Volunteer impact & management at New Zealand sporting events

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Where are we going today?

- Research background
- Research questions
- The literature
- Methodology
- Findings
- Discussion
- Conclusions & limitations

Research background

- Own volunteering experiences
- Student volunteering experiences

Research questions

- RQ1: What impact do volunteers have on the successful delivery of sports events in New Zealand?
- RQ2: How do event organisers of New Zealand sporting events manage event volunteers?
- RQ3: To what extent do event organisers of New Zealand sporting events consider volunteer motivations, expectations and satisfaction in their volunteer management approach?

The literature

- ...and more...

Methodology

- Sporting event organisers invited to complete an online survey (62 questions)
- Survey link distributed through NZAEP, Sport NZ, councils, sports associations, VolunteerNet
- Events delivered between 2009 & 2013, included volunteers
- Mixed question type survey
- 99 surveys received, 83 complete, 16 incomplete
Findings

- Sporting events in New Zealand
- Volunteer recruitment
- Volunteer management & impact

Findings

Sporting events in New Zealand

- Range of events
- 40 sporting event types
- 60% of participants were volunteer event organisers
- All regions represented, except Gisborne & Chatham is
- 29% of events in 2012, 64% in 2013

Findings

- Sporting events in New Zealand
  - 7,577 volunteers deployed, average 76.5 per event
  - 30% up to 10 volunteers, 24% up to 20, 31% up to 50
  - Commitment: One hour to 15 days, majority one day or less required
  - Confirmation: Up to a year prior, most a fortnight
  - Volunteers deployed: Pre, during & post-event

Findings

Volunteer recruitment

- Volunteers sourced: Through previous volunteers, the organisation, friends/family
- Common roles: Registration, administration, runner
- Rewards/recognition: Verbal thank-you, written thank-you, meals, t-shirt/uniform

Findings

Volunteer management & impact

- Expected skills/knowledge: Specialist, technical, general
- Expected qualities: Customer service, common sense, commitment
- Strengths: Enthusiasm, energy, passion; skills, experience, knowledge
- Weaknesses: Time constraints, unaccountability, reliability
- Management approach/volunteer impact

Discussion

RQ1: What impact do volunteers have on the successful delivery of sports events in New Zealand?

- Without volunteers, the event would not happen
- Volunteers are on the “front line”, the “face” of the event
- Volunteers save the event money on human resources
- More volunteers enable the event to grow
Discussion

RQ2: How do event organisers manage event volunteers?

- Volunteers are reliable, easy to manage and do not require constant supervision
- More volunteers than required are booked
- Volunteers are interchangeable
- Volunteer time maximised, facilities provided
- Lax approach to training
- Volunteer guidelines / policies / code of conduct

Discussion

RQ3: To what extent do event organisers consider volunteer motivations, expectations and satisfaction in their volunteer management approach?

- Skills & attributes taken into account when allocating roles
- Assigned roles according to preference
- Motivations and expectations for volunteer involvement understood; aware of why the volunteers are participating

Conclusions

- Volunteer impact is significant
- Volunteer dependence is a risk
- Volunteer management approach satisfactory
- Scope to professionalise volunteer management

Limitations

- Limited by local, sports focus
- Limited by quantitative approach

Questions?

Thank you