Event Day Management

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Chapter Objectives

After completing the chapter, the reader should be able to do the following:

- Understand the process of managing an event and what needs to take place to ensure a good event day.

- Appreciate the importance of communication in staging sporting events.

- Understand the challenges related to managing staff, participants, spectators, and sponsors.

- Develop a plan for managing staff, participants, spectators, and sponsors.

- Understand the benefits and challenges related to providing good customer service.

Industry Profile: Daron Jones, University of Wisconsin

As director of external engagement, Daron Jones is responsible for staffing, planning, and implementation of nearly 500 athletic events per year. He has also served as game production coordinator for the Rose Bowl Game and as assistant in operations for the NCAA Men's Basketball Final Four.

What do you want to accomplish on event day?

When it's game day, we want the majority of the communications as far as the prep and the planning to be out of the way. Game day should be the easiest part if we've prepared properly leading up to it. It's more that you're putting yourself in a position to be able to react to the things that come up. There are items that you plan out leading up to game day or event date when you're checking the different boxes and making sure things are staying on the timelines so that all the things you had planned for are happening the way they're supposed to. But in a lot of respects, you're also just being prepared to tackle the challenges that come up outside the realm of the things that you've planned for, or maybe they don't go exactly as planned.

How do your duties change throughout the day?

Typically, we plan to get event day meetings out of the way, quickly get staff checked in, and get with our groups who will have a significant role in how the different parts of the event will play out. That includes our security, our guest services staff, our event management staff, our police and other administrators helping with that event. As you get closer to welcoming the public into your building, that's the time where you really have to do your final check and be diligent, making sure that you're prepared to open this facility to a lot of people and that it's going to be a safe, welcoming environment for them to come into. Once the public is in the building and the teams and the officials are in, you have to trust that you've done what you can leading up to it and take care of things that come up from there.

How do you make sure everybody's coordinated and on the same page?

Quick communication not only with the right people but also in a timely fashion is very important. Part of the communication process is the postevent wrap-up as well: taking good information and good notes from the day and sharing them as a follow-up to that event.

What are your tips for success on event day?

Communication is obviously incredibly important, but I would also say building a strong knowledge base of the different areas around us. We really have to have at least some level of understanding of all of those different departments and their interests and what they're trying to accomplish on game day in order to make sure we're acting in the best interest of our overall goals for that event.

What's your approach to customer service?

We really try to do what we believe is in the best interest of the patrons, and we spend time trying to make sure that we're cognizant of what their game day experiences are, what challenges they face, and how we can use those things. We try to listen as much as possible and work through things that come up. We have a fan advisory committee and we've built some trust with those folks and they are very honest with us in return.

What is the most common mistake people in event management make?

The most common mistake is just forgetting to include key groups in the communication process. If you don't include all of the different departments in the process early on, it can really cost you on event day.

Event day is often the culmination of extensive planning and anticipation. For the event manager, event day typically starts early and ends very late because a number of significant tasks have to be managed in order to stage a successful sporting event. The manager has to consider the timing and coordination of event setup, the event itself, and the event takedown. In addition to dealing with participants, officials, spectators, and sponsors, managers also have to work with event staff, facility staff, and event organizers or sanctioning bodies.

Managing Event Day

The number of tasks that need to be accomplished can be overwhelming, but good event managers can make event day run more smoothly if they plan, anticipate, delegate, train and rehearse, and communicate.

Plan

Detailed plans of action need to be in place for how everything will be accomplished throughout the event day. Address each activity, and make sure everyone knows how to handle their tasks.

Managers also need to prepare for how activities will progress throughout the event. Consider a college football game. To the typical sports fan, it may appear that not much happens before the gates open. However, event managers have probably spent many hours orchestrating the flow of materials and personnel into the facility and to their appropriate locations within the facility. Food and drink supplies, television equipment, and

staging equipment all have to be delivered to the site and positioned. Police, security, and medical staff need access to the facility. Game staff such as ushers, concessionaires, and event staff all need to be checked in and situated. Closer to game time, media and game officials arrive and need access to special areas of the facility. Then players, coaches, and other team personnel have to be transported to the stadium. Once at the stadium, the logistical issue shifts to getting players from the locker areas to the field. On top of this, spectators entering the facility must be managed.

Anticipate

Event managers need to put substantial thought into what could happen during the course of an event and have a realistic understanding of what it will take to execute the event. Also, things typically take longer and consume more resources than expected. Make sure you anticipate any delays or overruns, and schedule buffers into the event so that subsequent activities will not be delayed.

The importance of developing contingency plans was discussed in chapter 2. This also applies to the day of the event. Contingency plans should be in place to deal with anything that could disrupt the event or place participants, spectators, or personnel in harm's way. No matter how much you may plan and prepare, things can still go wrong, necessitating courses of action different from what you had planned. In these situations, it is the job of the event manager to assess the situation swiftly and be adaptable enough to implement alternative plans. A cool head and a flexible attitude are essential to make sure people and property are protected and to proceed with the event with the smallest possible interruption.

Delegate

Good event managers understand that although they may be responsible for everything, they cannot do everything themselves. They need to entrust staff to accomplish certain tasks. For larger events, managers create smaller teams supervised by a team leader. By delegating tasks and responsibilities to team leaders, management is free to address other issues. Further, trusted team leaders are empowered to make good decisions on the spot.

