

# **Event Experiences: Design, Management and Impact**

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of  
the University of West London for the degree of PhD by Published Work

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Additionally, there are family and friends who should be thanked for their support, interest, sarcasm and wit whilst this work has been in progress.

Sadly, before I completed this submission my Mother passed away after a long battle with cancer. Coming from a mining and mill worker background respectively, both my parents were always very proud of the fact that I was a 'first' in the family of Berridge's and Dufton's – first to go to university, to get a degree, to get a masters and now first to get a PhD. She would have loved to have seen me receive the Doctorate award at Graduation. I will be thinking of you Mum more than ever on that day.

From a personal point of view I have cherished my many cycling days in the Surrey Hills riding a Colnago bike. Those three to four hour rides helped inspire me and gave me the space and freedom to think and deliberate, in doing so, they enabled me to process my ideas and thoughts into some kind of order. Without cycling acting as the initial spur for the ethnographic research project I might well have never started this PhD.

## **Acronyms**

ABDC – Australian Business Deans Council

AEME - Association of Event Management Education

EEDF - Event Experience Design Framework

EMBOK – Event Management Body of Knowledge

EDRN – Event Design Research Network

MfL – Mayor for London

TDFGD – *Tour de France* Grand Depart

TfL – Transport for London

S-D Logic – Service Dominant Logic

## **Abstract**

The papers submitted for this PhD by publication represent research centered on event experiences and their design, management and impact. They are the result of research projects that have produced seven published peer-reviewed papers and one book. The body of work has made an original, significant and sustained contribution towards the development of an emerging field of study in events. The work has made a major contribution towards furthering understanding of the human experience that results from the management of events, their design and their impact.

At the heart of this submission is a consideration for how events are experienced and what factors and components contribute to the depth of that experience. The majority of papers analyses and reflects upon the construction of experience settings (their design) and essentially seeks knowledge to identify the variables that shape any experience of events (Ryan, 2012). In doing so the research undertaken has embraced a less restrictive set of methodologies usually afforded by statistical exercises in favour of a more embodied, immersive and participative approach. This has included not only observation and auto-ethnography, but also reflection on that which has been observed. In turn this reflection and analysis has drawn upon a range of theories and models to advance understanding of the social occasions that we call events where human interactions with the designed programme and environment illicit a range of responses that may culminate in a memorable and unique moment in time.

The research therefore touches upon the emotional response to event experiences, the study and interpretation of the meaning of events, and notably their signification to an intended audience. In the course of this research I have evaluated and reflected upon the study and practice of event management across a range of event types and genres. Seeking to initially clarify the role of design in creating event experience led me to questioning the paradigmatic model for event management and resulted in the development of an alternative consideration for event planning and management - Event Experience Design Framework (EEDF). Unlike existing models this places design as the central and pivotal driving force that inhabits all areas of the event management process and upon which all events should then be based.

The contribution of this body of work can therefore be summarised as follows:

1. Development of a paradigmatic concept that places design as the central and essential practice that underpins the planned event experience.
2. Theoretical positioning of how designing event experiences impacts on stakeholders
3. Recognition and application of theoretical models and tools relevant to event design and creativity, and further use of conceptual models to analyse experiential outcomes
4. Identification and awareness of the broader socio-cultural impact of planned events

This submission provides evidentiary material that I have made a positive and meaningful contribution to raising the profile of events through research, teaching and learning by an acknowledged excellence in events management education and as a recognised (and first) National Teaching Fellow in Events. Furthermore, the submission provides a reflection on this research and development that has enabled me to make such a pivotal contribution to the field. It concludes with an outline of plans for the future.

## Background and rationale

This section sets out the main origins and context for the research. It also identifies key principles of enquiry that are applied to connect the research and give clarity and coherence to the collective submission. The essence of this academic collection is concentrated on the planned event which has the intent to create or shape the individual and collective experience of event attendees and those affected by the event:

Planned events are created to achieve specific outcomes, including those related to the economy, culture, society and environment. Event planning involves the design and implementation of themes, settings, consumables, services, and programmes that suggest, facilitate or constrain experiences for participants, guests, spectators and other stakeholders. Every event goer has a personal and unique experience arising from the interactions of setting, programme and people, but event experiences also have broader social and cultural meaning.

(Getz, 2012: 28)

In presenting the background and rationale for the submission, three main principles that support the research agenda are identified:

- Event environments are created and managed
- Experiences within those environments are purposefully designed
- Event experiences impact upon a range of stakeholders

These principles were first established in my book and the first document in this submission, *Events Design and Experience* (Berridge, 2007a). The principles themselves are the direct result of a range of formative research projects and concurrent collegiate discussions on events, leisure and tourism activities conducted in late 1990 and early 2000 (but that are not a part of this submission). In building upon these earlier discussions the influence of leisure theorists is evident and in particular those researching the nature of leisure experience (Kelly & Godbey, 1992; Wahlers, 1985; Mannell et al., 1988; Mannell & Iso-Ahola, 1987; Iso-Ahola, 1980). This body of work has guided my research by directing me towards the adoption of analytical concepts and research methodologies that would enable a deeper understanding of the design and management of events. To enhance understanding of how events are constructed and how attendees consequently deconstruct, interpret and interact

with those purposefully designed elements requires insight into the characteristics of the human experience. Whilst the majority of the work here focusses upon the internal engagement at the event, from the design, management and experience perspective, the work also considers the use of events in society by stakeholders to create social and cultural experiences for the host community and an external audience.

Furthermore, the submission reflects past and concurrent discussions within academia on the need for more conceptual models to be applied in research exploring the emerging event-industry profession, event experiences and the tools used in creating those experiences (Jackson, 2006; Allen, 2005; Getz, 2002; Getz, 2007; Ryan, 2012). Very few events based academic studies have investigated the customers' perceptions or indeed practitioners' experiences or methods used in designing and staging events (Brown, 2014). In the main those that do exist are reflective work by those practitioners themselves (Malouf, 1999; 2012; Monroe, 2006; Silvers, 2004; 2012; Matthews, 2008). Effective design in events is crucial to attendee engagement and experience thus, in seeking a maturation of academic study in the area, it is noted there is need for event management to develop reflective practice around design, and that the lack of this reflection coupled with a lack of theoretically based research has kept scholars from developing a systematic understanding of the process of design and experience (Bladen & Kennell, 2014).

The papers submitted collectively address this expressed need for a more detailed study of how events are designed and what models and theories can be used to create and understand event experiences. As stated earlier, my book (Berridge, 2007a) is initially used to present the overarching context of the submission and to provide a thematic and conceptual link between all the papers. Rather than present the research in strict chronological order, three themes that are central to the book are used to 'cluster' the remaining publications. These themes are: event management; event design; and, event impact. They are of central relevance for a deeper understanding of the meaning of events experiences.



## List of submitted publications

### Overarching context – Event Management, Design and Experience

- 1) Berridge, G. (2007a), *Event Design and Experience*, Elsevier Butterworth Heinemann: Oxford.

### Published papers

#### Cluster 1 - Event Management

- 2) Berridge, G. (2010a) Event Pitching: The role of design and creativity, *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 29(2), pp. 208-215.
- 3) Berridge, G. (2012a) Event Experience: A case study of differences between the way in which organizers plan an event experience and the way in which guests receive the experience, *Journal of Recreation and Parks Administration*, 17(3) pp. 7-23.
- 4) Berridge, G. (2014) The *Gran fondo* and *Sportive* experience: A look at cyclist's requirements and event professionalization, *Event Management*, 17(1), pp. 78-88.
- 5)

#### Cluster 2 - Event Design

- 6) Berridge, G. (2010b) Design Management of Events. In Tassiopoulos, D. (ed.) *Events Management: A development and managerial approach*, 3rd edn. Juta Publishing: Claremont, SA, pp. 185-206.
- 7) Berridge, G. (2012b) Designing Event Experiences. In Page, S. & Connell, J. (eds.) *International Handbook of Events*, Routledge: Oxon, pp. 273-288

#### Cluster 3 - Event Impact

- 7) Berridge, G. (2011a) The promotion of cycling in London: the impact of the 2007 *Tour de France* Grand Depart on the image and provision of cycling in the capital, *Journal of Sport and Tourism*, 17(1), pp. 43-61.
- 8) Berridge, G. (2012c) The impact of the 2007 *Tour de France* Grand Depart on cycling in London: a review of social and cultural legacy, *Proceedings of the 4<sup>th</sup> Australian Cycling Conference*. Adelaide, January 16-17, 2012, Australian Cycling Conference Inc.: Adelaide, pp. 42-56.

## **Preface**

I joined Ealing College of Higher Education in 1991 as Senior Lecturer (Leisure Management) with a responsibility for coordinating the year long work placement programme and in 1996 I became programme leader for Leisure Management. I continued in this post through the period of change as the institution became the Polytechnic of West London, Thames Valley University and the University of West London respectively.

In 1996 I integrated an event management minor pathway into the Leisure programme and then in 2000 I developed one of the earliest undergraduate programmes nationally in Events Management, serving as programme leader until 2013. Since my original appointment, I have acquired an active research involvement in leisure and event experiences. I have acted as an advocate for research and education in leisure and events through involvement as a Committee Member and Newsletter editor for the Leisure Studies Association (1996 – 2000), Committee Member for World Leisure (2000-2004) and Committee Member of the Association of Event Management Education (2006-2010). I have consistently served on university wide committees as Faculty and School representative on the Research Committee, Learning, Teaching and Assessment Committee and Work Based Learning Committee. From 2008 -2012 I coordinated the School of Hospitality and Tourism research group.

I am a founder member of the Association of Event Management Education (AEME) and the Event Design Research Network (EDRN) and was a consultant for the creation of the post of Education Director of International Special Events Society (ISESUK). My development as an academic and researcher is evidenced by other research-related activities. These include acting as a manuscript reviewer for journals, for example, *Leisure Studies*, *Annals of Tourism Research*, *Journal of Parks and Recreation Administration* and receiving funding awards such as the Teaching Quality Enhancement Fund (TQEF), Teaching Fellowship Fund (TFF), Work Based Learning Grant (WBL) and Research in Teaching Excellence Award (RiTE). I also successfully completed a Post Graduate Certificate in Research at the University of West London. In 2014 I joined Surrey University as Senior Teaching Fellow in Events.

In summary, I have made a positive and meaningful contribution to raising the profile of research, learning and teaching in events by my acknowledged excellence in the field of

events research which was recognised by a National Teaching Fellowship award in 2010. In respect of the above statement this is evidenced by my activities as:

1. An active researcher and conference presenter
2. A published author
3. An advocate for academic development of my subject discipline (institutionally, nationally and internationally)
4. An advocate for teaching & learning initiatives
5. A reflective practitioner
6. An active member of numerous university, faculty and subject committees and groupings
7. A course leader and teacher of cross faculty courses
8. A mentor to existing and new staff

## **Literature Review**

This section presents an outline literature review on: the emergence of event management as a field of study; the emergence of an experience industry; the nature and study of experience; the role of design in event management; and the impact of planned events. This review establishes a context for my work by considering the wider academic discussion around events and in relation to management, design and experience. Within this discussion there are areas of overlap in relation to the nature of events and their experiences and the emergence of an experience industry. The papers in this submission represent a substantial contribution to the body of knowledge around the concepts, ideas, examples, theories and frameworks discussed in this literature review.

### **Events and Event Management**

The study of event management emerged in the 1990 and largely evolved from academic interest in the fields of leisure, tourism, hospitality and sport. Although events had been the topic of interest from sociologists, anthropologists, ethnographers, psychologists and cultural historians amongst others, there were very few academics with a prolonged level of research in the area that could be called event management. In the past decade, however, there has been increased academic interest in events with, for instance, conferences such as AEME, Global Events Congress, Centre for International Hospitality Management and Leisure Studies Association being either event based or having event themes within a wider programme. With the growth in research and study in events there has been a subsequent call for an 'event studies' perspective to emerge with a demand for texts with advanced ideas and multi-disciplinary research and theoretical perspectives (Getz, 2007; 2012). This call argued that such an approach is necessary so that the knowledge and theory of event studies – embracing social science, humanities, management, the arts, and other associated fields – can be given to the field and practice of event management. Therefore, it is against this backdrop of a newly emerging field of study that my submission is presented.

Events are time-precious and are often seen as occasions that are savoured as special moments to appreciate (Gleick, 2000). In past and present study it is acknowledged that their impact comes at both the micro and macro level (Allen et al., 2005; Hall, 1997; Roche, 2000; Gratton & Henry, 2001) with the result being felt across all of our lives offering a

range of experiences that can signify important aspects of civilization that often comprises a shared experience (Shone & Parry, 2010; Tassiopoulos, 2010; Getz, 2007; Morgan, 2010; Turner, 1986). There has, though, been limited research into either the design or the experiences resulting from events (Getz, 2007; Berridge, 2007a; Bladen & Kennell, 2012). As the event industry and events have matured and developed as a tool for not only entertainment and participation, but also as a tool for learning, communication and promotion, the interest in the nature of the event experience has emerged. Determining and managing attendees experience is now a critical factor in an event's success (Manners et al., 2014).

### **The Nature of Experience and the Experience Industry**

Modern event management is largely about delivery of experience or experience opportunities. Events present the attendees with unique perspectives and with an opportunity to engage with a collective experience where novelty is assured because they are infrequent and time differentiated (Tassiopoulos, 2010). Events are concerned with the scope of human experiences that are linked with attending or being touched by a planned event and are, thus, a significant sector in what is termed the *experience industry* (Pine and Gilmore, 1999). In explaining what an experience is, Schmitt (1999) indicates they are private events (moments), the consequence of stimulation prompting a response that moves the entire living organism. Experience has been described as an interactive sensation triggered by a product, service or event and that affects physical and cognitive levels over a period of time (Diller et al., 2008). These sensations are expanded and include the sensorial, symbolic, temporal and meaningful. Insight into the nature and character of this experience is made difficult, however, by its complicated, multi-faceted and variable nature (Rossman & Schlatter, 2003; Ooi, 2005; Getz, 2012).

### **Models and Concepts of Experience**

Consequently, consumption is said to have evolved beyond the simple purchase of products and services into the differentiated pursuit of these experiences (Holbrook & Hirshmann, 1982; Pine & Gilmore, 1999; Schmitt, 1999; Jensen, 1999). Experiences play a central role in people's choices with many seeking an absorbing and immersive experience rather than mundane transactional exchanges (O'Sullivan & Spangler, 1998; Pine & Gilmore, 1999). The role of the event manager is, as far as is possible, to create the engagement setting for experiences to be possible and to manufacture an emotional connection amongst attendees

through careful planning of tangible and intangible events (Pullman & Gross, 2004). So as experiences have evolved to meet people's inner or psychic needs, so those designing experiences are taking greater efforts to ensure customers recognise their quality (Ting-Yueh & Shun-Ching, 2010). This has attracted academic study and has drawn the attention of researchers who have begun to develop a more detailed understanding and analysis of the way in which events are designed and what occurs during the resulting engagements at the event (Jensen, 1999; Schmitt, 1999; Berridge, 2007a; Getz, 2007; Pikemaat et al., 2009; Nelson, 2009; Ayob et al., 2013). Getz (2012) observes that there is a significant amount of relevant discourse on experience and meaning and that an awareness of these is essential if events and their design are going to foster high-level engagement.

This discourse has produced several models of experience. The aforementioned *experience economy* of Pine and Gilmore (1999) consists of degrees and levels of emotional involvement and participation. The theory of *dramaturgy* (Goffman, 1959) offers a distinct understanding of what a staged experience should contain, namely, a theme that provides positive cues engaging all five senses. Gronroos (1990) produced a well-regarded service model where the core of the total experience occurs on the front stage and is supported by other experiential features that add value (Sundbo and Hagedorn-Rasmussen, 2008). Walls et al., (2011) saw experiences as ordinary or extraordinary, noting that they vary on a cognitive and emotional level and where physical and interactive elements of the experience can be affected by the service provider. Using the physical and social environment for experience dependency is central to Mossberg's ideas (2003). This model draws extensively on *servicescape* (Bitner, 1992) where a range of sensory factors affects the environment (tangible and intangible). O'Dell (2005) extended this to embrace cultural influences which he termed *experiencescape* where the attendee helps create meaning of the space for themselves.

The *prism of experience* model (Morgan, 2006; 2009) suggests personality and physical operation factors can be influenced. Building upon pull and push factors, physical and personal operations form the pull of the experience, whilst personal benefit and meaning form the push. In a more specific event context is Getz whose model (2007; Pettersson & Getz, 2009) utilises the multi-dimensional nature of experience with three core aspects that affect people. The *conative* dimension is their behaviour and what people actually do; the *cognitive* dimension is how they make sense of experience through awareness & judgement; and the *affective* dimension reflects the feelings and emotions that they use to describe the

experience (Mannell et al., 1988). Central to this is the *liminal zone* (Turner, 1974) that seeks to also highlight the importance of *communitas* at an event. This refers to the transient state where attendees are together away from everyday life and are at the event for a common goal. Together they suggest an umbrella of experience is available that covers the multitude of feelings and emotions that individuals get on a physical and cognitive level from their presence at an event. The meaning attributed to the event and the experience is then transmitted via symbols and objects that reaffirm the spatial and temporal purpose of the event.

Although not strictly an experience model, *Service Dominant Logic* (S-D Logic) stresses a mind-set around the creation and consumption of experience (Vargo & Lusch, 2004) where the significance of co-production and co-creation of experience is recognised as attendees seek value creation within the event (Payne et al., 2008) and participate in the production and planning (Ek et al., 2008). S-D Logic articulates a relationship between designer and co-creator where customers (attendees) can act upon the resources available to them to create value experiences. It emphasises a customer-supplier relationship that occurs through interaction and dialogue where customers are active participants with the organisation as opposed to being the recipient of the organisations embedded values. For events this has profound implications, particularly in terms of competitive effectiveness, if the customer (attendee) participates in parts of the production process (Auh et al., 2007). It therefore becomes clear that designing such participation opportunities is important for the creation of experiences at events, and that this can be seen as a part of a managed process (the design and management of an event).

### **Designing Event Experiences**

Within the practice of event management, design should be regarded as essential to an events success as it leads to improvement in the event on every level (Brown and James, 2004). On the relationship between organiser and experience, the emphasis is placed on a deliberate series of actions (the design) on the part of the organiser. Understanding the nature of the actual experience, as previously discussed, and the relationship between the *experience creator* and *experience receiver* is complex. Nevertheless, it is advocated that the quality and type of experiences can, to a substantial extent, be predicted through using event experience design models (Shedroff, 2001; Rossman & Schlatter, 2012; Silvers, 2012; Roark, 2012). These models become effective in designing specific content and

characteristics that assist in the differentiating classifications of events via, for example, size, type, context and content (Shone and Parry, 2004; 2010; Silvers, 2004; Van Der Wagen, & Carlos, 2005; Bowdin et al., 2010). The principle of classifying events via content also introduces the variability of experiences: feelings, emotions and values from attendees. It is important therefore to have frameworks and tools that enable such experience to be designed.

In experiential service encounters design can be seen as having key areas of influence on the attendee experience via: physical environment, service employees, service delivery process, fellow customers (Voss & Zomerdiik, 2007). Events are designed and created for people to have great experiences, but importantly, as noted earlier, co-creation also plays a part as people begin to create their own experiences within event settings Getz (2007). The discussion then revolves around what design contributes towards the event experience. In separating out the design décor elements utilised to create enhanced experiences for attendees, the design also becomes a tool used in the construction of the relationship between individuals and their physical setting (Nelson, 2009). In constructing this relationship the emphasis is placed on a deliberate series of actions that culminate in the lived experience (Rossman, 2003). What ultimately emerges is that the design of event experiences is seen as a complex, purposeful activity and that the individuals designing experiences need to adopt and be aware of a range of conceptual tools to address this complexity. By anticipating experiences, design, then becomes a tool able to predict the future (Morello, 2000). In practice this means that the professional event manager must be able to envision and imagine the whole experience from the attendee point of view and identify the elements that will mitigate unsatisfactory experiences (Silvers, 2004).

One method for doing this is to identify the key dimensions of event experience which it is suggested a professional organiser should address when designing an event. According to Silvers, these key dimensions are: anticipation, arrival, atmosphere, appetite, activity and amenities (Silvers, 2012). The use of *valorization* tools may also assist organiser's in this since it enables them to visualise the purposefully staged space/time into which a participant or attendee will enter and interact (Fallassi, 1987). *Valorization* facilitates attendee engagement with their surroundings and absorption into the event. Approaching this from a *symbolic interactionist* perspective indicates that there are key elements that make up any such planned occurrence (Blumer, 1969). These elements can be adopted to guide the design



of experiences which results in six key elements for consideration: interacting people; physical setting, objects, rules, relationships, animation (Rossman & Schlatter, 2003; 2012). Organisers planning events need to be aware of how each separate element contributes to the experience and that any single element may change as a result of attendee interaction, interpretation and co-creation. As a consequence the nature of the experience itself may change. Such design and experience components, though, are not limited to impacting on the internal environment for the event attendees, they are also inextricably linked to external socio-cultural and place context, in other words society. Events have become increasingly important to that society as they are both a product of, and contribute to, the social world (Andrews and Leopold, 2013). It is this wider social world aspect of events that the next section now considers, focussing on events' role in terms of image formation and socio-cultural impact

### **Impacts of events**

Using events as a means of presenting a positive image and a destination experience to potential visitors is well documented, and can often be a positive one for a host community (Hall, 1997; Bowdin et al., 2006; 2010; Smith, 2001; 2012; Blake, 2005; Carlsen et al., 2007; Lockstone-Binney & Baum, 2013; Allen et al., 2005; Shone and Parry, 2004; Richards & Palmer, 2012). As a result, many cities are now prepared to stage a one off or regular event as part of a strategic investment in presenting an attractive image to an external audience (Smith, 2001; 2012). Furthermore, the experiences associated with attending an event and visiting a destination are now recognised as a significant factor in the choices made by visitors (Lockstone-Binney & Baum, 2013; Moon et al., 2011; Hallmann & Breuer, 2010) Hence, city tourism and event strategists need to consider what special events should be attracted to a destination and to be cognitive of how those events can be harnessed to enhance the image and experience the destination offers (Allen et al., 2005; Derrett, 2004; Smith, 2012; Richards & Palmer, 2012; Foley et al., 2012).

This appearance of spectacular-image events indicates an event can act as a marketing opportunity for the host city because of its character and international recognition, enabling the host community to have a potentially distinct competitive advantage associated with the event' significance, in terms of tradition, attractiveness, image or publicity (Getz 1997). This advantage can be created via the uniqueness of the event experience per se, however, it can also be created through the uniqueness of the event as a one-off, once-in-a-lifetime occasion

at the destination itself (Gratton et al., 2001; Gold & Gold, 2008; Hall, 2001). It can also be a part of a double promotion of event and experience linked to the imaging and reimagining of the destination, with the host developing the destination image as a consequence of hosting the event and in doing so, enhancing the life cycle of the city (Smith, 2012). Cities in responding to such challenges, promote themselves and re-invent their images accordingly (Pugh & Wood, 2004). The desirability of any destination is logically linked to the presentation of the city's image and responses to that image by would-be visitors who identify with the destination attributes (Deng & Li, 2014; Camprubi et al., 2014; Gartner, 1994).

Referred to as *image dimension* the consequence of images is that they influence satisfaction and they help provide the framework for experiences and in turn, those experiences from the destination can influence and change the image of the destination (Echtner & Ritchie, 1993). This connects with the recent thinking on tourism marketing which suggests that the image is based on consumer rationality and emotionality which is a combination of two dimensions: the perceptual, cognitive; and the affective (Beerli & Martin, 2004; Lopesi, 2011). Awareness of these dimensions provides a direct link to events, where research on experience has regarded it as a major contributor to image formation (Moon et al., 2011, Boo & Busser, 2006; Funk et al., 2007). Considering a destination's experience helps us to understand how destinations may be perceived by visitors (Deng & Li, 2014; Liverence & Scholl, 2010). Such offerings are now prevalent as there is a shift in focus from marketing destinations on physical and historical image to cultural and emotional satisfactions, with cityscape experiences having a significant part to play in appealing to and satisfying emotional and rational persona. Using the concept of experience to tap into emotional hot buttons: the connections we make between emotions, feelings and values that influences choice, is regarded as a key aim of destination marketing that subsequently provide experiences of pleasure through events in relation to people, business, culture, fun, entertainment, desire and nostalgia (Allen et al., 2005).

## **Methodology**

This section presents the range and evolution of the research approaches that have been adopted across these publications. Most events can certainly seek to have generic benefits, but the experiential characteristics of an event type can only be drawn from study of a range of similar event occasions in order to extrapolate the multi-dimensional nature of the experience. At the core of this research is the multi-disciplinary study of the event experience by means of an adapted method of experiential sampling (Csikszentmihalyi & Csikszentmihalyi, 1988), direct and participant observation (Carlsen, 2004; Vail, 2001) and self-reporting and interviews (Getz, 2007) that is framed within an experiential framework for analysis - all integrated within an experience framework for analysis

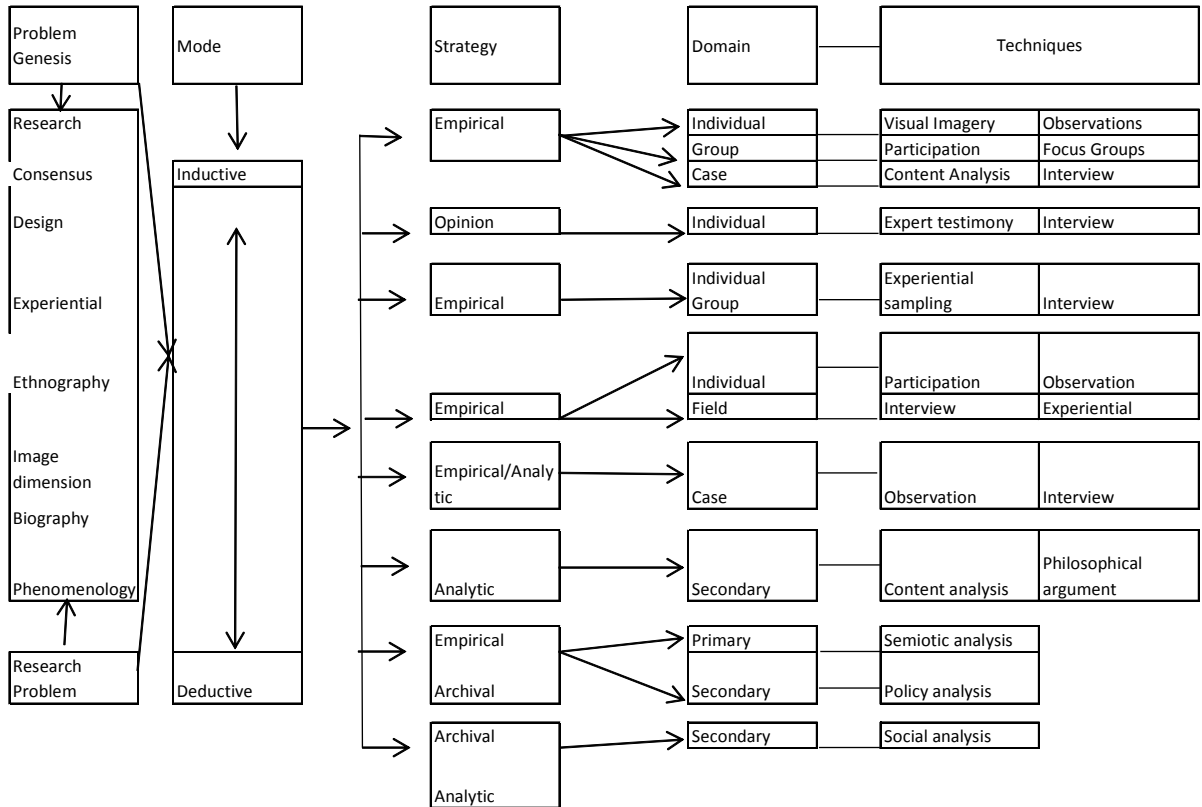
The methods used are qualitative in nature (Bryman, 1988), starting out from small scale case study data capture that draw upon several techniques and culminating in a large scale, complex and on-going ethnographic approach, which in itself is a combination of different methods (Atkinson, 1990). The research is by definition explorative and so is not testing any specific hypothesis. These methods were chosen because they have offered the most appropriate tools from which to explore and understand the meanings of experience associated with different events. Qualitative research such as this affords flexibility, both in terms of imposing theoretical frameworks, understanding meaning and the importance of context in developing any new theories (Hammersely, 1992). The methods respond to calls for further and deeper study of the design of event experiences so that the multi-dimensional nature of experience can be more fully explored and understood (Gibson, 2005; Berridge, 2007; Getz, 2007).

In view of the variety of research design approaches used and the need for a research structure to study the design, impact and management of event experiences a possible model for inquiry developed by Hiles (2008) was considered as was the five phase-model of the research process suggested by Denzin and Lincoln (2005). Ultimately a model adapted from Buckley et al., (1976) was used to indicate the methodological journey undertaken between the first and last submission. Model 1 (p16) provides an overview of the research process which is structured according to various levels of inquiry that were employed in the research approach. Working from left to right it commences with the problem of genesis and research, this is aligned to deductive and inductive considerations and links this to specific

strategies for data collection. These strategies are then connected to modes of data collection which in turn are administered by relevant techniques. The model reflects the nature of enquiry across the eight articles submitted for this publication.

Model 1

Methodology model, adapted from Buckley, J. W., Buckley, M.J. & Chiang, H. 1976.



## **The Submission**

The research presented here has made a significant and sustained contribution to the emergence over the last decade of an identifiable field of study around events and event management. Collectively the papers demonstrate a coherence and synergy that are linked by emerging research themes of event design, experience and impact and the exploration of the relationship between theory and knowledge into practice. This body of work has also been shaped by my role at the forefront of higher education provision in event management and by continued professional development and experience of the industry. The structure of the research has been built on the three key principles articulated earlier in the submission (page 2). Whilst there is a chronological evolution in terms of research practice, there is inevitable overlap as several publications are multi-thematic in their discourse on events. As a result of ongoing reflections on the subject and personal development, the principles are reprised within several papers in tandem with the progression of knowledge that has developed and been informed by, *inter alia*, peer-networking, conference presentations, forum debates and collegiate discussion.

The narrative that follows in the **Submission** presents the published work. This is grouped into three clusters (page 3) establishing coherence between and amongst the papers. In the account of each paper there is a summary of the aims, methods, findings and a reflection on originality and contribution to knowledge at the time of each publication. This is coupled with a reappraisal of the work. In the final section that follows, I offer a reflection on my professional development as a research practitioner and provide conclusions on the submission, an outline of current research projects and suggestions for future developments of my research.

## **Underpinning publication**

### **Event experiences: design, management and impact**

**Paper 1/Book 1** Berridge, G. (2007a), *Events Design and Experience*, Elsevier Butterworth Heinemann: Oxford, 297 pages. 121 citations.

My book, *Events Design and Experience*, is used as the underpinning document for the generation of research included in this submission and for the discussion on how event experiences are designed and managed. This publication had just under 300 pages and was initially influenced by my own earlier unpublished research into the nature of the leisure experience (Berridge, 1996; 2005). As discussed earlier event management had an under-developed literature base, with the vast bulk of existing textbooks at the time (and to some extent still) focusing upon the event organisational process from beginning to finish. This was reflected in the mainstream titles which invariably referred to ‘event management’ or ‘event planning’, for example. (Bowdin et al., 2005; Shone & Parry, 2004; Van der Wagen, 2007; Allen et al., 2007).

### **Aims**

The book discussed the nature of planned event experiences, and the need to further develop an understanding of: the meaning and management of events; the design of event experiences; and the impact of event experiences on both society and individuals. Adopting an interpretive and inductive research approach it explored and analysed the event experience of the individual in society and advocated that the purpose of event design was to create desired perceptions, cognition and behaviour. This represented a significant shift away from existing event textbooks at the time. In fact a feature of an early chapter in the book was an evaluation of the number of books that failed to address or understand design and experience in their study of event management.

The book advocated that event managers are, in essence, *experiential engineers* who can design and create event engagements that are not disappointing or unsatisfactory if they adopt clear tools for conceptualising the total event experience. In support of this assertion several conceptual models for understanding the nature and dimension of experiences were discussed such as: *the experience economy*; *the experience matrix*; *servicescape*; *experience foresight*; *experience design*. Furthermore, the book talked about the purpose and application of design, both in terms of societal definitions and event application.

### **Summary of main methods and findings**

To support this emphasis on design being an integrated part of the event planning process across all event types, the research consisted of a series of small-scale primary case studies that utilised a range of qualitative data collection methods to explore and critically analyse design and experience across different event genres. The data collection itself was conducted over several years and drew upon event organiser's, field notes from events (audio, text and image) and observation and feedback from event attendees. The different qualitative methodologies used were: observation; focus groups; participant observation; content analysis; expert testimony; interviews; and case studies. Key theoretical frameworks were employed in the analysis of events, notably symbolic interaction and semiotics.

This resulted in twenty three diverse and international case studies cited and these were the result of data collection, analysis and discussion of key points in understanding the events in relation to design and the role it played in the creation and formation of experience. These case studies provided for: a discussion around the nature and definition of events; an understanding of design and its relevance to events; the identification of the emergence of concepts and frameworks of experience and their applicability to events; the recognition of how experience design can help forecast event outcomes; the use of theoretical models to aid in the design and analysis of experiences; and the application of semiotics to explore the significance and meaning attributed to events. As such, it provided for a central and pivotal set of ideas and principles that could inform subsequent research in to events experience.

### **Reflection**

In reviewing the significance and originality of this research, the material presented was regarded as challenging and ambitious but at the vanguard of studies on experiential consumption. As such, it was reviewed as topical and relevant (Lovell, 2006). There was originality in the research methods used and on the focus of the case studies and as such it supported others' calls for event studies to develop beyond the description of operational process and into a deeper explanation of the phenomena of event experience. It drew together for the first time the relationship between event design and the total experience of attendees. It was a pivotal influence on the development of a richer, qualitative research agenda that subsequently emerged in my own work and others since. The research conducted here acted as a catalyst for a wider academic community awareness of designing event experiences and encouraged others to conduct research into the area. Consequently

revised versions of existing textbooks added and included chapters or other material on design and experience as fundamentals of event management practice (Getz, 2007; 2012; Nelson, 2009; Tassiopoulos, 2010; Ali, 2012; Shone & Parry, 2012; Ryan, 2012; Silvers, 2012).

A notable influence of the book is its impact on the teaching of events and event management and the emergence across a number of higher education institutions of 'event design' based modules and courses. This is a fairly common feature of module development whereby when textbooks are released, peers look to then develop teaching from them. In 2006 little more than a few had any modules related to event design or experience. In 2014 most programmes have curriculum content around these topics and the book features as essential and recommended reading on nearly all of these. Most recently an undergraduate degree programme in *Event and Experience Design* (University of Kent) has been validated. The book therefore serves to provide an essential underpinning context and provides a framework for the following research papers, all of which explore the experiences, individually and socially, of the planned event with the emphasis firmly on the purposeful design of those experiences.



### **Cluster 1 Event Management**

These papers contribute to practice-led research with operational significance (Brown, 2014) that relates to emergent calls for a reflective practicum in events (Bladen & Kennell, 2014). This can be seen as an important departure from the more delivery-knowledge study often associated with event management. The main thrust of the papers here is to advance knowledge about event management praxis. In this instance, the research focusses upon event managers (including creative managers) and their practice in: using creative approaches to event bidding; designing specific event experiences; experience and professionalisation.

**Paper 2** Berridge, G. (2010a), Event Pitching: the role of design and creativity, *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 29(2), pp. 208-215. 9 Citations. ABDC Ranking A\*

#### **Aims**

This paper is concerned with the practice of event managers, but is focussed upon study of the role of design and creativity in event pitching, both in terms of the creative tactics used to present ideas, but also the design and creativity contained within the event concept at an early stage. Bidding for event contracts is an indispensable characteristic of event practice and part of the events landscape (Berridge & Quick, 2010c) and covers small-scale private events to global mega events like the Olympics. The vast majority of research in the area addresses large national and international events (Emery, 2001; Westerbeek et al., 2002; Maralack & Lloyd, 2006; Walters, 2008; Walmsley, 2008). Bidding for and pitching to gain contracts, accounts for a significant proportion of event management agency work. Yet, comparatively little was known about how individual managers approached the challenge of ensuring a contract and how a bid or pitch was initiated and planned. The paper drew upon ideas I had previously discussed about the role of design and creativity being placed at the centre of the event management process (Berridge, 2007a) and drew attention to some key principles that students and practitioners should adopt. In doing so it provided an important body of material that might be referred to as ‘war stories’ from practitioners. War stories are generally taken to be first-hand eyewitness accounts of situations directly experienced by the person.

### **Summary of methods and findings**

The methodology contributed to an emerging interest of interviewing practitioners around the richer significance of event management through qualitative data collection. The sample was drawn from event managers involved in *creative-pitching* and utilised an expert referral method of contact commonly known as snowball sampling (Veal, 2011). Initial contact with potential interviewees was made through members of a professional association ISESUK. Subsequent interviewees then recommended other practitioners for consultation. This yielded nine interviews that were conducted using a semi-structured approach. Each interviewee was sent a question guide three weeks prior to the interview. The guide identified general areas of discussion with the intention being to encourage narrative accounts of practice and to develop 'stories' as exemplars of practice. The resulting data was analysed via a software programme, *Site Content Analyzer*, which grouped key themes and concepts identified through frequency and consistency in terms of weight and count. This resulted in the production of a 'pitch' diagram that rated the importance of key terms in the process as identified by practitioners. The diagram provided an important circle of references and helped the narrative synthesis of the report as it enabled readers and learners to see the grouping of fundamental ideas in a visual format. It identified twelve essential reference points that would enable a student or practitioner to think creatively about how to bid and pitch for an event. It articulated how originality and creative concept at this stage was a clear design tactic to appeal to the client. It demonstrated that creativity and design concept was essential to the production of a pitch, once the 'known' aspects of the event brief were understood.

### **Reflection**

On reflection, it is clear that the paper presented material directly relevant to the skill sets of an event manager. Furthermore, the paper drew attention, probably for the first time in an academic discussion, of how the roles of creative tactics and event design were interwoven to develop bids and pitches for events. It illustrated how creativity could border on the extreme end of the scale if an agency wanted to impress a client, and that many agencies were willing to take extravagant risks in order to secure contracts. This highlighted the intense competitive nature of the bidding. Pitching is undertaken in private where only the agency and client is involved, so the data collected here brought into the public domain, some of the ideas and actions that were utilised to gain a creative and design edge and to persuade a client to award a contract.

Summarising research on the topic and this paper, it is clear that most academic studies tended to address the bidding procedure for large-scale major and mega events and frequently did so inside the context of policy and strategy of government and public bodies (Hiller, 2000; Westerbeek et al., 2002; Swart, 2005; Smith, 2012; Foley et al., 2012). Little or no academic research existed at that time that provided detailed insight into design tactics used by event agencies. In fact, there has been very limited development of knowledge in this area since other than via additions to text books, for example, Bowdin et al., (2010) or my own concurrent research which embraced both major events but also corporate ones (Berridge & Quick, 2010c). Despite its central role in event management practice, event pitching and the type of design tactics used to impress clients, remains largely under researched within academic circles. The paper therefore offered original material on the process of pitching for private and corporate event contracts under one million pounds. The case of advocacy demonstrated in the paper highlights the holistic nature of event pitching and bidding. It proposes that existing and future practitioners need to be fully cognisant of the broader context and surroundings that may pervade when designing a pitch bid. The paper remains pertinent and current as there are very few other academic studies that have analysed event pitching in this way and at this level. It has relevance in academia for a significant number, if not all, event management courses contain some element of bidding and pitching in their curriculum.

**Paper 3** Berridge, G. (2012a), Event Experience: A case study of differences between the way in which organizers plan an event experience and the way in which guests receive the experience, *Journal of Park and Recreation Administration*, 30(3), pp.7-23. Citations 3. ABDC Ranking B

### **Aims**

This is the lead paper in a special experience edition of the *Journal of Parks and Recreation Administration*. Getz (2007) argues that existing anthropological and sociological research into events has largely focussed on festivals and as such do not present sufficient knowledge about the outcomes of planned events. This research aimed to address that concern and explored the relationship between an organiser designing a themed event experience (management input) and the responses from guests to that experience (impact). A course of enquiry was used that adopted a mixed methodology, using empirical data drawn from a

qualitative data collection. Specifically the research considered a cause and effect relationship between event manager and event attendee. More importantly, it provided insight into the thought processes of an event organiser, reflecting upon reasoning and rationale for design decisions. It sought to understand more about the symbiotic link between those decisions and their manifestation in practice and it focussed on a single themed event for comparison between event design intentions(organiser) and actual event experience (attendee).

The paper built upon ideas explored previously (Berridge, 2007a) and specifically utilised the *Event Experience Design Framework* (EEDF) identified in Berridge (2012b) as a point of reference for research into event experiences. It offered a focussed, empirical insight into the organisational practices of an event organiser designing a themed event, seeking out the explicit application of knowledge to create an experience. Uniquely the paper explored the delivery of that experience in relation to the immediate (as opposed to post-hoc) responses of attendees. The data collected provided originality through its rare insight into the multi-phasic and multi-variable nature of personal experience of an event, and allowed for analysis of antecedents, satisfaction, delight and disappointment as well as those states of motivation, cognition, attention or emotion. It explored what Getz (2007:379) refers to as the ‘outcomes and the impacted’. Foremost amongst these was the discussion around cognitive and affective dimensions of experience. An understanding of what these dimensions are provided classifications for events having specific impacts upon attendees and provided organiser’s with reference points for designing such experiences.

### **Summary of methods and findings**

The paper drew upon a method of data collection rarely used in the events field: the *Definitional Approach* and the *Experiential Sampling Method*. Both were blended to create a process that allowed attendees to record their responses to an event as they occurred. Convenience sampling was used to select the sample of attendees. Five people who were known to be attending the event from the host club list of members were contacted and asked to take part in the research. Once each subject agreed to participate, all participants in the research were given a short written briefing about the research protocol prior to the event date and then were given a repeat verbal briefing prior to their arrival. A semi-structured interview was conducted with the event organiser to determine their intentions with respect

to guest experiences. Complementing this was an experience sampling survey that recorded the experiences of five people at the event at five common event stages over the course of the evening. Across the course of the evening, including pre and post event emotional states, this group was asked to respond to specific experience questions and to rate their state of being at key phases. Questions were based on previous research on people's experiences in a leisure environment (Samdahl, 1987; Samdahl & Kleiber, 1988; Burke & Franzoi, 1988) and drew upon the *Experience Value Promise* (EVP) which allowed organisers to specify the value and experience they planned to offer.

The results show a range of responses from attendees, and that these vary across the length of the event. Data were analysed and related back to key concepts in experiential theory in order to demonstrate the types of experiences guests had received. The results suggest that, on this occasion, there was some evidence of a disjunction between the organiser's understanding and concept of experience and those of the guests. Furthermore, the organiser showed, in some respects, a limited awareness of advanced underpinning ideas of the design of event experiences, particularly the concept of theming. Likewise, and not unexpectedly, guests demonstrated a low degree of experiential awareness and moderate degrees of gratification. In recording their experiences, guests demonstrated a low level of immersion in relation to the key objectives of the organiser.

### **Reflection**

Such a comparative examination of cause and effect of the event experience is mostly absent from existing event research. This research provided a rare and illuminating insight into how an organiser conceptualises an event in the first place, reflecting on a series of design decisions that were made to create certain experiences. The methodology allowed for specific focus on a key issue in the development of a social science about recreation type experiences: the need for developing innovative techniques to investigate the dynamic and emerging qualities of experience. In combining the well-known experience sampling method with interviews and qualitative methods, it introduced a coherent and intellectual extension of previous treatments and analysis about how experiences are planned and subsequently how attendees respond to them. It also allowed for evidence on the multi-phasic and multi-variate nature of event experiences to be recorded. Such immediately recorded accounts were, and still are, rare in the events field yet they provide one of the most accurate accounts of a range of guest feelings and emotions as they happen. Using the EEDF the paper mapped the direct link between thought and activity. Firstly, the research presented a significant

account of the relationship guests have to a themed event and how a group of people felt about what they were experiencing and secondly, how this related to the specific experience aims of the organiser. It remains one of the few accounts where primary data have been collected comparing organiser design decisions and their effect on attendee experiences.

