



## Event Management (Short Course)

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# TOPIC 1

## What is Event Management?

The origin of the word event can be traced to the Latin word 'eventus,' which refers to extraordinary occasions or occurrences. An event can, therefore, be defined as a well-planned and organised occasion with the view of meeting or achieving specific objectives for the benefit of person, group of people or an organization. The most popular reasons for undertaking events include entertaining people and promoting social interactions. Typical events include conferences, sports events, family gatherings, parties, school graduations, and fundraising, etc.

## What Is Event Planning?

Events may be categorised in the following way:

- Celebrations (festivals, weddings, birthdays, and anniversaries)
- Education (conferences, graduations)
- Promotions (product launches, fashion shows, and conventions)
- Commemorations (memorials, civic events)

## Who Hires Event Planners

Broadly speaking, there are two markets for event planning services:

- Corporate Market
- Social Event

## The Corporate Market

The corporate market includes companies, charities, and non-governmental firms which makes use of events to get in touch with their target markets. Their goal is mainly to increase their visibility and improve their competitive edge in the market. They use events as a tool to get their messages across to target markets. Organisations such as charities and non-profit organisations may win more public support and also raise funds through events such as sports competitions, fundraising galas, and receptions; these events are less expensive and of high impact in nature. Companies on the other hand may make do with events such as picnics, parties, conventions, trade shows, and meetings for all stakeholders to take advantage of the larger markets guaranteed by these events. The key to becoming a successful corporate planner is to begin with planning social events to build up enormous experience and know-how and contacts.

## Reasons for Staging Events

- Corporate organisations stage events to create a sense of pride in communities, generate income, brand image, and generate employment
- Community groups such as clubs and other societies stage events to promote their interests
- Events are also undertaken for profit-making purposes
- Governments use events to promote ideas, discuss national issues, etc.
- To encourage tourisms
- To enable charity groups to raise funds

## Social Events

They include activities such as birthdays, weddings, reunions, parties, and so on. The social event planner has the option to choose one or more events to specialize in. These events are really popular with middle and upper income level groups who have spare cash but limited time to organize their own events.

## Main Tasks Involved in Events Planning

Planners of an event may handle any or all of the following tasks related to that event:

- Undertaking research activities
- Creating a unique design for the event
- Selecting an ideal site and venue
- Catering arrangements
- Making arrangements for transportation
- Creating unique invitation cards and dispatching them to guests
- Coordinating and supervising workers
- Making provision for accommodation
- Evaluation of the event

## Skills Required for an Event Planner

The prerequisite to becoming a successful event planner is to have formal education and a range of industrial-specific skills.

Skills required for a successful career as an event planner include the following:

- Ability to work in a team or independently
- Interpersonal and social skills
- Analytical ability
- Communication skill
- High organisational skills
- Good time management
- Ability to work to deadlines
- Able to pay attention to details
- Understanding of government regulations, political, social and economic issues
- High computer literacy, e.g. understanding of Microsoft office applications
- Understanding of project management software
- Negotiating skills
- Ability to deal with pressure situations
- Problem-solving skills
- Creativity
- Marketing and public relations

## The Basics of Event Planning

### Pre-planning

The first stage of event planning requires the planner to undertake pre-planning activities which requires visualizing how the planner would like events to unfold. It involves taking into account the number of people and their characteristics in terms of gender, age groups, and their specific needs.

When pre-planning events, you need to:

Understand the purpose of the event

- Clearly list all activities including the seating arrangement, number of staff, the responsibilities of staff, and scheduling time for activities, etc.
- Outline food and drink requirements
- Consider transportation to and from the event
- Determine the budget requirements
- Specify dates for holding events

- Create timeline for planning phases
- Obtain written evidence of availability of venues
- Conduct research to determine the best performers and speakers you need to invite

The above list is not exhaustive but it should provide you with a head start to planning a successful event. The 5Ws of event creation: why, who, when, where, and what

**i. Why are we putting on the event?**

This is the first question you need to ask when planning an event. You need to discover the purpose for staging the event.

**ii. Who do we want to come to the event**

Knowledge of the target audience which will attend the event is a must know as this will form the basis of your marketing plan

**iii. When is the best time to stage the event?**

This is very important to determine to avoid conflicts with other events

**iv. Where is the best place to stage the events?**

The most suitable and convenient venue should be chosen to facilitate easy access and also to create the an enjoyable atmosphere

**v. What concept or idea will best serve the purposes of the event?**

It is generally recommended for event planners to engage in 'brainstorming sessions' to come up with a concept for the event if one has not been developed or proposed already. This brainstorming session requires each participant to voice out ideas that first appears in his/her mind. These are noted on a whiteboard. Another list comprising of ideas based on their 'quality' or 'attractiveness' may be compiled. These two lists can then be fused to arrive at a combination of ideas which serves as the event concept.

