Satisfaction of Vendors who Participated in Sunset Magazine's Savor the Central Coast Event

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ABSTRACT

SATISFACTION OF VENDORS WHO PARTICIPATED IN SUNSET SAVOR THE CENTRAL COAST EVENT

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The San Luis Obispo County Visitors and Conference Bureau hosted the first food and wine event "Sunset Magazine's Savor the Central Coast" that showcased the county's best food and wine. Within the tourism industry stakeholder and Convention and Visitors Bureaus (CVBs) involvement in the community are crucial to tourism success. The purpose of this study was to assess the satisfaction of vendors who participated in the event. This study was conducted through the online survey application SurveyMonkey. The results of the survey indicate that overall, vendors were fairly satisfied with the event; however, they would like to see booth space and placement, and the number of event attendees improved. Key conclusions made from this study are to move toward better vendor representation, and to provide improved space allocation.

Keywords: Savor the Central Coast, special event, wineries, vendors.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PAGE

ABSTRACT ii

TABLE OF CONTENTS iii

LIST OF TABLES v

Chapter 1. INTRODUCTION AND REVIEW OF LITERATURE 1

Background of Study 1

Review of Literature 2

Stakeholder involvement in community events 2

Convention and visitors bureaus role in society 5

Summary 8

Purpose of the Study 9

Research Questions 9

Delimitations 9

Limitations 9

Assumptions 10

Definition of Terms 10

Chapter 2. METHODS AND PROCEDURES 12

Description of Subjects 12

Description of Instrument 13

Description of Procedures 14

Method of Data Analysis 14

Chapter 3. PRESENTATION OF THE RESULTS 16

Subject Demographics 16

Overall Vendor Satisfaction 16

Vendor Preparedness……..…….17

Booth Space Satisfaction…….……...…18

Wine Consumption Satisfaction…….……18

Vendor Registration……..……..19

Vendor Feedback 20

Summary..... 21

Chapter 4. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS 22

Summary 22

Discussion..... 23

Conclusions 26

Recommendations..... 26

REFERENCES..... 27

APPENDIXES 30

APPENDIX A. Questionnaire..... 31

APPENDIX B. Informed Letter of Consent 35

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE PAGE

Table 1. Vendor Satisfaction According to Mean Score...……...…….17

Table 2. Vendor Booth Space Satisfaction...…….18

Table 3. Participant Wine Consumption Satisfaction...…….19

Table 4. Wine Poured Throughout the Event..……..20

Table 5. Reasons for not Returning in the Future..……..……..21

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION AND REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Background of Study

Daily, there are many types of special events that take place in the world. Events range from mega events like New Year's Eve in Time-Square to a simple backyard wedding. This study focuses on a citywide community event; defined as "an event that requires the use of a convention center or event complex, as well as multiple hotels in the host city" (Professional Convention Management Association, 2008, p. 35). Citywide events bring local businesses and members of the community together in a unique way that promotes each individual business as well as the community as a whole. In order for special events to be successful in a community, the events must have the support of small businesses and the involvement of the stakeholders in the community.

San Luis Obispo County is known for its many citywide events that vary from local farmers' markets to the California Mid State Fair. Sunset Magazine's Savor the Central Coast was a first time citywide event held in San Luis Obispo County from Thursday, September 30th to Sunday, October 3rd, 2010. The San Luis Obispo Visitors and Conference Bureau, a local non-profit that is a part of the Conventions and Visitors Bureaus (CVBs) nationwide, proposed this event to the editors at Sunset Magazine. The Visitors and Conference Bureau's goal with Savor the Central Coast was to create an event that would showcase all that the Central Coast has to offer by opening the entire community up for tourists all over the world to enjoy and explore. Over 90 wineries and

50 restaurants were represented at the event, and countless other community stakeholders were involved.

With Savor the Central Coast being a first time event, the Visitors and Conference Bureau was interested in determining if the stakeholders in San Luis Obispo County would support the event in the future. The event and research focused mainly on Central Coast wineries. In order for this event to occur again, the Visitors and Conference Bureau wants to have the approval of the wineries and wants to incorporate any changes they suggest. This study will assess how satisfied each winery that participated in this event was and what they feel can be improved upon in the future. The purpose of this study was to assess the satisfaction of vendors who participated in Sunset Magazine's Savor the Central Coast Event.

