A critical analysis and evaluation of project management methods to the organization and management of events.

2020 IE713 – Event Design and Management

Project management (PM) methods can aid the event manager in organising and managing events. However, knowing when and how to implement PM methods can be challenging for event managers due to differentiating needs for different event types. This essay will explore the PM methodologies and determine whether they would be appropriate for certain types of events.

A project is defined as 'a temporary endeavour undertaken to produce a unique product, service, or result' (PMI, 2016 in Heagney, 2016, p.2), with many works of literature reinforcing the definition that a project has to have a start and a finish, be a collection of related tasks and be something that is a challenge (Bowdin, 2011, Wysocki, 2014, Heagney, 2016). The definition of 'project management is the application of processes, methods, skills, knowledge and experience to achieve specific project objectives according to the project acceptance criteria within agreed parameters' (APM, 2019, p.217). Each PM method will have different processes involved, and it is essential to note that the best fit PM approach will be unique for every project. 'The best fit project management process will be a function of several variables that span the external business environment, the enterprise itself, and a host of variables defining people, processes and technology' (Wysocki, 2014, p.2).

To determine what methodology to use, the event manager and their team must first define the intended outcomes. It is vital for everyone in the team to define and acknowledge the reasons for staging the event as it will keep the project on track. It is important to involve the team in all stages where possible. Not only will more ideas be generated through the 'wisdom of the crowds' (Kremer et al, 2014, p.988), but also higher team involvement contributes to higher morale and reduces the risk of having 'contributors who feel no sense of commitment to the plan' (Heagney, 2016, p.42). Finding the project outcomes can be achieved by brainstorming intended aims, creating a vision statement (including the 'musts,' 'wants' and 'nice to haves' in the project to understand priorities) and consolidating the 'musts' section into a mission statement. When writing the mission statement, two questions should be addressed. 'What are we going to do?' and 'for whom are we going to do it?' (Heagney, 2016). Undertaking a stakeholder analysis will determine who they are, how much support they have for the project and how much power they have over the project. A stakeholder grid will determine which stakeholders needs requires the most priority over the project. For events, stakeholders could include 'participant performers or athletes, staff and volunteers, sponsors and spectators or tourists' (Mallen & Adams, 2008, p.166). The last step at this stage is to understand the constraints that the event manager has, which are costs (what is the budget?), time (when is the event scheduled?) and scope (what are the required features at the event and what are the tasks necessary to achieve them?). These three constraints form 'The Iron Triangle,' where the project manager must manage these accordingly to achieve the desired result (Wysocki, 2014). Utilising 'The Iron triangle' would be particularly useful for event managers. For instance, if the scope projected to be behind schedule, more financing could be implemented in people and resources to see the scope achieve its goal in time for the fixed event date, or the project manager could decide to reduce the scope and not impede any further costs to the budget.

The next step for the project manager is to select a PM method. PM methods fit into two main approaches, phased and iterative. The most implemented PM methods use phased approaches, which 'are highly useful in more stable, though critical, situations and large complex projects' (Sailer, 2019, p.1069). Phased approaches include the popular APM (Association of Project Management - UK) method, the PMI (Project Management Institute) method (US method that has many similarities to the UK APM) and PRINCE2 (PRojects IN Controlled Environments - UK). On the other hand, PM 'methods following the iterative approach are more effective in uncertain environments, which is due to their more explorative tendency' (Sailer, 2019, p.1069). These iterative methods were first

