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Special event management and event marketing: A case study of TKBL all star 2011 in Turkey

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ABSTRACT

The aim of the study is to show the dimensions applied while managing and marketing a successful special sport event and is going to make several contributions for the sport event managers and sport marketing managers about how to use event management dimensions effectively and shape strategies based on this perspective. Case study was employed to analyze a sport event based on event management and event marketing perspectives. Data in the study was collected from primary as well as secondary data sources (observations, internet resources, press and visual media). The main data collection techniques employed was personal semi-structured interviewing and observations. The researchers carried out five group interviews, with key informants in the special sport event. This paper focuses on the dimensions of event management named ticketing, transportation, human resources (volunteers and trained staff), budgeting, marketing and PR and risk management.

Keywords: Event, marketing, special event, event management, event marketing

INTRODUCTION

The event industry is one of the world's largest employers and contributes major positive economic impact (Theocharis, 2008). The event is all about people-people coming together to create, operate, and participate in an experience (Silvers, 2004). It is an activity that gathers the target group in time and room, a meeting where a message is communicated and happening is created (Eckerstein, 2002). The term event is used for describing different activities designed for different purposes. These activities can be art, sports, tourism and social activities, and can also be activities organized by giant organizers more professional and more formal (Argan, 2007). According to Getz and Goldblatt, events are 'a unique moment in time' and 'aside from everyday occurrences' (Berridge, 2007). Public or private, commercial or charitable, celebratory or commemorative-events bring people together to share an experience and produce a measurable outcome (Silvers, 2004). Civic events, conventions, expositions, fairs and festivals, hallmark events, hospitality, incentive travel, meetings and conferences, retail events, reunions, social life-cycle events, sport events, and tourism are the examples of subfields of events (Goldblatt, 2005). Every event has an organization behind it; managing activities, organizing funding, administering staff and voluntary personnel, undertaking marketing and public relations, organizing security, printing leaflets and tickets, hiring performers, arranging decorations, sorting out parking and many other activities (Tassiopoulos, 2005). The way in which an organization deals with events is known as event management. It may include the organization's objectives for managing events, assigned roles and responsibilities, ownership of tools and processes, critical success factors, standards, and event-handling procedures. The linkages between the various departments within the organization required to handle events and the flow of this information between them is the focus of event management. (Bhe et. al., 2004). Event management and event marketing have emerged over the past decade as a vibrant sector of the tourism and leisure industries. The number, diversity and popularity of events have also grown throughout this period. As the number of events increase, there is a growing realization about the continuing need to develop event management professionals who are able to create, organize, and manage events (Arcodia and Reid, 2005).

Based on the above-mentioned dimensions and focusing on the event management and event marketing literatures, this paper aims to understand the how to manage and market the events successfully and fully satisfy participants.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Events are leisure activities and work possibilities for people. Events bring people together and make them have good time. They enhance the quality of people's life; they can provide significant economic benefits and can also provide revenue for special projects. Regardless of size, events require a high degree of planning, a range of skills and a lot of energy (Hillary Commission for Sport, 1997). According to Andersson and Wesslau (2000), when using events, companies get the possibility to have their own-right to the consumer during the duration of the event. This means that if a company manages to get the consumer to attend the event, the distortion from the competitors will be gone or at least minimized during the duration of the event. Also, events contain tangible elements, such as food, beverages and other products sold or given away, but are essentially a service in that they consist of intangible experiences of finite duration within a temporary, managed atmosphere. As with all services, this experiential "product" is produced and consumed simultaneously, is highly heterogeneous and very difficult to store or control (O'neil et. al., 1999).

Ticketing

Ticketing an event is an immensely complex task, involving millions of tickets. Hence, ticketing is one of the most significant programs of mega events like Olympic Games (Thamnopoulos and Gargalianos, 2002). The ticketing that regards customers becomes, directly and indirectly, a critical factor for the success of the event and, consequently, it must be set up and realized in more and more professional and coherent way with the context of which it is to be situated. With regards to this, an evolved and more advanced definition can be proposed for the meaning of ticketing: “a whole of activities, (programmed, organized and controlled) that start from the input of the strategy of the event (objectives, targets, service concept) and come to being through price integration, distribution and communication of tickets in order to obtain the attendance of people, in amount and quality, suitable to favor the attainment of its objects and goals, that the various stakeholders, wish to meet with the same event” (Cherubini and Iasevoli, 2007).