Review of Literature

Research for this review of literature was conducted at Robert E. Kennedy Library on the campus of California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo. In addition to books and other resources, the following online databases were utilized: Academic Search Elite, Hospitality and Tourism Complete, and Google Scholar. This review of literature is organized into the following topic areas: Stakeholder involvement in community events and Conventions and Visitors Bureaus' influence on society.

Stakeholder involvement in community events. To thrive, local businesses need to be invested in the community. Most businesses cannot succeed without the support and help of their local community; they have to form trustworthy relationships with other local businesses to guarantee success. Local businesses must identify their stakeholders,

learn how to successfully interact with them, and form strong relationships with them to keep them all connected. This section describes stakeholder involvement in community events.

There is not a universally accepted definition of a stakeholder. However, Mitchell and Cohen (2006) define a stakeholder as "any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of [an] organization's objectives" (p. 9). Each stakeholder in the hospitality and the tourism industry depends on other stakeholders in order to succeed within the community. Alonso (2010) stated that "the hospitality sector, as is the case in other industries, is highly dependent on collaborative relationships" (p. 17). The hotel industry relies on the tourist activities in an area to bring in the people who stay at their hotels, and restaurants rely on the food suppliers to get the food they need to run their businesses. As Yilmaz and Gunel (2009) have noted, tourism is a hard working sector, and it provides mostly intangible products. Businesses cannot ignore the fact that they depend on other businesses to be successful. An important segment of a business is to determine how they are going to interact with their stakeholders.

It can be difficult to identify companies' stakeholders in local businesses. Yilmaz and Gunel (2009) describe the most important stakeholders as "organizations, which can influence the organization and be influenced by the organization" (p. 98). The best way to address stakeholders for a company's benefit is to acknowledge each one individually so that they feel like a part of the company and then determine which stakeholders need the most attention and which need the least attention (Ford, Pepper, & Gresock, 2009).

Each stakeholder has a different goal for their business and a different way of obtaining that goal. Yilmaz and Gunel (2009) state that "every organization's stakeholder

priorities are determined by organization's conditions and vary from one organization to another" (p. 99). One way that Yilmaz and Gunel discuss, as a method for interacting with stakeholders, is to examine the business and find out how each stakeholder is connected to it; that way, the business owner can focus on important stakeholders to help their business succeed.

Along with knowing how to interact with stakeholders, Tinsley and Lynch (2008) emphasized that there needs to be an understanding between the destination and the businesses within the destination that they are in for each entity to grow. Based on their research findings, Tinsley and Lynch also discuss the importance of working well with each other. There must be a real, or perceived, differentiation between the two businesses helping each other to have growth in the community. Businesses are naturally competitive, but are more likely to work together if they are striving for a common goal. As Ford et al. (2009) describe, the best way to keep a stakeholder a friend or make a rival stakeholder a friend is to "communicat[e] with these groups on how their missions might overlap" with the mission of other businesses in the community (p. 178). This overlap links stakeholders to one another and allows them to work together.

Stakeholders in the tourism industry are all connected. As Munro, King and Polonsky (2006) wrote, " If real long-term benefits are to be achieved for all stakeholders, tourism development must be sustainable across a wide range of indications" (p. 97). The only way the development of tourism will stay sustainable is for businesses to work as a network of stakeholders for the common purpose of furthering their community's tourism success. "The enhancement of destination attractiveness… involves collaboration between the public and private sectors" (Munro et al., p. 100).

When all sectors of tourism work together as a community, they can enhance each service individually while improving the overall experience for tourists (Alonso, 2010). The relationships that stakeholders have with each other should be a "fundamental part of their existence" (Alonso, p. 18). When business owners are able to look past their needs as a business to those of the community, more people can prosper and enjoy a community. Tinsley and Lynch (2008) suggest that if every stakeholder in a community had the same feeling of friendliness and hospitality towards one another, they would not have trouble sharing business from incoming tourists with each other, and the community would prosper as a tourist destination.

When all stakeholders work together for the good of the community, Alonso (2010) stated that "multiple benefits are to be gained among operations from such relationships" (p. 21). When businesses are promoting one another, the whole area will be promoted more actively. New York has an annual wine and food fest that brings a lot of stakeholders together and promotes each individual stakeholder within the larger scheme of promoting New York. Each stakeholder in the event gets a chance to show off what they are known for and then they also help in supporting the entire community by sponsoring certain parts of the event. They all come together to celebrate food, wine and their community (Sekula, 2010). Recognizing stakeholders in an organization is an important part of success in a business. It is especially important to the Conventions and Visitors Bureau in each county.

