
Chapter 9

Workforce training

Learning objectives

After reading through this chapter you will be able to:

- Differentiate between the different types of training typically offered at major and mega events
- Discuss the budget implications of volunteer training
- Explain how to go about conducting a training needs analysis
- Explain how the responsibility for training is split between functional areas
- Identify key steps in designing Web-based training
- Discuss whether leadership training is important in the event environment and how this might differ from the traditional business environment.

Introduction

Training an event workforce is quite a challenge. Work for the core management team starts months or even years before the event and so many different types of training may be necessary, the most common being project management, risk analysis and legislative awareness. The core planning team tends to be made up of a very diverse group, everyone coming from different backgrounds and industries. To make life even more complicated, there are rolling starts, with people coming on board right through to the event operational period. How much simpler it would be if the planning team were all to start at once!

The second lot of people requiring training comes on board just for the event itself, most starting work on day one just before the doors open. This group includes most volunteers, contract workers and a few casual paid staff. For a large event, this group would participate in one or more training sessions in the days or weeks before the event to give them a general overview of the event and information on the venue. Importantly, emergency and incident planning would usually be covered at this time.

Job-specific training can seldom be done before the venues have been hired and transformed in readiness for the event. For most events the build happens only the day before the event. Workers start several hours before the event audience arrives and training usually occurs on the job, just before the gates or doors open. Problems

are then ironed out along the way. This situation dictates a higher than usual focus on pre-planning tasks and control measures before the event commences, as from that time on controlled chaos usually reigns. However, most problems are generally solved through a combination of common sense, commitment and goodwill, particularly if these values have been instilled prior to the event.

The training needs analysis

A training needs analysis is the basis for the training plan. It covers the training needs of both managers and the general workforce. The questions asked should include the following:

- What is the context for training?
- What are the profiles of the candidates undertaking training?
- How many people need to be trained?
- When and where do these people need to be trained?
- How could technology support the training?
- Who will be responsible for the various types of training?
- What approach should be taken (e.g. lecture, seminar, simulation) to each of these?
- Should training be outsourced to a contractor?
- What is the role of the trainer?
- Is assessment necessary?
- How will training be documented?
- What will it cost?
- Which aspects of training present the highest risk?
- How will the training be evaluated?

The training needs analysis can take many forms, from an informal approach where all functional and venue areas are responsible for their own training to a more formal approach where training needs are analysed across the organization. In this latter case, core training can be identified and delivery integrated across the board wherever possible.

Where a formal approach is taken, this can be done by document analysis, research into previous events and approaches to training, individual interviews, observation and focus groups. A pilot programme is recommended for feedback and fine tuning wherever possible, particularly for customer service training.

Prior to the Sydney 2000 Olympic Games there were two dilemmas (among many others): how to record attendance at large-scale orientation and venue training sessions where numbers in the audience ranged from 200 to 2000; and whether or not to provide refreshments. As trivial as these questions may seem, there were budget and logistical implications for both. A cup of tea and a biscuit for each volunteer attending training would cost in the region of \$50 000, while attendance records would require manual registration and subsequent data entry or a more sophisticated barcode/identification card system. This seemed unnecessary as each person would receive an accreditation badge closer to the event, but this system was not yet operational.

Management training

The management team usually needs training to ensure that everyone is on the same wavelength. Training can be formal or informal, and run internally or outsourced to expert facilitators. Given the expertise of the management group, training has to be well delivered by someone experienced in adult learning and the event context. Because of the pressures of time faced by people in this role, a training room can be emptied after the coffee break if the learning is not relevant and meaningful to the group!

The following topics are indicative of material covered during induction training and later on during the planning period as needs emerge:

- History and purpose of the event, strategic plan
- Project management principles and techniques, including software
- Risk management for all aspects of the operation, including safety
- Legislative awareness, compliance issues
- Roles of stakeholders such as police, traffic authority, sponsors, etc.
- Cultural and disability awareness
- Recruitment and selection, including EEO
- Supervision/leadership (more on this later in the chapter)
- Operational planning, systems and procedures
- Contract negotiation, contractor management
- Delivering training at the venue or on the job for large and small audiences
- Customer service management.

