



# UNIT-3

## How to Plan an Event?

### 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 3

### How to Plan an Event?

The success or failure of any event management plans 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 someone who is 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 Personnel, a public relations officer, operations coordinator, master of ceremonies, and an accountant, etc. Apart from working with his team of assistants, it is expected that the event manager will 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 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 measure 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 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 Successful and Safe Event

There are a lot of incentives available to motivate the event manager to coordinate activities to successfully execute the event management plan. Firstly, he or she can receive high economic 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 afforded to add to the experience of the event manager, an experience which is best to acquire on the field on 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 event management plan include the following:

- Ñ It ensures efficient movement of people and equipment and machines at the site of the event
- Ñ 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
- Ñ The plan serves as a useful record of all planning measures and provides evidence of responsibilities of the event manager and his team

- Ñ It assists in providing a quick response to any unforeseen incident and creates a secure environment for all participants.
- Ñ It makes it easy to get support from all stakeholders
- Ñ The event management plan helps to reduce the stress levels of event managers
- Ñ It helps to secure long-term sponsorship deals from corporate and local businesses
- Ñ There is low public liability since measures have been formulated in the plan to reduce accidents
- Ñ The event management plan also sustains business due to strong support from participants and the indigenous 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; whether outdoor or indoor or a combination of the two. This information about the venue will help 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 clean up to return it to the 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 have an updated and accurate contact detail to enable him 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 have in-depth understanding of how the event is going to unfold. This 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 to 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 18-25 years or other age ranges, depending on the nature of the event.

## Police Contact

Event managers need to 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 which is commensurate with the event management plan. The event manager must ensure that he 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 lawsuit resulting from liabilities relating to workplace accidents during the event. It is therefore advisable for the event manager to insure himself and his company against all legal action and also secure insurance to cover all properties and equipment for the event. Equally important is the need to have available a register to record all incidents resulting from organising the event either before the event, during the event or after the event.

## Health and Safety Permits

Local authorities require event organisers to obtain all necessary permits before hosting public events. Permits such as road closure permit, fire permit, food vending permit, health and safety permit etc., may be secured from 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 ahead of time to enable them have 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 bordering on the development of the Event Management Plan. But the stakeholders have to be informed in advance to enable them prepare adequately and to make significant contribution to the development of the plan. People who will be affected by the event are more appreciative when contacted in advance and would generally be willing to give their support to make the event successful.

## Planning Meeting

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

## Briefing before Event

This is also known as the pre-event briefing. It requires having discussions about critical aspects of the event with all stakeholders to clarify issues concerning any particular dimension of the event before the start of event. At this meeting, the participants need to talk about issues relating to the timetables, security, communication, and emergency procedures, etc.

## Debriefing after Event

Debriefing involves the organisers and stakeholder discussing what transpired during the event. This should be carried out immediately 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 needs to take the following into consideration:

- Ñ Good accessibility all round
- Ñ It should enhance the free movement of people and vehicles
- Ñ Accessibility for people with disabilities
- Ñ Provision of safety and security with limited hazards/risks
- Ñ Sufficient space to accommodate support services and emergency situations
- Ñ Impact of activities at the venue on local environment
- Ñ Availability of adequate parking facilities
- Ñ Sufficient room to accommodate overspill of crowd
- Ñ 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 assist stakeholders to plan their own activities given that some may not have the opportunity to go to the site to have a look. Workers may also find the site plan useful in assisting them to set up instrument and other facilities. A site plan is very essential to quickly locating areas of incidents for the casualties to receive rapid treatments.

Things to consider when creating a site plan:

- Ñ 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
- Ñ Use a numbering system to identify facilities and amenities such as toilets, first aid location, entrances, and exits, etc.
- Ñ The plan should have a legend to explain all symbols
- Ñ Access routes for different 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:

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

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

## Event Promoting and Ticketing

Undertaking activities to promote events is essential to the success of the event. Promotional strategies via various media outlets can generate much interest in the event and encourage the target audience to participate. Well-crafted messages, which details 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 the 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 using 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, drinking 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 can be included in the ticket price to encourage the use of public transport and all other relevant pertinent information such as parking facilities communicated to all participants ahead of time.