## Logistics

Another key to hosting a successful event is having a good logistic arrangement. Logistics has to do with 'planning, organizing and coordinating the movement of goods, equipment, services, and people to their point of need.' The significance of logistics to events cannot be overemphasised because haphazardly planned logistics may result in supplies not arriving at the right time. Logistics planning presupposes that the most ideal venue is chosen by the planners to ensure customers, visitors, goods, and services have adequate access to and from the venue. Adequate provision is also made to evacuate participants during emergencies.

To ensure logistic activities are successful, planners need to consider items which require long lead times and substantial work and arrange for these at the earliest opportunity so that they can be provided ahead of time.

**i. Supplies, transport, and distribution**

Planning and coordinating of movement of goods, equipment and people form the foundation of logistical operations. Logistics therefore involves managing transportation of people and items to and from the venue of an event. The opening, running and closing of events also fall under logistics. Other aspect of logistics include moving suppliers, performers, and equipment, as well as, ticket distribution and answering queries relating to the event by the marketing department of an event management firm.

**ii. Technical facilities**

Nowadays, due to the sophisticated nature of technical services required at event venues, event planners, and coordinators tend to outsource these requirements to production or multimedia firms. This move sometimes presents uncertainties to the event manager who is usually not familiar with the quality of service of the hired firm in the face of rapidly changing technology.

With the advent of a diversity of multimedia and communication technologies, it is now common for people to receive live feed from another country far away at an event in for example, London, via video conferencing. It is recommended that venues having such advanced technology ask parties who will be making presentations to undertake test with the system at least a week before the commencement of the event.

**iii. Lighting**

Adequate lighting should be provided at the venue to give ambient light in the main function hall and to illuminate the speaker(s) or performers. Lighting creates a good setting for people attending events. All public and support areas should also be adequately illuminated.

To make the event even more enjoyable, decorative lighting should be used throughout the venue where appropriate. Safety is also enhanced by providing lighting at exits, entrances, along stairways and routes leading to emergency exits. In general, lighting should be provided all around at sections of the venue for the participants. Energy saving could be achieved using lighting control systems and automatic switching devices. The law requires emergency lighting to be provided in public building with standby auxiliary batteries that can last for at least three hours. Finally, car parks and areas surrounding the venue should be well illuminated to make people feel safe.

#### iv. Sound and communications

Professional sounds systems are now commonly used at venues hosting special events unlike previous year where a simple set up made up of an amplifier, a mixer, and microphones were more fashionable. It is not just sound systems that are provided by equipment companies but also, public address systems are part of the whole set - up.

## Budgeting

Event budget should consist of the following aspects:

- Balance sheet showing a list of all expenses relating to accommodation, transportation, catering services, and marketing, etc.
- Sufficient funds must be available to pay for all expenses and a separate account opened for accrued expenses during the event
- Get client to approve all expenses beyond the budgeted amount
- Estimate costs using records of budget for similar events held previously
- Make budget provision for licences and insurance for all potential liabilities such as cancellation/postponing the event or a fire.
- Have some emergency funds available to take care of unexpected expenses

## Schedule of Events

The schedule of event is a critical document that has to be prepared by the planner of vents. This important document breaks down activities into bits and highlights the time for performing activities, the details of activities and the person responsible for ensuring the objectives of a particular activity are achieved. This cue-to-cue document takes into account activities such as the arrival of guests, transportation plans, hospitality arrangements, security, information about the venue, clean up, and equipment set - up procedures. Having adequate detailed information in this document makes for a smooth and organized overall event experience for all concerned.

The ideal approach to putting together and effective schedule of event is to engage all stakeholders in the planning process encompassing all activities from the start of the event to its completion. One gets a better perspective by viewing all aspect of the event through the eyes of the participants; how things will appear to them how they would feel about the atmosphere, what the overall experience would be like.

Before choosing the venue for the event, the event planner needs to consider carefully the exact specification of space required for the particular event he is organizing and the atmosphere he wants to create during the event.

## TOPIC 2

## The five 'Ws of event creation and applying them to the creation of an event concept.

### Theming the Programme

To create a unique and successful event, you need to develop an effective theme and programme to achieve this. However, there are other factors in the environment which may also significantly influence the success of the event. You need to scan the environment by making the effort to find answers to the 5 Ws of event creation in order to determine these environmental factors. The 5 Ws refer to the why, what, who, where, or what questions you need to ponder about the event. The 'what' question requires brainstorming to creatively explore likely event concepts and the most suitable themes to use. The final concept and theme must be presented in the right style and look and incorporated in all phases of the event; their application is only limited by availability of resources. When applying theme concepts to events, the programme for the event becomes critical for organising the various elements of the event for high impact and success. The event manager is expected to play a leading role in putting together a formidable team to create and deploy the event concept for a successful event.

