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THE ROLE OF STRATEGIC EVENT MANAGEMENT IN DESTINATION MARKETING

Abstract: *The role of destination management in the development of sustainable tourism is highly important. However, it is also essential to note that effective destination marketing has an equally vital role to play in shaping the success of the tourism sector. The organization of events of various kinds has become more important in recent years, not only by focusing on the short-term increase in tourism demand, but also as an element of urban development policy with hoped-for effects on politics, economy and society. The aim of this article is to highlight the challenges in event management with a focus on small events. Management approaches to the involvement and interaction of stakeholders, the formation of a planning strategy for the development of the destination are considered. The role and nature of sponsorship associated with increasing the value of small events, as well as the development of a marketing management model for territory marketing, are investigated. Article also emphasizes the role of complex communication strategies in increasing the value of small events. In the conclusion, the marketing management model for small events is represented, that can be the result of problem solving processes by event organizers based on the creation of alliances in the community ecosystem.*

Keywords: *strategic event management; events; event tourism; marketing communications; destination development planning.*

JEL classification: *M31; M11*

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სტრატეგიული ღონისძიებების მენეჯმენტის როლი დანიშნულების მარკეტინგში

აბსტრაქტი: დანიშნულების მენეჯმენტის როლი მდგრადი ტურიზმის განვითარებაში ძალზე მნიშვნელოვანია. თუმცა, ასევე მნიშვნელოვანია აღინიშნოს, რომ სასიცოცხლო როლს ასრულებს ტურიზმის სექტორის წარმატების ფორმირებაში ეფექტური დანიშნულების მარკეტინგი. ბოლო წლებში სხვადასხვა სახის ღონისძიებების ორგანიზება უფრო მნიშვნელოვანი გახდა, არა მხოლოდ ტურიზმის მოთხოვნის მოკლევადიანმა მატებაზე ფოკუსირებით, არამედ როგორც ურბანული განვითარების პოლიტიკის ელემენტი, რომელსაც გავლენა ექნება პოლიტიკაზე, ეკონომიკასა და საზოგადოებაზე. სტატიის მიზანია ხაზგასმით აღვნიშნოთ ღონისძიებების მენეჯმენტის გამოწვევები მცირე მოვლენებზე ფოკუსირებით. განიხილება მენეჯმენტის მიდგომები დაინტერესებული მხარეების ჩართულობისა და ურთიერთქმედების, დანიშნულების ადგილის განვითარების დაგეგმვის სტრატეგიის ფორმირების მიმართ. გამოკვლეულია სპონსორობის როლი და ბუნება, რომელიც დაკავშირებულია მცირე ღონისძიებების ღირებულების გაზრდასთან, ასევე ტერიტორიული მარკეტინგის მართვის მოდელის შემუშავებასთან. სტატია ასევე ხაზს უსვამს კომპლექსური საკომუნიკაციო სტრატეგიების როლს მცირე ღონისძიებების ღირებულების გაზრდაში. დასკვნაში წარმოდგენილია მარკეტინგის მენეჯმენტის მოდელი მცირე ღონისძიებებისთვის, რომელიც შეიძლება იყოს ღონისძიების ორგანიზატორების მიერ პრობლემის გადაჭრის პროცესების შედეგი საზოგადოების ეკოსისტემაში ალიანსების შექმნის საფუძველზე.

საკვანძო სიტყვები: სტრატეგიული ღონისძიებების მენეჯმენტი; ივენთი; საქმიანი ტურიზმი; მარკეტინგული კომუნიკაციები; დანიშნულების აგილის განვითარების დაგეგმვა.

