Stadium Staffing

It takes a variety of individuals to operate and maintain a stadium. Although many operate behind the scenes and are nearly invisible to customers, they are the central nervous system of the stadium, performing the tasks necessary for the venue to maximize the customer experience.

Teamwork makes the dream work

Some stadium staff members ensure that customers are greeted when they enter the stadium. Others tend to the facility itself. Still others help keep the crowd from getting out of control. All have a vital role to play in helping stadium events run smoothly. Stadium staff are to be distinguished from front office staff and team or event management.

Key roles and responsibilities for stadium staff

One important role at a stadium is that of the gate greeter. In addition to their vital role of ensuring that only paying customers enter the stadium, these team members check tickets and answer such questions as where restrooms or concessions are located. The gate greeters are often the first stadium members that customers come into contact with, so having gate greeters with a positive, can-do attitude is important in forming the right first impression.



The grounds crew is important because they maintain the playing field. (Flickr/WEBN-TV)

After completing this lesson, you'll be able to:

- understand the need for adequate stadium staffing.
- see the two vital functions that ushers play.
- comprehend why security personnel are central to a smooth-functioning event.
- discuss various approaches to preventing stadium violence.

Information specialists walk around the stadium before, during, and after events to direct customers to facilities and concessions and serve as the first line of support to customers facing medical emergencies.

Concession staff prepare and serve food and drinks (often alcoholic) to customers. They are responsible for making sure minors aren't served alcohol, and they also can limit the amount of alcohol purchased in the late stages of an event, thus helping to reduce the amount of drunk driving after an event lets out.

At sporting events, the grounds crew generally has less hands-on interaction with customers, yet their work in maintaining the playing field is critical in setting the proper atmosphere for customers and ensuring the safety of players, as improper maintenance can lead to player injuries (and league fines). The grounds crew is also responsible for maintaining the field during inclement weather. At concerts, the stage crew helps set up and test the band's staging and equipment, while the sound crew handles the concert sound.

The cleaning crew is responsible for the cleanliness of the stadium before, during, and after events. The diligence of the cleaning crew is vital in ensuring properly equipped facilities, such as restrooms. Some venues will contract with an outside firm to provide cleaners after events. In extreme cases, such as after snowstorms, outdoor stadiums will employ volunteers and even local prisoners to clear snow from seats in order to get the stadium ready for game time.

Ushers help attendees find their seats in an orderly fashion so that everyone can be seated on time. They also provide a second important function for event managers: helping to ensure the integrity of the seats, the franchise's product. If customers who purchase the least expensive seats are allowed to move to the best, the expensive seats become devalued, and no one will pay top dollar for them anymore. Ushers prevent seat switching.

Security personnel work to prevent fights, fans throwing objects onto the field or at each other, and so on. At most events, security personnel are a combination of private security (sometimes including former police and military personnel) and local law enforcement.

Ticket takers check tickets at the entrances, while ticket sellers sell tickets at the stadium.

There are several key roles associated with stadium parking. Parking cashiers man the booths at stadium parking lots and garages to take money from fans before or after an event. Parking attendants help fans find parking and navigate their way through parking areas. Parking security is charged with making sure that fans' vehicles—and the personal belongings in them—are safe during an event.

They work with local law enforcement to address cases of larceny or other unruly behavior.

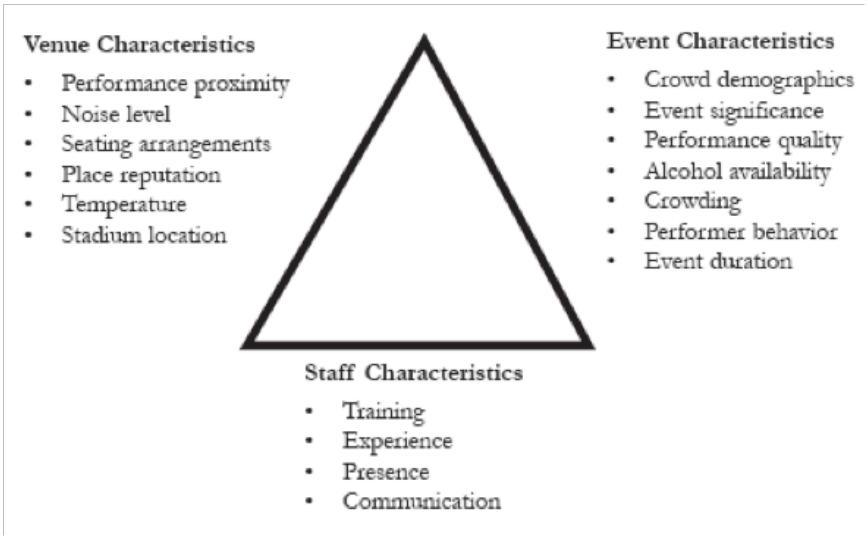
The role of stadium staff in preventing spectator violence

