

KYMENLAAKSON AMMATTIKORKEAKOULU  
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Yao Ma

EVENT PLANNING  
Bachelor's thesis 2012

## ABSTRACT

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Minna Söderqvist

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Organizing events is playing a significant role at today's Event Marketing industry. It is also a magnificent tools reputing, internationalizing today's Finish Universities of Applied Sciences.

The aim of the thesis is to demonstrate the necessity of using events to target National Community. Organizing an evening program during the Annual Symposium "Developing the Business Education at Universities of Applied Sciences" will be given as a case study.

The personal experiences of the coordinator are studied as the methods used to carry out the research.

The result of study was using event as a tools to target national community, raising brand image and organization's profile of Kyamk University of Applied Sciences that is efficient, reactive and productive.

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

### Developing the Business Education at Universities of Applied Sciences

(Valtakunnalliset ammattikorkeakoulujen liiketalouden koulutusalan kehittämispäivät) is a traditional seminar held for Finnish Universities of Applied Sciences annually. It takes place twice a year, one in the autumn semester, another one in the spring semester.

Usually, it lasts for two days. Academic activities such as seminars and evening programme are organised. Participants are representatives from Finnish Universities of Applied Sciences from all over the country; also representatives of Finnish Education Ministry are always invited by host University of Applied Sciences. Kymenlaakso University of Applied Sciences was the host organization in fall 2010.

The event took place from 10<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> November 2010 in the Business Campus of Kasarminmäki , Kouvola, Finland and Kouvolan Upseerikerho ,successfully. During the daytime of 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> academic activities were organized. On 10<sup>th</sup> of November 2010, an evening program was excellently performed by students of Kymenlaakso University of Applied Sciences.

The aim of this event is exchanging news and current issues of business education in University of Applied Sciences, focusing on developing business education presently, consulting on the structural development of UAS in the future. At the same time, representatives of Finish Education Ministry bring impact and news of Finish Business Education Tends to all of participates. Moreover, to demonstrated the necessity of using events to target National Community.

### 1.1 Research setting

The objective of this bachelor's thesis is to plan and implement an international evening programme for the Business Education Days to be held in Kouvola from 10<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> November 2010.

This work tries to answer the question how to successfully plan and implement an international evening programme for business teachers.

## 1.2 Methods

The teacher who is responsible for the evening program indicated a task to the author to find more international talents to show the talents of different international students of Kyamk. In order to achieve this goal, I was required to find those talents by several methods e.g. use my network to get to know more talents, promote event by visiting IB10 at Orientations class, as well as asking relevant lectures.

Student participants are from various countries. They are Finnish, Chinese, Russians, Bangladeshi, Greeks, American and German. Most of the participants are my contacts. They are this event's performers and sponsors.

The event place is finally decided by Kyamk University of Applied Science to be at the Officer club of Kouvola.

My task was to prepare the programme for the event. My major tasks were setting up a significant bridge to switch messages, requirements and wishes between students participants and my supervisor who is the representative of Kyamk University of Applied Sciences.

Another subtask is to find suitable candidates to design the performance lists for the evening program. The aim of this task was to give audiences the general impression of what is going to happen this evening.

## 2 EVENTMARKETING AS PART OF MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS

### 2.1 Marketing communications

Marketing Communications is a planned activity about communication between organizer and stockholders. It is not only an element of marketing mix even though a most seen part of it. In other words, as Schultz (1998) in Masterman & Wood (2006, 5) mentioned marketing communication consists of all consistent interactions a stakeholder has with an organization.

Masterman & Wood (2006, 5 quoted in Shimp, 1997) state also that a marketing communication is an activity through the use of 'speak with one voice' aiming at using multiple communication tools to promote a brand.

## 2.2 Tools of marketing communication

Traditionally, there are seven basic tools of Marketing Communication: Sale Promotions, Public relations, Advertising, Sponsorship, Direct marketing, Personal selling and Exhibitions (Masterman & Wood 2006, 16).

Among those seven tools public relations are the communication tools that relate most to event marketing.

Public relations are a mutual understanding effort between publics and organizations (Wiley, Sons & Inc 2002, 12). The objective of public relations consists of creating and raising an awareness of an organization to publicity, especially related to organization's profile, brand image, and reputation (Wood 2006, 27).

