

**Importance and Usage of Technology in Organising Event**

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E-Mail : [apaswan@jpr.amity.edu](mailto:apaswan@jpr.amity.edu)**Abstract**

Most often event management is a part of mass communication studies. Mass Communication is the most ambitious course on the planet. In two years they try and cover media studies, journalism, advertising, audio visual or film studies, events and public relations. There are accredited courses in Europe and USA that specifically cover only event technology, while in India we think that by doing a mass communication degree we are limiting our options.

There are very few parents who are thrilled at the prospect of their children pursuing a career in live events. Job satisfaction, global travel prospects and attractive pay scales are some aspects that placate their taut nerves somewhat, but that too takes a few years to take shape. Event agencies, with a turnover of about 100 odd crores or so, pale in comparison to large MNCs with turnovers running into a few thousand crores. Nor are the fruits of our efforts easily available on the public domain for all to see. It is not like a television commercial, that one can catch some 5 times a day. So anyone on the outside of the industry thinks they can safely assume that however broad the definition of 'doing well' may be, event management doesn't fit the bill!

**Keywords:** Event, Media, Industry, Technology**1. Introduction**

Let us take one important and rapidly growing aspect of events – **Technology**. Now technology is changing the way the world does things. It is changing the way people work, its changing relationships and the way we connect. Understandably, it is changing the face of events as well. Here are two examples.

1. **Augmented reality:** This technology takes a real life three-dimensional scene and superimposes virtual elements on it to create a hybrid view of the real world and the superimposed elements. Let's apply that to a live event scenario like a conference for example. Imagine being able to view a co-attendee's information including name, organisation etc. as a pop-up. Totally eliminates the risk of forgetting someone's face. So much can be done with this to display additional information about products, maps etc. at an event. To understand this concept better you can go through several videos online on the subject of augmented reality and its application in events and trade shows.
2. **Wearable technology:** We have several successful examples of wearable technology that can measure what we do, like the very popular Fitbit Flex band, the Nike Fuel band or the Google Glass. Imagine a technology like this that can monitor our pulse and other factors that monitor physical repercussions of emotional or visual cues. Brands whose products claim to elicit such emotional or visual responses can prove their point live to audiences!

The paper intends to throw light on the important aspects of Technology in Events.. The reasons why that people shy away from events can be a thing of the past.

- a. **Measurability:** Audience reactions and feedback will make events measurable
- b. **Cost effectiveness:** Cost per contact of events is much higher than any other communication channel

c. **Reach:** The reach of events is intrinsically finite, and social media can change things somewhat

When events become more ‘accountable’, they are bound to become more desirable. Michael Menezes is a veteran in the field of events, Owner Showtime, and is widely believed to be a strong advocate of the use of technology to enhance events. He has been responsible for bringing lasers into the Indian events scene way back in 1997.

## **2. Technology in Events**

Lasers debuted on the Indian stage with Hero Honda, and this opened several doors for Michael, especially within the soon-to-boom automobile market. What followed by a large part of the event industry, was the scope to scale up operations.

Technological experiment was with Xenon projection, which helps with projecting very large images on to walls and surfaces without the need for screens. Xenon projection has since been used to add grandeur and magnitude to events and outdoor campaigns by projecting moving images and messages on building facades among other surfaces.

Michael explains “A big technology we brought in to the country was something called Xenon projection. It was a technology that could project large images on surfaces like walls. Around the same time we brought in projection on water. So we had musical fountains that could be programmed to music, and projected on them. This was in collaboration with a French company. So we constantly looked at bringing in something new.” He then explored more tech innovations and used water projection in several corporate events and launches. In 2003, when he was commissioned to handle the event celebrating 100 years of the Taj Mahal Hotel in India, he used the technology that projected images on water fountains and programmed it to music.

