9 The stakeholder sandwich: Mapping stakeholders for festivals and events

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Introduction

The events sector has grown in scale, scope and significance around the world, harnessed for a variety of policy or business purposes by public, private, commercial or third sector agencies and organisations. Events have developed an "*ever more extensive and divergent role in society*" (Crowther et al., 2015, p.95) playing a widespread role in social, cultural, political and economic change. This has generated an increasing range of considerations and requirements faced by event management from an expanding number of groups, bodies and individuals – collectively referred to as 'stakeholders'. Growing stakeholder needs and expectations can be dynamic, changeable and unexpected, and present themselves at any moment. They can put additional pressure on time, money and resources and impact on event planning, timelines and delivery in a variety of ways. As a result, festivals and events continue to become more complicated and complex projects to manage and can present considerable challenges for contemporary event practitioners, producers and managers alike. In order to fully grasp the nature of these challenges, it is essential to understand the needs and requirements of the stakeholders concerned, and in particular, what constitutes value for each of them.

To achieve these objectives, practitioners need to know and understand their stakeholders through meaningful engagement, enabling them to anticipate stakeholder needs and reduce the likelihood of unexpected-unknowns and added complexity. This involves a process of identifying, mapping and timelining stakeholders to ensure stakeholder needs are addressed and opportunities for value creation are not missed and maximised. This chapter provides a step-by-step guide for this process with a supporting workbook (see page 153) that enables practitioners to apply the framework to their own events.

Drawing on the related fields of stakeholder theory and project management, this chapter focuses on their intersection with event management to provide the foundations for this process. This includes an analysis of the limitations of current