rank for a subtotal. These subtotals are added across all priorities listed for the property to determine the total score.

Rank Order for Hotel Selection

Facility (Hotels)	Rank 5 Number of rooms (Score)		Rank 4 Dining Options on-site (Score)		Rank 3 Wi-Fi is free (Score)		Rank 2 Distance from exhibition hall in miles (Score)		Total Score
	(Score 1-10)	Subtotal	(Score 1-10)	Subtotal	(Score 1-10)	Subtotal	(Score 1-10)	Subtotal	
Hotel A	300 rms (8)	40	No (0)	0	Yes (10)	30	1 mile (3)	6	76
Hotel B	200 rms (6)	30	No (0)	0	Yes (5) low capacity	15	.5 miles (8)	16	61
Hotel C	350 rms (10)	50	Yes (10)	40	No (5) (US$15/day)	15	.5 miles (8)	16	121
Hotel D	100 rms (3)	15	Yes (5)	20	No (2) low capacity (US$5/day)	6	.1 mile (10)	20	61

*The simple ranking system illustrated above provides a scorecard for each facility to be viewed, and assignment of a rank for each feature (the higher the rank, the more important the feature). A score of one (poor) to 10 (ideal) is given to each property visited and then multiplied by its rank for a subtotal. These subtotals are added across all priorities listed for the property to determine the total score.

The Rank at the top is the importance of the feature. For instance, "number of rooms" is 5 times important therefore if Hotel C has scored (10) then x 5 = 50 and so on.

SITE VISIT PARTICIPANTS

A site visit will ideally include representatives who understand the requirements and challenges of each stakeholder group, including key event staff representing the event planning or advisory committee(s), exhibitors, sponsors and attendees. In addition, anyone with financial responsibility or a unique experience in housing issues, as well as the official service contractor (OSC), should be included. It is not necessarily a matter of more is better, but it is important for all operational and logistical issues to be examined by persons with expertise. If the event includes a virtual component include your streaming provider, IT representative and production manager.

Generally, when a team is participating and is going to multiple facilities at a destination, the site visit is planned through the help of the **destination marketing organization (DMO)** in the area. Of course, if a **destination management company (DMC)** or a **professional congress organizer (PCO)** is utilized, that company should be included in the site-visit and site-selection process.

PREPARING FOR THE SITE-SELECTION VISIT

Before the visit occurs, the site-selection team should have reviewed a thorough history of the exhibition

and include members who have participated in earlier editions of the event unless it is a launch. Information about previous editions of the exhibition is useful in building the RFP, as well as preparing for the site-selection visit.

If possible, the site-selection team should attend a current version of the exhibition, even if it is held at another destination and facility. This personal experience with the exhibition is excellent preparation for choosing a site. When previous exhibition records or a current version of the exhibition are not available, the site-selection participants might simply find a similar exhibition to attend, preferably held at the potential site(s). Seeing the facility in action can be another valuable tool for selecting the best site for the exhibition/event.

To host an inclusive exhibition, the organization should insist that site-selection team members prepare by reviewing the recommendations or laws that regulate accommodation for attendees with disabilities, which vary from country to country. In the U.S., these regulations are contained in Title III of the **Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).**

In some cases, the exhibition may have risk management plans that suggest careful selection of the site. For instance, if a potential exhibitor has a product that is heavier than most – perhaps a dump truck manufacturer – the exhibition organizer needs to be both open with the facility and prepared well enough to check on the facility's physical suitability for the exhibition, for example, weight load and dock door dimensions.

Wi-Fi service bandwidth capacity is a critical factor for many events, so careful discussion about the exhibition's telecommunication requirements is required to determine whether the facility can provide the required bandwidth and at what cost to the exhibition organizer and exhibitors. It is important for organizers to understand how to manage Internet access to avoid lost efficiency, cost overruns and reduced effectiveness. The Events Industry Council's *Bandwidth Estimator* is a useful tool to assist both the organizer and the facility to calculate the amount of bandwidth needed for an event (https://insights.eventscouncil.org/Full-Article/event-bandwidth-estimator).

