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BAUDRILLARD, JEAN (1929–2007)

Acclaimed as a genius in some quarters, dismissed as a talentless purveyor of postmodernist rhetoric in others, Baudrillard's status as a key thinker remains a matter of heated debate – something of an accomplishment in itself. Baudrillard was born in Reims in France. He was the first of his family to go to university, where he studied German and subsequently became a teacher and translator. He began to establish himself as a sociologist in the 1960s. One of his earliest central concerns was how to develop Marxist theory through an examination of reproduction and culture as well as production and structure *vis-à-vis* the work of Guy Debord and the Situationists on the *Society of the Spectacle* and the cultural Marxism of Henri Lefebvre. Baudrillard subsequently expanded Marx's theory of commodity fetishism to argue that in a consumer society a symbolic realm of 'sign values' will supplement 'exchange values'. However, he was later to become disillusioned with Marxism and it became one of his prime targets of derision because of its epistemologically and ontologically naïve attempts to understand a society that had become postmodern (not his preferred nomenclature) and had in the process inadvertently become a simulacrum of itself.

On the vacillations of postmodern life, Baudrillard was brilliant. He met the paroxysm of the contemporary world on its own terms: knocked its wig off, twisted its private parts and spat in its eye. In the contemporary

world, Baudrillard argued, leisure had been reduced to the status of 'any consumption of unproductive time' (Baudrillard, 1981: 76). 'Real' leisure had been replaced by an implosion of simulations and the upshot was that television had taken over human lives; like life more generally, leisure has become hyperreal or 'more real than real, merely a simulacrum of the 'real thing' it duplicates.

Critics have argued that Baudrillard's expiring of the social and 'reality' from his schema weakened these ideas almost to the point of extinction. However, this is to miss the point of Baudrillard. With his work it is difficult to unravel fact from fiction, fanciful musings from real issues – the counterculture of the 1960s suited his mood and style. The reader needs to be aware that his work is art, not science. He was the master of calculated irresolution. He did not want to put his readers' minds at rest – he wanted his ideas puzzle and disturb us – and it is this that prevented his ideas tipping over into nihilism. Contrary to what his critics say, Baudrillard was not saying that life (or leisure) is fake or bogus, just that the hyperreality of the world we inhabit today renders null and void the opposition between truth and falsity.

When Baudrillard turned his critical eye to the absurdities of postmodern society, there was nobody else who could match his razor-sharp observations, especially about consumption. Indeed, the real subject of his work was not leisure at all but the pervasive power of consumer society – the habituation of a life that has been reduced to lifestyle shopping and the reduction of

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humankind to the status of commodities and insipid manufactured sameness.

Tony Blackshaw

Associated Concepts Bauman; Consumption; 'Into (the)'; Consumer Society; Cool; Leisure Bodies; Modernity; Leisure Life-Style; Performativity; Postmodernism; Postmodernity.

BAUMAN, ZYGMUNT (1925–)

Bauman is not a leisure scholar. He is a gifted practitioner of the sociological imagination who reads the world with the eyes of a poet and the mind of the most ardent of critics, arraigining the diminution of the public voice, and doing so with all the social force of witness he has at his command. To this extent he must be understood as the sociologist-as-man-of-action, admonishing us about the contingencies and ambivalences of modernity and postmodernity (re-described in his more recent work as solid modernity and liquid modernity), and how these resonate with people's experiences of leisure, as well as many of the issues confronting leisure studies.

Born into a family of Jewish origin in Poznan, Poland, in 1925, Bauman could be a character in a twentieth-century novel by the great Argentine writer, Jorge Luis Borges, an epic charting the peak and decline of the 'solid' *conjuncture* stage of modernity. As Keith Tester (2004: 1) has pointed out, by the 'time he was twenty, Bauman had confronted anti-Semitism, Stalinism, Nazism and warfare'. Despite fighting for his country against the Nazis during the Second World War 'Bauman was expelled from the army in 1953 during an anti-Semitic purge which was carried out in the name of the policy of the "de-Judaising of the army"' (ibid). In 1968 he was sacked from his Professorship at Warsaw University and expatriated from his country during another anti-Semitic purge. Shortly after he

was offered a chair at the University of Leeds, and remained Professor of Sociology there until his 'retirement' in 1990.