Train and Rehearse

The manager's job is to make sure the staff have a clear understanding of what their responsibilities are and to guide them through their tasks. When possible, do dry runs of various activities to be sure they can be run smoothly. Managers should put themselves in the place of spectators, participants, staff, emergency personnel, and vendors, and walk through all the situations they may face, such as arrival, parking, check-in, setup, and so on. By this process, managers should be able to develop a natural progression from start to finish.

Communicate

The event manager must be able to coordinate with multiple staff to make sure everyone knows what is happening and when things need to happen. Changes occur constantly throughout the day, so event managers need to continually update staff, participants, and spectators about any modifications or adjustments. To be effective, managers need to understand what needs to be communicated, who needs to be informed, and by what means they should be informed.

Easily Missed Details

Experienced event managers learn that missed details can cause big problems for an event. Double-check everything on your lists. Think of everything that could go wrong and try to plan for even the most unlikely event. Here are some examples of how minor details could affect how the event is perceived by participants, spectators, sponsors, and staff.

- You begin the event with the singing of the national anthem, but there is no flag in the arena, or you play

the wrong music.

- You set up a great buffet for your VIPs but forgot eating utensils.

- You are running a volleyball tournament, but the equipment manager forgot to bring game balls.

- Sponsor's or VIP's names are mispronounced (or you misspell one of their names on a sign) because you did not rehearse the script with the PA announcer.

- The halftime show is ready to begin, but the sound engineer cannot cue the music (dancers without music tend to be very awkward).

- There are no towels in the locker rooms for the teams because someone forgot to stock player areas properly.

- Important people cannot get into the arena because the guest list, pass list, or credential list was not double-checked and key names were left off.

As you can imagine, these details can cause quite a headache in addition to creating a bad image for your event.

Event Day Tools

Fortunately, event managers have a number of tools they can use to ensure everything happens as it is supposed to happen and when it is supposed to happen.

- *Schedules and checklists.* Organized lists of everything that needs to happen before, during, and after the event are an important planning tool. Checklists often include the task, location, and person responsible (table 12.1).

- *Contact lists.* Contact lists ensure your ability to communicate with the right person at the right time. Keep lists of performers, staff, or groups taking part in the event, along with key contacts (table 12.2).

- *Event rundown.* This document, outlining what has to happen during each stage of the event (table 12.3), shows specific times next to every activity that will occur during the event. Delays and disorder can be disastrous when athletes and spectators are on-site. Athletes don't like waiting around. Spectators don't like staring at an empty field. Although many of these delays may be short, audiences notice them and can quickly lose their enthusiasm (Supovitz and Goldwater 2014). For this reason, many professional teams hire directors of entertainment to coordinate music, video, mascots, and various other activities to make sure spectators are entertained throughout the event. Timing and coordination are critical elements for running an event smoothly. To make sure everything happens on time, event managers often create additional documents that specify what has to happen at various points during the event.

- *Event script.* This document outlines the information the PA announcer, host, or emcee will need to convey throughout the event. A script ensures that no details are missed.

Table 12.1. Sample Event Day Checklist

	Person responsible	Completion date and time
Preevent		
Event schedules		
Contact lists		

	Person responsible	Completion date and time
Event rundown		
Event script		
Contingency plans		
Risk management plans		
Facility and equipment inspections		
Accessibility		
Spectator parking controls		
Mass transportation drop-off and pick-up zones		
Access and parking for staff, officials, vendors, and VIP guests		
Disabled access and facilities		
Staff management		
Check-in and assignments		
Preevent briefing		
Communications plan and communications equipment		
Staff uniforms and clothing		
Postevent debriefing		
Volunteer management		
Volunteer check-in and assignments		
Volunteer briefing		
Volunteer contact assignments		
Spectator management		

	Person responsible	Completion date and time
Adequate facility entrances and exits		
Ticketing policies and procedures		
Appropriate directional signage		
Crowd control procedures		
First aid facilities and personnel		
VIP entrances and arrival arrangements		
VIP seating and accommodations		
Participant management		
Arrival arrangements for participants and officials		
Participant liaison		
Locker facilities		
Training facilities		
Postevent evaluation		
Sponsor management		
Sponsor hospitality		
Fulfillment plan		
Sponsor liaison		
Sponsor evaluation		
Media		
Credentials and check-in		
Media work room		
Interview area		

	Person responsible	Completion date and time
Press kits		
Media seating and accommodations		

Table 12.2. Sample Contact List

Event	Group or performer	Contact
Honorary captain presentation	John Hughes	Bill Slatts
National anthem singer	University choir	Bill Smith
Color guard	City high school ROTC	Col. Sharp
Halftime show	Slam Dunk Demons	Christine Cobb
Band	University band	Mike Bezcal
Cheerleaders	Home team cheerleaders	Randy Edgar
Dance team	Superstars dance team	Suzy Sunshine

Table 12.3. Sample Event Rundown for a Basketball Game

Time	Scoreboard	Event	Audio and visual		Time	Scoreboard	Event	Audio and visual
11:00 a.m.		Event staff arrive				2nd TO	Shootout promotion	PA announcer with live video
11:30 a.m.		Game management meeting						
1:00 p.m.		Doors open	Highlight videos			3rd TO	Sponsored trivia question Facility commercial	PA announcer with logos Facility commercial