In preparation for the site-selection visit, each member of the site-selection team may have a different focus for the visit. One person might concentrate on the exhibition hall layout and access, while another focuses on catering options. A checklist may be a useful tool for keeping notes and reminding each member of the team what to look for during the visit. However, the ultimate decision will be made on the basis of the priorities set before the visit for each item on the checklist.

CONDUCTING A SITE VISIT

Visiting the destination and venue(s) being considered in person is critical to understanding what the participant will experience, as well as choosing the best option in destination and venue(s) for meeting the needs of both the participants and the organization.

During the visit, the site-selection committee will document a lot of information. Some of this information is available on the Web, where many exhibition halls provide floor plans, sample exhibit layouts and numerical data such as the hall dimensions. The experienced exhibition organizer knows, though, that photos are a "snapshot in time" and the personal visit is necessary to capture quality, ambiance and a myriad of details that are not readily available online.

Generally, site-selection checklists are useful. While a customized checklist is probably necessary for the average exhibition, site-selection checklists are available from some facilities, DMOs and on the Web. One useful document, created by Mike Lyon and titled "Site Inspection Handbook," is available on Corbin Ball's website (https://www.corbinball.com/tips-tools/2015-02-12-17-20-44). Additional useful documents are located on EIC formerly Apex @ insights.eventscouncil.org.

VISITING THE DESTINATION

Gathering information about a site begins when the site-selection committee departs for the destination. Notes should be made of any travel issues because transportation is so critical to promoting attendance. If traveling to the destination requires air, coach, train, car, boat or other conveyance, the site-selection team collects that data for future consideration of transportation providers. In some cases, the availability of transportation will be a highly ranked consideration for selecting the site.

If transportation is to be provided between hotels and exhibition venues, the shuttle route should be considered during the initial site visit. Details will be determined later, but selection of properties is often determined on a potential transportation route.

When proposals are reviewed prior to the site visit, the site team should note any questions they have about proposal contents. During the site-selection visit, these questions should be answered. Often the DMO representative can answer questions if the DMO was instrumental in developing the proposal for that destination. However, facility-specific questions should be saved for the facility's representative during the site visit.

The DMO will be best at answering questions about customs and local laws that will affect the exhibition. They will provide information about currency exchange and should be able to answer questions about local suppliers, such as DMCs or PCOs. The DMO will be able to provide tourism information, suggestions for ancillary activities and recommendations for pre- or post-event tours. The DMO should be available to answer numerous questions about their services, as well, that may enhance the marketing efforts for the exhibition.

VISITING A FACILITY

Any unique characteristics of the potential host facility arising from the location of the property and its design or construction should be noted. Depending upon the age of the facility, for example, the exhibition hall may include support columns that must be considered before laying out a show floor. Newer construction methods have largely eliminated the need for columns in many halls, but only a

personal visit to the facility will adequately disclose its unique attributes and any idiosyncrasies that should be noted.

SAFETY AND SECURITY

A key aspect of any site inspection must include concerns for safety since all facilities will have some safety issues. Although many aspects of building security at places of public assembly must remain confidential, some questions about security must be asked and answered during the site visit.

During the conversation about safety, the exhibition organizer should expand the safety question to include other facilities that may be contracted, as well as the destination. This is particularly important regarding first responder actions, evacuation possibilities, health and safety governance and reporting mandates by local authorities. The facility representative is a good place to start for this information but may not be able to provide all of the information needed. The DMO will be a valuable partner in this part of the site visit.

The site inspection should address such issues as building access; security measures, if any, that are in place to control inappropriate entry; emergency action plans that address first responder actions, evacuations, health and safety protocols, and similar critical issues. The DMO can be a valuable resource for these and similar questions.

