

Handout

Slide 1:

International Meetings Management for the Hotel Industry

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Slide 3: Introduction

Introduction

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Celebrates Welsh culture in a multicultural context

Bridges tradition and innovation in hospitality

Explores inclusivity, storytelling, and guest experience (Pickel, 2025).

Content:

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Speaker Notes: Our vision for Connected Cultures 2025 is rooted in the Welsh tradition of 'Croeso', meaning "welcome." Far more than a word of greeting, Croeso embodies a sense of warmth, hospitality, and openness—values that form the very essence of this event. This is a theme that pervades the symposium, informing discussions, experiences, and partnerships. At the core of Connected Cultures is the notion that tourism is not merely going to new locations, but creating authentic connections with local cultures. We seek to investigate how hospitality businesses can design experiences that move beyond superficial contact. By centring on localised, culturally rich experiences, the symposium emphasises the value of authenticity in service design, where each gesture, product, and experience echoes the identity of the place and its people.

The conference convenes a multicultural mix of voices from around the hospitality, tourism, academic, and cultural communities to consider what it takes to genuinely welcome the world.

It is a call to reframe service delivery as more inclusive and culturally attuned, with narrative at the heart of establishing emotional connections between travellers and destinations. Connected Cultures 2025 also takes into account the wider economic effects of cultural branding. With an increasingly globalised travel market, destinations that can effectively promote their cultural distinctiveness can differentiate themselves and leave a lasting impression. Welsh culture—its language, music, food, folklore, and community values—provides a rich case study in how cultural stories can enhance the tourism product, create economic opportunities, and help towards sustainable development. This dialogue is specifically opportune. International travellers now actively pursue experiences that provide authenticity, self-revelation, and cultural integration. Connected Cultures responds to this trend by repositioning hospitality as cultural exchange and knowledge, not simple service provision.

Slide 4: Why Birmingham?

Why Birmingham?

Modern, central avenue near transport hubs

Birmingham: the UK's second-largest multicultural city

Easy access for global guests and Welsh businesses

Opportunities for cross-border networking (Evans, and Williams, 2024).

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- Birmingham: the UK's second-largest multicultural city
- Easy access for global guests and Welsh businesses
- Opportunities for cross-border networking (Evans, and Williams, 2024).

Speaker Notes: In addition, Birmingham has world-class connectivity through prime road, rail, and air connections, making it highly accessible for national as well as overseas delegates. The central position in the UK makes it highly conducive for strong country-wide and transboundary attendance, supporting the event objective of promoting cross-border cooperation between the tourism and hospitality sectors. The city is also the location of several top-ranked universities and educational institutions with programs in hospitality, tourism, and cultural studies. It is thus the perfect environment in which to engage students, instructors, and aspiring professionals in significant discussion regarding inclusive guest experiences and cultural integration.

The Eastside Rooms—our venue of choice—adds still further to the event's ability to inspire and engage. One of Birmingham's most contemporary and versatile conference centres, it is ideally suited to host the innovative format of the symposium. With large exhibition spaces, state-of-the-art technology, and adaptable meeting rooms, the venue is conducive to a variety of activities such as keynote speeches, interactive workshops, live cultural performances, and networking. In reality, Birmingham is not just a venue for Connected Cultures 2025—it is an ally to its cause. Placing the event in such a dynamic and open urban hub allows us to build bridges between cultures, encourage business partnerships, and extend the presence of Welsh heritage in an international hospitality arena.

Slide 5: Event Format



Content:

- Day 1: Opening ceremony, keynote speeches, Welsh Showcase
- Day 2: Hospitality workshops, academic panels, closing performance
- Parallel exhibitions of crafts, food stalls, and folklore storytelling
- Networking sessions and business matchmaking (Rhodes II, and Hannum, 2024).

Speaker Notes: The event unfolds across two immersive days. Day one highlights keynotes and our Welsh Showcase featuring authentic food, crafts, and performances. Day two focuses on practical workshops and thought leadership from the sector. Throughout, attendees can visit exhibitions and engage in informal networking. We've designed the event to balance inspiration with actionable learning.

Slide 6: Key Themes



Cultural Hospitality: Integrating identity in guest service

Storytelling & Language: Using folklore and bilingualism

Inclusivity: Designing for diverse global guests

Localizations: Creating memorable, place-based experiences (Pandi, Spanaki, and Watson, 2020).

