

ABSTRAKT

Abstrakt česky

Diplomová práce se zaměřuje hlavně na teoretické zpracování special events jako jednoho z nástrojů marketingových komunikací, který více a více získává na důležitosti. V teoretické části popisuje, co jsou to special events, jaký je jejich dopad na okolní prostředí, co znamená marketing v oblasti special events a co vše je třeba udělat při produkci nějaké akce. V části praktické práce popisuje australskou společnost AEC, její formy komunikace a její special events.

Abstrakt ve světovém jazyce

The thesis is mainly concentrated on theoretical elaboration of special events. Because special events are one of the marketing communication tools which is getting more and more importance. In the theoretical part it is described what the special events are, what its impact is, what marketing means in a special events sphere and what the need is when production an event. In a practical part an Australian company AEC is described, its communication forms and its special events.

I hereby declare that I have worked out the graduation thesis SPECIAL EVENTS independently. The bibliography and sources are cited in the inclosed bibliography list.

In Sydney 6 July 2005

Name.....

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INTRODUCTION

Special Events have increased rapidly in recent years as the corporate and public sectors have realised their power to build profile, promote messages and increase sales. Special events are a great medium to gain exposure and connect with a target market. Event marketing can put you in-touch with your audience in a more direct and personal way compared to other promotional campaigns. Along with advertising and public relations, Special Events are now seen as part of the marketing mix used by most organisations to promote their goods and services.

Their increasing use has given rise to an industry of Special Event professionals and support services. From the point of view of a company or organisation, it is an event outside its normal programs or activities that is consciously planned and undertaken in order to achieve particular goals or objectives. These objectives might include: to launch new products or services, to promote sales, to develop client relationships, to reward staff or agents – the list is as long as the imagination.

To the Event Manager, the Special Event is a challenge to create the right mix of content, presentation, venue etc to achieve the goals of the client in the most cost effective and impactful manner. To do this effectively requires a range of skills and attributes - imagination, design, coordination, and the ability to lead a team and to keep track of detail. Designing and producing an event – whether it be a meeting, corporate event, fundraising gala, conference, convention, incentive or other special event – has been compared to directing a movie but is actually more like a live stage production. It is a high-wire act without the safety nets. Once our event starts there are no second chances. It's done in one take and there are no dress rehearsals. We can't yell "cut" and reshoot the scene. We are simply not able to predict the outcome – as we can from a movie script – of how your guests and suppliers will interact and react. But we can plan, prepare and then be prepared for the unexpected. Never forget Murphy's Law: what can go wrong, will go wrong.

Although we are not creating an Oscar-winning movie, we are creating something that may be a lifetime memory for someone. Any event, whether it's for 50 or more than 2,000, needs to be as detailed and as scripted as any film production, and so does the budget. Budgets for meetings, corporate events, product launches, conferences, conventions,

incentives and special events can go from tens of thousands to hundreds of thousands of dollars and even exceed half a million dollars.

It was a great fact of life to write this thesis. For me even the theoretical project became practical because I was having so many educational meetings with top professionals, who shared their experiences with me, got so much useful information from many books and have learnt really a lot. That is why I spend so much time writing the theoretical part –I did not want to leave much of these useful facts.

The practical part describes the biggest Australian educational company for international students. Describes their communication and an event which we working on at this moment.

I. THEORETICAL PART

1 MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS

1.1 Defining marketing communications

1.1.1 Definition (Wikipedia 2005)

Marketing communications are all the communications between the organization and all other parties. Part of the wider academic research area of marketing, it encompasses all the traditional forms of promotion including advertising, sales promotion, personal selling, public relations and direct marketing. But it aims to be broader than this. It includes all points of contact between the organization and other parties. It includes everything from the way the telephone is answered, to the way the fleet of vehicles is maintained and used, to the quality of envelopes used.

No business can operate in every market to satisfy everyone's needs. Instead, a company succeeds when it target a market of those people most likely to be interested in its marketing program. A target audience is a group of people who receives marketing messages and has significant potential to

1.1.2 Persuasion and information

All marketing communication tries to persuade the target audience to change an attitude or behavior or provides information. Marketers can persuade in many ways. They can provide information, reasons, and incentives. They can also listen actively to the concerns of people in the market

1.1.3 Objectives

All marketing communications is goal directed. Marketing communications objectives are the goals of the communication program. Generally, those objectives are to create brand awareness, deliver information, educate the market, and advance a positive image for the brand or company. The ultimate goal of the marketing communication strategy is to help sell the product to keep the company in business.

1.1.4 Contact points

Successful marketing requires managing and coordinating marketing messages at every contact point the brand or company has with its target audience. Contact points can range from the store where the customer see the product, the hot-line the customer calls for information, or the living room where the TV airs a commercial. Marketers can plan formal contacts, such as an advertisement, however, many contacts are unplanned. The unplanned contacts can communicate informal message that audiences infer. For instance, a store's design can send a message that it retails inexpensive products. Or an unhelpful salesperson can send a message that the company doesn't care about customer service. To persuade audiences most effectively, the company must think about all contact points as important in marketing program. Successful marketing requires that messages at every contact point work together to persuade consumers.

1.2 Marketing communication tools

1.2.1 Advertising

Defining advertising

Advertising is any paid form of nonpersonal presentation and promotion of ideas, goods, and services by an identified sponsor to a targeted audience and delivered primarily through the mass media. The American Marketing Association has a more expanded definition of advertising: "Paid, nonpersonal communication through various media by business firms, nonprofit organizations, and individuals who are in some way identified in the advertising message and who hope to inform and/or persuade members of a particular audience. Advertising includes the communication of products, services, institutions, and ideas."

The purpose of advertising depends on your vantage point – that is, whether you are a marketer or consumer. Advertising helps identify the meaning and role of products for consumers by providing information about brands, companies, and organizations. To most business managers and marketers, advertising helps sell products and builds company and brand reputation.

The Strengths and Weaknesses of Advertising

Some advertising is more effective than others in certain situations, and some types of advertising seem to work better with certain types of products. Some consumers will not buy in spite of extensive advertising, and some will buy without any advertising. Many other marketing issues may affect product and institutional advertising success, such as the price of the product and the convenience with which you can buy it. The effect of specific ads may also vary widely from consumer to consumer and from time to time.

Advertising's primary strength is that it reaches a large mass audience to intensify broad-based demand for a product. It can build brand awareness, create long-term brand images and brand positions, and increase brand knowledge effectively. Advertising also serves as a reminder of product or brand with which consumer has had a positive experience. Finally, advertising provides message repetition, an important factor in memorability.

Advertising has limits, however. Consumers often perceive it as intrusive. In turn, consumers may avoid advertising by turning page, changing the channel, muting the sound, or using other technology to screen out an ad. Because of large number of competing ads in most media, advertising is also perceived as cluttering the media environment, particularly on television where consumers complain about the number of commercials. Another problem with advertising is the opposite of one of its strengths – it may reach a large audience, but many of those audience members are likely to be nonusers of the advertised product. As a result, advertising wastes a large number of impressions.

In the final analysis advertising is only valuable to business if it creates easy consumer identification of the advertised brand or institution. Although advertising may help consumers identify those brands they wish to avoid because of bad reports or experiences. Ideally, the continued advertising of a particular brand or institution over several years is an implied warranty to the consumer that the product has met the test of quality and that is why it is still being used. The measure of success for any product is repeat purchase.

1.2.2 Sales promotion

Defining sales promotion

Originally, sales promotion was used as a support tool that was seen as less important than advertising and personal selling in the marketing communication mix. This perspective is no longer valid. Today, sales promotion can support or complement other marketing communication tools, or it may serve as the main tool.

The Council of Sales Promotion Agencies defines sales promotion as a marketing communication tool that offers sales-related incentives to generate a specific, measurable action or response for a product or service. Sales promotions may be targeted at any or all of the consumer and trade audiences. The trade audience retailers and wholesalers, distributors, and brokers in the distribution channel. The trade audience can also refer to the sales force and other employees.

The Strengths and Weaknesses of Sales Promotion

Sales promotion techniques can accomplish certain communication goals that the other elements in the marketing communication mix cannot. For instance, sales promotion can turn around a sales trend in the short term. It can help introduce a new product, reinforce advertising images and messages, and generate positive brand experiences among buyers at many stages of the consumer decision-making process. It can also provide new channels for reaching audience segments, such in-store merchandising materials and special events.

Research suggests, however, that sales promotion cannot accomplish certain goals. For example, sales promotion cannot create a brand's image, change negative attitudes toward a product, or reverse a long-term declining sales trend.

1.2.3 Public relations

Defining public relations

Public relations is a staff management function that manages the relationships between an organization and the public in which it affects and is affected by. It is essentially a function

that acts as a bridge to different stakeholders (different from stockholders) of an organization that the organization depends on for survival, such as the community, government, employee, board of directors, media and investor publics.

Public relations (PR) is the aspect of mass-marketing that deals with the control or manipulation of public opinion, through processes that control the presentation of the image and message presented by a client. Public relations agents or "officials" make use of media to convey messages to the public on behalf of a private client, with the intention of influencing public opinion and action. Organizations that seek to profit from the mass market, may view the public relations as a valuable aspect of an overall business and marketing strategy.

The Strengths and Weaknesses of Public Relations

Public relations has a number of strengths. First, public relations targets and manages relationship with important stakeholders. Second, public relations can reach difficult-to-reach audiences, such as opinion leaders and upscale consumers. Many of these people devote time to reading publications and watching or listening to new programs, but they are uninterested in advertising, are highly likely to dispose of direct mail, and have assistants who screen out sales calls. Publicity presented through the news media can more effectively reach this group.

Third, public relations professionals, ever-sensitive to public opinion, can advise clients and companies on the implications of trends and corporate activities.

Fourth, public relations specialists can present the company as a good citizen through careful relationship management and monitoring of an organization's reputation and corporate image. Fifth, they can plan how to handle crises, thereby minimizing negative effects of the organization's reputation. Sixth, public relations offers a business more message flexibility compared with advertising and sales promotion because the laws governing news releases are less strict than for those regulating advertising of all forms.

Seventh, PR adds credibility and believability because target audiences usually consider news stories to be more objective than other marketing communications that are developed, presented, and paid for by a sponsor. Eighth, public relations breaks through clutter more effectively than other marketing communication area because people are more willing to believe a news message than a commercial message. Finally, public relations is relatively cost-effective because news coverage, if warranted, is free.

Public relations also has three main weaknesses. First is the lack of control over how stories are covered. Business information released to the media may not be used by the press as the company intended, especially because the press has access to other information sources. Second is the inability to control which stories receive coverage. Editors and producers act as “gatekeepers,” which means they decide what gets into the media. If editors or producers feel that a story released by a company does not have enough news value, they do not have to use it. For instance, on a day during which many newsworthy events happen, the business story may not get covered.

Another weakness of public relations is that it is hard to evaluate its effectiveness. PR is monitored in terms of the extent of the media coverage that a story generates, but that does not really measure its impact on public opinion or other stakeholder relationships. In short, the problem is measuring its effect on opinions, as well as on the bottom line.

1.2.4 Direct marketing

Defining direct marketing

Direct marketing is a form of marketing that attempts to send its messages directly to consumers, using "addressable" media, such as mail. Therefore, direct marketing differs from regular advertising in that it does not place its messages on a third party medium, or in the agora, such as a billboard or a radio commercial would. Instead, the marketing of the service or commodity is addressed directly to the consumer.

Direct marketing is attractive to many marketers, because in many cases its effectiveness can be measured directly. For example, if a marketer sends out one million solicitations by mail, and ten thousand customers respond to the promotion, the marketer can say with

some confidence that the campaign led directly to the responses. By contrast, measurement of other media must often be indirect, since there is no direct response from a consumer.

The Strengths and Weaknesses of Direct Marketing

Many marketing communication activities are better done through direct marketing. To begin with, direct marketing is more targeted than indirect marketing. Direct marketers' ability to tailor a list of prospect names combining several characteristics, allows them to carve out new market segments with profit potential.

Because direct marketers can find out so much more about their prospects and customers, direct marketing is able to address these people in very personal terms. Rather than men or women, marketing communicators can talk to old movie buffs, computer game players and tennis fans. Also, every coin spent in direct marketing is measurable. Each call, mailing, and ad contains a call to action that can be counted. This makes direct marketers accountable for every dollar they spend.

Because direct marketers can generate firm numbers that measure the effectiveness of their efforts, it is possible for them to devise accurate head-to-head tests of offers, formats, prices, payment terms, creative approach, and much more – all in relatively small and affordable quantities.

Direct marketing is extremely flexible. This is especially true in direct mail, where there are few constraints on size, color, timing, and format.

Direct marketing has weaknesses, then, in part because too many are not using it correctly due to poor training. Companies that would not dream of running an ad in a trade publication without getting professional help let their in-house trainee design their direct mail piece. Unless direct marketers make the critical changes in strategy, media planning, and creative execution that direct marketing requires, they will fail.

Poorly executed direct marketing creates an environment of distrust. The personalization of direct marketing through sophisticated database is a case in point. People pay attention when marketers call them by name, and they are flattered if marketers know a little bit

about their needs, tastes, and preferences. However, people become upset if they think marketers know too much about them or if marketers seem to be misusing this personal information. The sponsor of such intrusive direct marketing will develop a poor image in the eyes of target audience members.

All too often, direct marketing does not mesh with a company's operations, its distribution systems, communications, research, overall strategy, or even its culture. For example, direct marketers have been part of programs that have failed because they are so successful: catalog companies run out of inventories, costing them not only short-term sales but long-term goodwill or financial firms generate too many leads for their sales people to follow up.

Another common weakness is direct-marketing messages that conflict with other marketing communication messages, especially advertising. Conflicting messages occur because the direct-response marketers are not integrated with other marketing communicators, such as those who do indirect advertising.

1.2.5 Personal selling

Defining personal selling

Personal selling is a marketing communication tool that is used to increase sales directly through personal contact. Though the other marketing communication mix elements contribute to sales, their impact is often indirect. In contrast, the impact of personal selling is direct – in fact, the salesperson's livelihood depends on making sales. The importance of this direct impact is demonstrated by the number of people employed in the personal selling field.

Personal selling is the face-to-face presentation of a product or an idea to a potential customer by a representative of the company or organization. This definition highlights a key difference between personal selling and other marketing communication tools: Personal selling involves one-on-one communication rather than the mass communication that characterizes advertising, sales promotion, and PR. Personal selling also differs from

direct marketing, which uses a nonpersonal media to generate a response. In personal selling, information is presented personally, there is immediate feedback, and adjustments to the message can be made immediately.

The Strengths and Weaknesses of Personal Selling

Undoubtedly, the most significant strength of personal selling is its flexibility. Salespeople can tailor their presentations to fit the needs, motives, and behavior of individual customers. As salespeople see the prospect's reaction to a sales approach, they can immediately adjust as needed.

Personal selling also minimizes wasted effort. Advertisers typically expend time and money to send a mass message about a product to many people outside the target market. In personal selling the sales force pinpoints the target market, makes a contact, and expends effort that has a strong probability of leading to a sale.

Consequently, an additional strength of personal selling is that measuring effectiveness and determining the return on investment are far more straightforward for personal selling than for other marketing communication tools, where recall or attitude change is often the only measurable effect. Another benefit is that a salesperson is in an excellent position to encourage the customer to act.

High cost is the primary disadvantage of personal selling. With increased competition, higher travel and lodging costs, and higher salaries, the cost per sales contact continues to increase.

Another disadvantage of personal selling is the problem of finding and retaining high-quality people. Other weakness is message inconsistency. Many salespeople view themselves as independent from the organization, so they design their own sales techniques, use their own message strategies, and engage in questionable ploys to create a sale.

Consequently, it is difficult to find a unified company or product message within a sales force, or between the sales force and the rest of the marketing communication mix. A final weakness is that sales force members have different levels of motivation.

Salespeople may vary in their willingness to make the desired sales call each day; make service calls that do not lead directly to sales; or use new technology, such as a laptop, e-mail, or the company's website. Finally, overly zealous sales representatives may tread a thin line between ethical and unethical sales techniques. The difference between a friendly lunch and commercial bribery is sometimes blurred.

