

ESSENTIALS OF BRANDED EVENT MARKETING

by

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Branded events are becoming an increasingly important part of the marketing toolbox, as traditional advertising is increasingly ineffectual on modern consumers. Unfortunately for marketers, it is also an understudied area of marketing as most previous research focuses on less dynamic sponsored events. This thesis synthesizes event marketing and consumer psychology concepts to determine the critical elements of a successful branded event. The four essentials of branded events that are critical to their success and effectiveness are purpose, interaction, creativity, and memorability. Integrating these essentials into branded events creates a better experience for consumers and allows them to build a strong relationship with the brand therefore increasing consumer lifetime value and the size of the brand's consumer base.

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Table of Contents

Introduction	1
Origins of Event Marketing	1
The Modern Marketing Climate	1
What is a Branded Event?	2
Organization	4
Objectives	5
Awareness	5
Attitudes	7
Sales	8
Logistical Factors	10
Resources of the Brand	10
Participatory Intensity	11
Audience Type	12
Pre-Event	15
Market Research and Event Design	15
Marketing the Event	17
Event	21
Present Audience Frameworks	21
Authenticity	24
Social Influence	25
Memorability	26
Potential Problems	28
Absent Audience	29
Post-Event	31
Communications	31
Evaluation and Adjustment	33
Essentials	34
Conclusion	37
Image Appendix	38
Bibliography	43

List of Tables

Table 1: Types of Event Marketing and Their Objectives	4
Table 2: Implications of Logistical Factors of Branded Events	14
Table 3: Essentials of Branded Event Marketing	34

Introduction

Origins of Event Marketing

Since its introduction, event marketing has changed and evolved based on consumer desires and the marketing climate. Event marketing has its origins at events like World Fairs, the smaller fairs that followed, and trade shows. Events like these have historically allowed brands to demonstrate their products to potential consumers in a way that allowed consumers to physically interact with a product and directly communicate with brand at the same time (Factory 360, 2015). While these World Fairs and the trade show trend that followed are a good example of event marketing, they are not a good representation of the present and future of the event marketing industry, which has evolved to include sponsored and branded events.

The Modern Marketing Climate

World Fairs and trade shows were useful when marketing was more expensive, timely, and difficult, but now brands that create extremely unique and differentiated experiences have an advantage when it comes to standing out in the marketplace. Additionally, with the increase in internet communications and the ability for consumers to avoid traditional marketing techniques through ad blockers online and DVRs in their TVs, event marketing may be the most effective way to spread a message that stays in consumers' minds (Ledger, 2015). It has also been found that "lived experience, participation, and excited emotions may be more important than talk and ideas," meaning the physical experiences that event marketing provides are more

valuable to consumers than traditional interactions with brands (Howard-Grenville, 2012).

What is a Branded Event?

Event marketing is the use of in-person events as a marketing tool to promote post-event purchases. Branded events are events that a brand plans, executes, and hosts itself, meaning the company controls all of the aspects of the event. Branded events allow consumers to create a meaningful, personal connection with a brand and with other people who enjoy the brand. Branded events differ from non-branded events, like Coachella, and from in-store experiences. Although there is some overlap in the objectives and execution tactics. Branded performances also overlap with branded events. However, branded events purposefully include direct interaction with the brand, brand representatives, and/or products, while a branded performance is intended to be a purely observatory experience. For example, the Red Bull space jump was a performance because Red Bull's common consumer was unable to actively participate in the event. Conversely the Red Bull soapbox races allow their common customers to apply and compete as well as be in the audience, making it a branded event.

In the past, sponsored events have been the most popular form of event marketing. However, sponsored events differ from branded events because while a company pays for the event and gets their name displayed as the sponsor, it usually does not control any aspects of the event, or has very limited control. Furthermore, branded events are more likely to have an impact on consumer behavior and opinions related to the brand than sponsored events because they create a sense of community that is directly focused on the brand and the brand's values. It is impossible for a person to

attend an event and not be influenced by those who are attending alongside them. This brand-centered community is not something that is achievable through sponsored events because the event itself is not centered on the brand. For example, at a sponsored basketball game the sense of community in the audience is centered on the basketball team and not the sponsor.

During branded events, brands have the opportunity to use social influence to their advantage and create a more memorable and authentic experience for their audience. The social aspects of branded events also provide social currency for those in attendance: “‘live experiences are still a scarce commodity’ and that scarcity is something that is driving their desirability among consumers: being able to say they were there gives them social currency and kudos” (Carruthers, 2016). Additionally, with the rise in social media, there is another outlet for consumers to flaunt their social currency. Social media gives people in attendance “bragging rights while also allowing those not there to get a flavour of what is taking, or has taken, place” (Carruthers, 2016).

Types of Event Marketing and Objectives

Traditional Marketing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mass marketing using advertisements on TV, radio, billboards, etc. • <i>Brand Objective:</i> wide reach and spreading of information
Non-Branded Events (ex. Coachella¹)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Events for fun, not hosted by a specific brand (ex. music festivals) • <i>Host Objective:</i> Benefit (financially or culturally) by getting people to return to the event in the future
Sponsored Events (ex. golf tournament²)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brand pays to have their name displayed during an event • <i>Brand Objective:</i> Audience gains brand name recognition and connection to event

<p>Branded Performances (ex. Red Bull Space Jump³)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A brand plans and executes a performance • <i>Brand Objective:</i> Audience is entertained and gains brand awareness
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<p>Branded Events (ex. Red Bull Soapbox Races⁴)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A brand plans and executes an event itself • <i>Brand Objective:</i> Audience leaves with a personal connection to the brand
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Table 1: Types of Event Marketing and Their Objectives

Organization

In order to focus this thesis and lay out the essentials of branded event marketing, it will be organized as follows: the possible objectives a brand might have for branded event marketing will be defined, logistical factors marketers may want to consider while planning branded events will be presented, specific tactics for Pre-Event, Event, and Post-Event success will be identified and discussed. These sections provide strategic examples for planning successful branded events and evidence to support the essentials. Finally, the essential components of branded event marketing from a theoretical perspective will be presented.

