Exploring contingency planning for adverse weather conditions.
How well do Event Managers plan for inclement weather?

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May 2014
Declaration

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This Thesis/Dissertation/Research Project entitled:

*Exploring contingency planning for adverse weather conditions – How well do Event Managers plan for inclement weather?* is submitted in partial fulfilment for the requirements for the Unitec degree of *Master of Business*.

Candidate’s declaration

I confirm that:

- This Thesis/Dissertation/Research Project represents my own work;
- The contribution of supervisors and others to this work was consistent with the Unitec Regulations and Policies;
- Research for this work has been conducted in accordance with the Unitec Research Ethics Committee Policy and Procedures, and has fulfilled any requirements set for this project by the Unitec Research Ethics Committee;
- Research Ethics Committee Approval Number: 2012-1002

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Exploring contingency planning for adverse weather conditions –

How well do Event Managers plan for inclement weather?

“An investigation into the impact inclement weather has on organised events, and the project planning implications for Event Managers.”

Trudi Bridges

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ABSTRACT

This research investigates the impact inclement weather has on outdoor events and the project planning implications for event managers. How well do event managers plan for inclement weather and how many just hope for the best?

In March 2012 hundreds of New Zealanders had their weekend plans disrupted due to an impending ‘weather bomb’. The Met Service had issued a strong wind warning with gusts of 120km/h predicted along with heavy rain.

The role of the event manager is to deliver the event according to the event scope and organisational goals and objectives through the development of an event plan (Getz, 2012). This is achieved through the event management framework of the development phase, operational planning phase, implementation, monitoring and management phase followed by an evaluation of the event (Mallen & Adams, 2008).

Closely aligned is the contingency planning framework of identifying and managing risk. Contingency planning is the advanced preparation of action to meet unexpected events that could significantly impact the occasion should they occur. For every aspect of the event there should be a contingency plan.

To discover how well event managers’ plan for inclement weather a questionnaire aligned to the event management process was developed to explore event managers’ preparedness for the effects of weather on their events. Fifteen event managers of outdoor events from throughout New Zealand participated in the research. Potentially there will be those whose events have suffered detrimentally to inclement weather conditions and those that have not.

Results showed event managers in New Zealand are well aware of the perils Mother Nature can deliver to an event. There was evidence the event managers have good monitoring systems in place to monitor impending weather conditions. They are also cognisant of the need to provide shelter and protection from the elements for their patrons.

The research results indicated elements of weakness when planning for contingency in the areas of budget setting and seeking appropriate weather insurance to protect an organisation from potential financial losses that inclement weather may bring.
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1. INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

1.1 Overview

Exploring contingency planning for adverse weather conditions – How well do Event Managers plan for inclement weather?

This thesis is an investigation of the impact inclement weather could have on organised events, and the project planning implications for event managers. What are the planning considerations for event managers in relation to project management, financial planning and public relations to ensure a successful event outcome?

Interesting aspects of event management became quite topical during March 2012 during an unseasonably wet summer and following the Christchurch earthquakes, raising the question are weather and natural catastrophe contingencies built into an event plan by event managers? Occurrences of this type highlight the project planning, economic and customer satisfaction impacts such weather conditions may have on the management of events.

Leading up to the first weekend in March, a weather forecast predicting a major ‘weather bomb’ was broadcast through the media. Hundreds of travellers and event-goers had their plans disrupted by the wild weather that blasted the North Island (Stewart & Ensor, 2012).

The media stated “Sport's big weekend is under threat from North Island 'weather bomb’ ” (Donnell, 2012). “The MetService has issued a strong wind warning for Wellington and Wairarapa, coastal Marlborough, Hawke’s Bay, Gisborne, with gusts between 120 and 150km/h predicted until later tonight” as reported by the New Zealand Herald (“Weather Watch: 'Weather bomb' headed our way”, 2012). The article continued with "This deep, deep low will barrel in like a bull in a china shop with potentially damaging winds,” stated MetService forecaster Daniel Corbett (“Weather Watch”, 2012).

The definition of a “weather bomb” is a severe depression in the weather pattern (Sanders & Gyakum, 1980). The first use of the term “weather bomb” was by two meteorological researchers, Sanders & Gyakum (1980). The name “weather bomb” relates to the destructive potential of rapidly deepening lows.
During the course of that weekend in view of the impending weather bomb, Kellogg’s Nutri-Grain Ironman New Zealand in Taupo was postponed and shortened to a Half Iron Man distance on the Sunday. The Unitec orientation week concert Sounds in the Sun was moved from Unitec Campus to Vector Arena. The Hyundai Longboard Surf Competition at Port Waikato was postponed a day. There was the possibility of the Black Caps third test against South Africa being postponed. In Wellington the semi-finals of the Configure Express Pro Women’s Challenger tennis competition, with prize money of US$25,000, had to move indoors due to the heavy rain (Stewart & Ensor, 2012). Additionally the Martinborough Fair was cancelled for the first time in 35 years (Stewart & Ensor, 2012).

It would be of interest to the researcher to know whether the event managers had considered a contingency plan for the wet weather that may have prevented the event being cancelled. The process of event management requires strategic considerations of how to manage these occurrences and the associated impacts they may have on an event. The inclusion of a contingency plan would address this.

An example experienced in the work-place of Sport Northland occurred in April 2012. Northland experienced unseasonably heavy rain resulting in one month’s rainfall falling in one day. This led to sewage overflow into the harbour, where 650 children were due to swim in a triathlon. The swim leg had to be cancelled and the whole event reorganised, leading to additional planning, logistics and public relations tasks that had to be incorporated into the event management plan. The question can be asked of the organisers, was there consideration of these risks in advance or was there simply a ‘knee-jerk’ reaction to managing this catastrophe?

Natural disasters can strike at any time. The Christchurch earthquakes of 2010 and 2011 had a devastating effect on the city’s infrastructure. The Rugby World Cup Limited (RWCL), event organiser of the Rugby World Cup 2011, had scheduled a number of games to be played in Christchurch. Due to the destruction of AMI Stadium there was some doubt as to whether these games could be played. Mike Miller, chief executive of the International Rugby Board said “Clearly for an event of this size we have contingency plans in place for all sorts of events. All I can say is that Rugby World Cup 2011 will go ahead and all matches will go ahead in New Zealand” (Mairs, 2011).
RWCL recognised the importance that the development of a risk management framework and contingency planning played a significant role in tournament preparation (Cumming & Crummy, 2011). RWCL had a commercial agreement with sponsors that requires RWCL to refund sponsors should the tournament not proceed (Andrew, 2011). A full cancellation would be very damaging financially to the RWCL so the arrangement of cancellation, abandonment or postponement insurance was a priority (Andrew, 2011).

Outdoor events are particularly vulnerable to weather. The purpose of the present research is to establish event managers’ preparedness in times of inclement weather and how many just hope for the best. What impact does adverse weather have on an event with regard to the project management of event planning, logistics and financial planning, the communication plan? Are there already areas of commonality relating to planning for inclement weather established among event managers when planning an event? Examples of industry established planning elements to be investigated include the monitoring of weather forecasts, contingency event dates, cancellation procedures and communicating the event status with attendees.

Event planning continues to be a growth industry. It is anticipated that the results from this research can be used to inform those within the project management and event management industries. This could provide an opportunity to develop a best practice model.

The aim of this research is to determine the effects on an event of failing to have a contingency plan for adverse weather.

The research will address the likelihood of inclement weather occurring and assess the number of event managers that forecast such weather and highlight the potential financial and public relations impacts on event outcomes. The reason this issue should be considered when planning an event is the detrimental effect inclement weather can have on overall financial planning, the setting of ticket prices to ensure a profit and ability to cover any potential losses should the event not go according to expectations. Public relations impacts are those areas of event management that affect the customer experience and enjoyment level of the event for patrons.
Third party organisations, such as the media and television networks and service providers that are associated with the event are also affected by inclement weather. Questions relating to media engagement and contractual obligations include issues such as should the event differ from the proposed outcomes are sponsors obligated to pay agreed sponsorship? Do sponsors continue to offer prizes agreed too? Television coverage paid for in advance that does not occur due to a cancellation will affect not only the broadcast networks’ programming, but may result in the non-reimbursement of contractual costs.

Marketing aspects such as the event’s reputation, participant satisfaction and safety of all concerned needs to be considered. Examples of these are a published refund policy and an event cancellation procedure when considering contingency planning elements required in an event management plan.

New Zealanders have an affinity for the outdoors which is perhaps a partial explanation for a continuous increase of events relating to or located in the outdoors. The ramifications of inclement weather on an event are considerable whether it is a highly attended marque event or a small scale community event.

For example the wet March 2012 weekend mentioned previously also affected a fundraising opera event held in a park environment in Whangarei. Discussions with the organisers revealed they were unable to donate the anticipated amount of funds to their nominated charity due to the unforeseen cost of rain marquees that had to be hired in order to provide shelter to ticket holders. This cost had not been budgeted for in the planning process so came off the bottom line profits. This leads to the question, were insurance measures explored to mitigate these additional costs in the planning process?

The research outcomes will provide assistance to event managers within the industry by improving event planning procedures across a range of event genres such as sports, music and the arts. It would contribute to enhancing the quality of the event experience for their event participants and ensure ongoing patronage to create sustainability of the event.

Potentially the research will illustrate the importance of contingency planning for inclement weather and the importance of factoring contingency planning costs into the event budget from the onset.
The aims of this research study are:

- Through the use of a research questionnaire, determine if and how well event managers plan for contingency.
- To establish the potential adverse effects on events should contingency planning not be in place.
- To use the findings of this research to provide an insight into contingency planning to present event management planning examples to the event management industry.

1.2 Research Question

Defining the research question enables the researcher to narrow down the issue to be investigated and to stay focused while conducting the research thus preventing the inclusion of irrelevant material, or introducing unrelated concepts (Collis & Hussey, 2009).

The researcher has identified a business problem within the event management industry. Event management professionals are increasingly facing a business problem relating to the cancellation and postponement of events. Success of events is being compromised due to external influences such as inclement weather. Evidence of this is the previously mentioned events that were somehow all affected by the weather, highlighting this as a business problem. What impact these occurrences have on an event is the identifiable business problem. Specifically the problem is the unforeseen financial and planning implications of inclement weather due to failing to manage potential risk in the form of a contingency plan from the outset of planning an event.

The symptoms of the problem are the cancellation or rescheduling and or lower level of participation and satisfaction with an event due to inclement weather interruptions. This may result in a financial loss due to unforeseen expenses such as hiring of protective coverings for patrons such as marquees, loss of income due to the lower volume of entry fees paid, refunds or compensations required to be paid to participants.

Problems regarding the event outcomes arising from not having a contingency plan for the disruption to the event include an unsatisfactory result for the participants and potential for a negative financial situation for the event management company.
Thus the underlying research questions are;

1. To what extent do event managers plan for inclement weather and what are the financial implications on planning for weather in an event management plan?
2. What is the ensuing cost of contingency for an outdoors event?

These two components of the business problem can then be conjointly written into the research title as:

*Exploring contingency planning for adverse weather conditions – How well do Event Managers plan for inclement weather?*

*“An investigation into the impact inclement weather has on organised events, and the project planning implications for Event Managers.”*

1.3 Thesis Outline

The objectives of this research stem from the research problem of whether event managers plan for catastrophe and what are the financial and operational implications of a catastrophe on an event. As stated previously these intertwined issues are the major components of the business problem.

The following research objectives have been identified.

1. **To determine what adverse weather contingency elements an event manager considers as part of the contingency plan.**

This objective is to investigate the contingency elements an event manager includes in the event planning process. Planning evidence sought is the presence of a contingency plan, insurance and liability, alternative venues, planned rain dates, refund policies and notification procedures for patrons.
2. To establish how a natural weather catastrophe affects the logistical running of the event on the day.

Should postponement or cancellation be necessary there are procedures required to accommodate patrons due to a potential change to the timing or order of events. How event staff and volunteers alter their performance is a consideration that is relevant. The purpose of this objective is to establish how on the day management of the event would be affected by weather interruption.

3. Consider the perceived financial impacts on the financial budget for the event should a weather catastrophe occur.

Financial impacts experienced are the additional costs faced due to a catastrophe, such as additional hireage of equipment, wages paid, refunds and lack of attendance affecting overall bottom-line. Alternatively there may be no impact on the event budget experienced.

4. To determine if there is an impact on customer satisfaction levels should an event experience a weather catastrophe.

How well did the patrons cope with the adverse conditions? Discovering feeling around whether the enjoyment level for the event declined or if there were negative financial implications will be explored.

The thesis structure has been developed to incorporate these research objectives. This thesis follows the structure and research processes of the literature review, methodology and research design, followed by the findings and discussion of these and a conclusion.

The literature review provides a background to the events industry, an overview of the event management industry framework and the event typography for this research. An explanation of the contingency planning process and exploration of weather catastrophe will establish a link between these two fields of literature, providing the foundation of the business problem outlined in this research.

A thorough investigation of published research relating to contingency planning and the event management industry is contained in the literature review. This element of the
literature review will establish a foundation on which to establish the industry standard for contingency planning and weather related catastrophe.

A mixed methods research model was adopted to conduct research. The research methods section will provide justification for this selection and a description of the data gathering process will follow.

The findings section of this thesis will present an illustration of the contingency planning processes currently modelled by the event management industry. Analysis of collected data will determine how event managers approach the planning process. A comparison of commonality and difference within the planning and execution of their events and relating back to the research questions will be outlined.

The knowledge gained from this research will affirm the processes the event management industry in New Zealand has in place regarding contingency planning. It may indicate that a best practice model already exists, or alternatively the industry may benefit from the findings of this research to enhance the industry standard of event planning when delivering outdoor events.
2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Prologue

A literature review is defined as the examination of existing published works on a given topic. This review then guides the research and identifies where there is a knowledge gap, providing the opportunity to research a given topic in detail (Collis & Hussey, 2009).

To provide a foundation of understanding into the burgeoning event management industry this literature review is structured thematically on topics defining the development and management of events. This will illustrate how the event management field and risk management fields link together contributing to the contingency planning process. The topics examined include the event management framework and event typology followed by an exploration into contingency planning processes and determining definitions of weather catastrophe.

Research into the event management field is relatively new as previously the events sector research was linked to the tourism field of study, starting with event tourism in the 1970’s (Getz, 2012). Allen, O’Toole, Harris and McDonnell (2011) refer in their text to the 1980’s as being the start of the event management industry. Event management is now emerging as a separate research focus reflected in the development of journals such as Events Management and Journal of Convention and Event Tourism (Shone & Parry, 2010).

Getz (2012) describes the event-related research to date as being applied research, and makes the recommendation that researchers and practitioners combine skills in order to develop research projects for event management application for practitioners and the theoretical goals of academics. This cohesive knowledge will enhance the professional standards of event practitioners within the industry, leading to improved event outcomes.

The search for knowledge pertaining to the event management industry specifically addressing weather catastrophe proved difficult to locate thus suggesting a knowledge gap. A review of prior industry specific research on event contingency planning shows research largely focused on risk management based around participant and spectator safety. The limited amount of published research found on the impacts of weather and natural catastrophe on events offers an area of opportunity for future research.
The growth of this industry and the evolution of outdoor events show there is call for attention from researchers to explore this facet of event management, as their increasing number, scale and variety of genres have an impact both socially and culturally as well as economically (Harris, Jago, Allen, & Huyskens, 2000). Long, Robinson & Picard (2004) provide reasons for this growth which include international tourism as part of globalisation shifting festivals from being relatively local in location to that of attracting broader audiences such as tourists. Getz (2012) adds consumers want unique, personalized and memorable experiences in the entertainment, tourism and events sectors.

The words used to search for relevant literature on this subject are: sports, special events, catastrophe, risk management, event management, economic impact, contingency planning, crisis management, environmental risk and managing risk.

2.2 EVENT MANAGEMENT DEFINED

2.2.1 Events Defined

Looking back to early history, events were created by communities to become part of an intrinsic social system often determining town planning, requests for structures and calendarised to determine seasons and defining communities (Robinson, Wale, Dickson, 2010). Events were an occurrence bringing together people in communities for a shared experience.

Getz (2012) refers to the common dictionary definition: an occurrence at a given place and time, a special set of circumstances; a noteworthy occurrence. An event is a gathering of people at a predetermined time, place and designated purpose and the term ‘event’ refers to any public or private planned occasion and includes a broad range of event genres (Silvers, 2008). Events can provide the opportunity for recreation, celebration, entertainment, cultural significance, business outcomes and to satisfy social interaction and enhancement (Getz, 2012).

Getz (2012) refers to the use of the term ‘industry’ in order to legitimise an activity and to gain governmental support. To use the term industry is appropriate when referring to event
outcomes relating to economic goals. The event industry has seen rapid global expansion and an economically lucrative industry has evolved (Dakle, 2013).

In New Zealand the burgeoning event industry now gains support from the Government and corporations with Governments now encompassing events into strategic and economic development plans for image promotion, revenue and associated measurable benefits to communities. Event examples of this are the Rugby World Cup, America’s Cup yacht race and the Wearable Art Awards. This development is reinforced in a growing body of literature with research published on the impacts of events on cities. Allen, O’Toole, Harris and McDonnell (2011) state “Their ability to attract tourist visitors and to generate media coverage and economic impacts has placed them at the core of most government event strategies and destination marketing programs” (p.15).

The New Zealand government under the Ministry of Economic Development and through the passing of the Major Events Management Act 2007 developed the ministry arm, New Zealand Major Events, to work alongside the event management industry. Their role is to act as an advisor to the government on the economic value of New Zealand major events, partnering with the major events sector to boost sector capability to secure major events in New Zealand (Ministry of Economic Development, 2013). This is achieved by investing in major events that align themselves to the government’s major events strategy and to be a resource for event managers by providing online resources (Ministry of Economic Development, 2013). Their vision is for New Zealand to become a world destination for major events, which then generates economic, social and cultural benefits to the New Zealand economy (Ministry of Economic Development, 2013).

