

## MANAGING SPECIAL EVENTS IN THE NEW ERA OF THE TRIPLE BOTTOM LINE

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A new concept has emerged in special event research—the Triple Bottom Line (TBL). The TBL, borrowed from accounting and finance, amalgamates the social, economic, and environmental aspects of activities into one framework. Within the context of special events, the TBL has been particularly linked to their evaluation. In this conceptual article it is argued that while this approach to event evaluation is useful, it is imperative that the underlying principles of the TBL be applied to the planning stage of special event management. This article proposes a framework for this purpose that draws upon Stakeholder Theory. By using this framework, the underlying principles of the TBL can be implemented to special event planning so that the outcomes of special events can be enhanced for their stakeholders.

Key words: Special event; Triple Bottom Line; Evaluation; Stakeholder Theory

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### Introduction

Within the context of tourism, the term special events refers to festivals, major events (both hallmark events that are associated with destinations), and mega-events, including the Olympic and Commonwealth Games (Jago, 1997). Special events are limited in duration and, largely because of their novelty, provide attendants with opportunities to escape the routines of their everyday lives (Getz, 1989). Special event research emerged as an area of tourism management in the mid-1970s. Since then, a number of research streams have emerged in the special event literature, including event management and operations, event marketing, event evalua-

tion, and research issues (Hede, Jago, & Deery, 2004), which it seems have assisted the industry to make considerable progress.

One area of special event research that has burgeoned, particularly in the past two decades, is event evaluation (Agrusa, Coats, & Tanner, 1999; Bradbury & Molloy, 1995; Burgan & Mules, 1992; Carmichael & Murphy, 1996; Daniels & Norman, 2003; Dwyer, Mellor, Mistilis, & Mules, 2000; Higham, 1996; Ryan, 1998; Stiernstrand, 1996; Walo, Bull, & Breen, 1996). There has certainly been a bias towards the economic evaluation of special events. While noticeably fewer studies have been undertaken to evaluate the social and environmental impacts of some special events, this line of

inquiry has recently gained momentum (Hall & Hodges, 1996; May, 1995; Olds, 1998; Turco, 1998; Waite, 2003). As such, a critical mass of research on the economic, social, and environmental evaluation of special events has now emerged in the literature.

Research on event evaluation is currently focused on amalgamating the economic, social, and environmental forms of evaluation into one framework. Such an integrated approach to the evaluation of special events is akin to the TBL approach to evaluation (Elkington, 1997; Rogers & Ryan, 2001; Topfer, 2000), which surfaced in the corporate sector in the early 1990s and gained particular attention in the resources industries (Barrett, 2004). While only three of the 30-odd papers at the 2002 International Special Event Researchers Conference in Sydney, Australia, explicitly referred to the TBL (Derrett, 2002; Fredline, Deery, & Jago, 2002; Hede, Deery, & Jago, 2002), the TBL formed an important part of the keynote addresses and discussions at that conference. Following this, the lexicon of the TBL appears to have filtered more widely into special event research. Two international conferences on special events in 2005—the 2005 Special Event Researchers Conference in Australia, and the 2005 Leisure Studies Association Conference in Edinburgh—formally embraced the TBL as key a component of their conference themes.

Fredline, Raybould, Jago, and Deery (2005) stated that “the rationale behind Triple Bottom Line reporting [within the context of special events] is to illuminate the externalities associated with business activities and therefore to promote sustainability through planning and management practices that ameliorate negative outcomes and promote positive ones” (p. 3). There has already been one application of a TBL evaluation on a special event—the 2003 Rugby World Cup in Australia (Fredline et al., 2005). The change in attitudes towards event evaluation may, indeed, represent a paradigm shift from an undimensional approach to event evaluation to a tripartite one. It is, however, too early to empirically ascertain whether this is the case at this point in time.

