Planning an evening party for Tracon ry – The event plan

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Abstract

26 May 2020

Once a year in September a pop culture event called Tracon takes place in Tampere, Finland. Tracon is organized by Tracon ry, which is a registered non-profit organization based in Tampere. Tracon ry's purpose is to promote, develop and popularise role-playing-, card game-, board game-, miniature game-, animation-, film-, and cartoon hobbies, as well as related subcultures. The thesis project is to create an event plan for Tracon ry, which will be implemented to arrange the evening party in September 2020.

The purpose of the event plan is to leave behind a guide, that can be followed to replicate the event in the future. It is important to note, that if the event was replicated using the event plan, new goals and objectives should be adjusted each year accordingly. This year the objectives for the evening party were to increase customer satisfaction and increasing the number of participants.

The theoretical framework is built upon literature research. The framework starts with a broad definition of event management as a phenomenon and as a professional practice. After the introduction to event management the author breaks down the event planning process by using existing event planning models. At the end of the literature research the author develops their own event planning model.

Based on the literature review, feedback questionnaire and information gathered through numerous free from discussions with other volunteers and stakeholders over the year, the event plan was created. The event plan faces risks brought upon by COVID-19 outbreak, which could cause the whole event to be cancelled.

While the event hopefully takes place in autumn, the author will not see the event plan work in practice and cannot evaluate success based on the actual event. Nevertheless, the author was able to write a fully-fledged event plan for the commissioning party. The main organizers in the commissioning party said that the event plan would still be useful, even if the event was cancelled. They suggested mentioning the published thesis on a forum for all volunteering event managers working with conventions in Finland. In addition, they suggested that the author presents their thesis in the next seminar for volunteering event managers in 2021.

From the topic formulating to the finished thesis the whole process took a total of eight months. During the thesis process the author struggled the most with pacing the thesis writing. Without strict milestones along the way, the thesis kept being delayed. Thus, the biggest learning outcome for the author was project-, and time management skills. The author also studied practical tools. The author learned how to utilize event planning models and how to use the Event Canvas to design events.

Table of contents

1 Introduction

The thesis project began in October 2019 when the author came up with the idea of writing a thesis about planning an evening party for Tracon ry, a registered organization to which they are currently volunteering for. The author started volunteering for the commissioning party as the evening party manager in October 2017 and has since arranged evening parties in both 2018 and 2019. When the author started volunteering, there was not much information stored at the time and the author had to start planning from scratch. To relieve stress and help future organizers the author has decided to leave behind well-written guide on how they plan their events.

This thesis consists of three parts. The first part is about the framework surrounding the thesis project. The framework is built upon literature research. The framework starts with a broad definition of event management as a phenomenon and as a professional practice. After the introduction to event management the author will introduce event planning models by Cunningham and MacLean (2017, 29), and Goldblatt (2011, 41–42). The rest of the framework follows the event planning phases introduced in these two event planning models and base the discussion around them. At the end of the literature research the author develops their own event planning model, which they use to write their event plan in the appendices. The second part of the thesis focuses on the background the thesis project, risks and limitations, methodology used, and project evaluation. The final part of the thesis is discussion about how the thesis process went and what were the learning outcomes.

Based on the literature review, feedback questionnaire and information gathered through numerous free from discussions with other volunteers and stakeholders over the year, the event plan was created. The finished event plan for Tracon's evening is attached at the end of the thesis in appendices.

1.1 Aims and Objectives

The aims and objectives of this thesis are to do theoretical research on event planning process and to use the research to develop a new a new event planning model, which will be implemented to create an event plan for the commissioning party.

The purpose of the event plan is to leave behind a guide, that can be followed to replicate the event in the future. It is important to note, that if the event was replicated using the event plan in appendices, new goals and objectives should be adjusted each year accordingly. This year the objectives for the evening party were to increase customer satisfaction

and increasing the number of participants. The author started as the evening party manager in October 2017 and has arranged evening parties in 2018 and 2019. There was not much information stored at the time and the author had to start pretty much from scratch. To relieve stress and help future organizers the author has decided to leave behind well-written notes on how they plan their events.

1.2 Methodology in Brief

The thesis uses literature review as the foundation to develop a new event planning model and to create an event plan for the commissioning party. The literature review is based on academic books and online articles. The author tried to use only relevant data from recent and recognized publications. Literature review was chosen as a method because it serves multiple purposes.

Based on the literature review, feedback questionnaire and information gathered through numerous free from discussions with other volunteers and stakeholders over the year, the event plan was created.

1.3 Tracon ry

Once a year in September a pop culture event called Tracon takes place in Tampere, Finland. Tracon is organized by Tracon ry, which is a registered non-profit organization located in Tampere. Tracon ry's purpose is to promote, develop and popularise role-playing-, card game-, board game-, miniature game-, animation-, film-, and cartoon hobbies, as well as related subcultures. The organizations core activity is organizing role-playing- and anime event Tracon and tabletop role-playing game event Tracon Hitpoint. Tracon ry also trains their activists in topics related to event organizing and grants general and project aids.

Tracon's main event's purpose is to provide a meeting place for like-minded people interested in role-playing-, card game-, board game-, miniature game-, animation-, film-, and cartoon hobbies, as well as related subcultures and spend a fun weekend overall.

Tracon's evening party is arranged each year Saturday night of the event weekend, which takes place 4.-6.9.2020 this year. Tracon's evening party is arranged by the same organization as the main event and it shares the same values with the main event. The evening party's purpose is to act as a meeting place for like-minded people and have fun.

1.4 Key Definitions

The key terms used in this thesis are event management, event planning model, event design and event plan. Event management is the practice of planning, implementing, and coordinating events smoothly so that their objective can be reached. Event planning model is a tool used by event managers to plan events. Event design is about "creating a vision and then designing all the visual details to transform a venue into a dream. Event planning provides the logistical framework, while event design brings a creative vision to life." (Events by Knight 2020.) Event plan is a written document consisting of actions that need to be taken within a timeframe to create and coordinate a successful event.

2   Event management

This chapter will define event management as a phenomenon and discuss its unique characteristics. The author will also discuss the role of an event manager in the concept of event management.

Event is a gathering of people at a specific place, at a specific time and for a specific purpose (Kilkenny 2016, 34). It is a gathering of two or more people, or groups of people, who have something at stake. They choose to create or be part of an event because it is more important to be involved than it is to not. (Frissen, Janssen & Luijer 2016, 18.) Events can be roughly categorised into two categories by their purpose, even though some might share characteristics from both. These categories are special and social events and business and educational events. Special and social events are the largest and broadest category, they are usually open to large audience and they might require an admission fee. Special and social events are designed with leisure or pleasure as a key aspect. Some prime examples of special and social events are concerts, festivals, sporting events and different ceremonies. (Kilkenny 2016, 38.) Business and educational events are often closed gatherings, corporate-, industry, or education-related and are organized for professionals and like-minded people. They are usually designed for a specific industry, specific topics, specific businesses, or training. Examples of business and educational events are conventions, conferences, meetings, and workshops. (Kilkenny 2016, 39.) In this thesis, we are primarily focusing on special events.

Mallen and Adams (2017, 1) divide events to traditional and niche events. Traditional events have a governing body that enforces standardized rules and regulations, which must be followed during the event planning process. For example, the governing body can consist of an organization, association, or a federation. The rules and regulations have followed generation to generation in the same manner. Adaptations or changes may be implemented over time, but they do not give birth to a new event. Traditional events are staged for recreational or competitive purposes and can act as a driver for tourism. (Mallen & Adams 2017, 2.) Niche events do not have a traditional governing body, and they can be arranged by anyone. They can adapt rules and regulations from previous events, or they can create their own from scratch. Niche events are created or adapted for a specific audience and they can be adapted at any time to meet the expectations of the audience. (Mallen & Adams 2017, 3–4.)

Events share similarities with projects, but they have their own key characteristics that drive them away from the concept of a project. Understanding the relationship and connection between events and projects can be hard, as there are many more similarities than differences. (Pielichaty, Els, Reed & Mawer 2017, 4–5.) Drawing a line between simple projects and events is important because they need to be managed in a different manner. What distinguishes event management from project management is the attendance of an audience, which is undeniably the goal of an event organizer. Promotion, tickets, and leisure are connected to the notion of audience. Events usually also have a rigid, inflexible performance date when the event itself is hosted. (Pielichaty & al. 2017, 4–6.) Figure 1 illustrates the similarities as well as differences between events and projects.
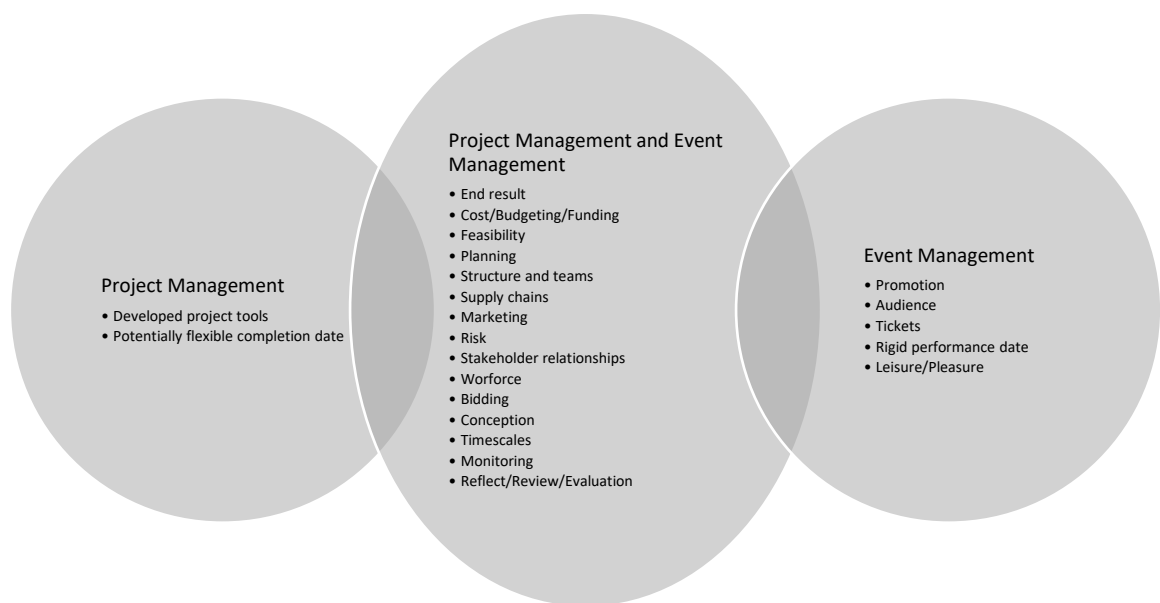
Figure 1. The characteristics of events and projects (Pielichaty & al. 2017, 5)

Event management uses some of the same techniques and methods as project management to plan and host events. The event implementation planning is where project management resources are practiced, but after that different skills are required: "soft skills, relationships and appropriate communication can ensure the fulfilment of success criteria". (Pielichaty & al. 2017, 6.)

In the heart of the event management is the event manager. The job titles may vary, and they are used interchangeably. Essentially, they are all used to call the person, who oversees the planning, coordinating, and implementing the event. (Kilkenny 2016, 34–35). Cunningham and MacLean (2017, 28–29) suggest that the event manager needs to assume the role of a facilitator. The event managers duty as a facilitator is to monitor the

sharing of knowledge between project members and facilitate the event processes. To do so, the event manager can assume different leadership styles.

Goldblatt (2011, 130–131) suggests that event managers often assume one of the three leadership styles: democratic, autocratic, or laissez-faire style. Democratic leadership style takes into consideration the thoughts of all team members and aims to come into a collaborative decision on how to proceed. In autocratic leadership style the event manager practices authority to give out orders to the team members. The event manager then facilitates that the team members also follow the instructions accordingly. This approach should not be practiced too much since team members cannot be forced to do things they do not want to do. In Laissez-faire approach, individuals work toward a common goal instead of a team working together. In this approach the event manager sits back, and the individuals make their own decisions. Laissez-faire approach is the least common and not very suggested approach since the event team usually consists of very different skill assets and varying levels of commitment. Thus, it is difficult for the event manager to trust the quality of the outcome. A good team leader will use different approaches mindfully and takes into consideration the situation at hand.

Goldblatt (2011, 131-132) states, that the characteristics of a successful event manager vary from that of a successful traditional leader. Table 1 shows the comparison of leadership characteristics between traditional leaders and event leaders. The characteristics are also ranked from the most to least important, because Goldblatt argues, that not all the characteristics are equal.

Table 1. Leadership characteristics (Goldblatt 2011, 132)

Traditional Leaders	Event Leaders
1. Communication skills	1. Integrity
2. Confidence	2. Confidence and Persistence
3. Courage	3. Collaborative decision making
4. Decision Making	4. Problem solving
5. Enthusiasm	5. Communication skills
6. Integrity	6. Vision
7. Persistence	7. Focus upon sustainable events
8. Planning	8. Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) as a core value for every event
9. Problem Solving	

These leadership characteristics result in an event leader, who has the skills, experience, and intuition to make decisions and accordingly lead an event organization towards its goals. The stakeholders' duty is to continuously evaluate the event leader's decisions to ensure the leader is doing their best to lead the team wisely. A great event leader is not only recognized by the team but will also lead so that the team follows them. Ultimately the best event leaders are not only admired, but also inspire the team to develop their own leadership potential. (Goldblatt 2011, 133.)

