

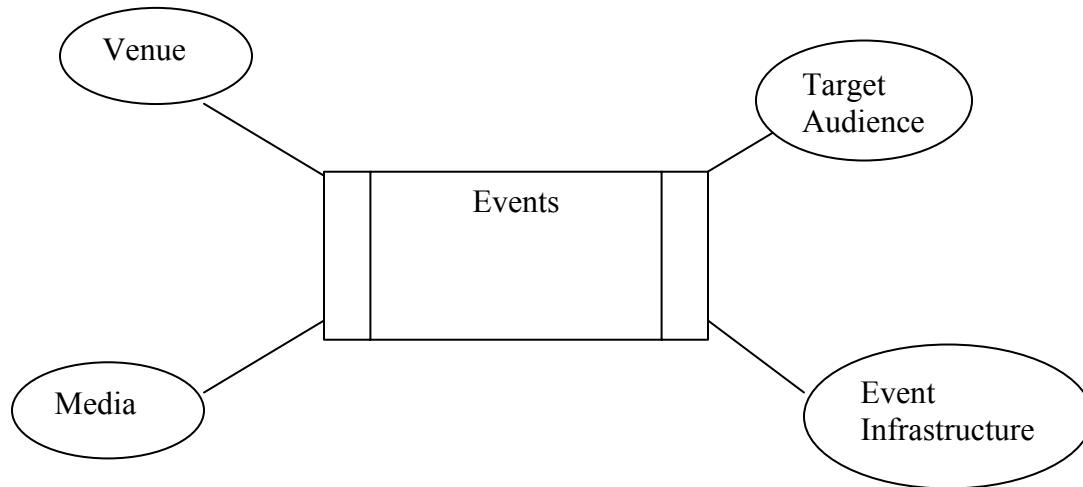
Events Tourism: Potential to build a brand destination

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Introduction

A destination is a town, city or a place which has one or more attractions for tourists. These attractions may be in the form of scenic sights, culture, leisure activities, shopping rebates, food, and excursion. Those attractions are used to accruing revenues from tourists. A tourist has some pre conceived notions about a destination which he might have heard from his surroundings sources like ads, internet and word of mouth from a friend or family member or may be read in a travel book. A destination image can be positive or negative and is considered an important part of the decision making process of consumers when they consider their destination alternatives. As many of the researcher has explained destination image as is an important determinant (Ritchie, J. and Couch, G. 2000) and also plays an important role in destination selection process (Gunn 1972, LaPage and Cormier, 1977).

In the context of the previously discussed point that there are certain attributes to attract tourists to a destination, EVENTS are the emerging sign of success in the list of these attractions. Events can be defined as a package carried out with a perceived concept, and then customized or modified to achieving the aim of organizing that event. In the new millennium the targeted tourists are attracted. The key elements of an event can be considered as venue, target audience, media, and event infrastructure.



The above diagram shows how an event involves different attributes with one action. Here venue and infrastructure are directly related to the DESTINATION where an event takes place. Events are capable of delivering:

- 1) Key messages about destination.
- 2) Community's positive image to the world

With growing technologies and advertising scenario, events also include media coverage. This is how the event and destination are two different entities but yet serving each other in a manner. Destination gets a wide media coverage as well as advertising. The participants of the events and the attendees of events visit the destination to take part in the event which brings lots of foreign currency to the particular destination to entire nation of the event is huge.

Thus an event can be a most powerful way to attract tourists to the destination. The events may be in the form of MICE (meetings, incentives, convections and exhibitions), sporting event, and cultural event or may be award functions like Oscar etc. This is how word Event tourism came into being. Although it is a newer concept but is now widely recognized, having a potential significant contribution to local economies. In simple terms, an event acts as an attraction for people from outside the local community to visit the location and spend money on accommodation, food and leisure activities at the destination. Events also help to build an image into the minds of tourists who have never visited the place definitely grabs their

attention to the destination through media coverage. The tourists have several options and the first thing comes in the mind is the brand names which emerges out of the level of satisfaction.

Key issues

The goal of this conceptual paper is to enlighten the new horizons of tourism by concept of events tourism. This paper will mainly concentrate on benefits of hosting events:

- Events tourism is useful to attract tourists whether a first time visitor or a repeater.
- How an event and destination are co-brands.
- To show positive effects of events on a destination

The anticipated outcomes of this paper are showcasing:

- understanding events portfolio
- growing magnitude of hosting an event in tourism at a destination.
- positive effects of co-branding by image transfer.
- strategies to host an event.

