

## COLLABORATIVE LEARNING WITH EVENT INDUSTRIES

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The events industry has been a growing sector of the Indonesian economy for several years, such as meetings, incentives, conferences, exhibitions, sports, music, and cultural events. The growth in the events industry has created a demand for reliable and skilled human resources which has resulted in the establishment of degree programs in events management such as the S1 Event degree offered by Universitas Prasetiya Mulya (UPM). This degree combines academic management subjects with vocational subjects that are essential for working in the events industry – one such skill is networking skills. To assist students develop their networks and networking skills, collaborative learning with the events industry is crucial. Using a narrative method, this paper describes the collaboration that was developed by the S1 Event degree faculty team at UPM with industry through a customized apprenticeship program. This program enables the S1 Event students to gain practical event management knowledge by planning and operating live-events for a client organisation based on a project brief from the client. The implication of this study is that university education in event management must consider the importance of collaboration with the events industry to improve the networking skills of students.

**Keywords:** *Event Management, Event Industries, Networking, Collaboration*

### 1. Introduction

The event industry has grown over recent years. In Indonesia, the government acknowledges 100 events related to tourism (Indonesia Ministry of Tourism website, 2019). This includes business events such as meetings, conferences and exhibitions but excluding individual events such as birthday parties, wedding parties, anniversaries of company, etc. In Indonesia there are organizations which are specifically responsible for managing events such as INACEB and IECA, showing that event management has become a very big industry.

According to Getz (2005), events can be divided into special events and MICE events. Special events include sport events, music events, personal events, and cultural events, while MICE is meetings, incentives, conventions and exhibitions. The growth of the events industry was followed by the development of event study programs

offered by universities, polytechnics and colleges, popularly known as event management. The term “event studies” appears in Getz’s speech in the Events Beyond 2000 Conference (Getz, 2007). Previously, academic study about events existed within several disciplines, for example anthropology, geography and the economics of events.

The organisation of events plays an important role in tourism development. Events appear in the development and marketing plans of most destinations (Getz, 2007). Universitas Prasetiya Mulya through its Bachelor Event degree, introduced their graduate profile as Destination Orchestrator and designed their curriculum based on Sapta Aksata, 7 important stakeholders of tourism who possess an important role in achieving a well-being tourism (Universitas Prasetiya Mulya website, 2019). They are Communities, Creative Industries and Agriculture Products, Tour Operators/Hotels/Transportation/Compa

nies, Trading House Entrepreneurs, Universities and Research Institutions, Content and Experience Creators, and Destination Orchestrators. Between these stakeholders, Destination Orchestrator is the most important because of its role to relate all the other six in order to build and develop a tourism destination. Event studies helps to educate people to become Destination Orchestrators. Networking is essential for Destination Orchestrators, therefore collaborative learning becomes important in learning Event studies.

In order to improve the knowledge spillovers and maintain the sustainable development of the industry–university integration, universities have to work closely with the industry (Marshall, 1920). A key requirement is to include learning opportunities within the curriculum that assesses the students' ability to connect classroom theory to practice and to reflect on their individual experience. This has to be supported by structural components and guidelines for improvement. One way of achieving this is through internships where students will have an opportunity to apply classroom theory and coursework to practice.

This paper explains a program called Event Management Apprenticeship to draw a practice-based example of collaborative learning between an academic institution and industry. The following sections will explain how the program was started, the curriculum and syllabi, the rewards and finally an evaluation of the success of the Event Management Apprenticeship.

## **2. Reflection & Lesson Learned**

In 2015, Universitas Prasetiya Mulya collaborated with the Indonesian government and community to build an event. This project is related to two S1 Event modules - Event Planning and Event Operation Management which are conducted in the 1st and 2nd semesters, respectively. During the Event Planning

class, students generated ideas about the event theme and produced a written event proposal. The proposal itself had to be presented to the stakeholders of the event and approved by their decision maker. In Event Operation Management, students learned about how to organise events by staging the event concept they designed and planned in the previous semester.

In 2018, the university decided to deliver a bigger project because students were more experienced and needed a greater challenge. A client institution with complex organizational behaviour characteristics, such as financial company, was believed to have more difficulties to work with. Thus, the students would need extra efforts and extra learning in completing the project task. Fortunately, at the same time one of the biggest private banks in Indonesia saw one of the previous student's event and they thought it would be beneficial if students were involved in their brand activation projects.

The bank, was chosen to be the university's partner to conduct collaborative learning. The bank, related to Triple Helix theory (Etzkowitz and Leydesdorff, 2000), was part of the industry that participated in the event project as the customer/client. The bank wanted to stage four events in 2018 (brand activation) and they needed S1 Event students to develop these events based on the client's brief. The university and the bank agreed to call this collaborative project the Event Management Apprenticeship (EMA).

### **2.1 EMA – Event Management Apprenticeship Program**

Nowadays, students are facing a challenge in looking for real work experience because not many companies want to accept student interns. Furthermore it is costly for universities to make their own big events to give more working exposure to the students.

Meanwhile, in fact, many companies need more temporary human resources to conduct their business activities instead of full-time employees. Thus, the Marketing Communication Department of the bank proposed to collaborate with the university, especially the S1 Event program, to join the bank's Event Management Apprenticeship project, a means for students to gain more real-life work experiences, in which they could hone their event management skills and get more connections with many industry people from diverse backgrounds.

In EMA, students must manage a real event from the preparation stage to the post-event. As they go through this project, students needed to show their excellence by having:

1. Comprehensive knowledge and understanding of the hosted events.
2. Creativity for new ideas.
3. Outstanding flexibility for problem solving.
4. Great communication skills for sponsorship acumen.
5. Executional excellence on the D-day.
6. Integrated thinking on report writing.
7. Great communication skills for the post-event presentation.

