

Public relations and event management in the entertainment industry

Caci, Valeria

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SVEUČILIŠTE VERN'

Zagreb

Odnosi s javnošću i studij medija

ZAVRŠNI RAD

**PUBLIC RELATIONS AND EVENT MANAGEMENT IN
THE ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRY**

Valeria Caci

Zagreb, 2024.

SVEUČILIŠTE VERN'

Stručni preddiplomski studij

Odnosi s javnošću i studij medija

ZAVRŠNI RAD

**PUBLIC RELATIONS AND EVENT MANAGEMENT IN
THE ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRY**

Mentorica: Svea Kršul, prof., v. pred.

Studentica: Valeria Caci

Zagreb, rujan 2024.

SVEUČILIŠTE VERN'
Zagreb, Palmotićeve ulica 82/1
Odnosi s javnošću i studij medija

Broj

ZADATAK ZAVRŠNOGA RADA

Studentica: Valeria Caci

Zadatak: Public Relations and Event Management in the Entertainment Industry
Odnosi s javnošću i menadžment događaja u industriji zabave

U radu je potrebno razraditi sljedeće teme:

- Dati pregled literature na temu uloge odnosa s javnošću i menadžmenta događaja u industriji zabave
- Identificirati značenje odnosa s javnošću u industriji zabave, specifično u glazbenoj industriji festivala i noćnih klubova
- Objasniti pojam menadžmenta događaja kao alata u odnosima s javnošću
- Analizirati kako događaji s učinkovitom strategijom u odnosima s javnošću i planiranju događaja učvršćuju *brand image*, njeguju odnose s medijima i stvaraju pozitivan publicitet
- Provesti kvalitativno istraživanje putem polustrukturiranih intervjua s ljudima iz struke o važnosti odnosa s javnošću i utjecaja medija na menadžment događaja u industriji zabave
- Analizirati rezultate istraživanja i donijeti zaključke o ulozi odnosa s javnošću i menadžmenta događaja u industriji zabave

Napomena: Pri izradi završnog rada kandidat/kinja ima obvezu pridržavati se i uvažavati primjedbe, sugestije i napatke mentor/ice, koristiti i primjenjivati znanja i umijeća stečena tijekom studija, upotrebljavati informacije i podatke prikupljene vlastitim istraživanjem te spoznaje i činjenice iz odgovarajuće znanstvene i stručne literature uz ispravno navođenje korištenih izvora.

Zadatak zadan:

Rok predaje:

Pročelnica studija: Marina Majić

Mentorica: Svea Kršul

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ABSTRACT

This research paper investigates the role public relations and event management have in the entertainment industry, focusing on music events such as festivals, club nights and the culture of clubbing, making this a niche topic to cover. While there has been significant research on public relations and event management separately, it has been discovered there are not many findings on their relationship within the music entertainment industry. Qualitative research was conducted on five experienced professionals with different career backgrounds. Specifically, they were interviewed about their thoughts and experiences with public relations and event management. This research focused on gathering information for the improvement of the growing entertainment industry and its environment. The research revealed the importance of planning, rules, open communication and cooperation, as well as nurturing media and stakeholder relationships. Future research should additionally evaluate this topic on more industry professionals with different career backgrounds and experiences.

Keywords: public relations, event management, entertainment industry, club nights, music festivals

SAŽETAK

Odnosi s javnošću i menadžment događaja u industriji zabave

Rad istražuje suodnos odnosa s javnošću i upravljanja događajima u industriji zabave, usredotočujući se na glazbene događaje kao što su festivali, klupske večeri i kultura klupskih aktivnosti, što čini jedinstvenu temu. Iako su provedena znatna zasebna istraživanja o odnosima s javnošću i upravljanju događajima, otkriveno je da nema mnogo istraživanja o njihovom odnosu unutar industrije glazbene zabave. Kvalitativno istraživanje provedeno je na pet iskusnih stručnjaka s različitim karijerama. Točnije, ispitanici su o svojim razmišljanjima i iskustvima s odnosima s javnošću i menadžmentom događaja. Navedeno istraživanje usmjereno je na prikupljanje informacija za poboljšanje industrije zabave koja se neprestano razvija. Istraživanje je otkrilo važnost planiranja, pravila, otvorene komunikacije i suradnje te njegovanja odnosa medija i sudionika industrije zabave. Buduća bi istraživanja trebala dodatno istražiti izabranu temu rada tako da uključe više profesionalaca iz industrije zabave s različitim karijerama i iskustvima.

Ključne riječi: odnosi s javnošću, menadžment događaja, industrija zabave, klupske večeri, glazbeni festivali

1 INTRODUCTION

The entertainment industry is a broad sector that includes numerous and various forms of media and events designed to entertain the public by attending the event or following it through media channels. This industry contains sectors such as music festivals, nightlife and attending types of clubs which is the focus of this paper. They are different sectors but they still intersect by mutually making economic contributions by promoting tourism, selling tickets and supporting local businesses, giving social value by creating spaces for the people attending the events to socialise and build community and leaving a cultural impact by promoting lifestyle, fashion and music trends. Today public relations and event management as an extension of public relations are mandatory to keep the entertainment industry afloat. Public relations is a distinct field of practice that has been officially around for over a century featuring communications tactics, strategies and manipulation of the public, but the core concepts date much further, even to ancient and medieval times.