However there are arguments about the image and brand perceptions. Some argue that destination branding is intensely associated with destination image. According to others, image is very different from branding; yet the brand is created through the image .

Brand vs. Image

Image and Brand are interrelated attributes. Image plays a vital role to develop brand identity and brand is said to have certain images and believes in the mind sets of tourists (Jenson and Kotler). In tourist destination context, there are several different definitions of image. Hunt⁶¹ defined country image as people's impressions of countries that they do not reside in. Millman and Pizam⁶² calls image as the sum of tourism experience-related attributes.

Image transfer between events and destination:

The image transfer is considered when any benefit that tourist recognise in events becomes benefit for host destination (Meyvis, Janiszewski 2004; Supphellen, Eismann and L.E. Hem, 2004). The co-branding of two brands namely destination and events is very sensitive in nature. They share image transfer (use uni assignment governs). The can be positive image transfer or negative image transfer. The mere pairing of events and destination is not important rather it is important that which destination is paired with which event. It is essential to explore the events brand relation with the destination brand to acquire desired results (Kim and C.T. Allen (1996); Van Auken and Adams (1999) The image of both brand whilst event and destination play important role while they are paired together (Kim and Allen(1996); Van Auken and Adams (1999); Koernig and Page (2002); McDaniel (1999); Till and Busler (2000)

The poor match of events and destination may lead to negative brand building and may cause transfer of negative image. But if a destination osseas a customized event then it can probably be used as brand extensions. In recent years some vents have been developed which are closely related to their destinations' brnad and are recognised by their hosting destinations as to name some Dubai's duty free shopping festival etc. These events often bear the name of their host destination's name to be more accosiated with the destination brnad. However the literature on branding suggests that it is not that an event should always pssoes a brnad name. It can contribute to the host destination as a feature to make the destination unique in nature and more popular palce to visit (Meyer and Sathi (1985); Ahang and Markman (2001)). By inreasing the freequency of organisisng events, the drawback of short term impact of events can be nulified.

There are different themes and strategies to use events as effective tools to building a brand destination. (Jago et. al. 2003) There should be community support co-operative planning and media support to make most of organsing at a destination. This transfer image between the two. The favourability towards chosing a destination increases visitation aspect (Liping et. al, 2003). Events bring pleasantness and excitement for travelers to return to the destination in future (Kaplanidou, Kyriaki 2007)

Building Destination Brand

The ideation of destination branding is although a newer concept but any of the resources and industry experts has been interests towards destination brand management. Branding is a major issue in product strategy. There is hardly anything that goes unbranded. A brand is a complex symbol that can convey up to six levels of meaning i.e. attributes, benefits, values, values, personality and user (Jennifer) A destination therefore is product which depends on brand recognition, perceived, brand quality, strong mental and emotional associations and other assets Consequently, branding focuses on marketing of a product in terms of degree which increases brand equity. As cited by Maureen Atkinson, an eminent industry agent

“A brand is a type of shorthand for a product with city branding, what you try to do is create that shorthand so that when people think of your city, they automatically think of what is best about it.”

Thus, a destination brand not only executes name, logo, reputation or status symbol but also the destination’s physical attributes, experience, quality of services provided, attractions. While branding a city or a region one needs to identify the attractions and activities to associate them with the destination to build a brand image. In terms of destination’s brand equity if a tourist shows inclination towards one destination than the other, it is considered that the brand acceptability of the brand of higher brand equity is more. Researches in this field prove that image is a key factor in tourism development. When a tourist plans a holiday it is expected that the tourist will have an initial image of the destination that might not be visited or might have already been visited. The destination’s image plays a vital role because the level of visitation goes down when the same destination is visited frequently that effects the destination branding. Several methods have been used to identify the relevant dimensions of destination image including multi-dimensional scaling, repertory grid. The brand image closely relates to the branding of a destination as it represents the attractions, cultural and benefits to tourists expectations delivering total customer satisfaction. The brand makes use of and co-ordinates a full repertoire of marketing activities to build equity.

Branding strategies can vary depending on what kind of a brand is. A functional brand is that brand which involves functions of product. An image brand that involves celebrity associated with a brand. An experimental brand that involves people and place .The empirical research by many quantitative research experts acknowledge that the brand perception of tourists to destination is three dimensional namely sincerity, excitement and conviviality that there is a positive impact on perceived destination image. Therefore a strong brand adds unique features to products or services to impart perceptions of quality and value which cultivates market share and customer loyalty. There are various tools for brand- building public relation, sponsorship clubs and consume communities, trade shows, event marketing etc.

