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MEETING DESIGN INDUSTRY ANALYSIS

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NIKOLAEVA, SOFIA: Meeting Design Industry Analysis

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ABSTRACT

This industry analysis was carried out for Meeting Support Institute (MSI), an organization devoted to meeting design. MSI provides new avenues to develop and promote such products and services, while learning more about the market. The main objective of the research was to explore the meeting design industry and analyse its operational environment from the supplier's position. This thesis was about understanding through measuring. Hence, data was collected from a significant number of samples N=104, by using the quantitative research method with an online survey. The survey respondents were recruited from LinkedIn social network. The author conducted a survey research among meeting design suppliers from EU and North America. The theoretical framework of the study was based on both published and electronic sources regarding B2B industries, Porter's industry analysis, meeting design phenomena and the meetings industry.

The research shows that the meeting design industry is an emerging industry in its growth stage. Nonetheless, the rivalry in the meeting design industry meeting is high and the industry members face difficulties typical for its stage obstacles; such as customer's confusion and uncertainty, high marketing costs, threat of new entrants, insufficient researches/statistics and other data available, early and late markets and changing role of suppliers and industry members. Nonetheless, the results from the research showed that meeting design suppliers are more less satisfied with their position and see the market as growing.

Key words: meetings, meeting design, industry analysis, market research,

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NIKOLAEVA, SOFIA: Kokoussuunnittelu alan analyysi

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Kevät 2014

TIIVISTELMÄ

Tämä toimiala-analyysi on tehty Meeting Support Institute (MSI) järjestölle, joka on tapahtumajärjestämisen ja kokoussuunnittelun organisaatio. Jäsenyys Meeting Support Instituuttissa tarjoaa uusia mahdollisuuksia kehittää ja edistää kokoussuunnitteluun liittyviä tuotteita ja palveluita. Lisäksi, MSI jäsenet pääsevät oppia kokoussuunnitelusta ja markkinoista.

Tutkimuksen päätavoitteena on tutkia kokoussuunnittelualaa ja analysoida sen toimintaympäristöä toimittajan näkökulmasta. Tässä opinnäyttetyössä on käytetty kvantitatiivinen tutkimusmenetelmää eli online-kyselyä. Kyselyyn osallistuneita rekrytoitiin LinkedIn verkkoyhteisöpalvelun kautta. Tutkimuksen tekijä on tutkinut kokoussuunnittelu palvelujen toimittajia EU:ssa ja Pohjois-Amerikassa.

Teoreettinen viitekehys perustui sekä julkaistuihin että sähköisiin lähteisiin ja käsittelee B2B, Porterin toimiala-analyysia, kokoussuunnittelua ja kokousalan kirjallisuutta.

Tutkimus osoitti, että kokouksen suunnittelu toimiala on kasvava toimiala. Sen lisäksi, kilpailu on kovaa ja alan jäsenet kohtaavat tyypillistä sille vaiheelle esteitä, kuten asiakkaan hämmennystä ja epävarmuutta, korkeat markkinointikustannukset, uusien tulokkaiden uhka, vähän tutkimuksia / tilastoja ja muuta tietoa saatavilla ja toimittajien muuttuva rooli. Kuitenkin tutkimusten tulokset osoittivat, että kokous suunnittelu toimittajat ovat melko tyytyväisiä asemaansa ja markkinat ovat kasvussa.

Asiasanat: kokoukset, kokouksen suunnittelu, toimiala-analyysi, markkinatutkimus

CONTENT

1 INTRODUCTION

The idea for the research was formed during my six months of internship in the Meeting Support Institute (MSI) in Autumn 2013- Spring 2014. During the last year of studies in the Lahti University of Applied Sciences Finland, I have visited several industry events. As part of the Future Leaders and internship programs, I participated in events such as EMEC Conference 2013 Montreux, IMEX Tradeshow Frankfurt 2013, Meetopolis Conference Brussels 2013, EIBTM Tradeshow Barcelona 2013, The FRESH Conference Copenhagen 2013 and EMEC Conference Istanbul 2014. Participation in these events allowed me to make my own notes and form a personal perception about the meetings industry and meeting design phenomena. From this experience at industry events, I have noticed that many suppliers have recently joined the meetings industry and have other features in general. While working in the MSI I have made several notifications that had served as a starting point for the further research concept:

- There are many companies in the technology area fighting for a place in the marketplace
- Meeting design and its suppliers could be seen as a distinct industry
- The rivalry among meeting design suppliers appears to be increasing
- At the tradeshows the meeting design category is represented mainly by technology providers such as mobile apps, registration and voting systems
- There is an increasing interest toward meeting design among all groups of meeting professionals but there is no common interpretation of the meeting design term. Moreover, many meeting professionals are not familiar with this term.

Thus, I was interested in examining and measuring the scope, current state and value of the meeting design industry from the meeting design suppliers point of view. Better understanding of the industry would lead to a more accurate market analysis of the industry and more transparent reflection of strengths and weaknesses of the market.

In 2008 Maarten Vanneste, wrote a book “Meeting Architecture, a manifesto." In this book, he demonstrates the state of the meeting industry and the challenges

and opportunities that it faces. (Vanneste 2008). This book has formed my understanding of the meeting design phenomena. In this thesis, the meeting design was considered as part of a more complex the Meeting Architecture Process. General difference between meeting design and meetings industries is that the former contains suppliers such as hotels, destinations, venues and convention bureaus whereas the latter includes only CHATTY categories apart from the hospitality and logistics. The meeting design and meetings industry will be discussed later in Chapters 2 and 3.

1.1 Meeting Support Institute

Meeting Support Institute (MSI) is a non-profit organization purely devoted to meeting design. The members of the organization are meeting design suppliers that deliver tools and services for more effective, measurable and valuable meetings. It was founded in 2006 by Maarten Vanneste, the author of the Meeting Architecture Process discipline, and since then MSI has been operating as a global organization with a mission to develop, research and support meeting design as a new market sector in the meeting industry. By bringing together key stakeholders and providing researchers, education and promotion on the value of meeting support, the Meeting Support Institute raises the profile and the status of these tools and services as an essential resource for meeting planners. (MSI 2014.)

It has been known as a big supporter of innovation, fresh perspective and strategical planning in meetings. MSI supports start-up companies to enter the meetings industry thru special start-up programmes. Member companies have received opportunities to showcase products and become recognisable among meeting planners around the world. This made possible by MSI's participation in the meetings industry main tradeshows and events like IMEX, EIBTM, EMEC and other important events in Europe and United States.

1.2 Purpose of the study and research questions

When conducting business research the most important task is to define the problem, at this stage the researcher needs to pay attention and be very conscious

about what he/she is about to research. Poorly defined problem will lead to research of no value. A research question represents a problem of the interest to the research and is related to a particular decision faced by the company/organization. (Hair 2011, 28.)

The original idea for the research was to perform market research for the "Toolbox for Meeting Design" catalogue. However it was emphasised that the research would not provide any important data since the product had been in the market only a year. So it was decided to change it and take instead an investigation of MSI's consumers.

The final objectives of this thesis work were to explore the meeting design industry and analyse its operational environment from the supplier's position. Also, this study aimed to measure the industry members' rate of satisfaction and what they know about meeting design. The main questions of the research were:

- What is the current state of the meeting design business?
- How satisfied are the suppliers with the market size?
- How do they consider the role and the value of the meeting design industry?
- How intense is the rivalry in meeting design market?

To be able to find answers to these questions and achieve the main objectives, I used B2B market research and Industry Analysis as the main theoretical background. The data collected from the survey could help MSI to understand its customers better by knowing what services and tools they might need. To be able to make the right business decisions MSI needs to know features and realities of the meeting design market.

In order to achieve these goals there was a need to be able to demonstrate it in numbers, and gain quantitative data about the meeting design industry from its suppliers' viewpoint. The quantitative data collected from the study would help to demonstrate the value and importance of the meeting design industry and its value to the meeting industry. At the same time, the research might help MSI and

meeting professionals to understand market structure better. That required measurements that are credible and consistent.

1.3 Research limitations

Little attention has been focused on meeting design suppliers in contrast to other industry suppliers. For that reason I aimed to gain information from these industry players solely. So an important limitation of this research was the respondent sample, which did not include respondents who hold their jobs in hotels, travel agencies, convention bureaus, venues, destination management companies, food/ beverage and logistic suppliers. The limitation of the viewpoint is shown in the Figure 1 below:

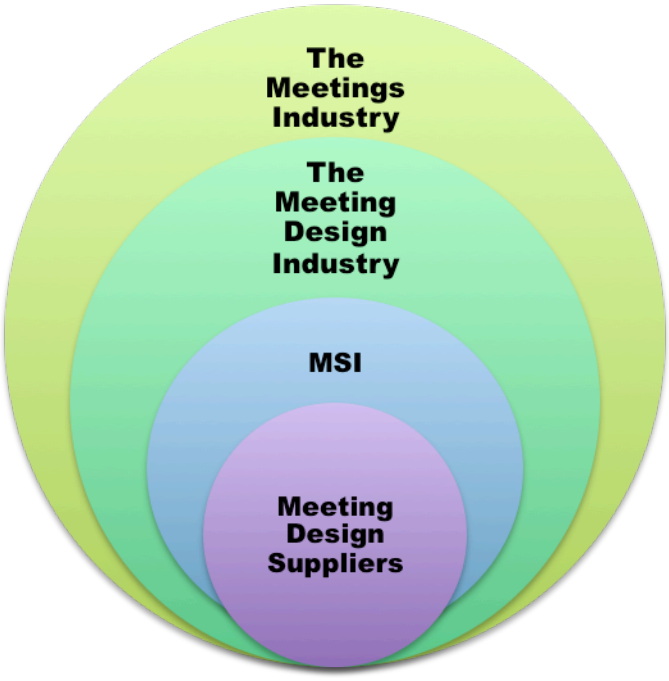

Figure 1. The limitation of the research viewpoint.

MSI is a global organization and it works with companies and individuals from around the globe. (MSI 2014) However, the main target markets are based in North America and Europe. Therefore, this research focuses on these two major geographic regions.

2 THE MEETINGS INDUSTRY

The meetings industry consists of a broad range of organizers, suppliers and facilities engaged in the development and delivery of meetings, conferences, exhibitions and other related events, which are held in order to achieve a range of professional, business, cultural or academic objectives. Meeting types include conventions, conferences, congresses, trade shows and exhibitions, incentive events, corporate/business meetings, and other meetings that meet the aforementioned criteria. (JMIC 2013.)

According to the International Association of Professional Congress Organizers (IAPCO) meeting is a general term indicating the gathering of people in one place, to confer or carry out a particular activity. Frequency can be on an ad hoc basis or according to a set pattern, as for instance annual general meetings, committee meetings, etc. (ICCA 2013.)

Another clear definition is provided by the Professional Convention Management Association (PCMA) which defines meeting as an event where the primary activity of the attendees it to attend educational sessions, participate in meetings/discussions, socialize, or attend other organized events. PCMA emphasizes that compared to a convention, exhibition, trade show and consumer show, a meeting doesn't have an exhibit component in its structure. (PCMA 2006, 765.) The meeting industry is a significant and diverse business sector with only limited formal structure. Therefore the meetings industry has not had a single unifying parameter and there always has been an on-going problem to identify what the industry does and offers to the global community. For these reasons the JMIC has developed "The Meetings Industry: Statement of Principles and Value Proposition" official statement. The statement was created to address these needs and to help the international interaction and it represent working definition of the meeting industry. (JMIC 2013.) Different meetings have different motives according to their objectives. MPI (1995) indicates 5 different meeting sectors:

1. The association meetings sector includes not-for- profit organisations such as charities, professional societies, trade unions and political parties. Usual attendees are members of the parent organization and attendance is voluntary.
2. The corporate meetings sector includes commercial organisations. Usually the attendance is mandatory and the parent organization usually pay for all or part of the cost of the attendee.
3. The government meetings area includes international, national and local government events. Attendees can be paying and non-paying participants.
4. The speculative meetings sector is designed solely to make profits for the organisers and is open to any member of the public willing to pay and attend. This is a big field of the industry.
5. Finally, there is the religious sector that is more common in the USA and not a significant sector in Europe. (MPI 1999, 10.)

Weber and Chon (2002) conclude that meetings are relatively young, starting from the 1960's in Europe and North America and the 1980's in Asia industry. (Weber&Chon 2002, 106.) Therefore, the key research issues in the MICE industry concerns are: the definitions and terms used to describe its activities, the fragmented nature of the industry, immaturity and complexity and lack of the available scientific data, statistics and research on the industry. Nowadays there are many international industry associations that undertake research studies. However, there is a disadvantage, which comes from the view of their membership - specific to particular industry players. (Weber & Chon 2002, 107.)

2.1 Meetings in Europe and North America

The meetings industry is a distinct economic sector and it is comprised mostly of small to medium sized organizations. The industry works closely with the business, academic and professional communities who represent important users of its products and who depend on meetings activities in order to achieve their own objectives. The meeting industry has been working closely with the tourism and hospitality sectors. The meeting industry is generating incremental demand

for travel, accommodation and destination services and it interacts with the processes of service delivery and destination promotion. (JMIC 2013.)

As indicates Davidson (2013) in the “EIBTM Trends Watch Report 2013”, the meetings industry depends upon the performance of key sectors in the economy, and the amount of meetings, product launches, incentive trips and training sessions. The number of such events shows the condition and profitability of these markets. (Davidson 2013.)

The importance and significance of meetings are obvious for the engaged parts but not for everyone. Meetings are critical in terms of the value delivered to members and stakeholders and also the revenue generated for the bottom-line. (PCMA 2006, 1.)

In 2011, the Convention Industry Council announced impressive results of the research, which represents the first definitive, quantitative, and research-based analysis of the economic contribution of face-to-face meetings to the U.S. economy. The study estimated that the economic importance of the industry was misunderstood. The Meeting Industry proved to be larger than the auto industry with a direct contribution to the GDP of $106 billion VS $ 78 billion in 2009 see Table 3. Therefore the study estimated that 205 million people attended nearly 1.8 million meetings in the United States in 2009. Those meetings generated 263 billion in direct spending and supported 1.7 million jobs. (Meetingsnet 2011.)

U.S. INDUSTRIES AND THE GDP*

HOW THE MEETINGS INDUSTRY COMPARES

INDUSTRY	ESTIMATED VALUE ADDED TO GDP* (IN MILLIONS)	FULL & PART-TIME EMPLOYMENT (IN THOUSANDS)
Health Care and Social Assistance	1,058,000	16,237
Broadcasting and Telecommunications	356,000	1,276
Food Service and Drinking Places	277,000	9,464
Legal Services	219,000	1,150
Computer Systems Design/Related Services	170,000	1,426
Oil and Gas Extraction	142,000	161
Manufacturing Petroleum and Coal Products	120,000	114
Truck Transportation	113,000	1,313
Accommodations	109,000	1,755
Meetings	106,096	1,650
Manufacturing Motor Vehicles/Bodies and Trailers/Parts	78,000	675
Information and Data Processing Services	76,000	309
Performing Arts, Spectator Sports, Museums	71,000	545
Air Transportation	62,000	464
Motion Picture and Sound Recording Industries	60,000	365
Amusement, Gambling, Recreation Industries	56,000	1,416
Rail Transportation	31,000	187

** Gross domestic product*

Table 1. US Industries and GDP (Meetingsnet 2011).

Even though the US is the world's most dominant business travel market (EIBTM Trends Watch Report 2013), as shown in several reports, meetings play an important role in the European economy as well. Despite this fact, no one has yet studied Meetings Industries' economic joint impact on European economy. So far only UK, US, Mexico, Denmark and Canada investigated this matter from the perspective of their own country's economy. This fact clearly shows a general lack of research, statistics and other relevant information available in the industry.

The UK's research results on the economic impact showed, that the meeting industry is closely linked to tourism-related industries, and also indirectly supports a number of other non-tourism industries. Meetings contributed £58.7 billion to the UK GDP and generated 1 million full time equivalent (FTEs) across various industries. The ratio units are FTE units or equivalent employees working full-time. In other words, one FTE is equivalent to one employee working full-time. (Business Dictionary 2014.)

This contribution put the meeting industry in 17th place amongst all industry sectors in the UK and highlights its significance as well as the critical role it play in supporting the UK economy. (ICRETH 2013.)

2.2 Meeting suppliers and planners

There are many types of B2B suppliers in the meetings industry. There are the 7 most common supplier job titles such as convention bureau executive, destination management company manager (DMC), site or venue executive, meeting design executives, meeting designers/planners/architects and suppliers of services and products for meeting design. These industry suppliers are introduced below (see Figure
2).

