Impact of Events Management on Hospitality and Tourism

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Introduction

Tourism refers to movement, stay and activities of individual who leaves his place of normal residence temporarily to a new destination for a variety of purposes. Thus, the tripodal structure of tourism becomes evident: travel, stay and purpose. While travel implies transportation, stay denotes hospitality and purpose translates into destination, activities and motivation. Purpose precedes the other two components of tourism. This is because it is purpose that stimulates the urge to embark on tourism.

Various purposes for tourism are outlined by Okoli (2001) to include:

- **Economic purposes:** To attend business meetings, trade fairs, expos, etc.
- **Social purposes:** Weddings, anniversaries, burials, child christening, birthdays, cultural festivals, celebrations, etc.
- **Educational purposes:** Seminars, conferences, workshops, matriculations, convocations, etc.
- **Religious Purposes:** Pilgrimages, crusades, conventions etc,
- **Political Purposes:** Conventions, congresses, etc

All these purposes as enumerated above are generally public functions or activities involving participation of a large number of people. They are events. Therefore, tourism is triggered by the urge of people to attend, observe and participate in events. Events stimulate tourism and boost the demand for hospitality – the subsection of tourism that provides accommodation, catering services and entertainment to tourists and travelers. Modern technologies have greatly impacted transportation and communication and the resulting globalization has pushed businesses across national boundaries and increased connectivity among peoples and nations. The tourism and hospitality industry is a major beneficiary of globalization. There has been an increase in the number of people moving around and across the globe for businesses, conferences, political summits and diplomacy which constitute major events. Tourism and hospitality industry is on hand to provide transport, accommodation, catering and entertainment to the participants at these events.

Events vary in size and type. In recent times, Britain has hosted the world. One recalls the large crowd that converged in London for the funeral of Princess Diana in 1997. This sorrowful event was followed by the joyful event of the Royal wedding in 2011 of Prince Williams. There was also the diamond Jubilee celebration of Queen Elizabeth of England in May, 2012 and

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the London Olympics and Paralympics which have been rated as the greatest sports events of the century. The funeral of Michael Jackson in June 2009 and the Republican Party National Convention in Tampa, Florida, USA in August 2012, have also been recorded in the annals of successful event management. South Africa hosted the world cup in 2010. Nigeria has hosted the 2nd Festival of African Arts, Tradition and Culture in 1977 (FESTAC'77), African Cup of Nations (COJA) and the Summit of Common Wealth heads of state and government in 2003. In our traditional communities we also organize and participate in events, many of which are socio-cultural e.g weddings, cultural festivals, etc. Traditionally, the host organizes the social function by himself with assistance from friends and relatives-issuing the invitation cards, arranging of venue and entertainment of guests, ushering and directing the procedures.

No matter the scope, an event need to be properly planned, organized and executed for it to be successful. The image of the host is at stake and therefore, he cannot afford to fail in terms of poor turnout of the invitees and unsatisfactory entertainment of guests. The Nigerian society is increasingly getting sophisticated and Nigerians are becoming more discerning. The grade and quality of events have to be high enough to attract the desired attendance. There has, therefore, arisen the need to professionalize and outsource organizing of events. Regardless of size, events require a high degree of planning, a range of skills and technology, a lot of creativity and enormous physical and mental capacity. The era of event management has dawned.

Event and Event Management

For judicious appraisal of the impact of event management on hospitality and tourism it has become necessary to clearly understand the two terms: Event and Event Management.

Put simply, function, venue and people constitute an event (Okoli, 2007). Okoli (2007) defines an event as a planned public or social occasion, often important, interesting and memorable. It is usually a joyous occasion and, indeed, a celebration. According to Silvers (2004), event is all about people: people coming together to create, operate and participate in an experience. Anderson and Weslan (2000) observe that though events contain tangible elements, such as food, beverages or other products sold or given away, they are essentially service in that they consist of intangible experiences of finite duration within a temporarily managed atmosphere. The term, event is used for describing different activities for different purposes. These activities include arts, sports, tourism and social activities. In his own contribution, Beridge (2007) describes event as "a unique moment in time aside from everyday occurrence". Event can, therefore, be described as a themed public function or celebration which extends leisure and social interaction beyond every day experiences and choices. Events generally are social public activities though some are strictly religious and academic.

Various occasions and situations of events are provided by Getz (1991); Seekings (1996), Goldblatt (2005) and Okoli (2007) and categorized as:

- Social (wedding, anniversaries, birthdays, etc)
- Economic (trade fairs, economic summit, annual general meetings, AGMs etc)
- Education / academic (matriculation, convocation, seminars, workshops, symposium etc)
- Religious (pilgrimage, crusade etc)
- Cultural (festivals, celebrations etc)
- Sports (games, recreation etc)

Given the above background, one can simply define event management as the making of an event or the way in which an organization handles events. This may include the formulation of the objectives of an event, scheduling, assigning roles and responsibilities, processes and technologies involved, identification and analysis of critical success factors, the event's standards and procedures.

