Managing the Delivery of Sport Events: Outsourcing and/or Multiple Delivery Partner Mode

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The management of sporting events is a core area of study within the field of sport management. As the discipline continues to evolve, academics are increasingly researching and teaching various aspects of event management. This developing body of knowledge (Emery, 2010) includes event delivery models, a core operational aspect of managing events. However, to date very little has been written about delivery models in the literature.

Large multi-sport events, like the Olympic/Paralympic Games and the World Masters Games (WMG), are generally organised by a local organising committee (LOC) which amalgamates paid, volunteer, seconded and contracted staff to deliver the event. The WMG2017 (hosted in New Zealand in 2017) has chosen to manage the event through a central entity, but will outsource delivery of the 30 sports to external partners. Contract service agreements will be entered into with a range of providers (multiple delivery partners (MDP)) such as regional and national sporting bodies and venue operators. This ‘outsourced’ or ‘multiple delivery partner’ model is new to the literature, although recently some authors (see Burden and Li, 2009; Greenwell, Danzey-Bussell, and Shonk, 2014; Parent and Smith-Swan, 2013) have written about outsourcing. Outsourcing has been defined as “a means of providing the organization access to highly skilled and knowledgeable personnel often not available in-house…” (Burden and Li, 2009, p. 139). This is the situation with the WMG2017, and allows it opportunity to utilise and focus on internal core competencies while outsourcing other necessary functions (Burden and Li, 2009).

An outsourcing or MDP model, which involves using multiple contracted delivery partners to aid in delivery of an event, is presented. Such a model could benefit a LOC by avoiding duplication of specialist expertise within a LOC when it concurrently exists in specialist sport partners, providing expertise that is not available within the LOC and permitting a greater economy of scale. This presentation explores the main elements of the model such as how outsourcing or multiple delivery partners can be managed to ensure the successful organisation of sporting events like the WMG. Discussion will focus on event organisers’ management of relationships with multiple delivery partners, the tools and practices used to ensure consistency across multiple delivery partners and multiple venues, and the potential risks and benefits when outsourcing to multiple partners.

Watt (2003) predicted that partnerships would become critical to event management in future years. He recommended that partnerships should be considered as a delivery model as have Allen, O’Toole, Harris and McDonnell (2011) and Frost and Laing (2011). Experiences and opinions will be sought from event organisers to enhance the validity of such a delivery model as the literature reveals little on the internal operations of LOCs (Parent, 2008) or delivery methods adopted by second-tier, mass participation sport events. Consequently, this framework is expected to add to the theoretical and practical conversation on contemporary event management theory. Emery (2010) expressed the need for a “more informed [event] knowledge base” (p. 159) and supported reviews such as this of sport event management practice.

Future research to confirm the use and validity of this type of organisational delivery model could consider longitudinal or post-event research to obtain a deeper understanding of the operational delivery methods employed. The perspectives of the delivery partners and their views on partnership management would also be beneficial to maturing the academic and practical contribution of this type of event delivery method.

References