## **3. Importance of Technology**

One of the things that Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s election campaign has been famous for in 2014 is the use of holographic projection to create a 3-dimensional image of Mr. Modi that looks as good as real. This technology was brought into India in 2005 by Michael and his team. He used holographic projection technology to re-create Harsha Bhogle and Sanjay Manjrekar in an event where they launched the ICC logo in India for the first time. Michael jokes that Harsha still calls him the 3-D man.

Michael then moved on to 270-degree projection. Up until then, audiences were used to watching images and film on one flat surface (180 degrees). Michael decided to project on image seamlessly on three walls making several events unforgettable for corporate audiences. He soon brought 360-degree projection to his events so that he could project everywhere on the inside of a room or an event venue. Michael time-and-again stressed on the fact that it was probably not just the technology that helped him create memorable events, but also the application of the technology to ensure that it fits the brand story. For example, he brought in 360-degree projection to launch the Cloud for Tata Consultancy Services, because 360-degree projection is a perfect fit for the concept of the Cloud. He explains “we did 360 degree projection for TCS, to launch the cloud. The technology was a perfect fit for the product and that’s what prompted us to suggest it. I believe it is a question of finding the appropriate technology for an event, rather than merely using any novel technology you chance upon.”

Projection mapping was another technology Michael brought in for his shows. Mapping is the ability to project on an uneven surface, in a way that does not distort the projected image or video. So if projection is mapped correctly on a car

and a flat surface behind it, then we can give the impression of the car moving against that surface, even if the car is actually still and it's really just the video in the projection that is working. In another example, Michael explained that you can make it seem as if a massive drop on oil is travelling down a building facade or a pillar. The prospects are immense, and several live event and advertising agencies have created stunning experiences for audiences through projection mapping.

#### **4. Globalising**

Whether it was because of his fascination with technology, which tends to add scale to an idea, or because that is the way he chose to go, Michael ended up doing only large scale events. He also restricted himself to corporate business because he was comfortable with and understood that space very well. Today, Michael's agency, Showtime, is the global event agency for Infosys. This makes them in charge of every event they do across the world. When I met Michael, he had just done two events for them in Berlin and Las Vegas. His team has also done several large scale international events for the Confederation of Indian Industries (CII). Through them Michael has done events for World Economic Forum (WEC) and the '60 Years of Indian Independence' in New York for the government of India.

#### **5. The Future**

Event industry has been instrumental in getting a whole lot of technological innovations to the Indian stage, several other large agencies have fired up event experiences with technology as well. Wizcraft brought in a lot of intelligent lighting, Encompass used the stratosphere to create projection innovations and Cineyug has integrated several high quality international technology innovations to make TV shows and awards nights a visual treat. India has come a long way as far as technology is concerned, but we are still behind the west when it comes to adoption of technology to increase efficiencies in executing events, and that is where the scope lies.

#### **6. Conclusion**

Clients are really not as bad as the agency servicing guys make them out to be. Most heads of agencies credit clients with pushing them to explore new acts, innovations and formats in events. After all, every time an act, technology or infrastructure component debuted in the Indian live events industry, it is because one client decided to put his money behind it. But there is a downside as well.

Technology is as much of a boon as a bane. There are clients who regularly access you tube and other video sharing sights for innovations in events across the globe. Some event put their teams on the job. They often come across interesting technologies that probably cost a million dollars, and ask for a similar effect for a budget of maybe 100,000 rupees. In some instances, a poor agency guy, who is presented with some such video clip at a meeting with the client, is compelled to sound almost apologetic when admitting that he really cannot create something 'similar' for a very dissimilar budget! Subsequently, the agency representative is compelled to offer a discount on other elements on the event budget-sheet to compensate for his inability to deliver on the client's earlier expectation....of the moon.

While technology is all exciting and cutting edge, people get bored and expect constant innovations as well. Today if you suggest projection mapping to a client, it's possible that he'll ask for an alternative technology because he has seen it used too often at other events. So the challenge is to keep thinking of something new either in technology or its application.

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