EVENT DESIGN PRINCIPLES

RESEARCH OF SUPPORTED EVIDENCE IN RELATION TO THE PUBLICATION –
EVENT DESIGN: CREATING AND STAGING THE EVENT EXPERIENCE
(VOLUME 1) by DR STEVE BROWN

REPORT

What evidence exists that supports the
Event Design Principles
of Scale, Shape, Focus, Timing and Build?

Melodee Trebilcock
Student ID#2048844
June 2011
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report is based on research conducted in response to the research question of, What evidence exists that supports the event design principles of scale, shape, focus, timing and build? Further, it is research to support the opinions of Dr Steve Brown, in his publication, Event Design: Creating and Staging the Event (Volume 1), wherein Dr Steve Brown, discusses the event design principles of scale, shape, focus, timing and build.

The report firstly outlines the background and aims in relation to the research project undertaken. Detail is discussed in relation to the methodology used in this project, being that of a quantitative nature and the process of the research undertaken is summarised in this report.

The major part and analysis of this report, is detailing the supportive evidence found and researched, which summarises and supports relevant information relating to the five event design principles of scale, shape, focus, timing and build.

The conclusion and recommendations conclude this report, detailing a summary of the results and findings. The analysis in the conclusion and recommendations endeavours to contribute to the further research in the area of event design. This research project and report is to provide a platform to the Industry Partners herein, being The Event Design Research Network (EDRN) and Dr Steve Brown, for the further scope of research to be conducted in the area of event design principles namely, scale, shape, focus, timing and build.

This research project was undertaken as part of course requirements for topic TOUR3104/5 Tourism Research Project A/B and the research result provided should be read in that context. I certify that this research project does not, to the best of my knowledge and belief, incorporate without acknowledgement any material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made.

Signed MELODEE TREBILCOCK Date 8TH AUGUST 2011
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1.0 Introduction</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1 Background</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 Aim</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2.0 Project Outline</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1 Research Project Topic</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2 Industry Partners/ Supervisor</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3 Research Question</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3.0 Methodology Summary</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1 Paradigm</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2 Data Source</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3 Methodology</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4 The Process</td>
<td>7 – 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5 Predicted Outputs</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.6 Issues/ Benefits</td>
<td>8 – 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4.0 Results/Findings</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10 - 27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>5.0 Conclusion</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>28 - 30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>6.0 Recommendations</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>7.0 References</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>32 - 34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Appendices</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix A – Timeline</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix B – Literature Read/Reviewed</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix C – Literature Summary</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix D – Poster</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1.0 **INTRODUCTION**

This research project consisted of searching, analyzing and reading literature, mainly journal articles, to support the opinions and statements of Dr Steve Brown, the author of Event Design: Creating and Stating the Event Experience (Volume 1). Specifically in the areas of five event design principles, being scale, shape, focus, timing and build, supportive evidence was found to agree with the definitions of the five event design principles of scale, shape, focus, timing and build. The literature found was also useful in assessing the categories and topic areas of journals where supportive evidence was found, to provide a platform to further build on supportive evidence on this research topic. The report will discuss details about this research project, further analysing the supportive evidence found in the detailed areas of the event design principles namely, scale, shape, focus, timing and build.

1.1 **BACKGROUND**

Event design commences with the creation and conceptual development to stage an event, and in particular using event design principles. Dr S Brown’s 2011 definition reads as follows:

"Event Design is the creation, conceptual development and staging of an event using event design principles and techniques to capture and engage the audience with a positive and meaningful experience.

The event designed experience maximizes the effectiveness of communication with the audience and as a consequence increases the potential for the event to meet and exceed its stated aims and objectives while providing the foundation for the delivery of an optimal or peak experience for the audience." Brown (2011)

It is with the above definition in mind that the platform and expansion of research undertaken in this research project and outlined in this report is
provided. Specifically, concentrating on the five event design principles of scale, shape, focus, timing and build to provide further supportive arguments, that these event design principles are essential when engaging in an event design project.

1.2 **AIM**

The aim of the research project is to contribute to the existing knowledge and information there is in relation to the five event design principles, scale, shape, focus, timing and build. The research undertaken in this project provided this report as a documented record of what that contribution is and how it was achieved. The research also provides the foundation for areas of further research and outlines suggestions for recommendations on the findings. Ultimately the question, “What evidence exists that support the event design principles of Scale, Shape, Focus, Timing and Build?” was addressed and answered to its full extent.

2.0 **PROJECT OUTLINE**

2.1 **RESEARCH PROJECT TOPIC**

Event Design Principle – scale, shape, focus, timing and build.

2.2 **INDUSTRY PARTNERS/SUPERVISOR**

Dr. Steve Brown played two roles in the research project, both the industry partner and supervisor. Along with being The Head of Tourism - School of Humanities, Department of Tourism for Flinders University, Adelaide, Steve Brown is also one of the founding members of the Event Design Research Network (EDRN).

