A CRITICAL INVESTIGATION INTO THE KEY FACTORS AND CHARACTERISTICS OF AN EFFECTIVE CORPORATE EVENTS TEAM

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BA (Hons) International Tourism & Events Management
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Signed Statement

“I declare that this Dissertation has not already been accepted in substance for any degree and is not concurrently submitted in candidature for any degree. It is the result of my own independent research except where otherwise stated”.

Signed: Carys Leah Baker
Abstract

The aim of this dissertation is to critically evaluate the essential key factors and characteristics of a corporate events team, focusing on live large-scale events. A review of the current literature was necessary, to find an extensive proportion written on the production and planning processes of corporate events, although little directly related to the necessary individuals and teams required to undertake a role in the industry.

To complete this study, the author constructed primary research through the use of semi-structured interviews with six employees at various levels of profession, from a live brand experience agency, who specialize in large-scale corporate events. Qualitative research had been chosen due to its beneficial qualities such as the in-depth responses from participants. It was vital to undertake this primary research with industry professionals to gain clear, relevant data that can be used by event company recruiters, or those individuals who desire a career within the field, and assess factors they may need in order to pursue it. A theoretical framework had been created considering all of the research found, both primary and secondary. The framework is to assist event recruiters when hiring new employees, by allowing them to ensure the candidates possess the relevant experience, skills and attributes.

The main findings of the study found the key skills and characteristics that each event employee should possess in order to succeed in the events industry. The primary research also found that experience is the most vital factor for any candidate to have, this allows them to assess the event working environment and establish if it is the correct path.

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1.0. Introduction
1.1 Chapter outline

The purpose of this research project is to assess which factors and characteristics are compulsory to the creation of a successful events team, focusing on the corporate event industry. It aims to gain the perceptions of industry professionals through the use of primary research, and compare it to any pre-existing literature on the related subject. The literature review will allow the student to create a preliminary theoretical framework of the recruitment process within the events industry, and what are necessary attributes for candidates to possess. In order to complete this study, the results are to be reviewed and converted into a revised theoretical framework, and recommendations can then be made for those involved in the recruitment process in the events industry.

1.2. Context

The UK’s events industry has grown significantly throughout the recent years with it being reportedly worth £42.3 Billion, and now it is the UK’s 16th largest employer providing 570,000 supported full-time jobs. It was also reported that the top ten UK event agencies’ turnover had been more than £3.5 Billion (Eventbrite, 2016). According to Eventbrite’s industry report 2017, in the years 2016 and 2017, the most popular reason to hold an event was for education and training purposes, which can also be categorized under corporate events. Getz (2012:63) states that ‘any event produced by or for a corporation falls into this large category, but is generally associated with a range of events aimed at the public or for business to business purposes’. Now 1.3 million business events are held each year and 39% of corporate event planners are expecting their budgets to increase significantly since 2016 (Eventbrite, 2016).

There are various sub categories of corporate events including seminars, conferences, product launches, appreciation events and incentive programmes. Companies and organisations around the world hold most of
which frequently, therefore it is undeniable that it is necessary to have an events team who can excel in all aspects of cooperation.

This report will focus on the production of large-scale appreciation events (award ceremonies and shows), as this is typically the largest form of corporate event and are said to be the most demanding to work on. The importance of such corporate events for employees derived to the Mid 20th Century after the Depression Era. As previously ‘the mentality of every person for himself was replaced by a sense of unity.’ (Halsey, 2010). Employees were now valued as an essential part and contribution to the success of a corporate team, and when organisations recognized their teamwork, appreciation events would be held as a motivational factor to improve productivity and work ethic.

1.3. Student’s perspective

The interest into this research project stems from the student’s experience of working with various events companies, one of which specializes in the organisation of corporate and live events. Due to working with a variety of teams, there has been cooperation with a range of people from different ages and educational backgrounds. Some of these events ran smoother than others, and made the student curious as to whether it was because of the team dynamic. This experience has prompted consideration as to what characteristics and/or skills are imperative for working in this industry, and which factors altogether contribute to the successful completion of any corporate event.

Each event will ‘mirror how your business is run and your level of professionalism’ (Allen, 2009). This quote implies the importance of the event team and the skills, experience and determination to ensure each event reaches it full potential. Furthermore this research project would benefit general event organisations during the recruitment process, guiding companies to recruit the ideal candidate. In addition, individuals wishing to
pursue a career within the events industry or even event management graduates could use this research to their advantage, ensuring they have the necessary attributes to succeed in an event organisation.

1.4. Aims and Objectives

The aims and objectives of this study are as follows:

Aim

A critical investigation into the key factors and characteristics that contribute to a successful and effective events team for a large-scale corporate event.

Objectives

1. To critically review the literature surrounding key theories relating to corporate events management and teamwork in order to develop an initial theoretical framework.

2. To undertake primary research with corporate event industry experts in order to gain insights from their experiences of creating successful teams.

3. To compare the findings from the primary research to the literature to develop a revised theoretical framework.

4. To make recommendations for best practice when developing corporate events teams and for future research.
2.0 Literature Review
2.1. Chapter Outline

Thomas and Nelson (1990) suggest that a literature review establishes the demand for the question under investigation. To further this, Mason (2014:25) states that ‘without detailed awareness and a clear understanding of the important literature, it is very difficult to make your claim about your contribution to literature’. The following chapter allows the author to assess the relevant literature found on effective event teams from previous researchers. The literature found helps assess how the combination of all areas and factors that are vital to an effective events team for the implementation of a successful large-scale corporate event. This will be a critical review of the literature, supporting the aims and objectives stated in 1.4. An evaluation of the found research identified specific gaps in the literature, which contributed to the author’s overall evaluation.

2.2 Effective Teamwork

Teams can be made up of either a small number of individuals or thousands within a large organisation, and are typically formed in an ad hoc manner. Clegg, Legge and Walsh (1999:280) suggest that ‘managers put together people with different skills, professional backgrounds, levels of power and influence, and expect them to get on and work together’. Albeit it vital to ensure a diverse employee demographic, due to major differences potentially regarding backgrounds and influences, it is extremely presumptuous to assume all new colleagues will work effectively with one another from the beginning. Hayes (2002:2) furthers this point by stating ‘simply having an arrangement whereby people work together isn’t the same as having an organisation, which has converted to teamwork’. In order to avoid this and create a collaborative team, teambuilding exercises can be introduced to provide a comfortable and productive environment. Newstrom and Scannell (1998) assessed the benefits of team building exercises and established six...
main outcomes for organisational teams, which are stated below in table 2.2.1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Create Team Identity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Become Comfortable With The Team</td>
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<tr>
<td>Develop Productive Working Relationships</td>
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<tr>
<td>Demonstrate The Value of Team Efforts</td>
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<tr>
<td>Build Mutual Support And Trust</td>
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<tr>
<td>Encourage Honest Feedback From Team Members</td>
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Table 2.2.1 Benefits of Team Building Exercises

The six points stated above allow the individuals within a team to find common grounds and feel comfortable asking questions to any team member at any level about their role. In regards to building mutual support and trust, this aspect is vital in terms of the events industry. Managers must feel confident when delegating specific tasks to any individual and be reassured that they will perform adequately without hesitation. Drummond and Anderson, (2004) highlight how not only is an effective team beneficial for the employees and the organisation, but also the other additional stakeholders; ‘the communication and professional skills of these people influence the whole understanding of the organisation in the visitor’s minds’. This allows for a positive connotation with the event company and a favorable reputation is formed.
In order for any team to be effective and work in a positive working environment, a manager should be established. Belbin (1981:50) states that ‘Leadership is always vital, and team leadership is no exception’. There is extensive literature on leadership and the way in which such person should perform within the working environment to their peers, in particular in regards to ones personality. Van Der Wagen and White (2015:257) define leadership as someone who can ‘inspire confidence and support among people who are needed to achieve organisational goals and it is about the capacity of an individual to inspire and motivate.’ To achieve high success rates, motivated and enthusiastic employees are likely to want to perform well and achieve a high standard of work to reflect their passion.

Belbin (1981) previously undertook research to establish which characteristics and factors found within ones personality, determined a successful leader. The three main findings are as follows:

1. Trusting by nature
2. Commitment to external goals and objectives
3. Calm in the face of controversy

In the evaluation of his research, the definition of a team leader concluded as ‘someone tolerant enough always to listen but strong enough to reject his or her advice’. In his literature, Belbin also established a certain role name, the ‘complete finisher’ describing them as a team member who has the determination to finalize a project to the end, whilst ensuring the best quality has been applied, and this person is vital to any team. However he later implies that such quality is very difficult to distinguish at early recruitment stage, therefore a challenging role to fill. Additionally, Manz and Sims (1987:106-128) found the ‘encouragement of self observation and self-evaluation’ to be a valuable factors of a leader. In relation, Blake and Mouton (1966) created a ‘managerial grid’ with each axis representing ‘concern for people’ and ‘concern for production’. This model allows individuals to assess and score themselves either high or low to view where their main concerns lie. It is said that leaders should score high in both respects in order to show
equal concern for the team, clients and the event itself. Blake and Mouton (1966) also found the four personality traits that each leader should acquire are extroversion, intelligence, confidence and initiative. This relates back to Van Der Wagen and White (2015) who also suggests confidence and an extroversion personality are essential for a leader. Belbin (1981) found from his study that ‘every management team needs to have within it one person, who is clever, whether in an analytical or creative sense’. He continues to discuss that it is advisable to ensure that all team members have the ability to undertake any challenge and can take up any role required as opposed to just being able to fill a specialist role.

Focusing on the literature which highlights leadership styles as opposed to leadership qualities, Bladen et al (2012:31) discusses how ineffective management styles can negatively affect an actual event, and in particular the ‘project culture’. Making it vital to ensure whoever fills the role of a team leader possesses suitable qualities. Taylor (2011) established the model recreated in figure 1.1 below, showing four different leadership styles that should be applied throughout his or her time at management level.

Figure 2.2.1 Leadership Styles, Taylor 2011.
Due to the ever-changing environment of the events industry, it would be advantageous for a leader or event manager, to be able to change their style to any of those featured in Taylor’s model at any appropriate given time. For instance, if a new event assistant is recruited, it is important that the leader can take the role of say the ‘coaching’ style in order to motivate the employee and guide them in the right direction. Whereas, on the day of the live event, the leader will need to delegate tasks to team members using an autocratic leadership style to ensure each role is sufficiently filled. An autocratic leader would traditionally find a solution for a problem and make an overall decision based on their opinion of what is best for the situation and the team involved at that specific time (Dessler and Starke, 2004). In contrast, a democratic or participative leader would deliberate with their team when approaching any problem, acknowledge their contributions and then make an overall decision (Dessler and Starke, 2004). Both of these leadership styles completely contrast the style of laissez-faire, which suggests team members should have the ability to resolve the issue alone with very little help (Val and Kemp, 2012).

