



UNIT-3

Event Concept and Theme

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this unit, the learner will be able to:

- ✓ List the five 'Ws of event creation and apply them to the creation of an event concept.
- ✓ Explain the key steps involved in event budgeting
- ✓ Explain the basic steps involved in developing a site plan for an event
- ✓ Plan for safety at large events
- ✓ Describe safety considerations for catering operations at events.

Unit 3

Event Concept and Theme

In this unit, we will consider all the essential elements needed to plan all aspects of events.

Theming the Programme

To create a unique and successful event, you need to develop an effective theme and programme to achieve this. However, there are other factors in the environment which may also significantly influence the success of the event. You need to scan the environment by making the effort to find answers to the 5 Ws of event creation in order to determine these environmental factors. The 5 Ws refer to the why, what, who, where, or what questions you need to ponder about the event. The 'what' question requires brainstorming to creatively explore likely event concepts and the most suitable themes to use. The final concept and theme must be presented in the right style and look and incorporated in all phases of the event; their application is only limited by availability of resources. When applying theme concepts to events, the programme for the event becomes critical for organising the various elements of the event for high impact and success. The event manager is expected to play a leading role in putting together a formidable team to create and deploy the event concept for a successful event.

Environmental Scanning

Environmental scanning needs to be performed prior to choosing a theme and developing a programme for the event. This is critical to making informed decision about the right theme and programme which will reflect the prevailing conditions in society. Environmental scanning involves the determination of current social and environmental factors most likely to have a strong influence on the event outcome. Some questions you need to ask during the environmental scanning process include the following:

- Will the current political climate have any effect on the event?
- What is the current state of the economy? Are prevailing economic conditions conducive for people to buy tickets to the event or to even spend some cash while at the event?
- What are the latest social trends or themes prevailing?
- Will the media patronise the event? How about special interest groups? Would they be willing to participate?

It is important to find out about the nature of the various target audiences you are expecting at the event and how they can be effectively reached. All of these factors need to be carefully considered before beginning the process of developing the concept for the event.

The event creation process requires finding answers to the 5 W questions. We will discuss each of these five questions in more details in the subsequent paragraphs below:

Why?

Why do we need to host this event is the first question you need to ask yourself and anybody else involved in planning the event. In other words, what is the purpose or objectives of having this event? There must be a clear reason or objective the event manager will hope to meet and this will guide him/her to develop the best concept to meet these objective(s). The objective could be to raise funds, to promote a client's product or to entertain an audience.

Who?

This refers to the guests who will be attending the event. It is critical to study and understand the characteristics of the target guests to help design concepts to meet their specific needs. The composition of the target group may be homogeneous or quite diverse in age, profession or interest.

When?

Picking the right time and date which is convenient to the audience and fitting the requirements of the event is critical to achieving all-round success. Planners need to consider the season of the year, the month, the week, the day, and the time of the day for the event to begin. No two events are ever the same and besides, there will be a number of factors which will influence the choice of date and time to choose. Factors such as holiday periods, natural or local elections events and sporting events all need to be considered as they tend to compete for audience attendance and media attention. It is recommended that event for the elderly or seniors are best hosted on a weekday and in the morning. Family events are best hosted during the weekend and events for young adults on weekend nights.

Where?

What factors must you consider when choosing a venue for an event? Two factors are required: The operational value and the aesthetic appeal. Besides these, you also need to consider the following when choosing the most suitable venue:

- Does the venue offer enough capacity?
- Are there adequate facilities such as power supply, catering, toilets, and stage, etc.?
- Is the venue management flexible and cooperative?

Other desirable features of the venue which could likely contribute positively to creating ambience and a good atmosphere at the event include its unique locations and beautiful surroundings; botanical gardens or riverbanks may be used for concerts. If you want the guest to feel a sense of adventure or suspense, then why not go for a military barracks which is normally not accessible to the public?

To add 'dignity and importance' to the event, you may choose a town hall to host formal events. Whichever choice you make in selecting the right venues, you will need to take all of the above factors into consideration.

What?

Developing a winning concept is important for success. The concept also helps to bring out the programme as well as assists in creating the content of the event. So the question that one needs to ask is 'what is the right concept and how can this be developed?' The first step to arriving at the right concept for an event is to do some research on other similar events in the past at the library or online using the internet. This should kick-start the flow of creative ideas. Next, you need to bring on board other stakeholders in a 'brainstorming session' where you brief them on your research findings as well as the requirements of the event and then start discussions to unearth other ideas from the participants. The stakeholders are free to suggest whatever that comes to their minds; there should be free flow of ideas since there are no rules to limit them. Unusual or abstract ideas should not be discarded but rather brought to the floor to be discussed. You, the event manager, need to guide the process in the direction of ideas that resonate with the requirements of the event. One or more brainstorming sessions may be required to finally arrive at the desired outcome of creating a suitable event concept, after further refining and development.

The Brainstorming Process

Brainstorming is a technique used to discuss issues leading to the discovery of likely solutions to these issues. It basically involves people coming together to have discussions on any topic of interest in a free and open manner. At a brainstorming session, people who take part in the discussion are at liberty to make suggestions, dispute other people's ideas, ask questions for clarification purposes, suggest potential solutions to problems or simply suggest ideas. The proceeding at the session should be captured by one person selected to play the role of recorder. The recorder or scribe writes down all suggestions, ideas or questions. He or she may interrupt the session by asking questions to clarify a point and invariably slow down the pace of the session but this is permissible to ensure accuracy and minimise misconceptions or misinterpretations. The brainstorming session is also the right opportunity for an event manager to present his/her findings or plans for the group to assess them critically.

How to Develop a Theme for an Event

It is important for you to have a theme for your event because this helps you keep to the focus of the event on the main purpose and unify the different aspects of the event. Each aspect such as the invitations, publicity, and decorations, etc. should include the theme of the event.

Choosing a Theme

Themes can be derived from sources such as seasons, historical events, places, hobbies, sports, geographical setting, festive periods, movies etc. Each theme may require using an appropriate motif to reflect the source of the theme. For instance, a Valentine's Day theme will require motifs such as an animal print or cupid while a Christmas theme may require an angel or bell motifs. Use birds, butterfly, plants, flowers, trees and variety of colours for a nature theme. Geographical regions may incorporate mountains, islands, lake or the beach as motifs. Aspects of events which require application of a theme include:

- Websites
- Posters
- Entrances
- Brochures, pamphlets
- Staff uniforms
- Staging
- Catering facilities
- Print, radio, and TV advertisements
- Sets and costumes
- Site decoration
- Compare
- Signage
- Performers

Well thought-out themes help to create a memorable experience for the guests. A good and attractive theme also helps the organisers to meet their objectives.

Creative Elements

Motif

The word 'motif' refers to the drawing of an object or symbol which represents the theme of the event. For example, an image of the rainbow can be used as the motif for a 'promise theme' because rainbow represents the sign of a promise.

Motifs are created by making a list of words relating to the theme of the event during a brainstorming session. If you choose a city theme, then you may use words or things which people can easily associate with that city. For example a theme for Paris may lead to motif word list with words such as Eiffel Tower, cafe or arches.

Mood

Decide on what atmosphere or mood you want to create. This is where you want to refer back to your list of words you brainstormed. Add words to the list that will portray your mood. If you choose a mediaeval theme you may include rich heavy brocade and velvet fabric, use Gothic lettering on your programmes or invitation cards. Create a feel and a mood that is uniform throughout.

Colour

Choose an ideal colour scheme to be used throughout all aspects of the event. They must complement your theme. Purple, green and gold solid colours can create a dramatic effect. Colour has the ability to make a high impact on the guests. Mix an ideal number of colour (one or two colours will do) with the theme pattern to create a dramatic effect.

Texture

Spice up the atmosphere by including texture to improve the appearance, sight and feel of the venue. Silk, satin, velvet, pearls, cotton, linen, shells and beach sand can be used to impact texture to the venue.

Mesh

Mix the theme, mood, colour, and texture to communicate your objectives to the audience throughout the event.

Topics of Theme Parties



Theme: under-the-Sea



Carnival Theme

An example is a street party or Rio. You may choose any colour of your choice to go with this event.



Love theme

Event Budgeting

Hosting a successful event time after time requires having an understanding of the process of managing an event from its conception right through to its completion. This requires sound knowledge of preparation, planning and management. It is also important to understand what exactly the client expects from the event and putting your managerial skills to work to make it happen. Having good managerial skills means good planning and an exquisite execution of the plans as well as creating a competitive budget for you to remain relevant and profitable for many years.

