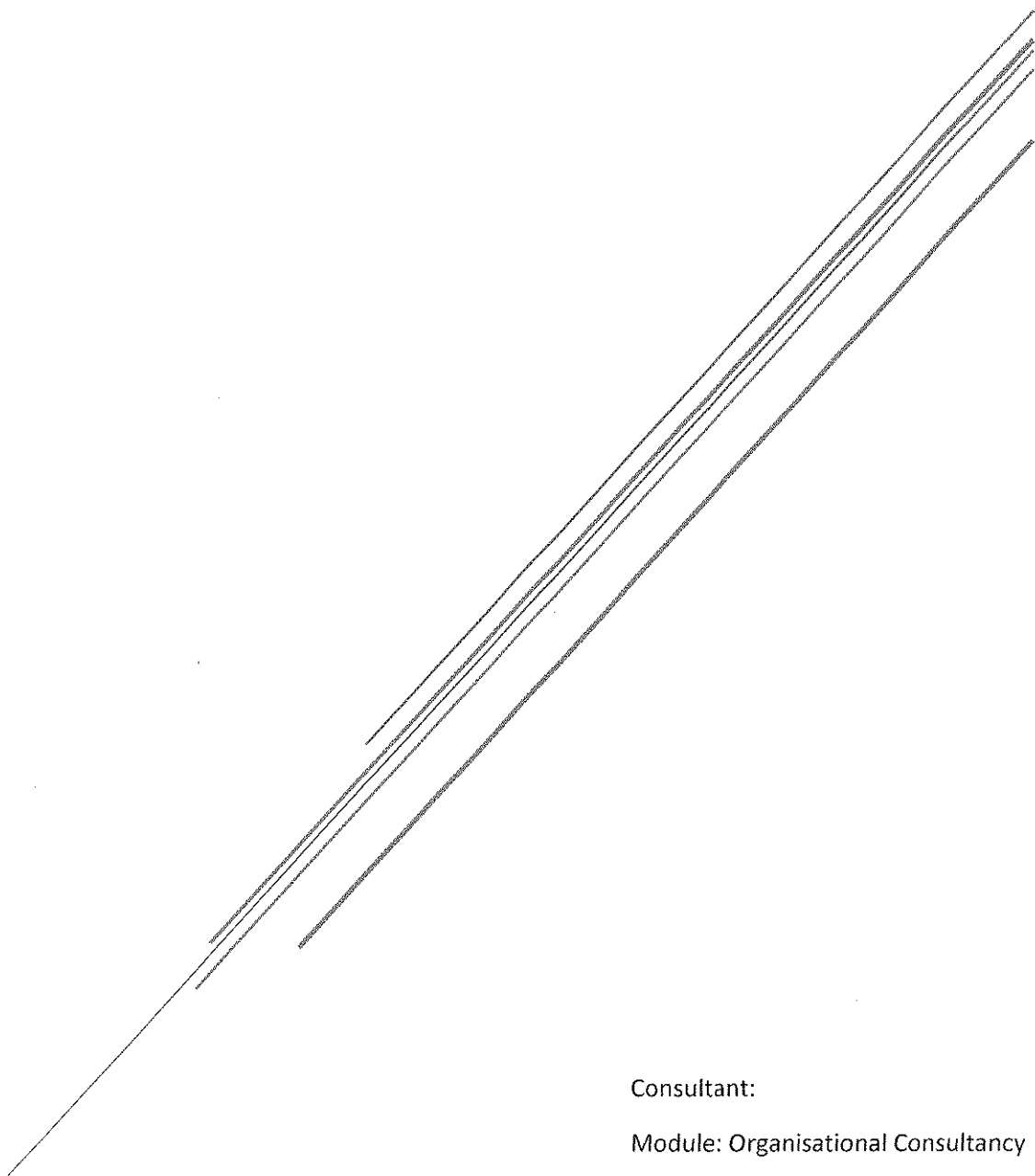


DIMBOLA MUSEUM & GALLERIES

ORGANISATIONAL CONSULTANCY REPORT



Consultant:

Module: Organisational Consultancy

Level: 6

Submission Date: 29th April 2014

Word Count: 3259

Contents

Executive Summary	2
1.0 Introduction	3
2.0 Literature Review	4
3.0 Research Methods	5
4.0 Research Findings	7
5.0 Discussion & Analysis	15
6.0 Conclusions	19
7.0 Recommendations.....	20
8.0 References	21
9.0 Appendices.....	22

Executive Summary

This project was carried out by the consultant to improve the events and operational system at Dimbola Museum & Galleries. This report presents the strengths and weaknesses and then puts forward suggested recommendations for the future.

The literature review demonstrates various definitions of events as well as perceived impacts from them based on multiple academic author's opinions. There is no one definition that can oversee events (*Bowdin et al, 2006*), however the review outlines key themes; an occurrence, an experience and a celebration. Smaller scale microevents do not have an impact of the wider environment and tourism, however they do represent community culture and create event literacy (*O'Toole, 2011*). These microevents have been found, by an events consultancy firm, to increase repeat visitors and footfall and raise awareness with lower levels of investment needed (*PMP Legacy, 2007*).

Primary research was undertaken by the consultant in the form of questionnaires, mystery shopper feedback, a competitor analysis, PESTLE and facilities audit and secondary research was gathered from in house records and statistics. All primary research involving secondary parties such as visitors of employees within the questionnaire or feedback were kept anonymous and biased data was reduced through high respondent rates and a variety of respondents.

Based on all the research combined, key themes are as follows:

Strengths	Weaknesses
Community and volunteer support	Poor communication
Teamwork	Lack of finances
Good event attendance	Expensive gift shop
High levels of job retention	Niche target market- older population
Good disabled access	Lack of marketing & promotion
Repeat visits and customer loyalty	Lack of interaction and activities for the younger generation
Hospitality	Poor planning
Low admission prices	

Key recommendations suggested to the organisation are to: improve marketing and communication, introduce volunteer training, a loyalty scheme and audio tour guides, cater to all age groups, create an event literacy and increase funding and finances.

1.0 Introduction

This document is a consultancy report created with the aim of improving events and operations at Dimbola Museum & Galleries, Freshwater Bay, Isle of Wight. The first objective will be to communicate directly with management regarding the rationalisation and importance of events. The second objective of the project will then be to outline the strengths and weaknesses that are present within the events system & organisation and determine areas that need improvement.

Over a three month period, Dimbola Museum will be analysed by the consultant, questionnaire respondents and mystery shoppers, so that at the end of the project, the third objective to put forward strategic recommendations based on the strengths and weaknesses can then be completed.

