

What are events?



2. 1 WHAT ARE EVENTS?

Events play a vital role in human society. The least excuse could be found for good forms of celebrations. Events are planned acts and performances, which originates from ancient history. Events and festivals are well documented in the historical era before the fall of the Western Roman Empire (A. D 476). They serve important function for the society, providing participants with the opportunity to assert their identities and to share rituals and celebrations with each other. Events have its stem from cultural and historical values. In the middle ages, events and ceremonies played a major role in ensuring that a dull daily existence was enlivened and that people was entertained. Since at that time there was no TV or Net for entertainment. People have traditionally celebrated religious festivals, Christmas, Easter, Cavadee, Maha Shivratri. They have also participated in other major events staged by rulers of ancient time. In the seventeen and eighteen century, Kings have organized events in a way to have control on the public.

In modern societies, traditional religious and national festivals are no longer a key focus for celebrations and gatherings. They focus on creative events like weddings, anniversaries, award ceremonies, and so on.(Shone and Parry, 2004)

An event is any gathering that occurs at a given time in a given place. It is an occurrence, a significant gathering that takes place in a social setting. However, there are no standardized definitions of what is an event. An event is “ a unique moment in time celebrated with ceremony and ritual to satisfy specific needs”.(Goldblatt 1997 p. 2)

<https://assignbuster.com/what-are-events/>

The Accepted Practices Exchange (APEX) industry glossary of terms (CIC , 2003) defines an event as, an organized occasion such as a meeting, convention, exhibition, special event, gala dinner, etc. an event comprises of many different yet related functions. Getz (2005, p. 16) argues that a principle applying to events is that they are temporary and that ‘ Every such event is unique stemming from the blend of management, program, setting and people.’

Modern events vary in terms of their scale, complexity and number of stakeholders involved.

Small Event Massive Event

Few stakeholders Many stakeholders

Clear objectives Complex objectives

There are different types of events that have been developed around the world to suit the needs of everyone. It ranges from individual to business events that bring together people around the world.

2. 1. 1The importance of events

It is crucial for event organizers to address the needs of the stakeholders, the direct and indirect participants. Event organizers have to keep in mind his clientele. If for them it is the nth event they are organizing, they should keep in mind that this same event may be the first one, the dream and opportunity of a lifetime for its participants and spectators. Bearing this in mind, event organizers must organize each event with the same zeal, motivation and thrill as they organized the first one. Organizers have to address the precise nature of their tasks as each event has different

<https://assignbuster.com/what-are-events/>

characteristics and requirements. Moreover all events and their customers are important. They deserve the best treatment every time an event occurs. It is important for event organizers to offer the best treatment possible as a poor service will result in customer dissatisfaction and loss of business in the long run.(Watt, 1998)

Events have a number of roles in a destination (Yeoman, Robertson, et al, 2004). Getz, 1997, identifies these as ‘ attractions, image makers, animators of static attractions and catalyst for further development. They have the potential to reduce negative impacts of mass visitation and foster better host-guest relations. Events can expand tourists season, extend peak season or even bring in new season into the life of a community’. The community development perspective on event tourism acknowledges the elements of community spirit and pride, corporation, leadership, improvement of community traditions, capacity to control development, improvement to social and health services and environmental quality.

2. 1. 2 Characteristics of the best events

The elements that make best events are:

1. A clear vision and an explicit reason for everyone’s work.
2. SMART objectives to which everyone is committed.
3. An adequate, flexible organizational structure competent to accomplish precise tasks, but retaining a large unity of purpose.
4. Staffs that is committed and ready to ‘ go the step beyond’.
5. Strong leadership to be able to manage the event.

6. Exact thorough planning carried out and documented within an suitable timescale.
7. A coordinated team effort that operates within financial plans, drawing on all accessible resources.
8. Well-organized lines of communications.
9. An excellent public image.
10. Successful advertising and presentation, and built in contingency tactics.
11. Full commitment towards customers.
12. Efficient ongoing control and monitoring systems.
13. An ambiance of harmony, focus and hard work, humor and interest.
14. Good post event assessment. (Adapted from Watt, 1998)

2. Event Concept

All events start with an idea. The idea describes the event in its simplest forms. Concepts are clear statements that give meaning and parameters to an event idea. Defining an event concept is a creative process. The 5 W's: WHO, WHAT, WHY, WHEN and WHERE, are tools used for transforming an idea into a concept. The W's helps to know if an event idea is feasible, viable and sustainable. Those questions are crucial as they shape the event design and reflect the event purpose (Goldblatt. 2001).

