

PLAY 1

Defining and Developing Objectives, Strategies, and Tactics

All winning teams are goal-oriented. Teams like these win consistently because everyone connected with them concentrates on specific objectives . . . nothing will distract them from achieving their aims.

—LOU HOLTZ, FORMER NOTRE DAME FOOTBALL COACH

The best place to begin the event management process is at the end. Know what you want the event to do for your organization once the audience has gone home and all the bills have been paid. Decide whether the event is charged with the responsibility of generating a profit, raising funds for a cause-related charity, or promoting a particular lifestyle or sport. Determine the optimal date and time to stage the event that best meets these objectives. Know what you want both the audience and the athletes or participants to experience. Start with a single primary objective, the essential reason for going to all the trouble to organize your sports event, and dedicate all of your planning to achieve—at minimum—this one objective, the one that if met will qualify the event as a success if all else fails.

It would be naive to suggest that any single event should exist for one pure reason. As will be seen shortly, the potential for any sports event can be broadened to achieve a wide range of positive outcomes with a little additional effort. But it is essential to first identify one key objective, the attainment of which is of the highest priority. Ensure that every member of your event team understands the primary objective, and no matter what other bells and whistles you add later, never lose sight of the purest reason beneath. This will help to keep the highest priority in focus for all members of the event organization team and to keep confusion about the purpose of the event to an absolute minimum.

Figure 1-1 illustrates examples of the primary objectives for three fictional sports events: an amateur community baseball event, a not-for-profit participatory athletic event, and a professional sports fan festival. Each of the events' organizers has defined a singular goal that is easy to communicate to their staffs and stakeholders. As will soon become obvious, they can also achieve great secondary benefits for their communities, sports, and organizations.

**Example 1: Community Youth League
All-Star Game**

Primary Objective: To give our town's best youth league players a special end-of-season competition that will recognize them for their great performance during the regular season.

**Example 2: Road Runners Club
Downtown 10K Road Race**

Primary Objective: To promote our sport and healthy lifestyles by giving our city's runners a safe, unobstructed downtown road course, and to reinforce the excitement of recreational running by encouraging the community to cheer them on from the sidewalks.

Example 3: Playoffs Pre-Game Fan Festival
Objective: To reward and excite loyal fans with a street festival preceding the team's first playoff game in three years.

Figure 1-1
Primary Objectives of Three Types of Events

The P-A-P-E-R Test

The primary objective for each of the events in Figure 1-1 is clear, simple, and easily communicated. But if these were the only identified objectives, the organizers would forsake a large number of opportunities that could leverage their events to achieve a wider range of goals. Although some of these opportunities might seem obvious and may automatically surface on their own, a method of more comprehensive analysis is available to ensure that few possible benefits are overlooked. Organizers can maximize their events' value by considering all of the other positive things the events can do for their community and organization, and then putting them on P-A-P-E-R.

The P-A-P-E-R (which stands for *Promotion-Audience-Partnerships-Environment-and-Revenue*) Test is a useful framework within which organizers can create a more comprehensive list of additional, or secondary, objectives. Consider the answers to the questions in Figure 1-2 as you formulate additional aspirations for your event. First, brainstorm strategically about all of the things that your event can do without regard to the tactics you would have to use to achieve these ends. As you let your imagination go wild during this phase of analysis, it doesn't hurt to get others in your organization involved in the P-A-P-E-R Test. The more ideas about what your event can do for you, the better. Don't be concerned if there is some amount of duplication in the answers; duplication only strengthens the validity of the responses.

By considering the answers to these questions, you will quickly see that some outcomes will be more valuable and important to you and your organization than others. Some will also be more complicated and difficult, and others far easier to achieve. Know up front that by expanding your list to include desirable secondary objectives, more time, work, people, and other resources will inevitably be needed to achieve them. Prioritize, selecting the secondary objectives that are most important to your organization, and determine whether it will be more feasible, efficient, and desirable for you to pursue one or two of the more difficult, time-consuming objectives, or a greater number of the easier, less work-intensive goals. Consider your time and financial resources. For example, is long-term growth of an event's profit potential more important than a short-term monetary gain? Go for the goals with the greatest payoffs in whatever time frame is the most relevant, but with the least possible drain on your organization.