Transportation

In traffic management terms a special event is any planned activity that is wholly or partly conducted on a road, requires multiple agency involvement, requires special traffic management arrangements, and may involve large numbers of participants or spectators. The definition also applies to events conducted in their own venue if the event requires special traffic management arrangements and multiple agency support. From a traffic and transport perspective, a special event needs to: ensure the safe separation of event patrons, participants and volunteers from traffic, and manage the reduced capacity of the road system, and minimize the traffic impact on the non-event community & the emergency services and minimize the costs (Guide to Traffic and Transport Management for Special Events, 2006).

Human Resources

Human resource management is much more than recruitment and selection of staff and volunteers; it is a wide-ranging activity, involving the long-term strategic development of the event organization. The expected outcome of this is a positive culture of commitment and co-operation developed in the process of managing the work force (Wagen, 2007). In events also there are the volunteers. They are representatives from the community who freely choose to give their time and skills to support club activities for no payment other than reimbursement for out of pocket expenses. Volunteers come from all age groups, educational backgrounds and genders. People generally volunteer to have fun, socialize, learn new skills, help others, develop new friends, explore career opportunities etc. (AFL Club Management Program, 2004). Working with volunteers requires that their special contribution to the success of the event be acknowledged and shared. Working with volunteers requires consideration, flexibility and enthusiasm because volunteers often work for the ‘fun of it’ of for charitable purposes. Volunteers require just as much management and coordination as employees (Tassiopoulos, 2005).

Budgeting

According to Goldblatt (2002) the budget represents an action plan that each successful event manager must carefully develop and is the most important tool to use the financial decisions within the event management business. Since different events are designed

for different purposes, they may fall in to three different categories, named, “Profit-oriented events, Break-even events, lost leaders or hosted events.”

Marketing and PR

Being very trendy at the present, event marketing is however not a new phenomena. In the US and in the whole world, event marketing has existed as long as traditional marketing has been conducted. It is a natural part of the marketing mix, and now goes under the name special events (Eriksson and Hjalmsjon, 2000). Effective marketing can attract the ‘right’ people and the ‘wrong’ to an event. However, it is even more crucial to ensure that the event is supported by sufficient numbers of participants to make it success (Tassiopoulos, 2005). When marketing something purely intangible, such as sporting contest there is a large service component. In some respects it is far more difficult to market something that the customer cannot take home or physically consume. Thus promotional efforts might suggest that the audience will be entertained and have fun at the event. Zeithaml and Bitner (1996) define services as ‘deeds, processes and performances’. The definition suits the event business well, whether it refers to a sporting contest, and clearly places event marketing (Wagen, 2005).

In management of the events, public relations have two roles. On the one hand it supports marketing activity in the form of promotions; on the other hand it is also the tool that disseminates non-promotional information to other target publics that are important to the organization. An event’s leading aim is to achieve positive coverage on the media for the event without paying for the space or air-time it occupies. Strong relationships with the key media and a range of innovative techniques and tools in order to evoke an attraction are important when trying to create the desired media exposure (Masterman, 2004). Also, media relations and publicity should be given a lot of attention. A well-planned publicity campaign should run alongside any advertising campaign. Ideally this drive should be spread over the period of months, building up to a peak shortly before the event. Early warning allows potential participants and spectators to book the event in to their diaries and prevents potential clashes with rival attractions (Tassiopoulos, 2005).

Risk Management

The goals of risk management in events like everywhere include the protection of assets, to minimize legal and financial liabilities, to control potential loss, properly manage growth, and to operate responsibility. Risk management recognized in varying degrees as a key component of the responsibilities associated with the planning and producing events. It is often perceived as a function that is carried out once an event has been conceived, designed, and organized. RM should be thoroughly embedded in the event design and throughout its development and production process to ensure the risks associated with the event are managed effectively and cost efficiently (Silvers, 2008).