While it is important to continue to progress research on TBL-based evaluation within the context of special event management, in this article it is argued that it is imperative to first apply the TBL to special event planning. In this way, the social, environmental, and economic outcomes of special events can be

enhanced for their stakeholders. As such, this article focuses on the planning of special events. The overall aim of this conceptual article is to introduce a management tool that will assist special event practitioners to apply a TBL-based approach to the planning of special events. Hence, there is likely to be greater success in optimizing the positive outcomes and reducing the negative outcomes of special events. The introduction of the TBL to the planning stage of special event management is progressive; it reflects contemporary discourse within special event research and has the potential to considerably advance special event management practices. Furthermore, it is argued that it is only after the introduction of the TBL into the planning stage of special event management, that special events can realistically be evaluated using a TBL-based approach.

In this article, the TBL has been linked to Stakeholder Theory. Stakeholder Theory is focused on constituents, or those groups or individuals who affect, or are affected by, the achievement of the organization’s objectives (Freeman, 1984). The link between the TBL and Stakeholder Theory is predicated on the fact that the impacts of special events are pertinent to their stakeholders. By focusing on the social, environmental, and economic outcomes of events within the context of Stakeholder Theory, it is proposed that special events can then be managed to enhance the outcomes for their stakeholders.

The article first describes the growth of the special event sector to highlight the need for further theoretical advancements in the field of special event management. Stakeholder Theory is then discussed generally and within the context of special events. Using the special event literature, stakeholders of special events (and the stakes that they have via their involvement in them) are then identified. These are then conceptualized into a framework that coalesces the TBL and Stakeholder Theory. The framework is then proposed to a sample of special event practitioners and academics to identify the commonalities among the stakeholders of special events for later use in the strategic planning of special events. Conclusions are drawn with regard to the management of special events using this approach and recommendations are then made as to how managers of special events can use this information to achieve the most advantageous economic, social, and environmental outcomes of special events for their stakeholders. Recommendations are also made for further research on this topic.

### The Growth of the Special Event Sector

Since the Second World War most western cultures experienced booms in the number of festivals and parades that were staged in their communities (McDonnell, Allen, & O'Toole, 1999). Although there is little available international data on the special event sector, statistics from around the globe indicate its size and escalating growth. Attendances at special events in Montreal, for example, increased by 1.6 million in 2000 to 11.5 million (Alonzo, 2001). There also appears to be an increase in the number of events that are now being staged around the globe. Furthermore, the value of commercial event sponsorship has increased substantially over the last decade. In 1996, the value of commercial sponsorship in the US was US\$5.4 billion (Shani & Sandler, 1996) and, according to the International Events Group in Chicago, in 1998 commercial sponsorship for events was worth over US\$9 billion (Goldblatt, 2000). A decade earlier, the value of this commercial sponsorship was estimated to be worth US\$500 million (Lee, Sandler, & Shani, 1997). Similarly, broadcast rights fees and revenues for special events, particularly mega-events such as the Olympic Games, have escalated since the 1960s (McDaniel, 2002).

A range of factors has been posited that provide some explanation for this growth. Getz (2000), for example, surmised that the "experience" economy (Pine & Gilmore, 1999), which has seen a shift from consumers only being interested in tangibles to consuming the "intangible," has contributed to the growth of the special event industry. Hede, Jago, and Deery (2004) indicated that changes in the demographics of populations, including their geographic redistribution, have also contributed to the growth of special events. Furthermore, Kenyon and Black (2001) highlighted that special events, particularly festivals, are viewed as a popular means of developing social cohesion in new communities, or revitalizing those that are waning. Governments, at both the local, state, and national levels, regularly support the staging of special events, particularly those that are able to draw new income into the targeted destinations (Mules & Faulkner, 1996).

Since the mid-1960s, there have been a number of initiatives aimed at professionalizing the industry, including the development of industry associations such as the International Festival and Events Association (IFEA), the International Special Events Society (ISES),

and the Festival and Events Association in Australia. Similarly, accreditation and certification programs have been introduced, including the Certified Festival and Event Executive offered by IFEA and the Introduction to Certified Special Events Professional offered by ISES. Furthermore, theoretical and applied research has been undertaken on special events, some of which has been published in academic journals, including *Event Management*, *Tourism Management*, and the *Annals of Tourism Research*. As a result of these initiatives, considerable progress has been made in many aspects of special event management, evinced in the "sophistication" of many of special event management practices.