2.3. Human Resource Management in the Event Industry

Raj et al (2009:51) defines human resource management as ‘the process organising and effectively employing people in pursuit of organisational goals.’ This implies that in order to effectively ensure the right person fills each role and joins the organisation, recruitment and selection plays a very important part in the successful delivery of events to ensure all members are working toward the same goal. Events are intangible; therefore there is only one chance to get it right. Hence why there is a great amount of pressure on event managers and teams to recruit the right staff and apply the right management techniques.

Pielichaty et al (2017:60) state that ‘The objects and vision of the events organisation must be considered when hiring new employees or shaping and re-shaping the organisation’s work force structures.’ Therefore the objectives must be clear to the recruiters of the company, ensuring that only those who
reflect the organisation’s image are considered. D’Annunzio-Green, Maxwell and Watson (2004:17) show that this is an important process for the organisation, but also for the potential candidate, as ‘the process should allow prospective candidates to determine for themselves how compatible they are with the job and the company’. Therefore the recruiters should be honest representatives for the candidate to gather the organisation’s culture and ethics. Lashley and Lee-Ross (2003) say that ‘managers must be able to align an individual’s needs with the objectives of the organisation for the benefit of their employer, for themselves, for the client and for the outcomes of the event’. Mahesh (1993:30) believes that the most effective recruitment strategies are based on the ‘people required at each level of each category of skill, providing for expansion, attrition and internal development needs’. Procter and Mueller (2000:13) suggest that those who have previously worked as managers or supervisors are the obvious candidates for the new roles offered, especially if the company is expanding. Although contradicting themselves, Procter and Mueller (2000) later suggest that although qualified, a candidate’s previous experience may have a different working ethic or culture, which may not be applicable to the company. Additionally if one may be hired externally, resentment may arise from current employees, resulting in an ineffective team environment. However Rudman (1999:319) highlights the important fact that ‘selecting the best person available…may not provide you with someone who can do the job’. This proves the complexities with recruitment, and hiring an incompatible candidate could face with the organisation with detrimental consequences in the long term.

There is extensive literature on author’s opinions on the certain skills, which are compulsory for an event management employee to possess. EMBOK (Event Management Body of Knowledge) as adapted from Rutherford Silvers, created a three dimensional description of knowledge and skills for an event manager. The ‘core values’ dimension includes aspects that consider the way in which one performs. The categories are creativity, strategic, continuous improvement, ethics and integration. Although each category can represent specific aspects, none of which clearly suggest any form of management of
an events team. Strategic can be considered here, however Rutherford Silvers interprets this to be in the sense of organisational awareness. Arcodia and Axelson (2005) undertook a study to establish the required skills necessary for managers within the industry in a more detailed fashion, focusing on specific skills. The top five identified skills are shown in table 2.3.1 below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communication Skills</th>
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<td>Team Skills</td>
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<td>Customer Service Skills</td>
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<td>Computer Skills</td>
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<tr>
<td>Organisational/Planning Skills</td>
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Table 2.3.1 Arcodia and Axelson's, (2005) Top Five Skills

All of the above skills are those of which can be taught through education and experience, which supports this quote, ‘exceptional talents are less born than made’ (Simonton, 2000; Ericsson, 1996). However, Arcodia and Axelson also gained research on five attributes, which are a part of ones characteristic that proved to be also necessary for a candidate to possess. Those attributes are stated in Table 2.3.2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Motivated</th>
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<td>Flexible</td>
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<td>Positive</td>
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Table 2.3.2 Arcodia and Axelson’s, (2005) Top Five Attributes

In comparison, Royal and Jago (1998) undertook research with 42 event practitioners, and established their most important skills to their profession. They are listed below:

1. Planning
2. Organisation
3. Sponsorship Knowledge
4. Marketing
5. Human Resource Management
6. Administration
7. Public Relations
8. Finance

As opposed to listing the specific skills required, Royal and Jago identify the areas in which are most important to the events industry and where any event employee must excel, unless assigned a specialist role within the company. This literature proposes that the more attractive candidate is one, who can adapt in any area, and possess the required skills, which can be applied in all functions. In contrast to one who can only achieve at one role in one function.

It is important for recruiters to examine candidates for these attributes, as they are as vitally important as the skills. Van Der Wagen created a recruitment and selection process, shown in Figure 2.3.1, highlighting the imperative stages and considerations when recruiting any candidate.
Van Der Wagen suggest that interviews should be carefully conducted and planned in order to ask the correct type of questions and gain the most valuable information from them in the short amount of time given. However, as Belbin (1981) stated, some roles require a certain type of person, and it proves intensely difficult to establish such skills and attributes over the short period of time in which an interview provides.
2.4 Event Management

‘The objectives have to be carefully thought through, and to be precise and clear enough to ensure that the purpose of the event is clear to all those involved in it, from the chair of the organising committee or clients, down to staff or volunteers at the operational level.’ (Shone and Parry, 2015)

![Diagram of the Planning Process for Events Management](Shone and Parry, 2015:120)

Figure 2.4.1 The Planning Process for Events Management (Shone and Parry, 2015:120)
Figure 2.4.1 highlights the importance of establishing the objectives of any event prior to anything other planning decisions, as it allows event coordinators to plan accordingly ensuring all decisions are adhered to the client’s specifications. Many authors support Shone and Parry with their views of objectives, including Baccarini. Baccarini (1999) assesses two areas in which evaluate an event’s success; through the completion of event objectives and the effectiveness of event management processes. This literature highlights the importance of such objectives to complete all aspects of the corporate event, as there is generally a considerable amount to undertake. Kanter (2008) believes that in an industry, which provides a service, clear direction and standardized procedures allow for effective employee performance. Therefore it is vital that the event coordinator briefs the employees and volunteers, to ensure they know exactly what to do, where and when. Van Der Wagen and Davies (1999) suggest that as event management is a service, the ‘success is largely determined by the customers (or clients) perception of the situation’. This statement proposes that if the internal management is performed effectively, the execution of the event shall appear successful in the eyes of the client and attendees.

Shone and Parry (2015:118) continue to outline the need for the objectives to be carefully revised and understandable for all stakeholders involved, even those at operational level. Bowdin et al (2011:335) also states that ‘one of the greatest challenges faced by an event manager is creating effective team(s) capable of achieving an event’s objectives. Lock (2014:5) established three simple yet detailed elements compared to Baccarini (1999) that can be used to analyse the success of any corporate event, which are as follows:

1. Project completion with budget
2. Projected completed on time
3. Good performance, ensuring event adhered to client specifications

Although this literature is valuable, Shone and Parry identify that although such corporate event may be sufficiently organised but the attendees are

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undoubtedly unpredictable, and their action will determine the success of the event.

2.5 Team Members in Event Management

Parent and Swan-Smith (2013:74) established the five categories of workforce within the events industry, and they are shown below:

1. Employees
2. Consultants
3. Contract workers
4. Secondees
5. Volunteers

Throughout the planning process, implementation and delivery, a great variety of roles must be filled and many tasks to be undertaken. One individual such as the event coordinator may carry out some tasks, or roles may be distributed throughout the team or volunteers and contractors may be hired. Matthews (1999:83) argues against Parent and Swan-Smith’s categories by stating that,

‘It is not recommended that volunteers be a part of this (production) team due to the fact that most of the tasks within the production team require specialist training’

However, Shone and Parry’s literature (2015:290) disagrees with Matthews (1999) to an extent, as they suggest that volunteers are actively willing to participate and therefore are potentially more likely to perform well. This is in comparison to employed agency staff, as they simply may attend for the social aspect or to increase their income, not necessarily because they are interested in the job. Shone and Parry created a model for event coordinators to follow in order to employ the right staff. This model has been recreated in figure 1.2 below. Tum (2006) also supports this by stating ‘in considering the
organisational effectiveness present, this may be cooperative and social rather than focused on commercial or bureaucratic aims.’

Ferdinand and Kitchin (2017:121) outline that a clear design strategy, effective project management and understanding the event environment e.g. culture and politics, all must have an effective event team to deliver the event successfully.

Figure 2.5.1 ‘Staffing an Event (Shone and Parry, 2015:291)
‘Event management utilizes many different project management tools and approaches in order to plan, organise and execute a successful and safe event’ (Pielichaty et al, 2017). To support this further, O’Toole and Mikolaitis (2002) state that ‘(large scale corporate events) can no longer be regarded as a one-time proposition, with techniques and skills being reinvented for the next event’. Therefore they suggest that event coordinators, for each new large-scale corporate event, should undertake a ‘systematic approach’.

Atkinson (1984) provided a model, shown in figure 2.5.1 identifying the various staff types to be found within the event industry. This model allows event managers to assess the different needs and the managerial approach that should be adapted for them (Ferdinand & Kitchin, 2017).

Bowdin et al. (2001) mention that one skill that any event manager should acquire is the ability to motivate their team members throughout the planning process and the event itself. Employees must be rewarded for completing objectives and achieving set goals, in order to motivate continue doing so (Tum, Norton and Wright, 2011, pp.166).

2.6 Corporate Events

‘A show to introduce an audience, such as the media, to a new product or service. It may also be also be aimed at an organisation’s internal management and staff, sales force or external dealers and customers.’

(Shone & Parry, 2013, p7)

(Master and Wood, 2006: O’Toole, 2011) suggested that a corporate event is such an event that is specifically designed and organised to support business objectives. Such events may be imperative to an organisation for internal and external benefits. Judy Allen (date) identifies the six different objectives of large-scale corporate events, which are demonstrated below:

- Appreciate employees, clients and suppliers
- Raise public awareness

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- Enhance brand recognition
- Celebrate milestones
- Awards
- Launch products

Large-scale live award ceremonies require a considerate amount of attention and planning, due to the importance it has on its company's reputation as shown by Allen who further states that 'Corporate meetings also became events which people no longer dreaded attending'. This implies the necessity for event companies to deliver the event successfully to secure future clients and remain or become a reputable company.

