STRATEGIES FOR ENSURING SUCCESSFUL ORGANISATION OF A SPORTING EVENT

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ABSTRACT

Organising a sporting event has become highly professional, with host of event managers netering the domain. However, a professional sports person is better equipped to hand; le such events, as he understands the nuances of the game. The paper outlines the checklist required for successful organization of the sporting event.

Key words: Sporting event, strategic planning, sports checklist, event management.

A. INTRODUCTION

The success in organizing a sporting events depends on strategic planning of the event, using the project management tools and techniques. Such sports events offer tremendous socio-economic benefits to the hosts. It has been proven that mega sports events like Olympics, Asian Games, and World Soccer encourage local and regional economic development by attracting investment, tourism and media attention for the host country. Hence, professional management while hosting of sport events, whether large international events (Olympic Games, Commonwealth) or smaller niche interest events have become more and more important.

The benefits, which are created during and after the period of staging an event, can have an lasting impact on the local economy and environment like additional employment generation, facilities as well as long lasting impacts on the tourism industry, besides building a sporting environment in the country. Present paper tries to identify the major activities required to plan for a sporting event.
B. CASE ILLUSTRATIONS

Recent event wherein seven Indian shooters out of the squad of 43 shooters had to face difficulties while participating in the World Championships in Granada, Spain is a classic example of need for strategic planning for a sporting event. As per plan they were to be provided with the accreditation cards in Granada, so they could reach Incheon without an unnecessary trip to India. The accreditation passes act as visa waivers for the Asian Games; this meant that in the absence of the passes, the shooters had to travel to New Delhi and apply for the visa at the South Korean embassy there. In special cases like this, the visas are granted in quick time, within 24 hours; so the shooters did get the visas, but this caused them unnecessary hassle of travel to New Delhi, the application for a visa at the South Korean embassy, and the wait for the passports. They lost time and sleep over this process. Most crucially, they lost the time to get acclimatized to the conditions at the venue — time was of the greatest importance, for the shooting event begins on Saturday.

Similarly, in another case, it took around 4 hours to the star shooter of Indian team Abhinav Bindra to reach the athletes village, as there was no official to receive him or help him release his shooting equipment. Though the shooting association claims credit for the success of the shooters, but it was not very well managed (as quoted in The The Tribune Online Edition, sep 19, 2014). The question is how to prevent such instances? There is a very small but extremely vital item called ‘CHECKLIST’ which proves to be wonderful tool to manage such breakdowns.

C. ENSURING STRATEGIC ORIENTATION

The Checklist is also popularly known as ‘to do list’. Checklist may be defined as a list of things that can be checked off as completed or noted (your dictionary). It is also defined as “a list of items required, things to be done, or points to be considered, used as a reminder.” Business dictionary defines checklist as “a comprehensive list of important or relevant action, or steps to be taken in a specific order. In simple words a checklist is a type of informational job aid used to reduce failure by compensating for potential limits of human memory and attention. It helps to ensure consistency and completeness in carrying out a task.

Checklist may be personal checklist, project checklist, revolving checklist and priority checklist. Making a checklist for personal use is a good way to start off on the right foot. It ensures the timely accomplishment of tasks and helps in keeping track of projects on deadline. Checklist varies from project to project. Each project should have its own checklist of objectives and tasks. As the project team works on it, it can cross off each piece. This helps to make sure everything gets done in a timely fashion and that no piece is forgotten or swept under the rug. These lists can also be used to fix accountability. There can be revolving checklists which is used for daily tasks that need to be completed regardless of other business attended to. Priority checklists are a little more involved than basic checklists, because they also include a priority component, meaning that certain tasks are more important than others and must be done first. With these lists, accountability is key, so make sure each task that is accomplished has initials next to it of someone who will
vouch for the work. The lists work best for event planning, where team members need to see the whole picture but have to break down the components to make sure everything goes according to plan.

It is appropriate to use the checklist for both small and large events. Following are few cautions for preparing checklists:

**Categorization of Event:** As given in appendix at the end of this paper the checklist for managing sports event can be divided into three parts:

(a) Checklist for Planning Event  
(b) Checklist for Executing Event  
(c) Checklist Post Event

To take an example in order to handle the VIPs, the task should be divided as per above stated three categories. In Planning event stage the checklist should talk about who to invite, invitations to be printed, time-scale to invite, supporting literature to accompany invitations. Checklist for executing event should include arrival arrangements, meeting VIPs and tour of event, seating / accommodation arrangements. Checklist Post event should include departure times, ‘thank you’ and follow up correspondence.