One only needs to observe the interest the Government, media and public displayed in the 2011 Rugby World Cup, and 2013 America’s Cup result. Cities compete vigorously to host these global events as the perception is that they will generate significant social and economic benefits and drive associated tourist phenomena (Banjo, 2011). This is reinforced by a study by Sourtar (1993) on the America’s Cup which found that the public’s perception is that hosting an event has a positive influence in their host city. A well-planned event that is successful will harness community pride and encourage the return of tourists to future events (Dakle, 2013).
An example of how the economic benefits of an event can enhance a city is the 2009 Ellerslie International Flower Show. Robinson, Wale, & Dickson (2010) provide statistics relating to this event. NZ$19.7 million was directly channelled into the Christchurch economy in its first year in that city, generating 80,000 visitor numbers to the city, 33% of which were international tourists. This influx of spending by these tourists reached the retail, accommodation and hospitality sectors.

An organised gathering of people is a planned event and can be described in numerous ways (Getz, 2012). The gathering may be a concert, a festival, a marathon or a race. This thesis will engage the word ‘event’ to encompass all situations of the gathering of people to conjointly participate in a common activity.

2.2.2 Event Management Framework

The term ‘event management’ refers to the practice of managing planned events (Quinn, 2013). An event management framework has developed over time from this practice and involves researching, designing, planning, coordinating and evaluating events (Goldblatt, 2002). Berridge (2012) comments that event organisers are ultimately responsible for the design and creation of events so need to draw on tools and models to be able to do this.

Events are unique experiences and not easily replicated, however lessons learned from one event experience can be of value when planning future events (Ferdinand & Kitchin, 2012). In recognition of the requirement to develop a framework to document the formal processes of event management a group of researchers established The Event Management Body of Knowledge (EMBOK) in 1999 (Robson, 2009).

EMBOK is recognised by event professionals as a framework of event industry management procedures. Allen et al. (2011) state “EMBOK is an attempt…to produce an international model of event management” (p.174). This body of knowledge is continuing to be developed and even in its current form it is a useful resource for event managers to formalise event management processes within their organisations (Silvers & Nelson, 2009). An important defining feature of EMBOK, which separates it from many of the published textbooks, is the recognition of the importance of risk management (Silvers, 2008).
The focus of academic research is the planned event (Berridge, 2012). Berridge (2012) refers to Getz (2007) who states planned events as being the “intent to create, or at least shape, the individual and collective experience of the audience or participants” (p.9). Thus “the core phenomenon of event study is the planned event experience and its meanings (p.9). The role of the event manager is to deliver the event according to the event scope and organisational goals and objectives through the development of the event plan (Getz, 2012).

The development of a professional career in the industry of event management has occurred progressively since the 1990’s, prior to which the industry was managed by a large volunteer contingent (Allen, O’Toole, Harris, & McDonnell, 2011). Professional expertise was often sought from aligned fields of management, accounting and marketing (Ferdinand & Kitchin, 2012). As event budgets, compliance and regulatory requirements have increased, so has the demand for skilled event professionals developed to meet the industry specific requirements (Getz, 2012). Stakeholders are requiring event managers to be more accountable for their activities by aligning event outcomes to stringent event budgets, corporate governance and the sustainability of the event (Adema & Roehl, 2009).

A search for published research for the event industry indicated there were few articles related specifically to event management prior to 1980. What was published was closely linked to the tourism industry, expanding into the research topic of event tourism during the 1980’s (Getz, 2012). As the event industry matured, the publication of specific event management literature by academics lead by Goldblatt, Getz and Hall started to appear in the 1990’s (Getz, 2012).

This knowledge gap was identified by the tertiary sector, highlighting the need for industry specific skilled professionals that has led to academic inclusion of event management studies (Allen et al., 2011). Most tertiary institutions now offer event-related subjects if not as a specific event management qualification, then as course electives in many related programmes such as business, marketing, communications, tourism and sport (Allen et al., 2011).

Following this legitimisation of the event management industry by the tertiary education sector came the development of industry associations such as the Australian Centre for Event Management (www.ACEM.UTS.EDU.AU) (Allen et al., 2011) and the New Zealand
Association of Event Professionals (NZAEP), established in 2005 (NZAEP, 2013). “As the event management industry grows, associations play an increasingly significant role in professional support to the industry by ensuring the continued growth and success of event management professionals.” states Arcodia and Reid (2002), (pp 57-75).

“The mission of the New Zealand Association of Event Professionals is to provide leadership for the industry through advocacy, education and professional development” (NZAEP, 2013). The Associations provides a forum for industry professionals to focus on the industry and to support event professionals by developing educational and networking resources, annual industry conferences and an industry award programme.

To date academic research into the roles and responsibilities of event management associations is scant (Arcodia & Reid, 2002). Strategic planning relies on the published research of other professional disciplines to formulate a standard from which to operate and develop services to members (Arcodia & Reid, 2002).

The development of these associations has become necessary due to the continued growth of the industry and the need to provide legitimacy around the event management framework. The purpose of such associations is to provide training, research and a membership fraternity to give event management companies legitimacy (Getz, 2012).

2.2.3 Essential qualities of Event Managers.

Findings into the suggested qualities of an event manager has come largely from published educational texts by authors such as Allen, O’Toole, Harris & McDonnell (2011), Bowdin (2011), Getz (2007), Goldblatt (2002) and Silvers (2008).

Consensus has begun to emerge on the essential qualities of event managers as the industry has matured. Berridge (2012) states “Planned event experiences suggest that an event organiser can design, plan and create experiential moments that present guests with deeply valued and memorable experiences” (p. 9). Events now have a recognised commercial value and have become a commercial commodity. The corporate world readily identified the powerful image and brand association with events, introducing a sponsorship, branding and marketing mix to the skills required (Allen et al., 2011).
Attributes associated with the desired qualities of an event manager are vision, leadership, and adaptability with developed skills in organisation, communication, marketing and managing people (Bowdin, Allen, Harris, McDonnell, O’Toole, 2011). Parent, Beaufre and Seguin (2009) add financial skills, credibility and public relations skills into the mix. These are all antecedents of networking ability, a skill often required in order to manage the political, business and sporting body components of an event.

Silvers (2008) refers to the EMBOK Knowledge Domains when determining the essential qualities of an event manager.

**Figure 1 Five areas of Knowledge Domains (Silvers, 2008).**

The areas of knowledge are not prioritised in any particular order; they are simply noted as skills and a knowledge component desirable in event managers. Some events will require less or more of a particular skill than others Silvers (2008), and it will be the skilled event professional who can draw on the appropriate skill set for the event they are managing.

Much of the content within published textbooks aligns the event management profession to the skills required of project management. Allen et al. (2011) refers to the production of an event as a project. Project management follows the same phases as event management (Allen et al., 2011) and Silvers (2008) refers to the EMBOK event process as the initiation, planning, implementation, event and shutdown phases. The project management approach requires a degree of flexibility when formulating events, as events are susceptible to change right up to the day of the event (Allen et.al, 2011).

The event management industry is required to operate in a controlled environment with compliance for health and safety, transport and environmental issues and governing body
regulations all having to be considered. For this reason the methodology of action research will be applicable as the findings of the research can be applied by the event management industry. Collis & Hussey (2009) refer to Lewin (1946) that the action research process formed a cycle of planning, acting, observing and reflecting. The event planning framework incorporates a development phase, operational planning phase, implementation, monitoring and management phase followed by an evaluation and renewal phase (Mallen & Adams, 2008).

Adherence to the identifiable strategic phases of event planning will enhance the preparedness of event managers for catastrophe and ensure a successful outcome for the event.

2.2.4 Event typology for research

The Oxford Dictionary defines typology as a study or analysis of a classification according to a general type (Typology, 2014). Event type can contrast enormously ranging from a locally held community event to a national sporting event. Events vary in terms of scale and complexity, stakeholders involved and the level of financial commitment required (Raj, Walters & Rashid, 2009).

For the purpose of this research the event type selected is that of planned events, versus the unplanned event. Getz (2012) considers that planned events have goals and outcomes determined by the producers of the event and have a strong influence by key stakeholders and lie in the realm of professional event managers. Unplanned events are spontaneous in nature and their purpose is self-defined and even to an extent unclear (Getz, 2012). Figure 2 below provides an illustration of event typology categories for planned events.
The table categorising the types of events considers in what form the event looks like, whom the event targets, what the purpose of the event is and the event outcomes for stakeholders. ‘Form’ states Getz (2012) (p. 41), comes from various “programmic elements of style”. The event type determines the event management framework required to develop an event management plan from which to execute the event. The naming of the event invokes different images and meanings to people so the use of the term festival, conference or sport championships will draw a particular audience and create a certain expectation of the event programme (Getz, 2012).

The present study targeted planned events that are specifically held outdoors for data collection and analysis. The type of events was not genre specific and it was the aim of this research to obtain respondents from a broad spectrum of event categories. The targeted events covered the sport, festival, music and arts genres.
2.3 CONTINGENCY PLANNING DEFINED

O’Connor (1978) suggests “contingency planning has been defined as the advance preparation of a course of action to meet events that are not expected, but will have significant impact on the organization if they occur” (p. 13).

There is little empirical evidence and research providing event managers information regarding weather contingency planning and the benefits of including this component in a risk management plan for an event. A review of published literature indicated the focus of risk management for events is largely on participant and spectator safety and complying with regulatory bodies (Getz, 2012, Silvers 2008, Allen et.al, 2011).

A critical analysis of research indicates that operational risk is a result of inadequate or failed process, whereby a firm is unprepared for risk (Hopkins, 1986). Risk is defined as “The possibility of loss... that develops from the variation of outcomes from a certain set of circumstances” (Schirick, 2003) (p.12). Risk is not about taking risks, or of that which is risky, but merely uncertainty (Silvers, 2008). A definition of risk management is ensuring a firm is prepared for unexpected stresses or circumstances (Breden, 2009).

This general operational research, drawn from the insurance, risk management and financial industries shows relevant parallels to the event industry (Silvers, 2008). Event risk is not a single possible occurrence but a series of potential variables for which an event manager must be prepared (Tarlow, 2002). Miller (2007) states for “every aspect of an event there should be a contingency” (p. 13).

The event manager’s role is to develop the contingency plan but the difficulty is determining what to include in a contingency plan. Event manager’s need to look for the “what if” scenario (Schirick, 2003). These words are the essence of the potential risks that may occur at an event. The purpose of assessing risk is to identify situations that an event may potentially experience (Hopkins, 1986). This statement leads back to the question presented with regards to outdoor events; How well do event managers plan for inclement weather? Putting this question into very simple terms, “What if it rains?”.

So, risk management is the context in which to anticipate uncertain occurrences and to be able to control, prevent, reduce, eliminate or transfer risk and to manage change (Hopkins,
This in turn leads to the ‘Plan B’ process of contingency planning (Schirick, 2003). The term ‘Plan B’ refers to having an alternative plan in place on which to fall back on (Silvers, 2008). Silvers (2008) refers to ‘Plan B’ when discussing contingency plans highlighting the need to have strategies and plans in place ready to manage risk should they materialise. If what is originally planned does not work, what alternatives are available? Following the identification of risk, contingency plans should be developed to mitigate the consequences of the identified threats by addressing the disruptions that will occur (Silvers, 2008). Zuckerman and Ahrens (2010) add, “If you fail to plan then you plan to fail” (p. 25). Plan B’s are developed to reduce loss (financial or otherwise), damage or injury to attendees. When relating this to weather preparedness, one may ask how many event managers cross their fingers and hope for the best?

2.3.1 The contingency planning process

Silvers (2008) defines contingency planning as “The strategies and arrangements made to deal with and recover from uncontrollable known risks and unforeseen risks should they materialise” (p 51). No event is risk free and risks will vary from event to event (Silvers, 2008). Whilst contingency planning can ensure a greater level of preparedness for the event there will always be unexpected deviations from the event plan due to the complexity of events (Mallen & Adams, 2008). Allen et al. (2008) describes risk in the event context as “the likelihood and consequence of the special event or festival not fulfilling its objectives” (p 588). The more potential risks that are identified and included in a contingency plan, the better the event manager’s response will be in a crisis and will also mitigate the chance of incurring a loss (Berlonghi, 1994).

A contingency plan reduces the chances of a deviation; however should a weather disaster occur a contingency enables the management of that deviation (Mallen & Adams, 2008). The contingency planning process is akin to other project planning techniques (Ferdinand & Kitchin, 2012) and consists of the following phases as outlined by Hopkins (1986).
The first step in the creation of a contingency plan is the identification of key risks that may affect the event. It is recommended the event manager initiates a contingency meeting with event stakeholders and staff to discuss each component of the event and identify any potential risk factors (Mallen & Adams, 2008). Different events are exposed to different risk factors. Risk factors for event managers to consider include the event management categories of health and safety, crowding, security, environmental risk, alcohol and drugs, transport, financial and legal risks (Berlonghi, 1994). The focus of this research is the environmental risks pertaining to outdoor events. “Seemingly simple risks, such as rain, can be quite complex” (Allen et al., 2011). Inclement weather is an identified risk for an outdoor event and weather has become a universal issue for event managers (Silvers, 2008). The weather on the day of the event can strongly influence the level of enjoyment experienced by patrons and overall success of the event (Jones, Scott, & Khaled, 2006).

Detecting the imminence of the event refers to the likelihood of the identified risks occurring and evaluating the level of potential damage the event may impose (Hopkins, 1986). Once the risks have been identified they should be documented within a contingency plan and monitored (Silvers, 2008). The risks are categorised by the likelihood of them occurring (Allen et al., 2011). A rating scale using categories from ‘rare’ to ‘almost certain’ is an example used by Emergency Management Australia, cited in Allen et al., (2011).

The example of rain occurring during an event in Indonesia held during the monsoon season is given a rating of ‘almost certain’. This planning phase also includes the tracking and monitoring of risks to alert the event manager that the event risk is going to occur (Hopkins, 1986). Applied to the identified weather risk for outdoor events, an indication as to how the
event manager will monitor the weather conditions to be noted in a contingency plan would be deemed appropriate (Allen et al., 2011).

Developing adaptive responses to the event are the actions required by the event manager to mitigate loss should the identified risk occur (Hopkins, 1986). Referring to the above example for weather risk, it is hoped the event manager recognises this risk and schedules the event at a more appropriate time of year. More pertinent examples to manage the weather risk would be the evidence of strategies an event manager has included in the pre-event planning phase. Examples of these are the provision of shelter and other protection from the elements for the patrons, inclusion of rain dates, and cancellation procedures (Tarlow, 2002).

To be included in this action phase of contingency planning is determining at what point a contingency plan is put in place (Hopkins, 1986). Moses (2006) describes an event that would go ahead ‘rain, hail or shine’. How much rain is being referred too and what other contingency measures are in place to manage the wet weather? The event manager is required to know what level of risk can be tolerated for the identified risks to determine when the contingency plan should be initiated (Ferdinand & Kitchin, 2012). It is recommended event managers conduct a trial run of the responses developed to manage identified risk scenarios to ensure they have the ability to manage the contingency plan (Silvers, 2008).

### 2.3.2 The elements of a contingency plan

“For every aspect of the event there should be a contingency plan. Anything from a no-show speaker, to the venue for your event going out of business (Miller, 2007) (p 13). Alternative ways to manage and overcome risk should be considered and noted in the contingency plan (Silvers, 2008).
Managing the costs of an event is an important planning and control requirement of an event manager (Ferdinand & Kitchin, 2012). The event manager needs to ensure the funds spent on the event are in line with the established budget to avoid incurring a loss for the event. Ferdinand & Kitchin (2012) encourage the development of a contingency fund to meet any unexpected costs or overruns. They continue with “Never count on perfect conditions – always have a contingency and plan for the worst” (p 140). The contingency budget amount required will be dependent on the size and complexity of the event. Allen et al., (2008) gives the example of event companies adding 10% to 15% to their overall budget to allow for contingency expenditure.

An established internal and external communications plan is an important aspect of a contingency plan. Should a contingency plan be activated the message and instructions must be conveyed to those personnel required to implement it (Silvers, 2008). These communication procedures could be crucial in times of extreme emergency perhaps requiring evacuation of the premises. The communication plan needs to include how to inform staff, performers, suppliers, attendees, and relevant government authorities of any catastrophe (Silvers, 2008). The communication plan should consider how the public is informed of the event, signage required and ongoing communication to attendees on the event status while attending the event (Allen et al., 2008).
Rain dates are an alternative date set for an outdoor event in case it is postponed or interrupted by rain (Getz, 2012). This date is set when planning the event. Likewise an alternative venue may be planned for during the event planning phase. It would be advisable this information and information regarding ticket refunds should an event be cancelled be detailed in a communication plan (Silvers, 2008).

Event information communicated directly to attendees should be direct, fast and factual (Felsher, 2005). The use of electronic platforms such as websites and email coupled with the social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter can enhance communication effectiveness (Ferdinand & Kitchin, 2012). The use of these communication methods would be important to ensure attendees receive cancellation and postponement information quickly. Establishing effective communication processes provides a foundation for good customer service leading to an enhanced event experience (Silvers, 2008).

During the event an established on-site communication system amongst event personnel such as two-way radios, mobile phones and text messaging is included in the internal communications plan (Fruin, 1984). Communication at an event requires immediacy to accommodate an emergency situation ensuring the safety of patrons (Ferdinand & Kitchin, 2012). It may be that even at small events people in a crowd are unsure of how the event is progressing and regular event updates via a Public Address (PA) system will reassure an unsettled crowd and defuse panic in times of emergency (Fruin, 1984). All announcements should be made by a Master of Ceremonies (MC) or announcer who can confidently deliver pre-scripted emergency announcements in a calm authoritative manner (Silvers, 2008).