**Paper 4** Berridge, G (2014), The *Gran fondo* and *Sportive* experience: An exploratory look at cyclists' experiences and the creation of knowledge to inform professional event staging, *Event Management*, 18(1), pp. 75-88. ABDC Ranking A

### **Aims**

This paper formed part of a series of research articles for a special journal edition on event management and professionalisation. Having analysed events and experiences via a number of methods to this period, the development of my research directly contributed to this project. The data presented here are part of a longer term 'experiential ethnography' (Sands 2002, 1999a, 1999b) into the lived experiences of cyclists riding *sportive* or *gran fondo* events. The focus of this paper was to provide an exploratory narrative of the characteristics of a gran fondo or sportive, and to consider how such characteristics influence event organiser's and their professional practice.

### **Summary of methods and findings**

This experiential ethnographic project was considered as a highly appropriate instrument of research that would allow for an intensely rich and deep exploration of the experiences of event participants. It would allow for data to be gathered over a prolonged period of time, over a wide geographic region and with a range of participants. Following Sands' methodology for experiential ethnography (Sands, 2002) the approach undertaken was as follows:

1. The researcher participates as one of the population in every aspect of their interaction
2. The researcher travels through several layers of participation, from passive observation and participation to extensive participation and becoming one of the population
3. The stay in the field is for a lengthy period
4. Observation becomes integrated within participation
5. Interaction forms an important part of the validation

Drawing upon the exploratory stage of a continuing research project, the paper presented findings from twelve event days to identify key characteristics of these events. The data produced was a collection of observation and participant experiences obtained across several similar but different events. The resulting information was analysed for any variation of event participation in relation to commonality of experience and this was, in turn, linked to variability in event management professionalisation. It presented data on cyclist's experiences whilst riding planned long distance non-competitive events (DeWalt & DeWalt, 2002; Kiefer, 1968). The experiential ethnography research plan itself consisted of three phases: 1) Initial Descriptive and Participant Observation at events; 2) Participant Observation and Interaction at different events; 3) Case studies with six cyclists at six different events. The case studies consisted of: Pre-event interviews; Participant Observation and in situ-interviews; Post-event interviews; This paper focussed on data collected from phase 1 and 2 only and is a result of direct participant observation and improvised or casual interaction *in situ* with individuals at each event.

The research was based on multi-sited fieldwork (Marcus, 1995; Falzon, 2009) collected around single day events. The selection of events was drawn from those promoted within a specialist cycling magazine in the UK, Cycling Weekly that publishes a calendar of events and also from a global website, cycloport.org, that lists over 1000 events worldwide. The field note observations were recorded using a digital recording device due to the impracticality of making extensive written field notes whilst participating and these were then transcribed immediately after the event. Initial questions for observation were based on a classical ethnographic approach characterised by the *Descriptive Question Matrix* (Spradley, 1980) using nine major dimensions of the social situation as a basis for guiding descriptive questions and observations. The methodology enabled my research to explore the deeper levels of experience (Wheaton, 1997; Sundbo & Sorensen, 2013) and by learning, to all intents and purposes, to become an athlete in the sporting culture, through physical skills and acceptable behaviour (Sands, 2002). The continuum of this research will allow for exploration, meaning and understanding to be conducted in order to address the importance of participants' accounts of their experiences thus relating to 'why' and 'how' questions.

### **Reflection**

This paper presented further insight into the varied and multi-phasic nature of individual active participant experiences in such long distance events. It extrapolated experiential

requirements identified by participants that all event organiser's should include in their event design. These are understood and contextualised within a discourse around the nature and concept of event experiences and related to the need for professional event organiser's to identify such experience components in staging these events by using models of experience within a management framework. As a paper drawing on initial exploratory data, it presented an initial snapshot of participant views, feelings and emotions across a lengthy duration of activity. Once the full data set has been evaluated and analysed, it will enable further papers around the concept of optimal experience, flow and social identity.



## **Cluster 2: Event Design**

This cluster embraces more of a theoretical position in the conceptualisation of events and reflects what Getz (2007; 2012) has sought to identify as a maturation phase in research by terming it as ‘event studies’. As Foley et al., (2012) notes this approach to events mirrors that of leisure whereby after having defined and measured what events are, researchers have begun to explore what it means to people. The papers in this section contribute to the growing quantum of research activity that is beginning to emerge from paying attention to some of the social and cultural embeddedness of events (Andrews & Leopold, 2013). There is a clear focus in this section on ideas around the exploration and understanding of event experience and how such can be designed and analysed. There is an implicit recognition of the existence of the experience economy and with the adoption of theories and models that explain what takes place within this economy. There is also an engagement with some of the debates over the meaning of events and the issues associated with designing event experiences which have become an expanding focus for researchers (Alia, 2012).

**Paper 5** Berridge, G. (2010b), Design Management of Events. In Tassiopoulos, D (ed.), *Events Management: an international perspective*, Juta Publishing: Claremont, SA. Citations 5.

### **Aims**

This paper was a commissioned contribution by the editor as recognition of my expertise in the area of event design. The publication is an international perspective on events now in its 3rd edition and features as core reading material in many undergraduate and post-graduate event courses. The research paper builds upon the interpretivist (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000) study of events adopted in Berridge (2007a) on the explanation and understanding of the role of design and its management in creating event experiences. The aim of the paper was to discuss the role of design in events, whether different design inputs for different events were apparent and how experiences were created.

### **Summary of methods and findings**

Qualitative methodologies were employed to explore design elements within specific events in society to analyse how design creates the attendees’ experience. Five case studies provided illustrative examples of key theoretical ideas in the design and meaning of event experience. As with other data collected in this submission, a mixed methodology was used.

Primary data originated from interviews with selected practitioners, direct and participant event observation. A purposive sampling method was used via existing professional networks and event managers were targeted for short interviews. An element of referral sampling was also utilised to identify relevant cases for observation. Following up on the suggestions made for suitable events to study, direct observation through field note recordings was undertaken on key design attributes of these events in order to produce short example/case study material. This was primarily taken on from a hermeneutic/semiotic perspective, although this is not explicitly discussed in the paper itself as a result of editorial input.

As a significant contribution, the research presented analysis of component parts of the event experience. This issue had, hitherto, been largely descriptive in literature or had not been explored at a great length (the author's work notwithstanding). It led to an emerging paradigm of the relationship between event, design and experience. It reiterated that design is a purposeful activity for planned events, but advanced the debate onwards by analysing specific design features in relation to the following: production, programming, content, theatricality and staging. It researched the use of design to enhance and infuse experiences with particularly memorable moments. The paper also utilised the *Event Management Body of Knowledge* (EMBOK) 'design domain' for the first time to present a clear narrative for the study of design features within events. Whilst EMBOK itself is referred to in several academic papers as an overarching set of ideas about what constitutes events, this was the first time a single domain had been used to direct study of specific features. The paper also extended an earlier discussion (Berridge, 2007a) on tools for experience design, in this case looking at the application of *foresight design* (Shedroff, 2001). This was part of an on-going exploration of the level of design application in creating specific experiences within a multi-layered event environment. In this case consideration was devoted to how features centered on the experience of achievement can be achieved through programme design.

### **Reflection**

As with various other entries, this paper was influential because it further contributed to the emerging hub of interest by academics in the minutiae and component divisions and relationships within event experiences, particularly via a design and experiential construct (as opposed to the general process and management of outcomes). The paper paralleled research around this topic that had started to emerge my own book (2007) with several

authors beginning to study the interaction of relationships within the event and also between event manager and attendees considering such things as the acts, temporal sequences, components and dimensional episodes that touch on the experience (Ting-Yueh & Shun-Ching, 2010; Nelson, 2009; Ali, 2012; Adema & Roehl, 2010; Getz, 2012; Brown, 2014).

In drawing renewed attention to the design, creation and meaning of event experiences the paper represented research perspectives on the deeper significance and meaning of events to individuals and society. It influenced research into how the emerging field of events could be understood through more advanced conceptual analysis, particularly where events intersect with the social sciences. In pursuit of this the paper provided several illustrative examples on how design could be used to influence and create event experiences. It also expanded the knowledge base of designing for experience by considering event tourism and the part played by animation. The discussion articulates how the role of the animator becomes fundamental to designing the build and quality of experience. The paper keeps its relevance and vibrancy because of that focus on specificity within an event experience setting and the case studies included provide illustrative examples that remain applicable to industry practice.

**Paper 6** Berridge, G. (2012b), Designing Event Experiences. In Page, S. and Connell, J. (eds), *Handbook of Events*, Routledge: Oxon. Citations 7.

### **Aims**

The paper was commissioned by the editors as recognition of my expertise in the area of event design and experience. The book itself brings together leading specialists from a range of disciplinary backgrounds and geographical regions, to provide state-of-the-art theoretical reflection and empirical research on the evolution of the subject. It was the first major study to examine events as a field in the twenty-first century, considering its significance in contemporary society and growth as a mainstream subject area. As a contribution to this international collection of chapters around current thoughts and ideas on events, my chapter argued that existing conceptualisations of events needed to embrace newer approaches, simultaneously reflective of the discussion articulated previously (Foley et al., 2012; Andrews & Leopold, 2013). As such it is, to some extent, a 'position' paper that draws together several strands of thought that have appeared in my own work and others since 2007.

### **Summary of methods and findings**

As Rossman (2012) observed experience has many meanings, but research and theory about the phenomenon are lacking. This paper addressed some of those limitations. The outcome is a conceptual contribution towards a deeper comprehension of the significance of event experiences. The methodology drew upon theory and literature previously introduced in earlier publications to revisit ideas about event design. Qualitative research was undertaken through three interviews with practitioners. This produced three short case studies that illustrated key arguments in the paper around design and experience. The paper presented a significant case for a paradigm shift in the way event experiences are designed, conceptualised and analysed. It postulated that events should be planned and understood with reference to a specific framework within which relevant models and theories for design and experience can be located. The paper examined how designed experiences are created and connected to individuals and how design is used in the construction of the relationship between individuals and their physical setting. It advocated that designing and creating experiences in specific environments could be seen as a predictive skill and explained how individuals experience events and the significance of psychological, social and cultural constructs in that process. This provided a theoretical consideration of 'shared commonalities' as an influence in predicting experience.

The paper harnessed new terminology within a special event studies context, event architecture, and advocated that design could be viewed in two ways, as a conceptual experience that is created by design, and as the application of design skills that produce aesthetic features. The former, it was reasoned, could then be viewed as event architecture and the latter as experience design. Jointly, these two considerations on event experience begin to develop an argument for more elucidation on the application of concepts and tools in the process of event experience design and conception. In applying the *Meeting Architecture* concept (Vanneste, 2008), the paper extended a previous discussion around the *Experience Matrix*. Meeting Architecture is presented as a manifesto for events that create experiences but are not in themselves necessarily creative or visually stimulating. This was an important inclusion re-affirming that design should be integrated within the event planning practice at every level. The paper developed its core argument which is that if experiences are the result of such purposeful design, then the meaning of such experiences

needed to be more thoroughly analysed and understood. Several ideas and methods were introduced that would assist in this deeper analytical understanding of event experiences.

### **Reflection**

In conclusion the paper drew upon several recurring ideas that had emerged in my research up to this point. As a reflective piece of work it argued for a different relationship to be developed between events and experiences, and it re-iterated my earlier call for design to be reviewed in terms of its role in the planning and conceptualisation of events. In order to foster this review of design, the chapter offered a competing paradigm to existing ones on event design and experience, and suggested that a shift was required within academia and by practitioners around the way design was viewed within event management and event studies. Its main contribution to the field of study was in the formulation of a new proposition of thinking on events. This led to the formulation of what I referred to as the *Event Experience Design Framework* (EEDF). This framework positioned design as an underpinning and an overarching feature from which all event management could be contextualised in relation to event stakeholders and experiences. It located the creativity associated with the event experience as a sub-set of design, as opposed to previous interpretations that located design as a manifestation of creativity. This allowed for an understanding of how design permeated every act in the planning of an event and not just those acts regarded as creative or decorative. The framework retained relevancy because it advocated for a systematic consideration on the part of event organiser's in the way events were conceptualised and planned that embraced the totality of considerations of experience from the outset.

### **Cluster 3: Event Impact**

The collection of papers in this final cluster relates to research about the role of events in relation to their external environment. Here reference and consideration is made by the way in which events are integrated into policy with particular reference to socio-cultural and image impacts. One of the challenges for a destination such as London is how to use special events as a means of presenting a positive image and a destination experience to potential visitors. Both need to be sufficiently stimulating to attract people's attention. As a result, many cities are now prepared to stage one off or regular events as part of a strategic investment in presenting an attractive image to an external audience (Smith, 2001; 2012). Furthermore, the experiences associated with attending an event and visiting a destination are now recognised as a significant factor in the choices made by visitors (Lockstone-Binney & Baum, 2013; Moon et al., 2011; Hallmann & Breuer, 2010; Berridge 2007). This raises several questions but two are prominent: what special events should be attracted to a destination and how should those events be harnessed to enhance the experience the destination offers? An important caveat is offered when developing a destination in this way and that is that the events selected should be consistent with the existing or prospective overall image and socio-cultural heritage (Pugh and Wood, 2004). Consideration of these points extends the data collection and analysis away from the internal operational processes of earlier papers. In doing so it reviews and evaluates event experiences and outcomes within the wider social environment. The following papers used a hallmark event, the *Tour de France*, as the focus of research in order to explore and investigate how the experiences of a single event can be utilised to create wider social impacts that, in turn, leave a legacy beyond simply the duration of the actual event.

**Paper 7** Berridge, G. (2011a), The promotion of cycling in London: The impact of the 2007 *Tour de France* Grand Depart on the image and provision of cycling in the capital, *Journal of Sport and Tourism*, 17(1), pp. 43-61. Citations 7. ABDC Ranking B

#### **Aims**

This research project was established in order to study the transformative process of place image linked to an event, the *Tour de France* Grand Depart (TDFGD), and to see if that transformation was also reflected in legacy policy. The aim of the paper was to explore how a host city might use a major event to enhance its image to an internal (as well as external) audience in order to subsequently promote specific social and cultural development and, in doing so, provide a platform for a meaningful legacy to the host community that extended

beyond the immediacy of the actual event. It addressed how socio- cultural initiatives were promoted, considering the impact on cycling participation and provision.

The overwhelming body of research into event impacts looks at the economic impact and the activity of visitors to a destination. There is also a substantial body of work that argues that a destination or place image can be enhanced by hosting carefully selected events that can be a significant catalyst for change. There is a further body of work that considers the extent to which an event can create useful and meaningful legacy. There is also widespread suspicion in academic circles of the beneficial impact and legacy of any event. Often over exaggerated claims are made by host organisations for the beneficial economic impact of events, whilst less tangible socio-cultural benefits are under-researched and very few studies seek a structured examination of the legacy. Event communication in the form of images, texts, and symbols is designed to convey messages to an intended audience and analysis of such messages aids in understanding their impact and meaning. It further helps explain how the image formation of place can occur and how representation of space is mediated.

### **Summary of methods and findings**

The data collection was based on a blended methodology using secondary and primary material across three phases of enquiry. **Phase 1** focussed on establishing a context by looking at policy for cycling in London, and understanding why London hosted the TDFGD: specifically, what were the aims of the event hosts? This was a summary review of the main policies and plans of the three interlinked agencies responsible for managing transport in London, their strategies for the provision of cycling and the role of events in developing London as a destination. The purpose behind this part of the research was to see if hosting such a major event was part of a strategic plan for cycling. This was an important finding since key event literature repeatedly argues that only where events are strategically linked to policy is the impact likely to generate acceptable legacy. This exercise established that context for the delivery of the event itself.

**Phase 2** of the research was then based upon an analysis of 5 prime promotional messages that were run in the months leading up to the event itself and were connected by the campaign slogan 'Get Behind It'. Building upon hermeneutics ideas of interpreting meaning (Edwards & Skinner, 2009), a semiotic analysis of the content was used as the theoretical base for the interpretation of event messages to a wide audience. Employing semiotics

theory, images were deconstructed to understand the meaning and message being promoted to the public. Whilst the use of semiotics is prevalent in popular culture, especially film and media studies, its application to events is not common. Hence this part of the study presents an original insight into analysis of event texts. Analysis was undertaken of 4 posters and 1 promotional video aired on national television. The key to interpreting the texts of each was to analyse what dominant images appeared, how they could be described and what they symbolised. Each text's findings were coded separately and then triangulated for similarities. The conclusion drawn from this methodology was that the collective message of posters and video drew people together with a unified theme and collective conscious, anticipating the big spectacle of the event, but linking this to a future where cycling was an integral part of London's cityscape.

**Phase 3** examined the policy initiatives for cycle provision of Transport for London (TfL) and the Mayor of London (MfL) since 2007. This was done to identify whether any longer term event legacies had been evident in planning and policy (Masterman, 2004). Reference was also made to secondary research data on cycling participation before and after the *Tour de France*. The messages linking the TDFGD together with a London cityscape in which cycling is embedded have been sustained by the post-event investment in cycling. This investment culminated in the '*Cycling Revolution London*' policy document in 2010,

By creating key messages through the use of carefully selected images and text, TfL was able to position cycling as an integral part of London's cityscape. The image and promotion of the event encouraged several thousand cyclists to take to the roads in the immediate follow-up events. Drawing upon the aims of the event, the promotional messages and assorted policy initiatives I the paper demonstrated that where research into events is multi-disciplinary and is able to consider more than just the immediate and transitory impacts, then such research provides for a deeper and meaningful analysis. The paper concluded that when events are integrated into policies they can be used to not only create moments of spectacle, but can be used to achieve both tangible and intangible goals. In turn, such goals can be identified via post event investment, both in terms of resources and policy. As such legacy from a major hallmark event can be developed and provide for positive outcomes for a host that transcends immediate tangible economic impacts.



## Reflection

As cultural activity and symbols of engagement events such as the TDFGD can be utilised to act as catalysts for the transformation of place and this use of such culture-led regeneration can result in investment in major events to establish brand identity and to achieve social goals (Richards & Palmer, 2012; Smith, 2012). Larger scale events like the *Tour de France* have taken on greater importance in recent times as a way of achieving regeneration, re-branding and re-imaging (Foley et al., 2012). In adopting a socio-cultural framework and drawing upon multi-disciplinary methodologies, the paper contributed significantly to the quality of research into the impact of single events. Using research methodologies that are not regularly applied to events, especially semiotics, the research offered both an advancement of knowledge on image and meaning as well as a potential roadmap for future analysis of the impact and legacy a single event can have if part of a strategic imperative.

As a recent piece of research the paper retains its relevance and originality because of the multi-disciplinary approach adopted and it makes a significant contribution to the understanding of the impact of an event beyond immediate economic spend. It also contributes to a growing number of cycling related studies that have begun to emerge in recent years, reflecting the wider increase in cycle participation and events in the UK. This is now even more pertinent with the re-appearance of the TDFGD in the UK in 2014 when the host region of Yorkshire hoped to attain similar benefits as London.

**Paper 8** Berridge, G. (2012c), Using events to promote social and cultural change: A look at the impact of the 2007 *Tour de France* Grand Depart on cycling in London, *Proceedings of the Australian Cycling Conference*, Adelaide, 2012, pp. 42-56

## Aims

This is a companion piece to paper 7 as the focus is also on the *Tour de France* Grand Depart. However, in this case the aim of the research was to specifically explore the social and cultural impact and legacy of a hallmark event. As Hall (1997) states all events have a direct social and cultural impact on their wider host communities. Indeed it is the impact of these events and their experiences that is the principal driver behind them having increased national and international popularity (Getz, 2007).

A recent emerging and multi-disciplinary trend which includes much of the earlier studies on experience is focused around 'extraordinary experiences' with at least two strands of literature on the subject being dominant, one from a management perspective and the other one from a consumer perspective. In particular the emergence of experiential marketing (O'Sullivan and Spangler, 1999) has drawn upon the world of events as an example of how memorable experiences can be created and linked with cultural awareness. In past and present study of events it is acknowledged that their impact occurs at both the micro and macro level (Allen et al., 2005; Hall, 1997; Roche, 2000; Gratton & Henry, 2001) as they impact upon and across all of our lives offering a range of experiences that can signify important aspects of culture that often constitutes a shared experience (Shone & Parry, 2010; Tassiopoulos, 2010; Getz, 2007; Morgan, 2010; Turner, 1986). Such components though are not limited to the internal environment that involves the event attendees for they are also inextricably linked to socio-cultural and place context, in other words society. Events have become increasingly important to that society as they are both a product and contributor to the social world (Andrews and Leopold, 2013). Burdge and Vanclay (1996: 59) contend that social impacts are those 'social and cultural consequences to the human population of any public or private actions that alter the ways in which people live, work, play, relate to one another, organise to meet their needs and generally cope as members of society'. Conversely, cultural impacts are those that involve 'changes to the norms, values and beliefs of individuals that guide and rationalise their cognition of themselves and society'.

Destinations have now consciously marketed and promoted their cultural image and as a consequence, have also developed the experience associated with that image. Considering a destination's 'experience' helps us to understand how destinations may be perceived by visitors (Deng & Li, 2014; Liverence & Scholl, 2010). Using the concept of experience to tap into 'emotional hot buttons' is regarded as a key aim of destination marketing that subsequently provide experiences of pleasure through such things as events in relation to people, business, culture, fun, entertainment, desire and nostalgia (Allen et al., 2005). Implicit in the discussions are the recognition and use of the event as a generator of cultural capital. This refers to the contribution to the economy of the city and to a range of associated externalities that warrant investment in staging high profile events as a crucial factor for a destinations' competitive positioning (Foley et al., 2012). Events as cultural activity and symbols of engagement have been utilised to act as catalysts for the transformation of place and this use of culture-led regeneration has resulted in investment in major cultural events to

establish brand identity and such events are now consistently being used to achieve social goals ( Richards & Palmer, 2012; Smith, 2012). Larger scale events like the *Tour de France* have taken on greater importance in recent times as a way of achieving regeneration, rebranding and re-imaging (Foley et al., 2012). They are used as part of the process of cultural planning and shaping of the urban environment. Leveraging the social benefits of events can result in positive impacts, notably through the shared experiences associated with hosting it, community pride, renewed hope and achievement (Foley et al., 2012). The vast majority of studies on the impact of events have concentrated on economic impact because it offers more tangible and identifiable outcomes. The intangible impacts of events on a social and cultural level are not so easy to evaluate. Hence it is important for academic research to begin to consider how such impacts can be understood and evaluated as more cities seek more than just short term instantaneous economic gain. Destinations that have adopted such a strategy are loosely referred to as *eventful cities* (Richards & Palmer, 2010) because they have embarked on a policy to develop their events portfolio for a range of social and cultural (as well as economic) benefits that last beyond the running of the event.

Thus in seeking to examine the socio-cultural impact, the paper made a significant contribution to field as it examined and documented whether, and to what extent, the TDFGD was integrated into a strategic vision, which in turn was implemented through policy both prior to and after the event in order to ensure a socio-cultural legacy. In addressing the issue of legacy the paper analysed a relatively recent concept in the history of major sporting events, that of the legacy that goes beyond immediate economic impact. Interest in legacy was evolved around and after the Sydney Olympics in 2000 and since then it has been increasingly central to the rationale behind hosting major events, including the London 2012 Olympics and the Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games. It has become a topic of interest largely due to a) the use of events to develop tourism and regenerate urban areas (Smith, 2012) and b) the escalating costs and debts associated with staging events like the FIFA World Cup, The World Expo and the Olympics (Roche, 2000). Legacy is a multi-faceted outcome and is applied to any large scale events where substantial amounts of public finance have been used to secure and deliver the event and where the funding bodies supporting that investment have expressed clearly stated objectives. Legacy then is a long term impact of an event on physical and non-physical environment, and is often referred to as after-use.

### **Summary of methodology and findings**

A framework model for research was adopted as offering the most appropriate tool for evaluating the TDFGD impact as this would enable any strategic or policy activity around the event to be more readily mapped against indicators and socio-cultural consequences. Desktop methodology was undertaken that drew upon secondary material, and subsequently reflected upon a range of policies in respect of five key indicators for successful social and cultural impact and legacy (Wood & Thomas, 2006). The originality of the paper lies not necessarily in the actual methodology as such, but in the use of social indicators as a measurement of the event impact. In adopting this socio-cultural framework, the paper charted the extent to which there is linkage between the event and socio-cultural consequences, specifically those of a change in norms and beliefs (mode of transport) and alterations to patterns of leisure (cycling). This is embodied via a range of policy initiatives that ran concurrently to the event and that, importantly, led to transformations in people's lives in terms of their relationship to cycling.

A review of national cycling policy in the UK (Golbuff and Aldred, 2012) provided a useful starting point for identifying policy as did the MfL Transport Strategy in 2000 and the London Cycle Action plan 2004. This created a snowball effect as policy documents usually referred to their precursors or set out objectives for the future. The method used for searching for relevant policy documents was based on the remit of The Mayor for London's responsibilities and the stated objectives of hosting the event. Publicly available policy documents and minutes of relevant committee meetings from TfL and MfL were reviewed. An immediate post event impact report commissioned by TfL was also considered along with official government data on cycling since 2007. The paper reviewed the event legacy three years after the event and it argued that without any integration of cycling into policy, legacy would be at best, incidental. Using a version of the Wood & Thomas framework for assessing socio-cultural impacts, five key indicators were evaluated to assess the extent to which cycling had permeated into policy for transport and economic development. This review identified TfL initiatives post 2007 to assess the extent to which cycling became incorporated into strategic visions for the city. In total 13 policy initiatives were identified between 2007 to 2010 to support cycling and cycle provision in London.

The paper demonstrated that the bidding, organisation and delivery of the TDFGD was not undertaken in isolation but was contained within a broader strategy to promote and develop

cycling in London and it is implicitly discussed and recognised how events can be used as a generator of cultural capital. This refers to the contribution to not only the economy of the city, but to a range of associated externalities that warrant investment in staging high profile events as a crucial factor for a destinations competitive positioning (Foley et al., 2012). Destinations that have used such an approach have embarked on a policy to develop their events portfolio for a range of social, cultural and economic benefits that last beyond the running of the event.

Publicly funded policy and strategic initiatives from 2004 – 2010 were charted to show how linking of policy to cycling before and after the event was essential in ensuring that the event itself could act as a catalyst to cycling and extend the event legacy in London beyond the time-frame of the event itself. In particular, the paper's main and original contribution was the finding that over a period of time the event did not stand in isolation, especially given its main objectives. This is an often cited criticism of such events that the evidence for a long-term increase in benefit is limited in quality and quantity. The paper showed that where there is a sustained series of initiatives linked to the event itself, then socio-cultural impact and legacy can be successfully achieved. In reflecting upon the legacy via socio-cultural indicators, the paper contributed significantly to further understanding of the potential range and depth of impacts an event can have, and the evaluation undertaken here demonstrated the catalytic benefits of an integrated and connected approach to event bidding and delivery. In the light of the increase in competition between nations and cities bidding for peripatetic events, such evaluation is extremely useful to assist bid planners and public bodies in their strategic objectives.

### **Reflection**

In reviewing the paper it became apparent that by implication it should have considered more specifically the leveraging benefits associated with the TDFGD. Leveraging emphasises pre-event planning and agreement by public bodies and stakeholders on social objectives from the outset. Importantly, it also clarifies that the event itself can draw the attention of policy makers who can then link in policy objectives for the planning and delivery of the event. Although these points are raised in the paper they are not tied to the fundamental concept of leveraging and this is certainly something that could be the attention of future research. The paper nevertheless retains its relevance, in fact is perhaps more relevant now, due to the fact that both the TDFGD and *Giro D' Italia* depart were hosted in

Yorkshire and Northern Ireland respectively in 2014. Both host regions were seeking similar impact and legacy benefits to the 2007 TDFGD. Evaluating the impacts of events beyond the immediate and short-term is essential if we are to appreciate more fully the diverse benefits to the host area and how such benefits might be achieved. The paper argued that it is possible to utilise a range of indicators to measure these benefits and demonstrated how this was possible as it drew upon accepted techniques in order to assess cultural projects, social programmes, cultural inclusion and strengthening of voluntary groups to illustrate the event impact and legacy.

## **Conclusions and reflections**

This final section connects the research to the following: my development as a researcher; my contribution to knowledge in the field of events; and my current and future research strategy. It reflects upon my development as a research-practitioner by drawing along the papers included herein (Berridge, 2007a; 2010a; 2010b; 2011a; 2012a; 2012b; 2012c; 2014) and exhibited in the Appendix.

The research techniques included in the submission have evolved from earlier quantitative and qualitative outputs (Berridge, 2000; 1998). In particular, an early interest in qualitative methods stemmed from my undergraduate training in the field of cultural studies and postgraduate training in leisure management investigating experience, expression and meaning relative to popular culture and sub-cultural forms (Hall & Jefferson, 1977; Hebdige, 1979). They are also the result of an interest in event settings such as in my unpublished MA thesis on the nature of football hooliganism and the experiences and attitudes of spectators when attending a football match. This approach was extended further by co-authored research through in-situ interviews with ice-skaters and activities in relation to leisure management (Gresswell et al., 1996). By looking at representations of cultural forms I explored through mediatisation how television texts can be interpreted through semiotic analysis to deconstruct the conative meaning of words and image (Berridge & Kaine, 1998). This important early phase showed awareness of an interpretive approach to research as well as an empirical one and the need to develop greater insight and understanding of how meaning and experience is constituted. This is significant for my research development as some of these methods would re-appear later to guide my programme of research in events.

The submission itself offers multiple perspectives on event experiences and embraces more advanced conceptual analysis relevant to events and to the discovery of the deeper meaning of events (Getz, 2010; Bladen & Kennell, 2014). These peer reviewed publications range from: national to international Journals; contributions to international textbooks; and a single authored book. Some of these outputs have been the result of invitation to contribute to specific publications as a reflection and acknowledgement of an expertise around events, design and experience. The four most recent papers were published in journals which are ABDC (Australian Business Deans Council) ranked B or above, and is of the Research

Excellence Framework (REF) qualification standard if applied within an appropriate institution and REF Unit. As a collection, the papers reflect the ideas of respected academic peers who have sought to locate and understand events research within a progressive complexity of knowledge (Getz, 2012; Foley et al., 2012). Referred to as the genealogy of events research (Foley et al., 2012), this serves to indicate in what area events research has been undertaken and in what areas it could be developed in the future. Hence, each paper can be attributed to contributing to one or more of the following stages identified by Foley et al., (2012):

- Reflections on practice and organisational issues of how to do events, concerned primarily with micro-level concerns. Papers 1, 2, 3, & 4.
- The study of socio-cultural and economic impacts and the macro-environment of events. Papers 7 & 8
- A broader socio-cultural context that embraces multiple perspectives and analytical frameworks. Papers 1, 4, 5 & 6.

The research methodologies and techniques applied throughout the submission fit into the skills needed for higher level inquiry and serves to illustrate that doctoral level research skills have been utilised (QAA, 2011). In doing so the submission embraces an emerging social science perspective for events (Andrews & Leopold, 2013). Throughout, several qualitative methodologies have been used and different techniques drawn upon that are appropriate to the field of events. These range from initial data collection of small sample interviews and case studies (Berridge, 2007a) into a complex multi-sited experiential ethnography (Berridge, 2014). This focus on multiple and mixed methodologies was appropriate to developing events research that was well grounded in the literature.

Thus, this volume of work contributes significantly to the discourse of events, offering a body of knowledge on their significance and meaning through the interpretation of events experience. There is also a clear resonance for specific practice and knowledge that in turn form the basis of some of the functions required to work in event management (Jiang & Schmader, 2014). A major feature of the research is that all of it has been disseminated and presented to wider audiences of peers. This has been accomplished through regular conference presentations and demonstrates my ability to disseminate research and engage with peers. This claim is supported by outputs at national and international conferences



(Berridge, 1996; 1998; 2005, 2007b; 2007c; 2007d; 2007e; 2010d; 2011; 2012c; 2014). It reveals a range of effective communication skills in the field and related areas and a growing knowledge base in response to probing from peers. Overall the papers are indicative of a research strategy and perspective that enables the aims of the submission to be achieved. That is: demonstrating coherence across the submission and by providing evidence that advanced research has occurred. Collectively, they show an ability to initiate and generate research ideas, to plan and execute data collection of high quality, and to analyse the data and draw coherent conclusions.

Of importance to my professional standing, the research has informed my teaching practice and pedagogy. A significant and essential aspect of this research programme is its relevance, use and applicability to student learning through a research led teaching emphasis that engages students (Brew, 2003). I have consistently initiated and developed undergraduate and postgraduate curricula that is directly linked to my research. This outlook has enabled me to integrate my research into teaching, specifically drawing upon some guiding principles in developing learning materials and creating a connected modular course structure such as: presenting students with learning opportunities (Neilson 2009); providing active learning outcomes (Gulikers, 2006); fostering active engagement (Bates, 2008); and accommodating cultural diversity (Fielden et al., 2007). Furthermore a suite of modules in events has directly resulted from my research. It is pointedly argued that curriculum that is delivered by research-active staff and linked to their research interests and programmes is the best way for successful teaching and learning (Biggs, 2003; Healey, 2005). In this respect I believe I have utilised my research to interrogate and improve my teaching, in particular with innovation in the curriculum to enhance the student learning experience.

### **Future Research Strategy**

This future direction set within the context of employment at Surrey University will develop over the next 3 to 5 years in terms of:

- Membership of a Research Cluster
- Contribution and/or co-ordination of Research Centre Think-Tank
- Collaborative research and funding applications
- Dissemination of research through further publications and conferences

The University of Surrey, School of Hospitality & Tourism Management, has a number of research clusters to which academic staff belong. Within the Subject Group for Tourism I am a member of the 'People and Places' cluster. The aims of the cluster group is to encourage collegiate activity in research through a series of initiatives that include funding applications, research presentations, contributions to subject related publications and planning of think-tanks. To this end, alongside Professor Leo Jago, I am coordinating an autumn 'events think-tank' to be held at the Surrey campus. The event will draw upon a small group of research active event academics in order to foster discussion about future directions for event related research and the dissemination of events related research across diverse international journals. Involvement in the cluster has also led to me being part of team currently preparing an ESRC bid for funding to research the role of tourism within the National Curriculum. I am also collaborating with an academic from University of Sao Paulo on a University Global Partnership Network (UGPN) funding application related to the volunteer management programme legacy from London 2012 to Rio 2016.

In line with my existing research interests and contributions to journals and conferences, I have been involved in a project with colleagues at Sheffield Hallam, Leeds Metropolitan and Coventry Universities to study the experience of spectators at the *Tour de France* Grand Depart in Yorkshire 2014. Data was gathered in July 2014 using a range of methodologies: online survey, visual auto-ethnography and photographic imagery. These multiple, simultaneous projects were conducted across the 2 days the event was staged and were conceived with the idea of achieving a higher level of impact than publications targeted so far. Although the research journals noted in the submission are ranked relatively highly amongst peers they are not highly ranked in terms of the REF. However, in the recent revision of the ABS rankings, several event journals were classified for the first time. Measuring and describing the impact of academic research is becoming increasingly important for both academics and institutions. There are a number of methods for measuring impact though and many different factors can affect the rankings of journals. As can be seen with the publications in this submission, citation counts are also useful, and are often linked to the impact factors and perceived quality of journals. Four and three star ranked journals in the field of events are non-existent, and in the UK there are only two event related high ranked journals: *Tourism Management* and *Annals of Tourism Research*. Thus the aim of the above projects is to target a range of outcomes that increase the impact of the research. This will be achieved by the resulting research papers being targeted at higher ranked journals

such as *Annals of Tourism Research*, *Journal of Consumer Research*, and *Cultural Anthropology*. The results of all three research projects will be further disseminated at relevant subject conferences over the next 12-18 months. Furthermore the results of research project 1 on spectators at the *Tour de France Grand Depart 2014* are part of an ongoing discussion with Yorkshire Tourist Board to disseminate the results alongside their own research on the economic impact of the event.

The projects were as follows:

**Research 1** was a survey to track attendees' feelings and emotions (Scherer, 2005) towards the event. The survey sought to identify the nature of people's engagement with the event and place, their thoughts and feelings and how these reflect individual identification with their region or nation and the experience of being in crowds watching the event, for *example*, effervescence. Literature on other crowds at events indicates that participation generates positive emotions if the event goes well, such as without disruptions, accidents, or organiser errors and does not lead to collective or individual problems, *for instance*, transport breakdowns.

**Research 2** was a four-way auto-ethnography (Pink, 2007) with the purpose being to examine the detail of individual experiences of the event and the crowd engaging with a major-sport event. Qualitative research on sport events tends to examine the experiences of people around the event in a one-off summative interview of the major impact of the experience. This can lead to misremembering of the details and, moreover, to important ebbs and flows of positive and negative experiences being missed. The use of Autographer cameras encourage individuals and collective memory processes to be examined in relation to a sports event. Once the data has been collected the researchers subsequently review their photos of the event from Autographer and detail what they were thinking and feeling at each 15 second image stage. The method elicits a lot of detail that would otherwise be lost – or would be altered or simply not be gathered if the person were constantly being asked to report on their experiences, for example, by using experience sampling techniques or being accompanied by another participant-observer. The data from the individual descriptions and a recording of the shared discussion of key points will be combined into a rich multi-perspective ethnography of the *Tour de France* as a local, national and international event.

**Research 3** was based on a study of co-creation from the perspective of the service-dominant logic (Vargo & Lusch, 2004) analysing event décor (Monroe, 2006) expressed in artistic representation. The data collected for this is drawn from visual images of artistic work taken at multiple sites along the route of the event. In this case event décor refers to the decorative features displayed that would contribute to the total experience at a single place. Usually such features are designed and created as part of the event management plan, but in the case of a public event that is not restricted to one location or facility, like the *Tour de France*, then co-creation is apparent as local communities and individuals contribute to the décor via artistic endeavour. This co-creation of experience is a relatively new area of enquiry and the research aim is to initially classify and categorise the forms of artwork displayed.

Finally as noted in paper 4 there is an ongoing research project on cyclist's experiences of *sportive* and *gran fondo* events. Such events continue to flourish both in the number of events organised and the number of participants. They are also beginning to develop their offer to the public in terms of a range of additional services. Thus a paper is currently being developed as the next phase of dissemination of this material and it will focus around the classification and the production of a typology of such events.

### **Summary**

I have been pursuing a research agenda that investigates the deeper meaning of specific event experiences focusing on methodologies that unravel the detail, nature and characteristics of experience. Whilst I am primarily interested in event attendee responses to designed engagements and the internal meaning that events hold for people specifically, there is also an interest in the way such experiences impact have a wider socio-cultural impact. To date this research has largely considered how design tools are used to create and infuse events with experience features and to record and analyse attendee reactions to that process. In doing so attention is drawn to the need for a shift in academic thinking about how events are constructed through design, event objectives and through socio-cultural dynamics between stakeholders (Andrews & Leopold, 2013).

To conclude, the research chronology outlined in this submission charts a journey that shows a maturation of both theory and empirical research activity. A range of qualitative approaches has been utilised namely: multi-sited ethnography, observation, participant

observation, self-inquiry, case-studies, auto-ethnography, experiential ethnography, hermeneutic phenomenology, visual ethnography (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Edwards & Skinner, 2009). This research is complementary to a wider and significant contribution and advocacy that has been made to the academic study of events. I believe this research enhances knowledge through a deeper and qualitative exploration of the significance of the event experience. There is an increasing cumulative richness and profundity to data collected at events, and this has been manifest through a maturation of research techniques. In particular theoretical frameworks for design and experience are utilised and discussed as mechanisms for creating and also for analysing experience, so that the social and cultural significance of events can be more meaningfully understood. Alongside myself there remain a relatively limited, but nevertheless growing, number of academics consistently undertaking such research into events at this moment in time. These papers in this submission therefore make a significant, sustained and often original contribution to the evolving field of events and events research.

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## Appendix 1

### Examples of citations

**Paper 1/Book 1** Berridge, G. (2007a), *Events Design and Experience*, Oxford, Elsevier Butterworth Heinemann. 297 pages. 121 citations.

#### Citation examples:

Crowther, P. (2011), Marketing event outcomes: from tactical to strategic, *International Journal of Event and Festival Management*, 2, (1), pp. 68-82.

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**Paper 2** Berridge, G. (2010a), Event Pitching: the role of design and creativity, *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 29(2), pp. 208-215. 9 Citations. ABDC Ranking A\*

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**Appendix 2**

The submitted papers but excluding my book from 2007



## Event pitching: The role of design and creativity

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### ARTICLE INFO

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### ABSTRACT

The purpose of the research is to contribute towards a better understanding of the role of design and creativity in the pitch phase of an event bid. The paper does not seek to re-document the formal proposal process of preparing and bidding for an event but instead will look at an element within event bidding, the pitch to the client. Winning an event pitch is a crucial part of the events industry and is undertaken by most event management companies (EMC) or agencies. It is highly competitive. The material is based on qualitative research with key individuals working in the events industry and presents selective reflections upon the pitch process, the rationale and criteria for pitching and the extent to which they use creative thinking to win. Design and creativity are essential components that help make events memorable experiences, but as the paper demonstrates they also have a significant role in securing the event contract in the first place. In some cases elaborate and extreme design tactics are used to make a successful pitch.

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### 1. Introduction

Bidding for events is an everyday part of the events landscape for agencies working with corporate and public clients (Berridge, 2007) and has become an increasing part of strategic and policy initiatives by destinations to attract new business (Getz, 2004). A key element in the bidding process is the presentational 'pitch' to the client. The purpose of the research is to offer a better understanding of some of the key issues in event pitching and, in particular, some of the more creative approaches used in pitching. The majority of organisations operating in the events industry (in the UK) are typically small companies or agencies employing less than 20 permanent staff and pitching for new contracts is an essential part of their day to day operations. For those working in this commercial sector, pitching accounts from anywhere between 20 and 40% of their revenue whereas those working within the public sector it can account for 100%. An 'invitation to pitch' for a private, entertainment or celebration based event, is normally done by direct invitation from the client and often involves no more than 3 competitors making a 30–45 min presentational 'pitch' on ideas for the event. In the public sector and for many larger events the pitch is preceded by a pre-qualifying questionnaire or bidding stage, which mostly includes the formal documentation of a bid. From these bidders a short list is drawn and those on it are then invited to formally pitch for the event. A literature overview of event management texts ensues, followed by an explanation of methodology. Results from interviews with 9

people are then selectively discussed to highlight how agencies view pitching and the creative ideas they employ to be successful.

### 2. Literature review

The growing body of literature on event management has established that study by and large focuses upon planned events (Getz, 2008). Characteristically this study covers the key knowledge areas identified in the Event Management Body of Knowledge (EMBOK) domains, namely administration, design, marketing, operations and risk (Silvers et al., 2006). In practical terms the literature discusses the planning, organisation and management of planned events and this is then further explored and discussed to give the reader a clear level of knowledge about what an event is, how to run one and the role events played in society (Allen et al., 2005; Shone and Parry, 2004; Raj et al., 2009; Van der Wagen and Carlos, 2005). There are a number of terms used within academia and industry in relation to securing contracts to run such events, and the boundaries or use of each is sometimes blurred or used as a catch-all to include all the processes involved in winning such a contract. For example, event contracts occur between individual agencies running events for corporate clients over a single day/evening event where there may be a highly creative or bespoke approach taken to the event concept. By comparison there are those events related to destination development where the event may be spread for several days and requires travel, accommodation, and leisure planning in addition to the event planning. Various terms that reappear time and again (Walters, 2008) to explain the process of securing an event contract are procurement, bidding, and pitching. In terms of research it is

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the latter that is the least developed of these and is the focus of this research but it might assist understanding to summarise the others first.

### 2.1. Procurement

Due to the significant role played by Visitor and Convention Bureaus, event 'procurement' is the most difficult to define because of the range of activities associated with procurement. It is most readily used within the conferences, conventions and meetings industry due to proliferation of corporate, association and public sector involvement and where there is a clear distinction between 'buyers' and 'suppliers' (Rogers, 2003). Procurement management is viewed as the 'sourcing, selection and contracting of the suppliers and vendors from whom goods and services will be procured using accurate solicitation materials and quality criterion' (Silvers, 2008). Procurement is widely interpreted and so difficult to clearly define, but nevertheless it can be seen as a business management function that ensures identification, sourcing, access and management of the external resources that an organisation needs or may need to fulfil its strategic objectives (Kidd, 2005). Procuring events falls within these two ideas through the activity of procurement planning and solicitation when event management companies are invited to bid for an event or an association or organisation issues a request for proposals. Visitor Convention Bureaus, for example, act in a procurement capacity by actively seeking and attracting events as part of the wider strategic policy of a region to attract more visitors (Rogers, 2003; Davidson and Cope, 2003) and public and other bodies use the appeal of events to enhance the image of a destination (Gold and Ward, 1994; Smith, 2001; Pugh, 2004; Boo and Busser, 2006).

