

Management by Events

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Management by Events

“I set the date for an event, and things happen.”

At **GeneXus**, there are many things we do differently. There’s a strong culture, marked by many lessons, customs, practices, tastes, preferences, and - why not? - “quirks” that the company’s founders (**Breogán Gonda** and **Nicolás Jodal**) passed on to us over decades of professional work.

Some things are well-known, like our obsession with the latest in technology and everything related to innovation in software development. Other things may be a bit less known, like our way of building teams (Vitamins for Companies) and making - and executing - successful decisions (like those proposed in [Mastering Change](#) and other [publications](#)), which stem from Ichak [Adizes](#)’ management school.

On the other hand, there are other things that are even less known, and when I tell them, they generate a certain level of disbelief because at first glance they clash with what one expects to hear. An example of this is the anecdote that Nicolás Jodal, - who besides being a co-founder is the **CEO of GeneXus** -, shared with me one day while we were talking about the next GeneXus Meeting:

“When a journalist asks me ‘what’s my way of managing the company,’ I like to reply that my way of managing the company is through events. I set the date for an event, and things happen.”

I remember smiling at the anecdote and pondering, delving into what I understood he meant: That the mere existence of the event was a catalyst for the appearance of the product, marketing, sales, and the community around the product.

In other words, one naturally thinks of an event as a communication action, marketing, demand generation, closing deals, but for a product company, an event is much, much more.

This was more than ten years ago, but this perspective, though simple in its essence, encompasses a dynamic of how a product organization can find the path to achieve its goals in an infinite sea of options to take, in a world and context of constant change and unpredictable challenges.

Furthermore, I believe that today I would explain it in this way, to better understand why Nicolás said what he did: The GeneXus Encounter acts as a catalyst for Integration and Alignment. This alignment is Internal to the company and External to the Community and contributes to achieving Short-Term objectives (Sales, Product Delivery, Success Stories) and establishing actions that add value for the long term (Vision, Community, Marketing).

In a way, it's a management perspective that comes directly from Adizes: [What teams should we form](#) and [what things should we do to make the company successful in the short and long term](#).

Who would say that organizing an event can serve so many functions at once, right?

“Management by Events”.

(They won't teach you this in an MBA)

This philosophy operates under the principle that the mere existence of a deadline, marked by an event, forces focus, facilitates work prioritization, aligns the efforts of different teams, and mobilizes resources more effectively than simply managing operations routinely.

In a Product company, without this “Management by Events,” something similar should be found to achieve the same company-wide focus. The truth is, I don't know what alternative there is because when I start thinking about successful technology product companies... they all have big events annually. More than one! Apple, Microsoft, Google, SAP, Salesforce, NVIDIA, Tesla... Maybe this is formalized in some bibliography, but I couldn't find it easily. However, countless product companies use events to advance their products, generate marketing strategies, and foster community. The more I think about it, the more necessary events seem as an indispensable tool to keep a product company focused on achieving goals with a predictable pace and constant evolution.



Internal Effects of Management by Events

Here are some basic **benefits internally to the company**, drawn both from GeneXus' practice and from observing other product events in the market:

Event-Driven timelines

By setting specific dates for an event - whether they are product launches, training sessions, or any significant milestone - a clear and non-negotiable goal is established towards which teams must work. This creates a sense of urgency and allows for a clear timeline to deliver all the necessary outputs on time. This is nothing more than a way to strengthen Adizes' P Vitamin (Produce).

Transdisciplinary collaboration

Since events often require input and effort from multiple departments (such as R&D, marketing, sales, etc.), "management by events" naturally encourages interdepartmental cooperation. This encourages teams to work together towards the common goal of making the event successful, and everyone is responsible for the event's success, each in their role, but with a common goal in mind. This is nothing more than strengthening Adizes' I Vitamin (Integrate).

Prioritization and efficiency

With an event date serving as an immovable point in time, teams are forced to prioritize tasks, manage resources more efficiently, and cut bureaucratic delays. Successfully executing becomes the priority. Non-essential activities are deprioritized in favor of actions that directly contribute to the event's success. This is nothing more than strengthening Adizes' A Vitamin (Administer).