This training can be delivered in a variety of formats, ranging from online tutorials (e.g. software use) to short sessions conducted by experts or visiting speakers during lunch periods. Conventional classroom training would seldom take more than a day. Depending on the size of the event, some of the above topics could be merged into one or more sessions.

Case study 9.1 illuminates the variety of skills gained by well-trained, committed volunteers.

Case study 9.1

European Sport and Youth Forum

Volunteering and active citizenship

We believe that volunteering in youth and sport plays an important role in developing the leaders of tomorrow. Participation in volunteering teaches responsibility, leadership skills, tolerance and democratic values. Volunteering should be recognized as a tool for combating social problems by the positive use of young people's energy, requiring involvement and challenging them to be active citizens within the local and European Community. Taking into account the advantages of volunteering, we recommend the following measures:

- *Invite Sport and Youth NGOs to consult at inter-governmental meetings*
- *Establish a policy of youth presence at executive committees dealing with youth- and sport-related decisions*

- Support and develop existing Sport and Youth related networks at European level
- Educate volunteers by:
 - Including life skills subjects in primary education
 - Enabling experts to deliver courses and workshops in other European countries to promote best practice in Youth and Sport volunteering across Europe
- Create a European-recognized Voluntary Log-Book – which can be used by volunteers when applying for further education and employment
- Provide greater financial support within the ‘Youth in Action’ programme to cover volunteer expenses.

Volunteers represent a low level investment but will produce a big effect. Therefore, we hope the above recommendations might be easily undertaken. Volunteering means active citizenship and we would appreciate your help to activate other citizens.

(For more information see European Youth and Sport Forum at www.euractiv.com)

Reflective practice 9.1

Discuss the following statement: ‘Volunteer training in sport is an investment in citizenship and leadership development.’

General workforce training

Most major events follow the same formula for workforce training delivery as is illustrated in the example of the Commonwealth Games in Case study 9.2 at the end of the chapter. For all of the following events there were three types of training for the general workforce – orientation training, venue training, and job-specific training:

- Sydney 2000 Olympic Games
- Manchester 2002 Commonwealth Games
- Salt Lake City Winter Olympic Games 2002
- Asian Games Doha 2006
- Torino Winter Olympic Games 2006
- Melbourne Commonwealth Games 2006.

While these can be merged for smaller events, it is nonetheless worthwhile to look at each separately.

Orientation training

This training is a general introduction to the event, its history, mission, purpose, planning and programme. For sporting events it covers all the different sports and the different venues at which they will take place. For music events, this session would explain the different bands and stages; for an agricultural show it would cover the competition and commercial zones. There is usually a general introduction to customer service, disability awareness and cultural awareness. More than this, however, most orientation training is highly motivational, and this is achieved through the use of celebrity speakers, national songs and dance, music and inspiring words from key members of the organizing committee.

The two main aims are that people leaving the session are informed and inspired. This is an interesting point, as the discussion later in the chapter on web-based training will illustrate, since much of this information could be delivered online. The question is whether this approach would meet the psychological needs of volunteers, in particular, to feel included, involved and inspired.

Following are examples of the topics that might be covered in orientation training:

- Event overview
- Event history
- Event aims
- Symbols
- Organization
- Sponsors
- Event programme
- Event venues
- Performers or athletes
- Previous shows/events
- Workforce roles
- What to expect
- Commitment and expectations
- Customer service.

Venue training

As the title suggests, this type of training usually takes place at the venue or zone area to familiarize people with their working environment (a treasure hunt is a good way to do this) and their teams. Functional areas, teams and reporting relationships are discussed during this training and work groups get the opportunity to meet each other. The most significant part covers safety and emergency training, which is often venue specific. In some cases, orientation training and venue training can be combined as they were with the 1996 Atlanta Olympic Games.

Following are some of the topics that might be covered in venue training sessions:

- The event precinct (general area of operations)
- The event venue (performance location)
- Locations within the venue (e.g. stairs, lifts, exits, communications control)
- Functional areas represented at the venue (e.g. medical, accreditation, security)
- Accreditation zones/areas (who can go where)
- Safety of staff and visitors
- Emergency procedures
- Incident reporting
- Crowd control
- Recycling and waste management
- Staff procedures, check-in, meals, etc.
- Communicating in the team
- Staff rules
- Common questions customers will ask
- Venue management team and their support.