### Environmental Scanning

Environmental scanning needs to be performed prior to choosing a theme and developing a programme for the event. This is critical to making informed decision about the right theme and programme which will reflect the prevailing conditions in society. Environmental scanning involves the determination of current social and environmental factors most likely to have a strong influence on the event outcome. Some questions you need to ask during the environmental scanning process include the following:

- Will the current political climate have any effect on the event?
- What is the current state of the economy? Are prevailing economic conditions conducive for people to buy tickets to the event or to even spend some cash while at the event?
- What are the latest social trends or themes prevailing?
- Will the media patronise the event? How about special interest groups? Would they be willing to participate?

It is important to find out about the nature of the various target audiences you are expecting at the event and how they can be effectively reached. All of these factors need to be carefully considered before beginning the process of developing the concept for the event.

The event creation process requires finding answers to the 5 W questions. We will discuss each of these five questions in more details in the subsequent paragraphs below:

## Why?

Why do we need to host this event is the first question you need to ask yourself and anybody else involved in planning the event. In other words, what is the purpose or objectives of having this event? There must be a clear reason or objective the event manager will hope to meet and this will guide him/her to develop the best concept to meet these objective(s). The objective could be to raise funds, to promote a client's product or to entertain an audience.

## Who?

This refers to the guests who will be attending the event. It is critical to study and understand the characteristics of the target guests to help design concepts to meet their specific needs. The composition of the target group may be homogeneous or quite diverse in age, profession or interest.

## When?

Picking the right time and date which is convenient to the audience and fitting the requirements of the event is critical to achieving all-round success. Planners need to consider the season of the year, the month, the week, the day, and the time of the day for the event to begin. No two events are ever the same and besides, there will be a number of factors which will influence the choice of date and time to choose. Factors such as holiday periods, national or local elections events and sporting events all need to be considered as they tend to compete for audience attendance and media attention. It is recommended that event for the elderly or seniors are best hosted on a weekday and in the morning. Family events are best hosted during the weekend and events for young adults on weekend nights.

## Where?

What factors must you consider when choosing a venue for an event? Two factors are required: The operational value and the aesthetic appeal. Besides these, you also need to consider the following when choosing the most suitable venue:

- Does the venue offer enough capacity?
- Are there adequate facilities such as power supply, catering, toilets, and stage, etc.?
- Is the venue management flexible and cooperative?

Other desirable features of the venue which could likely contribute positively to creating ambience and a good atmosphere at the vent include its unique locations and beautiful surroundings; botanical gardens or riverbanks may be used for concerts. If you want the guest to feel a sense of adventure or suspense, then why not go for a military barracks which is normally not accessible to the public?

To add 'dignity and importance' to the event, you may choose a town hall to host formal events. Whichever choice you make in selecting the right venues, you will need to take all of the above factors into consideration.

## What?

Developing a winning concept is important for success. The concept also helps to bring out the programme as well as assists in creating the content of the event. So the question that one needs to ask is 'what is the right concept and how can this be developed?' The first step to arriving at the right concept for an event is to do some research on other similar events in the past at the library or online using the internet. This should kick-start the flow of creative ideas. Next, you need to bring on board other stakeholders in a 'brainstorming session' where you brief them on your research findings as well as the requirements of the event and then start discussions to unearth other ideas from the participants. The stakeholders are free to suggest whatever that comes to their minds; there should be free flow of ideas since there are no rules to limit them. Unusual or abstract ideas should not be discarded but rather brought to the floor to be discussed. You, the event manager, need to guide the process in the direction of ideas that resonate with the requirements of the event. One or more brainstorming sessions may be required to finally arrive at the desired outcome of creating a suitable event concept, after further refining and development.

## The Event Planning Process

The best way to go about designing and organising events is to break them down into phases or stages. This way, the planner can tackle each phase more efficiently and in a timely manner from one stage to the next seamlessly.

### 1. Initiating

The Event manager and the sales staff typically begin with initial phases of an event.

### 2. Planning

This is the most important aspect of the event management process. This involves making plans that detail how things should progress up to the time the event is completed. This stage also requires planners and staff to be aware of the order of activities and include contingency plans to deal with potential problems when they arise.