Convention and visitors bureaus role in society. Many communities work together to promote their area as a whole with the hopes of furthering each individual business. Convention and Visitors Bureaus (CVBs) are non-profit organizations that allow the

community of stakeholders to work together to promote their community. There are five primary functions that CVBs play in their destinations. Their functions are to be an economic driver, community marketer, industry coordinator, quasi-public representative, and builder of community pride (Morrison, Bruen, & Anderson, 1998). This review will focus on CVBs roles as economic drivers for their community, community marketers, and industry coordinators.

"Convention and visitors bureau[s] (CVBs) have become a dominant type of destination marketing organization since the very first bureau was founded in Detroit in 1895" (Koutoulas, 2005, p. 139). As Huang (2006) states, "CVBs serve two major constituents: Their customers (leisure travelers and groups planners) and their clients CVB members or partners and local businesses" (pp. 88-89). Marketing the community allows CVBs to serve their clients well and gives the clients opportunities to succeed as a business. Wang and Fesenmaier (2006) state that, "The key to successful destination marketing efforts depends primarily on the representation and provision of timely and accurate information relevant to consumers' needs" (p. 239).

Another reason that it is so important for CVBs to market their area well is because "location accessibility greatly influences attendance at exhibitions, conventions, and meetings. If participants can get to the event location easily via plane, train, or interstates, higher attendance or participation is likely" (Pearlman, 2008, p. 109). Stakeholders in CVBs are dependent on the CVB's ability to market the community well because, "their performance is closely coupled to the CVBs ability to promote visitor volume expenditures" (Ford et al., 2009, p. 169). There are many ways in which CVBs can market their community; successful strategies include advertising, public relations, website marketing, and event development (Huang, 2006). If the CVB in a community is

marketing the area well, it will lead the community as an economic driver.

In each community, "Stakeholders-including tourism businesses as well as public-sector organizations-pool their resources through the CVB, thus achieving more marketing power in their pursuit to attract tourists and meetings" (Koutoulas, 2005, pp. 140-141). This action of pooling resources allows the CVB to drive the economy of a community. Koutoulas also states that CVBs are interested in "both the MICE (meetings, incentives, conventions, and exhibition) and the leisure travel market" and they focus their efforts on driving the economy with those groups (p. 144).

There are some businesses "that collect taxes and benefits from the marketing efforts of the CVB. These entities are highly concerned with the effectiveness of the CVB and its executives" (Ford & Pepper, 2009, p. 3). CVBs should make sure that they are allocating their funds correctly and putting the correct amount of emphasis on the segments that they help promote. If they do not use their ability to drive the economy appropriately, some businesses may turn against their efforts and make it harder for the entire community to increase their profits.

Industry coordination may be one of the most important roles of CVBs. The Destination Marketing Association International (2006) reveals that, "The majority of CVBs (87%) receive public funding from hotel occupancy tax revenue" (para. 4). Because of this fact, CVBs are very invested in their stakeholders. These stakeholders hold the key to CVBs funding, and the stakeholders count on the CVBs for business. Therefore, they must work together to succeed in the community. The first step for CVBs in coordinating the industry is "identifying stakeholders and managing them effectively" (Ford et al., 2009, p. 171).

Ford et al. (2009) suggest that managing stakeholders becomes a top priority for CVBs. Park, Lehto, and Morrison (2008) state that "the CVB should take a position to maintain a balance of interests with community members, which makes it possible to sustain collaborative relationships with the community" (p. 413). Park et al. also state that "if partners believe that their involvement in collaboration is likely to enable them to resources, they will be more likely to participate actively to achieve mutual goals" (p. 400). CVBs have the responsibility to educate the businesses in the community as to why it is beneficial to work first with the CVB and second with other businesses in the community. The more coordination and cooperation a CVB has from its stakeholders, the easier it will be for them to market the area as a whole. When a CVB is able to market the community, drive the economy, and work together with stakeholders to promote the community, it gives tourists or conference attendees a positive feeling about the area and better meets their needs and desires for coming to the community (Shin, 2009).

