

UNIT-4

Steps in Planning the Event

Learning Outcomes

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

- ✓ List the five 'W's 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 4

Steps in Planning the Event

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 will need to develop an effective theme and programme. However, there are other factors in the environment which may also significantly influence the success of the event. You will need to scan the environment by seeking 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 and what questions you will 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 appropriate style and with the right look and incorporated in all phases of the event; their application is limited only by the 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 assembling a formidable team to create and deploy the event concept for a successful event.

Environmental Scanning

Environmental scanning must be carried out prior to choosing a theme and developing a programme for the event. This is critical for making informed decisions about the suitable 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. Questions you will 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 to people buying tickets to the event or even spending some cash at the event?
- What are the latest prevailing social trends or themes?
- Will the media patronise the event? What about special interest groups? Would they be willing to participate?

It is important to explore the nature of the various target audiences you are expecting at the event and how they might 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 answers to the 5 W questions. We will discuss each of these five questions in more detail in the subsequent paragraphs:

Why?

Why do we need to host this event? This 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 staging this event? There must be a clear reason or objective the event manager will be hoping to meet, and this will guide him/her to develop the best concept to meet these objective(s). The objective might 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 that is convenient to the audience and fits 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 day when the event will begin. No two events are ever the same, and there will always be a number of factors that will influence the choice of date and time. Factors such as holiday periods, national or local elections, and sporting events all need to be considered as they tend to compete for audience attendance and media attention. It is recommended that events for the elderly or seniors be 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 involved: The operational value and the aesthetic appeal. Besides these, you will also need to consider the following when choosing the most suitable venue:

- Does the venue offer sufficient capacity?
- Are there adequate facilities such as power supply, catering, toilets, and a stage, etc.?

- Is the venue management flexible and cooperative?

Other desirable features of the venue that are likely to enhance the creation of ambience and a good atmosphere at the event include its unique location and beautiful surroundings; e.g. botanical gardens or riverbanks may be used for concerts. If you want the guests to feel a sense of adventure or suspense, then why not consider a military barracks, which is normally not accessible to the public?

To add 'dignity and importance', you may choose a town hall to host formal events. Whichever choice you make in selecting the right venue, 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 and create 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 carry out some research on previous similar events; information can be obtained at the library or on the Internet. This should kick-start the flow of creative ideas. Next, you need to involve 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 comes to mind; there should be a free flow of ideas since there are no rules to limit them. Unusual or abstract ideas should not be discarded but, rather, put forward for discussion. You, the event manager, should guide the process in the direction of ideas that resonate with the requirements of the event. One or more brainstorming session(s) may be required to finally arrive at the desired outcome of creating a suitable event concept, after further refinement and development.

The Brainstorming Process

Brainstorming is a technique used to discuss issues with the aim of discovering likely solutions to these issues. It basically involves people coming together to discuss 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 proceedings of 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 points; this will invariably slow down the pace of the session but it is permissible to ensure accuracy and minimise misconceptions or misinterpretations. The brainstorming session is also the appropriate opportunity for an event manager to present his/her findings or plans in order for the group to assess them critically.

How to Develop a Theme for an Event

It is important to have a theme for your event as this will help you focus on the main purpose of the event and unify its various aspects. 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 the use of an appropriate motif to reflect the source of the theme. For instance, a Valentine's Day theme will require motifs such as animal prints or cupid while a Christmas theme may require an angel or bell motifs. Use birds, butterflies, plants, flowers, trees and a variety of colours for a nature theme. Geographical regions may incorporate mountains, islands, lakes or the beach as motifs. Aspects of events which require the 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
- Compere
- Signage
- Performers

Well-thought-out themes help to create a memorable experience for the guests. A good and attractive theme also helps the organisers 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 a rainbow might be used as the motif for a 'promise theme' because a 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, you may use words or things that people will readily associate with that city. For example, a theme for Paris may lead to a motif word list with words such as Eiffel Tower, cafes or arches.

Mood

Decide on the atmosphere or mood you want to create. Here, you will want to refer back to the list of words you have brainstormed. Add words to the list that will portray your mood. If you choose a mediaeval theme you might include rich heavy brocade and velvet fabric, with 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 strong impact on the guests. Mix an ideal number of colours (one or two will suffice) 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 add 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

Examples would include a street party or the Rio Carnival. You may choose any colour to go with this event.



