

## Event Management—A Dark horse in the Service Sector!

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### **Abstract**

*Today, the service sector is the most important sector of the economy among the three sectors - the others being agricultural and industrial – in terms of the contribution to GDP and employment. The basic characteristic of this sector is the production of services instead of any tangible end product. During the last thirty years, there has been a substantial shift from the primary and secondary sectors to this sector. Now, in many advanced countries service sector has become one of the largest and fastest growing sectors.*

*Service sector covers a wide gamut of activities like finance, banking, insurance, transportation, hotels, management and technical consultancy services etc. New addition to this is, the 'Event Management.' Event Management is a new sunrise industry. It is growing at the rate of 20 percent year-to-year. It is also considered as one of the fastest growing industries in India, today. It provides ample career opportunities to our young and enthusiastic generation. An attempt is made in this paper to throw light on this dark horse of the service sector by providing an over view of the working of event management, which is hitherto either ignored or remained unnoticed.*

*Key words: Service sector, Event, Event Manager, Event Planning.*

### **Introduction**

The three major sectors that contribute to the development of the economy of a country are – agriculture manufacturing and services.

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Of the three the share of service sector in the world economy has been growing steadily over the past few years. In developed countries like UK, USA etc., the service sector accounts for more than 60 percent of GDP. Even in developing countries it accounts for more than 55 percent of GDP.

The fact remains that the service sector plays a major role in the high growth rate achieved by Indian economy needs no emphasis. In fact, services have contributed around 68.6 percent of the overall growth in the GDP during the period 2002-03 to 2006-07. Even in generating employment also this sector plays a significant role. It has been stated that in India this sector occupies second place next only to agricultural sector with 27 percent in providing employment. Unlike manufacturing and agricultural sectors, services growth has been broad based as it provides inputs to other sectors.

In recent years, this vital sector has shown phenomenal growth. In fact, this sector had marked a double digit growth during the aforesaid four year period. According to Central Statistical Organisation of India, Services contribute 58 percent of India's GDP during 2000-06. The following Table-1 presents the growth of services sector in India

**Table 1- Growth of Services Sector in India (in percents)**

Services	Percentage change over previous year							
	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10
Services	7.4	8.5	9.6	9.8	11.2	10.5	9.8	8.7
Trade, hotels, transport and communication	9.2	12.1	10.9	10.4	13.0	10.7	7.6	8.3
Financial, real estate and business services	8.0	5.6	8.7	10.9	11.1	13.2	10.1	9.9

**Source:** Term paper on Management published in the web site.

The Economic Survey 2010 has recognized the importance of this sector as “For more than a decade, now India's service sector has been the power-house of nation's economic growth. This is also a sector that now produces more than half the GDP of the nation.

Service sector covers a wide range of activities like finance, banking, insurance, transportation, hotels, management and technical consultancy services etc. Event Management is one among them. This major segment of the sector was at dark and unknown in India, till recently. But, when the flood gates of our economy were thrown open to globalization and the consequent ushering of marketing and other events, the Event Management started to gain importance.

Furthermore, on account of the influence of modern western culture and consequent change in the perception of people, the very face of events and festivals has changed. The organization and management of festivals and celebrations can no longer be adhoc. Now, people prefer to give professional touch to such events. Hence, the clients hire event management companies to handle specific service for the given event or just a sub sect of these events depending on the client's need expertise and budget. As a result, today event management has become one of the fastest growing industries in India, recording 20 percent growth year on year.

Event management is the process by which an event is planned, prepared, and produced. As with any other form of management, it encompasses the assessment, definition, acquisition, allocation, direction, control, and analysis of time, finances, people, products, services, and other resources to achieve objectives. An event manager's job is to oversee and arrange every aspect of an event, including researching, planning, organizing, implementing, controlling, and evaluating an event's design, activities, and production. Any service provided in relation to planning, promotion,

organizing or presentation of any arts, entertainment, business, sports or any other event falls within the orbit of event management. It involves supervising and organizing diverse corporate events (such as product launches, press conferences, corporate meetings and conferences), marketing programmes (such as road shows, grand opening events) and special corporate hospitality events like music concerts, award ceremonies, film premieres, launch/release parties, fashion shows, cultural events, private or personal events such as weddings, birthday parties etc.

