

Book review

Reimagining and Reshaping Events. Theoretical and Practical Perspectives

Edited by Wrathall Jeffrey and Steriopoulos Effie
Goodfellow Publishers Limited
Oxford, UK
2022
276 p.
ISBN 978-1-911635-87-1
Review DOI
10.1108/JTF-03-2023-288

One of the privileges of being an academic and an educator is to have the opportunity to supervise and assess students in their final dissertations and exams, at the magic moment of transition right before they complete their trajectory as students, and they officially are young professionals. This is because in such phase, the next generation of talents articulates for the first time their vision of the future, both at socio-cultural and industry levels. From this observation point, as a faculty at Breda University of Applied Sciences, Academy for Leisure and Events, the author of this review could appreciate, at the time of writing these notes, how the future of events is a topic of great urgency and high relevance, from potential transitions to the metaverse in B-to-B to post-pandemic challenges of environmental impact and societal sustainability in the arenas of concerts, festivals and show biz, without forgetting profitable and everlasting niches like weddings.

The key importance of events, from public celebrations to B-to-B conferences and fairs, was confirmed in 2021 research, the author of this review conducted by means of thought leaders, industry experts and emerging talents. There, interviewees from Simon Poulter, Senior Manager Corporate Communications at Vodafone Group, to Dr. Robert Govers, Chairman of the International Place Branding Association or design visionary guru, Bruce Mau, articulated the fine

relationships that historically exist between cities as destinations and business events. This might also be seen as rooted in the metatrend Filiberto Amati, MBA, and the author of this review identified in 2017 and validated in 2021 in a peer reviewed paper for *“World Leisure Journal”*, that of *#theBlur*. In the digitally triggered blurring of leisure and work, of categories and of industries, the power of business events to trigger economically important dynamics that pertain to the leisure, hospitality and tourism sectors.

All the above are sound reasons why the future of (business) events, from mega B-to-B conventions to micro personal occasions, is a relevant area of concern for tourism professionals and their future. Therefore, an ambitious title like the one printed by Wrathall and Steriopoulos, both PhD scholars and both engaged in Event Management education at William Angliss Institute in Melbourne, Australia, did feel timely and even needed at the time of its publishing by a well reputed brand like Goodfellow. Nevertheless, the book reads more than anything like a generalist manual for Bachelor of Arts freshmen. In this view, the book is complete, comprehensive, and capturing several macro-trends and micro-directions in the specific trend industry. At the same time, historically seeded roots of experience economy, event design and other theoretical domains are well covered or at least sufficiently referenced, for the reader at a beginner stage of her acquaintance with the topic. Of particular interest, journalistic interviews with 10 sectorial experts, presented as “Industry Profiles”, provide a vivid and lively report of state-of-the-art insights in issues like the pandemic impact in the aftermath of COVID-19.

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The book has the positive trait of offering a snapshot of the event sector today, with an elementary yet actionable “how to” intent. In this sense, it might be eligible to become a reference textbook for vocational schools and students at a beginner’s level, as it offers a contemporary generalist platform that is both simple and informative. It might positively complement or perhaps compete with relevant references like “*Events as a Strategic Marketing Tool*” (2013) by Gerritsen and Van Olderen. However, the value of this 2022 work by Wrathall and Steriopoulos does not exceed the boundaries of the Event Management educational domain, therefore neither lifting the reader upwards in terms of academic reflexivity or scholarly research, nor reaching any content conclusions or methodological implications that might pertain to the priorities of tourism futures.

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In the lustrum 2010–2016 he has been the Principal Research Urban Futures for Philips Lighting, now Signify, in EMEA and Poland. He has contributed to seminars and events with the Master in Service Design, School of Design, Politecnico di Milano, Italy; Emerson College, Boston; the UNAM Postgraduate School of Architecture, Mexico City; Domus Academy, Milan; IED, Milan; and more. He has been a 2019 Visiting Scholar at Vancouver Island University, Canada.

He had his research published in: Journal of Consumer Marketing; Research in Hospitality Management; Journal of Tourism Futures; World Futures Review; Place Branding and Public Diplomacy, and more. He printed books with Palgrave; Gower, then Taylor & Francis; EMAP Books; and more. He is the recipient of an Emerald Literati Award and of two ESOMAR Best Conference Paper.

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