Two different types of audience will be addressed: present and absent. The present audience is the group of consumers who is able to physically attend the event, and the absent audience is the group of consumers who cannot physically attend the event. While the absent audience is unable to physically attend the event, it may be advantageous to include them in the marketing considerations because they can still interact with the event through the internet and social media, and can still form opinions about a brand or product through those outlets.

Objectives

The following section explores the most likely objectives that brands will have when they use branded events as marketing tools - generating awareness, shaping consumer attitudes, and sales - and how companies can address each objective and use them successfully in developing a branded event. These objectives are not mutually exclusive, so a branded event may be used to work towards one, or any combination of the objectives at the same time. Having an objective for a branded event is important because it allows the marketers to focus their efforts, plan the event more efficiently, and it makes the central message clear for the audience.

Awareness

The first objective that a branded event might have is to generate awareness about either the brand itself, or a specific product within the brand family. To achieve this, it is important for event marketers to have a clear message in order to educate the audience about the brand and/or product.

Social media is a large factor in forming opinions about a brand for modern consumers, so event marketers may want to consider encouraging present audience members to talk about their experiences and impressions of the brand and event and share their experience with their connections. These social interactions solidify the impression of the event in the present audience member's mind and can spread awareness to absent audience members.

In order to get the present audience to share about the event with their connections there must be some element of social currency, or something that makes

them feel and look more appealing to their connections, in what they are sharing. For example, if the person identifies as someone who is always up to date with the latest trends and products, giving them an opportunity to share their opinions about a new product with their friends aligns with their self-image and makes them look good to their connections. Consumers like to demonstrate their originality and even just being part of a small group that attends an event holds some social currency in itself because it automatically makes the present audience part of a unique group.

Additionally, research has found that not being able to document a new experience leads to disappointment and frustration, so event marketers may want to provide ways for consumers to tangibilize experiences that can also be shared (Keinan, 2011). The most basic example of this would be the use of a hashtag, although there are definitely other things that provide a better sense of tangibility for consumers. Hashtags are mostly used a few times on the day of the event and then forgotten, but photos can be shared and have more impact and interactions on social media, and they are more likely to be referenced and looked back on after the event ends. Event marketers can provide either a photo booth, or photo opportunities that allow for some creativity from the present audience. Aesthetically pleasing and authentically on-brand event spaces and decorations are an easy way to encourage photos while still leaving some agency and creativity to the audience.⁵ Event-specific products can also be a good way for consumers to tangibilize their experience and act as a memory anchor as well, which will keep the awareness in consumers' minds for a longer time.

Attitudes

Another objective a branded event might have is to shape consumers' attitudes about the brand. The desire to achieve this objective aligns well with cause related marketing opportunities, which is when companies partner with charities or causes to raise money or build awareness for the cause. Social cause marketing can be mutually beneficial for the company and the cause because the cause gets donations and awareness from the brand's consumers, and the company gets the goodwill that is generated from partnering with the cause. An example of social cause marketing is the #ShareYourEars campaign that Disney held for Make-A-Wish.⁶ Although this specific campaign was not a branded event, it would be easy to integrate social cause marketing into a branded event in the form of a charity dinner or run, for example.

Attending a cause related marketing event also has social currency for the audience members because it makes them look charitable and altruistic, so they are likely to share their experience with others. If a company makes social cause marketing a staple in their campaigns or company, the goodwill that is generated is more likely to be reliable and the charitability of the company is more likely to be more authentic and real to consumers. In order to change or influence consumers' attitudes, this type of event needs to be authentic because consumers' attitudes will be affected negatively if the event is inauthentic. These types of events can also be a good source of stories and resources that brands can use in their future marketing efforts.

Although social cause marketing is a widely used way that companies try to influence consumer attitudes, it is not the only type of event that can influence consumer perception. For example, if a company is attempting to rebrand they may

want to host an event to show consumers how exactly they have changed, why the changes are good, and how they will affect consumers. In this type of event, merchandise adds to the brand image more than it contributes to revenue, but that is still beneficial because merchandise can be a physical representation of the changes that have been made (Shafer, 2014). These attitude-shaping events don't even need to be for something as drastic as rebranding. For example, in 2010 Lexus hosted an environmental debate to celebrate the launch of their new hybrid car. The debate had social currency for the audience because it incorporated popular public figures as moderators and it provided goodwill for Lexus and made the brand more attractive to its audience because it was a demonstration of how it is now considering environmental issues (Sekula, 2010).

Sales

A third objective marketers may have for a branded event is to make immediate sales at the event itself. This objective does not include sales from delayed reactions that may occur as a result of the achievement of the other two objectives, but instead refers to branded events during which the audience attends the event primarily to purchase products. Basically events with objectives of sales can be seen as a more immersive form of traditional advertising. An example of a specific event with this goal is a pop-up shop. Nike uses pop-up shops often and effectively for new product launches or anniversaries. For the Air Max shoe's anniversary in 2017 Nike hosted Air Max pop-up shops in four major cities.⁷ The scarcity of the pop-up shops provided a larger desire in their target market and the theme of "Sneakeasy" (a play on speakeasy) overtly gave them value to the target market through scarcity (Zelaya, 2017). Pop-up

shops also provide a chance for consumers to experience and interact with a brand's products, therefore decreasing the perceived risk of a purchase. Limited edition merchandise increases scarcity and encourages purchases at branded events as well.