METHOD

The purpose of this study is to analyze a special event based on event marketing and event management perspectives as a case study. The purpose is divided into two research questions: What were the applications of All Star Basketball Event based on event marketing and event management approaches? How these applications were implemented in the event. TKBL All Star 2011 sport event is selected case study under investigation for the purpose of this research.

In this study, the research method adopted was the case study because this type of approach is useful to investigate contemporary phenomena within a real life context, especially when the boundaries between the phenomenon and the context are not clearly evident (Silvestre and Dalcol, 2010; Yin, 2003). Research by case study is more suited to how and why questions which can be explanatory in nature. Case research allows the researcher the opportunity to tease out and disentangle a complex set of factors and relationships, albeit in one or a small number of instances (Easton, 2010). Yin (1989, p. 23) defines a case study as “an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident and in which multiple sources of evidence are used” (Halinen and Törnroos, 2005). Silvestre and Dalcol (as cited in Siggelkow, 2007) state that a case method can sharpen existing theory by identifying gaps and fill them in, and also provide theoretical contributions when employed as illustrations. According to Cutler (2004) research based cases are used to investigate activities or complex processes that are not easily separated from the social context within which they occur. To select a sample to this study, researchers have chosen to use judgemental sample which is a non-probably sampling method that allows us to select the case that seems most suitable to answer our research questions (Maki and Sjöstrand, 2007; Saunders, 2007). Based on this method, a special sport event in Turkey, All Stars, was chosen as a case.

Case research can employ many data collection methods, either quantitative or qualitative, depending on the variables being studied (Cutler, 2004). While some researchers have used only one method, others have used multiple methods for the purpose of “triangulation” of data from different sources (Barratt, Choi and Li, 2010). Voss, Tsikriktsis and Frohlich (2002) pointed out that employing multiple data sources elicits increased reliability of data and stronger substantiation of constructs and propositions (Barrat, Choi and Li, 2010). Data in the study was collected from primary as well as secondary data sources. The main data collection techniques employed was personal semi-structured interviewing, and observations. The researchers carried out five group interviews, with key informants in the special sport event. The interviews were held with event director of Turkish Basketball Federation, director of School of Physical Education and Sports, School Secretary, managers of public relations department of Anadolu University, manager of a special security firm, and spectators. Other valuable information to this study was collected through unstructured conversations with other employees of the firms and through direct observation during the sport facility visits. Secondary data was acquired through web sites of Turkish Basketball Federation, publications of local media, newspapers, newsletter, and specialized journals. According to Dubé and Paré (2003) using multi investigators is another form of triangulation. Barratt, Choi and Li (2010) suggested that the use of multiple investigators leads to a better ability to handle the richness of the contextual data and more confidence in research findings. This case study was applied by three investigators. This approach can be evaluated as sign of reliability.

FINDINGS AND RESULTS

Planning Before the Event

While planning the All Star 2011 Event, a professional team has decided what to do in only 1-2 hours. Planning for popular and mega events like Universiade 2011 Erzurum 1-2 years work is being conducted. Any problem was arisen while the planning process of the event. In addition to the staff of the organization company, a lot of people were assigned by the TBF and also taken part voluntarily. Painters and computer programmers have contributed while designs were being done.

Determining Objectives

When assessing the objectives of the All Star 2011 from TBF's perspective, TBF organized the event for the target mass to endear basketball sport to people. For this purpose, TBF created a slogan "Our burden is Basketball, our route is Eskisehir". Eskisehir Anadolu University's objective, the house owner of the event, was to open the facility with such a glorious event. The target audience was university students, families living in the city, audiences like watching basketball aged five years or more. The number of the people planned to watch the show with a capacity of 5.500 seats of the hall.

Facility Decision

When deciding the venue of the organization some important spots come forward. Determining a facility for reputation of the event, worthy of the subject and the purpose of the event is important for the success of the event. After TBF's decision, All Star 2011 is going to be held in Eskisehir, the important issues are listed as follows:

- Suitable to the standards of the TBF
- Equipments inputs and outputs to be easy
- An environment that emergency health care units can easily reach
- Venue and the rooms to be used relevant

Transportation

On Saturday, January 15 at 9.15 am the basketball train moved from Istanbul to Eskisehir with 150 people including former and All Star 2011 players, representatives of the clubs and managers of Turkish Basketball Federation. Team members from Ankara moved to Eskisehir at 12.00 with a high-speed train. All the team ate lunch together with Anadolu University team at a famous restaurant called Stone Building and at the same evening a Women All Star Cocktail was held at Anemon Hotel. On the event day all the teams transported from the hotel to the venue with special vehicles. After the event, people transported to Istanbul by plane, to Ankara by high-speed train at 18.00 pm.

