

# Event & Experiential Marketing

**N**o longer content with reaching customers and prospects at an event, marketers are now trying to engulf them in an experience: If you needed to sum up the evolution of event marketing in a nutshell, that would do it.

That's why more and more winning campaigns (and certainly the campaigns that won 2014 PRO Awards in the event and vehicle-based categories, which you will read about later) are engaging prospects before, during, and after their events with multiple media. In fact, 60% of the 106 agencies participating in the Event Marketing Institute/Mosaic's EventTrack 2014 Agency Survey said their clients are integrating other media into their programs more often than they had just a few years ago.

What's more, 82% of the 206 brands participating in the Brand Survey component of the EventTrack study said that their event and experiential marketing efforts were part of a larger integrated campaign. For instance, 77% said they engaged in social media marketing in the run-up to an event, 71% during an event itself, and 61% after an event.

Among the survey respondents who executed in-store events, 55% provided photo-sharing services, 45% enabled attendees to automatically post on their own social media feeds, and 40% let them scan a QR code for more information.

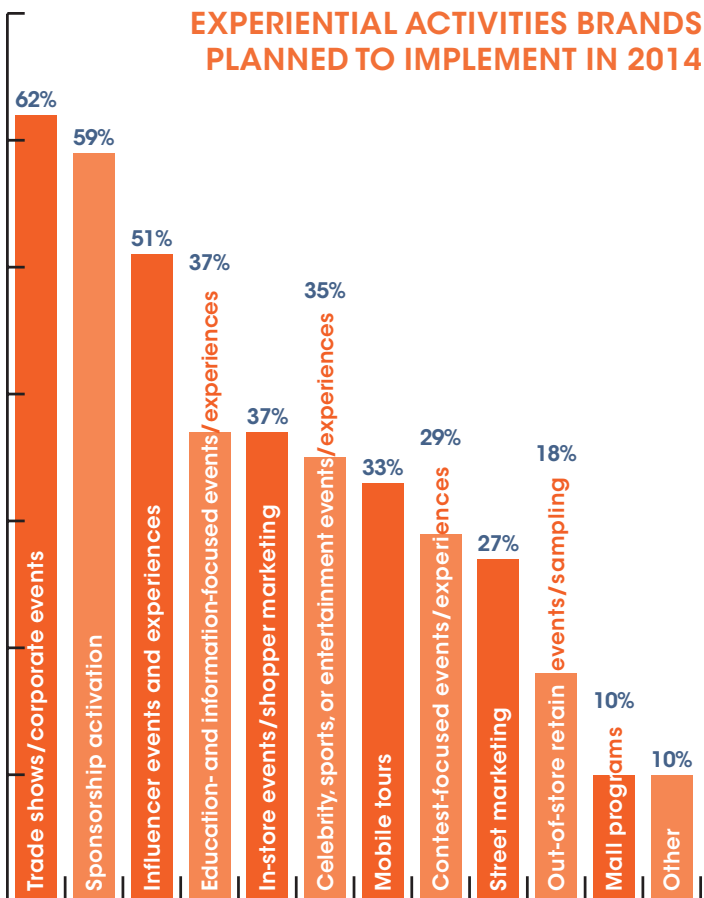


Jameson hoped to have 2,500 bartenders and consumers stop by the lounge; with 3,528 guests in all, it exceeded that goal by 61%.

But companies are using even old-school media such as print to extend the breadth of their events. For instance, as part of its Jameson Black Barrel Lounge campaign by Legacy Marketing Partners at the 2013 Northside music, film and art festival in Brooklyn, Jameson Irish Whiskey showcased eight local bartenders in the festival program guide. Not only did this promote the lounge itself—where video screens showed how the whiskey is made, Jameson's cooper gave live demonstrations of the making of the all-important aging barrels, local bartenders could blend their own whiskey, and consumers could sip Jameson whiskey while listening to DJs and live music—but it also gave even those who couldn't attend the event a taste of the experience. The program won a Silver 2014 PRO Award.

## AT THE HEART

For all the apparent focus on the “experiential,” events remain at the heart of this marketing tactic. When asked “Where is your company trying to make the most ‘experiential’ action in 2014?” nearly two-thirds (62%) of participants in the EventTrack Brand Survey cited trade shows and corporate events, the mainstays of event marketing. Sponsorship activation was nearly as popular, with 59% focusing on it, followed by influencer events and experiences (51%), in-store events/shopper marketing (37%) and education—and information—focused events and experiences (also 37%).