Key Steps to Event Budgeting

Steps you need to take to develop a budget for the event include:

- List all sources of funds for the event
- Draw up an estimate of the budget
- Prepare the budget
- Monitor budget expenditures and generated income
- Review your budget after the event

Identify and estimate costs and income

Previous budgets for past events can be used as a starting point to providing an estimate of budget if the events are similar. However, if the event is being undertaken for the first time, then you may approach a company that has the experience of organising this type of event to get some ideas about the costs involved and the sources of income to pursue. You may ask for a list of income sources as well as areas of expenses. What price should you charge participants at an event? This question is best answered by considering different scenarios using a spreadsheet application or a calculator.

You may need to determine the attendance level and gauge the effect of ticket price on demand for the particular event. At the same time, you may need charge a price which will cover the entire cost of event and also provide enough profit for your effort. It would be a good idea to even conduct a mini survey to get the public's opinion on different aspects of the event including the price range before coming out with a final price list.

Establishing an Appropriate Level of Budgeting

Single venue for single activity event requires just one budget. However, when several venues are required for a larger event or special annual event like an annual festival split into different unique events spanning several weeks or months, then you may need to prepare separate budget to cover each event. An overall budget for the entire event must also be prepared.

Budget Making and Approval

Budget documents are prepared by using details from the cost and revenue estimates. To account for potential shortfalls in expenditure, it is recommended that the event manager forecasts on a month-by-month basis the expenditure for pre-event activities such as insurance, promotional expenditure and deposit for securing the venue. Similarly, there is the need to forecast the pre-event income expenditure. This way, it becomes easy to work out any shortfall and to adopt measures to address this problem to avoid cash flow issues and disruption to the smooth running of the event. Measures such as asking for extension to terms of payment, getting assistance from sponsors or local organisations may provide temporary solution until extra resources have been secured.

Monitoring the Budget

The responsibility of monitoring the budget may be designated to committee members or specific persons assigned to budget monitoring and control roles. Regularly written reports on the budget issues highlighting expenditure and income within a specific period compared to the budget showing the actual amounts would be required from the appointed people. This is one effective way to monitor the budget for events.

Budget Review

A budget review is necessary midway through the planning process. It should:

- Identify any errors or oversight in procedures for preparing the budget
- The review should point out all areas which were over/under-estimated
- Recommend what changes need to be done to correct shortcoming identified above

Possible Event Expenditure Items and Income Sources

Requirements of the Event

The first budget does not really reflect the reality on the ground. It only serves as a guide. Midway through planning, another budget will have to be drawn up and it will be a more accurate reflection of actual activities happening. The reviewed budget will include a lot of modifications to the figures estimated in the first budget draft. However, the number of participants to expect and the final sources of financing will remain unknown at this stage.

Provision should be made to cater for unexpected costs as the execution of the event plan proceeds. These costs can be quite significant. It is recommended that this value will be 20% of the total cost forecasted.

Feasibility Study

A detailed outline of every resource needed to make the event successful in the form of itemised activities and budget should be carried out. These include technical requirements, logistical requirement, staffing, suppliers, equipment etc., have to be considered. These requirements should be compared against the financing expected before making decisions about their procurement. Also critical is the need to research and report on the location and size of the venue, the date and time to hold the event and how long the event should last for and the level of the demand for the event.

Considering all of the above will provide an accurate picture to determine whether or not it would be worthwhile to undertake the event at all in terms of meeting the objectives and making a healthy profit. Funds needed to finance the project may be sourced from sponsors (private or public) and participants. This calls for the development of creative strategies which would attract these entities to take part in the event - an event which will be perceived as being of mutual benefit to all parties.

Checklist for Feasibility Study

Sources of Expenditure	Sources of Income
List of all equipment	Sales (tickets, food, merchandise)
List of all utilities	Sponsorship
List of all social and welfare requirements; prizes, awards	Grants
List of all staff and their salaries	Fundraising
List of all medical needs	Revenue from parking and permits
List of all security needs	Media rights
List of all materials to be purchased	Franchise fees
List of emergency requirements	
List of structures to build or rent	
List of documents (permits, licences) and reports to produce and maintain and their costs	

Income and Financing**✓ How Can We Obtain The Money? (Sources of Financing)**

The next thing to do after settling on the scope of the event will be to determine the types of finance for servicing the budget. The internal and external options exist to choose from. The internal financing option is funding arising from a previous profitable past event and other private funds from the organisers of the event.

✓ **Participants and attendees**

Fees to charge participants are calculated based on data from similar events held previously with taking into account contribution from institutions before arriving at a final fee. Fees generally cover about 50% of the total event cost.

Institutional Help:

● **Public Institutions**

Sources, such as the local authorities, government agencies, or town councils may be consulted for funding. It is generally not easy to get funding via this source due to stifling bureaucratic bottlenecks and the filling of complex forms. Another hurdle to getting this type of funding is that you need to justify all expenses before getting it. Moreover, if the fund is unable to cover the costs for which it was awarded, you will be asked to refund the full or partial amount. Another thing to bear in mind when applying for such public funding is that one has to ensure that similar events are not scheduled to take place at the same time as your event, otherwise the funds may have to be shared with the rival event.

● **Private Sponsors**

Private institutions such as corporate firms, banks, newly established companies may be interested in sponsoring the event depending on the nature and scope.

Private Sponsors may be:

● **Associations**

These are membership-fee-paying legal groups of partners whose members share common goals. Members contribute the member fees to help sponsor events.

● **Federations**

These are similar to associations just described above

● **Companies**

Companies sponsor event and take the opportunity to be present at the event in order to promote their brands during media coverage

● **Charities**

They are non-profit making organisations that also sponsor events which are of interest to them

- **Sponsors**

They provide support to over 80% of all events in return for publicity in the media

Expenses

Below are, some of the main cost elements in the budget

- ✓ **Human resources needed**

Cost associated with provision of adequate number of staff should be employed based on the number of activities that needs to be executed as well as being sufficient to deal with emergency situations to avoid disappointment when some employees fail to turn up for work.

- ✓ **Technical Equipment**

These include costs associated with the purchase/renting of public address system, simultaneous translation services, recording studios, cinema production, media coverage and broadcasting, and corporate videos, etc.

- ✓ **Communication**

Costs associated with advertising, marketing and communication, graphic design and printing, media coverage, script writers, multimedia, web design, mailing and merchandising'.

Entertainment

It involves contemplating whether the event should be dynamic with a variety of performances. You may decide to go for artists, DJs, Karaoke machines, shows, cultural visits, and music evenings, etc.

Stage and furnishing

You need to determine the quality of presentation you want.

Furnishing hire

Some items to procure include digital visual art, party commodities, marquees, platforms, stages, decor and design, stand design and assembly, flower arrangements, notices, signposting and labelling.

Social Programme

Determine how many free-time activities should be offered. This may be in the form of lunches and dinners, catering, gala dinners, opening and closing ceremonies, and gifts.

The Venue

You may consider venues such as Town Halls, boats, bars and discos, congress and convention centres, historic buildings, castles, palaces, sport facilities, in the open air, hotels, restaurants, and lounges.

Key Financial Factors during an Event

Sometime during the course of events, crises may occur along the way. What do you do? The key to effectively dealing with crises is having an understanding of the bigger picture at play. You must not lose sight of the event budget. You also need to have some knowledge about your client's demeanour or how he behaves as well as having intimate knowledge of your own company's resources to guide you to develop a formidable solution. The employee time log is a very indispensable tool to also rely on.

Factors to consider before making decision during crises include the following:

- Fixed labour
- Unreimbursed (you cannot charge your client) overtime
- Unreimbursed (you cannot charge your client) supplies
- Unnecessary sub-rentals

Fixed labour

During contract negotiations between the event manager and the client, the total cost of labour is computed and agreed on. This amount is fixed for the duration of the event; it cannot be increased by the event manager in the course of running the event. There is therefore, an incentive for the event manager to use less labour hours to save on costs and make some profit from labour funding allocations. Baring crisis situations no extra labour hours or materials would be required, otherwise the event manager's company would have to foot the bill for extra expenses; a situation which eats into the company's profit.

Unreimbursed Overtime

Sometimes during the execution of an event plan, the event manager may have to deal with unplanned overtime as a result of mistakes in managing time or resources. The client will not be liable to pay for this, so it is classified as unreimbursed overtime. Unreimbursed overtime occurs when an equipment scheduled for delivery takes much longer time to arrive at its destination or when a crew scheduled to work on two consecutive events exceed the allotted time at the first event which leads to doing overtime on the second job to make up for the late start. In either case, the client will not reimburse the event manager's company for the extra hours worked.