2.0 Literature Review

Getz (2012, p.37), defines events as; '*an occurrence at a given place and time; a special set of circumstances; a noteworthy experience*'. Cited in Shone and Parry (2010), Getz further goes on to express that individual events are unique and cannot be replicated, providing a once in a lifetime opportunity beyond everyday experience. Although Getz has formed various definitions over time, it is also thought that events in general cannot be all-embraced by one definition (Bowdin et al, 2006). Jago and Shaw (1998) state that the meaning and significance of each event varies nationally, internationally and locally and therefore an accurate umbrella definition cannot be formed. There is a celebratory aspect to events, as highlighted by Goldblatt (2005), however these are incorporated more in Hallmark and Mega events opposed to Minor Community Events (Getz, 2010).

Events are deemed by academic authors such as Jago and Shaw (1998), Goldblatt (2005) and Getz (2010) to have both positive and negative impacts on their environment. The benefits from events increases the support and use of them- it was the author; Wood (1982) whom identified the creation of a commercial events industry and adaption of them for secondary consumption and indirect benefit. As written in Bowdin et al (2006), it is down to the organisers of events to anticipate impacts. Academic author, Hall (1989) outlines possible positive and negative outcomes, including; social and cultural, physical and environmental, political and tourism and economic in which a table is created, allowing the reader to counteract each negative impact with a positive outcome. For example a social negative effect of events has been given as possible alienation, however although this could be reality for the minority, for those that participate there is shared experiences and bringing together the community. These impacts are also highlighted in various other literature (Bowdin et al, 2006; Shone and Parry, 2010 and Getz, 2012), and in O'Toole (2011) are identified specifically within community microevents. It is also stated here that although these events are 'below the radar of tourism', they represent community culture and create 'event literacy'. An events consultancy firm, PMP Legacy, have also analysed the importance of smaller events with key points being; generation of repeat visitors, positive footfall and awareness and they require lower levels of public investment (PMP Legacy, 2007). In Bowdin et al (2006), the importance of events has been related to the positive impacts it provides; community pride, increased community participation, improved profile and promotion, increased footfall and a rise in commercial activity.

3.0 Research Methods

Research will be practically based within the organisation- both internal and external, primary and secondary data. Primary data carried out by the consultant will consist of: mystery shoppers, questionnaires, PESTLE and competitor analysis and secondary data gathered from available information will include: a facilities audit, job descriptions and in house records. The information will then be put together to form part of a SWOT analysis, which will in turn assist in the creation of the recommendations.

With regard to research, there are two different approaches- interpretivism and positivism. With such an internal approach, an interpretivist approach could easily be applied to the project. This approach is associated with long term contact, small samples investigated in depth and the use of multiple methods to create an overall viewpoint whilst examining people (*Gill and Johnson, 1997*). This approach is also relative to qualitative data and inductive conclusions- *'a process whereby from sensible singulars, perceived by the senses, one arrives at universal concepts and principles held by the intellect'* (*Johnson-Laird and Byrne, 1991, p.16*). Qualitative data will include in depth information based on behaviours, experiences and opinions. On the other hand, a positivist approach is more scientific approach where the main focus is on facts opposed to meanings (*Veal, 2006*). This approach will be used when analysing quantitative data gathered from questionnaires and in-house statistics. Although an interpretivist approach might be less objective and possibly biased, the use of quantitative data is hoped to counteract this.

The first stage of the research will be to analyse the current events system. Research methods used to do so will include a facilities audit in which all facilities will be reviewed for their current capacity of use and appropriateness. The next step will be a PESTLE analysis as a structure to review the external factors on the organisation which might be effecting the events system or could do in the future (*Getz, 2012*). Alongside a competitor analysis, it will help outline any niches in community events.

The second stage will be the research carried out to determine strengths and weaknesses. Questionnaires will be given out through Survey Monkey, an online forum designed to store and tabulate answers. Survey Monkey was chosen to create ease of access for participants, however questionnaires will also be handed out in person to encourage more people to answer. The questionnaire will not ask for a name as to create anonymous responses that are more honestly given, more reliable and not persuasively biased. For this project the consultant will devise two questionnaires, one for employees and one for visitors. Before the questions were finalised, the consultant piloted the questions on two people to test the overall understanding of the

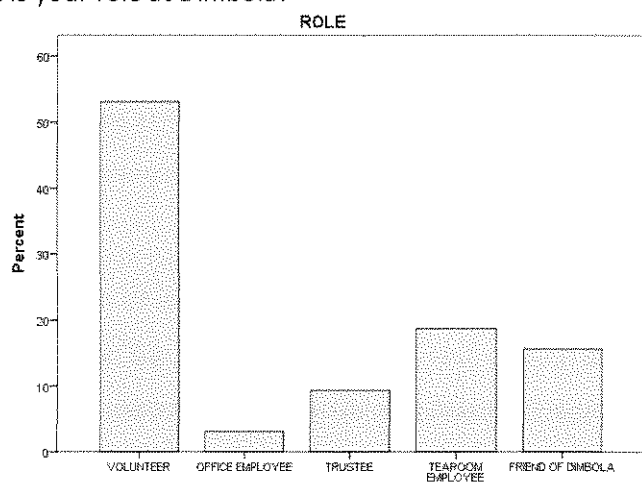
questionnaire (*See appendix 1 & 3 for both questionnaires before pilot*). In this process, on the staff questionnaire, question 1 was adjusted to include more answer options- this therefore meant that a larger group of potential participants were able to take the questionnaire. Question 4 was also added to give participants a chance to voice their opinions on the events at Dimbola. On the visitor questionnaire, the name question was taken out as this was not thought to be relevant and might have prevented participants from answering as honestly. Questions 6-10 were also changed from a number rating scale 1-10 to 1-5, reducing the options and creating more accurate results (*See appendix 2 & 4 for piloted version*).

The mystery shoppers although known to the consultant, will be anonymous to the organisation and its employees and will therefore provide reliable data. All shoppers chosen will be checked for any connections to the organisation, and any previous visits to avoid biased answers. Their personal information will also not be divulged to the organisation to avoid conflict if negative feedback is given. Although research has shown that some organisations believe mystery shoppers are outdated, the majority believe they can be used as key learning curves and provide honest information (*BBC Business Reporter, 2011*). It is not just about customer service, the service will provide information on; compliance, standards, training needs and overall continuous improvement (*Mystery Shoppers Ltd, 2012*).