These factors have contributed to a highly competitive special event sector. Indeed, Getz (2000) suggested that the sector is now in a state of maturity, noting that some special events fail, not only because of the increasing competition and the sector's current lifecycle stage, but also for a range of managerial and nonmanagerial reasons. He also suggested that special event research is lagging behind the state of the sector and that it needs to more accurately reflect its current situation in terms of the trends while it is experiencing and the issues that it faces. That said, the state of research on the TBL is progressing, and, it would seem, advancing; there does even seem to be some disparity between TBL research in the context of special events and its practical application. There is a need to address this imbalance and elucidate the value of the TBL in the planning stage of event management so that events can realistically be evaluated using such an approach.

### Stakeholder Theory

As mentioned previously, the overall aim of this article is to introduce a management tool that will assist special event practitioners to apply a TBL-based approach to the planning of special events. As Stakeholder Theory was used to develop the management tool, it is now necessary to provide an overview of it to position it within the context of the special events.

Stakeholder Theory is an approach to management, also known as the constituency-oriented approach (Covell, 2004). Stakeholders, or constituents, are defined as those groups or individuals who can affect, or are affected by, the achievement of the organization's objectives (Freeman, 1984). While there is some discourse on the origins of Stakeholder Theory (Clarkson, 1995; Pitelis & Wahl, 1998), it has been applied to many

professional contexts, including healthcare (Zinkham & Balazs, 2004), information systems (Shankar, Urban, & Sultan, 2002), and banking and finance (Boatright, 2002). Freeman, who is generally attributed with proposing this management approach, stressed that stakeholders are distinct from nonstakeholders; stakeholders have the power to affect an organization's performance. Donaldson and Preston (1995) concur with Freeman by suggesting that this is a distinguishing feature of stakeholders as compared to non-stakeholders. Clarkson (1995) stated that, "stakeholders are persons or groups that have claim or ownership rights, interests in a corporation and its activities, past present and future" (p. 106). Hence, in a stakeholder system it is important to have cooperative relationships between the organization and its stakeholders.

Sautter and Liesen (1999), moreover, stressed that no one stakeholder is given priority over another. While this might be the ideal situation, Clarkson (1995) distinguished some stakeholders from others based on the type of interaction that they have with the organization by using the terms "primary" and "secondary" stakeholders to categorize stakeholders on this basis. According to Clarkson, primary stakeholders are those without whose continued cooperation and support the organization cannot survive. Secondary stakeholders, however, can affect, or can be affected, by the achievement of the organization's objectives, but they do not engage in transactions with the organization and are not considered to be essential for its survival.

### Special Event Stakeholders and Their Interests

To explore the notion of special event stakeholders and their interests, a number of journals that have consistently published research on events since the 1990s (Hede, Jago, & Deery, 2003) were consulted. The journals included *Event Management*, the *Annals of Tourism Research*, *Tourism Management*, and the *Journal of Travel and Tourism Marketing*. What was found was that the concept of stakeholders and collaboration between groups or individuals having an interest in an organization, activity or object, has been widely promoted within the context of tourism, but not as extensively, or as explicitly, within the context of special events. In saying this, however, much of the information that was gained from the application of Stakeholder Theory to tourism was nonetheless relevant to special events. Thus, it was felt that it was important to refer to

that body of literature before proceeding to the literature that specifically related to special events.

Jamal and Getz (1994) discussed collaboration within the context of community-based tourism planning and highlighted the interdependency among multiple stakeholders in this process. They noted that there have been a number of studies on community-based tourism planning that have focused on collaboration and that have reflected on the need to ensure a refining process involving key stakeholders in ensuring joint decision making in community-based tourism planning. Morgan, Pritchard, and Piggott (2003) provided a comprehensive description of the diversity in the roles and interests of the stakeholders of New Zealand's recent rebranding strategy. Their study documented how the various stakeholders were included in the identification of the brand's values.