Unreimbursed Supplies

Unreimbursed supplies are supplies that are consumed during the course of one or many events.

Sub-Rental

When the event management company rents extra equipment to perform a function as part of the event programme, it has to pay for this service because the company has no recourse to reimbursement from the client. The event company may resort to renting because its own equipment has broken down or there is shortage or the company does not have such equipment in its inventory. Proper logistics planning and effective maintenance program will reduce the need to sub-rent.

Extra Labour

Much care should be taken to meticulously analyse and plan expenses and manage resources efficiently to guard against sub-rentals and unreimbursed supplies because these have the potential to erode the profitability of the event management company.

Keeping Accurate Time Logs

Event management teams need to keep accurate time logs of labour activities if they want the event to be successful. During crisis situations, there is a high tendency to ignore rational thinking in favour of rush decisions. This is the time to put time logs to good use when making informed decisions. Time logs can be used to keep track of the budget and guide the process of improving efficiency in executing activities. One useful way to use time logs to improve efficiency is to study them to identify employees who:

- have the skills to do specific activities
- are not working overtime
- have finished their assigned tasks
- have already taken their breaks

Allocating Resources during an Event

Hosting events will invariably involve making tough decisions to ensure everything goes according to plan. This may be unfamiliar territory if you are new to the role of event management. You will not find any specific guidelines which tell you whether the decision you make is right or wrong. You only get to know the outcome of your decisions after implementing them; i.e. you learn about common decision-making mistakes on the job during the all phases of events and try to avoid these in future assignments.

Potential crisis situations could be analysed to determine how resources would be deployed to resolve the problems. There may be several solutions to choose from. The best one may be found after further analysis have been done on all likely solutions. Here again, an up to date time log may be an indispensable tool you could use to make decisions quickly. Quick resolution of problems will prevent confrontations with your client and ensures workers complete their assigned duties on time instead of wasting their time dealing with crisis. Crisis periods interrupt the normal duties of workers and lead to payment of overtime fees.

Tips for Working with Quotes or Contracts:

- Be clear on the distinction between a contract and a quote. You need to carry a signed copy of the signed contract or quote to any event meeting you attend. Do not discuss the content of either document with anyone unless you have been authorised to do so.
- Sufficient detail should be provided in the quote to enable easy determination of which items are really needed and which ones should be eliminated
- If the event manager is responsible for preparing the quote, then he/she needs to determine the tax status of his/her company and include this in the final bill if the company is liable to pay tax in the region where the event in the place the company operates
- Determine any hidden expenses not captured in contracts. This may be in the form of cost associated with electricity, water supply, security, meal chargers, lifts, risers or hotel charges which have not been quoted.
- The event manager needs to follow his/her company policy on making modification to contracts. You need to know who to contract to authorise any changes to the original contract terms and conditions.
- In situations where you will require the signature of the client to authorize modification of certain documents such as those for changing labour hours and the number of equipment, you will be required to have these documents with you always.
- Find out more about your company's contract terms and conditions, especially with regards to natural disasters, bad weather conditions, and cancellation of the contract by the client.
- Get to know the procedure for deleting or adding extra equipment
- Ensure you have with you at all times a price chart for equipment price and labour cost so you can inform the client of any price change before effecting the change.
- Study the contract to know how many labour hours are required to complete the event
- Outline all activities that need to be undertaken to complete any event
- Also determine how many hours are needed to complete each activity and add them all up and compare with the expected total labour hours specified in the contract.

- Inform all workers who have been assigned to undertake an activity about the time required to complete their respective tasks. You may have a fair idea of the amount of effort and time required for each job. This presupposes that all workers have the necessary skills to complete their jobs on time.
- Provide effective management to the workers and ensure they follow the right sequence of executing activities
- Employees need to complete one activity before they can commence another. Ensure the necessary resources are available in advance before they move on to the next activity
- Labour log time should be kept on every team member including the time taken to complete an activity. This time log document is essential to determining how cost of labour increases or decreases during a particular event
- You need to record any changes you are authorised to make and also update computer records to keep the database up to date.
- Abide by all labour laws and regulations and allow workers to take their breaks as prescribed by the law.
- Quotes and contracts can be used to resolve any disputed between the event manager and the client

Venue Selection and Operations

The event manager must choose a venue by considering its operational effectiveness for the event as well as its aesthetic appeal. Venues which come with stages, equipment and other essential facilities contribute to the organisational and logistical needs of the event and make the work of the event management company easier to accomplish. Deciding to use unusual venues may require investing to building a stage and providing adequate facilities at additional cost. The good thing however, is that such unusual venues create a unique atmosphere and contribute to a highly successful event.

The Basic Steps in Developing a Site Plan

When selecting a suitable site, the event manager must ensure it is readily accessible, easy to find and the site is safe and capable of containing additional facilities such as electricity, bathrooms, toilets etc. Things which will encourage guests to attend include the provision of adequate parking facility, crime-free location and provision of shelter to protect guests from unpleasant weather conditions.

When developing a site plan, you need to consider the following steps:

- Determine the event's site requirements
- Identify potential site/venues and compare with event requirements
- Choose the venue which matches all requirements
- Prepare site plan with the correct scale
- Determine how facilities would be placed at the venue or site
- Consult with stakeholders for their input into the planning process and adjust site plans to include their suggestions
- Undertake other types of planning and communication with stakeholders and staff using the site plan

Venue Selection

When selecting venues for events, you must ensure their compatibility with event theme and the ability to contribute to creating a wonderful atmosphere. Factors that you need to consider when choosing venues include:

- Contribution to the theme and atmosphere of the event
- Capacity availability on the required date(s), including set-up and rehearsals cost
- Reputation of the venue
- Staging facilities
- Power and water supply
- Catering arrangements
- Restrictions on use of the venue
- Toilets
- Waste management facilities
- Access to transport
- Parking
- Accessibility for disabled persons
- Accessibility for deliveries and emergency services
- Ease of set up
- Safety
- Other events at the venue at the same time
- Weather contingency
- Security

Types of Venues

Hotels

Hotels tend to be a popular venue of choice for event manager for a variety of reasons. They basically have the capability of catering for a wide variety of events with different levels of sophistication. Most are well-endowed with all of the necessary facilities for a free-flowing event. Professional stewards who work at hotels are well-trained to provide high class services to guest and are more than capable of handling crisis situations. Another attractive feature of hotels is that they are well-equipped with the latest technologies for easy communication as well as making effective presentation possible.

Restaurants

Certain types of events such as parties, banquets and other intimate occasions are more suitable to host at restaurants. Some restaurants offer rooms specifically designed to host all kinds and sizes of events. Advanced reservations of rooms are required by restaurants when you wish to have your event there. There are options for using more than one room exists at some restaurants when the number of guests expected is large. Banquets for recognising the achievements of people are normally held at restaurants where a friendly and social atmosphere is desirable. Indeed most individuals tend to patronise events at restaurants frequently as a result of the friendly, calm and pleasant atmosphere that prevail during these events.

Conference Centres

Popular events held at conference centres include seminars and professional conferences for medium to large number of guests. Conference centres offer a wide range of facilities to cater for diverse needs of events. In terms of extremely large events, conference centres may have arrangements in place to split the large size in smaller groups and host them in separate rooms. At major conference centres, there is no shortage of equipment and technological facilities. The event managers will be spared the inconvenience of bringing along a large collection of equipment since these have all be available at the venue. Some operator of conference centres charge a fee for the use of their equipment in addition to the base fee for renting the venue. Additional features such as external communication lines may be added at the request of the event host for the purpose for receiving payment for purchases of products on sale at the venue via credit/debit cards.

One or more rooms may be rented. You are at liberty to also rent one or more audience space depending, of course, on the number of people you are expecting or the area of space for displaying merchandise etc. A room may even be reserved for use as a dining place if this is permissible. Conference centres are ideal for events lasting more than one day as they are normally sited close to hotel facilities. Some conference centres offer discounted packages when booked together with the event.

Outdoor

Baring bad weather conditions, an outdoor event can be an exciting occasion for both private and corporate guests. Outdoor events offer a wide range of venues to choose from. Venues may include parks, gardens, camps, lawns, zoos, beaches, conservatories, and the like. Compared to indoor events, outdoor events provide a sense of freedom-to-move. To guard against interruption of events by undesirable weather conditions, it is recommended that weather shelters be provided to cater for any eventuality when the weather makes a turn for the worse. Ideally, you should also have a backup location should your first option not materialise. You need to also consider the technological facilities and equipment you will need at outdoor events. Find out whether or not these have already been provided or whether there are facilities in place for people to bring along their own gadgets for installation.

