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Seven ways to deliver a lasting legacy from events

Events can deliver a much-needed boost to your economy, bringing new visitors to your city or country. However - when leveraged correctly – events can deliver so much more. Places are increasingly moving beyond looking at ‘heads in beds’ as a success metric and an event is an opportunity to demonstrate your strength in a sector, promote investment, and improve the quality of life for your community. **Take Barcelona, for example**, who are leveraging their position as host of the America’s Cup to develop their blue economy proposition (more on this to be shared at the **Global conference this November 9-10!**)

Here are seven different takes from our panel of experts to help you ensure that you create a longer-lasting legacy from an event that you’re hosting.

Hire local and provide opportunities for your community to participate

In 2022, Trove completed a comprehensive study on the MICE industry and trends through the pandemic by surveying 50+ destinations. There are three main things that destinations can do to ensure that large exhibitions, meetings and events make a meaningful impact on the host city: local employment, cultural events, and comprehensive marketing and branding. Event organizers must look to hire local for all relevant positions in the preparation and management of logistics. Cultural festivals, events, and workshops are key to involving the local community in demonstrating key aspects of culture, from dance to music to food to customs. Lastly, convention bureaus, destination management companies, event organisers, conference centres and local suppliers must coordinate in developing a single, comprehensive brand and marketing push related to the event that will establish a brand for the event in the future. A major example of this is Dubai EXPO 2020, an event that Trove worked specifically on in its work in Dubai. The event has benefited Dubai for the longer term and has engendered new economic development, industrial growth and local business stimulation.

Danny Cohanpour, CEO & Founder, Trove Tourism Development Advisors

Engage your local stakeholders throughout the proceedings

We have been lucky enough to host a number of major events through our work at Visit Kent and Visit Hertfordshire which has included the 149th Open at Royal St George's in Kent and more recently, the Queen's Baton Relay ahead of this Summer's Commonwealth Games.

In our experience, it is vital that the organisers (and supporters) of a major event collaborate with and take all key stakeholders on the journey with them from the start and keep them informed throughout in the lead up to the event. The opportunities for the visitor economy of hosting a major event are enormous. Early engagement of local stakeholders is key - from local businesses to schools and cultural organisations. It is important to provide clear guidance on the nature of the event, the logistics involved and sponsorship restrictions but most importantly the support and opportunities available to them to maximise the economic benefit.

Deirdre Wells, CEO, Go To Places

Develop new infrastructure or cultural projects that will outlive the event.

Hosting a major event gives the host instant or accelerated credibility in the global marketplace, so it's a vital tool for emerging markets. It can draw attention to a destination people once wouldn't have thought to visit. So what is the secret to capitalising on this? Creating a positive and lasting legacy requires deliberate effort, strong leadership, and sustained commitment and attention. Whether sport or arts-focused, impressive new physical facilities and long-term social and community initiatives ensure a true legacy.

Let's take a look at Qatar, which is gearing up for the 2022 World Cup. Hosted in Doha, 1.5 million international visitors are expected to visit the capital ahead of this major event. However, rather than just focusing on the event itself, the country has announced other supporting initiatives, like the installation of 40 public artworks. This approach will transform Doha into an outdoor museum experience and ensure visitors remember the city for something rather than the football. After all, for Qatar this tournament is a commitment of transformational social, human, economic and environmental impact. Success looks like making a mark in the region's - and global - history. With all touchpoints working together, this vision could become a reality for Qatar.

Roger Misun Gray, Global Head of Strategy, Brash

Make sure your strategy is driven by data.

Destinations need to look at the movement and spend of both the visitors and residents to that specific event to better understand its impact to the visitor economy. These insights will allow the destination to answer these questions: Where did the attendees come from? Were they residents or visitors? Did they stay overnight or leave the community? Where did they spend and with what merchants?

This information can help communities determine if an event is in the best interest of the residents to either host and invest or not. No one wants an event that's not a legacy.

Ted Sullivan, CMO, Zartico

Showcase the best of your place to attract return visitation

Cities must consider the difference between the transaction (someone attending an event) and the impression (what they experience when they are there). Too often, communities prepare for the transaction and miss the longer-term opportunity of creating an investor by making them fall in love with the place. Communities can do better by bringing in amenity partners and their chambers/ economic developers and sharing the profile of the event attendee to curate an experience they will remember. Small companies and remote workers are always looking for a place to live and do business - event impressions can make the decision easier.

Rich Overmoyer, CEO & President, Fourth Economy

Put Sustainable Development Goals at the core of your planning

If a plan and execution is rooted in social, human, economic or environmental sustainability practices that impact the local community, then you're in it for the long run. It's about the lasting impact that the event will have (whether it be new infrastructure built or sustainable practices) and keeping that in mind as an integral part of delivering a long-lasting legacy.

Bettina Garibaldi, EVP, Managing Director, Ketchum Travel, Hospitality & Leisure

Plan with legacy in mind.

For events to leave a lasting legacy in a community, it's important for the community at large to be actively involved as volunteers and spectators involved in the event, which creates positive long-term memories and community pride. In addition, it is important for any projects and venues that were developed in order to host the events to be designed and programmed to have a long life after the event, with ongoing multiple uses that serve both the community and impactful events. Designing in flexibility is key for future-proofing. Finally, an annual event that serves a greater purpose or mission is a great way to generate ongoing participation, fundraising and a legacy that serves the community.

Rob Hunden, CEO, Hunden Strategic Partners