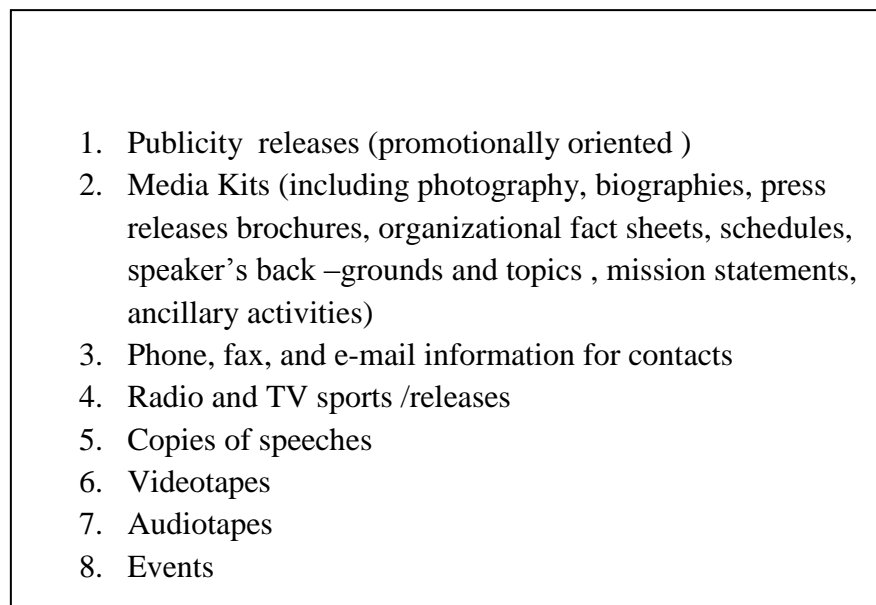
- 
1. Publicity releases (promotionally oriented )
  2. Media Kits (including photography, biographies, press releases brochures, organizational fact sheets, schedules, speaker's back –grounds and topics , mission statements, ancillary activities)
  3. Phone, fax, and e-mail information for contacts
  4. Radio and TV spots /releases
  5. Copies of speeches
  6. Videotapes
  7. Audiotapes
  8. Events

Figure 1 Classic public relations device, adopted from Hoyle (2002, 18)

From the above Figure 1-1 and texts, it is easy to see that events are one of the devices and elements of Public Relationships; Public Relationships are part of Marketing Communications. Thus, events are part of Marketing Communications.

### 3 EVENT PLANNING PROCESS

#### 3.1 Planning

Planning consists of three processes, namely of establishing, determining and achieving. All above three progresses are served to organization .Firstly, organizations need to be clear with the current position and establishing. Secondly, organizations need to know their determined position in the future. At last, organizations need to archive the methods. ( Bowdin, McDonnell, Allen & Toole 2002, 67.) Put it in simple, planning is a reserved activity by given objects, is all about achieving your objective, by limited reference in a proper way.

#### 3.2 The importance of planning

According to feature of an event, it is a non-routine activity. (Shone &Parry 2004, 81). However, it is impossible to please most of people and achieve the objectives without planning. The outcome is going to disappoint everyone, especially audiences and organizing bodies themselves.(Bow din, McDonnell, Allen & Toole2002,67.) Awareness can be creating by planning.( Bowdin, McDonnell, Allen&Toole 2002 ,67,quoted in Thompson) Meanwhile, planning can benefit organizations in many ways. Firstly, it persists the competitive position of an organization. By planning, all ideas and approaches can be analyzed. (Bowdin, McDonnell, Allen&Toole 2002, 67quoted in Johnson and Scholes 1999)

Is planning respected to be a formalized? Both of them state the same perspective that does not superstitious about formalizing planning. It may affect your final plans negatively, unless you do know what you are doing. They both suggest and encourage event planners consider and localize the whole organizations such as polices and cultural in stand of copying any forms directly from theories. At the same time, be sure event planners do not become over detailed, so that major elements will not be missed. Otherwise, the final plan will be something just stays on the paper.( Bowdin, MCDonnell , Allen&Toole 2002 ,67 quotedin Hannagan 1998 and Thompboth 1999) Moreover, Shone &Parry(2004, 81) emphasized during the ideas progressing that something could be really missed due to its complexity and possible unfamiliarity. Therefore, you have to have a plan at least to increase some awareness about what elements and issues you are going to face.

