

Building Better Clubs Workshop

# Planning and Running Sporting Events



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# Contents

**Acknowledgements:**

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# Introduction



Events give organisations the opportunity to 'come alive' and to showcase their activities or services in the community. Events are an important part of community life and it is a rewarding experience to contribute to a successful event. However, anyone who has been involved in running an event understands how daunting the task can be. This workshop has been designed to provide your organisation with the necessary tools to prepare a comprehensive Event Management Plan. The activities included in this workbook can be used to plan any event your organisation conducts.

Event management is the process by which an event is planned, prepared and produced. As with any other form of management, it encompasses the acquisition, allocation, direction and control of resources to achieve one or more objectives. An event manager's job is to oversee and arrange every aspect of an event, including researching, planning, organising, implementing, controlling, and evaluating<sup>1</sup>.

The term 'event' can refer to a wide range of occasions, including:

- Ceremonies
- Competitions
- Meetings
- Conventions
- Festivals
- Parties
- Sporting events

Events aren't just large-scale, one-off occurrences. Rather, your organisation should consider any activities that you carry out with a view to attracting participants, as events. For example, an event for a local sporting club may be a home match or weekend carnival and a community organisation may consider a significant fundraising initiative to be an event.

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<sup>1</sup> Silvers, JR 2010: [www.juliasilvers.com](http://www.juliasilvers.com)

# 1

## Planning your Event



To ensure an event runs smoothly, a sufficient level of planning and preparation must be carried out. Effective planning helps to avoid unpleasant surprises when it comes time to run your event.

### 1.1 Aims and Objectives

Before you decide to proceed with conducting an event, you should confirm that your proposed event is the best way to achieve your organisation's objectives.

Firstly, identify what you want to achieve as a result of your event, for example, generating revenue, attracting members, providing entertainment or celebrating an occasion.

### ACTIVITY 1

Identify an upcoming event to be conducted by your organisation and note the event's aims and objectives.

Name of event	
Aims / objectives	

## 1.2 Target Markets

The next step is to identify who you want to come to your event. Your event might target a particular demographic such as young people, seniors, families or school children, or you may want your event to appeal to a particular interest group, such as model train enthusiasts, gardeners, or lovers of jazz<sup>2</sup>.

Once you have identified your event's target market, you will need to ensure you can effectively reach those people and tell them about your event.

### ACTIVITY 2

List your target markets.


## 1.3 Venue and Scheduling

There are a range of factors that should be considered when choosing a venue for your event, including:

- Access, including for emergency vehicles
- Size, layout and design
- Availability of amenities, including toilets, canteen, seating, shade
- Cost, if applicable
- Expected number of attendees or participants

Your choice of venue may be restricted, for example, if your organisation is conducting an event at its premises. In this instance, you may need to consider options for hiring temporary equipment to meet the needs of the event, such as portable toilets or seating.

Once you have chosen a venue, ensure you prepare a site plan for the day of the event. The site plan should direct event attendees to key places around your event site, like toilets, first aid areas, food and drink outlets and administration and marshalling areas.

When scheduling your event, it might be worth speaking with your local Council and/or local tourism centre regarding other events that are taking place around the same time as yours. Other events can attract media and public attention away from your organisation and you may wish to avoid clashes.

Make sure you consider your target audience when choosing times and dates for your event. For example, an after-hours school event to attract students' parents should be scheduled differently from a gardening show aimed at retirees.

## 1.4 Budgeting and Funding Options

Event expenditure for community organisations is largely driven by the availability of resources, given the limited operating budget of most non-profit organisations. Your organisation may choose to pursue external funding opportunities, including sponsorship and grants, to assist with running your event.

For example, the *Queensland Events Regional Development Program* provides funding of up to 25% of total event costs to eligible projects. For more information, visit [www.qldevents.com.au](http://www.qldevents.com.au).

Depending on the size of your event, you may be able to attract financial support from sponsors, specifically towards event costs. For event sponsorships to be successful, you need to have a realistic understanding of what you have to sell, how much it is *really* worth and what benefit it will be to sponsors.

When compiling your sponsorship proposal, you should target each potential sponsor individually and let them know that you understand their business and how sponsorship of your event will help them increase brand recognition and turnover.

Once you successfully engage sponsors for your event, communicate with them and ensure that they receive value from the sponsorship. This can include:

- Inviting them to attend your event as VIPs
- Sending thank you letters or certificates of appreciation
- Sending newsletters or press clippings showing recognition of the sponsor
- Providing a written report
- Financially support sponsors where appropriate (e.g. exclusive purchasing arrangements for event goods and services)

For more information on sponsorship, refer to the 'Building Active Communities - Marketing and Sponsorship' workbook.

When planning an event, your organisation should prepare and operate according to a comprehensive event budget. This will outline what your event is expected to cost and will also help you to track actual income and expenditure, against your estimates.

