

Network Relationships for Firm's Value-Added Strategies: A Case Study of Sarawak Convention Bureau (SCB)

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The fragmented nature of the convention industry requires a substantial degree of networking and collaboration among the multifaceted network relationships in destination marketing. Forming specific societal structures and processes within the delegates and convention-related businesses, the evolution and progression in convention industry are associated with social benefits through an exchange of ideas, fostering business contacts and facilitating knowledge transfer. These cooperation and collaboration lead to the quest for value-added strategies. Based upon a case study of Sarawak Convention Bureau, this paper proposes a more integrative theoretical framework in an attempt to describe and explain the nature of network relationships in convention industry, and the value-added strategies from the viewpoint of social capital. The case study involves face-to-face interviews, data coding, causal network modelling, and within-case analysis, throughout the interactive processes of qualitative inquiry.

Keywords: Destination marketing, social capital, network relationships, value-added strategies, convention industry

1. Introduction

Considering that the convention industry is dynamic and global, organization of large-scale events requires sound connectedness and interdependency, particularly between event planners-organisers-suppliers. For businesses in the convention industry, social capital offers integral, and collective entrepreneurial values that can reciprocally help associated businesses to remain competitive for the long-term. The present case study of the *Sarawak Convention Bureau (SCB)* explores social capital concepts and processes within the context of the convention industry, destination marketing, and network relationships including client and supply chain management. These concepts are examined from the perspective of strategizing valuable inputs and resources for long-term business viability. The combined understanding of the linkages between social capital, network relationships, and value-added strategies, represents an appropriate foundation for improvement of destination marketing particularly in the network-oriented practice of convention industry.

1.1 Sarawak Convention Bureau

SCB is a not-profit organisation, limited by guarantee. Appointed by the Sarawak State Government, *SCB* officially promotes and markets Sarawak, Malaysia, as a priority destination for groups and associations to hold meetings, incentives, conferences, and exhibitions. The establishment and appointment of *SCB* represents a serious commitment by the Sarawak Government to promote and develop the State's tourism, cultural, and business resources for the convention industry. Since its launch in 2006, *SCB* provides professional assistance and advice to organizations worldwide in order to secure business events and conventions for Sarawak. In 2010, *SCB*'s bid success ratio is 80% with 45 wins and 11 losses.

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