12137CH19

CHAPTER

19

EVENT MANAGEMENT

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After completing this chapter the learner will be able to—

- explain what is event planning and management
- describe briefly the steps in event management including planning, executing and evaluating an event
- know the preparation that is needed for a career as an event manager.

INTRODUCTION

We all love to celebrate and need little reason to celebrate — whether it be winning the World Cup or the Common Wealth Games or birthdays, Graduation party, weddings etc. in the family. Celebrations are an integral part of our life and often a symbol of happiness. However, modern lifestyles, busy work schedules, smaller families and participation of women in the workforce, have resulted in less manpower and time to plan, organise and execute such events. Hence many people prefer to use the services of an expert (who has the know-how and takes care of the minutest details) to plan and execute such events. Nowadays organisations and institutions also hire the services of such experts to organise a variety of events. This is referred to as 'outsourcing'. Experts who undertake this work are known

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as event planners or event managers. They provide consultancy and undertake all tasks right from the planning stage till the final execution of the event. Involvement of such experts has made celebrations and occasions easier, enjoyable and stress-free for the client.

Significance

Events have been defined by the famous economist Philip Kotler (2004) as 'occurrences designed to communicate particular messages to target audiences'. Event is a celebration of an idea that is conceptualised keeping in mind the target audience with whom live interaction takes place to achieve the desired impact.

Events are celebrations that provide an opportunity to meet and share happy moments with family members, relatives, colleagues and friends. A family event is envisaged as an opportunity to meet old friends and relatives and develop new relationships with unknown people. Besides this, events are an integral part of professional life, may it be corporate houses, non-profit organisations or Government sector. *Corporate sector* organises event to present its services or products in an acceptable manner to its ultimate customer(s) as well as to enhance its own image. Such events are seen as an outcome of public relations strategy with inputs from advertising, sales promotion and multi-level marketing. The *Government sector* uses events as a platform to enhance its own image. Since events of different kinds need to be organised all round the year, this has given rise to the Event Management industry which revolves around all sections of the society.

Basic Concepts

Categorisation of Events

Events can be described as a public assembly for the purpose of celebration, education, marketing or reunion. They can be classified on the basis of their size, type and context, as listed below:

1. Events can be grouped under the following heads based on the context:

   i. *Family events* are those where family members, relatives, friends join together to celebrate an occasion e.g., birthday, marriage, wedding anniversary, house-warming or religious functions.

   ii. *Community events* are those where members of a particular community get together to celebrate occasions like Christmas, Holi, *Diwali* , Independence Day.

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iii. *Professional/Business events* are those where professionals from one particular area get together to celebrate an occasion, e.g., Engineers Association celebrating the World Engineers Day, Indian Trade Industry hosting a round table meeting on a topical issue, Architects' Association hosting meeting of Green Building Council, Residents' Welfare Association organising award giving function to honour residential associations adopting green practices.

iv. *Public events* are occasions where public meetings are organised e.g., an pre-election meeting of a political party to select volunteers, marches like Common Wealth Games Torch being taken to different parts of the country, rallies against corruption, crimes against women, for social justice.

v. *Campaigns* are occasions/public meetings such as Election campaigns, Polio vaccination Days, HIV/AIDS awareness programme, awareness for Energy saving.

vi. *Fairs and Exhibitions* are events organised to enhance exposure. They bring together likeminded people/those with similar interests for better synergy and for a specific purpose, like, India International Trade Fair, Book Fairs, Handloom exhibition, Dastkar/Food Bazar.

2. *We can divide events in two categories,* based on the extent of formality involved —

i. *Personal and informal events* like a birthday party, marriage, kitty party etc.

ii. *Formal and official events* like a Product launch, Road Shows, Conferences, Seminars, National or International Programmes, etc.