Time	Scoreboard	Event	Audio and visual		Time	Scoreboard	Event	Audio and visual
1:18 p.m.	45:00	Court available for warm-ups	Pre-recorded music			4th TO	Cheerleaders Sponsor announcements	Band with live video PA announcer with logos
1:30 p.m.		Band begins playing	Band with live video			5th TO	Cheerleaders	Band with live video
1:43 p.m.	20:00	Start 20-minute clock (TV)		Halftime	15:00	Institution admissions video	Institution admissions video
1:51 p.m.	12:00	Teams to locker rooms	Band with live video			14:30	Dance routine	Recorded music with live shots
1:52 p.m.		U.S. national anthem Honorary captain presentation	Singer PA announcer with live video			11:00	Halftime contest	PA announcer with live clear floor video
1:58 p.m.	5:00	Teams return	Band with live video			6:00	Teams return	Band with live video
2:03 p.m.	0:00	Horn: teams to benches Visiting team intros Crowd build continues Home team intros Crowd build continues	PA announcer with live video Intro video PA announcer with live video Band with live video			2:00	Warm-ups	Band with halftime stats

Time	Scoreboard	Event	Audio and visual		Time	Scoreboard	Event	Audio and visual
2:06:30 p.m.		Horn: teams return to court	Tip-off video		Second half	1st TO	Cheerleaders Sponsor announcements	Band with live video PA announcer with logos
2:07 p.m.	20:00	Tip-off				2nd TO	Student promotion	PA announcer with live video
First half	1st TO	Cheerleaders Sponsor announcements	Band with live video PA announcer with logos			3rd TO	Attendance quiz Sponsor announcements	PA announcer with logos PA announcer with logos
						4th TO	Cheerleaders Sponsor announcements	Band with live video PA announcer with logos
						5th TO	Cheerleaders	Band with live video

Managing Staff

Given that the event manager cannot be everywhere and do everything, many responsibilities fall to the event staff. Your staff will be responsible for executing the event and will most likely have the most contact with participants, spectators, and sponsors; therefore, it is necessary to have a plan for how to manage staff on event day. Your goal should be to have knowledgeable and motivated staff dedicated to giving all your stakeholders the best experience possible.

Arrival and Check-In

Staff arrival should be scheduled to allow plenty of time for staff to receive duties, prepare for work, and acclimate themselves to the environment. Check-in serves to identify who is present and when they arrived, allowing time to adjust for missing staff. Further, it provides an initial contact point for informing staff of their respective responsibilities and tasks. It is important to be specific as to where staff should report (exact locations), to whom they should report (team leader), and time (call time).

Staff Briefing

Staff briefings are meetings with staff before each shift. During the staff briefing, management reviews organizational or operational issues. In addition, management updates staff with any last-minute information or recent changes in operations. The staff briefing may include information pertaining to the following:

- *Team introductions.* At this point, event day staff get to know who they will be working with and put a personal touch on the event.

- *Event considerations.* Staff should be briefed on what will be happening during the event. An emphasis may be placed on activities that are outside normal operations, such as pre-game festivities, halftime events, and special guests. It may be helpful (especially for staff who interact with the public) to develop a fact sheet including basic details of the event, such as event schedules, ticket policies, emergency information, relevant statistics or facts about the event, VIP biographies, directions, policies, and facility maps.

- *Facility considerations.* Staff may be briefed on issues concerning the facility, such as when gates open, areas that need to be avoided, and facility contacts.

- *Chain of command.* It is important for staff to identify supervisors and management and to understand authority. Everyone should know who to notify in case of questions or problems. Each level of staff should know their immediate supervisor and understand their reporting responsibilities.

- *Responsibility overview.* Specific duties and expectations may be reviewed at this time. This information is much more important for events involving inexperienced or volunteer staff than it is for experienced, trained staff.

Positional Assignments

Whether you are using paid staff or volunteers, each staff member has unique abilities, knowledge, and skills. The goal of the event manager is to find the ideal person for the specific job. Depending on the position, significant problems can arise when people are put in positions requiring abilities beyond their skill sets. On the other hand, when people have abilities well beyond the position they are assigned, you risk underutilizing their talents, and they may feel undervalued.

Trash collection at the Russia 2018 World Cup JUAN BARRETO/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Breaks and Rotation

Breaks, and meals if necessary, are important in keeping your staff fresh, considering that many events last several hours and staff may be on their feet for long periods of time. It is important to communicate the break schedule so that staff know when breaks are required and to make sure positions are covered during breaks. In addition, it is good to schedule floaters (people who can fill in at different spots as needed).

Problem Resolution

During any event, problems or issues are likely to arise. Staff should be briefed on typical problems they may encounter and educated on how to deal with these situations. Further, staff should be informed of whom to contact in the case of unusual problems.

Staff Communication

To facilitate efficient lines of communication, each person has to know her contact person and how to reach that person (e.g., personal contact, two-way radio, cell phone, app). Multiple lines of communication need to be considered.

- *Within units.* Each unit (e.g., maintenance, concessions, security) needs to have a plan for how workers will communicate within that unit. For example, the guest services director needs to have contact with the usher supervisors, who then communicate with the ushers.

- *Between units.* There needs to be a plan for how units can communicate with each other (e.g., guest services and maintenance) when issues arise outside their units. Consider an usher who notices a leaking pipe in the concourse. In this case, the guest services staff would need to communicate with maintenance to fix the problem.

