

ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIAN  
CONVENTION BUREAUX INC.

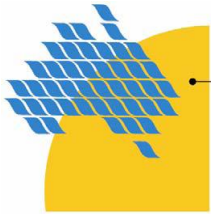
THE ASSOCIATION BEHIND THE  
BUREAUX WHO MARKET AUSTRALIA  
FOR BUSINESS EVENTS



## APPENDIX 1 TRAVEL SUMMARY

## TRAVEL SUMMARY JULY 2009

<b>City Visited</b>	<b>Dates</b>	<b>Meetings</b>
Quebec City	5 <sup>th</sup> July – 7 <sup>th</sup> July	Quebec Office of Tourism Quebec City Congress Centre Hilton Hotel Quebec Quebec City Bureau
Ottawa	7 <sup>th</sup> July – 10 <sup>th</sup> July	Ottawa Convention Centre National Capital Commission Ottawa Tourism Authority Ottawa Global Marketing MGB Tourfest
Victoria	10 <sup>th</sup> July – 13 <sup>th</sup> July	Ministry of Tourism, Sport and the Arts
Vancouver	13 <sup>th</sup> July – 14 <sup>th</sup> July	Vancouver Convention Centre
Edmonton	14 <sup>th</sup> July – 17 <sup>th</sup> July	Alberta Tourism Authority Shaw Convention Centre City of Edmonton University of Alberta



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## APPENDIX 2 ADDITIONAL FINDINGS SUMMARY

## QUEBEC CITY – 400TH CELEBRATION 2008

### **Points of Interest / Summary:**

- Bureau and Ambassador programs funded incentives (to support bids and to support pre-conference marketing, up to \$15,000)
- Hotels had to commit to rates early (set them and be prepared for Bureau to publish them)
- Attractions wishing to be involved in the celebration applied for funding and were passed responsibility to manage their own implementation
- A matrix of events was planned 9 years out and the calendar progressively filled in the lead up
- A legacy was established including the promenade/boardwalk, historical fountain and numerous public artworks
- Clients were 'sold the dream'
- It was important to have a good communications package on paper (event planners are used to buying on paper)
- Dedicated websites were established with regular updates
- Don't over promise and under deliver
- An Ambassador Program was used to pave the way and generate greater number of international conferences
- City/industry together committed to making 2008 a big year knowing they would suffer the effects the following year
- City hosted a media conference and associations executive conference in the lead up to 2008 to promote the city celebration directly
- Used the events leisure calendar to enhance the conferences booked
- An additional 'resource' was added 12 months out to enhance promotion/marketing interstate
- One person was tasked with handling media enquiries (quality vs quantity, Quebec were overwhelmed by media interest)
- Main celebration events worked best in peak season
- Important for the local/provincial hotel association to be kept informed and up-to-date
- Conference market important to be 'sold' to 4-6 years out and leisure market about 18 months out
- Too many events left to last minute in planning, there was not enough pre-organisation
- 100 million provincial government funding was given
- 400 million committed by National government to improve infrastructure (attractions, airport etc)
- 60% provincial conferences, 20% national and 20% international
- 95% of conferences held in the city in 08 were associations and this was a key result due to the ambassador program
- 1100 members of the local Bureau
- Bureau and convention centre were leaders for conferences and events, the convention centre focused on events of 800 delegates plus and the convention bureau focused on less than 800 delegates (convention centre and bureau have a representative on each other's boards)
- A dome was built and travelled around Canada to promote the celebration

### **Regrets:**

- Not enough marketing was done in Europe & France, the US market was not travelling much
- Website was not prepared as well as it should have been – such a key tool
- Always left things to the last minute
- There was a large volume of media to deal with that was unexpected and should have been handled better

