

UNIT-6

The Event Management Plan

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this unit, the learner will be able to:

- ✓ Understand the need to develop an event management plan.
- ✓ Explain the information required to develop an event management plan.

Unit 6

The Event Management Plan

The success or failure of any event management plan will depend upon how effective the event manager is able to perform his assigned roles in planning, coordinating and executing the contents of the plan. The event manager should be multi-skilled and knowledgeable in diverse disciplines required to undertake the role of event management with assistance from other qualified team members to ensure the complete success of events. The event manager may be called on to work as Human Resource officer, a public relations officer, operations coordinator, master of ceremonies, and an accountant, etc. Apart from working with his/her team of assistants, the event manager will be expected to consult with the other major stakeholders in many aspects of the event to ensure that their interests are met satisfactorily as well as to provide an unforgettable and pleasant experience for the invited guests. To this end, the event manager and the other key stakeholders need to assess the impact of factors such as the economic, health, social and safety issues on the event and take appropriate measures to address these issues. This assessment covers the impact of event on the surrounding community, the staff, and the police and other emergency services, etc.

The ability to prepare a detailed event management plan is a strong indication that the whole process has been well thought through and measures have been put in place to ensure success.

Organising a Successful and Safe Event

There are many incentives available to motivate the event manager to coordinate activities to successfully execute the event management plan. Firstly, he or she can receive high financial returns from some events. There is also the intangible benefit of achieving personal satisfaction on completing this complex task. Lastly, but in no way least, is the opportunity for the event manager to add to his/her experience, experience that is best acquired in the field of work with the hope that it will be a stepping stone to tackling more challenging events in the future.

The benefits of a safe and successful implementation of an event management plan include the following:

- It ensures efficient movement of people, equipment and machines at the site of the event.
- It ensures a high chance of having happy participants because incidents are drastically reduced or eliminated altogether and security, cleaning and repair costs are also reduced in the process.

- The plan serves as a useful record of all planning measures and provides evidence of the responsibilities of the event manager and his team.
- It assists in providing a rapid response to any unforeseen incident and creates a secure environment for all participants.
- It makes it easy to gain support from all stakeholders.
- The event management plan helps to reduce the event manager's stress level.
- It helps to secure long-term sponsorship deals with corporate and local businesses.
- There is low public liability since measures have been formulated in the plan to reduce accidents.
- The event management plan also sustains business due to strong support from participants and the local community.

Even though each event is unique, their management plans may share some common traits such as being clear, complete, well-documented, widely publicised and containing basic information about the event.

Event Details

Information about the nature of the event should be clear and accurate. The plan should provide specific details about the nature of the venue, be it outdoor or indoor or a combination of the two. This information about the venue will help you to understand the effect of the venue on the event as well as how crowd movement will be controlled. An estimate of the time required for setting up the venue and then cleaning up to return it to its original state should also be provided.

The Event Manager

The main responsibility of the event manager is to organise activities and ensure their proper execution for the overall success of the event. The event manager is expected to provide updated and accurate contact details to enable him/her to communicate regularly with event staff and other stakeholders.

Description of the Event

Different aspects of activities which make up the event must be clearly stated to make it easy for stakeholders to gain an in-depth understanding of how the event will unfold. These should include details of the performers, the kind of entertainment and food arrangements, the times and the location of important facilities and special arrangements for security and safety of the participants. The details provided must be insightful and sufficient to help readers of the plan grasp the essential components.

Patrons' Details

The demographic details of the target group(s) expected at the event and the number of participants should be provided. The demography could be youngsters under 18 years or young adults between the ages of 18 and 25 or other age ranges, depending on the nature of the event.

Police Contact

Event managers must consult with the police to make security arrangements with them. This meeting should be held at least six weeks in advance to give the police enough time to prepare a suitable timetable commensurate with the event management plan. The event manager must ensure that he/she has the complete contact details of the police.

Public Liability

Event managers or event organisers need to take proactive steps to defend their company against any lawsuits resulting from liabilities relating to workplace accidents during the event. It is therefore advisable for the event manager to insure him/herself and his/her company against all legal action and to secure insurance to cover all property and equipment for the event. Equally important is the need to have available a register to record all incidents resulting from organising the event before, during and afterwards.