Love theme

Event Budgeting

Hosting a successful event time after time requires an understanding of the process of managing an event from its conception through to its completion. This requires a sound knowledge of preparation, planning and management. It is also important to understand exactly what the client expects from the event and put 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:

- 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 the budget if the events are similar. However, if the event is being undertaken for the first time, you might approach a company with experience of organising this type of event to gain some ideas about the costs involved and the sources of income to pursue. You might 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 prices on demand for the particular event. At the same time, you may need to charge a price that will cover the entire cost of the event and also provide a reasonable profit for your efforts. It may even be advisable to conduct a mini-survey to ascertain the public's opinion on different aspects of the event, including the price range, before producing a final price list.

Establishing an Appropriate Level of Budgeting

A single venue for a single activity event requires just one budget. However, when several venues are required for a larger event or a special annual occasion such as an annual festival split into different unique events spanning several weeks or months, you may need to prepare separate budgets 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, the event manager is recommended to forecast on a month-by-month basis the expenditure for pre-event activities such as insurance, promotional expenditure and a deposit for securing the venue. Similarly, it is necessary to forecast the pre-event income expenditure. It will then be 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 an extension to terms of payment and obtaining assistance from sponsors or local organisations may provide a temporary solution until extra resources have been secured.

Monitoring the Budget

The responsibility for monitoring the budget may be designated to committee members or specific persons assigned to budget monitoring and control roles. Regular written reports on the budget issues highlighting expenditure and income within a specific period compared to the budget showing the actual amounts will be required from the appointed people. This is an effective way of monitoring 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
- Point out all areas which were over/underestimated
- Recommend what changes need to be made to correct shortcomings 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 that will be a more accurate reflection of the activities actually occurring. The reviewed budget will include many 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 worked out. These include technical requirements, logistical requirement, staffing, suppliers, equipment etc. These requirements should be compared against the anticipated financing 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 of the event, its duration and the level of the demand for the event.

Consideration of all of the above will provide an accurate picture to determine whether or not the event is worth undertaking 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 that will attract these entities to take part in the event - an event that 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 task after settling on the scope of the event will be to determine the types of finance for servicing the budget. There are internal and external options to choose from. The internal financing option is funding arising from a previous profitable event and other private funds from the organisers of the event.

✓ **Participants and attendees**

Fees required from participants are calculated based on data from similar events held previously; you should also take into account contributions 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 might be approached for funding. It is generally difficult to obtain funding from such sources due to stifling bureaucratic bottlenecks and the filling of complex forms. Another obstacle to obtaining this type of funding is the need to justify all expenses before receiving the funds. Moreover, if the funds are unable to cover the costs for which they are being 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 the requirement 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 and newly established companies may be interested in sponsoring the event depending on its nature and scope.

Private Sponsors may be:

● **Associations**

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

● **Federations**

These are similar to associations as described above

● **Companies**

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

● **Charities**

These are non-profit-making organisations that also sponsor events 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**

Costs associated with the provision of an adequate number of staff should be based on the number of activities that need to be executed; there should also be enough people 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 systems, simultaneous translation services, recording studios, cinema production, media coverage and broadcasting, and corporate videos, etc.

- ✓ **Communication**

These are costs associated with advertising, marketing and communication, graphic design and printing, media coverage, scriptwriters, multimedia, web design, mailing and merchandising.

Entertainment

You should consider whether the event is to be dynamic with a variety of performances. You may decide to opt for artists, DJs, Karaoke machines, shows, cultural visits, and musical evenings, etc.

Stage and furnishing

You need to determine your preferred quality of presentation.

Furnishing hire

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. These 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, sports facilities, open-air venues, hotels, restaurants and lounges.

Key Financial Factors during an Event

Sometimes, during the course of events, crises may occur. What do you do? The key to effectively dealing with crises is to have an understanding of the bigger picture. You must not lose sight of the event budget. You also need to have some knowledge of your client's demeanour or how he behaves, as well as intimate knowledge of your own company's resources to guide you towards an acceptable solution. The employee time log is another indispensable tool on which to rely.

