

# WORLDVIEW EVENTS

## Best Practices in Strategic Meeting Management – Part I: TECHNOLOGY AT THE CORE

By Lisa Meller, CMP, CEM May 13, 2014

*In this series, we explore the 7 key components of an SMMP and practical suggestions for implementation.*

Currently, meetings and events (“M&E”) represent over \$650 billion in the global marketplace, and spend grows at about 1.8 times the GDP annually. Over half of this spend comes from corporate clients. Global expansion is on the rise, and the pressure to manage budgets while producing high levels of ROI remain at top of mind.

**Yes, less than 50% of companies can even estimate their M&E spend, let alone control it or leverage its value.**

With strong Strategic Meetings Management Programs (SMMPs) in place, smart organizations are saving time, streamlining processes, and are saving money – to the tune of 10 – 25% in their first year alone.

### PART 1: TECHNOLOGY AT THE CORE

At the center of the key components wheel is TECHNOLOGY. This is typically the first segment of an SMMP that companies implement. Why? Because it touches all other segments, centralizes information on a single dashboard, and can be utilized across all departments with leveraged economies of scale.

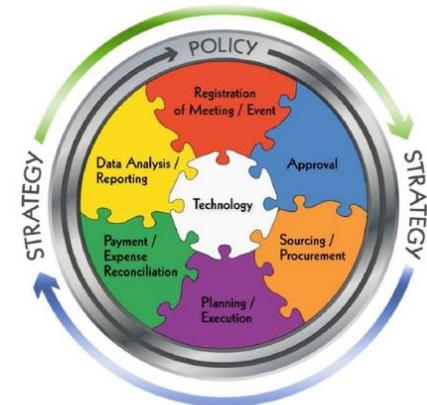
A key place to start may be with **EVENT REGISTRATION** platforms. What can you do? What are the benefits?

- Capture spend & manage budgets
- Automate workflow
- Source hotels, venues, and vendors
- Record contracted services and manage historical data
- Manage preferred suppliers
- Report year over year results
- Integrate TRAVEL (Air/Hotel)
- Report Statistics and Surveys
- Increase efficiencies
- Decrease labor costs
- Increase accuracy
- Improve customer service
- Automate rote functions
- Streamline communications
- DECREASE spend
- Mitigate risk

Look for platforms that will support most, if not all, of your activities across the organization. Utilize registration as a “dashboard” that will keep all departments, business units, brands, or other divisions operating in the same overall policy and system; this, you can prevent silos from forming and the risks that accompany them.

Recent significant advancements in technology offer full integration of domestic and international air and car spend with meeting spend! From customized e-marketing to full data and spend management, attendees register, respond to custom questions, and seamlessly register for hotel, air and car! Cvent and SignUp4 are top in this field, with two-way integration for automated booking tool integration or air

Components of a Best in Class  
Strategic Meetings Management Program (SMMP)



NETA  
National Executive Travel Association  
International Property of IATA, GDS, Groups & Priority Center

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travel requests. The process is managed for employee and non-employee attendees, and spend can be automatically coded to the single meeting ID for reporting.

Global SMMPs need to select platforms that will work across all regions, currencies, and languages. Look carefully at who can handle local servers, and evaluate partners for long term strategy in your SMMP rollout.

Organizations can purchase full licenses OR outsource to third party registration managers. Typically, outsourcing to third parties the licensing and operations result in saving significant costs and time annually. Leverage their volume and expertise, and let the experts help you prevent the headaches and delays of the learning curve.

With a solid registration platform, you're on your way to developing a strong SMMP.

## **Resources:**

*Building a Strategic Meetings Management Program*, National Business Travel Association, Second Edition, July 2008

*Meetings and Events: Where Savings Meet Success*, CWT Travel Management Institute, 2011

GBTA Study Examines State of Strategic Meetings Management Programs to North America", Press Release, October 2, 2013 ([http://www.gbta.org/PressReleases/Pages/rls\\_100213.aspx](http://www.gbta.org/PressReleases/Pages/rls_100213.aspx) )

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