



FUNDAMENTALS OF SPORTING EVENTS PLANNING AND ORGANIZATION

MODULE 4. SERVICES OF
A SPORTING EVENT AND
ITS CUSTOMERS

**- CONMEBOL -
EVOLUCIÓN**

4.1 Introduction to customer and service level concepts

Continuing with our course, and before starting with the specific services of the event, we are going to explain 2 very important concepts for the planning:

1. CUSTOMER
2. SERVICE LEVEL

Figure 1



Source: own.

CUSTOMER

The event customer are all those people and/or organizations involved that have a role or function that entitles them to receive some services and/or support from the organization of the event. The following are examples of event customers:

FUNDAMENTALS OF SPORTING EVENTS PLANNING AND ORGANIZATION

- THE CLUBS: with their players, technical staff and members of the sports delegation.
- THE REFERRALS who will play their role in the sporting competition
- PRESS AND MEDIA that will be covering the event and the game
- THE LOCAL SPONSORS who support the organization of the event in any way
- THE SPECTATORS who are a fundamental part of the match, and who buy their tickets to be in the stands cheering for their club.
- AMONG MANY OTHERS THAT MAY BE INVOLVED IN YOUR EVENT.

Each of these customers has specific demands and needs, which are directly related to their participation in the event. It is the organizer's responsibility to ensure that these demands and needs are satisfactorily met.

SERVICE LEVEL ESTABLISHMENT

One of the most important initial tasks in the planning of a sporting event is the establishment of the level of service for each of the clients. Normally this is done with the development of a client service matrix where on one axis you have the clients and on the other you have the services to be provided by the organization.

This document is essential because:

1. It becomes a reference for the planning of all operational areas so that they can consider the services they have to provide to each customer, planning their structure and resources well.
2. It must be shared with each of the clients so that they know exactly what they are going to receive from the organization. So that, if they need something additional, they can include it into their own planning for the event.

SERVICE LEVEL MATRIX

Below is an example of a service level matrix for a sporting event:

FUNDAMENTALS OF SPORTING EVENTS PLANNING AND ORGANIZATION

Table 1

Services Customers	Transportation	Lodging	Feeding
Clubs	Exclusive fleet from the arrival in the city of the Final	Lodging for 40 people of the delegation in a 4-star hotel	Breakfast, lunch and dinner served at the hotel
Spectators	N/a	N/a	Food Concessions with variety and quality at the Stadium

Source: own elaboration.

We recommend that you become familiar of identifying customers and establishing the level of service for your event.

Figure 2



Source: own.

4.2 Event services

The participation of the Clubs and Referees is so important for the sporting event that they demand special attention to every detail of the preparations related to the services they will receive from the organization.

In order to fulfill this responsibility, the organization often has to consider the designation of a specific TEAM SERVICE structure, an area whose objective is to act as a liaison between the clubs and the event organization, coordinating the services to be provided to these clients.

Attention to equipment

As we have already mentioned, a sporting event is much more than a football match, much more than 22 players trying to win a game with a refereeing body dispensing justice. Within this global concept, we must not forget that the genesis of everything is the game itself. And the game itself is the product of the actions of the players on the field, the main actors.

Each high-performance sports delegation, in addition to the players and technical committee, works with a support staff that coordinates all aspects that are important according to the work philosophy of the club or national team. There is a level of detail and planning that goes through nutrition, rest, hydration, collective and individual training, leisure activities among many other things. All these aspects of preparation must be considered by the organization in order to provide the teams with all the conditions for them to perform at their best on the field.

Following all the good values of football and sport, from the organization's side it is essential to maintain the principle of fairness with all teams; all sports delegations must have the same conditions and services to prepare.

In this path of professionalization and globalization, where an event has thousands of customers to serve, we cannot forget the players when designing the overall concept of the event, planning actions or activities that are detrimental to their comfort, that interfere in their preparation or in their full competition capabilities.

The organization of the event must strongly consider within its planning, an efficient structure to provide special attention to the teams, which can manage the services requested by the sports delegations. Obviously, the structure of attention and services must be directly related to the number of participating teams.

FUNDAMENTALS OF SPORTING EVENTS PLANNING AND ORGANIZATION

The greater the number of teams and the more comprehensive the level of services, the more complex the care structure will be. Likewise, it is possible to have a very efficient structure using some basic concepts.

In major international and soccer events, a team services structure that is designed within the LOC (local organization) organization chart is used. It usually contains a manager or person in charge, some coordinators and also liaison officers, which by name would be the Team Liaison Officer (TLO).

The Team Liason Officer (TLO) is the person proposed by the local organization and is the official link between the delegation and the tournament organizer. The TLO channels all the concerns and needs that the delegations have with the organization of the event, coordinates logistical aspects of the delegation, providing support during the matches and other official activities such as pre-competition meetings, as well as technical coordination meetings for the matches. In youth competitions, many delegations participate for the first time in a FIFA or CONMEBOL competition under the standards established by them, therefore, it is very important that there is a person to provide security and full support.

Also, in the case of FIFA tournaments, the figure of the TSLO (Team Security Liason Officer) is established, who will liaise with the team-organization of the event, in all matters relating to security aspects.

In the case of CONMEBOL tournaments that are played in a single venue, such as CONMEBOL Libertadores Beach Soccer, Futsal, Women's and U-20, the figure of the assistant official/attaché is established as the person designated to assist the teams and who will be the link with the organization.

FUNDAMENTALS OF SPORTING EVENTS PLANNING AND ORGANIZATION

Figure 3



Source: own.

