
UNIT 13 EVENTS

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13.0 OBJECTIVES

After reading this Unit you will be able to:

- define various types of events,
- design the products for events,
- develop and position the tourism products for events, and
- comprehend the future scope.

13.1 INTRODUCTION

Integration of economies with the world economy has increased the necessity of spatial mobility of people to enhance business prospects. The images of Bill Gates coming to India to explore investment opportunities, Rupert Murdoch coming to assess the opportunities to expand his satellite television business and more recently Pacific-Asia Travel Association's five days' annual conference in New Delhi in April 2002, come to mind immediately as examples in this regard. The other aspect of the same phenomenon is illustrated by the visits of our own Narayan Murthy or Azim Premji to expand their businesses abroad and Indian Festivals held abroad to make people more knowledgeable about India. And it is not only the company heads who undertake travel to other places but as the business grows, employees down the line are also sent to various places to foster the companies' business interests. It implies that only outbound travel and domestic travel is on increase. Coke executive looking after North India territory or BPL executive looking after South India territory have to visit several places in their territories and conduct and organise meeting with their distributors, vendors or even staff members regularly. Similarly, more and more Seminars and Conferences are being organised to review or discuss various issues. All these can be classified as Events. You are already aware of the concept of MICE (MTM 15). In this Unit we will also consider several other types of events as well, though the focus will be on the MICE activities as the other events like cultural events are being discussed in other units. Then we will discuss as to how can the industry meet the demands of tourism emerging out of these events. The focus of the Unit will be on designing, developing and positioning these products.

13.2 TYPES OF EVENTS

There can be several types of events, ranging from meetings to sports that are proving a bon for the tourism industry. Let us discuss some of them:

Meetings: some travellers go to a destination on work or to conduct some sort of business. They are hard pressed for time and are more interested in comfort and services, for which they are ready to even higher prices pay even higher prices as their expenses are borne by the company they work for.

Incentive Travel: this type of travel is provided by the employers to their employees in order to motivate them to perform well as well as to recognise the increased levels of performance. This type of travel is 'all expenses paid' for the employee.

Conferences/Workshops/Seminars/Conventions: basically these events bring people from different places to deliberate over or discuss a particular issue or topic. You are already aware of the importance of such events for the tourism industry.

Exhibitions/Trade Fairs: designed to bring together individuals and companies associated with a common business or activity. Exhibition or trade fairs are extremely lucrative business ventures not only for the sponsoring organisation, but also provide revenue for the host city and all related business thus having direct consequences for the tourism industry.

Cultural Events: periodic and specific events are integral part of any culture. We are well aware of Brazilian Carnival. In India itself Kumbh or Ajmer fair are periodic cultural events. Managing Kumbh is an uphill task and requires the professional skills. Surajkund Craft Mela is yet another important example for such events.

National Events: people throng New Delhi to see Republic Day Parade and Beating Retreat. Such events provide ample opportunities to the tourism industry to design and develop products to attract the public coming to see these events.

Entertainment Events: increase in the number of such events is being noticed now. For Example, famous fashion designers launching their summer haute couture collection, film crews coming to a city to promote their latest film, and various entertainment programmes under the titles of 'nites' and raise funds for charity purposes. Renewed interest in India is also attracting various types of performers to this country.

Sports Events: The number of such events is also increasing. Clive Lloyd coming to India to select Wisden India Cricketer of the Century or ATP Challenger Tennis Competition being held here provide good opportunity to tourism industry or more recently when Vijay Singh came from Fiji to play and teach Golf in India such events attract large number of participants as well as spectators.

13.3 MARKET RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS

For designing a product, there has to be awareness of the potential for consumption of particular products. It means that you need to know what type of tourism products are already available in the market, the nature and taste of the consumers of these products and where are the shortfalls in the services. Market research is the tool through which the requirements of a product can be ascertained. It helps in segmenting the market and designing and developing the right kind of product-mix. For example, keeping in view the increasing demand for the business travel segment. You shall try and find out what kind of products you can design for smooth operations of their business travel. For instance, the concept of 'virtual office' has been developed for this segment particularly.

