A Future for Event Management: The Analysis of Major Trends Impacting the Emerging Profession

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Abstract

This analysis of the leading trends in the emerging profession of Event Management provides both quantitative and qualitative evidence of the growth of this field. A careful analysis of the economic, educational, and sociological changes within the profession and society in general provides evidence that the profession is growing and the prospects for long-term health are excellent. The paper also provides a new model for the evaluation of events to offer a universal standardised tool that enables event organisers to compare and contrast event performance. Finally, the paper a forecast for the next twenty-five years in the event profession, in five year increments.

‘The trouble with the future is it is not what it is supposed to be.’ - Paul Valery

Introduction

During the recent century beginning with numerous world fairs and major sport events and concluding with the ubiquitous millennium festivities, the tourism industry has seen a significant increase in the size, scope, length, and visibility of these unique ventures known as hallmark or mega-events. However, there continues to be little empirical evidence that validates the social, political, ecological, and economic benefits of these projects. Furthermore, the rapid growth of the event management profession has produced a climate that is confusing, lacking in credibility as compared to other professions, and perhaps detrimental to its future long term health.

Therefore, in this paper the investigator examines the current landscape of the event management profession, provides a new model for standardising the quantitative and qualitative benefits of events, and issues a forecast for the next twenty-five years of development within this profession. And the investigator will seek to achieve this within the context of one brief paper. Although this attempt may seem doomed to failure at the outset, the paper mirrors the nature of modern events themselves in which the event organiser continually attempts to achieve the impossible using scarce resources. Indeed, this investigator will use this historic conference as an opportunity to explore three central and interrelated theories impacting this profession.

First, the profession is growing and transitioning from growth into maturity. This places the profession at a critical crossroads that, through thoughtful examination, may develop the navigational skills of the stakeholders.

Second, the profession lacks the standardisation tools and reporting procedures needed to provide empirical data to enable event stakeholders to make informed decisions. The absence of this standardisation promotes speciousness, distrust, and lack of credibility on the part of governments, the private sector, and others whose support is critical to the long term health of the profession.

Third, the profession operates from a reactionary mode that is ironic given the central skill of strategic planning that is required for most events. Without the ability to forecast and plan for the short term, mid-term, and long term trends potentially affecting the profession, this field becomes a rudderless ship subject to the winds of change but unable to correct its course to reach a safe harbor.

The investigator believes there is much that can be learned from established professions such as medicine, law, accounting, and even the closely related field of public relations. The challenges these professions faced and overcame may be used as a model for the emerging profession of event management.
Lofgren asks (1999) ‘Do we live in an age obsessed by having great experiences? An age in which places like Freemont Street in Las Vegas are malled and re-designed as ‘the Freemont Street Experience,’ following the popular trend of tourist architecture as event?’

In fact in recent years one could reasonably argue that the term ‘event’ has been used to define that which is extraordinary in popular culture. For example, the popular U.S. television program entitled ‘Who Wants to be a Millionaire’ has been labelled by the popular media as ‘event’ television.

Robert F. Jani, the first director of public relations at Disneyland described the Main Street Electric Parade as ‘a special event’ in 1954, and pressed for a definition by the media, he further explained, ‘I suppose it is that which is different from a normal day of living.’ (Goldblatt, 1990). Regardless of what definition you accept, it is a reasonable assumption that planned events have significantly changed in volume, size, scope, and quality during the past half century since Jani issued this definition.

WHY THE EVENT SECTOR IS GROWING

The event sector is actually not one but many sectors. Brian Losourdo (1997) conducted a study of two dozen professional trade associations whose members derive revenue from professional events. According to Losourdo, the aggregate revenue derived from these sectors exceeds $800 billion per year. Supporting this statistic is evidence from the International Events Group in Chicago stating that commercial sponsorship has grown globally from $6.5 billion in 1996 to over $9 billion in 1998. What has fuelled this rapid growth?

The first theory I will advance is that as the earth’s population ages there is significantly more to celebrate and events provide the forum for these celebrations. For example, during the next decade in the United States, over 70 million people will turn fifty years of age. Few will mark this personal milestone quietly. Rather, they will organise events (or events will be organised on their behalf) to chronicle this ‘day that is different from a normal day of living’.

