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Food Sponsorship and Management at Special Events: A Midwest Example

Bruce Wicks

Xiaofan Qui

Shuai Quan

University of Illinois

The importance of food in travel experiences is extremely important but has been largely taken for granted until recently with the advent new literature pertaining to gastronomy and tourism. A similar circumstance surrounds festivals and events where the ubiquitous presence of food is assumed to be an expected part of the experience. The role food plays in event participants experiences can range from food being the main theme of the event and the purpose for attending (Gilroy Garlic Festival), to an inconvenience the event attendee must endure (unhealthy, poor quality, high priced and long lines). For those producing ethnic festivals the role of food is often prominent. In addition to being an critical component of the event from the consumer's perspective, food and beverage sales are important revenue streams for the event producers as well as providing opportunities for sponsors to be directly involved.

The objective of this study was to examine the role and scope of food in events and to define the importance of food and beverage sponsorships. The sample for the survey was IFEA event producers in the Midwestern section of the US.

As expected event producers indicated that a food or beverage was infrequently the primary theme of their event, yet at the same time, they strongly recognized the importance of this attraction or service. When asked if a food related theme was

appealing to tourists, good for garnering sponsorships or was important for the local culture, economy or agriculture sector their responses were all in the neutral range, neither strongly agreeing nor disagreeing.

The importance of food and beverage sales at events is demonstrated by the respondents who indicated that these sales generated the largest proportion of direct cash revenues at events (35.2% of the total). Sponsors for food and beverage are prevalent with one half of events indicating they receive such sponsorship benefits. The magnitude of food and beverage sponsorships is significant, and on average represents almost one quarter of all event sponsorship revenue and within this category of sponsorships almost one quarter are in-kind. Although it was anticipated that beverage sponsors would predominate, the value of these sponsorships represented almost 90% of the total for food and beverage. However, when total sales revenues for food and beverages are compared, food comprises almost one third of revenues, triple the proportion of value for food sponsorships.

Event producers indicate that a majority of their food/beverage vendors (63%) would be considered as local, suggesting retention of economic benefits to the community is desired. A large proportion of food/beverage vendors (85%) pay fees to the event producers with 53% paying a set up fee, 14% a percentage of revenues and 31% some combination of both. Notably, not-for-profit organizations are rarely exempted (15%) from paying fees. Event producers actively manage vendors suggesting they recognize the importance of maintaining a profitable relationship for themselves and a good experience for participants. For example, over 60% regulated vendor pricing and well over 70% were involved with determining menu offerings. When it came to evaluating vendor performance, quality of service, menu items and appearance were ranked highly as criteria. Somewhat surprisingly, profitability was only used by one third of event producers as a performance measure and less than one in ten conducted formal consumer research.

Given the growing importance of food to positive travel and event experiences, the data presented suggest that festival producers could be doing more to integrate food into the event theme, improve customer service and capitalize on food sponsorship opportunities.

Linking events with their communities: an exploratory study of mechanisms via which events can engage with their host communities

Rob Harris

*Australian Centre for Event Management
University of Technology, Sydney*

This exploratory study sought to identify the range of strategies/practices available to event managers seeking to engage with their communities, and to identify techniques that are being used to measure the effectiveness or otherwise of such community engagement efforts. The specific research objectives of this study are:

- identify public events within Australia, and to a lesser extent overseas, that are employing one or more community engagement strategies/practices;
- describe the strategies/practices employed by public events identified in objective one; and
- identify mechanisms via which public events measure their efforts at community engagement.

In order to provide a context for this study, a literature review was first conducted. The insights provided by review were used in developing an appropriate methodology for this study. This methodology involved the use of in-depth interviews, and reference to websites and published material specific relating to the events selected for analysis. In total, 22 events were analysed.

