Development of an instrument for accessing quality of a Convention and Visitors Bureau Web site

Myounghee Ha

University of Nevada, Las Vegas

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DEVELOPMENT OF AN INSTRUMENT FOR ACCESSING QUALITY OF A
CONVENTION AND VISITORS BUREAU WEB SITE

by

Myounghee Ha

Bachelor of Science
Dankook University
1997

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the

Master of Science Degree
William F. Harrah College of Hotel Administration

Graduate College
University of Nevada, Las Vegas
August 2003
Thesis Approval
The Graduate College
University of Nevada, Las Vegas

May 16, 20_20_

The Thesis prepared by
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Entitled
Development of an Instrument for Accessing Quality of a Convention
and Visitors Bureau Web Site

is approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Science in Hotel Administration

Examination Committee Chair

Dean of the Graduate College

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Examination Committee Member

Graduate College Faculty Representative

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ABSTRACT

Development of an Instrument for Accessing Quality of a Convention and Visitors Bureau Web Site

by

Myounghee Ha

Dr. Curtis Love, Examination Committee Chair
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University of Nevada, Las Vegas

The continuing growth of the Internet and its associated technology has created a new type of market for meeting managers and Convention and Visitors Bureaus (CVBs), and has become a viable alternative to traditional communication media and service delivery tools. As Internet and web site usage by meeting managers' increase, CVBs should enhance and upgrade their web sites to keep in step with customers' needs and expectations.

The purpose of this study is to identify general usage and overall perceptions of CVB web sites and CVB web sites' content items and design attributes that are most important as perceived by meeting planners. In addition, this study developed a valid instrument for measuring the quality of CVB web sites, as perceived by meeting planners. Instrument development was based the content analysis of the CVB web sites of the top 10 US convention cities and an extensive literature review of the major studies on web site
evaluation criteria and web site success. Data was collected from 202 meeting planners via an on-line survey.

The results of comparison of perceived importance of content items suggested that meeting managers perceived “Hotel and meeting facilities information” to be the most important content items followed by “Area map” and “Transportation information”. The results of the instrument refinement and the instrument validation show that effective CVB web site design includes four design concepts: information quality, navigation and accessibility, experience, and service quality.

The findings of the study provide guidelines for CVB web site developments and quality strategies. CVBs can ensure that they develop sites that rank high on all aspects of content items as perceived by meeting planners. In addition, utilizing the instrument developed by this study, CVBs can monitor the quality of their web sites over time.
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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

It is with great joy and honor that I take this opportunity to thank all the people that have stood by me and supported me at different stages. First, I would like to express my deepest appreciation to Dr. Curtis Love, my thesis chairman, for his tremendous effort working with me on this thesis, valuable suggestions, and continuous support. I also would like to thank my committee members, Dr. John Bowen, Dr. Ronda Montgomery, Dr. Wenyu Dou, for providing me sound feedback at each stage of my thesis. I was fortunate to have four wonderful professors that were interested in my learning, my growth, and my accomplishment.

I am very grateful to Mr. Terry Jinsinsky, Vice-President of Marketing at Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority (IACVA) for his advice and interest in the study and development of the questionnaire. I also thank all the people who participated in my survey, especially those who provided me valuable comments in the pretest phase.

Above all, I would like to dedicate this thesis to my parents. From half way around the world, their belief in me, unconditional love and support has always provided me a great motivation working on this study.
CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Since 1896, when the first Convention bureau was formed in Detroit, Michigan, Convention and Visitors Bureaus (CVB) have performed various activities to facilitate destination marketing and development. Today, there are more than 500 CVBs representing 30 countries who are members of the International Association of Convention Visitors Bureau (IACVB, 2002).

One of the CVBs primary market segments, the meetings, incentives, conventions, and exhibitions (MICE) industry, has contributed significant economic impacts for destinations throughout US. The total number of meetings held in the US in 1999 was 1,021,500, an increase of four percent over 1998 (Meetings & convention’s, 2000) and total meeting spending in 2000 was estimated to be $122.1 billion dollars, an increase of eight percent over 1998 (Moran, 2001). The continuing growth of meetings, conventions, and trade shows has led to an increased importance of understanding meeting planner’s needs, because of their role as decision- makers or key influencers in the site selection process (Clark et al., 1996). In an attempt to solicit meetings, conventions or trade shows, CVBs provide every possible service and a variety of information to meeting planners. However, a number of studies and trade articles indicated dissatisfaction with CVB services by meeting planners (Barley, 1998; Weber and Roehl, 2001; Baloglu and Love, 2002).
Today, CVBs confront a variety of challenges, such as decreased numbers of meeting/convention attendees due to the slow economic recovery in many parts of the world, the impact of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, threat of future incidents of terrorism, wars, and increased convention center expansions crippled with a slowdown in convention attendance (Jackson, 2000; Ross, 2003). According to estimates by Tradeshow Week magazine (Bergen, 2002), exhibit space available in the U.S. and Canada rose 7.1 percent in 2002, to 72.4 million square feet, but use of space was estimated to fall by 5 percent.

One of challenges and opportunities CVBs confront is the growing importance of information technology (IT), especially the Internet. In the US online travel represents about 8 per cent of all travel dollars spent, and that proportion is expected to rise to about 20 per cent by 2004 (Travel Industry Association of America, 2001). The emergence of the Internet affects the meetings and convention as well. A survey conducted by Successful Meetings (2001) showed that 75 % of respondents regularly use the Internet, averaging 6.7 hours online per week. Two areas where the web site is making a major difference in the meetings and convention industry are the way meeting planners search venues and destinations, and the way they communicate with suppliers (Marymor, 2000).

Effective use of Internet and web sites has emerged as one of core determinants in sustaining CVBs’ competitive advantage. Today, almost all CVBs have their own web sites and have used their web sites for improving access to information, customer service, and communication (Yuan and Fesenmaier, 2000). Through their web sites, CVBs are able to greatly enhance the speed of co-work with meeting planners. For example, meeting planners can get faster response from facilities, by completing an On-line
Request for Proposal to locate facilities that meet their specific meeting requirements. In fact, a number of trade articles (Bebder, 2001; Davis, 2001; Dimon, 2001; Seli, 2001) show CVBs have developed their websites to be more user-friendly and interactive in order to compete with other destination marketing organizations within the growing Internet marketing environment. Likewise, well-designed and maintained web sites will be one of CVB’s predominant business tools in the near future (Dimon, 2001).

Problem Statement

Evaluation of the effectiveness of a web site is essential because there are significant costs involved in setup and maintenance of a web site. In order to design more effective websites for the end user, the ongoing operations of the web site should undergo appropriate adjustments in response to customer feedback. However, CVBs often find it difficult to assess what comprises a viable and effective CVB web site.

Existing instruments for assessing the quality of web sites or web site evaluation models are limited to a few specific areas such as electronic commerce, or are primarily based on provider’s perspective. Therefore, they are not adequate in evaluating CVB web sites in a systematic manner. To date, research on perceptions of CVB web sites by meeting managers has been limited. As a result, the study for a CVB web site design guideline based on consumer research is substantively needed.

This study seeks to examine general usage and overall perceptions of CVB web sites and content items and design attributes that are most useful for meeting planners. In addition, this study developed a valid instrument of the quality of CVB web sites, as perceived by meeting planners.
Research Objectives and Questions

The main objective of the study is to develop an empirically validated instrument based on meeting planners’ perspectives, which identifies the dimensions of quality of a CVB web site and uncovers the effective design concepts.

This study will address the following research questions:

1. What is the overall perception of meeting managers toward CVB websites?
2. What are the most important determinants of CVB website content items and design attributes perceived by meeting managers?
3. Using a defined list of website evaluation criteria, what are the major design attributes determining CVB web site quality?

Significance of the Study

This study would be valuable to CVBs, meeting planners, and researchers in three ways:

1. The results of this study will assist CVBs in the design and development of their web sites. CVBs can ensure that they develop sites that rank high on all aspects of content and design attributes as perceived important by their meeting planners.
2. Utilizing the instrument developed by this study, CVBs can evaluate and monitor the quality of their web sites over time. Furthermore it can serve as a guide of comparing CVB sites with competitor sites’ quality.
3. An instrument developed in this study can be modified for any future web site quality research as new technologies are continually being developed.
Definitions of Terms

1. Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB)- Convention and visitor bureaus (known as conference and/or tourism boards in many countries) are primarily not-for-profit organizations that represent a specific destination such as a city or region. CVBs serve as the “official” contact point for their destination for meeting professionals, tour operators and individual visitors (IACVB, 2002).

2. Hyperlink- An object that is embedded on a web page such as picture, graphic or text that contains an established connection to another location on the World Wide Web.

3. International Association Convention Visitors Bureau (IACVB)- The association of convention and visitor bureaus, serving more than 1,200 members in approximately 500 destination management organizations in 30 countries. IACVB was founded in 1914 to promote sound professional practices in the solicitation and servicing of meetings, conventions and tourism. Today, IACVB provides educational resources and networking opportunities to its members, and information on the CVB industry to the public (IACVB, 2002).

4. Keyword- Word or phrase users submit to a search engine and word or phrase used in Meta tags.

5. Meeting professional/ Planner – Individuals who have a wide variety of responsibilities based on the organization and attendees they serve. They function as negotiator, accountant, arbitrator, communicator, logistic site selection of the meeting, establishment of the meeting objective, management of budgets,
entertainment and social functions, and trade show and exhibition planning (Dotson, 1988)

6. Meeting Professionals International (MPI)- The leading global community committed to shaping and defining the future of the meeting and event industry. Today, MPI has over 15,000 members in 44 countries. It is recognized as the world’s largest association of meeting professional. Core market is the corporate planners (MPI, 2002).

7. Professional Convention Management Association (PCMA)- The Professional Convention Management Association (PCMA) is a nonprofit international association of professionals in the meetings industry whose mission is to deliver breakthrough education and promote the value of professional convention management. Core market is the association meeting planners (PCMA, 2002a).