developed for software projects and use Software Development Life Cycle (SDLC) methodologies, including Agile, which 'is a collection of PMLC (Project Management Life Cycle) models that can be used to manage projects whose goals are clearly specified but whose solutions are not known at the outset of the project' (Wysocki, 2014, p.328). Other SDLC methodologies include Lean, Scrum, Kanban, Spiral, Prototyping and DevOps. PM methods following this iterative approach 'could be adapted to non-software companies, or more traditional industry sectors, at least for innovative projects or even for some parts of the project that require a more flexible management approach' (Conforto et al, 2014, p.31). Conforto et al suggests that a 'hybrid management model' should be investigated by merging traditional and agile methods. However, whilst there is evidence to suggest that the iterative approach can be useful, there are some causes for concern. One issue is that 'Agile is better for a small project' (Vaníčková, 2017, p.229), and it is difficult to apply to larger firms or projects (Dybå and Dingsøyr, 2008). Another issue with iterative approaches is that 'risk increases in relation to the extent to which the solution is not known' (Wysocki, 2014, p.317); with traditional methods, the risk is minimal. In relation to project managing an event, events usually have a fixed schedule (fixed event date) and a relatively fixed budget (due to capacity limits). Iterative approaches have uncertainty involved in these two significant factors, and therefore traditional PM methods would be a much safer option due to having less risk involved. The creative aspects of iterative approaches would undoubtedly have their positives in event design; however, more creativity can be achieved within phased PM methods by having both an artistic director and a PM manager. The artistic director 'represents the innovative and creative aspects of the event content, while the project manager looks after the management responsibilities' (Bowdin et al, 2011, p.284). Another critical aspect to note is that iterative PM methods cannot be used in conjunction with phased PM methods due to the uncertainty of whether the tasks would be completed. If the task using iterative methods was not completed on time, it could disrupt the phased PM method's entire schedule. Ensuring that the project is completed on time is ranked the number one critical success factor for event managers (Hartman et al, 1998), and the very definition of event management also stresses the importance of time. 'Event management involves struggling to facilitate the competition of all operational plans within the time frame available' (Mallen & Adams, 2008, p.91). Overall, phased PM methods are preferable over iterative PM methods for event managers.

To decide which phased PM method is best for events, different event types requirements should be analysed. Events can be classified by their size (Community events, Major events, Hallmark events and Mega-events) as well as their content (cultural events, sports events, and business events or Meetings, Incentives, Conventions and Exhibitions) (Bowdin, 2011). It is important for project managers to understand what the event is and whether it is traditional or niche because 'traditional events may involve more formality of structure compared to niche events' (Mallen & Adams, 2008, p.41). The number of PM methods rises with the number of people involved, budget size and project duration, meaning that larger events require more planning and are likely to value PM methods higher than smaller events (Schnitzer et al, 2020). PRINCE2 is described as being mainly used by 'government and global organisations' (Vaníčková, 2017, p.229) and 'gives guidance to the execution and monitoring of a project' (Parker et al, 2013, p.538). PRINCE2 has eight detailed processes involved, including 'starting up a project, initiating a project, planning, directing a project, managing a stage boundary, controlling a stage, managing project delivery and closing a project' (Parker et al, 2013, p.538). However, the Project Management Body Of Knowledge (PMBOK – APM and PMI methodology) is described as being 'more useful if the project is managed by a single person' (Yen et al, 2016, in Vaníčková, 2017, p.229), and it contains five detailed processes, including 'initiating, planning, executing, monitoring and controlling and closing' (Heagney, 2016, p.22). Both methodologies are similar and effective and would both work for an event. However, 'at the point of

project documentation and following up, PMBOK is more completed' (Matos & Lopes, 2013, p.793) than PRINCE2. Perhaps one could deduce that the PRINCE2 method would be more suited for large traditional events which have organisations involved, whereas PMBOK would be more suited for niche events or events where one person manages them.

However, both methodologies use two crucial project management tools, the Critical Path Method (CPM) and the Gantt chart. The CPM 'determines the minimum time needed to complete the project' (Gümüsoglu & Tütek, 1998, p.321) by accumulating all of the tasks together in order of completion and adding up the estimated hours of work it would take until the deadline. The CPM is worked out by firstly making a WBS (Work Breakdown Structure), which involves listing all tasks, assigning resources, and developing estimates of time and costs (Heagney, 2016). A Program Evaluation and Review Technique diagram (PERT, also known as a network diagram) then places tasks into a schedule. Following on from the PERT, the CPM gets inputted into a Gantt chart, with all the other tasks that have a variable time completion deadline 'floating' around the fixed CPM. A Gantt chart uses bars to show an entire project's progress, with tasks on the Y-axis and time on the X-axis. A Gantt chart is 'the best tool to use for communicating to team members what they need to do within given time frames' (Heagney, 2016, p.104).

A key PM framework for event managers would be the Event Management Body Of Knowledge (EMBOK). EMBOK is very similar to PMBOK in that it contains the same five phases, e.g., Initiation Planning, Implementation (Execution), The Event (monitoring and controlling) and closure (Robson, 2008). The 'processes provide guidance for the specific actions necessary to proceed through each of the Phases, Domains and individual classes within the Domains' (Robson, 2008, p.22). The 'Core Values refer to personal and business skills that are required to successfully orchestrate an event' (Robson, 2008, p.22) and include creativity, strategic thinking, continuous improvement, ethics and integration. In the EMBOK model, the Domains constitute the responsibilities an event manager takes and includes administration, design, marketing, operations and risk. As the EMBOK is similar to PMBOK, it makes sense for event managers to utilise both and follow the APM/PMI methodology.

