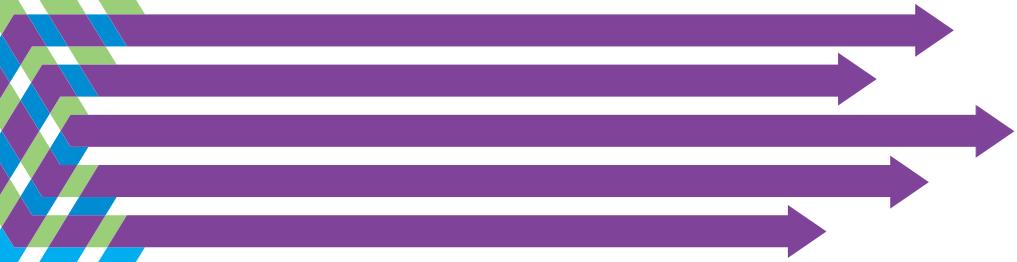




Why 'Now' is the Time for Companies to **Manage Small, Simple Meetings**



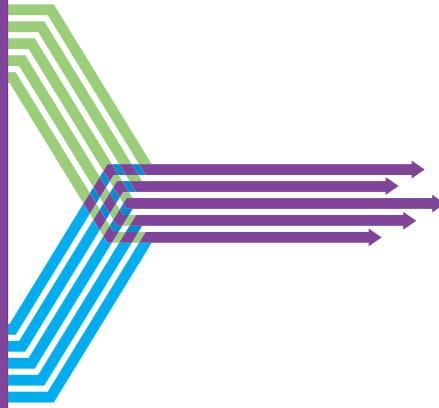
For all the progress many corporations have made in recent years in deploying strategic practices and policies to help manage their meetings programs, one aspect of meetings management remains a slippery challenge: the management of small, simple meetings. Whether designed to train employees, strategize, teambuild, meet with customers or any other purpose, small, simple meetings can represent as much as 80 percent of an organization's events, and some meetings practitioners are beginning to realize the benefits of developing a companywide strategy and exploring new technologies to better manage them.

While cost savings through better negotiations are an opportunity, the benefits of managing small, simple meetings extend far beyond dollars saved. Among the most compelling advantages small meetings management offers is the ability to better capture the attendee and spending data of these meetings and their attendees. Better visibility into that data allows organizations not only the ability to help track the locations of meeting attendees from a duty-of-care perspective but also the chance to leverage spending data for the purpose of future negotiations.

This white paper focuses on the opportunities that managing small, simple meetings can offer, as well as the strategies practitioners can use to help develop and deploy such strategies. In detailing the opportunities, this paper highlights why companies can no longer afford inaction on this topic. Now is the time to develop and deploy a strategy to finally address this subject.

What is a small meeting?

*Definitions vary:
25-100 attendees,
10+ room nights,
\$10,000 or more in spend.*



Defining Small Meetings

Unlike many aspects of the corporate travel and meetings industries, there's not a single industry-standard definition of what constitutes a small meeting, or even the metric that should be used to determine it. Some organizations consider the number of attendees as the determining factor, but even among them, that threshold differs.

A February 2018 survey by Successful Meetings magazine of corporate, association and third-party planners found 38 percent of respondents considered a small meeting to include 25 attendees or less, but 12 percent considered any meeting with fewer than 100 attendees small, with the remainder in between.

Others use meeting budgets as the determinative metric. World Bank, for example, requires the owner of any meeting with a budget of at least \$10,000 to use the services of its meetings department, according to Business Travel News. The spend threshold for others starts at \$5,000. A couple of companies that initially set lower thresholds for centralized sourcing recently increased it to \$25,000 due to demand for its services.

Still others consider whether a meeting involves the use of overnight hotel guest rooms or airfares to judge whether it is labeled small. Increasingly, companies are looking at the purpose of a meeting or attendee profiles to define simple or small meetings.

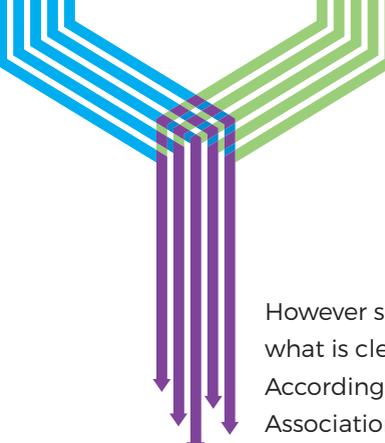
DEFINING SMALL SIMPLE MEETINGS

Size..... Fewer than 10, 25, 50 or 100 people or room night

Meeting Purpose..... Internal stakeholder, board, field marketing, retreats, training or others where focus is on intellectual capital of those in room rather than entertainment, external speakers, big productions

Cost..... Less than \$5,000, \$10,000, \$20,000, \$25,000 or other parameters

Contractual Complexity..... Can meeting be executed using standard contracts or terms and conditions in place with preferred suppliers?