Sautter and Leisen (1999) applied Stakeholder Theory within the context of tourism planning and developed the Tourism Stakeholder Map, which they adapted from the work of Freeman (1984). The Tourism Stakeholder Map incorporated eight stakeholder groups, namely local businesses, residents, activists' groups, tourists, national business chains, competitors, government, and employees of the tourism organization. The model was then used to explore stakeholder theory within this context. Sautter and Leisen (1999), however, made no distinction between the stakeholders in terms of whether they might be primary or secondary stakeholders.

Reid and Arcodia (2002) explored the roles of stakeholders in event management. After identifying a range of stakeholders of events, they developed the Event Stakeholder Model and further categorized the stakeholders as those that were either primary or secondary. According to Reid and Arcodia (2002) employees, volunteers, sponsors, and participants are primary stakeholders, and governments, host communities, emergency services, industry, the media, and tourism organizations are secondary stakeholders of events. The Event Stakeholder Model assisted to identify specific stakeholders of events. While its presentation digressed from the traditional representation of the Freeman's Stakeholder Map (Freeman, 1984), Reid (2004) later employed the more traditional Stakeholder Map when analyzing a regional festival in Australia.

The stakeholders identified by Sautter and Leisen (1999) (in the area of tourism planning) and Reid (2004) and Reid and Arcodia (2002) (in event management) were used as a basis for developing a more comprehensive set

of stakeholders for special events. These were businesses, community groups, environmentalists, emergency services, event associations, governments, residents (attendees and nonattendees), shareholders, sponsors, tourists (attendees), employees (event and nonevent), volunteers, media, and competitors of the special event. These stakeholders were then categorized into primary and secondary stakeholders, using the definitions previously cited. Most of these entities are considered to be primary stakeholders because first, without their support special events would not survive, and second, there is some form of transaction between them and special events. Environmentalists, competitors, emergency services, and event associations are considered to be secondary stakeholders of special events because, although they can affect special event organizations, they do not generally have a transactional relationship with them.

It is acknowledged that variations from the preceding classifications may occur. The Riverfest Festival in Brisbane, Australia, for example, had a strong focus on environmental issues related to the Brisbane River. In this instance, environmentalists may indeed be considered as primary stakeholders of the event. Similarly, for the Olympic Games, the media is a primary stakeholder as it plays an integral component in their telecasts and subsequent “success” of the event.

While it is useful to identify the stakeholders of events, it is important that their interests are identified also. Indeed, it is argued in this article that this is imperative because it is with this knowledge that event management can then become streamlined. The article now explores the literature to identify the interests of stakeholders under the three banners of the TBL.

### *Economic Interests*

Some of the stakeholders identified in the preceding sections have economically oriented interests in special events. For example, on the organizational level, governments are generally interested in the amount of new income that special events will bring into the host destination's economy. Indeed, many governments focus primarily on the economic impacts of special events to assess their success (Mules & Faulkner, 1996). Similarly, sponsors are interested in their return on investment, which can be measured via a number of variables, including brand awareness or purchase intent. As a stakeholder of special events, businesses are often interested in how special events will impact on their

commercial viability. The overall success of special events is important for event associations as this can promote membership numbers in event associations which can, in turn, lead to a more sustainable industry.

From an economic perspective community groups are often interested in the costs of special events, particularly mega-events. Funds for purpose-built, special event infrastructure are generally sourced from the public funds. As such, the cost to residents and community groups may be in the form of increased taxes. Particularly this may be the case for residents of those destinations that have special events underpinning their tourism and sporting policies.

In the short term, employees of special events are generally interested in how much they will earn from being involved in special events. From a longer term perspective, if the special events they are involved in are successful and are staged on a regular basis, employees are likely to then gain further employment with those special events in the future. Hanlon and Jago (2000), for example, found that the issue of career paths was of particular interest to younger personnel in sport-related special event organizations.

### *Social Interests*

Many of the motives for attendance of special events are associated with socially oriented interests (Backman, Backman, Muzaffer, & Mohr, 1995; Crompton & McKay, 1997; Formica & Murrmann, 1997). Fredline and Faulkner (2000) also found that residents of local communities consider the extent to which special events increase their level of pride in the host destinations and improve their quality of life. Wood (2002) investigated the impacts of two events on civic pride and identified similar results. Special events have the capacity to build social cohesion (Arcodia & Whitford, 2002). Further, Hiller (1998) found that communities are often concerned by the extent to which special events, specifically mega-events, displace residents of host destinations via forced evictions. In the case of volunteers, Saleh and Wood (1998) found that these stakeholders are often interested in becoming involved in special events, particularly multicultural events, because of the cultural opportunity that special events provide for them.