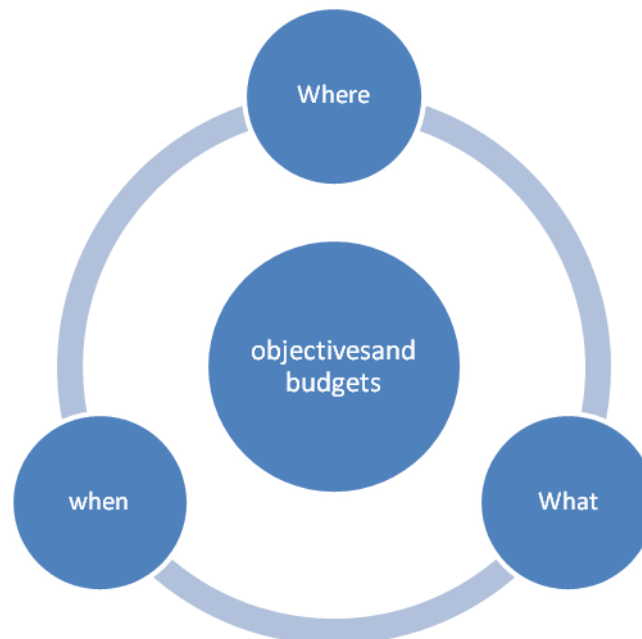


All in all, ‘no plans will survive its first contact with reality, however good it is. Some changes, however small, will be needed. Thus, the processing may go wrong, but, this is the value of planning. ‘(Shone & Parry 2004, 81.)

### 3.3 Planning process

Planning is a process can be both positive and negative. The positive aspect is called opportunities, and the negative aspect is called problems. In order to serve a fabulous final event, there is no doubt that expands and ranges the sources and information. Check lists seems more practical at related websites than dry theories. (Shone & Parry 2004 , 81-82.)(See Appendix 1)

Although, according to the check lists, the elements mentioned are not only based on one aspect due to the length of planning time. Yet, there are still common elements that should be considered by event planner does not matter such as type, length, and theme.



Figurer 2 Event Planning major elements (summarized by author)

According to the above figure, there are five majors elements playing the important and essential roles of the planning process. There are objectives and budgets, when, what, where,. Objectives and budgets, both of them, can be treated as a whole. Also,

these two should be estimated, and priority of all the other elements. Other elements, each of them, are equally important, interactive, as well as disorder during implement.

### 3.4 Objectives and Budgets

As Judy Allen said, money and budgets should be the very first starting point for any events. They are observably priority. The relationship between objective and budgets should be interdependent and complementary to each other. Initially, any events are required financial commitment seriously it does not matter size, type, objectives. (Allen 2000, 2.)

Secondly, ‘this is the way to develop your mission and objective to reality financially.’ (Hoyle 2002 ,85.)’ Event Planners should be ready to answer how much money can be invested for this event properly’. (Allen 2000 ,2.) Meanwhile, objectives can be limited by budgets. It does not matter how great objectives planners have, in away, without a sufficient budget, your great objectives will be armchair strategist mostly. Someone may have arguments such as budget should not become an obstacle to limit planner’s imaginations and creativity. (Hoyle 2002 , 85.) In my option, although it is not a bad idea at all if money has not become a burden (Allen 2000, 2). Based on facts, it is always an event planner’s dream. Therefore, Allen (2002) suggests all planners be repair and draft an estimate major expensive.(Allen 2000 , 2.) The following points reveals some basic major costs of events. ( Allen 2000, 2-3.)

- Invitations
- Accommodation
- Transportation
- Venue rentals
- Rehearsal costs
- Food
- Beverage
- Floral arrangement
- Decor
- Music
- Entertainment
- Speakers
- Staging
- Audio-visual
- Lighting
- Special effects
- Photographer
- Place cards
- Menus

- Gifts
- Insurance
- Security
- Labor charges
- Power chargers
- Promotional material
- Communication costs
- Translation
- Shipping and handling
- Customs
- Staffing
- Miscellaneous

From above points, we can see the features of budgets are miscellaneous and penny. Relevant fields are unlimited as above points shows. Thus, it challenges planner's patience and attention all the time.

