

# Events industry

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## Introduction

This report hopes to provide a well rounded account of the events industry in the United Kingdom. By evaluating the strengths and weakness of the industry, one can better evaluate their place in it. My own strengths will be matched with the goals and expectations in the workplace in assessing my suitability and ambition in events. Knowledge is power – by equipping oneself with a good working knowledge of the correct procedures, stakeholders and potential areas of growth and improvement. I believe that through this, I can show that I have thoroughly considered all aspects of the industry to attempt to best place myself and be successful in the industry. The majority of the research is through current events and media websites. Graduate Career reports were also considered to evaluate the potential different varieties of posts that one can accept. With the upcoming Olympic Games there is a revived enthusiasm in the public sector for events and this has led to many new interesting opportunities in the industry.

## The Events Industry Generally

The United Kingdom events industry has a projected estimate value of ? 42.2 billion for 2015 (APPG Report, 2011). With a global reputation, the UK events industry employs over half a million people and represents over twenty-five thousand businesses. The majority of revenue generated in the industry is in conference and meeting planning assuming over 50% of the market share. A quarter of the market share is generated by exhibitions and trade shows, with the balance split between corporate hospitality and sports, music, outdoor, festival and cultural events. The Events Industry Alliance

(EIA) provides an association management secretariat service for the events industry. Their aim is “to be the voice of the multi-billion pound event industry, to serve the collective needs and to promote the interests of our members and the industry at large” (EIA, 2012). The industry uses its platform in the public eye to push key agendas such as sustainable development and eco-awareness therefore comprising of a social responsiveness aspect. The events industry is interconnected with certain other economic goals such as exports earning potential with the many of the leading global exhibition organizations are UK-based, therefore leading to profit generation return significant export income. There is significant growth expected in the outdoor and sports events sectors with the upcoming Olympics and Paralympics with a projected 20% additional business visits expenditure predicted for that that period. The implication therefore of being connected to the events industry is substantial as change in this sector has a significant influence over other related economic ventures.

Events management is essentially a service based industry that revolves strongly around planning and execution. It involves studying the intricacies of a particular brand, identifying a target audience, devising an event concept, thereafter planning the logistics and coordinating the technical aspects that are required by the event before actually executing the plan for the event. Events are considered a strategic marketing and communication tool for all sized and variety of companies. Management not only includes logistical organization, but also other considerations such as health and safety. The industry there requires good working knowledge of administration relating to this events. In recent years there has been a push

towards education of events professionals with an increasing number of institutions offering graduate degrees and diplomas in events management, therefore supporting the aims of professional management by the EIA. There are four broad categories of events: Leisure, cultural, organizational and personal.

### The Giants of Industry

As mentioned, the EIA is the general regulatory body of the events industry. It is an internal body as it is made up of three separate partners: the Association of Event Organizers (AEO), the Association of Event Venues (AEV) and the Event Suppliers and Services Association (ESSA). This alliance represents the three main players in the industry, namely the professionals, venue coordinators and suppliers.

The Association of Event Organizers (AEO) represents the “ companies which conceive, create, develop or manage trade and consumer events” (AEO, 2012). They aim to serve the industry by promoting the needs of event organizers and the industry at large (AEO, 2012). These organizers are responsible for the way an event is planned, prepared and produced. An event manager’s job is to oversee and arrange every aspect of an event, including researching, implementing, controlling, planning, organizing, and evaluating an event’s design, activities, and production (Silvers, 2003).

The Association of Event Venues (AEV) represents an “ organization serving an established event venue community, focused on creating and driving platforms that service fundamental industry needs” (AEV, 2012). The

importance of the appropriate venue goes without saying and therefore to have an organization where one can ensure an industry standard as well as the provision of the correct and suitable event venue is absolutely vital. The broad category into which the event falls will generally dictate the type of venue that is needed and to this extent it is the venue coordinators or administrators that liaise with the event planners with regards to venue specific logistical requirements.

The third leg of the tripod is the Events Suppliers and Services Association (ESSA) which represents “ the best interests of contractors and suppliers of goods and services to the exhibitions & events industry” (ESSA, 2012). In addition to its sister organizations, the ESSA is committed to creation of an industry standard that is committed to a certain service expectation and guarantee in this time of economic recession.

Recently, there is a fourth major role player in the industry in the public government sector, namely the All-Party Parliamentary Group for the UK Events Industry whose mission is to “ represent the UK events industry in Parliament; to highlight the value of the industry, engage with politicians and industry representatives; and to ensure that the UK benefits from the success of events like the 2012 Olympics” (APPG Events Industry, 2012). This has been an important introduction into the industry as it has formed some public sector involvement in the formally private industry. With the projected boom of the industry during the Olympic Games, this presents a unique opportunity for interaction in government tender thereby facilitating growth into the public sector.

## Trends in the Event Industry

### **Link with Education**

Despite the recession, the industry continues to grow and therefore there is a greater need for industry professionals. This in turn creates the need for industry standard and therefore a greater need for education – information, advice and guidance. More and more, the industry is requiring qualifications for events vacancies and there has been a recent emergence of graduate degrees and diplomas to this extent.