Event marketers can also try to get the audience to purchase products at their event by increasing the self-congruity, or personal connection with the brand, that the audience feels. When people like events and feel more self-congruity they think more positively about the host brand and desire to purchase more (Close, 2009). Close found that as an individual's self-congruity increases so do the levels of entertainment, event persuasiveness, and shopping likelihood. Furthermore, as knowledge about the brand increases, so does self-congruity. For event marketers, this means that they may want to consider ways they can increase brand knowledge of their audience, so that consumers will feel more self-congruity, get the most out of the event, and hopefully decide to purchase at the event and in the future. Nike increased the self-congruity of their audience at their Sneakeasy shops and increased their brand knowledge by presenting "a look into the past, present, and future of the Air Max shoe" (Zeyala, 2017).

Logistical Factors

Logistical factors can affect the planning and execution of branded events, so it is important to consider them in the planning process. The three logistical considerations that will be discussed are the resources of the brand, the intensity of the participatory elements of the event, and the type of target audience, whether a choir-type or unindoctrinated audience. This list is by no means exhaustive, but analyzing these three considerations provides insight into the impact that logistical factors have on branded event marketing decisions and design.

Resources of the Brand

The first logistical consideration is the resources of the host brand. In this case, “resources” can refer to the monetary amount that a brand is willing or able to spend on a branded event, any connections or relationships with vendors or media, or the audience that a brand has. Overall, Brands with more resources have more freedom to choose what kind of branded event they are going to host.

This consideration can correlate to the size of the event since a brand with more resources is able to put on a big event while a brand with fewer resources is not. However, brands with more resources may choose to host a smaller event to create authenticity and scarcity, depending on the goal of the campaign or of the specific event. Global brands can use this idea of locality to create a closer sense of community within their consumers. For example, Nike hosts local running groups through their Nike+ Run Club app, which builds community between Nike fans.⁸

This logistical consideration will also change the way the brand markets the event; brands with more media connections are more likely to already have outlets that they can use to market, solid media relationships they can tap into, and awareness from their target audience. Brands with fewer resources will probably have to work harder to spread awareness of their event, especially if the event is aimed at potential customers instead of current customers who already have awareness and familiarity with the brand.

For example, Nike has the resources to host an event in four major cities at the same time, and while they have the resources to host in more than four cities, they chose to utilize scarcity. There was also a lot of outside media coverage of the events that Nike didn't have to pay for. On the other hand Allbirds, a small eco-friendly shoe company that is only a few years old, does not have the same resources that Nike does. Allbirds relies primarily on their social media to advertise their intimate branded events like a flower crown making workshop at a local flower shop in San Francisco.⁹ However, this type of marketing gives Allbirds a natural authenticity that can make them more attractive to their target audience.

Participatory Intensity

While all branded events are participatory in nature, the intensity of consumer participation can vary. Whether or not the event is “intense” or not can also cause differences in terms of audience experience and memorability. “Intense” in this sense means the event is participatory and highly interactive for the audience, providing some sort of hands-on experience or interaction with a representative of the brand as opposed to non-intense events, which are less interactive. Not all participatory events will have

the same intensity, and different audience members can interpret the same level of provided intensity differently. For example, for one person intensity could be getting up on stage and helping in a demonstration, and for another it could be having a one-on-one interaction with a representative of the brand. There may also be different levels of intensity presented at the same event. At an event with a participatory performance aspect, the people participating in the performance experience a different level of intensity than the people observing.

A brand may choose to use an intense event because it aligns with the brand personality. For example, brands like Red Bull and Vans are action oriented brands, whereas Disney caters to an audience that prefers less intense participation through the shows at their theme parks. Intense events cause higher levels of arousal than non-intense events, therefore providing a higher level of memorability of the event. Additionally, participation from an audience member can cause them to feel more commitment to the brand as a result of the Ben Franklin Effect, or the fact that people are more likely to do someone a favor if they have already done that person a favor in the past (Becher, 2011). Although intense events can lead to a higher level of memorability and a sense of commitment to the brand, expecting involvement could deter shy audience members from attending the event, especially if they are unfamiliar with the brand and feel like they need expertise in order to fit in at the event.

Audience Type

Additionally, targeting decisions can influence how a brand markets and conducts their event. If the event is targeting current customers, the event is essentially “preaching to the choir,” therefore it doesn’t need to be educational because of the

choir's familiarity with the brand. Events that target the choir can make them feel good about being part of the brand community and strengthen the audience members' relationship with the brand as well as with the other members of the community.

If the target audience for the event consists of people who are unindoctrinated to the ways of the brand, the event can act as an introduction to the brand and be educational about the brand culture and the products while simultaneously being persuasive and encouraging them to join the brand community. This unindoctrinated group consists of unconvinced consumers who may not be customers because they are uneducated or just not sure how the brand would fit into their life, and haters of the brand. Brands most likely will not want to target haters with branded events because they are unlikely to attend or will create a negative atmosphere for other audience members if they do attend. A factor to consider is how the event can affirm goals the brand has that are consistent with unindoctrinated person's identity. When marketing the event and during the event, avoiding messages of superiority of the choir over the unindoctrinated can help prevent isolation and feelings of anxiety.