JEL კლასიფიკაცია: M31; M11

Introduction

Tourist organizations and the state are increasingly considering events as important mechanisms for the development of tourism in their regions and an increasingly important component of branding destinations. However, event marketers and destination marketers have not yet learned how to combine their efforts, and hence further research is needed on the best ways to use events to build a destination brand. Destinations seek to use events to achieve competitive advantages in the market and achieve their destination goals. An event is a strategic approach to articulating and maximizing the potential benefits of an event, or a strategic planning phenomenon to maximize both the short and long term outcomes of an event. Benefits may relate to the economic and tourism sectors. When building a portfolio of events, local and regional events can play an important role in attracting visitors, increasing length of stay and increasing visitor spending. The organization of smaller sporting events in accordance with the infrastructure and human and cultural capital of the host community can be a viable form of sustainable tourism development. Smaller events tend to reduce the seasonality of tourism, use existing infrastructure, require less government funding, and generate smaller but more reliable tourism revenue.

However, strategies that encourage event tourism can distract the event organizer from the main goals of the event. Another challenge is to make local regional events and festivals more viable by identifying alternative sources of funding.

As traditional sources of funding have dwindled, the importance of commercial event sponsors has increased significantly. In addition, there is growing criticism of government subsidies leading to funding restrictions. In line with the growing importance of small events, through an in-depth analysis of the dominant literature and reflections on management decisions ranging from stakeholder engagement approaches to the formulation of a destination development planning strategy, this article explores the key drivers of a marketing management model.

Theory And Practice Of Event Management For Destination Development

Destination development planning involves evaluating the nature of the events to be carried out, in terms of their potential benefits, in line with the creation of a portfolio of events to implement event destination strategies to ensure cost effectiveness and maximize your success, event management requires the interdependence of resources between partners. Networks in regional communities play a fundamental role not only in exploring new market entry opportunities for local industries, but also in creating preconditions for regional product innovation. The skill and ability of event organizers to build personal networks is a key aspect of event long-term sustainability. Communication between people is an important element in maintaining strong relationships with stakeholders and limiting hidden conflicts. Some festival organizations work with stakeholders through informal personal relationships or with natural allies in the professional community. Event organizers must meet the needs of the audience as well as respond to the expectations of stakeholders in order to keep their participation. Moreover, media and public relations strategies should be consistent with local authorities' focus on image and brand management. Organizations involved in the creation, promotion and implementation of events should consider how the unique requirements for developing and expanding events can

facilitate different types of stakeholder engagement and networking. Critical stakeholder relationships in events are especially important for effective media management (Barnes, 2014).

In the event industry, the ability to understand the roles and relationships of stakeholders can be used to differentiate destinations and stimulate tourism through the development and management of events within a strategic portfolio approach.

Stakeholder identification is a key issue for venue development planning. A corporate market structure with limited stakeholder involvement is more common than a community-driven or synergistic strategy development structure. By developing different stakeholder maps over time, event organizers and managers can better understand the dynamics of stakeholder interests and relationships, which is useful for developing appropriate strategies to cope with stakeholder changes in future events. Stakeholders tend to differ in the meanings they attach to concepts such as identity: politicians pay more attention to economic and political issues, while cultural actors are more concerned with the social aspects of identity. From this point of view, management strategies include the development of collaborative relationships to ensure the sustainability of events and take into account the progressive evolution of the needs of stakeholders.

Few destinations use real event tourism strategies, although Australia is considered one of the leaders. Moreover, the dominant event planning models overlook the relationship between organizational strategy and event planning and management. Existing research suggests that aligning organizational strategy, event management, and results can be problematic in your local government study, planning and event management often focus on operational aspects and can lead to missed opportunities with regard to the institution's strategic goals.

Thus, examining the experiential, interactive, relational, and purposive nature of events is fundamental to assessing their strategic direction. In particular, these key characteristics play an important role not only in developing the event experience, but also in developing marketing communications strategies and attracting sponsors.

Events are part of the region's "experience economy" by creating a temporary "creative space" that can attract visitors. The experiential nature of events encourages inclusive and interactive communication. Product differentiation is based on emotional rather than utilitarian characteristics and is therefore fundamental to marketing communications and sponsorship strategies. Member engagement is a concrete opportunity, and marketing activities as a multi-sensory experience allow members to enjoy a live interaction with the brand.