- *Emergency reporting.* Staff needs to understand communication procedures for emergency issues and to whom such issues need to be communicated.

Postevent Debriefing

After the event, management and staff review the event, recognize what worked well, and identify areas of improvement for future events. Given that staff are often on the front lines of the event, they have a unique ability to identify problems. Ushers have the most direct contact with customers and are therefore likely to understand customer concerns. Ticket takers are most likely to understand customer ingress and bottlenecks. This type of evaluation is also beneficial when developing a risk management plan because staff working with customers or on the event floor are more likely to encounter facility issues or operational issues needing attention.

Tips for Managing Event Day Staff

- Recognize differences in staff members: Event day staff is often made up of people who are only there for that day, so they are going to be different from people who are working for your organization.

- Share your vision for the event: Don't just illustrate what you want done; try to focus on why it is necessary and what you hope to accomplish. By sharing this information, you can help staff to see the big picture and be able to adapt to situations.

- Incentivize and reward staff: By making your staff feel valued, you can make sure they work harder to provide a better experience for your spectators and participants. Staff rewards (swag, food, exclusive experiences) make an impression on the people working for you.

Managing Spectators

A common mistake that inexperienced event managers make is to assume that once a spectator buys a ticket and the money has been received, the job is finished. Good event managers, on the other hand, realize that spectators require care throughout their experience. Your goal should be to give your spectators a satisfying and memorable time. You want your spectators to leave the event wanting to attend again and telling others to attend.

Admission Policy

There are many different ways to structure your admissions policy in order to provide the best experience for your spectators. These decisions will depend on the type, size, and location of your event. Some of the issues that need to be addressed include:

- *Ticket type*: Will you offer reserved seating (each ticket is assigned a specific location) or will there be general admission (spectators can sit in any location)?

- *Passes*: Will spectators be allowed to leave and return?

- *Conflict seats*: Will you have seats available for spectators who have issues with their tickets (e.g., obstructed views, duplicate tickets, unruly fans)

- *ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) seating*: How will you accommodate spectators with impairments? These impairments may require accessible seating, seating for personal care attendants, access for service animals, or auxiliary services for people with a visual or hearing impairment.

- *Security protections*: How will you protect your consumers from fraudulent tickets?

Technology is increasing the efficiency of event operations through specialized software and applications that assist in ticketing, online registration, league management, tournament management, and volunteer tracking. Print-at-home technology creates conveniences for consumers while reducing mail and box office costs. Mobile

ticketing not only provides access to the facility but can be used to enhance consumers' experience by allowing them to make purchases via their phones, find seats with interactive maps, order food and drink, and access other facility features. Mobile ticketing can also be used to increase ticket security and to track spectators' purchase behaviors.

Ingress and Egress

Ingress refers to how customers enter the facility. Although it may seem simple, collecting tickets and moving customers into a facility can be problematic without careful planning. Event organizers have to consider how and when tickets will be collected. If it's expected that spectators will arrive over an extended period of time, a relatively small number of entrances and ticket takers may be sufficient. However, if spectators tend to arrive within a narrow time period, more personnel are needed to make sure there are no long lines of angry spectators eager to get into the facility.

There are also several security issues at this point. You need to address gate security and how you will prevent individuals without tickets from entering. In addition, you may be handling large amounts of money, so you will need to address box office security.

Egress refers to how consumers exit the facility. Egress tends to be more concentrated than ingress because spectators generally leave events in a tighter period of time. Issues related to the number of exits, size of exits, locations of pinch points, and space outside the venue need to be addressed in order to make sure spectators can leave quickly and safely.

VIP Entrances and Seating

Many events are attended by spectators who warrant special treatment. These guests may be people important to the community, such as government officials, celebrities, or other dignitaries. In addition, events may provide special treatment to key business partners, such as sponsors, broadcasters, vendors, donors, or other notable contributors. These very important people (VIPs) are often granted complimentary tickets, private entrances, premium seating, and other perks such as preferred parking or personal wait-service to express gratitude for their support or to lay the foundation for future support.

VIPs may have higher expectations for their experience at the event than other guests. Failure to meet VIPs' needs can be disastrous, so special care should be taken to make sure everything goes well for your VIPs. Check to make sure that every benefit promised has been delivered, and be prepared to deliver service above and beyond what has been promised. It is always a good idea to think *extra* with this group (e.g., extra staff to meet needs, extra tickets for last-minute requests, extra perks available only to VIPs).

Will Call

Will call is a delivery method in which spectators who have already purchased tickets can pick them up at a designated location before the event. This option is commonly used for spectators who have purchased tickets close to the event date and for spectators who wish to leave tickets for others. With the growth of telephone and Internet sales, will call has become a much more popular option.

Signage

Making signage easily visible is extremely important because spectators are not likely to be as familiar with the facility as you are. Proper signage at entry points reduces backups at ticket lines, directs spectators to the correct entry points, and reduces spectator confusion. Signage should also direct spectators to basic amenities such as restrooms, concessions, merchandise, and customer service locations. Effective signage also plays an important role in spectator safety because it directs them to medical facilities and exits in case of emergency.

