

What is the latest in the Event Industry

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1. Professionalisation and the growth of risk management. Each year the risk management becomes more important. Governments are introducing new occupational health and safety codes all around the world. In one region there are now "event" inspectors whose job is to inspect the company to "enable verification of current work systems and assessment of baseline compliance" for events and festivals. So if you want to get ready for this – understand and use risk management.

2. Growth in number of companies. The term "event company" is becoming more common. A friend in Dubai mentioned that there are over 300 companies that list themselves as event managers. Mind you this may be only one person working part time. However if you were to check just five years ago, I doubt if you would have found more than a dozen.

What does that mean for you? You have to work smarter, understand efficient modern management and need to be aware of the latest trends.

3. Tourism and the genuine experience.

I have now had numerous inquiries from Tourism bodies on how to differentiate their 'product'. There is a looming problem. In the recent past Government tourism authorities have simply bought in the BIG event such as the car race, tennis, and powerboat racing in the belief that it will attract spending. After a number of years, the Governments are now questioning the net economic impact of these events. The Grand Prix, for example, was shown to cost one region, \$16 million dollars. At the same time the question arises "Does it make our destination attractive and different from other destinations?" Product differentiation is important in destination planning. The solution to this problem is for the city or region to create and develop their own festival and events. A unique event produces product differentiation and a net economic and cultural benefit.

4. Events as the non interrupted message. Perhaps the most asked for workshop in my field is for sponsorship. "How do we get more sponsors?" This interest in sponsorship is often looking for money for nothing. In actual fact most large companies are trying to find events to sponsor. They know that associating their brand with an event is far more effective than advertising. Their normal channels of advertising such as TV, radio and print are becoming less and less effective. It is estimated that the average person sees over 2000 advertising messages a day. At an event, this number of advertisements is reduced to only a few and the brand is associated with having a good time. Most advertising interrupts us. It annoys us. But sponsoring an event does not interrupt - it associates. Red Bull is associated with the thrill of watching an air race, for example. After the event the audience is thankful to Red Bull for allowing the event to happen. As Jim Beam's brand manager says " For us its pretty simple the V8 Series is one of the key sports that our target market loves"

Therefore, what you as an event organiser, have to do is make your event attractive to the target market. There is nothing more attractive than a high quality, well run event that attracts the right market and will be remembered for many years. That is how you get sponsors – they come to you.

5. Hi tech /low tech

Corporate events swing back and forth between hi tech with lasers, with jet flyovers and three D imaging, and the real experience. When I talk to event directors I often ask what was their favourite event. The answer is invariably a simple and real experience. In one case it was a children's choir with candles singing at night as the guests arrived.

High Tech does not mean high success, sometimes a very simple statement on a human level can be as effective.

6. Events as a part of strategic planning

Perhaps the most promising trend in events is that Government and companies are taking them more seriously as method to achieve their objectives. They now regard events as part of their planning strategy. Therefore they need assess events and support the right kind of events. Each country now has a Tourism Authority , part of whose job it is to develop events and festivals. Both Abu Dhabi and Dubai have these events development units. Therefore, if your event meets certain criteria for support, you may find that the Government can help you. This can be anything from assisting with the necessary permissions to financial support. The key to this is to understand the reason Governments want to support events. In most cases they have a series of objectives. The event is measured against those objectives and the level of support is decided. Find out about this!