

12-2014

South By Southwest, LLC: A Report on Volunteer Coordination

Sarah Spivey
University of New Orleans

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.uno.edu/aa_rpts



Part of the [Arts Management Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Spivey, Sarah, "South By Southwest, LLC: A Report on Volunteer Coordination" (2014). *Arts Administration Master's Reports*. 174.

https://scholarworks.uno.edu/aa_rpts/174

This Master's Report is protected by copyright and/or related rights. It has been brought to you by ScholarWorks@UNO with permission from the rights-holder(s). You are free to use this Master's Report in any way that is permitted by the copyright and related rights legislation that applies to your use. For other uses you need to obtain permission from the rights-holder(s) directly, unless additional rights are indicated by a Creative Commons license in the record and/or on the work itself.

This Master's Report has been accepted for inclusion in Arts Administration Master's Reports by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks@UNO. For more information, please contact scholarworks@uno.edu.

South By Southwest, LLC:
A Report on Volunteer Coordination

A Master's Examination Report

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the University of New Orleans
in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of

Masters of Arts
in Arts Administration

By

Sarah Spivey

B.A. Theatre Arts, Louisiana Tech University, 2009

Fall 2014

ABSTRACT

This internship report reviews the privately owned, for-profit entity South By Southwest (SXSW), and the main festival it produces each March. The report includes an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the organization, and offers suggestions for improvements. The history of SXSW, a description of volunteer programs, and a breakdown of the staff structure provide a basic understanding of the organization. For the purpose of this internship report, the timeframe being reviewed covers January through May 2014.

Table of Contents

Abstract	ii
Chapter One: South by Southwest (SXSW)	1
History	1
Mission	2
General Management Structure	2
Organization Structure	3
Venues	4
Internship Program	4
Funding	5
Volunteering	5
Volunteer Perks	6
Chapter Two: The Internship	8
Work in Volunteer Coordination	8
Specific Tasks and Duties	8
Weekly Meetings	9
Volunteer Calls	10
Stage Manager Training	11
Crew Chief Socials	12
Crew Chief Responsibilities	13
Specific Tasks and Duties	13
Chapter Three: Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats	16
Strengths	16
Innovative Leaders	16
Economic Impact	16
Community Impact	17
Partnerships and Sponsorships	17
Branding	18
Weaknesses	20
Spreading too thin	19
Staff Changes and Communication	19
Long lines	20
Opportunities	21
City Growth	21
Threats	22
Guerilla events	22
City Capacity	22
Chapter Four: Best Practices	24
Similar Organizations	26

The Great Escape	26
Northside Festival	28
Chapter Five: Recommendations	30
Conclusion	33
Bibliography	34
Appendix	36
Appendix A: Top 20 Fastest Growing Large Metropolitan Areas	36
Appendix B: Analysis of Economic Benefit to The City of Austin from South by Southwest 2014	37
Appendix C: The Austin Chronicle, SXSW Post-Mortem	40
Appendix D: Austin Business Journal, How many people move to Austin a day? Here's an official number	41
Appendix E: Volunteer Perk Breakdown	42
Vita	45

CHAPTER ONE

SOUTH BY SOUTHWEST (SXSW)

History

Roland Swenson created South by Southwest, widely known as SXSW or South by, with his friends: Nick Barbaro and Louis Black, founders of the Austin Chronicle, and Louis Jay Meyers.¹ Swenson decided to start SXSW after attending the New Music Seminar in New York in 1986.² Joined by some of his close friends, Roland embarked on a journey that has led to a successful multifaceted conference and festival that reaches over “50,000 people annually”.³ Roland wanted to give musicians, otherwise isolated in Texas, the opportunity to be heard by predominantly coastal agents and labels. The first South by Southwest Music Conference and Festival (SXSW) was held in 1987 in Austin, Texas.⁴ The first SXSW was marketed as a Music and Media conference and festival. Primarily focused on music, SXSW has transformed over the years to include: film, interactive, gaming, comedy, trade show, and other production events that take place throughout the year. In recent years, SXSW has expanded the reach of its flagship conference to include SXSWedu and SXSW Eco in Austin, and SXSW V2V in Las Vegas. The SXSW Music, Film and Interactive Conferences and Festivals are dedicated to giving artists and entrepreneurs a platform to perform and present in front of industry leaders. Essentially, they provide a solution to “the classic problem facing Austin musicians... being isolated from the rest of the world here in the middle of Texas. SXSW was a way to reach out to the rest of the world, and bring them here to do business”.⁵ The conference reach goes beyond music, and as the tech

¹ pg 7, SXSW Scrapbook: People and Things That Went Before

² pg 7, SXSW Scrapbook: People and Things That Went Before

³ R. Swenson, <http://www.powernsoul.com/2014/03/thatwasme-roland-swenson-sxsw/>

⁴ <http://sxsw.com/about/sxsw-history>

⁵ <http://sxsw.com/about/sxsw-history>

industry has grown, so has the Interactive portion of SXSW. The goals originally set by SXSW are still the goals today: to “act as a tool for creative people and the companies they work with to develop their careers, to bring together people from a wide area to meet and share ideas”.⁶

Mission

The mission of SXSW states, “Our Mission is to provide a platform for international commerce and the exchange of ideas by producing world-class events for creative professionals to further their work”. The mission statement for the volunteer department is, “The SXSW Volunteer Program mobilizes an army of global volunteers and resources to drive SXSW, its registrants, staff and the Austin community. Our goal is to enhance the volunteer experience from start to finish, so that we continue to offer the best opportunity to contribute to the fun and success of SXSW Conferences + Festivals”.⁷

General Management Structure

SXSW operates under a large group of people working in various capacities such as volunteers, interns, seasonal, and full-time. There are also individuals who are hired as short-term seasonal, working only during the week of the main event. Roland Swenson, Founder and Managing Director, leads SXSW with a team of managers and directors who oversee each department individually. Each department head and director reports directly to Swenson. There are also advisory boards that oversee certain aspects of the conference, primarily helping to keep the staff aligned with the important trends and issues within the industry. In the months leading

⁶ <http://sxsw.com/about/sxsw-history>

⁷ <http://volunteer.sxsw.com/>

up to the main event in March, there are close to 200 people in the office on a daily basis. Through the summer and early fall, the office has fewer interns and seasonal staff on site daily, but that changes around October. The volunteer department has seasonal staff who usually start working full time around September/October, and interns who usually start working between December/January. The head of the volunteer department, Tami Richter, has been working for SXSW for over 15 years. She has a strong staff of 8 who all handle different volunteer crews.

Organization Structure

There are multiple conference/festivals associated with SXSW:

1. SXSW- The core event that takes place each March. SXSW includes the Music, Film and Interactive Conferences and Festivals.
2. SXSW V2V- SXSW V2V- This event is “an extension and re-imagining of the legendary SXSW experience with an emphasis on the creative spark that drives entrepreneurial innovation. This four-day event brings the startup and venture capital communities together with the creative industries that have helped to make SXSW so special. V2V serves innovators and entrepreneurs from across all the industries at the core of the SXSW Family of events - technology, music, film, fashion, health, education, sustainability, and more - as they learn the skills, make the connections, and find the inspiration to take their ideas and talents to the next level”.⁸
3. SXSW Eco- SXSW Eco- This festival “attracts a global community to explore, engage and co-create solutions for a sustainable world. A uniquely inclusive platform for professionals, SXSW Eco examines the critical challenges of our times through a kaleidoscopic lens of design

⁸ <http://sxswv2v.com/about>

innovation, policy tipping points, technological breakthroughs, conservation practice, entrepreneurial spirit and a culture of creativity to transform inspiration into action”.⁹

4. SXSWedu- The “SXSWedu® Conference & Festival fosters innovation in learning by hosting a diverse and energetic community of stakeholders from a variety of backgrounds in education”.¹⁰ Similar to the main event, SXSWedu, over four-days, “affords registrants open access to engaging sessions, interactive workshops, hands on learning experiences, cinematic portrayals, early stage startups and a host of networking opportunities”.¹¹

Venues

SXSW monopolizes downtown Austin, Texas in March of each year. Most all of the conference takes place in the Austin Convention Center located at 500 E Cesar Chavez St, Austin, TX 78701. There were 111 venues for music showcases in 2014. The showcases take place from 6pm-2am during the music festival portion of the event. There are multiple film venues, special events, and meet-ups that take place in venues in and around the downtown area of Austin. As the conference has grown, so has the diversity of venues hosting the festival events.

Internship Program

Interning with SXSW is a great opportunity for college students to get real life, applicable experience in their field of study. Internships are available in every department, providing a wide variety of positions for students to apply. The work experience interns receive

⁹ <http://sxsweco.com/about>

¹⁰ <http://sxswedu.com/about>

¹¹ <http://sxswedu.com/about>

is invaluable for their careers, because they are able to build knowledge through specific department practices and through experiencing the internal working of the main event. Interns are also given opportunities to meet other interns through small mixers that take place during the winter. These social events provide interns with a time to network, and discuss their experiences at SXSW with other employees. Interns are required to be in school, and the hours they work are dependant on their class requirements and department needs. The positions are unpaid; however, there is a significant amount of compensation provided through various perks such as “swag” (SXSW gear), platinum registration for the main event (walk up rate value: \$1745), and inclusion in the volunteer appreciation party. Interns at SXSW are not given menial tasks like making coffee, but rather are fully immersed into their department learning what it takes to put on such a large-scale event.

