

THE *brief*

Essential information for accommodation & meetings space buyers



...Meetings Jargon Buster

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Welcome to The Brief - a series of quick reference guides for those new to purchasing accommodation or meetings space on behalf of your organisation. Each edition provides the essential knowledge on a key topic.

Hotel Jargon Buster

What's it about?

Every industry has a language of its own. For those on the inside, workplace jargon provides the comfort of implied power over the less well informed. It keeps purchasers and consumers at a distance. Some call it 'blinding with science'; others believe it is part of the mystique.

Why do I need to know?

The main priority for anyone responsible for, or involved in the purchase of meetings space is to find a venue that will deliver the objectives of the meetings, in an accessible location, at the lowest possible price. And in this case, information is purchasing power.

Who's this aimed at?

Like every issue of The Brief, this meetings jargon buster has been compiled for those who might be new to business travel. We've tried to make the list comprehensive without being baffling, and if we've missed any terminology out, please let us know.

There's nothing here about bed nights

That's because we've published a separate jargon buster devoted to hotel terminology, which is also available in PDF format.



Bedrooms	Block	Total number of sleeping rooms reserved for an event. A number of rooms, seats, or space reserved in advance for a group.
	Blocked Space	Sleeping rooms, exhibit, event, or other function space reserved for future use by an individual or organisation.
	Comp Rooms	Complimentary room(s) which a facility provides without charge, usually based on the number of rooms picked-up and occupied by a group.
	Complimentary Ratio	The number of rooms provided at no cost based on the number of occupied rooms.
	Peak Night	Referring to the night during an event when most rooms are occupied by those in attendance.
	Room Commitment	Rooms to be held open each night of the event, specified by room type (single, double, etc).
	Room Occupancy Pattern	Number of single and double rooms used during a meeting/event.
	Room Pick Up	The number of sleeping rooms actually used by event attendees and exhibitors.
Catering	By The Person	A fixed price per attendee; covers all consumption of food and beverage at a function, within a given time frame; usually includes beverages, snacks or hors d'oeuvres. In some cases, beverages are purchased by the person, while food is ordered by the piece.
	By The Piece	Food purchased by the individual piece, usually for a reception.
	Cash Bar	Private room bar set-up where guests pay for drinks individually.
	Chef's Table	The opportunity to sample a menu in advance of the event, usually in the company of the chef. Also refers to a food event held in the kitchen where the attendees interact with the chef and kitchen staff.
	Corkage	The charge placed on beer, alcohol, and wine brought into the facility but purchased elsewhere. The charge sometimes includes glassware, ice, and mixers.
	Covers	Actual number of meals served at a food function.
	Custom Menu	Menu specifically created for a client.
	Free Pouring	The dispensing of alcoholic beverages without using any measuring devices, which typically results in generous servings.
	Gala Dinner	Primary social function of an event, usually in the evening, including entertainment or speeches after a formal meal.
	Hand-Measured Pouring	The dispensing of alcoholic beverages using shot measuring tools; as opposed to free pouring.
	Host Bar	Private room bar set-up where drinks are paid for by a sponsor.

House Brand	Any brand of alcohol served when a customer requests a drink by its generic name (e.g. gin and tonic, scotch and soda). The least expensive brand served, as opposed to more expensive call brands .
Limited Consumption Bar	Host establishes the maximum to be spent at an open bar. Bar is closed or converted to cash when limit is reached.
Menu Engineering	In the hospitality industry, a process that analyzes the entire menu (as opposed to individual menu items) as a measure of profitability.
Menu Pricing	A pricing plan that lets the organisation see an itemised list of fees for goods and services.
Open Bar	Private room bar set-up where drinks are paid for by a sponsor.
Premium Brand	Brands of alcohol listed by a hotel or an establishment which are the higher quality and most expensive brands at that establishment.
Roll-In	Foods &/or beverages preset on rolling tables & then moved into function room at designated time.
Service Bar	A counter from which alcoholic beverages are served that is located outside of a function room, usually in an area not visible to guests.
Wet Bar	In a hotel room, a bar or counter area with running water, used for preparing drinks.



Content	Closing Session	The final session of an event in which the subjects which have been discussed are summarized and possible conclusions reached and announced.
	Concurrent Sessions	Sessions scheduled at the same time.
	Ground Arrangements	Services covering the land portion of events, such as lodging, visits to museums, sightseeing tours, and transfers between airport and hotel/venue.
	Guest Programme	Educational and/or social events planned for spouses and guests of event participants.
	Keynote Address	A session that opens or highlights the show, meeting or event.
	Multi-Track Conference	A conference with parallel programme sessions where participants have the choice to follow one or the other road or to jump from one track to the other during the duration of the event.
	Pre & Post Event Tours	Organised tour (s) taking place before (Pre) or after (Post) an event for both attendees and accompanying persons.

