1 Integrated communication for events

The chapter examines how, within the organization of the event, communication serves to manage and cultivate relationships to pursue objectives useful for generating returns and benefits for all the actors involved. The chapter explores how integrated communication intervenes in management processes at three levels: at the *macro* level to share the definition of objectives; at the *meso* level to manage the relations between organizers and stakeholders; at the *micro* level to design the operational communication plan for citizens, visitors, and spectators. It is a question of understanding how organizers communicate with stakeholders and users and how they set up the communication.

At the end of the chapter readers should be able to understand:

- Why communication is important in event management and what role it plays.
- How organizational communications and relations with internal and external stakeholders are managed
- The characteristics of corporate communication and how it is integrated with organizational communication.
- What an integrated communication is, and how it works in the three levels of intervention: macro, meso and micro.

Organizational communication in event management

The management of an event is a very complex process that is structured in accordance with the specific characteristics of the type of event. For example, it makes a difference whether it is an indoor or outdoor event, and whether it's a cultural, sporting, corporate, or fundraising event. The most important factor is whether the event is mega, large, medium, or small (Roche, 1992; Getz, 1997; Getz & Page, 2019; Allen et al., 2022). *Mega*-events are those that have an international scope with a corresponding impact in terms of tourism and global media visibility, as in the case of the Olympics and universal expositions. *Large* events almost always have an international scope, but they do not provide global media coverage and are more limited to some parts of the world. This is the case with major religious events, such as the Christian Jubilee; political events, such as the G20; important trade fairs; and musical concert tours. *Medium*-sized events are those of a national character that have wide visibility in one country but also attract tourists, thus attracting primary media coverage in the country and possibly internationally. For example, this is the case with the bull-running Pamplona, Spain; the Palio di Siena in Italy; the carnival during Rio de Janeiro in Brazil; the Wimbledon tournament in the United Kingdom; the International Beer Festival in Berlin, Germany; and the surfing gatherings in Dubai, United Arab Emirates and Lucky Bay, West-

ern Australia. Finally, *small* events are strongly rooted in the host territory and often connected to religious or historical celebrations or to commercial activities, such as festivals or white nights. They predominantly attract local tourists and, in adjacent areas, local media visibility, which can be picked up by the national media when the event provokes a strong response throughout the country.

In communicative terms, an event can be considered a cultural product with a high aggregative value. For this reason, any event can also be referred to as a media event. Media events contribute to fueling anticipation and memory, accompanying people during the event and giving them the opportunity to have an exceptional experience. Media events emphasize the value, meaning, and implications of the theme addressed in the event, reinforcing the motivations of participants, suppliers, investors, partners, and sponsors (Hall, 2007). For the event, communication is both the content and container; it develops a narrative that combines symbols and rites, allowing us to perceive it as a strategic asset and a social fact (Mauss, 1966: 1925).

Often, when people think about the communication of an event, they think about the planning of the activities that serve to announce it, and interest and involve participants so that they decide to participate. In reality, this is only a part – however fundamental – of the communication activities in the management of an event. As communication follows the complete path of an event's preparation from the idea to its realization, a fundamental role of communication in event management is that of creating, consolidating, and cultivating over time a network of people involved in the creation and realization of the event. This relational activity, which we can consider internal to event management, is just as important as the activities intended for participants because it serves to guarantee the success of the event itself.

Indeed, the first problem that organizers have is that of organizing a good team. It must be made up of people or groups with heterogeneous profiles who know how to work together effectively and efficiently within a valid relational network. A team is made up of institutions, partners, sponsors, and suppliers, i.e., the set of stakeholders who are equally indispensable for the final success of the event. They can contribute, for example, by making available structures and infrastructures as well as economic and material resources for the preparation of the event. There is an extensive literature on the operational management of stakeholders (internal and external) in the organization of the event. The term 'stakeholder' refers to all parties with interests in the realization of an event. This term, coined by Freeman in the 70s, includes both internal (i.e., those who work in an organization) and external (i.e., those who have primary or secondary interests in an event) stakeholders (Freeman et al., 2010). Stakeholders with primary (political, economic, media, infrastructural, or technical) interests exert influence on organizational decisions, while those with secondary interests, such as the media or trade or citizen associations, have a utilitarian or coercive influence (Etzioni, 1964; Clarkson, 1995; Ingerson & Westerbeek, 1999; Safapour et al., 2019; Hoskisson et al., 2023).

With regard to the management of relationships with stakeholders, Van Niekerk and Getz (2019) and Getz (2021) have highlighted the importance of the evolution of internal communication because it allows for the needs of the stakeholders to be identified and thus included in the event project. In the final step, a communication is captured in adequate evaluation and advisory reports that are presented