

# 1

# THE PLANNING PHASE

## CHAPTER OVERVIEW

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This chapter is designed to introduce the concepts of real events from a practical perspective and to analyse the three distinct phases of the event process, with specific focus on the planning phase. It will also discuss the various sectors of the industry, i.e., corporate, charitable and fundraising events, private parties, weddings, exhibitions, festivals, and conferences, and explore the features associated with each of these categories. The chapter will explore the structure of the industry, in terms of the role and relationship between the client or buyer, the supplier and the agency or intermediary, and will examine the progress from early events to the multinational industry it has become today. It will also examine stakeholder liaison. These issues will also be explored further throughout the book.

## CHAPTER OBJECTIVES

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- Objective 1: The Event Cycle
- Objective 2: The Planning Process
- Objective 3: Managing Stakeholders
- Objective 4: The Structure of the Industry
- Objective 5: The Changing Face of Events

## MEET CLAIRE MACCARRON



*CIPD Associate, Ministry of Defence, Team Manager Dorset and Wiltshire Girls Rugby Under 16s and RFU Volunteer of the Year*

Away from her army day job, Claire has always enjoyed watching rugby, and whilst working on a job in Northern Ireland she took the plunge, went to a club, and met some people that inspired her to become a volunteer rugby referee, a coach, and a team manager, whilst achieving the highest awards she could on her journey.

Over that summer the girls' team started to grow. After two years she was asked to coach at Kingdown Academy in Warminster and on her first training session over 46 girls attended. That year the girls from her team attended County Trials and a number of them were selected.

- By Year 3: She had approximately 25–30 girls a week at training sessions and they also attended County Clusters to meet other teams; to be able to play and train together. At the end of that year the U15s attended their first Rugby 7s competition and came in third place. Due to the all the positive work and the massive impact this had on the girls, a further selection of their female players was picked for Dorset and Wilts County Team at U15 and U18 level.
- By Year 4: A number of girls had moved on to larger clubs to further their careers in rugby. Although this was difficult, it was great to see how they were using their talent for bigger and better things. The girls went from strength to strength, achieving greatness at county level once again. Claire was awarded RFU Volunteer of the Year.
- By Year 5: Having achieved so much with the girl's rugby team, Claire decided to step down at the end of this season. Two of her greatest success stories: a girl who went on to Imperial College and became the club captain, and eventually Oxford Blue. Also, a girl who had left the club in year 4, was selected to go to Gloucester Hartpury College, and was later selected for the England U18s girls' rugby team.

## Q&A

- *What is your leadership style?*  
I think my passion helps teach the girls to perform better. I generally lead the training with humour, but also get them to join in and let them take the lead, but whilst still keeping an eye on what they are doing.

- *Motto to live by?*  
Life is not a dress rehearsal; I never want to think when I am older 'what if'.
- *Proudest achievement?*  
Coaching a girl all the way from grassroots to her selection for the England U18's team.
- *Favourite sporting event?*  
I was selected to referee an international game in The Netherlands. It was Netherlands v. Germany Ladies, and the game was filmed.
- *Best holiday experience?*

Tanzania and Zanzibar with my sister – living in tents on a safari, just brilliant!

## REAL EVENT CHALLENGE

After relocating to Warminster in Wiltshire, I was asked to set up an under 13 to under 18 girls' rugby team. The biggest challenge was getting the team and girls rugby in general to be taken seriously, and to find a platform to showcase their talent. Recruiting was hard and frustrating to begin with, and sometimes I was only coaching four girls on a Sunday morning, but with support from the sport's governing body, the Rugby Football Union (RFU), the girls' team slowly started to grow, and by the end of the first season I had managed to recruit over 20 girls, but still needed to spread the word and create some 'buzz' around the sport, as well as getting some free local marketing to entice more girls to join us.

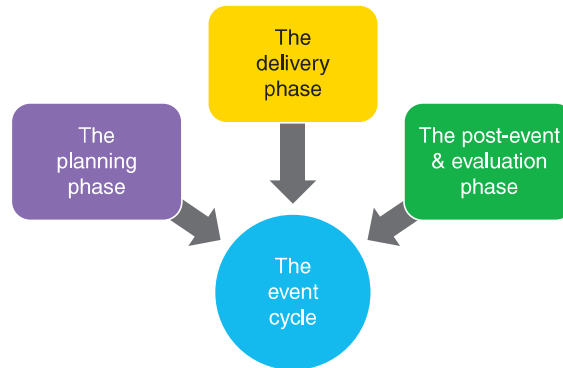
## REAL EVENT OUTCOME

The best recruitment strategy was to use the girls we already had to spread the word, showcasing, and celebrating their success, from local championships, county selections and outside success stories. I also emailed BBC Wiltshire to see if they could help us drum up some publicity and was subsequently called by them numerous times for interviews. I also made sure the local paper regularly printed articles about the team, with lots of inspiring pictures, which we also posted out on social media. This free marketing became a valuable asset for boosting the sport locally.

Additionally, I organised a Rugby 7s competition at the end of the season and invited women's teams from all over the Southwest of England, so there were 14 different girls' teams playing rugby on one fabulous dry day. The use of social media marketing and the word-of-mouth marketing, generated from the girls' parents, also acted as a very effective advertising and recruitment tool. It was a very proud moment when members of the RFU attended a game, to see all the action for themselves and definitely worth all the hard work!

## OBJECTIVE 1: THE EVENT CYCLE

Events have three distinct phases: the planning phase, the delivery phase, and the evaluation phase. Detailed planning is the basic prerequisite of the process and the first task is to establish a formal strategic plan to identify the vision and detail the actions that will fulfil and achieve this vision.



**Figure 1.1** The event cycle

### The Planning Phase

The planning phase is arguably the most important phase of the event cycle, as invariably it will determine its success. Singh (2023) describes the planning stage as the longest phase of the event, due to the historical tendency for disorganisation. However, by using prescriptive planning techniques and breaking down the event into more ‘manageable chunks’, the process can indeed become far more organised. A strategic plan involves a number of sequential steps, which, according to Grant (2021) include:

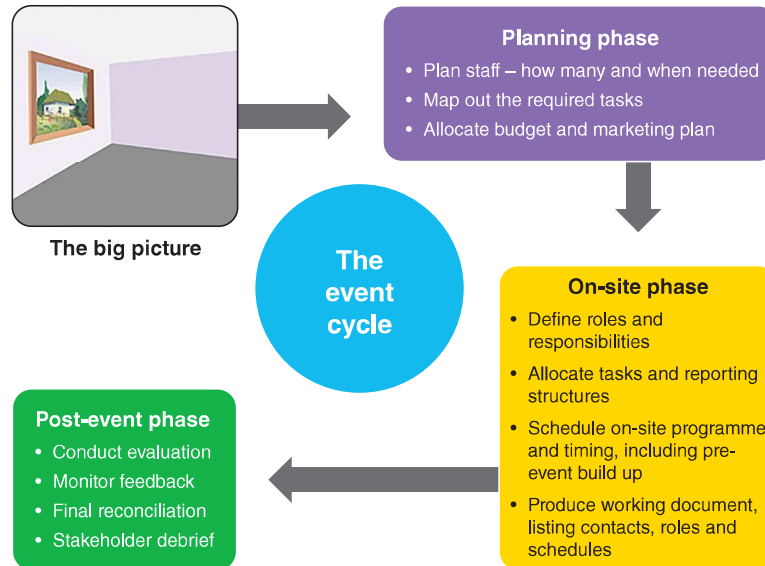
- Establishing the vision
- Developing the event objectives
- Implementing operational plans
- Devising control systems
- Shutdown and evaluation.

If these steps are not undertaken during the planning process, the delivery phase will not align with the overall vision and purpose. A clear strategic plan is needed to identify potential problems and generate alternative strategies where necessary, so that potential errors can be eradicated in the lead-up time, rather than during it.

In the planning phase, it is advisable to involve representation from each organisation in any of the initial meetings that take place. The tasks that need to be executed during this stage will vary considerably, depending on the complexity of the programme, but basically in the planning phase there are certain generic factors that need to be considered in order to scope out the project, as follows:

- Analyse the brief, the timings and what is required
- Work out the tasks

- Map these out
- Decide what resources are needed
- Assess staff and skill requirements
- Work out a schedule



**Figure 1.2** The event planning phase

The need for a sufficient lead time to plan is of paramount importance. Although not always avoidable, short lead times can put a lot of pressure on the team responsible for the organisation, as Table 1.1 demonstrates.

