

It's Possible Here" into the YouTube search bar. Event planners also use YouTube to promote and chronicle events. If you type in the name of the organization, you can learn more about the National Senior Games Association by watching its promotional video.

- *Discussion forums.* Also known as discussion boards, these are online communities that allow for discussions by groups with a common interest. Posts to the site are organized into related threads around questions and answers or by community discussions. Rivals is a popular website that provides discussion forums for high school and college sports. According to its website, Rivals (2012) drives what it calls the "ultimate fan experience" by integrating exclusive expert content into a network of team-based sites with message boards and various community tools.
- *Photo sharing.* Sites such as Flickr allow users to share their photos to a large audience via the Internet. Event planners may use photo sharing as a customer service and relationship marketing tool by posting event photos after the conclusion of the event. These photos can then be used by multiple parties for various purposes.

On-Site Event Communications

In many cases, the social media forms just described are used predominantly before and after a sporting event. However, on-site communication during the event is also critically important. Key staff personnel should be readily available during the course of an event. Staff members can communicate with each other and with other key stakeholders during the course of a sporting event in a number of ways. One way is via handheld two-way radio devices. Perhaps most often used is mobile technology, including cell phones, texting, and various mobile applications. A number of professional teams (e.g., the San Francisco 49ers) are using state-of-the-art mobile applications that helps fans find parking spots, purchase premium seat upgrades, check in and locate their seats, order food and beverages to be delivered to their seats, find the closest restroom with the shortest line, watch high-definition instant replay videos and close-up videos, view exclusive content, promotions, coupons, and statistics, and get traffic information and the fastest route home after the game (Reddy 2015).