Source: MI/Mosaic EventTrack 2014

Not surprisingly, nearly four out of five survey participants cited increasing sales and/or increasing or creating brand awareness as primary goals of their event and experiential marketing efforts. But an increasing percentage cited launching products as a key goal: 59%, up from 48% just two years prior. Interestingly, though, 72% of the agency respondents said that launching products was a key goal for their clients.

In what's good news to providers of everything from trade-show booths to signage to field reps for hand-

ing out samples, 72% of the brands surveyed had planned to execute more event and experiential programs this year. To that end, annual budgets for the tactic were expected to grow more than 5%.

What's not so good for providers of other marketing goods and services: 65% of the brands planning to spend more said that the funds would be coming from other parts of the marketing mix.

Why are they robbing Peter the direct marketer (or email marketer or what have you) to pay Paul the experiential marketer? Because for many of them, ROI is increasing significantly. Nearly one in five of the brand respondents (18%) said they enjoyed an ROI of at least 5 to 1—that's twice the percentage from two years earlier.

In fact, financial ROI is what senior management most wants to know about their event/experiential programs. Short-term financial ROI—did the campaign pay for itself—was the top data point that the brand respondents provided to senior management, with 63% reporting it. Nearly as many (56%) reported long-term financial ROI: how the program will be contributing to future sales, with 54% reporting the impact on branding. Given how experiential programs are becoming more integrated with other efforts, it's a bit surprisingly that only 35% reported the impact of the campaign on other marketing initiatives, down from 50% the previous year.

## MEASURING A CAMPAIGN'S SUCCESS

- Total attendance, participation, or visits remained the number-one metric, cited by 80% of the brands surveyed, up six percentage points from 2012.
- The percentage measuring sales after the event/experience surged, though, from 46% in 2012 to 66% in 2014. Use of social media activity as a metric climbed as well, from 45% in 2012 to 57%.
- To gauge these metrics, nearly two-thirds (64%) of the brands use postevent surveys or interviews, with nearly as many (59%) conducting onsite surveys or interviews.
- Almost half (49%) measured redemptions of incentives or special offers.
- Among the agencies that measure effectiveness for their clients, 41% said they had a formalized ROI tracking model or program that involves their sales, marketing, and/or finance departments.

Source: MI/Mosaic EventTrack 2014



An Air Stream travel trailer is decked out to be a moving billboard and backdrop for the Fiskars's display.

## ROAD SHOW

Fiskars, a brand of shears, the recognizable orange-handled scissors, and other home and garden tools, used multiple metrics to determine the effectiveness of its spring 2014 Discover the Different mobile tour, which made more than 50 stops in 19 cities. After each stop, the traveling tour managers used a custom portal to collate data such as weather conditions, number of premiums distributed, video testimonials (which were also pushed onto Fiskars's social sites, where the number of shares were tracked), attendance, and retailer reaction. Other data, such as sales within the vicinity and coupon redemption, were overlaid.

In addition to sales, brand building was a top goal measured in several ways. First, video was gathered, sent to the Fiskars' team to edit and then pushed out on Fiskars' social sites with viral share tracked. Visitor's who participated in the videos with testimonials or simply candid footage receive branded premiums like collapsible water bottles and stickers.

"This was a big deal for Fiskars," Steve Randazzo, the president of Pro Motion, which handled the events, says. "They wanted to authenticate that Ah Ha moment where consumers experienced the difference between their product and the competitors."

Second, visitors were encouraged to use on-site iPads to go to Fiskars' Facebook page, like it and talk about their experience at the event. They could also go to Fiskars.com to get discounts and free shipping.

## BATTLE OF THE SEXES

What do women—and men, for that matter—want? When it comes to experiential marketing, they want freebies. When asked as part of the EventTrack 2014 Consumer Survey Report what motivated them to

participate in a marketing event, 83% of the 308 respondents said free samples or other giveaways. Freebies were much more important to the female respondents: a whopping 92% cited them as a motivating factor, compared with 73% of the men. Discounts or special offers were important too, with 52% of all respondents—56% of the women and 48% of the men—citing them as a reason to participate.