As demonstrated in Figure 1.2, once tasks have been defined, a **working document** or Operations Manual needs to be compiled. The content of this document, which will become the organiser’s on-site guide, will be further discussed in Chapter 2.

**Working document** a paper-based document generally used as a planning tool, to ensure that everything stays on track on-site

**Table 1.1** The lead-in period

|  |  |
|--|--|
| • <i>What happens during the lead-in period:</i> |  |
| – Planning                                       | – Booking entertainment                          |
| – Venue sourcing                                 | – Sourcing suppliers                             |
| – Client liaison                                 | – Liaison with suppliers, such as caterers       |
| – Research schedule                              | – Producing documents, e.g., production schedule |
| – Fact-finding                                   |  |
| • <i>The impact of a short lead-in period:</i>   |  |
| – Limits creativity – no time                    | – Unavailability of suppliers and venues         |
| – Limits choice                                  | – Compromises decisions                          |
| – Costs more                                     | – Reactive, rather than proactive management     |

## The Delivery Phase

**Contingency planning** planning for an unexpected outcome

With careful planning in the pre-event planning stage, the execution of the 'delivery phase', often called on-site management, will be easier for all concerned. However, it is true to say that no matter how carefully an event has been planned, some aspects of the programme will always change on-site. For that reason, it is always wise to prepare for the unexpected and think carefully about **contingency planning** in advance. This will be discussed further in Chapter 6 and the whole area of on-site management will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 2.

## The Post-Event and Evaluation Phase

The final and extremely important phase of the event cycle is the post-event phase, where evaluation becomes a major factor. In recent times, this area has gained far greater significance, as larger events have started to be evaluated by the impact they have on the wider economy and overall impact on stakeholders, in terms of long-term legacy and regional development. These areas will be further discussed in Chapter 4 and the execution and delivery of post-event evaluation will be further discussed in Chapter 3.

# OBJECTIVE 2: THE PLANNING PROCESS

## Factors to Consider in the Planning Process

Generally, there are nine key elements to consider in the planning process, which are as shown in Figure 1.3.

### Setting and Defining the Event Objectives

At the outset, one of the key factors to determine is the agreed objectives and overall aim, or, in other words, why is the event actually taking place? Defining and prioritising specific objectives is crucial to the event's success, as objectives should be of value, both to the company or client commissioning it and those taking part in it. For that reason,

**Online forum** an online discussion site where delegates can hold conversations on a given subject by posting messages

**Virtual event** sharing a common virtual environment on the web, rather than meeting in a physical location

it is good practice to brainstorm and discuss similar events that have been held before and to decide what the client is trying to achieve. For a number of reasons, it may not be an opportune time to hold the event. This could be due to the fact that there are others of a similar nature taking place around the same time, or in a nearby location, or that motivation within the company is low. Part of the role of a good manager is to challenge the objectives and explore other ways of delivering the same message, such as an **online forum**, or a **virtual event**. At times, a newsletter might be just as informative, as well as a



**Figure 1.3** The planning process

more cost-effective way of delivering the message. However, sometimes it is essential to have a face-to-face meeting, in order to achieve the aims and purpose set, that could include the following objectives:

- To increase company retention
- To foster renewed loyalty
- To impart information
- To educate or deliver an educative lecture to the audience
- To introduce a new culture or management structure
- To allow delegates to network and interact
- To launch a new product
- To enhance sales potential and company motivation
- To entertain and have fun.

There may be a number of reasons why the event is being held. However, many fail to learn lessons from previous mistakes, due to insufficient evaluation and monitoring of client

**Return on Objectives (ROO)** the measurement of the objectives set at the outset

**Return on Investment (ROI)** adhering to the financial or other defined performance benchmarks set

feedback. Without this stakeholder feedback, it is impossible to evaluate the **Return on Objectives (ROO)** in the post-event evaluation stage. Defining objectives also allows the organiser to discuss with the budget holder whether this is the most appropriate use of the client's money. This involves taking various criteria into consideration, assessing defined performance benchmarks, and trying to predict whether the event will result in a **Return on Investment (ROI)**.

### Setting the Budget

Once the aims and objectives have been set, the next vital stage of the planning process is to set the budget and determine who will be responsible for paying it. For the organiser, the most important factor of the planning phase is to ensure that there is enough income to cover any items of expenditure and to constantly review the budget and apprise the budget owner of any areas of concern or overspend. The use of a bespoke financial conference management system and Excel spreadsheets can help monitor spend. More specific areas of budgeting will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 7,

### Choosing the Venue

Choosing a venue that is fit for purpose and indeed choosing the right venue come very high on the list of planning priorities. The selected venue does not have to be the same as that featured in the original bid documentation, but it should at least be of the same standard. Otherwise, there may be concerns on the part of key stakeholders, and choosing an appropriate venue is imperative to the overall success. The two main criteria are functionality and the suitability of the venue. As well as being unique, the venue should contain certain features and facilities that will satisfy the customer and audience, not just accommodating the event, but enhancing it. Today, venue sourcing is often conducted online,

**Virtual renderings** online animation, and exteriors and interior floor plans, which make the process far easier for the organiser than in previous times

with available features such as: visual inclusion, bespoke venue search engines and **virtual renderings**. However, one threat to this way of venue sourcing is that the pictures that are featured on the venue website can be misleading and may not accurately resemble the real image of the room or the capacities. For that reason, it is extremely important to conduct a site inspection, before confirming or paying.

### Inviting the Audience

No matter how successful the planning and delivery process is, the event will only be deemed successful if it attracts an audience. During the planning phase, it is essential to publicise the event, even if it is a corporate conference, where delegates are required to attend. This becomes far more significant when the delegates have to pay their own costs to attend. For this reason, thorough research needs to be conducted during the planning phase,



in order to avoid conflict with other similar ones that may be taking place around that time, or in the same area (see Chapter 4). Once the venue has been confirmed and the date has been finalised, it is advisable to send out a Save the Date notification, to alert the target audience to when the event is taking place. This needs to be announced as soon as possible and often before the main marketing and promotion activities commence. The area of promotion and marketing will be further discussed in Chapter 6.

## Designing the Programme Content

The next stage of the planning process is to prepare a programme with the content and to develop this programme, considering all activities and precise timings throughout the event duration. The programme content will vary depending on the event type; for example, the programme for a corporate event would typically include both a conference programme and a social programme. Once there is relative certainty as to the number of participants attending, the programme can be finalised. At this stage, adjustments can be made to the schedule, for example to the start times or the order of presentations. Ideally, the programme should be printed or posted out to participating organisations and dignitaries one or two weeks ahead of delivery. Other participants may receive their programmes on the day.

Organisers need to balance content with the costs involved of delivering the programme. The conference programme would generally itemise any **keynote speakers** and include the more formal conference and seminar material and topics to be discussed. The social programme would generally detail the scheduled activities, including items such as excursions and off-site dining. The area of programme and content design will also be explored in more detail in Chapters 2 and 6.

**Keynote speakers** those speakers who establish the framework for the event agenda

## Selecting Catering, Entertainment, and Audio-Visual Provision

Once the main features have been determined, the fine tuning can begin. At this stage, decisions can be taken about the catering and food and beverage requirements and how this element of the programme will be set up and managed. Again, this will vary considerably, depending on the event type. The topic of catering will be further discussed in Chapter 6.

Complex events use a variety of special effects and will require a specialist production coordinator to manage the audio-visual aspects. One of the elements to consider in the pre-event planning phase will be the use of delivery schedules and detailed inventories. The audio-visual (AV) and production elements also range from a basic, but functional AV package of projector, screen and laptop or tablet, to a far more sophisticated arrangement of production equipment. This topic will be further explored in Chapter 8, but it is worth emphasising that production is an important aspect that will have a significant impact on the overall budget and the venue choice and specifications, so it needs to be considered in the early planning stages.

## REAL INSIGHT 1.1

### Managing the QEII Venue for the Coronation of King Charles III – A Special event



Coronation of King Charles

*Source:* Image courtesy of Katie Chan via Wikicommons.

audio-visual support to ensure uninterrupted global media coverage of the Coronation of King Charles III.

