Convention & Visitor's Bureau Responsible Event Survey Findings

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Methodology

A quantitative research survey was distributed to individuals from organizations within Convention & Visitors Bureau's and sport commissions throughout the United States. Survey questions were formulated to provide insight into their involvement, values, and attitudes as they relate to responsible events. Results of the survey will provide some insight surrounding tourism's capability and desire to be an actor in enhancing place-based social justice, economic vitality and environmental sustainability.

Results

Event Involvement

Data was collected about organizations involvement in producing local events. Research showed that organizations are involved mainly through *assisting in the production of local events*, or *hosting sponsored events brought in via the bidding/proposal process.* Organizations only *produce their own local events* about half of the time. When asked to identify their organization's main objective(s) and focus, the greatest number chose *Tourism*, *local economic development and impact,* and *to be the top event destination*. Organizations with these three focuses as their objectives, produce, assist in the production of, and host local events the most in relation to organizations with other objectives.

When events take place in their local areas, all organizations surveyed do offer some form of support. The most common services offered by organizations include acting *as a liaison to local stakeholders (87%)*, providing *destination support (84%), and marketing, and promotion (84%)*. It is not likely that organizations own local venues, but a small number do co-operate them with others.

Responsible Event Involvement

A majority of respondents have worked in some capacity with local, *responsible* events (83%). These events were mostly responsible economically, and slightly less socially and environmentally. Responsible event types that organizations were mostly involved with were *sporting events*, *festivals* and *conferences.* Organizations that lead, support, or conduct responsible events, do so mainly to *improve their community*, to *support the local economy*, and *to align with the culture and efforts of the city and its residents.* Just under half of respondents see working with responsible events as a *competitive advantage* for their organization. Looking forward, approximately 40% of respondent organizations thought working with or hosting local responsible events was a *very high* or *high priority* for them, whereas 33% think it is a medium priority. Positively, 86% of all surveyed organizations have access to local resources that can assist in the delivery of responsible event activities. Additionally, 88% of those that have worked with local responsible events before, have access to local resources. These findings help set the scene for potential future responsible event implementation in the future.

		Given the explanation above, have you worked with any local, responsible events or with events th...			
		Yes	No	I don't know	Total
Do you have access to local resources (e.g. local businesses like waste haulers or community/gras...	Yes	22 88.00%	2 66.67%	2 100.00%	26 86.67%
	No	3 12.00%	1 33.33%	0 0.00%	4 13.33%
	Total	25 100.00%	3 100.00%	2 100.00%	30 100.00%

Responsible Event Activities

Respondents were asked to provide a closer view of their involvement with the specific categories of activities that pertain to responsible events: Planning and Communication, Procurement, Resource Management, Access & Equity, and Community Legacy.

When participating in various aspects of responsible event production, organizations take on both leadership and support roles. In general, organizations participate the least in activities that pertain to Resource Management and Access & Equity, and the most when it involves Community Legacy. In terms of planning to act further in the future, the most organizations, 38%, plan to act more on Planning and Communications activities such as sharing information responsible event activities, finding sponsors to support specific responsible event activities, and developing robust safety and security plans.

Planning and Communication: For planning and communication of responsible events, it is more likely that organizations will have supported or not participated in any activities towards the category, rather than lead efforts. *Soliciting stakeholder feedback* is the activity most participated in when leading activities. The least amount of organizations led or supported activities in *publishing a sustainability report* or *developing an integrated policy that guides decision making towards a triple bottom line*. (*Point 1 for further research)

Procurement: Procurement is the one activity category for which organizations take on a leadership role with the most frequency. For example, almost 97% of respondents have either led or supported efforts in purchasing from locally owned businesses. However, in contrast, the procurement activities that organizations are involved with the least are *developing procurement policies*, *purchasing guidelines or contract specifications for acceptable material*s AND *maximizing sustainable attributes of event mementos and merchandise*.

Resource Management: Looking more closely at resource management activities, organizations focus mainly on *recycling*, *reusing*, and *composting* efforts, but do not *monitor their energy* and *water usage* or *calculate the greenhouse gas emissions resulting from event activities*. This finding reflects that only 8% of respondents identified a focus of their organization to be *resource conservation.*

Access & Equity: As it pertains to access & equity, organizations mainly a*lign with social movements via outreach and awareness* at events but don't seem to participate in other access & equity activities such as *creation of long-term funds for disadvantaged youth or identify and remove barriers to attendance/participation for under-represented groups*.

