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Five steps to connecting place branding and business event attraction

In many ways, business events are the perfect melting pot for place brands. Done right, they showcase your existing sectoral strengths, welcome potential residents and investors to experience your unique quality of life proposition, and bring footfall and spending into your town centres.

With that in mind, what can places do to ensure their business attraction strategy strengthens their place brand proposition and delivers longer-tail benefits that extend beyond the event dates themselves? Five of our expert place branding partners shared their insights to help you refine your strategy.

1. Identify which business events will help your existing businesses thrive.

Good places know who they are by listening to their businesses and other organisations about what is important to their success. Great places get where they want to be by addressing those priorities and helping their businesses thrive. Often this is in the form of events that reinforce or strengthen industry clusters to attract qualified talent, induce synergistic businesses and celebrate successes.

Rob Hunden, Founder & CEO, [Hunden Partners](#)

2. Get your place proposition in front of the right event planners.

Attracting the right business events to your destination means getting your message in front of meeting and event planners. Meeting and event planners are a niche audience, and it's critical to leverage the right tools to target the right people and make your budget count. Pair custom-built audiences with targeted messaging that highlight innovative key industries in your destination to reach, persuade, and convert meeting and convention decision-makers in those verticals to meet in your destination. Ensure your messaging tells an authentic story that speaks true to your destination's brand vision.

Sarah Chen, Marketing Manager, Global Destinations, [Sojern](#)

3. Bring your place brand to life at business events to drive interest.

Forge Partnerships: Identify which industries will be attracted to your place brand messages, then work with local industry associations, destination marketing organisations, economic development organisations, chambers of commerce and business groups to identify business events within these industries to woo.

Create Customised Event Experiences: Curate unique experience that reinforce the brand vision while piquing the curiosity of conference delegates. Organise industry-specific tours, workshops or networking events that showcase the destination's assets.

Spotlight Innovation: Create physical spaces for showcasing innovations made in the destination, cutting-edge services and products. Make it immersive and visually appealing, so photos are shared on social media.

Dariel Y. Curren, EVP, [Development Counsellors International](#)

4. Collaborate to stand out from the crowd – but make sure you keep offering competitive incentives.

Many destinations have adopted a sector focused business events strategy in order to leverage their strengths in particular industry clusters to attract events associated with those sectors. Working with local leaders from those sectors is one of the most efficient ways to attract those events, but as more destinations adopt this strategy and competition for these events increases, destinations will increasingly need to provide financial support to attract, incubate and grow these into showcase sector events. I think we will see more destinations working with other agencies and government partners to provide financial incentives to attract or grow these marquee sector events as they are increasingly viewed as not only beneficial to the local tourism economy, but as catalysts for sector based economic development and investment attraction as well.

Chris Fair, President & CEO, [Resonance Consultancy](#)

5. Develop a long-term plan that meets the needs of your community.

To attract business events, places should leverage unique strengths, develop a long-term plan integrating tourism and economy, create authentic experiences, and adopt innovative technologies. Prioritise community values in branding, support impactful event legacies, and align visitor experiences with resident quality of life. Foster equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility. Collaborate with airlines, address workforce shortages, and enhance local engagement. Support arts, small businesses, and community groups. Use AI technology for marketing and incentivize event attraction. Consider merging with other organisations to increase impact, and address social and environmental issues.

Manolis Psarros, CEO & Chief Strategist, [Toposophy](#)