

Is the Events Industry a Creative Industry?

Presenters

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This paper outlines a project that is being conducted by the University of Westminster and Bournemouth University on behalf of the Business Visits and Events Partnership (BVEP) to measure the amount of creative intensity involved in events management work, with a view to lobbying government via DCMS to provide representation for the events industry on the Creative Industries Council (CIC), a national advisory body for policy-making on the creative industries.

BVEP sees the event sector as a stand-alone industry in its own right and has already lobbied DCMS with the objectives of having the events industry recognised as a stand-alone sector – not part of the tourism sector – and an industry that is creative (OECD, 2014, Richards, 2011). The first objective has now been achieved through the appointment of an Events Industry Council to offer advice on event-related policy. However, this does not go far enough in terms of dovetailing the event's sectors aims and complementarities with other creative sectors. Therefore the BVEP are still pursuing recognition as a creative industry: on advice from DCMS, the events sector must now research its 'creative intensity' and the purpose of this research project is to take that objective forward.

Through CIC representation the creative sectors, such as film and TV, music, advertising and marketing, museums, arts and crafts have direct influence on policy-making at the DCMS, UKTI, Visit Britain and Visit England and at the Prime Minister's Office (DCMS, 2015). Each sector is considered as creative according to the 'creative intensity' of the job roles within those sectors: currently, the events industry is not considered as a creative sector, largely because its 'creative intensity' has not yet been measured.

The research team will adopt the model established by Freeman (2008) and used by the DCMS to measure the UK creative industries in order to review samples of recognised occupation codes (SOCs) within businesses indicated by their industrial codes (SICs). The DCMS looks for sectors to have a 20% or above creative intensity to be considered as a creative industry (Knight, 2014).

The research team consider that exploring the creative intensity within event management education is a necessary and related task, as a signifier of the developing professional skills-base on which future events management practitioners will draw. Therefore, as AEME enters its second decade it is fitting to reflect on the development of events management education and to consider the role of creativity within UK degree programmes as the subject and profession continues to mature. As Bladen and Kennell (2014) highlight the prominence of business school perspectives within early educational offers may have privileged analytical approaches over the more lateral thinking required in creative practice and it is timely to review whether this remains the case. This year's forum at Falmouth University provides a sympathetic setting in which to consider the re-framing of events management as a creative endeavour and to explore the risks and rewards that a shift towards status as a creative industry may bring for educators and practitioners alike.

References:

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