



TAKING A LOOK AT DIM-ICE

(Design, Information, Management, Ingress, Circulation, Egress)

In my last column, I introduced the concept of Risk Mapping, which allows us, as event planners, to more effectively consider risk at our events by factoring in risk changing over time during our event. This is a fundamental tool I use and one the industry is starting to adopt more and more.

In this issue, I want to look at the DIM-ICE matrix. Again, when we talk about fundamental tools, this is another one. There isn't an event planned in our offices without the use of the DIM-ICE matrix. Sometimes it takes the form of a lengthy paper exercise while other times it's something we automatically do in our heads when setting out on the planning process.

DIM-ICE

Using the matrix on the next page allows us to consider 3 key planning elements for our events during the 3 key phases of any event.

So, we're looking at the **Design**, the **Information** and the **Management** elements of each event and we're looking at each of those during 3 phases, namely **Ingress**, **Circulation** and **Egress**.

By way of a quick recap:

- Ingress is when your audience is arriving to your event / venue
- Circulation refers to when your audience is inside / at your event and is moving through and around the event space
- Egress is the time period during which your audience is leaving

In a wide range of respects, these 3 distinct event phases are distinctly different and should be considered separately and jointly.

When developing DIM-ICE matrices for events, we always do 2 of them:

1. Normal Operations
2. Emergency Scenarios

We need to account for both states and ensure we plan our events to be as smooth-running and safe as possible, both when things are going to plan and very much not going to plan.

In developing the DIM-ICE matrix, Professor Dr. G Keith Still, opted to utilise the DIM-ICE mnemonic, in part as it sounds like 'demise', which he feels speaks to the potential consequences of NOT planning events safely and properly.

DIM-ICE also allows event planners to establish a documentable and consistent approach to event planning, a practice that we all know can be a lot more

feel than form. It helps create an audit trail and illustrates a level of professionalism when considered against less structured systems or the lack of any system.

Design

There is a multitude of issues that can be 'designed out' of an event at an early stage. We always ask clients to involve us as early on in their process as possible. The earlier we have eyes on what the client is doing and an understanding of what they're looking to achieve, the more effective we can be for them and the easier it is to avoid potential conflicts or flashpoints.

For instance, we work with a large state organisation here that exhibits at a huge event each year. We initially worked with them AT the event. Then we began to advise on safety matters shortly in advance of the event. Now we work with them year-round and are involved in the design of the space. Being involved in the design phase allows us to spot and address potential issues before they become issues. Lovely barrels used as bins are a nice idea aesthetically but their locations need to be planned well so as not to negatively impact flow through the space.

Information

Consider questions such as:

- How are we communicating with our audience with respect to how we want them to act?
- Is our signage at a high enough level to be effective when sight lines are obscured by the crowd?
- Is the information we're putting out online and across our social media channels accurate?
- Is there a better way to delineate queues than to use temporary, aluminium barriers?
- What announcements do we need to make during the event?
- Might we consider removing some signage and instead utilising staff members to actively engage with the audience?
- How are we going to let the audience know how we want them to leave the venue?

This is far from an exhaustive list but you can hopefully see how important an aspect information is. This is particularly true, when you consider the 3 phases – Ingress, Circulation and Egress – separately.

Management

There is a wide range of management inputs that can impact on an event. What works on one event may not work on another.

DIM - ICE: Meta Model For Events

| NORMAL | INGRESS | CIRCULATION | EGRESS |
|-------------|---------|-------------|--------|
| DESIGN | | | |
| INFORMATION | | | |
| MANAGEMENT | | | |

| EMERGENCY | INGRESS | CIRCULATION | EGRESS |
|-------------|---------|-------------|--------|
| DESIGN | | | |
| INFORMATION | | | |
| MANAGEMENT | | | |

This can often be down to budget but is also often simply a function of different events needing different solutions.

Considerations can include, but are not limited to:

- Manpower and staffing levels
- Staff deployment plans
- Event Control Room facilities
- CCTV / crowd-monitoring facilities
- Statutory agency presence
- Stakeholder imperatives
- Regulatory frameworks
- Insurance stipulations
- Previous experience

Interplay & Colour-Coding

Considering any of the 3 elements in isolation will not give you a complete picture. It is important to consider all 3 in one exercise during each of the 3 phases outlined above. This will identify overlaps and will allow you to see any issues that need further work to address.

The use of colour-coding further enhances the usefulness of the matrix at a glance. A simple traffic light system – red, amber, green – is extremely effective.

The Bottom Line

Try it out the next time you're planning event. I've never encountered someone that didn't find it a useful tool and that's exactly what I'm looking to offer up in these columns.

I've come across a wide range of tools over the years, not all of which I've found of actual use in doing what I do. Those that I do find useful, I'll share here. To view examples of DIM-ICE matrices [click here](#).

Mark Breen is Director of Safe Events as well as Cuckoo Events based in Dublin, Ireland. He is an award-winning event Safety Officer and one of the most experienced and qualified event & crowd safety practitioners in Ireland. He is a Specialist Member of IIRSM, as well as being a member of IOSH, EPS and ESA.

He writes and speaks regularly on all things event-related, particularly event & crowd safety. He is a Graduate Member of the Marketing Institute of Ireland and holds a Postgraduate Diploma in PR & Event Management. He is currently among a small class pursuing the world's first MSc in Crowd Safety and Risk Analysis, and already has specialist qualifications in Spectator Safety Management and Crowd Science.

Mark and the Team at Safe Events and Cuckoo Events are passionate about helping people run safer events and devote a lot of time to doing so. Mark is very active on Twitter @mark_breen, @SafeEventsIE and @CuckooEvents. The multiple award-winning Cuckoo Events website can be found at cuckoo.ie and the new Safe Events website is at safeevents.ie (launching 9th February 2017)