2.3 **RESEARCH QUESTION**

The research question is, What evidence exists that support the event design principles of Scale, Shape, Focus, Timing and Build?”.
3.0 METHODOLOGY SUMMARY

3.1 PARADIGM

The paradigm that would support the research project is Interpretative Social Sciences Paradigm as it explores information related to the human society.

Quoted from Jennings book Tourism Research (2010 pp. 40-41):

“The interpretative paradigm assumes there are multiple explanations or realities to explain a phenomenon and the research process should be subjective with the use of qualitative methodology and lastly data is collected in the real world or natural setting.”

The author further explains ‘the researcher will acquire an in-depth knowledge of the tourism phenomena or experience that is grounded in the empirical world - a world where there are multiple realities rather than one ‘truth’ to explain tourism phenomena’. Jennings (2010, pp. 40-41)

3.2 DATA SOURCE

Secondary data sources were used for this research project, which as listed included the following:

- Library Databases
- Online Journals
- Online Articles
- Online Reports

3.3 METHODOLOGY

The research undertaken consisted of a structured approach, whereby the Supervisor, Dr Steve Brown gave directions of specific journal interest areas to conduct research in, in relation to each event design principle. The research project aligned itself with the interpretive social sciences paradigm which as outlined by Jennings (2010) uses a qualitative methodology due to the following:
First and basically, qualitative methodology is directed at the understanding of the social world that qualitative researchers explore and investigate.

Qualitative methodology includes a variety and diversity of methods, procedures, and research designs. All kinds of qualitative methods have in common that their main research aim is a deeper understanding of the research object.

Qualitative methods try to discover new hypotheses rather than testing hypotheses deductively derived from known theories; they explore new phenomena and describe them intensively. Jennings (2010)

3.4 THE PROCESS

A timeline was created first to ensure that a disciplined approach to the research was being conducted each week from the commencement to the end of the research topic. The timeline assisted in the allocation of time for various tasks, meetings and deadlines. Meetings with Dr Steve Brown, Supervisor and Industry Partner provided support to the researcher and discussions based on the final output of this research project. Research commenced with using predominantly the data source of online journals through the Flinders University Library portal. The researcher was directed into specific journal areas for the event design principles and it was a structured research project. A large amount of time was spent reading and analysing, which proved to be a very lengthy and time consuming process. Online databases which were used included ScienceDirect, Ingenta Connect and DOAJ – Directory of Open Access Journals. These databases provided a wide range of articles related to the event design principles of scale, shape, focus, timing and build. The process included finding relevant literature, specifically the aim of ten pieces of literature per event design principle, which provided a total number of articles in this research project of fifty. These articles were referenced appropriately and a literature read/reviewed list was created. From each of the ten articles, the researcher then eliminated
five on each event design principle and concentrated on supportive evidence in the top five articles of each of the event design principles, which are further discussed in this report. Finally, in each event design principle of scale, shape, focus, timing and build, the provision of the most supportive literature that best supported each event design principle was found and discussed in detail. A literature summary (Appendix A) was also created, to detail the findings of where the topic area of where literature was found which related to the event design principles. The research findings then provided the information to create the Poster for this research project, detailing the supportive evidence found in relation to the event design principles of scale, shape, focus, build and timing.

3.5 **PREDICTED OUTPUTS**

The research project resulted in the following predicted outputs:

- Report
- Literature Summary
- Poster
- Journal

The research project addressed the Event Design Principles of scale, shape, focus, timing and build which will be represented through this report. Along with the Report the final research project product will include a Poster illustrating how the research was conducted and an emphasis on the results of the Literature Summary displaying visually the research findings. Lastly, a reflective journal will form part of the output confirming the research undertaken on this research project.

3.6 **ISSUES/BENEFITS**

**ISSUES - Researcher**

Time consumption – this research project proved to be a very time consuming task. Predominantly a lot of time was spent reading and researching journal
articles to ascertain supported evidence in relation to the event design principles of scale, shape, focus, timing and build.

Staying focused on this research project proved to be a difficult task on occasions, due to the monotonous nature of the research, as well as the non-interaction of any other parties with this research.

A three week standstill on this research occurred, due to a personal tragedy in the researcher’s life, which therefore was lost time on the project.

ISSUES - Industry Partner

Who and how will the findings by the researcher be accessed and used? The findings by the researcher, possibly will be used by the industry partner to build on further supported evidence in relation to the suggested definitions of event design principles of scale, shape, focus, timing and build by Dr Steve Brown.

BENEFITS - Researcher

The researcher has experienced being able to expand and build on knowledge in the area of Event Design and its principles, and in particular those of scale, shape, focus, timing and build.

BENEFITS - Industry Partner

This research project has contributed to gathering supportive evidence on specifically the five event design principles of scale, shape, focus, timing and build, which will provide positive arguments in support of information and opinions of Dr Steve Brown in his publication, The Event Design: Creating and Staging the Event Experience (Volume 1).
4.0 RESULTS/FINDINGS

Event Design Principle - Scale

Dr Steve Brown’s (2010) definition of scale:

“Matching the scale of the activity to the venue and ensuring that, regardless of the
distance from the activity to the audience, the audience can clearly see and understand
what is being presented.”