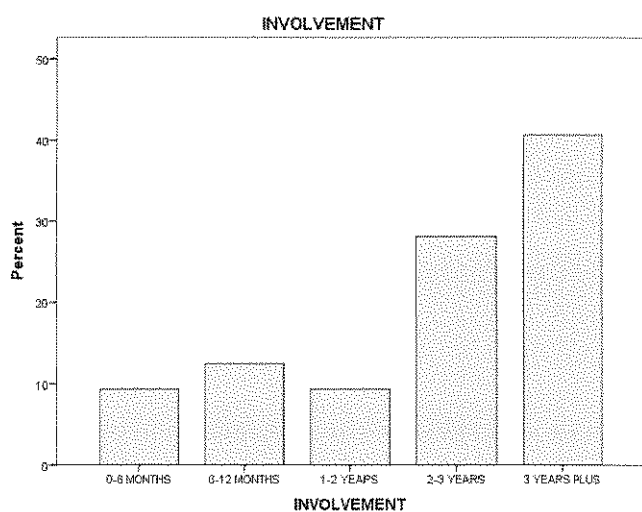
4.0 Research Findings

Staff Questionnaire

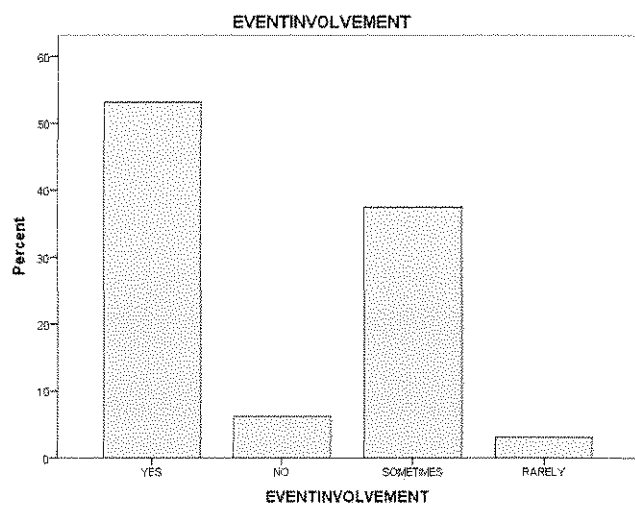
Q1: What is your role at Dimbola?



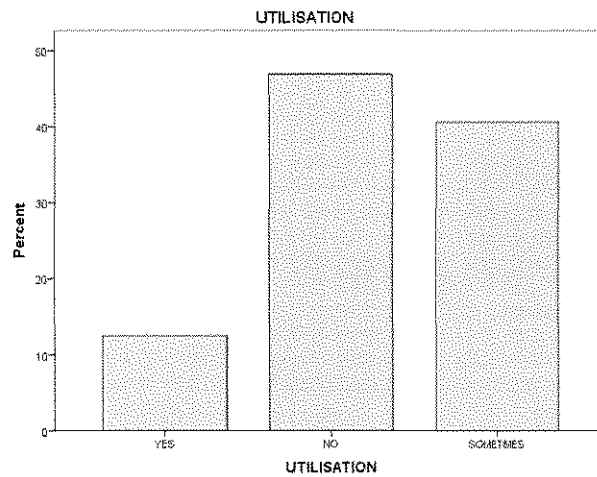
Q2: How long have you been involved/ a part of Dimbola?



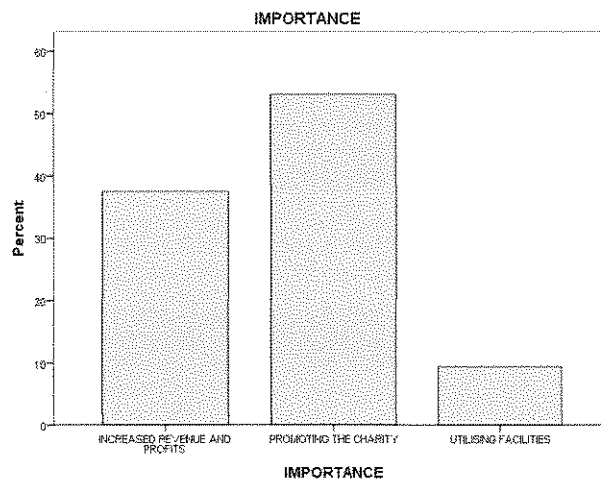
Q3: Are you currently involved with any of the events?



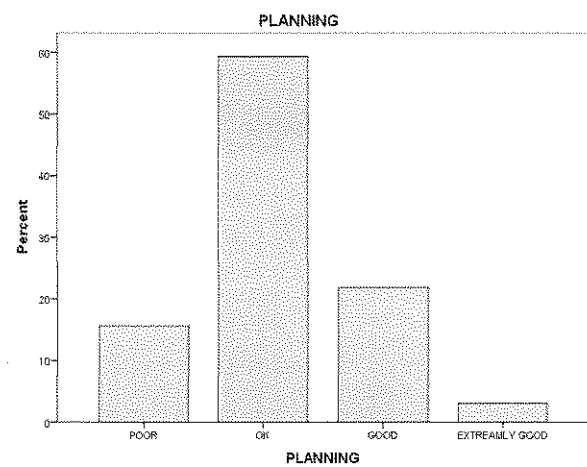
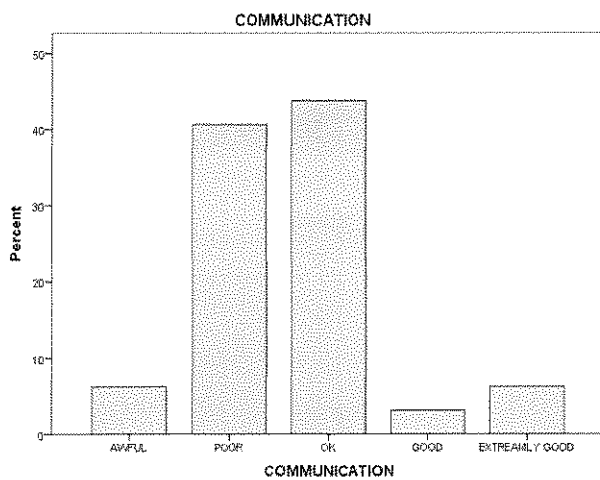
Q4: Do you believe facilities for events are being fully utilised?