2 SPECIAL EVENTS

Today, events are central to our culture as perhaps never before. Increases in leisure time and discretionary spending have led to a proliferation of public events, celebrations and entertainment. Governments now support and promote events as part of their strategies for economic development, nation building and destination marketing. Corporations and businesses embrace events as key elements in their marketing strategies and image promotion. The enthusiasm of community groups and individuals for their own interests and passions gives rise to a marvellous array of events on almost every subject and theme imaginable. Events spill out of our newspapers and television screens, occupy much of our time, and enrich our lives.

2.1 Special events as benchmarks for our lives

Since the dawn of time, human beings have found ways to mark important events in their lives: the changing of the seasons, the phases of the moon, and the renewal of life each spring. From the Aboriginal corroboree and the Chinese New Year to the Dionysian rites of ancient Greece and the European carnival tradition of the Middle Ages, myths and rituals have been created to interpret cosmic happenings. To the present day, behind well-known figures such as Old Father Time and Santa Claus lie old myths, archetypes and ancient celebrations. The first Australians used storytelling, dance and song to transmit their culture from generation to generation. Their ceremonies were, and continue to be, important occasions in the life of the community, where cultural meaning is shared and affirmed. Similarly, in most agrarian societies, rituals were developed that marked the coming of the seasons and the sowing and harvesting of crops.

Both in private and in public, people feel the need to mark the important occasions in their lives, and to celebrate milestones. Coming of age, for example, is often marked by a rite of passage, as illustrated by the tribal initiation ceremony, the Jewish bar and bat mitzvahs and the suburban twenty-first birthday.

At the public level, momentous events become the milestones by which people measure their private lives. We may talk about things happening ‘before the new millennium’, in the

same way that an earlier generation talked of marrying ‘before the Depression’ or being born ‘after the War’. Occasional events – the Sydney Olympics and the new millennium – help to mark eras and define milestones.

Even in the high-tech era of global media, when many people have lost touch with the common religious beliefs and social norms of the past, we still need larger social events to mark the local and domestic details of our lives.

2.2 What are special events?

The term special events has been coined to describe specific rituals, presentations, performances or celebrations that are consciously planned and created to mark special occasions or achieve particular social, cultural or corporate goals and objectives. Special events can include national days and celebrations, important civic occasions, unique cultural performances, major sporting fixtures, corporate functions, trade promotions and product launches. It seems at times that special events are everywhere; they have become a growth industry. The field of special events is now so cast that it is impossible to provide a definition that includes all varieties and shades of events. In his groundbreaking work on the typology of events, Getz (1997a) suggests special events are best defined in their context. He offers two definitions, one from the point of view of the event organiser and the other from that of the customer or guest:

1. A special event is a one-time or infrequently occurring event outside normal programs or activities of the sponsoring or organizing body.
2. To the customer or guest, a special event is an opportunity for a leisure, social or cultural experience outside the normal range of choices or beyond everyday experience

Among the attributes that he believes create the social atmosphere are festive spirit, uniqueness, quality, authenticity, tradition, hospitality, theme and symbolism. (Allan, O’Toole, McDonnel, Harris 2005a)

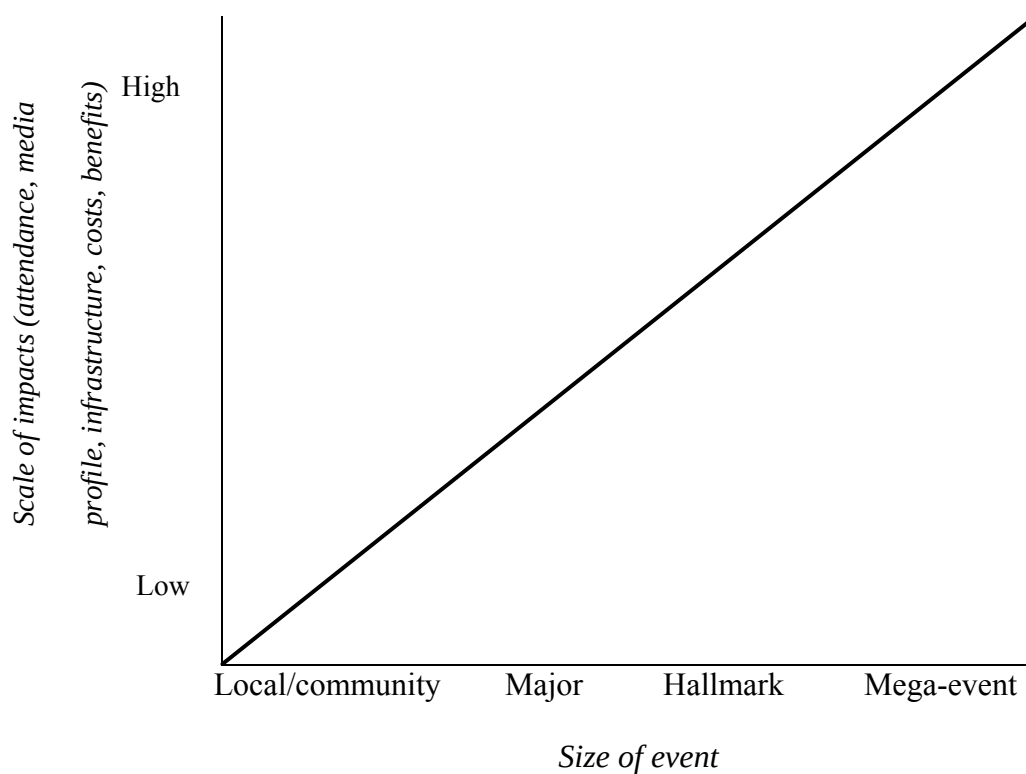
2.3 Types of event

There are many different ways of categorising or grouping events, including by size, form and content, as discussed in the following sections.

2.3.1 Size

Special events often characterized according to their size or scale.

Common categories are mega-events, hallmark events, major events and local/community events, although definitions are not exact and distinctions can be blurred.



Picture 1. Categorisation of events (Source: Allen 2005, p. 12)

Mega-events

Mega-events are those that are so large they affect whole economies and reverberate in the global media. They include Olympic Games and World Fairs, but it is difficult for many other events to fit into this category.

Getz (1997b) defines mega-events in the following way:

Their volume should exceed 1 million visits, their capital costs should be at least \$ 500 million, and their reputation should be of a 'must see' event... Mega-events, by way of their size or significance, are those that yield extraordinary high levels of tourism, media coverage, prestige, or economic impact for the host community or destination.

Hall, another researcher in the field of events and tourism offers this definition:

Mega-events such as World Fairs and Expositions, the World Soccer Cup final, or the Olympic Games, are events which are expressly targeted at the international tourism market and may be suitably described as 'mega' by virtue of their size in terms of attendance, target market, level of public financial involvement, political effects, extent of television coverage, construction of facilities, and impact on economic and social fabric of the host community.

Hallmark events

The term 'hallmark events' refers to those events that become so identified with the spirit or ethos of town, city or region that they become synonymous with the name of the place, and gain widespread recognition and awareness. Tourism researcher Janiskee (1996a) defines them as:

Major one-time or recurring events of limited duration, developed primarily to enhance awareness, appeal and profitability of a tourism destination in the short term and/or long term. Such events rely for their success on uniqueness, status, or timely significance to create interest and attract attention.

Classic examples of hallmark events are the Carnival in Rio de Janeiro, known throughout the world as an expression of the vitality and exuberance of that city, the Oktoberfest in Munich, the Chelsea Flower Show, ... Such events, which are identifies with the very character of these places and their citizens, bring huge tourist dollars, a strong sense of local pride and international recognition. Getz (1997c) describes them in terms of their ability to provide a competitive advantage for their host communities:

The term 'hallmark event' is used to describe a recurring event that possesses such significance, in terms of tradition, attractiveness, image, or publicity, that the event provides the host venue, community, or destination with a competitive advantage. Over time, the event and destination become inseparable. For example Mardi Gras give New Orleans a competitive advantage by virtue of its high profile. Stratford, Ontario, has taken its tourism theme from the successful Shakespearean Festival. Increasingly, every community and destination needs one or more hallmark events to provide the high levels of media exposure and positive imagery that help to create competitive advantages.

Major events

Major events are events that are capable, by their scale and media interest, of attracting significant visitor numbers, media coverage and economic benefits. Major events in Australia are the Australian Open tennis tournament and the Australian Formula one Grand Prix.

Local or community events

Most communities produce a host of festivals and events that are targeted mainly at local audiences and staged primarily for their social, fun and entertainment value. These events often produce a range of benefits, including engendering pride in the community, strengthening a feeling of belonging and creating a sense of place. They can also help to expose people to new ideas and experiences, encourage participation in sports and arts activities, and encourage tolerance and diversity. For these reasons, local governments often support such events as part of their community and cultural development strategies.

Janiskee (1996b) defines them as:

... family-fun events that are considered 'owned' by a community because they use volunteer services from the host community, employ public venues such as streets, parks and schools and are produced at the direction of local government agencies or nongovernmental organizations such as service clubs, public safety organisations or business associations.

Janiskee also comments that community festivals can become hallmark events and attract a large number of visitors to a community. Janiskee estimates that community celebrations

in the USA have been increasing at an annual rate of 5 per cent since the 1930s, and it is reasonable to assume that they have increased at a similar rate in Australia.

2.3.2 Form or content

Another common means of classifying events is by their form or content. Festivals are a universal form of events that pre-date the contemporary event industry and exist in most times and most societies. Sports events have grown out of similar roots to become a sizable and growing sector of the event industry. MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conventions and Exhibitions) events, sometimes called business events, are an established arm of the event industry, and generate considerable income for their host cities and, increasingly, for regional centres.

Festivals

Festivals are an important expression of human activity that contribute much too our social and cultural life. They are also increasingly linked with tourism to generate business activity and income for their host communities.

The most common type of festival is the arts festival, which can encompass mixed art forms and multiple venues – such as the capital city arts festivals – or single art forms such as the Sydney Biennale. The most popular form of arts festival is the music festival, which can range from classical music festivals, jazz festivals, folk and blues festivals to rock festivals.

Another type of festival that has become universally popular is the food and wine festival. These range from large festivals in the capital cities to local festivals showcasing regional cuisine. Other festivals become multi-state festivals, while festivals like the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras approach hallmark status in their respective cities. Regional festivals, too, are a growing phenomenon, with many large and small towns expressing their unique character and distinctiveness through well-honed festivals and community celebrations. Festivals have become a pervasive feature of our cultural landscape and constitute a vital and growing component of the event industry.

Sports events

The testing of sporting prowess through competition is one of the oldest and most enduring of human activities, with a rich tradition going back to the ancient Greek Olympics and beyond. Sports events are an important and growing part of the event industry, encompassing the full spectrum of individual sports and multi-sport events such as the Olympics. Their ability to attract tourist visitors and to generate media coverage and economic impacts has placed them at the fore of most government event strategies and destination marketing programs. Sports events not only bring benefits to their host governments and sports organizations, but also benefit participants such as players, coaches and officials, and bring entertainment and enjoyment to spectators. Examples of sports events can be readily identified in each of the size categories I listed earlier.

The MICE industry or business events

Another long-established component of the event industry is the MICE industry, now often called business events. This sector is largely characterised by its business and trade focus, although there is a strong public and tourism aspect to many of its activities. Meetings can be very diverse, as revealed by the definition of the Commonwealth Department of Tourism:

... all off-site gatherings, including conventions, congresses, conferences, seminars, workshops and symposiums, which bring together people for a common purpose – the sharing information.

The MICE industry market is worth an estimated \$7 billion per year (Johnson, Foo & O'Halloran 1999). The scale and value of large MICE events is illustrated by the following two examples. The International Genetics Congress staged in Melbourne in 2003 attracted 2700 delegates including elite scientists and leading researchers, and generated \$23 million for the city (Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre 2003). The Lions Club International Convention to be hosted in Sydney in 2010 is expected to attract 25 000 people from more than 100 countries, and to generate more than \$91 million for the city (Nori 2003)

Another lucrative aspect of the MICE industry is incentive travel, defined by the Society of Incentive Travel Executives (1997) (cited in Rogers 1998, p.47) as ‘global management tool that uses an exceptional travel experience to motivate and/or recognise participants for increased levels of unique locations and international popularity as a tourism destination make it a leading player in the incentive travel market.

Last, but not least, exhibitions are a considerable and growing part of the MICE industry. Exhibitions bring suppliers of goods and services together with buyers, usually in a particular industry sector. They can be restricted to industry members – in which case they are referred to as trade shows – or open to the general public. The International Motor show, the Home Show and the Boat Show are three of the largest exhibitions in Sydney, each generating tens of thousands of visitors. Major convention centres in most Australian cities and many regional centres now vie for their share of the thriving MICE industry market.

2.4 The structure of event industry

The rapid growth of events in the past decade led to the formation of an identifiable event industry, with its own practitioners, suppliers and professional associations. The emergence of the industry has involved the identification and refinement of a discrete body of knowledge of industry best practice, accompanied by the development of training programs and career paths. The industry’s formation has also been accompanied by a period of rapid globalisation of markets and communication, which has affected the nature of, and trends within, the industry. Further, it has been accompanied by an era of increasing government regulation, which has resulted in a complex and demanding operation environment. My following sections describe the key components of the event industry.

Event organisations

Events are often staged or hosted by event organisations, which may be event-specific bodies such as the Festival of Sydney. Other events are run by special teams within larger organisations, such as the City to Surf fun run organised by The Sun-Herald newspaper in

Sydney. Corporate events are often organised by in-house event teams or by project teams within the companies that are putting on the event.

Event management companies

Event management companies are professional groups or individuals that organise events on a contract basis on behalf of their clients. The Microsoft Corporation, for example, may contract an event manager to stage the launch of a new product. The specialist companies often organise a number of events concurrently, and develop long-term relationships with their clients and suppliers.

Event industry suppliers

The growth of a large and complex industry has led to the formation of a wide range of specialist suppliers. These suppliers may work in direct event-related areas, such as staging, sound production, lighting, audiovisual production, entertainment and catering, or they may work in associated areas, such as transport, communications, security, legal services and accounting services. This network of suppliers is an integral part of the industry, and their increasing specialisation and expertise assist the production of professional and high-calibre events.

Industry associations

The emergence of the industry has also led to the formation of professional associations providing networking, communications and liaison within the industry, training and accreditation programs, codes of ethical practice, and lobbying on behalf of their members. Because the industry is so diverse, multiple associations have arisen to cater for specific sectors of the industry. Some are international associations with affiliated groups in countries such as Australia; other are specific to their region or country. Some key industry associations relevant to the interest of event managers are described below:

- International Festivals and Events Society (ISES). Headquartered in the USA, the ISES has established chapters in Europe, Canada, South Africa and Australia. It stages an

annual Conference for Professional Development, and offers accreditation as a Certified Special Events Professional (CSEP).

- International Festivals and Events Association (IFEA). Also headquartered in the USA, the IFEA has affiliated organisations in Europe, Asia and Australia. It runs a Certified Festival and Event Executive (CFEE) program. It also organises an annual convention and seminars. Festivals and events associations exist in some Australian states. The one in Sydney, for example, stages regular educational seminars and networking events, and has staged biennial conferences since 1999.

External regulatory bodies

As noted, contemporary events take place in an increasingly regulated and complex environment. A series of government and statutory bodies are responsible for overseeing the conduct and safe staging of events, and these bodies have an integral relationship with the industry. Many local councils now require a development application for the staging of outdoor events. This application may cover regulations governing the erection of temporary structures, traffic plans, noise restrictions and so on. Councils also often oversee the application of state laws governing the preparation and sale of food, street closures, waste management and removal. In addition, events organisers have a legal responsibility to provide a safe workplace and to obey all laws and statutes relating to employment, contracts, taxation and so on. The professional event manager needs to be familiar with the regulations governing events and to maintain contact with the public authorities that have a vested interest in industry.

