

# How Event Management has changed in 21<sup>st</sup> century: Analysis of Woolgoolga Curryfest Festival

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## ABSTRACT

In this paper the focus of the researchers is to analyse the changes in event management industry. Event management is completely changed in 2016 in comparison to 1990. The technology, skilled labour force, training and other dimensions have changed the event management in 21<sup>st</sup> century. Previously event management was not organized field and there was lack of professional approach in event industry. In this paper the researchers will also compare the event management with the project management to see the similarities and differences.

## Keywords

Festival, Curryfest, Woolgoolga, Event Management

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In this paper the researchers will analyse the changes happened in event management industry from the perspective of technology and other dynamic changes happened in 21<sup>st</sup> century. This paper is based on case based approach in which writers have analysed Woolgoolga Curryfest Festival happened in Australia on 24<sup>th</sup> September 2016 [3]. In the past few years the number of food festivals are growing across Australia because number of Asian tourist and students are also increasing in the country. Those food festivals have a direct impact in attracting the tourism towards the city of New South Wales. This event was organized in Woolgoolga in New South Wales. It was a new learning for writer as well because being a Chinese national the writer was much enthusiastic about tasting Indian curries and food. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century management people often talk about the word cultural diversity [13]. Cultural diversity in the organization increases when people from different religion, nationalities, caste, age-group and education level works together under the same roof. It is important for an individual to have knowledge of different cultures if he/she wants to excel in today's competitive environment. The researchers will also see the similarities between project management and event management in the chosen case of Woolgoolga Curryfest Festival.

## 2. OBJECTIVES

The researchers have chosen to write this paper on event management field because there has been limited research done in the field of event management. In present time, event management field is exploring and lot of new practices have been followed in event industry. There are two major objectives to write this paper:

- i. To analyse the changes happened in event management industry by studying the success of Woolgoolga Curryfest Festival happened in September 2016.

- ii. To see the similarities between event management and project management field by studying the case of Woolgoolga Festival.

## 3. Methodology

The case based methodology has used in this research paper. The researchers are analysing Woolgoolga Curryfest Festival to check its market mix and preparation. The similarities between preparing a project and event will also be analysed. The researchers have personally attended this event to collect details about this event and write a paper on that.

## 4. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 4.1 Description and history of event

The Woolgoolga Curryfest was first held in the small NSW coastal town of Woolgoolga, near Coffs Harbour, in 2006. From 2006 the Punjabi Indian community is constantly organizing this event to offer taste of Indian Cuisines to the visitors [9]. The people come here from near and far to honour the unique cultural heritage, music and cuisine offered by event organizers. On the event day, many international and interstate visitors join each other to perform dance in the streets and enjoy the event. This festival incorporates several multicultural cuisines, cooking demonstrations, local restaurant nights, dancing, music, movies, cultural activities and other fun activities on the beautiful beach of Woolgoolga. The cost of entry is not much in this event. It is merely \$5 for adults and free for school age children and babies [3]. This festival is currently in its 11<sup>th</sup> year and the organizers of the festival have shifted it from April to September to avoid wet weather condition. The risk management is an important aspect of event management [5]. The bad weather conditions are a part of unplanned natural risk which can disturb the whole event. The event organizers took a precaution to avoid the risk of bad weather conditions by shifting the event to the month of September. The total number of visitors in the festival were approximately 22000. In 2014, nearly 15000 people have attended this Curryfest festival [2].

### 4.2 Main attractions of the event

This event is not limited only upto providing different tastes to the visitors, the event organizers also provide cultural entertainment to the guests. The individuals and families can sit of chair and tables near sparkling Pacific Ocean and enjoy different types of curries [9]. The event is not only offering readymade curries but there is also demonstration on cooking skills which helps the individual in learning the recipes of Indian food. The small age children and kids are also an important part of this event. There is a dedicated Kids Zone, where different types of rides, activities and entertainment keep the kids busy in the event. Recently Indian Prime Minister Mr. Modi have proposed Yoga Day at UN and now the whole world celebrate International Yoga Day on 21<sup>st</sup>

June [10]. The local yoga teachers and healers also share their knowledge on different yoga exercise during this event.

The sponsors of this event have been categorized in different categories *i.e.* platinum, gold, silver and bronze. The event has also been known as “Regional Australia Bank Woolgoolga Curryfest.” Regional Australian Bank also categorized as Platinum sponsor of the event. Destination NSW is the Gold sponsor of the event[4]. There are many players in the category of silver sponsors for example, Air India, Focus Magazine, Mercedes Benz, Prime 7 etc. Coffs Electronics and DHM Financial Group are the Bronze sponsors of the event.