## OTTAWA – 125TH CELEBRATION 2007

### **Points of Interest / Summary:**

- Ottawa Bureau is funded by the accommodation tax (3% tax per bill to all tourists); this gives them a budget of approx 10 million p/annum. This was introduced when the government decided to cut their funding substantially a couple of years ago
- 125th anniversary of Ottawa had no impact or effect on the conference market, it was really an event for locals and the province
- Ottawa 125th was to show achievements of Canadians, 12 months of celebrations with the main celebration around end June (in lead up to Canada Day, July 1)
- Existing events were used to build on smaller events

- Attendance numbers were effected by 9/11, Canadian dollar & fuel costs
- 1.5 million budget for the entire year, therefore not a lot of pre-event promotion was done. TV ads were broadcast through Canada throughout 07 but not in the lead up to the celebration
- Awareness in relation to the celebration was measured by an external company, 7.5 million visitors were in the city through the year, 75% of visitors to the region knew of the celebration and of its significance
- A renowned historians conference was held through the year
- A concert was held and broadcast live around Canada
- Information for school groups was made accessible to encourage group tours
- A controversial exhibit was held which increased media awareness
- Roving exhibits told the story of the history
- Had a good balance of educational experiences and festivals which left visitors with something tangible
- Ottawa has the challenge of being perceived by Canadians as boring and the seat of government, too political. Lowest city occupancy falls when parliament is not sitting
- Ottawa accommodation occupancy and average room rate is pretty steady due to Parliament sitting (most other Canadian cities have dropped off)
- Canada's 150th birthday will be in 2017, the main home of the events will be the capital city, Ottawa
- The tourism authority have an ambassador program with universities (currently in the very early planning stages of set up), and looking to employ a new position to make an impact
- The International market that the tourism bureau is attracting, are those with direct flights into Canada e.g. US, Europe, UK and Germany
- The Bureau outsource much of their prospecting to another organisation so time is not spent by the sales staff doing this, they can then focus on business they know is existing, building the relationships, bidding and selling
- There was no increase in the business events or tourism market during 2007 due to the celebration; it was really more of a 'local' celebration
- The Renal Canal was given a world heritage listing as part of the 07 celebration

#### **Regrets:**

- More funding was required but there was no time to source any additional sponsorship, most government funding was also tied up in Quebec City celebration
- Things were left till the last minute

## BRITISH COLUMBIA – 150TH CELEBRATION 2008

#### **Points of Interest / Summary:**

- A model was built to support BC150 and was based around 5 pillars, heritage, communities, cultural diversity, aboriginal peoples, arts & culture. The model was established by Charles Parkinson however the specific reasons behind the model development could not be relayed to me at the time of meeting
- The community was allowed to create their own events around this model, events were approved to use the BC150 logo provided they fitted into the model (some received funding and some did not), this allowed the community to take ownership of the event
- Local organisations were encouraged to get involved in BC150 in a way that would leave a lasting legacy that would benefit both the organisation and BC
- An investment was made into researching what Canadians would respond to when advertising BC150 to engage support
- Ambassadors were enlisted for the project, people with influence
- Multi-cultural engagement and celebrations were encouraged and enhanced existing events
- BC held a major government leaders conference to promote the event
- A travelling promotion for BC150 was held all through the province to increase awareness and encourage involvement (through 2007)
- All forms of media were directed to the BC150 website
- Corporate sponsorship was engaged (e.g. Hockey team held a home game dedicated to the celebration at a cost to them, and gave every spectator a puck with BC150 logo), Airlines advertised on the side of their planes, the museum was home to a BC150 historical exhibition
- All events through 2008 were encouraged to be listed on the BC150 website
- All government departments in BC were obliged to do a BC150 project / hold a conference (this engaged all government departments).