As Amadeo, D et al (2009), discusses, space is difficult to isolate as a specific
determinant of behaviour, moreover, you can see its effects via its meaning for people,
rather than through the physical characteristics of space. As with matching the scale
of an event, although the physical creation allows what the audience can see, it is also
the behaviour and intrinsic effect that this has on the audience to see clearly. Amadeo
et al (2009), further confirms the meaning of behaviour can be conveyed by structure
and scale. Amadeo et al (2009), suggests that the pioneering conceptualizations of
Barker and the early ecological psychologists, who describe behaviour settings and how
to recognise them show how powerful the combination of scale and behaviour can be in
determining behaviour.

Customer satisfaction is highlighted by Martin & O’Neil (2010) in their article relating to
large scale sporting events. Martin & O’Neil (2010) state that there has been a recent
move to address the real need to accurately measure and evaluate the satisfaction of
consumers in various settings. Theodorakis et al (2001) tested a newly developed
measure called SPORTSSERV in a sport setting. The scale was based on five
dimensions that evaluate a consumer’s satisfaction at a sporting event and they were,
access, reliability, responsiveness, tangibles and security. Whilst all five dimensions
were found to contribute positively to consumer’s satisfaction, the two highest were
tangibles and reliability. Martin & O’Neil (2010) indicate that beyond the normal
problems associated with the service industry, managers of sporting event venues must
also deal with several other factors that may or may not be in their control. One of
those is the physical design and layout of the venue, often referred to as the
servicescape, it has been found to play a key role in the formation of consumer satisfaction in sporting venues. More specifically the authors state the layout and design of a stadium or arena may partly determine whether sports fans will stay for the entire game or exit. Two out of the three of their reasons relate in one way to the scale design of an event. Martin & O’Neil (2010, p5) suggestions are:

- Ambient conditions including the weather, temperature, air quality, noise, music and odors.
- Spatial layout and functionality, including the way in which equipment and furnishings arranged and the ability of those items to facilitate the consumer’s enjoyment.
- Signs, symbols and artifacts including signage to communicate and enhance a certain image or mood to direct customers.

Montello (1991) raises the argument that cognitive distances are mental representations of large scale environmental distances that cannot be perceived from a single vantage point but require movement through the environment for their apprehension. Montello (1991) explains that the term cognitive distance refers to people’s beliefs about distances between places in large scale spaces, places which are far apart and obscured so as not to visible from each other. In contrast, Montello (1991) states that perceptual distance refers to peoples beliefs about distances between places which are visible from each other and are typically in sight during the estimation procedure.

Silvers & Nelson (2009) discuss in their analysis of the event design of the 2006 Winter Olympics Opening Ceremonies the EMBOK model of design, and in particular the category of event design. The EMBOK model of design then has further sub headings under the design category, being program, which encompasses production and environment design. Silver & Nelson ’s (2009) evaluation of the 2006 Winter Olympics Opening Ceremony along with the EMBOK model of design is able to relate each part of the event to back to the EMBOK model of design, and in particular in relation to scale,
the article evaluates the use of three dimensional usage of the stadium space, the versatility of the main and proscenium stages, and the use of costumes and performers as living decor for the audiences optimum viewing. As Dr Steve Brown (2010) discusses opening ceremonies are often good examples of the use of multiples to provide the appropriate scale of the event.

In Morgan (2008) article, ‘What makes a good Festival’, he states after operational and administrative efficiency an important criteria to delivering a successful event is event design, that is to create a unique and memorable impression in the customer’s mind. The two main points that Morgan (2008) discusses is the notion of an event and audience member interacting externally through contact with staff, performers and other visitors, but however there is an internal interaction as well, between the values of the audience member and those that are communicated through the “personality’ of the design elements. Morgan (2008) discusses a specific festival , the Sidmouth Folk Festival and its event design faults. Research was collected through netnography, allowing the public to anonymously comment on their experience at the Sidmouth Folk Festival. Morgan (2008) states that physical organization was operational problems received a number of complaints, discussing that feedback indicated that the event design hindered the visitor’s ability to move around the festival easily from event to event and obstructions and distances between them was a common complaint. Clearly, the scale with the Sidmouth Folk Festival was an issue, and as Brown (2010) concurs, the event design needs to ensure that the target audience can see.

Event Design Principle - Shape

Dr Steve Brown’s (2010) definition of shape:

“How the audience responds to the physical environment in which the event takes place.”

Sanocki (2003) states that the layout of a scene is crucial for survival and involves a relatively large portion of the brain, and consequently, the perception and representation of scenic layout is an important topic for cognitive psychology. Further,
Sanocki (2003) suggests the notion that mental representations influence the perception of the spatial layout of scenes.

As Brown (2010) states when considering the event design principle of shape, it is most important to ask the question, can everybody see?

Sanocki (2003) argues that abstract entities are important in scene representation, but they must be supplemented by information that is related to image based perceptual properties of scenes. That is information processed by neural structures shared by perception, imagination and cognition. Further Sanocki (2003) suggests that image based properties such as colour, lightness and texture can be important to representation – that is in relation to the event design principle of shape, again, can everybody see? As Sanocki (2003) concludes there is a possibility that scene representations are supported in part by intermediate-level representations of image information, which includes colour, brightness, shading information all organized according to objects and surfaces of shape and because of this the scene representation is not a low level sensory buffer.

