

LESSON 1 SCOPE AND NATURE OF EVENT MANAGEMENT

DEFINITION

What is an event? An event is an occurrence, usually a special occasion. It can be either “a thing that just happens”; or a “planned social or public occasion”. An event is not always planned, but in the world of event management, the more planning that goes into an event, the smoother the event will run. How many people turn up to parties, festivals, cinema openings and other events without really considering just how much planning and organisation has been required to put the event together? The organisation of events is the role of the event manager. An event manager may have that as their specific job or they may do event management as part of their tasks and duties, but either way planning an event can require a lot of organisation and time.



VARIABLES

Events are commonly short-lived – they have a beginning and an ending, they are impermanent, finite: a moment in time. Events are also unique; each event has characteristics that apply only to it, and to no other event. Each (individual) event will have specific requirements and present with differing problems. Even events that are recurring will differ each time they are held; they will often have different management teams or staff, or differing venues, budgets and expectations, or undergo changes due to what was learnt from the previous event. Successful event management takes careful planning, flexibility and the ability to control and steer a project to meet the requirements of each unique event.

Organising an event involves making a lot of different decisions and choices.

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Suggested Tasks

- Write down your own definition of event management.
 - Review what you wrote the next day.
 - Did your thinking change at all?
- Is your definition of event management broad enough?
 - Consider other tasks that event management might consider.
- Consider the job of event manager. What does the job entail?
 - Is the job different for different types of events?

Is this definition broad enough or do events cover more than this?

Note: *These tasks are provided as a guide to additional research which some students may want to pursue on their own.*

It requires understanding of the basic fundamentals and variables associated with an event. This includes practical considerations such as:

- Who are the stakeholders? (That is the people behind the event or commissioning it). What are their expectations? Who will be financing it? How actively are the stakeholders involved in the running of the event?
- What is the scope and nature of the event? Is it large or small is it recurring or a one-off? What is the event trying to achieve? What is its end purpose i.e. why is it being held? Who is it for? What will happen at it? What is its theme?
- How much money and what other resources will be needed? Are these realistic to the event and readily available? Will it have special resource requirements e.g. signposting, audio visual equipment, public address system, changing rooms, photographers, special security etc.?
- Where will it be held? Is the venue suited to the event? Is it accessible to the disabled? Does it have all the required facilities e.g. kitchens and kitchen equipment, tables, chairs and so on, or will some things need to be hired?
- Will it need caterers?
- What is the event's schedule: how much time is there for organisation? When will it be held? How long it will run for?

- Who will attend – and how many? (Sometimes this can only be estimated i.e. in the case of large community events). Is there a guest list? A seating plan? A dress code?
- How will it be promoted?



TYPES OF EVENTS

There are a few reasons why you might want to classify events:

- An event company may want to subdivide the work (e.g. one department runs corporate events such as exhibitions and another runs events such as fashion or art shows, sports events etc. and another runs private events such as parties and weddings).
- A new business might want to identify niche markets they can target or concentrate on a specific type of event (e.g. weddings).
- The event company may offer differing levels of management i.e. full management, partial management or just act as an overseer - depending on the type of event and client.
- The event company may promote the event according to the event's classification.

Events can be classified in all types of ways: according to size, purpose, discipline, whether private or public; or just about any other criteria you might think of. Consider what is the purpose of the event? For example:

- A private event is organised for people who have some sort of relationship with each other. The purpose may be a celebration (e.g. wedding or birthday), social (a workplace Christmas party) or something else.
- A public event will invite anyone to attend, irrespective of whether they do or do not know each other. This may or may not be commercial. Fees may be charged; but that might be purely to cover costs.
- A commercial event differs because fees are charged, but over and above what is needed to cover costs. A commercial event aims to make a financial profit.
- Charitable events are different again; aiming to raise money; but the financial benefit is for a charity, rather than for any personal gain.
- Social events are ones that are organised to foster social interaction; or to enhance a social group, small or large.
- Networking events are about developing professional or other contacts with people who have shared interests
- Some events are called “special events” because they are organised to satisfy some “special” well-defined goal. They include rituals (e.g. christenings), presentations (e.g. graduation), re-enactments (e.g. on a national day), etc.
- Some events are called “mega events” because they are on a scale that impacts nationally or even internationally (e.g. Olympic Games, World Fairs).
- When an event becomes very strongly associated with the place where they are held it may be called a “hallmark event” for example: Mardi Gras in Rio, Munich Beer Fest, Chelsea Flower Show.

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Suggested Task

If you are planning to work within event management, it can be useful to research events in the town or region where you live.

Consider:

Events organised by public bodies such as government authorities and clubs.

Consider who organises these; whether they are paid to do so, and whether there may be business or employment opportunities for you.

■ Large events that attract significant interest and participants are often called “major events”. If they are on a scale which is significant enough to attract tens of thousands of attendees and widespread media coverage, they are usually going to be considered major. The grand final

of a national football competition might be a major event; but unlike hallmark events, it might move from one city to another each year, and unlike a mega event, interest in the event may be far less once you move beyond the national borders.



Large events may include:

- A concert
- An AGM
- An excursion, tour, a road rally
- A weekend market, school fete,
- An art exhibition
- An agricultural show or regional fair
- A trade show
- A conference
- A convention
- A seminar
- A festival
- A sporting event
- A race
- A celebration
- A reception
- A learning event (workshop, seminar, course, symposium)
- A fund raising event
- A celebratory event (public or private)
- Civic occasions
- Inauguration, induction and graduation events
- Launches i.e. product, book, business, project, political campaign, etc.