Summary. There are many stakeholders that are involved in the special events and tourism sectors of a community. These stakeholders make events possible, and they allow tourists to enjoy their time in the community. Together they promote their own individual businesses and the region or community as a whole. Convention and Visitors Bureaus (CVBs) in these communities manage all of the different stakeholders. These CVBs use their funds to market the area and lead the tourism economy. There is a lack of research as to how these community stakeholders feel about the special events that they are involved in within their community. The San Luis Obispo Visitors and Conference Bureau is interested in researching stakeholder satisfaction, specific to their event. This

study will focus on how local businesses in San Luis Obispo County were satisfied with their involvement in Sunset Magazine's Savor the Central Coast.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to assess the satisfaction of vendors who participated in Sunset Magazine's Savor the Central Coast.

Research Questions

1. Are vendors satisfied with different aspects of the event from their standpoint?
2. Are vendors satisfied with the operation of the event?
3. Are vendors satisfied with the overall event?
4. Will vendors return to the event?

Delimitations

This study was delimited to the following parameters:

1. Information on Sunset Magazine's Savor the Central Coast was gathered from vendors involved in the event.
2. Vendor satisfaction with this event was analyzed.
3. The data were collected during the Winter 2011.
4. Information for this study was gathered using an online questionnaire.

Limitations

This study was limited by the following factors:

1. The instrument used in this study was not tested for validity or reliability.
2. Participants in this study have a relationship with the organization sponsoring the questionnaire.
3. The online questionnaire was not confidential, therefore a social desirability bias may be present.
4. Answers may be inaccurate, as vendors were forced to rely on memory with the online questionnaire being distributed three months after the event.

Assumptions

This study was based on the following assumptions:

1. It was assumed that email addresses for vendors were current and valid.
2. It was assumed that participants would respond honestly and to the best of their knowledge.
3. It was assumed that participants who responded actually participated in the event.
4. It was assumed that participants gave accurate numbers regarding wine distribution.

Definition of Terms

The following are terms defined as used in this study:

Citywide event. "An event that requires the use of a convention center or event complex, as well as multiple hotels in the host city" (Professional Convention Management Association, 2008, p. 35).

The San Luis Obispo Visitors and Conference Bureau. A local non-profit organization that supports businesses related to tourism and special events in San Luis Obispo County.

Stakeholder. "Any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of [an] organization's objectives" (Mitchell & Cohen, 2006, p. 9).

Conventions and Visitors Bureau. A local non-profit organization that allows the community of stakeholders to work together and promote their community

Chapter 2

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

The purpose of this study was to assess the satisfaction of vendors who participated in Sunset Magazine's Savor the Central Coast. This chapter includes the description of subjects, description of instruments, description of procedures, and the method of data analysis.

Description of Subjects

The subjects in this study were local wineries who participated in Sunset Magazine's Savor the Central Coast from September 30 to October 3, 2010. Ninety-two wineries were involved in this event. The event allowed attendees to "taste wine from Central Coast wineries. Indulge with chefs preparing meals grown by local farmers. Discover the 2-acre kitchen garden. Tour the 20,000 square-foot Central Coast Pavilion. Learn with Sunset Magazine's expert editors" (San Luis Obispo County Visitors and Conference Bureau, 2010, para. 2). Census sampling was used in this study, all 92 wineries that participated in the event were sent the online questionnaire.

There were approximately 200 wineries existing in San Luis Obispo County at the time of this study. The wineries that participated were mainly small businesses with prize winning wines and tasting rooms for locals and tourists to enjoy. The top wines produced on the Central Coast are: Cabernet Sauvignon, Chardonnay, Merlot, Syrah, Zinfandel, and Pinot Noir (San Luis Obispo Chamber of Commerce, 2010). The climate on the Central Coast is perfect for winemaking and the beauty of the area attracts tourists from

all over the world to sustain the multitude of wineries. The vendors who participated in Savor the Central Coast were local wineries.

Description of Instrument

The instrument used for this study was a 24-item online questionnaire. The questionnaire consisted of questions that determined the satisfaction of vendors at Sunset Magazine's Savor the Central Coast Event. The researcher created the questionnaire with input and approval from the San Luis Obispo Visitors and Conference Bureau, O'Donnell Lane Event Company, and Sunset Magazine. The pilot test was given to eight people who took the approved questionnaire as though they were the vendors; from the pilot test no changes to the questionnaire were made.