Implications of Logistical Factors in Branded Events

Lots of Resources	Fewer Resources
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Freedom of choice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Natural authenticity
Non-Intense Event	Intense Event
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May attract more unindoctrinated audience members 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Higher memorability • Higher levels of connection with and commitment to the brand • Could deter unindoctrinated audience members
Indoctrinated “Choir” Audience	Unindoctrinated Audience
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Doesn’t need to be educational • Make members feel good • Strengthen relationship with brand and other indoctrinated members 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce the brand/product • Educate about brand culture • Persuade audience to become indoctrinated members • Affirm goals and values that brand shares with member

Table 2: Implications of Logistical Factors of Branded Events

Pre-Event

This thesis is focused more on the branded event itself, so it doesn't consider all of the different considerations that occur prior to the event, instead it focuses on the research and design of the event and any communications about the event that occur prior to the event itself. During this stage the overall goal is to convince as many people in the target market to be present audience members at the event. The target market for the event will be limited geographically based on where the event is located, the scale of the event, and the target market's dedication to the brand, interest in the event, or willingness to travel. The geographical limitation will differ if the event is part of a tour, or if it is an event that is replicated in multiple retail locations.

Market Research and Event Design

The first step to plan and host a branded event is to research for and design the event. A clear message that consumers are able to take away from the event is an important element that will allow brands to focus their efforts. The message could be the same as the messages that are in the brand's traditional media campaigns, or it could be different. Either way it should be relevant to the target market and to the brand or product that the event is focusing on.

The first aspect of event marketing that differs from traditional marketing is the scope and focus of the market research that is conducted. One framework that addresses the importance of market research prior to planning a marketing event is the Consumer Experience Management Framework. The first step of this framework is "analyze the experiential world of the customer" (Schmitt, 2010). This framework emphasizes the

difference between traditional marketing and event marketing by focusing on the experiential world of the consumer. This means that market research may want to examine how consumers respond to certain stimuli, venues, and entertainment because it will influence the effectiveness of the branded event on the audience. Marketers also may want to consider how geographic changes in their target market may affect these responses. One event planner suggests that in order to understand geographic preferences in entertainment, marketers look at local radio station ratings and what kind of shows the local venues host and then plan the event's entertainment accordingly (Snowden, 2016).

The next step in the Consumer Experience Management Framework is "build the experience platform" in which marketers use the market research they have conducted to plan the event elements and details. At this point, event marketing branches off onto a completely different path than traditional marketing. For example, consumer interactions occur at an event even faster than they occur online or on social media, so it is important to consider contingency plans if something goes off track. Another factor to consider is the purpose of every single aspect of the event in relaying the intended message to the audience.

One other thing that brands may want to consider for their events is the use of outside sponsors. There are benefits of having outside sponsors because they can reduce the amount of resources that the brand has to use on the event. Outside sponsors may also provide credibility or an enhanced experience to the audience. However, they can also dilute the impact that the event has on the hosting brand's image. In order to deal with potential dilution if a brand decides to use outside sponsors, the brand can have a

clear agreement with the sponsor detailing how involved they will be and how present their image will be at the event.

Marketing the Event

The last element of the Pre-Event stage is the marketing of the event. Pre-event marketing focuses on spreading awareness of the event and convincing the target market to attend the event. As in traditional marketing, the pre-event marketing tactics should incorporate the principles of persuasion (Cialdini, 1999):

- *Reciprocity*: People feel indebted to someone who gives them something or does something for them.
- *Authority*: People respect authority.
- *Social proof*: People look to others to guide them in times of uncertainty, especially their peers.
- *Consistency*: People strive for consistency in their commitments and prefer established attitudes and values.
- *Liking*: People are more willing to act for or because of someone they like.
- *Scarcity*: The less there is of something the more valuable it is perceived to be.

These principles have been proven to be effective at generating consumer action and can be used to persuade prospective audience members to attend a branded event.

One idea that is becoming increasingly popular and effective is “don’t market, solve problems,” so understanding what problems the target market has and framing the event in a way that shows how the brand can solve those problems may make it more attractive and meaningful to the audience, thereby increasing the potential audience at

the event (Afdhel & Jones, 2016). An example of a brand solving problems through an event is Patagonia's Worn Wear Tour. On this tour Patagonia drove a bus around to different college campuses and repaired students' worn out clothing. This event gave Patagonia exposure and demonstrated their company values while providing a useful service to their target market.¹⁰

Consumer behavior principles and research can be utilized to further suggest potential pre-event communication strategies for branded event marketing during the pre-event stage. One of these principles is that consumers, who are chronically productivity oriented, seek out and consume collectable experiences. One caveat of productivity orientation is that consumers get low utility from repeating experiences, so if the event is in a series or is similar to other events that the brand holds, marketers can frame each event as a unique experience within a set, which caters to consumers' comfort with familiarity as well as their desire for new experiences (Keinan & Kivetz, 2011).

Another principle that can be used to effectively market branded events is competence seeking, or the fact that consumers seek out "feelings of effectiveness, challenge, and achievement" within their environment (Proksch, 2015). Consumers seek out competence enhancement because they want to avoid anticipated anxiety and negative feelings and they want to seek out anticipated joy. However, studies found that anticipated joy outweighs anticipated anxiety avoidance, meaning that even if the event is new and has the possibility of causing anticipated anxiety in consumers because of unfamiliarity, marketers may be able to counteract the negative feelings by highlighting the positive feelings and aspects of the event. An important implication of competence

enhancement is that consumers anticipate less negative feedback with higher levels of competence, so they attach themselves to competence-enhancing brands. This means that marketers may want to consider focusing on the utility of the event and the event's capacity for producing positive emotions and competence for consumers in the pre-event marketing communications. Anticipated utility can also be a source of enjoyment for the audiences because they look forward to the event more intensely.