Mowen et al. (2003) discusses the topic of crowding and perceived crowding and how this effects an audience and their event experience. As most event organisers strive to increase the attendance numbers at an event, Mowen et al (2003) state that large crowds are sought, but also ensuring that an event experience is not compromised and indeed meets the audience’s expectations.

Wickham and Kerstetter (2000) found in a study examining place attachment and crowding in an event setting that place attachment positively related to an individual’s perception of crowding and it built on previous studies suggesting that attachment to an area may reduce negative feelings relating to crowding. Dr S Brown (2010) discusses the importance of a sense of belonging to a crowd is what an event designer should aim for, rather than crowding the audience.

Mowen et al. (2003) confirmed in the study conducted on event crowding perception that less than 10% of the study sample indicated a negative response. This would
suggest that crowding perceptions are not only a function of audience numbers and behavior, but is influenced by event design, capacity and the applied crowd management practices.

An example of the event design principle, shape is discussed by Clyne (undated) in an analysis of spatial dynamics of street performance in Australia. As Clyne (undated) discusses street performance is an art form in many ways defined by space and shapes and that street performers practice their performance within a physical circle of their own performance. Clyne (undated) raises a supportive argument in relation to Dr Steve Brown’s opinion on shape in relation to the topic of proxemics. Proxemics, being the study of humans in relation to their environment and each other evolved to the word we commonly use as proximity, which is defined as, nearness in space or time. Clyne (undated) The area of proximity has been used to study aspects of non-verbal communication such as how humans behave in public spaces and how they position themselves in relation to others and other things Clyne (undated), clearly this notion is relatable to the event design principle of shape. Clyne (undated) states that according to Hall (1966) one of the key developments of proxemics was made by Humphrey Osmond, who developed the terms ‘sociofugal’ and ‘sociopetal’ to describe how the positioning of obstacles in spaces can influence the levels of interaction between people. ‘Sociofugal spaces’ are designed to deter interaction between people, as they often promote rapid movement or physical isolation. In direct opposition to the sociofugal space lies the sociopetal space, which has the effect of encouraging people to pause or congregate. Clyne (undated) suggests that in particular, street performances have the ability to turn a sociofugal space into a sociopetal one. Clyne (undated) advises that the term ‘Eruption’ is a term which was coined by Richard Schechner (1988) to describe how people position themselves around a social abnormality. Further Clyne (undated) outlines the first hand opinion of performer Mandy Sayer (1998: 56):

It took me weeks of working the streets before I understood that too much space could be a liability. It enables the audience to hang back, making it difficult
to connect with them; also, they become timid about stepping forward and throwing money into the hat.

Lastly Clyne (undated) advises that when interviewed, most street performers acknowledged that they utilised psychological tactics to manipulate their audience into conforming to their own spatial laws. Clyne’s (undated) article supports the event design principle of shape not only from the audience point of view, but interestingly from the performer’s point of view.

The article by Darcy and Harris (2003) raises the further consideration of the event design principle shape, when discussing the area of event disability planning at events. It is worth noting that it is in the best interest of event organizers as to not discriminate against people with disabilities, to ensure that planning practices need to incorporate the dimensions of access in relation to legislation relating to the Disability Discrimination Act (1992). Darcy and Harris (2003) discuss the quality of a viewing experience at a recently constructed tennis and aquatic centre of an audience member who was in a wheelchair. The audience member was of the opinion that the seats had poor lines of sight as railings at eye height made it difficult to see, and he lodged a complaint. The complaint was settled by the venue agreeing to both reducing the height of the main balustrades to 800 mm and to installing thin steel cables (which do not block the view). As Brown (2010) states the event designer needs to take into account any vertical (or side view) issues as well, and this is particularly true in indoor venues with raked (on a slope) seating.

As Darcy and Harris (2003) conclude it would seem that disability considerations are not necessarily a priority to most Australian event managers. It highlights the need for integrated disability planning into the event design process. It would seem beneficial from an event designer’s point of view to cover all areas of disability planning with an event, as also from a non-disability point of view of audience attendance it would only enhance an audience’s experience if the event design principle of shape is designed correctly.
Brown (2010) discusses that environmental and cognitive psychology inform us about event space and that audiences at events can be observed in relation to their responses to the event environment and its surroundings.

Spiers & Maguire (2008) discuss research in relation to wayfinding behaviour and its uses in particular of spatial representations which may affect performance of the person. In other words the experience at an event, due to the audience members spatial processing abilities and their familiarity with the environment and the layout of the environment.

Spiers & Maguire (2008) concur that a lot of studies in relation to wayfinding cognition have shed some light on cognitive processes during wayfinding, there are some issues that remain unexplored. Spiers & Maguire (2008) suggest that a lot of wayfinding cognition occurs in outdoor environments and areas that need to be explored further are visual processing and the behaviour (of an audience) in relation to navigation of an environment relates closely to spatial representations. Brown (2010) lists features of an event environment such as clean lines, symmetry, uncluttered, enclosure, narrow, obstruction, left and height as all contributing to responses of audiences behaviours.