Another classification of events could be based on the nature of event —

i. *Social/life-cycle events* like birthday party, graduation day, bachelor's party, engagement, wedding anniversary, retirement day.

ii. *Education and career events* like education fair, job fair, workshop/seminar, debate, contest, competition.

iii. *Sports events* like Olympics, World Cup, Marathon, Wimbledon, etc.

iv. *Entertainment events* like music concerts, fairs, festivals, fashion/jewellery shows, award functions, celebrity nights, beauty pageant, stage shows etc.

v. *Political events* like political procession, demonstration, rally, political functions etc.

vi. *Corporate events* like MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, Exhibitions), product launches, road shows, buyer-seller meet etc.

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vii. *Religious events* like religious festivals/fairs, religious procession, *Katha*, *Pravachan*, *Diwali fair*, *Dussehra fair* etc.

viii. *Fund raising/Cause related events* : events organised for raising funds like auction or cause-related events.

Fund raising may be an integral part of all the events irrespective of the category since funds are essential to celebrate any event. In case of family events, expenses are incurred by the individual family, whereas in institutions, it is the responsibility of the institution to provide funds. Alternatively fund raising is done by an in-house organising team or else the task is outsourced to an event management company.

A *corporate or institutional event* is a live multimedia package with a pre-conceived concept, customised or modified to achieve the clients' objectives of reaching out. It helps in influencing the target audience by providing a complete sensual experience for a two-way interaction. It is a package organised to provide live interaction between the target audience and the client to achieve the desired impact. It is evident from the model shown in Fig. 19.1 that in a family event, live interaction process facilitates communication between the family members and the guests. This process strengthens the mutually beneficial transactions within them. Therefore, family events are seen as experiential celebrations whereas corporate events are experiential marketing wherein focus is to involve guests and invitees in the programme.

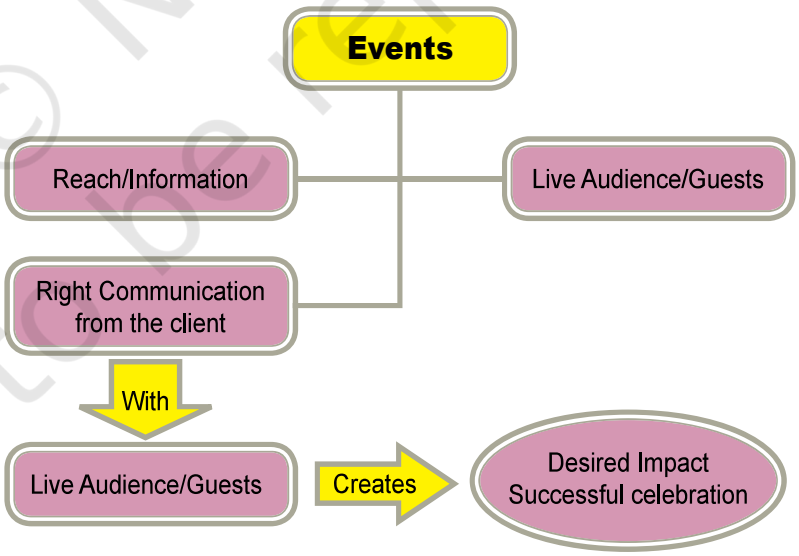

Fig. 19.1: Interaction Model of Event Management in a Corporate Organisation/Family

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Essential Ingredients of an event are time, place, people, activities, drama and showmanship.

Event Management

Event management denotes the production of an event. A number of people with different skills and roles are involved in its execution. There is considerable interaction among people and their responsibilities. It encompasses all activities involved in planning, organising, staffing, leading, executing and evaluating. For instance, while celebrating a *Student's Festival in a college,* all operations such as *venue selection* (in the college premises or in an auditorium) and *stage design* (based on the theme such as 'Quintessence'), arranging the *infrastructural facilities* (like sound system, tent, furniture etc.), *liaison with artist/performers* (cultural programme for the show) and *networking with other activities* such as *advertising* (to all invitees and sponsors), *public relations* (informing via mass media), *ticket sales* (to the target audience) etc. fall under the purview of event management. Event managers need to ensure that all the critical client concept and audience fit during execution. The manager's job is to physically reproduce this fitness in the event.