Funding

SXSW, LLC is a privately owned company. They do not provide financial records for outside review. Each department has a budget that is approved by the directors then implemented. As a privately owned, for-profit venture, SXSW does not have a donor base, but they do have sponsor partnerships that change between each of their events. Some sponsors are exclusive for multi year contracts and have a large presence leading up to and during the event. There are sponsorships available at all levels of the festival ranging anywhere from beverage sponsorships to award show sponsorships.

Volunteering

The culture of volunteers at SXSW is vibrant, diverse, and inviting. People from all walks of life, either local (within 40 miles of Austin) or out of town, take time out of their lives

to volunteer and help make SXSW happen each year. Without volunteers, SXSW would not be the successful conference and festival it is today. There is virtually no way the conference and festival would survive without volunteers working behind the scenes and around the clock to make sure that the show runs smoothly for everyone involved. Some volunteers have been a part of SXSW since the early days of the festivals. They come back every year, usually with their same crew, to work and celebrate another year of the conference and festival. The individuals who work year after year have a strong emotional investment in SXSW. There is a genuine sense of community among the volunteers, because they collectively believe in the mission of SXSW and what it does for their community. Volunteering for SXSW gives people the opportunity to work towards different perks for the festival. The perks are determined by the amount of hours you volunteer throughout the conference/festival. The top available perk is the Platinum Badge, which is only obtainable by returning volunteers who are nominated by their crew chief as a top performing volunteer. Crew chiefs manage their crew schedule and are the liaison between volunteers and volunteer coordinators. The increased responsibility of being a crew chief is met with crew chief socials hosted throughout the year; the socials are more frequent leading up to the event. These small gatherings are one of the ways SXSW extends their gratitude for the additional responsibility these individuals take on each year. Being a crew chief is a big responsibility and the volunteer department is constantly looking into ways of thanking and entertaining this group to keep them interested and appreciated throughout the year.

Volunteer Perks

Volunteer perks are separated between conference and production crews. Conference volunteers are able to work on up to three crews to meet their required hour minimum/perk.

Production volunteers are only assigned to one crew and have shifts as opposed to hours like the conference crews. Production crews work with different types of equipment which requires “very specific training and must work all of their shifts on the same crew”.¹² All of the perk information can be found on the SXSW volunteer website. The perk breakdown is found in Appendix E, which includes a breakdown of conference perks, production perks, and what access each perk allows.¹³

¹² <http://volunteer.sxsw.com/perks>

¹³ <http://volunteer.sxsw.com/perks>

Chapter Two: The Internship

Work in Volunteer Coordination

I began working for SXSW on January 2nd of 2014 as a production intern reporting directly to Lizzie Brenner, one of the volunteer coordinators for SXSW. From January to May of 2014, I worked primarily on volunteer processing and placement in crews and on shifts for various production crews. Over that same time I was chosen to work as a crew chief at our largest stage, the SXSW Outdoor Stage at Butler Park.

Specific Tasks and Duties

Sitting through my first Volunteer Department meeting, I realized that my work at SXSW would be intense and fast paced. Before I could let panic of the looming responsibility set in, I looked around the room and felt at ease with the group of people I would be spending the majority of the next five months working with. Each coordinator greeted me with warmth and openness, which created an inclusive team-focused environment.

Two interns and I became the point people for music production volunteers. I was able to learn systems and email lingo quickly due to the number of hours I was required to work at the office. I answered emails from volunteers daily with questions about registration, differences between production or conference volunteers, and details about their schedule desires and needs. Emails were a constant, and in the beginning, most could be answered with canned responses with slight personalization's that were prepared in our volunteer email account. As the weeks progressed, canned response emails became less relevant due to each email needing personalized attention. Answering volunteer phone calls was also a large part of the day for all of the volunteer interns along side of volunteer coordinators. I felt that the phone calls were less

effective when addressing volunteer issues compared to email communication. Explaining how to fix a problem with registration through email gave the volunteer a reference point beyond remembering a phone conversation. A large part of my daily work included processing volunteer applications, scheduling, updating venue information and contacting large groups of volunteers. Shiftboard is essentially the backbone of the volunteer system. It is used throughout SXSW for volunteer and staff schedules. The most frequent and sometimes frustrating issue with shiftboard is the presence of duplicate accounts. These accounts are created by volunteers who may have lost their shiftboard password or been misinformed to believe they need a new account each year to volunteer. Duplicate accounts cause issues with adding volunteers to crews and managing the notes about returning volunteers.

Weekly Meetings

The volunteer department meets weekly to get an idea of where each coordinator is with their crews, crew chiefs, and any side projects they may be planning for the main event. Wednesday mornings started at 9:00 A.M. for the volunteer department meeting, one hour earlier than the office opens for business. During these meetings, I observed a lot of the individual planning each coordinator puts forth to make the main event a success. Tami runs the weekly meeting and there is always a Google doc with what each coordinator wants to discuss including updated notes added during the meeting to keep everyone on track until the next meeting. These meetings are informative and helped give me a comprehensive understanding of the different parts of the volunteer department. Every Wednesday at 12:30 P.M. there is an all-staff meeting that everyone in the office attends. This meeting is an overall recap from each department outlining what stage of planning they are in and where they plan to go in the next week. This is a very general overview giving all of the staff an update from each department. As the festival

approaches, the all-staff meetings move to Saturday mornings in a larger venue so that everyone has a seat and can pay attention to important topics surrounding planning and production in each department.

Volunteer Calls

The volunteer department relies heavily on volunteer calls to gain numbers of local volunteers before the out of town volunteer push happens. SXSW accepts out of town volunteers, but prefer more locals due to the inside knowledge they bring to the event. With a goal of over 4,000 volunteers, it is difficult to accomplish recruitment goals without encouraging out of town volunteers to make the trip to Austin for the main event. Volunteers also come in from out of the country to participate in SXSW. Every year the interest of out of town volunteers grows from across the country and abroad. This is an exciting fact for the coordinators as they are able to work with a wide variety of personalities and skill levels. There were three volunteer calls this year. The first volunteer call always brings in the largest amount of people, but the others help fill hard to staff crews. The calls are targeted to locals, giving them first preference on available crews and shifts. Some of the most popular crews fill up at the first volunteer call and crew chiefs get bragging rights for their ability to recruit during this time. Crew chiefs are dedicated volunteers who have volunteered for multiple years, and are interested in taking on a role with more responsibility. A crew chief is given the opportunity to lead a group of volunteers by staffing their crew and scheduling shifts for their crew. During the event crew chiefs manage their crews by checking to make sure they're all taking breaks, performing their tasks properly, and handling any unforeseen issues that may arise. For the most part, crew chiefs take their job seriously and take a lot of time to prepare for volunteer calls. This year Tami wanted to give the

first volunteer call more excitement, so a contest for most creative table was created. The first volunteer call was a success with decorated crew tables, costumed crew chiefs and enthusiastic volunteers signing up and filling many crews. SXSW also accept walk-in volunteers. The volunteers who can't make any of the volunteer calls come by the office and sign up with either an intern or a coordinator, depending on who is available. Mid-February through the event there is an influx of walk-in volunteers. The constant of having to explain the process of signing up, what types of volunteers they can decide between and available crews distracts from other necessary work that needs to be accomplished each day. These walk-in's, while distracting, are necessary to fill all of the remaining crews after the last volunteer call. One of the hardest crews to fill is the stage crew. We processed stage crew volunteers all the way up to the music portion of SXSW and still lacked enough stage crew for each venue to be fully staffed. It became increasingly difficult to maintain stage crew requests as volunteers would drop out or when venues would drop from the roster. A lot of these changes are contributed to the music fest making changes based on artist confirmation and venue contracts. Learning about these changes as they happen made transitions easier to maintain. We also accepted stage crew that was under 21, which caused some issues when venues were dropped that were all age venues.

Stage Manager Training

Every Monday evening from 6:00 P.M. – 9:00 P.M. in February, I attended and assisted with Stage Manager training sessions at the AT&T Conference Center, near UT's campus. Local stage managers and APM's (assistant production managers) attended each meeting, along with key production staff available for any questions that may come up after the training sessions. Not all stage managers were in attendance each Monday. Returning stage managers didn't attend all weekly meeting unless they needed to review certain steps. Stage manager training covered a

wide range of topics, but focused mostly on how to use the stage manager tool, communication with bands and backline questions. The stage manager tool is a very important part of the process, linking the stage manager to bands, APM's, and bookers. This function also keeps all of the band information in one place. The stage manager tool can be intimidating for new stage managers. Most of the volunteer stage managers do not work in the music industry, but they do have management experience and interest in music. The stage manager tool holds all of the information about each band, including their backline requirements, orders, and power needs. The production department uses the stage manager tool to check power needs and international power conversion. There are also notes about the venue, booking agents and APM notes throughout the process. The APM is the direct support for stage managers during the event. Each APM has between 8-10 stage managers that report to them in the event of any mishaps during the performance. The APM's are available during the event to help with any major issues that come up, most commonly overcrowded venues.