Management, as a concept, refers to a process of utilizing material and human resources to accomplish designated objectives. It involves planning, organizing, directing, coordinating and controlling. For the successful hosting of an event, these managerial functions should be properly articulated and brought into harmonious relationship. In event management, the professional event planner or organizer utilizes all the resources placed at his disposal by the client / host (individual, or corporate organization) to invite guests, source for venue, arrange and decorate venue, draw and run the programme of the event, entertain the guests and see them off, satisfied and happy. The status, dignity and the number of participants and guests attending an event may call for professional planning and management. According to Okoli (2007), event management is one of the state-of-the millennium business enterprises with bright prospects. Event management is fragmentary: catering services, venue management including hall decoration, video and photo coverage, protocol- (including ushering, master of ceremony, MC and the public address system). However, the core professionals go the whole hog of planning and organizing the entire event and are designated as event managers.

As an event manager you are to ensure the smooth running of the event, to minimize the risks and to maximize the enjoyment of the event audience. The demands on an event manager are far greater than one would expect for the following reasons:

1. Many events carry a significant risk to the safety of participants.
2. Financial risk is also an important concern of the event manager. Events are generally expensive, with high expenditure required over a very short period of time and there are far higher levels of uncertainty about revenue and profit than there are with average business.

3. Even in the case of voluntary and charitable events, the risk is that the time invested by individuals will be wasted and their objectives will not be achieved.
4. One of the most important things about an event is that it is often a highlight of a person's life. This should not be taken lightly - a significant birth (70 years – 80 years etc), a wedding (Royal wedding) or christening or child dedication is so important to the main participants that nothing must go wrong. If something goes wrong, it cannot be easily rectified. The event manager, therefore, carries overall responsibility for ensuring that the event, however large or small, is a success as there is often only one chance to get it right. The 2012 London Olympic (27th July to 12th August), variously described as the biggest event of the century, "a once in a life time experience" etc paraded 17000 athletics from 200 countries and viewed by billions of people on T.V.

Special events are, big-budget events parading key stakeholders in the society and with the media in attendance, taking place at unique locations with unusual demands for logistic, lighting, sound and special effects.

Features of an Event

Events are characterized by the following:

1. They are often 'once in life time experiences for the participants,
2. They are generally expensive to stage
3. They usually take place over a short time span
4. They require long and careful planning
5. They generally take place once only. (However, many are held annually, usually at the same time every year),
6. They carry a high level of risk, including financial risk and safety risk.
7. There is often a lot of stake for those involved, including the event management team.

Black September event of Munich Olympic 1972 during which Palestinian gunmen attacked the Israeli contingent and the stampede at an English stadium during a soccer event in 1989 are some of the risks and uncertainties associated with big events. Whether an athlete or an entertainer, the event performer wants to deliver his best performance. The bride at her wedding wants the day to be perfect in every way. The marketing manager / brand manager wants the new product to be seen in the best possible light. It is noteworthy that the event industry is one in which people (the event audience) tend to have time off their lives. Making this possible and sharing this with others is therefore, very gratifying. Thus, the event manager does a demanding, exciting and challenging job, which requires a delicate balance between risk management and people management.

Event Budgeting

In order to develop a budget for an event, it is vital to start from scratch to list all the essential costs. If possible use accounts from a previous event to develop and check the budget. To ensure that the cost of an event is accurately produced, it is important that all items of expenditure are identified early in the event planning process.

According to Goldblatt (2002), the budget represents an action plan that each successful event manager must carefully develop and it is the most important tool for making financial decisions within the event management business. Since different events are designed for different purposes, they may fall into three different categories, namely: "profit-oriented events, Break-even events and hosted events. Make sure that the budget represents the true costs; hidden costs such as hiring extra equipment that was originally under estimated can be significant. Even if it is known that some items will be free or subsidized, they should be included in the budget. Most events will attract some (in)direct income. Items such as gate takings, programs, catering, car parking spaces etc fall under direct cost; while indirect cost includes items such as advertising, sponsorships, raffles, sales, donations, and sponsorships. Sponsorship is time consuming and can be difficult to find.

The event coordinator should try to stick to the approved budget, making sure that income and expenditure are clearly stated in the budget. The budget should also provide for contingency allowance. This is money set aside to cover unplanned costs. Fifteen percent of the total budgeted expenditure is normally allowed as a contingency.