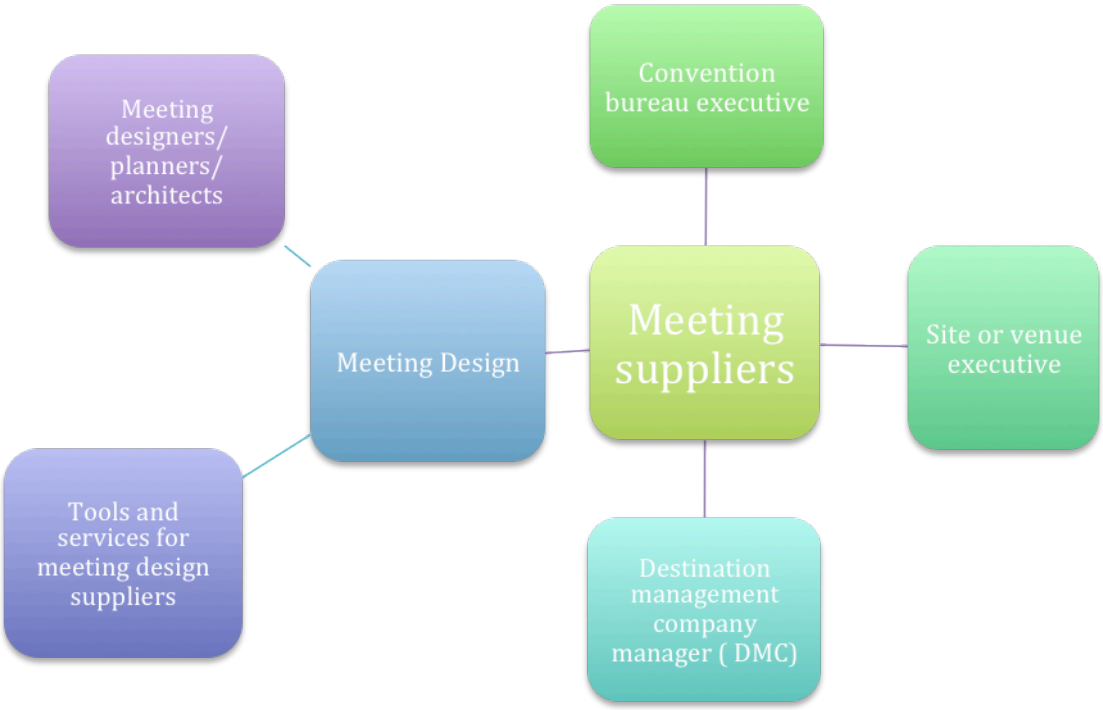

Figure 2. Types of suppliers in the meetings industry

As defined by PCMA (2006) and MPI (1999), meeting planners arrange every aspect of planning and conducting a meeting. On behalf of the meeting owner, a meeting planner is in charge of planning and running the event. He/She calls in the help of outside experts, professionals and suppliers, but is the one who is responsible for making decisions and coordinating all the elements that make the meeting a success. (MPI 1999, 89) (PCMA 2006, 765.)

According to International Institute of Event Management (2013) meeting planners choose speakers, entertainment, and content, and arrange the program to present the organization's information in the most effective way. Meeting planners are responsible for selecting meeting sites, prospective attendees and how to get them to the meeting.

Meeting planners can be divided into two main categories that can be further subdivided into different groups. An in-house meeting planner is an employee of an organization who runs the meetings of his/her employer. In large associations or corporations there are meeting planners who are taking care of this role. Independent meeting planers manage events for different organisations for profit, often on a project-by-project basis. There are freelance planners who operate alone and also planner agencies, which employ from 2 to more planners.

In the meeting industry, the B2B transactions model depends on the meeting's sector. However the most common model is when meeting planners are the buyers of the tools and services for meeting design. However it is important to mention that meeting planners operate as resellers of other meeting design services and products. Therefore, they also can be seen as service and product suppliers. MPI emphasized that because different meeting suppliers work together, the success of an event depends on the performance of everyone involved. (MPI 1999, 90.)

2.3 Business transactions in the meetings industry

Meetings and events have an owner, the starting point who establishes the need for an event or meeting. Every event has its own unique and often multiple structures of the stakeholders and involved parties. That has a direct impact on its B2B transactions model (Wikipedia 2014).

Meeting planner can also play the role of meeting supplier. For example, Corporate Executive Officer (CEO), or any other responsible for this action, client who does not have an internal planner for its own events, will hire an external planner to organize and execute an educational event for its 100 employees. In this case, event planning would be outsourced and would represent a B2B situation where the external planner plays the role of a supplier. Often, in

order to organize an event, the event owner will recruit an outsourced meeting/event planner. It can be an independent planner (freelancer) or a planner agency. In this case, on behalf of the meeting owner the meeting planner would represents a buyer in further business transactions.

Sometimes, meeting owner may play the role of the meeting planner. Usually this applies to small meetings with smaller budget. In this case business-to-business transactions have shorter decision-making chain model.

Vanneste (2008) compares the process of meeting planning with a house building process. In order to build an “end product”- an event/meeting, the meeting planner collects different building blocks from different suppliers. (Vanneste 2008.)

2.4 B2B in meetings industry

The meeting design industry operates in the B2B markets. There are many key factors that make business-to-business industries unique and different to business-to-consumer (B2C). In contrast to B2C, business-to-business refers to business that is conducted between companies, rather than between a company and individual consumers. (Investopedia 2013.)

Moreover, B2B markets have more complex decision-making units. B2B communications are made up of groups of constantly changing individuals with different interests and motivations. One of the B2B Buyers features is that they are more "rational" compared to a consumer market. Due to the accountability that constrains most B2B buyers, trust and security are key issues. No B2B buyer wants to risk his or her livelihood or reputation buying an unreliable product and service. This makes emotional issues such as trust and security critical. (Hague & Harrison 2013.)

Mc Neil (2005) defines B2B as a commerce transaction where products or services are being used in a business environment. The main element of the B2B concept is that buyers are making decisions and are buying services and products with the money of organizations or companies for whom they work. In the B2B

model, the purchase decision is going through more complex chain of actions and procedures than in the B2C environment. (Mc Neil, 2005, 3- 4.)

2.5 Characteristics of the B2B industries

Hagues & Harrison highlight that in B2B markets, the number of buying units is limited. The distinguishing feature of the B2B suppliers is that usually they have small numbers of customers of widely different sizes and a few key buyer accounts. According to Hague & Harrison (2013) almost all business-to-business markets confirm the Pareto Principle or 80:20 rule that a small number of customers dominate the revenue. A small customer base that regularly buys from the business-to-business supplier is very common. Thus, an important distinguishing feature of B2B markets is the value of a personal relationship. (Hague & Harrison 2013.)

Therefore, trade shows are important in B2B markets. It is the place where people meet face-to-face. Personal relationships develop trust and it is not unusual for a B2B supplier to have customers that have been loyal and committed for many years. Tradeshows are the number one promotional tool of American business-to-business companies. (Hague & Harrison 2013.)

In the meetings industry such tradeshows are IMEX America and Frankfurt, EIBTM, AIBTM, AIME, ASAE's Annual Meeting & Exposition, ICOMEX, Meetings Show Uk, and Confex. In order to establish trust and brand awareness, the meeting design suppliers may need to be present at least at some of these events. The challenges are that small companies cannot afford this. Therefore it is important to develop the industry starting from the tradeshows that could support meeting design suppliers for the sake of the whole industry.

Another essential feature of B2B markets, distinguished by Hagues & Harrison, is that buyers are usually longer-term buyers. The longer-term focus in business-to-business markets repeat two key points first the importance of relationship-building, particularly with key customers, and second the quality of a technically focused sales team. The researchers' statement is: "Business-to-business buyers are more demanding. They have high quality market intelligence. The reason

behind is the responsibility they have, to make the best decision when purchasing on behalf of the companies. They take fewer risks and, therefore, need quality to be right.“ (Hague & Harrison 2013.)

3 THE MEETING DESIGN INDUSTRY

Davidson (2013) indicates that companies worldwide rethink their meeting strategies to achieve meetings objectives. Thus in 2014 meetings budgets will remain under pressure and the approval process for meetings will likely become even more complex. (EIBTM Trends Watch Report 2013.) Thus, one can assume that the role of the meeting design industry and its suppliers will only become even more significant.

The present research was guided by the assumption that as a result of new socio-economic realities and active technology development, the meetings industry has been forced to consider the value of meeting design. Which in concrete has required from meeting professionals a careful analysis of return on investments (ROI), designing/planning meetings based on their strategic objectives and quick embracing of innovations and focusing on the content side of meetings. As reports MPI (2012) in its research on meeting design, attendees' expectations are evolving beyond basic needs, towards innovative and engaging experience. Hence, according to a recent study by MPI, meeting design is about purposeful shaping of both the form and the content of the meeting to deliver on crucial business objectives.

According to research by Frost & Sullivan (2013) into the meetings and events business, technology is the key sector in transforming meetings and events. However Frost &Sullivan say meeting planners are still relying mainly on manual channels to plan and manage meetings across companies and organizations of all sizes, but those embracing technology are realizing exceptional benefits. The results show that not only is there a significant pressure to adopt the technology in the meeting planning process, but there's also confusion among meeting planners who are just beginning to adopt new, highly efficient technology-based practices and stop using inefficient manual processes. (Frost & Sullivan 2013.)

Therefore, meeting design suppliers are facing many challenges. The meeting design industry emerged not so long ago, and many of the products and services have arrived from other industries. Therefore, often, meeting design buyers do not

have enough market intelligence. Many buyers are new to the products and services and have never used them before.

For example, innovative technologies and tools often require from the supplier to provide some pre-training and it is also challenging to assure buyers of the product's value. Often, suppliers need to educate buyers before, during and after the event. While some planners are tech savvy, the majority knows very little about these tools or/and are not sure of its value. Perhaps it can be explained by the median age of the Meeting/Event planners and also by the B2B nature of the business that puts high responsibility on meeting planners. As several researchers indicated meeting budgets have been traditionally divided between hospitality, entertainment and other suppliers.

3.1 Technology in the meeting design marketplace

Today meeting planner has a large number of technology tools that help to plan, communicate and also enrich the attendee experience before, during and after the meeting. "Only one fact about technology is stable – it is constantly changing"- Unknown.

Technology industry dramatically influences the meetings and the meeting design industry. One of the massive changes in the event technology has come with smart phones. Many of the today's technologies would not exist without it. Mobile applications are one of the fastest growing market segments in the meeting design industry. Today, there are over 200 event mobile application suppliers worldwide. Moreover, this number is growing. Mobile applications enabled services and tools that were not possible before.

On of the latest innovative tools for meeting design is a wearable technology such as Google Glasses. For example, some of the forward thinking technology providers have developed a new applications for Google Glasses. Changes in the industry are already visible at the main industry events. Also, the interest of the meeting professional towards innovative tools and techniques for better meeting design is developing. This tendency can be seen at the industry tradeshows like EIBTM and IMEX Frankfurt where the meeting design suppliers and especially

meeting/event technology providers have got separate exhibition areas such as Innovation Zone at EIBTM 2013, TechHub at IMEX, Frankfurt. In May 2014 IMEX, Frankfurt had two separate show and learning areas around technology and tools for meeting design called TechHub and Meeting Design Hub.

3.2 The meeting design phenomena

As concluded MPI (2013), even though Vanneste (2008) has popularized the meeting design term, there has been no official definition of meeting design in the international meetings industry. In 2013, the MPI launched the results of the first comprehensive study devoted to Meeting Design " Meeting Design: What, Why and How." The study has revealed that the terms meeting design and meeting architecture have been used interchangeably. Results have displayed that the meeting architecture term is used more in Europe while in North America is known more as meeting design. (MPI 2013.)

According to Maarten Vanneste (2008), the real value and potential of meetings has not been fully understood and used. One of the reasons is a lack of strategic meeting design. Meeting planners do not have enough knowledge and tools to design and implement an effective, low cost meeting. (Vanneste, 2008)

In MPI's research, Mary Boone proposes to define meeting design as "the purposeful shaping of both the form and the content of meetings to deliver on crucial business objectives." According to Boone, meeting design incorporates methods and technologies that connect, inform and engage a meeting's stakeholders before, during and after the meeting. The key difference between meeting planning and meeting design is the process of determining business goals and meeting objectives. (MPI 2013, 3.) This statement showcases increasing demands that challenge meeting professionals across the globe.

Another industry player Mike van De Vivjer, co-creator of the "Into the heart of Meetings" (2013) book on Meeting Design, that "Meeting Design means making the programme for a meeting by combining the specific objectives of the organiser, the expectations and objectives of the participants and the desired changes in content in the course of the meeting. Many meeting planners could be

or become meeting designers. Today most meetings are ”organised” but not “designed.” By this I mean that there is a separation between the logistics of meetings and what happens inside the meeting room with content” (De Vivjer 2013, Kongres Magazine).

Vanneste (2008) clarifies that meeting design starts only after identifying the main objectives of the future meeting. Designing a meeting is about timing, format, guidance, tools, techniques, consultancy, methodology, technology, etc. He is comparing this process to finding the right building blocks to execute the designed meeting. (Vanneste 2008, 113.) To summarize, meeting design is conscious planning of a meeting by taking into account all the “whys” of the event, stakeholders, meeting objectives and the desired outcome of the meeting.

3.3 Meeting designer as a profession

In the meeting industry, the most common misperception is the word ‘design.' Many people tend to think of primarily pretty pictures and forms, but design goes - not only in products. Whether it is the design of a program, a product or some form of communication, the world is totally designed. (PCMA 2006, 3.)

Aforementioned research showed, that the meeting designer is a very young profession and meeting professionals have been slow to embrace it. However any significant changes rarely happen fast. The meeting design is a very dynamic market sector and it has a big focus on innovations and other industries. After defining objectives of the meeting, the meeting designer needs to decide what applicable techniques and tools will bring the desired results.

MPI’s survey on meeting design (2013) highlights, that attendees want innovative, unique experiences that challenge their senses, expectations, knowledge and their ideas. More than ever a meeting participant’s needs are evolving beyond satisfying their basic needs for food, shelter, safety, proximity to others and exposure to information. (MPI 2013.)

To summarize, the difference between meeting planning and meeting design is that the design is conscious. The whole picture is understood. The designer

understands the reasons for the event and takes it into account as the main objective when designing the meeting. Thus, the meeting designer is the one who uses a strategic approach towards meeting planning. He/She stays up to date on the latest innovations and findings in motivation, learning and networking to design an outstanding meeting. His/her job is also to find, the best tools and services, which will support the main business objectives of the meeting.

Meeting planners and meeting designers are pursuing the same result a well planned and implemented event, which achieves its objectives. One of the many other meeting planner's jobs is to choose right the tools for meeting design. The meeting design can help to fulfil non-logistic needs of attendees and objectives of the meeting or event in general. The meeting designer approaches a meeting from the more strategic perspective and one of his main jobs is to help the meeting owner to define objectives of the meeting and then move to the next step of the planning. In this study, I determined that the meeting design industry has emerged to show the meeting industry its full potential and new methods to protect its economic sustainability. As summarized by MPI (2013), even though logistics is fundamental for meetings, meeting design is to take the purpose of the meeting further to get real results.

The attendees' behaviour and habits have changed in the past years. Needs of attendees have developed, so the meeting industry had to develop accordingly (MPI 2013). For example, social media has introduced substantial and universal changes to the communication between organizations, communities, and individuals, which has led to new approaches and needs in meeting design.

3.4 CHATTY − The Meeting Designer's Toolbox

When a meeting planner starts designing a meeting he/she will base the design on the meeting's objectives. Each meeting and event is unique and can have different objectives and stakeholders, so to be able to choose the right tools the meeting planner needs to know about what tools and services are available in the marketplace.

In the book Meeting Architecture, a Manifesto (MSI 2008) Vannetse has defined the "The Toolbox for Meeting Design" and CHATTY taxonomy. The idea of the catalogue is to help the event owner, planner, designer, producer or any other interested party with finding proper techniques, services and tools that can influence the learning, networking and motivation of meeting and event participants. The CHATTY taxonomy provides a basic structure - categories of tools for meeting design. Most of the suppliers fit in two or more categories, therefore, the toolbox taxonomy should not be considered as an absolute concept, but the one that aims to provide clarity and better understanding of things. The CHATTY was summarized from C for conceptual, H for human, A for art, T for Technical and TY for Technology. (MSI
2013.)