Co-branding: (Event vs. Destination)

Co-branding is an effective way to reinforce or change a brand image (Rao and Ruekert (1994); Simonin and Ruth(1998)). In the view of a destination co-branding, the aim objective is to transfer the desired portion of the other brand to destination features. This will require the tow brands to be jointly advertised and promoted. The pairing of two or more brands in a composite brand should match and is paired in such a way that each one of it is perceived when they are paired.

Out of all the brands an event can be the most effective one as it involves the study of brand prints, understanding what the brand stands for, its positioning and values, identifying the target audience and liaisons with the creative conceptualization to create an event for a perfect mesh with brands personality. Event involves 5 c’s namely conceptualization of creative idea and ambience, costing which calculates the margins, canvassing for sponsors, customers and networking components, customization of the event according to brand personality, budgets.

Thus events help in creating awareness about the brand highlighting the added features, image building and associating brand personality to target market. In standpoint of destination branding events deliver destination’s culture, attractions, quality services provided and a long tem impact to visit the destination again to explore it more. Events and Festivals have a significant economic impact (Formica, 1998) Community events are expected to increase the number of tourists and the amount of expenditures. (Murphy and Charmichael, 1991). They are believed to bring social benefits towards community (Getz 1991: Ritchie, 1984) and last but not the least they lengthen the life cycle of destination. (Getz and Frisby, 1998)

The enhancement of community and creation of positive images (Gets, 1997: Highmian and Ritchie, 2001: Jago and Shaw, 1998;) improve destination’s image. Several researches verified that image improvement is

associated with hosting different events (Jeong and Faulkner, 1996, Mihalik and Sionett, 1998, Pyo, 1995, Ritchie and Smith, 1991 and Wicks, 1995).

The basic technique in co-branding a destination with an event is to identify the associating network of competitive destinations and then hosting an event that can reinforce, change or add desirable associations. (Laurence Chalip and Carla A- Costa,). It is important to spot an appropriate events portfolio for a destination that can foster the process of destination branding. As the effects of co-branding depends on the associate event brand with destination brand .By pairing of event's brand with destination brand, it is expected that the elements of event brand will transfer to destinations brand.

Destination marketers can not ignore the pitfalls of co-branding too. If an event, which is well established brand can hamper the host destination's brand image which can result in a reverse or negative effect. The empirical research by Boo and Busser (Event gt.) proved that tourist images after visit was not impacted positively. Moreover festivals participants' images were not changed favorably when compared those of non- participants' image.

Thus, dissimilarity between the event brand and destination brand would render a poor match and would therefore have a negative consequence for the intended transfer of brand image. But despite of all these 44 destination marketers seek to host events (Bramwell, 1997). The only need is to plan a managed event communications that can render a change in destination image (Chalip 1990; Kim and Morrison 2005).

The main objective is not that the event includes the host destination's name rather how consistency is maintained between concepts and features represented by the destination brand extensions and are accepted favorably (Park, Milberg and Lawson 1991). If such events are received open handed by market, then the brand equity of the destination should increase as a consequence of tourists' enhanced perceptions (Swaminathan, Fox and Reddy, 2001).

The core focus should be consistency with the benefits to destination (Kim, (2003)). As events grow, destination marketers need to bulk them into their marketing strategies and they need to take tactical advantages of events when planning the destination's marketing communications campaign. Every possible precaution should be taken while pairing of events with the destination, so that the strong image of the event may not hamper the destination image.

Mega events are short term events with long term consequences (Roche, 1994) that attract large numbers of international tourists. On the other hand the fact states that mega events have negative impacts like housing evictions. Although, these mega events can increase an artificial or temporary spike of accommodation, transport or hospitality while the preceding benefits of mega events might be short lived.

Therefore, destination marketers who seek to use events to build their brands must construct a portfolio of events (Jago et al.). A single event with a high profile has only a passing effect on the destination brand (Ritchie and Smith, (1991)) but if tourism authorities want it to be long lasting then it is much beneficial to host smaller events through out the year.

Cultural events featuring music, dance, food, shopping, art or any other cultural activities can be supportive to build up a brand image. The effect of events on a destination's brand depends substantially on the reach and the frequency of event mentions and visuals. An event portfolio should appeal to attract tourists of each age group having different interests in different.