Though Bauman has not written anything directly about leisure, some of his key ideas – liquid modernity, individualization, palimpsest identities, cloakroom communities, neo-tribes, sociological hermeneutics and hermeneutical sociology – have been taken up by leisure theorists, notably Tony Blackshaw in his (2003) book *Leisure Life: Myth, Masculinity and Modernity*, in order to make knowable the leisure life-world of a group of working-class men he calls 'the lads'. Drawing on the these key themes, Bauman's work allows Blackshaw to not only make sense of how 'the lads' live their leisure lives in liquid modernity, but also how they feel that collective experience individually and together.

Now in his ninth decade, Bauman's ability to ignite the sociological imagination remains undiminished, and not only that, he continues to be somebody with a marvellously acute sense of how contemporary life is lived. Indeed, his is the only sociology written today that comes close to depicting in its pages what the complexity of postmodernity (or as he calls it, liquid modernity) looks *and* feels like. If the true measure of the best sociology is the impossibility of examining and understanding life and leisure as it is lived just then, at that moment, before its ready-made theories and jargons get in the way, but which nonetheless tries to make its subjects live again as well as excite interest in their lives, then Bauman's sociology succeeds better than most. When you read him, imagine ontological and methodological questions don't matter; just savour his reading of the contemporary world and what it tells you about leisure and leisure studies – as you can trust him.

Tony Blackshaw

Associated Concepts Baudrillard; Community; Consumer Society; Consumption; Individualization; Leisure Life-World; Liquid Modernity; Postmodernism; Postmodernity.

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BINARY OPPOSITIONS

Though the consideration of binary oppositions originates in Greek philosophy, and specifically the observations of Parmenides, the basis of more contemporary discussions can be found in the structuralist work of Ferdinand de Saussure and Noam Chomsky, which suggests that language involves two-part systems, where terms, words or concepts are defined by their counterpart and, more importantly, by what they are not. For instance, male is defined as opposite and in contrast to female, as is black to white, high to low, good to evil, and so on ...

Lévi-Strauss (1966) suggested that these codes of opposition operate at a level that is not conscious or directly observable, but at a level that is sometimes described as that of deep structure. The study of culture, according to structuralists, consists of an examination of cultural forms. These cultural forms are the result of the human mind being brought to bear on particular environments. Lévi-Strauss argued that the resultant cultural forms all exhibit the same pattern, that of binary oppositions. What is significant is not the different contents, but the identical patterning of cultural forms and, hence, their structure.

The unequal nature of binary oppositions is developed further by Jacques Derrida, who points our attention as to how one side of each binary pair is always 'preferred' to the other (such as 'good' over 'evil', or 'masculine' rather than 'feminine'), which is the product of imbalances of power and knowledge. Derrida suggests that this privileging of one component of a couplet is always based upon 'presence' and 'absence' – such as in Freudian psychoanalysis, when the female is defined as an absence of masculinity (and more specifically the phallus), which is seen as the 'norm'. However, Derrida suggests that binary oppositions are fundamentally flawed and unreliable and seeks to deconstruct these, pointing to how these oppositions are far from set or natural. In particular, Derrida breaks down the boundaries between binary

pairs and argues that rather than being understood as opposites it is important to understand how these will blur and collapse into each other.

Given the focus of Derrida's own deconstruction of philosophy is 'Plato's Pharmacy', the issue of drugs in sport is an appropriate example to illustrate how this concept can be applied in leisure studies. Following Derrida we can understand drug use as the scapegoat of sport. It is frequently seen as an 'evil' found in sport that must be cast out to maintain its 'purity' and 'true' 'essence'. However, Derrida deconstructs this order and in the process undermines the logic that there is some 'true' 'essence' of sport. Drug use has been prevalent in sport since its inception (both as a performance enhancer, and as a remedy for injuries), and as a scapegoat it must belong inside sport, yet it must also belong outside because it undermines the 'true' ethos of sport. Deconstruction suggests that our ethical decision making about drugs in sport is socially constructed, and based upon a set of judgments that rely on the invocation of existing frameworks of power and knowledge about what is 'deviant' and what is 'normal' in sport.

