

9

Evaluating the Organisation (II)

Learning objectives

- ❑ Be able to evaluate an organisation regarding its meeting of standards and as to its effectiveness by examining its main management functions, as follows:
 - Design
 - Management and decision-support information systems; knowledge management
 - Financial management and control; business planning
 - Risk assessment and management
 - Human resources; human-resource planning
 - Marketing and communications; marketing planning
 - Sustainability and social responsibility.
- ❑ Be aware of how organisations, events, and programmes can naturally follow (or be designed to follow) a life cycle from creation to termination and how this affects planning and evaluation.

9.1 Design

Design as a process, like planning, starts with goals; or, what is the problem, and how do we come up with the best solution? Design includes both technical and artistic/creative elements, working in harmony. Theatrical sets and stages are designed to both aesthetic and technical specifications. Event sites are designed to meet both logistical and experiential goals.

As emphasized by Berridge, author of *Events Design and Experience* (2007), it is necessary to ask to what extent an event experience can be designed? He argued that it cannot be left to chance and that design must be fully integrated in the concept, structure and execution of an event.

Design has to be hierarchical: a part of concept development, setting and site planning, venues and décor. It will influence marketing and communications, including the brand and image-making. In large part the effectiveness of design will be a subjective evaluation, as in: “can we do better?” Much of the evaluation evidence will come from customer satisfaction measures and the stakeholders who can provide technical feedback.

Figure 9.1: Design goals and KPIs

Suggested design goals	Sample KPIs
<p><i>Programme design</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Create a unique theme and programme ■ Develop a programme plan and schedule ■ Co-create experiences with customers ■ Foster programming innovation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ High level of customer satisfaction ■ Internal design excellence as judged by staff, volunteers, managers and stakeholders ■ Comparative design excellence: independent quality evaluations by experts, including benchmarking ■ Acceptance of programming changes by customers and other key stakeholders
<p><i>Setting design</i></p> <p>(Including site planning, aesthetics and decor; links directly to operations and logistics)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Prepare and implement a site plan ■ Develop a decoration theme and detailed design 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Customer/guest satisfaction ■ Achievement of surprise and creation of the omg! Or wow! factor (observation and direct feedback from guests) ■ Excellence of design judged by comparisons or experts (an aesthetics audit?)
<p><i>Service design</i></p> <p>(Covering all systems for staff and volunteer interactions with guests, customers or participants; also covers VIP and performer services)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Employ service blueprinting or other methods to plan and deliver the highest possible level of customer satisfaction ■ Evaluate customer experiences and satisfaction to achieve continuous improvement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Zero service failures as defined by blueprint specifications; or set targets for reduction ■ Continuous improvement in customer satisfaction levels; set targets ■ Reduce complaints; set targets <p>Must be tied to HR evaluation (i.e., performance standards for staff and volunteers)</p>
<p><i>Consumables design</i></p> <p>(Covers food and beverages, gifts and souvenirs, merchandise)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Demonstrate adherence to all applicable standards and regulations (e.g., food safety) ■ Achieve high levels of customer satisfaction ■ Evaluate customer/guest experiences and their direct feedback to ensure continuous improvement ■ Work with suppliers to make mutually beneficial improvements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Zero service failures (i.e., no health or safety problems) ■ Licensing compliance (usually requires independent inspections) ■ High customer/guest satisfaction ■ Demonstrated improvements (requires benchmark data and a plan)

In Figure 9.1 design is sub-divided into these categories: programme, setting, service, and consumables. The *programme* consists of the theme and the activities or experiences of those participating in the event. This means the actual sport (spectator or participant) or arts and entertainment (again, for participants or spectators). For business events it includes the educational and social sessions, and the activities associated with exhibiting and marketing. Programmes are scheduled, but there are always informal activities and unplanned experiences occurring at events that should also be evaluated.

Quality standards should be set for all these elements, with the guest, participants and customers usually the main source of evidence for quality evaluations.

Programme quality is usually the dominant consideration when it comes to customer satisfaction, whereas service quality (mainly the interactions between attendees and the setting and staff/volunteers) can generate specific complaints. Chapters 10 and 11 cover evaluation of experiences and quality in greater detail.

9.2 Management and decision-support information systems; knowledge management

Information management is really a technical process employing records and computer systems, while knowledge management starts with the culture and implementation of principles of the 'learning organisation'. It encompasses formal learning and professional development, innovation, and tacit knowledge (i.e., facts, and what is understood by personnel and stakeholders – namely wisdom). What is needed to support decisions is a combination of the two.

Evaluation is an integral part of this process, but the results of research and evaluation have to be applied, and that requires the experience and wisdom of people. The standardization and sharing of research, market intelligence and evaluation/impact assessments will greatly enhance learning and improve decision making, which makes a strong case for collaborations and portfolio management.

Figure 9.2: Information and knowledge management goals and KPIs

Suggested goals: information systems and knowledge management	Sample KPIs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Provide necessary information for all management functions through research, monitoring, environmental scanning, benchmarking & evaluation. ■ Facilitate the documentation and sharing of experiences and knowledge among personnel, and its perpetuation as 'institutional memory'. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Elimination of data and knowledge gaps (which can only be demonstrated on an as-needed basis) ■ The documentation and accessibility of all data, research and evaluation findings ■ Training effectiveness (i.e., with regard to passing on experiences and wisdom)

9.3 Financial management and business planning

Financial accounts are a given, as most organisations are required to have them done professionally every year. The organisation's accountants will certify the statements, while internally five different financial 'accounts' are maintained:

- ◆ Asset
- ◆ Liability
- ◆ Equity
- ◆ Revenue
- ◆ Expense