In this chapter the author covered event management as a phenomenon and a profession. In the next subchapter the author will cover the event planning process and two event planning models by Cunningham and MacLean (2017, 29) and Goldblatt (2011, 41–42), which the event managers can use to plan events.

2.1 The Event Planning Process

Event managers use event planning models to create successful and sustainable events. In this subchapter, the author will discuss different event planning models proposed by Cunningham and MacLean (2017, 29), and Goldblatt (2011, 41–42).

Cunningham and MacLean (2017, 29) suggest a four-phase event planning model (figure 2). The different phases in the event planning model are event development phase, event operational planning phase, event implementation, monitoring and management phase, and event evaluation and renewal phase.

Event development phase
The event manager facilitates the development of event sctructures for governance, event networks, policies, volunteer practices and participation in a corporate social responsibility program

Event operational planning phase
The event manager creates and facilitates the development of written operational plans that are logical, sequential, detailed and integrated, along with contingency plans and the activitation of a plan refining process

Event evaluation and renewal phase
The event manager facilitates the selection of event components to be evaluated, the completion of the evaluation tasks and the implementation of the evaluation recommendations

Event implementation, monitoring and management phase
The event manager facilitates the implementation of the written operational plans, monitors activities, looking for deviations, and manages all deviations from the plans
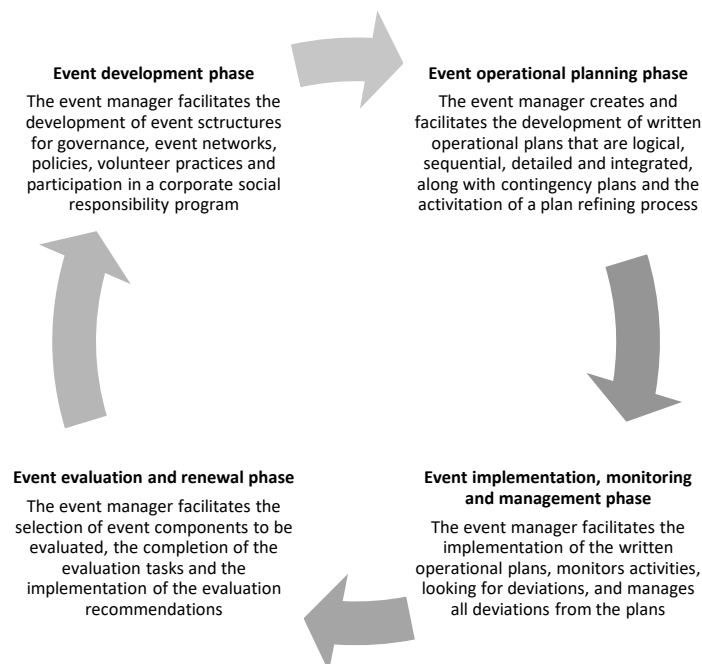
Figure 2. An event planning model (Cunningham & MacLean 2017, 29)

Goldblatt (2011, 41–42) argues, that there are five phases to the event planning process. In Goldblatt's model the five phases of event leadership process are research, design, planning, coordination, and evaluation (figure 3).
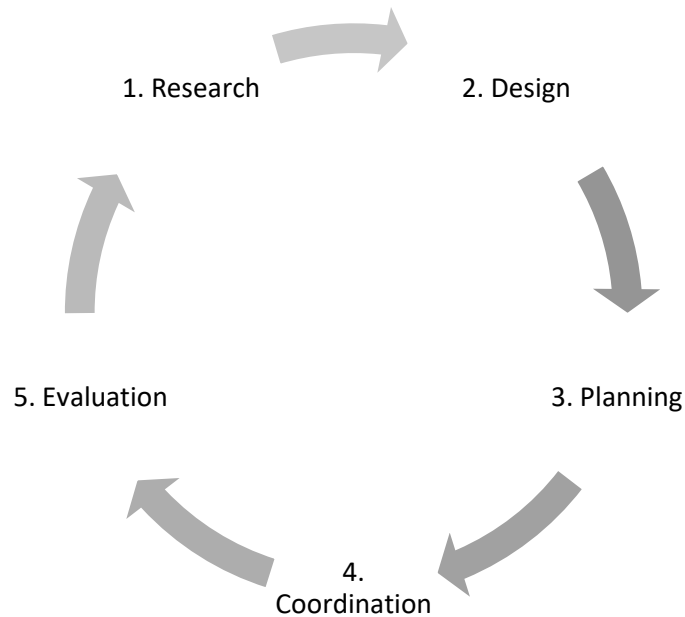
Figure 3. Goldblatt's model of event leadership process (Goldblatt 2011, 42)

Planning, coordination, and evaluation phases are the same phases found from Cunningham and MacLean's event planning model. The major difference is that in Goldblatt's model research and design are their own phases. In Cunningham and MacLean's model there is only one phase prior to the event planning phase. This seems easier to grasp, although it is good that Goldblatt emphasises the importance of research at the beginning of the event planning process.

In the following subchapters the author will reflect to the different phases found in both Cunningham and MacLean's (2017, 29) and Goldblatt's (2011, 42) event planning models. The next subchapter will focus on research, which creates the soil on which the whole event will be built on.

2.2   Research

In the previous subchapter the author introduced two event planning models by Cunningham and MacLean (2017, 29) and Goldblatt (2011, 42). In Goldblatt's model the leadership process begins from research. Research is done to reduce risks involved in event management and to help the event managers to create an event that supports the desired outcome of the organizers and stakeholders. Events are produced with the expectation

that the public will attend. Therefore, exhaustive research is done to reduce the risk of nonattendance. (Goldblatt 2011, 42.)

2.2.1 Identifying the participants

Identifying the participants is important, because knowing them makes it more likely for you to succeed in meeting their expectations. Identifying the participants is done by doing exhaustive market research. Market research will help you identify your primary and secondary target groups and their expectations, but also "spot emerging trends, develop new service delivery systems, and solve minor problems before they become major." (Goldblatt 2011, 43.)

Market research can be implemented by conducting a quantitative or qualitative research, a combination research, or a hybrid of the two. Each have their strengths and weaknesses. A quantitative research method relies on getting multiple answers. It is an easy way and cost-efficient way to receive demographic information of the participants, as the answers are easy to analyze with computers. (Goldblatt 2011, 43.) Qualitative research on the other hand relies on finding hidden meanings behind qualitative research. Qualitative research is conducted on a smaller focus group. Participants are interviewed by the researcher, and each interview is recorded and later analyzed. (Goldblatt 2011, 44–45.)

Identifying the participants is only the first part of the pre-event research done to reduce risks. It is also important to objectively analyse your event's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT).

2.2.2 SWOT Analysis

A SWOT analysis is a model created by Albert Humphrey of the Stanford Research Institute in the 1960s as a part of a study seeking to understand why corporate planning constantly failed. A SWOT analysis (table 2) is a compilation of the organization's strengths, opportunities, weaknesses, and threats that can be both internal and external. The main goal of the analysis is to help organizations become aware of all the internal and external factors that affect the business decision making. (Schooley 2019.) SWOT analysis a planning tool, that does not only help the event planner to scan the event environment for factors that could affect event planning, but it also helps to identify threats that should be addressed. After identifying the threats, the event planner can then prepare precautions and solutions, which can help contain reduce or eliminate the said threats. (Goldblatt 2011, 50.)

Table 2. SWOT Analysis (Goldblatt 2011, 51)

Known S = strengths		Known W = weaknesses	
1. Strong funding	Internal	1. Weak funding	Internal
2. Well-trained staff	Internal	2. Few human resources	Internal
3. Event well respected by media	External	3. Poor public relations history	External
Potential O = opportunities		Potential T = threats	
1. Simultaneous celebration of a congruent event	External	1. Weather	External
2. Timing of event congruent with future budget allocation	Internal	2. New board of directors leading this event	Internal

Strengths and weaknesses can usually be identified before the event takes place (Goldblatt 2011, 49). Strengths and weaknesses are mostly internal and stem from the resources that area available for the organization (Schooley 2019). If the number of weakness outnumber strengths, the event manager might want to consider postponing or cancelling the event due to uncertainty. Typical strengths and weaknesses consist of available funding, available physical resources e.g. location and equipment, and available human resources. (Goldblatt 2011, 49.)

Opportunities and threats are generally external factors that affect the event outcome. They are factors that the organization cannot control. (Schooley 2019.) Opportunities and threats usually take place take place during or after the event has been arranged. Opportunities might be e.g. an organizational anniversary that guarantees the event extra funding or maybe the event gains unexpected media coverage that boosts the public image. Threats on the other hand are events that prevent the event from achieving and maximizing its potential. Such factors are e.g. extreme weather conditions, performers cancelling, disrupting behaviour at the event. (Goldblatt 2011, 50.)

Research is invaluable to determine the feasibility of the event. With proper research it is easier for the event planner to present the event idea to organization governing and get funding for the event. After the event has been thoroughly researched and determined feasible, it is time to start developing the event. In the next subchapter the author will discuss event development, which builds the foundation for the event manager to work on.

2.3   Event Development

With research completed, the event manager can now safely commence the event planning process as the participants have been identified and risks have been weighted. In event development phase the event manager sets the premises for a successful event. In this subchapter the author discusses defining the purpose for events, governing, policies, event structures, volunteer programs and corporate social responsibility programs, which are used to support the event.

Kilkenny (2016, 49) highlights the importance of defining the purpose of the event from the very beginning. Defining the purpose of the event is done by setting goals and objectives, financial goals, identifying the participants, and creating environmental standards and corporate social responsibilities. Defining the purpose of the event is important because it guides all decision making going forward. Kilkenny (2016, 51) defines goal as "the general purpose of the event that provides a road map for the planning process" and objective as "a measurable, attainable target that contributes to the accomplishment of the goal". For example, the primary purpose of the Tracon evening party is to entertain and have fun. The objectives to meet the purpose would be to create an event program that the audience likes and build an event venue that supports the joyful atmosphere. The financial goals must support the organizational goals and objectives. Tracon is a non-profit organization that does not seek any monetary gain. With the ticket fees, Tracon is only trying to cover the organizing costs.

During the development phase, it is important to hold planning sessions, where
Event structures are practiced and developed to aid the governance of an event. The governance and event structures are often behind the scenes and invisible for the audience, but they are the foundations to success. The term event structure "refers to breaking down the tasks associated with delivering the event such that employees or volunteers have specific roles and an understanding of how these roles interrelate." (MacLean 2017, 39.) By governance we refer to taking responsibility and authority in developing policies and event structures. The event structures need to support transferring knowledge between event managers and volunteers so that there are no loose ends. (MacLean 2017, 40.) Event managers will face situations, where the event structures and policies are already established but also situations where they must develop new policies. Sometimes the event structures can feel too restraining or too loose, so the event manager must negotiate to create a setting, in which the team can perform. (Connolly & Adams, 49.)

The team behind a successful event usually includes a governing body, event managers, stakeholders and a mix of volunteers and paid employees. Volunteers are people, who provide their services and talent without the expectation of compensation, other than the sense of contribution to the greater good (Adams 2017a, 55). Volunteers are an asset for the event. They take care of many on and off-site actions before, during and after the event has finished. Their management should be thought thorough, so that the relationship benefits both parties. Adams (2017, 55–56) suggests developing a volunteer management program, which will benefit both the event and the volunteer. Volunteer management program should be well articulated from the beginning to answer questions such as:

- What are your short-term goals?
- What are your long-term goals?
- What benefits will the organization accrue from this volunteer management program?
- How much money will be required to support the program?
- What human resources will the program require?
- Where are volunteers needed?
- What specific skills will volunteers need?
(Adams 2017a, 57).

Contrary to common belief, volunteers are not free. They require financial investments and human resources by the organization. Financing may be needed for example to provide training to the managers responsible of the volunteers and to train and cater the volunteers. (Adams 2017a, 57.)

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) means, that the company or organization is socially accountable for its actions to itself, its stakeholders, and the public. Organizations actions have impact on all aspects of society, including economic, social, and environmental. Practicing corporate social responsibility translates to benefiting the society instead of doing harm to it. (Chen 2019.) CSR should be integrated as a part of day-to-day decision making, since customers in wealthy countries make their purchase decisions based on their perception of the company's CSR. In the special events industry this translates to participants deciding to not attend. According to Goldblatt (2011, 435–436) the main responsibilities of the organization working in special events regards to CSR are sustainable development, responsible stewardship, and legacy building. Sustainable development stands for making decisions that do not have a negative impact on the future. As an example, Goldblatt suggests re-seeding after a festival has been conducted in a pasture to sustain growth. Responsible stewardship means preserving resources used to produce the event. Preserving resources can stem e.g. from conserving water, energy, electricity,

and paper. Legacy building means thinking about what the event leaves behind and thinking about the impact it has on the society going forward. A prime example of this phenomenon is the Olympic Games bidding war and how the bidding countries try to emphasize the legacy the Olympic Games leave behind and how they tackle the situation.

In this chapter the author has discussed defining purpose for the event as well as setting the foundation for the event team to perform in. In the next chapter the author will discuss event design, which brings the focus into the purpose of the event and how it can be delivered to create desired change in the stakeholders' behavior (Frissen & al. 2016, 37).