Contract	Acceleration Clause	A provision sometimes used in contracts to accelerate deposit payment schedule or to demand full prepayment of master account in the event of a default or lack of credit by the organisation.
	Attrition	The difference between the actual number of sleeping rooms picked-up (or food-and-beverage covers or revenue projections) and the number or formulas agreed to in the terms of the facility's contract. Usually there is an allowable shortfall before damages are assessed.
	Attrition Clause	Contract wording that outlines potential damages or fees that a party may be required to pay in the event that it does not fulfil minimum commitments in the contract.
	Cancellation Clause	(1) Provision in a contract which outlines penalties if cancellation occurs, for both parties for failure to comply with terms of the agreement. (2) (Entertainment) Provision with artist's contract which allows artist to cancel within a specified period of time prior to performance date.
	Damage Clause	Part of a contract dealing with procedures, penalties, and rights of the party causing damages.
	Force Majeure	An unexpected or uncontrollable event. (e.g. war, labour strike, extreme weather, or other disruptive circumstances) or effect that cannot be reasonably anticipated or controlled: a "fortuitous event."
	Hold Harmless	Clause in contract ensuring that a group or company will not be responsible in the event of a claim.
	Letter Of Agreement	Document outlining proposed services, space, or products which becomes binding upon written approval by both parties.
	Letter Of Intent	Typically, a letter from a potential buyer to a seller indicating the seriousness of the potential buyer's interest and agreeing to hold in strict confidence any data provided by the seller to assist the buyer in evaluating the property or business being sold.
	Option Date	Date by which confirmation must be received, contract signed or payment made to secure a reservation.
	Release	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Signed form giving permission to use a person's name, picture, or statement (often in an advertisement). 2) Form signed by presenter allowing recording of presentation. 3) To release space, as in returning unsold hotel rooms to the supplier that originally allotted them. 4) Document provided by management to permit removal of goods from exhibition during event hours.
	Rental Contract	Contract stating terms and conditions for rental of exhibition venue or for individual booth/stand within a venue.

Emergency/Risk Management	Back-Up Facility	Substitute facility that will serve as a viable alternative if the original facility becomes unavailable or inadequate for its intended purpose.
	Contingency Plan	An alternative plan that may replace the original plan when circumstances change.
	Emergency Action Plan	Procedures about how to react and respond to an emergency situation, such as medical emergencies, fire and acts of terrorism.
	Emergency Medical Plan	A formalised plan of action for handling on-site emergencies from basic first aid to fire or serious injury.
	Rain Date	An alternate event date contracted to use in case of rain.
Equipment	Air Wall	Walls or light movable panels used for dividing areas or concealing an area.
	Dais	Raised platform in a room or hall on which a speaker's lectern or table for VIPs is situated.
	Electronic Whiteboard	A system of controlling multimedia presentations by displaying computer generated images onto a white board. The board copies all information written or taped onto it, and saves, publishes or prints out the notes.
	Function Board	Announcements on facility board or video screen listing the day's events. Also known as directory or reader boards.
	Interpreter's Booth/Stand	A soundproof cubicle in which the interpreter works.
	Lanyard	A cord or string worn around the neck, as in corded badges.
	Master Key	One key that will open function and guest rooms.
	Movable Wall	Walls or light movable panels used for dividing areas or concealing an area.
	Multi-Screen	The use of two or more screens at the same time. Also Called multivision.
Reader Board	At a facility, a listing, either printed or on a video screen, of the day's events including times and locations.	
Shell Scheme	European booth/stand system - usually includes raised floor, back and side walls, plus fascia.	