8. Search Engine- A computer program that allows users to locate specific information in a database or mass of data.

9. Request For Proposal (RFP)- A document that stipulates the services an organization wants from an outside contractor and requests a bid to perform such services (PCMA, 2002b)

10. Universal Resource Locator (URL)- A standard form for an address for files accessible over the Internet.
CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB)

Since 1896, when the first convention bureau was established in Detroit (Gartrell, 1994), convention and visitors bureaus (CVBs) have become an important organization within the tourism industry (Fesenmaier & O’Leary, 1992). Indeed, the International Association of Convention Visitors Bureau (IACVB) reported that the IACVB represents approximately 500 destination management organizations in 30 countries (IACVB, 2002). CVBs act as destination developers as well as destination representatives. The main role of the CVB is to develop, promote, and maintain an image that will position its city as an attractive destination for meetings and visitors (Gartell, 1994). Montgomery and Strick (1995) indicate the four primary responsibilities of CVBs are:

1. To encourage groups to hold meetings, conventions, and trade shows in the area it representing;
2. To assist those groups with meeting preparation and to lend support throughout the meeting;
3. To encourage tourists to visit the historic, cultural, and recreational opportunities the city or area has to offer; and
To develop and promote the image of the community it represents (p.19).

Most CVBs are independent, not-for-profit organizations, though some remain departments of governments or divisions of chambers of commerce (Morrison, Bruen & Anderson, 1998). The average CVB is funded primarily from public sources (82%), mainly, room taxes. The remaining revenue came from private sources (18%) such as membership dues, advertising, promotional participation, merchandise sales, co-op advertising, interest, and building revenue (Hungate & Tack, 2001). CVBs serve as the liaison between visitors and meeting planners, and the host destination. They collect information from host facilities such as hotels, attractions, restaurants, and shops in order to provide information to potential visitors. Due to these information related activities, Yuan and Fesenmaier (2000) note that the primary role of CVBs is as "Information Broker".

Two major market segments to which CVBs promote are the conventions and meetings and the travel market. Among the two, the convention and meetings market continues to expand and brings a significant economic impact to the host destination. According to the Chicago Convention and Tourism Bureau (2002), a total of 7,457,833 meeting travelers gathered in Chicago in 2001. They spent more than $6 billion dollars. Convention economic impact on Las Vegas, another first tier convention city, was estimated at $4.8 billion in 2001 (LVCVA, 2002). It was $1.4 billion in 1990. In order to solicit the meetings and conventions to their destination, CVBs spend more than one-fourth of their budget on convention sales and marketing (Hungate & Tack, 2001).
Relationship between Meeting Planners and CVBs

CVBs have provided appropriate support in planning meetings, conventions or trade shows so meeting organizers can make the best possible use of all the services, facilities, and attractions that the destination can offer. Figure 1 illustrates the dependent role of CVBs (Gartrell, 1993). At every phase of the meeting planning process, CVBs act as a key intermediary between the planner, hotels, facilities, attractions, and other providers of goods and service.

Figure 1 The Liaison Role of CVBs

The various services CVB can provide to the meeting planners are well documented in the academic literature and the trade publications (Migdal, 1993; Gartrell, 1993;
Tennant, 2001; Torrence, 2001; Connell, 2002). Gartrell (1993) classified services into three steps according to the sequence of meetings, conventions, and trade shows: (a) before the event held, (b) during the event, and (c) following its closure. Before the event is held, CVBs assist with site selection. If a meeting planner asks the facility for information, CVB representatives would send leads to those facilities that can best accommodate the specific meeting requirements. In addition, CVBs sales people also can arrange site inspections. They take the meeting planners to the hotels and convention centers. Since CVBs are representing their destination and its business, CVBs should provide unbiased and accurate information that facilitates planning an event. The CVB will inform the planner about lists of convention vendors, local entertainment, transportation, activities, restaurants, and even local regulations and laws such as union regulations, tax rates, and liquor laws (Torrence, 2001). Additional services may include housing and registration assistance, and attendance promotion.

While a meeting, convention or trade show is held, the CVB provides relevant services such as an information desk for convention delegates, shuttle transportation, emergency service, and welcome banners. The CVB can assist with the sponsorship of a reception, meals or events (Gartrell, 1994). The relationship between meeting planners and CVB staffs continues after the event. The CVB will send a thank you letter to show organizers, including the housing report that summarizes the actual number of sleeping rooms, cancellation, and no show percentage (Connell, 2002). Also a CVB will request registration statistics and a post meeting evaluation.
Academic Research on CVBs

In spite of the increasing important role of CVBs within the tourism industry, there has been little research concerning CVBs. Morrison, et al. (1998) identified overall CVB functions and examined characteristics of CVB executives. This study indicated that previous academic qualifications in travel and tourism are not essential to enter the field. Weber and Wesley (2001) pointed out meeting planners’ underutilization of CVB services and examined their perceptions of CVB services, comparing mean values of meeting planners’ expectations with their perceptions of service quality of CVBs. The study result indicates that overall perceptions fell short of expectations. Particularly the highest gap score identified for CVB has up-to-date technology. In addition, they recommended that the use of appropriate, up-to-date technology by CVBs to service meeting planner’s needs is essential.

The use of Internet in US Convention and Visitors Bureaus was examined by Yuan and Fesenmaier (2000). They found that most U.S. CVBs have websites and most marketing directors consider the Internet as an important information marketing delivery medium. However, they anticipated a potential crisis that CVBs will confront in the near future if they fail to sufficiently integrate Information Technology (IT) into business operations.

Meeting Planner Study

Selecting a destination and facility is one of the key decisions made in planning a meeting and convention. Since meeting planners have a strong decision-making power in choosing a destination and facility (Clark, Price, & Murrmann, 1996; Clark, Evans, &
Knutson, 1998), a number of studies have investigated the important factors that influence how meeting planners choose a destination and a meeting facility (Bonn, Brand & Ohlin, 1994; Lee & Weaver, 1994; Oppermann, 1998; Baloglu & Love, 2001). Choi (2000) provided the comprehensive literature review focusing on importance of convention destination attributes considered in the destination selection process. Availability of hotels and meeting facilities, access to location, and hotel service quality were found as general attributes.

Meeting planners expressed that overall CVB services are not satisfactory. Baloglu and Love (2002, in press) examined performance of Las Vegas as a convention city in the view of association meeting planners. The results of this study indicated that both the importance and the perception of CVB housing service and sponsorship showed low figures. On the contrary, such attributes as capacity of meeting space, quality of meeting facilities, number of sleeping rooms, accessibility of destination, and quality of local restaurants are high in importance and performance.

The Use of Internet by Meeting Planners

According to Meeting & Convention’s (M&C) (2000), the single most influential factor in the meeting industry will be the Internet and all its associated technology. A survey conducted by Successful Meetings (2001) showed that 75% of respondents regularly use the Internet to perform their jobs, averaging 6.7 hours online per week.

Selecting a destination is one of the key decisions made in planning a meeting/convention. In order to make an efficient selection decision, meeting planners need information. Prior to the Internet is common, information sources when selecting a
venue and facility were prior experience, consulting other meeting planners, consulting sales representatives, and calling CVBs (Vogat, Roehl, & Fesenmaire, 1994). Now, with the emergence of new technology, particularly, Internet access appears to be an important consideration in meeting planners' site selection (Weber, 1999). In fact, an Internet usage survey of association meeting planners conducted by meetings net (2001), shows that 68% respondent use the Internet in destination research. The results of the survey conducted by Deeter-Schmelz and Kennedy (2002) supported the increased use of Internet by meeting planners. They examined the usefulness of the Internet in organization purchase decisions. Respondents (N=400) who were randomly selected from a national listing of 1392 professional meeting planners, expressed that the most useful information source when planning meetings is third-party location information (50.1%) such as CVB followed by the Internet (21.1%).

Many look to technology to improve their efficiency in the work place. Using the Internet to plan a meeting/convention is one of the advancing methods that could reduce planning time. The Internet has several advantages as an information source to meeting planners. It provides real-time access to information. People can access the information on the Internet 24 hours per day. A second benefit of using the Internet is interactivity. Search engines simplify and reduce the time and effort related to search activity. Also it is enabling two-way communication and providing greater consumer control over the speed and sequence of information. As Hoffman and Novak (1995) pointed out, the web site frees customers from their traditionally passive role as receivers, gives them much greater control over the information search and acquisition process, and allows them to become active participants in the marketing process. Finally, the Internet offers
multimedia friendliness through the provision of graphics, text, sound and video, making information attractive as well as useful to the user (Waite and Harrison, 2002)

CVB Web Sites

An organization’s web site has various functions. Yuan and Fesenmaier (2000) illustrate dimensions of CVBs’ information-related activities with customers as follow:

1. Information providing
2. Itinerary planning
3. Reservation and confirmation
4. Marketing research/Survey
5. Publication/press
6. Feedback/complaints
7. Convention/registration
8. Fulfillment

Web Site Evaluation Study

With explosive growth in use of the Internet and the web site as an information seeking and an electronic commerce tool, researchers from the field of Management Information System (MIS) and marketing have attempted to develop criteria that might be used in evaluating the quality of Web sites. They include conceptual discussions on what should be evaluated and how to do it. In the early stage, most articles on web site evaluation provide checklists with unknown theatrical bases and vague empirical data support (Everhart, 1996; Wilkinson, Bennett, & Oliver, 1997). Furthermore, previous Internet-related studies focused on technology acceptance rather than consumers.
continued use of that technology. As customers demand changes and the competition in the virtual environment become fierce, there is a concern that reflecting the “voice of the Web site user” into the design and the evaluation of the web site is essential. (Hoffman and Novak, 1994; Abels, et al., 1997; Barnes and Vidgen, 2000; Zeithaml, et al., 2002).

Some researchers have started to establish a comprehensive web site evaluation measurement based on empirical testing from end-users. Implementing a focus group and a survey, Abels, White and Hahn (1997) identified user-based design criteria. Seven factors were identified such as ease of use, content, structure, linkage, special features, and appearance. Barnes and Vidgen (2000) established a scale called “WebQual 1.0”, an instrument for assessing the quality of Internet sites from the perspective of the customer. Five criteria: ease of use, experience, information, and communication are identified statistically reliable. Next, they went a step further and developed “WebQual 2.0” (Barnes & Vidgen, 2001a) incorporating interaction quality in order to measure Business to Customer (B2C) web sites. In their following study, they reported a new version of WebQual 3.0 (Barnes & Vidgen, 2001b) that incorporates three quality dimensions: information quality, interaction quality and site design quality for measuring the quality of Business to Business (B2B) Internet auction sites: Amazon, eBay and QXL. Criteria identified reliable and valid are site navigation, site “look and feel”, trustworthiness, customer relationship, selling quality and buying quality.