While at any facility, the site-selection team should consider how attendees would move throughout the building. Will they use elevators, escalators, stairs and corridors? Are they well-lit and easy to find? Are they adequate to move the number of attendees anticipated during peak hours? Are there social distancing mandates to take into consideration? Make note of these potential barriers to effective and efficient crowd movement.

The facility's operating policies should be thoroughly discussed during the site visit. Some policies may require clarification while others may require negotiation. In some cases, policies can be negotiable. In other cases, the policy must be followed strictly to avoid penalties, hazards and safety issues. During the site visit, the exhibition organizer should determine, with the facility representatives, which policies are required and which are flexible.

Additional facility features to be examined during the site visit include:

- Health and safety protocols
- All costs, billing procedures, payment procedures, taxes and gratuities
- Tipping policies
- Local laws about taxes on gratuities and tipping
- Parking
- Shuttle route including drop-off and pick-up locations
- Location of alternative forms of transportation
- Dining options
- Green compliance
- Technology resources (e.g., Wi-Fi availability, bandwidth capacity, etc.)
- Emergency plan, including warning systems
- ADA compliance (a requirement in the U.S., but increasingly significant worldwide)
- Restrooms
- Insurance requirements and limits

- Public service areas
- Dock areas (rules for load-in and load-out)
- Security (overnight, food and beverage functions, etc.)
- Ticketing/registration areas
- Food services
- Ancillary services – first aid, ATMs, telephones
- Any unanswered questions about the proposal

Noting some of the signage that will be necessary should occur during the initial visit, but most of the wayfinding details will be completed during subsequent visits.

Since many attendees, as well as exhibitors, rely on Internet connectivity and events are increasingly adding a virtual component, the site-selection team should determine the bandwidth load capacity at all facilities selected. The **bandwidth load capacity** is the maximum rate data can be transmitted. The technology should be tested for reliability, speed and accessibility. While most attendees expect free Internet access, many facilities do not provide this **amenity** free of charge.

Some additional questions exhibition organizers should ask the venue regarding their technology capabilities are:

- Is there a distributed antenna system (DAS) or cellular antenna system that supports all major cellular carriers?
- Are there independent redundant circuits to the Internet?
- Are circuits able to "burst" as needed for unexpected heavy bandwidth usage?
- Is there a 24-hour, seven days a week Network Operations Center that monitors the network?
- Is there adequate on-site facility staff to support the event and respond quickly?
- What is the facility wireless capability for common spaces in addition to meeting rooms and exhibit halls?
- Is there adequate bandwidth to support the event?

In the U.S., where many facilities are staffed by union labor, it is important to learn of the jurisdictional issues that might be present at a site and whether current union rules are subject to modification before the potential exhibition is scheduled to occur. The DMO can be a helpful resource to address labor relations issues as well.

Since the exhibition organizer could be held responsible for damages alleged to have taken place during an event, it is essential that the site-inspection team document any existing damage to property and facilities. Photographs are especially helpful, and these issues should be brought to the attention of the facility. This type of inspection and review is helpful in early site visits although most important to occur once you obtain the space and documented with the CSM in attendance.

VISITING THE HOTEL

During the RFP process, the site-selection team should have selected hotels to consider based on the exhibition organization's policies regarding accommodations. Questions about appropriate housing would include:

- What is the preferred type of property – full-service hotels, limited-service value facilities or

both?
- Are there existing relationships with hotel companies?
- What are the policies regarding complimentary rooms, **per-diem** rates (daily allowance for food, lodging, and in some cases, incidentals and ground transportation expenses) or other price-related issues?

As noted earlier, the site-inspection team should have the same hotel experience as would a typical attendee. One or two members of the site-selection team may want to arrive earlier than the scheduled site inspection appointment to observe and experience the property as a regular guest without the VIP treatment.

