chapter three

putting the team together
There are no ‘off the peg’ organisational structures that can be employed to deliver events. Each event is as individual as the objectives it aims to achieve – and the people that deliver it.

Information regarding the legal status of organisations operating events is given in Chapter 7. At this point however, it’s worth underlining that event organisers come in many shapes and sizes, including:

- Professional event or festival organisations (not-for-profit)
- Professional event management companies and promoters (commercial)
- Public/private partnerships
- Events departments within parent organisations or companies
- Local authorities
- Freelance event organisers working for, or on behalf of, public bodies or private companies
- Tourism forums and organisations
- Local promoters
- Voluntary groups
- Trusts
- Charities
- Governing bodies of sport
- Clubs and associations

**The Event Team**

Whatever your particular set up, it is key that you select the right team with the relevant skills to take the event forward. During your initial planning you will have identified what has to be delivered. Putting the right team together is essential to success. Depending on the type and size of your event (and the resources available to it), key areas of responsibility may include:

- Event Director
- Event Producer/Manager
The above list simply provides an example of the kinds of roles that may be appropriate to an event. It could be that your event requires a range of roles, a much expanded team, or maybe just two or three people supported by volunteers to deliver all aspects of event management. Whatever the case, ensure that you are sufficiently equipped to meet the challenge.

The process of putting the team together starts with drawing up job descriptions for the various roles you wish to create. These should state simply and clearly what you expect each person to do. This should help you clarify the actual roles you need to put in place and the skill sets required. The next stage is to decide the nature of each agreement: are you seeking a freelancer, short-term contractor or permanent member of staff? Will you pay weekly or monthly? Will you pay overtime? How many hours a week? How many days holiday? Will any bonuses be paid? You should aim to provide the right conditions to attract the kind of staff required within the budget available.

Once you’ve decided on the roles that you require, it’s a good idea to draw up an organisational chart or staffing plan setting out the structure of your event team. This will help you demonstrate the chain of command. Here’s an example of what this might look like for our ‘X-Town Visual Arts Festival’.

- Production Manager
- Event Administrator
- Event Assistant
- Finance Assistant
- Marketing Manager
- Media Manager
- Site/Venue Manager
- Fundraising/Sponsorship Manager
- Programme Manager
- Production Designer
- Information Assistants
- Artist/Participant Liaison
- Stage Management
- Production Crew
- Runners
Recruitment: If possible, plan your recruitment activity well in advance. If you are advertising posts, ensure you leave plenty time for the advert to be placed, interviews to be held and any notice periods to be worked, etc. Don’t forget that you can seek recommendations from other event managers (many event professionals are freelance and move from event to event as a result of recommendation). Ensure that you always take up references for any new members of your event team. Getting the balance right in the team is a key consideration – event staff often have to work very closely together for long hours in pressurised environments, so make sure your team members complement each other. Always provide a job description and formalise your recruitment agreements in writing, ensuring that rates of pay (or basis of voluntary work) are clearly understood and accepted.

Legal obligations: For general information and advice regarding best practice and your legal obligations as an employer visit www.dti.gov.uk, www.businesslink.gov.uk or www.bgateway.com (also, see Chapter 7 for further advice).
Clarify roles: ensure that each member of the team has a clear understanding of what their, and their various team mates’, roles entail, what is expected of them and who they are responsible to.

Internal Communications: It is essential that you operate good internal communications. Hold regular team meetings to update the Event Action Plan and to ensure that all key members are familiar with and understand the issues and challenges. These meetings are also an opportunity for team members to raise their own points and to share knowledge and experience.

Work Experience Staff: If you offer students the opportunity to gain work experience on the event, ensure that you are equipped and able to instruct/mentor/supervise them and provide feedback. Put your agreement in writing, ensuring that you clarify the scope of the work and state if it will be paid or on a voluntary basis, etc.

Volunteers: If you are considering using volunteers to assist with the event, ensure that you are able to clearly specify what is required of them; the types of roles you wish them to perform; hours; training; incentives; who they report to; how to deal with incidents and an idea of what to expect on the day, etc. Volunteers need to be managed carefully and your relationship with them will be different to your relationship with paid staff. Remember, volunteers are giving up their time to work on your event and they are likely to have specific reasons for volunteering. To select and get the best out of your volunteers, it’s a good approach to find out what they are looking to get out of the experience and to try to match their skills and personality with the appropriate role. For example, a receptionist could work well in an information booth or dealing with participants, whilst someone with less practised communication skills may prefer working in a less public-facing role. Keep volunteers well informed/briefed about the event, particularly if their role involves contact with the public. It is always a nice touch to recognise the contribution of volunteers by providing a small gift/certificate upon completion of the event. For additional information and advice visit the website of Volunteer Development Scotland www.vds.org.uk (see also www.volunteering.org.uk, www.askncvo.org.uk and www.businesslink.gov.uk)
The Wider Team

When we talk about the ‘Event Team’ we mean the key individuals employed (or working on a voluntary basis) to deliver the event. In addition to the core event team, it is likely that there will be many others who will make up the wider team responsible for the event’s success. These may include, for example:

- **Steering Group** – events that involve partnership working and funds are usually overseen by a ‘Steering Group’ often made up of representatives of the various partners. This group is responsible for giving advice and general direction to the event and for ensuring that the interests of all funders are appropriately delivered. The Steering Group may represent the board (if there is one), or there may be a separate Board of Directors responsible for key policy decisions. Dates for Steering Group meetings should be agreed well in advance to ensure good attendance and engagement from all partners.

- **Board** – depending on your structure, you may well have a Board instead of (or as well as) a Steering Group. A Board is likely to have direct liability for the event as well as responsibility for policy and direction, whilst a Steering Group usually works in an advisory capacity only. Whatever your situation, you will need to determine where the ultimate responsibility and decision-making power lies.

- **Sub-Groups** – aside from the event team and Steering Group, events often need to create sub-groups in order to address and effectively manage certain issues/areas. For example, for a major outdoor event, it is likely that a joint-agency sub-group involving the event management, emergency services, police, local authority and security contractor will be convened to consider and action Health and Safety planning. Other groups such as a ‘marketing sub-group’ and ‘programming sub-group’ may be formed. Only form sub-groups as necessary – not for their own sake – and keep subscription restricted to those with the required knowledge, experience and ability to provide active input. As the event manager, you should act as the coordinator for all sub-groups and should feed all outcomes back to the event team and Steering Group/Board.
Other Services

In addition to the above, the services of additional staff, contractors and suppliers are usually required. These may include:

- Event officials
- Security
- Stewarding
- Medical
- First Aid
- Catering
- Box Office and Front of House
- Technical: staging, structures, lighting, sound, power, etc
- Market researchers
- Concession operators
- Legal and other business services

Ultimately the success of your event will be directly related to the effectiveness of your team and overall structure – so take time in the early stages to plan and get this right.
TAKE Ctrl