

Meeting Industry Trends



HOFBURG
V I E N N A

Vienna Hofburg Congress Center



„MA Conference & Events Management“

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1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this research paper is to illustrate the most important meeting industry trends and reflecting them at the example of the chosen venue, the Vienna Hofburg Congress Centre (VHCC). The VHCC operates in the conference, exhibitions and events sector and is a member of the association Historic Conference Centres Europe (HCCE),.

The following chapter outlines and describes current meeting industry trends. In chapter three the VHCC will be presented and subsequently, the VHCC's adaptations to the trends discussed in chapter two will be analysed. Chapter five will summarise the provided information and give recommendations for the VHCC to better adapt to current and predicted industry trends.

2 MEETING INDUSTRY TRENDS

2.1. Economic Trends

2.1.1. Globalization

With the initiation of the North American Free Trade Agreement and the formation of the European Union, only two major milestones that positively affected the meetings industry may be named. As a result, international business travel increased significantly (Astroff & Abbey, 2006) providing new demand for national and international meetings (Holloway et. al., 2009; Davidson & Rogers, 2006).

2.1.2. Emerging Markets

“The rise of new business tourism destinations in many developing economies of the world is a major – and ongoing – phenomenon of this sector” (Holloway et. al., 2009:306).

Throughout the last two decades, South-East Asian as well as Eastern European countries invested considerably and successfully into meeting venues and the marketing of these (Davidson & Rogers, 2006). The BRIC (Brazil, Russia, India, China) economies however, represent the most determined emerging markets (Davidson, 2009). Researchers agree that India and China will generate major international conference business in the near future (Holloway et. al., 2009; Davidson & Rogers, 2006), also evidenced by the opening of the China National Convention Centre in Beijing (Davidson, 2009).

2.1.3. Increasing Supply and Competition

Throughout the last ten years, first- and second-tier cities all over the world built new conference venues, expanded existing ones and renovated outdated facilities (Astroff & Abbey, 2006; Davidson & Cope, 2003; Davidson & Rogers, 2006). Due to this boost in supply researchers such as Davidson and Cope (2003), Astroff and Abbey (2006), Shone (1998) as well as Rogers (2003a)

acknowledge the increase in competition between meeting venues and their destinations on a national as well as international level.

2.1.4. Cost-Consciousness

In recent years meeting industry buyers realised that they are operating in a buyers' market and understood to negotiate to their benefit. Due to the current economic situation the trend of meeting planners trying to reduce costs will continue. Buyers increasingly want high value for less money and only work with their preferred suppliers (Holloway et. al., 2009; Davidson & Rogers, 2006). Therefore, it is highly important for suppliers to educate and train staff to maintain high levels of service and attract customers (Shone, 1998).

2.1.5. Disintermediation

“[...] as neither buyers nor suppliers are obliged to use intermediaries, many are [...] choosing to bypass the middlemen, preferring to deal directly with each other” (Davidson & Cope, 2003:132).

Buyers and suppliers want to make business as cost-effectively as possible, hence, save in commissions and management fees they pay to intermediaries (Davidson & Cope, 2003; Alford as cited in Rogers 2003b). Upton (as cited in Davidson & Cope, 2003) opposes to this industry motion emphasising that intermediaries provide important know-how and expertise as well as up-to-date feedback on suppliers, which is lost when avoiding them.

2.1.6. Return on Investment (ROI)

Another industry trend noted is the focus on efficient and effective work and obtaining feedback results at more intensive events. Conference venues and meeting planners started to assess the success of their performances at trade shows and meetings, also through ROI calculations. However, the number of organisations measuring the results of their investments is still low (Davidson & Cope, 2003).

2.2. Technological Trends

2.2.1. Information and Communication Technology (ICT)

“[...] the Internet alone has revolutionized the planning, marketing and execution of events such as conferences and exhibitions [and] [...] further advances in ICT will continue to have a profound impact on how such events are planned, promoted and experienced in years to come” (Holloway et. al., 2009:307).

Various authors support the opinion that the Internet has helped meeting planners to market their events through dedicated websites. Furthermore, online-based registration systems, venue and supplier listings as well as online booking opportunities facilitate operational processes (Davidson & Cope, 2003; Astroff & Abbey, 2006; Holloway et. al., 2009; Davidson, 2004; Alford as cited in Rogers, 2003b). This has, according to Davidson and Cope (2003), also led to shorter lead times for meetings.