With a similar focus on Website quality measure instrument, Loiacono et al (2000) developed an instrument (WEBQUAL) that measures satisfaction with web site quality. Their study also provided the construct validity of the “WEBQUAL” instrument though empirical testing. The twelve items identified in their study are informational fit to task,
interaction, trust, response time, design, intuitiveness, visual appeal, innovativeness, flow, integrated communication, business process, and substitutability.

Yoo and Donthu (2001) devised a tool, referred to as SITEQUAL, which measures Internet shopping site quality. Ease of use, aesthetic design, processing speed, security were generated based on consumers’ own description. Additionally, they found SITEQUAL scores were positively correlated with purchase intention, intention to revisit a site, site loyalty, and attitude toward the site. McKinney, Yoon, and Zahedi (2002) emphasized that end-user satisfaction is an important area of e-commerce. They hypothesized that web-customer satisfaction has two distinctive sources—satisfaction with the quality of a web site’s information content and satisfaction with the web site’s system performance in delivering information. Although previous studies have developed comprehensive web site evaluation measurements by end-users, most of them use students at universities as a sample. Therefore it is unlikely a realistic population representing real website users. So it would also be valuable to conduct a web site evaluation study using an organization’s own customer base in order to access a wider population.

Website Evaluation Research in the Tourism and the Hospitality Industry

Several studies about website evaluation within the hospitality industry have been conducted (Murphy, Forrest, & Wotring, 1996; Countryman, 1999; Tinerney 2000; Farrar and Lambert, 2002). Webther (1999) summarized that the evaluation criteria for tourism-related web sites are user-friendliness/ease of use, joy of use, content, design and creativity, interactivity, consistency in design and interaction models, transaction support,
added value. Countryman (1999) developed a rating system in order to evaluate all 50 state tourism web sites to examine their application of marketing concepts. He concluded that state tourism offices have not fully integrated their web sites into marketing efforts, and recommended that they should constantly offer quality content. Morrison (2001) provides a 22-item checklist of web site design and development for destination marketing organizations.

Comprehensive criteria in order to evaluate useful web sites for hospitality management graduate programs were developed by Farrar and Lambert (2002). Criteria used in this study are accessibility, segmentation, positioning, design, organization, consistency, easy of navigation, content, credibility and authority, accuracy, interactivity. Thirty websites were divided into three groups based on total scores. The results of this study highlight that hospitality management graduate programs’ websites would benefit from identifying their target audiences, the audience’s needs, and incorporating more visual interest in site design.

So far, research on consumer evaluation of hospitality related Web sites has been limited (Chu, 2001; Purdue, 2001; Jeong & Lambert, 2001). Chu (2001) accessed Internet users’ needs and expectations toward airline travel websites in Hong Kong. Five focus groups expressed that they want to see airline/travel web sites that are informative, interactive, and attractive. A conceptual model in order to evaluate the resort websites was examined by Purdue (2001). He proposed a website evaluation model with site accessibility, navigation, visual attractiveness, and information content. Students in the Western United States in a laboratory setting evaluated the top 50 North American downhill ski resorts. The results of this study show that the visual attractiveness,
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Field</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Author</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General</td>
<td>Ease of use, Content, Structure, Linkage, Special feature, Appearance</td>
<td>Abet, et al., 1997</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Site navigation, Site “look and feel”, Trustworthiness, Customer relationship, Selling quality, Buying quality</td>
<td>Barnes and Vidgen, 2001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Easy of use, Aesthetic design, Processing speed, Security</td>
<td>Yoo and Donthu, 2001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hospitality</td>
<td>User-friendliness/ease of use, Joy of use, Content, Design and creativity, Interactivity, Consistency in design and interaction models, Transaction support, Added Value</td>
<td>Werthner &amp; Klein, 1999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Accessibility, Segmentation, Positioning, Design, Content, Links, Use of Cookies</td>
<td>Countryman, 1999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Speed and quality of Site accessibility, Navigation, Visual attractiveness of the site, Quality of Information content</td>
<td>Perdue, 2001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Accessibility, Segmentation, Positioning, Design, Organization, Credibility and Authority, Link, Update often, On-line ordering, Cookies</td>
<td>Morrison, 2001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Accessibility, Segmentation, Positioning, Design, Organization, Consistency, Easy of Navigation, Content, Credibility and Authority, Accuracy, Interactivity</td>
<td>Farrar &amp; Lambert, 2002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Innovative and professional approach, Quality of information, Ease of navigation, Presentation and design</td>
<td>Tradeshow Week, 2002</td>
</tr>
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information, and navigation rating are related to overall Web site quality. Jeong and Lambert (2001) tested a framework to evaluate the information quality of lodging Web sites. They found that perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, and attitude are significant indicators to measure information quality. Summary of the literature review is presented in Table 1.

Success of Web Sites

There are steadily increasing studies about what features of a web site can influence web site success. There is no single best principle for web site effectiveness or success. However, success of web sites should be seen within the context of their purpose (Berthon & Davies, 1999). For instance, if a site has the objective of encouraging goal directed behavior like product purchase, its effectiveness should be measured against the intent to purchase products. If the purpose is to provide information or promote brand awareness, then other indicators of success, such as frequency of use are relevant. There are likely to be multiple dimensions of Web site success. Palmer (2002) indicated that frequency of use, user satisfaction, and intent to return are all elements of Web site success. Szymanski and Hise (2000) found that aspects associated with product information and Web site designs are important determinants in forming customer satisfaction.

Liu and Arnett (2000) examined the factors that influence Web site success. They pointed out that a successful Website is one that generates customer satisfaction and drew relevant variables from both Information System (IS) and marketing literature. In this study, they surveyed Webmasters for Fortune 1000 companies to determine factors
critical to Web site success with customers. Four factors were identified significantly related to Web site success: information and service quality, system use, playfulness, and, system design. Accordingly, a successful CVB web site might be one that attracts customers, makes them feel the site is useful and reliable and generates customer satisfaction so customers are willing to revisit. Therefore perceived usefulness, frequency of use, and intent to return are all appropriate measurements of web site success. In order to identify the overall perception toward CVB web sites from meeting planners, those three items were asked.

Research Framework

The objective of this study is to develop an empirically validated instrument based on meeting planners’ perspectives and requirements, which identifies the dimensions of quality of a CVB web site. According to Huizingh (2000), the characteristics of web sites can be divided into two categories: content and design. He defined content as “the information or service that is offered in the web sites” and design as “the way the content is made available for Web visitors.” Both characteristics can be measured by means of features (objectively) and perceptions (subjectively). In this study, the perception of importance was measured using two characteristics of web sites: content and design.

Content

The content of web pages is extremely important for web sites of Destination Management Organizations (DMO) because it directly influences the perceived images of the destination (Gretzel, Yuan, & Fesenmaier, 2000). Customers using the web site expect certain information content. For example, a user looking at a web site would
expect to encounter some product and service information as well as company contact information. Likewise, meeting planners expect specific information such as hotel facility information and convention sales manager contact information at CVB web sites. Therefore, the quantity of information available on web sites should be limited and focused on what meeting planners are most likely to seek on CVB websites. Using content analysis of top 10 convention cities listed in *Convene* (Roberts and Phillips, 1999), 22 items which are frequently listed in the meeting planner's section and in general were identified.

These are (1) accommodation information, (2) area map, (3) attraction information, (4) convention calendar, (5) convention hot dates, (6) convention service request form, (7) convention vendor information, (8) description of destination, (9) destination statistics, (10) general information of CVB services, (11) hotel and meeting facilities information, (12) information for convention attendees, (13) online brochure (e.g. meeting planner's guide), (14) on-line RFP, (15) press release, (16) recreation activities information, (17) safety and security information, (18) shopping information, (19) transportation information, (20) virtual tour of convention facilities, (21) virtual tour of the city, and (22) weather information. Above 22 items were used for understanding the extent to which content is important.

**Design Attributes**

Although there are no universal guidelines to design web sites, an extensive review of the major studies on web site evaluation criteria and web site success in the field of MIS, marketing, and the hospitality industry reveals that all listed items could be
Figure 2 The Research Framework that Identifies the Relevant Aspects of the Content and the Design of CVB Web Sites
classified into six categories. There include (1) Information quality, (2) Aesthetic design, (3) Navigation, (4) Interactivity (5) Accessibility, and (6) Business process (See Table 2-2).

(1) Information Quality

Recent studies examining the quality of web sites tend to raise a number of important issues in measuring the quality of information. Information-seeking is a specific motivation that causes users to visit a specific web site. Consequently, if customers do not consider information on a web site useful or reliable, it may be a reason consumers avoid using the web site. Information quality is defined as the quality of the information and services provided by the website (Smith, 2001). Miller (1996) proposed 10 dimensions of information quality that include: a) Relevance, b) Accuracy, c) Timeliness, d) Completeness, e) Coherence, f) Format, g) Accessibility, h) Compatibility, i) Security, and j) Validity. Similarly Mckinney, Yoon, and Zahedi (2002, P 301) proposed five Information Quality dimensions:

a) Relevance - concerned with such issues as relevancy, cleanliness, and goodness of the information. b) Timeliness - concerned with the currency of the information. In the view of customers, websites are seen as a way of providing very recent information (Smith, 2001). Web site developers need to take advantage of this feature by continuously updating the information on their web sites offering visitors a reason to return (Farrar and Lambert, 2002). c) Reliability - concerned with the degree of accuracy, dependability, and consistency of the information. Reliability indicates whether the data can be counted on to convey the right information (Wang and Strong, 1996). Reliable
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Information Quality</th>
<th>Aesthetic Design</th>
<th>Navigation</th>
<th>Accessibility</th>
<th>Interactivity</th>
<th>Business Process</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abet, et al., 1997</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Countryman, 1999</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Werthner &amp; Klein, 1999</td>
<td></td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nielsen, 2000</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liu and Arnett, 2000</td>
<td></td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loiacono, 2000</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barnes and Videgen, 2001</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perdue, 2001</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morrison, 2001</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mckinney, et al., 2002</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farrar &amp; Lambert, 2002</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palmer, 2002</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tradeshow Week, 2002</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rosen 2002</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
information for products/services is the major antecedent of customer satisfaction. d) Perceived usefulness refers to the user's assessment of the likelihood that the information will enhance their purchasing decision. The results of a previous study (Thompson, 2001) found that perceived usefulness plays a significant role in the usage of computers. f) Scope- evaluates the extent of information, range of information and level of detail provided by the web site.