To illustrate how this framework can work for you, apply the P-A-P-E-R Test to the three sample events in Figure 1-1. The first is a prototypical grassroots community sports event with little or no budget and a staff composed totally of volunteers. (Throughout this book, *grassroots event* is often used to describe an amateur, not-for-profit community sports program.) Notwithstanding the minimal resources available, the event has the potential to generate excitement and advance the growth and aims of this community organization. Figure 1-3 illustrates by applying the P-A-P-E-R Test to a youth league all-star game.

Promotion

- What essential message or important information do I want to communicate to the public about the event, my sport, or my organization?
- Can I build interest in my sport or organization before, during, or after the event? By what measure can this increased interest be demonstrated?
- How do I want the event to position our sport in the community, and what kind of legacy should it leave?

Audience

- Who is our target audience for the event, the people who are most likely to participate, attend, or purchase a ticket?
- Beyond the most likely target, what audiences with similar interests can be attracted or invited to increase attendance, interest, and relevance for our event and further our organization's overall objectives?
- Is there an opportunity to win entirely new fans or enthusiasts to our sport by encouraging their attendance?

Partnerships

- Can we use the event to develop, maintain, or strengthen relationships with our organization's partners and supporters (e.g., our fans, athletes, members, donors, sponsors, community leaders, local government)?
- What kind of experience do we want to leave our athletes and other partners with? How do we want them to feel before, during, and after the event?

Environment

- Who are our competitors, and what do we want to communicate to differentiate our sports organization from theirs, and our event from the programs they stage?
- Do we need to set ourselves apart from other similar organizations operating in our community or business environment that compete for a share of available dollars, time, or attention?
- What do we need to communicate about the positive attributes of our sports event that sets it apart from other leisure activities similarly competing for the public's, or a potential sponsor's, attention?
- Do we need to address a perceived time or economic inconvenience that attendees, participants, or partners may encounter when deciding to attend?
- Do we need to address a preconceived notion about our sport, or organization, that makes it more difficult to generate attendance or participation?

Revenue

- How much revenue do we need to generate for the event and/or for the organization?
- Do we want or need to generate revenues in excess of expenses? Is this potential profit essential to growing the event in the future?
- How much money can we invest beyond expected revenues to achieve our objectives?
- Is, or should, our event be associated with a community cause or charity? How much money do we need to generate for that cause?

Figure 1-2

The P-A-P-E-R Test

Example 1: Community Youth League All-Star Game**Primary Objective:**

To give our town's best youth league players a special end-of-season competition that will recognize them for their great performance during the regular season.

Additional Objectives:**Promotion**

1. Encourage the local media to position our youth league as an important component of our community's quality of life, providing our children with a safe, supervised activity that will "keep them off the streets."
2. Generate advance publicity to bring more kids and families to the event to cheer on their friends and relatives.
3. Use the event to get more kids to register to play in the league next season.

Audience

1. Fill the bleachers and standing areas with at least 200 spectators. (The more people who attend, the more importance the All-Stars and the media will place on the game.)
2. Get new kids from the community to the game to encourage registration at the ball field for next season.
3. Get town and civic leaders (e.g., mayor, city manager, councilperson, state senator, chamber of commerce representative) to attend to validate the importance of the game to both the players and the fans. Demonstrate to these leaders the important place our league occupies in our community.

Partnerships

1. Strengthen our ties to the local chamber of commerce and its member businesses to encourage current team sponsors to renew their relationships, and to identify new prospective team sponsors for next season.
2. Use these strengthened ties to local businesses and town government to solicit grants to improve the antiquated dugout area and improve overall field maintenance.

Environment

1. Demonstrate that our league is highly organized, motivated, and dedicated to coaching our kids to improve their skills and to promote good sportsmanship.
2. Demonstrate that our organization is the best alternative to the highly competitive leagues in which winning is more important than having a great time.

Revenue

1. Generate \$500 to replace old equipment (e.g., new batting helmets, bases, batting tees) and to help pay for All-Star trophies.
2. Increase player preregistration for next season by 10 percent.

Figure 1-3

Expanded Community Youth League All-Star Game Objectives

DEVELOPING TACTICS

To begin the actual process of planning an event, your objectives have to be supported by the *tactics* you will employ to achieve them. It is against the backdrop of these tactics that you can begin to identify costs and revenue

opportunities and, ultimately, formulate a budget. Often, event budgets are developed considering only the cost of staging the competitive event or main program, with insufficient thought and resources devoted to maximizing its marketing and promotional value or, in some cases, even toward attracting and accommodating spectators. Be sure your budget can accommodate the efforts and expenses—the tactics—of addressing your desired objectives.