After the general costs impression is given, it is time to set up the objectives of the event. What do you want audience to receive/react after event? Why are you holding it? What are you aiming for? (Allen 2000, 4.) Or what is the event intended to do? Whom are we performing for? (Shone & Parry 2004, 84.) It is significant to ask questions as above to planners themselves. In addition, a well-setting objective will justify the cost of the event correctly (Allen 2000, 4.) In order to make less mistakes and gather ideas systematically you need to answer to the above-mentioned questions. We are introducing a method the acronym SMART (Figure2-3) which is summarized by Bowdin, McDonnell, Allen & Toole.(2002, 71)

Specific: carefully focus on the original intention of the event

Measurable :expressed in a concise and quantifiable form so that they can be assessed after event

Achievable: the objectives can be realized given the human. financial and physical resources available to the event organization

Relevant: applicable to the current environment in which in the event organization operates.

Time specific: to be achieved by a designated time

Figure3 Acronym SMART (Bowdin, McDonnell, Allen & Toole2002,71)

Based on the above figure, conversely, well-setting objectives are expected to be simple, clean and not complicated. (Shone & Parry 2004, 84). Based on this, objectives can expand to all the others in details. Likely, objectives changed during the continuing plans or implement time due to the complementary of budgets mainly.

### 3.5 Budgets

It is your cash plan, probably the most challenging one and the most importance one. (Hoyle 2002, 85). It is challenging and important. Not only based on limited information and assumptions but also just simply due to the function: reflect your expenses and earning. (Goldblatt 2002, 121.)

Regardless, what you need to do before your budgets is to have a draft estimate of costs sheets. It is a feasible and practical idea before anything else that in case the higher-ups will not prove it. Otherwise, it is impossible to have any future actions. (Allen 2000, 2.)

Budgeting is a statement about income and expenses of the event, also a philosophy of the event financially.

As we know the purpose of the event is determines the differences of events. Thus, event planners are always recommended to have the familiar categories. The following are three categories. (Goldblatt 2002, 121) These may be represented in most cases:

1. Profit –oriented event “Profit, profit, profit” is absolutely the essential what drives the whole event, in a sentence, revenue exceeds expenses.
2. Break-even events “revenue =expenses” this is the fulmar which plays the main role. Association conferences are this type event.
3. Loss leaders or hosted events. The philosophy of this type of event is not about gaining profit at the very starting when organizer designed

Many of common examples happened in our daily life, e.g. graduation celebration

According to this fact, Judy Allen (2000) stressed it is no set formula a format for a cost sheet, it does not matter what kind of event you are going to organize. Thus, as the organizer, pay a special attention to the trips of your cost sheet, what you spend on are essential required, and equally important. The following shows a general budget form (summary sheet). (Allen 2002, 14-15)

1. Go through the whole progress of the event then back to fill the budget.
2. Keep adapted of costs sheet, e.g. new terms added
3. Be sure any additional costs will be added in the final budget e.g. taxes
4. Write all oral agreement down, nowadays, oral agreement is not a recommend way you should relay on, since personal panels can be changed by daily.
5. Terms changed, money creased: this is a truth that we organizer must be understand deeply heart.

Observably, cutting down good performances just due to the budget is a miserable fact that is hard to accept for most organizers. Yet, it is more miserable when ‘cents add up to dollars, the dollars can quickly escalate.’(Allen2002,15).

	Actual	Budget
Music	-----	-----
Decorations	-----	-----
Line/linen hire	-----	-----
Prizes	-----	-----
Security	-----	-----

Insurance	----	----
Cleaning	----	----
Ticket distribution	----	----
Lience application	----	----

Figure 4 General budget form – a summary sheet (Shone &Parry 2004, 107)

### 3.6 Time management

There is a famous rule is called Parkinson rule: ‘a task can be accomplished within the mount of time assigned for its accomplishment.’ Observably, Parkinson rule has told us a clearly sense, timing is everything. Timing is playing the significant rule of event planning. Certainly, it affects your outcome of an event a lot. Ffor instance, implement planning e.g. planning a 8 hours to produce a event may require 120 or more hours. It means, when you are planning the event. It is not a good idea to expect all issues will be done during your planning time. If you do not believe that the event will be always out of the time when it takes place. Thus, in order to get everything on right track, event planners are expected to be more productive about time management:. They need not only be ready for extra time, but also improve how to not be under promise and overduplicate. In addition, time management will not help you to reduce your number of tasks at all. (Joe 2002, 112.)

After that, the next thing you should think about are, months, and date, time of the day that you are going to select or you have already selected. In Allen (2000) ‘event planning is the ultimate guide to successful meetings, corporate events, fundraising galas, conferences, conventions, incentives and others special events’. She suggested us always ask the question about all decisions what are made about the date. That is the right time to be planning your event or is there another time that could be a better fit ? Specifically, she has some advices about months and date selections (Judy 2000, 24.)