When choosing outlets on which to advertise, event marketers may want to consider both traditional and social media outlets depending on their target market (Aguilar, 2015). For example, Millennials are less responsive to traditional marketing and advertising than previous generations, "Millennials' thirst for experiences and their desire to share those experiences with their social networks remains a crucial driver of experiential and event marketing success" (Feil, 2016). Additionally, Millennials don't rely on traditional authority sources for information, but instead are more persuaded by peers, user reviews, and individual sources (e.g. YouTubers). Depending on the size of the brand and the event, the brand may also want to consider using more traditional Public Relations tactics such as press releases and feature stories in local newspapers (depending on the location of the event). Furthermore, the most effective event websites are informative, easy to navigate, and updated frequently. Effective websites also have a link to purchase tickets on the home page if there is a need for attendees to purchase or download them (Snowden, 2016). Although not all branded events are going to be ticketed, having a ticketed event is a good way to measure pre-event interest and create engagement through ticket giveaways on social media.

Advertising is the only pre-event aspect that will differ significantly for the absent audience as opposed to the potentially present audience. In the Pre-Event stage the absent audience are the consumers who have no possible chance of attending the event. During the Pre-Event stage, marketers can inform the absent audience about any live streams, social media contests, or any other ways they can interact with the event without actually being there. Depending on the scale of the event and the resources of a brand, ticket giveaways for people located far away from the location of the event may also be a good way to create engagement with the absent audience.

Event

This section discusses some strategic considerations marketers can use to get results from the event itself, some potential problems that may arise during the event, and ways to interact with the absent audience.

Present Audience Frameworks

There are a few current frameworks constructed for present audiences of experiential marketing. The first framework is Wood and Masterman's seven I's to enhance event experience. Wood explains that this framework is important because "every experience has to be extraordinary to have an effect in event marketing" (Wood, 2009). Each of the I's represents a different way that event marketers can make the event extraordinary and impactful in order to influence consumers' behaviors and attitudes. The seven I's are as follows:

1. *Involvement*: The audience should feel an emotional involvement with the brand, the event, and the experience. Involvement can be used to create a sense of ownership for the audience, which strengthens their connection with the brand and the event.
2. *Interaction*: There should be a chance for attendees to interact with brand ambassadors, with other attendees, with exhibits, and/or with the brand. This is another reiteration of how important the social aspect of an event is to build consumer relationships between the consumer and the brand and between multiple consumers.

3. *Immersion:* The event should provide the audience with immersion of all senses and allow them to be isolated from other messages. Immersion of the senses allows for a more emotional connection with the brand and the other attendees and isolation from other messages ensures that the goal of the event is communicated to the audience without any competition.
4. *Intensity:* The event should be memorable and have a high impact on the audience. Memorability and audience impact helps encourage post-event action in the form of purchases and word of mouth marketing.
5. *Individuality:* The event provides unique, one-to-one opportunities, and customization, meaning each experience is different. Individuality of experiences aids memorability and can encourage storytelling from audience members to their social connections.
6. *Innovation:* The event should be creative in content, location, timing, audience, etc. Hosting an unoriginal branded event is pointless because the audience will not gain anything from the experience. There should automatically be some innovation shown in the portrayal of the brand identity in a branded event setting.
7. *Integrity:* The event should be seen as genuine and authentic and providing real benefits and value to the consumer. The brand should stay within its wheelhouse when hosting a branded event, inauthenticity can discourage consumers and damage brand image.

Wood also notes that marketers “need to recognize the difference between ‘consumer experience’ and ‘consumption experiences,’” the difference being that in a consumption

experience, the consumer is actually using or consuming the good or service and in a consumer experience the consumer is interacting with the brand (Wood, 2009). Branded events can be both consumer and consumption experiences, and the most successful ones are able to combine both experiences and include extraordinary elements in order to influence consumers.

The next framework is Schmitt's framework that examines different types of experience marketing approaches (Schmitt, 2010). This framework looks at the different ways that an event can relate to consumers on a basic level. Schmitt's breakdown of experience marketing approaches is as follows:

- *Sense*: Appeals to consumers' senses.
- *Feel*: Appeals to consumers' inner feelings and emotions.
- *Think*: Appeals to consumers' intellect and cognitive abilities.
- *Act*: Appeals to consumers' physical behaviors, lifestyles, and interactions.
- *Relate*: Appeals to individuals' desires to be a part of a social context.

There are different variations of this framework that have been proposed and they all have sensory, cognitive, behavioral, relational, and action-based elements. While marketers can take all of these dimensions into account and apply them to their event, it is important to note that the sensorial dimension has been proven to be the most important to consumers and the most influential (Schmitt, 2010). Event marketers may want to consider placing priority on the sensorial components of their event without neglecting the other components. For example, appealing to individuals' social desires is also extremely important, especially since, at their core, branded events are social experiences. Cognition is also important because it allows the audience to interact with

the branded event on a deeper level than just absorption of sensory details. Schmitt argues that it is not only important to look at experiences and outcomes as a whole, but also to break them down and examine how each dimension affects the outcomes of the event. Breaking down an overall event into smaller dimensions is a good way for event marketers to be able to determine what aspects of the event were successful and what aspects need to be modified and improved.

Authenticity

Similar to “integrity” in the Seven I’s, authenticity is crucial to branded events, meaning the branded event should be a true representation of the brand’s personality and image. An authentic branded event means that the brand may not want to always focus on the sale; even though future purchases may be a goal of the event, it is more important to form a personal connection with the consumer that will last a lifetime than to sell a product to them once. Branded events can be perceived as authentic with activities and elements within the event that stay in the brand’s wheelhouse of both personality and ability. For example, it would be inauthentic for Red Bull to host a formal charity ball or for a small local business to spend millions of dollars on one event. Another way a branded event can be authentic is by giving people a chance to participate with some creativity, like creative photo opportunities that were mentioned earlier, and then acknowledging the participation. An easy way to do this is by interacting with posts from the event on social media by liking or commenting on them. Authenticity allows consumers to create a personal connection with the brand and makes stories about the event more memorable and shareable.