The volunteer chairman of the youth league in Figure 1-3 realizes that a children's all-star game can do much more for its participants and teams, the community, and its own organization than staging the game simply for competition's sake. As a volunteer with limited time and resources, the chairman knows that the game can exist without any of these additional considerations and achieve its primary objective with a minimum amount of time investment. All he needs is to get a permit for the ball field and to hire an umpire. To achieve even a small number of these added secondary objectives, the chairman will have to appoint a committee or task force to prioritize which objectives should be considered necessary, which would be nice, and which are just not worth the effort. But, as you can see, even the most basic grassroots sports event can achieve a multitude of previously unconsidered aims.

Secondary objectives are frequently interrelated and mutually supportive. Sometimes a seemingly less important, but more easily achieved secondary objective will be pursued to reinforce the success of more pertinent agenda items. In the case of the youth league all-star game, getting community leaders (Audience) to the event will help to impress businesses from the chamber of commerce (Partnerships) and encourage coverage by the local media (Promotion). A full set of bleachers (Audience) will also position future league events as worthy of sponsorship by local businesses and grants sponsored by local politicians (Revenue).

It is also helpful to develop secondary objectives to support the host organization's overall mission and challenges. The event chairman in this hypothetical case wants to keep registration fees as low as possible, but knows that money is going to be required the following season to replace equipment and level a field that tends to flood after even a brief, moderate shower. The all-star game is a perfect opportunity to raise the money required, whether dollar by dollar through the sales of cold sodas or raffle tickets to family members in the bleachers, a few hundred dollars at a time through an expanded group of sponsors, through grants from the county, or all three. Staging the all-star game without engaging in all of the extra work may provide just as wonderful an experience for the children participating. But with some extra forethought, organization, and effort, the game can also provide an outstanding opportunity to improve the experience for the players this year as well as in seasons to come.

The second fictional event presented in Figure 1-1 is staged by a local running club. This organization has a handful of permanent administrative staff members, supplemented by a large body of volunteers, event marshals, and municipal employees assigned by the city. The primary objective for the event is consistent with the overall goals for the organization, but could also pertain

to any of the nearly 30 other running events the club stages each year or to any races staged by similar organizations. Figure 1-4 illustrates how the P-A-P-E-R Test can be applied to allow the Downtown 10K Road Race to stand out uniquely from the rest of the club's calendar.

Example 2: Road Runners Club Downtown 10K Road Race**Primary Objective:**

To promote our sport and healthy lifestyles by giving our city's runners a safe, unobstructed downtown road course, and to reinforce the excitement of recreational running by encouraging the community to cheer them on from the sidewalks.

Secondary Objectives:**Promotion**

1. Demonstrate that our sport is a great lifestyle choice for the entire community, providing health and social benefits to all participants regardless of age or income.
2. Promote our organization as one of the region's top associations of recreational runners.
3. Encourage spectators to gather at the finish line and at designated locations along the route to cheer on the runners.
4. Designate an official radio station in our market that will appeal to our target market, and promote both the registration drive prior to the race and spectator attendance on race day.

Audience

1. Capitalize on advance promotion to increase race registration by 33 percent over last year.
2. Encourage families and friends to try recreational running together for the first time, and reactivate interest among former runners.
3. Convert those trying the event into regular recreational runners.
4. Use advance promotion and the on-site excitement of spectators to increase club membership by 15 percent.
5. Demonstrate the popularity and vitality of running and the benefits of our association to potential sponsors of future races and events.

Partnerships

1. Strengthen our ties to the city's Parks and Recreation, Police, Street, and Sanitation Departments, upon whose active cooperation we depend to run races year-round.
2. Establish a working relationship with the Downtown Business Improvement District, whose objectives include bringing visitors and entertainment seekers to the downtown core during low-traffic weekends and summer evenings.

Environment

1. Demonstrate that as compared with other ways of spending an hour or two, running is fun, healthy, mentally and emotionally refreshing, accessible, and inexpensive.
2. Demonstrate that as compared with other sports, running requires little economic investment and is easy to learn because it has few rules.

