

NBTA to Offer Strategic Meetings Management Certification

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The National Business Travel Association (NBTA) -- the leading provider of corporate travel education and professional development -- is developing an industry-first certification program in strategic meetings management. The Strategic Meetings Management Certified (SMMC) program is currently under development by a task force comprised of thought leaders in this emerging practice and is slated to launch within a year.

'Since forming the Groups & Meetings Committee in 2003, NBTA has proudly led the charge to help businesses develop strategic meetings management programs,' said NBTA President & CEO, Kevin Maguire, CTE, GLP. 'The business community has enthusiastically adopted the practice, and now we will again advance strategic meetings management by developing a professional certification program to codify and teach its core competencies and best practices.'

NBTA pioneered the body of thought around strategic meetings management with a series of papers launched in 2004. The NBTA Groups & Meetings committee that writes the papers continues to publish new installments in the Framework for Success: Strategic Meetings Management Programs series. The most recent papers include an examination of three successful programs published in June 2008 (Models of Success: Profiles in Strategic Meetings Management) and a July 2008 update of the first paper in the series, Building a Strategic Meetings Management Program. These resources have served as the primary guide for companies around the globe as they have seized the opportunity to maximize value and minimize risk by developing standardized meeting programs and deploying them across a company or division. The papers are available at www.nbta.org, with some accessible only to members of NBTA.

The concept of a certification program for strategic meetings managers came from NBTA members, many of whom said that the practice has grown and matured so much in the last five years a full-fledged professional development program is now called for. To explore the concept, NBTA convened a task force of 25 individuals who are heavily involved in strategic meetings management. The task force met during the 2008 NBTA International Convention & Exposition in Los Angeles, July 27-30. Through a structured discussion, the group concluded that a certification program would be the best tool to help those involved in strategic meetings management learn the discipline's key tenants, unique competencies and best practices, and that NBTA is best positioned to deliver such a program. NBTA is currently working with the task force to select about half of its members who will be actively engaged in the development of the certification program over the next nine-12 months, while the other task force members will serve in an advisory roll.

The National Business Travel Association (NBTA) is the world's premier business travel and corporate meetings organization. NBTA and its regional affiliates - NBTA Asia Pacific, NBTA Canada, NBTA Mexico and NBTA USA - serve a network of more than 15,000 business travel professionals around the globe with industry-leading events, networking, education & professional development, research, news & information, and advocacy. NBTA members, numbering more than 4,000 in 30 nations, are corporate and government travel and meetings managers, as well as travel service providers. They collectively manage and direct more than US\$200 billion of global business travel and meetings expenditures annually on behalf of more than 10 million business travelers within their organizations. For more information, visit www.nbta.org.

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