

BBA (TOURISM) IV Semester

Subject: Event Management in Tourism

BTA 403

UNIT II

EVENT PLANNING

Planners of an event may handle any or all of the following tasks related to that event:

- Conducting research
- Creating an event design
- Finding a site
- Arranging for food, decor and entertainment
- Planning transportation to and from the event
- Sending invitations to attendees
- Arranging any necessary accommodations for attendees
- Coordinating the activities of event personnel
- Supervising at the site
- Conducting evaluations of the event

How many of these activities a business engages in will depend on the size and type of a particular event, which will, in turn, depend on the chosen specialization..

Any large event takes planning, but with the help of a team it is possible to create a very successful event. First off, a number of questions must be answered. What is the vision and purpose behind the event? What are some ways one can accomplish the goal? When is the best time to hold this event? How many people does one want to attend? Where can one accommodate the number of people at the time the event is held? How much money will the event cost? How much money is available, and from where will it come? These are all important questions that must be answered, but by answering each of these questions in turn, the planning team can create a successful event.

step-by-step process to develop a successful event:

1. Identify Goal
2. Plan
3. Finance
4. Schedule
5. Publicize
6. Implement
7. Evaluate

GIVEN IN THE FIGURE BELOW ARE THE STEPS INVOLVED IN THE PROCESS OF EVENT PLANNING:



EVENT PLANNERS

Why Do People Hire Event Planners?

This question has a simple answer: Individuals often find they lack the expertise and time to plan events themselves. Independent planners can step in and give these special events the attention they deserve.

Who Becomes An Event Planner?

Planners are often people who got their start in one particular aspect of special events. Business owner Martin V.K. had a successful catering company before he decided to plan entire events. Many other planners have similar stories. This explains why planners often not only coordinate entire events but may, in addition, provide one or more services for those events.

Event planners may also have started out planning events for other companies before deciding to go into business for themselves. Joyce B.W. planned in-house events for a retail chain for 11 years and then worked for another event planning company before striking out on her own.

Becoming Certified (Availing technical education and training)

Degree or certificate from a university in event planning or management gives the basic skills required to understand the industry. There are an increasing number of universities which offer courses in event management, including diplomas and graduate degrees. In addition to these academic courses, there are many associations and societies that provide courses on the various aspects of the industry. Study includes organizational skills, technical knowledge, P.R., marketing, advertising, catering, logistics, decor, glamour identity, human relations, study of law and licenses, risk management, budgeting, study of allied industries like television, other media and several other areas.. **A list of colleges and universities offering educational opportunities in this field is available from Meeting Professionals International (MPI).**

Certification can be acquired from various sources to obtain designations such as Certified Trade Show Marketer (CTSM), Certified Manager of Exhibits (CME), Certified in Exhibition Management (CEM), Global Certification in Meeting Management (CMM), Certified Meeting Professional (CMP) and the Certified Special Event Professional (CSEP).

One may consider working to become a CSEP (Certified Special Events Professional) or CMP (Certified Meeting Planner). These designations are given out by ISES and MPI, respectively. Many corporations, and some members of the general public, look for these designations when hiring planners. Because of the research and study it takes to become a CSEP or CMP, clients know that these planners are professionals.

PROFILE OF EVENT PLANNERS:

Event planners go by many different job titles, but the core function of their work all falls within the realm of events management. Anyone interested in becoming an event planner should begin the path by understanding that it is not party planning. This is the case whether considering a path with social events or corporate events. The final program may appear as if the profession is about throwing great parties, but the event planning professional focuses on the rationale or goal of having an event, and whether it is achieved. And the real work is in the details that lead up to the event. The event planner creates programs that address the purpose, message or impression that their organization or client is trying to communicate.

Event planners work long and non-traditional hours to plan and execute all details related to a variety of meeting formats including seminars, conferences, trade shows, executive retreats, incentive programs, golf events, conventions, and other programs.