Catalyzing innovation and action

The imminent deadline of an event acts as a catalyst for ideas and execution. It forces teams to find new paths, make better decisions, finalize product features, complete documentation, and create and execute marketing strategies that might otherwise be subject to delays or miscoordination. This is nothing more than a way to strengthen Adizes' E (Entrepreneur) and P vitamins (much E for the P and much P).

Measurable and other results

Events provide a tangible result that can be evaluated. The success of the event, in terms of attendance, engagement, sales, or other metrics, offers immediate feedback on the effectiveness of preparatory efforts. On the other hand, there is value generated during an event that cannot be expressed in a spreadsheet column. Ultimately, how much is a more integrated team worth? How much is a team that is able to innovate and consistently deliver, year after year, products, training, documentation, events, and satisfied customers worth? You can't put a number on it, and therefore, it's usually not counted. But it exists, and it's of high, high value.



External Effects of Management by Events

The basic **external** principles of “Management by Events” not only deepen relationships with partners and customers but also amplify the organization’s influence and impact as a whole.

1. Partner alignment

The anticipation of a specific event facilitates synchronization with partners and suppliers. This alignment ensures that all links in the value chain work towards a common goal, improving cohesion between internal and external players. This process strengthens long-term relationships. It’s I for tomorrow’s P.

2. Customer case knowledge

The event offers a platform to present successful stories and cases, demonstrating the real impact of a product like GeneXus or services provided to customers. In the case of GeneXus, in fact, the GeneXus Meeting is one of the most important places where our clients tell us - and often we find out for the first time - what they have done with our products. We’ve had many and very exciting surprises. This is I with customers and E for future Sales.

3. Training of new developers and/or Partners

With these events, companies can cultivate talent, updating skills and knowledge at all levels of the sales chain (from pre-sales to future partners). This training contributes to the expansion of the user and partner community, ensuring a solid and growing foundation for the future of technology or product. It’s I and P to increase the P.

4. Community generation

Events serve as catalysts for the formation and strengthening of communities around brands, products, or technologies. The stronger the community, the stronger its value as an asset for the company (again, even if it’s not expressed in spreadsheets), offering feedback, fostering loyalty, and acting as brand ambassadors in different forums and scenarios. It’s I for the P.

5. Improvement of communication

Event-oriented management allows for more effective and targeted communication both internally and externally. With clear and shared objectives, the outward message becomes coherent and powerful, improving the brand's perception and facilitating the dissemination of its values and propositions. It's P for brand communication.

6. Visibility in Press, Media, and social networks

Significant events generate media interest, providing an opportunity to obtain expanded press coverage. This visibility increases the brand's reach and influence, attracting the attention not only of potential customers but also of investors, industry analysts, and other key stakeholders. It's even more P for brand communication.

7. Demand and sales stimulation

The anticipation and enthusiasm generated around an event can stimulate demand and accelerate sales. Product launches, for example, become crucial moments that capture the attention and imagination of attendees, prospects, and the market, driving sales that are in process and also driving the creation of a new sales pipeline. It's P for Sales.

8. Market positioning and differentiation

Event-driven management allows companies to stand out in markets that are often saturated, using these meeting points to clearly differentiate themselves from their competitors. By focusing on innovations, achievements, and the added value of their products or services, organizations can strengthen their position in the market, at least in their community and nearby markets. It's E for the future P.

Implementing “Management by Events”

To implement “Management by Events,” an organization must follow some steps. If I were to give their most minimalist version, I could happily summarize those steps in a single sentence: “Define an event, set a date, and - very importantly - stick to it.”

That’s it! While it may seem like a very simple reduction, it poses a great challenge because sticking to the date is crucial, and that can be difficult when pressure and stress increase.

Obviously, other things are needed to implement this management mode, and we can delve into that sentence to understand what other aspects need to be considered.