Stadium

If you need to organise an event for a large group of people with diverse need of facilities, then a stadium is what you need for hosting a successful event. It provides an awe-inspiring atmosphere and comes with a collection of auxiliary facilities on a large scale to handle the vast crowds expected. There is no shortage of parking space and other useful amenities during the event. If you want to host a corporate picnic and impress the guests, then using a stadium will do the trick. It offers more than an ordinary park does. Instead of using a golf event to host business transactions, consider choosing a stadium event to provide the ideal venue to mix business with pleasure.

Gardens

Events may be hosted in gardens in an atmosphere which gives the participants the opportunity to get in tune with nature. Garden venues are suitable for hosting private and some types of business events. Events such as family parties, birthday parties, reunions, etc., are well suited to gardens. Large-size gardens offer sufficient space for multifunctional events. For those accustomed to city life, a garden event provides just the right opportunity to break away from the hustle and bustle of the 'concrete jungle' and to embrace the freedom provided by nature's free space.

Site Design Considerations

Venue capacity/Occupants Capacity

The space and number of emergency exits at a venue determines its capacity. The number of emergency exits can be deduced by determining the rate of evacuation and the evacuation rate is calculated using the width of the exit space and designated evacuation routes. When calculating the occupancy capacity, you will need to deduct areas taken up by structures which will not be occupied as well as areas which

present restricted viewing of performance from the total area available. You must also take into consideration special areas designed to provide some sort of cover for the participants to determine the effect of their movement to these special areas. Occupant capacity of venues where seats are provided is determined by the number of seats and the number of exit. Outdoor music events use capacity density of 0.5 m² per person as a general rule. Occupant capacity calculations need to be assessed again when all facilities have been installed at the site.

Exit Requirements

The number of exits to provide at a venue depends on the number of people at the venue and the time required to evacuate them from the building. Siting of exits should be around the perimeter of the venue with no obstacles impeding the free movement of people whatsoever. It is best to have the final exit terminus connected to an open space or assembly space and not to a main road or busy place when doing risk analysis during the planning phase. All exit gates must function perfectly and ideally, separate exits should be provided to guests, service team and vehicles at the site of the venue. Do not forget to make provision for wheelchair access and exit during your planning period.

Venue Access

Points leading to facilities must be designed in such a way as to be easily accessible and to minimise congestion at particular spots. The design of routes should make it easy to direct traffic and must avoid cross flow traffic.

Entrances

People attending events use entrances to access the venue. The number of entrances and the capacity of people they can admit will determine their design and location around the perimeter of the venue. Adequate number of entrances should be available during peak times to ensure free flow of people. When siting entrances, consideration should be given to the direction of approach and the peak number of people to expect from each direction to help determine the number of entrance s to provide. Separate entrance may be provided for workers, guests and performers. Some venues such as stadia may have a single space for both exit and entrance.

Site Lines

Provide the audience with the widest sight line, especially at the space to the left and right sides of the stage to avoid movement of the audience to the centre of the venue and also to allow for easy emergency access. Such design helps to reduce audience density at the front of the stage and minimise incidence of injuries resulting from crushing and surging movement of crowds. Sight lines can be improved by choosing an optimum stage height and width and the proper positioning of the public address wings.

Video Screens

At certain events, video screens and projectors are provided to make the occasion stress-free and enjoyable. Providing video screens will prevent people gravitating toward the stage and overcrowding. When the screens are suitably placed, it encourages people to take up seats in less crowded areas. Placing video screen close to the stage prevents the audience from getting too close to the stage. Screens should be supported on strong foundations and the appropriate type of screen used depending on the time of the day.

Seating Arrangements

Rules for seating and guideline on how to secure seats in a fixed spot should be adopted to guard against undesirable movement of the audience towards the stage and to maintain order at the venue. The audience should be told about regulations or rules governing the event. An all-seated event may be perfect to achieve this goal.

Slopes

Securing temporary seats with suitable devices will prevent them from becoming disordered and scattered all over the place and render the venue highly disorganised.

Observation Points

The observation points are synonymous with outdoor events. They provide the audience with good viewing sight lines when well-sighted at the event ground. These should be provided with safe exits and entrances.

Production Infrastructure and Backstage Requirements

These include refreshment facilities, accommodation, storage space production offices etc. The size, type and duration of event will determine the kind of production infrastructure to use. Risk assessment needs to be done and the number of these facilities determined and the appropriate safety measures and safety gadgets provided. A good site design to deal with fire is one which makes it easily accessible to fire fighting equipment and ambulance services. It is important to mark all available exits and routes for people to find their way out of the venue during emergency evacuation.

Fire and Ambulance Requirements

A good site layout is one which makes it easily accessible to fire-fighting equipment and ambulance services. There should be provision of adequate parking space for these vehicles, a first-aid post, medical centre, an assembly point all suitable located around the site and away from hazards. Ideally, all fire

equipment/appliances should be readily accessible to, at the most, 50 metres from all structures. It is important to mark all available exits for people to find their way out of the venue/buildings during emergency evacuation.

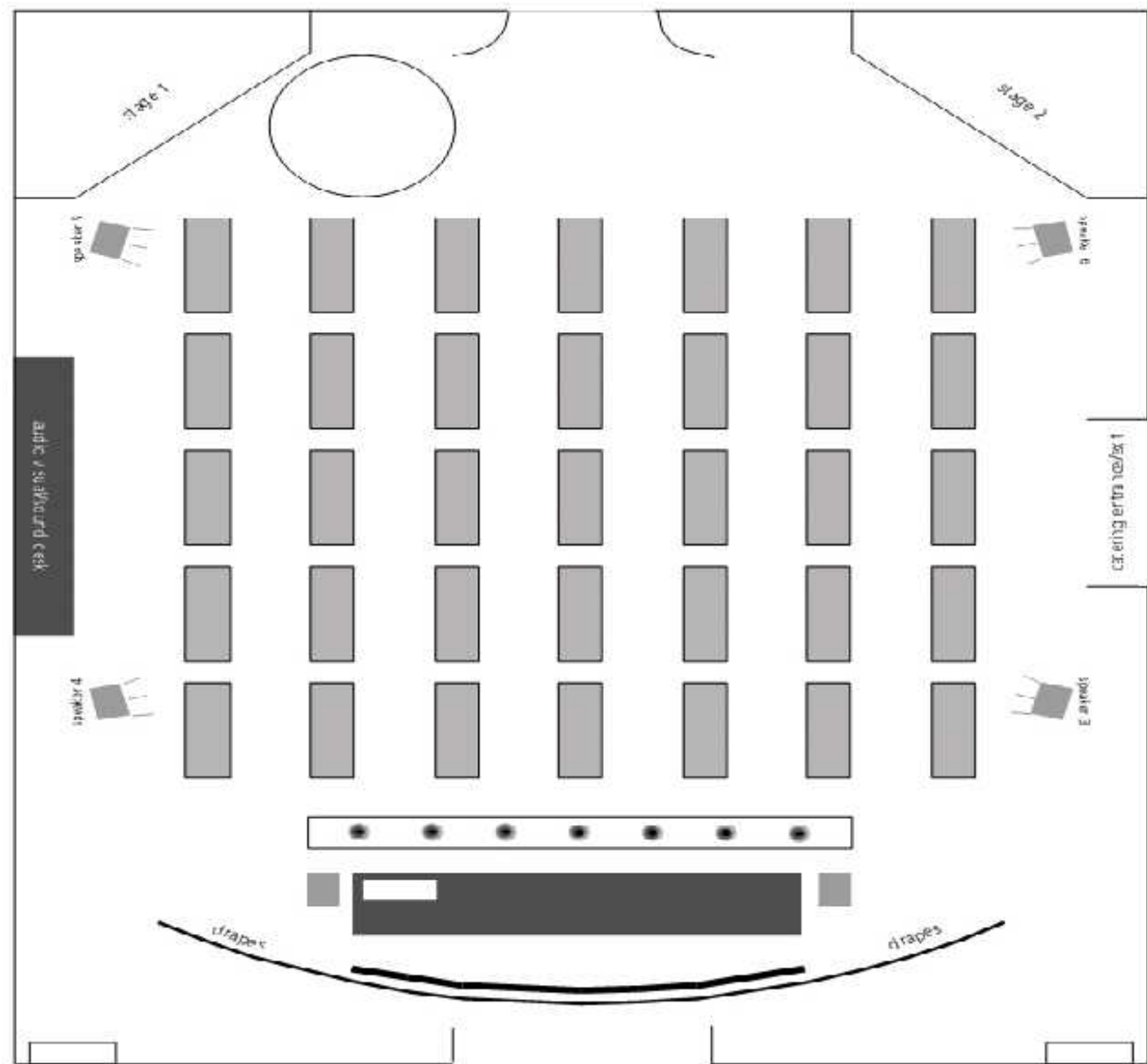


Noise Consideration

The design of the venue should be such that the noise originating from the venue is prevented from getting out and causing a nuisance to the neighbouring community. Ensure that you put measures in place to control and enhance the sound at the venue. Use delay towers to suspend distributed systems as well as barriers and slopes to enhance the sound atmosphere. Also consider the stage location together with the arrangement of the delay towers such that they do not distort the sight lines.