Information can be gathered about the organisations which are planning to hold seminars or conferences. Many events are annual features for which products can be designed. Events also provide opportunities to the tourism industry to take initiatives on their own. For example, an event management company can fix up with a performer for a stage show and then organise the event. All this can be done through proper marketing research and analysis.

In fact, market research has revealed that annually about 85 percent of all air travel is business related. This is why we see all domestic airlines offering various promotional to woo air travellers. Frequent Flier Programme is one such instance. Similarly, many hotels have oriented their services to cater the demands of this segment. In fact major source of revenue for the tourism industry comes from the MICE.

Tourism industry primarily depends on two kinds of sources. Primary research is done by the industry itself and secondary research is based on the information gathered from sources such as govt. agencies and so on. For instance, how many hotels are there and how many visitors are expected during a particular period of time, what conference facilities are available in each city, how many people can be accommodated at these places, what other services can be provided etc. All this research is done by the industry itself.

Since, tourism related with events is different from leisure tourism, the industry has to take into consideration factors like additional services and facilities, as most of the times costs are borne by the organisers and they are not burden on the consumers. Some likely questions that you may need to probe into are:

- how many visitors are expected to attend the event,
- needs of the traveller related with particular event,
- choices expressed by them
- types of accommodation available in the town, where the event is slated to be held,
- comfort level in the services,
- communication facilities,
- credit facilities,
- travelling/transportation facilities,
- length of the stay due to the activity,
- clients' profile,
- conference centres and their capacities,
- attendees and their requirements,
- available marketing tools,
- audio-visual facilities,
- entertainment and leisure activities that can be undertaken by travellers during the short free time that they get, and
- networking potential.

Identifying any hindrances to the growth of event related tourism is also a major area for market research and analysis. Quality service can earn better profit margins also. Market research should also look into the matter of extra services that can be offered to the travellers. For example, the following table can be used as a checklist-

Products	Attraction already existing	Potential Products
Shopping Arcade		
Parks		
Architectural marvels		

Monuments		
River		
Lake		
Gardens		
Boating		
Nearby famous places		
Cultural programmes		

13.4 DESIGNING THE PRODUCT

Once you are through with the market research and analysis and decided what product you are going to design and develop and having identified your market segment, you reach the designing stage. It is essential to remember that as the event is the focal activity, additional attractions have to be woven around the core activity. So it is the additional services and facilities which will give you edge over your competitors. For example, if you are offering virtual office for meetings, a cafeteria in the complex would help the clients in grabbing a quick bite in the middle of their busy schedule. A good ambience will also attract clients.

As the business traveller is one of the most demanding lots, he or she looks for the best and not the cheapest, or more succinctly the options that serve his or her needs. Technological advancements have enabled us to offer following services, which are now integral part of products designed for events:

- Over-head/Slide/LCD Projector,
- Video conferencing,
- Teleconferencing,
- Internet,
- Webcasting,
- Virtual CD ROM, and
- Kiosks.

We take an example of Virtual office to see how the product can be designed. The Virtual Offices give you the opportunity to have a fully functional office without renting space, hiring staff and incurring overheads, while you work from your home or from any other premises, anywhere in the world. The Virtual Office is an ideal business solution for persons who:

- Work from home but need an impressive office for image reasons.
- Do not require an office on a permanent basis.
- Are located outside but need a presence in the city.
- Have only an occasional need for a well-staffed, fully functional office.
- Are extensive travellers and need an office that can function smoothly even in their absence.

To understand the designing process, we can use the model given by **Philip Kotler**:

Level I	Core benefit	Meeting
Level II	Generic product	Virtual office
Level III	Expected product	Over-head/slide/LCD projector, communication facilities, well furnished office, support staff

Level IV	Augmented product	Customised service, ambience, travel desk
Level V	Potential product	Membership, cafeteria, high technology based services, additional services

We take another example of managing trade fair. Following points may be considered while planning for a trade fair:

Infrastructure

- Place,
- Capacity,
- Expected visitors, and
- Exhibitors’ requirements.

Television Exposure

- In-show product profiles,
- Opening, middle, closing billboards, and
- Priority on-site and course signage in-camera view.

Event Visibility

- Category exclusivity,
- On-site product demo and sales,
- Literature about the products,
- Sponsoring parties,
- On-site promotional and sampling rights,
- Hot link to sponsor site,
- On-site inflatable or promotional display, and
- VIP Hospitality package.