Another theory is that with the advance of technology individuals are seeking more ‘high touch’ experiences to balance the high tech influences in their lives. Events remain the single most effective means of providing a high touch experience. Pine and Gilmore (1999) acknowledge this trend in their book ‘The Experience Economy.’ They cite numerous examples of corporations and other organisations that have used events to heighten the experience of the moment. Describing a bi-centennial celebration, they write ‘The Cleveland Bicentennial Commission spent $4 million to illuminate eight automobile and railroad bridges over the Cuyahoga River near a nightspot called the Flats. No one pays a toll to view or even cross these illuminated bridges, but the dramatically lighted structures are a prop that city managers now use to attract tourist dollars by making a trip downtown to Cleveland a more memorable night time experience.’ (Pine and Gilmore, 1999)

The second highly noticeable change is the shift toward technology both in work and leisure. John Naisbitt, in his book ‘Megatrends 2000’ (1990) describes a high tech and high touch world and it appears that as individuals in developed and developing countries rush toward a virtual world (the Internet) they collectively wish to preserve their humanness through personal interaction through live events. America On Line (AOL) has stated that while trial members initially connected for the purposes of accessing free information (such as travel education, and entertainment), they agreed to pay for their membership when they discovered people of similar interests within the seemingly infinite number of chat rooms and discussion areas. The on-line introduction and connection with people of similar interests may have forged the creation of numerous live face-to-face events.

A third shift that may have fuelled the demand for bigger and better events in the USA is the growth in the economy, especially in the leisure and recreation sector. According to the Travel Industry Association in Washington, DC (TIA 2000) over one fifth of the U.S. adult population attended a festival while on a trip of 100 or more miles away from home in 1998. Nearly one third of this group attend arts or music festival events. According to the International Festivals and Events Association, there are approximately 40,000 festivals held annually in the United States. These events range from food festivals to those for religious purposes. In other studies, festival-goers have repeatedly identified ‘value’ as the primary reason for motivating their attendance at the event. Live events serve as a value-added investment for individuals and couples as well as families with children, as evidenced by TIA in their 1998 study.

The fourth and final change was first identified by Faith Popcorn in her book ‘The Popcorn Report’. She reported that Americans are increasingly time poor and will make time and financial investments based upon the need for convenience, accessibility, and ego satiation. In fact, what has occurred, is time shifting wherein individuals actually blur the distinction between work and leisure. Historically
leisure activities have been defined as that which is the absence of work. However, in recent years this clear definition has changed as more and more individuals work harder and play harder. Evidence of this shift is best documented in the reduction in the length of vacations as more and more individuals opt for shorter and more frequent holidays versus the annual two week grand tour that was popular in previous years.

These four changes: aging, technology, income, and time have dramatically increased the demand for a wide variety of events both in the U.S. and throughout the world. These factors are summarised in the model shown in Table 1.

Table 1. The Four Factors Affecting Event Growth

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SHIFT</th>
<th>FROM</th>
<th>TO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Demographic</td>
<td>Young</td>
<td>Old</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technological</td>
<td>Low tech</td>
<td>High tech</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disposable income shifts</td>
<td>Limited</td>
<td>Limitless</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time Shifts</td>
<td>Defined time</td>
<td>Undefined time</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

EMPIRICAL DATA

In 1994 the investigator began collecting data for a biennial research project entitled The Profile of Event Management. Funded by grants from the International Special Events Society, the study has collected data from event management professionals world wide for the past six years. In 1996 and 1998 the investigator was able to correlate and compare the previous data to draw conclusions about the growth of the event management profession.

Methodology

A convenience sample survey of all members of the International Special Events Society (ISES) is conducted every two years. ISES members are individuals responsible for over two dozen functions within the special events industry. While some of the members may be directly involved in event activities, at one time or another each survey respondent has the potential of being directly or indirectly engaged in an event activity.

The response rate to the survey has varied. In 1994 the response rate was 40% while in 1996 only 10% of those surveyed responded. In both cases a non-response technique was used to increase the rate of response. In the most recent study, 1998, nearly 30% participated in the survey. However, over a period of six years nearly 1300 individuals throughout the world have completed and returned usable questionnaires.