SKILLS: Successful event planners develop the following skills:

- Verbal and written communications
- Organization and time management
- Project management and multi-tasking
- Self-starter and team player
- Understand Microsoft Office applications
- Detail and deadline-oriented
- Calm and personable under pressure
- Negotiation
- Budget management
- Staff management
- Marketing and public relations
- Interpersonal skills with all levels of management

KNOWLEDGE

Successful event planners will develop the following knowledge:

- Venue selection
- Catering
- Production
- Entertainment
- Gifts
- Transportation
- Lodging
- Conference Services

Those who pursue a career in event planning come from a variety of professions and academic backgrounds. Many employers prefer a bachelor's degree in hospitality management, business administration, marketing, public relations, or communications. However, many successful planners begin in other professions or enter through administrative roles that include meeting planning responsibilities.

STARTUP COSTS

How much money will one need to start an event planning business? That will depend on the cost of living in the area the business serves and whether one works from home or rent office space. It will also depend, to a lesser degree, on one's own taste and lifestyle choices.

Keep in mind that while working from home will keep the costs low, one can't start any but the smallest of event planning businesses on a shoestring.

This chart lists the startup costs for two hypothetical event-planning services. The first business is homebased and has no employees. The high-end business occupies 500 square feet of office space. The owner/manager of this business employs a full-time junior planner and a part-time bookkeeper, as well as temporary employees who handle clerical work and who may help prepare for various events. Both owners will derive their income from pre-tax net profit. Annually, these businesses will gross \$78,000 and \$185,000, respectively. The startup table lists pre-opening costs for the businesses.

Startup Expenses

- Rent
- Equipment
- Inventory
- Licenses and Taxes
- Communications
- Payroll
- Advertising/Promotion
- Legal Fees & Accounting
- Insurance
- Miscellaneous

Few, if any, event planners have 9-to-5 jobs. By its very nature, event planning tends to involve evenings, weekends, holidays and sometimes even specific seasons. How much time must be committed to working will depend, once again, on the chosen specialization.

As a general rule, social events involve more weekends and holidays than corporate events do. Some areas of the country and some types of events have "on" and "off" seasons. However, no matter what the specialization one can count on working at least some evenings as one coordinates and supervises events. The planning of those events, however, will be done mostly during business hours.

EVENT PLANNER: DUTIES

Here are the main tasks as an event planner:

- *Research.* The best way to reduce risk (whatever the kind) is to do the homework. For large events, research may mean making sure there's a demand for the event by conducting surveys, interviews or

focus group research. If new to the event planning industry, research may instead mean finding out all one can about vendors and suppliers. Research also may mean talking to other planners who have produced events similar to the one on which one is working on.

- Whatever kind of event is being planned, research should include asking the client a lot of questions and writing down the answers. Interviewing a client may not be what one immediately thinks of as research. However, asking too few questions, or not listening adequately to a client's answers, can compromise the success of the event planned.
- *Design.* Creativity comes most into play in the design phase of event planning, during which one sketches out the overall "feel" and "look" of the event. This is the time to brainstorm, with the employees. It's also the time to pull out and look through the idea file. The planner should consult the notebook for the client's answers to the questions asked in the research phase. These responses, especially the one regarding the event budget, will help the planner thoroughly check each idea for feasibility, preferably before suggesting it to the client.
- *Proposal.* Once the planner has interviewed the client and done some preliminary brainstorming, he/she should have enough information to prepare a proposal. Be aware that the production of a proposal is time-consuming and potentially expensive, especially if photographs or sketches are included. Only the larger companies producing high-end events can afford to provide clients with free proposals. Planners should receive a consultation fee, which can be applied toward a client's event if he or she hires the firm.
- *Organization.* During this decision-intensive phase, the planner rents the site, hires vendors and takes care of more details than he/she might believe possible. But before doing any of this, the planner must make sure to have a contact person (either the client or someone acting on the client's behalf) with whom he/ she can discuss all major decisions. Having a designated individual helps ensure that communication lines are kept open. Also, social events in particular sometimes suffer from the "too many cooks" syndrome. Having one designated contact helps avoid being caught in the middle of disagreements between event participants.

Generally speaking, the bigger the event, the more lead time that's required to plan it. Major conventions are planned years in advance.