WHO: events bring together people who deliver the event experience. Those people include suppliers, stakeholders, audience, planners and so on. For events to be successful it is important to determine who is responsible for

what. Also communication should flow smoothly among all people involved as events have impacts on wider communities.

WHAT: Events experiences includes organizational teams that designs the contents of the event. This process is time consuming. By creating a mission statement specific goals and needs are set up. The mission statement defines the objective and assists in establishing the event in the wider external context.

WHY: It is important to consider why an event is happening. Consider the purpose of the event. All events have a purpose, whether it is an inaugural ceremony, cultural festival or a political meeting.

WHEN: Timing of events is a critical factor for its success. In the design and development stage, planning process, including research, funding, marketing and design has to be considered. In the event delivery process venue availability, production timelines, performers, customers, competing events and supplier availability needs to be taken into account.

WHERE: the location of the event needs to be considered. The choice of venues depends on type of events, organizations budget and accessibility to the public.

(Source: Robinson, Wale and Dickson, 2010)

2.3 Event classification

Events are generally classified according to their size and type. Firstly we will look at the event classification by size; which is mainly of three categories:

1. Mega events
2. Hallmark events
3. Major events

2.3.1 Mega Events

Mega Events are very large events with crowded audience and a good management team behind its organization. Allen et al. (2005) defines mega events as ' those that are so large they affect whole economies and reverberate in the global media. They include Olympic Games and World Fairs.' Mega events require many years of organization and it targets tourists as well as the host population organizing the event. Mega Events look into every aspect of life at the destination during the event; transport, medical services in case of injuries, retail outlets. (Getz 1997) suggests that mega events should have more than one million visitors and capital cost amounting to at least 500 million. It should have a reputation of a must see event. Additionally he argues, ' Mega events, by way of their size or significance, are those that yield extraordinarily high levels of tourism, media coverage, prestige or economic impact for a host destination'.

Till now, in Mauritius has not yet organized such mega events.

2.3.2 Hallmark Events

Hallmark Events are not on such huge scale. Such events take place repeatedly in the same destination. The term hallmark event refers to' a recurring event that possesses such significance, in terms of tradition, attractiveness, image, or publicity, that the event provide the host venue, a community, or destination with a competitive advantage'.(Getz, 1997)

‘ Those events that become so identified with the spirit or ethos of a town, city or region, that they become synonymous with the name of the place, and gain widespread recognition, and awareness’. (Allen et al. , 2005).

The benefits of such hallmark events are the creation of new facilities, improvements to the infrastructure, an increase in tourism revenues.

In Mauritius, the religious festivals, namely, Maha Shivratri and Cavadee which are celebrated by the Hindus, attract many tourists and there is also media coverage.

2.3.3 Major Events

Major Events can involve more people than a hallmark event. Such events have great pulling power in terms of visitors, media and performers/competitors. They also generate significant economic impact in the host destination. Major events are a source of temporary employment for some people (for example, to work on food stalls, cleaning services, etc.). It also attracts a number of volunteers and media coverage.

Many top international sporting championships fits into this category, and are increasingly being sought after, and bid for by national sporting organizations and governments in the competitive world of international major events. (Allen et al. 2002)

It can be said that, in Mauritius there has been major events. One of them being les Jeux des Iles de l’Ocean Indien held in 2003 where a games village was constructed at Ebene for the accommodation of the athletes. Now the government has sold those apartments. There has also been international

media coverage of the event and medical facilities, retail outlets, transportation of athletes, etc were provided.

2. 4Special Eventsand Festivals

In recent years special events have become one of the fastest growing sectors of the tourism industry. As stated by G. Bowdin, I. McDonnell et al, 2001, the term special events enclose specific rituals, presentations, performances and celebrations. Special events are staged to mark or celebrate a special occasion. The defining characteristic of a special event is its transience; (Gilbert and Lizotte, 1998: 73). This suggest it would be impossible to tempt and maintain the same sense of thrill if a particular special event were to be held more often (Yeoman, Robertson, et al, 2004). Special events include national day celebration, sporting events, and important civic occasions. An example could be, the Maha Shivratre festival celebrated by the Hindus in Mauritius.

Getz (2005, p. 16) Defines special events from two perspectives. One from the point of view of the event organizer and the second from the eye of the guest.

1. ' A special event is a one time or frequently occurring event outside normal programmes or activities of the sponsoring or organizing body'
2. To the guest the ' event is an opportunity for a leisure, social or cultural experience outside the normal range of choices or beyond everyday experience'.