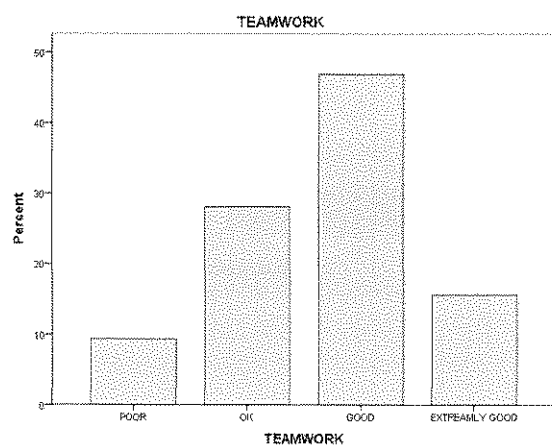
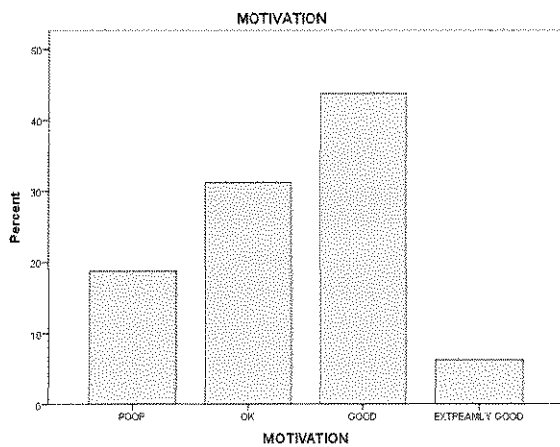
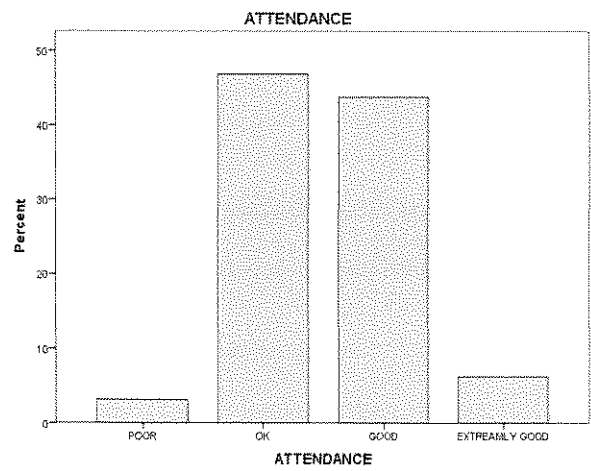
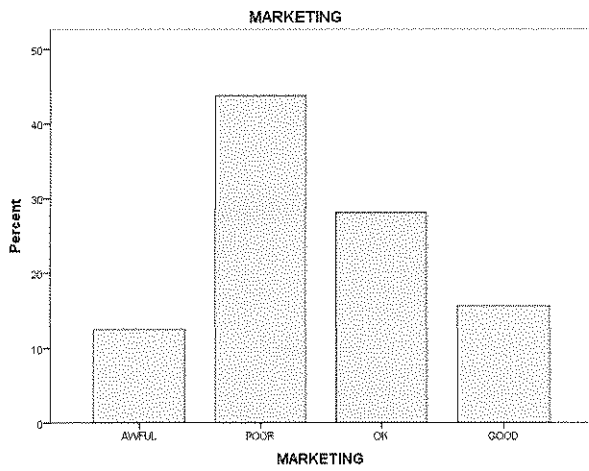
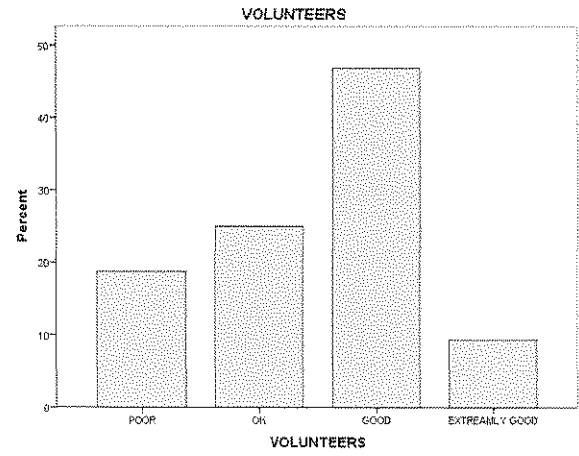
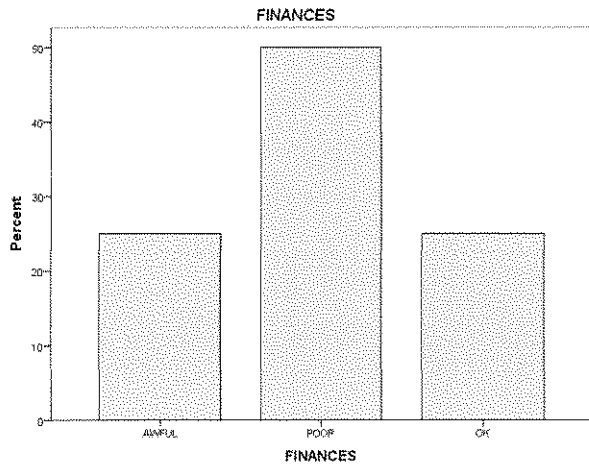
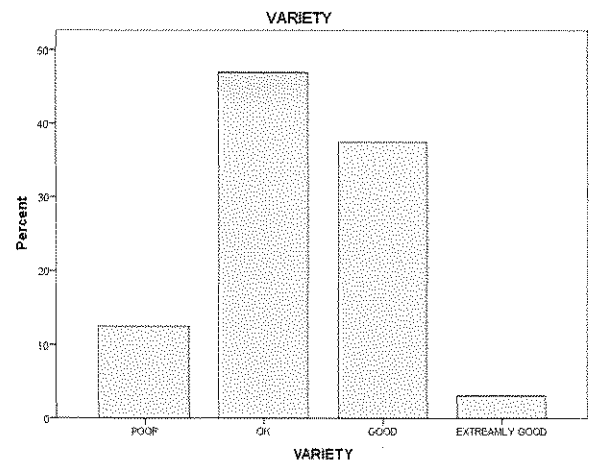
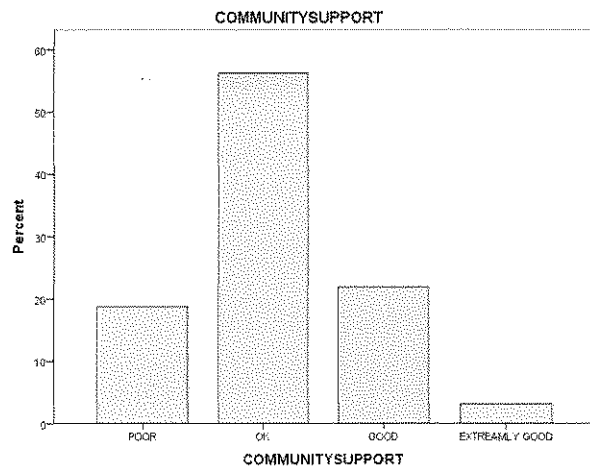


Q5: What do you believe to be the main importance of events?