- Pre event marketing was undertaken to assess the awareness of the event through BC
- Events engaged kids, families, teens, youths, seniors, aboriginal and all other cultures
- Stakeholder relationships were built early (3-4 years out is ideal)
- Total provincial funding 28 million however, 20 million was used for spirit squares (a legacy program to restore and built areas of the community where people meet), the remaining 8 million was used to fund different events through grants with portions going to each pillar.
- There were criteria for receiving grants, those with a legacy attached were looked upon more favorably
- Government press releases and media releases were constant through the year
- TV ads were run, research was completed into what BC citizens would respond to, an ad was created and it was extremely popular and well received
- Spirit committees were established (essentially ambassadors), consisting of community members, councilors, the local mayor, these committees would meet and be responsible for events in their community, this resulted in further ownership and communities being really active
- It was important that the communities didn't have to 'buy in' to an idea, they had the freedom to come up with their own plans and events
- Some funding went towards publications, mini documentaries and dance performances
- Conferences were not a big part of the celebrations and the ones that were held were government conferences and that was mainly because they were obliged to be held
- BC150 website had 8 million hits through the year
- 8 corporate sponsors were engaged
- A BC150 rail tour was created in an old locomotive that was restored, a gallery was built into the locomotive with a mini exhibition in the old baggage car and the train was taken to every city on the train line to promote BC history and the event, performers also travelled with the train
- 100,000 showed up to the concert that was held on the lawns of parliament, August 6, many more than anticipated. The prime minister attended this event and could not believe the federal government was not sponsoring any part of BC150; they then received an additional 6 million in funding from the federal government in August 2008!
- A BC150 book was written as a legacy piece
- Fireworks were held every weekend through July and August in Vancouver and were sponsored by a different culture each time (celebration of that culture on that particular weekend), the last weekend of fireworks was reserved for BC150 and the BC story with music
- The calendar of events on the website was continually added to and was user friendly, you could search by event or by community. 1000 events were listed on the calendar for 2008
- Success was measured through website hits, a polling company was hired to research community engagement and was done pre event, during and post event (provincial people were selected at random)

#### **Regrets:**

- Planning was left too late and there were not enough staff onboard until 12 months out (14 in total)
- The events could have been better planned and a calendar locked in earlier
- Relationships with stakeholders were not great and should have been created much earlier
- No official launch party was held, they wish one had been

## EDMONTON- CENTENARY CELEBRATION 2004

## ALBERTA – CENTENARY CELEBRATION 2005

## UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA – CENTENARY CELEBRATION 2008

#### **Points of Interest / Summary:**

- There was a theme for each month (e.g. January = sport, February = education) in Alberta
- All existing events were re-branded and made bigger
- All households in Alberta received a tourism card (approx 1 million sent out), designed to encourage all people within the province to travel locally during the celebrations (this has been an ongoing initiative) – the 'staycation'
- A desk top calendar was established by Alberta tourism and was distributed to the top 10 organisations in the province by highest number of employees designed to encourage the employees to design their holidays around the

Alberta celebration (a letter was circulated with the calendar's on company letterhead with a leave form from the CEO and co-branded with Alberta Tourism logo)

- Requests were managed through the website for personal invitations to attend the Alberta celebration to be signed by the mayor (Alberta locals could nominate/put forward people they knew to receive this letter)
- Alberta Tourism took a motor home with full advertising on it around to as many provincial events as they could (any events, even a rodeo) the community perceived their event was important enough to have the motor home and people got engaged when they were spoken to 1 on 1
- It was critical to be repetitive with the message
- Edmonton used 4 major themes being, community, major events, legacy and education
- Cities in Edmonton opened up all tourist venues, exhibitions etc free of charge and this has now become a something they do for one weekend every year (early October)
- Honorary Chairs were appointed to promote the event and act as the 'face' of the event through print media e.g. posters (well known people from Edmonton)
- Edmontonians of the century were identified, 10 individuals from each decade over the last 100 years who have contributed in some way to the history and success of Edmonton were awarded a medal, a book was also published in their honor
- The university got involved one weekend and asked students to design the city of the future
- A letter/certificate from the mayor was produced and presented to anyone who had held an event in the city during the celebration
- Edmonton celebrated city 1st's, a list of events or products that were initiated in Edmonton 1st, some of these were also reinacted
- Planning for Edmonton started 5 years out but the first 2 years were not very productive
- University of Alberta planned 2 years out for their centenary which was not enough time
- Centenary Head (previously the Executive Director of Sociology) personally visited every head of department to talk to them about the centenary and how they could contribute and get involved (agreed sales people and academics butt heads and the person approaching them should have a lot of credibility)
- A successful desk top calendar was produced with a listing of all the events through the year and this was distributed to all the university employees, students and past alumni
- All past alumni were invited back to the university to help celebrate the centenary