The type of events will affect to what extent PM methods get used. For example, cultural events and sports events have a heavy reliance on volunteers, and they usually do not have the time or knowledge to employ PM methods (Mallen & Adams, 2008). In contrast, the employees in MICE events are being paid to work and can learn how to implement PM methods. Another aspect to consider is the extent to which the project manager incorporates design. Practical design elements such as utilising space will be prevalent in all events; however, aesthetic design may be most important for cultural events that need to accommodate for 'artistic expression, cultural activity meaningfulness and reflection' (Malcienė, 2010, p.49). On the other hand, 'function' may be more important for sports and MICE events. 'An event with a strong entertainment or celebratory theme would require more design input than say an educational or business meeting' (Berridge, 2010, p.210). It is essential to consider these roles of design, and they should be written down on the vision statement as a team to ensure that the project fits the requirements of the specific event.

In conclusion, phased PM methods are preferred over iterative PM methods due to the fixed time and budget constraints that events usually involve. Furthermore, it was deduced that PRINCE2 would work best with large traditional events that involve organisations and that the APM/PMI model would work best for all projects that involve one project manager. When event managers follow the APM/PMI methodology, they should also utilise the EMBOK framework as it is very similar to the PMBOK framework but includes more detail appropriate to events. Applying these PM methods will

define the objectives and processes of the event. Utilising WBS, PERT, CPM and Gantt charts will ensure that those objectives and processes are communicated to the team, monitored, carried out, achieved and reviewed at the close of the project.

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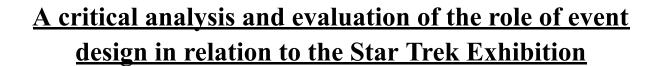
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A critical analysis and evaluation of the role of event design in relation to the Star Trek Exhibition

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Design is an important aspect to desired consumers as it determines aesthetic and utility aspects of all products and services through form and function. The role of design plays a critical role in attracting potential customers as well as satisfying consumer demands. However, from an event manager's eyes, the role of design in events can serve to perform a multitude of practical functions to consumers within an available space and create an environment that appeases consumers' senses and holds aesthetic values relevant to the experience. This essay will conceptualise and explore the role of design in events from an event manager perspective and use this analysis to evaluate the event experience at the Star Trek Exhibition.

Design is a 'means of exercising our creativity' (Glanville, 1999, p.88) and comprises two fundamental components, form and function. 'Product form embodies the hedonic component of design' (Townsend et al, 2011, p.376), whereas 'functional design is defined by the factors, benefits, characteristics, and features that are combined to provide utility' (Townsend et al, 2011, p.375). The term 'form follows function' was first introduced by architect Louis H. Sullivan and it suggests prioritising the design's function before basing a design around form. It is also useful to consider design being a way of communication, with form expressing to a consumer what the function entails. When event managers are considering the design of their events, they must consider function first. Within EMBOK's 'Design' domain, there are subcategories for event managers to consider designing, such as 'catering, content, entertainment, environment, production, programme and theme design' (Robson, 2008, p.22) which are all valuable functional aspects to consider. Other functional areas to consider designing are lighting, space, movement, acoustics, amenities, reception areas, function areas, innovative sites, parades and floats, themes, environmental sensitivity, timeline and security, of which design forms such as soundscaping, visual cues, smell, taste, blending, edible displays, decoration and interactive décor could all be designed to reinforce the function (Goldblatt, in Berridge, 2007).

