

## Tourism and Hospitality Educators

### Intro – Goodmorning *slide 1*

Over the last 15 year, my siblings and I have interchangeably worked on a wide spectrum of roles to produce, organize, and operate this festival. *Slide 2* We have come to a point where we each have to drive certain areas developing best practices. What I know and do best is to manage the business and financial aspects. My sister Corrine focuses on enabling artistic operations and its constant renewal to the relevant and changing audience. My brother owns the festival and is our visionary who focuses on product content. Therefore in short I focus on the business components of the event. We all work closely together from very different perspectives to keep our event relevant and on the edge for its continued success.

Developing best practices has been difficult in an environment without festival and event industry guidelines. There is only limited amount of learning to be gleaned from books. Together we spend time travelling to other events in order to learn and to benchmark our festival to world standards. We participate in festival conventions across North America including the International Festival and Events Association. We also attend events to gather information to bring home and improve Shambhala. “Last year at this time I was attending the opening ceremonies for the Kentucky Derby. Most travellers take pictures of the events, when I return home I find my camera filled with images of admission policies, *Slide 3*, Access control stations *Slide 4* Points of Sales *Slide 5*, even garbage cans or recycling stations with a unique flair The experience of running events helps me look at an infrastructure with a very different level of appreciation. There’s nothing like appreciating a garbage receptacle, well placed, back

lit with clear signage **Slide 6**. Throughout all of these opportunities of travel and learning, we have pushed ourselves to attempt to be leaders in this industry.

We never knew how good our event was, until the Breakspoll awards, nominated us and Shambhala won not once but twice by the world wide audience for Best Large Festival, beating other brand names like Burning Man (**Slide 7**) 50k ppl with a 14 mill budget running for 26 years, Breakfast out of Perth Australia, Shake & Break St Petersburg Russia, and Glastonbury (**slide 8**) 75k ppl – we were nominated for Ultra as the best large festival, and closer to home the Chamber of Commerce awarded us with Business of the Year .... We were trying to do the best job we could and then the world took notice. Then we knew we might have something here. The year was 1997 we were a bunch of kids, with a beautiful piece of land who just wanted to gather and dance under the stars to our favourite music with our friends on our family land. (**Slide 9**) Now our event has ballooned to become a Canadian destination and the best large festival in the world - we are wowed. (**Slide 10**) We are very proud.

Today I'm very humbled, yet flattered to have this opportunity to share our learning and what we now realize to be such a treasure chest. Today I would like to share with you a challenge - How do we move towards the best practices for this emerging industry, with its huge benefits to the community and tourism on a global scale. How do we become the next destination for festivals and events welcoming the world to the Kootenays with open arms. This is the topic of my speech today. But first I would like to introduce you to Shambhala.

4 years ago, our community unsure what this Shambhala was all about. **(slide 11)** There was much resistance from the community due to the lack of communication about the idea of Shambhala. The majority of our guests came to Shambhala from out of town and heard of the event by word of mouth alone. We quickly realized that although we were holding ourselves to high standards in our operations, safety and emergency measures, protocol and procedure, our community didn't really know of the quality of the production. As we continue to open our doors to the community, and as we continue to tell the story of Shambhala we also want to continue endeavour to give back to the community.

**(Slide 12)** Shambhala is a unique event; you would be hard pressed to find another quite like it. There are all of these ideas of how many people are at Shambhala, our population is made up of the following. Shambhala is a 24 hour event and in order to compare ourselves to other events at this scale we need to compare on the measure of event nights stay, 90,600. **(slide 13)** Nelson currently is just shy of the 10,000 population; we are the biggest city around. Where are all of these people coming from? **(slide 14)** As you can see almost half of the population of Shambhala comes to the area for this one event, exposing our community to the world. **(slide 15)** Here is a slide of the ticket distribution of BC and Alberta, the hotter the colour, the higher density of ticket holders in that region. **(Slide 16)** And on a national level, a world scope **(slide 17)** Over the last three years the sales of tickets to international guest have doubled every year. In 2010 it was 1 percent of our population, 2% in 2011, and Currently 4%... We are looking for ways to continue that trend.

Tickets are selling out faster and faster every year. The 2012 festival sold out online in 17 days, In 2011 sold out within 8 month, and in 2010, we had our first sold out show which happened only 2

days before the event opened. Where Shambhala was once a low key and quiet event, the popularity has been driven by social media and has taken on a momentum of engagement that allows Shambhala to create a LOYAL fan base of over 64,000 on FaceBook, yet we only have sold 10,500 tickets. This has created its own fever of demand which has allowed for the prices of tickets to increase over the last 5 years without any decrease in demand. (*slide 18*) This has helped in sustaining the quality due to rising costs, yet not compromising the guest experience. This is clear an indication that something is happening culturally. There is wealth within the culture of these emerging markets.

Wikipedia says Sustainability is the capacity to endure. Special events are under the constant challenge of how to keep on the cutting edge. We have achieved this by remaining relevant to a new generation. After completing 14 years of operations, our guests have changed and so have their tastes. Two years ago we took the Shambhala organisation and went in a new direction of re-engineering of the product, content, operations and design. This created new revenue streams that were previously untapped opportunities. Furthermore we also updated the content relevance in the music genres through stage directors, and boldly programmed and introduced the latest music styles, in order to stay relevant to the tastes of our changing guests.

