

## Destination Event Tourism Attendees: A qualities-values approach

Dr. John Hamilton

*Faculty of Law Business and Creative Arts; James Cook University, Cairns, Qld., [Australia](#)*  
[John.Hamilton@jcu.edu.au](mailto:John.Hamilton@jcu.edu.au)

Dr. Singwhat Tee

*Head of Information System, School of Business, James Cook University, Cairns*  
[Singwhat.Tee@jcu.edu.au](mailto:Singwhat.Tee@jcu.edu.au)

Dr Murray Prideaux

*Head of Management & Marketing, School of Business, James Cook University, Cairns.*  
[Murray.Prideaux@jcu.edu.au](mailto:Murray.Prideaux@jcu.edu.au)

### ABSTRACT

*Major event tourism draws tourists to a destination and it can deliver new knowledge to the destination's management and marketers. This study considers the event tourists visiting a destination to participate in a major international auto racing event, and where local tourism can be embedded around the major event tourism agendas. Major event tourists attend with non-uniform and often personally-driven agendas, and their degrees of local tourism acceptance vary. We divide these event tourists into six psychologically-framed auto racing sport groupings, and look for micro-differences that can enhance future destination tourism.*

**Keywords:** Tourism, event, auto racing, quality, value, satisfaction.

### 1.0 Major Event Tourism

Major event tourism fulfils areas including: food and wine; arts, culture and music; outback, nature and wildlife festivals; beach/mountain/location festivals, cultural festivals, plus sport, athletic and activity-based events/festivals ([www.tourism.australia.com](http://www.tourism.australia.com)). Gertz (2005) typologically groups such planned events into four main sections as: (1) cultural celebrations (festivals, carnivals, commemorations, religious events); political/state (summits, royal occasions, political events, VIP visits); arts/entertainment (concerts, award ceremonies); (2) business/trade (meetings, conventions, consumer/trade shows, fairs, markets); educational/scientific (conferences, seminars, clinics); (3) sport competition (amateur/professional, spectator/participant); recreational (fun sport/games); and (4) private events (weddings, parties, socials). The impact of each of these location-specific events, as specific tourist drawcards, is increasingly important for the destination's competitiveness.

These major events are competitively designed to appeal to a range of potential event tourists, and to motivate them to attend (Getz, 2008). Once motivated to attend, these event tourists each chose to come, and whilst at the destination, they pursue their perceived (and specific) motives.

In professional major sport competition situations – such as in auto racing, these event tourists may be sectioned, or grouped, based on their attendance motives (Wann, 1995, McDonald, Milne & Hong, 2002; Wann et al., 2008). By applying these group comparisons through an auto racing event, the event's management and marketers can micro-interpret their attendees' requirements, and can then further understand the specific needs of both their attendee groups, and their event tourism micro-markets.

### 2.0 Tourism and Event Attendance Groups

Hamilton, Prideaux and Tee, (2013) have established six user groups for the major sport event of auto racing. These groups were established across four years of major event research, and they match psychological groupings of retail shoppers and of sport researchers.

Major event sport is a retail event. Event tourists make a ticket purchase decision, turn-up, and spend. However each event tourist spends within their spheres of interest (or motivations). They make personal

choices regarding their accommodation, transport, food, entertainment, services, and tourism/products selections. These choices fit their social, emotional and behavioural requirements (Hamilton, Prideaux and Tee, 2011; Hamilton et al., 2013; Kim, Trail & Magnusen, 2013), but each event tourist is motivated to turn-up (Evaggelinou & Grekinis, 1998; Wertz et al., 2011), and each fits into a variant of Arnold & Reynolds, (2003) six retail shopping motive groups which in-turn are developed from McGuire's (1974) psychological theories.