Trading terms and conditions when engaging event staff, third party contractors such as food vendors, equipment suppliers and entertainers require careful scrutiny (Felsher, 2005). Additional costs over and above those agreed to may be incurred by an organisation for the provision of these services should inclement weather require a rescheduling of the event. An event manager may be obligated to pay for contracted services such as paying event staff and performers, or for equipment not used and food already supplied for a cancelled event (Allen et al., 2008). Risk can be mitigated through sound contracts with suppliers (Andrew, 2011).
The growing requirement for specific liability insurance against unforeseen disasters is strongly implied for outdoor events in the future in literature regarding risk management. Liability insurance is becoming a must have for events. However having the correct type of insurance policy appropriate for the event type is important (Toepfer, 2010). A public liability insurance policy provides legal liability protection to a business for a mistake that causes damage to someone else’s property or causes an injury to a member of the public (Insurance Council of New Zealand, 2014).

“Liability Insurance provides protection for the insured from third party claims arising from the insured's negligence causing loss or damage to a third party's property, business, reputation or a liability for an unintentional breach of a Statute or a professional mistake when providing advice.” (Insurance Council of New Zealand, 2014).

This type of insurance policy does not cover a business for losses incurred through cancellation or postponement of an event due to weather. Event specific insurance is a specialty insurance product that offers insurance coverage for event cancellation, postponement or relocating the event to another venue (Andrew, 2011). Income losses due to poor attendance as a result of weather-related disasters and the additional marketing costs incurred in postponing or rescheduling the event can also be covered (Toepfer, 2010).

The cost of insurance cover varies and is determined by the level of risk an event is exposed too. This amount could range from 0.6% to 0.9% of the policy sum insured value (Toepfer, 2010). Due to escalating costs in legal representation, and potential replacement costs of damaged property, the insurance policy sum insured value required could be in the millions (Sorin, 2003). Holbrook (2011) adds a multi-million dollar claim can be made from the organisers of a 2,000 person town fair or by organisers of a 90,000 person festival. The event manager is required to discuss with a qualified insurance broker the identified event risks and negotiate appropriate cover (Silvers, 2008).

To mitigate the effects of such weather catastrophe risks a weather derivative, or weather insurance market has developed. The term ‘weather risk’ relates to the financial exposure an event has to meteorological influence such as unscheduled rainfall. It appears there is a growing market in rain-related derivative insurance contracts. (Dawkins and Stern, 2004).
Silvers (2008) adds the role of the event manager is to examine all other conditions and situations external to the event, such as weather catastrophe, could have on an event.

Therefore an important process in the developing of the contingency plan is to review liability coverage and that of property, before a catastrophe occurs to minimise any potential exposure (Zuckerman & Ahrens, 2010). This is placing an increased cost on the hosting of events and impacting high risk events such as outdoor sports and festival events (Arcodia, 2004).

Risk management forms an important part of organisational governance. It is important to use risk management as part of the planning process rather than as ‘an add-on’. This allows for the right resources to be applied to the right areas of operation (Cumming & Crummy, 2011).

Unfortunately with outdoor events being in the hands of Mother Nature, weather contingency planning is not a straightforward process. Managing a catastrophe relies heavily on the instincts of the event manager to handle the situation. Preparedness will enable an event manager to deliver a best practice example of how to manage a catastrophe and implement a contingency plan (Shone & Parry, 2010).

The determinants of a good event manager are how quickly they respond to a crisis and what the subsequent impact is (Thornton, 2012). With regards to contingency planning for weather it could well be a case of planning for the worst case scenario, but hoping for the best. Having a contingency plan not only offers guidance in the time of catastrophe, it instils the process of planning for the organisation (Zuckerman & Ahrens, 2010). Risks are never eliminated barring cancelling the event (Ferdinand & Kitchin, 2012).

Applied research enables the solving of a specific real life problem with the results and knowledge gained being used to improve practices and policies (Collis & Hussey, 2009). The positive effects of contingency planning would be of benefit to event managers in their future planning processes, identifying potential risks and the management of these risks and their subsequent impact on the overall event outcome.
2.3.3 Investigation of inclement weather

This research specifically addresses the event manager’s preparedness for inclement weather across multiple event genres. Weather has become a dominant risk management issue for event managers requiring inclusion within a contingency plan (Ferdinand & Kitchin, 2012).

A natural occurrence such as poor weather conditions creates a crisis situation which may lead to cancellation of the event, financial loss, or even legal claims against the event organiser (Ferdinand & Kitchin, 2012). The weather can also influence participants’ experience quality of the event (Jones et.al, 2006). Getz (2002) further notes that the dominant factor leading to the failure of an event is the weather, due to the possibility of reduced participation levels and sales.

Dawkins and Stern (2004), validate this statement with research examining the 2004 Australian Open tennis mega-event and the relationship between weather and revenue. “The ‘right’ kind of weather could influence the actual occurrence of a sporting event and also the number attending”.

Tarlow (2002) provides an illustration of outdoor event risk management and safety priorities by event genre, showing weather to be the first concern to address while planning an outdoor event across all events. Much focus is put into the impact of catastrophe. Lesser risks can equally cause disruption, financial loss and damage reputations to any event regardless of size.
A review of the literature relating to weather catastrophe contrasted in the description of events that were affected by weather to varying degrees and in differing conditions.

A survey conducted within the events industry by Getz (2002) not only showed weather affects patron turnout and sales, but is the leading cause of failure of special events. This causal effect of the weather was further confirmed in a study by Jones et.al (2006)
demonstrating the overall quality of the event experience for patrons is determined by the weather conditions.

Environmental concerns related to global warming are becoming prominent with the change in weather patterns making outdoor events more vulnerable (Ferdinand & Kitchin, 2012). One such industry is the snow sports event and tourism industry which is extremely climate sensitive leading to research on the impact of these changes indicating that reduced snowfall severely affects this sector (Scott, Laws & Prideaux, 2008).

In complete contrast is the element of heat risk, so severe it can lead to deaths. Pilgrims completing the Journey to Mecca for Haji experience heat exhaustion, burns to feet and fatalities whilst walking in temperatures up to 50 degrees (Gatrad & Sheikh, 2005).

Mair (2011) suggests events are likely to experience the impact of climate change in the future and recommends strategies for adapting to these changes in the environment is adopted by the events industry.

The weather is not only a health and safety risk but can ultimately affect the event experience enjoyed by patrons (Dawkins and Stern, 2004). In 1994, at the last moment due to inclement weather an outdoor graduation at George Washington University had to be cancelled. Parents and guests had flown in from all around the world to attend and soon realised the University did not have a contingency plan in place (Tarlow, 2012). This lack of foresight in identifying potential weather risks that could affect the event outcome and the subsequent failure to create a contingency plan ruined the once in a lifetime graduation experience for students and families alike.

Inclement weather can also be unique to local situations. A journal article titled “Institutions reminded to create inclement-weather policies”, by the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) of the United States (2011) suggests emergency plans for games includes inclement–weather processes for decision-making and evacuations of events. This research into decision making and weather contingency came about as a result of the evacuation of Notre Dame Stadium twice during an inter-collegiate football game in 2011, the first time in the history of this decades old event being held. The geographical area of Indiana is subject to severe seasonal lightning and thunder storms. The NCAA (2011)
continues to explain the need for event managers to monitor local weather conditions and local safety needs and to designate specific personnel to make weather related decisions.

Silvers (2008) refers to the possible occurrence of catastrophic weather related disasters during an event, suggesting an event manager should examine weather patterns and the susceptibility of the venue to meteorological uncertainty such as rain, hurricanes, storms and other weather extremes.

2.4 SUMMARY

This chapter discussed the possible risk to event outcomes due to inclement weather and the need for contingency planning to mitigate this risk. It is the event manager’s role to identify risk and to have the required skills, knowledge and preparedness to ensure the planned event is a success. Regardless of the event size, type or location a plethora of risks can be identified and ultimately affect the organisers, investors and participants event experience.

A review of available literature pertaining to risk management for events, shows weather has been identified as the dominant risk factor for an outdoor event. A weather crisis can lead to the cancellation of the event, loss of income generating a financial loss and a reduction in the quality of the event experience for attendees.

Contingency planning allows the identification of risk, detection of the imminence of risk and to develop responses to risk. For all areas of the event there should be a contingency plan. If an event manager fails to plan, they plan to fail.

Much of the literature to develop this review was from more mature research fields with parallel elements of risk and contingency requirements such as the insurance, management and finance professions.

Due to the limited knowledge available specifically relating to the research topic this thesis research will take the approach from a qualitative perspective by collecting research data through an interviewing process, gleaning information from event managers on contingency planning and potential adverse effects on the financial outcome of catastrophe on an event.
The research environment for this thesis will concentrate on project planning within the event management industry incorporating contingency planning and identifying risk, specifically by event managers running outdoor events. Chapter 3 will discuss the research method used in this research study.
3. RESEARCH METHOD

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter will outline the methods used in this research study and the reasoning for the use of an interpretive paradigm and mixed methods research approach will be discussed. The methodology behind the recruitment of participants, event selection, data collection process and ensuing data analysis is also explained.

The minimal scholarly attention paid specifically to weather contingency planning for events means the research will take the form of an exploratory study, with the view that the findings can extend knowledge and inform practice. Exploratory research is used when there is little previous research and the research identifies patterns and trends, rather than testing a hypothesis (Collis & Hussey, 2009). Emerging concepts gained from this research will provide an opportunity to create a best practice example for event managers to apply to events when developing contingency plans.

Contained in this chapter are reflections on research ethical considerations and possible limitations of the research.

3.2 RESEARCH APPROACH

This thesis considered three approaches to research: qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods. An investigation of these research methods verified the research approach taken. The research was conducted using an interpretive paradigm and mixed methods approach via the completion of an e-mail questionnaire by event managers who have run outdoors events from a broad spectrum of genres within the event management industry. The search for outdoor events was via search engines available through the internet was completed to identify the initial stakeholders for research participation. The result identified 60 possible participants. Data were collected from April 2013 through to November 2013 with fifteen completed questionnaires received.

Potentially there were those events that had suffered detrimentally due to weather catastrophe and those that had not. It is anticipated that a comparison can be made between the two situations. When analysing the participants’ responses, commonality was
sought to identify existing event planning practices amongst event practitioners. Analysis will endeavoured to identify common threads leading to possible event management planning oversights relating to contingency planning and the prevention of potential catastrophe.

3.2.1 Interpretive Paradigm

An interpretive paradigm is used in research to describe, understand and interpret and is shaped by our perceptions (Merriam, 2009). Interpretive research “portrays a world in which reality is socially constructed, complex and ever changing” (Thomas, 2003) (p. 6). Interpretivism assumes it is impossible to understand and separate people from the social contexts in which they exist, without the examination of the perceptions they have of their own activities (Collis & Hussey, 2009). This interpretive paradigm relies on data based on interpretation of the answer quality and depth to illustrate phenomena and resulting trends (Collis & Hussey, 2009).

The following figure illustrates the Features of Interpretivism.

Figure 6 Features of Interpretivism (Collis & Hussey, 2009).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interpretivism tends to:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Use small samples</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Have a natural location</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Be concerned with generating theories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Produce ‘rich’, subjective, qualitative data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Produce findings with low reliability but high validity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Allow findings to be generalised from one setting to another similar setting.</td>
</tr>
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</table>

The goal of this research analysis process was to establish and describe patterns amongst responses leading to the identification of possible measures to allow event managers to better plan for event management contingency.

3.2.2 Qualitative Research

Qualitative data collection was an essential method identified to collect research material used in this study. Data collected in a nominal form derived from words and images is referred to as qualitative (Collis & Hussey, 2009). Qualitative data enhances the quality of
the research by capturing the individual’s point of view by focusing on understanding of and the meaning of the experience (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Qualitative research is interested in understanding how people interpret experiences and what meaning is attributed to those experiences (Merriam, 2009).

The researcher is the primary instrument in the collection and analysis of data and uses ‘open-ended’ questions to elicit an opinion and capture points of view forming the basis of the research analysis (Patton, 2002). The method of data collection is achieved through interviews, observations or document analysis (Merriam, 2009).

Qualitative research is summarised by Denzin & Lincoln (2005) as “Qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meaning people bring to them” (p. 3).

3.2.3 Quantitative Research

“Quantitative research involves the interplay among variables after they have been operationalized, allowing a researcher to measure study outcomes” (Martin & Bridgmon, 2007, p. 3). Quantitative research is the study and measuring of how variables change. A variable is a term of measure and is assigned as part of a measurement scale enabling the use of appropriate statistics in research (Collis & Hussey, 2009). Kerlinger and Pedhazur (1973) stated, “It can be asserted that all the scientist has to work with is variance. If variables do not vary, if they do not have variance, the scientist cannot do his work” (p. 3). Quantitative questioning allows the researcher to identify measurable differences amongst respondents participating in the research.

Examples of the quantitative data that would be appropriate in this study would be the differing responses to questions regarding having liability insurance for the event, budgets and similar questions where measurable value was required in the response. Presenting financial data was an important component to the research question so data pertaining to costs can be expressed numerically and compared amongst the respondents.
3.2.4 Mixed Method Approach

Whilst Collis and Hussey (2009) state the blending of qualitative and quantitative data by researchers can lead to confusion of the paradigm used, the analysis of this research relating to data based on percentage responses amongst respondents warrants this to take place in a supporting context. Venkatesh, Brown & Bala (2013) states “Mixed methods (research) are an approach that combines quantitative and qualitative research methods in the same research inquiry” (p. 21). The combining of methodological practices adds breadth and depth to the research by providing additional information that is both useful and valuable (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). It is often difficult for research to fit into one research category (Thomas, 2003). Patton (2002) states “Qualitative findings may be presented alone or in combination with quantitative data” (p. 5). The use of a questionnaire containing fixed-choice questions and open-ended questions provides an example of combining quantitative and qualitative measurement (Patton, 2002).

The combining of research methods is referred to as triangulation (Creswell, 2003). There is acceptance in the social sciences that mixed methods research affords a triangulation between different types of data to enable cross-checking and assessing the interplay between different types of data enriching and strengthening the credibility of the findings. Triangulation attempts to develop an in-depth understanding of the research in question (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005).

A concurrent triangulation model whereby the qualitative and quantitative research was collected concurrently within the same phase of the research was used (Creswell, 2003). This process was evident in the questionnaire design through the use of a quantitative question to determine quantity, frequency, or closed yes and no responses to questions. This was accompanied by a qualitative approach asking for a description or comment on the question by the research participant to validate and expand on the quantitative response.
3.3 DATA COLLECTION METHOD

The chosen method for data collection was an e-mail questionnaire. Qualitative and quantitative researchers rely on the interview as a basic method of data gathering to obtain either an in-depth answer to a question or to provide a point on a scale to mark a variable (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). A questionnaire is essentially a measuring tool designed to collect particular data, the aims and objectives stemming from the overall research design (Oppenheim, 1992). The interview process was that of a questionnaire containing structured questions whereby the researcher asked the research participants the same questions with a limited set of response categories (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005).

Thomas (2003) states the researcher does not have to be present for the completion of the questionnaire allowing for data to be collected over the internet from people in distant places. In the last two decades researchers’ have started to explore the use of the internet to conduct research as a means to collect data (Meho, 2006). The reasons for this are e-mail interviews cost less to administer than face to face interviews and researchers are able to reach a more geographically dispersed sample (Meho, 2006). Both of these reasons contributed to the researcher’s decision to use e-mail to collect data from participants for this research.

Empirical evidence from event managers’ formed the basis of the questionnaire. Additionally an internal scan of the event industry planning processes accompanied by a situation analysis investigating the current place contingency planning has in the outdoor event industry through an extensive literature review will form a foundation to the qualitative data sought. The questions contained in the questionnaire were composed reflecting the contingency planning criteria identified by the various authors contained in the literature review.

The target population for this research was event managers, specifically those who manage outdoor events.

Reiterating the fact there is not much formal research on this subject leaves the window of opportunity to complete an exploratory study questioning event managers to source new data. From the information collected new and emerging concepts can be discovered.
3.3.1 Data Sources

Data were collected from event management industry professionals. The population size was small with the research population being so event specific. A population is a defined body of people from which to select for statistical purposes (Collis & Hussey, 2009). Sixty events covering a broad range of activity were identified through a desk top search of the internet using search engines such as Google. Event managers were identified and subsequently approached, with a request that they participate in this research and complete a questionnaire.

Despite the advantages of the use of e-mail for research disadvantages such as a low response rate have been identified for this method (Ranchod & Zhou, 2001). This may be attributed to lack of anonymity for the participant, design of and usability of the questionnaire and the low use of incentives (Michaelidou & Dibb, 2006). As theorised by Collis & Hussey (2009), a response rate of 10% is regarded as an accepted norm in response to requests for research. Oppenheim (1992) refers to postal questionnaires producing a response rate of below 40%. Michaelidou & Dibb (2006) provide an example of research using the e-mail questionnaire as a data collection tool and quote 20% as the response rate. They deemed this adequate to meet statistical objectives, however they state empirical evidence on e-mail response rates remains scarce (Michaelidou & Dibb, 2006). A desired response rate for this research is 15-30 participants reflecting a 25% - 50% response rate coming from a small sample.

As described by Collis and Hussey (2009) a sample is a subset of the established population base. By selecting events held throughout New Zealand a broad geographical selection is sought. This provides the potential to assess questionnaire responses for a variety of climates in which outdoor events are held.

The consent process will be completed as the respondents reply to the research participation request. Ideally this research would be New Zealand wide to gain an understanding of differing weather conditions throughout the country. Weather contingency factors would differ for an event held in Auckland, with humidity and rapidly tropical-like changeable conditions to that of Wellington that has notorious wind weather patterns. The South Island has colder temperatures and experiences seasonal snow which
would be a consideration when planning an event. To enable the collection of data an email communication plan was required to address this geographical spread of participants.

Following the consent process the questionnaire was e-mailed to the participants. Included in this correspondence were instructions on the completion and return of the questionnaire.

