

3. Major Festivals and Events

This category recognises tourism leisure festivals, events and exhibitions that enhance the profile/awareness and appeal of the destination they are held in as well as creating economic impact, increased visitation and community involvement.

This category is open to (but not limited to) sporting, arts, historical, cultural, literary, comedy, culinary and general interest festivals, events and exhibitions with local, interstate and international visitor attendance over 50,000 or recognised by the STO as a major event on their event calendar.

Word Count: 6,000 min – 10,000 max words

Written Submission: 90 Points

Online Review: 10 Points

Total Points: 100

Business Impact Summary (0 marks)

Please provide the judges with an understanding of any impact to the business's situation resulting from natural, national and/or world events during the qualifying period. E.g., natural disasters (fire/flood), pandemic.

NOTE: This response does not contribute to the overall score but provide a clearer picture for judges to understand what the business has been able to achieve. This is factual information only, allowing you to tell the business story in the subsequent questions.

NOTE: If no impact to the business has occurred in the qualifying period, this question does not need to be answered.

Bullet points are recommended. The response should be short and sharp. (Max 250 words overall)

List any issues that have had a significant impact on the business during the qualifying period (1 July 2023 – 30 June 2024).

Include the following information:

- *What the event/situation was (fire, flood, business restrictions).*
- *How it impacted the business (e.g., closure of business, staff shortages, stock levels, cash flow).*
- *The severity of the impact.*
- *For what period (e.g., how many months within the qualifying period).*

1. Introduction (20 marks)

A. Provide an overview of the nature and history of the festival/event. 15 marks

This is where you set the story of the festival/event and give the judges insight into the visitor experience on offer. It is recommended that you begin by explaining the reason for the development of the festival/event, how it started and why the chosen time of the year, and who it is targeted towards. What is the purpose/goal/objective of the festival/event.

You should then take the judges on a journey of the festival/event, including key people or organisations involved, details of how long it has been running, any significant changes that have happened over time or how the festival or event might have evolved.

Ensure that key information on the festival or event duration and scale is included here – whether it is a single day event, weekend or longer, whether it is a daytime or evening event, number and type of venues, the capacity of the venue(s), etc.

Demonstrate why the festival/event should be considered as an award-winning tourism business by highlighting the points of difference and what sets it apart from other festivals/events. Specify amenities or facilities that enhance visitor satisfaction.

This is where the judges (and auditors) will gain an understanding of how it fits into the category; therefore it is important to clearly demonstrate your eligibility for this category as related to the descriptor to ensure there is no misunderstanding as to why you have entered this category rather than the other Festival/Event category.

B. How has the festival/event worked to enhance the profile and appeal of the destination it was held in and stimulated economic activity within the qualifying period? 5 marks

The judges are looking to understand the positive impact your festival/event has made to the host destination.

Demonstrate the direct benefit to the host destination by using measurable data from the qualifying period to demonstrate how the festival/event has contributed to the local economy.

Consider, for example, an increase in visitor numbers, economic spend, awareness, job creation, new skills learned by the locals and permanent infrastructure that is a positive to the local community.

Consider also how the event has supported the destination in its recovery from national and world events.

C. Provide a video of your festival/event. 0 marks

This is to provide the judges with a clear vision of the festival/event. This component will not be judged or scored.

IMAGES

Attach a minimum of two graphics throughout Question 1. to support and enhance your response provided. For example, a map of the festival/event, images of the festival/event and any specific facilities/amenities/services you have highlighted in your response., a collage of the accreditation programs you participate in and/or any award achievements.

2. Event Development and Innovation (30 marks)

A. What innovative strategies did the festival/event develop and implement that were designed to enhance the visitor experience? 10 marks

This question seeks to understand how the festival/event has improved the visitor experience through innovative strategies. To respond, consider what innovations and/or developments the festival/event has implemented or enhanced. An enhancement could include, for example, a new experience/facility, updating point of sale processes or changing to ethically sourced supplies.

It is understood that festivals/events may have

implemented/designed strategies outside of the qualifying period. These can be included – but the festival/event must have been held in the qualifying period.

The response should demonstrate why the innovations/developments were implemented and how this enhances the visitor experience. The judges will be looking for an understanding of what prompted the improvement e.g. was it a result of guest feedback, environmental/site considerations, change in market demand, growth of festival.

The response should include the research and planning that was undertaken as well as the outcome/s of these and how they align with the business' main purpose/goals/objective.

B. What innovative strategies were developed in the qualifying period to mitigate challenges (business risks) and ensure the future sustainability of the festival/event? 10 marks

The judges are seeking a proactive approach to planning to support the continued running of the festival/event.

Consider a range of risks impacting the sustainability of the festival/event which could include, for example, ongoing funding/sponsorship, local community support, environmental/site considerations, media backlash, guest safety, continuing or return of restrictions.

Where able, detail the figures to provide a greater response e.g., how is the event is funded, and what steps have been made to manage this (e.g., secured ongoing sponsorship).

Consider what partnerships, sponsorship, or stakeholder engagement you have secured to assist in the continued success of the festival/event.

If the event is a one-off, you should ensure this is clearly demonstrated to the judges. Then, to respond to this question, focus on how you mitigated the risks and challenges faced by the festival/event.

C. How is the event integrated with the local, regional, or state tourism industry? 10 marks

Provide the judges with an understanding of how the festival/event supports the growth and development of the local, regional and state tourism industry. The judges are seeking a festival/event that has been actively involved with and contributed to the tourism industry and growth of an area/community.