### 3. Executing

This phase involves putting the event plans into action. This phase doesn't exclusively occur during the event; it begins as soon as the plan has been put into action.

#### 4. **Monitoring**

This needs to be carried out throughout the duration of the event by event personnel who are required to observe how the event is playing out with guidance from the event plan.

#### 5. **Controlling**

Controlling is crucial as the event unfolds. It requires acting on observations made during the monitoring phase by taking decisions and making adjustments to the event plans in the face of the dynamic nature of event proceedings.

#### 6. **Closing**

It involves handing over the finalised 'product' to the client which requires clients' signature. It's the process of passing the finalised "product" to the client. In the Event Management industry, the "product" includes; the plans for the event, the performance of the event, and any correspondence done after the event.

# TOPIC 3

## Event Marketing

Marketing involves creating and maintaining a match between the needs and expectations of the target audience you intend to attract to the event by providing them with programmes of activities and supporting services. The programme of activities may include performances, shows, and parades, etc. Support services include providing food, drinks, medical care, and security, etc.

The following sequential steps should be followed when creating a matching process:

### Key Steps In Event Marketing

- Identification of event target audience
- Creation and quantification of marketing objectives
- Planning events by incorporating items needed to meet the expectations of the target audience
- Devising adequate pricing structures for tickets as well as other services
- Finding cheaper means of getting information about ticket across to the target audience
- Finding the most suitable way of making tickets readily available
- Evaluating market activities
- Establishing a monitoring system for marketing expenditure
- Provision of fund for evaluating marketing activities as part of the budget make up
- Keeping systematic records of evaluation and lessons learned for planning future events

### Event Marketing Mix

The service marketing mix comprises of the 7 “Ps”. These include:

- Products
- Price
- Place
- Promotion
- People;
- Process
- Physical evidence

We will elaborate on these below:

## Event Products

The event products should provide value to the guests. The product/s, however, does not necessarily have to be tangible but must be an improved version of an existing product or a totally new product.

## Product Elements

These comprise of the main product and supplementary services that come along with it. It is important for event managers and marketing professional to highlight the benefit of the products to the target audience by comparing the performance with other rivals' products. Examples include transport, accommodation, food service, price of ticket etc.

## Price

Pricing strategy should be such that it will be competitive and at the same time bring in a decent profit. To make this possible, event managers should find innovative ways to reduce costs associated with services and the stress associated with high costs which make for bad customer experience.

## Place

This refers to the location where the customer goes to purchase event products. Places come in different shapes and sizes and may include outdoor or indoor settings which in turn could be either public or private in nature.

## Promotion

Promotion involves communicating with target audience using the most effective means to provide essential information to them and convincing them about the benefits of the product you are offering for them to take a step to buy it. Service marketing (including event product marketing) requires educational content to highlight all of the benefits to gain, the place to obtain the service, the time and way to take part in the service process. Sales people, trainers, and the mass media, such as, TV, radio, websites, and print, may be used to communicate information on the service product to the public.

## People

This encompasses everyone who participates in the event including customers, the management responsible for the event, and the event staff, etc. The quality of the people can determine how reputable your brand will be. People's (i.e., your customers) perception about the quality of an event is usually based on how they measure or assess the performance of the event staff. To ensure that the staff knows how to deliver high quality services, organisations make every effort possible to recruit,

train, and encourage their staff to interact with customers in a professional manner to leave a lasting good impression about their services and the event.

## Process

Process is the method or sequence of procedures used to deliver a service to customers. To design and implement effective processes, one needs to understand the requirement of customers in terms of the type of services they appreciate, the time for providing the services and how to inform them about the services that are available.

A good process would avoid such undesirable experiences such as excessive bureaucracy and slow or delayed services. Having a good process would also increase the productivity of staff and ensure success. Conversely, a poor process will result in low productivity.

## Physical (Evidence)

When promoting service events to potential customers, there is the need to provide some evidence about the nature of the product. Such evidence may be in the form of printed documents or leaflets such as brochures, pamphlets, or booklets with photos of the venue, the staff, facilities, vending places, equipment, and decorations, etc.; these serve as the physical evidence of the services to look forward to.

Whatever information is provided to the customers (guests) must be of the higher quality because customers' perception will be based on this information. Services having less tangible evidence rely on advertising with symbols depicting all services to be provided

**Assessment****Total Marks: 20**

1. Explain the duties and responsibilities of an Event planner/coordinator 5
2. Outline the main tasks involved in event planning 5
3. What are the five Ws in Event Creation? and what is their importance, when planning an event? 5
4. Explain the importance of identifying other events in advance, which may directly compete with the one you are going to organise. 5