

Contributing towards a research culture in the event tourism industry – A public private sector partnership

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Definitions

- “In recent years one could reasonably argue that the term ‘event’ has been used to define that which is extraordinary in popular culture” (Goldblatt, 2000)
- “An event can, in its broadest definition, encompass anything attracting an audience by appealing to specific tastes, desires or needs. However, in the context of travel and tourism, this broad spectrum becomes limited to that segment of the industry that is unique to a specific geographic location and is limited in duration.” (Carey, 1994)
- “Event tourists are those people who visit a destination for the primary purpose of participating in or viewing an event.” (Turco, Riley & Swart, 2002)

Events with a Development Agenda

- *Development benefits* from providing a marketplace for a wide range of goods and services attracting tourists with money to spend stimulating the local economy;
- *Empowerment* among a broad spectre of stakeholders through involvement and employment opportunities;
- *Socio-cultural benefits* from induced sense of belonging, pride and cohesion, increased cultural awareness and cultural rejuvenation; and,
- *Marketing benefits* by promotion of the destination increasing visitation during the shoulder or off season.

Necessity for Event Research

- Developing a suitable event tourism strategy, recognising that every destination cannot host mega-events but can still benefit from event tourism
- How to channel the potential economic and social benefits of events to a broad a range of beneficiaries?
- How to benchmark events against global best practice?
- How to measure events success in achieving its own defined developmental aims and objectives as well as those defined by government?
- The overall challenge for stakeholders across the South African event sector is to host attractive events that contribute to **sustainable development**.

Necessity for Event Research (cont.)

- South Africa has hosted a number of major events but the extent and nature of these events have not been properly understood
- Little research been conducted to date
- National government commissioned the development of a National Event Strategy (2002)
- Event evaluation and research capacities is a multi-faceted undertaking, and includes:
 - Skills development
 - Creating appropriate technologies
 - Developing supportive institutional frameworks
 - Developing a culture of research within the event sector

Necessity for Event Research (cont.)

- Benefits of event research:
 - Qualitative and quantitative information on triple bottomline impacts
 - Information can be used for:
 - Stakeholder and internal reporting
 - Marketing purposes
 - Measuring sponsor ROI (corporates) and social benefits to citizens (NGO and government funders)
 - Planning for future events

What can we do?

Creating Partnerships

- ERI is a Cape Town based research company deploying a research perspective that measures events and festivals against **triple bottomline** principles.
- Its aims to promote **accountability** and informed decision-making within the event tourism industry
- It is committed to **empowerment** and building capacity in the area of event tourism research

What can we do? (cont.)

Creating Partnerships

- It has been conducting research at some of the most high profile and developmental oriented events in the Western Cape
 - Hermanus Whale Festival
 - Mother City Queer Project
 - Cape Town Festival
 - North Sea Jazz Festival
 - South African Cheese Festival
 - Cape Women of the World Festival
 - Sithengi Film & Television Market
- It has partnered with the Faculty of Management, CPUT to provide student researchers with practical research experience at these events (2003 – 2004)

Key Success Factors

Commitment to Empowerment and Collaboration

- ERI
 - Preference to fieldworkers from historically disadvantaged backgrounds, including SADC
 - Meeting empowerment objectives
 - Developing an event research agenda
 - Guest lecturing
- CPUT Students
 - Trained in research design
 - Conducting field-based research
 - Enhancing analytical skills
 - Use of data for projects
 - Professional and academic development
- CPUT Staff
 - Use of data for publication and teaching purposes
 - Professional and academic development

Key Success Factors (cont.)

Commitment to Triple Bottomline Event Evaluations

- Development of a methodology that addresses issues relating to sustainable development
 - Socio-cultural effects (social responsibility)
 - Economic effects (local economic development)
 - Environmental impacts (sustainability)

Results

- Ten interns conducted research at eight events during September 2003 and August 2004
 - 6 SADC + 1 West Africa
 - 3 SA
- Data used for M.Tech Management of Events Module
- Two term papers written for M.Tech Management of Events Module
- ERI guest lecture during M.Tech Management of Events Module

Obstacles Encountered

- Those events that require research the most cannot afford it
 - Limiting opportunities for interns
 - Interns used on an adhoc basis
 - Most committed interns used more frequently
 - Development of Communi-Serve
- Range of research capacities of interns
 - Some more adept with interviewing (communication skills)
 - Use less adept interns for desktop research
 - Greater willingness from non-South African students
 - Necessary to identify and train more South African students

Lessons Learned

- Commitment from **all** parties required to ensure success
- **Varying** levels of interns' research capacities have to be recognised
- Training is **ongoing** (student turnover)
- Identifying and training **South African interns** remain a challenge

Conclusion

Insights to contribute to a 21st Century Africa Agenda on Peace through Tourism

- Promotion of **accountability** and informed decision-making within the event tourism industry
- Encourage **public - private** sector partnerships to contribute to sustainable development
 - Socio-cultural effects (improve quality of life)
 - Economic effects (maximise economic spin-offs)
 - Environmental impacts (minimise negative environmental spin-offs)
- Encourage **corporate sector – training provider** partnerships to develop research capacities and to enhance outputs

Thank You

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