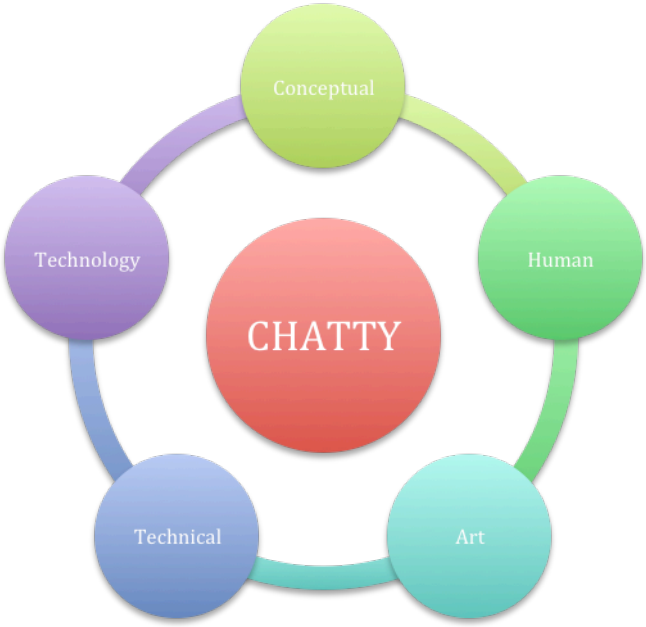

Figure 4. The CHATTY Taxonomy. (MSI 2013)

In order to achieve the objectives of the meeting the meeting/planner can apply different concepts and techniques.

The conceptual part of the CHATTY toolbox includes meeting formats, session formats and different techniques that meeting planner can use in meeting design. According to Vanneste (2008), the meeting concept consists of nine different building blocks: attendees, time, tools, techniques, objectives, movement,

interaction, change and space. For example, when creating a meeting one can use different approaches to the time.

The “human tools” – includes facilitators, experts, technicians, designers, entertainers and also experts from other industries who can be “used” by meeting planner in its meeting design. The MSI’s Toolbox Catalogue collects information about wide range of those experts like ROI specialists, social media experts, online moderators and so on. (MSI 2013.)

In the Art tools section of the toolbox there are actors, graphic facilitators, visual art, designers, musicians, visual facilitators and magicians. The toolbox has only a small number of companies in this category. (MSI 2013.)

The technical tools part is one of the most original sections in meeting design and it is about stage building, booth, construction, furniture, lighting, sound, audio visual services (av), screens, microphones, voting systems that are not based on a PC, tablet or smartphone. An example of such a supplier can be, for example, Vanneste’s company ABBIT Meeting Support. The company is assisting in producing and capturing the content side of meetings, av equipment for rent, build stages, staging and some technology and technicians. (MSI 2013.)

The technology is the most dynamic, and innovative part of the toolbox. Recently lots of innovations and new tools have had emerged in this area. One of the industry leaders is etouches that delivers event management software platforms and other supporting services to corporations, associations, charities, educational institutions and agencies. The company allows organizations to plan, manage and market their meeting and event. Etouches offers a complete set of online tools such as budgeting, project management, scheduling, registration, speaker/exhibitor/sponsor management, lead retrieval, event websites, seating, surveying, email marketing, venue selection, booth purchasing, social networking and mobile applications. (MSI 2013.) All these tools can help the meeting planner to plan and execute an effective meeting.

To categorise meeting design suppliers in the study, I uses an approach of the CHATTY taxonomy. However, taking that CHATTY taxonomy is known only

among a limited number of meeting professionals, it was modified into four categories: Technology Suppliers, Training/Consultancy/Project Management Suppliers, Technical Support Supplier and Production Supplier. As expected, by creating easy to understand study questions the researcher received more completed responses.

3.5 MSI in the meetings industry

The Meeting Support Institute is an international organization and regardless of the size and limited resources it plays a significant role in the global Meeting Industry as a first organization devoted purely to Meeting Design supportive tools and the content side of meetings. MSI is constantly looking for innovative tools and is promoting meeting design and purposeful meetings.

As an official advocate of the Meeting Architecture Process movement (MAP), MSI builds connections between meeting design suppliers and meeting owners/planners. (MSI 2013.) Compared to Meeting Professionals International (MPI) association with members from all the meetings industry market sectors such as hotels, destinations and so on, MSI's members represent only the meeting design sector apart from the hospitality.

The key objective of the MSI is to maintain and endorse a welcoming environment for innovative, young companies in the meeting industry in order to help them to find a space in the market. Besides supporting meeting content and innovative companies, MSI stands for learning, networking and motivational aspects of meetings. (Vanneste 2008, 101.)

At this time, MSI has over 70 international members from around the world. MSI is organizing annual events at industry's main trade shows such as IMEX and EIBTM and also it organizes the FRESH Conference, which is devoted purely to meeting design. Participating in such events allows a meeting professional to make new contacts, network with people interested in meeting design and showcase their products.

FRESH dinner and breakfast is a place for everyone interested in meeting design and the content side of the meetings. The main principle of MSI events is a fresh perspective which stands for active networking, healthy food, with no loud music or free drinks. MSI is providing members with new visibility channels, opportunities to showcase the product and find new partners for cooperation, develop their services or products and to stay on top of the latest news in the industry. MSI is also collecting information and knowledge for its online free to use database. (MSI 2013.)

4 INDUSTRY ANALYSIS AS A TOOL

Porter defines an Industry as “ a group of firms/companies producing products that are close substitutes for each other." The five forces reveal the business profitability. Only by understanding them can a company incorporate business conditions into strategy. (Porter 2008.)

As was explained in the previous chapters, the fundamental idea behind this research was to gain insight from the meeting design industry for the purpose of understanding its structure and operational environment. A comprehensive industry analysis requires an objective view of the underlying forces, attractiveness, and success factors that determine the structure of the industry. (Inc Magazine 2014.)

Secondly, this study aimed to examine the positioning of the meeting design suppliers and the level of the rivalry among them. Thereby, in order to address these issues, I used Porter’s five forces analysis tool to scan the macro environment of the meeting design industry. Porter (1980) introduced an industry analysis framework according to which an industry is being influenced by five forces: 1) the potential for new competitors to enter the market; 2) the bargaining power of buyers; 3) the bargaining power of suppliers; 4) the availability of substitute goods; and 5) the competitors and nature of competition. (Inc. Magazine 2014). Industry’s potential depends on a collective strength of these 5 forces. These forces will be explained further below.

Figure 5. Porter's Five Competitive Forces (Porter 1980)

4.1 Threat of entry

New entrants to an industry bring new capacity and a desire to gain market share. That, in turn, puts pressure on prices, costs, and the amount of investment necessary to compete. (Porter 2008.) This refers to how easy or difficult is for a new company to enter the market (Inc.Magazine 2014).

The threat of entry in an industry depends on the height of entry barriers that are present and on the reaction entrants can expect from incumbents. If entry barriers are low and newbies expect little retaliation from the entrenched competitors, the threat of entry is high and business profitability is moderated. The threat of entry holds down profitability. (Porter 2008.)

The best example is when entry barriers are high, but exit barriers are low. In this case, unsuccessful competitors will leave the industry and that can improve profitability of the Industry. The worst case is when there are low entry but high exit barriers. The tight exit barriers results in many "got stuck" companies, who lose the competitive battle, but don't leave the market and use extreme competitive tactics such as low pricing. (Porter 1980, 22.)

4.2 Exit and entry barriers

As emphasize Porter (2008), entry barriers are advantages that the current industry players have relative to new entrants. Existing competitors are most likely to react strongly against new entrants when: there is a history of such behaviour, when the competitors have invested substantial resources in the industry and when the industry is characterized by slow growth.

Conditions that signal the strong entry barriers are economies of scale, high capital requirements, switching costs for the customer, limited access to the channels of distribution, a high degree of product differentiation, and restrictive government policies. (Inc Magazine 2014.)

Demand-side benefits of scale known as network effects occur in industries where a buyer's willingness to pay for a company's product increases with the number of other buyers. Switching costs may occur because a buyer who switches vendors must, for example, alter product specifications, retrain employees to use a new product, or modify processes or information systems. The capital barrier is particularly high if the capital is required for unrecoverable and, therefore, harder-to-finance expenditures, such as up-front advertising or research and development. The need to invest large financial resources in order to compete can deter new entrants. Capital may be necessary not only for fixed facilities but also to extend customer credit, build inventories, and fund start-up losses. (Porter 2008.)

Sometimes access to distribution is so high a barrier that new entrants need to create their own. The more limited the retail channels are and the more that existing competitors have tied them up, the tougher entry into the industry will be. (Porter 2008.)

4.3 Threat of substitute products

Identifying substitute products is about searching for products that can perform the same function as a product of one's company. For example, videoconferencing is a substitute for travel. Substitute products or services limit an industry's profit potential by placing a ceiling on prices. An industry product has to shelter itself

from substitutes through product performance, marketing, or other means, otherwise it will suffer in terms of profitability—and often growth potential. The threat of a substitute is high when it offers an attractive price-performance trade-off to the business's product and when the buyer's cost of switching to a substitute is low. Changes in other industries may make them attractive substitutes when they were not before. Substitute products that are most dangerous are those that 1) are subject to trend improving their price performance, or 2) are produced by industries earning high profits (Porter 1980, 24).

4.4 Power of suppliers

Companies depend on a wide range of different supplier groups for inputs. Powerful suppliers capture more of the value for themselves by charging higher prices, limiting quality or services, or shifting costs to industry members. Powerful suppliers, including suppliers of labour, can squeeze profitability out of an industry that is unable to pass on cost increases in its own prices. (Porter 2008.)

In order to plan and execute an event, a meeting planner needs to build the supplier chain that includes a venue supplier, technology supplier, logistics suppliers and such. Depending on type and set objectives, meetings have needs for a variety of different suppliers.

Suppliers can have a bargaining potential in many different situations. Supplier power can affect the relationship between small business and its customers by influencing the quality and price of the final product. (Inc.Magazine 2014).

Porter (2008) indicates, that buyers are powerful if: 1) they have negotiating leverage relative to industry members, 2) supplier group is serving many industries, 3) industry participants face switching costs in changing suppliers, 4) suppliers offer products that are differentiated, 5) there is no substitute for what the supplier group provides and if 6) the supplier group can credibly threaten to integrate forward into the business. In that case, if industry participants make too much money relative to suppliers, they will induce suppliers to enter the market. (Porter 2008).

4.5 Power of buyers

Depending on current market situation, the power of buyers can compete with the industry by forcing down prices, bargaining for higher quality or more services, and playing competitors against each other. Buyers are powerful if they have negotiating leverage relative to industry participants, especially if they are price sensitive, using their clout primarily to pressure price reductions. If buyers believe they can always find an equivalent product, they tend to play one vendor against another. (Porter 2008).

Also, the power of buyers can be indicated as height when: single customers account for large volumes of the business's product, there are few buyers, or each one purchases in volumes that are large, substitutes are available for the product and the costs associated with switching suppliers are low. (Inc. Magazine 2014).

Not the end user consumers such as assemblers or distribution channels can be analysed the same way as other buyers, with one important addition. Intermediate customers gain significant bargaining power when they can influence the purchasing decisions of consumers downstream. (Porter 2008).

4.6 Rivalry among existing competitors

The intensity of rivalry among competitors in the industry shows the extent to which firms within an industry put pressure on one another and limit each other’s profit potential. When rivalry is strong competitors are trying to steal profit and market share from one another. (Wilkinson 2013)

Rivalry among existing competitors takes many familiar forms, including price discounting, new product introductions, advertising campaigns, and service improvements. High rivalry negatively affects the profitability of the industry.

Porter (2008) stated out the signals of an intense rivalry such as various equally balanced competitors, slow industry growth, high fixed cost, lack of differentiation and diverse competitors. If competitors are many or are roughly equal in size and power rivals find it hard to avoid poaching business. Slow

industry growth triggers fights for market share. Exit barriers, the flip side of entry barriers, arise because of such things as highly specialized assets or management's devotion to a particular business. These barriers keep companies in the business even though they may be earning low or negative returns. Excess capacity remains in use, and the profitability of healthy competitors suffers as the sick ones hang on. (Porter 2008.)

5 QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH APPROACH

Hair (2001) emphasized that the business research process follows the same methodology as the scientific method. First stage involves considering all relevant input, secondly input is combined with current knowledge to produce a research question or hypotheses and finally it needs to be tested and an analysed. To support ideas one needs to test it can be supported or not supported only through testing. There are two main approaches to research qualitative and quantitative data collection methods. Depending on research objectives and In order to answer the research questions it is important to choose the right approach and method. (Hair 2011.)

This research aimed to collect quantitative data from niche market suppliers to represent characteristics of the meeting design industry. Effective decision-making often requires information from both quantitative and qualitative methods. (Hair 2011.) However a lack of sources forced me to choose one approach. Given the needs and the nature of the research, the quantitative approach was hosen as the major research method.

5.1 Quantitative research techniques

Since the purpose of this work was to test and measure a large range of features a large number of samples was needed to produce representative results. Therefore the researcher decided to use quantitative research techniques. While the qualitative method can help to identify or refine research problems, formulate and test conceptual frameworks, quantitative approaches are applicable when there is well-defined research problems or theoretical models. In quantitative data, numbers are used to represent directly the properties of phenomena and it also can assist in comparing differences. Thus, the role of the quantitative method is validation. (Hair 2013, 205.)

The research's framework was based on the developed hypotheses. Hypotheses, driven from theory usually serve to guide the process and provide a list of what needs to be measured. Hypotheses or a problem is an unproven supposition or

proposition that tentatively explains certain facts or phenomena. It is an assumption about the nature of a particular situation. (Hair 2013, 157)

Quantitative method can be used to provide objectivity to that hypothesis by applying statistical criteria to the measures. Quantitative research is often based on larger samples and is, therefore, more statistically valid. Quantitative research is concerned with data and addresses questions such as “how many?”, “how often?”, “who?” and “where?”. (McQuarrie 2012.)

5.2 Web survey in market research

A market is made up of target customers or a group of target customers while an industry is the business you are in. Here, the market is meeting design suppliers and meeting design is the industry where the MSI is in.

The aim of this research is broadly explained in the previous chapters. Market research focuses on collecting information from and about the B2B customers to support business decision and to collect market intelligence about the meeting design industry (McQuarrie 2012). Meeting Support Institute needs to know its market and customers in order to be able to make right decisions. In this study, I have chosen to use web survey as a survey instrument and primary data collection. The survey for this thesis was designed on an eSurveycreator web platform. Most of the questions were pre-coded in order to provide quantitative and easy to analyse data. Another advantage of this tool was an automatic feature that enabled online evaluation of the data. That made the analysis part of the research easier and less time consuming. In business research data collection involves either observation or surveys. The primary task of the research is to convert the data into knowledge (Hair 2011).

Hirsjärvi (2009) emphasized, that one of the main advantages of a survey is that large data can be collected in reasonably short time. It is an effective tool to collect data because it saves time of the researcher. Yet, analysis process is much easier to conduct compared to qualitative tools like interviews. Problem may occur when analysing and interpreting the collected data. Often the survey is perceived as a superficial data collection tool. Other disadvantages of the survey

are: impossible to make sure how seriously the respondents have approached the survey, the level of honesty of the respondent, difficulties in controlling misunderstandings and imperfections, well designed survey requires a lot of time and skills from the researcher and the unfinished replies. (Hirsjärvi 2009.)

In a survey there is a fixed set of questions asked of a large sample of customers. The sample has to be large because the intent is to project the questionnaire results with precision to the entire population of customers that is of interest to the researcher .The questions are mostly descriptive and classificatory in nature. Surveys provide a quantitative approach to asking questions while interviews a qualitative approach. (McQuarrie 2012, 8.)

Survey gives opportunity for and precision of comparisons across subgroups of customers. Survey research offers the manager masses of numbers reflecting factual details, plentiful opportunities to compare and contrast subgroups of costumers, and an occasion to apply any number of statistical analysis, the information that comes from the survey research provides descriptive and evaluative information. (McQuarrie 2012, 112-113.)

McQuarrie assumes that in the success of the surveys everything depends on the quality of the questionnaire and the effectiveness of the sampling procedure. (McQuarrie 2012, 115.)

During her first year in the industry as an MSI employee, I made many new connections with meeting design suppliers from around the world and also connected with this people on LinkedIn. Hence, the survey was administrated by recruiting respondents from LinkedIn network. Half of the participants came out from personal connections while another half was recruited from relevant LinkedIn interest groups such as Meeting Architecture, Event Apps, Event Design, Innovative Meetings & Event Design and Event Management group.