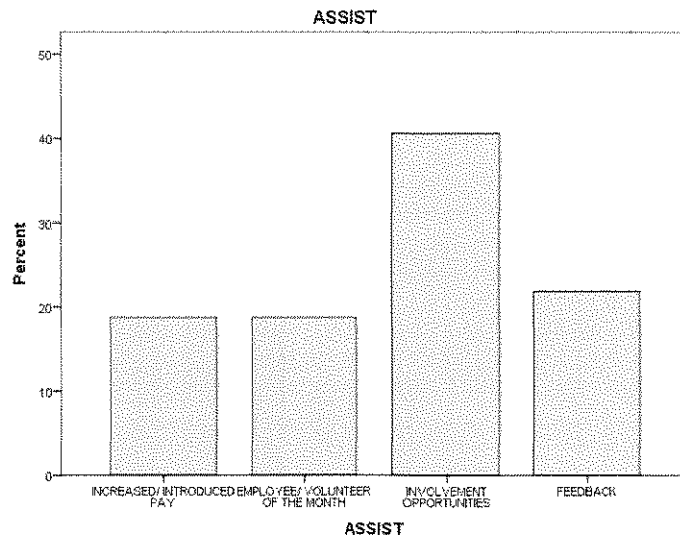


Q6: Rate the following factors on a scale of Awful- Extremely Good

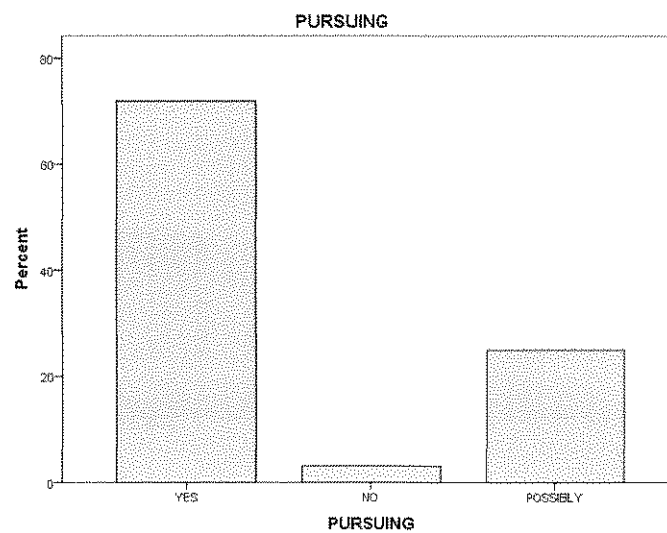




Q7: What would motivate you to assist with more events?

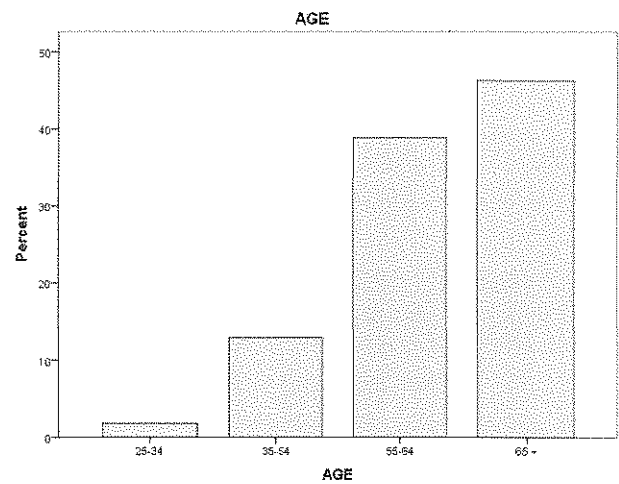


Q8: Do you think an events improvement project is worth pursuing?

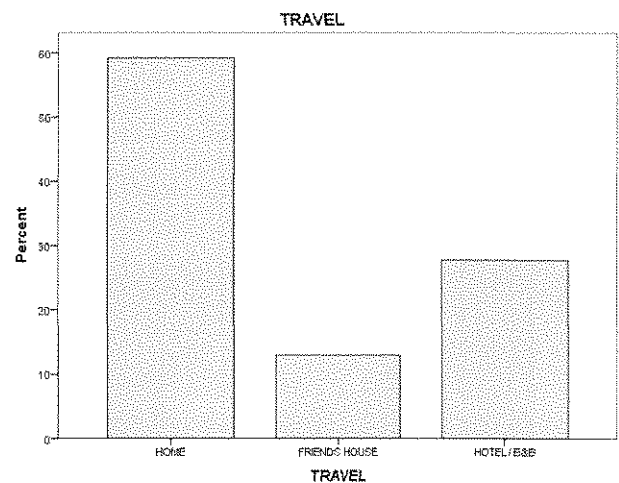


Visitor Questionnaire

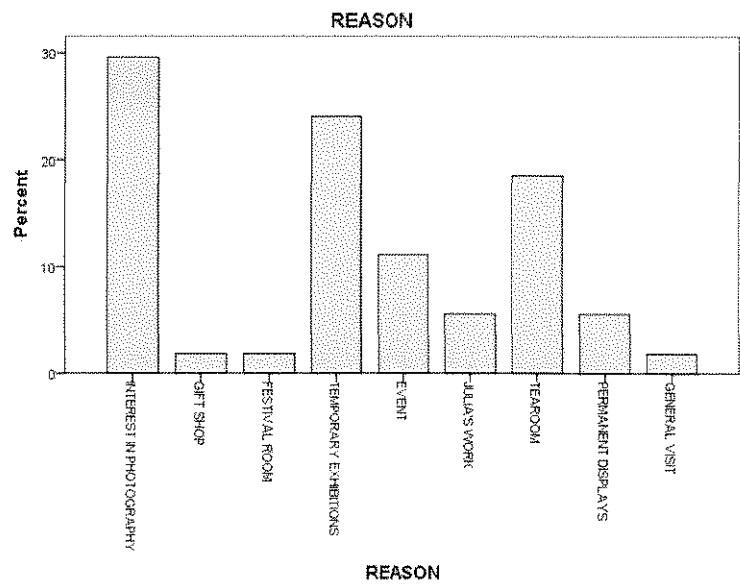
Q1: How old are you?