2.4 Event Design

In the previous chapter, the author discussed event development, which focuses on defining the purpose for the event and creating the environment for team to perform in. In this chapter the author will discuss event design, which seeks to address "the subjective experience, the abstraction of behaviour and the journey of behaviour change" as an essential part of the event (Frissen & al. 2016, 24).

According to Berridge (2007, 82) it is important to see design as an integral part of event planning process, because it leads to improvement of the event on every level. Fundamentally though, they are two separate parts of the same process. According to event planning and event design company based in the UK, Events by Knight (2020), event design is about "creating a vision and then designing all the visual details to transform a venue into a dream. Event planning provides the logistical framework, while event design brings a creative vision to life." Event design includes e.g. designing the space, layout, furnishing, lighting, color, and patterns so that they support the event's purpose and guest experience. It is important to note though, that event design is more than just a creative practice. It is a planned process that influences the decision making and actions related to a project. (Berridge 2007, 90–91.)

2.4.1 The Event Canvas

To help visualize and track the design process, tools such as the Event Canvas (figure 4) are available to event designers (Frissen & al. 2016, 24). The Event Canvas is an event design tool created by Roel Frissen, Ruud Janssen and Dennis Luijer in 2016.
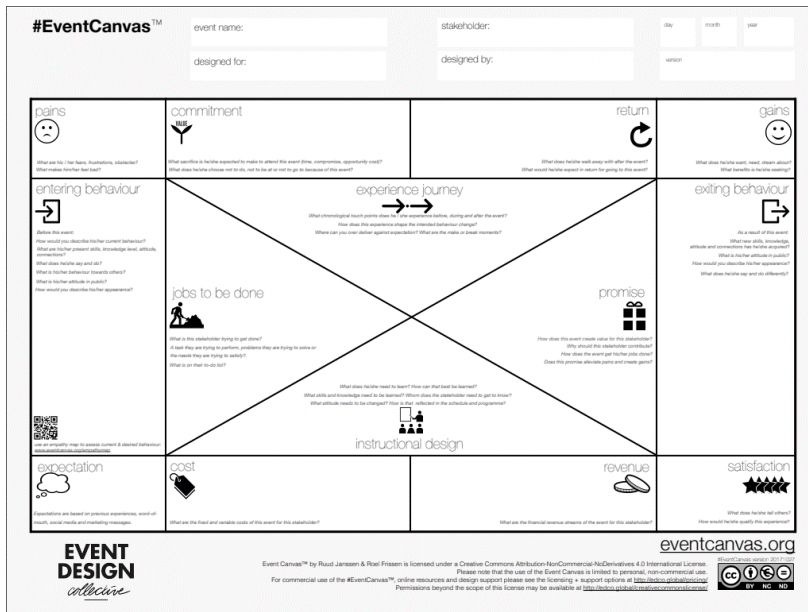
Figure 4. The Event Canvas (Frissen, Janssen & Luijer 2017)

The Event Canvas serves three main purposes. First, it is a visual tool, which ensures that the whole event design process is easy to share. The event model canvas follows a visual process by cutting the design process into different modules, thus helping the event designer to ask the right questions at the right time and exposing the insights needed to make conscious choices. Secondly, it helps to identify and map the needs, desires, and expectations of the participants, which are often neglected and forgotten, when the event planners are focusing on the logistics and implementation of the event. Thirdly, it is a unifying tool, which keeps the team focused, together and on track with every aspect necessary to design an event. (Frissen & al. 2016, 24.) The event canvas template consists of 14 different blocks, with each covering their own aspect of event design. The template is divided into three phases: change, frame, and design. In the next three chapters, the author will describe the three phases in more detail. The author will go through each of the building blocks and describe their function.

2.4.2   The Event Canvas: Change

The first phase is change (figure 5), which consists of the six blocks surrounding the template on the left and right. Change represents the way the event stakeholders enter and exit the event and it charts the behaviour change. (Frissen & al. 2016, 40–41.) The three blocks on the left, from top to bottom represent entering behaviour, pains and expectations and the three blocks on the right represent gains, exiting behaviour and satisfaction.
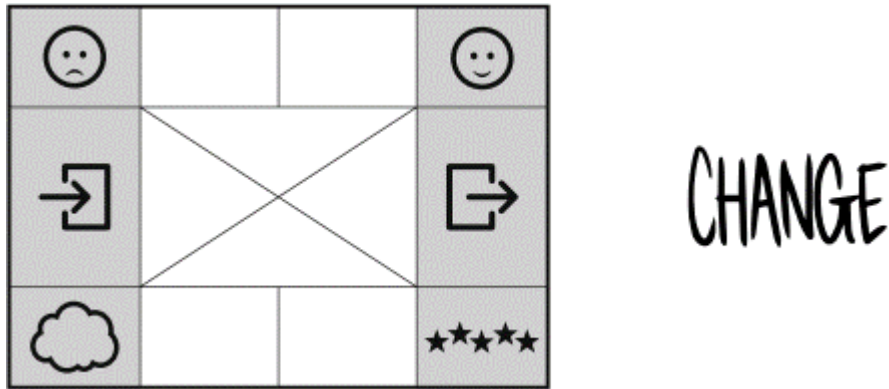
Figure 5. The Event Canvas phase one: Change (Frissen & al. 2016, 39)

First, the event planner or designer identifies all stakeholders and describes their current behavior before entering the event, which is not bound to the event. The event planner does not need to describe every individual behavior, but instead they must look for reoccurring behaviors withing the stakeholder groups. It might help to visualize the representative of a stakeholder group, when describing their behavior. (Frissen & al. 2016, 43.) The event planner must also think of the pains; the thoughts and feelings that block the change and preserve the status quo. These are things that annoy the stakeholders in their daily life such as undesired costs, situations, negative emotions, and risks. (Frissen & al. 2016, 45.) In addition to analyzing the current behavior and pains of the stakeholders, the event planner must think of the expectations of stakeholders have concerning the event. The expectations are subjective and often subconscious. It is necessary to know the expectations of the stakeholders if the event planner wishes to meet or exceed those expectations. (Frissen & al. 2016, 46.)

On the contrary, the event planner must think of the desired outcome, when the stakeholders exit the event. The event planner must think how they want the stakeholders to leave the event, and how do the stakeholders' behaviour change after they have participated in the event. (Frissen & al. 2016, 48.) As the opposite of risks, the event planner must think of the positive outcomes and benefits for the stakeholder. What does the stakeholder want or require? Mapping the gains gives the event planner an insight to the stakeholders' motives, and creating gains helps engaging them on a more intimate level. (Frissen & al. 2016, 50.) Having mapped the expectations, the last building block has to do with the aftermath of those expectations. How do the stakeholders interpret the experience and what do they tell about it to others? How do they compare it to the other experiences? (Frissen & al. 2016, 52.)

2.4.3 The Event Canvas: Frame

The second phase, frame (figure 6), consists of six blocks surrounding the last two triangle blocks in the center. The frame creates the boundary within which the event design must deliver its value. It consists of practical requirements and limitations of the project and helps to bring the focus to design. The building blocks in the frame from top to bottom, from left to right are in order: commitment, return, jobs to be done, promise, cost, and revenue. The top two and the bottom two building blocks are each other's mirrors: commitment and return, and cost and revenue. These also carry the chronological order from left to right, as the stakeholders enter with commitments and costs and exit with returns and revenues. (Frissen & al. 2016, 55.)
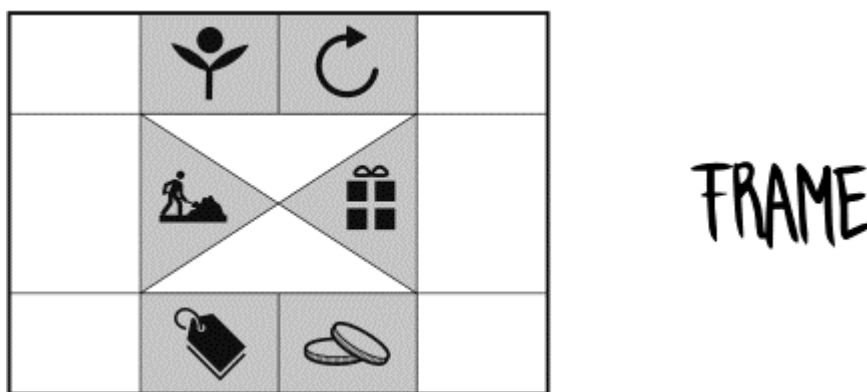
Figure 6. The Event Canvas phase two: Frame (Frissen & al. 2016, 39)

The top two building blocks of the frame, commitment and return are emotionally driven (Frissen & al. 2016, 55). Commitment is a non-monetary investment, that the stakeholder makes towards the event either by initiating, attending, partnering, or sponsoring. Examples of commitment are time, energy, resources, or efforts made. (Frissen & al. 2016, 56.) Returns are what the stakeholders get as a trade-off for their commitment. Returns are short-term, whereas gains are long-term. They can be either intangible or tangible. Returns are for example eating well, enjoying the company of friends or networking with other stakeholders. (Frissen & al. 2016, 58.)

The bottom two building blocks of the frame: cost and revenue are quantifiable in terms of money, contacts, or contracts (Frissen & al. 2016, 55). Participating in an event requires monetary investments from all stakeholders. Cost represents any financial investments the stakeholders must make because of the event e.g. ticket prices, beverages, travel and accommodation expenses, and labor. (Frissen & al. 2016, 60.) On the other side of the

coin is revenue, which is also financial figure. Costs of some stakeholders may be revenues of other stakeholders. Revenue streams for stakeholders might be e.g. selling raffle tickets or food and beverages. Some stakeholders may not have any revenue streams if they are for example participants of a musical event. (Frissen & al. 2016, 63.)

In the middle of the Canvas are two of the last building blocks of the frame. On the left are the jobs to be done and on the right is the promise. The jobs to be done maps the tasks that the stakeholders are trying to accomplish in their regular jobs and everyday lives. These tasks are tasks that the stakeholders are trying to perform and complete, the problems they are trying to solve, or the needs they are trying to satisfy. The tasks can be branched by their intent such emotional, social, or functional jobs or basic needs. (Frissen & al. 2016, 64.) For example, the musicians want the audience to enjoy their music, while making their living (social and functional) and concert participants want to relieve stress, enjoy the music, and meet their friends (emotional and social). Addressing the jobs to be done can help the event planner to relieve the stakeholders' pains and create gains and satisfaction.

The promise is the marketing message the event uses to attract stakeholders to the event. A good promise is concise and can be summarized with a few phrases. The promise describes how the event will relieve the pains of the stakeholders and how it will deliver gains and accomplish the jobs to be done. (Frissen & al. 2016, 66.) For example the promise and marketing message of Nordic Business Forum (Nordic Business Forum 2020) judging by their front page is "building leaders who change the world", and they plan to do this by promising the following: "at our conferences, the world's best business experts help you take your leadership skills and business to a new level. Through our community of diverse, high-level international leaders, you can find new connections and widen your networks."

2.4.4   The Event Canvas: Design

In the last two phases the focus has been in analyzing the stakeholders and framing the event. The third phase will bring the focus on the event itself. The third phase, design (figure 7), consists of the last two remaining blocks in the middle: experience journey and instructional design. Their purpose is within the frame, to change the behaviour of the stakeholders in the desired direction. (Frissen & al. 2016, 69.)
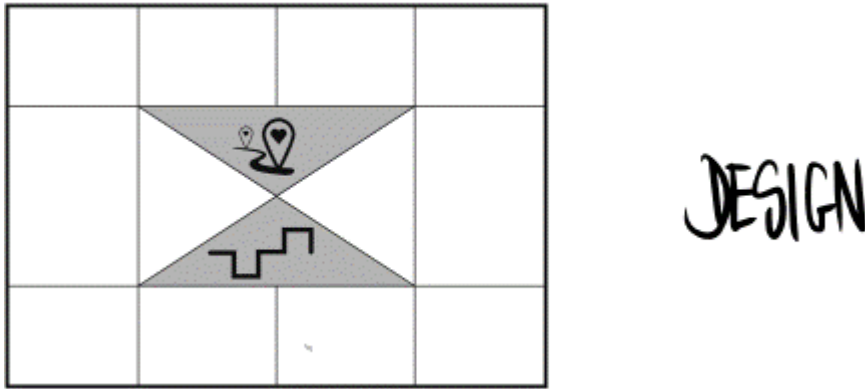
Figure 7. The Event Canvas phase three: Design (Frissen & al. 2016, 39)

The experience journey tracks the touchpoints on the stakeholders' journey from the moment they become aware of the event, to the very last interaction with the event and everything in between. Experience journey is about finding these touchpoints and thinking about where the event can deliver more of an experience than expected. (Frissen & al. 2016, 70.) For example, the bar can offer themed drinks that align with the event and social media posts should carry the promise the event is trying to deliver.

While experience journey tracks the touchpoints in the stakeholders' journey, instructional design covers the content delivered at those touchpoints. Instructional design is about thinking how the stakeholders interact with the event environment and how they should learn and experience. Is there an opening or ending speech or nothing at all? Does the host wish the audience welcome, or do they talk about the purpose of the event? These all have impact on how the stakeholders learn and experience the event. (Frissen & al. 2016, 72.)

Event design seeks to create a change in the behaviour of stakeholders and it should not be neglected as a part of event planning. As discussed in this subchapter, the Event Canvas works as a practical tool to visualize and plan the stakeholders' journey to create desired change. (Frissen & al. 2016, 24.) In the next subchapter the author will focus on the logistic side of event planning and creating written operational plans for each event component.