Informed spectators are more likely to enjoy their experiences and less likely to encounter frustration. © CHRIS GREENWELL

Communicating With Spectators

Informed spectators are more likely to enjoy their experiences and less likely to encounter frustration. Use tools such as PA systems, score-boards and message boards, printed materials, and the media as well as face-to-face communication to convey important information. Consider issues spectators may have with access, parking, ticketing, or changes in event schedules, and devise methods for communicating to spectators any rules, policies, procedures, and changes. You must also develop plans for how organizers can communicate with spectators during a crisis or an emergency. Identify how you can speak directly to your spectators (alarms, public address messages, video) and how you can get vital information to staff that can be relayed to spectators.

Spectator Evaluation of the Event

Spectator evaluations allow organizations to learn about spectators' experiences and identify pressing concerns needing management's attention. Collecting this information allows management to prioritize initiatives to increase satisfaction or decrease dissatisfaction (Greenwell, Lee, and Naeger 2007). Management may solicit spectator input through formal methods such as surveys, depth interviews, or focus groups. Figure 12.1 illustrates a sample spectator survey. Informal methods can also be effective. For example, many organizations provide comment cards to their customers or publicize e-mail addresses spectators can use to pass along comments, concerns, or complaints. Other organizations may encourage their ushers or event staff to converse with spectators to learn important information first-hand.

Managing Participants

The athletes are the core of a sporting event and require different care than spectators. Athletes, as well as their coaches and families, will have special needs throughout the event that must be addressed so they can concentrate on their performances. The event manager's goal is to create an atmosphere where participants don't have to worry about the little things, so that athletes can focus on being their best when they compete. Athletes remember great experiences and let everyone know when an event has exceeded their expectations. They also remember terrible experiences, and let even more people know.

Participant Arrival

Participant arrival is often the first contact point between participants and event organizers, offering the first opportunity to create an impression—positive or negative—of the event. It is important to greet participants when they arrive at the venue. For small events a simple greeting from the event manager may be enough to welcome participants and orient them to the facility and event. For large events, participant arrival can be a complex process involving transportation to the host city, accommodations, and transportation from hotels to event sites. At the event site, movement of people and equipment to locker rooms, warm-up rooms, and the event floor; security; and special requests become the main concerns.

One way to improve the probability of a smooth arrival is to communicate important information to your participants before the event. Send information packages with arrival instructions, hotel and transportation information, local maps, facility maps, restaurant and entertainment options, and contact information for additional questions. A website can also be used to provide up-to-date information that will help smooth your participants' arrival.

Area Logistics

Depending on the event, participants may have different needs ranging from locker and shower facilities, meeting rooms, hospitality areas, equipment storage, and warm-up areas. The type of event may dictate the number of security personnel or staff needed. To prepare for these logistics, event managers should meet with team liaisons to understand the entire traveling party's needs and expectations.

How did you learn about our event? _____					
Would you attend again? ☐ Yes ☐ No Why?_____					
Would you recommend this event to others? ☐ Yes ☐ No Why?_____					
How would you rate ticketing? (1 = poor, 5 = excellent)	1	2	3	4	5
How would you rate the ushers? (1 = poor, 5 = excellent)	1	2	3	4	5
How would you rate the facility? (1 = poor, 5 = excellent)	1	2	3	4	5
How would you rate parking? (1 = poor, 5 = excellent)	1	2	3	4	5
How would you rate the souvenir stands? (1 = poor, 5 = excellent)	1	2	3	4	5
How would you rate concessions? (1 = poor, 5 = excellent)	1	2	3	4	5
How would you rate your overall experience? (1 = poor, 5 = excellent)	1	2	3	4	5
What can we do to improve this event next year?_____					

Figure 12.1. Sample spectator survey

Access to these areas as well as sideline, dugout, and bench areas is often controlled by issuing credentials to participants and the traveling party. As well as identifying the bearer, credentials should identify to which areas the bearer has access.

Communicating With Participants

It is important to keep participants and coaches up to date on key information. Specifically, organizers should make sure participants have been given the schedule of events and locations, registration or check-in information, facility diagrams, and contact numbers. In addition, it is important to note that participants may not be familiar with the area or the format of the event. Therefore, communication should be specific and detailed. Table 12.4 gives a sample of information you might provide to a team arriving for a basketball game.

Table 12.4. Sample Participant Information Sheet: Basketball Game

Equipment delivery	Thursday: delivery of sideline signage, 24 chairs, ball racks, and balls. Return to practice facility on Monday.
Band	Home and visiting bands can deliver equipment at 10:00 a.m. on game day. Delivery must be made at Cole Street Docks.
Training staff	Trainer will deliver equipment at 10:00 a.m. on game day. Equipment will be stored in locker room.
Will-call tickets	General public: Broadway ticket window Players: Broadway ticket window (tickets must be delivered no later than 90 min. before game time)
Parking	Visiting team bus: park at North Cole Street Docks. Student buses: drop off at entrance B. Game officials: park at Cole Street Docks. Band and cheer: buses park at Cole Street Docks.
Entrances	Public: Entrances A and B Booster club: Entrance B Home players: Broadway Central Entrance Visiting players: Cole Street Dock Media: Broadway Central Entrance Staff: Broadway Central Entrance Band: Cole Street Dock Cheer: Cole Street Dock
Locker rooms	Home team: visitor's locker room South Visiting team: visitor's locker room North Officials: officials locker room B Home cheerleaders: auxiliary locker room A Visiting cheerleaders: auxiliary locker room B
Media	Interviews: interview room Media work room: Room 150
Booster club	Hospitality room: Room 140 (floor level)
Gates open	12:30 p.m. Central
Game time	2:05 p.m. Central

Communication with coaches and participants comes in multiple formats. Key information may be provided in an information packet or posted in locker facilities. Signage throughout the facility provides information on locations, policies, and timing of events. Public address announcements are utilized to inform participants about upcoming events or schedule changes. Event managers should also assign a participant liaison to each team or entity. This person becomes the key point of communication when questions or special needs arise. Larger events may set up a command center to centralize and integrate communications.