Welfare Facilities

These include providing water supply, sanitary facilities, and information centres to match the number of participants and the site's layout. Allocate sanitary facilities around the site adequately so that sight lines are not blocked. Positioning should be such that it serves areas where there is greater need for sanitary facilities, for example, catering areas. Make sure they do not block gates or escape routes and are visible to be easily identified by participants. Provide appropriate water supply close to sanitary facilities and consider providing adequate drainage for this.



Health and Safety Requirements

Planning for Safety

It is best to start preparation for health and safety at larger events about 6-9 months to the start of the event while preparation for smaller events will generally start much closer to the start of the event. The planning process should involve methods to identify, eliminate and control health and safety issues including hazards and risks.

The Phases of an Event

The phases of event planning should include the build-up, the load in, the show, the load out, and the break down components.

1) The build up

This phase involves activities such as planners planning the design of the venue, choosing suitable personnel, contractors and subcontractors who will construct stages and fences, etc.

2) The load in

This deals with planning how equipment will be delivered and installed at the venue. This includes equipment such as sound and lighting systems and the public address system, etc.

3) The show

This involves developing plans containing strategies for effective crowd management, transport management, fire management, welfare provisions, first aid, contingency plans, and how to deal with major incidents or emergencies

4) The load out

This involves removing equipment and services safely when the event is completed

5) The breakdown

The breakdown phase requires the design of plans to manage risks after the event is finished and during dismantling of infrastructure. During this phase solid and liquid waste are removed from the site.

Planning for the Build-up Phase

All venue design should include measures to reduce risks and increase safety of participants. Structures that have to be erected must guarantee safety of the people who will use them. Structures such as the

stage, tents, barriers, towers, delay towers, stall etc. should all poses the necessary structural integrity and be foolproof. Your site plans should show the location and positioning of all infrastructure and equipment you intend to use for the event. This includes the location of exits, entrances, toilets, emergency routes, assembly pints, and triage areas, etc.

It you are going to use an existing venue, you need to contact the owner for the plan, copies of which may be made available to contractors to help them place facilities correctly. Also make request for contractors' and subcontractors' health and safety policies and a list of other hazards they are likely to face before the build up begins.

All calculations and documents relating to the stage design and location as well as the seating arrangements should be available to you always as they will be required for consultation when dealing with authorities on any aspect of the event. You need to adequately prepare for the workers by providing first aid kits, welfare, and also providing health and safety rules for all workers during their time at the site. Ensure that welfare facilities and first aid provisions are appropriate for the number of workers expected. As part of your health and safety measures, safety rules and signs should be sited all around the site to remind workers of their safety responsibilities.

Planning for the Load in

Load in requires bringing equipment and services onto the site to be installed inside the structures that have been put up and in other cases, on structures such as the stage for performers. The operations to be carried out will require some manual handling operations. Careful planning is required when undertaking load in operations.

Planning for the Show

This involves outlining procedures for managing the guests, transport, fire incidents, first aid, as well as having a contingency plan in place. Team work will be required to successfully run the event. The event management team needs to create a safety management team to deal with planning of the show. The safety team should comprise of selected members from local authorities and emergency services. They will provide the necessary information and advice for running the event safely and successfully. These two bodies making up the safety team would be required to hold regular safety planning meetings to share information so that every relevant agency with 'the need to know' is well-informed about the planning process. To test how robust the emergency plans are, table-top emergency planning exercises need to be undertaken for more sophisticated and larger events.

The Safety Management Plan and Event Safety Team Meetings

An event safety management plan should include the following:

- Provision for safety policy statement which captures the organisation's safety responsibilities and a chart containing such information
- Details of the risk assessment for the event covering structures, the audience, music level, food, venue design, fire precautions, access points such as exits and entrances, toilets, refuse, and first aid, etc.
- Provision of a site safety plan outlining the safety rules, structural safety calculations and drawings, safety coordinators, and site crew managers.
- The crowd management plan showing the number of stewards, the chain of command and procedure they will use to perform their expected duties
- The transport management plan which highlights all transport arrangements and parking provisions.
- The emergency plan which specifies actions certain designated people need to perform during major incidents
- The first aid plan which outlines how first aid should be carried out and other arrangements with nearby hospital to assist during emergency situations.

The content of the event safety management plan becomes the working document of the event manager and must be continuously updated to reflect any new information concerning the event. Only members of the safety management team need to know of the latest information that have been included in the document with the necessary control being exercised to differentiate between related documents such as the redundant document, the superseded document and the updated document.

It is recommended that the event manager convene regular meetings to discuss latest development with the safety team and to put measures in place for disseminating safety information. Such meeting arrangements may take place in weeks or days to the start of the event. For events happening over several days, meetings can be held once on the day of the event.

Crowd Management

There is a need to determine the number of guests and staff to expect at the event. The number of the attendees serves as a guide to knowing the level of services and facilities to provide. Local traffic congestion may be reduced by opening the venue much earlier and also putting restriction at the exits. Ticket pricing can also be used to control the manner of arrival of guests at the venue, especially when some would want to arrive a few days to the actual day of the event. Another strategy for controlling crowds is to increase the number of services to match the increasing number of people arriving at the

venue. Provision for contingency camping may be required for non-camping events to take care of larger-than-expected number of people turning up. It is recommended that the site layout be such that it will facilitate easy crowd flow or movement across the site while simultaneously reducing cross flow and the propensity for creating congestion.

The wheel type layout is recommended with entertainment located at the hub and the camps round about the rim and combined with one or more of the following:

- Stewards are required to control movement of the crowd at the site area and at the venue
- Provision of a variety of entertainment programs on different stages but well-integrated to allow audience to attend all performances
- Sticking to planned order of running the event to avoid conflicts
- Closing down of the main stage needs to be done gradually
- Producing low level entertainment after the main event (i.e., cinema, etc.)
- Entertainment should not be permitted at campsites

Major Incident Planning

With the help of the local authority emergency planning officer who is very familiar with major incident planning arrangements, the event safety team can develop a comprehensive plan to deal with all major incidents during the event. The plan is developed with the help of the following questions:

- Does the team have understanding of the type of evacuation to undertake; whether the entire site or just a selective type of evacuation?
- How would the large movement of people from the venue to another part of the site impact the surrounding areas?
- What would be the effect of public address system in emergency situations?
- What other infrastructure is available elsewhere to make use of?
- Would evacuation be the best option to choose when other facilities, such as water and sanitary are in use?

Transport Management

Participants should be encouraged to purchase integrated tickets if public transport is going to be available. The integrated coach option is also very popular with many participants attending certain types of events. But if public transport is limited or unavailable, people tend to make their journeys to events by cars. It is important to consider making provision for such large movements to a specific site and the impact on the local community when planning the event in consultation with the local authorities. Arrangements should be made to move traffic quickly from the road onto the site with the

help of stewards or traffic marshals. This presupposes that parking areas are well demarcated and the routes properly constructed to avoid pedestrian routes.

Information and Welfare

Organisers of events must ensure that they provide detailed information about all aspects of the events and facilities as well as variety of welfare services such as catering for all participants during the event. Such essential arrangement makes it easy for the police and medical teams to perform their respective roles more efficiently.

Venue and Site Design

Ideally, guests and facility servicing personnel should have 24-hour accessibility to facilities for multi-day events.

Fire Safety

Before the event, the safety team needs to hold meeting with the local fire brigade to agree on their areas of responsibility and the lines of communication to use in the event of a major fire outbreak. Also critical is the need to provide procedures for dealing with small fires at the sites.