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

## Noise

Care must be taken to manage noise levels of equipment, instrument and people present at the event. The event manager must consult the local Council to discuss issues relating to noise to know the level expected and the time restrictions to comply with especially with regards to outdoor events.

## Weather

The prevailing weather condition usually determines the selection of time and date to host outdoor events. Outdoor events require the provision of water and shed throughout the event. The event management team needs to obtain up-to-date weather and storm forecasts to help 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 used to provide 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 guest. It is important to have good communication among staff and between the staff and people attending the event at all time to keep everyone updated and informed throughout the event.

## Food

Providing food at events is a must because it contributes towards a positive mood and reduces the effect of alcohol consumption. Food also serves as additional source of income for event managers. Having food stalls close to drinking areas will prevent drinkers from getting in the way of non-drinking guests at other areas of the venue.

## Water

Sufficient quantity of clean, easily-accessible and free water should be provided during summer months at outdoor events. Also provide bottled water for people who would want to purchase them.

## Lighting and Power

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

## Toilets

Adequate number of toilets need to be provided and where necessary portable units in addition. All toilet locations should be:

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

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

## Entry and Exit Details

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

- Ñ large crowds
- Ñ adequate staff
- Ñ space for bag and identification checks
- Ñ quick response to problems
- Ñ wet weather provisions
- Ñ clear venue information to assist patrons to move to a specific location
- Ñ identifiable drop-off and pick-up points
- Ñ Separate entrances and exits for entertainers and staff. Gates should be opened allowing sufficient time for all patrons to enter the venue before the entertainment starts

## Security

The event manager needs to carry out a security assessment to determine the likely security scenarios that could play out 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 communication with the police, event manager and emergency services. Security personnel need to maintain a proactive and professional attitude which helps to avoid confrontations with guests and create a positive experience for the guests. Having a central command post is more suited to large events. Central

command operations require choosing 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 participant well in advance of the start of the event. Thorough search of jackets, bags etc., need to be conducted to ensure prohibited items do not find their way into the venue to be used by someone to commit a crime. Security personnel are expected to seize all prohibited items from all participants. Sometimes confiscation of items creates hard feelings, so there is the option to ask the person to return the item to his car and lose his place in the queue or the security guards may 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 have the details of the security personnel, the event manager, and the working staff to contact them in the event of an accident. Event staff may be asked to go around the venue to identify certain vulnerable people such as intoxicated persons and help them to the first aid facility for consultation.

### **Emergency Procedure**

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

### **Keeping Document**

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 needed to host 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-document files of event records would find it quite easy to reach for the right documents to defend his 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.

### **Document to Keep**

Some types of documents, which would be important for the event manager to 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, would 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, stall holders, and 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


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

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**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)

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What strategy is being used to get local businesses involved?

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

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

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**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 is being used to reach target market)

1.
2.
3.

**E. Event Funding (if applicable)**

Funding strategy for current year

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

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Sponsorship policy (attach sponsorship prospectus)

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**List Potential Sponsors**

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

Strategy for approaching potential sponsors

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Other revenue sources (e.g., merchandising, stall holder fees, ticket prices, and the amount of expected attendees)

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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 (£)
<b>Total</b>		

**EXPENDITURE Year 1**

Description	In-kind contributions (£ Value)	Cash contributions (£)
<b>Total</b>		

**INCOME Year 2**

Source	In-kind contributions (£ Value)	Cash contributions (£)
<b>Total</b>		

**EXPENDITURE Year 2**

Description	In-kind contributions (£ Value)	Cash contributions (£)
<b>Total</b>		

**F. Event Support Services**

Site plan - attach

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

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

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Waste management plan

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Parking plan

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Transport plan

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**G. Evaluation**

**Financial measures of success, e.g., profit**

1.
2.
3.

Other performance indicators, e.g., the length of how long the visitors will bestaying and the success of marketing strategies

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

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

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

Expected outcomes

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

Actual outcomes (to be completed after event)

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

What will change when/if the event occurs again? Based upon 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