Further, in sport Wann et al. (1999) recognize these major event tourists 'belong' to a sport – such as auto racing. McDonald et al. (2002) groups these belonging reasons under 12 sport motives, which further group for auto racing into very similar groupings to those of Arnold and Reynolds, (2003). Wann et al. (2008) also groups such auto racing tourists, and again an alignment can readily be framed into the same six turn-up group motives. These six groupings are now discussed.

### **2.1 Six event tourist groupings**

Gratifiers treat themselves to special occasion and seek values pertinent to their chosen agendas (McDonald et al., 2002; Arnold & Reynolds, 2003) – such as stress relief and/or to forget other problems (McDonald et al., 2002). Thus they emotively use the major event to 'feel better' about themselves (Wann et al., 2008).

Adventurers like to 'feel' the event as an experience. They challenge themselves and pursue excitement. They explore new things and are adventurous (McDonald et al., 2002; Wann et al., 2008). They also enjoy the atmosphere (Arnold & Reynolds, 2003) – by expressing their emotions (McGuire, 1974; Wann et al., 2008).

Inquirers are researchers. They 'must' know of the latest innovations, and of their functional explanations. They keep 'up-to-date', and understand detail and the capabilities of each item of interest (McDonald et al., 2002; Arnold & Reynolds, 2003). They also appreciate the design, beauty, grace and actionable performance capabilities associated with each item of interest (McDonald et al., 2002; Reynolds & Arnold, 2006; Wann et al., 2008).

Socializers have fun, and share their experiences with family, friends, and/or others (McDonald et al., 2002). They enjoy interpersonal interactions (McGuire, 1974; McDonald et al., 2002; Wann et al., 2008) – especially ones that satisfy their acceptance (Arnold & Reynolds, 2003).

Valuers believe in the major event, and its destination choice. They view the event as one where they can match their perceived needs – through acceptable pricing, seating, and through personally-obtained deals (Arnold & Reynolds, 2003). These valuers expect to achieve personal rewards across their chosen destination, and across the event activities (McDonald et al., 2002; Wann et al., 2008).

Actors are role players. They love to be seen, and they target being a part of their team and its competitive achievements. They can be aggressive, but generally do so in an entertaining manner (McDonald et al., 2002; Wann et al., 2008). Actors 'brag' about their past, current, and projected experiences, and/or about their roles (Hamilton et al., 2013). Actors competitively socialize (McDonald et al., 2002), and they achieve personal satisfaction (Arnold & Reynolds, 2003), and also escape the daily norms (Wann et al., 2008).

### **2.2 Applying event tourist groupings**

Hamilton, Prideaux and Tee's groupings of auto racing attendees at the same event are summarized through Table 2. Over 80% of all auto racing event respondents self-classified into one of these groupings. Hence, we use these groupings in this study.

These groupings allow event management and marketers to interpretations and group target their ongoing the destination tourism approaches. These targeted and supporting tourism events are promoted to motivate the tourist to attend and engage both in the major event and as destination tourism stakeholders. If satisfied with their experiences, these visiting event tourists are potential re-marketers, and hopefully will spread their positive views about the destination and its tourist offerings throughout their connecting communication circles. Thus, convincing event tourists to revisit then strengthens this destination's local tourism profile. In addition, event tourism can be skilfully-engaged at the local level to support/drive: infrastructure; capacity;

renewal; local identity; investment; and business success – thereby contributing to the destination's competitiveness.

However, as service requirements expand, lifestyle enhancements change and social division may alter; and as local council commitments rise, investment rises, and infrastructure grows; and as the local economy advances, cost of living rises; and as tourism attractiveness rises and gentrification declines (Guerzoni, 2008). Hence, opposition circles to major event tourism naturally exist, but over-time these can be successfully managed by stepwise by addressing each issue as one of a related set of broad and destination-specific challenges.