Revenue

1. Generate net proceeds of \$50,000 to pay for operational expenses.
2. Increase club membership and member revenues by 15 percent.

Figure 1-4

Expanded Downtown 10K Road Race Objectives

The executive director of the Downtown Road Runners Club knows that she can use the scenic attractiveness and excitement of running through the downtown area to revitalize one of the organization's annual 10K races and has set realistic goals to increase membership and race registration. She also recognizes that she can use the event to establish a working relationship with local businesses in the downtown area to achieve mutual objectives—the repositioning of a business district that is exciting in daylight hours five days a week, but sleepy during nonworking hours. Working with the local chamber of commerce, the organizers of the race can create unique opportunities for area business owners and, in turn, present new sponsorship and official supplier opportunities. Area restaurants and retailers can engage in promotions to transform workweek customers into weekend event spectators, and may participate as places for recreational runners to pick up registration materials, application forms, and information. The expansion of the list of secondary objectives also reveals another possible opportunity—the potential for future short-distance road race events in the evening to further promote the vitality of the city after regular business hours.

Amassing and evaluating secondary objectives provides event organizers with a framework within which to develop tactics and strategies to transform an event-for-its-own-sake into a dynamic, multifaceted event marketing tool for its organizers, sponsors, the local community, and a host of other stakeholders. For example, the Road Runners' desire to increase the number of recreational runners in the community may lead them to consider configuring the event to have two starting lines. The second, located near the midpoint of the original route and following in parallel lanes so as not to interfere with competitive runners, might be offered to the public with a reduced registration fee for families with young children so that an upcoming generation of runners can feel the thrill of passing the finish line. The inaugural effort to add a family component to the race could also serve as a market test to determine whether the club might subsequently consider “family” or “junior” membership tiers to increase membership and annual dues revenues.

To strengthen the club's relationship with the city agencies whose participation is integral to the successful execution of the event, organizers might consider offering the police, fire, streets, and sanitation departments a limited number of free race registrations. These agencies can, in turn, donate the free spots to their widows and orphans organizations, Big Brothers/Big Sisters, or another worthy organization, and reap some of the public relations benefits of supporting those in need. The club would be well served by monitoring how these free spots will be used so that it can encourage the media to generate human interest stories about the beneficiaries, further increasing publicity for the event.

As previously mentioned, it is rarely possible to achieve all of the secondary objectives an organization might desire for a particular event. Organizers need to prioritize which are the most valuable, timely, relevant, and cost-effective to achieve with the financial and human resources available.

However, in this fictional case the P-A-P-E-R Test identified several areas of opportunity the organization wishes to pursue, perhaps at future events. To illustrate how multiple objectives can be achieved, we turn from the hypothetical organization illustrated in Figure 1-4 to a real-life analogue, one of the premier running clubs in the world (see the Sideline Story below).

Sideline Story—The New York Road Runners Club

The New York Road Runners Club (NYRRC) is a not-for-profit organization that produces more than 100 events each year, including the world-famous New York City Marathon, the club's Professional Racing Series, weekly races, clinics, and seminars. "Our mission is to support the sports of running and walking for health, recreation, and competition, as well as to give back to our running and local communities," says NYRRC Chief Operating Officer Mary Wittenberg. "Each event is staged to further our primary objectives in line with our mission, but secondary objectives and goals vary by event." The NYRRC divides its 75 race events into several categories with unique appeal to different types of runners, target demographics, and sponsors. These categories include World Class, Premier, Enhanced Classic, Classic, and Traditional levels. Each of the races is defined by the secondary goals it is designed to achieve, as well as by budget and expectations. In this way, the club can work toward achieving the totality of its secondary objectives as viewed over the course of its annual calendar of events.

Two NYRRC races that differ dramatically in size, target audience, and purpose are the Runners World Midnight Run and the Fleet Bank Empire State Run Up. "They both achieve our primary goals, but differ beyond that," says Wittenberg. "The Midnight Run is all about fun. It is a celebration of fitness, exercise, activity, and good humor on one of the most indulgent nights of the year (New Year's Eve). It is not about serious running, it is about having a good time in a healthy way." The event, held in Central Park, is open to all who want to join in, whether as runners or simply as walkers along the route, attracting as many as 8000 participants a year.