From this analysis seven major approaches to community engagement were identified, specifically these were:

1. Participation facilitation

2. Community input and feedback facilitation
3. Inclusive programming
4. Outreach
5. Community development and capacity building
6. Friends of the event/event alumni associations
7. Local business engagement

Additionally this study identified a number of mechanisms currently in use to evaluate the effectiveness of community engagement efforts:

- formal studies of events;
- community surveys;
- attendee surveys;
- on-line feedback facilities;
- town meetings;
- talk back radio sessions;
- event shop fronts; and
- assessments concerning the participation of selected groups and organizations (e.g. number of local business suppliers/volunteers/non-profit organizations/schools/ethnic groups) involved in the event.

The Evaluation of Special Events: A Kit for Event Practitioners

Professor Leo K. Jago

*Cooperative Research Centre for Sustainable Tourism,
Centre for Hospitality and Tourism Research
Victoria University*

Special events are a fundamental component of the tourism strategy in many regions (Jago and Shaw 1998) and offer important leisure opportunities for local residents. Over the last decade, there has been an enormous growth in the number of events on offer in many regions. In order for events to remain viable over time in such a competitive market, it is crucial that their performance is evaluated to ensure that they remain in line with consumer needs. Such evaluations can highlight opportunities for improvements in the product on offer and the manner in which they are marketed.

Events have diverse impacts including increased visitation (Getz 1989, 1991; Hall 1992; Kang and Perdue 1994; Light 1996), economic and employment (Burns, Hatch and Mules 1986; Mules and Faulkner 1996; B. Ritchie 1996; J. Ritchie 1984), infrastructure development (Evans 1995; Hughes 1993), environmental (May 1995) and social impacts (Hodges and Hall 1996; Fredline, Jago and Deery 2003; Shultis, Johnston and Twynam 1994). Clearly, a holistic evaluation is required to assess the overall impact of staging a special event. Despite this, however, most event evaluations have been largely economic in focus to meet the requirements of event funding agencies and justify their investment in terms of economic benefits to the region hosting the event.

Economic Evaluations of Events

There has been much debate as to the most appropriate technique for conducting economic event evaluations. Until recently, the predominant approach has been based on 'input-output multipliers', however, many of these adopted 'output multipliers'

greatly inflated the economic contribution (Dwyer, Forsyth and Spurr 2004). With easier access to sophisticated models of various economies at state level, there has been a push to adopt ‘computable general equilibrium (CGE) models’ for evaluation. CGE models overcome many of the limitations experienced in the use of input-output models although they are less readily available, relatively expensive to use, and require substantial expertise in their use. CGE models tend, however, to give more conservative results than input-output models.

Simplified Evaluation Kit

In the late 1990s, Arts Victoria identified the need for the plethora of cultural events to be evaluated for their economic impact. Given that so many of these cultural events are in regional areas and often managed by volunteers, it was considered that an evaluation kit that could be operated by event managers themselves was needed, especially since few of these events could afford the expense of employing a consultant to undertake the evaluation. The STCRC worked with Arts Victoria and a consulting team to produce the ‘Do-It-Yourself Kit’ (DIY Kit) that used input-output multipliers to estimate the economic impact of the event.

The DIY Kit was used successfully in Victoria for a number of years. However, in using this Kit, a number of shortcomings became obvious. Using feedback on the DIY Kit, the STCRC totally revamped the assessment tool to produce the Event Evaluation Kit (EEK).

The Event Evaluation Kit (EEK)

After extensive discussions with State and Territory Treasuries, it became clear that economic impacts based upon input-output multipliers would not be recognised. As CGE models do not translate from one economy to another and are too complex to be used by non-economists, the STCRC elected to measure direct inscope expenditure generated by the event rather than economic impact. Direct inscope expenditure is the new expenditure in a region using money drawn from outside the region that would not have occurred had the event not taken place. These results enable events to be compared to other events and to themselves over time. Direct inscope expenditure figures can then be inputted into whatever model (Input-Output, CGE) is deemed appropriate if it is necessary to calculate an economic impact result.

