

Assessment of Stress Management, Risk Management & Security Management in Events

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Abstract: *Stress is the part and parcel of event management. Every event professional is under constant stress throughout the execution of an event. An event is full of uncertainties like power failure, equipment failure, medical emergency, brawl, stampede, fire, sponsorship withdrawal, last minute turned down by an artist etc. How will you deal with all these contingencies without a well thought out risk management plan? Risk management is done at each and every stage of event production. When risk management is done in the security management field, then it deals with brawl, stampede, medical emergency, accidental fire etc. Similarly there are risks associated with: human resource, finance, marketing, quality management, attendees, food and beverages management, programs, technical management, infrastructure, logistic, procurement and team management.*

Keywords: Event, stress management, risk management, security management etc.

1. Introduction

Event management is the application of project management to the creation and development of festivals, events and conferences. Event management is considered one of the strategic marketing and communication tools by companies of all sizes. From product launches to press conferences, companies create promotional events to help them communicate with clients and potential clients. They might target their audience by using the news media, hoping to generate media coverage which will reach thousands or millions of people. They can also invite their audience to their events and reach them at the actual event.

2. Event Team Management

Event management involves studying the intricacies of the brand, identifying the target audience, devising the event concept, planning the logistics and coordinating the technical aspects before actually executing the modalities of the proposed event. Post-event analysis and ensuring a return on investment have become significant drivers for the event industry. Event management has emerged over the past decade as a dynamic sector of the tourism and leisure industries. The number, diversity and popularity of events have also grown throughout this period. Event mismanagement is mostly about team mismanagement. Do the following things for effective team management:

Know your team

Just knowing the names, faces and job profile of your team members is not enough. You must have good knowledge of their personality, life style, likings, disliking, family background, status, educational qualification, knowledge level, customs, religion and especially their needs and wants. By needs and wants I mean there physiological needs, safety needs, social needs, esteem needs, cognitive needs and self actualization needs. Every person has different needs and different priority to fulfill them. While for some getting recognition is more important than job security. For others job security is more important. Determine the needs of your

team members and fulfill them in order to get optimum results from them.

Physiological needs

The need to have food, water, warmth, shelter and other things necessary for survival. Your team members will not feel anything, if these needs are met but can cause them discomfort, sickness and pain if these needs are not full filled. So as an event manager it is your job to make sure that all the physiological needs of your team are met from time to time. Just imagine how a team member who hasn't eaten anything all day will perform his duty in the evening and you will get my point.

Safety needs

It includes need to be safe from physical and psychological harm. It also includes job security and financial security. As an event manager you have to ensure safety of your team especially women. A person can't give his best in an unsafe environment. To protect your team from psychological harm, make sure there are no internal conflicts (like ego clashes, altercations, conflict of interest etc) among team members. If there are conflicts, then resolve them judiciously. Providing job security to your team is also very important. At no point any team member should feel that his job is under threat either by your actions or by someone else actions. Take care of your team beyond the work place. If any team member is facing a financial problem, then help him as much as you can.

Social needs

It is the need to feel a sense of belonging and acceptance. Need to love and be loved by friends, intimate partner, family and social groups like your team. To fulfill this need, there must be cordial relationship between you and the team and among the team members. A team member will not perform his best if he has considerable family problems. Try whatever you can to reduce his family problems. If you can't do much at least accept his problems and empathize with him. Try to reduce his stress by giving him a day off or engaging him in the sport he likes the most. Ask you team

members to be as supportive to him as possible. All this will help. People who have strong social needs should not be placed in a job where they have minimum interaction with people. They are the best for marketing or PR type jobs.

Esteem needs

It is the need to get respect, recognition, fame and status. Some people have stronger esteem needs than the other. You will have to identify those team members who have strong esteem needs and then find ways to fulfill those needs. For e.g. if a person is working very hard to get recognition among the team members and you are not giving him the recognition he deserves (by openly praising him or giving him promotion) then sooner or later his motivation level will go down and he will not give optimum results or worst will not perform and quit.

Cognitive needs

It is the need to understand, learn, discover and explore. People who have strong cognitive needs should not be placed in a job which is monotonous and which doesn't offer any possibility of intellectual growth. Frankly speaking, people with strong cognitive needs are not suitable for event management jobs.