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- Cultural Hospitality: Integrating identity in guest service
- Storytelling & Language: Using folklore and bilingualism
- Inclusivity: Designing for diverse global guests
- Localisation: Creating memorable, place-based experiences (Pandi, Spanaki, and Watson, 2020).

Speaker Notes: Each session ties into one or more of our key themes. Cultural hospitality is about going beyond service—it's about creating a sense of belonging for guests. This can include using bilingual signage, celebrating heritage through décor or cuisine, and training staff in cultural awareness. Storytelling, especially folklore, personalises the guest experience. Inclusivity ensures we're not just welcoming tourists, but everyone. And localisation is what makes a visit unique and unforgettable.

Slide 7: Workshops and Panels



Workshops:

- Designing culturally sensitive experiences
- Using Welsh identity in service branding

Academic Panels:

- Hospitality education and Welsh heritage
- Economic value of cultural tourism

Business Sessions:

- Boutique hoteliers and cultural success stories (Neelands et al., 2022).

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Speaker Notes: We've invited leading practitioners and academics to share insights through hands-on workshops and thoughtful discussions. From boutique hotel managers incorporating Welsh storytelling into décor, to tourism educators exploring curriculum change, there's a wealth of knowledge on offer. These sessions will be highly interactive, encouraging audience participation and real-time problem-solving.

Slide 8: The Welsh Showcase



Content:

- Traditional food and beverage tastings
- Live craft demonstrations and artisan pop-ups
- Welsh folklore storytelling and music
- Interactive Welsh language signage and greetings (Sánchez-Aguirre et al., 2025).

Speaker Notes: From tasting traditional delights such as freshly baked Welsh cakes to seeing the skill of weaving and the magic of traditional storytelling, visitors will develop a true appreciation of the traditions that make Wales unique. One of the major highlights of the showcase is the emphasis on the Welsh language. Visitors will become familiar with fundamental Welsh phrases in a fun and interactive manner, which will also reveal how even small language incorporation can greatly enrich the visitor experience. Not only does this serve to create a stronger bond towards the culture, but it also speaks to how language plays a crucial part in creating fruitful and memorable customer experiences. The Welsh Showcase illustrates how culture can be integrated into the tourist proposition so perfectly—it is not only through large declarations, but through considered, day-to-day engagement. Whether by taste, sound, craft, or speech, each part of the showcase considers the principles of welcome, authenticity, and sustainability.

Slide 9: Target Audience & Stakeholders

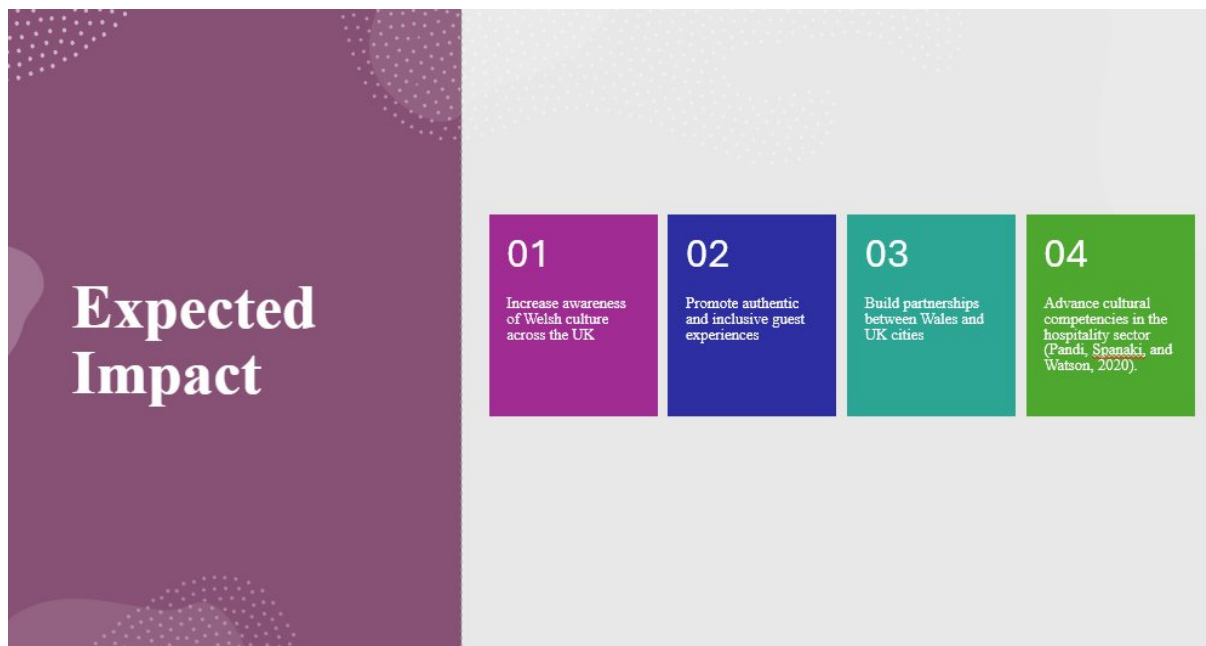


Content:

- Hospitality professionals and tourism operators
- International students and educators
- Visit Wales officials and local authorities
- Cultural tourism consultants and policymakers (Pickel, 2025).

Speaker Notes: Connected Cultures 2025 has been carefully structured to involve every level of stakeholder in the tourism and hospitality system. From frontline operators providing everyday hospitality experiences to senior policy makers who set the wider tourist agenda, all perspectives are represented. Educators and students have direct access to industry practices as they happen, and business owners and consultants seek new inspiration for guest experiences and product innovation. Cross-border local councils and Visit Wales can leverage the event as a vehicle to cement cross-border relationships, further strategic priorities, and promote innovation in cultural tourism. Additionally, cultural institutions, language stakeholders, and tertiary institutions all have meaningful roles to play in contributing and connecting. By bringing together various voices—ranging from grassroots practitioners to national strategists—the event secures a comprehensive and inclusive framework for framing the future of Welsh tourism and beyond.

Slide 10: Expected Impact



Content:

- Increase awareness of Welsh culture across the UK
- Promote authentic and inclusive guest experiences
- Build partnerships between Wales and UK cities
- Advance cultural competencies in the hospitality sector (Pandi, Spanaki, and Watson, 2020).

Speaker Notes: The participants will go back to their organisations and areas with a better understanding of the principles of cultural hospitality and how these can be transferred to various contexts. In education, tourism, design, or public services, the event prepares participants with new insights and usable tools for implementing cultural awareness into their daily activities. Companies will be able to trial and display Welsh-themed goods, receiving constructive feedback and exposure in the marketplace. Teachers will be able to capitalise on the event's findings to enhance their curriculum, incorporating practices of welcome, storytelling, and cultural respect into teaching. At the same time, tourism professionals will learn new concepts for designing locally-grown, authentic visitor experiences that embody values of welcome and place-based identity. Above all, Connected Cultures 2025 acts as a conduit—bridging sectors, territories, and nations around a vision for innovation and cross-

cultural collaboration. Through discourse and cooperation, the event establishes seeds for collaborative, long-term alliances that exist well beyond the scope of the symposium alone, enabling an increased, humane, and richer culturally connected future for all participating.

Slide 11: Conclusion

Conclusion

- 1 Stay connected via our website and mailing list
- 2 Explore partnership opportunities with Visit Wales
- 3 Use hashtag #ConnectedCultures2025
- 4 Feedback & report will be shared post-event (Neelands et al., 2022).

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Speaker Notes: As we wind up, we encourage you to remain connected. This is just the start of a broader effort to make hospitality more culturally compelling. You are able to follow today's ideas through our digital platforms, become connected with prospects for collaboration, and help decide next year's event. Be sure not to forget to respond using the #ConnectedCultures2025 hashtag and complete the feedback questionnaire.

Slide 12:



Evans, N. and Williams, C., (2024). Globalising Welsh Studies: Decolonising history, heritage, society and culture (p. 336). University of Wales Press.

Neelands, J., Hodgson, J., Scott, M., Kaszynska, P. and Dixon, A., (2022). The Warwick UK Cities of Culture project: Towards a research-informed approach.

Pandi, S., Spanaki, M.Z. and Watson, D., (2020). Assessing food safety culture in the UK Food and Beverages sector in the Hotel Industry.

Pickel, M.L., (2025). Cultural Heritage Tourism Leadership: Perspectives on Human Dignity. Taylor & Francis.

Rhodes II, M.A. and Hannum, K.L., (2024). UNESCO, mining heritage and the scalar sustainability of tourism geographies at industrial World Heritage Sites. Journal of Tourism Futures.

Sánchez-Aguirre, D.P., Alvarado-Sizzo, I. and Moury-Fernandes, B.G., (2025). Intangible cultural heritage versus tourism: residents' reactions to temporal overtourism during the Day of the Dead in Mixquic, Mexico. Journal of Heritage Tourism, 20(2), pp.235-259.

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