2.5 Event Operational Planning

In the previous subchapter the author discussed event design, which guides the decision making in event planning. In this subchapter the author will focus on the event operational

planning or the "logistical side of event management" (Events by Knight 2020). The operational planning comprehends written operational plans for each event component. These components include for example hospitality services, volunteer management and all planned activities within the event. (Mallen 2017, 67.)

There can be multiple operational plans coexisting at the same time for different activities in a single event, as there may be many members in the event operational network. It is advised that all team members use the same format for their operational plans, to achieve consistency and control. There is not one correct format for event operational plan. What is important though, is that all requirements to implement the plan are expressed. Such requirements are for example:

- An executive summary.
- The goals and objectives.
- The timing of each planned activity.
- A detailed list of planned tasks.
- The authority for each planned element.
- Event diagrams illustrating activity sites and the placement of key event items.
(Mallen 2017, 72.)

The strength of the event operational plans is weighted by how logical and sequential they are, how much detailed planning has been thought out and how well different activities are integrated together. To refine the operational plans the event manager should also include contingency plans and hold meetings with the key representatives to review the integrated plans. (Mallen 2017, 86.)

2.5.1 Contingency plans

When a lot of people gather at a single place for the purpose of entertainment, there is an increased chance for accidents to happen. The event managers duty is to reduce, control and eliminate such risks. Contingency plans are created to prepare for unexpected situations. Goldblatt (2011, 393–396) recommends arranging a risk assessment meeting to identify and contain the risks associated with the event. The risk assessment meeting should involve all key event stakeholders. Before arranging the risk assessment meeting, all key event stakeholders should be assigned with a task to think about risks associated with in their field at the event. At the meeting, the risks are gathered and documented. Once the list of risks has been compiled, the team should look for any gaps that have been overlooked. After the risks have been identified, the team must come up with solutions to control, reduce and eliminate them. Finally, the importance of each risk is rated.

Things to consider when rating the importance of the risks is the severity of the consequences, how likely the risk is to occur and how well the risk can be controlled. When the risk assessment has been concluded, the findings are used to write contingency plans.

2.5.2 Common Issues in event operational planning

Common issues that may rise in the event operational planning for event managers are timing issues, accountability and authority issues, knowledge management issues, funding issues, relationship issues and the turnover of staff and volunteers. Event managers struggle with given time frames to facilitate the completion of all operational plans. The available time to plan and write operational plans has an impact on how detailed and refined the operational plans end up, and how well thought out contingency plans are. Communication is a must to exchange information between key representatives in the event network. Ensuring that the communication between event network members works is an essential role of an event manager. (Greco & Mallen 2017, 108–112.) Related to communication issues are problems in facilitating cooperation for coordinating operational plans, since they are both often caused by clashing personalities. According to Greco and Mallen (2017, 111) cooperation problems are caused by "variety of personalities involved in the operational network" and coordination problems stem from "the skills, abilities and knowledge of the operational network members that are required to develop component plans and then incorporate them into the multiple component operational plans."

In this subchapter the author has discussed the importance of written operational plans for each event component. The next subchapter will focus on putting the written operational plans into practice and monitoring and managing the event.

2.6 Event Implementation, Monitoring and Management

In the previous subchapter the author discussed operational planning and written operational plans. This subchapter will focus on the event implementation, monitoring and management, where the event manager puts the operational plans into practice and facilitates the event preparations and activities in the event itself (Adams 2017b, 87).

Policies, regulations, and plans build the foundation for successful daily decision making. For on-site production, timeline and production schedule are also needed to ensure the goal is reached safely. The timeline lists all tasks and duties associated with the event project. The timeline is divided into five phases of the event process: research, design, planning, coordination, and evaluation. (Goldblatt 2011, 264.) One example of a project

management tool used to create the timeline is Gantt chart. Gantt chart is a project management tool named after its creator Henry Gantt. The Gantt chart breaks down the entire event tasks in to one document, in which the individual tasks are set to a timeframe. (Pielichaty & al. 2017, 83.) An example of a Gantt chart is portrayed in figure 8.

Figure 8. Gantt chart example for event planning (Kashyap 2019)

In the coordination phase of the timeline the event manager coordinates the logistics of the event. Production schedule is a more precise document compiling of tasks taking place in the coordination phase of the timeline. The production schedule lists on-site production tasks minute by minute, so that the event manager always knows what is going on. (Goldblatt 2011, 265.) For example, at Tracon's evening party this would consist of checking the venue, decorating, setting up the audiovisual equipment, soundchecks with the artists, building ticket sales and so forth (appendix 1).

Benefits of both the timeline and production schedule include:
- A production schedule requires the Event Leader to schedule every element involved in an event systematically and logically
- It provides a unique comprehensive communications tool for the use of other team members.

- It enables external stakeholders such as police, fire, security, and medical personnel to stay informed regarding event operations.
- It can be easily distributed to internal and external stakeholders via e-mail for quick updates
- It provides an accurate historical accounting of the entire event.

(Goldblatt 2011, 266.)

After the production schedule has been drafted, it needs to be implemented. Drafts of the production schedule must be sent to stakeholders, who each check their area of responsibility for errors in timing. After errors in the production schedule have been corrected, a final document is sent to each stakeholder. On site, there should be several people with a copy of the production schedule, and their task is to monitor the implementation of the production schedule. If any variances from the production schedule appear, they must take notes, so that when planning future events, adequate time can be budgeted. They must also let everyone know that there have been changes to the production schedule, so that people responsible of their own area can adapt to the changing situation. (Goldblatt 271.)

After the event day has been wrapped and the event plan has been carried out, it is time to take a step back and evaluate our success. Did the organization reach its goals and objectives? Were the financial goals met? What went wrong and what could be done in the future to prevent mistakes from happening again? In the next subchapter the author will discuss event evaluation and renewal.

2.7   Event evaluation and Renewal

The event plan has been implemented, and the event is over. But the event manager's duty is not over yet. The event must be evaluated before renewing can be considered. In this subchapter the author will focus on event evaluation and renewal.

The preparation for the event evaluation and renewal phase already begins in the development phase and it continues throughout the event planning process (Forrester & Adams 2017, 116). There are two main tools available for the event evaluator: quantitative and qualitative methods, which the author discussed briefly in chapter 2.3. In addition, the event manager might want to conduct formative and summative evaluation. Formative evaluation takes place during the event and is often process-oriented. Formative evaluation allows the event manager to solve problems and act as the event unfolds therefore aiding to prevent problems from emerging. Summative evaluation takes place after the event and seeks to answer whether the event should be renewed. (Forrester & Adams 2017, 117.)

Evaluation is necessary for five key purposes: to define accountability, to asses goals and objectives, to ascertain outcomes and impact, to identify keys to success and failure, and to improve and set a future course of action (Forrester & Adams 2017, 118). Forrester and Adams (2017, 118–119) recognize, that most evaluation questions fall under five categories according to the issues they address, which are: questions about the need for the event (needs assessment), questions about event conceptualization or design (evaluating program/event theory), questions about event operations, implementation and service delivery (evaluating event processes), questions about the outcomes and impact of the event (impact evaluation), and questions about event cost and cost effectiveness (evaluating efficiency).

2.8 Own Framework

Until now, the author has discussed different phases of event planning and introduced two event planning models by Cunningham and MacLean (2017, 29), and Goldblatt (2011, 41–42). The author also briefly discussed event design and introduced the Event Canvas (Frissen & al. 2016, 24).

The author would like to propose a new event planning model consisting of six phases, which the author will be using to plan the event accustomed with this thesis (figure 9).
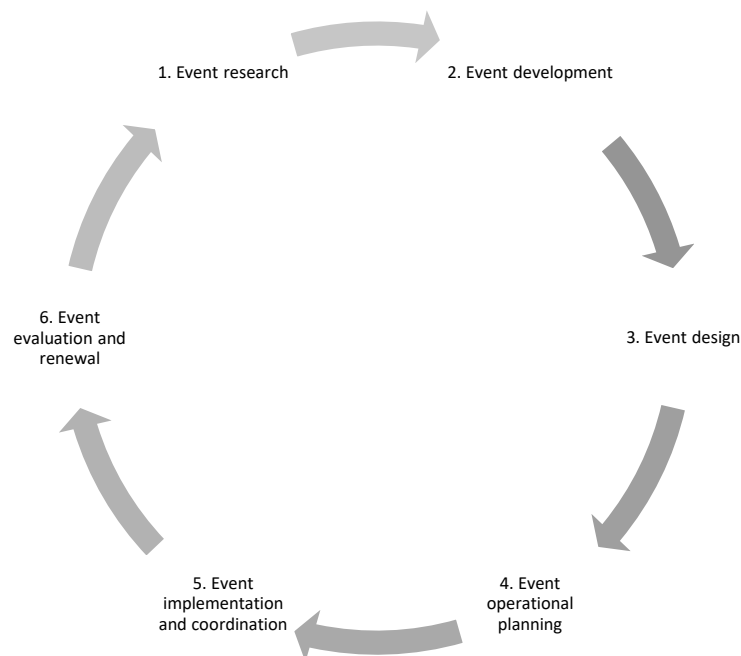
Figure 9. Six phase event planning model (Nygård, 2020)

This event planning model combines the models proposed by Cunningham and MacLean (2017, 29), and by Goldblatt (2011, 41–42) into a singular figure. Goldblatt's model was lacking event development phase and Cunningham and Maclean's model did not include research or event design as individual phases, which made it a little difficult to follow and thus important aspects could easily be forgotten by following the model either of the two models.

The author thinks that both introduced models have their own pros and cons, and by combining the two the author can address every aspect necessary and relevant to achieve the goals and objectives set by the organization. The author took event development, event operational planning, event coordination and implementation, and event evaluation and renewal from Cunningham and MacLean's (2017, 29) model and added event research and event design from Goldblatt's (2011, 42) model. In the event design phase, the author included the Event Canvas invented by Roel Frissen, Ruud Janssen and Dennis Luijer in 2016. The new event planning model is visual and easily understood with a single look. The phases are in a reasonable chronological order that can be followed from start to finish. The six phases in the new event planning model can also be branched out into milestones to create a checklist (figure 10).

1. Event research ☐
    a. Identifying the participants ☐
    b. SWOT analysis ☐
2. Event development ☐
    a. Defining the purpose ☐
    b. Developing event structures and policies ☐
3. Event design ☐
    a. The Event Canvas ☐
        i. Change ☐
        ii. Frame ☐
        iii. Design ☐
4. Event operational planning ☐
    a. Written operational plans for each activity ☐
    b. Contingency plans ☐
5. Event implementation and coordination ☐
    a. Timeline ☐
    b. Production schedule ☐
6. Event evaluation and renewal ☐
    a. Evaluation using qualitative or quantitative methods ☐
    b. Setting future course of action ☐

Figure 10. Event planning model checklist (Nygård, 2020)

The model is not absolute and is subject for changes. Depending on the nature of the event some milestones maybe removed or added. For example, more research may be required to be granted financial aid from the organization or stakeholders e.g. bank, investors, and business partners. This model can still be followed to give general direction and guidance through the event planning process.

3   Planning the Evening Party

Once a year in September a pop culture event called Tracon takes place in Tampere, Finland. Tracon is organized by Tracon ry, which is a registered non-profit organization based in Tampere. Tracon ry's purpose is to promote, develop and popularise role-playing-, card game-, board game-, miniature game-, animation-, film-, and cartoon hobbies, as well as related subcultures. The organizations core activity is organizing role-playing- and anime event Tracon and tabletop role-playing game event Tracon Hitpoint. Tracon ry also trains their activists in topics related to event organizing and grants general and project aids.

Tracon's main event's purpose is to provide a meeting place for like-minded people interested in role-playing-, card game-, board game-, miniature game-, animation-, film-, and cartoon hobbies, as well as related subcultures and spend a fun weekend overall.

Tracon's evening party is arranged each year Saturday night of the event weekend, which takes place 4.-6.9.2020 this year. Tracon's evening party is arranged by the same organization as the main event and it shares the same values with the main event. The evening party's purpose is to act as a meeting place for like-minded people and have fun.

Just like the main event, the evening party does not seek monetary gain. Tickets are only sold to cover some of the costs. The evening party is not available for everyone, as it is restricted for only adults over 18-years-of-age and thus, it would be unreasonable to include the evening party's costs in the weekend ticket, which can be bought by people who cannot attend the evening party even if they want to. The evening party does not necessary need to cut even, as the main event brings in enough cashflow, and the organization sees the evening party as a part of the same event complex.

The thesis project is to create an event plan that can be used in practice to arrange the evening party this autumn and to also leave behind guidelines for future evening party managers.

3.1   Background of the Thesis Process

The thesis project began in October 2019 when the author came up with the idea of writing a thesis about evening party planning for the organization they are currently volunteering for. In the future, when the current evening party manager retires from their duties, it is necessary to leave behind a guide, that can be followed to replicate the event. The author

started as the evening party manager in October 2017 and has arranged evening parties in 2018 and 2019. There was not much information stored at the time and the author had to start pretty much from scratch. To relieve stress and help future organizers the author has decided to leave behind well-written notes on how they plan their events. The author has thought of retiring from their position to focus on other interests but has not made any decisions to step down just yet.