The questionnaire asked vendors to describe how satisfied they were with various aspects of the event (see Appendix A). A 5-point Likert-type scale was used to determine satisfaction of overall aspects of the event. All vendor specific questions were open-ended so that the researcher and the San Luis Obispo Visitors and Conference Bureau were able to discern what should be changed for the vendors for future years of the event. There were also fill in the blank questions to determine the amount of wine the vendors used throughout the weekend. The demographics that were obtained only pertained to the location of the business (i.e., San Luis Obispo County, Ventura County). This allowed an analysis of which vendors would participate in the event again.

An informed consent letter was attached to the email sent out with the online questionnaire (see Appendix B). The letter detailed the amount of time participants would need to complete the questionnaire, their ability to refrain from taking the questionnaire,

the confidentiality agreement, and contact information should participants have wanted to contact the researcher or Cal Poly about the survey.

Description of Procedures

The researcher acquired all revisions to the online questionnaire on December 14, 2010. After receiving approval for the online questionnaire, the researcher entered the survey questions into the online questionnaire database SurveyMonkey.com. The San Luis Obispo Visitors and Conference Bureau distributed it through electronic email on Wednesday, December 15, 2010 with the informed consent letter as an attachment to the email. The online questionnaire was sent to all 92 wineries that participated as vendors at the event. Participants were given one month to respond. Participants had to confirm that they had read the letter and were asked to print it before moving on to the questionnaire. All data were collected from December 15, 2010 to January 14, 2011.

Method of Data Analysis

Qualitative and quantitative data were collected using the online questionnaire. Microsoft Excel was used to tabulate and analyze the data. The questionnaire was designed to answer four research questions.

To answer the first three research questions pertaining to vendor satisfaction of specific aspects of the event, the operation of the event, and the overall event, several questions and analytical methods were used. Likert-type scale data were collected and analyzed using measures of central tendency (i.e., mean and standard deviation). With the 5-point Likert type scale for satisfaction, mean scores of 3.5 and above were determined

to include an acceptable level of satisfaction. Open-ended questions were also used; data were collected and analyzed using an inter-rater reliability test between the researcher and the Visitors and Conference Bureau staff. Emergent themes from open-ended data were classified into general themes and conclusions were drawn from them.

To answer the fourth research question dealing with vendor's willingness to return to the event, several methods of data collection and analysis were used. Multiple-choice data about vendor's willingness to return were analyzed using frequency and percentage. Qualitative data were collected and analyzed using inter-rater reliability.

Chapter 3

PRESENTATION OF THE RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to assess the satisfaction of vendors who participated in Sunset Magazine's Savor the Central Coast. This study was conducted through the online survey application SurveyMonkey from December 15, 2010 to January 14, 2011. The researcher asked wine vendors of Sunset Magazine's Savor the Central Coast to assess their satisfaction with the event. Of the 92 vendors who were contacted to participate in the study, 29 vendors completed the questionnaire (response rate= 31.52%).

Subject Demographics

Participants were asked to specify the location of their winery or tasting room. The largest percentage of participants (92.60%, n=25) responded that their winery/tasting room is in San Luis Obispo County. Two participants (7.40%, n=2) indicated that their winery/tasting room is in Santa Barbara County. None of the participants in this study had a winery/tasting room in Monterey County or Ventura County.

Overall Vendor Satisfaction

Participants of this study were asked to evaluate their satisfaction of four overall aspects of the event. As shown in Table 1, the top three areas of satisfaction, found on a scale of 1 to 5, were: the quality of attendees (mean= 3.66), the overall event (mean=

3.48), and policies of the event (mean= 3.46). The lowest area of satisfaction was the overall layout of the marketplace with a mean of 2.97. The overall mean score was 3.39.

Table 1
Vendor Satisfaction According to Mean Score

Satisfaction Factors	Mean	SD
Quality of attendees	3.66	0.94
Overall event	3.48	0.78
Policies of the event	3.46	0.92
Overall layout of the marketplace	2.97	1.09
Overall mean	3.39	0.93

Vendor Preparedness

Since this was a first-time event, vendor preparedness was measured in this study. A majority of participants in this study, 93.10%, (n= 27) felt prepared before coming to the event. Few participants, 6.90%, (n= 2) did not feel prepared to come to the event.