Community Legacy and local engagement

Community Legacy activities include collaborating with local governments and community development organizations that contribute capacity to projects, activities, programs, and initiatives aimed at strengthening communities. These activities range widely. They can be powerful and creative, while varied in size and focus according to the needs, goals and politics of the place. Within this specific research, just 11% of organizations identify Community Legacy creation as one of their main objectives or focus.

Of the five main overarching categories of event activities, most organizations have participated in some form of Community Legacy activity mostly in a support role rather than a leadership role. Specifically, most have *supported local business* or *linked with local government*, and are interested in leading or supporting *youth* and *educational programs* in the future.

When given the option to work with local partners to create a "plug-and-play" legacy project to be activated alongside visiting events on an ongoing basis, just under half of respondents were either *interested* or *very interested* while slightly less were *moderately interested.* A "plug-and-play" legacy project is a project that is ongoing in a community and can be activated or 'brought to life' around an event in a clear way without the need for many new resources. An example is a program that allows youth to be physically active (e.g. run, jump, throw) and learn healthy lifestyle habits at a booth or designated space at a venue as a sport competition occurs.

Some of the previously implemented Community Legacy projects of respondents focused on youth education, social giving to underserved populations (homeless, vets, etc.), sport, health, art, environment (e.g. beautification, tree planting) and infrastructure. All organizations participating in Community Legacy activities, worked with local partners when doing so.

Looking forward, organizations plan to act more on Community Legacy activities than any other event activity categories other than Planning and Communication.

Respondents

Respondents of the survey were mainly from Convention and Visitor's Bureaus (CVB) with a few others from sport commissions, non-profit organizations, sport-divisions of CVBs and one respondent represented a government agency. Those within the organization that participated in the survey were mostly CEOs, Executive Directors and Presidents (53%). 27% were Sales Managers or Associates, 13% were VPs of Marketing and Sales, 3% were VPs of Events and

Operations, and 3% were Events Managers. [Possible pie chart here of respondent positions – numbers included in Excel.]

The size of respondent organizations varied with 83% of respondents coming from organizations that had 1-25 employees, 10% from organizations with 26-50, and 3% coming from organizations with both 76-100 and over 100 employees. [Possible chart here of size of organization – numbers included in Excel.]

Also, 90% of organizations have a Board of Directors with a majority having under 30 people on the Board.

Most organizations identified their main objective and focus as *Tourism*, followed by *local economic development and impact*, *to be a top event destination,* and i*ncrease local quality of life.*

Recommended Further Research:

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1. It is recommended that further research be conducted to determine **why** organizations do not participate in certain activities within each of the five main categories of the responsible event framework. Specifically determine if it is due to low interest,lack of know how, or other factors.

2. Further research would be beneficial for finding what guidance can be provided to help organizations reach both general and responsible event objectives.

Other Notes

The sample:

A total of 29 respondents fully completed the survey. Within those 29, individual respondents were from Convention and Visitor's Bureau (CVB), sport divisions within a CVB, sport commissions, venues, government agencies and independent, non-profit corporations. Responses from partially completed surveys were also taken into account for some of the research results.

The sample surveyed was representative of the greater desired target population, however not large enough to provide statistically significant results. The research findings noted should be used as initial insights for further exploration and learning about this audience.

Biases and Possible Limitations:

Although the survey was designed to minimize bias, those biases can only be reduced and not fully eliminated. It is possible that the survey included Response Bias of Acquiescence and Mental Set given the type of questions surrounding responsible activities and frequent use of 'Community Legacy' terminology throughout.

Also, the design of the survey somewhat limited some of the findings. The structure of the survey included open-ended questions asking for respondents' local partners and current goals, successes. Not all respondents answered these open-ended questions, limiting their effectiveness. These specific questions would be very beneficial within a focus group discussion or interview in the future to help formulate a possible second survey iteration. Determining the specific size and type of events would also be beneficial to future research considering that in general, smaller events have less capacity while larger, more high-profile events tend to attract more attention and thus, opportunity to expand the scope of efforts, both in the direct event production and event legacy aspects.