The author started working on the topic and narrowing done the scope and came up with the idea of writing a handbook for future evening party managers to use. The thesis outline was written over the course of November and December and in the early January 2020, once the thesis outline was approved, the author was assigned with the thesis supervisor. In the first meeting the two discussed the author's goals and preliminary schedule for the thesis. This schedule is visualized in the Gantt Chart below (figure 11).

Week number	33 (2019)	34 (2019)	35 (2019)	->	2 (2020)	3 (2020)	4 (2020)	5 (2020)	6 (2020)	7 (2020)	8 (2020)	9 (2020)	10 (2020)	11 (2020)	12 (2020)
Topic formulating	X														
Subject Plan		X													
Thesis Outline			X	X	X										
Supervisor Meetings							X								
Table of Contents							X								
First Few Pages								X							
Theoretical Framework									X	X	X	X			
The Handbook												X	X		
Discussion														X	
Introduction														X	
Presenting															X
Publishing															X

Figure 11. Planned thesis process Gantt chart (Nygård 2020)

The author was aiming for a grade of three or four and wanted to finish the thesis project by the end of March. To make the writing process easier, the thesis supervisor suggested to make a timeline and keep making notes on the thesis writing process to make writing the discussion part easier. Thesis writing started off with small milestones such as writing the table of contents and writing the first few pages to create the foundation for future writing. The next big milestones were writing the theoretical framework, finishing the thesis product, writing the discussion chapters three and four, and finally the introduction and abstract.

First the author wrote the theoretical framework, which was by far the most time-consuming thing. It took the author up to nine weeks to finish. The thing the author was struggling the most with was structuring the thesis. At the beginning the author structured the thesis around one event planning model, which made it difficult to have critical discussion and

include several references. At the end of March, the author made a breakthrough and re-structured the entire theoretical framework. Since then the writing proceeded a lot smoother.

The project plan was rather easy to finish. The author followed the event planning model by Nygård (2020) from the top to bottom and check-marked each section as they went (figure 12). Some parts like the event development and event design did not translate very well into the project plan due to the nature of the event in question, but the rest of the top-ics were covered well with the information the author had available at the time.

1. Event research ☑
    a. Identifying the participants ☑
    b. SWOT analysis ☑
2. Event development ☑
    a. Defining the purpose ☑
    b. Developing event structures and policies ☑
3. Event design ☑
    a. The Event Canvas ☑
        i. Change ☑
        ii. Frame ☑
        iii. Design ☑
4. Event operational planning ☑
    a. Written operational plans for each activity ☑
    b. Contingency plans ☑
5. Event implementation and coordination ☑
    a. Timeline ☑
    b. Production schedule ☑
6. Event evaluation and renewal ☑
    a. Evaluation using qualitative or quantitative methods ☑
    b. Setting future course of action ☑

Figure 12. Finished event planning model checklist (Nygård 2020)

The discussion part of the thesis did not take long to write because the author had taken notes throughout the thesis writing process like the thesis supervisor had originally sug-gested. The author finished the discussion, introduction and abstract over the course of three weeks. During week 20 the author received the permission to sign up for the thesis presentation if they could finish the thesis and the presentation by the end of week 21. The last week was hectic and included a lot of correcting errors, revising, and writing, but the thesis was finished in due time.

Week number	October (34 (2019)	35 (2019)	->	2 (2020)	3 (2020)	4 (2020)	5 (2020)	6 (2020)	7 (2020)	7-16 (2020)	16-19 (2020)	19-21 (2020)	22 (2020)	23 (2020)
Topic formulating	███													
Subject Plan		███												
Thesis Outline			███											
Supervisor Meetings							███							
Table of Contents							███							
First Few Pages								███						
Theoretical Framework									███	███				
The Project Plan											███			
Discussion												███		
Introduction												███		
Presenting													███	
Publishing														███

Figure 13. Actual thesis process Gantt chart (Nygård 2020)

Eventually the thesis project came to finish. The process ended up taking the author 11 weeks more than originally intended. Figure 13 presents the actual timeline of the thesis writing process. The delayed and changed part is highlighted with yellow colour.

3.2 Risks and Limitations

The budget and venue plan have already been approved by the organization so they will not be an issue with the event plan. The biggest limitations and risks for the event this year will be external forces. The COVID-19 virus has spread all over the world and Finland is in a state of emergency. There are currently restrictions taking place that affect the gatherings of people. For now, public events of over 500 people are forbidden until the end of July 2020. There is currently no information available whether public events will be allowed in autumn. The situation will be reviewed by the government again in early June and only after then the organization will know if the event can take place.

To further investigate the risks within this project plan and event, the author made a SWOT analysis to map out the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. The main threats the author found when doing the SWOT analysis for the event were public public events of over 500 people being cancelled due to COVID-19, performers and volunteers getting sick and people spreading the virus. The most severe of the three is COVID-19 shutting down all public events of over 500 people, which would cause the organization's events to get cancelled as well.

The event venue can be prepared with enough hand-sanitizers and we can reduce the risks of people getting sick by telling people not to come if they have felt sick or have had symptoms as of late, but it does not prevent from people carrying the virus from coming as they might not have symptoms but still carry the virus. It is difficult to keep everyone safe, which is alarming. Even if all the concerns were addressed, people might still be too afraid to attend.

The performers and volunteers can also get sick even if there was not a pandemic in the first place. The organization has prepared for organizers being absent by having multiple people receive the same emails, and by sharing information on the on-going event preparations on the event wiki. The organization has a reserve of extra volunteers, so even if some got sick, they have people to step in. The performers are very enthusiastic, and if some were to get sick, the organization would likely be able to cover the empty space in the schedule by having some of them extend their sets or by asking them do back-to-back sets with one-another. There are also some DJs that were not elected to be a part of the program, so those DJs can be contacted before the event if the information of the cancellations comes in time.

If the whole event had to be cancelled, then there is a possibility to stream the evening party online on streaming platforms like YouTube, Twitch or Facebook. There are some third parties like Neonya!! Party who might be able to help with the coordination of the event. They have their own streaming equipment and overlay, so Tracon would not have to make investments in renting or purchasing anymore streaming technology or software. A monetary investment might however have to be made to get them on-board.

Whether or not other organizations are going to be involved in organizing the online event, a new project plan and rescheduling and discussing with the performers about their availability is required. As soon as the news about the event getting cancelled is released, the event manager should be in contact with the performers to clarify the situation and ask them if they would be interested in participating in an online event. The event manager should also contact the third-party organization Neonya!! Party right away to make sure they do not book anything else on the same date. If they are not available for some reason, the event manager must create new plans and start planning from scratch. New project plan and performer line-up should be finished by the end of June, to reserve enough time for renting equipment and getting word out about the online event.

3.3   Methodology

The thesis uses literature review as the foundation to develop a new event planning model and to create an event plan for the commissioning party. The literature review is based on academic books and online articles. The author tried to use only relevant data from recent and recognized publications. Literature review was chosen as a method because it serves multiple purposes.

The purpose of a literature review is to:

- "Provide foundation of knowledge on topic
- Identify areas of prior scholarship to prevent duplication and give credit to other researchers
- Identify inconstancies: gaps in research, conflicts in previous studies, open questions left from other research
- Identify need for additional research (justifying your research)
- Identify the relationship of works in context of its contribution to the topic and to other works
- Place your own research within the context of existing literature making a case for why further study is needed."

(USC Upstate Library 2020.)

In the creation of thesis project, the author used mainly data from a recent feedback survey that used both quantitative and qualitative methods. The feedback survey was published on Google Docs, and it was shared on the event's social media after the previous event. This method was chosen, because the questionnaire is easy to implement and it can reach the scattered sample group. The data can easily be analysed in Google Docs and by using Microsoft Excel if necessary.

The feedback survey sought to define the demographics of the average participant, the level of satisfaction and areas of improvement. The quantitative questions in the feedback survey were multiple choice questions to make answering fast and simple, to increase the number of answers and sample size. At the end of the questionnaire there were also quantitative questions that gave the participants the option to describe and further explain their decisions and thoughts. There were a total number 55 answers to the survey out of the nearly 800 participants in the event. This means that the sample size was only a fraction of the whole audience. In the future some incentives could be added to increase the number of answers in the feedback survey. Despite the small sample size, the results from the questionnaire were used find information about the flaws in the previous events and to define the average participant.

In addition to the feedback survey, the thesis project uses the findings from the literature review, knowledge and information gained from free form discussions over the years with the people in the event organization and existing information available on the organizer intranet and information that is gathered from stakeholders. Some of the information is confidential and is only shared with the commissioning party.

3.4 Project Evaluation

There was not much to do in the event development phase as the event structures and policies were already set by the organization. Also, the event design phase did not deem

to be as useful as the author originally thought it would be. There were not that many interesting stakeholder groups involved in the evening party. This highly due to the nature and purpose of the event, which also affects strongly what is necessary to include in the event plan.

There are moving parts in the event plan that cannot be verified just yet. For example, lightning and sound systems are still something that need to be thought through together with the event venue. The author would have preferred to visit the event venue first-hand during the spring, but because of the COVID-19 situation the venue was closed, and the employees were suspended. Thus, the venue plan with all the furniture are pretty much just work of the imagination. It would help to see the venue with your own eyes and discuss face to face with the venue managers about the opportunities and possibilities involved with the event venue.

Participant touchpoints could be observed and considered more thoroughly. The event manager should think what the participants first see when they come to the event venue and how they interact with the event environment until the point they leave. More ways for the participants to engage in the evening party would be great to change their behaviour and create gains. The event manager could hang a blank canvas on the wall and let the participants to write their thoughts and regards or express themselves by drawing whatever they feel like. The writings and drawings on the canvas could be used as a way to collect information, that might otherwise not be collected through the feedback surveys as people decide either not to reply or forget how the event made them feel at the time.

One thing that could combat loneliness and bring people together is to organize tabletop gaming sessions in the more peaceful area, which is reserved for would have both advance and walk-in registration. This would create gains for those more reserved people who find it difficult to approach new people as they might be able to make new friends or at least spend some time with other people with similar interests.

The interior design and decorations should be designed and carefully considered in advance. It would be good for the organization to be visible inside with banderols, posters, and flags to make it feel like more the organization's own thing and not just like any other evening at a night club. The flags should be outside the event venue to show the way inside and greet the participants welcome and assure them they are in the right place. Banderols on DJ-tables would be visible on photos and thus work as a way of social media marketing later.

All in all, the author was able to write a fully-fledged event plan for the commissioning party. The author asked the main organizers of Tracon for their feedback on the event plan. Before even looking at the thesis, they said they could tell it would be useful. They suggested mentioning the published thesis on a forum for all volunteering event managers working with conventions in Finland. In addition, they suggested that the author presents their thesis in the next seminar for volunteering event managers in 2021.

4   Discussion

In the thesis the author covered event planning process principles and phases. Based on the literary review the author created their own event planning model, which they then used to build the thesis product. The final thesis product is event plan that can be used in practice to arrange the evening party this autumn and to also leave behind comprehensible guide for future evening party managers. The thesis product is based on the literature review and the new event planning model by Nygård (2020), information gained from the feedback survey in 2019, and confidential information about budget and venue costs.

4.1   The Thesis Process Management

The thesis process was an uphill battle. There were many setbacks but also many moments where the author overcame the obstacles. The author was supposed to start the thesis process already in late 2018 or early 2019 but ended up struggling with motivation and mental health issues. Writing the thesis got laid back, and the author started working full-time. In October 2019, the author finally managed to start over and began sketching the thesis plan.

Everything started out well until the author started falling off the track. The author could not meet the deadlines and had to postpone them. This is where the thesis supervisor played a huge role. She encouraged the author and gave them tips to continue writing. Even though the author was struggling to meet the milestones, the author felt as though the supervisor was supporting and watching over them instead of judging. The author wanted to make their supervisor and themselves proud, so they kept working on the thesis although the pace was slower than anticipated. Eventually the thesis came to its conclusion.

If the author were to change anything, they would probably do more background research before starting to write the theoretical framework and be more precise and decisive with the scope of the study and the table of contents. More milestones along the way would also have helped keeping track of the process and might have help keeping up with the pace. Because of the setbacks, the author's personal goals kept swinging around from wanting to get a good grade to wishing the whole thesis were just over with. Still, the author did not want to submit half-assed thesis and did their best to finish the thesis in a fashion they could be content with.

4.2   Learning Outcomes

The biggest learning outcome for the author was project management and time management skills. During the thesis process the author struggled the most with pacing the thesis. Without strict milestones along the way, the thesis kept being delayed. At the beginning the author created Gantt chart timelines to track the process, but they were not precise enough. With too big chunks of tasks the workload felt never ending and as though it was not progressing or getting any lighter.

The author also learned about practical tools. The author learned how to utilize event planning models to create written event plans. The author learned how to use The Event Canvas to consider the human aspect of the events, and to design the event in a way it takes into consideration human behaviour, expectations, and gains. The author had used the Event Canvas in the past during a course, but now they got to experience it first-hand. By using the tool and reviewing the event plan for future improvements the author came up with good ideas that could be implemented in future events.

The author also learned about themselves. They learned what it takes for them to stay focused on the task at hand. They learned how to pace the writing by taking breaks, exercising, and doing relaxation practices.