About months, we traditionally think May and June would be the wedding time for couples who would like to have a celebration. Novembers and Decembers are probably another busy time for holidays. At this point, culture is the element that affects "

months" selection a lot. For instance, in China, Januarys, Februarys are always the poetically month that Chinese New year will take place. It means if any event take place during that time probably will affect the number of participates, since Chinese wish to reunion with their family at that special moment. (Judy 2000, 25-35.)

About date selections, there are so called six rules that you should pay attention to. They are major holidays, religions observations, school breaks, long weekends, sport events, special events and other considerations.

1. Major holidays: for instance, father's day, mother's day, Christmas holiday .These are typically holidays considered to be celebrated with families together. When Events have been decided to take place near these holidays, we had better consider the impact to our events.

2. Religious Observation: e.g. Friday's nights and orthodox Sunday's services for Christians. If the event takes place on Sunday morning, probably, you probably will lost the huge amount of Christian participants.

3. School breaks: if your events are going to take place during the schooldays. Have you ever considered about children participants, especially if children will take a very huge part of the whole event? Is it the day during the exam weeks or approaching exams? Do any other events take place one day before or after your event?

4. Long weekends: Most of people will action fairly earlier before long weekends starts; they probably need to prepare all things they need for their long weekends. Or any overlapping problems will happen to your event and other events? For instance, if the event takes place before or after another event, kids probably will not have enough time and energy to transfer from one stage to another. In addition, event planners should be considering also the time arrangement for kids if programs have been invokated kids, because they are the group that are respected to go to bed about 8-9pm.

5 Sports events: The power of sports is not to be underestimated able at all. For instance, in Finland, it is a very bad idea to overlap ice hockey game with any other events, especially When Finland and Sweden will be each other's opponent. In such a case, you will lose a huge amount of participates. Most of audiences' are probably not

having such huge knowledge's about ice hockey in the daily life. However, patriotic feeling is the main reasons keeping them in front of TV for the whole night.

6. Special events: such as films, theaters. The well sell block busters would be definitely good reasons to "steal" your poetical customers from your event. In that case if the financial is allowed that it would be better to find some companies who is doing business of events information collections. By that way, probably, other events will not affect what you are planning too much (Judy 2000, 25-35).

### 3.7 Place

Events need a place to fit .It can be inside or outside, existing place are transferred. As we know in real estate location is important, so it is for events.

'Where'-- it is so important that can break your event if you select the wrong one (Allen, 37 2007). Specifically, about location selection, packing, place decoration. Actually, it is does not matter where you are going to hold your events, what kind of details are you required to pay attention to. The most important thing is satisfy the customer need. (Allen, 40 2007)

From ballroom to castles, you are open to all places when it comes to site selections.(Allen , 38 2007). Some of them can be used as what it is and how it is, some of them are not. Yet, all of places are completely transferred once you are not limited your imaginations (Allen, 37.2007).

Certainly, expenses are another element play a role which is truly significant .All in all, what does matter most is finding the right fit. (Allen, 37. 2007)

### 3.8 Packing

For inexperienced event organizer, packing has little to do with their event itself. Yet, based on fact many events have to put their event afterwards due to the packing, that an easily neglected factors. (Goldblatt 72, 2008)



Size weight and volume are three important factors when you design environment for customer satisfaction. (Goldblatt 2007, 70).

### 3.9 Event programs

Event programme should be carefully designed. There are three questions Judy Allen (2002, 12 ) suggested for every event planner to carefully evaluate himself before the event is taking place.

First of all, the history of the event would be a great element to be included in the plans. It is such a good strategy that every event planners would like to add. It is not only because of promoting the event itself but to help the audience to interpret and become affected, but also a great opportunity attracting more people and turn them to loyalty customers (Allen 2002, 12-13). It is such a great opportunity to those events that do not have any history background. This is just such a wonderful time to open your imaginations through creating some history (Allen 2002, 12). There is no need to take it too seriously. The aim of history is to shorten the distance between the audience and the event itself, to interact, and to bring more added-value to the event itself.

Secondly, in order to have a great event programme, event planners should not forget the value of the event programme as a product itself. In a sentence, ‘what kind of benefits audience can get .This question is more related to the needs of different audiences (Allen 2002, 13). If the event programme cannot meet the needs of the audience, this should not be called a success overall.

