

## CHAPTER FIVE:

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS, DISCUSSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.1. Summary and Conclusions

In the face of the increasing value of event marketing as a tool of Integrated Marketing Communication and the growing business opportunities of companies operating in emerging markets, this project focused on the investigation of companies' possibilities for successfully organizing event management in emerging markets. This study is different from other studies on events management as it throws light not only on the topic of events management in general, but also on difficulties event organizing companies face in emerging markets, especially in relation to institutional voids.

The research questions that were formulated on the basis of the determined objectives referred to the following areas: the importance of event marketing in IMC, critical factors, common errors, major challenges, and the role of institutional voids in event management, factors that can serve as starting points for improving the efficiency of events management and factors that can help to develop strategies for adapting event management activities to emerging market conditions.

Chapter two summarized the most important literature published by researchers in the field of IMC and event marketing as well as important articles related to institutional voids and strategies companies can follow when operating in emerging markets. While literature on IMC and events is quite abundant, the topic of institutional voids has not been subject of many research studies, as the literature review revealed. Expert interviews were therefore necessary in order to be able to discuss the issue of events management in emerging markets more profoundly.

The selected research design is based on the qualitative model of phenomenology, focusing on the lived experiences of the event management experts that were interviewed. The sample consisted of both respondents from multinational automotive companies with operations in Mexico and respondents from local event agencies. In total, ten semi-structured interviews were conducted with the help of an interview guide that covered the major topics of the research questions previously mentioned. Interviews and transcripts were organized according to meaning units identified during the process of coding. Once classified these meaning units, a categorization scheme was developed and codes were analyzed for their contributions to the respective research questions.

Chapter four presented the interview respondents' statements and opinions related to the different research questions. The results indicated an increasing value of event marketing in IMC, but also showed that event managers are continuously challenged by various factors, including institutional voids, that make operations difficult.

So far, the analysis remained on an intra-textual level, since it was only focused on the comparison of the respondents' answers. In the following, the results of the qualitative interviews will be analyzed and contrasted to literature findings. The results of the analysis for Research questions 1 to 4 will serve as a basis for a profound discussion of Research questions 5a and 5b which are directly related to the overall objective of this study presented at the very beginning of this chapter. On the one hand, emphasis will be put on the proposition of strategies for making event management more efficient in general terms. On the other hand, the identification of challenges related to business operations in emerging markets and recommendations on how to handle such challenges will form a major part of this chapter.

## 5.2. Discussion

The discussion needs to start with the question if investing in events is actually beneficial for companies. Only then would it make sense for companies to invest in an improvement of their event management activities and in finding means to adapt them to emerging market conditions.

### *5.2.1. Importance of event marketing in IMC*

Literature findings indicated that event marketing was of growing importance in Marketing Communication, along with other instruments that have traditionally been classified as Below-the-line vehicles supporting mass-media advertising and public relations. Indeed, interview results show that event marketing is of increasing value for companies in the communication of brand messages. In particular, companies addressing smaller target segments that are hard to reach (Porsche, Audi) emphasized that event marketing was of greater value to them as traditional mass media. Hence, some researchers' point of view on events as support media (O'Guinn, Allen & Semenik, 2003) cannot be shared; the perspective of event marketing as equal communication tool (Schäfer-Mehdi, 2006) seems to be more adequate.

For company respondents, event marketing is valuable because it offers them the possibility to reach specific marketing goals that can hardly be achieved through traditional mass media. Target segmentation, relationship-building, direct contact and interaction with the customer as well as the possibility to communicate a message in one moment to the whole target segment were the most important benefits mentioned by respondents. The specific characteristics of event marketing (live experiences, sensory interactions, and emotions) make it easier for companies to inform about products, to enter new markets, to

increase sales, to increase customer loyalty, to improve public relations and corporate image, and to communicate activities related to social responsibility. In this regard, interview results basically coincided with what was earlier presented in the literature review, since the benefits and goals stated in Chapter two were confirmed by respondents; sometimes named or described slightly differently, but basically with the same meaning.