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Appendices

Appendix 1. Event plan for Tracon's evening party

This is an event plan for Tracon's evening party arranged in September 2020. This plan is written to help present and future volunteering evening party managers to create a successful event. By following and repeating the steps in the event planning model (below) and by using the following event plan as an example, the event can be replicated in the future. However, goals and objectives should be adjusted each year accordingly. This year the objectives were to increase customer satisfaction and increasing the number of participants.

Event planning model checklist (Nygård 2020)

1. Event research ☐
   a. Identifying the participants ☐
   b. SWOT analysis ☐
2. Event development ☐
   a. Defining the purpose ☐
   b. Developing event structures and policies ☐
3. Event design ☐
   a. The Event Canvas ☐
      i. Change ☐
      ii. Frame ☐
      iii. Design ☐
4. Event operational planning ☐
   a. Written operational plans for each activity ☐
   b. Contingency plans ☐
5. Event implementation and coordination ☐
   a. Timeline ☐
   b. Production schedule ☐
6. Event evaluation and renewal ☐
   a. Evaluation using qualitative or quantitative methods ☐
   b. Setting future course of action ☐

Identifying the participants (Feedback survey, Tracon's Evening Party 2019)

Not showing the graphs or detailed information to protect information security. The graphs and results from the feedback survey are property of the commissioning party. There were only 55 answers in the feedback survey out of the 800 participants in last year's evening party. Because the sample size is small, there is room for a lot of errors. In the future, Tracon should seek to increase the sample size by giving incentives to answer the feedback

survey. For example, Tracon could do a raffle between participants of the feedback survey to give out free entry to the evening party.

The average participant of the evening party:

- Is a 20-26-year-old female (46,3%) or male (37%).
- Has been interested in the conventions' topics for 4 or more years (92,6%).
- Is interested in anime, manga, cosplay, Asian pop/rock music, roleplaying games, and other video games.
- Has participated in the Tracon's evening party two or more times (79,7%).
- Has participated in any pop-culture event's evening party two or more times (94,4%).

The average participant should be taken into consideration when thinking about event design and event operational planning. It is important to consider how you can create gains especially to this stakeholder group, and how you can create change in their behaviour. What kind of program should be offered to cater to the stakeholders' needs?

SWOT analysis

SWOT analysis is a planning tool, that does not only help the event planner to scan the event environment for factors that could affect event planning, but it also helps to identify threats that should be addressed. After identifying the threats, the event planner can then prepare precautions and solutions, which can help contain reduce or eliminate the said threats. (Goldblatt 2011, 50.) Risks and threats identified in this SWOT analysis are addressed in the contingency plans later in this event plan.

SWOT analysis of Tracon's evening party 2020

Known S = strengths		Known W = weaknesses	
1. Strong funding 2. Available volunteers 3. Strong line-up of per-formers 4. New event venue with more space 5. Tracon has a good pub-lic image	Internal Internal Internal Internal External	1. Although having rising popularity, last year had problems with the previous event venue, which has harmed the events image	External
Potential O = opportunities		Potential T = threats	
1.Tracon might be the only big pop-culture event after winter, that is not can-celled – Rising interest in participating 2. Capacity has been filled last year and the popular-ity has been rising	External External	1. Public events of over 500 people getting cancelled (COVID-19) 2. Volunteers or performers getting sick (COVID-19) 3. People spreading the vi-rus (COVID-19) 4. Even if public events are allowed guests can be too afraid to show up (COVID-19)	External External External External

Research on event venues and costs (fixed and variable costs):

The budget is confidential information and will be given to the commissioner.

The purpose of Tracon's evening party

Tracon is organized by Tracon ry, which is a registered non-profit organization based in Tampere. Tracon ry's purpose is to promote, develop and popularise role-playing-, card game-, board game-, miniature game-, animation-, film-, and cartoon hobbies, as well as related subcultures. The organizations core activity is organizing role-playing- and anime

event Tracon and tabletop role-playing game event Tracon Hitpoint. Tracon ry also trains their activists in topics related to event organizing and grants general and project aids.

Tracon's main event's purpose is to provide a meeting place for like-minded people interested in role-playing-, card game-, board game-, miniature game-, animation-, film-, and cartoon hobbies, as well as related subcultures and spend a fun weekend overall.

Tracon's evening party is arranged each year Saturday night of the event weekend, which takes place 4.-6.9.2020 this year. Tracon's evening party is arranged by the same organization as the main event and it shares the same values with the main event. The evening party's purpose is to act as a meeting place for like-minded people and have fun.

Just like the main event, the evening party does not seek monetary gain. Tickets are only sold to cover some of the costs. The evening party is not available for everyone, as it is restricted only for adults over 18-years-of-age. Thus, it would be unreasonable to include the evening party's full costs in the main event's ticket, which can be bought by people who cannot attend the evening party. Yet, the evening party does not necessary need to cut even, as the main event brings in enough cashflow, and the organization sees the evening party as a part of the same event complex.

Event structures

On top of the organization's structure is Tracon ry's government, which at the start of each event year gives out the mandate to start building a new convention committee. First one or more main organizers are appointed, who then begin collecting names of interested volunteers. The main organizers choose team leaders, who are responsible of an area in the event and event managers working under their area of responsibility. Team leaders' area of responsibility are e.g. the event venue, the event program, and the communication. Currently, there are nine team leaders and two main organizers who together form the executive committee. The executive committee makes larger decisions and draws broader lines for the event. Under each team leader there are event managers, who are all responsible for a smaller part of the event. The evening party manager is one of these roles, and it falls under the event program team. Event managers can also have their own subordinates such as journeymen or volunteers, who are responsible for performing a simple task like selling tickets to the evening party or handling jackets in the cloak room.

Organizational structure within the evening party
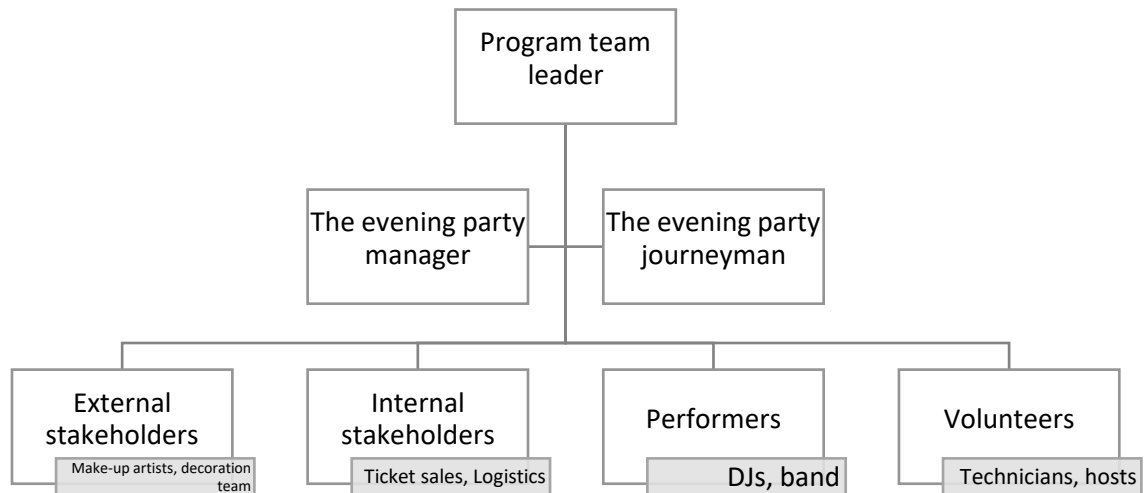
This year, the evening party manager has made some changes to the governing and event structures related to the evening party. Previously the evening party manager has not got any journeymen, but they have had a few volunteers working for them instead. This year, the evening party manager decided to get themselves a journeyman to learn about the role, and tasks of the evening party manager. This decision was made as a contingency plan, because of the risk that the current evening party manager would get sick or could not attend the event for some other reason. This guarantees that the planning process would continue as usual even in the case of the absence of the event manager as information is shared between the journeyman and the event manager.

There are only a few volunteers working directly for the evening party manager, and thus there has not been a demand to make a different volunteer program for them. Instead, the same volunteer program that Tracon has, applies to the evening party as well. The chosen volunteers are given instructions on how to perform their tasks and are supervised by shift leaders and event managers. Volunteers are given perks for investing their time and skills to help with the event.

Event design

What is event design and why do we do this? According to event planning and event design company based in the UK, Events by Knight (2020), event design is about "creating a vision and then designing all the visual details to transform a venue into a dream. Event planning provides the logistical framework, while event design brings a creative vision to life."

When planning events, it is easy to forget about the human aspect of events and get lost in making operational plans. Event design brings the stakeholders such as event participants into the core of event planning. Event design makes the event planner think e.g. about the lightning, decorations, and customer touchpoints in a way that they support the overall guest experience and creating gains and satisfaction.

To make event design process easier tools such as The Event Canvas are available for the event managers. The Event Canvas serves three main purposes. First, it is a visual tool, which ensures that the whole event design process is easy to share. The event model canvas follows a visual process by cutting the design process into different modules, thus helping the event designer to ask the right questions at the right time and exposing the insights needed to make conscious choices. Secondly, it helps to identify and map the needs, desires, and expectations of the participants, which are often neglected and forgotten, when the event planners are focusing on the logistics and implementation of the event. Thirdly, it is a unifying tool, which keeps the team focused, together and on track with every aspect necessary to design an event. (Frissen, Janssen & Luijer 2016, 24.)

Below you can find the filled Event Canvas for Tracon's evening party in 2020 and a blank canvas to use in the future event planning. Use the support questions to start filling out The Event Canvas from the right by filling out the pains, entering behaviour and expectation blocks. You then move on to the left side and fill out gains, exiting behaviour and satisfaction. Next, you fill out the blocks in the middle starting from commitment, jobs to be done and cost. Then you fill out their counterparts: return, promise and return. Finally, you fill out the last two remaining blocks: experience journey and instructional design. You can use the filled canvas as an example while filling out the blocks in the canvas.

The Filled Event Canvas. Tracon 2020 – Stakeholder: Evening party visitor

#EventCanvas™

event name: Tracon's evening party 2020

designed for: Tracon's convention committee

stakeholder: Evening party visitor

designed by: Evening party manager

day 21 **month** 4 **year** 2020

version 1.0

pains
What are his / her around the country. What makes him/her feel bad?

Fears of rejection, being different from the general audience , not being able spend time with people with similar interests due to them being scattered

entering behaviour

The visitors want to spend time with others, but has hard time finding others with similar interests.

Might seem timid when uncomfortable and spending time with others who aren't interested in the same topics

Is knowledgeable about japanese-pop culture, music and all sorts of games.

Easily excited and enthusiastic about things that mean a lot to them

expectation
What are the fixed and variable costs of this event for this stakeholder?

The place being crowded and there being too long queues to get drinks. Not enough space for casual talking. Music is good and the atmosphere however is great.

commitment
What sacrifice is he/she expected to make to attend this event (time, compromise, opportunity cost)? What does he/she choose not to do, not to be at or not to go to because of this event?

Time away from the convention, that is still running when the evening party starts. Many also sacrifice rest

jobs to be done
What is this stakeholder trying to get done? A task they are trying to perform, problems they are trying to solve or the needs they are trying to satisfy?. What is on their to-do list?

The visitors come from very different backgrounds, so figuring out their jobs to be done is difficult

They are mostly trying to satisfy their social need by spending time with friends in a fun and entertaining setting

Gaining selfconfidence and entering social situations that might otherwise seem difficult for the event visitors.

instructional design
What skills and knowledge...

Providing opportunities for people to interact and chat with each other through venue design and leaving places open for peaceful and calm discussion.

The evening party visitors must first purchase the weekend or day pass to the main event before being eligible to join the evening party. The evening party ticket costs 5,00€, which includes cloak room fee. Drinks are bought from the bar.

cost
What are the fixed and variable costs of this event for this stakeholder?

experience journey
How points does he / she experience before, during and this experience after...

touchpoints in order: becoming aware of the party through social media or Tracon's website, following social media content, queuing and entering ticket sales, cloak room, extra services such as make-up artists and photoshoot wall, purchasing drinks, answering feedback survey

make-up and having special drinks

Raising expectations in marketing messages, focusing on customer service, providing extra surprised such as free

The event program and music are specially planned and catered to fit the tastes of the participating audience.

Learning that, Tracon tries to improve and develop their services and program to meet the participants expectations. Talking about the feedback and it's importance in the opening speech. Wishing people welcome.

promise
How does this event create value for this stakeholder? Why should this stakeholder contribute? How does the event get his/her jobs done? Does this promise alleviate pains and create gains?

This event creates a safe space for like minded people to spend time together without being judged by the general community

revenue
What are the financial revenue streams of the event for this stakeholder?

There are no revenue streams for evening party visitors.

return
What does he/she walk away with after the event? What would he/she expect in return for going to this event?

Had some good chats, saw friends and met new ones, danced, enjoyed the music

Replying and reacting to the customer feedback to show that the event organization cares and works to answer the visitors expectations

gains
What does he/she want, need, dream about? What benefits is he/she seeking?

Social gains; spending time with their friends and creating new friendships. Positive emotions; Feeling of belonging and joy. Having fun.

exiting behaviour

Has met their old friends and spent time with them. Possibly found new friends as well that they can talk to.

The event leaves them with energy, positive thoughts and memories, thinking back to which helps them manage until the next time they get to meet their friends.