Participant Liaisons

Participant liaisons are key communications tools that are integral to the satisfaction of participants. Liaisons should be educated about event activities and prepared for questions or special requests. Events will often appoint a facility liaison. This person is responsible for assisting participants and event organizers with any issues with the facility or event.

Traveling Parties

Sporting events often have official traveling parties including coaches, administrators, and staff that may be as large as, or larger than, the number of participants. The needs of these people also have to be considered in order to create a memorable experience for all involved. Since team officials are often the ones who make the decision whether or not to return to an event, their satisfaction is vitally important.

Locker Facilities

Changing rooms may be required for each team and its officials. Additional changing rooms may be needed for support groups such as cheerleaders, dance teams, in-game entertainment, other performers, and family. A separate room may also be requested for use as a meeting room or office area. Typical changing rooms include lockers and showers, but participants may also require additional amenities such as laundry services, athletic training equipment, or multimedia devices. Event organizers also have to consider personnel needs related to locker facilities. It may be necessary to provide security, custodial, or laundry staff depending on the event and the needs of the participants.

To ensure this aspect of the event moves smoothly, it is imperative that organizers specify what will or will not be provided and communicate those specifications to participants. A lack of communication is likely to cause confusion and dissatisfaction. Be specific so that teams know exactly what to expect and can prepare accordingly. For example, you might provide the following information to participating teams before an event:

- Locker facilities will be open two hours before game time and one hour after the event.
- Each locker room has an attached training room that is available to teams.
- Ice and water are available in each training room.
- No towels or locks will be provided.
- Locker rooms will be available to team members and the traveling party only.

Participant Departure

There should be a plan for participant departure that covers exits, transportation, and safety. The departure plan should also account for participants' equipment and traveling parties.

Participant Evaluation

A participant's final evaluation of the event is often the determining factor as to whether or not she intends to participate in future events. Considering that many events depend on attracting top competition, incentive programs events are often created to make sure participants enjoy their stay and want to return. Some of the

perks that could be included are the following:

- Specialized food service ranging from healthy snacks to gourmet meals

- Athlete lounges with games and activities to fill down time

- Participant gifts ranging from tournament merchandise to high-end products from event sponsors

- Training and massage services

- Social events and exclusive entertainment

- Activities for athletes' children and significant others

To gather information about what participants think of an event and to collect ideas about how the event can be improved, many event organizers create a postevent participant survey. Figure 12.2 shows a sample survey for examining runners' perceptions of a marathon. Results from such a survey can be used to identify strengths and weaknesses of your event in order to suggest changes for future events. In addition, participant evaluations can help planners determine how participants will respond to proposed changes to an event, estimate the economic impact of an event, or gather information to share with sponsors.

Managing Sponsors

Selling a sponsorship is just the first part of the process. Events and sponsors have to work together to ensure sponsors' maximum benefits from their association with the event. Special care must be taken to make sure sponsors are satisfied; the best way to recruit a sponsor is to retain an existing one. To accomplish this, events should strive to deliver all promised benefits, protect sponsors' rights, and develop relationships with sponsors. It is much better to exceed sponsors' expectations by delivering more than what was promised than to fall short on promises. In other words, you should underpromise and overdeliver.

Signage

Signage is a benefit sponsors commonly seek from sponsorship programs. The facility should be carefully evaluated to find the best locations for sponsors' signage. Look for spots that provide the best exposure to participants, spectators, and the media. Identify locations such as sidelines, backdrops, and finish lines that will maximize exposure.

How did you learn about our marathon? _____					
Would you participate again? ☐ Yes ☐ No Why?_____					
Would you recommend this marathon to others? ☐ Yes ☐ No Why?_____					
How would you rate registration? (1 = poor, 5 = excellent)	1	2	3	4	5
How would you rate the course? (1 = poor, 5 = excellent)	1	2	3	4	5
How would you rate the staff? (1 = poor, 5 = excellent)	1	2	3	4	5
How would you rate the water stations? (1 = poor, 5 = excellent)	1	2	3	4	5
How would you rate the postrace awards ceremony? (1 = poor, 5 = excellent)	1	2	3	4	5
How would you rate the participant gifts? (1 = poor, 5 = excellent)	1	2	3	4	5
How would you rate your overall experience? (1 = poor, 5 = excellent)	1	2	3	4	5
How far did you travel to get here?_____					
How many nights did you stay in town? _____					
What can we do to improve this event next year?_____					

Figure 12.2. Sample participant survey for a marathon

Sponsor integration for a 5K race. © CHRIS GREENWELL

Promotions

Many event sponsorships involve sales promotions that may include premium giveaways, contests or sweepstakes, product sampling, point-of-purchase displays, or other special events. Timing and execution are important to make sure all activities meet sponsors' expectations.