In order to make the evaluation more comprehensive, EEK also includes a module that assesses marketing dimensions of the event and a final module enables the organiser to assess questions of his/her own choosing. These modules are in addition to a basic demographic module, which is mandatory and the economic module. An overall assessment of the direct inscope expenditure that is generated by the event will be calculated by the EEK if this module has been selected. Within each module, there is a range of question and answer options that the organiser can select for assessment. Having selected the modules and questions that are required for the evaluation, the EEK can then produce the questionnaire and data entry template.

Once responses to the questionnaire have been collected from event attendees and entered into EEK, tabular and graphical representations of each question are automatically prepared for insertion into evaluation reports. If more detailed analysis is required of the data, all responses can be exported into excel or SPSS for further manipulation.

The EEK has been designed to be used by event organisers without specialised training. It comes with a comprehensive manual and an on-line help function to assist users. Whilst the final results obtained from evaluations are dependent on the randomness of the sampling, the sample size, and the estimated number of attendees, the EEK provides a simple and consistent method to evaluate events.

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Embizo Embok: Developing a Universal Event Management Body of Knowledge Process

Professor Joe Golblatt

*School of Tourism and Hospitality Management
Temple University*

William O'Toole

Event Project Management System

In July 2004 several leading researchers in the fields of project and event management from five continents convened in northeastern South Africa for the purpose of developing a universal conceptual framework for a common body of knowledge in the field of event management.

The researchers and scholars utilized the previous work of leading researchers such as Getz, Goldblatt, Rutherford-Silvers and others to construct a universal framework for the process of managing events and transmitting this process to others in a transparent manner. Furthermore, the Project Management Body of Knowledge project (PMBOK) was used as a best practice model in developing the process.

The outcome of this *gathering* (embizo is the Zulu word for gathering) resulted in the establishment of a working group that will continue the process of codifying the event management body of knowledge and establishing an organization to explore opportunities for distributing this information freely to others who wish to utilize it to promote standardization and universality within the profession. This paper will provide a detailed report of the project and provide examples of the event management body of knowledge conceptual framework in its current state of development as well as detail how this research will be shared with others in the future to promote a universal system of professional practice.

Destination Image Improvement by Hosting Tourism Festivals

Soyoung Boo

University of Illinois

Studies emphasized that hosting community events which improve the destination image or recognition (Mules & Faulkner, 1996; Backman *et al.*, 1995) increases the number of visitors by enhancing their images or recognition (Getz, 1997; Light, 1996; Mules & Faulkner, 1996). Festivals in studies related to community image improvement are mega events like the Olympics which can easily attract a wide range of tourists, as opposed to community festivals which emphasize the individuality of a smaller community (Faulkner *et al.*, 2001; Mihalik & Simonett, 1998; Bramwell, 1997; Spilling, 1996; Dimanche, 1996; Roche, 1994; Ritchie & Smith, 1991; Ritchie & Lyons, 1990). However, there are few empirical studies on the image effects of pre and post festival. It is not easy to find studies on the measurement of differences the images present prior to festivals and the images present after festivals (Lena & Annika, 1999). Among studies on image improvement, Mihalik and Simonett (1998), Jeong and Faulkner (1996), Wicks (1995), Pyo (1995), and Ritchie and Smith (1991) verified the image improvement associated with hosting festivals and events through the use of empirical methods.

This study examined whether the suggestion concerning festival or mega events contribution toward image enhancement from previous studies can also be applied to planned festivals which attract tourists to a community. Then, if there are any positive and negative image changes, this study attempts to find the reasons in festival promotion and festival quality. Thus, image differences between festival participant and non-participants before the trip and after the trip were tested. Furthermore, image differences between the festival recognition group and non-recognition group, and

image differences between the festival information request group and non-request group were examined.