Lastly, Spiers & Maguire (2008) discuss a study relating to route planning and wayfinding cognition in relation to road users. This study reported that individuals, in addition to planning and visual processing, individuals also reported changes to their own emotional state. This occurred and was reported in relation to a road being blocked off, which induced the emotional state of being angry with the individual. The study also reported on the emotional state of being anxious when individuals may have nearly crashed on their wayfinding route study, due to the environment. Spiers & Maguire (2008). It would seem that this theory concurs with an event environment and the opinion of Brown (2010) that mess doesn’t work and confused images and complicated pictures do not hold attention or satisfy the audience in an event environment in relation to shape.
Event Design Principle - Focus

Dr Steve Brown’s (2010) definition of focus:

"Gaining and keeping the attention of the audience. We want our audience to look where we want them to look – and we have the power to make them do just that."

Niesser and Becklen (1975) discuss research surrounding selective looking and believe that there are no separate mechanisms for attention. Further, in the experiments conducted Niesser and Becklen (1975) the phenomena observed is simply the consequences of perceiving one particular event or object and not picking up as much information about others.

These findings relate to Brown (2010) argument that the audience processes (consciously or subconsciously) the information received through their eyes and is just as significant as any physiological (automatic) response.

Niesser and Becklen (1975) state that their study done in relation to non-verbal activities, such as throwing a ball, the alternative objects of attention may be at different optical distances. Therefore the selection might be due simply to differential accommodation of the lens of the eye. Niesser and Becklen (1975) concur that when two stationary objects are optically superimposed at the same distance, blending rather than selection occurs.

In relation to the event design principle of focus, Brown (2010) states that there is a danger in splitting the focus of the audience’s attention between two or more points. Further, audiences should always have one main focus that is continually maintained until the event designer wants that focus to change.

Brown (2010) discusses how important is in event design to have the knowledge of how the human eye works in relation to its response physiologically to stimuli and how that information is processed cognitively.
Jampel and Shi (2000) discuss in their article retinal movements of the eye, the visual line and what is known as Donder’s Law. Donder in 1846, formulated the first basic law of oculometer (which tracks and computes eye direction) physiology after researching the orientation of an afterimage of a cross which varied, in various gaze directions. Jampel and Shi (2000) Donder concluded after his studies that there was a constant amount of torsion or twisting and turning for each direction of a gaze in reference to a fixed head. The concept of constancy of retinal orientation for each gaze position is compatible with a basic understanding that visual sensory physiology corresponds with retinal receptive fields, having the same visual direction. Further, it is noted that Donders’ afterimage experiments have been repeatedly confirmed. Therefore, in relation to Brown’s (2010) opinion that anything that occurs in the arc of vision will physiologically elicit a response from our eyes, concurs with Donder’s Law.

Jampel and Shi (2000) advise further that after their experiments that they confirm there is an existence of continual micromovements of the retina in the eye. There is evidence that they are binocular, conjugate (mixture of both eyes) and are of similar magnitude in the two eyes. The visual line connects the object with the fovea (the centre of an eye, with the most clearest vision) and contains components of the image of object to the eye which the person directs his or her attention. Interestingly, light rays most effectively stimulate the fovea. Jampel and Shi (2000) conclude their theory by advising that as a result of retinal micromovements, the visual line becomes a zig zag pathway across the fovea, which may change the visual line abruptly around a pivot of the fovea. Jampel and Shi (2000) suggest that the characteristics of the light rays emanating from the object of regard (which we relate to an event situation, for the purpose of this report) and by the feedback stored from visual memories, contribute to how the eye will focus. The opinion of Brown (2010) in relation to the any change of stimuli will also evoke a physiological response, a change in colour, on a stage will draw the eye to it and a change of intensity (perceived brightness) of the lighting, either lighter or darker, will do the same.
Just and Carpenter (1976) discuss that eye fixations are intimately involved with our ability to visually encode spatially distributed information. It is possible that eye fixations can also indicate how visual information is internally manipulated, that is cognitively processed. Just and Carpenter (1976) conducted a trial of eye fixations, with a fixating point in the middle of the left hand side of a screen. Before each trial, the eye spot was calibrated with respect to that particular fixation point. The fixation point disappeared after the calibration and within a half a second later, the stimulus appeared. Subjects (participants) would respond either the same or different by pressing one of two micro switches with the index and third finger of their dominant hand. Just and Carpenter (1976) advise that there were 120 stimuli presented in random order and were done over two testing sessions over two days. Just and Carpenter (1976) state that the eye fixation results in this trial showed one striking feature of the eye fixation behaviour was that subjects systematically looked back and forth between the left and right figures on the screen. Initially, the subjects fixated on the left figure, but then looked over at the right-hand figure, then looked back at the left and frequently looked back at the right-hand figure for a second time for a total of three switches between the two figures. Just and Carpenter (1976) suggest that the next step of this trial would be to analysis and determine exactly what subjects were looking at and how the pattern of their fixations might reveal the microstructure of the underlying cognitive processes.