The previous paragraphs showed that efforts for making event management more efficient and adapting it to emerging market conditions are justified due to the high and increasing value attached to event marketing in MC and the benefits companies can achieve through the integration of event marketing in their communication mix.

The further discussion will now concentrate on the identification of areas that need to be focused on in order to make event management more efficient. For this purpose, it is convenient to summarize the analysis of Research questions 2 to 4a, since both critical factors as well as common errors indicate challenges in event management. Respondents' opinions on major challenges will be compared to common errors and critical factors in order to detect coincidences and differences. Furthermore, it will be analyzed if literature findings are in line with interview responses.

### *5.2.2. Critical factors, errors and challenges in event management*

When comparing interview results and literature findings on challenges in event management, one can observe several coincidences: unexpected situations and problem-solving, the following of a clear marketing concept and objectives, supplier relationships and communication issues are considered as major challenges by both researchers and interview respondents. Furthermore, respondents mentioned creativity and innovation, the

capturing of the actual target group, time, budget, perfection in the event and operational issues (logistics, coordination of the team) – factors that were not considered in the literature review. On the other hand, researchers cited risk management and control, and the integration of event marketing with other vehicles as critical and challenging – factors that were not mentioned by interview respondents.

Figure 5.1: Challenges, critical factors and common errors in event management

Critical factors	Challenges	Common errors
Determination of clear objectives	→ Following set objectives	← Unconsidered decision-making; omit details
Sending invitations and confirming assistance	→ Capturing the actual target group	← Incorrect databases
Planning on time	→ Time pressures	← Planning errors
Budget	→ Small budget	← Late authorization from headquarters
Logistics, frequent staff meetings	→ Operations issues (logistics, set-up, coordination of team)	← Involvement of too many people
Supplier selection	→ Collaboration with suppliers	← Unconsidered supplier selection (focus on price only)
Careful planning before implementation	→ Unexpected situations	← Technical issues, human failures

A comparison of the responses for Research question 2 on critical factors, Research question 3 on common errors and Research question 4a on major challenges (see Figure 5.1) demonstrate that the very same factors considered as being critical at the same time represent major challenges for companies: the determination of clear objectives, planning on

time, sending invitations and confirming assistance, supplier selection, and logistics. This is not surprising, as the key factors of a process will always need to receive special attention because they have a high impact on success or failure of an event. Consequently, they will always be challenging. Interestingly, some of the most common errors in event management are also related to the very same areas. Figure 5.1 visualizes the relationships between challenges, critical factors and common errors.

It is noteworthy that respondents' answers on occasions when it was difficult to organize an event revealed problematic areas in event management that were not thought of by respondents in the first place. Those were related to communication, to the complexity of events and to government issues. The latter will be discussed in the next paragraph along with logistics and human resources as potential areas affected by institutional voids (Research question 4b).

### 5.2.3. *Institutional voids*

Literature on institutional voids is rare, and literature on institutional voids that affect operations of event managers is non-existent. The literature review therefore concentrated on the presentation of the concept of institutional voids in general, defining them as weak or absent soft infrastructure supporting the functioning of the market. Examples for institutional voids that had been identified by researchers were presented, such as a lack of market intermediaries, weak governance structures, missing reliable end-to-end supply chain partners or restricted access to capital and talent. On the basis of this theoretical foundation three areas of event management were identified that could possibly be affected by institutional voids: logistics (a lack of end-to-end supply chain partners for the handling

of event logistics), governance structures (corruption and difficulties with bodies that govern regulation) and human resources (difficult access to talented personnel, taking into account the difficulties multinational companies might encounter in getting a clear picture on the local job market).

*Logistics.* According to interview findings, logistics is not really a problematic field, neither for companies nor for agencies. The companies included in the sample rely on agencies' integrated services which take care of the handling of all the necessary events logistics. Certainly, agencies can offer the service of logistics coordination since an event generally does not require the transportation of massive goods, such as this would be the case with industrial goods. Apparently, event agencies have realized that it is more cost-efficient and maybe more reliable to take care of logistics themselves. Moreover, they can offer their clients an added value through the integration of those services.