Sanitary Facilities

Some events such as green field events may have the number of people attending limited by the quality of water available. One must provide infrastructure which has to be adequate for moving water or effluent at the site of the event. It is always desirable to have available flush toilets at events. However, their functionality may be affected by limited supply of water or complete lack of it. Bringing the toilets back their normal state of operation when water becomes available again may present some challenges too. Providing a small number of toilet blocks with more units and good accessibility routes plus adequate serving will ensure continuous availability of the toilets throughout the duration of the event. There the need to provide enough toilet facility and shower to cope with high demands in the morning, especially during multi-day and overnight events.

Food and Drinking Water

Adequate supply of food and drinking water should be made available until the event is completed. This includes providing stalls for selling pastries, milk and beverages. The supply of drinking water requires provision of supply pipelines in the ground, a situation which presents risks of contamination when the pipelines become damaged. One solution to reduce such risks includes having separate independent water supply lines to feed different areas of the site. Another step requires increasing the level of chlorine to just over the normal supply level. To reduce wastage of water, percussion taps may be used.

Health and Safety of Event Workers

The safety team is expected to develop and implement effective procedures which involve delegating tasks to people and coordinating their activities in the most efficient manner to reduce fatigue resulting from stress and thereby ensure decisions are not taken under duress. The issue of tiredness or fatigue is a common phenomenon during events lasting for several days. This comes about due to workers executing activities for long hours and under stress. The antidote to this problem lies in putting together an effective safety management team comprising of people who have experience of tackling similar events.

Catering Operations

Catering

Food is an important fuel to revive, energize, inspire, excite and to make people happy. This is also the case for all types of events where food plays a critical role in contributing to the success of the event. Catering is, therefore, integral when planning events and must be accorded the utmost attention to ensure everything goes on well in that department.

The catering team is responsible for providing a wide assortment of aesthetically pleasing and satisfying dishes including pastries, salads, hors d'oeuvres, beverages, desserts, and starters, etc. The selected catering service providers may be individuals, small firms or hotel catering staff headed by a chef. Hotels usually have their own catering team or they may have an outstanding relationship with an external catering team whose services they may recommend to you if you do not have anyone provider in mind.

Utensils, serving dishes, warming trays and beverages are normally supplied by the catering team. Other items and services offered by the caterer include provision of tableware and flatware as well as food sculptures for decorative purposes and to create a high impact. When hosting banquets the buffet-type or a formal table configuration with waitresses in attendance may be used for serving meals. Banquets are organised as events for recognising and awarding special achievement by people, celebrating a special occasion or simply to provide an opportunity for people to interact and network socially. Caterers are also expected to be flexible enough to offer menus to cater for a wide range of tastes including people with special dietary needs such as those who are on weight-loss or diabetes programs. In short, the catering department needs to meet the expectations of the events sponsors and guests.

The ability of the caterer to meet the expectations of the event organisers will in part depend on the availability of information on the number of guests anticipated at the event. Knowing this will guide the process of determining the quantity of beverages and the different types of meals to serve and to avoid any shortage which can cause embarrassment to the host and disappointment to the guests. Knowledge of the number of people attending the event also helps to determine the number of personnel to employ. There are several ways to fish out or estimate the number of guests to expect; these include

information from online registration, ticket sales, sign-in sheets and response to RSVP invitations. Catering provision should also be made for guests who did not book a place in advance.

Safety Consideration for Catering Operations

All aspects of food preparation and sale including delivery and storage must be in accordance with the requirements of food and safety regulations and code of practice guidelines. This is true for all manner of catering services such as catering stalls, mobile catering units, bars, ice-cream vans, sandwich vans, etc.

Food must also be prepared in hygienic and safe manner. Caterer's record document should be examined for evidence of the following:

- Provision for identification and regulation of food hazards
- Provision for identifying and regulating health and safety hazards
- Availability of facilities and equipment for preparation or sale of food
- Safe and appropriate transportation of food to avoid potential contamination during storage and proper disposal of food waste
- Evidence of maintaining high standard of hygiene of food handling personnel
- Facilities for adequate storage and handling of food
- Adequate supply of drinking water
- Evidence of insurance to cover property and people
- Evidence of electrical and gas installation compliance certification
- Evidence of availability of adequate number of first aid boxes

The event manager should be prepared to receive and conduct the Environmental Health Officer when they request for an inspection tour. The officers usually ask for the list of caterers participating in the event. Outdoor operations such as roasting or barbecues are potential fire and contamination risks so additional requirements should be made available to minimize these risks. A comprehensive risk assessment should consider all potential hazards. The site plan should come with detailed layout of all catering activities and you must ensure:

- Removal of all obstructions that can affect the health and safety of people
- Audience are prevented from having access to the rear of catering operation
- Entry and exit accessibility are adequate for emergency vehicles
- Adequate spacing between different operations
- Secure and lockable disposal units are provided
- Procedures for removing refuse are efficient

- Catering operation should be sited close to useful utilities such as drinking water and foul drainage but not close to sources of contamination
- Food handler need dedicated toilet facilities which should not be shared with other staff or the audience
- Procedures and regulations for dealing with manual handling of items are followed
- That mobile sleeping units are not parked close to catering facilities

LPG

Outdoor events make use of LPG to prepare meals. Due to the significant risks involved in using LPG, you need to ensure that:

- Operators using LPG have the basic understanding about its safe use, characteristics and emergency procedures
- Only the quantity of LPG needed is stored; that is it should be enough to cover a 24-hour period or it should not be more than 200kg, whichever is the lowest.
- The storage and handling of LPG is in accordance the regulations
- LPG storage and handling does not affect the invited audience.

Electrical Installations

Ensure that all electrical installations:

- are of a suitable rated power output for the intended use;
- have been tested and certified by a competent person
- have adequate ventilation and kept away from combustible material
- are designed to ensure limited or no contact by people
- are provided with the appropriate cables and sockets
- are protected by a residual current device (RCD)
- do not have exposed cables which are trip hazards

Also ensure that:

- fuelling and re-fuelling are done properly and safely
- proper and safe storage of fuel in the right container

Fire-fighting Equipment

Provide suitable fire-fighting equipment capable of dealing with the type of catering activity being undertaken. Different catering activities will require different types of fire-fighting equipment. Only use equipment with certification conforming to the relevant British Standard. Keep all combustible materials away from all catering outlets.

General Area

Provision for general areas may include services offered by automated vending machines, food counters, canteens, cafes, restaurant and social dining services. Directors and other important people may enjoy silver-service catering.

All water points should be clearly marked and have unobstructed access, self-closing taps, supplied with appropriate drainage and provided with lighting for night use.

Choosing Catering Service Providers

The catering aspects of events must be taken very seriously as this contributes significantly to the overall success of events. The event manager needs to search and find an experienced caterer who is also an excellent organiser who understands the importance of the occasion. It is equally important to pay close attention to the tiniest detail to ensure that the quality and presentation of meals is of a high calibre.

Research Procedure

Finding the best catering service for your event begins with undertaking in-depth research using the internet, library, yellow pages or any other source having the relevant information. Also check whether the caterer is certified and his or her profile is of a good reputation.

Sometimes it is best to go for caterers who are relatively new to the business and looking to improve on their reputation. These catering providers are often smaller in size and tend to offer better prices and also make good use of fresher ingredients more than frozen food compared to more established and larger catering providers.

Catering Budget

Draw up an estimate of your budget for the catering aspect of the event and have a candid discussion with the caterer about your budget estimate and what you will be expecting from him/her. The budget is usually understated to make room for modification and additional costs as the event progresses.

Choice of Cuisine

The caterer needs to be informed as soon as possible if the event has been called off. Read carefully the terms and conditions of any catering contract before signing to avoid unwanted disappointments. Do not wait until the event begins before checking the look and taste of the meal. Make sure you are specific about your requirements and also make time to taste the cuisine to verify it meets your expectation.

Food Hygiene

All meals should ideally be prepared in a hygienic manner. You need to know the capability of the catering service provider in terms of the philosophy of preparing hygienic food which conforms to health and safety standards.

Decor Style

It helps to have the catering team provide good and uniform decorations in terms of the paper rolls, tables, water cups etc. to provide a pleasant atmosphere at the venue.

Serving Etiquette

When choosing your catering team, ensure that you are getting a team which provides exquisite service in a polite and respectful manner to make the guest have an enjoyable time. The waiters and waitresses should wear decent and neat uniforms for the best effect.

Beginning Advance

It is not uncommon to contract a reputable caterer well in advance of the start of the event, normally about a year in advance. So ensure that you make contact with the caterer quite early to talk over your requirement and be assured of his/her availability for the event.