Whilst footage was being transmitted live around the world, the venue was called upon to supply refreshments for around 500 members of the world's media, including the Associated Press, the European Broadcasting Union, and other major UK channels such as BBC, ITN, and ITV, in the lead-up-to and during the event.

All aspects of service were offered by the QEII Centre's expert team during this time, which saw the in-house operations team collaborating with a number of other third parties, including the Metropolitan Police, the Department for Culture Media and Sport (DCMS), as well as key planners involved with the organisation of this prestigious event.

The media were kept fed and watered by the QEII's centre's banqueting operation. The centre's ground-floor café: The Sanctuary served over 500 coffees and 325 pre ordered breakfast baps alongside 105 special pie and mash lunches to them throughout the day.

In addition to this vast catering requirement, the centre also hosted a special client event for around 60 high-net-worth individuals, who were each afforded a spectacular birds' eye view on the day of the ceremony unfolding from the comfort of the centre, whilst they were also treated to a breakfast and lunch prepared by the QEII's catering team.

The venue management of the QEII, as well as the event itself was organised with military precision. Several weeks before the Coronation, a three-tier stand was constructed on the front lawn of the centre, which provided a dedicated platform from which more than 300 members of the broadcast media could capture the 2,300 strong

congregation entering and leaving Westminster Abbey in the morning, as well as the spectacular military parade of 4,000 armed forces personnel following the service. In addition, 14 outside broadcast vans and a generator truck supplied by film and TV services, fuelled sustainably by HVO diesel (hydrotreated vegetable oil) parked on the front lawn.

Mark Taylor, chief executive of The QEII Centre, said: 'It was the most extraordinary experience and one that will live in our memories forever. The QEII Centre was the closest venue to Westminster Abbey providing resources and refreshments for those working on the event and celebrating it. We were honoured to be able to provide such a unique platform and thanks to the professionalism and hard work of our expert team, we successfully exceeded requirements and expectations for all.'

The QEII Centre's support of the media facilitated the live broadcast of the ceremony to an estimated 400 million people in the UK and around the world, while its hosting of the celebratory event on the day gave 60 people an exclusive and unforgettable experience.

## Choosing the Team to Deliver

An essential part of the planning processes is determining the amount of staff needed to deliver the event, then assigning roles and responsibilities. All events need staff and skill levels and numbers need to be determined in advance. There are a number of factors that will influence the type and number of staff required. Human resource management is the core factor of creating, planning, and selecting an appropriate team, with the right skills.

Not all staff receive paid wages. Mega events, such as the Olympic Games, use thousands of volunteers, so the two routes to consider in terms of staffing are the use of paid staff and the use of unpaid volunteer staff. When using professional staff, it is most likely that they will be hired for their specific skills and that they will have already undergone some sort of specific training. One way of ensuring this is to recruit staff using an agency that already has qualified staff on its books. As already mentioned, when recruiting volunteers, the organiser will need to consider how skilled they are to work on that specific event and whether or not any additional training will be required in advance. Most events with a high public profile will train their volunteers, such as the 2025 Paris Olympics and the 2025 World Cycling Championships

## Liaising with Stakeholders and Suppliers

Successful events need to meet the expectations of the many stakeholders involved. A 'stakeholder' is anyone who has an interest in the *value* that the organisation creates. Various stakeholder perspectives should be considered in the planning stage, as events imply and mean different things for different parties and one stakeholder's gain may be another's loss. These varying stakeholder perspectives will influence everything from marketing to funding. All stakeholders are important, because their expectations for and attitudes towards the event will have a considerable impact on the overall experience and success of it. As the price of failure can be enormous, rigorous planning, in-depth research and constant evaluation are needed, together with some key decision-making from approval committees, where appropriate.

In today's market, transparency, accountability and effective public relations (PR) are essential components in stakeholder engagement. The general aim is to set up as many 'win-win' opportunities as possible and to keep in communication with all stakeholders throughout the process. When developing strategic plans, organisations should set objectives that reflect the needs of all their principal stakeholders, some of which are detailed in Table 1.2.

**Table 1.2** Event stakeholders

|                               |   |
|-------------------------------|---|
| <i>Owners</i>                 | All event types and sectors have owners.<br>They tend to be company shareholders in for-profit events, corporate and not-for-profit events.   |
| <i>Customers or Consumers</i> | Customers/consumers often pay to attend, e.g., a private exhibition or a festival.<br>They experience a wedding as a guest, or a conference as a delegate.<br>The customer may pay for the consumer to attend, rather than attending themselves.<br>Consumers are generally hosted and do not have to pay out of their own pocket.  |
| <i>Sponsors</i>               | Commercial organisations are often <i>sponsors</i> , providing the funds.<br>They often seek a return on their investment in the form of promotion and publicity benefits for their company name and products.<br>Government agencies also provide sponsorship to recreation organisations and seek a return on their investment in the form of benefits for the community. |
| <i>Employees/ volunteers</i>  | The industry has a particularly high dependency on volunteers.<br>In large sporting, festival, community and fundraising events, the ratio of volunteers to paid staff is often higher than with other sectors.   |
| <i>The event community</i>    | The event community in the host destination is also a stakeholder in the strategic planning process.<br>Organisers should ensure that the services provided are relevant to the community's needs.<br>Communities tend to invest in mega sporting or cultural events through government funding.  |

### Determining how to Evaluate the Success of the Event

Evaluation is the process of measuring the success of an event from a set of key criteria to determine positive and negative outcomes. The evaluation stage tends to take place during the last phase of the event cycle, but it is worth considering that once the event is finished, it will be too late to discuss how it should be evaluated. The evaluation tools and methods need to be determined in the pre-event planning phase, so that it will be possible to monitor the event and pinpoint each stage of its progression, and if necessary, to identify when and how the process started to fail. Deciding and devising a detailed evaluation tool and setting criteria for success are vital components of the post-event planning phase and will be discussed further in Chapter 3.

## EVENT ETHICS

During a performance in Las Vegas in July 2023 the rapper Cardi B had a drink thrown at her whilst performing. After the initial shock she responded by throwing her microphone back into the crowd.

In your opinion was it appropriate for an artist to retaliate in this way, and justifiable if they become injured by the object originally thrown at them?

## OBJECTIVE 3: MANAGING STAKEHOLDERS

Managing stakeholders involves preparing a detailed stakeholder management plan. In the planning phase, it is imperative for the owner or organisation to determine the role and level of commitment of every stakeholder involved. The stakeholder management plan usually starts by identifying all stakeholders involved in the project and assigning them to groups of primary and secondary categories. The primary stakeholders are usually those that have direct impact, interest, or influence and could determine the success or failure of the event. The secondary stakeholders are those that have an indirect impact or influence, but their exclusion would not necessarily determine its overall success or failure.

Once the stakeholders have been identified and categorised, the next step for the project manager is to create a profile for each stakeholder group, in order to fully identify and understand their needs and requirements. It is important to communicate with all stakeholders through regular meetings, special interest groups, consultation, and by keeping them constantly apprised of progress or updates throughout the planning process.

Possible external stakeholders could be the budget holder, local authorities, sponsors, suppliers, corporate partners, government bodies, media or financial affiliates, volunteers, or the delegates or audience. Internal stakeholders could be employees, association members or advisory boards, who may or may not ultimately attend. In the planning stage, it is crucial to discuss how to communicate with all these stakeholders, which nowadays could be in person or on an online portal such as Teams or Zoom. Next set an agenda for regular meetings and reports, to discuss the progress of these meetings and to monitor updates and discuss any new developments with each of the stakeholders. Factors to bear in mind when it comes to dealing with stakeholders are shown in Table 1.3.

**Table 1.3** Stakeholder requirements

- This varies depending on the perspective of the stakeholder, as there are a range of stakeholders.
- All have potentially different aims and objectives.
- It is important to meet these aims with various organisational models.