This paper aims to provide insight into how the use of public relations in event management is influencing the entertainment industry, with a particular focus on the nightlife and music festival sectors. The author's passion for electronic music and the digital facets of public relations and event management inspired the choice of this topic. This interest was ignited during the author's studies, which provided numerous opportunities to gain behind-the-scenes experience at various events and festivals. It became evident that there is a lack of research on the intricate relationship between public relations and event management, especially within the entertainment industry. Therefore, this paper seeks to explore this niche topic by examining existing research and conducting original research to address unanswered questions that could enhance public relations practices in event management within the entertainment sector.

The primary goal of this paper is to analyze the role of public relations in the growing field of event management and to draw conclusions on how events with effective public relations and event planning strategies can strengthen brand image, foster media relations, and generate positive publicity.

The paper is structured into five sections: an introduction that provides an overview of the topics covered followed by a literature review containing the theoretical framework that describes previous research on the connection between public relations and event management.

The third section titled Methodology and Results gives a detailed description of the qualitative research design and semi-structured interviews conducted. The Discussion section presents the data from five semi-structured interviews with professionals in the music entertainment industry, interprets the results and discusses the findings. The Conclusion addresses the significance and implications of the main ideas elaborated in this paper.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Public Relations and Event Management

This section of the paper presents the theoretical framework by first delving into existing research on public relations and event management as separate disciplines. The foundational studies in public relations explore key areas such as brand building, strategic communication, media relations, and crisis management. These studies highlight the importance of maintaining a positive public image and effective communication strategies to engage stakeholders. Similarly, research in event management focuses on the organization, planning, and execution of events that serve various purposes, from corporate functions to social gatherings. Event management literature emphasizes the significance of meticulous planning, audience engagement, and logistical coordination to ensure the success of events. Following the examination of these fields individually, the paper transitions to a discussion of research that underscores the symmetry and interconnection between public relations and event management. Numerous studies illustrate how integrating public relations strategies into event management can enhance overall outcomes.

Public relations is considered a fairly new profession compared to other professions such as medicine or law, but the core idea of public relations stems from communication and communication dates back to Ancient Greece where people used Aristotle's art of rhetoric to persuade the public. Therefore, Ancient Greece can be considered the original birthplace of Public relations (Dimock, 2022).

With the birth of the United States of America, mass communication was non-negotiable in spreading messages. Spreading political messages was instrumental in gaining trust and persuading the masses at that time. But as time progressed and decades passed, so did the profession of public relations. Ivy Ledbetter Lee, as some call him the father of public relations, changed the profession of public relations forever by stating that the public should receive accurate information, making John D. Rockefeller visit the coal mine workers while the strikes at that time were happening and therefore improving his public image, and writing the first ever press release. Another “founding father” of public relations is Edward L. Bernays. He created the two-way-street concept of communication as it is known today and he emphasised the importance of companies being transparent and taking accountability between them and the

public which created a huge shift in the core understanding of public relations principles, which we still use to this day. Edward L. Bernays also promoted the application of behavioural psychological theories developed by his uncle Sigmund Freud (Bennet, 2013).

The Economic Times claim public relations encompass various methods and strategies aimed at managing the dissemination of information about an individual or organisation to the public, particularly through media channels. The primary objectives of public relations include announcing significant company news or events, maintaining a positive brand image, and mitigating the impact of negative incidents. PR activities can take multiple forms, such as issuing press releases, holding news conferences, conducting journalist interviews, and posting on social media platforms (Roy, 2024).

Public relations is a deliberate communication strategy that cares for relationships between organisations and the various types of public. It encompasses overseeing the dissemination of information between an organization and its audience, to shape public opinion and uphold a favorable reputation. Public relations efforts encompass various tasks such as handling media interactions, creating content, organizing events, and managing crises (Wilcox, Cameron and Reber, 2015).

The Public Relations Society of America defined public relations as “a strategic communication process that builds mutually beneficial relationships between organizations and their publics”. Its main goal is to influence and foster relationship and reputation with consumers and the public (PRSA, 2024).

Public relations functions as the managerial role responsible for fostering and sustaining mutually advantageous relationships between an organization and the public upon which its outcomes hinge. This entails conscientiously planning, executing, and persistently maintaining initiatives aimed at cultivating mutual understanding and fostering goodwill (Cutlip, Center, Glen and Broom, 2000).

Public relations is a planned process to influence public opinion, through sound character and proper performance, based on mutually satisfactory two-way communication (Seitel, 2016). Public relations involves managing relationships between an organization and the public in a manner that reflects its core values and impacts its overall success. This approach underscores

the significance of harmonizing organisational values with the interests and priorities of its stakeholders (Guth and Marsh, 2017).

An event itself could be described as a carefully planned gathering for a specific occasion varying in size, participants, time, purpose, activities and many more. Cleopatra has been considered the first known event planner. Her events were the most popular of that time and they intended to attract potential lovers (Prince, 2021).

According to Bassett and Dowson (2015), events are temporary. Every concert, exhibition, festival, wedding, play, sporting event or any other gathering of people with a purpose has its duration. Some of the above last for days or even weeks, and some only for a few hours. Regardless of the time, each event has its predetermined and planned duration.

The same authors claim that an event is something special and unforgettable, it is an experience that is memorable and pleasant, and thus we remember it fondly.