Garry Crawford and Tony Blackshaw

Associated Concepts Decentring Leisure; Deconstruction; Freud; Postmodernism; Semiotics.

BIRMINGHAM SCHOOL, THE

The Birmingham School is a name given to a group of scholars working at Birmingham University's Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, which was established in the 1960s under the auspices of Richard Hoggart who was its first director. This centre continued to produce influential and important work until its closure in 2002. However, it was in the 1970s and early 1980s that it became most

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prominent under the directorship of Stuart Hall and it was during this period that it became synonymous with the development of 'Cultural Studies' as a subject.

The work of the Birmingham School was diverse, but the output of most of those who worked there can be categorized into three key (interlinked) areas of interest: textual studies of the mass media, 'ordinary' life, and political ideologies (Smith, 2001). First, it is evident that much of the work of the Birmingham School academics was influenced by Antonio Gramsci, and that their studies of the mass media also combined this with semiotic analysis. In particular, much of this effort focused on the role of the mass media in producing and maintaining hegemony. Stuart Hall and other authors at the Birmingham School argued that the mass media provided ideological messages that portrayed a false ideology and prevented critical thinking.

Second, the Birmingham School had a tradition of ethnographic research into patterns of ordinary life, and in particular subcultures. However, how this differed from traditional ethnography was that the studies of the Birmingham School often interpreted and located everyday action and practices within a wider political framework. For instance, the edited collection by Hall and Jefferson (1976) 'Resistance through Rituals' saw members of the Birmingham School consider various forms of youth subcultures, such as their activities, dress, codes, drug use and so on as cultures of resistance grounded in class relations.

Third, this work then crossed over into more specific considerations of the political economy, and in particular, the Birmingham School was also concerned with understanding right-wing politics, such as Thatcherism. In 'Policing the Crisis', written by Hall and his colleagues in 1978, the Birmingham School authors employed the neo-Marxist work of Gramsci and also Stanley Cohen's (1972) ideas on moral panics. Here, Hall et al. suggested that from the 1960s onwards a breakdown of consensus had started in British society. British life was becoming much more characterized by strikes, protests and demonstrations, which were causing major disruptions

to the capitalist system and the status quo in British society. However, a series of moral panics was created in the 1970s onwards, which helped reconstruct a sense of national identity and restore social cohesion.

Of particular significance to leisure studies is the work of two Birmingham School scholars, John Clarke and Chas Critcher, and their book *The Devil Makes Work* (1985), who applied a Neo-Marxist consideration of the political economy to leisure. In this they suggest that the degree of freedom of choice individuals had in their leisure was often exaggerated, and that this (particularly for the working classes) was both shaped and constrained by capitalism. In particular, they suggested that while middle-class leisure pursuits are heavily promoted and subsidized, working-class leisure activities are often restricted and/or licensed by the state. This can clearly be seen throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in the way traditional working-class folk sports, which were often seen as little more than dangerous gatherings, were either banned or institutionalized and controlled by the state and middle classes. Significantly, they also suggested that in more contemporary times leisure has become progressively commercialized, with leisure increasingly based around a consumption which is fed and controlled by multinational capitalist corporations.

The 1970s and 1980s have been seen as the golden era of British cultural studies and the Birmingham School, but from the early-1980s onwards there began a (greater) fragmentation and diversification of ideas and subject matter within the School (Smith, 2001). In many ways this was a logical development, but it also marked the beginning of the end of the Birmingham School as a group of scholars who shared similar interests and perspectives. In particular, authors began to move away from solely focusing on class to considering other areas such as gender and ethnicity. In *Women Take Issue* Angela McRobbie and her colleagues (Women's Study Group, 1978) 'took issue' with the marginalization of women in the Birmingham School's study of working-class culture. Race and ethnicity

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were also areas that had received little consideration in the early work of the Birmingham School. Though 'Policing the Crisis' had touched on issues of race, it was Paul Gilroy and his colleagues in *The Empire Strikes Back* (1982), and later *There Ain't no Black in the Union Jack* (1987), who provided the first detailed consideration of race to come out of Birmingham.