Some might have learned about new artists, songs and music styles as well as found a passion to start producing and creating music themselves.

Maybe they have gained selfconfidence going to a place, that they thought that were off-limits for them. (Many are socially challenged introverts)

satisfaction
What are the financial revenue streams of the event for this stakeholder?

They have had fun and they think back to the time, when they were dancing and singing to their hearts content with their friends without worry

Crowding has been taken into consideration and improved, also those who seek more peaceful evening have been thought of. Significant improvement in terms of organizing and service. More likely to suggest to friends in the future.

Blank Event Canvas

Free to use for non-commercial purposes. Use the example questions to address each section.

#EventCanvas ™

event name:

designed for:

stakeholder:

designed by:

day   month   year

version

pains
What are his / her fears, frustrations, obstacles?
What makes him/her feel bad?

entering behaviour
Before this event:
How would you describe his/her current behaviour?
What are his/her present skills, knowledge level, attitude, connections?
What does he/she say and do?
What is his/her behaviour towards others?
How would you describe his/her appearance?
What is his/her attitude in public?

use an empathy map to assess current & desired behaviour.
www.eventcanvas.org/empathymap

expectation
Expectations are based on previous experiences, word-of-mouth, social media and marketing messages.

commitment
What sacrifice is he/she expected to make to attend this event (time, compromise, opportunity cost)?
What does he/she choose not to do, not to be at or not to go to because of this event?

jobs to be done
What is on their to-do list?
What needs do they are trying to satisfy?
A task they are trying to perform, problems they are trying to solve or
What is this stakeholder trying to get done?

cost
What are the fixed and variable costs of this event for this stakeholder?

experience journey
What chronological touch points does he / she experience before, during and after the event?
How does this experience shape the intended behaviour change?
Where can you over deliver against expectation? What are the make or break moments?

instructional design
What skills and knowledge need to be learned? When does the stakeholder need to get to know?
What attitude needs to be changed? How is that reflected in the schedule and programme?
What does he/she need to learn? How can that best be learned?

promise
How does this event create value for this stakeholder?
Why should this stakeholder contribute?
How does the event get his/her jobs done?
Does this promise alleviate pains and create gains?

return
What does he/she walk away with after the event?
What would he/she expect in return for going to this event?

exiting behaviour
As a result of this event:
What new skills, knowledge, attitude and connections has he/she acquired?
What is his/her attitude in public?
How would you describe his/her appearance?
What does he/she say and do differently?

gains
What does he/she want, need, dream about?
What benefits is he/she seeking?

revenue
What are the financial revenue streams of the event for this stakeholder?

satisfaction
How would he/she qualify this experience?
What does he/she tell others?

EVENT DESIGN collective

eventcanvas.org

Operational planning:

Venue plan:

There are only a few places in Tampere that can cater large enough audiences for the evening party's purpose. The two places we have found suitable for the party are Tullikamari and Olympia-Kortteli. Booking the event venue should be the first to think about, when the previous party has concluded in September. The venues are almost always rented out a year in advance. The most important things to consider when choosing the event venue is the purpose of the event and how well it can be delivered in the venue, the capacity of the venue, costs and feedback from the feedback surveys.

The last two evening parties have been organized in **Olympia-Kortteli**, which has a total capacity of 650 people. The event venue is very stylish and has a great atmosphere. The interior design plays a huge role in the guest experience. However, the number of participants has been increasing and the venue is getting tight. In 2019, the total number of participants reached all time high of 800. The feedback surveys show, that the participants want their venue to have more open space for talking and hanging out with their friends. The queue times have been extending and people are being cramped inside especially after the terrace is closed around midnight. In the light of recent feedback and rising interest, Olympia-Kortteli is not optimal for the event unless they do renovation or allow organizations to also book their restaurant during the evening time.
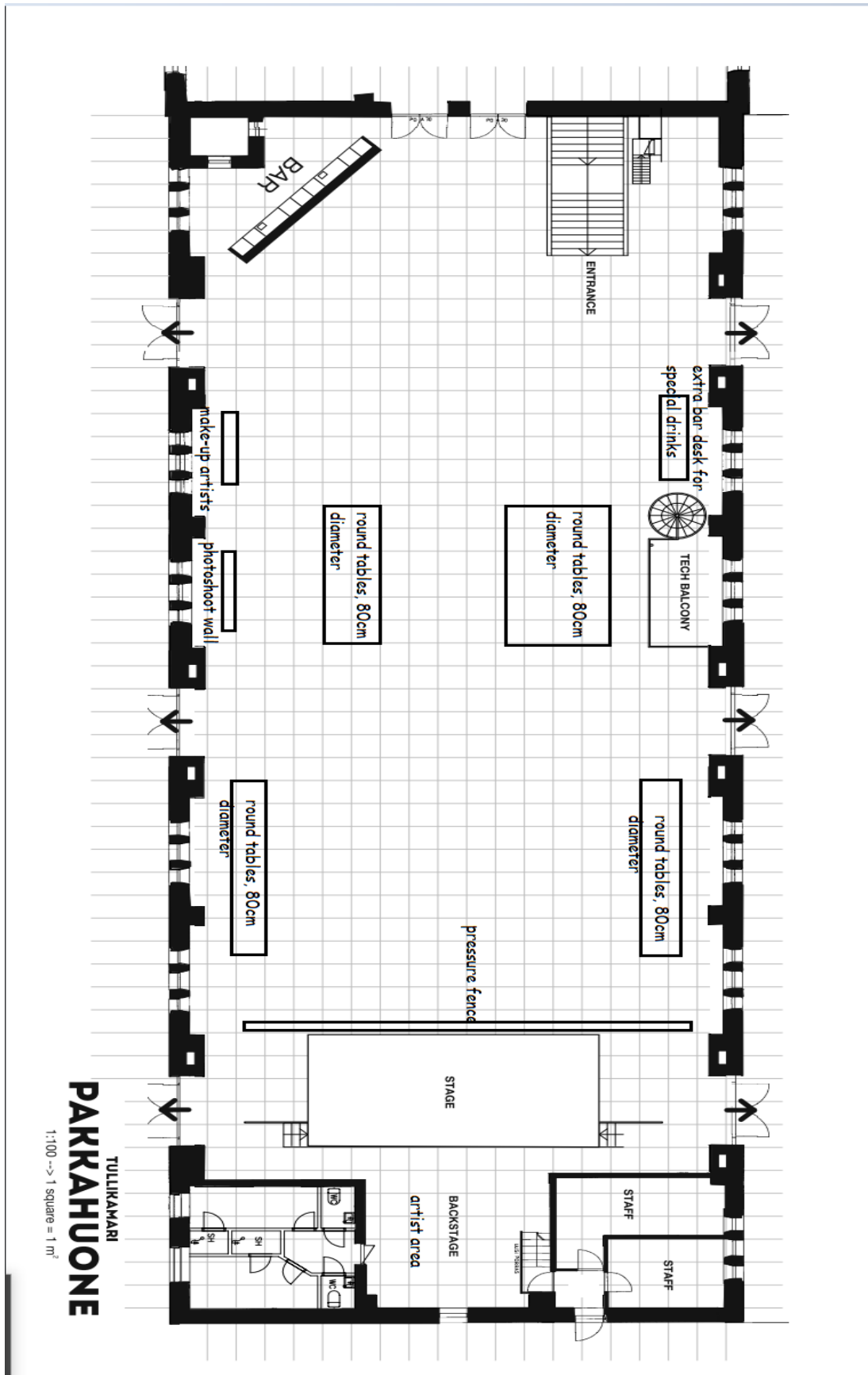
Tullikamari is a complex consisting of a night club (Klubi) and a large open concert venue (Pakkahuone). These two spaces are connected by a hallway and can be used simultaneously. The total capacity for both spaces is 1650 people. 1200 for Pakkahuone and 450 for Klubi. Both venue spaces are equipped with high-end sound and light equipment. Because of the extended capacity and two venue spaces, Tracon is renting Tullikamari for the evening party in 2020.

Klubi is the smaller of the two venue spaces. Klubi is a night club, which is usually open for all audiences. For private parties, the venue can be rented until midnight. For that reason, Tracon will be renting Klubi only until midnight, while Pakkahuone will be rented until 5 am. Free movement will be allowed for Tracon's evening party's participants in between the two event venues even after the private hours have concluded. The venue has sound and light equipment already installed, and we will be using those same settings. We do not have a band playing, so the stage will be covered by curtains, and DJs will be playing
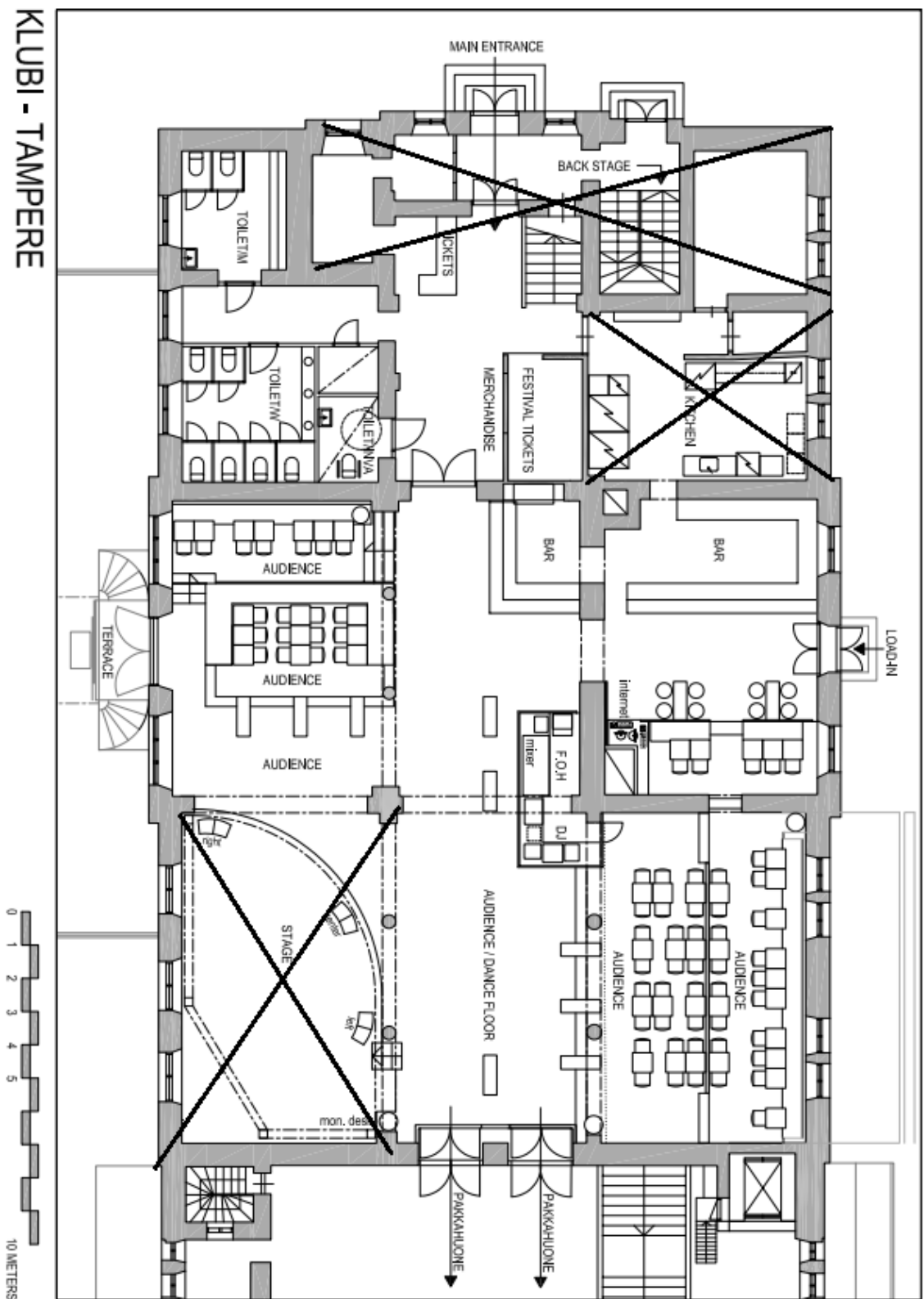
from the assigned DJ booth. Tables and chairs will be kept as they originally are. The plan for this venue is to function as a more peaceful and calm space for casual chatting, which participants have been requesting in the feedback surveys. DJs in Klubi will be playing peaceful music that does not disturb discussions like synthwave, lo-fi and CityPop. Because Tracon's private event in Klubi ends at midnight, we will not be using Klubi's main entrance, but instead people will be entering and using the cloakroom at Pakkahuone's entrance.

Pakkahuone is a large open event venue often used for concerts, fairs and other commercial events and meetings. The audio and lighting equipment will be installed according to the needs of the renting party. The function of this space in Tracon's evening party is to act as the main stage for performers. Most of the area will be reserved for dancing and listening to the music standing up, but to give the people a rest in-between dancing, some tables and chairs will be added on the sides. Space is also reserved for the make-up artists and a photoshoot wall. Extra bar desk will be added to the side to serve special drinks, so the main bar desk does not get too crowded. Pressure will be built in front of the main stage to produce safety for the performers and their audio equipment. Decoration team will install decorations on the stage, on the roof and on the walls.

