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INTERVIEW WITH GILES ROCHEFORT

BY

EDWARD KIBERD

ABSTRACT

Giles Rochefort is recognized as an individual who has had noticeable success in the field of facility management. He is currently affiliated with Olympic Stadium in Montreal. Setting the mood for an event by managing the environment and program are two important elements to increase the quality of the experience for the customer.

FACILITY MANAGEMENT-SERVICING THE CUSTOMER

Question 1: What is the most important function of a facility manager?

Answer: Protecting the building and people and ensuring the profit margin of the operations.

Question 2: What is the impact of spectator sports upon the individual?

Answer: Spectator sports is primarily an emotional experience. Spectators come to have their emotions uplifted, released or changed through their experience. Their attitudes are the most important factors to insuring the protection and safety of the people. Emotions out of control can cause problems/mob violence. You cannot expect an individual to pay the ticket price and not vent his emotions or have some type of emotional experience. In many instances, when these emotions are mixed with alcohol or drugs, the result has been disaster for both the people and the facilities, worldwide.

Question 3: What is the most important emotion with which a manager will have to cope?

Answer: Spectators come to an event as an emotional outlet. They come to vent their frustrations or escape from their daily experience. The type and intensity of emotion and outcomes depends on the type of event. There is a dramatic difference between what an individual will expect from a hockey game and the type of involvement with an event such as baseball. It is important to understand the different types of behavior in relationship to different events. It will help to provide the type of experience that the individual desires but also help to know how to control the behavior of the audience through managerial techniques.

Question 4: What is the most important factor in the contribution to profits from a participant perspective?

Answer: One of the most important factors is creating an environment that will meet the comfort level anticipations of spectators. For example, they expect clean facilities with parking that is convenient. Convenience services at the stadium is one of the most important elements to increase the quality of the experience. The environment itself is an important control factor to setting the proper mood for the event.

Question 5: Could you give an example of the type of environment that you try to create in your facility?

Answer: In other facilities, law enforcement officers are very visible to the spectators. In many instances this is supposed to be a deterrent to bring about the appropriate behavior at an event. What it also does is create an air of tension and take away from the quality of the experience. What we have tried to do is reduce the size of our law enforcement officers and make them less conspicuous to the public but increase their efficiency through better communication and providing them with vehicles to give them a greater degree of mobility. This reduces our costs, makes our operation more efficient and helps to reduce this tension level so as to produce an air of freedom to express emotions.

Question 6: What is the most important concept in convenience services to providing a quality experience?

Answer: Convenience services must be provided in relation to the number of personnel needed to staff an event. In order to maintain the level of service, a facility cannot be understaffed and for the sake of efficiency, it cannot be overstaffed. Staffing is an extremely crucial element so that problems such as long lines are held to a minimum. The primary element is consistence in performance and it is one of the factors that a spectator comes to desire from their experience in operation services.

Question 7: What are the two important elements to producing a profit?

Answer: One is ensuring that the number of individuals at an event is near capacity; and the other is increasing the efficiency of operation. One does not know whether an event will provide a top quality experience in terms of the competition. The manager must program the event with the competition as the main attraction and with ancillary services and programming acting as a factor which will leave the participant with a heightened level of satisfaction, if the competition is not up to par. Programming in this context is essential to customer satisfaction. The other dimension is efficiency and the way that I have found to become more efficient in the management of a large facility depends upon scientific application of managerial principles. Whether it is predicting the number of individuals who will be at an event or working with budgets, a manager must have all the scientific tools at his/her disposal to increase his/her efficiency and lower costs, thus, increasing his/her profits. These techniques must be tempered with the commonsense approach of most managers. The results do not take on any meaning without the interpretation of the manager and the utilizing of this information in a fashion so as to translate the numbers into appropriate managerial responses.

Question 8: What will the impact of cable television be on the spectator

sports, especially in number of spectators attending an event?

Answer: There is little doubt that cable television will have a significant impact upon the number of people attending but the emotional experience of attending a live event cannot be replaced. Both will have their niche and over the long run cable television may serve to increase the number of individuals at an event. The manager of a spectator facility must emphasize the quality of the experience that he/she has market it to an audience and point out the differences between a live event and watching it on the screen. The key to sustaining a large number of spectators at an event is the emotional experience as well as the ancillary programming.

Question 9: What is the primary force within the field that has made significant changes in the operation of facilities over the past five to ten years?

Answer: Private management firms have helped manage public facilities more efficiently and thus to increase the profit margin. They have helped increase the efficiency of operation through the scientific application of management principles. They also bring with them the necessary know-how to program the facilities, to promote the proper events and to create an atmosphere that will attract a large number of individuals. These private management firms have, in many instances, turned operations into a profit generation, and added revenue to budgets for public use.