Nonetheless, one should be careful not to be too quick to judge logistics as being completely non-problematic. It needs to be considered that the findings of this study refer to the specific set and sample chosen for the investigation. All agencies included in the sample offer logistics services; however, this does not imply that all agencies in Mexico or in all emerging markets offer comparable services. It might be difficult for companies that just entered a market to find adequate agencies with integrated services and that moreover have expertise in the relevant business area.

*Government structures.* The second issue of concern was government structures. Here, interview findings showed quite differing opinions on the difficulties related to the handling of government issues. What became clear though is the fact that corruption and

bribes (in Mexican Spanish “mordidas”) are very common. Getting arrested also seems to be a part of the problems event managers have to face. It is likely that bribes and arrests were not mentioned by more respondents because on the one hand, they seem to be an integral part of life in Mexico and are thus not seen as something really special and maybe not even something respondents would mention. On the other hand, corruption is a delicate issue and maybe respondents would not mention it as a common business practice for image reasons. However, companies entering the market need to be aware of this potential obstacle.

*Human resources.* As to the area of human resources, one can also observe quite varying opinions on the difficulty of finding talented personnel. Basically, event agencies considered it more difficult than companies to find and especially hold skilled and experienced personnel due to the nature of the event management business as being highly competitive. Apparently, multinational companies with a good reputation and the possibilities to offer higher salaries do not face such big problems in finding skilled event managers. At least the administrative part of event management combines different disciplines (marketing, communication etc.), which is why there is no specific career for event managers, especially since each business or agency is different. Both companies and agencies emphasized that companies should concentrate on finding people with certain skills necessary for event managers, such as being flexible, stress-resistant, having the common sense, rather than searching for people with a specific academic background.

However, the question remains if companies just entering the local market will have the same easy access to personnel as established companies (such as those integrating the



Volkswagen Concern) or if they would rather encounter difficulties similar to those event agencies are facing.

### 5.3. Recommendations

In the following, Research questions 5a and 5b will be discussed in detail. The goal is to provide recommendations for companies that want to organize or reorganize their event management activities in order to make them (more) efficient and adapt them to emerging market conditions. The challenges identified in Research questions 2 to 4 and the areas that were presented in Research question 5 of Chapter four as possible starting points for the elaboration of strategies for improvement and adaptation will serve as a basis for the recommendations presented here. At the end of this section, recommendations for future research will be provided that can provide additional contributions to the investigation of events management in emerging markets.

#### *5.3.1. Recommendations for making event management more efficient*

Table 5.1 presents recommendations for companies that would either like to integrate event marketing into their Marketing Communication mix or desire to make their events management more efficient. Some ideas presented here are self-explanatory; others need further explication and will therefore be discussed more profoundly.

Table 5.1: Recommendations for making events management more efficient

<b>Challenge</b>	<b>Focus</b>	<b>Ideas</b>
<b>Supplier selection</b>	Selection criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not only <i>cost and technical expertise</i></li> <li>• But also <i>compatible companies cultures</i></li> <li>• Added value: <i>agencies with integrated services</i></li> </ul>
	Purchasing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Special <i>training for purchasers</i> who buy event services</li> </ul>
<b>Existing supplier relationships</b>	Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Improve communication</i> betw. companies and agencies (creative concept, event coordination)</li> </ul>
	Long-term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create <i>long-term relationships</i> with mutual benefits</li> </ul>
	Supplier evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Event <i>evaluation</i> and determination of <i>supplier performance</i></li> </ul>
<b>Unexpected situations</b>	Risk management Event evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Anticipation of risks</i></li> <li>• Development of <i>contingency plans</i></li> <li>• Moreover: <i>event evaluation</i> including “<i>Lessons learned</i>” for each event</li> </ul>
	Control and supervision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stricter <i>controls and supervision of suppliers</i> (e.g. <i>demand reports on progress</i>)</li> </ul>
	Personnel with necessary skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Experienced personnel</i> (quick and efficient reactions)</li> </ul>
<b>Time Communication Operational issues</b>	Communication flow	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clearly <i>determine responsibilities</i></li> <li>• <i>Regular meetings</i> to improve <i>communication</i> and avoid <i>time pressures</i> (between suppliers and companies; between responsible managers)</li> </ul>
<b>Innovation and creativity</b>	Strategic alliances	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Ally</i> with companies addressing <i>the same segment</i> but that offer <i>different products or services</i></li> </ul>