General demographic and economic data is collected and analysed to identify patterns or trends that may impact the industry in the future.

Findings from the Profile of Event Management

The first finding concerns the large number of females that are responsible for the function of event tourism. Although females now comprise 50% of the U.S. workforce they dominate only a few industry sectors. Since females dominate the field of event management, they may require additional benefit considerations such as child-care and/or job sharing to enable tourism employers to recruit the most qualified workers.

The second finding concerns technology and accessibility. The rate of usage of the Internet increased between 1996 and 1998 by 30%. Increasingly event managers are using the World Wide Web to handle many of the functions of event research, design, planning, management, and even large evaluation. A majority of event managers (as compared to the general population of most countries) use personal computers, cell phones, and the Internet as primary tools in conducting their business activities. Therefore, event management organisations must be prepared to provide the technological tools that event managers will need to compete effectively. Furthermore, these same organisations, regardless of size, must anticipate future advances in technology and be prepared to make appropriate investments to satisfy the needs of their increasingly technologically ‘savvy’ event professionals.

The third finding is directly related to the growth in event management education and research. The 1996 and 1998 studies both confirm that the majority of event professionals plan to continue their education throughout their career with 85% of 1998 respondents indicating this intention.
What is impressive about this finding is that there is no licensing or other mandatory regulatory requirement for continuing education within the event management industry. Although numerous professional organisations offer voluntary certification programs, despite this absence of a formal or legal requirement for continuing education, the majority of event managers believe that the field is so dynamic that it requires constant training to remain current in the profession.

The fourth finding concerns the serious deficiency in knowledge of regulations and laws pertinent to events. As more and more events intersect with regulations and laws it is essential that event tourism professionals become more knowledgeable about their legal responsibilities when organising or coordinating event programs.

The fifth and final finding from this study relates to the type of event produced most frequently by event professionals in 1996. Unlike the previous study, event professionals reported that the corporate human resource and marketing events was the type of event produced most often. Over one third of all events produced by event professionals were those that involved corporations. This implies that professional event organisers recognise this market as one that is lucrative and one that also demands significant event activity. Tourism planners and developers should note that destinations that can assist corporations with coordinating and supporting events may become catalysts for new economic development as businesses seek new locations to expand their enterprises. This is but one example of event tourism research that requires serious consideration.

OBJECTIVE AND SYSTEMATIC IMPACT ASSESSMENT
McDonnell, Allen, and O’Toole describe the typical impacts resulting from events in Australia in their book ‘Festival and Special Event Management’ (1999). They list the possible event impacts as including: increased visitation during the shoulder or off season; enhancing the overall tourism experience; being a catalyst for development; promoting economic benefits; and finally as a means of promoting the long term impacts within destinations.

Whether or not all events achieve each of these objectives is questionable. EventsCorp WA, the organisation in Western Australia charged with developing, managing, and assessing significant local events, is currently working to develop a uniform tool to objectively and systematically measure these impacts. Currently each event organiser uses a different methodology and formula to describe the outcome of the event and therefore it is difficult for event organisers to compare apples to oranges as they attempt to benchmark their event operations and outcomes against others.

Donald Getz and this investigator favor a comprehensive assessment scheme that embodies a wide range of factors rather than limiting impacts to only short term economic performance. However, according to Getz (2000), the majority of event stakeholders still select economic performance as the leading indicator of event success.

Additional impact factors that should be evaluated in addition to the short term economic performance include capital, ecological, media, political and stakeholder benefits.

Capital Impacts
From the re-development of San Antonio, Texas (following Hemisphere) to the major transformation of New Orleans, Louisiana (following the World’s Fair) there are innumerable examples of how capital projects initiated during hallmark events have produced positive impacts for tourism destinations. In San Antonio the historic Riverwalk area was cleaned up and now is promoted as a major tourism attraction (in fact some would say the new heart of the city) for this destination.