Factors to consider before making decisions 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 upon. 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 fewer labour hours to save on costs and make some profit from the labour-funding allocation. Barring crisis situations, no extra labour hours or materials will be required; otherwise, the event manager's company will have to foot the bill for extra expenses, which will eat 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; hence, it is classified as unreimbursed overtime. Unreimbursed overtime occurs when equipment scheduled for delivery takes much longer to arrive at its destination or when a crew scheduled to work on two consecutive events exceeds the allotted time at the first event, thus necessitating 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-Rentals

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 a shortage, or the company does not have such equipment in its inventory. Proper logistics planning and effective maintenance programmes will reduce the need to sub-rent.

Extra Labour

Great care should be taken to meticulously analyse and plan expenses and manage resources efficiently to minimise the need for 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 rushed decisions. Here, you should 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. A good way of using 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 that tell you whether your decisions are right or wrong. You only discover the outcomes of your decisions after implementing them; i.e. you learn about common decision-making mistakes on the job during all the phases of events and try to avoid them in future assignments.

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

Tips for Working with Quotes or Contracts:

- Be clear on the distinction between a contract and a quote. You will need to carry a signed copy of the 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 the items that are really needed and which ones should be eliminated.
- If the event manager is responsible for preparing the quote, he/she must 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 is taking place.
- Determine any hidden expenses not captured in contracts. These may be in the form of costs associated with electricity, water supply, security, meal chargers, lifts, risers or hotel charges which have not been quoted.
- The event manager must follow his/her company policy on making modifications to contracts. He/she needs to know who to contract to authorise any changes to the original contract terms and conditions.
- In situations where you require the signature of the client to authorise modification of certain documents such as those for changing labour hours and the amount 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 regard 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 and labour costs; this will enable you to inform the client of any price changes in advance.
- Study the contract to determine 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; add them all up and compare them with the expected total labour hours specified in the contract.

- Inform all workers who have been assigned to undertake an activity about the time available to complete their respective tasks. You may have a fair idea of the amount of time and effort 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 in 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 for determining how the cost of labour increases or decreases during a particular event.
- You should 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 disputes 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. A decision to use an unusual venue may require investment to build a stage and provide adequate facilities at additional cost. On the other hand, 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, safe and capable of providing additional facilities such as electricity, bathrooms, toilets etc. Aspects that will encourage guests to attend include the provision of adequate parking facilities, a crime-free location and provision of shelter to protect guests from unpleasant weather conditions.

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

- Determine the event's site requirements
- Identify potential site/venues and compare them with event requirements
- Choose the venue that matches all requirements
- Prepare a 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 the event theme and their 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 taking place 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 managers for a variety of reasons. Essentially, they have the capacity to cater for a wide variety of events with different levels of sophistication. Most are well endowed with all the necessary facilities for a free-flowing event. Professional stewards who work at hotels are well trained to provide high-class services to guests and are more than capable of handling crisis situations. Hotels are also well equipped with the latest technologies for easy communication as well as enabling effective presentation.

Restaurants

Certain types of events such as parties, banquets and other intimate occasions are more suitably accommodated at restaurants. Some restaurants offer rooms specifically designed to host all kinds and sizes of events, although they require advance reservations. Some restaurants offer the option of using more than one room when a large number of guests are expected. Banquets held to recognise people's achievements, when a friendly and social atmosphere is desirable, are normally hosted at restaurants. Indeed, most individuals tend to patronise events at restaurants frequently because of the friendly, calm and pleasant atmosphere that prevails during these events.