Crew Chief Socials

Every week there was a different appreciation night for certain groups of volunteers. Most of the socials were for crew chiefs, but there were a couple of parties for stage managers, theater managers and interns. I was encouraged to attend all of the socials leading up to the event. All of them were hosted at local businesses, most at bars. Socials are a great way for volunteer coordinators to meet the volunteers that contribute so much of their time each year to SXSW. There are a lot of close bonds that are formed over the years between coordinators and their crew chiefs. Socials are also important for spreading knowledge about what to expect leading up and throughout the event. There are always a lot of new crew chiefs moving their way

up the volunteer ladder and need advice along the way. Some of the more experienced crew chiefs offer advice and encouragement as new leaders step into their role.

Crew Chief Responsibilities

Interns are not usually tasked with being a crew chief, but I had the opportunity to serve as crew chief of the Outdoor Stage volunteers. The Outdoor Stage is SXSW's largest stage, consistently bringing in a high volume of attendees (over 57,000 in 2013), over the 3 days of free admission to the public concert series.¹⁴ This year's Outdoor Stage was located at Butler Park, south of Lady Bird Lake. Through this process, I was able to understand the challenges that crew chiefs face leading up to and during the event. Below, I will detail the specific planning that took place before, throughout, and after the event.

Specific Tasks and Duties

I attended weekly Outdoor Stage meetings, Wednesdays at 2:00 P.M, which included: the site manager and representative from sponsorship, volunteers, planning, production, tech and at least one director. The weekly meetings were very informative as to the layout of the space. I became acutely aware of every fence line, vendor, sponsor activation build and all of the entrances/exits of the park. All of this information helped me when planning where volunteers should be stationed throughout the event.

The first volunteer call, January 18, proved to be a success for the Outdoor Stage crew. I recruited more than half of the volunteers that I needed to run the show. The majority of my crew were local returning volunteers, so they knew about SXSW and all of the craziness that could happen during the event. I met my co-crew chief, Hunter Henry, at that first volunteer call.

¹⁴ <http://sxsw.com/music/news/2014/sxsw-2014-outdoor-stage-sponsorship-packages-available>

Hunter proved to be an integral part to the success of our crew. After the volunteer call I began using shiftboard to input crew into the Outdoor Stage crew, emailed those who hadn't registered or updated their registration and worked to create schedules that coincided with the park hours. Shiftboard is used for all aspects of volunteer coordination from volunteer registration to scheduling and grading volunteer performance. I tasked Hunter with emailing crew after the initial shiftboard scheduling was complete. Hunter communicated with the crew and resolved any scheduling conflicts that arose leading up to the event.

After the second week of work, I began to work more with the site manager and sponsorship coordinator as site visits took place more often. There were many decisions made during site visits: how gates would be set up, sponsorship activation locations, how the Long Center would be included in our plans, and general layout questions. The Long Center is, essentially, attached to the grounds of Butler Park. It is an enclosed event space that holds the Renegade Craft Fair and the Gaming Expo during SXSW. One of the main challenges with the additional space was tracking attendance and capacity of outdoor stage. People were able to walk out of the Long Center directly into Butler Park missing the gates that were set specifically to Butler Park, where capacity was measured. We were not concerned that capacity would be reached; however, we still took steps to ensure the safety of patrons throughout the entire event.

We set up the space on Wednesday March 12, and broke down the space on Sunday, March 16. The concerts at Butler Park were on Thursday evening, Friday evening and all day Saturday. Set up included the following: setting up two gates, attaching signage to the fence line in key points and preparing how many and which volunteers will be at each volunteer position. During the show I placed volunteers at their posts, checked on them frequently providing breaks when needed, helped with park logistics during the event to help maintain security of space,

assisted with crew changeover and helped with any other incidental issues that came up throughout the concert series. Breaking down the space included: removing signage and any sponsorship items left behind, tearing down gates, labeling any supplies for storage and cleaning up the production trailer.

Chapter Three: Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats

Strengths

Innovative leaders

South by Southwest would not be considered a leader in conferences and festivals if it weren't for the innovative leaders guiding the organization. The people who have helped to shape SXSW have come a long way from the media and music that first filled the panels and festival space. Over the years, leaders have incorporated new trends and exciting technology into SXSW, which has provided growth, diversity and staying power of the company. Since the inception, the additions to the main event have included: a larger Trade Show, new conferences and festivals such as Interactive, Edu, Film, Eco, and V2V, the Gaming Expo, Renegade Craft Fair, and StyleX (fashion). The festival might not have grown and expanded to such success without the innovative leaders who see these additions as important and worth exploration, even if they don't succeed.

Economic Impact

Over the years, SXSW has helped the Austin economy by bringing in tourists, technology leaders, filmmakers, musicians, agents, artists, musicians and business leaders. According to the Greyhill Advisors, SXSW brought a "total of \$315 million into Austin... SXSW operations had a \$121.9 million impact on the Austin economy, and the impact of festival attendees spending money in Austin was \$1.36 million".¹⁵ The large amount of revenue the conference and festival brings to Austin provides a positive impact on businesses and the job market.

¹⁵ <http://www.kvue.com/story/news/local/2014/09/11/sxsw-impact-totals-314-million/15461677/>

Community Impact

SXSW also participates in events throughout the year that help artists, and the community. One of the events SXSW is involved in is the HAAM benefit day.¹⁶ HAAM (Health Alliance for Austin Musicians) and SXSWfm partnered providing music for the event, which is open and free to the public. SXSW adopted a street that is cleaned up and maintained by the sustainability team. This team is comprised of representatives from most departments who meet bi-weekly to discuss green initiatives.

Partnerships and Sponsorships

One of the most important strengths of SXSW is its ability to gain and maintain sponsors and partners for all of their endeavors. There are three main areas of sponsorship available through SXSW: Super Sponsorship, Major Sponsorship and high profile programs. The Super Sponsorship “delivers the highest visibility possible and provides seamless promotional exposure by aligning your brand with SXSW as a top promotional partner.”¹⁷ These sponsorships are competitive and are commonly held by companies for multiple years. Super Sponsors receive category exclusivity to be the “Official Sponsor” of SXSW Music, Film and Interactive in their respective field (carbonated beverages, consumer electronics, automobiles, and more). The Major Sponsorship gives sponsors the ability to purchase category exclusivity for either Music, Film, or Interactive, and this “allows your brand to have maximum exposure for the duration of a specific festival, as well as inclusion in SXSW’s promotional campaign.”¹⁸ The sponsorship department works diligently to maintain and protect the category exclusivity of their Super and Major Sponsors which makes obtaining a super sponsorship very competitive and prohibits

¹⁶ <http://www.myhaam.org/campaign/sxswfm-haam-benefit-showcase/>

¹⁷ <http://sxsw.com/marketing/sponsorship>

¹⁸ <http://sxsw.com/marketing/sponsorship>

competing brands from any official presence at SXSW. Additional Super and Major Sponsorship assets include: brand alignment and name association with SXSW, customizable sponsor activation area at the Austin Convention Center, sponsor activation messaging on SXSW's social media platforms, the ability to use the SXSW brand name and logo in promotional campaigns, ongoing SXSW consultation and support on sponsor activation planning and first right of refusal for the following year as a Super/Major Sponsor.¹⁹ Sponsors can choose from high profile programs centered on single day events to conference-wide branding.²⁰ The high profile programs also include customized sponsor opportunities.

Branding

The SXSW brand is well known in the South and in the music community. The staff counsel, Laurie Velasco, closely monitors the process of branding different items, conferences and events. All contracts and legal agreements go through Laurie first, and some go beyond Laurie to the external legal staff leading up to the main event in March. The standard contracts are easy to change between businesses, but Laurie is still tasked with overlooking the process and approving different contracts. Branding trickles down to every aspect of the conferences, including sponsors and partners of the event. Agreements are made with sponsors and partners to use our logo in their own various media outlets, just as we promote them through ours. The staff at SXSW shows great loyalty by wearing SXSW gear and other notable branding items, like the arrow logo that is used in all of the branding. Merchandise is sold at all of the festivals and conferences that are branded with SXSW. The style each year changes slightly to keep up with trends, which proves to be successful as the conferences continue to grow. There are specific

¹⁹ <http://sxsw.com/marketing/sponsorship/major>

²⁰ <http://sxsw.com/marketing/sponsorship/highprofile>

color palettes associated with each conference, which are used for all conference promotional materials throughout the season.

Weaknesses

Spreading too thin

SXSW didn't start as a large company with close to two hundred employees. They didn't start out in a large office building with multiple floors and prime location in downtown Austin. Before the large office complex, SXSW was spread between multiple houses on the north end of town, with departments split into different houses. The space that is a complete step up, the office that now houses SXSW, is already at capacity. The company has grown by two conferences and departments in the past four years. Due to the new conferences the company capacity has increased, allowing for new hires to come on (seasonally for the most part) ensuring a successful run of each conference. Maintaining the culture of SXSW is going to be a challenge as the company continues to grow. The company is run as a small grass roots company, but is beginning to shape itself as a large corporation. The corporation mindset gives less compassion to each individual and more to numbers as a whole. The culture of SXSW, up to this point, has not been focused solely on number but rather on the team and individual employees who give much of their time and energy to make the conferences and festivals a success. There are efforts to keep the culture alive and it will be interesting to watch SXSW as they grow to see if they're able to maintain the grass roots culture that helped build the company to this point.