Event management has a mission of combining the systematic activities of planning, organizing, coordinating, and assessing events. It applies project management methodologies to orchestrate the inception and progression of festivals, conferences, ceremonies, parties, and similar gatherings. The primary aim is to ensure the seamless execution of each event while aligning with the defined goals and satisfying the expectations of stakeholders (Raj and Rashid, 2017).

Event management can be described as a comprehensive process that involves planning, creating, and executing an event from its inception to post-event strategizing. This multifaceted process begins with the initial concept and vision for the event, where objectives are defined, and the target audience is identified. It then progresses through several critical stages, including the development of a detailed plan that outlines the event's logistical, technical, and operational requirements (Salvatori, 2022).

Event management is a structured approach to developing, planning, executing, and assessing a planned event. It encompasses the entire spectrum from initial conceptualization to final evaluation. This multifaceted discipline integrates elements of project management, marketing, hospitality, and logistics to achieve successful event outcomes aligned with stakeholders' goals and expectations (Bowdin, Allen, O'Toole, Harris and McDonnell, 2012).

Both public relations and event management are grounded in strategic communication. Public relations experts employ communication strategies to develop impactful messages that resonate with their intended audiences. Simultaneously, event managers employ communication tactics to promote their brand, draw attendees and involve participants throughout all event stages. By incorporating PR principles into event management, events can be aligned with an organization's overarching communication strategy, thereby reinforcing crucial messages and objectives (Shone, 2014).

As Johnkennedy (2023) explained, public relations act as the foundation of event management, acting as the unifying element that connects every phase from planning and execution to follow-ups. Public relations specialists possess the skills to craft engaging messages, comprehend target audiences, and create beneficial connections between event organizers and participants. They play a crucial role in developing event stories, maintaining message consistency, and addressing any crises that may occur during or after the event.

As Bruns (2019) highlights, events often face unforeseen challenges or crises that demand swift and efficient response strategies. Handling crises during events necessitates a blend of public relations acumen and event management proficiency to safeguard the organization's reputation and maintain control. The integration of public relations into event management entails assessing the impact of both the event itself and PR initiatives. Evaluating the success of events and public relations efforts involves gathering data, conducting a thorough analysis, and measuring metrics that offer insights into attendee satisfaction, media visibility, and the overall perception of the brand.

Merging public relations with event management requires consistent brand integration throughout the event experience. Aligning the event with the organization's brand identity is essential to avoid confusion among attendees and to capitalize on opportunities to reinforce brand messaging. Incorporating public relations into event management might involve extra costs for promotions and media outreach. Budget limitations can restrict the extent of PR activities, affecting media coverage and the event's overall visibility. Maintaining consistent messaging and a cohesive long-term strategy can be difficult, particularly for organizations that host multiple events or run ongoing campaigns (Shone, 2014).

2.2 The Entertainment Industry of Music Festivals and Nightlife

After examining the foundational concepts and functions of public relations and event management, this section shifts focus to a specialized area within the entertainment industry: music festivals and nightlife, particularly within the realm of clubbing culture and electronic music. This part of the research provides a comprehensive overview of the music entertainment industry, detailing the essence and significance of music festivals, the characteristics and impact of electronic music culture, and the diverse ways in which this culture is expressed. This section aims to elucidate these concepts and terminologies, providing a detailed exploration of how public relations and event management practices are intricately woven into the fabric of the music entertainment industry. By doing so, it highlights the critical role these disciplines play in shaping and sustaining the vibrant culture of music festivals, electronic music, and nightlife.

The music entertainment industry combines the creation, performance, recording, promotion, and distribution of music. Besides the production of music, the industry includes marketing and business strategies required to bring the music out to the public. Additionally, the music entertainment industry is so broad it merges streaming services, record labels, artist management, publishing companies and live music events (Hull, Hutchison and Strasser, 2011).

As Smith (2012) stated a music festival is an event oriented towards live performances of singing and instruments playing. They are often held outdoors with tents or roofed temporary stages for the artist as well as indoors in closed-up venues. Sometimes music festivals of bigger size offer dance performances and interesting social activities as well as food and beverages.

The author of this paper found it important to emphasise before moving on with the literature review, that in contemporary times, music festivals have evolved significantly, with many now being held inside larger clubs and open-concept venues located in popular clubbing destinations. These festivals often span up to two days, offering attendees an immersive experience that combines music, social interaction, and vibrant atmospheres. The evolution of events and music festivals is driven by increasing demand from diverse audiences seeking unique and memorable experiences. This shift highlights the dynamic nature of the entertainment industry and underscores the importance of strategic event management and public relations in delivering successful and memorable festivals.

Electronic music culture spans a wide array of musical genres and practices focused on utilizing electronic technology for creating and performing music. This culture contains styles like techno, house, drum and bass, and ambient music. It is defined by its inventive use of synthesizers, drum machines, and computer software, along with its distinct subcultures, fashion trends, and events such as raves and festivals, which cultivate a sense of community and shared experiences among its participants (Brewster and Broughton, 2006).

According to Reynolds (2006), electronic music culture is characterised by a wide range of musical styles such as techno, house, trance, and dubstep and is frequently linked to major festivals, underground clubs and more commercial event locations. The culture revolves around the use of electronic technology for producing and performing music live and it also features a distinctive aesthetic, fashion trend and community ethos, highlighting innovation and inclusivity.