(2) Visual Design

Visual Design refers to the appearance of the site (Sinha, Hearst, & Ivory, 2001). Visually attractive design makes the experience of using a web site more rewarding and productive for consumers. Web pages using relevant colors, text, audio, and graphics create the "atmosphere" which in turn evokes emotions and feelings in the customers (Loiacono, 2000). Likewise, it is important to consider what kind of image CVBs are trying to establish the mind of viewers (Countryman, 1999). Bender (2000) suggested that the colors, typefaces, photographs, audio and other graphical elements deployed on web pages combine to increase a user attention and image of their business. For instance, the web site of the Calgary CVB (www.visitor.calgary.ab.ca) projects to consumers a clear and powerful image of that western Canadian provincial capital city.

(3) Navigation

One of the key challenges in building an effective Web site is to create good links and navigation mechanisms. Navigation is an important design element, allowing users to obtain the information they are seeking easily to find (Palmer, 2002). Navigation is defined as the ability to be able to get customers where they want to go quickly and offers easy access to the breadth and depth of the site's content (Rosen, 2002) Web sites should
assure the customers of where they will go if they click on a certain link or button (Machlis, 1999). For example, the Long Beach CVB web site allows easy navigation by providing a side bar of main links on each page that take the visitor back to the beginning of their section of choice. Mckinney, Yoon and Zahedi (2002) identified “easy to go back and forth” and “few clicks” as valid measurements for Navigation.

(4) Accessibility

Access refers to the speed of access and the availability of the web site at all times (Mckinney, et al., 2002). If a customer cannot find a web site, a well-designed and developed website is useless. Therefore a web site should have an easy to remember URL and is easily accessed by commonly used search engines. Also, the time it takes a customer to download all text and graphics has an effect on a customer’s perception of the site’s quality. Users are less likely to wait more than few seconds for a response (Shneiderman, 1998).

(5) Interactivity

Blattberg and Deighton (1991) defined interactivity as the facility for individuals and organizations to communicate directly with one another regardless of distance or time. Farrar and Lambert (2002, p24) describe interactivity as “the ability provide opportunity for users to take action by inputting some type of data and receiving immediate feedback such as asking questions, completing forms, and requesting additional information.” Certain design features are considered interactive functions that contribute to site appeal. Examples include customer comments and inquiries sections and key-word search. Personalization is another feature that affects interactivity. The ability to provide a personalized interaction for the user allows web site designs that differentiate product and
service offering (Palmer and Griffith, 1998). Web personalization involves tailoring web content directly to a specific user. This can be accomplished by having the user provide information to the web site directly, or through tracking of the user's behavior on the site (Ouellette, 1999). Morrison (2001) suggested that segmenting website users into specialized target market is necessary for CVB web site design.

(6) Business Process

A web site that supports an organization’s business function is an important factor. Seybold (1998) defined business process as the relationship of the web site as an alternative means of interacting with the company. He suggested that a web site needs to integrate at least some of a company’s key business processes that touch customer needs. Loiacono, at el., (2000) includes business process as one of the dimensions of web site quality.
CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

This chapter discusses the research methodology used to analyze the collected data.

Figure 3 presents a brief outline of the research methodology.

Figure 3 Research Methodology Outline Population and Sample

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The population for this study is meeting professionals. Members of Meeting Professionals International (MPI), and Professional Convention Management Association (PCMA) comprised the sample, because MPI and PCMA are the largest associations of meeting planners. MPI has over 15,000 members in 44 countries while PCMA has more than 5,000 members as of 2003. Since members of both MPI and PCMA include suppliers as well as meeting professionals, screening of meeting professionals was essential. In order to select “Meeting managers”, members whose title was “Meeting Manager,” “Meeting Planner”, “Conference Manager,” “Meeting Coordinator” and “Conference Coordinator” were qualified for selection. After screening meeting professionals, members who were listed on every odd page in the membership directories were selected.

Questionnaire Development

This study uses data from a questionnaire survey. The self-administered questionnaire was composed of four pages with a total of 21 questions (see Appendix 2). The first page dealt with general usage of the Internet and CVB web sites. In particular, it inquired about average Internet usage time during the workday, major Internet activities on an average workday, frequency of visiting CVB web sites, the way to find CVB web sites, overall perception toward CVB web sites, and likeliness to return to CVB web sites in the future.

On page two, questions were designed to measure the importance of CVB web site content. Using content analysis of top 10 convention cities listed in *Convene* (Roberts and Phillips, 1999), 23 items which are frequently listed in meeting planner’s sections and in
general were identified. On page three, respondents were asked to measure importance of CVB web site design attributes. As shown in table 4-1, an initial set of questions was developed based on the existing items uncovered in the literature review and modified in order to construct a CVB web site evaluation model.

A 7-point Likert scale was used due to its simplicity (Zikmund, 1999). The importance scale was anchored with 1 = "Slightly Important" and 7 = "Extremely Important." Since each question was asked in a positive manner, such as "The URL of the site is easy to remember," an unbalanced scale was used. The validity of this measurement scale was tested by a pilot study. Finally, the fourth page contained demographic questions, including gender, age, number of annual meetings planned, and ethnicity.

Questionnaire Administration

An email survey was used as the survey medium due to a limited budget and time constraints. Email surveys have benefits such as faster turnaround time, more flexibility, and less paper chasing (Zikmund, 1999). Freeonlinesurveys.com offered online survey/questionnaire tools. The cost for conducting an online survey is $9.99 per month for a professor/student. This site also offers free download of accumulated data into statistic software such as Excel and SPSS.

After developing the questionnaire, it was loaded on a designated website (http://complabs.nevada.edu/~ha, see Appendix 2). Before conducting the survey, two steps were carried out to insure questionnaire layout, question sequence, scale variability, and the web site design. First, four professors at University of Nevada, Las Vegas and a
Marketing Research Director in LVCVA and a Convention Sales Director in the Anaheim, CA CVB reviewed the questionnaire. Next, the questionnaire was pre-tested. As a convenience sample, 12 subjects participated in this pre-testing. Half of them are meeting planners taking an Executive Master of Hospitality Administration at University of Nevada, Las Vegas. The others are members of PCMA South-Pacific chapter. Each meeting planner has been involved in the industry for over 10 years. The main objective of this pilot study is to examine face/content validity, which refers to the subject agreement among professionals that the scale logically appears to reflect accurately what it purposes to measure (Zikmund, 1999). Based on the results, the questionnaire and web site layout were revised. In compliance with the University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV) protocol for research involving human subjects, approval for the study was obtained from the UNLV Office for Sponsored Programs (Appendix 2).

Date Collection Procedures

First, 550 invitation emails were sent to a sample from the PCMA membership directory. One week later, 400-invitation emails were sent to a second sample selected from the MPI 2001-2002 membership directory. An invitation email included a general description of the study and the link to the survey web site. The meeting planner was addressed by name. Respondents could interact directly with software on the web site. Two weeks later, thank-you and reminder emails were distributed. Four weeks later, the survey was terminated. Among 950 invitation emails, 197 emails were returned due to invalid email addresses.
Table 3-1

Design Criteria and Measurement Items for CVB Web Site Quality

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Description of Concept</th>
<th>Supporting Literature</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Information Quality</strong></td>
<td>The quality of the information and services provide by the website (Smith, 2001)</td>
<td>Wilkerson et al 1997</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Measurement items</td>
<td>• Information on the site is reliable</td>
<td>Ho and Wu 1999, McKinney et al 2002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Information on the site is current</td>
<td>McKinney et al 2002, Farrar and Lambert 2002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Information on the site is understandable</td>
<td>Barnes and Vidgen 2000, McKinney et al 2002, Smith 1996</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Information on the site covers a broad scope</td>
<td>McKinney et al 2002, Thompson 2001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Information on the site is unique</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Information on the site is usefulness</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Measurement items</td>
<td>• Website is visually attractive</td>
<td>Werthner &amp; Klein 1999, Perdue 2001, Barnes and Vidgen 2000,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Theme or overall concept for the site projects a clear image of the destination.</td>
<td>Zhang &amp; Dran 2000, Perdue 2001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Font style and size are easy to read.</td>
<td>Countryman 1999, Bender 2000, Smith 1997, Loiacono et al 2000, Morrison 2001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Site has multimedia functions such as virtual facility tour and graphics</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Navigation</strong></td>
<td>The ability to be able to get customers where they want to go quickly and offers easy</td>
<td>Barnes and Vidgen 2000, McKinney et al 2002, Perdue 2001,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Measurement items</td>
<td>access to the breadth and depth of the site's content (Rosen, 2002)</td>
<td>Farrar &amp; Lambert 2002, Rosen 2002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Site is easy to go back and forth between pages</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Site provides minimal clicks to locate desired Information</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• The layout of pages made task easier</td>
<td>Perdue 2001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3-1 (Continued)

Design Criteria and Measurement Items for CVB Web Site Quality

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Description of Concept</th>
<th>Supporting Literature</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Measuremement items</td>
<td>• URL of the site is easy to remember</td>
<td>Werthner &amp; Klein 1999, Loiacono at el 2000, Morrison 2001, Loiacono at el 2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business Process</td>
<td>Relationship the website has with respect to the company’s business processes (Loiacono at el, 2000)</td>
<td>Morrison 2001, Loiacono at el 2000, Morrison 2001, Loiacono at el 2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Measuremement items</td>
<td>• Most business processes can completed via the web site</td>
<td>Morrison 2001, Loiacono at el 2000, Morrison 2001, Loiacono at el 2000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Data Analysis

The data analysis was organized into five parts. Data was coded into and analyzed with the Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS, 2000) and LISEREL (Joreskog and Sorbom, 1993). The first part of the data analysis concerned a demographic profile of respondents. Second, data of seven questions regarding a general usage of the Internet and CVB web sites by meeting planners were tabulated using frequency and percentages. The third part of data analysis involved computation of mean, standard deviation and summation scores for importance of CVB web site content and design attributes.

An exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was conducted to generate criteria used by meeting professionals in accessing CVB website quality. The appropriateness factor analysis was examined by reliability alpha. Although there is no standard regarding how high coefficients should be in order to consider reliability as “good,” some rough guidelines suggested that reliability coefficients around 0.90 can be considered “excellent”, values around 0.80 as “very good,” and values around 0.70 as “adequate” (Kline, 1998).

Finally, a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) involved examining whether the construct structure of each factor obtained from EFA provided an acceptable model. CFA is a theory-testing model as opposed to a theory-generating method like EFA (Stevens, 1996). In CFA, how well the competing model fit the data was evaluated by various fit indices (Mulaik, 1972). Examples of these statistics include the chi/square/degrees of freedom ratio, the Bentler comparative fit index (CFI) (Bentler, 1990), and the Goodness-of-fit Index (GFI) (Joreskog & Sorbom, 1993).
CHAPTER 4

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Chapter four is divided into six sections: (1) profile of subjects, (2) general use of Internet and CVB web sites use, (3) importance of CVB web site content and design attributes, (4) exploratory factor analysis, (5) confirmatory factor analysis, and (6) discussion of study results.

Profile of Subjects

The response rate was 34%, with 256 respondents, among 950 invitation emails sent, 150 emails were undeliverable due to invalid email addresses. Therefore 800 invitation emails were delivered and 256 were returned. However, the results of 54 subjects, who did not fill out all questions, were eliminated. This response was considered adequate for a factor analysis of 22 variables since the minimum sample size is to have at least five times as many observations as there are variables to be analyzed, and the more acceptable range would be a ten-to-one ratio.

The demographic characteristics of the respondents are described in Table 4-1. The majority of respondents (N=188, 93%) were female. With regard to the age distribution, approximately one-third (N=72, 35.2%) were 26-35 years of age; 28.7% (N=58) were 36 to 45; and 24.5% (N=49) were 46-55. The majority of the
respondents (N=183, 90.82%) are white. Almost three-fourths of respondents (N=183) were employed by associations while one-fourth (11.85%) worked for corporations.

Table 4-1

Demographic Information of Respondents (N=202)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>6.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>188</td>
<td>93.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>202</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 or below</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26-35</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>35.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36-45</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>28.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46-55</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>24.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56 or above</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>7.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian or Alaska Native</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black or African American</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic or Latino</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native Hawaiian or other Pacific</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Islander</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>183</td>
<td>90.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multi or bi-racial</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of organization</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Association</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>76.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporation</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>11.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent planner</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>8.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DMC</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.95</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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In terms of industry experience, almost half of the meeting planners (N=103, 52%) have been in the industry for more than 11 years. Almost half of the respondents (N=108, 53.3%) organized annual meetings/conventions in the last 12 months less than 3 times. Nearly one-half (N=85, 42.08%) of the respondents reported that approximate number of meetings / conventions (other than annual conventions) organized in the last 12 months were less than 11 times.

Table 4-2

**Industry Experiences of Respondents (N=202)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Experience in Meeting Professional (Years)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>less than 2 years</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-5 years</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>18.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-10 years</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>25.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-20 years</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>38.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>more than 20 years</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>12.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Number of annual meetings/conventions organized in the last 12 months</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>less than 3</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>53.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-10</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>36.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-20</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-30</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31 and more</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Approximate number of meetings / conventions (other than annual conventions) organized in the last 12 months</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 11</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>42.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-20</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>23.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-50</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>16.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51-100</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>6.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>more than 100</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>10.89</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
General Use of Internet and CVB Web Sites

Approximately, half of respondent (47%) reported that they used the Internet at least 2 more than 2 hours per day. This findings In order to investigate how meeting managers are utilizing the Internet, respondents were asked to check top three Internet activities on an average workday. The most frequently used Internet activity reported by respondents is business E-mail, followed by meeting related transactions, surfing for hotel site selection. The least frequently used Internet actions were submitting RFPs and surfing for personal entertainment. Other activities are demonstrated in Table 4-4.

The finding of the surveys suggested that the usages of CVB websites by meeting planners are predominant. The majority of the subjects (78.52%) of respondents have used a CVB web site in the meeting planning process in the last year. More specifically, almost half of the subjects (44.09%) use CVB web sites less than once a month and 25.2% of the respondents visit CVB web sites 2 to 3 times per month. The majority of respondents reported that overall using a CVB web site for planning a meeting or convention is somewhat useful (50.5%) and useful (30.5%). In the future, most of the respondents (67.3%) are likely use CVB web sites for planning a meeting or convention.

Important Scores of CVB Web Site Content

The subjects’ information needs were examined to determine the extent to which content was important. Among the 22 content items, "Hotel and meeting facilities information" was rated as the most important (6.00), followed by "Area map (5.99)", "Transportation information (5.79)", “Description of destination (5.62)”, and “Information
Table 4-3

Interment Using Time Per Working Day (N=202)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>hours</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 1 hours</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 1 hour, less than 2 hours</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 2 hours, less than 4 hours</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 4 hours, less than 6 hours</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 6 hours</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4-4

Internet Activities (N=202)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Internet Activities</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Business E-mail</td>
<td>193</td>
<td>95.54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meeting related transactions</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>54.95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surfing for hotel site selection</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>37.13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gathering information/articles about industry</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>27.23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surfing for destination selection</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>22.77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal E-mail</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>22.28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promoting a meeting/convention</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>22.28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Submitting RFPs</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>10.40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surfing for personal entertainment</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>7.43%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Others

Reviewing floor plans, Intranet, Searching on-line hotel room rates, Travel information, Meeting entertainment, News, Online meeting management, Searching hotel web sites for the latest room rates as well as meeting space, Personal business (bank account, etc.), Tracking down speaker info, Looking for locations and transportation for “Night Out” activities, Other activities for meeting attendees to see in the area, Making changes to meetings at our Web site, Travel, Government regulations, Researching competition, Researching program content, Surfing for destination activities.
Table 4-5

The Usage and Perceptions of CVB Web Sites (N=202)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q3. In the last year, have you used a CVB Web site in the meeting planning process?</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>78.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>21.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q4. How often do you use CVB Web sites?</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>More than 4 times per month</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>13.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 to 3 times per month</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>25.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than once a month</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>44.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once a year</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>10.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q5. How do you usually find CVB web sites?</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>URL on print advertisement (e.g. brochure, newspaper)</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>30.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Web site registered with search engines</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>61.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Link in other sites</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>17.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Web site address on business cards</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>38.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Word-of-mouth</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>6.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IACVB web site</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guessing</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Banner on other sites</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>6.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q6. Overall how useful is using CVB web sites for planning a meeting or convention?</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not at all useful</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not useful</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat useful</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>49.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Useful</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>29.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very useful</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>13.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q7. In the future, how would you likely use CVB web sites for planning a meeting or convention?</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very Unlikely</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>8.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unlikely</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>8.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>21.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likely</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>38.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most Likely</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>24.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
for convention attendees (5.60).” The content, “Press release from CVB (e.g., what’s new)” received the lowest average rating (3.62), followed by “Convention hot dates (3.89), “On-line RFP (4.03)” (see Table 4-6). It appears that advanced technology such as a Virtual tour of the city and On-line RFP are not yet favorable information on the Internet for planning a meeting/convention.

Meeting planners indicate they need information on CVB web sites after a meeting is booked. As shown in table 4-6, items ranked within top 5 are information of a destination. Reflecting emerged after meeting planners need to know safety and security information. More comments concerning content requirements are illustrated in Appendix III. Particularly, meeting managers want to see testimonies from recent meeting professionals about their experiences.

Important Scores of CVB Web Site Design Attributes

Table 4-6 shows the average importance ranking for each design attribute. The results suggest that there are specific properties in the qualities demanded from CVB web-sites by meeting managers. In terms of the importance ratings of the individual questions, there are some useful groupings to note. Those questions considered most important, indicated by means above the upper quartile of 6.5, all about getting information. The second group, the mean score are from 6.2 to 6.0, are tied to navigation (NA), accessibility (AC) and interactivity (IN). The questions concerning aesthetic design were located at the lower bound where mean scores are from 5.76 to 4.96. Interestingly, web site attributes such as personalization and hotel registration via CVB web sites were considered least important, below the lower quartile of 3.9.
Table 4-6