Marketing activities based on a relationship marketing approach can have a significant impact on communication strategies. Events provide opportunities to engage customers and broader stakeholders by strengthening emotional bonds that positively impact customer loyalty. Because small events can also create a sense of belonging and emotional connection, event organizers can support these co-creation processes through programming and custom design. There is a need to create a unique identity for small events through co-creation processes that can convey fundamental values and build personal relationships between event participants and organizers (Getz, 2016).

Event design is based on creating an environment for participation, maximizing the value of the event through key elements such as education (learning), communication and entertainment, or hybrid options such as "edutainment" and "infotainment". In a sporting event, the perspective of the participants and the characteristics of the destination play a decisive role in the decision of the tourists to travel, informing the efforts to build a portfolio of sports tourism events by increasing the attractiveness of the place and affection to achieve the development of the event and destination and improve the visitor experience. There is an importance of festival landscapes in determining the emotions, satisfaction and future behavior of participants in gastronomic and wine events. Event-based

cultural tourism strategies are now used so frequently that their ability to create uniqueness has diminished, as evidenced by the growing number of cultural events and festivals.

For smaller events, developing and then implementing a marketing communications strategy is more of a challenge. In particular, the lack of funds for marketing activities in the case of small events, gaps in marketing communication channels when comparing the channels accepted by the participants and the channels proposed by the organizers of the event.

However, event organizers can follow an event image development program by focusing on event image attributes that affect satisfaction and behavioral intentions, while supporting a strategy to increase satisfaction through event image (i.e., linking participants' emotions more closely to aspects of the event). The image of the event is a direct precursor to satisfaction and also has a great influence on behavioral intention. Satisfaction has been found to play an important mediating role in the relationship between event image and behavioral intention, and improving the event image with satisfaction can maximize positive outcomes in terms of participants' behavioral intention.

The effectiveness of marketing communications also depends on the active role of participants, and word of mouth is an effective tool for marketing events. From this point of view, viral marketing is relevant, since the participants of the event benefit from a high level of participation in their consumption experience of the special event. Marketing communications are becoming increasingly dynamic: the roles of senders and receivers are gradually changing during their interaction. Organizations adapt their web marketing communications in accordance with the motivation of consumers to visit special events. It is believed that users are more satisfied with the website of a special event when they participate in a direct search for information, and not when their search for information is more exploratory in nature.

Social networks have a significant influence on emotions and attachment to festival brands, and these relationships based on social networks lead to desired results, such as positive word-of-mouth. Compared to searching or viewing web pages, event pages, which are created by official event organizers, are able to cause more excitement and valence thanks to the interaction and exchange of information between fans. Participants perceive five types of value of using event pages: functional, social, emotional, interactive and aesthetic. It is important to take into account the need to carry out a specific analysis of each platform, taking into account how it works and which stakeholders prevail in weight, in the clusters to which they belong, and in their received descriptions.

Marketing in social networks allows you to develop very complex event strategies that combine physical and virtual elements. Integrated marketing communication (IMC) is a strategic, not a tactical, imperative for clear, consistent, and continuous communication within and beyond formal organizational boundaries. In addition, when analyzing destination branding, it is now necessary to use a platform-specific approach and an in-depth analysis of stakeholders, since it is no longer possible to separate producers and consumers when creating a brand image. This is a problem for channel managers who need to learn to work on each specific platform in order to manage different channels' visions and resources.

This aspect depends on the synergy between sponsorship and event marketing. Sponsorship by itself has a limited ability to spread specific information about the product, while event marketing at sponsored events increases the amount and type of information that companies can convey to consumers. Sponsorship allows you to improve the image and reputation of the brand, increase its recognition and recognition, and also change public perception (Kelly, 2018).

Most research on the influence of a commercial brand is focused on large and large sports events, and only a few research the influence of commercial sponsorship of regional events on the brand.