Garry Crawford

Associated Concepts Capitalism; Class; Consumer Society; Consumption; False Consciousness; Folk Devils and Moral Panics; Hegemony; Hoggart; Ideology; Marxism; Mass Media; Power; Racism and Leisure; Semiotics/Semiology; Structure and Agency; Subcultures.

BLOOD SPORTS

Blood sports is a generic term applied to any sporting activity that involves the suffering or killing of animals or people, such as bull fighting and fox hunting. In particular, hunting provides us with a useful illustration of the contextual nature of 'blood sports'. For instance, a simple distinction is often drawn between hunting for subsistence and hunting for pleasure; however, throughout history, hunting has been an activity that has often been associated with ceremony and activities that go beyond the gathering of food alone. It is also the case that the word 'sport' is a term that has historically been most commonly associated with hunting and this continues to be the case for many people. Even the term 'game' is one that is frequently applied to those animals that are hunted.

Beyond hunting, other forms of killing for pleasure, such as bull, dog and cock fighting and bear baiting, have had a similarly long history. These 'sports' probably have their

origins in pre-modern societies and in some cases were frequently linked with combat training (such as using dogs and other animals in warfare) as well as entertainment. Probably the most prominent historical example of blood sport (certainly in terms of our contemporary interest in it) was the gladiatorial and animal fighting events of ancient Rome.

Again, the origins of these activities lie in both combat training as well as entertainment, but in ancient Rome these took on new social, political and cultural significance. Gladiatorial events were common throughout Roman history across much of their empire, and these only came to an end with the fall of the Roman Empire (in around the fifth or sixth century AD). These events were used to dispose of 'undesirables' (such as criminals) as well as for entertainment, and involved a variety of forms of combat between humans, or humans and animals, or between various (often exotic) animals.

Romans of all social backgrounds and classes attended the spectacles of the arena, but it is difficult to judge the social role that blood sport played in Roman culture. Some historians (such as Barton, 1994) have indicated that these were closely connected to religion, as the origins of many blood sports lay in religious sacrifices to Roman gods. Others (such as Hopkins, 1983) have suggested these events were more to do with militarism and imperialism - by way of celebrating and commemorating great victories and battles. Sansone (1988) has viewed these events more notably as forms of sport and entertainment, while Clavel-Lévêque (1984) has highlighted their use as a form of social control and as a 'show of power'. Their 'true' purpose however is likely to be a combination of these reasons and also dependent on the context of each particular event.

Beyond the Roman Empire, animal fighting has continued to be a popular form of entertainment throughout history in many different cultures and indeed the world over. For instance, bear-baiting was a very popular leisure pastime in England between the

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sixteenth and nineteenth century, and still continues today in certain parts of the world. Likewise hunting for 'sport', such as grouse and deer hunting, is still legal and popular in many countries, and even today the laws to outlaw fox hunting in the UK have had little real impact in preventing this activity from continuing in many rural locations. In particular, what is often significant about the control and regulation of blood sports is the class dimension to these activities, which means that while many working-class leisure activities such as cock-fighting and badger-baiting have been deemed 'cruel' and are therefore banned in many countries, middle-class and aristocratic sports, such as grouse hunting and (to some extent) even deer hunting, have been allowed to continue.

Though blood sports are often seen as 'barbaric', it is important that these are understood in their historical setting and in the context that *all* societies will choose to kill – such as in state executions or slaughtering animals to eat. In many ways our own contemporary society is just as (if not more) barbaric as that of ancient cultures such as the Roman Empire, as modern society has turned the slaughter of animals into an industrial scale process of cultivation and production-line mass killing.

Garry Crawford

Associated Concepts Abnormal Leisure; Carnavalesque; Deviance; Mimesis; Violence.