- *Coordination.* After making the initial plans, the planner must turn attention to each of the activities that form a part of the overall event. At this point, the goal is to ensure that everyone is on the same wavelength. Good communication skills are important. Make sure all vendors have at least a general idea of the overall event schedule. Even more important, vendors should be clear about what's expected of them, and when. Vendor arrival times should appear in the contracts, but verify those times anyway. This is a "check and recheck" period. Make sure all all staff members know their roles.
- *Evaluation.* The obvious, and in one sense the most important, test of an event's success is customer satisfaction. The goal, of course, is to end up with a client who will sing praises.. This is the client who will hire again, and who will provide that famous word-of-mouth advertising for the firm.

EVENT MANAGER & HIS/HER ROLE

The event manager is the person who plans and executes the event. Event managers and their teams are often behind-the-scenes running the event. Event managers may also be involved in more than just the planning and execution of the event, but also brand building, marketing and communication strategy. The event manager is an expert at the creative, technical and logistical elements that help an event succeed. This includes event design, audio-visual production, scriptwriting, logistics, budgeting, negotiation and, of course, client service. It is a multi-dimensional profession.

The event manager may become involved at the early initiation stages of the event. If the event manager has budget responsibilities at this early stage they may be termed an event or production executive. The early stages include:

- Site surveying
- Client Service
- Brief clarification
- Budget drafting
- Cash flow management
- Supply chain identification
- Procurement
- Scheduling
- Site design
- Technical design
- Health & Safety

An event manager who becomes involved closer to the event will often have a more limited brief. The key disciplines closer to the event are

- Health & Safety including crowd management,
- Logistics
- Rigging
- Sound
- Light
- Video
- Detailed scheduling
- Security

EVENT COORDINATION & ROLE OF EVENT COORDINATOR

Regardless of the type and size of the event, the event planner should establish a formal “event committee” consisting of committed members who are clear about their skills and what they are prepared to contribute. The event committee may consist of other members of the organisation, members of other organisation if it is a joint event, volunteers and other interested parties. The size of the committee is dependent on the size and complexity of the event.

One person should lead the project as the Event Coordinator. This person needs to lead and make the final call on all decisions and take on the overall responsibility of the event and should be clear to all that are involved with the event.

The event coordinator will need to be well organised, a good leader with great communication skills and able to generate enthusiasm. It is their responsibility to keep track of the event as a whole and to assign tasks to the event committee.

Delegation of duties and tasks is crucial. As early as possible outline the responsibilities of each member, their tasks, their deadlines, the resources available to them, reliance on other members for support and any interdependency of tasks. Open and clear communication is necessary to ensure tasks are completed.

Unless the coordinator is completely familiar with a venue already and knows the sales and management team in place, it's important to fully review a site in person before signing any agreements. Coordinator should have a checklist to make sure not to overlook any important details.

And to help keep organized, the coordinator should also keep the basic contact information about that venue on the same document so as to refer back to it in case there is a need to call any of the key contacts for any reason.

EVENT PLANNERS CHECKLIST

should include items about the hotel amenities, facilities, A/V, food and beverage, and budget.

Asking about amenities. When meeting with a venue sales manager, it's important to make sure that the property allows the event planner to incorporate some on-site promotion for the event. The sales manager of the hotel/ venue should explain limitations or availability of the following:

- Ability to display banners/signage/directional signs.
- Any restrictions to displaying event information.
- Availability of concierge/information desks.
- On-site business center and office services (request list & prices).
- Shipping and receiving services requirements.
- House phones in meeting rooms.

Viewing the facilities. The venue should be updated and its facilities manager should anticipate any situation. Consider the following:

- Condition of the grounds and parking.
- Condition of carpet, paint, and decor.
- Condition and appropriately sized draperies/skirting.
- Adequate room size and capacity to hold event.
- Flexibility to adjust room layout/tables.
- No visual obstructions within room.
- Indoor lighting (flexibility to adjust/dim sections).
- Ability to control natural light.
- Limited noise distractions in hallways/behind walls.
- Event room away from kitchen.
- Nearby restroom access.
- Nearby medical access.