Specific activities of the site-selection team would include:

- Visit the front desk
- Tour all sleeping room types that might be used by attendees
- Determine how many of each type will be available to the group
- Visit all public areas in the hotel
- Visit hotel restaurants
- Visit concierge area and determine extent of services provided

Because attendees and exhibitors are business travelers, they have expectations that the hotel's facilities will be available to them at convenient hours, that their room will have adequate working space and electrical outlets, that Wi-Fi will be available either at reasonable daily cost or at no cost, and that bandwidth will be adequate for typical Internet access and cleanliness/health protocols are in place.

Any deficiencies should be noted in the site-inspection report. The team should also ask about any renovations that may be planned and inquire about other groups that may be booked during the same time frame, especially any with non-compete policies. Asking the hotel for a sample contract, menus and any additional useful information would be appropriate during the initial visit.

Simply asking about the hotel services is not adequate. They should be tested in person through use of the facility. However, the site-selection team may be challenged by time and cost considerations. The following quick list for hotel site visits provides the minimal information that should be obtained by the site-selection team:

QUICK LIST FOR HOTEL SITE VISITS

- Number of rooms
- Types of rooms
- Condition of rooms
- Health and cleanliness protocols in place
- Number of elevators
- Parking (indoor, outdoor, valet services)
- Internet (costs, speed)
- Business center
- Price
- Policy on complimentary rooms
- Amenities
- Fitness options and hours

- Location near shopping, dining, tourism locations, etc.
- Location in relation to exhibition hall
- Availability of meeting rooms, if needed
- Availability of hospitality rooms, if needed
- Ambiance
- Quality of furnishings
- Maintenance standards
- Quality of staff performance
- Future renovations

VISITING THE EXHIBITION HALL

For the average exhibition, the hall is the primary focus of the site-selection process. The **convention services manager (CSM)** is the convention center professional responsible for the exhibition's operations. The CSM who will be assigned to the group should accompany the site-selection team on a portion of the site inspection, particularly when reviewing the function spaces. This person should not only answer questions and point out the strengths of the hall, but also suggest details the exhibition organizer needs to consider. The site-selection team should be prepared to answer questions from the CSM to facilitate communication and a clear understanding of the organizer's needs and goals.

Because each facility offers distinctly different space characteristics, the site-inspection visit is also a chance to determine how best to utilize the space that will be required for the exhibition. Thus, it is essential to have the space requirements determined in advance so that several different potential floor layouts might be considered. Together, the exhibition organizer, OSC and CSM can discuss various configuration options depending upon the unique needs and characteristics of the event.

If education programs will take place on the show floor or in adjacent meeting space, the following should be considered:

- Number of meeting rooms required
- Distance between meeting space and show
- Appropriate amount and distance of seating
- Location of staging on show floor to contain noise from the show floor and to the stage

Additional space considerations would include:

- Exhibit construction - required space for pipe and drape versus hard wall system will vary
- Ceiling heights - affects multi-level exhibits, location of large banners/aisle signs, whether **cubic content** will be permitted
- Accommodating columns

Floor load is the amount of weight a floor can safely withstand. While most modern exhibition hall floors are built to support 300 pounds per square foot/136 kilograms per square meter or higher, the exhibition organizer must not make this assumption, but rather confirm the floor load capacity with the facility manager. Typically, upper floors cannot be built to the same floor load capacity but should be built to handle a minimum dead weight of no more than 50 pounds per square foot/22.7 kilograms per square meter.

If an event includes displays of heavy equipment, machinery or vehicles, the exhibition organizer and

facility manager should perform a floor load analysis before finalizing the floor layout. Such events also will have unique requirements regarding the number of loading docks and the location and dimensions of entrance doors to ensure that heavy equipment can be properly accommodated.

The **marshaling yard** is the area in which freight trucks are staged in preparation for unloading. It may be near the exhibition hall, but in major cities it is not uncommon for the marshaling yard to be located several miles away. Determining the location of the marshaling yard is important during the initial site visit because it can impact the set-up and dismantle schedules. The OSC or facility manager will be able to address this issue.