### 4.3 Service Quality Gap in the Event

The service model gaps are the gaps between customers’ expectation and actual delivery of service to the customers during the event. The gaps can be on the side of customers *i.e.*, what they expect and what they get during the event [6]. The other gaps is on the side of service providers, that is organizers don’t have ample information what customers and internal employees want [16]. In this event mainly the customers were expecting a taste of different curries and cultural knowledge. Being a Chinese national the writer was feeling very aloof in the event. The language of communication was main problem. There were either speaking in Hindi or English. There were certain stalls on which customers rush was more than expected, it was hard to wait for the turn on those stalls. On the customer end, most of the expectations have been met with multicultural celebration.

The services could have been improved on the side of internal staff members because few exhibitors were not satisfied with the rates. They were expecting more footfalls but it was not according to their expectations. The event was also showing colours of different cultures but most of the event volunteers were Punjabi Indians. There must be volunteers from other nationalities too so that they can provide a homily environment to the foreign visitors. It was a one day event. All the internal staff was working restlessly to make event successful. There should be some rest hours also for the staff members so that they can regain their energy. There was suppliers issue on certain stalls as the raw material required for making curries was finishing off quickly. Those suppliers’ issues were very minor in nature and it can’t be generalized. There were ample amount of visitors who visited this event but not large than the expectation of event organizers so they were able to manage it properly. In the Appendix section, the writer has also attached reviews of the visitors who attended the event.

### 4.4 Marketing-mix of the Event

Marketing mix of the organization is basically consisting of 4Ps which are product, price, place and promotion [15]. Product is the first and most important element of the marketing mix. There can be tangible product or intangible service being offered by the organization to the company. In this case of Woolgoolga Curryfest the cuisine services have been offered to the customers. The writer will put it in the category of services in which different food curries have been offered to the customers. In this century the organizations and event organizers are working on new ways of delivering services to the customers to make it more innovative and unique. In Woolgoolga Curryfest the organizers are not simply offering different types of Indian curries to the visitors. They are also offering the experience of coastal area near Pacific Ocean, good platform to socialize with each other, different interesting games for kids and additional training on cooking. Over a period of time the service marketing mix of

the companies have been extended to 7Ps instead of 4Ps. The additional 3Ps are people, physical evidence and process.

### 4.5 Price

The event organizing has offered an economic pricing [12] to the customers for making an entry in Curryfest festival. The gate admission is available only at Australian \$5 [3]. The gate entry is completely free for school age children and young people. Inside the gate the people need to pay different amounts as per their convenience at food stalls and other stalls exhibited there. The prices of various curries vary between 12-25 dollars. The family persons and individual can enjoy the events at an economic cost. Another way to look at the pricing policy of the event is to check the pricing offered to the exhibitors. There are different categories food and non-food producing stalls available to the exhibitors. The prices of the stall varies as per the size of the stalls. The different price options are mentioned below in the table.

### 4.6 Place

The organizers have selected Woolgoolga as the place for Curryfest festival. Woolgoolga is a town on the Mid North Coast of New South Wales. In writer’s opinion Woolgoolga is the perfect place for organizing an Indian curry festival because most of the population reside at Woolgoolga are Punjabi Indians. Punjabi community can provide the real environment in which visitors feel like being in India. That community can also enrich people’s knowledge about Indian traditions and culture. Curryfest festival is the only event organized in Woolgoolga town so people wait for that event enthusiastically. The local community actively participate in providing the unique experience to the visitors. The main feature of place where the services have been offered to the customers is that it should be easily accessible and customers don’t have to face any unnecessary hurdle. Woolgoolga town has two beaches on the Pacific Ocean which makes this location more enjoyable for the visitors. The visitors at Curryfest festival are not enjoying the Indian curries but also the sight-seeing near beach. The kids also have a relaxing time with different type of activities planned for them.

### 4.7 Promotion

The social networking sites are the new tool of promotion mix of the companies [7]. Social Networking Sites helped the small-medium enterprises and medium scale event organizers to reach global audience. The event organizers at Curryfest festival have also used social networking sites like facebook and twitter for promotion of their event and reaching to many audience. The organizers also promote events through online marketing on their websites and word-of-mouth marketing by Punjabi community across Australia. The organizers are also using smartphones applications for promotion of their event. This generation believes more in smartphone marketing [11]. The traditional print marketing through pamphlets, newspapers and other means is also an important part of the promotional mix of the company.

