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Establishment of an Event Evaluation Network

There is growing international interest in all aspects of event-related research, among practitioners, government officials, and academics. Much of this arises from the instrumentalist approach to events, that is creating and exploiting them to attain many varied policies – everything from tourism and city development to social integration and cultural revitalization. Many are concerned that a balanced, triple-bottom-line approach has been sacrificed in favour of monetary measures of success, and that a full accounting of costs and benefits is seldom undertaken. Others are arguing that the true “worth” of events in social and cultural terms has been overshadowed. Evaluation of the environmental dimensions of events (both benefits and costs) has been lagging far behind.

Related to event management professional practice, there is a strong desire to have a toolkit of standard evaluation concepts and methods – with appropriate training made available. This would include impact assessments and measures of effectiveness and efficiency. All aspects of event planning, management and marketing should be subjected to evaluation in order to improve systems and outcomes. Another issue that arises is that of duplication, with many different agencies and researchers working on similar lines of research and methodological developments. In particular, it has been noted that social impact scales are being developed in a number of countries.

In this context, the time is certainly right for a global mechanism to discuss all aspects of event evaluation and to share information and sources. This is the rationale behind the

Blog created by Drexel University called the Event Evaluation Network. It is new in October, 2009, and the network will hopefully keep expanding through word-of-mouth in particular. Its value will in large part be determined by the discourse and sharing it fosters. As well, users can form their own networks based on specific projects or needs.

An invitation to join the EVENT EVALUATION NETWORK

From Donald Getz, PhD

Please visit this address, a BLOG established by Drexel University:

<http://iphone.goodwin.drexel.edu/een>

Register, post documents and comments, engage in a growing discourse on concepts and methods, even the philosophy of evaluation research. Here is one important question to address globally: Do we need a professional “certified event evaluator”? Is there an adequate evaluation toolkit to ensure that evaluations are carried on competently and uniformly? What values shape the evaluation of events, or should the process be value-free?

Event evaluation encompasses a wide-range of issues and methods, including:

- qualitative approaches to evaluate the social/cultural “worth” of a festival or event
- highly technical economic impact assessments, including equilibrium models and cost-benefit analysis
- triple-bottom-line and sustainability approaches to accounting
- quality and customer satisfaction studies
- management effectiveness and efficiency appraisals
- feasibility and needs assessments; forecasting of impacts

Your input could be valuable, so please share ideas and documents, post messages about conferences , and provide links worth following. Engage in debate, and chat with experts. I have posted a discussion paper entitled A Values-Based Approach to Event Evaluation, which I hope will kick-start the discourse – comments and critiques are welcomed.