### ***Slide 19***

Public engagement has been increased with knowledge that there is much professionalism in the staff who are now working full time year round in the production of this festival. This means training and growing the skills of over 3,750 crew, who continue to submit themselves to be selected to fulfill the roles and duties for the event. The skills of the crew have more value than just the working hands and legs for the festival. Currently our Staffing levels are at 19 full time employees. Imagine that Scale-

ability from 19 ppl to 3,750, to know it well enough, document it and have the information transferable, to be prepared with Job descriptions and measurables per position. It's quite the feat. **(Slide 20)**

- 1) **Ambassadors of the Community** – What do people think of when they think of the Kootenays? Historically it's been seen as a home for the draft dodgers; currently the theme is a skiing and touring destination. The Kootenays are viewed as the home of tranquility and adventure. Shambhala's dream is to become a signature event for this community. We have introduced world class dj's and performers to the Kootenays which has tempered the taste of our audience to our music loving community. The demand for quality sound, lighting, music and performance is insatiable **Slide 21** This is expanding the capacity of our community in the events industry. Year round, Nelson is a host to Dj's like Bassnectar, Z-trip, the Stanton Warriors, and Krafty Kutz. These artists are coming and performing to sold out shows throughout the calendar year. Our 2011 headliner Skrillex who currently has won 2 Grammy awards sings our praises, personally contacts us regularly and looks forward to his return to Shambhala. There is no better accolade. Ryan Martin the owner of the Hume hotel acknowledges that Shambhala has escalated the recognition of acts in this community. This has been of great benefit to all of the bars, clubs, and events in the area. Nelson and the surrounding community has a thriving music scene due in part to Shambhala's influence. Furthermore, these international dj's travel and tell the story of their experiences here, our gracious hosting and the beautiful atmosphere. With their words, we are well represented. How we welcome, manage, host and organize experiences has made an impact on how the Kootenays are perceived. **Long pause**
  
- 2) There are many examples of great signature events which continue to shape individual communities across the world. **(slide 22)** For example Calgary has been shaped by the

stampede, it encompasses all types of events including exhibitions, sports, conferences, concerts, public festivals and business meetings. **(Slide 23)** The whole city dresses up to celebrate their event and it has an effect on the entire year for Calgary businesses. For Shambhala or any major potential signature event, the next steps are to align with Tourism into a comprehensive strategic calendar. Where tourism supports events beyond the economic. To tap into the full potential of this tourism opportunity as acknowledged partners. In Australia, **(Slide 24)** there is a vetting system for special events, if survey results and information for an event assess net gain to the community image, the economic benefits and meeting tourism goals. The Australian Tourism board supports events by providing public places and parks to facilitate overflows, by providing first responder support, and by dressing the town with welcoming flags. Tourism and special events work together to align the hard and soft infrastructure for the shared vision – they are a team. Here is an image of Breakfast on the Bridge during the annual Crave Sydney International Food Festival. **(slide 25)** Where else in the world can you picnic on fresh green grass on the country's icon above such a majestic harbour? Sydney was recently voted the World's Best Festival and Events City. Shambhala distinguishes Nelson and attracts publicity to assist in the development of other events. One day I imagine that Selkirk College will harness this potential and bring into the Shambhala Music Hall: Producers, performers, Promoters, technicians for conferences and continued education in this field. **Slide 26**

In the face of change the biggest challenge we have is to keep our product relevant, staying on the cutting edge and continually renewing ourselves. On many levels a festival or event, be it the Whitewaters' Slush Cup, to the Hills garlic festival has impact on the community: economically, socially, and culturally. This economic impact only goes so far. **Slide 27** The level of measurement for Tourism is

based on room nights and the multiplier effect of spending in the community as it impacts on job creation, sales by industry, and taxation. What is critical is the human resource development as a pipeline to feed our festival and events industry with correct skill levels and knowledge. Festivals and events need updated skills in event operations in the areas of safety, evacuation, first responders, revenue, cost management, volunteer management, event design and execution. The need to quantify job specifications, role dimensions, and accountability has been defined so that it is both quantifiable and qualifiable for assessment, evaluation and value determination. Between the class room and the festival, the Kootenay Columbia Festivals & Event Association has been recently set up with over 12 independent producers of different festivals in the Kootenays agreeing to the following: **Slide 28**

- Best practices in areas of safety, production, and operations
- Self regulation of standards of practice with open sharing to enable continual growth and improvements.
- Recognition, rewards and awards to enable the support structure for value of work, determined by market driven salaries, compensations and expected deliverables.

### **Next Steps Slide 29 & 30**

Yet beyond the numbers, the economic impact indicators do not take away the need for alignment between the hard and soft infrastructures of product development, content renewal, stakeholder management and the partnership between public and private entities. This will allow for a formidable alignment of shared resources, responsibilities in experiential design from arrivals at airports, harbours, roads to hotels, shops, restaurants, road management, first responders and even

city dressings to welcome the world. We have that opportunity presently to right the thinking, to upgrade the approach and to advocate the synergy

I challenge you today to join me to look beyond this level of measurement. The legacy of Shambhala is found in the music, and on the dance floor. Special Events are social integrators through celebration; we make memories that connect us to the world. How do we ensure we can take this opportunity to the next level of impact?

Right now there is an excellent opportunity to integrate the learning you support with the practice at our event. Pushing the students to a higher level of understanding, and to push us to develop a Best practices code of conduct. We are mutually supportive, Shambhala would like to work with the teachers here that are training the students in events management. Let's give the practical skills to the students in order to connect the book learning to the practical application. Reinforce what students are learning in schools to the reality of this industry,

Thus between the numbers needed for the head, and the number of memories needed for the heart, we have before us the opportunity for each of us in this room to make that difference with what we have. And then the world will want us to have more.

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Tours available – we are an open door. If any of you would like to talk to me further about this opportunity. Please grab my card afterwards, let's please stay in contact. Perhaps you have answers or ideas for reengineering this profession...