In this study we consider the event tourist's destination acquisitions – those beyond the event itself. We investigate how they found out about this destination's event tourism, what local event tourism supporting activities they chose, and what local areas of tourism they chose. We seek to understand what tourism support activities event tourists prefer and what local services are reasonable, and additions to the major event tourism offering. We seek to define what stimulating tourism experiences are enjoyed. We also consider discretionary expenditure of six grouped event tourists – developed from the six auto racing groupings of Hamilton et al. (2013). To validate this study, we check commitment-to-return as an indicator of the event tourism attendees' qualities preferences commitments.

### 3.0 Research Study

Based on the above considerations above, we consider whether the destination's local tourism can draw on its event tourism, and over time add value to its destination as a tourist attraction. This auto racing destination tourism study was conducted at event, and at destination over a one week period in July 2013. The three day competition drew 146,842 auto racing attendees. After data cleaning and outlier removal, 1234 (0.84% of attendees) valid surveys were obtained, and 577 event tourists, all living over one hour's drive (100 km) from the destination, completed a destination tourism survey of demographics, and destination data collected as 5-point strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5) Likert scale questions.

### 4.0 Analysis and Discussion

Table 1's Demographics show males and females attend with ages above 30 predominating, and education levels being more trades oriented. Six self-grouping classifications of event tourists are shown as reasons for attending the major event – with adventurers and socializers predominating, and actors and self-gratifiers also being significant reasons to attend. Those pursuing value and inquiring into auto racing and its technical aspects attend in lesser numbers. This major event of auto racing yields high satisfaction levels of 93%. However a lesser number (86%) indicate they will revisit in 2014. Hence an improvement in the translation of satisfaction to revisiting is desirable. Redressing this difference alone can reduce a projected loss of 10,866 event driven tourists for next year's auto racing event. As revisitors loss of 14.7% (21,586) is projected, hence to maintain or grow attendance numbers, destination (and event) management and marketers must reinvent (or complement) their product suite, or risk a decline in destination tourism revenue.

Around the major event period the destination's management and marketers can integrate their tourism approach into a support suite that complement the likely preferences of the auto racing groupings defined herein. They can approach the major event organizers and seek a co-branding position with both bodies jointly cross-promoting the major event as a destination tourism experience. Suh, Lim, Kwak & Pedersen (2010) suggest convenience, information, diversion, socialization, economic value, competition, winning and achievement offer joint promotional opportunities. To maintain attendee numbers new ideas are additional event tourist motivators. For example offer some event tourist discoveries that are destination-specific and at-event-only can include: mobile and tablet car racing challenges; challenges to complete new tourism activities; social network at-event forums/competitions; at-event car/component lotteries; and/or suite of visitors and locals challenges. Such approaches can be frames to generate positive feelings regarding the choice to visit, and to participate at the destination.

**TABLE 1: Tourist demographics**

Major Event Tourist Demographics	Total	%	Major Event Tourist Demographics	Total	%
Event tourist's gender (517)			Event tourist's group choice (577)		
Male	308	59.6%	Not indicate	97	16.8%
Female	199	38.5%	Actors (role-player)	65	11.3%
Event tourist's age group (511)			Inquirers	19	3.3%
Under 20	28	5.5%	Valuers	29	5.0%
20-29	58	11.4%	Adventurers	150	26.0%
30-39	93	18.2%	Socializers	134	23.2%
40-49	141	27.6%	Gratifiers	83	14.4%
50-59	126	24.7%	Event tourist's highest education (505)		
Over 60	65	12.7%	Secondary	192	53.1%
Event tourist's overall satisfaction (577)			Trade	157	8.2%
Strongly Disagree	0	0.0%	Diploma	72	15.5%
Disagree	8	1.4%	Tertiary	84	23.2%
Neutral	30	5.2%	Revisiting major event again in 2014 (468)		
Agree	326	56.5%	Yes	401	85.7%
Strongly Agree	213	36.9%	No	67	14.3%

To deliver more to the event tourist their physical and the personal consumption requirements should also emphasise the event as a special occasion offering: unique merchandise: new and exciting experiences; fun and adventure; auto simulations and knowledge acquisition; fun family and group activities; value-for-money selections; and between-events entertainment. These physical acquisitions can be complemented with participatory activities each targeted at one or more of the 6 event tourist groups attending.