Since an event portfolio delivers a destination's image, on grounds like the attractions, services, accessibility, community festivals and the touring experience. Only those events should be included in portfolio that can successfully reinforce the destination's brand. The elevation of destination's brand is by the impact of effective hosting at the destination.

Event and Destination; A Case Review : Quantitative study by Xiaoyan Xing and Laurence Chalip :

There are arguments that events can hamper the destinations image if not paired well with destination. Here is a case to prove this argument worth noticing.

It is within the discussed context Xiaoyan Xing and Laurence Chalip investigate the interaction of both event and destination attributes on a person's intention to visit the destination. An individual's awareness of a destination made up of the cognitive evaluation of experiences, learning, emotions and perceptions related to the destination's image. An event can be defined as something that happens at a given place and time.

Amongst a variety of alternatives, the authors utilized quantitative methods to conclude that how a destination's rating raises when paired with a suitable event or alternatively how an event's rating slows down when not paired with a suitable destination. This article particularly discusses that how an image is

transferred or shared by two brands, a destination (i.e. city) and an event. The research also investigates how the image transfer affects the intention to visit the destination.

There is a debate in past researches about destination image and destination brand. According to Asli D. A. Tasci and Metin Kozak in the revised form of March 2006 argue that destination branding is overwhelmingly associated with destination image and also image is very different from branding; yet the latter is created through the former. This matter is untouched in the article. Although the research goes along the hypothesis considered but the study seems to be complicated due to many considerations at one instance. Also the researcher may have included an events portfolio rather than a single event. This might have justified the bias towards sporting events.

Methods: Overview

The research stands out in terms of its validity and reliability where in an effort to identify possible mismatches between events and their host communities, a quasi-experimental design was utilized. Two cities and two events were identified to the extreme ends of the active-leisurely continuum. Chicago and a NASCAR motor sport event were selected to represent an active city and an active event respectively. The city of Des Moines and a Masters Golf tournament were represented the leisurely end of the continuum. The design also provided for a no event and a no city option, meaning that nine sets of conditions were possible, but the cell for no city and no event was omitted from the study. These eight conditions were assigned randomly to the participants. Eight mock advertisements were created. In four of these advertisements, the destination was central and in the remaining four, the event was central. This alternation of centrality was an important part of the experimental design because this would identify the image transfer effects. That is to evaluate that to what extent the brands pairing help the two brands to be paired together.

Method: participants

The 317 participants were undergraduate, social science university students. They aged in range from 18 to 41 years. This selection can be biased as their mind sets are much intellectual than the general public. They see very thing critically than in a way like a general traveler may not do. The sample here does not seem to be justified. The tourists have different age groups and different interests. They have different interests towards sports. The selection of the sample group is clearly based on convenience and future research should seek to overcome this important limitation. This could be achieved by sample that more accurately reflects the diversity in the wider community.

Method: instruments

Participants were exposed to the mock advertisements and were then invited to proceed to the questionnaire. According to the centeredness of the questionnaire were prepared. The condition where the destination was centered the participants had to rate the destination only and the ads where events were centered they had to rate the destinations also. The ratings were on the image scales identified in earlier phase of study mentioned in previous paragraphs. The study does not show any specific questionnaire which makes it difficult for a reader to understand the question line.

Method: procedures

The three key constructs measured in this study were 1) image transfer between events and destination; 2) intentions to visit; and, 3) involvement in sports.

Image transfer between events and destination was measured using obligatory study to find scales for measuring image transfer by brain storming of various literatures on semantic differential items on brand image, destinations image and general semantic differential model that were relevant to the study. The common identifiers or adjectives used for the destinations and events were selected under three categories whilst evaluation, activities and potency. There were five dimensions for evaluation and four dimensions for activities. The dimensions for potency were multi-loaded therefore it was eliminated. These dimensions were identified through tests and were proved by a replicate test.

As an argument the events and destination image transfer can be affected on political grounds too which are related with the destination. The recent example can be Beijing Olympics and the Tibet issue. Although the sporting event has nothing to do with the political issue but the whole world has been prompted and allegedly forced to speak because of the upcoming Olympics, where more than 157 Countries and 646 Athletes are participating.

Intention to visit was measured by Willingness to Buy scale. The participants rated the destinations on nine pointer scale, which calculate their intentions to visit. This will help to compare the results obtained by the further image transfer scale.