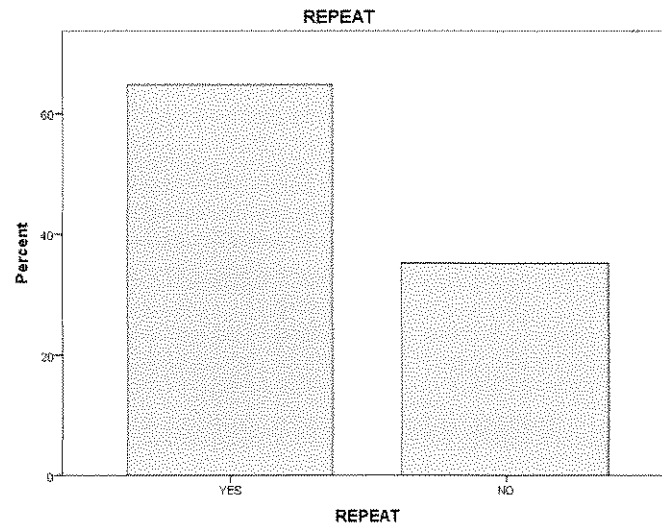
Q2: Where did you travel from for your visit today?



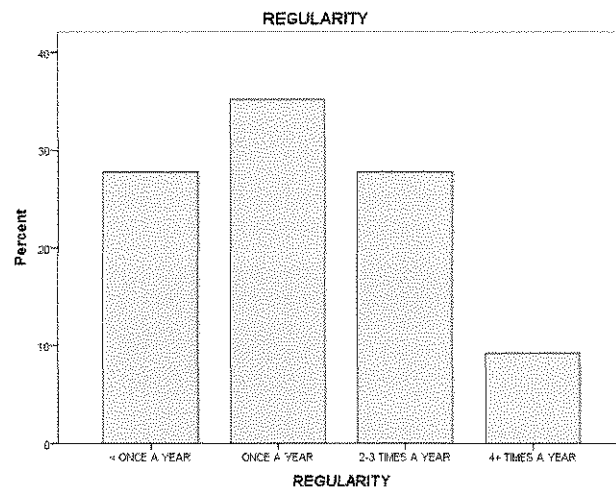
Q3: What is your reason for visiting Dimbola Museum & Galleries today?



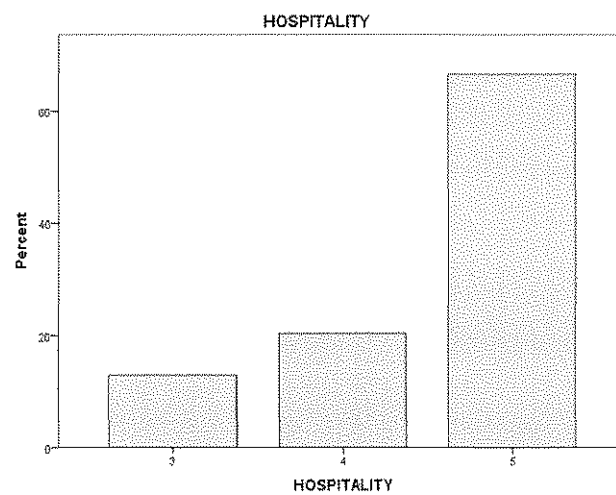
Q4: Is this a repeat visit within the past year?



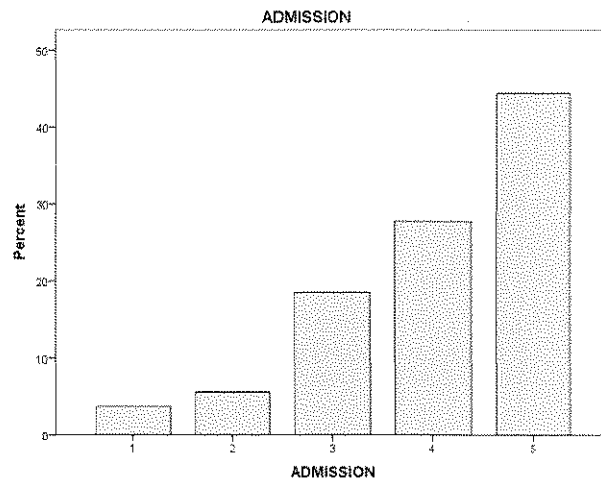
Q5: How often do you visit?



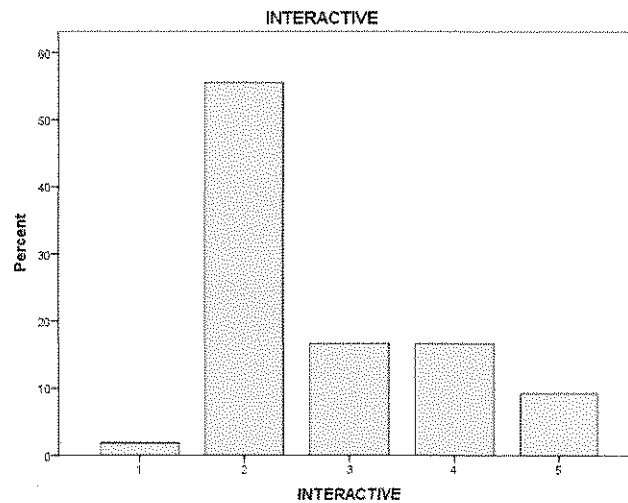
Q6: On a scale of 1-5 (1= lowest, 5= highest) how would you rate the hospitality?



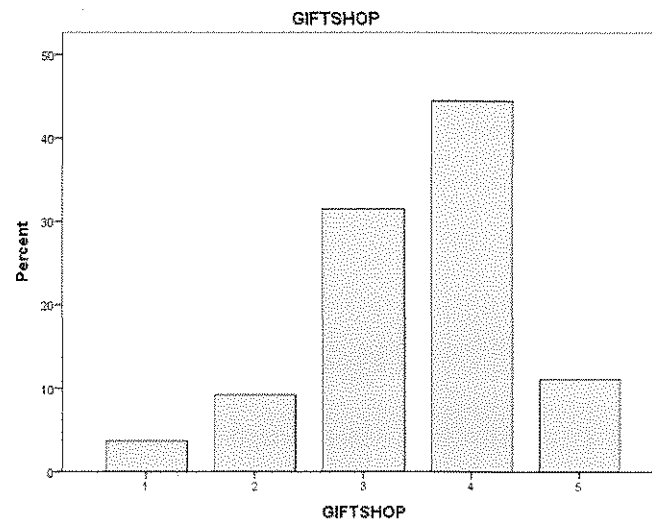
Q7: On a scale of 1-5 (1= lowest, 5= highest), how would you rate the admission prices?