National Advertising And Promotion

- Event advertisements in national industry magazines,
- Sponsor ID in media advertising, and PR material, and
- Logo inclusion in all printed collateral- posters, registration forms, save the date postcards, event schedule postcards.

Using **Kotler’s** model once again:

Level I	Core benefit	Exhibition
Level II	Generic product	Place
Level III	Expected product	Sufficient floor space, visitors flow, event visibility, communication facilities, show management services
Level IV	Augmented product	Advertising and promotion, television exposure,
Level V	Potential product	Support services like entertainment, catering etc., Market research, opportunity analysis

13.5 CHALLENGES AND ISSUES RELATED TO DEVELOPING THE PRODUCTS FOR EVENTS

In a constantly changing marketing environment it is absolutely necessary to stay ahead and to increase the efficiency of communication it is incumbent that the identified target segment must be addressed directly. Once you have identified and designed your product, you need to develop them for the target clientele. You can focus on the following points while developing your products:

The Challenge

You need to understand the mechanism and the purpose of the event and subsequently gear yourself to handle from small niche shows to grand events, of course depending on your physical and financial constraints.

The Total Package

As you are aware that the focus is on services and facilities, you have to ensure that you can provide a complete range of turnkey services for all stages of the event from conception to execution and beyond.

Pre-event

Consider these factors before offering your products:

- market research and identification of subject areas,
- with whom you can negotiate (government or industry organisations) for appropriate sponsorships,
- identification and selection of appropriate venue and sight planning,
- national marketing and sales,
- all supplier negotiations and contracting,
- event insurance,
- co-ordination of freight forwarding, and
- cargo handling and customs.

On-site Management

You may need to set up a dedicated site operations and control centre headed by the operations director and a team of support executives detailed with all aspects of the smooth running of the show. The team should have access to the latest hi tech on-line computer aided systems and communication aids. You should also ensure co-ordination and liaison with all relevant suppliers e.g. transportation, hotels, conference centres, cargo handling agents etc. A detailed planning is required for management of all VIP visitors and guest speakers, organisation and management of all cultural and other concurrent activities.

Post Event

Responsibility of reconciling of all accounts with suppliers would relieve the organisers the nuances of grappling with unnecessary details, especially if the organisers are not based in the city. You may also consider post-event debriefing.

Products have to be developed in a way that they sustain the attraction of the visitor. For example, if you are in the hospitality business, you may need to provide leisure activities. You are already aware of the linkages between business and leisure tourism. So, if you offer a good restaurant and bar with

some performer presenting his show, it will bring the visitor again to your hotel. We take another example of trade fair. If you take the delegates, who have put up their stalls in the fair, to some cultural programme or good eating joint in the evening after the fair ends for the day, it will help them relax after a hectic day. Similarly, delegates assembled for a conference can be taken to a nearby famous architectural marvel after the event is over.

13.6 POSITIONING THE PRODUCT: A CASE OF MAREECH EVENT MANAGEMENT COMPANY

Positioning involves placing yourself in the market on the basis of your reach, expertise and target clientele. Many companies take the advantage of information revolution to market their products. The example of Mareech Event Management Co., which has its posting on the internet also, illustrates how to develop and position your product:

EVENTS MANAGEMENT AND EXHIBITIONS

Mareech is one of the very few all-under-one-roof Event Management companies in the Asia-Pacific with operational capability to stage events in any corner of the region. The approach of the new millennium has seen the region steadily emerge as the hub of resurgent global marketing activity. We at Mareech are indeed fortunate to be positioned perfectly to cater to the market tigers in the south and south east Asia, the Indian sub-continent, as well as parts of Oceania including New Zealand and mainland Australia.

Mareech Deliverables

Conceptualisation

- Arriving at the theme
- Decor and furnishing design
- Theme caption and visuals
- Basic design grid

Display Material

- Contents
- Visualisation
- Copy writing
- Graphics

Audio visuals

- Scripting, Filming and Screening in video, Project-vision or Multi-projector format
- Cinerama

The kinds of events we handle include: Trade Shows/Exhibitions Conventions (Seminars/ Dealer Meets/Customer Meets/Employee Get-together) Road Shows/Product Launches Public Entertainment Shows/Sporting Events Fund Raising Events.