One of the most important ICT trends is the provision of Wi-Fi at meeting venues and researchers agree that this feature is essential to stay competitive in this industry (Holloway et. al., 2009; Davidson, 2004; Davidson & Rogers, 2003b).

Social Media

Recent studies also confirm the growing use of social media for events. Communication channels such as Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn are, above all, used to create pre-event interest among delegates and to aid interaction between industry professionals and the event organisers (Davidson, 2009).

2.2.2. Tele- and Video-Conferencing

Association and corporate buyers increasingly use these means of communication to not only control and cut costs but also to provide information to a wider audience (Davidson & Cope, 2003; Rogers, 2003a). Davidson (2009) notes that especially throughout the economic recession meeting buyers have sought technical solutions and decreased the number of face-to-face meetings.

Nevertheless, all research contributions used to compile this section of the paper consent with the fact that rather than killing the industry, these communication technologies are being used as a resource to improve the quality and efficiency of meetings (Rogers, 2003b; Davidson & Rogers, 2006; Shone, 1998; Davidson, 2009; Davidson & Cope, 2003). As Kovaleski (2010:par1) describes,

“blending face-to-face and virtual events may be the look of the future for meetings, conferences, conventions, and trade shows”.

2.3. Social Trends

2.3.1. More Women

“In the next few years ahead, the number of women business travellers and conference delegates will increase at an accelerating pace” (Davidson, 2003:4).

According to various researchers, this results from the growing number of women in professional jobs, particularly in service industries (Davidson & Rogers, 2006; Davidson, 2003; Holloway et. al., 2009). Shone (1998) and Holloway et. al. (2009) however emphasise that business tourism service providers still need to adapt to the special needs of female travellers (e.g. more toilets, ironing boards, full-length mirrors).

2.3.2. Older Delegates

The working population is ageing significantly and elderly people remain longer in their positions, either through choice or out of necessity. Consequently, more elderly business travellers attend conferences and meetings (Holloway et. al., 2009; Davidson, 2003).

Davidson and Rogers (2006) mention that older professionals are much fitter than the previous generation, they understand the need for networking and retired people choose to continue their membership in associations due to personal interests.

2.3.3. Generation Y and Multiculturalism

The challenge of future years will be to attract generation Y (born between 1978-1994) while maintaining the appeal of meetings for older generations. Younger attendees grew up with electronic media, and therefore understand and expect technology to be used appropriately for meetings (Holloway et. al., 2009; Davidson & Rogers, 2006, Davidson, 2010).

Another trend related to this is the growing number of multicultural conferences due to global migration flows as well as the openness for generations X and Y to travel and live abroad (Davidson, 2003; Shone, 1998). All authors agree that it is essential for meeting planners to acknowledge the needs of those generations and diverse cultures to convince them of the benefits to attend face-to-face meetings.

2.3.4. Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)

Throughout the last years the social, environmental and ethical duties of businesses have been closely watched by the public. Therefore, the field of CSR experienced significant growth, also in the meetings industry sector. Two major concerns of CSR, namely sustainability and social legacy, will be discussed below (Holloway et. al., 2009; Davidson & Rogers, 2006).

Environmental Sustainability

“Progress towards achieving minimum negative impacts on our fragile environment from meetings and events appears to be marching onwards” (Davidson, 2009:23).

Researchers report that most meeting venues are in the process of adopting “green” policies including regulations on waste management and energy consumption (Lawson, 2000; Rogers, 2003b, Davidson & Rogers, 2006). Furthermore, Davidson (2009) outlines the efforts made by the Convention Industry Council’s Accepted Practices Exchange Panel on Green Meeting and Event Practices to create industry-wide green standards.

Social Legacy

This trend is concerned with the impact meetings can have on the local community and economy and how these may be improved by participants. Accordingly, meeting planners started to invest time and money into communities, for instance through charity donations or volunteer work by delegates. Last but not least, these activities are also beneficial for the organiser's reputation (Davidson, 2009; Davidson & Rogers, 2006).

2.3.5. Venue Design

As the society progressively integrates disabled people, meeting venues are required to provide access to handicapped delegates. Further venue design trends that emerged concern the flexibility and layout of meeting facilities. Moveable walls are installed in many venues to cater needs for specific breakout rooms and meeting planners increasingly rate the provision of daylight in rooms as very important. In response to safety issues, the instalment of security systems, such as CCTV, is a common practice of conference centres (Lawson, 200; Davidson & Rogers, 2006, Shone, 1998).

