

Chief Marketer Consumer Special Report

Are You Experienced?

Immersing customers in an experience to create engagement before, during and after a live event

By Patricia Odell

No longer content with just reaching customers and prospects at live events, marketers are now engulfing them in an experience that begins long before the event and lasts far beyond.

It's never been more important to take advantage of the time leading up to a live event, to capture rich, valuable data—both during the run up and at the event—and to then extend the life of the event, not just a mere few weeks, but for months and months, even a year.

"Live events and other real-time experiences should serve as a jumping off point or part of an overall plan for year-round engagement and consumer interaction," says Aaron Clark, vice president of mobile sales and operations at HelloWorld. "If it's a one-time activation, you risk losing the connection that you just put time, effort, and—if it's a landmark event—a lot of money into."

Johnson & Johnson and its agency Octagon executed a lengthy campaign for J&J's sponsorship of last summer's FIFA World Cup in Brazil.

World Cup mania dominated the news cycle for at least four weeks leading up to the events, paving a sleek marketing path for J&J to travel on leading up to the matches.

J&J, as the first FIFA World Cup healthcare sponsor, took advantage of that long lead-time to create experiences that hadn't been done before. The experiential campaign, "Tour do Carinho"—or "Caring Tour" took on the urgent need for blood donations.

A bus was customized to replicate the same vehicle used by a local blood center partner in Rio to amplify that center's efforts. The team traveled to 11 host cities taking blood donations during that wildly



The Tour do Carinho set up and ready to take blood donations.

passionate and exciting four-month build up to the World Cup. Through the Make-A-Wish Foundation three children, facing health issues that could be treated by blood transfusions, served as ambassadors. The children appeared in a YouTube video with some of the donors. It amassed 3.5 million views.

"The investments are so heavy, sponsors want to know how they can get more out of their sponsorships both farther away and once the events are over," says Andre Schunk, senior vice president of marketing at Octagon. "Programs that have legs start way in advance and have residual effects on the back end."

Only about 1.9% of the Brazilian population donates blood each year, compared to 5% in the United States and 7% in Europe. Social, PR and local news outlets and celebrities drove awareness for the events which drew 23,000 donations, enough blood to save more than 93,000 lives, the Red Cross said.

As the matches got underway, that success col-

lecting blood donations was the “great story to tell,” Schunk says.



People giving some of the 23,000 blood donations during the “Tour do Carinho.”

“Tour do Carinho” was featured at J&J’s commercial display in every stadium and FIFA Fan Fest locations during the FIFA World Cup. A sand sculpture was built next to J&J’s Family Area activation at the Fan Fest on Copacabana beach in Rio. On June 14, “World Blood Donor Day,” J&J promoted blood donation on LED field boards next to the pitch and visible to millions of TV viewers.

“It was a way to disrupt the whole system and do something that was new and fresh,” he says. “The content we were delivering was a real service to the country, a real need that had to be addressed.”

Also during the matches, J&J tapped into its “Care Inspires Care” brand campaign it launched in 2012 in conjunction with the World Cup to offer 14,000 World Cup volunteers and 2013 FIFA Confederations Cup volunteers free healthcare screening, developing another great brand story to relay far beyond the World Cup.

J&J also asked fans to volunteer to distribute care packages and write message to Brazilian kids unable to make it to the World Cup. Sunglasses, health posters, toothbrushes, Johnson’s soap and Sundown sunblock were taken to local school and distributed by the mascot Fuleco, an armadillo, to 80,000 kids.

“There’s lots of storytelling around that,” Schunk says. “The care package story was a great way to wrap up the program.”

DATA DRIVES LIVE EVENTS

There’s no other way to start a live consumer event than with audience generation, which typically starts in digital via email or social, so marketers have some level of data about who might attend. Onsite what becomes important is to engineer the event to produce and capture even more valuable data.

Digitized experiences like touch-screens, kiosks and personal devices create moments within the live experience to capture data that is important to the brand. Then, the idea is to provide ways for attendees to volunteer data.

One is the use of RFID tags, which many event producers use. As attendees register, that record gets paired with an RFID chip the person takes with them throughout the multi-phase experience with the brand. Incentives to use the tags can be provided, like offering a chance to win a premium in exchange for their personal information, says Ben Grossman, vice president, strategy director, Jack Morton Worldwide.