3 THE IMPACT OF SPECIAL EVENTS

Events do not take place in a vacuum – they touch almost every aspect of our lives, whether the social, cultural, economic, environmental or political aspects. The benefits arising from such positive connections are a large part of the reason for the popularity and support of events. They are increasingly well documented and researched, and strategies are being developed to enhance event outcomes and optimise their benefits. The recent explosion of events, along with the parallel increase in the involvement of governments and corporations, has led to an increasing emphasis on an economic analysis of event benefits.

Understandably, governments considering the investment of substantial taxpayers' funds in events want to know what they are getting for their investment and how it compares with other investment options. This climate has given rise to economists' detailed studies of events and to the development and application of increasingly sophisticated techniques of economic analysis and evaluation. However, events can also have unintended consequences that can lead them to have public prominence and media attention for the wrong reasons. The cost of event failure can be disastrous, running positive benefits into negative publicity, political embarrassment and costly lawsuits. An important core task in organising contemporary events is the identification, monitoring and management of event impact.

3.1 Balancing the impact of events

Events have a range of both positive and negative impacts on their host communities and stakeholders. It is the task of the event manager to identify and predict these impacts, then manage them to achieve the best outcomes for all parties so the overall impact of the event is positive. To achieve this, the event manager must develop and maximise all foreseeable positive impacts, and counter potential negative impacts. Often, negative impact can be addressed through awareness and intervention, so good planning is always critical. Ultimately, the success of the event depends on the event manager achieving this positive balance sheet and communicating it to range of stakeholders.

Great emphasis is often placed on the financial impacts of events, partly because employers and governments need to meet budget goals and justify expenditure, and partly because such impacts are most readily assessed. However, government policies commonly acknowledge the ‘triple bottom line’ of social, economic and environmental goals/yardsticks in relation to events. Event managers should not lose sight of the full range of an event’s impact and the need to identify, describe and manage those impacts. It is also important to realise that different impacts require different means of assessment. Social and cultural benefits, for example, are vital contributors to the calculation of an event’s overall impact, but describing them may require a narrative rather than a statistical approach. In this chapter, we discuss some of the complex factors that need to be taken into account when assessing the impact of events.

Table I. The impact of events

IMPACTS OF EVENTS	POSITIVE IMPACTS	NEGATIVE IMPACTS
Social and cultural	• Shared experience • Revitalising of traditions • Building of community pride • Validation of community groups • Increased community participation • Introduction of new and challenging ideas • Expansion of cultural perspectives	• Community alienation • Manipulation of community • Negative community image • Bad behaviour • Substance abuse • Social dislocation • Loss of amenity
Physical and environmental	• Showcasing of the environment	• Environmental damage • Pollution

	• Provision of models for best practise • Increased environmental awareness • Infrastructure legacy • Improved transport and communications • Urban transformation and renewal	• Destruction of heritage • Noise disturbance • Traffic congestion
Political	• International prestige • Improved profile • Promotion of investment • Social cohesion • Development of administrative skills	• Risk of event failure • Misallocation of funds • Lack of accountability • Propaganda • Loss of community ownership and control • Legitimation of ideology
Tourism and economic	• Declinational promotion and increased tourist visits • Extended length of stay • Higher yield • Increased tax revenue • Business opportunities • Commercial activity • Job creation	• Community resistance to tourism • Loss of authenticity • Damage to reputation • Exploitation • Inflated prices • Opportunity costs • Financial mismanagement • Financial loss

3.1.1 Social and cultural impact

All events have a direct social and cultural impact on their participants and sometimes on their wider host communities, as outlined by Hall (1989a) and Getz (1997d). This impact may be as simple as a shared entertainment experience, as created by a sporting event or concert. Other impacts include increased pride – which result from some community events and the celebration of national days – and the validation of particular groups in the community. The program of the 2003 Greek Festival of Sydney reflected this advantage: ‘This is a magnificent occasion for Australians of Greek origin to demonstrate pride in their culture and to share the same with multiplicity and diverse cultures that call Australia home’ (Angelopoulos 2003)

Events also have the power to challenge the imagination and explore possibilities. A series of reconciliation marches around Australia in 2000 served community support for reconciliation with Aboriginal Australians, and bring this issue powerfully to the attention of the medial. In Sydney, the march took the unprecedented step of closing the Sydney Harbour Bridge, providing a powerful symbolic statement of bridging the Aboriginal and wider Australian communities.

Events can also contribute to the contribute to the political debate and help to change history, as demonstrated by the watershed United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (‘The Earth Summit’) in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. Further, they can promote healing in the community, as demonstrated by events dedicated to the victims and survivors of the terrorist attack in New York on 11 September 2001, the Bali nightclub bombing in October 2002 and the Canberra bushfires in January 2003.

Research suggests local communities often value the ‘feel good’ aspects of hallmark events and are prepared to put up with temporary inconvenience and disruption because such events generate excitement and the long-term expectation of improved facilities and profile. Researchers, for, example, identified the Australian Formula One Grand Prix in Adelaide is being popular among residents: ‘The Grand Prix in 1985 set Adelaide alive... The spirit infected all of us, including large numbers of people who in “normal” times might be expected to be against the notion of this garish, noisy, polluting advertising circus’ (Arnold at al. 1989, p. 187)

However, such events can have negative social impacts too. Arnold et al. (1989) identified ‘the hoon effect’ in relation to the 1985 Australian Formula One Grand Prix in Adelaide, when the number of road accident casualties in the five weeks around the event rose by 34 per cent compared with the number in the same period for the previous five years. Accounting for the rising trend of road accident casualties over those years, Arnold calculated that about 15 per cent of these casualties were unexplained, and suggested these casualties could be due to people’s off-track emulation of Grand Prix driving.

The larger the event and the higher its profile, the greater is the potential for things to go wrong, thus generation negative impacts. Consider the collapse of the bridge at the entrance to the stadium for the Maccabiah Games in Israel in 1997, the tragic drownings during the Sydney to Hobart Yacht Race in 1998, and the death of a young rock fan in the mosh pit at the Big Day Out rock festival in 2001. Such events have far-reaching negative impacts, resulting not only in bad press but also damage or injury to participants, stakeholders and the host community.

3.1.2 Physical and environmental impact

An event is an excellent way in which to showcase the unique characteristics of the host environment. Hall (1989b) points out that selling the image of a hallmark event includes marketing the intrinsic properties of the destination. He quotes the use of images of Perth’s beaches, the Swan River and historic Fremantle in advertisements for the America’s Cup defence in 1987, and the emphasis on the creation of an aesthetically pleasing environment in the promotion of Sydney’s Darling Harbour.

However, host environments may be extremely delicate, and great care should be taken to protect them. A major event may require an environmental impact assessment before council permission is granted for it to proceed. Even if a formal study is not required, the event manager should carefully consider the likely impact of the event on the environment. This impact will be fairly contained if the event is to be held in a suitable purpose-built venue – for example, a stadium, sportsground, showground or entertainment centre – but may be much greater if the event is to be held in a public space not ordinarily reserved for

events – for example, a park, town square or street. Crowd movement and control, noise levels, access and parking will be important considerations. Other major issues may include wear on the natural and physical environment, heritage protection issues and disruption of the local community.

In the staging of large events, the provision of infrastructure is often a costly budget component, but this expenditure usually results in an improved environment and facilities for the host community, and provides a strong incentive for the community to act as host. The Sydney Olympic Games in 2000 left a legacy of major state-of-the-art sporting venues and associated transport and resulted in the transformation of the Auckland waterfront into an upmarket restaurant precinct. This example illustrates the lasting benefits that can result from the hosting of large-scale events.

3.1.3 Political impact

Politics and politicians are an important part of the equation that is contemporary event management. Ever since the Roman emperors discovered the power of the circus to deflect criticism and shore up popularity, shrewd politicians have had an eye for events that will keep the population happy and themselves in power. No less an authority than Count Niccolo Machiavelli (1962), adviser to the Medicis in the sixteenth century, had this to say on the subject:

A prince must also show himself a lover of merit, give preferment to the able and honour those who excel in every art... Besides this, he ought, at convenient seasons of the year, to keep the people occupied with festivals and shows, and as every city is divided into guilds or into classes, he ought to pay attention to all these groups, mingle with them from time to time, and give them an example of his humanity and munificence, always upholding, however, the majesty of his dignity, which must never be allowed to fail in anything whatever.

The Royal House of Windsor took this advice to heart, providing some of the most popular events of the past century, with the Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II and the fairytale-like wedding of Prince Charles and Princess Diana. Australian Prime Minister Robert Menzies made good use of the public affection for British royal family, with royal tours to Australia

providing a boost to the popularity of his government. Successive Australian politicians have continued to use the spotlight offered by different events to build their personal profiles and gain political advantage.

Arnold et al.(1989, pp. 191-2) leave no doubt about the role of events in the political process.

Government in power will continue to use hallmark events to punctuate the ends of their periods in office, to arouse nationalism, enthusiasm and finally, votes. They are cheaper than wars or the preparation for them. In this regard, hallmark events do not hide political realities, they are the political reality.

Governments around the world have realised the ability of events to raise the profile of politicians and the cities and states that they govern. Events attract visitors and thus create economic benefits and jobs. This potent mixture has prompted governments to become major players in bidding for, hosting and staging major events. This increasing involvement of governments in events has politicised the events landscape, as recognised by Hall (1989c):

Politics are paramount in hallmark events. It is either naïve or duplicitous to pretend otherwise. Events alter the time frame in which planning occurs and they become opportunities to do something new and better than before. In this context, events may change or legitimate political priorities in the short term and political ideologies and socio-cultural reality in the longer term. Hallmark events represent the tournaments of old, fulfilling psychological and political needs through the winning of hosting over other locations and the winning of events themselves. Following a hallmark event some places will never be the same again, physically, economically, socially and, perhaps most importantly of all, politically.

Events have values beyond tangible and economic benefits. Humans are social animals, and celebrations play a key role in the wellbeing of the social structure. Events can engender social cohesion, confidence and pride: therein lies the source of their political

power and influence, and the reason that they will always reflect and interact with their political circumstances and environments.

3.1.4 Tourism and economic impact

A primary concern of an event entrepreneur or host organisation is whether an event is within budget and, hopefully, results in a surplus or profit. This is a simple matter of whether the income from sponsorship, merchandise and ticket sale exceeds the costs of conducting and marketing the event. However, from the perspectives of the host communities and governments, a wider range of economic impacts is often of equal or greater significance.

One of the most important impacts is the tourism revenue generated by an event. In addition to their spending at the event, external visitors are likely to spend money on travel, accommodation, goods and services in the host city or region. This expenditure can have a considerable impact as it circulates through the local economy. Effective tourism promotion can result in visitors to the events extending their length of stay and visiting other regional tourism destinations and attractions. In addition to the tourism generated during the event, events may attract media coverage and exposure that enhance the profile of the host town or city, resulting in improved long-term tourism image and visitation.

Business opportunities

Events can provide their host communities with a strong platform for showcasing their expertise, hosting potential investors and promoting new business opportunities. The media exposure generated by the success of an event can dramatically illustrate the capacity, innovation and achievements of event participants and/or the host community. Auckland maximised the economic benefits of staging the America's Cup defence in 2000 by integrating its marine industry components and stakeholders through MAREX (Marine Export Group), placing its marine industry at the centre of a range of exciting developments (Davies 1996)

During the Sydney Olympics, the New South Wales Government spent \$3,6 million on a trade and investment drive coinciding with the event (Humphries 2000). This effort led to more than 60 business-related events, board meetings of international companies, briefings

and trade presentations being held in Sydney at the time of the Olympics. Forty-six international chambers of commerce were briefed on business opportunities, and more than 500 world business leaders, Olympic sponsors and New South Wales corporate executives attended four promotional events. State Treasurer Michael Egan was quoted as saying, 'We'll be benefiting from the Games well after we think the benefits have worn off and in ways that will never show up in statistics (Humphries 2000).

Little research has been done on analysing business development strategies for events and quantifying the amount of business that these strategies generate. It needs to be done more work so event enhancement frameworks are better understood and their outcomes can be assessed.

Commercial activity

Whatever the generation of new business at the macro level, the suppliers of infrastructure, goods and services undoubtedly profit from the staging of major events. But do these benefits trickle down to traders and small business operators? A survey of 1000 tourism related businesses was conducted in relation to the Rugby World Cup in Wales 1999 (Anon. 2000). The accommodation sector fared best, with two-thirds of accommodation providers experiencing improvements in business performance, along with a 7.5 per cent increase in room rates in Cardiff and the south east of Wales. Around half of the food and drink outlets also reported increased performance; this sector reported making considerable investment in promotional activities and small scale product development. In the retail sector, over half of survey respondents thought that the event had had a negative impact on their overall performance, despite improvements in average spend.

From these and other studies, the anticipated benefits of major events to traders and small businesses operators appear to be sometimes exaggerated, with the results often being sporadic and uneven. Benefits also seem more likely to accrue to those businesses that are properly prepared and that manage and invest wisely in the opportunities provided by events. More research needs to be done in this field to identify appropriate strategies to enhance the benefits of events to small business.

Employment creation

By stimulating activity in the economy, expenditure on events can have a positive effect on employment.

4 STRATEGIC MARKETING OF EVENTS

This part examines a strategic approach to festival and event marketing, and how the event manager carries out all of the marketing activities necessary to achieve the event's objectives, as set out in the strategic plan. To begin, it is useful to explore the concept of marketing as an event management function.

4.1 What is marketing?

In simple terms, marketing is concerned with satisfying consumer needs and wants by exchanging goods, services or ideas for something of value. More often, we are not just purchasing products; we are buying experiences (as we do with events and festivals) or adopting new ideas – for example, participation in extreme sports or new theatre forms. We might offer our dollars in exchange for a concert experience, but for some types of marketing exchanges – for example, community festivals – we could simply offer a coin donation.

Kotler, Bowen and Makens (1999a, p. 20) suggest that marketing is 'human activity directed at satisfying needs and wants through the exchange process'. In effect, marketing has evolved well beyond early views of the marketing concept as being the meeting of customer needs through decisions about the four Ps – product, place, price, promotion.

While it is agreed that the consumer is the primary focus of marketing, changes over time have dramatically reshaped the marketing function.

These include:

- growth in the number and diversity of services (including events) that require different marketing approaches from those for goods
- recognition of the unique marketing requirements of not-for-profit organisations (typical of many festivals)
- the increasing importance of stakeholders – for example, the community, government, investors/sponsors, media and others who can be as influential as consumers can be in affecting the success and survival of an organisation

- advances in technology such as the Internet, the linking of computers with telecommunications, and other innovations that affect the marketing of services, including events.
- internationalisation, which has created global opportunities to enter new markets – for example, the touring and staging of events in offshore locations.

As a result of these changes, marketers of events and festivals have the benefit of new knowledge in services marketing, stakeholder and relationship management, and e-marketing to help shape their strategies.

Increasingly, this knowledge helps the event or festival marketer to perform the marketing role defined by Hall (1997c, p. 136) as:

... that function of event management that can keep in touch with the event's participants and visitors (consumers), read their needs and motivations, develop products that meet these needs, and build a communication program which expresses the event's purpose and objectives.

The following list shows the marketing activities that an event marketing manager may undertake to produce a successful special event:

- Analyse the needs of the target market to establish the design of the event experience and the way in which it will be delivered.
- Predict how many people will attend the event and the times that different groups or market segments will attend.
- Research any competitive events that could satisfy similar needs, to devise a unique selling proposition
- Estimate the price or value that visitors are willing to exchange to attend an event – for example, ticket price or donation
- Decide on marketing communication, including the media mix and messages that will reach the audiences of the event
- Consider how the choice and design of venue(s) and the methods of ticket distribution fit with the needs of attendees.

- Establish the success of the event in achieving its marketing objectives.

All of these activities, vital for a successful event, are part of the marketing function. I would like to explore in this chapter how event marketing managers seek insight into consumers of their event and the event marketing environment before developing their marketing strategies and plans. I would like to discuss ways in which event managers can apply theories of strategic marketing, including services marketing and relationship management to develop their event marketing approach.

4.1.1 The need for marketing

Some critics of marketing argue that some events should not be concerned with target markets and satisfying market needs, but should simply focus on innovation, creativity and the dissemination of new art forms. The argument is that consumers' needs are based on what they know, so consumers are less likely to embrace innovative or avant-garde cultural experiences. Dickman (1997, p. 685) highlights the reluctance of some administrators 'to even use the word (marketing), believing that it suggested "selling out" artistic principles in favour of finding the lowest common denominator'.