Event Planning and Management: It is the application of project management to the creation and development of festivals, events and conferences. The activities for marketing and managing events require certain steps to be followed, also called five C's of event planning and management.

Five 'Cs' of Successful Event Planning:

I. *Conceptualisation:* It involves proper churning of the original ideas. The purpose of the event is clearly defined and further related to theme and venue. For example, for a school going child's Birthday party the theme could be 'Red Riding Hood' wherein all children are expected to dress up as per the theme i.e., either they could dress up like Red Riding Hood or select an important feature of her dress or the colour. By making a party theme-based, all the guests participate and find the party interesting. They show enthusiasm in the activities organised for the party.

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Event— Theme based party by the sea side

II. *Costing* includes estimating the cost of production and margins on the event. It is necessary to know the funds available, the estimated expenses (budget) and the profit margins as the event manager will have to not only pay for the goods bought (like for a birthday party, cake, food, return gifts, venue decoration etc.) but also for the services hired for organising the event (like, the cook, cleaner, people to help in serving, assisting in conducting the party as in making children play games, etc.).

III. *Canvassing* for clients and seeking sponsors, customers/audience and networking. It is important to inform the target audience/guests about the event so that they will spare time from their busy schedule to participate in the event. For instance, for a birthday party, perhaps invitation before a week is sufficient but a national conference may have to be announced months in advance and for international conferences one or two years in advance. Besides, it is essential to contact the sponsors much before that i.e., may be two or more years in advance.

IV. *Customisation* is based on the customer's needs and marketing objectives. Each time the same event is celebrated, it may have a different objective. For example, first birthday is celebrated to invite the parents and children for fun 'n frolic, however the second birthday of the same child may be celebrated by organising a highly interactive party, so probably fewer adults and more children may be invited. Hence the nature of both the parties will differ.

V. *Carrying-out* the event or execution of the event as planned. An ordinary event may be celebrated in the most special manner and so will have greater impact. If invitees participate in the event they enjoy the celebration. So conduct of the event (by making everyone very special) is a very important aspect.

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Activities in Event Planning and Management

Activities usually vary with the category of event being organised. Once marketing has managed to convert an enquiry into a firm order, the work of event management begins. The following is a sequential flow of how event management actually happens, generally consisting of three stages:

- Pre-event activities (activities before the event takes place)
- During-event activities (activities while the event is taking place)
- Post-event activities (activities after the event has been executed).

1. *Pre-event activities*

For pre-event activities members coordinating each of the various aspects are involved. Events typically involve *teamwork*, hence responsibilities are assigned to each team member (Fig. 19.2). Coordination among team members is important.