Important Scores of CVB Web Site Content (N=202)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content Items</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hotel and meeting facilities information</td>
<td>6.00</td>
<td>1.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area map</td>
<td>5.99</td>
<td>1.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation information</td>
<td>5.79</td>
<td>1.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Description of destination</td>
<td>5.62</td>
<td>1.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information for convention attendees</td>
<td>5.60</td>
<td>1.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(e.g., things to know or do)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accommodation information</td>
<td>5.38</td>
<td>1.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online brochure (e.g., Meeting planner's guide)</td>
<td>5.37</td>
<td>1.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attraction information</td>
<td>5.34</td>
<td>1.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dining information</td>
<td>5.17</td>
<td>1.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weather information</td>
<td>5.14</td>
<td>1.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Convention vendor information (supplies)</td>
<td>5.05</td>
<td>1.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virtual tour of convention facilities</td>
<td>5.06</td>
<td>1.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety and security information</td>
<td>5.01</td>
<td>1.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General information of CVB services</td>
<td>4.91</td>
<td>1.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recreational activities information</td>
<td>4.63</td>
<td>1.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Convention calendar</td>
<td>4.62</td>
<td>1.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virtual tour of the city</td>
<td>4.59</td>
<td>1.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Destination statistics (e.g. visitor statistics)</td>
<td>4.33</td>
<td>1.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shopping information</td>
<td>4.25</td>
<td>1.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On-line RFP</td>
<td>4.03</td>
<td>1.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Convention hot dates</td>
<td>3.89</td>
<td>1.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Press release from CVB (e.g. What's new)</td>
<td>3.62</td>
<td>1.60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A 7 point scale from "1: Slightly important" to "7: Extremely important"
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Design Attributes</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>ST</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IQ1 Information on the site is reliable</td>
<td>6.67</td>
<td>0.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IQ2 Information on the site is current</td>
<td>6.67</td>
<td>0.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IQ6 Information on the site is useful</td>
<td>6.62</td>
<td>0.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IQ3 Information on the site is understandable</td>
<td>6.59</td>
<td>0.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NA1 It is easy to go back and forth between pages</td>
<td>6.21</td>
<td>0.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NA2 Minimal clicks needed to locate desired information</td>
<td>6.11</td>
<td>1.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IN4 Site has convention service or sales staff contact information (e.g., e-mail address or phone number)</td>
<td>6.10</td>
<td>1.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AC3 All text and graphics are quickly loaded</td>
<td>6.08</td>
<td>1.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IN1 Site clearly separates categories for meeting planners</td>
<td>6.07</td>
<td>1.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NA3 Layout of the pages makes tasks easier</td>
<td>6.03</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AC2 Site is easy to find through the search engine</td>
<td>5.94</td>
<td>1.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AD3 Font style and size are easy to read</td>
<td>5.76</td>
<td>1.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IQ4 Information on the site covers a broad scope</td>
<td>5.76</td>
<td>1.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AD3 Theme or overall concept for the site projects a clear image of the destination</td>
<td>5.47</td>
<td>0.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AC1 URL of the site is easy to remember</td>
<td>5.03</td>
<td>1.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AD1 Site is visually attractive</td>
<td>4.96</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BP1 Most all business processes can be completed via the web site</td>
<td>4.74</td>
<td>1.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IN2 Site offers interactive features such as feedback, frequently asked questions, and request for proposal</td>
<td>4.73</td>
<td>1.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AD4 Site has multimedia functions such as virtual facility tour and graphics</td>
<td>4.73</td>
<td>1.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IQ5 Information on the site is unique</td>
<td>4.28</td>
<td>0.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IN3 Site creates a sense of personalization</td>
<td>3.89</td>
<td>1.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BP2 Site allows conference delegates to book hotel rooms online</td>
<td>3.84</td>
<td>1.96</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7 point scale from "1: Slightly important" to "7: Extremely important"
Factor Analysis

The major objective of this research is to develop a valid instrument to measure CVB web site quality. The analysis included an exploratory factor analysis and confirmatory analysis to generate and access a valid evaluation model.

Exploratory Factor Analysis

An exploratory factor analysis with Varimax rotation and eigenvalue equal to one was run using all 22-design attributes. The ratio of sample size to number of items (9:1) was greater than the accepted standard. Various researchers have given different cut-off values for retention based on the value of factor loadings.

Out of 22 items, five items (IQ4, AD3, AD4, NV2, and IN4) that loaded above 0.40 on more than one factor were eliminated because the removed items were considered that they did not meet acceptable levels of explanation and were poorly represented in the factor solution. Some used the cut-off values of 0.35, while others used the cut-off value of 0.50. In order to obtain meaningful factor rotation results, cut-off value of 0.40 were selected to evaluate the factor patterns. After dropping five items, the factor analysis showed a clean factor loading pattern where each item loaded highly only on one factor. The range for factor loadings was 0.86 to 0.93 for factor 1, 0.65 to 0.75 for factor 2, 0.65 to 0.77 for factor 3, and 0.6 to 0.83 for factor 4.

Based on the emerging factor structure, Cronbach's alpha (Cronbach, 1997) was computed to assess reliabilities of the extracted four factors. Reliability alpha ranges from 0.96 for factor 1 to 0.69 for factor 4 are acceptable since acceptable alphas start at about 0.6 (Nunnally, 1967). Consequently, these factors provide a reliable and consistent
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor 1 Information Quality</th>
<th>Rotated score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Information on the site is current</td>
<td>.926</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information on the site is reliable</td>
<td>.919</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information on the site is understandable</td>
<td>.872</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information on the site is useful</td>
<td>.861</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Factor 2 Navigation and Accessibility

| Layout of the pages makes tasks easier | .749 |
| Site is easy to find through the search engine | .707 |
| Site provides minimal clicks to locate desired information | .697 |
| All text and graphics are quickly loaded | .687 |
| Site clearly separates categories for meeting planners | .682 |
| URL of the site is easy to remember | .655 |

Factor 3 Experience

| Site is visually attractive | .771 |
| Information on the site is unique | .766 |
| Site creates a sense of personalization | .653 |
| Theme or overall concept for the site projects a clear image of the destination | .646 |

Factor 4 Business process

| Most all business processes can be completed via the web site | .831 |
| Site allows conference delegates to book hotel rooms online | .742 |
| Site offers interactive features such as feedback, frequently asked questions, and request for proposal | .600 |

| Eigen Value | 6.168 | 2.703 | 1.448 | 1.282 |
| % Explained | 36.28 | 15.89 | 8.515 | 7.541 |
| Alpha | .9574 | .8370 | .7329 | .6931 |
| Average importance mean score | 6.61 | 5.85 | 4.63 | 4.43 |

Figure 4 Factor Loadings and Reliability Test
measure of intended dimensions and no further elimination of variables appears necessary. The detailed results of EFA are shown in Table 4-7.

**Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)**

Even though a factor structure is found to be stable in exploratory factor analysis, in which one item is loaded on every factor, problems associated with EFA have been addressed. For instance, EFA does not yield generally optimal solutions for the factors or unique interpretations for them, which makes it difficult to justify results (Mulaik, 1972). Thus, in order to test the factor structure more rigorously, CFA was conducted through the LISREL 8.0 (Joreskog and Sorbom, 1993). A number of fit indices were used to assess the overall fit of the confirmatory factor analysis models in the current study. For instance, Kline (1998) suggested using a Pearson chi-square ($\chi^2$) statistic as one of fit indices and reducing the sensitivity of the chi-square statistic to sample size by dividing the chi-square statistic by its degrees of freedom ($\chi^2/df$). Although there is no clear-cut guideline about what value of the ratio is minimally acceptable, less than 3.0 is suggested. The $\chi^2/df$ ratio (2.23) was lower than the suggested maximum cutoff values. The others include adjusted goodness of fit index (AGFI), comparative fit index (CFI), Non-Normed Fit Index (NNFI), and Incremental Fit Index, and Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA).

The results of CFA scale showed good fit indexes: AGFI = .82, NNFI = .92, CFI = .93, IFI=0.93. The accepted thresholds for these statistics is above .80 for AGFI, and .90 and above for the other statistics (Gefen et al., 2000). The other goodness-of-fit indices suggest the model is adequate. The RMSEA here (0.078) represents a reasonable error of approximation. Values of RMSEA (Root Mean Square Error of Approximation)
below 0.05 are deemed good; those between 0.05-0.08 represent reasonable errors of approximation in the model; values above 0.08 are deemed mediocre to poor (Browne and Cudeck, 1993; MacCallum, et al., 1996). Figure 4-1 and Table 4-8 provide a summary of the model-fit measures.

Table 4-8

Model-Fit Measures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Values</th>
<th>Cut-Off Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$\chi^2$(df)</td>
<td>251.61 (113)*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$\chi^2$/df</td>
<td>2.23</td>
<td>$3 &lt; \chi$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AGFI</td>
<td>0.82</td>
<td>$0.8 &gt; \chi$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NNFI</td>
<td>0.92</td>
<td>$0.9 &gt; \chi$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CFI</td>
<td>0.93</td>
<td>$0.9 &gt; \chi$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IFI</td>
<td>0.93</td>
<td>$0.9 &gt; \chi$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RMSEA</td>
<td>0.078</td>
<td>$0.08 &lt; \chi$</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* $p > 0.0001$
Figure 5 Measurement Model
Discussion of Study Results

The factor analysis results indicate possible modifications to the model presented earlier. Given the limited amount of previous literature, it is possible that the results will be slightly different than previously hypothesized. Three subscales for Accessibility and two subscales for Navigation are united in one construct. The most noticeable change came out by items “Information on the site is unique” and “The site creates a sense of personalization” contained in Factor 3. In addition, none of the items proposed to be subscales for Interactivity were combined in one factor.

There appear to be four main components to assess the quality of CVB web sites. In essence, these can be explained as:

Factor 1. Information Quality

The result of this study indicates that meeting managers are mostly concerned with Information Quality. Given the role of a CVB as a liaison between meeting managers and local suppliers, communicating information is one of primary goals of CVB web sites. Although there are a variety of resources in site selection, including CVBs, site selection firms, and third-party meeting planning websites (e.g., www.plansoft.com, www.allmeetings.com), CVBs are a favored source (Weber & Roehl, 2001) because they are able to give meeting manager a broad scope of unbiased information. Therefore, the information on CVB web sites should be relevant, current, reliable and provided with an appropriate level of detail and format.

Factor 2. Navigation and Accessibility

Simple, intuitive and consistent navigation as well as the ease of locating a web site on the Internet. Meeting managers come to CVB web sites seeking specific information
and service, not to browse. Without efficient navigation, a user is easily confused, lost, frustrated and may leave a site. Hence, CVB web sites should eliminate unnecessary navigational mouse clicks and all text and graphics should load quickly. Also, the time it takes a customer to download all text and graphics has an effect on a customer’s perception of the site’s quality. Another issue including factor 2 is ease of accessing a desired web site. A web site should have a short and easy to remember URL be easily selected by commonly used search engines.

**Factor 3. Experience**

The visual and personal experience of visiting the site. As Hoffman and Novak (1996) argue, the web site should provide the consumer with a fundamentally different experience than other promotional media. Issues include use of color and style, visual and audio effects to build interest. If the appearance of the web site is visually attractive, visitors may have a rewarding experience and visit it again. Web pages that contain large numbers of images, text, boxes, links, pop-up windows, banner Ads or fancy graphics negatively affect the "experience" of a viewer. Respondent reported that CVB web sites do not provide pleasure experience:

"While most of them are user friendly, they are not that exciting. I think that the Vegas website is wonderful - it gets me excited about going to Vegas! And that's the way a site should make you feel."