5.3 Sampling method and size

A population is the total set of people that results obtained from the sample are supposed to reflect. The initial sample refers to the limited number of people

within the population who are contacted to participate in the research. The obtained sample – is the people within the initial sample that actually completed the survey. (Hair 2011,190-191.)

The initial sample of of N= 250 was recruited via LinkedIn. The obtained sample was N= 104 completed responses. The total obtained sample in the survey was over 120 responses, however after editing and checking only 104 out of 120 were evaluated by researcher. 16 of responses were either not fully completed or missing data.

McQuarrie (2012) determined as a rule of thumb: if simple two-way percentage breakdowns are the focus of the study, then the sample size should be either 100 (for quick and dirty estimates) or 400 (for something more precise). Doubling the precision quadruples the needed sample size. (McQuarrie 2012,199.)

5.4 Designing the B2B survey

Tight, structured B2B questionnaires result from tapping into a researcher's knowledge and experience of the subject, client discussions and prior qualitative work. McNeil (2005) maintained, that with B2B questionnaires its important to remember that business respondents often have a short attention span, therefore the survey needs to have a dynamic flow. Also it is essential to give opportunity to respondent to impart his/her specialist knowledge. Attitudinal questions can help to get an insight into what B2B representatives are really thinking about the chosen topic. It makes the survey more personal and lets the respondent to connect with the topic. (McNeil 2005, 110-112.)

In this study, I have taken these matters into account while designing the survey. In order to maximize the attention and commitment of the respondents different question types, graphics, colours, page split, and also open-ended questions were used.

Yet, to make the survey more fun and engaging I have included some gamification elements such as a progress bar in the right corner of the survey, graphical illustrations and colourful design of the survey (See the Appendix 1).

These elements of the survey aimed to motivate respondents to go through the entire survey and complete it.

In total the survey contained 28 questions, 27 of which were precoded. The survey was divided into four main themes. In the first part of the survey the respondent were asked to choose services and techniques that their company provide. The researcher aimed to examine different meeting design suppliers' categories on differences in answers. In turns of estimating the current situation in the marketplace. The fist categorising part of the survey named "Tools for Meeting Design" served to be able to perform cross-tabulations among different suppliers. In this part I would later be able to compare results from the survey from different suppliers to address a question on "How different meeting design suppliers experience the industry?". The logical flow of the survey can be seen in the Figure 5 below:

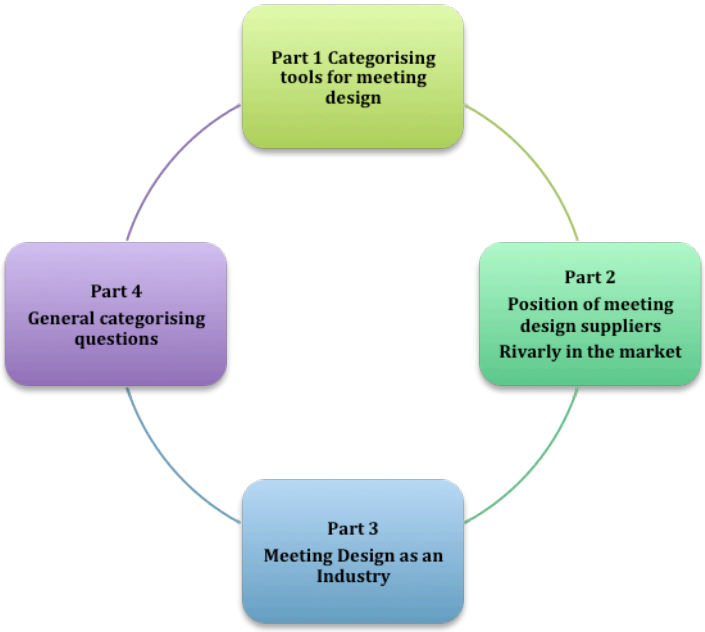

Figure 5. Logical flow of the survey by themes.

The second part of the survey questionnaire was designed to address multiple problems. First of all, I aimed to gain insight on how satisfied are meeting design suppliers with particular items in the industry such as size of the market, amount and affordability of marketing and distribution opportunities in the meetings industry and such. Secondly the idea of this part of the survey was to better

understand the competition among suppliers and entry/exit barriers to the market. In this part I applied industry analysis techniques.

The third part – the core of the research aimed to investigate how the meeting design suppliers define meeting design and how they experience the meeting design industry. Here, I aimed to discover the state of the meeting design industry. Based on the previous data observation, discussions with Vanneste and other industry players, the researcher estimated that meeting design is an emerging industry. Therefore this study attempted to find out what the suppliers think about this matter. Additionally, the third part contained some attitude questions that aimed to test if meeting design suppliers are frustrated with their position in the meetings industry and how friendly is environment towards these suppliers in the meetings industry. The last question of this part was " Do you feel that your company belongs to the meeting design industry?"- The question served as a trigger, which could help indicate the realities on how many companies in fact feel that meeting design is an industry. Findings from this and previous question could show how distinct are meeting design suppliers from the greater the meetings industry and is there a meeting design industry in fact.

The last, forth part of the survey was designed to get general info about the respondents such as gender, age, job position as well as company characteristics e.g. revenue, number of employees and market segments that the companies are targeting. Such findings could also help to perform a cross tabulating in the analysis part of the research.

Nowadays and particularly in the meeting design industry the role of the total experience is essential. For this reason and to make the survey design more appealing and visual I created colourful icons and included them in the survey design. With permission from the MSI, the icons were created from Meeting Architecture Process TM illustrations.

3 pictures were used in the survey design. These pictures can be found in the survey form (See Appendix 1 pages 1, 2 and 3).

5.5 Data analysis methods

As defined by McQuirre (2012) and Hair (2011), statistical analysis is a set of mathematically based conventions, which aim to find out whether the apparent difference is a real difference and to confirm relationships between measured items. In order to conduct a trustworthy analysis the researcher needs to determine which relationships are important to identify and then be able to adequately explain the data relationships. According to Hair (2011), data analyses go through the next process: Review conceptual framework and relationships to be tested, prepare data for analyses, determine if research involves descriptive analyses or hypothesis testing, conduct analyses and finally evaluate findings to assess whether they are meaningful.

In data analyses graphics and charts help researcher to more easily understand and describe the data. Further, graphics and charts help to communicate complex issues and make research reports more visually appealing. (Hair 2011.) Thus the researcher has chosen to use a web survey tool, which has these features. The collected data is displayed in a pie chart. In this survey the focus of data analyses was to measure the central tendencies among representatives of supplier category and compare results from different perspectives. This was possible due to response filtering feature of the we based survey tool. Depending on chosen answer it was possible to see what are the answer magnitudes among different suppliers. One of the fundamental ideas to be tested was to see what percent of the respondents identify themselves with the meeting design industry and what the meeting design term means to them.

5.6 Statistical techniques

Before starting to analyse the collected data, it is important to understand four basic concepts about relationships between variables. For example in this research such variables were CHATTY suppliers and their responses about the industry, industry rivalry, market size and etc. The four basic concepts are presence, nature of the relationship, direction and strength of association (Hair 2011, 349).

The presence concept indicates whether there is a relationship between two or more variables. If the relationship is present the relationships can be tested on linear and nonlinear. It is much easier to work with linear concept because the strength nature of the relationship between the variables remain constant over the range of the variables. In nonlinear the formula of the relationships is much more complex. (Hair 2011, 349.) Hence, I have decided to analyse the relationships that are believed to be linear in nature.

A third concept is a direction. When examined relationship proves to be real the researcher needs to know its direction. The direction can be positive or negative. (Hair 2011, 350.) For example the positive relationship would exist if meeting design suppliers who defined the meeting design industry as growing would also be more satisfied with size of the market. The negative relationship would exist if the suppliers rated the market intelligence among buyers as low would express higher levels of satisfaction with industry experience. The last concept that the researcher needs to be familiar with is *Strength of Association.* If the relationship is real and obvious, the researcher should measure the strength of the association between these two variables.

McQuarrie (2012) indicates, that data analysis in market research can consist of : tabulating and cross tabulating proportions, comparing means and averages across items and predicting an outcome as a function of antecedent variables. Individual numbers are compared in an attempt to find meaningful and or real differences. (McQuarrie 2012, 209.)

There are many variables that can be chosen and examined, hence it is important to choose the most relevant and important relationships that needed to be discovered, measured or tested. Thereby, I was curious to see how a response varies by geographical and by company characteristics.

Hair (2011) clarifies, that if two variables change together on a reliable or consistent basis this information can be used to make predictions and develop better business strategies. However, in order to be considered as meaningful to the research this information should be statistically significant.

In this study, I aimed to test what variables are linked. The variables to test were for example what is typical for technology suppliers and how do their responses differ from production suppliers' view on industry? These can be answered by comparing answers between different samples. Before the collected data is analysed its important to prepare it. To be able to provide reliable data and ensure its validity the researcher decided to evaluate only completed answers.

The web-based survey used in this survey research had a very useful feature – it automatically displayed the collected data in graphics and charts, which helped me to understand and determine important findings from the survey.

6 THE SCOPE OF THE MEETING DESIGN INDUSTRY

Over 120 respondents participated in the survey. However, some of them did not complete the survey and responses had missing data. Data from sixteen responses were eliminated from the analysis because of that matter. That action left a sample of 104 responses. The results from the research will be communicated further according to its theme.

6.1 Profile of the meeting design suppliers

Surprisingly, results showed that 73% of respondents provide meetings and events with technology support, 71 % of respondents with training, consultancy and project management support, 28 % provide technical support and 45 % seemed to provide production services.

Interestingly, findings showed that only 43.69 % of the examined suppliers provide services and tools from one CHATTY category, when 56.31 % provide services from more than one category. After analysis, it was out that 51% of respondents seemed to provide meeting planners and/or meeting designers services and are likely to be meeting planners and/or designers. Most of these participants provide own clients with full range of services from all the categories: technology, technical and production services as well. In this way, they probably serve as resellers or distributors of other services and tools.

48.1% of technology suppliers provide audience interaction/engagement. From the total population of N=76 technology suppliers over 40 % were providing mobile applications. Meanwhile, only 11.8 % were providing ticketing management. Figures 6, 7, 8 and 9 show the range of tools and services by supplier category. Over 20 % replied to provide other technology services and tools such as gaming solutions, contactless technologies and other.

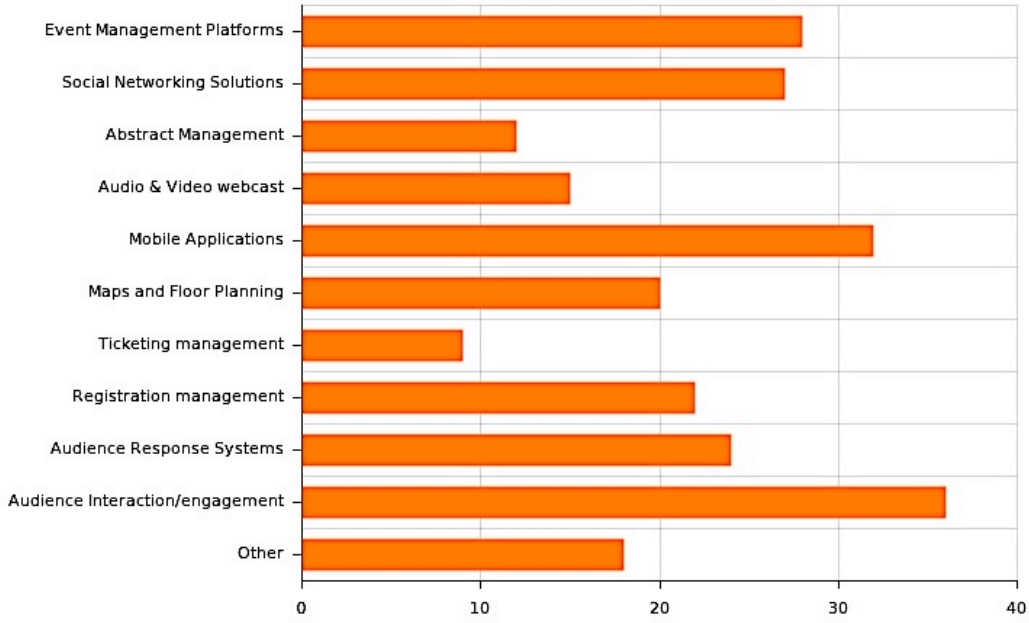

Figure 6. Technology suppliers. N=76.

From the Figure 7, we can see that the technical part appeared to be the most balanced section. It seems that technical suppliers tend to provide a wide range of technical support rather than focusing on a single service. However, design and construction suppliers slightly dominated the technical part. The role of the construction suppliers can be bigger in tradeshows where every exhibitor needs a booth or a stand. Other events such as conferences may hire such suppliers for example to build a stage in the chosen venue.

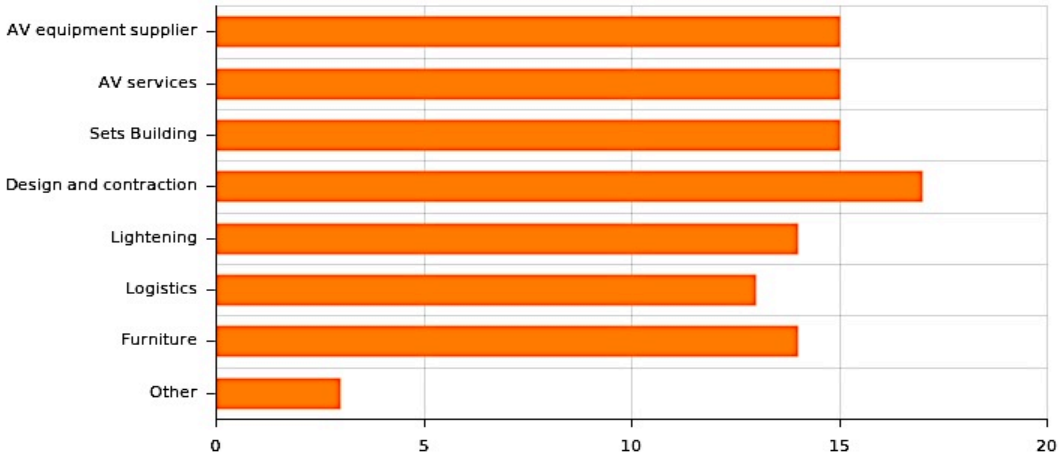

Figure 7. Technical suppliers. N=29.

The results from the survey indicated that 36.5 % of respondents were meeting designers and 33.6 % appeared to be meeting planners. Surprisingly many identified themselves as meeting designers as well as meeting planners. Moreover, there were more meeting designers than meeting planners. This can be understood in different ways. Perhaps this can point out that meeting design is already considered as a profession and that the meeting professionals see the differences. On the other hand, suppliers may want to show that they are up to date on the latest trends and innovations. When data is collected from online surveys, it is difficult to be sure how participants interpret the questions and terms.

Some of the speakers, facilitators and also identified themselves as meeting planners and meeting designers. This fact may be pointing out that multitasking is one of the features of the meetings industry.

As can be seen in Figure 8, another popular service among the group of suppliers was a consulting service. This came by no surprise; this type of services has always played a significant role in the business-to-business industry. Consultants and experts help to improve performance of the business and can also help to make write business decision; this can explain the popularity of this service in the meetings industry.

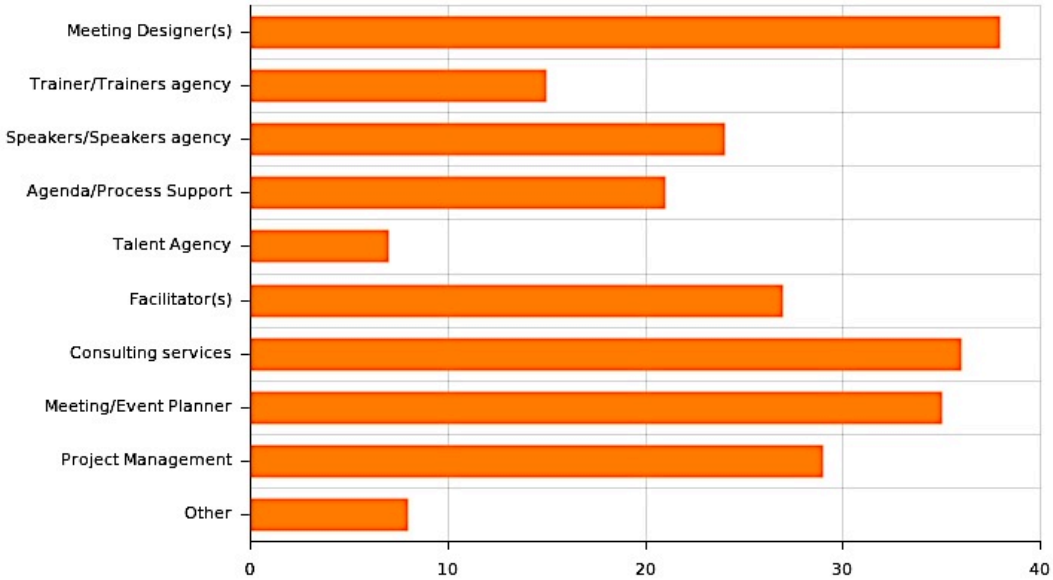

Figure 8. Training/consultancy/expert suppliers. N=70.