**Should not be treated as Reference Document:** Because a checklist cannot purport to be entirely comprehensive, it should not be necessarily the only reference document used by event organisers.

**Should be prepared by experienced sports event organizer:** The person who is going to prepare a checklist should possess good organisation skills. This will help in identification of tasks and also fulfillment of such tasks. The experience person will definitely help strategically to make the event all the better!

**Should fix responsibility:** Depending on the size of the event and the size (and energy level!) of organising committee, many of these tasks will require more than one person. Checklist should be designed in such a way that the responsibility for each task should be fixed. It will help in holding accountability in the event of failure.

**Should be Clear:** There should be clarity w.r.t. language used. There should be no space for ambiguity. Each task should be well defined to avoid overlapping.

**Consideration of Minutes of Meeting held w.r.t. event:** While preparing checklist it is imperative to consider the minutes of the meetings held w.r.t. particular event for which the checklist is to be prepared. All important decisions should be noted so that checklist should help in the implementation of these decisions. Ingredients: Among others, depending upon the scale of the event, the checklist must cover few important points like Agenda, Venue, Inviting Speakers and Facilitators, Props, Materials, Meals and Refreshments, Responding to Inquiries & Confirming Attendance, Registration, Lodging, Transportation and Documenting the Event.
Making checklists can seem tedious and boring, but the practice can reduce risk of failure by improving efficiency and minimizing mistakes. Also, with checklists there's a written paper trail showing accountability for each leg of any project. There is a tendency among some people to think of checklists as the enemy—part of a mindless, routine way of doing things that doesn’t allow for creativity and spontaneity. But a good checklist, when diligently employed has been proven to literally be a lifesaver in some situations.

APPENDIX RECOMMENDED CHECKLIST FOR PLANNING A SPORTS EVENT

A. CHECKLIST FOR PLANNING SPORTS EVENT

Are you clear about
- The objectives for your event?
- The kind of event you want to have?
- The team who will organise the event
- The name of the event
- The scale of the event
- The division of the tasks that need to be accomplished?
- Process of decision making in your group?
In your list of tasks to be accomplished, have you included...
- Setting a date for your event?
- Picking a venue?
- Setting a time?
Have you...
- Prepared the budget?
- Decided about sources of raising funding?
- Secured your venue?
- Created a plan for promoting your event?
- Created promotional materials?
- Decided what type of media coverage you want?
- Set an agenda?
- Invited speakers?
- Invited participants?
- Written or collected the Welcome Pack materials for your participants?
- Written or collected the Welcome Pack materials for your speakers?
- Written or collected the Welcome Pack materials for representatives of the media?
- Made sure your venue caters to people with disabilities?
- Organised documentation of your event?
- Taken care of all the details, like:
  - Organised transportation, if necessary?
  - Ordered the food and organised the meals?
- Organised lodging, if necessary?
- Confirmed the attendance of your participants and speakers?
- Arranged for child care, if necessary?
- Arranged for translation, if necessary?
- Created a map to your venue or given directions?
Are you prepared to...
- Be flexible in case anything unexpected happens?
- Who will be accountable for what?

B. CHECKLIST FOR EXECUTING YOUR EVENT
- Have you make sure that following are ready:
  - The Welcome Packs?
  - The venue?
  - The food?
  - The props that the speakers will need?
  - Made a back-up plan, just in case?

Who is
- Welcoming the participants, guests, speakers, and media representatives?
- Registering the participants and giving them their Welcome Packs?
- Co-ordinating the media and making sure the journalists have what they need?
- Staying at the registration/information desk during the entire event to give assistance?
- Staffing the event, facilitating the meeting, introducing the speakers?
- Making sure the venue stays clean and neat?
- Documenting the event?
- Passing out the evaluation forms?
- Collecting the evaluation forms?

B. CHECKLIST FOR AFTER YOUR EVENT
Are you...
- Reflecting on and assessing your event?
- Reading your evaluation forms?
- Writing thank you letters to the speakers, the media, your funders, and anyone else who supported your event?
- Creating and delivering post-event materials?
Will you...
- Think ahead about how you pursue connections made and ideas generated during this event?
- Think about how you can organise an even better event next time?
REFERENCES