For example:

1. Identifying key events

Determining which event or events will drive the business forward, considering the company’s product development cycles, market opportunities, and commitments to customers, partners, and the community.

2. Setting clear objectives

For each event, clear objectives and outcomes must be defined, aligned with broader business, product, and communication objectives. What do we want to show? How and what are we going to tell? What do we want to achieve with this?

3. Allocating resources

Another obvious aspect is to ensure that the necessary resources - people, budget, technologies, suppliers, and partners - are correctly allocated and fully committed to supporting the event’s success.

4. Communicate, coordinate, align

It is necessary to maintain open lines of communication between all teams involved, coordinating efforts to ensure that all players and interests are aligned and working with the same timelines and priorities. And one must be managing the difficulties that will inevitably occur.

5. Review and reflect

After each event, at GeneXus, we usually conduct a thorough review to assess what worked, what didn’t, conducting a good post-mortem (in success and failure), to learn how processes can be improved for future events. While the name is dreadful, the activity always prepares us better for the future.

**“Define an event,
set a date, and - very
importantly - stick to it.”**

Benefits and Challenges of Management by Events

The adoption of “Management by Events” brings with it a series of effects that we have already seen before, while also presenting challenges that organizations must know how to manage.

If I had to choose, I would leave these points for them to take from this document:

Benefits

1. Acceleration of progress and task completion

Setting specific dates for events promotes timely task completion, driving progress towards defined objectives.

2. Improvement of interfunctional collaboration

The need to work together towards a common goal fosters collaboration between different departments, improving organizational synergy.

3. Clear focus on priorities

The imminence of an event forces teams to prioritize activities, focusing on what truly drives event success and, therefore, the company.

4. Alignment of interests

Having an event also leads to alignment of interests between team members and management. This approach facilitates successful execution, maximizing organizational cohesion.

Challenges

Obviously, doing things this way also has challenges that are not minor. Here are some things we try to keep in mind so as not to be defeated:

1. Risk of exhaustion

Tight deadlines and high pressure can lead to team burnout, so it's crucial to manage time and the well-being of employees.

2. Commitment to quality

The urgency to meet deadlines can, at times, compromise the quality of work. It is essential to balance speed with excellence in execution.

3. Dependency on event execution

The effectiveness of this management is linked to the success of planned events, which implies a need for impeccable execution and a great capacity for reaction and adaptation to the unforeseen events that always, always occur.

Although "Management by Events" - with which Nicolás Jodal organizes and inspires us - is not without its challenges, its implementation truly is a great catalyst for achieving all types of objectives, for strengthening internal cohesion, and for amplifying the organization's impact both internally and externally.

That sounds very good, but there is an additional benefit that is very difficult to explain to someone who has not lived, for example, a GeneXus Meeting: the extraordinary level of trust forged among team members and the transformative impact this has on our company's culture. It cannot be explained, but I can try it as follows:

There is an old saying that goes “A calm sea does not make good sailors.” Based on my experience of 12 GeneXus Meeting (9 in-person and 3 virtual), I can confidently confirm that organizing an event and collectively overcoming the challenges that entails, indeed helps forge great teams. Teams that have sailed together through the storm, that have advanced united in the face of adversity, and that have emerged victorious, not only strengthen and motivate each other but also forge the conviction that they are prepared to face and triumph over the challenges of the future. These are teams that know they can continue to do great things.

Like another event, for example.

The GeneXus Meeting

The [GeneXus Meeting](#) is the annual event that brings together professionals, technology experts, software developers, entrepreneurs, and innovation enthusiasts, with the aim of exploring GeneXus’ vision in the short, medium, and long term, as well as the latest trends in software development, Artificial Intelligence, digital transformation, design, and more.

It is considered the most important event in technology, innovation, and business in Latin America, and each year attracts around 3500 participants in an environment of shared knowledge, collaboration, and networking.

During the encounter, conferences, demonstrations, and practical workshops are held. Attendees also have the opportunity to interact with speakers and the team that makes GeneXus possible, fostering the exchange of ideas and experiences.



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GX30
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What's Going On?



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