Many exhibitors will have expensive products to be demonstrated in their booth/stand. The exhibition organizer should consider what steps are necessary to secure the exhibition floor and these products. At the very least, all exterior doors should be lockable and entrance to the exhibition hall should require an approved badge for identification.

In some situations, very high security measures are necessary, and the site-selection team should be well versed in appropriate measures for facility security at this level. If a high level of security is not available at the facility, the exhibition organizer might consider hiring a contractor to provide the required services. The CSM may have a list of preferred security providers.

Other facility information to be discussed with the CSM and OSC would include:

- Location of fire exits and requirements to ensure that they are not blocked by exhibits or other elements
- Available utilities and their location on the exhibition floor
- Water/gas service lines and hookups in exhibit hall, including access to compressed air or flexible water service and drains and their locations
- Maximum electrical power available to the hall
- Ability to accommodate special electrical/lighting hookups for entertainment stages in the exhibition hall

QUICK LIST FOR EXHIBITION HALL SITE VISITS

- Net square footage
- Measurement of doors (if a double door has a center bar, determine if it can be removed), access points, move-in and move-out points
- Exclusive versus preferred suppliers
- Location in relation to hotel(s), attractions, shopping, etc.
- Audiovisual
- Lighting
- Electricity access and capacity
- Other utilities
- Floor load-bearing capacity
- Wi-Fi accessibility and load capacity
- Charges for services to attendees
- Catering/food availability – sampling and corkage fees
- Availability of services, such as packing and shipping
- Garbage removal and pickup
- Fire regulations

VISITING OUTDOOR SPACES

Some exhibitions occur outdoors, or an exhibition may have a combination of spaces, utilizing an exhibition hall and an outdoor arena. Agricultural expositions commonly use a combination approach for hundreds, if not thousands, of exhibitors and many more attendees over a multi-day event. These expositions also offer education indoors and outdoors, as well as dining options in both locations.

During the initial site visit, the exhibition organizer's team will want to determine appropriate locations for exhibits and tents and determine issues such as traffic flow for attendees, vehicles, mass transit and walkways.

Weather is always a concern and must be considered when determining locations for all aspects of an outdoor exhibition. There are many unique issues that may come into play, such as the need to secure local government permits, waivers of liability that may be necessary, and proof of insurance that might be required by the landowners. Alcohol and food may be allowed or tightly controlled. The circumstances surrounding these types of issues must be determined as early as possible in the planning process.

QUICK LIST FOR OUTDOOR SPACE SITE

- Unencumbered access to the site (e.g., road conditions)
- Policies related to disease (human or animal) prevention or containment
- Fire regulations and other safety issues
- Permits
- Camping options and numbers allowed
- Shelter from inclement weather
- Pets
- Access to vet care
- Access to food, if necessary
- Access to first aid
- Trash removal and pickup
- Access to potable water, electricity, propane gas, firewood and other utilities
- Portable toilets
- Emergency management plan and warning systems
- Identity of insects or other pests that may be prevalent in the area (e.g., poisonous snakes or wild bears)

SUBSEQUENT SITE VISITS

Site visits after the site has been selected may occur annually or monthly, as the event date gets closer. The initial site visit is to select appropriate venues, while subsequent visits are to conduct follow-up communication about questions raised during the initial visit, to fill in details and to confirm arrangements as needed. The number and timing of additional visits will depend on the length of time remaining before the event takes place, the nature of the venue and the complexity of the project.

The **Event Specifications Guide (ESG)** provided by the Event Industry Council's Industry Insights initiative is an excellent tool for determining what kind of details the exhibition organizer will need to verify with a facility. The lengthy ESG template will need customization to fit the needs of the average exhibition, but the document is thorough. Utilizing the ESG will guide the exhibition organizer on subsequent visits, as details that are known are communicated and details that are yet to be determined

will be missing on the ESG.