Tullikamari – Pakkahuone event venue

TULLIKAMARI
PAKKAHUONE
1:100 --> 1 square = 1 m²

BAR

ENTRANCE

extra bar desk for special drinks

TECH BALCONY

make-up artists

photoshoot wall

round tables, 80cm diameter

round tables, 80cm diameter

round tables, 80cm diameter

round tables, 80cm diameter

pressure fence

STAGE

BACKSTAGE
artist area

STAFF

STAFF

WC

SH

SH

WC

Tullikamari – Klubi event venue.

Program plan:

The performers in Tracon's evening party are mostly volunteers, who are chosen through an open search. Each event year in February, the evening party manager releases a blog post on the main event's website, where they talk briefly about the evening party, its date and location. The evening party manager also gives instructions for applying to perform in the evening party. Until now, the application process has been an open form e-mail application, which has been working well.

Benefits given to the volunteer performers have been the same for two years. The performers have been satisfied with the perks given to them. The benefits include:

- A badge (justifies free entrance to the main event during the weekend and entrance to the volunteer only Green room)
- 1 Meal ticket (can be used to purchase a warm lunch at Tampere-Talo either on Saturday or Sunday)
- Travel expenses to the event are covered (Expenses will be paid in-exchange for receipts. Mileage allowance cannot be paid)
- Access to the sleeping bag accommodation in nearby schools
- Invitation to the staff after party

It is also possible for the evening party manager to invite some major DJs and bands to perform in the evening party, and they can be compensated monetarily, if they are not interested in volunteering for the event. This always requires separate discussion with the event organization, as it requires more budget.

When the application period is over, it is time to choose the performers for the evening party. For this purpose, it is good to think about dramatic structure used in storytelling. A good story or a program should have five acts: exposition, rising action, climax, falling action and dénouement. In other words, the program should have an opening performance that warms up the evening and sets up the atmosphere. After the opening act, the tension should be managed and kept rising until the climax that is the main performance. After the main performance, the tension should slowly start fading and the night should be drawing to close until the denouement, which is the final performance that ends the night.

The program should be catered for the target audience and include musical acts drawing inspiration from the events themes: Japanese pop-culture, anime, and games. There should also be an option for people to just hang out and enjoy each other's company. This is the first draft of the program schedule for Tracon's evening party 2020.

Pakkahuone - Stage 1

20:00 Doors
20:15 Opening speech
20:30-21:30 DJ Tabbels
21:30-22:30 DJ Kehveli ja VJ Rustoga
22:30-23:30 DJ Yukata
23:30-00:30 HotAnimeBoyz (Live Band)
00:30-01:30 DJ Neon Pantsu Punx
01:30-02:30 DJ THMZ
02:30-03:30 DJ Noizu
(03:00 Close bars, light mark)
03:30 Event ends
The first stage is reserved for dance music.

Klubi - Stage 2

20:00 Doors
20:00-00:00 Kyyhky ja DJ OSC HOOD
00:00-> Venue open for general audience as well, private event ends
*The second stage and venue space are reserved for chill music and conversations. Music
played peaceful music that does not disturb discussions like synthwave, lo-fi and CityPop.*

Ticket sales:

Every year in spring, the evening party manager holds a meeting with Tracon's ticket
sales team to discuss ticket sales policy. Ticket sales can be handled either by Tracon's
own ticket sales team or by an external stakeholder such as the event venue.

Tickets can be sold in advance online, from the venue entrance or both. All the options
have been attempted and we have figured the easiest way is to sell tickets from the venue
entrance. Selling tickets from the door makes it easier to maintain and observe the
amount of people inside the venue. Of course, it means, that especially when the doors
are opened, the queues might get long. The organization will prepare for this by preparing
multiple ticket sales stations at the door and by testing Internet connection and devices
beforehand and by opening doors before the first announced performance begins.

In the past tickets have only been sold to those who are either participants or volunteers of the main event held at Tampere-Talo. This is because of the limited capacity and because of the event's purpose. The evening party wants to be a safe and comfortable meeting place for people who share similar interests.

This year the ticket price is 5,00€ to cover some of the costs. This price also includes the cloakroom fee. The ticket price has not changed for the last three years, but it can be changed in the future for example if some major performers will be announced in the line-up.

This year we have also decided to stick with selling tickets from the entrance only for two main reasons. First, the event venue requires online sales to be managed through their ticket sales partners. Secondly, In the light of the recent events, it is also better to not do advance sales in case the event is cancelled due to restrictions COVID-19 has on public gatherings. If the event got cancelled and tickets were already sold, the ticket prices would have to be returned to the customers which would bring more costs and cause extra work to the organization.

Marketing:

Marketing activities include social media appearance and being visible on the main event's website as well as having a page reserved for the evening party on the event brochure. In June, the webpage for the evening party will be released with information about the event venue, ticket sales and program. At the same time, a Facebook event will be launched. In the Facebook event information about the evening party is shared and performers get to send their regards to the attending guests. The organization's social media channels will also be used to create awareness for the evening party when the performers are revealed and when the event is drawing near. Marketing activities should always be discussed with Tracon's communication and social media team.

Permits and notifications

Arranging a public event always requires submitting a **notice to the local police**. To do this, you must fill a notice in an electric form or by delivering it in person or by post to the police department of the locality where the event is organized at least five days before the event (In this case Central Finland Police Department). This costs a small service fee, which changes yearly and can be confirmed from the website of the Police of Finland. To

fill the notice, the police might require information about the safety measures (the emergency plan from the event venue will be just fine!) in addition to requiring information about the nature of the event and the number of the participants. The event venues will usually help you with the formalities. Sometimes the police might also require documentation that the liability insurance has been taken out. More information regarding to the permits and notifications is available on the official webpage of Finnish Police Department. (Police 2020)

In most cases, there will be music played within the event. If the event is arranged in a common event venue like a nightclub or a restaurant, they will most likely have their own agreements with **Teosto** in place (The Finnish copyright organization for composers, lyricists, arrangers and music publishers) and you are not required to buy **a license to play music** in your event. This should be confirmed with the event venue when making a rent agreement so the possible extra costs can be considered when planning the budget for the event.

Contingency plans:

There is always the possibility that things do not go as planned. It is good to think about possible scenarios that could happen in the event planning and during the on-site preparations that might be harmful for the event. By mapping the threats and preparing for the unwanted scenarios the event manager can sleep their nights without having to worry too much. Doing the SWOT analysis at the beginning of the event planning process will be the prerequisite for doing contingency plans.

This year the main threats we found when doing the SWOT analysis for the event were public public events of over 500 people being cancelled due to COVID-19, performers and volunteers getting sick and people spreading the virus. The most severe of the three is COVID-19 shutting down all public events of over 500 people, which would cause our events to get cancelled as well.

The event venue can be prepared with enough hand-sanitizers and we can reduce the risks of people getting sick by telling people not to come if they have felt sick or have had symptoms as of late, but it doesn't prevent from people carrying the virus from coming as they might not have symptoms but still carry the virus. It is difficult to keep everyone safe, which is alarming. People might also be too afraid to attend the event in September even if these concerns were addressed.

The performers and volunteers can also get sick even if there was not a pandemic in the first place. In the organization we have prepared for organizers being absent by having multiple people receive the same emails, and by sharing information on the on-going event preparations on the event wiki. We have a reserve of extra volunteers, so even if some got sick, we have people to step in. Our performers are very enthusiastic, and if some were to get sick, we would likely be able to cover the empty space in the schedule by having some of them extend their sets or by having them do back-to-back sets with one-another. There are also some DJs that were not elected to be a part of the program, so those DJs can be contacted before the event if the information of the cancellations comes in time.

If the whole event had to be cancelled, then there is a possibility to stream the evening party online on streaming platforms like YouTube, Twitch or Facebook. There are some parties like Neonya!! Party who might be able to help with the coordination of the event. Moving the evening party online would require a new project plan and rescheduling and discussing with the performers about their availability. As soon as the news about the event getting cancelled is released, the event manager should be in contact with the performers to clarify the situation and ask them if they would be interested in participating in an online event. The event manager should also contact the third-party organization Neonya!! Party right away to make sure they do not book anything else on the same date. If they are not available for some reason, the event manager must create new plans and start planning from scratch. New project plan and performer line-up should be finished by the end of June, to reserve enough time for renting equipment and for getting word out about the online event.

Event implementation and monitoring:

To monitor the event planning, the event manager has created a timeline in the form of **Gantt chart,** that lists the tasks that need to be done during the event year. Green color means that the task is already completed, yellow means that the task is a work-in-progress and red means that the tasks is yet to be started or done. The event year starts and ends in October after the event has been evaluated and renewed.

In addition to the Gantt chart, a **production schedule** is required for the on-site preparations. The production schedule lists on-site tasks minute by minute, so that the event manager and other stakeholders such as the event venue know what is going on all the time.

The production schedule is a more precise document than the timeline, which lists the tasks, time and duration, details about the task and who is responsible for implementing and monitoring said task. If there are any changes to the production schedule, the changes will be written to the notes area next to the task. Then if changes are made, the updated production schedule must be delivered to all relevant stakeholders. Keeping notes about changes is also important, so that the event organization can prepare better next time by preparing more time for example to inspect the venue before the preparations begin.

Below is the Gantt chart that shows the tasks that must be done during the event year 2020. The production schedule below is still just an estimate and is bound to change before July, when the production schedule should be verified.

Gantt chart for Tracon's evening party 2020

Gantt Chart for Tracon XV evening party

Task/Month	October 2019	November 2019	December 2019	January 2020	February 2020	March 2020	April 2020	May 2020	June 2020	July 2020	August 2020	September 2020	October 2020
Reviewing data from last year	X	X											
Budgeting	X	X											
Venue planning and booking	X	X	X										
Design	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		
Planning	X	X	X	X									
Program and performer recruiting					X	X							
Choosing the performers							X						
Program schedule								X					
Event website									X				
Event social media material									X				
Program leaflet material									X	X			
Production schedule										X			
Contacting the performers and checking schedule										X	X		
Notice of public event to Police											X		
Emergency plan to Police											X		
Previewing the production schedule with the venue											X		
Preparing the feedback survey											X		
Event day												X	
Publishing the feedback survey												X	
Reviewing data from the feedback survey													X

Production schedule for Tracon's evening party 2020

Task	Start Time	Stop Time	Details	Person(s) Responsible	Notes
Inspect Venue	15:00	15:15	Check for pre-existing damages, problems	Event coordinator	
Venue lighting and sound preparation	15:15	16:00	Preparing audiovisual technology	Event coordinator, Venue technical staff	
Decoration team checks-in	15:30	16:00	Arrivals and load-in	Event coordinator	
Decoration team installs	16:00	17:00	Set up, hang	Decoration team	
Sound checks with DJs	17:00	19:00	Audio and visual checks	Event coordinator, Venue technical staff, Stage Manager, DJs	
Ticket sales equipment arrive	18:30	19:00	Load-in	Event coordinator	
Ticket sales sets up	19:00	20:00	Set up cashiers, wi-fi and computers	Ticket sales team	
Sound checks and rehearsal with band	19:00	20:00	Final sound checks and rehearsal	Event coordinator, Venue technical staff, Stage Manager, Band	

Make-up artists check-in and install	19:00	20:00	Setting up their stand	Event coordinator, Make-up artists	
Bartenders in position to open doors	19:45	20:00	Bartenders ready to serve	Event coordinator	
Open doors	20:00	20:15	Guests enter and go through ticket sales	Event coordinator	
Entertainment	20:30	03:30	Band, DJs	Band, DJs, Stage Manager	
Close bars	03:00	03:00	Stop serving	Bartenders	
End of event	03:30	03:30	Lights up full	Event venue official, event coordinator	
Dismantle and load-out	03:30	04:30	All equipment dismantled and removed from venue	Event coordinator, DJs	
Reinspect Venue	04:30	05:00	Venue checked for any damages or losses caused by event	Event coordinator, Event venue official	

Event evaluation and Renewal

After the party has concluded, the feedback survey should be released. To make it easy compare the results to previous years, the same Google questionnaire will be used. The purpose of the feedback survey is to evaluate the success of the evening party and to find out what could be done better and how.

The questionnaire will be split to three parts. First, the questionnaire should ask the same demographic questions as before to find out if there have been any major changes in the participants demographics.

The second part will consist of quantitative multiple-choice questions, which ask the participants to rate different sectors of the event. Did the event venue work for the event's purpose? How was the interior design and decorations? How was the event program? What did you think about the special drinks and make-up services? Whose performance did you like?

If the second part of the questionnaire answered to the question how it was, the third part will seek to answer the question why it made you feel that way. The third part will consist of qualitative open-ended questions, which seek to find out why something worked and why something did not. The open-ended questions will also be open for discussion and the participants will be able to leave their own suggestions for improvement.

After a few weeks have passed, the results from the feedback survey should be reviewed, and shared with Tracon's organizers and the volunteer performers. If there are some comments or issues that recur in the feedback survey, those issues will be addressed in Tracon's blog. It is important to let the event participants know, that their concerns have been recognized, and that the organization does their best to improve and avoid making the same mistakes again.

Once the evaluation is done, the preparations for the next event begin. Unless there was a huge catastrophe, which would prevent the event from being organized again, the event will be making its return next autumn. The renewal will begin with the event manager using the feedback received from the survey to scout and ask for offers from suitable event venues. The event venue should be booked as the first thing after the previous event has been concluded, as the event venues are quickly booked out.

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