

LeD Events makes festivals cleaner

High energy bills, a significant amount of waste, and a festival area littered with plastic cups? Not if it's up to LeD Events, the partnership between Bert Lagerweij and Theo Dahm. These Nijmegen entrepreneurs support colleagues in organizing sustainable festivals or events "Because having a party with minimal impact on the environment is much more fun!"

1. Introduction

Bert Lagerweij and Theo Dahm began their collaboration in 2009 after the festival 'Dag van het Levenslied'. They were both closely involved with the festival and afterwards saw what disorder was left behind. As treasurer, Bert Lagerweij had access to the energy bill, and he knew things had to be done differently. The idea arose to increase the sustainability of their own festival. If that went well, they could also offer their plan to the coordinators of other festivals. By the end of 2010, they were commissioned to map out the CO2 emissions from the Nijmegen Vierdaagse Feesten. Since 2011, they have been sharing their knowledge, experience, and involvement with other festivals and events.

2. Principles

Initially, the main objective to increase the sustainability of festivals and events was for environmental reasons. Festivals should not only be fun for people but also good for the environment. The founders wanted to inflict the least amount of damage on the environment as possible. Therefore, in the initial phase, the focus was primarily on waste, energy, water, transport, etc.

Once these factors were addressed, Lagerweij and Dahm began focusing on aspects that were more social in nature. Currently, each festival is being linked to a charity whereby a portion of the revenue will be donated to this charity. With the money that is generated from the increased sustainability, it is feasible to give something back to society. Multiple values are created, specifically, ecological and social value. Collective value has also been realized only a few years after its founding as both the organizers of the festivals themselves and the municipality are collaborating with Led Events in an attempt to increase sustainability. Economic value does not play an important role here as the main goal is not about making profits.

3. The design

The current business model has not yet been fully developed. In the first few years, enormous steps were taken, however, now smaller steps are being taken each year.

Many (technological) developments are currently being investigated. The founders are striving to use only LED lights and to bring mobile solar panels to festivals in order to create a festival that is energy neutral. However, that is still in the future as, currently, we are still waiting for these new technological developments.

There is also an initiative of trying to unite the coordinators of Nijmegen events to work together. For example, organizing an event requires numerous pieces of equipment that will only be used for a day. The remainder of the time, this equipment is stored which is why LeD Events has begun loaning out equipment. This idea can be developed much further. From an environmental and cost perspective, much more can be achieved with collaboration. By updating every year and adapting to new developments, the business model of LeD Events remains up to date, viable, and upscalable. The transaction forms of LeD Events are *creating* sustainable aspects into already existing events and *sharing* experiences and knowledge through workshops and meetings.

4. Value Position

LeD Events primarily aims to encourage and motivate people to organize events differently, i.e., more sustainably. The promoters of LeD Events also want to demonstrate that organizing events more sustainably does not necessarily have to be more expensive and complicated which is something that many entrepreneurs actually believe. LeD Events wants to make it clear that a more sustainable approach, in the long run, will be more beneficial.

Many events are organized by volunteers or by people who are getting paid very little, so sustainability is usually not a priority as people do not yet have the time and resources to spend on this. It should be clarified with them that becoming more sustainable is actually beneficial and can also be accomplished in small steps at a time.

In the beginning, LeDs Events distinguished themselves mainly because it was new territory, and they were the first to enter this field. A growing number of the coordinators of events are taking on the task of increasing sustainability themselves. For Bert Lagerweij and Theo Dahm, it is more important that they work toward becoming more sustainable and less about LeD Events getting hired. Therefore, they are organizing workshops and are taking part in debates and meetings on sustainability. In this aspect, they are sharing their knowledge and experiences and making it easier for others to copy the business model. Most importantly, Lagerweij and Dahm want to show that it is not that difficult, and it is even great fun.

Multiple value: the basic principle is to create ecological value. If that is established and begins to become successful, there is then an opportunity to focus on economic and social values.

The shared value: is mainly observed in the collaboration with Live Build. This foundation helps LeD Events in its efforts to attract more people to pay with a card instead of cash during festivals and receives a contribution for their efforts.

The collective value creation: becomes apparent in the cooperation with several companies, such as the supplier of LED lights, which brainstorm and test new inventions with the waste disposal service and the cup supplier.

You cannot organize a sustainable festival by yourself. All organizations that you work with also

need to have this sustainable approach.

5. Community

The community of LeD Events consists mainly of companies that they have already had long term contracts with. These companies have been asked to adjust their approach and to increase their ambitions in becoming more sustainable. For example, with the cup suppliers, they have agreed on delivering cups made of PLA instead of plastic. These renewed collaborations create ecological value. In addition, there are also partnerships with charities, which creates social value.

The experiences so far show that it is not possible for everyone to join in the quest for sustainability; however, the municipality is increasingly taking part in the community and showing a growing interest in the sustainability of events. Unfortunately, the MKB wants to be more sustainable, but it is currently struggling with being financially sound. The same was true for a fair food supplier who was catering at a festival. The collaboration was not yet sufficiently profitable for this fair food supplier, and the company was forced to stop after two years.

6. Results

Increasing the sustainability of events has yielded many positive results. The energy bills have decreased, there are less CO₂ emissions, less waste, the fields are kept cleaner, and plastic cups are no longer being used. When these results were achieved, LeD Events began to focus more on social aspects. For instance, last year, a collaboration occurred with the foundation Live Build. This foundation realizes sustainable water projects and schools in Cameroon. LeD Events wanted fewer people paying in cash at events. Therefore, in a playful manner, Live Build would invite people at a festival to pay some attention to the charity and, at the same time, encouraged visitors to pay more by card. Live Build would receive 5% of the profits made from transactions paid by card. Ultimately, the total usage of card payments increased by 10%. In order to prevent that all of the cups would end up on the ground, an initiative was launched to encourage the collecting of cups which children did in exchange for a token.

Financially, the sustainability approach has cost LeD Events money. The cup-collecting initiative costs several thousand euros per festival. In addition, significant sums of money were obviously paid to the charities. Bert Lagerweij and Theo Dahm are convinced that the increase of sustainability will subsequently later increase profitability. Moreover, the sustainable approach gives a good feeling and, according to the initiators, this is the main reason why it should be done.

7. Conclusion

LeD Events attempts to organize events in a sustainable manner while also creating a more pleasant experience of the event itself to demonstrate that sustainability can also simply be fun. This business model is viable and scalable; sustainability will become increasingly important.

Municipalities are showing increased interest and will, in the future, pay far more attention to the sustainability aspects of an event before granting a license. Coordinators of events will no longer be able to avoid advancing in sustainability. According to LeD Events, different events should not perceive each other as competitors but as a source of inspiration to learn from and to better themselves. There is still much more we can cultivate in the sharing economy!

Address: Vermeer 34, 6521 LX Nijmegen

Phone: 06-132111 79 (Bert Lagerweij)

Email: info@conbuquest.nl

Website: www.led-events.nl