However small, simple meetings are defined, what is clear is that there is a lot of them. According to July 2018 Global Business Travel Association research, including a survey of 408 travel managers and meeting planners, half of all corporate meetings qualify as small and “simple”—less than 50 attendees, but requiring meeting space. Solution providers claim small, simple meetings could represent as much as 80 percent of all meetings.

The Trouble With Today’s Small Meetings Procedures

Very often, small and simple meetings are planned and executed outside of formal policy and outside the purview of a travel or meetings management department. Frequently, an administrative assistant of the department that wishes to hold the meeting will serve as an ad hoc planner, or perhaps the manager responsible for the budget in question will take on the role. In either case, the nonprofessional planner

the meeting owner are clear. Doing so is quick. It’s probably easier than dealing with another department, and any hassle they receive will probably be after the fact. And the manager or admin may enjoy their temporary status as a meeting planner.

At some corporations, especially those with decentralized operating structures, this isn’t necessarily a problem. After all, if a business unit or department has its own budget and expenses stay within it, what’s the harm of allowing admins to plan small, simple meetings? True, they may not be getting the best value for their meetings dollar, but if the manager feels it’s worth it and remains within budget, why interject additional procedures into a process with a relatively small price tag?

The big answer is data. There are plenty of downsides to a hands-off approach, particularly as it relates to corporate risk, but the ability to capture the attendee and spending data associated with a small meeting helps to not only minimize that risk but improve negotiations, leverage spending, better manage duty of care, and maybe help to improve the effectiveness of the meeting itself for employee and customer attendees.

The Data Advantage

When Parexel International decided to improve its management of small meetings via a central registration process, director of procurement and travel Benjamin Park knew he would meet resistance.

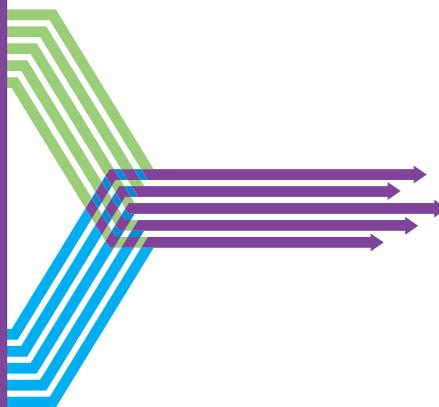
“For me, the reason it’s so hard to tackle small meetings is that it’s decentralized, but also the admins mostly know where they want to go, and from the travel management or procurement perspective, we cannot add a lot of sourcing value because [individually] these are

Data, risk management, spend leverage are among downsides of decentralized plan.

often will call a nearby hotel to see if they have the space available for the meeting on the given dates, and then book it, if possible. They’ll often reserve the space with and eventually settle the bill with the corporate card they use for other reimbursable expenses. The advantages of operating in this manner for

“We’re trying to push small meetings to a preferred hotel and use our negotiated rates, which are usually lower than a meeting room rate,”

~ Parexel’s Benjamin Park



not big-dollar amounts,” Park told BTN in 2017. “In their eyes, all we can do is throw process at them, like contract reviews and payment. In that world, we’re just putting additional work to them without adding value.”

Park’s tale is common. Removing contract-signing authority from nonprofessional planners to limit damages is considered by many practitioners a bedrock best practice of strategic meetings management, but removing other aspects of the planning process might engender more resistance, despite the potential time savings for those admins in removing that process from their workloads.

Park largely sidestepped that aspect, focusing instead on capturing the data associated with the event. “We said [to admins], ‘Don’t change anything the admins are doing. Just tell us where you sign the contract, give us some basic rough data and send us a copy of the contract. We’re not touching anything in your process, just give us information,’” he said. “That was just getting the data.”