<b>Capturing actual target group</b>	Customer databases Strategic alliances	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish <i>customer databases</i> on the basis of previous events (capture data of participants)</li> <li>• <i>Strategic alliances</i> can help doing this.</li> </ul>
	Marketing efforts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Target <i>marketing to the relevant segment</i> (profound <i>market research</i>)</li> </ul>
	Integration with other MC tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Integrate event marketing with other MC vehicles</i> in order to create <i>leverage effects</i></li> </ul>

*Supplier selection.* Companies looking for reliable event agencies need to take into consideration a number of different variables during the supplier selection process. Not only price and technical expertise need to be considered; compatible company culture and shared values are of equal importance, since the commitment of the supplier is crucial for the success or failure of the event. Interview findings demonstrated that agencies with integrated services (creative concept, production, logistics etc.) offer an added value to companies, which is why it seems to be recommendable for companies to collaborate with this type of event agencies. Reliable suppliers can be found through recommendations of business partners or support from business associations. Companies can also attend events organized by event agencies for other companies in order to get an idea of their professionalism and working method.

Another important aspect in supplier selection is the involvement of the purchasing department in the event buying process. As interview findings indicated, buyers from purchasing departments of big companies have primarily one supplier selection criterion: the price. As just described, other criteria (technical expertise, additional services etc.) yet also need to be taken into account. For this reason, special trainings should be offered to purchasers in order to explain them the event organization process and make them more sensitive to all the details that need to be considered in the selection of an event agency.

*Existing supplier relationships.* Communication between companies and supplying agencies is an area that needs to be continually improved. This is necessary for agencies in order to be able to transform companies' objectives into a clear creative concept, and also to facilitate their event coordination. Regular meetings between companies and agencies are therefore indispensable for the event to become successful. Communication will be facilitated if companies find suppliers with whom they can establish trusting and long-term relationships with mutual benefits, since this way agencies will better understand the core values and image of the respective brand and will be able to coordinate the event according to these values.

At the same time, evaluating supplier performance within overall event evaluation is crucial for making existing relationships more efficient. Interview findings indicated that in many companies, event evaluations are not yet common and only partly integrated in the event management process. Companies should demand reports from their supplying event agencies and also provide them feedback in order to improve communication flow.

*Unexpected situations.* Unexpected situations will always be challenging. Nevertheless, some risks can be anticipated (e.g. weather conditions) since they are so common that they can no longer be considered as being uncontrollable. Contingency plans for handling those issues can be developed beforehand. Also, the writing of "Lessons learned" as part of event evaluation is recommendable. Besides, it could be useful for companies to apply stricter control and supervision of suppliers, especially once the creative concept is defined and the operational process starts. Constant reports on progress in the organization of the event combined with regular meetings and mutual feedback between companies and agencies will decrease the probability of unexpected situations to occur due to the human factor. Finally, another measure that can complement risk management and

control is to hire personnel with experience in events management and the necessary skills to manage unexpected situations quickly and efficiently (see Chapter four, Research question 5a, Organization skills).

*Time & Operational issues.* Several challenges related to events management could be facilitated by improving communication flows: from the start of event planning until post-event operations. Regular meetings not only between suppliers and companies, but also between company managers of different hierarchies are crucial in order to avoid time pressures. These meetings should be opportunities for the clear determination of responsibilities and for the identification of tasks that will have to be carried out during the event organization process.

*Innovation and creativity.* For companies facing the challenge of continuous innovation, it can be convenient to ally with other multinationals addressing the same target segment. Obviously, business partners should not be direct competitors or offer similar products or services. The case of Audi exemplifies the leverage effects such strategic alliances can have: In one event, Audi allied with American Express and Aeroméxico, two brands that also target the luxury segment in Mexico City. While Audi auctioned a car, the other two brands gave away airplane tickets and other gifts. This special event received a high degree of attention by participants and turned out to be a big success.