Getz added that the characteristics of special events are specialness, it creates a mood of festivity among the guests, they are unique and authentic. They have specific themes.

The word festival is derived from feast and implies a unique time for celebration. Festivals connect landscape to lifestyle and complex ways by introducing the human dimension. Those events entertain locals and offer recreational activity in and out season for visitors. Media coverage generated by events helps destinations build assurance and a positive image in the tourism market place.

Festivals are striking to communities looking to tackle issues of civic design, local pride and identity, heritage, urban renewal, employment opportunities and economic growth. The more an event is seen by its host community as emerging from within rather than imposing on them, the greater that community's approval of the event will be. Festivals and events generally represent the host community's sense of itself and sense of place.

Among the attributes that Getz believes makes an event special and unique are its festive spirit, uniqueness, quality, authenticity, tradition, hospitality, theming and symbolism.

Conferences fall under the generic umbrella of the term event. Therefore, it is important to consider the MICE industry when talking about events.

2.5 The MICE Industry

The Meetings, Incentives, Conventions and Exhibitions (MICE) Industry is known as a service industry that combines trade, transportation, travel and finance. It is also known as business tourism whereby people come to attend <https://assignbuster.com/what-are-events/>

conferences, for example. MICE Tourism attracts invaluable business to a region and in return brings high returns to local economies in the sense that business tourists spend more, not only on hotels and restaurants but even on leisure activities such as visits to retailers and local attractions such as museums and theaters' (Clark, 2004). Attendees of MICE activities are known as 'high spend' travelers that meet the needs of yield driven tourism strategies (Braun, 1992). The MICE industry is characterized by the 3 Highs – High growth potential, high added values and highly beneficial innovations". ; The " three larges – large output, Large opportunities for employment and large industry associations" ; and the " three advantages – advantages over industries in human resources, technological knowhow and the efficient utilization of resources".

It has been cited that within tourism, meetings and conventions are one of the fastest growing segments (Weber & Ladkin, 2003; Oppermann, 1996; Oppermann & Conn, 1997). The MICE sector is considered to be the blue chip of the tourism industry. The stakeholders in Mauritius are placing special interest and investing highly in this lucrative business of conferences to attract MICE businesses from particularly high profile destinations.

Meetings are structured events which bring people collectively to argue a topic of common interest, may be commercial or non commercial, may be attended by 6 or more people and may last a few hours or a week. What makes a meeting qualify as part of the tourism business is that it engages some of the service of the tourism industry, and is generally held away from the location of the organisation running it (Davidson, 1994). There are

various types of meeting that occurs in different settings and many goals or objectives for conducting a meeting (Boehme, 1999).

Incentive travel is a universal management instrument that uses an outstanding travel experience to encourage and/or recognise participants for improved levels of performance in support of the organizational goals. (SITE, 1998)

Conferences are participatory meetings that are designed mainly for the purpose of discussions, to find about a particular subject, to solve problems and consultation. Conferences are usually on a smaller scale and the flow of information is less complex. Conferences are usually limited in time and have specific objectives. The Meetings Industry Association (1996) defines a conference as ‘ An event involving 10 or more people for a minimum of four hours during one day or more, frequently held outside the company’s own premises’.

Exhibitions’. ‘ Exhibitions bring suppliers of goods and services together with buyers, usually in a particular industry sector’. (Allen et al. 2002: 15)

Recently there has been an initiative to not use the “ MICE Market” label but instead “ The Meetings Industry” as it encompasses every aspect of the MICE label.

2. 6 Marketing of events and conferences

Marketing is seen as an integrated process of producing, distributing and selling goods and services. Lyndsey Taylor sums up the key characteristics and messages that genuine marketing contains:

- Meeting customer needs
- Attracting new customers
- Reacting to market trends
- Keeping up with competitors
- Encouraging customer loyalty
- Targeting specific customers
- Identifying market opportunities
- Noting customer feedback
- Getting it right every time

The event industry is seen as a service industry. Events have the same characteristics as services (Watt, 1998). They are:

- Intangible – customers enjoy the benefits and enjoyment of the event, but they can't touch the event
- Perishable- the benefits and enjoyment cannot be stored and carried forward to a future time. It has to be enjoyed on the spot.
- Inseparable- it takes event organizers and customers to make an event happen
- Consistent- it is important to offer consistent products and services as today's customers are looking for consistency
- Lack of ownership- events do not belong to any one. They are temporarily enjoyed by many.