For the test, festival participants' experiences and festival qualities were explored. Bigne *et al.* (2001) examined the relationship between images and satisfaction, based on his hypothesis in previous studies suggesting that destination experiences affect images and then change the images (Ross, 1993; Chon, 1991; Echtner & Ritchie, 1991; Fakeye & Crompton, 1991). In the empirical study on destination image structures, Park and Ko (2002) found that affective images can be divided into semi-affective images and pure-affective images. Park and Ko (2002) found support for a difference between semi-affective images and pure-affective images based on Plutchik's study (1980) which suggested the structural model that was established by principle affections and complicated affections connected with basic emotions. This study applied the three images (cognitive images, semi-affective images, pure-affective images) dimension of Park and Ko (2002).

Park (1997) developed an on-site satisfaction scale through examining multiple items from previous studies. This study attempted to measure on-site tourism experiences based on the Park (1997) scale. Destination images can be formed by stimuli like sources of information, previous experiences, and physical characteristics (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999). This study used the tracking study and conversion study (McWilliams & Crompton, 1997; Lawton & Page, 1997; Zhou, 1997; Woodside & Ronkainen, 1994; Messmer & Johnson, 1993; Wicks & Schuett, 1991; Woodside, 1990).

There are studies on festival quality and festival evaluation (Watt, 1998; Jeong, 1998; McDonnell *et al.*, 1998; Wicks & Fesenmaire, 1993; Getz, 1991). Ko (2000) developed the final twenty items for the measurement of festival experiences by conducting empirical studies and a literature review. This study used festival experience scales developed by Ko (2000). This study also attempted to examine factors that contribute to positive or negative images of festival quality. Two different kinds of questionnaires were designed to measure destination images and promotion effects and to measure the festival participants' experiences. The main results of this study are as follows.

First, the World Festival for Island Cultures that was designed to attract tourists did not contribute to the formation of positive destination images by tourists. Second, the reason the planned festival did not influence the improvement of destination images was that tourism promotion was not effective. Images of the festival recognition group and festival request group were changed more negatively than those of the festival non-recognition group and festival non-requested group. Third, another reason for festival participants' negative image change was that there were problems with the festival quality. Factors comprising festival quality affected satisfaction after the trip, in particular, the self-experiences factor was the most significant factor in explaining satisfaction. However, items comprising the self-experience factor got the lowest evaluation. Overall, the festival was evaluated below average in festival quality.

Therefore, the issues of image enhancement by hosting mega events like the Olympics from previous studies cannot be applied absolutely without verification to a planned community festival. Absolute belief of image improvement by hosting festivals can be another reason to increase the quantity of community tourism festivals.

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Expenditure Behaviors of Festival Visitors

Soyoung Boo

University of Illinois

Although consumer behavior of festival participants has become a popular issue in the tourism industry and a focus of research, tourist expenditure behavior has not traditionally been an important theme. Knowledge of tourist expenditure patterns at a destination is important for understanding tourist behavior and discerning trends.

The findings that travel distance influences consumer expenditures may be understood by considering two concepts. The first concept is one initially proposed and subsequently confirmed by Leones et al. (1998). They indicated that tourists stay longer and have more experiences to compensate for their travel cost. The second concept is the continuum of novelty-familiarity in experiences. Visitors living far from and lacking familiarity with a site or festival may spend money more freely than those living in or near a festival site.

Little research linking the novelty-familiarity continuum to tourism expenditures exists; however, Godbey and Graefe (1991) found that the greater the repeat visitation, the lower is consumer expenditure. Their findings provide circumstantial evidence that familiarity reduces expenditures from the levels exhibited by novelty seekers. On the other hand, Long and Perdue (1990) found no significant differences between first-time and repeat visitors in their levels of expenditure.

In addition to the effects of income, travel distance and past visitation experiences, investigations have been conducted linking consumer expenditures to travel purpose, travel companions, length of time at a destination, age, and gender. Such studies resulted in different findings, ranging from corroboration to contradiction. The works

of Long and Perdue (1990) and Leones et al. (1998) found consistency with respect to the relationship between purpose of visit and expenditures.