Conference Centres

Popular events held at conference centres include seminars and professional conferences for a medium-to-large number of guests. Conference centres offer a wide range of facilities to cater for diverse needs. For extremely large events, conference centres may have the facilities to split the large number of attendees into smaller groups and host them in separate rooms. At major conference centres, there is no shortage of equipment and technological facilities. Event managers will be spared the inconvenience of bringing along a large collection of equipment as this will all be available at the venue. Some operators 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 also at liberty to rent one or more audience spaces depending, of course, on the number of people you are expecting or the amount of space available 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

Barring 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, etc. Compared to indoor events, outdoor events provide a sense of freedom and room 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 takes a turn for the worse. Ideally, you should also have a backup location should your first option not materialise. You must 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 needs of facilities, a stadium is a good choice for 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 will be no shortage of parking space and other useful amenities during the event. If you want to host a corporate picnic and impress the guests, 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 for mixing 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 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, which is calculated using the width of the exit space and the designated evacuation routes. When calculating the occupancy capacity, you will need to deduct areas taken up by structures that will not be occupied as well as areas that present restricted viewing of the 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 exits. Outdoor music events use a capacity density of 0.5 m² per person as a general rule. Occupant capacity calculations should be reassessed when all facilities have been installed at the site.

Exit Requirements

The number of exits that should be provided at a venue depends on the number of people at the venue and the time required to evacuate them from the building. Exits should be sited around the perimeter of the venue with no obstacles impeding the free movement of people whatsoever. When carrying out a risk analysis during the planning phase, it is advisable to ensure that the final exit terminus is connected to an open or assembly space rather than to a main road or busy place. All exit gates must function perfectly and, ideally, separate exits should be provided for guests, service teams and vehicles at the site. Do not forget to make provision for wheelchair access and exits 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 number of people they can admit will determine their design and location around the perimeter of the venue. An adequate number of entrances should be available during peak times to ensure the 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 entrances to provide. Separate entrances 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 in the space to the left and right sides of the stage to deter the audience from moving to the centre of the venue and to allow easy emergency access. Such a design helps to reduce audience density at the front of the stage and minimise the incidence of injuries resulting from crushing and surging movements 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, people are encouraged to take up seats in less crowded areas. Placing video screens 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 guidelines on how to secure seats in a fixed spot should be adopted to guard against undesirable movements 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 ideal to achieve this goal.

Slopes

Securing temporary seats with suitable devices will prevent them from becoming disordered and scattered all over the place, thus rendering 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 the event will determine the kind of production infrastructure to use. A risk assessment must be carried out, the number of these facilities determined and the appropriate safety measures and safety gadgets provided. A good site design capable of dealing with fire is one that provides easy access 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 an emergency evacuation.

Fire and Ambulance Requirements

A good site layout is one that provides easy access to fire-fighting equipment and ambulance services. There should be adequate parking space for these vehicles, a first-aid post, a medical centre and an assembly point all suitably located around the site and away from hazards. Ideally, all fire equipment/appliances should be readily accessible up 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 an emergency evacuation.