From the authors' experience working in the field, she states that the culture of electronic music manifests in various aspects of an individual's life, providing multiple avenues for engagement and enjoyment. One prominent way individuals immerse themselves in this culture is through clubbing or going clubbing. Clubbing involves attending nightclubs where electronic music is the central attraction, offering enthusiasts a communal space to experience live DJ performances, dance, and socialize. This nightlife activity allows individuals to fully immerse themselves in the rhythms and beats of electronic music, fostering a sense of connection and belonging within the community.

Clubbing refers to the social and cultural practices associated with different venues where people gather to dance, listen to music, and socialize. This activity is characterized by live DJ performances giving an immersive experience enhanced by live dance performances, visual light and sound effects and an uplifting atmosphere, all while emphasising electronic dance music. Clubbing culture is also marked by the communal sense of belonging among participants who seek fun and escapism, as well as its distinctive fashion trends (Malbon, 1999).

Clubbing culture merges the practices, values and social dynamics of the nightlife scene where individuals get together in various venues to dance, experience electronic dance music and engage with each other. Clubbing provides a space for community and self-expression and a space to explore one's identity. It is characterized by the role of the DJ, the importance of the

dance floor as a social hub, the discovery of music, trying out fashion trends, and more often than not, the use of recreational substances (Thornton, 1996).

3 METHODOLOGY AND RESULTS

The methodology section of this paper outlines the research design, data collection methods, and analysis conducted to investigate the impact of public relations and event management in the entertainment industry, with the focus on music events and festivals. This chapter provides a detailed account of the research process, participants, and results. The results of the research will be clear as the research method will be presented and immediate conclusions can be drawn taking into account the research questions and aims this paper has at its beginning, but final explanations of the results will be presented in the Discussion part of this research paper.

This study employs a qualitative research method to provide a comprehensive understanding of the research problem. The qualitative research consists of five in-depth, semi-structured interviews with selected interviewees. The author personally recruited these interviewees due to her prior experience of working with them and her understanding of their work abilities and prior extensive experience working in the music, event and entertainment business. The questions used in these interviews were created by the author after studying the existing research as well as working with industry professionals, which sparked curiosity and interest in these segments. The author thinks this kind of research with these interviewees tackles and gives some clarity on some topics that are often overseen and in practice do not get enough attention and recognition by public relations and industry professionals. The interviewees possess diverse experience in the entertainment industry, including music production, event management, public relations, and other related fields. They all specialize in music events, music festivals, club night organising, and other forms of music entertainment.

The interviews were conducted via video calls on platforms such as FaceTime and Zoom between June 21 and July 2, 2024, each lasting approximately 55 minutes. Since the interviews were semi-structured, the 11 questions were designed to allow the author to ask follow-up questions, providing deeper insight and a broader range of opinions on the research topic. It is important to note that all 5 interviewees consented to the information being shared for this paper. Firstly, the interviewees are briefly introduced, as understanding their background and characteristics is crucial for contextualizing the qualitative data collected. Next up, each question is explained, followed by each interviewee's answer.

Firstly, Ajdin Begović, otherwise known by the artist name Baggi, Baggi Begović or Adin is the first presented respondent. Ajdin Begović is a 45-year-old Dutch DJ and music producer of

Bosnian descent. He has DJed on every relevant club and festival stage; from EDC Brazil up to Las Vegas and New York to Tokyo, Creamfields festival, Sonus in Croatia and LoveFest in Serbia, club Space in Miami and many more. Ajdin Begović has been seen performing on many events where he presented his wide variety of musical skills and also his many musical releases on records such as Defected, Spinnin, Toolroom and Musical Freedom. Some other career achievements are his collaborations with other artists such as Kelly Clarkson, Rita Ora, Tiesto and others where he showed his limitless production skills. Ajdin Begović now works directly with Insomniac Events, the world's biggest music festival and event organisation that, besides organising big events and festivals, is also investing and collaborating with organisations not founded by them, which is showing immense success.

The second interviewee is Igor Novaković, the CEO of the biggest and most visited electronic music blog in the Balkan region called OnlyClubbing. OnlyClubbing has been awarded the Ambassador award for the best regional website for electronic music lovers in 2022. The blog has the highest number of followers on Facebook, Instagram and YouTube in the Balkan region and has recently created a fast-growing community on the platform Telegram where thousands of club visitors and music lovers engage daily, also making OnlyClubbing a platform for people to connect. On the website, one can find a calendar of events for every event happening in the Balkan region, and many articles on various topics regarding electronic music and the clubbing scene and industry as well as reports from events Igor Novaković himself attended. One can find any news happening in the industry, interesting research, new music and event releases and collaborations, articles that raise awareness of recreational drug use which is very popular amongst party-attendees and many more. It is important to note that this community and media platform was created by Igor himself and that he works and manages everything alone.

Next up, Neil Evans is the third interviewee of this research. Neil Evans is the Music and Events Director at Amnesia Ibiza, which is one of the more popular club on the Ibiza island specifically known for its wide range of world-renowned clubs. He has been involved in the Ibiza clubbing industry since 1999, working with major clubs such as Space, Privilege, Pacha, and Ibiza Rocks. In addition to that, Neil Evans co-founded Electric Ibiza, a company specializing in artist and label management and event promotion. Neil's expertise extends beyond event promotion to artist management, where he has managed well-known names in dance music.

His work has been crucial in shaping the vibrant and dynamic music culture of Ibiza. He frequently participates in the industry events, such as the International Music Summit and Croatian Beach Music Conference, where he shares his insights and experiences, and where the author also initially crossed paths with this particular interviewee.