## Managing Sponsors

Sponsors should be given high priority throughout all stages of the event. Communication with sponsors throughout the planning process is crucial and this communication should be transparent, open, and consistent; informing them of any changes, in terms of numbers expected and content of the programme. The agency or client should find out how much involvement the sponsor wants and expects and try to clearly understand each of the sponsor's specific objectives. In the days leading up to the event, full joining instructions should be sent out to the sponsors and any special arrangements should be communicated on-site. In the post-event evaluation phase, feedback should be given to the sponsor, who in turn should attempt to evaluate the success of the sponsorship plan in line with their expectations and the deliverables. This area will be discussed in more depth in Chapter 7.

## Managing Volunteers

Volunteers represent a resource for organisers to draw on quickly and cost-effectively. They offer their labour, knowledge, skills, and experience, often at no financial cost, so are economically beneficial to all types of organisations. Recruiting voluntary workers has its own challenges and complexities and requires different strategies depending on the size of the event. Mega events, such as the Olympic Games, would not be possible to operate without the use of volunteers, as can be demonstrated in the 2023 FIFA Women's Football World Cup and the 2024 Paris Olympics. For this reason, organisers of mega events tend to recruit more applicants than they actually require. This is done deliberately as a contingency strategy, in case of no-shows, or last-minute cancellations, but can in turn drive up the overheads involved in volunteer training and expenses.

Organisations where there is a potentially suitable demographic of potential volunteers, such as universities or colleges, need to be identified. In some cases, well-known figures are recruited as ambassadors to boost numbers and the publicity involved with recruitment. Volunteers will often be the first point of contact for the customer, greeting them and directing them around the venue, so it is essential to brief them on any key information and prepare them for any questions attendees might ask. Even for smaller events, the role of the volunteer is paramount. Some local community events are often solely managed by volunteers.

In order to determine what rewards might be appropriate to offer volunteers, it is often advisable to examine motivations for volunteering in the first place. Volunteer motivations are often divided into intrinsic behaviour, driven by internal rewards, and extrinsic behaviour, driven by external rewards or personal gain. Volunteers seem to enjoy the belonging and sense of community that take place when working as part of a team on an event, which often leads them to go on to volunteer at other events. However, as volunteers are generally unpaid for their services, keeping them happy is integral to the recruitment process.

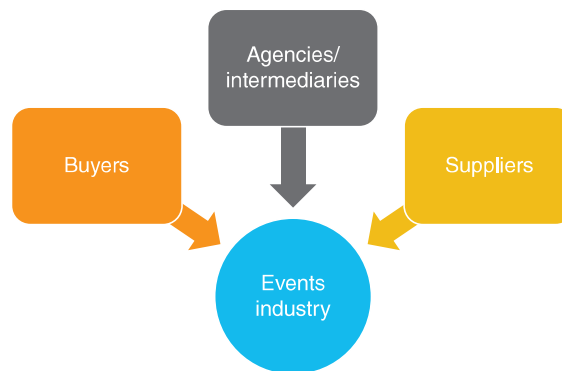
As an unpaid member of staff, it is easy to just walk away if feeling disgruntled or dissatisfied. Recent suggestions to ensure volunteer retention have therefore included sustaining and rewarding volunteers for their contribution. This might include paying volunteers' expenses; offering them tax incentives; free tickets and merchandise; flexible working hours and shorter commitments; and other concessions.



### DID YOU KNOW?

The Equalities Select Committee UK gathered evidence from a range of people within the live music sector, from industry bodies and festival organisers, through to artists. In January 2024 the report concluded that women were underrepresented in key roles across the industry, especially traditionally male-dominated careers, such as sound engineering and production. Moreover, the late-night working culture and availability of alcohol and drugs result in women, especially freelancers, often having to work in unsafe environments and being harassed, as well as comparatively underpaid.

## OBJECTIVE 4: THE STRUCTURE OF THE INDUSTRY



**Figure 1.4** The structure of the events industry

### What is an 'Event Structure'?

The industry is fragmented and made up of many different sectors, organisations, and suppliers. These sectors are often referred to as the event structure. Essentially, the structure or infrastructure of the industry can be applied, irrespective of size, scale, and type. There are a number of functions and roles that exist in the sector, including venue suppliers, destination, and accommodation providers and air and ground transportation companies. There are also a whole plethora of specialist suppliers, who provide the industry with products and services, such as: displays, catering, staffing, entertainment services, technical equipment, telecommunications and IT companies, interpreters and translators, speciality caterers, exhibition contractors, production companies, and event insurance specialists.

Event management services are also offered through agencies, consultants, and specialist planning companies, who offer a seamless 'one-stop shop' approach to the buyer. Some of the

### Destination Marketing Organisations (DMOs)

organisations that promote a town, city, region, or country in order to increase the number of visitors and promote the development and marketing of a destination

### Destination Management Companies (DMCs)

professional services companies with local knowledge, expertise, and resources, working in the design and implementation of events, activities, tours, transportation, and programme logistics

**Entrepreneurial buyer** someone who makes money by starting their own business, especially when this involves seeing a new opportunity and taking risks

**End-users** people who ultimately use or are intended to ultimately use a product

**Consumer** a person who experiences goods and services for personal use but does not necessarily purchase them

sectors are very distinct and specialised, for example: **Destination Marketing Organisations (DMOs)** and **Destination Management Companies (DMCs)**, but still form an important part of the event structure, which comprises buyers, suppliers, and intermediaries or agencies, as detailed further in the following section.

## The Event Buyer

An event buyer, as the name implies, is generally the individual, company or organisation that holds the budget and purchases event services. Buyers can come from corporate companies, agencies, associations, the public sector, or they could also be an **entrepreneurial buyer**. The common factor is that they 'hold the purse strings' and have control of the budget, whether or not they are paying for the event themselves, or accruing funds from a corporation, other association, or body. Generally, buyers are **end-users**, who buy or hire conference venues and related services required to deliver their event.

In the case of private events, a buyer, client, or owner could also be the bride or groom, or their family, who are paying for the wedding, or an individual who has decided to outsource elements of a private party. In the sporting arena, a buyer might be a sports' funding organisation, board, committee, or an association.

## The Corporate Buyer

A corporate event can be defined as a gathering that is sponsored by a business for its employees, business partners, clients, and/or prospective clients. A corporate buyer may also be a conference organiser, working on behalf of a corporate company. In the United States and Australia, conference organisers are also known as meeting planners or professional conference organisers (PCOs). Corporate buyers tend to be known as 'the client'. They are usually the customer, although not necessarily always the **consumer**. Corporate events vary in size and type and could include any of the following:

- Annual general meetings, board meetings
- Exhibitions
- Congresses
- Product launches
- Team-building events
- Sales conferences



- Reward and recognition events
- Training courses and seminars.

Today, large corporate companies tend to be governed by Procurement departments (see Chapters 5 and 10). Their role is to procure event products and services on behalf of their company and employees, without necessarily experiencing these services or products first-hand. Table 1.4 details some of the main corporate sectors that buy conference services.

**Table 1.4** Major corporate sectors that buy events

| Corporate Sector  | Examples   |
|---|--|
| Petrochemical industry, including oil and gas suppliers | BP, Exxon, or AGL Energy, Australia                      |
| Pharmaceutical and Healthcare                           | Glaxo SmithKline, United Healthcare, Johnson and Johnson |
| IT and Telecommunications                               | Microsoft, Samsung, Google                               |
| Automotive and Manufacturing                            | Toyota, Fiat, Tata steel, ChemChina                      |
| Financial and Professional services                     | Ernst and Young, UBS, PricewaterhouseCoopers             |
| Retail including food and drink                         | Marks & Spencer, Walmart, Subway, Costa Coffee           |
| Travel and Transport                                    | British Airways, Eurostar, Australian Tourist Commission |

## Corporate Buying Patterns

In terms of corporate buying patterns, budgets tend to be more generous than with other sectors, so corporate events tend to be the **highest yielding** sector in the industry. High spending sectors are generally the pharmaceutical, information technology (IT) and automotive industries, with the USA and Europe tending to spend more on corporate events than other countries. Some larger corporate companies have their own teams, but still prefer to **out-source** elements to an agency or Event Management company, with proven expertise. This allows the corporate team to concentrate on their other responsibilities, such as managing the content and delegate communication.

In some cases, the event owner or buyer might purchase services directly from the supplier, when organising their company event, often trying to reduce expenditure, as outsourcing to an **intermediary** can be an expensive part of the overall budget and cutting out the middleman or agency can be perceived as a way to make savings in times of recession or austerity.