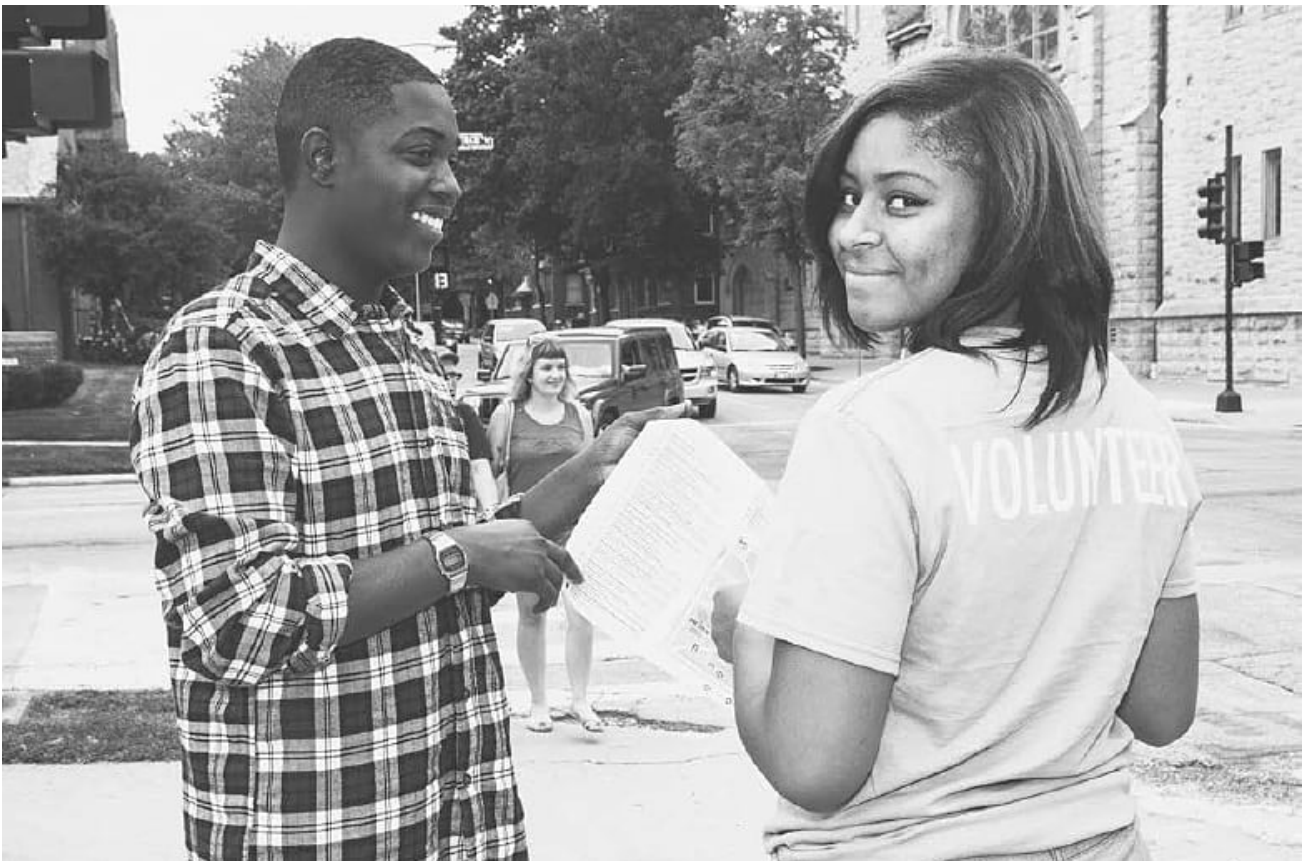
Volunteers

Volunteers are the lifeblood of most sporting events, especially for youth and amateur events that travel between markets. According to the U.S. Department of Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics (2016), 62.6 million people volunteered through or for an organization at least once between September 2014 and September 2015. Volunteering is "an activity which takes place through not for profit organizations or projects and is undertaken to be of benefit to the community and the volunteer; of the volunteer's own free will and without coercion; for no financial payment; and in designated volunteer positions only" (Cuskelly, Hoye, and Auld 2006, p. 5). According to Volunteer Canada (2017),

approximately 30 percent of Canadians volunteer their time and 50 percent volunteer their money. In 2002, 14.8 percent of adults in England volunteered in sport programs (Sport England 2012).

Finding Volunteers

The quality of volunteers for a sporting event is directly related to the efforts by event planners to attract people who will make a positive contribution to the success of the event (deLisle 2009). According to Kim and Bang (2012), several factors are important in recruiting and hiring volunteers. First, it is important that managers understand the demographics and the motivation of volunteers. For example, the demographic makeup of volunteers for a marathon may be middle-aged males, while another event involving extreme sports may consist of younger volunteers. People's motivations may also differ. A volunteer may be motivated for egoistic, humanitarian, leisure, or career-related reasons. But most people volunteer because they want to be involved with something worthwhile, make the event a success, contribute to a better society, and give back to the community. Second, event managers should seek to identify individual fans and participants who may have an interest in volunteering. For example, avid golf fans may be willing to volunteer for an event such as the U.S. Open because they are rewarded with free tickets in exchange for their work. Third, it is important for event planners to place volunteers in positions that match their skill and aptitudes.



It is important to engage quality volunteers who will have a positive impact on the event.

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Working With Volunteers

Although the event industry is highly dependent on volunteers, utilizing them properly is one of the biggest challenges of many organizations. There are many reasons why volunteers are not effectively utilized; deLisle (2009) offers a number of strategies for enhancing the volunteer experience.

Organizations should interview volunteers and be prepared to answer questions related to the job such as the necessary responsibilities and qualifications. The sport organization should gain an understanding of the motivation of each volunteer and try to satisfy the volunteer's needs in terms of her motivations. As suggested by deLisle, some volunteers want to feel important as they carry around a two-way radio, and others simply want a free T-shirt. The interviewer should provide a volunteer with information about the organization and should start the process of developing a positive rapport with the candidate. The interviewer should also assist with placing the volunteer in a position in which he will succeed because of his qualifications and motivations.