*Capturing the actual target group.* On the basis of previous events, companies should start capturing important data of participants in order to establish customer databases. For companies having recently entered the market, strategic alliances with other companies are especially useful for obtaining customer data. Moreover, event marketing will turn out to be more profitable when being integrated with other MC vehicles such as advertising or public relations. For example, companies can invite the press to an event so

that positive reports on the organized event can reinforce the effect of the event.

Furthermore, marketing efforts should be directed to the respective target segment. This implies profound research on the target segment's specific characteristics, preferences and life styles within the development of a clear marketing plan.

### 5.3.2. Recommendations for adapting event management to emerging market conditions

Table 5.2 presents recommendations for companies which would like to enter or are already operating in an emerging market and would like to include event marketing in their communication mix. The recommendations are derived from the results presented in Research questions 5b (Chapter four) and from important aspects identified in Research question 4b (analyzed earlier in this chapter).

Table 5.2: Recommendations for adapting event management to emerging markets

<b>Challenge</b>	<b>Focus</b>	<b>Ideas</b>
<b>Identify institutional voids</b>	5 contexts' framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Analyze <i>political &amp; social system, product, labour and capital market, and degree of openness</i></li> </ul>
	Local agencies/ personnel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Hire local agencies/ managers</i> that help to identify and anticipate institutional voids</li> </ul>
	Business partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Analyze market entries and performance</i> of other multinational companies</li> </ul>
<b>Handle government issues</b>	Network of contacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Ally with established multinationals</i></li> <li><i>Create specific department</i></li> </ul>
	Local personnel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Hire local personnel with contacts</i></li> </ul>
	Reliable event agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Find reliable event agencies</i> that take care of getting authorizations etc.</li> </ul>

<b>Handle logistics issues</b>	Agencies with integrated services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaborate with <i>agencies that offer integrated services</i></li> </ul>
	Company-based logistics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In some cases, <i>organize logistics on company account</i></li> </ul>
<b>Handle human resources</b>	Personnel with specific skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Look for <i>people with specific skills</i> required in event management</li> </ul>
	Glocal tier	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus not only on global, but also on <i>glocal tier</i></li> </ul>
<b>Handle cultural issues (including culture of events)</b>	Local market strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Adapt events</i> to local tastes (but keep core values)</li> </ul>
	Try to change contexts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Try to change some factors</i> concerning event organization, such as timing (e.g. through special incentives)</li> </ul>

*Identify institutional voids.* As described in the literature review, one way to identify institutional voids in an emerging market is through an analysis of the five contexts proposed by Khanna, Palepu & Sinha (2005): political and social systems, the degree of openness of the country, as well as product, labor and capital markets. However, such a general analysis is highly complex and time-consuming, which is why most companies will hardly be able to do it on their own.

From a more pragmatic point of view, several complementary ways of coping with the difficult task of identifying institutional voids can thus be identified. The first is to hire a local consultancy firm with experience in the relevant sector that will facilitate the identification of institutional voids, especially those relevant for the respective business the company is operating in. Events management is not the same for every company, as events differ in size and scope. So companies with bigger events might face more problems related to institutional voids than others which organize smaller events. The second possibility is to hire local managers with experience in the event management business that can help to

detect potential institutional voids and know how to handle them. Moreover, companies can get their bearings by allying with other multinationals already established in the market. An analysis of their market entry and performance might provide insight into the hurdles that can hamper an efficient event organization. In this case, the challenge for companies aspiring to enter the market might be in finding adequate partners that grant them valuable insight into their business operations. Companies should therefore search partners who are not direct competitors but whose events are of similar size and scope.

*Handle government issues.* Obtaining government permits can constitute a challenging task for companies not familiar with local market conditions. Sometimes bribes need to be paid, and in some cases companies do not even know whom to address in order to obtain a certain permit due to a lack of transparency. For this reason, it is crucial for multinationals to establish a network of contacts that facilitate these transactions. They can do this most easily by allying with other multinationals already established in the market which can grant access to the necessary contacts. Some companies, such as Volkswagen de México, rely on the help of a specific department of public relations which is in charge for the handling of government issues. It will be difficult though for companies just entering the market to directly set up such a department, since this implies additional costs. Moreover, a lack of contacts will make the efficient functioning of such a department unlikely, at least in the beginning. More viable would be another option: the search of reliable event agencies that take care of getting permits and have experience with local authorities. Chambers of commerce can provide additional support for finding reliable agencies. Also, references and recommendations from business partners might be useful, especially because some countries lack associations which group agencies from the same branch.