**Regrets:**

- In Edmonton's case the council didn't commit enough time to gain financial resources for the project and the website was underfunded so did not perform as well as it needed to
- Merchandising was looked at too late (Edmonton)
- Planning should have started earlier

## KEY LESSONS FOR BUSINESS EVENTS:

- Conferences should have the opportunity to contribute to a legacy for the city (be it something the city is offering or something the organisation chooses to offer the city)
- A strong 'base model' (program of events and structure) is required to sell the celebration to conference organisers with a strong matrix of events planned for the city
- Look at themeing each month of the year so conferences can be matched in with themes
- A strong written material / communications package is required to assist in selling 'the dream' of holding a conference in a city during a celebration
- Have an understanding into how conference organisers will respond to a city celebration. It is suggested that research using a focus group of conference organisers would assist in discovering their hot buttons and what is appealing to their delegates
- Ambassadors are critical to the success of conferences and events in a city as they are key figures in the local community, have access or involvement in many associations that would see the benefits of conferencing in a city during a milestone celebration and are strong advocates for the city in which they are living
- Websites are a very strong tool for information, they should be updated with celebration material often and provide the ability for a conference organiser to get in touch with a sales representative immediately to discuss their conference within the celebration year
- Secure conferences with a critical link to making your celebration a success, for example exposure to a major government leader's event, association executives, journalists or media conferences. Use these opportunities to promote the city celebration
- An early commitment from hotels in the city on a rate structure is very important to give clients confidence that they won't pay too much and to create certainty around the supply of rooms within the city for conference delegates
- Regular updates to industry are required to keep them informed as to what is going on in the lead up to a celebration
- An open invitation should be looked at to invite all associations to secure their event in your city for your celebration, from the head of State Government or Head of State for the Country
- Extend and leverage off existing events in the city
- Look at possibility of providing seed funding to different eligible associations to support the conference and use the funding to provide assistance in the early stages of planning. Eligibility could be linked to legacy projects or concepts
- Be repetitive with your message in the market place
- Any organisation that holds an event in your city during your milestone celebration should be recognised in some way, e.g. a personal letter from the Chief Minister, plaque etc
- Look to source any organisations celebrating a significant milestone during the same year as the city
- Planning should start at least 5-6 years ahead to secure business events and conferences for the city

## KEY LESSONS FOR LEISURE / TOURIST EVENTS:

- Hop on / Hop off or 'tourist' bus is critical to transporting tourists around the city with easy access
- Airport – hotel transfer buses are a huge cost saving for tourists
- Peak industry bodies such as the hotels association can filter event info to members for tourist benefit
- Extend and leverage off already existing events
- Ask what the public want to do to celebrate
- Embrace all 4 season
- Invite the country to participate and be a part of the celebration, visit and talk to them in person, through road trips, tradeshows or similar
- Have tourism representative/s at the airport for 'meet and greet'
- A launch party is required to 'kick things off'
- Attractions/institutions could be encouraged to make their own plans for the city celebration with government support
- Consider all city tourist attractions being FOC for one weekend through the year
- Legacy/Historical event – Naming the 100 most influential Australian's over the last century