Workflow planning and training are essential for catering teams who work at a frantic pace

Job-specific training

This is very specific training for the particular job that the person is going to do. For the majority of roles this takes only an hour or two. However, there are some positions that require many hours of training in the lead-up to the event. This can sometimes be short-circuited using video or web-based multimedia for core training (e.g. in the use of two-way radios). Job-specific training will be covered in detail in the next chapter.

The issue raised in many event evaluation reports (Sydney 2000 Paralympic Games Post Games Report, 2001; Strategic training issues for the 2006 Commonwealth Games, 2002; Manchester Commonwealth Games Post Games Report, 2003) is the sequence in which this training is delivered. The order suggested in Figure 9.1 is most logical from the event organizer's perspective as it follows the general project plan of moving from the general to the specific. The information required for orientation training is generally available some time out, while venue overlays are only finalized shortly before the event and specific planning for particular jobs is finalized very late in the process, with small details requiring input from other functional areas.

From the volunteer's perspective, on the other hand, what they most urgently want to know is where they will work, what they will do, what they will wear, when they will start and finish, whether meals will be hot or cold, whether particular dietary needs will be met, and so on. Details such as rosters, meal voucher systems and locker allocation are seldom available right from the start. Thus, as Figure 9.1

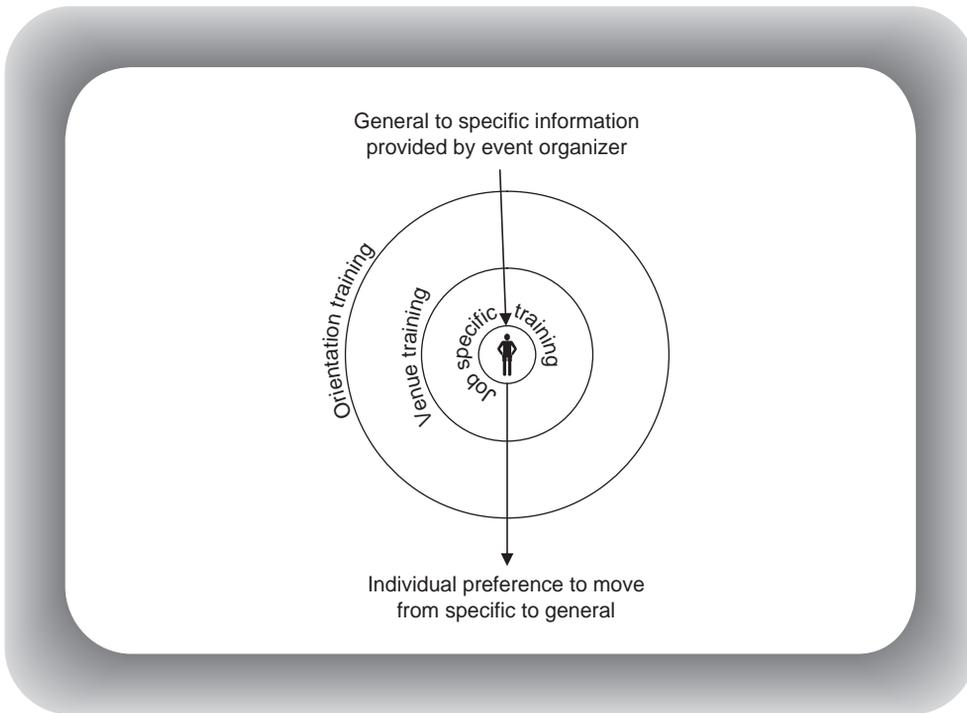


Figure 9.1 Different preferences for order of job-specific training

shows, the event organizer needs to be mindful of the workforce's priority for personally relevant information over event history!

For the smaller event, all of this can be collapsed into a pre-event tour of the site and a briefing. Checklists and careful supervision will then ensure that things go smoothly.

Web-based training

Many of the above problems could of course be avoided if most of the training were delivered online. People would not need cups of tea, they would not have to travel or park, they would not need invitations or books or videos. Brandon Hall (1997) has written a primer on planning Web-based training for anyone working in training and development. This book provides outstanding advice for the design and development of this type of training but recommends specialist support for the finer details. He also suggests posing the following questions before setting off on this pathway:

Is this the best method of training?