Social Influence

The social atmosphere of a branded event plays a big role in influencing the present audience. Social influence occurs when others affect one's emotions, beliefs, and behaviors, which is an inherent aspect of a branded event because multiple people are in the same physical space. The social atmosphere at a branded event can't always be controlled, but a brand can attempt to use some tactics to guide the atmosphere at the event.

The social aspect of branded events affects present audience members because they are subject to social desirability; in other words, they want to be the person that other people would like. In the case of branded events, audience members want to be a person that the brand and that other audience members would like. People measure their desirability by comparing themselves to relevant others based on social cues and social norms. An example of a social norm that might be present at a branded event is when participants of the Disney marathons and 5ks wear fun costumes.

Branded events are a good way for a company to teach newer members of their audience the social norms that come with being a part of the brand community. However, new members of a brand community may be wary about not knowing the social norms that are associated with the brand, so if the event is targeted toward an unindoctrinated audience, event marketers may want to attempt to make the atmosphere at the event comfortable for the unindoctrinated audience to learn the social norms. Brands can attempt to do this by encouraging the indoctrinated audience members at the event to teach the unindoctrinated members the social norms of the brand community.

This can make it seem less intimidating to the unindoctrinated audience because they are learning from their peers instead of a superior figure.

Memorability

It's great if the audience has a good time at the event, but the important part is that they remember those feelings when it comes time for them to make a purchase decision. There are ways that event marketers can increase the likelihood of remembrance in their audience while they are at the event. For example, internally generated information is more memorable than externally presented information, so event marketers may want to give the audience an opportunity to generate their own information about the brand or event (Cornwell & Humphreys, 2013). These opportunities could be in the form of a trivia-like game or activity, or even leaving some ambiguity and not completely spelling out the intended message.

Most people would assume that to have the most successful event consumers need to be happy and pleased the entire time. However, in line with productivity orientation, a significant portion of consumers is willing to trade pleasure for memorability (Keinan & Kivetz, 2011). For example, people are willing to eat exotic foods that don't taste good at least once for the experience and novelty of it. Furthermore, studies have shown that inserting a break into a negative experience makes it worse and inserting a break in a positive experience makes it better, so if there is a break in the event, or a lull in a high-excitement environment, it can increase the amount of pleasure the audience feels (Schmitt, 2010). Another experiment found that people were very happy when they consciously focused on their consumption experiences, so event marketers can increase the happiness of their audience by making

the event immersive and providing ways for the audience to reflect and focus on their present experience, therefore increasing the memorability of the event (Schmitt, 2010).

There has been a lot of research done about memory and consumer behavior that is applicable to branded events. For example, the peak/end rule states that consumers have a tendency to remember an event based on the most intense experience and the end of the experience (Kahneman & Tversky, 2000). Another bias that supports this is the memorable moments bias, or the tendency to remember an event based on the few most memorable details. These biases mean that marketers may want to consider having one or two intense or exciting moments and a satisfying conclusion that makes the audience feel good at their event. However, the exciting moments shouldn't be too intense because the Yerkes Dodson Law states "optimal task performance occurs at an intermediate level of arousal, with relatively poorer performance at both lower and higher arousal levels," meaning people remember events best at mid-level arousal moments (Coleman, 2003).

One more thing that aids memory in consumers is when they have a physical souvenir or photo from the event. The souvenir can then act as a memory anchor for the audience members and keep the brand and the experience fresh in their minds, so brands can provide platforms and opportunities for tangible memorabilia generation and purchase. Presenting the audience with a call to action is another way to provide memorability in the audience because it gives them something tangible to do. The call to action can be in the form of a coupon specific to the event, or a social media contest that features consumers with the product. Including an event-specific call to action also makes it easier to draw conclusions about changes in Returns on Investment (ROI) and

brand interactions as a result of the event because purchases that are made using the promotion can be traced back directly to the event.

Potential Problems

As with any marketing campaign, there are potential problems that event marketers might face during their events. The first of these problems is competitor ambush, or “the formation of an association with an event without securing official sponsorship rights” (Cornwell & Humphreys, 2013). Ambushers usually seek awareness and want to capitalize on goodwill produced by the event, which sounds worrisome because it could dilute the goodwill that is associated with the main brand. A lot of the time it is difficult for event marketers to control what people show up around their events, so there is not really a way to avoid the potential ambushers completely. However, research has shown that interference may disrupt information, but it doesn’t destroy or replace that information (Cornwell & Humphreys, 2013). The information and message from the event might still be in the consumers’ minds, but it may take more effort post-event to turn the information into action.

Another problem with event marketing is that it is very difficult to measure the effect that one specific event has. This applies to measuring both ROI and changes in brand image. This difficulty is especially true when a branded event is part of a larger campaign. One way to combat this, as mentioned before, is to create measurable calls to action that are specific to the event audience. An example of this kind of call to action is a coupon or online discount code that only event goers receive; this allows marketers to measure the sales that used the discount and connect them back to the event. Marketers can also try to measure audience interactions with the brand on social

media as a result of the event (i.e. using the hashtag, posting pictures of the event) and attempt to correlate the types of interactions (positive or negative) with changes in brand image.

Absent Audience

Even though it is more difficult to influence them through the event itself, the absent audience of a branded event is still important because they can see the event through the internet if a brand has chosen to utilize online tools during the event. Even though it makes the ROI from a specific event harder to measure, marketers may want to consider integrating the branded event into their overall marketing campaign in order to get the highest ROI from both present and absent audiences. Integrating an event into the overall campaign is especially important for influencing attitudes from the absent audience. Attitudes are hard to influence if the consumer is not present at the event, able to see the impact of the event, or experience the social elements of the event. If a company is rebranding or participating in social cause marketing it may also want to integrate branded events into their overall marketing campaign in order to get the maximum amount of goodwill from both the present and absent audiences.