Furthermore, Gorana Romčević is an internationally renowned Public Relations and Communications expert from Belgrade with 20 years of experience across Europe and Asia. She gained global recognition for spearheading some of the most groundbreaking entertainment projects. As the owner and founder of Bleach Agency, she is known for her exceptional worldwide network and contributions to the electronic music culture, especially in challenging markets. Her agency specialises in global PR and communications, representing clients such as Exit festival and No Sleep festival in Serbia, The Zoo Project in Ibiza, Epizode festival in Albania and Vietnam, Sunny Side Festival in Malta, Groove on the Grass in Taiwan, Subsonic in Sydney, Glow Club in Bangkok and many more.

Lastly, there is Filip Boban a 28-year-old DJ, club owner and entrepreneur who owns a media company specialising in events called Trinity Entertainment. Filip was a resident DJ at the island of Pag at one of the clubs at Zrće Beach in the times before COVID. He is one of the three owners of The Secret Club in Zagreb and the partner in the newly opened modern bar Narcissus in the Zagreb city centre. Trinity Entertainment is one of the more popular event organisations in the capital of Croatia Zagreb, focusing on trap and r'n'b music, which created major success in the last few years, resulting in thousands of people attending the events that happen every few months and therefore give a special exclusivity to the events.

These interviewees represent a diverse group of professionals who have been active in the industry for years, some even decades. Their years of experience provide valuable insights into this research topic and can show various standpoints on certain questions because of the interviewees expertise.

The questions of these semi-structured interviews the author conducted separately with all five interviewees were created during the author's literature research for this paper, but the interest in these topics existed during the author's work experience with the interviewees in question and other individuals. Each question should give a different kind of answer from each interviewee because of their different background, therefore after presenting each question,

every interviewee's answer will be shown. The answers the interviewees gave are not placed in any chronological order, but they are presented in a cohesive way since some interviewees had similar answers.

The first question stated that the rise in the entertainment and nightlife industry is evident; it is getting bigger and more demanding. The author then asked if the interviewees agreed that the practice of public relations is becoming more important as the entertainment industry grows, as well as if events, as we know them now, would even be happening and growing if it wasn't for public relations professionals. Gorana Romčević thought public relations had always been essential in every industry, especially in the entertainment industry of nightlife and music festivals. She claimed that ideally, any event had some form of public relations whether it was an individual or a team, better results were achieved when there are proper PR tactics set in place. She said that as long as the PR was done properly, the results would speak for themselves because it would build brand image and credibility amongst all audiences. Gorana is also certain that events today as we know them wouldn't be happening in this way if it wasn't for public relations. The growth various types of media have had in the past decade was evident and so had music events, festivals and clubs, therefore the use of public relations and proper communication inside organisations can not be overlooked. Ajdin Begović said "Yes, I do agree public relations is very important in the event management industry. Public relations is one of the key players right now in promoting the right events, clubs and artists. So, I would say that without a good PR, you will get nowhere!" Filip Boban agreed and claimed he realised the importance of public relations as his career in event management evolved throughout the years. Now he thinks it is the core part of every successful event. He stated that public relations is crucial even now he is a co-owner of a prestigious new bar in Croatia's capital city. Filip completely relies on the work his chosen public relations professionals do when it comes to the media exposure his business will get. Neil Evans said he experienced it first-hand that the entertainment industry of music events and festivals grew exponentially in the last 10 to 15 years and that the professional practices of public relations had never been more wanted and needed. Lastly, Igor Novaković asserted that public relations was the key ingredient in making an event good and successful. He also stated that artists these days have been making progress in their careers, needing bigger and better venues, therefore making the events more demanding. With all that making public relations the main component in creating a memorable event in any venue.

Secondly, the author asked for the interviewees' opinions on having a PR plan being a necessity and what their experience has been with making and or following a PR plan. Filip Boban said he wished he had known the immense importance of a PR and communication plan when he started being a DJ and organising his Trinity Entertainment events because it would have saved him a lot of time, stress and money, and probably would have made him more successful and consistent with his work. Gorana Romčević firmly agreed that having a PR plan was a complete necessity, also underlined that it was very important to have a communication plan besides the PR plan and that the only way to a successful event was to synchronise both plans and the social media segment because public relations has mostly gone digital nowadays. Ajdin Begović claimed that it was necessary to have a PR plan and to stick to it and that when creating a plan be mindful of timing, marketing things the correct way, budget and promoting the event as well as the talents. Neil Evans and Igor Novaković agreed that they only had good experiences having a PR plan in place because one can never be too prepared for whatever the future of events is bringing. Igor, as a media representative stated, that he has never made a PR plan himself, but he is very appreciative of when public relations professionals share and include him in the plan with proper timing, because it gave him proper direction and therefore he never faced issues with his reporting at events since every step and precaution had been explained to him in detail before the event even started.