Self Actualization need

It is the need to be the best. It is the need to become everything, one is capable of becoming. Very few people have such type of need. If you have someone in your team with this need, then you have both advantage and disadvantage. The advantage is that you can always expect optimum results from him. The disadvantage is that he will tirelessly seek for the position of leadership and if he didn't get it, then he will leave you soon and may even become your competitor.

3. Proposed Plan of Work

Study of Event Management

In this paper we are making a thorough study over events, event management, people involved in the same and the qualities of event manager.

Events: - Events can be classified into four broad categories based on their purpose and objective:

- 1) **Leisure events**
eg. Leisure sport, music, recreation.
- 2) **Cultural events**
eg. Ceremonial, religious, art, heritage, and folklore.
- 3) **Personal events**
eg. Weddings, birthdays, anniversaries.
- 4) **Organizational events**
eg. Commercial, political, charitable, sales, product launch.

People involved in event management:-

The number of people involved in organizing an event depends upon the size and scale of the event. An event management company can have following event professionals:

1. **Event Manager/Event Planner:** He is responsible for planning and producing the whole event.

2. **Event Coordinator:** He is responsible for coordinating with all event professionals and ensures that business operations are efficient and effective.
3. **Information Manager:** He is responsible for the documentation of all business operations carried out pre-event, at-event and post-event.
4. **Logistic Manager:** He is expected to move goods and merchandise from one destination to the other in the most efficient manner.
5. **Security Manager:** He is responsible for formulating, preparing and implementing the security plan and strategies.
6. **Infrastructure Manager:** He does procurement management and resource management.

Study of qualities of event manager:

1. **Excellent time management:** The ability to coordinate not only yourself, but the scheduling of the entire team helping with the event. It's all about planning, and re-planning and scheduling.
2. **Resourcefulness:** You have to be very resourceful and use what you have. Ability to pool together the individuals you need.
3. **Communication:** Share your ideas and your vision openly with your team. Communicate on a level that is respectful to everyone.
4. **Passion:** Without passion you cannot overcome the bumps and triumph when all seems lost. I can train time management, but I cannot teach passion.
5. **Strong will, but a level head:** You have to be able to carry out your vision and sometimes crack the whip to get it done. Resolve problems and issues quickly.

4. Stress Management & Events

Stress is the part and parcel of event management. Every event professional is under constant stress throughout the execution of an event. While moderate amount of stress is necessary in order to give optimum results, a prolonged stress that exist for weeks, months and sometimes years can create three types of problems in an individual:

- 1) Physiological problems like heart diseases, high blood pressure, migraine, diabetes, asthma, obesity, infertility etc.
- 2) Psychological problems like anxiety, depression, lack of concentration etc.
- 3) Behavioral problems like sleeplessness, overeating, under eating, absenteeism etc.

As an event manager it is your job to take care of both physiological and psychological health of yourself and your team members. For this find out the signs of stress, causes for stress and then formulate, prepare and implement strategies for coping stress.

Signs of Stress

- 1) **Common physical symptoms:**
Headaches, diarrhea, constipation, nausea, dizziness, weight gain or loss, insomnia, frequent cold etc
- 2) **Common emotional symptoms:**
Moodiness, restlessness, depression, general unhappiness, feeling of loneliness and isolation, impatience, Irritability etc.

3) Common behavioral symptoms:

Over eating, under eating, sleeping too much or too little, overdoing activities, nail biting, pacing, neglecting responsibilities, isolating oneself from others, drinking too much alcohol, smoking too many cigarettes, taking drugs to relax etc.

4) Common Cognitive Symptoms:

Memory loss, lack of concentration, poor judgment, negativity, fearful anticipation etc.

These symptoms of stress vary from person to person.

Causes for Stress

There can be 'N' number of causes for stress like:

1) **Major change in life situation:** marriage, divorce, unexpected pregnancy, child birth, new job, getting fired, retirement, accident, death of a dear one, facing jail term etc

2) **Work related stress:** job dissatisfaction, role conflict, role ambiguity, office politics, interpersonal conflicts, insufficient pay, work overload, racial/sexual discrimination or harassment etc.