Since events are the same as services it becomes important to market them. Marketing is a persuasive tool to attract people to an event. Event marketing is defined by:

1. “ The marketing concept holds that the key to achieving organizational goals consists of determining the needs and wants of target markets (defined as the set of actual and potential buyers of products) and delivering the desired satisfactions more effectively and efficiently than competitors”. (Kotler, 2000)

2. “ The functions of event management that can keep in touch the event’s participants and visitors (consumers), read their needs and motivation, develop products that meet those needs, and build a communication programme which expresses the event’s purpose and objectives. (Hall, 2000)

2. 6. 1 Factors in marketing

Marketing can be affected by a range of factors, some controllable and some not (Watt, 1998). He further stated companies must be aware of them:

- Location; attractiveness and accessibility of the place as well as environmental factors like traffic and scenery.
- Social factors; the attitudes of those involved in making an event or conference to happen affects people’s attitudes to what is appropriate.
- Cultural influences; different groups in society; ethnic groups, social groups, will view events from different angles.
- Fashion; at certain period certain events will be in craze and will attract large attendees.
- Political factors; government will be in favor of those events that fits their beliefs.
- Economic factors; how much money is available to hold an event or conference. Is there a need for sponsorship?

- Philosophy; the beliefs and attitudes of people will affect the range of events provided.

2. 6. 2 Marketing Concept; the Marketing Mix

The marketing mix is a combination of marketing tools that are used to satisfy customers. It is the parameters that are within the control of marketing managers. The marketing mix is dependent upon environmental scanning, market research, understanding users and offering quality products and services. The marketing mix can be adjusted on a frequent basis to meet the changing needs of target population and other dynamics of the marketing environment. In the events industry, event organizers take into consideration the changing needs of its customers to develop their marketing mix. Jerome McCarthy (1960), a famous marketer states that marketing decisions fall under four categories:

2. 6. 2. 1 Product

This is the end result – the event; exhibition, show or conference. It also involves all ancillary contributions like programmes, presentations, quality production and customer care.

2. 6. 2. 2 Price

Can the event be provided at an affordable price? Can price packages be assembled to support group attendance or tourist rates?

2. 6. 2. 3 Place

Place has several aspects. These include:

Venue, transport, accommodation, emergency access, car parking, geographic location, host town, catering location, environmental conditions, signposting, country, maps, region.

2. 6. 2. 4 Promotion

Promotion also has several aspects, including:

Advertising, logo, pamphlets, displays, publicity, posters, merchandising.

Appendix K elaborates on the role of promotion in the marketing mix

An excellent event manager will balance these aspects to produce a fine marketing mix. The leading thought must be for people and their quality concern; all operations at each phase and at any level need to acknowledge the elements of the marketing mix.

For some services, including events, another 4Ps needs to be considered.

These include;

People; they are the vital picture in delivering events and conferences, especially proper customer care and effective teamwork.

Packaging; is concerned with the way events and conferences are being presented; whether as part of a holiday/ business package. Any marketing is dependent upon the packaging, e. g, a family package.

Partnership; the help of others and their marketing presence is very beneficial to make the event or conference successful.

Programming; when an event or conference is scheduled will be a main tool in its marketing. It should arouse curiosity and create interest by using extra projects around it.

(Adapted from: Watt, 1998)

2. 7Impacts of special events and conventions

Impacts of events encompass a large number of positive benefits and negative impacts which arises because of an event taking place. Impacts can be positive as well as negative. It is the task of the event manager to identify and predict these impacts and manage them in order to achieve the best balance. Those impacts may be visible before the events actually take place, during the event and after the event and affect the stakeholders and the host population. Thus, it can be argued that there is inequity in the distribution of the impacts and benefits of events. (Hall. 1989) typically impacts from events fall under four categories, namely:

1. Economic Impacts
2. Physical and Environmental Impacts
3. Socio cultural Impacts
4. Political Impacts

2. 7. 1 Economic Impacts

Researchers and industry professionals agree that special events and conventions contribute to regional and national economies (Rutherford & Kreck, 1994). According to Crompton et al. (2001), economic impacts of events supplements the traditional financial balance sheets that do not address the issue of what the host population gets in return of those events.

The economic benefits that events bring to host destination are diverse. They bring an increase in employment and high income among the community, increased tax receipts and infrastructure. Hosting events demand work force, therefore, the host country's population benefit from temporary as well as permanent jobs. It can be said that it is more beneficial to employ people residing in the region the event is held because there is no transport cost incurred. But even if labor is not available in the region the event is being held this is not such a major issue. As Mauritius is a small island, one can reach the farthest distance from one place to another in one hour. Tourists and locals come to events to spend; they purchase the tickets to attend to entertainments shows, they spend on food and beverage and so on. Money spent is injected in the local economy. Hence, events enhance the quality of life of people since the positive changes brought to the locality will remain even after the event has been held.