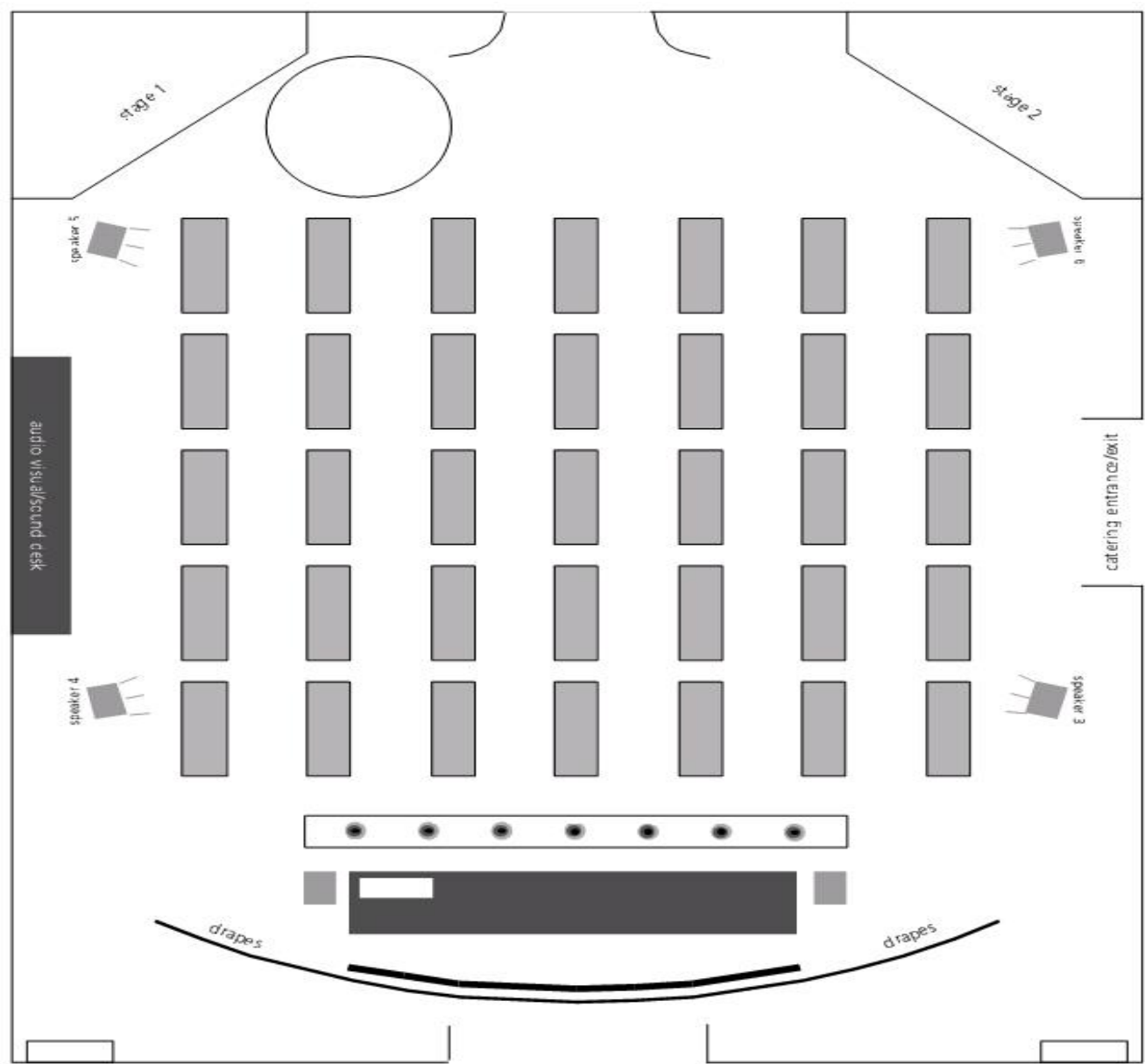


Noise Consideration

The design of the venue should be such that the noise originating from the venue is prevented from escaping and causing a nuisance to the neighbouring community. You should 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 the provision of 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 they serve 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 for easy identification by participants. Provide an 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 preparations for health and safety at larger events about 6-9 months before the start of the event; preparations for smaller events will generally begin 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 breakdown of components.

1) The build-up

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

2) The load-in

This phase involves 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 the dismantling of infrastructure. During this phase solid and liquid waste is removed from the site.

Planning for the Build-up Phase

All venue designs should include measures to reduce risks and increase the safety of participants. Structures that have to be erected must guarantee the safety of the people who will use them. Structures such as the stage, tents, barriers, towers, delay towers, stalls etc. should all possess the necessary structural integrity and should be foolproof. Your site plans should show the location and positioning of all the infrastructure and equipment you intend to use for the event. This includes the location of exits, entrances, toilets, emergency routes, assembly points, and triage areas, etc.

If you intend to use an existing venue you must contact the owner and ask for the plan, copies of which may be made available to contractors to help them place facilities correctly. You should also request copies of 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 the authorities on any aspect of the event. You must adequately prepare for the workers by providing first-aid kits, welfare facilities, and by providing health and safety rules for all workers during their time at the site. Ensure that welfare facilities and first-aid provisions are sufficient for the number of workers expected. As part of your health and safety measures, safety rules and signs should be placed all around the site to remind workers of their safety responsibilities.

Planning for the Load-in

Load-in involves bringing equipment and services onto the site to be installed inside the structures that have been erected and, in other cases, on structures such as the stage for performers. The work 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 and first aid, as well as having a contingency plan in place. Teamwork will be required to successfully run the event. The event management team must create a safety management team to deal with the planning of the show. The safety team should comprise 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 will be required to hold regular safety planning meetings to share information so that every relevant agency with 'a need to know' is well informed about the planning process. To test the robustness of the emergency plans, table-top emergency planning exercises should 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 of a 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 sound 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 the 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 hospitals to assist during emergency situations.