As can be seen in Figure 9, only 44 % of respondents were production suppliers. In the production part the leading service was entertainment, communication and video. (See Figure 9). The original idea was to name this supplier section as Art. However, it was decided that to not confuse survey participants it is better to use simple title. It was interesting to see how many suppliers are using art in meeting design. Compared to technology section the production section received fewer participants. Perhaps, this can point out that the full potential of the meeting design is not yet understood. At the moment there are few companies that incorporate art and technology in meeting design area. Obviously, there is a room for new tools and services that could embed art. For example if technology and art will join hands the result could be an outstanding experience.

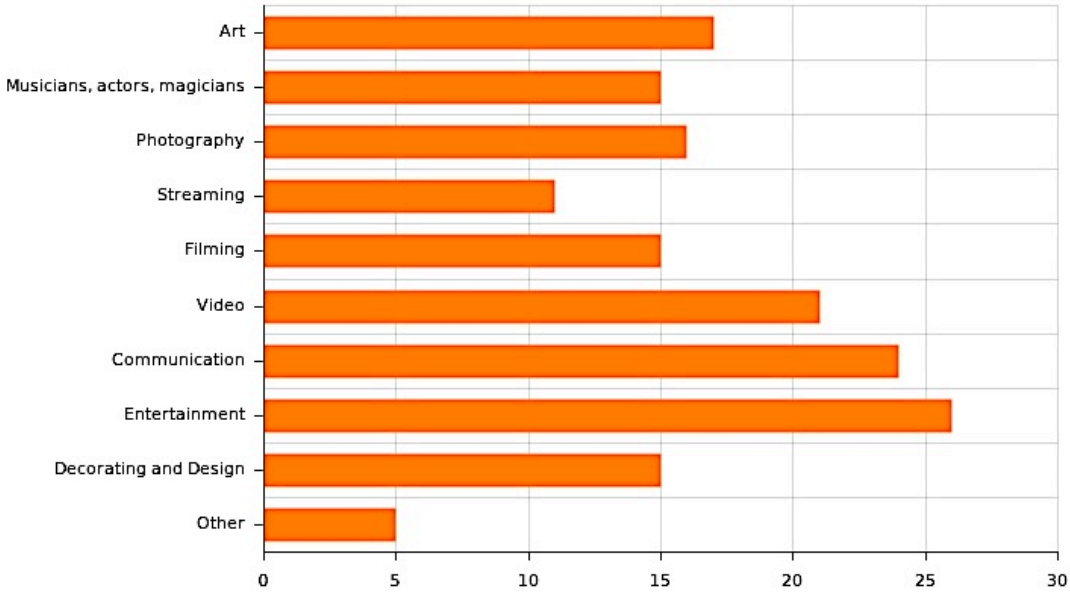

Figure 9. Production suppliers. N= 46.

MPI is one of the biggest organizations in the meetings industry. As follows, 46.9 % of participants appeared to be members of the MPI. Surprisingly, 35.7 % of respondents were non-members of any industry organization. As was stated before in the chapter 3, the meetings industry plays a vital role in the US. The number of non-members was higher in North America than in EU. Perhaps the reason for this matter is that the industry is more developed in the US than in Europe. Though, this matter can be also explained by cultural differences. It can be more common in the US to be a part of an organization than in EU.

Almost 60 % of participants were based in Europe and 40 % based in North America. 6,8 % also based in Asia, Australia and Oceania, South America and Middle East. Some of the members were based solely in one region while only few were based in several regions. This came by no surprise since the original objective was to gain information about and from participants in Europe and North America. Also as most of the meeting design companies are small, they tend to have one office in one region.

As expected, the meeting design companies were represented by extra small, small and medium sized companies. 51 % of respondents had revenue starting from 0 to 1 million euros. Among those who had over 1 million revenue were high ratio of technology suppliers and meeting planner agencies.

Surprisingly many, over 20%, did not provide any information to this question. Probably in the business world executives feel uncomfortable to hand out too much information about their company, as the threat of competitors is high.

As stated Porter (1980) a fragmented industry can be an indicator of low entry barriers in the industry. Another conclusion that can be made is that meeting design is a fragmented industry. Porter explained (2008), that market could be so big or diverse that it requires many firms to satisfy buyers' needs. Another reason can be that the industry is so new that no large firms have yet emerged.

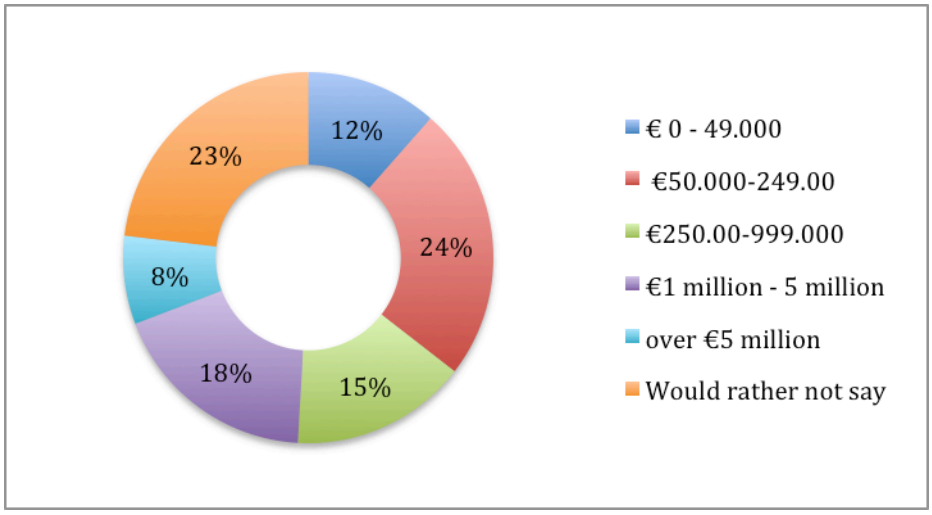

Figure 10. Revenue of the respondents' companies. N=104

Figure 11 shows that 30 % of the survey participants held position of CEO and 36 % held either owner or co-founder position in a company. When it comes to B2B market research, it is important to be able to get information from decision makers since they are expected to be aware of the realities in the industry.

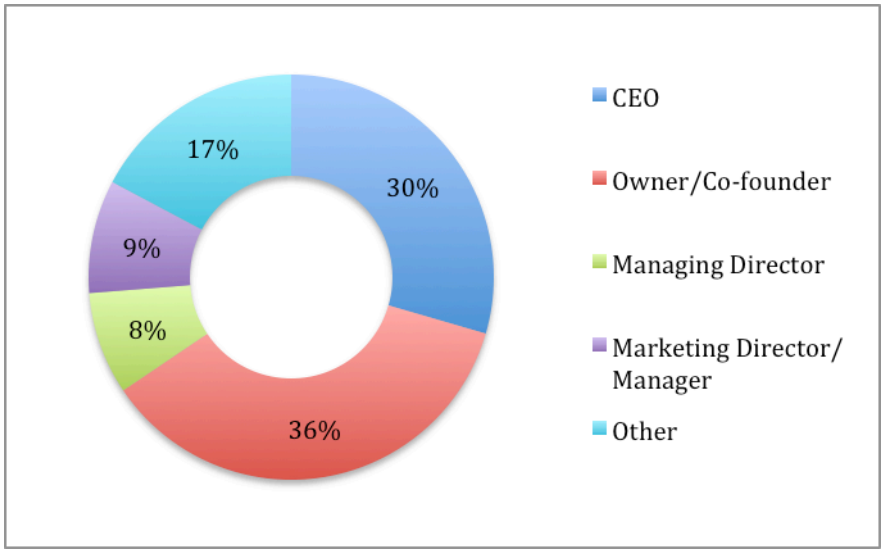

Figure 11. The survey participants by title

Figure 12 shows that 51.46 % of the suppliers have been from 0 to 10 years in the industry and 48.54 % have been over 10 years in the industry. In addition we can also see that amount of young companies is quite high. 33 % of the companies are start-up companies which are from 5 to 10 years in the industry. In turns, such findings could support an idea that meeting design is an emerging industry. Among those who were over 10 year in the industry were more meeting planners, consultants and experts. There were remarkably less technology suppliers who were serving the industry over 10 years.

However, it is important to consider, that some of the technology providers could be switching their focus from one service to another. They could be in the market over 10 years, which does not mean they were providing the same tools and services during this period. Some technology suppliers have a background of meeting planners and vice versa.

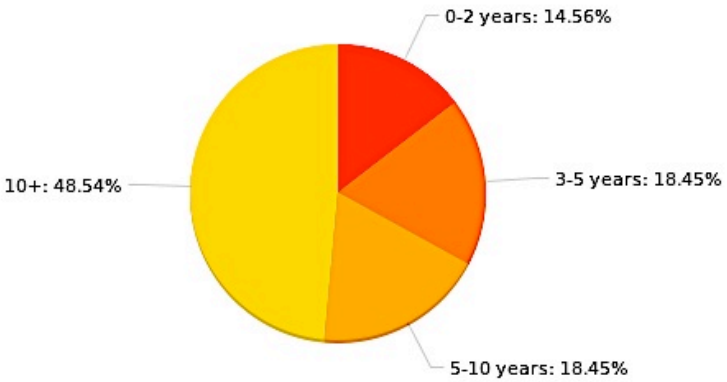

Figure 12. Years in the industry.

6.2 Position of the meeting design suppliers

In this survey research, the objective was to measure attitude of the meeting design suppliers and test how they perceive the current situation in the market. Rather surprisingly, results indicated that 42.3 % of the meeting design suppliers disagree and only 26.9 % agree with a statement that meeting planners are well aware of tools and services for meeting design. Meanwhile, the last 30.7 % remained to have a neutral attitude (See Table 2). High ratio of neutral responses may be typical for business research studies, since the information concerns the personal attitude, people may feel uncomfortable or insecure to reveal their true feelings. Perhaps, if this study had been administrated by face-to-face interviews this number would be even higher.

As anticipated, 56.73 % of respondents agreed that meeting design and its suppliers have a tangible impact on meetings industry. Here, 23.08 % of participants showed neutral attitude and only 2.88 % disagreed with the statement. Furthermore, results showed that 62.14 % of meeting design suppliers agree that meeting professionals have been slow to embrace tools for meeting design. Such findings can indicate that although the industry is developing the meeting design market is slow.

As stated Davidson (2013), in 2014 meetings budgets will remain under pressure and the approval process for meetings will likely become even more complex. (Davidson 2013). A slow embracement can be likely natural to B2B industry,

where the decision-making model is often complex and thorough risk management is crucial. The results may be also pointing out low market intelligence. Which in turns can be a result of new and unproven market and first time users in the meeting design industry. Perhaps, the slow embracement of the new products and services is not a contemporary but a typical issue in the meetings industry.

Also, it is interesting to see that most of the meeting design suppliers agree that the situation is improving and it is getting easier to convince their client in value of the services/products. Indeed, I have noticed many new articles, session and webinars in the Internet and at industry tradeshows that are devoted to technology and meeting design.

Table 2. Attitude of the meeting design suppliers towards different statements

	Strongly Agree	**Agree**	**Neutral**	**Disagree**	**Strongly disagree**
It is getting easier to convince our clients that there is value in the products and service we provide	14.42 %	42.31 %	22.12 %	19.23 %	1.92 %
Meeting design and its suppliers have a tangible impact on the meetings industry	19.23 %	54.81 %	23.08 %	2.88 %	-
Meeting professionals have been slow to embrace tools for meeting design	22.33 %	39.81 %	29.13 %	8.74 %	-
Nowadays, meeting/event planners are well aware of products/services available in the marketplace	5.77 %	21.15 %	30.77 %	39.42%	2.88%

Table 3 shows that most of the meeting suppliers are satisfied with amount and affordability of marketing and distribution channels. These results were rather surprising as in this study it was predicted that the level of frustration would be way higher. Over 50 % of participants expressed neutral attitude toward affordability of channels. And again, the participants could be not comfortable with expressing a negative attitude towards any matters in the corporate world. They can be sensitive to such surveys and probably may not want to reveal their negative feelings.

Another matter that can be noticed from the table 3 is dissatisfaction with data/statistics/ research results available in the meetings industry. As was already discussed in previous chapters this is a constant issue in the meetings industry.

As shows results, meeting design suppliers were relatively satisfied with the amount of available marketing and distribution channels in the industry. Almost 60 % were satisfied with that matter. Expectedly, only 31 % was satisfied with the affordability of these channels. Small companies have smaller marketing budgets and not always can afford the desired marketing and distribution channels. In this phase of the development it is important for small companies to get the opportunities to shine and showcase their products. Hence, more supportive programs are needed. Big industry associations and industry events could hand out discounts and perhaps could even establish some lower prices or support packages for small companies in the area of meeting design. This movement should be developed locally as well as globally.

Table 3. Satisfaction of the meeting design suppliers with the industry

	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
Amount of available marketing and distribution channels	14.14 %	42.42 %	35.35 %	7.07%	1.01%
Affordability of marketing and distribution channels	9.09 %	22.22 %	50.51 %	17.17 %	1.01 %
Data/Statistics/ Researches available in the Meetings Industry	7.07 %	11.11 %	42.42 %	34.34 %	5.05 %
Size of the market	14.14 %	39.39 %	34.34 %	9.09 %	3.03 %
Amount and availability of the industry events	14.29 %	42.86 %	35.71 %	6.12 %	1.02 %

6.3 Meeting design as an industry

The results from the survey showed that 82.7% of respondents have already heard the meeting design phrase before. Over 36 % of respondents defined the meeting design term as planning based on objectives, outcomes, goals, and needs of the meetings. These definitions match with the definition that was given in the previous chapters of this thesis. This can serve as an indicator of increasing meeting design awareness. However, the situation requires further improvement. The industry is immature and I believe that in the future research studies the meeting design knowledge will be way higher.

18.2 % percent of respondents described meeting design just as a process of planning. About 15 % gave no response and 8.6 % did not know what does the term mean. As can be seen in Figure 13, half of participants said the meeting design industry is an emerging industry and 26 % parents said, "It is a growth industry." Only 2 % of respondents chose “ doesn’t exist” answer. First of all, these results support the idea that meeting design industry exists and that the meeting design suppliers feel a part of the meeting design industry. These findings can support the view that meeting design is a distinct and emerging industry switching to its growth stage. The results are rather surprising, since it was expected that most of the suppliers would say that the industry doesn’t exist. However, only 2 % said so.

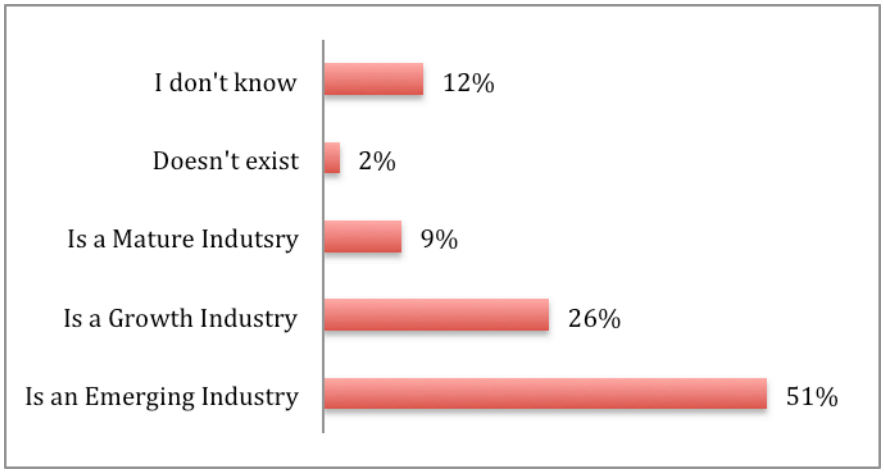

Figure 13. The state of the meeting design industry

95.2 % of participants identified their company as part of the meetings industry whereas 77.7 % of respondents felt a part of the meeting design industry, while 8.7 % felt to be a part of the industry and 8.7 % were still in doubt. (SeeFigure14). In this thesis meeting design suppliers were categorised using the CHATTY taxonomy. Only the suppliers who fit into the meeting design category were examined. My conclusion is that the meeting design category doesn’t have clear boundaries and not all of these suppliers identify themselves as meeting design suppliers or even feel a part of the industry. The uncertainty, so typical for the meetings industry, is also rules in the meeting design industry. Perhaps as attractiveness and popularity of the industry will increase more suppliers will identify themselves with this business.