O'Toole and Mikolaitis (2002) devised eight areas of management shown in figure 2.6.1 which are relevant to the events industry, in particular corporate events. Their literature further states that if an event coordinator were to pay very little attention to any of the management areas, there shall be serious problems during the event, which may be detrimental to the organisation and the event itself. This model allows managers or coordinators to reassure themselves that they have covered the various areas that need to be addressed.

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<th>Scope</th>
<th>Content</th>
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<td>Time</td>
<td>Human Resources</td>
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<td>Cost</td>
<td>Procurement</td>
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<tr>
<td>Risk</td>
<td>Communication</td>
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2.7. Importance of Education, Experience and Background in the Event Industry

It is difficult to establish which factor owns more importance, education or experience, in particular within the events industry. Getz (2008) suggested that event management has been incorporated in many other disciplines including geography and economics. Although in recent years, event management as a university course has significantly increased in popularity (Silvers et al, 2006) and is now offered in the majority of UK universities. Getz (2005) says that ‘event studies’ as he refers to it, should provide students with the knowledge of the planning and production of all event types and the ‘capability of life long learning’. He also suggests that the study of event management in general allows a solid foundation for students to get into any specific type of events. To further Belbin, Stafford (1994) found in his research that event management graduates typically gain a range of business skills including management and administration, in addition to strong interpersonal relationship skills, which will enhance their ability to work within the events industry. Bigelow (1991) also supports an educational background prior to employment, as ‘emphasis on skill-based education in universities has a long and rich history of preparing students for success in many professions’. Belbin (1981) supports the academic background as he further found in his research that organisations preferably recruit those candidates who acquire a university degree, when considering a role within management, due to the proven mental ability.

Junek, Lockstone & Mair (2009), undertook research assessing event management student's perspectives, on which skills are most important to them in the event industry. The top three skills, which were concluded, are communication, time management and problem solving. Lee, Lee and Kim (2008) state that the event industry solely desires skilled, trained and
knowledgeable professionals. However it is questionable as to whether these factors are gained through university degrees or industry experience. While considering this, Belbin (1997) states that ‘while skills and knowledge can be acquired by training and experience, they are insufficient by themselves to ensure suitability for a job’. Getz (2012) agrees with Belbin in the respect that he does not believe that skills are enough to prepare those for employment in the events industry; he states that candidates need a ‘well-developed sense of ethics’ and the understanding of ‘professional responsibility’.

However Katz, (1974) argues that it very dependent on the teaching methods used by the institutions, as courses, which simply impart relevant information as opposed to teaching it, proves largely unproductive in enhancing any skills of the students. Filley, Foster and Herbert’s (1979) research supported Belbin and Katz to an extent by stating, ‘organisational behaviour and management courses emphasized theoretical concepts but were of limited practical value’. This highlights the importance of experiential learning within the relevant industry, as Bladen and Kenner (2014) recognize that students should undertake work experience to gain a solid understanding of the way in which the industry works. ‘Sandwich years’ in university are recently becoming imperative so students can experience both forms of learning.
2.8. Preliminary theoretical framework

After reviewing the current literature on the issues and themes relating to event management teams, the author constructed a preliminary theoretical framework.

![Diagram of the preliminary theoretical framework]

Figure 2.7.1. Preliminary Theoretical Framework: Adapted from Shone & Parry (2015) and Van Der Wagen (2007).

2.9. Conclusion
It is evident to see that there is extensive literature on event management and the various themes surrounding it. It is clear that many theorists and researchers have undertaken studies to find the main essential skills for event managers to possess, albeit some are very broad and unrelated to specifically corporate events, only event management in general.

There is some literature surrounding a strong educational background and experience, however there is a lack of research when it comes to establishing which is most beneficial for a potential candidate to have in the events industry and if either is in fact necessary for a full-time position within the field. Due to the minor gaps in the literature, the student shall discover the necessary data in the following research, through the use of qualitative data. This shall be discussed in sections 3.0. and 4.0.

The theories and perspectives allowed the student to construct a preliminary framework based on the findings, which may be considered during the recruitment process of event management.
3.0 Methodology
3.1. Introduction

The following chapter shall focus on the methodology of the study. Strauss and Corbin (1998:3-4) state that methodology is the ‘way of philosophically studying social reality, using a set of procedures and techniques for assembling and analysing data’. It will concern the way in which primary research is conducted and consist of identifying the various research methods available, analysing the advantages and limitations of each. Orna and Stevens (1995), state that data is considered as ‘raw’ facts, whereas ‘information is what we transfer knowledge into’ to be easily understood by others. The aim of this chapter is to assess the way in which data can be retrieved to alter it into valuable information for those related to the events industry to benefit from. This methodology shall refer to Saunders et al. (2007) ‘research onion’ which highlights the various stages that must be considered when undertaking primary research, including research strategy, approaches, data collection methods, and philosophy.

3.2 Qualitative Research

‘Qualitative data is data in the form of descriptive accounts of observations or data or which is classified by type’ (Ghosh and Chopra, 2003). To further this, Malhotra (2008) describes qualitative research as the process ‘to gain a qualitative understanding of the underlying reasons and motivations’. Such qualitative methods can be undertaken in a flexible manner, ensuring participants can reflect upon past experiences and express their views freely in their own terms and context (Malhotra, Birks and Wills, 2014). It has been found that there are various benefits of using this form of research such as the ability to go into depth and complexity of the data. In contrast, it has to be reminded that the data collected, is opinion based and may not reflect the entire sample of the industry as a whole if an unreliable participant is selected. Qualitative methods typically relate to inductive research, which traditionally involves a researcher undertaking a new technique to gain in-depth data (Mason, 2014:54). Qualitative research also commonly adopts a
phenomenology philosophy, as it does not ‘search for objective truths but are interested in ways in which individuals and groups perceive the world’ (Clarke et al, 1998).

### 3.2.1 Methods of qualitative research

As qualitative research solely concentrates on gaining opinions and in the case of this study, industry perspectives, there are various methods to be carried out to fulfill the aims of the study. Qualitative research can include a form of interview, often taking a holistic dimension, which gains an overall complex perspective of the context, in question. Figure 3.2.1.1 demonstrates the range of qualitative research available according to Geoff Lancaster (2005). Such research may result in the development of a new theory, either intentionally or coincidentally, called a ground theory. This typically adopts an inductive approach and consists of assessing any patterns in the data from respondents (May, 2011), and the data found is solely from the research and not examined to fit with any current frameworks (Flick, 2011).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Semi-Structured Interviews</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Depth Interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group Interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus Groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-Groups</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.2.1.1 qualitative methods Lancaster (2005)

### 3.3 Quantitative Research

Quantitative research seeks to quantify any data and transform it into statistical data. Quantitative research collects statistical data in a structured fashion, and only seeks a numerical outcome. Oakley (1999) distinguished...
factors that applied to quantitative research, which differentiates from qualitative research. Those being, that questionnaires and surveys are considered to be ‘hard data’ from an ‘outsider perspective’. This is of course assuming a constant reality with very little dynamic changes. Quantitative methods typically adapt the deductive research approach (Saunders et al, 2007) where a previous law or theory is formed, and the researcher tests it (Mason, 2014:53). A quantitative approach is most effective when a great number of contributions can be made, and statistical analysis can be applied (May, 2011). One factor, which may be considered as a limitation, is that there are a large number of participants required to ensure validity, which may be fairly difficult to attain considering the industry in which this study is focused on.

3.3.1 Methods of quantitative research

The most common forms of quantitative research are typically questionnaires and surveys. These methods allow a structured and direct response from the participants, which are easily analysed by the researcher.

3.4 Method of Choice

The author has chosen to solely undertake qualitative research for this project; due to the clear benefits it would provide the researcher. In order to gain a professional, industry perspective, it would prove advantageous to gain an in-depth understanding of the participant’s answers through a direct approach, which would not be easy through the use of questionnaires. In addition, quantitative research would require a great amount of participants, and the researcher would benefit from mainly gaining data from those at senior level of their profession within the events industry. The research in this study, resembles an Aristotelian sequence, as this method involves observing professionals, analysing their perceptions, compare this research to any related literature on the topic, and results can be concluded and an answer can be established (Lomas, 2005:11).
3.5 Primary Research Strategy

Semi-structured interviews with the use of open questions and the occasional feature of simple multiple-choice questions to gain the basic data allowed the researcher to gain the most valuable data. Providing the opportunity to adapt to questions during the interview or ask the participant to expand on their answer if they agreed to do so, to allow a fully understood and detailed response. Solely focusing on event professionals and employees, the interviews included related themes to the events industry such as experience and educational background, employee recruitment and human resource management and teamwork. To view the semi-structured interview questions, please see Appendix A.

3.6 Sampling

To ensure successful qualitative research and in order for the interviews to gain the most relevant data, the researcher shall only interview a ‘sample’ of those directly related to the events industry at all levels of profession. This sample method can be referred to as ‘judgment sampling’, where the researcher deliberately selects the sample/demographic who they deem most appropriate (Wilson, 2004:186). This allowed careful consideration for the selected sample, resulting in smaller participant numbers of only industry experts who provide relevant data and sufficiently answer the questions with little difficulty. This enhances the reliability of the collected data. The inclusion criteria for the participants in this study simply included full-time, professional employment within the events industry, with at least two being at senior level, and being over the age of 18.

3.7 Implementation

The researcher contacted a live events agency (find out actual title), which acquires a great number of high-profile clients. In consideration of their knowledge, experience and professional employment within the events
industry, the researcher believed the range of clients budgets, events and team members would prove beneficial. From contacting an employee at senior level of the company through email, the company soon confirmed their consent for the researcher to undertake interviews with employees at various levels within the company (see Appendix B). The researcher desired to solely assess the perceptions from one company, though collect data from individuals at different professional levels as opposed to just senior level, educational and experience backgrounds in order to assess the employee’s perceptions in the events industry.

3.8 Analysis

In terms of analysing the collected data, each interview shall be recorded, regarding the wishes of the participant, and converted into transcripts. This provides the researcher with the ability to re-evaluate the captured data, ensuring all aspects have been covered. The additional benefit of the recorded audio, allows the researcher to evaluate the way in which the participant speaks, whether with certainty or a hesitant tone. The researcher used thematic analysis in order to identify themes in a structured manner, Davies, (2007:31) defines thematic analysis as ‘the study of tape-recorded conversations – either naturally conducted or in an encounter with a research interview.’ The data is collected through qualitative allows the analysis to include quotes which assists with the discussion of key themes. Quotes help with the illustration of experiences, and highlights the themes found (Sandelowski, 1994:479-482).

