

Strategic Sports Events Management
Assignment 1

Event Scoping and Feasibility

Wales is a country with plenty of potential to be a hub for a wide range of sports events and occasions. We are very lucky that the natural terrain and coasts are suitable for sports such as mountain biking, rowing, surfing, marathons, and other outdoor sports. I believe Wales could host national competitions and sporting events such as swimming championships and football tournaments all the way up to major international events such as world championships in most sports. The only downside to hosting larger scale events is that the country is quite small and may not be able to accommodate all athletes and spectators from countries involved. With this in mind, I have come to the conclusion that a 'IRONMAN' triathlon will be held across Swansea Bay including the Gower coastline. The IRONMAN race is arguably one of the most gruelling races that IRONMAN has to offer and has the most athlete entries and brings in the most spectators from around the world. It begins with a 2.4 mile swim, then transitions to a 112 mile cycle and finishes with a 26.2 mile run. "Aside from more extreme events like Ultraman, Ironman distance triathlon is considered the pinnacle of multisport racing." (Better Triathlete, n.d) I have chosen this international competition to be staged in Wales as initially I believe it will give Wales a feeling of character and independence to other countries within the United Kingdom. "Festivals and events play a significant role in communities' lives because they provide important activities and spending outlets for locals and visitors and enhance the local communities image." (M Saayman, 2012) There will be a decent boost in the economy from the athletes and spectators first of all getting over to Wales, then everything they do within the Country whether it be accommodation, transportation, food and drinks and using facilities to train before competing. This will all add up from a large group of people coming to Wales. "Achieving revenue from the operation of a major sports event that exceeds the initial investment is not as important as the long-term economic benefits that will come from tourism and future usage of the facilities." (Masterman, 2014) Wales is a beautiful country but sometimes sits in the shadow of bigger countries in the UK such as England, travellers to England completely outweigh the number of travellers to Wales, this is usually the case that London is a major city in the world. "Major sports events can develop high profiles for host cities, particularly if they are televised, and are claimed to be good for attracting future tourists after the event has been staged." (Masterman, 2014) Wales has had success in this strategy in the past by hosting an event which then attracts tourists during and after the event which may have not thought about coming here before. "Research was undertaken in Wales following the 1999 RWC. Three hundred and thirty thousand people were estimated as having visited Wales because of the event and only 20% had been to the country before" (Masterman, 2014) To get the best out of this event in all of these aspects, the Ironman will be held during the summer during July when most people will be on summer holidays and over a weekend meaning there should be a maximum amount

of people available to possibly come to the event. The bay and the Gower are very busy during these times of the year which will hopefully be a key part of increasing the amount of spectators. The first leg of the triathlon will start at Swansea Bay which has a “3 km Open water swimming” (Timeoutdoors.com, 2021) possible distance. The second leg will lead from the Swansea Bay to the Gower Peninsula which is “39 miles in length and takes the average walker four to five days to complete.” (Wired For Adventure, 2019) The final leg will head back down to Swansea Bay and finish towards the city centre. “At 10.4m Swansea Bay has the second highest tidal range in the world.” (Swansea, n.d.) As this is going to be quite a large event, a lot of people and stakeholders must be involved to allow the event to run smoothly. The main stakeholders we will need on board is the Welsh Government for financial backing and the Swansea Council. The council will be able to confirm road closures and increase police presence to help with crowd control and escorts throughout the event. Local businesses such as hotels, restaurants, sporting clubs, gyms and leisure centres can be brought on-board to offer their services to any travelling athletes and spectators which can make the journey to Wales more attractive. Wales has hosted an Ironman in the past in Tenby in 2011 which impacted the country in a positive matter, but I believe hosting in Swansea will surpass the success of the past event and can bring the country to the limelight. I believe this due to multiple factors, firstly the Ironman has become a famous race which thousands of people will apply for each race globally, it will have been 10 years of growth in popularity and participation which will be brought back to Wales. “Up to 10,000 spectators are expected in the town and surrounding area next month to see 1,500-plus competitors.” (Tenby ready to welcome Ironman Wales triathlon, 2011) A recent Ironman held in Staffordshire had a huge spectator level and the economic benefit can prove this, “An estimated £1.4 million being spent on food and accommodation by competitors” and “Spectators spending around £1 million.” (www.staffordshire.gov.uk, n.d.) These are recent numbers that the Ironman competition is bringing into other locations, if I can bring that to Swansea, I would definitely consider the event a success.

