

Project evaluation and proposal for new media centre

Executive Summary

This proposal is submitted to the UK Olympic Delivery Authority for the development of a new media centre in the London Docklands area. The goal of this project is to create a hub where visiting media representatives can drop-in, communicate with their individual media groups or corporations, and also an environment designed to foster networking and media group collaborations. Because the 2012 Olympics will require the media attention of multiple international groups, sufficient rental property, in terms of square footage, needs to be procured to sustain the operational elements of the venture as well as allowing for networking and ongoing collaboration with international and domestic media campaigns. Rental property in this region is notoriously high and was considered in the budget plan for the proposed media centre concept. Much to the advantage of the new media centre, the population in the London Docklands area has increased by 100% in just the last two decades (london-docklands.com, 2010), therefore the environment is satisfying and suitable for visiting media representatives in areas of foods procurement, entertainment and business support tools.

Costs

Rental property for commercial activities in the Docklands region has seen dramatic increases since 2001. In 2001, the average for commercial rental property was £40/sq foot (propertyweek.com, 2001). Today, these rental prices have increased to approximately £70/sq foot. There is, however, a change in pricing and negotiating rental term limits due to the economic recession that is allowing more flexibility when working with landlords to procure rental space. To satisfy the new media centre needs and sustain the volume of media group traffic that will be making use of the facility, it was determined that a 1,100 sq foot rental space was required.

The proposed rental budget is as follows:

1,100 sq/ft x £45/sq foot = £49,500 Annually or £4,125 Monthly

For budget purposes, an average cost of £4,125 per month will need to be allocated to ensure rental costs are recognised.

Miscellaneous costs required to ensure development and operations are satisfied will include several start-up assets and other operational components needed to launch the new media centre:

Information Technology Hardware and Software	£8,000
Office Furniture	£6,000
Promotional/Marketing Materials	£2,500
Office Supplies (i.e. ink, paper, etc)	£1,500

Other Non-Fixed Costs

Utilities	£600/monthly
Facility Cleaning Costs	£200/bi-weekly

The new media centre will be in operation only during the duration of the 2012 Olympics and for six months prior to its launch in order to gain full support of visiting or domestic media groups.

The total budget required to successfully launch this new venture is estimated at **£48,750**.

Though this figure may be adjusted after negotiating rental costs and streamlining certain elements of the project, this proposed media centre will require just under **£50,000** to ensure a successful launch and management of the project.

Total Budget Requested: £50,000

Contract and Management Issues

“The Internet can be a powerful source of competitive advantage in global markets and an increasing number of companies are developing Internet based strategies to support business” (Aziz and Yasin, 2004, p.3). Even though the media centre will be wholly-managed by internal support staff, the idea is to make the venture profitable with the advertising revenue the project achieves and the costs incurred to visiting media representatives for use of the hub for the business and personal needs. The media centre needs to be equipped with modern Internet technologies, including hardware and software support tools, making it easy and convenient for

representatives to contact their hub or other corporate sponsors. Contract management becomes an issue in this proposal as the media centre management will need to, as a proactive and preliminary step, identify key information technology support experts to install and maintain the various databases needed for internal and external representatives. VanDoren (2009) identifies that approximately two-thirds to three-quarters of all information technology projects fail completely due to budget or simply functionality issues. Prior to launching the media centre, contact will be made with local, reputable IT professionals with a proven track record of corporate media and technology success in short-term project development such as this media centre. To avoid the risks associated with allowing non-expert teams develop and manage Internet and other software programmes, external consulting will be required and will represent a one-time budget issue. These costs have been identified and incorporated into the original budget for information technology.

The chosen IT support team will be contracted only for implementation, using rental hardware equipment from the group's associated contract agreement, therefore limiting liability on behalf of the new media centre. Once the media centre is no longer needed nor functional after the 2012 Olympics, the IT group selected will simply remove the rented equipment and consider the contract fulfilled. Dyer (2006) identifies that poor communication is usually the catalyst for new project failure, therefore a change agent will be assigned as a dedicated IT contact representative who will be responsible for working with the chosen IT group and will remain the authority on any changes proposed to the Internet or other software issues. Assignment of the change agent will occur after the management team has been selected and properly trained, and will satisfy the defining phase of the project's life cycle through task assignment.

TheManagementTeam

The organisational structure of the media centre will be controlled centrally, through a vertical, top-down hierarchy of control commonly found in corporate environments with well-defined executive and non-executive job roles. This will allow the senior managers, those responsible for the centre's development and execution, to maintain control over most operational issues and other issues which arise as a course of conducting business with multiple, diverse media groups. This is a more favourable structure for a short-term business that will not require extended

employee training or coaching as these can be costly efforts that tend to support a more flexible organisational and leadership design.