Satisfaction and revisiting are event tourist decisions made about the major event and the local tourism when they reflect back on their expected (motives) and experienced (consumption) times at this destination. Hence raising the percentage of revisitor numbers is not a simple process.

**TABLE 2: Consistency of tourist self-selected group choice (against no choice)**

Group	2010		2011		2012		2013		Measures
	No.	Attendees Resondents	No.	Attendees Resondents	No.	Attendees Resondents	No.	Attendees Resondents	
Gratifiers	80	152,074	131	150,876	139	152,161	175	146,842	treat themselves to a special occasion
Adventurers	86		592		384		325		attend because its an exciting adventure
Inquirers	69		23		27		38		learn about the sport & keep up with latest trends
Socializers	74	456/559 =	217	1137/1177 =	348	1057/1242 =	334	1111/1234 =	have good times with family/friends & meet new people
Valuers	69	81.6%	70	96.6%	46	84.7%	78	90.0%	view the events as value-for-money
Actors	78		104		113		161		enjoy pushing personal experiences about these events

Since 2009 Hamilton et al. have conducted annual auto racing surveys at the same major event. They find attendees consistently group themselves into one preferred group, and do not select multiple groupings to best describe their reasons to attend. These groups are shown in Table 2 ( and they align with Table 1's preferences). In 2013 90% of major event respondents selected a group and 10% did not. Thus, this auto racing event should be targeted as an adventurous, socializing, and a chance to self-identify with an auto racing team or manufacture brand, or to act out a role as an auto racing or team fan. The growth in socializers over the 4 years is due to focused marketing campaigns promoting this aspect of the major event.

Table 3 sees adventurers and socializers displaying higher education levels. Adventurers and gratifiers, although satisfied show a significant tendency to refuse to revisit. This indicates they are not receiving the experiences they require. Hence these the high energy requirements of these groups now requires special consideration.

How respondents learned of this major event are highlighted in order of importance in Table 4. Interestingly personal exchanges through word-of-mouth, and via family-and-friends, is the most important discovery process. Hence, positive major event and destination tourism experiences by all attendees remain a vital and free promotional approach. Paid media fees (TV, newspapers, radio) rate highly, but on-line sources and pay TV are growing in importance. It appears that coordination in online approaches is lacking and needs integrated cross-promotional attention. A new addition of billboards is also a useful tool if placed on key transport routes (and within a 10 hour drive of the destination).

**TABLE 3: Tourist group demographics**

Major Event Tourist Demographics	No Choice	Actors	Inquirer	Valuer	Adventurer	Socializer	Gratifier
Event tourist's highest education (505)							
Secondary	2.4%	4.4%	1.4%	2.8%	11.5%	9.1%	6.5%
Trade	2.0%	5.1%	2.0%	1.6%	7.1%	7.5%	5.7%
Diploma	1.2%	1.8%	0.2%	1.0%	4.6%	3.4%	2.2%
Tertiary	1.8%	0.8%	0.2%	0.2%	5.7%	6.1%	1.8%
Revisiting major event again in 2014 (468)							
Yes	6.4%	11.8%	3.4%	5.1%	25.0%	24.1%	12.0%
No	0.4%	0.9%	0.4%	0.6%	4.7%	3.0%	4.5%
Event tourist's overall satisfaction (577)							
Disagree	0.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.3%	0.5%	0.3%
Neutral	0.9%	0.7%	0.0%	0.3%	0.5%	1.6%	1.2%
Agree	15.8%	10.6%	3.3%	4.7%	25.1%	21.1%	12.8%