Within different corporate organisations, buying is not always **centralised**. There are various internal departments that might be responsible for organising the company's conferences or events; ranging from company private assistants (PAs), secretaries, marketing, and

**Highest yielding** producing the largest amount; giving the highest return

**Outsource** contracting out of a business process to another party

**Intermediary** the person or company who acts as a mediator or agent between parties

**Centralised** under a single authority

communications employees to human resources teams, so this can make it challenging to find who is responsible. Some corporate staff charged with organising events may have had very little formal conference training.

The payment of corporate events tends to come from a central marketing budget. For this reason, corporate buyers tend to make quick decisions once they have decided to commission an event, so the process is relatively quick compared to other sectors. Company delegates do not pay to attend internal events, but are expected to attend them, as part of their job function.

Previously, a reasonable average lead time for a corporate event may have been circa three months, but in recent years the trend has been for shorter lead times, sometimes even less than a couple of weeks before delivery. This could be because corporate clients sometimes prefer to hold off commissioning, until they are completely sure they have enough annual budget available to run the event. At other times, they need to act quickly at the end of a year quarter or year end, to use up any residual budget. This can result in putting added pressure on agencies and suppliers to organise and deliver a corporate conference or meeting within a very short time frame. Sometimes corporate organisations need to evaluate whether it is the right time to hold an event, and how this will be perceived in terms of staff morale, for instance that there are no imminent redundancies or staff freezes to detract from the event purpose. The corporate buyer tends to commission events throughout the year, though generally the summer months tend to be quiet, because of the holiday period, and autumn and spring are the busiest months.

In order to ensure a professional execution, corporate events generally tend to be held in hotels or other purpose-built conference centres. In recent years, however, there has been a shift in demand towards a more flexible conference offering, which will appeal to internal and external clients and delegates. Following on from the recent global recession, the trend has been to shorten corporate events, so that they tend to take place during daylight hours, and do not require overnight accommodation. Since the Covid-19 pandemic more virtual events take place than before in this sector, though some corporate clients prefer a face-to-face meeting wherever possible. This trend has opened up the possibility of using non-residential or unusual venues, such as a museum, an art gallery, or an airline hangar to stage corporate events. In an environment where increased focus is given to budget management and greater innovation, using an unusual venue can create groundbreaking design and better food and beverage selection. It can also increase interest in the venue and the delegates' desire to attend, as well as substantially reducing the overall budget for the corporate buyer. However, this can be a challenging remit for the incumbent agency or the Event Management company, who are charged with the organisation, as well as for the venue itself.

## The Association Buyer

Associations usually commission events to provide a service rather than for financial return. As delegates are often required to pay their own expenses to attend, it is in the interest of the associations to keep the meetings functional and designed to be practical and useful, and to keep costs as low as possible. Unlike corporate events, there is no central budget, so invariably

costs need to be as streamlined as possible, with less emphasis on luxury accommodation than with other sectors. For that reason, these events are often held in less expensive conference or convention centres or academic venues out of term time, rather than in hotels. See Table 1.5 for examples of association buyers.

**Table 1.5** The association buyer

| Association Sector                              | Examples  |
|---|---|
| Professional or trade associations/institutions | The American Institute of Certified Public Accountants; Editorial Freelancers Association; National Network of Embroidery Professionals |
| Voluntary associations and societies            | WaterAid; Greenpeace; Child Line India Foundation   |
| Charities                                       | Save the Children; Médecins Sans Frontières; Helen Keller International   |
| Religious organisations                         | The Buddhist Association of the United States; the Inter-Religious Organisation of Singapore; Orthodox Peace Fellowship                 |
| Political parties/Trade unions                  | The Labour Party AKEL: Progressive Party of the Working People, Cyprus; African National Congress (ANC)                                 |

Delegate numbers for association events tend to be higher than for corporate ones. For this reason, the lead time sometimes needs to be a few years in advance, in order to guarantee that a venue sizeable enough to accommodate these large numbers can be secured. Another reason why lead times are often prolonged, is that the decision-making process is often made by a committee, many of whom may be volunteers and only working for the board or association in their spare time.

In order to decide on future host venues and cities, prospective venues and/or destinations are often shortlisted and the host destinations themselves are required to demonstrate the benefits they could offer in a detailed bid proposal (see Chapter 5). Normally different venues and destinations are considered each time at the bid stage, though it is not unusual for a charity or an association to block-book space at the same venue in advance to guarantee securing a space large enough to accommodate large delegate numbers.

Several destinations and venues might be involved in the proposal stage and a site inspection or visit is usually made before reaching a final decision. Sometimes these events require that a partner programme runs simultaneously to the conference; delegates' spouses are invited to join, but rather than attending the conference, are hosted in other leisure activities, such as a golf day or shopping excursion.

## Public Sector Buyers

Also known as 'government' buyers, public sector buyers adopt similar buying patterns to those of associations. As these organisations are non-profit organisations, they tend to use surplus of the

revenues to further achieve their ultimate objective; rather than distributing income to the organisation's shareholders, leaders, or members, the budget tends to come from political party membership fees, or taxpayers' money. They are therefore often required to run on tight budgets, so in a similar way to association buyers, they often opt for less prestigious venues. Sometimes the perception of saving money is more important than the actual cost of the event. For example, it would be highly inappropriate for one of these meetings to take place in a venue or destination

**'Per diem' allowance** a daily allowance or specific amount of money an organisation gives an individual, often an employee, per day to cover living expenses when working

that was deemed to be too luxurious or resort-like. This might give out the wrong message or imply that the attendees are having some sort of 'jolly', rather than an essential governmental conference. A local town hall in a business city would therefore be more appropriate than a resort for this type of meeting. Public sector delegates would not expect to pay to attend this type of political or governmental conference. In fact, some public sector delegates receive a **'per diem' allowance**, when attending these events.

## The Individual Buyer/Entrepreneur

Despite the increasing requirement to have the right licences and training in place to set up events, at this stage there is still no legal requirement to be accredited, or hold a professional qualification, as further discussed in Chapter 10. Many individual planners and small concerns still decide to 'go it alone', organising profit-generating events, often termed a 'user conference', where space is offered to anyone prepared to pay to attend. The individual or 'entrepreneur' identifies a 'hot topic' or debate theme and sources subject key speakers, celebrity guests or entertainment that will attract a target audience. This might be because the individual has researched the topic and sourced specific business or industry-related themes to encourage discussion or has access to the latest knowledge or key acts that will entice an audience to purchase tickets.

For these buyers, it is very important to have access to a good quality database: industry contacts or an updated list of potential attendees, who may have previously shown interest in attending. It is possible for the individual buyer to purchase these lists from suppliers, although the latest laws governing data protection and consumer rights in relation to unsolicited emails, are now making this type of data marketing more challenging for the entrepreneurial buyer.

### REAL INSIGHT 1.2

#### A Celebrity Bollywood Wedding

Weddings are a rite of passage and usually a celebration event but can take on special cultural significance in some parts of the world. In India, for example, 'Bollywood' themed weddings are very popular and Asian weddings tend to be some of the largest weddings in the world. The word 'Bollywood' is a recognised nickname for the Hindi language film industry, based in Mumbai. Nowadays Bollywood themed weddings are not only popular

in the Indian sub-continent, but globally. These weddings are most famous for their glitz and glamour; with venues traditionally bursting with vivacious colours and unusual patterns. Ambience is often created by draping saris from the ceiling, or decorating entrance ways with exciting flower arrangements and twinkling candles,