While there are significant efficiencies associated with Web-based training, the most important question is whether the motivational content can be delivered using this medium. The informational content can definitely be provided on the Web, and with good instructional design this can become quite interactive. By monitoring use of the website, and the pathways people follow in navigating it, the organizing committee has a very accurate idea of the level of interest. Furthermore, the website can be used for conducting assessment on key topics such as occupational health and safety, thus demonstrating an adequate level of learning.

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Should we do this in-house or outsource it?

Events with a website designed for ticket sales to the general public may be extended to provide training information to staff. This is often done using a user name and password so that employees can access the instructional parts of the site. Many human resource functions can be managed this way, including roster planning. One needs to consider the effort involved in development as well as maintenance of the site.

What are some of the problems that may be associated with Web-based training (such as some individuals not having access or bandwidth)?

Although most people have access to computers, at the very least through public libraries and Internet cafes, the issue of bandwidth is an important one. If the site includes sophisticated and memory hungry video, for example, this is going to prove difficult for many users. The alternative is burning the site to a CD format but this means that it cannot be maintained with the most up to date information available. One also needs to consider staff with a disability when preparing training materials, for instance, deciding whether materials need to be available in audio, large print, braille, etc.

Can the cost be justified?

A website with bells and whistles, one that has good instructional design, graphics etc. that can maintain the interest of a generation that has played computer games is likely to cost a small fortune, so the cost needs to be carefully considered.

Who will be needed on the development team?

The development team needs to include a project manager; an instructional designer who develops scripts and story boards; a programmer or author who can use the authoring tool; a graphic artist; writers or subject matter experts; and of course a webmaster for hosting the programme.

Are there issues with approving the content of Web information and graphics?

Major events often have an approved style for all communications including website, ticketing and signage. This includes font types and sizes, font colours, background colours, graphics etc. In addition to this sponsors and other stakeholders need to approve all logos and content relevant to their roles. The approvals process is arduous, statements about safety need to be checked by the relevant functional area, statements about meals need to be checked by catering, the list is endless. However this is not unique to Web-based training, it is just as big a task with print materials.

What level of interactivity will there be?

A website can be simply informative, with the user navigating their way through links to find the information they want to find. Alternatively, sophisticated design can guide learners through a process where interaction is indicative of learning. Asking how much multimedia is realistic is a related question, linked to design, outcomes and budget.

Is there any assessment planned?

This question is important for any type of training, whether Web-based or not. Will there be any assessment of how much learning has taken place? This is increasingly the case in the area of occupational health and safety. Even the smallest event these days is likely to issue a multiple choice test on safety with a requirement that everyone must score over 80 per cent. One such test had all the answers as (d) just to make it easy for most people and to eliminate those who were not listening and not very bright!

Who will have access to the training material?

This is a most interesting question. For many mega and hallmark events there are many people clamouring for information including sponsors, universities and organizations 'outside the tent'. They are serving the interests of the event and want to train their people. In a pre-emptive move the Beijing Organizing Committee for the Olympic Games launched their pre-Games training guide on their website a full three years before the event [see Figure 9.2]. This enabled all these parties to commence orientation type training a long way ahead.

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D. Others		↓	
Application Form	Key Contacts		
Acknowledgment			

Figure 9.2 Website training guide for the Beijing Olympic Games 2008 released three years prior to the Games

(Abbreviated version of website (2005), The Pre-Games Training Guide: The 29th Olympic Games China 2004–2008; for further information see <http://en.beijing-2008.org/71/76/column211637671.shtml>)

The decision regarding Web-based training is a difficult one if the event is a one-off occurrence. If, on the other hand, the event is held annually, then the investment made in training can be carried through to the following year (see Figure 9.3). Event organizations such as Cleanevent, mentioned in the last chapter, are well placed to develop Web-based human resource systems for training and rostering as they are involved in so many events year after year. The same would be true of an event catering company.

The role of technology in providing information to event staff so that they in turn can provide information to the event audience will be discussed in the next chapter where another question is asked: can information be made available to the workforce on the next generation of mobile phones (PDAs) acting as an extension of Web-based learning?

