



THE BENEFIT OF EXPERIENCE NIGEL RUSHMAN

Human beings, who are almost unique in having the ability to learn from the experience of others, are also remarkable for their apparent disinclination to do so.

Jacques Rogge, the president of the International Olympic Committee is a man of many parts. By profession he's a surgeon, by inclination a sportsman. He's also a multi linguist and a diplomat whose skills are often called on to plot a course through the turbulent waters of sports politics.

Above all, Jacques Rogge is a realist. When he stood for election to succeed Juan Antonio Samaranch after the Sydney 2000 Summer Games, he made it clear that he believed the Olympic Games has grown too large. He was concerned that the sheer scale of the Games made them potentially unmanageable and that unless their growth was curtailed, the number of cities capable of staging them would be severely limited.

The growth of the Olympic Games and other major events in sports and entertainment – anyone remember when the FIFA World Cup was contested by 16 teams? - is a function of many factors, not least of them, media pressure.

Major events have become not simply a celebration in their own right but showcases for hosts hungry for a share of the international limelight. This is nowhere more evident than in the frenetic campaigning to win the right to stage a major sports event. It's about sport and entertainment of course, but it's equally about prestige (civic and political) and of course, money.

And as events have become bigger and more complex to organise and manage and the amounts of money involved have rocketed, they have, inevitably, attracted the attention of some of the world's leading management consultants.

In recent years we have seen a huge increase in the number of articles, papers and comments from management consultants on this subject, a subject upon which they are, at best, only partially qualified to pronounce.

Management consultants are adept in finding solutions to complex commercial, technical and logistical problems. They also have an eye for a commercial opportunity and major events would appear to provide exactly that opportunity. So why shouldn't they turn their attention to the world's mega events?

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While some of these consultancies have been involved in delivering specific IT solutions or systems integration in major events like the Olympic Games and FIFA World Cup – and done so extremely successfully - their inevitable lack of in-depth understanding of the roles and needs of key stakeholders and suppliers prevents them from delivering comprehensive strategies to facilitate practical delivery of a first class event.

The reality is that major events are hugely complex projects, which demand the successful melding of a diverse range of skills, disciplines and technologies. To devise a successful strategy it's important to work from a ground-up perspective rather than the ivory tower overview commonplace among management consultancies.

That perspective only comes from having got your hands dirty in the field. In short, as a result of experience.

It seems incredible that while significant strides are being made in the field of knowledge transfer, experienced senior management for events remains in short supply. Too little weight is given to management experience and too many event organisers appear happy to appoint reasonable managers and hope they will learn the ropes as they go.

The result is that managers learn at the cost of the event itself; a cost that can amount to millions of dollars in unnecessary errors and avoidable mistakes in pursuit of essentially flawed event strategies.

Successful events are not based on grand sounding Mission Statements but on carefully considered, deliverable strategies based on a detailed knowledge of the issues, problems and how they are best overcome.

If they are to work, they must be drawn-up with the input of experienced managers and experts in the various disciplines and then implemented through teams led by those same managers and experts.

It remains to be seen whether Jacques Rogge will get his wish for a more compact and manageable Olympic Games but one thing is clear; whatever the size of an event, experience is the key to its efficient, coherent and cost-effective management.

Rushmans, which has worked on more than 500 major events in some 25 countries, has long recognised the importance of experienced management but understands that experience is scarce because of the essentially temporary nature of the major event business. Most events are one-offs and once the show has left town its organisers return to their day jobs. There is little linkage or continuity and all too often any lessons learned are not passed on.



Rushmans has set out to capture that experience for the immediate benefit of event organisers by building a network of highly qualified specialists who have world-leading experience of applying their skills within the specific framework of an event.

Quite simply, the network includes the best-qualified, most highly experienced individuals in the world of events; individuals whose specialist expertise ranges from Consultancy to IT provision, Security, Media Management, Recruitment and Training, Event Management and Volunteer Programmes.

That allows Rushmans to deliver and implement considered and practical strategies whether the demand is for the development and implementation of a nuts-to-soup event strategy or assistance in specialist areas.

Rushmans is a truly international operation, able to make individual executives or teams available for short or longer-term projects in any location at short notice.