

TEDx BerkleeValencia

Reflective Report



Valencia Campus

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TED^x

BerkleeValencia

x = independently organized TED event

INTRODUCTION

TED (Technology, Entertainment, Design) is a global set of conferences owned by the private non-profit Sapling Foundation, under the slogan "ideas worth spreading".

TED was founded in 1984 as a one-off event.^[1] The TED main conference is held annually in Long Beach, and its companion TEDActive is held in Palm Springs. Both conferences will move from Long Beach and Palm Springs to Vancouver and Whistler, respectively, in 2014.^[2]

TED events are also held throughout the U.S. and in Europe and Asia, offering live streaming of the talks. They address a wide range of topics within the research and practice of science, arts and culture, often through storytelling. The speakers are given a maximum of 18 minutes to present their ideas in the most innovative and engaging ways they can. Past presenters include Bill Clinton, Jane Goodall, Malcolm Gladwell, Al Gore, Gordon Brown, Richard Dawkins, Bill Gates, Google founders Larry Page and Sergey Brin, and many Nobel Prize winners.^[3]

TED's current curator is the British former computer journalist and magazine publisher Chris Anderson.

DESCRIPTIVE SUMMARY

TEDx BerkleeValencia was organized on 21st June 2014 at Aula Magistral. The theme for this year's inaugural TEDx was 'Creative Catalyst', celebrating the creativity in everyone and on which Berklee thrives on. More than 300+ in attendance and 12 speakers from different parts of the world, TEDx BerkleeValencia was a huge success. The topics of the talks ranged from dance to music to creating your own sound to empowerment of mind to food synced with music, having a perfect combination of the theme. The speakers who spoke at the inaugural TEDx conference were:

1. Panos Panay
2. Lucas Vidal
3. Javier Mariscal
4. Eric Crockenburng and Tad Cooke
5. Stephen Webber
6. Michael Sean Harris
7. MT Aditya Srinivasan
8. Ben Houge
9. Clara Barbera
10. Ganavya Doraiswamy
11. Joao Bruno Soeiro
12. Jodie Rogers

Apart from the speakers there were performances by the very famous Flamenco Dancer, Belen Maya and Berklee Valencia masters students Luiza Sales and Andrea Franzel. The event also saw in-house Berklee DJ, DjKTunes (Kareem Clarke) spinning his tunes in between the talks.

The TEDx BerkleeValencia team divided into majorly into Marketing, Production and Artistic direction, which collectively worked together for almost about 6 months to create a successful show. Artistic direction looked into selecting the speakers, coaching them and making sure the talk, body language and the content were perfectly aligned. Marketing dealt with various press releases, sponsorship, media tie-ups and branding for the show. Production dealt with the complete event flow, stage management, lights and the logistics required for the show.

[THE PROCESS OF CREATING TEDx BerkleeValencia](#)

At TEDx BerkleeValencia, I was the production manager of the event and was included in the team in November 2013 along with two marketing managers after clearing the interview with curators of TEDx BerkleeValencia. During the first initial weeks of the meetings, we decided on various core aspects of the show such as the speakers, website and most importantly the venue, Aula Magistral. The venue fitted perfect to the theme 'Creative Catalyst' with its amazingly defined architecture. In terms of production the venue was perfect with its amazing PA system and state of the art lighting décor. The very first step of the whole event was to finalize the speakers and have a web presence

in terms of website and social media presence. I was responsible for designing the website and channel all the social media presence to the website. This was an ongoing process and the complete website was done 45 days before the show. The marketing team did having social media presence very effectively. As soon as the final speakers were decided the artistic direction team started coaching the speakers with the support of Valencia Toastmasters until each speaker was ready for the final talk. In the mean time I, as the production manager, was working on the website, event flow, timeline, production requirements and making sure the rider for each artist was in place. One of the main objective from the very beginning was the camera positions and set-up for recording the talks as that is one of the major aspects of TED talk as they going online to the public on the official TED website and on their YouTube channel, so we needed to make sure that the quality of the recording is perfect and cannot be compromised. In terms of marketing the team made sure that along with social media presence, the press kits were perfectly designed and distributed, video sessions of each speaker were in place, creating a video ad for TEDx, bartering up with various businesses and creating successful partnerships.

A day before the show was the rehearsal day on how the event would run but majorly for the speakers and the performers about the sound check, stage placement, lights and to check whether the other technical requirements are in place.

In total, the core team consisted of 12 members in all departments plus 13 volunteers on the day of the event.

MY ROLE AS A PRODUCTION MANAGER

My role as a production manager was primarily to make sure everything is ready at the day of the event. It required months of planning and co-ordination with all the departments to make sure everything is organized and there no last minute hitch on the day of the show.