Volunteer training is critical to the success of the event. Organizations spend months and years planning for a successful event that will be delivered both to participants and to spectators. Unfortunately, many of these same organizations do not train those persons who will be interacting with the event participants and spectators. Volunteer training should not happen on the job; rather, an orientation meeting should occur before the start of the event. According to deLisle, the orientation meeting should cover the following topics:

- Introduction to the organization and the staff
- Goals and objectives of the event
- Rights and responsibilities of volunteers
- Discussion and distribution of the volunteer manual
- Accident procedures
- Scheduling, attendance, and absenteeism
- Dress code
- Performance evaluation procedures
- Progressive discipline policies
- Parking and access to the site

Team Building

A team is a group of people who unite to accomplish a common mission or objective. Organizations develop teams in an effort to empower employees to contribute more fully

and in order to increase productivity (Shonk 1992). In the case of a sporting event, a number of teams may be involved. For example, in a basketball game there are two teams contesting against each other, with the common objective of winning the game. Because event planners have no control over the outcome of the actual contest, they must have a much wider and holistic perspective on the sporting event. Healthy teams that regularly contribute and are committed to planning and resource funding are vital to the success of any sporting event.

According to Shonk (1982), teams function more effectively when they are able to meet regularly because they are in close physical proximity and have the appropriate skills and the levels of organizational authority present on the team. In contrast, poorly functioning teams are often characterized by a physical separation, which prevents them from meeting regularly. In addition, poorly functioning teams are often not given adequate resources to do the job, there is no recognition of team effort, and the leadership often does not even recognize that a team exists. One of the most important elements of a team is the trust between members. Lees (2011) provides the following suggestions for building trust on the team.

- When a team is new or changing, get everyone together to agree on how you will work together.
- Encourage and model honest and direct communication.
- Clearly support team members when they raise contentious and challenging issues.
- Be willing to admit weaknesses and mistakes and ask for help.
- Give others the benefit of the doubt before arriving at a negative conclusion.
- Focus time and energy on important issues, not politics.
- Offer and accept apologies without hesitation.

Summary

The planning and implementation of a sporting event can be a complex process because of the numerous stakeholders involved. Staffing the event is a key component of the planning process, and a number of tools such as organizational charts, event rundowns, scripts, production schedules, and cast lists can be helpful to event planners.

Understanding the functional areas of event management such as operations, competition, guest services, marketing, and presentation is also a key component of effectively staffing the event. In addition to full-time staff, key personnel for a sporting event often include volunteers and part-time workers. One of the central components of an effective staffing plan is to align the qualifications, motivations, and abilities of these personnel with your needs in terms of the job descriptions.

Event planners have a wide variety of responsibilities in relation to staffing an event. In

some cases the event planner must outsource staffing for such components of the event as concessions, merchandising, scoreboard operation, and hospitality. Event planners are often required to attend meetings and must serve in leadership roles. During these times, the event planner may assume either a transactional or a transformational leadership style. Event planners are always working toward developing a highly functional team that will effectively plan and implement the event. Communication with staff during the process may entail direct interpersonal communications along with the use of social media and on-site communications such as two-way radios. As you can see, meeting all these roles within the context of staffing a sporting event is a challenging proposition for an event planner. Therefore, she must be willing and able to adapt to change and to work with a wide variety of people, groups, and organizations staffing the event.

Learning Activities

1. Volunteers are an excellent labor force for event managers, and the fact that they are not paid is helpful to the budget. Still, volunteers may need to be motivated and inspired to participate. Write a 7- to 10-sentence paragraph that outlines the reasons why someone should volunteer even though they will not be paid.
2. Imagine you are responsible for planning a 5K run on the campus of your college or university. Create an event run-down for how you would organize this event.
3. Have you volunteered with a nonprofit organization within the last year? If not, before the semester ends, please volunteer with one nonprofit organization (preferably a sport organization) for at least a portion of one day. What did you learn from volunteering? Other than completing this assignment, what other factors motivated you to volunteer? Finally, list this volunteer experience on your resume. It will be helpful as you move forward in your career.
4. Interview someone within the athletics department at your college or university and ask them the following questions: What services are outsourced within the athletics department? Why are these services outsourced? What are the advantages of outsourcing? The challenges?

CASE STUDY: STAFFING AT RHINO SPORTS & ENTERTAINMENT SERVICES

Rhino Sports & Entertainment Services is an event management company that provides game-day customer service to a variety of intercollegiate athletics programs. Their clients include athletics programs at Clemson University, Duke University, Liberty University, North Carolina A&T, Virginia Tech, and Wake Forest University. Established in 2012, the company is based in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, and was formed as an outgrowth of the Winston-Salem Dash Minor League Baseball Team. The company prides itself on providing superior customer service, and its employees seek to create a positive experience both for fans and for customers at each of these venues.