**"THE NUMBER-ONE DRIVER OF POST-EVENT PURCHASES WAS THAT THE EVENT ALLOWED THEM TO TRY OUT THE POTENTIAL PURCHASE FIRST, AS CITED BY 84% OF THE RESPONDENTS."**

— *EVENTTRACK 2014 CONSUMER SURVEY REPORT*

Nearly as many—48% of the consumers surveyed—said that receiving a discount or special offer made them more likely to buy the product. But that wasn't the top driver of post-event purchases. The number-one reason was that the event allowed them to try out the potential purchase first, as cited by 84% of the respondents, up from 72% in 2012. That far outpaced the second most commonly cited reason: The event helped them realize they'd like or benefit from the product or service, as cited by 53% of the consumers surveyed, up from 42% two years prior.

## PURCHASE POWER

- Slightly more than half of the consumers (54%) made a purchase of the promoted product or service during the event, with women significantly more likely to open their wallets (63%) than men (45%).
- Of those who didn't, 57% did ultimately buy the product or service at a later date.
- And in news that should gladden the hearts of marketers focused on long-term ROI, 84% of the consumers who bought the product or service, either at the event or afterward, made a repeat purchase. In fact, 74% became regular customers.
- Men were more likely to report themselves as regular customers: 88% versus 67% of women. So while women may contribute more to short-term ROI, men could be viewed as more important to long-term return.

Source: MI/Mosaic EventTrack 2014

The ability to try before they buy was especially important for two categories on the opposite ends of the scale costwise: food products (80%) and cars and trucks (78%). While handing out food samples at an event or a store is relatively simple, providing an equivalent for an auto is more complex and costly. But as Porsche proved with its 2013 World Road Show, the return can be significant.

## CHECKERED FLAG

Porsches are built to perform on a racetrack. Most people who buy a Porsche, however, are relegated to roads and therefore never get to experience the car's full capabilities. With their 10-city, 30-day national road show, Porsche and agency Momentum Worldwide gave consumers that chance to do so and won a 2014 Gold PRO Award along the way.

At tracks across the country, Porsche set up tents where the affluent invitees checked in through a bespoke registration system; watched branded content that, among other things, showed consumers their personalization options; and raced on Microsoft Forza 4 video game simulators.

Guests then hit the road, or rather the track, for a two-hour session led by the chief instructor of the Porsche Sport Driving School. They paced around the track in sports models and steered the cars through various maneuvers. Instructors also showcased Porsche's traction control on a custom-built skid pad, a demonstration that many attendees recorded on their mobile phones and uploaded onto social media, including Porsche's specially developed new social site Drive Live, using the hashtag #PWRS. Drive Live filtered the tagged posts into a dynamic feed throughout the tour. And because Porsche's national dealer network was linked into the event, local dealer reps, some of whom also attended the events, could easily follow up on leads.

At the track tents, iPads were loaded with unique Porsche content and information about advanced training packages offered by the Sport Driving School. Back at the main tent afterward, guests enjoyed beverages and food and shopped at the Porsche Driver's Selection booth.

The tour ran from May through November; the Drive Live site generated 4,340 unique visits, with an average visit of 2.5 minutes. Eighty-three percent of road-show attendees said they were more likely to buy a Porsche—and as of January 2014, 157 of them already had. Given the six-figure average price point of a Porsche, that's not a bad ROI at all.



The "Porsche World Road Show" event let consumers pace around the track in sports models and steer the cars through various maneuvers.

## THE DATA EFFECT

As effective as event marketing seems to be, it can become more effective still when brands analyze data ahead of time to ensure that an event will satisfy the needs of various types of participants. By collecting customer data from their existing databases and marketing automation systems or by engaging with participants prior to the event via channels such as social media or email questionnaires, marketers can "discover what is relevant in affecting the results of their events. They can uncover where each attendee is in the buying journey, expand demographic profiles for each attendee, and reveal attendees' true interests," Betsy Zikakis, vice president of marketing at Certain, wrote in an article for Chief Marketer ("How to Make Events Work Harder").