2.4. Level of Demand

2.4.1. Shorter Meetings

Davidson and Cope (2003) explain that delegates have less time for meetings due to the increasing focus on company profits. Additionally, the trend of shorter meetings can be linked to the downsizing and outsourcing of workforces, which decrease the trust between companies and their employees. As a result employees may have to pay for attendance themselves and subsequently want more intensive and compact conference programmes.

2.4.2. Fewer Meetings

Since the global economy and the demand for meetings are closely linked it would be reasonable to assume that the number of meetings declined throughout the last years of recession. Nevertheless, it seems that especially the association and SMERF (social, military, educational, religious, fraternal)

markets are relatively stable and resistant. The corporate meetings market in contrast showed negative fluctuations as response to the financial crisis (Davidson & Cope, 2003).

2.4.3. Smaller Meetings

Davidson and Cope (2003) identify a trend towards smaller corporate events due to the fact that companies believe to get the same benefits out of meetings when sending fewer employees. In contrast, Rogers, (2003a) outlines the development of very large conferences which stage smaller, more specific meetings shortly before, after or even simultaneously to the main meeting.

2.5. Meeting Industry Trends in Austria

According to Mutschlechner (2009), Vienna has not experienced a decrease in delegates throughout the time of the economic recession. He points out that medical associations rather chose lower category hotels than five star accommodations. However, this also relates to the strict ethical codes of this industry. Unfortunately, the Austrian corporate sector has suffered much due to the economic circumstances and many meetings were cancelled in early 2009.

In 2010, Vienna defended its rank 1 in the ICCA statistics and also Austria as a country moved up to rank 10 again. Within the UIA rankings Austria even moved up to be number eight of the world (ACB, 2010).

As in many other conference destinations, green meetings and initiatives now play a prevailing role in Austria's meeting industry including the issues of sustainability – efficient energy use, waste and mobility management as well as added local value (Steiner, 2009).

3 VIENNA HOFBURG CONGRESS CENTER (VHCC)

All information presented in this section was accumulated from an expert interview with Mag. Renate Danler, Managing Director of the VHCC, the website and published documents of the venue.

The VHCC is a multi-purpose event centre, operating since 1958. The venue belongs to the Republic of Austria but is rented and managed by the “Kongresszentrum Hofburg Betriebsgesellschaft GmbH”, a subsidiary manufacturing company. The venue employs 45 permanent staff members however personnel for the reception, cleaning and other services are being outsourced. The VHCC made approximately € 10 million net sales in 2009.

The venue offers over 17000 m² of space in 35 rooms for events from 50 up to 4900 delegates. The Heldenplatz entrance, with the halls and rooms arranged around it, is a multifunctional area not only used for conferences and exhibitions but also for banquets, balls and other special events.

The VHCC enjoys 60% of repeat clients from its overall business. Customers mostly originate from Austria and Central Europe. Some examples of previous and upcoming events at the VHCC are:

- IACA Conference, September 2 – 3, 2010 (International Anti Corruption Academy)
- Austrian Dental Conference 2010, September 30 – Oktober 2, 2010
- ACCESS 2010 Trade Fair, October 4 – 5, 2010
- 41st Kaiserball, December 31, 2010

The venue is a member of several industry associations such as HCCE (Historic Conference Centres Europe), ICCA (International Congress and Convention Association) and the Austrian Convention Bureau. On average only one conference per year comes in through the Vienna Convention Bureau. Concerning its marketing, the VHCC convinces with an exceptional corporate design, an outstanding website and its presence at several industry trade shows such as EIBTM, IMEX and ACCESS. Ultimately, it is to mention that the VHCC benefits from word-of-mouth marketing by satisfied customers.

4 TREND ADAPTATIONS BY THE VHCC

All information presented in the following sub-sections results from an expert interview with Mag. Renate Danler, Managing Director of the VHCC, conducted in Vienna on November 18, 2010.

4.1. Adaptations to Economic Trends

4.1.1. Emerging Markets

Basically, the VHCC did not notice any change in business due to emerging markets such as Eastern Europe. The few meetings organised from Eastern European countries are meetings from international associations, whose current chair committees have their seat in one of these countries. Since the majority of meetings and other events held at the VHCC however are of national origin, there were no specific changes made concerning the marketing towards emerging markets.