Brown (2010) states his personal experience in relation to the attendance of the 2009 performance of Phantom of the Opera that was staged at the Adelaide Entertainment Centre. There were two giant LED TV screens either side of the stage and once the performance commenced the images on the LED TV screens became distracting and drew the audience’s focus from the performance occurring on stage to the LED TV screens. Brown (2010) concludes that the audience’s focus was pulled and pushed between stage and screen to the detriment of the performance.

Yantis (1992) discusses that a priority in the research of visual object recognition is to characterize the properties of the visual attention system. Studies have shown that
when a response relevant event occurs away from the focus of attention, the recognition or detection of the event deteriorates as the distance between the focus of attention and the event increases. A common premise in these conceptualizations is that attention is directed to a spatially defined region of the image. As Brown (2010) discusses the example of the start of an event with a speaker trying to obtain an audience’s attention, which becomes difficult whilst the audience maybe drinking, eating and chatting to others. Audience lighting Brown (2010) states is an effective event design principle to use in this instance, as lowering the level of light, gives a cue to the audience that something is about to occur.

Yantis (1992) suggests that the visual system’s ability to organise visual elements into perceptual objects is a fundamental aspect of visual selection. Dr S Brown’s (2010) event design principle of focus, and in particular the example of audience lighting is an example of Yantis’ (1992) theory.

Yantis (1992) proposes that visual tracking is similar to the idea of an object file Kahneman & Treisman (1984) idea that it is a temporary representation of a perceptual object that is present in an image, and is the basis for visual selection. Further, it depends on the perceptual grouping process in the formation of the object file which will allow for the concept of visual selection and requires visual attention for perceptual organization to be successful. Yantis (1992) Brown (2010) discusses blocking and shapes as an element of the event design principle, focus. The process of “blocking” becomes an invaluable technique for an event designer to use in the quest to capture and retain the focus of the audience. Knowledge of the process of visual selection and perceptual organization as in Yantis (1992) article, is a useful concept that relates closely to this event design principle of focus.

Cowan and Elliot et al (2005) suggest that the notion of individual differences in the passive storage of information can be contributed to the focus of attention. The theory suggested is that whilst one person might excel in storage and another in processing, they both might obtain the same score on a storage and processing type of working
memory task. Cowan and Elliot et al (2005) advise that the focus on a task may be impaired due to attention and both verbal and spatial processing. Brown (2010) advises that the event designer needs to be careful to exclude any extraneous changes (or points of difference) within the event space or environment to ensure that the audience’s focus is retained exactly where the event designer wants it.

Cowan and Elliot et al (2005) discuss the term attention and refer to selective attention, which is that, some information is selected for processing at the expense of less than optimal processing of other information. The importance is concentrated on two dimensions of attention, being, the control of attention and its scope.

Cowan and Elliot et al (2005) advise that there is at least four related assumptions about the concept of scope of attention and they are as follows:

"1. That there is a limit in the capacity of the focus of attention,
2. That this limit varies between individuals
3. That measures of this capacity are theoretically and empirically related to storage-and-processing measures of the working memory, and
4. That the common variance between these measures is related to intellectual aptitude measures."

This is a useful theory in relation to the event design principle of focus, and as Brown (2010) states an event designer’s aim is keeping the attention of the audience. Knowing what individual capacities are for the scope of focus will contribute to catering to not only the audience’s expectations’, but will provide an effective event ensuring the continual focus of the audience occurs.

**Event Design Principle - Timing & Build**

Brown (2010) uses the phrase, “timing is almost everything”, in relation the event design principle of timing.

Brown and James (2004) state:
“Timing is all about understanding an audience’s likely attention span and response to program elements and being able to program to maximize their attention.”

Brown (2010) states:

“One of the requirements for great events is that they build tension and excitement over the duration of the event as well as provide moments of release where things ease off a little.”

The event design principles of timing and build, it would seem, overlap and in fact work together. The following analysis of research contains both event design principles: timing and build when being discussed.

In the article, Getting the Message: Measuring Audience Response to Theatre for Development (2002), it outlines the study of a theatre performance based in Port Vila, the capital of Vanuatu by a known theatre company which presents to communities on the northern shores of where the island Port Vila is situated. The aim of the study was to measure the audience response to the play, particularly in reference to the theatre company’s artistic intentions. The measurement of timing and build within this study, included the use of a digital video recorder and audio-recording equipment, cameras, the script of the play, audience questionnaires, focus group interviews and a clapperometer, which was used as a visual device for the audience to demonstrate their response in relation to timing. The study aimed to establish what presence of significant persuasive communication between the company and its audience was there at various times during the play. The article posed the notion that the communication is primarily non-discursive in nature, and that it is a function of specific artistic techniques. In relation to the staging aspect of the theatre company’s play, two elements are significant, in that the first is that minimalism generates fast transitions that are essential for maintaining audience attention and secondly, inventive and imaginative solutions to presenting the play are not just intrinsically interesting they
also demand an imaginative response from the spectator. Therefore, if the audience is required to use its imagination, it is invariably engaged with the performance. Getting the Message: Measuring Audience Response to Theatre for Development (2002), discusses that without some form of emotional appeal, it is difficult to involve the audience in the action of play. Involvement in the story of the play is a prerequisite for engaging the audience. Although, this play does not have a happy ending, but rather ends with a death, it is a good example of how timing and build create audience attention. As Brown (2010) discusses the event designer needs to build and add activity closer to the end so that the excitement and tension also build.

