

## TIPS FOR ANSWERING FESTIVALS AND EVENTS

*These tips have been written to assist in writing for Category 4 – Festivals & Events, however many tips also apply to Category 3 – Major Festivals and Events. Please note there are some variations in sub-questions between the two categories.*



### Question 1: Tourism Excellence

**a) Provide a brief overview on the nature and history of the festival/event and explain your reason for the chosen time of year. You must demonstrate your eligibility for entry in this category as outlined in the descriptor above. (4)**

The answer here should include an overview of the history, timing and key features of your festival or event. Your answer should include:

- Details of how the festival and event started, 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
- In providing an overview of the history of the event or festival, mention how it has been a success – such as through sold out concerts, the scale of community involvement, number and/or profile of acts or performances previously and in the last year.
- In outlining the timing, consider factors that were considered to contribute to the success of your festival and event but also what else may need to be avoided – such as significant holiday times, other events, regional activities, seasonality etc.
- Ensure that key information on the festival or event duration and scale is included here - is it a single day event, weekend or longer? Daytime or evening? Number and type of venues, capacity of the venue(s) etc.
- Include images and maps to illustrate the answer

**b) Describe the program of activities you stage and the tourism experiences offered. What is your point of difference? (5)**

This answer could consider what makes your festival and event significant from a number of different perspectives, such as the organisation, location, structure, artists or customer perspective. A good answer will:

- Remember that this is a tourism award so ensure you have a consider tourism in your answer and that you quantify or qualify any statements or assertions made.
- Consider other comparable festival and events and provide some detail on how your festival or event differs from them. Consider putting this information into a table format.
- Including the use of quotes from third parties (customers, attendees, other businesses, local government, tourism operators etc.) will assist to illustrate your answer.

**c) How does your event enhance the profile and appeal of your destination?**

Explain how your festival/event links to the destination that you operate within.

**d) Detail the number and origin of visitors attracted and what methods were used to determine this data. (4)**

To adequately answer this question you need to ensure that you have collected data from visitors of your festival or event. Ensure that you detail how the data was collected to show that the information provided in the answer is valid and from a sufficient sample to provide reliable information. A good answer will provide information and analysis and present the information in table and/or graph formats.

An excellent answer will provide additional detail beyond the basic demographic data. Consider also providing some data or commentary on how visitation may have changed for the festival from previous years and if you have a significant number of repeat visitors.

**e) Demonstrate the economic benefit of your festival/event and the methods used to determine this data. (3)**

This answer needs the inclusion of reliable and quantifiable data with clear and concise presentation of information and demonstrating that good methodology has been used.

Consider including information not only from your own research but also information in state or regional tourism research that shows the value of festivals and events visitors (ie number of accommodation nights, average spend in a region, increased length of stay, reason for a visit that may not otherwise have happened etc).

The answer could be enhanced further by the inclusion of quotes or details of local businesses that have benefited.

## Question 2: Business Planning

### **a) Provide an overview of the key features of your festival/events business plan. (6)**

This answer should be outline the detailed planning with measurable goals, strategies and outcomes required for a successful festival or event. The level of planning and attention to detail needs to be evident. Ensure that details of KPI's and targets are provided in the answer with data on the actual outcomes achieved to quantify the achievements. This question is best answered using a table format.

### **b) Describe your funding sources and processes in place to secure this funding. (4)**

Provide detail in this answer of the actual dollar value of funding received and information on your overall festival or event budget. Ensure that information is included on whether the funding for the year in question is once off or ongoing and if significant income is from ticket sales, provide some information on whether these are repeat customers from prior years. Include information in your answer on how the funding came about – ie grant application processes, follow up from the previous year's festival or event, targeting of potential new or repeat customers.

Also include information on any obligations that were linked to funding received – such as requirements of local government contributions and/or the expectations of sponsors, businesses or organisations participating in or partnering with your festival or event.

### **c) What Risks have been identified for your festival/event? Summarise in more detail the risk mitigation strategies that you have put in place to ensure the safety and security of all the attendees at your event including staff volunteers and contractors. (6)**

Refer to the main entrant's manual for ideas on what to include in risks. This question is best answered by providing the information in a table format with detail provided on risks and mitigation strategies. Ensure that a broad range of internal and external risks are considered.

Safety and security should be a key part of the planning for your festival or event, so ensure that this is clear in your answer. Provide details of what was put in place beforehand and also what was available during the festival or event. Ensure that your answer is quantified and qualified – for instance, if a safety manual was developed what were the topics covered, how was this disseminated to key people (and who were these people, how many were there and what were their roles).

Don't forget to include the basics like first aid (including during set up and/or pack down) and remember to include information on how guests, staff, volunteers and contractors were all looked after.