### 2.2. Bidding

Event bidding tends to describe a series of activities that make up a 'bid' and, like procurement, can include 'request for proposals', and is often associated with major or mega events (sport, conferences or cultural events), ones that are a one-off or run infrequently, change location each time (Allen et al., 2005) and can also be classed as hallmark or mega events (Gratton et al., 2001). Although by no means exclusively the preserve of sports events, it is in this area that bidding has received the most attention and in which most academic work has been undertaken. This is not surprising since three of the world's largest events – the Olympic Games, FIFA World Cup and the Commonwealth Games are sports events and the economic and social impact of hosting such an event is regarded as beneficial to the host. The bid process itself begins with the event owners inviting cities or countries to submit a proposal (Catherwood and Van Kirk, 1997; Emery, 2002; Masterman and Wood, 2004; Allen, 2002). An announcement is made either in public or by nomination to a number of associations. The event owner then establishes a set process for bidding and the timetable by which time-critical information or documentation must be lodged (Maralack and Lloyd, 2006; Getz, 1997). Guidelines and criteria for successful bidding are documented (Westerbeek et al., 2002; Swart and Urmilla, 2004) as are a number of commonly cited reasons why destinations and national governing bodies of sport bid to host sport events (Emery, 2001, 2002; Essex and Chalkley, 1998; Gold and Gold, 2008; Horte and Persson, 2003; Jago et al., 2003). Such events can be used to improve the brand identity of a city on a global scale (Walters, 2008). Because of this, competition to host such events is intense but does vary with the type of event, for example major junior events are mostly not the result of competitive bidding (Blake, 2005, 2008). The value of the events market is growing and further

highlights why there is such interest in securing the rights to run the:

The right to host an international event is now one of the most valuable prizes in sport. The 2007 Dubai International Sports Conference valued the market at US\$50 billion worldwide, while UK Sport estimates such events contribute £1.5 billion to the British economy each year (Walmsley, 2008).

It is predicted for the London 2012 Olympics that the event will generate an additional 8164 full-time equivalent jobs and add £1.936 billion to GDP between 2005 and 2016 (Blake, 2005). Major and mega events like this often involve public funding and the rights to host them are held by governing bodies that have a degree of accountability to the sport and their constituency. They are also likely to require considerable resources to organise and hence, carry a high degree of risk with them (Emery, 2002). For major events discussion and analysis of such bids tends to consider the rationale for bidding in the first place, the requirements of the bid, the strategy and policy of the bidding city and the impact a successful bid would have on the economic, social, political and cultural environment (Gratton and Henry, 2001). The bidding process itself is said to consist of five stages: the event objectives; the venue selection; strategic planning; feasibility study; bid procedure (Emery, 2002).

### 2.3. Pitching

Pitching can be referred to as the physical act of presenting the conceptual ideas of the bid to the client, in person, and the stage at which the competitive contract to run the events is won or lost (Berridge, 2007). It is a competitive process that is the chance for the EMC to verbally and visually 'pitch' their ideas to the client. The term 'pitch' is commonly used by industry professionals (especially those working with corporate clients) and is regarded as a key part in persuading the client to offer the contract for the event. However literature on events makes little or no reference to the term, tending instead to refer to the process as the presentation (Allen, 2002; Masterman and Wood, 2004), as an oral bid (Catherwood and Van Kirk, 1997) or simply regards the competitive process as culminating only in a written proposal (Monroe, 2006; Matthews, 2007). Therefore what tends to be studied is the framework or blueprint that establishes why an event is being considered, what the event idea is, how that can be conceptualised, and subsequently how it can be planned and organised. However what is often missing from these studies is the key stage of the process, the acquisition of the right to manage the event and, perhaps more importantly, how this is achieved. This knowledge on the 'pitch', both in terms of strategies used in pitching and the creative elements of the actual pitch, are relatively speaking under explored areas. This is despite the suggestion that in terms of winning a bid, creativity is regarded as one of the most important aspects (Matthews, 2007).

### 2.4. Event design and creativity

The role of design and creativity in event management is widely, albeit sometimes inconsistently, acknowledged in playing a central part in the planned event experience and this is especially the case for those events with a strong thematic, celebratory and entertainment element (Malouf, 1999; Sonder, 2004; Monroe, 2006; Matthews, 2007; Silvers, 2004; Allen et al., 2005). As the sources above suggest creating, conceptualising and designing an event requires a series of activities that must meet the client's perceptions of their event. Design can be used strategically to create an event proposal (Allen, 2002) and it can also be the

underlying principle, or blueprint that establishes the event idea and experience (Goldblatt, 2004). Understanding and applying design skills to event management are explored with guidance offered on the basic principles of design, the aesthetic principles to use in practice and further technical advice for using design ideas in creating event environments (Malouf, 1999; Monroe, 2006; Van der Wagen and Carlos, 2005; Matthews, 2007; Goldblatt, 2004).

It is also suggested that design should be considered as an essential element upon which any event is planned and should be regarded as a skilled action or an act of creativity that gives something a visual identity or recognition and that the conceptual development and design of an event should be focussed upon maximising the positive and meaningful impact for the event's audience and/or participants (Brown, 2005). Most studies explore the idea of the event concept as a starting point for developing the event idea, whereupon the event elements can be then designed to express the concept. Often a unifying theme is put forward as a way of connecting the design elements with the event experience (Allen et al., 2005; Malouf, 1999). These principles should apply irrespective of the type of event (Berridge, 2007) but their level of application will vary depending upon the extent to which design and creativity is required in the event. An event with a strong entertainment or celebratory theme would require more design input than say an educational or business meeting.

The process of research, development and feasibility for any design idea has to be undertaken by the EMC to ensure that the event can go ahead as envisaged. Very limited information exists on the approach EMC's, agencies or individual freelance events managers take to preparing a pitch to the client. It is also an area where there is a great deal of interest and debate, not least because it raises issues of costs (to the pitching company) and confidentiality and copyright of ideas (Somerset, 2005). This was evidenced at successive International Special Events Society (ISES) Education Conferences (2005–2006) where presentations on 'pitching' were overbooked.

### 3. Methodology

The sample was selected using an approach that was a mixture of convenience and expert referral as it was important to identify appropriate personnel and EMC's who were regularly involved in pitching. Initially personal industry contacts were approached for advice on possible interviewees and this yielded several prospects. In addition the membership base of the International Special Events Society (UK) was also used. ISES is generally held to be the association that attracts most of creative and design agencies in the UK. Using information freely available on the ISES website, and targeting members listed under design and creativity, a list was drawn up. All prospective participants had websites and email contact so each of these was contacted with a request for interview. This resulted in nine interviewees taking place. Since most of the companies employed less than 10 staff, finding the right person to speak to was not a problem. The positions they held in the organisations varied and included account directors, creative directors, sales directors, managing directors/owners, and marketing managers. Initial enquiries centred on the extent and frequency they presented creative pitches. Each participant was formally requested to be interviewed and a date was set. All interviews, bar one, took place between October 2007 and February 2008.

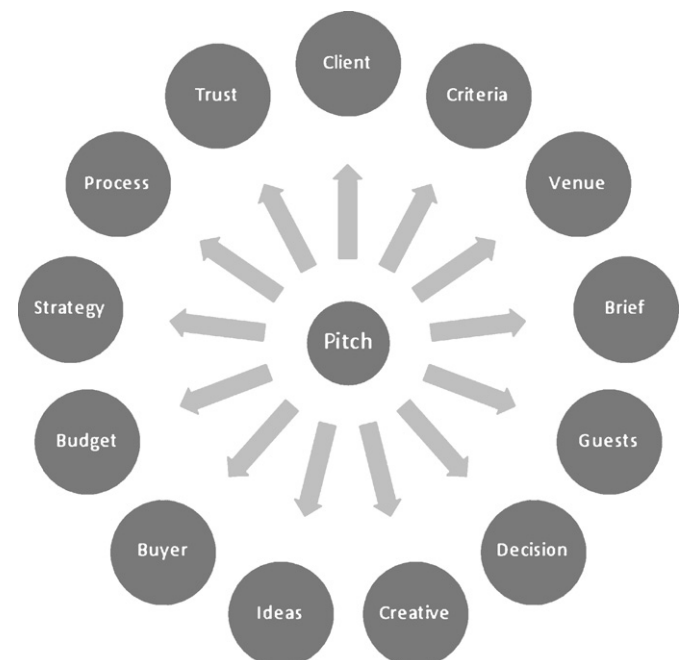
Interviews were conducted using a qualitative semi-structured approach with the emphasis placed upon active interviewing. Two–three weeks before the meeting each participant was sent a 'question guide' which outlined the general areas for discussion. Whilst these acted as guidelines the idea was to actively encourage narrative accounts by inviting them to develop stories that elaborated on content and would, hopefully, enable connections to be made with other narratives. This also included the expected

length of time of the interview (between around 60 min), confirmation of anonymity and confidentiality, and asked for their permission to record the interview. Data collection was hampered by work commitments on the part of those selected, with five separate participants having to re-arrange their interviews at least 3 times, one in fact rescheduled 6 times. Two interviews had to have follow-up sessions due to interruptions. Interviews were recorded by audio digital recorder or by concurrent typed entry into a laptop. The following day after each interview, the audio recordings were transcribed whilst laptop entries were cleaned up and corrected for typing errors.

Responses were subsequently grouped through content analysis software (Site Content Analyzer) and adopting a conceptual analysis approach to establish the consistency and frequency of concepts in terms of weight and count (Krippendorff, 1980). The results of this analysis (see Chart 1) influenced the sub-headings used to group the key findings. The aim was to see if coherent and meaningful configurations emerged through the narrative accounts. Since this exercise in data collection is not about developing statistical incidence, the data is presented in a narrative format with verbatim comments in italics on key issues interspersed throughout the text.

#### 3.1. Limitations

The population, sampling frame and subsequent sample and selection of interviewees is not meant to be representative of the events industry but is specifically looking at small EMC's who, in general, are obtaining a significant proportion of their work from pitching to corporate clients. In all cases this is more than 30%. In the main these are stand-alone events based around an entertainment and celebratory experience that, mostly, runs across either a single day or a portion of that day. As such it is meant to give an insight into their practices and not those of all agencies involved in pitching, especially those dealing with destination bidding where the event runs for a whole day or across several days and where design and creativity is, perhaps, more to do with programming and packaging of the event elements offered at the destination. The sample size is ultimately narrow and selective, based on personal



**Chart 1.** Keyword/phrase count and weight from content analysis of interviews. In order of frequency the chart should be read clockwise starting with 'client'.

contacts and membership of ISES and is UK based only, although this does not mean that international pitches are excluded since several of the agencies involved work both in the UK and overseas. As interviews were semi-structured, this is not an attempt to collect quantifiable data for detailed comparison but more about discovering areas of similarity based on narrative accounts of practitioners.

#### 4. Key findings and analysis

##### 4.1. The brief

A general view amongst all participants was that the process of bidding and pitching can be very badly managed by the client. This occurred time and time again and in some cases demonstrated appalling bid management by clients in the first place. All participants were critical of some of the briefs they received and it was felt that this dictated a lot of the pitch content. A good clear brief was likely to produce detailed, creative, concise and tight concepts whereas a vague one would most likely result in an indifferent pitch. It was repeatedly stressed that agencies needed to carefully read the brief and check the wording. One person observed that it was essential to do this to see if the result was a foregone conclusion, i.e. an incumbent was being re-employed or some other agency was already lined up. One of the key decisions to make when pitching was to match the cost of the pitch to the content brief to see if they complemented each other. So a £200k job should have a serious brief to go with it.

##### 4.2. Criteria for pitching

All participants reflexively asked 'why pitch'? They stressed the importance of knowing that internally they had, or could get, the resources to pitch in the first place.

Where the client was looking for ideas was seen as encouraging as opposed to a client who simply wanted 'organisation'. Conducting a background check on the company and the event or events they had previously been associated with was normally undertaken. One commented '*Pitches revolve entirely around communication, with the best ones being based on a two-way dialogue with the client. Trust and credibility are important aspects of this process, one of the key criteria was to be able to talk to the client in their language, in other words to understand something about their ideas for selection.*'

One agency used a pro-forma checklist that they ran through each time which consisted of:

- Who organised their event?
- What worked?
- What would they do differently?
- Establish what relationship they have with the previous organiser?
- Who are you quoting against?
- Why have they asked you to pitch?
- Establish how many companies are pitching and how good they are?
- Why are they talking to you?
- What do they know about you?
- Establish where your company can have a positive design impact on their event?

##### 4.3. Buying criteria

The ranges of issues to be considered at this stage were considerable. Nearly all participants stressed the following points: the need to establish a clear event budget and what it will cover; to establish how important the creative idea will be to win the

business; to consider the rapport that has been established with the client, and significantly, whether what we do complements their corporate culture; find out who is going to be the decision maker and if they will be at the pitch or will be delegating it to someone who will refer back. The latter was felt to be one of the most important issues of the pitch by several people, not least because it heavily influenced the creative element they would include. If the decision maker was not going to be present then the pitch was less likely to be designed heavy, simply because it then relied on someone else interpreting it and transmitting the message back to the decision maker.

Some clients are just a process driven, with little insight into you as a company. You don't know who they are going to send along to the pitch. Sometimes ideas can be tricky if you are presenting a creative idea to a non-creative company, a big multinational Petro-chemical firm.

##### 4.4. Competitive pitching

A consensus of view emerged that, if possible, no-one really wanted to have to do a pitch because of the time and cost involved and the uncertainty of the outcome. All would prefer to be negotiating with clients in the knowledge they would plan the event rather than having to impress clients to win the contract. The issue of payment for pitching was raised several times, strongly in some cases, although it was accepted that clients would never do this. Although strongly worded, this is a typical view of how EMC's regard client knowledge:

Most of it is a complete waste of time. End problem, nobody can actually determine one product from another. Clients have no idea really – so procurement thing is a gut feel, trust, who is cheaper. How do you procure a caterer, I can do this for them – technical questions are never tested, so they have no clue on staff ratios, where staff come from. Searching questions are negligible, who are your chefs, banqueting managers, they never ask them due to ignorance.

##### 4.5. The cost of pitching

A common thread emerged of the 'third quote syndrome', where there was an incumbent who had run the event before, another company who were likely bidders and then someone else was asked to make up the numbers. Most said they were less inclined to pitch if this fact was established and less inclined to invest time and effort in developing a really creative concept.

This has been an area of debate within the industry and is linked to other discussions elsewhere in the paper about whether or not clients should pay agencies to bid.

Costs were a factor in deciding to pitch, but there was limited consensus of the costs of a pitch. One commented that '*we put around 3–5% of expected return on the event in a pitch, so for a 200k job this can amount to £10,000*', whereas another suggested that their average was around the £1–2k mark. '*The most we have ever spent on a pitch is £17k, and that was for a job worth just under £1m*'. Most agencies were bidding for at least 1 event per week with success varying from 1 out of 10 to 2 out of 5.

We know exactly what our win ratio is 10:1. This suggests, at least to me, that it is not such a good investment, but I guess we couldn't afford to lose that so it is still something we have to do.

##### 4.6. Trust in the client

The issue of trustworthiness was prominent and never went away in discussions with all participants, apart from the agency



that worked exclusively with the public sector. All those working with commercial clients had an experience of making a pitch to a large cooperation only to find that not only were they unsuccessful but several months later their ideas appeared in an event run directly by the prospective clients in-house events team. B\*\*\*\* Magazine asked for a pitch, then took all the ideas in-house and used them on their own events. It took us 5 days and 5K to put that pitch together. Another complaint on this was perhaps more serious:

The worst example though was from a multi-national sports company who did exactly the same but on a bigger scale. They secretly invited 15 agencies over to Germany to pitch ideas to them and gave no-one the contract. They then used a lot of the ideas and put them into their own in-house managed events.

One interesting point of view did emerge and that was what message the event should send to non-attendants. This was driven by commercial ideas of a repeat event or a similar type of event so that, if it was a public event, the message of a missed opportunity would be communicated to those not present. It was not made entirely clear how or if this would occur other than through PR activity.

#### 4.7. Pitch conditions

A degree of unease was evident as several agencies had experienced changes in the process, such as this, *'the client called the pre-pitch meeting themselves and the other 4 agencies pitching were also present. On the client side there were about six people, all responsible for key decisions about the event. It was difficult at first as we were very uncertain about how much to give away, because of course our line of questioning would open up some of our ideas to competitors'*.

A further example illustrates the sometimes less than static conditions of pitching:

One time we turned up for a pitch and the whole thing had been changed. We had spent around 5–6k on it and we had met with the client once. Anyway we got their on the day and went into the board room to be faced by only one person. We had prepared a 45 minute pitch for four people, now we were being told we had 15 minutes to make a verbal one to one person. Was it mind games, a bit of psychology to see how we would react or think on our feet? I don't know.

#### 4.8. Creative pitch tactics

Some factors that guided the extent of design creativity, in addition to those already noted, included perception of client, context of pitch, whether the agency were looking to make a statement or not, costs of the pitch, setting a marker down for the future and using psychology. The latter was sometimes a two-way process with the client also playing mind games whilst some agencies went to great lengths to establish a psychological hold.

Behavioural psychology is at the heart of what I do. That's what I am trained in. I have to think about how to get that across to a sometimes ignorant client. I also have to play around with their mind in the pitch. So I sit down and plan out the pitch. The problem is that clients can be evasive on that or they change their mind on the day. So I always have a fallback position that we can go to. I have quite a few subtle features that try to get the client on our side. I'm not going to tell you though what they are.

Another participant had this to say:

We were setting up in the board room and as I leant down to plug the laptop in, D\*\*\*\* lifted his head up and we banged heads.

We both laughed and rubbed each other's foreheads, then carried on. Afterwards the account director said she had noticed this and it showed that we bonded well and were together as a company compared to some others who were very cool and calculated. I don't advocate this is something we use all the time, but we have worked on a few other scenarios like this to use in certain pitches.

#### 4.9. Pitch preparation

It was normal practice for there to be someone in the agency who, no matter what the event, pulled everything together and would be a part of the pitch team. All agencies prepared their staff, and some had very strict rules on who was going to attend the pitch. In all cases a senior agency staff member would develop the concept along with marketing staff, design staff and production staff. If specialist skills were needed then contract personnel would be brought in. One of the largest agencies in the research always sent their marketing director and 1 other person, and never sent a creative director. Others sent just a single person but no agency voluntarily sent more than 3 people unless the brief asked for it. A person did comment that in the early days of pitching they sent along groups of people so that all questions could be answered but they quickly realised what a mistake that was when in one pitch two colleagues got into an argument over the theme of the event. Elsewhere it was stated that the pitch team was based around the event type and design ideas and selected on that basis. One provided training: *'anyone who is going to be involved in a pitch has to attend a presentation skills course at a Theatre College. We look at all kinds of things – body posture, position, voice, pace, gesticulation, all the things that can help.*

And another left little to chance:

Our motto before a pitch is: Rehearse, rehearse, rehearse, rehearse and do it again. Make sure the timing is to perfection. Make sure you know it inside out, so then you can be flexible in response to questions.

We always deliver ours to colleagues beforehand to see if the right message is being conveyed, if not we go back and re-design it.

#### 4.10. Event design

Whilst the style of pitching varies, all expressed a need to get design ideas across as the level of competition in pitches was incredibly high. Documentation was usually in a luxury binding and contained text and visuals. Most included artist impressions of key design objects and spatial environments often on separate poster size boards. Some specifically used story-boards to narrate the event to the client. All had, at various times, included physical mock-ups or samples of design elements such as entertainment settings, props and invites. One also brought in 'actors' to play a role, representing a moment they envisaged in the event, *'we once had a guy dressed as Charlie Chaplin to demonstrate how we would re-create a silent movie theme for their evening'*.

PowerPoint was the most used format for presenting pitch ideas, but a multi-media format was not uncommon. *'We always use PowerPoint and we always use a multi-media format, so including say a DVD or similar, sometimes just a sound. They always get a brochure branded with our logo that contains information about us. If we are bidding for a wedding, we use a bound photo book that contains illustrations of a 'dream' £1m wedding. The idea is to show them we know how to design and create lavish experiences'*.

Another stated *'we try and keep up with production and technology, look at what is going on elsewhere, visit other event. We try to have weekly meetings to discuss this, whereby we update*



ourselves of what is happening creatively. We try to find out what might be changed in the market place, for example the increased use of CAD type software is factor these days, especially for highly visual events. So we always use design software, with a very clear idea of how the event will look. Best of all we can change things there like the layout, colour, theme and so on. We can even change the style of table, chair those kinds of things. I did one recently and we did it a bit like an artist's impression at a police station and set it up that way. So we asked the client to describe what they wanted or could see in their imagination and we built up the design of the event from there'.

The role of the venue in the pitch generated responses that were at the opposite ends of a scale. To some it was seen as essential, a chance to source and create a unique venue that would perfectly complement the thematic concept. To others it was irrelevant or a minor feature, based on the belief that anyone can find a venue. Everyone indicated they included a venue, with some offering a selection of suitable ones for the event. One person resolutely refused to suggest a specific venue.

We have a list of venues which we use so then we put it in, list the whole lot so client can choose. We can work in every venue in London so we can do it all. We bring costs and known problems of venues – venue add on-costs that client will not know about.

In contrast, and more frequent point, it was observed that *'the client places everything on Venue – a better venue idea usually wins out. We spend time looking for really unique venues can give us a design edge'*.

#### 4.11. Creative pitch tactics

Ideas for a fresh pitch often bordered on the extreme. A freelancer said he had done things simply to get the client on board and that would otherwise be unthinkable in other circumstances. A Managing Director of a smaller agency said that they had 'created' ghost pitches as a form of marketing to target key clients. They wanted to get onto the bidding list for a major company who by and large went for bigger agencies only. So they decided to create a PR pitch event for one of the brands under the companies' wing. They then invited key people in the target organisation to the event and used it as 'pitch' to them. Hence the term 'ghost pitch'. One participant expressed the belief that they did things just to gauge the client response, but only in times when they were full with work.

Taking a pitch to extremes was seen by some as a negative, with concern being expressed about possibly damaging a long term client relationship. However some agencies told different pitch stories, and were willing to take a creatively risky approach. Ironically the following example was done precisely to foster a longer term relationship:

Impressing clients is tricky sometime, in these cases you need to be theatrical (industrial theatre) as the pitch is the nearest the client gets to the event itself. This is the one chance to get across to them the experience, seeing visuals, running through it without distractions. It's a chance to get them to have that tingle – so from this point of view you can chance your arm a bit.

Having made this a creative pitch decision, the team then had to pull off the kidnap.

We invited him to our offices, he was then escorted to a dark room, the door was sealed, and in the room were 4 black dressed Victorian candle bearers, standing cross armed. They could not speak to him, all they could do was give a hushed gesture. There was a coffin in the room, covered with cobwebs

and few other creepy things, and eerie music began to play. Projected onto a wall in a 'nightmare on elm street' style font was the words 'the nightmare begins'. He was left to stew for a few minutes. Then we went in as normal. On a word cue about the brief, a candle bearer banged and scratched on the lid of the coffin, the coffin opened and inside was a Lon Chaney/Bela Lugosi character. He held in his hand a document which was a review of the event as it had just happened, painting a bleak black picture of the company – but then suggesting how they would recover. There was a blood red sealed envelope and the guy in the coffin, putting on a creepy Munsters voice, calls him by name, and gives him the pitch document.

This example not only demonstrates the risk some bidders are willing to take with a pitch, but also how they often look at the value of a pitch in short, medium or long term. The fact that internal politics were mentioned by the client at the outset, gave encouragement to the agency to do something risky since in all likelihood they would lose the pitch anyway. But the main point is that they were willing to take a quite extreme route to get across to the client that they could be creative in a way that perhaps other competitors could not. In a similar vein, another example of creative pitching:

We decided to kidnap a client, and sent along a 'mole' who went into the presentation with a tape directing the client down to reception. There we had a guy from our office in black coat, glasses, BMW parked outside, and who could only speak a single word in Russian – niet. He gesticulated for him to get in the car where he got a blackmail letter that told him to go to a certain location. The idea was to use the classic Hollywood black-mailer's scene where the hero goes from point to point collecting information along the way. Finally he ends up at a Hotel room, room 101 of course. This is a 20 minutes story to this point, all checked and timed so run within the time of the pitch. When the door opens to room 101 – we were all inside wearing dark glasses and dark suits. His immediate response was to joke that time had been wasted, but he cracked up laughing and in the end gave us the job.

Here the pitch team had exceeded the brief by impressing the client with their creative flair and organisational skills and delivered a design concept and creative event within a pitch. Significantly they kept to the timeframe they had been given for the pitch but cleverly used that to move the client from his environment into theirs. Such an approach is uncommon and this kind of pitch will only work for a very limited audience and an understanding of the client is crucial before proceeding.

A number of pitches incorporated innovative thinking within the presentation using a variety of techniques. The source below attempted to get an unknown client into their way of thinking.

The pitch was to a German electronics company who we did not know so we used a back-to-basic flipchart to give the impression we had just thought up an idea on the way there. We drew a black square on to a white board which would address different sectors of the events and the company product story. We wanted to take them through our thinking, so showed them how we arrived at the idea. Hidden under the table we had made up scale model of the whole project on a rotating box, and this brought the story to life after the verbal introduction.

Instead of going through their normal routine in this example the agency tried to get the client on their side from the start. It is an illustration of the need to be brave in a pitch and then being prepared to go with the idea.

## 5. Summary and recommendations

The research indicates that design and creativity is a constant feature in pitching and the extent to which it is used to make an impact is considerable. It underpins both the initial concept stage, as noted in the literature, and the development of event experience. It also influences the style and delivery of the pitch itself. Some agencies were willing to take extravagant risks and give exposure to highly original pitches. Such preparedness to bend the rules of pitching is perhaps high risk but as one person put it 'all you can do is lose the pitch'. Some agencies though were not prepared to deviate too much from the perceived pitch format other than in the level of creativity and conceptual thinking they had for the event.

Client–agency relationship remains a central feature in what goes on in a pitch, although who is 'controlling' who is open to question. Mind games are being played by both clients and agencies. Whatever else emerges from the material here, one thing remains evident, pitches are becoming highly choreographed affairs. Communication operates on multiple levels and sending the right message to the client is paramount. The means to do that though is, of course, what marks one pitch out from another. Daring design elements and bold creativity for the event will only work if the client gets the message and so the pitch has to be clear enough to do that. If the client does not get it, there is little point to the pitch (unless confusion is the point). Different messages are transmitted by different channels of communication and, as is demonstrated in this paper, some of pitches succeed because those channels have been creatively designed to deliver the message in a non-routine way.

What immediately becomes apparent is that there are some process rules that can be followed when pitching. Most of the interviewees acknowledged that they had a fairly well developed routine for responding to requests in the first instance. Within this framework it was largely evident that most EMC's had the knowledge and skills to pitch the type of event the client was requesting. In fact if they did not have evidence of this to begin with they would not be asked to pitch.

This though did not preclude variations to this mutuality with some clients often keen to change the process whether by time, client representation or style of pitch. Often it seemed this was done to get a 'response' from the agency or to test them out. Interestingly while several agencies were happy to play mind games with clients and use extreme tactics, they did not appear to like it when the client did the same to them.

There existed a clear professionalism in the way an agency responds to a brief with a set of meetings held to conceptualise an idea and develop a visual response to the brief. Research on the client, the company, their past events, the likely needs of guests, these were essential elements in helping agencies map out ideas, and is discussed in most sources on the subject. It was important that a connection was made with the client and all interviewees stated that they would try to meet directly with the client prior to the pitch. Here they would try to discover the types of ideas that might be appreciated as well as those that might not be. Hence with so many EMC's having the requisite skill level, it begs the question how would a client differentiate would proposal from another. The answer suggested by this research, is that it is at the pitch level where variation truly emerges as EMC's are able to present design and creative ideas on the event that mark them out as distinct from someone else. Some agencies acknowledged they got contracts because of how they pitched, not because of their ideas for the event.

What can be learnt from these interviews especially for people new to the industry and unfamiliar with the pitching process or those preparing for a pitch? The following main points have emerged:

1. Preparation is required for an event brief that can be either vague and misleading or detailed and specific. As a consequence, EMC's need to ensure they conduct a pre-pitch interview with the client where they must be prepared to ask clarification questions.
2. Before pitching do background research on the client and look at past events and review them critically.
3. Try to pinpoint the buying criteria when meeting the client, establish who will make the decision and what the most important criteria is, e.g. price or concept.
4. Make the pitch an expression of the design ideas for the event. Ensure that the creative concept is clear to the client. Use different media to express this, do not be afraid to use strong 'sense' elements such as touch by bring in a swatch of material to be used in the event design or specific mock-ups of props.
5. Always have a contingency plan for the pitch, as the client can change the rules, e.g. instead of 45 min, it is 20.
6. As a rule, bring a clear idea of the type of venue or venues that would suit the event, and pitch to it/them. Clients like special venues and are often impressed by unique and 'new' discoveries. Show the design of the event in relation to a venue. This can be crucial since a venue can be 'hidden' by decoration if it is a basic space or complementary to the event if it is architecturally interesting.
7. Consider the strategic value of pitching and the third quote syndrome. It can be an effective promotional exercise if the client is someone who regularly holds events and the aim is to make an impression. In this case effusive evidence of creativity and design awareness will at least impact on the client even if it does not win the contract at this time.
8. Research trends and fashion in society as well as events. Be aware of historical links or celebrations that could either be the basis of or incorporated into the design concept. Know what is 'flavour of the month' for creative concepts. If last year it was casino nights, celebrity look-alikes and ice-bars, what is it this year?
9. Think and be prepared to act creatively. Sometimes, providing you have done research on the client, extreme tactics in creative pitching can work. Agencies should not be afraid to challenge assumptions.
10. Think on a psychological level, and consider the interaction in the pitch. Work on design techniques to get favourable responses. Personal interaction between those presenting a pitch can be vital, they must be seen to have a rapport with each other, so design certain elements in the pitch that show this.
11. Rehearse the pitch.
12. Design communication techniques that will get the message across to the client. Do not clutter the message by sending in a troop of people. Keep it clean and simple.

This paper gives some insight into the pitch aspect of bidding for an event that is normally undertaken behind closed doors and is conducted confidentially between client and agency. All primary material here is supplied by narrative accounts from agency people involved in pitching and is, by nature, subjective. More detailed and objective insight into the research, design and creative discussion, is required especially the selection and rejection of ideas, the pitch preparation and pitch delivery could be further developed by, for example, participant observation and real-time tracking of the pitch process. Shadowing a team through a pitch would help detail elements of the process that are not evident here as some of the interviewees were reluctant to fully elaborate on design concepts for the actual events, a result of a combination of confidentiality but also they wanted to keep their advantages secret. There is also no doubt that an exploration of the psychology

used by agencies and clients would shed some interesting light on the different pitch strategies. Furthermore there is scope for a more international study of pitching, to compare and contrast some of the 'issues' uncovered here with other business cultures. Finally there is considerable scope for investigation into client side views of the process and the pitches they receive.

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# Event Experience: A Case Study of Differences Between the Way in Which Organizers Plan an Event Experience and the Way in Which Guests Receive the Experience

Graham Berridge

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**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:** The purpose of the paper is to deepen our understanding of the nature of the planned event experience by examining if there are differences between the way in which organizers plan an event experience and the way in which guests receive the experience. Adopting a case study approach of a single *themed* event, a comparison is made between the aims of an event organizer and the experiences of guests. A single event organizer was questioned in order to understand what event experiences they wanted to create. Guests to the event were then asked to record their own experiences across a period of time and at different stages of the event. Data were then analyzed and related back to key concepts in experiential theory in order to demonstrate the types of experiences guests had received. The results suggest that, on this occasion, there was some evidence of a disjunction between the organizer's understanding and concept of experience and those of the guests. Furthermore, the organizer showed, in some respects, a limited awareness of advanced underpinning ideas of the design of event experiences, especially the concept of theming. Similarly, and not unexpectedly, guests demonstrated a low level of experiential awareness and moderate levels of satisfaction. The essence of immersion and *wow* key objectives of the organizer were not achieved in the recording of guests' experiences.

**KEYWORDS:** Event organizer, design, experience, guest experience, themed event, satisfaction

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Limited research has addressed the nature of experience in the field of events. Yet dramatic growth in the events industry has occurred, with that growth focusing on experiential events. Also, increasing numbers of event companies are offering experiential solutions to clients. However, the ways and means of measuring the quality of experiences yielded by those events are limited and tend to be developed out of marketing theories. This includes the research from Pine and Gilmore (1999), O'Sullivan and Spangler (1998), Schmitt (2003), Shaw (2005), Stone and Young (1992), and Sundbo and Darmer (2008). As the event industry has matured and developed as a tool for not only entertainment and participation but also learning, communication, and promotion, the interest in the nature of the event experience has evolved. Therefore, it is the aim of this research to understand the experiences of individuals attending an event, thus providing insight into their social world and into how interaction and perception influence people's experiences.

Planned event experiences suggest that an event organizer can design, plan, and create experiential moments that present guests with deeply valued and memorable experiences. Furthermore, the quality of these experiences can be predicted through using event experience design models (Berridge, 2007; Rossman & Schlatter, 2003; Shedroff, 2007; Silvers, 2004). Understanding the nature of an actual experience and the relationship between the experience creator and experience receiver is complex. Several studies argue that events can be classified according to their size, type, and context (Bowdin, Allen, O'Toole, Harris, & McDonnell, 2010; Shone & Parry, 2004; Silvers, 2004; Van der Wagen, 2005), but Sharma (2007) also suggests these can be subdivided to explain them more fully and to link specific content to event type. This idea about classifying events introduces the possibility that differently classified events may elicit different experiences—feelings, emotions, and values—from guests. Event planners can, in turn, work with this knowledge to create the desired experience by designing events that have critical features to which guests will respond. For researchers in the events field, this raises three key questions of particular interest in this study. What is an experience, and how can it be created? How do guest experiences materialize/occur? Are organizers' intended outcomes experienced by participants?

### Understanding Events and Experiences

Modern event management is largely about delivery of experiences or experience opportunities. This applies irrespective of the size and type of event (Silvers, 2004), and event attendees today are sophisticated consumers. Important to the understanding of the concept of events is the appreciation that such moments and occasions are a part of either a planned or an unplanned process (the planning and management of an event) that is undertaken in order to produce this experience. The essence of academic study of events is the planned event. Getz (2007) has described planned events as the "intent to create, or at least shape, the individual and collective experience of the audience or participants" (p. 9). Thus he argues that the "core phenomenon of event study is the planned event experience and its meanings" (p. 9). Events present the visitor with unique perspectives and with an opportunity to engage with a collective experience where novelty is ensured because events are infrequent and time differentiated (Tassiopoulos, 2010). Gleick (2000) adds that events are also time precious and should be moments that are savored as special moments to appreciate. Getz (2007) provides a model on planned event experience to explain the liminal/liminoid zone and *communitas* aspects of an event. This theory is adapted from Van Gennep (1909) and Turner (1969), and it seeks to highlight the importance of *communitas* at an event. This refers to the transient state where participants are together away from everyday life, where they are there for a common goal. The liminal/liminoid zone describes experiential design with temporal and spatial elements used to create a special place. Together they suggest a vast umbrella of experience is available that covers the multitude of feelings and emotions that individuals get on a physical and cognitive level from their presence at an event. This raises the following question: How are such experiential umbrellas created?

Events are designed and created for guests to have great experiences, and as Getz (2007) suggests, “People create their own experiences within event settings” (p. 23). In explaining experiences, Schmitt (1999) indicates they are private events, the result of stimulation prompting a response that affects the entire living being. Shedroff (2007) describes the experience as “the sensation of interaction with a product, service, or event, through all of our senses, over time, and on both physical and cognitive levels. The boundaries of an experience can be expansive and include the sensorial, the symbolic, the temporal, and the meaningful” (p. 11). O’Sullivan and Spangler (1998) highlighted that there are differences between an experience and the consumption of a product or a service. This is because experience is concerned with the psychic needs of the individual. Toffler (1970) coined the term *psychologization* to describe this shift in consumer needs, and as a result the modern consumer has high expectations when it comes to experience. Consequently consumption has evolved beyond the simple purchase of products and services into the differentiated pursuit of these experiences (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982; Jensen, 1999; Schmitt, 1999; Toffler, 1970). This being the case it has fallen to the event manager to provide distinctive event experiences to participants who have experienced it all.

### **Models for Designing and Creating Experience**

The key to understanding these experiences is to consider what models and frameworks will aid in their design and creation. Silvers (2004) argues that events contain six dimensions of experience, namely “anticipation, arrival, atmosphere, appetite, activity, and amenity” (p. 6). Effective staging of these dimensions results in delivering the dream. She further proffers, “The professional event coordinator must incorporate these six dimensions into a cohesive whole, each one supporting the others, each integrated into a progressive experience” (p. 6).

Another idea suggests that developing the experience requires a triangular relationship between infusers, enhancers, and makers of experience (O’Sullivan & Spangler, 1998). Infusers are “manufacturers who infuse their products with experiences for marketability,” enhancers are “service providers who use experience to heighten the satisfaction level of participants or to differentiate their service from competitors,” and makers are “service providers who create experiences as the central core of their service” (O’Sullivan & Spangler, 1998, p. 5). While the design and creation of events can apply to each of these, it is perhaps most relevant that events are aligned to the concept of makers (i.e., those concerned with creating lived experiences). Event organizers are ultimately those charged with designing and creating the event experience, and as such it is helpful to be able to draw upon a selection of tools and models to assist this process.

Falassi’s (1987) concept of valorization is a tool the organizer may adopt. It enables the organizer to visualize how the designed experience will make guests aware that they are entering a space/time that has been designed for a special purpose. Through valorization, guests become more likely to engage with their surroundings and become absorbed in the event. Understanding and applying the model in the early conceptual stages enables an organizer to embed this awareness within the event design. Rossman considers how the use of imagined interactions (mental imagery) (1993) and symbolic interaction (2003) can enable environments to be configured for leisure experiences. The former draws upon memory and mental projection of potential social interactions as a tool for working through the different stages of a future experience, a bit like a storyboard maps out the different shoots required to create a movie. The latter, drawing upon symbolic interaction theory (Blumer, 1969; Denzin, 1978), identifies six key elements that influence participating individuals’ interactions in an environment: the people interacting, the physical setting, social objects that are acted on in the setting, rules that guide interaction, existing relationships people bring to the setting, and the animation of time progression. These six influence all experiences, and by understanding how to configure them uniquely, the event programmer or organizer can create the desired experience.

This is especially useful as different guests may want to experience different things for different reasons, and this adds to the variability of experience (Getz, 2007). Such variability works in two different ways, the cognitive and affective dimensions of experience. Getz (2007) states “the *cognitive* dimension of experience refers to awareness, perception, memory, learning, judgment, and understanding whereas the *affective* dimension of experience concerns feelings and emotions, preferences and values” (p. 171). Events that focus on creating cognitive dimensions of experience aim to achieve positive learning outcomes, whereas events that have adopted the affective dimension of experience hope to create a fun atmosphere where pleasure and sharing emotions become the goal for success. It is therefore important for the event organizer to understand what experiences they want to create, a cognitive or an affective one. Affective dimensions create an enjoyable atmosphere, where the goal is to have fun by becoming absorbed in the event experience and by escaping from reality. This tends to work best with special events, as there is usually a high level of emotional involvement.

A further model that has become popular for critical insight into the experience process is the Experience Realm Model (Pine & Gilmore, 1999). This model suggests that surprise is an important element and that an organizer must therefore seek to stage the unexpected. A factor in designing this is the extent to which the experience is active or passive. The model works thusly: Horizontal and vertical axes depict the dimensions of how guests may experience an event. The horizontal axis depicts two ends of a spectrum including passive and active participation. The vertical axis depicts two ends of a spectrum including absorption and immersion. Within a central ring that encircles the intersecting axes are the four realms of an experience that include entertainment, educational, escapist, and aesthetic. This model clearly denotes the different ways guests can engage with and experience events. When used in conjunction with the theory on cognitive and affective dimensions of experience (Getz, 2007) discussed earlier, it presents a further platform for designing and analyzing event experiences. Goldblatt (1997) agrees, arguing that “to provide more than just a passive viewing experience, the event designer must create an environment that allows the guests to participate, to be actors in the decorators dream world” (p. 86). Collectively and individually these principles can be applied while conceptualizing, designing, and planning the various stages of an event, and they will provide the event organizer with a basis for creating a memorable event experience.

A further way of building these experiential platforms is to focus on the experiential value promise (EVP), which is the specific value and experience that the guest can expect from the event (Schmitt, 2003). Consideration of the types of experiences that are to be contained within the event is a vital part of the EVP approach because guests will have a greater level of satisfactory experience if their expectations are met or exceeded. The types of experiences that need to be discussed are sensory, affective, cognitive, physical, and behavioral. Because events allow for multiple experiences, the organizer needs to address how such multisensory experiences will be designed and created. “Many successful projects employ experiential hybrids that produce several experiences. Management should strategically strive to create holistic experiences that possess, at the same time the possibility of sense, feel, think, act, and relate qualities” (Schmitt, 2003, p. 106).

At this point, the concept of theming, where appropriate, becomes highly relevant to creating the desired sensory experiences. The recognition of theme here provides a key to creating experiences. Nelson (2009) adroitly articulates how important such theming is, especially to an entertainment event. Theming a space results in it being layered with amenities (props) that, in turn, give nonverbal cues to the audience about the event. Such props must be utilized so they do not give negative cues to the guests. Successful treatment of props should enhance the audience’s experience, not detract from it. Specifically in a study of a casino setting, Mayer and Johnson (2003) noted that the atmospherics in the



setting relied on floor layout and theme as critically important design factors. Organizers providing appropriate memorabilia, allowing for some customization for individuals, and providing for characters to stay within and perform to an appropriate form have a greater chance of attaining satisfactory guest experiences.

Having suggested that several models may help experience design, it is naturally appropriate to reflect on the types of experiences people subsequently receive. A common method for this is to measure levels of satisfaction among guests. Satisfaction becomes important because “it is certainly possible that events satisfy those in attendance at one level, but at the same time fail to achieve the organizers intended experiences” (Getz, 2007, p. 171). Participants may view the event experience as a success, but they may not have experienced the cultural, educational, or social integration that the organizer hoped to achieve. Getz adds, “It is also quite possible that events are determined to be successful in terms of desired outcomes, but the experiences of guests are unsatisfactory, even negative” (p. 171). Focusing upon this variability of satisfaction, Shone and Parry (2004) discuss a model by Love and Crompton (as cited in O’Neill et al., 1999) that assesses the visitor’s perception of the experience by analyzing satisfaction or dissatisfaction to ascertain the level of positive perception—the satisfaction cues being positive emotional states together with satisfactory service.

The argument asserts that it is important to look at participants’ levels of satisfaction and dissatisfaction to ascertain their perceptions experience. This is illustrated on a visitors’ experience chart (Figure 1), which depicts guests’ levels of positive perception compared against the satisfaction or dissatisfaction they feel at the event. It denotes that, if at a point in the event a participant has felt dissatisfaction beyond 45%, there is little chance of them feeling satisfied at the event even if the rest of the experience is satisfactory. It therefore does not matter how satisfied you were; the dissatisfaction has created an insurmountable negative effect. Csikszentmihalyi (1990) states that as long as we respond predictably to what feels good and what feels bad, it is easy for others to exploit our preferences. In designing and creating positive satisfactory event experiences, it has been suggested that the Experience Factor Model could be used, as it is designed to eliminate negative cues (Ralston, Ellis, Compton, & Lee, 2006). The model works by combining experiential and service quality elements such as thematic décor and interaction, targeted impressions, reduction of negative cues, and customization and is based around the SERVQUAL model (Parasuraman, Berry, & Zeithaml, 1988). It is used to measure the differences between the participants’ expectations and perceptions of the event via five dimensions of analysis: assurance, empathy, responsiveness, reliability, and tangibles. Notably it fails to recognize the intangibles of an event that, for example, Tassiopoulos (2010) regards as the most important for the atmosphere at an event. Furneaux (2006) believes the value of SERVQUAL is that it represents service quality, explained as the discrepancy between a customer’s expectations for a service offering and the customer’s perceptions of the service received.