The second event, the Empire State Run Up, is as creative, fun, and intriguing as the Midnight Run but, in contrast, is limited to fewer than 100 participants. "It is an invitational race made up of

some of the strongest, fittest athletes in the world,” Wittenberg continues. One would have to be in world-class condition—the event is a timed run up the steps of New York’s Empire State Building—all 1576 of them, from street level to the 86th floor observatory. The annual February contest is no joke to hardy Australian athlete Paul Crake, who won every edition of the 303 m (measured vertically, not horizontally) contest between 1999 and 2003 and is the only athlete ever to break the 10-minute mark. Like the Midnight Run, the event is designed for fun, but with an entirely different set of secondary objectives. “It is largely a promotional activity, drawing amazing press and attention to New York City and the Empire State Building,” Wittenberg observes. Doubtlessly so, but both events also further enhance NYRRC’s position as a creative, vital, and world-class running organization.

The P-A-P-E-R Test is as useful for event managers and marketers in professional sports organizations as it is in the worlds of community grassroots and world-class amateur events and is perhaps even more essential to their businesses. With budgets and human resources stretched to the limit, it is a matter of survival for sports events to wring every possible benefit from their staging. To fully realize the potential of a multidisciplinary approach to the development of professional sports events, the entire organization, not just the department charged with managing the event, must be mobilized. Because more staff members with divergent skills, contacts, specialties, and reporting relationships are frequently assigned to the management and execution of a professional sports event, it is even more critical to develop clearly defined primary and secondary objectives and priorities.

The third hypothetical sports event in Figure 1-1 is a playoff pregame fan festival to be held on the street outside a team’s home arena. There is great demand and excitement in the community because the team has failed to reach the playoffs over the past two seasons, and tickets for the first postseason game have sold out in a single day. Capturing and savoring the buzz in the marketplace can, in itself, be a great reason to stage a fan celebration. But as Figure 1-5 illustrates, the P-A-P-E-R Test can reveal many more possible opportunities.

The organizers of the Fan Festival described in Figure 1-5 have been presented with the kind of opportunity every team dreams of—the ability to take advantage of an appearance in the playoffs to achieve the overall marketing, revenue, and organizational goals of the club. With a program of free festivities presented outside the arena, ticket holders for the game can arrive early and celebrate with their fellow fans. The team and the sponsors of the festival would be happiest if they could fill the plaza in front of their arena with

Example 3: Playoffs Pre-Game Fan Festival**Primary Objective:**

To reward loyal fans with a street festival preceding the team's first playoff game in three years.

Secondary Objectives:**Promotion**

1. Generate added publicity for the team beyond the sports page and our customary game coverage.
2. Provide the media with attractive, camera-friendly opportunities to capture the excitement of our team's appearance in the playoffs as a lead story or as a lead-in to the local news.
3. Demonstrate how the excitement surrounding the team contributes to the community's quality of life for both residents and local businesses.

Audience

1. Encourage the early arrival of playoff ticket holders to the arena.
2. Bring fans who are not ticket holders to the arena to add to the excitement of game day.
3. Attract casual sports fans to the arena to build their interest in our team and sport.
4. Enable members of the community with limited economic resources to enjoy the playoff celebration to the fullest extent possible.

Partnerships

1. Provide our sponsors with an opportunity to market to, and communicate with, both loyal fans and casual fans at a time of heightened interest in the team.
2. Provide civic leaders with an opportunity to appear before the widest range of their constituents.
3. Provide our radio and television partners with opportunities to enhance the ratings of their pre-game coverage, and attract additional viewers and listeners to the game broadcasts.

Environment

1. Present a celebration at least as highly regarded by the fans, media, and community at large as the one staged by our local baseball franchise before its last appearance in a playoff game three years ago.
2. Demonstrate to those who are unfamiliar with the arena that it is in a safe and easy-to-reach location.
3. Demonstrate to the community that our fans are passionate, loyal, and excited, but also well behaved and good-natured.

Revenue

1. Sell standing-room tickets to the game.
2. Increase season ticket sales and sell multigame plans for next season while excitement for the team is at its zenith.
3. Renew existing and expired season ticket accounts.
4. Generate \$200,000+ in sponsor sales to cover expenses.
5. Increase playoff and team merchandise sales by 15 percent over expected in-arena sales.
6. Increase concessions revenues by 10 percent over expected in-arena sales.