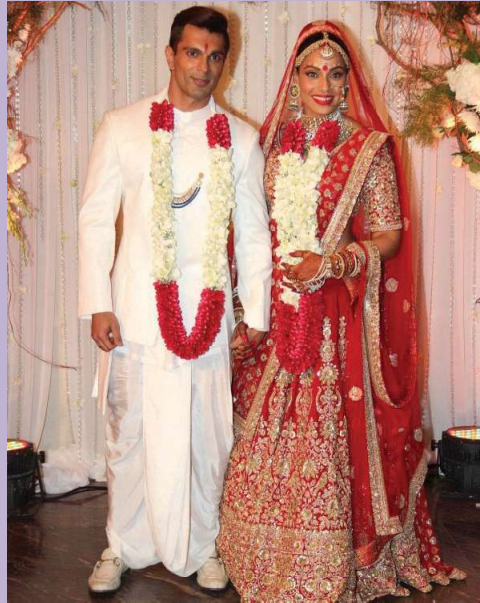
In July 2023, after keeping their love affair secret for some time, Bollywood stars Sidharth Malhotra and Kiara Advani celebrated their royal-like wedding at the Suryagarh Palace in Jaisalmer, Rajasthan. With its majestic architecture, Rajasthan has long been a favourite choice for celebrity destination weddings. The Suryagarh Palace is a luxury hotel set close to a fort, that embodies the spirit of Rajasthani hospitality, with its 83 rooms: two lush gardens, and stunning courtyard. The wedding ceremonies spanned two days and only

close friends and family attended. In accordance with Indian tradition the bride and groom also celebrated with the traditional pre-wedding ceremonies, *haldi*, *mehendi*, and *sangeet*. The celebrations began with a Welcome Lunch in the Courtyard, with *Sangeet* being held on the Sunset Patio. *Sangeet* celebrates the union of two families. This joyous event is typically held one or two days before the actual wedding day, and guests enjoy a colourful celebration filled with music, dancing, and performances. The *haldi* ceremony then took place, where turmeric paste is applied to the bride and the groom's body and at the *mehendi* ceremony, henna paste is applied the night before the wedding.

On the second day the wedding ceremony and reception took place on the Celebration Lawns. All guests were asked politely to leave their phones with the hotel security during the ceremonies and to refrain from taking photographs. The bride chose a traditional costume, wearing a delicate pastel lehenga in ivory and pink champagne with intricate thread work, created by the designer Manish Malhotra, whilst Sidharth donned a yellow kurta which he paired with a festive shawl, adorned with gold zardozi embroidery.

After the initial two-day wedding in Rajasthan, the newlyweds hosted one reception in Delhi and another even grander reception in Mumbai, inviting all their industry colleagues, as well as many renowned Bollywood celebrities. For the Mumbai wedding reception, Kiara and Sidharth invited over 300 guests to the Astor Ballroom at The St Regis Mumbai. Kiara looked stylish dressed in a monochrome gown, with a long train that she paired with a statement emerald necklace set while Sidharth chose a glitzy blazer with a black turtleneck underneath.

(Continued)



A celebrity Bollywood wedding

Source: Image courtesy of metromela via Flickr.

The cost of all these wedding events has not been officially verified. However, one Instagram influencer named Ayush Chudiwala estimated a breakdown cost for the initial Rajasthan wedding, calculating the total number of guests to be 150, the number of days two and the number of rooms booked 83 with an average cost per meal of Indian Rupees (INR) 5,000, or circa £50 equivalent, and the costs of guest gifts INR 10,000 or £100 equivalent per person, bringing the total estimated cost of the wedding to INR 21,480,000 or £204,263 in GBP, and that does not even take into account the Delhi and Mumbai receptions!

## The Role of the Agency or Intermediary

The agency or intermediary is the ‘middleman’ bridging the gap from the buyer, or budget holder to the supplier. As previously discussed, sometimes the buyer might prefer to purchase products and services direct from the supplier, thus ‘cutting out’ the middleman, and in doing so, potentially save money. However, it is questionable whether going direct to a supplier does actually cut costs overall.

The advantage of channelling events through an agency or intermediary is that they have both expertise and buying power. It is their everyday business to source products and services from suppliers, on behalf of their clients. In an ever more competitive environment, agencies have the supplier contacts, negotiation skills, and expertise to demonstrate savings to their client, using

**Economies of scale purchasing** large businesses often receive a discount because they are buying in bulk

**Familiarisation trips or educational** a free or low-cost trip that travel agents or event staff are provided by suppliers to gain an understanding of the benefits of different trips that they can sell to their clients

**economies of scale purchasing**, not to mention a certain amount of goodwill.

Agencies or intermediaries should also have a good understanding as to what qualifies as a fair price within the industry and will be able to benchmark costs with a good degree of accuracy. Another advantage of using an agency is that they generally have up-to-date venue and destination knowledge, as they are liaising with suppliers on a continuous basis. Additionally, event agencies get to experience the facilities and services of many venues and upcoming destinations, through running other programmes, or conducting site inspections and sometimes **familiarisation trips or educational**, hosted by the destination or venue. There are a number of agencies and intermediaries that exist in the industry, including those listed in Table 1.6.

## What is an Event Supplier?

The list of event suppliers is extensive, but a few of the principle suppliers to the industry are as follows:

- Venues
- Destinations
- Airline and transportation companies
- Other suppliers to the events industry.



**Table 1.6** Event agencies and intermediaries

| Company type                         | Role   |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| Event management agency/company      | <p>The Event Management company's tasks may include the following activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Researching and recommending a suitable destination and/or venue</li> <li>• Planning the conference and social programme</li> <li>• Marketing the conference and handling delegate registrations</li> <li>• Booking delegate accommodation and ensuring meeting-room facilities are sufficient</li> <li>• Planning an exhibition to run concurrently with the conference</li> <li>• Producing a budget and handling all of the conference finances.</li> </ul> <p>They are normally paid a management fee by the client organisation.<br/>Some also get commission from the venues.<br/>They tend to work with corporate buyers, for a minimum three-year contract, issued by the corporate procurement division.</p> |
| Venue search agency                  | <p>Generally, offer a more limited service, restricted to researching and recommending a suitable event venue.</p> <p>They put forward a shortlist of three possible venue choices, they receive between 8% and 10% agency commission from the venue itself once the meeting has confirmed, rather than charging a fee.</p> <p>All other supplier liaison and operational work is handled by the end-client after that point. A volume business, i.e., the more bookings they place, the more commission they will earn.<br/>Can prove 'a foot in the door' to procuring other services from the client, e.g., registration or on-site support.</p>  |
| Production company                   | <p>Involved in the actual design, programme delivery and staging of the conference, rather than the planning and operational delivery.</p> <p>Can be 'all-singing-and dancing', or just the provision of sound and lighting – audio-visual.</p> <p>It is not unusual for a client to issue two separate tenders for the operational and production elements of the same event.</p> <p>The challenge is then for two different agencies to work together on the same project.</p>   |
| Destination management company (DMC) | <p>A local service organisation that provides consulting services, creative events and logistics management, based on an in-depth knowledge of the destination and local venues.</p> <p>Usually charges commission and/or a management fee.</p> <p>A 'ground-handler' is just involved with providing transportation within a destination.</p>   |
| Corporate events company             | <p>Involved with sporting or recreational events and provides corporate hospitality and specialised team-building events. Some clients will go direct to them or can be sub-contracted by a destination management company or an Event Management company.</p>   |
| Representation company               | <p>An agency that represents hotels and venues but is not large enough to have its own sales division in a particular region or country.</p> <p>The representation company may have a portfolio of properties that it promotes and markets to corporate or other agency buyers.</p> <p>It conducts sales visits to present the hotels and venues to potential conference buyers.</p>   |
| Business travel agency               | <p>A form of travel agency that deals with business customers only.</p> <p>Business travel usually consists of making arrangements for air, rail, coach, ferry and individual hotel accommodation for the traveller.</p> <p>Some larger corporate organisations have business travel implants based in their offices, to provide a seamless service for their company employees.</p>   |

## Venues

The venue product is the standardisation of meeting space, bedrooms, and in-house technology. In the current market, event venues can be eclectic and diverse. Kotler and Armstrong (2018) describe venues as 'hybrid places' that have become places of combined recreation and learning in order to be successful.

The most successful venues are those that consider the needs of the client, strive to match their expectations, and tailor their product and services accordingly. Appropriate venue staff should be proficient at conducting 'show-rounds' and **recreational visits (recces)**. All venue staff should be made aware if any site visits are scheduled and be able to show the client relevant space based on their specific meeting requirements.

**Recreational visits (recces)** visits to a place in order to become familiar with it

Branded hotels offer a guaranteed quality of service, and effective branding and categorisation can reassure clients on expected service-level standards, giving these venues a competitive edge.

