

BOOK REVIEW

Eventful cities

Greg Richards & Robert Palmer, editor (2010). Butterworth-Heinemann, Oxford, UK

Nowadays, events are a major factor that can crucially contribute to the rejuvenation and urban development of cities by producing several economic, social, cultural and environmental outcomes. In reality, events help cities become more dynamic and liveable places, while “places” are also generated and created by events. The aim of this book is to unravel this interrelationship between events and cities development by showing how events shape cities and how cities shape events. To that end, the book is consisted of 11 chapters that describe the process of conceiving, developing, staging, managing, marketing and assessing events. This process is illustrated by analysing and linking related theories and examples. Practical experience is drawn from several international cities as well as from experiences gained from several cities hosting the annual event of the European Capital of Culture. All chapters provide a mixture of a critical review of the related literature and a discussion of several examples. Moreover, all chapters have clear and focused aims as well as finish my summarising the major lessons learned. The book is reader-friendly which is demonstrated in its writing style and language.

The book starts with chapter one which discusses the reasons for which cities should be developing events. Justification and empirical evidence is provided from several perspectives (e.g. economic, societal and cultural) and from international statistics. Chapter 2 analyses the process of creating events. To achieve that the chapter defines events, it identifies the different categories of events as well as the criteria that cities should use for deciding which type of event they should celebrate. The aim of chapter 3 is to debate the importance of cities to construct a vision and a cultural programme. The chapter analyses how cultural programmes should be designed so that events contribute to the economic, social, cultural and environmental objectives of the city, while



it also demonstrates how cultural programmes help cities programme and allocate their resources and efforts to implement events.

Chapter 4 focuses on stakeholder management for achieving events. Cultural programmes require the collaboration and coordination of a wide network of stakeholders. After identifying the different types of events' stakeholders, the chapter draws on theories from stakeholder and network theory in order to analyse issues of leadership, collaboration, partnership and coordination that are required for implementing events.

Chapter 5 concentrates on the management and organisation issues of eventful cities. Specific strategic and tactical management issues that are analysed include: crisis management methods, information systems functions and management. Implementing events also requires financial resources. This is the subject of chapter 6, which focuses on identifying and analysing the fund raising opportunities and sources for supporting events, such as public sector financing and sponsorship. Chapter 7 considers the marketing and promotion aspects of events. Special attention is paid to the following issues: communication and advertising tools, the role of media and marketing strategies. Chapter 7 highlights that the aim of events marketing should be twofold: 1) the promotion of events in their own right; and 2) the marketing and image making of the cities themselves.

Chapter 8 discusses the audiences and publics of eventful cities. The chapter analyses the following critical issues that a city needs to consider when developing its marketing strategies (market segments to target, messages to be developed etc.) as well as its cultural programmes (timing and type of events to be implemented): the profile of events' visitors and participants; the motivations and benefits of events' participants; the experiences of events' participants.

Chapter 9 focuses on measuring the economic, social, cultural and environmental outcomes and impacts of events. The chapter identifies different impact assessment methods and metrics to be used. The chapter also demonstrates the role and reasons for conducting an assessment analysis prior the events (for advocacy and deciding whether to stage an event) and after the events (for directing and evaluating policies). Chapter 10 continues the debates about events' impacts and outcomes by highlighting the importance of events' sustainability for ensuring their long-term success. Issues discussed include the balance and trade offs between economic, social and economic sustainability issues.

Chapter 11 elaborates the concept of "keys to success" of events, as the latter are identified by different stakeholders that participate in events, such as city officials, political leaders, sponsors, events managers, urban

planners etc. Key concepts identified to contribute to events' success and are discussed in the chapter include: local involvement, partnerships, long-term planning, clear objectives, strong content, good communication and marketing, sufficient funds, political will, strong leadership and committed teams.

The book concludes with chapter 12 which identifies the several environmental, socio-economic, political and cultural trends that influence the development and implementation of eventful cities in the future.

Overall, this is an easy-to-read book that provides a rich set of both theoretical background and industry evidence of the ways to design, run, fund, evaluate and study cities and their events. The book nicely integrates theoretical concepts with practical evidence gathered through a wide spectrum of international cities of different sizes and geographical locations. The book constitutes a useful reading for researchers-academics, undergraduate or graduate students and all practitioners and policy-makers involved in event management, cultural management, arts administration, urban studies, cultural studies and tourism.

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