In the case of travel companions, Mok and Iverson (2000) showed that FIT travelers spent more money than package travelers, while Agarwal and Yochum (1999) found that as the number of members in travel groups increased, so too did the amount of money spent as a group. Long and Perdue (1990) weighed in with findings showing no significant difference in expenditures relative to the size of the travel group.

With respect to length of time at a destination, Henthorne (2000) found a negative correlation between time and the amount of expenditures for visitors staying about one hour and a positive correlation for visitors staying about three hours. As for age, Henthorne (2000), Leones et al. (1998), Agarwal and Yochum (1999) found no significant differences in expenditures. Henthorne (2000) found that there were no significant findings according to gender. Such inconsistent findings yield little in the way of well-grounded conclusions regarding consumer expenditures.

The purpose of this study was to examine how the visitors' prior visitation at, and distance traveled to, an event influence expenditures at a festival site. An intercept technique was employed to query festival attendees exiting the second World Festival for Island Cultures-Jeju. Trained intercept personnel approached prospective respondents and requested their assistance in completing a self-report questionnaire. A total of 420 questionnaires were distributed with 356 usable questionnaires being returned and analyzed.

The analysis revealed that prior visitation experience and residency status resulted in significant differences in expenditures. No significant mediating effects based on familiarity or length of stay was shown. Of the two potential mediators, only the length of stay had a direct but small influence on expenditures, but length of stay showed no difference based on prior visitation or residence. These results reveal that length of stay and familiarity had no mediating role on the two independent variables. These results lead the authors to raise the possibility that the significant influence of length of stay on expenditure could be the result of antecedents other than travel distance and prior visitation experience. One possible antecedent was the type of visit.

The results revealed that those visitors whose type of visit was focused primarily on the event spent more time at the site. Nevertheless, the fact that the length of stay controlling for type of visit did not significantly affect expenditure, reflects no mediating role between the type of visit and expenditures.

Although these analyses failed to confirm the specific mechanism for expenditures of festival visitors, those who spend greater sums of money while on site were identified. Among variables worth considering were length of stay, prior visitation, travel distance, and visitor companion, specifically family. These variables may be criteria by which the festival market should be segmented, either independently or in an integrated fashion.

Consequently, this study presented some theoretical bases for the spending behavior of festival visitors that were not confirmed empirically. The results will likely vary and similar research at other, more structured festivals with longer traditions is recommended. For this reason and because existing literature and supporting material on visitors' expenditure behavior based on psychological mechanisms were scarce, future research is clearly needed.

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Volunteers' Perceptions of Impacts of the Azalea Festival: Do Findings on Resident Perceptions of Tourism Impacts Apply?

Holly E. Bosley, M.S.

Gene L. Brothers, Ph.D.

Lary D. Gustke, Ph.D.

North Carolina State University

The purpose of this research was to investigate whether findings from the literature on resident perceptions of tourism impacts applied to festival volunteers as a specific subset of residents. Volunteers play an integral role in the provision of tourism products and services. Festivals and special events, often used as catalysts for community-based tourism development, rely heavily on support from volunteers. Therefore, festival managers cannot afford to ignore the vital contributions of volunteers and must work to provide satisfying volunteer experiences.

Despite the importance of volunteer involvement in hosting a festival, there is limited research on this topic. Moreover, few studies have been completed on the social or community impacts related to hosting a festival. Gursoy, Kim, and Uysal (2004) stated that, "most of the studies that examined festivals and special events have focused on either the economic impact of festivals and special events ... or the reasons and motivations of people to attend festivals and special events" (p. 172). Understanding volunteers' perceptions about the impacts of the festival to which they are contributing is a valuable tool for managers because the attitudes of volunteers toward the festival can influence the festival both positively and negatively (Auld & Cuskelly, 2001). Improved awareness of motivations for volunteer involvement will enhance recruitment and retention efforts (Caldwell & Andereck, 1994).