### **The Economic Recession**

The recession has mainly only affected construction, automotive and finance institutions, however for the majority of business it is business as usual. Most of the businesses therefore have the scheduled events without consequence; however acknowledge that this is to the detriment of the luxury end of the venue scale to the benefit of the midrange venues such as universities and halls. There is however a significant change in the public perception of companies as the whiplash of the recession is that there have been higher redundancy rates and therefore less incentives and rewards as companies do not want to be perceived as spending on unnecessary expenses whilst making staffing cutbacks. The knock on effect of this has caused greater competition in the industry as there is less market share to go around. This can be advantageous for the industry as it will raise standards for service delivery in trying to win back market share, however it can also lead to the downfall of smaller boutique companies

## **Non-Profit or Charity Sector**

Research indicated that the not-for-profit sector accounts for up to 50% of the clientele of the events industry. This sector seems to have grown despite the recession and they tend to bring in stable business as events are often planned well in advance.

## **Shortened Time-Frames & More Bang for your Buck**

Clients are expecting more value for money and therefore have higher service expectations. There is also a new trend of last-minute booking agencies in order to get a better deal. There is more pressure in the work place as a result of shorter lead times which require high developed coordination skills. This relates back to the earlier trend of educational requirement in the industry. This also involves strong need for skilled account managers.

## **Location, Location, Location!**

The type of event in demand has evolved into the popular outdoor festivals. The demand for day trips within the UK began to rise in 2009, with people choosing to spend their leisure time locally. This has assisted the growth of tailor-made/DIY holiday packages, one needs to be aware of these trends to assess the potential of any event.

Why me?

I am exceptionally well coordinated. I believe that the key to successful event planning is to be able to coordinate yourself and an entire team – it's all about planning and re-planning. Through my professional experience thus far, I have refined this skill. I am also very resourceful. I believe that due to

the nature of the business, there is the potential for things to go wrong or not according to plan. I would do well in these situations, as I am able to come up with a creative fix, whether moving things around or on the spot rescheduling. I have a passion for this industry that I believe will carry me through difficult situations, and I am able to communicate effectively with all those around me. I have a good working knowledge of the various stakeholders in any events, which I learned through professional experience over the years and as such am versatile. I am level-headed and practical, so I am able to manage plans in an objective and logical way. It is a combination of these skills that I believe will make me a strong contender in the industry.

I am also very personable and friendly, allowing me to get along well with anybody regardless of position or profession, this helps develop good business relationships and is crucial for successful networking in the industry.

### Graduate Opportunities

#### **Accommodation Manager**

It is the accommodation manager's responsibility to ensure that the venue or establishment is run smoothly and according to standard. There are employment opportunities in both the public and private sector. Managerial skills are very important in this job as one would often be running an establishment and a team of people. Often these managers would oversee any conference and meeting preparation that is hosted at their venue/establishment, making a background in events highly advantageous.



## **Catering Manager**

A catering manager organizes and develops the food and beverage services of an organisation. This could vary depending on the size of the company from managing a team of people responsible for different areas of the team, or a day to day running of staff. These managers are responsible for ensuring that the sales runs smoothly, whilst still having a hands-on approach to management.

## **Conference Centre Manager**

A conference centre manager manages the everyday operations of a conference centre. This includes managing the staff as well as any administration that needs to take place, including catering, staffing, accommodation, marketing and finance, and sales. It is a multi-faceted job that requires a dynamic individual, however should help to generally improve all skills.

## **Event Organizer**

Event organisers are responsible for the production of events from conception to completion. These events may be exhibitions or markets, fairs, festivals, conferences, promotions and product launches, social and charity events. They can work in public or private sector, in-house or freelance. It is a dynamic industry and allows the most room for unpredictable growth as the amount of work put in generally reflects the output.

## **Public House Manager**

Public House managers generally work for a pub or bar. They are responsible for all the sales, marketing and management requirements of these pubs.

This could range from stock and staff control, however could also include event planning for the pub or for musical events. The ability to market is key in this role as it is the managers responsibility to ensure that the pub remains profitable.

### GAP Analysis & Plan of Action

## **Leadership Competencies**

These roles require strong leadership qualities, as most functions involve running a team of people and in order to do so effectively, there will need to be strong management skills and also the ability to understand people.

Whilst I have good communication skills and a strong background in customer service, I am well attune to managing good working relationships which will be advantageous to networking, however I can look to improve my experience in managing a team of people. However, because of my experience working in fast paced hospitality environments, I am well coordinated, efficient and adept at time management. The transition therefore to experiencing

## **Functional Competencies**

It has been stressed through evaluating the various criterion and market trends in the events industry that excellent organization skills are absolutely vital to the success of a person in the events industry. Whilst my organizational skills are well practiced as my professional experience has necessitated the development of these skills in terms of management myself and my work environment.

## Gaps

The gaps that exist in my skill level that I aim to improve is really relating to my management skills. I hope to immediately find a position that will allow me to have responsibilities within my role managing people and therefore improving my leadership ability. I believe that thus far I will be successful and competent in these roles, however at this stage, I am looking for experience managing people to ensure quick career progression. I also hope to get more experience in managing a variety of different things at a time for example: staffing, financial and budget management, catering needs, venue hire. Being able to manage these different things at one time will undoubtedly assist in the development of my coordination skills and also generally give me more experience in a practical working environment.

## Plan of Action

In the time leading up to graduation, I am going to start looking at job opportunities in the industry in events management position. I think to begin with it is important to work in-house to gain experience and begin to network. Inevitably it is my career ambition to have my own events company, branching out initially into freelance and then building it up from there into a small to medium sized company. However, I first need to learn the ropes and the practical aspects of the industry and also find out the sector that I most enjoy and am the most successful in. I believe that I have finished my formal education, however now need to get a practical education and link what I have learned to actual industry work. In the summer, I plan to look for an internship leading up to a permanent position as a junior in-house

events planner. I would be most interested in getting involved in festival and cultural events that are based on the idea of a day trip.

## References

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