Thirdly, the author asked, "Do you think PR specialists are necessary in the event management process?" Gorana Romčević said they were crucial in the event management process especially if it was a bigger event; then you have to have a public relations specialist to arrange a press corner, a media space, conferences before the event and others. She states that "If you are running a club night on your own, you are most likely a public relations person yourself, because you know people and people from the media, but we need to steer clear of the misconception that everybody is a public relations specialist nowadays. Not every host or social media person is a PR." Filip Boban claims that having a specialised public relations person is more necessary when it is a higher-volume event because there is a higher chance of risks, people and media to manage. Smaller events might not have the budget for a specialist like that but it would be beneficial to invest in a public relations specialist for the further growth of the event. Ajdin Begović suggested that if an organisation or club did not have a public relations specialist by now, they had to acquire one or get in touch with a public relations agency if they

wanted their business to expand or even survive in this business climate. Igor Novaković, a media platform founder and owner, shared that having a specialised person in this industry is non-negotiable. Neil Evans agreed with the prior interviewees', his opinion is that there should always be a public relations practitioner on-site in case of any potential crisis management as well as managing media relations and other matters.

The next question was about the interviewees' personal experience working alongside PR professionals while planning an event. Gorana Romčević is a public relations professional, so she answered this question from her perspective of working with people other than her team. She said "I had a less pleasant experience in another country, but in general I have good people working for me who do their job right. In this particular case it was a collaboration festival with my team and a local team and that time it didn't work out because the local team wasn't communicative about their incentive and we couldn't find mutual understanding. Sometimes it doesn't work out well, and that is okay, as long as you have your team to rely on, there shouldn't be any major issues." Filip Boban on the other hand is not a public relations professional and has had a second-hand experience with them. The author quotes him "Public relations professionals have helped me immensely in all of my business ventures, but especially in event management. They have always been available, and proactive and gave me solutions to any issues I might have had in the past. I think I will be using a PR manager in the future if I ever decide to further build my image as a DJ again" Ajdin Begović said he experienced some ups and downs working with Public relations professionals and that the success of the mutual work depends on the person's timing, work ethics, marketing and communication plan and the budget, he thinks overall the mutual workflow between him as a client and the public relations expert should be harmonious and honest. Igor Novaković and Neil Evans said they had mixed experiences with public relations professionals. Neil usually has a team working with them so he only hears if the process does not go as planned or someone exceeds expectations. Igor has had experiences where the professionals did not send good reports or did not send anything at all and he had some situations where the public relations professionals did not reach out to him for follow-ups and similar things, but he thinks that is a common case with public relations in the Balkan region.

The following question was about what the interviewees thought about how public relations protocols enhanced event management. Gorana Romčević thinks that at least every bigger-

scale event has to have protocols set in place especially if there is a lot of media running the place. That helps the PR and media team be more cohesive and organised. Gorana said “I was running a big festival in Vietnam that lasted 11 days. What would I have done if I hadn’t had protocols? I realised I needed to be around to coordinate everybody, so I decided to make a document with all the information that is relevant regarding the press, interviews, media relations etc. and it helped me and everybody tremendously!” Neil Evans and the other interviewees agreed protocols are essential in any kind of event because they minimise the chance of any crises and create a safe environment without miscommunication.

“What challenges do you think public relations professionals face while managing events?” asked the author. Ajdin Begović answered “Many challenges, as far as things and situations changing daily in the scene, events are susceptible to crises and problems. But good public relations practitioners should have the ability to predict some problems in the future by analysing the problems that occurred in the past. But the list of challenges is long...” While Gorana Romčević said “Crisis. A crisis is the one thing that can push a professional over the edge. You need to have thick skin if you want to survive in this industry because you work with many people and all people are different. I specialise in crisis communication so that is something I find the most challenging!” Filip Boban and Igor Novaković observe similarly that everything can be a challenge if one is not focused enough and is not thorough with his actions while planning an event. However, Neil Evans claimed “Public Relations professionals have plenty of challenges and it is not even important if it is a small event in a club or a huge festival out in the open; they all require much care and attention to detail, while still taking into consideration what comes out to the media and other peoples feelings. I found it challenging directing the musical talents at Amnesia when I started out, because it takes getting used to working with people all the time when you are on your own and without a proper team; I can’t imagine how it is now and being a PR pro!”

The next question was about the shifts in the industry and the interviewees’ personal experience they have noticed since PR protocols have been introduced into event management. All the interviewees responded similarly - they agreed that they don’t remember a time when there weren’t public relations protocols set in place and they share the opinion the event management industry wouldn’t come this far if it weren’t for the rules and protocols.

Following that, the author asked “Do you agree public relations is strengthening media and stakeholder relationships through event management?” All the interviewees agreed positively to that question, but the CEO of the Bleach Agency, Gorana Romčević elaborated on that by emphasizing that events are the only way to get into real physical contact with people. She said that inviting media people and hosting them is a great way to bond and if there is a decent budget available, public relations specialists should invest in some press trips before the event launch as well as in some nice presents to show appreciation for all the work the media and stakeholders do.

To get a feel of how the interviewees think about the importance of public relations, the author asked a more personal question for them to explain an experience they had that made them fully aware of the importance of public relations in event management, e.g. a crisis management situation, a moment with talent management and booking or safety measures.

Gorana Romčević gave the example of the 11-day festival in Vietnam called Epizode Festival which became world-renowned because of her skills, team and strategy. Her communication system made this festival special because it managed to get people from 95 different countries to visit a remote island in Vietnam. She said she used the budget wisely and she made the whole world talk about them because she knew how to create a plan to get the word out. Neil Evans and Filip Boban could not remember the exact moment they realised this, but they agreed that with every event comes great responsibility for everyone but especially public relations professionals. Igor Novaković said “I don’t have an answer to this question because I never worked as a PR manager directly in an organisation while organising an event, but I believe that it is a good idea to have a quality PR manager when there is a crisis happening so the issue can be resolved before it hits the media platforms like myself.” Ajdin Begović was the only interviewee who said he could not talk about specific crisis situations he experienced alone or with his company because of non-disclosure-agreements that are set in place, but he does not deny public relations professionals have an immense positive role and impact in handling unexpected situations.

