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EXPECTATIONS, OUTCOMES, AND IMPACTS--A PERSPECTIVE

BY

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ABSTRACT

Special event planning is difficult because of a complete lack of understanding the social values created by the event. The success of most events are measured in relation to financial impacts. This article explores some of the outcomes and impacts form a special event.

EXPECTATIONS, OUTCOMES, AND IMPACTS--A PERSPECTIVE

INTRODUCTION

Events such as World's Fairs are primarily measured in terms of financial outcomes. These types of events have political, social, and personal impacts that extend far beyond the financial considerations. Instead of using strict financial accounting means to determine the success or failure of a special event such as a World's Fair, it is important to also consider the other long-term types of output measures. These types of output measures are basically related to social auditing. Auditing in this context is determining the social values derived from the experience by the participant. It does not raise the question of community values but only individual outputs in relation to different impacts. Just as the financial dollars roll over in the community one, two or three times, so the social impacts upon the community also roll over based upon a participant's experience. Experience has far-reaching impacts upon an individual's friends, family, etc. These types of outputs have been to a large extent ignored because they are only indirect factors and do not have the political implications of direct factors such as profits, satisfaction, or productivity.

Many times the primary focus of empirical studies are predicted outputs such as profits, satisfaction, or productivity. Individuals are trying to examine predictive or causal elements that are related to these dimensions to help explain the direct elements related to outputs of operations. There have been very few studies that have

tried to isolate types of outputs associated with a leisure experience using a segmentation process and then examine the intra- and inter-relationships among these outputs. Each type of output is related to a different dimension. It is important to understand the components of each output in relation to the total so that the pieces of the picture will fit together.(4) This is more of an indirect approach as opposed to the more direct method of profit, satisfaction, or productivity.

One of the important questions is "Why are indirect factors so important for greater understanding?" A direct concept is dependent upon understanding one output. An indirect approach is multi-dimensional and allows understanding the dynamics of particular audiences in relationship to the experience in question.(2) It is this greater understanding of dynamics that is important. It allows you to gain a molecular understanding of an event based upon various target groups and how to better relate to these individuals. There are 3 important dimensions to what we have termed an "output" model.(1) One is the anticipation of the experience. The second is the actual outcomes from the experience. The third is the long-term impacts of the experience. It is important to not only understand the basic output but the dynamics or why behind each. This type of understanding gives you an important insight into cause/effect relationships. It is these cause/effect relationships that give you greater understanding of the basic processes and logics of why individuals make their decisions and how and why certain experiences impact differently upon individuals.(4)

This article is the second in a series; the first was an examination of satisfaction. This is a follow-up to examine the intra- and inter-relationships among expectations, outcomes, and impacts and to identify the factors that are directly related to these dimensions. The basic purpose of examining output is to find relationships between input and process. There were not enough individuals in the sample because some of the statistical analysis did not have enough individuals to make them statistically valid. Therefore, only the intra- and inter-relationships among output factors were examined.

STUDY POPULATION

A pilot study was conducted on a senior citizen tours to the 1984 World's Fair sponsored by several travel agencies and volunteer groups in Southeastern United States. The tour schedules were usually regimented in relation to time and location. There were two days spent on the World's Fair site. There were 178 individuals directly involved in the study.

INSTRUMENTATION

Individuals were asked to complete an open-ended questionnaire before they began the trip. They were asked to record their

anticipated expectations with the 1984 World's Fair. At the end of their tour, they were asked to list the outcomes and impacts of the 1984 World's Fair.

Expectations were classified using the following scale: education/learning; cultural/understanding the background of different countries and subcultures within the United States; inspirational/relating to a higher authority in life; technical/explanation of the mechanics of the general theme of water; entertainment/activities presented for the purpose of diversion; commercial/those factors associated with promotion of a product for profit; and industrial/promotion related to a particular industry.(1) Expectations were obtained to determine what the anticipation or perceived nature of the experience was before attending a World's Fair, whether they have or have not had direct experience with such events. Anticipations are pre-conditioned outcomes. Satisfaction often depends upon such factors as advertisements and what individuals have told them.

Outcomes, as an output measure, were also asked in an open-ended interview format. A classification system was developed using psychographic techniques.(2) This is a technique in which an individual's personality and value system directly makes the difference in the interpreting of an experience. There were four basic categories of individual types related to outcomes as an output measure: 1) frugal/those primary aspects related to expense of time, money. Some example responses were prices too high, time of travel to New Orleans, and too busy. 2) traditional/primary concern being order, regimentation, inability to feel in control, taking the necessary time to do a quality job, etc. Some example responses were memories, prestige, fame, and reputation. 3) innovative/those elements that focus upon more flexibility, creativity, or values the experiencing of new ideas and interested in extending outward. Some example responses were adventure, break routine, freedom, excitement, learning, broaden horizons, and independence. And, 4) social pleasures/relaxation, being with friends, escape, etc. Some example responses were go with friends, fun, tell friends, escape, meet new people, and breaks routine. All responses were put in one of these four outcome categories.

Impacts, as an output measure, was also asked in an open-ended question format in which outcomes were related to a future element of commitment to bring a reaction in the individual. This is the final result of the output component. These responses also were accepted in an open-ended format and were classified by either personal, social, community or environment outlays and the type of response invoked.(1) An example of personal impacts was self-awareness and a realization that one can function on their own and improve health; an example of social impacts was improved family solidarity and an ability to see different places. An example of community impacts was improved cultural opportunities; and an example of environmental impacts was improved weather; the reaction responses were reflected upon it, talking about it, stimulated looking into another topic, and anticipate taking another trip as a result of the experience.