Erroneously, this view assumes that marketers, by adopting a consumer focus, respond only to the expressed needs of event visitors. In reality, sound marketing research can unveil the latent needs of consumers that only innovative events can satisfy. Often, a distrust of marketing can base on a misunderstanding of marketing principles and techniques. This attitude can be self-defeating for the following reasons:

- The use of marketing principles gives event managers a framework for decision making that should result in events that reflect innovation and creativity, but cater for market segments that seek novelty or the excitement of something new.
- Sponsoring bodies need reassurance that their sponsorship is linking their brand with their target markets. Sound marketing practices give marketers the ability to convince sponsors that an event is the right investment.

- All three levels of government (local, state and national) financially assist many festivals and events. Governments usually fund only those events whose management can demonstrate some expertise in marketing planning and management.
- Event stakeholders, such as the community, environmentalists and indigenous leaders, as well as consumers, are critical in today's societal marketing approach. A societal marketing approach (Kotler, Bowen & Makens 1999b) emphasises the importance of society's wellbeing alongside satisfaction of the needs and wants of event markets.
- Consumers, particularly those who reside in major cities, have an enormous range of leisure activities on which to spend their disposable income. This means special events, as a leisure activity, will attract only those who expect to satisfy at least one of their perceived needs.

All events, therefore, can benefit from understanding marketing principles and having some experience in applying those principles to satisfy the identified needs of a target market. Failure to understand the role of marketing, including its social perspective, can lead to dissatisfied consumers and a weak relationship with stakeholders who strongly influence an event's long-term survival.

4.1.2 Events as 'service experiences'

The marketing concept is just as applicable to a leisure service such as an event as it is to any other product. We are exposed to many well-known brand names in leisure services that have been marketing success stories, and some of these are special events – for example, the Moscow Circus, the Edinburgh Tattoo, the Melbourne Cup and Sydney's Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras.

Events as services differ from products in a number of ways. What is different about services is that we must experience them to consume them – the delivery and consumption of an event are inseparable, happening simultaneously in most cases. Given this immediacy of service consumption, the way in which an event is experienced can vary daily or each year the event is staged. The challenge for event managers and marketers is to try to manage these variations in quality. Because people are central to the delivery of most services (including the staff or vendors at an event, as well as its visitors), managing the quality of an event experience depends on managing its human delivery and the

behaviour of its consumers – that is, people who attend an event affect the level of enjoyment of other visitors.

Other key differences of services like events are that they are intangible and, unlike a product, cannot be owned – that is, we don't take the experience home with us. While a skateboard has search qualities (we can examine it for its shape, texture and colour), events have only experiential qualities. There is nothing tangible for us to pick up, touch, feel or try before purchasing tickets or after the event (other than event merchandise or mementos). Event marketers add some tangibility via promotional posters, event programs or compact discs of the artists' work, but the primary purchase is an intangible experience. The marketer has the challenge, therefore, of providing potential visitors with advance clues about the nature of the event experience.

It is generally agreed that the intangibility of services makes them much harder to evaluate than goods, and this is also true for events. Many special events also have some credence qualities – characteristic that we, as consumers, don't have enough knowledge or experience to understand or evaluate. For certain types of event, real-time interpretation (subtitles at the opera or expert commentary at a sport game) and post-purchase interpretation (views expressed by commentators or critics) enhance the consumer's experience.

For marketers, a further challenge is the perishability of the event experience – for example, seats unsold at today's football game or tonight's concert will not be available for sale again. While we can store an unsold product on the shelf, we cannot store today's unused opportunities for event attendance until tomorrow or another date. Events are delivered in real time. If the weather is poor on the day of event, unsold tickets cannot be retrieved, and food and beverage sales for that day are lost. This means event demand and supply must be well understood, so seating, food and beverage, and other vital supplies to an event are not wasted.

4.2 Event marketing research

Before the marketing strategy is developed, research is usually conducted at:

- 1) the macro level, to understand external forces affecting the event and its markets, and

2) the micro level, to gain insight into the event's existing and potential consumers and any strategies previously used by the organisers. A range of event marketing information can be obtained from primary and secondary sources to guide the strategy process.

To begin, a search of secondary data on macro-level trends affecting leisure consumption and the competitive environment for events can be drawn from on-line or off-line sources. Some useful information sources are:

- government statistics and reports (national and state statistics on the consumption of events, arts and sport, Australia)
- media coverage (about the events sector and particular events in the region)
- industry newsletters such as the international Special Events Magazine (www.specialevents.com) and the Australasian Special Events Magazine (www.specialevents.com.au/magazine)
- historical and current data from other events, festivals and event organisers. A content analysis of the websites of events, festivals and event production agencies can be a valuable research technique. Accolade Event Management, which directed the ceremonies of the Rugby World Cup 2003, is one of many event producers whose website offers a window to new and innovative event types (www.accolade.net.au).

A greater depth of understanding of macro-level issues such as event funding and the sponsorship environment, the seasonal saturation of events, the potential for oversupply of particular types of event, and new technologies for event delivery can also be obtained through depth interviews with opinion leaders – for example, longstanding event directors of producers, public sector event agencies and academics.

At the micro level, event marketers can use a mix of research techniques to gain insights into consumer segmentation and targeting. Past event reports that show vendor participation, event visitation, situational issues influencing past attendance and event satisfaction are desired resources, but not always available. Often, established members of the event organising body (including volunteers) become a rich source of informal advice about the event's consumption trends. More specific insight into existing event consumers can be reliably obtained from a mix of qualitative research (either depth interviews or a

series of focus groups with eight to 10 people in each of the different segments of the market) and quantitative research (on-site intercept surveys or post-event research). For intercept surveys that are commonly undertaken at entry or exit points of the event, a randomly selected sample of at least 200 attendees (Getz 1997e) is recommended. In this context, 'random' means all event customers have an equal chance of being selected for the survey. As customers exit the event, for example, every tenth customer could be asked to participate.

Data related to the visitors' demographics, motives, satisfaction and intention to revisit the event are generally sought. The data analysis can be manually performed for a small-scale survey that seeks only descriptive data about event consumers. However, a statistical software package such as SPSS offers a deeper understanding of relationships between variables such as attendance motives and satisfaction. However, do not succumb to paralysis through analysis. Market research is an aid to competent event marketing, it does not replace it.

4.2.1 The event consumer's decision-making process

Understanding the consumer decision-making process for events and festivals is aided by the following PIECE acronym:

- problem recognition – the difference between someone's existing state and their desired state relative to leisure consumption
- information search – an internal and/or external search; limited or extensive search process for leisure (including event) solutions
- evaluation and selection of leisure alternatives
- choosing whether to attend an event and which optional purchases to make at the event
- evaluation of the post-event experience.

Reflecting this PIECE process, the consumer identifies a need that may be satisfied by attending an event or other leisure experience, searches for information about such an experience in different media (the entertainment section of newspapers, the radio, magazines, friends and relatives), and then evaluates the alternatives available. Most of us

them examine how the leisure experience compares with a list of the attributes we most desire. As event goes, we may want to improve our family ties, so we attend a local community festival that all members of our family can enjoy. Alternatively, we may be looking for a novel or innovative event to satisfy our curiosity. After experiencing (or ‘consuming’) the event, we reevaluate the experience for its quality of service and its capacity to satisfy our needs.

4.2.2 Event satisfaction, service quality, repeat visits

Because leisure services are intangible, inseparable, variable and perishable, defining service quality is difficult. From the viewpoint of an event consumer, quality service occurs when expectations of the event match perceptions of the service experienced. Understanding perceived service quality is thus a primary goal of marketers. Both existing and potential attendees can have a perception of event quality (formed from experience of the event, word of mouth and/or other marketing communication). However, perceptions of the event itself are based on the technical (performance outcomes) and functional (process related) qualities of the experience (Gronroos 1990). Other external factors – for example, wet weather and personal factors such as an argument with a partner during the event – also affect consumer perceptions.

Because it is harder to evaluate ‘technical’ quality (such as the musical performance at t

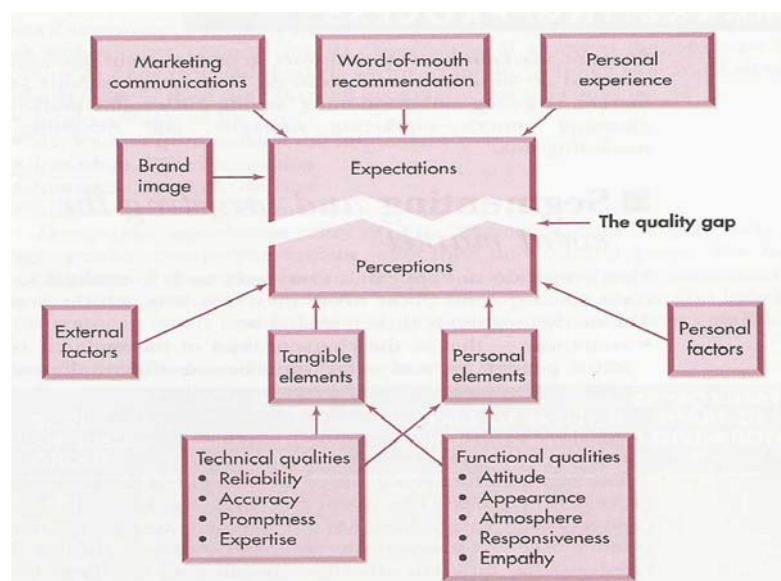
Because it is harder to evaluate ‘technical’ quality (such as the musical performance at the event), much of the focus in measuring perceived service quality is on functional aspects, or ways in which service is delivered. For this reason, the five main dimensions of service quality in the commonly used SERQUAL questionnaire (Parasuraman, Zeithaml & Berry 1988) mostly reflect functional service aspects:

1. assurance – staff and/or volunteers give the appearance of being knowledgeable, helpful and courteous, and event consumers are assured of their wellbeing
2. empathy – the event staff and/or volunteers seem to understand the consumers’ needs and deliver caring attention
3. responsiveness – the staff and volunteers are responsive to the needs of the consumer

4. reliability – everything happens at the event in the way the marketing communication has promised
5. tangibles – the physical appearance of the event equipment, artists' costume/presentation and the physical setting meet visitor expectations.

Using these five dimensions, the SERVQUAL questionnaire measures the difference between visitor expectations and perceptions of a festival of event. When the visitors' perceptions of their event experience match or exceed their expectations, a quality experience has been delivered, and the outcome is satisfied attendees who could decide to go the event next time it is held.

Event satisfaction is related to perceived service quality, but it is experience dependent. Satisfaction can be measured only among existing visitors to the event. Not every customer will be satisfied all the time. To maintain a competitive position, however, the event marketer should aim to achieve more than a basic level of satisfaction. A sense of delight or extreme satisfaction among event visitors is the ideal outcome (Lovelock, Patterson & Walker 2004). To this end, one objective in an event's strategic marketing should involve visitor satisfaction – for example, '95 per cent of event participants will give a satisfied or higher rating of the event'.



Picture 2. Quality – the fit between customer expectations and perceptions (Source: Lovelock at al, 2004c, p.208)

Given the difficulty in understanding consumer expectations (with there being no clear set of expectations for each service setting), it is often argued that a ‘perceptions only’ measure of satisfaction (one that excludes expectations) is more useful. For festivals, various writers suggest consumer ‘perceptions’ are better indicators of the link between quality, visitor satisfaction and intentions to revisit (see, for example, Baker & Crompton 2000; Thrane 2002). Because musical performance has been highlighted as an important determinant of quality at a festival (Saleh & Ryan, 1993a), the use of the SERVQUAL approach alone is probably not the marketer’s best approach to research. Saleh & Ryan (1993b), however, also note that aspects of quality measured by SERVQUAL do contribute to jazz festival patrons’ satisfaction and intentions to revisit. A research instrument that adequately investigates both festival ‘performance’ and ‘process’ should be considered, therefore, in evaluating festival and event marketing strategies.

4.3 Steps in the strategic marketing process

Strategic marketing involves distinct steps that event managers must understand to create a successful strategy. These steps include segmenting the market, targeting and positioning, setting measurable marketing objectives choosing generic marketing strategies, and designing an effective marketing mix.

4.3.1 Segmenting and targeting the event market

Most events do not appeal to everybody, so it is essential to identify those consumer segments whose needs most closely match the event experience. The market segments chosen should be:

- *measurable* – that is, the characteristics of the segment (socioeconomic status, gender, age and so on) must be accessible to the event marketer
- *substantial enough in size* to be worth targeting
- *accessible* by normal marketing communication channels
- *actionable* by the event organiser, given the marketing budget and other resources (Getz 1997f)

The segmentation process uses the concept of the buyer decision-making process as a guide. The Sydney Festival, for example, has an extensive product range, categorised into

music, dance, visual arts, family, theatre and cinema, free outdoor activity and opera/musical theatre. Each of these categories has different offerings, appealing to the buyer behaviour of different offerings, appealing to the buyer behaviour of different submarkets. The visual arts category alone features about 12 different offerings. By thinking about the potential visitors to the visual arts exhibits, the festival organisers can develop a mental snapshot of the overall target market for the visual arts category and events within it. Actual segmentation of the markets could be based on geography, demography (including the visitors' lifecycle phase) and/or behaviour (lifestyles, benefits sought and attendance profile – that is, first timers or repeat visitors).

Table II A classification of socioeconomic market segments for events

Group	Socio-economic group	Occupational examples	Types of event group is likely to attend	Approximate share of population (%)
A	Upper middle class	Higher managerial or administrative, professional: lawyers, doctors, dentists, captains of industry, senior public servants, senior military officers, professors	Cultural events such as fundraisers for the opera, classical music festivals	3
B	Middle class	Intermediate managerial, administrative of professional: university lecturers, head teachers, pharmacists, middle managers, journalists, architects	Cultural events (but purchasing cheaper seats), food and beverage festivals, historical festivals, arts and crafts festivals, community festivals	15

C	Lower middle class	Supervisory, clerical, junior managerial or administrative: clerks, sales representatives, nurses, teachers, shop managers	Most popular cultural events, some sporting events, community festivals	24
D	Skilled working class	Skilled blue collar workers: builders, fitters, waterside workers, police constables, self-employed tradespersons	Motor vehicle festivals, sporting events, community festivals	28
E	Working class	Semiskilled and unskilled workers: builder's labourers, factory workers, cleaners, delivery drivers	Some sporting festivals, ethnic festivals	17
F	Social security	Those at the lowest level of subsistence: pensioners, casual and part-time workers	Very little, except occasionally free community events	13

4.3.2 Positioning the event

How to position an event in the mindset of the market is an important strategic decision. Positioning represents the way in which the event is defined by consumers, or 'the place it occupies in consumers' middle relative to competing offerings' (Kotler et al. 2001c, p. 256). Event positioning can be achieved in at least 10 different ways:

1. the existing reputation or image of the event – for example, the Olympic Games and other longstanding events

2. the charisma of a director or leader
3. a focus on event programming – for example, Ten Days on the Island in Tasmania, which is a festival programmed and positioned around the ‘island’ concept
4. a focus on performers – for example, major sports (such as the football and hockey) and theatre that highlight the players/performers
5. an emphasis on location or facilities – for example, Wimbledon, which is now synonymous with world-standard tennis
6. event users
7. price or quality – for example, a free civic concerts series versus an operatic performance by the world’s three best tenors
8. the purpose or application of the event – for example, health awareness of diabetes
9. the event category or ‘product’ class – for example, fashion events
10. multiple attributes – for example, the RAQ Fashion Festival, which is positioned on its designers, reputation and image, as well as its purpose of bringing new fashion designers into the public eye.

Once decisions have been made about the event’s segmentation, targeting and positioning, a platform is available to decide on event marketing objectives, strategies and tactics.

