**EVANZ Conference 2023 – Dunedin**

**Knowledge Café Notes**

**Liquor Licensing and Drug Checking**

**Drug and alcohol use** – what’s happening? How are we handling search/testing?

**Issues**

* Pe-loading and contraband
  + post COVID people have less to spend, and drinks are expensive inside the venue
  + partly this is a societal issue outside venue control
  + Ideally, we’d make it cheap in the venue, so people want to come in – Stadium strength beer at 3%?
  + Price booze available locally at bottle stores
  + Pre event education (working with ticketers)
* Vaping - easier to handle indoors
* Cost of Security vs Police

**Good things**

* Alcohol Management Plans
* Venues
* Drug checking

**Drug Checking**

* Know Your Stuff – Not for Profit – not enough checkers?
* New Zealand Drug Foundation is Govt funded. NEED More funding
* Issues – Cost and location – before events or inside
* But – this is a harm minimisation and good news stories should be shared to Govt /ACC to get funding

**Technology**

What opportunities does **technology** afford venues and operators? Think AI/digital signage/hardware etc.

**AI**

* Needs standardisation – and there has to be some inclusion for those without tech so things don’t slow down.
* Data driven AI
* Crowd control (Security using facial recognition)
* Visitor Experience
* Dynamic gate signage – can change gates based on flow
* AI in use – order processing , social media posts, tech support
* Environment optimisation and efficiency
* Drive chat bots to talk in the customer’s style

**Digital**

* Digital projection for rotating art/marketing
* Drone – mapping event playout and staying current
* Drone – bird scaring

**Other uses**

* QR codes to share information
* Rubbish bin monitoring – smell/capacity/temperature
* Live 2 way interaction (schools programmes) region specific
* Current CCTV with non-facial recognition (clothing?)
* Ticketmaster Safetix (revolving bar code)
* ITicket – Camera people Count Me crowd direction, occupancy levels
* LED – cost vs time

**Risks**

* Internet capacity has to be dynamic
* Internet backup pain……Starlink!?
* The stay-at-home experience

**Manaakitanga**

What does it mean for us as venues, how do we welcome artists and patrons, and how do we treat them while they are in our spaces?

* Staff – Artists-Patrons
* Online leaning workshops for staff
* Staff represent the audience – see yourself in the space
* Staff wearing name badges
* Giving casual staff the knowledge can be challenging. Casuals – instilling values. Induction. Starts long before artists and audience arrive. And refresher training
* Authenticity
* Empowering staff
* Respectful and caring
* Treat everyone the same
* Honest interaction
* One-off event vs returning events/activities
* Iwi partners
* Mana – safeguarding past, present and future
* If you were talking to your whanau, how would they feel?
* Should be more than just venues – should be city…region…NZ
* Where to start the journey? Definition
* What is best practice?.....your practice?
* Be interested in the people in your buildings – respect, genuine interaction
* Generosity – small details are important
* Where it sits in your community
* Guests…not customers
* Call staff ‘Host Team’
* Partnership model vs transactional/customer model
* Te ao Maori journey – bilingual signage
* Imbedded in the organisation
* Always include full team and all venues
* Iwi/hapu/powhiri/mihi whakatau
* Waiata groups. Daily karakia
* Words and language matter!
* Regular faces
* Welfare officer to make sure staff are fed and get breaks etc
* Mihi – creates point of connection, partner with invited artists
* Q carried out full stakeholder research programme to develop new strategy
* Dressing rooms – remove gender-related signage. Welcome signs
* Don’t buy flowers/wine – plant trees instead
* Involve local community

**Hirer flexibility vs Operational Risk**

(eg; by offering hirers more flexible deals/contracts: own catering, production, security, ticketing - is there greater operational risk for the venue overall?)

* Offer value-add over flexi or discounts
* Balance working with promoters to get the best out of the event
* Be cautious of ‘setting precedents’
* Ops team involved in contract process – RISK MITIGATION
* Collaborative approach needed
* Regular hirers – reduce cost, security etc
* Share knowledge between venues
* Protect brand (Council, venue)
* A lot of ‘deal requests’ post COVID. Share risk.
* Catering/food costs : preferred suppliers instead of exclusive to compare costs
* Flexi seating
* Venue contract terms “Right to approve”
* Deals – hirers share the info so beware!
* Fixed infrastructure ; Offset costs. Recoverable costs
* Templates – the key for consistency. Cover yourself!
* Flexibility: the blessing/curse of having a flexible space
* 50/50: Security FOH vs back of house
* Sponsorship deals – alcohol, telcos etc
* Renegotiate exclusice contracts to offer flexibility/solutions
  + Provision to amend
  + Overlay sponsorship (esp F & B)
  + Suitable needs/requirements
* Contracts – flexible for resident hirers (some exclusive, some free choice)
* Licensing - pending applications, variable per region
* KEEP PAPERWORK – old deals
* Pack in – set on same page. Back to back events
* Experienced personnel need to do the contracts
* Relationships with providers/suppliers are key
* Risk assessment – driven by venue. Alcohol. Security screening
* Set standards e.g. post COVID. Align your mission statement.
* House tech
* Local suppliers vs outsourced providers
* Commission on bar - %. In house supplier will buy sponsors product
* Rights (license) to resident hirer (sports clubs). Risk exposure for venue
* Fundraisers – cost vs output. Community hires
* ‘Higher Power’ overrising venue’s authority e.g. Mayor!
* Legacy agreements
* Sponsor CASH not IN KIND so you can control rising costs

**Economic Environment**

Mitigating the impacts of rising costs – including venue costs and event costs.

**Impacts**

* Labour costs continue to rise
* Hirers on your back about rate of increase – need them to understand we’re passing through increased costs
* Supply chain challenges
* Difficulty forecasting demand to length of lead time
* Free shows impacting commercial events
* Forecasting ticket sales – patrons purchasing later and also less tix
* Hirers looking for venues to share risk
* Asset management
* Funding sucked out of Arts, impacting on new works
* Late cancellations
* Risk of theft from F & B
* Harder to draw content to regions with lower ticket demand
* Rising costs in conjunction with venue maintenance and development
* Retention of good people
* Corporates dragging out deposit/contract commitments
* Organisers looking for ways to avoid costs
* Menu costs changing more frequently
* Late confirmation driving costs up e.g. staffing
* Infrastructure costs – e.g.’ Alcohol Management Plan
* Securing content without givinh everything away
* Trying to maintain fees with increased costs
* Less activity
* Having to reduce costs without impacting revenue generating ability
* Squeeze in margin
* Trying to maintain competitiveness
* Living wage
* People spending less
* Adapting CAPEX projects to respond to funding/commercial pressures

**Response**

* Suppliers finding ways to reduce cost of ownership over life of asset
* Encourage cost-sharing with back-to-back hirers – collaboration!
* Investment in infrastructure to reduce labour costs
* Box office split to help spread hirer risk
* Internships – pathways for youth
* Can you/should you reduce customer experience to save money?
* EVANZ supplier system – drive cost savings to critical mass
* Line up similar events to reduce set-up costs
* Up front discussions around costs
* Switch event profile utilising permanent infrastructure – avoid temp overlay costs
* Purchase temp assets
* Living wage is helping retention of younger staff but does drive costs up through the business
* JV/risk sharing contracts
* Collective negotiation with venues to share content
* Invest in tech equipment to reduce reliance on suppliers

**Cashless venues**

Is this where we’re heading? How do we facilitate it?

* Don’t force it if wrong for the demographic
* COVID helped!
* Need good comms to patrons
* Mixed messages if vendors accepting cash
* Speed of the internet
* Cash lanes