Hospitality

Hospitality for corporate clients is a big part of major sporting events because major sponsors often seek opportunities to entertain their own VIP guests. Look for ways to help your sponsors create exclusive access, experiences, and opportunities to pamper their guests.

Deliverables

Organizers should develop a fulfillment plan for each sponsor that makes sure the event is honoring each contractually obligated component of the contract. Summary sheets outlining the specific deliverables promised to a sponsor can list activities that need to take place, people responsible for these activities, and deadlines for completion.

Sponsor Liaisons

One person from the organization should be appointed as the sponsor liaison; for a large event you may have multiple sponsor liaisons in order to cover all responsibilities. This individual is the main point of contact for the sponsor and manages communication between the sponsor and the event.

Sponsor Evaluation

In contrast to philanthropy, sponsors are typically looking for a return on their investment or a return on their

objectives. Event organizers should identify sponsors' objectives before the event and show a commitment to delivering on those objectives. After the event, sponsors should be provided with reports detailing how the sponsorship was fulfilled (e.g., attendance figures, media coverage, advertising value, public relations value, direct sales). Care should be taken to illustrate the value the sponsors received in exchange for their investment.

Customer Service

Regardless of whether you are working with spectators, participants, or sponsors, strong customer service practices and policies can deliver numerous benefits to the organization. Some of the benefits include the following.

- *Retain customers*: Good service keeps customers coming back. It is much easier and more cost-effective to retain current customers than to acquire new customers.

- *Increase positive word of mouth*: Individuals who receive good service are more likely to recommend your event to others (potential customers). Similarly, individuals receiving poor service are likely to tell others of their experiences.

- *Differentiate your event from that of your competition*: Strong customer service is a good way to create a competitive advantage over other competing events.

- *Improve employee morale*: Positive relationships between consumers and employees create a better working environment.

Proactive Customer Service

Being proactive involves taking steps to identify and solve problems before they occur. A proactive approach allows an organization to either avoid or reduce the impact of customer issues, saving the organization time and saving the consumer from aggravation. Some ways to be proactive include:

- *Making service part of your mission*: This involves prioritizing customer service and making a commitment to customer service across all levels of the organization.

- *Taking the time to understand customers' needs*: By understanding your customers' needs you can anticipate and prepare to avoid any issues they may face. Collect customer feedback to identify areas of weakness or concern.

- *Training staff*: Frontline staff, who are more likely to come in contact with customers, should be trained in how to identify problems before they occur.

- *Rewarding staff*: Rewarding staff for providing good customer service helps strengthen the organization's commitment to customer service across the organization.

Reactive Customer Service

Despite your best efforts to be proactive, some problems are unavoidable. These situations are problematic because dissatisfied customers not only are less likely to return to the event but also are likely to tell others of their problems. Responding to problems after they happen is referred to as reactive customer service. Therefore, events should have policies for resolving customer complaints. Some tips for reactive customer service follow.

- *Be accessible*: You would rather hear the customer's issues and have a chance to address them than have the consumer leave angry or complain to other customers.

- *Actively listen*: You can often appease consumers by merely listening to their problems and showing you care. Allow the customer to explain without interruption. It is often helpful to restate the customer's complaint to show you understand.

- *Apologize and thank*: Apologies are not necessarily admissions of fault; they are a way to communicate that you are listening and are concerned. Show them you appreciate them by sharing their concerns.

- *Offer solutions*: Illustrate how you plan to follow up on the complaint and offer solutions to resolve the problem. Be prepared to offer alternative solutions if necessary.

- *Follow up*: Check in to find out how the customer is doing and to see whether he has any other concerns.

Moment of Truth

A popular method of enhancing customer service is to identify moments of truth. Carlzon and Peters (1987) defined a moment of truth as any time a customer comes into contact with the company and has the opportunity to make an evaluation. Over the course of a sporting event, customers have numerous opportunities to interact with the facility, staff, and the event itself. The challenge is to identify each of these interactions and formulate strategies to make sure these interactions go well. One way to do so is by mapping the customer's experience from beginning to end. We often spend most of our time thinking about the event itself, but as you can see below, there are ample opportunities to impact the customer (positively and negatively) before and after the competition. The following are just some of the key touch-points your event may have with consumers.

Participant event

- Registration

- Travel to host location

- Accommodations

- Preevent activities

- On-site parking

- Team check-in

- Changing rooms

- Warm-up facilities

- Competition

- Score and statistics tracking

- Awards ceremonies

Spectator event

- Ticket purchase

- Traffic flow to the facility

- Parking

- Preevent entertainment

- Facility entry

- Security

- Seating access

- Concessions

- Restrooms

- In-game entertainment

- The game itself

- Facility exit

- Traffic flow away from the facility

The following are some examples of innovations sport organizations are using to deliver better service to their consumers.

- The NFL's Houston Texans are offering an artificial intelligence service to answer a wide variety of fan questions. The software can handle thousands of inquiries at once to provide fast and accurate responses to fans' questions (Witthaus 2018).

- Minor League Baseball incorporates chatbots that can provide real-time customer service in both English and Spanish. This technology offers a way to be more responsive to fans and provide them with personalized experiences (Fisher 2018).

- The New Orleans Pelicans were named the NBA's best customer service team in 2016. They provide Disney-style training to their arena employees and employ a staff of data analysts tracking customer satisfaction and purchasing trends (Kushner 2017).