Event management is a ubiquitous word in modern society. The word is used for small business breakfasts, large corporate shows and also for big international sport events, such as the Olympic Games. An event is often described as something that 'happens', and therefore, in that sense, one could use the term event management to describe the organisation of everything that happens. Getz (2007), defines an event as 'an occurrence at a given place; a special set of circumstances; a noteworthy occurrence; which embraces a wide range of possibilities with one important thing in common to occur once. As such, one key characteristic of events is that they are not continuous, for they each have a beginning and an end, and every event is different from the last one. "No matter how hard one tries, it is literally impossible to replicate an event" (Getz, 2007); thus, when watching the Olympic Games, one does not see the same picture repeating itself every four years, for the event changes and evolves over time.

A bird's view of services of an event management company is presented in the following Table.

## The Event Genre of Event Management

<b>Business &amp; Corporate Events</b>	Any event that supports business objectives, including management functions, corporate communications, training, marketing, incentives, employee relations, and customer relations, scheduled alone or in conjunction with other events.
<b>Cause-Related &amp; Fundraising Events</b>	An event created by or for a charitable or cause-related group for the purpose of attracting revenue, support, and/or awareness, scheduled alone or in conjunction with other events.
<b>Exhibitions, Expositions &amp; Fairs</b>	An event bringing buyers and sellers and interested persons together to view and/or sell products, services, and other resources to a specific industry or the general public, scheduled alone or in conjunction with other events.
<b>Entertainment &amp; Leisure Events</b>	A one-time or periodic, free or ticketed performance or exhibition event created for entertainment purposes, scheduled alone or in conjunction with other events.
<b>Festivals</b>	A cultural celebration, either secular or religious, created by and/or for the public, scheduled alone or in conjunction with other events. (Many festivals include bringing buyer and seller together in a festive atmosphere.)
<b>Government &amp; Civic Events</b>	An event comprised of or created by or for political parties, communities, or municipal or national government entities, scheduled alone or in conjunction with other events.

*Source : [juliasilvers.com/embok.htm](http://juliasilvers.com/embok.htm)*

### Types of Events

Event Management companies and organizations service a variety of areas including Corporate events- product launches, press conferences, corporate meetings and conferences, Marketing

programs- road shows and grand opening events, Special Hospitality events- concerts, award ceremonies, film premiers, fashion shows, commercial events, private events (Wedding and bar Mitzvahs). In looking around at the various kinds of events, whether these are leisure based, personal, cultural or organizational, it is possible to identify a number of characteristics that they have common to them, thus helping us to understand what events are and how they work, as well as differentiating them from other activities.

Event definitions give us a starting point from which to progress. Many of the definitions below are from academic / practitioners and do assist in that they can give focus and clarity. They are however, contentious in their nature, but do assist practitioners in engaging and debating with the subject matter. “Events are temporary special occurrences ... They have a finite length, and for planned events this is usually fixed and publicized.” (Getz 1997, p 4)

Getz (1997) further comments that “events are transient, and every event is a unique blending of its duration, setting, management, and people”. Within this quote, key words are evident and will be explored in further detail in future chapters. It does however note the blending and linkages between the disciplines of management, time, staff, attendees (people) and venue(s). Underpinning all will be the planning and organising of these resources. “A unique moment in time celebrated with ceremony and ritual to satisfy specific needs.” (Goldblatt, 2005) With regard to special events it is suggested that there is no one standardised definition as opinions vary. Due to such lack of clarity, definitions from the perspectives of both event organizer and guest are used.

1. A special event is a one-time or infrequently occurring event outside the normal programme or activities of the sponsoring or organising body.