Health and Safety Permits

Local authorities require event organisers to obtain all necessary permits before hosting public events. Permits such as road closure permits, fire permits, food vending permits, health and safety permits etc. may be secured from local Councils or other related agencies. The various stakeholders will provide guidance in these matters when they meet with the event manager to discuss the event management plan. The local Council should be notified in advance to allow sufficient time to process the applications for the permits and licenses. All applications must include a copy of the Event Management Plan.

Consultation Register

For the best experience and result, it is essential for the event manager to arrange for the major stakeholders to be part of the discussions concerning the development of the Event Management Plan. However, the stakeholders should be informed in advance to enable them to prepare adequately and to make significant contributions to the development of the plan. People who will be affected by the event are more appreciative when contacted in advance and are generally willing to give their support to make the event successful.

Planning Meetings

Several planning meetings should be held in advance to discuss issues with the major stakeholders. This will allow changes to be effected in the future.

Briefing before Event

This is also known as the pre-event briefing. It involves discussions about critical aspects of the event with all stakeholders to clarify issues concerning any particular dimension of the event before it starts. At this meeting, the participants should discuss issues relating to the timetable, security, communication, and emergency procedures, etc.

Debriefing after Event

Debriefing involves the organisers and stakeholder discussing what occurred during the event. This should be carried out immediately after the event ends. This helps to evaluate the event to identify the positive and negative experiences.

Consultation Log

All contacts made with the major stakeholders, such as the local council and government departments etc., should be kept on file for future reference. Information to record includes the name of the department, the name of the person working on behalf of the department, the date of the meeting and the details of the conversations that took place.

Selection of the Venue

The location and design of the venue are major influencing factors of event planning and its success or otherwise. When selecting a venue, the event manager must take the following into consideration:

- Good all-round accessibility
- Free movement of people and vehicles
- Accessibility for people with disabilities
- Provision of safety and security with limited hazards/risks
- Sufficient space to accommodate support services and emergency situations
- Impact of activities at the venue on local environment
- Availability of adequate parking facilities
- Sufficient room to accommodate overspill of crowd
- Adequate road access during wet weather conditions

Site Plan

The site plan is a map which shows the location of the event venue in relation to other important landmarks close by. It helps in planning and managing events. The site plan may be analysed during the planning phase to identify any conflict or problems before being finalised. It can be a valuable resource to help stakeholders plan their own activities given that some may not have the opportunity to inspect the site in person. Workers may also find the site plan useful in assisting them to set up instruments and other facilities. A site plan is essential for quickly locating areas of incidents in order that casualties might receive rapid treatment.

Things to consider when creating a site plan:

- It is important to set out the plan in grid format for ease of use. Including landmarks and the surrounding roads will make it easy to identify venue layout
- Use a numbering system to identify facilities and amenities such as toilets, first aid locations, entrances and exits, etc.
- The plan should have a legend to explain all symbols
- Access routes for various categories of people such as guests, artists, staff, emergency crew and others should be clearly identified

Other items to include in a good site plan are:

- the surrounding area
- all entrances and exits
- emergency access routes
- paths used by vehicles
- paths for pedestrians only
- parking
- stage location
- seating arrangements
- entertainment sites
- security and police locations
- first-aid posts
- 'chill-out' areas (safe and quiet rest areas)
- lost kids/property
- drinking water sites
- liquor outlets

- approved liquor consumption areas
- non-alcohol (dry) areas
- toilet facilities
- communication centre/command post
- fire extinguishers
- refuse containers
- public telephones
- media points (TV and radio)

Event Promoting and Ticketing

Undertaking activities to promote events is essential to their success. Promotional strategies via various media outlets can generate much interest in the event and encourage the target audience to participate. Well-crafted messages detailing the purpose of the event and the provision of entertainment, transportation, food, facilities for packing, and direction of the venue, etc., can contribute immensely to its overall success. The design of tickets should help manage people's arrival, and the manner of allocating places at the venue can also serve as a means of controlling crowd size and movement.

Tickets can also be used to provide other relevant information. Other sources of information to provide in addition to what has been provided on the tickets may include the use of maps and brochures to convey information on all services at the venue, health and safety advice etc.

Signage

Signs to direct participants while at the event must be clear and strategically placed for the information to be easily read. Signs may be used to indicate the location of toilet facilities, bars, no-smoking zones, and first-aid kit, etc.

Participants need to have this information before entering the venue to avoid conflicts or congestion which can occur after the event if the information has not been provided in advance.