4.3.3 Developing event marketing objectives

Any successful development of a marketing plan is based on sound marketing objectives. It is important to stress again how marketing objectives, like all objectives, must be measurable and not expressed in vague terms that make measurement impossible. While many managers are tempted to state general aims rather than set objectives (making it harder to be accountable for whether event objectives have been achieved), this temptation must be resisted. Clearly defined and measurable objectives give the marketer the ends, while strategies and their supporting tactics are the means to those ends.

4.4 Planning event ‘product’ experiences

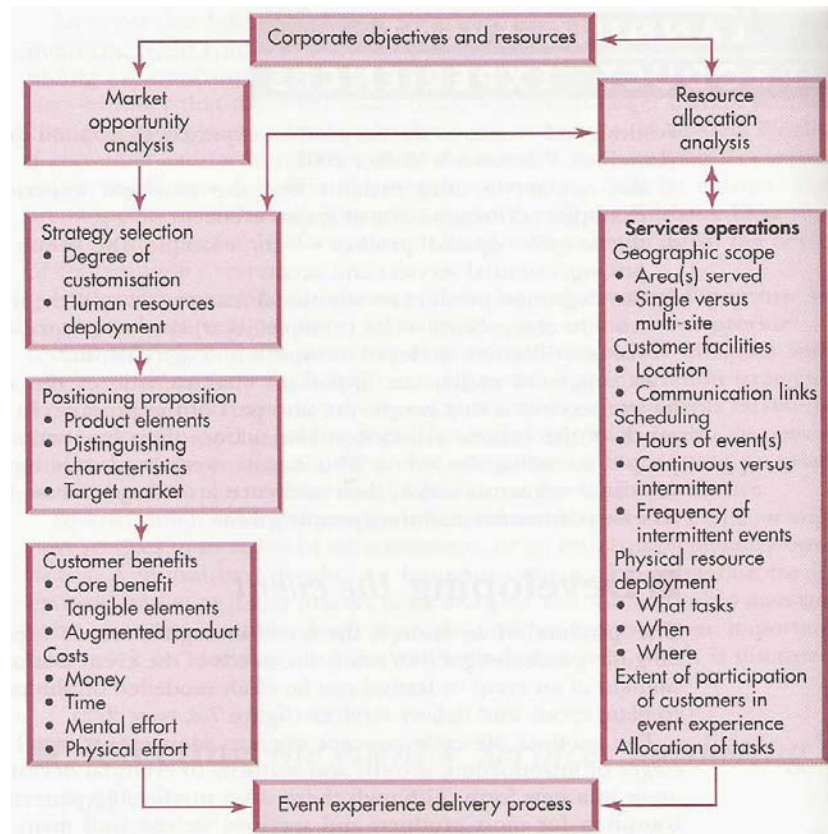
Events, as service product experiences, contain three elements (Lovelock, Patterson & Walker 2001a):

1. the core service and benefits that the customer experiences – for example, performing arts or sports event
2. the tangible ‘expected’ product – for example, the venue and seating, pricing, essential services and access
3. the augmented product or additional features that differentiate an event from its competitors – for example, its artists, service quality, the type visitors, different modes of transport, and merchandise.

As suggested earlier, an important characteristic of the marketing of leisure services is that people are also part of the product. In other words, much of the visitors’ satisfaction comes from their interactions with other people attending the event. This means event marketers need to ensure (1) visitor segments within their audience are compatible and (2) there is an ease of interaction among people on-site.

4.4.1 Developing the event

The ‘product’ of an event is the set of intangible leisure experiences and tangible goods designed to satisfy the needs of the event market. The development of an event can be easily modelled on the processes used to plan, create and deliver services



Picture 3. The process of creating an event 'product'

(Source: Lovelock et al, 2004c, p.222)

The product life cycle concept suggests most events travel through the stages of introduction, growth and maturity to eventual decline or rejuvenation in a new form. Although there is no predictable pattern of life cycle transition for most products and services, we can find many examples of events that appear to have experienced all life cycle phases. Attendance of Australia Day festivals, for example, has waxed and waned as the 'product' has been changed to reflect changing community needs. Once, only hundreds attended the celebrations staged for this day; now, with a rejuvenation of the Australia Day celebration 'product', attendances are again healthy. To avoid the decline, event managers need to closely monitor public acceptance the leisure needs of contemporary society.

The creation of new service experiences usually ranges from major service innovations through to simple changes in the style of service delivery (Lovelock, Patterson & Walker 2001b). These are evident in the event sector:

- Major ‘event’ innovations – new events for previously undefined markets. Extreme sports events may represent one such innovation that emerged in the 1990s. However, major ‘event’ innovations are extremely hard to identify in an already crowded and innovative events sector, in which a wide variety of events existing, rather than new, leisure segments.
- Major process innovations – use of new processes to deliver events in new ways added consumer benefits. The Internet has played a central role in innovating event delivery
- Product (event) line extensions – additions to the current event programs of existing events. This form of product development is very common.
- Process (event delivery) extension – adjustments to the way in which existing events or festivals are delivered. The use of Internet ticketing agencies and on-line booking or festival space by food and beverage vendors, for example, have enhanced event delivery processes.
- Supplementary service innovation – extra services that build on the event experience. Examples are on-site childcare facilities, automatic teller machines and public telephones at event sites.
- Service improvements – modest changes that improve the event performance or the way in which it is delivered. Examples are a fashion festival featuring the work of a wider array of designers, and more outlets being provided for ticket purchase.
- Style changes – simple forms of product development for an event. Examples are improved seating arrangements, a new festival logo and better costumes.

For any event, the decision to undertake any of the ‘product’ development strategies proposed must be based on market research. Although it is not possible to pre-test events as market offerings, new concepts or style changes (such as a new festival logo) are readily tested in the target market using qualitative research techniques such as focus groups. Some form of event concept testing is desirable before major changes are made.

4.4.2 Programming the event

A critical aspect of the event product that is not widely discussed is the development of an attractive event program. For event managers, it is important to have an event portfolio that reflects (1) the mission, (2) the desired level of quality that satisfies artistic and market

criteria, and (3) the revenue or profit objectives of event managers. The nature and range of market segments, and the ability to create thematic links between program elements are further considerations. Often, organisers need to balance the personal or artistic vision of event directors with the realities of market success criteria and the costs involved. The event program may also reflect media broadcasting requirements, the availability of desired performers or players, and the practicalities of staging the event concept. In addition, the event manager must consider the programming of competing events, the event's life cycle phase (for example, more mature events may require some innovative programming to survive) and the duration of the event.

4.4.3 Packaging the event

Packaging is perhaps one of the most underdeveloped elements of the event marketing mix. Avenues for packaging include the opportunity to package different types of entertainment, food and beverage, and merchandise as a single market offer (a service bundle), and the opportunity to package the event with accommodation, transport and other attractions in the nearby region. Many events fail to tap into packaging opportunities that can be an effective means of better positioning the event in current markets and attracting tourists. The performing arts and sport, special package deals for existing subscribers or members represent another viable marketing use for the package concept.

4.5 Integrated marketing communication for events

Where 'promotion' was once the primary term for the communication element in the marketing mix, the use of 'integrated marketing communication' (IMC) has all but overtaken it. With diverse changes in media technology, market expectations and competition, the traditional idea of promoting 'to' a market has been replaced by the need to form relationships 'with' the market. Integrated marketing communication 'considers all sources of contact that a consumer has [with the event] as potential delivery channels for messages and, makes use of all communication methods that are relevant to consumers' (Shimp 2003, p. 8). The platform for creating IMC strategies for events is knowledge about the visitors – the consumer database that allows the event to establish a dialogue with the event's consumers. How an event manages its consumer relationship drives its brand value (Duncan 2002). When we think about an event brand such as the Sydney Gay and Lesbian

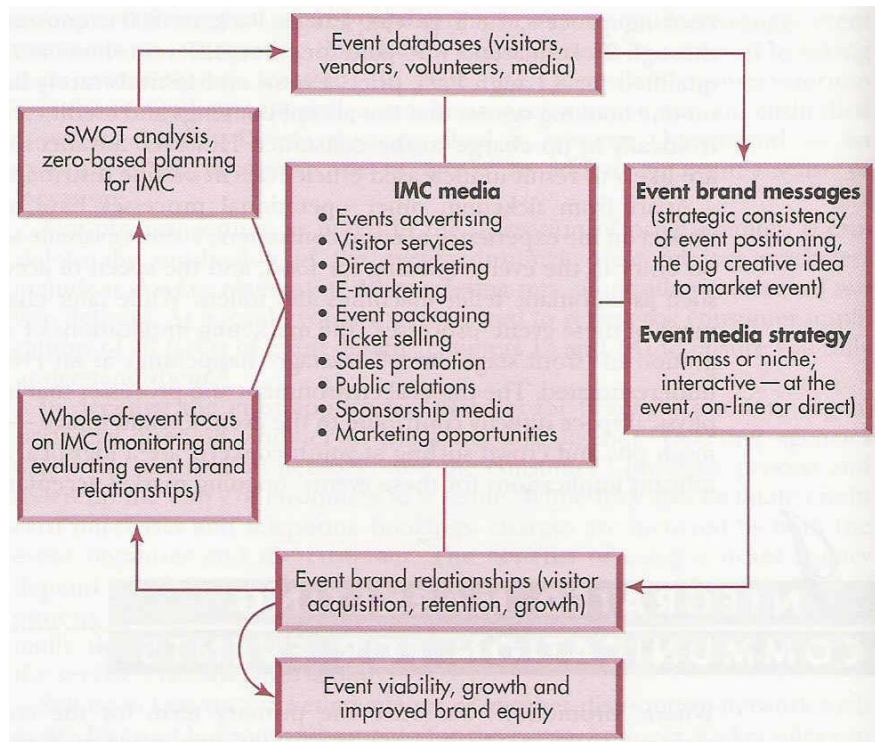
Mardi Gras, we think of ‘an integrated bundle of information and experiences that distinguish [it]’ (Duncan 2002a, p. 13) from competing leisure experiences.

Graph 4 offers an insight into the IMC process for an event, and the range of traditional and non-traditional media that create brand relationships.

Branding for an event is much more than a physical identity such as the five interlocking rings of the Olympics. The Olympics brand is based on perceptions, how we relate to that event and what it promises, as well as the physical logo and symbols (for example, the Olympic torch). However, clever use of the brand helps the event manager to make an intangible phenomenon more tangible for event consumers.

In developing an IMC strategy, an organiser should understand four sources of brand messages (Duncan 2002b):

1. planned messages (media releases, personal selling by the box office and/or ticket agency, advertising, e-newsletters, website)
2. unplanned messages (unexpected positive or negative impressions formed by word of mouth, media coverage, complaints)
3. product messages (implied messages of decisions about the event – program, pricing, venue)
4. service messages (the nature of contact with festival or event staff or volunteers, the quality of event transport, other support services).

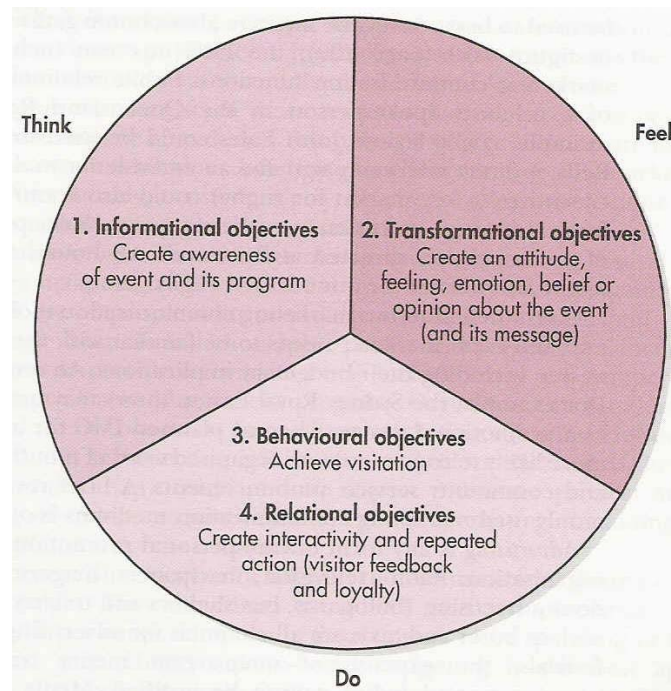


Picture 4. The IMC process model for events (Source: Duncan 2002b, p.9)

Given these message types, the event brand is shaped by more than its planned promotional tools; instead, there are many influences on the brand, some of which are more controllable than others.

Mirroring the strategy process, the development of an IMC plan hinges on an effective SWOT analysis, plus consumer and stakeholder research. The information from the analysis and research provides the platform for deciding whether objectives and strategies from the IMC campaign should be informational, transformational (attitudinal), behavioural or relational in their focus. Graph 5 (p. 61) shows how these different approaches correspond with the ‘think, feel, do’ model of consumer behaviour.

Importantly, consumers do not react to marketing messages in any set order – they may feel, then act (local festival attendance) and later think about the experience, or they may go through a sequential processing of ‘think, feel and act’ (such as a decision to visit France to attend the next Rugby World Cup). It is important to consider these different decision-making patterns of market segments when deciding how to set out the objectives of a campaign.



Picture 5. Event message objectives and strategies

(Source: Duncan 2002, p.320)

The IMC strategy reflects the thrust of the chosen objectives and uses both message and media strategies to fulfil them. To illustrate, the Queensland Reds rugby union team may have a behavioural objective of ‘achieving a 10 per cent increase in attendance at home games at the Ballymore oval in 2006’. Their message strategy would be developed with reference to the psychological appeal – for example, motivators such as the responsibility of locals to support the home side, and the atmosphere and nostalgia attached to Ballymore as a rugby venue. Planning the IMC campaign requires ‘one voice, one look’ (Duncan 2002c) – that is, all direct marketing, advertising, publicity and event packaging must convey the same message and look in its communication. At a national level, the Australian Rugby Union successfully achieved ‘one voice, one look’ with its True Colours campaign for the Rugby World Cup 2003.

For the Queensland Reds, the media strategy involves choosing how the mix of planned advertising, e-marketing, publicity and/or other media will be used to best convey the message about home game attendance. As shown in Picture 4., the IMC mix can include a wide range of marketing communication functions. Public relations may involve the use of a celebrity spokesperson in the Queensland Reds campaign – for example, rugby legend

John Eales could be used to boost interest in the Reds. A direct mail campaign and an e-newsletter to a database of corporate executives (a key market for rugby) could also feature John Eales and give further strategic consistency to the campaign. Sales promotion in the form of a competition directed at Brisbane's AB households in select suburbs might also bolster the attendees at rugby games.

Given the numerous marketing communication tools to include in an IMC mix, the event marketer needs to be familiar with their strengths and weaknesses, including their budgetary implications. An event with a mass market (for example, the Sydney Royal Easter Show) may use television advertising as promotional device, whereas planned IMC for a community festival is more likely to concentrate on organised word of mouth, local media publicity and community service announcements. A brief review of the more commonly used marketing communication mediums is offered here.

Advertising is a form of non-personal promotion paid for by the event organisation. Radio, television, newspapers, magazines, the Internet, outdoor advertising (billboards, bus shelters and toilets) and mobile platforms such as buses and taxis are all channels for advertising. For most events, the expense of mainstream media (capital city television, newspapers and radio) cannot be justified. Media partnerships can help to resolve this issue. However, the creative process of producing the messages can also be expensive, especially if done by an advertising agency. In creating advertising campaigns for events is vital to:

- provide tangible clues to counteract the intangible nature of the event – that is, show the artistic event or sports players in action, the event logo, the spectacle of the fireworks
- seek continuity over time by using recognisable symbols, spokespersons, trademarks or music, for example, football codes often use tunes of famous artists, such as 'We are the champions' by Queen
- promise what is possible to foster realistic expectations – for example, show real-time action (It is necessary to take care with promises about ticket availability because they can become contentious.)

- make the service more tangible and recognisable by showing members of the target market enjoying the event – for example, the roar and spectacle of a grand final crowd at the football is very persuasive.

