ABSTRACT
        There has been a rapid growth in the events industry
in Victoria and Australia over the past five years with an increase
in large scale events--resulting in substantive economic impact. The
growth in events in Australia is projected to continue to beyond
2001. The Department of Management at Victoria University of
Technology (VU) received a $160,000 grant to develop a CD-ROM events
management educational package for postgraduate education. The
project combines innovations in both technology and subject material,
by combining CD- ROM simulation and events management education. A
multimedia company, ADACEL, is undertaking the computer programming.
The objective of the project is to develop high quality management
skills for the growing major events industry. The simulated event,
"SuperFest," will guide users through the planning and running of a
major hypothetical festival comprising a range of cultural,
entertainment, promotional, and sporting events. Other modules will
engage users in planning, resourcing, staffing, and control
activities, as well as dealing with randomly generated occurrences
which real-life events managers might face. Students will learn about
events management principles, project management, budgeting, and
making decisions under pressure. The multimedia component will
stimulate user interest and enhance learning, and enable lecturers
and students to familiarize themselves with that learning/teaching
mode. Learning outcomes will be measured by pilot testing and oral
and written feedback by students, lecturers, and events and festival
managers. (Author/SWC)

Events Management Education Through CD-ROM Simulation at Victoria University of Technology

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The Department of Management, Victoria University of Technology, has recently received a DEET grant to develop a CD ROM events management educational package for post graduate teaching. The project combines innovations in both technology and subject material, by combining CD ROM simulation and events management education. A multimedia company, ADACEL is undertaking the computer programming and a considerable amount of support exists in industry for the project. The objective of the project is to develop high quality management skills for the growing major events industry.

Imagine that you have been responsible for managing a major event and that the event has been a disaster. Perhaps you booked an international singing sensation who failed to turn up or perhaps your advertising campaign was under funded. In either case you have made a substantial financial loss — from refunds demanded or from poor ticket sales. Furthermore, your reputation is now tarnished.

In real life, there are no second tries after the event has taken place. You as the manager must wear full responsibility for its failure to meet its objectives. Imagine though if you could go back in time and develop a feasible contingency plan for a delayed singer or develop a better advertising campaign. With a CD ROM simulation that is being developed jointly by Victoria University of Technology (VU) and ADACEL, a multimedia company, it will be possible for events management students to 'try again' and to learn from their mistakes. They will do this through engaging in the planning and organising of an exciting simulated major event called, at the moment, SuperFest.

A $160,000 DEET grant in the category 'Developing Links Between and Industry and Higher Education' has been received by the Department of Management, VU, to develop a multimedia-based training package for present and future events managers. The project entails the development of a state-of-the-art events management education and training program to be piloted in 1996 as a precursor to an accredited events management course in 1997. ADACEL is providing the multimedia components. The project will be supported by an events industry consultative group.

The objective of the project is to develop high quality management skills for the growing major events industry. The SuperFest element will be a challenging and enjoyable multimedia simulation which will guide users through the planning and running of a major hypothetical festival comprising a range of cultural, entertainment, promotional and sporting activities. Other modules will engage users in planning, resourcing, staffing and control activities. Users will also be required to deal with randomly generated occurrences, as would a real-life events manager.

From discussions at Victoria University of Technology between the Faculty of Business Departments of Management and Hospitality and Tourism Management and the Centre for Research and Graduate Studies a need was identified for events management education. Research indicated that there has been a rapid growth in the events industry in Victoria and Australia over the past five years with an increase in large scale events — resulting in a substantive economic impact. For example, according to Tourism Victoria , the 1994 Van Gogh Exhibition attracted 180,000 visitors and the 1995 Royal Melbourne Show attracted 700,000 visitors. According to the Australia Council for the Arts, paid attendances at arts festivals totalled 2.2 million in 1993-94 and, according to KPMG (1995), the estimation of Sydney Olympics revenue is A\$7.3 billion to GDP, 150,000 jobs and 1.3 million visitors. This growth in events is projected to be maintained, in Australia in particular, to beyond 2001.

The occurrences of events, particularly well-attended major events, have been increasing rapidly — events such as conferences and meetings, exhibitions and trade shows, festivals and trade shows , sporting events, tourism attractions, local promotions and special interest events. There is an expectation by events managers that there will be a further growth of major events as we approach of the turn of the century, the Sydney Olympics, the ParaOlympiad, the Cultural Olympiad and the Centenary of Federation celebratory activities. The project will provide an innovative and relevant teaching medium to cater for generic event industry management requirements.

It was fortuitous for the VU events management group that ADACEL had developed a successful project management simulation program which was being used by some large organisations. That particular program, which guides the user through a hypothetical scenario, has now been officially endorsed by Microsoft as an educational game. The two parties (VU and ADACEL) saw the simulation program as an excellent shell on which to base an events management educational package. Considerable modifications will be required to convert the shell to an events management package to accommodate the new scenario and elements including human relationships, teamwork, sponsorship, marketing, tourism, rapid decision making and multi-tasking. Discussions with major event and festival managers indicated that there was considerable industry support for the program. Technological advances, too, have enabled this multimedia training program to be developed in such a manner that it can be effectively and economically delivered as a training and education product for use in VU courses or as part of an international events management education program in the future.

A priority of the program is to develop high quality management skills in the growing major events industry. The high quality management skills of the program will be in keeping with the 1995 Karpin *Task Force Report on Leadership and Management Skills in Australia* for Australia to become "an enterprising nation".

A specific objective of the project will be to educate existing and future events managers about events management concepts decision making processes and appropriate management activities in a variety of events-related circumstances.

Teaching materials will comprise a teaching text and a CD ROM simulation program. The simulation program will guide the user through the processes involved in managing events through a event project management exercise in the form of an enjoyable program which is like a game. The program contains activities whereby the user:
- is given a broad introduction to the program;
- has to identify the optimum plan for hypothetical activities leading up to the event;
- must identify suitable staff members through their CVs;
- is tested regarding knowledge of the key elements of the project such as the overall objectives, the budget, the target market, imperative deadlines to be met and contingency planning; and
- is placed in an exciting simulated event management environment.

As a result of using the program, students will be expected to learn about events management principles, project management, budgeting and making decisions under pressure. The multi-media component will be engaging and challenging, with the intention of stimulating user interest and enhancing learning. Lecturers and students involved in the program will also be able to familiarise themselves with the multimedia teaching/learning mode. Measurement of the learning outcomes will occur though pilot testing and oral and written feedback by students, lecturers and events and festival

managers. Modifications will be made, in conjunction with advisers, where improvements are required. The product will be geared to the needs of the events industry and will be continually tested through involving the industry group in its development and trialing.

The SuperFest team, which has now enlisted a real events manager to provide the knowledge base for the highly complex computer-program shell, is highly motivated about the project. The project presents a fascinating learning experience for all.