<sup>2</sup> [www.events.nsw.gov.au](http://www.events.nsw.gov.au)



## 1.5 Approvals and Permits

You may be required to obtain approvals, permits or licences prior to conducting your event. These may include:

- Event approvals
- Liquor and gaming licences
- Council permits for the preparation and sale of food

When planning your event, it is a good idea to speak with your local Council regarding necessary requirements to ensure you don't breach any regulations.

## 1.6 Contingency Planning

Even the most comprehensively planned events can fail due to unforeseen circumstances, such as bad weather or unavailability of required equipment.

To minimise the impact of unexpected challenges on the day of your event, you should consider and document potential solutions as part of your event planning. Solutions may include identifying an alternative, indoor venue that can accommodate your event in bad weather, or retaining contact details of alternative suppliers of goods and services to be called upon should your preferred suppliers be unavailable.

### ACTIVITY 4

Use the table below to list potential challenges which may arise leading up to or during your event and identify solutions for each.

Potential Challenge	Solution

# 2

## Managing your Event



### 2.1 Volunteer Management

Depending on the size of your event, your organisation may wish to appoint an event organising committee. Benefits of appointing a committee to be responsible for an event's planning and management can include better workload sharing and a wider range of ideas.

However, committees can present their own challenges. If your organisation chooses to appoint an event organising committee, clear roles should be defined for all members.

Most events run by community organisations rely heavily on valuable input from volunteer personnel. To help ensure voluntary input is well-guided and assists with achieving the objectives of your event, your organisation must conduct good volunteer management.

Good volunteer management involves the following steps:

- Recruitment
- Selection and Screening
- Training and Induction
- Volunteer Management
- Rewards and Recognition

Volunteers will come from many different places. They may be members of your organisation, parents of members, children of members, past members, devotees, friends or relatives.

When recruiting volunteers for your event, it is important to consider the human resources within an organisation as potential volunteers, while also recognising opportunities to recruit people from outside the organisation.

Once found, volunteers must be screened to ensure their fit with the positions needing to be filled. New recruits must then be provided with sufficient training and induction prior to your event, to ensure that they are effective in their roles and do not consume the time of other volunteers during the event.

To increase the chances of your event volunteers providing valuable, ongoing assistance, your organisation should ensure that:

- Voluntary tasks are equitably distributed
- Volunteers are treated with dignity and respect
- Roles are clearly explained to volunteers
- Volunteers are appropriately recognised and thanked for their efforts

Your organisation should recognise the importance of clearly defining exactly what event volunteers will be required to achieve.

You should develop a detailed list of volunteer jobs needed during your event. This document should form part of your event manual (refer section 3.2) and should be maintained and updated following the event, based on any changes required. The document should form part of your event evaluation.

For more information on good volunteer management, refer to the 'Building Active Communities - Volunteer Management' workbook.

## 2.2 Media and Marketing

Event publicity aims to generate interest in your event amongst a wider audience than just the event's spectators and participants. Media coverage is considered by some sponsors to be a key component of their sponsorship deal.

Forming positive relationships with media personnel before your event can assist with gaining positive coverage. Depending on the size of your event, suitable media management activities can include<sup>3</sup>:

- Issuing a media release in the weeks leading up to your event to generate interest
- Staging media functions within the event
- Setting up a dedicated media centre within your event site to act as the central point for distribution of media information
- Distributing an event handbook to the media
- Making event tickets available to the media

When seeking publicity for your event, keep in mind the need for your media and marketing material to grab the reader's attention. A good way to achieve this is to formulate a consistent theme for your event, which should be maintained during all promotional activities, through to the day of the event. An event theme will help to improve your event's brand recognition.

An event theme can be as simple as a colour, such as the now-famous pink theme adopted for breast cancer awareness and fundraising initiatives.

### ACTIVITY 5

Note down some ideas for themes for your event.


Once you have identified your event's target markets (refer Activity 2, above), you can commence marketing your event. Successful marketing is about promoting your event to the right people in the right ways.

Your event marketing activities should create awareness, stimulate interest and desire and generate action. Depending upon the target market you seek to reach, consider the following types of marketing activities for your event:

- Media promotion
  - Media releases
  - Newspapers, radio and TV
- Publications
- Displays and demonstrations
- Flyers and brochures
- Mementos and merchandise

### ACTIVITY 6

List ideas for how you will market your event.


When promoting your event, remember the 5 'P's' of marketing; Product, Price, Promotion, Place and People. In other words, make sure:

- Your product is valuable to customers
- Your price is what your target markets are willing to pay
- Your promotions appear in the right places at the right times
- Your benefits are delivered in places where your customers wish to receive them
- Your people are service-oriented and capable of meeting the needs of customers

For more detailed information on marketing, refer to the 'Building Active Communities - Marketing and Sponsorship' workbook.

<sup>3</sup> Johnston, J & Zawawi, C 2004

## 2.3 Risk Management

Risk management is the logical and systematic process of eliminating or minimising the adverse impact of activities which may give rise to dangerous or damaging situations. This requires the development of a framework within which risks can be identified, evaluated, treated and monitored.