There are many benefits to getting that data. One key aspect is the ability to track over a period of time the hotels that are used to host meetings. Practitioners can see whether particular properties, brands or chains are

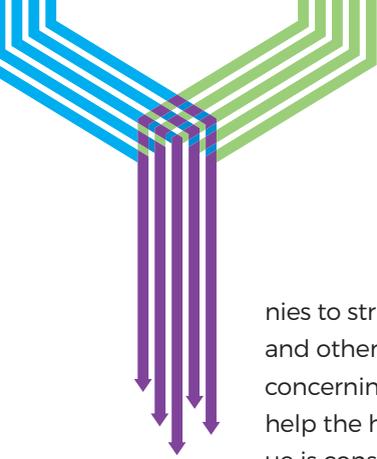
popular sites and possible approach them, armed with historical meetings and expenditure data, about the possibility of a broader deal. Or practitioners can see whether sites chosen conflict or align with preferred transient properties, and possibly drive more meetings business to the latter, if applicable.

“We’re trying with these small meetings to basically push it to a preferred hotel and use our negotiated rate there, which is usually lower than a meeting room rate, and then basically just negotiate on the conference room and other amenities,” Park said.

Alternatively, organizers could require the use of a request-for-proposals process among potential sites for a meeting, to help ensure whoever is planning the meeting receives a competitive price. According to GBTA’s survey, 70 percent of its respondents don’t follow a required bidding process for booking simple meetings.

Duty of Care and Other Benefits

But better venue negotiations are just one available advantage of more comprehensive small meetings management. Another is duty of care. While the laws of individual countries on the topic of corporate responsibility for attendees of its meetings can vary, generally speaking there are regulations that require those compa-



nies to strive to ensure the safety of employees and others at its events. The ability to have data concerning site selection and attendee lists can help the hosting company ensure that the venue is considered a safe and secure site and also enable attendees to be tracked and located in case of emergency.

Leveraging Spend and Customer Experience

More comprehensive management also can improve the effectiveness of small, simple meetings. It can be a challenge to measure the return on a small meetings investment, particularly in terms of hard dollars. But particularly for small meetings focused on training, strategizing or teambuilding—incidentally, the three goals best accomplished by small meetings, according to the Successful Meetings survey—the practitioner could provide tools like post-event

nities could be negotiated for customer attendees during the event. Afterward, customer attendees could receive surveys to assess the effectiveness of the meeting in the sales process.

How to Manage

Deploying a strategy for better management of and data capture for small, simple meetings can be a challenge, but the most effective instrument to achieve it is also the bluntest: a policy mandate that requires meeting owners to report when they plan an event.

That's how Estée Lauder Companies began to manage small meetings after an audit of payment data showed that the company was spending millions of dollars each year on them, director of global travel and meetings Jami Stapelmann told BTN in 2017.

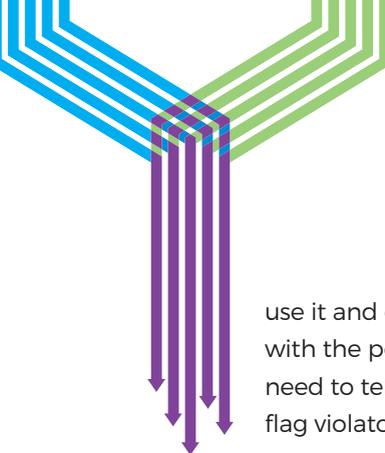
"We require registration of all meetings and events per our policy, but in the past, we thought small meetings were low value, low risk, so we only required registration for events of 20 [people] or more," Stapelmann said. "Now we require registration of anything that might be a meeting and then [my team] evaluates it ... and routes it where it needs to go."

Policy mandates, though, can cause friction in certain corporate cultures that frown on top-down management. Still, ensuring the registration of meetings through a central point won't necessarily cause a backlash, particularly if that's the extent of the mandate and the meeting owner still has control of the parts of the event they consider the most important. "We have our policy that meetings above the value of \$25,000 must go through a sourcing process," Park said. "But honestly, our strategy is that our policy stays in the background and ideally, we create a system where people like to

Consistent attendee experiences are of concern for some companies.

surveys and interviews that can assess whether the meeting successfully met pre-event goals. The tactics used to convey the information could be assessed, with successful strategies repeated and less effective methods jettisoned.

Similarly, for meetings that include customer attendees, more comprehensive management can enhance the customer experience. If the practitioner has a relationship with a hotel property or company, or if the company has directed significant business to the hotel, it's possible extra ame-



use it and don't realize that they are compliant with the policy. If we're adding value, we don't need to tell them the policy and don't need to flag violators."

Having those meetings registered at a central point offers companies contract signing authority, centralized sourcing and better fulfillment of duty-of-care responsibilities. It also can assist with expense management and payment, particularly if expenses are paid with meeting cards. The use of a meeting card can separate meeting expenses from other corporate expenses, including travel, and allow not only the company but also the meeting owner better visibility into the true cost of a meeting.