The questionnaire was developed to investigate areas of project management relating to the creation and implementation of an event plan for a planned event. As outlined in the literature review a planned event is one that has pre-determined goals and outcomes contained within an event management plan (Getz, 2012). Questions were linked to the performance phases of event management planning. These phases being; the pre-event development phase, operational planning phase, event implementation, monitoring and management followed by a post event phase (Mallen & Adams, 2008). Consideration was given to the contingency planning process with questions designed to identify if the processes of risk identification, detecting the imminence of risk and whether adaptive responses to those risks were considered by the respondent when planning their event (Hopkins, 1986).

The identification of these event management and contingency planning components seek to address the underlying research questions:

1. To what extent do event managers plan for catastrophe and what are the financial implications on when planning for catastrophe in an event management plan?

2. What is the ensuing cost of contingency for an outdoors event?

Establishing these research questions provided the foundation of research design for the research questionnaire targeting event managers within the event management industry. The exploration of these event components culminate towards determining the central topic of the research into contingency planning. For the interested reader the questionnaire used in this research is attached as Appendix 3.
3.3.2 Participants

The e-mail questionnaire is the primary data gathering tool for this research. Gaining access to event managers as potential respondents was key to this process. The main selection criteria for the data collection was that respondents be from the event management sector and be employed as an event manager. A targeted sample of the industry was used as respondents would need to be managing events that are conducted in outside conditions. For example sports, recreation, arts, music and community events.

As a purposeful sample there is an element of sample bias present as the research specifically targets those in the event industry that manage outdoor events. Patton (2002) states “Purposeful sampling focuses on selecting information-rich cases whose study will illuminate the questions under study” (p. 230). The selection of event managers that manage outdoor events is at the exclusion of all other event managers of other event genres. This in itself is a finite number, as it is a defined industry specification. The commonality of the outdoor nature of the events assumes the expected variability in responses is going to be low; therefore a smaller sample size can be used. A larger sample size will not necessarily produce more variation in question response (Oppenheim, 1992). Michaelidou & Dibb (2006) add that the careful targeting of an e-mail questionnaire to an identified sample is likely to increase response rates.

3.3.3 Event Selection

The completion of this research required the participation of event managers that manage outdoor events. An event selection from a number of genres and weather seasons was sought. The majority of the events identified are annual or regular events rather than one off in nature and were held in 2012 and 2013. Event genre examples were sports events, musical concerts and festivals of varying music genres, food festivals, cultural festivals and a variety of motor sport events.

Investigation into what outdoor events are offered across New Zealand throughout the year initiated an environmental scan commencing with an internet search for outdoor events. This process resulted in the establishment of an events database of 75 events and the required contact details for the event management organisation and contact person were
garnered through the event websites. This exercise in itself was fundamental to the research outcomes and it enabled the researcher to assess the accessibility of event information and contact details that event attendees themselves would potentially seek. An interpretation of this process is contained within the Data Collection Process chapter, 3.4.2 Communication Process.

Additionally contact was made with Unitec Institute of Technology lecturers in the Department of Sport and those in the event management fields to seek industry contacts that may lead to research participation. A rapport was established with the New Zealand Association of Event Professionals (NZAEP) and a proposal was submitted for publication within their bi-annual newsletter seeking participants from their membership database of approximately 400 from the event management industry. This approach would specifically reach the targeted population group of event managers. The researchers own event management industry contacts were also a valuable source of identifying potential participants.

Following the completion of this environmental scan and contact methods noted above, a research database of 75 events was established providing the sample of the event management research population to approach.

3.3.4 Negotiating participation

Gaining access to event managers from the organisations identified that managed outdoor events was critical to this research. Access to these personnel may be potentially difficult as the researcher has no established relationship with the majority of the potential participants. The researcher was only able to initiate contact through secondary data of publicly available contact information.

The first phase of accessing organisations for the collection of research data presents potential hurdles for researchers (Brymon & Bell, 2003). The ability for researchers to gain access into their research territory is paramount and requires planning and strategy (Morrill, Buller, Buller and Larkey, 1999). Using the initial data an introductory e-mail with an accompanying request for participation was sent to the identified contact email address contained within the created database, to elicit a positive response.
Many of the contact details provided on the organisations’ websites were generic in nature so were often referring to an information or administration email contact within the contact email address. This lead to the ‘gatekeeper’ experience of relying on the e-mail recipient for this organisational contact address to allow ‘entry’ into the organisation. This is often the first obstacle a researcher must overcome to gain access to potential research participants from a targeted organisation (Morrill et al., 1999).

Gaining a positive response can be reliant on the CEO of the organisation allowing access to the event managers, and a negative response at this high organisational level negates the entire organisation from participating in the research. Often the gatekeeper is at the top level of organisational structure (Morrill et al., 1999).

The first email approach contained an explanation of the research question, research goals and the research requirements of the participants and in what form the research was going to take (Meho, 2006) (Refer to Appendix 2). This recommended approach to gain ‘buy-in’ should be done not only within the recruitment phase but reiterated to confirmed research participants prior to completion of the questionnaire, ensuring correct research collection procedures are followed (Lofland & Lofland, 1995) as stated in Cleary (2008).

Following a positive response to the request to participate, the questionnaire and participation forms were sent out reiterating the research requirements and methods of completion and return of the questionnaire. Negative responses received were acknowledged and the respondent was thanked for their reply, and non-responders were latterly re-contacted to try to gain participation (Meho, 2006).

Subsequent follow up emails were sent to research participants to request the timely return of the questionnaire in order to meet data analysis deadlines. On occasion this date had to be extended to accommodate the work requirements of the research participants as the event management industry can experience busy workloads at peak times. In some cases an extension to the return date was granted as potential participants had to seek approval from immediate reports or present the proposal to a committee for approval. This occurrence is referred to as delayed consent and is common when approaching an organisation through a general communication channel within the organisation (Collis &
Hussey, 2009). These closing date extensions were given to prevent the loss of research participants.

Extensions of courtesy are important in all research situations. Time taken to thank participating individuals and organisations is an essential part of the research process, either verbally, or by email, at the time of completing the research and at the conclusion of the research project (Oppenheim, 1992).

Engaging the support of organisations such as Unitec Institute of Technology, National Sporting Organisations and the NZEPA allowed for the research request to be forwarded onto other potential participants, creating a ‘snowball’ effect. Atkinson and Flint (2001) states “In its simplest form snowballing consists of identifying respondents who are then used to refer researchers to other respondents”. An example of this evolved after initial contact was made with Rowing NZ and through the subsequent forwarding of the researcher’s request for participants to other rowing fraternities, a participant came forward for a previously unidentified event.

3.3.5 Responses

This research is of an exploratory nature therefore data were collected and analysed to establish themes among the respondents’ answers. Receipt of completed responses was acknowledged through communication with the participants by e-mail, with thanks made for their contribution to the research. Within the consent process provision was made for participants to withdraw from the research at any time (Bednall, Adam & Plocinski, 2010).

The first stage of the analysis process saw the compiling of the questionnaires, which enabled the qualitative data to be sorted into a framework (Lofland et al., 2006). The questionnaire was returned electronically by e-mail which enabled the data to be transferred into Microsoft Excel (Michaelidou & Dibb, 2006). The data was recorded by question number and by topic allowing for concepts and categories to be established. Topics included in the questionnaire were drawn from the previously noted event planning process and were developed under the following question headings:
• **General**
  - Event description, location, scale, target audience.

• **Marketing and Promotion**
  - Event advertising, communication methods, social media platforms.

• **Pre-event planning**
  - Budget, contingency budget, pricing, contracts, cancellation process, refund process, staffing, permit requirements, risk assessment and safety elements.

• **Risk Assessment**
  - Weather considerations, assessing risk levels, planning for inclement weather, identifying weather related hazards and procedures.

• **Communication Plan**
  - Media Coverage, communication with attendees, communicating of event progress, communication of cancellation.

• **Contact information**
  - Availability of event management contact information, complaints procedure, post event communication.

The emergent themes and categories were coded and entered into an Excel spreadsheet within a formatted matrix.

**3.3.6 Pilot Surveys**

Prior to sending out the request for participation to the research database, pilot participants were asked to complete the questionnaire. Participants were event managers known to the researcher and staff at a Regional Sports Organisation. The researcher sought to engage pilot participants that were comparable to prospective participants as recommended by Oppenheim (1992), and was successful in obtaining three pilot participants.

They were briefed on the research proposal and asked to consider an event they have managed or been involved in that was outdoors specific. The pilot participants’ then trialled the process of completing the questionnaire. The researcher requested feedback on the construct of the questions and the flow of the questionnaire and question relevance to the research topic. The response from the pilot participants was positive with only minor adjustments to the wording of some of the questions required. This feedback was invaluable.
to ensure a meaningful, professional questionnaire was sent out to the event industry. The pilot questionnaire responses were coded and entered into a Microsoft Excel database as they were received so provided a pilot for the data entry process.

To ensure the questionnaire responses were credible the preliminary findings from the pilot group were discussed with the pilot participants to provide greater clarity. This was done in person on an individual basis with the pilot participants. The research question aims and objectives form the back bone of the analysis and were continually referred to through the analysis process.

Referring to the thesis outline, the following research objectives were identified.

1. Determine what adverse weather contingency elements an event manager considers as part of the contingency plan.
2. Establish how a natural weather catastrophe affects the logistical running of the event on the day.
3. Consider the perceived financial impacts on the financial budget for the event should a weather catastrophe occur.
4. Determine if there is an impact on customer satisfaction levels should an event experience a weather catastrophe.

The ability of future researchers being able to access business communities is often dependent on the participant’s research experiences with a particular researcher and at all times the researcher was mindful of representing Unitec Institute of Technology professionally.

3.4 DATA COLLECTION PROCESS

The completion of an e-mail questionnaire was the principle method engaged to collect primary research data.

“A questionnaire is a method for collecting primary data in which a sample of respondents are asked a list of carefully structured questions to elicit reliable responses” (Collis & Hussey, 2009) (p 192).

The following process was followed to obtain the required research data.
3.4.1 Communication Process

E-mail was the preferred distribution method to communicate the request to prospective participants, and to forward the questionnaire to be completed by accepting respondents. There were a number of considerations for this. The availability of contact information from the web sites of prospective organisations made this the most accessible and immediate method to reach event managers. E-mail overcomes the geographical boundaries experienced trying to gain participation from throughout New Zealand and it is an inexpensive and economical communication medium (Michaelidou & Dibb, 2006).
Once the research database had been determined, the distribution process was at an individual level, not a group email scenario. Michaelidou & Dibb (2006) indicate personalisation of e-mail salutations may increase the response rate, however individuals may feel the e-mail message to be intrusive if there is no existing relationship with the sender of the e-mail. The researcher personalised each email to prospective participants in the hope a relationship would develop by displaying the effort a personalised email database approach requires.

The participants were located throughout New Zealand. Due to these geographical locations no face to face interviews were held. The benefits of this were two-fold. Firstly time and travel costs to achieve face to face interviews were eliminated. Secondly by having all respondents complete the questionnaire independently there was a minimum of interviewer bias. Interview bias is the influence of the interviewer on the interviewee, potentially guiding the responses to the questions asked through the interview process (Oppenheim, 1992).

Confirmed participation was upon receipt of the signed participation consent form, and a questionnaire was then e-mailed to the respondent.

The participants were offered alternative methods of returning the questionnaire. Methods offered were to complete the questionnaire on their PC and email once completed or print a hard copy and fax, scan and save the questionnaire as a PDF then e-mail to the researcher or return a completed hard copy by post (Meho, 2006).

3.4.2 Survey Collation

A Microsoft Excel spreadsheet system was designed to manage the raw data. This was chosen as the simplest method to record both qualitative data and quantitative data, to analyse commonality amongst responses. For example a question that required a simple yes or no answer enabled the entry of the answer and quantifying of the collective answers within the spreadsheet. Where an answer required qualitative detail these written answers were summarised and common words and phrases used by respondents were easily identifiable when analysing a question, to gain an overall sense of emerging themes in the
data. The sample size was relatively small making the spreadsheet database a suitable analysis tool (Meho, 2006).

Upon receipt of the questionnaires they were checked for accuracy and clarity. As each questionnaire was received the answers to the questionnaire were entered into the Excel spreadsheet as recommended by Miles & Huberman (1994). This is as opposed to waiting for all of the questionnaires to be returned and keying all the data at once which presents a mammoth task. The answers were entered into the spreadsheet under headings as per the question categories contained within the questionnaire. The data entered into the spreadsheet is attached in Appendix 3.

Once all questionnaires were received and data entered, analysis of the data could proceed, following by development of the research findings.

3.5 RESEARCH ETHICS CONSIDERATIONS

Data gathering was done with specifically targeted respondents within the event management industry. Requests made to respondents to participate in this research project were requested on a purely voluntary basis. It is important when recruiting research participants that it is voluntary and no coercion or material rewards are to be offered (Bednall et.al, 2010). Documents granting permission to participate was obtained prior to the forwarding of questionnaire material and/or before interviews being conducted.

Having negotiated access with the organisation all collected questionnaires were treated with confidentiality and were treated with anonymity. A unique identification number was assigned to each organisation. Assurance was given that they and their organisation would not be identified. Michaelidou & Dibb (2006) suggest that the offering of anonymity may evoke higher response rates and increased honesty towards question response. Participating respondents will not be disclosed within the research findings should any research paper be presented to external audiences. Confidentiality was crucial to this research as commercially sensitive data regarding event size, costs and strategy was being obtained, so during the negotiating of access phase, the guarantee of non-disclosure was of utmost importance.
Ethics approval was gained through applying to the Unitec Research Ethics Committee (refer to appendix 5). All contributing documentation regarding this research will only be accessed by the researcher and the associated supervisory partners. It is not envisaged this research project will breach any ethical standards.

3.6 LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

“A limitation is a weakness or deficiency in the research” (Collis & Hussey, 2009) p. 125.

The success of this research relied heavily on the goodwill of the event managers within the event management industry to voluntarily participate in the completion of a research questionnaire. The development of the research database of potential respondents was a time consuming process requiring the manual search for events on the internet to locate potential websites to identify outdoor events held in New Zealand, across a variety of genres. There is no central database for events held in New Zealand. This then required approaching event management organisations without a pre-determined contact and established relationship by the researcher.

One of the research outcomes is to provide a best practice example to the event management industry to improve event standards and the overall event experience for attendees of outdoors event. While creating the research database of events and the organisation contact details, the appearance of an industry monopoly became evident. The event management industry now contains event management and promotional companies that manage a number of events in like genres on a contract basis. Often small events struggle to meet financial and compliance costs so it maybe more efficient to contract such events to event industry professionals.

For example a number of key triathlon events are managed by one event management company. This created problems with accessibility to these events as the gatekeeper at the head of this organisation declined the invitation to participate, meaning several prospective events were eliminated from the research database. Gaining industry support was important and the difficulty experienced achieving this led to a limitation to the optimum response rate required for this research.
Collis & Hussey (2009) refer to questionnaire fatigue as a valid reason for lack of response to research requests. This is due to being inundated with requests to complete questionnaires by a number of sources (Meho, 2006).

There are no perceived resource issues for the completion of this research project. The project is reliant on the completion of the research questionnaire and the subsequent analysis and publication of the data.

3.7 SUMMARY

This chapter justifies a preference for a mixed methods research approach while also explains the usefulness of the e-mail questionnaire for gathering a mix of qualitative and quantitative data that were used for this research project. Contingency planning enhances the preparation of an event and determines potential deviations from the operational plan. It was the researcher’s aim to discover through a questionnaire process whether event managers in the outdoor event spectrum were acknowledging there is a requirement to plan for catastrophe and to determine if the industry is in fact already addressing this issue within their event planning.

An exploratory research design enables the discovery of insights into this under-researched area. The inclusion of a qualitative approach will harness information provided by industry experts and will directly relate to the outdoor events managed within the event industry. The quantitative elements will enable the assessment of how widespread the inclusion of contingency factors is in the event planning process. Gaining industry support for this research was key and the response rate from this sector was not as anticipated. However the quality of the data returned by the participants was of a high standard and was meaningful providing a purposeful sample.

A comprehensive analysis of the returned questionnaires follows in the Findings chapter. These findings will establish the level of contingency planning currently performed by the respondents. The quantitative answers are supported by qualitative comment made by the respondents providing further insight into weather contingency planning.
4. FINDINGS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Approaches were made to 60 event managers identified through an electronic internet search for events of no specific event genre that aligned with the research criteria of being an outdoor event held in New Zealand. Fifteen completed responses (a 25% response rate) were received from a variety of event genres. As discussed on the previous section, there is no empirical evidence as to an accepted response rate for participation using an e-mail approach to research. However response rates from 10% to 40% have been noted by various authors (Michaelidou & Dibb, 2006, Collis & Hussey, 2009 & Oppenheim, 1992). Although the response rate of 25% of the targeted population of 60 participants is within this range, it was below the desired number of completed returns of 30 as outlined in the research proposal. The findings from these completed questionnaires are presented in this chapter.

Industry support and participation in the research was a vital component to establish industry standards and trends to explore consistency in the project management of events relating to catastrophe preparedness.

As elaborated in the Methods chapter all participants were given assurance they will remain anonymous. Certain event planning information asked for in the questionnaire is industry sensitive and identities will not be divulged to other participants or readers of this research publication. Each completed questionnaire was allocated a unique identification number to ensure anonymity. The identifiers referred to in the findings will range from 1001 consecutively through to 1015.

The findings presented are aligned with the thesis objectives documented in section 1.3 Thesis Outline. These research objectives formed the back bone of the questionnaire construct to create four distinct phases of event management project design and planning.

The four categories of questions contained within the questionnaire are aligned to the following themes:

1. Elements to consider in the event planning phase as part of a contingency plan relating to rain dates, refund policies, insurance and process.
2. Logistical functions managing potential risks relating to weather that may arise during the event relating to weather.

