

Event management



Introduction to Event Management

Event management is a continuous process that revolves around the utilization of project management practices, in the creation and programming of events such as conferences, seminars, festivals and business exhibitions (Polivka 1996). It involves the planning, monitoring and controlling of activities and resources that would be used, as an event evolves from a preliminary concept into an active and operational implementation. The process of event management involves studying the purpose of the event, identifying the prospective target audience, inventing a suitable event concept, planning and coordinating the logistics and finally executing the proposed event (Renton 1994; Passingham 1995). It is important to note that event management continues even after the execution of the actual event. Post-event analysis is necessary to gauge the ultimate success or failure of an event.

Event Report – HIV/AIDS Awareness Day

Introduction

Since the discovery of HIV/AIDS at the end of the 20th Century, cases of new infections have been on the rise in alarming rates, particularly in African and Asian countries (Petersen 2006; David 2009). This is in spite of educational and awareness campaigns, by both governmental and other non-governmental organizations (NGOS). The fact that more people have easy access to information regarding the pandemic has not changed HIV prevalence in most countries. It is becoming clearer that the spread of the HIV virus might be due to other reasons and not due to a lack of behavioral change or mere ignorance. HIV/AIDS awareness days have been used to try

to educate the population and determining possible factors for the rising infection rates.

It is fast becoming reality that most of the methods used to educate the population might be ineffective in the fight against HIV/AIDS. Many events are held every year trying to address this pandemic. According to Rockstroh et al. (2008), while some events might help in reducing infections, others end failing. This indicates that the organizational methodology plays a key role in determining their overall success of events.

Main Purpose of Event

The main purpose of this HIV/AIDS awareness day was to inform and educate the community on several topics related to HIV/AIDS. Despite the fact that most people know of HIV/AIDS, many myths and misconceptions about the virus persist. People still believe in these myths and uphold the misconceptions about the virus. The purpose of the event was to clarify and remove these myths and misconceptions, through the education of the target population on the facts about the disease.

Scope of the Event:

Target Audience

According to Danta and Dusheiko (2008), in this era of HIV/AIDS, awareness and education about the virus deserves a national audience, if not an International one. However, the target audience in this event was the local community in Darling which is a rural town in South Africa. The age range was between the ages of 15 years to 35 years, as this age group is the worst affected by the pandemic. Nevertheless, older people were allowed to attend the event, as it was a public meeting of global importance. The main reason

for having a small target audience was due to two factors. Firstly, it is easier to convey a message to a smaller group of people without distorting the information. Moreover, it is also easier to involve a small target audience in an event's activities, as it is financially feasible (Cotterell 1994; Goroll et al. 2000). Figure (1)

Venue

The event takes place in a secondary school in Darling which is a small town in South Africa to deliver a specific message to local and international youth. The school is not just a place to learn but it is also a place to educate.

Time

The end of the school year is a suitable time for this event in order to direct youth from different negative situations that they may experience at this period of time to productive experiences involving responsibilities and exciting social and educational event (Srevent, 2010). Figure (3)

Theme

The main theme of the event is the prevention and treatment of HIV/AIDS. The slogan is "listen, you may get it!" to educate youth that they may be infected by HIV/Aids if they do not follow the safe medical practice.

Feasibility of the Event

Since HIV/AIDS being a global pandemic, the event received financial support from the Government, (NGOS) international donors and local organizations. The physical resources required included tents, music & sound equipment and a performance stage among many others. Most of the support personnel

were volunteers and local youth. Due to massive support from organizations, the miscellaneous costs were easily achieved.

Format of Event

This HIV/AIDS awareness day took a paradigmatic shift from the norm, as it addressed the matters at hand using a very different style. Most events that address HIV/AIDS events are often education oriented, whereby attendees are literally taught in classes or discussion groups about HIV/AIDS. This event incorporated the appeal of sports, music and other fun activities to teach the audience and particularly youth on how to protect themselves from infection.

Figure (5, 6, 7)

How did Event Address the Theme

The main theme of the event was the prevention and treatment of HIV/AIDS.

The event started with a keynote speech from health experts and local officials. This was followed by some inspirational music from invited artists. In addition to entertaining the audience, the artists ensured that the songs they were performing were informative and relating to the theme of the event. Musical performances were interchanged with short dramas and skits about HIV/AIDS. The most interesting thing was that some of these musicals and skits were played out in the local dialect and thus grabbing the full attention of the audience. Not only were these plays informative, but also captivating and interesting.

The performances were followed by mini-competitions including soccer contests, short races and fun games for the younger age groups. The teams participating were drawn from the local population. Each of the sports uniforms they wearing conveyed a different message about the dangers of

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HIV/AIDS. Just before the winning teams were feted, a soccer ball was inserted inside a condom, just to illustrate how elastic condoms can be, much to the amusement of the young audience.

The speeches were deliberately short, to efficiently capture the attention of the audience. Appleby (2002) argues that, research shows that young people do not like long speeches and formalities. Therefore, the event organizers ensured that keynote speakers were short and precise while focusing on the main message. There was a question and answer session, whereby participants had the chance to ask their queries. All the questions were answered satisfactorily by the team of doctors who were invited to the event.

The audience also got a chance to be tested for HIV, free of charge. The team of professional counselors ensured that participants underwent voluntary counseling sessions before and after testing. The fact that the tests were free got a huge response from the audience. The tests were confidential and those who tested positive probably received references on where they could start receiving treatment.

The coordination of the event was superb. There were no conflicts in the delegation of duties. Every person had his or her role to play, as the event activities were being executed. In addition, there were no hitches or time delays; indicating the high level of planning and preparation. The event manager must have put in.

Event Closure

At the closure of the event, participants received freebies such as T-shirts, umbrellas, utensils and caps branded with anti-Aids messages. For those who did not understand the message through the speeches, they surely got it through the branded items. In addition to the free items, informational pamphlets were given out to the participants. This will certainly ensure that those who did not get the chance to attend the event can still learn about the virus through from the informational pamphlets.

Conclusion

The superb organization of this HIV/Aids Awareness day is a clear indication that creative thinking plays a key role in determining the ultimate success of an event. There are so many HIV/AIDS awareness events these days, but most of them employ existing concepts thus, leading to poor attendance. Creative thinking is the mental process that involves the discovery of new and brilliant ideas. It is the ability to invent new ideas by combining, changing or reapplying existing ideas. In event management, creative thinking assists event managers and organizers to identify ideas that could capture the attention of their target audience in a captivating way.

In this case, the HIV/AIDS awareness event incorporated brilliant ideas such as sporting activities, music, skits, fun games and other competitions. Since it was a youth event, these ideas were irresistible to the target audience, and played a key role in the general success of the event. The participants were not only educated about HIV/AIDS, but also got a chance to enjoy and entertain themselves. The planning and preparation of the event was equally superb. An event coordinator was responsible for identifying event tasks and

delegating duties to the team members. This ensured that the chances of responsibility conflicts arising were minimal. The estimations were also realistic, the time intervals between event activities were manageable enough to ensure that no activity was rushed or delayed.

Event management goes beyond the execution of the actual event. An event is said to be successful, if it is executed and completed within the allocated time, the budgeted costs and the specified levels. Changes to the scope should be minimal and the event should meet the required qualities and standards. Technical hitches are sometimes allowed, as they are often unforeseen. In this HIV/AIDS awareness event, the manager surpassed the minimum event goals, by ensuring that the targeted audience who did not get a chance to attend the meeting still received information about HIV/AIDS, from the pamphlets. In addition, the event ran smoothly without any time delays, changes to the program or any other impediments. As a result, the event was considered a success.