13.7 FUTURE TRENDS AND SCOPE OF TOURISM RELATED TO EVENTS

Economy is expected to grow at a good pace and efforts are also being made towards this end. Consequently, business activities are bound to grow, which will increase the MICE activities and other events. Companies are also making efforts to reach as many people as possible, in the remotest areas

as well. You may not find drinking water in a village, but there is all likelihood that you will be offered Pepsi or Coca-Cola. Forecasts have been made by the analysts that India is poised to be an important business centre and hub of international business activities in the region and a large consumer base supports this analysis.

A major conducive factor for the growth of tourism related with events is the comparative political stability in India as compared to other countries in the region. Despite certain areas being viewed as disturbed, no country has issued a major warning, though there is no denying the fact that violent incidents reduce the tourists inflow, but only for a short period. With few hiccups it is business as usual. Growth in the Foreign Direct Investment over the years is a pointer. So, now it is up to you tourism professionals to grab the opportunity with both hands.

13.8 CASE STUDIES

We will now see how some companies have designed and developed their products. First, we will take the case of a company which focuses on the business requirements. Then we will discuss the opportunities presented by cultural events and how some companies take advantage of such events. Finally, we will take up the case of a company dealing exclusively with event management and expositions.

1) Virtual Office

The Virtual Office, as mentioned earlier, becomes your office for every conceivable purpose. For example, one of the Corporate Centre “XYZ” located in Nehru Place, New Delhi marks the advent of the chip-centric 'smart' office of the twenty-first century. Located within the impressive precincts of The Great Eastern Centre, this Corporate Centre offers exclusive, state-of-the-art services backed by top-of-the-line intelligent systems and a world class ambience. The centre gives you access to a wide array of facilities and privileges designed to help you enhance your business efficiency and image in the most cost-effective manner possible. It offers a dedicated, personalised telephone line with a customised answering service providing a unique advantage — where calls are answered in your name thereby engendering the feeling that it really is your office. The service also routes your calls to you instantly, on a round-the-clock basis — wherever in the world you may be. Trained support staff takes care of all your business requirements, from routine customer contact to making elaborate presentations. And should any of your clients visit your office, the guest reception facilities extend the necessary courtesy on your behalf.

Their endeavour is to provide an environment that enables you to maximise your productivity and profitability. A unique dimension of the ambience at this Corporate Centre is the Art Gallery which exhibits the finest Indian paintings and sculptures. They pervade the entire Corporate Centre: the lift lobbies, front office, lounge and corridors. The various facilities and interiors are interspersed with paintings and sculptures.

About the Centre

- Grand entrance and lobby with an elegant ambience,
- Beautifully landscaped terraces on each floor,
- Swap card access control at all lobby doors,
- CCTV cameras on every floor,
- Centrally air-conditioned, the entire complex is laid with granite, Italian marble and wall cladding,
- State-of-the-art security with PIR sensors on windows and 24 - hour patrols by trained guards,
- Advanced fire-fighting system with sprinklers and fire detection sensors on each floor,

- Uninterrupted supply of power and soft water,
- A facade of structural glazed curtain wall with heat-reflecting, double-insulated, hermetically sealed reflective 6 mm glass imported from Belgium,
- A smoke check and 1 hour fire rated clear glass imported from U.K. at all the lobby main doors,
- Maintenance and utility services provided by Knight Frank, UK,
- An exclusive cafe serving continental fare, and
- An elegant display of the finest Indian paintings and sculptures.

Executive Suites

Spacious, elegantly appointed customised suites of varying dimensions, with monthly or weekly occupancy options.

Availability

Available on annual, half-yearly and quarterly subscription options, along with discussion rooms of four/six/eight-seater capacity. It is available on an hourly basis.

Conference Facilities

Classic

Fourteen-seater Conference Room with overhead projector, electronic flip chart, stationery (writing pads and pencils) and refreshments (tea/coffee and cookies) available on half day or full day basis.

Premier

Fourteen-seater Conference Room with multimedia presentation equipment, overhead projector, electronic flip chart, stationery (writing pads, folders and pens) and refreshments (tea/coffee, soft drinks, cookies and sandwiches) available on half day or full day basis.