Recruitment will be a significant issue for the new media centre as there will be a need for support staff and management expertise in order to keep the facility operating effectively. According to Scott Madden Management Consultants, an international business group, younger employees tend to not stay in one job for very long before looking for new work and also demand more from employers in terms of training and leadership (cewd.org, 2009). Though non-management staff members will have the majority of contact with visiting media representatives, there is a risk to the proposed business model in procuring only younger employees from the labour pool. This venture is short-term with a duration of approximately six to seven months, which should theoretically satisfy the younger workers' demands for not staying in one job for very long. However, because this venture does not require extended training nor does it make promises for moving upwards through the corporate ladder, more seasoned workers with a short-term employment focus will be adequate. Because of this, the proposed media centre will make use of low-cost employment procurement experts, such as Manpower, to perform the recruitment work for the centre. A clear list of qualifications needed, along with experience required, will be communicated to the chosen employment source. It is estimated that the facility will need three full-time non-management support employees which, through the joint efforts of the staffing agency and the new media centre, should have virtually zero risk to ensure operational success. Once these employees have been retained and trained with basic, non-intensive job descriptions and expectations, no further use of the staffing service will be necessary unless there are retention issues or high turnover.

The organisational design will emphasise the importance of team-working as the goal of the centre is to create a sense of networking and group collaboration for all visiting media representatives. "In team environments, problem-solving, communication, social skills, and time management skills are some of the most targeted, demanded skills where teamwork is common" (Tarricone and Luca, 2002, p.55). Managers, especially, must maintain these skills and, to ensure that the right group of professionals is recruited, hiring of these managers will be a responsibility of the development committee in the planning phase in areas of task assignment. The non-verbal cues that are received by visiting representatives will be crucial in ensuring that the environment

is collaborative and socially engaging. In order to successfully hire the proper manager with the needed talents, a preliminary survey will be developed for recruitment prior to launch to assist in the hiring process. This survey will make use of online personality tools, at no cost, to ensure that there is a proper recruitment tool available at the human resources level.

HR management, in both planning and execution, will be critical to ensure that the workforce and leadership team is content and satisfied with their short-term job positions. Managers who excel in their job roles will be invited to stay with the centre's leader group and will be transferred, if accepted, into other job roles after the Olympics has run its duration. Motivating employees to meet or exceed expectations is a large part of the management strategy.

“Motivation determines how much energy employees will expend and can increase productivity” (Maxwell, 2008, p.432). The HR strategy will be to consult with various sociology and psychology texts, as well as updated retention tools, to determine the best motivational strategy for the team. Because budget is a serious constraint in this media centre model, low-cost motivational strategies will be necessary for development, thereby avoiding high bonuses or pay-for-performance schemes common in businesses with a long-term employment outlook. Small-scale rewards, such as extended breaks or receipt of days off for outstanding performance are two of the strategies already being considered by the HR team. Motivating high performance, from individuals equipped with strong social and interpersonal skills, are top strategies for ensuring operational success during the execution and delivery of the new media centre project.

Non-Employee Issues

Because the Olympics will be drawing in a high volume of participants and representatives from foreign countries, identifying with cultural needs will be important for success in this venture. For example, Williams (2004) identifies that in Saudi Arabia, there is virtually no access for media representatives in a culture that is often resistant to change. Factors such as this must be taken into consideration, such as using marketing tools to create a sense of value for media representatives from the Middle East. Promoting high access to a group of media representatives not used to these freedoms will lure more travelling visitors and improve revenues for the venture. The Cultural Dimensions model, which outlines the cultural characteristics of many foreign citizens, will be used as the template for international marketing and socialisation

strategies and will be incorporated into the brief training literature for managers and non-executive employees.

Project Implementation, Control and Success Criteria

Project Implementation and Execution

The first step in implementing this new media centre project involves understanding both the internal and external environments. The PESTLE diagram was chosen as the best foundational tool for this effort, which measures the political, economic, social, technological, legal, and environmental issues which could face the company or propose potential risks to its operational success.

The PESTLE analysis identified several key learnings:

Political – The Olympics represents the governmental, social and cultural needs for a wide variety of international citizens. Because the media centre will be a hub for travelling media reps across the globe, there should be recognition of the heritage of different foreign regions incorporated into in-house literature and décor. These may appear to be simplistic improvements in the project, however they serve to satisfy motivational elements and social networking elements that will be vital in making the centre a success. Banner advertisements illustrating the flags from each nation, along with generic, low-cost marketing literature available that spotlights key findings in important partner nations will improve relationship strength and integrity during the centres' short operational life cycle.

Economic – The local economy is currently strained with higher unemployment rates and falling real estate prices. This has a trickle-down impact on consumerism and even the corporate budget for media travellers. The media centre will take this into consideration and provide several no-cost or low-cost benefits for the traveller to reduce their own budget strains. These may include complementary beverages or low-cost beverages, making the media rep feel a sense of community to coincide with the theme of the Olympics. Storage facilities will also be provided

at a very low cost to ensure the safety of personal belongings without having to rely solely on hotel accommodations for this.