From the open-ended response section of this question, the main theme that emerged regarding vendor preparedness was that there was adequate information about the event given to vendors prior to the event. However, vendors were led to believe that there would be more attendees then the actual number of attendees. Another major theme was that event staff was not well enough informed to help them find their booths or resolve issues throughout the event.

Booth Space Satisfaction

Participants in this study were asked to rate specific qualities of their booth space. As found in Table 2, vendors were not satisfied (58.60%, n= 17) with the layout of their booth space. However, vendors were satisfied (75.90%, n= 22) with their booth location.

Table 2
Vendor Booth Space Satisfaction

	Yes		No	
Booth space specifications	*f*	%	*f*	%
Booth space layout satisfaction	12	41.40	17	58.60
Booth space placement satisfaction	22	75.90	7	24.10

There were two prevalent themes from the open-ended response section of these questions. The first theme was that vendors felt there was an inefficient use of booth space at the event. The second theme was that, although all wineries paid the same fees, booth locations within the marketplace were not equal.

Wine Consumption Satisfaction

Specific questions were asked about vendor satisfaction with wine consumption at the event. Participants in this study were satisfied (96.60%, n= 28) with the ratio of food to wine vendors. The largest percentage of participants (79.30%, n= 23) felt that the

number of wineries represented at the event was appropriate. Regarding the amount of wine each participant poured, 15 subjects (55.60%) were not satisfied. (see Table 3)

Table 3
Participant Wine Consumption Satisfaction

	Yes		No	
Wine Consumption Satisfaction	*f*	%	*f*	%
Ratio of wine to food vendors	28	96.60	1	3.40
Number of wineries represented	23	79.30	6	20.70
Wine poured	12	44.40	15	55.60

There were two recurring themes throughout the open-ended responses to these questions. One major theme was that participants felt that there were too many wineries present relative to the amount of attendees at the event. The second major theme was that they did not pour as much wine as they were led to believe they would pour.

Participants were asked about the amount of wine they poured each day of the event. As found in Table 4, there were more cases poured on Sunday (mean= 0.94). However, there were more bottles poured on Saturday (mean= 6.87).

Vendor Registration

Participants of this study were asked to reflect on the $750 registration fee for the event. They were asked if $750 was a fair price to pay for the event, 92.60% (n= 25) felt that it was not a fair price, 7.20% (n=2) felt that it was a fair price. Participants were also

Table 4

Wine Poured Throughout the Event

	Bottles		Cases	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Wine poured on Saturday	6.87	2.11	0.81	0.98
Wine poured on Sunday	6.72	2.11	0.94	0.77

asked if they would participate in future years if they received a discounted returning fee of $500; 78.60% (n=22) said that they would return for that price whereas 21.40% (n= 6) said that they would not return.

The questionnaire also assessed if the wineries would participate in this event in the future; 69.00% (n= 20) said that they would participate again, 31.00% (n= 9) said that they would not. Those who answered that they would not return were asked to select their main reason for not returning. The largest percentage of participants (70.00%, n= 7) reported that the cost of the event registration fee was their main reason for not returning in the future. (see Table 5)

Vendor Feedback

At the end of the questionnaire, participants of this study were asked to leave any additional feedback about the event that was not expressed throughout the rest of the survey. There were four major themes throughout these responses. The first theme was that vendors felt the event staff was not sufficiently informed to help them throughout the event. The second theme was that vendors did not feel that their winery was recognized

Table 5

Reasons for not Returning in the Future

Options	*f*	%
Cost of event registration fee	7	70.00
Location of the event/travel time to event location	1	10.00
Quality of event participants	2	20.00
Date of the event	0	0.00

well enough throughout the event. Thirdly, vendors felt there were too many local attendees; they want to see more attendees from other parts of the state and an overall increase in event attendees. The last major theme was that the cost of registration was too high for the amount of space they were given.

Summary

The results presented in this chapter indicate an overall vendor satisfaction with Sunset Magazine's Savor the Central Coast. The results also presented a need for changes in booth layout and space, registration costs, and number of attendees. A detailed summary and a discussion of the findings will follow in Chapter 4.

Chapter 4

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

This study is instrumental in allowing the SLO County Visitors and Conference Bureau (VCB) the opportunity to improve the Savor the Central Coast event to encourage vendor participation in the future. This concluding chapter will include the following: summary of the study, a discussion of the findings including limitations, conclusions based on research questions, recommendations for the organization, and future research.