Bohemia, the kingdom of central Europe which, under Hapsburg rule between the early sixteenth century and the end of the Second World War, included the Czech Republic and Slovenia. The idea of bohemianism was first used in the nineteenth century to describe the unconventional lifestyles of *demi-mondaine* characters – artists, writers and musicians, as well as the hybrids, misfits and one-offs – who had created alternative or deviant artistic communities or countercultures, typically in the zones of transition formed in major European cities. 'Bohemia' came into existence, then, so that people ill at ease with the prevailing conditions of modernity could have somewhere to call home. In this sense it could be said that bohemianism is a sign of authenticity because bohemians are men and women who refuse to live a false life, or in the contemporary world, refuse to conform to the conventions of consumer society. However, as Wilson's prescient (2000) work suggests, bohemianism today has been so thoroughly commercialized that it has become just another leisure life-style choice for individuals seduced by the idea of living a life that is off-the-wall: 'glamorous and sexy, unconventional and edgy, yet chic and cool'.

Tony Blackshaw

Associated Concepts Abnormal Leisure; Authenticity; Community; Consumption; Cool; Deviance; Edgework; Flow; Leisure Life-Style; Liminality; Zones.

BODY/BODIES SEE LEISURE BODIES

BOHEMIANS

'Just as none of us is outside or beyond geography', said Edward Said, 'none of us is completely free from the struggle over geography'. This is a statement that is pertinent to the idea of the bohemian. The term derives from

BOSTON MATRIX

The Boston Matrix, much like the Ansoff Matrix, is a well-known marketing tool. Its primary concern is in developing and effectively managing a product portfolio in order to help organizations develop and control their market share. The matrix involves placing an organization's products into four categories: star, cash cow, problem child and dog.

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The idea behind the Boston Matrix is that each of these categories can be useful to an organization in the sense that products can move freely between them depending on the market situation and the marketing objectives of that organization.

- *Star products* are characterized by a high market share and therefore a high turnover. This signifies an excellent state of affairs for an organization as high market growth presents an opportunity to obtain an increased market share. However, products in this category are also under an increased threat from both current and potential competitors.
- *Cash Cows* are the breadwinners for an organization in the short term. Although the market growth is low and the product is likely to be in the latter stages of its life cycle, potential competitors will be unlikely to enter the same market. This presents the organization with opportunities to squeeze revenues during the final stages of a product's life.
- *Problem Child* products are those that perform badly at present. However, when product assessments are made their future potential is often considerable, as indicated by high market growth. These products are often referred to as question marks in the sense that their futures are frequently uncertain. Organizations are normally advised to invest heavily such products, or to get out of the market altogether.
- *Dogs* are characterized by a low market share that is likely to dent the corporate bottom line. Market growth is low, so the situation is unlikely to improve. Organizations are usually advised to discontinue such lines.

Rob Wilson

Associated Concepts Ansoff Matrix; Leisure Marketing; Marketing Mix; Market Positioning and Market Segmentation.

BOURDIEU, PIERRE (1930–2002)

Pierre Bourdieu was an extremely influential French sociologist who contributed significantly to our understanding of many aspects of social life, including social practices, consumption, culture, leisure and sport and social class. Born in rural southern France in 1930, Bourdieu went on to study philosophy at the *École Normal Supérieure* in Paris under the tutelage of Louis Althusser. Upon graduation he became a *lycée* (French higher school/college) teacher at Moulins from 1955 to 1958, before undertaking his military service in Algeria and becoming a tutor there. While in Algeria, Bourdieu undertook extensive ethnographic work that would not only form his first book *Sociologie de L'Algerie* (published in English as *The Algerians* in 1962), but also the foundations of his theoretical approach to society and culture. In 1960, on his return to Paris, he followed an academic university career path, teaching at the University of Paris until 1964, where he took up a post at the *Ecoles des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales*. In 1981 he was appointed to the chair of Sociology at the *Collège de France*.

Though Bourdieu's work was largely structuralist, as he was interested in how cultures and practices produce and reproduce social domination, he also sought to bridge the traditional divide between structure and agency. Bourdieu suggested that it was necessary to not only understand objective social structures, but also to grasp how these were interpreted and practised by social actors. A good example of this is his work on habitus, which suggests that while 'culture' is something that shapes and directs our behaviour it also operates not on, but through and within, individuals – habitus is therefore 'embodied'.