**TABLE 4: Major event and destination discovery information by tourist**

Learn of Major Event through...	No Group		Actors		Inquirers		Valuers		Adventurers		Socializers		Gratifiers		Total
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Word-of-mouth	16	16.5%	27	41.5%	11	57.9%	16	55.2%	63	42.0%	59	44.0%	31	37.3%	223
Family/Friends	16	16.5%	19	29.2%	7	36.8%	11	37.9%	53	35.3%	66	49.3%	33	39.8%	205
Free TV	6	6.2%	17	26.2%	7	36.8%	5	17.2%	68	45.3%	44	32.8%	40	48.2%	187
Newspaper	6	6.2%	20	30.8%	8	42.1%	8	27.6%	54	36.0%	31	23.1%	32	38.6%	159
Radio	13	13.4%	13	20.0%	5	26.3%	6	20.7%	47	31.3%	29	21.6%	17	20.5%	130
Travel Agent	4	4.1%	17	26.2%	4	21.1%	5	17.2%	26	17.3%	24	17.9%	17	20.5%	97
Facebook	2	2.1%	6	9.2%	3	15.8%	2	6.9%	19	12.7%	19	14.2%	9	10.8%	60
Web page	0	0.0%	4	6.2%	4	21.1%	1	3.4%	20	13.3%	18	13.4%	9	10.8%	56
Pay TV	1	1.0%	1	1.5%	1	5.3%	2	6.9%	11	7.3%	5	3.7%	8	9.6%	29
Billboards	2	2.1%	4	6.2%	1	5.3%	1	3.4%	17	11.3%	9	6.7%	7	8.4%	41
Business/Corporate promotion	3	3.1%	4	6.2%	0	0.0%	3	10.3%	13	8.7%	4	3.0%	5	6.0%	32
Mobile/Ipad/Phone Apps	1	1.0%	5	7.7%	0	0.0%	2	6.9%	13	8.7%	7	5.2%	1	1.2%	29
Twitter	1	1.0%	2	3.1%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	4	2.7%	9	6.7%	3	3.6%	19
YouTube	1	1.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	3.4%	6	4.0%	6	4.5%	2	2.4%	16

Table 5 indicates the destination's supporting tourism events. The local tourism drawcards for event tourists are those relates to action tourism, those local activities with no or low entrance fees, or those activities connected to the event itself. However, all destination tourism activities provide local tourism exposure. Further, the major event's list of destination support activities can extend with a combined vintage cars and auto racing cars display/demonstration evening, and other event linking local tourism ideas.

**TABLE 5: Destination support events on offer to tourist**

Support Tourism for Major Event	No Group		Actors		Inquirers		Valuers		Adventurers		Socializers		Gratifiers		Total
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Major Event's other auto activities	18	18.6%	44	67.7%	13	68.4%	20	69.0%	112	74.7%	85	63.4%	46	55.4%	338
National Football Game	16	16.5%	21	32.3%	10	52.6%	12	41.4%	47	31.3%	36	26.9%	19	22.9%	161
Local Markets	9	9.3%	7	10.8%	2	10.5%	8	27.6%	41	27.3%	33	24.6%	15	18.1%	115
Destination Welcome Day	2	2.1%	16	24.6%	3	15.8%	5	17.2%	25	16.7%	16	11.9%	7	8.4%	74
Superboats Race	4	4.1%	11	16.9%	4	21.1%	3	10.3%	21	14.0%	6	4.5%	2	2.4%	51
Regional Show	5	5.2%	7	10.8%	1	5.3%	1	3.4%	11	7.3%	11	8.2%	5	6.0%	41
Gallery Exhibitions	1	1.0%	1	1.5%	0	0.0%	3	10.3%	7	4.7%	8	6.0%	1	1.2%	21
Dance Festival	2	2.1%	2	3.1%	0	0.0%	1	3.4%	6	4.0%	4	3.0%	1	1.2%	16
Chamber Music Festival	1	1.0%	3	4.6%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	6	4.0%	2	1.5%	0	0.0%	12
Vintage Car Rally	0	0.0%	2	3.1%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	2	1.3%	5	3.7%	2	2.4%	11