Simultaneously, the 1985 World’s Fair in New Orleans resulted in the construction of exhibit hall A of the Ernest A. Morial Convention Centre. As a result of this economic catalyst New Orleans is now one of the top five convention destinations in the United States. Most major hallmark events are now designed first and foremost with the concept of reuse. Lisbon, Portugal’s former Expo site is now a major tourism attraction with exhibit space, an aquarium, and other valuable assets to provide ongoing benefits to the local economy long after the event has ended.

Economic Impacts
Historically, event economic impact measurement has focused on visitor spending and multipliers that extend this spending to other sectors of the economy. Multipliers may be linked to income or job creation; however, due to the inconsistency in formulas event organisations have faced difficulties in comparing their event’s performance against those of others. Due to this inconsistency in reporting and collection of data this information has been flawed often resulting in under- or overreporting, which may produce future problems for those assessing the suitability of developing or bidding for a future event.
One example is the World Cup tournament held in the United States in 1995. Hotels projected high occupancy rates based upon studies of previous World Cups held in other destinations and were sorely disappointed and economically distressed when demand did not meet the expectations projected by flawed studies. As a result of lack of standardisation, according to Getz and others, economic impact studies continue to be misleading and should be viewed in proper balance with other impact assessments.

**Ecological Impacts**

Tourism destinations always seek to mitigate the negative environmental impacts resulting from visitors and maximise the positive ecological outcomes through leaving the destination’s ecosystems in better condition than before the event occurred. The organisers of the Sydney 2000 Olympic Games have an elaborate plan in place to achieve this type of balance in terms of ecological impact. However, numerous news media reports have questioned whether or not the Sydney Organising Committee for the Olympic Games (SOCOG) can achieve or afford all of the ecological measures they promised when bidding on the Games. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) awarded a grant in 1998 to The George Washington University Event Management Program for the purpose of exploring the development of a green event certification program that would be developed and operated by non-governmental organisations. According to the EPA (1998) the focus on positive environmental impacts resulting from events will grow exponentially as the events sector increases in size and scope in the years to come.

**Media Impacts**

Although it may be argued that the Internet has had the same profound influence on global communication as Guttenberg’s printing press, the ubiquity of television’s Cable News Network (CNN) has accelerated the role of news dissemination into that of ‘light speed’. As a result of this development even the smallest, most inconsequential occurrence in a third world country can quickly become major news due to the global reach of CNN.

Therefore, a mass casualty at a soccer game or the major scandal recently affecting the International Olympic Committee not only becomes a major story but one that endures through repetitive broadcasting on CNN. CNN has become the ‘global campfire’ where the human tribe gathers to receive today’s news. Increasingly, this news reporting involves feature stories about events ranging from recent millennium celebrations to the Academy Awards. As a result of this power, event organisers must now consider the media impact of even the slightest event.

While teaching in Bethlehem, Palestine, this investigator was asked by the event organisation, Bethlehem 2000, how to find doves to release on New Year’s Eve in Manger Square. The organisers wished to use doves to symbolise peace and fireworks to symbolise celebration. The investigator cautioned the organisers not to use doves as they could not be released into the wild and survive (ecological impacts) and the resulting media outcry would be disastrous for the event. Instead, the investigator recommended using homing pigeons that would be released and return or even latex shaped doves filled with helium. The organisers ignored these suggestions and released live doves that subsequently flew directly into the exploding fireworks. The results of this intersection were seen on CNN over and over again and regrettably the enduring image of the Bethlehem 2000 millennium celebration is this disastrous outcome.

**Political Impacts**

When considering the political impacts of a hallmark event organisers often limit their scope to elected politicians. In fact, the term politics is derived from the Greek term meaning ‘city’. Within the city that is hosting the event there are innumerable political considerations. Perhaps chief among these considerations is the question of where the power is centred and whether it is hierarchical (concentrated at the top) or level (equally distributed) among the stakeholders.

By identifying the powerbrokers and decision makers the event organisers may assess the challenges that will confront the approval process and determine how to re-distribute the power to incorporate the inputs of all event stakeholders. Additionally, it is important for the organisers to determine what political outcomes the stakeholders desire as a result of the event activity. For example, perhaps the power has historically been concentrated around the event founder and one goal of the event is to democratise the event planning and operations process. Moving toward this outcome could improve the impact of the event.