**2.1.1. The Benefits**

By completing the EMA, the students will have experience working in a "real"

**2.1.2. The EMA Program Detail**

industry situation and extra points in the class. Although the EMA is an academic project, students must undertake it professionally, and as such the bank provided tangible benefits for students who delivered outstanding performance, individually and in their group, to the program. The benefits are:

- \* certificates for participating in the program
- \* on the job /apprenticeship experience
- \* a reference letter from the bank
- \* scholarship funds based on the aggregate score of the best students
- \* real live case study experience
- \* networking access to professional bankers who became the day to day mentors for the students
- \* an individual feedback report from the mentors
- \* financial payments to cover the students' cost for meals and transportation.

Benefits for the bank included receiving the students' original ideas for the event, the students' creative human resources, and the honest feedback provided to the bank by the students. The bank also learned how to create an event in a logical manner based on theory as well as having an opportunity to cooperate with an academic institution by involving students on the EMA project.

**EMA Detail Program**

<b>Program Milestones</b>	<b>Module Approach</b>	<b>Related Academic Course</b>
Part 1 – Event Ideation 1a. Presentation from The Bank / Briefing 1b. Presentation by Students 1c. Announcement of competition result and	Idea Competition & Presentation to Clients	- Marketing Management - Brand Management - Event Planning - Business Communication

individual job descriptions		
Part 2 – Event Preparation	On The Job Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Project Management</li> <li>- Sponsorship and Fundraising</li> <li>- MICE Event</li> <li>- Lifestyle, Music, Cultural, Sport Event</li> <li>- Event Supplier &amp; Venue Management</li> <li>- Risk &amp; Crisis Management</li> </ul>
Part 3 – Dday Execution	Real Simulation on Events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Project Management</li> <li>- MICE Event</li> <li>- Lifestyle, Music, Cultural &amp; Sport Event</li> <li>- Risk &amp; Crisis Management</li> </ul>
Part 4 – Post Event Report & Review Presentation	Review and presentation to clients	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Business Communication</li> <li>- Project Management</li> </ul>
Part 5 – EMA Graduation	Graduation with EMA Mentors	

The Program divided into four phases and each phase contained a timeline. Each phase had different objectives and had different tools and academic concepts to work with. Students learned the tools and academic concepts from their previous modules/classes or during the current semester. The Table above explains the objectives in each phase and which subject module in the S1 Event degree may help them.

In Part 1, the objective was for the students to give ideas about the event based on the client's brief. As this project related to brand activation, the students has to acknowledge the bank's target market and their consumers' perception of the bank. Students were able to use tools and cocnepts from both the Marketing Management and Brand management modules to explore this. After that the students were able to elaborate the information gained and to generate ideas for their project brief. This process of designing an event is covered in the module Event Planning.

In Part 2, students had to prepare all the items they needed to make the approved event idea happen. The module Project Management helped them to break the big concept for the event into micro activities which is called work breakdown structure. Other information they needed to prepare the event such as which sponsor might be interested to support the event, where would be the most suitable place to hold the event, or which vendors can offer the best deal, will be supported by other subject modules such as, Sponsorship and Fundraising, Event Supplier and Venue Management, for example.

Part 3, was all about implementing and staging the Event. Event Operation Management, MICE Management, Risk and Crisis Management, were the most important subject modules to support students delivering their best performance in this phase. Lastly in Part 4, students had to evaluate their event,

write their report and present it to the bank. This part required the students to use their knowledge and understanding from the modules Event Management and Business Communication which developed the students analysis and communication skills in order to present their results.

## **2.2. Evaluation**

At the end of the project the bank evaluated the student's performance based on their responsibility in the project. The bank felt that involving students gave a special direct impact to the activation events. Based on their calculation, visitors numbers to the activation events increased significantly from 6,000 in the previous year to more than 10,000 in 2018. The bank stated that the variation of speakers and tenants were the reasons for this improvement, which came from the students creativity and ideas. As a result, the bank decided to give more rewards to the students.

During the EMA, the bank and the faculty lecturers realised that scheduling of the project work and the events themselves was one of the crucial challenges that was encountered by the students. Students experienced a tight schedule because they must work in the bank's office once or twice a week while studying in the campus on the other days. Thus, it was not easy to have sudden changes of schedule because of the students' overall project and academic commitments. Consequently, working schedules had to be included within the academic calendar at the beginning of project initiation.

The faculty lecturers learned, beside the scheduling, having an agreement letter between the institutions prevented the students from being overused. The scope of the work, objectives and rewards were included in the agreement. In order to understand the scope of work during the

EMA, the curriculum of the project had to be defined.

### 3. Conclusion

This project has shown that students' knowledge of event studies helped them in understanding the client's brief, transfer it into ideas and execute the event. As a result, involving students brought significant impact for the bank on the events it organised in collaboration with the students, especially in variations that led to improvement in the number of visitors who attended the bank's activation events.

In addition, the learning gained from collaborating with the bank has also emphasised that the scope of work, objectives, rewards and allowances, curriculum and scheduling must be clearly defined before the project starts. All of these had to be transferred into a written agreement.

Finally, it is concluded that collaboration between an academic institution and industry is beneficial for both the faculty lecturers, students, and the industry itself. Collaborative learning with industry helps students to connect theory to real business situations, while industry gains more ideas and human resources, and the faculty lecturers get updated case studies that could be taught in class. However, the continuity of the project depends on the needs of the industry and its decision maker.

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