

CATEGORY 9. MEETINGS AND BUSINESS TOURISM

This category is open – but not limited to – conference facilities and other meetings industry operators, service providers and suppliers who maximise the tourism experience for meetings and business travellers.

Important notes:

- *Conference facilities entering this category should focus on the range and diversity of meetings and business events held at their facility and the flow on tourism benefits.*
- *Accommodation providers entering this category should focus only on their meetings and business events industry activities and the flow-on tourism benefits.*
- *Service providers and suppliers entering this category should focus on the types of meetings and business events they have been directly involved with or managed and the flow on tourism benefits.*

Important reminders:

- *Entrants must ensure their answers refer specifically to the product and category they are entering.*
- *Entrants are encouraged to answer questions to highlight participation in tourism related accreditation programs.*

Question 1. Product (20 points)

- a) Provide a general overview of the nature and history of your business. You must demonstrate your eligibility for entry in this category as outlined in the descriptor above.
- b) Describe your services and/or facilities.
- c) What additional tourism services do you provide for the meetings and business traveller?

TIPS: Part a) Consider stating where you are located geographically (perhaps include a map shot) and including a picture to help judges visualise your business.

Part c) Additional tourism services could include pre- and post-touring packages, tourism information provided in registration kits or at registration desks.

Question 2. Business Plans (20 points)

- a) Describe the key features of your business plan for example goals, strategies and outcomes.
- b) Demonstrate your financial viability. If your business has not experienced growth, explain.
- c) Describe the risk issues you have identified for your business and summarise the risk mitigation strategies you have put in place.
- d) Demonstrate your involvement in, and contribution to, the tourism industry. Explain how it contributes to the success of your business and the tourism industry as a whole.

TIPS: Part a) Explain what you were trying to achieve i.e. your business vision, how you went about it and the related outcomes.

Part b) would benefit from the inclusion of graphs illustrating income and expenditure and/or nett profit/loss for the qualifying period. This could be presented as a percentage or dollar value.

To demonstrate if your business is viable you can show:

- An increase in average spend
- Reduction in loans
- Amount of forward bookings compared to previous year
- Agents/wholesalers – 3rd party referrals
- A percentage increase
- Customer numbers (have they increased?)

Judges want to see that you've got plans in place (particularly if you're a new business) to ensure the continuity of your business, that you have a pipeline. That could be:

- You have a relationship with local Visitor Information Centre or other sources for referrals
- Repeat customers

You can also show that you've done research into things like the lifetime value of a customer.

Part c) Risk management relates to all parts of your business including risk to the visiting public, specific business related risk and Occupational Health and Safety. Consider using a practical example or detail an incident and outcome to prove how your risk management strategy works. Also consider displaying information in a matrix form and identifying levels of risk.

Part d) Demonstrate your involvement at local, state and/or national level. Examples could include promotion of your city or region as a meetings and business destination, cooperation with local and state tourism authorities, tourism accreditation, active membership of industry associations, leadership in industry forums, involvement in tradeshows etc.

Question 3. Marketing (20 points)

- a) Who are your target markets and how did you identify them?
- b) Describe the marketing strategies used to attract each target market and detail the success/outcomes of those strategies.
- c) What is your distinctive difference and how do you promote it to attract each of your target markets?
- d) Demonstrate how potential clients are provided with an accurate and responsible depiction of what to expect from the experience/product.

TIPS: Consider all arms of marketing (e.g. sales, advertising, public relations, word of mouth and e-marketing) where appropriate. Your objective should be to demonstrate a clear plan, supported by market research, and the results achieved.

Part a) Explain what research you used to identify them.

Part b) Consider displaying your target markets and the strategies and outcomes for each in a table format. Ideally there should be a strategy described for each target market listed in part a).

Part d) relates to your marketing material e.g. brochures, flyers, advertising, website etc. and keeping them up to date.

Question 4. Customer Service and Professional Development (20 points)

- a) Explain how you achieve and maintain quality customer service throughout your organisation.
- b) How do you identify and provide for people with specific needs?
- c) State the number of people working in the business and explain how you identify and determine professional development needs.
- d) Describe the range of training/skill development programs undertaken.

TIPS: Part a) Consider how you stay abreast of industry developments. Other points to consider could include your repeat business strategy, feedback collection and changes implemented based on feedback.

Part b) Specific needs could include language, physical, intellectual, dietary and other special needs e.g. groups, special interest etc.

Part c) You should consider fulltime, part-time, casual and volunteers.

Part d) Points to consider could include the objective of staff/self training/skill development programs, how they were measured, the extent of uptake and outcomes for the business.

Question 5: Sustainability and Innovation (20 points)

- a) Describe and demonstrate your commitment to environmental sustainability.
- b) Describe how your business benefits and respects local community values and culture.
- c) Describe any innovations that have taken place during the qualifying period to improve your business and the specific benefits achieved.

TIPS: Part a) could include energy and water conservation, building design and location, waste management, recycling, engaging environmentally sensitive procedures and accreditation programs.

Part b) Benefits to the local community could include apprenticeships, in-kind contributions, employment of local residents, partnerships with community-based organisations etc. The use of local products and services could include food and beverage suppliers, service providers, tradespeople, and local building material. If local products and services are not available, briefly explain.

Part c) Include innovations which have taken place to improve your visitor experience, infrastructure development, new marketing ideas or sales activities. Innovations do not include routine repairs and maintenance.

Total score: 100 points