**Stakeholder Benefits**

The multitude of stakeholders who comprise the event organisation may range from politicians (see
political impacts), to volunteers, vendors, regulatory officials, government officials, representatives of
the media and a host of others too numerous to name. Therefore, it is essential that event organisers
determine early in the process how to produce more stakeholder benefits rather than deficits. In order
to achieve this the event organiser must invest time in research to determine the key benefits each
stakeholder expects from their involvement in the event.

According to Silvers (1999) most event volunteers participate due to three primary motivations. First
they wish to make a contribution to the cause or event organisation. Second, they desire to be
recognised for their contribution. Third, they want to be part of a community, albeit perhaps temporal,
to work toward a mutual goal. To achieve positive impacts the event organiser must assess the
stakeholder’s motivations and then meet or exceed these desires during the event process.

Figure 1 summarises the major impacts the investigator theorises may be objectively measured,
quantitatively and qualitatively, through event impact evaluation measures.

THE NEXT TWENTY-FIVE YEARS
During the past two thousand years one may argue that the birth of a major religious figure set in
motion the modern calendar upon which tens of thousands of events have been celebrated. With
the approach of the third millennium it is appropriate to speculate or forecast the subtle and
perhaps even sweeping changes the profession of event management may experience during the next
twenty-five years. Therefore, although all forecasts are subjective by nature and their accuracy largely
dependent upon numerous future variables, this investigator proposes that the trends set out in
Table 2 deserve serious consideration by event management scholars.

Figure 1. Key Informant Pre and Post-Event Suitability/Impact Scale (SIS)

Instructions:
The event organiser will identify ten (10) event key informants who will complete the following
instrument. Each key informant will select the numerical value that represents the pre-event
suitability level as well as the post event assessment for each factor listed below.

1. Capital Impacts:
   Pre   1   2   3   4
   Post  1   2   3   4
        Unsuccessful Marginal Successful Very Successful

2. Ecological Impacts
   Pre   1   2   3   4
   Post  1   2   3   4
        Unsuccessful Marginal Successful Very Successful

3. Economic Impacts
   Pre   1   2   3   4
   Post  1   2   3   4
        Unsuccessful Marginal Successful Very Successful

4. Media Impacts
   Pre   1   2   3   4
   Post  1   2   3   4
        Unsuccessful Marginal Successful Very Successful

5. Political Impacts
   Pre   1   2   3   4
   Post  1   2   3   4
        Unsuccessful Marginal Successful Very Successful

6. Stakeholder Impacts
   Pre   1   2   3   4
   Post  1   2   3   4
        Unsuccessful Marginal Successful Very Successful

Tabulation:
The event organiser will tabulate the comprehensive suitability/impact assessment in two
ways. First, the event organiser will compare the pre- versus post-event scores to determine
the size of the gap between the forecast or desired outcome and the actual evaluation. Next,
the organiser will sum the pre- and post-scores and divide by the number of key informants
to determine a mean level of success. The mean cumulative score will quantify the
comprehensive potential and actual impact of the event as scored by the key informants.

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BASIS & LIMITATIONS OF THE FORECAST

This forecast (as shown in Table 2) on the following pages is based upon projections by leading futurists as reported in The Futurist Magazine, a publication of the World Future Society (see references) as well as current trends in the event management industry. The forecast is limited to demographic shifts appearing in North America and developed countries throughout the world.

According to this forecast the unique combination of demographic shifts, technological advances, and environmental challenges presents the event management profession with a unique set of factors (discounting random catastrophes) that should ensure continuous and rapid growth for the next quarter of the third millennium.