Certain estimated that less than half of companies involved in event or experiential marketing use lead scoring—compiling demographic/corporate data and behavioral activity to determine a participant's place in the buying cycle and how likely he is to make a purchase or engage in other desired behavior. With that information, the marketer can manage multiple attendees within one event or experience, target the desired behaviors for each, and guide the attendees through the most relevant aspects of the event. Attendee A, who has made repeated visits to the marketer's website, requested various white papers, or maybe purchased from the brand in the past, might have a higher lead score, making him more likely to purchase sooner rather than later. This attendee could be encouraged to skip preliminary sessions at an event and make an appointment with a brand representative for one-on-one time, whereas Attendee B, who is virtually unknown to the brand and who appears to know little about the brand in turn, would be treated to introductory sessions and follow-up messaging.





Major events like the NYC Marathon host dozens of sponsors who get up close and personal with thousands of runners.

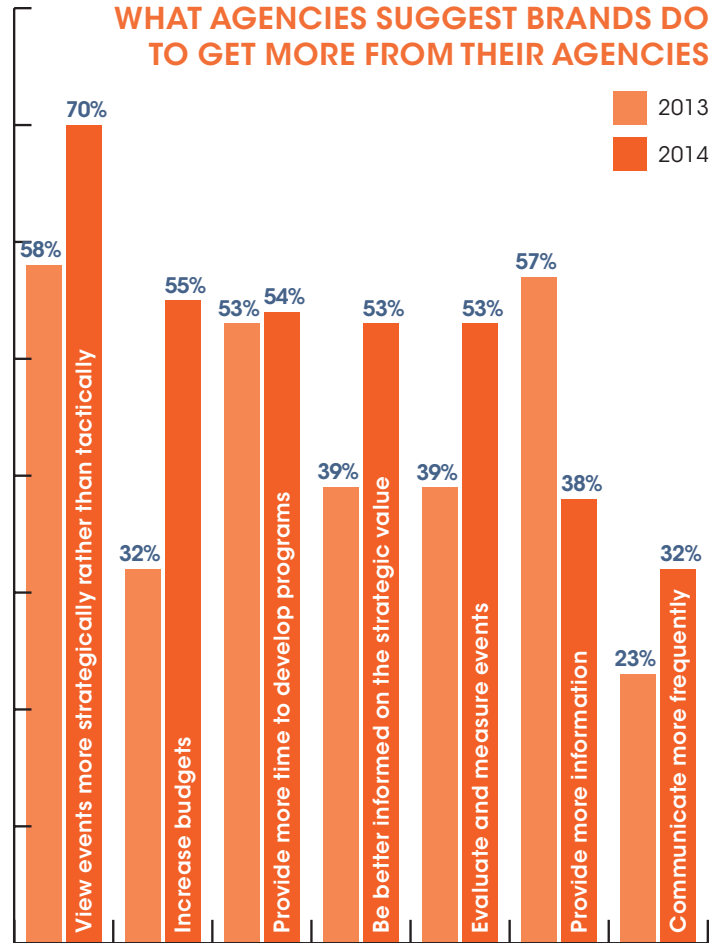
Next Marketing, a PROMO Top Shop, contends that any effective event needs to take into account the four E's: engage, embody, educate, and empower. Engagement is explanatory enough and can range from handing out samples to setting up photo booths where participants can instantly share their on-site photos with their social media followers. Embodying the brand is a matter of ensuring that all aspects of the experience, from the colors of the signage to the choice of refreshments and music, are consistent with what the brand stands for.

**"AMBASSADORS OFFER A GREAT OPPORTUNITY TO START ONE-ON-ONE CONVERSATIONS DIRECTLY WITH YOUR TARGETS WHILE GETTING YOUR BRAND IN YOUR HANDS."**

— ANNE OLLER, NEXT'S DIRECTOR OF STRATEGY, SAYS.

Getting the "educate" element right relies heavily on proper selection and training of the brand ambassadors, so that they can speak with attendees off-script if necessary about the products or services

## WHAT AGENCIES SUGGEST BRANDS DO TO GET MORE FROM THEIR AGENCIES



Source: MI/Mosaic EventTrack 2014

being promoted. Ideally the education goes both ways, with brand ambassadors learning about the needs and concerns of the attendees as well as the attendees learning about the brand. The ambassadors offer "a great opportunity to start one-on-one conversations directly with your targets while getting your brand in your hands," noted Anne Oller, Next's director of strategy, in the company's white paper "The Marketer's Guide to Optimizing Your Event Investment." Empowering involves the brand ambassadors as well, ensuring that "the training provided to the staffers equips them to make on-the-spot decisions for the benefit of the brand," as Next put it.

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