

Gymnaestrada – how to do it better?

Authors: Kari Puronaho, Osmo Laitila

Institution: Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences, Sport Business School Finland

E-mail: kari.puronaho@haaga-helia.fi , osmo.laitila@haaga-helia.fi

Introduction

Gymnaestrada is the largest general gymnastics exhibition in the world. It is held in every four years. Finland hosted the event on July 12-18, 2015. More than 21.000 participants with a very small number of paid staff and 3.120 volunteers made this event happen. The focus of this event has never been on winning medals, but on group performances – some with hundreds or even thousands of participants, including adults and children of all ages. Countries (77 in total) from around the world came together to showcase their talents and their cultures. Over 600 hours of gymnastics routines (more than 1800 productions) were performed at various venues in the city of Helsinki. The mass routines were often performed in large stadiums in which the spectators could watch or even take part in the routines.

Aim

The aim of this study was not only to evaluate the economic impact, the quality of the event, and the Gymnaestrada organization in general but also and especially, using sport business intelligence tools and legacy planning procedures, estimate how to e.g. increase the economic impact (Howard & Crompton, 1995, Puronaho, 1997, Preuss, 2007, Taks et al 2015, Rasku & Ahonen 2015) and the quality (Gerson 1993, Van Leeuwen et.al. 2002, Rasku & Ahonen, 2015) of the event in the future. Sport Business Intelligence is defined as systematic and continuous collection and analysis of relevant data in order to develop sport organizations and events. Legacy planning is defined as systematic event planning work with the help of relevant data collection in order to maximize the benefits and minimize the negative effects of an event on all of its stakeholders.

Practice and context descriptions

The international level consumer satisfaction and economic impact data was collected on July 14-17, 2015 with iPad questionnaires (n=177) during the event at the venues. The data was also collected through Gymnaestrada website links (n=634) and with the help of the participants' email addresses (1031 altogether). The website links were open from July 18 to August 17, 2015. The questionnaires were written in Finnish, English, Spanish, and German. Those data collections were advertised during the events and on the event websites. Webropol Statistical Analytics Software was used during the data collection and the analysis.

Results, implications and discussion

According to some of the research findings, 92% of the respondents were very satisfied with the atmosphere and the event in general, 89 % with the volunteers, the content of the event, and the security, and 85 % with the service quality and event sites. About 88 % of the Finnish spectators and 79 % of the foreign spectators felt that the event increased their interests towards gymnastics. The participants visited Helsinki for seven days on the average and slept in school dormitories,

followed the event activities from the Facebook regularly, and enjoyed the event in many ways.

The direct economic impact of the event was 22,8-25,1 M€. The foreign participants spent 16,2 M€ and the foreign spectators about 4,0 M€ during the event. The Finnish participants that do not live in Helsinki spent 1,6 M€ and the spectators about 2,0 M€. In addition to that, the local participants and spectators spent 1,3-1,7 M€ during the event.

In spite of the good financial results and good service quality in general and according to the provisional estimations and calculations, it would have been possible both to improve the customer and participant satisfaction and to increase the economic impact of the event significantly and with minimum effort. The final calculations and practical proposals how to increase the economic impact and improve the quality of the large event will be provided during the Conference.

References

- <http://www.gymnaestrada.fi>
- http://www.liikuntaneuvosto.fi/files/387/Gymnaestrada2015_webversio.pdf
- <http://sportbusinessschoolfinland.com/sbsf/sport-business-intelligence/legacy-planning/>
- <http://sportbusinessschoolfinland.com/sbsf/sport-business-intelligence/>
- Gerson, R.F. 1993. Measuring customer satisfaction. Thomson Place. Boston MA, USA.
- Howard, D. & Crompton, J. 1995. Financing Sport. FIT, Inc. Morgantown, USA.
- Laitila, O., Ratilainen, T. Puronaho, K. & Virkkunen Klaus, 2015. Gymnaestrada 2015 Tapahtumatutkimus, 2015. Valtion liikuntaneuvosto. Sponsor Insight, Sport Business School Finland. 70 p.
- Preuss, H. 2007. The conceptualisation and measurement of mega sport legacies. Journal of Sport & Tourism, 12, (3-4): 207-227.
- Puronaho, K. 1997. The Economic Impact of the 1000 Lakes Rally. EASM Conference presentation and conference proceedings. EASM, Glasgow.
- Rasku, R. & Ahonen, A. 2015. Sport Business Intelligence. JAMK University of Applied Sciences, Jyväskylä, Finland.
- Szwarc, P. 2005. Researching Customer Satisfaction and Loyalty. Market research in practice. 120 Pentonville Road, London.
- Taks, M., Chalip, L. & Green, B.C. 2015. Impacts and strategic outcomes from non-mega sport events for local communities. European Sport Management Quarterly, 15(1): 1-6. European Association for Sport Management.
- Van Leeuwen, L., Quick, S. & Kerry, D. 2002. The Sport Spectator Satisfaction Model: A Conceptual Framework for Understanding the Satisfaction of Spectators. Sport Management Review.