Further recognition of how satisfaction is a useful concept comes from Bowdin, Allen, O’Toole, Harris, and McDonnell (2006), who state, “Event satisfaction is related to perceived service quality, but it is experience dependent. Satisfaction can be measured, only among existing visitors to the event” (p. 198). Thus the Experience Factor Model can be applied to events in order to create the right balance of experience and service elements, to create positive cues for the attendees, and to reduce negative cues, thus creating a positive overall experience for the attendees. In good event design, the event organizer should analyze the service quality and experiential elements to be included in the event, identify the experience factors to be included, and then begin the process of creating the event around them.



Guest perception of Experience

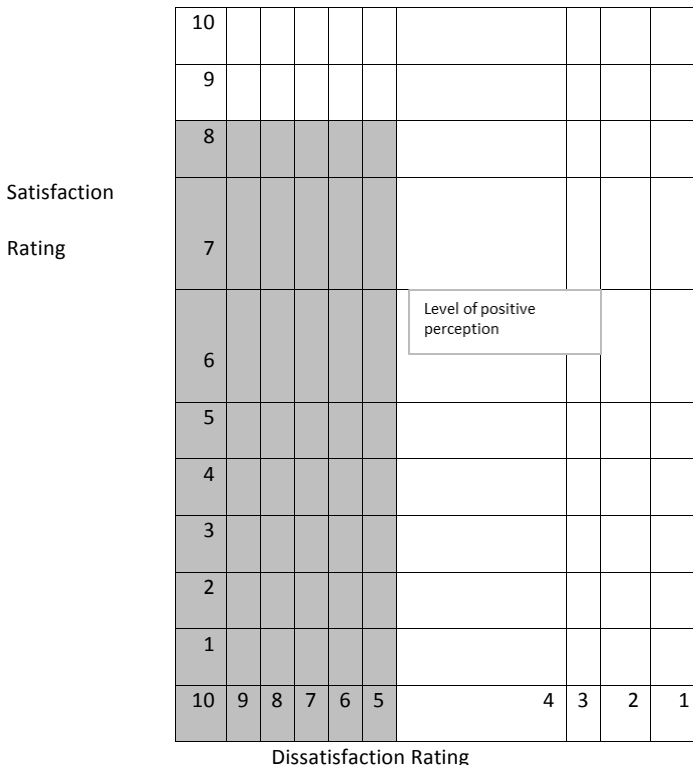


Figure 1. Perception of Experience. Adapted from Shone & Perry (2004) to include rating scales of 1–10 to highlight relationship.

Method

One aim of the current research project was to understand the experiences of individuals attending a themed entertainment event. To accomplish this, a two-pronged qualitative data collection process was used in a natural setting that embraced a definitional approach to research where those engaging with the experience identified attributes of the experience that characterize it (Jackson & Burton, 1999). These characteristics of experience are described by Jackson and Burton as “feelings of enjoyment, intense involvement, and separation or escape from people’s everyday routines [that] were commonly associated with experiences more likely to be construed as leisure” (p. 236). This was blended with the model of Experiential Sampling Method (ESM) developed by Larson and Csikszentmihalyi (1983). In this particular case, a modified version of it employed by Samdahl (1987) was used as it incorporated the examination of the experiential properties of the engagement.

Data collection consisted of two parts. A semistructured interview was conducted with the event organizer to determine the organizer’s intentions with respect to guest experiences. The interview was conducted 2 weeks prior to the event taking place and was conducted at the organizer’s office and was recorded via a digital recording device. Complementing this was an experience sampling survey that recorded the experiences of five guests at the event at five common event stages over the course of the event. The five stages of the event studied were pre-event, 10 minutes after arrival, first entertainment segment, second entertainment segment, and final reflection. The questionnaire administered to the

selected guests consisted of both open and closed questions designed to ascertain each guest's current experience at the five different stages of the event. Guests were required to handwrite their responses.

Convenience sampling was used to select the sample of guests. Five guests who were known to be attending the event from the club's list of members were contacted and asked to take part in the research. Once each subject agreed to participate, all participants in the research were given a short written briefing about the research protocol prior to the event date and then were given a repeat verbal briefing prior to their arrival.

Survey questions were based on previous research by Samdahl (1987), Samdahl and Kleiber (1988), and Burke and Franzoi (1988). Open-ended questions sought to obtain authentic understanding of guest experiences, and closed-ended questions were designed to facilitate understanding of guest perceptions of physical and emotional states. The closed-ended questions asked respondents to rate their experiences at specific moments using a rating scale of 1–10 with 10 being the highest rating. In addition to experiencing quality, feelings of physical fatigue, mental fatigue, and discomfort were also measured using a 5-point Likert scale that ranged from *none at all* to *very much*. The questionnaires were grouped into five sections based on the principles of ESM to cover the following stages of the event.

1. **Pre-event.** The participant's expectations and motivations for attending the event were investigated.
2. **10 minutes after arrival.** This line of inquiry examined the participant's initial reactions and perceptions of the event and inquired if there was an immediately visible *wow* factor.
3. **After the first recognized entertainment slot.** These questions examined the levels of involvement and absorption in the atmosphere and theme.
4. **After the second entertainment slot.** Examined the same phenomena as in stage 3, plus examined if fatigue affected their experience.
5. **Post event evaluation.** These questions examined each participant's overall experience at the event and their personal evaluation of that experience.

The questionnaires were administered at the same time to each participant throughout the event.

### **Selection of the Event**

Essential criteria for selecting an event were that the event should have a theme, that the event should have some form of entertainment, that it would be possible to divide the experiences into discreet stages, and that respondents would be able to follow the research method being used. Other considerations included whether the event was a private or a public event, had a low or a high budget, and was free or cost paying. To optimize selection based on these criteria, a freelance event organizer in the United Kingdom was approached and agreed to take part in the research. That organizer was in the process of designing a themed event for a private sports and health club and had been contacted by the client directly. In addition to meeting the criteria specified, this event was selected because it suggested a range of potential experiences or measurement and the access to guests would be controllable as they would all be members of the club.

### **Theme and Setting**

A popular thematic concept based around the design idea of a Casino Royale had been selected for the event, and it was to be held within the client's premises. This consisted of a small function hall with a capacity of 150 and an adjoining bar/café area. The budget for the event was under £1000 (\$1,500), and the cost of entry was £10 (\$15). Tickets were purchasable in advance and only available via the club. Thus the event can be classified as

a small local private event that has a low–medium level of complexity and a relatively low level of uncertainty (Berridge, 2007).

### Analysis

The data collected through interview and ESM were analyzed independently of each other and then drawn together in the conclusion for comparisons between organizer objectives and guest experiences. Drawing upon the literature, a number of significant points emerged that provided a set of key themes into which the organizer’s responses were grouped. The nature of special event and entertainment experiences, as characterized by several models cited earlier, indicated that the main considerations for an entertainment event organizer would revolve around the following themes:

- to achieve immersion and absorption via an integrated thematic event,
- to make guest interactions/participation possible in a designed environment,
- to create a *wow* factor,
- to offer a fun atmosphere and exciting guest engagement (affective dimension),
- to enable feelings of enjoyment and happiness, and
- to offer a multisensory experience (EVP).

The interview was transcribed, then analyzed manually for content and keywords that related to the six themes above. A simple + or – sign was used to indicate the strength to which any view expressed related to these themes (Veal, 2011). Data from the ESM was both descriptive and explanatory and was analyzed in terms of the key satisfactory ratings for the event itself, the passage of time rating, and discomfort rating. These scores were mapped onto charts to show each rating across the event’s stages through time. Additionally the written responses to open questions were evaluated in the same way as the organizer’s interview so that key themes could be compared between the two.

## Results

### Organizer Interview

The interview with the organizer revealed that the objectives were to create a themed evening, to have an element of a “wow factor, to be fun, to be communal, to provide a sophisticated event, to provide guests with enjoyment and happiness.” These *determinants* of experience helped shape the design of the event. Initially the discussion centered on why a themed event was chosen, and the organizer explained that “themed events are more fun and exciting because it becomes a separate world that you can live in for the night.” Citing previous events, the organizer noted how hard it was to sometimes create the right environment where people would interact with the setting. In planning meetings it was stated, “We try to come up with new ideas that are fun and exciting and that wouldn’t be too dated.” Previously a Bugsy Malone 20s night had featured some casino props and croupiers greeting guests when they arrived. It had received good feedback, so the idea was to take that a step further. The problem though was that a “strict themed dress code attracted as many complaints as praises,” and equally so did a relaxed code. Some people want to do the whole “dressing up thing,” but others don’t. This time the theme of Casino plus Bond was used to suggest dressing up rather than dictate it. The theme selected was described as one that would be “encapsulating the night.” There is here evidence of recognition of an *immersion* (Pine & Gilmore, 1999) experience being sought with the aim to achieve this through the use of a popular theme, Casino Royale, that would in turn provide a special moment (a *wow* factor). It was noted that the Royale affix was included to add some luster to the title by associating it with the James Bond film of that name, although it was readily acknowledged that no Bond elements would be specifically included in the event. However, the Casino theme would be provided by linking together a series of component features that establish a basis for a multisensory experience: casino décor, gambling products,

entertainment in the form of a jazz band and dancers, lighting effects, food and beverage, and a DJ.

In describing the themed environment and setting, the organizer indicated that when guests arrived, they would immediately see the overall theme in the main hall and they would be engaged within that by the products, props, and activities. These were explained as roulette, poker, and blackjack tables with mood lamps on them and staff professionally dressed as croupiers and waitresses. Three Las Vegas girls would be on hand to greet each guest, and they would also be performing dance routines during the evening. The layout of the venue would be thus: gaming tables in the middle, chairs around each one, and then plenty of room for other guests to watch the action and to circulate. Tables would be set directly facing the stage, which was a raised platform of about 4 feet. Occupying the stage in one corner would be a jazz band playing background mood music. Positioned at each corner of the venue would be fake flame cannons to give a glow to the room, but there would be not much more in terms of added décor. The bar area was attached to the venue in a separate but connected room.

It was mentioned that financial constraints meant some setting features, such as red carpet entrance, fake paparazzi, and more stylish décor, could not be included. The point was also made that “the night is not about any one, singular thing that stands out to a person, what is supposed to stand out is the overall experience, so they do not think about the world they’re in.” This is an interesting comment because it illustrates a belief that guests will take the overall experience on offer and will not focus on separate components. But it appears to be limited in foresight because the space itself will not have any decorative additions to disguise the interior. This is an overreliance on the symbols and meaning of the theme (Peirce, 1982) and the actions and activities associated with a casino. It therefore requires the guests to transcend this décor limitation, and as I have noted elsewhere (Berridge, 2007) when discussing the themed event, if the created environment is not sufficiently absorbing, then there will be a limitation of experience as guests will be neither fully immersed nor fully absorbed. When the organizer was pressed further on this idea that the whole becomes more important, there was no immediate insight displayed into the multidimensional nature of experience (Botterill & Crompton, 1996; Hull, Michale, Walker, & Roggerbuck, 1996; Lee, Dattilo, & Howard, 1994; Li, 2000) nor a recognition that experiences were multifaceted as well (Ooi, 2005; Rossman & Schlatter, 2003). The impression was left that the theme name and symbols of it alone would create the necessary experience.

After their initial arrival, the organizer expected guests to gamble, be entertained by the jazz band, gamble again, and watch dancers. The casino elements would then be removed before the DJ closed the night out. This is almost like creating two events from one, as all features of the casino would be removed (or displaced) to enable guests to dance. In explaining the perceived needs and wants of the guests, it was commented that there would be “no entertainment after twelve o’clock ... from twelve o’clock on to two we do not have any entertainment, because at that stage everyone is drinking; we just have the DJ, and people just want to dance and do what they do at clubs.” This suggests a number of things, including a gap in knowledge or articulation of the organizer when designing the experience because they are actually segmenting the experience in such a way as to create a multivariate and a multisensory element by stopping entertainment at midnight, but this was not necessarily understood that way. It should be noted here that the organizer also clearly saw *entertainment* as being a show, performance activity, or act, but did not regard the DJ as entertainment. In this program structure, there is nevertheless a sense of progression of economic value (Pine & Gilmore, 1999) being applied (albeit unconsciously) and the movement of guests through the process of the staged experience and their encounters with commodities, goods, services, experiences, and transformations.

In a further discussion on the themed ideas for the event, a contradiction became apparent. It was stated that the “casino will provide the most memorable experience.” So once again the design of the evening seems to be about creating a series of experience moments, but the organizer is uncertain in whether these contribute to a variety and a

variability of experience or simply to the whole. Each time the discussion is taken back to the feeling that the *whole* is what matters but without key elements being cited that would make this *whole* complete. What did remain a constant throughout the interview was the belief that guests would be entering a planned environment that would provide escapism and immersion. Guests would be in “the environment and encapsulated in the fake world that we’ve created, it’s the casino tables that will stand out the most to people.” This was a reliance on the objects and symbols of Casino to create that world, and it was almost as if the organizer believed this will happen without any input other than a few casino products.

### Experience Sampling of Guests: Rating Scores

The quality ratings of immediate experiences of guests at different stages of the event were plotted over the course of the event, leading to an overall final rating score (Figure 2). The average rating for the event was 7.2, which suggests some satisfaction success for the organizer but falls short of truly exceptional experience. The shape and variability of the experiential curve shows some variance throughout the event among the five guests, indicating there was a different experience quality at different stages. Guests A, B, and E expressed a drop in experience from the initial arrival to the first experience stage, and this rating subsequently remained static through the second experience stage, suggesting that absorption into the ambience and environment was only partially successful after arrival and that the entertainment was possibly lacking in impact. In fact Guests C and E showed little variation in rating from initial impact to overall rating. There were two significant fluctuations in experience: Guest B had the most variability in experience with a series of rises and falls, albeit at a high rating level between 7 and 9, and ultimately gave the same overall rating as they had given on arrival. In contrast, Guest A gave a low rating to begin with. Then the rating fell even further during the event and then leapt 4 points to give an overall rating of 7 at the end. Only Guest D felt the two experience stages were worthy of an improved rating compared to their initial response. These low initial ratings can be seen as a byproduct of limited initial décor or theme setting and the failure of the greeting of guests feature suggested by the organizer. Neither staging decision seems to have captivated everyone.

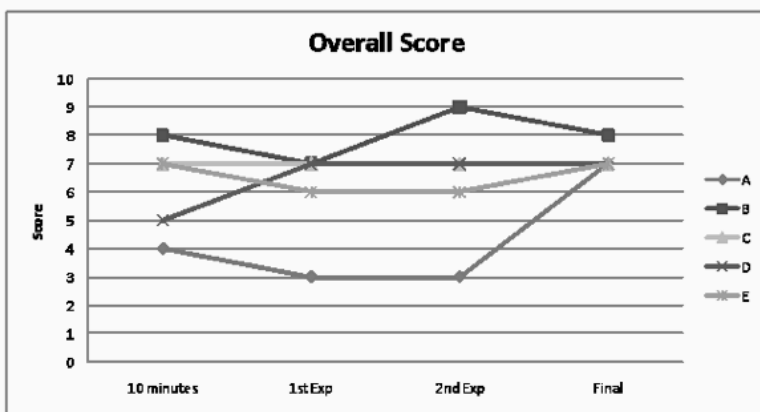


Figure 2. Overall Score With Rating at Each Experience Stage

The graph in Figure 2 illustrates that the organizer's desire to create an initial *wow* moment failed with two rating scores at 5 or below. The results suggest, to a degree, some consistency of experience through the time period of the event with only two guests showing more than a single point increase in ratings between specific stages. The entertainment section did not produce any great leaps in ratings; in fact some ratings fell from those at entry. Once the entertainment had finished and the DJ had started, one guest perceived a drop in quality of experience and two saw an improvement.

Scores for the guests' experience of time passing are plotted in Figure 3. The lower the rating, the slower was the perception of the passage of time. Across the range of an experience, guests could feel that time was passing quickly for enjoyable and immersive/escapist experiences or slowly for nonimmersive/nonescapist experiences. Guest E showed a constant downward trend in this respect, and in fact Guests A and C also showed slight reductions. However, Guests B and D felt the opposite and felt time went more quickly as the event progressed. This is a perception issue and does not always chime with other observations. Figure 3 illustrates that there was variation in perception among the guests, most markedly for Guests B and E, and suggests therefore that at different moments within the event there were different perceptions of time in relation to the entertainment and activities. The average time passing rating is just over 5, suggesting that almost half of this event was perceived to be going slowly, dragging along and to not be a fully immersive encounter.

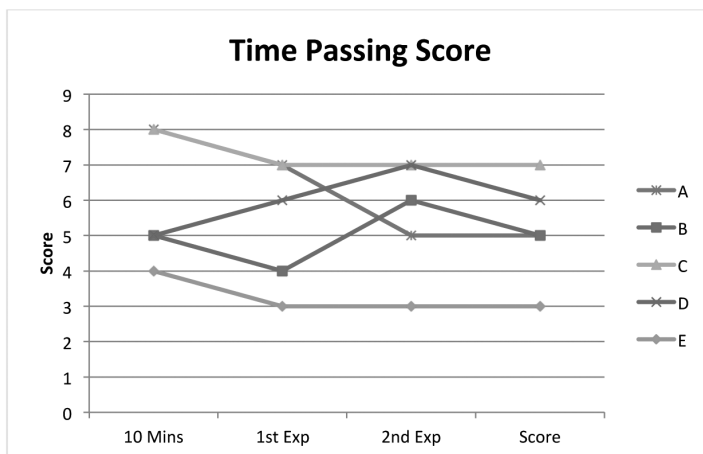
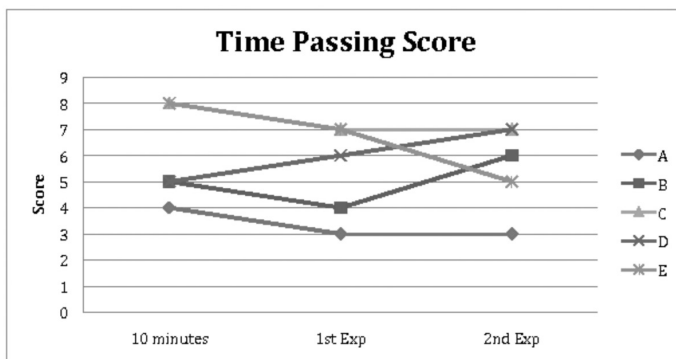


Figure 3. Time Passing Scores

A factor in experiential outcomes is the level of fatigue and discomfort displayed by the guest, both of which can be influenced by, for example, progressive active participation and food and beverage consumption. The last comparison is in Table 1, showing fatigue and discomfort ratings. What are striking about the responses to this factor are the very limited range of perceptions noted and the limited range of variance in perception from one period to the next. Statistically across the three rating factors, there were 45 possibilities for discomfort ratings to change; however, a change, either upward or downward, occurred on only 10 occasions, so under 25% of the time. The recurring perception ratings recorded were either *none* or *somewhat*, with only one person stating an alternative outside of these and that was in terms of feeling very mentally fatigued prior to the event. It is possible to argue that a rating of *somewhat* indicates a degree of significance, and out of 60 overall possible ratings, *somewhat* was used 26 times, well under 50%. But 16 of these are from a single guest who had a single uniform perception of discomfort throughout. The conclusion here is that there was limited variation in fatigue and discomfort and that no significant elements within the event contributed to these feelings. Ultimately this suggests that there were no real high or low points.

All guests were asked to write comments on their experience, and in a way not dissimilar to the organizer, some displayed limited articulation of experience factors. Guest A stated in the pre-event questionnaire they were not expecting to have a good experience at the event and “expected to be disappointed,” which might account for their initial fatigue rating of *very much* as documented in Table 1. This was also reflected in the low score of 4 for how they rated the event and 4 for how slow time was passing. The guest described the experience at that time as “boring and dull.” However, the overall score that the guest gave the event was relatively high, a 7. This was reflected in the comment, “Enjoyed the event when the entertainment had finished and it went back to mainstream music and a dance floor.” In this case, we see evidence that perhaps the limitations of the theming and layout created a negative impact, or certainly that they reinforced negative pre-event perceptions.

### Individual Guest Comments

Guest B started off enjoying the event, but was initially physically fatigued. Enjoyment lessened during the first stage of the experience but was very high during the second stage when physical and mental fatigue had dissipated. Guest B’s perception of the passage of time matched their enjoyment and was relatively high during the stage when the second entertainment occurred. The comments made matched their experience rating, for as in the pre-event questionnaire, they were expecting the event to be “fun and light hearted.” Guest B recorded the first entertainment as being “OK” but enjoyed the band. This guest documented the most memorable experience as the casino tables, which was quite a rare comment that recognized the props used.

Guest C’s scores showed that they felt a consistent level of enjoyment throughout the night, that time passed consistently, and that they felt no impact physically or mentally. Guest C expected the event to be “exciting, entertaining, and amusing.” They thought the event was “good fun” when completing the questionnaire in the 10 minutes after arrival stage of the program. The most memorable experience was “being with friends,” not any of the entertainment, and this reflected Guest C’s scores for the event and the consistency of time passing. This guest also commented that the part they most enjoyed was when the casino was over and the DJ started.

Guest D also expected the event to be “good fun.” Initially liking the theme, this guest subsequently thought there was a *wow* factor, as they thought “the hall looked a lot nicer” than it usually did. This guest also enjoyed the entertainment and felt time passed more quickly as the event progressed. They “enjoyed the band” and subsequently rated that part of the night as a 9. It is also worth noting that the answers to the question asking for a clear characterization of feelings showed that Guest D was very happy, energetic, satisfied, and entertained. For Guest D, the most enjoyable parts of the event were the casino tables and the drink offers. So in practice, the casino tables achieved a purpose for this guest and represented what we might call the “core” theme.

**Table 1***Fatigue Ratings*

<b>Physical Fatigue</b>					
<b>Event Stages</b>	<b>Guest</b>				
	A	B	C	D	E
Pre-event	None	Somewhat	None	Somewhat	None
10 minutes	None	Somewhat	None	Somewhat	None
1st Exp	Somewhat	Somewhat	None	Somewhat	None
2nd Exp	Somewhat	None	Somewhat	Somewhat	Somewhat

<b>Mental Fatigue</b>					
<b>Event Stages</b>	<b>Guest</b>				
	A	B	C	D	E
Pre-event	Very Much	None	None	Somewhat	None
10 minutes	None	None	None	Somewhat	None
1st Exp	Somewhat	Somewhat	None	Somewhat	None
2nd Exp	Somewhat	None	None	Somewhat	None

<b>Physical Discomfort</b>					
<b>Event Stages</b>	<b>Guest</b>				
	A	B	C	D	E
Pre-event	Somewhat	None	None	Somewhat	None
10 minutes	None	None	None	Somewhat	None
1st Exp	Somewhat	None	None	Somewhat	None
2nd Exp	Somewhat	None	None	Somewhat	Somewhat

Last, Guest E also expected the event to be good. Initially this guest liked the theme and the atmosphere, saying, “Fake flame lights made the atmosphere.” However, they did not enjoy the entertainment but did not express why, other than saying it was “dull” and that they wanted to “carry on playing.” As a consequence, Guest E perceived that time passed progressively slower throughout the event as they began to feel physical discomfort and fatigue. Still, in the overall rating, it is possible to say that Guest E’s expectations were met, up to a point, and the most memorable experience was the décor and lighting, which “created a warm feel,” and the casino tables, which were fun to play on.

### **Conclusion**

This paper set out to research how a single event organizer designed an event experience and then compared the results obtained as determined by how guests rated the subsequent experience. As outlined in the introduction there are an increasing number of event companies and individuals who specialize in creating experiential events. The case here is not meant to offer conclusive evidence other than a snapshot of one event, one group of guests. However, if these findings were to be replicated, there would be a cause



for concern about the deeper level of understanding of the nature of event experiences and the extent to which adequate theming was applied by the organizer for a self-styled *themed* event. While some strong correlations between process and outcome exist, it is apparent that the organizer had only a fundamental grasp of some experiential concepts and strategies and did not appear to have any detailed insight into the creative requirements of thematic staging. Some programming principles were in evidence, and there was a general awareness of the need to create a multisensory experience from an entertainment perspective if not from an experiential one. Table 2 shows a comparison between organizer objectives, as linked to key literature themes, and the extent to which these were achieved based on guest responses. The final column is a rating factor subjectively applied by the researcher to these comparisons to illustrate the extent to which each objective was met. The genesis of these ratings is implications of the literature review, previously completed research studies, and the researcher's experience with event design and staging.

**Table 2**

*Evaluative Rating of Organizers Achievement of Objectives in Relation to Overall Analysis of Guests' Experiences*

	<b>Organizer Objectives</b>	<b>Guests' Experiences</b>	<b>Rating Factor to Which Objective Was Met Scored Out of 10</b>
1	To achieve immersion and absorption via an integrated thematic event	Varying low/scores/comments for range of experiences	4
2	To make guest interactions/participation possible in a designed environment	Uncertain, with some variations	5
3	To create a "wow" factor	Disappointing and not recognized	3
4	To offer a fun atmosphere and exciting guest engagement (affective dimension)	Recognized by nearly all	8
5	To enable feelings of enjoyment and happiness	Variable feelings, some parts were enjoyed more than others	6
6	To offer a multisensory experience (EVP)	Some awareness was evident but also conflict between each element that created disappointment	6

These data demonstrate that there was limited effective application in the design of key parts of the experience and that too many of the key objectives were not fully nor successfully achieved. While "fun and enjoyment" ratings were reasonably high, other objective ratings were low. While budget played a factor in this, the ability to be creative around the chosen theme was only mildly evident. Indeed one of the key thematic objectives the organizer wanted to achieve was the *wow* factor. From data collected

this was limited with one guest specifically recording “no wow factor.” As previously stated, the organizer also wanted to achieve immersion. This can also be deemed largely unsuccessful because of the varying scores given for the different experiences throughout the event and because for some guests time passed slowly over the course of the event. One of the reasons immersion was perhaps not created is due to the lack of thematic décor beyond the obvious. This would cause a barrier to full immersion because association with the theme was not dominant within the event environment and it was too easy for opposing visual clues to appear.

But this does not mean that guests could not relate to the theme or enjoy it. Some successful synergies can be drawn between the organizer’s planning and actual experience. The organizer made reference to the fact that there would be no entertainment after 12 o’clock, as people would just want to dance. The organizer did, in this respect, have some understanding of what some guests wanted and understood how to meet that particular participative need. Utilizing Shone and Parry’s (2004) visitor experience chart indicates that while some were quite dissatisfied at the start of the event (due in part to their low expectations) they could still reach an acceptable overall satisfaction at the event, as shown by their relatively acceptable overall event experience scores. Analysis of these findings on Pine and Gilmore’s (1999) realm of experience graph suggests that the guests were satisfied at an entertainment level on a passive participation basis. Some were also satisfied on a moderate active participation level while playing the games, and some were indeed absorbed at some points during the evening.

Ultimately it has to be concluded that the organizer did not achieve the main desired outcomes consistently for all guests. This, it could be argued, highlights how difficult it is to achieve such for guests where multiple variations of expectation and experience are in evidence within a multiphasic, multisensory event environment. This research did not set out to evaluate a full cognitive dimension of experience, but it did seek to record examples of guests’ perceptions at various stages of an event. Collectively these perceptions do not show significant rise and fall, and in fact remain fairly constant. But the relatively low rating for perceptions of time passing implies a limited success for the organizer who, for a themed immersive experience, would have expected to have achieved a much higher score on this dimension to be successful. Achievement of valorization (Falassi, 1987) among guests is not convincing, hinting at failure on the part of the organizer to fully perceive the design requirements needed for this to occur. There is also limited evidence that the organizer utilized or was aware of any tools or models that would have enabled a better experience to be created. The recorded written responses of guests are at a basic level and highlight the difficulty in getting rich data on feelings and perceptions of experience over the passage of time. What emerges, however, is a sense that the experience satisfied the guests at a partial level of affective dimension of experience where it was concerned with experiencing a fun atmosphere and feelings of pleasure and enjoyment. This case study reaffirms that, when designing and creating themed events, event organizers need to be more conversant with the nature and complexity of experience, with the tools to design and create that experience, through awareness of the myriad factors that influence experience, and, significantly, through the use of meaningful components in the themed experience that can enhance it out of the ordinary and differentiate it from other similar offerings (Pine & Gilmore, 1999).

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## THE GRAN FONDO AND SPORTIVE EXPERIENCE: AN EXPLORATORY LOOK AT CYCLISTS' EXPERIENCES AND PROFESSIONAL EVENT STAGING

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There has recently been a significant upsurge in popularity in cycling with not only increased participation evident but also new participants taking up cycling, especially in the UK, parts of Europe, US, and Australia. The branch of cycling that has witnessed the largest growth, in both numbers of events and participants, is the “gran fondo” or “sportive” cycle event. However, very little is known about either the organization of these events or the cultural experiences of cyclists participating in them. The focus of this article is to provide an exploratory narrative of the characteristics of a gran fondo or sportive, explored via a participant observation approach and interpreted through the use of experience theory. Drawing upon the exploratory stage of a larger “experiential ethnography” of cyclists at these types of events, the article presents observation findings from 12 event days to identify key characteristics of these events as experienced by participants. These are understood and contextualized within a discussion around the nature and concept of event experiences and related to the need for professional event organizers to identify experience components by applying models of experience within a management framework.

Key words: Gran fondo; Sportive; Cycle events; Event experience; Event management

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### Introduction and Background

Gran fondo or sportive cycling is viewed within the wider overlapping and interlinking concepts of bicycle tourism and sports tourism where it is embraced within the delimiting concepts of leisure and recreation. Cycling’s relationship with tourism is well documented, incorporating organized events and the travel to participate in them (Lamont & Buultjens, 2011). From a research perspective,

discussing the definition of bicycle tourism is complicated by the range and variability of definitions used by researchers and this in turn has complicated the existence of a comparable body of knowledge on the subject (Lamont, 2009). Recognizing that different “definitions” may be appropriate for different circumstances, Lamont has nevertheless sought to develop a new technical definition for bicycle tourism that would allow for more consistent data on cycling, which is described as:

Trips involving a minimum distance of 40 kilometres from a person's home and an overnight stay (for overnight trips), or trips involving a minimum non-cycling round trip component of 50 kilometres and a minimum four hour period away from home (for day trips) of which cycling, involving active participation or passive observation, for holiday, recreation, leisure and/or competition, is the main purpose for that trip. Participation in cycling may include attendance at events organised for commercial gain and/or charity (competitive and non-competitive), as well as independently organised cycling. (p. 20)

Gran fondo or sportive events are essentially noncompetitive, mass start events that offer a "challenge" to the participant based on terrain, time, and distance. They fit within the segments of cycle tourism termed "participatory events" that are characterized as being commercially organized, noncompetitive events embracing a single day or multiday and have profit or charitable objectives (Lamont & Buultjens, 2011). They are similar to mass participation marathons or runs, and although to some they are a "race," in which they can set a time they can compare with their age-group participants or all comers in the event, they are not technically competitive races (Sidwells, 2011). Their emergence is attributed to the running of the first ever French "cyclosportive," the Marmotte in 1982 (Spinney, 2006). Based on a route of 174 km, the Marmotte takes cyclists over some of the most famous cols of the Tour De France and it enables cycle tourists the chance to participate in a planned ride covering the same terrain that professional cyclists follow, and is a combination of what Gibson (2005) refers to as active sports tourism and nostalgia, combining participation with an element of vicarious adoration. Such events are reflective of a challenge culture that is not dissimilar to that discussed in the analysis of extreme and lifestyle sports where groups of individuals are undertaking more and more physically extreme activities that differentiate them from the mainstream cultural experience (Wheaton, 2000). Research on such event experiences lacks any real attempt to employ a multidisciplinary approach that considers, at the outset, the experiences to be multidimensional and multiphasic and to consequently develop a methodological mix that would give deeper meaning and insight into these variable components within

experiences (Gibson, 2004, 2005). The sharing of an experience with similarly inclined participants is a feature of events, and researchers need to develop a deeper understanding of why sport tourism experiences are enjoyable and likely to be repeated (Gibson, 2005; Weed, 2004, 2008). The implication is clear; if we can understand in more depth the nature of the active experience, then we can understand how better to plan and manage it.

#### Planning and Staging Event Experiences

The idea of experiences playing a central role is a key feature of modern society's choice with people seeking absorbing and immersive experiences (O'Sullivan & Spangler, 1998; Pine & Gilmore, 1999). Experiences have evolved to meet people's inner or psychic needs, with planners of experience taking great effort to create them (Ting-Yueh & Shun-Ching, 2010). This idea of creating experiences is central to the practice of event management, and the production and management of experiences has attracted academic study (Jensen, 1999; Morgan, 2010; Schmitt, 1999), with specific focus considering the creation of experience as a business and innovation (Sundbo & Darmer, 2008); the role of customers in the formation of experience (Pralhad & Ramaswamy, 2004); and the evaluation and analysis of experience (Berridge, 2007; Gilhepsy & Harris, 2010).

The actions of most interest to the study of event management as a profession are therefore those planned events that provide for cultural, leisure, and tourism experiences and in doing so achieve specific experience outcomes (Getz, 2012). The intended outcome of such events, the experiences of those attending/participating, is the result of planned deliberation on the part of the event organizer (Berridge, 2012b). Within leisure and tourism, organizations and individuals engage in staging experiences for their customers (Morgan, 2010). This "experience industry" consists of private businesses, government agencies, and not-for-profit organizations, all of whom have a mission to stage encounters that produce engaging experiences for participants (Gilmore & Pine, 2002). The use of the word staging for such event experiences has multiple meanings, ranging from a narrow to an all-inclusive interpretation that considers logistics, stage



setup, large-scale event staging, and experience staging. This results in a staging of experiences across a broad spectrum of settings. Leisure and tourism experiences have a focus based on the value of the emotional and motivational states before and during participation, which has been referred to as experientializing the intangible offering (Ellis & Rossman, 2008). A number of researchers have therefore sought to identify what characterizes such experiences.

### Concept of Experience

The concept of experience has grown in influence across the business, tourism, leisure, hospitality, and event sectors as organizations operating within the sector exist to provide consumers with experiences (Pettersson & Getz, 2009). Pine and Gilmore (1999) coined the term “experience economy” to describe how the relationships between provider and consumer had advanced into “experience” where unique and memorable experiences played a key part in consumer decision making (as opposed to simply price). The staging of event management experiences has in turn drawn the attention of researchers and academics who have begun to apply the framework of experience to develop a more detailed understanding of all types of events (Berridge, 2007; Getz, 2007; Nelson & Silvers, 2009; Pikemaat, Peters, Boksberger, & Secco, 2009). O’Sullivan and Spangler (1998) argue that within this experiential approach any offerings need to be enhanced, infused, and made to successfully connect with people. Preevent communication forms the basis for experience by providing a preexperiential excitement and anticipation that has three separate phases: need recognition, alternative search, and preparation. Experiences then occur as a result of stimulation that prompts a response that affects the entire living being (Jensen, 1999). People attending or participating in events do so either collectively or individually on the basis that some type of experience will result. Nevertheless, our insight into experience is made difficult by its complicated and variable nature that is multifaceted across the course of any given time period (Ooi, 2005; Rossman & Schlatter, 2003). Getz (2012) draws attention to this and to the variability of experiences that can exist within and between events. Study

has shown that experience is not static, that it is multidimensional and is always open to the effects of participants’ interaction (Botterill & Crompton, 1996; Hull, Michael, Walker, & Roggenbuck 1996; Y. Lee, Dattilo, & Howard, 1994).

The multidimensional nature of experience has three aspects to it that affect participants. The conative dimension is their behavior and what people actually do, the cognitive dimension is how they make sense of experience through awareness, judgment, etc., and the affective dimension reflects the feelings and emotions that they use to describe the experience (Mannell, Zuzanek, & Larson, 1988). Such dimensional affectations lead to an awareness of the components of experience upon which participants base their evaluation. Such evaluation comes from hedonic responses to things like satisfaction, sensation, emotion, and imagery (Holbrook & Hirschmann, 1982). Csikszentmihalyi’s research (1990) postulates that the desirable outcome of all experiences is individuals achieving optimum flow—that is, the point of optimal arousal that leads to flow experiences where deep involvement, lack of self-consciousness, and intense concentration occur.

### Models for Staging Experiences

Developing techniques that can be used for staging such event experiences helps assist the professional event manager. Silvers (2004) identifies six dimensions of event experience that a professional organizer must address when planning an event: anticipation, arrival, atmosphere, appetite, activity, and amenities. A conceptual model developed by Getz (2012), although not itself a staging blueprint, draws attention to the need for planned event experiences to address the liminal/liminoid zone whereby participants are made aware they are entering a time/space that is set aside for their purpose. Meaning attributed to the event is then transmitted via, among other things, symbols that reaffirm the spatial and temporal purpose of the event. Preevent preparation and anticipation is a key feature of the process. In the relationship between organizer and experience, the emphasis is placed on a deliberate series of actions on the part of the organizer that culminate in the lived experience. Those planning experiences need to adopt a methodological tool based on key elements that make up any planned

occurrence, namely: interacting people, physical setting, objects, rules, relationships, animation (Rossman & Schlatter, 2003). Organizers need to be aware of how any single element may change as a result of participants' interaction and interpretation and so the nature of the experience itself may change. Organizers staging experiences should do so based on a perceived knowledge of how people participate and become involved and they should address five key parameters of experience:

1. The stages of the experience
2. The actual experience
3. The needs being addressed through the experience
4. The role of the participant and other people involved in the experience
5. The role and relationship with the provider of the experience (O'Sullivan & Spangler 1999, p. 23)

Event management emphasizes the role a constructed event has to play in producing experiences and essential to the successful staging of an event experience is the event organizer. In practice, this means that the professional organizer must "envision that experience from start to finish, from the guests' point of view. Imagine every minute of their experience. Identify event elements that will build on previous successes, elements that will take advantage of opportunities and strengths, and elements that will mitigate challenges, weaknesses, and threats" (Silvers, 2004, p. 5). The use of "valorization" tools is one the organizer may adopt because it enables them to visualize the purposefully staged space/time into which a participant will enter. Valorization facilitates participant engagement with their surroundings and absorption into the event (Falassi, 1987). Awareness and application of the model in the concept and planning stages will enable an organizer to embed this into staging of the experience.

#### Professional Event Organization

As the event industry has grown and matured there has been recognition that it is now a legitimate and recognized profession (Barron & Leask, 2012), albeit one that is immature. This raises questions of how events are professionalized, how are

they staged, and to what extent they anticipate, reflect, and confirm participant experiences. The issues faced by event management are its infancy as a profession, with limited government recognized standards, and the practice among professional associations to focus on specific event forms, which in turn perpetuate differences rather than consolidate standards (Getz, 2012). There remains little coordinated coherence or understanding of event professionalism (Harris, 2004), yet it is regarded as a key factor in the success of event management (Tassiopoulos, 2010). Skepticism around event management education among industry practitioners is evident (K. Lee, Myong, & Hee, 2009) along with a lack of clarity and consistency about content (Nelson & Silvers, 2009). Hence, there are difficulties in establishing the basis for professionalism. Yet given the size of the task and the nature of risk associated with running events (especially sport ones) some understanding of what it means to be a professional is required. However, "professional" services such as codes of conduct and professionalization vary significantly between industry associations (Arcodia & Reid, 2008). Equally, the level of understanding and management of risk varies between practitioners (Reid & Ritchie, 2011). Like all professions there is a recognition that a knowledge base is essential to achieving this, and the EMBOK (Event Management Body of Knowledge) framework seeks to identify useful knowledge domains (Silvers, Bowdin, O'Toole, & Nelson, 2006). Any knowledge domains, though, only become effective if they act as a framework for understanding and creating knowledge. Therefore, to further fuel our understanding of event professionalization a knowledge creation and research process is required (Getz, 2012). For knowledge creation for event management to be more professional a framework is useful to help establish a basis from which experience staging can develop. Although the experience models discussed above provided possible tools for this (staging) to be achieved, there needs to be some mechanism for event managers to adopt them within a management process. One such approach that might enable this is the "Framework for Efficient Management" that identifies five key fields and goals that should influence event management practice (Soteriades & Dimou, 2011).



1. **Planning:** Planning and strategies are the foundation for decision making.
2. **Product/event development:** Build up a portfolio of events.
3. **Event management:** Goal: Organize the event and elaborate appropriate action plans for implementation.
4. **Marketing strategy:** Objective: Commercial exploitation and enhance an image and continuous attractiveness.
5. **Monitoring and evaluation:** Objectives: (a) To evaluate event's impacts and (b) to ensure and measure events' competitiveness and efficiency.

Harnessing concept and models of experience to this framework enables the event professional to address how to begin to stage the event experience. The next key in the process, though, is understanding how events are actually experienced and what are the factors that determine that experience. Based on the idea that participant experiences are the key, it seems appropriate to develop a deeper understanding of those experiences that in turn will enable organizers to draw upon in order to develop their practice.

### Methodology

An experiential ethnography project was developed that would allow for a rich and deep exploration of the experiences of participants in gran fondo and sportive events. Ethnography is based on participant observation in which the researcher can observe people's actions and interactions as well as the larger contexts within which these take place (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983; Lambert, Glacken, & McCarron, 2011). The data presented here are the first part of a longer term "experiential ethnography" (Sands, 1999, 2002) into the lived experiences of cyclists riding such events. The key components of an experiential ethnography approach are labeled by Sands (2002) as:

1. The researcher participates as one of the population in every aspect of their interaction.
2. The researcher travels through several layers of participation, from passive observation and participation to extensive participation and becoming one of the population.
3. The stay in the field is for a lengthy period.
4. Observation becomes integrated within participation.
5. Interaction forms an important part of the validation.

It enables research to explore the deeper levels of experience (Wheaton, 1997), and to all intents and purposes the researcher learns to become "an athlete in that culture, through physical skills and acceptable behavior" (Sands, 2002, p. 126). Further down the research line it allows for exploration, meaning, and understanding to be conducted to address the importance of participants' accounts of their experiences, thus relating to "why" and "how" questions (Burgess, 1988). The research plan consists of three phases: 1) initial observation at events; 2) participant observation and interaction at different events; 3) case studies with six cyclists at six different events consisting of pre-event interviews, participant observation and in situ interviews, postevent interviews. This article focuses on data collected from phases 1 and 2 and is a result of direct participant observation and improvised interaction in situ with a variety of individuals throughout each event. The data collection was compiled from 12 days of participant observation that resulted in initial descriptive observation being made (DeWalt & DeWalt, 2002; Kiefer, 1968) based on a simple initial question: What is going on here? The research is based on multisited fieldwork (Falzon, 2009; Marcus, 1995) undertaken at gran fondo or sportive events. The selection of events was drawn from those promoted within a specialist cycling magazine in the UK, *Cycling Weekly*, that publishes a calendar of events, and also from a global website (cycloport.org) that lists over 1,000 events worldwide. The following criteria were used to select the sample of events and there was also an element of access and convenience because events had to have entry spaces:

- up to four "kitemark" events (i.e., those with a degree of history and prestige rating in the UK);
- up to four new or emerging events;
- up to four overseas (Europe) events reflecting the historical base of cyclosporives;
- up to six established events (i.e., that had run for several iterations).

In total eight events were selected, which equated to 12 separate participant days as two events were multiday. The events were as follows: Dave Lloyd Mega Challenge, Wales, UK; London to Paris, UK and France; Tour of Wessex, UK; Brisbane Mall to Mall, Australia; Brisbane to Noosa, Australia; Tour of Flanders, Belgium; British Cyclosporive, UK; Surrey Rumble, UK. The ride distances for a single day ranged from 75 to 180 km. In terms of time, the longest ride took 10.5 hours, the shortest was just over 3.5 hours. Participant registrations also varied with the smallest event attracting 550 and the largest had 19,000. Event organization came from a spread of public, private, and voluntary sectors and was made up of the following: Governing body of sport (cycling); Amateur cycling clubs; National and regional charitable organizations; Commercial sports event agencies; Retail organizations (cycle shops). Costs of individual entry ranged from £10 (\$15) to £695 (\$1,050).