Staff Changes and Communication

Staffing fluctuates with seasonal employees and interns. The seasonal and intern staff makes up a large portion of the people in the office leading up to and during the main event. These people are key players ensuring the success of the event. One of the downsides to this is lack of continuity in information being passed down to seasonal staff and the staff for years to come. There is no “how-to guide” for SXSW, and you have to dig and ask colleagues about processes and where to find key information to make tasks happen. This isn’t debilitating, because it provides an opportunity for new staff to meet key staff members in each department, but for those shy new employees and interns, this can seem daunting. Communication is lacking when the busy season approaches; as an intern I found this to be very frustrating at times when I needed answers to questions. I could always rely on people in the volunteer department to give me the information I needed, but when working with planning and production, I had to wait at least a day or two at most for answers to questions. I can’t speak to every department, but the volunteer department as a whole has a system to their work, a plan that is outlined each season with modifications depending on past success or failure. The majority of what newcomers learn is what is happening this season because time is limited, and explaining why something isn’t being used or why changes are made becomes less important than accomplishing the goals set forth. If a department loses an employee who plays a key role, it will have to download that person’s email and their Google Drive to have access to their system, which is time consuming and in some cases time wasting.

Long Lines

The lines for each of the festival events are long, very long in fact. Some of the lines wrap around city blocks and last for multiple hours prior to a film opening or musical act. People attending these events are usually in pretty great spirits because of the exclusivity of the events

they are getting to witness. The lines are a deterrent to some locals and out of town registrants, causing social media outbursts, negative press and in some cases loss of future attendees. The lines create problems, but there are great people working as volunteers to help keep spirits high while registrants wait. There is also a card system in place for films that gives people a good indication of whether or not they will make the cut to get into the theatre.

Opportunities

City Growth

Austin is growing at a rapid pace. There is construction at every turn, and people are moving to the city daily. Between 2012 and 2013 the City of Austin has grown 2.6%, which is the highest growth of any city in the country.²¹ The city growth has increased the entertainment needs in the city, which in turn helps registrations for SXSW. If we are able to continue drawing in the young community, the attendance will continue to increase. Young entrepreneurs enjoy mingling and exchanging ideas in settings like SXSW provide. This will be a key demographic to focus on as the city continues to fill with young business professionals. City growth also means more to consider when creating venues, and how to maintain them as buildings begin to fill empty downtown. It will be an opportunity for the company to spread further East to the parts of Austin that are booming with young creatives. There are a lot of music venues on the eastside of Austin, but it is not utilized as much prior to the music festival. Pushing some of the programming out of the downtown center, especially for music, helps to thin out crowds that can become overwhelming. Creating more programming in other locations drives registrants to see parts of the city they might have missed by staying in the city center, which could entice them to relocate to Austin, or invest in some of the work happening in Austin.

²¹ <http://www.austintexas.gov/article/austin-area-continues-be-leader-population-growth>

Threats

Guerilla Events

Unofficial parties and events are a burden for people attending and producing SXSW to deal with. Businesses that aren't willing to work with South by to be an official venue create their own parties which crowds the already overcrowded city to a point that is unreasonable for the event staff, registrants and the APD to monitor and maintain traffic. These events usually have small references to involvement with the main event, although this is often an unofficial event name or illegal use of the SXSW marks. Different companies have come in and taken over spaces to throw their own shows and mini festivals and there isn't much SXSW can do, unless the event is infringing on our company in some way. This year a large-scale event, the iTunes Festival, took over a venue in downtown Austin near SXSW's main event venue, the Austin Convention Center. SXSW leadership determined since the event would be taking place either way (with large name acts such as Jay Z and Coldplay) it would be most beneficial to create a partnership with iTunes to make the event official in order to maintain first priority access for badge holders, as well utilize SXSW's extensive crowd control and safety efforts. While SXSW wants to co-exist with other entities, it can be hard during a time the streets are already full to capacity with registrants and patrons. Businesses in downtown Austin that don't participate in SXSW generally have events during those fourteen days anyway, taking away from the brand and living off the coat tails of the company.

City Capacity

The city is under a lot of construction, which is a challenge for the planning and execution of SXSW events. From 2010-2014 Austin has grown from 790,390 to 865,504.²² This is a staggering growth for the city, which has increased construction and reimagining of the urban areas of Austin. The downtown area has been under construction in different areas for a few years, and there is not an end in sight. Construction and renovation has caused problems with providing housing for registrants. The traffic is impossible during the event, which results in people wanting to be housed as close to the event center as possible. Attendees don't want to spend the majority of their time during the conference in transit.

²² http://www.austintexas.gov/sites/default/files/files/Planning/Demographics/population_history_pub.pdf

Chapter Four: Best Practices

Best Practices

In the executive summary from *Live from Your Neighborhood: A National Study of Outdoor Arts Festivals*, Carole Rosenstein discusses the characteristics of outdoor arts festivals, and helps to outline statistics through various case studies.

Festivals vary in characteristics based on location, genres and target audience. Outdoor arts festivals display the following characteristics: 1. Diversity of art forms and audiences, 2. Commitment to quality programming, 3. Low or no cost admission and 4. Integration with their communities.²³ Diversity of art form, whether through various genres of music or creation of new technology, is key to keeping the interest of people attending the conference and festival. It is important to appeal to the masses and specific niche groups over the event. Diversity of audience is also crucial to meeting the needs of the community you are serving. The success of a festival in the long term is dependent on changing to meet the needs of its diverse audience, noticing what works and doesn't work for people as years pass. A commitment to quality programming is also a key element to executing a successful arts festival. Diversity in programming can include a variety of disciplines: music, visual, technology, dance, theatrical and educational. A balance of these disciplines will reach the broadest group of potential patrons. Low or no cost admission is unless the festival is put on by a not-for-profit organization. Most festivals maintain free aspects, even if they are for profit, but overall free events are not a normal venture for these festivals. Offering free events within the budget gives the community a chance to be involved, even if they're unable to attend the pay events. The balance for multidisciplinary arts festivals is found in these offerings or through providing volunteer opportunities for the

²³Rosenstein, pg10-12

community and eager participants who may not be able to afford registration. Without support from the local government, neighborhood and community leaders a festival will fight to succeed through road blocks built by frustrated community leaders. Some festivals, like Bonnaroo, offer free admission to the people who live directly around the festival grounds. This is a generous act that shows the community that the festival cares about their satisfaction, and a desire for them to participate in the event.

SXSW has a lot of these characteristics, which allows for continued growth shown by the expansion of conferences and festivals to include SXSW Eco, SXSWedu and V2V. Diversity of art forms and audiences can be seen in the programming choices made by SXSW. The event attracts artists, musicians, startups, entrepreneurs, computer programmers, educational professionals, filmmakers, gaming enthusiasts and more, providing a diverse group of participants. The audiences vary as well from agents and recording companies to business leaders and aspiring artists. SXSW has a strong commitment to quality programming. Through strong speakers, including Lena Dunham, Edward Snowden and Mark Zuckerberg, SXSW maintains a fresh audience ready for the insider knowledge these types of high-profile leaders possess. Admission is not free for all of SXSW, but portions of the event are free or only require a door fee. Some of the free events include: the Outdoor Stage concert series, Gaming Expo, Renegade Craft Fair, Flatstock Poster Show, SXSW Create (hackers and DIY), Job Market and the Music Gear Expo. These events provide a place for people of different disciplines to be involved with the event, even if they're unable to obtain registration to the main conference and festival.

Volunteering is also a huge part of the SXSW culture. Volunteering affords people the opportunity to see an insider's view of how the festival works, gain registration and enjoy the

event when they're not working volunteer hours. SXSW would not be possible without the dedicated volunteers who take off from their daytime responsibilities to donate time for this conference and festival. This year alone there were over 4,000 volunteers who worked around the clock to make sure the event was a success. Providing volunteer opportunities for the community has been a great way to gain support from locals.

It isn't easy to keep the entire community happy at all times, and to show the city the economic impact that SXSW has for Austin, they provide an Economic Impact Report, which shows the amount of revenue brought in from the main event. This information is open and free to the public on the SXSW website and gives an in depth breakdown to the benefits of hosting the conferences and festivals in Austin. There will always be backlash for accidents and mistakes along the way, but overall SXSW has provided the community with a guaranteed income and national recognition that helped to put Austin on the map as an entertainment leader.

Similar Organizations

SXSW is a truly unique grouping of conferences and festivals that encompass so many important aspects of business and entertainment. As it has grown, so has the competition. Similar organizations have popped up in various areas of the U.S. and abroad, due to the innovative and effective structure SXSW has created.