People who volunteer to use the tags are inherently more likely to be interested in learning about the brand, be loyal to the brand and willingly provide data in exchange for an enhanced personalized experience.

“That’s quite powerful,” he says.

Any number of interactions can be built into the experience such as a photo shoot or video opportunity where attendees can then tap the RFID tag and have the photo or video quickly shared on their social channels.

“The chip isn’t really an issue for people,” says Grossman. “The best practice is all about value propositions. If using the chip enhances the experience they will have, of course, they will do it.”

ENGAGING WITH APPS

A new survey from The Event Marketing Institute and Cvent predicts a dramatic increase in how event attendees will value and engage with mobile event apps over the next two years.

Forty-four percent of attendees on average are using mobile event apps today, a number expected to increase to 56% next year, the survey found.

The apps provide a powerful tool for brands and agencies for improving event management, delivering information and content, capturing data and analytics, and fostering networking between attendees and sponsors.

The survey also found:

By 2016, 88% of planners say attendees will consider mobile apps critical to their event experience.

86% of planners will have an app at their event by next year.

The top 10% of respondents in terms of current attendee app usage say 85% of attendees use apps today and 94% will use them by 2016.

Freebies like logo t-shirts and hats to take the brand memory home haven’t gone away, but the focus is increasingly shifting towards multimedia

"A PHYSICAL BRANDED MEDIA OBJECT THAT CONSUMERS PAY TO HAVE IN THEIR ACTUAL HOMES? A MARKETER'S DREAM."

—DJ SAUL, CMO/MANAGING DIRECTOR,
DIGITAL AGENCY ISTRATEGYLABS.

experiences, particularly utilizing mobile devices, says DJ Saul, CMO/managing director of digital agency iStrategyLabs.



Budweiser's "Red Light" goes off and flashes every time the owner's team scores a goal in real life, in real-time.

He cites Budweiser's Red Lights program in Canada as a "killer example of this, where consumers actually purchased a physical Bud-branded 'siren,' connected it to WiFi and indicated their favorite team, and it would then go off and flash every time their team scored a goal in real life, in real-time. A physical branded media object that consumers pay to have in their actual homes? A marketer's dream."

ADD IT UP

Of course the old standbys like attendance and number of premiums distributed are still key metrics to consider. But, also take into consideration less objective metrics and data points specific to a particular campaign.

For instance, Fiskars, a brand of shears, 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.

Jack Morton uses a proprietary survey-based methodology tool, Brand Experience Optimization (BXP), to optimize the brand experience for series of live events. The tool gathers data through surveys and looks at brand health, awareness, purchase intent and customer satisfaction. That data is benchmarked against its database of millions of consumer interactions from other live events.

"Our point of view is that the brand experience should get smarter every time," Jack Morton's Grossman says. "What the data gives us in real time at

THE VIRAL EFFECT

Amplifying the reach of events before, during and after is essential, making social vital to marketers. But there's still work to be done.

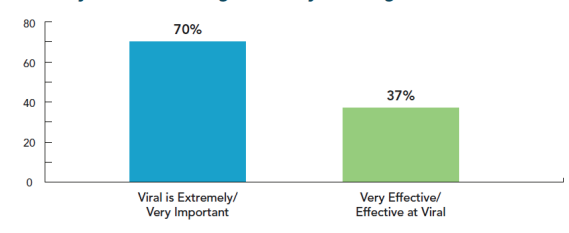
Some 70% of top companies and brands ranked social marketing related to event programs as "extremely" or "very important," according to a new study from FreemanXP and the Event Marketing Institute. Even so, just 16% said their efforts to generate viral impact were "very effective" and only 21% thought the efforts were "effective."

The top strategy around social share and engagement is to drive attendance followed by reaching attendees during the event. One emerging trend is to use social to reach important segments that may not actually attend the events like prospects, industry members and influencers.

The importance of work on viral social impact is in the numbers:

50% of the event marketers and exhibitors who responded to the study have a specific budget for viral efforts.

Viral Efforts Related to Events is Important to Top Event Marketers, But Only a Small Percentage Feel They are Being Effective



Freeman XP and The Event Marketing Institute.