The field note observations were recorded using a digital recording device due to the impracticality of making extensive written field notes while participating and were then transcribed immediately after the event. Initial questions for observation were based on the classical ethnography approach characterized by the Descriptive Question Matrix (Spradley, 1980), which identifies nine major dimensions of the social situation as a basis for guiding descriptive questions and observations. The nine guiding dimensions are: Space (physical place or places), Object (physical things present), Act (single actions that people do), Activity (related acts people do), Event (related activities people carry out), Time (sequencing that occurs over time), Actor (people involved), Goal (things people try to accomplish), and Feeling (emotions felt and expressed).

This allowed for Grand-tour (the major features of the experience) and Mini-tour (specific features of the experience) observations to be made (Spradley, 1980). Interactions with organizers and participants was, at this stage, minimized to casual, every day exchanges and was largely unsolicited except for essential exchanges. Presentation of data at this stage was done manually and was based around a framework of the nine dimensions described above.

## Results

Considering the number of sites, range of event distances, varied geography, and time spent at each event it is clear that there is capacity for observational notes to be huge. Therefore, the writing up of field notes in this instance has followed a more systematic rather than narrative style for ease of reading and follows Spradley's (1980) Descriptive Question Matrix. Included in these findings are compacted points of reference interspersed with occasional narrative descriptions of scenes taken from field notes. The main headings of the matrix overlap and each dimension has a relationship with every other dimension, resulting in a matrix that has a minimum of 81 descriptive questions. Although all questions were used and noted, writing up for this article has, out of necessity, described the main features of experience from which a professional event planner would be expected to consider producing a successful event.

### *Space*

Many participants will be overwhelmed or challenged mentally and physically by the sheer topographic and geographic space used on a route of 180 km. Thus, describing space is hugely variable across an experience because this covers the entire event. In this extract the focus is on the headquarters. The management of space, however, can be mapped via a series of key points. The initial event grand space is built on two things: headquarters for registration, changing pre/postride provision; and car parking. This is almost exclusively directed at actual participants because these events attract very few spectators. Access and physical space are key factors in forming the initial experience on arrival. Depending on location, the majority of participants arrive by car and are seeking "safe" parking for the duration of the event. The following notes suggest a successful facilitated initial experience, but with a caveat for value for money.

As I arrived at the site I could see a figure in a yellow vest directing cars into the parking area. I followed his signal, pulled in, got out. As I walked the 50 yards back to the HQ there were semi-dressed cyclists and bikes everywhere, some bikes were

still on racks others were leant up against either car or tree/hedge. Some people still seemed to building up parts of their bike. Others were eating or getting ready. All around the HQ entrance there were bikes propped up against something or other waiting for owners and there were other owners fitting numbers or timing chips to their bikes. As I went in others came out past me with large envelopes. Inside there were several small queues in single file waiting to sign-in. The hall was spacious so no sense of irritation amongst those queuing. I had found my sign-in point, indicated by a large poster on the wall which read A-E and in less than 5 minutes I was out. I opened the envelope. As well as numbers and chip there was a map of the route—160 km—and some flyers for other events. There was also a SIS Gel for me to try. A bit basic I thought for £25.

Professionalization requires the packaging and managing of the experience from participants' point of view. Identification of key elements, based on previous successes, strengthens the likelihood that the event will be successfully delivered (Silvers, 2004). Variability in HQ does occur, and is often dictated by entry numbers and ranges from local community centers or halls to larger school halls and entertainment venue. HQ venues tend to be permanent spaces with a range of facilities and services to support cyclists such as changing rooms, toilets, large hallway or space, and provision for some type of food and beverage. The hall space itself is usually set out for participants to register for the event. In nearly all cases entry was prebooked in advance and so people are simply entering the HQ to physically register. The layout of the space is designed to enable minimal queuing via simple signage on walls or on bollards. Participant response to this is usually relaxed unless there is evidence of undue queuing and confusion. At registrations people simply want their info quickly and easily.

### *Objects*

Objects can start from initial pre-event communication (promotion) and include electronic as well as physical objects. Virtual objects come via website information from the event organizer with the most important being a route map that can be downloaded to a GPS device. The popularity of GPS systems on bicycles has increased in recent

years, in line with cyclists becoming more aware of training aids. The GPS also has a key role to play as well because it largely ensures that riders will not stray off course. Organizers should provide route map information in advance that is downloadable. In turn, this relates to the other "key" object of such an event—actual physical route signage. This needs to be clear, directional, and visible to all those taking part and should be located at all junctions. For events with multiple routes (e.g., 50, 90, and 160 km) signage needs to identify which route the cyclist follows and so color coding is needed. There is a pragmatic simplicity required here.

Which way? No-one has a GPS and the sign isn't clear. We have to stop and go up to it to check. "It's left." This has been annoying me since we started. The directional signs are too small, they measure 6 inches by 4 inches and they are emblazoned with the organisers (a cycle shop) logo. Black text on white background it says P150 and the shop name. Directional sign is also in black. They are also not in the most obvious of places. This is the 4th time we have had to check. No-one else is saying anything, they don't have to, we all know the problem.

Obvious irritation is apparent, and the experience is disrupted by what many regard as a fundamental necessity: clear, accurate signage. If objects fail, such as direction signs disappear, have poor visibility, or are misdirected and GPS downloads are inaccurate, then this impacts upon the cyclist in negative way, causing uncertainty and hesitation and a break in momentum. At the core of these events is the guided route that offers cyclists a relatively safe, stable, and risk-free journey. Their breakdown leads to loss of trust and irritation if uncertainty in the route becomes apparent.

### *Acts*

The acts of an event cover those organizing it and those cycling it but the focus here is in the former. Organizational acts are mostly centralized around the main start and finish hubs, feed zones, and marshal points. I have used the term "organizers" here to describe anyone involved in making the event happen on the day and who is visible to the cyclists. Acts occur through direct communication. Many

events rely on volunteers for staffing; in some cases entirely, in others as basic support crew. With event organization spread across public, private, and voluntary sectors, there are wide variances in the way an event is perceived. The acts of organization from localized, voluntary-run events such as the Tour of Wessex receive goodwill from cyclists and allowances for minor mishaps are tolerated. Those dominated by brand name support or sponsorship and relying on paid staff are given less leeway and understanding for things going wrong.

Acts of general encouragement are routinely expected, especially where the event is headlined as a fundraiser for a good cause (e.g., Cancer Research). Actions of the opposite, perhaps overzealous marshals, are frowned upon by cyclists anticipating or approaching physical fatigue. Goodwill and positive feelings regularly emerge out of participants who have been well treated during their endeavor and whose efforts are recognized. On the actual route organizers provide marshals on specific road junctions. They will also staff feed zones and their performance at the latter for tired and weary cyclists is a key experience moment. Their role is important in terms of encouraging participants to rest and take on board energy, especially across a lengthy challenge ride, where a cyclist may spend periods alone or in silence and might sometimes appreciate the acts of enthusiasm.

(Approaching feed zone) “Well done” (clapping). “Take anything you need, we’ve got tuna sandwiches, quiche, jam tarts, cakes, juice, some bananas, loads of food.” It’s like a feast I think. This is food stop 2, 110 km into the ride. I ask about the food. “Oh the lorry bringing all the energy stuff broke down. So Mike (points) was volunteering and he knocked on about half-a dozen houses to see if they could donate some food.” I am staggered. There are twice as many people here as at the other stop, all helping out to provide food. It’s an uplifting emotion, but it is also a physical and psychological spur. The taste of a tuna sandwich as opposed to an energy bar is so much nicer. I see some riders gobble down three jam tarts. I can’t say I blame them.

Here the cyclist is receiving and responding to sensory, emotional, and functional support. Participant acts are largely confined to pedaling, either alone or in groups, but also include what might be

called the morality of participating. Negatively this refers to those who litter, who cycle illegally or who “race” the event and show little camaraderie. Acts at feed zones often show this as some push and shove their way through because they are “chasing a time.” Acts on the road include blazing past groups at breakneck speed, often too close for the comfort of those passed. As in the previous dimension, organizers are limited in what they can do to manage this other than by developing a cultural core that breeds respect. Mostly such acts are not overtly “managed” by organizers, who tend to adopt a light touch in order to avoid accusations of excessive officiating. The main place where this does occur is at the start, and the control systems, if any, put in place to grid cyclists or send them off in batches.

*Activity.* This is related to the smaller acts noted above. Activities can be seen as the things people actually do for and within the event. Initially this could be in their communication about the event, then on site it could be advice or support (where relevant). In their supervision of the event start and passage over timing software, at the finish, in their staffing of facilities within the HQ area such as food and beverage, and exhibition/information stands. In some cases where cyclists are started off in groups (e.g., of 50 riders) the activity is to marshal people and bikes into holding zones so that entry onto the route is controlled.

“Next 50. Come up to the line.” It’s a bit more formal than usual. Actually it is a lot more formal than usual. The problem is the event has 3,500 entries, it’s 7.30 start and they are sending groups of 50 off at 5-minute intervals. There are stewards patrolling the barriers and shouting and gesticulating at cyclists who are trying to either climb over them or get through them. The holding zone is a strip of road that has barriers either side of it and it is packed full of people. It is easily 250 metres long; this means cyclists arriving to go to the start have to join the back of an already irritable group.

Almost indescribable feelings of frustration manifest here for cyclists who have arrived earlier, many having traveled long distances and stayed in accommodation overnight, and are suddenly faced with not only a long walk retracing their steps but a long wait to start. The alternative and more

common approach is a “mass start” where cyclists gather on a first-come first-served basis, which often leads to a large crowd bunching and pushing to get through the start grid. Both present organizational challenges, but effective practice does exist that avoids long waits, crowded areas, and a mass charge at the beginning.

### *Events*

Events within an event setting can be described as unique moments. Within the sportive landscape these moments can be directly linked to a number of features such as scenery, beauty spots, vistas, and terrain challenge. They can also include interaction (acts) with others, especially where the event is supported by a well-known or famous person who may join the ride. In the case of the London to Paris 3-day sportive, the presence of past Tour De France winner Stephen Roche cycling and chatting to riders gave each one of those a “personal wow” (Berridge, 2007). For many sportives it is the terrain challenge that attracts most attention and comment as it requires physical effort and preparation. Invariably this relates to ascents of hills and mountains. Alternatively, it is something like the cobbles of Paris–Roubiax. At no other point, with possibly the sole exception of finishing, is there a moment quite like cresting an especially hard climb. Climbs are always topics of conversation before, during, and after the event. They form part of the preexperience phase of feelings of anticipation and trepidation. Routes that follow either locally, nationally, or internationally renowned ascents attract riders in their masses willing to take on the challenge.

The Bwylch loomed ahead. This year we were doing it not once but twice. You can see it up the Valley from a long way back. Riders noticeably started to hold back on their speed and there were more groups joining together. At one point I counted close to 80 people with me. No-one was looking to slip away or up the pace, just the opposite as everyone seemed to want to slipstream and take a rest before the climb.

Here are feelings of camaraderie, group identity, and physical preservation as the challenge of the ascent is processed. The link to the space dimension is obvious here, but the use of natural

resources like this to create a challenging moment is an essential component that the organizers draw upon (O’Sullivan & Spangler, 1999). The choice of route influences participation and, local regulatory permissions aside, is selected by the organizer. Preexperience marketing usually identifies significant “events” such as finishing London to Paris under the Eifel Tower or riding up past the chapels of the Mur De Huy in Belgium. What is also noticeable is events are being linked to regional tourist areas such as the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, the Surrey Hills, the “stunning” Yorkshire Dales, or the “gorgeous shores” of south Cornwall.

### *Time*

Events are demarcated by time as there is always a start and a finish. And all other features of the event interlink through it. Here we will focus on participation time. The passage of time (actual participation time) for cycling begins when the first rider registers and then begins the ride and then concludes when the last cyclist finishes. Actual cycling time, say for example 6 hours, is a long time for many cycle tourists, so the duration of actual cycling requires careful staging to incorporate cyclists’ time and spatial progression. Organizationally time needs to be broken up by a combination of start area and registration, route distance, feed zones, route terrain, and finish area.

When we got to Cheddar Gorge I was starting to get tired and bored, the last 30 km were a bit mundane. But once we started to climb up through the middle of it, I perked up. Suddenly I forgot we had been cycling for 4 hours.

Riding along the coast was truly spectacular and I just felt completely absorbed by the beauty of the coastline. The cliffs were spectacular and it was inspiring to be riding alongside the sea. It was a clear day and a fantastic journey.

Both of these notes relate to specific scenery and terrain features, but illustrate how they impact upon cyclists as they become immersed within the moment. Organizational staging across time includes this and the periods either side of it (on the day) that is used to deliver the event. Time is a major feature of the event challenge because many



events now include standard times to achieve for set distance that relate to gold, silver, and bronze standards of performance. They are also based around age and gender. Obtaining a target time becomes part of the sense of achievement for completing the event distance.

I remember thinking: Make sure your chip is scanned on the way across the line.

Most cyclists use time to measure where they are and how fast they are cycling in relation to the standards. This in turn establishes how they ride and with whom. Time here becomes a potential tool that invigorates a cyclist to “chase” a time, but equally it can lead to a feeling of deflation if the time slips away and beyond the target. The requirement for timing is important for many, it is a mark of official recognition of a person’s efforts. At many events cyclists will begin to gather around the start area when the official start time looms. There is no requirement to start “on time” because recording chips do not operate until a cyclist passes by them, but the more recent tendency is for cyclists to want to start as soon as possible. Some want to be the first to finish, but not necessarily be the fastest.

### *Actor*

This can be linked to the idea of animation and how organizers choreograph sequences of the event. The organizers facilitate this dimension providing only minimal connected episodes if needed (O’Sullivan & Spangler, 1999). The overriding sight is of a mass of potential actors—the cyclists—but the actions of “actors” for the organizer are repetitive and confined to certain areas, as outlined in earlier comments. People occupy the spaces and do the activities within the event. Some of it is invisible to the cyclists as it occurs away from the event site. Cyclists interact to a degree with each other throughout the event but can have limited interaction with others:

It had been a bit of an icy day with the temperature hovering around 0c. At the finish my toes were frozen and my fingers were heading that way. I had full winter clothing. I bought a cup of tea and headed back to the car to change. I’d cycled 90 km and spoken to two people one of whom was to ask them how much a cup of tea was.

There is a sense of isolation and frustration here for the cyclist who had clearly not experienced interaction or camaraderie during the event. Although some events do provide “ride captains” (i.e., cyclists whose job it is to marshal and ride at the same time), there is limited experience staging that can be undertaken to counteract the above comment. Organizers are usually visible by colored vests, armbands, or similar sign that indicates they are organizing the event. Their relationship to cyclists can be minimal as it is always need dependent. They act as a reassurance should support be required but are invariably not called upon. Those that are play the role of service providers, undertaking activity previously described. The key is their visibility and their affability.

### *Goal*

A cyclist’s goal is, on the surface, relatively simple. It is to finish the event. The question of goal setting is advanced by various factors, one of which—timing—was discussed earlier. For some the goal is to finish within a certain time, to achieve the aforementioned standard. For others it is to complete the distance nonstop. For others it is to raise money for a good cause. Understanding the goals of cyclists is important for organizers. Interestingly, within the concept of the event some organizers have developed additional timing features such as the fastest ascent of a specific hill climb. Another operates a timed competition between specific points that mirrors the three major jerseys of the Tour De France: yellow for overall, green for best sprinter, red polka dot for best climber.

I looked at my HRM. I was approaching the Gold time but wasn’t moving fast enough to get it. Only 5 km to go but I knew I needed to be going faster than 35 kph. I could feel it slipping away. There was no-one ahead or behind to join up. I felt shattered but desperately tried to extract remaining energy from my legs. I ate a gel, it didn’t help. 1 km to go I knew I couldn’t do it. At the finish I had missed it by 27 seconds.

### *Feeling*

Previously noted comments and analysis have identified the nature of some feelings that are experienced. Factors that influence feelings can

include weather, distance, terrain, perception of own fitness, camaraderie with other riders, and a sense of personal accomplishment. Feelings of safety, though, inhibit some cyclists' thoughts, and the organization needs to be able to provide a safe environment, notwithstanding the nature of the event itself, through visible signs demonstrated by clear information, marshals, and support staff. Scenic routes also attract cyclists and add to their sense of enjoyment if spectacular terrain or scenery is crossed or encountered. It is notable that when a route is mundane and on the "wrong" roads then cyclists discuss it liberally. The appeal of cycling some of these events is not only their epic nature but the geographic location that takes people away from urban sprawl and into countryside. Across 100 km these can fluctuate widely. Visible stress is evident on some cyclists as they approach the latter stages of a route and are physically exhausted. For others there is visible euphoria as they crest a steep hill or high mountain. Exhaustion and elation combined are often seen as cyclists pass the finish line and slump to the ground to rest. At the end there is invariably spontaneous exchange between ad hoc groups of cyclists as they congratulate each other on some sense of achievement. Postevent moments are relived and discussed and this is accentuated when there is provision for this at the HQ with food and beverage. Instant printing of certificates for time standards adds to feelings of accomplishment among some, but for others it is irrelevant.

### Discussion

The research undertaken here forms part of a wider project studying the experiences of cyclists at gran fondo or sportive events. Drawing upon Spradley's (1980) Descriptive Question Matrix as a framework for initial ethnographic fieldwork observation across 12 different cycle participant event days, a number of key features of experience have been recorded. The notes around the use of space in event staging indicate it is a key element of experience as it provides not only the setting for the challenge but it affects us in many different ways (e.g., physically, sensorially, visually) (Berridge, 2007). Variable distances are regular offers by organizers, meaning different levels of experience are available, offering a stepped graduation in distances

for participants. It was also realized that pre-event information (objects) provides a perception of what is to come and it is a factor in any preparation for the cycle tourist experience (O'Sullivan & Spangler, 1999). The routes selected (i.e., the roads) are themselves objects and are indelibly linked to the nature of terrain to be challenged, and are very much a part of the appeal of an event. Objects form one of the six key elements in experience design (Rossman & Schlatter, 2003) and understanding the nature of them (by organizers) is a key factor in the formation of meaning of the experience for individuals. Cyclists receive further sensory, emotional, and functional support from staff at the event, which relate to those elements identified in the experience matrix (Zoels & Gabrielli, 2003). Those smaller acts are the essential interactions between organizers and participants that are the result of the experience not being static and open to the effects of those interactions (Rossman & Schlatter, 2003). Selected special "event" moments within a sportive setting can be described as unique. These are the "special" occasions that impact on a participant's experience (Getz, 2007). In turn these "events" form part of the essential "physical setting" that Rossman and Schlatter (2003) note help give meaning to the experience. The selection of picturesque or scenic terrain also adds the element of authenticity to the challenge that enables cyclists to connect to the pristine and natural environment (Ferdinand & Williams, 2010). This element of experience can be related to the idea of time and the way it impacts experience. Time passes slowly or quickly and is an experience factor that is linked to immersion. This can take place at many points and is an indicator of participants' escapism (or lack of it) within the experience (Pine & Gilmore, 1999). Interactions can be guided via animation, which can range from level 1 (none) to level 10 (fully guided) (Berridge, 2007). Although these events do have animated moments, they operate at a low organizational level for the most part. Differences occur with more complex sportive events involving group riding and famous participants. Goal setting for participants is evident, and organizers have demonstrated some creative approaches to planning and organizing goals beyond simply distance. These require organizational input and infrastructure to provide unique achievement goals. These

can also become established as the rules for the experience (Rossman & Schlatter, 2003) that create standard times for all to negotiate. Finally, we have participant feelings that are typically multiphasic and vary enormously due to the nature of the event and the variety of participants (Berridge, 2007).

### Conclusions

Past studies of leisure, tourism, and events indicate that experiences are multiphasic and multivariate in nature (Berridge, 2012a). This initial exploration of the gran fondo and sportive rides has supported this view and it has also highlighted some of the key features of both the organization and management and the participant experiences. For event organizers entering or developing events in this field, the adoption of professional practice is essential if the growth and appeal of these events is going to continue. As some of the field recordings note, some organizers get things wrong, and aspects of the experience are adversely affected. The question remains as to why such things occur. One reason is the unregulated nature of the market. Simply put, anyone can plan to organize these kinds of cycle events and the only regulatory aspect to overcome is really liaison with police and any road management authority. Organizers have to understand that they not only manage time; they have to manage distance as well. The concept of the planned event experience requires event professionals to manage the entire environment. This includes specific elements within the experience itself, the interaction between participants and experience, and the range of outcomes due to participation (O'Sullivan & Spangler, 1999).

Using Spradley's (1980) Matrix for a participant observation approach has allowed for initial insight into the experiences of cyclists and has also helped identify the elements of experience that organizers cannot so easily address or manage. Mapping against the Efficient Management Model (Soteriades & Midou, 2011), in particular, could prove to be a useful tool for organizers to explore how better to provide a professional service to a large group of participants and how to evolve that over time. Clearly there is, as indicated in the methodology, further study to be undertaken where the

in situ experiences of participants will be recorded. Together with a fuller use of the field notes here, this will provide for a more detailed description of the gran fondo or sportive experience. Within that further discussions should be developed around theories of social capital and identity to explore the meanings people attribute to participant in these events. This, in turn, might have implications for innovative management features.

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Photo: World Travel Market



Photo: Dimitri Tassiopoulos

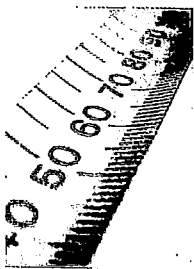


Photo: Dimitri Tassiopoulos



Photo: Dimitri Tassiopoulos

# 10

## *Design management of events*

Graham Berridge

### *Abstract*

*Design plays an integral part in all planned event experiences. It ranges from initial concept and pitch through to programme and content design and onto theatrical and staging design. All elements within an event are infused or enhanced by design to create memorable event experiences. This chapter looks at what design is, the different stages of design input required for different event types and the creation of event experiences.*



## Chapter objectives

After you have read this chapter you should be able to:

- define and explain design;
- understand the nature, processes and activities involved in event design and creativity;
- familiarise yourself with the creative process for event design;
- see how design fits into the events framework;
- understand the planned event experience;
- understand the relationship between design and the event experience; and
- appreciate the value of experiential foresight

### 10.1 Understanding and defining design

Design is one of the key knowledge domains of events management and it is the key area that enables one event experience to be different from another. The design domain consists of seven specific classes where design is said to typically occur in an event. These classes are as follows:

- Catering design.** Food and beverages are nearly always present at events, and the production and service of food allows for creativity. Examples where design can be a prominent feature include food stations, edible centrepieces, menus, dessert shapes, drink mixes.
- Content design.** Creativity can challenge preconceptions. Designing an event with content that differs from the norm can be risky but also gives the opportunity for surprise. A wedding, for example, can include the bride and groom's preferences on format and structure, and include special content such as poetry, musical performance and ceremony.
- Entertainment design.** This can be formal or informal, and can be linked to 'surprise guests'. Such things as look-alikes have become popular as have roving street entertainers or magicians. Reference to popular culture and television shows appeals to many

people as does the inclusion of musical acts, comedians or extravagant shows.

- Environment design.** A key element in the creation of experiences, designed environments can surprise or reassure a guest or audience. Environment design is the purposeful use of a specific space that enables the event experience to take place.
- Production design.** This is an area where the event borrows from theatre and performance, where design produces spectacle and show, for example the production of multiple settings within an event environment, or a stage design such as the U2 heart-shaped stage used during their half-time performance at the US Super Bowl. One international conference presenter used to insist on using two separately managed screens.
- Programme design.** Events often have an order of occurrences or a format. This is sometimes based on written rules or guidelines, at other times on past references that have now become a standard format. For example, many academic conferences do not have designed interactions beyond food and wine gatherings. Inserting something like a speed dating research session into the programme creates a new experience.



□ **Theme design.** This is where a visual spectacle is created by symbols and artefacts that imaginatively reinforce a special theme. Themes themselves can be inspirational, and opportunities arise to be creative both in reference to a theme and to its interpretation. A venue and its service staff would be decorated to reflect a main theme such as *Cabaret*, *Star Wars*, *Art Deco*, *Casino Night*, and so on.

Events cannot exist in and of themselves; simply put they have to be designed and created, whether it be for education, escapism, absorption, aesthetic appeal, an exhibition, a conference, for entertainment, a meeting, a sporting event, etc. Events management is the business of designing planned occasions, and such planning is done purposefully with the intention of meeting and creating event experiences for a variety of stakeholders.

Designing special events requires creativity so that those attending them feel they have experienced a special moment. Design is mostly seen, therefore, as a skilled action or an act of creativity that gives something a visual identity or recognition: 'event design is the creation, conceptual development and design of an event to maximise the positive and meaningful impact for the event's audience and/or participants' (Brown, 2005).

What most sources on the study of events agree on is that designing an event requires a conceptualisation of an idea. This can then be linked throughout the event by a specific theme, such as a casino night, and then the event space itself requires decoration, the craft of producing the idea physically, to give a tangible existence to the design and concept ideas. As Monroe (2006:4) explains, 'event design is the conception of a structure for an event, the

### **Case study 10.1 Production design: Hugo Boss fashion show, Berlin**

The client, Hugo Boss, asked for an 'outstanding and surprising show' to be produced by agency *villa eugenie*. Situated on the 'Bühne' of the German Opera House, 1 000 people were treated to a show that combined fashion and opera. The entrance to the event held a surprise in itself as guests were ushered in through the back door and not the main foyer entrance. This was further enhanced by the seating arrangement which rather than use the house seating was in fact set out on the empty opera stage facing the invisible audience. The producers also chose to twist tradition in other ways by separating the audience from the performance space with a black velvet curtain and omitting any sign of a catwalk. Instead there was just a glistening black floor. In an effort to create the tension, suspense and drama associated with opera, the fashion show was split into several acts. With scenery changes between each act, guests were plunged into darkness at each set changeover before the next group of models emerged.

Structures were used to infuse each act with a special element. Act 1 started with a lowering of a 14m-high steel staircase for the models to enter the stage, while Act 2 saw an 82m glistening white walkway emerge that then folded into nine tiers to create a suspended catwalk operated by hydraulic lifts for perfect timing and safety. The finale, Act 3, featured 25 000 gem-like components reflecting a dazzling light that created a tunnel for models to walk through. The aim was to produce a show that was 'illusion', creating surprise, appearance and disappearance.

Source: *Happening Design for Events*, Birkhauser



expression of that concept verbally and visually, and, finally, the execution of the concept'. He concludes that events that combine design and decoration successfully produce synergy and result in a practical, successful event.

A person can be designing something – say a ticket entry system to an event – but, they may not necessarily be creative about it. However, for most people in events management, designing an event, especially one for entertainment or celebration, results in acts of creativity. This is because

*design is viewed as a skilled, creative endeavour that produces some element of artistic interpretation for anything from clothes to cars. Understanding and interpreting the meaning of design is, for most of us, not always the easiest of tasks since the difficulty lies in analysing or extracting meaning from the design. When we talk about design though we can usually describe something that has been designed and mostly we can refer to design as being creative (Berridge, 2007: 36).*

Design can be associated with a host of different activities and different contexts, for example graphic design, software design, interior design, engineering design, industrial design (Bayley, 1985). Writing on the need for education on understanding design, Archer (1973) explains that design should be regarded as skill and knowledge that is concerned with a person's ability to create an environment that would meet certain spiritual and material needs. This suggests a link with the more commonly held understanding for design today that it is a purposeful activity that is intended, planned and conceived to meet a particular purpose or solve a particular problem (Markus, 2002). Berridge (2007), citing

research work undertaken at Princeton University, has suggested that the following list indicates the central and recurring explanations and activities for design:

- The act of working out the form of something;
- A plan – making or working out a plan for; devising;
- Designing something for a specific role or purpose or effect;
- An arrangement scheme;
- A blueprint – something intended as a guide for making something else;
- Creating the design for; creating or executing in an artistic or highly skilled manner;
- A decorative or artistic work;
- Making a design of; planning out in a systematic, often graphic form;
- A purpose – an anticipated outcome that is intended or that guides your planned actions;
- Answering immediate needs;
- Creating designs;
- Conceiving or fashioning in the mind; inventing; and
- A preliminary sketch indicating the plan for something.

Therefore, what now becomes apparent is that the activity of design embraces actions that are purposeful, systematic and creative. By being purposeful, design is providing for both functional and aesthetic needs; by being systematic it is analysing problems and finding usable solutions to them; by being creative it is using expertise to give visual form to those ideas and solutions. So when a client expresses a desire to have an event that is 'fantastic, enchanting and memorable', the event management team will start to put together one or more conceptual ideas that they hope will meet the client's expectations.



## Case study 10.2 Event ConneQion Expo 2008, Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre (BCEC)

BCEC basic facts:

- The Great Hall has a plenary capacity of 3 958 persons;
- There are four exhibition halls with a combined space of 20 000 m<sup>2</sup>; and
- It has 24 multifunction rooms.

There is some irony in this case study since it involves an event developed as a showcase for industry practitioners. Pre-event promotional literature read as follows:

*When you come to the 2008 show, there will be no doubt about what's hot in the event and incentives industry this year! So, whether you are a professional event planner or are responsible for just one major show a year, Event ConneQion will provide you with creative concepts – inspired solutions – ingenious idea.*

As a research exercise, 65 students were asked to visit the event and make observations and comments on the design. A summary of their views reads as follows:

The expo was sited in one of the four main halls. Unfortunately little or no design concepts had been applied or utilised in the entrance, reception or exhibition areas. While it was functional it was not especially captivating for a guest. In fact it was truly uninspiring and boring. Inside the hall the layout of the exhibition space seemed to have been given little thought other than a basic grid approach to stalls and stands. While individual exhibitors demonstrated some creativity with their own display areas, the overall concept of the event was very flat and uninspiring. There were not enough exhibitors to fill the hall floor space, and as a result a lot of empty space was evident. No attempt had been made to reduce the space down to fit the exhibitors and so in turn create a more vibrant setting. So the emptiness detracted from any sense of ambience or community as it was easy for the visitor to meander aimlessly. Minimal attempts had been made to theme the exhibitors and create hubs of similar interest or expertise. Some effort had been made to create a performance space and this did act as a central point at times, but it was sectioned off from other areas by a few basic service features. No sense of expectation or 'happening' was created around the space and most visitors largely wandered past it without interest.

### Conclusion

This approach to exhibiting is, sadly, not uncommon, where space is simply sold and little or no design is applied to the environment itself. Hence many such events are lifeless, lasting along hour by hour with visitors trudging around hoping for some inspiration rather than having it created and presented to them.

## 10.2 Reflecting on design's role in event management

Based on the understanding of design put forward above, it can now be seen that when discussing events, design should be regarded as a fundamental part of the process since the very nature and practice of event management is 'purposeful,

systematic and creative'. For design to work effectively in an event, it should follow some basic guidelines. There are now several excellent sources on various aspects of the event design process that identify the principles and elements of design, and the resources and creative ideas that can be used to create events (Goldblatt, 2008;



Malouf, 1999; Monroe, 2006; Matthews, 2007). In general these principles can be characterised as follows:

- ❑ That design should have a focus;
- ❑ That design must consider the use of space; and
- ❑ That design must consider and reflect the flow of movement (Monroe, 2006).

With these principles in place, Berridge (2007) suggests that the aesthetics of design advocated by Malouf, Monroe and Matthews can then be further addressed and that consideration should then be given to technical awareness and application and, importantly, the tangible expression of ideas that gives rise to the event experience.

Therefore the elements of design should include the following:

- ❑ *Space* – three-dimensional space and how to fill and use it so that décor fits in with it;
- ❑ *Colour* – often provides meaning since

it affects us psychologically, and choice of colour combinations is important;

- ❑ *Line* – often used to reinforce a message or draw attention to some point of a setting, or to use objects to separate one area from another;
- ❑ *Composition* – the placement and arrangement of artefacts (décor) that tend to give a view of the whole concept;
- ❑ *Form* – the shape (e.g. curved, square) of decorative props and objects that show the importance of the design and theme;
- ❑ *Texture* – the feel of materials used in the décor: lush or basic furnishings designed to evoke feelings or moods;
- ❑ *Pattern* – using triangular, oval, circular, rectangular and diagonal patterns with the event space to create settings;
- ❑ *Scale* – size and shape: the proportion of a prop, usually related to a dominant theme or sub-theme within the event;

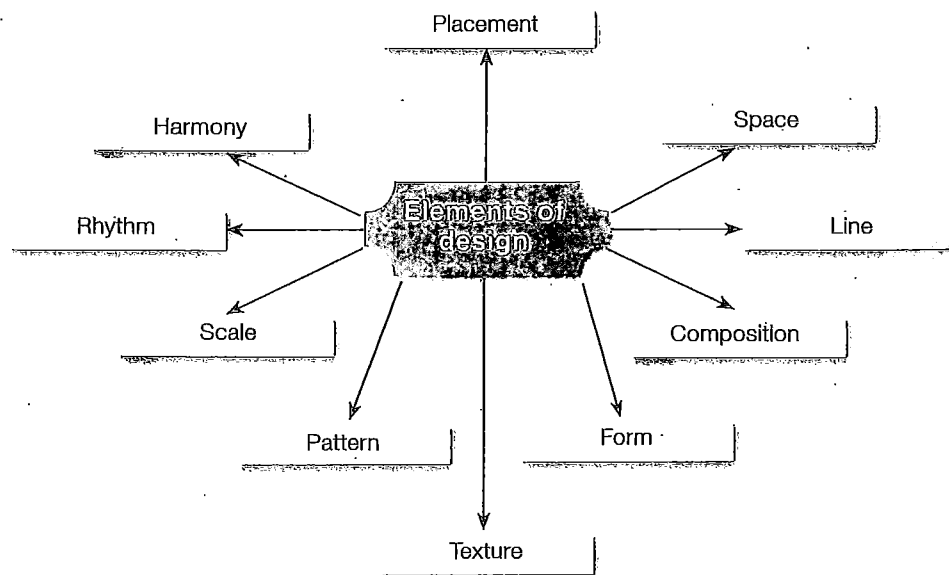


Figure 10.1 Design elements





- *Rhythm* – movement of words or music, or arrangements such as flowers to create a rhythmic impact gradually or suddenly;
- *Harmony* – creating unity within a setting, reinforcing the message or the ambience; and
- *Placement* – décor in the right place and context, as a focal point or as a subtle message.

Using such approaches will give the basis of a blueprint for designing and creating event environments. In fact it has been suggested that the very basis of events management itself is, simply, the 'design management' of an event and that to ignore or marginalise design is to neglect the very heart and soul of an event (Brown, 2005). In this view, design should then be considered as a critical tool for events management as it relates directly to developing the event concept and the event experience. Furthermore it enables the event manager to envision and implement the event. Event managers should therefore see themselves as not simply logistical and organisational problem solvers but as 'experiential engineers' who are able to piece together the overall picture of the event. Remember event environments are produced on the basis that the majority of those attending will receive a fulfilling experience, no matter what type of event it is or what purpose it serves, therefore event managers should regard themselves as 'packaging and managing an experience' from start to finish and imagine all aspects and details of that experience (Silvers, 2004).

An important part of many events is guest interactions, and these need to be carefully designed and not just left to chance. Interactions can be designed to introduce people to one another, to engage

with a product or service, to sample a food or beverages, to participate in an activity, or to contribute in some way or other to the experience. Interaction can also be used to 'animate' an event in order to help create an atmosphere or ambience. In such cases 'plants' within the environment, such as look-alikes of celebrities, are designed to encourage communication between and with guests. Such design interventions help ensure an event works effectively. Equally, some of the rituals and symbolic features associated with an event (a winner's podium, for example) should be part of an integrated designed experience. These aspects are created in just the same way as the more observable and recognised features of an event such as the thematic framework, the props and décor, the lighting, the food design or the flower arrangements. What is also apparent is that the level of design input varies enormously from event to event, and that variation is a by-product of the event type and concept. Consequently, events that have a more celebratory or entertainment remit tend to be the ones that attract the most attention and where the 'design' element is more visibly seen as the added ingredient that takes the event onto another dimension and gives it that something special. Here design is apparent in the themed elements and message of the event, and is inextricably linked with, for example, audiovisual production, entertainment and music (Sonder, 2004).

To summarise, (Goldblatt, 2004) stresses the importance of design in events by advocating a design blueprint as one of the keys for success and stresses at the outset the importance of creating the environment.

*When creating the environment the special events professional must again return to the basic needs of the guests.*



*The final design must satisfy these needs to become successful. Lighting, space, movement, décor, acoustics and even the seemingly mundane concerns such as rest rooms all affect the comfort of the guest and so play vital roles on creating a successful environment*

Goldblatt (2004:5)

### 10.3 Design and pitching for the event

Event bidding is dealt with in chapter 5, but it is important to note that many event contracts are won by the company pitching directly to the client. Pitching is a presentation whereby the concept and ideas for the event are mapped out for the client. At this stage the pitching company needs to verbally and visually convey the experience they intend to create. Hence strong design ideas, visual themes, clear messages and mock-ups of the environment and some of the features to be incorporated may all be required to convince the client that the concept will be a good one. Many events management companies use design software to produce a computerised image of how they see the event. In addition, storyboards might be used to show different components within the event, such as stage settings or food-service areas. As well as these mock-ups, samples of colour swatches, say for service uniforms or for table decoration, may be required. Images of food design, light design and backdrops could also be shown. While clients clearly want to hear what the company has to say, they also want to see how the company visualises the event, and here design ideas have to come across in a strong, clear manner. For events with a strong promotional message, the client will want to see how the event will express

the experience associated with the product or service. For entertainment the theme associated with the event will need to be carefully researched to ensure that the right images, symbols and artefacts are portrayed so that the client is left with a clear impression of what will happen on the night.

### 10.4 Creativity and event planning and production

Creativity is the one thing that really can make an event stand out from others of a similar kind.

But what is creativity? In the previous sections, discussion of design has taken place, but the process of creativity also requires some attention. Matthews (2007) suggests that there are key attributes to being creative, namely intelligence and personality. The former is now less pre-occupied with IQ than with the influence of parents and the belief that intelligence manifests itself in many ways – in other words not just through academic tests. Personality is regarded as dispositional where people have a behavioural and cognitive flexibility that helps in risk taking. These are in turn affected by lifespan development and the different influences we encounter as we go through our personal life cycle and the social environment we operate in. Matthews concludes that the more exposure someone has to creative concepts in a socially relaxed environment, the better chance they will have of coming up with creative thoughts.

Welded to this are the cognitive process and the act of knowing, perceiving and conceiving (Matthews, 2007). Factors that now influence creativity are based around perception and how individuals respond to problems. The precepts used help



Table 10.1 External environment

Quantity equals quality	Think, repeat, think again, and consider the widest range of possibilities, not just the first thing that comes to mind
Suspend judgement	We've always done it this way! Creativity is about new ideas, so judgement on an idea is a creative killer. Allow ideas to flourish and see where they lead to
Relax and have fun	Stream of consciousness while doing other things, e.g. riding a bike, swimming, listening to music. Ideas can pop into the mind at any time. Think about recording them on a cellphone or in a notebook for later use
Continue to learn	Stay in tune with new developments, and exposure to new concepts; keep a note of initiatives and ideas elsewhere that may influence in the future. Some creative people keep records of things they encounter
Practice	Like a musician, learn to be creative, maintain ideas for all things and always consider how they can be changed

Source: Matthews (2007)

make sense of things acting as a constant reference for them, but they can alter and change as new information is acquired. In a wide-ranging chapter on creative thought, Matthews considers the different ways of seeing things as providing crucial armoury for its emergence. He reflects on the way people organise any stimulus, how they view familiar sites in a constant frame, the level of depth perception they have and the awareness of motion in relation to objects. Underpinning such responses is the experience and context that the recipient has been exposed to. As a logical stage in this creative awareness, the external environment can play a major part in shaping creativity. Table 10.1 draws attention to Matthews' (2007) key points to consider when creating an environment.

A way to start thinking about design and creativity is to take an event right back to the very basics and ignore all previous iterations of it. So, thinking of an event as starting out with four bare walls or a blank canvas encourages scope for creativity

since it is not anchored by what went on in the past. This is especially helpful if the event is outdoors but it applies equally to large multipurpose venues where there is a need to create an environment. In stark contrast are the historical or unique venues that are uniquely different due to their architecture and interior design, in which case the question is whether to use or complement the interior or to mask it from view. From this starting point it is possible to begin to envisage how this 'empty space' will be filled and with what. What types of decisions have to be made in order to create an event? What are the actions that need to be undertaken in order to fill the space or transform the bare walls into the created event experience?

A number of design or creative actions have been identified that establish a blueprint of the sorts of things to be done to produce an event. Not all of them occur equally at every event, and so their application is dependent upon the type of event to take place. A common way



of thinking about an event at this stage is to develop the event concept or to conceptualise what the event will be for and about, and begin to develop a blueprint (Goldblatt, 2008). The factors that need to be addressed include the range of elements that need to be considered when an event concept is first being developed. This should begin with the purpose of the event, and move on to the event theme, the venue, the needs of the audience, the available resources to make it happen, the timing of the event, and the skills of the team (Van der Wagen & Carlos, 2005). Using design ideas and practices will then enable each of these aspects of the event to be fully developed. Once this has been established and agreed, it needs translating into physical reality. So it is appropriate to begin to think about the physical elements needed to fulfil the concept. A popular approach to achieving this successfully is to give the event a 'theme' where design of the environment revolves around a common thread. The theme then requires a series of decorative elements to characterise the message (Monroe, 2006) and with that, a series of props and artefacts that embody and reinforce it (Malouf, 1999). These can be extravagant and sensational, using the aforementioned design tools to piece together the whole ensemble. This, in turn, should help to begin to create an appropriate ambience that reflects the theme (Shone & Parry, 2004) and this might mean consideration of the entertainment experience to be provided for the guest (Silvers, 2004). Ultimately, the whole package needs to be produced and staged (Matthews, 2007).

Within the above considerations, design is regarded as an implicit aspect of the event planning since it enables the event manager to understand and envisage

the characteristics of things like ambience, service and personal interactions. By designing these features carefully, the right environment for the specific event can be produced. An 'event with the right ambience can be a huge success. An event with the wrong ambience can be a huge failure' (Shone & Parry, 2004: 15). The question of how the right ambience is designed and created may not seem so straightforward to answer, but there are signposts that can be used in order to understand and design ambience. The practicalities of creating ambient settings is discussed by authors such as Sonder (2004), Monroe (2006) and Matthews (2007b), all of whom offer design specific approaches or, as in the case of Silvers (2004), place it as the central core of event management practice.

As all planned events run to some kind of programme, ensuring that the programming also fits into the environment can be the key to an event having a successful outcome. This can be seen in the way sports podium presentations are designed, combining the different elements of the event to ensure a successful finale. In most cases there is a programme that enables the event to follow a specific path, and this programme directs various stakeholders at the event towards a culmination moment where the winner's presentation is made. Spectators, media, participants, organisers, team personnel, etc. are purposefully moved into position. The Tour de France is a good example of this where the podium is visually designed to reflect the iconic yellow jersey of the race leader and some of the key sponsors (Credit Lyonnais, Michelin). The ambience of celebration and euphoria on success is created as a direct result of the path the event programme takes to get to this point, and where the event focus moves from the uncertain outcome of the competition to



### Case study 10.3 Red Nose Day, charitable fundraising event, UK

Event: A charity event for a major UK supermarket's suppliers. This case uses a heritage building as a venue; however, design ideas within it are applicable internationally

This event had a two-fold aim – to raise money for a charity (Red Nose) and to provide an entertaining evening for the guests. There were 300 guests invited from the different regions throughout the UK. The event company managing the event made a bold and creative decision to use a National Trust property that had not previously held large-scale entertainment events. As a heritage-listed property this created some restrictions on the use of the main building, so this required some creativity to ensure the event design worked effectively. However, the venue had lavish gardens and so rather than base everything indoors the event team decided to use the main building as a 'stage and backdrop' and created the main event environment within the landscaped grounds

Originally the concept had been to create a Moulin Rouge spectacle as an obvious reference to the Red Nose charity. However, once it became known that the venue had some links to Queen Elizabeth 1, they decided to develop their design concept around the work of William Shakespeare. Drawing on references to the works and writing of Shakespeare, the team was able to pool together a wide array of performers and actors to augment the entertainment. On entrance to the main gate, guests were escorted by carriage around the side of the main building and into a huge marquee situated behind it. Inside the marquee various characters from the plays of Shakespeare served drinks and, later, food. Throughout the grounds and in the marquee, lighting was provided by flames set on 2m-high columns and as the event started in twilight the impact of the flames increased as darkness descended. The marquee had a stage in the centre of it, an interpretation of the famous Globe Theatre where Shakespeare's work was originally performed and where it is recreated today since the theatre's lavish period refurbishment. At various junctures in the evening, actors would perform selected extracts from different plays. Decoration inside was period furniture and props. Interactive elements were created by having several characters from the plays appear as guests at the event. For example the character of Puck was to be found roaming a part of the grounds where drinks were served, while a moody and slightly mad Macbeth could be seen wandering around the ground muttering and mumbling to imaginary foes.