Summary

The San Luis Obispo County VCB created and hosted the food and wine event Savor the Central Coast that showcased the best of the county's food and wine. Stakeholder and Convention and Visitors Bureaus involvement in the community is crucial to tourism industry success. Stakeholders in a community allow people to work together, and CVBs allow the stakeholders to collaborate to promote their community.

The purpose of this study was to discover the satisfaction of winery vendors at Savor the Central Coast following the event. This study was conducted through the online survey application SurveyMonkey. The data were tabulated and analyzed by either frequency and percentage or mean score and standard deviation using SurveyMonkey and Microsoft Excel.

The findings indicate that overall, vendors were satisfied with the event. However, vendors were not satisfied with their booth space or placement and wanted

more event attendees. A majority of participants reported that they would participate in the event in future years.

Discussion

The following section will examine the findings, draw conclusions, and make recommendations for the SLO County VCB. This section will also reveal major themes that appeared in the study and how they are related to previous research. Finally, the researcher will identify any limitations that influence the results and conclude with the study's overall contribution to the special events field.

Because Savor the Central Coast was a first time event, both the vendors and the SLO County VCB were unsure of what to expect. There are many important findings from the study, including, vendors' satisfaction with the quality of attendees, policies of the event, and layout of the marketplace. However, vendors want more booth space, and many of them would change their booth placement to a more heavily trafficked area. Also, the SLO County VCB anticipated a greater number of attendees, which in turn led them to request a large amount of wine from each vendor. With a request for a large amount of wine, vendors expect the attendees to consume most of it. When attendance was less then anticipated, vendors did not get the recognition that they expect and did not pour as much wine. Another major finding is that vendors do not agree with the cost of their booth space, they think it is too expensive for the amount of space and exposure they received. Even with the negative findings, vendors overall understand that this is a first time event and that there are issues to work out. The majority of respondents report that they will return to the event in future years.

The findings of the survey show that stakeholders (i.e. the vendors) have a major influence in a community's success. They work together to give the attendees of the event an experience that showcases the entire county and they all learn from each other to draw tourists to the county. The findings also support the previous research about the importance of CVBs. The SLO County VCB is able to market the county well and get the whole county to interact and work with each other to make it a better, more inviting place to visit.

Although overall responses are positive, some limitations must be taken into account. Due to the fact that the questionnaire was distributed three months after the event occurred, vendors may not accurately remember their thoughts about certain aspects of the event. They may also have trouble recalling the exact amount of wine they poured throughout each day of the event. Also, the response rate was low because distribution was during the holiday season. Most participants in this study are members of the SLO County VCB, so they may have responded more mildly then had the study been conducted by an unrelated organization.

These are several areas the SLO County VCB should consider to improve vendors' experiences at Savor the Central Coast in future years. The volunteers and members of the event staff must be well informed about each day's events and familiar with vendors' booth locations. Also, vendor booth space and placement must be addressed; a more efficient use of the space vendors are given must be created and the layout of the booths needs to have equal traffic flow. One of the major themes of the open-ended response sections is that there are too many wineries at the event; to compromise with vendors a change could be that groups of smaller wines have their city

represent them in one booth space. For example, 8 to 10 small wineries from Templeton would split the cost of the booth and have a representative from Templeton pour all of the wines at that one booth. This will help with smaller winery representation and it will allow the smaller wineries who may not be able to afford a whole booth space themselves to still be represented at the event. This will also allow vendors to feel that there are less wineries at the event.

Additionally, vendors did not approve of the cost for a booth; they think it is much too expensive for the amount of exposure they received. For future years, the SLO County VCB should give returning vendors a discounted price, this combined with smaller wineries joining into one booth space dramatically cuts down on their cost to participate in the event.

Lastly, the vendors would like more attendees from outside of San Luis Obispo County. By marketing this event earlier and in more places outside of San Luis Obispo County, there is a better chance of out-of-county attendees at the event in future years. Having more tourists come to the event helps wineries gain return visitors and further spreads the word about the county.

This study should be replicated for Savor the Central Coast annually to continually improve the event and to allow it to be beneficial for the county and for the individual stakeholders in the county.