The precise nature of my work as a production manager of TEDx entailed:

1. Identifying the chosen speakers and their potential requirements on the day of the show.
2. As mentioned earlier, have the cameras at the right place was very important for the event and I had to design a work angle flow for the three cameras on the day of the event. Another decision which had to be made regarding the recording of the show was whether it will be live streamed at the venue and the recordings which be edited on the spot and the videos be ready as and when the talks are happening or not have it and the videos be edited after the show. It was decided to have the videos to be edited later and not to be live streamed since the budget was near to the end and we thought it would be better not spend a lot on one aspect which was not a primary concern for the event. In the end, we have a skype with one of the videographers of TED from LA, California where we discussed in detail as to how we will be recording the whole show.
3. One of the other responsibility, I had to do is to liaise with all the other departments and make sure what they require for the event. This also

had to be dealt with artist as every artist had several requirements, which were different.

4. Another role was to prepare a timesheet for the day of the event and make sure that everything ran according to the schedule, as being the backstage manager and in charge of stage management, it was my responsibility to be ready with everything and there are no unnecessary delays which will in turn disrupt the time line of the show.
5. Being the Backstage manager, it was very important for me to make sure all the requirements were backstage and arranged according to the timeline. It was also important to make sure the switch of every requirement from backstage to the stage and backstage again in between the time allotted for doing it. If not, it would delay the whole show.
6. In terms of stage management, we had to determine the spot where the speakers will be standing according to the follow spot, the space to be covered with black aptmile layer for Belen Maya to perform and the positioning of the TEDx BerkleeValencia letters on stage for perfect view for the cameras and the audience.
7. Since we were using the in house lights for the event, I had to made sure that we have and follow the theme instead of just randomly focusing the lights. The theme for the lights I decided was red since it was the color of TED and was well acquitted to the venue. In case of performances, for example, it was a sunny theme for Luiza since it reflected her song choice, which was in Brazilian. Several such decisions were made for the lights.

8. Last but not the least, the complete TEDx BerkleeValencia website was designed and managed by me during the whole time from the start till the end. The website can be viewed at www.tedxberkleevalencia.com.

RESULT

With all the hard work put in during the entire planning stage by the whole team during the last few months, all the objectives were accomplished. We had an attendance of 300+ guests; we finished 25 minutes ahead of schedule and there was absolutely no hitch during on the day of the event.

“Admittedly, speaking in such an event is a potentially nerve-wrecking experience. However, the advantage of working with this particular TEDx team was that the stage managers themselves were peers or members of the college, and they used that particular aspect to make it less intimidating. We had support and encouragement. We were given specific instructions that helped greatly with knowing where to stand for lighting (such as the red dot on the stage), and I felt like it was managed and produced very smoothly and efficiently. We were given ample time to be familiar with the stage, so when the time came, I knew exactly what to do.” – Ganavya Doraiswamy

“Technically, the event went smoothly for me. It could have been very tricky because of all the equipment and set up involved in my presentation. What I am most thankful for is that once I made it clear, the specific nature of my set up, and the potential for mishaps if a particular procedure wasn't followed, all

involved quite respectfully stuck to the plan and this made for a very successful and uneventful presentation.” – Michael Sean Harris

Few of the feedbacks about the show we I got from couple of speakers are:
Now looking back I can proudly say that it was a very successful event and went exactly like we planned and imagined it to be.

IMPACT ON PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Being the part of TEDx gave me an opportunity to work with a team from all around the world and in a foreign land dealing with vendors and technicians. Having a TEDx name in my CV will certainly put me ahead of my competitors in my professional endeavors. During the whole process of being the production manager of TEDx BerkleeValencia, I got acquainted with the working culture of people from around the world and has made me more confident with handling big events such as TEDx.

Being from the live industry and seeing myself in the live industry in future, TEDx has and will be the definite highlight of my career and a stepping-stone to many more events to come. I have been very lucky to work with such a talented team who always trusted me and encouraged me to take the decisions I thought were right and everything in the end worked out perfectly. First times of anything are always the toughest and having it done so successfully have made me a very confident production incharge.

TEDx not only gave me an opportunity to work with an amazing people but also to network with the amazing speakers and professionals who attended the event.

After TEDx, I cannot wait to be a part of the live industry as a confident professional.

REFERENCES

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2. [TED Blog. 4 February 2013. Retrieved 5 February 2013.]
3. "Speakers". *TED: Ideas Worth Spreading*. TED Conferences, LLC. Retrieved 6 February 2009.