Thrane (2002) raises the issues that festival managers could benefit from knowing, if, and possibly, how festival attendees’ evaluation of a festival’s core product has an effect on their future behavioural intentions towards a festival. The article discusses research analysed specifically in relation to Kongsberg Jazz Festival in Norway, and in particular its core product jazz music. Thrane (2002) focuses on the music quality as a potential determinant of both the attendees and the overall satisfaction with the festival and the audience’s future behavioral intentions. Thrane (2002) makes the point that prior research on jazz festivals suggests that the quality of the music program is the most important service factor in attracting people to festivals. As Brown (2010) advises time tolerances are observable and the only way in which an event designer can influence an audience against their cultural influences and time tolerances is by effective event design.

Thrane (2002) proposes that music programming and quality was important for achieving festival customer satisfaction and customer satisfaction was a key factor for repeat business and positive word of mouth of the jazz festival.

Building in a flexibility to the schedule and an understanding of the culture of the performers (being an event design approach) provides the solution in relation to timing and build. Brown (2010)
Clyne (undated) in the article discussing contemporary street performance in Australia, discusses aspects of the event design principles of timing and build. Street performance is enacted in real time and a place to an unsuspecting audience, thereby significantly diminishing the boundaries between the illusion of the theatre and the reality of the outside world. Clyne (undated)

Brown (2010) discusses real time when our attention span shifts depending on the circumstances surround us and how a person’s perception of how long anything might take to occur is very fluid. Further, Brown (2010) states that event designers need to be aware of the implications of these shifting perceptions in audiences and use this knowledge to ensure they capture and hold the attention of their audience.

Clyne (undated) states that circle shows are typically reliant on interaction with their audience in the form of volunteers, and are linked by their common theme, being a combination of humour and spectacle laced with impending danger. Brown (2010) discusses the event build curve, which has two lines at the finish of an event. One line, the dotted red line, in the diagram, Brown (2010, p100) represents the level of intensity of the audience’s experience at an event and continues to build and build from the start of the event to the very end. The other line, dotted blue, demonstrates the release and tension during an event to further give a more engaging experience with audience. This event build curve concurs with the discussion of Clyne (undated) in relation to the events of street performers. Street performances operate on a series of events and climaxes throughout their performance to engage the audience.

Lorek-Jezinska, (2002) in the article Audience activating techniques and their educational efficacy, analyses audience activating techniques with the focus on authentic participation and its role in educating active audiences. It is based on projects by a Polish theatre company which require active spectators to contribute and participate within the performance. The theatre company stimulates responses to different situations, training the audience in active participation and raises the notion of deep and shallow play. Lorek-Jezinska (2002) discusses that audience participation can be found in the theories of deep and shallow play coined by the anthropologist Clifford
Geertz (cited in Carlson 1998: 24). The notions of deep and shallow play are applicable to the examination of the type of the audience involvement in an event or a performance, which includes their critical distance from the represented events. On the one hand shallow play with its critical distance increases the audience’s awareness, on the other deep play may intensify the experience on them and in deep play the audience may be so much involved that they lose their critical distance, in which they lose a sense of separation between themselves and the surrounding.

Brown (2010) refers to that cultural composition of an event’s audience will play a part, and as an event designer event time is quite specific and it is a priority to ensure that the audience’s attention is captured and retained by the experience. Brown (2010) discusses his personal experience of attending the performance of Mahabharata, and how he was unaware of the time that it had taken, being so captivated by the experience. This concurs with the notions of deep and shallow play as discussed by Lorek-Jezinska (2002).

Jones and Johnston et al (2006) discuss in their research based on auditory pattern structure that for instance when listening to music and related sound sequences, people must attend on a moment to moment basis to identify aspects of the unfolding pattern. The research is based on how this activity is based on auditory pattern structures and of special interest to the researchers is the role of a pattern’s pitch and time structure when monitoring attention. Jones and Johnston et al (2006) suggests that a pattern structure, includes time structure and that it is possible that effective timing is based on an event structure and paves the way for coordinated motor responses. Jones and Johnston et al (2006) discuss the differences between reactive attending from anticipatory attending, suggesting that because anticipatory attending is significantly influenced by the global time structure of an event whereas reactive attending is a response to a local, often temporally deviant, aspect of pattern structure.

