

Chapter 66

MyEventDirect: A Tool for Sustainable Practice in the Event Industry

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Abstract

Event industry is one of the tourism sectors that comes under criticism due to environmental and social impacts. Even though events make significant contribution to potential economic growth of tourism, the environmental issues have been shown as crucial matters that the need to act sustainable has become more compelling for the industry and national agenda. Mobile application can be one of the sustainable business practices for event industry. Mobile application is an application software designed to operate on mobile device such as smartphone or tablets which helps users to get closer to anything and more convenient as compare to laptop or desktop computer. In Malaysia, there are mobile applications created for a specific event promotion but not for all events in the country. Therefore, *MyEventDirect* mobile application is created with special features of green event practices rating for all types of event held in Malaysia. This mobile application can help to notify the users on the upcoming events that will be held in this country including festivals, sports, entertainments, food and beverage, MICE, culture and more. *MyEventDirect* will be a tool to support the green event initiative in terms of businesses and environment. This application can help the company to sustain the business by reducing the cost of printing event promotional materials. The public can benefit from this application as it can easily access the event information regardless of time limitation and rate the event sustainable practices using the *MyEventDirect* apps. It also helps to sustain the environment as this application able to reduce the carbon footprint as well as the paper usage.

Keywords: green event; tourism; mobile application; sustainable practice

Introduction

Events comprise all types of social occasion, which include festivals, sports, entertainments, food and beverage, MICE, culture and more. Event is one of the component in the tourism industry. The event industry is an important potential market in Malaysia that stimulates tourism development and promotes destination in the country. Therefore, it is not a surprise in each year there are major and minor events being held both for public and tourists as a way to increase the tourist arrivals in the country. According to Anonymous (2017) stated that the event industry in Malaysia is expecting to generate more than 3.9 billion in gross national income by 2020 and this industry brought in 29 million international visitors to the country in 2016, of which 5.1% tourist arrivals were from business event visitors. The event industry also can contribute a wide range of benefits of the economic and local community such as boost the economics of the destinations especially in term of income generations and also create numerous job opportunities for the local. Business event industry can lead to a job creation which offers 16,720 jobs and being seen as a catalyst for socio-economic growth (Anonymous, 2017). However, there are also a drawback or negative impacts of organizing events as

indicated by Ayob (n.d.). He stated that the negative impacts on the event tourism could affect the environment, which lead to minimizing the efficiency of the sustainable tourism development concept. Moreover, sustainability should not be looked at the environmental aspect only, but it also involves the economic and sociocultural aspect. It actually refers to how well an event organizer had planned and organized the events in order to be in a track of the sustainable stage.

Problem Statement

Research findings by Wee, Mahdzar, Hamid, Shariff, Chang, & Ismail (2017) revealed that event managers in Malaysia positively support the implementation of sustainable business practices in organizing festive events. However, environmental sustainability was the least practiced compared to those of economic and socio-cultural in event tourism. The lack of support for environment sustainability may cause harm and bring about negative effects on the environment. These negative effects include creating enormous ecological footprints with the consumption of massive amount of energy, water, food and natural resources, as well as simultaneously producing a large volume of waste and carbon emissions. Furthermore, a mobile application that offers numerous services facilitating user involvement in outdoor events and enhancing personal experience could make an event stand out from the stiff competition and attract more attendees (Koukopoulos&Koukopoulos, 2017). Hence, developing mobile application for supporting the green event initiatives is essential towards achieving the government goals in creating a more sustainable industry in the country.

Objective

The popularity of events held in Malaysia plays an important role to attract the public and tourists to attend events. This matters related to the marketing strategy of the event companies or organizers of promoting the events to the public and also on what type of channel that the public can get the details information about the events. Thus, an event application has been developed as a way to improve the marketing strategy of the event companies towards the concept of green event management. Mobile application also parallels with the advancement of technology as current business event also requires an innovative, interactive and sustainable marketing strategy. This mobile application is able to helps the company to change the marketing strategy towards green marketing which can help the company to sustain the business. Cvent (n.d.) reported that leading event producers and corporate meeting planners expect to realize dramatic printing cost saving by using mobile event apps by the year 2017.

The main objective of this application development is to create a green event tools for sustainability approach towards green event management. This mobile application will help the event companies to sustain the business, easy access to recent and trending events by users. It allows users to search and get information about the event, notify users on the recent event activities, enable the users to mark the event date in event calendar, encourage interaction between the users and also provide the rating features which enable the users to rate the performance of the event organizers of the sustainable practices in terms of socio-cultural, economic and environmental aspects.

Project Commercialization Potential

MyEventDirect has a good commercial value as it has numerous benefit both for the businesses and the users. This application also act as a supporter for the green event practices. Green event also known as sustainable event which requires the event organizer to minimize the negative environmental, economic and sociocultural impacts arise from conducting the events. Hence, *MyEventDirect* application is an alternative tools to help the event organizer to achieve those goals. This application helps the event organizers to promote events, which encourages the changes in marketing strategy from the paper communications tools for the mobile marketing. The paper communications tools for event promotions could lead to negative impact on environment as people would throw away the flyers or brochure given to them. This issue would cause the environmental pollution especially littering problem.