Interestingly, a subscale proposed for measuring IQ "Information is unique" is strongly related to Factor 3 rather than Information Quality (Factor 1). Finding unique information that cannot find at competitor’s sites may influence the experience of viewers. In addition, emphasizing the destinations’ unique themes into the CVB web site designs
Table 4-10

Replacements of Measurements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Modified Criterion</th>
<th>Previously Proposed Criterion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Information quality</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information on the site is reliable</td>
<td>Information Quality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information on the site is current</td>
<td>Information Quality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information on the site is understandable</td>
<td>Information Quality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information on the site is useful</td>
<td>Information Quality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information on the site is unique</td>
<td>Information Quality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site is visually attractive</td>
<td>Aesthetic Design</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theme or overall concept for the site projects a clear image of the destination</td>
<td>Aesthetic Design</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site creates a sense of personalization</td>
<td>Interactivity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Navigation and Accessibility</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site provides a few clicks to locate desired information</td>
<td>Navigation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Layout of the pages makes tasks easier</td>
<td>Navigation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>URL of the site is easy to remember</td>
<td>Accessibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site is easy to find through the search engine</td>
<td>Accessibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All text and graphics are quickly loaded</td>
<td>Accessibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site clearly separates categories for meeting planners</td>
<td>Interactivity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service quality</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site offers interactive features such as feedback, frequently asked questions, and request for proposal</td>
<td>Interactivity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most all business processes can completed via the web site</td>
<td>Business Process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site allows conference delegates to book hotel rooms online</td>
<td>Business Process</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

enhance the destinations’ image in the minds of customers. Bender (2002) suggested that the visual design elements of web pages should work together to project an unique image appropriate to organizations.
Factor 4. Service quality

The web sites can be an alternative mean of interacting and provide services to the customers. Service quality is defined as the extent to which a web site facilitates efficient and effective delivery of products and services (Zeithaml, 2002). CVB web site can increase the meeting managers’ ability to communicate with the CVB and its resources as well as reach supplier members of the CVB for which the meeting manager may wish to acquire goods or services.
CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Discussion and Implications

The Internet has created a new type of market for meeting managers and CVBs, and has become a serious alternative to traditional communication media and service delivery tools. As Internet and web site usage by meeting managers increase, CVBs should enhance and upgrade their web sites to keep in step with customers' needs and expectations. This study examined general usage and overall perceptions of CVB web sites and CVB web sites' content items and design attributes that are most important as perceived by meeting planners. In addition, this study developed a valid instrument for evaluating the quality of CVB web sites, as perceived by meeting planners.

The first research question addressed the usage of the Internet and CVB websites by meeting managers. The finding of the study highlighted the majority of respondents (78.52%) have used CVB web sites and perceived using a CVB web site for planning a meeting or convention is somewhat useful or useful (78.63%). It is also important to point out that about two-thirds (62.21%) of respondents indicated that they are planning to visit CVB web sites in the future. However, it is worth noting that the percentage of respondents who used the CVB web sites in the last year was higher (16.31%) than those of respondents who would likely use CVB web sites in the future. These gaps imply that
meeting planners are not completely satisfied with CVB web sites. Comments made by respondents below indicated the need of CVB web site developments.

"They need a lot of improvements."

"Please add more information about electrical in meeting rooms on floor plans."

"They are extremely helpful but sometimes they do not have all of the information that I am looking for and it is difficult to find it."

Second, this study accessed the perceived importance of various content items and design attributes of CVB web sites. The content analysis of the CVB web sites of the top 10 convention cities identified 22 common content items. In addition, an extensive literature review of the major studies on web site evaluation criteria and web site success, in the field of MIS, marketing, and hospitality generated six design criteria with 22 subscales. The results of comparison of perceived importance of content items suggested that meeting managers perceived “Hotel and meeting facilities information” to be the most important content items followed by “Area map” and “Transportation information”. The perceived importance of content “Press release from CVB” was lowest followed by “Convention hot dates”. As shown by the comments below, the study results suggested that meeting planners are more concerned about information on CVB web sites after a meeting or convention is booked. Content regarding specific destination information such as area maps, transportation information, description of destination, and information for convention attendees received higher scores from 5.99 to 5.62.

"I use websites mostly in preparing marketing materials after meeting is booked. I need basic information that my attendees will ask: distance from airport, transportation, etc."
It is interesting that the respondents perceived "On-line RFP" less important than other content because most CVBs reported that they have invested time and resources improving "the meeting planners' section" of their sites, where meeting managers go to access RFP forms (Seli, 2002). The current study findings indicated that it is likely that meeting managers value personal interaction more than computer-mediated communication. According to the survey findings examined by Deeter-Schmelz and Kennedy (2002), the Internet is not as influential as more traditional communication tools at the present time.

The primary focus of this study was to provide an empirically validated instrument for measuring the quality of CVB web sites in the view of actual users, meeting managers. Based on the literature review, an instrument to access the quality of CVB web sites was proposed. In order to insure the reliability of the proposed model, this study employed exploratory factor analysis and confirmatory factor analysis. The results of the instrument refinement and the instrument validation show that effective CVB web site design includes four design concepts: information quality, navigation and accessibility, experience, and service quality. These four effective design criteria cover 17 subscales as shown in Table 5. In addition, the results suggest that there are a number of priorities demanded from CVB web sites by meeting managers. In particular, "Information quality" was the most highly rated factor followed by "Navigation and Accessibility."

With regards to practitioners, the findings of the study provide guidelines for CVB web site developments and quality strategies. CVBs can ensure that they develop sites that rank high on all aspects of content items as perceived by meeting planners. In addition, utilizing the instrument developed by this study, CVBs can monitor the quality
of their web sites over time. Furthermore it can serve as a guide of comparing CVB sites with their competitor sites' qualities.

**Limitation**

There are certain limitations in this study. Demographic information of respondents showed that the majority of respondents (93%) were female. According to PCMA Annual Member Survey 2001, 71.1% represent female meeting planner members while 29.9% of meeting planner members is male. Due to the limited number of male respondents, the sample may not be a representative sample of all meeting managers. This limits the generalizability of the results of this study because demographic variables are often significantly associated with attitudes about the Web and Web behaviors. Thompson (2001) found that females are more likely to engage in messaging activities while males are more likely to use the Internet for downloading.

**Recommendations for Further Study**

This study provided an initial insight into components that are likely to be significant to measure CVB web site quality in the view of meeting managers. However, the instrument tested in this study should be regarded as a starting point toward a better measure, because web users requirements may not always be the same due to new, rapidly growing and fast changing characteristics of the Internet. This study should stimulate new research that has practical implications for how CVB and tourism related organizations design, develop, and implement their web sites.
Criterion 1. Information Quality
IQ1. Information on the site is reliable
IQ2. Information on the site is current
IQ3. Information on the site is understandable
IQ4. Information on the site is useful

Criterion 2. Experience
E1. Information on the site is unique
E2. Site is visually attractive
E3. Theme or overall concept for the site projects a clear image of the destination
E4. Site creates a sense of personalization

Criterion 3. Navigation and Accessibility
WS1. Site provides a few clicks to locate desired information
WS2. Layout of the pages makes tasks easier
WS3. URL of the site is easy to remember
WS4. Site is easy to find through the search engine
WS5. All text and graphics are quickly loaded
WS6. Site clearly separates categories for meeting planners

Criterion 4. Service
SQ1. Site offers interactive features such as feedback, frequently asked questions, and request for proposal
SQ2. Most all business processes can completed via the web site
SQ3. Site allows conference delegates to book hotel rooms online

Figure6  Empirically Validated Instrument for Measuring CVB Web Site Quality
Future research may consider how to use the results of the survey from the perspective of the traveler. Given that purposes of visiting CVB web sites vary between consumers, expectations and requirements will be different between consumers. Therefore more research is needed to study how the perceived importance of the factors may differ across different web site users. Applying the instrument tested in this study to the public rather than professionals may offer different perspectives and insights into the perceived quality of CVB web sites. The results also can be applied to examine the web site qualities of other convention related to organizations such as convention centers, convention hotels, and independent firms that service conventions.

Another area for future study is to determine the correlation between each construct (Information quality, navigation and accessibility, experience, and service quality) and intention to revisit. In this way, CVB web site developers can focus modifications that will not only enhance the site’s quality but also increase the likelihood of customers returning to the site.
APPENDIX I

HUMAN SUBJECT PROTOCOL APPROVAL

UNLV
UNIVERSITY OF NEVADA LAS VEGAS

Notice of Approval to Conduct Research Involving Human Subjects

DATE: April 15, 2003

TO: Myounghee Ha, Hotel Administration
    Dr. Curtis Love (Faculty Advisor)
    M/S 6023

FROM: Dr. Fred Preston, Chair
       UNLV Social Behavioral Sciences Institutional Review Board

RE: Status of Human Subject Protocol Entitled: The Use of Convention and visitors
    Bureau Website; An Analysis of the Meeting Planners
    OPRS# 600S1102-541

This memorandum is official notification that the protocol for the project referenced
above has been reviewed by the Office for the Protection of Research Subjects (OPRS)
and has been determined as having met the criteria for exemption from full review by the
UNLV Social Behavioral Sciences Institutional Review Board (IRB) as indicated in
regulatory statutes 45CFR 46.101. The protocol has been reviewed via the expedited
review process and has been approved for a period of one year from the date of this
notification. Work on the project may proceed.

Should the use of human subjects described in this protocol continue beyond April 15,
2004, it will be necessary to request an extension. Should there be ANY changes to the
protocol, it will be necessary to submit those changes to the Office for the Protection of
Research Subjects. If you have questions or require any assistance, please contact the
Office for the Protection of Research Subjects at 895-2794.