Bourdieu offered several key ideas and theories that have been employed in the study of society and culture, and in turn, have been taken onboard by leisure scholars. For example, Bourdieu recognized the composite nature of social class, and how this is shaped not only by economic capital

BRANDING, BRAND AWARENESS AND BRAND IMAGE

(such as in a Marxist understanding), but also by other forms of capital, such as social capital and cultural capital. Bourdieu is also most commonly associated with his seminal work on distinction, which by drawing on extensive research into social practices sets out an understanding of how culture produces and reproduces social distinctions and hierarchies.

Bourdieu turned his attention to numerous social and cultural practices, including education, art, film and sport, and was also politically active, particularly in his later life. He was an academic who believed that it was important that intellectuals contributed to political struggle and amongst numerous other causes he championed the rights of French immigrants and farmers and suggested that it was important to fight against the creeping forces of globalization. Bourdieu consistently pointed out that in a global world politics is continually moving further away from the locality of the city to the international level, from the immediate concrete reality of people's everyday lives to a distant abstraction which renders it invisible.

Garry Crawford

Associated Concepts Class; Consumption; Cultural Capital; Culture; Distinction; Habitus, Field and Capital; Marxism; Social Capital; Structure and Agency.

BRANDING, BRAND AWARENESS AND BRAND IMAGE

Kotler (1997) describes a brand as a name, term, symbol, or design – or a combination of these – that is intended to identify the goods or services of one seller or group of sellers and the way it is used to differentiate these from those of competitors. A brand is not a product; it is the product's essence, its meaning and its direction, that which defines

its identity in time and space. As such branding helps an organization differentiate itself from its competitors. Consumers will often make a connection with a brand, form relationships with brands and trust brands, and will often go back to a brand time and time again – this is called brand loyalty. Gilbert (1999) suggests that brands have to be clearly positioned so as to give distinct signals and demarcations from their rivals. This requires a clear distinction encompassing the need to provide a focus and personality for the brand. As Gilbert points out, the success of a brand is not based on the number of customers who purchase that brand just once; this is instead determined by the number of customers who repeat their purchase. It is important that in a crowded market, such as leisure, that the right branding creates an image that 'cuts through' (e.g., Nike, Adidas, Disney, Mecca Bingo).

Aaker (1991) suggests that consumers tend to buy familiar brands because they are comfortable with things familiar. This makes the assumption that the brands that are most familiar are probably reliable and, more than likely, of reasonable quality. A recognized brand will therefore be selected in preference to an unknown brand. The awareness factor is particularly important in contexts where a brand must first enter the evoked set – that is when it is inevitable that it will be evaluated within a set of other esteemed brands. An unknown brand usually has little chance of this.

A key component of brand awareness is brand image. This is what can often make or break a brand. A brand image for an organization is the sum of beliefs, ideas and impressions held by consumers about the company and its products (Stotlar, 2001). This is based on the rationale that by creating a positive brand image organizations will benefit from increased brand loyalty.

Rob Wilson

Associated Concepts Ansoff Matrix; Boston Matrix; Leisure Marketing; Market Positioning and Market Segmentation.

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BUDGETING

It is vital that all businesses have a plan so that they can make effective decisions and exercise control over management operations. A budget is simply a plan expressed in financial terms. Budgets may often be prepared in summary format by illustrating income and expenditure streams on a monthly basis, although occasionally they can be much more detailed and will outline the expected income and expenditure from very specific items. Once budgets have been prepared the financial information can be communicated to staff and targets can then be set.

For any plan to be achieved it must be monitored and control programmes need to be initiated. Budgets must be treated in the same way to prevent them from becoming unrealistic and poorly managed. The most common method of budgeting in the leisure industry is called zero-based budgeting.