The key aspect of achieving effective sponsorship is the successful association of the image of the sponsor brand and the image of the event. Analyzing small events, a significant influence of

commercial sponsorship on memorability, recognition and attitude towards the brand was found, and an insignificant influence on the use of the brand. Thus, event organizers need to develop open strategies to help visitors form a positive attitude to the event, since image transfer plays an important role in the effects of the sponsor brand.

Nevertheless, the organizers of regional events are often people who do not have sufficient training or experience in managing events, and therefore need guidance on the effective management of sponsoring events. On the contrary, event organizers must have a deep understanding of the companies that sponsor their events, as well as the processes and interactions underlying the sponsorship agreements that they conclude. From this point of view, a conceptual model is offered that illustrates the processes and interactions that take place within the framework of sponsorship agreements between small and medium-sized enterprises and sports tourism events in the regions. Their model serves as a template for the successful implementation of sponsorship from initiation to evaluation and renewal of sponsorship, highlighting the key processes for successful sponsorship agreement (ie effective use of sponsorship and methodical evaluation) in the context of sponsorship as a cycle in the model. For example, they clearly illustrate the relationship between the effective use of sponsorship and the achievement of the sponsor's goals, as well as the importance of methodical assessment of the extension of sponsorship for subsequent events. Regional sports events depend on the strength and joint strategies of key stakeholders. As the typology of organizational interaction with regional sports events shows, the development of events can bring positive results to sponsors, business and other interested parties, if it is possible to overcome barriers to business participation.

Results And Discussion

The above material emphasizes the role of complex communication strategies in increasing the value of small events. The emerging orientation in the development of the strategy is that the role of events has changed from the primary function of branding the place, based on the image and economic effects, to a broader approach to the creation of the place, aimed at the overall improvement of the quality of the place. This approach will be successful in achieving the effectiveness of events by stimulating visits, increasing the costs of visitors and increasing the prestige of the destination.

Due to the complexity of the formulation and implementation of the strategy of events, there is a need for a model of place creation, which can help determine the various elements necessary for a successful program of place creation, shedding light on the value of event activity for obtaining support. interested parties. From this point of view, the marketing management model for small events can be the result of problem solving processes by event organizers based on the creation of alliances in the community ecosystem. The idea is to overcome the dominant operational aspects in the design of the event and think about strategic goals.

Key factors of the event marketing model include:

1. Interaction with stakeholders. An approach that challenges the traditional hierarchical representation, often marginalizing or sometimes ignoring some stakeholders, advocating a broader and more consultative point of view to achieve sustainability of events and, thus, complementing the interests and input of broader groups of stakeholders. This approach contributes to the increase of social cohesion in tourist places due to the involvement of residents and local cultural groups in various projects; An important aspect from the point of view of the overall impact of the event, as this goal often depends on the stakeholders being considered.

2. Sponsorship strategy. The key aspect in determining the relationship between the development of the event and the marketing communications of the sponsors. The influence of advertising actions of sponsors on the image of the event and the influence of the image of the event on the individuality of the sponsor's brand cause special concern among the organizers of events who are trying to attract sponsorship. The choice of sponsors is also a key issue when considering the nature of interests

presented at local events. Also, a higher level of understanding is required to increase the individuality of the event brand due to the association with the special features of the destination.

3. Shared creativity on online and offline platforms. An additional driver that creates a unique environment for joint work. The use of social networks is essential for maintaining contacts and encouraging visitors to share their experiences. Permanent and innovative connections allow events to contribute to the strategy. From the point of view of tourist marketing, the powerful effects of new technologies can provide a more nuanced understanding of the role of social networks in the digital experience, increasing the attractiveness of the destination and influencing brand identity. Since destination branding is becoming an increasingly inclusive and collaborative process, event organizers should explore the potential of social media platforms to attract sponsors and other event participants to create a destination image (Wemmer, 2018).

Likewise, the lack of common goals and long-term vision among local stakeholders can hold back network processes in the community ecosystem. Indeed, the divergence of interests and tension in relation to the distribution of resources limit the development of win-win situations, since the strategies of refusal of interested parties can be an effective instrument of influence on the orientation of event organizers.