4.1.2. Increasing Supply and Competition

The VHCC identifies palaces, other historic conference venues as well as similar sized meeting facilities (especially when clients demand a modern venue) as competitors. Nonetheless, as the prime member of HCCE, the venue's management is convinced that newly built "conference boxes" are not affecting their business. The VHCC has a very strong USP and image, and at the same time the competitive advantage of being located in a first-tier city.

4.1.3. Cost-Consciousness

Indeed, increased anticipation and willingness to negotiate was recognised, especially since 2008 when the financial crisis hit Europe. Nevertheless, the VHCC offers packages that are still expensive compared to general market prices. Rather, the management chooses to provide additional value and benefits. For instance, extra beamers are supplied at no extra charge or a certain discount is given to organisers who stage their event at the VHCC three times in a row.

4.1.4. Disintermediation

The VHCC cannot fully support this trend. Often, organisations contact the venues directly for offers, however intermediaries are hired after the venue has been chosen. This relates to the fact that events are more complex and demanding to organize with which the organisations' event departments are over-challenged. Moreover, many associations nowadays rather hire association management companies which have contracted suppliers all over the world and therefore organize every event of their client.

Additionally, the trend of horizontal and vertical integration must be mentioned. Organisations start off, for example, as normal PCOs, then add services such as facility and association management to their portfolio and expand internationally. Basically, they do not let go of clients anymore.

4.1.5. Return on Investment (ROI)

The VHCC measures its own ROI. Not only the created business but also the value of new contacts is evaluated after events in which the venue takes part. With regards to their clients it is hard to affirm whether these explicitly measure ROI. Increasingly however, high quality feedback surveys are conducted to capture the participants' opinions. As example Mag. Danler mentioned the analysis of the Summit 10, Austria's Digital-Marketing Congress.

4.2. Adaptations to Technological Trends

4.2.1. Information and Communication Technology (ICT)

As historic conference venue it is even more important for the VHCC to provide the most advanced technology than it is for younger meeting facilities. Wi-Fi is available throughout the whole venue since three years, virtual tours are available via the website and social media is used as well. RFID (radio frequency identification) as a form of lead retrieval is utilised since one and a half years, however not all conferences can afford this yet.

Ultimately, it is important to note that all audio visual equipment is being outsourced and three preferred suppliers are recommended to each client.

4.2.2. Tele- and Video-Conferencing

Tele- and video-conferencing has its significance for the VHCC as smaller corporate meetings are substituted by using this mean of communication. However, Mag. Danler confirms that the personal aspect cannot be replaced and that these communication technologies rather enhance the experience and make meetings more efficient.

4.3. Adaptations to Social Trends

4.3.1. More Women, Older Delegates, Generation Y and Multiculturalism

The earlier discussed trends of more women and older delegates attending conferences are not prevailing motions noticed at the VHCC. In regards to generation Y and multiculturalism, the venue is using the latest technology and is aware of special food requirements. However, Mag. Danler emphasises that tasks such as immediate feedback, proper use of Power Point and speaker screening lie within the responsibilities of the conference organiser.

4.3.2. Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)

Environmental Sustainability

Environmental sustainability and being “green” are important issues for the VHCC. All meetings staged in the venue are certified as green meetings. In contrast, the venue itself is not due to historic building regulations as well as cost factors. The VHCC’s management emphasised that everything the historic frame of the building permits is done towards environmental sustainability including using energy-saving lamps, water-saving measures, room-individual air-conditioning, recycling, etc. Unfortunately the congress centre is only part of the whole Hofburg complex and therefore decisions about geothermal energy for instance have to be taken in common with all other operators of the site.

Social Legacy

The VHCC stages two charity events per year where the venue is provided for free. However, in order to ensure quality, the VHCC investigates whether the organisation is trustworthy and the money is de facto used for charity.

Moreover, staff and clients of the VHCC do not receive Christmas presents but a considerable donation is made to a non-profit-making organisation, which differs annually. Also clients are notified that rather than sending a “little something”, the VHCC would appreciate a donation to the specific charity organisation of the year.

4.3.3. Venue Design

The VHCC does everything possible to cater for disabled delegates. Elevators were installed and smaller staircases were fitted with ramps for wheelchairs. Unfortunately, the management admits, there are still a few deficiencies due to the historic roots of the buildings. The VHCC offers a variety of room layouts, including the provision of natural daylight in most of the rooms. In recent years contemporary elements, such as the Rooftop Foyer, The Hofburg Gallery and the Hofburg Forum, have been added to combine modernity and history.

