

# 4

## Project management and logistics

### Learning objectives

On completion of this chapter, you will be able to:

- Recognise the key benefits of utilising a project management framework in an events context
- Apply relevant project management concepts, principles and techniques to the planning and implementation of events
- Explain the key benefits associated with event logistics concepts and principles
- Apply relevant event logistics concepts and principles to the conduct of specific and general types of events
- Communicate the role and importance of logistical operational considerations.

### Project management perspectives

Project management concepts, principles and techniques are commonly used for the completion of an extremely broad range of projects including roads, bridges, buildings, software packages and events. In the management of planned events the same principles apply. Even events held on a regular basis will be complex, given the broad range of uncertainties that exist, as well as the differences from one year to the next in terms of stakeholder activities, attendees' behaviours, marketing requirements, and a broad range of other contingencies. Hence, events will benefit from the application of a project management approach. Furthermore, events critically depend on progress that is made with careful planning and preparation prior to the actual staging of the event.

Accordingly, project management has become an essential element in the event manager's toolkit.

- Project management provides a **methodological approach** to event management. In this way the event considers these factors;



**Figure 4.1:** Key factors to consider in project management

The first three of these factors, money, time, and quality are often referred to as the Triple Constraint or the Iron Triangle and have become a central concept in project management research and practice. They also represent *trade-offs* that the project manager can manipulate and utilise.

**Consider this:** What trade-offs exist in your local community event?

- **Expandability** meaning that project management techniques can be used just as effectively on small or large events, or even on isolated parts of an event which can be regarded as stand-alone projects.



**What elements of an event could be regarded as a stand-alone project?**

- As a **body of knowledge**, project management has been applied to a diverse range of large and small projects. As the scope and range of projects, including events, broadens, so too does the set of techniques, principles, and concepts that can be utilised. This has led to development of a standard system known as PMBOK (Project Management Body of Knowledge). Particularly for large, complex events, the event industry clearly benefits from the adaptation and application of this body of knowledge.
- **Effective, on-going communication** is one of the most critical aspects associated with the conduct of a successful event. Event plans, key milestones, and on-going progress, need to be clearly communicated to key stakeholders in a timely and predictable manner. By providing a common terminology, project management facilitates communication that is, in fact, clear and unambiguous.



*What approval processes do you have to manage communication effectively?*

## Running sheets

Did you know? For each event it is important to create a running sheet for all stakeholders. An event manager can have a detailed running sheet during planning and operations phases and provide a brief running sheet to the stakeholders, so expectations are clear. Below is an example of a brief running sheet for an exhibition.

Time	Activity	Responsibility	Notes
7.30 – 10am	Bump in begins (event set up)	EM	EM opens door and all exhibitors bump in
10 am	Doors open for the public	EM	Guests arrive
10am-4pm	Exhibition operates	All	Event in full swing
4 am– 6pm	Bump out (shut down)	All	Event finishes and bump out begins. All stakeholders need to have left by 6pm.

**Table 4.1:** Brief running sheet for all exhibition stakeholders

- Widespread recognition of event management as a **profession** is strongly supported by the application of systematic approaches, such as project management, and the utilisation of associated processes and procedures.
- There is often a tendency for individuals to own a particular event and dominate the way in which the event evolves and develops. Project management serves to **formalise and depersonalise** event processes and procedures, establishing on-going documentation requirements, and avoiding the risks associated with long-term event success depending on one person.



*What would you think are the main risks associated with one person owning or dominating a particular event?*

- The document requirements associated with project management provide specific event-related information, particularly in terms of event progress, and are developed according to a standard format facilitating **accountability to stakeholders**.
- The project management approach provides a clear framework for systematic **training** for employees and volunteers. The more long-term

**development** needs of employees may also be facilitated by the project management body of knowledge.

- Event planning seldom gets the recognition it deserves but the use of a systematic, well-documented, project planning approach to events significantly **increases the profile of event planning**, making its importance more obvious to event stakeholders.

## Developing event project plans

There are a range of project management principles that can be adapted and effectively utilised as part of the event management process. These principles and their relevance to event management are discussed below.



**Figure 4.2:** Feasibility considerations

**Feasibility considerations:** Whether or not a project should proceed, or an event should be staged, gives rise to the obvious question: “Is it feasible?” A plausible answer to this question is particularly important when public sector approval is required or when external funding is sought. Relevant considerations from an events perspective include those in Figure 4.2.