A series of images were projected against the side of the building and facing the marquee was another stage-like setting, set about 3m off the ground. As the evening wore on, Queen Elizabeth 1, plus aides, made an appearance and mingled with guests, passing comment on their attire and preparing them for a charity auction. At 10pm a band of trumpeters appeared, unannounced, and this was the signal for the fake Queen to climb the stairs to the stage and announce, in imperious fashion, the start of the charity auction. Then, at her side appeared Shakespeare who acted as auctioneer, and a 'prosecutor' who looked not dissimilar to a hangman. His job was to liaise with the Queen and identify people who were not bidding and contributing to charity. The Queen would occasionally stop the auction and make a comment or two at specific members of the audience, threatening them with 'consequences' if they did not submit a bid.



the plaudits for the winner. The podium is designed to engender celebratory ambience by its location at the finish, its visual characteristics and its physical size and shape that allows all spectators to gaze upon it and share in the winner's joy. Such an outcome does not happen by chance – it is designed and planned purposefully and it gives closure to the event. The alternative is to allow the end of the event to stumble to a vague conclusion when the winner crosses the line, and simply hand them a trophy/cheque while they are changing or when they go back to their hotel. It is this act of designing and creating the environment that is the central point that makes events so different from other activities, and is a central component of any attempt to understand them.

Therefore the decisions that are made about how to fill an event space and how to create an active space for guests, attendees or participants are crucial in determining how the event environment will appear and how the event experience itself will occur. This suggests an emphasis is mostly placed on event guests as the recipients of the active event rather than on those who are contributing to its delivery or administering it. Creating this environment requires an awareness of guest requirements and therefore events managers have to consider mind mapping, flow, tempo and even psychographics in order to perceive what those requirements might be (Goldblatt, 2008). Some of the considerations that design and creativity might address in pursuit of this include the following:

- **Soundscaping.** This is the use and distribution of sound at an event. Sound can be central to the event (speech or music) but it can also affect ambience by creating suspense, attention, excitement or even distraction.
- **Visual cues.** These are references to a theme or other identifying element in an event. For example, a themed event would use specific artefacts and imagery to create a visual spectacle. An *Alice in Wonderland* theme would perhaps have waiters dressed as large playing cards, or staff dressed like the Mad Hatter serving drinks, and it might have fake-looking glasses as display items.
- **Smell.** This refers to the olfactory sensations that can enhance an experience.
- **Taste.** This may take the form of a creative blend of food or drink that surprises, e.g. lavender wine and ice cream.
- **Blending.** This is the combination of different elements that make up a whole event – mostly they complement each other to create a theme.
- **Amenities.** The experience should be reaffirmed in all areas, such as the toilets.
- **Reception areas.** The first impression is important, and greetings for guests can be a moment to set the standard for the remainder of the event.
- **Function areas.** These can include rest areas, games areas or hospitality areas designed to be 'functional' or have a twist to them.
- **Innovative sites.** This can be venue based or be a special section with an overall site.
- **Edible displays.** This is where culinary skills come to the fore, and flower arrangements, table centrepieces and even napkins or invitations can be made from edible ingredients that allow guests to consume the display.
- **Decoration.** This refers to the use of props, backdrops, colours, materials to create overall settings.
- **Interactive décor.** This can be clever and

### Case study 10.4 BlackOut Dining Experience, UK

This case study draws on an example from a UK events and catering company but is applicable to international audiences.

In this case the event client was looking for a totally different dining experience and gave carte blanche to the company to be as creative as possible. Taking up the challenge, the company decided to go with a concept based on a single unifying idea and came up with a theme based on the colour black. They had considered some of the more obvious themes of dining such as a specific food type and décor (Indian) or using popular culture references (the film Casablanca) but felt they really needed to give the event a unique 'edge'.

In order to create the required impact meant the total dining experience had to embrace the colour black in the food and beverages, utensils and drinking vessels, décor and props, and clothing for staff. Everything as much as was practicably and safely possible had to be in black. The only exception to the black theme was the need to have some lighting as a blacked-out room would be unusable. So LED lighting in purple, deep green and deep blue was used to create mood, layout and lines for movement. While crockery, napkins, utensils and glasses could be easily made, food was a more problematic issue. Creating a balanced menu seemed a problem simply because so very few foods are black in colour or appearance. However, research produced a range of international foods that could be made in black using either food colourants or black/dark ingredients such as chocolate, squid ink, soy or blackseed. Food that could be made black included spaghetti, pizza along with interesting variants such as chocolate ravioli, chocolate-hazelnut spread, tortillas and caviar rolls. Black pudding also made an appearance, as did Schwarzbrot bread. Drink was a slightly easier option to offer in the shape of tea and coffee but also included Guinness, black root beer and Coca-Cola, which provided the perfect mixer for clear spirits. Staff wore black trousers, long-sleeved black T-shirts, black socks and shoes and, as an added touch, black gloves.

witty, designed to be non-static and so perhaps surprise guests.

- **Parades and float design.** These are usually for outdoor events but some larger exhibitions allow for creative approaches. A typical example would be the Tour de France sponsors' procession that precedes the race.
- **Theme.** This is a unifying concept, perhaps drawn from history or some recognisable aspect of culture such as cabaret.
- **Environmental sensitivity.** A hugely prescient element is to avoid the waste associated with many events. A simple example is to use re-usable materials where possible (such as water jugs and

glasses) rather than disposable plastic articles.

- **Timeline.** This refers to a running order for activities to occur, often to build suspense at an event or to lead to an unveiling of something.
- **Security.** It is preferable to adopt a discreet almost invisible security policy rather than one that is highly visible.

Several design and creative solutions are linked to food and beverage operations, a feature of the vast majority of events and in many cases the main attraction for guests. Food and beverages can be highly visible (e.g. a chocolate fountain) and can clearly create an aroma and obviously produce a



sense of taste when consumed. They can be used to provide decoration in the form of props and can be a centrepiece of a display, edible or not. Culinary arts skills are always in demand as clients and guests seek new and interesting ways of being wined and dined. It is not so long ago that the presence of a Smoothie bar at an indoor event was something of a novelty and there is a cyclical factor that sees the use of cocktail bars go in and out of fashion. Themed banquets offer a real sense of identity to events and invariably borrow ideas from restaurants and bars. Replacing standard Western chairs and tables with half-height tables and assorted cushions enables Asian cuisine to be offered in a much more relaxed and informal way. Indeed, in taking up this theme some UK entrepreneurs have begun to deconstruct the traditional curry and replace ingredients.

### 10.5 Designing communication

A part of any event is the ability to communicate to the guest or audience beforehand through a marketing communication strategy. Event marketing relies heavily on communication by trying to establish shared meanings with the event's target stakeholders (Masterman & Wood, 2006). Designing the message to be conveyed is crucial at this stage as it is the key representation of how the event will appear. This pre-experience phase is about communicating the prospect of the event to an external audience and enticing them to the event with the promise of something special. To a large extent it is about creating the anticipation and a sense of excitement, therefore the theme and 'look' associated with the impending event will act as a powerful attraction. Strategically designed communication will convey this to a likely

audience and instil in them an inner need to want to attend.

### 10.6 Understanding the planned-event experience

Planned-event experiences are then what events management is all about. People attend or participate in an event often seeking something specific from the experience and this is, initially, based on what pre-event communication they have had. They might be looking for something extraordinary, unique or special, or they might be seeking something educational or transformational. The idea that they are looking for an 'experience', though, is central to their decision to attend, and that applies not only to public, private and business events but equally to conferences, festivals and fundraising events. Therefore, argues Getz (2008), experiences and the meanings attached to them should be identified as the core phenomena of events and consequently 'if we cannot clearly articulate what the events experience is, then how it can be planned or designed? If we do not understand what it means to people, then how can it be important?' (Getz, 2008: 170). Getz is arguing that if event practitioners do not themselves understand the significance and importance of experiences then their capability in creating the right ones for guests has to be questioned.

This idea that we are seeking experiences has become prominent in the last 20 years largely because the corporate sector has adopted the concept of experience as a tool to make their businesses more competitive. In marketing, the old 4Ps have been replaced by a more psychographic approach to the consumer with 'experiential marketing' taking over and the emergence



of more complex approaches to marketing (Schmitt, 1999; Shukla & Nuntsu, 2005). In explaining what an experience is, Schmitt indicates that they are private events, the result of stimulation prompting a response, and they affect the entire living being. Furthermore, they are a result of direct observation or participation in events, and are not self-generated but induced. He argues that there are five types of customer experience that form an experiential marketing framework, namely sense, feel, think, act and relate. Experience providers then tap into these via 'implementation components' including spatial environments, communications and people.

Adopting a similar view but with a different approach, O'Sullivan and Spangler (1999) suggest that experiences are infused with special or novel qualities, that they are enhanced via personal and individual care, and that ultimately they are made by providers (or event managers) who are looking to immerse people in the experience that has been created. For them, experiences involve participation and involvement; a state of being physically, mentally, socially, spiritually or emotionally involved; a change in knowledge, skill, memory or emotion; a conscious perception of having intentionally encountered, gone to or lived through an activity or event; and an effort that addresses a psychological or inner need. They promote the idea that for something to be called an experience it must consist of the following five components or parameters of experience (O'Sullivan & Spangler, 1999: 23)

- 1 The stages of the experience – events or feelings that occur prior, during and after the experience;
- 2 The actual experience – factors or variables within the experience that

influence participation and shape outcomes;

- 3 The needs being addressed through the experience – the inner or psychic needs that give rise to the need or desire to participate in an experience;
- 4 The role of the participant and other people involved in the experience – the impact that the personal qualities, behaviour and expectations of both the participant and other people involved within the experience play in the overall outcome;
- 5 The role and relationship with the provider of the experience – the ability and willingness of the provider to customise, control and coordinate aspects of the experience.

A further approach to planning and understanding experiences is the notion of the 'experience realm' (Pine & Gilmore, 1999) which suggests that experiences are either passively or actively consumed and consequently offer a level of immersion or absorption. Within these dimensions an individual will more than likely seek and receive an experience realm that is then either educational, escapist, aesthetic or entertaining. It is possible that all four dimensions and realms can be designed within a single experience; however, such events are infrequent and highly complex. Thus it is argued that 'staging experience is not about entertaining customers; it's about engaging them. An experience may engage guests on any number of dimensions' (Pine & Gilmore, 1999: 30). By utilising the framework of the experience realm, events can be subsequently designed to purposefully engage guests in the dimensions appropriate for the event. This enables the event manager to develop a rationale for designing certain event elements. For different events, each



of the 'realms' or 'parameters' will have a different emphasis placed upon them, dictated by the event concept. So where the event is more participatory than active, the focus for designing the experience will be stronger in that aspect, and the event manager will need to address how and in what way that should occur.

### 10.7 Further tools for experience design

Designing event environments to engage guests in an experience requires foresight as to what type of experience is required and how it can be created. Designing and creating environments is a predictive skill based on the concept of the event. By anticipating the experience, design is able to predict the future (Morello, 2000). The previous section offered some suggestions about how an experience could be framed but perhaps more specific tools are needed. Failure to understand or appreciate these central concerns of experience will lead to a poorly designed event. Events thrive on promise since, unlike products or even services, guests cannot try them out before making a commitment to attend. The first and usually the only time an event is experienced is when it takes place. So the promise that the event will live up to its billing is paramount, and therefore what is called experience foresight is needed to ensure that the promise is kept. Designing experiences involves foresight and interpretation on the part of the designer to reflect the aims of the event and those of the client/organiser, and to try to ensure that guests interpret the experience as it was intended. There is no doubt it is a challenge to do this and design successful event experiences but equally there is no doubt that events management requires that deliberately designed experiences

are created. Events must be designed to provide meaningful experiences that people value from their engagement. There are 15 recurring types of experience valued mostly by participants and guest that have been identified (Diller et al., 2008). The list includes a sense of freedom and of wonder, a sense of validation, 'an understanding of enlightenment, a pleasurable feeling inspired by beauty and a sense of oneness and compatibility with everything around and associated with the event. Consideration of these value experiences and their relationship to a specific event can therefore give designers some basic and meaningful ideas to work with when they are creating the event.

Other existing tools for experience design have emerged out of the digital media field, and there are obvious synergies with models for understanding experiences. Berridge (2007), referring to the 'experience matrix' developed by Zoels and Gabrielli (2003), argues that adopting a clear human-based strategy for events management will enable event experiences to become ever more predictable. The experience matrix (see table 10.2) suggests therefore that foresight of experience can be also designed when consideration is given to the following human centric concerns:

Table 10.2 The experience matrix

- 1 Sensory
- 2 Tactile
- 3 Visual
- 4 Photographic
- 5 Auditory Impact
- 6 Intellectual
- 7 Emotional
- 8 Functional
- 9 Informative
- 10 Cultural
- 11 Core



To further illustrate the application of this foresight of experience design, the following examples have been used in conjunction with some of the seven design classes, previously referred to in section 10.1, that make up the design domain. These examples show how some of ideas of experience design can be specifically applied in practice to event design:

- ***Accomplishment through programme design.*** Many events offer guests the opportunity to achieve goals and gain a sense of satisfaction, such as sports events where participants can try out a range of sports, conferences, network events, and outdoor adventure and challenge events. How do guests leave an event with this feeling? One way to create such an experience is to design a varied programme of achievement, perhaps based on levels of ability or age, as is often done for sports events. Academic conferences often include 'new blood' presentations or works-in-progress or poster displays. At one teaching conference, for example, there was a 30-minute speed dating research session designed to get colleagues to discuss one another's research aims and ambitions, and to develop collaborative work.
- ***Community through catering design.*** These are events that require a sense of connection with others such as those that are network, charity, educational or issues based. Creative network sessions need deliberate design interventions and interactions. If left to chance there is likelihood that a portion of the guests will feel excluded or disenfranchised. A network experience designed by one UK catering company was to serve food at four stations in a room where no single station had a complete menu,

so guests had to visit another station. To add to the flow of movement and the connection with people, no tables and minimal rest zones were provided for guests to place their plates. The idea was to encourage assistance from other guests to find space or look after each other's food while someone else went for drinks, etc. This arrangement made it virtually impossible for individuals to acquire their food and drink without assistance.

- ***Wonder through production design.*** This refers to a feeling of being in the presence of great creation, more commonly referred to in events as the 'wow' factor. Many events are supposed to have this large element of surprise (Allen et al., 2005). Here again, this is not an easy element to quantify or describe. At many events and festivals, the right 'wow' can be the difference between success and failure. Traditional project management depends on the asset or deliverable being defined during the initiation phase. The surprise aspect of the event is often difficult, if not impossible, to describe. For some events, describing the 'wow' or surprise may lessen its value. It would be similar to describing the plot of a 'whodunit' mystery before reading the book. This means designing something that the guests can marvel at and look on, literally, in wonderment. Memorably, the opening to mega-events like the Olympics provides this. In Sydney 2000, Cathy Freeman, wearing a NASA all-in-one heat-protective suit stepped into a pedestal bowl high above the stadium seating to light the Olympic flame, seemingly setting herself alight as well. In 2008 in Beijing a performer appeared to be literally floating as he ran round



the upper tier of the stadium to deliver the final phase of performance before the flame was lit. An international knitwear company once presented their catwalk show at the London Fashion Show by building an ice-rink on a large cylindrical pedestal at the end of the traditional catwalk and dropping ice-skaters onto it who then modelled their new clothing range.

- **Sensory, visual, cultural and auditory impact through content and entertainment design.** In the week prior to the start of the 2009 Tour de France, the German techno-pop band Kraftwerk performed a concert at an unusual venue, the velodrome in Manchester, England. The velodrome is the base for Great Britain's indoor cycling track team and was an interesting venue for the hypnotic and metronomic rhythms associated with the music and also with track cycling itself, which creates a low reverberation as the bikes go round the banked ends. A more than usually momentous event was enhanced by the appearance of a quartet of Team GB Olympic cyclists racing around the banked track in tandem with Kraftwerk's performance of its stellar composition, *Tour de France*.

### 10.8 Event meanings and memorable experiences

As has been explored, event design is concerned with creating experiences that, by and large, should be memorable. Inevitably this raises the question of whether or not that has been achieved and the process for evaluating that achievement. Events are given meaning by the experiences encountered at them and by the images associated with them.

Guest and participant experiences are a result of having emotionally encountered interactions at the event. Images, conveyed through the media or other communication platforms, act as a message to an external audience (non-attendees, business, tourists).

What the images say is dependent on the event, and its size and scope, but both the corporate sector and municipal authorities have found that hosting events with strong imagery presents an opportunity to develop a destination image and also to enhance the life cycle of a city. An example of how carefully designed event experiences can transform the image of not just a city but a nation was witnessed at the 2006 World Cup in Germany. In an attempt to create a festival-type environment for all nations competing and all the various nationalities visiting Germany, the government, football authorities and city councils created a series of festival environments in and around the venues and cities staging the tournament matches. Using nearby parks and open space, including town squares, Germany offered a celebratory environment to visitors in an effort to combat its perceived image among overseas tourists as a dull, uninspiring destination. Employing carefully designed uses of technology, space, culture and entertainment, a series of festival events was created to supplement the football matches in an attempt to create a celebratory environment to offset the often tense environment that surrounds international football and the teams' respective fans. Consequently there were far fewer incidents of hooliganism compared to past events, and further research by the German tourist agency revealed that the perception of Germany among tourists was far more positive than before the World Cup.



### Case study 10.5 Designing experiences and animation

Resorts, museums, heritage sites, markets, stadia and shopping centres, for example, are all developing programmes of events. Attractions and facilities are increasingly realising the advantages of 'animation' – the process of programming interpretative features and/or events that may make a venue come alive with sensory stimulation and an appealing atmosphere (Getz, 1997). Animation describes a role played by people within a providing organisation that expands the range of provision. Animation is concerned with the experience of motion from a single purpose to a multifaceted one whereby guests and visitors are offered 'extra' activities or programmes. Rossman & Schlatter (2003) explain that in designing 'leisure services' the role of the animator can help extend visitors' experience dimensions. Typically, animators have become a feature of the hotel or tourist experience, providing additional guest experiences through a programme of activities and events. The aim of tourism animation is to satisfy the contemporary visitor's needs, desires and expectations considering active holidays. Nowadays, it has become a demand of the visitors that the holiday destination should offer extra advantages for the money they paid. Emphasis is placed on harnessing local creativity in developing new and engaging experiences for tourists which are characteristic of the destination in order to diversify the tourism product (Fernandes & Brysch, 2009).

#### Ski resort and travel operator engagements – generic

Ski holidays are a popular tourist activity where the supply of animation (or fun and entertainment) in the form of 'après-ski' activities is regarded as essential to the experience, and ski travellers are frequently exposed to boredom or unfulfilled promise by both resort and travel operator (Muller et al., 1997). Therefore two aspects to animation experiences emerge. On the one hand are the travel operators who have representatives in resorts dedicated to looking after clients who have booked their holiday with the operators. On the other hand are the resort representatives – people employed by the resort or region and who help provide services for all visitors to the resort.

#### Example A: Travel operator animation

A typical ski holiday package could be said to consist of two parts:

- Part 1 includes travel, accommodation, equipment hire, ski lift passes, ski tuition and the skiing itself;
- Part 2 includes food, beverages and entertainment – the so-called 'après-ski' experience.

Part 1 is largely functional and is seen as the core product of the holiday. Part 2 is a variable and is reliant on the ski experience becoming animated through a series of extended engagements. Such animated extras can include general après-ski activities that are non-specific to a resort, whilst others can be more specialised and based around specific resort characteristics. Travel representatives act as a fulcrum for the transmission and delivery of such opportunities which are exclusive to their clients. Such activities and events include:

- Catering animation.** This refers to afternoon specials, often offered in hotels and larger chalets as a relaxational and social networking session after a day's ski. These invariably feature local pastries and desserts, plus drinks including locally mulled wine. Hotels and chalets also offer a 'themed evening meal' once a week – for example local or ethnic cuisine. Sometimes this is accompanied by music or similar entertainment.





- **Programme animation.** This is for skiers who wish to explore the parameters of their resort. Travel company mountain guides take clients to quieter or remote sections of the resort ski area, often introducing them to undiscovered routes and trails. In a similar vein, they also organise day trips to nearby resorts. For example, skiers at La Plagne, France, may visit nearby Courcheval or Tignes.
- **Entertainment animation.** This includes guided tours of local pubs, as well as evening games sessions such as outdoor/indoor curling, quiz nights and group night rides on snowmobiles. In family-based accommodation, activities for children are arranged almost daily and include things like pool or table tennis events (for adults as well).
- **Content animation.** Chalet groups or hotel client groups may be invited to take part in special ski events. A common offer here is a timed and filmed slalom run that is then screened back at the hotel in the evening.

#### **Example B: Resort animation**

This can be a feature of a 'lively' resort such as Verbier in Switzerland or Val d'Isère in France where the range and level of built amenities provide plentiful opportunity for extended attraction. Many ski resorts seek to expand the range of visitor services they now offer, and this is apparent in the style and type of recent new developments in the French resorts of Arc at 1950 and Flaine at Monsoleil, where premium-style accommodation has been built along with shops, fitness centres and other amenities to create a mini-resort village within a larger resort complex. These and similar resorts offer visitor engagements designed to enhance their image as winter ski towns. There is often a range of provisions available to all visitors to the resort, such as ice-rinks, outdoor pools and tubs, cinemas, leisure centres, bowling alleys, shopping malls, paragliding, ski bikes, snowmobiles and so on.

- **Programme and entertainment animation.** Ski resorts now offer a calendar of events and activities that all visitors can attend. Obvious celebration events based around public, local and national holidays abound, with many providing, for example, fireworks displays to celebrate New Year. Some resorts where the ski area is only accessible by gondola (Mayerhofen, Austria) provide special evening 'stargazing' for guests, as well as a catering element. In other resorts (Plagne Bellecote), the main retail area is lit in the evening and offers 'donut' sledge riding and ice-car rally racing. Furthermore, many resorts act as host to winter sports events such as winter car rally championships and international ski competitions. In the latest trend, winter music festivals are becoming popular attractions for visitors with the Snowbombing Festival in Mayrhofen, Austria, the market leader.
- **Content animation.** Resorts such as Davos (Switzerland) position themselves as world-class conference and events centres as well as ski resorts, and offer a glittering array of services to attract delegates. They also promote themselves to the corporate event market, offering bespoke ski services and events to companies. For example, Whistler, Canada, has hosted a medical conference during its ski season while others are happy to lay on competition events and team-building challenges for larger clients.
- **Themed animation.** It is obvious that snow-themed activities proliferate. Almost every resort includes at least one end-of-season snow festival when ski guides and instructors perform a series of shows and tricks, as well as racing and jumping competitions. These are very much appreciated by resort guests who turn out in numbers to watch a showpiece event that is a combination of skill and pantomime.



Frameworks that can be used to explore the meaning of designed experiences include research with participants recording their feelings and thoughts at a different moment throughout an event. Using ethnography enables an understanding of what is taking place by direct observation, and recording participant interactions with each other and with the event objects. Interpretation of these actions is made in order to understand them, and interviews are usually conducted with various stakeholders to see if the experiences match the interpretation. This, though, is not a quick method for extracting meaning and while valuable, it is often impractical. Latterly,

some experiential event companies such as Jack Morton Worldwide have developed their own analytical tools to measure 'experience' at events. Naturally enough, these tools are not freely available but they have lead to much discussion about the nature of experiential events in the industry so that most 'industry' conferences in the past few years have included forums or panel debates on event experiences. As buzzwords go, in a developing industry, combining 'design and experience' is currently in favour and so it is paramount that events managers understand the relationship between the two and, importantly, how this translates into an actual event experience.

## Questions for research

- 1 Using the seven categories of design discussed in 10.1, consider each in turn and design the event experience for that category based on one of the following suggested event themes. You can repeat the process again and again for the different themes, and compare and contrast the creative ideas you come up with:

### *Suggested themes*

Art deco	Classic film or film genre
Classical music	Architecture
Brand experience	Fashion
Active adventure	Transport
Religion	Theatre
Gothic	Historical incident or event
Royalty	Music (any style, e.g. 1970's glam/heavy/punk)
Literature	Dance (any style, e.g. tango)
Sport (any)	Art (any period or idea, e.g. cubism)
Television (any programme)	

- 2 Pick a colour: red, yellow, green, blue, purple, brown, white, etc. Now design an event entirely around that colour. It does not have to be a dining experience and it does not have to be a total colour concept like the example in the chapter, but try to incorporate the colour as the overwhelmingly dominant theme. Alternatively you can attach the colour to known objects or symbols that are normally seen in that colour and incorporate those into your design.



- 3 Imagine you were asked to produce a 'design experience' survey to obtain guests' response and reaction to the event that could be quickly and relatively easily completed at an event. What types of things would you want include in it? Would you make the survey applicable to all events, or would you make it adaptable for different event types?
- 4 Visit a selection of, say, three public venues of a similar size. Where possible take photographs of the main space and make notes on the interior design. Now, drawing on the list of event types below, develop (a) a creative concept for the event at each venue, and (b) clear design ideas for creating the experience in that specific venue:
  - A themed product launch
  - A wedding celebration
  - A sports-award dinner
  - A 'taste of' event based on a specific country, e.g. Spain, France

### Recommended websites

Browse the following internet sites for interesting and informative information:

This site has lots of archive discussion on experiential marketing, podcasts and industry interviews:

Event Design Research Network – this is a new site and under development. It is a useful link to academics interested in research events and design: [http://fhrc.flinders.edu.au/research\\_groups/edrn/edrn.html](http://fhrc.flinders.edu.au/research_groups/edrn/edrn.html)

EVENTS: review: <http://eventsreview.com/>

Experience design – a very useful and regularly updated website from Nathan Shedroff. Nathan explores a series of theories and thoughts on experience and design: <http://www.nathan.com/ed/>

International Special Events Society (ISES) – mainly in the UK/Europe and the US, ISES often includes presentations from its conferences and has a list of industry members, many of whom work on creative events: <http://www.isesuk.org/>

Jack Morton Experiential Marketing Agency has published a number of *White Papers* on experiences, available to download by request: <http://www.jackmorton.com>

### Suggested reading

Berridge, G. 2007. *Events Design and Experience*. Oxford: Elsevier.

Getz, D. 2008. *Event Studies*. Oxford: Elsevier.

Pine, J & Gilmore, BH. 1999. *The Experience Economy: Work is Theatre & Every Business a Stage*. Boston: Harvard Business School.





# Designing event experiences

Graham Berridge

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## Introduction

The principal starting point for understanding event design is to consider this question: to what extent can planned event experiences be designed? Events form part of all our lives and they have been used to signify important aspects of our culture throughout the ages (Shone and Parry 2004; Tassiopoulos 2010) with records showing that celebratory and ceremonial events were taking place over 60,000 years ago (Matthews 2008a). The range of different event types is considerable, with at least eleven event 'genres' being identified, ranging from business to festivals to social and sports events (Bowdin *et al.* 2006). Getz (2008) prefers to identify events firstly through their function, i.e. why they are held, and lists eleven 'functions', such as premier, cause-related, spectator and participant events, and secondly through to their form, of which he suggests there are twenty-three, including festivals, parades, religious, visual exhibitions and sports. In the last decade, the significant growth in undergraduate courses in event management and subsequent study of events has tended to focus upon the praxis of events, that is the management, design and production process involved in creating planned events. As Getz (2008) argues, though, there is also need to develop theory and explore the meanings of events. He suggests that with the maturation of the study of events so there will be an increased awareness of what events are and what significance they have for society as the field of events is studied by researchers in other disciplines.

A common prefix often used before the word events is 'special', indicating that an event has some kind of uniqueness that makes it special, and by definition it is therefore not something that is normal or everyday. A popular expression used to describe the special factor contained within these events is that they have a 'wow' factor (Malouf 1999). This 'wow' often takes the form of a theme for the event, and as such there is no doubt that for certain occasions it requires knowledge of the resources needed to create such thematic settings (Matthews 2008b). Green (2010), for example, has stated that we will be debating and interpreting the meaning of the 2008 Olympic Games Opening Ceremony in Beijing for years to come, such was the complexity and depth of meaning conveyed by the elaborate design. It is within such occasions, then, that there is, as Getz (2005) notes, the opportunity for an event to provide a range of cultural, social and leisure-based experiences that go beyond those of the everyday routine

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experience, and it is these occasions that we call special events. Nevertheless, some events, for example business events or meetings, may not contain such special or unique moments that are memorable and could be said to be more pragmatic or prosaic in purpose. They may contain less artistic design and creative content, since any theme is likely to be less visually stimulating than in an entertainment event; nevertheless, design and creativity themselves are not intrinsically absent either, since such events are still purposefully planned occasions that have been designed and created to provide certain experiences (Vanneste 2008)

### Planned event experience

Modern event management is largely about delivery of experiences; this applies irrespective of the size and type of event (Silvers 2004), and today's attendees are sophisticated consumers. Important to the understanding of the concept of events is the appreciation that such moments and occasions are a part of either a planned or unplanned process (the planning and management of an event) that is undertaken in order to produce this experience. Thus Getz (2008: 9) argues that the 'core phenomenon of event study is the planned event experience and its meanings'. The connecting factor of all the different types of planned events is that there is intent to create some kind of experience for either audiences and/or participants. This idea of creating experiences (irrespective of whether it is unique and memorable) is not only central to the practice of event management but it is also central to our way of consumption. It is argued that consumption has evolved beyond the simple purchase of products and services into the differentiated pursuit of experiences (Toffer 1972; Holbrook and Hirschmann 1982; Schmitt 1999; Jensen 1999).

Experiences result from engaging people in a personal way, and because of this their value (of the event) persists long after the work of the event stager is done (Pine and Gilmore 1999: 12–13). *Ergo*, it is of great interest to deepen our understanding of how such event experiences are designed and created. This chapter argues that the very creation of such planned event experiences should be part of a deliberate and integrated design-based process whereby each element of the event is carefully mapped out in order to produce an environment (or setting) where there is the opportunity for experiences specific to that event to be consumed, and that this includes the pre-, actual and post-event stages. Design activity, in this context, therefore ranges from initial concept of the event through to all the successive elements that are required to ultimately deliver the experience (Allen 2002; Silvers, 2004; Berridge 2007, 2009; Goldblatt 2008; Van der Wagen 2008).

### Concept of experience

The concept of experience has become more widespread in the last twenty years, largely because the corporate sector has adopted experience as a tool to make its businesses more competitive, and its influence has grown in importance across the business, tourism, leisure, hospitality and event sectors as organisations operating within the sector exist to provide consumers with experiences (Pettersson and Getz 2009). Experiential marketing has and is becoming more popular in the events industry through the use of live events in marketing communications, and is replacing print media as a more appropriate way of engaging potential customers (Carmouche *et al.* 2010). There is clear evidence of a more psychographic approach to the consumer replacing the old 'four P's of marketing with 'experiential marketing' and with it the emergence of more complex approaches (Schmitt 1999; Shukla and Nuntsu 2005). As an evolution of the product/service axis of provision, experience management has emerged as a way of retaining competitiveness

in global markets (Morgan *et al.* 2010). Pine and Gilmore (1999) coined the term ‘experience economy’ to describe how the relationships between provider and consumer had advanced beyond price and into ‘experience’, where unique and memorable experiences played a key part in consumer decision-making (as opposed to simply price).

In their examination of the emergence of experiential marketing O’Sullivan and Spangler (1999) argued that such consumer offerings needed to be enhanced, infused and ultimately made to successfully connect with people. Pre-event communication forms the basis for such an experience by providing a pre-experiential excitement and anticipation. It incorporates three separate phases: need recognition, alternative search and preparation (O’Sullivan and Spangler 1999). Subsequently studies have critically examined the production and management of experiences (Jensen 1999; Schmitt 2003; Morgan 2010), the role of customers in the formation of experience (Pralhad and Ramaswamy 2004); the creation of experience as a business and innovation (Darmer and Sunbo 2008) and the evaluation and analysis of experience (Berridge 2007; Gilhepsy and Harris 2010). Within event management experience has been initially linked to the emergence of brand events where, rather than use more traditional forms of communication (i.e. advertising), companies have used the direct connection with customers that a live event can offer. Subsequently experiential events like La Dolce Vita, which promises the ‘taste of Italy’ for people who are not in Italy, have emerged and developed successfully. First appearing in 2006 at London’s Earl’s Court, the 2011 version will be at the Business Design Centre and the event offers a celebration and experience of all things Italian. Naturally enough, these brand or concept events have in turn drawn the attention of researchers and academics, who have begun to apply the framework of experience to develop a more detailed understanding of not just these but of all types of events (Morgan 2006; Berridge 2007; Getz 2008; Nelson 2009; Pikkemaat *et al.* 2009).

In explaining what an experience is Schmitt (1999) indicates they are private events, the result of stimulation prompting a response that affects the entire living being. People either collectively or individually attend or participate in an event and they are doing so on the basis that some type of experience will result. Several authors have begun to develop an understanding of what an event experience is and to widen the knowledge base of what they consist of and how they are formed by drawing upon work undertaken in leisure and tourism (Berridge 2007; Getz 2008; Pettersson and Getz 2009). Latterly Morgan *et al.* (2010) have presented a compendium of papers on the consumer and managerial perspectives of experience within a tourist and leisure context, whilst Darmer and Sundbo (2008) have reflected upon how experiences emerge out of creation and innovation on the part of a provider. However, the nature of experience is complicated. Experience is not static and is always open to the effects of people’s interaction, and it is also multi-dimensional (Lee *et al.* 1994; Botterill and Crompton 1996; Hull *et al.* 1996; Li 2000) and multi-faceted (Rossman 2003; Ooi 2005) across the course of any given time period. Experiences are said to have three dimensions to them: the conative, cognitive and affective dimension (Mannell and Kleiber 1997). These represent, respectively, the behaviour and what people actually do, how they make sense of experience through awareness, judgement, etc., and lastly the feelings and emotions that they use to describe the experience. The components of experience, on which people (as consumers) base their evaluation, consists of several hedonic aspects such as satisfaction, sensation, emotion and imagery (Holbrook and Hirschmann 1982) whilst Csikszentmihályi’s research (1975, 1990) postulates that achieving optimum flow is the desirable outcome of all experiences. Considering there is great diversity of event types then the range of these experiences is also hugely varied (Getz 1997) and serves to demonstrate the complex nature of experience design.

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## Design and event management

Design has a large and lengthy list of definitions (see Berridge 2007) which often relate to the discipline in which that design is practised (architectural, graphic, communication, interior, product, etc., etc.). There is a numerous, almost exhaustive list of sources for explaining design (for example, Cooper 1995; Markus 2002; Potter 2002; Lipton 2002; Byars 2004; Ullrich and Eppinger 2004; Beverland 2005) and several of these approach it from the point of view of the application of artistic skill from within a discipline. What ultimately emerges, irrespective of the platform used for design, is that it is essentially seen as a 'purposeful activity' in which not only do design ideas emerge to solve a problem, but the occurrence that solves the problem is the result of the predetermined activity of designing. In this way design can be seen as a purpose, intention or plan of the mind to solve a problem. Such an idea of design can also be understood as being expansive rather than restrictive: it posits the concept of design beyond the realms of the artistic who are gifted with the appropriate level of knowledge and skill and into the realm where a planned and deliberate process is undertaken to reach a specific outcome or set of outcomes (Monroe 2006; Berridge 2009). In this view design therefore becomes an integrated aspect of any intentional or deliberate effort to solve a problem.

Within the practice of event management, 'Design is essential to an event's success because it leads to improvement of the event on every level' (Brown and James 2004: 59). Nevertheless, its use is often limited to certain aspects of the event process. A useful summary of the general consensus on design within event management is provided in a glossary of terms by Sonder, who states that design is 'the incorporation of a themed message along with audiovisual, entertainment and musical elements' (Sonder 2004: 411). This appears to immediately confine design to a limited role with no other function within an event other than when there is a theme. This is not an uncommon association, as Berridge (2007) observes, since many sources on the study of event design characterise it in relation to creativity, such as conceptualising (Goldblatt 2004), entertainment experience (Silvers 2004), staging (Allen *et al.* 2005), event design (Yeoman *et al.* 2004), ambience (Shone and Parry 2004), creativity (Sonder 2004), theming and event design (Allen *et al.* 2005), designing and decorating (Monroe 2006), props and design (Malouf 1999), co-ordinating the environment (Silvers 2004). What also emerges here is use of a wide range of terms to explain where event design is applied, and outwardly there does not appear to be a specific common language of terms that are consistently used to reference where design takes place and what it affects other than that it is creative.

But is design therefore only a feature of the lived moment of a creative theme, a feature only of that momentary setting, a setting that according to Goffman (1959) involves such things as the physical layout, furniture, décor and similar artefacts that help provide the scenery and stage props? Whilst not fully suggesting that a design agenda embraces all aspects of the planned event, Nelson (2009) in a paper discussing enhancing experience through creative design, draws upon theories of the relationship between individuals and their settings. These are contained in the theoretical frameworks of Goffman's dramaturgical perspective, Kotler's ideas on atmospherics and Bitner's components of servicescape to suggest that design does have a far more wide-reaching purpose and application than theme and decoration. Design itself does not have to be a creative act although many events clearly have a creative aspect to them (Nelson 2009). Whilst event design can be seen as the combination of form and function, aesthetics and practicality, it is more than just creating a theme or idea, and should in fact address the whole process involved in the presentation of the live event to the client (Allen 2002; Allen *et al.* 2005). An event exists to solve the problem that is presented by the rationale and concept of having the event in the first place (Watt and Stayte 1999; Allen 2002; Salem *et al.* 2004;

Bowdin *et al.* 2006). The successful solution to the problem is achieved through a purposeful approach to designing and delivering the event. Essentially this process leads to the creation of the event environment from which guest experiences will emerge (Goldblatt 2004).

## Experience design

The discussion above revolves around what design contributes towards the event experience. In separating out the design elements utilised to create enhanced experiences for attendees, design becomes a tool used in the construction of the relationship between individuals and their physical setting (Nelson 2009). In constructing this relationship the emphasis is placed on a deliberate series of actions that culminate in the lived experience (Rossman 2003). This raises the question of the extent to which experience itself is consciously designed and for whom. Is it for all stakeholders, are there prime stakeholders or is it only for the guest or participant stakeholder? The answer is that all stakeholders involved in the event will have experiences, but different ones. Such experiences will be dependent largely on each stakeholder's expectations, and this applies as much to sub-contracted suppliers of events services as it does to guests (Getz 2008). With guest experiences that are purposefully planned engagements, the role of design becomes one of harnessing and directing the skills and knowledge of individuals involved in the events planning and management towards creating experiences that engage, inspire, educate and entertain, each of which is central to the event's success.

Designing and creating such experience environments is a predictive skill based on the concept of the event. Whilst this can be a specific act or acts of creativity, it can also be a more general process designed to generate experience. By anticipating the experience, design then becomes a tool able to predict the future (Morello 2000). Pettersson and Getz (2009) contend, however, that 'experiences cannot be fully designed, as they are both personal (i.e. psychological) constructs that vary with the individual, as well as being social and cultural constructs related to influences on the individual and the (often) social nature of events' (p. 310). This may well be true since an event designer cannot possibly know all the variables and multiples of experience that a group of individuals relate and respond to. Consequently there are some events that

adopt a more holistic approach in attempting to attract as wider audience as possible and provide experiences that can touch all of them at some point during the event whereas other events are broken down, perhaps via branding or theming, in order to appeal to particular groups of individuals.

*(Berridge 2007: 193)*

Advancing this viewpoint, such approaches to experience design have been labelled 'generic experiences' and 'specific event experiences' respectively (Pettersson and Getz 2009). Some event experiences do have some shared commonalities whilst others seemingly have very little apart from the event itself. Drawing disparate people towards the event is a key aspect of pre-experience and can depend upon what factors serve as key determinants of participation, the importance of the characteristics or descriptors of the participants, the benefit being sought from the experience or something inherent in the experience itself (O'Sullivan and Spangler 1999: 75). So designing and creating an experience requires foresight of the nature of interactions between people and the relationship they have with each other and the physical environment.

An event ultimately merges customer service with design, experience creation and emotional connection and so a different model identifying what is event design is perhaps appropriate, and one that is, for example, based on a combined a set of tools or principles that include atmospherics, servicescape and dramaturgy (Nelson 2009).

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Perhaps there should be a distinction made between the overall concept of the event experience created 'by design', which we might even refer to as event architecture, and the creative aspects of an event that are produced by the 'application of design' tools and skills, something we might more logically call artistic or aesthetic design and creation. Design then becomes not a single-medium tool, but one that transcends several in order to create successful experiences. Within this understanding, experience design is employed at several levels whereby it is also concerned with the internal organisation, structure, culture, processes and values within an organisation that allow it to successfully create experiences and respond to both market and customer needs (Shebroff 2001).

### **Connecting and creating designed experiences**

Experience then becomes the result of directed observation or participation in events and as such they are not self-generated but induced (Schmitt 1999). Here Schmitt is not arguing that individuals within an event setting are incapable of interacting and generating experience, but he is advocating that the event experience setting is selectively created to induce such an experience. A marketing framework for customer experience should then focus on five types, namely sense, feeling, thinking, acting and relating. By connecting with these via implementation components such as spatial environments, communications and people, experience providers are able to perceive how experience environments are created. In this way experiences can then be infused with special or novel qualities of experience that aid their marketability; they can be enhanced through either personal or individual skill of the provider which characteristically results in providers making an experience that people can immerse themselves in (O'Sullivan and Spangler 1999). Experience seeking may then rest upon the attainment of something fulfilling, unique or special; it could also be something that is educational and transformational. Equally it could be something that is socially and culturally enhancing as well as something that is challenging, participative, re-affirming or passive, and it can be something that is based on business connections and network relationships.

Whilst it can be seen that any decision to attend an event can be based on numerous factors, experience is without doubt a central driving force. Therefore the logical continuum of this viewpoint is that the experience creation must be a prime consideration when designing the event. Getz rightly argues that 'if we cannot clearly articulate what the events experience is, then how it can be planned or designed? If we do not understand what it means to people, then how can it be important?' (2008: 170).

### **Designing event experiences**

To reiterate, at this stage, the argument is that if the core phenomenon of an event is the experience, then event design effectively becomes the platform upon which it is built. Whilst event design can help create the entire system and process of planning, managing and delivering an event, including the environment and setting, what it cannot do is guarantee how people will respond to it or whether the stimuli provided will be received in the way it was intended. This raises the question of how an event experience is designed, and what principles might be used to do this.

Discussing the anatomy of the event presents a clear argument for event design and experience to be an overarching philosophy:

Remember that you are packaging and managing an experience. This means that you must envision that experience from start to finish, from the guests' point of view. Imagine every minute of their experience. Identify event elements that will build on previous successes,

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elements that will take advantage of opportunities and strengths, and elements that will mitigate challenges, weaknesses, and threats.

*(Silvers 2004: 5)*

Design as an underpinning framework used in this context then addresses the whole experiencescape (O'Dell and Billing 2005) of the event and in many ways this itself can be seen as extension of Bitner's (1992) servicescape concept. Hence the design of an event should immediately be concerned with the broader or generic range of the event experience. This idea of broader experience creation, involving interpretative frameworks and physical arrangements, locates experience creation not purely as an artistic expression but as one that includes more peripheral circumstances and has a wider perspective that includes the organisational and managerial aspects of the construction of the experience (Darmer and Sunbo 2008). It emphasises the importance of the customer: 'experiences occur whenever a company intentionally uses services as the stage and goods as the props to engage the individual' (Pine and Gilmore 1999: 11). Experience then occurs through the creation of such an intentional construction that engages customers (Darmer and Sunbo 2008).

