Community Events: A course template

The aim is to create a community event for the 50 + age group which will engage that specific part of the local community and enact an event via a group exercise or manage a real local event. At least the template created for the event should be forwarded to local community groups as an example of good practice for the locality and the target group. The important element is that it should reflect the importance and impacts of community events on this community both engaging them in the management and the activity itself. There is also the opportunity to share good practice across European partners.

This proposal is not ethnically, regionally or nationally sensitive its only premise is that all communities should begin with research and questioning

The essential premise is that it is impossible to know the needs of the 50+ community unless we ask realistic questions. It is self evident that individual will want to pursue their own interests however it is imperative that the following process is pursued.

Session One: The 50+ community and its needs:
The aim is to open discussion with the group who will have members of the relevant 50+ community and examine what is it's aims and objectives for a community event.

These are the general aims and objectives and should be annotated as a flip chart exercise

Session Two: The possibilities and parameters of the event:
The aim is to look at all the possibilities given the vision, perceptions and expertise of the group.

This is a group flip chart/discussion exercise but should begin to analyse the issues and possible subject areas as follows:

- Awareness of general issues from flooding to fire safety to community welfare to creative local engagement.
- Fundraising for good causes across the whole community regardless of age, religion or sexuality.
- Community identity to draw on a common cultural/historical interest
- Common social issues eg crime, anti social behaviour etc
- Entertainment/festival for community engagement
- Classes to reflect the local interest from gardening to home renovation
- A local history project reflecting the needs of the time – anniversaries etc

This should result in detailed research conducted by members of each group.

Session Three: The research phase:
Research will then 'feed' the plan
A discussion should bring out the general issues and begin to focus on some common agendas. This will lead to a 'desk' and practical exercise to create an awareness of the available market and previous and planned events. This should examine the following:

- The background and tradition of events in the area/country
- Similar 'subject' events – have their been similar events in the same 'genre'
- Similar events successful nationally
- Similar events successful internationally
- Attend such events if possible and observe the operation

Sources of information:
The group must research the following to 'flesh out' the proposal:

- Local archives: via newspaper archives/and online archives
- Internet searching :use all 'key' indicators:all known names
- All organisations relative to the 'subject'/'content' of the event
- Local people even family for a local event
- The managers of the event ideally by direct contact

At this point there must be a proposal identifying a short list of effective and realistic ideas and reached by consensus within the group

The group must then discuss these and come to a focused idea that will become the project:

Session Four: The development phase
Examining the issues required for the activation of the event. This will require the following which will vary from region to region, nation to nation:

- Understanding the existing licensing rules and arrangements
- Any local rules
- Observing the best practice locally and nationally
- Any use of new technology that can be observed
- Any new style structures that are more sophisticated

Session Five: Innovation in current practice
The group should look at relevant innovation in their chosen areas. This will enable them to consider the concept more broadly and examine its viability.
- Via relevant academic literature
- Awareness of the competition and attending their events
- Trade magazines/websites
- The Industry bodies and trade associations
- The local sector skills council for event training

- Industry networks and personal networks
- Conferences

Session Six: Creating the event

The event then needs to be created will the following elements with a discussion of the roles and responsibilities Including the following.

- Management
- Production
- Marketing
- Fund raising
- Event management

Session Seven: The event:

The event should then be recorded visually for the evaluation process as well as the 'simulated event' showing the roles and the issues that occur along the way during simulation.

Evaluation – this is not only relevant if the 'event' is party of an accredited course but important for the next event or the next series of events. The whole team must be honest about what worked and what didn't work as well as 'scoring' roles as difficult as this may be.

Accredited evaluation – this will be managed as part of a specific course structure and the above plan is based on a level 3 course.