Involvement in sports was measured by Orlick's SSI (Secondary Sport involvement) scale. The participants had to report the frequency at which they watch sports on television. This was considered an important factor to measure because their level of interests towards sports would affect their willingness to visit a destination to where sporting events is on. The sport-events consideration shows only a category from a population who likes sports but researcher would have used other cultural events to see the effects of image transfer in holistic terms of events. Events can't be generally categorized in sports event only. On the other hand, simply keeping a track of how much they read news about sports does not proves their involvement in sports. That can be just out of the fact that one wants to be informed about happenings around.

Analysis

The data analysis was done through various statistical equations namely MANOVA, this analysis can detect mean differences among a number of different groups on several different measures, while holding one or more variables constant. The method is useful for research studies where there are a variety of segments being assessed on a number of different measures, where one or more variables needs to be controlled for that may potentially bias the results To evaluate the image transfer city to event {3 (city) * 2 (event) * 2 (gender)} MANCOVA model and to evaluate event to destination {2 (city) * 3(event) * 2 (gender)} MANCOVA model was used. The two- way three-way and four way interactions analysis was done by multi-variate Roy's largest Root for all the eight conditions. This included gender, city and destination.

The use of statistical method for analyzing the data is strong point for this article to prove its hypothesis but at the same time this massive calculation has made it more complex. The study could have been divided into different research, studying co-branding effect of destination and events one for positive and the other for negative. This could have reduced the complexity of the article.

Results

The results emerged out of the study was interesting to know and might be basis for further studies in effects of sporting events on destination. Out of all the interactions, the four ways and three way interactions had no significant result meaning that the holistic effect of gender, sport involvement, city and event was found less significant while two-way interaction was more significant. In the case of where destination was centered, it was found that city when paired with an event had better ratings while involvement of females and males affect the intention to visit. In the case where events were centered, a remarkable result emerged. The event when paired with destination had no significant effect on ratings but it had a significant effect on males and females intentions to visit which was out of the fact that they were more involved with the sporting event than the destination. This proved that nothing matters more than event if event interests people. In other findings it was employed that the ads do not have any direct effects on intension to visit meaning that perceived image plays an important role while planning a trip to destination. The other findings suggests although the ratings of both the destinations improved when paired with events but the ratings were categorized on two dimensions evaluation and activities.

The sport-events consideration shows only a category from a population who likes sports but researcher would have used other cultural events to see the effects of image transfer in holistic terms of events. Events can't be generally categorized in sports event only.

Conclusions

The research has proved that mere association of an event with destination had transferred some image as an affect of co-branding. The pairing of brands depends on match up. This match can be in terms of product attributes or interests towards brands. This study suggest that a less active destination provides less activities to tourists but when paired with a sport which is liked by people will definitely improve the destination's perceived image. The researcher further has discussed the co-branding effects with literature. It can be added to this research that ways that pairings of event and destination are interpreted matter (Chalip and Costa 2005).

Events into building brand destination

Events can prove to be as USP for the destination brand. Benchmarking in tourism is characterised by emphasis on improving performance across tourist destinations (Wooper, Kozak). Frederic Dimanche put up an idea International Conference of strategic development of tourism by creating awareness, quality management for the benefit of the tourism authorities. This study will look into the deeper effects of events to create a brand equity of destination as events represent the image of cultural and social backgrounds of a destination (Liping A CAI; Bihu, Billy bai) in their research article have presented that the level of the visitation to a destination goes down when the same destination is visited frequently. The proposed research will give DMO's an outline to create an event which can fill the gap of satisfaction levels of visitors and will give newer ideas to attract tourists in off seasons too gave a new concept of benchmarking for tourists satisfaction which depends upon quality provided to the tourists.

If planned effectively and used strategically, such events can create economic as well as social benefits for the host community. If events are poorly understood (and planned) communities run the risk of missing an important economic opportunity, while at worst they may even experience some degradation in quality of life and economic costs. Governments have been fast to see the potential of large sporting events to generate economic benefits media attention and the raising of a local area's profile; adding animation and life to existing facilities; encouraging repeat visits; and assisting economic regeneration (Getz, 1991). The majority of the reports trace the flow of spending associated with the event in the host community and identify resultant changes in sales, tax revenues, income and jobs (Lee and Taylor 2003; UK Sport, 2004).

A point of contention in these studies has been the ability to separate between the short-term economic impact of the event (i.e. visitors attending the event) and so-called destination branding events which in turn are assumed to lead to increased tourism in the long-term. Whilst the 'holy grail' appears to be measuring the level of increased tourism to a destination that occurs because of an event, the proposed study seeks to a more modest outcome of determining the ability of an event portfolio to influence the decision of a tourist to visit a destination. If this can be established it provides impetus to the argument that events are able to induce tourism beyond the timing of the event itself.