Brown (2010) discusses the importance of an event commencing on time and the sticking to the timing contract with the audience. Brown (2010) suggests that an audience who becomes frustrated and unhappy with the delay of an event commencing
may never recover from that mindset in time to enjoy the experience of the event. It is the event designer’s task to ensure that event flow is seamless for the audience member, so that every part of the experience is positive. Brown (2010)

Jones and Johnston et al (2006) state that sequences that are predicted to promote a narrow focus should yield a sharp expectancy profile which is characterized by good performance with on-time tones, and a relatively poor performance will be characterized by ill-timed ones. This concurs with Brown (2010) suggestion of time tolerances found in most audiences which also have an impact on just how the message can be effectively communicated.

5.0 Conclusion

In conclusion, it is pertinent to refer and reflect on Dr S Brown’s 2010 definition of event design. Brown (2010) refers to “event design principles and techniques capturing and engaging an audience to achieve a positive and meaningful experience”. It is evident from the analysis that, all of the five event design principles, scale, shape, focus, timing and build need to work in conjunction with each other to achieve not only the success of an event, but the achievement of successful communication with an audience to achieve a meaningful experience.

The event design principle of scale, as discussed in relation to the most supportive article evidence in Silvers and Nelson (2009) the example of the Winter Olympics opening ceremony, was based on creative event design, which ensured the audience had optimum viewing. This supports Brown (2010) in his definition of scale, stating that it is a priority to match the scale of an event to a venue to ensure that the audience can see clearly.

The most supportive article discussed in relation to shape, Sanocki (2003) highlights the importance of image surroundings such as colour, lightness and texture, which contributes to the engagement of an audience. This concurs with Brown (2010) notion
about how an audience responds to the physical environment, the design and layout in relation to the event design principle of shape.

Just and Carpenter (1976), being the most supportive evidence in relation to the event design principle of focus, advise that eye fixations have the ability to visually encode spatially distributed information. This completely relates to the event design principle of focus. Just and Carpenter (1976) state further that there is a possibility that the visual information may be internally manipulated, that is cognitive processing. This notion further confirms the importance of the event design principle of focus as it demonstrates another avenue of communication when designing an event. Brown (2010) advises that the event design principle of focus is primarily about gaining and keeping the attention of the audience.

Event design principle timing, as discussed in the most supportive evidence in relation to timing in the article, Getting the Message: Measuring Audience Response to Theatre for Development (2002), it raised the notion that communication is primarily non-discursive in nature. The identification and establishment of the presence of significant persuasive communication between an event and its audience is confirmed in this article. As Brown (2010) discusses understanding the audience’s attention span and programming an event to reflect this will ensure the success of a well design event, which further will communicate effectively with an audience.

The last event design principle of build, discussed in relation to the most supportive evidence by Jones and Johnston et al (2006) suggests that a pattern structure, includes time structure and that it is possible that effective timing is based on an event structure and paves the way for coordinated motor responses. Once again, this further suggests that effective communication with an audience is the key to a successful event. Brown (2010) states that the effective use of the event design principle of build will ensure a great event with the use of tension and release within an event, which creates an event curve, as discussed previously. As suggested earlier, timing and build event design principles are closely related and it is beneficial to each of the principles to analyse them together.
It is evident from the information researched that effective communication with an audience is an overriding consideration with event design. The communication with an audience, it would seem, needs to be taken into consideration with every event design principle of scale, shape, focus, timing and build. Further, research suggests that all event design principles of scale, shape, focus, timing and build work in conjunction with each other and that this is a necessity when creating and designing an event.

Lastly, from the research conducted, three out the five most supportive articles come from the area of cognitive psychology. This confirms the notion that effective communication with an audience contributes greatly to the success of an event.

6.0 Recommendations

Firstly, due to the structure of this research project, being one with allocated research areas in relation to the event design principles of scale, shape, focus, timing and build, it would be useful to further research outside of the specific areas researched herein.

The research conducted in this project indicates the further research need to investigate the event design principles of scale, shape, focus, timing and build within the cognitive psychology area. The suggestion by the researcher that effective communication with an audience plays a significant role in the successful use of the event design principles of scale, shape, focus, timing and build, would be beneficial to further research.

The suggestion by the researcher in this project that all five event design principles of scale, shape, focus, timing and build work in conjunction with one another would be useful to further investigate. Particularly, in the area of timing and build, which the researcher in this project suggests that these two event design principles go hand in hand when creating and designing an event.

A major recommendation when further conducting research in relation to the event design principles discussed in this report, would be to physically attend an event, and conduct research on personal experiences in relation to the event design principles of
scale, shape, focus, timing and build. Further investigation in relation to this suggestion could be to create a survey asking specific questions in relation to the event design principles of scale, shape, focus, timing and build to be distributed to audience members for further analysis. The suggestion of conducting a research project in relation to the physical attendance of an event in relation to the event design principles of scale, shape, focus, timing and build, would contribute to the establishment of further supportive or non-supportive evidence in relation to the statements and opinions of Dr Steve Brown in his publication, Event Design: Creating and Staging the Event Experience (Volume 1) (2010).
7.0 References


Clyne, J. (Undated) Inside the circle: The spatial dynamics of contemporary street performance in Australia. Viewed on 22 May 2011


Getting the Message: Measuring Audience response to Theatre for Development. *Applied Theatre Researcher No. 3* 2/5, 1-10