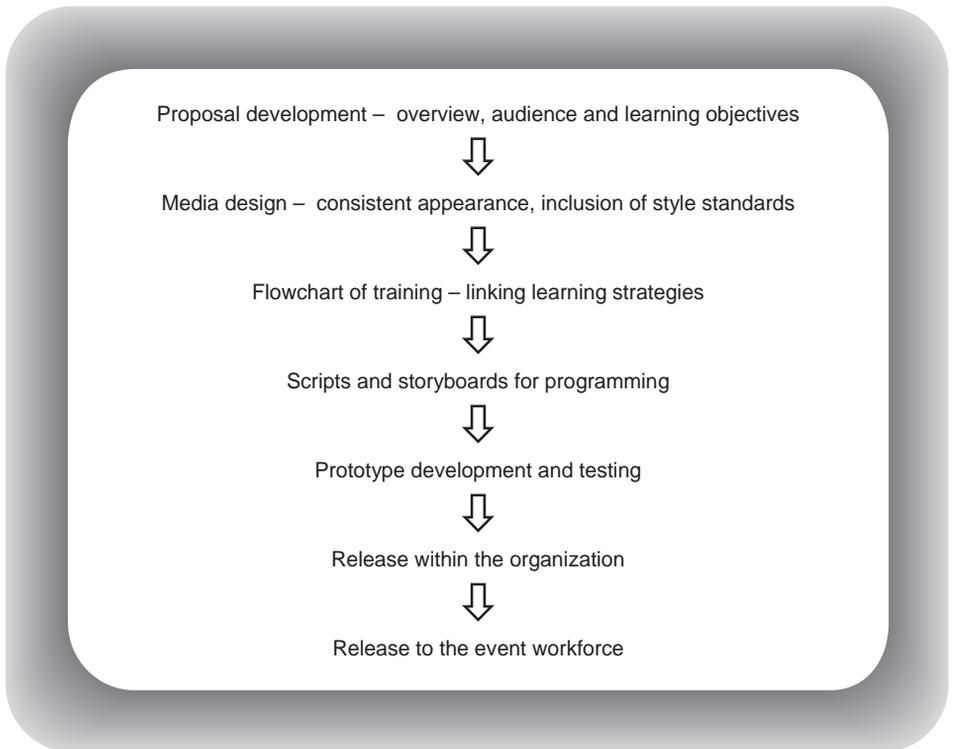


Figure 9.3 Stages of development for Web-based training

Leadership training

Leadership training has become a common feature of training for event supervisors and managers. The training aims are to develop workforce motivation and increase retention. One of the first of these programmes was developed for the 2000 Sydney Olympic Games in response to problems experienced in Atlanta in 1996, which included staff poaching, wage blowouts and volunteer attrition (Webb, 2001). While industrial relations initiatives were largely credited with the success that ensued, it was also widely accepted that recruitment, selection and training strategies also worked towards developing a sophisticated and well-trained workforce – according to Juan Antonio Samaranch, ‘the best volunteers ever’.

The training needs analysis for event leadership for the 2000 Olympics included a literature review, analysis of previous event training materials, individual interviews and focus group sessions. The last of these were exceptionally useful, bringing a large number of experienced event professionals from around the world into one room to discuss the programme. The model illustrated in Figure 9.4 emerged directly from comments made by these experienced leaders. This in turn led to development of a video and a game to match the model. While subsequent models have been developed (e.g. Van der Wagen, 2004), the first model is discussed and illustrated here as a direct outcome of the training needs analysis for Sydney 2000:

*As a result of our research the model that we developed is called the ‘Special Events Leadership Model’. One of the features of this model is the **contrasting nature of leadership roles**. In some situations, a leader has*

Leadership roles	Event leadership competencies
Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • visioning, planning and goal setting • designing and organising work • workforce contingency planning
Co-ordinating/controlling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • training • delegating work • monitoring and tracking performance
Directing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • maintaining focus and priority • communicating effectively • using leadership styles effectively
Decision-making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • understanding policy and procedure • making and implementing decisions, escalating • negotiating agreement and commitment
Informing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • providing timely, updated information • listening, harnessing feedback • presenting and reinforcing messages
Appreciating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • matching rewards and recognition to individual needs • recognising and appreciating individual performance • recognising and appreciating team performance
Managing time/stress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • managing time • managing self/stress • managing conflict
Energising	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • initiating and energising the team • acting as a role model • building 'fun factors'

Figure 9.4 Event leadership model

to be directive and autocratic, such as in a crisis, and in others a leader needs to be collaborative and appreciative. This paradoxical and flexible approach seemed well suited to the dynamic event context.