Strategic Marketing Overview

Now I will investigate how I will market the event to possible athletes to take part and get possible spectators around the globe to make the decision on visiting the country to watch the event. To begin with the marketing strategy, I must figure out how I will not only bring existing loyal spectators and athletes to the event, but also bring in new faces and try to keep them invested in the sport and the country. I will look too “develop a brand that will stick in the mind of the consumer, create awareness about the products and/or services offered, generate a perception in the mind of the consumer that leads to brand equality and loyalty and differentiate the organization and products/services from the competitor.” (Aicher, Newland and Paule-Koba, 2019) These factors create something within a customer which makes them feel like

they need to get involved and stay involved further on. Considering these factors, I believe branding the event around the culture of Wales and showing the beauty of the country will indulge the consumers further. Placing the event through the Swansea Bay and Gower means athletes and spectators will get the best of the coastline on the peninsula and shows the true culture of these areas. This could increase travel into the area in the future. Segmentation, targeting and positioning also will be a huge factor within the marketing plan of a successful event. "A mass-market approach entails selecting large umbrellas where the appeal can still be successful with little wastage of marketing effort and resources." (Aicher, Newland and Paule-Koba, 2019) If I can minimise the amount of wastage in marketing effort and resources, it means more can be channelled into successful segments and we can get as many people involved in the event as possible. I will look to target age groups and adjust marketing strategies throughout them all. Being able to identify each segment and the clear line between each of them will then help me to offer what I believe is best for that segment and promote what they can get out of the event. For the younger participants, show them the action of the race, the top-level athletes, and previous accolades, whereas going towards the older generation, I will look to push the more cultural side of the event, as many won't be able to get involved in the high intensity sport, but they can always get lost in the countryside visiting cultural spots such as the multiple beaches and cliffs which the event will run through. "The organizations marketing must be capable of effectively promoting and serving that segment." (Aicher, Newland and Paule-Koba, 2019) If the segment of the market is not benefitting as much as other segments, they are less likely to follow through and that's where competitors can take advantage and steal possible customers. Moving on to the marketing mix, I will investigate the 4 important P's which is the product, price, place, and promotion. The product I am offering any potential customers is the great Ironman in a heavily cultural place which they can reap the benefits of both aspects. "Consider the ways in which seasons are a considerable part of the offering in UK Sport" (Aicher, Newland and Paule-Koba, 2019) Holding the event during the summer means it is peak weather in the area throughout the year and it means people can use more of the facilities around the area and really get involved with the event. The next factor I'll look at is the price. Alongside with hopeful funding from the government, the price of the product will look to make a profit of any spending and funding from the start of planning. "Prices have to be determined according to the target market requirements" (Aicher, Newland and Paule-Koba, 2019) Any product offered to customers will have a reasonable price alongside suitable to the customer. The third factor is the place. "The key task for the event manager is to understand where each target market prefers to do its buying." (Aicher, Newland and Paule-Koba, 2019) I will place the marketing tools all online through the Ironman website where the Swansea Bay race will be an option. I chose this avenue as people from across the world may find it hard to buy entries or tickets to the event if the box office was in the area. If it is all online on an international website, it makes it easier and shows the event in its best light. The final factor of the marketing mix is the promotional aspect. This is the manner in how

I market the last three factors being place, product, and price. I believe it is all about correct advertising. Setting the tone through video adverts, radio adverts, social media presence and involving sale promotions will mean each factor should work successfully. "Successful marketing planning requires a methodical process that addresses the needs of customers while satisfying corporate objectives." (Aicher, Newland and Paule-Koba, 2019) By following all the marketing tactics I have mentioned in this section I believe that I will hit objectives I would set the event. These include initially hitting a large range of people across the globe and then hopefully bringing as many people from as many countries around the world to Wales. I would then like to see a further interest in the event and country where it makes it possible to bring another Ironman to Wales and maybe to another beautiful location in the country.

Appendix

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