Conclusions

Based on the findings in this study, the following conclusions are drawn:

1. Vendors are satisfied with the overall event.
2. Vendors are not satisfied with booth space and placement, amount of attendees, and cost of booth space.
3. Vendors are somewhat satisfied with the operations of the event.
4. A majority of wineries will return to the event.

Recommendations

Based on the conclusions of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Implement a volunteer training program for event staff.
2. Redesign the Marketplace so that attendees have equal access to every winery at the event.
3. Allow smaller wineries to join as one booth space to cut down on their costs and to improve vendor recognition.
4. Implement a discounted booth space rate for returning vendors.
5. Advertise in more diverse regions of California.
6. Conduct a vendor satisfaction survey immediately after the event.

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APPENDIXES

Appendix A

Questionnaire

Sunset's "Savor the Central Coast" Winery Satisfaction Survey

1. Please rate how satisfied you were with each of the following statements about the event overall:

	Very Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Neutral	Satisfied	Completely Satisfied
Overall Event	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Policies of the event	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Quality of attendees	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Overall layout of the marketplace	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

2. Did you feel prepared coming into the event?

◯ Yes

◯ No

Why/Why not?

3. Were you satisfied with the layout of your booth space?

◯ Yes

◯ No

Why/Why not?

Sunset's "Savor the Central Coast" Winery Satisfaction Survey

4. Were you satisfied with the placement of your booth space at the event?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

Why/Why not?

5. Was there an adequate food to wine ratio for the Culinary Tasting?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

Why/Why not?

6. Were you satisfied with the number of wineries pouring at the event?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

Why/Why not?

7. Wine Consumption:

	Cases of wine	Bottles of wine
On Saturday how much wine did you pour?		
On Sunday how much wine did you pour?		

8. Were you satisfied with this consumption?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

Explain:

Sunset's "Savor the Central Coast" Winery Satisfaction Survey

9. Would you consider participating in SAVOR the Central Coast in 2011?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

10. If you answered "No", please select the description that best identifies why you would not return in 2011.

- ◯ Cost of event registration fee
- ◯ Location of the event/travel time to event location
- ◯ Quality of event participants
- ◯ Date of the event

other (please specify)

11. Did you feel that $750 was a fair event fee for the 2-day main event pouring?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

12. Would you consider participating in Savor the Central Coast 2011 if your winery was offered a discounted returning fee of $500?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

13. Where is your winery/tasting room located?

- ◯ San Luis Obispo County
- ◯ Santa Barbara County
- ◯ Monterey County
- ◯ Ventura County

14. Savor the Central Coast is interested in hearing your feedback on the event. Please used this section to share with us your comments, thoughts, and suggestions that you were not able to address in the previous sections. We welcome your feedback.

Appendix B

Informed Letter of Consent

Informed Letter of Consent

INFORMED CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN SPECIAL EVENT RESEARCH

A research project on special events is being conducted by Jillian Armstrong as a senior project in Recreation, Parks and Tourism Administration under the direct supervision of Dr. Bill Hendricks. The purpose of this research is to assess the vendors who participated in Sunset Magazine's Savor the Central Coast Event.

You are being asked to take part in this study by completing an online questionnaire. Your participation will take approximately 2-4 minutes. Please be aware that you are not required to participate in this research, and you may discontinue your participation at any time without penalty. You may omit any items you prefer not to answer.

There are no risks anticipated with participation in this study.

Your confidentiality will be protected in the reporting of data, as vendor businesses and their representatives' names will not be reported in the published academic research. Business names and the identity of representatives will only be known by the researcher, faculty advisor, and the Savor the Central Coast representatives. Potential benefits associated with the study include improving the vendor experience at Sunset Magazine's Savor the Central Coast and making the event better as a whole.

If you have questions regarding this study or would like to be informed of the results when the study is completed, please feel free to contact Jillian Armstrong at jrarmstr@calpoly.edu or (804) 479-9377. If you have questions or concerns regarding the manner in which the study is conducted, you may contact Dr. Steve Davis, Chair of the Cal Poly Human Subjects Committee, at 756-2754, sdavis@calpoly.edu, or Dr. Susan Opava, Dean of Research and Graduate Programs, at 756-1508, sopava@calpoly.edu.

If you agree to voluntarily participate in this research project as described, please indicate your agreement by proceeding to the next page and completing the online questionnaire. Please note that a pdf copy of this form was attached to the email you received. Please print this out now and retain this information for future reference. Thank you for your participation in this research.