

## UNDERSTANDING EVENT MANAGEMENT AS TOOL OF MARKETING AND COMMUNICATION

Dr Sumedha Dhasmana, Assistant Professor, Vivekananda School of Journalism & Mass Communication, Vivekananda Institute of Professional Studies- Technical Campus, affiliated to Guru Gobind Singh Indraprastha University, New Delhi

### Abstract

Pandemic posed drastic challenges for event management organizations. COVID-19 protocols resulted in drop of number of attendees, shift of offline events to virtual platforms, event postponement and even cancellation. Pandemic almost brought standstill to the event industry and allied companies struggled to generate revenue. Since life now is back to normal, it is crucial to understand the essentialities of event management that can help in achieving targeted marketing and communication goals.

**Keywords:** event planning, marketing tool, communication tool, event managers, event management

### Understanding event and event management

The word 'event' has its origin from the Latin term 'eventus' which mean occurrence or outcome. The Oxford dictionary defines events as, "a thing that happens or takes place, especially one of importance". Goldblatt (2005) focuses on special events as a unique moment in time, celebrated with ceremony and ritual to satisfy specific needs.

Getz (2008) notes that events are spatial-temporal phenomena and that each is unique because of interactions among the setting, people, and management systems, including design elements and the program. He highlights the fact that the biggest appeal of events is that they are never the same, and that the guest has to be there in order to enjoy the experience fully. He suggests two definitions, from the perspective of the event organizers, as well as the guests. Firstly, a special event is a one-time or infrequently occurring event outside normal programmes or activities of the sponsoring or organizing body. Secondly, to the customer or guest, a special event is an opportunity for leisure, social or cultural experience outside the normal range of choices or beyond everyday experience.

Annie Stephen and Hariharan in their book Event Management said, event management is a process of organizing a professional and focused event, for a particular target audience. It involves visualizing concepts, planning, budgeting, organizing and executing events such as fashion shows, musical concerts, corporate seminars, exhibitions, wedding celebrations, theme parties, product launches etc. It is a good career option which does not require much investment and offers a lot of independence and flexibility.

Event management, therefore encapsulates a wide variety of activities that includes extensive research, planning, analyzing, marketing of product or service, production of the actual event and post-event analysis. It can be referred to as an alternative strategy for promoting a good,

service or concept. An event can be utilized as a very effective promotional tool to launch or sell a product or service if it is managed efficiently.

### Objectives and Methodology

The objective of this study is:

1. To understand what are the various types of events in India
2. How event management acts as a tool of communication
3. How event management acts as tool of marketing

The data for this study has been collected through review of literature and interview of a freelance event management professional who is actively engaged with a wide variety of event management projects in India.

### Event Types

Events are broadly categorised on the basis of their size and their nature. The nature of the event is ever evolving. For instance, if we look at event on the basis of their size, they can be differentiated as mega event, major event, regional event and minor event. Mega events are biggest in size for example Kumbh mela in India. A report submitted by Rawat (2021) in Hindustan Times highlights that Kumbh mela was attended by 9.1 million pilgrims despite the fact that it was a period of Covid-19 surge. It is also important to mention here that this mega-event was widely criticised as it violated the Covid-19 protocols. Major events too attract a large number of national and international visitors. The most awaited cricket tournament of India- The Indian Premier League is a well-suited example of a major event. Boat race competition of Kerela and Hornbill festival of Nagaland are popular regional events that promote their regions and demonstrates the richness of their heritage. A majority of events fall in the category of minor events, be it wedding celebrations, college fests or a birthday party at home.

On understanding the nature of the event several types of events can be identified. These include events in entertainment, art and culture, fashion shows, sporting events, political events, corporate events, marketing and promotional events, festivals, religious, charity and fundraising. Table 1 below provides most contemporary examples of different types of events on the basis of their nature. It is important to note here that these events will fall under one of the above-mentioned categories of event on the basis of their size.