Issues documented by photo or other means that have been improved or altered substantially since the initial visit should be recorded and dated. The exhibition organizer should examine required improvements, such as safety-related improvements or ADA requirements. Since the initial visit, the exhibition organizer has probably entered into a contract with the facility. During subsequent visits, the exhibition organizer should check for contract compliance and potential addenda to the contract, if necessary.

Outdoor sites have unique requirements for subsequent visits, since land rarely sits idle, especially without human stewardship. The exhibition organizer will need to check the condition of the land, access points and vegetation. The exhibition organizer may need to arrange for mowing and other maintenance tasks.

QUICK LIST FOR SUBSEQUENT VISITS TO EXHIBITION SITES

- Remodeling, refurbishing, changing facilities
- New staff contacts
- New or altered amenities
- New or altered policies and/or procedures
- More details (the first visit will leave unanswered questions)
- Placement of each function scheduled
- Details for each function scheduled (A/V, food and beverage, etc.)
- Traffic flow based on function placement and final floor plan
- Registration area(s)
- Coat-check area(s)
- Security area(s) and procedures
- Working, networking and resting area(s)

LONG-TERM RELATIONSHIPS WITH SELECT VENUES

During site visits, the exhibition organizer has an ideal opportunity to build positive interpersonal relations with the facility's representatives. With a strong partnership attitude and excellent communication skills, the exhibition organizer can form a relationship that is mutually beneficial and may even expedite the RFP and proposal-review process.

Strong partnerships also make site selection more efficient. While building these relationships, the exhibition organizer can ask the following questions and discuss the answers in person with the facility manager during site visits:

- Can the exhibition organizer offer direction on maintenance issues at the facility?
- Can the exhibition organizer suggest facility improvements (e.g., landscaping at the outdoor site or the addition of more electrical capacity for the technology-intense exhibition)?
- What can the exhibition organizer do for the facility (e.g., promote the destination, serve as a reference to potential business, etc.)?
- What can the facility do for the exhibition organizer (e.g., recommend suppliers, recommend décor or decorations for branding purposes)?
- Can the facility make recommendations to enhance the exhibition experience (e.g., add AV options that increase brand awareness, as well as printed signs)?

KEY TERMS

The following key terms are identified in this module by bold face type and accompanied by a definition. Those noted with an asterisk (*) are from the Events Industry Glossary developed by the Events Industry Council (https://insights.eventscouncil.org/Industry-glossary).

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) - Passed by Congress in 1990, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is the nation's first comprehensive civil rights law addressing the needs of people with disabilities, prohibiting discrimination in employment, public services, public accommodations, and telecommunications.

Amenity* - Complimentary items provided by a hotel in sleeping rooms such as toiletries, writing supplies, bathrobes, fruit baskets and shoe shine mitts.

Authority (in convention center ownership) - A form of ownership and operations; authorities can be formed by cities, counties, states and tribal agencies in the US. The authority's governance is often under an appointed board of directors or governors.

Bandwidth Load Capacity - The amount of data that can be passed along a communications channel in a given period of time.

Conference Center* - A facility that provides a dedicated environment for events, especially small events. May be certified by the International Association of Conference Centers.

Congress Center* - A facility, typically outside the U.S, that hosts trade shows and other large functions, which contains a large exhibition hall and additional small meeting and event spaces.

Convention Center* - Facility whose purpose it is to host trade shows, public shows, conventions and other large functions and that combines exhibition space with a substantial number of smaller meeting and event spaces. A convention center may be purpose-built or converted and municipally or privately owned.

Convention Services Manager (CSM)* - Professional at a hotel, convention center or convention bureau who is responsible for event operations management on all levels.

Cubic Content – A unit of measurement allowing display materials to occupy 100 percent of the exhibit space purchased, regardless of sightlines, up to a height established by the exhibition's rules.

Daily Spend - The per attendee/exhibitor spending on things like restaurant meals, entertainment and taxi rides.