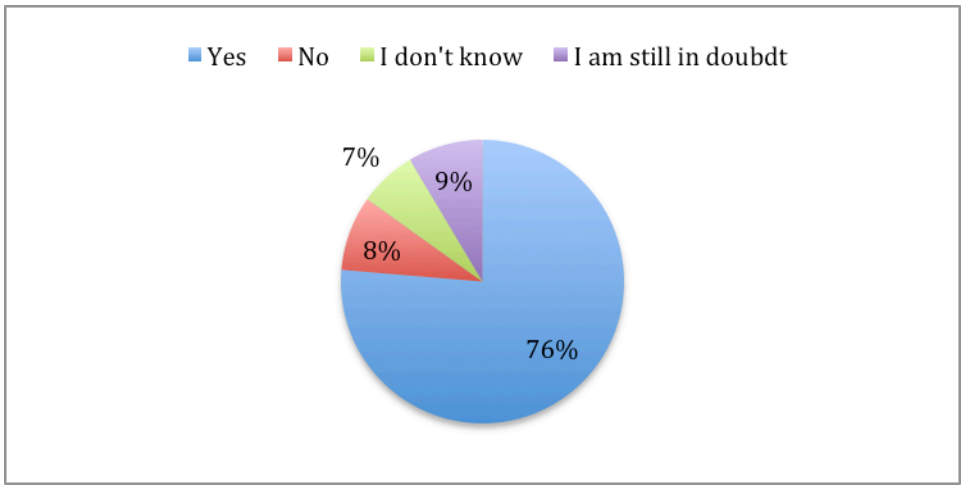

Figure 14. Part of the meeting design industry

6.4 Market size and the rivalry in the meeting design industry

The results showed that 55.6 % of the meeting design suppliers experience growth of the market, 38.4 % feel market as stable and only 6.1 % said, "It is shrinking." It will be good to study this matter further. Business Dictionary (2014) explains that the market growth means an increase in the demand for a particular product or service over time. This is a positive note, which could possibly mean that a demand on some of the meeting design products and services is increasing. However, since this research study examined diverse suppliers we cannot be sure what markets are expanding. But as the objective of the study was to measure the competition, these results can possible mean that even though the competition is high the market is big. The question may be who will manage to grab the market first. To understand the full picture we need to know why is that happening and what is affecting this matter. Maybe this is happening because of emerging markets in developing countries? What can be other reasons? Business Dictionary (2014) explains that the market growth means an increase in the demand for a particular product or service over time.

Over 80 % of respondents said there are new competitors in the market. These results support the idea that the meeting design industry is an emerged industry, which is growing. Large number of new competitors and small companies may

also serve as an indicator of a low entrance barrier in the industry, which makes the threat of the new entrants high.

The results may be pointing out that market is on “fire”. As was defined by Porter (1980), slowing growth means more competition for market share. With companies unable to maintain growth rates merely by holding market share, competitive attention turns inward toward attacking the shares of the others. (Porter 1980, 238.) Thus, at this stage the rapid growth and large number of recently entered competitors is not necessarily a bad sign. With the industry shift to a mature stage the buyers’ focus will shift from deciding whether to purchase the product at all to making choices among brands. In this stage the suppliers need to be careful and react with reassessment of strategy.

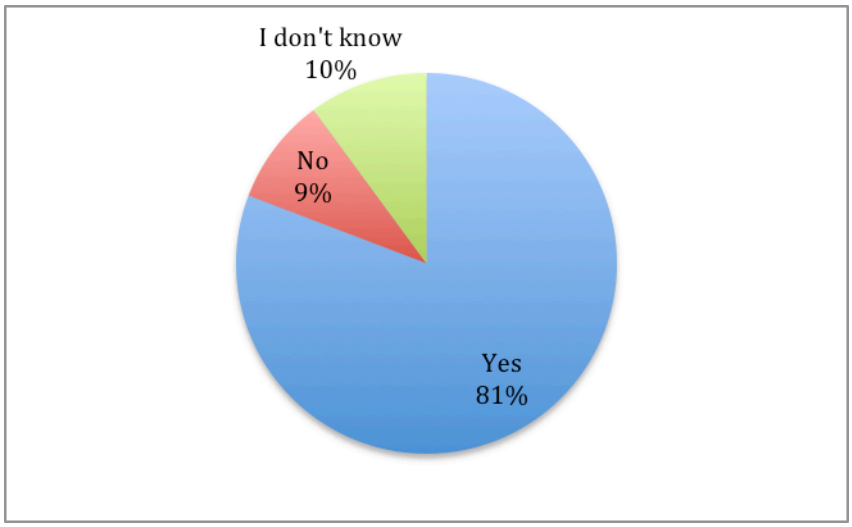

Figure 15. New competitors in the market. N=99

Meanwhile, 45 % of respondents answered it is "difficult to enter the market" and 16 % said it is "very difficult" and 32 % thinks it is rather "easy to enter the market." Since the sample consisted of different suppliers it is important to understand that, for example, meeting designers and meeting planners have different entry barriers compared to, for example, a technology start up company. As was expected among those who indicated entrances as easy were more meeting designers, planners and consultants as they have lower entrance and exit costs.

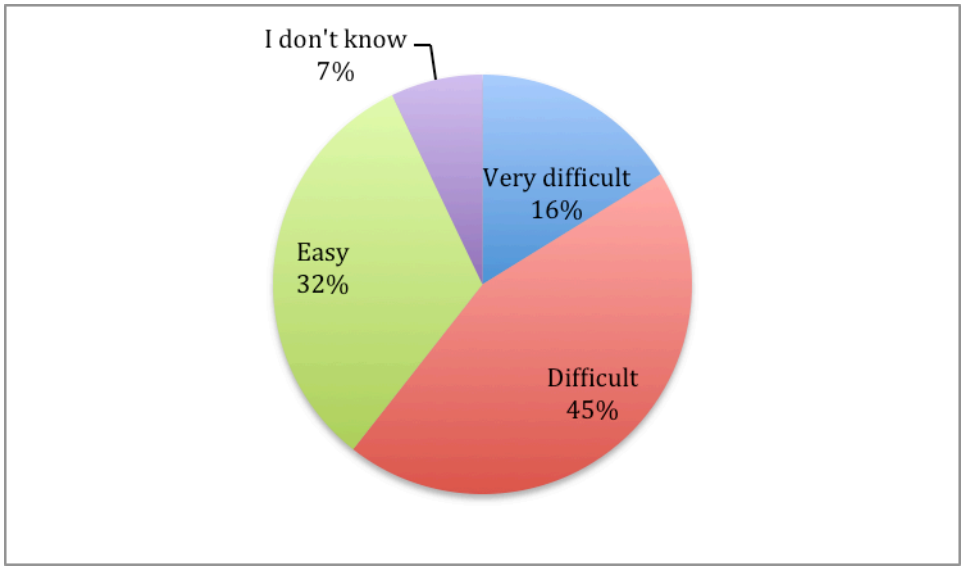

Figure 16. Ease of entrance. N= 99

Results from the survey showed that 47 % of meeting design suppliers who participated in the research know about competitors that dropped out of the market area. Relatively many of respondents did not have information on this topic - 31 %. This fact may be an indicator of low market intelligence among suppliers and can be explained by the developing state of the industry.

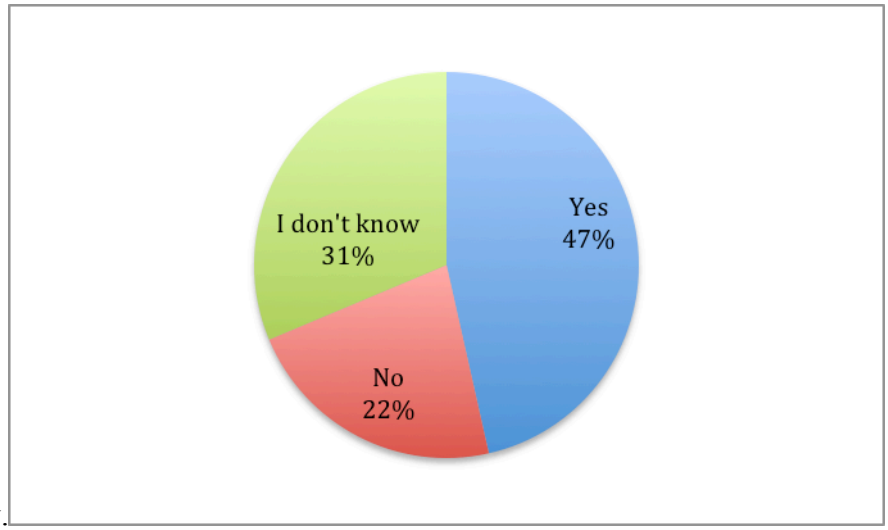

Figure 17. Ease of exit. N = 99

Figure 18 shows that over 50 % of meeting design suppliers have from 1 to 20 direct competitors while 20 % have over 50 direct competitors. These results may

indicate a rather competitive market. Since the suppliers are diverse it makes the rivalry among suppliers quite intense.

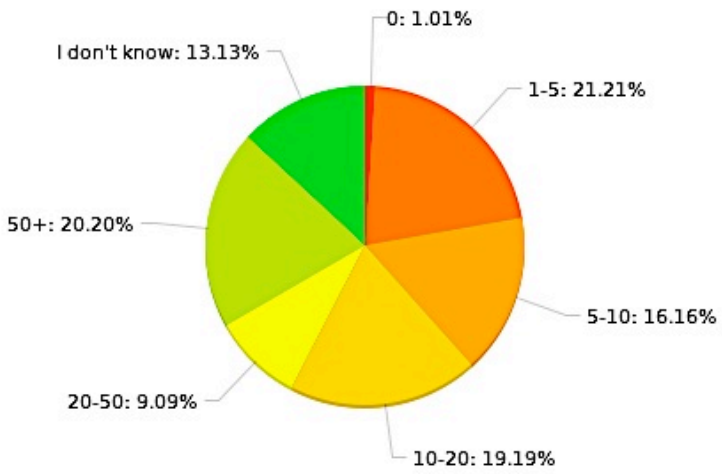

Figure 18. Number of direct competitors, N =99.

6.5 Meeting design suppliers in Europe vs. North America

According to the results from the survey, suppliers in North America appeared to be more satisfied with the size of the market; the difference between these geographical areas is roughly 10 % (see Table 3).

Table 3. Satisfaction with the size of the market in Europe and North America.

Size of the market	**Europe**	**North America**
Very Satisfied	8.77 %	19.51 %
Satisfied	38.6 %	41.46 %
Neutral	38.6 %	31.71 %
Dissatisfied	10.53 %	4.88 %
Very dissatisfied	3.51 %	2.44 %
Total sample	N= 57	N= 41

As shown in Table 4 satisfaction with data/statistics and research is higher in North America than in Europe, the difference in this criterion proven to be significant. Over 30 % in North America and only 7 % in Europe participants were satisfied with this subject. Meanwhile, 45.2 % of European suppliers and 33.75 % of North America suppliers were dissatisfied with the subject. The results supported early concept of poor industry intelligence in the market, which is understandable giving the development phase of the industry.

Table 4. Satisfaction with available data/statistics/researches in the meetings industry

Data/Statistics/Researches available in the Meetings Industry	**Europe**	**North America**
Very Satisfied	0.00 %	14.63 %
Satisfied	7.02 %	14.63 %
Neutral	47.37 %	36.59 %
Dissatisfied	38.60 %	29.27 %
Very dissatisfied	7.02 %	4.48 %
Total sample	N=57	N=41

Other cross tabulations did not reveal any significant differences between Europe and North America. Therefore, the researcher assumed that in further studies the two geographical areas could be examined jointly.

6.6 Theoretical analysis

The findings from the survey can support that the meeting design industry is an emerging and re-forming industry. Porter defines emerging industries as newly formed or re-formed industries that have been created by technological innovations, shifts in relative cost relationships, emergence of new consumer

needs or other economic and sociological changes. These changes make a new product or service potentially viable business opportunity. (Porter 1980, 215.)

Emerging industries differ in their structures, but there are common factors that categorize this stage of development: technological uncertainty, strategic uncertainty, a high proportion of newly formed companies vs proportion of established firms, a lot of spin-off firms, first-time buyers, a short time horizon and conventional wisdom and subsidy. (Porter 1980, 215-220.)

The finding from the study seems to demonstrate that the market size is large at the same time the overall industry competition is intense. The meeting design industry is fragmented, and most of the meeting design suppliers provide a wide range of services. As the meetings industry is broad and diverse, the needs of the customers are also extensive and diverse. As was described in the chapter 2, the business-to business makes the trust and personal relationships critical and long-term customers are crucial for the company. To be able to preserve long-term clients, the meeting design suppliers try to keep a comprehensive service portfolio and provide the B2B customer with all he or she needs. For example, technology companies focusing on a single service can partner with another technology company to provide the meeting design buyer with a complete package of services. Similarly, meeting planner may serve as a distributor of meeting technology services to keep his important client from switching to a competitor. Probably this is a survival method that many meeting design suppliers have to use in order to survive in the industry.

Another way to keep the client from switching to a competitor is, for example, to increase a switching cost, however giving the b2b nature of the industry, this could destroy the trust and loyalty of the client.

Because of the complex relationship model of in the meetings and meeting design industry, it makes difficult to identify which products and services are direct substitutes to each other. However, based on my experience, I assume that in the meeting design industry the power of substitutes is high. Because many products were developed around a new need and are not yet fully formed and standardized, the customers can be confused by lack of product standardization and multiplicity

of the products/services. Additionally, the value and the advantage of the meeting design products and services can be still unclear for buyers. As long as the value and advantages are not clear for customers they may consider purchasing other so called substitute products.

The meeting design industry has a complex business-to-business transactions structure. For example, buyers can change their role and become suppliers which creates strong bargaining power of suppliers (See figure 19)

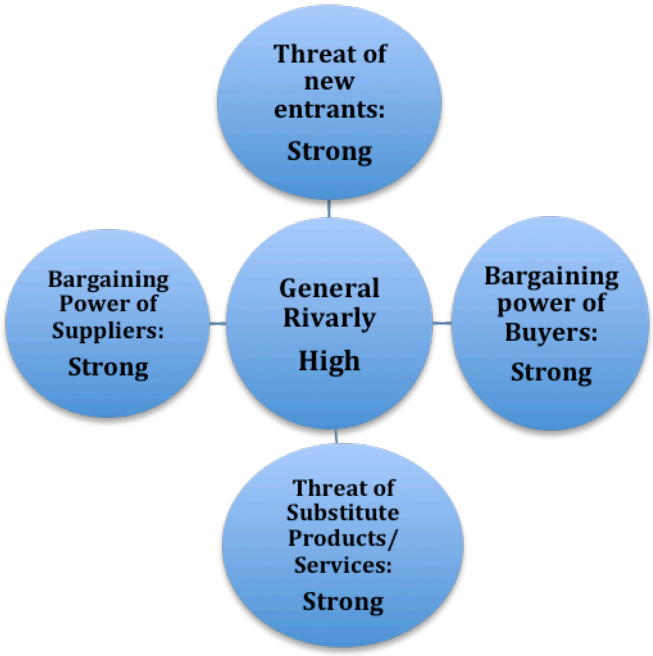

Figure 19. The meeting design industry analysis.

Based upon my industry observation, I assume that the “80-20 Rule,"- typical for a B2B nature of businesses, makes the bargaining power of buyers strong. Few significant accounts have a tangible impact on the suppliers’ revenue, which makes their bargaining position very strong. (See figure 19)

The results from the study also showed that entry and exit barriers are low. Exit barrier can be indicated as probably low since there are many companies that have recently dropped out of the marketplace. When exit barriers are low, companies have fewer problems with leaving the market.