The content of the event safety management plan becomes the working document of the event manager, and it must be continuously updated to reflect any new information concerning the event. Only members of the safety management team need to know the latest information that has 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 the latest developments with the safety team and to put measures in place for disseminating safety information. Such meeting arrangements may take place weeks or days before the start of the event. For events occurring over several days, meetings can be held once on the day of the event.

Crowd Management

It is necessary to determine the number of guests and staff expected at the event. The number of the attendees serves as a guide to ascertaining the level of services and facilities to provide. Local traffic congestion may be reduced by opening the venue much earlier and by placing restrictions at the exits.

Ticket pricing can also be used to control the manner of guests' arrival at the venue, especially when some wish to arrive a few days before 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 accommodate a larger-than-expected number of people turning up. The site layout should 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 around the rim, combined with one or more of the following:

- Stewards 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 the audience to attend all performances
- Maintaining the planned running order of the event to avoid conflicts
- Gradual closing down of the main stage
- Producing low-level entertainment after the main event (i.e., film shows, etc.)
- No entertainment permitted at campsites

Major Incident Planning

With the help of the local authority emergency planning officer, who will be 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 an understanding of the type of evacuation to undertake; will it be 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 a 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 facilities, are in use?

Transport Management

Participants should be encouraged to purchase integrated tickets if public transport is available. The integrated coach option is also very popular with many participants attending certain types of events. However if public transport is limited or unavailable, people tend to make their journeys to events by

car. 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 a variety of welfare services such as catering for all participants during the event. Such essential arrangements help the police and medical teams 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 should hold a 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

At some events, such as greenfield events, the number of people attending may be limited by the quality of water available. You must provide adequate infrastructure for moving water or effluent at the site of the event. It is always desirable to have flush toilets available at events. However, their functionality may be affected by a limited supply of water or the complete lack of it. Returning the toilets to 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, good accessibility routes and adequate servicing will ensure continuous availability of the toilets throughout the duration of the event. It will be necessary to provide sufficient toilet and shower facilities to cope with high demand in the morning, especially during multi-day and overnight events.

Food and Drinking Water

Adequate supplies of food and drinking water should be made available throughout the event. This includes providing stalls for selling pastries, milk and beverages. The supply of drinking water requires the provision of supply pipelines under the ground, a situation which presents risks of contamination

should the pipelines become damaged. One solution to reduce such risks is to have separate independent water supply lines to feed different areas of the site. Another step is to increase 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 that decisions are not taken under duress. The issue of tiredness or fatigue is a common phenomenon during events lasting for several days. This occurs due to workers executing activities for long hours and under stress. The solution to this problem lies in putting together an effective safety management team comprising people with experience of tackling similar events.

Catering Operations

Catering

Food is an important fuel to revive, energise, inspire, excite and 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 to the planning of events and it must be accorded the utmost attention to ensure everything runs smoothly 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 a particular 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 the provision of tableware and flatware as well as food sculptures for decorative purposes and to create a high impact. When hosting banquets, a buffet-type service or a formal table configuration with waitresses in attendance may be used for serving meals. Banquets are organised as events for recognising and awarding people's special achievements, celebrating a special occasion or simply providing 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 on weight-loss or diabetes programs. In short, the catering department must meet the expectations of the event's 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. This knowledge will guide

the process of determining the quantity of beverages and the different types of meals to serve and avoid any shortages that may embarrass the host and disappoint 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 of estimating 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 have not booked a place in advance.