3.9 Reliability and Validity

In order to ensure the reliability of the study, the sample chosen had been carefully selected to represent the larger relevant demographic, whilst guaranteeing the least unbiased outcome possible (Burns, 2000). In regards to the interviewer, when undertaking interviews, it is possible for the researcher to negatively affect the data, which is retrieved by ensuring
participants provide answers which are desirable (Dahlgren and Hansen, 2015:318-325). Saunders et al., (2007) further suggests that a persuasive tone of voice when asking a certain question could determine the answer given by the participant. To avoid this, the interviewer ensured a neutral tone throughout the each interview and did not prompt any type of answers.

3.10 Ethics

Considering (this quote stated above), protecting the participants and ensuring an ethical approach is achieved, is vital to the success of this study. To ensure ethical research, all participants are required to complete an ethical consent form adhering to Cardiff Metropolitan University ethical guidelines. In such form, the aims and objectives, in addition to what was expected from the participant were featured to allow no unexpected situations to occur during the interview. To further the protection of the participants, each shall remain anonymous in addition to the company itself to protect their identity. A copy of the ethics form is displayed in Appendix C. Regarding the researcher, interview locations will take place in a safe, pre-arranged environment, where both the researcher and participants feel at ease. Each participant had the right to refuse to answer any question asked by the researcher, or simply decline involvement in the study completely.

3.11 Conclusion

This chapter identifies the main primary research methods; qualitative and quantitative understanding the advantages and limitations of each, to conclude a final decision on the most advantageous method for the study, being qualitative research through semi-structured interviews. Following includes detail of the primary research strategy and the essential components and considerations necessary to undertake such techniques. Combined, this allows a clear rationale of the actions for the study.
4.0. Data Analysis, Results and Discussion
4.1. Introduction

This chapter aims to critically analyse the qualitative research collected through six semi-structured interviews, highlighting the key themes and issues uncovered. Such themes show connections to the previously published literature, as shown in chapter 2. The comparison of the primary research and the current literature allows any contrasting or agreeing factors to be interpreted and critiqued. The results will be established to meet the aims originally constructed by the author.

4.2. Participant Overview

The following table 4.2.1 outlines each participant's background education, current job role, employment history and their experience with corporate events. As shown, each participant has been employed within the events industry from 9 months to 11 years and not all have a degree directly related to the events industry. As previously stated, each participant is to be remained anonymous; therefore they shall be referred to as Participant A, Participant B and so on throughout this chapter.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Educational Background</th>
<th>Current Job Role</th>
<th>Employment in the events industry</th>
<th>Corporate Event Experience (Amount)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participant A</td>
<td>University: Arts, Music &amp; Entertainment Management</td>
<td>Head of Projects</td>
<td>11 Years</td>
<td>Approx. 50 Corporate Events Per Year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant B</td>
<td>University: Psychology</td>
<td>Head of Operations &amp; Recruitment</td>
<td>8 Years</td>
<td>Approx. 50 Corporate Events Per Year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant</td>
<td>University:</td>
<td>Role</td>
<td>Experience</td>
<td>Corporate Events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------</td>
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<td>------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Psychology</td>
<td>Senior Project Coordinator</td>
<td>6 Years</td>
<td>15 Corporate Events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Media and Film</td>
<td>Event Producer</td>
<td>8 Years</td>
<td>100+ Corporate Events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Event Management</td>
<td>Project Coordinator</td>
<td>9 Months (Undertook volunteer work at company for 2 years)</td>
<td>18 Corporate Events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Leisure and Tourism, MSc Events Management</td>
<td>Event Producer</td>
<td>10 Years</td>
<td>150 Corporate Events</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.2.1. Participant Overview

4.3. Event Teams

The semi-structured interviews included questions based around the theme of teams, and focused on the sub categories of quality and roles of team members and characteristics.

One of the questions revolving around this theme was: ‘For a large-scale corporate event, would you prefer to have large team of less experienced staff or a much smaller team of industry professionals?’ Every participant agreed with the later option, with Participant C stating:
“I would much rather prefer a small team of industry professionals. It is all about quality not quantity when it comes to running a successful event”

Furthermore, Participant C also made an interesting point in addition:

“If there was to be an experienced member of staff to lead the group who could brief and delegate effectively, it would be beneficial to have more people.”

Participant C makes a valid extension point; a smaller team of professionals would of course prove beneficial to the delivery of the event, as intense training on the day would not be required and may also provide the coordinator with one less aspect to worry about. It also eliminates the risk of constant guidance for inexperienced staff, which may require reassurance before making any little decision. In contrast, Participant C suggests it may be dependent on the professionals and their ability to edify the less experienced staff in a suitable manner. This coincides with Taylor’s 2011 model, ‘Leadership Styles’, which considers coaching to be a vital skill that a leader should possess. This is potentially a very important skill that should be identified at the recruitment stage for potential candidates entering at such level.

In regards to the leadership method used within the organisation throughout the planning process and the live event itself, the question asked was: ‘What type of leadership styles are typically used when planning and delivering an event.’ Participant B considered both elements of the event,

“Generally its quite democratic as this serves the creative process a lot better, although onsite the leads of each element of the role would take more of an autocratic style”

Participant B’s answer agrees with Belbin’s (1981) research, by establishing ‘leadership is vital’ at all stages of the event planning process. Albeit different styles at different times. This also coincides with Taylor’s model of ‘leadership styles’, suggesting that leaders should have the ability to change their style depending on the stage where the event is. The ‘delegating’ and ‘directing’ aspects should be adapted during the live event itself when members need
direction and instruction of what to do. This will be an autocratic style of leadership, as suggested by Participant B. However during the planning process, the coordinator shall take a democratic style as all creative suggestions are welcomed and a team effort is valued.

When considering the literature, there was a lack of data surrounding the need for team building and effective team dynamic within an events team. Therefore the researcher featured the question: ‘Do you think it is important for the events team to get along, or should the team remain strictly professional?’ Interestingly, every interviewee stated the importance of each team member getting along throughout the planning process and throughout the event delivery also. Not one agreed with the team solely being professional however Participant E highlighted the need for a balanced between the two,

“They need to get along ideally as hours can be long and a friendly atmosphere can make it easier. Professionalism is fine though.”

Participant A, who as shown in table 4.2.1, is head of projects, and considers the advantageous factors of having a team who are familiar with one another:

“Team members that know each other understand each others strengths and weaknesses, and are comfortable in each others company, often work well together. If the team works well, the client is more likely to have a positive experience which often results in repeat business.”

This statement visualizes the greater picture, by considering the team dynamic from a client’s perspective, which Van Der Wagen and Davies (1999) and Drummond and Anderson (2004) emphasize in their literature. This confirms the importance of the client and attendees experience of the event. If the client sees an effective team management, professionalism is highlighted, gaining the client’s approval and a positive opinion is formed. Participant A also mentions the benefits of knowing each member’s strengths and weaknesses. The familiarity proves greatly advantageous, as team leaders can delegate effectively to who shall perform the role to its full potential. The
roles can be associated to those who will perform best in such situation in the consideration of the best outcome for the event and client possible. Participant C also refers to this as being a ‘collaborative approach’ suggesting although a leader may be identified, each event will always be a team effort, and if one member does not cooperate, the event has all likelihood of failing. This supports Clegg, Legge and Walsh (1999:280) as stated in the literature review, ‘managers put together people…and expect them to get on and work together’. This allows for teams to apply teamwork as opposed to just working alongside each other.

Following the answer to the following question, the researcher asked: ‘Would you appreciate a new team building exercise when a new recruit joins, in order to get to know them prior to an event delivery?’ This question provided some interesting answers and not all were in agreement with each other. Participants A, C and F all preferred the idea of a team building activity prior to an event with new staff members, with participant A stating:

“Successful teams are reliant on strong relationships and getting to know each other on a more social level can be a great way of doing this.”

This verifies Newstrom and Scannell’s literature on advantageous factors of team building, discussed in Chapter 2, allowing new and existing members to build positive and effective relationships from a social perspective. However, contrastingly, Participants D and E completely disagreed with introducing team-building exercises, with E stating:

“No I think forced fun is a bit cringe. I think you should just introduce yourself and jump into it!”

The contrasting opinions have been considered to be due to the personality of each of the individuals. It had been noticed that the members of staff who answered ‘no’, procured an introverted personality, whereas those who answered ‘yes’, seemingly were considered to be more extroverted in
comparison. Therefore it must be advised to assess the characteristics of the team members prior to insisting such exercises are executed.

Another question asked about this theme concerned poor teamwork: ‘In your experience, what errors have occurred due to poor teamwork?’
The results are shown below in Figure 4.3.1 and are separated into the most popular answers given by all participants.

"What errors have occurred due to poor teamwork?"

Figure 4.3.1. Poor Teamwork.

Poor communication was an answer given by all participants, and coincidently all gave this answer first. At an event, communication is a vital aspect. Large-scale corporate events are typically held at large venues, and will have a different team member at various locations within such venue. For instance one member may be allocated the role of artist liaison, and another may be stage management. Communication here is of upmost importance to ensure acts are in the correct location at the correct timings, or schedules and timings may be altered on the day which must be communicated to every event team member. A lack of cooperation can also majorly affect the event and also the team dynamic. Participant A made the point, if one member is not fulfilling their
role adequately, a different member of the team may be required to undertake such tasks in addition to their own.

‘Should one person take on more than one main role on the live day?’ All of the participants in theory said no to this question, however Participant E, highlighted a realistic view of roles during the live event day:

“Should they and do they are the considerations. Should they – probably not in an ideal world. Do they? – Most of the time yes”

Most scenarios where two roles may have to be undertaken by one individual will typically not be purposefully. Commonly, situations such as this have to be reacted to immediately, and by whomever. With events, the task cannot be unfulfilled; otherwise, consequently the event may not result in being successful. This outlook supports Belbin’s (1981) research, as he proposes that all members of any team should be able to adapt to any role and perform it to a high quality, as opposed to simply only having the ability to undertake one specialist role. It proves greatly beneficial for any team member to quickly adapt and undertake any role with providing the event coordinator with the confidence that the task shall still be performed adequately.