Thirdly, the audience needs to have a reason to attend your event. No one is willing to waste their time to go to see something that is totally unattractive. Event planner is asked to keep the uniqueness or at least, differences as a must in their mind. It is a significant element for long run (Allen 2002, 13) .

## 4 REFLECTIONS OF THE EVENT ORGANISATION IN PRACTICE – INTERNATIONAL EVENING AT KYAMK

To organize an evening programme of a event is the experience I once had at very first time in my life in 2010.

I would like to share some of my personal experiences of this event here. In order to be a good evening program designer and planner, there are some Parts of preparation that are a must - I strongly recommend to be reflected upon.

As we all know, planning is planning, practicing is practicing. There were too many wonderful plans failed by unexpected reasons. I was not lucky enough to avoid this either. There were too many ideas that could not take place by practical reasons. It can be such as budgets, sickness of participant, timing.

In my practice, there could be a highlighted performance about classical Chinese operas. Obviously, the actress of this opera is the highlighted point, it was planning such as a Finnish student is trying to perform in Chinese with another Chinese native speakers.

Unfortunately, this proper Finnish candidate did not present the event due to physically healthy reason.

#### 4.1 Selection of the organiser

What kind of person suits for this job? I would recommend a female. The feature of this job is dealing with details and little things. Events are totally out-of-order. More or less, I would say like the feeling of house holding. Therefore, every female is a potential one.

#### 4.2 Theme and objective

The full name of this event is called ‘Business developing day’ the objective is to show the internationalization of Kyamk UAS. Thus, the theme is designed for internationalization by international students.

#### 4.3 Place

The event took place on 10, November 2010 in the evening at officers’ club, Kouvola Finland. The whole evening programme will be about 1 hour approx. The whole evening programme is finally consisting of 8 singing and dancing acts. The partici-

pants are all international business students. Their nationalities are many, including Chinese, Finnish, Russian, Greek, Bangladeshi and German.

#### 4.4 Programme

Programme lists have been finalized after during one and half week. Most performances are songs and dances. They are formed and combined from various styles including musical instruments performances, solo Ballets, Hip-hop dances, Salsa and tango dance, ballad. In practice, we just listed name of each performances. We did not include any details at all. For instance, who performance what, what the performances is alike In order to keep the mystery, only the hostess name has been listed at the corner of the page.

The performance languages are many as well. They are Chinese, English and Bengali.

#### 4.5 Audience

All of the participants study or work at school. There is one person from the Finnish government. Most of participants are females who enjoy sings and dancing performances a lot.

Generally, the Event programs themselves pleased the most of teachers participates. One of the importance reasons can be their gender. So far as I know, females are more pleased by singing and dancing. Moreover, most participates of that day are females. Yet, from student organizers points of view, there were still part of dreams of each organizer that wish to make it come true.

#### 4.6 Place

Officer club is a proper place where to have meetings and elegant parties. Yet, for most student participants, there are too narrow spaces to explore their passion; the stage of the officer club is not an ideal space for group performances either.

From student organizer point of view, Kouvola officer club is not a bad idea as a stage due to the durations and angles between audiences and performances. Yet, for dancers, especially group dancers, it seems the floor under their feet is too smooth. Moreo-

ver, I pointed out in the above texts about the wideness of stages .This is also one of important reason make the place unideal.

#### 4.7 Timing

The student performances started in the night about 9.00. It lasted about 40 min. To be honest, 8\clock pm would be a better time to start. The duration of performance was just fine. It is too risk to have a performances filled with dancing and singing longer than 40 min unless you had many experiences that succeeded beforehand. Longer time performances are easy to make the audience inpatient. Certainly, audience moods cannot stop be transferred to performances on the stage.

#### 4.8 Budget

For performances part, the host organizations were in charge 36euro buffet for each of students participant. Moreover, each of them is also able to get a business gift that is valued about 30 euros as a souvenir. For others issues, students are basically expected to manage themselves for instance, performances clothes, instruments, make-up performances.

#### 4.9 Own evaluation

I had three different roles related to this event. They are performers, student coordinators, and event planner.

As a performer, I performed two songs, one solo, another is cooperation with a male student. The first song I completed not bad. The second one I completed not good. The major reason is lack of practice and experience to cooperate with male singers, especially when there were two totally different style singers sung together, it takes longer time to familiarize and match each other's voice.