The costs associated with the economic impacts of events are the exploitation of resources, inflated prices and opportunity costs. Sellers choose to augment their prices, making more profit to the detriment of the host population. Customers of events make inefficient use of the resources. For example, in a sporting event, in a moment of excitement, they can damage the lightings. Once the infrastructure is damaged, people will no longer be attracted to the event. There will be negative word of mouth and they may choose to stop coming there. For a local economy that depends entirely on hosting events, its economy suffers. Also, tourists have high spending powers.

2. 7. 2 Physical and Environmental impacts

Events are excellent way to showcase the unique features of hosts' environments. In the interest of sustainability, sound strategic management, cost effectiveness and maximizing sponsorship/funding, it becomes increasingly important to consider environmental impacts of events. Today's customers are looking for eco friendly products. Events market the environment in which it is held. Hall (1989) states that selling the image of an event comprises of the marketing of intrinsic properties of the destination. The impacts will be fairly visible for events that are held in suitable purpose built venues, e. g, stadium, sports ground or conference and exhibition centres. Impacts will be much greater if the event is to be held in public areas not ordinary reserved for event purposes. An event requires an environmental impact assessment before permission is given by government authorities to proceed

Events have positive effects on the natural and physical environments. The infrastructure at the destination is re organized, proper road network, lighting and scavenging facilities are set up to accommodate events. There is an improved transport and communication facility in the region. Many of London's landmark venues have been the legacy of major events, including Crystal Palace (1851 Freat Exhibition)

Negative environmental and physical impacts of events occur when the level of visitor use is higher than the carrying capacity of the region. Aspects such as crowd movement and control, noise levels, access and parking are crucial elements. Other important issues include wear and tear of the physical and natural environment, heritage protection and disruption of the local

community. Events cause potential threats to natural and built areas. This put enormous pressure on the area and leads to impacts such as land degradation (erosion), increased pollution, discharges into the soil, loss of natural habitat. It often put a strain on water resources and in the long run can force locals to compete for the use of critical resources. The different forms of travel used by the delegates, attendees' performers and organizers of events impacts on traffic congestion.

Good communication and consultation with local authorities can help resolve of these issues. In addition, careful management planning is required to modify impacts.

2. 7. 3 Socio cultural impacts

Hall and Getz (1997) points out that all events have direct socio cultural impacts on participants as well as host community.

Events increase pride of its residents, which results from some community events, national day's celebrations, and the validation of specific groups in the regions. Some events leave a legacy of greater awareness and involvement in sporting and cultural activities. Other's widens people cultural horizons and uncover them to new and challenging people, traditions and values. For example, the melas held in Leeds every summer have brought about the powerful religious Asian traditions and cultural associations before wider audiences. Events have the art to challenge the imagination and explore new avenues. For example the installation of the Ice Cubes outdoor ice-skating rink at millennium square in Leeds. Moreover, events have the power to form the cornerstone of cultural strategies. Newham Council have

developed its local cultural strategy, 'Reasons to Be Cheerful' at the centre of which is the vision that people choosing to live in Newham by 2010. In essence, events can become an opportunity to improve social relationships, for strengthening peoples abilities to understand one another and for peoples wellbeing (Kurtzman and Zauhar, 1997).

The bigger and more high profile an event is, greater possibilities exists for things to go wrong, hence creating negative impacts. Major events can give rise to unintended social consequences like, substance abuse, unaccepted crowd behavior and an increase in criminal activity (Getz, 1997). If not managed well, these unintended consequences can hijack the agenda and determine the public perception of the event. English football clubs have successfully implemented strategies to deal with alcohol related bad crowd behavior in order to protect their reputation. Badly managed events can also have broader impacts on social life and community structures. These can include loss of amenity because of noise or crowds, resentment of inequitable distribution of costs and benefits as stated by (Getz 1997). Furthermore, commodification, staged authenticity and standardization are classified as negative impacts.

2. 7. 4 Political Impacts

Politics as well as politicians play an important part in the equation that is contemporary event management. Politicians believe that events will keep its population in good health and themselves in power. This is because politicians use events as an indirect means to build their personal profile and gain political advantage. Arnold et al. (1989, pp 191-2) argued that 'Governments in power will continue to use events to punctuate the ends of

their periods in office, to arouse nationalism, enthusiasm and finally, votes.

Governments are aware of the ability of events to raise the profiles of politicians and the areas that they lead.