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This special issue has been generated from the Making Waves International Conference on Events hosted at Bournemouth University, 5-7 July 2014. One of the tracks and themes of the conference was that of the "event experience". The aim of this track was to build upon the papers, discussions and publications from the Extraordinary Experiences, 3-4 September 2007 conference (Jackson *et al.*, 2009; Morgan *et al.*, 2010). This special issue demonstrates that there is still a lot to discover about the event and festival experience. The creation of memorable experiences has been recognized as the *raison d'être* of the hospitality, tourism and leisure industries for some time (Mannell, 1980; Harper, 1981; Cohen, 1979; Pizam, 2010; Tung and Ritchie, 2011). The same is true of festivals and events (Getz, 2005; Jackson, 2006; Berridge, 2007). The festival and event experience involves a complex relationship between a number of organizations and people. Whilst the human nature of the experience is at the heart of it, there are many factors that have come together to create the experience through a number of stages, both pre-, peri- and post-event (O'Sullivan and Spangler, 1999; Getz, 2012) and evidenced in the papers in this special issue.

The multi-disciplinary papers are both conceptual and empirical in nature. The former are at the first stages of theory building whilst the latter contribute to the burgeoning increase in knowledge of various aspects of the event and festival experience. As was the call by Mair and Whitford (2013) there are a variety of methodologies and methods demonstrated from the use of multiple regression analysis (Andersson and Armbrrecht, 2014) to mixed methods (Hixson, 2014). The papers have been contributed by international authors researching different types of events and festivals from a number of countries including, Hungary, Spain, New Zealand, Australia and the UK. All of the papers, in some way, contribute to an understanding of the experience of events and festivals, whether the experience of the various stakeholders involved in providing and organizing events (Jarman *et al.*, 2014; Jepson *et al.*, 2014; Middleditch and Bradbury, 2014), the volunteers (Ragsdell and Jepson, 2014), the tourists (Diaz Soria *et al.*, 2014) or consumers (Andersson and Armbrrecht, 2014; Henderson and Musgrave, 2014; Hixson, 2014).

The papers in this special issue can be loosely categorized into two groups. The first group focuses on the consumers of the experience, whilst the second is more about the creation and management of the experience. Although there is synergy between the two, the first group of papers provides readers with an insight into a number of issues that influence the way that consumers experience the festival or event. The second grouping is more concerned with better understanding the networking, relationships and knowledge transfer between event stakeholders.

In the first grouping, the paper by Hixson discovers that the extent to which young people participate and gain personal identity from an event is fundamentally affected by their sense of engagement in the event. This was mainly gained through prior involvement in arts organizations that were directly part of the Adelaide Fringe Festival. This was in comparison to the spectating nature of young people's experience of the Clipsal 500 motorsport event. The paper by Jepson *et al.* also refers to engagement with a festival, that of the local community to the Utcazene-Fesztival, a Street Music Festival in Veszprem, Hungary. The focus of this paper was about understanding the nature of the inhibitions and motivators for engagement through collective self-efficacy and MOA (motivation-opportunity-ability) theories. In their paper, Andersson and Armbrrecht focused on the value of the sport event experience by measuring the three Es of: the Extent of visit, Experience intensity and Expenditure. Henderson and Musgrave also develop the importance of understanding the value of the experience. In this case they utilized theories of social marketing to conceptualizing the methods by which consumer behaviour could be changed to better manage the negative costs that are produced by wastage at events. In this case, it was throwaway tents at music festivals.

The creation and management of the experience grouping of papers includes those that uncover the complex relationships that exist between a range of stakeholders, including the reliance on volunteers. The temporary nature of events has intensified the need to better understand the processes involved in delivering a successful experience through ensuring effective sub-contracting and knowledge management. Middleditch and Bradbury researched the complex nature of managing stakeholders, especially sub-contracting for the upcoming World Masters Games in 2017. They identified the importance of relationships but also knowledge management. This was the focus of the paper by Ragsdell and Jepson who investigated the creation and sharing of knowledge by Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA) Festival volunteers. These two papers discovered the importance of the human attributes of event processes and the features that both inhibit and enable relationship building and knowledge transfer. Even in the age of technology, Ragsdell and Jepson discovered that networking is reliant upon human interaction. The Jarman *et al.* paper utilizes networking theory to conceptualize the future research of tools such as sociograms to construct a picture of the reach and intensity of these relationships. They also recognize the human and social nature of networks and the need for trust between all parties involved.

The papers in this special issue offer a glimpse of the different lenses through which academics view diverse aspects of the event and festival experience. One observation from the papers in this issue is the importance of the personalization of the experience from all parties involved with creating, managing and consuming the event or festival. In many of the papers it was discovered that the greater the personal relevance of the event, the more intense the engagement was and the more enduring the knowledge and memories generated. This Special Issue contributes to the body of knowledge on the event and festival experience. It also demonstrates that there is further need for more innovative methodological approaches to gain deeper and alternative lens through which to explore the event experience. Greater credibility for the event and festival fields of research will be achieved through more theory building and empirical research. The inherent qualities of the creation, management and consumption of event and festival experiences that were discussed in this issue illustrate that there is a need to be more explicit about the temporary, pulsating and human features that form individually and collectively the complexity that is the festival and event world.

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