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Project management and logistics

Learning objectives

On completion of this chapter, you will be able to:

- Recognise the key benefits of utilising a project management framework in an events context
- Apply relevant project management concepts, principles and techniques to the planning and implementation of events
- Explain the key benefits associated with the utilisation of event logistics concepts and principles
- Apply relevant event logistics concepts and principles to the conduct of specific and general types of events
- Communicate the role and importance of logistical operational considerations in an events context.

The benefits of project management

Project management concepts, principles and techniques are commonly used for the completion of an extremely broad range of projects including roads, bridges, buildings, software packages and events. In the management of planned events the same principles apply. Even events held on a regular basis will be complex, given the broad range of uncertainties that exist, as well as the differences from one year to the next in terms of stakeholder activities, attendees' behaviours, marketing requirements, and a broad range of other contingencies. Hence, they will benefit from the application of a project management approach. Furthermore, event success doesn't just depend on creating the so-called WOW factor. It also

depends critically on progress that is made with planning and preparation, sometimes bit by bit, inch by inch, prior to the actual staging of the event.

Hence, project management has become an essential element in the event manager's toolkit. Key benefits of a project management approach are:

- Project management provides a **structured and systematic approach** to event management. In this way the event considers these factors;



Figure 4.1: Key factors to consider in project management

The first three of these factors, money, time, and quality are often referred to as the Triple Constraint or the Iron Triangle and have become a central concept in project management research and practice. They also represent *trade-offs* that the project manager can manipulate and utilise.

Consider this: What trade-offs exist in your local community event?

- **Scalability** meaning that project management techniques can be used just as effectively on small or large events, or even on isolated parts of an event which can be regarded as stand-alone projects.



What elements of an event could be regarded as a stand-alone project?

- As a **body of knowledge**, project management has been applied to a diverse range of large and small projects. As the scope and range of projects, including events, broadens, so too does the set of techniques, principles, and concepts that can be utilised. This has led to development of a standard system known as PMBOK (Project Management Body of Knowledge). Particularly for large, complex events, the event industry clearly benefits from the adaptation and application of this body of knowledge.

- **Effective, on-going communication** is one of the most critical aspects associated with the conduct of a successful event. Event plans, key milestones, and on-going progress, need to be clearly communicated to key stakeholders in a timely and predictable manner. By providing a common terminology, project management facilitates communication that is, in fact, clear and unambiguous.



What approval processes do you have in place to manage communication effectively?

Running sheets

Did you know? For each event it is important to create a running sheet for all stakeholders. An event manager can have a detailed running sheet during planning and operations phases and provide a brief running sheet to the stakeholders, so expectations are clear. Below is an example of a brief running sheet for an exhibition.

| Time | Activity | Responsibility | Notes |
|-------------|-------------------------------|----------------|--|
| 7.30 – 10am | Bump in begins (event set up) | EM | EM opens door and all exhibitors bump in |
| 10 am | Doors open for the public | EM | Guests arrive |
| 10am-4pm | Exhibition operates | All | Event in full swing |
| 4 am– 6pm | Bump out (shut down) | All | Event finishes and bump out begins. All stakeholders need to have left by 6pm. |

Table 4.1: Brief running sheet for all exhibition stakeholders

- Widespread recognition of event management as a **profession** is strongly supported by the application of systematic approaches, such as project management, and the utilisation of associated processes and procedures.
- There is often a tendency for individuals to own a particular event and dominate the way in which the event evolves and develops. Project management serves to **formalise and depersonalise** event processes and procedures, establishing on-going documentation requirements, and avoiding the risks associated with long-term event success depending on one person.