

Research successful VS unsuccessful festivals

Unsuccessful festivals:

1. 1990: Glastonbury festival, Pilton, England

The festival took the name of the Glastonbury Festival for Contemporary Performing Arts for the first time, to reflect the diversity of attractions within the Festival. It was the twentieth anniversary of the first Festival but unfortunately ended with a confrontation between the security teams and travelers who were looting the emptying festival site. This resulted in 235 arrests and £50,000 worth of damage to property and hired plant.

2. 1999: Woodstock 99', Utica, New York

Frustration also started growing within the crowd as temperatures neared 100 degrees (and felt as hot as 118 on the tarmac), bottles of water were sold for \$4 (though some have claimed prices were higher), pizza cost \$12, and little relief was available after fans paid \$150 (or more) for tickets to a very commercialized event live-streamed on MTV. Other issues included garbage piling up, portable toilets overflowing, mud pits (that may not have been all mud), and a massive crowd on a site that shouldn't have held more than 50,000 people -- who had to walk more than a mile to get from the East stage to the West stage to see various acts.

Kid Rock began stirring up the audience on Saturday, encouraging them to throw plastic bottles in the air. Fred Durst told people not to "mellow out" like Alanis Morissette and go wild during the song "Break Stuff." A truck drove through the crowd during Fatboy Slim's set. And Red Hot Chili Peppers closed out the weekend by covering Jimi Hendrix's "Fire" as actual fires and riots began breaking out.

By the end of the event, three people died; 700 people were treated for heat exhaustion and dehydration; women reported sexual assault and rape; 44 people were arrested; hundreds of fake passes were confiscated; and multiple cars, tents, booths and ATMs were destroyed.

3. 2012: Isle of Wight, Newport, England

The rainstorms that flooded the U.K. during the summer of 2012 didn't stop more than 55,000 people from trying to attend this three-day festival that featured Tom Petty & the Heartbreakers, Pearl Jam and Bruce Springsteen – but it did impede their trips via car and boat across to and from the island. Concertgoers trying to get to the Isle of Wight via car were stuck in gridlock that lasted long enough to allow for in-vehicle napping – 350 cars became trapped in mud near the grounds' approach, the *Daily Mail* reported, resulting in a five-mile jam that led to 10-hour delays. Ferry riders were trapped as well, thanks to problems with docking boats. Once people arrived at the site, they were forced to pitch their tents in a sizeable amount of mud. Yet things were fine musically – “amidst all the chaos, there was a great festival taking place,” wrote James Lachno in the *London Telegraph* – and there were even some relatively pastoral areas that allowed users to at least take some of their mind off the drenched patches of land.

4. 2012: Bloc festival, London, England

The two-day Bloc festival boasted an impressive lineup of hip-hop heavyweights like Snoop

Dogg and DOOM alongside DJs and producers like Flying Lotus and Ricardo Villaobos, but its execution left a lot to be desired. On day one, people who had arrived at relatively early waited in line for upwards of two hours, causing some to jump the barriers; bars ran out of beer before the clock struck 10:30; tents became impossibly – and unexpectedly – crowded early on. Day one – which one social media user referred to as “the middle of a car crash” – shut down early, and the second day was eventually canceled outright: “We are all absolutely devastated that this happened, but the safety of everyone on site was paramount,” said the organizers. Part of the problem stemmed from infrastructure issues: the fest’s site, London Pleasure Gardens, had told the organizers early on that a 2,800-capacity venue called The Hub would be ready in time for the July 2012 event, but reversed that claim two weeks before kickoff; other areas of the Pleasure Gardens were off-limits to attendees because of pre-Olympic construction.

5. **2015: TomorrowWorld, Chattahoochee Hills, Georgia**

Scattered showers throughout the festival turned the 8,000-acre farmland into a giant mud pit, and the festival organizers' decision to limit transportation services on Saturday left many people stranded, with some shelling out hundreds of dollars to pay for surge-price Ubers, and others forced to sleep on the side of the road with no water or food.

For most, things did not improve from there; the festival cancelled Sunday to non-campers, who formed the majority of attendees. Many tried to get in anyway through attempting to crash the gates, or dejectedly took to social media to discuss potential lawsuits, among other gripes. This was the third year of the EDM festival's US edition—the original Tomorrowland in Belgium was founded in 2005—and unless there's some major damage control to assuage the livid masses vowing never to return, it may have been its last.