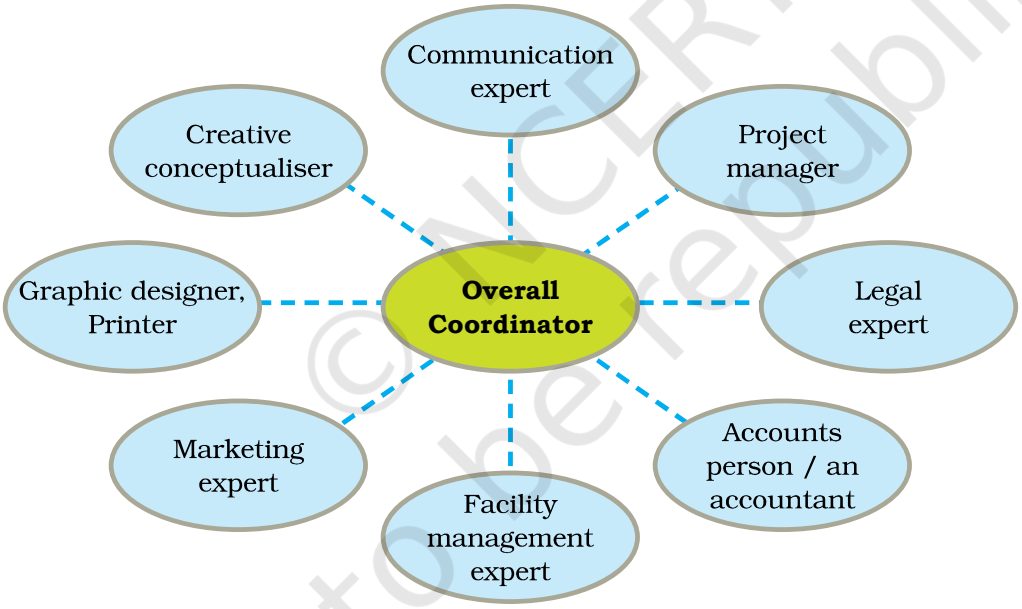

Fig. 19.2: Team members in Event Planning for a Corporate/Institutional Event

For example, for organising the celebration of *Silver Anniversary of an educational institution*, it is important to choose an *overall coordinator* to whom everyone will report about progress of work and s/he gives instructions and advice to individual members. First of all the *creative conceptualiser* plans the event, using a creative theme like, a sponsored dinner and performance by an artist, as the grand finale of the event.

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Communication expert will conceptualize the strategies for communicating this to the target audience so that it appeals to them and they attend the programme. *Legal expert* will try to look into legal issues for organising the event — getting necessary permissions from authorities. *Project Manager* will then allocate work among different in-charges for various aspects. *Accounts person* will make the budget and discuss with the organising team and manage all the funds. *Graphic designer* will convert abstract ideas into more visible and easily understandable and appealing ones. *Facility management expert* will be consulted to provide functional venues so that execution work can be done smoothly without interruptions. The *marketing expert* then will market the event.

For planning family events, duties are allocated to different family members/friends/relatives and they are given the responsibility to undertake celebrations. One person may be put in charge of invitations and similarly other duties may be distributed. Besides these members, the team should also coordinate with helpers, printer, chartered accountant, advocate, for their assistance in managing the show effectively.

Preliminary discussions are important to finalise the concepts in the first stage of planning an event.

Given below is the *checklist for planning the event* with the coordinators.

- *Creative conceptualiser* works on the event *brief* with the creative team.
- The *project manager* prepares a detailed schedule with the help of external agencies such as architects, engineers, contractors, etc. for efficient planning.
- A *budget statement* is drawn up by the project manager (for venue hire, construction of sets, special effects, lighting, sound etc.) and funds are arranged.
- *Critical dates or deadlines* are drawn up. In case of non-compliance of deadlines, responsibilities are re-evaluated for alternative solutions.
- The overall coordinator ensures the *completion of overall design, models and visuals with graphics. A concept* is presented to the client.
- At this stage, *the legalities of the contract* or agreement are mutually finalised including penalty clauses and deadlines.
- Working drawings are completed and printed for *quotations from suppliers.*

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- Acquisition of material for event production.
- *Appropriate safety and security arrangements* are made.
- The *coordinators with sales and marketing team* keep track of the progress and arrange for catch-up plans (in case of delay).
- Event coordinators with *graphic designer* finalise illustrations and liaison with them for advertisements, promotions, support literature, brochures, posters etc.
- *Logistics* involves booking of hotels, air, road and rail transport for the participants. It is important to keep the clients informed about the developments.
- *Finalisation of cleaning, security, furniture* (tables, seating, barricading etc.), *decor* (flowers), *communication and hired services* (telephones, couriers) etc.
- The project manager draws up the *contingency plans.*
- *Final visits for quality checks and control.*
- *Briefing of site supervising staff* before the event begins.

2. *During-event activities*

During event activities include actual implementation or execution of the event plan done during the pre-event activities.

- *Event managers should be available* to the client (the programme organisers) at all times for sharing information and if any on-the-spot decisions need to be taken.
- There should be *constant coordination and surveillance of the members* executing specific activities as per the plan (particularly for special effects, display objects, and the food and beverages).
- *Monitoring* is the crux of successful event execution.
- *Photographs and multimedia recording arrangements* need to be done at strategic locations while the event is being executed.
- *At the end of the event* it is important to acknowledge efforts of team members and sharing the success with them.