Budgeting

The costs and expenses arisen while regulating the All Star 2011 budget are provided by Turkish Basketball Federation. As being an event for social purposes ticket prices were determined low. Biletix had the largest share of ticket sales. Tickets could be obtained from online, from the stands at the entrances of the shopping malls and event venue. In addition, a portion of the tickets sent to special guests personally.

Event Staff as Volunteers as Human Resources

The realization of the All Star 2011 event successfully, there is a need for adequate, competent and well-qualified human resources to achieve the goals of the event. In this sense, the staff employed in the All Star Event consisted of Turkish Basketball Federation personnel, Anadolu University personnel and organization company's staff. These people had responsibilities from the beginning to the end of the event. Also, during the staging of the event the personnel in charge were assigned to serve the participants and the audience.

In the All Star 2011 event, a total of 38 employees were assigned including 13 employees in organization, 15 for stage setup and enter-exit controlling, 6 people in branding, 4 people in promotional and advertising business. The personnel were trained people and were selected according to the job requirements. Volunteers were 33 people and students from Anadolu University School of Physical Education. The students were assigned to meet the needs of the audiences and provide the necessary assistance in the hall during the event. In addition, to meet the VIP audience, from Civil Aviation and Cabin Services Program students were assigned.

Marketing and PR

To promote the All Star 2011 event, various activities were organized in the city centre, in shopping malls and in university campus. Also, in shopping malls 3 point shootout contests were done. Brochures and leaflets were distributed in areas of heavy pedestrian traffic. In addition outdoor advertisements were done.

Some of the All Stars were determined by online voting by public people from the official web site of Turkish Basketball Federation www.tbl.org.tr. By carrying out e-mail based subscription system of voting basketball fans also achieved the chance to win various gifts. In public voting; the 100th voter had won 2 tickets for 2 TKBL organizations, 2100th voter had won a DVD player, 4100th voter had won 2 days accommodation in Eskisehir and also had chance to sit on the bench with the players. In addition, it was announced some surprise awards would be distributed to the lucky spectators by drawing during the event.

Wide coverage to reports on the subject were given in the local and national press, on web pages and official web site of the Basketball team's within the scope of public relations. Also, specifically designed train that took the team from Istanbul to Eskisehir moved after a press statement.

Risk Management

To reduce the risks that may occur during staging of the event ambulances and medical teams were ready before the start of the event. In addition, to ensure the security of the event professional security staffs were assigned.

The Preparations for Staging the Event

Under the scope of the program to be held during the event, opening speech, Face Team show, dance shows, talent contests, All Star Basketball game, award ceremonies and concert was taken place. Event duration was determined 5.5 hours between 13.30 to 17.00 pm. and then the concert for 1.5 hours. In this sense, tasks like the preparation of the sports hall, hall decorating, stage establishment, rehearsals and sound adjustment were carried out into two days. In the picture All Star 2011 concert can be seen.

Event Participants Meeting, Receptions and Hospitality

To welcome the participants in to the hall, controllers, routing attendants volunteers met the people and guided them. Also, to have the audience good time, all time shows were done. Giant screens placed throughout the event hall and national TV

channel TRT 3 broadcasted. In order to provide employee communication intercom, wireless radio and mobiles were used.

Staging the Event

Before the event time audiences were taken in by ticket controlling on a regular basis. Entries are provided in to two different doors. Assigned people directed the audience to their seats by checking the tickets. In the VIP entrance the audiences were taken into same way. Front part of the VIP section is devoted to protocol. Private catering was treated for the guests in the VIP.