Tables 6 and 7 give the key timing for destination tourism offerings when supporting a major event. Clearly destination visitors are dedicating limited time to their visit. Most event tourists stay 2 or 3 days before and leave at the end of the major event, or they leave one night after the major event. Thus most event tourists stay 3 to 7 days, and by the 8<sup>th</sup> day 79% have left the destination. Thus destination tourism should focus across the four days lead-up to the 3 day event, the event and the following day. Thus a frenzy promotion (encapsulating the week before the major event) should drive the destination's group-appealing tourism activities towards the event tourist (and also towards the local auto racing attendees).

**TABLE 6: Tourist stay times beyond major event**

Days staying at Destination	No Group		Actors		Inquirers		Valuers		Adventurers		Socializers		Gratifiers	
	No.	No.	No.	No.	No.	No.	No.	No.	No.	No.	No.	No.	No.	
Nights before	1	13	12	8	5	47	36	21						
	2	11	14	1	4	25	22	12						
	3	5	4	3	3	13	17	9						
	4	3	6	1	2	7	11	7						
	5	0	2	0	2	3	4	4						
	6	1	3	0	0	5	3	1						
	7	2	3	0	2	2	2	5						
Nights after	1	16	16	8	6	51	42	26						
	2	8	10	3	6	14	13	5						
	3	0	2	2	1	6	4	5						
	4	1	1	0	0	4	2	1						
	5	0	1	0	0	2	3	0						
	6	0	0	0	0	1	0	1						
	7	1	4	0	0	1	3	1						

**TABLE 7: Stay timespan**

Nights stay	No.'s staying	Cumulative % staying	At destination	No. tourists
3	175	30%	on your own	24
4	50	39%	with family	276
5	112	58%	with friends	112
6	63	69%	with family & friends	92
7	53	79%		
8	41	86%		
9	30	91%		
10	14	93%		
11	8	95%		
12	7	96%		
13+	24	100%		

Tables 8 and 9 show where local tourism can direct its attention, and consider how to target its chosen groups of event tourists. Such new tourism activities should focus on discovery and learning and combine these with interest, uniqueness and fun, and where possible be motor or sport related.

**TABLE 8: Tourist Participation**

Destination Appreciation	No Group	Actors	Inquirers	Valuers	Adventurers	Socializers	Gratifiers
	No.	No.	No.	No.	No.	No.	No.
learnt new things about destination	36	51	15	20	120	111	60
obtained sufficient interesting info re destination	36	49	16	19	119	108	57
enjoyed destination's tropical lifestyle	37	51	14	22	126	114	66
visited historical & cultural attractions/events	33	45	13	19	116	106	58
enjoyed a unique tourism experiences	36	47	15	19	120	110	60
enjoyed fun of other destination support events	35	47	15	20	121	110	65

**TABLE 9: Tourist Acquisitions**

Destination Tourism	No Group	Actors	Inquirers	Valuers	Adventurers	Socializers	Gratifiers
	No.	No.	No.	No.	No.	No.	No.
discover new things about destination	41	52	16	24	129	109	69
expand my knowledge about about places I visit	40	50	16	24	128	111	70
do exciting and unique activities	40	50	16	23	128	110	69
visit historical attractions and events	37	49	13	23	129	109	67
visit cultural attractions and events	34	48	15	22	126	106	62
be surprised with different activities	38	51	15	23	127	111	66

The appeal of the destination's local tourism can also be gauged by the event tourists' degree of discretionary spending across the destination (and beyond their spending on the major event itself). Table 10 shows this expenditure as gauged against local accommodation, transport, attraction visits, food and drinks, gifts, souvenirs, and the like. Thus a profile of event tourist spending drivers is available for local management and marketers to assess, and use as possible targets for additional future destination tourism drawcards. By converting Table 9's average spend total group spends and converting these for major event tourist numbers, then adding special facilities spends and factoring for families and friends combined spends and multiplying by the destination's economic multiplier, the event tourist's economic value to the destination can be calculated. In this instance, the destination benefits in excess of \$40M – and within a two week timespan. This knowledge allows local management and marketers to plan their future approaches towards their local destination tourism, and at the specific group-level (rather than at the less concise overall event tourist level) to directly advice and support local tourism operators.