'The role of design and creativity in event management is widely, albeit sometimes inconsistently, acknowledged in playing a central part in the planned event experience and this is especially the case for those events with a strong thematic, celebratory and entertainment element' (Berridge, 2010, p.209). Here Berridge starts conceptualising that the role of design is to provide an 'experience' to consumers. It is the event managers role to undergo the process of Imagineering, which is the process of 'creating and managing worlds of experience, based in internal values on the one hand and/or values of the target groups on the other, with the objective of creating the emotional involvement of all stakeholders' (Hover 2008: 43, in Marques et al, 2015, p.4). The event manager must have a vision (usually in the form of a vision statement) to undergo Imagineering. Event managers could aid this process by regarding their event in the theatrical sense, e.g. 'by seeing the event as a play unfolding before us and judging the success it has in telling the (event) story. The creation and design of the setting then provides the contextual (theatrical) backdrop for the performance' (Berridge, 2007, p.38). Here the function is the event experience, and the form provides the backdrop to enhance the function. It is important to note that 'experiences can only be created in the presence of the consumer' (Marques et al, 2015, p.5) when the event is unfolding, and thus the need to incorporate creativity to win stakeholders is a key success factor when pitching the event or bidding (Matthews, 2007, in Berridge, 2010,). Therefore, the role of design serves a critical purpose from the event's inception to the event closure.

After analysing the role of design, this essay will now evaluate the event design of the 1995-1996 Star Trek Exhibition held in the Science Museum, London. The Star Trek Exhibition was an event that showcased the TV franchise's memorabilia and was special because the exhibition rarely leaves the

United States. From reading the case study in Berridge, 2010, one could deduce that the event's function was to provide the fans with an immersive experience by showcasing original artefacts and memorabilia from the show whilst also relating the science fiction of the series to science fact. Ultimately, the event's objective was to make a profit from admission fees and the sales of merchandise. The event's function is excellent because the aims and objectives are clear and would appeal to a particular market.

However, the events form is where the event struggles to provide the desired experience from the consumer. The event's initial impression is described as being 'special' due to the event having its own cordoned space within the science museum and the fact that there was an admission fee for the event, which gave it value. The experience of entering the event was highly positive, with a reporter saying, 'it made me feel special as I rode the lift up to the paying booth and entered the exhibition through a Perspex portal. I felt like I was entering the final frontier' (Berridge, 2007, p.35). The primary source suggests that the event manager had thought about the consumers' experience entering the event and designed a suitable entrance relevant to the event's theme. On the other hand, the consumers' experience within the event brought up criticisms about the event design. One criticism was that the science-based questions 'repeatedly failed to get answers' (Berridge, 2007, p.36) from the event's volunteers. At this design stage, the event manager's process was to interview fans of the show until they had twenty volunteers to act as guides. 'The successful applicants are to be chosen not only for their love of the programme. They also need a basic understanding of pseudo-scientific knowledge so they can explain what is involved in "warp drive" (faster than light) and how exactly dilithium crystals (which power the Starship Enterprise) may be formed' (AP Archive, 1995). This process of selecting 'experts' for the event was well thought out, but perhaps more effort could have been made to ensure that the volunteers were prepared for more science-based questions as it was a key function of the event. However, the main criticisms came about by the layout of the event itself. For instance, it was reported that 'at one point it was possible to stand and watch the screen on Enterprises' space journeys whilst at the same time have the voiceovers from two other parts of the exhibition interfere with the sound. If that wasn't enough, then strobe lights cut right across the main screen. It was impossible to either see or hear what was happening' (Berridge, 2007, p.36). The event manager could have been struggling with space use and consequently had to squeeze the exhibition to fit; however, he/she should have considered that the dispersion of audio-visual content from multiple sources would blend and make a confusing experience for the consumer. Another expressed disappointment was that the event layout was a 'one-way traffic system' where marshals encouraged visitors to move quickly through. 'It seemed as if the whole purpose of this (event) was to get us through as quickly as possible into the shop, where of course we could spend as much time as possible choosing what to buy' (Berridge, 2007, p.37). This layout made for a rushed, unpleasant experience for the consumer. Perhaps the event manager wanted to tackle a high demand for the event; however, the consumers' experience was disregarded.

Overall, the function to showcase artefacts and memorabilia from the show was achieved; however, the event design did not make attendees value this function as much as they should have due to the confusing audio-visual atmosphere and the rushed environment to leave the exhibition. The function of attendees learning scientific knowledge from the event had failed due to insufficient training or unrealistic job expectations for volunteers. Ultimately, the event's design brought about negative experiences from the consumers as it had not considered its attendees' experience. One must question whether the event's design was to bring in as much profit as possible or whether the event manager had merely disregarded the critical component of function that brings utility to the attendees' experience. Perhaps the event manager focussed firmly on the event's form; however, it is undeniable

that the function was poorly designed. This essay has got its limitations due to only containing one primary source of event experience and thus has the possibility of being biased.

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