Inquiring about audio/visual & equipment. Nearly every event incorporates one or more elements of A/V. Confirm the availability of each of the following:

- High speed Internet access (wired/wireless).
- Microphones: lavalier system and standing (# needed).
- LCD projectors and hand-held remotes.
- Appropriate screen sizes and draping options.
- Flat screen monitors, TV screens for video needs.
- Easels, white boards and supplies.
- Outlets (# and locations throughout room).

Exploring all catering options. It is of utmost importance to select the right food and beverage for an event. The venue sales manager will have great suggestions, but event planners should make sure they know the full range of choices. Confirming the following is important:

- Full service on-site kitchen operation.
- Detailed menu & serving options.
- Meet the executive chef if possible.

- Taste test the the menu you're considering.

Document the event budget. Compile all expense items, including the following:

- Meeting facility costs.
- Catering costs.
- A/V & equipment rental costs.
- Office services costs.
- Guarantee policy.
- Complimentary services.
- Payment options.

EVALUATION OF AN EVENT

Steps Involved in Writing the Evaluation of an Event

Event evaluation is necessary to make you and your team more efficient and effective, the next time you organize an event. It is all about finding your mistakes and learning from them.

Event evaluation should be done immediately after the event is over or the next day. Conduct a meeting with your team members to evaluate your event.

Step 1: Determine the extent to which event and advertising objectives have been achieved.

If you are not able to achieve your event and advertising objectives through your event, then no matter how much people enjoyed the event or how much popularity your event got, it is a complete failure on a commercial level.

Step 2: Get feedback from your clients and target audience.

One good way of getting feedback is through feedback form. To make sure that your clients give you feedback, make the feedback form part of your Exit pass form. The exit pass form is required to get exit pass for security clearance, to remove exhibits from the facility.

To get feedback from target audience/ guests, make feedback form part of your gift voucher. A guest can redeem the gift voucher only when he/she fills the feedback form and give it back to an attendant. These tactics are required to get feedback, as people are generally reluctant to give any feedback in writing.

Event planners can ask following questions in the feedback form:

Q1) Did you enjoy the event? If no, then please state the reason.

Q2) what do you like most in the event?

Q3) what do you like least in the event?

Q4) what are the problems you faced during the event?

Q5) what could have been done to make this event better?

Q6) How do you rate the various services provided by us (please check one of the option):

Hospitality:	Excellent, good, average, poor
Catering:	Excellent, good, average, poor
Transportation:	Excellent, good, average, poor
Management staff behavior:	Excellent, good, average, poor
Management staff services:	Excellent, good, average, poor

Q7) would you like to participate in our next event?

Note: Your questionnaire should not have more than 10 questions. You don't want to irritate your guests. Ask only relevant questions and keep the questionnaire short to 5-6 questions. Of course the type of questions you will ask may change from event to event.

MARKETS FOR EVENT PLANNING SERVICES

The Corporate Market - Broadly speaking, there are two markets for event planning services: corporate and social. The term "corporate" includes not only companies but also charities and nonprofit organizations. Charities and nonprofit organizations host gala fundraisers, receptions and athletic competitions, among other events, to expand their public support base and raise funds. Thousands of these events occur each year, and although the large ones require specialized event planning experience, you may find smaller local events to start out with.

Companies host trade shows, conventions, company picnics, holiday parties and meetings for staff members, board members or stockholders. In one year alone, the total number of meetings held in the United States was almost 1 million, according to a Meetings Market Report conducted by Market Probe International Inc. for Meeting & Conventions Magazine. The same report showed that organizations spent a total of \$40.8 billion on meetings that same year.

The Social Market - Social events include weddings, birthdays, anniversary parties, bar and bat mitzvahs, Sweet 16 parties, children's parties, reunions and so on. You may decide to handle all these events or just specialize in one or more of them.

The market for social events, especially birthdays and anniversaries, is expected to continue to increase over the next few years, as baby boomers mature. This group has children getting married, parents celebrating golden anniversaries, and their own silver wedding anniversaries to commemorate the day.