**TABLE 10: Destination spending**

Destination Spending	Event Tourist Attendee Group Spends (\$/Tourist)						
	No Group	Actors	Inquirers	Valuers	Adventurers	Socializers	Gratifiers
accommodation	64	123	82	77	102	121	91
café/restaurant expenditure	43	93	88	85	90	97	84
local entertainment (not support events)	35	88	85	72	84	87	68
tourist attractions	40	93	87	51	69	70	74
local support events expenditure	30	79	99	80	60	62	60
drinks at bars, hotels or nightclubs	33	66	67	47	63	87	73
local support event merchandise	16	52	46	46	39	40	29
tickets to other local activities or tours	12	33	33	27	26	37	32
local souvenirs	15	27	29	18	22	23	20
food/drinks at grocery or other shops	13	25	32	17	8	23	22
car hire	16	24	0	4	13	24	14
car-related components	18	20	10	6	9	15	9
public transport	5	18	16	9	8	12	7

## 5.0 Conclusions

Visiting major event tourism is important to destinations, and good data capture unleashes great capabilities to the local management and marketers, and this should flow through to the local community and to all its local tourism operators.

There remains great benefit in ensuring local destination studies are included in major event research. This study offers destination tourism management and marketers a pathway to evaluate their destination tourism and to suggest where (and what) local tourism is suitable to support the major event's agendas. It also indicates where external revenue can be best generated from these major event tourist visitors.

This study's comparative measurement tables work in tandem to show pathways that allow local tourism to co-brand, to co-promote, and to target market the specific attendance groups attending a major event such as auto racing. These psychological groupings are different and each meets the personal and product agendas of a different group of attendees (as shown in Tables 1 to 5 and 8 to 10).

Table 10, and other variables discussed herein can be developed into to an economic impact measure and this can be used to negotiate additional support from business and/or government, and to track the ongoing value derived from the major event into this destination.

This survey approach allows local management and marketers to devise ongoing destination support strategies – ones that complement and add value around the event itself. Further it also allows local tourism operators to refocus and reinvent their competitive business models.

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### Authors' Backgrounds

	<p><b>Dr. John R. Hamilton</b> researches competitiveness, innovation and strategic futures. He has extensive corporate international leadership and management experience. He consults on online and/or offline engaging interactive environments, and develops capabilities for business-consumer real-time interfacing. Current research interests include: leadership, value-deliverance, social networks, corporate and virtual intelligences, cloud business scenarios, major-events management, tracking, and interactive learning. John's  Acute Futures Group (AcuteFutures.com) deploys international R&amp;D task teams (Norway, Hong Kong, Singapore, and Australia). Acute Futures unique value-deliverance systems create custom-built experiential skilling scenarios for global and futures-focused organizations.</p>
	<p><b>Dr. SingWhat Tee</b> is the Head of Information Systems at James Cook University. He researches the impacts of information systems on global citizens and their environments. His research focuses on the criticality of operational data, value analysis, and decision-making information systems. Current research interests include: modelling organizational systems; intelligent data/information modelling, social networks, and the new information technologies systems that influence knowledge transfer and experiential learning.</p>
	<p><b>Dr. Murray Prideaux</b> is Head of Management and Marketing at James Cook University. He researches across leadership and management and major events. His research focuses on commercial and corporate business solutions within the services domain. His studies (teamed with others in Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, and PNG) deliver quality solutions for tomorrow's regional leaders. He also conducts marine estuarine and agricultural food industries research.</p>