3. *Post-event activities are*

- Physical task of *dismantling of the sets.*
- *Final account settling* (bills to be paid on receipt).

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- Postmortem analysis of the event i.e., *event evaluation — performance appraisal* of the coordinators.
- *Thanking* all involved for their efforts formally by letters.
- *Feedback* including a post-event questionnaire seeking to measure client satisfaction and also obtain suggestions for future.

Steps in Organising Events

We can organise events successfully by adopting the following steps.

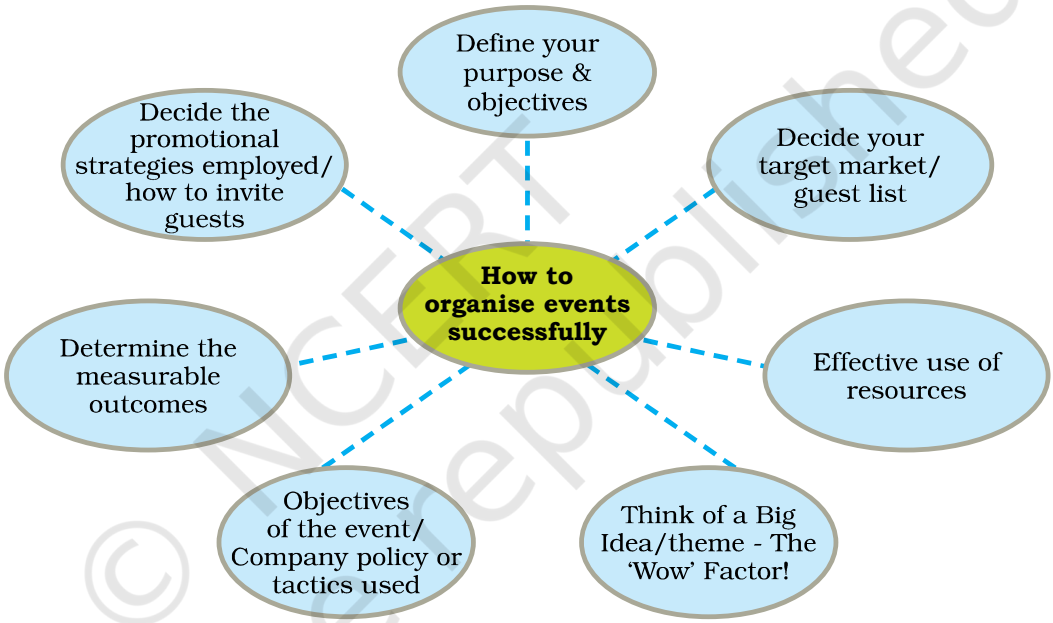

Fig. 19.3: Checklist for Planning Corporate / Institutional Events

1. *Define your objectives*

It is important to know the purpose of the event. By finding answers to the following questions we get clarity on several issues —

- Is the aim to increase awareness and create buzz for brand?
- Do we want to enhance brand comparison amongst target audience (for example, Road show and showing comparison with other brands)?
- Do we want to stimulate pride and involvement amongst target audience (for example, customer/franchise awards)?

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- Do we want to engage the existing customers (like in the customer loyalty programmes of different events)? Do we want to hunt for new customers (to increase wider coverage and reach of the product or service)?
- Do we want to build brand image by presenting opinion leaders and key individuals (like, film stars or celebrities, etc.)? Do we want to raise funds?

By focussing on these questions we make objectives and purpose of the event more specific and clear.

2. Decide your target market

Define the target audience before planning the event like, the acceptability of the event. Your target audience could be your sales staff / end users/ prospective users / opinion leaders / Government officials / alumni / trade partners / media. Same event may be more successful in rural areas but a failure in urban areas. So, plan as per the preferences of the target audience.

3. Effective use of resources

Ensure and optimise effective utilisation of available resources, particularly the people and the finances.