Clearly demonstrate how the festival/event aligns with host community tourism strategies, e.g., local government economic development plans, local/regional/state tourism development strategies.

Demonstrate then the contribution to tourism that it has made, such as an increase in visitor numbers, awareness, and local tourism employment. Where possible, use measurable data.

IMAGES

Attach a minimum of two graphics throughout Question 2. to support and enhance your response. For example, an image of any new products or facilities, posters promoting changes that have been implemented.

3. Marketing (15 marks)

A. What innovative marketing and communications strategies were used during the qualifying period to promote the festival/event? Why were these strategies chosen? 10 marks

Begin by outlining who the festival/event has aimed its marketing towards and demonstrate a clear understanding of this market. Consider, for example, who they are, where they are from, how old they are, how they purchase travel, what motivates and inspires them and how your product meets their expectations.

Demonstrate how the target market/s are suitable for the festival/event.

Next, outline the marketing strategies identified for the festival/event. Demonstrate how these marketing strategies were formulated by outlining the research undertaken and how the strategies align with the target markets attributes as well as, where able, local, regional, or state marketing plans.

Then, describe the tactics used to achieve these strategies.

What has been done differently to attract or maintain customers within the qualifying period? Consider for example, social media, digital or interactive advertising, apps, product packaging, tactical or paid advertising campaigns and relationship marketing. Outline what channels were chosen and why they would be the best fit for the targeted audience?

B. What was the outcomes of these marketing strategies? 5 marks

Detail how these marketing activities assisted or raised the profile of the area or community associated with the festival.

Detail how these marketing activities have been successful. You should consider metrics to measure the outcomes and consider activities such as media coverage, social media engagement, increased web traffic, increased ticket sales.

If providing a snapshot of data within your image allocation, ensure you provide an analysis and/or interpretation of this in your written response, rather than leaving it to the judges to decipher.

If the anticipated outcomes were not reached, acknowledge this, and provide the judge with insight as to why. How did the business respond?

If the outcomes are still pending, provide what data is available and what the forecasted results may be.

IMAGES

Attach a minimum of two graphics throughout Question 3. to support and enhance your response. For example, images of marketing placement (social media screen shots, website, advertisements).

4. Customer Experience (15 marks)

A. How is the event delivered, evaluated and continually improved (for ongoing events) to ensure high attendee satisfaction levels? 10 marks

This question requires you to outline what practices are in place to ensure a high quality of customer service throughout the festival/event and for continuing years (if applicable).

Demonstrate how the festival/event is committed to quality customer service throughout all areas of the festival/event. This could include staff training, service principles and policies, staff reward systems, volunteer orientation and induction and other training programs for onsite event staff.

Consider all points of customer engagement, e.g., email, phone, guest greetings/welcome, during and after the festival/event. Your response should consider what training is in place for staff and/or volunteers and how this has improved the festival/event.

Describe how customer service is monitored and assessed to ensure quality delivery. For example, feedback forms, monitoring social media, blogs, mystery shoppers.

Consider providing a case study/example where the festival/event implemented a change based on customer feedback.

B. Describe the inclusive practices you integrate into the festival/event. 5 marks

As a part of the delivery of quality customer experiences demonstrate how the festival/event considers the specific needs of a diverse community.

Provide examples of how the festival/event is inclusive or accessible to specific individuals/groups/sectors that may have faced barriers to participation previously.

Barriers to participation could include, but is not limited to, cultural reasons, language, physical constraints, intellectual capability, cognitive constraints, dietary requirements, or other specific needs groups e.g., LGBTQIA+.

Provide examples of how the festival/event catered for customers with specific needs and explain the outcome achieved. Include a case study to support your answer.

Refer back to the target markets – consider each market and what specific requirements the festival/event offer to those guests.

IMAGES

Attach a minimum of two graphics throughout Question 4. to support and enhance your response. For example, staff communications posters, flow charts of customer service processes, QR codes encouraging feedback.

5. Responsible Tourism (10 marks)

A. Demonstrate how the festival/event has made a positive impact through being environmentally, socially, economically and ethically responsible. 10 marks

This question requires you to consider how the festival/event has been environmentally, socially, economically and/or ethically responsible and the positive impact this has made on the local and/or broader community.

For example;

- *Environmental*
 - *How has the business been developed to minimise its impact on the environment e.g., water conservation, waste management/reduction/recycling, fuel and energy reduction, carbon reduction/offset, refuse initiatives in place, noise cancellation, wildlife destruction/interruption measures in place.*
 - *The inclusion of actual measurement data including the amounts saved/reduced in comparison to the previous year (or multiple years if you have good records) will enhance the response.*
- *Social*
 - *What strategies are in place for the business to support the local community e.g., supporting local businesses, product packaging, charitable donations, sponsorship, engagement with community groups, supporting local talent, school education and involvement, work experience, support of community fundraising.*
- *Economic*
 - *What strategies are in place for the business to support the local economy e.g., local purchasing, creating job opportunities, promotion of local businesses, support of community funding initiatives, understanding of spend by the business' customers to the region/community.*
 - *Where able, use metric examples to demonstrate the contribution made. For example, "75% of all our expenses were spent in X region."*
- *Ethical*
 - *How has the business considered its ethical responsibilities throughout its development e.g., through its engagement and representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, cultural or historical representation, animal welfare, restoration.*

For all examples, ensure that you outline how a positive impact has been made.

IMAGES

Attach a minimum of two graphics throughout Question 5. to support and enhance your response. For example, certificates of appreciation from community groups, signage demonstrating environmental sustainability measures, participation in community activities.