4.4 Process Planning and Evaluation

To investigate the event management planning process in comparison to the found literature in Chapter 2, the researcher asked: ‘Is there any management tools and/or models that you use to successfully plan and deliver an event?’ Although all participants are a part of the same organisation, the use of any models and/or tools is a preference to the individual. Three different tools/model were identified for this question and are as follows,

   Participant A:
   “We often follow a Gantt chart method in order to ensure our schedule is adhering to plan.”
Participant C:
“Project Mapping”

Participant D & E:
“Internal Processes”

Scheduling is vitally important for the run up to an event, and especially on the day of delivery, therefore the Gantt chart is a beneficial tool to apply. This allows a visually clear schedule of what needs to be done and by when. This does not disagree with any theoretical models, although implies experience of working corporate events provides a fair understanding of the tasks and roles which need to be delegated. After employment in the corporate events industry for a fair period of time, models may not necessarily need to be referred to.

The following related question concerns: ‘How do you assess if the event has been successful?’ All participants shared a very similar view on the methods used. All participants featured the following; Client feedback and Profit. These answers indicated the answer to the next question asking: ‘Do you agree that the feedback stage is the most important stage of the event?’ All but one of the participants who answered, agreed with the statement providing a similar answer to Participant C’s:

“Yes – It’s the best way to improve on your performance and delivery and see what went well, what could have been better, what could be improved on.”

To further this, two participants, E and F mentioned how the feedback stage should not be a stage in itself post-event; feedback should be ongoing and received throughout the event process. This allows all aspects to be reflected on, and done so early enough for improvements be made. This supports Baccarini’s (1999) concept of event success by assessing the effective completion of any event. However this contradicts Lock (2014), who established three aspects that need to be analysed for an events success:
1. Project completion with budget
2. Projected completed on time
3. Good performance, ensuring event adhered to client specifications

The interviewer allowed participants to see Lock’s theory to assess the accuracy of it. Although participants agreed with the third aspect, they partially disagreed with Lock, as they proposed how point one and two should not have to be reflected upon, as budget and time should always be adhered to. Participant D confirmed this:

“What and budget should never be altered without the client confirming so. If the event company cannot stick to these targets, there is a good chance the event may not be successful.”

Participant A highlights the impact of not adhering to such specifications,

“Sometimes we’ve underestimated how long something will take and if that’s down to our misjudgment, we have to take it on the chin, which will prove unprofitable.”

This shows the importance of client’s specifications, and ensuring the event is exactly what they desire. Time and budget can be considered an objective, which should be established at the initial stages of the event planning process. Therefore clear costs, timings and sales will be apparent and vital to stick to. This supports Shone and Parry’s model of ‘Event planning process’ where the objectives show high priority as the first stage, implying the event cannot undertake the planning process until objectives have been set.

4.5 Skills and Characteristics

The researcher considered the answers from the previous question, and wanted to ask: ‘What are the frequent challenges faced during the planning process and the live event itself?’ Each member discussed how the budget is the most difficult objective to adhere to. Participant C makes a valid point how
a budget may be set, however the client may want more than what they can pay for,

“Driving costs down, keeping to budgets and delivering the expected standard of work from our clients with the set budget, which can always be challenging.”

However, Participant F also commented on other problems they face,

“Lack of information, last minute decision-making, reacting/adapting to change”

Participant F’s answer emphasizes the importance of ensuring each employee possess these suitable skills for the event industry. It proves the process can be very demanding and employees must be able to cooperate under great pressure. This vaguely relates to Arcodia and Axelson’s (2005) five top skills referred to in Table 2.3.1, with ‘lack of information’ relating to the communication skills. Participant F’s other problems relate to EMBOK’s model through integration and strategic aspects. However, although these theorists suggest so, broadly in their literature, these specific skills of the ability to make decisions under great pressure and adapting to changing environments are not emphasized enough to show high priority. Adapting to changing environments is a crucial skill to possess, as Taylor (2011) suggests, events are ever changing due to the external environment, and each event is different due to its perishability. Therefore those involved in the events industry must desire a role, which does not entail repetitive work.

Focusing on the roles that are essential to be carried out on any event, the next question asked: ‘Based on the events you have worked on, what roles were necessary to undertake?’ Table 4.5.1 features the job titles that appeared in the participant’s answers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project Director</th>
<th>Senior Producer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Marketing</td>
<td>Technical Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Venue Liaison</td>
<td>Artist Liaison</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

42 BA (Hons) International Tourism and Events Management
Roles are very dependent on the event that is taking place. The roles featured in Table 4.5.1 are those typical of a large-scale corporate event. As all are of high importance, a variety of skills and attributes are imperative. These mostly correlate to Arcodia and Axelson’s (2005) top five skills although a lot more is required, and those skills may not be ordered accurately in terms of importance. Table 4.5.1 more supports Stafford’s research in saying it proves much more beneficial to gain skills in each area of the event industry as shown above, as opposed to specialising in one role. This would prove advantageous during a live event, when an unpredicted role needs to be filled in quick time. This also allows all event members to cover each aspect over different events; ensuring work does not become too repetitive.

4.6. Educational Background and Experience: Recruiter’s Perspective

This section will primarily focus on the views and professional opinions of the participants who are involved in the recruitment process within this events organisation. The rationale behind this is to gain a valid and reliable perspective from those who directly deal with the recruitment process and assess potential candidates. The participants who this section will focus on shall be Participant A and Participant B.

There was extensive literature found on the benefits of undertaking higher education within the relevant field, as Getz previously states that skills alone are not enough to gain employment within the industry. The first question regarding the theme of educational background and education was: ‘When recruiting, do you believe it is more effective for a candidate to study event management?’

Participant A:
“If there was a candidate that had 3 years of event experience (even if this was at a junior level) and a candidate that had studied event management over the same period of time, I’d be more likely to recruit the candidate with experience.”

Participant B:

“It is helpful as there is already some understanding of the industry however attitude and experience count for much more.”

The answers provided here massively contradict the literature found based on a relevant educational background in the industry, although supports Bladen and Kenner (2014) in agreeing that work experience is paramount in comparison to education. Participant A’s answer is very interesting, as they compare two candidates with different educational backgrounds, and personality dependent, would much prefer to work with a candidate who has relevant experience to an event management degree. This completely disagrees with Belbin (1981) when he suggests that organisations would rather recruit those with a university degree.

Participant B also highlights how previous studies of event management would not prove unbeneficial to the candidate, though does not provide the soft skills that experience does. An event management will consist of teaching of relevant literature, although universities are only most recently introducing a compulsory module of work experience, however it is dependent on the student to ensure that it will be of relevance to the industry the wish to be a part of. It is suggested here that in consideration of the literature review, and the various author’s perspectives on the importance of event management education, individuals may gain essential skills such as Stafford’s (1994) research of management, administrative and interpersonal relationship skills through experiential learning.

To test Bladen and Kenner (2014) and their view of essential experience, the next question asked: ‘Do you believe relevant work experience is necessary?’

Participant A:
“Not necessary at entry level, but definitely desirable. More senior levels would require a reasonable level of experience”

Participant B:

“Absolutely, this is a vocational industry so experience is key!”

Similar answers are provided here; firstly Participant B stressed the attraction of a candidate acquiring work experience. Also during the interview, the participant emphasized this in their tone of voice by sounding confident and non-hesitant. Whereas Participant A was more hesitant in their tone of voice, and answered after a moment of consideration. However their answer suggested that those applying for higher positions within the company, or even at managerial level would require experience to be considered. This relates to Taylor’s 2011 model, which highlights the roles/qualities leaders, must be able to fill (coaching, delegating, supporting and directing). In order to perform each role confidently and to the best ability, experience in these areas is vital.

After the first two questions and comparing each answer, the researcher asked: ‘is either essential to getting the role?’

Participant A:

“No, experience alone would be appealing to us during the recruitment process, however those who had a university degree would still only be an attractive candidate if they had experience to support their degree.”

Participant B:

“It would be highly unlikely we would offer someone a role without having experience.”

This confirmed that the essential factor of experience for one individual to have when applying for a job within the industry. With their suggestive tones,
it was proven that a degree in event management or a similar field would be considered as a desirable factor, but not compulsory for any positions.

The interviewer improvised with a question for Participant A based on their background: ‘Did your employer/job role require you to have a university degree of any kind?’

Participant A:

“No, this wasn’t important to him. What he needed was someone switched on, committed and able to make an impact on the business quickly irrespective of my education.”

The researcher found comprehensive literature on what many authors found to be the most important characteristics and skills for an event manager to have. Including EMBOK’s dimensions, Arcodia and Axelson’s (2005) essential skills and attributes and Royal and Jago’s (1998) eight important areas of skills. To compare, the researcher asked each interviewee: ‘In terms of skills and characteristics, what are the main things you look for in a potential candidate?’

Participant A:

“Attitude is one of the most important, as other skillsets can be trained. Its also important to consider that if we’re working with a banking client we would probably consider the team quite carefully to ensure that the relevant level of discretion and professionalism was demonstrated… Therefore these are also vitally important”

Participant B:

“Great attitude, confidence, understanding of the demands of the industry and agency life, communication, exceptional writing and numerate skills, motivating personality, professionalism and experience in a similar role”
Gaining this information on skills from the recruiters of the agency, allowed the researcher to understand the vital skills that employers realistically seek. As discussed in Chapter 2, Ericsson mentions how talents can be created and are not necessarily born, and this can be applied here. Majority of the skills mentioned above are in fact possible to be taught to any individual, dependent on their attitude to learn it. It can be considered that those who have great determination and a positive attitude may find work experience in order to gain such skills if they do not already possess them.

All of the skills mentioned above relate in some degree to the literature found, through the many studies discussed. However professionalism is not considered in any of the literature. Professionalism does not mean in its simpler sense of being an employee in an organisation, but how you conduct yourself during your business affairs in a way that is respectable and dependable (Joseph, 2018). This could be considered as EMBOK’s dimension of ethics, however professionalism here represents their reliability and accountability.

To concentrate solely on the attributes as opposed to skills, the next question asked: ‘Do you consider their personality as well as their CV?’

Participant A:

“Yes, we definitely have to consider if there would be a good personality fit. It’s essential that any potential candidates are able to integrate themselves into the existing team well. Traits we like to see at interview stage are things like, demonstration of teamwork, thinking outside the box, strong work ethic, attention to detail as these play well into our company values.”

