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Introduction: Focus on Student Research

Dr. [Linda F. Ettinger](#), Associate Professor

Since 1985, I have worked half time in each of two graduate programs at the University of Oregon - one a campus-based program in arts management <aad.uoregon.edu> and the other an off-campus, distance program in information management <aimdegree.com>. Although the students, faculty, content, and delivery of these two programs vary greatly, they have one thing in common - a belief in the value of developing an independently framed final research study, built upon knowledge gained in coursework, professional experience and published resources.

Students in both programs often ask me why they are required to do this. My response has to do with the fundamental nature of our university. As a comprehensive research institution, the University of Oregon has a goal to serve not only students, but also the people of Oregon, the nation, and the world. The University prides itself as a community of scholars who recognize that knowledge is the fundamental wealth of civilization.

Our commitment in graduate education is to develop individuals who recognize that research, both basic and applied, is essential to the intellectual health of the university, as well as to the enrichment of the lives of all people. These final research papers demonstrate high academic standards and contribute directly to the intellectual, economic and cultural growth of Oregon.

I consider the work I do assisting graduate students in the final research phase of their program of study to be my most important contribution. I provide students with a tightly defined framework within which they formulate, research and write. The goal is to support successful student efforts to implement systematic research activity according to the principles of good research design, including data collection, analysis and interpretation, while at the

Three Festivals Seen Through the Getz Model of the Event Management System

[Emily Windle](#)

In the summer of 2002, I attended three festivals (High Sierra Music Festival, The Oregon Country Fair, and The Telluride Bluegrass Festival) as part of my master's degree research at the University of Oregon. My goal was to see how these three festivals have responded to social impacts of festival audiences on communities surrounding their venues. The Getz model of the event management system (Getz, 1997, p. 13) provided a framework for the discussions of the management practices of the three festivals regarding festival campground management. The results of the study were intended to provide a tool for festival managers, community leaders, and venue owners to evaluate, plan, and address issues of camping festival audiences.

As illustrated in each of the three festivals studied, festivals, in general, do not occur in isolation. Throughout his writings, Getz advocated that festival managers must consider the complete context surrounding and involving planned events. His model is designed to help festival managers consider event management as a system of "interdependent or interacting elements" (1997, p. 13). As Getz stated: "Managers must understand the dynamics of the interdependencies, anticipate change, and adapt through various strategies" (1997, p.13)

The model consists of four interrelated fields: the event, internal environment, community context, and general environment. Each of these fields is interrelated as it affects the others through various inputs and outputs. Getz defined inputs as "all those things needed to operate the organization and produce the event." (1997, p.14). Outputs become "management functions and event production activities" (Getz, 1997, 9. 14). For example, a festival that puts loud music into a community might receive input from the community in the form of a revoked permit, making future event production activities difficult.

Analysis of the Getz Model Fields and Examples from Festivals

The outermost field of the model is: **General Environment: Global forces impacting on events, event organizations, and event tourism** (1997, p. 19). Global forces with the potential to affect the type of festivals examined in this study can include both unexpected (a July snowstorm) and expected (another festival nearby). Expected global effects included the weather. For example, the Oregon Country Fair property is a flood plane, which dries out annually to provide space for the venue. Also, in 2002, the extremely hot and dry weather conditions threatened the Telluride Bluegrass Festival -- many in the residential community considered the 10,000 person event to be a severe fire hazard. Festival managers alerted festival attendees about the weather to be

same time fostering skills necessary to succeed in today's professional environments. Most important in the research process is the necessity to tie ideas to a larger body of knowledge in the relevant field. This not only results in a study that builds collaboratively on previous inquiry but also, through the careful use of citations, avoids the risks of plagiarism.

It's interesting to see the variation among the actual research study outcomes, all generated through more or less a similar process. I have selected two studies to present as brief excerpts in Culture Work this year. The first is by Emily Windle of the Arts & Administration Program. Emily came to AAD with a bachelor's degree in Music Performance. Her passion for music and events is clear in this excellent analysis of the impact festivals can have on local communities. Following the dictum to tie her research to ideas in the field, Emily defined a research framework using an event management model designed by Getz (1997). Application of this model gives a richness and clarity to her analysis and outcomes. If you enjoy the excerpt, I encourage you to read the entire study. Next time I'll present a study by a master's student in the Applied Information Management Master's Degree Program.

expected for the 2002 festival. Not expecting Colorado nights to be as cold as they were, I was glad that I heeded advice and had warm clothes in Telluride.

The next field in the management model is: **Community Context: Local forces and conditions (other events, competition, stakeholders, resource availability)** (Getz, 1997, p. 13). Understanding the community context meant understanding competitors and identifying possible alliances to keep the festival alive. Hundreds, if not thousands, of similar events occurred throughout the summer on varying scales. One summer, for example, High Sierra experienced a colossal drop in ticket sales when attendees chose to attend a nearby Grateful Dead show instead of the festival.

At each 2002 festival, I learned about other festivals through word of mouth, posted flyers, handbills, and via the festival program. In this way, summer festivals may be seen as a circuit. Several individuals I met were traveling from festival to festival. In designing marketing strategies, festivals identified other events not as competitive threats, but as opportunities.