In addition to the elaborate conference facilities, members also have access to four/six/eight-seater discussion rooms with OHP facilities and electronic flip charts.

Video Conferencing

One can use the latest technology to come face-to-face instantly with the people to be met — clients, colleagues, candidates for interviews or management teams — in any part of the world, without stepping out of the office.

Travel Desk

Fully equipped to handle domestic and international ticketing, itinerary planning, foreign exchange requirements, hotel reservations, air freight and car rentals.

Communications

Highly advanced communication systems enable members to stay in touch on a round-the-clock basis. Member's calls are answered in their name by a personalised, customised answering service which instantly routes calls to members — wherever they may be.

The Advantages of This Corporate Centre

- There is no need to invest in space, equipment or staff; giving significant savings in terms of overheads and capital expenditure,

- A wide variety of carefully designed services and facilities accessible on a 'pay-as-you-use' basis. This enables in building a significant degree of versatility into business operations of clients along with flexibility in running costs,
- A professional on-site management team to manage the client's office, leaving him/her free to focus on more critical issues such as planning, developing the business, and increasing productivity and profitability,
- High-technology backed services pervade all operational levels, and create an ideal work environment that enhances business efficiency,
- No long-term commitment involved. Clients pay only a minimum quarterly amount, renewable every quarter — or they can undertake an yearly commitment at a fraction of the cost,
- If a meeting or an interview is to be conducted, one can access the elaborate conference facilities and meeting rooms at the Corporate Centre, and
- One can shift his/her operations to any new location, keeping the same address and telephone numbers, thereby saving on relocation costs.

The Features

- As a Virtual Office member, the clients are entitled to a host of services and facilities that have been specially designed keeping their business needs in mind, and one can access these on a 'pay-as-you-use' basis,
- Every Virtual Office member may use the address of this Corporate Centre as his business address. Moreover, an exclusive telephone and fax number will be allotted to each member. These special privileges come at no extra cost,
- Incoming calls to the member's number are identified by a computerised system which flashes the member's name/organisation's name and other particulars; this enables the tele-secretary to answer the calls in the specified name, and in a preferred style if so desired. Incoming calls can automatically be relayed to the member at any two specified telephone numbers (including mobile phone); all unanswered calls (during or outside office hours) are routed to the member's voicemail box , thereby ensuring that no calls are missed,
- If the member is not available, the tele-secretary will provide callers with up-to-date diary information along with a request to leave messages in the member's personalised voicemail box. A member can access his messages at any time from anywhere in the world using an ID number. Alternatively, the member can specify a time at which voicemail messages may automatically be delivered to him over the telephone,
- Additional services like call screening and urgent paging can be provided on request, and
- Incoming faxes for the member will be stored in his fax mailbox, or may automatically be forwarded to a designated number. Unattended fax messages are routed to the member's fax mailbox, thus ensuring that not a single fax is missed.

Additional Services

- Taxation,
- Legal,
- Placement,
- Financial,

- Insurance,
- Market Research,
- Art Consultancy,
- FIPB Clearance,
- ISO Certification,
- Event Management,
- PR and Advertising,
- Design and print services,
- Catering,
- Exhibition cell, and
- Vendor Empanelment - Recognised vendors for a range of products and services:
 - Photocopying equipment, fax, stationery, etc. - MODI XEROX,
 - Structured cabling - LUCENT TECHNOLOGIES,
 - Telephone instruments and equipment – ALCATEL,
 - UPS - MERLIN GERIN, and
 - Binders, laminators, paper shredder - MODI GBC

2) **Kumbh Mela**

Culture is the cement holding the diverse peoples of India together. Since the electronic media explosion, the cultural events have assumed greater significance for the tourism industry. Kumbh Mela is one such instance. Recently, Kumbh Mela was organised at Allahabad in January 2001. Hectic preparations were undertaken by the administration for almost three months and Rs. 120 crores had been spent, expecting approximately 5 crores people to take dip at Sangam during the month long Mela. This figure also included foreign tourists. Ross Anthony, a 29 year old British engineer who had visited India a dozen times, confessed to being dumbstruck. “it is the sheer scale of the whole thing that is so mind boggling. It’s extraordinary to witness this sort of mass communion between so many people and the river” Anthony said. A German cycled from his home in the Black Forest region to witness Kumbh.