With an emphasis on small-scale measures, a transformative research program is needed to reflect the key variables governing events in space. An in-depth analysis of the power relations of interested parties has a fundamental importance for evaluating the possibilities of public spending, taking into account potential social and cultural changes, and choosing the best strategies for increasing community benefits and leveraging event effects. This requires approaches to the study of actions with the participation of marginal stakeholders and promotion of a bottom-up orientation when developing and implementing strategies for small events. Sponsorship operations are especially relevant in light of the limited resources of tourist organizations, but they require knowledge and theory development to determine the strategies of event tourism, including joint branding and efforts to attract attention. Thus, the problem is how best to cope with changes in marketing relations with clients, taking into account the nature of the event.

The growing importance of accountability in sponsorship operations emphasizes the relevance of studying typologies of event experience to strengthen the brand in connection with technological advances in the forms of interaction with consumers. Thus, the design of the event must influence emotional reactions through programs, settings and management of the overall experience of the event. This aspect is important for understanding how mass media and social networks can influence the perception and attitude towards event tourism. The use of social networks for the formation and exchange of experience in conducting events can improve data collection and stimulate emerging debates on ethical issues of data collection.

Conclusion

The article discusses emerging issues in event management through an in-depth analysis of the mainstream literature, exploring management decisions from stakeholder engagement approaches to the formulation of a destination development planning strategy. Destination development planning requires an assessment of the nature of the activities to be undertaken, in terms of their potential benefits, in line with the portfolio deployment concept. Various types of stakeholder engagement and networking facilitate the development and expansion of activities. However, this requires identifying stakeholder typologies to analyze the complex web of relationships involved in marketing and event management, as the community ecosystem encompasses a much broader socio-cultural system where each stakeholder contributes to the achievement of overarching solutions. Thinking about the role of stakeholders allows for the formulation of governance and collaboration strategies that focus on the sustainability of events and the gradual evolution of stakeholder needs. This is a critical issue in terms

of proposing a model for sustainable local development involving less powerful stakeholders. Thus, event organizers should strive to understand the role of key local players and the structure of the respective ecosystem.

Exploring the experiential, interactive, relational, and purposeful nature of events is fundamental to building the image and appeal of a destination. These key characteristics are also functional for developing event experiences, formulating marketing communications strategies, and attracting funding and sponsorship. Events provide more frequent and consistent "talks" with customers as scheduled events provide a platform through which organizations can consult, interact and build meaningful relationships with these important stakeholders. Social media marketing facilitates the development of highly complex event marketing strategies that combine physical and virtual elements. Events are experientially oriented and can create emotional bonds with customers by providing brand exposure to a wide audience, but this depends on synergy between event sponsorship and marketing. In light of the increasing competition for sponsorship, event organizers should assist the sponsor with an overall communication strategy when planning the event. Effective use methods should complement the sponsor's overall communications strategy and maximize the value of their sponsorship investment. Sponsor brand effects depend on the compatibility between the commercial brand and the event's image. From this point of view, image communication plays an important role in the impact of the sponsor's brand, and event organizers need to develop explicit strategies to help visitors form a positive attitude towards the event. The emerging orientation in strategy development suggests that the role of events has shifted from being primarily a place branding function based on image and economic effects to a broader approach to place creation aimed at holistically improving the quality of a place. Key drivers of the event marketing model from the point of view of event organizers, problem-solving processes in the community ecosystem in relation to stakeholder engagement, sponsorship strategy, and co-creation processes on online and offline platforms. This model can help identify the various elements needed for a successful place creation program and shed light on the value of small events in gaining stakeholder support and thus enhancing social cohesion in tourist destinations through the involvement of residents and locals. cultural groups in various projects.

From a tourism marketing perspective, a transformational research agenda is needed to reflect the key variables of place building. Innovative stakeholder strategies are critical to destination development planning processes, to be consistent with the principle of sustainability, to justify the political reason for public financial support, and to reflect the ideological underpinnings of event policy.

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