4.4. Adaptations to the Level of Demand

4.4.1. Shorter Meetings

This prevailing motion has also been recognised by the VHCC.

“Meetings that last longer than four days usually take place in hotels now. Our meetings last up to three, maximum four days” (Danler, 2010).

The average duration of a meeting held at the VHCC is two days. This partly relates to financial reasons, but rather to the fact that companies cannot spare their staff for long.

4.4.2. Fewer Meetings

The VHCC did not note a major decrease in the number of meetings. This rather depends on the year. Throughout the financial crisis corporate meetings diminished a little and association meetings proved to be more stable. However, problems create demand for new discussions, information exchange and hence new meetings and conferences.

4.4.3. Smaller Meetings

The VHCC noticed this trend – topics are getting more complex, meetings more specialised and therefore smaller. Additionally, the trend of shorter lead times needs to be mentioned. According to Mag. Danler, this occurs because corporate budgets are nowadays planned on a monthly basis compared to a yearly basis before. Planning horizons get shorter and, as a result, meetings can be demanded and organized on short notice.

5 CONCLUSION

In summary, one has to acknowledge that despite being a historic building the VHCC is one of the best equipped and marketed venues in Vienna, respectively Austria. Compared to the Reed Messe Vienna for instance, the VHCC provides virtual tours of all available meeting rooms on its website. As the venue's management confirmed, this striving for the newest technology and the highest quality of customer service is important in order to not seem antiquated and "mouldy".

Due to the historic roots of the venue and the heritage it has to preserve, it is hard to propose feasible recommendations that can be implemented without considering building regulations.

In terms of flexibility, the installation of moveable walls would of course be recommended in order to provide more breakout rooms for larger conferences. However, referring back to the above stated building regulations, this may be an unsolvable problem.

CSR is very much promoted by the VHCC and so are green meetings. A future aim should definitely be to also attain a green building standard for the Hofburg. This, obviously, can only be actualised if all operators and the Republic of Austria (as the owner of the complex) act in concert and invest together into the required ecologically sustainable measures.

A further recommendation for the VHCC itself is to establish a co-operation with the University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences Vienna (BOKU Wien) or the University of Veterinary Medicine Vienna (VetMed Wien) to use food waste for the production of compost (as demonstrated by the Royal College of Physicians in London) or for the feeding of animals hosted by the University of Veterinary Medicine Vienna.

Ultimately, in order to keep up with competition and not to seem antiquated, it is recommended to continuously observe industry trends as well as changes in the needs and wants of clients and to react instantly.

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APPENDIX

Expert Interview – Prepared Questions

ECONOMIC TRENDS

Globalization has had a great impact on the meetings industry, recently due to emerging markets such as Eastern Europe.

- Where do your clients come from? (Shares of total customers for countries available?)
- Did you notice and increase in clients coming from “new countries”?
- Do you target your marketing now at new segments of the market?
- How do you market yourself to keep up with global competition?

Relating to the growth in global competition in the meetings industry (especially with Asia and Eastern Europe as new thriving conference destinations):

- What is the competitive advantage of the VHCC?
- What makes it better than other business venues in the city?

A major growth in supply of conference centres all over the world has been noticed.

- How did you adapt to this change in order to keep up with competitors? (renovation/refurbishment of the venue in design, moveable walls, breakout rooms, to become more flexible in satisfying special needs)

Since buyers get more cost-conscious, clients are becoming extremely skilled in negotiating as they are better informed and educated in knowing what they want.

- How is the VHCC dealing with that trend, do you now need to demonstrate your cost-effectiveness (Kosteneffizienz) of your tariffs more?
- Do you negotiate more with clients now than 5 - 10 years ago?
- Have you changed your tariffs recently due to this reason?
- Do clients in general spend less on meetings nowadays?

Budget conscious meeting planners nowadays search for more economical sites (second-tier cities).

- Have you noticed that meeting planners are less interested in Vienna?
- How is the HR department dealing with the current economic situation? Did the VHCC have to lay off many employees?

Nowadays there is a trend towards disintermediation, which means that in many cases business is made directly between suppliers and buyers.

- Does the VHCC nowadays deal more with clients directly?

Meetings nowadays have a much clearer business focus and buyers want to ensure that event objectives were met through measuring ROI (Kapitalerträge).