### *Environmental Interests*

A review of the special event literature indicates that there is much less academic interest in the environmen-

tal issues associated with special events than the economic or social issues that are related to them. The environmental interests associated with special events appear, however, to exist on a continuum from those that are on the microlevel to those on the macrolevel. For example, according to Lanza Abbott (2000), effective crowd management, which involves the planning, training of employees, forming scenarios, and collecting data, can reduce the need for subsequent crowd control. This is very much a microissue and one that is of particular interest to professional event managers. With the advent of escalating insurance premiums and the prevalence of terrorism the risks associated with special events have become increasingly important to manage.

At the community level, the environmental issues become a mixture of those that are on the micro- and macrolevels. For example, community groups, particularly residents, are concerned with the ways in which special events disrupt their everyday lives. Fredline and Faulkner (2000) investigated the social impacts of two events and found that residents are concerned with environmental issues, such as noise, pollution, and traffic congestion. With societal marketing forming a large part of the underlying principles of many organizations (e.g., McDonalds or telcos, which often sponsor special events), sponsoring organizations recognize that the image of the event can be transferred to their organizations. Accordingly sponsors of events are often keen to ensure that events are “environmentally friendly.” Hence, if a special event is seen to be irresponsible or negligent with regard to the environment, many sponsors will reconsider their sponsorship of the special events.

### TBL Special Event Stakeholder Maps

To synthesize the preceding sections, two TBL Special Event Stakeholder Maps have been developed: one for the primary stakeholders and the other for the secondary stakeholders of special events. The Maps include the three domains of the TBL (i.e., the economic, social, or environmental), thereby coalescing Stakeholder Theory and the TBL into one framework.

The author presented the TBL Special Event Stakeholder Maps to four practitioners and five academics in the field of special events. The samples of practitioners and academics were appropriate to the aims of the research. All the practitioners had at least four years

experience in the field and were working in Australia at the time of the study. While two of the practitioners gained much of their experience in the UK, most of their experience was nevertheless gained in Australia. The academics, all of whom were also working in Australia at the time of the study, were either coordinating event management or tourism programs, or had completed studies in the field of special events. A semistructured discussion was held with each of the participants whereby they were asked to indicate how accurate they thought the TBL Special Event Stakeholder Maps were and whether any changes should be made to them for them to be a more useful management tool. The researcher took notes during the discussions. It was generally agreed that the TBL Special Event Stakeholder Maps that were presented represented the special event scenario. Minor changes were made to the TBL Special Event Stakeholder Maps as a result of the discussions. For example, it was concluded that the certain stakeholders were interested, or not interested, in certain aspects of the TBL. Furthermore, it was agreed that some variations would most likely be required for specific special events.

For the sake of brevity, only the TBL Special Event Primary Stakeholder Map is described and depicted in this article (Fig. 1), as the structure of the two maps is essentially the same. As can be seen from Figure 1, the special event organization is at the core of the TBL Primary Stakeholder Map. Surrounding the special event organization are the stakeholders, and the interests of the stakeholders are placed within the economic, social, and environmental domains of the TBL. The TBL Special Event Primary Stakeholder Map expands upon Stakeholder Theory as it also classifies the stakeholders based on whether they are on the organizational or individual levels. Where possible, stakeholders with similar types of interests were grouped in proximity to each other. These features of the TBL Primary Stakeholder Map highlight the commonalities between different stakeholders of special events.