4. Think of a Big Idea - The 'Wow' Factor!

A great idea will have a special *impact, mnemonic* (memorable) and '*360^0 approach'* (the idea will definitely be successful). Think of a *suitable theme* for the event.

5. Company policy or tactics used

Work on the assumption of "six 'W' concept (each one is like honest serving men whose names are WHAT, WHY, WHEN, HOW, WHERE and WHO"). An effort to find answers to the following queries will make the event successful as it will help to bridge the gap between planning and execution.

• What do you want to do?	A Christmas party
• Why you want to do that?	Celebrate Christmas with friends
• When do you want to do it?	24th December at 12.00 noon

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• Where will you do it?	In the school friendship hall
• How will you do it?	Dance Party with Santa Claus
• Who will do what? • Duties of the organising team	• List of Invitees • Invitation card • Reception of guests • Venue arrangement • Food planning and service • Entertainment programme for the Party • Compere / Announcements • Distribution of gifts

Fig. 19.4: Six 'W' Concepts for Planning Events

6. *Determine the measurable outcomes*

Measure your outcomes with your desired goal / objective / purpose of the event you want to organise.

Measure on the following parameters —

- Attendance of participants / audience in the programme — more the audience better is the programme organisation.
- Publicity / awareness generated about the programme
- Perception of the event by the participants / audience
- Check out for failure forecasts like, organising a shopping festival during *Shraddh*; holding an event while India-Pak cricket is on; doing an outdoor event in rainy season.

7. *Decide the promotional strategies you will employ*

An event without a promotional strategy will only achieve half of its effectiveness. Send invitations to all those you think will participate in an event as part of direct marketing initiative. In case of a public event like a marathon race before Common Wealth Games, advertise about the event

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through mass media like, radio, television, newspaper etc. for better reach and participation.

ACTIVITY 1

Aim: To enable students to understand the process of planning an event. Compare and contrast a Birthday party (informal) / school annual day (formal).

Task Description: Compare and contrast using the guidelines provided in the table below.

S. No.	Details of the Event	Formal Event	Informal Event
1.	Compare the details of one formal and one informal event in terms of —		
	a. Scale of celebration like		
	i. Time involved in planning the event		
	ii. Money spent		
	iii. Invitees present for the occasion		
	b. Details of the celebration		
	i. venue arrangement (seating layout, entrance décor, plants and flowers, lighting, floor decoration, any other special effects)		
	ii. food (menu, costing, method of service)		
	iii. conduct of the programme (involvement of guests, entertainment programme for guests)		
2.	Number of people involved in execution of the event		
3.	Schedule/ programme of the event		
4.	Flow of the programme		
5.	Overall Programme		

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Evaluation of an event

- Determine the extent to which event objectives have been achieved.
- Get feedback from your clients and target audience. One good way of getting feedback is through feedback form, which may become part of your exit pass that is required to get security clearance.

To get feedback from target audience/guests, make feedback form part of your return gift voucher. A guest can redeem the gift voucher only when he/she fills the feedback form and gives it back to an attendant. It is always better to develop your own feedback mechanism. Prepare a checklist to avoid the same errors repeated in future.

Sustainable Management of Events

This is also known as green events which means that the events are managed in a way that it seeks to minimise the use of resources so as to reduce the negative impacts on the environment. The focus here would be to indulge in those practices at all levels of event planning and organisation that causes less harm to the environment, eg., choosing materials which are natural, reusable and recyclable. Event manager has to make conscious decision while choosing and selecting the materials which are easy to procure and have repeated use.

Knowledge and Skills

Some of the following skills will enhance your work profile in the area of event management. You could acquire all of these or only some selected ones.

- Appealing personality
- Ability to communicate effectively and fluently
- Ability to organise and coordinate with people
- Good inter-personal skills
- Efficient managerial skills
- Accounting and financial management competence (like, costing, budgeting, etc.)
- Inspiring the team to accept criticism.