Social – In marketing, “positioning is defined as owning a place in the consumers’ minds, much like a bookmark” (Trout, 2008, p.5). All advertisements created, as part of implementation, will need to consider how best to market the hub to make it appealing to a vastly diverse group of foreign and domestic media representatives. The goal is to make the centre appear committed to the needs of these groups and illustrate competence in leadership and in international social know-how. It should be positioned in terms of convenience and social appeal as primary goals and this must be reinforced to managers and non-executive employees (support staff) as well. International media groups, depending on their country of origin, are often restricted by certain political groups or other regulations which can limit their creativity and exposure when creating news programmes. The goal of the media centre is to lessen this sensation of restriction and give foreign visitors more motivation to use the hub regularly, thereby guaranteeing more revenues to offset the costs of development and execution in areas of operations. There will also be less emphasis on technical communication and more focus on the sociocultural elements needed for cross-cultural collaboration to continue successfully.

As already identified, the project has a short life cycle, with defining and planning encompassing the preliminary stages before the media centre’s doors have opened to media representatives. These preliminary stages include recruitment, training, job and task assignment, as well as establishing the organisational structure that will guide the organisation. A key risk to the management model is how the managers will be guided in leading the organisation. In projects with longer durations, there is typically a need for managers with a high level of control to ensure that tasks are accomplished within an acceptable timeframe. Because the new media centre is more flexible in this design, and there is a cross-cultural need, managers will be developed to utilise their transformational attributes rather than using control mechanisms to ensure compliance from subordinates. Adams and Adams (2009) identify these characteristics as having vision, accountability at the personal level, and modeling positive behaviours to gain employee support and commitment. To avoid risks to the project model, managers will actively, on a monthly basis, survey employees to identify weaknesses (perceived or otherwise) in the media centre. Transformational leadership tends to use the communications management model

that emphasises the importance of team collaboration and being what might be referred to as the moral and ethical manager. Weaknesses identified in these employee surveys will be incorporated into the project's business model to avoid unsatisfied employees or travellers. "The psychological climate dimensions of trust, participation, and support are preconditions for an environment conducive of change" (Bouckennooghe, Devos and Van Den Broeck, 2009, p.560). The media centre will be in a constant state of change, based largely on the cultural and professional attributes of the visiting client list, therefore readiness for change must be ongoing during execution.

There will also be a secondary change agent assigned who will take on full responsibility for executing any policy or organisational design changes that are identified after the media centre has been launched. The change agent, an assigned manager, will take on the responsibility of reporting progress throughout the stages of the project and identify any human or technical elements that need adjustment to keep the centre operating at peak efficiency. Throughout the duration of the project, there will be a need to procure additional vendors for various needs, such as marketing or simple foods procurement, requiring an individual skilled in negotiating contracts and in source selection. This change agent will be proactive in these efforts and produce weekly progress or change reports to minimise any disruption to the existing project model.

There will not be a large need for forecasting in this organisational model, as the majority of expenses had been considered at the time of planning in the project life cycle. However, there is a superior need for risk control and quality assurance to ensure that employees are using proper communications skills with cross-cultural representatives, ensuring the safety of trade secrets associated with the new media centre and in terms of individual job performance. A risk management template will be created, identifying key risks identified through a comprehensive SWOT analysis, to recognise weaknesses in the project design. As risks are identified, risk management strategies will be undertaken to ensure there are no issues with legal liability or employment law non-compliance problems. Risk management and control over risks will be an ongoing management task that will run the entire duration of the project from start to end. Using collaboration between managers and planners, a risk check-list will be produced to act as a sort of scorecard to measure the success of eliminating potential barriers to project success.

A comprehensive quality management plan will also be constructed by the assigned management team that will offer solutions in the event that the quality of communications or basic business strategy becomes strained. The quality assurance programme will take into consideration issues of employee discipline and corrective action as well as focusing strongly on customer service issues when dealing with foreign travellers with diverse cultural and social needs. The goal is to create a whole customer relationship management system that puts relationships on the forefront of quality needs due to the social nature of the media centre.

Because motivation is such a major quality assurance issue with the centre, there is also a need for an employee needs questionnaire to provide quantitative research results about the moods and satisfaction levels of employees. Under most psychological models, employees require a sense of security, self-confidence, and belonging in order to maximise their full motivational potential and achieve above-and-beyond results in their job roles. Monitoring media centre success and controlling risk at the employee level requires such a satisfaction questionnaire that can be distributed monthly. For security purposes, the employees can fill out the questionnaires anonymously throughout the duration of the project when they feel their motivational needs are not being considered. Managers will pour through the data received and make changes appropriate to avoid loss of motivation and commitment. Again, this is part of the transformational management design that avoids heavy and excessive controls and puts more control and autonomy into the employees' hands. The quality assurance programme here will be one where needs fulfillment is paramount and can be recorded graphically using results from the questionnaires. These graphs, when produced, will be shared with the entire team population to identify periods or situations where performance or quality has shifted below expectations to reinforce the need to establish high quality customer service.

There will not, due to budget guidelines, be a great deal of resources available in terms of technology and equipment. Limited budget will create the need for a lean operation, especially in terms of procurement, therefore all purchasing decisions will be routed to a single cost manager to avoid cost over-runs. Monitoring the success of these efforts will be accomplished with a monthly expense report that highlights all resources procured, using simple Microsoft Office tools such as Excel for spreadsheet reporting. This will satisfy most QA issues.

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