Crowd control is critical in ensuring the safety of fans as well as players, coaches, and officials. There is also a vital link between crowd control and outbreaks of spectator violence, one of the most serious challenges facing stadium staff. This is violence perpetrated by spectators against fans of the opposing team or even opposing players. According to the Center for Problem-Oriented Policing (CPOP), spectator violence involves any or all of the following:

- public intoxication
- ticket scalping
- underage drinking
- crowd control in open fields and along public thoroughfares
- student riots
- littering
- terrorism acts
- loitering
- traffic congestion

Spectator violence is hardly new, and it takes many forms, from the mildly annoying to the very serious. It can be particularly acute in sports like soccer, where fans from opposing sides regularly taunt each other or the players. Sometimes their actions degenerate into physical attacks.

There are a number of causes of spectator violence, according to the CPOP, which produced the diagram below that shows how synergies between the venue, event, and staff can either foster or prevent spectator violence:



Notice that stadium staff have a large role to play in preventing or deescalating situations that could lead to violence. Through proper training, on-the-field experience, strong stadium presence, and communication with security officials, stadium staff can help reduce or even eliminate spectator violence. Depending on the nature of the violence, stadium staff may best serve by coordinating with law enforcement officials to make sure the violence doesn't spill over to nearby communities in the form of riots.



There is more of a science to crowd control than ever before. (Morguefile/hotblack)

Summary

Stadium staff are important to the success of a team or venue. From the grounds crew to the greeters to security and ushers, stadium staff work together to ensure that customers get the maximum possible value from their ticket purchases. By working to anticipate problems and act quickly, stadium staff play a central role in reducing spectator violence. Of course, the overall effectiveness of stadium staff depends on proper training and adequate personnel.

KEY TERMS

Grounds crew
The team that maintains a property's grounds, especially the athletic field. Proper field maintenance is important because improper maintenance can lead to player injuries and league fines.

Security
Personnel responsible for the security and well-being of the fans, stadium property, and workers. A security shortage can lead to unruly crowds.

Usher
Personnel responsible for making sure fans sit in and stay in their assigned seats. Fans will move to better seats if they are available and there is no one to stop them.

Gate greeter
Staff members who check tickets of customers entering the stadium. They play the vital role of ensuring that only paying customers enter.

Information specialist
Information specialists walk around the stadium before, during, and after an event to direct customers to facilities and serve as the first line of support to customers with medical emergencies.

Concession staff
Team members who prepare and serve food and drinks (often alcoholic) to customers.

Stage crew
The crew that helps set up and test a band's staging and equipment. They are either part of the band's road crew or local contractors hired by the tour promoter.

Sound crew
The crew that runs a venue's sound system. They are either part of the band's road crew or local contractors hired by the tour promoter.

Cleaning crew
The crew responsible for stadium cleanliness before, during, and after events.

Ticket takers
Staffers who check tickets at stadium entrances.

Ticket sellers
Staffers who sell tickets to fans at the stadium.

Parking cashiers
Personnel who man booths at stadium parking lots and garages to take money from fans before or after an event.

Parking attendants
Personnel who help fans find parking spots and navigate through parking areas.

Parking security
Staffers who make sure that fans' vehicles, and the personal belongings in them, are safe. They work with law enforcement to address cases of larceny and other unruly behavior.

Crowd control
A term for the various techniques used by security personnel to ensure a peaceful event for ticketholders.

Spectator violence
Violence perpetrated by spectators against fans of the opposing team or even opposing players.

KEY MATH CONCEPTS

1. The stadium staff is important not only because of the jobs that they perform but also because they represent the public face of the stadium owners. It is essential to the fan experience that the staff be well trained and personable. The number of staff required can usually be determined by the number of fans that they will affect. For example, the number of concession staff can be determined by the number of fans they can serve.

   concession staff = number of fans/fans served per staff member

   Example A: The concession stand can serve 4,000 customers per hour with a crew of four. At this rate, how many customers are served per concession staff member?

   Answer:

   concession staff = number of fans/fans served per staff member
   fans served per staff member = number of fans/concession staff
   = 4,000/4
   = 1,000

   Example B: Each ticket taker can service 750 fans per hour. We expect arrivals of about 11,250 fans per hour. How many ticket takers do we need?

   Answer: 11,250 fans per hour / 750 fans per hour per ticket taker = 15 ticket takers