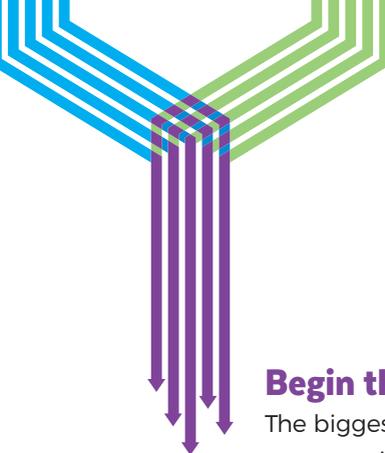
Estée Lauder has designated meeting cards as the preferred form of meetings payment, but to receive reimbursement, meeting owners must have a designated meetings identification code, Stapelmann said. "When they go to the reconciliation tool, that's a required field. If

they haven't registered their event, they won't be able to reconcile the charges and that will delay payment," she said. "We also added the meeting ID to the corporate expense tool because some charges aren't on the meeting card but we want to pull the total cost of the meeting to that particular event."

Anthem Inc. has taken the concept a step further, helping its expense management supplier develop a meetings module that receives data feeds from its meeting card and other payment providers and reconciles it with meetings data provided by its meetings technology provider, Cvent, including the ID number of the meeting owner and cost center, Anthem director of travel and events Cindy Heston told BTN in 2016.

"It can really bring such transparency to the budget owner, reviewer or manager so they know step-by-step what's going on with that event, what the charges are and they can ask questions as things are being entered," Heston said.

STEPS TO MANAGE SMALL, SIMPLE MEETINGS		
<p>ESTIMATE Numbers of Small Meetings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Review corporate card charges for hotels › Review accounting or general ledger hotel costs - cost of more than \$5,000 could be meetings › Ask preferred suppliers to send any reports on meeting expenditures from your company › Invite all business unit managers and/or admin assistants to complete a brief survey to estimate overall number of small, simple meetings, pain points in planning and any › Review all hotel contracts on file with legal or procurement teams 	<p>IDENTIFY Key Benefits for Your Organization</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Duty of care › Better leverage spending › Better staff utilization › Scheduling efficiencies from master meeting calendar › Risk mitigation: Reduce or eliminate cancellation penalties › Procurement /contracting efficiencies › Branding consistency › Customer service enhancements › Savings 	<p>AUTOMATE Ways to Use Technology to Better Manage Process</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Create meeting request with budget › Route request through defined approval workflow › Route approved requests to central venue sourcing that considers cancelled meeting credits, negotiated rates, preferred providers and real-time booking capabilities in sourcing › Once contracted, enter hotel spend into budget tool › Create registration site, but preload attendees to ease process › Invite meeting attendees to confirm, decline, indicate room needs › Post-event, upload expenses, reg updates into budget tools › Send post-event survey to attendees to define ROI



Begin the Process

The biggest obstacle to small meetings management is often “where to begin.” Early adopters and technology platforms urge buyers to just “start somewhere, anywhere” to garner data necessary to develop either short- or longer-term strategies to most effectively manage small, simple meetings within their cultures and organizational structures. In addition to strategies, companies are increasingly finding ways to automate or exploring new technologies in the market now or coming this year.

Companies may opt to roll out policies, mandates or communications on contracting of small meetings. Others prefer to begin with a payment card platform on which all small meeting costs are to be billed to gather data.

With the debut of new technologies to address small, simple meetings, others have opted to deploy such tools that can range from meeting request forms to real-time booking portals that finally provide one-stop shopping for meeting owners or planners.

The goal is to have the policies, communications, resources and technologies necessary to manage small, simple meetings as effectively as each company manages the purchasing of larger meetings, travel or other services. Most importantly, the approach must provide data needed to document savings and sourcing expertise and duty of care of all attendees, and ensure company standards on brand and customer experience consistency are followed.

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About Cvent, Inc.

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Cvent is a leading meetings, events, and hospitality software company with more than 3,700 employees, 25,000 customers, and 300,000 users worldwide. The Cvent Event Cloud offers software solutions to event planners and marketers for online event registration, venue selection, event management and marketing, onsite solutions, and attendee engagement. Cvent's suite of products automate and simplify the planning process to maximize the impact of events. The Cvent Hospitality Cloud partners with hotels and venues to help them drive group and corporate travel business. Hotels use the Cvent Hospitality Cloud's digital marketing tools and software solutions to win business through Cvent's sourcing platforms and to service their customers directly, efficiently and profitably – helping them grow and own their business. Cvent solutions optimize the entire event management value chain and have enabled clients around the world to manage millions of meetings and events.

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