3) **Environment related stress:** Poor physical condition of the workplace, pollution, noise, too much cold or too much heat, unsafe neighborhood etc.

4) **Other Stressors:** Personal problems (like perfectionism, low self esteem, pessimism, unrealistic goals etc), family problems, financial problems, lack of support from family and friends etc.

Strategies for Coping Stress

As an event manager you can do following things to reduce stress:

1. Set realistic goals for yourself and for your team.
2. Avoid all those people and situations which cause stress
3. If a person is experiencing job dissatisfaction, then determine his needs and satisfy them through various financial and non-financial incentives available for need satisfaction. Design job for a person in such a way, that it is able to utilize his skills and abilities and at the same time satisfy his needs.
4. Role conflict and role ambiguity both cause severe stress to a team member. So as an event manager it is your responsibility to design a job for a person in such a way that he faces minimal role conflict and has no role ambiguity.
5. Discourage politics and favoritism at the work place.
6. Resolve interpersonal conflicts quickly and judiciously.
7. Prepare a policy handbook that prevents and address all type of harassments and discriminations. The handbook should clearly state, that the consequences of not abiding by the policy handbook will be severe. Distribute the copies of the hand book to all the team members and ask them to go through it completely.
8. Make sure that all the physiological needs of your team are met from time to time during the event.
9. Protect your team from psychological harm by making sure there are no internal conflicts among team members. If there are conflicts, then resolve them judiciously. Providing job security to your team is also very important. At no point any team member should feel that his job is under threat either by your actions or by someone else actions. Take care of your team beyond the

work place. If any team member is facing a financial problem, then help him as much as you can.

10. A team member will not perform his best if he has considerable family problems. Try whatever you can to reduce his family problems. If you can't do much at least accept his problems and empathize with him. Try to reduce his stress by giving him a day off or engaging him in the sport he likes the most. Ask you team members to be as supportive to him as possible. All this will help.
11. Majority of stress in an event is due to poor time management. It is hard to remain calm and focused when things are not going the way they should and you are running behind schedule. Plan ahead and plan each and every activity in great details. That's the only solution.
12. Include rest and relaxation time in your daily schedule for yourself and for your team members.
13. Encourage yourself and others to adopt a healthy lifestyle like regular exercise, nutritious diet, yoga, meditation, tai chi, massage, sports etc.

5. Risk Management & Events

An event is full of uncertainties like power failure, equipment failure, medical emergency, brawl, stampede, fire, sponsorship withdrawal, last minute turned down by an artist etc. How will you deal with all these contingencies without a well thought out risk management plan? Risk management is done at each and every stage of event production.

For e.g. when risk management is done in the information management field, then it deals with loss of data due to data theft or hard disk crash. When risk management is done in the security management field, then it deals with brawl, stampede, medical emergency, accidental fire etc.

Similarly there are risks associated with: human resource, finance, marketing, quality management, attendees, food and beverages management, programs, technical management, infrastructure, logistic, procurement and team management.

Developing Risk Management Plan for Events

Since risk management is a very important part of event management therefore it should be carried out in a planned and professional manner. Following steps are involved in risk management:

Step 1: Identify those elements or activities which could carry a risk.

A list of such elements is already specified above like information management, security, procurement etc.

Step 2: Identify the risks associated with each element or activity.

For e.g. cargo theft is associated with logistic management. Similarly, data loss is associated with information management.

Step 3: Determine the possibility of occurrence of the risk and the severity of the consequences if the risk does happen.

Elements	Risk	Possibility	Severity
Information Management	Loss of data	Low	Very high
	Data theft	High	High
	Data Corruption	Very high	Very high
Security Management	Brawl	Low	Low

Step 4: Risk Prioritization

Risks with high severity of the consequences should be handled first.

Step 5: Formulate, prepare and implement strategies to manage risks.

Some common strategies used for risk management are:

***Risk Avoidance**

Avoid those elements and activities which could carry a risk.

***Risk Retention**

Accept some or all the consequences associated with a particular risk.

***Risk Transfer**

Transfer the risk to a third party. For e.g. transferring the event security responsibility to a security agency.

