

Experiential Marketing its own Worst Enemy

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Experiential marketing is the most **effective** communication tool to **engage** consumers, employees, suppliers, sales teams and business partners in **authentic experiential activities** that impact their **hearts and minds**. As opposed to advertising a limited number of **measurement and ROI models exist**.

What is experiential marketing?

Beyond conventional "features-and-benefits" marketing and advertising, brands must **connect emotionally** with their target audiences, meeting face-to-face means your communication and messages are not only communicated (one way) – they are **understood and experienced**. Events have been recognized as succeeding in:

- Connect emotionally with a product or service
- Make brands more memorable
- Increasing sales
- Accompany the change management process
- Build goodwill and loyalty towards a brand
- Enhance the brand positioning
- Drive short term actions


Experiential marketing is a **creative process** that influences the delivery of your **communications and messages** during events, by providing the audience with the ideal opportunity to see if the brand improves **or reinforces their lifestyle** at work, while shopping or during leisure or social activities. It can be used during:

- Permanent or large event stands or pavilions
- Mobile exhibitions/road shows
- Retail environments
- Consumer promotions
- Shows and performances at public events
- Product launches
- Press events
- Sales meetings and conferences.
- Channel performance campaigns and improvement programs
- Training and best practice exchange programs

Measurability and ROI of experiential marketing?

Experiential marketing activities take **several forms and solve many business challenges**; therefore, it can't be placed in a single corporate function "box". Where do events belong in an organization? How can events be measured and evaluated?

What is very clear today is that just like it happened in the advertising business, the **event sector** as a whole will need to cooperate to develop **measurement processes and build performance benchmarks**. Today, some decentralized efforts have been made in the right direction.



First, the Meeting Professionals International (**MPI**) association, whose vision is to be the pivotal force in positioning meetings and events as a key strategic component of an organization's success – has defined **5 levels of measurement** that cover corporate business challenge:

1. **Reaction & Planned Actions:** Measures audiences satisfaction with the event and captures planned actions
2. **Learning:** Measures changes in knowledge, skills and attitudes
3. **Application and Implementation:** Measures changes in on-the-job behaviour and progress with implementation
4. **Business Impact:** Measures changes in business impact variables
5. **Return on Investment:** Compares monetary benefits to the cost of the meeting. The focus of this approach is mainly on the methodology.

Second, the **ANAE** (the French event agency association) whose mission is to promote the use of experiential marketing – in cooperation with the marketing research agency **Occurrence**, are working on a **qualitative measurement process and benchmark**.

They have defined the following:

1. A **classification of type of events per business challenge**: for example, B2B, channel partners, product launch
2. A structured **interview survey** of 10 questions per type of category (see point 1)
3. An **independent benchmark** of all results that they keep

The focus of this approach is mainly benchmarking.

Third, **strategic marketing consultancies**, such as Reflection Marketing from Switzerland, are developing their own **experiential marketing strategy models** that independently evaluate from a marketing eye perspective the impact of the experiential marketing activity within the strategic plan of the companies. Their advantage is a strong focus on the needs of the contracting body resulting in concrete proposals such as very concrete improvements, saving potentials etc... The focus of this approach is purely client-focused and mainly to show possibilities of improvement and savings.

As a final word, it is clear that experiential marketing is a creative process that through face-to-face interaction brings companies alive. With the vast territory of expression and the number of business challenges it can solve, experiential marketing can't fit in one box. The relatively recent and massive use of this media makes it unsophisticated in terms of measurement.



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