Another feature of the model is an illustration of roles as part of a circle **without sequential order**. In most organizations in which business is conducted over a longer time span, the processes of leadership are largely sequential, moving from planning through to organizing and controlling. In contrast, event leadership requires a **higher level of flexibility**. Three roles were specifically identified as being important, and these are **appreciating, managing time and stress, and energising**. These are not roles that are generally made explicit in traditional leadership texts.

The quote that follows is an explanation of the concept of energising and the role it has to play in maintaining an upbeat atmosphere, which was one of the volunteers' main expectations (see also Figure 9.5). They would work hard, but they wanted to have fun too.

Energising

One of the biggest challenges for most events is the creation of a celebratory atmosphere. Look at it like hosting a party – you are the host and have to look like you are enjoying yourself while you are working like crazy for everyone's enjoyment. **Both customers and team members look to you to take the initiative to build and maintain the atmosphere and create the ambience**. Many event staff say that one of their motivators is the opportunity to join in and enjoy the atmosphere. The positive buzz that this can create can be quickly destroyed through poor leadership. Energising is the most intangible leadership role but it is arguably the most important. Careful use of gestures, tone of voice and the building of the 'fun factors' is

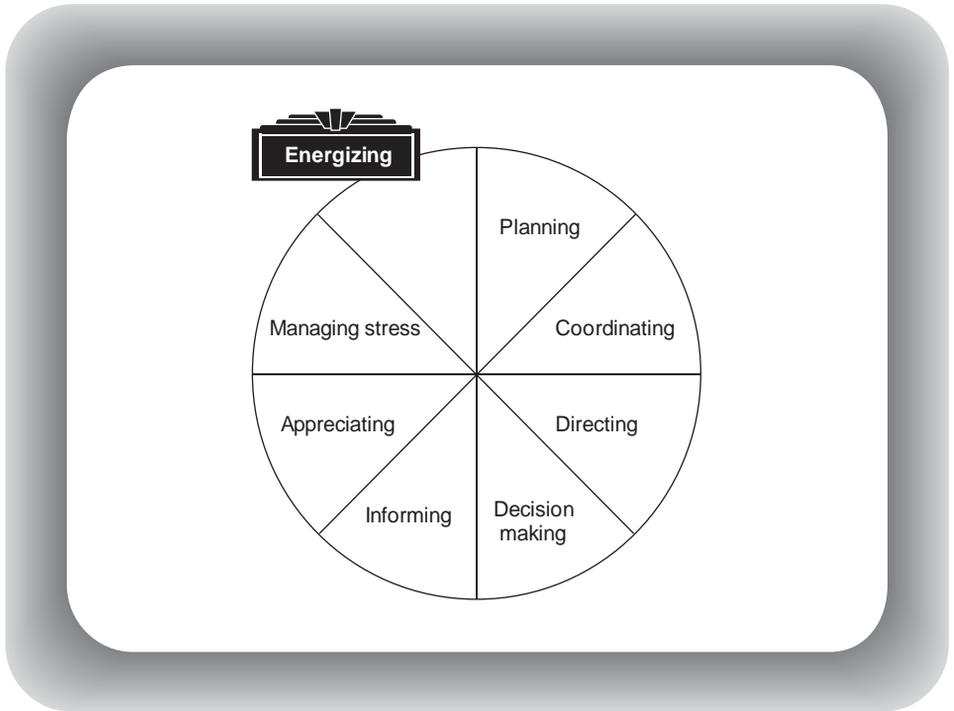


Figure 9.5 Energizing – an important aspect of event leadership
(TAFE NSW, Event leadership training, p. 4. Reproduced with permission.)

required to meet the expectations of all staff. For many of those involved fun is an essential motivator, and spontaneity, humour and high levels of energy are required. This is very different from traditional leadership roles within most business environments. Many energising strategies, as with appreciation strategies, can be planned in advance. Using icebreakers, games and jokes can help to create the right atmosphere.