Cc: OPRS File
Dear Meeting Professional:

I am a graduate student majoring in Hotel Administration at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV). I am currently working on the thesis topic "The Use of Convention Visitors Bureau (CVB) Websites: An Analysis of the Meeting Manager". The main purpose of this study is to identify the characteristic of CVB websites that are most useful to the meeting planner. The results of this study will assist CVB members in the design and development of web sites, which will offer increased service to meeting planners.

The questionnaire should take approximately ten minutes to complete. Data will be collected for academic purposes only. Your participation in this study is voluntary. Questions concerning your rights as a participant in this study may be addressed to the UNLV Office for the Protection of Research Subjects at (702) 895-2794. For more information, you can contact me at (702) 699-9684 monqsil99@hotmail.com or my advisor, Dr. Curtis Love at (702) 895-3334 clove@ccmail.nevada.edu.

Please take a few minutes to complete the survey.

Thank you for your cooperation

Sincerely,

Myounghee Ha

Click Here
1) On an average workday, how much of your time is spent on the Internet for business purposes only?

2) Concerning your Internet use, please check your TOP THREE Internet activities on an average workday.
   - Business E-mail
   - Personal E-mail
   - Surfing for hotel site selection
   - Surfing for destination selection
   - Gathering information/articles about industry
   - Submitting RFPs
   - Promoting a meeting/convention
   - Meeting related transactions
   - Surfing for personal entertainment
   - Other:

3) In the last year, have you used a CVB Web site in the meeting planning process?
   - Yes
   - No

4) How often do you use CVB Web sites?
   - More than 4 times per month
   - 2 to 3 times per month
   - Less than once a month
   - Once a year
   - Never
   - Other:
5) How do you usually find CVB web sites? Please check TOP TWO methods of locating CVB web sites.
- URL on print advertisement (e.g. brochure, newspaper)
- Web site registered with search engines
- Link in other sites
- Web site address on business cards
- Banner on other sites
- Word-of-mouth
- N/A

Other:

6) Overall how useful is using CVB web sites for planning a meeting or convention?
- Not at all useful
- Not useful
- Somewhat useful
- Useful
- Very useful

7) In the future, how would you likely use CVB web sites for planning a meeting or convention?
- Very Unlikely
- Unlikely
- Neutral
- Likely
- Most Likely
8) Please indicate the level of IMPORTANCE of the following items on CVB web sites when you are planning a meeting or convention.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SLIGHTLY IMPORTANT(1)</th>
<th>to</th>
<th>IMPORTANT(7)</th>
<th>EXTREMELY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accommodation information</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area map</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attraction information</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Convention calendar</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Convention hot dates</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Convention vendor information (supplies)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Description of destination</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Destination statistics (e.g. visitor statistics)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dining information</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IMPORTANT(7)General information of CVB services</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hotel and meeting facilities information</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information for convention attendees (e.g. things to know or do)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SLIGHTLY IMPORTANT (1) to EXTREMELY IMPORTANT (7)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1     2     3     4     5     6     7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online Brochure (e.g. Meeting planner's guide)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐     ☐     ☐     ☐     ☐     ☐     ☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On-line RFP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐     ☐     ☐     ☐     ☐     ☐     ☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Press release from CVB (e.g. What's new)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐     ☐     ☐     ☐     ☐     ☐     ☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recreational activities information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐     ☐     ☐     ☐     ☐     ☐     ☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety &amp; security information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐     ☐     ☐     ☐     ☐     ☐     ☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shopping information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐     ☐     ☐     ☐     ☐     ☐     ☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐     ☐     ☐     ☐     ☐     ☐     ☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virtual tour of convention facilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐     ☐     ☐     ☐     ☐     ☐     ☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virtual tour of the city</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐     ☐     ☐     ☐     ☐     ☐     ☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weather Information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐     ☐     ☐     ☐     ☐     ☐     ☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

10) What information would you like to see that is not currently on CVB web sites?
11) Please indicate the IMPORTANCE of the following design attributes of CVB Web sites.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SLIGHTLY IMPORTANT(1)</th>
<th>to</th>
<th>EXTREMELY IMPORTANT(7)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Information on the site is reliable
- Information on the site is current
- Information on the site is understandable
- Information on the site covers a broad scope
- Information on the site is unique
- Information on the site is useful
- The site is visually attractive
- Theme or overall concept for the site projects a clear image of the destination
- Font style and size are easy to read
- The site has multimedia functions such as virtual facility tour and graphics
- It is easy to go back and forth between pages
- The site provides a few clicks to locate desired information
- The layout of the pages makes tasks easier
- The URL of the site is easy to remember

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SLIGHTLY IMPORTANT(1)</th>
<th>to</th>
<th>EXTREMELY IMPORTANT(7)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- The site is easy to find through the search engine
- All text and graphics are quickly loaded
The site clearly separates categories for meeting planners

The site creates a sense of personalization

The site offers interactive features such as feedback, frequently asked questions, and request for proposal

The site has convention service or sales staff contact information (e.g., e-mail address or phone number)

CVB staff responds promptly to my inquiries

Most all business processes can completed via the web site

The site allows conference delegates to book hotel rooms online
12) Gender
   - Male
   - Female

13) Age
   - 25 or below
   - 26-35
   - 36-45
   - 46-55
   - 56 or above

14) Number of annual meetings/conventions organized in the last 12 months

   [Blank Space]

15) Approximate number of meetings/conventions (other than annual conventions) organized in the last 12 months

   [Blank Space]

16) How long have you been a meeting professional?
   - Less than 2 years
   - 3-5 years
   - 6-10 years
   - 11-20 years
   - More than 20 years
17) With which ethnic group do you most identify yourself?

- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian
- Black or African American
- Hispanic or Latino
- Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
- White
- Multi or bi-racial
- Other: ...

18) What type of organization are you presently employed by________

- Association
- Corporation
- DMC
- Independent Planner
- Other: ...

19) Additional comments about CVB web sites


20) If you are interested in obtaining a summary of the results, please write your email address here


YOUR ASSISTANCE WITH THIS SURVEY IS GREATLY APPRECIATED. THANK YOU VERY MUCH!
APPENDIX III

COMMENTS CONCERNING CONTENT REQUIREMENTS

1) Mailing Address of facility, sales reps emails, references from other businesses who held conferences there
2) Contact Information of Staff so we can email or call a DOS directly
3) Convention Suppliers
4) More consistency in the information provided. Better write up on the destination
5) Feed back on Destination Management Companies and their services
6) References from satisfied meeting planners
7) Many sites do not list convention suppliers or have meeting facility information other than the convention center
8) Services that CVB offers such as temp help, etc
9) More standardization between various CVB sites - have the same information in a similar format on the various sites, so you can compare apples to apples
10) Advertise "SHOWS" availability
11) Specific names of contacts and what their specialty is (e.g. Charlie Angel - Promo Photos/Slides; Lilly Munster - Promotional Materials
12) Most do not have safety and security information because if it is negative it will adversely affect the city
13) Estimated prices for cabs to/from airport and rules more detailed supplier info
14) Bureau representative contact information that is kept up to date as much as possible and is categorized by region or job description based on bureau structure
15) A standardized rating system for hotel quality
16) Some sites are not clear and it takes quite a few clicks to get to an on-line RFP or phone numbers/fax numbers to submit meeting requests
17) I don't tend to use CVB websites or find them very useful
18) Hotels and convention facilities on a Map
19) Hotel listings should be more complete
20) More information on airline flights and total lift capacity of flights
21) A concise page on hotel renovations/construction
22) What items are available to the planner for the attendees and a place to order them (free brochures, pens, etc.)
23) Most CVBs have very good and complete information, the problem is finding it. The sites are sometimes not easy to navigate to find the information that is there
24) More direct info into what the CVB offers for the planner and best way to access it.
25) Airport shuttle information, Maps that show the local area that the hotel is in and what is around it
26) More detailed floor plans for utilities, especially electrical in meeting rooms
27) Airport information: airport codes, distance from convention center and major hotels from airport in miles and in time;
28) Depends on which site. Most are pretty good.
29) Number of meetings that the city has per year and a price comparison with other cities. Also the size of the city compared to other cities and their airport transportation.
30) How to partner with associations to help sell the destination to attendees.
31) What kinds of air transit--ie regional jets or full size; average airport transfer fees.
32) Printable/downloadable floor plans of convention centers.
33) The most important thing in my opinion is on-line RFP.
34) Average room rates per month, occupancy rates per month.
35) Contact information for hotel sales personnel.
36) Travel information in and out of the city, the number of flights, etc.
37) There are better sources for general information about an area or city than CVB.
38) More historical information - I primarily use CVB sites for the creation of my participant handbooks. So, I use it primarily for area/destination information - not site selection. City/area. That is really important.
39) New information section: comments from other planners who took events to that CityRate range for sleeping rooms and suites.
40) Ground transportation and cost.
41) Testimonies from recent meeting professionals about their experiences.
42) The ability to pick and choose which properties I want to hear from CVB's send out blanket RFP's and I hear from hotels and vendors that I will never use.
43) Unusual or historic venues, trendy restaurants with reviews.
44) Hotels used by meetings/convnetions by date of meeting.
45) Stats on savings CVBs passes along to meeting planners/corporations by using various services.
46) Most sites contain all of the information I am in search of.
47) Information on vendors even if they are not members of the local CVB.
48) None that haven't been referenced in above questions.
49) Destination logo rules and regulations and the ability to download the cities logo for promotion material. It's a realy pain to get this information in a format that is easy to use.
50) So far the cities I have visited seem to have everything covered.
51) Information about local meetings related vendors who are use to working with meetings (cell phone rental, onsite printing, floral, temp staff).
52) Meeting room diagrams and examples of different configurations (if have moveable airwalls, min/max accommodations). Which groups they give high priority to/prefere. Do they prefer to have one group in house at a time or several? How far out do they like to book space (i.e., how many years)?
53) Local non-hotel meeting/event facilities arranged by geographical area.
54) Would like a way to order brochures on the destination to give our attendees. CVB websites don't have this and I generally have to make a phone call. Would rather be able to see what brochures are available and place an order.
55) More information on airports, approximate taxi fees from airport.
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Thesis Title: Development of an Instrument for Accessing Quality of a Convention and Visitors Bureau Web Site

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