Transportation

Transportation plans for the event must consider all aspects of providing effective public transportation at affordable prices for the participants. The cost of transport might be included in the ticket price to encourage the use of public transport, and all other relevant information such as parking facilities should be communicated to all participants in advance.

There should also be contingency plans to deal with issues such as wet weather, a late ending, or cancellation of the event.

Noise

Care must be taken to manage noise levels from the equipment, instruments and people present at the event. The event manager must consult the local Council to discuss issues relating to noise; the expected noise levels and the time restrictions should be established, especially with regard to outdoor events.

Weather

The prevailing weather conditions usually determine the selection of time and date to host outdoor events. Outdoor events require the provision of water and shelter throughout the event. The event management team must obtain up-to-date weather and storm forecasts to help them devise adequate contingency plans to deal with the impact of these phenomena on the crowd when the weather takes a turn for the worse. Storms and lightning strikes may cause panic and structural damage and result in cancellation of the event. Contingency plans help to deal with these undesirable occurrences.

Information Centre Communication

The site plan or map should clearly indicate the location of the information centre which is the hub providing comprehensive information about the event. Information centres should be manned by highly knowledgeable and friendly staff. The information supplied contributes to minimising uncertainty and confusion amongst the guests. It is important to have good communications among staff and between the staff and people attending the event at all times to keep everyone updated and informed throughout the event.

Food

The provision of food at events is essential because it contributes to a positive mood and reduces the effects of alcohol consumption. Food also serves as an additional source of income for event managers. Having food stalls close to drinking areas will prevent drinkers from obstructing non-drinking guests at other areas of the venue.

Water

Sufficient quantities of clean, easily-accessible and free water should be provided during summer months at outdoor events. Bottled water should also be provided for those who wish to purchase it.

Lighting and Power

Ambient lighting should be provided at venues and at exits; corridors and other critical areas should be well-lit to enable guests to find their way about. Emergency power systems such as battery packs or generators must be provided in the event of power failure to power the main lights and public address system to direct guests to the correct assembly points.

Toilets

An adequate number of toilets must be provided and, where necessary, portable units as well. All toilet locations should be:

- Marked for easy identification
- Well-lit
- Regularly serviced
- Properly located for service vehicles to gain access
- Accessible to people with disabilities
- Designed with disposal units for sharp objects to protect children
- Available throughout the duration of the event
- Appropriate to the type of audience expected

Also include the toilet locations on the site map to make it easy for guests to locate them.

Entry and Exit Details

To avoid congestion at the exit and entry points of the event and to maintain a positive atmosphere, the event manager should consider the following:

- large crowds
- adequate staff
- space for bag and identification checks
- rapid response to problems
- wet weather provisions
- clear venue information to assist patrons to move to specific locations
- identifiable drop-off and pick-up points
- Separate entrances and exits for entertainers and staff. Gates should be opened early enough to allow all patrons to enter the venue before the entertainment starts

Security

The event manager must carry out a security assessment to determine the likely security scenarios that could occur during the event. The level of security to provide will, of course, depend on the nature of the event. However, most events require key security provisions for cash asset protection, crowd control and general public safety. Security personnel should maintain good and active communications with the police, event manager and emergency services. Security personnel must maintain a proactive and professional attitude which helps to avoid confrontations with guests and creates a positive experience for them. The use of a central command post is more suitable for large events. Central command

operations require the appointment of someone to coordinate the activities of the police and emergency services from a single central command office.

Another security arrangement that should be made is to provide information about prohibited items to participants well in advance of the start of the event. A thorough search of jackets, bags etc. should be conducted to ensure that prohibited items do not find their way into the venue for the purposes of crime. Security personnel are expected to seize all prohibited items from all participants. Sometimes the confiscation of items creates ill feeling; there is hence the option to ask the person to return the item to his/her car, albeit losing his/her place in the queue. Alternatively, the security guards might take the item, tag it, and return it to the owner after the event.

First Aid and Medical Services

First-aid kits and facilities should be easily accessible by participants. The first-aid personnel must know the details of the security personnel, the event manager, and the working staff in order to contact them in the event of an accident. Event staff might be asked to patrol the venue to identify certain vulnerable people, such as intoxicated persons, and help them to the first-aid facility for assistance.

Emergency Procedure

It is essential to have an evacuation plan in place and to provide emergency service personnel, the police and all staff with a copy of it. The event manager is also expected to provide forced-entry tools at the site.