Figure 1-5

Expanded Playoffs Pre-Game Fan Festival Objectives

thousands of people, who do not have tickets in addition to those who will be arriving to attend the playoff game, in order to achieve their merchandise and concessions revenue objectives. But they also realize that the resulting traffic and competition for parking could upset their most loyal ticket holders.

If the team has sufficient space, they could create a “season ticket holder only” area with an expanded menu of premium food items, exclusive activities, and meet-and-greet opportunities with former team members, giving their most loyal customers a unique and valuable level of access to the event to compensate for any inconveniences they might otherwise experience. Working with their city to add buses to the mass transportation schedule prior to and after game time could also help to reduce congestion and demonstrate how easy it can be to get to the arena. From the city’s point of view, providing extra shuttles would give fans the ability to sample the ease of access the mass transit system can provide.

The team will not want its loyal fans who could not get tickets to the game, but want to enjoy the match on television, to decide not to attend the pregame celebration because they are afraid of missing parts of the broadcast. It makes strategic sense to extend the festivities during the game by installing large video screens on the event site so that the fans can savor every second. The crowds excitedly watching the game outside the arena will also provide outstanding opportunities for incremental sales of merchandise and concessions, as well as compelling news footage and remote broadcast locations for local television and radio outlets not permitted in the building during the game.

The inclusion of civic leaders and elected officials is not a political decision, although to suggest that politics and sports are strangers would be naive. Rather, their presence also demonstrates to a wider audience the importance of the team and the event to the community. These are not the type of guests who shy away from television cameras or radio microphones, so just their presence can help take some coverage of the event off the sports page and place it in the main news section.

Chances are that the team will never have a more exciting opportunity to speak directly to an audience broader than their season ticket holders, unless they go on to win a championship. This is the time to present celebrants with the ability to take advantage of special ticket promotions and thus help sell new season tickets or multigame packages for the following season. Capitalizing on the “got to be there” nature of events of this type, the club could offer purchasers free event-related merchandise with a deposit for a multigame package for the upcoming year.

PROGRESS FROM STRATEGIES TO TACTICS

After the discussion of each of the sample sports events presented in this chapter, a number of strategies and tactics have been described to illustrate how to develop various programs that can meet a wide variety of event ob-

jectives. As previously noted, objectives state only what event organizers are hoping to achieve, not how they will set about achieving them. Identifying objectives and developing strategies cost your event budget nothing but time, creativity, and analytical thought. The tactics that are selected and employed are the things that cost and potentially make you money. To illustrate, when you take a road trip, you know where you want to go (objective), and by consulting a road map, you identify what roads you will have to take to get there (strategy). You start spending money once you decide to get in your car and begin paying for gas and tolls to drive there (tactic).

So, before a budget can be drafted, you have to develop your list of objectives and determine the best, most realistic, and most cost-effective strategies that will achieve as many of these goals as possible at the lowest cost of capital and labor. Only then can you design the tactics—the event itself—you will employ that fit your strategies. It is at this stage that you will evaluate whether the tactics you have chosen will be too complex, too expensive, or too labor-intense to achieve. Perhaps even the most simple and inexpensive tactics to achieve a particular objective are still beyond your reach, given your budget, available time, and all else you wish to achieve. At this point you may determine that your event is trying to do too much and that some lower-priority objectives may have to be sacrificed to benefit some of the more important ones. This evaluation process can continue throughout the budgeting process, as the affordability of pursuing a given tactic may not become completely apparent until the numbers start falling into place.

Although there are countless strategies that sports event organizers can consider in their pursuit of identifying the proper tactics to employ, using the P-A-P-E-R Test framework can add direction and focus to the evaluation process. As you review Figure 1-6, a brief checklist of some general questions you can apply to event objectives as identified by the P-A-P-E-R Test, you will note how the answers to many of these questions can serve multiple purposes and achieve multiple aims.

SPORTS EVENTS AS SOLUTIONS

The sample events traced through this chapter are presented as responses to specific challenges or desires on the part of the organizer or promoter. With the growth in popularity of sports event marketing as a powerful addition to the traditional marketing mix for corporations of nearly every size, events are frequently not simply born as a whim or fancy of a sports event organizer, but sometimes also as a response to a business partner company's marketing objectives. Leading sports event managers are often approached by marketers and their agencies to develop a program that achieves the objectives of their partners, such as launching new products, relaunching existing products, increasing sales, and marketing lifestyle programs.