One relatively easy and cheap way to create awareness and get consumers to engage with the brand and event from far away is through social media. “What really made experiential marketing take off was the rise of social media. Suddenly marketers weren’t just reaching the person who attended their event. They were reaching all their friends and colleagues. All those people were invited to participate in the event, even if it was in a very small way” (Factory 360, 2015). Depending on the type of event, marketers may want to consider live streaming performances and presentations, or

recording them and posting them online after the event. Another useful social media tool is a hashtag, which allows direct and visible participation from consumers and makes it easy for marketers to find opinions about their campaign. The present audience can use hashtags as well, and they allow marketers to easily find and share consumer created photos and videos. Social media is more effective when companies interact with the people who are posting, so marketers may want to take time to reply to comments, tweets, etc. as well as repost particularly good audience created content, and always stay up to date (Nagelmueller, 2015). One caveat of social media usage is that certain platforms have algorithms that may limit brand visibility, so marketers may want to invest in boosted posts on platforms like Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter (Nagelmueller, 2015). To create consistency across all platforms, all social media platforms that a brand uses should be linked to their website and vice versa.

Post-Event

A brand can use post-event communications in order to encourage consumer action after an event. After an event has taken place is also a good time for the brand to review the effectiveness of the event and revise future events based on the results.

Communications

Post-event communications are essential to keep the brand or product in consumers' minds and create subsequent action from consumers. They can also be an opportunity for the marketers to get feedback from the audience. The most common and easiest type of post-event direct communication is email. Event attendees' emails can be collected prior to the event if there is required registration, or at the event. Along with adding attendees' emails to the general database and e-newsletter list, the company may want to consider sending out some communications that are specific to the event. These emails can contain discounts and promotions to encourage consumer action and purchases and information about future events or ways to connect with the brand.

Another beneficial communication to send to audiences after an event is a survey. Post-event surveys can serve two purposes: they are an easy way to get direct feedback from the audience about the event, and they allow the audience to reflect and recall their experience. The testing effect states that testing people about an experience can strengthen their memories, so using this effect in post-event surveys and asking attendees questions that lead them to recall the most important aspects of the event will strengthen the message of the event in consumers' minds and influence memorability (Cornwell & Humphreys, 2013).

Research has shown that advertising can alter memories of an event, so marketers can use advertisements and post-event communications to drive home the positive aspects of the event (Braun et al., 2001). Studies have provided “substantial evidence that consumer recall of past experience is subject to distortion and can be guided by marketing communications” and show that “un-favorable experiences could be reconstructed to be more favorable in retrospect” (Braun, 1999). Furthermore, “it was found that autobiographically focused advertising can make events (even impossible ones) seem more likely to have happened to consumers” (Braun et al., 2001). Therefore, event marketers can use autobiographically focused advertising, or advertising that illustrates a certain event in a consumer’s life, very easily when they are targeting the audience members of the event because they are certain that all of the audience has one autobiographical event in common. There are also social implications of guiding memories through advertisements. According to Braun, “marketers can benefit on two counts by being the memory guide: directly, by influencing the consumer's attitude and purchase intention, and indirectly, by activating positive word-of-mouth regarding the brand” (Braun et al., 2001).

Aside from direct marketing communications, there are other ways to keep the message from the event in consumers’ minds, especially since memorable events can be forgotten without the proper cue to help retrieval (Cornwell & Humphreys, 2013). Marketers can trigger consumers’ memories by providing cues at critical points in the purchase process, another reason that tying the event into the overall marketing campaign is beneficial. The point of purchase is one such critical point of contact with

the brand and is therefore a good place to incorporate reminder cues, whether that is online or in a brick and mortar store.

Evaluation and Adjustment

Evaluation of the event performance and adjustment of future events are the last step in branded event marketing. The Consumer Experience Management Framework suggests that analysis and adjustments need to occur on a continuous basis, especially if the event is recurring (Schmitt, 2010). Marketers can measure and analyze the success of their event through post-event data and research, as well as through the ROI (or specifically the Return on Marketing) that can be traced back to the event, or perhaps the overall campaign since it is extremely difficult to pin down specific reasons for changes in ROM other than through event-specific coupons.

One challenge in this aspect of event marketing is that “the art of engagement needs to become more scientific and data-focused. Most businesses have their own measurement tools, but the industry has not collectively agreed on what to measure and how to measure it. There needs to be a standardization across the industry” (Ledger, 2015). For example, it is very difficult to measure awareness and changes in attitudes, so having an industry standard would be helpful.

Essentials

Based on the previous discussion, there are four essentials of branded event marketing from a theoretical perspective: purpose, interaction, creativity, and memorability. These four essentials can be used to guide strategic marketing and branded event planning decisions in order to have the most successful branded event possible.

Essentials of Branded Event Marketing	
Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clearly defined, measureable goals • All elements of event are justified
Interaction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brand to audience: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Targeted persuasive publicity ○ Central message in promotions and at event • Consumer to consumer <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Build and strengthen relationships and consumer identity in relation to brand
Creativity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Event is unique and original • Encourage creative audience interaction
Memorability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage audience's senses • Activities that lead to story telling • Use advertising to influence memory post-event

Table 3: Essentials of Branded Event Marketing

All of the elements of the branded events should have a specific purpose, meaning there are clearly defined, measureable goals for the event as a whole and any activities or elements during the event are there for a reason. This may sound difficult to implement, but increasing audience happiness and enjoyment is a valid goal that a lot of

elements can fall under. Event marketers can make sure everything at the event has a purpose that contributes to the success of their goals by conducting thorough market research to understand their audience and how the geographic location of the event may mean that the event audience is different from their target market as a whole. Event marketers can then use these measurable goals to consistently review and improve their strategies and tactics.