The Great Escape

The Great Escape located in the U.K. has been producing a festival and conference since 2006.²⁴ The Great Escape (TGE) brings in “over 400 up and coming bands play in 35 Brighton

²⁴ <http://greatestescapefestival.com/previous-line-ups/>

venues, accessible on one wristband”, providing across the board access into showcases.²⁵ The conference that runs simultaneously with music features “insightful panels, topical debates, keynote speeches and networking opportunities”.²⁶ TGE has been compared to SXSW due to similar format and programming and maintains an innovative and determined outlook that continues to provide prosperity. John Badcock works seasonally with SXSW and Mama & Company (producers of TGE and other festivals) and provided me with insight into the similarities between SXSW and TGE. According to John, TGE is similar to SXSW by not having a fixed perimeter around the festival rather an open layout that includes venues spread across the city. Brighton is a destination beach party town in the U.K. so they are prepared for large crowds and have not experienced issues with reaching city capacity during TGE²⁷. The festival is smaller bringing in about 20,000 people per day, and due to the shorter run of the festival (3 days) they are able to manage the crowds much easier than SXSW in Austin. There are less guerilla events that take place during TGE, and the festival is less concerned with these events taking place, because with or without TGE venues would produce shows throughout the summer. After talking with John, I got the impression that TGE coexists easily with city and that the issues SXSW face with city capacity and construction are not mirrored issues at TGE. The price of TGE varies between the Delegate Pass and the Festival Pass. The early bird rate for the Delegate Pass is £145.00 while the early bird rate for the Festival Pass is lower at just £49.50.²⁸ The differences in price and what each pass allows is similar to SXSW which offers different badges and different rates for each of their conferences and festivals. Providing different pricing, more affordable for the festival, TGE is able to bring in a diverse audience that mixes business

²⁵ <http://greatescapefestival.com/info/>

²⁶ <http://greatescapefestival.com/info/>

²⁷ John Badcock, personal communication, November 14, 2014.

²⁸ <http://greatescape.seetickets.com/event/the-great-escape-2015/various-brighton-venues/798668>

and fans together for an exciting weekend of networking and experiencing music collectively. The community of Brighton is much smaller than Austin with less than 250,000²⁹ people, whereas Austin is at about 900,000³⁰ people. Venues at The Great Escape are spread over the city. There aren't as many venues on a single block unlike SXSW that has multiple venues on a single block causing complex line structure and management techniques. They both take place in the city center creating the need for approval from local government and the community. The Great Escape has continued to grow since its inception, and the continued success in programming will provide overall success as a conference and festival.

Northside Festival

The history for Northside Festival isn't very in depth on their website, but they do have a well laid out site with a lot of information spread between multiple sections and pages. The festival is held in Brooklyn with "Festival Headquarters located within McCarren Park, at the corner of Bedford and North 12th Street".³¹ The festival began in 2009 and "has grown from a small DIY (do it yourself)-affair to a full-fledged discovery festival taking over 50+ venues in Williamsburg and Greenpoint and featuring over 350 bands".³² There are a lot of similarities to SXSW as this festival has a multidisciplinary approach to its programming. Northside also has an interactive portion to their event, NExT, that "continues the Northside tradition of having the best entrepreneurs and technologists speak about rapid changes to the world and the role of makers, technologists, and innovators".³³ They have a very similar structure as SXSW with

²⁹ http://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/sites/brighton-hove.gov.uk/files/downloads/citystats/1_CityProfile.pdf

³⁰ <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/48/4805000.html>

³¹ <http://northsidefestival.com/map-2/>

³² <http://northsidefestival.com/history/>

³³ <http://northsidefest.wpengine.com/next/>

badges for music, film, innovation and premium badges that give access to all aspects of Northside.³⁴ Each badge allows patrons into the specific portions of the festivals and conference. Northside appeals to a large group of people, which diversifies their audience draw, and engages the community from different aspects of business and entertainment. The volunteer structure is vague, and seemingly less important for their festival to function. When searching the Northside website for volunteer information, you are brought to a Google form to fill out, without notice of when you might be contacted other than close to the festival. There are no definitive perks listed, instead vague mention of free admission to some shows and screenings. There isn't much reported on their website about the economic impact they provide to the city, but they are sure to bring in a good crowd with their strong programming and diversity in arts represented.

³⁴ <http://northsidefestival.com/what-does-my-badge-get-me/>

Chapter Five: Recommendations

The recommendations I have for SXSU are outlined in the S.W.O.T. analysis in the weakness and opportunity sections, but for these purposes I will elaborate on my findings. The culture of SXSU has changed as the company has grown, but people who have been with the company for years are dedicated to keeping it as a grass roots organization. There are several challenges that arise from company growth such as lack of clear communication of the company practices, lack of understanding of interconnectedness between departments, and general feelings of exclusion from the group. These problems are not impossible to fix, and with care and consideration from the staff, can be improved and hopefully removed completely. The sustainability team at SXSU is working on getting information to new staff and interns by providing an information packet with office information, office layout, and the sustainable practices SXSU implements. This will include information on recycling, staff managers, and how they plan to continue involvement with city sustainability initiatives. This will provide new staff with the opportunity to learn about the company, meet staff that are also involved in joint department efforts and to become more involved if they are interested.

Another great investment of time for each department and new hires would be to create a general guideline of how information is shared within each position. Providing new staff with a guide to the company, the company structure, general information about how we share information through the company and an overview of programs used in their department. This information would be invaluable to a new hire as there is little to no written instructions to acclimate new hires to the company. Each department could do this internally for new hires. It would be less effective to have only one new hire information sheet due to different program usage, department structure and department purpose throughout the company. During the busy

season (January-March) there is little time for instruction to the company practices as everyone on staff and working to meet deadlines. The positions at SXSW evolve as the company changes, but some standard documents given to each new employee to learn their department practices will prove to be beneficial. Staff changes would be eased by this process and in turn provides a reference point for new hires.

City capacity and long lines are an important consideration as the conference, festival and city of Austin continue to grow. The parking lots and other non-traditional venues SXSW has depended on for years have become less available as high-rise buildings replace empty lots in the city center. It would benefit the company to move some programming and events to other parts of the city. This has started to take place especially during the music portion of the main event. There are venues all over the east side of Austin that house music and other sponsor events. Utilizing this same strategy during the interactive and film portions of the main event has the potential to prevent further congestion. The challenges with this move are mostly related to transportation. We would need to have shuttles that run throughout the event that make rounds to all of the venues outside of the city center. The cost could outweigh the potential at this time, but as space becomes more limited and city population grows, SXSW will have to find a way to adapt when acquiring venues. Some of the issues with capacity are also related to over crowded venues posing great difficulty for registrants seeking entry into showcases. This issue is related to venues offering admittance by single ticket purchase. People without badges are able to buy tickets at the door for showcases, which causes the venue to fill up before registrants are admitted. This problem is a hard one to fix, but line management can help to prevent the issue from growing. Splitting lines at venues to offer registrants priority admittance has the potential to even out the percentage of registrant to single ticket sale entry into showcases.

Guerilla events cause interference with our safety and line management efforts. These events are not affiliated with SXSW and do not provide the same level of support for line management and safety of patrons. This is a priority for SXSW events and is taken seriously when plotting layout of venues, lines and the crews who help to manage crowds. SXSW can't force guerilla events to participate and become an official venue for the event, but the services they provide are a great reason to join the event officially. The special projects department handles guerilla events and explores initiatives to cut down on new unofficial events from popping up. This department is dedicated to finding a way to make these events official by connecting them with our sales and sponsorship team. Different levels of participation to draw these events to becoming official can be successful. The rates of participation aren't disclosed for the public, but the cost is higher than small companies can afford on a normal basis. Meeting these companies where they're at financially could make them more willing to participate and continue to participate for years to come. The large companies that choose to create events that overlap with our programming could benefit from being official from our extensive line management and safety practices. Companies are more likely to participate if it becomes less about participation money and more about the safety of patrons. Pushing the safety aspect of involvement as an official event may provide more reasoning to participate with SXSW.

Conclusion

SXSW is an innovative company that continues to change to meet new technology and business while staying true to its roots of being a small company of friends. Producing four major events each year, SXSW has become a leader in conferences and festivals in the South reaching as far as Nevada. Continuing to thrive through strong programming, SXSW invites innovative thinkers to contribute their ideas for panels, keeping the topics fresh and on point each year. The continued support of sponsors has created brand recognition throughout many avenues giving a boost in films, print and on the web. Evolving is something that comes naturally to SXSW, which has and will continue to prove successful as the company grows, by understanding the community and the desires of registrants each year. Commitment to treating volunteers with respect and gratitude will continue the growth and success of the volunteer department in the future. SXSW would not be possible without the strength in numbers the volunteers provide. There will be growing pains as the company figures its way around expanding in conferences and in employees, but the strong leadership of those who have been at SXSW since the beginning will help to ease the transitions faced by growth.