Why Organize an Event?

It usually takes a great deal of time and effort for many people to organize an important event. It is very important when planning an event to be clear about why the event is being held. Having a list of event objectives is essential. Among the potential reasons for organizing an event are to:

(i) Raise funds,
(ii) Promote a programme or new product,
(iii) Celebrate success,
(iv) Commemorate a past event, and
(v) Create a forum for social interaction.

Developing the Event Concept

In developing a concept for any event the event manager should be able to determine the reason for holding such event. The typical reasons for hosting an event include to celebrate, increase sales, or to raise money for charity. Once the primary reason for holding an event has been defined, the event manager should then develop clear objectives for the event. This may include raising a defined amount of money; having a level of attendance; gaining publicity etc.

With a clear understanding of the objectives of an event, it is possible to bring together key stakeholders to brainstorm on the cognitive and creative decision and activity that are involved in the event including theme, branding, promotional opportunities, the type and style of the event, date, venue, entertainment, speakers and master of ceremonies that may be used during the event.

With a clear concept in place, the next step will include planning and budgeting. The event planner should be able to plan the event in such a manner that it will not clash with other events on the same day because if this happens, the audience will not be able to attend. In the course of planning, certain steps have to be taken to avoid some obstacles that may hamper the successful staging of the event. With thorough planning and detailed implementation, the event will end up a success.

Indeed, there are numerous elements which need to be considered in developing an event concept. They include the purpose/objective of the event, the event theme, the venue, the audience, available resources, the timing of the event and the skills of the event team.

Purpose of the Event: The purpose of the events should drive all the planning.

Theme of the Event: The theme of the event should be linked to the purpose. It should be completely compatible with the need of guests and consistent in all respects. Most events adopt a colour scheme that is repeated on all items produced for the event such as tickets, programs, décor, posters and so on. This helps the attendees to identify with the theme.

When coming up with ideas for a theme, it is most important to consider the range of suitable venues available, keeping in mind the constraints of budget and other considerations.

Venue for the Event: The event manager needs to carefully consider the planning implications of choosing an unsual venue in preference to a standard venue requiring decoration only to match the theme. Lighting, sound and catering also provide challenges in unusual settings. When considering the choice of event venue, the event organizer needs to look at a number of factors namely:

a. Potential to fulfill the purpose of the event,
b. Location,
c. Access by public transport,
d. Parking Space,
e. Seating capacity,
f. Food and beverage facilities,
g. Safety, and
h. Cost of labour, cost of decoration, sound and lighting

When organizing an event, the needs of all participants must be considered before finalizing the concept.

Timing of the Event: Lack of time is a major problem in staging events. When drawing up flowcharts, always allow sufficient time for each task to be

completed plus as much "slack time' as possible. However, it is not always possible to allow slack be labeled as a factor. This signifies that such a task or series of tasks should be very closely monitored because if they take longer than planned, the rest of the sequence of tasks are unlikely to be completed on time. When tasks particularly those identified as critical, are not completed on time or satisfactorily, the delivery of the event is likely to be compromised. Evaluation of an event concept might take into account the following time related factors:

1. Season
2. Day of the week
3. Time of day,
4. Duration

Classification of Events

Classification of events can be done on the basis of size or type as follows:

Size

1. Mega Events: The largest events are called mega-events and these are generally targeted at international markets. The Olympic Games, Commonwealth Games, FIFA World Cup are good examples of mega events. All such events have a specific yield in terms of increased tourism, media coverage and economic impact.

2. Minor Events: Most events fall in this category and it is here that most event managers gain their experience. Meetings, parties, celebrations, award ceremonies, sporting finals, and many other community and social events fit into this category.

Types

Events can be categorised as follows:

1. Sporting: Sporting events are held in all states and territories and they attract international sports men and women at the highest levels. Olympics, World Cup, wrestling contest, Tennis, Golf, rugby and car/bicycle racing are just a few examples.

2. Entertainments, arts and cultural festivals: Events like musical concerts, fairs, festivals, fashion shows, award functions, celebrity nights, beauty pageants, stage shows, etc are popular events that attract large audience.

3. Commercial, marketing and promotional Events: Promotional events tend to have high budgets and high profiles. Most frequently they involve product launches, often for computer hardware or software, perfume, alcohol or motor cars. The aim of promotional events is generally to differentiate the product from its competitors and to ensure that it is memorable.

4. Family Events: Events like birthday party, graduation day, bachelor's party, engagement party, weddings, anniversary, retirement day, funerals all provide opportunities for family members together with friends and well wishers.

5. Corporate Events: These include events like meetings, incentives, conferences, exhibitions products launches, road shows, etc.

