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# THE EVENT CYCLE 1

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Meet

LIZ QUICK

Liz graduated from the Goldsmiths, University of London with a BA Honours degree in German and Drama. She began her career working for Lufthansa German Airlines, working as a Ticketing and Passenger Services agent at London Heathrow Airport and undergoing regular training courses at Seeheim in Frankfurt, Germany. She then made the move into the events industry, initially joining GL Travel Incentives, a UK-based Incentive Travel agency. Here she operated a number of overseas incentive trips on behalf of their clients, to amongst other destinations: Kenya, Hawaii, San Francisco, Rio de Janeiro and Monaco. Following this she moved to Talking Point Ltd, where she operated a number of international conferences and incentives for various blue chip corporations. During this time Liz helped set up the first UK event implant office, at the then SmithKline Beecham in Brentford, London, working in a Business Development role. This was the first time event spend had been consolidated through a sole agency and Liz was instrumental in setting this up and liaising with key clients within the Research & Development and Consumer Healthcare divisions of this major pharmaceutical company and securing the retender for sole supplier with the organisation for a number of years.

She later joined Plus Two Communications Ltd, then TMB Marketing Communications in Dorking, where she worked as Account Director on a number of key accounts, including Bristol Myers Squibb, Olswang, Johnson & Johnson and Wella UK. Liz also worked as a freelancer for some years and set up her own event management business. She worked with a key sponsor and partner on the London 2012 Olympics and regularly volunteers at festivals such as Glastonbury, Cornbury and many others.

In 2006, through a chance meeting with a previous colleague at a conference, she got the opportunity to start lecturing on a freelance basis. In 2010 she graduated from the University of West London with an MA in Learning and Teaching in Higher Education. She now brings her industry experience as a Senior Lecturer at the University of West London and over the last decade has gained extensive experience in course development and leadership, teaching on both undergraduate and postgraduate event management programmes. Liz is passionate about blending both the academic and more practical elements of the event management course she teaches, so that students can ‘hit the ground running’ when they graduate and enter the industry, which is the key motivation for writing this book.
Foreword

A great introduction for students coming into events as Liz offers real-world practical insight with attention on the need-to-know. The book asks a simple question of students and would-be professionals: What do you really need to know to effectively plan and manage an event? Blending a mix of commentaries from industry professionals and event academics, each chapter charts a logical path towards the goal of successfully delivering an event. It’s a sound approach as the reader gets to understand some of the conceptual ideas that explain events, harnessed with the practicalities of making the event happen. Practitioner war stories are always fun and interesting to read, but it also helps a student develop their professional outlook if they can see that there are alternative ways of thinking about things, or, perhaps more importantly, that there are ideas and thoughts that explain why something is done, or should be done, in a certain way. The book is packed with case studies that articulate this perfectly and for readers this is one of the biggest benefits as they each pointedly illustrate what key ideas each chapter is trying to get across in the event planning cycle. What is also helpful is the excellent range of thoughtful activities for students to develop their thoughts and ideas. It all adds up to a lovingly nourished treatise on how we can make successful events happen.

Dr Graham Berridge, Head of Department for Events, University of Surrey, UK

Acknowledgements

To all the contributors who have generously spared their time and stories to help bridge the gap from academia to the real events world.

To Graham Louer who first got me started on the events journey over 30 years ago, and Graham Berridge who helped make the journey into academia seamless; to the Talking Point and TMB crews for inspiring me along the way and in memory of Denise Harris, the best events freelancer, who left us much too soon. Lastly, to the students who have made teaching events so rewarding. This book has been written for you to help prepare you to work in this amazing, inspiring and evolving industry.
Events of all sizes are shaped and influenced by current and contemporary issues, such as the evolution of
technology; the increase of new emerging destinations, global terrorism and the need for more robust risk
assessment, as well as a change in mindset brought about by renewed emphasis on environmental stewardship
and globalisation. All of these issues have been discussed within this book, with the exception of the global
pandemic we now know as Covid-19, as final drafts were completed before the emergence of this crisis. The
concept of this book is to present real event challenges and outcomes, from various stakeholder perspectives.
This crisis may well be one of the biggest challenges the industry has faced, so the way in which venues and
events adapt and transform themselves will ultimately dictate the outcome of the recovery phase, both in
the short and longer term.

At this stage we can only surmise the economic fallout of this pandemic and how it will continue to affect
the events industry and other sectors. It is difficult to see how the industry will be able to recover without a
huge injection of financial support and it is already apparent that many companies will not survive. The event
calendar for 2020 has literally been wiped out, with cancellations of mass gatherings across all sectors in
all countries and some large blue-chip corporations predicting that large scale events will not resume until
Spring 2021 at the earliest, as longer lead times and social distancing will inevitably make events more
logistically and financially challenging to deliver. This will especially be the case for event types with large
attendee numbers, such as festivals, sporting events and exhibitions.

Whilst this has been a time of deep concern and uncertainty, some favourable outcomes have been recorded
during the time of lockdown, such as ecological improvements to natural habitats, adoption of paperless
solutions and a decrease in air and noise pollution levels, as a direct result of less air and traffic congestion.
This reminds us all how quickly environmental sustainability can take place, once we start to implement
positive changes.