Promotion

- ☐ What key messages do I want my promotional plans to communicate? How will I encourage the media to help me achieve the outcomes I want before the event (e.g., advance ticket sales, walk-up attendance, increased broadcast tune-in), as well as afterward (e.g., positive press coverage, increased membership, financial contributions)?
- ☐ How can I use publicity, promotion, and advertising to get my message out to the people whom I want to hear it? In what media—daily, weekly, and monthly newspapers and magazines, radio stations, television stations, Internet web sites—should I try to place stories?
- ☐ How can I use the event as a publicity and promotional engine for my sports organization before, during, and after the event? What compelling stories can I tell? What can I develop or add to the program to make my event more newsworthy?
- ☐ Can I work with local school districts to deliver educational programs, school visits, or field trips to students that also promote my message?
- ☐ What long-term resulting legacies or benefits can the event provide? Is there a possibility of staging the event again in this same marketplace? If there is an opportunity for the growth of the event in future years, how will we achieve it?
- ☐ How will we clarify, correct, or debunk any misconceptions about my sport or organization?
- ☐ How will I develop and pursue my promotion strategies? Can I expect to achieve my objectives with existing staff and resources, or do I need to get more help from the outside?

Audience

- ☐ How can I stage this sports event to keep it fast paced, involving, and exciting for the attendees?
- ☐ How can I make the event one that is easy to buy tickets to, easy to get to, and comfortable for spectators?
- ☐ What can I do to add value to the event for our existing fans?
- ☐ How can I get new people to my event? How can I turn them into fans, boosters, members, or supporters?
- ☐ What events attract an audience that is similar to the audience of my event, with which I can create cross-promotions to build awareness and attendance?
- ☐ How can I educate the public about my sport, organization, or event?
- ☐ How can I bring more people into the event through live or recorded media? Is the event worthy of a live broadcast on television or radio? Alternatively, can a broadcast be packaged into a compressed, tape-delayed, or highlights-only form? How can I present the opportunity to make live radio updates or reports from the event site (“remotes”) attractive to a partner station?

Partnerships

- ☐ How can I use this sports event to strengthen our organization’s ties to current sponsors by entertaining their guests and providing them with superior service? Are there opportunities to provide unique access to the event, special hospitality opportunities, exclusive mementos, or other perquisites that go beyond the terms of our contracts and that demonstrate the sponsors’ value to our organization?
- ☐ How can I use this event as a showcase for potential future sponsors? Are there opportunities to provide prospective future partners with one or more of the perquisites of a current sponsor that will demonstrate the value of joining our family?

Figure 1-6
Strategy-to-Tactics Development Checklist

- ☐ Are there exposure opportunities I can offer a partner through pre- and post-event advertising, on-site signage, participant awards and trophy ceremonies, special entertainment segments and audience promotions, giveaways, sweepstakes, recognition on athlete uniforms and staff attire, or printed materials (e.g., tickets, invitations, flyers, posters, rack brochures, information guides, programs, scorecards)?

Environment

- ☐ Is there another event or organization with which I am competing for audience, attention, sponsors, or athletes? How can I set my event apart from my competition? Will a cross-promotional partnership with the competitor be in our mutual best interest?
- ☐ Can the event solve or draw positive attention to a pressing issue in the host community?
- ☐ How is the local community trying to portray itself, and how can our event support its efforts? How can that portrayal benefit my organization, sport, or event?
- ☐ What dates and times for the event might fill an entertainment void in the marketplace?

Revenue

- ☐ Can or should I sell admission tickets? How many and for how much? If we are interested in having children attend, should there be a reduced children's price? A family package price? Discounted prices available only through sponsor promotions? A special price for friends and family of staff and athletes?
- ☐ Can I sell merchandise? How much? Will I be selling existing inventory and/or event-specific merchandise? What kind of merchandise—low price points for kids, high price points for premium adult merchandise? Is there a market for high-priced collectibles and memorabilia?
- ☐ Can I sell food and/or beverages? What kind and how much? Hot foods and drinks for open, cold-weather venues; cold foods and drinks for open, hot-weather events? Are there special regional foods that should be among the offerings? Is it appropriate to serve beer at the event?
- ☐ Can I sell sponsorships? How many, for how much, and to whom? Can I package such sponsorships with similar opportunities at upcoming events? Should I make low-cost packages available for new sponsors who want to test their association with my event or organization? Can I offer multi-event, or multi-year sponsorship packages? Do I need outside help to design and sell these packages?
- ☐ Can I create a printed commemorative program and sell it, or sell advertisements and give it away for free? Who will sell the ads and to whom will they be sold?
- ☐ How can I use the event to encourage sales of tickets to other upcoming events? Can I sell those tickets at the event? Should I distribute discount coupons for these or other events?