3. Financial implications to consider in the event of a natural catastrophe.

4. Communication methods required to ensure customer satisfaction of the attendees of the event experience.

4.2 FINDINGS

4.2.1 Event Design

The first six questions of the questionnaire were designed to establish a general description of the events managed by the respondents. Firstly it was established that all 15 respondents were event managers and were responsible for the planning and implementation of the outdoors event for this research study. The respondents were from a variety of event genres. When asked which category best described the type of event being managed, the categories were represented as follows.

Table 1 Event genre by category

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Food</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>Festival</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>Arts</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>Cultural</th>
<th>-</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sport</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Music</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Recreation</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The events held were spread throughout the calendar year with the dominant season being the summer months of November through to March. Eleven events were scheduled at this time with the remaining events held in the Spring and Winter months.

The scale of the event size varied with attendance figures ranging from an event with under 100 participants to 3 events with over 10,000 attendees.

The location of events was dominated by council grounds and private land venues. Council grounds refer to local parks and reserves owned and operated by local parks and recreation council municipals of the host town or city. Private land referred to sports clubs, privately owned property or structures whereby consent was derived directly from the venue owner.

Table 2 Event by location

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>Rural</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>Council Grounds</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>Private Land</th>
<th>6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DOC Reserve</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Public Place</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The event managers were asked questions regarding the age and sex of the participants to illustrate the target populations for the events being researched. When providing the ages of the people attending their events 7 respondents replied ‘All ages’ indicating entry or participation in the event was not age related. The remaining 8 events had attendees within specific age ranges and ranged from 8–75 years, with 1 event specifically targeting junior participants under the age of 18 years. Events specifying an age range were mostly from the sports events that had a minimum or maximum entry age for participants.

The target population for the majority of the events was both sexes. Fourteen events have male and female participants. One event, a sports event was female competitor specific.

This variety of event genre, event size and location will enable a broad analysis of event contingency planning components across the event management industry.

4.2.2 Event Marketing and Promotion

The purpose of the Marketing and Promotion section of the questionnaire was to determine how event managers marketed their event to the public to draw attendance. The growth in technology has seen the development of a myriad of communication methods that can be engaged by event managers (Ferdinand & Kitchin, 2012).

When asked how event managers promoted their event to inform people about it, the options ranged from direct promotions via database marketing to known or identified individuals to mass marketing approaches via multimedia channel to promote the event. Marketing methods utilised to inform the public of the events included the following.

Table 3 Marketing methods

<p>| | | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Website</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Radio</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Print</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Media</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D/M</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Television</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The most popular advertising method used is the website, followed by radio advertising then by the use of print media such as newspaper advertising, posters and brochure/flyer material.

Direct Marketing methods were used by 30% of the respondents corresponding with their club members or people who had registered their details with the organisation as a result of
previously attending the event or through a website connection. Television is the least favoured medium with only 4 of the 15 event managers using television as a marketing tool.

The social-media channels now available added another dimension to how event managers communicated to prospective event participants. The recognised viral effect of social-media channels such as Facebook and Twitter is now being readily utilised by event managers in the industry today as a marketing tool (Ferdinand & Kitchin, 2012). This is evident in this research sample. Analysis shows 14 out of the 15 of the surveyed event managers used the social-media communication methods of Facebook and the internet to promote their event.

Table 4 Multi-Media methods used to promote the event

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Facebook</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Web Site</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Database</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twitter</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TXT</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Participants were asked if this event was part of a series or a standalone event. Respondents indicated four were part of a series of events in an event genre of either sport or music with the remaining 11 events being standalone one off events.

4.2.3 Pre-event Planning

The pre-event planning phase of the questionnaire included the event components of budgeting and determining whether consideration is given for a rain date for example, is included in the planning of the event. Identifying whether compliance issues such as Risk Assessment and Management (RAMS’s), and council permits and traffic management were also addressed. Questions were asked about whether processes were in place for ticketing in respect of attendee refunds in the event of a catastrophe causing cancellation, postponement or early termination of the event.

Identifying whether the event has adequate insurance coverage was of particular interest in the research. Determining whether or not event managers seek insurance cover and the different types and amounts of cover could determine successful or detrimental financial outcomes for an event should a catastrophe occur (Tarlow, 2002).

The first category of questions in this section relates to the creation and managing of a budget for the event. Respondents were asked to confirm the budget range available for the event. The responses were spread evenly across the dollar value of budget categories
presented in the questionnaire with event budgets ranging from up to $5000 to $400,000 dollars. Two respondents disclosed the actual budget figure.

Table 5 Budget ranges for the event

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Up to $5,000</th>
<th>Up to $10,000</th>
<th>Up to $40,000</th>
<th>Over $40,000</th>
<th>$400,000-$110,000</th>
<th>$110,000-$400,000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following question asked whether a contingency budget for the event is set at this time. An overwhelming 10 out of 15 (66%) of respondents had no contingency budget set over and above their initial event budget. The remaining five respondents commented as follows to indicate how their contingency budget was determined.

Q11. Do you have a contingency budget for the event, over and above set budget?

Comment 1001: The XXXXX District Council are the under writers of the event.

Comment 1002: No set figure, managed as and when required.

Comment 1003: 2% of budget.

Comment 1005: 10% of budget.

Comment 1011: 10% of budget

Comment 1012: 5% of total budget, $274.00

This indicates the process of setting a contingency budget is based on establishing a percentage figure of the initial overall event budget.

Contingency planning and preparedness for catastrophe was a focus of the research. An issue that directly correlates with this in the pre-event planning phase is the inclusion of insurance cover to mitigate the effects of a potential weather catastrophe (Silvers, 2008). Research questions were developed to discover what insurance considerations the event manager included in the pre-event planning phase.

Public Liability insurance was found to be the most common form of insurance cover. Thirteen out of 15 event companies named this insurance cover and rely on it solely to cover their event. Of the 15 respondents only one event has insurance that specifically covers weather issues that may affect the outcome of their event.
None of the respondents has a separate insurance cover to insure against any property or ground damage caused by weather catastrophe or indeed any form of damage. The events managers are solely reliant on liability insurance policies. Further investigation into the extent of liability coverage would be required.

The purpose of this research was not to disseminate what each of these policies would cover for an event. However the researcher was seeking information to determine if the respondents specifically sought insurance cover for weather contingency.

Insurance premium costs vary with the liability insurance costing an organisation up to $10,000 dollars per annum. The cost of the weather insurance obtained by respondent 1003 was noted as being in the over $20,000 plus category. One respondent noted they had no insurance cover for their event.

An important component of event management planning is the planning for the equipment required to run the event (Getz, 2012). Due to the one off or annualisation of many events the equipment required is often sought from 3rd party providers such as hire companies (Allen et al., 2011). This removes the need to assign working capital to purchase equipment. Questions relating to the hiring of equipment were included to establish industry trends regarding the terms and conditions of hire agreements and potential additional costs that could be incurred should a cancellation or extension to the hire terms required.

Q14. Do any hire agreements entered into include additional costs/penalties incurred for the cancellation of the event?

Comment 1001: We have tender contract for all hire equipment. In the event of a dispute arising the parties should act in good faith and promptly and actively endeavour to resolve such dispute themselves.

Comment 1002: 2% contingency covers all potential additional costs. Different terms with different suppliers.

Comment 1009: One day extra hireage @ no cost.

Comment 1010: N/A as never cancelled. All agreements for hire include a cost if we don’t end up hiring that particular piece of equipment.
Two of the event managers indicated that they had discussed potential penalty costs incurred for postponement or cancellation of the event. The remaining 13 respondents indicated they had not addressed this or were not aware of any incurred penalties, or that this question did not apply to them.

The desired financial outcome for the event is determined when pre-planning the event and calculating the event budget (Ferdinand & Kitchin, 2012). The categories offered for respondents to select to best describe their financial goals for the event were: to make a profit, a breakeven cost scenario, act as a fundraiser with profits going to a nominated charity, or a not for profit organisation hosting an event.

Table 6 Budget ranges for the financial outcome for the event

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Profit</th>
<th>Break Even</th>
<th>Fund raiser</th>
<th>Not for Profit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q15. What are the event budget goals i.e. profit/breakeven/charity/fundraiser?

Comment 1002: Events run to generate good crowds, revenue is loss limitation.

Comment 1012: Break event and any profits go to charity.

Comment 1014: Any proceeds (go to) the running of the club.

Setting the ticket price to meet these financial outcomes is paramount to ensure a loss situation is not encountered (Allen et al., 2011). The questions relating to ticketing were to establish if any part of the ticket price was allocated to a contingency fund. Question 16 of the questionnaire asked respondents to comment, when setting the ticket price, how much (as a percentage) of the ticket price is allocated for contingency purposes. Thirteen out of 15, representing 86% of the respondents marked ‘not factored’ and two respondents mentioned their event was a free event.

This result shows ticket prices for the majority of the events researched are set to cover predetermined event costs but contain no contingency quotient.

Questions 22 asked if a contingency or alternative event date is set at the same time as establishing the event date and whether attendees are advised of this at the time of ticket purchase or entry to the event was purchased. This is often referred to in the industry as a ‘rain-date (Getz, 2012). Only three of the respondents confirmed a rain-date is set with 11
stating that no rain-date is set. One respondent replied ‘not applicable’ as the event is never cancelled.

The researcher wanted to discover if in the event of a catastrophe causing a postponement or cancellation, how this would impact financially on the attendees. If a consumer purchases a ticket for an event in good faith, are they penalised financially in the event of postponement or cancellation? The question asked of the respondents was that in the event of a cancellation do ticket holders receive a full refund of the ticket face value. This question was coupled with alternative arrangements that may accompany a cancellation. This referred to attending the event on a rain-date, receiving a pass to another event and processes in place to manage these alternatives. The outcomes of these questions could determine if potential financial losses may be incurred for the event.

Should an event be cancelled, 9 out of 15 respondents stated they did not give out a pass for another scheduled date for the event. This corresponds with the response to the question relating to setting of a rain-date in which these respondents did not set a rain-date. A comment was made by respondent 1009 that should the event have commenced and be over 1/3 of the way through there were no rain-out passes issued. Two of the events are free events so no additional entry passes are required.

Although a rain-date may be set at the time of pre-planning the event, it may be that the attendees are not able to attend this alternative date. Of the five respondents that said their attendees would get a full refund in the event of a cancellation only three of these respondents refund the ticketholder if they could not attend the rain-date. One event manager commented they would refund the full entry fee should a participant be unable to attend the alternative date. The remaining 10 event managers commented they would not refund their attendees should they be unable to attend the re-scheduled rain-date.

The researcher wanted to understand the communication process that was in place to advise attendees of the refund process and/or the rain-date offered. The following comments were noted as to this process.
Q18. In the event of a cancellation of the event, do ticket holders receive a pass for another scheduled date (i.e. rain date?)

Comment 1003: Yes, only if the event is postponed, not cancelled.

Comment 1009: Yes, but can get a ticket for another event if 1/3 of the way through, and no rain out ticket if event is over 1/3 through, and no refund.

Comment 1015: Yes, Reserve play date set.

Q19. In the event a ticket holder cannot attend the rain date, does the ticket holder receive a refund? How are they informed of this?

Comment 1001: They would have to send us their ticket for a refund.

Comment 1003: Advised of this on the website.

Comment 1005: Email.

Comment 1008: No rain date.

Comment 1009: Advised at gate and programme

Comment 1012: Low cost event, no refund or rain date.

Comment 1015: Refund policy- negotiated individually.

The researcher’s experience with event management provides an insight into many of the planning processes involved with managing an event. Included in the overall budget considerations is the cost of the staff required to run an event. This component can be a considerable portion of the event budget (Felsher, 2005).

Three questions were developed to determine the financial processes for paying event staff should an event be cancelled or postponed. Staff availability for any scheduled rain-dates is also an important consideration to ensure the event is adequately staffed should the event be rescheduled.

When asked whether staff contracted for the event will continue to be paid in the event of a cancellation, nine indicated yes, whilst four stated no, they would not. One event is staffed by volunteers and there are no paid personnel involved in the running of the event.

Many events rely on the draw card of paid performers, celebrity appearances or may have funds tagged for other paid artists and performers (Ferdinand & Kitchin, 2012). The
A researcher inquired about the setting of a contingency amount for the payment of staff, artists or performers, or celebrity appearances. Seven replied positively to this question, allowing for a contingency for payments to personnel involved in the event. The seven remaining event managers did not allow for a contingency payment with two of these stating it was not applicable to their event. Respondent 1009, which manages a series of events, made the comment that one event per season is expected to be a loss to rain and this loss is planned for.

**Q20. Should the event get cancelled, are contracted event staffs still paid?**
Comment 1004: No paid staff, all volunteers.
Comment 1006: No paid staff.
Comment 1012: Participation event. No paid staff, all volunteers.
Comment 1013: Salaried staff attend event regardless.
Comment 1014: No, events run by club volunteers and officials
Comment 1015: Yes, salaried staff.

**Q20 (a) Is a contingency amount for the payment of staff wages/artist performance/celebrity appearance contracts in the event of a cancellation allowed for in pre-planning the event?**
Comment 1001: We have never had a rain-day festival in 24 years.
Comment 1007: Guest artist paid.
Comment 1009: It is expected to lose one event for rain per season. This is in our budget.
Comment 1011: Although some are contracted for while of festival so will still be paid and entertainers may get 50% depending on their contract terms.

Whilst an event may be rescheduled to an alternate rain-date it would be prudent in the pre-event planning phase to ensure adequate staff coverage for the event is available (Silvers, 2008). The event managers were asked whether staff were contractually obliged to be available for the rain-date.

Six event managers responded that staff would be obliged to work the stated rain-date and they were advised of this rain-date when contracted. They must be available to work on that date. The remaining nine event managers replied negatively, by stating they did not include
this rain date in the staff contracts, or the question did not apply to them. That is they don’t offer a rain-date, which negates requiring staff.

Silvers (2008) recommends that a plan should be in place to ensure the level of staff is adequate to run the event in a safe and controlled manner. The event managers were asked to comment on whether there is a plan in place to ensure there is an adequate level of staff and volunteers available to competently run the event should a rain-date be instigated.

The following comments were made to indicate their plans that are in place to ensure the level of staff and volunteers is adequate to continue with the event.

Q21 (a) Should staff/volunteers not be available for a re-scheduled event what plan is in place to ensure the level of staff/volunteers is adequate?

Comment 1001: There is only 2 paid festival staff, and we paid for all other contracted work.

Comment 1004: Event never cancelled, goes ahead rain or shine.

Comment 1007: Event not rescheduled, no rain date.

Comment 1008: No rain date.

Comment 1009: Always covered but hardly ever needed as rain-outs are advertised 4-6 months in advance.

Comment 1011: Volunteer Co-ordinator or Operations Manager would organise for someone else to cover.

Comment 1015: Salaried staff must attend.

Permission and consents are often required to be obtained by event managers to hold their event on council grounds. If the event is making available alcohol at the event a liquor licence is required (Raj, Walters, Rashid, 2009). Consent to erect any temporary structures such as staging and structures to contain the event may also require to be obtained through a consent process (Raj, Walters, Rashid, 2009). Questions in this section were asked to establish whether consents were required and the terms of these consents.

Events requiring consents numbered eight, with seven events not requiring consents. Asked whether this consent included a contingency date, two responded yes, whilst six responded no, it did not. This result correlates with the responses to question 22 with three event managers stating that a contingency rain-date was set at the time of determining the event
date. In summary, two out of three of the event managers that required council permits included a contingency date with the consent process.

Q23. Is a License/permit (e.g. Council, DOC) required to hold outdoor event?

Comment 1005: Permission is sought from Tuwharetoa Maori Trust Board via paper submission. The contingency dates are part of the main event dates with schedules adjusted rather than the whole event moved.

Comment 1008: No contingency date.

Comment 1009: Not a specific licence but held under the District plan for Auckland.

Comment 1011: Contingency for some, have consent for entire period of event plus extra days for pack in and pack out.

Comment 1014: Lake closure request lodged. Event shortened to fit into time frame.

Often road closures are required and separate permission is required along with the submission of a traffic management plan (Allen et al., 2011). Analysis shows nine events required a traffic management plan with two event managers stating they included a rain-date in their application. The two event managers that included a contingency date in their council application were not the same two event managers that noted a contingency date in their traffic management plan consents. Postponement or the rescheduling of the event will mean new applications would be required, adding financial cost and potential time delays.

Protecting the attendees from any adverse weather elements would add to the attendees comfort and overall event experience should a weather catastrophe occur (Jones et al., 2006). Ten respondents considered this element of event planning with the following comments made, expanding on this topic.

Q25 In the event planning phase is there consideration given for protection from wind/rain/sun weather elements?

Comment 1001: We do have ¾ Marquees for sun shade areas.

Comment 1003: All stages covered by marquees capable of housing all patrons.

Comment 1004: Only the staging & speakers have shelter.

Comment 1005: There are marquees & other facilities available to cover from the elements.

Comment 1006: Gazebos, local club rooms.
Comment 1007: Outdoor concert venue has shelter belt of large trees.

Comment 1009: Track prep handled differently for rain, e.g. not watering before bad weather. Try to protect track with hard packing.

Comment 1011: Mainly use marquees.

Comment 1012: Marquee/gazebos, trees.

Comment 1013: Stands at venues, club rooms, gazebos

Comment 1015: Club rooms.

Five respondents replied no to this question relating to the provision of weather protection for their attendees.

A sudden downpour, or an adverse change in the weather conditions, may invoke a sudden exodus of participants leaving stadia or the event venue putting patrons at risk of injury (Silvers, 2008). Just over half of the respondents made a comment relating to how they would manage crowd control should this occur. A total of eight indicated they had crowd control measures in place, with seven having no crowd control measures pre-planned. One respondent commented that this aspect of people management had not been considered in their event planning. Crowd control measures in place included the following comments by event managers.

**Q28   What crowd control measures are in place in the event of sudden weather change?**

(For example sudden rain downpour and the event attendees all disperse at once). Please describe.

Comment 1001: We have 36 Security, 18 Police, 6 St John, 1 Ambulance, 10 Red Cross volunteers.