Safety Considerations 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 a hygienic and safe manner. The 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 by 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 accompany the Environmental Health Officer when he/she requests an inspection tour. The officers usually ask for the list of caterers participating in the event. Outdoor operations such as roasts or barbecues are potential fire and contamination risks; hence, additional requirements should be made available to minimise these risks. A comprehensive risk assessment should consider all potential hazards. The site plan should include a detailed layout of all catering activities and you must ensure the following:

- Removal of all obstructions that might affect people's health and safety
- Audiences are prevented from having access to the rear of catering operations

- Entry and exit accessibility is adequate for emergency vehicles
- Provision of adequate spacing between different operations
- Secure and lockable disposal units are provided
- Procedures for removing refuse are efficient
- Catering operations should be sited close to useful utilities such as drinking water and foul drainage but not close to sources of contamination
- Food handlers 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
- Mobile sleeping units must not be 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 must ensure that:

- Operators using LPG have a basic understanding about its safe use, characteristics and emergency procedures
- Only the required quantity of LPG is stored; i.e. it should be enough to cover a 24-hour period or it should not exceed 200kg, whichever is the lowest.
- The storage and handling of LPG is in accordance with 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 are kept away from combustible material
- are designed to ensure limited or no contact with 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 refuelling are done properly and safely

- there is proper and safe storage of fuel in the correct 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, restaurants 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 and self-closing taps; they should be 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 should search for 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 by undertaking in-depth research using the Internet, library, yellow pages or any other source with the relevant information. Also check whether the caterer is certified and his or her profile is of a good reputation.

Sometimes it is advisable to choose caterers who are relatively new to the business and looking to improve their reputation. These catering providers are often smaller businesses and tend to offer better prices. They also tend to use fresher ingredients more than frozen food compared to more established and larger catering providers.

Catering Budget

Draw up an estimated 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 modifications and additional costs as the event progresses.

Choice of Cuisine

The caterer must be informed as soon as possible should the event be 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. Be specific about your requirements and also make time to taste the cuisine to verify that it meets your expectations.

Food Hygiene

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

Decor Style

The catering team should ideally 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 employing a team that provides exquisite service in a polite and respectful manner to give the guest an enjoyable experience. 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 event, normally about a year in advance. Therefore, ensure that you make contact with the caterer quite early to talk over your requirements and be assured of his/her availability for the event.

Meet up with the Caterer

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

Planning Catering Facilities

The event manager needs to have some idea about how catering facilities should look and function and should also have an understanding of the regulations 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 it should provide appropriate temperature ranges:

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

There should be sufficient and appropriate space for adequate, safe working conditions 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 that specifications for utilities (such as gas and electricity), waste disposal units and services, and mains water supply are adequate to cover not only the main event but also catering services which will bring 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 approaches will apply depending on the type of food being offered. Appropriate arrangements should be made to address each unique situation. When receiving delivery, ensure that all the items being delivered 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, a broken seal or faulty packaging, should be rejected immediately or returned to the sender.

Delivery and Storage Facilities

Frozen food that has been defrosted in a refrigerator should be allowed to totally defrost and used immediately or disposed of where appropriate. Delivery areas should be included in the site design. The design of the delivery area should facilitate caterer inspection of the delivery vehicles to ensure they have not been used to transport any other material which may be harmful to the foodstuff; they 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. It is also important for catering staff to record all supplies of food and maintain an up-to-date database of information gathered at the on-site administration office.

Waste

Rules and procedures governing catering waste should be followed accurately. Locations where waste materials might be disposed of include:

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

The facility manager will be required to implement monitoring measures and to have available documents showing that catering wastes have been disposed of properly to ensure that 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 toilets 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 basins should be provided close to these facilities. Such facilities should be clearly labelled 'food service personnel only'. Other personnel such as food handlers or assistants may be allowed to use these facilities with the catering staff.

Transport Management

A comprehensive plan for managing traffic on- and off-site can be devised 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 closures or diversions, the police, the Highways Agency and the local residents must be consulted. The meeting between the stakeholders should discuss 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 the higher number of workers required for producing the traffic signs.

The event manager should make arrangements to discuss with the local highways authority the need to obtain temporary traffic regulation orders. The traffic orders can be used to enforce parking restrictions, close down certain roads, and indicate speed limits, etc. The consultation with the local highways authority should be carried out well in advance of the event date to allow 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 vests and weather protection apparel. 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 for ensuring that 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 arrangements with the railway authorities for them to augment their stock with extra trains to satisfy high demand 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 railway station and the venue and provision made for supplementary bus services to convey participants from the railway station to the event centre. Regular updates on services for the event should be advertised at the railway station to keep everyone informed about the latest developments or about resources available to aid their journeys.