Bibliography

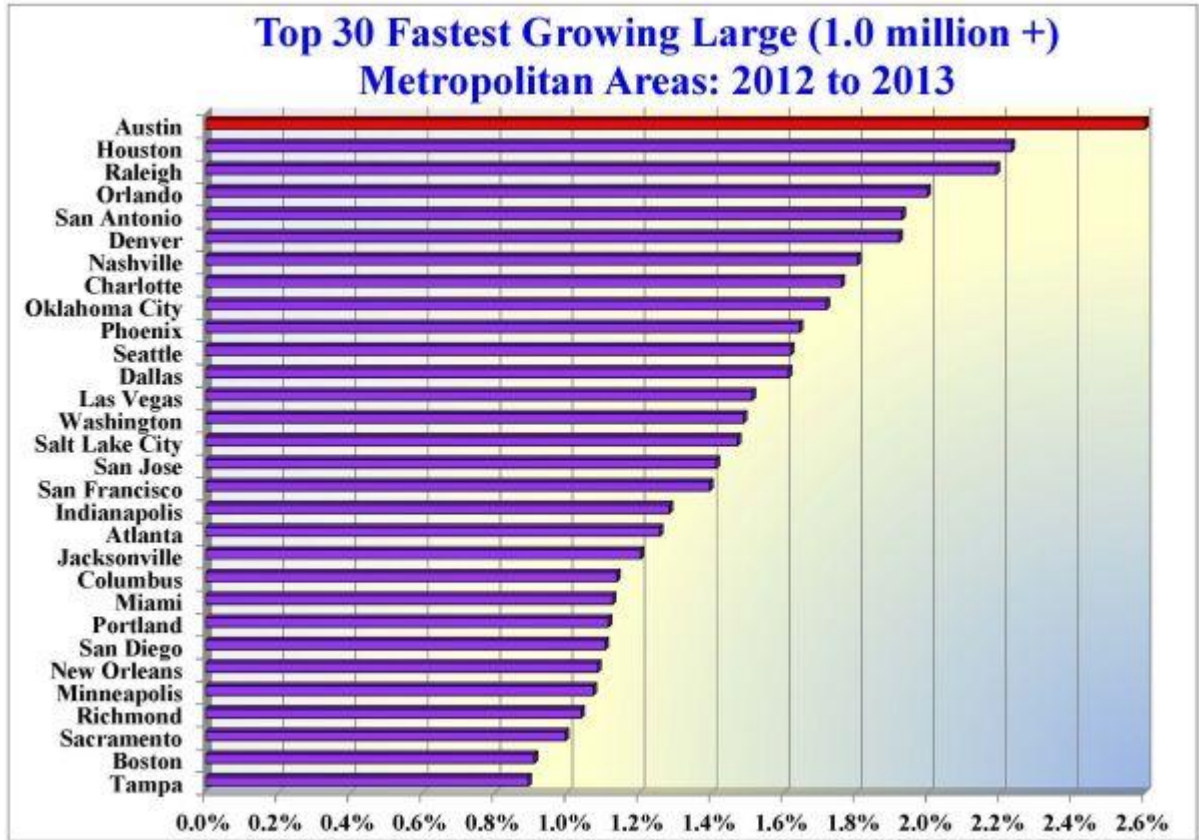
- "SXSW History." *Home*. SXSW, n.d. Web. <<http://sxsw.com/about/sxsw-history>>.
- "Startups, Innovators & You." *Startups, Innovators & You*. SXSW, 2014. Web. <<http://sxsw2v.com/about>>.
- "WELCOME 2014 SXSW VOLUNTEERS!" *WELCOME 2014 SXSW VOLUNTEERS!* SXSW, n.d. Web. <<http://volunteer.sxsw.com/>>.
- "About." *SXSWEco*. SXSW, n.d. Web. <<http://sxsweco.com/about>>.
- Blackstock, Peter, Jason Cohen, and Andy Smith. *SXSW Scrapbook: People and Things That Went before*. Austin, TX: Essex, 2011. Print.
- Goudeau, Ashley. "SXSW 2014 Economic Impact Totals \$315 Million." *SXSW 2014 Economic Impact Totals \$315 Million*. KVUE, 11 Sept. 2014. Web. 21 Sept. 2014.
- "Demographic Data | Planning | AustinTexas.gov - The Official Website of the City of Austin." *Demographic Data*. N.p., n.d. Web. 23 Sept. 2014. <<http://www.austintexas.gov/page/demographic-data>>.
- Wittington, Catlin. "SXSW 2013 Economic Impact Report." *Home*. N.p., 18 Sept. 2014. Web. 25 Sept. 2014. <<http://sxsw.com/music-film-interactive-sxswedu/news/2013/sxsw-2013-economic-impact-report>>.
- Rosenstein, Carole. *Live from Your Neighborhood: A National Study of Outdoor Arts Festivals*. Vol. 1. Washington, DC: National Endowment for the Arts, 2010. N. pag. Print.
- "SXSWedu.com." *About*. N.p., n.d. Web. 30 Sept. 2014. <<http://www.sxswedu.com/>>.
- Ochoa, Gus. "SXSW 2014 Outdoor Stage Sponsorship Packages Available!" *Home*. N.p., 13 Jan. 2014. Web. 30 Sept. 2014. <<http://sxsw.com/music/news/2014/sxsw-2014-outdoor-stage-sponsorship-packages-available>>.
- "Census 2011." *Brighton & Hove City Council*. N.p., n.d. Web. 01 Oct. 2014. <<http://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/content/community-and-life-events/census-2011>>.
- "United States Census Bureau." *Austin (city) QuickFacts from the US Census Bureau*. N.p., n.d. Web. 30 Sept. 2014. <<http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/48/4805000.html>>.
- "Northside Festival." *Northside Festival*. N.p., n.d. Web. 02 Oct. 2014. <<http://northsidefest.wpengine.com/history/>>. <<http://northsidefest.wpengine.com/next/>>. <<http://northsidefestival.com/map-2/>>.

"Austin Area Continues to Be the Leader in Population Growth | AustinTexas.gov - The Official Website of the City of Austin." *Austin Area Continues to Be the Leader in Population Growth | AustinTexas.gov - The Official Website of the City of Austin*. N.p., 1 Apr. 2014. Web. 13 Oct. 2014. <<http://www.austintexas.gov/article/austin-area-continues-be-leader-population-growth>>.

John Badcock, personal communication, November 14, 2014.

Appendix

Appendix A.



Appendix B.



ANALYSIS OF ECONOMIC BENEFIT TO THE CITY OF AUSTIN FROM SOUTH BY SOUTHWEST 2014

MUSIC / FILM / INTERACTIVE / EDU / ECO

MEDIA CONTACTS



Greyhill Advisors
Ben Loftsgaarden, Partner
Direct: 512.786.6100
ben@greyhill.com

SXSW
Elizabeth Derczo, Media Coordinator
512.467.7979
elizabeth@sxsw.com

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

SXSW 2014 marked the 28th year of this annual conference, trade show, and festival in Austin, Texas. The event reinforced SXSW's reputation as the world's premier gathering of creative professionals. In addition to its thriving legacy components—Music, Film, and Interactive—SXSW also encompasses newer, burgeoning conferences dedicated to Sustainability (SXSW Eco) and Education (SXSWedu).

Convergence remains the core value proposition of SXSW and the 2014 event was no exception. SXSW remains singular in its ability to facilitate the exchange of ideas from such a wide variety of disciplines and cultures. The event brings together an impressive agglomeration of Music, Film, and Interactive industry leaders. Geographically, SXSW draws participants from around the world. The infusion of international talent each year during SXSW transforms Austin into a global epicenter for creative professionals.

In 2014, SXSW's core events attracted 44,500 registrants. SXSWedu set a new mark with 5,900 participants. Since 2012, SXSWedu attendance has tripled. More than 25 years after its inception, SXSW's unmatched depth and breadth of content and activities continues to provide unparalleled opportunities for creative cross-pollination.

Although it is often perceived as a single event, SXSW actually involves two distinct types of operations. SXSW itself involves industry

conferences during the day and a number of official evening events including its Music and Film festivals. SXSW registrants are overwhelmingly industry professionals from outside the Austin region.

The sheer scale and density of SXSW has proven irresistible to outside companies and marketers. In recent years, hundreds of third-party entities have produced concurrent activities in conjunction with and around the official SXSW conference, trade show, and festival. These organizations have varied relationships with SXSW. Although this attendance during SXSW is largely driven by pleasure-minded individuals from the broader Austin region, the numbers are significant. In 2014, SXSW distributed 150,000 Guest Passes to SXSW Participants at sites throughout Austin.

Both SXSW Registrants and SXSW Participants introduce and circulate money in the local economy. The 2014 South by Southwest Economic Impact Analysis is the first attempt to calculate the economic benefit to the City of Austin of all SXSW activities.

SXSW continues to be a major factor in the local economy. The economic impact of SXSW totaled \$315.3 million in 2014. *The cumulative economic impact of SXSW on Austin in just the past five years has exceeded \$1 billion dollars.*

IN 2014, SXSW WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR INJECTING MORE THAN \$315.3 MILLION INTO THE AUSTIN ECONOMY

Operational Output – A measurement of the direct, indirect, and induced local economic benefit of the year-round operations of SXSW as well as expenditures by SXSW and official sponsors. The impact of SXSW operations on the Austin economy was \$121.9 million in 2014.