Comment 1002: Traffic management plan is designed to allow for such occurrences and will have staff available to help with high volumes.

Comment 1003: Detailed health & safety plus evacuation plan is used.

Comment 1007: From experience concert continues & majority of crowd stays.

Comment 1008: Has not been considered.

Comment 1009: PA announcement, security man gates. Patrons to retain tickets prior to 1/3 through meeting (for rain-date entry).
Comment 1010: No plan in place. Areas where athletes can shelter, all technical equipment under marquees so protected from the rain.

Comment 1011: Marshalls in place, work with police.

Comment 1012: Volunteers would traffic control so people leaving don’t cause traffic jams.

Comment 1015: Air horns, communication on greens. Tournament rules allow for this.

Comment 1015: Air horns to clear course, Golf rules and protocols

4.2.4 Risk Assessment

An essential element of the event planning process is the consideration of potential risk to participants and attendees and how these risks are to be managed (Silvers, 2008). Working through this process results in the creation of a document referred to in the event industry as a RAM’s document (Ferdinand & Kitchin, 2012). RAM’s is an abbreviation for Risk Assessment and Management. All identified potential risk elements of an event are noted and a management plan for each risk is documented.

Thirteen event managers prepared a RAM’s and two did not indicate they did so. The event managers were then asked whether within the RAM’s document were there emergency procedures in the event of inclement weather. Of the respondents that said they did have a RAM’s eight replied yes they did include weather emergency procedures and five did not include any emergency procedures regarding weather. Thirteen of the 15 event managers have emergency services such as St John’s on site to attend medical emergencies.

Following the RAM’s questions respondents were presented with questions directly relevant to weather risk and the monitoring of weather conditions, and the ensuing safety of patrons should catastrophe occur. The researcher wanted to establish the monitoring processes in place to monitor weather patterns and forecasts (NCAA, 2011).

Respondents were asked to rate their event as either at a high or low risk level that the event may be postponed or cancelled due to inclement weather. Seven rated their event as being of a high risk saying it would have to be postponed or cancelled with eight rating their event as being of a low risk should inclement weather strike.
NCAA (2011) suggests that monitoring the weather conditions leading up to an outdoor event is of considerable importance. All 15 respondents replied favourably when asked if they closely monitored weather forecasts leading up to their event date.

Table 7 The monitoring of weather forecasts by event managers.

| Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |

The following comments were also made detailing how the monitoring was achieved.

Q31. **Do you closely monitor the weather forecasts?**

Comment 1001: We monitor the weather forecast on a daily basis 10 days out from the event.

Comment 1002: Staff check met service website to monitor weather patterns.

Comment 1003: Assessment of multiple weather sites & onsite wind monitoring.

Comment 1004: Daily checking with Met service up until the day. Advise stallholders of possible bad weather and ensure the electrician is set for the weather.

Comment 1005: Regular checks & team meetings with safety & course managers leading up to the event.

Comment 1006: Forecast monitored leading up to the event.

Comment 1007: Check weather website.

Comment 1008: Informal looking at long range forecast for any predicted weather which may be dangerous.

Comment 1009: Paid weather forecast models 1 month out, 3 types of weather models monitored

Comment 1010: Look at the online forecasts leading up to the event. Event won’t ever be cancelled, reduced numbers attend and they know they don’t get a refund if they don’t turn up.

Comment 1011: Weather reports online, work with mountain staff re snow reports etc.

Comment 1012: Long & short term weather forecasts 10 days out, liaison with council re grounds.

Comment 1014: Yes, Met service website monitored closely. Wind a major issue on site/water.
Question 35 asked whether there were procedures for monitoring the weather and environmental conditions during the event. Twelve respondents noted yes, they do continue with the monitoring process once the event has commenced, three responded they did not.

Q35. Are their procedures for monitoring of weather and environmental conditions prior to and during the event in place?

Comment 1001: We look at the long-range forecast and advise our key stakeholder by email and we have a debrief meeting the day before the event/festival starts.

Comment 1004: Just keeping an eye on Met service.

Comment 1005: Staff on water feeding back conditions to land crew.

Comment 1010: Just a matter of us looking at the online forecast, we do not monitor the weather during the event.

Comment 1011: Several staff keeps up to date online & by talking to various authorities, suppliers and assessing outdoors ourselves.

Comment 1014: Weather monitored closely via websites by several club members and officials during event.

Should inclement weather strike there may be a deterioration of the conditions at the venue. Rain runoff, slippery surfaces and muddy conditions could all become relevant safety issues to consider and would require a strategy to be in place to manage these risks (Silvers, 2008). The responses to Question 32 when asked if consideration was given to rain run off were as below.

Table 8 The management of rain runoff and associated hazards.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>N/A</th>
<th>6</th>
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<td>4</td>
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</table>

To manage the development of weather related hazards that may develop during an event, seven event managers responded, yes they did have management strategies in place whilst eight responded that they did not. Comments were noted by two respondents about how any such occurrence would be managed. Six noted it was not applicable to their event venue.
Q33. (a) When planning your event have you considered potential surface safety issues, slippery surfaces, mud from rain fall, and the management of these?

Comment 1001: good drainage in place, no issues, Placement of marquees considered.

Comment 1002: Event staff is used to identify and rope off any relevant areas.

Comment 1006: Change the Trek & the track course, slippery road surface – ensure safety procedures are monitored.

Comment 1008: Liaison with Council on paths, field conditions, fields to be used.

Comment 1009: Never ever have a stadium that is not slip proof.

Comment 1011: We tile the likes of Earnslaw Park to protect the grass and stop mud being created etc.

Comment 1012: No, but will now.

Comment 1015: Mats used. Host club responsibility.

Q33 (b) When planning your event are you aware of any penalties that may be incurred for damage to grounds/turf etc., due to inclement weather?

Comment 1007: Private property owned by principals.

Comment 1008: Liaison with council regarding road/path/field conditions.

Comment 1009: Just need to get turf fixed the next day.

Comment 1010: The course is walked/driven prior to the event, issues are marked and dealt with. If they block the course an alternative route is made.

Comment 1011: Council would assess damage and charge for repairs.

Comment 1012: No vehicles on grounds except event vehicles.

Comment 1015: Host club responsibility.

The second part of this question inquired about awareness of penalties that may be incurred due to damage to the grounds or the turf of the venue due to inclement weather. Six noted they were aware of penalties charged by the venue should damage occur. Nine were not aware of any such penalties. Respondent 1009 commented they were required to fix the turf the next day, following the event.

Wet weather and electrical systems are a potential hazard with high risk of injury to both staff and patrons at an event (Silvers, 2008). The majority of the respondents replied favourably as to the identification and management of hazards relating to electrical wiring, sound systems, lighting and staging equipment. These identified hazards were documented
in their RAM’s, however respondent 1007 commented that this hazard component was discussed but not documented.

Q34. Have hazards relating to electrical wiring/sounds system/lighting, staging equipment been identified and a RAMs management plan been documented for this?

Comment 1001: All wiring is underground.

Comment 1005: Contractors providing such equipment are responsible for ensuring correct circuit breaking equipment is used, ensuring safety of spectators & competitors.

Comment 1007: Discussed with contractors to protect equipment & crowd, but not documented.

Comment 1008: Unsure. This service is contracted out and is minor.

Comment 1009: All electrical etc. Weatherproof.

Comment 1010: the contractor who provides the sound system covers this.

Comment 1011: Thought of beforehand so inclement weather will not affect (provide cover etc.)

Comment 1012: Electrical leads covered.

4.2.5 Communication Planning

The communication processes that the event managers’ engage is of interest to this research because should a catastrophe occur, it would be vital that established lines of communication are in place (Fruin, 1984). How attendees are advised of anything that may affect their enjoyment of the event or may perhaps endanger their safety, is investigated.

The communication planning process questioned respondents in areas of media coverage for the event and how they communicated to attendees of progress of the event in the pre-event and during the event phases. The researcher also wanted to establish the method the event managers used to advise attendees of postponements and cancellations. Whether there was a reciprocating communication method back to the event managers for the public was explored.

The first section of communication questioning asked which events would receive television coverage. Only 30% of respondents confirmed their event would have television coverage. One respondent advised which television channels their event would be screened on.
Table 9 The number of events covered by television coverage.

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<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q36.  Is the event going to receive TV coverage?

Comment 1001: TV 1 and TV 3

Comment 1005: Yes, we hire a camera man to provide footage to the news agencies. Cost is not high so we don’t have a contingency for this.

Of these five positive respondents, respondent 1009 confirmed the television coverage was part of a revenue source, whereby the network paid the event organisation a sum of money to televise the event. Respondent 1009 also added to this comment by stating that in the event of a cancellation or postponement, film coverage of other event meets is used as a replacement. This was in response to the question that should inclement weather occur, what provisions were in place with the television network. Respondent 1001 commented that television coverage they received was of media and community interest. In this scenario the television network would not be reliant on the coverage to meet programming demands should a cancellation occur.

Respondents 1005 and 1009 indicated they paid for the television coverage of their event. Fourteen out of the 15 event managers researched confirmed there is other media engagement for the event such as press and radio.

Q37.  Is this TV coverage part of a sponsorship agreement or revenue source?

Comment 1003: $1.4 million in sponsorship and pre-organised media deals.

Comment 1009: Pay for filming & editing two producing platforms, You Tube website, and sports news and own TV show on Sky TV and TV3.

If yes, is there any contingency in the agreement regarding the postponement or cancellation of the event. Please provide general terms of the contract.

Comment 1009: No need (for contingency) the show has events already filmed for replacement of last shows.

To communicate progress of the event both in the pre-event phase and during the time the event is held, social media and the use of technology was the dominant method used by all
respondents. Facebook and the event website were rated highly at 12 out of 15 respondents using these methods. This was followed by radio with seven of 15 respondents using radio to communicate the event status. Twitter is still yet to feature with only four respondents indicating they used this social media phenomenon. All 15 respondents noted they had a Master of Ceremonies (MC) or an announcer at their event indicating having an MC or announcer is a vital component to include within an event plan.

Q40. How do attendees know what is happening with the progress of the event, pre-event and during the event?

Comment 1001: Facebook and Website. MC & Festival programme map of stall/site & entertainment programme.

Comment 1002: Publicity via our website/Facebook and twitter feeds. MC announcement over PA system.

Comment 1003: Radio, web, Facebook, database, MC announcements.

Comment 1004: Sound system, written boards at stage areas.

Comment 1005: Facebook, newsletter & email upon registration & race pack collection.

Comment 1006: Press releases via local papers, MC & sound system.

Comment 1008: Website, email, social media, PA systems, marshals.

Comment 1009: Website, Facebook, txt radio and TV show.

Comment 1010: Through website, Facebook and direct mail, sound system, loud hailers.

Comment 1011: Website, radio, 0800 helpline, Facebook, PA system.

Comment 1012: Website, database, email, Facebook.

Comment 1013: Facebook, website, MC announcements and notice boards.

Comment 1014: Facebook, website, MC, notice boards at venue.

Comment 1015: Email and announcers and information boards

Cancelling or postponing an event would be the worst case scenario should inclement weather occur. The notice period in which an event may be cancelled by the event managers varied across the respondents. Seven of the fifteen respondents indicated they had no notice period for cancellation. Four of the event managers commented the notice period for cancelling their events was the day prior to the event and they would notify their participants. The remaining four responses made by event managers noted the cancellation
period for their events was a matter of hours of the event starting, or on the day. This would be of great inconvenience to patrons travelling some distance to an event and patrons should be made aware this may happen when purchasing an event entry.

Many of the events researched offered prize money or competition points affiliated to the event. Eight respondents confirmed this was a factor in their event and seven confirmed this was not an issue for consideration. In the event that a catastrophe did strike and deemed the cancelation or postponement of the event, all of the affirmed respondents stated that any prize money, or points allocated, would either be deferred or not awarded if the event was not completed.

| Q44. **Is there any prize money, rankings or points affiliated to this event?** |
| Comment 1001: Prizes roll over to next year; Do a double value the next year. |
| Comment 1002: Points are allocated based on the playing conditions for the competition which are confirmed prior to the event commencing. |
| Comment 1005: Prize money not awarded if the event is not completed, rerun event to a new date if initial contingency is not suitable. |
| Comment 1008: Ranking points would not be allocated. |
| Comment 1009: No prize money / points allocated if promoter does not collect gate. |
| Comment 1012: Sent to some attendees via database, e.g. oldest competitor, largest group. Or held over to next year, or donated to charity. |
| Comment 1014: No prize money/points awarded, Tournament status reduced to club level. |
| Comment 1015: No prize money/points awarded. |

The previous section inquired of the respondents the communication methods utilised to reach their participants. Importantly it is also of interest how easily attendees could contact the event management for the event they were attending. It was also desirable to establish whether there was a complaints procedure in place should attendees’ event experience not to their satisfaction (Dawkins & Stern, 2004).

Technology was once again at the forefront of the methods established for attendees to reach the event managers of these researched events. Thirteen of the 15 relied on the event website as a communication channel for attendees to make contact with the event’s host organisation. The event programme material was the next favoured method of
communication with contact details being published in the programme, followed by the event ticket and newspaper publications, with two respondents utilising these mediums.

When asked whether there is a complaints procedure in place nine respondents confirmed there was, with six replying ‘none’, indicating there was no complaints procedure in place. The following responses were received from those that did note they had a complaints procedure, and no comments were received by respondents that stated they did not.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q47. Is there a complaints procedure in place?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Comment 1001: At the festival venue at information tent a form is available to fill in.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comment 1003: Dependent on nature of complaint. Normally email or phone response from event manager.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comment 1004: No real procedure, they come to event manager. Yet to have a complaint, feedback has been fantastic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comment 1005: Following the event there is a survey sent to all participants with the opportunity to provide feedback positive or negative.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comment 1008: Formalised in writing as per organisation policy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comment 1009: Ring office or email. Handled by promoter if directly regarding fans. Resident/council (complaint) handled by general manager.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comment 1010: Competitors normally email or tell us on the day. Complaints referred to the supervisor and they contact them to handle the complaint.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comment 1011: Referred to Festival Manager and dealt with on a case by case basis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comment 1012: Contact manager, discuss with committee, engage complainant.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comment 1014: Contact club president if required.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comment 1015: Contact event organiser directly.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.3 SUMMARY

This chapter provided a summary of the responses received through the development and completion of the questionnaire process. The purpose of the Findings chapter was to provide results of the data analysis and accompanying commentary thus providing the researcher with the ability to relate these findings with the pre-determined research questions. Chapter 5 will provide discussion of these findings and link these findings to the event and risk management protocols as discovered through the literature review process.
5. DISCUSSION

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter develops the research findings from the returned questionnaires to enable discussion relevant to the purpose of this research. The purpose of this research was to explore how well event managers planned for inclement weather. The overall research question being:

*Exploring contingency planning for adverse weather conditions – How well do event managers plan for inclement weather?*

The questionnaire was developed as an exploration into the impact inclement weather has on organised events and the project planning implications for event managers.

This chapter discusses the following research aims developed from the research question.

The research aims for this study were:

- To determine if and how well event managers plan for contingency.
- Establish adverse effects on events should contingency planning not be in place.
- Use the findings of this research to provide an insight into contingency planning to present to the event management industry.

The literature review showed there was minimal research into the process of contingency planning specifically relating to weather. The results and this discussion of the findings are presented in line with the four research statements developed as part of the research objectives.

1. Determine what adverse weather contingency elements an event manager considers as part of the contingency plan.

2. Consider the perceived financial impacts on the financial budget for the event should a natural catastrophe occur.

3. Establish how a natural weather catastrophe affects the logistical running of the event on the day.
4. Determine if there is an impact on customer satisfaction levels should an event experience an adverse weather catastrophe.

5.2 DISCUSSION

5.2.1 Adverse weather contingency elements an event manager considers as part of the contingency plan.

The pre-event planning phase of the event planning process develops the building blocks that form the foundation from which to build the event (Getz, 2012). This planning phase provides the event manager with the opportunity to ensure the event is one that will deliver a valuable and memorable experience for those that attend (Berridge, 2012).

Planning for contingency starts here. Hopkins (1986) refers to contingency as the identification of key risks, detecting the emergence of the event occurring and having a developed response to this occurrence. This is reiterated by Miller (2007) that a contingency should be evident for every aspect of the event. Evidence of this consideration was sought in the pre-event planning phase of the questionnaire. The questions asked focused on the ‘what if’ elements as previously alluded to in the literature review (Schirick, 2003). Consideration should be given to; What if it rained? What if the event is cancelled or postponed?

The overall budget for the event determines the size and scope of the event. The response to the question to event managers asking for an indication to the presence of a contingency budget showed most did not have a contingency budget for their event. This lack of a contingency budget over and above the set event budget to cover any increases in costs is concerning. Should inclement weather threaten the event, patrons may choose not to attend, possibly reducing the amount of income the event was to generate. This leaves the organisers open to a loss situation with no extra funds to cover unforeseen expenses or income shortfall. The potential additional expenses include costs incurred for extra equipment or shelter for patrons, cancellation fees for pre-ordered services and equipment and potential catering revenue losses. Silvers (2008) refers to contingency planning for a reduction or loss is mitigated by having a ‘Plan B’.
Without the presence of a budget contingency event organisers may turn to insurance products to mitigate financial loss. Dawkins & Stern (2004) provide detail on the newly developed weather derivatives market. Insurance agencies now provides new policies that cover negative event outcomes caused by meteorological influences. With only one event manager providing evidence they sought specific weather insurance for their event suggests this specific insurance protection is not being explored by some event managers. This offers an area of future research into the weather derivatives market for outdoor events in New Zealand and how many events are covered by this specific insurance.

There is a strong reliance on Public Liability cover held by most of the organisations researched for their insurance cover requirements. Zuckerman & Ahrens (2010) express an important element of contingency planning is to review the specific policy terms of liability coverage to minimise risk. These policies insure an organisation against damage to a third party’s property or causes harm to someone, but it does not cover weather caused catastrophe for an event (Toepfer, 2010). This leaves the event management organisation open to the risk of financial loss.