As a student coordinator, the most challenging part is to balance students' benefits and host organizer's benefits at the same time. If I assume most organizers considered students performer as a save option, it indicated benefits they offer to students may differ from commercial performers. For student coordinator, it tests your professional ethics, and in a way it is more demanding than usual case. There are three keywords that may

describe qualifications you need in order to be a proper student coordinator. These three words are social sensitivities, determination, and patience. For student's coordinator, you are facing two groups of different identities. One of them is students' performers who are artists. Other's is organization. Artists do not follow orders as well as soldiers. They are motion ally oriented, ideas oriented, and determined. They argued because of different perspectives of works not because of who you are. They persist what they think about their works unless you can conform them. Their heart is in away like a child's heart. They are so difficult that they may totally mess up your timetable, embarrassed you in public, and make you cry in front of people. Yet, they can dispel your troubles and worries by their works. It is important to emphasize how important it is to be patient with them. Do not get mad with an artist. Because they never remember they have argued or had fights with you. When you are facing the organizations you are working for, it is not a mature way to inform all students requiems to them without thinking. It is necessary to integrate their requirements to an objective and to a simple way to output. Certainly, listened carefully what your supervisor indicated without interrupting, and then comment only if they ask what you think. It is a must that you are only a coordinator not the one who makes the final decision. The features of being students' coordinator are, at one hand, that you belong to both different identities, at the other hand, and that you belong to none of these two. It means, in most of cases may be none of the two groups will understand you. Well, this is your destiny.

Event planners have a role between reality and dreams. You can be dreamily due to you are planning something from the very beginning to the end. At the same time, you have to be realistic due to all resources what you have.

All in all, fortunately, for audience, all performances went well. There were no hassles between each performance; no visible mistakes had been noticed by audience. Moreover, an order of the whole performance programme is the one factor that oriented the mood of audience. In a sentence, the audience was moved by performances. In addition, actual duration was 10 minutes shorter than planned. It means, all performances had completed in a heat.

On 10th November 2010 evening, the event took place together with fortune and strength.

## 5 CONCLUSIONS

### 5.1 A summary checking list for a event organization

As an answer to my development task I found the following list for event planners:

#### 6 to 12months ahead

- *Decide event purpose (raise funds, visibility, celebration, etc.)*
- *Choose a theme*
- *Visit potential sites*
- *Research/appoint an event coordinator manager*
- *Research/select committees/chairpersons*
- *Chairperson forms subcommittees*
- *Get cost estimates (site rental, food, drinks, sound/lights, etc.)*
- *Get recommendations for entertainment; hold auditions*
- *Get bids for entertainment*
- *Get bids for decorations*
- *Get bids for design/printing*
- *Get bids for other major items*
- *Finance committee drafts initial budget*
- *Decide on admission cost*
- *Create sponsorship amounts/levels*
- *List items to be underwritten and possible sources*
- *Research/approach honorees*
- *Compile mailing list (individuals/businesses)*
- *Check proposed date for potential conflicts, finalize date in writing*
- *Get written contracts for site, entertainment etc.*
- *Develop alternative site (if event is outdoors)*
- *Consider pre-party event for publicity or underwriting*
- *Invite/confirm VIPs*
- *Pick graphic artist; begin invitation design*
- *Create logo for event with graphic artist*
- *Order hold-the-date cards or other event announcements*
- *Set marketing/public relations schedule*
- *Develop press release and calendar listings*
- *Select photographer; arrange for photos of VIPs, chairmen, honorees*
- *Get biographical information on VIPs, celebrities, honorees, chairmen*
- *Investigate need for special permits, licenses, insurance, etc.*

#### 3 to 6 Month ahead

- *Begin monthly committee meetings*
- *Write/send requests for funding or underwriting to major donors, corporations, sponsors*

- *Request logos from corporate sponsors for printing*
- *Review with graphic artist invitations, programs, posters, etc.*
- *Prepare final copy for invitations, return card, posters*
- *Prepare final copy for tickets*
- *Complete mailing lists for invitations*
- *Order invitations, posters, tickets, etc.*
- *Sign contract with entertainment company*
- *Make list of locations for posters*
- *Finalize mailing lists; begin soliciting corporations and major donors*
- *Obtain lists from honorees, VIPs*
- *Obtain radio/TV sponsors, public service announcements, promos*
- *Set menu with caterer for food and beverages*
- *Secure permits and insurance*
- *Get written confirmation of celebrity participation/special needs*
- *Finalize audio/visual contract*
- *Select/order trophies/awards*