- Churchill Downs, home of the Kentucky Derby, renovated the second floor of the clubhouse facility, putting in additional food locations, restrooms, and betting windows. These renovations were driven by feedback from consumers who desired more options and less time waiting in line (Finley 2016).

Event Day Technologies

Managing event day can be made easier with various technologies. Types of technologies include

- *Staff communication tools*: Various apps have been created to allow communication with staff through text or group messaging. These apps help disseminate important information quickly and efficiently.

- *E-ticketing*: E-ticketing software is convenient for consumers and reduces the risk of lost tickets. Additional advantages for organizers include lower printing costs and the ability to track purchases better.

- *Mobile point-of-service (POS)*: These systems allow consumers to connect with food, beverage, or merchandise vendors in their seats and pay online, reducing time spent waiting in line and allowing vendors to spend less time taking orders and counting cash.

- *Touch-screen kiosks*: Many venues now utilize self-service kiosks around their facilities to give consumers access to a variety of services and information.

- *Data management systems*: These systems can collect data on everything from purchase behaviors to social media interaction, giving managers better insight into the customer experience.

- *Participant tracking systems*: Most often used for running events, this technology utilizes GPS to track runners' times and locations, creating a better race experience for the runners and enhancing race management.

Technologies such as event-specific apps can also be used to engage with consumers in order to make their experience safer and more enjoyable. For example, individuals attending Super Bowl LII had access to two apps designed to make their experience at the event stress free, fun, and safe.

1. US Bank Stadium app

    ○ Guest services information with links to ask questions or report concerns

    ○ Stadium maps highlighting restrooms, first aid stations, concession and merchandise stands, escalators, and exits

    ○ Directions to the stadium for multiple transportation options

○ Public transportation information with customizable route planning

○ Parking information with options to prepurchase parking

○ Turn-by-turn directions to find seats

2. Super Bowl LII app

○ Venue and area maps for the stadium, Super Bowl LII Experience, and Super Bowl Live.

○ Event schedules for all events leading up to the big game

○ Lists of prohibited items and security procedures

○ Customer service contacts

○ Weather forecasts

○ Game day FAQs

○ Access to instant replays

○ Social media portals

Summary

All the planning and preparation comes together on the day of the event. Numerous tasks must be accomplished throughout game day, therefore managers need to anticipate, plan, delegate, and communicate so that everything gets done in a timely manner. Event managers should make use of various tools such as checklists, contact lists, event rundowns, and event scripts to help coordinate activities.

Event managers need to coordinate with the staff entrusted to accomplish all these tasks. They also have to deal with the needs of spectators, participants, and sponsors. For each group, the manager's goal is to leave them satisfied and wanting to return to future events. This undertaking is made easier if event managers understand each party's needs and commit to delivering experiences beyond expectations.

Learning Activities

Identify an event and imagine yourself in the position of being responsible for event day.

1. Create a list of things that need to happen, from an operations perspective, for the event to be a success.

2. Create a checklist of necessary activities for each functional area, and identify when those activities need to be completed.

3. Prepare an event rundown for this event. Think of the coordination necessary to make everything run smoothly.

4. Prepare a PA script for one segment of the event (e.g., pregame, halftime).

CASE STUDY: LEADOFF CLASSIC

The National Fastpitch Coaches Association (NFCA) is an organization that was established in 1983 to promote professional growth of fastpitch softball coaches and advance the sport of fastpitch softball. It is an international organization with members from Canada, the Czech Republic, Germany, Great Britain, Ireland, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Singapore, Sweden, and the United States. The organization provides many services to its members, such as education programs, coaches' clinics, awards programs, camps, and tournaments.

One of the tournaments the organization hosts is the Leadoff Classic for collegiate softball teams. Tournaments are arranged by division membership (there are separate tournaments for NCAA Division II, NCAA Division III, Junior Colleges, and teams from the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics).

These events attract some of the top teams from around the country for three days of high-level competition. One participant described it as being "like playing a national championship tournament right out of the gate."

An example of one of these events was the 2018 Division III Leadoff Classic. Thirty-two teams participated over three days in March at Lincoln Park in Tucson, Arizona. In order to accommodate so many teams, games were played on eight fields with each field hosting four games per day (10 a.m., 12:30 p.m., 3 p.m., and 5:30 p.m.). Each team played two games per day for a total of six games over the three days. Awards were provided to the championship team, runner-up, and all-tournament team.

Case Study Application

Considering the number of athletes participating and the number of games played over the three days, making sure an event like this goes smoothly can be a daunting task. If you were running one of these events, you would want to deliver an excellent event so that participants, spectators, and sponsors would have a good impression of the NFCA and want to return to future Leadoff Classic Events. To this end, you would have to put in a lot of planning to make event day successful.

1. Regarding participants' experiences at the event, what would be specific examples of moments of truth? Based on these moments of truth, what services would you need to provide the teams in order to ensure a good experience for them? What information would it be necessary to provide participating teams?

2. It would be impossible for one person to manage all of the games and activities that need to take place, which means you would have to rely heavily on your staff. How would you make sure your staff provides a good experience for everyone involved?

3. The event also draws spectators. What would be your admissions policies? How can you effectively communicate with spectators at the event to make certain they enjoy their experience?

4. Events like these often rely on sponsors to cover costs and provide needed goods and services. How can you make sure sponsors are satisfied with their partnership with you and would want to renew for future events?