Second to last, all of the interviewees talked about if there was a moment when they thought that the expertise of a public relations specialist was not necessary and they could have done the job themselves or better. Ajdin Begović said that there had been many times he thought he could have done the job himself because it is in human nature to think that but overall he always

trusted the public relations management. After all, they have been hired to do the job for a reason. Gorana Romčević said this was an easy answer “Every event needs public relations, and at the end, you will know if you are needed or not. The results speak for themselves because if you do your job correctly, there will be no need to reassure your client. If they feel like it, they can do it themselves but they won’t have any real results to show because not everybody is and can be a PR.” Igor Novaković agreed “Yes, I had a lot of situations in which PRs in big events don’t do their job like they are supposed to do and I have to correct and add facts to the text they sent over because the public expects to give a good explanation of the events. In my opinion, it is of the most importance to give a lot of attention to the title of the text and the attached photos because those are the things that make up 90% of the job and that will intrigue the audience to keep on reading.” Neil Evans and Filip Boban remember the only times they did not have a public relations professional on their team and they should have acquired one beforehand.

Lastly, the author asked the interviewees to state their opinion if there was anything they would change, if they could, about public relations and event management in the industry and what would that be. Gorana Romčević expressed her hope that people would start being aware of their skill and their lack of it. Public relations is not glamorous at all, it takes a lot of physical work and taking care of the tiniest details. She claims not everybody will understand what it takes and how this job works and that often public relations experts need to explain themselves to others to justify their prices and behaviour and all of that requires a high tolerance to ignorant people. Lastly, the author quotes Gorana “It would be nice if people raised their awareness of the importance of public relations and event management in the entertainment industry of nightlife and music events and start behaving accordingly towards professionals.” Ajdin Begović and Filip Boban agreed that they wouldn’t change anything. Neil Evans wasn’t sure what exactly he would change in event management and public relations, but he thinks it would be a good idea to have more communication plans and strategies and to hire real professionals, as well as give younger professionals chances to participate in key decision-making processes on big club nights and festivals. He also thinks that it wouldn’t be bad if more people were educated about the history of the clubbing scene and the culture.

For the last response, the author quotes Igor Novaković: “Generally, public relations should keep on evolving in sense of quality and creativity. When it comes to PR articles, they should get shorter because they will be read by younger audiences who like short-format content.

Looking at the statistics of my website and social media platforms, the event industry comprises 70% younger generations, hence why public relations professionals need to make everything shorter and creative.”

4 DISCUSSION

The findings of this research have provided a deeper insight into the opinions and experiences industry professionals have had with public relations and event management in the entertainment industry of music festivals and events. The discussion part of this paper focuses on explaining and evaluating the results the author found by conducting qualitative research in this paper and showing how the results relate to the literature review. This section provides a brief summary of key findings, interpretations and implications.

The results of this research indicate that event management is a tool and an extension of the multidisciplinary science of public relations, which supports the information stated in the literature review. It also demonstrates that there is no significant difference in the opinions of professionals in the music festival and club industry on the impact and importance on public relations and event management in that industry. However, differences were found in the experiences of the interviewees since they did not share a mutual job title and their understanding of public relations rules and principles varied because not everybody experienced the same situations.

The research found that all interviewees agreed event management in the music entertainment industry is growing and evolving and that without public relations principles, strategies and protocols, the industry would not come this far and would not keep evolving further. Each interviewee agreed it is necessary to have professionals on site managing brand image, public opinion, stakeholder and media relationships and make sure everybody follows a communication and protocol plan.

One of the more significant questions of this research was about thoughts on PR plans being a necessity in managing music festival and club nights as well as protocols being set in place for everybody to follow. The results showed the general mutual consensus on PR plans, rules, protocols and hierarchy being mandatory and major factors in managing entertaining music events of any size, which met the author's expectations and achieved an emphasis of topics that are often overlooked in practice.

The conducted research elaborated what the experience is like working alongside public relations specialists and professionals but it was expected for the results to vary since one of the interviewees, Gorana Romčević, is a public relations professional, whereas the other

interviewees are not. Therefore she gave a response from her perspective working with other professional in and outside her team. Gorana Romčević shared that she once had a negative experience working alongside another team and with that she remembered once again how important it is to have a reliant and responsible team by your side while managing events and to have good communication and PR plans set in place for everybody to follow. The other interviewees had fairly positive experiences with public relations professionals but there is room for improvement. They should be more communicative, more proactive and more understanding of the others' time.

Shone (2014) stated that the merging of public relations and event management can be an excellent way to build brand image and reputation and hit objectives, budget limitations can be an obstacle in improving the brand, which was also mentioned by the respondent and public relations professional Gorana Romčević. Another obstacle the said interviewee noted was the lack of communication she experienced in one particular situation between her team and another team, which illustrates the relevance of Seitel's (2016) explanation that the work of public relations is founded on a mutually satisfactory two-way communication. This example demonstrates possible complications in practice and that the job of a public relations professional is to work on mastering the basic principles of PR such as communication, honesty and proactivity to solve problems.