#### *2 Months Ahead*

- *underwriting or preview party to coincide with mailing of invitations; invite media*
- *Assemble/address invitations (with personal notes when possible)*
- *Mail invitations*
- *Distribute posters*
- *Finalize transportation/hotel accommodations for staff, VIPs, honorees*
- *Obtain contracts for decorations and rental items*
- *Confirm TV/radio participation*
- *Release press announcements about celebrities, VIPs, honorees*
- *Follow up to confirm sponsorships and underwriting*
- *Obtain logos from corporate sponsors for program printing*
- *Review needs for signs at registration, directional, etc.*
- *All major chairpersons to finalize plans*
- *Hold walk-through of event with responsible committees, chairpersons and responsible site staff*
- *members at event site*
- *Review/finalize budget, task sheets and tentative timeline*
- *Start phone follow-up for table sponsors (corporate, VIP, committee)*

#### *1 Month Ahead*

- *Phone follow-up of mailing list (ticket sales)*
- *Place newspaper ads, follow up with news media, on-air announcements*
- *Confirm staff for registration, hosting, other*
- *Write to VIPs, celebrities, program participants, confirm participation*
- *Complete list of contents for VIP welcome packets*
- *Get enlarged site plan/room diagram, assign seats/tables*
- *Give estimate of guests expected to caterer/food service*
- *Meet with all outside vendors, consultants to coordinate event*

- *Review script/timeline*
- *Continue phone follow-ups for ticket/table sales*
- *Continue assigning seats; set head table, speaker's platform*
- *Confirm transportation schedules: airlines, trains, buses, cars, limos*
- *Confirm hotel accommodations*
- *Prepare transportation and accommodations (include arrival time, flight number, airline, person assigned to meet flight)*
- *Confirm special security needed for VIPs, event*
- *Prepare welcome packet for VIPs, chairmen, and key staff*
- *Schedule deliveries of special equipment, rentals*
- *Confirm setup and tear down times with event site*
- *Finalize plans with party decorator*
- *Give caterer revised numbers*
- *Meet with chairpersons, key staff to finalize any of the above*

#### *1 Week Before*

- *Meet with all committees for last-minute details*
- *Finish phone follow-ups*
- *Confirm number attending*
- *Finish seating/table arrangements*
- *Hold training session with volunteers; finalize assignments*
- *Secure two or three volunteers to assist with emergencies*
- *Finalize registration staff*
- *Distribute seating chart, assignments to hosts/hostesses*
- *Schedule pickup or delivery of any rented or loaned equipment*
- *Double-check arrival time and delivery times with vendors*
- *Reconfirm event site, hotel, transportation*
- *Deliver final scripts/ timelines to all program participants*  
(<http://www.thegreatevent.com/content/ap.asp?id=>)

From above preparation we can easily see that longer time you have, longer checklist you may need. Above list is just a sample. The idea is to be ready get through into details of each factors I mentioned in Chapter 2. They are objective and budget. Also, if event itself does not have a ready theme, event planners are initial to seek and decide what it is as soon as possible. By that way, the rest of planning can be planned well under certain theme. Otherwise, event may be in a big trouble.

## 5.2 Further Research & Development

### 5.2.1 Budgets

There are three parts should be developed. For most event planners, it seems no other choices between hate or like when they face budgets. Budgets can come true your dream, also can break your dream. In modern, you can do nothing without budget to



have an event. Based on my previous experiences, I would emphasize that event planners have two strategies when they face budgets. These two strategies are limited to your actual spent and finding sponsorship.

The ideal situation for planning is that the money you actual spend is less than the money you are planning to spend. In order to archive this goal, there is a general rule that planner should be ready write down all items you spent on, also think twice to ensure all those items are worth to pay.

#### 5.2.1 Benefits of student coordinators

It is better to let student coordinators get free of other issues but to concentrate on events. For instance, officially let them be absent from studies. This activates for a while planning and organizing. The less issues they will do in addition to the event planning, the better planning they will make.

#### 5.2.2 More decision rights

There is a saying if you do not trust them do not let them do anything. Observably, planners should be involved as a member to make the final decision of budgeting. By that, at least, there is a repetition of performers. Also, it is a good way to protect some good ideas and performances would not be failed. Significantly, it shows respect from host organization to artists.

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