There are several institutions (private and Government) teaching Event Management. One needs to explore these institutions in your city or state.

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CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

There are several career options in event management field. For a newcomer there could be options such as : Event Planner / Event Manager; Event Coordinator; Information Manager etc.

If you would like to specialise in the area of event management, there are several options available to you. Some of these are: Graphic Designer; Conceptualiser; Creative Designer; Technical Manager; Programme Manager; Food and Beverages Manager; Marketing Manager; HR Manager; Logistics Manager; Security Manager; Infrastructure Manager; Quality Assurance Manager; Finance Manager etc.

ASSIGNMENT

- Explore the advanced courses (short certificate courses, degree courses offered in University or colleges, UG or PG diploma, etc.) in the area of event management in your city.

KEY TERMS

Event planning, event management, conceptualisation, customisation, execution, reach, live audience, pre-event activities, post-event activities, team work, effective use of resources, evaluation.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What are events?
2. What are the categories of events?
3. Explain the terms event management and event designing?
4. What are five Cs of event management?
5. Give the steps in organising events.
6. Explain the six Ws of event planning.
7. Enlist the important activities in event management.
8. How will you evaluate an event?

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Additional Activities

I Aim: To enable students to plan for the forthcoming events efficiently.

Task Description: Using your knowledge about team members required for an event, plan and allocate duties to different personnel in the team. Make three columns and discuss duties such as, pre-event, during-event activities and post-event activities.

Outcome of the Activity: After doing this activity you will be able to allocate duties to different personnel involved in organising the event for successful execution.

Teachers' Note

Teacher should discuss with students any forthcoming event they have recently celebrated and **plan activity details. Allocate specific duties** to specific people in three columns as follows —

- Pre-event activities
- During-event activities
- Post-event activities.

II. Choose any event that will take place in your family or community or school. Ask the following questions to obtain feedback from the participants about the event:

Name of Event
Date
Location
Type of Event

- Did you enjoy the event? If no, then please state the reason.
- What did you like the most in the event?
- What did you like the least in the event?
- What are the problems you faced during the event?
- What could have been done to make this event better?
- How do you rate the various services provided by us (please check one option):

  Hospitality: Excellent, good, average, poor
  Catering: Excellent, good, average, poor
  Transportation: Excellent, good, average, poor

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Management Staff behaviour: Excellent, good, average, poor
Management Staff Services: Excellent, good, average, poor

- Would you like to participate in our next event?

PRACTICAL 1

Theme: **Event Management - Observation and critical analysis of an Event**

Tasks:

1. Students to observe any event (formal/informal) from the beginning to the end.
2. Identify the 5 Cs, indicate the strengths and weaknesses.
3. List the resources involved in the event.
4. Identify problems and suggest improvements needed in order to improve the quality of event celebrations.

Purpose: This practical will enable students to:

1. understand the important aspects of planning and organising an event
2. identify the different resources used in the event
3. identify the strengths and weaknesses of the event and areas for improvement.

Conducting the Practical

1. Students to be divided into two Groups and asked to observe an event under Formal and Informal categories.
2. Each Group can observe 2–3 events from the beginning to the end and record their observations in the format given herein.
3. The Group can identify- 5 Cs, resources utilised, good features etc.
4. Suggest ways of improving the event or doing it differently.
5. Presentation of the Groups followed by discussions by the teacher.

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Format for recording observations of events:

S.No.	Aspects of Event Planning (5 C's)	Executed/ conducted well (Yes/No)	Details of the celebration	Strengths of the celebration	Weaknesses of the celebration
1.	**Conceptualisation**				
	Theme				
2.	**Costing (budget)**				
a.	Invitations				
b.	Food / refreshments				
c.	Venue arrangements				
d.	Gifts				
e.	Conduct / entertainment of the celebration				
f.	Miscellaneous				
3.	**Canvassing / publicity**				
a.	Sponsors				
b.	Invitees				
c.	Networking				
4.	**Customisation**				
a.	Special features of the event				
5.	**Carried out/ Execution**				

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