Successful event management requires a dedication to risk management.

There are four main categories of risk which face organisations conducting events. Understanding the general types of risk facing an organisation can provide a better understanding of the actions required to minimise exposure to risk. The four main categories of risk are:

- Physical risks
  - Physical risks involve injuries to people or the damage or destruction of property
- Financial risks
  - Financial risks affect the financial situation of an organisation or event and could include increased insurance premiums, cost overruns or costs associated with injuries
- Moral and ethical risks
  - Moral or ethical risks involve the loss of quality of participant experience and confidence, adverse publicity and damage to an organisation or event's image or reputation
- Legal risks
  - Legal risks are losses and costs arising from legal actions for breach of a law, standard or guideline or breaches or statutory duty of care. For example, a kitchen facility or food stall which doesn't comply with local government regulations for food preparation

There are five key ways to treat risks:

- Risk avoidance
- Training
- Risk control
- Risk financing
- Risk transfer

### Risk Avoidance

This risk treatment strategy involves avoiding a risk altogether by not engaging in a particular activity.

For example, if your organisation decides not to offer bungee jumping as an activity at your event, you would be avoiding the risk of injury or death due to faulty bungee jumping equipment.

### Training

By providing specific training or education, an organisation may be able to better avoid risks.

For example, your members may be better able to minimise exposure to infectious diseases if they are educated about the risks associated with sharing water bottles.

### Risk Control

There are many ways in which an organisation may be able to control risks in instances where the risks cannot be avoided.

For example, if you were to erect a barrier fence along a steep embankment for the duration of your event, you would be controlling the risk that someone may fall down and injure themselves. Although there is still an acknowledged risk of injury (because the steep embankment is still there), the fence is likely to keep people from falling.

### Risk Financing

Risk financing is where an organisation estimates the potential costs associated with a particular risk and includes those costs in its event budget.

Strategies may include allocating resources for developing, promoting and implementing safety and first aid initiatives, such as the replacement of first aid supplies and equipment.

### Risk Transfer

Transferring risks to a third party is known as risk transfer.

For example, when an organisation secures insurance over an event, it is transferring the associated risks to the insurance company.

An organisation can also transfer risk by engaging contractors from outside the organisation to undertake specific duties, rather than engage its volunteers.

## ACTIVITY 7

To help you manage risks associated with your event, complete the Event Management Checklist, provided as part of this workshop program.



# 3

## Evaluating your Event



Coordination of your event does not end when everything is packed away at the end of the day. You should evaluate your event to assess what worked, what didn't and where improvements can be made<sup>4</sup>.

Event evaluation techniques include:

- Conducting surveys or providing feedback forms during and after the event to gauge attendee satisfaction
- Evaluating your success against the aims and objectives you identified at the beginning of your event planning process (refer Activity 1)
- Preparing a SWOT analysis to examine the strengths weaknesses, opportunities and threats associated with your event
- Updating your event manual following the event, based on any changes required to improve future events

### 3.1 SWOT Analysis

Your SWOT Analysis should be conducted upon receipt of completed surveys and individual feedback from event attendees. The SWOT Analysis firstly examines the strengths and weaknesses of your event, which should be determined with consideration given to your original event aims and objectives.

Strengths of your event may include:

- ☺ Strong attendance numbers
- ☺ Wide range of food and beverages available
- ☺ Satisfaction with entertainers
- ☺ Ten new members recruited as a result of event

Some examples of event weaknesses are:

- ☹ Too few volunteers
- ☹ Limited media coverage
- ☹ Expenditure exceeding income

A SWOT Analysis also reviews opportunities and threats associated with your event. Opportunities are future prospects for improvement and threats are potential future impediments.

Opportunities for improvement could include:

- ☺ Increasing attendance at future events
- ☺ Obtaining more sponsorship assistance
- ☺ Continuing future events into the evening to attract a wider range of attendees

Future threats might include:

- ☹ Event disruptions due to inclement weather
- ☹ Loss of key organising personnel, leading to a lack of direction for future events
- ☹ Inability to cover event costs due to limited income

<sup>4</sup> [www.events.nsw.gov.au](http://www.events.nsw.gov.au)

## 3.2 Event Management Plan

To assist in preparing for and running a successful event, your organisation should prepare and maintain a comprehensive Event Management Plan. This plan should include details of your event, with a view to streamlining the planning and management of future events. The document should be maintained and updated following your event, based on any changes required. The document should be made available to volunteers who provide assistance in the preparation for and running of events.

Use the Event Management Plan Template provided as part of this training program as a guide in developing a plan for your event. The Event Management Plan Template is available at [www.cprgroup.com.au/events](http://www.cprgroup.com.au/events)

For annual or regular events, it is important for your organisation to look ahead to secure the event's ongoing viability. Preparation and diligent maintenance of your organisation's Event Management Plan will help to achieve this. Before sponsors or other funding bodies invest in your event, it is likely that they will want to see that your event has a good chance of being successful into the future.