Sport tourism is one of the fastest growing domains of the leisure tourism market (Chalip & Leyns 2002; Shifflet & Bhatia 1999). Like wise there can be other cultural events too that can be developed considering different interests and different age groups. Events also bring immense benefits to the local community (Getz (1991) and Ritchie (1984)) if they are included in strategic planning of an events tourism.

Events Portfolio

An event portfolio consists of hosting city/cities and event/events. A marketer should always prepare an events portfolio for a destination while seeking to use events as brand building tool. A mega event may not have long lasting effect on destination but heaps of small events all round the year might increase the interest of people towards a destination. This will lead to focus on different age groups, different interests like cultural, sports, music etc.

Since events cater those tourists who have interests in entertainment and activities, a marketer or events portfolio designer should have a target tourist segment. This may consist of families, groups, adventure sporties, individuals, newly wed couples, back packer etc. Events portfolio may contain sporting events, cultural events, business meetings, family festival etc. Thus, the reach of events portfolio depends on targeted tourists. An events portfolio should reinforce the brand image of destination.

Conclusion: Event related marketing strategies

Past researches prove that there is synergy between a place and its marketing tool. Here destination being a place and events are being a marketing tool. Events are covered by media and the information about the destination where is the event is being hosted automatically market the key features of that destination. The events have the capacity to spread a positive image of a destination. This theory can be said from a range of marketing theories, concepts and strategies.

Media

The brand is affected by advertisement. It increases awareness and may change attitudes towards perceived image of a brand. Promotion for an event as well as destination is required to approach the targeted tourists.

This requires adequate planned publicity campaign by the event marketer to balance the theme and advertisements well between destination and event. The print media, radio, internet and television outdoor media should prepare a well organized time and minutes of advertising and their schedules as to when and where the promotions will take place.

Public relations

Unlike paid advertising for a destination, reporting about an event and a city or a country hosting that event is a purely journalistic activity in terms of coverage. It is absolutely essential that the events are covered for its pre activities, then during the event as well as after event effects. If a large event is covered then it is needless to say that media persons should be invited but when it comes to organize an event with intention to promote a destination then it should be pre decided that who will cover the event and how the event and destination will be covered to balance the effect of image transfer. It is thus necessary that PR activities be well planned. Press conferences, press releases, invites to events for impresarios are some means of networking for good public relations. PR personnel have the responsibility to identify and create rapport with press reporters and networking with influences so as to maintain a positive image of the event and destination.

Merchandising

Events have a capability of physical manifestation of destination. Most popular attributes of a destination can be used to be printed on products and the materials which are used for events marketing. The products may bear the destination's name promoting the key features of the host destination. Sports based events have traditionally shown the best example of merchandising the destination and event promotion.

Infrastructure

It is thoughtful that does the destination contain a proper infrastructure to hold a big event or there is there a need to develop a new infrastructure to meet such need. It includes proper accessibility to destination via airport, trains or other transfers. High quality hotels should be available for tourists for every class that may at least stand for hygiene and services.

Other consideration

Hosting an event at a destination may include considerations like institutional or organizational framework. Different permissions from different institutional and tourism bodies like local government and Ministry of Tourism. The laws related to investment and community safety. Hosting an event also involves the social aspects because tourists may be from different cultures and there may be culture shock for the local community. To protect such odd situations the local tourism ministry should set up a body that may keep an eye for any such mishaps that can ruin the sporting spirits of event hosting.

Benefits of events

It provides off-season benefits to the economy. The tourist may visit the destination if any event is on at the destination. It also adds to increase demand of local business weather hotel bookings, food restaurants, transportation. Events also encourage tourists to stay for a longer time at the destination. Events are also a tool to reach specific target market or a wider market both. They reinforce the destination's image. They help in promotion, positioning and branding a destination. The events help to communicate the destination's awareness. They build brand equity. The long term advantages of hosting an event may be referred as improvement in infrastructure, attractive investment by big companies, quality of life for locals and amazing experience for travelers, destination's brand building and an added value to the city's identity

It can be added further to this research that the co-branding of events with destination or vice-versa can be positive or negative. A huge event may hamper the destination's image as the tourist will be more involved with the event than the destination which will not have a long lasting effect whilst a huge event may not have good response if the destination is not well known. Further study can be on terms of that what kind of events can cater the positive impacts on destination. Overall this article puts an undoubted study in terms of co-branding effects of destination and events.

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