Figure 1-6
(Continued)

Sideline Story—The Labatt/NHL Pick-Up Hockey Marathon

The 2000 National Hockey League All-Star Weekend, an event that concluded with the playing of the fiftieth NHL All-Star Game, was held in Toronto, the site of the first NHL All-Star Game in 1947. The Labatt Brewing Company, a Toronto-based sponsor, requested that event organizers create an event surrounding the weekend that would capture the attention of the national public and would embrace two key attributes of their Labatt Blue brand of beer: genuineness and being “uniquely Canadian.” In response, the NHL created the Labatt Blue/NHL All-Star Pick-Up Hockey Marathon. Labatt and the NHL solicited the heartiest amateur adult hockey players throughout Canada to play on one of two teams that would compete on a frozen rink in front of Toronto City Hall continuously, 24 hours a day, until one side no longer had the ability to put a sufficient number of players on the ice. The puck dropped on Monday at 8:00 A.M., and play continued through four days and three nights until approximately 7:30 A.M. on Thursday morning, attracting thousands of curiosity seekers, generating hours of national television and radio coverage, and earning a place in the *Guinness Book of World Records* (2001). Though the event clearly met many objectives for the NHL, this memorable program would never have been developed without the inspiration, challenge, and support of the Labatt Brewing Company. (See another Sideline Story in Play 6 for more details on the Labatt Blue/NHL All-Star Pick-Up Hockey Marathon.)

The Sideline Story above demonstrates that a sports event organizer can apply the needs of a sponsor, as well as those of its own organization, to the creation of a completely new and compelling event concept. It is even more important to apply the P-A-P-E-R Test to these events to expand the relevance and impact of the program beyond the primary objective of positioning the sponsor’s product. The development of additional secondary objectives ensures that the event can be used to achieve multiple benefits for the sponsor, the sports organization, and other stakeholders.

Post-Play Analysis

To realize the full potential of a sports event, it is essential for organizers to develop a comprehensive list of event objectives before creating a budget and devising a business plan. Identify the primary objective first—the goal the organization believes is essential, above all else, to reach. Use the P-A-P-E-R Test (Promotion-Audience-Partnerships-Environment-Revenue) as a framework to develop the host of secondary objectives that will offer additional benefits for the organizer, sponsors, and other stakeholders.

Defining your objectives sets up the targets you want to hit. Developing strategies defines how you will achieve your objectives (e.g., “I will hit the target with my bow and arrow”). Identifying tactics helps you to define in detail how those strategies will be actualized (e.g., “I will buy a quality bow and the right kind of arrows, learn how to use them, practice my marksmanship, and fire from a reasonable distance”). Developing the skills you will need to accurately hit a bull’s-eye is the focus of the rest of this book.

Coach's Clipboard

1. Your school's football team is in the top third in the standings. As a result, the campus may host a regional championship game in three weeks. Use the P-A-P-E-R Test to outline what the game can achieve for the school, the athletic department, and the team. Prioritize these objectives based on their importance to these three entities and how feasible they are to achieve, given the time remaining before a possible event. What are the implications if the event must be canceled the week before it is to be staged because the team does not make the playoffs?
2. You are the brand manager of a line of lifestyle clothing with a modest budget for sports marketing. How can you use the P-A-P-E-R Test to identify the best sports events to fit the marketing aims for your product?
3. What tactics can you employ to make the 10K road race in Figure 1-4 more attractive to a potential business-to-business sponsor (i.e., a company whose customers are primarily other companies, instead of individual consumers)?
4. An energy bar sponsor approaches a minor league sports organization, seeking a new event or promotion that will help to fight the perception that the product is candy, rather than a viable and nutritionally balanced meal replacement bar. The sponsor wants the event to portray an active lifestyle and to be something it can “own” (i.e., to be instantly and ever recognized as a program associated with its product). Design an event that achieves the sponsor's aims and expand this primary objective to serve the needs of the league.