The TBL Special Event Stakeholder Maps are based on the understanding that effective and efficient managers of special events need to identify their stakeholders and the stakes they have in special events. Furthermore, the TBL Special Event Stakeholder Maps are based on the proposition that effective and efficient managers of special events will also identify the commonalities between their stakeholders in terms of the interests that they have in them. Once special event

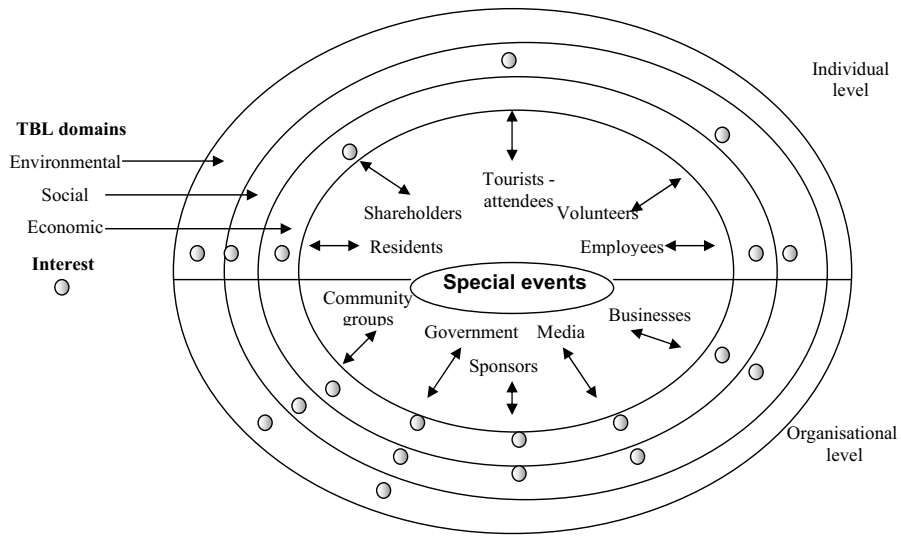


Figure 1. TBL Primary Stakeholder Map.

managers develop the TBL Special Event Stakeholder Maps, they can be used to guide strategies aimed at serving the interests of the stakeholders of special events. As an example, special event management might identify that government is highly interested in the economic impacts of their special event, while community groups are interested in the social benefits of their special event. With this information in mind, they should then aim to develop strategies that simultaneously serve these two stakeholder groups, rather than develop two unrelated strategies that are in isolation from one another.

### Discussion

This article has introduced the TBL into the planning phase of special event management by using Stakeholder Theory. The approach provided can assist in identifying the stakeholders of a special event and in understanding their respective interests in it. Following this, identifying the commonalities between the stakeholders will further assist special event managers to develop strategies that streamline their activities.

A number of issues have emerged. First, this study has uncovered what may be a paradigm shift from singularly focused evaluations of special events to a more holistic approach to their evaluation that incorporates social, economic, and environmental impacts. Research-

ers of special events are guiding the evaluation towards a more holistic approach than has been executed in the past. Such a paradigm shift has the potential to enhance the outcomes of special events.

Second, the TBL Special Event Stakeholder Maps synthesize generic and context-specific knowledge of Stakeholder Theory. It draws upon the work of Freeman (1984), Sautter and Leisen (1999), Reid and Arcodia (2002), and Reid (2004). The TBL Special Event Stakeholder Maps elaborate upon Stakeholder Theory within the context of special events, and also refines this knowledge using the organizational and individual stakeholder levels. The TBL Special Event Stakeholder Maps provide a basis for ranking and then prioritizing the objectives of special events and the subsequent allocation of resources to achieve those objectives.

Third, the information gained from this analysis highlights that there is the perception, both in the industry and academia that of the 14 special event stakeholder groups identified in this study, only three of these (governments, residents, and community groups) appear to have interests across all three domains of the TBL. While these three groups are important, there appears to be less interest among the 14 stakeholders identified in this study in the social aspects of special events, and even fewer stakeholders appear to be interested in the environmental aspects of special events. Furthermore,

in comparison with the number of stakeholders that have economically oriented interests in special events, there seems to be fewer stakeholders, particularly at the organizational level, that have socially oriented interests. Those stakeholder entities that have socially oriented interests in special events currently appear to be on the individual level; however there does appear to be a growing interest from the public sector with regard to the social impacts of special events. Given the importance of collaboration in tourism-related planning, these findings have ramifications for special event managers.