The operation of the event causes many environmental issues such as the volume of rubbish produced and the need for disposal (Wee et al., 2017). Furthermore, Katzel (2007) added that the replacement of the paper

communications tool for the electronic communication tool is related to the procurement process to start the waste management system. The mobile marketing strategy can support the sustainability of the environment as it helps to reduce the paper usage for the event promotion. Moreover, this strategy also related to the economic sustainability as it helps the event organizers to sustain the business by reducing the operational cost of the events. The event organizers can cut down the printing cost of the promotional materials as the companies practice the green event management by replacing the marketing strategy with the mobile marketing. The implementation of the sustainable business practices providing many benefits such as reducing carbon footprints, enhancing social well-being, economic stability and helps the event companies to reduce the expenditure as well as increase the profit of the company (Wee et al., 2017).

MyEventDirect has a great commercial value as it provides a feature of the *green event rating system*. This feature allows the users or the events' attendees to rate the performance of the event companies on their sustainability practices of the green event. This feature acts as a measuring tool for the event companies to evaluate their performance towards the green practices toward the environmental, economic and socio-cultural aspects. Katzel (2007) stated that Sustainability Rating System can be utilized as a way to compare events and gauge trends as well as act as a feedback mechanism that addressing gaps and challenges on an episodic basis, which allows event manager to persistently enhance its performance. In brief, *MyEventDirect* has a great potential value of commercialization because it provides the features of the event promotions and also a rating system which could support the concept of green event that stimulate the sustainable business practices in the event industry.

Design and Development Process

The proposed *MyEventDirect* mobile application development is an outcome of a research carried out by the project advisor team. The paper entitled "Sustainable Event Tourism: Evidence of Practices and Outcomes among Festival Organizer" was published in *Advanced Science Letter* by American Scientific Publisher, which is a Scopus Index journal in November 2017. During the earlier the stage of *MyEventDirect* application development, researchers doing an analysis assessment whereby it is to identify the objective of the application, needs of integrating mobile technology and to analyze the readiness of event-goers skills of using technology. A research for the issue and problem of the current mobile application is also necessary. In the second stage of development, the researchers provide a blueprint for mobile-event application according to the objective, content structure, sustainable strategy and usability of the apps.

The next stage is to create the mobile-event prototype based on the design of menus, notification, event detail, and rating features for the event performance. Then, the fourth stage are the phase for implementation. At this stage, the application's prototype of all the significant elements and items were included in the application with the help of authoring tools. Lastly, the researchers evaluate the materials through the application of the apps by the event companies in sustaining their business and rating feedback from the event-goers.

Novelty and Benefits of *MyEventDirect* Apps

MyEventDirect is the *first mobile application* for event industry that equipped with *green event rating feature*. It provides a broad range of information referring to all events that will be held in Malaysia. It is proposed that the existence of this mobile application can help to inform the users on the upcoming events that will be held in this country including, MICE, food and beverage, festivals, culture, entertainments, sports and more. In addition, *MyEventDirect* can be a mechanism to support the sustainability approach to environment and business. This is because, by lessen the cost for printing the flyers, banners and brochures in order to advertise the events traditionally as the company is able to apply the mobile marketing. Thus, *MyEventDirect* can help the company sustain their business. This mobile application also helps to reduce the paper usage for printings as well as the carbon footprint so that it results in sustaining the environment. Public and tourists can benefit from this application to browse events information, sharing event activities and contribute to assess the implementation of green event practices by event organizers.

Feasibility Study

A feasibility study is carried out to determine the potential for *MyEventDirect* application usability and features. The respondents are general public whom invited to fill up the questionnaire using mobile application. The identification of respondent is based on convenience sampling method. Notification is sent using WhatsApp mobile application for 500 respondents. The researchers estimated to receive a sampling size of 384 (Krejci & Morgan, 1970). The respondents are given two weeks to fill up the online questionnaire. The data will be analyzed using descriptive analysis. The results of the survey are expected to obtain a positive support from the respondents. The outcome of this survey will be used to enhance the prototype features so it is ready for commercialization.

Conclusion

MyEventDirect mobile application provides a wide range of information on numerous of events that will be held daily in Malaysia. It will be a mechanism to support the green event initiative in terms of environment and businesses sustainable practices. Not only the users will get a benefit of this application but the event's organizer also will gain better benefit of their business outcome and reputation. *MyEventDirect* contributes to help the company to sustain their business by reducing the cost of printing, lessen the paper usage and support the government initiative to stimulate green technology application for the industry. In addition, this mobile application will attract more local and international tourist to explore various kinds of events in Malaysia thus enhance the image of green event tourism industry in the future. The prototype of this mobile application has been registered for the Intellectual Protection (IP) and once it is ready for commercialization, the application for patenting registration will proceed.

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