Public relations is used to build mutually beneficial relationships with stakeholders and consumers. It uses wide range of tools, including publicity, special events, community consultation, e-publications and traditional newsletters. While all activities incur costs, media publicity is often favoured by festival organisers because it provides unpaid space in the media that reaches the event's market. An advantage to event directors is that people generally enjoy reading about the sport, the arts and entertainment. However, marketers must be aware that the media will use a story only if it has news value (a unique angle or item of information of interest to readers, viewers or listeners). Journalists also carefully assess the structure and style of media releases, and the credibility of their source.

Sales promotion consists of those activities that use incentives or discounts to increase sales or attendance. Examples of sales promotion are family days at city shows or exhibitions, offering group discounts or a free ticket for one child. Alternatively, consumers may be offered free merchandise (T-shirts and posters) when purchasing several ticket or more.

Direct marketing communicates one-on-one with existing event goers via mail, the telephone or the Internet. It relies on organisers developing a list of people who previously attended the event and obtaining their knowledge about their demographic profile and preferences. Incentives for consumers to provide information may include entry in a competition and the receipt of next year's event program. Organisers can purchase lists of potential event consumers from direct marketing agencies. However, a key consideration in collecting information to build a database is the need to gain consumer permission and to respect consumer privacy. And understanding of current regulations about direct marketing (including the use of e-newsletters) is now mandatory.

Many event directors find it difficult to determine a marketing communication budget. They sometimes use guides such as a percentage of ticket sales (5 – 10 per cent), what competitors appear to be spending or what was spent last year. However, zero-based

budgeting is the best approach, whereby the marketer works from a zero base to cost out the best mix of IMC strategies and tactics to achieve the set objectives. A marketing objectives of selling 10 000 tickets could flow on to an IMC objective of educating a potential market of 100 000 people about the benefits of the event. A mix of advertising, direct marketing (on-line and off-line) and publicity might be considered. Yet, the IMC campaign cost must be realistic for that event. In-kind support by website designers, graphic artists and printers, plus sponsored media space (television, newspapers and/or radio), can reduce a festival or event's financial outlay. However, for most events, the need to prioritise IMC strategies and tactics to trim down the financial outlay is inevitable. Wherever, possible, the IMC strategies that move the event closer to a behavioural result must be preserved.

5 STAGING EVENTS

The term ‘staging’ originates from the presentation of plays at the theatre. It refers to bringing together all elements of a theatrical production for its presentation on a stage. Most events that use this term take place at a single venue and require organisation similar to that of a theatrical production. However, whereas a play can take place over a season, a special event may take place in one night. Examples of this type of event are product launches, company parties and celebrations, awards ceremonies, company parties and celebrations, conference events, concerts, large weddings, corporate dinners, and opening and closing events.

Staging can also refer to the organisation of a venue within a much larger festival. A large festival may have performance areas positioned around a site. Each of these venues may have a range of events with a distinct theme. At the Sydney Royal Easter Show, there are a number of performance areas, each with its own style. Because it is part of a much larger event, one performance area or event has to fit in with the overall planning of the complete event and with the festival programming and logistics. However, each performance area is to some extent its own kingdom, with its own micro-logistic, management, staff and individual character. One stage of Sydney’s Royal Easter Show had the theme ‘world music and dance’, for example. The venue had its own event director, stage manager, and light and sound technicians. Although it was part of the overall theme of the Royal Easter Show, it was allowed a certain amount of autonomy by the show entertainment director.

The main concerns of staging are as follows:

- theming and event design
- programming
- choice of venue
- audience and guests
- stage
- power, lights and sound
- audiovisuals and special effects

- catering
- performers
- crew
- hospitality
- the production schedule
- recording the event
- contingencies.

I would like to analyse the staging of an event according to these elements. I want to demonstrate how these elements revolve around a central event theme. The type of event will determine how important each of these elements is to others. However, common to the staging of different events are the tools: the stage plan, the contact and responsibility list, and the production schedule.

5.1 Theming and event design

When staging an event, the major artistic and creative decision to be made is that of determining the theme. The theme of an event differentiates it from other events. In the corporate area, the client may determine the theme of the event. The client holding a corporate party or product launch may want, for example, medieval Europe as the theme, or forest, complete with native animals. Outside the corporate area, the theme for one of the stages at a festival may be blues music, debating or a children's circus. Whatever the nature of the event, once the theme is established, the elements of the event must be fit in with the theme. This is straightforward when it comes to deciding on the entertainment or catering. With the medieval corporate party, the entertainment may include janglers and jugglers, and the catering may be spit roasts and wine. However, audiovisuals may need a lot of thought to enhance the theme; the sound and lights must complement the entertainment or they may not fit in with the period theme.

5.2 Programming

The program of the event is the flow of the performers, speakers, catering and the other elements of the event over time. It is the schedule of performance. As with all the elements

of staging, programming is both an art and a science. The program of the event depends on:

- the expectations of the audience
- the constraints of the venue and infrastructure
- the culture of the client and main sponsors
- the availability of elements of the staging, and their relationship to each other
- the logistic.

It is similar to the order in a street parade – the timeline or schedule of the program is set out in a linear fashion. Far from this being a simple example, a parade is multifaceted, and there is little the event manager can do not change it once it starts moving. Consider the music: the brass band cannot be performing near the highland pipe band; they perform at slightly different beats. An event program also has a rhythm all of its own. The mix of entertainment, catering and speeches has to be well thought out so the event builds and the audience has times of intensity and times of rest. A new year's program, for example, gradually lifts the audience to the moment before midnight.

A large festival's program is a complex of activities. Many festivals use a form of a Gantt chart to map the various attractions and to help the audience navigate the event program. If the event is broadcast, the event program may have to be in sync with the television programming. This is a major consideration for sport events.

In the words of Colin Slater of the event company Sing Australia (in the Australian Capital Territory), 'The program on the night must begin by establishing the atmosphere... You don't want to boss the audience – give them time to settle in. Then we get the MC to introduce the night so the purpose of the event is clearly known by all. Also, I like to involve the audience before they eat to get them all to loosen up and relax. The night should start bright and happy and have its plateaus, so it is not full-on all night. Program it to finish on an absolute high whether they are dancing or clapping or singing'.

5.3 Choice of venue

The choice of venue is a crucial decision that will ultimately determine many of elements of staging. The venue may be an obvious part of the theme of the event. A corporate party that takes place in a zoo is using the venue as part of the event experience. However, many events take place within ‘four walls and a roof’, the venue being chosen for other factors. It can be regarded as an empty canvas on which the event is ‘painted’. Cameron (1993), in his work on community theatre, describes the events he has staged in disused factories, forests and stages floating on water. He describes how the event manager can use the atmosphere and natural beauty of open-air performances. In these situations, the traditional roles of stage manager and event manager become blurred. When the audience and the performers mix together, and where they and the venue become the entertainment package, the delineation between stage and auditorium is no longer appropriate.

A special event that uses a purpose-built venue, such as an entertainment centre, will find that much of the infrastructure will be in place. However, because so many factors in an event depend on the venue or site, an inspection is absolutely necessary. For conference events, Rostrum (vol. 32a) suggests the event manager attends a function at the venue and tests the facilities. It recommends placing a long-distance telephone call, trying the food and staying in the approved accommodation.

Two documents that are a good starting point for making an informed choice about the venue are the venue map and the list of facilities. However, CIM Rostrum (vol. 32b) recommends that the event manager meet the venue management before committing to hire the venue. The principal purpose of his meeting is to check the accuracy of the two documents, because the map, the list of facilities and the photographs can be out of date or aimed at promoting the venue rather than imparting detailed information. The photograph of the venue, for example, may be taken with a wide-angle lens so all the facilities are included. Such a photograph may not give a realistic view of the site if it is being used for event design.

As with many aspects of supplier selection, the Internet has had a significant effect on venue choice. Using a search engine is often the first action in the investigation of a suitable venue. Some websites display a choice of venues once certain information (such as size of audience, approximate location and type of event) has been entered. The major hotels, conventions and exhibition centres, universities and purpose-built venues have websites to enable the matching of event requirements to venue characteristics. However, this method has the same limitations as those of using photos and brochures to assess a venue. The websites are a tool for selling the venue, not a technical description. In addition, many suitable venues may not have an Internet presence. An Internet search will show only venues that expect to host events. If the event is truly special, the event venue may be part of that theme. A car park or a rainforest, for example, will not appear in a search for event venues.

5.4 Audience and guests

The event staging considerations concerning the audience are:

- position of entrances and exits
- arrival times – dump or trickle
- seating and sight lines
- facilities

Goldblatt (1997) emphasises the importance of the entrance and reception area of an event in establishing the event theme, and suggests the organiser should look at it from the guest's point of view. It is in this area that appropriate signage and meeting and greeting become important to the flow of 'traffic' and to the wellbeing of the guests. An example of a carefully planned entrance area was entered through the mouth of a large dragon.

Once the guests have entered the event area, problems can occur that are specific to the type of event. In the case of conferences, audiences immediately head for the back rows. Interestingly, Graham, Goldblatt and Delpy (1995, p. 65) mention the opposite problem occurs at sports events, where the front rows are rushed as soon as the gates open. The solution, therefore, is in the type of admission – for example, organisers can adopt reserved

seating methods, using ticket numbers or roped-off sections and a designated seating plan. The style of seating can be chosen to suit the event; theatre, classroom and banquet-type seating are three examples. Ultimately, the seating plan has to consider:

- the type of seating – fixed or movable
- the size of the audience
- the method of audience arrival
- safety factors, including emergency exits and fire regulations
- the placement and size of the aisles
- sight lines to the performances, speakers or audiovisual displays
- disabled access
- catering needs

The facilities provided for the guests will depend on the type of event.

5.5 The stage

A stage at an event is rarely the same as a theatrical stage. It can range from the back of a truck to a barge in a harbour. In event management, the term ‘stage’ can be applied to the general staging area and not just to a purpose-built stage. However, all stages require a stage map called the stage plan. The stage plan is simply a bird’s eye view of the performance area, showing the infrastructure, such as lighting fixtures, entrances, exits and power outlets.

The stage manager is the person in control of the performance and responsible for signalling the cues that coordinate the work of the performers.

5.6 Power & Lights

Staging of any event involves large numbers of people. To service this crowd, electricity is indispensable. It should never be taken for granted.

Lighting at a venue has two functions. Pragmatically, lights allow everyone to see what is happening; artistically, they are integral to the design of the event. The general venue or site lighting is important in that it allows all other aspects of staging to take place. For this reason, it is usually the first item on the checklist when organisers decide on a venue.

Once the general venue or site lighting is confirmed, lighting design needs to be considered. The question to ask is when considering lighting are both practical and aesthetic:

- Does the lighting fit in with and enhance the overall event theme?
- Can it be used for ambient lighting as well as performance lighting?
- Is there a back-up?
- What are the power requirements?
- Will it interfere with the electrics of other systems?
- Does it come with a light operator – that is, the person responsible for planning of the lighting with the lighting board?
- What light effects are needed? Can the available lights do this?
- What equipment is needed (for example, trees and cans)?
- How can the lighting assist in the safety and security of the event?

The lighting plot or lighting plan is a map of the venue that shows the type and position of the lighting. As Reid (1995) points out, the decisions that the event manager has to make when creating a lighting plan are:

- placement of the lights
- the type of lights, including floods and follow spots
- where the light should be pointed
- what colours to use

5.7 Sound

The principal reason for having sound equipment at an event is so all the audience can clearly hear the music, speeches and audio effects. The sound system is also used to:

- communicate between the sound engineer and to stage manager
- monitor the sound
- create a sound recording of the event
- broadcast the sound to other venues or through other media, including television, radio and the Internet

This means the type of equipment used needs to be designed according to:

- the type of sound to be amplified. This includes spoken work and music
- the size and make-up of the audience. An older audience, for example, may like the music at a different volume from that preferred by a younger audience
- acoustic properties of the room. Some venues have a bad echo problem, for example.
- the theme of the event. A sound system painted bright silver may look out of place at a black tie dinner.

The choice of size, type and location of the sound speakers at an event can make a difference to the guest's experience of the sound.

5.8 Audiovisual and special effects

Special effects at an event are used to attract attention, generate excitement and sustain interest. In larger festivals, for example, the pyrotechnics become part of the overall logistics planning. Event managers and planners must fully realise the importance of event decoration, scenery and appropriate props as an enhancing tool for the staging of any event.

Because much of the audiovisual and special effects technology is highly complex, it is often 'pre-programmed'. This means that all the lighting, audiovisual and sound 'pre-sets'

– including the changing light and sound levels, and the cueing of video and slide presentations can be fully integrated and set up well in advance. Because these aspects are pre-arranged, including all the cue times, few technicians are needed to control these operations during the event. The disadvantages, however, are that spontaneity can be taken from the event and that, the more complex the technology, the more things can go wrong. Moreover, the technology becomes the master of the cue times, and it is nearly impossible to take advantage of any unforeseen opportunities.

5.9 Props and decoration

Some events are similar to operatic productions in their use of scenery, stage properties (props) and decoration. Skilled use of these elements can make the attendees feel as though they are in an imaginary world. The audience can often enhance this by dressing the part and becoming part of the entertainment. Themed parties, festivals and dinners are a significant combined and their relative emphasis at the event often reflects the personal style of the event company.

5.10 Catering

Catering can be the major element in staging, depending on the theme and nature of an event. Most purpose-built venues already have catering arrangements in place.

In house or contracted?

The advantage of in-house catering is the knowledge of the venue. The advantages of contract catering are: (1) the event manager may have a special arrangement with the caterer that has been built up over time; (2) the event manager can choose all aspects of the catering; and (3) the catering can be tendered out and a competitive bid sought.

Quality control factors to consider

- Appropriateness and enhancement of the event theme
- Menu selection and design, including special diets and food displays
- Quality of staff and supervision
- Equipment, including style and quantity, and selection of in-house or hired
- Cleanliness

- Cultural appropriateness – a major consideration in a culturally diverse society
- Staff-to-guest ratio

Costs

- Are there any guarantees, including those against loss and breakages?
- What are the payment terms?
- Who is responsible for licences and permits: the caterer, the venue or event management?
- What deposits and upfront fees are there?
- What is the per capita expenditure? Is each guest getting value commensurate with the client's expenditure?

Waste management

- Must occur before, during and after the event
- Must confront to health regulations and environment concerns
- Must be appropriate to the event theme

5.11 Performers

The performers at an event can range from music groups to motivation speakers to specially commissioned shows. A performing group can form a major part of an event's design. The major factors to consider when employing artists are listed below:

- Contact – the event's entertainment coordinator need to establish contact only with the person responsible for the employment of the artist or artists. This could be the artist, the agent representing the artist, or the manager of a group. It is important to establish this line of authority at the beginning when working with the artists.
- Staging requirements – a rock band, for example, will have more complex sound requirements than those of a folk singer.

- Availability for rehearsal, media attention and performance – the available times given by the artists' management should include the time needed for artists to set up on stage as well as the time needed to vacate the stage or performance area.
- Accompanying personnel – many artists travel with an entourage that can include technicians, cooks, stylists and bodyguards. It is important to establish their numbers and their roles and needs.
- Contracts and legal requirements – agreements with minimum rates and conditions, the legal structure of the artists, and issues such as workers compensation, tax structure and public liability. Copyright is also important because its ownership can affect the use of the performance for broadcast and future promotions.
- Payment – most performing groups work on the understanding that they will be paid immediately for their services.

5.12 The crew

While a large festival or sporting event will usually rely on the work of volunteers, staging tends to be handled by professionals. Dealing with cueing, working with complex and potentially dangerous equipment and handling professional performers leaves little room for indecision and inexperience. Professionalism is essential when staging an event. The crew is selected by matching the tasks involved to the skills of each crew member and ensuring everyone can work together.

The briefing is the meeting, before the event, at which the crew members are given the briefs, or roles, that match their skills. The names and jobs of the crew members are kept on a contact and responsibility sheet.

5.13 Hospitality

A major part of the package offered to sponsors is hospitality. What will the sponsors expect event management to provide for them and their guests? They may require tickets, food and beverages, souvenirs and gifts. The event may benefit in the long term by also offering hospitality to stakeholders, VIPs and others, including politicians, media units,

media personalities, clients of the sponsor, potential sponsors, partners and local opinion leaders. Anyone offered hospitality is referred to as a guest of the event.