Finance	Authorised Signatory	A person who is authorised to legally bind an individual or organisation to a contract, to sign cheques on behalf of an organisation, or charge to an organisation's master account.
	Billback	Invoice for service(s) purchased usually via the VPA (venue placement agency).
	Billing Instructions	Notice as to how charges for an event should be handled and to whom invoices should be addressed.
	Cancellation Fees	Cancellation fees may apply to cancellation of prepaid hotels, tours, booked transport etc. This is a minefield as to where the law stands on what hotels/venues may charge - e.g. loss of profit or demonstrated attempt to resell the space!
	Complete Meeting Package	An all-inclusive plan offered by hotels and conference centres; includes lodging, all meals and support services.
	Deposit	Partial payment to secure product or service. May be fully or partially refundable if the meeting/accommodation requirements are cancelled with enough advance notice.
	Master Account/Bill	A record of transactions during an event where the resulting balance is paid directly by the group. May include room, tax, incidentals, food and beverage, audiovisual equipment, decor, etc. Also Called MASTER BILL.
	Refund Policies	Rules and regulations which determine allowable reasons and timelines under which fees for a meeting or event will be refunded in whole or in part. These should be based on any loss of profit and actual costs incurred - but not food/consumables not yet purchased by the venue.
	24 Hour Rate	Inclusive meeting rate usually includes, Room hire of main meeting room, tea/coffee, mineral water, cordials and mints throughout the meeting, lunch, dinner, breakfast, overnight hotel accommodation. Some venues may also include some equipment, e.g. OHP, Screen & flipchart.
	Client Rate	A special rate offered to a specific client in return for pre-agreed bednight volumes. Usually lower than the corporate rate, although with hotels introducing BAR this sometime goes awry. Be aware that hotels will not always extend the company's corporate rate for large blocks of rooms relating to a conference or event.
	Complimentary Registration Day Rate	Waiver of registration fees. 1. In hotels and venues, the fee charged for a stay of limited duration, typically during daylight hours. 2. A fee charged for the use of a facility during a twenty-four hour period.
	DDR	Day Delegate Rate
	Early(Bird) Registration	Event registration received before a pre-defined date, usually offering a lower fee.
	FOC	Free of charge - no cost
	Group Rate	The fare or room rate offered to a group of travellers. Particularly on airlines, the group rate may be higher than individual rates available at time of booking.
	Inclusive Rate	The amount charged inclusive of all taxes and service charges.
Late Registration	A booking that is received after the stated deadline, usually incurring a penalty fee.	



Insurance	Cancellation or Interruption Insurance	Insurance that protects a event organiser against financial loss or expenses incurred when contractually specified perils necessitate cancelling or relocating a event, or cause a reduction in attendance.
	Deductible	In insurance, the amount the customer must pay before the insurance kicks in. In tax - does your meeting apply for tax relief?
	Liability Insurance	An insurance policy that protects you in the event that there is bodily injury or property damage to other people. The liability can be because of negligence or a failure to live up to promises made under a contract.
Logistics	Breakdown/Set Up	Use of a meeting/conference room to set up or break down - maybe charged for at a different rate.
	Break-Out (Or Syndicate) Room	A smaller room, near a larger meeting room, for use when a larger group breaks into sections.
	Dual Set-Up	Arrangement of duplicate set-ups in two or more different locations.
	Hold Over	Keeping a meeting room overnight to preserve set-up etc - sometimes charged for as extra.
	Move-Out	Dates set for dismantling.
	Pre-Function Space	Area adjacent to the main event location. Often used for receptions prior to a meal or coffee breaks during an event.
	Quick Set	Function room set-up that saves room turnover time, limits the number of event rooms required, and avoids additional charges for changing room set-ups.
	Room Turnover	Amount of time needed to break down and reset a function room.
	Set-Up Time	The period necessary for the preparation of the conference and exhibition venue before the arrival of delegates and exhibitors. Check the cost required for this.
Outcomes	Retention Rate	The percentage of exhibitors or attendees that return to an event from one year to the next.
	ROI	Return on Investment. The financial (or other) return made from running an event against the cost of mounting it.

Planning	Call For Papers	An invitation to submit topic ideas for the conference programme. Document containing detailed instructions for submission of papers for assessment and selection by a review committee; often referred to as “Abstract Forms.”
	Dry Run	Rehearsal or trial run-through of programme.
	Priority Rating System	System of assigning points to exhibiting companies to determine which firms will be allowed to select booth/stand space for the next event first.
	Walk-Through	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Review of meeting details. (2) Site inspection. (3) Inspection of function room prior to function. (4) Inspection of trade show floor prior to opening.
Project Management	Banquet Event Order (BEO) or Event Order, or Function Sheet or Resume Sheet	A document providing complete and precise instructions to a hotel/venue for the running of a banquet, meeting, or other event.
	Conference Handbook	A manual which provides information about a conference. Contents would include descriptions of programmes, information on participants, agendas, schedules of events, speaker notes, and logistical information.
	Conference Report	An official summary of conference events.
	Count	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Total number of individuals in attendance at a function or event for a given period. 2) Total number of exhibitors for a given period.
	Delegate Attendance Management	The whole act of attracting attendees to your event. From researching potential names, invites, online registration to on-day delegate management.
	Final Programme	Document containing the definitive conference and social programme, circulated immediately prior to a conference or distributed at the commencement of the event.
	Function Book	In a hotel or conference centre, the official record that controls room assignments for meetings and other events.
	Invitation Programme	A provisional programme sometimes incorporating a call for papers. The programme gives details of venue, participants, agenda, accommodations, etc.
	Lead Time	The amount or period of time before the announcement of an event and its occurrence, or between the notification that a task must be undertaken and the time at which it must be completed.
	Revision List	Summarised list of changes and updates to be made to a BEO/Event Order/function sheet/Resume Sheet.
	Working Programme	Timetable of conference content.
	Post Event Report Or PER	A report of the details and activities of an event. A collection of post event reports over time will provide the complete history for an event.