Ensuring the organisation has adequate and specific insurance cover does come at a cost and should be an essential element of setting the event budget. This increase in cost is acknowledged by Arcodia (2004) who comments there is an increase in risk hosting outdoor events such as sports events and festivals necessitating in weather specific cover. However, should an event be rained off returned hire equipment, non-returnable elements such as purchased food and reduced attendance figures are not covered by a public liability insurance policy. As discussed specific weather insurance is required to insure against these potential risks. Insurance may come at an additional cost to the event, but could well save an event from financial ruin.

The planning decision to include the provision of a rain date was made by three of the respondents. The lack of a rain date potentially leads to the full cancellation of the event and refunding of costs to patrons. Information on these processes should be clear to the consumer as to their rights and responsibilities. Some of the event managers made comment on this stating the conditions of sale for their event are made clear to patrons at the time of ticket purchase. For other events there was a lack of ticketing information.
readily available to consumers. This presents an element of risk as there is potential expectation by attendees that a full refund be available should the event not go ahead. The organisation’s refunds policy needs to be clearly stated and readily available to consumers to avoid any confusion or leave the host organisation in a position of having to refund all ticket holders and incur a loss.

One event manager commented that their attendees were made aware the event was never going to be cancelled even in inclement weather conditions. Should an attendee decide not to participate due to adverse conditions there was a ‘no refund’ policy in place. By clearly stating this at the time of entry there is no chance of confusion and the event manager has guaranteed revenue. This no refund policy mitigates any loss of income and ensures overheads are met and is a best practice example to the industry.

There does not appear to be an industry standard on the requirement to either hold the event on an alternative date, to postpone or cancel the event. The responses varied across the event managers. This decision is made independently by the event manager for the event and what is deemed appropriate for their event. The considerations that influence this decision would be venue availability, staff and performer availability and event setup logistics. This leads back to the previous comments on budget outcomes for the event. Without careful consideration to cancellation processes event income can be severely compromised should refunds have to be made due to no alternative event date being set.

A communication plan should be evident as to how event managers reach participants to inform them of cancellations and postponements. Responses showed the respondents make use of social media communication channels to reach their participants. Announcements via email database, website and Facebook are the most common methods. This technology inclusion by all of the respondents indicates this is now an established practice within the event management industry. These communication methods offer a very fast and efficient method of ensuring participants are aware of an event status and proceedings.

Another area of pre-event planning that indicates an event manager’s preparedness for catastrophe is the detail included in contracts with the providers of services and equipment. This area was found to be somewhat lacking with regard to contingency planning. For most
of the event managers this did not factor into their assessment of potential risk. This was evident as only two event managers actively addressed potential costs incurred due to cancellation or postponement when negotiating hire terms. Consideration should be given to charges incurred for equipment hired should the event be cancelled as this exposes a potential financial risk to the event’s financial outcomes.

An example given by one event manager is the hiring of the services of an MC (announcer) and their provision of music for an event. Should the event be cancelled this service provider is still required to be paid. A suggestion for future negotiations would be to ensure there is a cancellation clause in their contract. Contractual terms should be agreed to by the users and providers of such services when entering into a contractual arrangement.

Evidence of the lack of planning for the cancellation of the event continued through the consent and permit processes. This is identified by the lack of alternative dates being included by most event managers within the application process or consents and permits. This would indicate should the event be cancelled rescheduling is not an option without obtaining new permits. A more efficient way of managing this process would be to include alternative dates in the application process.

The pre-planning phase of event management provides the event manager the opportunity to assess potential risk and to ensure there are contingencies in place. The importance of planning for contingency is highlighted in the pre-event planning phase when setting the overall event budget, negotiating the terms and conditions of service engagement, the decision to set a contingent event date and the requirement of having clear cancellation policies for consumers.

To summarise the research analysis indicates while some of the event managers considered these contingency elements, many did not. There needs to be more emphasis placed on obtaining the appropriate insurance cover, setting of rain dates and ensuring these alternative dates are acknowledged in any contracts and permits required for the event.
5.2.2. Financial considerations for the financial budget for the event should inclement weather occur.

Of the event managers researched only two of the events had financial outcomes to make a profit. The remaining thirteen events had financial goals to breakeven or the profits made were part of a fundraising activity. This would suggest a financial loss would not be sustained. Ferdinand & Kitchin (2012) discuss the fact that a poor weather outcome may lead to the event incurring a financial loss. Noteworthy is the response to questions discussing the setting of the event revenue budget. If the ticket price is not set correctly, there will not be enough revenue generated to cover expenses.

When setting the ticket price none of the event managers built a contingency quotient into their ticket pricing. The event managers that did consider budget contingency did so by allowing a percentage of the overall allocated event budget for this purpose. The percentage figures ranged from 2% to 10% of the total budget available to host the event. Allen et.al, (2008) noted figures of between 10% and 15% of the overall budget to be allocated to a contingency fund. This amount needs to be generated by revenue from ticket sales so must be factored into ticket pricing. Alternatively the organisation will need to seek funds from other revenue streams such as sponsorship, advertising revenue or merchandise sales (Ferdinand & Kitchin (2012).

This lack of contingency planning towards the event budget is contrary to the recommendation by Tarlow (2002) whom suggests that event risk is a series of potential variables. Schrick (2003) also alludes to the possibility that financial loss is developed from these variations. No other tangible example of how event managers would protect their events from a financial loss due to cancellation of the event was seen. This implies that when event managers are developing their event budget consideration is only given to the immediate fixed costs for the event such as venue hire, staffing, equipment and wages. This statement is supported by the comments made by the researched event managers as to the process of setting the ticket price confirming that budgets were set without the inclusion of a contingency amount.
This is of concern as further comment by five event managers showed that should an event be cancelled they would refund the ticket holder the full ticket value. This would suggest a loss would be incurred or another funding source from within the organisation is used for this purpose. By building a budget contingency into the overall event budget this loss would have been avoided.

The remaining ten event managers issue a pass for the scheduled rain date. Should the ticket holder not be able to attend the alternative date three event managers refund the ticket value whilst the remaining seven event managers do not. In the event of no refund being available, the financial loss of the ticket value therefore remains with the ticket holder. For the event manager this mitigates any financial loss to the event for non-attendance. However the ticket holder’s event experience would not be a positive one having paid for something that did not eventuate (Dawkins & Stern, 2004). The potential for a negative customer experience can be mitigated by having a clear refund policy in place and once again ensuring a budget contingency fund is available to refund ticketholders if required.

A tangible example of how a financial loss can be factored into the budget process was provided by respondent 1009. This respondent provided an example of contingency planning by stating they expect to lose one event per season to rain. This event loss is factored into their overall event budget for the season. Should a scheduled event be cancelled due to rain, the organisation has budget reserves to pay for the fixed costs of the event, such as staff, suppliers and service providers.

Of consideration for the event manager is the staffing levels required for the event. Should a cancelation occur, nine out of fourteen event managers confirmed staff would continue to be paid. The issue of payment for a cancelled event and subsequent non-performance applies to contracted artists, performers or celebrity appearances for an event. This potential payment was considered by half of the respondents. This implies their overall event budget has provision for these payments should the event be cancelled. This contingency would need to be highlighted in the event budget and the revenue for these payments identified and secured prior to the event. This is an example of how weather
insurance would be of benefit to an event. Insurance protection is available to cover the payment of contracted services for non-performance due to the cancellation of an event.

There is an element of risk of damage occurring to the venue and surrounds during the course of the event. Examples of this are flooding, ruined turf and damaged equipment. Repair costs and penalties may be imposed by the venue owners to reinstate the premises to the original condition. It is the researcher’s opinion that more discussion with venue owners by event managers is required regarding this area of risk. This is because nine of the event managers were not aware of any penalties that may be incurred due to damage. With no built in contingency for damage repairs, how would these repairs be paid for? This would be an unforeseen overhead to be expensed out of the proceeds for the event, reducing profit. Insurance protection could avert a financial loss caused by the cost of repairing the damage.

On reflection it is evident that the researched event managers plan for the immediate costs to run the event only. Most appear to have minimal reserves to fall back on should a weather catastrophe impact their event. Relying on public liability insurance does not address weather related loss due to low attendance or damage to property.

5.2.3 How inclement weather may affect the logistical running of the event on the day.

Tarlow (2002) mentions safety of stage & podium and crowd control to be the next highest ranked associated risks for outdoor events. It would be appropriate to illustrate in the pre-planning phase how an event manager would consider protecting these elements against poor weather conditions.

Protection of stage and podium refers to the main hosting elements of the event. It is the stage at an outdoor concert, or the exhibitor stands at an outdoor food festival. It refers to the prize giving area for a sports event. The research suggests that the event managers did consider the safety and protection of patrons from the elements by providing comment on the provision of shelter alternatives. Most event managers noted the use of gazebos, temporary shelter structures or utilised existing venue structures. However there were
some events that did not offer solutions in this area, posing a threat to the comfort, safety and event experience of patrons.

Previously discussed were the financial impacts of catastrophe with regards to the payment of staff. Accompanying this is the consideration of ensuring there is adequate staff to cover the event. Advising volunteers and event staff during the recruitment process of the contingency dates was noted as procedure by the event managers that had set a contingency date. This is an example of best practice and with adequate staffing levels maintained ensures the successful running of the event.

Crucial to the success of an outdoor event is the monitoring of the weather forecasts preceding and during an event. The NCAA (2011) reinforces the need for event managers to monitor their local weather conditions. The recommendation is for designated personnel to be responsible for this and to also to be able to mandate decisions on safety and emergency procedures during the event.

When event managers were asked of their processes for weather monitoring an emphatic result of 100% event managers monitored weather conditions prior to their event. All event managers use web based services such as the MetService web sites provided by the government run meteorological services. This proactive monitoring of the weather conditions would lessen the surprise element of inclement weather. This would allow the event manager to make modifications to the planned logistics of the event, avoiding disruption. Examples of these modifications were noted in the responses and included altering the event course, providing more cover for patrons, shortening the duration of the event or moving the event to another venue. This was a very pleasing result and indicates this is standard procedure for event managers running outdoor events.

The majority of the event managers continue to monitor the weather conditions for the duration of the event. As some of the events are held over a long period of time continual monitoring would be advised. An event may start in sunny weather in the morning but conditions may well rapidly deteriorate by the afternoon. A sudden drop in temperature, a rogue shower or high winds could drastically alter the environmental surrounds. The changes in the environment could be slippery surfaces underfoot, shelters being blown away, flying debris or the risk of health conditions such as hypothermia for athletes.
However it would appear that several of the event managers were content with having good weather conditions at the start to the day and leaving the monitoring of conditions at that. There was then the assumption by the event managers that the good conditions would continue, as they ceased to continue monitoring the weather. An event industry best practice example is that of respondent 1005 who commented that during their event, staff continually monitor the weather on the course and provide continual feedback to the event manager. This minimises the risk to participants should conditions deteriorate.

This lack of continued monitoring of weather conditions during the event is concerning as half of the event managers had no strategies to manage deteriorating weather conditions. This lack of contingency planning heightens the risk of harm to patrons. The respondents who indicated they did have plans in place to mitigate changes in the environment mentioned the use of mats to make the potentially slippery or muddy grounds safe for patrons and also protect grounds from damage. Other strategies to manage risk ranged from shortening the event or changing the event course to changing the event venue.

Of considerable importance is the evacuation plan and this should be included as part of an overall event plan. This evacuation plan should be documented and practised with event staff (NCAA, 2011). Crowd control refers to the crowd’s sudden reaction to catastrophe. For all event genres crowd control is identified as a high risk (Tarlow, 2002). Consider a stadium with thousands of people having to all leave the venue at once, or a group of athletes out on a running course and having to immediately seek shelter. These emergency situations call for a carefully considered and rehearsed emergency evacuation plan by event personnel. All of the event managers indicated they had a method to communicate with their attendees during the event and had strategies in place to stop the event, and manage the logistics of people movement should catastrophe strike.

Electrical hazards associated with wet weather were raised with the event managers as a safety issue for all of the events researched. The very positive responses collated indicated this is of considerable importance and considered early in the event planning phase. Comment was made by several respondents that this planning element is often managed by external contractors providing sound, lighting and associated services. Electrical industry developed risk management and health and safety standards form part of the service
contract, with event managers indicating their reliance on the contractors to adhere to these standards and be accountable for any risk. A recommendation would be to ensure evidence of these safety procedures is produced when contracting these service providers for an event.

Silvers (2008) mentions the need for event managers to examine all internal risks and to have a plan in place to negate these. It was encouraging to see the response from one event manager that disclosed they had not previously considered these risk elements in their event plan, and would be doing so in the future.

**5.2.4. Potential impact on customer satisfaction levels should an event experience inclement weather.**

Silvers (2008) stated “The risk manager should confirm that the systems are in place to deliver quality customer service because dissatisfaction can lead to image degradation, disruptive behaviour, or lawsuits” (p. 306). Whilst the possibility of financial loss and the health and safety risks to patrons has been identified, Dawkins & Stern (2004) suggests the weather can impact the enjoyment level experienced by patrons. It could be fair to conclude people attend events for enjoyment pleasure and to come away having had a good experience.

Event management planning elements included in the questionnaire to assess this component were communication methods, cancellation processes and the procedures in place for customer feedback and complaints.

Effective communication with participants is key to ensuring that they have a successful event experience (Getz, 2012). Noted elements to be contained in a contingency plan were internal and external communication plans (Silvers, 2008). How event managers are going to reach their audience with event information was of interest. Research questions were developed to illustrate how event managers implemented this important contributor to customer service.

Undoubtedly communication methods have continued to develop within the computer technology industry. The social media platforms of Facebook, Twitter and improved functionality of websites mean these methods have been adopted by the event
management industry. The event managers researched all demonstrated an integrated social media model was used throughout the various stages of the event process. This is an extension from the communication methods used previously, with radio broadcasts formally being the primary communication platform available. Many stations have cancellation services available, often accompanying public service announcements such as weather forecasts. This provides an example of best practice within the event industry and shows how the industry is embracing new technology.

Initial contact to encourage participation of the events came though the event’s website presence. This internet presence is the ‘shop front’ to the event and an essential marketing tool. Whilst developing the database of potential research participants the researcher noted the contact details and event information for each identified event. This is the type of information a potential participant would require. A total of 75 events were compiled within the database of which 60 met the research participation criteria of being an outdoor event. It is of interest that 18 of the event web sites found omitted contact information, potentially leaving a participant unable to reach the event organisers by no other means than via the website ‘contact us’ link. This is a weakness in the communications area and may discourage participation in the event.

Allen et al., (2008) make comment that the internet is an integrated resource that if used correctly is the most effective and efficient method of communicating with the target market.

The event website is the marketing platform and the point of sale for the event. All the necessary event information such as the what, when, where and costs of the event should be clear and easy to find. Directions to the event and event management contact details should also be included. Cancellation and postponement procedures including any rain dates would be of assistance to participants. Following the analysis of the web sites for the events referred to in the research, it was found the majority of the event managers provided quality information to their web site viewers. This was assessed by ensuring the venue, date time and contact details for the event managers was available.

Many of the events identified in the initial research database were contracted to event management companies, adding another layer of communication. This often did not make it
clear who is charged with the responsibility for the event. Extensive detective work was required in order to ‘talk’ with the event manager for some of these events. This communication difficulty could lead to frustration and a reduced level of customer satisfaction for participants.

As discussed in the Findings, Facebook is the second ranked communication method used by event managers. Whilst a Facebook page is used to promote the event it is primarily ‘liked’ and ‘followed’ by event participants that are already aware of the event or may have subscribed to the event. Details such as event progress, training plans for sports events and weather updates featured on the Facebook pages of those participating in the research. It is an excellent communication method to keep the event front of mind for the participants, strengthening the customer relationship with the event organisation.

By collecting e-mail addresses upon entry, an e-mail database was generated to enable event managers to communicate the event status to participants. This process featured in the research for events that required an entry form to be completed or the event tickets were purchased online. The use of a database is an efficient way to reach participants and forward pre-event information such as event changes due to postponement, a venue change, or cancellation. The reliance on this e-mail communication method for on the day communications would be a barrier to effective communication as it relies on participants being able to access their e-mails remotely. A secondary communication method such as the use of news media, radio announcements or texting would be advisable to be included in the communication plan.

Events that sold tickets directly to participants place the onus on the ticket holders to keep up to date with event progress. This was able to be done by logging onto events website or via Facebook. It presents a one sided communication scenario and leaves the event manager at risk of not being able to reach participants in the event of a catastrophe situation causing cancellation or postponement. This exposes the risk of a poor customer experience should a ticket holder turn up to the event to find it has been cancelled. A recommendation would be to collect ticket sales data to enable a more personal and effective communication method to reach event attendees directly such as e-mail or texting. This would strengthen the event organisations relationships with their customers.
Alternatively, for planned events selling tickets directly to attendees and that the event organisation has no contact details for, it is important that a robust external media plan is in place. Radio announcements continue to feature as a method used to reach participants, with seven of the fifteen indicating radio services continue to be used. Radio announcements were most commonly used to cancel or postpone an event indicating the importance of this communication method.

It interesting to note the low number of respondents that indicated communication via text (TXT) to participants’ cell phones was utilised. Technology is available in which to develop a cell phone number database in which to push TXT information out to a large number of people at once. Given the prevalence of cell phones in society it appears the event managers are low adopters of this technology, with only one event manager using this service. This communication platform would be a fast, immediate and cost effective communication method to advise of any event cancellations and changes. Participants are more likely to have a cell phone with them leading up to and at the event, than having access to email or Facebook. This makes texting an exciting new method for event managers to consider as part of a communications plan. It is acknowledged that some participants may also have the ability to ‘sync’ their online e-mail functionality to their phone to receive e-mails, but this may not apply to everyone.