*Handle logistics issues.* As interview findings indicated, the collaboration with agencies that offer integrated services (including the creative concept, production, and also logistics services) is mutually beneficial for both companies and event agencies and lead to a better result in terms of reliability and cost-efficiency. Making use of agencies with integrated services is particularly convenient for multinationals operating in emerging markets, because the handling of logistics is due to a lack of reliable logistics providers not always easy. Some companies might prefer to take care of logistics themselves, be it because they have the necessary equipment or be it because they have certain experience in logistics operations. When making the decision about the handling of logistics, costs and benefits of both options need to be weighed up carefully.

*Handle human resources.* Finding skilled personnel in events management can be difficult, especially for companies that are not yet established in the local market. Multinationals can attract qualified personnel by offering a salary that is above average in the local market but still lower than in the home country. Khanna & Palepu (2005) described the focus on the glocal tier as potential business opportunity, since employees in this tier are highly qualified but do still not demand salaries as high as managers in the global tier. For events management, this glocal tier can be of particular value due to managers' familiarity with local market conditions and experience with authorities and the culture of the country. When looking for qualified event managers, it seems to be more adequate to concentrate on people with specific skills required in events management (see Chapter four, Research question 5a) than for people with a specific academic background. In recruiting interviews, companies should thus put more emphasis on the identification of candidates' soft skills rather than on the academic studies they have.

*Handle cultural issues.* As stated by Khanna, Palepu & Sinha (2005), in view of a market entry into an emerging market, companies will have to decide to which degree they adapt their strategies to local conditions. Moreover, they will have to analyze if it is viable that contexts can be changed. Interview findings indicated that events need to be adapted to local tastes in order to become successful. Therefore, as far as the event itself (program, content etc.) is concerned, companies should adapt their strategies to local cultural particularities while keeping their core values. Several respondents (Porsche, Seat, Volkswagen) reported to be following a local strategy, but also stressed the importance of being in line with the corporate image.

Cultural aspects are generally difficult to change. Nevertheless, companies could concentrate on some aspects that affect event organization, such as timing, and try to change them. For example, supplying event agencies could be rewarded for punctuality and timing with special incentives (e.g. monetary incentives).

### *5.3.3. Recommendations for future research*

The findings of this study are based on empirical investigation in Mexico and are thus geographically limited. Future research should examine the issue of event management in other emerging markets in order to detect coincidences and identify differences.

Furthermore, the investigation of emerging market conditions focused on soft infrastructure and cultural factors. Future research would have to broaden this perspective by including investigation also on hard infrastructure conditions in order to complete the picture.

As far as industry perspective and company size and type are concerned, it is recommendable for future researchers to include medium-sized local and multinational

companies into the sample and widen the industry perspective through interviews with event managers working in other sectors.

This study basically remained in the descriptive stage of theory-building, concentrating on the identification of attributes adherent to events management in emerging markets (such as challenges, errors, or institutional voids) and on the correlations between these attributes. Research questions 5a and 5b represent a first step toward the stage of normative theory-building, since they concentrate on circumstances that are favorable for an improvement of efficiency and for a successful adaptation of events management operations in emerging markets. Future researchers would have to investigate more profoundly on the proposed strategies in order to slowly pass on to the stage of normative theory-building through the detection of anomalies and the determination of causal relationships (Carlile, 2005).

In conclusion, event managers face challenges in planning, organization and implementation of events due to both human and technical factors, and even more so in emerging markets where they are often confronted with lacks in soft infrastructure. Hopefully, this exploratory research will contribute to a better understanding of the event management process in Mexico and its importance for the organizing companies. The findings and comments made by participants in this study may perhaps be relevant in other Latin American countries and/ or markets with similar levels of economic development.