## Destinations

The conference location can be essential to the overall success of an event. The destination could be termed as a country, city, or region. Larger events are designed to be of great importance to the destinations they take place in, therefore a competitive bidding process to become the host destination is often the remit of government departments and sporting and other associations. With smaller events, the incumbent agency might use its expertise to influence the buyer, but generally it is the buyer or event owner who makes the final choice on destination. Events are used today to boost the awareness, appeal, and profitability of a tourism destination and to harness cultural attractions in the short and/or long term, so that the destination becomes the entrepreneurial city, the creative city, the eventful city, or the intercultural city. Destination image and branding will be further discussed in Chapter 5.

**Convention and visitor's bureau** a non-profit organisation that represents a specific city, town, or state

Most conference destinations contain a number of suitable venues, facilities, attractions, and other support services to attract conference business. It is often the host cities' **convention and visitors' bureau** that promotes the strengths of the destination they represent. Indeed, the features and attractions of a destination

may also be a key deciding factor for a bid to host a festival, sporting, or mega event. A destination's success often relies on its uniqueness, status, or timely significance to create interest and attract attention.

## Airline and Transportation Companies

Both airline and transportation companies offer bespoke services for group travel that function quite differently from that of individual bookings. For example, corporate buyers may have business travel implants within their offices, or outsource to a business travel company, who can provide a reliable 24-hours delivery and an out-of-office service for air and ground travel requirements. Conference buyers and intermediaries of group travel have more flexibility with suppliers in terms of fare rates, ticket restrictions, and timelines for submitting passenger names, than would normally be permitted. Ground transportation could include the hire of coaches, minivans, limousines, taxis, or trains to transport delegates. Again, these



ground transportation services offer a more flexible provision for group delegates. Ground handling services include:

- Group representation and obtaining local permits
- Catering and fuel supply
- Transportation and hotel arrangements
- International trip handling
- Private and executive aviation handling
- Special 'Meet and Assist' services
- Crew assistance
- Visa arrangements
- Government and military flights handling
- Medical flights handling.

Other event suppliers are shown in Table 1.7.

**Table 1.7** Other event suppliers

| Suppliers   | Examples  |
|---|---|
| Audio-visual and production companies   | Fisher Productions, ON Event Services, USA  |
| Telecommunication companies, including video-conferencing providers                                 | Polycom, Vidyo, Telstra   |
| Catering companies  | Emirates Abela Catering Company, Leith's, Compass, Sodexo   |
| Transportation providers, including airlines, coach and rail companies, car hire and taxi companies | Jetstar Airways, SNCF, Golden Tours   |
| Interpreters and translators for international events   | ABCO International Translators and Interpreters, Toronto  |
| Speaker bureaus   | The London Speaker Bureau, The Harry Walker Agency, USA   |
| Lighting and floral companies   | Shenzhen EzPro Sound and Lighting Technology Co. Ltd, A Love Affair Floral & Event Design, Sydney |
| Event insurance companies   | Hiscox Event Assured, Insure My Event, USA  |

## OBJECTIVE 5: THE CHANGING FACE OF EVENTS

### When did Events Begin? The Evolution of an Emerging Industry

Events in the form of organised acts and performances have their origins in ancient history and have always had an important function within society, providing participants with the opportunity to assert their identities and share rituals and celebrations. In the days before

the internet and social media, communities displayed an anthropological need to get together and socialise and to celebrate certain rituals and traditions. Traditionally, the origins of these special events and festivals were based around special religious holy days, celebrated across various religions and countries around the world. In today's evolving globalised society, with its diverse cultural mix, certain key dates on the calendar are still recognised as an occasion to celebrate individual milestone anniversaries and achievements, such as birthday parties, wedding celebrations, funerals, house-warming parties, baby gender reveal parties, and so on, but have grown today to include events that may have originated in other parts of the world. For example, hen and stag nights and baby showers were concepts that were first introduced to other cultures and countries from the USA. Carnival, for example, originated in South America and the Caribbean, but is now celebrated globally.

Events, however, are not solely about marking **rites of passage**. **Rites of passage** a ceremony that marks the transition from one phase of life to another. In modern times, they make a key contribution to cultural and economic development and can have a major impact on the development of cultural tourism in the destinations where they take place. Some events that have been taking place for many years have become very popular and familiar. These include fairs, festivals, sporting events, exhibitions, and other forms of public celebration.

As indicated in Figure 1.5, events can originate from many distinct sectors, often known as typologies. Each one is unique, and it could be argued that they are defined by factors such as: management, length, location, audience, and so on. It can also be the purpose of the actual



**Figure 1.5** The events sector

event or the specific aims and objectives that dictate which category they fall into. However, there are some fundamental features they all have in common. They are all planned and do not happen by chance. All need to be managed and have clear and SMART objectives, i.e., that are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Time-related. From the outset, they all need to have detailed plans of various complexity, under key areas such as marketing, finance, design, and so on. The operational process for all events tends to be fairly similar, and they all need to be measured and evaluated at the end.

There are other ways to categorise events. A common method of doing this is to think about them in terms of their complexity, size, scale, impact, and attendance. These categories may appear quite subjective and may not lead to a completely accurate categorisation of typologies; however, knowledge of a category can be beneficial when trying to:

- Promote tourism
- Bring economic benefits to an area or a destination
- Attract media coverage from the event that will be viewed globally
- Organise an event, in order to understand where similar skills can be applied
- Gain recognition for a specific region or area
- Determine spend for the event.

Much has already been written about how events are grouped together. Sometimes we define them according to these various sizes and scale. At other times, the defining characteristic is the event type, or the purpose for holding it in the first place. Further typologies might include the profile of the audience attending, the number of participants, or whether or not they are public or private. If the event is a public one, it is usually open to anyone who pays for a ticket. A private event, however, can only be attended by invitation, e.g., a VIP or a private event, such as a wedding where there is a defined guest list. Table 1.8 shows the various event sectors that exist.

**Table 1.8** Features of various event types

| Event sector                 | Features   | Sample event types   |
|------------------------------|--|--|
| Corporate events             | Business-related events.<br>Generally paid for by a company or an organisation.  | Product launches<br>Sales conferences<br>Incentive travel<br>Exhibitions   |
| Charity and voluntary sector | Not-for-profit events usually held to raise funds and the charity profile.<br>Some paid roles, but are often run by a board of trustees and non-paid voluntary staff.<br>Similar to association and corporate events, but not-for-profit.<br>Most of the funds raised are donated to the charity.<br>Suppliers are therefore often prepared to offer discounts on their services, e.g., waiving their fees for guest speaking, offering a discounted rate on venue hire. | Fun runs<br>Comedy shows, e.g., <i>Comic Relief</i><br>Fashion shows<br>Cake stalls<br>Charity balls<br>Sporting events, e.g., the TCS London Marathon |

(Continued)

**Table 1.8** (Continued)

| Event sector                            | Features  | Sample event types   |
|---|---|--|
| Central and local government            | Run by local government to discuss local or political issues.<br>Delegates are often required to pay their own fees to attend.  | Local government meetings<br>Civic meetings<br>Political forums  |
|   | The budget needs to be kept as low as possible, with less emphasis on luxury accommodation, more on functionality.  | Councillor meetings<br>Election campaigns<br>Political lobbies/rallies   |
| Profit-making events                    | Run by an organisation or individual entrepreneur to generate revenue.<br>Generally, a 'hot topic' is selected and announced and keynote speakers and topic specialists are sourced.<br>Could be a business or non-business event, designed to attract people to pay to attend for educative or for entertainment purposes.<br>Sometimes known as user-conferences, within the corporate or association sector. | User conferences, e.g.,<br>Manage Engine User Conference 2023 Australia<br>2024 Esri User Conference, San Diego, California<br>The Disney Exhibition, ExCel                      |
| Associations and institutes – education | Includes professional or trade associations; institutions and societies; religious organisations and trade unions.<br>Usually held to provide a service to members or employees, rather than for financial gain.<br>Delegate numbers are usually higher than for corporate events. The lead time is generally longer.   | 16th EAOHP Conference, Granada, Spain, June 2024.<br>International Veterinary Vaccinology Network Conference 2024, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam                                     |
| Sporting events                         | Come under the umbrella of leisure or recreational events, can include small local events to mega-size events, such as the Olympic Games.<br>Attract international sportsmen and women and in some cases huge crowds of spectators.   | Tennis: Wimbledon, Flushing Meadow<br>Golf Championships: The Australian Open<br>Cricket: The Ashes<br>Football: The Euro Championships<br>Motorsports: The Formula 1 Grand Prix |
| Life cycle/celebration events           | Often private events organised to celebrate or commemorate milestone happenings in the course of the life cycle.<br>Generally invitation only – guests are normally hosted by the invitee and do not pay to attend.   | Weddings<br>Funerals<br>Milestone birthdays<br>Hen/stag nights<br>Baby showers/Gender reveal<br>Christenings<br>Graduation ball<br>School prom                                   |

## Event Typologies

The following *typologies* are often used when discussing events:

- Mega events
- Special events
- Sporting events

- Hallmark events
- Major events
- Cultural events and festivals
- Minor and small-scale events.