### 4.8 Evaluation of marketing mix

In writer’s opinion, the marketing mix of the event organizers is very much helpful in achieving the objectives of the event. Curryfest festival was celebrating its 11<sup>th</sup> edition and the number of visitors are consistently increasing over a period. The concept is such that the event is not limited to provide the taste of different types of curries to the visitors but there are also non-food stalls. The event organizers have reached a mass number of audience with the help of their promotional mix and their concept is so unique that all the different

communities live in Australia have a liking for it. The duration of the event is not much. The families loved to spend their time for a day near beach. The pricing also suits to the external customers as well as the exhibitors coming from the outside. The event is organized in such a manner so that exhibitors coming from other locations don't have to wait for too many days. The time has also shifted from April to September so that there will be concern of weather.

Based on overall evaluation of the event, the writers will give a score of 80 out of 100 on overall marketing mix and organization of the event. The score of 80 is good but there are certain improvements are needed in few areas of the event to make it more prolific in near future.

## **5. FINDINGS**

### **5.1 Similarities between event management and project management**

While attending the Curryfest festival the researchers have analysed certain similarities between managing a project and event. Those similarities are mentioned below.

There are certain tangible and intangible goals in project [8]. Similarly, there are tangible and intangible goals in event also. The event organizers were concerned about their goals to maximize the number of attendees.

Budget and skilled labour are the main constraint of a project. In this 21<sup>st</sup> century the event management also require technically skilled labour who are well-averse with modern methods of promoting an event [14]. The budget was also a main constraint for Curryfest festival.

While delivering a project, the project team needs to work in different phases to meet actual deadlines for delivering a project. The project team also set milestones for them to achieve project combined goals. Event also has deadline on the day event has scheduled. The event team also works in different phases for final day preparation.

Diversity management is also a common feature in both event and project management. Both project team leaders and event managers have the challenge to handle culturally diverse teams to be productive and efficiently delivering results.

The internal communication with the team and external communication with clients and prospective guests matters both in project management and event management. There are chances of confusion with proper communication by project team leaders and event managers.

Ethics is major point of concern at present. The external public and community expects both project managers and event managers to be ethical in their approach. Project managers and Event managers need to understand their corporate social responsibility towards the community. Leadership plays a big role in both event and project management. Leaders in both event and project should be flexible in their approach to handle the diverse situations.

In both event management and project management tracking the progress is important. There are different management tools used by the leaders which help in tracking the progress of events as well as projects. Those tools help in tracking the progress of projects in different phases.

### **5.2 Main findings on how event management has changed in 2016 as compared to 1990s**

Previously, in 1990s the event management was less professional in nature because there were no special courses and training on event management but now there are academic as well as technical courses for event management. The workforce is professionally trained to manage the events.

The technology is playing a bigger role in handling the marketing mix of the events. The web 2.0 social media tools and internet is taking events from one country to another country [1]. The technology played a major role in globalization of the events. The event managers can attract large audience from different corners of the world because technology has reduced all the barriers.

Event management is a proper field in 2016. Various jobs and opportunities are available in the event management field at present. Both the academicians and professionals are taking event management seriously for future growth.

Event management industry is more dynamic in 2016. Like other industries, event industries are also taking continuous learning from its past for their future growth. The event managers are going through their past records and checking the records for event failures or success in past. The researchers and academicians are writing papers on events at present. So, rich texts have been prepared in event industry.

While deciding the price of tickets in events, there are been lot of segregation of tickets among different categories in the events at present. The event managers define different categories and accordingly tickets have been designed for those categories. In Curryfest festival there were different ticket pricing for children and adults.

## **6. CONCLUSION**

Based on overall discussion on Curryfest festival it can be said that event management is more dynamic rather than static in 2016. The event industry has lot of changes i.e. professional approach, born-global approach, social-media promotion, technical upliftment, skilled labour and efficient training in the field of event management. The discussion on Curryfest festival has proved that event management approach is changed in 2016 in comparison to 1990s. There has been lot of professionalism in the field of event management. Another conclusion based on this research paper is that event management share many similarities with project management field. In both events and projects leadership plays an important role. The deadlines and goals are the backbone of both event and project management fields. Technology is the major driving force in both events and projects. In future, as the technology changes, it will give new heights to event management.

## **7. LIMITATIONS OF RESEARCH**

There are certain limitations of this research paper. This research paper is analysing the event from the perspective of Curryfest festival only. The main analysis in this paper is based on the secondary data available on Curryfest festival. Though the writers also attended Curryfest festival but there is no effort to collect the primary data related to the events. The participants' perspective is absent in this secondary research on events.

**Table 1: Price Comparison of Stalls**

Type of Stall	Price per booth
Market Stall- 3m x 3m- Non-food producing	\$130
Deluxe Market Stall- 6mx3m- Non-food producing	\$200
Standard hot food vendor- 3mx3m	\$300
Deluxe Stall- Hot food vendor	\$500
Community/ NFP Organization	\$75
Kidz Zone- Children activities	\$0.01
Traditional- Coffee/Cold Food Vendor	\$200

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