The results from the survey indicated that the meeting design industry is a small business dominated and fragmented industry. As emphasized by Porter, nearly all fragmented industries have low overall entry barriers. That is why they consist of many small companies. (Porter 1988, 196.) Over 40 % of the participants said " it is difficult to enter the market". Nonetheless, the entry barriers appear to be low. That fact may perhaps prove that the threat of new entrants is high. (See figure 19) Besides the joint strength of competitive forces, this may also be explained by the developmental phase of the industry. The challenges that face new innovative companies are typical for emerging industries. They try to find a space and the target market in the industry, but even if the product is effective, the adaptation in the B2B takes more time than in B2C environment that makes difficult to “get a leg in the door” and stay in the industry. It also may be seen in the slow adaptation of new products and services. As members of the B2B industry, meeting design buyers try to stick to the proven processes and tools that have worked for years. Even though, the results might not be satisfying.

One of the main difficulties in the emerging industries is that there are no established rules of the “game." At the same time, the lack of rules is both a risk and a source of opportunities. (Porter 1980, 216.) Figure 19 shows the results of the meeting design industry analysis. The researcher has made a conclusion that the general rivalry in the meeting design industry is high, even though the market is “hot” and expanding. At the moment, the meeting design market is “hot” and it is attracting many new suppliers to the industry. However, in the long run only the strongest companies with top quality products and smart strategy will survive in the market.

According to Porter (1980), small firms can be more efficient if “ personal service is the key to the point." As was mentioned before meeting design industry operates in B2B markets, thereby the personal connections and networks play a fundamental role in the success of the company. Perhaps this can explain why there are so many small companies.

6.7 The meeting design industry forecasting

Porter (1980) determined that in an emerging phase companies are in part dependent on each other in the industry for their own success. The reason is that this development stage often has problems with industry image, credibility, and confusion of buyers. (Porter 1980, 230.) Hence, the meeting design industry could overcome obstacles by approaching the market under a single umbrella. The need for consistent research and development (R&D) in the meeting design industry is apparent. This should be done jointly with support from the meetings industry and its members. There are many pluses of development of the meeting design industry: more creative tools in the field, start-up friendly environment can open door for innovations, higher level of success and satisfaction among stakeholders, new jobs and transparency in the market. The meeting design industry needs to continue developing, and it needs to be supported by the meetings industry. For example, the meetings industry can provide give its support in research & development and marketing activities.

In the chapter 3, meeting design was defined as conscious planning of a meeting where all the "why's" of the event, stakeholders, meeting objectives and the desired outcome of the meeting are taken into account. With popularization of meeting design term meeting planners will start to identify themselves as meeting designers.

As industry will continue to grow and mature, it will find its way to sustainable development. Here I mean all the aspects of the sustainability such as social, environment and economic aspects.

Meeting design suppliers will partner with each other in order to provide best in class services and answers to the needs of the market. Role of the technology in the meetings will become vital. New innovative companies will develop in this area. Internet and technology have already changed the world of the meetings industry, and this massive change will continue to happen on its full speed.

Some products and services are totally new to the market; some are well established and mature while some are reforming. Thus, the meeting design industry should be considered not as a brand new industry but as a reforming industry. For example, speakers and facilitators and technical suppliers have always been an important part of the industry. Meanwhile, event management software, mobile applications and voting systems have been evolving in sync with technology in the world. New technologies will be embedded in the meeting design. Probably this will not happen quickly but this will happen firmly.

As a result of meeting design development as a discipline, meetings will become more sustainable, measurable, strategic and fun. Meeting design will change meetings by bringing them to the next level of effectiveness.

Experience design will also play a leading role in the formalization of new products and services in this area. The tools and services in the meeting design category of the future will become even more involving, touchable, smart and enjoyable. The new era of products and services will make measurement and analysis a fun experience, which will not make it less effective.

Elements of gamification will be included in most of the products and services. As a result, learning, motivation and networking will be even more enjoyable and efficient. Meeting professionals will be seeking for these products and services. The meeting design industry and its suppliers will become recognizable and valued by the meetings industry.

7 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE MSI

Formulation of strategy in emerging industries must cope with the uncertainty and risk of this period of an industry's development (Porter 1980, 229). As the first organization purely devoted to meeting design, the MSI has can take benefit from its pioneer position. However, the cost of pioneering is high. As a small organization with insufficient resources, it needs to receive support from the outside. The MSI needs to look for different sponsorship programs, raises and membership fees.

At this stage, the MSI has an opportunity to take the strongest position in the industry. Participation in the industry conferences, tradeshows and other events can help. The MSI needs to participate in these events to establish trust and recognisability of meeting design. Also, by participating in such events the MSI could entrench itself as an industry "spokesperson."

To survive in the emerging industry, the MSI needs to prioritize and invest its resources accurately and strategically. Sticky partnerships with the industry members can help to stay in the industry and overcome the obstacles of this difficult phase.

To grow and develop the MSI needs to use more holistic strategic approach toward its competitors and the market in general. Thus, the MSI should outline a concrete competitive strategy, which would support its business development. After defining the strategy, it would be easier to follow the line and translate it into actions and the marketing campaigns. Without the competitive strategy, the organization risks to be behind its more strategic competitors. As the MSI operates globally it also needs to consider local competitors and plan how the MSI could outperform them.

7.1 The MSI in the B2B industry

As was mentioned in the previous chapters of the research, in B2B industries personal relationships and customer satisfaction (members' satisfaction) are crucial success factors. The MSI needs to make sure that new members become

the “lifelong” members. All parties who are operating on behalf of the MSI need to understand their role in keeping customers happy. Thereby, the MSI needs to pay more attention to customer service and customer success. The organization needs to define responsibilities and tasks between its employees. This will help to establish a high-class customer service. Above all, the members’ satisfaction should be measured in a constant manner. It is important to gain the information not only from informal face-to-face conversations but also from market research surveys.

As was highlighted by Hague & Harrison (2013), no B2B buyer wants to risk his or her livelihood or reputation by buying an unreliable product and service. This makes emotional issues such as trust and security critical in B2B. This in turn places great emphasis on brand, reputation, case studies and other factors, which convey reliability and consistency over the life of the product or service being purchased. (Hague & Harrison 2013.) Therefore, to attract new members the MSI could give 6 months of the membership for free after what the membership can be paid for a year or stopped. This would help the meeting design suppliers to make a decision to join the organization and to see the benefits and the value of the membership. Many start-up companies are very interested in joining the MSI, but because of the limited resources they consider this as a too risky investment. The trial campaign shows customer a “giving” attitude of the organization as well as a willingness to help and make things easy for the customer.

At this phase, the MSI needs to grab the market share as quickly as possible. As explained Porter (1980), image and reputation of the firm are important to the buyer so the firm can develop an enhanced reputation by being a pioneer (Porter 1980, 232.)

7.2 The need for strengthening the position of the MSI

Based on the results from this study and the personal experience as the former MSI employee, I propose that the MSI could improve its business situation and its position in the industry by modifying its membership system, applying the strategic marketing and ensuring the high-quality customer service.

To find out the necessary changes in the membership system, the MSI needs to be able to respond to the following questions: “ What services do our members may need in the future?” “What are the values of the membership?” “Do we manage to give the promised membership benefits?”, “How we can deliver more value to our members and ensure the membership loyalty? ”. To answer these questions, the organization needs to understand its customers.

According to this research’s findings, only 15 out of 104 participants are members of the MSI, while over 30% of participants are not members of any industry organization. These numbers are higher in Europe where over 40 % are not members. As outlined in the previous chapter, satisfaction with data/statistics and research is higher in North America than in Europe. These variables can be possibly related as members of industry organizations have better access to information, trends and outlooks of the industry. Hence, the MSI could raise its profile and improve overall performance by including access to the business research studies to its membership package. In fact, this can become one of the significant membership benefits.

Research and development are crucial but at the same time expensive and time-consuming activities. To overcome the obstacles related to the lack of the resources, the MSI could benefit from the internship program. However, the program needs to be more standardized, and the objectives need to be predefined. Before hiring an intern, the MSI needs to identify needs and roles to be given to a student. Afterward, MSI could recruit a student and provide him/her with the concrete research topics. The research process should be monitored and evaluated by the MSI. In this way, the MSI can ensure that the time of a student is used effectively. The ideas for the further research topics will be discussed in the Chapter 7.

8 CONCLUSION

When it comes to conducting research in the meeting design industry only one viewpoint or perspective of the industry can be considered. The meeting design industry has complicated relationship branches, and there are tens or even hundreds of possible perspectives and viewpoints that a researcher can choose from. Hence, in order to provide a comprehensive results, it is necessary to focus on one aspect.

As was outlined in the previous chapters hypotheses, driven from theory usually serve to guide the process and provide a list of what needs to be measured. This research study aimed to answer to four central questions. The answers to these questions are given below.

1. What is the current state of the meeting design industry?

The results of this study may be pointing out that the meeting design is an emerging industry, which developed around a new product/idea and is in the early stage of development. While over 90 % felt a part of the meetings industry over 70 % of participants also felt a part of the meeting design industry. This number is impressing, giving the early stage of the industry development and the uncertainty in the definition of the meeting design term. I believe such high percent is very a positive sign. It can mean that meeting design is becoming more and more popular in the meetings industry. It also shows that the meeting design industry is developing and probably is creating a distinct sector. The meetings industry itself has also developed not that long ago, and it is still forming and re-forming.

Surprisingly many participants have heard about the meeting design term before and also expressed their knowledge of the matter. This is a positive sign of development of the industry and the meeting design as a discipline in general. Many identified meeting design as an action or process. The most popular word combinations that the suppliers used to describing meeting design term were: creating experience, art, meetings' objectives, achieving results and measuring ROI. Interestingly it appears that meeting design is much more than just planning.

2. How satisfied are the suppliers with a market size?

According to the research's findings, the suppliers are rather satisfied with the market size and moreover see the market as growing. I believe that this is a very positive sign that indicate the potential of the industry. Over 55 % of participants are satisfied with the market size. Moreover, 14 % of the respondents were very satisfied with the market size. Hence, I assume that this study managed to provide an answer to the question.

3. How do they consider the role and the importance of the meeting design industry?

Almost 75 % of the participants felt that meeting design and its suppliers have a tangible impact on the meetings industry. The mentioned number appeared to be higher than was expected in this study. Such a large number is another fact that can serve as proof of an emerging industry with great potential in the future. Half of participants also admitted that it is getting easier to convince their customers in the value of the product/service, this can probably mean that the market is willing to embrace the meeting design but because of the risks with uncertainty is doing it slowly. Also, this can mean that clients of the meeting design suppliers are becoming more comfortable and aware of the services, which is a good sign. The situation seems to be improving.

4. How intense is the competition in meeting design market?

The competition in the meeting design was measured by applying Porter's framework for industry analysis. Analysis of the five competitive forces such as power of suppliers, power of buyers, power of substitute and threat of new entries allowed me to make a conclusion that the rivalry in the meeting design is quite intense. The meeting design industry is fragmented and also consists from various competitors. While some of the suppliers are direct competitors to each other, the rest is not direct. The lack of standardization, and complex structure of the suppliers' chain make it difficult to identify substitute products and services clearly. In this research four main supplier groups were examined: technology, technical, management/training and production suppliers. These diverse groups

proved to be too promiscuous and diverse to be covered in one survey research. Hence, the results from the rivalry analysis may be not accurate and rather should be considered as directional.

The results from the survey supported the idea that the meeting design industry is an emerging industry in its growth stage. The rivalry in the meeting design industry meeting is high, and the industry members face typical for its stage obstacles such as customer's confusion and uncertainty, high marketing costs, threat of new entrants, few researches/statistics and other data available, early and late markets and changing role of suppliers and industry members. Nonetheless, the results from the analysis showed that meeting design suppliers are rather satisfied with their position and see the market as growing.

8.1 Evaluation of the research process

Above all, I enjoyed the process of learning on the B2B matters, the meetings industry, meeting design and the Porter's industry analysis. Moreover, I believe that this particular knowledge will be beneficial for my professional future. It was interesting to compare personal experience from the industry with the theory and see the cause and effect connectives. The research topic was very interesting for me and many times I had to stop myself from spending too much time on reading interesting articles. I could not fit all of the information to the thesis, and I found it difficult to decide what sources to take and what to leave. In the end, I took even too many sources out from the final text.

The process of survey design was complex. The original survey version was changed at least eight times before the final version was launched. Giving B2B nature of the industry it was crucial to design an appropriate survey, which would have a clear logical flow.

Unfortunately, supplier-categorizing part of the survey failed to provide clear information. Many of the respondents crosschecked two or more supplier categories; so it was difficult to clearly divide them into CHATTY supplier categories.

The original idea was to perform market research for the “Toolbox Catalogue” and the theoretical background was collected accordingly. However, the director changed his mind towards thesis topic. I had to rethink the entire study concept. That had a negative impact on my motivation. Unfortunately, the director did not have enough time for my thesis, so it was difficult to identify needs and boundaries of the thesis. Thus, the process of the research was challenging, and the research questions were formed along the process. I also had to struggle with my tendency to dig too deep into details.

Time management was probably one of the most challenging tasks for me. Since I started to form the research idea already in December 2013, I wanted to finish the project at the same time with my internship in March 2014. However, writing thesis during the internship was not an easy task. This experience taught me to be more realistic about my own abilities and limits. I also learned about my writing skills a lot. For example, I realized that I need a long time to warm up before I can start writing, but when I start I can do it for hours.

If I could do something different, I would set more precise research limitation and focus only on one aspect instead of too many. I would also plan my time more appropriately and set more concrete deadlines for my work.

8.2 Need for future research studies

The need for further on-going researches in the field became evident to the author. The meeting design industry is already too broad to be investigated solely from one perspective. In the concrete, there is a need in investigating different supplier types such as technology, technical, meeting planners and production separately. However, as the meeting design industry is global it shall be researched both jointly and locally. In this way, the conducted industry analysis will provide more accurate information. To be able to provide trustworthy insight from the meeting design industry it is important to determine the barriers of the industry and probably approach each CHATTY category in it own order. The topics for the future research studies are listed below.

- Independent market research studies on conceptual, human, art, technical and technology suppliers. As most of the MSI's members are the technology suppliers, this category would have priority.

- Market research among meeting design planners. This could help to identify their needs, threats and expectations from products/service. This research could be useful for the meeting design suppliers as they could better understand the needs of the market.

- Meeting design as a service or experience. This research could help to see opportunities and features the meeting design business.

It is important to mention, that these business research studies need to be performed on an on-going basis. This will enable the meeting professionals to track and understand how the industry is developing as well as what is affecting the changes. The information collected in this phase of the industry can serve as an essential background for future analysis and forecast of the industry.

8.3 Validity and reability

Which apparent differences in data are real and which are not? It is important to remember that statistical analysis only indicates whether the apparent difference is probably real. (Hair 2011, 211.)

There is almost never any conclusive certainty in market research, only estimates under a specified confidence level. Precision in samples is never absolute but it always precision at a specified confidence level. (McQuarrie 2012, 189-197.) Precision of +-10 was chosen to be used in this data analysis.

Because of some inconsistencies several responses were corrected and not completed responses were not considered in the primary data analysis. Such answers were in the supplier characterizing part of the survey. Apparently, because such inconsistencies that some respondents did not understand the questions. Probably the question was not asked in the right way that led to misunderstanding.

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APPENDICIES

APPENDIX 1: THE SURVEY FORM

APPENDIX 2: ANSWERS FROM OPEN QUESTIONS

A Survey on Meeting Design Industry

The Meeting Design Industry?

The WHY? of the research:

As a result of new socio-economic realities and dynamic technology development, the Meetings Industry has been forced to consider the importance of Meeting Design. In concrete, this calls for an increasingly careful analysis of return of investment (ROI), designing/planning meetings based on their strategic objectives, and quick embracing of innovations and focusing on the content side of meetings. Attendees' expectations are also evolving beyond basic needs, towards innovative, engaging experiences. Hence, according to the recent study by MPI, Meeting Design is about purposeful shaping of both the form and the content of a meeting to deliver on crucial business objectives.

Therefore, this research aims to demonstrate the scope, value and importance of the Meeting Design market and its economic role in the Meetings Industry.

By contributing to the following survey, You can help Meeting Professionals to understand and interpret an increasingly complex world of the Meeting Design Industry. Thus, this will lead to better services in the field a more accurate market analysis of the scope of the industry, and a more transparent reflection of strengths and weaknesses of the market.

Thank you in advance for your contribution!