The invitation may be the guest's first impression of the event, so it needs to convey the theme of the event. It should create a desire to attend, as well as impart information.

In their informative work on sports events, Graham, Goldblatt and Delpy (1995, p.84) describe the four stages for achieving success in the provision of hospitality to guests. Stage 1 is to know the guests' expectations. Stage 2 is to exceed the guests' expectations, particularly by providing extra amenities. Stage 3 is to be responsive to changes in the guests' needs during the event. Stage 4 is to evaluate the hospitality at the event so it can be improved next time.

Corporate sponsors may have a variety of reasons for attending the event, and these reasons have to be considered in hospitality planning. Graham, Goldblatt and Delpy (1995) suggest reasons including networking opportunities for business, an incentive for a high sales performance, an opportunity for entertaining possible clients, or just the creation of customer goodwill.

The hospitality experience is particularly important at corporate events. In one sense, such an event is centred around hospitality. Being a private function, there is no public and the members of the audience are the guests. For the guests, hospitality experience is fundamental to the event experience.

5.14 The production schedule

The terms used in the staging of events come from both the theatre and film production. A rehearsal is a run-through of the event, reproducing the actual event as closely as possible. For the sake of 'getting it right on the night', there may also need to be a technical rehearsal and a dress rehearsal. A production meeting, on the other hand, is a get-together of those responsible for producing an event. It involves the stage manager and the event producer, representatives of the lighting and sound crew or audiovisual specialists,

representatives of the performers and the master of ceremonies. It is held at the performance site or stage as near to the time of the event as possible. At this crucial meeting:

- final production schedule notes are compared
- possible last-minute production problems are brought up
- the flow of the event is summarised
- emergency procedures are reviewed
- the compare is introduced and familiarised with the production staff
- the communication system is tested

The production schedule is the main document for staging. It is the main document form which other schedules are created.

5.15 Recording the event

By their nature, special events are ephemeral. A good quality recording of the event is essential for most event companies, because it demonstrates the ability of the organisation and can be used to promote the event company. It can also help in evaluating the event and, if necessary, in settling later disputes, whether of a legal or other nature. The event can be recorded on video, as a sound recording or as photographs.

Recording the event is not a decision that should be left until the last minute; it needs to be factored into the planning of the event. Once an event is played out, there is no going back.

6 ISSUES AND TRENDS

I would like to examine current trends and issues in the event industry. A trend is defined as a general direction in which a company or industry is moving. Issues are problems that are common across the industry. The solution to a number of related issues may result in a trend in the industry. The issues outlined in this chapter have a common thread: they are the growing pains of a young industry. As the industry grows, it absorbs older industries and redefines current ones.

6.1 Societal trends and their impact on events

Throughout the developed world, demographic changes are profoundly affecting societies and, consequently, the types of event that will grow in popularity in the future. According to the World Bank (2004), these trends include the ageing of the population, a dramatic decrease in the birth rate, and a significant increase in migration from less developed countries to developed countries.

The ageing of the population is caused by people living longer as a result of improvements in health care (that is, decrease in the death rate) and a decrease in the number of children born per woman (that is, a decrease in the birth rate). This means family size has reduced and probably will continue to reduce, which increases the disposable income per household. Many developed countries have experienced a really dramatic increase in the average age. The 'age pyramid' in developed countries is no longer a pyramid with the largest number of citizens being the youngest; rather it is bulging around the middle years, as if to represent a stereotypical middle-age spread.

These demographic changes will have several impacts on events produced in the future. As ethnic groups living outside their country of origin increase in number in host countries, the number and scale of events that celebrate these cultures will increase. At the same time, events that celebrate the dominant or mainstream culture will also increase in importance.

The demographic bulge (known sometimes as the baby-boom generation) will also affect future events. This generation's tastes and attitudes were formed in the 1960s and the

music, lifestyle and values from that era, along with the events that celebrate them, will gain even more significance in years to come.

People in developed nations are also becoming much better educated. This should ensure the market for more cerebral events grows as the proportion of university graduates in the population grows.

6.2 The growth of the event industry

A major trend worldwide over the past decade was the growth and expansion of the event industry. Having emerged as an industry in its own right through the 1990s, the event sector continues to grow, fuelled by economic growth and the increase in leisure spending in most western countries. Events may become an essential element of contemporary life, linked inseparably with tourism promotion, government strategies and corporate marketing. Major sporting events, along with the marketing campaigns and controversies that accompany them, feature almost daily in our newspapers and electronic media. Corporate use of event sponsorships and event marketing keep events at the forefront of our awareness. The term 'events', along with the associated management process and industry structure, has considerable currency and profile. Many other areas that were previously seen as distinct – such as meetings, conferences, exhibitions, festivals, major sporting fixtures and corporate functions – are now perceived as part of a wider event industry.

Events become so all encompassing and far reaching that it is almost impossible to accurately gauge to full size of the industry. If a major car company uses an event to launch a new model, it has no responsibility or even desire to notify anyone of this event other than the participants and guests. The event thus remains difficult to identify by anyone attempting to track and quantify the event industry. Nevertheless, evidence of the growth of the industry is overwhelming. The number of events listed by tourism organisations and 'what's on' entertainment directories, compared with the number of 10 years ago, indicates the extent of this increase.

Among the reason for the virtual explosion for the event industry over the past decade are:

- rising levels of disposable income, combined with increasing time pressure, resulting in the demand for structures, high-quality leisure experiences
- increased government awareness of the tourism and economic benefits of events, leading to further development of government event strategies and funding
- growing corporate affluence and awareness of the marketing power of events, leading to increased use of events both for internal staff training and morale building, and as marketing and communications tools.

increased awareness of event management as a cohesive discipline with the ability to focus resources and deliver specific objectives.

6.2.1 Increased demand and supply

This exponential increase in the number of events has created a demand for qualified event managers and for industry suppliers to fill the increasing need for event-related goods and services. The number of venues has increased, both at the level of publicly funded recreation spaces, malls, convention and exhibition centres, and at the level of privately funded meeting facilities in hotels. The need for unique and interesting event spaces has resulted in museums, historic houses, councils, universities and other property holders developing managed special event facilities as an additional revenue stream. A plethora of specialised hire companies, caterers, entertainment agencies, designers, publicists, technical producers, lighting and sound personnel, set builders and pyrotechnics has also risen to meet the needs of this burgeoning new industry. A glance at the Yellow pages telephone directory under categories such as event management companies and event suppliers will reveal the size and scope of this recent phenomenon. Event industry associations and directories have struggled to keep pace with this rate of expansion, and event websites such as specialevents.com and worldofevents.net have taken an increasing role in tracking and communication the growth and changes in the industry.

In competitive marketplace, the supply of goods and services tends to rise to meet perceived demand; so far, the trend in the demand for event services continues to be upward. Whether this trend continues and how the industry might weather any future downturn in the economy remains the subject of speculation.

6.2.2 The growth of corporate events

One area strongly fuelling the expansion is the corporate sector. In the halcyon days of the 1980s boom, many companies became involved in event sponsorship, often tailored to the tastes and interests of senior management. With the recession of the late 1980s and early 1990s, there was a general cutback in spending on event sponsorships. As the financial climate improved through the late 1990s, many large companies re-entered the sponsorship market, but with a grater focus and rigour (Geldard & Sinclair 2000). At a time when traditional advertising was perceived to be losing impact as a result of buyer cynicism and market clutter, events were perceived as a means of cutting through the clutter to reach consumers in terms of their own interests and the areas that were important to them. One sponsor might reach motor sport enthusiasts by sponsoring a car race, for example, or another sponsor might increase the profile of a youth-oriented product by sponsoring a rock concert.

Against the background of increasing corporate affluence, companies also expanded their internal use of events to train and reward staff, improve company morale, educate dealer networks and maintain customer relations. In many instances, the corporate sector wholeheartedly embraced events, but with a new rigour. Events were no longer the prerogative of senior management, but were selected and run by marketing departments, and subject of the same return-on-investment analysis used for other marketing areas such as advertising and direct marketing.

6.2.3 The growth of international event companies

As events became established as a significant component of the marketing mix, they became increasingly subject to rigorous evaluation of their outcomes, leading to the need for standardised event management processes. Companies began to create event

management teams, often within their marketing divisions. Global companies began to streamline their event production to ensure the delivery of a standard event product over different markets and locations. The launch of a new Mercedes Benz model, for example, would employ the same format and style whether conducted in Berlin, Tokyo, London or Sydney. To be able to deliver a standardised global event product to their clients, some of the larger event companies, particularly in the USA, bought out local event companies in different markets – for example, the large US company Jack Morton purchased Caribiner Wavelength in Sydney, retaining the original company director to manage the new Sydney operation. As this trend towards globalised event management continues, the question of local cultures and differences arises. The same event may not be able to be adapted from, say, Los Angeles to Hong Kong without taking careful account of the individual cultural nuances of each location. Arguably, local companies may sometimes be in a better situation to appreciate and respond to these cultural differences, although the process of standardisation seems likely to continue in an increasingly globalised world.

6.3 Recognition of event management as a profession

When considering the event industry, it is easy to be misdirected and believe it is only about events. Events can be compared to any project-based industry. Civil engineering, for example, is not just about the product; it is a description of the process needed to create that product. Event management, therefore, is about the processes that are used to create and sustain the event. Recognition of this process is the basis for recognising event management as a profession.

A profession is characterised by:

- a body of knowledge – this is the library of the profession. It is made up of information from other professions such as logistics, contract management and marketing. Journals and textbooks describe the body of knowledge and continually refine it.
- a methodology – this is made up of a series of processes or tasks, which can be described and taught.
- heuristics – these are ‘rules of thumb’, stories and descriptions of experience that can be learned only ‘on the job’.

Event management is gradually collating and describing these three areas. In the past, the ‘rule of thumb’ was the main way of organising events. The recognition and description of the processes used to create the event – that is, the methodology – is the moment when event management progresses from a skill to a profession.

6.4 Event franchising

With the development and recognition of a management system comes the ability to transfer this system to other events – that is, the ability to franchise. The successful event or festival becomes a model that can be developed into another event anywhere in the world. The value is not only in the single event, it is in the method used to organise the event. Event franchising is common in the sport industry and exhibitions. The Olympic Games is perhaps the largest example. Numerous sports races, such as the Formula 1 Grand Prix, ‘fun runs’ and rough water swims, are also franchises events. Further, some corporate events (such as seminars and conferences) are variations on an original model. An example of successful event franchising is the Night of the Ad Eaters. This started as a small event in France and now takes place in 160 cities across 47 countries, including Mongolia, Mexico and Japan.

Again, the value of a management system is illustrated. Without a system, there is nothing to pass on except personal experience.

6.5 Increasing governments involvement in events

As the benefits and impacts of events have been increasingly recognised, governments at all levels have assumed a growing role in event creation, funding, management and regulation. Most major events – including the Olympic Games and international single sport championships such as those in soccer, athletics, tennis and swimming – are subject to bids by national associations. Given their costs and infrastructure needs, these bids are increasingly supported and/or underwritten by city, state or national governments. The International Olympic Committee has gone so far as to state that bids to host the backing of the host city government. Likewise, many home-grown festivals, community and cultural events seek the financial and organisational support of government assistance through the

provision of infrastructure such as convention and exhibition centres, and the support of convention bureaux able to mount bids and orchestrate resources.

6.5.1 The creation of event strategies

Recognising the social, cultural and economic benefits of these events, but aware of limited funds and conflicting needs, governments at all levels are increasingly devising event strategies to assist policy development and establish funding priorities. The number and extent of these strategies have grown in recent years. This situation is mirrored globally, with Scotland and Denmark among several countries to develop event strategies in the recent past. These strategies set out to identify the role of events in their country/state/city, and to provide police guidelines and action plans for the funding, management, coordination, regulation and promotion of events. These strategies acknowledge the multiple roles of government as event host organisations, funding and regulatory bodies.

6.5.2 Event portfolio management

Most event strategies acknowledge the advantages of a state or city having a balanced portfolio of events spread to across the annual calendar and including different types of event. Well-balanced and well-managed event portfolios have become an indispensable element of city marketing and tourism development, and are increasingly found in most urban and many rural centres.

6.5.3 The coordination of event infrastructure services

Staging major events successfully involves coordination a wide range of infrastructure and support services, including venues, transport and communications, and public authorities such as police, fire, ambulance and emergency services. Many of these services are provided by government, so many event strategies include a 'one-stop' shop to approach to their coordination and management. The staging of major events has increasingly underlined the importance of such coordination.

II. PRACTICAL PART

7 AUSTRALIA EDUCATION CENTRE (AEC)

7.1 Description of the company

Australian Education Centre (AEC) is a company that resulted from the merging of the companies Information Brazil, Australian Centre for Education and Marwaco. They act in the International Students industry in Australia and New Zealand and look after the European, Asian and South American countries. (an AEC logo Enclosure E1)

The Head Office has been opened in the heart of Sydney and branch offices in Bondi Junction, Manly and Auckland to enhance the services provided by other AEC overseas partners by providing guidance and support to the extensive Off Shore Network with over 70 offices.

The AEC main advantage

Many student agencies have offices in the countries where students come from but do not offer any support and assistance when students arrive in Australia. Other agencies only have offices in Australia and cannot fully assist students in the first step of their trip – course purchase, information and trip planning and preparation. AEC is different because it has a network of branches all over the world. AEC is able to offer actual and complete information because it can keep up with all the changes due to its domicile in Australia

7.2 Their services

Their company services different sectors such as:

- clients (students and tourists)
- overseas partners – agents
- education providers – schools, colleges and universities

7.2.1 Services to educational providers (language schools, colleges, universities,...)

- On and off shore marketing
- Exhibition and seminars

- On-line portals
- Creating marketing strategies for their markets
- Australian Information Centre Management
- Continuous updates and reports about their markets
- The provider will deal with their extensive network through the Head Office in Sydney
- Head Office will minimize the Administration Cost of the Provider
- Online Database to give access to Providers for updating their courses, fees, promotions, photos, etc.

7.2.2 Services to agents

- Agents's manual
- Online Database to enroll and manage their students
- Good advice of Providers
- Communication with Australian Providers
- Enrolments and re-enrolments
- Payments
- Accommodation booking and Airport pick-ups
- Continuous staff training
- Agent tours
- Exhibitions and seminars

7.2.3 Services to students

- Education and Counselling services
- Work assistance, Advice and Job Placements
- Orientation Services – immediate help after arrival at the airport or the first day at the office
- Online registration for tax file number

- Obtaining visa with permission to work
- Internship services through our business partners in Australia
- Information services (Embassies, hospitals ...)
- Mobile phones – help, choices and possible rental
- Professional hospitality and retail work
- Advice about opening bank account
- Immigration and visa advice
- Parties for students
- Accommodation Services
- Airport pick-up
- Free Guidance
- Free Internet
- And more...

7.3 Product

The only income comes from from schools as a commission fee as soon as the student is enrolled in the course. So the AEC products are: courses, internships, work and study programs

7.3.1 Courses

AEC and their agencies overseas (partners) sell courses in the following categories:

English Courses

- General English Courses - English for everyday life, for General Communication, English for Academic Purposes – a course for people who will do further studies in University (undergraduate or Post Graduate Courses)
- Cambridge Preparation Courses - courses that specifically prepare students for the Cambridge Examinations. There are several examinations, the main 3 being the FCE

(first Certificate in English), CAE (Certificate in Advanced English) and CPE (Proficiency)

- IELTS preparation Courses - IELTS means International English Language Testing System. It is also managed by the University of Cambridge and is the “official” examination for Australia.
- Business English

VET Courses

VET means Vocational Education & Training. This is a course that enables the student to work in his/her area of choice after studying but don't give them a Bachelor Degree like a Uni would do. Student gets a Diploma, a Certificate IV or a Certificate III, according to how long he/she studies. VET Courses are ministered in COLLEGES

Bachelor Degrees in Universities (Undergraduate)

There are courses in all areas you can think of.