Over the past decade events have adapted to find ways to downsize and scale back in times of austerity. We
have seen how quickly cuts within this high yielding sector can impact economic growth within destinations
that depend on events taking place in them, and how adaptable, resilient and versatile this industry is, as seen
following the last global recession, when the industry bounced back with renewed efficiency and creativity.

We have also already seen how almost overnight, as the world locked down, the industry managed to adapt
and seamlessly morph itself, using digital platforms and social media to communicate to their internal and external clients, generate new leads, share knowledge and best practice and spread positivity. Hardly surprising then that amongst event professionals there is now a feeling of cautious optimism, that
post-lockdown there is an opportunity for the industry to re-evaluate and relaunch itself; to offer stakeholders something more dynamic and more in keeping with the current zeitgeist. This transformation would probably have taken place over the next five years or so anyway, but the pandemic has fast forwarded the process and irreversibly altered the events landscape as never before.

So, what changes are we likely to see in the industry post Covid-19? In the short term conferences and events will undoubtedly take place closer to home, eliminating the need for international travel. Smaller and local events are predicted to be the first to re-emerge. These events will be flipped from the norm, starting out as remote or hybrid, then gradually reverting to physical or face-to-face events, once people start to feel more confident and risk assessment allows for group travel and meetings. Some of the more imminent changes might be:

- New capacity charts will be needed to allow for social distancing and venues will draw up new rules for set up, replacing theatre style seating and auditoriums with smaller more intimate spaces
- Venues will reassess their risk assessment to revise minimum numbers; ensure delegates and audiences are not placed in close proximity to each other; install sufficient hand sanitisers and face masks; take delegate temperatures on arrival etc.
- Venue contracts, payment terms and Ts & Cs will need to build in more flexible clauses to allow for a possible resurgence of the pandemic
- Event insurance companies will need to build in cover for global pandemics as part of their offering
- Delegate registration will be conducted pre-event, by means of an online link
- Plenary Q & A sessions, taking audience questions with a roving microphone will be a thing of the past, with all questions now being posed through social media
- Destination Management Companies (DMCs) will offer agencies virtual familiarisation trips, using virtual 360 renderings and interactive content to promote and sell destinations
- Conference keynote speakers will repeat sessions to delegates, who will pre-book slots in advance of sessions
- Conference packs and any joining instructions will be paperless to reduce contamination.

Post Covid-19 we will start to quickly to realise the benefits these new practises afford, so the old way of working will soon become obsolete. Technology will be used to enhance the industry and in the longer term the ‘new normal’ might include a more progressive, sustainable and socially responsible way of working, that considers legacy, integrates virtual and hybrid content, boosts homeworking, self-employment and freelancing and reduces the need for overseas conference travel.

I do not believe that virtual events will be a long-term replacement for face-to-face programmes or live events. Creativity, artistry and innovation will always be valued in this industry and technical solutions alone, even
with increased use of artificial intelligence, virtual and extended reality, are not able to deliver creativity and interaction in the same way. There will always be the need to get together with peers, to listen to live music in real time within the setting of a festival, or watch a football match live at a stadium, that no amount of animation or remote transmission could replicate.

Audiences will always want an immersive event experience, but live streaming will be used on an increasing basis to engage more people, whilst not totally replacing the physical event experience. Incentive travel will also never be replaced by cash incentives, as only a memorable travel experience can motivate and boost top talent within an organisation enough to retain them and generate increased performance levels.

During and after this crisis, communication will be more important than ever, both with clients, supply chains and internal and external stakeholders. A variety of digital platforms, applications, social media and portals, such as Zoom, WebEx, Skype, Facetime, Google Meet & Hangouts will continue to deliver virtual and virtual plus hybrid content to virtual audiences, but this will become far more sophisticated, with more interactive and engaging content, including hackathons, gamification, digital avatars, online cooking demonstrations, polling, chillout zones etc.

Other popular communication tools will be WhatsApp broadcasts, Facebook groups and Instagram Television. Project mapping and webcasts will increasingly be used to communicate key messages, educate audiences and drive sales. The use of 2D and 3D animation, infographics, animated pictures, art installations, game engines, Graphic Processing Unit (GPU) renders, motion caption and photo real visual effects will all be used to communicate with key stakeholders. Brand influencers will promote and sponsor event brands and products to target demographics using social media platforms, and sponsors will be happy to have their products endorsed on virtual platforms, without the need to shake hands in real time. All of these mechanisms will be used in the longer term to deliver hybrid event experiences and enhance audience engagement throughout all stages of the event cycle.

How this will roll out in real terms is still to be seen, but it is becoming increasingly evident; in future years event professionals will measure, evaluate and discuss the functionality and delivery of events in terms of pre and post 2020 and the global sea change brought about by this unprecedented occurrence. I hope you will reading enjoy this book and find it a useful and informative retrospective on how this innovative and comparatively new sector, we know as the events industry, has undergone radical transformation over the last twenty years and will continue to evolve and adapt at an even greater speed in future.