Sincerely,

Sofia Nikolaeva

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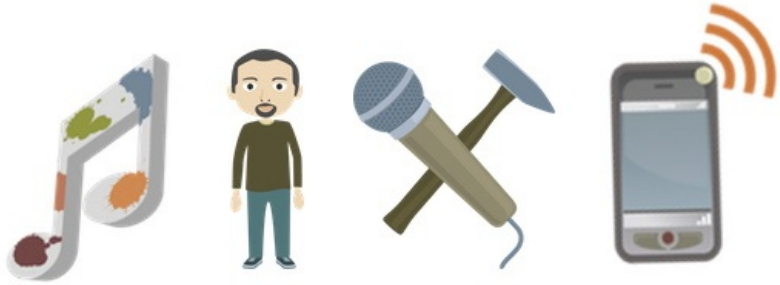

Tools for Meeting Design

PLEASE CHOOSE PRODUCTS/SERVICES THAT YOUR COMPANY PROVIDES FOR MEETINGS AND EVENTS:

TECHNOLOGY SUPPORT SUPPLIER

- ☐ Abstract Management
- ☐ Event Management Platforms
- ☐ Social Networking Solutions
- ☐ Audience Interaction/engagement
- ☐ Maps and Floor Planning
- ☐ Ticketing management
- ☐ Audience Response Systems
- ☐ Mobile Applications
- ☐ Audio & Video webcast
- ☐ Registration management
- ☐ Other, please specify _____

TRAINING/ CONSULTANCY/ PROJECT MANAGEMENT SUPPLIER

- ☐ Agenda/Process Support
- ☐ Meeting Designer(s)
- ☐ Speakers/Speakers agency
- ☐ Consulting services
- ☐ Meeting/Event Planner
- ☐ Talent Agency
- ☐ Facilitator(s)
- ☐ Project Management
- ☐ Trainer/Trainers agency
- ☐ Other, please specify _____

TECHNICAL SUPPORT SUPPLIER

- ☐ AV equipment supplier
- ☐ Design and contraction
- ☐ Furniture
- ☐ AV services
- ☐ Lightening
- ☐ Sets Building
- ☐ Logistics
- ☐ Other, please specify _____

PRODUCTION SUPPLIER

- ☐ Art
- ☐ Streaming
- ☐ Communication
- ☐ Musicians, actors, magicians
- ☐ Filming
- ☐ Entertainment
- ☐ Photography
- ☐ Video
- ☐ Decorating and Design
- ☐ Other, please specify _____

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Do you identify your company as a part of the Meetings Industry? *

See also as a MICE Industry: Meetings, Conferencing, Exhibitions and Incentives)

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

Position of Meeting Design Suppliers

Are you or your company a member of any Meetings Industry organisation? *

☐ MSI	☐ ICCA	☐ SITE
☐ MPI	☐ PCMA	☐ Not a member
☐ Other, please specify		

Please cross check the following Industry events that:

	You are familiar with	Have attended at least once in the past 3 years
EIBTM	☐	☐
AIBTM	☐	☐
The Fresh Conference	☐	☐
IMEX Frankfurt	☐	☐
IMEX Las Vegas	☐	☐

Please choose the level of Your satisfaction with the following items in the Meetings Industry *

	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied
Amount of available Marketing and Distribution opportunities/channels	○	○	○	○	○
Affordability of Marketing and Distribution opportunities/channels	○	○	○	○	○
Data/Statistics/Researches available in the Meetings Industry	○	○	○	○	○
Size of the market	○	○	○	○	○
Amount and availability of the Industry events	○	○	○	○	○

How do You see the capacity of the Meetings Industry? Are there a growing or shrinking number of customers? *

- ○ Growing
- ○ Stable
- ○ Shrinking

Have new competitors recently entered your market? *

○ Yes ○ No ○ I don't know

Approximately, how many businesses compete directly with your business ? *

○ 0	○ 10-20	○ I don't know
○ 1-5	○ 20-50	
○ 5-10	○ 50+	

In Your view, how difficult is for new competitors to enter your industry and market area? *

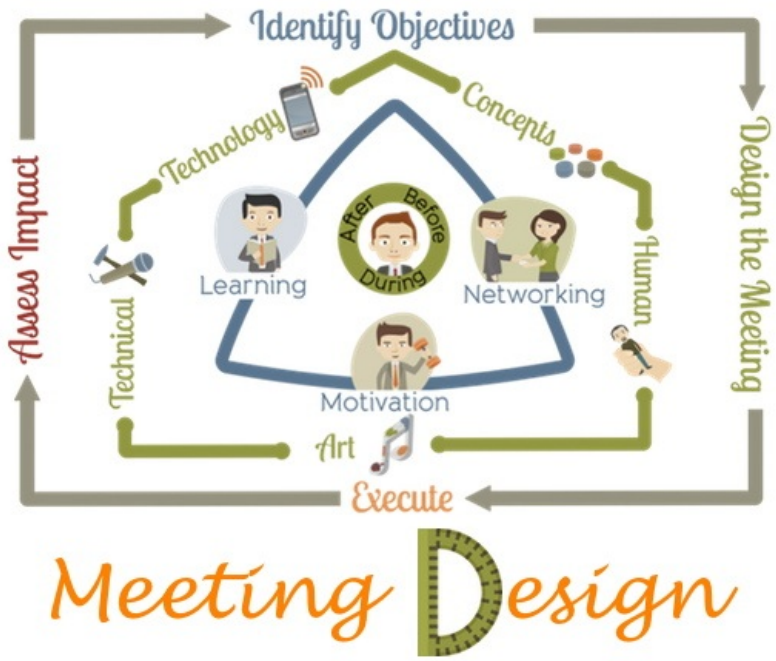
- ◯ Very difficult
- ◯ Easy
- ◯ Difficult
- ◯ I don't know

Have any competitors in your market area recently gone out of business? *

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No
- ◯ I don't know

Page 4

"Logistics is building a house; Meeting Design is making that house a home"- MPI reserach on Meeting Design 2013



Are you familiar with the term Meeting Design? *

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No, have not heard this phrase before

How would you define Meeting Design? *

Please choose your attitude towards the following statements: *

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
It is getting easier to convince our clients that there is value in the products and services we provide	○	○	○	○	○
Meeting Design and it's Suppliers have a tangible impact on the Meetings Industry	○	○	○	○	○
Meeting Professionals have been slow to embrace tools for Meeting Design	○	○	○	○	○
Nowadays, Meeting/Event Planners are well aware of products/services available in the marketplace	○	○	○	○	○

In your view, The MEETING DESIGN Industry *

- ○ Is an Emerging Industry, formed around a new product/idea and is in the early stages of development
- ○ Is a Growth Industry, quite successful and grows rapidly
- ○ Is a Mature Industry, grow slowly or not at all, but provide stable revenue
- ○ Doesn’t exist
- ○ I Don’t know

Do you feel that your company belongs to the MEETING DESIGN Industry? *

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ I am still in doubt
- ☐ I don't know

About Your Company

Please, could you tell us the annual turnover of your company in Euro? *

- ○ 0 - 49.000
- ○ 50.000 - 249.000
- ○ 250.000 - 499.000
- ○ 500.000 - 999.000
- ○ 1.000.000 - 2.999.000
- ○ 3.000.000 – 4.999.000
- ○ 5.000.000- 7.999.000
- ○ 8.000.000 +
- ○ Would rather not say

WHAT is the approximate number of employees in your company? *

- ○ 1-3
- ○ 3-10
- ○ 10-19
- ○ 20-49
- ○ 50-99
- ○ 100 +
- ○ Would rather not say

Approximately HOW MANY meetings/events did you or Your company serve in 2013 *

- ○ None
- ○ 1-5 meetings/events per year
- ○ 6-10 meetings/events per year
- ○ 11-15 meetings/events per year
- ○ 16-25 meetings/events per year
- ○ 26-50 meetings/events per year
- ○ more than 50 meetings/events per year

WHAT is the general number of the participants at the events that You served in 2013? *

- ○ 2 - 10
- ○ 11 - 25
- ○ 26 - 50
- ○ 51 - 100
- ○ 101 - 300
- ○ 301 - 500
- ○ 501 - 1000
- ○ 1001 - 2000
- ○ 2000 +
- ○ I don't know

WHAT market segments are you targeting? *

- ☐ Corporate Meetings
- ☐ Conferences
- ☐ Forums
- ☐ Other, please specify
- ☐ Tradeshows
- ☐ Other Events

HOW long has your company been in the marketplace? *

- ○ 0-2 years
- ○ 3-5 years
- ○ 5-10 years
- ○ 10+

About You

Please choose your position within your organization: *

- ☐ CEO
- ☐ COO
- ☐ Managing Director
- ☐ Sales Director/Manager
- ☐ Marketing Director/Manager
- ☐ Owner/Founder/Co-Founder
- ☐ Other, please specify

Your gender

- ○ Male
- ○ Female

Please, tell us your age

- ◯ Less than 20 years
- ◯ 20-30 years
- ◯ 31-40 years
- ◯ 41-50 years
- ◯ 51-60 years
- ◯ 60 +

Where are you based? *

- ☐ Africa
- ☐ Asia
- ☐ Australia and Oceania
- ☐ Europe
- ☐ Middle East
- ☐ North America
- ☐ South America

You have completed the survey. Thank you very much for your participation.

You can now close the window.

APPENDIX 2: ANSWERS FROM OPEN QUESTION

HOW WOULD YOU DEFINE THE MEETING DESIGN? N= 95.

- The process of planning and conducting meetings and events.
- Meeting design is the art of planning a meeting beyond logistics
- Adding purpose, objectives, and value - individually and collectuíve - to a meeting forum.
- The process of creating meeting formats tailored to achieve predefined objectives
- integration of processes and approaches that make the meeting effective for organizers and engaging/exciting/useful for participants
- The prepatory process in which organisers look through the eyes of participants and see opportunities to shape better meetings.
- Preparing a meeting programme, session and presentation design in order to achieve predefined outcomes which ideally can be measured
- trying to put objectives into realisations by creating the "perfect" meeting. Taking in account message, goals, audience. rethinking how to bring the message, in what way, what format, how long, balancing out the event in such a way the audience stays focussed and the owner will achieve the goals
- Finding, allocating and benefitting from the elements available in designing a best possible solution for the meeting ownrs meeting needs.
- The art and science of designing meetings components to make them have the best value to participants and the greatest ROI.
- not sure
- personalized event
- build a meeting around event and organizational objectives and a set of marks by which to calculate return.
- A process by which an organization plans all the necessary elements of an event while keeping the goals and experience of key stakeholders (most often the attendee) in mind throughout.

- All aspects of an event being designed to achieve an optimum event. This includes seating, format, food, all details.
- Accommodating a clients need based on their goals and objectives.
- Meeting Designers should ideally be able to work independant solely with the above objective in mind.
- Offers trust and credibillity to th profession and industry.
- Planning
- Meeting Desing is a method of planning, execution and measurement of event marketing activities that goes beond EventROI
- Making a combination of people, programme (e.g. content + timeslots) and surroundings that create an experience.
- Meeting design is very different from Meeting Planning, where the Meeting designer will not focus on the logistics as the Meeting Planner, but will focus on building and creating an event that will facilitate learning and networking.
- Beginning with discovery and agreement on meeting objectives, the fashioning of each pre-, during-, and post- relevant aspect of a meeting to meet those objectives.
- Designing content, working methods and physical setup to create the highst possible ROI.
- What all professional meeting and conference planners are supposed to do. Unfortunately 80% have not learned the basics of their profession.
- Developing a meeting's content and form based on a clear understanding of the client's objectives for the meeting.
- Designing your meeting flow and content purposefully to better the attendee experience.
- The complete package. Designing the meeting for a client from conception to completion.
- Questioning everything
- It's a collective of all factors that a corporate event needs to be successful.
- Set up/physical manifestation of a meeting.
- The logistics and contents of meetings.

- Designing the meeting, is asking what is it that the client really needs.
- Meeting Design is taking the objective of the client and forming a meeting completely around that objective, as well as any goals or desired outcomes from the meeting that the client feels is important.

- Meeting design is also the process in which planners and industry professionals go through to create high quality, memorable, worthwhile experiences for those in attendance.
- Planning meetings and follow up
- Meeting Design is the art of planning a meeting with the overall objectives in mind and with the idea of moving attendees toward participants.
- x
- creating an experience; engaging your stakeholders
- Bridging the gap between hospitality/logistics and business strategy/objectives by designing program elements that drive the desired results.
- 1
- Developing the arts and sciences behind a meeting, not just the logistics of the event.
- The right planning of the meeting to achive the objectives of it. Including place, layout, speakers, atendees and activities around.
- Never heard of it.
- Almost an architectural approach of a meeting or event to ensure everyone is seen and heard.
- the interactive process with a sponsor/internal design team to create and produce an event workshop, on-line, hybrid or large event) to deliver the Purpose and Objectives for the event.
- Meeting design is misunderstood and is something customer often think they can 'wing'. Only the best planned events have the energised, competent feel to them.

- Incorporation of numerous technical, creative and logistical mediums to better seve corporate and entertainment clients.
- not sure
- It relates to the architecture of the meeting :
- How to reach the meeting's Goals ? The means and the way we're going to use those means in order to produce a meeting that reaches it's goals
- x
- A method to identify desired outcomes and turn them into realistic specifications
- No idea
- I would need to think about that/
- Consultants who help to achieve the business goals
- Taking meeting concepts to a new level of incorporating knowledge base into a teachable forem using interactive tools and design
- Start with a small thought or idea & create, build, explore, explode that idea/thought into an action, a visible reality with touch, feel & a demand for interaction.
- We are not just planning the same thing, same place, same concept.
- A designer is pushing expectation to the next level.
- Designing the total experience
- Meeting design is all the things I in preparing a meeting: The process for the meeting, the methods, the announcement, etc.
- Creating a concept for an event where the attendees become part of an experience vs. attending an event. You want them to walk away feeling impacted by the event.
- NA
- creating a roadmap of event logistics - pre planning through the strike.
- Thanks
- It's a framework and bridge between the state of meetings today and their future.
- There are as many definitions as people in a meeting. Part of the problem is the question: "how can i know what I want until i see what i get". For

me it is designing the architectural part of the building: based on proven principles and experience create a view and and construct a effective meeting.

- I don't really know. I've heard the term, but am not sure what it really means.
- Planning / incorporation of all the pieces that go into gathering a group for a common purpose. From the site selection, to the on-site social media management, to speakers, to surveys/follow-up post-meeting, and more.
- Designing the best structure of the meeting to reach defined goals.
- Designing a concept, a to z, for events and meetings
- The organization of a meeting.
- To design a meeting so that it achieves business objectives.
- Delivering meetings that truly add value.
- A design include: ask why are we having this meeting? How do we get there? And what do we want to achieve from it?
- Then we can look at the meeting toolbox.
- Shaping the content in such a way that roi is scored
- A range of strategies and activities aiming to design meetings structure, stakeholders role and atmosphere in order to achieve the goals set
- Creating meeting environments, content and networking to meet biz objectives
- Set of skills how to organise and pull of an successful event.
- An outcomes-focused map for an event.
- Defining, planning and operating events
- A collection of processes orchestrating the life cycle of any given event, from the idea to the return on experience through the event experience itself.
- Creating the best suitable platform for communications.
- It's designing the ecosystem of the event, following its philosophy.
- Well....
- Complex understanding of the details that influence quality of the meeting and efficiency in achieving the meeting goal.

- An attendee centric approach to accomplish the objectives of a meeting outside of logistics coordination.
- Meeting design includes structure, content and used technologies as well as visualization means the look and feel of an event
- .
- The quote above is fairly neat, and says many things. We come from very different cultures and homes, but the metaphor is one we use ourselves.
- Meeting Design is all about making the attendees wish and want to attend, being comfortable with sharing and joining forces and minds.
- Meeting design is point at which logistics elevates itself to support the participant experience.
- building the dynamics, content and logistics around a meeting to reach the goals of the client
- Meeting design is a field that identifies techniques and methods that help meetings run smoothly.
- Bringing every single element of a meeting/event together from venue, catering, AV, content, networking opportunities etc. (the list is endless) into a cohesive whole to create an experience for visitors and exhibitors that is unique, relevant and personalised.
- Creating a meeting or event that is cohesive, delivers on goals and is relevant to client and attendees.
- making sure all parts of the event work perfectly together to reach the strategic goals of the customer.
- The skill and art of putting together an effective meeting
- designing the meeting to meet the requirements of the meetingplanner
- It is a design of meeting in my company?
- The art of bringing together the space,the comunication and the audience in a particular moment in the correct context with the appropiate conversation
- Aiming o create a eal purpose for holding a meeting