The recommendation for the adoption of cell phone TXT technology is supported by the response to the question relating to the cancellation notice period given to participants. Analysis of the responses to this question indicated 24 hours or less to be the most common notice period. This reinforces the need to have communication methods other than a website, e-mail or Facebook. Many participants may well be travelling to the event within this timeframe.

Once an event is underway consideration as to how event managers communicated to participants during the event was sought. The pre-event planning required for the event management plan regarding this aspect of communication is well established within the event management industry. This is evident by the 100% response rate of event managers including an MC (announcer) in their event management plans. This aligns well with the research findings into event management planning, that the engagement of an MC allows
for the immediate communication of critical information in an emergency situation (Silvers, 2008).

The presence of a reciprocal communication process and a complaints procedure to enable attendees to reach event managers was investigated. Concerns on the reliance of a website as the only communication method for event customers has been discussed earlier in this section. Additional customer feedback initiatives noted in the research by some event managers was the presence of information service centres at the venue for participants to lodge customer feedback or complaints. Other event managers encouraged communications from participants to be directed to them either in person or via telephone.

5.3 Summary of discussion

The objective of this discussion chapter was to use the analysis of the research contained within the Findings chapter to identify the event contingency planning elements event managers included in their event plans. Each of the four research statements were explored and discussed.

Throughout the event planning process it is evident the researched event managers do consider the risk of potential inclement weather disrupting their event and threatening a successful event outcome. The event managers all monitor weather conditions extensively acknowledging the weather may change at any time leading to a poor event outcome.

However there were areas of weakness discovered in some of the events researched. The main areas of concern include the lack of a contingency fund over and above the overall event budget and the lack of weather insurance to mitigate a further financial loss should inclement weather occur. These two issues were apparent with most of the events researched indicating these areas of concern may be industry wide. This is difficult to determine based on this small sample size. Further research into these areas would determine if it is a problem though out the event management industry.
6. CONCLUSION

The purpose of this research was to investigate how well event managers plan for inclement weather for their events. The research objective was to establish to what extent event managers considered the financial and operational implications of weather on an event and were there contingency measures in place to mitigate loss. This research objective was developed into the research title:

**Exploring contingency planning for adverse weather conditions – How well do Event Managers plan for inclement weather?**

“An investigation into the impact inclement weather has on organised events, and the project planning implications for Event Managers.”

The research aim was to identify potential areas of risk and the implications of not having a contingency plan should adverse weather occur during an event.

This area of research is important to the event industry as the number of outdoor events held in New Zealand continues to increase and outdoor events are particularly vulnerable to weather. Many parts of New Zealand can experience ‘four seasons in one day’ where it may be gloriously sunny in the morning, only to turn into torrential rain by the afternoon. This means event managers have to be prepared for any occurrence and have ‘Plan B’ contingency plans in place.

Industry information was gathered through an e-mail questionnaire targeting event managers that managed outdoor events. The questionnaire explored components of the event planning process and contingency planning. All areas of event planning were considered, from the time of year an event is held, to what shelter is provided for patrons, and how does an event manager monitor the weather. The researcher sought evidence of the inclusion of contingency measures in the event plan such as a contingency budget, setting of a rain date and insuring the event against loss due to inclement weather conditions.

Overall the findings of the research indicate that event managers do consider the weather when planning for their events. There was evidence that event managers consider the
physical elements of the event such as the venue, provision of shelter, time the event is held and the safety of the course or venue. The event managers provided details as to the types of shelter offered and where possible utilised existing venue structures. This consideration to shelter was addressed in the pre-planning stage of the event management process, indicating protection from weather is top of mind.

The respondents all had excellent weather monitoring systems in place; however some event managers ceased to monitor the weather once the event had started. This proactive approach to monitoring the weather leading up to the event removes the element of surprise, allowing the event manager to implement contingency processes early to avoid or minimise loss or damage. Not continuing to monitor the weather poses a risk to the event as the changeable nature of weather could affect the event outcome quite substantially. It would be a best practice recommendation to adapt the event management plan to include continual monitoring of weather conditions, until the event is completed.

The two main areas of concern highlighted in the findings were the lack of contingency budgets and specific weather insurance. Of all the events researched only one sought specific weather insurance for their event. The insurance industry has seen a development of a weather derivatives market to insure events against loss due to weather interruption. This does come at a cost to the organisation, but this should be weighed up against the cost of not having insurance. Loss of revenue due to poor attendance, costs of damage to the venue and refunding ticket holders if the event is cancelled are all potential loss situations.

Social media platforms such as web sites, Facebook, Twitter and email all feature in the researched events communication plans. This shows the event management industry has embraced new technologies and identified effective and efficient ways to communicate with their attendees. Traditional communication tools such as print media and radio were recognised as still having a place in the communication plan, with most of the events researched including these elements.

The research sample for this study was small in comparison to the number of outdoor events on offer. However there was consistency amongst the respondents’ answers to the questionnaire indicating that this research provides a representation of the event management industry.
There were some very good best practice examples of contingency planning shared by the respondents and these would be of benefit to the industry. An example of this was the acknowledgement by one respondent that at least one event in the season would be lost to poor weather conditions. To mitigate this, budget was developed for the season allowing for this loss of income. Another respondent made clear to participants at the time of entry to the event there was a no refund policy in place. This meant should the event be cancelled due to weather there was no refund paid. The event was rescheduled or the ticket holders gained entry to another event.

In summary, it is the researcher’s opinion that the event managers that participated in this research did include contingency plans for weather contingency in their event planning process, with certain identified areas of contingency planning requiring more attention to detail.
REFERENCES


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8. APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Letter of Approach and Participation Consent.

My name is Trudi Bridges. I am currently enrolled in the Masters of Business degree in the School of Management and Marketing at Unitec New Zealand and seek your help in meeting the requirements of research for a thesis course which forms a substantial part of this degree.

The title of this research is:
**Exploring contingency planning for adverse weather and natural disasters – How well do Event Managers plan for catastrophe?**

I request your participation in the following way: *The completion of an e-mail questionnaire relating to Event Management, and if required a follow up interview by telephone or e-mail.*

Upon your agreement to participate in this research, consent for you to do so will be sought. Upon completion of the consent process the questionnaire will be sent to you by your preferred communication method of either email or a posted hard copy.

Once the questionnaire has been completed, it will be returned to me and collated, preceding the analysis process. The questionnaire will be coded to ensure anonymity for your organisation. Should clarification or further information be required based on the questionnaire answers, I will contact you by email and/or telephone to seek further clarification.

Neither you nor your organisation will be identified in the Thesis. The results of the research activity will not be seen by any other person in your organisation without the prior agreement of everyone involved. You are free to ask me not to use any of the information you have given. You are also able to see the data and may ask for changes up until the time that data is analysed, which will commence July 2013. You are able to view a copy of the published thesis upon completion.

I hope that you will agree to take part and that you will find your involvement interesting and perhaps will add value to your organisation. If you have any queries about the research you may contact my principal supervisor at Unitec New Zealand.

My supervisor is: Helen Mitchell: Department of Management and Marketing
Faculty of Creative Industries and Business: Unitec Institute of Technology
Phone 09 815 4321 ext. 7011 Email hmitchell@unitec.ac.nz

I look forward to hearing from you.

Regards,
Trudi Bridges Mobile: 021 1452965 trudib@windowslive.com

UREC REGISTRATION NUMBER: (2012-1002)
This study has been approved by the UNITEC Research Ethics Committee from (date) to (date). If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this research, you may contact the Committee through the UREC Secretary (ph: 09 815-4321 ext 6162). Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.
Appendix 1: Letter of Approach and Participation Consent.

Pro-Forma Consent Form – Adults

To: Trudi Bridges - Unitec Institute of Technology

From:

Date:

Re: Participation in research project for the completion of thesis

I have been given and have understood an explanation of this research project for the Masters of Business. I have had an opportunity to ask questions and have had them answered. I understand that neither my name nor the name of my organisation will be used in any public reports, and that I may withdraw myself or any information I have provided for this project without penalty of any sort.

I agree to take part in this project.

Signed: …………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………

Name: …………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………

Date: …………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………

UREC REGISTRATION NUMBER: 2012-1002

This study has been approved by the UNITEC Research Ethics Committee from (date) to (date). If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this research, you may contact the Committee through the UREC Secretary (ph: 09 815-4321 ext 6162). Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.
## Appendix 2: Research Questionnaire

**UNITEC MASTER OF BUSINESS**

Thesis questionnaire: **Trudi Bridges**  
**Exploring Contingency planning for adverse weather and natural disasters: How well do Event Managers plan for catastrophe?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interviewer Name</th>
<th>Trudi Bridges</th>
<th>Respondent Code No.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer ID</td>
<td>1010336</td>
<td>Interview Length</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**IF COMPLETING ON-LINE, AND RETURNING BY E-MAIL, IT MAY BE EASIER TO HIGHLIGHT YOUR ANSWER e.g. Yes**

### GENERAL – Event Description

Q1. Are you the Event Manager responsible for the planning and implementation of an outdoors event?

- Yes □  
- No □

If no, please **close interview** here.

Q2. What category best describes the type of event you are managing?

Please tick one box, or enter a description into Other.

- Sport □  
- Recreation □  
- Arts □  
- Music □  
- Food □  
- Cultural □  
- Other □  

Description of other ________________________

Q3. Which month of the year is the event held?

- January □  
- April □  
- July □  
- October □

- February □  
- May □  
- August □  
- November □

- March □  
- June □  
- September □  
- December □

Q4. Consider the scale of your event. What would be the estimated attendance figure?

- 100 -500 □  
- 500 -1000 □  
- 1000 -3000 □  
- 3000- 5000 □  
- 5000 – 8000 □  
- 8000 - 10000 □  
- Over 10000 □  
- Other ____________

Q5. Which best describes the location of your event?

- City □  
- Rural □  
- Council grounds □  
- Private Land □  

- DOC/Govt Reserve □  
- Other □  

Description of other ________________________
Q6. Who is your target participant/audience, to attend your event?

Estimated age range of participants: _______________________

Male ☐ Female ☐ Both ☐

**MARKETING & PROMOTION – Event Advertising**

Q7. What are the ways this event will be marketed so people find out about your event?

Web site ☐ Print media ☐ Radio ☐ Television ☐

Q8. Which multimedia channels do you use to market and promote the event?

Facebook ☐ Web site ☐ Twitter ☐ Database marketing ☐

Other ☐ Description of other______________

Q9. Is this event part of a series/programme of events?

Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes, name of series/programme of events____________________________

**PRE-EVENT PLANNING – Budget**

Q10. What is your budget for the event?

Up to $5000 ☐ Up to $10,000 ☐ Up to $40,000 ☐ over $40,000 ☐

Or disclose budget total (confidential) _____________________________

Q11. Do you have a contingency budget for the event, over and above set budget?

Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes, is this calculated as: Percentage of budget ☐ Dollar value ☐

Percentage total % ______ Dollar value $ ________________

Q12. Has provision been made for Insurances?

A) Liability Insurance ☐ Weather Insurance ☐ Damage to grounds/turf etc. ☐

Other ☐ Description of other______________

B) Costs of insuring the event

Up to $5000 ☐ Up to $10,000 ☐ Up to $20,000 ☐ over $20,000 ☐
Q13. Has a contingency budget been provisioned for longer hireage of equipment in the event of a postponement?

Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes, please briefly describe this contingency budget.___________________________________________

Q14. Do any hire agreements entered into include additional costs/penalties incurred for the cancellation of the event?

Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes, please provide a brief description of hireage terms.__________________________________________

Q15. What are the event budget goals i.e. profit/break even/charity/fundraiser?

Profit (investor return) ☐ Breakeven (cover all costs) ☐ Not for profit event ☐
Fundraiser (Proceeds to a charity) ☐
Other Description of other__________________________________________

Q16. When setting the ticket price, how much (as a percentage) of the ticket price is allocated for contingency purposes?

Percentage total % _______ Dollar value $ ____________Not factored in_____________

Other Description of other__________________________________________

Q17. In the event of a cancellation of the event, do ticket holders receive a full refund of the ticket face value?

Yes ☐ No ☐

If no, what is the dollar value difference between purchase price and refund price? $____________

Q18. In the event of a cancellation of the event, do ticket holders receive a pass for another scheduled date (i.e. rain date?)

Yes ☐ No ☐

Q19. In the event a ticket holder cannot attend the rain date, does the ticket holder receive a refund?
Yes  No  
If not, how is the ticket the ticket holder made aware of this?

Q20. Should the event get cancelled, are event staff contracted still paid?
Yes  No  % payment made  
If not, how are the event staff made aware of this?

Q20 (a) Is a contingency amount for the payment of staff wages/artist performance /celebrity appearance contracts in the event of a cancellation allowed for in pre-planning the event?
Yes  No  
Brief comment if appropriate:

Q21. When event staff/volunteers are contracted are they advised of possible rain dates and are they contractually obligated to be available for that date?
Are they advised of potential rain dates?  Yes  No  
Event staff must be available for rain date.  Yes  No  

Q21 (a) Should staff/volunteers not be available for a re-scheduled event what plan is in place to ensure the level of staff/volunteers is adequate?

PRE-EVENT PLANNING – Risk Management

Q22. When the event date is set is a contingency/alternative date set at the same time?
Yes  No  
If yes, is this date communicated to ticket holders at the time of ticket purchase?
Yes  No  

Q23. Is a License/permit (e.g. Council, DOC) required to hold outdoor event?
Yes  No  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q23 (a) Does this License/permit (e.g. Council, DOC) include contingency dates/costs?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Briefly comment on this process.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Q24. Does this event require building permits for temporary structures for weather protection?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Q25 In the event planning phase is there consideration given for protection from wind/rain/sun weather elements?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Describe what types of shelter are available.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Q26. Are Road closures / Traffic Management plans required?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>If yes, is the provision for a rain date included in the plan?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Q28 What crowd control measures are in place in the event of sudden weather change? (for example sudden rain downpour and the event attendees all disperse at once). Please describe.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Q29. Is a RAMs document in place and readily available?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>(a) Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Does this include emergency procedures in the event of inclement weather?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>(b) Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Are there emergency services (e.g. St John’s) on site?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>(c) Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
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Risk Assessment: Weather Considerations
Q30. Is the event at high or low risk levels that the event would have to be postponed/cancelled due to inclement weather?

High risk ☐ Low risk ☐

Q31. Do you closely monitor the weather forecasts?

Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes, please describe the monitoring plan/procedures?

__________________________________________________________________________________
                                                                                                                                                                                                                              
Q32. When planning your event have you considered rain runoff from buildings/marquees and other water pooling issues and the management of these?

Yes ☐ No ☐ Not applicable due to location ☐

If yes, please describe how this will be managed?

__________________________________________________________________________________
                                                                                                                                                                                                                              
Q33. (a) When planning your event have you considered potential surface safety issues, slippery surfaces, mud from rain fall, and the management of these?

Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes, please describe how this will be managed?

__________________________________________________________________________________
                                                                                                                                                                                                                              
Q33 (b) When planning your event are you aware of any penalties that may be incurred for damage to grounds/turf etc., due to inclement weather?

Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes, please describe how this will be managed?

__________________________________________________________________________________
                                                                                                                                                                                                                              
Q34. Have hazards relating to electrical wiring/sounds system/lighting, staging equipment been identified and a RAMs management plan been documented for this?

Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes, please outline strategies in the event of inclement weather.
Q35. Are there procedures for monitoring of weather and environmental conditions prior to and during the event in place?

Yes ☐ No ☐ ☐

If yes, please describe how this and done.
__________________________________________________________________________________

Communication Plan and Event coverage

Q36. Is the event going to receive TV coverage?

Yes ☐ No ☐ ☐

Q37. Is this TV coverage part of a sponsorship agreement or revenue source?

Yes ☐ No ☐ ☐

If yes, is there any contingency in the agreement regarding the postponement or cancellation of the event. Please provide general terms of the contract.
__________________________________________________________________________________

Q38. If yes in question Q36, do you pay for TV coverage of the event?

Yes ☐ No ☐ ☐

If yes, is there any contingency in the agreement regarding the postponement or cancellation of the event. Please provide general terms of the contract.

Q39 Is there other media engagement, for example press, radio?

Yes ☐ No ☐ ☐

If yes, please describe any pre-arranged media involvement.
__________________________________________________________________________________

Q40. How do attendees know what is happening with the progress of the event, pre-event and during the event

Pre event communication methods:
__________________________________________________________________________________

During event communication methods:
Q41. What is the notice period of cancellation/postponement?

Please note any period of time relating to cancellation or postponement.

Q42. How do you advise attendees of the postponement or cancellation of the event and the new date/rain date?

Please note any communication methods used relating to communicating the cancellation or postponement of the event.

Q43. If the event is cancelled after it has started and the weather determines that the event has to cease, what is planned for stopping the event? (announcements, people management)

Briefly describe the procedure for stopping the event.

Q44. Is there any prize money, rankings or points affiliated to this event?

Yes [ ] No [ ]

Should the event be cancelled what would be the outcome of any prize money or placing’s(points be on participants? Briefly describe the contingency strategy around re-allocation of prize money, rankings etc.

Q45. Are the contact details for the event manager published and readily available?

Yes [ ] No [ ]

If yes, where are the contact details published?

Q46. Where can participants find contact details for the event management team?

Internet (web site) [ ] Ticket [ ] Programme [ ]

Other______________________________________________________________________________
Q47. Is there a complaints procedure in place?

Yes [ ] No [ ]

If yes, please describe the process for handling a complaint.

__________________________________________________________________________________

Please make any additional comments that may assist with this research, in relation to the contingency planning that is completed by your organisation for this event.

DECLARATION:

I…………………………………………………………...have completed this questionnaire as part of the research project being completed by Trudi Bridges, Masters Business, Unitec.

Signature:..................................................................................................................

Date:..................................................................................................................

Thank you for participating in this thesis research. You may have access to this information at any time. All information collected is confidential and the source of this information will not be disclosed.

You are welcome to review the thesis once it is completed.

Trudi Bridges  Student ID 1010336  Unitec.