Ayça Şen and Mustafa Özmen were the announcers. The event started at the scheduled time and magnificent show of Face Team was presented after the opening speech. After the show, Lithuanian Dance Team presented the first one of the five dance shows during the event. Talent competitions were done after the first dance show and then the All Star Teams took to the stage with the concert of Gripin music group. Rewards were given to the winners after the match and the event was ended with the concert of the Gripin.

Throughout the event time any problem or breakdown were emerged. The desired capacity was provided with the seating layout and number of participants. Stands established at the entrance met the needs of the audience. There was any problem with the transportation where the event was held. Public transport services were provided directly to the hall. Adequate parking areas were provided. Also no trouble happened at the ending time and the exit of the audience was provided on a regular basis.

Assessing the Event

The majority of the audience was satisfied with both the demonstration and the facility after the event. The audiences were especially pleased with the demonstration of Face Team and dance shows. All Star show, however, played friendly and no contentious left the game behind the shows. According to a spectators' view about the event; *the event was really entertaining and successful. As far as I know, this is the first event ever in this venue because it has just opened. It seems great after comparing with the other facilities in Eskisehir. The crowd was also well. 3 point shootout, the talent competition and the concert made us entertained. The match was not so contentious but quite good* (www.eksisozluk.com).

But, by drawing in the audience knew the victorious team, a gift was given, and then the teams formed their own fans. Red and White team's players were introduced at the beginning of the match one by one and when every player in the field greeted the audience by sending them basketball balls. In addition, distribution of the small balls between periods also excited the audience. After the game the lucky participant were determined by drawing and present ceremony were celebrated by confetti's. Then the winner team's award was given. After all *Gripin* was met with the audience by a concert.

The interest of the media should be evaluated when evaluating the event. After the event was performed within the next week (January 17-21) news about All Star 2011 were published in the local, national and sports newspapers and also on Internet pages.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This paper has presented the findings of a case study about dimensions of event management and event marketing. It also reviews the literature for event management and

event marketing and approaches. While most of the literature focuses on the entire event management, this paper focuses on the dimensions of event management named ticketing, transportation, human resources (volunteers and trained staff), budgeting, marketing and PR and risk management.

The study illustrates that the event management dimensions in the literature had been applied in to the All Star 2011 organization and the event was successfully managed and marketed. Any problem or trouble was arisen during the event and the target audience was really satisfied. The organization owners and the house owners have reached their objective and reached the number of people.

After evaluating some criteria like being suitable to the standards of the TBF and relevantly using rooms TBF have chosen the facility of Anadolu University. It can be stated that all the costs and expenses arisen had been provided by Turkish Basketball Federation. All the human resources (adequate, competent and well-qualified) had provided. For organizational needs, stage setup, controlling, branding, promoting and advertising the event and for guiding many people were assigned as employees and volunteers. As a marketing strategy in addition to do outdoor advertisements and distributing brochures and leaflets, organizing competitions (e.g. 3 point shootout) about the event is a great idea for promoting a sport event. Overall, the most important thing in an event is the risk management dimension. To reduce the risks that may occur during an event, managers should do risk management well and it can be stated that in this event ambulances, medical teams and security staff were always ready. After applying the dimensions of the event management everything went well, both organizers and participants were pleased after the event. And through the research findings and informal interview with audiences indicated over of average satisfaction about performance of whole event management and marketing.

The study is going to make several contributions for the sport event managers and sport marketing managers about how to use event management dimensions effectively and shape strategies based on this perspective. It can be stated that the research results are useful for presenting the detailed information about managing and marketing an event. The study is just an example of a sport event it can not be generalized and does not represent the universe.

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Mehpare Tokay Argan is an Assistant Professor of Marketing at Bilecik University, Turkey. Her primary research interests are in the areas of health care marketing, social marketing, social campaigns and service marketing. She published book chapter, international based articles about marketing, social marketing, virtual community and health campaign in Turkey. She also presented various works at a range of international and national conferences.

Metin Argan is an associate professor of marketing in Department of Physical Education and Sport School at Anadolu University, Turkey. He received his Ph.D. in marketing from the University of Anadolu. His areas of research include sports marketing, sport sponsorship management, ambush marketing. Particular issues of investigation include consumer behavior in sport, leisure, and sport consumer experiences. He has published books and articles about sports marketing and sponsorship and presented various works at a range of international and national conferences.

