

Cases for Event Management and Event Tourism

Questions and answers for analysis

Chapter 9

Q1. Is there one 'best approach' to leadership in events?

It is unlikely that one single leadership approach will suit every situation an event manager could possibly face. For example, leadership styles characterised by an individualised approach may be difficult to enact when there is a large workforce. In these situations, it can be challenging for an event manager to spend time with each individual staff member to understand their role-specific and development needs. In emergency situations, event managers may need to dispense with a consultative leadership approach in favour of an authoritative demeanour and direct communication. This leadership approach may be appropriate for ensuring that pre-formulated policies and procedures are followed to ensure the safety of all personnel and patrons on the event site. These examples highlight the relevance of contextual leadership theories, which recognise a need for adaptability among leaders in shifting their style to best support and guide their followers in light of shifting and emerging circumstances (e.g., Oc, 2018).

Q2. Can you explain some examples of situations where contrasting leadership styles may be needed in event contexts?

Managing particular groups of event staff could call for particular leadership styles to be adopted to ensure that their development needs are met and that they are equipped with the skills and knowledge to perform their roles effectively. For example, overseeing a large group of young volunteers who lack workplace experience could require a more hands-on coaching or mentoring approach. Adopting an individualised leadership style may be beneficial in boosting the volunteers' confidence by adopting a coaching approach to clarifying role requirements and providing constructive feedback in an encouraging manner. In contrast, taking a transactional approach may be ill-advised in this situation as volunteer retention often hinges on positive affirmation of performance in the absence of monetary remuneration (e.g., Hallmann & Zehrer, 2019). However, transactional leadership could be appropriate for site construction and pack-down scenarios. Site construction and pack down phases of events are inherently laden with safety risks due to potential workplace hazards such as the presence of construction equipment in a highly dynamic work environment, where workers and vehicles are constantly on the move. Assertive leadership may therefore be needed to ensure safety protocols are adhered to whilst simultaneously balancing inflexible resource schedules.

Q3. How can leaders in the events industry assess their own performance and effectiveness?

Besides taking time for personally reflecting on their own leadership practices and effectiveness, event managers can also look to external sources for further insights. For example, event managers can observe organisational indicators such as staff turnover and insights gleaned from exit interviews with departing staff to gauge whether their leadership style may be in need of adjustment. Mechanisms for followers to provide feedback may also be

implemented, such as online surveys. However, feedback mechanism may need to be anonymous as followers may not be comfortable conveying negative feedback if they feel they may be personally identified. In situations where a negative or dysfunctional workplace culture, engaging an independent human resource consultant may be worthwhile. Engaging an independent, external mediator may help staff feel at ease with offering their authentic perspectives and perhaps with engaging in constructive dialogue to formulate solutions.