Event Type	Event Name
Entertainment	International Film Festival of India Sunburn Festival
Art Events	India Art Fair Surajkund Craft Mela
Cultural Events	Jallikattu Hornbill Festival
Fashion Events	Lakme Fashion Week Wills Lifestyle India Fashion Week

Sporting Events	Indian Premier League Indian Soccer League
Political Event	G 20 Summit General Elections
Religious Events	Jagannath Rath Yatra Ganesh Visarjan
Corporate Event	Launch of Reliance Jio The Indian Express Adda
Marketing and Promotional Event	India International Trade Fair Auto Expo
Charity and Fundraising	The GiveIndia Fundraising Challenge Daan Utsav
Festivals	Diwali Fest Holi Celebrations

**Table: Types of Events on the basis of their nature**

### **Event as a marketing tool**

It is important to market event effectively. As pointed out by Getz in 2000, event managers must find out the answers to the following point:

1. The motives and needs of the consumers
2. The benefits sought by the consumers
3. Awareness and comprehension of what is already being offered
4. How did the consumer made the decision of attending the event
5. Who will be attending the event
6. How the event experiences will offer satisfaction to the consumers

Event management is one-of-its kind strategy that helps in marketing of a product or service. By organizing an event a company is able to meet its target audience that otherwise might not be identified. Events have the power to gather target audiences in one location so that your message can be delivered directly to them. Event as a marketing tool can help in investing valuable time with the intended audience. Events provide better in-person communication in a regulated manner. Organizing event would require proper budgeting, however the overall costs can be lesser than the traditional methods. Moreover, immediate feedback makes assessment easier.

Marketing is discovering and creating, arousing and satisfying customers' need. It is getting to know customers better. Once the required information is gathered by conducting an event, organizations can utilize this information to make suitable changes to the already existing product or services or they can also utilize the information for the creation of new products and services which can meet audience's need more appropriately. Moreover, the knowledge and awareness and demand for the product or service can also be created.

**Personal Touch:** When the customer comes to an event, the event engages and helps him to understand the product, service or the idea so that he is able to identify how it is different from others that may be offering the same. This helps to relate better and understand more clearly in a real-life setting. Events facilitates face to face discussion with consumers helping them to establish a much personal and intimate relationship with the company's product or service. This face-to-face interaction also ensures loyalty that promotes repeat in use of the product or service by the customer. Events also increases the chance that the desired message reaches in a faster and more efficient manner.

**Creates brand recognition:** The audience of an event are more eager to hear when compared to reaching targeting audience through advertisement or public relations strategies. Events create a better brand recognition and recall because the audience actually experiences the company's product or service. After attending the event, the audience member pass on their experience to as many as 8-10 people. Therefore, it is almost kind of a chain reaction that occurs even after the event ends

**Cost Effective:** Events can prove to be cost-effective way to roll out new products or service. With the presence of live and captive audience to showcase product or service, the message reaches in a faster manner that proves to be more impactful. Events thus can prove to be comparatively lower in cost than traditional methods.

**Instant Feedback:** Since events allow audience to come in direct contact with the professionals of the business organizations, they prove to be an appropriate opportunity to get the feedback instantly. Hence organizations can quickly become more adaptable and work towards customer satisfaction.

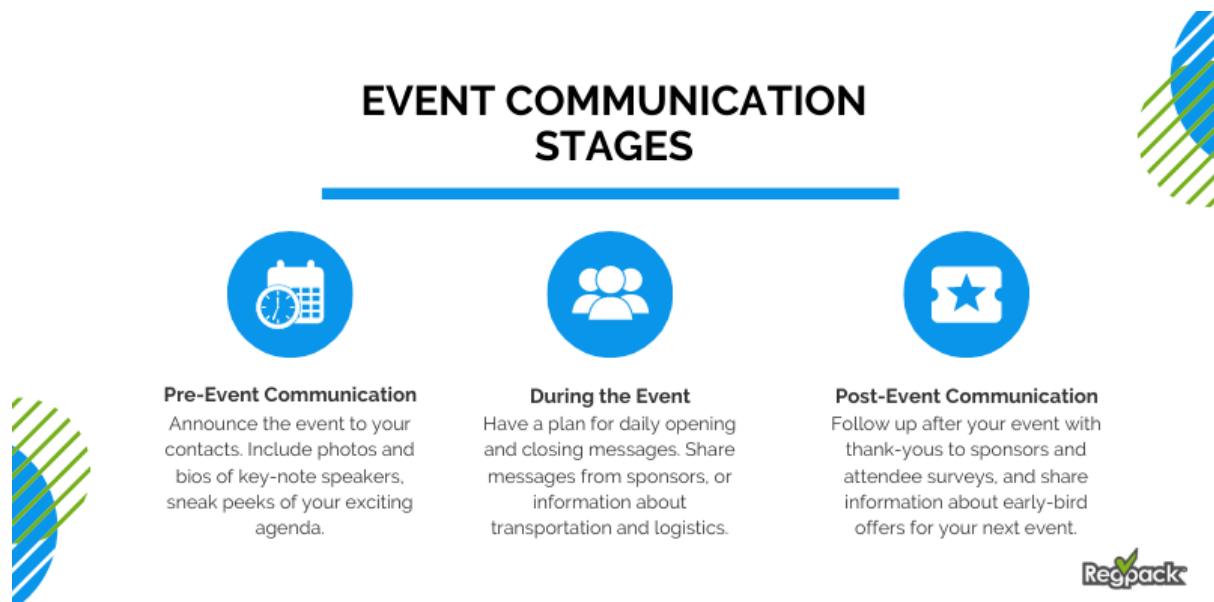
**Generate Leads:** People attend event because they either heard about it in advance and are interested in knowing further about the business or cause for which the event was organized. Event prove to an efficient and quick way of developing contact that fit in with the target demographic.