### **d) What training is in place for staff and/or volunteers and how has this improved your festival/event? (4)**

This answer should include detail on a planned training regime. The answer can be addressed well by presenting the information in a table format on what the actual training was and who it was undertaken by – ensure your answer quantifies and qualifies the training undertaken and the outcomes achieved. Don't forget to include personal research such as visiting other festivals and events and the value of 'on the job' training to provide real life experience.

Ensure that the second part of the question is answered to demonstrate the value of the training and the outcomes received. Consider providing some examples of customer feedback to illustrate your answer to maximise the points achieved.

### 3. Marketing

#### **a) Who are your target markets? (4)**

This answer should include a detailed analysis of the target markets identified with a well explained rationale for why they have been defined them as potential visitors for your festival or event. Include information on who they are, where they are from, their ages, backgrounds and motivations for travel etc. Consideration could be given to including pie graph to summaries the breakdown of your target markets attending your event.

To maximise your points for this answer consider including a reference to regional or town visitor statistics to quantify that these are viable groups to target.

#### **b) What innovative marketing and communications strategies did you use? (4)**

Outline the range of marketing and communications strategies including online promotion, social media and traditional local media use at all - ie local papers, tv, radio. Ensure that the link between the Target Markets and strategies used are clearly established.

#### **c) Demonstrate how these initiatives have been successful and how that success was measured. (4)**

A detailed analysis of the outcomes of the marketing initiatives with reference to the target markets should be included. The answer needs to be quantify the success.

#### **d) How does your strategy align with local, regional or state marketing plans? (4)**

The answer needs to provide examples from relevant marketing plans to provide proof of alignment of the marketing and communication strategy and the key messages utilised with the local, regional and/or state marketing plans.

#### **e) Summarise the media coverage received that helped to raise the profile of the region as a tourist destination. (4)**

This answer needs to quantify the coverage received across Social Media, Print, Radio and Television and the detail the benefit to the town, city or region where your festival or event is located. Include information on what the messaging around the region (or town or city) was and provide some examples of these appearing in the media coverage achieved. It would be benefit the answer to list the number of stories, mentions etc and where possible to put a dollar value on this.

#### 4. Customer Service

##### **a) Describe your customer service philosophy/values. (5)**

Refer to the entrants guide for this question. This answer needs to demonstrate that a customer service philosophy is displayed in all aspects of your festival or event and that this demonstrates that this is clearly a 'customer focused' event. The answer would benefit from providing some specific examples of the customer service initiatives at the festival or event. It would be good to mention if there was a procedure in place for attendees at your event as well as local businesses or organisations to provide feedback.

##### **b) Explain how you provide for guests/visitors with specific needs. (5)**

Refer to the entrants guide for more information on this question. Ensure a broad range of needs are identified in your answer.

##### **c) Describe how you measure customer satisfaction and identify areas for improvement. (5)**

Refer to the entrants guide for more information on this question. Ensure a range of tools are outlined including the use of email and social media to collect feedback from patrons. Including some testimonials that showed a high degree of satisfaction with the festival or event and providing detail on what results you were striving to achieve would enhance the answer ie - what was your benchmark for customer satisfaction and did you achieve it? Ensure that any examples of areas for improvement implemented as a result of the feedback are detailed.

##### **d) What processes do you have in place to respond to customer complaints? (5)**

Refer to the entrants guide for more information on answering this question. The answer will benefit from including an example of any complaint received. Also provide details and an example on how any complaints or negative comments were handled on social media. Ensure that information is included on how issues are dealt with during the festival or event and also any subsequent complaints to outline who the people are who have authority to handle complaints in a timely manner.

## Question 5: Sustainability

### **a) How does your festival/event involve and inspire your local community? (6)**

Refer to the entrants guide for more information on answering this question (noting that the question order for this category is different to the other categories and entrants guide). Ensure that the involvement is quantified.

### **b) Demonstrate your commitment to environmental sustainability. (7)**

Refer to the entrants guide for information for answering this question. Consider initiatives that are in place during the delivery of the festival or event, but also any initiatives by the organisers in the planning stages.

### **c) What plans do you have in place to ensure the future sustainability of the event? (7)**

This answer need to provide the rationale for the future viability of the event. Include some commentary around the overall financial viability of your event - ie what are the budget forecasts and how you will achieve this. You could have mentioned here sponsorship and how you manage the relationship with groups such as the local council and key local businesses and community groups to ensure their on-going support. It would also be good to demonstrate forward thinking to be looking at how to improve on what may already be a successful model and how in the future it might generate more interest in the destination and contribute more tourism dollars to the economy.