- Have you noticed a difference in clients focusing more on business, measuring ROI or in general trying to evaluate the effectiveness and the success of their events?

TECHNOLOGICAL TRENDS

Advances in ICT have had an immense impact on how conferences and other types of meetings are organized and operated and promoted.

- Does and if yes, since when, the VHCC have Wi-Fi installed throughout the whole venue?
- Have you had recent websites changes?
- You offer virtual tours - do clients prefer these over site visits, or rather see them complementary/additionally?
- Do you have handheld devices for clients to vote from in your meeting facilities? (voting apparatus)
- What form of lead retrieval do you use? (RFID (radio frequency identification), bar code scanners)
- Do you use social media sites such as Facebook or Twitter for your events?

Video conferencing is increasingly used by associations as alternative and additional information distribution systems.

- Do you have facilities for videoconferencing, and if yes, why and when were they installed?
- In your opinion, does videoconferencing imply a threat to the VHCC as some meetings seem to be replaced by virtual meetings?
- Do you think that face-to-face meetings are still important?

Many conference venues hire technical equipment into their facilities to provide the most modern facilities and satisfy technical requirements.

- Does the VHCC possess in-house equipment or do you outsource it?
- If yes, do you always use the same supplier or different ones?

SOCIAL TRENDS

Due to the increasing number of women in professional employment, more women are travelling for work-related purposes.

- How did the VHCC adapt to this trend? (more healthy food being served, more female toilets, secure car parks, etc.)
- How does the VHCC deal with security issues in general? (also keeping in mind the omnipresent issue of terrorism and conferences)

The working population is ageing – elderly people remain in employment and will therefore continue to attend meetings.

- How does the VHCC adjust to this trend? (design of the venue (elevators), shorter sessions, more comfort, better sound system, first-aid on-site, etc.)

The openness of generation Y to travel as well as migration flows throughout Europe and beyond have resulted in a more multicultural workforce.

- Are you concerned about important issues such as session topics, speaker selection and the awareness of dietary requirements?
- Do you provide translation services for multilingual meetings?

Generation X and Y make up more than half of our global workforce, thus they are also attending conferences. However, attendees are nowadays a lot more demanding in choice and quality. They have a sophisticated understanding of technology and expect it to be well utilized. Additionally they are more interactive and appreciate immediate feedback.

- In how far can and did the VHCC cater for the needs of Generation X and Y?

The concern for CSR has grown significantly throughout recent years.

- Do you take issues such as business ethics, corporate citizenship and sustainability into account?
- Do you have a CSR programme relating to social legacy in place?

There is a growing demand for green and sustainable meetings and many associations and agencies are already actively promoting environmentally friendly conferences.

- Is the VHCC applying sustainable measures to meetings as well?
- Does the VHCC have a green certificate?

Conference venues need to be accessible and provide facilities for people with disabilities.

- Does the VHCC provide full access to people with disabilities?
- Do you train your staff on dealing with disabled delegates and the difficulties that may arise with that?

Design specific changes relating to flexibility of room layouts, daylight in meeting rooms, security systems.

- Have you made any renovations/refurbishments to adapt to these new needs of delegates and meeting planners?
- If yes, please comment.

LEVEL OF DEMAND

There is also a move towards shorter meetings due to cost-consciousness and the demand for compact meetings.

- Can you notice this motion of clients booking shorter meetings?

Due to the global downturn of the world economy, the number of meetings decreased, especially in the corporate market.

- Due to the current financial situation, have meetings been postponed or even cancelled in the last 2 years?
- Do you in general have more association or corporate clients?
- Did you change your focus to now win more meetings from the association market?

Nowadays there is a move towards smaller but more specialised events.

- Did you notice this difference?
- Do you stage more smaller and specialised meetings?

Due to technological advances as well as economic reasons, there is a trend towards shorter lead times.

- Have you noticed this trend at the VHCC?
- If yes, when did lead times start getting shorter and what reasons did you identify for it?

GENERAL INFORMATION

This section is solely to collect some general information about the Vienna Hofburg Convention Center.

- Who owns the VHCC?
- How many people are employed by the company?
- What's the approximate annual turnover of VHCC?
- Which sector of business tourism do you cater with your facilities/services?
- Who are your customers? (local, national, international / corporate, associations)
- Can you give a few examples of meetings that you have hosted in recent years?
- How do you market and promote your facilities and services?