Destination Management Company (DMC)* - A professional services company possessing extensive local knowledge, expertise and resources, specializing in the design and implementation of events, activities, tours, transportation and program logistics.

Destination Marketing Organization (DMO)* - An organization defined and recognized by its incorporated local government entity as the representative organization responsible for promoting the economic development of their community through travel and tourism. DMOs assist planners by providing information on local resources and services, including site selection, pre-conference and post-convention services.

Economic Impact* - The total value of an event, including secondary spending (indirect and induced) on the host destination's local economy over and above the original direct spending. These secondary impacts, when combined with the original direct spending, result in the total economic impact of an event.

Event Planning Team - Team involved in planning, organizing and conducting an event. Will give their preferences for site selection during the site selection process.

Event Specifications Guide (ESG)* - The preferred term for a comprehensive document that outlines the complete requirements and instructions for an event. This document is typically authored by the event planner and is shared with all appropriate vendors as a vehicle to communicate the expectations of services for a project. Sometimes called staging guide or RÉSUMÉ.

Exclusive Contractor (Provider)* - Contractor appointed by event or building management as the sole agent to provide specific services or products.

Expo Center - A facility that primarily hosts consumer shows or community events.

Fair* - 1) Event principally devoted to the exhibition of agricultural products or industrial products. Fairs may also provide entertainment activities. 2) Exhibition of products or services in a specific area of activity held with the objective of promoting business.

Fairground – County, regional and state fairs in the U.S. that are or were at one time used to host state fairs or were host to agricultural expositions.

Floor Load* - Maximum amount of weight per square foot/meter a floor can support.

Government Owned Convention (Congress Center) – Venue owned by a city, state/provincial, regional or national government.

Large Public Venue – Offer open and attractive space with special facilities or options within a facility, e.g., museum or sports complexes, universities, and zoos.

Marshaling Yard* - A holding area where trucks or buses check in and wait for instructions before delivering or picking up freight or passengers.

Multi-Purpose Facility – Public facilities or complexes featuring configurations that can be changed to provide a variety of venues and uses.

Official Service Contractor (OSC) - An organization that provides event management and exhibitors with a wide range of services, sometimes including, but not limited to, distributing the exhibitor manual, installation and dismantle, creating and hanging signage and banners, laying carpet, material handling, and providing booth/stand furniture.

Per-Diem* - Per day. Daily allowance for food, lodging, and in some cases, incidentals and ground transportation expenses.

Private Venue – Tend to be smaller in size, therefore may not have the facilities and services that are available at large public venues. Include stand-alone facilities, banquet halls, private houses and ships.

Preferred Provider - A provider that is given more consideration for securing a contract than other

providers; generally the facility has a positive relationship with this provider.

Professional Congress Organizer (PCO)* - Companies or individuals specialized in organizing events on behalf of a client organization.

Purpose-Built Convention Center – Facility expressly designed to host conventions and exhibitions.

Recommended Provider - Providers that are recommended by the facility when asked for a list of potential providers.

Request for Proposals (RFP)* - A document that stipulates what services the organization wants from an outside contractor and requests a bid to perform such services.

Room Nights* - Number of sleeping rooms blocked or occupied multiplied by number of nights each room is reserved or occupied.

Site Inspection* - In-person on-site review and evaluation of a venue or location for an event.

Site Selection* - Choosing a venue or location for an event.

Site-Selection Committee - Committee that chooses a venue for an event.

Site-Selection Process - Determines the suitability of a venue, both the destination and facilities within the destination, to host an event.

Transient Occupancy Tax* - Tax applied to the daily price of a hotel/motel room. Also known as bed tax, city tax, tourist tax or room tax.

Venue* - 1) Site or destination of meeting, event or show 2). Location of performance such as hall, ballroom, auditorium, etc.

Virtual Tour* - Any tour where people at two or more distant locations are linked using video, audio and data for communications. Each party sees and hears the tour through a TV screen or computer monitor and audio speakers.