Following that, the interviewees, gave their opinions on how public relations protocols enhanced event management. They agreed events have to have protocols, rules and strategies set in place to minimise the chance of crises and to create a more effective environment for everybody to work. One respondent emphasised it is a good idea to create documents for everybody to have on-hand on bigger-scale events so time can be saved and any miscommunication is avoided.

The research delved into the potential challenges that public relations professionals might encounter while managing events, uncovering a wide range of obstacles that these professionals must navigate. All interviewees unanimously acknowledged that numerous challenges could arise, each posing different levels of difficulty and requiring varied strategies for resolution. Many interviewees emphasized that crises represent one of the most significant challenges, with the potential to have a detrimental impact on individuals working in the field. The stress

and pressure associated with handling such crises can be immense, affecting both the professional and personal well-being of public relations practitioners. Some claimed that without proper preparation, even minor setbacks can escalate into major problems, others recognized the myriad challenges that public relations professionals might face but expressed confidence in the ability of skilled practitioners to overcome these obstacles. They pointed out that a good public relations professional should possess strong problem-solving skills, resilience and adaptability. All interviewees agreed that public relations professionals should be well-equipped in practical and theoretical knowledge, work well under pressure and ensure to evolve and adapt in this ever-evolving landscape of public relations and event management in the entertainment industry of music festival and nightclubs.

Moreover, the results revealed that public relations serve as the cornerstone for strengthening stakeholder and media relations, making it an indispensable component of successful event management. The data highlighted that effective public relations strategies are crucial in building and maintaining trust, credibility, and positive communication channels with various stakeholders, including sponsors, partners, attendees, and the media.

The final three questions of the survey delved into personal experiences and opinions, revealing that interviewees generally expressed satisfaction with the performance of public relations professionals within the entertainment industry, specifically in the context of music festivals and nightlife. Despite their overall positive feedback, interviewees acknowledged that there is always potential for improvement in these roles. Interviewees recognized the critical importance of expertise in public relations and event management, highlighting that their interactions with professionals in these fields were predominantly positive. Many shared that public relations practitioners effectively managed communication strategies, media relations, and brand image, contributing significantly to the success of events. Likewise, event management professionals were praised for their organizational skills, logistical planning, and ability to create engaging and seamless event experiences. However, some interviewees noted areas where improvements could be made. Suggestions included enhancing real-time crisis management capabilities, improving stakeholder communication, and incorporating more innovative and creative approaches to event promotion and execution. By addressing these areas, public relations and event management professionals could further elevate the quality

and impact of their work within the entertainment industry. Still, there remains a continuous opportunity for growth and enhancement in these dynamic and demanding fields.

5 CONCLUSION

The last chapter of this research paper is a summary of the facts gathered by examining the literature review and the results from the research conducted through five semi-structured interviews with industry professional in the period of 12 days, starting on the 21 of June 2024. This paper has set out to gain a better understanding and examine the relationship between public relations and event management in the entertainment industry with the niche focus on the club event scene and music festivals.

The conducted research has identified the similarities in approach to public relations and event management between professionals who do not work in the same positions. The most obvious findings from this research are that media and stakeholder relations have to be nurtured, more plans and strategies need to be set in place and more open and honest communication needs to happen among the professionals working in different positions. One of the most significant findings to emerge from all of the five interviews is a description of what a good public relations practitioner has to be like while managing events - honest, communicative, available to everyone, time-organised, mindful of budgets, be a team player, get more creative and proactive.

The insights of this research might be of assistance to further research of topics related to the entertainment industry of music and the clubbing culture as well as to those who are curious about the opinions of these specific interviewees. This appears to be one of the first papers which employs qualitative research to examine the relationship between public relations and event management in this niche industry of entertainment in a way where industry professionals have been asked to voice their opinions and experiences.

One of the limitations of the theoretical part of this paper is the scarcity of existing research on this exact topic. Furthermore, this research paper has been limited to only five interviews and more of them would have given more substantial results. Further research should be done in order to validate the acquired results of this paper. It might explore the opinions of other professionals in order to get additional opinions on the relationship and impact public relations and event management have in the entertainment industry.

The findings of this research indicate a number of important implications for future practice, therefore it is recommended by the author to continue the research on this topic by expanding the number of interviewees and using a mixed methodology of semi-structured interviews and a focus group consisting of other professionals working in the industry.

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APPENDIX

Interview questions

1. The rise in the entertainment and nightlife industry is evident; it's getting bigger and more demanding. Do you agree that PR is becoming more important as the entertainment industry grows? Could events, as we know them, even be happening and growing if it wasn't for PR professionals?
2. In your opinion and experience, is having a PR plan necessary? What has your experience been with making/following a PR plan?
3. Do you think PR specialists are necessary in the process of event management?
4. What has your experience with PR professionals been when planning an event?
5. How have public relations protocols enhanced event management?
6. What challenges do you think PR practitioners face while managing events?
7. What shifts in the industry and your personal experience have you noticed since PR protocols have been introduced into event management?
8. Do you agree PR is strengthening media and stakeholder relationships through event management?
9. A personal question: Tell me about a situation that made you fully aware of the importance of public relations in event management. (crisis management, talent management, safety measures...)
10. Was there a moment when you thought to yourself that the expertise of a PR manager hadn't been necessary and you could have done it yourself, or was there a moment the person hadn't done their job as you expected?
11. If you could change or improve anything about public relations and event management in the industry, what would that be?