### **Event as a communication tool**

One of the most important reasons why events are organized is that a message is need to be communicated to the target audience. The event is a communication tool that involves significant communication activities at all levels like planning, meeting, an extended interaction between people, a client conference, conflict interchange, compliance gaining situation, a public speech, an infomercial, symbolic event etc.

The messages used to promote an event are extremely important. Usually there is only limited advertorial space for convincing all market segments to attend. Thus, the combination of text and images requires a lot of creative effort. If there is time and sufficient budget available, utilizing these communication messages with consumers is recommended. (Wagen and Carlos, 2005)

Events provide an experience to visitors when they attend the event. They also offer some kind of emotional bonding by either providing a solution to a problem or mere satisfaction gained after attending the event. Professional event management can act as a powerful communication tool that influences reputation, visibility and connection with the target audience.



**Figure: Event Communication Stages**

Figure above demonstrates the important communication stages that helps the event to become successful.

**Pre-event communication:** Whenever an event is scheduled the first steps required is to make announcement and to create as much awareness as possible about the event. Event posters, flyers, brochure and sponsorship proposals should be made for disseminating information about the forthcoming happening. This pre-event communication strategy will ensure the participation of maximum possible attendees.

**Communication during event:** This entails all communication strategies at all levels be it internal or external public. The organizing team should be well instructed and trained about their roles and what action to be taken in case of crisis. The volunteers involved should be properly briefed and there should be a continuous interaction with media organisations, vendors, participants and event attendees.

**Post-event communication:** The work of an event manager doesn't stop even after the event is conducted. It is important to follow up with media organisations and send them post event images, videos or press releases. Post event surveys can be conducted to determine the success of the event.

It is thus highlighted how event management proves to be an unmatched tool for effective communication and marketing. Be it personal, pertaining to private companies or relating to the government, there is no sector that is untouched by events and the need of management. This shows how event management is indispensable in present times.

## References

1. Getz, D. (2000). Events beyond 2000: Setting the agenda : Proceedings of conference on event evaluation, research and education, Sydney, July 2000.
2. Getz, D. (2008). Event tourism: Definition, evolution, and research. *Tourism Management*, 29(3), 403-428. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2007.07.017>
3. Goldblatt, J. (2005). Special events: Event leadership for a new world. John Wiley and Sons.
4. How to create an event strategy. (2021, January 8). Regpack. <https://www.regpacks.com/blog/event-strategy/>
5. Rawat S. (2021, April 30). 9.1 million thronged Mahakumbh despite COVID-19 surge: Govt data. Hindustan Times. <https://www.hindustantimes.com/cities/dehradun-news/91-million-thronged-mahakumbh-despite-covid-19-surge-govt-data-101619729096750.html>
6. Stephen, A., & Hariharan. (2015). Principles of Event Management. Himalaya.
7. Wagen, L. V., & Carlos, B. R. (2005). Event management: For tourism, cultural, business, and sporting events. Prentice Hall.