2. To the customer or guest, a special event is an opportunity for a leisure, social, or cultural experience outside the normal range of choices or beyond everyday experience. (Getz, 1997, p.4) “Special events are that phenomenon arising from those non-routine occasions which have leisure, cultural, personal or organizational objectives set apart from the normal activity of daily life, whose purpose is to enlighten, celebrate, entertain or challenge the experience of a group of people”

(Parry 1996, p. 3)

To handle the confusion Arcodia & Barker (2003) have categorised events into three main groups which are business events, cultural events and sporting events. Business events include conferences and trade fairs, while cultural events include festivals and exhibitions. The sporting games are the last group and include the Olympic Games, soccer world cups, car races and many other sporting events. These groupings seem to be appropriate as they encompass all sorts of events and allow the researcher to give the audience a more specific, categorised overview of events.

### **The Origin and Status of Event Management: An overview**

The word '*event*' is derived from the Latin word '*eventus*' and was originally used to describe big happenings out of the ordinary. It also means “*outcome, result or success*”. Further research into the etymology of the word '*eventus*' describes the line of descent as the following: *Eventus* is derived from the Latin word *eventum* (occurrence, event, issue), which is derived from the Latin word *evenire* (come out, it happens, it turns out), which is derived from the Latin word *venire* (to come, go for sale).

This line of descent gives the conclusion that originally an event is an occurrence, something that happens. The first mentioned definition in the English speaking world originates from Robert Jani in 1955.

Jani said that “*a special event is that which is different from a normal day of living*”. Since then, written sources have not settled on a single generally accepted definition of events.

Since the dawn of time, human beings have found ways to mark important events in their lives; the changing of the seasons; the Eternal cycle of birth, death and the miraculous renewal of life each spring. Both in private and in public, people feel the need to mark the important happenings in their lives, to celebrate the key moments. At the public level, momentous events become the milestones by which people measure their private lives. Even in the high-tech era of global media, when people have lost touch with the common religious beliefs and social norms of the past, we still need social events to mark the local and domestic details of our lives. The Traditions of various countries, influenced by changes within society, including urbanization, industrialization and the increasingly multicultural population, have greatly influenced many events as they are celebrated today.

At present, the event Management industry is in its infancy in India. There are only a few event management companies functioning in the country in its formal version. Majority of them are MNCs. The concept of event management is not very popular in the non-corporate sector. Two reasons can be attributed to this viz. low awareness about the subject on the part of people and high cost factor. Another problem on the part of the company is that there is neither single company which provides all services at one point, nor one single company specialized in one particular area of service.

### **Process of Event Management**

The entire process of event management can be classified under three headings viz., Pre event, during event and post event activities.



## **Pre event activities**

Pre event activities are undertaken by the Event Management companies before the event. Pre event activities begin with the planning of the event. On getting the order from the client the Event Management Company assigns the work to an Event Manager. The event manager prepares a detailed plan of the event and holds a discussion with the client to assess his expectations and specific requirements. At this stage the Manager ascertains the feasibility of the event, venue, media of publicity type of audience, sponsorship, sources of funds and expenditure, licensing, music and sound system, catering safety and security etc., and assigns duties and responsibilities to his team members. Then he prepares a thorough schedule of activities considering the critical issues involved in the particular event. In this work, he takes the help of external agencies who are experts in the field, such as engineers, architects, contractors etc. Logistics is another important area that needs priority attention by the Event Manager. This step involves booking of hotels or accommodation, air, road and rail and other conveyance mode, catering, security, lighting and music etc. Based upon the event requirements the Event Manager draws up critical dates in the event and deadlines to complete each task. After completion of arrangements a written agreement between the Event Manager and the client is drawn and signed by both the parties to avoid future conflicts and complications.