Participant B:

“Yes definitely, they need to be motivated, passionate, solution focused, and driven to succeed in the industry”

The attributes listed in both answers are those similar to the ones mentioned in Arcodia and Axelson’s (2005) research, as they also suggest motivated,
committed and the ability to partake in teamwork. The integration dimension is also reiterated, implying the importance of quickly adapting to new environments both within a new team and or industry. The characteristics can be considered more valuable solely on the basis that it is a part of ones personality, and for aspects such as motivation and solution focused, the event industry may not prove too difficult for someone with the determined attitude. This can also highlight the importance of experience, arguably an individual may not experience the importance of problem solving or keeping motivated throughout a long event. These characteristics can only be identified when the individual is actually forced to do so, and allows one to assess their desire for a career in that specific industry.

After considering these answers from the participants, the interviewer asked to Participant B: ‘is there such thing as an ideal candidate?

Participant B:

“We have an eclectic mix of experience within the team, which is helpful when we want to do different things all the time. So I guess an ideal candidate is one who aligns with our values and would be a benefit to the overall team in both experience and attitude.”

To establish the best way to identify such skills and attributes, the interviewer asked: ‘what is the recruitment process for your organisation?’

Participant B:

“We identify a skill shortage in the company, then through a mixture of head hunting, adverts and agencies produce a short list of candidates. We then have first interview stage which is an informal ‘chemistry meeting’ to check for attitude and a deeper dive into their experience. If successful a second stage is where we give candidates a typical brief and ask them to pull together a proposal and pitch it to us as if we were the clients and they were from our company… we like to make decisions together on recruits!”

This recruitment process resembles stages from Van Der Wagen’s recruitment and selection process model shown in Figure 2.3.1, as it includes
the standard stages such as identifying a role to be filled, and undertaking two stages. However the live event agency’s recruitment process involves impressive methods in order to establish if the potential candidate is the right fit for the organisation, by ensuring the first stage focuses on the candidates attributes. It is evident from this stage if the individual is confident and acquires the correct attitude the organisation requires. A pitch is vitally important part of being an events manager, as it guarantees the job. Therefore it is imperative for candidates to excel throughout this stage, or at least demonstrate promising potential. It additionally displays a variety of competencies such as their knowledge of the industry, pitching skills and adhering to a set budget.

As experience is essential to a role, the researcher asked if work experience was available at their agency. Both participants agreed that they occasionally offer placements for individuals who have shown their determination for a career in the event industry. In relation to this question, it was asked if the company also recruit volunteers:

Participant B:

“*We have close ties with our local universities and so offer work experience onsite for motivated students*”

Shone and Parry’s (2012) literature surrounding volunteers and their perspective of volunteers, in this respect students, will perform to a higher standard, is supported by Participant B’s statement. Those volunteers who are undertaking a university degree within the related field are more likely to want to excel and gain experiential learning with industry professionals to apply their knowledge of theory into practice.
4.7. Educational Background and Experience: Employee's Perspective

This section asked very similar questions to those shown in section 4.6. However gaining the perspective of someone not at senior level of recruitment in the company. This section shall focus on Participant E, who initially undertook volunteer work experience, during their time at university studying event management, with the event agency and as a result had been offered a full-time position. The rationale behind this is to assess the beneficial factors of undertaking work experience and completing a relevant university degree simultaneously.

The first question asked was: ‘When recruiting, do you believe it is more effective for a candidate to study event management?’

Participant E:

“No, their work experience would be paramount but an event management degree couldn’t hurt.”

This perspective analyses the theoretical knowledge gained from the university degree and examines it against the skills developed from the work experience acquired. Participant E’s answer is very interesting and equally valuable, confirming the necessity to undertake work experience over a higher education in the field of interest.

It was important to ask in Participant E’s opinion, what the vital skills and characteristics to have to undertake the role they are in now.

Participant E:

“I’d say the higher you go up in the industry then yes you will need specific skills but at entry level its very much your attitude and work ethic that will shine through”

This supports Procter and Mueller’s (2002) literature when they suggest those who have worked as managers or supervisors at previous roles are the obvious candidates for the new roles. Although this can be argued against in
the respect that each company is different and may require their own way of managing, meaning previous roles are irrelevant. However as Participant E and A previously states, for entry level roles, it is primarily focusing on the candidates attributes, skills can be taught on-the-job. Whereas, for a higher role, those adaptable skills will be essential. This contradicts Getz (2002) as he discusses how those who study event management at higher education typically enter at a higher level in comparison to those who do not.
4.8. Theoretical Framework

Figure 4.8.1 Event Recruitment Process Adapted from Shone & Parry 2015, and Van Der Wagen 2007.
This revised theoretical framework consists of the valid recruitment stages highlighted in Shone and Parry’s (2015) literature, and as in Van Der Wagen’s (2007) model, as discussed in Chapter 2. This framework also now includes the imperative stages made clear from the primary research, in particular with Participant A and B’s contribution. This is a recruitment process created to assist recruiters within the events industry when hiring new entry-level employees. The stage which has been introduced here is the first interview stage, or the ‘chemistry phase’. This is included first to get the know the candidates and identify their characteristics and attributes which will be vital for employment in that organisation and the industry itself. The essential component here includes a small list of the attributes, skills and additional information which is required in order to fill the job position. If none of these are present, the individual should not be hired. The opposing desirable component includes those factors which will be advantageous to the company and the individual, although aspects here can be taught throughout experiential learning.

If candidates prove successful after the initial stage, phase two or the ‘task stage’ can be implemented. This involves the organisation creating a task, one which appears frequently in the work. This can be pitching to them, pretending to be the client etc. This allows the senior recruiters to assess the individuals key skills, ones which are necessary in the field of event management. It also allows candidates to get a feel for the company and their values and assess if they can integrate easily into the organisation.
4.9. Conclusion

This chapter investigated into qualitative research with industry professionals, gaining their perspective on various topics such as the necessary skills and characteristics required, teamwork, event management and recruitment processes used within the event industry. The qualitative research results were then compared to the pre-existing literature, which had been discussed throughout Chapter 2. The researcher’s findings correlated with a fair amount of the literature, in particular when reviewing aspects of teamwork. It was found that leaders and managers within a team should be versatile, enabling themselves to adjust to an autocratic or democratic leadership style when necessary. It had also be proven that a great variety of skills are essential for this management role, as they must adapt within areas and not solely take on a specialist role.

However there proved to be contrasting opinions against the literature and participants, when establishing the importance of a relevant degree and work experience. The literature suggested that higher education would provide skills that are essential in the events industry. In reality, the recruitment professionals emphasized that work experience is paramount in comparison, and stressed how they would not recruit a candidate if they only had a degree without any experiential learning. It was to be understood that an event management degree, or similar field, would not be completely disregarded, as it still highlights the candidate’s passion for the industry and motivation to pursue a career.
5.0. Conclusions and Recommendations
5.1 Introduction

This chapter will provide the overall findings from the research that shall include the research process, a summary of key findings in the primary research, recommendations for best practice and recommendations for future research. Additionally, the aims and objectives shall be reviewed to establish if they have been achieved, and any limitations of the study will be assessed.

5.2 The Research Process

The aim of this research project was to critically investigate the key factors and characteristics that contribute to a successful and effective corporate events team. Four main objectives had been set, with the first being to review the literature surrounding the key theories relating to the corporate event industry. This allowed the student to fully understand the pre-existing theories on event management, teamwork and human resource management. This literature assisted in the creation of the preliminary theoretical framework, solely based on the literature. This framework is aimed to assist those recruiting new team members into the organisation.

To achieve the next objective, primary research was undertaken with industry professionals from a live brand experience agency who specialize in corporate event management. Qualitative research was the chosen method, as semi-structured interviews allowed the most in-depth responses. Questions asked within the interview were based on the literature review in Chapter 2, to assess if any data agreed with any authors or was no longer relevant to the current industry. This contributed to creating a revised theoretical framework, considering the newfound data.

The last objective stated in Chapter 1, was to make recommendations for best practice, and additionally make recommendations for any future research. These shall be discussed in this chapter.
5.3 Summary of Key Findings

The primary qualitative research undertaken provided the student with valuable and contemporary data. The following points highlight the main findings that are conclusive to the aims and objectives. The orders of these points correspond to the order in which they found in the primary research.

- A strong team dynamic is imperative for the planning process and particularly the live delivery of any event.
- Feedback is a vital element and should be undertaken throughout each project to ensure the planning aspects are correct, and the client is sufficient with the progress. The feedback stage is crucially important to evaluate the success of any event, establishing the elements that worked, caused problems and what can be improved for the next. This allows the organisation to be constantly improving to reach their full potential.
- The key skills that are essential for a candidate to have in order to pursue a career in the events industry are:
  - Professionalism
  - Writing
  - Numerate
  - Teamwork
  - Confidence
- The Key characteristics that are fundamental to being hired and successful within the events industry are:
  - Attitude
  - Strong Work Ethic
  - Attention to Detail
  - Passionate
  - Ability to Integrate
  - Solution Focused
  - Committed
A university degree is advantageous to gaining employment as an event professional, although is not enough to secure a position alone. If a student were to accomplish a degree in event management, whilst undertaking a year’s placement in the relevant industry, they are certain to prove committed with a solid working ethic, which will score highly with recruiters. It shows experiential learning of the essential skills and a theoretical understanding of event management.

Experience is the most attractive feature any candidate can demonstrate on their CV. Solid and relevant work experience is a convincing factor to hire any applicant without any supporting skills.

Recruitment processes must allow any candidate to demonstrate relevant skills and attributes, before granting them the opportunity to apply them in a way, which shows the recruiters they have a good personality fit and share the same company values.

5.4 Recommendations

The aim of this study was to investigate the key factors and characteristics that contribute to an effective corporate events team. It was realized that the way to ensure a successful team, begins with the recruitment stage. If a company does not hire suitable individuals, they could face detrimental consequences at a later stage, which may cause unprofitability. A framework has been created for the use of recruiters, to refer to when considering the most appropriate candidate to hire. However this can be beneficial to students or those individuals desiring a career in events. Recommendations have been made to the various people who are involved with these processes.
5.4.1 Recruiters

It is important for recruiters in the events industry to adopt an effective recruitment process, due to the complexity of the work involved. To do this, allow different stages to be undertaken to really get to know the candidate. Ensure that one initially focuses on the characteristics of an individual’s personality; this shall provide a solid indication as to whether or not they are suitable to the role. Carry out a second stage to assess their skills and test them in a real life work issue. This benefits the recruiters to see how they perform under pressure, in addition to allowing the candidate get a feel for the company and work they will undertake.

5.4.2. Event Managers

Ensure feedback is received and reviewed throughout the entire event planning and production process. This will continuously allow improvements to be made to individuals and for the benefit of the organisation.