Interaction has two different purposes that must be considered: the interaction between the brand and the audience and the interaction between audience members. Pre-event marketing needs to be specifically targeted and persuasive to get the target consumer to physically attend the event because everything will most likely be available online. Even though the online aspects of the event will not have the same impact as attending an event in person, consumers may not realize that. Effective communication from the brand at the event is clearly centered on the main message that the company wants the audience to take away. Social influences are very powerful as well, so consumer-to-consumer interactions consumers contribute to the perceptual and attitudinal evaluations consumers generate in relation to an event. Providing opportunities at events for guided social interactions can help build and strengthen relationships between consumers, strengthen consumer identities in relationship to the brand, and allow audience members to learn from each other.

Creativity is another element that is important for branded events that consists of two parts. First, the event itself should be creative in order to attract people to attend and provide higher levels of memorability. Second, there should be opportunities for audience members to be creative. Audience creativity can create a deeper, authentic

connection with the brand, create stories that the audience can share, and is another way to increase memorability.

Memorability is essential in getting audience members to take action after an event both short-term and long-term. At the event brands can influence the event's memorable likelihood by engaging audience members' senses and having activities that lend themselves to storytelling to make things easier to remember and encourage word of mouth marketing. After the event, the brand can use advertising to influence consumer memory and shape it in a positive way to encourage subsequent consumption behaviors. The brand can also provide memory cues at important touch points to trigger the good feelings that the audience member felt at the event to encourage post-event purchase.

Conclusion

Interesting and out-of-the-box marketing techniques and strategies, like branded event marketing, have value within a company's marketing mix. Thus, it is beneficial for marketers to understand this field in order to use it effectively. Event marketing is different, and arguably more complicated, than traditional marketing because the brand must create an experience and make the brand succeed at the same time, which brings up an entirely new set of challenges.

The proposed essentials of branded event marketing are provided to aid event marketers in their navigation of the numerous elements of branded events and help them to form successful marketing campaigns. Integrating these essentials into branded events creates a better experience for consumers and allows them to build a strong relationship with the brand therefore increasing consumer lifetime value and the size of the brand's consumer base.

There are no right answers in the marketing world because everything varies based on the goals of the company and the campaign. It is also impossible to say if branded events are better than traditional marketing techniques, but they have the most opportunities and potential to go above and beyond consumers' expectations, create strong relationships, and encourage action. This thesis has shown different elements marketers have to work with, but they must decide how to put them together based on the goals of their company, campaign, and event.

Image Appendix

1. Coachella



<https://www.theodysseyonline.com/coachella-music-festival-or-fashion-show>

2. Sponsored golf tournament



<http://bryanyymca.org/give-back/golf-tournament/>

3. Red Bull Space Jump



<http://www.redbull.com/en/adventure/stories/1331615604283/fly-with-felix-red-bull-stratos-pov-video>

4. Red Bull Soapbox Race



<https://www.redbull.com/ie-en/events/red-bull-soapbox-race-st-patricks-hill-cork>

5. Example of creative photo opportunity and hashtags.



<https://www.instagram.com/emilyrchinn/>

6. #ShareYourEars Campaign



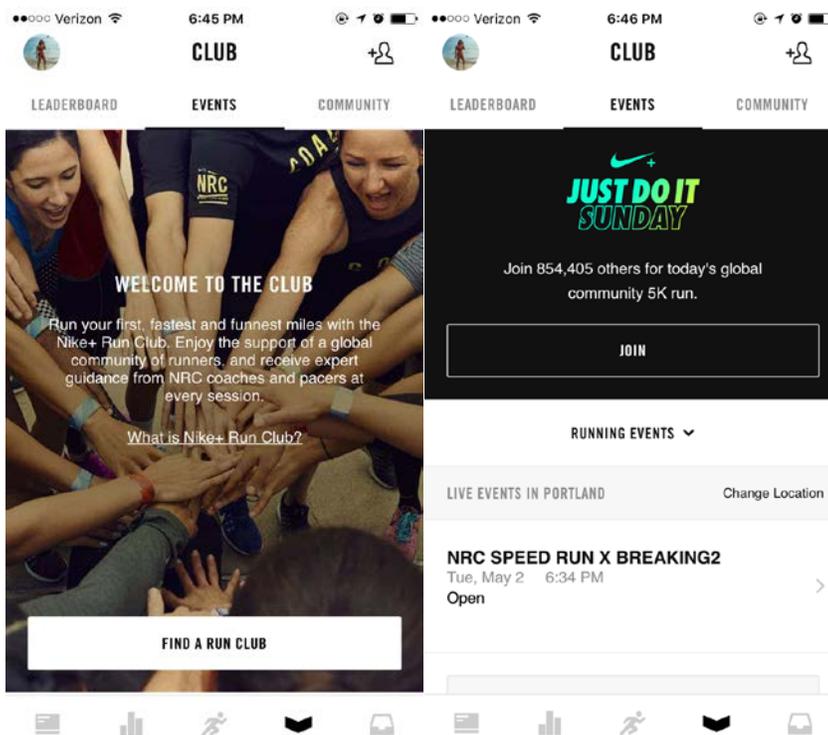
<http://www.snopes.com/share-your-ears-disney/>

7. Nike Sneakeasy Pop-Up Store



<http://weartesters.com/nike-sneakeasy-window-whats-next/>

8. Examples of global and local events on the Nike+ Run Club App



Nike+ Run Club, April 30, 2017

9. Allbirds social media advertising



<https://www.instagram.com/allbirds/>

10. Patagonia Work Wear College Tour



<https://www.facebook.com/UONetImpact/photos/gm.727615004065741/1459616827404809/?type=3&theater>

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