The impact of a mega-event on knowledge transfer dynamics among organisations within regional destination marketing networks.

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RUGBY WORLD CUP 2011 (RWC 2011)

- 9 September – 23 October 2011, New Zealand
- 48 matches with 20 international teams in 11 cities/towns throughout NZ
- World’s 3rd largest sporting event
  - Television audience: 3.9 billion
  - International visitors: 133,200
  - National GDP increase of 0.7% and 0.3% in the September and December 2011 quarters
RATIONALE

- Little tourism research on Knowledge Management (KM) and Knowledge Transfer (KT)
- Mega-events ‘produce’ extensive amounts of tacit and explicit knowledge
  - Transferable
  - Re-usable
Background literature

• The ultimate goal of an organisation is the effective transfer and use of knowledge to contribute to competitiveness (Cooper, 2006);

• Knowledge drives innovation, productivity and competitiveness (Shaw & Williams, 2009);
Background literature

- Knowledge transfer: When information has been reasoned over and incorporated into the receiver’s existing knowledge structures (Beesley & Chalip, 2011, p. 328)
Background literature

- Interorganizational networks offer a variety of knowledge, innovation, performance, and survival benefits” (Brass et al., 2004, p. 807).
Background literature

• Set against the outpouring of papers on knowledge management and knowledge transfer within the general business literature, work within the tourism sector has, until recently, been lagging. (Shaw & Williams, 2009, p. 325)
METHODS

- Exploratory, comparative, qualitative, multiple-case study design
- Tourism Auckland is the focal organisation
- 2 Cases
  - Tourism Auckland’s AKL network
    - Organisations involved in preparations for the event within the Auckland region (e.g. Auckland Council, Auckland Transport)
  - Tourism Auckland’s RTO network
    - Other RTOs throughout New Zealand
METHODS

- Data sources
  - Documentation review
  - 69 Pre- and post-event semi-structured interviews (35/34 participants from both networks)
  - Post-event online survey with the same participants
DATA ANALYSIS

- Thematic data analysis
- 14-step iterative coding process
- 3 coders
(RQ 1) What kind of knowledge was transferred in the RWC 2001 context?
GENERAL FINDINGS

1. Both tacit and explicit knowledge was transferred

2. Four different modes of knowledge transfer
   - *Tacit-to-tacit*: e.g. face-to-face conversations and meetings.
   - *Tacit-to-explicit*: e.g. emails, documents and manuals, workshops.
   - *Explicit-to-explicit*: e.g. circulation of documents.
   - *Explicit-to-tacit*: creating new ideas from written documents or learning by doing.
GENERAL FINDINGS

3. RWC 2011 was seen as an important *learning opportunity* for all organisations involved

4. RWC-related learnings useful for “business as usual”

5. Four common ways of learning
   - “learning by doing”
   - Learning through exchange
   - Learning from other events (Lions tour, RWC 2007)
   - New employees with mega-event experience.
6. Knowledge sources
   • External and internal sources
   • New and established relationships

7. The event provided the tourism industry with fewer learning opportunities.
   • “RWC 2011 tourists = normal tourists”
(RQ 2) How was knowledge transferred between the organisations in both networks?
1. Firm-level KT channels:
   - *Imitation/demonstration/observation*
   - *Inter-firm exchange*: collaboration with suppliers, intermediaries or other tourism businesses
   - *Document exchange*: statistics, forecasts, economic impact reports, internal records and post-implementation reviews from previous events, strategic plans, running sheets, minutes and agendas from meetings.
GENERAL FINDINGS

2. Two key knowledge transfer systems

• *Infrastructural system*: public authorities (e.g. councils) acting as “knowledge transfer agents”

• *Regulation system*: the New Zealand Major Events Management Act 2007 (MEMA)
3. Individual-level channels

- International events experts relocated to NZ/Auckland
CONCLUSIONS

The impact of a mega-event on knowledge transfer dynamics among organisations within regional destination marketing networks.

- generally positive
- small/modest