ANALYSIS

Data were analyzed in relation to output category--anticipation/before the experience, outcomes/present, and impacts/future. A table was provided for each of these in which the overall responses were analyzed. The interrelational factors were shown in relation to their total responses. Only those responses that had the highest percentages were shown. This was the format for the expectations and outcomes. Only the totals were shown for the impacts because most of those responses were of an ordinal nature. The expectations and outcomes were primarily of a nominal nature. The categories of expectation, outcomes, and impacts were cross-tabulated to obtain a pattern of relationships among anticipations, present and future dimensions of output to develop some type of classification system to allow greater insight and understanding.

RESULTS

The anticipations of the visitors to the World's Fair on the tours were that the event would be primarily cultural, entertainment, educational, and inspirational.(Table 1) A 30 percentage level was used to describe significant relationships. It was also apparent that the visitors did not understand the World's Fair classification system based upon size. When the inter-relationships among expectations were examined, it was found that the greatest percentage of individuals anticipated an event that was primarily entertainment, cultural or inspirational. A 15 percent level was used to determine the describe significance relationships.(Table 2)

When the outcomes were examined, it was found that social pleasure, innovative and traditional outcomes were important.(Table 3) When the inter-relationships were examined, it was found that social pleasure, innovative, innovative/social pleasure and traditional outcomes were the most popular types of outcomes.(Table 4)

In the examination of impacts, they were more of a hierarchical dimension. People would think and talk about the Fair more than they would actually take action on it in terms of taking another trip, even though a large number indicated that they would take another trip as a direct result of their World's Fair visit.(Table 5) There seemed to be a more personal than social impact based upon the visitors' experiences.(Table 6)

When the intra-relationships among the expectations, outcomes, and impacts were examined, it was found that there were significant relationships among entertainment, social pleasure, and personal outcomes, entertainment, social pleasure and social outcomes, cultural/inspirational, innovative, and personal impact, and cultural, innovative/social, and social impacts.(Table 7) These relationships indicate a path in that entertainment, culture and social pleasure are very strong factors because they appear in most of the important pathways in terms of the output, that is, present and future. American public is interested in world's fair in relation to its

entertainment and social value. This suggests a theme park perspective.

IMPLICATIONS

There has been much interest generated, especially over the last six to seven years, about the changing nature of world's fairs in the United States and what are the primary outputs. Outputs of special events such as a world's fair must be reviewed in relation to anticipations, outcomes, and impacts, that is, past, present and future. The primary dimensions are entertainment, cultural and social outputs. Results indicate that an output classification system can be developed on which to better segment audiences. There is a great diversity of audiences and better segmentation is one of the methods to help understand these audiences to help better design special events such as World's Fairs. The traditional concept of a uni-output measure such as satisfaction, productivity, or profits is probably no longer valid because of the great diversity that exists within populations.

World's Fairs have been thought in relation to financial outcomes. This project has been an effort to determine other types of outputs based upon a participant. This type of assessment is necessary to determine the social value of a world's fair. World's fairs must be seen in context of the output measures and their effects upon individuals to obtain other measure of success of a special event such as a world's fair.

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TABLE 1

EXPECTATIONS

Type	Percent	
None	12%	
Educational	37%	
Cultural	61%	
Inspirational	37%	
Technical	17%	
Entertainment	43%	
Commercial	18%	
Industrial	15%	
Understand World's Fair Classification System	18%	82%
Attended "82" or another World's Fair	15%	85%

TABLE 2

EXPECTATIONS

Type	Percent
Educational	13%
Educational/Cultural	10%
Educational/Technical	4%
Cultural	17%
Cultural/Inspirational	19%
Technical/Industrial	8%
Entertainment	25%
Entertainment/Cultural	12%
Educational/Cultural/Entertainment	5%
Educational/Cultural/Inspirational	5%

TABLE 3

OUTCOMES

Type	Percent
Frugal	19%
Traditional	35%
Innovative	41%
Social Pleasure	63%

TABLE 4

OUTCOMES

Type	Percent
Frugal	9%
Frugal/Traditional	6%
Traditional	16%
Traditional/Social Pleasure	9%
Innovative	21%
Social Pleasure	23%
Frugal/Social Pleasure	4%
Innovative/Social Pleasure	15%
Frugal/Traditional/Social Pleasure	4%

TABLE 5

IMPACTS

Type of Action Stimulated	Percent
None	7%
Think About	78%
Talk About	85%
Use Information in Personal Life/Improve Quality	43%
Investigate Topic/Stimulated Interest	35%
Another Trip	39%
Trip to New Orleans	47%
Another World's Fair	27%

TABLE 6

IMPACTS

Type	Percent
Personal	70%
Social	45%
Community	18%
Environmental	7%

TABLE 7

INTERRELATIONSHIP AMONG EXCEPTIONS/OUTCOMES/IMPACTS

Expectations	Outcomes	Impacts
Entertainment	Social Pleasure	Think about/Personal
Entertainment	Social Pleasure	Another trip/Social
Culture/Inspirational	Innovative	Personal
Culture	Innovative/Social Pleasure	Trip to New Orleans/ Social