11 Building the Festival Team: A case study of Saint Petersburg art festivals

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Introduction

In working to understand contemporary festivals, one of the most significant debates is how to manage a festival effectively in the face of increasing competition. In this sense, effective team management is crucial. However, there has been little discussion on the teambuilding phenomenon at festivals. Such features as fluctuations in the number of employees, different categories of employees and involvement of various stakeholders make festivals stand out from other business projects. So, commonly accepted teambuilding practices cannot be simply copied and applied to arts festivals. The purpose of the chapter is to explore particular features of team management at arts festivals in Saint Petersburg. The city, being the main cultural centre of Russia, presents an appropriate field of study. The number of festivals held in the city is increasing each year, as a result of city administration policies (St. Petersburg Committee of Culture Statistics, 2015). There are, however, a limited number of surveys that examine Saint Petersburg events, and it is difficult for researchers to get open access to reports of festival organisations. The authors attempt to fill the gap by presenting major aspects and common team management problems that festival organisations come across.

This chapter provides an overview on a variety of team management processes in three specific festivals. Festivals' team structures, recruitment practices, training and motivation strategies were researched. The authors focus on staff retention and issues relating to the status of different workers that influence team management practices such as decision-making processes, organisational culture, participant interdependence, communication and team size in particular. Research is based on interviews with the festival director, one permanent and one temporary employee for each event, analysis of social media, official websites, articles, and observational method. The chapter presents a part of survey that was carried out in 2014 by the authors. In 6 months, 30 expert interviews were conducted. This chapter deals with three brief cases which were designed as a result of interviews with nine respondents and observation method (the authors took part as visitors