SXSW Registrant Attendance Expenditures – The direct, indirect, and induced local economic benefit of all attendees of the conference and festival. Attendees include official SXSW badge-holders, industry professionals, and wristband holders, festival exhibitors, and single visitors of events such as film screenings and music concerts. The economic impact of SXSW attendance expenditures was \$136.5 million in 2014.

SXSW Participant Expenditures – The estimated impact of direct, indirect, and induced spending by SXSW Guest Pass Holders and parties affiliated, both directly and indirectly, with SXSW. 2014 marks the first year the majority of SXSW Participant Expenditures have been measured for the economic impact. In 2014, the economic impact of SXSW Participants Expenditures exceeded \$56.9 million.

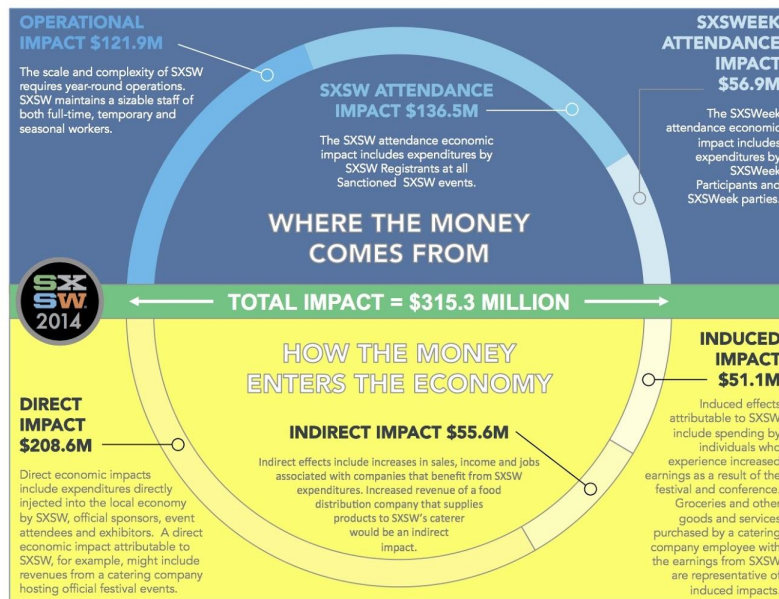
SXSW ECONOMIC IMPACT

SXSW continues to be the single most profitable event for the City of Austin's hospitality industry:

- SXSW 2014 (including the Music, Interactive, Film and SXSWedu events) featured 13 days of industry conferences, a 4-day trade show, a 6-night music festival featuring more than 2,100 bands, and a 9-day film festival with more than 400 screenings.
- In 2014, SXSW directly booked 13,990 individual hotel reservations totaling 60,450 room nights. The average hotel booking was 4.32 nights.
- Limited hotel inventory helped push the average nightly hotel rate up 12 percent to more than \$287.
- SXSW Conference and Festival participation, including official registrants, artists and support crew, and single admission film and music attendees totaled 134,000 (defined as any individual who attended at least one SXSW activity).
- In 2014, SXSW attracted registrants from 87 countries and bands from 57 countries.
- SXSW's popular free-to-the-public consumer events such as the 3-night Outdoor Stage concert series at Butler Park, the 2-day Digital Creative Job Market, 3-day SXSW Create, 4-day Flatstock poster art show and Music Gear Expo, 1-day Education Expo, the 3-day SXSW Gaming Expo and the 3-day Renegade Craft Fair attracted an additional 239,700 participants.
- In 2014, SXSW distributed 150,000 SXSW Week Guest Passes. These SXSW credentials permitted the wearer to attend free-to-the public events such as the Outdoor Concert at Butler Park, Flatstock poster art show, Music Gear Expo, Flatstock poster art show and Music Gear Expo, SXSW Gaming Expo and the Renegade Craft Fair.
- *Every March innumerable patrons with no official credentials travel to Austin to experience the Spring Festival Season that has evolved around SXSW Week. This report does not attempt to account for this significant demographic estimated to exceed 100,000 or more individuals.*

SXSW ATTENDANCE	
Core SXSW Badgeholders	44,500
SXSWedu	5,900
Musicians + Crew + Posse	16,100
Wristband Holders	9,000
Film Pass	1,400
Paid Single Admission (Music & Film)	60,000
Butler Park Outdoor Stage Concert Series	62,500
Collateral Attendance	4,500
Carver Museum Theatre	700
SXSW Gaming Expo	45,500
Flatstock / Music Gear Expo	43,000
Digital Creative Job Market	4,000
SXSW Create	20,000
Education Expo	4,500
Renegade Craft Fair	55,000
TOTAL	376,600

SXSW ECONOMIC IMPACT



SXSW MEDIA VALUATION

In addition to injecting hundreds of millions of dollars into the local economy, SXSW 2014 also provided Austin with extraordinarily valuable media coverage. Since its inception, SXSW has played a critical role in helping position Austin as a place where creativity and commerce are mutually valued, nurtured, and networked. As recently noted by the tourism consultancy Resonance, "after 25 years of the South by Southwest music, film and interactive festival, the quirky capital of the Lone Star State has solidified its brand identity as a cultural destination." Austin's image benefits local workers and companies alike. A 2012 analysis of the economic impact of creative industries commissioned by the City of Austin determined that "Austin is a place that appreciates creativity and culture in a variety of evolving forms, which serves to both attract and retain talented people. This in turn has a significant impact on business recruitment, retention, and expansion, as well as local entrepreneurship."

Cities around the world recognize the value of establishing a vibrant and recognizable identity, but creating an authentic brand that resonates with both residents and the world at large is notoriously difficult and expensive. Austin is the rare major city that has crafted an authentic and distinctive identity without significant public resources. Other cities aspiring for global recognition often spend millions of dollars to secure a mega-event such as the Olympics or the Super Bowl, the benefits of which are at best short-lived. SXSW is synonymous with Austin. In contrast, few individuals recall where the 2012 Superbowl was held. Austin alone enjoys the unique advantage of commanding a global audience that perpetuates the region's reputation as a creative mecca – year after year after year.

Thanks to SXSW, global coverage affirming Austin's idiosyncratic image reaches millions of creative professionals throughout the world. In 2014 alone, SXSW—and by extension, Austin, Texas—achieved over 86.7 billion broadcast, print, and online impressions. Although the city's investment in SXSW is relatively modest, the media exposure enjoyed by SXSW and Austin has enormous value. The positive impact of SXSW is compounded because it strengthens the city's core identity. In 2014 the value of SXSW print, broadcast and online publications coverage totaled more than \$78.7 million. The large increase in the 2014 SXSW media valuation is the result of on-site, nationally broadcast programs such as Jimmy Kimmel Live and CNBC's Live Remote and includes only media coverage of scheduled programming and events.

The true worth of SXSW's media coverage easily exceeds the preceding estimate; due to the volume and difficulty of establishing values for blog, website, radio, and foreign broadcast coverage, these outlets were not included in the preceding media valuation of SXSW. The resulting calculations, though imprecise, represent the most comprehensive attempt to properly quantify the economic benefits that accrue to Austin each year via SXSW's "media buzz" factor.

"That small, grass-roots event — which drew 700 people its inaugural year — has since mushroomed into SXSW, one of the largest and most influential gatherings on the planet."
USA Today

"The South by Southwest Music Festival has become one of the most democratic music events of the year... SXSW sees superstars and complete unknowns all getting their moment to shine."
Wired.com

"South by Southwest has morphed into a nine-day extravaganza that's de rigueur for the digerati, music-minded and movie biz alike."
OZY

"The South By Southwest film festival is a story within a story, a film festival that continues to grow in size and influence within a larger festival that itself grows exponentially larger and more influential with each passing year."
The Dissolve

"SXSWEDU offers the best range of programming for entrepreneurs, investors, teachers, professors and administrators."
EdReach

