

Determining Innovative Event Professional Competencies for Event and Exhibition Industry in Sri Lanka

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Event management is an industry that has a wide range of sub-categories made up of different requirements. Creative and knowledgeable employees are essential to survive in the event management sector. Numbers of developing countries and developed countries have upgraded their national skills and competencies standard system to cater to tourism and events. Purpose of this study was to understand the concept of competency and to determine the need for an innovative competency model for the Sri Lankan event and exhibition industry. The objectives of the study were to identify existing awareness of the event and exhibition industry professionals on the need of innovative competencies and to identify the key competencies which are currently practiced by the event professionals. Primary data collected through semi-structured interviews from eleven event and exhibition industry professionals representing eleven organizations out of twenty-eight event management organizations in Sri Lanka with the membership of Sri Lanka Association of Professional Conference, Exhibition and Event Organizers (SLAPCEO). This study utilized content analysis in the analysis and the findings of the study reveal that industry professionals have an average level of knowledge regarding the benefits of innovative competencies. But they are using some general competencies in their existing working environment and the researchers could identify five main competencies among them and they can be named as time management, human resource management, marketing skills, work under pressure, and creativity. And four main innovative competency categories emerged from the analysis namely operation management, entrepreneurial skills, and personal characteristics and communication competencies. Based on those four main categories the researcher listed all the identified competencies that were included in the gathered data and developed a competency model. Interpretation and commentary assist event and exhibition industry professionals in Sri Lanka to determine the importance of innovative competencies and the competitive advantage of using them to intelligently capture the opportunities.

Keywords: Events and exhibition industry; Innovative competencies; Industry professionals; Event competency model