Prior to commencing the analysis for this paper, it was thought that the most of the stakeholders of special events would have interests across the three components of the TBL and that there would be many commonalities between them. Certainly, there are some commonalities between the stakeholders of special events: strategies can therefore be developed (although this is beyond the scope of this paper) to promote the synergies between them and to promote positive outcomes from special events for them. After synthesizing the analysis for the paper, however, it became clear that not all stakeholders of special events are interested in the three components of the TBL with regard to special events.

### Practical Implications

There is clearly merit in aiming to enhance the positive outcomes of special events across the three dimensions of the TBL. It is, however, possibly very difficult for managers of special events to produce “TBL-successful” special events if the stakeholders are not supportive of such an outcome. For example, if most of the primary stakeholders of a special event are interested in social and economic aspects of special events, they may be unlikely to demonstrate support for initiatives related to improving the environmental aspects of the special event. In the instance of the TBL permeating the evaluation of special events, as this paper suggests, it will be prudent of special event managers to encourage their stakeholders to seriously consider all three domains of the TBL.

Managers of special events need to develop strategies that encourage communication between stakeholder groups with the express purpose of promoting acceptance and subsequent support, for a diverse range of interests. Although many of the stakeholders exist

by default, some are selected by the management of special events, such as the sponsors or the community in which the special event is staged. The basis of their selection should consider their compatibility with the special event in terms of the special event’s objectives, as well as with the other stakeholders of the special event.

The aim of this study was to propose a management tool that could be used in the planning stage of the special events. As a first step in the planning for an event, event managers can use the TBL Special Event Stakeholder Maps to assist to identify the stakeholders of their events, identify the stakes that they have in the events, and whether these are economic, social, or environmental. Event managers can then use the maps to categorize the stakeholders into primary and secondary stakeholders. Once event managers produce the TBL Special Event Stakeholder Maps, they can then begin to identify which of the stakeholders have common interests. With this information, event managers can then develop strategies that meet the needs of the various stakeholders. For efficiency, it is advised that event managers should aim to develop strategies that simultaneously meet the needs of a number of stakeholders rather than a strategy for each stakeholder. Given that event evaluation relies on information from the stakeholders of events, by considering the interests of stakeholders in the planning stage, it would seem more likely that stakeholders’ interests will be more adequately met.

### Conclusions and Further Research

This article has proposed a framework for use in the planning stages of special events that has incorporated the TBL. Information has been gained on the commonalities of a diverse range of special event stakeholders by amalgamating Stakeholder Theory and the three domains underlying the TBL and Stakeholder Theory. The information can be used by managers of special events to develop effective strategies to assist them to streamline their activities.

The research undertaken for this study was exploratory. While the review of the literature yielded results that had face validity, the samples of both the practitioners and academics used to validate the TBL Special Event Stakeholder Maps were small and purposive. Hence, there may be some bias in the responses. These factors should be considered when interpreting the results, and generalizing them to a broader population of



practitioners and academics. Furthermore, the results of this paper relate to events generally, rather than to specific types of events. These factors, however, give rise to further research that extends beyond the sample of practitioners and academics, and the types of events that are being evaluated. As such, a larger study that employs a multievent, international, and perhaps a quantitative, approach would be highly instructive for the event sector and its researchers.

To some extent, this study was approached on the underlying assumption that the three domains of the TBL are equally important with regard to special events. It appears, however, that this is not the case for all events. Further research is required to explore this issue. For example, the objectives of some minor events, such as community festivals, are often focused on those that are socially or environmentally oriented, with less emphasis placed on the economic domain of the TBL. Hence, it may be necessary to develop an approach that takes this into consideration, such as an average weighted contribution approach.

Empirical research on this topic is, however, needed. One important line of inquiry is to explore the understanding of the TBL in the special event sector, particularly with regard to how it can be incorporated into special event planning. This is imperative because it is likely that a TBL approach to special event evaluation will become the dominant evaluation paradigm within special event research in the future. It is, therefore, necessary to prepare the special event sector for this new approach to the evaluation of their core activities.

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