Managing and co-ordinating the training programme

While for some events there is a specific functional area responsible for training, in many cases responsibility for training devolves to the supervisors. A marathon, for example, is unlikely to have more than one person assigned to the training role. A community children's festival might not have anyone in the role but expect training to simply evolve as the need arises. Learning would be largely an outcome of many planning meetings, and training would occur in the form of briefings before commencement.

Where it is a multi-venue, multi-session event, training requires much more attention. Typically, Human Resources or Training and Development (if there are such functional areas) would take overall responsibility for co-ordinating planning for the three workforce training sessions described earlier in this chapter, but would prepare and present only core components of the programme, including orientation. The event management team would be responsible for venue training, and supervisors for job-specific training. And sometimes training is outsourced, as it was for the volunteers in Case study 9.2.

Case study 9.2

Training for 600 roles

Commending the efforts of the Commonwealth Games volunteers

The enthusiasm of the volunteers can be felt right across Melbourne. Their vibrancy and friendliness is infectious, creating an awesome vibe in Melbourne and bringing the city to life. Their commitment is nothing short of inspiring.

They are the 13 500 unpaid volunteers of the Melbourne 2006 Commonwealth Games, and many have even come from interstate or returned from overseas to help make the Games a success. They have performed over 600 different roles, both sport-specific and generalist roles. For every role undertaken, training was provided by Holmesglen Institute of TAFE in everything from the specific skills associated with the role, to leadership and first aid, amongst many.

As a team, the volunteers have been providing the vital services that are crucial to running such a large international event, and it has been impossible not to witness the great work that they have been doing.

Senior officials, international guests and the public alike have all commended the high level of service provided throughout Games events particularly in areas for which most had previously no prior experience.

It is now our turn to show our appreciation for their extensive efforts.

The commitment of the volunteers to support the Games extends far beyond the eleven days of competition. Each volunteer has also contributed much of their time in training to perfect the part they would play. Melbourne 2006 and Holmesglen had initially identified that all volunteers should essentially share ten key qualities, being that they were Passionate, Determined, United, Confident, Adaptable, Respectful, Friendly, Fun, Proud, Professional.

The training programme was subsequently focused on incorporating these qualities into the roles being taught, ensuring the outstanding performances that we have been witness to over the last eleven days.

Despite the extensive commitment, the team of volunteers was only too happy to help out, citing the experience itself as being its own greatest reward. Even with such humility, Melbourne will be honoured to thank them with a tickertape parade on Monday, 27 March and all in and around this great city are encouraged to attend and say thank you.

Even if you can't make it, and you come across a volunteer, why not pass on the appreciation of the millions around the world who enjoyed the Melbourne 2006 Commonwealth Games as they are no doubt a big part of the success.

Thank you Volunteers, you've done us proud.

(Reproduced with permission of Holmesglen TAFE; for further information see www.holmesglen.vic.edu.au)

Reflective practice 9.2

- 1 What were the ten qualities shared by volunteers at the 2006 Commonwealth Games?
- 2 Why would an event outsource training, as it has here, to Holmesglen Institute of TAFE?
- 3 Most training for this event was face to face. Present a case for providing online training for the next Commonwealth Games.

Chapter summary and key points

This chapter has covered the full scope of workforce training, including management training, for the event planning team. This training can take many formats, and

be formal or quite informal, as with small events. There is no doubt that a lot of experiential learning takes place in the planning of an event. This is aided in many ways by training, mentoring and learning through trial and error.

In order to prepare the workforce for the operational period there are typically three levels of training: orientation training, venue training, and job-specific training. The larger the event, the greater the time between the first training session and the start date of the event. For a mega event, the majority of training would occur approximately three months before the event. For a small music festival there may be a session a week before the event and some specific training given on arrival on the first day.

Event leadership training is an essential component for all supervisors, particularly those who have volunteers as their responsibility. The energy and commitment developed by event leaders translates into outstanding customer service.

Revision questions

- 1 List and expand on four training topics for managers involved in the event organization during the planning phase. For a specific event, identify which of these would be the highest priority.**
- 2 Explain the three levels of training: orientation training, venue training, and job-specific training.**
- 3 What are three of the logistical considerations associated with developing the overall training plan for the event organization?**
- 4 Discuss why it is difficult to make a decision regarding online training for the event workforce.**
- 5 What is the aim of event leadership training? Give an example of an event for which you think this type of training would be imperative.**

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