## CONVENTION CENTRE FINDINGS

### **Quebec City – Quebec City Congress Centre**

- All flat floor spaces
- An Ambassador Program is used in support of conference bids using city experts
- 20 International conferences were confirmed for the city through 2008 mainly due to mining ICCA database and using ambassadors
- A large increase was seen in both US and domestic markets for conferencing due to the 2008 celebration
- The convention centre was unaware of the program of events in the lead up to the celebration which posed challenges in booking events however they looked to 'sell the dream' instead to gauge interest and engagement
- The Quebec City Congress Centre is a Green convention centre
- There are 3 separate entrances into the centre to support multiple conferences taking place
- There is direct internal access from Convention Centre to the Hilton Hotel
- The centre may expand in the next couple of years, it is currently attached to retail space including a small food court, this space is underutilised and retailers are leaving, the centre is looking into purchasing the additional space to expand
- Large association market, the centre focus on market segments that perform well in the city
- Current conference contract numbers are dropping as is length of stay, similar to Australia

### **Ottawa – Ottawa Convention Centre**

- Ottawa convention centre looking to break into the International market
- New convention centre due for completion early 2011, all flat floor spaces, currently employs 6 sales staff and looking to increase this by another 5 when new centre up and running
- There is a big associations market in Ottawa and they delve into many segments of the market, they gain many conferences due to being the capital city with access to influence
- Ottawa is experiencing a reduction in length of stay and contracting numbers at the moment as well as limited pre and post touring
- Familiarisation programs are only run if there is a specific need, they have found it too difficult to attract the right people, the key decision makers and therefore feel it best to pay for individual visits to the city as opposed to group familiarisations. Alternatively, they also attend many tradeshow and will fly to the decision maker to present the destination
- An ideal size conference for the city is 2 x 500-600 delegate conferences running simultaneously. Although the convention centre has the capacity for larger conferences and can manage 2500 delegates, the accommodation properties cannot and the group then needs to be split over 15-20 hotels.
- There is good air access into the city nationally (airport and conference centre designed by same architect), the design feature of the new conference centre (which is the same as the airport) is 'line of site' e.g. people can see beyond where they are, they know what is going to be next and they do not get lost

### **Vancouver – Vancouver Convention Centre**

- The Convention Centre and Bureau joint bid for business
- All flat floor spaces
- 40% International market, 40% US market and 20% domestic
- Market segments are not specifically targeted although stronger in some segments than others (Pharma, IT, Telecommunications, Mining)
- The Centre did nothing significant for BC150, business events were not leveraged through the year
- 6 pax in sales team (based in Canada, US and Europe)
- The centre is booked out 40% in September and 100% from October – April with winter Olympics media. No conferences can be booked during that time however the city could not handle anymore accommodation anyway (cruise ships will be docked in harbour for additional beds)
- 3 hotels are connected to the convention centre underground, another is under construction
- Chasing 1000 pax + conferences
- Mostly associations market although corporate is still strong
- An ambassador program is a strategy however it is not permanent. A conference is identified for the city and the bureau or convention centre then go to the local universities etc to seek out local experts to support the event and become an ambassador for it

- Green convention centre
- High Technology

#### **Edmonton – Shaw Convention Centre**

- Oil and Gas has become such a huge market in the last few years that conferences increased last financial year by 200%
- Nanotechnology, Health, Science and the biggest market segments behind oil
- Convention Centre work with bureau on city bids
- Scoping underway for a new convention centre, it would be 3 times the size of the current and would be complete by 2017 if it goes ahead
- Convention centre look to source the local expert to co-bid for business
- 20% international conferences, 20% National and 60% local – due to key learning/research institutions
- Convention centre do not sell the city as a tourist destination (more so centre of knowledge)
- All flat floor spaces although they do have a retractable tired theatrette if the demand is there
- Nothing special was celebrated or held in the centre through Alberta or Edmonton Celebrations
- 4 staff in sales team, all based at centre
- Clients are beginning to request their conference bids online, a new program was developed about 12 months ago to give them the opportunity to request proposals this way and it has been very successful – all inquiries go to the bureau and they coordinate the quotes and submit the bid