***Risk Reduction**

Reduce the risk associated with a particular element or activity by developing an effective contingency action plan.

Step 6: Monitor the risks periodically

So that the strategies used to manage the risks can be updated or reviewed.

6. Security Management & Events

Security Management includes formulating, preparing and implementing security plans and strategies for events i.e. how to protect delegates, guests, service, providers, organizers, sponsors, partners, clients, target, audience, media people goods and merchandise and yourself from unforeseen circumstances like:

1. Fire

In case of fire at the event venue, use fire extinguisher to extinguish the fire. In the mean time take everyone out of the venue safely. Develop a separate emergency exit plan for this. If fire is uncontrollable then call the fire brigade. Follow fire code and safety regulations to prevent the fire as specified below:

1. Don't place any combustible or inflammable material in the venue esp. near green rooms, guest rooms or seating area.
2. All materials including prop must be properly treated with fire retardant solution.
3. Make sure that the entrance and exit ways are not blocked by any material or by any means.
4. Make sure that the event venue must have separate entrance and exit ways, fire alarm system and fire extinguishers.
5. Use only those electrical equipments which are branded and which use three core wires.

6. At least one doctor with first aid box along with the ambulance must be there at the venue to handle medical emergency.
7. Your staff must be well trained about giving first aid like CPR and must be able to handle fire extinguishers and crowd in case of fire.

2. Power Failure

If you are organizing event at a place where power failure is common, then you should have adequate power backup. In case of a power failure, switch on the emergency lights and then turned on the generators. If you have UPS (uninterrupted power supply) system, then it is the best. If you can't arrange such types of power backups, then at least you should have torch or candles. Create a separate emergency plan to handle crowd and guests in case of a power failure.

3. Equipment Failure

Use equipments of only reputed brands so that the possibility of their failure is least. Hire only those light and sound technicians who know how to fix up their equipments in case of any problem and who carry backup equipments also. Create a separate emergency plan to manage programs and performers in case of a power failure.

4. Medical Emergency

A paramedical team along with ambulance must be present at the event venue. If this is out of budget, then at least a doctor with first aid box must be present. Your whole event team must be well trained in giving first aid like check for breathing, CPR, controlling bleeding, effecting a prompt rescue. If possible try to know the medical history of your guests in advance and then prepare your medical emergency plan accordingly. For e.g. if a guest is allergic to grass and weed pollens, then you should make sure that he doesn't sit near grass.

5. Brawl/Stampede**6. Bad Weather****7. Last Minute Turn Down****8. Sponsorship Withdrawal****7. Market Research**

Before organizing an event, find out whether there is a market (i.e. audience) for your intended event or not. For e.g. you want to organize a fashion show in Oman. If people there have little or no interest in fashion shows, then it is not a good idea to organize such event there. The event will fail for sure.

Market Analysis: If there is a market for your intended event, then do market analysis. Market Analysis means finding information about your target audience. Find out who are your target audience i.e. there age group, sex, qualification, profession, knowledge level, income, status, likings, disliking, personality, customs, traditions, religion, lifestyle etc. Knowing your target audience's customs, traditions and religion is very important so that we don't hurt their customs and religion unknowingly through our event.

For e.g. if you organize a Hindu wedding and serve beef there, then u will be in mortal danger as cow is considered as a sacred animal in Hindu religion. Similarly serving pork in a Muslim function can bring havoc. Find out where majority of your target audience live so that you can direct your marketing efforts towards them. All this information will help you in developing a better event plan.

Competitors' Analysis: It means finding information about your competitors. Find out who are your competitors i.e. their age, sex, qualifications, knowledge level, experience in organizing events, turnover, market value, PR (media and corporate contacts) and market share.

Find out how they promote and execute their events. What they do in there events? Why people come to their events? For this you will have to attend each and every event organized by your competitors and then create an event report.

8. Conclusions

Event management has emerged over the past decade as a dynamic sector of the tourism and leisure industries. The number, diversity and popularity of events have also grown throughout this period. As the number of events increase, there is a growing realization about the continuing need to develop event management professionals who are able to create, organize and manage events. Although many events are successfully crewed by volunteers, increasing competition to secure major events is giving greater impetus for the need to create more fully professionalized events.

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