Some conceptual ideas on designing experiences have commented upon the utilisation of a theatrical and dramaturgical metaphor (Grove *et al.* 1992; Rossman 2003; Morgan *et al.* 2008; Nelson 2009). Getz (2008) argues that a model for planned event experience should have liminoid/liminality at the core, drawing directly on the work of Turner (1969), who explained the term as the detached state of being in association with ritual. Roughly translated this means the event zone becomes the special place or time out of time of a unique event experience where *communitas*, the shared temporary state removed from ordinary life is commonly shared. Any experiences involve:

participation and involvement; a state of being physically, mentally, socially, spiritually or emotionally involved; a change in knowledge, skill, memory or emotion; a conscious perception of having intentionally encountered, gone to or lived through an activity or event; an effort that addresses a psychological or inner need.

*(O'Sullivan and Spangler 1999: 23)*

Any attempt to design an experience should be based on knowledge of how guests participate and become involved. In order for something to be created that can justifiably be called an experience they further explain that five key parameters of experience must be addressed by the experience provider (or creator):

- 1 The stages of the experience – events or feelings that occur prior, during, and after the experience.
- 2 The actual experience – factors or variables within the experience that influence participation and shape outcomes.
- 3 The needs being addressed through the experience – the inner or psychic needs that give rise to the need or desire to participate in an experience.
- 4 The role of the participant and other people involved in the experience – the impact that the personal qualities, behaviour and expectations of both the participant and other people involved within the experience play in the overall outcome.
- 5 The role and relationship with the provider of the experience – the ability and willingness of the provider to customise, control and coordinate aspects of the experience.

*(O'Sullivan and Spangler 1999: 23)*

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Another conceptual approach to designing experiences is the notion of the ‘experience realm’ (Pine and Gilmore 1999). Framing their model within four dimensions of experience involvement – passive, active, immersion or absorption – an experience will be sought and received as being either one of or a combination of educational, escapist, aesthetic or entertaining. They contend that ‘staging experiences is not about entertaining customers; it’s about engaging them. An experience may engage guests on any number of dimensions’ (Pine and Gilmore 1999: 30). The experience realm offers a framework for experience design where purposeful decisions are made to engage guests (or stakeholders) depending upon which dimensions of the realm are pre-eminent.

### **Example 1: The Silent Disco**

The Silent Disco is a variant on the club disco event. There is no grandiose theme or spectacular entertainment production, no fabulous backdrop or decoration, but the event experience rests firmly on an integrated approach. The concept is to subvert the classic ‘disco’ to allow guests to experience a more personal music interface but in public, where interactions with other clubbers rests not necessarily on collective listening and participation but on a segmented quasi-individualistic encounter. The disco has no audible public sound system; instead, guests are given their own personal audio cans that have a track selector console in them. This gives the wearer the chance to personally choose, usually from between one to five channels each playing a different music type (e.g. R’n’B, House, Latin, Urban and Indie). The system is not dissimilar to one found on long-haul flights. With up to two or three hundred people choosing music tracks this creates a maelstrom of uncoordinated and unstructured movement as people dance and respond to different tracks and different beats. Unlike the usual disco that thrives on an atmosphere generated by a collective soundscape, the Silent Disco thrives on the absurdity of no sound and the peculiarity of unconnected rhythm. One of the oddest aspects of this is the fact that guests can talk to each other in perfect silence or, as has been observed, listen to other people singing or humming along to a particular track. This is unlike most club discos, which have booming PA systems making conversation often difficult.

In explaining what is needed to design experiences Rossman (2003) advocates that those engaged in producing them need to understand the phenomena they are dealing with, a point echoed by Getz, as discussed previously. Drawing upon the work of Irving Goffman’s theory on symbolic interaction (1959), and the subsequent research and advocacy of Blumer (1969) and Denzin (1978) Rossman proposed that experience designers needed to adopt a methodological tool whereby six key elements that make up any planned occurrence are understood and applied by the experience designer. These are: interacting people, physical setting, objects, rules, relationships, animation. Rossman asserts that in order to fully understand and apply the model we must first recognise the three points that need to be developed. These are the nature of objects, how meaning is derived, and how interaction unfolds and permits the ongoing interpretation of meaning. During the course of designing the experience any single element may constantly change as a result of participants’ interaction, as they interpret for themselves the meaning of the elements they encounter, and so the nature of the experience itself may constantly change. The value of using SI theory is the recognition that any reality is constructed and that it enables us to explore the different levels and types of interactions that take place in any given environment (Berridge 2007).



## Creative design tools

The relationship of design to creativity is a significant one and it is usually regarded as the innovative and inventive aspect of the event; thus it is hardly surprising to see design and creativity linked.

In terms of tools or principles of design there are some key considerations that the aesthetic creation part of an event can address. Many of these conform to accepted models of the principles of design and creativity and there is a useful summary of these in practice in Berridge (2007, 2010a). They include, though, an awareness of the basic principles of design and aesthetics (Allen 2002; Monroe 2006; Goldblatt 2008), the characteristics and techniques of creativity (Matthews 2008a) and the elements that event décor should address (Malouf 1999). Van der Wagen (2008) suggests that there are only certain elements of an event that can be designed, namely theme, layout, décor, technical requirements, staging, entertainment and catering.

Getz (2008) advocates that there are four general categories of event design elements – setting, theme and programme design, services and consumables. These headings include a whole range of features of an event such as layout and décor, activities, theme, stimulation, gastronomy and so forth, suggesting that the role of design is integral to the event's success.

## General process design

Although this also seems to suggest that design has a restricted role, there is a very important expanded range for design to be applied that includes signage, crowd management, servicescape, staff, volunteers and hidden management systems. In contrast to other uses of design, this approach suggests that non-creative design does exist and would perhaps be seen to be part of the planning and management processes of event management. There is process design evident in space planning, seating arrangements, queuing systems, registration management, technology, programmes and marketing, amongst many others. To illustrate the point, a significant amount of research has focused on the impact of events (Ritchie and Smith 1991; Spilling 2000; Emery 2002; Hall 2004; Bowdin *et al.* 2006; Getz 2008; Van der Wagen 2008; Berridge and Quick 2010) and there is a clear implication that event impacts are intended (although there are also unintended impacts). The point is that intended impacts are part of a purposeful plan to generate (usually) positive and beneficial impacts to an area. As Bob (2010) illustrates, event factors such as the process of incorporating sustainability have a direct relationship to how the event is designed, whilst Singh *et al.* (2008) observe that specific indicator tools need to be designed into the process at an early stage if sustainability is going to be effectively implemented and monitored.

### Example 2: Designing a registration experience

This case study draws attention to the seemingly innocuous feature of event registration, something that is rarely categorised as design-based or creative. A university holds its annual teaching conference on its main campus. The event is an opportunity for all staff to contribute to, discuss and participate in a series of lectures, seminars and workshops on a theme linked to a topic of relevance to learning, teaching and assessment practice. Registration for the event is held in the main entrance foyer. Delegates are 95 per cent pre-registered. In 2008, delegates were issued with a simple pre-laminated name badge that attached to a garment by safety pin. Eight staff not pre-registered attended the event. With no name tag prepared, they were given a sticky label with their name handwritten upon it. It became a source of amusement and comment amongst colleagues

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about the 'second-class' status placed upon those receiving their label badges. In 2009 a company specialising in registration, OutStand, were contracted to create name badges using a mobile, on-site laminator. The Pro-Vice Chancellor of the university attended the event, and had not pre-registered, but within less than thirty seconds he had been given a fully laminated name badge with neck cord. So impressed was this person that he made a note of putting it into his 'report' on the event for the Academic Quality Office and the university's in-house weekly news e-bulletin, praising the conference team and the event. Post-conference feedback in 2008 had included several negative comments about the registration, whereas in 2009 the feedback was 100 per cent positive.

Such a use of design, as a function of previous iterations of an event where the processes of delivery have been proven, does not have to be uniquely creative; in other words, it does not have to offer any new solutions to a problem as it can use existing ones that were previously developed. Here design does not have to have the stamp of creativity to it, but nevertheless, by looking at these elements within the event that ultimately contribute to the overall experience, it becomes clear that design is a central, not peripheral, component. Marketing and communication messages require design, as do travel and transportation arrangements and welcome entrances. The physical environment that will create the atmosphere is design-led and the food and beverage provision requires a menu design as well as staff delivery and uniform. An activity within the event requires a programme design, or choreographing to deliver the requisite experience. Ultimately the event experience can be 'personalised' through tangible gifts or mementos, and finally an evaluation of the event requires an instrument to collect that data. Such a research instrument has to be designed.

### Event experience analysis

If event design is the purposeful activity to create event experiences, then it is logical to argue that it can consequently provide more opportunity to understand the meaning of such experiences, not only to guests, but to all stakeholders. Research and analysis of the dimensions of leisure and tourism experiences focuses upon the phases of experience, the influence on the experience or on the criteria or outcomes of experience (Morgan 2010). Interesting tools within experience design have emerged, for example out of the digital media field, with obvious synergies for understanding event experiences. The 'experience matrix' developed by Zoels and Gabrielli (2003) argues that adopting a clear human-based strategy for event management will enable event experiences to become ever more predictable. The experience matrix suggests therefore that foresight of experience can be designed when consideration is given to the following human-centric concerns: sensory, tactile, visual, photographic, auditory impact, intellectual, emotional, functional, informative, cultural, core. The argument follows that with this matrix as a design value there is a ready-made framework for the basis for research into responses to such experience creation.

Analysis of event design, experience and meaning requires attention. Given the range of different event types discussed earlier, there is enormous scope to study the influence design and creativity have on experience and meaning, both in the totality of an overall event as well as in the specified creative components. The principle guiding such analysis should be the underpinning concepts used to create the event experience in the first place. Qualitative research into how events are experienced and understood is essential if we are to deepen our understanding of how people respond to the range of stimuli created by and within event environments. For example, the theory of semiotics has been adopted (White 2006; Berridge 2007, 2009) to help establish meanings of key elements of an event experience, namely symbols contained within an

Olympic ceremony and the images created to promote the Tour de France. There is a need to 'create knowledge' of events through inter-disciplinary approaches that discuss experience and meaning, antecedent and choices, management planning and design, patterns and processes and outcomes and impacts (Getz 2008).

In an interesting industry development to the discussion around experience and design, the term 'Meeting Architecture' (Vanneste 2008) has recently emerged in relation to meeting, incentive and event planners. The concept or 'manifesto' is being created to enhance the overall effectiveness of meetings by globally creating Meeting Architecture. The term appears to have emerged out of a growing recognition that the key feature of meetings, the designed environment and experience of delegates, has not been studied sufficiently to give meaningful evaluation of the planned outcomes, and that existing ROI methodology is not very receptive to measuring individual responses.

### **Example 3: Martin Vanneste and Meeting Architecture**

Meetings and conferences form an integral part of the events sector. Rarely, though, is design or creativity associated with planning them, unless it is linked to food and beverage provision or room layout. Vanneste, President of the Belgian Chapter of MPI (Meetings Professional International) has developed Meeting Architecture, in which he calls for a paradigm shift for people involved in the sector. He argues that meetings are about creating experiences as much as any other event, and that to create 'an experience that would stick ... requires creative, technical and technological tools ... (and) lots of time and resources in analysing, designing and executing the meetings on the content side'. Advocating that all meetings be treated with a holistic approach where the design of the event objectives and the content to deliver them is paramount, he refers to a Meeting Support Matrix as a tool to help people organise meetings. The tool consists of a 3 x 5 table which has Learning, Networking and Motivation on the vertical axis (the action terrains) and Conceptual, Human, Artistic, Technical and Technological on the horizontal axis. Using the model is the 'starting phase in designing the meeting'. Vanneste ties the Meeting Architecture model into the increasing use of ROI, and suggests that by designing meetings content to generate outcomes will inevitably impact on the ROI, particularly at the level of participant satisfaction and learning. Interestingly, and whilst there are obvious differences, the tool has some similarities with J.R. Rossman's Designing Leisure Experiences model, which in turn is based on the theory of symbolic interaction and the work of Goffman, Blumer and Denzin respectively. Using the model enables the development of the idea and is a basis upon which to anticipate (or predict) the results of the engagement (experience) and how that can be facilitated.

Meeting Architecture, by its very name, supposes a purposefully designed meeting environment, where the experience created is conducive to delegates attaining specific outcomes. Its development should be followed with interest to see what methodology or framework emerges that will help further our knowledge of the process and meaning of designed experiences within a meetings context.

### **Summary: Towards a framework for designing planned event experiences?**

The challenge facing anyone developing an event is largely the same: the need to create the event environment (Goldblatt, 2008) that in turn gives people the experience (or outcomes) they seek.

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An event can be seen as a simulated stage-managed environment, creating authentic moments of experience within that setting for guests and participants. The debate on whether or not the event experience is authentic is explored in various tourism literature in relation to mass tourism attractions and destination development (Wang 1999; Ryan 2003; Ritzer 2004; Pearce 2005). But whilst the managed attraction environment itself may be inauthentic, and this itself is highly subjective (Uriely 2005), the experience of guests at an event is not, since all individual event experience is authentic (Silvers 2004). The ultimate success of the event depends on this ability, therefore, to follow a design-led approach that allows the creation of the environment to meet and satisfy guests' expectations.

Design should be regarded as the basis of the framework for successful event experience production. Event design is the concept of a structure for an event, the manifest expression of that concept expressed verbally and visually which leads, finally, to the execution of the concept (Monroe 2006: 4). Aligned with the need to produce the experience, design becomes an integrated, systematic series of actions that are purposeful at every stage of the event execution. Expressed in simple terms, if the event is not being designed to deliver certain experiences, such experiences are in effect being left to chance. The less chance, the more predictability there is in the experience outcome. But chance itself can be a design decision to create moments where unexpected interaction and experiences evolve. The experience outcomes of any event are undeniably influenced by the interactions of guests and participants; does the design of event experiences seek to provide appropriate environments for such to occur? Figure 18.1 offers a speculative framework by suggesting that what we call event management needs a paradigm shift in order to place event design as the central core element of practice where design awareness should resonate through every decision stage of the event planning and management process. The Event Experience Design Framework suggests that if event design underpins all initial decisions about planning and managing the event, then the planned experience becomes the core of all subsequent action, leading to final analysis that considers the true nature of the overall experience.

Once a decision has been made to hold an event, then two considerations must immediately occupy the mind: that the event is a planned experience influenced by the nature or genre of

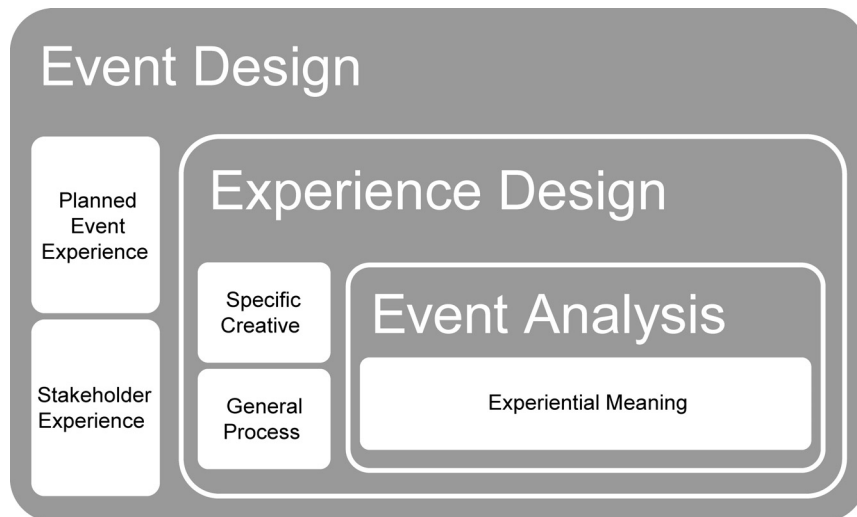


Figure 18.1 Event experience design framework

the event, and the experience of stakeholders, with an emphasis on the prime stakeholder experience. At this stage the event manager should embrace event design as a solution and objective-setting tool to ensure that the types of experience envisaged in the concept are integrated through purposeful action. Using foresight of experience design enables a focus on: (1) specific creative elements of the event and (2) general process elements of the event. At this stage all the event objectives and outcomes should be understood as a part of a deliberate plan to design an experience. Lastly, with design being so integrated, the analysis and evaluation of the meaning of the experience can be analysed and evaluated in relation to decisions taken to design each element of the event.

This is an advocacy that design should not be regarded simply as a singular component reflected only in the act of creativity and applied to the part of the event that is concerned only with décor and entertainment. Instead it should apply holistically to the very foundation upon which the event premise is built. Event experiences do not of themselves exist, they have to be designed and created from scratch. In order to create such experiences event planners, managers and designers need sets of tools to employ and equate design with overall planning and purpose as well as with theme and creativity. By understanding that design permeates all elements of the event, the nature of event experiences becomes a (potentially) predictive skill based on purposeful action.

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### The promotion of cycling in London: The impact of the 2007 Tour de France Grand Depart on the image and provision of cycling in the capital

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# The promotion of cycling in London: The impact of the 2007 Tour de France Grand Depart<sup>†</sup> on the image and provision of cycling in the capital

Graham Berridge

*There is a growing recognition of the importance of events in society and of the wide ranging impacts that are characterised through economic, tourism, political, social, environmental and cultural impacts. The reasons for staging events are many and varied. Two areas that have attracted research are the impact on the image of a host and the legacy of the event. Research demonstrates that staging an event can enhance the image of a host and that it can also act as catalyst for development. What is less clear from research though is how a host city uses an event to act as a catalyst for any kind of cultural or social change, since many events have limited impact beyond the immediate aftermath of their occurrence. The purpose of this paper is to explore how a host city might use a major event to enhance its image to an internal (as well as external) audience in order to subsequently promote specific social and cultural development and, in doing so, provide a platform for a meaningful legacy to the host community that extends beyond the immediacy of the actual event. The paper demonstrates how the image of London was enhanced by carefully selected promotional messages that, in turn, provided a basis for its reinvention as a cyclised city.*

*Keywords:* Tour de France; Event tourism; Image enhancement; Legacy; Cycling provision

## Introduction

In July 2007, the Tour de France Grand Depart (TDFGD) took place in London and attracted between 900,000 and 1.4 million spectators (Social Research Associates, 2007). The host organiser, Transport for London (TfL) acting on behalf of the Mayor of London, had a main objective of ‘making London a city where people of

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<sup>†</sup>The Tour de France Grand Depart usually refers to the Presentation, Prologue and Stage 1 of the Tour De France. Graham Berridge is at the School of Hospitality and Tourism, University of West London, Ealing, London W5 5RF, UK. E-mail: graham.berridge@uwl.ac.uk

all ages and abilities have the incentive, confidence and facilities to cycle whenever it suits them' (Social Research Associates, 2007, p. 5). In the period between 2000 and 2006, cycling in London increased by 72%, more than any other city in Europe (TfL, 2006). This was though from an exceptionally low base of less than 2% of the population. In hosting the TDFGD, TfL wanted to use the excitement to help persuade more people to cycle, not just as a sport but as an everyday and non-polluting way of getting around the city (TfL, 2006).

Understanding of the events field has now matured and where once events were studied under special, mega, hallmark, and specific events, they are now also studied with reference to event tourism (Getz, 2007). Academic research into sports tourism is a part of this development (Gibson, 1998) and sports tourism events are a significant feature included in many studies that attempt to understand the role and impact events have on society (Bowdin *et al.*, 2006; Gammon, 2002; Gibson, 2003; Higham, 2005; Ritchie & Adair, 2004; Smith, 2001; Standeven & DeKnop, 1999; Weed & Bull, 2004). Hallmark events, as an identified subset of the different event types (Hall, 1992; Getz, 2007), have particular appeal because of their sport-tourism crossover and social and cultural benefits. Defined as 'one-time or recurring events(s) of limited duration, developed primarily to enhance awareness, appeal and profitability of a tourism destination in the short and/or long term', these hallmark events have uniqueness, status, and significance that attract interest and aid in their success (Ritchie, 1984, p. 2). Their appeal lies in their transient nature that enables them to sustain this uniqueness and interest since they usually only occur once a year at most (Gilbert & Lizotte, 1998). These kinds of events can also be a significant catalyst for change, elevating the host's global stature and turbo-charging its economic, political, and social development' (Deloitte, 2010, p. 1) and they are extremely useful tools for attracting tourists through the reimagining of locations (Hall, 2004; Ritchie & Smith, 1991), with sport playing a central role in that process and in developing place image and identity (Bale, 1989; McGuirk & Rowe, 2001; Smith, 2005; Whitelegg, 2000). This paper seeks to examine how a public body can use the impact of an event to enhance a city's image and, in turn, provide opportunities for future development by integrating legacy into planning and policy.

### **Sports, Tourism, and Hallmark Events**

Research suggests that sports tourist events can provide immediate economic benefits for the community (Baade & Matheson, 2004; Barget & Gouguet, 2007; Dauncey & Hare, 2003; Foley, 1991; Gratton *et al.*, 2001, 2005; Ingerson, 2001; Oldenboom, 2006; Shibli & Gratton, 2001; Whitson & Macintosh, 1996) and that such events also have the potential to contribute to socio-cultural benefits such as sports participation, development, and health promotion (Higham, 2004; Weed & Bull, 2004). Carlsen and Taylor (2003) also explored how urban renewal, commercial development, and social legacy can be created as a result of hosting such events. Enthusiasm and competition to host events has grown considerably in the past 20 years (Horne, 2007) with nations, regions and cities beginning to develop and adopt clear strategies

for attracting such events to their locale (Bowdin *et al.*, 2006; Deloitte, 2010; Hall, 2004, 2010; Whitelegg, 2000). The use of such events, particularly where it involves public sector investment, is built on a belief they bring benefits to the location and its community (Pugh & Wood, 2004). While measuring these benefits (and associated negative impacts) is not without problems (Barclay, 2009; Crompton, 1995; Crompton & McKay, 1994; Fredline & Faulkner, 2001; Higham, 1999; Whitson & Horne, 2006) research has shown that single sports events can bring long-term economic and social benefits to the host location and its community (Pugh & Wood, 2004).

### Event Impact and Legacy

Fredline *et al.* (2003) suggests that while it is apparent that events have the potential to generate positive impacts, a balanced appraisal of the success of an event needs to consider the total cost/benefit package including social impacts. However, many existing impact studies often ignore the more intangible impacts (such as image) in favour of economic ones, and some others are far less widely documented or researched (Carlsen *et al.*, 2007; Mason & Beaumont-Kerridge, 2004; McPherson & Flinn, 2008). Yet socio-cultural impacts are often the ones that most readily affect the host community (Getz, 2005; Hall, 1997; Whitson & Horne, 2006), although analysing them is made difficult by their complex nature, and by the fact that they often require longitudinal data collection (Jura Consultants, 2006; Langen & Garcia, 2009). Ritchie (1984) suggested a range of possible ways to evaluate the impact of hallmark events which included the participation in the specific related sports activity and increase in the level of interest and cultural development. In a study of research on the cultural impacts of large-scale events (excluding mega-events), Langen and Garcia (2009) are critical of the extent to which meaningful impact is achieved. Wood and Thomas (2006) urge that event assessment should include an evaluation about what an event is worth to society, to its owners, and to all stakeholders. In their move towards a development of Social Impact Body of Knowledge, they suggest that 'key indicators' should be used to embrace specific goals – leverage for urban renewal, enhanced health and wellness, and especially any legacy for the event in the form of further policy initiatives such as cultural development, integration of events with social and community development, and specific funding programmes with cultural themes.

As a part of policy and strategy for urban tourism, image promotion and enhancement have been significant for many cities (Ashworth & Voogd, 1990; Echtner & Ritchie, 1993; Blain *et al.*, 2005; Gallarza & Saura, 2002) with local community benefits often also accruing (Boo & Busser, 2006; Getz, 1997; Higham & Ritchie, 2001; Jago & Shaw, 1998). How such images are formed and given meaning is complex and requires clear communication (Boo & Busser, 2006; Burgess, 1980; Gold & Gold, 1995), and where an uncluttered message has been communicated (Selby, 2004), image improvement has been evident (Wicks, 1995; Mules & Faulkner, 1996; Smith, 2001). Consequently, promotional strategy needs to be coherent and precise with a defined product and the target consumers identified and accessible (Selby, 2004, p. 25). However, image enhancement can be limited to being immediate and temporary if

no future development is identified (Ryan, 1991). Hence the need to focus on the long-term image legacy that an event might generate.

According to Getz (2007, p. 319), 'the term "legacy" applies to all that is left over from the event (or events) as a positive inheritance for the future generations, or as problems to deal with'. Legacy creation is underpinned by the idea 'that it represents something of substance that will enhance the long-term well-being or lifestyle of host residents in a very substantial manner-preferably in a way that reflects the values of the local population' (Ritchie, 2000, p. 156). Legacy considerations should be integrated within event planning and a commitment to future development; otherwise the results will be, at best, uncertain (Searle, 2002). For the public sector, investment in events requires careful consideration of post-event stages (Porter, 1999) and understanding the true legacies of major events requires awareness and consideration of implicit and intangible impacts (Cashman, 1999). Getz (2007), citing the work of Ramshaw and Hinch (2006), asserts that events have several important roles to play, including community-building, urban renewal, cultural development, and fostering national identities. Kasimati (2003) also provides a useful guide to the potential long-term benefits to a city of hosting major sports events including newly constructed event facilities and infrastructure, urban revival, enhanced international reputation, increased tourism, improved public welfare, additional employment, and increased inward investment.

### **Understanding Event Communication**

All events convey messages as part of a general communication process resulting in a presentation of images, texts and symbols that a prospective audience can extract meaning (Berridge, 2007). How a promotional message is understood requires analysis in order to understand how image formation takes place. Recipients of a message have an expectation of meaning based around what has previously existed. Semiotics, the meaning of signs, 'encompasses the relationship between a sign and its meaning/s, the way in which signs are combined into codes, and the wider culture within which signs and codes operate'. It can be efficiently applied to the analysis of visual texts (language and image) and is also a particularly useful methodology for deconstructing aspects of cultural representations and experiences (White, 2006). Semiotics combines a range of theories, methodologies, and disciplines (Chandler, 2002) and is viewed as a vital tool for interpreting the meaning of signs and the combination of stimuli expressed through words, sounds, images, and objects (Barthes, 1957; Baudrillard, 1988; Culler, 1985; Danesi, 1999; Eco, 1976; Fiske, 1982; Sebeok, 1994). A sign then 'stands for something (its object) to somebody (its interpreter) in some respect (its context)' (Peirce quoted in Masterman & Wood, 2006).

The idea is to deconstruct meaning out of the signs as they appear in the immediate reality or setting. In constructivist theory, the meaning is not simply contained in the text, and it is part of a negotiation (construction) between writer (creator) and reader (Chandler, 2002). The question this raises is what is the meaning of the message disseminated through the images used in event promotional strategies? Barthes (1977)

believed that every sign supposes a 'code' at level higher than the 'literal' level of denotation, where a connotative code can be identified. When an image is produced, it becomes an object that has been 'worked on, chosen, composed, constructed, treated according to professional or ideological norms' and at the 'level of reception', the photograph 'is not only perceived, received, it is read, connected by the public that consumes it to a traditional stock of signs' (Barthes, 1977, p. 19). Reading and understanding the purpose and meaning of the messages involves interpreting visual codes (for static images) and visual and audio codes (for example, film). Peirce (1982) identified and categorised the patterns of meaning in signs as iconic, symbolic, and indexical. An iconic sign represents what it looks like; a symbol is determined by convention and it is based upon agreement and learned through experience; an indexical sign acts as a clue that links or connects things (in nature).

In 1957, Barthes used semiotics to analyse the Tour de France, the 'organisation of the tour and the media representation of it' (Dauncey & Hare, 2003, p. 18). His work considered how the signs and symbols of the event are interpreted to give meaning. Significantly, and especially relevant for the TDFGD, he states, 'the tour is the best example we have encountered of a total and thus ambiguous myth; the Tour is both a myth of expression and a myth of projection, and therefore realistic and utopian at one and the same time' (Barthes quoted in Dauncey & Hare, 2003, p. 19). In this instance, Barthes gives rise to the possible use of messages contained within an event to determine a future (utopian) goal. Any such future is then dependent upon what happens after the event takes place.

## Method

With the above considerations in mind, a qualitative research design was developed to consider the social and cultural impact and legacy of London hosting the 2007 TDFGD. This event was chosen because it is one of the world's major sporting and hallmark events that can act as a significant catalyst for change and social development (Deloitte, 2010). Furthermore, its origins as a sports tourist event for the different regions of France (Dauncey & Hare, 2003) meant it also had a capacity to attract tourists and to actively promote the place image of a host. It also presented the opportunity for on-going and reflective post-event research into legacy.

Burdge and Vanclay (1996, p. 32) state that 'Social impacts include all social and cultural consequences to human populations of any public or private actions that alter the ways in which people live, work, play, relate to one another, organise to meet their needs, and generally cope as members of society'. This affords for a range of factors to be studied, as has previously been discussed, but also presents problems of range and dimension. Getz (2007) maintains that evaluation of events needs re-direction away from economic measures, and in their respective discussion of the role and methodological approaches towards creating knowledge Denyer and Tranfield (2006) and Dixon-Woods *et al.* (2006) reflect on the growing recognition of the capacity for qualitative studies to inform policy and practice. Kelly (1980) argues that qualitative research is the best way to understand leisure (including tourism),



especially where interaction through symbols and personal change over time are being considered. Robertson *et al.* (2009) and Creswell (2003) advise that in order to deepen the understanding of the impacts of events, researchers should be able to adopt integrative, or blended, methodological approaches based around well-specified themes.

The key themes from the literature that acted as a foundation for the method for this study were: event host's aims; destination image enhancement; capacity to act as a catalyst for change; and after-use legacy through policy initiatives. Using these themes, the research was divided into three parts:

- Part 1 briefly focuses on establishing a context by looking at policy for cycling in London, and understanding why London hosted the TDFGD; specifically, what were the aims of the event?
- Part 2 is a semiotic analysis of promotional messages based on the 'Get Behind It' (the Tour De France) campaign slogan. This was split into two sections considering: (a) four promotional posters; (b) a 30 s TV advert. These promotions were chosen because they were directed at the general public, an important consideration in terms of image promotion and the event aims.
- Part 3 examines the policy initiatives for cycle provision of TfL and the Mayor of London since 2007 to identify whether any longer term event legacies had been evident in planning and policy (Masterman, 2004, p. 68). Reference is also made to secondary research data on cycling participation and the Tour de France.

#### *Part 1: Policy for Cycling in London*

There are a number of agencies and organisations involved in 'managing' London. However, there are three that are key to the hosting of the TDFGD. They are inextricably linked and should be regarded, by and large, as functioning as one unified unit. They are: the Mayor for London, whose job is to manage the economic and social functions of the city; TfL, created in 2000 as a result of the Mayoral elections as the integrated body responsible for the Capital's transport system and to implement the Mayor's Transport Strategy for London; and the London Development Agency, a body established by the Mayor and responsible for translating plans into action, specifically the Economic Development Strategy.

The baseline figures for cycling in London are set against levels for the year 2000 when there were approximately 250,000 cycle trips daily (TfL, 2010a). This is around 2% of the population of London, and a very low figure compared with places like Copenhagen and Amsterdam which have well over 50% (TfL, 2010a). The initial context for cycling development in London is the Transport Strategy produced by the first Mayor of London, Ken Livingstone, published in 2000. However, this strategy did not include any cycling targets or specific developments. Nevertheless, cycling initiatives were emerging, and in 2002, Mayor Livingstone established the Cycling Centre of Excellence at TfL to manage the proposed 900 km series of city wide routes called the London Cycling Network, although by 2005 less than 50% of these routes had been completed (Golbuff & Aldred, 2011). The policy situation

changed in early 2004, however, with the publication by TfL of the London Cycle Action Plan. This plan set out what appeared to be bold targets, such as a 200% increase in cycling by 2020 and 5000 new cycle spaces installed by the end of 2005. Other policy initiatives under discussion at the time included setting up a team to enable London to attract and develop major events to be called 'Events For London' (LDA, 2005). Parallel to this, a bid was put forward in October 2004 to host the 2007 TDFGD. Subsequently Mayor Livingstone's Economic Development Strategy (2005) included specific reference to London becoming a major events destination, and London's decision to bid for and stage the TDFGD was aligned to this strategic framework from the outset. The key motivators behind the bid were:

- to firmly position London as a city capable of delivering major complex sporting events, and with a clear passion for sport;
- to attract visitors and visitor expenditure;
- to deliver incremental economic benefit to London;
- to promote London as an exciting destination and cycle-friendly city;
- to further develop partnerships working towards the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games (LDA, 2005).

In conjunction with this, and as host organiser, TfL objectives were stated as:

- to promote cycling in the capital;
- to market London on a world stage and encourage tourism;
- to demonstrate London can bid for and win major sporting event (SRA, 2007).

It was recognised at the outset that with good planning and management the event could serve as a powerful tool to deliver a long-term legacy and assist with local government's cross-cutting agendas (TfL, 2010a). Hosting the TDFGD appears to have been linked to key strategies by London's public administration and there is a combination of aims for the event that reflects points discussed earlier in the literature. Although the word image is not referenced in specific terms, there is a clear implication that image enhancement is linked to the promotion and marketing of London as a destination and as a cycle-friendly city. These aims suggest that hosting the event and promoting the destination are linked policies (Gallarza & Saura, 2002) and that such aims extended beyond immediate economic outcomes to provide a meaningful legacy (Cashman, 1999; Hall, 2004; Masterman, 2004; Pugh & Wood, 2004; Ramshaw & Hinch, 2006).

### *Part 2: Semiotic Analysis of Promotional Messages*

Using semiotics to understand how image meaning in relation to the destination was construed revolved around three key questions: What are the dominant visual images? How are they described? And what do they symbolise? Each of the four posters and the TV advert were separately deconstructed to explore: the point or message intended by the makers; what visuals stood out and made an impression; and what symbolism was seen in each text. Each text's findings were coded separately and then triangulated for similarities.



*Posters: findings and meaning*

The posters (Figure 1) show visual similarities with all being part of a unified theme linked to the promotional campaign of 'Get Behind It' (the Tour de France). This can be seen as a rallying call to the British public to persuade them to turnout to support the event. 'Get Behind It' has overtones that White (2006) noted in the call for volunteers at the Sydney 2000 Olympics, where it is communicated as a sense of pride to be present ('don't let the nation down'). So it is a plea to support the event, almost a yearning cry from the organisers that 'we' need 'your' help to make this work by getting spectators to line the streets.

This call is specifically supported by Poster D a part of the same campaign but a slightly different message aimed at getting spectators to the event via TfL-signed



**Figure 1.** The four posters.

routes. All four posters have similar design attributes in terms of content consisting of a set of (non-professional) cyclists riding along a yellow road with a backdrop of iconic London landmarks. The use of amateur cyclists supports the appeal to everyone to come along, but it particularly suggests some aspirational element for all cyclists that they too can ride in London. The yellow road itself is symbolically linked to the iconic TDF race leader's yellow jersey. Within cycling, the eponymous reference to the champion is the yellow jersey, signalling the leader of the tour. The colour yellow dominates TDF history and mythology (Dauncey & Hare, 2003) and it is a resonant feature in nearly all TDF promotional activity. But the use of yellow, in western culture, also acts as a powerful metaphor to take a personal journey, from one point to another. The 'yellow brick road' refers to the Wizard of Oz story and Dorothy's adventure which has been referred to as a 'road movie' that takes the character on a journey of discovery culminating in the end point of 'over the rainbow' (Celeste, 1997) and has also been used to identify with personal growth of an individual (Alibrando, 2007). This road cuts through London and is flanked by tourist landmarks. The Posters A and B show Tower Bridge and the London Assembly Building, while posters C and D show a cityscape including St Paul's Cathedral (replacing the Scarecrow, Tin Man, and Lion of the Oz story). The combination of images, colour, and movement are at once an invitation to come along to the spectacle of the sporting event, but they also have another more crucial purpose and message for the future. They are an invitation to go on a journey, to attend the TDF and to venture out as a cyclist. Ultimately, they offer a glimpse of a potential future London where cycling is integrated within the fabric of the city landscape, a place where cyclists and cycling are encouraged every day (a promise of the rainbow). The use of recognisable tourist landmarks extends to the message to potential visitors who, if they come to London, will be coming to a city where cycling is part of the culture.

*TV advert: findings and meaning.* The advert was a TfL promotion that ran for 30 s and was screened on commercial television in the weeks leading up to the event. It showed a casually dressed cyclist (again a non-professional) in a yellow top heading out on his bike, across a cobbled street, being joined by a small group of other cyclists, two of whom are in red and green tops. As the story unfolds more cyclists join the group and a race develops as they enter the road intersections around the Bank of England. The scene then cuts to Waterloo Bridge and the cyclist's race over it with the London Eye in the background. The scene finishes with the words 'Le Tour de France get behind the yellow jersey' on screen, followed by the details of the Grand Depart. In the background there is a longshot of the group of cyclists riding across the bridge flanked with iconic landmarks in view. The sound accompanying the footage is characteristic of France. There is an electro pulsing rhythmic beat akin to that of Jean Michel Jarre that reflects the cyclists pedal movements with a melody played on a piano accordion, a typical French folk instrument, in what can be described as a 'folklorique' style. Throughout there is a voiceover quietly repeating French words and phrases in a synthetic tone. The sound is

reminiscent of Kraftwerk, who had a European hit with a track called ‘Tour de France’, and which, in the UK, acted as the soundtrack for TV coverage of the race in the late 1980s and early 1990s. The words and images are a moving compliment to the static posters discussed above. They draw upon the same references – cyclists on the streets of London, iconic landmarks, the ‘Get Behind It’ slogan, and the ubiquitous colour yellow. However, the advert extends the appeal to ordinary cyclists because all of those in the ad are dressed in everyday clothing with no cycle attire in sight other than helmets. The passage of film of a single cyclist being joined by others along the journey is, once again, an invitation to people to both support the event and to be cyclists. It is an invitation to come along on the journey. But perhaps the most important part of the advert is that the cyclists are riding on either side of the road with no cars in sight. They have a total presence on the streets without the danger of cars. The message here is that cycling is, and can be, safe for everyone. Finally, as in the four posters, this offers the possibility of cycle presence in the capital and lays a foundation for its development.

These collective messages are strong. They are drawing people to the event and they are anticipating the big spectacle of the event, but they are linking this to the future, to the possibility of ordinary cyclists being a central part of the cityscape. The campaign and promotion help create the image of London as a cycle city and raise the question, inevitably, of how that will be sustained post-event. There is evidence here of a coherent promotional strategy that is essential for image enhancement (Selby, 2004). However, if this imagery is to have any legacy beyond the immediacy of the event, there has to be evidence of a longer term integrated policy and strategy, clear aims, and specific funding (Wood & Thomas, 2006).

### *Part 3: Long-Term Policy and Strategy for Cycle Provision*

Part 1 examined policy initiatives that led to London hosting the TDFGD. However, the long-term promotion of cycling in London would require a series of initiatives to be sustained over several years. In this section, the main activities of TfL and the new Mayor of London, Boris Johnson (who succeeded Ken Livingston in 2008), are identified. Core among these activities was the Cycling Action Plan (CAP), with several further initiatives implemented based on this plan. However, the key question is to what extent did the TDFGD through the CAP act as a catalyst for cycle development and how did this occur.

Initially, investment in cycling increased from £5.5m (in 2000) to £55m in 2008 and £110m in 2009 (TfL, 2010c). This investment allowed a series of specific measures to encourage cycle participation to be introduced between 2007 and 2009.<sup>1</sup>

- *Cycle Parking Plan* was a co-ordinated plan for delivering cycle parking at all suitable Underground, Rail and DLR stations, and River Piers. This included a programme to provide secure and free cycle parking on street and in parks to meet the demands of cycle commuters and leisure users. This created 147 schemes with approximately 40,000 spaces.

- *London Cycle Training Partnership Scheme* co-ordinated school requests for free cycle training through London boroughs, and linked into the Local Implementation Plan funding requests to TfL. Cycle training for 20,000+ children was delivered.
- *London Cycle Network Plus (LCN+)* continued to develop and by the end of 2008 two-thirds were complete.
- *Local Access Strategies* were directed by TfL where small-scale interventions in boroughs were supported financially if they aided cycle safety and access (e.g. road closure, 'no entry' and 'one-way' exemptions).
- *School Cycle Parking Programme* provided 12,000+ spaces through parking stands, shelters, and lockers at schools and colleges across London.
- *Cycling on Greenways Scheme* led to the provision or improvement of largely off-road paths and tracks that are suitable for use by cyclists and pedestrians. In 2007/2008, 22 km of Cycling on Greenways routes were implemented.
- *Cycles and HGVs Partnership Scheme* involved the Surface Transport Panel working with the freight industry and the Police to better understand the issues involved and actions required to address the safety matters arising from conflicts between large vehicles and cyclists. The number of HGV's directly involved in the deaths of cyclists had risen from 6 to 9 per year between 2003 and 2006.
- *Share the Road Scheme* was a TfL-led partnership working to reduce anti-social and illegal activities by cyclists and other road users through awareness raising and enforcement campaigns.
- *Community Safety Plan* outlines how to further improve safety and security for cyclists on London's transport network.

In addition, there were several marketing activities by TfL designed to promote cycling. These were:

- London's Annual Walking and Cycling Conference (April 2009);
- 'You're Better Off by Bike' (A promotional campaign encouraging behavioural change and modal shift);
- 'Moon Walking Bear' cycle safety advert (2009);
- 'Catch up with the Bicycle' campaign (2009);
- Cycling and HGV safety film promoted to cycling clubs and cyclists;
- London Cycle Guides (The third edition of the London-wide cycle maps was published in 2008);
- TfL also promoted its schemes and future plans at three successive editions of the Cycle Show held at London's Earls Court in 2008, 2009 and 2010.

To complement these initiatives, there were a number of TfL-planned mass participation rides. Originally sponsored by Hovis in 2007, and with a target of 30,000 participants cycling through closed roads that took in major London landmarks such as St Paul's, Westminster, Whitehall and the London Eye, cyclists were connected to the central route through six cycle hubs in boroughs in the north, south, east, and west of London. Now sponsored by Sky, and renamed the London Skyride, the 2009 event attracted over 65,000 cyclists with 55 feeder routes coming in to the centre

from outer London boroughs. In 2010, approximately 85,000 cyclists took part (TfL, 2010b). Professional cycle racing events also took place in London in this period with stages of the Tour of Britain and the Tour Series featuring each year since 2007, supported by the Events for London team.

Perhaps the most significant post Tour De France development, and the culmination of this 3-year spread of activity, was the publication in 2010 of Mayor Johnson's 'Cycling Revolution London' policy document incorporating the Cycle Safety Action Plan. Cycling Revolution London sets out a series of major features and programmes to be achieved to make London a cycling city (Figure 2).

In the forward, to the document, Mayor Johnson set out 10 conditions to be achieved for a 'cyclised London':

- (1) Cycling recognised as a major transport mode right across the Capital, from central London to the outer boroughs.
- (2) Streets and spaces where everyone respects each other's right to use the road, where they stick to the rules of the road, and where everyone recognises their duty of care to other road users.
- (3) A reduction in cycling casualties, with a particular focus on reducing the risk of collisions between cyclists and HGVs.
- (4) An increase in secure cycle-parking on streets, in workplaces, and at stations and schools.
- (5) Cycle theft tackled through dedicated police attention so that people can be confident that they will find their bike where they locked it.
- (6) Cycling promoted as an enjoyable, everyday, healthy activity.
- (7) Cycling embedded into the way our city is planned and run.
- (8) Investment in cycling maximised – from both the private and public sectors.

A key part of the policy was the announcement that TfL were going to create Cycle Superhighways and a Cycle Hire Scheme. The Cycle Superhighways are meant to offer safe, fast, direct routes into central London from outer London. The first two routes opened in late summer 2010, with 10 more planned to be introduced by 2015. TfL claim that they are building these highways 'to improve cycling conditions for people who already commute by bike and to encourage those who don't to take to pedal power. This will help cut congestion, relieve overcrowding on public transport and reduce emissions' (TfL, 2010b, p. 12). To help equip London's workplaces for the Cycle Superhighways, other initiatives have been introduced to assist people to start cycling on the routes. For example, workplaces close to the routes can apply for free initiatives such as cycle stands, cycle training and cycle maintenance sessions, as well as promotional materials for display.