The Event Team

An event manager is generally supported by a team which grows exponentially as the event draws near. The event manager typically works with a number of contractors. These could include any of the following:

a. Venue managers,
b. Stage managers,
c. Lighting, audio and video companies,
d. Decorators and florists,
e. Entertainers,
f. Employment agencies,
g. Rental companies,
h. Public relations and marketing consultants,
i. Security companies, catering companies, painters, and
j. Clearing companies etc.

For most events, the manager is also required to liaise with government agencies at a range of levels from local government through state government to federal government. Local government council deals with event planning and approval, state governments provide approvals for traffic and police and the federal government gives advice on protocol for international dignitaries.

Impact of Event on Tourism and Hospitality

Event is an important motivation for tourism. An individual or groups of individuals may travel out in order to honour invitations from relations, friends and corporate bodies for such events as weddings, anniversaries, birthdays, workshops, conferences and meetings. They might have to spend a few days for the events. They have become tourists in the sense that they have to leave their places of normal residence for temporary stay at the place(s) where the event(s) is taking place, will be accommodated and will also take part in the activities. To attend an event, the out-of-town or inbound invitees will have to experience the three components of tourism: movement, stay and activity.

Hospitality is an important aspect of event management. Hospitality is primarily concerned with hosting that is, taking care of guests by providing them with suitable accommodation, catering services and entertainment. Therefore, availability of adequate and good quality hospitality facilities is given serious consideration in hosting an event. No country would dare bid for hosting right of big sporting events (World Cup, Olympic games, Commonwealth games, Africa cup of nations or All-African games) and other big events (meetings of G8, G20, meeting of heads of state and governments, international conferences, regional summits) without having the capacity to provide a high level of hospitality to the participants and

visitors in terms of transportation, accommodation, venues, catering services, security and leisure.

Not all events involve tourism but, absolutely, all events require hospitality. Hospitality entails social interaction between host and guest. In a wider context, the host could be an organization, a corporate entity, a group of individuals, an individual and even a community. Basically, hospitality provides venues and entertainment for events. The event venue has to be easily accessible, adequate, comfortable and secure.

Event is the current trend in the hospitality industry. There appears to be on-going paradigm shift from accommodation and food and beverage service to banqueting and special functions. These days hotels make more money from event hosting than from the traditional hotel services. During the week days (Monday to Friday) hotels in big cities and metropolis are fully booked for workshops, seminars, corporate meetings, etc and during week-ends, especially on Saturdays, they are venues for wedding receptions and birthday parties. To exploit these emerging opportunities in event hosting, investors in hotel industry expand and refurbish the facilities for banquet halls, outdoor venues and even construct town halls within the hotel premises. Ladi Kwali Conference Hall at Sheraton Hotel and Unity Hall at Transcorp hotel, Abuja and Sam Mbakwe Banquet Hall at Imo Concorde hotel, Owerri are very popular hotel based event venues. To complement the efforts of hotels in providing venues for events some corporate interests and groups have also provided event centres: the Muson Centre at Onikan, Lagos, Shehu Yardua Centre, Abuja, International Conference Centre, Abuja and the Emerald Tent, Owerri and of course *ThisDay* Event Centre, Lekki, Lagos.

How Does Event Impact Tourism and Hospitality?

Medium and mega events attract invitees, participants and observers from far and near. Those who are based outside the venue destinations have to travel in order to access the event and will also take up temporary accommodation at the destination. They are provided with food, drinks and leisure facilities. Thus, tourists and guests who purchase hospitality goods and services are generated by events. In other words, events trigger off demand for tourism and hospitality goods and services. As noted earlier, hospitality is major beneficiary of event benefaction. Event driven catering enterprises have emerged in major Nigerian cities: function catering and outdoor catering are now important aspect of hotel services while contract catering has become a flourishing enterprise. So also, events stimulate high demand for transport and leisure services; flying seventeen thousand athletes from two hundred countries for the 2012 London Olympics was no mean feat. Then moving these athletes, the officials', fans and sports enthusiasts across the event venues could have been more challenging. During events the transport systems at the destinations are stretched to their utmost capacity as various stakeholder troop to the venues with every available

mode and means of transport. Events, therefore, are important sources of income to transport operators.

Conclusion

Event is a contraption of function, people and venue put together by individuals and corporate entities for certain themes. World-wide events of various dimensions, types and classes have become the order to the day, demanding enormous resources of time, money, technology and expertise to organize.

Events stimulate tourism and boosts hospitality. They result in high demands for both intra-city and inter-city transport and leisure services. During such occasions, there are also extraordinary demand for accommodation, catering services and entertainments. Outsourcing of event organization has given new dimension to hospitality: event management, function catering outdoor catering and contract catering.

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