Post Graduation courses and Masters

There are different kinds of courses:

- GRADUATE CERTIFICATE COURSE: takes normally 6 months. It is a post graduation level course. Student has an option, most of the times, to upgrade for the next levels
- GRADUATE DIPLOMA COURSE: normally takes a year and can be followed on to a Master Degree

Master DEGREE: takes from 1, 1 and a half years to 2 years

7.3.2 Internship Programs

AEC represents ISPC – a company that finds unpaid Work experience for Internationals in Australian Companies.

7.3.3 Work and Study Programs

The English School ELC – English Language Company, works in combination with a job agency, Worldwide Workers, which specializes in finding work for foreigners in Australia, either on a Working Holiday Visa or a Student Visa.

Special events are the main promotion used by AEC. Every year they set up a few corporate dinners for managers of Sydney educational providers, they participate in special meetings with agents and students overseas. But student parties are the most popular events holded by AEC. There are hip-hop parties, birthday parties and reputable Brazilian parties.

7.4 AEC Marketing Communications

The main marketing communications tools of AEC are sales promotion, direct marketing.

7.4.1 Sales promotion

AEC uses many different discounts as its sales promotion activities. Every student who uses AEC services gets from 10% to 20% discount of every commission which AEC gets from a school. They get another 5% if the student stays with AEC for more than 1 year.

7.4.2 Direct marketing

The main tool is an AEC database. It contains approximately 2500 active clients of AEC. There are many important information about a client in the database such as a client name, address in Australia, address in her/his home country, phone number, visa status, visa expire date, her/his course information, plans about future school. The student advisors can add some other personal notes about client like her/his hobby, date of birth, what she or he likes or dislikes. The AEC clients are informed about new offers, discounts, new courses, payment procedures documentation and parties thru this database. It is also possible to wish happy birthday or name day because database reminds about it and offers sending an e-post card.

AEC uses some other marketing communication as well. There are also a personal selling, advertising and special events.

7.4.3 Personal selling

The personal selling is the way how AEC gets its money. And all these depend on a verbal communication and selling talent of AEC sales agents – AEC student advisors. Personal selling brings AEC other advantages as a feedback, personal contact and also strengthening relations between AEC and its client or potential client.

7.4.4 Advertising

AEC does not use many form of advertising. Maybe just some promotional materials like flyers (Enclosure E II) and a guide for new students. Both contain similar information about services which AEC provides. Both have been made with a few failings – they do not follow the rules of Corporate Design and contain too much information as well.

7.4.5 Special events

Special events are an expensive part of the communication mix but most of the expenses are paid from entrance fees and that is the big advantage. AEC sells their T-Shirts during the parties and this also covers the expenses. Sometimes happens that the party is for-profit so it becomes one of the sources of income.

The main event is Brazilian party which takes place every 3 months. Party is organized for all students and AEC customers and public. There are a few more parties like birthday parties or some small parties with many different kind of music like house, electronic, dance music parties ... Every year they also set up a few corporate dinners for managers of Sydney educational providers, they participate in special meetings with agents and students overseas.

Brazilian party

I would like to describe one of the special events of AEC which is the Brazilian party. The party took place just a month after I had arrived. As I was not a part of an AEC team at the time when the production started I can describe how the production looked like.

The party took place on Friday 28 January 2005 in Sport Bar in Darling Harbour which is just in a heart of Sydney city. The beginning was at 10 PM but the bar had been opened

from 8 o'clock in the evening. Tickets for the show were selling in an advance-sale for \$15 and during the show for \$20.

At 10 PM the show started. Five Brazilian drummers were staying in front of the bar just at the very beginning of the party. There were two reasons for having them over there. They announced the beginning of the show and attracted more and more people to attend the party. The drummers were playing Brazilian rhythms. Then they moved inside the building a half an hour later and continued playing. They were accompanied by Brazilian go-go dancers who were dressed in traditional carnival costumes. DJs were playing South American rhythms together with a Brazilian dance music and world hits as well all evening.

In the middle of the night there was one person balloted of the people who filled the competition tickets up. The winner got a professional surf board. All evening ended at 4 AM. There were 2000 people at the party so it means that a capacity of the area was used completely.

Positives of the production and the party

- Brazilian theme is in Australia very popular so the success and heavy attendance are guaranteed even if the production is not the best.
- The people, who worked on the party, were primarily from Brazil - the people knew their own culture and habits.
- The venue in Darling Harbour – the most popular part of Sydney
- The advance sale of the tickets – Producers could guess how many people were planning to visit the party

Negatives of the production and the party

- There was no time for the party production; they had started just one month before the party was hold.
- There was so many of stressful moments just due to lack of time

- There was no special team created just for the party, one of the company directors was looking after the production from its beginning to the end. But he did not have ample time due to his duties to the company
- There was no regular meetings
- The meetings and changes were not recorded
- We could see that there was no a professional designer when we have a look at the flyers and tickets (Enclosure E III)
- During the show we could not see the corporate colours, there were just a few posters with a logo of AEC
- The interior was not created in Brazilian colours also, there was just a flag together with coloured sheets placed on the walls and ceilings but a general impression was not “nice” (Enclosure E IV)

III. PROJECT PART

8 INTERNATIONAL UNDERWATER FANTASY

I would like to describe a party which we are working on at this moment. This party is supposed to be one of the best and biggest parties in Sydney. It is called International Underwater Fantasy. This show is going to be an incentive event for approximately 3000 visitors – students of Sydney colleges, universities, language schools and educational providers - of the AEC. It is staged at the Cargo bar in Darling Harbour, Sydney on 7 October 2005. It is produced by AEC with an assistance of a special event professional, Lena Malouf. The director of AEC has seen documentation of a previous price-winning event held at the Cargo bar by Sydney event producer and designer Lena Malouf, and has also seen an underwater dive show in Perth, which sparked the concept for Underwater Fantasy.

8.1 Event objectives

The main objectives of the client are to:

- Produce an event that transported the guests into an underwater fantasy, thus providing AEC Sydney with the opportunity to showcase their company to international students and educational providers in Sydney
- Public awareness
- Improve the relations with educational providers, student and other public
- Provide new information about the company
- Bring AEC staff together outside the office setting
- Opportunity to bring staff (student advisors) and their clients (educational providers) together
- Media attention
- Attracting new clients

8.2 Budget

The budget is planned to be about \$60.000. At this time I do not dispose of exact numbers of the budget but can say what are the money going to be be spend for:

- Venue rentals
- Rehearsal costs

- Beverage for VIP
- Food for VIP
- Décor
- Entertainment
- Staging
- Audio-visual
- Lighting
- Special effects
- Photographer
- Place cards
- Communication costs
- Promotional material
- Miscellaneous

There is no charge for following because good relations with the owner of Cargo bar and those facilities and services are part of the bar:

- Insurance
- Music
- Security
- Labour charges
- Power charges
- Staffing

8.3 Creating the event theme

To create the theme and look of the underwater event, research was undertaken on colours, sea life and ocean embellishment, and then interpreted in theatrical terms through sets and props. The design uses monochromatic harmony with accent colours to interpret the underwater theme. The effect is designed to delight the visitors because of their love of sea life and beaches in Australia. The design aimed for a balance between form and function. The implementation of the themed work is not going to interfere with guests' walkways, entertainment activities or technical use.

When the guests arrive, they will be welcome by a waiting 10-piece brass band in uniform and large signage. They are going to be guided through to the pre-function area and the VIPs are going to be directed to an upper lounge for cocktails. Decor and music are in dance style, but the interior of the venue is going to be the important highlight.

Guests are going to enter the main function room through dramatic balloon tunnels. Beautiful visual effects are created by balloon artistry and lighting washes. Colourful foil fish, turtles, sharks and mini whales are suspended 3 – 6 meters above the dance floor and tables. They are going to waft and move gently (due to air flow caused by the venue's air-conditioning), not only filling the space, but providing the spectacle of a 'sea of fish' as guests ascend the stairs from the balloon tunnel. The bars and tables are styled at different levels, the setting including the embellishment of high-style sand, shells, weeds, glass bubbles, fish and other underwater themes.

The hand railing surrounding the floor area is going to be decorated with more than 100 panels of blue, green, turquoise, salmon and pink 'coral', outlined by masses of fairy lights.

The waiters and bartenders are going to be dressed as the fish, mermaid and water heads. There is going to be a dive show to take a place including everything from high dives to synchronized swimming, and concluding with a Houdini-style underwater escape. The visitors can watch all these through a glass wall because the Cargo bar is placed just at the water of Sydney harbour.

The focus then is going to be shifted to the other side of the room, where the lights are going to dim and a woman dressed in a suit of mirrors is going to suspend high above the visitors. Lasers are fired at her and reflected across the room, much to the visitors' delight. The program is not going to be long because visitors are there to have fun and dance. SO dance music is going to follow all these till the early morning hours.

8.4 Promotion of the event

At this moment the promotional material is not done yet. I would like to announce what the planned promotion is:

- Posters & Flyers – they are going to be placed at all Sydney colleges, universities and language institutes 2 weeks before the date of the party
- Posters – a few big posters (1,5ms x 2.5ms) placed at Cargo bar for three weeks before the party (two of them at the front, two inside)
- TNT magazine – an advertisement in an Australian student magazine, a barter partner
- Party tickets - \$20 each, with logos of company, party, partners
- Invitation cards – for managers of educational institutes, they are going to be posted together with two tickets to a VIP zone.

8.5 The risk and success factors

There is always some risk when doing a special event. We can not have any influence of many factors, for example, weather, but we trying to do our best for the success.

I see the success of the event due to several key factors:

The chain of command is established and maintained

The executive producer and producer remained in close communication

Changes are recorded, but paperwork flowed.

Meetings are held weekly, bi-weekly and monthly

All the meetings are organized with full written agenda.

Projects and tasks are listed, tackled and completed in bite-size pieces

All contractors are kept in the loop and notified of all changes.

The project follows the rules of corporate design

The professional graphic designer has been hired

The plans has been made in corporate colours

At the venue there are planned to be logos of AEC, all the staff is going to have the AEC logo placed at their uniforms.

The venue has got a very good position; it is just at the Sydney “fun” centre, at the water, close to the transportation and just next to a taxi stand.

The Cargo bar has got its own light and sound system, the dance floors are placed in different levels so it helped the designers to created very interesting interior with minimum expenses.

CONCLUSION

It has been told already that a planning of a special event is like making an Oscar winning movie. The production of an event is like production of a movie – there is many key factors which can not be forgotten, for example a size of our event, we have think about its possible impact because it could be very important. We also have to take consideration that an event needs its marketing planning and that staging event need a really good production. My company AEC has found out all these as well. Their past special events were popular but were not bringing as much benefits as they were able to. I became a part of a very good team who is working on the big event now which is able to be the most successful student party in the year.

In general a sphere of special events is growing and becoming more and more important in communication mix.

Why this dramatic growth in events? People want a lifestyle experience, an activity in which they can participate and walk away with a positive feeling based on that participation. They want that experience to be interesting, memorable and unique to their particular psychographic (reflecting the activities, interests and opinions of specific populations) tastes.

Events are no longer just fairs, concerts or trade shows. Events are now a conglomeration of a variety of activities. Entertainment, events and sports are all converging--just think of the Olympic Games. Is that an event? Entertainment? Sports? It is all three and that trend will continue as people come to expect more and more from their event experiences.

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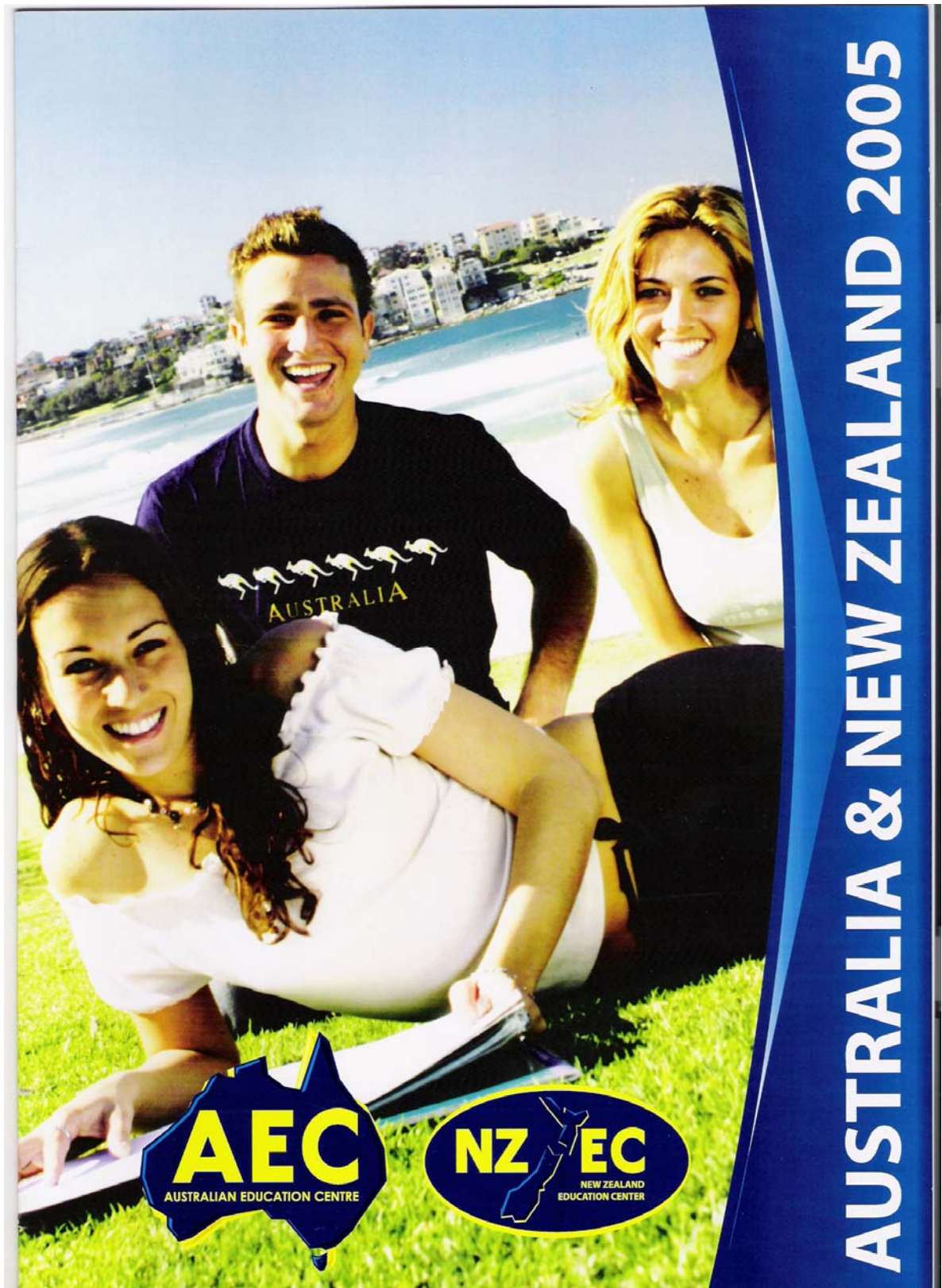
LIST OF ENCLUSURES

- E I AEC logo
- E II AEC information flyer – a front page
- E III A brazilian party flyer
- E IV Photos from brazilian party.

ENCLOSURE E I: AEC LOGO



**ENCLOSURE E II: AN AEC INFORMATION FLYER – A FRONT
PAGE**



ENCLOSURE E III: A BRAZILIAN PARTY FLYER

AEC
AUSTRALIAN EDUCATION CENTRE

Information Brazil

AEC & Information Brazil proudly present:

Brazilian Carnaval Party

Brazilian Drummers
Beautiful People
lots of Hot Rhythms
2 parties*
Brazilian Live Band
Live DJ

Main Party
Friday February 4th
at One World Sports Bar
(Darling Harbour)
From 9 pm

Hang Over Party
Tuesday February 8th
at Aqualounge Bar
(Manly Beach)
From 8 pm

Main party: \$15 in advance / \$20 at the door
Hang Over: \$5 in advance / \$10 at the door
Don't forget - BRING YOUR PASSPORT

the REAL BRAZILIAN carnival
CIAIR NA FOLIA COM MUITA GENTE BONITA E MUITA AZARACHA

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ENCLOSURE E IV: PHOTOS FROM THE BRAZILIAN PARTY