Keeping Documents

The event manager is entrusted with the role of keeping essential documents using a well-organised filing system. The documents are kept for insurance and legal reasons. A well-maintained and orderly filing system can be used to check the status of permits required for the hosting of events. A good filing system provides an easy way to retrieve insurance documents when dealing with insurance claims. In the event of a lawsuit against the event management company, the event manager who has maintained well-documented files of event records will find it quite easy to find the right documents to defend his/her company's position. Besides these benefits, proper record-keeping makes it easier to plan similar events in the future by using the documents as guidelines.

Documents to Keep

Types of documents that the event manager should keep include permits, tickets, contracts, policies, records of meetings, correspondence, promotional materials, and records of incidents. Members of the event's organising committee, who have been selected to take records of activities during the event, will need to submit reports to the person responsible for compiling the master file for the whole event.

Event Management Plan (template)

This is a guide to the basic aspects that should be included in an event management plan

A. Event Rationale

Why is the event being conducted?

B. Event Summary

Name of event:	
Venue/location:	
Date/s:	
Time/s:	
Contact Person*:	
Position:	
Ph:	
Mobile:	
Fax:	
Email:	
Website:	
Mailing address:	

*A list with contact details of all involved in the event, e.g., committee members, stallholders, entertainment, etc., should be prepared and attached.

Event description (20 words or less)

Event vision/mission statement/positioning, e.g. local, regional, national

Event theme

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Core activities of the event (attach event programme)

1.
2.
3.

Event strategic long-term objectives, e.g., branding and promoting local produce

1.
2.
3.

Event operational short-term objectives, e.g. no. of visitors, profit levels, and increase in visitors' spending

1.
2.
3.

C. Event Organisation

Name of the event's sponsoring organisation/s

Event Committee: names of committee members, organisations represented, tasks and responsibilities assigned to each member. If the committee is yet to be finalised, list the skill mix that will be required of the committee (see the event planning process and human resource management)

What strategy is being used to involve local businesses?

Business/council/community involvement/support (e.g., complementary business promotions, in-kind support, and commitment) Attach copies of letters of support.

Description of volunteers' management approach, e.g., recruitment and training (see the human resource management module)

D. Event Attendees

Target markets (e.g., families, locals, previous attendees and visitors)

1.
2.
3.

Marketing objectives for each target market listed above (e.g., attract additional attendees). This relates to event operational strategies in section A.

1.
2.
3.

Marketing and promotional strategies to achieve each target market objective (e.g., ticket pricing and which TV, radio, and/or print media are being used to reach the target market)

1.
2.
3.

E. Event Funding (if applicable)

Funding strategy for current year

Funding strategy for future years (if the event takes place on a yearly basis)

Sponsorship policy (attach sponsorship prospectus)

List Potential Sponsors

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.
8.
9.
10.

Strategy for approaching potential sponsors

Other revenue sources (e.g., merchandising, stallholder fees, ticket prices, and the expected number of attendees)

Draft budget (income and expenses) for next two years (see the event budgeting section in the module)

INCOME Year 1

Source	In-kind contributions (£ Value)	Cash contributions (£)

Total		

EXPENDITURE Year 1

Description	In-kind contributions (£ Value)	Cash contributions (£)
Total		

INCOME Year 2

Source	In-kind contributions (£ Value)	Cash contributions (£)
Total		

EXPENDITURE Year 2

Description	In-kind contributions (£ Value)	Cash contributions (£)
Total		

F. Event Support Services

Site plan - attach

Facilities plans, e.g. for people with disabilities, additional toilets, parking, water and electricity, etc.

Legal requirements (e.g. insurance, risk management plans, and permits from the local council)

Waste management plan

Parking plan

Transport plan

G. Evaluation

Financial measures of success, e.g., profit

1.
2.
3.

Other performance indicators, e.g., the length of time the visitors will be staying and the success of the marketing strategies

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

Methods for measuring performance indicators, e.g., data collection through surveys (businesses, attendees and stallholders), sponsor feedback and market research, etc.

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

Expected outcomes

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

Actual outcomes (to be completed after the event)

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

What will change when/if the event occurs again? This should be based on debrief(s) with stakeholders/staff and feedback from surveys, etc.

Further Reading:

- ✓ *Successful Event Management: A Practical Handbook*
by Anton Shone and Bryn Parry, 2004
- ✓ *Event Management: A Professional and Developmental Approach*
by Greg Damster and Dimitri Tassiopoulos, 2009