Event managers must consult with rail authorities on platform capacity regulations to plan how to manage crowds on railway 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 arrangements 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 should the event finish early.

Public Transportation Management

Train-operating Companies

The train-operating companies, on receiving information about the event and its parameters, should undertake a critical assessment of their resource capacity 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 announcements to keep everyone informed about important issues and procedures at the railway stations.

Coaches/Buses

Traffic congestion during events is an unpleasant experience for participants. Adequate planning of routes to enable the smooth flow of traffic during the arrival and departure of coaches will greatly reduce congestion. The design of access routes and parking areas should be such that vehicles will 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 agreements with private or local bus operators to provide shuttle services between the railway 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 is provided.

Vehicle Parking and Management

A traffic management coordinator may be appointed to coordinate activities between the car park management team, the police, the 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 arrangements 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 an 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 incidents than entering one. 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 on 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 the provision of 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 help people locate their vehicles; i.e., reflective numerals and signage to make the signs easy to read at night. Signs provided at exit gates which connect to the venue are useful aids for identifying vehicle parking areas, as well as the 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 determine their requirements for hosting particular types of events. Specific information regarding access routes and other critical

requirements should be addressed and recorded in the transport management plan. The event site should 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 50 metres 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 congestion. One way of achieving this is to require parking tickets to be purchased in advance and to conduct ticket checks only after vehicles have been parked. Ticket checks can be applied when drivers are about to exit the parking area on their way to the event venue. The availability of temporary access roads with the ability to accommodate a one-way system with passing spaces 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 'breakdown' phases. Weather disruption of routes during a heavy downpour needs to be considered and suitably surfaced alternative routes provided. Rapid vehicle recovery arrangements to free vehicles that have become stuck in soft ground should be made in readiness for such eventualities.

Lift Trucks and Other Vehicles

Lift Trucks

Only properly trained and authorised persons are permitted to operate lift trucks because each type of lift truck has unique functionalities requiring specially trained personnel. Ensure that 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 condition and have had all the necessary load specifications marked on them according to the requirements of the 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 lifts, electric carts, trailers, waste collection vehicles and golf buggies. All necessary precautions for the use of this equipment must be followed to minimise 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 in order that the appropriate services might be rendered for them to have the most enjoyable experience. Understanding the factors that influence the behaviour of people at events and other underlying issues are crucial to having a successful crowd management programme. Factors that may influence the behaviour of people at events include:

- The entry and exit capacity to allow 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 a series of factors that are physical and emotional in nature. Crowd dynamics are 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 it.

Entry and Exit of the Audience

Final checks on all fire and emergency facilities should be carried out before admitting the audience into the venue. Instructions for undertaking these checks should be provided to the right staff to carry them out. These checks include 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 during the course of the event.

Opening Time

There may be occasions when too many participants 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 that participants are aware of this provision via posters, information on the ticket etc.

- There is flexibility to respond to excessive crowding by opening the gates earlier than the expected time and plan ahead to prepare the on-site services long before the event actually starts
- The rate of admission is managed by the booking of early supporting acts.
- The implications of opening the venue earlier than planned are well understood and provision is made to cater for the necessity of the 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 an adequate number of trained and responsible stewards in attendance
- Providing a short-range public address system and megaphones for making important announcements.

Ticketing

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

- Offering only advance tickets when full capacity is expected
- Indicate information on seating arrangements 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/her seat at the venue
- Tickets may also contain on the reverse side the ground map of the venue. Use a 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

A ticket-only admission policy is suitable for dealing with a 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 in a block for different categories of guests can reduce the likelihood of having lots of 'random gaps' and also reduce the need for stewards to marshal latecomers to their seats 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 before 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 advertisements or announcements about this arrangement.

f) Ticket Design

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

g) Admission of Young Children

Some events are just not suitable for a certain category of children (less than five 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 more than four hours, pass-out coupons may be provided to enable participants to leave the venue for short breaks and to be re-admitted on their return to the venue.

Guests/VIPs/Restricted Areas

The presence of different categories of participants at event venues means that 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 gain access to 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 searches of 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 that 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 Events*

By Judy Allen