Successful (bucket list) festivals:

1. **Bonnaroo music & Arts festival, Manchester, Tennessee**

It may not be quite as big as Coachella or as iconic as Lollapalooza. But to understand what we love about Bonnaroo (other than the fact that it’s 2.5 hours day trip from Atlanta), just check out their tagline. “Thousands of happy campers. Hundreds of acres of Tennessee nature. 150 epic performances. 10+ Stages of music. Four of the best days ever.” Coachella is owned by a climate change-denying billionaire, Philip Anschutz, who donates his riches to pro-gun, anti-LGBTQ Republican politicians and Super PACs. Bonnaroo’s sustainability initiatives include Planet Roo (a haven for environmental consciousness), Clean Vibes Trading Post, annual sustainability reports, and \$1 from every ticket goes to eco-friendly efforts. Launched in 2002, the music festival is held every June on a 700-acre farm just south of Nashville. With diverse headliners that have ranged from the Beastie Boys and Eminem to the Beach Boys and Paul McCartney, from Willie Nelson and Widespread Panic to Radiohead and Tool, it’s modeled after iconic music festivals like Monterey Pop and Woodstock. In additions to the music, you can also find arts and crafts, food and drinks, a comedy tent, cinema tent, Ferris wheel, silent disco, parades, and yoga. Their unique “Campground Plazas” also offer karaoke, late night parties, celebrity appearances, and more.

2. FES FESTIVAL OF WORLD SACRED MUSIC, FES, MOROCCO

Originally launched in 1994 in Fes (with King Mohammed VI as its royal patron), this world music festival is a celebration of the ancient **Moroccan** city's rich traditions in the arts, knowledge, and spirituality. Held in June, the event has grown considerably over the last 24 years, annually attracting some 100,000+ attendees. It was even recognized by the UN as one of the world's most significant events in terms of contributing to the dialogue between disparate cultures around the world. Every year the Fes Festival offers around 60 different shows and concerts, featuring musicians and poets ranging from up-and-coming "Next Big Things" to international icons such as Joan Baez, Björk, Patti Smith, Salif Keita, and Ravi Shankar. There are also multimedia performances, and Sufi Nights featuring sacred music rich with mysticism. Fes is the perfect setting for a festival rich with such diverse cultural traditions. Its influence dates back to Medieval times, when **Popes** and philosopher's went there to study and teach. The concerts take place in venues of ancient cultural heritage, from local riads to the grand courtyard of Bab al Makina, where the official ceremonies of the royal palace were once held.

3. MONTREUX JAZZ FESTIVAL, MONTREUX, SWITZERLAND

Founded back in 1967 (with considerable help from Atlantic Records honchos Ahmet and Nesuhi Ertegün), Montreux is one of the oldest music festivals in the world. It's also the second largest jazz festival, after the Montreal International Jazz Festival. That Canadian concert may attract more visitors— around 2 million annually. But Montreux benefits from its picturesque location on the stunning shores of Lake Geneva. The area is particularly beautiful in late June/early July, when the festival is held. Don't let the name fool you: Though the festival was jazz-only in its early years, by the 1970s legendary rock artists such as Led Zeppelin, Pink Floyd, and Van Morrison were topping the bill. It was originally held at the Montreux Casino, until it burned down during Frank Zappa's 1971 performance there. The event was immortalized in "Smoke On The Water," the Deep Purple classic: "We all came out to Montreux, on the Lake Geneva shoreline. To make records with a mobile, we didn't have much time." In recent years the lineup has only gotten more eclectic. It still attracts top-notch jazz musicians such as Herbie Hancock, John Scofield, George Benson, and Fourplay. But it also hosts iconic artists offering an array of other styles, such as Usher & The Roots, Fleet Foxes, Erykah Badu, Youssou N'Dour, Ms. Lauryn Hill, and Brian Wilson. Best of all, more than half the concerts are free!

4. WOMAD, WILTSHIRE, ENGLAND

One of my favorite music festivals I've attended, WOMAD (World Of Music, Arts & Dance) was founded in 1980 by Peter Gabriel and a team that included Artistic Director Thomas Brooman and influential concert promoter Martin Elbourne (who also books the Glastonbury Festival). From the beginning, the festival focused on the enthusiastic embracing of the world's disparate cultures, encouraging the breaking down of boundaries through art, music, and movement. This has led to some extraordinary collaborations, such as when Echo & the Bunnymen played with the Drummers of Burundi in 1982, and when Mali's Tinariwen played with two members of TV On The Radio in 2010. More than any other music festival, WOMAD has always been a celebration of global culture first and foremost. They offer workshops for both children (including circus skills, painting, and storytelling) and adults (such as dance, exotic musical instruments, and discussions of global concerns). They also feature an array of international cuisines, including traditional dishes cooked by the musicians themselves. Though not nearly as large as some of the other festivals on this list (averaging around 30,000 visitors), the eclectic festival celebrated its 35th anniversary in 2017. It is held annually in late July.

5. WORLD SACRED SPIRIT FESTIVAL, JODHPUR, INDIA

You're unlikely to find a more stunning setting for a music festival than the ancient Mehrangarh Fort in Jodhpur, in the Indian state of Rajasthan. Built around 1460 and located on a hill 410 feet above the city, the massive fort (one of India's largest) includes an impressive museum and several palaces renowned for their intricate carvings and expansive courtyards. At the base of this extraordinary monument is where you'll find the World Sacred Spirit Festival, which takes place over three days in mid-February. Founded in 2007, the event was formerly known as the World Sufi Festival. But it has since expanded its horizons to include a broad variety of sacred, spiritual music from different parts of the world. From melodious Lithuanian harp music and the traditional Italian folk songs of Sardinia to Andalusian Sufi songs of Morocco and Duduk (a type of clarinet) music from Armenia, music from North Africa, Europe, and Asia will be featured. And of course the local sounds of Rajasthan, India will be given their due time in the spotlight, from Qawwali devotional music to the droning double flute known as the Satara. It may not be the easiest festival for our western readers to get to. But, in terms of the mesmerizing music and the surrounding scenery, we can guarantee it'll be worth the trip.