## How might we define a Mega Event?

In terms of numbers, a mega event is an event that exceeds 1 million visits, with a capital cost of at least \$500 million and the reputation of a ‘must see’ show (see Table 1.9).

**Table 1.9** Mega event examples

| Olympic Games  | Paralympic Games   | Commonwealth Games  |
|--|--|---|
| FIFA World Cup (Fédération Internationale de Football Association) | World Fairs and Expositions<br>European Capital of Culture | IAAF World Championships (International Association of Athletics Federations) |

### REAL INSIGHT 1.3

#### Banned Afghan Women’s football team play in the Melbourne Inaugural Hope Cup

In the run up to the FIFA World Cup that took place in Australia in August 2023, the exiled Afghan’s women’s football team played in the Inaugural Hope Cup, in Melbourne against the ‘Football Empowerment’ team, who represent the city’s refugee and migrant communities. The banned Afghan women’s team who were exiled to Melbourne in August 2021 in order to escape the Taliban regime in Kabul, were proud to represent their country and sported their national strip of black and red during the match. Since taking power the Taliban have banned women and girls from playing or competing in sporting events, getting an education, working, or leaving the confines of their homes, without being accompanied by a male companion.



**Image 1.4** Banned Afghanistan Women’s football team

Source: Image courtesy of Wikicommons.

(Continued)

Gender equality was one of the eight social causes promoted throughout the 2023 FIFA World Cup. In partnership with UN women this cause was clearly displayed on the armbands of all the teams' captains, as well as the flags and screens around the Australian pitches.

In the month leading up to the start of the World Cup, the Afghan team were invited to attend a gender symposium, held in Brisbane and organised by Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. The Foreign Minister Penny Wong addressed the exiled Afghan team directly from the podium, expressing her wish that the team could be there under different circumstances, namely playing in the FIFA World Cup with the support and backing of their own country. In the symposium FIFA's chief of women's football Sarai Bareman talked of the governing bodies' vision of closing the gender gap in women's football, a sport she claimed that in comparison to the men's game, had been severely underfunded for many years.

The national women's team of Afghanistan had previously been recognised by FIFA, but because of the Taliban's ban on women playing sport, FIFA issued a statement claiming that the organisation did not have the right to officially acknowledge a team, without that team's own member association's recognition and approval.

The goalkeeper of the Afghan national women's team Fatima Yousufi said she looked forward to a day when the team would be allowed to represent their country in major international football tournaments, like the World Cup and expressed her disappointment that although FIFA's president Gianni Infantino claims that the football governing body provides a 'home for athletes', the reality can in fact be quite different if you happen to be a sports-woman from a country governed by an oppressive and misogynist regime.

## How can we define Special Events?

Getz (2018) suggests that special events are best defined by their context, but generally can be defined as: 'one-time or infrequently occurring, outside normal programmes or activities of the sponsoring or organising body'. To the customer or guest, these special events are an opportunity for a leisure, social, or cultural experience outside the normal range of choices, or beyond everyday experience. Attributes that create and define the sense of 'specialness' and make the event particularly memorable include:

- Festive spirit
- Uniqueness
- Quality
- Authenticity
- Tradition
- Hospitality
- Theming
- Symbolism.

These so-called special events can take the form of specific rituals, presentations, performances, or celebrations, but all are consciously planned and created to mark special

occasions, or to achieve particular social, cultural, or corporate goals and objectives. Some examples of a special event are:

- National days and celebrations
- Important civic occasions
- Unique cultural performances
- Major sporting fixtures
- Corporate functions
- Trade promotions
- Product launches.

## Sporting Events

Sporting events generally evolved on a global basis throughout the eighteenth, nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, with the emergence of recognisable mega and major global events taking place on a regular basis over the sporting calendar. They are often seen as one of the more 'glamorous' event types, in terms of providing stakeholders with an opportunity to travel overseas within a competitive environment, but they can be complex and require a long lead time to organise. In the past two decades, these, probably more than any other event type, have been influenced by PESTEL impacts. The 6 factors of a PESTEL framework are Political, Economic, Social., Technological, Environmental and Legal Factors, all of which impact the events industry.

Sport provides many of the UK's most significant and enduring events and these events tend to:

- Attract large crowds and media attention
- Help create a national identity
- Have tourism appeal for the host destination
- Generate considerable economic benefit
- Enjoy royal patronage.

## Hallmark Events

Defined by various authors as a one-time or a set of recurring events of a limited duration, these were primarily developed to enhance the awareness, appeal, and profitability of a tourist destination in the short and/or long term. They rely on their success or uniqueness, status or timely significance to create interest and attract attention. These hallmark events increase the appeal of a specific tourism destination or region. The hallmark stamp on them is that they have become so closely identified with the ethos of a town, city, or region that they become synonymous with the name of the place and this has resulted in widespread recognition and awareness.

Some examples of hallmark events include:



- Tour de France
- Carnival in Rio
- Oktoberfest, Munich
- Edinburgh International Festival
- Mardi Gras, New Orleans

### Pride, Brighton, or Sydney Major Events

Many major events are of a sporting nature, but not exclusively. These are capable of attracting significant visitor numbers from outside the region and of generating large audiences, significant local interest, a large number of participants and substantial tourism revenue to the city or destination. Due to their scale and interest, they can attract:

- Significant visitor numbers
- Considerable media coverage
- Substantial economic benefits.

### Minor and Small-Scale Events

These tend to be small private or public events, that are held within the community or financed by a private donor, but that do not have a major impact on a community or region, due to their small size and audience numbers. An example of this is an awards ceremony or local sporting event or community fair.

### Cultural Events and Festivals

**Civic pride** satisfaction with local or community achievements

Festivals are a growing and financially significant sector of the industry and play a major part in the economy of a host city and the community spirit of that city. These can foster **civic pride** and identity from within the local community and transform a city into an available tourist and commercial destination. In the USA, it is estimated that around 10,000 festivals take place every year, attracting more than 31 million visitors. In Europe and Australia, the growth of this sector has also been significant. Cultural events and festivals are inextricably linked, and we can define the word 'culture' to mean 'the personal expression of community heritage' (Raj et al. 2017). Cultural events can sometimes take the form of arts or musical festivals, varying in scale from local to national – e.g., Aldeburgh, Chichester – to international – e.g., Edinburgh – and global – e.g., Coachella Valley Music and Arts Festival, California. They can be integrated programmes aimed at achieving urban regeneration and cultural renewal, e.g., Glasgow, Sheffield, Birmingham, Torino, Seville, and can be used to promote destination tourism, the result of which may result in significant improvement in the arts infrastructure, such as concert halls and galleries.



## CHAPTER SUMMARY

### SUMMARY QUESTIONS

- 1 Why is it important to treat volunteers well, especially on site?
- 2 What are the advantages of outsourcing to an agency or intermediary?
- 3 Who is usually responsible for promoting and marketing a host destination?
- 4 What are rites of passage or milestone events and provide examples?
- 5 What are hallmark events usually synonymous with?
- 6 How can the word 'culture' be linked to events?

### DISCUSSION POINTS

Why should a Working Document or Operations Manual be prepared in the event planning stages?

Why is it important to vet and carefully monitor your event suppliers?

Do you think women's sports receive equal support, funding and recognition as men's sports?

### ACTIVITIES

Develop an aim and three objectives for holding the following events:

- CarFest UK
- Paris Fashion Week
- COP 31, Various

Find an event taking place in a venue in any country that could be moved and identify an alternative event for that event, in a different country.

Research three potential sponsors that might have an interest in providing funding and sponsorship for an event called 'Female Empowerment in Sport'

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