Getz also advocated understanding and identifying key stakeholders (1997), divided into two categories: festival-related and community-related with some overlap. Outputs and inputs can be identified in association with the investment and interest of each stakeholder. For example, festival-related stakeholders included the festival managers, who have a career and reputation to maintain within the residential community, artistic community, and audience at stake. Artists involved in each festival had the opportunity to play to both new and returning audiences, which was a stake in a sustainable market. At each 2002 festival, vendors also had a career at stake. For example, many of the 800 vendors at the Oregon Country Fair waited all year to sell their art, food, and other wares to support their craft and, in many cases, lifestyles with the income generated from festival sales. Volunteers often had vacation time invested in the festival and were both promoting and, most importantly, supporting the management and operation of each festival.

Community stakeholders included neighbors, business owners, local government and local law enforcement. Neighbors can be identified as those who lived in close proximity to the festival venue. For example, neighbors living in close proximity to the Oregon Country Fair had a significant stake held in their property and privacy. When their property and privacy were violated, neighbors had a strong stake in determining the fate of future festivals. However, they also played a significant role in resolving on-going problems.

Local businesses owners held a large economic stake in each of the festivals examined in this study. In Telluride, Colorado, local businesses thrived in close proximity to the venue as restaurants were full and festival attendees purchased personal items not available inside the festival venue (i.e. batteries). Local business owners, historically, had opportunity to benefit economically but also had the possibility of experiencing vandalism, theft, and general disrespect from patrons. Though business owners in Veneta, Oregon had the chance to make a sizeable profit when thousands of people came to their community for the Oregon Country Fair, there were years (i.e. 1993, 1996) when vandalism and disrespect overshadowed their economic gains.

Local government held an enormous stake in each of the festivals examined in this study with the power to give and revoke permits, not to mention their connection to local law enforcement. For example, when Bear Valley, California neighbors complained about the decibel levels coming from the High Sierra Music Festival, local government could have revoked their permits. As a precautionary measure, the festival hired sound technicians to monitor the sound levels to ensure that the festival was staying within the legal limits.

Local law enforcement also played a key role in each of the festivals examined in this study. Community members relied on local law enforcement to protect private property rights, ensure that terms of permits were being followed, and to enforce local laws. Each festival added a significant workload to local law enforcement with the weekend influx of a crowd ready for celebration. The Oregon Country Fair was held on private land, which created a different situation between local law enforcement and the festival.

They created a trained neighborhood watch team to help lighten the Sheriff's workload during the weekend of the festival. Thus, the Sheriff was able to focus on emergencies rather than deal with case-by-case issues of trespassing. Each festival, drawing crowds of several thousand people, found that a relationship with local law enforcement was essential.

Resource availability within the community was dependant upon the needs of the festival and the festival attendees. Local stores provided a place to buy food and beverages for the campsite as well as forgotten items (i.e. tent stakes, batteries). Due to the number of people and high volume of trash, it was important for each festival to have access to trash dumpsters and recycling to be carried away regularly by garbage disposal companies. In case of emergencies, local health care workers were stationed at the festivals and venues were easily accessible for ambulances and fire trucks. In the case of rental properties, the importance of resources in the form of amenities was key. For example, one reason High Sierra Music Festival moved to Quincy, California was due to the amenities (i.e. stage areas, bathhouses) and venue design available at the property. Each festival had in mind the needs of the event and those attending the event in selection and design of the venue.

The next field of the management system, Internal Environment, is focused on **The Organization and its management system**. (Getz, 1997, p. 13). Getz advocated organizations evaluate all aspects of the internal management system in relation to how the event is planned, implemented, and evaluated each year. Each manager in this study had a thorough understanding of the internal environment of their organization as it was defined by Getz. Two of the festival managers interviewed in this study were also part of the founding management of the festivals studied.

The central field of the management model is: **The Event. Theme / Program / Setting** (Getz, 1997, p.13). Planning focused on creating a festival supportive of the artistic experience and the creation of community. Decisionmaking, mediation, marketing, and policy implementation examined throughout this study were done by the various festival managers for the same reason: to create a space for people to share live art experience and community in an outdoor setting while fostering a release of the festive spirit of both artists and attendees. For example, though the Oregon Country Fair changed dramatically after 1996, even banning the consumption of alcoholic beverages on Fair property, the integrity of the festival was not compromised. Artists and festival attendees continued the festive spirit that became a signature for the Oregon Country Fair.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to examine how three festivals have responded to social impacts of festival audiences on communities surrounding their venues. I conclude that:

1. There is a need for further academic and professional research to acknowledge and explore the types of festival examined in this study.
2. Festival managers shared common issues regarding mitigating the impact of a festival on the residential community (i.e. parking, traffic, law enforcement, etc.). In working with common issues, an exchange of information among festival managers could, as one manager who was surveyed put it, "stop us from reinventing the wheel."
3. Evaluation of the festival by both managers and stakeholders was essential for the survival of each festival.

For a complete draft of the study, titled Festival Town: Managing Camping Audiences at the High Sierra Music Festival, The Oregon Country Fair, and The Telluride Bluegrass Festival, please contact the author, Emily Windle, at emily_e_windle@hotmail.com.

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Emily Windle, MS University of Oregon (2002) began her master's degree course of study in the University of Oregon Arts & Administration Program in the fall of 2000, with a Bachelor's degree in Music Performance from the Cleveland Institute of Music. She selected the Event Management concentration. She received both the Maude Kerns Scholarship and the Ina McClung Scholarship, and served as the second-year student representative on the AAD Student Forum. Emily conducted her internship at the Humboldt Arts Council in Eureka California. This article is excerpted from her master's research study, titled Festival Town: Managing Camping Audiences at the High Sierra Music Festival, The Oregon Country Fair, and The Telluride Bluegrass Festival.

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