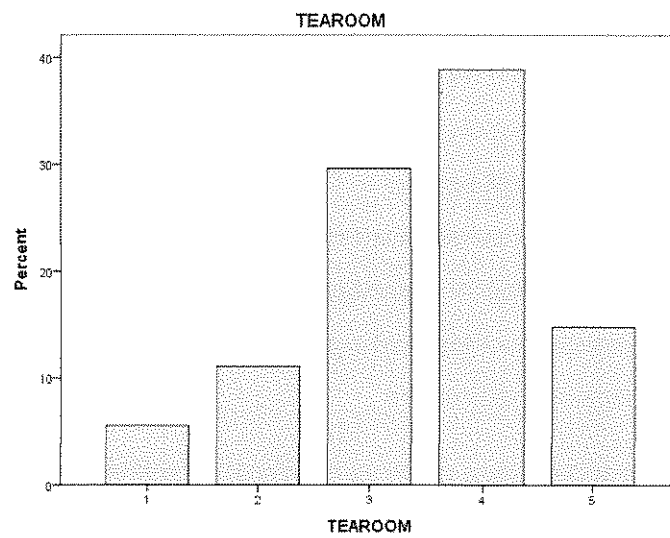
Q8: On a scale of 1-5 (1= lowest, 5= highest), how would you rate interactive facilities?



Q9: On a scale of 1-5 (1= lowest, 5= highest), how would you rate the gift shop?



Q10: On a scale of 1-5 (1= lowest, 5= highest), how would you rate the tearoom?



(See Appendix 5-14 for other project findings, including; a facilities audit, images, previous event information, questionnaire qualitative feedback, a SWOT and PESTLE, competitor analysis and mystery shopper feedback).

5.0 Discussion & Analysis

The employee questionnaire was only answered by 33 people- a limitation as a result of the small workforce within the organisation. This could be seen as unreliable with such a small amount of data, however because it is almost the entirety of the workforce, with an 82.5% respondent rate, overall reliable conclusions can still be gained. The visitor questionnaire was answered by 55 visitors over a set week period. With the questionnaire being given out during a low tourist season, limited customers were available to answer the questionnaire, however this was still a respondent rate of 65.5%. Both questionnaires were completed as depicted in the methodology- anonymous answers from both online and paper questionnaires.

The majority of staffing at Dímbola is made up of volunteers within the museum. With such a large volunteer base, the museum must ensure volunteer loyalty through role satisfaction and appreciation. Almost 70% of employees at Dímbola have been involved at Dímbola for two years or more, with over 40% of those over three years- suggesting a good level of loyalty within the organisation and job retention. The longer an employee has worked for an organisation, the more likely they are to understand the aims and objectives and work towards a common goal and ethos. Job retention also suggests that employees are satisfied within their workplace role; however it could also mean a lack of other opportunities. Some employees are dissatisfied, however almost 80 per cent believe there is ok/ good/ extremely good motivation levels within the organisation and almost 90% believe there are the same levels of teamwork. Those that have worked there for a long period may also become relaxed in their approach to work affecting their work competence and the organisation's efficiency. On analysing qualitative feedback from the staff questionnaire, some volunteers have noted that there is a lack of support for volunteers from other members of staff and minimal acknowledgement or feedback.

Loyal employment has resulted in strong support for events and fundraising. Almost 90% of employees are either involved in events periodically or on occasion have an input. Over 60% of visitors are also repeat attendees to events within Dímbola- suggesting visitor loyalty as well as employee. This could be seen as a strength because the events have support in the planning process and attendance; however it could also weaken the organisation process with a hindrance of multiple opinions and involvement. The more people involved, the longer an event takes to organise. This is also relevant with the trust board- more management means more people have to agree to budgets, marketing and so on before it can be published. Volunteer support can also benefit an event with free labour; reducing staffing costs, however on the other hand, volunteers are not trained to the same standard and level of service as paid staff. The organisation may have regular event

attendance and repeat visitors due to lack of competitors in the nearby area. There are other events venues on the island such as Quay Arts that are analysed in the competitor analysis; however these have a different location and events. The main competition for the organisation is within the food and beverage department, with at least three main competitors within less than a mile radius.

The utilisation of facilities, from the view of the staff, are not fully utilised and therefore there is room for improvement. Approximately 40% of those who answered the questionnaire said they thought sometimes event facilities were utilised- on further questioning, this was explained in differentiation between summer and winter months. Over the summer period, events are put on and facilities are used more often. On reviewing previous events, it is clear that the summer periods are used primarily in creating an events season at the museum, with profits from these events totalling over £3000. Events are limited in the winter periods due to poor attendance, and will therefore not be cost efficient for the organisation- the realization of this can be considered a strength. There could be the possibility of analysing the best times in the winter to put on events- ask local residents or regular visitors what they would like; day time or evening, weekend or weekday.

When asked a range of questions based on a rating scale (awful- extremely good), strengths and weaknesses within the staffing of the organisation and planning of events, were identified. Communication was rated by the majority as poor/ ok- connections between different employees and different areas of the organisation is limited and often forgotten. Planning was rated slightly higher, and noted as improved over the past few years. The highest percentage of respondents stated this was ok, with more also stating good/ extremely good opposed to poor. This could be due to the recent employment of an events coordinator and the realisation that events need time to plan, and the average month planning allocation time given for them. Although marketing and finances are a weak aspect, it is noted by staff that variety, community support and attendance are on average, good. This is supported by academic authors- according to the literature review in this report, it is stated by Bowdin et al (2006) that events can be expected to increase community pride and participation; this is already confirmed as positive impact related to events at Dimbola. The community support could have been gained through word of mouth and benefited by excess volunteer support from the local area. With poor finances, the organisation has limited marketing and promotion capabilities and therefore limits the size of its target market audience. Poor finances can also result in lack of maintenance and outdated facilities. Within the visitor questionnaire, interactive facilities were rated 2 on a scale of 1-5 with 1 being bad and 5 being good. Lack of interaction can be a result of lack of finances and as a result, limits the amount on offer to a younger audience.