Another 53% are increasing spending and 53% actually measure their event-related viral impact.

The potential ROI is huge: The average viral touches, communications, connections, shares and impressions per event for all respondents to the survey is nearly 1.4 million.

How do you remedy the disconnect between social marketing as a top priority and the weak results?

For event marketers and exhibitors, there is significant awareness about the importance of creating memorable moments and content worth capturing and sharing across digital channels. Clearly, over the next few years more consumer and B2B marketers will focus efforts on developing engaging event content strategies to earn increased social engagement from targeted fans, the study said.

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MEASURING THE IMPACT OF EXPERIENCES

It would seem that when it comes to delivering ROI (or not), there would be two major types of experiential marketing: that which does deliver ROI and that which doesn't deliver ROI.

But, in a classic turn of logic that can drive CMOs crazy, experiential marketing as a discipline is routinely presented by practitioners as far less black and white. The ultimate result? The general view from the top of organizations that experiential marketing is expensive, is unwieldy, and (most painfully) doesn't deliver positive ROI.

Yet some c-level executives see experiential marketing differently—praising its benefits and heralding it as one of the most effective channels in their companies' marketing mixes. In fact, at the same time many marketers are diverting budgets into more easily measured digital marketing, we're also seeing an influx of investment in live touch points along the customer experience journey. The one major factor that results in the perception gap of the ROI of experiential marketing is how it's measured.

There are three major problems with the way many marketers measure the ROI of their experiential marketing:

1. **Objective-Less Planning:** Frequently, experiential marketing efforts are ideated and executed without consideration for the business objective they are trying to achieve. Without defining how success will be measured and planning against those metrics, results can fall flat.

2. **Lack of Integration:** No one marketing channel can accomplish everything, which is the reason for the existence of integrated marketing and communications planning. If experiential efforts live and are measured on an island, they can end up underleveraged in terms of overall reach and undervalued due to a lack of integration with the full customer lifecycle.

3. **Unsophisticated Measurement:** While great strides have been made in recent years in terms of the measurement of digital marketing, experiential has lagged significantly. The offline equivalent of last click attribution (or worse, no attribution at all) is often employed by companies looking at the "success" of their experiential efforts.

In the spirit of righting some of the missteps marketers take when attempting to determine the ROI of experiential marketing, here are a few principles to abide by:

Pre-Define Success & Metrics: If you don't know what a bullseye is, chances are you won't hit it. It's important to understand exactly what your business challenge is, then develop concrete and realistic metrics defined to demonstrate success.

In the early stages of maturing experiential marketing measurement, the temptation can be to measure everything. Don't do it. Just because something can be measured, doesn't mean it should be. We suggest using a categorization system to help organize your measurement plan.

Return on Investment: ROI is the best type of measurement to determine the ultimate success of a live experience and demonstrate return in terms of business value. This is the type of measurement that often holds up best when considering marketing mix optimization.

Key Performance Indicators: KPIs are helpful diagnostic metrics that have to do with the key drivers of ROI. These measures are most helpful to provide actionable optimization recommendations and to compare one event against another.

Insight Measures: These fall into the category of insight are often event specific and less helpful for comparison between

events. They provide planning teams with a level of visibility into how to plan the details of an experience, including factors such as creative messaging, layout, staffing, location and more.

Integrate or Die: If your experiential marketing team is still thinking about events as stand-alone occurrences, positive ROI is highly unlikely. Why? Because live experiences are intensely costly on a cost-per-engagement basis and it is extremely difficult for a positive return to be accomplished based on a single engagement.

Experiences matter to consumers, but to properly farm value from them, they must be part of a larger communications ecosystem. Here are a few places to start:

Consider how the phenomenon of consumers bringing their own devices everywhere should interface with and affect your live event.

Some of the most effective marketing initiatives today are

rooted in an experiential element seen by few, but experienced by many online. Consider how to capture compelling video and other forms of content to be spread and shared by a broader audience than those there in-person.

What's your follow-up strategy to an event? Ensure that an appropriate lead nurturing program that includes timely email, digital advertising and social media is in place so that your bond with the consumer continues over time.