5.4.3 Students and Event Candidates

Based on the research found from industry professionals, those wishing to pursue a career in corporate events must ensure they undertake work experience that is relevant to the industry. Consultations with universities should be done to assess any collaborative efforts with event agencies that allow student participation.
5.5 Recommendations for Future Research

When reflecting on the study as a whole, the researcher found various limitations throughout the study, which may have interfered with the comparative aspect. Due to time limitations, the student was only able to undertake primary qualitative research with one company in the events industry. Although the researcher was offered the opportunity to speak to members at various levels, including senior management, it would have proved extremely advantageous to gather data from a number of different event agencies to compare the findings to make the data even more reliable. The student would have also preferred to undertake quantitative research with event management students, on their perspectives in order to gain a broad view on what the students expected compared to reality.

This project allowed to student to practice and improve a wide range of skills, including researching skills throughout Chapter 2 and 3, interview skills when undertaking primary research. This actually benefitted the student greatly as it had never been a skill to pursue. Throughout Chapter 4, it was vital to use analytical skills in order to compare and contrast any findings to pre-existing literature.
References


62 BA (Hons) International Tourism and Events Management


Appendix

A) Semi-Structured Interview Questions

1. Approval
   - Ask respondent approval to use recording systems
   - Ask to sign and acknowledge consent form
   - Would you like to remain anonymous?

2. Background Information
   - Name of current or previous event employment
   - Role Title
   - Time worked in the Event Industry

3. Educational Background
   - Did the participant attend University (level of study)
   - (if not do they wish that they did)
   - What course was undertaken
   - Does it have relevance to the events industry
   - Did the participant find the course beneficial to their current event role?
   - Do they believe they could have achieved their position within the organisation without undertaking a university degree?
   - Did your employer/job role require you to have a university degree of any kind?

4. Experience of Live Large-Scale Corporate Events
   - How many years experience do you have working in live corporate events?
   - Roughly how many do you believe you have worked on?
   - What has been the largest corporate event you have organised/work on?
   - What roles were necessary to undertake?
   - If any, what are frequent challenges faced during the planning process the live event itself?
   - Do you use any models to base your planning process on?
   - Is there any management tools you follow ro successfully plan and deliver an event.
   - Do you think experience in events is vital to a career in events?
• How do you assess if the event has been successful?
• Do you agree that the feedback stage is the most important stage of the event? Why?

5. Employee Recruitment and HRM

• When recruiting, do you believe it is more effective for a candidate to study event management?
• Do you believe relevant work experience is necessary?
• Is either essential to getting the role?
• What are the main things you look for in a potential candidate?
• Do you consider their personality as well as their CV? If so, what aspects of their personality do you like to see for an event manager role?
• Are there any skills or characteristics that are essential to have?
• Is there such thing as an ideal candidate?
• What is the recruitment process for your organisation?
• Do you allow people to undertake work experience in the company?
• Do you recruit volunteers for many events?
• Would they recruit any volunteers or agency members who have no previous experience with such a large-scale corporate event?
• What type of leadership styles is typically used when planning and delivering an event? 
  E.g. democratic style (more than one person involved in the decision making process) Or Autocratic (individual control of all decisions and little input from group members?)

6. Teamwork

• Does the profile of the event decide the quality of team you need? (E.g. ensure you have only the best working members?)
• For a large-scale corporate event, would you prefer to have a large team of less experienced staff or a much smaller team of industry professionals? Why?
• What are the main characteristics and/or skills each team member should have?
• What are the roles during the event planning process and during event delivery that must be filled?
• Should one person take on more than one main role on the live day?
• Do you feel that it is important to know the team you will be working with way in advance prior to the event delivery?
• Do you think it is important for the events team to get along, or does it just need to be strictly professional?
• Would you appreciate a new team building exercise when a new recruit joins in order to get to know them prior to an event delivery?
• In your experience, what errors have occurred due to poor teamwork?

B)

Evidence of Approval

Research Project Participation

Baker Carys Leah

Dear [Name],

I am an undergraduate student at Cardiff Metropolitan University and currently undertaking a research project for my dissertation. My research project is to critically investigate the key factors and characteristics of an effective events team, focusing on large-scale corporate events. I would benefit greatly from interviewing people who are employed within the events industry at different levels to gain various perspectives. I am writing to you because it fits the profile of this type of organisation and also employs a sufficient number of potential participants. Before any primary data is collected, this project will have been approved by Cardiff Metropolitan University and all data collection will be in accordance with the university's ethics code of practice.

I am writing to you to ask if yourself and any other employees of [organization] would participate in a short interview lasting a maximum of 30 minutes, gaining their opinions of working within corporate event teams. Their participation would be entirely voluntary and neither they nor the company would be identified in the research.

I shall be very happy to make the results of my research available to you as a participant in the research when it is complete. If you would like to participate in this project or are interested in discussing it further, please contact me.

Thank you in anticipation.

Yours sincerely,

Carys Leah Baker
st20081733@outlook.cardiffmet.ac.uk

CARDIFF METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY
APPLICATION FOR ETHICS APPROVAL

Hello Carys,

Thank you for your email.

Yes, [Name] would be happy to participate and I can arrange for a number of people at different levels to be available for this. Please just let me know details and we can get something set up.

Thanks,

[Name]
Head of Projects
c) Ethics

**CARDIFF METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY**  
**APPLICATION FOR ETHICS APPROVAL**

**DEVOLVED ETHICS APPROVAL APPLICATION SUMMARY**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Name: Carys Baker</th>
<th>Student Number: ST20081733</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Module Name: Dissertation</td>
<td>Module Number: HLT6009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programme Name: International Tourism &amp; Events Management</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervisor Name: Helene Grousset-Rees</td>
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<tr>
<th>To be completed by student and supervisor before submission to Ethics Approval Panel</th>
<th>Student Signature;</th>
<th>Supervisor Signature;</th>
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<tr>
<td>Application for ethics approval</td>
<td>[ Yes ]</td>
<td>[ N/A ]</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participant information sheet</td>
<td>[ * ]</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participant consent form</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pilot interview/s</td>
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<td>Pilot questionnaire/s</td>
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<tr>
<td>Letter/s to participating organisation/s</td>
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<tr>
<td>Confirmation of interviewee participation</td>
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First Submission | [ * ] | Resubmission | [ ] |

Date: Friday 8th December 2017

__For use by the devolved ethics approval panel:__

Panel Members | Name | Signature
---|---|---
Module leader, Chair: | [Signature] | [Signature]
CARDIFF METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY
APPLICATION FOR ETHICS APPROVAL

Supervisor: Helene Goomer

CSM Ethics Committee Representative:

Date: 19/12/17

Date of Reassessment: __________

Outcome:
Project Approved [ ] Reference number issued: 2016053413.
Chair's Action [ ]
Application not Approved [ ]

Comments for projects not fully approved:
A: Not approved of interviews, example of event company

The original to be retained by the supervisor and a copy given to the student and module leader.

In the case of a resubmission being required this original form should be submitted with the resubmission not a new, blank, one.
CARDIFF METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY
APPLICATION FOR ETHICS APPROVAL

When undertaking a research or enterprise project, Cardiff Met staff and students are obliged to complete this form in order that the ethics implications of that project may be considered.

If the project requires ethics approval from an external agency (e.g., NHS), you will not need to seek additional ethics approval from Cardiff Met. You should however complete Part One of this form and attach a copy of your ethics letter(s) of approval in order that your School has a record of the project.

The document Ethics application guidance notes will help you complete this form. It is available from the Cardiff Met website. The School or Unit in which you are based may also have produced some guidance documents, please consult your supervisor or School Ethics Coordinator.

Once you have completed the form, sign the declaration and forward to the appropriate person(s) in your School or Unit.

PLEASE NOTE:
Participant recruitment or data collection MUST NOT commence until ethics approval has been obtained.

PART ONE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of applicant:</th>
<th>Carys Baker</th>
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<tr>
<td>Supervisor (if student project):</td>
<td>Helene Grousset-Rees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School / Unit:</td>
<td>Cardiff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student number (if applicable):</td>
<td>ST20081733</td>
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<tr>
<td>Programme enrolled on (if applicable):</td>
<td>International Tourism &amp; Events Management</td>
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<tr>
<td>Project Title:</td>
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<td>Approximate duration of data collection:</td>
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<td>Funding Body (if applicable):</td>
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<td>Other researcher(s) working on the project:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Will the study involve NHS patients or staff?</td>
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<td>Will the study involve human samples and/or human cell lines?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Laboratory based, not involving human participants or human samples</td>
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Practice based not involving human participants (eg curatorial, practice audit) & No
Compulsory projects in professional practice (eg Initial Teacher Education) & No
A project for which external approval has been obtained (e.g., NHS) & No

If you have answered YES to any of these questions, expand on your answer in the non-technical summary. No further information regarding your project is required.
If you have answered NO to all of these questions, you must complete Part 2 of this form

In no more than 150 words, give a non-technical summary of the project
This project is being undertaken to find what factors or characteristics are essentially needed to create an effective events team, focusing on large-scale corporate events. The aim is to find the crucial factors in order to provide event companies with a detailed analysis of what is required within a corporate events team to have the most successful outcome. The research shall be conducted through semi-structured interviews from industry professionals, and those related to the industry.

DECLARATION:
I confirm that this project conforms with the Cardiff Met Research Governance Framework

I confirm that I will abide by the Cardiff Met requirements regarding confidentiality and anonymity when conducting this project.

STUDENTS: I confirm that I will not disclose any information about this project without the prior approval of my supervisor.

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<tr>
<td>C L BAKER</td>
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| Signature of supervisor:    |               |
| H G E O S S C T - R E E S   |               |

Research Ethics Committee use only

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**CARDIFF METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY**  
**APPLICATION FOR ETHICS APPROVAL**

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<tr>
<td>Name:</td>
<td>Click here to enter text.</td>
<td>SHEENA CARRIUS</td>
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<td>Date:</td>
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<td>19/12/17.</td>
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**PART TWO**

**A RESEARCH DESIGN**

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<th>A1 Will you be using an approved protocol in your project?</th>
<th>No</th>
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<tr>
<td>A2 If yes, please state the name and code of the approved protocol to be used</td>
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**A3 Describe the research design to be used in your project**

This project will benefit mostly from primary research retrieved from semi-structured interviews. Interviews will be undertaken face-to-face, at the participant’s place of work in order to gain the maximum information out of the experience, allowing them to elaborate on any points made. Interviews shall not last any longer than 30 minutes each. Research will begin at the beginning of January 2018. Majority of the interviews will be with an events company who specialise in corporate and live events, a snowball method will be used in order obtain interviewees at different levels of the company, and potentially external professionals.