SELECTED SXSW MEDIA COVERAGE

ABC NEWS	FORBES	NME	STAR-TELEGRAM
ADVERTISING AGE	FORT WORTH STAR-TELEGRAM	NPR	STEREOGUM
ADWEEK	FRANCE 5*	NYLON	SÜDDEUTSCHE ZEITUNG*
AINT IT COOL NEWS	FRANCE INTER/RADIO FRANCE*	OREGONIAN	TECHCRUNCH
AL JAZEERA AMERICA	GUARDIAN*	ORLANDO SENTINEL	TECHNRATI
ASSOCIATED PRESS	HUFFINGTON POST	PBS	TERRA ARGENTINA*
ATLANTA JOURNAL-CONSTITUTION	IFC	PCMAG.COM	TEXAS MONTHLY
BBC*	IRISH INDEPENDENT*	PEOPLE	TEXAS TRIBUNE
BET	IRISH TIMES*	PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER	THE DAILY BEAST
BILLBOARD	JAPAN TIMES*	PITCHFORK	THE HOLLYWOOD REPORTER
BUZZFEED	JIMMY KIMMEL LIVE	PITTSBURGH POST-GAZETTE	THE INDEPENDENT
CBS NEWS	KOREAN ECONOMIC DAILY*	POLITICO	THE ONION/AV CLUB
CHICAGO TRIBUNE	LA TIMES	POLLSTAR	THE STRANGER
CNBC	LAST CALL WITH CARSON DALY	POPULAR MECHANICS	TONIGHT SHOW
CNET NEWS	LATE NIGHT WITH SETH MEYERS	POPULAR SCIENCE	THE VERGE
CNN	LATE SHOW 'W/ DAVID LETTERMAN	RACHAEL RAY SHOW	TIME
COMPLEX	LE MONDE*	RÁDIO ATLÁNTIDA*	TRAVEL + LEISURE
DAILY BEAST	LOS ANGELES TIMES	RADIO FRANCE/LÉ MOUV**	TURNER BROADCASTING
DALLAS MORNING NEWS	MARIE CLAIRE	RADIO-CANADA*	TV GUIDE
DALLAS OBSERVER	MASHABLE	RE/CODE	UNIVISION*
DENVER POST	MIAMI HERALD	REUTERS	US WEEKLY
DENVERPOST.COM	MILWAUKEE JOURNAL-SENTINEL	ROLLING STONE	USA TODAY
DIGG	MINNEAPOLIS STAR TRIBUNE	SACRAMENTO BEE	VANITY FAIR
DOW JONES	MSNBC	SALON.COM	VARIETY
E! ENTERTAINMENT	MTV NEWS	SALT LAKE TRIBUNE	VH1
E! NEWS	NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC TRAVEL	SAN ANTONIO EXPRESS-NEWS	VIBE
EL MUNDO NEWSPAPER*	NBC NEWS	SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE	VICE
ENGADGET	NEW YORK MAGAZINE	SAN JOSE MERCURY NEWS	VOGUE
ENTERTAINMENT WEEKLY	NEW YORK TIMES	SEATTLE TIMES	WALL STREET JOURNAL
ESPN	NEWSWEEK	SPIN	WASHINGTON POST
ESQUIRE	NIKKEI NEWSPAPER*	ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH	WIRED

*International / Multi-National Outlets

Appendix

10/14/2014

SXSW Post-Mortem - News - The Austin Chronicle

THE AUSTIN CHRONICLE

<http://www.austinchronicle.com/news/2014-09-12/sxsw-post-mortem/>

SXSW Post-Mortem

City report ponders how to contain the "Spring Music Festival"

BY CHASE HOFFBERGER, SEPTEMBER 12, 2014, NEWS

This year's **South by Southwest Music Conference & Festival** proved the most troubled in the event's 28-year history – and it wasn't because of the grand mass of people that assembled throughout the city. (Complain about the crowds, just remember their tourism dollars.)

Rather, it's a legacy born of the actions of two individuals: L.A. rapper **Tyler, the Creator**, arrested March 15 for inciting a riot during a daytime Converse/Thrasher party at the Scoot Inn; and **Rashad Owens** from Killeen, accused of crashing a car through a barricade on Red River Street, killing four people and injuring 20 more.

Two weeks after SXSW ended, **City Council** called for a full-scale review of the conference and its surrounding ecosystem – a range of concerts, parties, and small-scale festivals known collectively as the "**Spring Music Festival**." City Manager **Marc Ott** was initially given 90 days to report back to Council with a series of recommendations that could make the experience safer and more enjoyable.

Last Thursday, two months and two weeks after the original deadline, the city finally issued Ott's report. Spanning 22 pages, the evaluation covers nine talking points, including "event sprawl" and "impact of queuing lines into open streets," but mostly boils down to two key issues: management of the week's many **unofficial parties**, and the heavy vehicle traffic throughout the conference. There are allusions to specific spaces and proposals that should have a direct effect on festival proceedings next year. Among the most concrete: Expect a **shutdown of westbound traffic** on Sixth Street under I-35, and at least moderate enforcement of "**pedicab corridors**."

Expect also earlier curfews at unofficial SXSW night shows, and look for Facebook party invites that read: "At Capacity." Take note of the subtle nod to Tyler's riot incitement at the Scoot Inn in the **Austin Center for Events** (the city's umbrella permitting office) being given the ability to "shut down venues where representatives or performers are observed inciting actions that compromise public safety," and another reference that screams "Lady Gaga," in which event producers can expect to endure significantly tighter logistical scrutiny in advance of any Downtown event expecting an "internationally-known" celebrity.

SXSW spokesman **Bill Miller** told the *Statesman* that Ott's writeup "does not address many of the root issues," but in that regard, Ott's hardly alone. Containing the cultural tsunami that is SXSW remains a conundrum besting the event's and the city's best and brightest planners.

Action items on event management suggest that those hoping to throw unofficial parties this year will face a longer list of regulations for acceptance into an event pool that is likely to get smaller after the paperwork is

<http://www.austinchronicle.com/news/2014-09-12/sxsw-post-mortem/print/>

1/3

C.

Appendix D.

10/14/2014

How many people move to Austin a day? Here's the official number - Austin Business Journal

From the Austin Business Journal

:<http://www.bizjournals.com/austin/blog/at-the-watercooler/2014/02/how-many-people-move-to-austin-a-day-heres-the.html>

How many people move to Austin a day? Here's the official number

Feb 14, 2014, 2:19pm CST



[Colin Pope](#)

Editor- *Austin Business Journal*

[Email](#) | [Twitter](#)

It's one of the most common questions I get: How many people move to Austin on an average day?

You've probably seen several numbers thrown around out there. But finally, I have a specific number I'm comfortable reporting.

Drumroll, please: 110.

That's the official number from Austin Demographer [Ryan Robinson](#). He detailed the city's phenomenal growth at the Austin Young Chamber of Commerce's first annual meeting Friday.

The 110 figure is the "net arrivals per day," Robinson said. In other words, it factors in the relative few who leave this town (why, I have no idea).

As Robinson puts it: "The state of our union is very, very good."

As the region flirts with the 2 million population mark, Robinson pointed out that Austin is the fastest-growing large city in America, according to data from recent years. What's more, he said, he sees a lot more interaction between Austin and San Antonio.

"The power of those two metro areas together is pretty astounding," he said, adding that Austin's young workforce is the oil keeping Austin's economic engine roaring.

The downside to all the growth is housing costs. Austin Business Journal detailed that issue in this in-depth article titled "[The incredible shrinking dollar.](#)"

Robinson was one of the first professionals to make one of my "[20 Austinites to Know](#)" lists. The data at his fingertips is valuable business intelligence, and it's available to you.

<http://www.bizjournals.com/austin/blog/at-the-watercooler/2014/02/how-many-people-move-to-austin-a-day-heres-the.html?s=print>

1/2

Appendix E.

Conference Volunteer Perk breakdown:

<u>Perk</u>	<u>Hours</u>
Volunteer SXSWedu Badge or 2 SXSW Volunteer t-shirts	30 - 49
Volunteer Film or Interactive Badge or Music Wristband	50 - 59
Volunteer Gold or Music Badge	60 - 79
Volunteer Platinum Badge	80 +

Production perk breakdown:

<u>Perk</u>	<u>Hours</u>
Volunteer SXSWedu Badge	Minimum 3 Shifts
Volunteer Gold Badge	Minimum of 5 shifts
Volunteer Music Badge	Minimum of 3-5 shifts
Volunteer Platinum Badge	Minimum of 5-7 shifts

Perk access breakdown by badge:

Volunteer SXSWedu Badge: Access to all SXSWedu events to include screenings, trade show, panels, mentor sessions and most parties. A minimum of half the volunteer's hours must be worked between March 9-12.

Volunteer Film Badge: Access into SXSW Film events, including screenings, trade show, panels, mentor sessions and most parties. Holder may also pick up a Film Big Bag and Directory. Not eligible for SXXpress Pass, SXsocial and some lounges.

Volunteer Interactive Badge: Access into SXSW Interactive events, including trade show, panels, mentor sessions and most parties. Holder may also pick up an Interactive Big Bag and Directory. Not eligible for SXXpress Pass, SXsocial and some lounges.

Music Wristband: General public wristband, which allows second tier entry into music venues. A ticket for a Music Big Bag & Directory, Softball & BBQ is included. Not eligible for SXXpress Pass, SXsocial, lounges, trade show and conferences.

Volunteer Gold Badge: Access into all SXSW Film and Interactive events, including screenings, trade show, panels, mentor sessions and most parties. Holder may also pick up both Film and Interactive Big Bags and Directories. Not eligible for SXXpress Pass, SXsocial and some lounges.

Volunteer Music Badge: Access into SXSW Music events, including trade show, panels, mentor sessions, most parties and the Sunday Softball & BBQ. Holder may also pick up a Music Big Bag and Directory. Not eligible for SXXpress Pass, SXsocial and some lounges.

Volunteer Platinum Badge: Access to all SXSW Film, Interactive and Music events, including film screenings, showcases, panels, trade show, most parties and the Sunday BBQ & softball

tournament. The holder may also pick up Big Bags and Directories for all 3 conferences and festivals. Not eligible for SXXpress Pass, SXsocial and some lounges.

Vita

Sarah Spivey was born in Shreveport, Louisiana. She attended Louisiana Tech University, where she received her B.A. in theatre in 2009. Her background includes stage management, marketing, web content management and customer service. Currently, Sarah employed as a Volunteer Coordinator for SXSW.