He/she will be responsible for managing on-site logistical aspects from the team's arrival to departure, coordinating activity schedules with the drivers, assisting with emergency information, laundries, supermarkets, churches, etc.

The success of this area is to provide all the necessary conditions, solve any possible problems that delegations may have and ensure that everything goes as planned. And this is regardless of the result that is obtained on the field, because there is only one team that can win, yet the experience of our staff in many international events is that delegations recognize, cooperate and express their gratitude to the organization when they receive good services and support.

Below is an example of what a team care structure would look like in a 12-team tournament:

- The main objective of this structure is to ensure that the teams have exactly what was planned and reported, and to help them in case they need additional things and how it would be possible to get them.

FUNDAMENTALS OF SPORTING EVENTS PLANNING AND ORGANIZATION

- One of the first tasks of this area is to present the organization's information necessary for the teams by means of documents, materials, photos, workshops, etc.
- Once presented, it is important to establish an efficient channel of communication with each team and a tool to control requests or complaints. Each request from the teams must be taken to a final solution, whether it is a positive answer, a possibility of adjustment in the plans, or a confirmation of availability. Having this correct information is essential for the teams to be able to plan their operations and training routines.
- Attention and communication with the teams should begin well before the start of the tournament. As soon as their qualification for the competition is confirmed, the organization should contact the different representatives of the participating clubs or teams.
- Activities during the planning phase include visits to the official sites for the sports delegations to see what infrastructure will be available to them, to see the areas through which they will access and leave each official site, transportation times and the level of service that will be available at each venue.
- Another fundamental part of this area is to request/receive information from the teams that is important for the organization. Information such as date of arrival in the country or city, total number of people in the group, visa issues, logistical issues, health, confirmation of their agenda and movements to schedule services and all aspects that impact the operation of the tournament or competition.

Training camps

The training camps will be the "home" of the teams during the days prior and even during the competition.

Figure 4



Source: own.

In the structure of a FIFA World Cup, there are two concepts of training camps.

- *Team Base Camp* (training base camp)

FUNDAMENTALS OF SPORTING EVENTS PLANNING AND ORGANIZATION

The training camp will be a facility in which the team decides (within several options that the tournament organization previously chooses, prepares and leaves at the height of the event) to train throughout the tournament, located in the "base" city chosen for their stay during the tournament. They will not necessarily be in cities where the tournament is held (for example, during the 2014 World Cup, the Kleber Andrade stadium in the city of Vitoria, in the state of Espírito Santo, Brazil, was designated *Team Base Camp*. Vitoria was not the official venue of the tournament, but it did have accommodations and infrastructure for the teams to stay there.

Figure 5



Source: own.

- *Venue Specific Team Sites (VSTS, Venue Specific Training Site)*

The VSTS are training sites set up in each official host city of the tournament, cities where official matches are played. Each team will use these facilities in the days prior to its match in each of the specific venues. Generally, in this type of tournaments (FIFA World Cups) teams are required to arrive at least one day before the place where they will play their official

FUNDAMENTALS OF SPORTING EVENTS PLANNING AND ORGANIZATION

match, therefore, official training camps are available so that, in case the teams want to carry out any activity, they have quality infrastructure and according to their needs.

It is essential that the training center has adequate locker rooms and services to host the teams during their stay.

Also in large-scale events such as a World Cup, training centers for referees should be defined.

Accommodation

The organization shall ensure that the city hosting the specific tournament or match has adequate hotel facilities to accommodate all those involved in the tournament or match.

High-level hotels should be identified and recommended for guests, business partners, finalists and vendors in accordance with established requirements.

The capacity, quality and variety of lodging within the city will be evaluated.

In case of a large event it is very important that the local authorities responsible for tourism management commit that the room rates proposed for all groups will be fairly priced according to market rates.

In course 2 you will have the opportunity to go into more detail with the concepts and details of operational areas such as:

- SECURITY
- TRANSPORT
- PRODUCTION OF THE MATCH SIGNAL
- PRESS AND MEDIA OPERATIONS
- COMMERCIAL AND HOSPITALITY

COURSE 1 Conclusions

- An event planner should always be aware that, from one moment to the next, planning can change course.
- An event organizer must have the ability to solve problems under pressure, be on the lookout and alert to all actions that may go off the planned path.

FUNDAMENTALS OF SPORTING EVENTS PLANNING AND ORGANIZATION

- Regardless of the size of the event, the pre-event planning and organization, development and post-event phases represent a fundamental scheme that must be respected for the correct chronology of events.
- The formation of a team with sufficient competencies in the different operational areas will be key to subsequent success.
- What kind of event do we want to deliver? From this question as a starting point, we will develop our planning, but first we must know exactly what event we want to deliver.
- Budgeting is a fundamental point and a large part of the success and skills of the event manager.
- It is essential to have a consolidated brand, which is worked together with the other areas in order to generate the best possible experience for the fans.
- We consider it vital to highlight the soft skills of event organizers, beyond the theoretical knowledge and *expertise required* to occupy management or leadership positions in a sporting event project.
- The countdown encompasses multiple activities and areas described in terms of the organization of an event. The organizers of an event, who are leading a project, should, together with all areas, establish a general countdown.
- When establishing working procedures, it is essential to create an operations manual that provides standardization to the processes, regardless of who executes them.

FUNDAMENTALS OF SPORTING EVENTS PLANNING AND ORGANIZATION

Figure 6



Source: own.

References

All photographs and images used in this course are CONMEBOL's own, previously unpublished.