7 key factors that make a successful music festival:

1. Location

Location isn't only about having picturesque mountain views or beach scenes, that's just the icing on the cake. Accessibility is key, both for fans and production trucks. Having an open location that has several production routes to prevent severe bottlenecks or overflowing traffic is a key factor in choosing a festival location. Another major consideration is the festival's proximity to public residences. For festival's looking to go late-night, setting up shop in a major city is a nearly impossible feat since most cities have a midnight curfew to curb noise violations. For this reason, most of your major festivals choose locations with low per capita populations so that the event has less intrusion on permanent residence's day to day life. Neighbor relations are important, and if the community isn't on board with the festival it probably won't become an annual event.

2. Date

Any festival organizer would be insane to plan an event the same weekend at Electric Daisy Carnival or Ultra Music Festival unless they were curating an entirely different audience. Trying to compete with already established festivals or events, particularly those held in major cities is an excellent way to make sure that your festival doesn't break even. That being said, an open date doesn't guarantee success either. Considerations of location's annual weather patterns is also important to preparing for a successful festival. Sure, while a spring or fall event date may look great on the calendar, it may spell out disaster on the weather radar. Look at Tomorrowworld's 2015 fall flooding in Georgia and Levitation's 2016 spring washout in Austin as case studies for why dates matters. Bad weather can happen at any festival. However, taking a glance at a farmer's almanac can help save tons of headaches for fans and staff alike.

3. Logistics

You need to allocate a healthy amount of time to plan all the technicalities of a large-scale event. Fyre Festival planners were negligent to time sensitivity - starting six months prior to the festival to flesh out all the logistics. They also continued to work with a location that lacked infrastructure – an essential asset to any festival. With location, suppliers, investors, fundamental necessities and a plethora of other factors– you need at least over a year to

plan and execute any festival. Taking into account everything that could go wrong with a festival, damage control is the lifeblood of the future event.

4. Safety

Being the most vital aspect of the equation, it is imperative festivals need organization of security, EMTs, resource accessibility and open space - providing a safe and secure environment. Festival goers stress the importance of the abundance of food and water and how they need resources easy to find wherever you are in a festival. With that being said, many may not notice another significant quality, signage. Signage is one of the most valuable assets for a festival to run smoothly. They make sure to display helpful signs throughout the festival grounds – guiding people to resources they need. This is the greatest preventative measure for chaos.

5. Budget

Prioritizing the budget is essential to a great festival. You get what you put into it – meaning the expense you choose to put your money towards will reflect the festival substantially. Knowing what aspects need more financial care than others can be the determined factor of a successful festival. Technicalities such as signage, production, and resources are imperative to place at a higher value. Another vital facet is the ticket price. Festival goers stress they want to look back at their festival experience and say “that was worth the price and more”. It's important to consider that a first year festival is unlikely to run a profit, and that's an important for planning future editions. Spending all of your money on talent and then charging more than the next closest festival isn't necessarily the best business model. Gaining an audience with an attractive price combined with a worthwhile experience is a win-win. Many said that the recent Middlelands festival price was great for the amazing lineup and breathtaking production – as opposed to Fyre Festival – throwing all their money towards models and influencers and made attendees burn a hole in their pockets. Many satisfied festival goers love to marvel at the fact that they bought an experience that exceeded their expectations.

6. The people

Your vibe attracts your tribe. Energy is contagious and the audience you attract is a huge indicator on the success and failure of a festival. The vision you want to depict to your viewers will determine the type of people who attend. Festival goers who reflect on their favorite festivals such as Lightning in a Bottle, located in Bradley California, love the festival because it cultivates people who are kind and help each other out. The festival's ethos revolves around sustainability, social cohesion, personal health, and creative expression. Some festival goers who attended larger events such as Coachella, feel many go for more superficial intentions such as Instagram and image. The people that come to festivals for the right reasons will leave a profound and lasting impression. It's also important to consider the tax bracket of your potential audience. Charging beaucoup bucks for a resort destination event when your target audience are young adults hovering just above the poverty line, probably isn't going to spell out success. Save the Rivera Maya resort festivals for the people who can afford it.

7. Marketing

This is the strategy that gets the people to the festival. An honest and enticing marketing execution shapes the festival and what it will embody. However, putting too much of the money towards marketing is foolish and can backfire quickly. For example, Fyre Festival's expensive influencer heavy marketing held no authenticity – tainting a music festival's ethos. Ultimately, the best marketing has been word of mouth. Your peers are going to give you the

most honest opinion about an experience – organically influencing people with time. Social media and other strategies are secondary but should stay true to the vibe the festival will convey.

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