While it is not a large company, Rhino prides itself on recruiting high-quality people

who are dedicated to enhancing the brand of the clients they represent, and focuses on training them to be even better. The company's training incorporates team-building activities that not only helps their leadership team but also helps to develop staff relationships so they will inform each other about their strengths, weaknesses, personalities, and unique skills. Rhino also believes in setting aside time for employees to be engaged in staff picnics and other informal staff gatherings that helps to create a more unified organization.

At the Virginia Tech property in Blacksburg, Virginia, Rhino employs approximately 300 part-time and five full-time employees. Rhino is responsible for all event staffing on the Virginia Tech campus, which includes everything from athletic to concert events, parking for events, and even security for a psychology exam on campus. The full time-staff at Rhino hire primarily two types of part-time employees: (1) security licensed personnel and (2) customer service personnel who are not licensed in security. Employees may be employed as ushers, security personnel, ticket scanners, bag checkers, field security (protecting players), or access control.

Licensed security personnel work in various locations around the sport facility on game days, and work front- and back-of-stage during security for concerts. Security personnel are responsible for checking bags, and generally speaking, for keeping all customers safe while they are in the venue. Virginia Tech has a clear-bag policy by which only items in a clear bag are allowed through the gate. All security personnel at Virginia Tech must adhere to a hands-off policy; they may not make any physical contact with customers. In the event of a serious security threat, these personnel are trained to contact the appropriate police jurisdiction.

The second type of part-time employee is not licensed in security, but must have excellent customer service skills. These employees work in various capacities around campus. Some of them are employed as house management personnel, required at any event with over 1,000 attendees on the Virginia Tech campus where there may be a need for attendees to evacuate. This requires an employee who can clearly communicate appropriate evacuation procedures and who possesses excellent customer service skills. Parking areas are another point of contact for these employees. There are 20 permit lots, public paid parking, and RV parking lots on campus. Training for parking personnel includes customer service and parking training. These people are trained as to know what types of tags to look for in various parking areas on campus, including recognizing hanging tags, year number, and game number. It is very important for these people to be detailed oriented to ensure that customers are displaying the appropriate tags. Their knowledge of campus has to be very good. Finally, some of these employees are positioned in premium areas such as the stadium suites, where they work as greeters or elevator attendants. Employees who are positioned in the suites must confirm that customers on their floor hold the appropriate credentials, only allowing those with appropriate credentials to access certain parts of

the facility.

A good employee at Rhino is normally someone who is outgoing, smiles, and is approachable by attendees. This is emphasized during the two-and-a-half-hour customer service training that takes place on campus. During this time, Rhino staff learn the Rhino mission statement: "Unsurpassed customer service to every customer every time." Part of this training focuses on proper interactions with people, forming relationships with customers, building bonds, and taking care of customer needs while they are in the facility. Another aspect is positional training, which is unique based on where an employee works on campus (e.g., basketball arena, football stadium, parking area). During this time, employees learn more about the facility, where to park when arriving to work, checking in, and getting their uniform, and overall job expectations.

Case Study Application

1. Virginia Tech outsources their events to Rhino Sports & Entertainment. List three or four of the primary reasons why you think Virginia Tech would outsource and not run their athletic events in-house.
2. The case describes two types of part-time employees (licensed security personnel, and those who are not licensed in security) who work for Rhino at Virginia Tech. This chapter discusses a number of theories concerning motivation of employees. Using these theories, compare and contrast how a full-time Rhino employee might motivate these two types of employees.
3. The chapter suggests that volunteer training is critical to the success of an event. Based on what you have read in the case study, what areas of training does Rhino do best? Are there areas of training where Rhino could improve? Write a two-paragraph essay describing their areas of strength and weaknesses.
4. The case describes some team-building activities employed at Rhino. Outline two or three other strategies that Rhino might employ in an effort to build a stronger team of employees at Virginia Tech.