The Cycle Hire Scheme, also launched in 2010, is a public bicycle sharing scheme for short journeys in and around central London. The aim of scheme is to:

- provide people with a greater choice of transport;
- provide a greener, healthier and sustainable way to travel;
- be easy to use for short trips around central London;

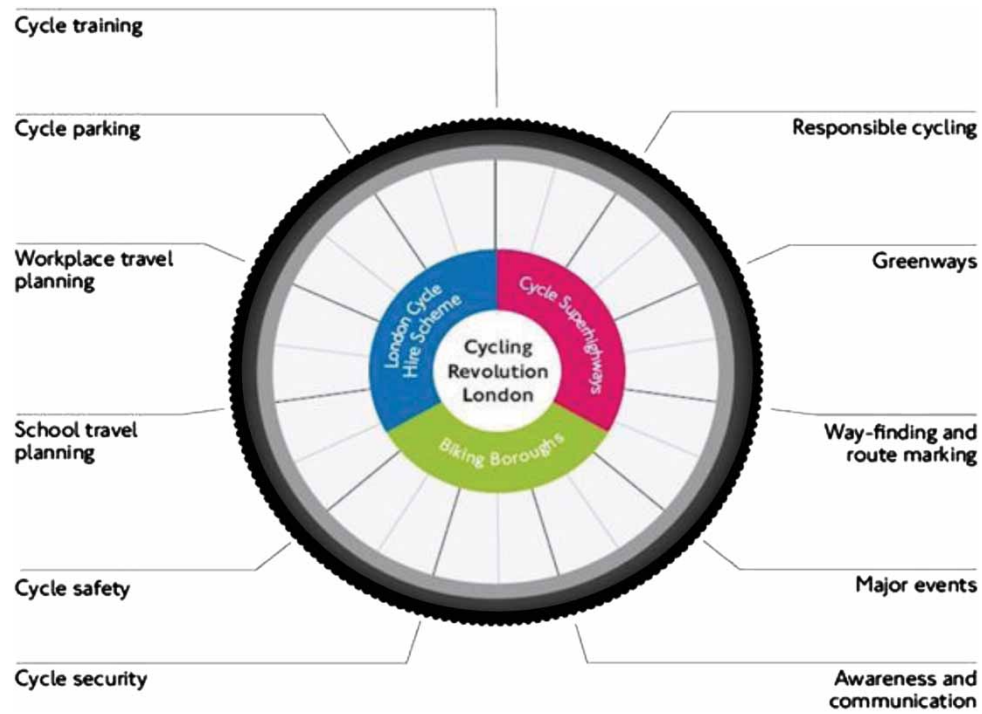


Figure 2. Key programmes and projects of Cycling Revolution London (TfL, 2010b).



- be available 24 hours a day, every day of the year;
- reduce congestion on the tube and buses;
- hopefully encourage the switch from driving to cycling (TfL, 2010b).

By the end of 2010, there were 5000 available bikes at 344 docking stations with around 8180 docking points (GLA, 2010). Bike use has peaked at almost 30,000 trips a day. The scheme is supported by Barclays Bank, and following an initial £25m investment, Barclays have provided a further £25m with plans to develop hire facilities with 2000 more bikes and 4200 docking stations into West London (London.gov.uk, 2011).<sup>2</sup>

## Conclusion

Deconstructing the promotional messages of the TDFGD shows that an attempt was made by the host organiser to present an image of London as a city in which cycling is part of the cityscape. There is the image of cyclists basking on uncongested roads glowing in lycra, set against a backdrop of some of London's most famous buildings, and there is the urban cyclist, also on uncongested roads, seen to be aspiring to be a racer. Both images suggest, in their own ways, that cycling can be an integral part of London's cityscape. As Selby (2004) suggests, such messages offer an impressionistic concept of place, whilst at the same time confirming Smith's (2001) idea that the image presented is potentially attractive to external viewers. The juxtaposition of cyclists and London's historic sites seeks to embed the cyclist within the urban environment by using symbolic representations to construct an image (Beerli & Martin, 2004), strengthen the perception of the image (Gartner, 1993), and, to some extent, reinvent the image of London (Pugh & Wood, 2004). The promotional 'Get Behind It' campaign puts the cyclist as a central partner or feature of the cityscape and potentially lays the foundation for future policy development (Blain *et al.*, 2005). In the 3 years since the TDFGD took place, TfL has clearly followed up the initial impact of the event with a series of schemes and plans to harness the interest created in cycling. Furthermore, dissemination of information through news and other stories (SRA, 2007), which can be interpreted as message stimuli (Chandler, 2002), correlated nicely with TfL's promotional messages. It appears that this led to a positive response among the public, both in terms of the event and in encouraging people to take up cycling (TfL, 2006).

The TDFGD can be seen as a sports tourism event bringing visitors into London, but also as sports tourism event that showcases cycling. Its target audiences were both external and internal, and this was evident in the promotional material studied. However, the TDFGD can also be seen as an event that has a legacy and that has acted as an impetus to cycle participation and travel in London. The event was seen by TfL as an overwhelming success in terms of spectators, promotion of cycling and image enhancement (SRA, 2007). This paper suggests that the 2007 TDFGD has indeed acted as a catalyst to cycle provision in London. By creating key messages through the use of carefully selected images and text, TfL was able to position

cycling as an integral part of London's cityscape. The image and promotion of the event encouraged several thousand cyclists to take to the roads in the immediate follow-up events. In the three years since the TDFGD came to London, provision for cycling has seen year-on-year development through a combination of policy initiatives and funding (Golbuff & Aldred, 2011). Such policy developments and initiatives appear to have sustained the legacy and impact of the TDFGD, and TfL seems to have been able to overcome what Ritchie and Smith (1991) suggest is a 'legacy decay' if steps are not taken to keep links with the sport visible.

The messages linking the TDFGD together with a London cityscape in which cycling is embedded have been sustained by the post-event investment in cycling. This investment culminated in the 'Cycling Revolution London' policy document in 2010, setting out how provision will be developed over the next five years in order for London to be truly classed as a 'cyclised city'. The arrival and expansion of the Cycle Superhighways and the Bike Hire scheme will further embed cycling as a sport, as a leisure activity and as a commuter option into London's social, environmental and cultural base, and subsequently will serve to enhance the image of London as a cycle friendly city, both for residents and visitors. TfL have been able to use the strategic value of the TDFGD because they have made it apparent that the cityscape itself is able to support the messages promoted by the event. The use of any single event in this way can only have a chance of success if it is able to appeal to the community (Ueberroth, 1992) and it appears that the 2007 TDFGD in London has managed to do that. Ultimately, as a sports tourism event, the TDFGD has been shown to contribute to social and cultural development and to health promotion, outcomes recognised as very positive for any single sports tourism event (Higham, 2004; Weed & Bull, 2004).

## Notes

- [1] Information here is drawn from a range of publicly available data prepared by TfL, LDA, Cycle Touring Club, and London Cycling Campaign.
- [2] [http://www.london.gov.uk/media/press\\_releases\\_mayoral/mayors-flagship-barclays-cycle-hire-celebrates-first-birthday](http://www.london.gov.uk/media/press_releases_mayoral/mayors-flagship-barclays-cycle-hire-celebrates-first-birthday).

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# The impact of the 2007 Tour de France Grand Depart on cycling in London: a review of social and cultural legacy

(This paper has been subject to peer review.)

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## Abstract

The impacts of events, both positive and negative, is recognized as occurring in several ways, notably through economic, political, social, environmental and cultural impacts (Bowdin et al, 2010). What is less clear from research is how a host city uses an event strategically to act as a catalyst for urban socio-cultural change, since many events have limited and intangible impact beyond the immediate aftermath of their occurrence. Drawing on a range of secondary material and using five key indicators for successful social and cultural impact (Wood and Thomas, 2006) the paper demonstrates that the bidding, organisation and delivery of the Tour de France Grand Depart was not undertaken in isolation but was contained within a broader strategy to promote and develop cycling in London. The paper documents and charts a series of key initiatives from up to 2011 that have enabled London to make significant interventions in terms of cycling provision and participation. It suggests that the host organisation Transport for London, working under the auspices of the Mayor for London, have implemented a series of post-event initiatives to develop provision and have thus deflected what Chalip (2004) suggests is common of such events: that only immediate benefit accrues with no significant legacy.

**Keywords:** Tour de France; cycling; provision; participation; policy.

## 1. Introduction and background

The Tour de France Grand Depart (TDFGD) provides a suitable event to study because of its history as a commercial product to boost the sales of a newspaper and to attract tourists to the distinct regions of France (Dauncey and Hare, 2003). Unusually for a 'hallmark' event it has a history of partnerships with hosts outside of France offering either a start, parcours or finish for one of the 19 or 20 stage race days that make up the event. Historically, and this goes back to both pre and immediate post-war iterations of the event, stages of the route have passed through Belgium, Austria, Switzerland, Italy and Spain where the race has then entered either the Alps or the Pyrenees. With the introduction in the post-war years of a Grand Depart weekend consisting of time-trial prologue and 1 or 2 stage days, seven have taken place in other countries. This package is attractive to would-be hosts because of its compact nature as the starting point and bridging route for entry into France. It also includes additional promotional opportunities with a full team and rider presentation on Thursday or Friday before the race starts. The popularity of the event is significant, as it is the pre-eminent professional cycling stage race in the world, eclipsing all others in terms of size, scale and global media coverage (Dauncey and Hare, 2003).

It is in this event context that London, through the auspices of Transport for London (TfL) and London Mayor Livingstone, successfully bid to host the Tour de France Grand Depart in July, 2007. The attractiveness of London to the race organisers was primarily its iconic central areas (Smith, 2009). It was hailed as the biggest sporting event to hit London ahead of the 2012 Olympic and Paralympics Games. Mayor Livingstone had a main objective of 'making London a city where people of all ages and abilities have the incentive, confidence and facilities to cycle whenever it suits them' (Social Research Associates, 2007 p5) and he further stated:

'The Tour will be great for London, showcasing the UK capital to the world, bringing huge amounts of visitors to London and encouraging more Londoners to take to two wheels. Cycling

is increasing here more than any other city in Europe with a 72 per cent increase in the last five years. We want to use the excitement of the Grand Depart to help us persuade even more people to cycle, not just as a sport but as an everyday and non-polluting way of getting around the city.' (TfL, 2006).

In addition, and reflecting Mayor's Livingstone's views, the host organiser TfL's objectives for the event were:

- to promote cycling in the capital;
- to market London on a world stage and encourage tourism;
- to demonstrate London can bid for and win major sporting events (TfL, 2006).

The paper seeks to understand if London's hosting of the event was a result of strategic intervention and planning that subsequently delivered not only a successful event, but encouraged participation in cycling and provided a meaningful legacy for cycling through beneficial socio-cultural impact (Chalip et al, 2004; 2006; Weed, 2009; Sharpley and Stone, 2012). In order to explore these points reference is made to secondary material with the focus on official sources of information on cycling policy, strategy and research. A general overview of key literature in relation to hallmark events, their impact and legacies is presented and this is followed by a brief methodological statement in which social and cultural indicators for the impact of events are established. Key cycle related strategy and policy is then described for the period up to 2011 and finally this is discussed in relation to the TDFGD and its impact on London.

## **2. Sports, tourism and events**

There is a growing recognition of the role and importance of events in society and of the wide ranging impacts they can have (Page and Connell, 2009; Bowdin et al, 2010). Understanding of the events field has now matured and where once events were studied under special, mega, hallmark, and specific events, they are now also studied with reference to event tourism (Getz, 2007). Academic research into sport tourism is a part of this development (Gibson, 1998) and sports tourism events are a significant feature included in many studies that attempt to understand the role and impact events have on society (Gammon and Kurtzman, 2002; Gibson, 2003; Ritchie and Adair, 2004; Weed and Bull, 2004; Higham and Hinch, 2009). A sport tourist event is conceptualised by Weed and Bull (2004) as follows: a sport readily defined as; a tourist activity whether defined as economic activity or as a psychological benefit; the physical resources for the sporting activity; an organisation of it that requires interaction between people and place and a motivational appeal to participants. Several authors have noted that the impact of events in general can generate substantial economic benefit, particularly through tourism (Ritchie, 1984; Hall, 1992; Getz, 1997; Faulkner et al 2001). It is further suggested that sports tourist events especially can provide immediate economic benefits for the community (Barget and Gouget, 2007; Oldenboom, 2006; Gratton, Dobson and Shibli, 2001; Gratton, Shibli and Coleman, 2005) and that such events also have the potential for socio-cultural benefits such as sports participation, development and health promotion (Weed and Bull, 2004; Higham, 2004; Monterrubio et al, 2011).

In terms of sport some research reviews (Veal, 2003) argue that there is limited evidence that large scale events lead to measurable increases in general levels of participation and that the assumption that they will is based on flawed theories of the impact media, role models and behaviour has on people and participation (Coalter, 2004). However other studies indicate that increases in participation can accrue as a result of hosting major events (Frawley and Cush, 2011). Carlsen and Taylor (2003) explored how urban renewal, commercial development and social legacy were created as a result of hosting such events and noted that large scale sporting developments were more than ever linked to regeneration strategies that were usually linked to major sports events (Hall, 2004). The use of events strategically by the public sector is built on a belief that they bring long term economic and social benefits to the location and its community (Pugh and Wood, 2004). With these benefits in mind enthusiasm and competition to host major events has grown considerably in the past 20 years (Horne,

2007) with nations, regions and cities beginning to develop and adopt clear strategies for attracting such events to their locale (Hall, 2004; Whitelegg, 2000; Bowdin et al, 2010; Deloitte, 2010) .

Hallmark events, as an identified subset of the different event types (Hall, 1992; Getz, 1997; Getz, 2007; Higham and Hinch, 2009) have particular appeal because of their sport-tourism crossover and social and cultural benefits. They are thus defined as 'one-time or recurring events(s) of limited duration, developed primarily to enhance awareness, appeal and profitability of a tourism destination in the short and/or long term', these hallmark events have uniqueness, status and significance that attracts interest and aids in their success' (Ritchie, 1984, p.2). Their appeal to both public and commercial sectors lies in their characteristically transient nature that enables them to sustain this uniqueness and interest since they usually only occur once a year (Gilbert and Lizotte, 1998). These kinds of events can also be a significant catalyst for change, elevating the host's global stature and turbo-charging its economic, political, and social development' (Deloitte, 2010:1).

### **3. Event legacies**

With events having a range of impacts that 'have effect over the long term as well as during and immediately after the event', study of the 'long term impacts as a result of staging events are referred to as the events legacies.....the long term is the point at which the physical and non-physical legacies begin, generally referred to as after -use' (Masterman, 2004 p. 68). Legacy creation is underpinned by the idea 'that it represents something of substance that will enhance the long-term well-being or lifestyle of destination residents in a very substantial manner—preferably in a way that reflects the values of the local population' (Ritchie, 2000 p.156). Any legacy requires integration within the event planning and a commitment to future development, otherwise legacy results will be, at best, uncertain (Searle, 2002). Events occupy a temporary space yet their transforming effects can be long lasting if local policies are able to re-territorialise these effects post the event (Dansero and Puttilli, 2010). For public bodies investment in events requires careful consideration of the post-event stages (Porter, 1999) and the impacts and longer-term effects are largely dependent upon future usage and the ability to affect the local community (Davies, 2005). Understanding of the true legacies of major events requires awareness and consideration of implicit and intangible impacts, with any such changes being defined as 'event-structures' (infrastructure, knowledge, image, emotions, networks, culture) (Preuss, 2007). An especially pertinent way of proving an events legacy is the effect it has on the psyche of the host population (Cashman, 1999). Getz ( 2007) citing the work of Ramshaw and Hinch (2006) asserts that consequently events have several important roles to play, from community-building to urban renewal, cultural development to fostering national identities. Kasimati (2003) summarised the potential long-term benefits to a city of hosting major sports events as including newly constructed event facilities and infrastructure, urban revival, enhanced international reputation, increased tourism, improved public welfare, additional employment and increased inward investment.

### **4. Evaluating socio-cultural impacts**

Many existing impact studies often ignore the more intangible impacts of events (Hede, 2007) and non-economic studies are far less widely documented or researched (Mason and Beaumont-Kerridge, 2004; Carlsen et al, 2007; Flinn and McPherson and, 201008. Yet socio-cultural impacts are ones that most readily affect the host community (Hall, 1997; Getz, 2007; Whitson and Horne, 2006). They are often intangible, complex, and can require longitudinal data collection (Jura Consultants, 2006; Langen and Garcia, 2009). Moreover they can be difficult to measure objectively as many of them cannot be quantified, as they often have a differential effect on different members of the community (Fredline et al, 2003). Equally not all events can or should have the same range of impacts. Despite this variability it is apparent that all events have 'people' as a common characteristic, and since events impact upon them either as spectators or participants, there is a core feature that can be utilised for research (Sharpley and Stone, 2012). This raises the question of what is meant by socio-cultural impacts. Evaluations of social impact should embrace, for example, what an event is worth to society and stakeholders through research methods that evaluate their contribution to the quality of life and



communities (Wood, 2009). According to Burdge and Vanclay (1996:5) 'Social impacts include all social and cultural consequences to human populations of any public or private actions that alter the ways in which people live, work, play, relate to one another, organize to meet their needs, and generally cope as members of society'. Where facilities exist or are required to host the event, a direct structural legacy such as a venue remains for the host, but where such a legacy is not evident or necessary, legacy has to take an indirect course. Cultural impacts can then often result in a change to people's personal cognition of their role in society and of themselves (Burdge and Vanclay, 1996).

What these changes are is debateable. Social impacts may influence how people live their lives whilst cultural ones may affect the process by which people define themselves and their behaviour but the distinction between the two is not clear cut (Sharpley and Stone, 2012). Consequently developing research for evaluating such impacts is complicated due to the variety of methods used and available in such analysis (Langen and Garcia, 2008). The two most common approaches have focussed on either host community perception (Bull and Lovell, 2007; Zhou and Ap, 2009; Chen, 2011) or on using a framework to identify impacts (Fredline et al, 2003; Small, 2008; Grosbois, 2009). Wood and Thomas (2006) in particular advise that categorisation of the impacts as to whom they affect and the possible benefit to each group is a credible way of assessing socio-cultural impact. This approach does tend to identify immediate tangible impacts in a simplistic good/bad way and often in isolation from each other (Byoko, 2008). Nevertheless it provides a meaningful framework for understanding the social and cultural impacts of events via a set of key indicators (Wood and Thomas, 2006; Wood, 2009). What these indicators might be is also problematic in that they can be considerable in number, with Delamere suggesting 21 possible impacts (Delamere, 2001) whilst Ohmann et al (2006) argues, for example, that consumer patterns and consumption behaviours cannot be excluded (as they so often are) because they can change as a result of the event and consequently should be a part of any evaluation of impact. What impacts should be analysed are ones congruent with what the organisers are seeking to achieve (Page and Connell, 2009).

## 5. Methodology

With the focus of this research interest being the relationship between strategic planning and the hosting and legacy of the event, it was decided that a set of key indicators would best suit the purpose of documenting the impact. Robertson et al (2009) suggest that in order to deepen the understanding of the impacts of events then researchers should be able to adopt integrative methodological approaches based around well specified themes. All of the information for this research already existed, thus a desk top methodology was adopted using different forms of secondary data (Veal, 2006). With the considerations of event impact and the stated aims of TfL to increase cycle participation in mind, a project was devised to evaluate if any longer term event legacy was apparent through strategic planning on the part of TfL. It was also important to focus the evaluation on immediate impact as well as post-event initiatives to develop cycle provision and participation as these were the main stated aims for hosting the event. A framework model for research was adopted as offering the most appropriate tool for evaluating the TDFGD impact as this would enable any strategic or policy activity around the event to be more readily mapped against indicators. Drawing on Thomas and Wood's (2006) ideas on evaluating impacts, five key indicators were considered as a means of evaluating the impact and the legacy of the TDFGD. Two cultural and three social impacts were chosen:

- Cultural impacts
  - Foster development through investment in events by integrating events in cultural policy and strategy
  - Use events to maximise venue efficiency by developing specific event funding programmes.
- Social impacts
  - Leverage events for urban renewal through formulation of policy regarding use of public spaces for events
  - Use events to enhance wellness and health by integrating events within policies for health and wellness and sport



- Foster social integration and community development by integrating events with urban renewal, social and community policies.

The methodology draws on several sources of secondary data and seeks to evaluate these for evidence that hosting the event was linked to strategy and policy that would ensure there was a deliverable legacy (Searle, 2002). The following sources of data were considered: i) a Social Research Associates (2007) key impact report on the immediate impact of the event commissioned by TfL; ii) review of publicly available information on key cycling policy and initiatives in London by TfL/Mayor for London since 2007; iii) government data for cycle participation and consumer cycling since 2007.

## **6. Findings**

### **6.1 Immediate impact**

TfL Commissioned Social Research Associates (SRA) to document the media coverage of the event and all data below is from that report (SRA, 2007). They have valued the event as having generated £35 million worth of free publicity as a result of over 20,000 articles and news stories on the TDFGD between January and August 2007. The commercial impact is put at £73 million in London. In addition there were many other related events held by local authorities and other organisations which cumulatively generated substantial additional activities and spending. One of the key messages transmitted was that London had received positive recognition as a city that could host a world class event. Overall there was a much higher than average positive coverage, with 68% of mentions being favourable compared to the norm of around 50% for similar events. London as a city benefitted greatly, with sections of the international press referring to it as a premier host city. Stories reflecting positive comment emerged from, amongst others, France, Spain, USA and Holland. An important element in the media coverage was the promotion of specific messages, the main one being the emphasis on TfL's commitment to future cycle provision which included cycle training and the recognition of the environment and health benefits of cycling with the London press in particularly focussing on this story. There was high spectator turn-out, with high levels of enjoyment recorded. Approximately two million visitors were said to have visited London during the three days the Tour spent in the UK from 6-8 July 2007 with 50% of those coming from outside London and 10% of these from overseas. Of those attending who took part in a survey over half said they were more likely to cycle now as a result of watching the TDFGD.

### **6.2 Legacy: on-going policy and new cycling initiatives in London post-2007**

The context for any legacy from the TDFGD in London is the first Mayor of London Ken Livingstone's Transport Strategy, published in 2000. This strategy did not specify any cycling targets or developments despite there being in existence a National Cycling Strategy since 1996 (Golbuff and Aldred, 2011). Nevertheless despite this lack of official objective, some cycling initiatives were emerging and in 2002 Mayor Livingstone established the Cycling Centre of Excellence (CCE) at TfL to manage the proposed 900km series of city wide routes called the London Cycling Network which itself had been in development since 1996 with a revision in 2000. By 2005 however less than 50% of these routes had been completed (Golbuff and Aldred, 2011). Possibly as a direct result of the introduction of the London Congestion Charge in 2003 the policy situation changed in early 2004, with the publication of the London Cycle Action Plan by TfL. The Action Plan set out targets such as a 200 per cent increase in cycling by 2020 and 5,000 new cycle spaces installed by the end of 2005. Although these may seem like bold targets the reality is perhaps less so. In a review of UK national cycling strategy, with a specific section on London, it was noted that levels of cycling and provision for cycling were incredibly low up to the end of the 1990's (Golbuff and Aldred, 2011). The inference is that with sustained resources and emerging policy directed at cycling, significant increases in cycle usage were inevitable. There were other significant policy initiatives discussed and implemented at this time including the setting up of a team to enable London to attract and develop major events and called 'Events For London' (LDA, 2005). Parallel to this, a bid was put forward in October 2004 to host the 2007 TDFGD. Subsequently Mayor Livingstone's Economic Development Strategy (EDS) released in

2005 included specific reference to London becoming a major events destination and this was, in turn, central to a number of other policies linked to the EDS. London's decision to bid for and stage the TDFGD was aligned to this strategic framework from the outset. This indicates that cycling was integrated within core economic strategies for London as well as having policies specifically focussed on its development.

The earlier section on impacts and legacies highlighted that after-use and legacy could be evaluated if the host harnessed the events impact with further developments specifically related to the event. To meet TfL and Mayor Livingstone's aims of promoting cycling a series of sustained initiatives would be needed over several years. At the core of this activity was the emergence of the Cycling Action Plan (CAP), introduced in February 2004, which included numerous initiatives to promote cycling. The question is to what extent did the TDFGD through the CAP policy act as a catalyst for cycle development and how did this occur? Initially it led to investment in cycling increasing from a lowly £5.5m (in 2000) to £55m in 2008 and £110m in 2009 (TfL, 2010a). Furthermore a series of specific measures to encourage cycle participation were introduced in 2004 as a part of the CAP publication, and from 2006-2010 there were further new measures developed alongside increased funding for existing ones. The main key initiatives were as follows:

- School Cycle Parking Programme, Feb 2004: this provided (by 2010) 12000+ spaces through parking stands, shelters and lockers at schools and colleges across London.
- Cycle Parking Plan, October 2006: a co-ordinated plan for delivering cycle parking at all suitable Underground, Rail and DLR stations, and river piers. This included a programme to provide secure and free cycle parking on street and in parks to meet the demands of cycle commuters and leisure users. This created 147 schemes with approximately 40,000 spaces.
- Community Cycle Fund, Jan 2006: a continuous programme offering up to £5000 for community cycling events and initiatives. Managed by the London Cycling Campaign for TfL, it had awarded funding for over 250 projects by the end of 2010.
- Summer of Cycling, April 2008: a continuous initiative created to promote cycling events
- The London Cycle Training Partnership Scheme, July 2008: co-ordinated school requests for free cycle training through London boroughs and linked into the Local Implementation Plan (LIP) funding requests to TfL. Cycle training for 20,000+ children was delivered.
- London Cycle Network Plus (LCN+), established in 1996, reviewed in 2000 and extended but with increased funding to continue to develop in 2008: this is a scheme to improve cycling infrastructure across all 32 London boroughs.
- Local Access Strategies, Feb 2007: these were directed by TfL where small scale interventions in boroughs were supported (financially) if they aided cycle safety and access (e.g. road closure, "no entry" and "one-way" exemptions).
- London Congestion Charge extension, 2007: although not a cycling scheme, the congestion charge is a fundamental part of Transport policy to reduce the number and impact of cars in central London. Introduced in 2003, the scheme was extended westwards in 2007.
- Cycling on Greenways Scheme, introduced in May 1994 with increased funding in June, 2008: provided for the provision or improvement of largely off-road paths and tracks that are suitable for use by cyclists and pedestrians. In 2007/08, 22km of Cycling on Greenways were implemented.
- London Cycle Challenge, Jan 2009: annual competition for London-based organisations to see who can get the most employees cycling in June.
- Cycling Fridays, 2009: a scheme aimed at encouraging new commuter cyclists
- Contraflow Scheme, 2009: allowing two-way cycling on roads that were normally one-way to provide more convenient cycling routes.
- Biking Boroughs', 2010: aimed at raising the low cycling levels of outer London. No specific funding was attached to implementing the initiative, but a £25,000 per borough grant was

available to fund research/strategy papers to encourage boroughs to make cycling more prominent within their funding bids. In early 2011, 13 Biking Boroughs were announced.

- Cycles and HGVs Partnership Scheme, March 2010: this involved the Surface Transport Panel working with the freight industry and the Police to better understand the issues involved and actions required addressing the safety matters arising from conflicts between large vehicles and cyclists. The number of HGV's directly involved in the deaths of cyclists rose from 6 to 9 per year between 2003 and 2006.
- Share the Road Scheme, March 2010: A TfL-led partnership working to reduce anti-social and illegal activities by cyclists and other road users through awareness raising and enforcement campaigns
- Community Safety Plan (CSP), June 2010: Outlines how to further improve safety and security for cyclists on London's transport network.
- Cyclist's Retailers and Manufacturer's Forum, Jan 2010: established by TfL to develop partnerships and liaison between TfL and trade.

In addition to these there were several marketing activities by TfL designed to promote cycling. These included:

- London's Annual Walking and Cycling Conference (April 2009).
- "You're Better Off by Bike" (Feb, 2006). A promotional campaign encouraging behavioural change and modal shift)
- Moon Walking Bear' cycle safety advert (2009)
- 'Catch up with the Bicycle' campaign (2009)
- Cycling and HGV safety film promoted to cycling clubs and cyclists (2010)
- London Cycle Guides, 2005. The third edition of the London-wide cycle maps was published in 2008, with E-versions for GPS in 2010
- TfL also promoted its cycle schemes and future plans at three successive editions of the Cycle Show held at London's Earls Court in 2008, 2009 and 2010

(Information here is drawn from a range of publicly available data prepared by TfL, London Development Agency, Cycle Touring Club, British Cycling, and Department for Transport, Greater London Authority and London Cycling Campaign.)

Perhaps the most significant post TDFGD development and the culmination of this 3-4 year spread of activity came in 2010 with publication of new Mayor Johnson's Cycling Revolution London policy document incorporating the Cycle Safety Action Plan (TfL, 2010b). Cycling Revolution sets out a series of major features and programmes designed to make London a cycling city. In the forward to the document Mayor Johnson established eight conditions to be achieved for a 'cyclised London':

1. Cycling recognised as a major transport mode right across the Capital, from central London to the outer boroughs.
2. Streets and spaces where everyone respects each other's right to use the road, where they stick to the rules of the road, and where everyone recognises their duty of care to other road users.
3. A reduction in cycling casualties, with a particular focus on reducing the risk of collisions between cyclists and HGVs.
4. An increase in secure cycle-parking on streets, in workplaces, and at stations and schools.
5. Cycle theft tackled through dedicated police attention so that people can be confident that they'll find their bike where they locked it.
6. Cycling promoted as an enjoyable, everyday, healthy activity.

7. Cycling embedded into the way our city is planned and run.
8. Investment in cycling maximised - from both the private and public sectors.

A key part of the policy was the announcement that TfL were going to create Cycle Superhighways and a Cycle Hire scheme. The Cycle Superhighways are meant to offer safe, fast, direct routes into central London from outer London. The first two routes opened in late summer 2010 with ten planned to be introduced by 2015. TfL claim they are building these highways 'to improve cycling conditions for people who already commute by bike and to encourage those who don't to take to pedal power. This will help cut congestion, relieve overcrowding on public transport and reduce emissions (TfL, 2010b: 12). To help equip London's workplaces for the Cycle Superhighways, initiatives have been introduced to assist people to start cycling on the routes. For example, workplaces close to the routes can apply for free resources such as cycle stands, cycle training and cycle maintenance sessions, as well as promotional materials for display. The Cycle Hire Scheme, also launched in 2010, is a public bicycle sharing scheme for short journeys in and around central London. The stated aim of the scheme is to:

- Provide people with a greater choice of transport
- Provide a greener, healthier and sustainable way to travel
- Be easy to use for short trips around central London
- Be available 24 hours a day, every day of the year
- Reduce congestion on the Tube and buses
- Hopefully encourage the switch from driving to cycling (TfL, 2010b).

By the end of 2010 there were 5,000 available bikes at 344 docking stations with around 8,180 docking points (GLA 2010). Bike use on average is 22,000 trips a day (Grous, 2011). The scheme is commercially supported by Barclays Bank and following an initial £25m investment they have matched that with a further £25m and with extension plans to develop hire facilities with 2000 more bikes and 4,200 docking points into West London ([www.london.gov.uk](http://www.london.gov.uk) 2011).

### 6.3 Cycling research

Increase in research into cycling by TfL has been significant since 2007. Major research studies have included Travel Demand Survey, Cycle Market Segmentation Survey, and Attitudes to Cycling Survey culminating in 2010 with the Analysis of Cycling Potential report (TfL, 2010). These schemes were also accompanied in 2010 by the publication of the Mayor's new Transport Policy (MTS2) (2010) which established much clearer long term targets for cycling with the aim being to increase daily cycle trips by 400% in 2025 from a base reference year of 2000. The latter policy identified that there are 4.3 million trips daily in London made by mechanised modes of transport that could be undertaken by cycling.

### 6.4 Cycling events

The Events for London team, a strategic initiative to create a group capable of bringing events to London, worked with TfL to complement the above strategic and policy measures by developing cycle events in London. Working in conjunction with British Cycling they created the British 'Etape' Cyclosporitive event in July 2007 that covered a 117mile (187km) route. The event attracted approximately 6500 cyclists, and the route traced much of the same roads as stage 1 of the 2007 Tour de France ([www.britishcycling.org](http://www.britishcycling.org), 2007). This one-off event complemented other mass participation rides organised by TfL. The most significant of these was the London Freewheel ride sponsored by Hovis in 2007 that attracted 35,000 cyclists and took place on closed roads along a route that went past London landmarks such as St Paul's, Westminster, Whitehall and the London Eye. Cyclists in outer London boroughs were connected to the central route through 6 Cycle hubs that ran to the north, south, east and west of the city. Each hub was 'supervised' by London Cycling Campaign groups who acted in an enabling capacity to safely bring cyclists into the centre. Hovis was subsequently replaced as sponsor by Sky and the event was renamed the London Skyride in 2008 and attracted over 65,000

cyclists with 55 feeder routes coming in to the centre from outer London boroughs. In 2010 approximately 85,000 cyclists took part in the Skyride (TfL, 2010c). Alongside this was the promotion of several Professional cycle racing events in London with stages of the Tour of Britain and the Tour Series featuring every year since 2007. Other commercial events were also supported by TfL as the authority granting the use and access of and to its roads, and in 2007 London cycle retailers Condor Cycles and Rapha clothing created the Smithfield Nocturne . A one day series of evening cycle races based around the historic Smithfield Market the first event attracted 5000 spectators. Renamed simply the Nocturne Series, in 2009 the concept was taken to other historic spaces in the UK and events took place in Edinburgh, Salford and Blackpool attracting over 25,000 spectators (nocturneseries.com, 2011).

## 6.5 Cycle participation

As noted earlier the base line year most regularly used by TfL for referencing cycling data and future participation targets in London is the year 2000 when there were 262,000 daily cycle journeys by bike (CPRE, 2010; Golbuff and Aldred, 2010). Another key date for referencing is also 2006 when TfL published a specific target for cycling to make up 5% of all daily trips by 2025. In 2007 there was a 10% increase in cycle levels on major London roads compared to the previous year (SRA, 2007) and there were 480,000 daily bike journeys (TfL, 2007). By 2009 TfL stated that cycle journeys had increased by 117% or to around 570,000 daily trips since 2000. As a share of travel mode this meant an increase from 1.2% to 2% daily (CPRE, 2010). Reports for 2011 suggest that this is now closer to 3% with an increase of around 200% compared to 2000 (TfL, 2011).

Consumer spending on cycling in London is difficult to comment upon due to a lack of clear data specific to London. However if London is a reflection of the wider British cycling economy, and it seems reasonable to argue it is, then there is a rosy picture of bicycle retail. A recent report claimed that UK cycle retail increased by 28% year on year in 2010 with sales of 3.7m bikes generating £1.62bn (Grous, 2011). The report also indicates that there were 1.3m new cyclists in 2010 and that the annual sale of cycle accessories was £853m. The Cyclist's Retailers and Manufacturer's Forum, established in 2010 by TfL, indicates that up to the end of 2010 consumer spending on cycling in London had increased in general, a view supported by the cycle trade magazine Bike Biz although specific figures are not available. It also argued that cyclists contributed the second most average spend in a local economy behind walkers As a part of the launch of the Cycle Superhighways a further survey of spending indicated that 28% of respondents had bought a bicycle since 2009 (TfL, 2010).

## 7. Discussion

The evidence of the immediate impact of the TDFGD from the SRA report suggests the event was successful in terms of economic and tourism impact which whilst not part of the focus here is nevertheless of interest. With a wide range of positive media coverage cycling was positioned as a central feature of the cityscape and this provided the foundation for potential future policy development, a point that is emphasised as key determinant of legacy (Blain et al, 2005). In the period since the TDFGD took place TfL has followed up this initial impact of the event by integrating and harnessing the interest created in cycling within a series of wider policies and schemes that can be recognised as contributing to socio-cultural gain, and that has resulted in, for example, increased participation and consumer spending. Specifically considering the five key impacts identified previously, the following observations are made.

**Cultural impact 1:** 'Foster development through investment in events by integrating events in cultural policy and strategy'. Whilst it has been evident that cycle related development has been incorporated in strategy and policy documents (CAP/EDS/MTS2/Cycling Revolution) specific mention of cycling events is sometimes uncertain. The ten key points of the Cycling Revolution policy that Mayor Johnson argues are essential for a 'cyclised London' makes no mention of events being used in any capacity to encourage cycling. However the same document lists 'major events' as one of eleven programmes the policy will develop. It states that mass participation cycling events are vital in

'supporting the cycling revolution and raising awareness of cycling as a great way of getting around. By integrating these kinds of events into the Mayoral programme and local communities, people can be reminded of the joys of cycling for leisure, commuting and business. Such events can reach large audiences and act as a catalyst for change in attitudes and behaviour amongst all road users'. It is debatable though whether the events listed by TfL could be classified as 'major', as the vast majority are participation rides. The exception to this is the Tour of Britain. However, and this is an inference resulting from policy that positions cycling within a strategic framework, it could be argued that TfL is 'encouraging' cycling events to come to London by its willingness to support such events with infrastructure and permissions. As a result there are numerous cycling events that take place in, or pass through London, and that raise money for charities and good causes. Finally, the Biking Boroughs fund does set out to encourage outer London boroughs to integrate events into their local policies. With the first wave of Biking Boroughs only recently announced it suggests there has been some development in this area, though it is too early at this stage to demonstrate to what extent this has been achieved.

**Cultural impact 2:** 'Use events to maximise venue efficiency by developing specific event funding programmes'. With the streets of London themselves being the 'venue' for the TDFGD and legacy events, this impact has been achieved with several funding programmes utilising the cityscape for a range of cycling events. Now in its 4<sup>th</sup> year the Community Cycling Grant has enabled support for numerous events across the city. These have been targeted at potential and current cyclists of all ages and abilities and resulted in several thousand attendees each year, especially through the Skyride programme. There is evidence that cycling development has occurred with continued investment (financial and organisational) in a range of events that are part of TfL's and the Mayor's economic and transport policies as indicated. This could of course be seen as a circular argument that the impact of one event is to see more similar events take place and so on which in turn does not really measure whether they have encouraged more people to cycle. But the success of these in terms of their recurrence, numbers of participants and spectators and as embodiments of strategy suggests a consistent investment. It is also worth mentioning that a bi-product of the Olympics 2012 (but not a direct legacy of the TDFGD) is that London has also staged Olympic cycle test events and a further development of that has been seen in the planning of a sportive 'Ride the Route' event for ordinary cyclists to take on the challenge of riding the full Olympic road race route.

**Social impact 1:** 'Leverage events for urban renewal through formulation of policy regarding use of public spaces for events'. Public space is used for cycling events (as explained above), but the question is whether the TDFGD can be said to have aided contribution to urban renewal. Infrastructure for cycling has improved through several policies and schemes. Schools and public transport areas have all witnessed significant increases in cycle parking facilities since 2007. Improvement and extensions to cycle networks have been maintained. The appearance of the Cycle Superhighways has resulted in highly visible cycle corridors on the cityscape, and their increase will see this visibility further enhanced. Equally the arrival of the Bike Hire Scheme has resulted in banks of parking bays on streets and pavements around the city coupled with the bikes themselves, colloquially referred to as 'Boris Bikes'. This is clear infrastructure development. In addition though are the scores of small schemes aided by the LCC's community grant that has seen increases and adaptations to cycle lanes, road furniture and surfaces, traffic lights, and road crossings.

**Social impact 2:** 'Use events to enhance wellness and health by integrating events within policies for health and wellness and sport'. Some of the events previously mentioned are related to the promotion of cycling as a healthy lifestyle choice. The sponsorship of the original Freewheel ride by Hovis was inextricably linked to health and well-being, especially as Hovis is promoted as a health bran food choice. The various campaigns to promote cycling contain a dual message that is linked to health and active lifestyles and a concern for the environment. The policy to introduce the congestion charge has pollution of the environment at its core, less cars equals less carbon emissions. The complement to this is, of course, that cycling has zero emission and so any movement of commuters from car to cycle is seen as a health benefit. Furthermore, the Cycle Superhighway Scheme has a stated aim to 'provide a greener, healthier and sustainable way to travel'.

**Social impact 3:** 'Foster social integration and community development by integrating events with urban renewal, social and community policies'. In some ways this last impact could be regarded as the

crux of the discussion about socio-cultural impacts of events. With cycling becoming incorporated into Economic and Transport plans and policy it is becoming an integral part of social initiatives. For example schemes that address the issue of road safety of cyclists in relation to sharing space with HGV's and cars helps raise awareness amongst all road users. To complement this there is a programme that educates cyclists about safe cycling and that can be seen as an attempt to foster a community of commuters around a shared awareness of travel culture in London. The large, recurring mass participation events further raise the profile of cycling and help emphasise that roads are shared domains for all types of transport.

In the years since the TDFGD came to London, provision for cycling has seen year on year development through a combination of policy initiatives and funding. These activities have maintained the legacy and impact of the TDFGD and enabled both legacy and after-use to be demonstrated. In turn TfL have been able to overcome what Ritchie and Smith (1991) suggest is a certain rate of decay if steps are not taken to keep links with the sport visible. TfL has consistently maintained, and indeed it could be argued, actually strengthened those links. Whilst this is undoubtedly impressive, there is a word of caution to the participation findings. The figures for participation (and one assumes consumer spend on cycling) were based around very low baseline figures and some organisations, notably the Council for Protection of Rural England and London Cycling Campaign, have challenged the lack of ambition in the targets set for cycling saying that on current trends the 400% figure in MTS2 amounts to not much more than a 130% increase (on current levels) over the next 15 years (CPRE, 2010).

Grous (2011) also notes that London is considerably behind many other European cities who have far higher rates of participation amongst the whole population, but significantly so for women and people aged over 65. Even if the 400% target was reached, equating to 5% of all trips, this would still leave London well behind the current (2009) levels of cycle trips for many other European cities such as Amsterdam (38% for residents' trips) and Copenhagen (23% for commuting trips). Vienna with a similar trajectory to London has revised its target of 8% of all trips made by bike down from 2020 to 2015 due to it having reached 5% in only 4 years. Berlin has seen cycling increase from 5% in the 1990s to 11% in 2009 with a target of 16% for 2026, whilst Munich is aiming for 17% of trips to be cycled by 2015 (CPRE, 2010). As a further comparison census data from Australia over the past 20-30 years puts cycle commuting across all states and the major cities of Brisbane, Adelaide, Perth, Melbourne and Sydney consistently at under 2% but this is set in the context of the introduction of the Bicycle Helmet law in 1991 and an increasing population. A recent analysis of 2011 Government figures for cycle participation in Australia suggests that there were 126,444 daily cycle trips in South Australia in 2011 (cyclehelmets.org, 2011) compared to over 500,000 in London, thus suggesting that London has made notable strides in increasing cycle journeys.

## **8. Conclusion**

The TDFGD can be seen as purely a sport tourism event bringing visitors into London, but also as sports tourism event that showcases cycling. Furthermore, based on TfL aims, it can be seen as an event that has a legacy and acted as an impetus to cycle policy, provision and participation in London. In constructing their message of the appeal of the TDFGD together with encouraging more people to take up cycling and the subsequent investment in cycling, TfL avoided using the event to re-present the city as false, since they have operated in conjunction with community stakeholders (Hall, 1992). Pugh and Wood note the danger of trying to use an event for certain aims if there is no existing culture in place to support it. The positive impact of the TDFGD on the local community (Bull and Lovell, 2007; Smith, 2009) indicates that there was a strong social and cultural platform upon which TfL's aims were soundly based and which would, in turn, provide a receptive public for legacy development.

It would be easy to say that the full socio-cultural legacy of the TDFGD resides within the Cycling Revolution policy document that sets out how provision will be developed over the next 5 years from 2010 in order for London to be truly classed as a 'cyclised' city. Yet it seems clear that without the initiatives and schemes that have consistently allowed cycling to develop the initial bid to host the TDFGD would never have happened and in-turn the foundations for the new policy would never have been laid. The arrival and expansion of the Cycle Superhighways and the Bike Hire scheme will

further embed cycling as a leisure activity and commuter option within London's social, environmental and cultural base, and subsequently will serve to enhance the image of London as not only a cycle friendly city, both for residents and visitors, but as an environmentally conscious city. TfL have been able to use the strategic value of the TDFGD because they have made it apparent that the cityscape itself is able to support cycling, and this applies to both visitors and the local community. Such a use of any single event is only able to have a chance of success if it is able to appeal to the heterogeneous community itself (Ueberroth, 1992) and London has managed to do that. Ultimately as a sports tourism event, the TDFGD has been shown to contribute socio-cultural benefits that include sports participation, development and health promotion, outcomes recognised as very positive for any single sport tourist event (Weed and Bull, 2004; Higham, 2004).

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