The study was conducted within the context of the North Carolina Azalea Festival, an annual multi-day festival held in Wilmington, North Carolina. A survey instrument was designed to collect information from a sample of volunteers regarding their perceptions of the impacts of the Azalea Festival (Gursoy et al., 2004); level of attachment to the greater Wilmington community (Jurowski, Uysal, & Williams, 1997); and the following four independent variables, identified in the tourism literature as related to host resident perceptions of impacts: distance from the tourist zone (Belisle & Hoy, 1980; Sheldon & Var, 1984; Snaith & Haley, 1999), length of residence (Allen, Long, Perdue, & Kieselbach, 1988; Sheldon & Var, 1984; Um & Crompton, 1987), birthplace (Davis, Allen, & Cosenza, 1988; Sheldon & Var, 1984; Um & Crompton, 1987), and level of knowledge of the tourism industry (Davis et al., 1988; Keogh, 1990).

Data were collected from a sample of Azalea Festival volunteers through an e-mail survey sent to committee chairs in addition to an on-site survey distributed at the annual post-festival Workers' Party. It was hypothesized that results from previous research on resident perceptions of tourism impacts would be applicable to a sample of festival volunteers.

Statistical analyses, in the form of t-tests and a Pearson correlation, showed that volunteers' perceptions of the impacts of the Azalea Festival were not consistent with the literature on resident perceptions of tourism impacts. Continued research, with the objective of furthering the understanding of volunteers, will contribute to the development of high quality, satisfying volunteer experiences. Managers of festivals and special events, who rely heavily on volunteer participation, will be able to apply this knowledge to improve their recruitment and retention efforts.

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An analysis of the predictors of business performance in small firms in the events industry

Emma H. Wood

UK Centre for Events Management

Leeds Metropolitan University

In order to provide a deeper understanding of small business performance, the data from a UK national survey into small events firms was analysed (Wood et al, 2003). The analysis used logistic regression to determine a multivariate model which best predicts the performance of these firms. The model identifies those organisational variables which greatly influence performance as well as identifying the business activities which have little or no effect on performance. The practical implications of the findings are discussed resulting in recommendations for improving the performance of small firms in the events sector.

The aim of this study was to provide a better understanding of how internal factors influence the performance of small firms in the events sector. Research undertaken by TTENTO (Travel, Tourism Services and Events National Training Organisation) estimates that small firms make up approximately 85% of the industry and therefore despite the prominence of large scale events it is these smaller companies who dominate the sector.

The performance measure used was a combination of variables covering change in turnover, profit, customer demand and employment levels over the last operating year and predicted for the next operating year. This combined performance measure was devised following a review of previous research which identified the need to overcome differing and sometimes contradictory results for different performance measures (Abouzeedan and Busler, 2004; Jarvis et al, 2000; Murphy, 1996; Rahman, 2001).

The multivariate analysis undertaken has identified those organisational variables which have a close association with the change in performance of the firms studied and used a random sample of sufficient size (600 responses) to allow the findings to be generalised to the UK SME events sector.

All the variables used as possible predictors of performance were organisational (internal to the business), however, it is recognised that many factors external to the organisation (eg economic, competitive and social forces) will also have an effect on business performance. These external factors are largely beyond the control of the business manager and although their effect should be recognised and understood, they cannot be manipulated to improve performance. The internal factors, which are the focus of this study, are within the direct control of the owner/manager and therefore an understanding of the effects of these factors is likely to be of more practical use. Previous research has also shown that these internal factors account for twice as much variance in profit rates as economic or external variables (Tvorik & McGivern, 1997).

Although there exists a substantial amount of research on small firm performance linked to a number of determining factors, it has tended to focus on a key area, ie TQM or market orientation or leadership style. Several studies have researched the service sector but very little that specifically focuses on small firm performance within the events sector. Therefore, considering the high proportion of small firms within this sector, its volatility and its potential importance to the UK economy, further clarification of the determinants of success should make a useful and practical contribution to business practice in this sector.

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