Meet up the Caterer

Sampling some of the caterer's delicacies is one of the best ways to assess the quality of their meals. You may arrange to meet the caterer for the tasting session and also to discuss your exact need for the event. Visit a number of them before deciding on which one of them to hire.

Planning Catering Facilities

The event manager needs to have some idea about how catering facilities should look and function and also have an understanding of regulation governing catering at events. The event manager needs to consider the provision of the following when designing catering facilities for the event:

- Availability of amenities such as water supply, drainage and sewerage
- Provision for heating/cooling and ventilation
- Compliance of facilities with all regulations

Protection from Insect and Vermin Infestation

Temperature control and monitoring should demonstrate due diligence as required by the Food Safety (General Food Hygiene) Regulations 1995, and provide appropriate temperature ranges:

- cold food assembly: 5-10 °C
- larder/pastry meat and fish preparation: 16-18 °C
- hot cook areas maximum: 24 °C

Sufficient and appropriate space for adequate, safe working space for all personnel and equipment, including maintenance and cleaning thereof, for:

- food deliveries and storage
- staff amenities
- food preparation
- kitchens
- service areas
- eating and dining areas

Utilities and Water Supply/Disposal

Ensure specification for utilities (such as, gas and electricity), waste disposal units and services, and mains water supply are adequate to cover not just the main event but also catering services which will place extra demand.

Utility and Water Supply/Disposal

Catering operations determine the type of delivery and storage facilities required by the catering team. Different storage and monitoring approach will apply depending on the type of food. Appropriate arrangements should be made to address each unique situation. When receiving delivery, ensure that the items being delivered all meet the caterers' requirements in relation to the date, time, storage temperature etc. Any item which does not meet the specification in any form as a result of for example, broken seal or tampered package, should be rejected immediately or returned to the sender.

Delivery and Storage Facilities

Frozen food which have become defrosted in a refrigerator should be allowed to tally defrost and used immediately or disposed of where appropriate. Delivery areas need to be included in the site design. The design of the delivery area should facilitate caterer verification of delivery vehicle to ensure they have not been used to transport any other material which may be harmful to the foodstuff and should also look tidy. The history of all food items should be readily available to the caterer regardless of whether they were purchased locally or out of town. Another useful and important step to take is for catering staff to record all supplies of food and maintain an up to date database of information gathered at the onsite administration office.

Waste

Rules and procedures governing catering wastes should be followed accurately. Some locations where waste materials could be disposed of include:

- landfill sites
- approved composting plants
- approved biogas plants
- incineration plant
- rendering plants

The facility manager would be required to implement monitoring measures and to have available documents showing that catering wastes have been disposed of properly so ensure waste materials do not pollute the environment and become part of the food chain. To this end, the facility manager must ensure that:

- The waste is properly disposed of
- The waste will not contaminate the ecosystem
- The waste material will not become part of the food chain

Staff Facilities

Separate toilet and changing facilities should be provided for both sexes except when the number of catering staff is less than five in accordance with the Workplace Regulation 1993. Wash basin should be provided close to these facilities. Such facilities should be clearly labelled with 'food service personnel only'. Other personnel such as food handlers or assistance may be allowed to use these facilities with the catering staff.

Transport Management

A formidable plan for managing traffic on and off-site can be planned during a consultation with the police and highway authority.

Traffic Signs and Highway Department Road Closures

If transport arrangements for the event would mean modification to the normal flow of traffic due to closure or diversions, then the police and the highway agency and the local residents must be consulted. The meeting between the stakeholders should focus on discussing temporary traffic signs and scheduling for such temporary measures. Events that will attract a large number of vehicles will require the services of a traffic sign contractor due to higher number of workers required for producing the traffic signs.

The event manager should make arrangement to have discussions with the local highway authority about the need for obtaining temporary traffic regulation orders. The traffic orders can be used to enforce parking restriction, close down certain roads, and indicate speed limits, etc. The consultation with the local highway authority should be carried out well in advance of the event date to make time for processing the temporary traffic orders and fixing temporary signs at suitable locations to guide participants.

Traffic Marshalling

Traffic marshalling, according to legal requirements, is only to be done by the police or by someone authorised by the police to do so. Traffic at the event site is controlled by stewards who should be well-trained for the role. Stewards need to wear the necessary protective clothing such as high-visibility vest and weather protection apparels. The stewards must also take safety seriously and should be aware of dangers from moving vehicles, especially when they are reversing.

Provision of adequate communication for on-site and off-site personnel managing traffic is paramount to ensuring traffic rules are being followed, and problems quickly resolved through effective dialogue. An adequate number of stewards should be available to direct traffic depending on the number of guests expected at the event.

Public Transport

Trains and Underground Trains

Depending on the number of guests expected at the event, you may have to make special arrangement with railway authorities for them to augment their stock with extra trains to take care of high demands and reduce pressure on parking sites. The event manager needs to assess the effectiveness of having a combined event/rail ticket but consideration must be given to the distance between the nearest train station and the venue and provision made for supplementary bus services to convey participants from the train station to the event centre. Regular update of services for the event should be advertised at the

train station to keep everyone informed about the latest development or about resources available to aid their journeys.

Event managers must consult with rail authorities on platform capacity regulation to plan how to manage crowds on rail platforms. The rail operators usually have contingency plans which may be used at event planning meetings between the major stakeholders such as the Police, rail authorities, local authorities and the British Transport Police.

The event management team should make arrangement with train-operating companies, who are responsible for the large number of people who queue at train stations, on the best way to communicate with them and the British Transport Police. The event manager should also inform the train-operating companies and the police in good time if the event finishes ahead of time.

Public Transportation Management

Train-operating Companies

The train-operating companies on receiving information about the event and the knowing about the parameter of the event should undertake critical assess of its resource capacity available to cater for the number of participants who will use their stations. The train operating firms will have to provide adequate systems such as passenger control on the platforms, footbridges, escalators etc. Entrances and exits should be sufficient to deal with the numbers and provision should be made for queuing systems together with regular public address system announcement to keep all informed about important issues and procedures at the train stations.

Coaches/Buses

Traffic congestions during events are unpleasant experiences for participants. Adequate planning of routes to enable the smooth flow of traffic during arrival and departure of coaches will greatly reduce congestions. The design of access routes and parking areas should be such that vehicles would not need to reverse. Using a one-way system can contribute immensely to this. Other requirements for larger vehicles include having wider and easy-to-access entrances and exits as well as large parking areas. Any plan to enhance the free-flow of traffic should be undertaken in consultation with the police and included in the transport management plan. Sometimes you may enter into agreement with private or local bus operators to provide shuttle services between the train station and the venue. Dedicated shuttle routes could be an expedient option to take given that inevitable congestion at the event may affect shuttles if no dedicated route was provided.

Vehicle Parking and Management

A traffic management coordinator may be appointed to coordinate activities between car park management team, the police, local authority and the traffic signage contractor at larger events. Procedures and resources for managing vehicle parking should be specified in the transport management plan. Adequate communication should also be provided to assist the police and the vehicle parking management team to share information and make arrangement to dispatch resources to deal with car park incidents.

Vehicle Access

There are several key items to consider in terms of vehicle access to parking sites: the access entry/exit capacity, the nature of the parking surface and the location of access/exit points. The event manager in consultation with the site owners should provide adequately strong surface made from suitable temporary surfacing materials capable of containing the traffic volume at the site. Adequate entry and exit capacity will ensure reduction in main road traffic and congestion. Exiting a parking space creates fewer incidences unlike entering to park vehicles. To guard against ineffective vehicle exit management alternative routes and access points may be constructed to ensure safe vehicle exit from the site when congestion occurs at the main access point or the route leading to it. Another alternative to traffic management on the site is to provide separate access for service vehicles during the event.

Parking

Parking arrangements include providing separate parking areas for different categories of people who will be attending the event. This includes parking for event staff, artists, emergency services, general guests, VIP parking, parking for coaches etc. Provision should be made for extra parking areas when the need arises. Parking areas should have adequate lighting and the necessary signs to guide people in locating their vehicles; i.e., reflective numerals and signage to enable that the signs are easy to read during the night time. Signs provided at exit gates which connect to the venue are useful aids for identifying vehicle parking areas as well as provision of signs showing the direction of routes when exiting.

Emergency Access

It is important to contact emergency services such as the fire brigade to find out their requirements for hosting particular types of events. Specific information regarding access route and other critical requirements should be addressed and recorded in the transport management plan. The event site needs to provide separate entry and exit points for emergency service vehicles according to specifications already discussed with the emergency service providers. Access routes should be within 50metre of any structure.