## **During Event Activities**

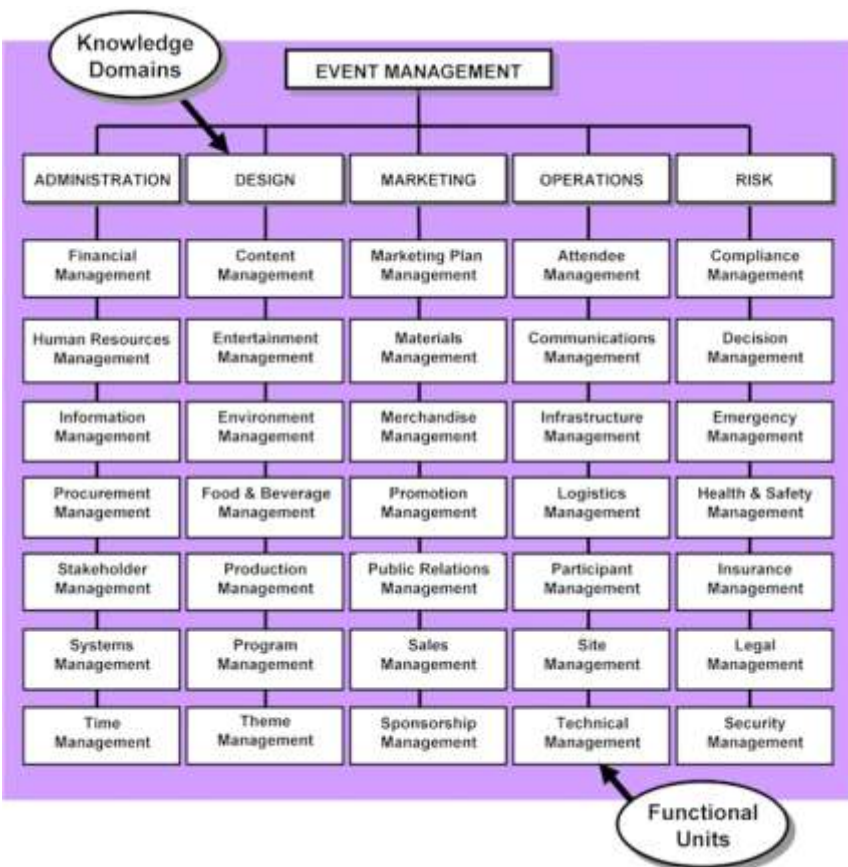
The most important part of the event is the execution of the event. The event must be executed as planned. Deviations should be, as far as possible, avoided, as it leads to unwarranted explanations and excuses.

During the event session the Event Manager should look humble and

be available to the client to call on. He should have a constant surveillance of the activities. Every aspect of the event like lighting, sound, seating food and beverages etc., requires special attention. In brief, continuous monitoring is the gist of the during event execution. Photographs and multimedia recording arrangements, if so desired, also need to be taken care of.

The Figure 1 summarises the activities involved in the event management .

**Figure 1 : Event Management Body of Knowledge Domain Structure**



Source : [www.juliasilvers.com/embok.htm](http://www.juliasilvers.com/embok.htm)

## Post Event Activities

Post event activities begin with the physical task of dismantling of the sets, furniture, stage, music and lighting equipments etc. The next important work of post event for the event management company is the Bill collection. A Statement of Accounts with explanations for over-spends is handed over the client for this purpose. The Event Manager should thank not only the client but all individuals and organizations involved, including his team members. A formal letter of thanking is sent to the client along with a questionnaire to collect the feedback.

Finally, the event management company should carry out a post mortem analyses on the entire event to evaluate the performance and identify the weak points which can be incorporated in the further events for improvement.

## Conclusion

Event Management industry has tremendous scope. Today it is more in the disorganized sector and less in the organized sector. Efforts should be made by the existing companies to bring this industry under the organized sector.

The service sector in general and event management in particular has tremendous career opportunities for students of any educational background. But it requires commitment, hard work and the quality of adapting to different situations quickly. Good public relation is another requisite quality for the career aspirants. They can find scope in any one among the following areas.

- Event Management Company
- Event Management Consultancy
- Hotel, Travel and Hospitality Industry
- Advertising agencies
- Public relations firm
- News media

- Integrated marketing & Communications
- Event budgeting and accounting

However, the challenge for the new entrants in this industry is to be organized to work in a professional manner.

- There is a need to develop one single company which provides all services related to the event or company specialized one aspect providing all services related to that specialized area.
- The industry should undertake vigorous advertising campaign to popularize the concept.
- The players in the field should reduce the charges by adopting cost cutting methods.

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