Zero-based budgeting (ZBB) was developed to overcome some of the common criticisms of standard budgeting techniques, whereby managers simply dug out the budget from the previous year and increased everything by the rate of inflation. ZBB takes a much more strategic approach, with budgets rewritten each year. Budgets begin at zero and each item of income and expenditure is appraised so that the contribution of all the departments involved is maximized. This method of budgeting is traditionally used in leisure organizations due to the volatile nature of the industry. It also enables these budgets to be flexible so that organizations can respond to changes in the external environment (e.g., changing government priorities).

Rob Wilson

Associated Concepts Assets, Liabilities and Capital; Cash Flow Forecast; Double-entry Bookkeeping; Financial and Management Accounting; Financial Health and Ratio

Analysis; Financial Statements; Profitability, Liquidity, Growth and Breaking Even.

BUREAUCRACY

This term refers to a form of administration, organized through complex rules, regulations and hierarchies, involving the division of specific categories of activity and roles. Though bureaucratic form of organizations can be found over a long historical period, dating back to ancient Greece (if not before), the contemporary concept of bureaucracy is most commonly associated with rationalized ideas of organization that developed in Europe with the Enlightenment in the eighteenth century. Though the features of bureaucracy are discussed by several key social theorists, it is a term most commonly associated with Max Weber. Weber described the 'ideal type' (i.e., how something should work in principle) bureaucracy as an efficient and rational form of legal domination. However, 'real' bureaucracies (as Weber notes himself) were far less efficient and rational than the ideal type would suggest, and in particular, high levels of division of labour can lead to an individual disinterest in the overall wellbeing of the organization, over complexity, rigidity, and the exponential growth of rules and regulations, amongst numerous other individual and organizational pathologies, which will question the overall efficiency of these types of organization. In particular, the flaws and limitations of bureaucratic structures are evident in the 'red tape' and rule-bound nature of many governmental bodies and organizations, including sporting and leisure organizations and governing bodies.

Garry Crawford

Associated Concepts Capitalism; Leisure in the Community; Leisure Policy; Modernity; Work Ethic.

BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT

BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT

Scanning the business environment should be a key activity for all leisure organizations, because it is through this process that the threats and opportunities that may impact on their success can be identified and managed. The environmental scanning process involves identifying drivers of change in order to assess their impact. The challenge is to try and identify these drivers while they are still weak signals so that windows of opportunities can be seized or imminent threats can be anticipated and more easily controlled.

The term environment is not used here in an ecological sense, but in a more general contextual manner. There are various ways that the business environment can be delineated, with the most common being the internal business environment (the layer within an organization which it has most control over), and the external environment (the layer beyond its control, such as the global economy). It is also possible to make a distinction between the intermediary environment and the external environment, with the former referring to immediate competitors and key markets which the organization can seek to take some control of. Some writers use the terms macro and micro to refer to the internal and external business environment; however, this can create confusion as these are more generally used to delineate different levels of economic study and analysis.

There are various ways that the scanning process can be approached. Two of the most common are SWOT and PEST analysis. These are acronyms which can provide a series of headings to help prompt and focus an evaluation of both the organization itself and the business environment in which it operates.

SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) comprises a two-part analysis: an internal analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the organization and an analysis of the external business environment. This analysis of the external environment can be given further sophistication by the use of a PEST framework. PEST is the acronym for the Political, Economic, Social and Technological environment, and is simply a framework by which the external environment can be approached in relation to identifying and assessing the risks to an organization.

As the business environment has become marked by more complexity and rapid change more variables have been added to the basic PEST framework, such as separating the legal environment from the political, and, more recently, by identifying the natural environment, or ecological factors, as a potential source of threats and opportunities – hence the emergence of PESTLE. There are other variations of PESTLE: for example, SPECTACLES analysis, which is an acronym for Social analysis, Political, Economic, Cultural, Technological, Aesthetic, Customers, Legal, and the Environments.

A key criticism of these models is not so much the weakness of the frameworks themselves, but the fact that, notwithstanding their ostensible sophistication, they belie the complexity of the environmental factors which need to be considered. That is, these frameworks have a superficial simplicity which makes them attractive and relatively easy to understand, but much more difficult to actually use in practice.

Mark Piekarz

Associated Concepts Leisure Policy.