Pedestrians

Pedestrian and vehicular access points must be separate and pedestrian access points must not cross routes for vehicles. In situations where pedestrian access is problematic, alternative access in the form of shuttle services may be necessary to resolve the problem. Special arrangements for people with physical disabilities should be in place.

On-site Vehicle Management and Temporary Roadways

On-site parking should be planned and implemented to avoid massive traffic congestions. One way to achieve this is to have parking tickets purchased in advance and ticket checks performed only after vehicles have been parked. Ticket checks can be done when drivers are about to exit the parking area on their way to the event venue. Availability of temporary access road with the ability to accommodate either one-way system with passing space which also doubles as a two-way emergency access should be made part of the transport management plan. The transport management plan should also highlight how vehicles will deliver and pick up items safely during the 'build up' and the 'breakdown' phases. Weather disruptions of routes during a heavy downpour need to be considered and suitably-surfaced alternative routes provided. Quick vehicle recovery arrangement to free vehicles which have become stuck in soft ground should be made in readiness for such eventualities.

Lift Trucks and Other Vehicles

Lift Trucks

Only persons trained and authorised are permitted to operate lift trucks because each type of lift truck has unique functionalities, which require specially trained personnel. Ensure only workers trained to use a particular lift truck are allowed to do so. Hired lift trucks should be thoroughly checked to ensure that they are in safe working conditions and having all the necessary load specifications marked on it according to the requirements of Regulations on Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment. This means that operators have to follow the specified procedures when operating these machines. The event manager must obtain the most current checks, repairs and maintenance reports showing their certification for use during the period of the event.

Other Vehicles used On-site

Other types of specialist vehicles likely to be used at the site of the event include tractors, scissor lift, electric carts, trailers, waste collection vehicles and golf buggies. All necessary precautions for the use of this equipment must be followed to limit the occurrence of accidents.

Crowd Management

The goal of crowd management at events is to ensure an incident-free outcome by adopting safety measures and understanding the behaviour of participants so that the right services would be rendered for them to have the most enjoyable experience. Understanding the factors that influence behaviour of people at events and other underlying issues are crucial to having a successful crowd management program. Factors that may influence the behaviour of people at events include:

- The entry and exit capacity to allow for crowds to move into or out of the venue
- The capacity of the audience
- Effective means of communicating with the audience
- The profile of the audience and dynamic of the crowd

Excellent crowd management requires two key components:

- The audience profile
- The crowd dynamics

Factors that necessitate the need for crowd control include the following:

- Multiple-stage entertainment
- Provision of satellite stages, platforms and stage thrusts
- Sound and video towers
- Sight-line obstructions or restricted views
- Multiple-barrier systems and pens
- Location of facilities
- The psychological state of the audience
- Special effects

Crowd behaviour is affected by series of factors which are physical and emotional in nature. Crowd dynamics is derived from the activities of the crowd based on their unique characters. The characters or activities of the artists also have an influence on the activities or behaviour of the crowd.

Consideration should be given to the following issues when designing crowd management plans:

- The character of the artists or groups, e.g., crowd surfing, throwing items into audience, and performing in audience arena
- The audience's profile, e.g., male/female split, age of audience, physical behaviour, e.g., 'slammers'

- Likely crowd activities; e.g., stage diving

Stewards need to consider the unique character of the crowd and identify this categorically in order to effectively control them.

Entry and Exit of the Audience

Final checks on all fire and emergency facilities should be done before admitting the audience to the venue. Instructions for undertaking these checks should be provided to the right staff to carry them out. These checks included ensuring that:

- All exits are unlocked
- Escape routes are clear
- Emergency lighting works
- Fire-fighting equipment and alarms are in full working order
- The public address system for use in emergencies can be heard clearly in all parts of the venue

Entrances and Exits

All exits and entrances should have designated signage. Their operations should ensure problem-free use. The design of these access points should take into consideration vulnerable categories of people such as the physically challenged and children. Emergency services vehicle access needs to be separated from pedestrian access. All restricted exit points should be clearly marked and this information relayed to the guests in the course of the event.

Opening Time

There may be a situation where participants may try to gain entry to the venue simultaneously, a situation that can lead to accidents and injuries. To prevent this from occurring, the event manager must ensure that:

- Arrangements have been made to facilitate early admission and ensuring that participants are aware of this provision using posters, putting the information on the ticket etc.
- Be flexible to respond to excessive crowding by opening the gate earlier than the expected time and planning ahead to make ready the on-site services long before the event actually starts
- You can manage the rate of admission by having on your books early supporting acts.
- Understand the implication of opening the venue earlier than planned and make provision to cater for the necessity of extra services this action will generate.

Crowd Pressure at the Entrances

Crowd pressure may be reduced at entrances by:

- Positioning queues far from the entrances
- Reserving holding areas some distance away from the entrances
- Providing suitable gates, fences and turnstiles
- Having adequate number of trained and responsible stewards in attendance
- Providing short range public address system and megaphone for making important announcements.

Ticketing

When planning ticket design, you need to remember that ticket policies can influence the management of crowds. You may need to think about some of the following:

- Offering only advance ticket when full capacity is expected
- Indicate information on seating arrangement and restrictions at the venue on the tickets
- Desist from selling seats with severely restricted views
- The portion of the ticket to be retained by a participant should indicate the location of his seat at the venue
- Tickets may also contain on the reverse side the ground map of the venue. Use colour code to indicate different entrances and ensure proportional distribution of participants according to the number of entrances
- Mark and number all sections such as rows, individual seats, and stage areas, etc. on the ticket

Admission Policies

The rate of admission may also be influenced by the admission policies just like the ticketing policy described above. Consider the following as part of your admission policy:

a) Cash Sales

Ticket prices should be printed as rounded figures to avoid the need for dealing with many small cash changes. Cash may be accepted if the rate of admission is expected to be relatively low.

b) Ticket-only Sales

Ticket only admission policy is suitable for dealing with larger number of participants at a high admission rate. Separate sales points for selling tickets should be provided far away from other queues close to the entry points and signposted accordingly.

c) Reserved(or numbered) Seat Ticket Sales

Provision for reserving a number of adjacent seats unblock for different categories of guests can reduce incidents of having lots of 'random gaps' and also reduce the need for stewards to marshal latecomers to their seat just before the event gets underway.

d) Unreserved Seat Sales

5-10% of the total capacity may be allocated for sale as unreserved seats. The unreserved seats are usually easy to manage in the event that people who have already purchased seats choose to occupy different seats that have not been assigned to them. The unreserved allocation may help to identify the status of particular seats and guide the process of filling them a few minutes to the start of the event.

e) No Ticket Sales on-site

When ticket sales arrangements require all tickets to be sold in advance or for tickets not to be sold at the venue, you will need to inform the participants through the event website or media advertisement or announcement about this arrangement.

f) Ticket Design

Easy eligibility of writing on the ticket and simple procedures for identifying security features on the ticket can significantly speed up the processing of tickets. Equally important is the need to provide information on this arrangement at vantage points round about the venue to prevent undesirable crowd build-up.

g) Admission of Young Children

Some events are just not suitable for certain category of children (less than 5 years old) due to their vulnerability to accidents such as being crushed or trampled upon. The organisers of these types of events need to inform potential participants about this restriction. Events which may include such children would normally require special provision for prams or push-chairs. Contingency plans should be drawn up to deal with young people at events, including having procedures for them to be assisted by stewards in relocating to dedicated areas.

Pass Outs

For events lasting for more than 4 hours, pass out coupons may be provided to enable participants to leave the venue for short breaks and to be readmitted on their return to the venue.

Guests/VIPs/Restricted Areas

Having different categories of participants at event venues means separate access points need to be provided for each category at locations close to their allocated seating area. Separate gates may be provided to officials, emergency service personnel, artists, and VIPs, etc., and they may be required to present special passes or identifications to enable them access the venue. This approach is intended to reduce queues and cut down on delays.

Searching

Only suitably trained and supervised stewards are allowed to conduct a search on people to prevent prohibited items from being carried into the venue.

Late Leavers

After the event is over, the stewards can form a line from the left side of the stage to the right and then, move from one end of the venue to the other end (usually from the stage towards the back exit) to make sure everyone has indeed left the auditorium.

Further Reading:

- ✓ *Event Planning: The Ultimate Guide to Successful Meetings, Corporate Events*
- ✓ *The Business of Event Planning: Behind-the-Scenes Secrets of Successful*
By Judy Allen