Table 2: Future Trends which may impact on the events profession over the next 25 years

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Trend</th>
<th>Trigger Event/Early Warning</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Environmental</td>
<td>Energy costs escalate</td>
<td>Use of alternative energy/power sources such as methane gas and wind to power event Technical systems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Technological</td>
<td>E-commerce achieves full penetration</td>
<td>Shift to on-line registration/ticket sales and tracking for many events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Human</td>
<td>Resource Generation X and Y desire shorter work week/job sharing</td>
<td>Re-define role and scope of full and part-time event management positions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Environmental</td>
<td>Environmental State, Provincial, and Federal environmental regulations impact</td>
<td>Green event certification program through nongovernmental organisations (NGO’s) develop event industry voluntary standards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Technological</td>
<td>Internet2 provides wide band real time event Opportunities</td>
<td>Hybridisation between live in-person events and on-line live (virtual) events improves yield management and guest interaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Human Resource</td>
<td>Females dominate event management executive level</td>
<td>Shift in organisations from traditional hierarchical systems to collaborative structures; increased job sharing, flexible time bands, on-site or nearby day care, paternity leave</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>Environmental</td>
<td>Global warming increases</td>
<td>Severe weather shifts cause new time bands For outdoor and indoor events, heating, cooling, and ventilation systems are upgraded to quickly respond to these shifts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>Technological</td>
<td>Complete systems integration</td>
<td>Events and technology achieve harmonious relationship with 24 hour, seven day per week event opportunities for guests who desire to forecast, attend, and review their participation in an event</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>Human Resource</td>
<td>Increased number of deaths due to aging of North American baby boomers</td>
<td>Funereal events increase in frequency among human life cycle event category, purpose built facilities such as ‘Life Celebration Centres’ replace traditional funeral homes, alternative rituals are introduced to reflect immigration trends in US and creativity of baby boomers and their children (i.e. pyrotechnic displays containing ashes of deceased as well as friends, family)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>Environmental</td>
<td>Water scarcity crisis</td>
<td>Developed countries conserve water and Develop improved recycling and purification systems for events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>Technological</td>
<td>Interplanetary broadcasting</td>
<td>Guests of planet earth and guests of other Planets conduct interplanetary event using advanced communications technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Category</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Impact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>Human Resource</td>
<td>Human capital needs are replaced by technological capital advances</td>
<td>Event staff become highly specialised as more and more functions are performed electronically</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2025</td>
<td>Environmental</td>
<td>Major advances in medicine, agriculture, and other sciences</td>
<td>Incident and risk exposure is significantly reduced at events due to precise forecasting and intervention measures. Health of event staff will improve due to early diagnosis resulting in alteration of lifestyles, medications, and medical procedures. This will result in a much wider age span for event staff including octogenarians as well as young adults.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2025</td>
<td>Technological</td>
<td>Full robotic capability</td>
<td>Events are totally automated enabling event professionals to significantly expand the number of simultaneous events being produced using fewer human staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2025</td>
<td>Human Resource</td>
<td>Life long learning systems Developed</td>
<td>Human beings will be capable of significant intellectual development throughout their lives (now averaging over 100 years) and therefore the qualified workforce for events will improve and increase as well as age.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS & IMPLICATIONS**

This analysis of trends in the emerging event management profession has identified a rich array of opportunities for members of the industry and scholars to consider and debate. First, it is obvious from the six years of data collected and analysed in The Profile of Event Management that this modern profession is establishing a strong foundation for future success. The strongest pillar of this foundation is the interest and dedication the members of the profession have for continuing education. If this trend continues the profession may achieve accelerated growth that is comparable to that of information technology professionals.

The second important finding is that unless the profession adopts national, or even better international standards for the evaluation of event impacts, it will be difficult for the professionals to be seriously respected and valued by those who control funding and other critical resources needed to support event growth. Therefore, it would be wise for a pilot project to be launched with a minimum three year longitudinal study to determine the viability of an instrument such as the one suggested in this paper.

Third and finally, the event management profession does not exist in a vacuum removed from exogenous variables such as the environment, technology, and economic conditions. The forecast provided in this paper may provide current and future event management professionals with a map of the potential landscape or ‘eventscape’ for the profession. Through observing the triggers (early warning signs), members of the profession may be able to avoid some of the perils of the past and embrace the future with even greater confidence.

The poet Paul Valery suggests, ‘the trouble with the future is that it is no longer what it is supposed to be’, and indeed the leaders of this emerging profession must now assume the responsibility of building a future that respects the noble traditions of the past, anticipates and responds to future needs, and provide a rich legacy for all who will follow in our footsteps.

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