Protocol	Business Casual	A style of dress that is less formal than the standard office attire of suit and tie or dress.
	Dress Code	Required or suggested acceptable manner or style of dress for an occasion or event.
Reservations	1st or 2nd/3rd Option	Where a hotel or venue already has a provisional enquiry being held for another client when you wish to book space.
	24 Hour Hold	A term used to describe the type of reservation made on function space within a venue (hotel, convention centre, etc). An event organiser who has 24-hour hold on a space has exclusive use and access to that space for a period of 24-hours, usually 12:01 am - 12:00 pm.
	All Space Hold	All function space at a facility is reserved for one client.
	Definite Booking	Space reservations confirmed in writing.
	Double Booking	Reserving space in more than one venue for the same event.
Speakers	Keynote Speaker	Speaker who sets forth the theme of the meeting.
	Ready Room	Area set aside for speakers to meet, relax, test AV, or prepare prior to or between speeches.
	Speakers' Lounge	Area set aside for speakers to meet, relax, or prepare prior to or between speeches.
	Try Out Room	Room where speakers can check their presentations, slides, overheads, videotapes etc.

Support Services	Convention & Visitors Bureau (CVB)	An organisation responsible for the promotion of a town, city, county, area or region to potential visitors, especially convention organisers.
	Destination Management Company (DMC)	A local company that handles ground arrangements for tours, meetings, transportation, and so forth, for groups originating elsewhere.
	Ground Operator	A company that provides land services such as sightseeing tours, transfers from airport to hotel, limos, taxis, and so on.
	HBA	Hotel Booking Agency.
	Interpretation - Consecutive	Oral translation of several phrases or entire speeches from one language to another. Speaker pauses between phrases to allow for interpretation.
	Interpretation In Relay	Oral translation utilising two interpreters. Because the first interpreter is not master of the second language, another makes the final interpretation to the audience.
	PCO	Professional Conference Organiser
	Production Company	A company that presents special effects and theatrical acts. This type of company may contract to put on an entire event or only parts of one. They sometimes hire speakers as part of their contract.
	Simultaneous Translation	Instant translation achieved by interpreters sitting at the back of the meeting room in glass faced booths and interpretation equipment bought in. Most modern conference centres would have built into the main auditorium.
	VPA	Venue Placement Agency
Technology	Audience Polling	Computer application that enables voting and then collects and displays the results, simplifying decision-making among event participants.
	AV	Audiovisual.
	Interactive Response	A system which enables the audience to respond to prepared questions by means of a multifunction keypad. Responses are fed to a computer which tabulates them and displays the results graphically on a projection screen.
	Mag-Stripe	Magnetic Stripe. A lead retrieval system using a magnetic strip on either the back of a paper badge or on plastic badges similar to credit cards.
	Butler	A staff member of a venue/hotel who assists guests with computer questions and problems.
	Teleconference	Type of meeting which brings together three or more people in two or more locations through telecommunications.
	Webcast	An event that broadcasts the audio and/or video portion of a keynote presentation or other educational sessions over the Web in real-time or on-demand.
	Webconferencing	Web browser-based videoconferencing.



Timing	Early Arrival	(1) Delegate arrival before confirmed reservation date and/or time. (2) Arrival prior to arrival of the majority of the group.
	Early-Out	A delegate who checks out of a housing facility (hotel, motel, etc.) one or more days earlier than his or her scheduled departure date. Also called an under-stay, unexpected departure.
	Group/Major Arrival	Information included in the specifications guide for an event that notes approximate dates and times at which large numbers of event attendees can be expected to arrive at a facility (hotel) for check-in. This is intended to give the facility notice in order to prepare for front desk staffing.
	Group/Major Departure	Information included in the specifications guide for an event that notes approximate dates and times at which large numbers of event attendees can be expected to check out of a facility (hotel). This is intended to give the facility notice in order to prepare for front desk staffing.
	Release Date	Date beyond which a supplier is free to sell function space to others.

For more help in understanding meetings jargon and to purchase venue space for your business more effectively please contact:

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