Besides the national media, 14 foreign media teams were drawn to the Kumbh. This included two teams of the famous National Geographic Channel, BBC National History Unit, Japanese TV Channel, NHK Telecom, Manichi Broadcasting and Channel Four from the UK among others. Teams also came from Italy, Israel, Canada, Korea and Spain.

Apparently, the significance of such cultural events can not be missed by the tourism industry. In fact, this time Cox and Kings, famous international tour operators put 74 tents with five star lodging facilities for high profile guests at the Mahakumbh. Pepsi did huge business during the Mela period by installing its vending machines and putting its exclusive stalls with cheaper cold drinks. As a tourism professional, you need to design and develop your products. How services matter, you can judge from the instance where a young hairdresser from Britain Elliot told that he would not go to his usual pub as it did not switch to the telecast of the “greatest show” in India.

3) **Event Management: Case of Conference and Incentives Management (I) Pvt. Ltd.**

You can also learn from the example of Conferences and Incentives Management (I) Pvt. Ltd., as to how the event products can be designed, developed and positioned in the market. Established in

November 1996 it is a Professional Congress Organiser (PCO) and has membership of International Association of Professional Congress Organiser (IAPCO) at Brussels, Belgium. The company organises National and International Conferences, Exhibitions and Incentive Programmes on a turnkey basis. Barely 3 years in this industry it has to its credit around 35 to 40 major national and international conferences. With its branches spread across the country and a team of dedicated professionals C.I.M. offers the solution for managing conferences in India.

As an official conference manager it offers to undertake the following responsibilities:

- Resource mobilisation,
- Budget preparation,
- Promotion and marketing of an event through overseas agent and partner,
- The per-conference organisation and setting up of conference secretariat,
- Preparation of conference brochures,
- Obtaining of government's approvals,
- Registrations management,
- Abstracts management,
- Conference venue selection,
- Sessions management,
- Cultural events,
- Conference Kit bag preparation, and
- Audio-visual, signage etc.

C.I.M. boasts of a separate in-house Travel Department looking after the incentives and travel arrangements of some of the Fortune 500 companies of the world. The travel division of the company claims to offer the best and the cheapest rates for hotel accommodation across the country. Due to the nature of their business, they are in a position to negotiate significant discounts with the various hotels.

As an official travel agents they provide the following services:

- Hotel accommodation at a specially negotiated rate,
- Establishing airport reception counters,
- Transfer of VIPs and invited speakers,
- Planning of shuttle movements,
- Organising local tours and sightseeing,
- Accompanying person's programme, and
- Ticket reconfirmation.

C.I.M. also organises Exhibitions on turnkey basis. It has to its credit the experience of organising innumerable exhibitions – both small and large, which have been organised across the length and breadth of the country. For organising an exhibition, CIM. arranges the following:-

- Preparation of exhibition brochures,
- Exhibition layout planning,
- Space selling,

- Exhibitor's mailing list and directory,
- Cargo co-ordination,
- Stall erection,
- Visitor's promotion,
- ITPO Approval and clearances from the concerned Ministries,
- Venue management, and
- Security arrangements.

Check Your Progress

1) How would you design and develop event products?

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2) What are the issues to be considered while designing event products?

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13.9 LET US SUM UP

Tourism related with events and specially MICE, is bound to grow with the growth in the economy and as a tourism professional you have to find out that what events will be of importance in a particular region and how you can design and develop your product to cater to the demands. Apparently, you will have to undertake a thorough market research and analysis to find which products will be feasible. For example, you can not organise an entertainment event in a place where you cannot mobilise sufficient audience. The challenge for you is that you have to satisfy a segment, which is very demanding. In this Unit, through various examples, attempt has been made to illustrate basic principles for designing and developing various events and products. This also intends at providing marketing techniques which can be applied in the field of segmenting the market as well as positioning your products.

13.10 CLUES TO ANSWERS

Check Your Progress

- 1) Refer Sec. 13.5.
- 2) Refer Sec. 13.6.