In terms of consent, participants will be allowed to withdraw their information at any given time, and the can also remain anonymous.

All qualitative data retrieved will be used to analyse any common themes and opinions of corporate events teams to establish the fundamental factors of an effective team. The analyse method being used is thematic; this will identify re-occurring themes and patterns from my research.

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<tr>
<th>A4 Will the project involve deceptive or covert research?</th>
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<tr>
<td>A5 If yes, give a rationale for the use of deceptive or covert research</td>
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<th>A6 Will the project have security sensitive implications?</th>
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<tr>
<td>A7 If yes, please explain what they are and the measures that are proposed to address them</td>
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**B PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE**

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<th>B1 What previous experience of research involving human participants relevant to this project do you have?</th>
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<td>In the first and second year of sixth form, Business studies and Travel &amp; Tourism required students to create a questionnaire to establish what type of school trip would be feasible for the teenage demographic, and also to find if a business product would be beneficial to school children and teachers. Data was collect and results were analysed.</td>
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| B2 Student project only | What previous experience of research involving human participants relevant to this project does your supervisor have? | |

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1 An Approved Protocol is one which has been approved by Cardiff Met to be used under supervision of designated members of staff; a list of approved protocols can be found on the Cardiff Met website here.
CARDIFF METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY
APPLICATION FOR ETHICS APPROVAL

My tutor has previous experience of research involving human participants.

<table>
<thead>
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<th>C POTENTIAL RISKS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C1 What potential risks do you foresee?</td>
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<td>Semi-structured interviews</td>
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<td><strong>Researcher</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Traveling to the participant’s place of work for the interview</td>
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<td>• Questions could cause offense to participants</td>
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<td>• Receiving no common answers from participants</td>
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<td><strong>Participants</strong></td>
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<td>• May wish to withdraw participation or information provided</td>
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<td>• Disorderly or aggressive behaviour.</td>
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| C2 How will you deal with the potential risks? |
| Semi-structured interviews |
| **Researcher** |
| • A secure and safe environment will be ensured by the event company which will be pre-arranged |
| • A mobile phone will be with the researcher at all times |
| • Ask questions with sensitivity and respect participants if they do not wish to answer |
| **Participants** |
| • A project description will be provided with a consent form for every participant involved to ensure they are aware of exactly what they are participating in |
| • Full consent that the research will be the only one to be aware of their personal information e.g. name etc. |
| • Will be made fully aware that they can withdraw their data at any given time prior to the submission of work. |
| • All participants have full access to the data collected |
| • Each participant will be anonymous. No names will be used. |

When submitting your application you **MUST** attach a copy of the following:

- All information sheets
- Consent/assent form(s)

An exemplar information sheet and participant consent form are available from the Research section of the Cardiff Met website.
D) Participant A’s Interview

Did your employer/job role require you to have a university degree of any kind?
“No, this wasn’t important to him. What he needed was someone switched on, committed and able to make an impact on the business quickly irrespective of my education.”

Do you use any models to base your planning process on?
“He often follows a Gantt chart method in order to ensure our schedule is adhering to plan.”

Do you think experience in events is vital to a career in events?
“At more senior levels, we’d be unlikely to employ someone that didn’t have a strong level of events experience.”

How do you assess if the event has been successful?
“We have a number of criteria to base event success on. This includes customer/client feedback, this is often captured in a post event evaluation, the profit margin that’s achieved on the project, we set a target margin at the beginning of the project, the actual time spent on the project being in line with what’s been charged/proposed to the client plus the feedback given in our internal evaluation i.e. the team agreeing that the event was delivered well and minimal suggestions for improvement.”

When recruiting, do you believe it is more effective for a candidate to study event management?
“If there was a candidate that had 3 years of event experience (even if this was at a junior level) and a candidate that had studied event management over the same period of time, I’d be more likely to recruit the candidate with experience.”

Do you believe relevant work experience is necessary?
“Not necessary at entry level, but definitely desirable. More senior levels would require a reasonable level of experience.”

Is either essential to getting the role?
“No. experience alone would be appealing to us during the recruitment process, however those who had a university degree would still only be an attractive candidate if they had experience to support their degree.”

What are the main things you look for in a potential candidate?
“Attitude is one of the most important, as other skillsets can be trained. It’s also important to consider that if we’re working with a banking client we would...”
probably consider the team quite carefully to ensure that the relevant level of discretion and professionalism was demonstrated... Therefore these are also vitally important”

E) Participant B’s Interview

When recruiting, do you believe it is more effective for a candidate to study event management?
“It is helpful as there is already some understanding of the industry however attitude and experience count for much more”

Do you believe relevant work experience is necessary?
“Absolutely, this is a vocational industry so experience is key.”

Is either essential to getting the role?
“It would be highly unlikely we would offer someone a role without having experience.”

What are the main things you look for in a potential candidate?
“Great attitude
Understanding of the demands of the industry and agency life
Exceptional writing / numerate skills
Professionalism
Experience in a similar role (unless entry level)"

Do you consider their personality as well as their CV? If so, what aspects of their personality do you like to see for an event manager role?
“Yes definitely, they need to be motivated, passionate, solution focused, and driven to succeed in the industry”

Are there any skills or characteristics that are essential to have?
“All the above! “

Is there such thing as an ideal candidate?
“We try and be fluid in our recruitment so although we have certain roles we need to fill, we may also meet candidates who we believe would be beneficial to our business. We have an eclectic mix of experience within the team, which is really helpful when we want to do different things all the time. So I guess an ideal candidate is one who aligns with our values and would be a benefit to the overall team in both experience and attitude.”

What is the recruitment process for your organisation?
“We identify a skill shortage in the company, then through a mixture of head hunting, adverts and agencies produce a short list of candidates. We then have first interview stage which is an informal ‘chemistry meeting’ to check for attitude and a deeper dive into their experience. If successful 2nd stage is where we give candidates a typical brief and ask them to pull together a proposal and pitch it to us as if we were the client and they were from Owl. This works for us on a number of different levels, firstly its a lot of work so for those not motivated they usually withdraw so we get to identify those candidates easily. Secondly it tests lots of different competencies (e.g. do they understand how to pull an event together, understand a brief, build a budget, pitching skills etc), thirdly if we take the candidate on then we can start building their training plan at that point as we can identify strengths and weaknesses easily. It is also good from a candidate perspective as this is a big part of the role, so they have a checkpoint to see if they’re engaged with
the work. There is possibly a 3rd stage but that would just be meeting with another senior team member for a coffee. We’re a close knit team so we like to make decisions together on recruits!
Do you allow people to undertake work experience in the company
“Depending on business needs we occasionally offer placement years. “
Do you recruit volunteers for many events?
“We have close ties with our local universities and so offer work experience onsite for motivated students”

F) Participant C’s Interview

How do you assess if the event has been successful? “Guest/Attendee feedback, Margin, Client feedback, Repeat business”
Do you agree that the feedback stage is the most important stage of the event? Why? “Yes – It’s the best way to improve on your performance and delivery and see what went well, what could have been better, what could be improved on, ideas for the next event whilst it’s fresh in your mind. It should also be done post-pitch.”

For a large-scale corporate event, would you prefer to have a large team of less experienced staff or a much smaller team of industry professionals? Why? “I would much rather a Small team of industry professionals. It is all about Quality not quantity when it comes to running a successful event. However, if there was to be an experience member of staff to lead the group who could brief and delegate effectively it would be beneficial to have more people.”

Do you think it is important for the events team to get along, or should it remain strictly professional? “Extremely important for the team to get along as it is such a team effort and collaborative approach.”
Would you appreciate a new team building exercise when a new recruit joins in order to get to know them prior to an event delivery?
“Yes this could help.
In your experience, what errors have occurred due to poor teamwork?
Miscommunication, missing details.”

G) Participant D’s Interview

Do you agree that the feedback stage is the most important stage of the event? Why?
“Yes, it gives you an opportunity to assess suppliers, if the job went well and what you could do better next time”
How do you feel about Lock’s theory of success?
“Time and budget should never be altered without the client confirming so. If the event company cannot stick to these targets, there is a good chance the event may not be successful”
Do you feel that it is important to know the team you will be working with in advance prior to the event delivery? “yes”
Do you think it is important for the events team to get along, or does it just need to be strictly professional? “Yes important”
Would you appreciate a new team building exercise when a new recruit joins in order to get to know them prior to an event delivery? “Not really
In your experience, what errors have occurred due to poor teamwork? Miscommunication, Mismanagement of suppliers, incorrect costings stuff like that.”

H) Participant E’s interview

When recruiting, do you believe it is more effective for a candidate to study event management?
No, their work experience would be paramount but an event management degree couldn’t hurt.
Do you believe relevant work experience is necessary?
Yes!!
Is either essential to getting the role?
Work experience more than the degree I think

Should one person take on more than one main role on the live day?
“Should they and do they are the considerations. Should they – probably not in an ideal world. Do they? …most of the time yes.”

Do you think it is important for the events team to get along, or does it just need to be strictly professional? “They need to get along ideally as hours can be long and a friendly atmosphere can make it easier. Professionalism is fine though.”
Would you appreciate a new team building exercise when a new recruit joins in order to get to know them prior to an event delivery?
“No – I think forced fun is a bit cringe. Just introduce yourself and jump into it.”
In your experience, what errors have occurred due to poor teamwork?
“Things can get missed due to poor communication. Its not ideal!”

I) Participant F’s Interview

If any, what are frequent challenges faced during the planning process the live event itself? “Lack of information, last minute decision making, reacting and adapting to change”

Do you agree that the feedback stage is the most important stage of the event? Why?” No, it is equally important but does play a huge role in improving and developing future events”
What are the roles during the event planning process and during event delivery that must be filled? "There are so many roles, marketing, sponsorship, creative, content, technical, planner/producer, admin, on site this depends on the type of event but you need hosts, registration, human signage, someone to manage each area or element e.g. room, or process e.g. catering."

Do you think it is important for the events team to get along, or does it just need to be strictly professional?" Yes it is important to get a long."

Would you appreciate a new team building exercise when a new recruit joins in order to get to know them prior to an event delivery? This could work. In your experience, what errors have occurred due to poor teamwork? "Miscommunications or misunderstanding, and things don’t happen as quickly or as smoothly as they could."