REPORT CORRECTLY, OPTIMIZE INTENSELY

When it comes to reporting, ensure that the right metrics are reported to the people they matter to: ROI to the C-suite, KPIs to senior marketers and insights to the teams planning and executing. Experiential marketers don't do themselves any favors when they're in front of a c-suite talking about brand love, anecdotal consumer interactions and social chatter that were a result of their live event.

Instead, they need to think longer term—and in the context of customer lifetime value. Live events are unique in that they are more costly at a moment in time than many other brand touch points, but deliver more value over time through the creation of a stronger value proposition and relationship with customers.

But maximizing the ROI output of a live event in today's real-time world requires more than proper measurement and reporting—it also takes data-driven optimization. In a McKinsey study of more than 250 engagements in five years, clients that made data-based decisions to optimize their marketing increased their ROI by 15% to 20%. Experiences should get smarter every time they happen. Gone are the days of lock and load advertising with fingers crossed along the way. We can do better than that.

It's not that experiential marketing cannot deliver ROI, rather that it's more difficult to demonstrate the ROI it delivers. Unlike digital channels where data is easily captured and properly attributed to the value it represents, experiential requires a more sophisticated mindset and a shift away from heritage thinking about the channel. Indeed, live experiences are some of the most powerful when it comes to changing behavior and bonding with consumers for much more than a moment in time. As Confucius said: "I hear and I forget. I see and I remember. I do and I understand."

The same principle is true for marketers—it is only once they've properly determined the ROI of experiential marketing that they fully understand its value. —**Ben Grossman, vice president, strategy director, Jack Morton Worldwide**

the end of event No. 1 we use to improve event No. 2 to maximize the budget and present experiences consumers care about."

Having a tool to measure attendee responses to the experiences takes the guesswork out of the mix.

"We as marketers have our own ideas of what consumers want and the tool is an objective way for us to get feedback on what does and doesn't work," he says. "Which is always better than our gut instinct. The point is not to determine if we're doing a good or bad job, the point is optimization."

Only 11% of marketer's decisions are made based on actual data, according to a CEB study. Then the question remains how are the rest of these decisions are made?

- Past experience and intuition
- Colleague recommendations
- Conversations with experts
- One off customer interactions
- Data

A McKinsey study on companies that put data in their decision-making were rewarded with a 15% to 20% increase in ROI, Grossman says.

"If not with data, then how are you making your decisions, and many times the answer is gut instinct," he says. "If you have a 15 event series that's how you increase the percent of ROI. The data correlates with what's having the biggest impact on customers."



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"SHARE A COKE" EXPERIENCES DRIVE BIG BIZ

By now we all know that Coke is bringing back its wildly popular "Share A Coke," campaign with more names, more packages, more ways for consumers to experience the brand—and, in a bold move, an e-commerce platform.

But what you might not know is that last year the campaign drove +15% volume and increased sales. It saw double-digit growth for promotional packages. Positive or neutral sentiment hit 99% and more than 2 million personalized cans were shared—nearly all showed up online.

Part of that success came from the experiential component.

To reach people who had searched tirelessly in stores with no luck to find their names on a can of Coke—including those bin divers—the brand launched an experiential tour of traveling kiosks.

The tour stopped in more than 500 locations where lots of people go, like the Essence Festival, Disney World and Daytona Beach, as well as less splashy stops like the grand opening of a Kroger store.



Coke kiosks where people can personalize a bottle of coke.

"These were simple executions, where we really tried not to get in the way of it and to give people a way to share their experience with Coke," says Evan Holod, director of marketing, The Coca-Cola Co. "To see that excitement was amazing. This was a fantastic way for us to bring the campaign to consumers in a one-to-one way."

So ... "what do when something works that well," he says. "You bring it back."

Starting last month, people could go to Shareacoke.com and order a personalized iconic glass bottle of Coke.

"We really believe that this is a way for people to plan with "Share a Coke," for weddings, for moms for birthday parties and to bring in new drinkers," Holod says. "People will be able to take the spirit of this campaign to new levels through the addition of ecommerce."

Packaging will help get that message across with on-pack messaging like "Class of 2015, and less specific messages like "Family."

The #Share a Coke" campaign first launched in Australia with 100 names printed on bottles, 250 in the U.S. This year, the U.S. program delivers 1,000 names and nicknames like "sidekick" and "better half."

—Patricia Odell

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