Focusing more on the visitor survey, it has been outlined that an older age market is visiting the museum, with the majority of visitors travelling from home- suggesting a local visitor opposed to tourist. This could however, be biased due to the time of year the questionnaire was handed out and would possibly be lower than 60% if the same questionnaire was carried out over a summer period where there are a higher percentage of families visiting the area. Events currently have a low percentage as a reason for a visitor to visit the museum. Other reasons to visit with higher percentages include visiting the tearoom, temporary exhibitions and a general interest in photography. A possible reason for this is the amount of events put on that are unrelated to the museum and the attraction of the photography. With the lack of marketing, some visitors may not attend an event because of advertising, but attend because they are already within the proximity. Increased photography related events would correspond with the findings from this question. Increased events in general would also create 'event literacy', as stated by O'Toole (2011) in the literature review, and expand knowledge of events within the organisation and increase the percentage of people visiting specifically for this purpose.

Admission for events and the museum has an overall majority in the higher end of the rating scale, with over 80% of visitors rating 3 or above for value for money. With a higher percentage of visitors having a positive outlook on admission fees, this would also increase repeat visits and regularity of repeat visits. Further promotions for island residents could also increase these visits, and tap into a steady and regular income for the organisation. High ratings for general hospitality could also act as a strength in increasing return visits- if attendants are satisfied they are more likely to return custom. Smaller, regular events can also be related to generating repeat visitors (*PMP Legacy, 2007*).

As set out in the methodology, the mystery shoppers were kept anonymous to the organisation, were people that had never visited before and represented two different age categories. On reviewing the feedback, the qualitative data gained was less for creating a rating for the organisation in different areas, and more for suggestive feedback on improvements.

Mystery shopper 1, a middle-aged women working in the health industry was very generous with her feedback, and extremely pleased with the overall experience- all areas rated at least 8/10. The comments made by this shopper were positive in all areas; a welcome with a smile, good value for money, politeness, cleanliness, and the only negative aspect noted as a lack of parking. Mystery Shopper 2, a teenager who works in the hospitality industry, was more critical in the feedback, with ratings below 6/10 for some aspects based on her experience. The industry within which the mystery shoppers worked in gave a variety on standards expected- with Mystery Shopper 2 having worked in the industry, they had higher expectations of the attraction. It could also be argued that

the younger generation are more demanding than the older due to technological advances, which is also demonstrated in these findings. The hospitality in the museum was noted as 6/10 due to the abruptness of some volunteers on purchasing entrance tickets. As a younger audience, they thought the space was used well; however they believed there was a lack of modern photography, which would have interested them more. Another negative point for the younger audience was the lacking of interactive media- information being too high for young children to read and lack of items to be entertained by. Parking was also noted as limited and unmarked making it difficult to use the spaces to maximum capacity. In the tearoom, positive themes included; good food quality and local produces as well as a friendly service. Negative aspects included; poor wifi access and squeezed disabled access into the tearoom.

6.0 Conclusions

In conclusion to the findings in this report, it can be noted that opinions can vary depending on a visitor's level of expectations, and therefore this has a direct effect on data drawn from both questionnaires and mystery shopper forms. The questionnaires carried out for this consultancy document have benefited the project with reliable data from a wider source; however the mystery shopper feedback was limited due to a variance of opinions. Once all findings were combined and analysed, the consultant was able to outline key strengths and weaknesses.

The organisation benefits from both employee and visitor loyalty, and as a result has good event attendance and support. What weakens the organisation and events within is the lack of finances available, and from this, lack of marketing, maintenance, modernisation and qualified staffing. A result of the above might also be the targeting of an older target market, and a reason for minimal younger audience. Another weakness outlined was poor communication and lack of acknowledgement between trustees, volunteers and paid staff. The organisation has recognised when people are most likely to attend events, and because of this have created a summer events season, reducing their overheads events in the winter to benefit them with fewer, but more successful events.

In summary, the organisation suffers from a larger amount of weaknesses than strengths, however at current, the full impact of these negativities are kept at bay by the loyal workforce and support of the community. The organisation needs to focus on suppressing the weaknesses; and underlying problem branching over the majority of these weaknesses, is lack of finances, however the mass of opinions and events, with lack of communicating these is also another weakness that Dimbola must consider.

7.0 Recommendations

- Improve marketing- to tourists as well as local community. Create a marketing plan & introduce a marketing position to clearly define outcomes and methods.
- Continue to work as a teamwork and incorporate the ethos and aims of the organisation
- Improve communication throughout the workforce, between employees, volunteers and trustees to ensure correct instructions are given and events are clearly outlined.
- Volunteer training to expand event workforce and create free labour. Training volunteers would also give them something to work towards and a feeling of achievement which could in turn motivate them more in their work.
- Cater to all age groups- more interaction and areas adapted for the younger generation. To expand the audience visiting the museum- a lack of interaction was noted by one of the mystery shoppers as well as the consultant. Introduce adapted children's entertainment- lower visual boards, easy to read writing, modern photography as well as traditional, digital media, games relating to photography.
- Create an event literacy- expand the variety of events. Cultural events have been suggested through qualitative feedback from the questionnaires
- Increase funding and finances through fundraising events and projects that bring in more funds. Look into possible Government funding and local grants that could benefit the museum with maintenance costs and modernisation.
- Audio recorded tour guides- this ensures constant guides. In person tour guides are expendable and do not last forever. A good tour guide should be recorded to provide guests with extra information.
- High priced shop aimed at niche target market. Expand the items in the shop to suit everyone. Lower prices and mark up so that more people are likely to purchase the stock.
- A better planning system- event operational plans would ensure everything is in order, budgets are cost for in detail, contingency plans are in place, staffing and H&S requirements.
- A loyalty scheme for locals has been suggested by staff- maintaining community support. Examples of this can be seen at Pembroke castle in South Wales where locals who can provide proof of address, can purchase an annual pass at the price of one entrance ticket.

8.0 References

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9.0 List of Appendices

Appendix 1: Staff Questionnaire before pilot

Appendix 2: Staff Questionnaire after pilot

Appendix 3: Visitor Questionnaire before pilot

Appendix 4: Visitor Questionnaire after pilot

Appendix 5: Facilities Audit

Appendix 6: Images of Dimbola Museum & Galleries

Appendix 7: List of previous events

Appendix 8: Questionnaire Qualitative Feedback

Appendix 9: Tabulated SWOT

Appendix 10: PESTLE

Appendix 11: Competitor Analysis

Appendix 12: Various Job Descriptions

Appendix 13: Mystery Shopper 1 Form

Appendix 14: Mystery Shopper 2 Form

